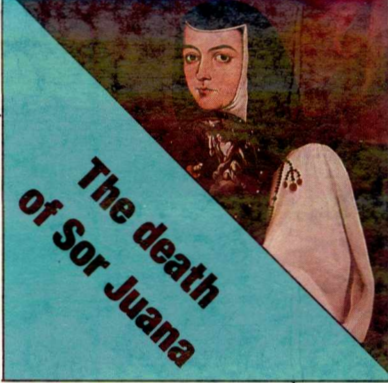


Voices of Mexico

MEXICAN PERSPECTIVES ON CONTEMPORARY ISSUES



The death
of Sor Juana

CISAN • UNAM

**Contexts of
Mexican policy**
by Soledad Loaeza

**Chiapas : the apogee
of contradictions**
by Carlos Monsiváis
**Chicano cinema: a
panoramic view**

by David Maciel



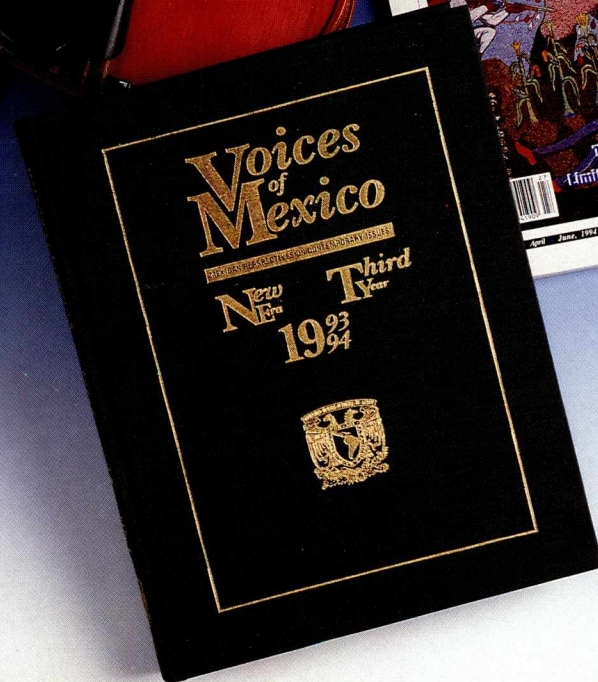
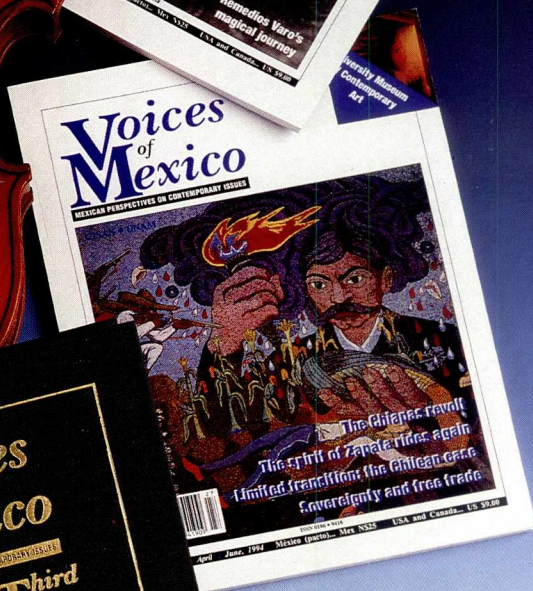
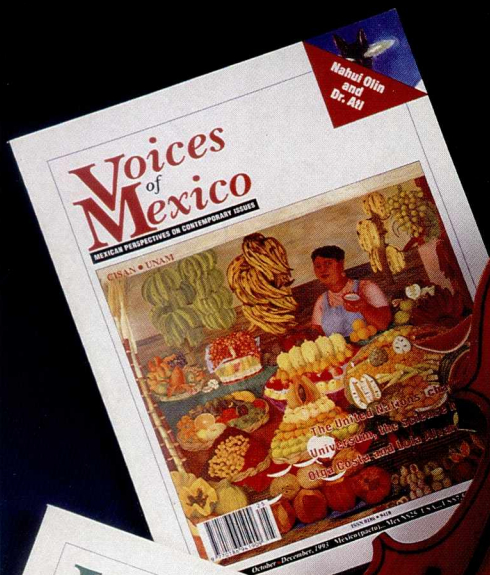
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Voices of Mexico

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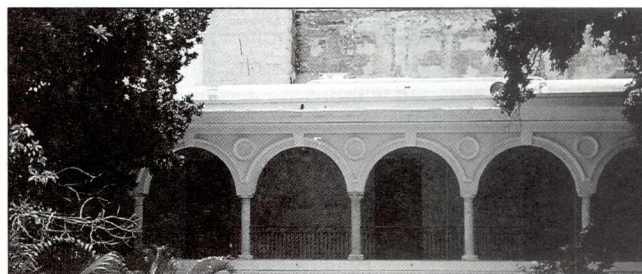
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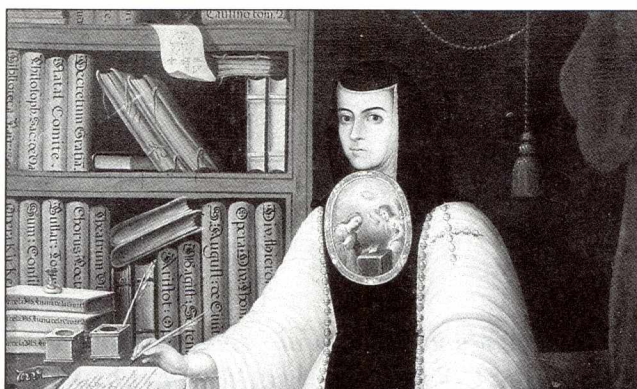
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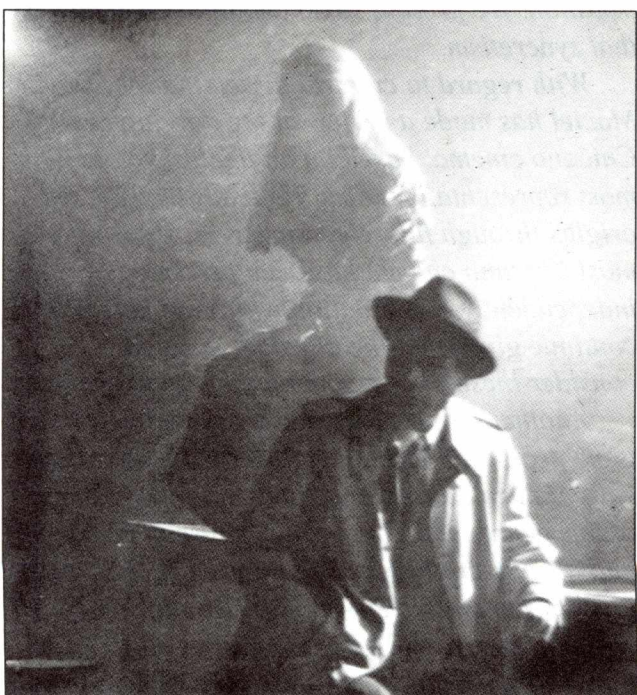
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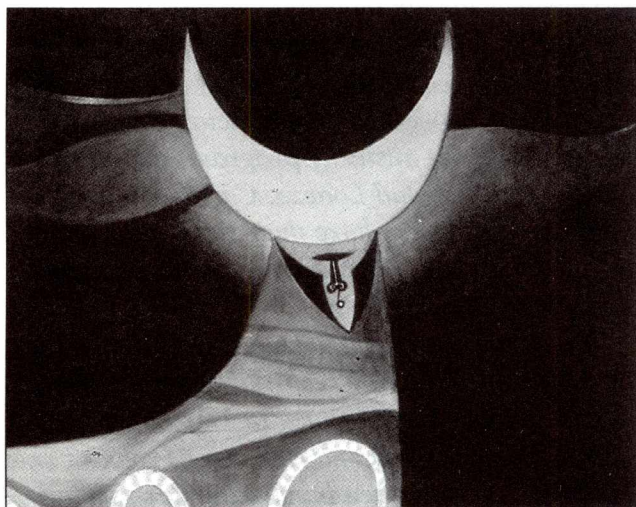


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The cover photo of issue No. 30 was by Arturo
Piera. He also took the photographs of José Agustín
Arrieta's paintings (pp. 81-84).

Our voice

In this issue, three writers analyse the perspectives for fundamental changes in Mexico based on greater pluralistic citizen participation in politics and elections, the recent change in the government, as well as the financial crisis together with the austerity programs adopted to overcome it. Soledad Loaeza, Carlos Monsiváis and Lorenzo Meyer share their reflections on the need for working to achieve a structural change in our political system.

Citizens have been insistently demanding that the Chiapas conflict be resolved by political means through negotiations. In Mexico we hear an increasing variety and richness of voices. Civil society has gotten involved and is seeking peaceful change. On February 12 elections were held in the state of Jalisco, in which the National Action Party (PAN) won the governorship and, for the first time, a majority in the state legislature. In May, elections will be held in Guanajuato and Yucatan, and we hope that these will be characterized by fairness and a high level of citizen participation.

Timothy E. Anna writes that Mexico, the United States and Canada are products of the European colonialism which imposed itself on the autochthonous states, and that when these nations won independence they chose federalism as their form of political organization. Federalism, he maintains, allows many voices to be heard and participate in the process of national identity.

A referendum will shortly be held in Quebec, so that its inhabitants may decide whether they want to continue to be part of Canada or become an independent country. Both in Robin Berting's article and in the piece on the international

conference about "Electoral Processes in Mexico, the U.S. and Canada, 1994, Evaluation and Perspectives," organized by CISAN, the likelihood is posed that the Quebecois will vote "no" on independence from Canada.

Yucatán is the site of the museum we feature on this occasion. Housed in a lovely Colonial building, the Yucatan Atheneum Museum of Contemporary Art (MACAY) will have its first anniversary this April. Carlos García Ponce, president of the MACAY Cultural Foundation, is carrying out exceptional work in rescuing and promoting our artistic and cultural values.

Elsa Rea presents us with an interesting article on the tlacuilos of the 16th century. The cultural and ethnic mixing we call mestizaje led these painter-scriveners of pre-Hispanic codices to learn the trade of scribes in the European tradition. We present some beautiful examples of that syncretism.

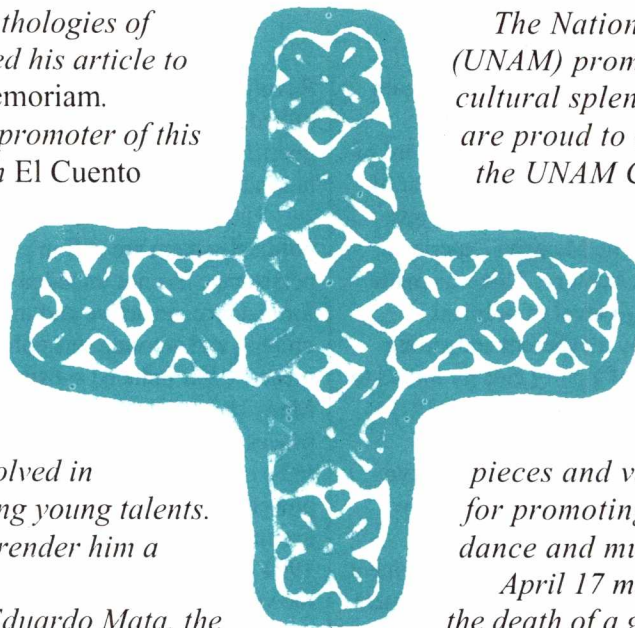
With regard to cultural dissemination, David Maciel has made a review of the development of Chicano cinema, based on an analysis of the most representative films. He leads us from the origins through future perspectives, showing how most Chicano cinema has been produced independently—a situation which is likely to continue given that the big studios do not consider these films economically attractive.

Another panoramic view presented in this issue deals with the contemporary Mexican short story. Lauro Zavala says there are more readers of this genre than of novels, because of its brevity and its mimicry of other quotidian genres such as journalistic and letter writing. He notes that abroad, interest in Mexican short stories has grown over the past ten years, giving rise to the

publication of several anthologies of translations. He dedicated his article to Edmundo Valadés, in memoriam.

Valadés was a great promoter of this genre in Mexico, through *El Cuento* (*The Story*) magazine, which he founded in 1939. Apart from a few periods of economic crisis, he continued to publish it until his death at the end of last year. He was always involved in supporting and stimulating young talents. In *Voices of Mexico* we render him a well-deserved tribute.

We do the same for Eduardo Mata, the internationally renowned Mexican conductor and composer. From 1966 to 1975 he directed our university's Philharmonic Orchestra, and this period is considered the orchestra's best. From 1977 to 1993 he was the artistic director of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, whose musical quality won it a Grammy nomination. His accidental death left unfulfilled a season schedule of eight concerts this year in his capacity as principal conductor of the Symphony Orchestra of Rome, and certainly a greater legacy of compositions as well.



The National University of Mexico (UNAM) promotes the artistic and cultural splendor of Mexico. Thus we are proud to acquaint our readers with the UNAM Choreographic Workshop,

which was founded in 1970. Since that year Gloria Contreras has carried out magnificent work, through the creation of choreographic

pieces and various teaching methods for promoting the appreciation of dance and music.

April 17 marks the third centenary of the death of a great woman: Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Her scientific curiosity and thirst for knowledge made her one of the most erudite figures of her era. She is considered the last great writer of the "Golden Century." Her beauty and intelligence awakened envy. When Sor Juana was forced to sell all her books and scientific instruments, she lost not only her freedom to study but her interest in life as well ❧

Hugo B. Margáin
Editorial Director.

Contexts of Mexican policy

Soledad Loaeza*

For decades Mexico stood in strong contrast with other Latin American countries because it succeeded in maintaining an impressive record of authoritarian stability that was a central pillar of economic growth and social change. Political continuity was an essential characteristic of the Mexican experience for most of the second half of the century. This was made possible thanks to a relatively high level of political institutionalization, epitomized by a coherent and strong state, the sustained preeminence of a party closely linked to the state, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), and the regular organization of elections.

Electoral processes were not simply a make-believe exercise destined to provide a democratic facade. They also contributed to stability because they offered an institutional mechanism for elite renewal. This arrangement provided an appropriate context for economic development because it guaranteed a significant degree of predictability in political processes and prevented dramatic swings between authoritarianism and democracy, such as those experienced by other countries in the region.

However, in the 1980s the Mexican political system was subject to the repercussions of a severe financial crisis and economic recession. These difficulties forced a profound reform of the Mexican state's participation in the economy. Inevitably, the reduction of state interventionism weakened political institutions and brought about a loosening of political controls. The counterpart of this process was an unprecedented politicization of Mexican society, that is, a substantial increase of autonomous political activities that induced an upsurge of non-governmental organizations and the expansion of independent electoral participation.

Since the mid-eighties the latter phenomenon led to the strengthened presence of opposition parties, namely the National Action Party (PAN), the long-standing conservative opposition, and the Party of the Democratic

Revolution (PRD), an organization created in 1989 that rallied leftist groups of different shades from former guerrilleros and communists to Priístas opposed to the De la Madrid and Salinas reforms.

Thus, although the central pieces of the traditional political system are still in place, in the last ten years their persistence has not impeded the addition of new elements, for instance, an active and increasingly influential public opinion and autonomous political organizations, whose presence has induced substantial changes in the system. Many specialists and observers see in this evolution a process of democratization. However, this view has proved to be overly optimistic; the PRI'S continued presence in power and the conservative tendencies of large social groups—as expressed in recent elections; for instance, in 1994 the votes for the PRI and PAN amounted to 77% of the vote—suggest that Mexico has undergone a limited experience of political liberalization. This path of change may lead to a democratic regime; nevertheless,

“In the 1980s the Mexican political system was subject to the repercussions of a severe financial crisis and economic recession”

liberalization is an open-ended process that can follow an erratic course.

The economic and political transformations that have been mentioned have had a profound impact on some of the assumptions of the almost legendary predictability of Mexican politics. These were, for instance: sustained economic growth, price and foreign exchange rate stability, political apathy and conformism, the power of the presidency. Predictability and a general, if superficial, political uniformity had been the central characteristics of

* Researcher at El Colegio de Mexico's Center for International Studies and member of CISAN's Rules Commission.

“*The international context and the transformation of Mexican society have determined the changing context of Mexican policy since 1982*”

the dangers a chaotic situation in Mexico involved for the United States. Most of the expressions of concern were accompanied by suggestions of a political change that would preempt general unrest by opening up the system to participation by the opposition.

This pressure was translated into increasing criticism of the PRI's virtual hegemony, electoral fraud and support of the PAN. The need of the De la Madrid government for international credit and good will was so great that it probably considered a more liberal attitude towards party opposition and competitiveness a low price to pay for economic recovery. This explains in part the governmental permissiveness with respect to progress by the PAN at the municipal and state levels in those years.

The influence of the international context on the liberalizing reforms undertaken by the Salinas government was recognized by President Salinas himself in his last State of the Union address on November 1, 1994. In this speech, in which he drew a general balance sheet of his six years in power, the outgoing president emphasized the weight of the international factor in many of the decisions he took: “Mexico has changed intensely.... The goals of these changes were the establishment of a new relationship between state and society and to place Mexico in an advantageous position in the new international reality....”

The international reality was an obvious frame of reference for the consolidation of a new, export-oriented economic model, of which the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was the kernel. The democratizing wave that overtook Latin America and Eastern Europe after 1989 was a continuous touchstone of political reform, for the opposition as much as for the Salinas government. Thus, for Salinas the international context was a source of pressure for political reform as it had been for De la Madrid, but in a different manner.

During his first year in office, Salinas succeeded in reducing the urgency of debt payments. Moreover, the appearance of a forceful populist opposition, led by Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, in the presidential race of 1988 had cooled the enthusiasm of many politicians and opinion-makers in the United States for immediate political reform

in Mexico. However, the conflict-ridden election and the severe allegations of fraud that tarnished Salinas' claims of legitimacy created an “image problem.” A president identified with and committed to the modernization of the Mexican economy could not afford to be perceived as the champion of timeworn authoritarian political institutions.

The international dimension of this “image problem” had two aspects: the new relationship of Mexico with the outside world, and the new international standards of “political acceptability.” This dimension set important constraints on the direction of the Mexican government's policies with respect to the PRI, the opposition, party competitiveness and human rights. It is also possible that some of the constitutional amendments Salinas introduced—for instance, regarding landed property or relations with the Catholic church—were made with an eye on events in Eastern Europe in relation to which Mexico could not remain far behind.

In spite of this, Salinas did not see reform as a priority. While he recognized its importance, he also believed it could be subordinated to economic change. Therefore, he concentrated his efforts on the latter area, where his goals seemed much clearer and better-defined than in the political domain, where his leadership tended to be reactive and dominated by a short-term perspective.

The pressure of a modernizing society

In addition to a difficult and changing international context that weighed heavily on the policy decisions of the Mexican government, President Salinas had to deal with the definition of new patterns of relationships between state and society. This need was imposed by the profound modernizing changes experienced by Mexican society in previous years; thus, it was a foreseeable stage in a process that since the beginning of the seventies had transformed a relatively unstable and fluid society, where social expectations were maintained by the promise of social mobility, into a dramatically unequal social structure in which class lines are more rigid than in the past.

This phenomenon of social stabilization was also the result of an accelerated modernizing process that, in spite of very profound disparities, has penetrated Mexican society as a whole. Thus, by the end of the eighties

“*The uprising in Chiapas can be understood as the extreme reaction of those who were being left behind in the modernization process*”

“*The process of political change in Mexico has been plagued by contradictions and equivocal signals*”

the traditional political system that had been created to accommodate the political expressions of a preeminently rural society, parochial and inward-oriented, seemed to lag far behind the urbanized society of the end of the 20th century, a society aware of and in contact with the outside world, eager to participate in the advantages of technological change and diversity. This Mexican society had overcome the apathy and conformism that for decades stood behind the non-participatory attitudes that were also a support of authoritarianism.

In order to understand the recent evolution of Mexican society it is necessary to remember that the years 1970-1982 were a period of high rates of economic growth, thanks, first, to international credit and, then, to the oil boom. However, this period of prosperity was followed by twelve more years of inflation (reaching 160% in 1987), recession and adjustment policies.

The rise of anti-authoritarianism among a number of social groups from 1983 onwards has to be understood in the light of the increased participation of the middle classes in the benefits of the economic development of the seventies and the improvement of their relative position within the class structure.

Others—for instance urban, low-income groups, not to mention the rural population that still represented over 34% of the total population—did not benefit as much from prosperity. Nevertheless, they were also touched by some of its effects, namely the expansion of education, the intense development of the media in that period, and the access to information from the outside world that came with the internationalization of Mexico.

This means that events in other Latin American countries, elections in Nicaragua, for instance, or even the fall of the Berlin Wall, were a frame of reference not only for the government but also for large social groups for whom radio or television became in those years a crucial agent of socialization, much more important than more traditional agents such as the schools, the Church or the family.

The Indian peasant uprising in the southern state of Chiapas on January 1, 1994 has been interpreted as a rejection of modernity by groups who want to retain their traditional identity, threatened by NAFTA, land property reform and the integration of Mexico into international economic and political currents. However, this movement


can also be understood as the extreme reaction of those who were being left behind in the modernization process, who felt marginalized from the prosperity and well-being ideally associated with social change.

In this perspective their rebellion does not appear as inspired by change itself, but rather by a type of change from which they felt excluded. Thus, this movement shares a common ground with the demands for effective political participation of the modernized middle-class and urban low-income groups that in the eighties were activated by different phenomena: the 1981-1982 crisis, the 1985 earthquake, the development of the media, the recession, the upsurge of Cardenismo in 1988, the dismantling of mechanisms of political control, the increased competitiveness of elections or a simple desire for change and new faces in the government.

The effects of social change on the Mexican political system have not been minor. Among them the most noteworthy has been the appearance and increased importance of public opinion as a central element of political balances, a phenomenon that derives from the new characteristics of Mexican society. It has also had a strong impact on the traditional institutional arrangement, built on the assumption that the only limits to governmental authority were self-imposed, but this impact has not yet found a solid institutional response.

The process of political change in Mexico has been plagued by contradictions and equivocal signals. The reaction of the governmental elite to demands for political change has been subordinated to the completion of a project of economic modernization that has had very high social costs. Paradoxically, many of these contradictions derive not so much from resistance to change but from difficulties in responding to the diverse demands of a society that has more political complexities than can be absorbed by the authorities in power or existing institutions.

Since the De la Madrid government, policy-makers and politicians are more responsive to a heterogeneous public opinion. This phenomenon has found expression in the politicization of the media, an impressive upsurge of non-governmental organizations, independent electoral participation and, generally speaking, increased autonomous political participation.

However, governmental responsiveness has not entailed a predictable pattern of change because it is not subject to a clear political design. Rather, it has been dominated by short-term reactions calculated on the basis of the priority of economic reform. Thus, the uncertainty that has apparently become a permanent feature of political dynamics in Mexico is not only related to the intensification of party competitiveness, but also to an institutional weakness that has to be resolved according to a plan of political modernization that has become Mexico's top priority 

Chiapas: the apogee of contradictions

Carlos Monsiváis *

On February 9, facing the TV cameras, President Ernesto Zedillo declared war, albeit in other words, on the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) and its leader, *Subcomandante Marcos*, whose identity he “unmasked.” The finger is pointed at Rafael Guillén Vicente, a B.A. in philosophy who had for a period of time worked as a professor at the Metropolitan University’s Xochimilco

campus and is said to have been a member of the Forces of National Liberation. According to the president, the EZLN was preparing to provoke the destabilization of Mexico, a charge demonstrated by displaying the not very powerful arsenals located in three safe houses —one of which held two revolvers.

The Ministry of Interior (*Gobernación*) also reported more than 110 denunciations made by the civilian population from January to September 1994, including the takeover of towns, murders, the looting of

* Journalist and writer.



The hard-liners are smiling, convinced that the most important thing is to liquidate civil society.

businesses, kidnappings, highway robbery, cattle rustling, the forcible (sic) recruitment of Indians and peasants, the purchase of arms with resources from the government's Solidarity and farmer aid programs, robbery, assault and rapes of the civilian population.... The strange thing is that, despite the foregoing, two Presidents of the Republic have used the word "dissidents" to refer to those who (suddenly) are now delinquents, and that they sent former Mexico City regent Manuel Camacho and the present Minister of the Interior, Esteban Moctezuma, to talk to them.

On the 9th of February twelve arrest warrants were issued, and the federal Attorney General hastened to carry them out in Chiapas, accompanied by an enormous deployment of the federal army. Marcos was not arrested, but alleged members of his group were; the foreign and international press, as well as the International Red Cross, were forbidden access to the territory recovered by the army. The government-line media jump with McCarthyite joy. And, again immediately, there is a widespread critical response: the arsenals—the conclusive evidence—turn out not to prove as much as was hoped; Marcos' escape increases his popularity; and indignation is spurred by denunciations of torture, proven in several cases by the press and Amnesty International.

The much-feared polarization has begun to occur. The Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) organizes demonstrations with obligatory attendance [known as *acarreo* in Mexico] in the states of Veracruz and Puebla, and at the Olympic Pool; Salinas-line intellectuals use their full repertoire of insults against the subversives; a sector of the Catholic Church seizes the opportunity to attack Samuel Ruiz (notably Bishop Juan Sandoval Iñiguez of Guadalajara and Bishop Emeritus Genaro Alamilla of Papatla). But the majority of public opinion has mobilized against the decision: there have been marches in several states, hundreds of articles and letters to the press, calls to radio stations, protest manifestos from university faculties, intellectuals, political groups, non-governmental organizations. One manifesto from intellectuals gathered over 700 signatures.

The government contradicts itself, issues corrections, denies the corrections, contradicts itself again, observes the fearsome fall of the stock market. Disinformation is taken to extremes, while many, frightened by both sides' violence or simply misinformed, avoid expressing any opinion at all. And support for the president is, in the best analysis, precarious. His measures gratify those who called for taking a hard line, and alienate the rest. Nobody denies

the need for a single national territory, but why is it that for thirteen months no one noticed the anomalies of the situation, which President Zedillo called an "abdication of sovereignty," a punishable act which the previous government overlooked?

Another error of calculation, with enormous international repercussions, was the sudden characterization of Marcos as a criminal and terrorist, which goes together with denial that the EZLN represents an "Indian rebellion." But Marcos is not some discredited *cacique* [traditional local boss] like oil-workers' leader Joaquín Hernández Galicia, whom the Salinas government was able to imprison to widespread applause. Marcos, if we go by the résumé the government is disseminating, is a radical intellectual who chose the path of armed struggle. And many of us who neither share that choice nor consider it viable feel enormously indignant when we see how, in order to "arrest twelve people," Chiapas is militarized, and then the government reverses itself, only to reconsider again immediately thereafter, and so on successively. Who believes in all this; who puts their trust in this sort of thing? Nothing could be more laughable than Chiapas Governor Eduardo Robledo's request to be granted a "leave" from office (a political cadaver as a posthumous gift to the Zapatistas), despite federal promises to respect the sovereignty of the states. And the support that is obtained dissolves into smoke. On February 14 the president stated: "Today I am issuing precise instructions to the Attorney General's office and the army that they not undertake any actions which could provoke confrontations." In other words, that nobody be arrested.

In this context it's worth recalling the obvious: in Mexico there are many societies, there is no such thing as *the* society; and this diversification (fragmentation) is aggravated by the accumulation of too many urgent situations in a short period of time, at a mind-numbing velocity. On February 9 one sector of opinion reacted to the new hard line by expressing enthusiasm for the president's *muchos pantalones*,¹ viewing the attacks as a staunch defense of the interests of the bourgeoisie and landowners. Another, very broad sector acknowledged the EZLN's motives and expressed concern over treatment of the detainees and the fate facing Marcos. Yet another sector watched the whole thing as if it were a show. Subsequently, for different reasons, everyone reacted critically, the

¹ This is a macho expression roughly equivalent to "having a lot of guts." (Editor's note.)

government having isolated itself once again. And all sectors avidly follow the latest news to get a glimpse of the day's contradictions, ambiguities and obfuscations.

Among the latest news: the president is no longer surrounded by the aura of "presidentialism," yet the government still bases itself on the conditioned reflexes of authoritarianism; public opinion and civil society (which are never the same thing) have become more vigorous and sharpened their memory. And the "unmasking" of Marcos has neither removed nor diminished that name. Whatever his identity was before December 31, 1993, since New Year's Day of 1994 *Marcos* is a different reality, both politically and psychologically. He is no longer a linear creature of his past, since he does not carry that past with him when he faces the communications media. And this makes Marcos completely different from Rafael Guillén, who is a person with a name, family, academic record and clandestine life. The ski mask is the radical separation which, as paradoxically as you like, makes Marcos a distinct personality, untrammelled by the discourse of the guerrillaist left, without the obligation to be orthodox. And that which arises from this, a leader who has no face but does speak with eloquence, creates —through letters, manifestos, proclamations and his characteristic "P.S.'s"— an unexpected dialogue with Mexican society and, to a certain extent, international society as well.

Fin de siècle turnarounds: a clandestine group with a very routine schema generates a leader who mixes elements from his original training with those provided by his immersion in the Indian world. The dogmatic Marxist Marcos turns out also to be an imaginative masked man who eloquently unveils the extremes of marginalization. Moreover, other elements unexpectedly manifest themselves in the literature he produces: Aztec and Maya culture, Biblical echoes, a sense of humor—all of which dilute the denseness of sectarianism and lend diversity to the messianic. Small-group origins are neutralized thanks to the weight of reality itself.

Everything goes by color

There are innumerable versions of what has occurred. The leader of the National Action Party (PAN), Carlos Castillo Peraza, explains his position as follows:

In January 1994 the Mexican government faced an alternative: either accept a formal declaration of war, followed by a real assault, or state that those who made this declaration are criminals.

It did not dare to do either of these things, since it was inhibited by its own responsibility, its own guilt in causing the conflict. This continued for a year, and

nothing could be done about it. Finally an Attorney General [PAN member Antonio Lozano Gracia], who shares no previous guilt regarding the Chiapas conflict, takes the path of legality, beginning to rebuild the state of law.

In its own way, the idea is a formidable one: a government whose own past conduct frightens it to the degree of paralysis, and an Attorney General who tosses the indecisiveness of two presidents into the garbage can, thereby providing the nation with a lesson in courage. The PAN, savior of the Republic. Without consulting Zedillo, who is asphyxiated by his past sins—among them having granted some credit to the "dissidents"—Lozano begins anew, on his own hook and due to his own guts, the reconstruction of the State of Law. Is there any point in explaining that Lozano took no initiative whatsoever and that his only role was to put into effect, in true McCarthyite spirit, the government's monumental mistake? Here party politics, the search for partisan profit from any and all situations, turns truly pathetic. Neither is it the case that the Zapatistas canceled the State of Law in Chiapas, which had been abolished long before. What did it was the conjunction of PRI politicians, cattle ranchers, landowners, judges and corrupt judicial police. In the face of all this the mere extermination of the EZLN, demanded by the pleiad headed by Fidel Velázquez [leader of the pro-government labor federation], becomes the least effective formula of all.

And the issue is complicated by the economic catastrophe which envelops everything and intensifies the climate of exasperation and injustice. Not that anything would be required to irritate the "authentic San Cristobalians," those members of "Good Society" (if they are members of any at all) who attacked Bishop Samuel Ruiz and the offices of his Diocese in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas. What we're dealing with here is anything but the sort of anti-clerical mobilizations seen in our historical past; instead these are practicing, even fanatical, Catholics, who put aside their age-old respect for the Church and insult one of its dignitaries, in the certainty that they are doing the right thing. And on the following day they receive approbation for their actions in the statements of those bishops who denigrate Samuel Ruiz with all political and theological fury.

Meanwhile, broad sectors of society demand that peace talks be started up again. The financial catastrophe is growing; the hard-liners are smiling, convinced that the most important thing is to liquidate civil society. As for the economy, they assure us, the strong will survive and that is what's most important ❧

To the public at large

We are living through crucial days. On top of the armed conflict in Chiapas we are witnessing the oscillations of our currency, following its devaluation, as well as the revival of political antagonisms and rancors. The financial crisis may become a genuine economic crisis which, in turn, could lead to disaster. For these reasons we take a grave view of the verbal violence used by writers and journalists in the press. This violence resuscitates ideological chimeras—scarcely veiled by a democratic phraseology new to its authors—buried by the history of this *fin de siècle*. Their resurrection in Mexico is disquieting. A declamatory and declarative fever has taken hold of many spirits. This agitation disturbs minds, exacerbates passions, deepens differences and transforms debates into contests. We must lay down the inflammable weapons of rhetoric. We ask nobody to renounce the public expression of their ideas. We ask that discussion be rational and civilized. In the realm of politics a major step in this direction was taken with the signing of the Commitments for a National Political Accord. True, a pact of this kind would be impossible, as well as undesirable, among writers and journalists. What is neither impossible nor undesirable is the hope that reflection will lead us, without abandoning our convictions, to listen to others' views and respect them.

For the last fourteen months a part of the nation's territory was occupied by an armed group. The causes of the insurrection are complex, making up an inextricable tissue of good and bad reasons, legitimate demands and unacceptable calls, a passion for justice and irresponsible obstinacy. But we will not discuss the uprising's origins or motives. This matter has been debated for more than a year. We will limit ourselves to stressing that the prolongation of the conflict would cause immense losses to the nation and countless sufferings for our people. This would prevent, for many years, any possibility of all of us joining together to build a stable, prosperous and peaceful democracy. Thus it is urgent, after fourteen months of waiting, to begin negotiations which will bring peace to Chiapas once again, and tranquility to all Mexicans. For this reason we believe that the government's recent actions were legitimate. They have a double basis. The first is recovering the nation's sovereignty over a part of our territory; to accept the existence of two authorities and two sets of laws would have been the beginning of anarchy and dissolution of the Republic. The second: opening the path to negotiation. This second objective is inseparable from the first.

We share the concern of a broad range of groups regarding the conditions of poverty and injustice suffered by the Indians of Chiapas. The moral and historical foundations of their demands are clear and justified; they must be attended to resolutely and immediately. We also believe that the solution of the conflict must be sought through negotiations, which must begin as soon as possible. This requires a broad amnesty which includes the leaders of the EZLN. In this process the government must show both firmness and generosity.

Among the dissident group's demands, some are of a national character, which citizens of Chiapas have as much right to put forward as do all Mexicans. Nevertheless, such demands should not be resolved in the negotiations between the government and the EZLN. It is up to all Mexicans, and not one group in particular, to discuss and make decisions about them.

We call on the EZLN to put aside its belligerent attitude, to take a chance for peace and to replace armed violence with democratic political action. We are moved to make this appeal by our conscience as citizens, above and beyond parties and partisan banners. Civil society is plural and diverse by nature; no group has the right to proclaim itself the spokesman or representative of civil society. Our society is not a homogeneous totality. It never has been. It has not even suffered the rule of totalitarian tyrannies. Nobody can speak in the name of others, least of all writers and artists. Throughout history their voice has been singular and unique.

Octavio Paz, Jaime Sabines, Juan José Arreola, Juan Soriano, Edmundo O'Gorman, Enrique Florescano, Luis González y González, José Luis Cuevas, Soledad Loaeza, Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, Teodoro González de León, Salvador Elizondo, Alejandro Rossi, Adolfo Castañón, Fernando del Paso, Jean Meyer, Ricardo Pozas, Jaime Moreno Villarreal, Gastón García Cantú, Abraham Zabludowsky, José Luis Martínez, Ramón Xirau, Alberto Ruy Sánchez, Josué Sáenz, Manuel Felguérez, Marco Antonio Montes de Oca, Sergio Sarmiento, Luis Ignacio Helguera, Jorge Hernández Campos, Martha Robles, Víctor Manuel Mendiola, Víctor L. Urquidí, Luis González de Alba, Daniel Catán, Miguel Cervantes, José Iturriaga, Jorge F. Hernández, Beatriz de la Fuente, Juan María Alponete, Olbeth Hansberg, David Medina Portillo, José de la Colina, Guillermo Tovar de Teresa, Eduardo Lizalde, Federico Reyes Heróles, Aurelio Major, Fernando Pérez Correa, Julián Meza, Ikram Antaki, Christopher Domínguez, Manuel Ulacia, Sergio González Rodríguez, Juan José Doñán, Juan José Reyes, Nedda G. de Anhalt, Javier Aranda Luna, Aurelio Asiain, Emmanuel Carballo, Beatriz Espejo, Ulalume González de León, Héctor Vasconcelos.

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Politics on the razor's edge

Political power

The rapid loss of presidential power involves great opportunities as well as dangers. Politically, we are living on the razor's edge, which should lead us to act with great care and intelligence.

Political power—the ability of an individual or group to impose their will on others in public affairs—is something which can just as easily grow as diminish: it can be won or lost, create as well as destroy. All these possibilities are present in today's Mexico; whether they occur—and, if so, how—is a question affecting us all, since all of us will experience its effects.

The nerve center of power in our country is, of course, the institution of the presidency. This has been the case since 1935 under the regime of General Plutarco Elías Calles, known as the *Jefe Máximo* (Supreme Chief). The presidency concentrated so much power that it not only annulled the other formal powers—the legislature and judiciary—but also subordinated local governments and *de facto* powers to its will, since only those *cacicazgos* [the rule of traditional local bosses, known in Mexico as *caciques*] which unconditionally accepted presidential power could survive.

At the beginning of the second half of this century, the entirety of Mexico's real power structure could be summed up in a single term: the Presidency of the Republic. This embodies the essence of our authoritarianism. Dependent on this power were the great industrial, commercial and financial fortunes as well as the government and opposition parties, trade unions, the Church and the *ejidos* [semi-collective farms inherited from the Revolution]. The presidency, and it alone, decided who could or could not engage in politics. Living without presidential recognition was living in error—and sometimes in terror as well.

A weakening at the center

The omnipotent and omnipresent Mexican presidency was born within a predominantly rural society of semi-isolated communities, in which formal education was scarce and the dominant forces, ideas and interests were those that had arisen from the Mexican Revolution. This presidency

began to lose legitimacy—and power—as a result of society's evolution, the loss of the revolutionary legacy's vitality and the crisis of 1968, when it used the force of arms in the face of its loss of legitimacy. A long subsequent chain of economic failures, as well as the consolidation of opposition parties, made it increasingly difficult to keep the huge mechanism of presidential power intact.

The Salinas regime: rise and fall

Carlos Salinas personally felt the cold winds of the new anti-authoritarianism and sought a new way to reverse the loss presidential power. He thought he found it in the “neo-liberal” economics that were on the rise world-wide; in a close and positive relationship with the great industrial powers; in linking the national project with the interests of big domestic and international capital and the Church; and reaching a mutually beneficial agreement with that part of the opposition which supported his economic plans—the National Action Party (PAN). Finally, taking this path also meant weakening the old mechanisms and interests which in years past had served the presidency in general: government-sector enterprises as well as the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and its worker, peasant and middle-class corporations.¹

In the end the Salinas regime was unable to maintain and transmit to its successor the power it had so recently recovered for the presidency. It turned out that Salinas excessively personalized this presidential domain and was unwilling or unable to turn it over to the institution or the system themselves. The international financial community and media had praised and legitimized Carlos Salinas—the young Harvard technocrat and modernizer—but not the old authoritarian Mexican presidency or the PRI's monopoly on elected posts. Both had become outdated in a period marked by the destruction of totalitarian and authoritarian regimes.

¹ The PRI contains three formal “sectors,” made up of trade-union, peasant and “popular” (i.e., middle-class) organizations; this structure is characteristic of the *corporatist* system of Mexican politics that took root with the “institutionalization” of the Revolution. (Editor's note.)

Moreover, at the end of Salinas' six-year term the Chiapas rising showed the new political and economic arrangement's inability to provide an adequate, institutional response to the demands of those Mexicans whom the presidency, in its public statements, had claimed to take very much into account—the poor, the disadvantaged, the Indian communities—and for whom the administration's most important social program had been built: the National Solidarity Program (with an average annual budget of 2.5 billion dollars).

Finally, the unsolved assassinations of the candidate and secretary general of the president's own party showed that someone had successfully defied his power.

Zedillo faces an accelerating process

Thus, Ernesto Zedillo inherited a monumental economic crisis and a presidency which had deteriorated, worn out by time as a result of its anachronistic character, its historical failures and, finally, the intensive use Carlos Salinas made of it for his own personal benefit.

The sudden and dramatic crisis of the Mexican "neo-liberal" economic model wound up dulling the shine of what was once the gilded technocracy—the core of "Salinas-ism"—of which the president himself was part. In fact the Salinas economic model, while generating a fiscal surplus [*superávit* in Spanish], ran a super-deficit on the foreign level. It was extraordinarily beneficial for a very few, but showed no mercy to the many. It was very effective at destroying low-productivity jobs but totally incapable of generating new ones in significant quantities.

The danger

The all-powerful presidency has already come to an end, but few of us would be served if we went to the other extreme: an impotent, useless presidency. The presidency's loss of power does not necessarily imply that what it lost will be gained by the institutions every modern democracy requires: parties, Congress, non-governmental organizations, trade unions, state and municipal governments, etc.

What the case of Tabasco, as it has evolved over recent days,² has shown us is that the power lost by the presidency can be gained by regional groups which are just as anti-democratic as the presidency itself, or even more so. If the revolt of the governors takes root, democracy will have gained nothing and we will return to the kind of *cacique*-ridden Mexico that existed in the 19th century.

² When central PRI authorities told their Tabasco subalterns to recognize the loss of a recent state election, the provincial party organization went into revolt, even threatening that the state might "secede" from Mexico. (Editor's note.)

There are other forces, as sinister as the "autonomous" governors, who can take advantage of this loss of power. To begin with, the United States, whose Congress will be making decisions that should rightfully be made by us. The seven great cartels and the almost ninety regional and local drug-trafficking rings that operate in Mexico. There are also the government organizations themselves which, if uncontrolled, can go even further afield—the police, bureaucracy, army, etc.

Finally, there is the possibility that part of the power lost by the great center of the system might not be gained by any person or group—that it simply dissipate, vaporize. That would lead to a victory of the law of the jungle.

We must overcome the politics of the razor's edge; we must put an end to the authoritarian presidency without destroying the presidency *per se*. We need an executive which is both the promoter and result of an authentic and effective national accord. One which allows the president to mobilize society positively and transforms collective frustration into constructive energy. Can the technocrat Zedillo become a statesman? ❧

Lorenzo Meyer

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The peso problem

*Declan Hayes **

In 1994, Mexico was characterized by a series of political crises which, in December, culminated in the massive devaluation of the nation's currency, the peso. The simmering dispute in Chiapas, the assassinations of two of the nation's leading politicians and the kidnapping of a number of leading entrepreneurs all helped to undermine the stability of the currency which began 1994 at the rate of 3.15 to the U.S. dollar and closed the year at a worrying 6 to the dollar.

Although government policies in the twilight days of the Salinas regime have also been cited as a factor further contributing to the peso's slide, retrospective recriminations will not solve the problems the Mexican peso, economy and people will face in the months ahead. Confidence, once shattered, is hard to restore, and the Zedillo government must not be deflected by the faults, real or imagined, of former regimes. Instead it must turn its collective mind to the political and economic problems which this financial crisis begets.

The results of the peso devaluation have been no less catastrophic than the devaluation itself. In an effort to stop further funds fleeing Mexico, short-term interest rates sky-rocketed to as high as 60 percent. These high interest rates are bad, not only for local businessmen who need ready access to cheap finance so as to function effectively in today's competitive global village, but also for mortgages, which form the microeconomic backbone of most developed economies. More than anything else, high interest rates can, as they have in the past, delay the possibility of economic recovery for years, thereby accentuating economic and political instability. The downgrading of Mexican debt will, by forcing Mexican borrowers to pay even higher interest rates on their loans, make the road to recovery even harder.

These effects will be felt most severely among Mexico's hard-pressed middle class and small business communities, whose interest repayments on mortgages and car loans doubled in January 1995. Indeed, it is this group which will bear the brunt of the job losses the government's cutbacks will cause: in real terms their salaries are only 75 percent of what they were in 1982, when the "debt bomb" exploded.

Given this sector's centrality to the smooth working of a modern economy, Zedillo must increase his efforts to fulfill his election promise that the fruits of Mexico's recent economic growth will trickle down to those whose sacrifices made possible the impressive growth of recent years. The need for ongoing social stability dictates that these groups must, in the national interest, be protected from the worst ravages of the current crisis.

Further, some of the supposed advantages of devaluation might turn out to be dangerous disadvantages. For example, as a result of the peso's slide, Mexican exports to the U.S. should, other things being equal, rise. But other things are far from equal in the U.S. where, for example, Mexican textiles are in direct competition with products from North Carolina, a state whose powerful anti-NAFTA Senator Jesse Helms recently castigated the Mexican government over the devaluation. Price advantages can, in other words, bring political retaliation and, if the peso slides much further, Helms could, in an effort to protect North Carolina's textile industry, garner support from other senators whose constituents' jobs are similarly threatened by a depressed peso.

To take one other example of the paradoxical effects of devaluation: Mexican exports, such as cars, dependent as they are on high-cost imported components, will gain little if anything from the peso's fall. Job losses will almost certainly occur in the Mexican automotive industry—thereby helping to prolong the coming recession.

Thus, though the peso devaluation poses many formidable problems for the Zedillo government, the primary challenge is the loss of confidence, epitomized by the negative comments of Jesse Helms, Ross Perot and others regarding the Mexican market. U.S. investors lost over US \$10 billion in Mexico in the dying days of December 1994, and the downgrading of Mexican debt by Duff and Phelps, Salomon's, Morgan's and other credit-rating organizations indicates that the international financial community believes the value of Mexican investments could further vaporize in the short term.

A brief exposition of their exposure to the Mexican peso will explain both their fears and the fears of the Mexican government that they might abandon the country for potentially greener pastures elsewhere. To take but one example: Fidelity Investment, the giant mutual funds company, invested over US \$100 million in Mexican

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securities, a giant sum which is dwarfed by the over US \$2 billion exposure of Alliance Capital Management. Indeed Finance Minister Ortiz, during his hectic recent visit to New York, made a special effort to reassure Alliance Capital that their almost US \$1 billion in losses can, in time, be recouped.

The difficulty of Ortiz' task can be further appreciated when we consider how peso-linked structured debt notes have complicated the crisis. These notes, which are now coming to maturity, were bought two years ago when the peso was stable, to lock in the high yields of 18 percent and more to be had at that time on Mexican treasury bills (Cetes). Most of these Cetes were bought on margins of 25 percent or less and the sellers are now demanding the remaining 75 percent, thus putting more pressure not only on buyers and the beleaguered peso but also on Ortiz in his difficult job of restoring confidence in Mexico.

It is therefore in the immediate interest of the Mexican government to convince these investors that this setback in the values of both the peso and the Mexican Stock Exchange is only a once-off correction. The credit lines which Mexico's NAFTA partners and the European Union countries have extended, together with the Agreement for Unity to Overcome the Economic Emergency which the government has secured with local business and trade-union leaders, have gone some way to restoring the confidence of the international investment community: the influential Templeton Fund is already urging their clients to buy Telmex and other major Mexican stocks. Reducing public spending, freezing minimum wages and taking US \$18 billion in foreign loans all helped prevent the peso from sliding into free fall.

So too did the line of credit which the government extended to domestic banks, which themselves are exposed to several billion dollars of short-term debt. While, thanks to the way it structured its currency positions prior to the devaluation, Banca Serfin will show a modest profit for the devaluation period, most of its competitors will show substantial losses. A run on these banks could prove almost fatal to the government, whose quick action in extending lines of credit to the banks and in temporarily loosening their prudential guide-lines (by allowing the banks to count the loans as capital, thus allowing them to borrow more from other sources) will most likely keep these institutions solvent for as long as the crisis lasts.

However, because confidence cannot be legislated, these measures are not enough to ensure that the crisis—which President Clinton has described as a “short-term liquidity problem”—does not become a financial flash flood wiping away the benefits a decade of economic stability has bequeathed to Mexico. During the Salinas regime alone, inflation was reduced from a crippling 157 percent to a manageable 10 percent, a magnificent achievement for a

country which is generally credited with triggering the default crisis of the 1980s.

As this issue goes to press, the current Mexican government is facing its first liquidity test: whether it can meet the interest payments on Cetes, its peso-denominated short-term bills. Given that the government has US \$70 billion in short-term debt, the magnitude of its interest rate bill is apparent. Government confidence, given the domestic and international assistance which has been forthcoming, will most likely survive this initial run on funds. However, other challenges will quickly follow.

Money is a coward and, once it runs away, only bold measures will induce the confidence necessary to entice it back. The Zedillo government must therefore urgently institute further reforms to restore the confidence not only of overseas investors but of local Mexican investors as well.

Most importantly, the Mexican peso must, like the Canadian dollar, be allowed to float freely so that it finds its own level in the market place, not an artificial one consistent with the policies of the government of the day on any particular day of trading. If, for example, the British and French governments could not (and now do not care to) defend their respective EMU-pegged currencies against deep-pocketed speculators such as George Soros (whose speculations are credited with knocking the once-mighty British pound sterling out of the EMU ambit), it is certainly ill-advised for the Mexican government to blindly peg the peso to the dollar at the arbitrarily suggested rate of 4.5 to the dollar, and thereby risk losing the (repayable) credit line which has been extended to it.

The U.S. is a world economic power whose currency therefore reacts to world events. Mexico, on the other hand, is a regional economic power, whose currency therefore moves to the beat of a different drum: the pace of economic activity in the Americas. To peg one to the other can only be described as a mismatch destined only for calamitous divorce. The peso, like the other NAFTA currencies, must therefore find its own sustainable level in the market place.

Faith in Mexico as a financial safe haven must be restored to Mexicans who, for well over a decade, have felt it expedient to keep the bulk of their financial assets abroad. To reverse the direction of this cash flow, Mexican financial institutions must be further liberalized and allowed to develop, free from Central Bank attempts to regulate interest rates, the U.S. dollar-denominated products these investors require.

In this regard, Finance Minister Ortiz' plans to introduce a futures market in pesos seem ill-advised for at least two reasons. Besides the fact that the peso is too volatile to allow such a market to function properly, peso-denominated paper cannot hope to reverse this decade-old trend, precisely because it is the fear of a falling peso which most concerns those locals who squirrel away their savings overseas.

Because investors would regard a futures peso-hedging facility as an inferior product to dollars and the other hedging facilities currently available, it is doubtful that the proposed futures market could garner the required depth of funds to enable it to function effectively. It would make more sense for the government to encourage Mexican institutions to develop other hedging products, such as the redeemable gold bars which the Union Bank of Switzerland has recently introduced to the market. Such innovative products would allow investors to keep their funds, free from a fear of further peso devaluations, in Mexico to the benefit both of themselves and of Mexican banks, which would thereby have more and cheaper funds at their disposal.

Indeed, as pointed out in *Voices of Mexico* 30, solving the savings problem is central to solving these wider economic problems. As long as the propensity of Mexicans to invest in their own country remains significantly less than that of the Asians—Mexico's main competitors for funds seeking relatively high returns in the world's major emerging markets—financial instability will remain endemic in Mexico.

Until Mexicans can be induced to invest over longer time horizons in their own country, it will remain much

more difficult for Mexico to attract long-term finance from overseas than it will be for Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan and the other emerging power-houses of the Far East. For these and other related reasons discussed in *Voices of Mexico* 30, the government must prioritize the savings problem.

The devaluation and change in credit ratings have also substantially increased the cost of capital to major government institutions, including Pemex and CFE, respectively the government's monopoly petroleum and electricity companies. These increased costs once again raise the question of Pemex's ownership status.

The issue of Pemex privatization is a major talking point at the moment. Finance Minister Guillermo Ortiz favors greater privatization and Energy Secretary Ignacio Pichardo is opposed to further liberalization. Given Pemex's sheer size—106,000 employees, annual profits of US \$20 billion and reserves worth over US \$750 billion, and that it now makes up only 15 percent of total exports (as opposed to over 60 percent in 1982)—the government, faced with greater macroeconomic problems, will have to give further consideration to its ownership status.

Although Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution specifically states that natural resources, petroleum included, are the property of the state, the government has of late tended to interpret this provision narrowly. Lease-back arrangements, which some of the former Soviet republics have used with success, might be one vehicle to retain most of Pemex's profits in public hands while allowing private funds to underwrite the vast investments Pemex needs to increase profitability to the level of the world's other major oil companies.

The devaluation has thus presented the Zedillo government with acute challenges which demand bold but palatable remedies. The government's dilemma is accentuated by Mexico's role as a financial barometer for all of Latin America. Falling Mexican markets produced a domino effect throughout the whole continent, the important markets of Brazil and Argentina in particular. However, Zedillo has an extremely able cabinet and, if collectively they can grasp the economic and political nettles manifested in free-falling markets, Mexico can benefit by building its future on increasingly solid foundations.

Its NAFTA partners, and the government's local business and union partners, have given it the required vote of confidence. The markets will, much quicker than history's textbooks, decide if those votes were well-placed or misplaced. So far, the indications, tentative though they are, are positive; if they continue that way, history will record the Zedillo era as the one which finally brought Mexicans their deserved economic rewards for the austerities of the past **M**



Siglo Veintiuno Editores

Antropología

CRISTALES Y OBSIDIANA PREHISPÁNICOS

coordinado por Mari Carmen SERRA PUCHE y Felipe SOLÍS OLGUÍN
con fotografías de Michel ZABÉ

Junto al barro y la piedra, el oro y las plumas, la obsidiana ocupa un lugar de honor, aunque poco estudiado, en el arte, la ornamentística, la utilería doméstica, la manufactura de armas y las ceremonias rituales. Este bellissimo libro colma este vacío con sus meticulosos estudios (yacimientos, extracción, intercambios, útiles y ornamentos) y con el espléndido despliegue a todo color de las fotografías de Michel Zabé. Ciencia histórica y arte reunidos en un excelente alarde editorial

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Chicano cinema: a panoramic view

David R. Maciel*

The origins and development of an alternative cinema

Chicano narrative cinema is a very recent development in the business of movie-making in the United States, an industry that originated almost a century ago. Creatively self-determined, full-length narrative features—written, directed or produced by Chicanos—first received wide theatrical distribution as late as the 1980s.

As an artistic body of work, Chicano narrative cinema, defined as films with substantial artistic control by Chicanos, debuted only a few years earlier, in the

mid-seventies. Since then, it continues to evolve and develop aesthetically through increasingly compelling stories, strong characterization, varied genres and original and innovative narrative styles. Its evolution in filmic focus and style, which covers its less than 20-year history, reflects the times in which the works were produced and mirrors an implied audience and community posture.

The small handful of male Chicano directors, writers and producers is largely perceived by the industry as a marginal creative community with high-risk, unmarketable product. In fact, even today, Chicanos are the most under-represented ethnic group in influential positions which

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L.A. deportation raid in the 1930s (scene from *Break of Dawn*).

exert artistic control or foster cinema projects.¹ Not surprisingly, as twice a minority, Chicana filmmakers have been less successful at establishing themselves as key creative players in feature-length narrative cinema than their male counterparts.²

Thematically, Chicano narrative films of the 1970s and 1980s have shared certain trends. Historical revision of key events in the Chicano experience has predominated. Mexican/Latino immigration to the U.S. is a key cinematic issue. Another major source of inspiration for filmmakers has been the rich literary expressions of recent Chicano/a writers. Drama and music have also been important elements in Chicano cinema.

Most Chicano narrative cinema to date has been produced as independent films, outside major Hollywood studios: *Alambrista*, *Once in a Lifetime*, *El Norte*, *Break of Dawn*, *El Mariachi*, and *Tierra*. In a selected number of cases, such as *El Norte*, *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortés*, and *El Mariachi*, corporate studios eventually incorporated them in their film distribution packages. A few Chicano cinematic productions were produced from the onset by a leading studio (*Zoot Suit*, *Born in East L.A.*, *La Bamba*, and *American Me*); or were realized, as in the case of *Stand and Deliver*, as a television production sponsored by PBS. Only *Raíces de Sangre* (Roots of Blood) was a Mexican state-produced Chicano film.

Full-length narrative features by Chicanos had a peculiar beginning. An enigmatic and unconventional young man from San Antonio, Efraín Gutiérrez, wrote, co-produced, starred in, and directed a dark trilogy of the Chicano experience: *Please Don't Bury Me Alive*, *Chicano Love is Forever*, *Junkie/Tecato Run*.³ Originally shot in 16mm and later blown up to 35mm, these movies narrate stories of Chicano youth on the fringes of society, facing a life that offers only despair, alienation, conflict and solitude. In Gutiérrez's films, the characters and narrative discourse attempt to construct a powerful individual—perhaps autobiographical—statement regarding those Chicanos/as who either self-destruct or are crushed by the institutions and society around them.

This trilogy contains similar characteristics. Aesthetically, these films were amateurish and experimental. In terms of distribution, the trilogy was shown mostly in Texas in the late 1970s. It was briefly shown in Mexico when the films were picked up by the Mexican distributor

Continental Films. By the early 1980s, however, the three features, along with the director, disappeared from sight.

In 1976, Jesús Salvador Treviño received an invitation from the Mexican government film producing company, CONACINE, to write, cast, and direct his script, *Raíces de Sangre*. He reflects on this time: "I had to go to Mexico, although I'm an American citizen, to direct my first feature. I found more sympathetic ears than here."⁴ Although the film was entirely produced and distributed by Mexican governmental agencies, over half of the cast, as well as the script and the direction, were Chicano. The overly ambitious plot focuses upon community and labor organizing against the *maquiladoras* (in-bond industries), which divide and exploit the Mexican-origin communities on both sides of the border.⁵

Jesús Salvador Treviño followed his earlier directorial debut with a pilot short film, *Seguín*. This movie was the initial episode of a projected historical epic of ten parts dealing with the Chicano community from the 19th century to the present. In Treviño's reconstruction of history, Juan Nepomuceno Seguín exemplifies a tragic hero who through naïveté and zeal cooperates with Anglo colonists in the struggle for separatism against Mexican President Antonio López de Santa Anna. As an analogy of the fate of other Chicanos in Texas and elsewhere, Seguín, after exhausting his usefulness to the Anglo conquerors of Texas, is marginalized and ultimately becomes a foreigner in his native land. In self-exile Seguín goes to Mexico and, subsequently, takes up arms for the Mexican cause against the North American invasion of 1846. Finally, years after the annexation of the Southwest by the U.S., Juan Nepomuceno Seguín is "pardoned" by the American government and allowed to live out his last years in his beloved Texas.

Conversely, *Alambrista* (1979), directed by Robert Young, was a landmark film in the evolution of Chicano cinema. This sensitive feature relates the odyssey of a Mexican undocumented worker, Roberto, from his native village in rural Mexico to the agricultural fields of California. During Roberto's misadventures, he realizes the constant exploitive conditions faced by undocumented workers in the U.S. Progressively, he is overtaken by feelings of alienation and hopelessness which lead him to voluntarily turn himself in to the authorities so they can deport him to Mexico.⁶

This movie is one of those rare films in which artistic quality and social commentary are superbly linked.⁷ The script and performances achieve their purpose in every detail, capturing both the human emotions as well as the material

¹ Chon A. Noriega, ed., *Chicanos and Film. Essays on Chicano Representation and Resistance*. New York, 1992, pp. 159-188.

² Rosa Linda Fregoso's *The Bronze Screen* (Minneapolis, 1993) is a most authoritative discussion of the participation and contribution of Chicanas in film.

³ Gregg Barrios, "Efraín Gutiérrez y el nuevo cine chicano," *La Opinión*, August 18, 1985. This is one of the few articles on the cinematic works of Efraín Gutiérrez.

⁴ Interview with Jesús Salvador Treviño, Los Angeles, June 12, 1990.

⁵ Jim Miller, "Chicano Cinema: An Interview with Jesús Salvador Treviño," *Cineaste* VIII, 1978, and Jesús Salvador Treviño, "Raíces de Sangre. First Feature Film Directed by a Chicano," *Somos*, June-July 1978, are two informative published interviews with Treviño.

⁶ *Variety*, July 14, 1978.

⁷ Katherine Díaz, "Luis Valdez, The Making of *Zoot Suit*," *Caminos*, September 1981.



Oscar Chávez as Pedro J. González in *Break of Dawn*.

circumstances that characterize the migratory experience. The film dialogue is spoken in both English and Spanish (with appropriate subtitles), which lends great authenticity. The docu-drama format has seldom been better employed in a feature film.

The next crucial film in Chicano narrative cinema was Luis Valdez's *Zoot Suit*. This movie, adapted from his successful play of the same name, recounts one of the most dramatic episodes in Chicano/a history: the Sleepy Lagoon incident in Los Angeles in the early 1940s.⁸ During those years, Chicano youth expressed their cultural individuality by a dress mode known as the zoot suit. The dominant society, particularly members of the police and armed forces, found such expressive behavior questionable and alien to their conception of the "American way of life." Chicano zoot suiters were persecuted and arrested at will. An incident of an unsolved killing in a Chicano neighborhood triggered massive arrests and the conviction of twenty-five zoot suiter youths in a celebrated trial that was characterized by a total disregard for due process of law.

This film attempts with success to combine theatrical and filmic techniques. *Zoot Suit* recreates the ambiance of the period and portrays a segment of the Chicano community in the 1940s. The principal male characters are well-developed and characterized, especially "El Pachuco," played with true inspiration by Edward James Olmos. The energy of the choreography and the musical score are exceptional. As a political statement and an artistic film, *Zoot Suit* is certainly one of the landmark achievements of Chicano cinema.

In this phase of Chicano narrative cinema, the tradition of combining artistic qualities with social and political commentary was the dominant one. Representative of this filmic current is *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortés* (1981), directed by Robert Young and with Edward James Olmos in the starring role.⁹ The feature narrates the tragic circumstance by which the

title character became a popular Chicano hero and a symbol of the plight of Mexicans in south Texas.¹⁰ The performances, photography, and direction merit special recognition. The story and the characters vividly reconstruct a society characterized by class interests and racial inequalities. As with other films by Robert Young, the characters never fall into stereotypes, but reveal the full complexity of human nature.¹¹ In a well-performed role, Edward James Olmos moved one step closer to becoming, for now, the one bona fide Chicano screen star.

Two years later, director and screenwriter Gregory Nava debuted with *El Norte* (1983). This independent film, originally produced and planned for the PBS series "American Playhouse," became one of the most successful independent films of recent times. *El Norte* depicts the complex and often tragic drama of Central American immigration to the United States. The film has been acclaimed for its creative photography, inspiring musical score, careful direction, and overall outstanding acting performances, particularly by two leading stars, Zaide Silvia Gutiérrez and David Villalpando, who debuted in this feature.¹² The dialogue is maintained in the native languages, Spanish or Maya, adding realism to the story. Among North American critics and audiences, the film received high praise and significant economic success.

Born in East L.A. (1985) once again addresses the theme of immigration, but does so from a strikingly original perspective. Combining parody with social satire, director, writer and star Cheech Marin takes direct aim at various U.S. and Mexican institutions, character types and perceptions. As the story unfolds Rudy Robles, played by Cheech Marin, accidentally gets caught in an INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) raid, and unable to prove his legal citizenship, is deported to Tijuana, Mexico. Rudy, who cannot speak Spanish, finds himself experiencing the tribulations of Mexican immigrants in a foreign country. After a series of mishaps while attempting to cross to the U.S., he begins to adapt to border circumstance. The film closes with hundreds of undocumented immigrants led by the protagonist overrunning the Border Patrol, and crossing into the U.S. with the song "Coming to America" as background music.

As *Born in East L.A.* was the first narrative comedy of Chicano cinema, it enjoyed critical acclaim and respectable box-office success.¹³ This movie was the recipient of first prize at the Havana Film Festival of 1988 because of its many artistic merits.

⁸ Carey McWilliams, *North from Mexico*, pp. 227-231.

⁹ Michael Healy, "Gregorio Cortés, Superbly Crafted Small Film," *Denver Post*, August 31, 1984.

¹⁰ See Américo Paredes, *With the Pistol in His Hands* (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1958), which forms the basis of the narrative story of the film.

¹¹ "Edward James Olmos and Robert Young with 21 Reasons Why You Should See *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortés*," *Caminos*, September 1982.

¹² Vincent Canby, "El Norte: A Fine Movie Fueled by Injustice," *New York Times*, January 22, 1984; Janet Maslin, "Film: *El Norte* Promised Land for Guatemalans," *New York Times*, January 11, 1984.

¹³ Chon Noriega, "Cafe Orale: Narrative Structure in *Born in East L.A.*," *Tonantzin* (San Antonio, Texas), February 1991.

Two important and very diverse Chicano narrative films were exhibited in 1987: *Break of Dawn* and *La Bamba*. *Break of Dawn*, written and directed by Isaac Aronstein and produced by Jude Eberhard, is based upon the life of Pedro J. González, the first Spanish-language radio celebrity in the U.S. in the late 1920s. He also became a political and community activist on behalf of the rights of the Mexican-origin population during the decade of the 1930s. As a consequence of his struggles on behalf of his people, González fell victim to injustice. He was falsely accused of rape, and, ultimately, imprisoned for six years in San Quentin. The film masterfully traces all these events and concludes with his release from prison.

The script of *Break of Dawn* clearly reveals a deep sympathy and understanding of the story and the events. History and film are seldom combined with such outstanding results. This film is an important and creative production which has been the recipient of well-deserved praise.¹⁴ However, the lack of an adequate production budget, as well as the fact that no major U.S. studio distributed it, seriously limited its audience and popularity. This fact shows just how difficult is the producer's job of selling a Chicano-theme film with a Mexican-origin cast to decision-makers at the studios and networks who are culturally unaware of, or basically uninterested in, the Chicano experience.

La Bamba is a major chapter in the evolution of Chicano narrative cinema. This impressive box-office and critical success greatly enhanced the directorial career of Luis Valdez.¹⁵ The film, more than any other Chicano film to date, carried an ethnic theme to receptive audiences within the U.S. and in foreign countries. The linear narration of *La Bamba* traces the rise of Ricardo Valenzuela (alias Richie Valens) in his quest to become a rock-and-roll celebrity. His short-lived stardom came to a tragic end when an airplane accident took his very promising life. The film, though, is much more complex than a musical biography. On one level, the central character is polarized with the conventional characterization of his brother portrayed as his "antithesis." Richie Valens embodies the "perfect" son, talented, loyal, responsible and caring. Conversely, the other son (well acted by Esai Morales) is portrayed as selfish, violent, *macho*, irresponsible, jealous and self-destructive.

On an artistic level, *La Bamba* is a notable film. Luis Valdez is unquestionably a creative talent who has mastered well the tasks and challenges of directing commercial cinema. The combination of a success story, a rock-and-roll fable, the musical score performed by Los Lobos, and a sympathetic hero made for a sure winner.

The inspiring *Stand and Deliver* (1988) continued the effective portrayals of real-life heroic figures by Edward

James Olmos. On an elementary level, the film narrates the efforts and tribulations of mentor/math teacher Jaime Escalante in bringing about social change through education for Chicano youth. Yet on a deeper perspective, *Stand and Deliver* pays homage to the triumph of the spirit and the will to struggle against discrimination, indifference and fatalism. This movie achieved a modest box-office success, overall high acclaim, and an Oscar nomination for Edward James Olmos for best performance by an actor.¹⁶

The two-fold success of this body of narrative cinema, financially and artistically, brought about the expectation that the so-called "Decade of the Hispanic" might resonate in the film industry. Chicano filmmakers anticipated that major production companies would now acknowledge the significantly large audience that responded well to Latino themes and stars. Therefore, investment in such new filmic projects would be expedient. Yet they were wrong. Mainstream Hollywood continued its previous policy on Chicanos, stereotyped them—usually as villains or prostitutes—or outright neglected them.

Various years passed for the next narrative feature, *American Me* (1992), to premiere. This individualistic effort by Edward James Olmos, who served as director, co-screenwriter, coproducer and star, is an intense and disturbing portrayal of Chicano gang/prison life. In this nihilistic character study, Olmos attempted a didactic, anti-crime social message for current and future Chicano youths.¹⁷ The morality tale fictionalizes the rise and fall of the so-called Mexican prison mafia. The odyssey begins with the brutal violence directed at Chicanos in the Zoot Suit riots and continues to the very end.

The film conveys a message of hopelessness about breaking the cycle of violence and revenge. Although *American Me* did not gain the economic remuneration it expected, critics and viewers applauded its courage, artistic experimentation and strength of discursive narrative.

The Waterdance (1992), written and codirected by Neal Jiménez, represents the advent of a second generation of Chicano filmmakers. Unlike the previous Chicano Movement generation, in which directors self-imposed the mandate to emphasize political issues, this later generation displays clear differences with the past. Attuned to a more general audience acceptance and wider-interest themes, these most recent filmmakers are striving to merge Chicano topics and/or characters with mainstream cinematic appeal.

With a great deal of sensitivity, *The Waterdance*¹⁸ focuses upon character studies of three paraplegic men.

¹⁴ David R. Maciel, "Cine chicano: Entrevista con Isaac Aronstein," *Dicine* (Mexico City), May 1989.

¹⁵ Susana Cato, "El cine chicano impone su imagen en la pantalla norteamericana," *Proceso*, September 19, 1987.

¹⁶ Victor Valle, "The Latino Wave," *Los Angeles Times*, April 2, 1988.

¹⁷ Nelson Caro's "Entrevista con Edward James Olmos," *Dicine*, November 1992, is an insightful view of Olmos' stated purpose and design of *American Me*.

¹⁸ The exact significance of the title apparently alludes to "the miraculous self-assurance of these paraplegics if they are to survive and keep their sanity: it is like dancing on water." Vincent Canby, "Heroism and Humor as Paraplegics Learn," *New York Times*, May 13, 1992.

The movie narrates its story through the interaction of the three main characters with each other and their plight. Unlike other films that deal with physical disabilities, *The Waterdance* approaches this issue with compassion, humor, complexity and optimism. In large part autobiographical, the plot revolves around the aftermath of a paralyzing accident suffered by an aspiring young Chicano writer. Ethnicity is subtly and effectively woven into a broader universal theme of friendship, love, intimacy, despair and ultimate hope. Strong character development and an unusually well-written dialogue are at the core of the film. A solid direction and masterful acting by the entire cast make for the very impressive directorial debut of Neal Jiménez.¹⁹

A much different production is the impressive debut feature *El Mariachi* by Robert Rodríguez. This movie is an action adventure story of a lone *mariachi*, who is falsely mistaken for an infamous hit man, since both wear black and carry a guitar case. The well-narrated story has all the

ingredients of the best action genre: continuous action, romance, humor, well-defined characters and crisp dialogue. The narrative never falters and more than delivers all its objectives.

A notable aspect of *El Mariachi* is that the film was a total one-person show, originally produced with a budget of merely 7,000 dollars. Director Rodríguez was also the scriptwriter, cinematographer, sound person, editor and sole producer. Regarding his movie, Rodríguez stated that: "I shot every scene in one take.... I just fed the actors the line and moved on...."²⁰ Entirely spoken in Spanish and set along the border (in Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila and Del Río, Texas), *El Mariachi* is one of the most remarkable debuts by a Chicano director.

La Carpa (The Tent, 1993), a one-hour movie directed by Carlos Avila and produced for PBS broadcast on "American Playhouse," is one of the most current Chicano narrative films. Interestingly, all the Chicano

¹⁹ Brian D. Johnson, "Redefining Manhood," *Maclean's*, June 8, 1992.

²⁰ Terrence Rafferty, "Have Guitar Will Travel?," *The New Yorker*, February 22, 1993.



La Bamba is a major chapter in the evolution of chicano narrative cinema. Lou Diamond Philips played the role of rock-and-roll celebrity Richie Valens.

characters speak their dialogue in Spanish. Set in Depression-era California, *La Carpa* is a bittersweet story of a young, shy, hard-working Mexican field laborer whose life is transformed when a raucous, ragged traveling “carpa” troupe comes to town. As a very subtle form of social history, the film portrays *la carpa* as a unique mediating force for exploring the political and social problems experienced by small rural communities of that era.

It took Luis Valdez over a decade to direct a film again. In 1994, he teamed up with producer Moctezuma Esparza and media entrepreneur Ted Turner to film a contemporary remake of the classic western character, *The Cisco Kid*. This version has Jimmy Smits (the Cisco Kid) and Cheech Marín (Pancho) caught up in Mexico fighting on the side of President Benito Juárez against French imperialism. This light-hearted action comedy succeeds on a purely entertainment level as a movie made for television.

Tierra (The Earth, 1994), directed by Severo Pérez, is the most recent Chicano film. It is faithfully based upon the classic novel, *Y no se lo tragó la tierra* (...And the Earth Did Not Swallow Him Up) by Tomás Rivera. The story is told through the eyes and experiences of the son of the protagonist family. It recounts the exploitive working conditions and lives of Chicano/a agricultural laborers in California. The film succeeds on the level of powerfully capturing the hardships and meager existence of the working-class Chicano/a community prior to the Chicano Movement years. This well-intentioned production, though, falls somewhat flat in its narration. The film suffers from too rigid a tone in its narrative structure. The technique of combining the narration with events on screen, as they unfold, is counterproductive, and proves more distracting than creative. In addition, the performances of the protagonists are quite uneven. A few are excellent, particularly that of Rose Portillo as the lead, as well as some secondary characters, but others are uninspiring.

Future perspectives

Clearly, Chicano/a filmmakers have already achieved modest commercial success, and have contributed significant cinematic productions. Recently, a second generation of Chicano film directors has begun to make strides in breaking the impasse. At the same time, veterans are building on past experiences and accomplishments to seek alternative directions.

Yet the future of Chicanos/as in cinema is uncertain, at best. It would seem that when Chicanos/as do appear on screen, the portrayals continue to abide by past trends in conveying a one-dimensional aspect of the Chicano experience in film: crime and drugs.

The major studios still do not believe in the economic viability of Chicano multi-theme programs. Unlike the recent Black filmmaking flowering and the awakening of

Native American themes, no such interest in Chicano themes or directors has been manifested by Hollywood. Even when opportunities are occasionally offered to Chicano directors by Hollywood, this usually involves their surrendering all artistic control and filming the project as dictated by others.

In addition, the “catch-22” of major Hollywood studio financial backing is the casting hurdle, for if a producer packages a good script with a proven, creative director, he will invariably want stars to complete the package. At present, there are few established Chicano/a stars.

To a large degree, Chicano narrative cinema to date has been produced independently, and this continues to be the case. In order to tell their own stories without submitting to Hollywood industrial whims, Chicanos/as have had to turn outside of the mainstream for production resources and exhibition channels. The problem with that model is that if Chicano/a filmmakers only pursue the independent route, they will be limited in budget, exhibition and distribution opportunities for their productions. To significantly improve the status of Chicanos/as in cinema, it is evident that several changes within the industry must occur:

1. A much larger number of Chicanos must establish themselves as key creative players—screenwriters, producers, directors—and decision-makers at the major studios and networks.
2. Compelling Chicano/a stories will not be told until a more significant number of genuine producers can emerge. They need to be well-versed in the business of development, packaging, financing, deal-making, production, post-production, distribution, promotion and marketing. Currently, far more Chicana/o directors and writers (albeit underemployed) exist than producers.
3. It will be vital to pursue more aggressively the distribution of Chicano/a films. The art and university circuit as well as local television stations might offer important outlets.
4. In addition, other possibilities for Chicano/a films might exist for exhibition with the growing cable television networks. Since these recently-created national cable stations are striving to break new ground and supersede existing major networks, some could be interested in employing a Chicano thematic agenda as one alternative direction in programming. For instance, HBO and TBS have already expressed interest, and have funded Chicano theme productions.

One hopes, then, that these possibilities will translate into more visibility and influence for Chicanos/as in cinema. Perhaps in the not too distant future, Chicano media images will be determined to a major degree by Chicanos/as and not by outsiders. If that were to come about, Chicanos will finally cease to be the “convenient villain” or the perpetual “dark señorita” on the screen, and be the complex, dynamic and vibrant community that they are. ❧

Yucatan Atheneum Museum of Contemporary Art

*Miguel A. Madrid Jaime**

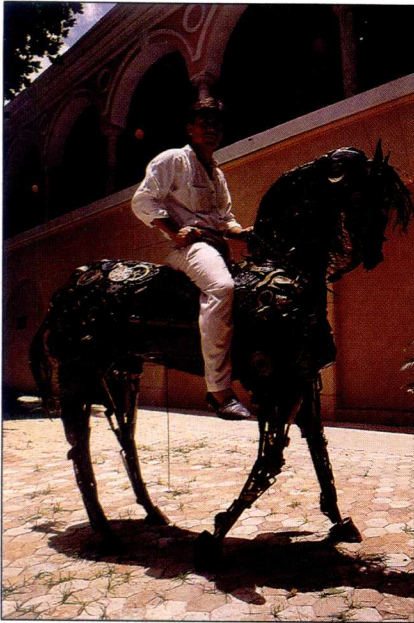
On April 29, 1994, the MACAY (Yucatan Atheneum Museum of Contemporary Art), the youngest museum in the oldest part of Mesoamerica, opened its doors to the public. Housed in a building of great cultural and historical significance, it grew out of the combined efforts of the Yucatecan community as well as other interested parties who over the years have insisted on the need to create a museum in the Yucatan dedicated to the fine arts.

As the project began to develop, considerable emphasis was placed on the importance of finding an appropriate space for the museum. The building chosen was Mérida's well-known "Ateneo Peninsular" (Peninsular Atheneum building). Although the structure itself dates back to the beginning of the Spanish Conquest, it is best remembered as the seminary attached to the Cathedral of Mérida, dedicated to San Ildefonso.

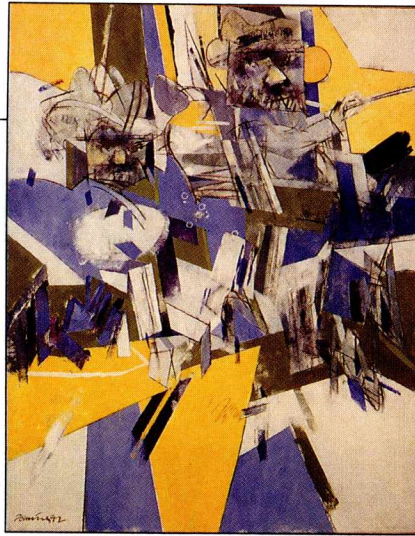
With the passing of time, the building was separated from the cathedral and converted into one of the first cultural institutions of the Yucatan Peninsula: the College of San Ildefonso, whose entrance — adorned by beautiful Colonial-style sculpture dedicated to the saints—

* Director of the Museum.





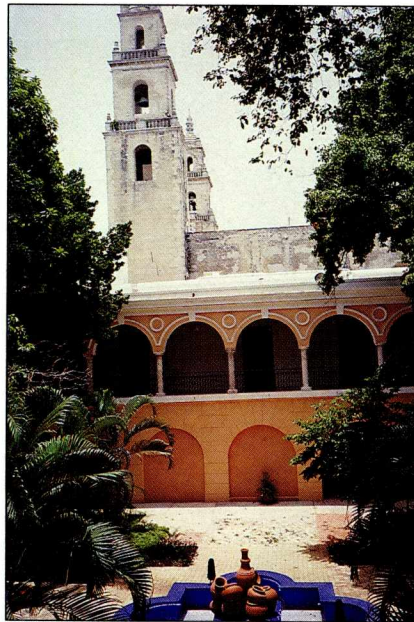
Adolfo Cuellar riding on his metal horse.



Gabriel Ramirez Aznar, *Mid-day workshop*, acrylic.



Adolfo Cuellar, *Owl*.



The museum's patio.



Fernando Castro Pacheco, *Woman's head*, oil.

Dish by Martin Coronel.



Temporary exhibition of Yucatecan embroidery by Silvia Terán.

Photos by Gunilla Hallgren.

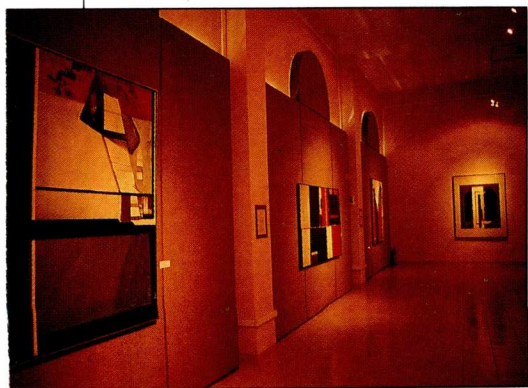


Works by Martín Coronel (loan from INBAL).

can still be admired today on Mérida's 58th Street.

Over the years, the building underwent many changes and amplifications, the most significant of which were done at the beginning of the 20th century. The structure, when completed in 1916, exemplified the "Frenchified" Renaissance style common at the time, decorated with military emblems, large votive lanterns and a pair of large angel-like figures with the words "Ateneo Peninsular" inscribed at their feet.

A product of the inspiration and cultural interest of General Alvarado, one of the most progressive government officials in the Yucatan during this time, the "Ateneo Peninsular" was created to make culture and education available to everyone. It was the general's hope that contact with these elements would help people to elevate themselves socially.



Fernando García Ponce hall.

Unfortunately, as time passed, the good intentions of General Alvarado were lost and the building was occupied by a series of public offices—a heterogeneous mix of government institutions having nothing to do with the arts. Through daily and indiscriminate use, the building soon began to deteriorate.

In 1991, after the building had been virtually destroyed, the idea of using it for its original purpose surfaced again. And so the rescue process began. Slowly, the government offices began to disappear and the restoration of the building progressed. In 1993, after two years of hard work, the reconstruction was finished and the first steps toward the installation of the museum commenced. At the end of the same year, the government and a small group of private patrons—known as the MACAY Cultural Foundation, headed by Carlos García Ponce—joined forces to begin planning the museum's future.

On January 31, 1994, the Yucatan state government handed the building over to the MACAY Cultural Foundation, which was placed in charge of the museum's administration.

At present, the MACAY—which has 10,500 square feet of usable space—consists of 15 exhibition halls, of which eleven are open to the public. Five of the halls house permanent exhibitions, while the remainder are for temporary ones. Entering from the Pasaje de la Revolución (between 58th and 60th Streets), the visitor finds him or herself in the vestibule, a small area dedicated to the sale of museum paraphernalia—books, catalogues, T-shirts, posters, key chains, pens, etc., as well as the MACAY bulletin, a magazine published by the museum every three months.

Leaving the lobby, one enters a patio where a blue fountain filled with large clay pots is surrounded by a

series of beautiful fruit trees, typical of the region.

To the left are two temporary exhibition halls, the museum workshop and another patio, soon to be the museum's exposition forum. The latter, a large space that can easily be adapted to the museum's needs, will be used for all kinds of cultural events, including sculpture exhibits, concerts, theater and dance performances, as well as any other activities the museum may offer. In the future, the area will be roofed over, allowing for the installation of a screening room and the use of the space for other indoor activities.


On the left side of the first patio, visitors enter the museum's second



Juan O'Gorman, outline for mural at Chapultepec Castle (loan from Fomento Cultural Banamex).

floor by means of a majestic double staircase, which will soon display one of the most important murals painted by Yucatecan painter Fernando García Ponce.

At the top of the stairs to the left is the "multi-use" room, designed for workshops, courses in art appreciation and the basics of drawing, painting, ceramics and theater, as well as the reception of school groups.

The halls in this area run from left to right around the building in the shape of a big, inverted "J." Those who are interested can peruse the museum's art library, with a collection of over 1,300 books specializing in fine art, architecture and crafts 

The death of Sor Juana

*Luis Roberto Torres Escalona **

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz was one of the most brilliant personalities of the Baroque period. Her work is characterized by an exceptional feminine and Mexican sensitivity, and is now considered the best example of Classical Spanish poetry in the Americas. Her life and work were part of a brilliant era filled with new literary, philosophical and scientific trends which brought great renown to New Spain (as Mexico was known during Colonial times) at the end of the 17th century.

Her activity in the field of culture —during a medieval epoch when science, wisdom and even talent were considered the exclusive domain of men— have made Sor Juana an exceptional figure in the modern history not only of Mexico but of the entire world, as a pioneer of women's rights.

Favors

At the age of sixteen Juana Ramírez de Asbaje, who came from Nepantla in the state of Mexico, became a protégée of Doña Leonor Carreto, the wife of Viceroy Don Antonio Sebastián de Toledo, Marquis of Mancera. Doña Leonor extended her protection to Juana Inés not because she was an orphan in the strict sense but out of admiration and sympathy for the young woman.

At the Manceras' court, Juana Inés gained an appreciation of the world and made her first social contacts. Just at the moment when her beauty, knowledge and grace had conquered friends and strangers alike, she decided to join the order of barefoot Carmelite nuns. Yet her stay in that order was not at all agreeable, given the severe discipline imposed on her.

Juana Inés' return to the world was brief. On February 24, 1669 she joined the Hieronymite nuns, whose less stringent discipline was better suited to the poet's delicate and erudite temperament.

During her first years of convent life, Juana Inés enjoyed privileges and "dispensations": she was allowed to read, write, converse with others and have servants. She was frequently visited by writing aficionados, both clergy and laymen, including the first Mexican journalist, Juan Ignacio de Castorena y Ursúa, and the learned Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora.

She was later to enjoy the support and appreciation of the new Viceroy, Don Tomás de la Cerda, Marquis of Laguna, and his wife the Countess of Paredes, who lived in Mexico from 1680 until 1688.

Intrigues

At the end of 1690, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz wrote her famous *Carta atenagórica* (Athenagoric Letter), in which she undertook a theological critique of a sermon by the Portuguese Jesuit Antonio de Vieira. This work earned her enemies and troubles. The suggestion to write the letter apparently came from Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz,



Juan de Miranda, *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz*, oil on canvas, 1695.

* Researcher at the Department of Artistic and Cultural Property, Office of University Assets, UNAM.

An extraordinary case

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz was a beautiful, sought-after woman who suddenly decided to become a nun. Then she was a nun who wrote love poems to ghosts, an intellectual interested in science and theology, who sometimes bordered on heresy.

She was a feminist *avant la lettre*, defending women's right to study. Her verse is of fundamental importance, providing us with a repertory of all metric forms. And at the end of her life came the most terrible thing: she sold her books, renounced all her previous work and devoted herself to the harshest ascetic practices.

Sor Juana was destroyed by the very powers she had served.

Octavio Paz.

Bishop of Puebla, who used it to discredit and infuriate a rival of his — Francisco de Aguiar y Seijas, Archbishop of Mexico, who was a fervent follower of Vieyra and notoriously hostile to women.

A torrent of replies and commentaries followed in short order, particularly given that Sor Juana had “little theological authority” to speak out on these issues, and above all because she was a woman. The polemics that thundered forth from church pulpits and the podia of seminaries and colleges reached such a pitch that for a time no other subject was deemed worthy of conversation. We now know that Sor Juana was used as a pawn in the personal quarrels between two powerful princes of the Church.

The envy, disapproval and hostility of her fellow nuns, together with Archbishop Aguiar y Seijas' opposition to her “worldly” activities, began to play havoc with Sor Juana's already tormented soul.

Loneliness began to wear her down. Don Tomás de la Serna, her protector, had died in Spain. Her friend the Countess of Paredes no longer wrote. A whole layer of sanctimonious and fanatical nuns began accusing her of mismanagement and blaming her sinful activities for the torrential rains, *chahuixtle* (corn blight) and other calamities that afflicted Mexico City in 1692.

Intolerance

In a world filled with uncertainty and fear, Sor Juana sought solace in an old father confessor and censor, Antonio Núñez de Miranda. It was he who had originally encouraged her to become a nun, while reproaching her from the beginning for her “profane” interests and “neglect of sacred matters.”

It is said that in late 1692 Sor Juana found herself censored, criticized and pressured by Núñez de Miranda. The idea was to cow her, bring her to heel and make her abandon her literary activity. It is clear that she was forced to abjure much of what she had said and written and to make a whole series of retractions. Núñez de Miranda went so far as to admonish her to declare herself worthy of “eternal death” and the “most infinite of hells.”

Plunder and death

During these ill-omened days Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz turned all her books, as well as her scientific and musical instruments, over to Aguiar y Seijas to be auctioned off. The proceeds were distributed to the poor. The archbishop was apparently in such a hurry to sell her belongings that he disposed of them at prices well below their real value. Not satisfied with selling off her library for a pittance, he seized her personal funds as well as those of the convent itself.

Simply because she was a woman, this distinguished poet was harassed by high Church officials. Not content with isolating her and tormenting her spiritually, they scattered her wonderful library and many of her instruments and belongings. The vendetta was so extreme that the ecclesiastical hierarchy sold off goods belonging to the convent she administered. These depredations sank Sor Juana into a deep depression, setting the stage for her early death.

Why did she enter the convent?

"I became a nun because, while I knew this state included things (of an accessory, not formal nature) which were quite repellent to my character, still, given my complete rejection of marriage, this was the least unbalanced and most decent thing I could choose in light of the security I wanted for my salvation; and to this (in the end the most important thing) I bent my head and all the little rebellions of my nature, such as wanting to live alone; not desiring any obligatory occupation which would stand in the way of my freedom to study, nor the sound of any community which would disturb the peaceful silence of my books."

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.
(Passage from her "Response to Sor Filotea de la Cruz")

Physical and moral ruin weakened Juana Inés' spirit. The suppression of intellectual freedom, isolation, abandonment by her friends and the intransigence of Church authorities set the stage for the poet's death.

Sor Juana died at the age of 46 on April 17, 1695, the victim of an epidemic that struck the convent of San Jerónimo. In the last period of her life she displayed a great piety and spirit of charity towards her fellow nuns in the face of the terrible scourge that decimated the convent.

A few months before her death, she wrote in the book of *Confessions*: "The day, month and year of my death should be noted here. By the love of God and His Most Pure Mother, I beg my beloved sister nuns, those of today and those of the future, to commend me to God, as I have been and am the worst that has existed. I ask the forgiveness of all, for the love of God and His Mother. I, the worst in the world: Juana Inés de la Cruz." ❧

Wolf Wagner.



Remains of the house where Sor Juana was born (Nepantla, 1651).

A tribute to Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

To commemorate the third centenary of the death of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, which occurred on April 17, 1695, Mexico and the United States will host several activities on the life and work of the poet, considered the last great writer of the *Siglo de Oro* (the "Golden Century" of literary achievement in the Spanish language).

Sor Juana scholars will hold three international meetings in the U.S. and four in Mexico, on the writer's thought, criticism and the world of New Spain (as Mexico was known in Colonial times), providing the backdrop to her work.

A collection of essays, two revised editions and four other works will be published. An International Documentation Center will be opened, and film, video and theatrical showings will be organized. In May, the University of California's Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies will sponsor the congress on "Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and Baroque Drama"; and the university named after the poet will host the "Sor Juana and Her World" congress in November.

Raquel Villanueva
Staff Writer.

Foolish men

Foolish men, you who accuse
woman without reason,
without seeing that you are the cause
of what you blame her for:

if with insistence unequalled
you solicit her disdain,
how can you want her to behave well
when you incite her to evil?

You combat her resistance
and then, so gravely,
say that fickleness
is the cause of her diligence.

With stubborn presumption you want
the one you are seeking to be
Thais in betrothal and
Lucretia in possession.

What humor can be more strange
than that which, senselessly,
steams up the mirror itself
and then complains it's cloudy?

With favor and disdain alike
you comport yourselves the same,
complaining if you're treated badly
and mocking if they love you well.

Thus no opinion can win the day;
since the most discreet, if she
admits you not, is ungrateful,
and if she does, is frivolous.

So foolishly you go about
with two measures, blaming
one for acting cruelly
and the other for being easy.

Yet how can the one whose love you seek
be of balanced temper
if the ungrateful one offends
and the easy one inspires anger?

Your pained lovers give
wings to their liberties
and after making them be bad
you want to find them virtuous.

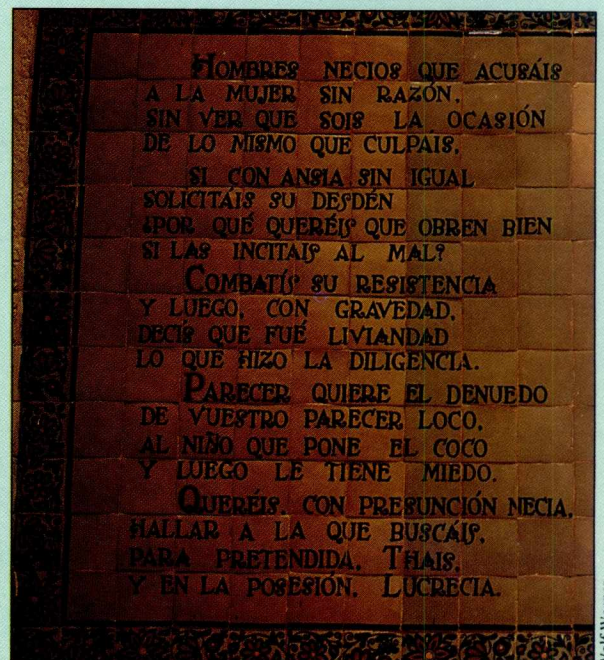
Who is most to blame
in an errant passion:
the one who falls before your pleas
or he the fallen one who's pleading?

And who is most at fault
even if they do some wrong:
the one who sins to pay
or he who pays to sin?

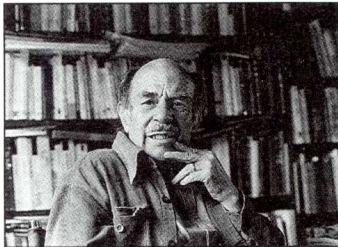
So, why do you shrink away
from the blame that is yours?
Love them the way you make them
or make them what you seek.

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz
(Excerpt from one of her most
famous poems)

Translation: Steven S. John.



Edmundo Valadés and Eduardo Mata



Rogelio Cuellar.

Edmundo Valadés



La Jornada's archive.

Eduardo Mata

Some have several deaths and are reborn several times. Other unfortunates are always dead. Some wretches were never born in the first place. In turn there will be other men who will live forever and others still who will stay dead in life as well as in death.

Edmundo Valadés
"A Man is Walking"

The story is what counts

Edmundo Valadés, story writer, journalist and publisher, died at the end of November in Mexico City, at the age of 79. Considered the greatest promoter of the short-story form in Mexico, Valadés was noted for his interest in creating an arena for developing the work both of world-renowned storytellers and of the young writers to whom he gave his personal support and encouragement. The author dedicated much of his life to this work, founding *El Cuento* (The Story) magazine, which over the years became one of the most prestigious in its field.

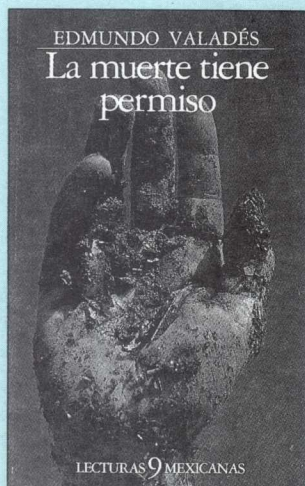
Valadés was born in 1915 in the city of Guaymas, Sonora. At the age of five, after his mother died, his father took the boy to live with an aunt in Mexico City. According to the writer Elena Poniatowska, the atmosphere in his aunt's house was rigid and devoid of affection, which may help account for Valadés' characteristic shyness.

From an early age he was interested in literature and writing. At first he thought his calling was poetry; he was still in secondary school when he devoted his first efforts to writing verses imitating such poets of the day as Díaz Mirón, Gutiérrez Nájera and Urbina. He later related that it was in this period that he got to know the poet and literature teacher Xavier Villaurrutia and showed him his verse; Villaurrutia, "with considerable intelligence and sensitivity, without hurting my feelings or discouraging me, let me see clearly that I was no poet..." (*La Jornada*, December 4, 1994). After that he dedicated himself to prose, discovering that the story was the means through which he could best express himself.

In 1939 he founded *El Cuento*, but the paper shortage and lack of other resources brought on by the Second World War caused the magazine to shut down after publishing five issues. Yet rather than giving up the idea, in 1964 he started the magazine up again and continued to publish it, with only a few interruptions, until his death.

While Valadés published renowned story writers from Mexico, other Latin American countries and around the world, he maintained a keen interest in the work of young authors. "He would write to those he didn't publish, expressing concern for them and their work, making corrections himself and returning the stories with suggestions for their improvement" (*La Jornada*, December 4, 1994). He considered the journal to be a "literary workshop," since by reading the material published in *El Cuento* writers learned new techniques, found themselves face to face with their own work, and improved it.

He believed the storytellers' art consisted of "making the dubious, the incredible, the impossible and the fantastic into something believable; to create real beings and worlds out of lies" (*El Financiero*, December 2, 1994). His own work reflected his ability to awaken the interest of readers who would remain hooked until the end. His story "Death Has Permission" became a classic of contemporary Mexican letters, side by side with such works as Juan Rulfo's "Pedro Páramo," Ricardo Pozas' "Juan Pérez Jolote" and "The Poisoned Water" by Fernando Benítez. First published in 1954, the book named after this story has



Death has permission

Edmundo Valadés

Up on the platform the engineers chatted with each other, laughing. They traded jokes, coarse ones with harsh punch-lines. Little by little they began to turn their attention to the people in the audience; they left off relating their good times and juicy tidbits about the girl who just started working at the gaming house they frequented. Their conversation turned now to these men, the collective-farm peasants gathered in an assembly down there in front of them.

—Yes, we ought to lend them a hand. They need to be incorporated into our civilization; they should get a good cleaning on the outside and be taught to be dirty on the inside....

—You're just a skeptic. Not just that, you're putting in question all our efforts, the efforts of the Revolution itself.

—Bah! It's all useless. You can't help these types. They're pickled in alcohol and steeped in ignorance. Giving them land was pointless.

—You're too superficial and defeatist, *compañero*. The fault lies with us. We gave them the land, and then what? Now we're satisfied. And what about credit, fertilizer, new agricultural techniques, machinery; are they supposed to invent all that themselves?

The chairman smoothes his ample mustache, that facial flagpole continuously polished by his fingertips, looking out through his glasses, impervious to the engineers' verbal fencing. When the animal, earthen, piquant smell of the men arranging themselves on benches tickles his nose, he takes out a handkerchief and blows it loudly. He too was a man of the countryside. But that was long ago. Now all the city and his post have left him of all that is the handkerchief and the roughness of his hands.

Those below seat themselves with solemnity, with the concentration peasants employ when penetrating a closed place: the meeting hall or the church. They speak sparingly and the words they exchange tell of harvests, of the rains, of animals, of credit. Many have food bundles hanging from their shoulders, a sort of cartridge-belt against hunger. Others smoke, calmly and without haste, the cigarettes looking as if they had grown out of their hands.

Others, leaning on the side walls with their arms crossed over their chests, stand guard tranquilly.

The chairman rings his little bell and the sound dilutes the murmur of voices. The engineers begin. They talk about agrarian problems, of the need to increase production, to improve crops. They promise to help the peasants, they encourage them to state their needs.

—We want to help you, you can trust us.

Now it's the turn of those below. The chairman invites them to state their concerns. A hand goes up, timidly. Others follow. They begin to speak of their preoccupations: the water, the *cacique* [rural boss], credit, the school. Some are direct and to the point; others go in circles and don't manage to express themselves. They scratch their heads and turn in search of what they wanted to say, as if the idea had hidden itself in a corner, in the eyes of a fellow peasant or up above, where a lamp is hanging.

Over there, in one of the groups, there are whispers. They're all from the same village. They are worried about something serious. They consult with each other, deciding who should be the one to speak.

—I think Jilipe, he knows a lot....

—Wait, you, Juan, you spoke that one time....

Unanimity is not reached. Those mentioned wait to be pushed. An old man, who may be the patriarch, makes a decision:

—All right, it should be Sacramento this time....

Sacramento waits.

—Come on, put your hand up....

The hand goes up, but the chairman doesn't see it. Other hands are easier to see and get called on. Sacramento looks inquiringly at the old man. Another man, very young, puts his hand way up. Above the forest of hairy heads the five earth-brown fingers can be seen. The hand is discovered by the chairman. He calls on its owner.

—Go ahead, stand up.

The hand goes down when Sacramento stands up. He tries to find a place for his hat. The hat turns into a huge impediment, it grows, it fits nowhere. Sacramento is standing with it in his hands. Signs of impatience appear at the presiding table. The voice of the chairman issues forth, authoritarian, warning:

—Get on with it, you asked to speak and we're all waiting.

Sacramento fixes his eyes on the engineer seated at one end of the table. It looks like he's going to speak to him alone; that the others have disappeared and only the two of them remain in the meeting hall.

—I want to speak for the people from San Juan de las Manzanas. We came with a complaint against the Municipal President who makes a lot of problems for us and we can't take it any more. First he took the little plots of land away from Felipe Pérez and Juan Hernández because they were next to his land. We sent a telegram to Mexico City and nobody answered. In the congregation we talked about it and we thought the best thing would be to go to the Agrarian office, to get the land back. But the trips and the papers didn't work at all, and the Municipal President kept those little plots of land.

When Sacramento speaks his features don't change. You might think he was saying an old prayer, one he knows very well from beginning to end.

—So that was it, then he had a grudge against us and accused us of being trouble-makers. It was like we were the ones who took his land away. Then they came with the business of the accounts; the thing about the loans, *siñor*, that we were supposedly behind on. And the agent took his side and said we had to pay a whole lot of interest. Crescencio, he lives on the hill where the water gate is, he understands about numbers, so he figured the accounts and it wasn't true; they wanted to charge us too much. But the Municipal President brought some gentlemen from Mexico City who are very important and said that if we didn't pay they would take our land away. So like you could say, they forced us to pay what we didn't owe....

Sacramento speaks without emphasis, without premeditated pauses. It's as if he were plowing the land. His words fall like grain being sown.

—Then there's what happened with my son, *siñor*. The boy got mad. I was worried and I tried to stop him. He was drinking and it messed up his head. Acting with respect hadn't gotten me anywhere. So he went to see the Municipal President, to tell him it wasn't right.... They killed him in a low-down way; they say he was stealing one of the Municipal President's cows. They brought him back to me deceased, with his face blown away....

Sacramento's Adam's apple trembled. That was all. He continued to stand, like a tree which has sunk roots. Nothing more. He still stared at the engineer, the one sitting at the end of the table.

—Then the part about the water. Since there isn't much, because the rains barely came, the Municipal President closed the canal. And since the fields were going to dry out and the congregation would go through a bad year, we went to look for him; that he should give us just a little water, *siñor*, for our crops. And he spoke badly to us, since he gets angry at us for the slightest thing. He didn't get down from his mule, just to show us what he thinks of us....

A hand tugs at Sacramento's arm. A man from his village tells him something. Sacramento's voice is the only thing to be heard in the room.

—If all that wasn't enough, well as for the water thanks to the Virgin there was more rain and we halfway saved our crops, but then there was the business about Saturday. The Municipal President went out with his men, they're bad people, and they stole two girls from us: Lupita, the one who was going to marry Herminio, and Crescencio's daughter. They caught us by surprise; we were out working so we couldn't stop them. They made them go up the mountain and then they just left them there. The girls came back in bad shape because of the way they hit them, and we didn't even have to ask what happened. And people were really stirred up this time, because by now we were really fed up with being at the mercy of such bad authorities.

For the first time Sacramento's voice shook. There was a threat, a hatred, an ominous decision in it.

—And since nobody paid any attention to us, all the authorities we've seen and we don't know where justice has gone, we want to take some measures here. You —and now Sacramento looked at each one of the engineers, stopping with the chairman— who promised to help us, we ask your leave to punish the Municipal President of San Juan de las Manzanas. We ask your permission to carry out justice with our own hands....

All eyes turn to those on the platform. Mute, the chairman and the engineers look at each other. Finally they argue among themselves.

—It's absurd; we can't sanction such an unthinkable request.

—No, *compañero*, it's not absurd. What would be absurd is leaving this matter in the hands of those who have done nothing, who have refused to listen to these people. It would be cowardice to wait for our justice system to do justice; they won't ever believe in us again. I prefer to solidarize with these men, with their justice, which may be primitive but in the final analysis is justice, and to take the responsibility together with them. As far as I'm concerned we have no choice but to give them what they ask.

—But we are civilized people, we have institutions which we can't just set aside.

—This would be justifying barbarism, actions outside the law.

—And what acts outside the law are worse than the ones they are denouncing here? If we had been mistreated as they have, if we had been harmed half as much as they have, we would have killed already, we would have forgotten about a justice system that does nothing to intervene. I demand we put this to a vote.

—I agree with you, *compañero*.

—But these are some really tricky types; we ought to confirm what they say. And besides, we don't have the authority to grant a request like this.

Now the chairman speaks. The man of the country has come alive inside him. Once he has spoken there is no appeal.

—The meeting will decide. I take the responsibility.

He speaks to the crowd. His voice is a peasant voice, the same voice that must have spoken in the hills, mixed together with the land, with his people.

The proposal of the *compañeros* from San Juan de las Manzanas is put to a vote. All those who agree they should be given permission to kill the Municipal President, raise your hands....

All the hands go up. The engineers' too. There is not a single hand which isn't raised, approving categorically. Each finger signals immediate and direct death.

—The assembly gives permission to the people from San Juan de las Manzanas to do what they ask.

Sacramento, who has calmly remained standing, finishes speaking. There is neither happiness nor pain in what he says. His expression is straightforward, simple.

—Well, thank you for the permission, because since nobody listened to us, since yesterday the Municipal President of San Juan de las Manzanas is deceased.

gone through over 18 editions. In 1961 he published *Antípoda* (Antipode), in 1966 *Las dualidades finestas* (The Fatal Dualities) and in 1980 *Sólo los sueños y los deseos son inmortales, palomita* (Only Dreams and Wishes Are Immortal, My Dear).

He also wrote essays and put together thematic anthologies, among them *La revolución de las letras* (The Revolution of Letters), *Los grandes cuentos del siglo XX* (The Great Stories of the 20th Century), *23 cuentos de la Revolución Mexicana* (23 Stories of the Mexican Revolution), *Con los tiernos infantes terribles* (With the Tender *Enfants Terribles*) and *La picardía amorosa* (Amorous Naughtiness). *El libro de la imaginación* (The Book of Imagination), published in 1970, became one of the best-known anthologies of this genre among Mexican writers. A devotee of Marcel Proust, in 1974 he came out with *Por los caminos de Proust* (Along the By-Ways of Proust), considered the best work on the subject written in the Spanish language. In the late 1980s he published a three-volume thematic anthology based on the magazine he edited, entitled *Los cuentos de El Cuento* (The Stories of *El Cuento*).

In addition to literature, Valadés worked as a culture journalist over the course of several decades. His articles appeared in a number of Mexican newspapers, and he also edited *Norte* magazine, which was published as part of the National Borders Program. In 1981 he was awarded the National Journalism Prize for his work in the dissemination of culture. A number of Mexican authors maintain that he deserved to receive the National Literature Prize, which he never won.

The writer's personal relations were always marked by his good-spiritedness, cordiality and the generosity with which he provided unconditional support to whoever needed it. His death orphaned many writers who found shelter for their dreams and fantasies in his publishing projects, as well as the freedom to give rein to the imagination, transforming it into literature.

A great musician

The internationally recognized Mexican conductor and composer Eduardo Mata died on January 4, when the small plane he was piloting to Dallas crashed; he had been on his

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Eduardo Mata on CD

Manuel M. Ponce: Música para piano y guitarra (Manuel M. Ponce: Music for Piano and Guitar), 1990 (new recording, published by Editorial Patria for the Anthology of Mexican Classical Music, Series One; the original recording was published by UNAM in 1974). Features María Teresa Rodríguez, piano, Alfonso Moreno, guitar, and the UNAM Philharmonic Orchestra.

Carlos Chávez, 1991 (new recording, published by Editorial Patria for the Anthology of Mexican Classical Music, Series Two; the original was recorded for RCA Victor in 1974). Features María Teresa Rodríguez, piano, with the London Symphony Orchestra and the New Philharmonic Orchestra of London.

Silvestre Revueltas: Música sinfónica (Silvestre Revueltas: Symphonic Music), 1989 (new recording published by BMG-Ariola and the National Council for Culture and the Arts; the original version was published by RCA in 1976). Performance by the New Philharmonic Orchestra of London.

Carlos Chávez: Sinfonías completas (Carlos Chávez: The Complete Symphonies), 1992 (new recording published by Vox Vox; the original recording was published in 1981 by the same company). Performance by the London Symphony Orchestra.

Iberia, 1981, published by Telarc. Performance by the Dallas Symphony Orchestra (DSO).

Gershwin, 1981, published by RCA. Performance by the DSO.

Ravel: Bolero, 1981, RCA. Performance by the DSO.

Strauss: Muerte y transfiguración (Strauss: Death and Transfiguration), 1982, RCA. Performance by the DSO.

Ravel: Mamá la oca (Ravel: Mother Goose), 1983, RCA. Performance by DSO.

Mussorgsky-Ravel: El cuadro de una exposición (Mussorgsky-Ravel: Pictures at an Exhibition), 1983, RCA. Performance by the DSO.

Prokofiev: El lugarteniente Kijé (Prokofiev: Lieutenant Kijé), 1984, RCA. Performance by DSO.

Strauss: El burgués gentilhomme (Strauss: The Bourgeois Gentleman), 1985, RCA. Performance by the Canadian National Arts Center Orchestra.

Copland: Sinfonía número tres (Copland: Symphony No. Three), 1986, published by Angel. Performance by DSO.

Bach: Los brandenburgueses (Bach: The Brandenburg Concertos), volumes I and II, 1988, published by Peerless. Performance by the Solistas de México.

Obras de Manuel de Falla y Julián Orbón (Works by Manuel de Falla and Julián Orbón), 1989, published by Olympia. Features Todd Joselson, piano, with the Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra.

Holst: Los planetas (Holst: The Planets), 1987, published by Pro-Art. Features chorus and DSO.

Sibelius: Sinfonía número 2 (Sibelius: Symphony No. 2), 1987, Pro-Arte. Performance by DSO.

Tres Héroes (Three Heroes), 1988, Pro-Arte. Performance by DSO.

Tchaikovsky: 1812, 1988, Pro-Arte. Performance by DSO.

Rachmaninoff: Concierto para piano número 3 (Rachmaninoff: Piano Concerto No. 3), 1989, Pro-Arte. Features Vladimir Viardo, piano, and the DSO.

Stravinsky: El pájaro de fuego (Stravinsky: The Firebird), 1989, Pro-Arte. Performance by DSO.

Danzas Sinfónicas (Symphonic Dances), 1989, Pro-Arte. Performance by DSO.

Mahler: Sinfonía número 2 (Mahler: Symphony No. 2), double album, 1989, Pro-Arte. Features Sylvia McNair, soprano, Jard Van Nes, alto, and the DSO.

Ravel: Bolero, 1990 (new recording, published by RCA, including the 1981 and 1983 versions). Performance by DSO.

El sombrero de tres picos (The Three-Cornered Hat), 1991, Pro-Arte. Features Lourdes Ambriz, soprano, and the DSO.

Stravinsky: Petroushka, 1991, Pro-Arte. Performance by DSO.

Stravinsky: La consagración de la primavera (Stravinsky: The Rite of Spring), 1991, published by Dorian. Performance by DSO.

Estévez: La cantata criolla (Estévez: Creole Cantata), 1992, Dorian. Performance by the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela.

Shostakovich: Sinfonía a Leningrado (Shostakovich: Leningrad Symphony), 1992, Dorian. Performance by DSO.

Un panorama americano (Panorama of the Americas), 1992, Dorian. Performance by DSO.

Prokofiev: Cantata Alexander Nevsky (Prokofiev: Alexander Nevsky Cantata), 1993, Dorian. Features Mariana Paunova, contralto, and the DSO.

Schumann: Concierto para piano y orquesta (Schumann: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra), 1993, Dorian. Features Iván Moravec, piano, and the DSO.

Revueltas: Redes (Revueltas: Networks), 1993, Dorian. Features the Latin American Quartet and the Simón Bolívar Symphonic Orchestra of Venezuela.

Respighi: Festival Romano (Respighi: Roman Festival), 1993, Dorian. Performance by the DSO.

Orbón: Tres versiones sinfónicas (Orbón: Three Symphonic Versions), 1994, Dorian. Performance by the DSO.

Chausson: Sinfonía Opus 20 (Chausson: Symphony Opus 20), 1994, Dorian. Performance by the DSO.

Falla: La vida breve (Falla: Short Life), 1994, Dorian. Features Marta Senn, mezzo-soprano, Fernando de la Mora, tenor, Cecilia Angel, mezzo-soprano, and the Simón Bolívar Symphonic Orchestra of Venezuela.

Jongen: Sinfonía concertante para órgano y orquesta (Jongen: Symphony Concerto for Organ and Orchestra), 1994, Dorian. Features Jean Guillou and the DSO.

Orff: Carmina Burana, 1994 (new recording, published by RCA; the 1981 original was also published by RCA). Features Barbara Hendricks, soprano, John Aler, tenor, chorus and the London Symphonic Orchestra.

Listing provided by Galerías Margolin and Francisco Vidargas
Originally published in La Jornada.

way to Texas to make some recordings. An outstanding promoter of modern music, including that of Mexican composers, he had distinguished himself as this country's most world-renowned conductor.

Eduardo Mata Asiain was born in 1942, in Mexico City. At the age of 15 he entered the National Conservatory of Music, where he made the decision to devote himself to music full-time. Nevertheless, he left the conservatory and enrolled in the Composing Workshop of Carlos Chávez, one of this century's most important Mexican composers and a primary influence on his development as a composer and director.

He expressed his admiration for Chávez, as well as for Silvestre Revueltas, both by continually including their works in his repertoires and in his statement on being admitted to the National College in 1984: "The existence of Chávez and Revueltas is virtually a miracle; both are originals, both are deeply Mexican. Through them our serious music acquired a certificate of naturalization in the concert of contemporary Western culture...."

When he was 22 he obtained his first position, as director of the Guadalajara Symphonic Orchestra; during the same period he was invited to be a resident artist at the Berkshire Music Center festival. From 1966 to 1975 he conducted the Philharmonic Orchestra of the National University of Mexico, which under his baton experienced the most brilliant era in its history, due to the quality of its performances and the prestige it gained in the university community and among the public at large.

During this period Mata decided to devote himself to conducting, putting aside his work as a composer. Yet he left a legacy of more than a dozen works, among them the *Trio for Vaughan Williams*, for clarinet, cello and percussion (1957); his *Piano Sonata* (1960); *Improvisations for Piano* (1961); *Arias on a 16th-Century Theme* (1964); and *Symphony Number 3* for winds and obbligato horn (1966). Regarding the work of composing music, Mata recalled the lessons of his teacher Carlos Chávez: "His method centered on preparing us to dissect the classics, so we could imitate them later on. He said it was almost impossible to teach people how to compose; that all we can do is exhaustively analyze the classics so as to try to emulate them, and on that basis produce work of our own.... He forced us to use our imaginations to the fullest, and when we reached a moment of freedom he would tell us: do what you like. There was an easy flow of creativity" (*El Financiero*, January 9).

On the other hand, Mata regretted not having deepened the appreciation of Mexican musicians' work in order to incorporate it into his own language as a composer. He noted that, like others of his generation, his search for a language of his own was oriented towards Europe and the United States, rejecting the nationalist current which was dominant in Mexico. He attributed this, however, to the fact that musicians in training were not encouraged to look to their own country. "We were told: study the great masters, because that is the dynastic path of Western music. But they never told us: study Chávez or Revueltas" (*El Financiero*, January 9).

His international career as a composer began in 1974, when he debuted with the London Symphony. Three years later he was named artistic director of the Dallas Symphonic Orchestra, a position he held until 1993, alternating with invitations to lead more than 100 different orchestras in the United States, Europe, Japan, Australia and Latin America. In 1989 and '90 he was the principal guest conductor at the Pittsburgh Symphony, and in October of 1994 he was named principal conductor of the Italian Radio-Television Symphonic Orchestra of Rome, with which he was scheduled to perform eight concerts this year.

It was characteristic of Mata to choose varied and rather unorthodox repertoires. The clarinetist Robert Kolb remembers that "he always defended his programs tooth and nail; they were unorthodox, featuring uncommercial or little-known music.... He was never inclined to make artistic concessions, and he never accepted the game of seeking easy success through conducting well-worn, hackneyed works from the popular repertoire" (*Reforma*, January 5).

Sixteen years of work with the Dallas Symphony bore witness to an extraordinary effort. This was manifested in the musical as well as administrative improvement of the symphony, the construction of a magnificent concert hall and the production of 29 records featuring a varied repertoire, as well as critical acclaim, including a Grammy nomination. This period included eleven world premieres, approximately 500 consecutive sold-out concerts, and several highly successful world tours.

Remaining unfinished are a series of recordings, invitations to conduct orchestras in various parts of the world, as well as the planned extension of his work with the Solistas de México (Soloists of Mexico) group, which he founded. Above all, Eduardo Mata bequeathed us the example of a man whose work represented Mexico musically, around the world ❧

Elsie Montiel
Assistant Editor.

The contemporary Mexican story

Lauro Zavala *

For many decades, readers of Mexican literature focused their attention almost exclusively on novels; short stories were relegated to the back of the bus. Now this situation has undergone a major change as a result of the transformation of short-story writing, in particular over the past two decades. This has drawn the interest of many readers, both in Mexico and abroad.

Let us examine the evolution of this process, particularly during the second half of this century. For many decades a "solemn tone" was cited as one of the most characteristic features of Mexican narrative. One of the changes during recent decades is the advent of an ironic tone and the experimental nature of story writing. Still, in the early '90s the youngest writers revived the "conversational" form and the use of such traditional genres as detective stories and epics of daily life.

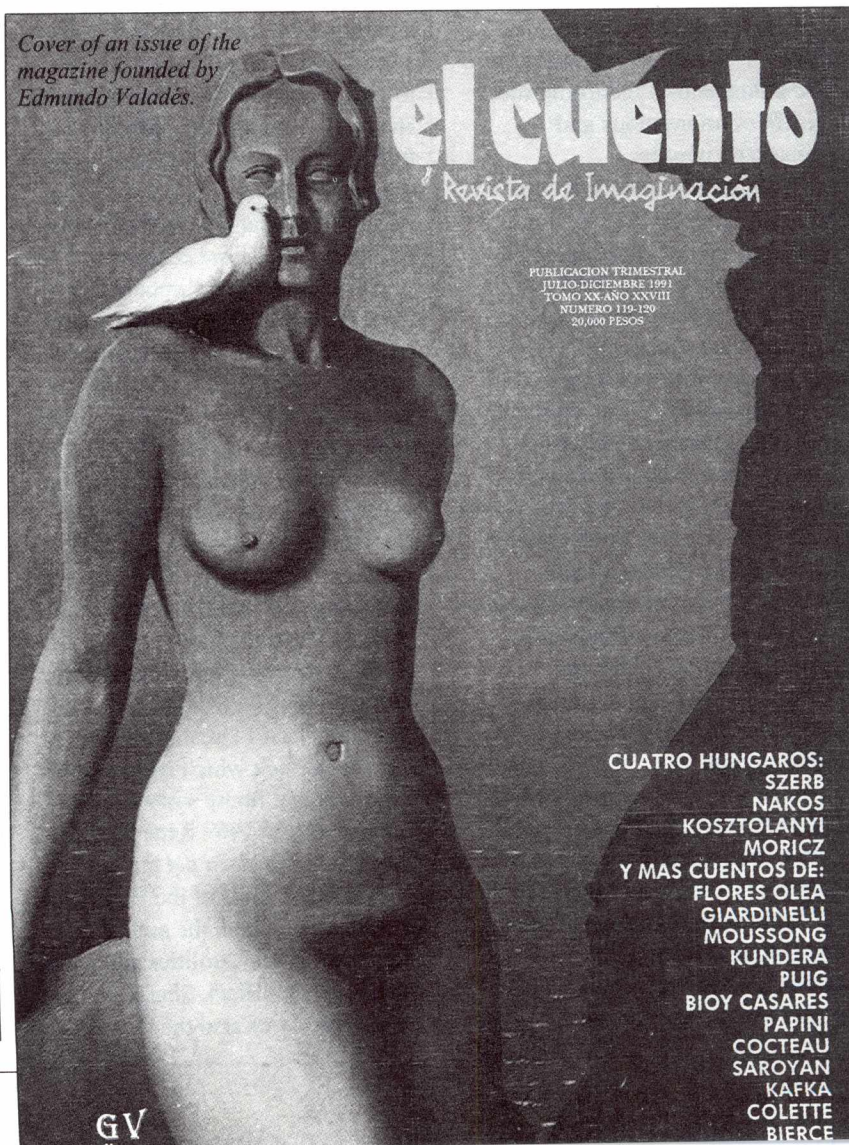
The most important reference points for contemporary writing are found in the 1950s and '60s. The writing of that period was generally characterized by an intimate tone ("intimism"), close to tragedy and the hieratic approach. In this context, the short story was still viewed as a way to prepare the writing of a novel, and—perhaps partly for this reason—many stories tended to be relatively long, often rivaling short novels.

Among the paradigmatic writers of this period one must mention José Revueltas, Juan García Ponce, José de la Colina, Juan Vicente Melo, Inés Arredondo and Elena Garro. Of course, each writer generated characteristics specific to his or her

narrative universe, always on the basis of the search for personal epiphanies and the presence of some specific mystery which the reader could intuit throughout the reading of the work.

In contrast, the Mexican short story of the past 25 years has been

Cover of an issue of the magazine founded by Edmundo Valadés.



CUATRO HUNGAROS:
SZERB
NAKOS
KOSZTOLANYI
MORICZ
Y MAS CUENTOS DE:
FLORES OLEA
GIARDINELLI
MOUSSONG
KUNDERA
PUIG
BIOY CASARES
PAPINI
COCTEAU
SAROYAN
KAFKA
COLETTE
BIERCE

* Professor/researcher at the Autonomous Metropolitan University, Xochimilco campus.

characterized by experimentation with language, the exercise of parody, irony and humor, and an almost journalistic treatment of collective daily life.

The new Mexican story involves a way of writing which is as experimental as poetry. It competes with the novel for readers' attention, for two reasons: its brevity (stories rarely exceed three or four pages) and its thematic and technical mimicry of journalistic writing and such other, equally quotidian genres as letter-writing and aphorisms.

There are numerous stylistic and ideological symmetries between these writers and some chroniclers of contemporary urban identity, such as José Joaquín Blanco, Hermann Bellinghausen and Carlos Monsiváis, who, in turn, share the interest of narrators like Armando Ramírez and Cristina Pacheco in recording the daily life of anonymous and marginalized people.

The key genre antecedents of these writing forms may be found in the work of such diverse figures as Efrén Hernández and Julio Torri (in the first half of this century), Juan Rulfo and Juan José Arreola (1950s), Salvador Elizondo and Augusto Monterroso (1960s). It is worth taking the time to describe these writers.

Julio Torri created a narrative universe in which voices of the people coexist with classical myths, shaping a skeptical vision of the human condition. Efrén Hernández created an autonomous imaginary universe, apparently removed from the contingencies of daily life, with its own rules and, above all, its own reading rhythm.

In the stories of Juan Rulfo (*El llano en llamas* [The Plain in Flames], 1954), narrative transculturation means extrapolating the mythic syntax of the rural world to the language of urban readers, a process through which the experimental use of narrative time acquires allegorical resonances.

Juan José Arreola (*Confabulario* [Scheme Compendium], 1952; *Bestiario* [Bestiary], 1959) created a densely intertextual writing in which surprise endings are, paradoxically, prefigured in veiled form from the first lines. Thus the force and rhythm of the language make this classic story technique (the surprise ending) irrelevant.

Salvador Elizondo (*El grafógrafo* [The Graphologist], 1967) produced self-sufficient, self-referential writing; he was able to produce his own parameters within which the events related lack importance in light of the means employed to evoke a diversity of images.

Augusto Monterroso practices (in *La oveja negra y demás fábulas* [The Black Sheep and Other Fables], 1969) a parody of a genre alien to literary stories—the morality tale—in order to create complicities with the reader. His work is part of the literary tradition, of which Julio Torri is the best exemplar, in which the most is said through that which is left unsaid; the shorter, the more complex.

In retrospect, the importance of "The Black Sheep and Other Fables" can be appreciated by noting that it is the most significant work of the transitional period from 1967 to 1971. During that period various books of stories were published which, taken together, marked a break with the dominant tone of over 50 years of Mexican narrative. In 1967 Jorge Ibarguengoitia published *La ley de Herodes* (Herod's Law), a collection of ironic stories; 1968 witnessed the publication of *Inventando que sueño* (Feigning That I Dream) by José Agustín, a book which included the important and funny story "What Is the Wave?"; in 1969 René Avilés Fabila's *Hacia el fin del mundo* (Towards the Ends of the Earth) was published, in which the author integrates fantasy, politics and humor. 1969—when "Black Sheep..." was published—was also the year of

Sergio Golwarz's *Infundios ejemplares* (Exemplary Fibs), consisting of ever-briefer paradoxical exercises. 1971 saw the publication of Rosario Castellanos' *Album de familia* (Family Album)—which includes "The Cooking Lesson," a story/essay which is a historic demonstration of grotesque humor—as well as *El principio del placer* (The Pleasure Principle) by José Emilio Pacheco, which contains the splendid "Bull Fight."

"Bull Fight" merits special mention here, since it is virtually the only example of historiographical metafiction in the history of Mexican short stories. In contrast, the outstanding Hispano-American novels of the 1960s and '70s mined this vein, which one might designate "Neo-Baroque," consisting of an ironic look both at a people's collective history and at the process of literary creation, relativizing any construction of meaning based on the use of a cultural code.

In all these writers one observes an interest in playing with conventions regarding the perception of social reality. The ridiculous and grotesque aspects of these conventions are thereby put on display; there is a deliberate use of humor, parody and irony.

Beginning in 1970, partly as a consequence of the 1968 crisis, story-writers began to show greater concern for the country's political problems and a greater interest in reflecting popular urban speech; at the same time they continued to work with humor and experiments in the fantasy genre. Among the foremost writers of the period were Guadalupe Dueñas, Amparo Dávila, Elena Poniatowska and Eraclio Zepeda.

During the 1970s experimentation was more notable in the fields of poetry and the novel than in short stories, as can be seen in the novels of Fernando del Paso, José Emilio Pacheco, Carlos Fuentes, Sergio Fernández, Héctor

Manjarrez, Daniel Leyva, Joaquín Armando Chacón and Gustavo Sáinz. In addition to a tendency towards historiographical metafiction, their work was strikingly fragmentary, a feature which inevitably implied a kinship with story writing.

Leaving aside the distinction between classical stories (with single, surprising endings) and modern ones (with endings which are open, imminent, deferred to other stories in the same series or anticipated within the narrative itself), the new short story born in the 1980s had the following formal characteristics:

a) *playful tone*: estrangement from daily life through the use of fantasy, humor, the absurd and language games;

b) *extreme brevity*: a tendency towards almost journalistic and aphoristic forms of writing, with a length varying from three lines to three pages;

c) *genre experimentation* with the limits and boundaries of the traditional short story, whether in relation to other forms of writing (*inter-genre* experimentation) or within the narrative itself (*intra-genre* experimentation).

In recent years the forms of experimentation have been very diverse. By way of example we can cite the following: the parody of philosophical treatises on the basis of trivial or implausible themes (Hugo Hiriart in "Dissertation on Cobwebs"); the skeptical narration of radically personal surprises, trifles, rubbish and protests (Alejandro Rossi in "Manual of the Distracted"); the questioning, through satirical chronicles, of the conditions of "extreme non-productivity risk" in which university researchers work (Guillermo Sheridan in "Letters from Copilco" [an avenue near the UNAM campus]).

There are also reflections on the act of writing, formulated as epistolary reviews of literary books (Bárbara

Jacobs in "Written in Time"); a lipogrammatical series of five stories, each of which uses only words containing one of the five vowels (Oscar de la Borbolla in "The Cursed Vowels"); stories in the form of prose-poem riddles (Manuel Mejía Valera in "Riddles"); music criticism articles written as stories, and vice versa (Alain Derbez in "The Uses of Radio"); games of form, such as the writing of a 100-chapter detective thriller in the space of a few lines (Francisco Hinojosa in "Black Report"); detailed psychological descriptions of daily objects (Fabio Morábito in "Tool Box"); and parody versions of canonical stories (Vicente Leñero's "Who Killed Agatha Christie?" and José Emilio Pacheco's collection *La sangre de Medusa y otros cuentos marginales* ["The Blood of Medusa and Other Marginal Stories"]).

Our account of these experiments must also take note of the intuitive typologies of female personalities on the basis of a preference for certain types of clothing (Guillermo Samperio in "Imaginary Notebook"); narrations which adjectivize verbs, make nouns out of pronouns and, in general, mix up all of the language's syntactical and grammatical functions (Dante Medina in "Childeries"); vampire stories which subvert the genre's conventions (Laszlo Moussong's "Castles in the Letter"); irreverent narrations of experimental nature (Hugo Enrique Sáez in "Pataphysical Notebooks"); and parodies in which a feminine perspective subverts common sense (Martha Cerda's "Señora Rodríguez and Other Worlds").

A retrospective glance at the main polemics regarding the Mexican short story over the past 40 years can give us a better idea of the genre's current situation. The 1950s witnessed a polemic between "earthy" stories (exemplified by Juan Rulfo) and the "artisan" style (represented by Juan José Arreola, who —like Rulfo— was from the state of Jalisco). The late '60s

produced a break between the realist, "intimist" and tragic story (represented by the former writers for the canonical and indispensable *Revista Mexicana de Literatura* [Mexican Literary Journal]) on the one hand and a style characterized by humor, parody and irreverence (exemplified by José Agustín) on the other.

In the 1970s and '80s the boundaries were no longer so clearly demarcated; the polemics of prior decades had become irrelevant and in many cases once-competing tendencies coexisted in one and the same text. Even those writers working with the most traditional story techniques presented an extremely sharp (and ironic) vision of reality; they too may be considered experimental. This is the case with Carlos Fuentes, Sergio Pitol, Hernán Lara Zavala, Juan Villoro, Agustín Monsreal and Enrique Serna.

There continued, of course, to be story writers working within the "intimist" tradition, among them María Luisa Puga, Ethel Krauze, Felipe Garrido, Bernardo Ruiz, Mónica Mansour and Brianda Domecq.

We must add to all this the rise of literary voices which have a post-modern character, precisely because they do not correspond to the editorial and cultural conditions of the country's political and economic center: Mexico City. Among story writers from other cities, denominated "the provinces," are Alvaro Uribe and Luis Arturo Ramos (from Xalapa), Dante Medina and Martha Cerda (Guadalajara), Luis Humberto Crosthwaite (Tijuana), Daniel Sada (Coahuila), Jesús Gardea (Ciudad Juárez), Ricardo Elizondo Elizondo (Monterrey), Francisco José Amparán (Torreón), as well as many Chicano writers, such as Sandra Cisneros, Rolando Hinojosa and others, who remain virtually unknown in Mexico.

The view of Mexican reality offered by writers from the country's "interior" is precisely a fragmentary,

Her what?

Impossible to go anywhere with her without finding a child who had committed suicide. Suicides suited for the situation, of corpse. In the bathroom a drowned person, in the closet a hanging (tight tie, I'd tease), and of course in the kitchen sliced veins painted their stains that can't be cleaned by washing and wash with bleach and scrub a dub dub, my love, and that there so it the impossible way wasn't possible for her, and, Where do you get children who commit suicide?

Then she might theorrize until my desire to paranny her with "once upon a time there was one who theorrized..." clawed at other scrawls: "and the reason is that the power discharged in the name of a thing onto its central itness leads to the no of over there, the no of the time when the thing non-exists or to the when it already does, or better, inventing the name you can't find if you need you don't know what." My placing-in-order invented a beginning in language affirming a Then: 1) knowing the name of a thing gives you power over it; 2) knowing the name of a non-existent thing means holding a power over all non-existent things or over what we don't know; 3) to invent a name is to have power over a you-don't-know-what.

—"To have power over a you-don't-know-what," over a you-don't-what-yourself, I what myself, what you stayed. Bravo: Treatise.

And treating me with Treatise she scordemned me as old-fashioned, and there was no way I could make her laugh, not even those times when I really understand the wordploy.

She doused me a tinytimation, praycluding herself:

—That is more or less that, but you mess-entangle.

—In any case, one doesn't know what.

—"One doesn't know what."

—what is always known

—like what?

—like what.

Dig in.

Dig in to what?

Oh you poor thing.

In any case, the children kept committing suicide on her and what had no idea where to hide.

Excerpt from *A ella qué* by Dante Medina
Translated by Santiago Vaquera
University of California, Santa Barbara.

contradictory and paradoxical one. Their forms of humor and irony reflect conditions of cultural and economic marginalization. One might even speak of cultural borders (especially those which determine the publication and distribution of their books in Mexico City), which wind up being as difficult to cross as the geographical and linguistic borders between Mexico and the United States. Some of these writers have indeed managed to cross these publishing barriers, which distinguishes them from Mexico City writers whose work is characterized instead by a crossing of genre boundaries.

On the other hand, it is noteworthy that over the past ten years there has been

an extraordinary interest in publishing Mexican stories, both here and abroad. More anthologies were published from 1985 to 1994 than over the entire 50 preceding years, both in Mexico and in translated versions in other countries.

In recent years, despite the crisis of the Mexican publishing industry, more than 400 books of short stories have been published annually. This demonstrates the status of a genre which —more difficult than the novel and as experimental as poetry— is the best indicator of the imaginative vitality of our literary language.

The new Mexican story, in addition to continuing the traditions of regional narrative and psychological fiction which were

dominant for three decades, is noteworthy for its playful and experimental nature. In its less orthodox variants, this form of writing challenges the boundaries between traditional narrative and other prose genres, particularly the essay, the vignette and the chronicle. In doing so, it employs humor as a weapon of demystification and irony as a critical strategy.

Alternating eroticism, imagination and immediate historical memory with reflection on writing, testimony of our urban life and the recording of intimate and collective earthquakes, these stories simultaneously nurture their readers' capacity for surprise and indignation ❧

Mexican dramatists at the end of the millennium

*Victor Weinstock **

Mexico's theater would seem to be in danger of extinction. Yet it is encouraging to discover that virtually all of this country's young dramatists are conscious of the precarious situation we find ourselves in, and that there is a broad range of proposals for dealing with the problem of empty performance halls. Theater in Mexico is vigorous precisely because of its diversity. Thus any attempt to establish "models" is doomed to failure.

Having said that, it may be that the most basic model for this generation of dramatists is commitment to their work. I am not referring to a commitment to this or that political tendency, as some allegedly serious analysts would have it. "The committed dramatist," Rafael Sánchez Navarro taught me, "is the one who knows that commitment is based on honesty in the interpretation of a play, respect towards the work of one's colleagues, and devotion to the audience."

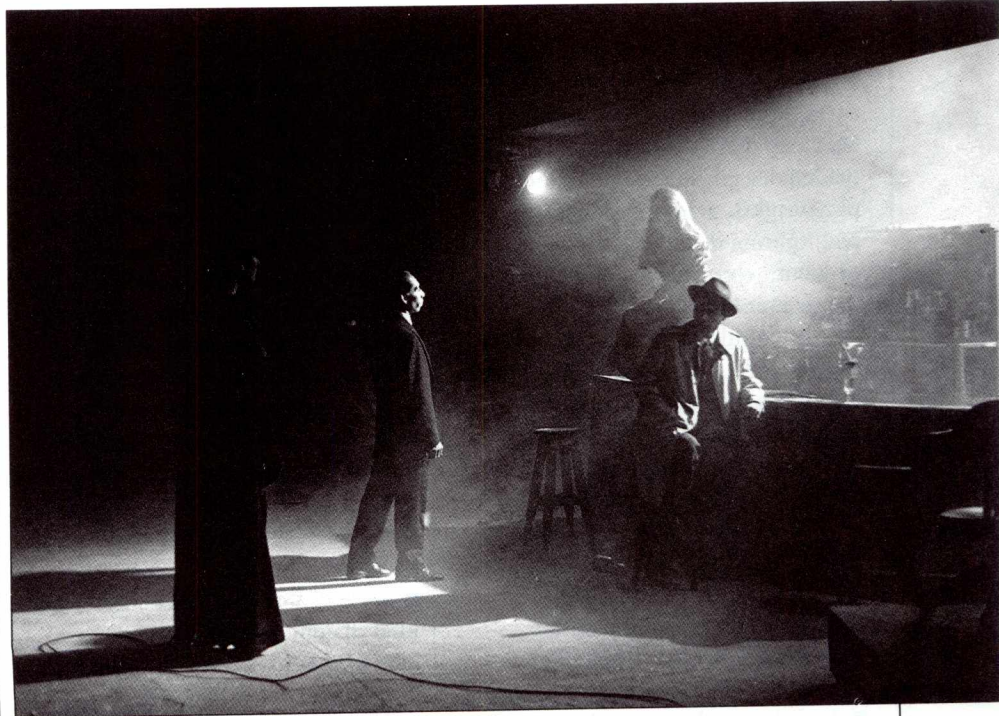
Financing and publicity are the key elements in our theater's famous (or infamous) crisis. During his last visit to Mexico the Italian master Eugenio Barba told us that nobody forced us to become dramatists, so we shouldn't complain. Still and all, the Odin Teatret that he directs would be a poor example of self-sufficiency. It

receives a subsidy of up to 45 percent from the Danish government, as well as considerable support from other governments, including Mexico's, allowing it to travel around the world nine months out of every year.

It is true that the governments of the world have other priorities—controlling the AIDS epidemic, for example. That is how the U.S. master Edward Albee, recently awarded his

third Pulitzer Prize, answered a question from Juan José Gurrola last year. A people's health certainly does take priority over its artistic festivals. But it is also true that art, and the theater in particular, is a product and reflection of a healthy society, one which is prepared to question its own foundations and goals. Government must actively participate in the cultural development of those it governs.

Juan Manuel Marentes.



Scene from Personal Assassin, directed by Rocío Carrillo.

* Writer and theater director.



Scene from Hugo Hiriart's *The Performance or Dangers of the Game*, directed by Alberto Lomnitz.

During the spring of 1994 I carried out a survey of young Mexican dramatists. Artists of all tendencies participated —directors, playwrights, actors, producers, set and lighting designers, etc.— many of whom wear more than one hat in the theater business.

It would have been impossible to interview all the participants in Mexico's theater world. Among those who could not be included were such key personages as Estela Leñero, Enrique Singer, Mario Iván Martínez, Pilar Mata, Luis Mario Moncada, Francisco de la O, Mauricio Jiménez and all those working in provincial theaters.

● What do you expect from the audience when it confronts your work?

■ *José Acosta*. I hope they have a good time, that they have fun, not

with the trivial things but with what's different.

■ *David Olguín*. What I aspire to do is cause a crisis for the spectator. If we take into account that theater is an art which delves into the human condition in the most direct way, it should have a real impact on the spectator's sensibility. I am interested in polemical audiences, some of which may surrender while others put their guard up.

■ *Rocío Carrillo*. We do "personal theater"; we take our guts onstage and show them to the audience. I hope they understand this, that they're not watching a fiction.

■ *Antonio Serrano*. Since theater is a kind of conversation with others, a kind of relationship that ranges from love to hate, what I hope for is that the audience will listen to me, feed me, because after all stories are born

from the audience. My work is like a filter for the reproduction of what they tell me.

■ *Laura Rode*. My greatest hope is that people will go to the theater with their minds blank. I want people to have fun like I do. Sometimes audiences are too solemn. If the audience relaxes we can put on more complex shows which are very rich in visual terms and in every other way. If the audience were more receptive we would grow together.

● Looking at it from the other side, what do you hope for when you go to the theater?

■ *José Acosta*. That it surprise me, that it show me something I don't see in my daily life. Even if it's a naturalistic work, I hope to see magic.

■ *Alberto Lomnitz*. If the play is good, it seems like time isn't passing, even if

the play lasts three hours. If it's a bad play it seems eternal. I try to lose myself in the conventions it presents me; but some works make this impossible since I'm distracted by their bad construction, their falsity.

● Taking Mexico's economic situation into account, where do you think the resources for financing the theater should come from? What should be the role of government and/or private enterprise?

■ *David Olguín*. One model I'm familiar with, which has produced very good results, is England's Arts Council. It's a question of achieving independence for artists. On the one hand the government should provide minimal but constant financial support, while on the other it hopes that artistic groups learn how to stay in the black. Attempts have been made to imitate this in Mexico, through competitions organized by the

National Fund for Culture and the Arts (FONCA) and the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS), for example. In both cases efforts failed because of the institutions' own inertia. The good will of Mario Espinosa at IMSS was not enough, since he was tied up in an administrative apparatus that doomed projects to failure. There's no continuity. If you receive support from FONCA you just put on a show, and

A bit about the interviewees

José Acosta (Puebla, 1957). Director of the Taller del Sótano (Basement Workshop), with which he produced *El otro exilio* (The Other Exile), *De nota roja* (From the Crime Page) and *Alicia*. His group has won several prizes; as an individual he was awarded a prize as director of the year. Has received support from the National Fund for Culture and the Arts (FONCA) and the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS) and participated in several international festivals.

David Olguín (Mexico City, 1963). Author and director of *Bajo tierra* (Underground) and *La puerta al fondo* (The Door in Back). He has received scholarships from the Mexican Writers' Center, FONCA and the British Council. In addition to his plays, he has published the book *Ernesto Sábato: Ida y vuelta* (Ernesto Sábato: There and Back).

Rocío Carrillo (Mexico City, 1963). Director of the "Secret Organization," which came out of the La Rendija (Split) group. Key works include *Infinitamente disponible* (Infinitely Available) and *Asesino personal* (Personal Assassin). Her group has received support from FONCA and was nominated by the Association of Theater Journalists as best independent group.

Alberto Lomnitz (Santiago, Chile, 1959). Director of the Señal y Verbo (Sign and Word) group, composed of both deaf and hearing actors. With this group, he put on Hugo Hiriart's *La representación o los peligros del juego* (The Performance or Dangers of the Game). He was also in charge of the premieres of Estela Leñero's *Casa llena* (Full House) and *Toodos los días* (Each and Every Day). New York's Hunter College invited him to write and direct a play on the 500th anniversary of Columbus' arrival in America, *Moros y cristianos* (Moors and Christians). He is the protagonist of *De nudos* (On Knots). He has received support from FONCA, IMSS and the Mexico/USA Trust for Culture.

Rafael Sánchez Navarro (Mexico City, 1958). He is known above all for his performances in *Cómo ser una buena madre judía* (How to Be a Good Jewish Mother), *Cuentos de Chekhov* (Tales by Chekhov), *Las memorias de Raquel* (Memories of Raquel), *Amadeus*, *El hombre elefante* (The Elephant Man) and *Modigliani*. Among works he has directed are *Drácula*, with José Alonso and Diana Bracho; *Harvey*, with Ignacio López Tarso; and *Amantes* (Lovers), with Julio Alemán and Sergio Corona.

Antonio Serrano (Mexico City, 1955). Director of *A destiempo* (At the Wrong Time) and *Doble cara* (Double Face). Author and director of *Sexo, pudor y lágrimas* (Sex, Shame and Tears). These three works have been awarded prizes, and he was given an individual prize for the third. He is currently preparing a new work, *Café Americano*.

Laura Rode (Mexico City, 1962) has been a visual designer for several operas at the Palace of Fine Arts, among them *Gianni Schicchi*, *Madame Butterfly* and *La vida breve* (Short Life), the last of which went on tour to Florence. Outstanding theater work has included designs for the productions *Fuenteovejuna*, *Muertos de la risa* (They Died Laughing), *Rita Julia* and *Adorables enemigas* (Adorable Enemies). She has been nominated several times by critics and won the prize for best set design for *¡Qué plantón!* (What a Wait!).

that's it. With no continuity in financial support, in the long run it's impossible to keep a company going. To me it seems unlikely that the private sector would participate in producing art theater; what's more likely is that they would buy artists for their own projects.

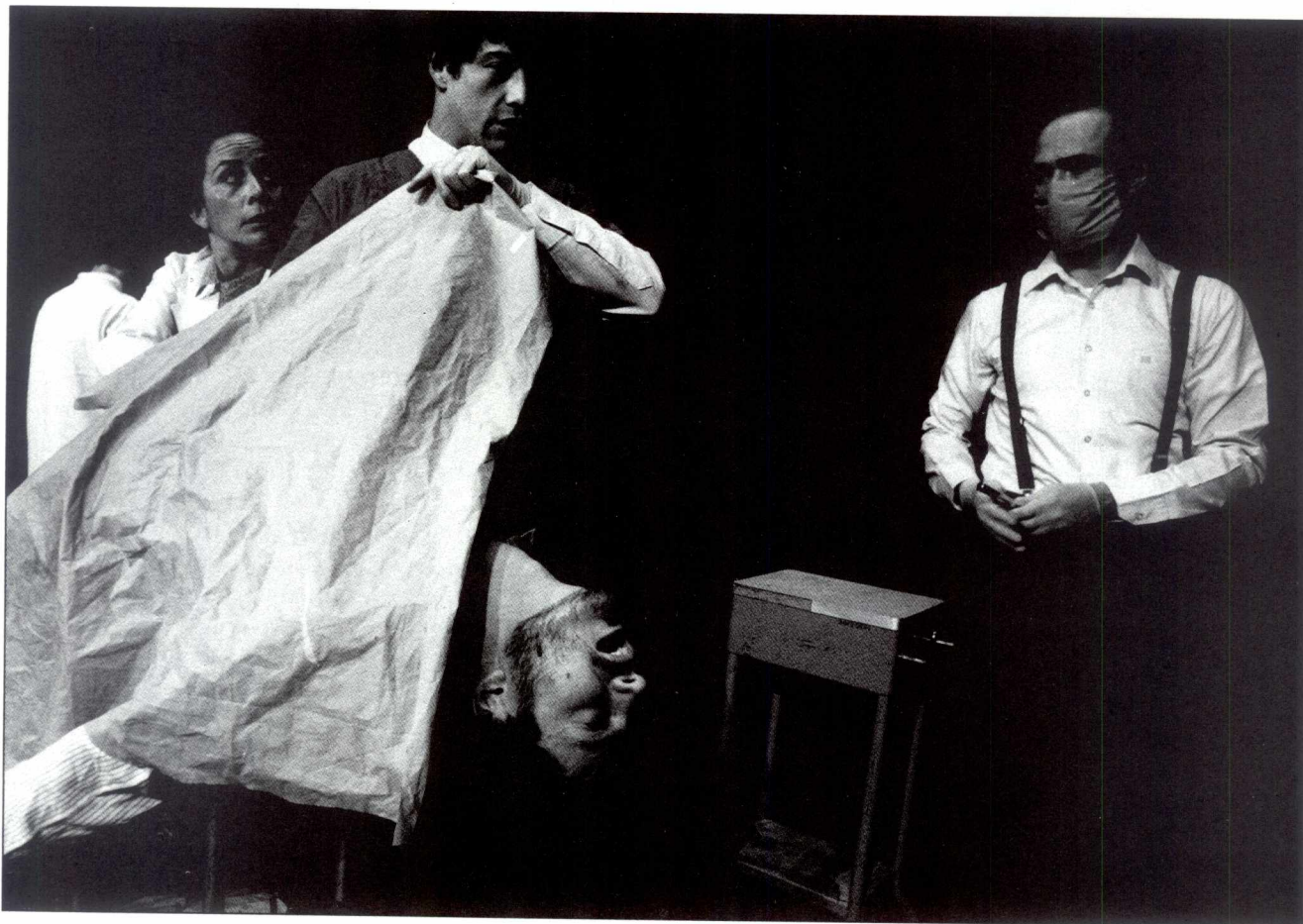
■ *Rocío Carrillo*. We are obligated to create our own infrastructure. You have to learn to survive with what comes from the box office. At any point now we're going to have to take over spaces, put on a performance and take off running. You have to learn to recycle scenery and costumes. We have to make a lot of noise and hope that the specialists will support us. I wish there were a personal relationship with institutions'

functionaries. I don't think the anonymous selection of projects is a good thing. Government has an obligation to support art; this isn't a question of paternalism but of responsibility and cultural memory.

■ *Alberto Lomnitz*. The idea in recent times has been that theater ought to be financed by the box office. I think that's a mistake; I think it is very important that government and private enterprise participate. The government should modify the law so dramatists can receive tax-exempt donations. This is a simple process in the United States, and it's helped keep independent groups going. Private enterprise should feel that it's in its own interest to invest in the theater, for fiscal and publicity reasons. The Mexican government, which has

traditionally supported the arts, should change existing legislation so as to seduce private investors.

■ *Antonio Serrano*. The government has abandoned its paternalistic and managerial stance towards the economy. There has been an opening to private enterprise. I feel the same thing should happen with the arts. I don't see why art should be the government's responsibility. Just as productive and service goods are produced, so too there are people who produce artistic goods, even if at the utilitarian level they have no real value. The fact that the theater has been subsidized for so many years has created the sort of megalomaniacal and onanistic monstrosities that we sometimes see on our stages, which seem to have no



Scene from performance of *The Other Exile* at Chicago's International Festival.



Scene from *The Door in Back*, written and directed by David Olguín.

interest in communicating anything to the public. Obviously that's reflected at the box office. Surviving by box-office receipts prevents the staging of spectacles which are just a cult to their creators.

■ **Laura Rode.** The price of tickets is very low; it doesn't cover costs. I feel it is the government's obligation to finance high-quality shows, since no private producer can do it. A private producer invests in the theater for one of two reasons: because it seems like good business or because it looks like fun. If it's the first reason, he's making a mistake. And if he wants to have fun, I think the government should support those producers, open the official theaters to them, whatever is necessary.

● Do you think there really is a crisis of the Mexican theater? If so, do you have any proposals for solving it?

■ **José Acosta.** I think we are not giving the public what it needs. While

theater will never be replaced by videos or movies, the audience at the end of the 20th century has other expectations. It gets many stimuli that the 20th-century theater, which we stubbornly continue to produce, does not satisfy.

■ **David Olguín.** Yes, there is a crisis. But in the midst of that crisis there is a very talented generation. It's been a long time since such an important generational phenomenon appeared in Mexico. There are various proposals, but demand is minimal. The public has abandoned the theaters... it's the economic crisis, television, who knows. And drama schools are no longer offering solid training. There are no serious theater journals, apart from *Repertorio*, and it looks like even that will be shutting down. Theater is a second-class citizen in our country. That's how we're treated. But there is some hope, since our generation is a very purposeful one.

■ **Rocío Carrillo.** The old masters created a formula for success and stuck with it. There's no longer any impact. Then there was a generation of flash-in-the-pan explosions. Finally, our generation seems to be very preoccupied with achieving the masters' perfection, and takes few risks. That is the crisis.

■ **Alberto Lomnitz.** There is a lot of supply and little demand. The theaters are empty. It's common to hear the new generation say, "I don't like the theater." Maybe that's because we're not doing very good theater.

"Neo-liberal" ideas are pushing us into the market of supply and demand. Supposedly the theater will purify itself naturally since it will have to survive by what it earns at the box office. I don't believe in that. What will be achieved, in the best case, is a popular theater. But we all know that including a TV star in the cast, even if they can't act, or including the word *sex* several times in advertisements, will attract people to the theater. Yet that doesn't mean the play is any

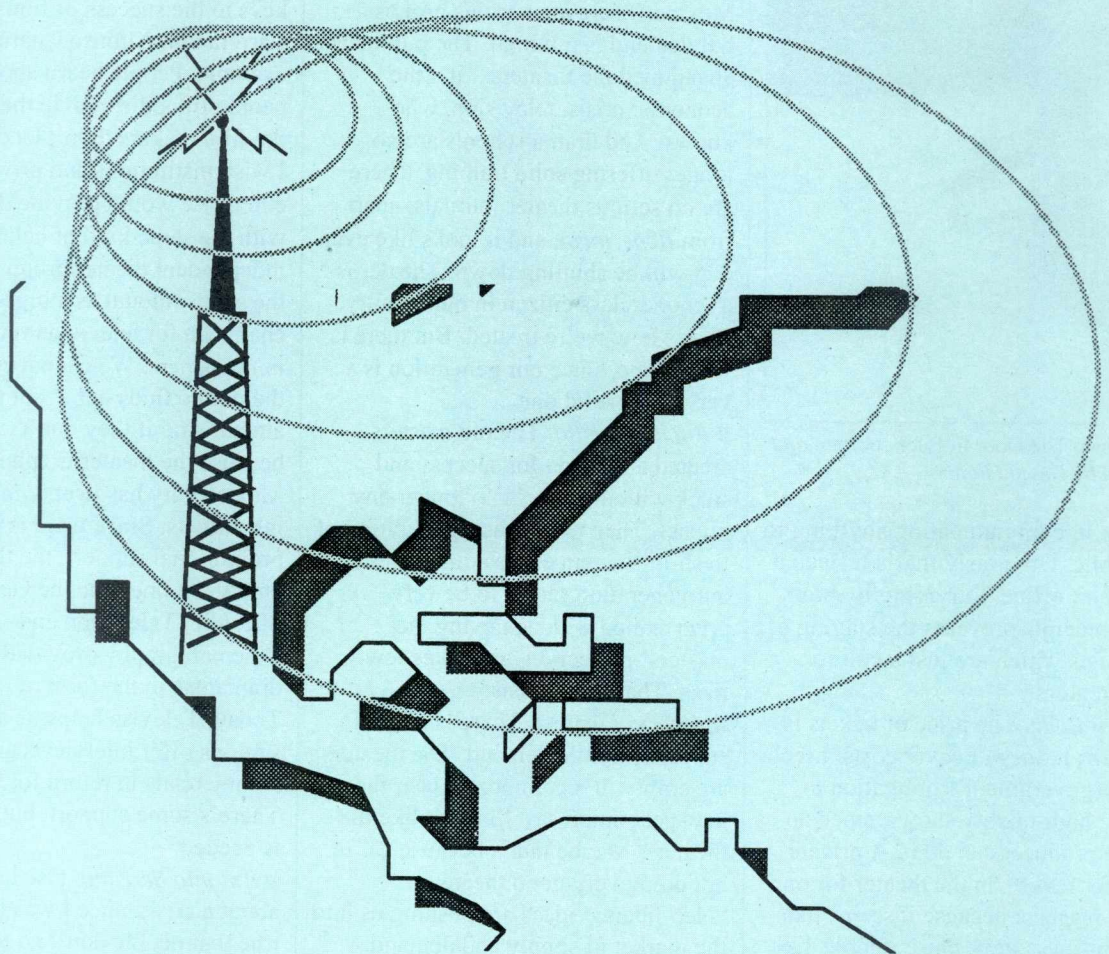
better than others. The day I figure out how to solve the crisis, I'll call you right away.

■ **Rafael Sánchez Navarro.** The theater of commitment has always been in crisis. This is a very hard trade. It's not the glamour that people see from the outside. We ought to learn from the young creators of the new Mexican cinema: their subject matter, their commitment, their solidarity. Distribution was one of the keys to the success of films by Carlos Carrera and Alfonso Cuarón, for example. People heard about them, people filled the movie theaters, and the film makers didn't let them down. I wish institutions and private enterprise would provide dramatists with the same kind of help. An independent theater group can't pay the same amount as a big supermarket chain can for television time and space in the papers. We cannot compete. If the public finds out about it, they attend. And if they don't... it's tragic, because the theater is ephemeral. Mexico City has twenty million inhabitants. Since there is no promotional support, the theaters are empty. At one time the General Office of Radio, Television and Cinematography provided support to dramatists in the form of publicity. Today, Televisa helps its actors; radio stations offer interviews and commercials in return for tickets. There's some support, but a lot more is needed.

■ **Antonio Serrano.** I've heard this tale about a crisis since I was born. It's true that people don't go to the theater. Many think that's the fault of the alienation produced by the mass media and consumerism. I ask myself, haven't we caused this famous crisis of the theater ourselves, because we've forgotten about the audience? What do we have to tell them, why do we want them to come? What's in crisis is the content and the way of saying what we want to say. M



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



XEPPM, Onda Corta

Largo alcance de México al mundo

Cultura con imaginación

Alejandro Gómez Oropeza: the deepest part of being

*Carlos Dantón Medina **



Born in Mexico City in 1963, Alejandro Gómez Oropeza developed his creative sensibility from an early age. He took painting and drawing classes at various workshops in Coyoacán and San Jerónimo, and studied art in Colorado and Paris. The result is a highly innovative approach, with an easily identifiable personal style.

Gómez Oropeza has a degree in architecture, a profession he exercised for three years and whose influence can be seen in his compositions, which harmonize balance, design and form. The creative process and the visualization of spaces filled with light and color always captured his imagination; one day, following his instincts, he decided to devote himself body and soul to painting. After more than twelve years he has

* Writer.

succeeded in transmuting these visions into works of art which have been exhibited in Europe, principally in Paris and Corsica.

The French journal *Valeurs de l'Art* devoted a cover to his work, considering him to be the creator of a new world: "The roots of this new world are based on architectural technique, which lends stability and allows creativity to express itself at the highest level. The canvas plays the role of a mirror reflecting the observer's sensuality. The subjectivity of form leaves a door half-opened to a world of phantoms, where the imagination of each individual leads us along different paths that show the imperceptibility of a hidden thought. Within this new world, the forbidden is non-existent. One must give free rein to ideas and imagination. The essential energy is revealed in a moment reserved for intimacy and eroticism."

We see, reflected on the canvas, the artist's inner world—a world made up of experiences that touch the deepest part of his being.

Gómez Oropeza's work is large-scale, at times consisting of two, three or more parts, magnifying his message and the spectator's interest. Scenes full of energy unveil themselves little by little, in a play of juxtaposed bodies. A couple in movement is portrayed, showing themselves without inhibitions; their mystery and passion are revealed.

Tempests of color and rivers of passion inhabit his canvases. Suns of joy, storms of pain and memories of love fuse together. There has been an evolution in the abstract cosmogony with which this young painter began; the cosmogony composed of vital elements—fire, earth and water—melded with corporeal elements: love, passion, pain. Reds, yellows, blacks and silvers run together to produce a symphony of feelings—intense, albeit

not always happy. The combination of reds and blues, achieving not only a visual but an emotional contrast, is particularly dear to him.

Alejandro Gómez Oropeza is a nocturnal being who may find his inspiration under the light of the moon or just as easily under the lights of a discotheque where bodies free themselves, adrenaline flows and euphoria awakens our senses. He makes these comments on the series *Untamed Thoughts*, which he created in just such a context:

Night patiently awaits her guests, beings who live and experience a flow of blood intensely charged with electricity, with the desire to live. Euphoria takes possession of the senses, reality disappears and the stage lights up. New and joyful beings move among us. Thoughts dance to the rhythm of sensuality. Bodies brush against each other, the lights blind us, the shouting begins. Inanimate beings walk from here to there. The night is their accomplice, their refuge, their fictitious reality. The ritual is carried out. Untamed thoughts consume themselves. The soul sets itself loose. The body does not understand.

He paints the darkness which surrounds us together with silence. In his works we meet bulls and bullfighters who fuse together, jointly celebrating the *fiesta brava* (bullfighting—literally, the "brave festival"); or women dancers who idolize the moon, their clothes flowing into the horizon.

The work of Alejandro Gómez Oropeza, with its European, African and Mediterranean influences, has stood out thanks to his dedication and love for art. Intense travel, through which he learned the art and culture of other countries, has impelled the vision of his painting, which becomes stronger every day **M**



With a Bull in the Belly,
oil on fiberboard, 1995.

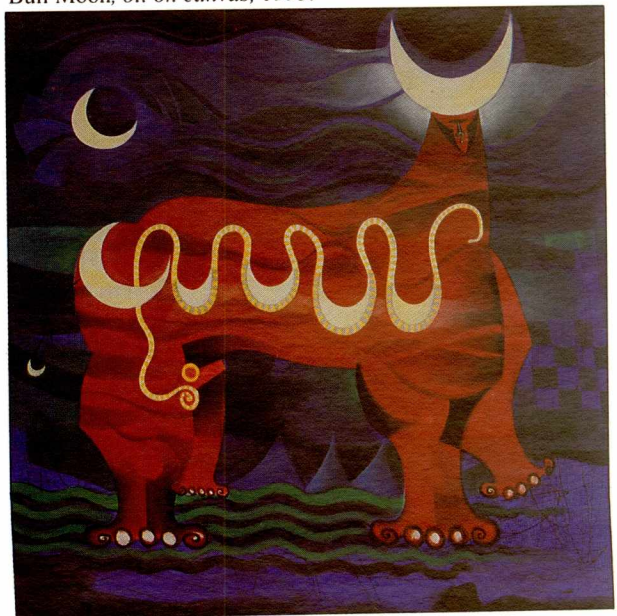


Night Scene, mixed media on paper, 1994.

The Woman with a Red Glove, oil on fiberboard, 1993.



Bull Moon, oil on canvas, 1995.



From painters to scribes: *tlacuilos* in the 16th century

Elsa L. Rea López*

In 1582 the noble lady (*cihuapilli*) María de Guzmán, a native of the Ollac neighborhood (*tlaxilacalli*) in Xochimilco, was gravely ill

For space reasons the editors have eliminated some of the footnotes from the original text.

We thank the National Archives for providing us with photographs for this article.

* Ethnohistorian, Center for Research and Advanced Studies in Social Anthropology (CIESAS).

and asked city officials to send her a scribe so she could make her will. Sixty years after the Spanish Conquest this legal act had become part of everyday life, based on a fascinating cultural transformation.

Indian scribes, like their Spanish counterparts, acquired prime importance during the Colonial era. The adoption of Spain's legal procedures meant that Indians now needed to leave a written record of all the legal affairs in which they were

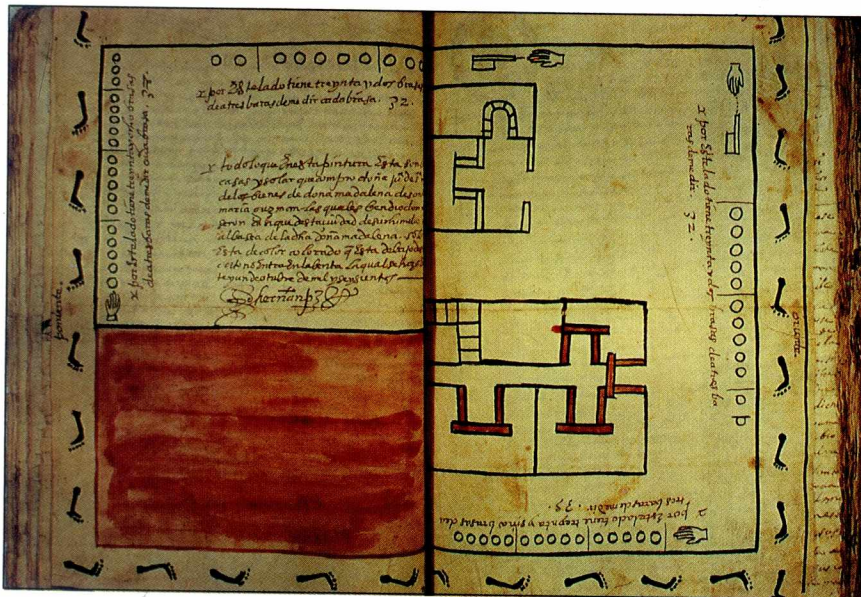
involved. Thus an age-old tradition had to adjust to the new conditions imposed by the Conquest.

At least some cultures of late pre-Columbian Mesoamerica included a personage known by the Náhuatl language groups as the *tlacuilo* (from the Náhuatl verb *tlacuiloa*: to paint or write). The *tlacuilo* was part official, associated with the ruling class, and part artisan, since in order to record events he had to apply his experience and expertise so as to reproduce the models established in semantic codices hallowed by tradition. Of high aesthetic quality, his designs systematically and precisely combined figures, phonemes and colors to represent oral language.

The knowledge and practice of writing were imparted in the *calmecac*, schools for nobles which specialized in training future priests, political leaders (*tlatoani*) or teachers at the *calmecac* itself. Future *tlacuilos* always came from the nobility, since being the son of lords or priests was a prerequisite for attending the *calmecac*. This type of specialized education was apparently not provided to the lower classes. While martial arts were taught to lower-class boys in schools called *telpochcalli* (from *telpuchtli*: young boy), it is unknown whether they were also instructed in reading and writing.

In the *calmecac*, the *tlamatimime* (wise teachers) taught the correct use of language, how to decipher texts conserved by tradition,¹ as well as their own method for using painting to write such texts. These teachers were responsible for the study and conservation of history, theory and science, since it was they who possessed the "red and black ink" contained in books and were in charge of transmitting this wisdom. Sahagún writes of these texts:

¹ Key among them those called *tonalpohuali*, *tonalamatl*, *xihuahmatl* and *temicamatl*.



Plan of house in Xochimilco, 1613.

...they were called divine songs, the verses of which were written in their books in characters: and they also taught Indian astrology, and the interpretation of dreams and how to count the years.²

The young nobles educated in the *calmecac* specialized in different religious, governmental or social functions. Those who showed an aptitude for painting were more intensively trained in writing, since they could use the skills learned at these schools in order to write about history, religion, mythology, etc.

Some *tlacuilos* may have specialized in writing about issues related to particular requirements of the complex Aztec civilization. Motolinía reported that there were five key books of ancient knowledge:

*The first speaks of time and the years. The second, of the days and the feasts held throughout the year. The third, of dreams and the tricks, vanities and omens in which they believed. The fourth is of baptism and the names they gave to children. The fifth speaks of the rites and ceremonies and auguries they used in matrimony.*³

There were probably *tlacuilos* with special knowledge on the correct way to handle each of these books.

Due to lack of information, we cannot say whether the state also used *tlacuilos* to officialize communication of minor juridical affairs to the population in general, or what kind of specialization was required if this was indeed the case. What is clear is that the *tlacuilo*'s role as scribe took precedence over his role as painter, since to become a scribe one had to go

through a number of stages of cultural and intellectual training, whereas skilled painting was more a question of manual and aesthetic practice that required lesser studies.

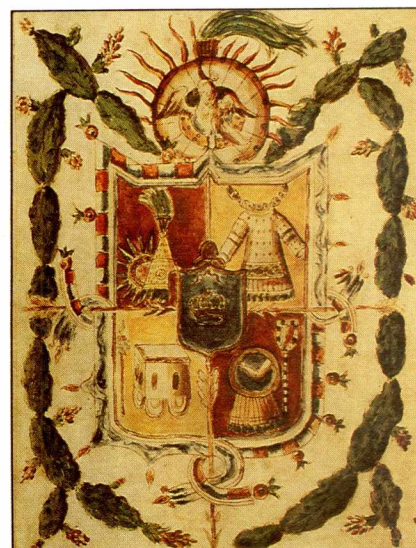
The details of the pre-Hispanic *tlacuilo* profession remain an enigma, and what we do know about this personage is the result of inference. In his 1959 study of Mexican manuscript painting, Donald Robertson posed a number of questions regarding these scribes: whether they worked at home, in government buildings or in the temples; whether they necessarily belonged to the priesthood or included laymen working for particular governmental offices; how they learned their trade, and what methods they used to join it.⁴

Another scholar, Pedro Carrasco, stressed the difficulty of determining whether, in Aztec society, a given specialized activity occupied all of an artisan's (in this case the *tlacuilo*'s) time, or if this activity was combined with farming for the artisan's own consumption.

We can nevertheless assume that—thanks to their specialized functions and membership in the social elite—*tlacuilos* were not obliged to earn their keep by farming the land, producing handicrafts or going to war, as were society's other members. It has been definitely established that they were exempt from paying tribute, as were the *calpuleque* (residents of specific neighborhoods), singers, warriors who distinguished themselves in battle, and young people.

The scribe's trade was passed on from father to son. It is useful to recall what one *tlacuilo* said when Emperor Moctezuma ordered him to paint the newly arrived Spaniards:

Powerful lord, I should not tell you something which is untrue, nor deceive you, since you are



Coat of arms conferred on the lord of Santiago Tlatelolco by Spanish King Carlos V, 1550.

the semblance of the gods. You should know that my forefathers and I never possessed any science other than our trade of painting and drawing these characters, and their place was to be painters of past kings, and they painted what they were ordered to depict. And thus, I do not know anything about what you are asking me to do, and if I said yes I would be lying.

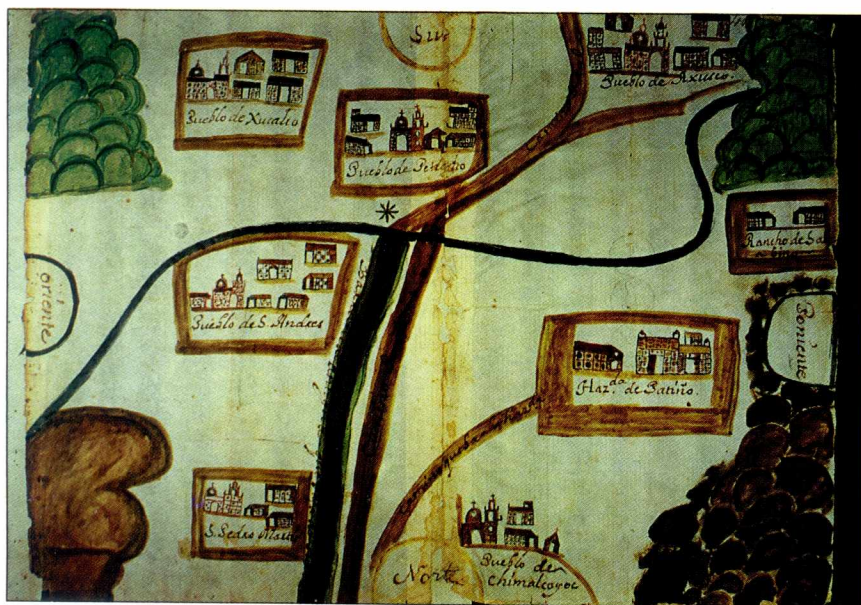
That there were *tlacuilos* of both sexes is attested to by the *Telleriano Remensis* codex, which shows a woman *tlacuila*. While no information is available on how women learned the trade, the likelihood is that they practiced it from childhood as members of painter-scribe families. It is also possible that codex painting was taught in the schools for women, called *ichpochcalli* (from *ichpochpiltontli*, maiden or girl).

It has so far been impossible to identify *tlacuilos* with specific individuals' names. Their work was anonymous; no matter how important or complex a codex or mural, the author's name was never referred to. This is particularly strange from a Western point of view, given that considerable creativity was involved.

² Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia general de las cosas de la Nueva España* (General History of the Things of New Spain), Mexico City, Porrúa, 1979, p. 329.

³ Fray Toribio de Benavente Motolinía, *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España* (History of the Indians of New Spain), Mexico City, Salvador Chávez Hayhde, 1941, p. 5.

⁴ Donald Robertson, *Mexican Manuscript Painting of the Early Colonial Period*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1959, p. 25.



Map of the Batiño Hacienda (Coyoacán), 1722.

Just as there were good *tlacuilos* who had the gift of combining aesthetic harmony with economy of expression, there were also mediocre ones. In Book X of his classic work, Sahagún noted:

The painter knows his trade, knows how to use colors, to draw and sketch images with charcoal and make a good mixture of colors; he knows how to mix them very well. The good painter has a good hand and grace in painting, carefully considers what he has to paint, shades the paintings well and knows how to make shadows, distance and foliage.

The bad painter is of bad and foolish temperament and thus is difficult and easily angered; he does not fulfill expectations for the work at hand, does not give luster to what he paints, shades poorly, and does not bring measure and proportion to what he paints, since he paints it rapidly.⁵

The Spanish tradition: scribes and notaries

The Spanish trade of scribe, the great tradition which combined with that of

the *tlacuilo* in 16th-century New Spain (as Mexico was known in Colonial times), had a very different history.

The original Middle Ages scribe was a weak figure with very little social prestige, at the service and under the protection of feudal lords or municipal councils. His trade has been the subject of scarce historical attention, although various laws and civil ordinances—some as early as the 4th and 5th centuries A.D.—laid out the rules to be observed by would-be scribes.

The profession was defined by the following events: In the year 317 Constantine established the validity of documents written by scribes, as well as the possibility of contesting their authenticity; in 378 Valente Graciano y Valentino reiterated such documents' validity. In 472 Emperor León I, known as "the Great," issued decrees regarding the evidential value of documents made by scribes. In medieval Constantinople, Justinian's legislative work *Novellae, Corpus Iuris Civilis* provided systematic norms for scribes' activity, and in the year 528 he issued what came to be known as the "Justinian Regulation of Scriveners' Documents." Notarial

assent was established in 537, and in 538 the testimonial admissibility of documents was defined. On the basis of the Justinian decrees, the scribe played a significant role in the evolution of legal systems, as his work was delineated through custom and the adaptation of relevant law to different locations, social changes and the needs of the moment.⁶

The scribe's profession was transmitted to the Americas, as an indispensable element in any legal activity. Thus scribes played a basic role from the first expeditions through the various stages of the Conquest and the Colonial era. Among the first documents signed by a scribe in New Spain were the "Military and Civil Ordinances of Tlaxcala" (1520).

During the Colonial period viceroys, governors and town councils provisionally appointed scribes, subject to approval by the Spanish Crown. While Iberian-born Spaniards occupied these posts in the early Colonial period, over time they were replaced by *criollos* ("Spaniards" born in the Americas).

There were different classes of scribes, exercising the profession in accordance with their given legal title. The most important of these were Royal Scribe, Public Scribe, Public Scribe of the Number, notary of belongings of persons deceased, mining scribes—and there were many more, in line with the intricacies of governmental and institutional policy in the colony. Indeed, each Colonial institution included a specialized person for each particular kind of clerking.

Those who wrote the many varieties of documents produced in the "king's house" were considered royal

⁶ The different Latin names given to scribes can be found in several of these laws: *tabellio, tabularis, scriba, cursor, logographus, amanuensis, grafarius, librarius, scribanus, cognitor, acturarius, exeptor, libetenses, refrendarius, consellarius* and *notarius*.

⁵ Sahagún, *Historia general...*, p. 554.

scribes, and as such could exercise their profession in any part of the king's territories, except where public scribes of the number had been appointed to function in towns and cities with a shortage of royal scribes. Public scribes of the number, or of towns and cities, were allowed to exercise their functions within a specific territory only. Scribes of the number obtained their appointment as a royal concession and were designated by a lay lord or an institution to which the king had granted that privilege. The warrant to exercise this profession could be purchased or inherited.

Scribes and writing in New Spanish and Indian societies: continuity or the beginning of a tradition?

The first years of New Spain's existence brought radical changes in Indian life. Spanish institutions were rapidly established in order to reproduce, on the colony's soil, social, political and religious structures from the Iberian peninsula.

During the early Colonial period the conquistadors tried to do away with everything related to pre-Hispanic customs: rites and ceremonies, ways of governing and virtually any activity that would recall the previous way of life. Through religion and coercion, the Spaniards' lifestyle was to be imposed.

As a result of these changes the indigenous elites —priests, chroniclers, *tlacuilos*, artisans and merchants— disappeared; they were replaced by Spanish specialists or forced to change their functions.

Those few artisans or tradesmen who managed to continue working in their field faced the challenge of adapting to the ideas, techniques and tools of the conquerors so as to be allowed to engage in types of work hitherto unknown to them —in addition to Spanish demands for rapid and optimal results.

The Spaniards nevertheless organized a teaching system in order

to get as much as they could out of the Indians. Able artisans and officials found it easy to learn new trades from Spanish teachers and to adapt old ones to new techniques.

Tlacuilos are a good illustration of this transition. The Spaniards took advantage of their ancestral knowledge and skills in order to teach them how to write in Latin characters and see that they continued to work as artisan painters, albeit with new methods. Thus, while *tlacuilos* who became Indian scribes learned Latin writing, the tradition of pictographic manuscripts continued, perhaps so as to gradually accustom the indigenous population to the change. Indigenous scribes took on the difficulties of the new writing, seeking to overcome them by taking advantage of the symbolic and phonetic nature of traditional writing, representing some expressions symbolically and others phonetically.

They were obliged to adapt their language to foreign terms, as well as to create new expressions in order to communicate more clearly and deal with topics related to religion, Catholic as well as heraldic iconography, and civil documentation.

The Colonial era saw the production of abundant genealogical documents which were crucial for requesting privileges; cartographic papers for the legalization of landed property; official complaints denouncing abuses or soliciting justice; wills, and other documents. Despite the damage wrought by time or intentional acts of destruction, samples of codices and documents from early Colonial times survive and give us an idea of the large number of *tlacuilos* or Indian scribes practicing their trade during that period.

Where did they learn how to speak and write the Spanish language? Again, the documentary evidence is scarce; but the probability is that they learned in religious schools with the assistance of village priests, or through contact with

Spanish scribes who employed them as assistants.

The Indians continued to make paintings and manuscripts, since such documents were useful to the civil and religious authorities. Codices were accepted as legal documents, and their production was encouraged during the 16th century. This cultural integration also meant changes in spoken and written language. At the same time that indigenous languages assimilated Spanish words, new expressions and words arose out of the fusion of the two cultures, as an adaptation to the institutional changes occurring in the Indian society of New Spain.

Teaching Indians to write

With the restoration of calm after the Conquest and the construction of basic Colonial institutions, the process of catechizing the Indian population began. Scholarly friars and other missionaries applied their knowledge in the recently conquered lands. Under the auspices of the Spanish Crown, they planned and experimented with new educational systems. They took advantage of the relatively free and improvisational atmosphere of the early Colonial period to apply the norms they upheld and transmit humanistic thinking, together with the mystique of their evangelizing mission.

Franciscan friars began the task by learning the languages of the colonized territories, none of which had any connection with European tongues. It was easier for them to learn Náhuatl or other indigenous languages than to attempt to teach Spanish to all of the conquered population. At the same time they considered the Latin used in prayers, sacraments and rote recitations of catechism to be essential for acculturation.

The religious orders working in New Spain were the Franciscans, Dominicans, Augustinians and, somewhat later, the Society of Jesus. The first three Franciscan evangelizers arrived from Spain in

1523, settling in Texcoco; two of them — Juan de Tecto and Juan de Aora— were priests, and the third was the lay brother Pedro de Gante. Twelve more arrived the following year, devoting themselves largely to education and establishing new norms for Indian youth with the objective of gaining converts to the Catholic religion.

The first schools in New Spain were founded by Franciscan friars. Fray Pedro de Gante founded a school for Indians in Texcoco, and in 1529 set up another —called San José de los Naturales (St. Joseph of the Natives)— as an annex to the convent of San Francisco in Mexico City. The Augustinians' foundation of a college in 1537 was followed three years later by Bishop Vasco de Quiroga's

creation of the San Nicolás Obispo college in Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, where teaching was carried out in the Purépecha language.

In 1536, under Franciscan direction, the Imperial College of Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco was inaugurated, with 60 Indian students who received a humanistic education including elements of European culture. "Enlightened" Indians also gave classes in this college, the objective being an interchange of knowledge between the Náhuatl and Spanish cultures.

The Imperial College was founded for the purpose of creating an indigenous clergy, but in 1555 the Ecclesiastic Council forbade the ordination of Indian priests. Faced with this loss of one of the main reasons for

Letrán college, which was founded in the mid-16th century. Thus the Spanish Crown's commitment to educating Indians declined after the relatively energetic efforts of early Colonial years.

The social utility of Indian scribes

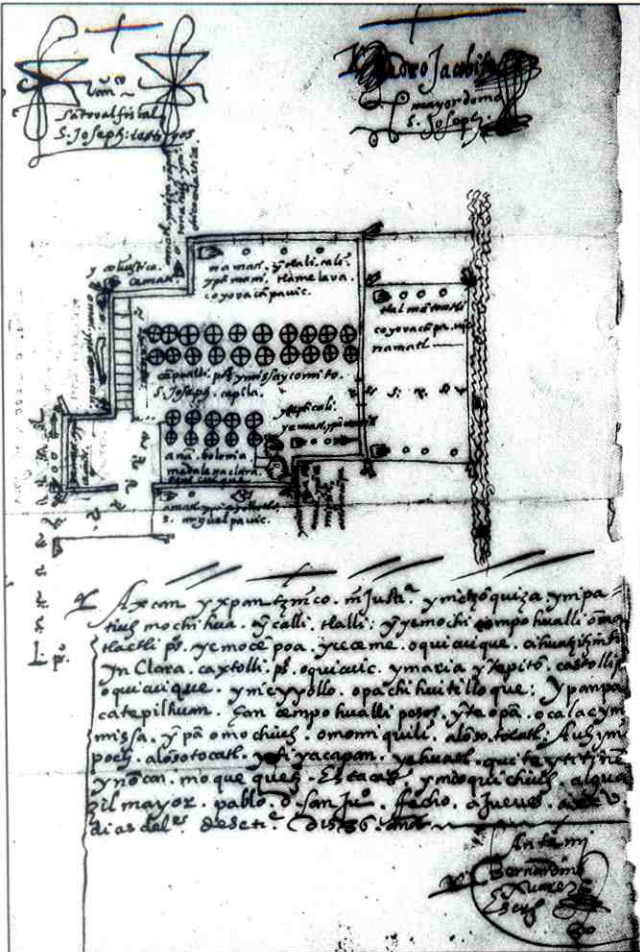
The young Indians educated in the clergy's schools and colleges became culturally differentiated from the rest of the community. They were therefore able to hold some public posts, whether helping the friars teach other young people or assisting in making or transcribing translations of books from Latin or Spanish into Náhuatl.

From very early on,⁷ in line with growing needs, young people who had learned to read and write were used to carry out tasks in churches, courts and town councils. Their work consisted of copying documents for local archives, taking town council minutes and, in some cases, writing wills.

The first Indian scribes—who arose from the mixture between the *tlacuilo* and the European scribe or notary—took on the challenge of the new form of written expression. They produced documents with unique characteristics resulting from the synthesis of two cultures, as can be seen in the examples illustrating this article, among them the testament which the *cihuapilli* Maria de Guzmán, feeling herself close to death, dictated to an indigenous scribe 413 years ago. Documents such as these, in addition to exemplifying "cultural syncretism," are valuable tools for learning about daily life during the birth of *mestizo*⁸ Mexico

the institution's existence, the Franciscans were able to obtain a royal grant of 500 pesos and a thousand *fanegas* (equivalent to about 2,500 bushels) of corn a year for feeding 150 to 200 children at the Santa Cruz boarding school. The corn came out of the tribute paid by villages close to Mexico City.

Until 1570, the Crown provided the San José de los Naturales college with an annual subsidy of 330 ducats. After that, efforts at Indian education were limited to the San Juan de



Codex-blueprint. Owners, house, lands, canals and measurements, 1586.

⁷ That is, beginning almost immediately after the incorporation of Indian communities into important towns or district capitals, where native administrative authorities were set up in accordance with economic and demographic criteria.

⁸ *Mestizo* denotes the mixture of races and cultures produced after the Spanish Conquest. (Editor's note.)

Where the stelae speak

Ana Leticia Vargas*

Calakmul, the city with the greatest number of stelae in Maya territory, faithfully reflects the level of perfection in stone sculpting achieved by our ancestors; this art reached its highest point after 500 A.D. The inscriptions in stone, of invaluable documentary value, relate the deeds of men who in order to survive resorted to war, matrimonial alliances, conquest and even self-sacrifice.

While, thanks to advances in epigraphic studies, we now know the names of various rulers in the Maya area, as well as the relations established between them, questions remain about the political-institutional life of many of these settlements.

Was Jaguar Claw, an important person born in Calakmul whose name is inscribed on stelae in various important sites, a dignitary whose ancestors came originally from this region?

Was the city of the "twin hills" (the meaning of *Calak*) an important political capital?

Is Calakmul the "Q Site" referred to in the inscriptions in El Perú, Dos Pilas and Tikal? Due to the poor condition of these monuments, epigraphers have not yet accepted such an association.

In order to be completely sure, the emblem glyph showing a serpent's head would have to be found on some of the walls and stairways of main buildings, as well as on stelae, says Ramón Carrasco. Since 1993, Carrasco has been in charge of salvage and research work in an area where

questions of dynastic history, evolution and development have been most enigmatic.

Up to the present, traces of the glyph have been found only on a polychrome vase and a fragment of a stairway, but not on any of the 120 stelae which line the city's roadways.

When the past reveals itself to us

Calakmul, considered one of the great cities of the Classic era, was one of the inheritors of the power of El Mirador (Guatemala), a city to the north of the central Maya area which was Tikal's great rival. Calakmul, first settled in the Late Pre-Classic period, expanded and flourished between the years 317 and 889 A.D. (that is, between 8.14.0.0.0 and 10.3.0.0.0, according to the Maya calendar).

This period of almost six centuries involved three hundred years of "expansion of the stelae, which were dated in Maya style, accompanied by a vaulted roof with projecting stones" and a period of "great activity and increasing refinement in architecture and the arts, at the same time that large religious buildings arose in the east and west regions of the central Maya area." The decline of that area began in the year 900, when the recording of Long Count inscriptions stopped and all organized religious activity ceased.¹

The zone was rediscovered a relatively short time ago. It was in 1931 that the American biologist

¹ Sylvanus G. Morley, *La civilización maya*, Mexico City, Fondo de Cultura Económica, (2nd ed., 7th printing), 1989, pp. 74, 77.



Thirteen of Calakmul's buildings are pyramids.

* Reporter for the National Institute of Anthropology and History, Media Office.



This bust may represent a Maya noble of the Classic period (250-800 A.D.).

Cyrus Lundell revealed the existence of this city, considered one of the largest in the Maya area.

Archeological salvage works began in 1982 under the direction of William J. Follan, a researcher from the University of Campeche (UAC). He carried out a study on the city's settlement pattern in order to get an idea of the size of the site, in which over 700 structures were found. The most important finds of the past decade—a tomb and one of the three jade masks now preserved in the Teniente del Rey Museum in the capital of Campeche—were discovered in Building VII, located in the central complex.

In October 1992, Calakmul became part of the Special Archeological Projects sponsored by the Presidency of the Republic. As part of the work program planned by the

project's director, "goals were set projecting over-all work on a group of structures and the establishment of their urban context, in order to provide a vision of the public areas as a whole."²

The Calakmul site is located in the Calakmul biosphere reserve, considered one of the country's largest with approximately 1.8 million acres of protected jungle. This area has the most important concentration of felines in all of North America. Jaguars, ocelots, wild cats, great anteaters as well as several species of monkeys and birds inhabit the reserve. In Calakmul there are trees of precious wood, including *ramonal*, *siricote*, *chakáh*, rubber trees, *chico zapote*, *palo mulato*, and *chechen negro*.

The zone, closed to tourism for the time being, is located about 250 miles southeast of the capital of Campeche, in the municipalities of Champotón and Holochehén. On the Escárcega-Chetumal highway, near the town of Conhuas, one encounters the turn-off connecting to a dirt road that leads to one of the most important settlements in the central Maya area, known for the abundance of its architecture and inscribed monuments. Carrasco notes that the deterioration of the inscriptions has stood in the way

² *Proyectos especiales de arqueología*, Mexico City, Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes/Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia/Fondo Nacional Arqueológico, 1993, pp. 10-11.

of the sort of epigraphic studies undertaken in Palenque, Yaxchilan, Tikal or Copan.

The site's main center was located on a dome of approximately 15 square miles surrounded by bays and seasonal streams. In the pre-Hispanic era the city had canals which provided water, as well as an adequate drainage system.

The city is characterized by the dispersal of the various groups of buildings, 13 of which are pyramidal. The monument area is located in the dome's main sector, "where they built both the two great pyramids which dominate the jungle (Structures I and II) and the palace complexes, in the fashion of great acropolises with their buildings constructed around patios and plazas."

Regarding the plan of the city, Carrasco points out: "The central area or plaza is made up of two sectors: one containing Buildings IV, V, VI and VIII, the other with Buildings II and V. Building II is the great pyramid, which dominates the group at the same time as it imparts a ceremonial or religious character to Building V, which divides the main plaza into two parts."

All the buildings in the main plaza have stelae or altars in front which must have contained the dynastic history of Calakmul's rulers. It is in this plaza that we find the largest number of stelae in the site: more than 55 of the 120 reported up to this time.

Six hundred feet north of the Main Plaza is another important group of buildings. Among the most outstanding are Building XI or the Ball Court, as well as Building XII and Building XIII, which was evidently looted twice, seemingly in the 1970s.

Since Ramón Carrasco became the director of the Calakmul Biosphere Archeological Project, aimed at carrying out research at the Nadzcan and Balamku sites and creating a tourist attraction south of Campeche, work has nearly been completed on Buildings IV, V, VIII, XI and XIII.

In pre-Hispanic geography, Calakmul was part of central Petén, a region which also included the cities of Nakum, Tikal and Uaxactún; these settlements shared a common history. Today it is located in the extreme south of the state of Campeche, about 20 miles from the Guatemalan border.

The most important work during this time, explains Carrasco, has involved establishing the sequence in which the monuments were built. This is the first step towards determining the sites' archeological chronology.

Excavations have yielded ceramic materials, cooking pots, cylindrical vases, knives, polychrome and monochrome dishes, bone and stone remains, as well as objects made of shell, jade and obsidian. In the process several "dedicatory offerings" have also been found, which tells us that specific ceremonies accompanied construction or modification of the buildings.

These offerings consist of large platters, called *Aguilas Naranjas* (Orange Eagles); joined together in the form of an urn, they were used as depositories for seashells and pieces of jade. Two of these (containing five varieties of seashells, small amulets in the shape of human beings—carved of jade, shell and pyrite—as well as jade fragments) recreate the origin of the Maya world.

A royal tomb was found in building IV, with elements associated with both the Early and Late Classic periods. Of the nine skeletons found, eight were of women, two of whom appear to have been decapitated. Carrasco explains that in the Maya worldview, the purpose of placing a sacrificed body inside a building was to endow the building with a soul.

How much do 20th-century scholars know about Calakmul? Important settlements from Petén and Río Bec made commercial contact with this site, whose twin city is El Mirador. Both centers flourished at the same time as Teotihuacan (located in Mexico's high plateau).

Calakmul was a center of productive, religious and artisan activity. In its buildings, whose architecture is similar to that of the Petén region, "one observes the complete domination of massive structures over the clear spaces; the walls are of enormous dimensions

and the rooms extremely small, communication with the outside was through only one door; there are neither arcades nor isolated structural supports."³

It shares architectural characteristics with other Maya cities which also arose in the Petén region, such as Uaxactún, which seems to have been one of the oldest; Tikal, considered the largest; and Nakum, located in the Holmul valley, next to the river of the same name.

"According to Morley ('The Inscriptions of Petén,' Appendix VI), the oldest dates are written on Stelae 43, 28 and 29. The first of these is found at the great pyramid and the other two at Building V, which faces the pyramid...." Stele 43 is dated 514 A.D. and the other two 623 A.D., indicating that this is probably the oldest part of the city. In general, the stelae represent "personages standing over captives, with a scepter in the right hand, luxurious clothing, serpentine headdress, feet apart 180 degrees, the body facing out and the face in profile, inclined slightly forward, together with numerous glyphs."⁴

The objects found in the pyramidal structures reveal the integration of ritual and domestic activity. The exceptions are Building VI, an enormous platform probably used for public events, and Building VIII, dedicated to astronomical observations.

During the Early (250-600 A.D.) and Late (600-800 A.D.) Classic periods, Calakmul played an important role in the regional politics of Petén—even influencing the fall of one of Tikal's most important lineages. "But what the forms of this interaction were and how it was that the rulers decided regional policy are questions which have yet to be answered," Ramón Carrasco observes.

³ Ignacio Marquina, *Arquitectura prehispánica*, Mexico City, INAH, 1990 (facsimile of the first edition), p. 509.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 575-576.




Calak means "twin hills."

Towards new tourist routes

The location of the archaeological zone within the Calakmul Biosphere Reserve has contributed to the development of a program which integrates ecological conservation, archeological works and socioeconomic aspects of the region. This is one of the sites where restoration should go hand in hand with nature, not against it. The preservation of the area's flora and fauna is an integral part of the project.

People from nearby towns have participated in the archeological works and ecological conservation. Both activities provide a source of employment, making it less likely that local farmers will hunt or fell trees as means of subsistence.

The Biosphere Archaeological Project is planned to include not only Calakmul but also the Balamku and Nadzcan sites. In terms of tourism, the plan is to establish a route beginning at Conhuas, the only area town with lodging and services for visitors. The idea is that to prevent the deterioration of the environment in the archaeological zones, visitors will leave the area once the tour is over.

During such a visit tourists will find themselves joined together with nature. The tour—on foot, bicycle or riding a pack animal—allows Calakmul to continue to be what our ancestors desired: a human treasure in the midst of the jungle, which still reigns over the land, water and air of southeast Campeche. 

Quebec at the end of the 20th century

Robin Berting *

This year there will be a referendum on Quebec independence. In an era of international economic globalization, and in one of the freest and most prosperous countries in the world, the question is why such a strong nationalist movement exists in Quebec.

Rather than guessing Quebec's future, my goal here is an understanding of the province's past, especially the last thirty years, which should help explain this movement's origins and destination.

I argue that in spite of what one might think, the Quebec nationalist movement is strong now *not* because the French language is in danger—it is doing better now than it ever has in the past—but because nationalists are winning the struggle over the identity of Quebecers. This is largely due to actions taken by the Quebec state, which have had a direct influence in shaping the nature of the region's society, and consequently in forming the identity of its inhabitants.

From "conservation" to modern Quebec nationalism

Before the 1960s, francophone Quebec—or should we say French Canada?—was more traditional,

devoutly Catholic and generally much more conservative than the Quebec society of today. Some people have compared it to traditional Latin American societies. Yet unlike Latin America there was no prosperous, dominant business class amongst French-speaking Quebecois.

Due to the English conquest of France's North American colonies, the anglophone minority—centered in the western third of Montreal and comprising 15 to 20 percent of the province's population—generally controlled business, commerce and industry.

The dominant nationalism in Quebec reflected the conservative nature of society at that time. The French language, the Catholic Church and family values were to be defended against the "corrupting" liberal influences of Anglo-Saxon North America and of the various ethnic groups that immigrated to Montreal from around the world. Still, in concrete terms, the tenets of this nationalism did little to defend francophones' interests in the face of their English-Canadian or foreign bosses. Quebec governments allowed foreign control of the most important sectors of the economy, seeing this as the only way to develop the area, since there was no French-Canadian capital, and on numerous occasions attacked the rights of workers, the vast majority of whom were francophones.

In spite of this situation, Quebec changed dramatically over the years. Industrialization, which brought urbanization with it, changed the rural nature of society, and new modernizing tendencies grew rapidly after the Second World War, culminating in the "Quiet Revolution" of the 1960s. The Liberal Party, led by Jean Lesage, defeated the old and reactionary *Union Nationale* which had governed since the 1930s, and replaced the latter's conservative nationalism with a much more modern view of society.

In 1962, with the nationalization of private electric companies, Hydro Québec was born. As was the case in Mexico when oil was nationalized in 1938, this action allowed the Quebec state to control the province's most important natural resource. Important reforms were also enacted in areas such as education and health.

Influenced by these political changes as well as trends from throughout the industrialized world, Quebec society underwent a major transformation during the 1960s. The standard of living increased, a new middle class—mainly comprised of employees of the expanding Quebec welfare-state bureaucracy—grew dramatically, social values changed, the birth rate declined from one of the highest to one of the lowest in the world, and the church lost virtually all its influence over society.

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The modernizers split into two main factions, while “conservative nationalism” virtually disappeared. One new tendency emphasized pan-Canadian federalism, promoting bilingualism and Canadian unity through the actions of the Canadian state; its main supporters participated in the federal Liberal Party. The other modernizing tendency, the new Quebec nationalism, called for the political independence of Quebec and the establishment of French as the province’s only official language; its main political outlet became the then social-democratic *Parti Québécois*.

Here we should draw a distinction between the new and old Quebec nationalism. The latter was based on ethnicity (that is, on *la nation canadienne française*, the “French-Canadian nation”), whereas the former is based on territory (i.e., the area covered by the Quebec state). The new nationalism welcomes immigrants from different horizons, as long as they accept that French is the main language of communication in Quebec, whereas the old nationalism basically rejected interaction with other ethnic groups.

In addition, the new nationalism was originally left of center, emphasizing workers rights; the Parti Québécois (PQ) received the support of the Quebec labor movement; and state intervention in the economy was considered essential for local development. In spite of many years of regional support to the Liberal Party in federal elections—in the absence of a nationalist alternative—modern Quebec nationalism has had more direct influence over local society than did the pan-Canadian federalism of the federal Liberal Party.

It should nevertheless be emphasized that neither vision dominates Quebec society completely.

In fact, a typical francophone Quebecker shares elements of both, in a rather ambiguous way, considering him or herself a nationalist and voting for the PQ, for example, while cheering when an English Canadian wins a gold medal in the Olympics; such a person might identify him or herself as a Canadian when travelling abroad.

The state as the motor of social change

In 1976, when the PQ won the provincial elections, its declared goals included making French the official language and holding a referendum on Quebec independence. In 1977, the first goal was achieved with the passing of Bill 101, the “Charter of the French Language.” This law encouraged the use of French in the workplace, made it mandatory for francophone children—as well as those of immigrants—to attend francophone schools, and prohibited the use of languages other than French in commercial signs. The goal of holding a referendum was achieved in 1980, but the “no” vote won 60 percent and Quebec independence was blocked. However, the PQ won the next Quebec elections and stayed in power until 1985, when the Liberal Party returned to office.

Even though the party did not achieve Quebec independence, the PQ’s eight years in office, mainly under René Lévesque, left their mark on the province. There was an exodus of much of the province’s anglophone community—about 250,000 out of less than a million Anglos left Quebec in the late 1970s. Many important corporations moved their head offices from Montreal to Toronto or elsewhere. This exodus, along with Bill 101 and its encouragement of French as the language of business, meant that francophones could fill the

void, especially by occupying the branch offices that replaced the departed company head offices. New francophone private enterprises also emerged, forming what came to be called “Quebec, Inc.” In addition to already established companies like the Power Corporation and Bombardier, giants like Lavalin, Quebecor, the Banque Nationale, Laurentienne and the Desjardins Group appeared. The business elite was no longer exclusively English-speaking.

Another result of Bill 101, especially the section dealing with the education of newcomers’ children, was that immigrants began to integrate into francophone society much more than before, at the expense of the English community. In the past, about 75 percent of new arrivals would integrate into the minority anglophone society and only 25 percent into the francophone majority. Now the numbers have been reversed. Demographically speaking, Quebec is more francophone than ever before. In addition, the terms of political debate have changed in Quebec, with most of the PQ’s achievements recognized as permanent, as the fact that the ruling Quebec Liberal Party has not tried to undo most PQ legislation attests. Only some segments of the anglophone minority, especially through the Equality Party and Alliance Quebec, have fought vigorously against the provisions of Bill 101.

One result of these social and political changes is the new perception that Quebecois have of themselves. Of course, the process is largely related to the changes brought about in a previous period by the “Quiet Revolution,” but the language laws have intensified these shifts by changing the socio-linguistic nature of Quebec. If one looks at Quebeckers’ identity in historical perspective, the

1960s prove to have been crucial. When the English defeated the French at the Plains of Abraham in 1759, the inhabitants of what is now Quebec called themselves *les canadiens*.

With the conquest, this term came to represent specifically the French-speaking inhabitants of Canada, as the English speakers were considered *les anglais* (the English). As time passed and English speakers came to consider themselves as much Canadians as the French speakers did, francophones began to refer to themselves as *canadiens français*. With the coming of the Quiet Revolution and all its social implications in the 1960s, that term became associated with the old, traditional Quebec society and thus acquired pejorative connotations. The new term *québécois* was born, associated with the new modern nationalism, and is used unconditionally by Quebec nationalists today. In addition, virtually all Quebeckers, except for some elderly people, identify themselves as Québécois and not *canadiens* or *canadiens français*. This change in identity can be attributed as much to shifts in local society encouraged by the Quebec state as to any other factors.

I do not contend that Quebeckers have neither real nor imagined insecurities regarding the survival of their language and culture, which contribute to their nationalist sentiments. Many francophones, in regions like the West Island of Montreal and the Ottawa river valley, are virtual minorities in their own communities. Moreover, the province's extremely low birth rate and declining population, in relation to the rest of Canada, are seen as highly worrisome. However, many Québécois overestimate the dangers to their language. For example, there is still a

widespread perception that immigrants tend to integrate into the anglophone community despite many studies which have proven the contrary.

What I do contend is that it is the perception that Quebeckers have of themselves that explains the nationalist movement's strength. It is interesting to note that the best-known demand of the failed Meech Lake Constitutional Accord was that Quebec be recognized as a "Distinct Society" within Canada. When public opinion in English Canada turned against the accord, many Québécois took this very personally, as a rejection of who they were, a lack of recognition of their collective identity.

Here's another example of this perception: on June 24 every year, St. Jean Le Baptiste Day—Quebec's national holiday (*fête nationale*)—hundreds of thousands parade in the streets of Montreal with Québécois flags; a week later, July 1 (Canada day) about twenty thousand people march with Canadian flags, and they're mainly anglophones.

I should emphasize that this transformation of identity has not been complete, and many ambiguities still exist. An anecdote emphasizes this point: in June 1993 I went to see Leonard Cohen give a concert at the Montreal Forum. The night before, in the same place, the city's hockey team, named *Le Canadien de Montréal*, had won the Stanley Cup. After the victory, two or three hundred thousand fans celebrated in the streets. Unfortunately, a minority of two or three thousand committed acts of vandalism and looting. Because there were so many innocent people present, the police couldn't do anything; from about 11 p.m. to 4 a.m. millions of dollars worth of goods and property were stolen or damaged, and it was all televised live and shown on the news

around the world. Montreal's reputation was tarnished and most Montrealers were thoroughly ashamed of the incident.

The next day at the concert, Cohen—an anglophone Montrealer who speaks French well, sings in English, and is adored by francophones and anglophones alike—made no verbal references to the hockey game or its aftermath. Near the end of the concert, however, he put on a *Canadiens* jersey. The crowd, a mix of francophones and anglophones—mostly intellectual types in their thirties or forties—went absolutely wild applauding Cohen. In spite of the shame that the aftermath of the game meant for Montrealers, they were all extremely proud of their hockey team, which has a long tradition of winning the Stanley Cup, going back to the beginning of the century.

One might say that the team represents all Montrealers, and it does, but I would argue that the symbolic representation of the team is different in each linguistic community. Since *Le Canadien* was founded at the beginning of the century, for francophones, declared nationalists or not, the name and the team itself, as a cultural institution, represent francophone Québécois. Its nickname is *Les Habitants* (the inhabitants), the old word used to describe French-Canadian peasants. It is the only team in which a majority have usually been francophone Quebeckers; and back in the 1920s and 1930s the city's English-speaking community had its own team, the Montreal Maroons.

On the other hand, from the perspective of English-speaking Montrealers and thousands of English Canadians across the country, the team is a Canadian institution—in the bilingual sense—as much as it is a

francophone Quebec institution: it is called the Canadiens and its uniform is mainly red, the color of the Canadian flag. In fact, the team has thousands of fanatic supporters all across the country, in places like Winnipeg and Vancouver, who cheer it on even when it plays against their own home teams.

The challenge of economic globalization

The changes in Quebec society provide elements making it possible to reconcile nationalism and globalization. Due to the growth of a francophone business class, many Quebec nationalists have no problem with economic globalization. In fact, resistance to the Free Trade Agreement in the 1988 federal election was much stronger in English

Canada than in Quebec, which registered a massive vote for the pro-free trade Conservative Party in an election that was basically a referendum on the commercial treaty with the United States.

In spite of a certain degree of linguistic paranoia vis à vis the rest of Canada, Quebecers are—rightly or wrongly—much less fearful than English Canadians of the danger of being swallowed up by the United States. Regarding free trade with Mexico, Quebecers are also more sanguine than English Canadians, largely because they share a number of cultural traits with Latin Americans.

I don't know whether it's true, but advertisements put out by the Alliance Française here in Mexico City say 60 percent of Canadian trade with

Mexico is through Québécois companies. In addition, Quebec nationalists contend that there is no contradiction between political independence and economic integration. Small states can prosper in an increasingly global economy. They often cite the European Community as an example of an ideal relationship which Quebec and the rest of Canada should try to achieve.

While I personally doubt that independence will be achieved this year—as too many Quebecers are still afraid of the negative economic results it might bring about, and there still exist many institutional and even emotional ties with the rest of Canada—there is no doubt that Quebec is steadily becoming more *québécois* and less Canadian. **M**

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6. Ability to understand and communicate in Spanish is not essential, but it is an asset.

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The right to die

Verónica Vázquez García *

The Sue Rodríguez case

On September 30, 1993, Canada's Supreme Court denied Sue Rodríguez the right to die with the assistance of a health-care professional. She had lateral amyotrophic sclerosis, an incurable disease characterized by progressive muscular paralysis ending with death by asphyxiation in a maximum period of three years.

Her specific request was that a health-care professional provide her with the adequate technological means to painlessly end her life when she chose to do so, and that the person assisting her not be prosecuted under the law for having helped someone die. By the narrow margin of four votes in favor and five opposed, the court decided against her.

Her illness was diagnosed in August 1991, when she was almost forty years old. In November of 1992 she asked the federal government that when health-care workers help incurably ill people commit suicide, such actions not be considered illegal. In December of the same year Sue Rodríguez took her case to the Supreme Court of British Columbia, where she lived. The court denied the right to assisted suicide on two occasions, after the first decision was appealed.

In March 1993 the Canadian Parliament rejected an initiative to consider the legalization of euthanasia

and assisted suicide, with 25 votes in favor and 140 against. In May of that year Sue Rodríguez took her case to the Canadian Supreme Court.

She based her argument on Article Seven of the Bill of Rights and Liberties, which protects each person's right to life, liberty and security, but in September the case was lost. John Sopinka, one of the judges who voted no, argued that the duty of the Bill of Rights and Liberties is to protect the "sanctity of life."

Sue died on February 12, 1994, defying the court's decision. According to police, the cause of death was assisted suicide. Her family and friends avoid speaking of the events and refuse to name the doctor involved. Svend Robinson, Member of Parliament from the New Democratic Party, also ignored the court's decision and was one of the two people with Sue at the moment of her death.

The case of Sue Rodríguez received widespread attention from the media, government officials, academics and grass-roots organizations. The press made her one of 1993's most popular personalities and called her case the most important event of the year at the Supreme Court.

For his part, Minister of Justice Allan Rock asserted that the court's decision regarding Sue Rodríguez' petition made a reevaluation of the government's position on euthanasia

necessary. Nation-wide doctors' organizations called a public debate, and the academic milieu defined the right to die and assisted suicide as "the most important moral question of the '90s."

Newspapers were filled with letters for and against Sue Rodríguez' right to die; meanwhile, Erwin Kirckhahn, a 51-year-old man with the same illness, invited reporters to his public suicide as a way of protesting the court's decision. He later retracted his invitation and said he would commit suicide privately. Kirckhahn died several months later of natural causes.

Organizations' view of the case

From the beginning, Sue Rodríguez received moral and economic support from the Right to Die Society of Canada, the British Columbia Coalition of People with Disabilities and the Dying with Dignity group, among others.

These organizations defend the desire of a patient to die in order to end an incurable illness, uncontrollable pain or suffering. They argue that the quality of life should be considered when medical treatment is provided. The people who provide such treatment should take into account the degree of suffering it will cause a patient, instead of attempting to prolong life under any circumstance.

These organizations affirm that the individual should have control over their death, in the same way that they should have control over their life. They defend the right to die in a dignified manner and at a time chosen

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The objective of this essay is to show the contradiction between laws regarding euthanasia and assisted suicide and the reality of daily life in Canada.

by the person in question. As Sue Rodríguez herself put it two days before the court's final decision, "If I can't decide about my own death, whose body is it? Whose life is it?"

These groups also consider it discriminatory against the physically handicapped that they are not allowed to seek assistance to do what other people can do without help (commit suicide).

On the other side, organizations supporting the Supreme Court decision against Sue Rodríguez included the Evangelical Protestant church, the Roman Catholic church, Alliance for Life, Campaigne Québec-Vie (Quebec Life Campaign) and Pacific Physicians for Life. Some give purely religious arguments, such as that only God has the right to take life. They state their opposition to the "culture of death" and the "destruction of the human race." Indeed, Pope John Paul II celebrated the court's decision against Sue Rodríguez.

Other organizations, above all those of doctors opposed to euthanasia and assisted suicide, oppose these practices due to the impact that they might have on medical services. They argue that euthanasia and assisted suicide could become a way to save on medical expenses, at the cost of the most vulnerable patients.

Implications of the Sue Rodríguez case

Beyond the groups that demonstrated in an organized way in favor or against assisted suicide in the case of Sue Rodríguez, opinion polls show that three out of four Canadians are in favor of the freedom to choose the time of one's own death.

An anonymous poll carried out among doctors across the country by the newspaper *La Presse* found that more than 60 per cent favored legalizing euthanasia. The Canadian Medical Association also reported that 60 per cent of Canadian doctors favor euthanasia and assisted suicide.

Nevertheless, pro-life groups are very effective in making themselves heard around these questions. The same is true with abortion, where despite the fact that three fourths of Canadian society favors a woman's right to choose what happens with her own body, groups opposed to abortion rights act in such a determined way that it seems as if they speak for all Canadians.

This has immobilized officials in the face of calls to legalize abortion. According to some analysts, it is likely that the same will happen with euthanasia and assisted suicide. Thus one of the effects of the Sue Rodríguez case is to shed light on contradictions between the laws that govern Canadian citizens and majority opinion.

A second effect is that the many unreported cases of euthanasia and assisted suicide carried out under poor conditions have begun to be a topic of discussion. The theme of euthanasia inevitably arose at the annual congress of the Canadian Medical Association in August 1993. Doctor Baodway, among others, stated that euthanasia is practiced daily in Canada, even though doctors don't talk about it.

Russel Ogden, a post-graduate student at Simon Fraser University, made public a report on cases of assisted suicide in Canada between 1980 and 1993. He speaks of the risks that assisted suicides run when helped by unqualified persons. The most serious is inadequate administration of medications, which can cause irreversible brain damage or a comatose state where the patient does not die. As eloquently stated by Ruth Lehman, a woman who decided to commit suicide, it is time that these subjects to come "out of the closet" in order to be openly aired.

Both effects make it urgent that governmental initiatives adapt the laws to the reality of Canadians' everyday life. Some tendencies in that direction can now be seen. For example, in October 1993 the reporter Anne Mullens received a grant to

study the legal framework which should be adopted regarding euthanasia and assisted suicide.

In the same month, during his electoral campaign, Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien said he favored discussion in the Parliament on the right to die, repeating this several days after the death of Sue Rodríguez. In August 1993 Noel Doig, president of the ethics committee of Canada's Medical Association, stated that his organization would examine the question of euthanasia and assisted suicide over the course of a year, defining their position and making suggestions on regulations. Finally, on January 20, 1994 Senator Joan Neiman asked the Senate to form an ethics committee to study the question of euthanasia and assisted suicide. One month later the Minister of Justice, Allan Rock, promised to introduce the debate into Parliament.

In British Columbia, on November 4, 1993 a series of guidelines were formulated for dealing with future cases of assisted suicide. The province did not depenalize euthanasia or assisted suicide, but the new guidelines give judges greater freedom to decide whether doctors involved in cases of euthanasia or assisted suicide should be charged with a crime. A doctor may now prevent their patient from experiencing emotional or physical pain, even if that action causes death, without penal risk. The new law declares that human life should be protected, but not "at any cost." It permits the doctor the decision to allow death with dignity.

Yet it must not be forgotten that cases like that of Sue Rodríguez, whom the Supreme Court denied the right to die, will happen again if Parliament fails to take a clear position on euthanasia and assisted suicide. As Svend Robinson said a few days after Sue Rodríguez' death: "The politicians can't continue hiding behind the courts and a law that was written in 1892." M

GOP \$\$\$ talked; did voters listen?

Thomas Ferguson *

Down through the ages, survivors of truly epic catastrophes have often recounted how their first, chilling presentiment of doom arose from a dramatic reversal in some feature of ordinary life they had always taken for granted. In his memorable account of the destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum by an eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79, Pliny the Younger remarks how, in the hours before the volcano's final explosion, the sea was suddenly "sucked away and apparently forced back... so that quantities of sea creatures were left stranded on dry sand."

Sudden, violent changes in an ocean of money around election time are less visually dramatic than shifts in the Bay of Naples. But long before the Federal Election Commission (FEC) unveils its final report on the financing of the 1994 midterm elections, it is already clear that in the weeks before the explosion that buried alive the Democratic Party, changes in financial

flows occurred that were as remarkable as anything Pliny and his terrified cohorts witnessed 2,000 years ago: a sea of money that had long been flowing reliably to Congressional Democrats and the party that controlled the White House abruptly reversed direction and began gushing in torrents to Republican challengers.

Throughout most of the 1993-94 election cycle a reversal of these proportions seemed about as likely as the sudden extinction of two important Roman towns did to Pliny's contemporaries. The Republican Party, virtually everyone agreed, normally enjoyed a lopsided overall national advantage in campaign fundraising. But in Congress, incumbency was decisive. Because big business, the Democratic Party's putative opponent, ultimately preferred "access" to "ideology," Democratic Congressional barons could reliably take toll—enough to make them all but invulnerable for the indefinite future.

In addition, the Democrats now also controlled the White House. By comparison with its recent past, the party was thus exquisitely positioned to raise funds for the '94 campaign. The party could extract vast sums of "soft money" (funds allegedly raised for state and local purposes but in fact closely coordinated with national campaigns) from clients (i.e.,

patrons) in the business community. It could also exploit the unrivaled advantages occupants of the Oval Office enjoy in hitting up big-ticket individual contributors.

The glib contrast between access and ideology was always at best a half-truth. Particularly if one reckons over several election cycles, the differences in total contributions flowing to Democratic leaders who literally opened for business, such as former House Ways and Means chairman Dan Rostenkowski, and populist mavericks like outgoing House Banking Committee chairman Henry Gonzalez, are quite fabulous. Between 1982 and 1992, for example, FEC figures indicate that Rostenkowski succeeded in raising more than \$4 million in campaign funds. Over the same period, Gonzalez's campaigns took in less than \$700,000. (Among Democratic Congressional leaders, Rostenkowski's was far from a record-setting pace. Not including funds formally raised for his forays into presidential politics, Richard Gephardt, formerly House majority leader and now minority leader, raised over \$7 million in the same stretch.)

Differences of this order demonstrate that in the long run, access eventually results in favorable policy outcomes or the money goes

The Republican Party is traditionally referred to as the "Grand Old Party."

This essay was adapted by *The Nation* from the author's *Golden Rule: The Investment Theory of Parties and the Logic of Money-Driven Politics*. Copyright 1995 by the University of Chicago Press.

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elsewhere. Airy talk about mere "access" also subtly diverted attention from the historically specific stages of the accommodation between the Democrats and big business as the New Deal system died its painful, lingering death of 1,000 contributions.

Early reports by the FEC for the 1993-94 election cycle appeared to confirm the conventional wisdom. In August, the FEC released a survey of national party fundraising efforts, which indicated that the Republicans were continuing to cling to their overall lead. Fundraising by the national Democratic Party, however, was up by 34 percent compared with the same period in 1991-92, when George Bush was President.

In the bellwether category of soft money (one of the best available indicators of sentiment among America's largest investors), the contrast was even sharper: Democratic receipts had doubled, to \$33 million, while for the Grand Old Party (GOP) receipts were down 28 percent, to a mere \$25 million.

Early statistics on Congressional races showed much the same trend. One FEC report released during the summer showed the early flow of contributions to Democratic candidates in all types of races (incumbents, challengers and, especially, open seats) running well above 1992 levels. By contrast, House Republican candidates in all categories of races trailed their Democratic counterparts in median total receipts. Other FEC statistics also indicated that in House races corporate political action committees (PACs) were tilting sharply in favor of Democrats.

As late as October, reports continued to circulate in the media of persisting large Democratic advantages in fundraising in regard

both to Congressional races and soft money.

By then, however, little puffs of smoke were appearing over Mount Vesuvius. Leaks in the press began to appear suggesting that the Republicans, led by the redoubtable Newt Gingrich, were staging virtual revivals with enthusiastic corporate donors, lobbyists and especially PACs.

On November 2 came what could have become the first public premonition of the coming sea change: new figures for soft money published by the FEC indicated that between June 30 and October 19, the Democrats had only managed to raise the almost laughable sum of \$10 million, while the Republicans had pulled down almost twice that much. Alas, the media and most analysts concentrated on each party's now closely similar take over the full two-year cycle. No one asked what had happened to dry up money to the Democrats in a period in which most observers still took for granted continued Democratic control of at least the House. Neither did anyone think to project the new trend, which was undoubtedly gathering momentum in the final, delirious weeks of fundraising as the GOP scented victory.

Two days later, the commission published data on Congressional races through October 19. Though almost no one noticed, the new data pointed to a startling turnabout: funds to House Republican challengers and candidates for open seats were now pouring in at twice the rate of 1992. Democratic totals were up only slightly, save for a somewhat larger rise among candidates in races for open seats (which, unlike 1992, left Democrats' median receipts well behind their GOP rivals). The ceaseless drumbeating by Newt

Gingrich and other Republicans was beginning to pay off. Only a few months before, corporate PACs investing in House races had been sending 60 percent of their funds to Democrats. By October, however, the PACs, along with other donors, were swinging sharply to the GOP.

The trend was strongest where it probably mattered most: in races waged by challengers and candidates for open seats. A study by Richard Keil of the Associated Press (AP) indicates that in 1992 PACs as a group favored Democratic challengers and open-seat aspirants by a two-to-one margin. By October 1994, however, the AP found that PACs had switched dramatically. More than half their donations to challengers and open-seat contestants were going to GOP candidates. (The AP figures are for all PACs. They thus include contributions from labor PACs, which give lopsidedly to Democrats. The real size of the shift within the business community and related ideological PACs is, accordingly, significantly understated.)

Pressed by Gingrich, who wrote what the AP described as a "forceful memo" on the subject to would-be Republican leaders of the new House, the GOP also made efficient use of another emergency fundraising vehicle: the shifting of excess campaign funds from Republican incumbents with a high probability of re-election. Additional last-minute spending against Democratic candidates also appears to have come from organizations "independent" of the parties but favoring issues firmly associated with Gingrich and the Republicans, such as the recently founded Americans for Limited Terms.

With so many races hanging in the balance (the Republicans, in the end, garnered only 50.5 percent of

the total vote, according to a study by Stanley Greenberg for the Democratic Leadership Council, DLC), the tidal wave of late-arriving money surely mattered a great deal. The AP's striking analysis of the effects of this blitz underscores just how wide of the mark were the establishment pundits who rushed to claim that "money can't buy everything" in the wake of (razor thin) defeats suffered by high-visibility, high-spending Republican Senate candidates in California and Virginia.

The AP examined sixteen House contests decided by four percentage points or less. Campaign funds from Republican incumbents to other Republican candidates came in at three times the rate of donations from Democratic incumbents to their brethren. The Republicans won all sixteen races. Even more impressive, of the 146 Republicans who the AP estimated had received \$100,000 or more in PAC donations, 96 percent were victorious—a stunning result when one reflects that much of the late money was clearly funneled into close races.

Most election analysts in the United States habitually confuse the sound of money talking with the voice believe of the people. Thus it was only to be expected that as they surveyed the rubble on the morning after the elections, many commentators gleefully broad-jumped to the conclusion that the electorate had not merely voted to put the Democratic Party in Chapter 11 but had also embraced Newt Gingrich's curious Contract With America. But the evidence is very strong that "it's still the economy, stupid," and that the 1994 elections were essentially the kind of massive no-confidence vote that would have brought down the

government in a European-style parliamentary system.

Let us start with some obvious, if once again relatively neglected, facts. As an anointed representative of massive blocs of money, Newt Gingrich may indeed be on his way to becoming a figure of towering significance in American politics. But until the sunburst of publicity that followed the elections, he was just another face in the crowd to most Americans. In a Yankelovich poll of 800 adults taken for *Time/CNN* immediately following the vote, 68 percent of respondents said they were not familiar with Gingrich. (Another 3 percent were unsure of their response; of those who were, slightly more people—16 percent versus 13 percent—viewed him unfavorably rather than favorably.)

It is true that a few late Democratic ads targeted the Contract With America and that the White House briefly attacked it. Both the Contract itself was essentially an inside-the-Beltway gimmick, publicized in the closing weeks of the campaign to answer the charge—coming mostly from desperate rival elites who saw all too clearly what was happening—that the GOP stood for nothing in its own right, and was simply trying to win by opposing Clinton and the Democrats. Based on what we know about the way ideas play off personalities in American politics, it is hard to believe that in such a short, distracted time-stretch the Contract could have become much more visible or attractive than Gingrich himself.

Nor does survey evidence about the public's attitudes support sweeping claims about a sharp new right turn by the mass public. Virtually all the polls released so far rely on various forms of so-called

"forced choice" questions. Because these squeeze the respondent to make choices between alternatives selected by the survey designer, they are not always a happy tool for sorting out views and opinions that were actually important to voters as they made up their minds from the welter of other convictions they have. (For example, it does not automatically follow that because voters do not care for a President's foreign policies, their distaste will carry over to their voting decisions. Many may simply vote their pocketbooks.)

Forced-choice questions also lend themselves to misinterpretation, by posing options that the electorate (or pollsters) may not realize are in fact incompatible, or by omitting alternatives that voters consider important. Depending on which responses receive emphasis, the electorate can appear to be moving in almost any direction.

Eighty-five percent of those interviewed in the Yankelovich poll, for example, attached a "high priority" to reducing the federal budget deficit. Seventy-five percent attached a similar priority to a constitutional amendment to balance the budget. Fifty-four percent agreed that legislation to limit the terms of members of Congress to twelve years was also a "high priority" item; 82 percent thought tougher law-enforcement legislation was also. The same poll showed that large majorities favor placing a "high priority" on actions to limit welfare payments (66 percent) and legislation authorizing a line-item veto for the President (59 percent).

But this particular survey (which is quite well crafted, by the standards of the trade) did not ask voters a number of other questions. Respondents were not asked, for

example, whether they ranked deficit reduction above economic growth. In all polls known to me, whenever that question is asked, growth is the landslide winner.

Nor was the public asked its views about cutting Social Security or the wisdom of making many specific budget cuts (for example, in Medicare and Medicaid) that the affluent sponsors of the balanced budget are seeking to impose by what is, in reality, stealth. (In a post-election poll by Greenberg for the DLC of people who said they had voted, 62 percent indicated that protecting Social Security and Medicare should be either the “single highest” or one of the “top few” priorities of the President and next Congress. Sixteen percent placed increasing military spending within those two categories.) Gingrich and the GOP’s stalwart opposition to raising the minimum wage is also unlikely to echo strongly with most Americans.

One also needs to remember that many Americans have been ideologically conservative and pragmatically liberal for decades. At no time before, during or after the New Deal, were new taxes, more bureaucracy or “big government” ever anyone’s idea of shrewd political appeals. This is one of several reasons for skepticism about the meaning of the discovery by Greenberg that if respondents are forced to choose between “traditional Democrats who believe government can solve problems and protect people from adversity” and “New Democrats who believe government should help people equip themselves to solve their own problems,” 66 percent say they identify with the latter.

To the extent that the answer does not reflect unalloyed familiarity with Beltway buzzwords, I suspect

strongly that one would find roughly the same pattern of responses at any point in the high New Deal. (Who now remembers, for example, that in the very first Gallup Poll, published in 1935, 60 percent of respondents said too much money was being spent on “relief and recovery”?) On the other hand, Greenberg’s survey shows clearly enough that, whatever the public mood about government action (which, as indicated below, has hardened), a majority of respondents flatly reject what certainly qualifies as the guiding idea of the Contract With America, that “government should leave people alone to solve their own problems.”

Nor is this all. Fifty-four percent of respondents in the Yankelovich poll also came out for tougher legislation to regulate lobbying, which Gingrich staunchly opposed as he solicited corporate cash. (This news was reported in a pre-election leak to *The Washington Post*; a Democratic Party less hopelessly mortgaged to pecuniary interests could have trumpeted it until the heavens resounded.) Forty-five percent also indicated campaign finance reform as another “high priority.” In the great tradition of predictive social science, one can venture that Mount Vesuvius will freeze over before House Republicans offer anything except cosmetics on this decisive issue.

Surveys also suggest that the Clinton Administration’s own Rube Goldberg scheme for health care reform did finally become unpopular with many voters. In the later stages of the mammoth onslaught against health care reform by industry groups, opinion also wavered on related health issues. Still, 72 percent of those polled by Yankelovich wanted health care “reform” to be a “high priority” in the next Congress. Health care reform

also topped all other responses in the poll when respondents were asked to pick one issue as the top priority of the new Congress. Whatever senses of “reform” respondents read into those questions, most surely intend something quite different from anything Gingrich and the new GOP majority in Congress have in mind.

More abstract—and hence, perhaps, less clear-cut—indicators also show no sudden new turn to starboard. While Election Day surveys do not exhaust the complicated question of how the public labels itself, the party identification figures in the (very large) *New York Times* Election Day exit poll actually moved the wrong way for a new “right turn” hypothesis: this year the percentage of self-described Democrats was 41 percent, compared with 38 percent in 1992. (The percentage of self-described Republicans did not change, while the percentage of Independents dropped 1 percent.)

Based on the percentages of the population who—in contrast to Democratic presidential candidates—remain willing to identify themselves with a specific political ideology, even the dreaded “L-word” does not seem quite ready to join the spotted owl on the list of endangered species. In 1994, 18 percent of respondents in the *Times* Election Day survey described themselves—or perhaps, confessed to being—“liberal.” A drop of 3 percent from 1992, this looks provocative, until one realizes that the figure in, for example, 1988 was also 18 percent. (The trend in the percentage of self-described “conservatives” was essentially a mirror image of these small zigs and zags: 34 percent in 1994, 29 percent in 1992, but 33 percent in 1988; the only other choice given in all three years was “moderate.”)

It may also be suggestive that some Democrats who were sagging dangerously in the polls—including Massachusetts Senator Edward Kennedy—but who still commanded sufficient financial resources to make effective counterarguments rallied to victory as they attacked the Contract.

Polls by the Los Angeles Times Mirror Center suggest that opinions about race have hardened somewhat since 1992, when the publicity and protests surrounding the Rodney King case led to sharp increases in the percentages of respondents reacting sympathetically to African-American concerns. Yet despite the noise about Republican gains in the South (which have a solid basis in that region's changing industrial structure and institutional obstacles to unionization and community organizations, which the press and most scholars virtually ignore), one cannot plausibly blame the staggering Democratic losses nationwide on some inchoate perception that the Administration was "excessively" partial to minorities, or even to cities. The Clinton Administration too obviously turned its back on all such concerns and the people associated with them.

A number of Republicans, of course, made a major issue out of illegal immigration. But this scarcely explains the across-the-board GOP victory. First, the issue in fact cuts across party lines, both in Congress and the states (as in Florida). During the campaign, Republican elites divided sharply on the question, not least because so many see it as intimately bound up with "economic growth" (translated into plain "English only": low wages).

Most fatefully, however, immigration's emergence as an object of mass political concern in American politics very much

resembles the gathering trend toward greater hostility to government activity or the various other (most far smaller) rightward shifts in public opinion mentioned above or documented in other recent polls. It is essentially a reactive phenomenon, an emergent, constructed reality that grows out of the persisting failure by (money-driven) governments to do much more than talk about problems such as high unemployment. This, along with the federal reluctance to share revenues with states receiving large numbers of immigrants, surely is the key to the upsurge of anxiety about immigration.

Dianne Feinstein's narrow victory in the California Senate race, which will—at least until 1996—go down in the *Guinness Book of World Records* as the most expensive non-presidential campaign in world history, is one more proof that, where there are resources and a will to counterargument, issues of this sort can be effectively engaged.

What destroyed Bill Clinton and the Democrats in 1994 however, was precisely what derailed his Republican predecessor only two years ago: in the midst of a steadily deepening economic crisis, it is impossible to beat something—even a fatuous, heavily subsidized something—with nothing.

But this was the hopeless task Clinton set for himself and his party after he—precisely as some of us predicted on the basis of the outpouring of Wall Street support for his "New Democrat" candidacy in 1992—betrayed his campaign promise to "grow out" of the deficit by "investing in America" when he assumed office in 1993. By deciding to make the bond market the supreme arbiter of economic policy, by ostentatiously refraining from

jawboning the Federal Reserve to restrain rises in interest rates, by abandoning his much-touted plan for an economic stimulus and instead bringing in a budget that was contractionary over the medium term, the President embraced precisely the program of continuing austerity that the electorate elected him to break with.

Once he had embarked on this course, almost everything else he tried to do was doomed. No amount of PC posturing, homilies about values or pathetically funded demonstration schemes for worker training or education could long disguise the fact that 5.5 or 6 percent unemployment is not really full employment and, a fortiori, not a "boom." (Note that, as usual, no one in the Administration spoke up in public to support Alan Blinder, the President's own nominee to the Federal Reserve Board, during the firestorm of criticism that followed his few brief remarks in a non-public speech about the weakness of the case for the vaunted "natural rate of unemployment" hypothesis. Because of this incident's chilling effect on future discussions of Fed policy, it may well be every bit as significant as the 1994 election itself.)

By some estimates, based on census data, the economic situation of as much as 80 percent of the population has not substantially improved since 1989. Such statistics may slightly underestimate the real distribution of economic welfare, particularly as this is affected by the thorny problem of valuing new products and changing quality. But this is arguing about decimal points. What matters is the real "chain reaction" that now threatens to blow apart the political system. This chain

reaction begins with the desperate economic squeeze a largely unregulated world economy now places on ordinary Americans. It leads next to the decay of public services and non-profit institutions that sustain families and communities, including schools, court systems and law-enforcement agencies. In the end, it makes the daily lives of more and more Americans increasingly unbearable.

Given that the Democrats controlled both the White House and Congress, it is scarcely surprising that so many Americans are fed up with them. Or that substantial numbers of people should be increasingly attracted to the only public criticisms of the system that they are consistently allowed to hear (particularly on talk radio or the generally right-wing "new media") —that their real problem is the bell curve, immigrants, welfare or, indeed, the very notion of government action itself, which does inevitably cost money.

That the system is so obviously money-driven and frequently corrupt only enrages people, while the Administration's all-out efforts for NAFTA and GATT underscored the fact that Clinton's priorities and his real constituency were somewhere else.

Sixty percent of those in the Yankelovich poll expressed the belief that the outcome of the 1994 election was "more a rejection of Democratic policies" than "a mandate for Republican policies." Fifty-six percent of the voters in the Greenberg survey claimed that they were "trying to send a message about how dissatisfied [they] were with things in Washington." Invited to be more specific, 15 percent said the message referred to "Bill Clinton," 15 percent pointed to "Congress," 5 percent each

indicated "Republicans" and "Democrats"; while 45 percent said the problem was "politics as usual."

But the most striking evidence about what is now happening in the American political system comes from the *New York Times* Election Day poll. This broke down the vote in terms of whether the respondent reported that his or her standard of living was becoming better or worse. The results are astonishing in the light of the publicity garnered after the election by the eight-point spread between men and women in the overall party vote, as well as conventional views that the Democrats mobilize less-well-off voters.

In both the overall national vote and major state campaigns that were separately reported (including the New York gubernatorial and Massachusetts Senate races), those whose standard of living was improving voted roughly 2 to 1 (66 percent to 34 percent in the national sample) for the Democrats. By contrast, those whose standard of living was getting worse went roughly 2 to 1 (63 percent to 37 percent in the national sample) for the Republicans, while the group in the middle split 50-50.

The contrast with 1992 is glaring: at that time, according to the *Times* exit poll, Clinton lost the former camp 62 percent to 24 percent (with 14 percent going to Perot). He split the group in the middle 41 percent to 41 percent (with 18 percent voting for Perot). But he swept the group whose standard of living had declined by an overwhelming 61 percent to 14 percent (with, suggestively, 25 percent going to Perot).

The 1994 surveys still show a sizable pocket of people with low incomes and relatively little schooling who remain stalwart Democrats, when they do vote. But these numbers show

just how upside-down patterns of mobilization are now becoming in America. Essentially, the 1994 elections suggest that the party that commands by far the most money is now succeeding by mobilizing increasing numbers of disenfranchised poor and middle-class voters against their traditional champions.

This is a voting pattern more reminiscent of some European elections in the 1930s than most American elections. It ought to ring some alarm bells. Asked whether the Republicans would do a better job of running Congress than the Democrats did, 61 percent of respondents in the Yankelovich poll declared that they would either do a worse job (16 percent) or make no difference (45 percent). Sixty-one percent, in other words, expect no major improvement.

Even a quick look at Newt Gingrich's Contract With America indicates that they are right. Nothing in it will do much to solve the problems of a world economy in which many of the biggest American businesses increasingly do not need most of the American work force or even the infrastructure —apart from the defense and foreign relations establishments. Nor will the suggestion by Gingrich and other Republican leaders after the election that price stability should perhaps be legally enshrined as the sole target for Federal Reserve policy.

What will happen as the economic crisis deepens, and voters discover that their suspicions were right? Perhaps for a while, the merry-go-round in Washington will spin with the speed of light. But in the long run? In all probability, I suspect, Mount Vesuvius' greatest blowouts are still to come. As in the thirties, those who scorn Keynes will be astonished at the outcomes for which they will have to accept responsibility. ❧

Federalism and nationhood in North America

Timothy E. Anna *

It seems to me, when it comes to discussing those elements of political culture and institutions that are fundamentally formative in the process of nationhood in Canada, Mexico and the United States, and that knit the independence period together with our own day, that the historian should recall that our countries are, above all:

1. The products of a European colonialism imposed on top of existing indigenous cultures and states (and I emphasize that American aboriginal societies were usually organized in the form of states);
2. Characterized by immense territorial size (an attribute that influences all our historical choices);
3. Nations which chose federalism as the base political institution for organizing the nation-state following independence.

Of these three, federalism seems the most instrumental in the formation of conscious nationhood. It is a form of government in which separate, self-governing territorial entities join together to create a greater whole, and in which power is distributed between the central authority and the constituent units.

The Brazilian scholar Aspásia Camargo gives a suitably Latin American definition: "We can define federalism as an extra-European model of state organization marked by the coexistence of two sovereignties: that of the union, which retains the control and the execution of some common functions, and that of the federated units, which occupy themselves with the rest."¹

I say this is a Latin American perspective because in neither the United States nor, at least until recent times, in Canada, would the scholar incorporate in the definition of federalism such an untroubled reference to the existence of dual sovereignties. (More's the pity.) The issue of whether federalism possesses such a thing as dual sovereignty, and if so, what it comprises, is currently under hot debate in Canada, at the insistence of Quebec.

In Mexican federalism, at least in the federalist revolt of 1823, the leading states such as Jalisco, Zacatecas, Oaxaca and the Yucatan believed in the idea that the nation can be sovereign and that

each state/province can also be internally sovereign.

While the United States was the first country to develop federalism, Mexico in 1824 and Canada in 1867—following the traditions of their own history and for realistic geographical and political reasons of their own—also formed federal unions. Neither Mexico nor Canada "copied" the United States. Despite whatever surface similarities may exist in form, in the process of nationhood there is no copyright on good ideas.

Federalism is such a fundamental part of our political structures that when it comes to articulating who and what we are as nations, we sometimes forget to mention it. As Marcello Carmagnani comments, federalism is not just a base for the institutional organization of certain countries, "it is also a political culture capable of regulating through concrete political practices the rights and duties of the different actors," as it involves their political participation, citizenship and social interaction.²

As a system of national organization and as a form of government in large countries of complex linguistic, ethnic and regional make-up, federalism fulfills

¹ Aspásia Camargo, "La federación sometida. Nacionalismo desarrollista e inestabilidad democrática," in Marcello Carmagnani, editor, *Federalismos latinoamericanos: México/Brasil/Argentina*. Mexico City, El Colegio de México/Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1993, pp. 300-362.

² Carmagnani, *Federalismos latinoamericanos*, p.10.

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many purposes. It combines the contradictory impulses of unity and diversity, of nationhood and regionalism, of oneness and pluralism, and it fulfills real political and ideological needs. At the same time, it places priority on the rights of the constituent parts to their own self-determination, which is, of course, the key element. It seems a self-evident principle that nationhood is meaningless unless it is a voluntary association.

In a setting where there are pre-existing political and juridical entities, federalism allows many voices to be heard in the difficult process of the development of nationhood. One of the most frequent mistakes many observers make is to assume that independence and nationhood are one and the same thing. The act of political separation from the colonial mother country, though an immense achievement in its own right, is not the same thing as the achievement of nationhood. When nationhood takes place, it is the fulfillment of a process of institutional construction, not the initiation of this process. In all three countries, federalism was the route, the process, to nationhood.

In Mexico, the creation of a federal republic that recognized the states of the union as "free and sovereign" was not an inevitable consequence of independence but the result of a genuine revolution which occurred two years after independence, in 1823, and which could not have happened until independence itself laid the essential foundation, which was the right to self-definition or self-determination.

Federalism has always been a very difficult form of national organization because it is complex and requires that many voices participate in the formulation of identity and

policy. In essence, it requires power-sharing. Mexico is a country defined by its regions, as are Canada and the United States. The issue of a "national project" at independence automatically raised the issue of the regions, and it was not possible for it to be otherwise because the regions demanded to be heard. That was perhaps the most revolutionary consequence of independence.

The essence of Mexican history, therefore, needs to be approached from a multiple, evolving, national/provincial/regional perspective. Provincialism—the aspiration for provincial equality and home rule, the desire for political devolution, the demand for juridical equality, opposition to the absolute power exercised by Mexico City over the rest of the country—became the foremost driving force of the early period after independence, and one that historiography rarely reflects.

As Luis González asks, in what way does recognition of the legitimacy of the thousands of *matrias* that make up the *patria* threaten the whole?³ Does recognition of heterogeneity endanger the survival of the nation? I believe not. I believe it constitutes, on the one hand, simple fairness and, on the other, a necessary awareness of the multiplicity of the mosaic without which the whole is weakened rather than strengthened. If modern Mexico faces a crisis of definition, perhaps some of its definitions have been false. And as Roger Bartra suggests, the only way to make systems conform to the reality of Mexican existence is to recognize clearly the

actuality of the past.⁴ That is the job of the historian.

The articulation of a "national project" in Mexico, that is, the creation of the nation-state and of its forms and institutions, was not possible until the regions played their fair share in defining it. Centralism that ignores the regions' right to autonomy in a country of great size and ethno-cultural complexity becomes a dead-end street.

The unique strength of federalism is that it allows—to use the Canadian terminology for a moment—the creation of nationhood through voluntary association amid the continuation of a regional mosaic, the joining into one nation of all the disparate cultural, ethnic, linguistic and geographical identities, a structure in which individual and provincial self-definition does not automatically have to surrender to the demands of national security or political union. There is nothing mystical, much less genetic, about the formation of the nation-state. It is a programmatic political construction, made by human hands. Self-definition and voluntary association are the two essential elements for a federal system.

This segment of Mexican history—the creation of the federal republic—is critical, I contend, because it offers historically based options that Mexicans in the 21st century can call upon in their task of renewing and redefining a national identity which, in our own day, is in rapid transition. We need to remember that the Mexican republic, when first created, was based on the dual foundations of provincehood and

³ Luis González, "Patriotismo y matriotismo, cara y cruz de México," in Cecilia Noriega Elió, editor, *El nacionalismo en México*. Zamora, El Colegio de Michoacán, 1992, pp. 477-495.

⁴ Roger Bartra, *The Cage of Melancholy: Identity and Metamorphosis in the Mexican Character*, translated by Christopher J. Hale. New Brunswick, NJ, Rutgers University Press, 1992, p. 175.

nationhood, which were not opposed but rather two sides of the same coin.⁵

A peculiar linkage thus ties Canada and Mexico together. In the late 20th century—and, one might almost say, against all normal expectations—the hoary old problem of federalism versus centralism is

⁵ Sergio Ortega Noriega, "Hacia la regionalización de la historia de México," *Estudios de historia moderna y contemporánea de México*, 1980, pp. 9-21.

still not dead. Issues of regionalism, power-sharing, regional economic disparities, ideological and ethnic differences between certain states or provinces, and regional demands for greater influence are still a part of both Canadian and Mexican life, precisely because they are issues relating to the control and use of power, and they are issues which we have not fully solved.

What is happening today in Mexico is that the great discourse

between region and center has once again broken out, after many years of quiescence, "a discourse whose intent," as Jorge Zepeda Patterson puts it, "is to recognize the need for identity in a population that without ceasing to be Mexican... rejects the official version of Mexicanness."⁶ The crisis of the 1990s suggests, as Carmagnani says for Mexico, that centralizing federalism is in crisis, but the federal pact itself may not be. The federal principle may simply be undergoing another of the reformulations that it has experienced since 1824.⁷

In Canada, there is no doubt that the existing form of federalism may soon be in crisis again, despite the existence of a constitution that is only twelve years old. Although the current federal government has declared it will not renegotiate the constitution, it is constantly renegotiating the terms of federalism when it comes to revenue-sharing with the provinces. When the new Quebec referendum takes place in 1995, the rest of Canada will have to consider genuinely innovative responses.

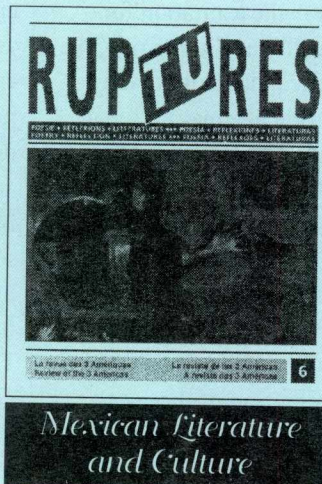
Thus, the primary point of juncture between Canada and Mexico is that in the last years of the 20th century and the first years of the 21st both will face the reformulation of federalism, which automatically will be a revision of the terms of nationhood.

Since our two countries have a long history of federalism, I believe we can address this necessary process of reformulation, troubling though it may be, with considerable hope **M**

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⁶ Jorge Zepeda Patterson, "La nación vs. las regiones," in Noriega Elío, editor, *El nacionalismo en México*, pp. 497-518.

⁷ Carmagnani, "Conclusión: El federalismo, historia de una forma de gobierno," in Carmagnani, ed., *Federalismos latinoamericanos*, pp. 397-416.

The Miami summit

Hernán Ancona *

“C onditions for hemispheric cooperation are propitious.” A simple but forceful sentence which sums up the idea that the American continent’s heads of state brought to the Miami gathering, this also describes the conviction embodied in the declaration of principles adopted by the “Summit of the Americas.”

Organized at the initiative of U.S. President Bill Clinton, the summit was a forum for bringing together the continent’s nations and seeking alternatives for promoting the region’s development. It was held in Miami—often called “the capital of Latin America”—on December 9-11, 1994, with the attendance of 34 heads of state. Fidel Castro was not invited.

“The problems of one country are now problems of all, and they call for joint solutions,” President Clinton said in his opening speech. He characterized the gathering as the beginning of a new relationship: “The summit’s objectives are to extend free trade from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego, strengthen democracy and achieve prosperity for the peoples” of the Americas.

In one of his speeches, which was repeatedly interrupted by applause, Clinton recognized that the same themes have been struck in the past; the difference, he said, is that

now the conditions exist for fulfilling these aspirations.

He added that in 1967, when the continent’s leaders met in Punta del Este, Uruguay, ten of the countries were ruled by dictatorships. “On this occasion, all of us here govern democracies.” He cited Cuba as the only country which has not embraced democratic values: “It is the only one absent,” he said.

In the days leading up to the summit some voices predicted clashes and verbal confrontations due to California’s Proposition 187, not only as a factor adversely affecting U.S.-Mexico relations but as a possible obstacle to overall accords as well. The issue was faced head-on, and the result was completely different: the question of immigrants was included in the action plans agreed on by the 34 heads of state.

On December 10 the Mexican and U.S. governments had already bilaterally agreed to prevent the controversy on this proposition from damaging relations between the two countries. Mexico’s President Ernesto Zedillo stated his concern over some political movements and even measures which limit human rights considered to be universal, such as health and education.

He said that Mexico disagrees with this kind of measure, at the same time as it recognizes that this question is an internal affair of one of the states of the U.S. He expressed gratification that the

federal government of the United States has in no way joined in this measure and, in fact, has publicly questioned Prop 187’s constitutionality.

The Miami summit concluded with a declaration of principles in which the region’s leaders committed themselves to creating the first continental free trade zone by the year 2005, eradicating extreme poverty, upholding democracy as the only system which guarantees the state of law and respect for individual freedoms, and effectively fighting official corruption. A 23-point action plan was also approved, the main points of which are:

Free trade. A commitment was made to go forward with negotiations to eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers to the flow of commodities, by the end of the century, with the objective of forming the first continental tariff-free zone by the year 2005. As a first step, a preparatory work schedule was established for 1995 and ’96, including a ministerial meeting charged with producing a final report on the area’s economy. A section was created for energy cooperation, which should begin to function this year; other commitments covered telecommunications, tourism, science and technology.

Health and the eradication of poverty. It was stressed that a key element for eradicating extreme poverty in the Americas is the obligation to provide universal basic

* Journalist.

education, regardless of race, migratory status or social condition. The objective is that by the year 2010 the region's nations guarantee that the entire population will have received primary education and that at least 75 percent receive, or be receiving, secondary education. The promise was made to comply with international agreements for guaranteeing child health, lowering infant and maternal mortality rates, and carrying out massive vaccination campaigns. This point includes strengthening the role of women in society and promoting "micro" and small businesses.

It is worth noting that, as an additional point, the heads of state agreed to promote the creation of a special body, called the "white helmets," made up of volunteers who can travel to the neediest of the continent's countries in order to participate in literacy, technical assistance and health campaigns.

With regard to the environment, the participants made commitments for efficient use of energy, an alliance to protect bio-diversity, and the prevention and treatment of pollution.

Drug-trafficking. Participants underlined the importance of committing governments to the signing of international agreements for anti-drug cooperation and the promulgation of effective laws that punish money-laundering, facilitate the seizure of goods belonging to drug traffickers and obligate financial institutions to freeze traffickers' accounts. The document signed by the 34 governments acknowledges the shared responsibility of producer and consumer countries, and therefore pledges to increase collaboration aimed at reducing both supply and demand, as well as the

traffic in arms and the chemicals used in drug production.

Human rights. The plan of action states that a democracy is judged by the rights enjoyed by the least influential individuals, and that current judiciary systems are responsible for the lack of measures for punishing human rights abuses, which in turn leads to impunity and prevents governments from providing equal justice for all. The commitment made on this point was that measures be adopted to guarantee judicial systems' independence as well as cooperation with all inter-American and United Nations human rights agencies. Emphasis was also laid on the will to guarantee the human rights of all migrant workers and their families, as well as the most disadvantaged groups, minorities, Indians and women.

Combating corruption. In this regard the governments committed themselves to establishing policies for information access aimed at helping citizens scrutinize the handling of finances and the allocation of official budgetary funds. The plan establishes a commitment for oversight of the allocation of official contracts so as to prevent bribery, and stresses the need for punishment of illicit enrichment of functionaries responsible for managing public funds. Within the framework of the Organization of American States, the region's nations must facilitate extradition of corrupt officials. A commitment was also made to collaborate with national and international banking institutions in order to detect suspicious financial transactions.

Commitments

In line with the above, the Miami summit was an important opportunity


for an exchange of views among the representatives of the attending countries, setting the stage for negotiations viewed as the first steps towards regional integration.

It was announced that, following negotiations, Chile will be joining the North American Free Trade Agreement. The heads of state of the U.S., Canada, Mexico and Chile therefore instructed their nations' trade representatives to make the necessary preparations and to hold formal meetings as soon as possible.

Canada's Prime Minister Jean Chrétien noted that Chile will provide an example for other countries' subsequent adherence to NAFTA. President Zedillo called this a decisive step in building the prosperity of nations and the welfare of their peoples.

President Clinton characterized Mexico and Canada as good partners; he mentioned that over the past year alone 100,000 jobs were created in the U.S. due to opportunities directly produced by NAFTA. For his part, Chilean President Eduardo Frei said that summits have been shown to produce important agreements, that it is possible to join together and achieve a level of equality and respect for the sovereignty of nations.

Beyond the specific commitments undertaken at the Miami summit, there was a general feeling that the gathering highlighted the great challenge of conceiving continental development as a whole, within the framework of plurality, mutual respect and tolerance.

Up until recent years inter-American cooperation was viewed as a dream virtually lacking in foundation. Today the facts demonstrate the urgent need to go from NAFTA to AFTA—the American Free Trade Area 

Mexican apparel

Weaving the theme of traditional and regional dress in Mexico is like drawing out threads whose many colors and materials cross, separate and seemingly have no end.

According to official data, 10 per cent of Mexico's population is Indian, made up of 56 different ethnic groups. They wear traditional clothing which corresponds to the climate, available materials and above all the customs maintained in each region.

Although traditional dress is different from regional dress, their history and origins are interwoven. Traditional dress reveals a chain of current customs, while regional dress is the symbol of a region's highest aesthetics.

The regional dress of Mexico is the clothing used for celebrations. It is often an integral part of a dance, ceremony or tradition. Some costumes are famous for their elaborate workmanship, beauty and showiness, for example the Jarocho of Veracruz and the Tehuana of Oaxaca. Others are equally fine but dominated by simplicity, such as the Tarasco of Michoacán and the Tarahumara of Chihuahua.

The woman who wears regional apparel is dressed meticulously from head to toe. Headdresses, jewelry, makeup and shoes are worn and used differently in each state. Some headgear projects from the head and is part of a hairdo, like the braids woven with ribbons—the *petob* of

the Huastecs, the *rodete* of the Zapotecs and the Nahuas' *mactahuatl*— or the crowns, combs, hats and shawls used by others.

Jarocho dress is made from three different kinds of white cloth. The lining

is satin, followed by a layer of net and another of lace. This is complemented with a short-sleeved blouse, a small white lace scarf, a velvet or embroidered black satin apron, an elegant hand-painted black fan and dainty white shoes



Julio Galán, *Tehuana of the Tehuantepec Isthmus*, 1987.

with small heels whose tapping can be heard when people dance. The men wear white pants and white guayaberas with a bandanna at the neck and black shoes and white hat.

In some cities, like Mérida in the Yucatan, women of all ages and classes wear regional dress daily without distinction of social status or age. The Yucatecan dress is cotton, simply cut with a square yoke embroidered with large colorful flowers. Lightweight fabric is used because of the extreme heat in the region. The clothing worn by the men is similar to the Jarocho.

Tehuana clothing shows off a headdress of black lace; the dress is

made of black satin and its main features are the enormous flowers embroidered in red and orange silk, whose stitches become smaller in the center of the flower.

Dyes and materials

In the small towns and ranches of the Mexican republic the tradition of cultivating fibers like tree cotton or *quauhixtacle*, cotton plants or *ixcatle* and colored cotton or *coyohixcatle*,¹ is still followed according to the region.

Another material used is wool, which was unknown to the ancient Mexicans. After the Spaniards brought their flocks from Europe the Mexicans learned to work with wool, using their own weaving instruments. Because the Chiapas mountains and the states of Chihuahua, Sonora and Mexico all

suffer from harsh weather conditions, wool material was well received by the Indians of those areas. In the process of wool-dyeing it was discovered that the dark colors of natural dyes like black and red provided the most intensity and definition.

The *ixtle* is a fiber made from the fleshy leaf of the maguey plant, which has long, tough filaments that can be woven in different thicknesses. In ancient times, Otomí women from the state of Mexico dressed completely in woven *ixtle*. The *quesquémitl*² and skirt were handwoven from this fiber. Wool was later substituted; sadly, today 80 to 90 percent of clothing is made using synthetic fibers.

² A short, triangular-shaped cape.

¹ Cotton is said to be native to the Americas and was taken to Europe in Colonial times. Cotton fibers which date from 7000 B.C. have been found in Tehuacán, Puebla.



Indian women of the Sierra and view of the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Guadalupe, 1820
F. Lenhart (lithograph)
C. Nebel (drawing).

Tradition and couture

The second day of February is traditionally celebrated in Mexico as *Candelaria*. On that day, you awaken, get dressed and sing lullabies to the holy child Jesus; the tradition also includes eating tamales on that day.

Dressing the holy child of Atocha represents a moral pledge and the beginning of a familial relationship, since the person chosen for this delicate devotional task is named the godmother. Tradition and dress become one in this religious act.

The world of clothing, like any other means of expression, can take quite singular turns when popular tradition is united with the ideas of contemporary fashion designers.

This combination came together on February 2 of this year thanks to the idea of bringing together twelve of Mexico's most famous designers in order to make clothing for the holy child of Atocha.

Favián Vergara, one of the youngest designers in Mexico, held an exhibition of the works of Armando Mafud, Enrique Martínez, Esteban, Gene Matouk, Gerardo Rebollo, Gloria Smith, Nathalie Prevout, Manuel Méndez, Ricardo Reyes, Mitzi, Keko and Favián himself, among others.

This exhibition went beyond traditional borders, not only because of the originality of the godparents, but since many of them had the opportunity to demonstrate their concerns for the problems that afflict the world as a whole.

Among the many "children," one was dressed in a white robe decorated with red ribbons, as a denunciation of the growth in the number of children born with AIDS.

Favián dressed the "prince of princes, conqueror of hearts," as he called him, in a snug black velvet jacket covered with small heart medallions and a black crown, symbolizing the sorrows of the times in which we live.

The traditional "children" were the majority, such as the barefoot *Huichol* baby with a *quesquemel* bordered in colored glass beads and a small woolen sash. There are the classics, like the figure wearing a velvet overcoat and white satin—the symbol of purity, according to its designer. Standing out from the rest were the ultramodern "children," among them "Elvis Presley," with a condom in one hand and a guitar in the other; or the one made out of beer cans with a cigarette in his mouth. The designers of these last two think that if Jesus Christ were alive today, he would be speaking about the problems of drugs, violence and the illnesses of our times.

Lace, velvet, wings and crowns set the scene for the holy children of Atocha, in an interesting and artistic renovation of tradition.



Mónica Ching
Assistant Editor.

Photos by
Arturo Piera.

The process of dyeing materials is one of the most surprising steps. The knowledge of nature and the ancestral heritage of the techniques used to extract the colors, as well as the patience needed to apply them, are a mixture of art and wisdom.

The snails found along the coasts of Chiapas and Oaxaca have a color which is extracted by dyers during spring nights. The dyer provokes the snail into releasing its dye, which is then absorbed by fiber skeins which the dyer has ready.

The cochineal tint is produced from a small insect that lives off the leaves of *nopal* (cactus) plants, mostly on those which have no thorns. Pregnant females produce the greatest quantity of dye, which is collected using tweezers and a plate. The cochineal is dried, pulverized and the powder is used as a coloring.

Indigo, of plant origin, is the result of a long process using the *xiuhquellitl* plant. Over 1000 pounds of this plant and many hours of work are required to produce only two pounds of dye.

Claudio Linati

Any discussion of Mexican apparel would be incomplete without mentioning a European artist who described—in both a pictorial and literary sense—the daily life of independent Mexico, and who left one of the most valuable and realistic testimonies existing today.

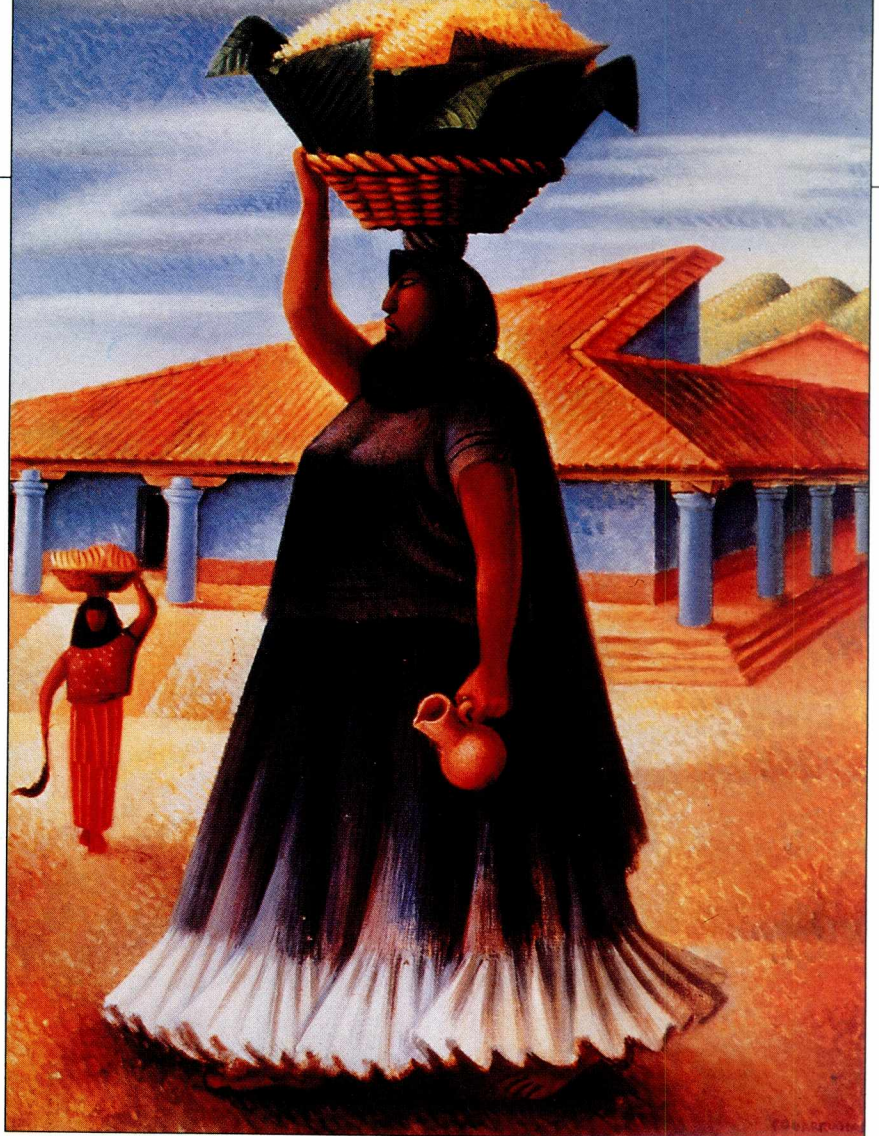
Claudio Linati de Prevost, the son of Count Filippo Linati de Parma, was born in Carbonera in 1790. He studied lithography in Paris and later, against his wishes, carried out a military

career. After innumerable vicissitudes—including being sentenced to death for political reasons, a sentence he escaped—he succeeded in obtaining all the necessary facilities from the Mexican government that he needed to establish a lithography shop in the nation's capital. He landed in Veracruz on September 22, 1825.

Linati had two great merits: that in Mexico he introduced and taught the art of lithography, and that he familiarized Europe with Mexican customs through the series of articles and lithographs that made up the book *Costumes Civils, Militaires et Religieux de Mexique* (Mexican Civilian, Military and Religious Costumes, Brussels, 1828).³

Linati's academic training was in the classic European school of that time. For that reason he was unable to express the authentic personalities of the different "castes"—the result of

³ A Spanish facsimile of this book was published in 1956 by the National University of Mexico's Institute of Aesthetic Research.



Miguel Covarrubias, *Tehuana*, 1940.

People of Tierradentro, with the Plaza of Santo Domingo in the background, 1840
F. Lehnert (lithograph).

mixture between the various races—and the many characters who made up post-Independence Mexico, characters like the night watchman, the candyman, beggar, tortilla maker or water carrier. While his European style carried over to his portrayal of these characters, he did faithfully reproduce the styles of their clothing.

Linati's attention was caught by every character he found on the street: military officers, soldiers and religious figures. He was also interested in portraying the staggering numbers of the poor who included a wide variety of beggars, alms-seekers and mendicants.



His work is known for the accompanying texts as well as the lithographs. Each drawing is complemented by a free-flowing description similar to a diary, manifesting his great power of **observation and sharp curiosity** regarding customs. It is likely that the drawings were a mere pretext to accompany his writings, using clothing to make all sort of connections, even political ones. Some examples: *A leper*, "...shirtless, without a jacket, a piece of leather and



Patricio Robles Gil.

Oaxaca dresses up in colors.



Claudio Linati, *Young woman of Tehuantepec, 1828.*

a woollen blanket make up his dress..."; *A water-carrier*, "...he is the only person in Mexico who wears a cap..."; *A scribe*, "...his half European suit shows his Spanish origins..."; *The young working woman*, "... her dress is made from percale clumsily printed in this country..." In a description less critical of Mexico one reads of his special admiration for typical regional clothing: "...The dresses of women from Palenque...are reminiscent of the ancient Egyptians and Phoenicians..."

Mexico's independence was strongly influenced by Europe, in this case France and Spain. Linati left a clear vision of the new fashion tendencies of high society, as well as the changes in military uniforms of soldiers, military officers and functionaries, in an epoch when Mexico's Liberal regime was determined to have a European-style army ✕

Pre-Hispanic fashion in the 20th century

Kaloniko

Maxtlatl

Maya, Olmec, Aztec, Chichimec, Zapotec and Totonac are some of the names of peoples and tribes who have left their mark on the history of Mexico. By learning about these civilizations we deepen our knowledge of Mexico's rich and varied wardrobe.

We know from the clay figurines found at Tlatilco (state of Mexico) that in ancient times men as well as women wore only short skirts and loincloths. Complementing their flimsy outfits, they wore necklaces and used many adornments in their long hair. Over time these simple garments became more elaborate, using paint and embroidery for ornamentation. Eventually social classes came to be distinguished by the clothing they wore.

Priests were one of the principal hierarchies. In some cases their clothing consisted only of two pieces. The first was the *maxtlatl* (loincloth) made of a piece of woven cotton, which passed between the legs and was knotted at the waist. On occasion they used a wider and longer piece of cloth with the same function. The other article of clothing was the *tilmatli* (cape), a large cloth knotted at the neck, long enough to reach the feet—the same length as the priests' hair, which Cortés' chroniclers described as long, tangled and malodorous. This was the case only for the priests, since

the rest of the Totonac population described in these chronicles was very much given to bathing—so much so that it is reported that many died when a smallpox epidemic broke out during the Conquest, since they were unwilling to give up the custom of taking a daily bath.

"Maxtlatl" is the name I gave to the model I have designed for you. I extracted the basic element of priestly garb in order to design a bathing outfit made from coarse cotton cloth, adorned with a contrasting color band in the *maxtlatl* style. The outfit is complemented by a leather bangle or anklet, an accessory whose popularity is currently growing in Mexico.

Quetzalli

The priesthood's simple wardrobe became more complex in the case of the Quetzalcóatl, Tecaxtliipoca, Tláloc, Chachihuitlicue, Taxoltéotl-Mixcoatl and Xipe-Tote cults, whose representatives were outstanding personalities who dressed in great splendor. Some of them displayed their cruelty in their clothing, as in the case of the worshippers of Xipe-Tote (Our Lord of the Flayed Skin), who dressed in skin flayed from a slave and adorned themselves with pearls, jade, turquoise, obsidian, coral and gold. Nose, mouth and ear plugs were commonly used.

Another key hierarchy in ancient Mexico was the warrior caste. It must

have been spectacular to see the knights wearing the images of the ferocious animals whose attributes they wanted to acquire. Thus we have the ocelot, eagle, coyote and tiger knights. The full range of living colors was elegantly worn, creating harmonious combinations which gave the appearance of a rainbow. Quetzal, macaw, crane, eagle and heron feathers were an integral part not only of their clothing but also of their armor and breastplates.

Ambassadors were also prominent personages distinguished by the magnificence of their clothing, in accord with the rank of the king or ruler they represented.

I have used ideas from warriors' clothing to produce a present-day model inspired by the original colors and sash design. The bag, made of jute cloth with feather trim, is in the shape of a shield. A leather anklet complements the outfit. The model is called "Quetzalli."

Jaguar

The pyramids of Teotihuacan, temples dedicated to the Moon, the Sun and Venus, are attributed to the architectural genius of the Totonacs, the conquering people of the Teotihuacan empire which was born at the same time that the Christian epoch began. When they lived in the eastern part of Mesoamerica, the Totonacs were sober in their clothing, but upon



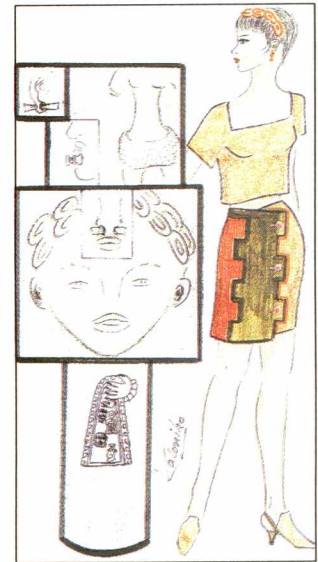
Maxtlatl



Quetzalli



Jaguar



Yacualli

moving inland their customs assimilated to those of the other inhabitants of the central regions.

Thus we see their kings, like other rulers in this area, wearing outfits designed in the best of taste: a white shoulder cape called a *xiuhtlmatli*, bordered with red feathers and seashell designs. The loincloth (*maxtlatl*) was white, with red designs; the sandals were in matching colors. When the chosen color was yellow, the entire outfit harmonized with this hue; the same held true if the favored tone was green or blue.

The headdresses of some kings and princes were real delights to the eye, combining such a variety of feathers that they created a color range attractive to one and all. In public ceremonies they used a golden crown studded with precious stones, called *copilli* or *xiuhuitzolli*.

The figure displayed here shows a king dressed in a shoulder cape (*ocelotlmatli*) made of jaguar skin bordered in feathers. The belt is also made of jaguar skin, matching the sandals. A crown and feather headdress complement this attire, which provided me with the idea for a

modern outfit based on a midi dress and short jersey wool cape. The outfit is decorated with a *maxtlatl*-style sash.

Yacualli

In all civilizations, man has sought to modify his appearance, and ancient Mexico was no exception. Its customs reflect a powerful desire for change.


The men of Mexico's eastern zone, where the Totonacs lived, were in the habit of shaving with obsidian razors. The women used mirrors of polished stone. Men were tattooed and painted themselves with *chapopote* (tar), while it was stylish for women to blacken their hair with seeds from the mamey fruit.

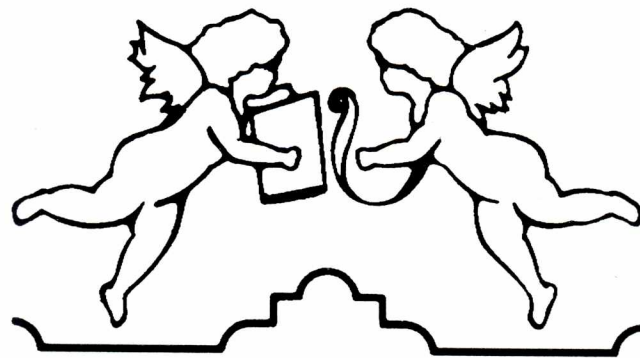
High-status men carried fans made from very rich, long and wide feathers, while women of the upper classes entertained themselves by smelling the bouquets of flowers which they carried. Women of the lower classes adorned their necks with beads made from baked clay, wood, bone or shell, while richer women wore necklaces of jade, amethyst, amber, rock crystal, jet, pyrite and gold. Men wore breastplates depicting deities.

Earrings were worn by men as well as women; the chronicles

describe their use as follows: "...[the Totonacs] are somewhat dark people who have perforated the lower part of the ear, where they place jewelry made of pearls and gold." As for the men, "...they make holes throughout the area between the outer margin of the lower lip and the roots of the lower teeth.... In the largest lip hole they place a delicate sheet of silver the inside of which holds up the protruding part; this adornment is round, and thick as a finger." This is a description of the so-called *bezote* or lip plug.

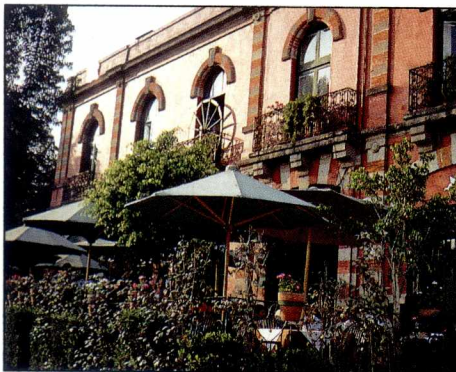
"Manicure for ladies." Actually there wasn't a sign saying that at the entrance to some hut; but the paintings at Teotihuacan lead us to believe that special care was given to the fingernails, since we see drawings of hands with nails that have been polished and painted red, as well as faces with eyes, eyebrows and lips adorned with make-up.

I designed the "Yacualli" model for you under the inspiration of Aztec sashes. I made it in nubuck and leather, in mix-and-match colors. The skirt buttons in front and the short blouse is simply cut 



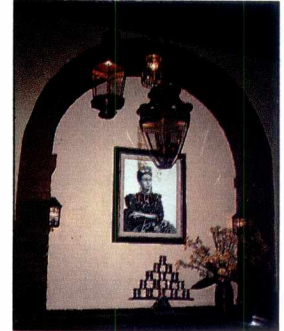
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Electoral processes in North America

The international conference on "Electoral Processes in Mexico, the United States and Canada 1994—Evaluation and Perspectives" was held in Mexico City on January 25-27. Organized by the National University of Mexico's Center for Research on North America (CISAN), the conference was coordinated by Silvia Núñez and Bárbara Driscoll, CISAN's Academic Secretary and Coordinator for U.S. Studies respectively. The event, inaugurated by Mónica Vereá, the Center's Director, included a representative for each country in each of the six round tables.

Presentations

In the first round table, Juan Molinar stressed that the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) holds the world record for remaining in power—it has ruled Mexico since 1929—and noted that, while U.S. voters have not faced changes in electoral laws during this century, their Mexican counterparts have seen a series of electoral reforms come and go over the past 35 years.

“The PRI brings together a broad range of forces, whose often contradictory interests cannot continue to coexist”

He reported that the average life-span of a recent Mexican electoral law is one and a half years. Key examples were the 1986 electoral code, which was reformed before being put to the test, and the 1994 elections, during which the need for a new electoral reform was being discussed even before the presidential election had concluded.

Molinar stated that the PRI is a party in decline, faced with an increasingly demanding opposition and the impossibility of continuing to sustain the fiscal costs derived from the way it is constituted as a political party.

He explained that the PRI brings together a broad range of forces, whose often contradictory interests cannot continue to coexist. As an example of this, he cited

the fact that the government authorized peasants to raise the price of corn, while forbidding corn tortilla manufacturers to raise their prices, compensating them instead through subsidies. The system this sort of contradiction produces has brought a serious economic crisis, which started in the 1970s.

Mark Jones confirmed Molinar's point about the stability U.S. voters have enjoyed. He mentioned that the American electoral process has not changed since 1789, noting that Bolivia is the only country in the Americas which shares the system of indirect election of presidents if they are not elected on the first round.

He specified two forms in which U.S. citizens exercise their democratic rights: through referenda—which allow them to create laws—and primary elections, which ensure that candidate selection is carried out by a majority of votes and not through party leaders' favoritism. Primaries became highly popular in 1968.

Jones remarked that the president of his country frequently fails to obtain the support of Congress. Even senators and congressmen belonging to his own party tend to be more concerned with the interests of their districts—which determine whether they will be reelected—than with those affecting the nation as a whole.

The same is true in Canada. According to R. Kenneth Carty, many members of Parliament—also in pursuit of reelection—are more intent on remaining on good terms with their electors than on governing.

He spoke about the changes undergone by the Canadian electorate since 1950, in a period when demographic growth made it impossible for each candidate to personally get to know his or her constituency. This situation was accentuated in 1960 due to population shifts—three fourths of the populace concentrated in urban areas. Moreover, the number of electoral districts increased from 200 in 1872 to almost 300 in 1988.

Carty said that since 1960, elections have been won or lost in Ottawa; thus, in recent years that city has determined the government's make-up.

During the second round table, Germán Pérez Fernández noted that differences between the Mexican, U.S. and Canadian electoral systems are so great as to make them incomparable. There are constant changes in

unchallenged access to the television cameras, this is no longer the case for Clinton.”

This year a referendum is scheduled to be held in Quebec (see “Quebec at the end of the 20th century,” p. 60), in order to decide whether to declare independence from Canada. On this issue, Louis Massicotte predicted that independence would be voted down because there is a difference between supporting sovereignty and intending to vote for it in a referendum. Still, he considered it unlikely that this would be the last referendum on the issue, since the Bloc or the Parti Québécois can afford to lose many referenda on sovereignty, but their federalist opponents can hardly afford to lose one.

In the sixth round table Santiago Creel, a citizen ombudsman during the 1994 presidential elections, denounced the fact that the ombudsmen’s report on the electoral process of August 21 had been distorted and misquoted by the House of Representatives.

He added that since that time elections have been held in five Mexican states, four of which led to post-electoral conflicts, and that votes will soon be held in 14 others. “If they follow the same pattern, by mid-year half the country will be in serious trouble.”

He emphasized the need to carry out an authentic electoral reform centering on: safeguarding Mexicans’ political rights in the Constitution; guaranteeing fair

PAN victory in Jalisco

On February 12, National Action Party (PAN) candidate Alberto Cárdenas Jiménez, 36, won the race for governor of his state, with 57 percent of the vote. The PAN also won the mayoralties of five of the largest cities and, for the first time, will have a majority in the state Congress.

Electoral calendar

Date	State	Type of election
May 28	Guanajuato	Governor
May 28	Yucatán	Governor
		City councils
		Congress
July 2	Michoacán	Congress
July 12	Chihuahua	City councils
		Congress
August 6	Baja California	Governor
		City councils
		Congress
	Durango	Congress
		City councils
	Oaxaca	Congress
	Veracruz	Congress
	Zacatecas	City councils
		Congress
	Aguascalientes	City councils
		Congress
August 20	Chiapas	City councils
		Congress
November 12	Puebla	City councils
		Congress
	Sinaloa	City councils
		Congress
	Tamaulipas	City councils
		Congress
	Oaxaca	City councils
December 3	Michoacán	City councils

Topics and participants

Historical Perspective on Electoral Processes: Juan Molinar (Mexico), Mark Jones (U.S.), R. Kenneth Carty (Canada) and Bárbara Driscoll (moderator).

Elections within the Local and National Frameworks: Germán Pérez Fernández del Castillo (Mexico), Samuel H. Fisher (U.S.), Gary Levy (Canada) and Richard Navarro (moderator).

The Participation of Civil Society: Julio Faesler (Mexico), Eric Uslaner (U.S.), Jacques Girard (Canada) and Silvia Núñez (moderator).

The Role of Communications Media in Electoral Processes: Raúl Trejo Delarbre (Mexico), Herbert Parmet (U.S.), Walter Soderlund (Canada) and Julián Castro Rea (moderator).

Federalism and the Balance of Power: Manuel Chávez (Mexico), Kenneth Collier (U.S.), Louis Massicotte (Canada) and Paz Consuelo Márquez Padilla (moderator).

Elections and Democracy: Santiago Creel (Mexico), John Mueller (U.S.), Daniel Latouche (Canada) and José Agustín Ortiz Pinchetti (moderator).

This international event culminates on April 3 with the wind-up forum on "Elections and Democracy," featuring Soledad Loaeza (Mexico), Seymour M. Lipset (U.S.) and Jean Pierre Kingsley (Canada); all the papers presented will be reprinted in a volume published by CISAN.

electoral processes; creating an independent, autonomous electoral authority; promoting democratic culture; reducing the number of polling stations in order to improve supervision; designing a more adequate system of districts, based on population criteria; and providing regulations to guarantee the right to information.

It is worth asking what measures are projected for doing away with the *cacique* (traditional local boss) system, which in past elections has frightened people into voting in certain ways and prevented secret ballots in many rural communities.

Daniel Latouche remarked that, just as Canadians are obsessed with referenda in Quebec, Americans are fixated on elections in our country. He added that, during negotiations for NAFTA, the question arose as to whether Mexico was democratic enough to join together with the United States and Canada.

Nevertheless, he stressed that NAFTA itself was negotiated in an anti-democratic way, and that the probable inclusion of Chile in the pact will be decided without taking Mexican, U.S. and Canadian public opinion into account, unlike what happens in Europe: "In

“The Parti Québécois can afford to lose many referenda on sovereignty, but their federalist opponents can hardly afford to lose one”

“People believe in a democracy which has been idealized but does not really exist”

the 1970s the French electorate was even consulted on the admission of the United Kingdom to the European Community. As more and more countries are admitted to NAFTA, our respective parliaments will probably have less to say about the treaty.”

As was to be expected, dissonant voices were heard. John Mueller said that people believe in a democracy which has been idealized but does not really exist. He accepted that democracy means liberty, but not equality or fraternity, and that among its principal obstacles are democrats themselves.

Regarding the perspective for an improvement in Mexico's electoral processes, he caused some turmoil in the audience with his statement that elections don't necessarily make a difference, and predicted two final outcomes: that the same people get elected or that the leader is changed but winds up behaving in the same way as his predecessors. Is that to be our fate—that, as Giuseppe Tomasso de Lampedusa wrote in *Il Gattopardo*, everything changes in order to remain the same? ❖

The Sculpture Zone

*Emilio Coral García **

The Sculpture Zone Center, located in University City's cultural area, is a place where visitors encounter a surprising integration of the modern and the historical, the earthly and the ritual. Its 64 monument-size concrete modules are a kind of reference, based on modern architecture and sculpture, to Mexico's pre-Columbian past with its numerous archeological monuments, found in places such as Teotihuacan, El Tajín, Palenque and Bonampak.

The Sculpture Zone displays artworks which aim to have a strong impact not only on the senses but on the deepest emotions of visitors. One is struck by the magnificence of works which, in addition to being sculptures, make up an urban space —perhaps a space which connects passersby with the energy of the cosmos, which even the most down-to-earth perceive one way or another in this site.

The zone consists of a wide plaza built around a center of volcanic rock, made up of very old stones that have been there since the memorable eruption of the Xitle volcano in pre-Hispanic times, which gave rise to what is now known as the San Angel stone formation. The stones are like a prolongation, reaching towards the sky, of the formidable natural energy of the volcano.

The modules of this magnificent work are arranged in a wide circle. Each is separated from its neighbors by a short distance, and the gigantic

circle made up of these megalithic pieces has an exterior diameter of about 360 feet; the interior diameter measures approximately 300 feet. The surrounding red clay highlights the stones.

This huge collective sculpture, inaugurated in 1979 by then UNAM Rector Guillermo Soberón, was made by six of Mexico's foremost artists: Mathias Goeritz, Hersúa, Sebastián, Helen Escobedo, Manuel Felguérez and Federico Silva. In the Sculpture Walk, an area near the Sculpture Zone, visitors can view various pieces of geometric sculpture individually made by each of these artists.

Geometric design is an important trend of composition in abstract art. In the Mexican art world, the creators of the Sculpture Zone have been key exponents of "geometrism" in sculpture, noteworthy for their

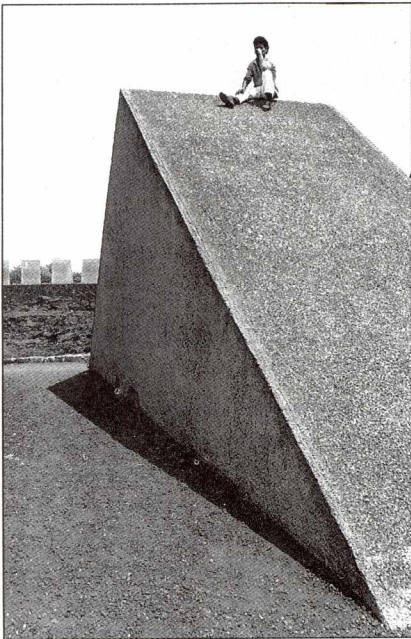
experiments with the handling of space as well as the dissection of geometric figures in order to achieve astounding compositions.

A visit to the Sculpture Zone, as well as the Sculpture Walk with its many works, is like an educational trip through the panorama of geometric sculpture in our country. One is struck not only by the artistic quality of the pieces but by their monumental dimensions as well.

Geometric design has its origins in nature and is a kind of concrete reference to all the different kinds of forms that man takes in as part of the process of getting to know that which surrounds him. The Sculpture Zone puts the spectator in contact with this learning process, revealing that which goes beyond what his or her senses grasp in an immediate way —since attentive viewers will find many



* Art and Culture Department of UNAM's General Property Office



opportunities here to perceive things in new ways. Just one example of this is the impressive vista of Mexico City one obtains by climbing one of the modules.

Parallel with the building of this space—which provides viewers with a majestic scene that brings culture and nature together—the artists responsible for the project published a “Manifesto of the Sculpture Zone.”

They declared their commitment to an art which would go beyond the borders of individual creation in order to achieve new forms of artistic experimentation. This is important in light of the fact that few collective art works have been as successful as this.

It is no easy task to carry through a monumental work of art in a collective way. In order to do so, the participants must share a commitment to cooperation as well as a certain affinity in their aesthetic convictions. That the creators of the Sculpture Zone shared these qualities was key to the realization of this work, which has become a landmark of contemporary Mexican art.

Walking through this part of the university campus, one encounters a series of cement structures engraved with references to the individual works in the Sculpture Walk. A little further on, we begin to glimpse the circle of megaliths among the bushes and other abundant vegetation that surround it.

The volcanic rock at the center of the concrete modules tempts those who enjoy jumping and playing among stones. One location is especially marked as the center of the whole ensemble; looking around him or herself from this vantage point, the spectator feels the force of being in a place that seems like the center of the entire universe.

The 64 modules of the Sculpture Zone are divided into four quadrants; each corresponds to one of the cardinal points and is made up of 16 modules. This is a way of recalling how important the four main directions were in pre-Hispanic cultures.

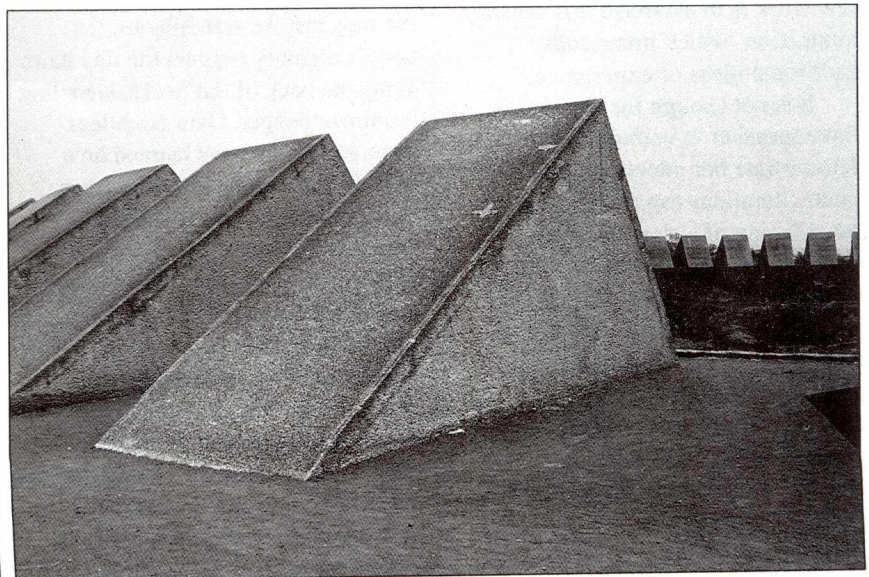
In Aztec myth, the world looks as if it were a great island divided into four huge quadrants. The east is a place of light and abundance; its color is white. The west, whose color is red, is related to the sun. The north has to do with the place of the dead; black is

its color. The south is related to the world of fertility and its color is blue.

We are reminded of the four main roadways which crossed the city of Mexico-Tenochtitlan before the arrival of Cortés: Tlacopan, Tlalpan, Nonoalco and Iztacalco. Walking among the megalithic concrete blocks, climbing them, or simply looking at them from a distance, one can come in contact with the sensations of grandeur and abundance that must have been awakened by the great pre-Hispanic cities, and the deep religious feeling found there.

A site like the Sculpture Zone is most important for its effort to recover the oldest roots of Latin American art and bring them together with contemporary artistic values. Thus, visiting this monument to culture can become a ritual act involving contemplation, silence and the sharpness of the senses of the spectator, who can suddenly feel him or herself transported to other times and places, other dimensions which are found not in external reality but rather within the visitor—in the very place where the deepest dreams and fantasies are born ✕

Photos by Arturo Piera.



Awakening the body's memory

Photos by Francisco Murguía, taken at a performance of the Rite of Spring.

K. Mitchell Snow *

I haven't understood a bar of music in my life, but I have felt it.

Igor Stravinsky

When Gloria Contreras creates a new dance for the Taller Coreográfico, she doesn't simply call out the steps and positions that have names in the grammar of dance. She moves among her dancers, literally molding their forms into the shapes she has envisioned, ensuring that the movement flowing through these forms realizes its expressive potential.

Before she can touch an audience through dance, she must first share her vision with the dancers. As the process of mounting a new work reveals, this vision is transmitted not just optically but viscerally as well. Part of the challenge in creating a new work is to establish this sensory connection, which transcends traditional ideas of experience.

It is not enough for the choreographer to verbalize or demonstrate her intentions. Seemingly small alterations can dramatically alter the meaning of a simple phrase. The dancers must experience the precise movement before they can fully internalize the message they are to convey. It is only when they have physically recognized the choreographer's meaning that they are able to lend life to a work. As Contreras works with her performers,

it becomes clear that the choreographic process is a way of awakening the body's memory.

It is this corporeal memory that the dancers of the Taller Coreográfico evoke when they speak of the challenges of committing the company's active repertory to memory. The traditional intellectual challenges of memorizing the rhythms of more than eighty works are tremendous in themselves. Yet beyond this, the Taller's dancers speak of summoning an intelligence lying somewhere outside of what most Western philosophers would classify as the mind, as a key element enabling their performance.

This gift of corporeal intelligence is not limited to dancers. Nearly everyone recognizes the prickly sensation of being watched from behind. Even though we are unable to see who may be watching us, the body's memory triggers the tiny hairs along the back of our necks, signaling imminent danger. Over countless generations, we have learned how risky it is to ignore such messages.

The value of body memory extends well beyond self-preservation. It also transmits and decodes the unwritten and unpronounceable language of movement. The intense physical reactions that the best dance can provoke in an audience certainly suggest that both viewers and dancers may experience the import of movement through sensory means transcending sight and sound.

This undeniably complicates attempts to analyze dance through traditional methods of discourse. The interrelationships between dance and time increase the difficulty. Whether our response to a particular moment in a dance is mediated through sight, sound or corporeal memory, the pose that strikes a responsive chord within the viewer vanishes before it can be fully examined. Indeed, motion is an integral part of the message we perceive.

During my study of the Taller Coreográfico, I was fortunate enough to watch Gloria Contreras analyze a score that would ultimately become the basis for a ballet. I had already seen rehearsals of completed works, as well as the classes that lay the foundations of the Taller's performances. I had also enjoyed the sudden magical encounter of seeing the music transformed into a complete ballet on the stage. All these experiences deepened my comprehension of the choreographer's art.

But her *Consagración de la primavera* (Rite of Spring) was my first opportunity to see a work grow and develop from the analysis of the score to a full presentation. It was only after observing the entire creative process that I began to comprehend why Contreras' works are so tremendously powerful. No other classical composition comes as close to touching the memory of the body. It seems to stimulate the same nerve endings that inspired the first of all dances.

* Writer.

Since 1913 the *Rite of Spring* has posed choreographers a most formidable challenge. Stravinsky himself never saw a version of the ballet that he liked. None of the composer's contemporaries were able to create a dance capable of bearing the enormous weight of his epochal score. Only a handful of master choreographers have even dared to approach the work since its fateful premiere.

Stravinsky himself specified that the *Rite* should be "accompanied by a choreographic representation as purely abstract as possible." As one of the major exponents of the abstract neoclassical tradition, Contreras has

approached the music in a manner that clearly honors the composer's intent. Her dance does not simply tell a story; it creates an experience in its own right.

Watching the birth of this abstract dance provided insight into the birth of dance itself. The opening moments of Contreras' choreography are filled with literal representations of the blossoming of spring. She did not use the costumes or pantomime of traditional 19th-century "story ballet" to create these effects. Instead they came from mimesis—from explorations of essence, not reproductions of outward form.

In Contreras' ballet, time exists on two separate but inextricably

related scales. It is, at first, a story of sacrifice. From the awakening of the earth to the death that spring demands, the dance revives an entire ritual—one so ancient that it is frighteningly recognizable across continents and cultures. At the same time, the ritual itself occurs in a time beyond calendars. The elements of the dance simultaneously evoke past, present and future. The choreography compresses all ages of creation into little more than half an hour.

The entire dynamic of the dance is revealed in a few brief movements at the beginning of the ballet, as life begins to stir. The earth does not release the life it holds without a





UNAM Choreography Workshop

Founded in 1970, its purpose has been to impart dance and music culture to university students and the public at large, through both performances and classes. To date the Choreography Workshop has choreographed 224 works, ranging from music of the 14th century to the most up-to-date and has presented almost 1,500 performances to a total of more than one million people. For the workshop the element of music is as important as that of dance, since the music determines the kind of choreography created.

The Choreographic Workshop organizes educational symposia: "Contrology' and the Care of the Body" explains the technique, developed by Gloria Contreras, which permits the flexibility of all the muscles, the free play of joints and rhythmic breathing which assist in purifying the blood, freeing it from the toxins which poison it. This is a simple technique, carried out in a horizontal position, which can be applied by everyone from four-year-old children to 70-year-old adults.

"Dance and Music" is a concert/lecture which includes excerpts from the work of 16 different composers. In addition to a number of anecdotes on their lives, an analysis is made of the pieces' choreography, which is then danced by one of the workshop's prima ballerinas, providing a glimpse at the work as a whole. In approximately an hour and a half or two hours, the audience gets an idea of how the music's influence determines the dancer's movement, rhythm and forms of expression. Forty-five such presentations have been made so far in various of Mexico's institutions of higher education.

UNAM's Choreographic Workshop has also sought to involve different artists, awakening interest in dance through contests, exhibitions and books. It has organized three competitions relating to "Dance Photography," as well as competitions on the subjects of "Poetry About Dance," "Drawings of Dance" and "Painting and Sculpture About Dance." The material these produced was used in 64 exhibitions.

It also has a video library which includes recordings of all the workshop's choreographic productions. As far as publishing, the workshop has put out two teaching books which include hundreds of explanatory drawings: *Contrología*, *Ballet paso a paso* (Contrology, Ballet Step by Step—first level) and *Ballet paso a paso* (Ballet Step by Step—second level, vols. I and II). It has also put out two historical books, illustrated with works from the three photo contests.

In 1974 the workshop founded the Choreographic Workshop Seminar, a school for initiation in the care of the body and the technique of classical dance, for university students and the public in general. A team of twelve teachers currently gives a total of 2,811 hours of class a year to 600 students. Overall it has given classes to more than ten thousand people.

Alejandro Romero.

struggle. It forcefully pulls the beings it has so recently released back to the soil which gave them birth, demanding nourishment in return for the miracle it created.

The composer maintained that the pounding rhythms of the composition led him to the sacrificial rites of prehistoric Russia. Later in his career he wrote that "this idea came from the music, and not the music from the idea." The notations in the score outlining the various scenes came from the choreography of Vaslav

Nijinsky's failed ballet, not from Stravinsky himself.

That Gloria Contreras has looked into the heart of the score and found the story of her own homeland in no way contradicts the composer's musical argument. Her dance captures a Mexico where, despite the Conquest, Spring has remained unshakably eternal.

Her evocations of ancient Mexico clearly distinguish this version of the *Rite* from earlier settings of the ballet. Traditionally, the demanding role of

the Sacrifice has been danced by a woman. Martha Graham first garnered international attention when she appeared as the Sacrifice in Léonide Massine's setting of Stravinsky's music. Contreras, instead, has set this role for a powerful young warrior, someone the Mexica would accept as a worthy offering to Xipe Totec, the flayed God of Spring.

Like the warriors destined for sacrifice in Tenochtitlán, the chosen one enjoys access to a large group of concubines. Their purpose here is not



simply to divert the attentions of the elected youth from his future; their caresses are more ritual than erotic. They are fully aware that their own offerings must be completed with a far greater sacrifice. Even in their wildest, most abandoned couplings, they foresee the imminence of death.

But this reality seems, at first, beyond the chosen one. Even when he has been lifted above his people in an obvious reference to his forthcoming sacrifice, he seems almost oblivious to his destiny. It is not until he is presented with a personified omen of what is to come that he recognizes his fate. When the men of the tribe gather behind him and stretch one of their own between them, with his head hanging down toward the earth, the young warrior can no longer deny the reality of his future.


With this one act—a moment that must be regarded as a literal rediscovery

of some ancient rite—the chosen one is cut off from his community. He makes one last, desperate attempt to repeat an earlier performance with one of his concubines, but this is impossible for them both. His touch no longer represents life. She rejects him, as she must. At this point, even his concubines join in the ritual battle against him.

In the original versions of the *Rite* the chosen one danced herself to death. But for the final sacrifice Contreras returns to Mexica ceremonies honoring Xipe Totec. As the community watches, the chosen one fights his final battle with one leg tied to the *temalacatl*, the stone of sacrifice. His inevitable and utter defeat is far more anguished than the actual moment of death which follows. The heart sacrifice that ends the ballet only completes the killing which has already occurred.

The Mexican echoes in Contreras' *Consagración* clearly link it to her

earlier *Imágenes del quinto sol* (Images of the Fifth Sun). The struggle for life of *Sensemaya*, the cyclical nature of creation in *Isostasia*, and the difficult relationships among man, nature and God of *Réquiem para un poeta* (Requiem for a Poet) are all here as well. The *Consagración* touches on all of the basic philosophical questions she has explored over a lifetime of work. It is, in itself, an immense and painful offering that holds the promise of new creation.

Having seen Gloria Contreras' *Rite of Spring*, one can never hear Stravinsky's music in the same way again. In concert with the music, her movements explain elements of life that otherwise seem difficult to express. Through the paces of her dance, she arouses the body's memories. Her message is not one that we can simply understand; it is one we must feel 



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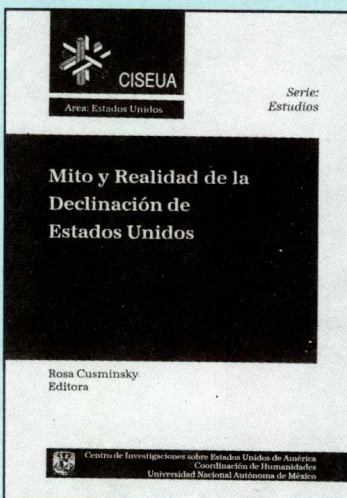
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El Tratado de Libre Comercio. Entre el viejo y el nuevo orden

Mónica C. Gambrill y Bárbara Driscoll de Alvarado (eds.), 1992, 283 pp.

This book analyzes the likely impact of NAFTA on: the energy industry, agriculture, geographical regions, in-bond industry; labor rights, immigration to the U.S., social classes, democracy, diplomatic relations, telecommunications and higher education. NAFTA is considered in light of other trade agreements, U.S. economic requirements and political processes.



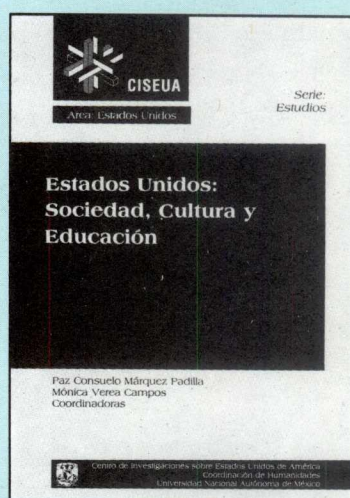
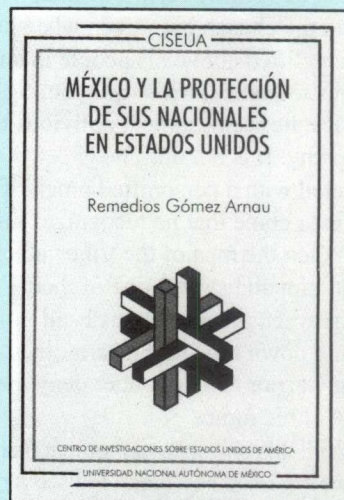
Mito y realidad de la declinación de los Estados Unidos

Rosa Cusminsky Mogilner (ed.), Serie: Estudios, 1992, 180 pp.

This book contains the contributions of lecturers from various countries who participated in the seminar "The Myth and Reality of the Decline of the United States of America," on the present academic debate about the crisis of the United States' hegemony.

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.



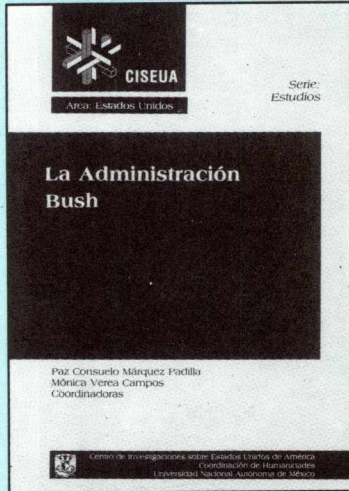
Estados Unidos: sociedad, cultura y educación

Paz Consuelo Márquez Padilla, Mónica Vereá Campos (coords.), Serie: Estudios, 1991, 177 pp.

Thirteen Mexican and U.S. specialists analyze from different perspectives the socio-cultural components of the U.S. as a rich mosaic of cultures and their main forms of expression, the complex social fabric, and the highly-debated U.S. education system.

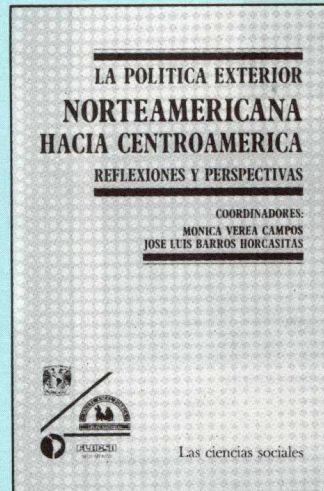
La administración Bush

Mónica Vereá Campos, Paz Consuelo Márquez Padilla (coords.), Serie: Estudios, 1991, 210 pp. Fifteen Mexican and U.S. specialists examine the main events of the first year of the Bush administration. This includes studies on minorities, arms control, the war on drugs, the economic crisis, foreign policy, and the North American Free Trade Agreement.



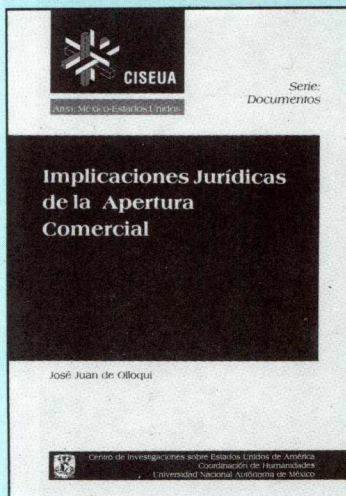
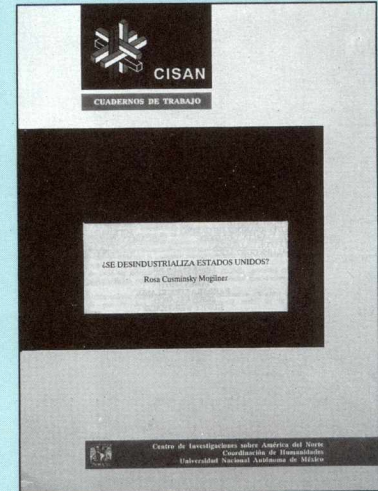
La política exterior norteamericana hacia Centroamérica: reflexiones y perspectivas

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.



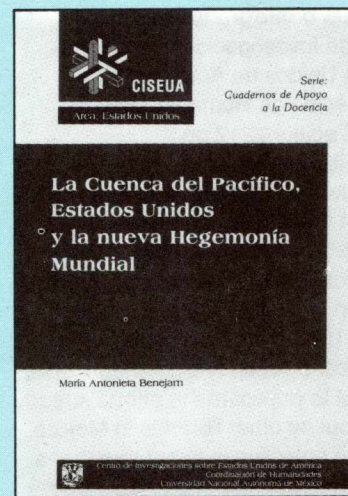
¿Se desindustrializa Estados Unidos?

Rosa Cusminsky Mogilner, Serie: Cuadernos de Trabajo, 1993, 139 pp. Fears relating to the industrial decline of the United States are associated with questions about the ability of the U.S. to maintain its position of influence and world leadership. This book summarizes current debates on whether U.S. industry has ceased to be competitive.



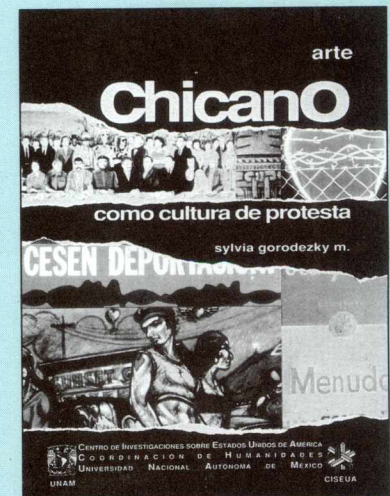
Implicaciones jurídicas de la apertura comercial

José J. de Ollóqui, Serie: Documentos, 1991, 42 pp. An in-depth analysis of legal issues concerning free trade. Ollóqui examines trade and legal developments under President Salinas' administration, within the framework of the Mexican Constitution, trade in Mexico, the internationalization of the financial system and other topics of interest.



La Cuenca del Pacífico, Estados Unidos y la nueva hegemonía mundial

Ma. Antonieta Benejam, Serie: Cuadernos de Apoyo a la Docencia, 1991, 106 pp. A book on the leading role played by the United States in the geopolitical processes of the Pacific Rim countries, a region of decisive importance to the future World Order.



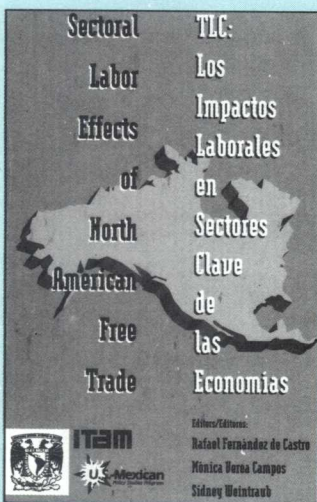
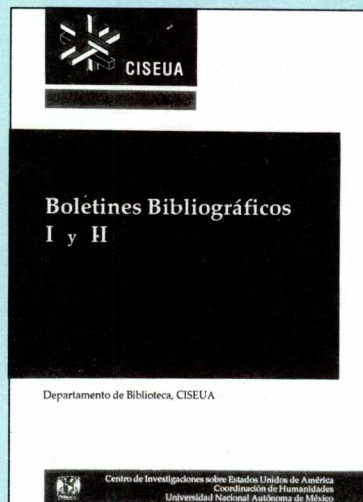
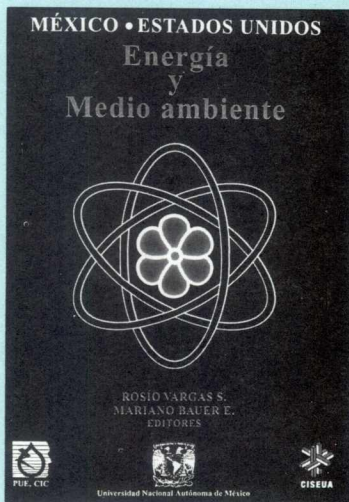
Arte chicano como cultura de protesta

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.

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.



Sectoral labor effects of North American Free Trade/TLC: Los impactos laborales en sectores clave de las economías

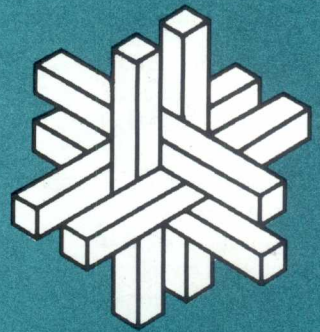
Rafael Fernández de Castro, Mónica Vereza Campos and Sidney Weintraub (eds.), 1993, 368 pp.

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.

Boletines bibliográficos I y II

Centro de Investigaciones sobre Estados Unidos de América- Coordinación de Humanidades, 1991-92 edition, 212 pp.

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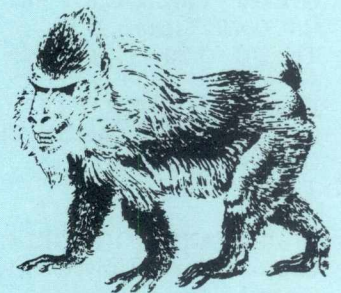
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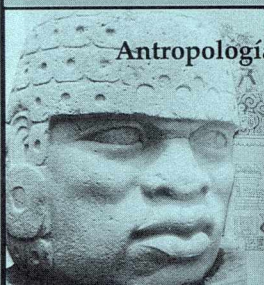
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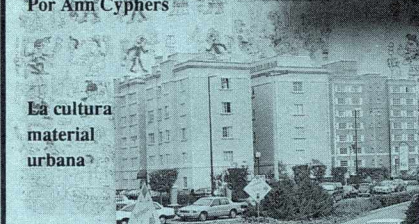
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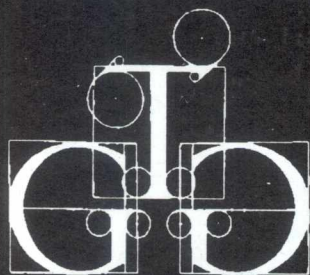
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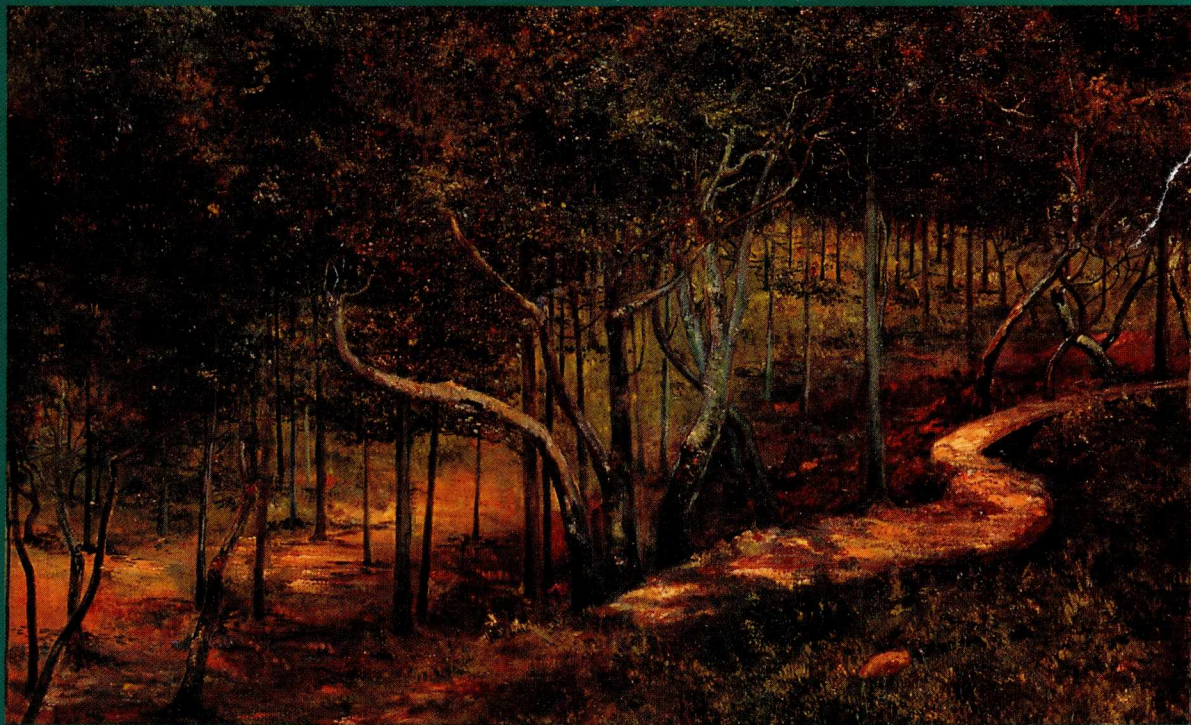


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el Bosque

de Joaquín Clausell (Campeche 1866 - Ciudad de México 1935)

Claro en



Claro en el bosque (óleo sobre tela, 94 x 134 cm., sin fecha) de Joaquín Clausell forma parte de la colección de arte contemporáneo del Museo Amparo. Es ésta, una de las obras características de Clausell, considerado el pintor impresionista mexicano por excelencia. Abogado de profesión, Clausell se inició en las artes plásticas a los 35 años, motivada su vocación por Gerardo Murillo —el **Doctor Atl**— y desde sus inicios dedicó su talento a la recreación paisajística de México.

El de Clausell es un caso único en la plástica mexicana pues a diferencia de Eugenio Landesio y José María Velasco, sus antecesores en el paisajismo mexicano, que interpretan y recrean los valles de nuestro país como grandes escenarios, Clausell denota una marcada predilección por la recreación de arroyos, bosques, pequeñas montañas recubiertas de follaje y cactus, cañadas frondosas. Por otra parte, es en sus marinas en donde su perspectiva plástica se torna panorámica.

En la obra paisajística de Clausell, a la cual pertenece **Claro en el bosque**, apreciamos al artista que recrea vigorosa y sentimentalmente la frescura de las enramadas y la transparencia de las aguas, lo recio y ca-

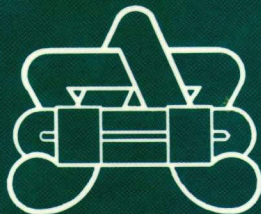
liente de la tierra mexicana. Dentro de la escuela impresionista, Clausell exalta la materia en su pintura por medio del contorno impreciso, el cultivo de las masas dispares y el predominio de la pasta, para plasmar los matices de la luz diurna y nocturna del paisaje.

Pocos pintores en México se dedicaron como Clausell a seguir el estilo del impre-

sionismo francés. En reacción contra la pintura romántica y en oposición a la plástica postrevolucionaria, la escuela a la que perteneció el artista mexicano eligió el aire libre para captar la luz en sus variaciones atmosféricas. Sin embargo, no obstante su adhesión confesada al impresionismo, Clausell supo dar un matiz original a tal filiación. En 1929 dijo: "No cabe duda que el impresionismo ha abierto un horizonte mejor, más enérgico y que no morirá nunca".

Clausell actuó fuera de los círculos de influencia de su época y no fue sino hasta después de su muerte que su talento y originalidad fueron reconocidos. Justino Fernández, el gran crítico de arte mexicano, dijo en 1983: "El impresionismo de Clausell no se parece a ningún otro... su color es rico pero recio, sus formas vigorosas, su factura gruesa; es un arte muy viril más no exento de finuras sentimentales, sobre todo en sus pequeños cuadros, llenos de intimidad, de penumbra misteriosa apenas rota por unas pequeñas manchas de sol".

La obra de Clausell es, sin duda, la del más significativo impresionista mexicano. **Claro en el bosque** es una muestra innegable de esta afirmación.



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