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VOICES of Mexico

CISAN • UNAM

Three Painters from Oaxaca
Rodolfo Nieto, Rodolfo Morales and Luis Zárate

Mexico and the United States At the End of the Twentieth Century
Remedios Gómez Arnau

Views from South of the Río Bravo
Migration to the United States as a Field of Inquiry
Barbara A. Driscoll

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Our Voice

September 30 marked the 164th day of the conflict in the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) that has paralyzed much of its academic activities, particularly classes. Part of the student body rejected the university rector's and council's proposal of establishing tuition fees for students who could pay, those with family incomes over four times the minimum wage a month. The idea behind the proposal was to supplement university resources, particularly those related to the needs of students themselves, to improve the quality of their education. With public monies scarce, the fees would be used mainly for libraries, laboratories, books and computers.

An important part of the university community thought that the proposal violated the right to free public education and was a cover for the intention to privatize higher education. The University Council modified its original proposal and stipulated voluntary tuition fees, allowing each student to decide according to his or her own conscience how much he/she would pay.

Nevertheless, the conflict intensified because the student movement broadened out its original demands to include holding a congress that would make binding decisions to transform the university and its governing bodies.

Clearly, at least two conceptions of a national university are at play here (there are probably more, but a great many members of the university community have not yet really been able to participate in the discussion). It is also clear that the conflict transcends the university and involves higher education as a whole.

This means that imaginative solutions are needed to guarantee access to professional and technical education for all Mexicans, regardless of their social or economic status, without sacrificing the UNAM's academic quality. What is needed are proposals to conciliate the two currently hegemonic conceptions of the university: one which emphasizes academic excellence (without disregarding social questions) and the other which emphasizes the social aspect (without ignoring academic questions).

Thousands of professors, researchers and students are working and studying in unusual circumstances, or have had to stop altogether. This is why a return to normalcy within the legal framework of the university's already existing institutions is imperative; with that, it would be possible to foster the participatory, inclusive spirit required for the transformation the UNAM truly needs. Our hope is that when this issue of *Voices of Mexico* is distributed, the conflict will already have been resolved.

o

Without a doubt, the most important issue in Mexican politics in the last few months have been party and candidate activities for the 2000 federal elections, including the presidential race.

Carlos Casillas presents us with an article highlighting the historic importance of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) holding primaries for the first time to select its presidential candidate. He also points to the paradox the PRI faces: to be able to possibly win the elections, it has had to democratize, but this could lead the party to split, in turn risking the electoral victory.

On the opposition side, the spotlight was on the "Alliance for Mexico," an attempt to forge a coalition of almost the entire opposition which finally failed September 28. In this issue of *Voices of Mexico*, we include two articles that look at the reasons this alliance was unviable. Ricardo Espinoza describes how it was based only on opposition to the party in power, with no programmatic framework. If the alliance had been formed, this could easily have led to ungovernability or the emergence of a superauthority above the parties. Esperanza Palma, for her part, questions making an alliance at all costs, which put a priority on discussion about candidate selection mechanisms at the expense of an attempt to arrive at basic programmatic consensuses. The events proved to the parties that the alliance was unviable and that they had more to lose than to win.

In the "Science, Art and Culture" section, we continue to look at the vast artistic production that has come out of the state of Oaxaca. This issue includes the work of three extraordinary Oaxacan painters, Rodolfo Nieto, Rodolfo Morales and Luis Zárate, with commentary by critics Jaime Moreno Villarreal, Antonio Rodríguez and Christine Frérot.

Voices of Mexico pays homage to the great universal painter, born in Oaxaca, Rufino Tamayo in the centennial of his birth. We also include Alicia Pesqueira's presentation of the Rufino Tamayo Museum of Pre-Hispanic Art of Mexico.

The "Splendor of Mexico" section continues our focus on Oaxaca. Teresa Morales and Cuauhtémoc Camarena introduce us to the rich tradition of Oaxacan community museums. The state is also famous for its fiestas and traditional celebrations, so in this issue we bring our readers Elsie Montiel's review of three of them: the Day of the Dead, the Night of the Radishes and the *Calendas*. Natalia Toledo then offers us a delicious article about traditional food from the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and we furnish our readers with a sample of Graciela Iturbide's brilliant photography of Juchitecan women. Finally, we offer an interesting article by María de los Angeles Romero Frizzi about the sixteenth-century canvases preserved by the Chocholtec town of San Miguel de Tequixtepec.

Our "Museums" section is also dedicated to Oaxaca: Jorge Pech Casanueva gives us a glimpse of the Contemporary Art Museum of Oaxaca.

To pave the way for the new millennium, *Voices of Mexico* recently began to promote young Mexican artists who have already made contributions to their respective fields, but who also constitute the nation's promise for the next century. This issue's "Science, Art and Culture" section is rounded out with an article by Mario Pacheco about Mexican film makers whose quality and innovative proposals have opened the way for them in Hollywood, and a piece by María Tarriba about young Mexican theater.

Our "Literature" section is also dedicated to young artists. Eduardo Hurtado writes about the work of two Mexican young poets who have had the greatest impact at the century's close, Julio Trujillo and Luigi Amara. We also present the reader with several of their poems.

Trade relations between Mexico and the United States recently became very tense when a group of U.S. oil producers accused Mexico of dumping and unfair trade practices. Fortunately, the U.S. court decided in favor of Mexico. In his article in our "Economy" section, Andrés A. González says that decision really could not have gone any other way and explains the Mexican point of view on the question.

We are including two articles about the situation of women in Mexico. The first, by Estela Serret, in our "Society" section, takes a close look at current gender inequalities. Though the panorama is not bright, Serret recognizes that there are reasons for optimism because since 1975, the issue has become important among political parties, civic organizations and the media. In the second, researcher Lee M. Penyak contributes an article to our "History" section about the *casas de depósito*, an eighteenth- and nineteenth-century institution used to control women. It consisted of assigning "problematic women" to "decent places" for rehabilitation and/or to guarantee their safety in difficult conditions.

The same section brings our readers the second and final part of Jesús Velasco's article about U.S.-Mexico relations in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This part of the article deals with the period from the end of the French intervention to the end of the Porfirio Díaz government, which, according to Velasco, sought to balance our relations with our northern neighbor through establishing closer ties with Europe and Latin America.

The "United States Affairs" section rounds out the analysis with a balance sheet of U.S.-Mexican relations in this century by Remedios Gómez Arnau, who finds important similarities between the current state of bilateral relations and those at the beginning of the century: in both periods they were uncertain and unstable. Although trade has increased with the North American Free Trade Agreement, tensions have also increased due to issues such as Mexico's transition to democracy and migration, which shows that Mexico is not a completely developed country.

In the same section, Barbara Driscoll contributes a review of the state of scholarly work about Mexican migration to the United States, focusing on academic efforts with different theoretical-methodological frameworks south of the Río Bravo.

In "Canadian Issues," Elisa Dávalos looks at the United States as the driving force behind the Canadian economy, an economy more based on export than on developing its own internal markets. Dávalos observes that this could make for problems for Canada in the era of globalization when economies can become more vulnerable.

Our "In Memoriam" section pays homage to Mexican painter Alberto Gironella, recognized for his creative body of work that portrays an irreverent view of art, life and death. **VM**

Paz Consuelo Márquez Padilla
Director of CISAN

PRI Primaries
Caught Between Democracy and a Split

Carlos Casillas*

Octavio Nava / AVE

The four contenders for the PRI presidential nomination, from left to right: Manuel Bartlett, Roberto Madrazo, Francisco Labastida and Humberto Roque.

Every day Mexican television viewers watch as a historic event in national political life unfolds. Some surprised, others indifferent, they all see publicity spots for each of the four different candidates for the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) presidential nomination. And next November 7, all of Mexico will witness something unprecedented: after 70 years in power, for the first time the PRI will hold a presidential primary open to all citizens.

* Political analyst and current contributor to *Nexos* magazine. Winner of the Carlos Pereyra Prize for a Political Essay, 1997.

Changing to Preserve

Over the last seven decades, Mexico has had 14 presidents. The Mexican political system's golden rule, however, has been that each chief executive designated his virtual successor.

In the last 20 years, Mexico's party system has undergone significant changes. As a result of successive electoral reforms[1] and the increase in political competition, the previously invincible PRI has been defeated in 10 states during this administration and in 1997, after mid-term elections, lost its majority in the Chamber of Deputies.[2]

All these blows and the profound dissatisfaction of its rank and file threatened the PRI, the

party longest in office in the world, with total defeat in next year's presidential elections if it did not change. The president, therefore, encouraged the idea of opening up the selection process for the PRI presidential nominee. Recent experiences in state elections showed that choosing the nominee by consensus, a simulated form of imposition, was risky because the contenders for the candidacies for different public positions no longer followed party discipline, and several public figures emigrated to other parties.

The PRI's aim in trying a new method of choosing its presidential nominee, therefore, was to recover lost support. It needed a legitimate, open, transparent mechanism that would change the public's perception of the culture of the *tapado* and the *dedazo*.[3]

THE RULES OF THE GAME

The PRI national leadership decided to hold nationwide primaries open to the entire society November 7; the winning candidate will be whoever takes the majority of the country's 300 electoral districts. Campaign time limits and a debate among all the contenders were set;[4] spending ceilings were established, and members of the PRI national and state leaderships prohibited from coming out in favor of any of the candidates.

PRIMARIES THE MEXICAN WAY

In contrast with the U.S. model of staggered state primaries, the PRI opted for a single day of balloting. No mechanisms were established, however, which would allow for the less likely contenders to withdraw from the race without creating an impression of a split or unequal conditions in the race.

The electoral rules complete with sanctions, however, have not effectively averted a negative campaign abounding in criticism and personal attacks, with proposals and argumentation in short supply. Criticisms are rife about candidates' campaign spending, the use of public funds to favor one or another and, in general, each contender's personal record.

THE CANDIDATES

Francisco Labastida, Roberto Madrazo, Manuel Bartlett and Humberto Roque all registered as candidates for the nomination. In practice, however, the first two have commanded the public's attention and therefore become the front runners.

Francisco Labastida Ochoa, born in the northern state of Sinaloa 57 years ago, has held many posts in the federal government: three times a cabinet member (twice during the Zedillo administration), he was also the governor of his home state in the 1980s.

Too grey a figure for some, too grim for others, Labastida has sought to convince voters with arguments that he is honest and hardworking. Jobs, public safety, education and the countryside are the issues he offers to deal with, putting forward his experience in public office as a guarantee. His candidacy has met with problems, however. Just before the formal start of the campaign, Labastida, then Minister of the Interior, was pointed to as the president's choice who, in contrast with past elections, would try to legitimize his position through a democratic process. The media and the other PRI hopefuls attacked him and built a wall of repudiation against an "official candidacy."

Awash in the sea of accusations, Labastida defended himself, saying that he had gotten where he is on his own merit. Taking this tack had different effects and created ambivalence among PRI members. On the one hand, it fed the feeling that Labastida's was a disguised official candidacy and therefore undemocratic. On the other hand, it fostered the idea that there really was no "favorite" and that therefore, sympathies and preferences could be won by others.

The "Rebel" Candidate

Another strong competitor is 47-year-old Roberto Madrazo Pintado. Born in Tabasco, he is the son of Carlos Madrazo, the national leader of the PRI in the 1960s, identified as a martyr to democracy by many PRI members after his death in an airplane crash. With a long political career behind him (two terms as federal deputy, one as senator and one term as the governor of Tabasco), Madrazo Pintado jumped into the national political arena when the legality and democratic nature of the elections that put him in the governor's chair were questioned in the courts. A political manoeuver —it is said that Madrazo disobeyed express presidential orders to resign the governorship— allowed him to remain in the post and project himself as "the rebel governor," the man who had shaken off the tutelage of presidentialism.

Once in the fray of the struggle for the PRI nomination, Madrazo went through a decisive transformation. His discourse went from critical to radical, from traditionalist to democratizing. Coming out strongly against President Ernesto Zedillo's economic policies, accusing it of neoliberalism, Madrazo has emphasized poverty, crime and the economy. He understood that the form of the transfer of power had changed in the PRI and with the help of publicity experts, he invaded the homes of millions of Mexicans with his television spots offering a product with slogans like, "Deeds, not words," and, "Who says it can't be done?"

Madrazo has set himself up as the spokesman for PRI members offended by the PRI technocracy, as the balance between tradition and modernity. With these ideas Madrazo has managed to excite a good number of PRI sympathizers and a sector of voters without partisan affiliation. At the same time, with his television spots, Madrazo invites all Mexicans to a silent revolt against the presidency, urging them to strike a blow against presidential imposition by aiming a "*Madrazo al dedazo*."[5]

The Risks

Positions inside the PRI are quite polarized and the outlook is uncertain. In the eyes of the voters, the battle is between the candidate of the status quo and the government, Labastida, and the wounded traditionalist PRI represented by Madrazo.

The trends in campaign publicity, personal attacks and suspicions that some governors are mobilizing resources in favor of one of the candidates put the PRI primaries at risk. If we add the most recent opinion polls that point to a virtual technical tie between the two front runners, the possibilities of a split in the PRI increase.[6]

What until a few years ago seemed impossible, the PRI's democratization, is happening. Nevertheless, the change could make for its defeat if the contradictions accumulated during years of the top-down exercise of power overcome the democratic dynamic and the PRI emerges from its primaries split apart. VM

Notes

[1] Mexican electoral legislation has been amended five times since 1978. The most important changes in 1996 gave the current Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) full autonomy to organize and oversee the elections.

[2] The PRI won only 47.5 percent of Chamber of Deputy seats in 1997, although no other individual political party won a majority either, creating a situation wherein there is no majority, a particular form of divided government.

[3] In Mexican political parlance, the *tapado* (or "covered one") is the politician selected by the serving president to succeed him; the *dedazo* ("the big finger" or "pointing the finger") is the mechanism whereby the chief executive picked his heir.

[4] See box "The PRI Contenders' Debate," p. 10.

[5] This play on words uses Madrazo's last name, which in rather risqué Mexican slang means a "mighty punch," against the *dedazo* (the aforementioned presidential "pointing the finger," or individually deciding on his successor).

[6] According to the Mexico City daily *Reforma* (30 August 1999), Madrazo is ahead with 26 percent to Labastida's 23 percent. The University of Guadalajara's Center for Opinion Studies, for its part, puts Labastida ahead with 30.5 percent, to Madrazo's 27 percent (*Reforma*, 31 August 1999).

The PRI Contenders' Debate

On September 9, Mexico watched the first television debate ever among candidates for the PRI presidential nomination, Francisco Labastida Ochoa, Roberto Madrazo Pintado, Humberto Roque Villanueva and Manuel Bartlett Díaz. The debate aimed to show each contender's priorities and proposals before the November 7 primary, as viewers scrutinized how each defended his own proposals face to face with the others.

However, unprecedented as it was together with the much touted elimination of the *dedazo* (the tradition of the president "pointing his finger" to designate his successor), the debate did not live up to expectations. Though all the candidates talked about their concerns, most of which were common to all four, what should have been a debate about platforms and ways of doing politics became vague statements with few concrete proposals about how to solve what they themselves pointed to as the country's most serious problems. In addition, at one point Francisco Labastida Ochoa and Roberto Madrazo Pintado began hurling personal attacks at one another. This was the follow-up of Madrazo's campaign of "denunciations" of the PRI's antidemocratic practices, thanks to which, in his opinion, the party leadership has thrown its support to Labastida, whom Madrazo has referred to as "the official candidate." Meanwhile, Labastida accused Madrazo of being a "liar" and wishy-washy on the issue of selling Pemex, the state-owned oil company, and pointed to his links to former President Carlos Salinas de Gortari.

The Common Concerns

Center stage was taken by public insecurity and the fight against crime. Labastida proposed "strength and vigor" to fight it. Madrazo called for higher sentences for convicted criminals and introducing "a reform to protect victims," without specifying what that would mean. Roque said, "public participation and the creation of a new body to fight crime" would be basic. And Bartlett pointed to poverty and marginalization as the roots of crime and proposed fighting them and creating "neighborhood and community defense committees."

Education took second place. The candidates talked of the need for free education and the new training programs especially for women (Bartlett), more and better schools (Madrazo) and quality education (Labastida), although none expressed an opinion about the strike in the National Autonomous University of Mexico, or how they would resolve the conflict if it were up to them.

Third place, although closely related to the first two, was occupied by economic growth: more and better jobs (all the candidates), encouraging savings and support for the countryside (Roque), higher wages (all), jobs for retirees and a plan to support micro-, small and medium-sized companies (Madrazo). Other important concerns were the development of legislation to protect the physically and mentally challenged and the fight against drug use among children and teenagers (Madrazo); housing for the poor (Bartlett); and improving health services and the need to end centralism (Labastida).

How the Viewers Rated Them

Three companies that do nationwide surveys, the *Reforma* daily newspaper, CEO and Indemerc-Louis Harris, all put Roberto Madrazo in first place (27.3 percent, 30 percent and 43 percent, respectively), Francisco Labastida second (25.5 percent, 20 percent and 24 percent), with Humberto Roque and Manuel Bartlett in third. La Crónica-IDS, a company specializing in opinion polls, did surveys in Mexico City, Guadalajara and Monterrey and came up with similar results, although they found percentage differences to be wider (Madrazo, 33 percent; Labastida, 15 percent; and Roque and Bartlett, 6 percent). However, Alduncin, another company whose polls cover the same cities, put Labastida in first place with 35.5 percent, Madrazo in second place with 29.7 percent and Bartlett and Roque trailing in third.

Universidades

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enero-junio

REVISTA DE LA UNIÓN DE UNIVERSIDADES DE AMÉRICA LATINA

La universidad ante el desasosiego cultural
Roberto Follari

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Julio Fernández Bulte

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Mexico's Opposition Alliance
A No-Go

All hope of an opposition alliance with the participation of both the National Action Party (PAN) and the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) for the 2000 presidential elections evaporated September 28.

It was the PAN that finally made the definitive move, rejecting the negotiation results, specifically the candidate selection method.

On September 13, the parties had named a group of well known citizens to design a mechanism for choosing a candidate. This Citizens' Support Council for the Alliance Negotiations presented its proposal September 21.

The two big players among the parties at the negotiating table, the PAN and the PRD, differed in that the former proposed the presidential candidate be chosen using a national survey or poll and the latter proposed a primary election open to the entire population.

After months of negotiations, the apparent solution was leaving the design of a third road in the hands of the citizens' council, which finally proposed carrying out a "national consultation," or primary, and four surveys (three prior to the consultation and one exit poll). However, their proposal did not specify the minimum number of people to be included in each survey, the relative value that would be assigned to the results of the surveys and the consultation, the minimum number of polling booths that would have to be set up for the primary or a minimum number of voters who would have to participate in the primary for it to be valid. It left these "details" to the parties to decide.

This call for an "autonomous action," as it was dubbed, would have been organized by another 14 member citizen's council, including the participation of civic organizations, with the parties as observers who would "commit themselves to provide the necessary resources for successfully carrying out the primaries." The proposal did include the idea of training 40,000 volunteers sponsored by the civic organizations to participate in the logistics of what would be called the "Consultation for Mexico."

For the surveys, the council proposed hiring a company specialized in opinion polls. The firm would have to be vetted by the parties and the methodology by the council. The survey results would be given only to the members of the citizens' council, the party presidents and the candidates.

The Parties' Responses The leaderships of the PRD and the Labor Party (PT) and four of the new parties (the Party of the Democratic Center [PCD], Convergence for Democracy [CD], the Party of the Social Alliance [PAS] and the Party of the Nationalist Society [PSN]) accepted the proposal with no reservations. Luis Felipe Bravo Mena, president of the PAN, however, stated his party's rejection of the proposal, saying it was not a third road, because it included a primary.

The PAN also asked a series of questions which it did not consider were answered satisfactorily. The most important was what would happen if the results of the surveys and the primary were contradictory.

Why It Didn't Work One of the problems that decided the break-up of the alliance was undoubtedly that negotiations centered on form and not content. The two articles that we publish in this issue of *Voices of Mexico* look at the reasons the alliance was unviable. Both were written before September 21, so they do not evaluate the final outcome of the whole process. However, both will provide the reader with a wealth of insights into why it turned out as it did.

What Now? The alliance seems definitively dead, at least the one that was originally conceived, one that included all the opposition parties. It is possible, however, that there will be attempts to forge partial alliances: the PRD with the PT and probably the PCD and CD; the PAN with PAS and possibly the Green Ecologist Party of Mexico (PVEM), etc.

New proposals might even be made to revive the original idea of the alliance. But that would be very costly to anyone involved.

Opposition Alliance for the Year 2000

*Ricardo Espinoza Toledo**

Mexico is currently undergoing a still unconcluded democratic political transformation. Nevertheless, the new pluralism of political life has given rise to a system of competing parties that has already strengthened local and federal representative institutions. The electoral laws and institutions established in 1996 have made it possible to overcome in the main the public's distinct distrust of elections. Today, the country's political profile bears little resemblance to what it was just a decade ago.

Political competition is carried out through a party system in which the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the National Action Party (PAN) and the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) are the most important; their interaction explains the extent and limits of political change in Mexico. Each has its own way of understanding power and politics, which is what differentiates them and makes them see each other as adversaries. The PRI was born the National Revolutionary Party (PNR) in 1929 out of the governing group, and has occupied the presidency since then. Founded in 1938, the PAN has continuously maintained center-right policies. The PRD, born in 1989, combines traditions from both the left and progressive PRI members and has tried to occupy the center left.

The PAN's moderation turned it into the opposition that the government and the government party, the PRI, could come to agreements and commitments with. Just the opposite happened with the PRD, a party whose very existence is greatly the result of the dispute within the group that has governed the country since the 1930s. The PRD's original adversary —particularly of its founding leader, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas— is the team headed by ex-President Carlos Salinas de Gortari. It is by no means irrelevant that Salinas' main ally was precisely the PAN.

The administration of President Ernesto Zedillo tried to change its relationship with the opposition and give priority to its dealings with the PRD, but was unsuccessful. With the exception of the efforts to develop the constitutional changes in electoral matters, the PRD has been absent from any other effort at consensus during the Zedillo administration.

Attempts at closer relations between the PAN and the PRD never went very far either, given the mutual aversion that stood in the way of any dialogue. Their relationship was one of true enemies: each considered the other important only as a reference point to mark the difference and reinforce its own position. They acted together in September 1997,[1] although only through their congressional caucuses and solely to open the congressional session.

From there to a PAN-PRD alliance for the 2000 elections, the step was only as rash as it was unimaginable. They shared their opposition to the PRI because it was the governing party, but nothing more. And this is not enough to make an alliance to govern a country, above all when each party has strong national figures.

The course of events changed radically. The PAN and the PRD went rapidly from unlikely allies to a possible alliance, without having discussed a political program.[2]

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THE THREE MOMENTS OF THE OPPOSITION ALLIANCE[3]

1. *The Initial Call*

The original proposal was to build broad consensuses. In September 1998, the PAN re-launched its proposal for a national pact for stability, governability and growth. The PRD, for its part, proclaimed its support for a national accord of governability between the executive branch and all the political forces. The PAN said its aim was to improve political, legal and social conditions to create a better scenario for 2000. While the PAN considered consensuses and joint leadership urgent to avoid the country going off track, the PRD thought consensuses were necessary to foster a true democratic transition. Up until that point the government and its party were part of the formula.

During the commemoration of the eighty-second anniversary of the Constitution, February 5, 1999, the president called on all the political parties to develop a common platform that would allow them to get through the political dispute over the 2000 elections without risking the main objectives they all agreed upon, regardless of particular ideologies and conceptions. This was the president's third proposal to the parties: the first, in the early years of his administration was to carry out a political reform of the state; the second, made shortly afterwards, suggested working toward consensus on a long-term state policy for development. These proposals were left by the wayside. Neither the president nor those he called upon brought them up again. His third attempt intended to build a common platform, but, like the others, it went no further than merely good intentions.

President Zedillo's attempts at the beginning of his administration to close the breach with the PRD, overcome Salinas' errors and present himself as the president of pluralism did not render the fruits hoped for. The negotiations for the 1996 constitutional electoral reform were the only exception, the only time the PRD actively participated and endorsed the reforms. But from then on there has not been a single important issue on which he has enjoyed the support of the "party of the Aztec sun," as the PRD is called. The reformed federal electoral regulatory legislation (the Cofipe),[4] the 1998 and 1999 federal budgets and the extremely complex matter of the Savings Protection Bank Fund (Fobaproa), just to name the most important, had to be resolved without PRD participation. This was probably a PRD tactic, but what President Zedillo called "the necessary party of the Mexican left" simply stayed on the sidelines of the important accords.

The PAN's relationship with the president, good at one time, later deteriorated. Aware of the risks to the country that a pure oppositional attitude has, the PAN has combined ideological principles with practices of government from which pragmatism is not totally absent. It has been a constructive opposition. However, the PAN has been trapped in the net of its relations with the federal government, which has had more political costs than benefits.

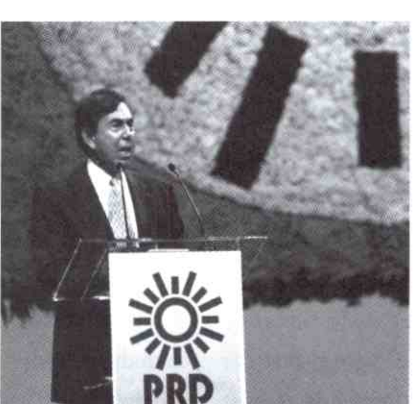
This state of things made closeness between the opposition and the president more difficult, particularly when the political forces were already measuring the effects of their actions in terms of the 2000 elections. For the opposition parties, cooperating with the government was like handing over part of their political assets.

2. *The Difficult Agreement*

The idea of an opposition alliance began to take on unexpected strength. Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas took it on board early this year and turned it into the PRD proposal. Shortly before that, Felipe Calderón, the outgoing national leader of the PAN, had talked about the opposition parties' need to join forces. It could be said that this was the opposition's answer to President Zedillo's call to develop a common platform. However, at the same time, it had decided to keep its distance from the government.

In any case, a PAN-PRD alliance seemed rash and devoid of any future. The differences seemed insurmountable. A first obstacle was the weight of the

The PAN is betting on Vicente Fox.



Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, the hope of the PRD.

Porfirio Muñoz Ledo, presidential nominee of the Authentic Party of the Mexican Revolution.

Photos by Antonio Nava/AVE

leading figures: Vicente Fox in the PAN and Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas in the PRD. They both accepted an alliance but neither would admit to eventually giving up his place.[5] Prominent PAN leaders, among them their national leader, had already stated that any attempt to unite around a common presidential candidate would be very problematic. In their own way, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and the PRD leaders had said the same.

Their traditions, as well as their respective programs and ideological principles differentiate them more than they bring them together. Different and even opposing conceptions of the state and its functions, or their positions on public education, what should be done with the oil and electricity industries, not to mention issues like NAFTA, Fobaproa or abortion, have always situated them on opposing sides.

But what kept them clashing and made them irreconcilable enemies were not exactly ideological disparities, but the kind of relationship that each had with the previous and current administrations: the PAN's collaboration and the PRD's questioning. The PRD systematically censured the PAN for its agreements with the administration, while the PAN criticized the PRD for a lack of proposals. Their mutual recriminations were their point of contact.

The only precedent of joint action by the two most important opposition parties, a real exception in the history of their conflictive relations, was an experiment known as the Majority Opposition Bloc that was needed for inaugurating the Fifty-seventh Congress and deciding on the internal functioning of the Chamber of Deputies in September 1997.

In this atmosphere, the news of intentions of forging an alliance were mere publicity and vague. Those backing the proposal did not clearly express their ideas; everything remained at the level of public statements in which PAN and PRD members alike presented themselves as the decided activators of a pact that the other side was blocking.

What kept the proposal of an alliance alive was the desire to defeat the PRI, and here was another big problem: the lack of a program. This is why the decision about who would head up the alliance delayed commitments enormously and the programmatic discussion never happened.

3. *Toward a Democratic Transition: The PRI in Opposition?*

Different factors came into play so that the PAN and the PRD, plus six smaller parties (the Labor Party [PT], the Green Ecologist Party of Mexico [PVEM], and other new parties like the Party of the Democratic Center [PCD], the Party of the Nationalist Society [PSN], the Party of the Social Alliance [PAS] and Convergence for Democracy [CD]),[6] would publicly commit themselves to an alliance. Two very important elements were the victory of the alliance for change in Nayarit[7] and the PAN's and PRD's candidates defeats in the elections in the State of Mexico.[8] However, the decisive factor was the dissension between opposition and administration around the legislative agenda,

particularly the new reforms to the Cofipe that were passed by the Chamber of Deputies only to be voted down by the PRI majority in the Senate.[9]

If the alliance is achieved, it would not guarantee an opposition victory, but the lack of an alliance would ensure a PRI win. This is how PCD leader Manuel Camacho Solís summed up the reason that the PAN, PRD and the other six parties committed themselves to it. They all agreed that the Alliance for Mexico should be formed by August 31 at the latest, and have its basic documents concluded in September. Its explicit purpose is to foster Mexico's democratic transition in peace and stability. With the slogan "For a new social pact," the parties agreed to participate in the 2000 elections with common candidates for the presidency, Congress, the mayor's seat of Mexico City and in all the state elections that year. However, the time limits set have not been complied with.

But the problem with an alliance like this are the self-imposed limits determined by its anti-PRI orientation. While it is true that PAN and PRD members also concur on democratic convictions, these have been thrust into the background. An alliance presidential candidate could perhaps beat the PRI, but questions then arise of how he will govern, who will support him and what controls the parties would have over the executive.

Though a possible advantage of a coalition candidate is that he would not assume the office of president as a minority leader, he would also not have a majority in congress: the majority, if he had it, would be the coalitions', and that sort of majority is always precarious. In this framework, the risks of institutional blockage cannot be ignored; and if that happened, there would be no "higher ups" to resolve the problem. Institutional crisis could be inevitable. Gilberto Rincón Gallardo, leader of the Social Democracy Party (DS), has pointed out the negative results that an alliance of this sort could bring about, such as the creation of an omnipotent figure, worse than Peru's Alberto Fujimori or Venezuela's Hugo Chávez.

The central discussion of the protagonists of the alliance has been about the procedure for choosing the man that would carry its banner.[10] The two most prominent figures, Vicente Fox and Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, have taken precedence over both the opposition coalition and the PAN and PRD themselves. The fundamental political discussion and programmatic proposals have been marginal and in truth only considered at all in order to cover Cofipe requirements. That is why its critics say the alliance, if it were made, would lack a clear profile. **VM**

NOTES

[1] This refers to the inaugural session of the new legislature, when for the first time the opposition had a majority in the Chamber of Deputies and imposed a series of unprecedented changes in its internal functioning. [Editor's Note.]

[2] After the close of this issue, the PAN announced September 28 it would not be participating in the "Alliance for Mexico" because it disagreed with the proposed procedure for choosing the presidential candidate. [Editor's Note.]

[3] A fourth moment that emerged after this article was received could be called "the failure of the alliance." [Editor's Note.]

[4] The Cofipe is the Federal Code of Electoral Institutions and Procedures. While the main political parties came to a consensus on the 1996 constitutional electoral amendments, including the Federal Electoral Institute being completely composed of non-partisan councilors, the Cofipe did not have the same fate. Reforms to this regulatory legislation were approved by only one party, the PRI, who held the majority of votes, because agreement was not reached on two basic points: party funding and —precisely— alliances and coalitions. [Editor's Note.]

[5] This turned out to be the case. See box "Mexico's Opposition Alliance. A No-Go," p. 12. [Editor's Note.]

[6] See box "The Parties of the Alliance," p.18.

[7] An alliance of opposition parties won the governor's seat for the first time in the July 2 Nayarit state elections this year. The PRD-PT-PAN-PVEM alliance was headed up by ex-PRI member José Antonio Echavarría. [Editor's Note.]

[8] Later it became clear that an alliance does not always make for victory: the PAN-PRD-PT-PVEM opposition alliance in the state of Coahuila headed by PAN gubernatorial candidate Juan Antonio García Villa was defeated at the polls Sunday, September 26, two days before the PAN announced it would not participate in the alliance for the presidential elections. [Editor's Note.]

[9] In July 1999, the opposition parties in the Chamber of Deputies PAN, PRD, PT and PVEM, approved a reform to the Cofipe in which, among other things, the obstacles and constrainments for party coalitions were eliminated. The initiative was not supported by PRI members and was finally voted down by the PRI majority in the Senate. [Editor's Note.]

[10] See the box on the break-up of the alliance, p. 12.

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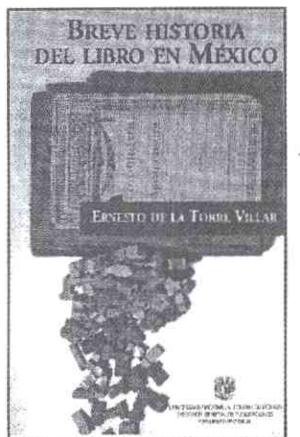

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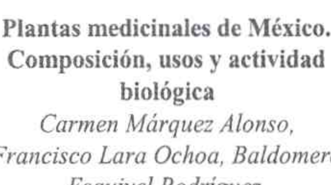

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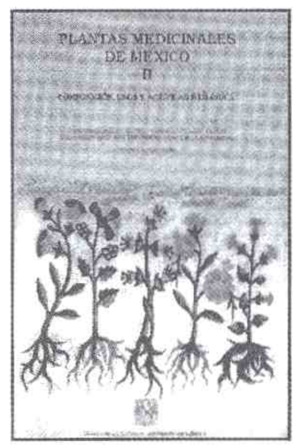

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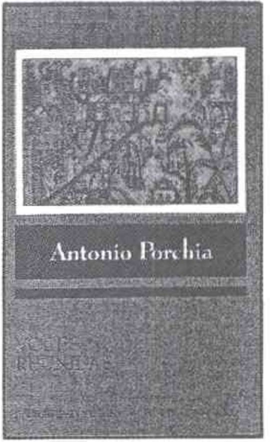

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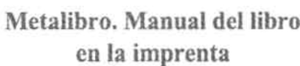

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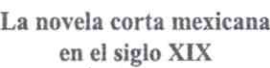

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The Parties of the Alliance

The National Action Party (PAN), founded in 1939, has the longest tradition in Mexico's opposition. Currently led by Luis Felipe Bravo Mena, it has nominated Vicente Fox Quezada as its presidential candidate. On the center-right of the ideological spectrum, its program is based on Christian Democratic principles and the concept of solidarity (or subsidiary-ism). It has achieved electoral importance since 1998, winning 7 governorships and more than 200 municipalities, among them all the country's major cities except Mexico City. In the last federal elections in 1997 it received 27 percent of the votes nationwide.

The Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) was founded in 1989 after the controversial 1988 presidential elections, by former members of the Democratic Current of the governing Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and the alliance of several traditional left organizations, the most important of which was the Mexican Socialist Party (PMS), mainly made up of former communist activists. The PRD, now headed by Amalia García, has for the third time made Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, the PRD's historic and moral leader and mayor of Mexico City until September 29, its presidential candidate. The PRD alone or in alliance with other parties (particularly the Labor Party [PT]) has won four governor's seats, counting Mexico City, and more than 200 municipalities. In 1997, it received 25 percent of the vote nationwide.

The Labor Party (PT), a left populist organization made up of several grassroots organizations, mainly from northern Mexico, notably in the states of Durango and Chihuahua, obtained its legal registration to participate in the 1994 federal elections. In 1997, it won 2 percent of the votes. Its current national leader is Alberto Anaya, and it has thrown its support to Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas for next year's presidential election.

The Green Ecologist Party of Mexico (PVEM) obtained its legal registration for the 1994 elections with Jorge González Torres as its national leader since its inception. In 1997, the PVEM received 14 percent of the vote nationwide and has broad support in Mexico City. Its political platform centers around defending the environment and promoting sustainable development. For the second time, it has nominated González Torres as its presidential candidate for next year.

The Party of the Democratic Center (PCD) received its registration in May 1999 and is led by Manuel Camacho Solís, former mayor of Mexico City, Minister of Foreign Relations and peace commissioner in Chiapas under the Carlos Salinas administration. Defining itself as a liberal republican party, it is in the center and has been one of the main promoters of the opposition alliance.

Convergence for Democracy (CD), another very recently established party, is headed up by a former PRI governor of Veracruz state, Dante Delgado. It proposes defining the democratic transition through parties alternating in the presidency. Also a center party, it has decidedly promoted the alliance.

The Party of the Nationalist Society (PSN), led by Gustavo Riojas, also emerged this year. Its policies are based on the political ideas of the former PRI presidential candidate, Luis Donaldo Colosio, assassinated during his campaign in 1994. The PSN ideological stance is undefined.

The Party of the Social Alliance (PAS) is on the center-right; it recovered its legal registration in 1999 under its new name; its immediate predecessor was the Mexican Democratic Party (PDM). Led by José Antonio Calderón, this current emerged more than 50 years ago and was originally associated with the sinarquista movement and different religious groups.

The Opposition Alliance
Obstacles and Prospects

*Esperanza Palma**

Introduction

The possibility of forging an opposition alliance for the 2000 presidential elections has posed a series of questions about the prospects for a coalition between Mexico's Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) and National Action Party (PAN) and the possible impact on the party system itself. Among these questions: What stands in the way of the coalition? What vision of democracy is at play in the debate around the opposition coalition? What impact would a joint candidate have on the electorate? What would the prospects be for a "multi-color" government if the opposition coalition won?

These are some of the questions I will take up in this article.

Reasons for the Alliance

A federal electoral coalition between right and left in Mexico would be unprecedented.

A few local experiences have been the exception in the political life of the PRD and the PAN. In 1991, the PAN and the PRD, together with the now defunct

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Ramón Cavallo/Imagenlatina

The leaders and negotiators of the parties that tried to forge the alliance.

Mexican Democratic Party (PDM), supported Salvador Nava's bid for the governor's seat. Nava was a respected local leader with no partisan allegiance, who was able to build bridges among the different parties. In the July 4, 1999, local elections in the state of Nayarit, the PRD and the PAN, together with the Green Ecologist Party of Mexico (PVEM) and the Labor Party (PT), formed the "Alliance for Change" coalition that ran joint candidates in the gubernatorial, mayoral and state Chamber of Deputies races. The alliance's victorious gubernatorial candidate was former Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) member, Antonio Echevarría. This win has been cited as a determining factor in the decision of the national party leaderships in initiating more formal talks on the possibility of an alliance for the 2000 presidential elections.[1]

The coalition seemed to have no other goal than defeating the PRI.

These negotiations are a novelty, but they still have borne no fruit. What is the motivation behind them?

At the heart of the proposal to form an opposition alliance is the question of the transition to democracy. For party leaderships and some intellectuals, Mexico's transition process is still inconclusive because federally there has been no partisan alternating in office. The argument most often heard is that if on a local level parties' alternating in office is a sign that the transition is underway, the same is needed federally to prove that the transition has been completed.[2] The only objective of an alliance of the left and the right would be to defeat the PRI and thus complete the transition. Once the PRI lost the presidency, it would be forced to compete in equal terms.[3]

The coalition does not seem to have any other goal than defeating the PRI. The PAN and the PRD conceive of the 2000 elections as a plebiscite in which they would invite the population to declare itself in favor or against the PRI.

Outside this goal, the parties share little common ground, a fact reflected in their negotiations over the last few months.

THE DEBATE

The central point of the PRD-PAN negotiations has been the mechanism for selecting the presidential candidate, although they have also touched on the coalition platform and the way in which the cabinet should be chosen.

Initially, the PAN said it would agree to an alliance only if its candidate headed it up under its political platform.[4] Later, its leaders proposed picking a candidate by opinion poll.[5]

The PRD has rejected opinion polls as a method for picking the presidential candidate and has proposed primary elections open to all voters. The PAN has definitively rejected primaries, arguing that they imply the risk of rival forces intervening in the process, alluding at the same time to their distrust of PRD members. According to the PAN, the recent PRD attempt to elect its party president brings into question its ability to carry out non-conflictive, clean primaries.

The two proposals, opinion polls or primaries, stem to a great degree from the political assessments of both parties and their presidential front runners. Recent opinion polls put Vicente Fox, the only real possible PAN candidate, way ahead of Mexico City Mayor Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, the PRD front runner. A July opinion poll done by the Mexico City daily newspaper *Reforma* gives Fox 37 percent of the votes and Cárdenas only 12 percent.[6] This would ensure Fox the candidacy. Cárdenas, on the other hand, is proposing primaries to gain time to recover public support.

Up to now, the candidate selection method continues to be the most conflictive point on the agenda and still has not been resolved. There does not seem to be much of a future for a third road since Cárdenas and the PRD have already stated

that primaries are the only democratic mechanism for picking the coalition candidate.[7]

The issues of the electoral platform and how to tailor a coalition government have been put on the back burner during the party negotiations. The little attention paid them also indicates that there are actually substantial differences. Initially, Fox proposed that there be no joint platform, but that each contender present his own program and the winner would have his program adopted as the coalition platform. Cárdenas, on the other hand, has insisted on a common platform being decided on first and proposed that it should deal with five issues: democracy, economic development, justice, peace and equity and sovereignty.

Finally, the PRD and the PAN have accepted that the coalition have a common platform and proposed that the president elect would pick a plural, inclusive cabinet, and that during the elections, a collegiate body be formed to ensure the implementation of the alliance's agreements.[8]

This apparent accord is still up in the air, however, since the platform has not yet been hammered out, nor a mechanism defined to pick a plural, inclusive cabinet. Would it imply an equal number of cabinet seats for all parties in the alliance? The central problem so far unresolved is what the coalition proposes to do if it wins the presidential election.

This dearth of definitions continues and, seemingly, the proposed alliance is confronted with insuperable obstacles.

The Obstacles

The ideological factor is frequently mentioned as the basic obstacle to an alliance between the PRD and the PAN. Undoubtedly, these parties have sharp differences in matters of economic policy, differences that can be summed up in the former promoting state intervention and the latter trying to limit state participation in the economy. They also differ on social questions such as abortion and sexuality. Nevertheless, ideology does not seem to be the central obstacle to an opposition alliance. As Leonardo Curzio says, the ideological debate has never been a central trait of our party system; partisan politics is more a matter of clans and personal loyalties than debates on the issues. We are far from the classical political system of Europe in which ideological tenets were for decades the crosscutting themes of partisan debate.[9]

The opposition coalition was not viable fundamentally because of the Fox and Cárdenas leaderships.

The opposition coalition is inviable not for these reasons, but fundamentally because of the Fox and Cárdenas leaderships. The debate around the presidential candidate selection mechanism shows that what is at stake is the leadership of the two front runners. It would seem that each is willing to make a coalition as long as he is the nominee, which is why they have proposed different mechanisms for making the choice. In addition, the distrust between the party leaderships and memberships has to be taken into account.

Another obstacle is the kind of electoral base each party has. Are PRD and PAN voters respectively transferable? Can we really count on an opposition coalition winning a presidential election? These issues surely have a certain weight in the considerations of both party elites.

We do not have many studies on the profile of the Mexican electorate. Whether an independent opposition electorate really exists that would vote for the PAN or the PRD indistinctly depends on the data used to make the analysis. If we merely add up the vote counts of each party in the last federal election of 1997, the coalition would have a good chance of winning. Other data also supports the hypothesis that there is a pool of voters out there who would cast their ballot for any opposition party. The case of Baja California is paradigmatic:

in 1988, Cárdenas received 37 percent of the state's votes and the PAN 24 percent; then, in the 1989 elections, the PAN won the governor's seat. Data like this is indicative of a volatile electorate that easily changes its vote from one opposition party to another. Nevertheless, other studies present a more complex view of the Mexican electorate.

One of the most detailed, careful analyses of public opinion and electoral preferences in Mexico is the book by Jorge I. Domínguez and James M. McCann, *Democratizing Mexico: Public Opinion and Electoral Choices* (Baltimore, London: John Hopkins University Press, 1996). Domínguez and McCann construct a model to explain electoral behavior based on an analysis of 1988 and 1991 Gallup polls and the vote counts in the 1988, 1991 and 1994 federal elections. According to this model, voters judge first of all the strength of the governing party and whether it will be able to develop the economy and maintain social peace. If they decide that the PRI is weak, a good number of voters will cast their ballots for an opposition party, whether left or right. A certain, lower, number of voters cast their ballots tactically, that is, on the basis of which opposition party they think has the best chance of beating the PRI.

Domínguez and McCann show that a sizeable portion of the Mexican electorate that votes for the opposition is consistent in identifying with certain left or right issues, for example, foreign investment and privatization. What would these non-tactical voters do when confronted with a joint opposition candidate? Would voters who agree with the privatization of the electricity industry vote for Cárdenas? An opposition alliance would leave a good part of the public without an electoral option.

RISKS AND COSTS

Up until now, the opposition alliance is only a promise. The negotiating commission continues to discuss the candidate selection method. Nevertheless, the key problem —which is not the central point on the negotiators' agenda— continues to be the kind of government that a coalition would form if it won the presidential elections. How would it pick the cabinet? What economic policy would it implement? What mechanisms would it set up to ensure its own cohesion and to deal with internal differences?

If different economic and social policies are not the PRD's and the PAN's main obstacle for establishing an electoral alliance, they are an impediment for a coalition government implementing minimally coherent economic and social policies. In the current legislature, the PAN and the PRD have clashed, for example, on the question of how to deal with the Savings Protection Bank Fund (Fobaproa). What could be expected from a "multi-colored" government? The lack of a shared platform brings with it the risk of ungovernability at a key moment in which democratic institutions have been gradually built up. A proposal like Cárdenas' to resolve differences in economic matters by referendum does not seem to be a way out.

The victory of an opposition coalition in a presidential election might solve the symbolic problem of the end of the transition. Nevertheless, it would come at a great price for the allies. A coalition would foster voter volatility and contribute to the weakening of party loyalties. This is not in the interests of any political party because it would make it more difficult for them to count on a stable electoral base.

The debate about the alliance shows that important sectors of the opposition (particularly in the PRD) do not seem to think the PRI would have a place in a democracy. The PRI has legitimate social and electoral support; it cannot at all be identified with a dictatorship. Democracy does not depend on a particular electoral outcome, but is a procedure, and the PRI could win in an election with real competition.

The PAN and the PRD already govern 11 out of 32 states; they have the majority in several state congresses and that of Mexico City and more than

half the seats in the federal Chamber of Deputies, and they hold innumerable city halls. It seems paradoxical that these parties are considering the possibility of an opposition alliance just when the conditions of party competition have improved substantially. In this context, the repeated denunciations of electoral fraud and the PRD slogan "Throw the PRI out of the National Palace" already sound anachronistic and hollow. Democratization has moved forward without a coalition. The fundamental issue in 2000 will be clean elections in which all the participants accept the results no matter who wins. **VM**

NOTES

[1] On September 26, an opposition alliance of the PAN, PRD, PT, and PVEM that ran long-time PAN member Juan Antonio García Villa for governor of Coahuila was defeated at the polls. This may well have influenced the definitive break-up of the alliance on September 28, when the PAN withdrew because it did not agree with the proposed procedures for choosing the presidential candidate. See box "Mexico's Opposition Alliance. A No-Go." [Editor's Note.]

[2] For this position, see Alberto Aziz's article "Una alianza para el futuro," in *La Jornada* (Mexico City), 3 August 1999, p. 5, and César Cansino's essay, "Crisis de partidos y cambios en el sistema de partidos: 1985-1997," César Cansino, comp., *Después del PRI. Las elecciones de 1997 y los escenarios de la transición en México* (Mexico City: Centro de Estudios de Política Comparada, 1998), pp. 47-74.

[3] See, among others, statements by PRD governors in *La Jornada* (Mexico City), 9 March 1999, p. 5, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, *La Jornada* (Mexico City), 25 March 1999, p. 7 and PAN leader Diego Fernández de Cevallos, *La Jornada* (Mexico City), 3 August 1999, p. 6.

[4] *La Jornada* (Mexico City), 9 July 1999, p. 7.

[5] The candidate selection procedure was finally what determined the break-up of the alliance. See box "Mexico's Opposition Alliance. A No-Go." [Editor's Note.]

[6] Quoted by Héctor Aguilar Camín in his article, "La alianza," *La Jornada* (Mexico City), 9 August 1999, p. 19. In addition, a *Reforma* poll published September 28, which asked "Who should be the alliance candidate?" put Vicente Fox ahead of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (60 percent to 19 percent, respectively). [Editor's Note.]

[7] "Mensaje a la Nación. Coalición por la democracia, la soberanía y la ley," *La Jornada* (Mexico City), 29 July 1999, p. 7.

[8] See box "Mexico's Opposition Alliance. A No-Go," p. 12.

[9] Leonardo Curzio, "Coalición opositora: ¿Ariel o Calibán?", *Voz y Voto* 77 (Mexico City), July 1999, pp. 12-17.

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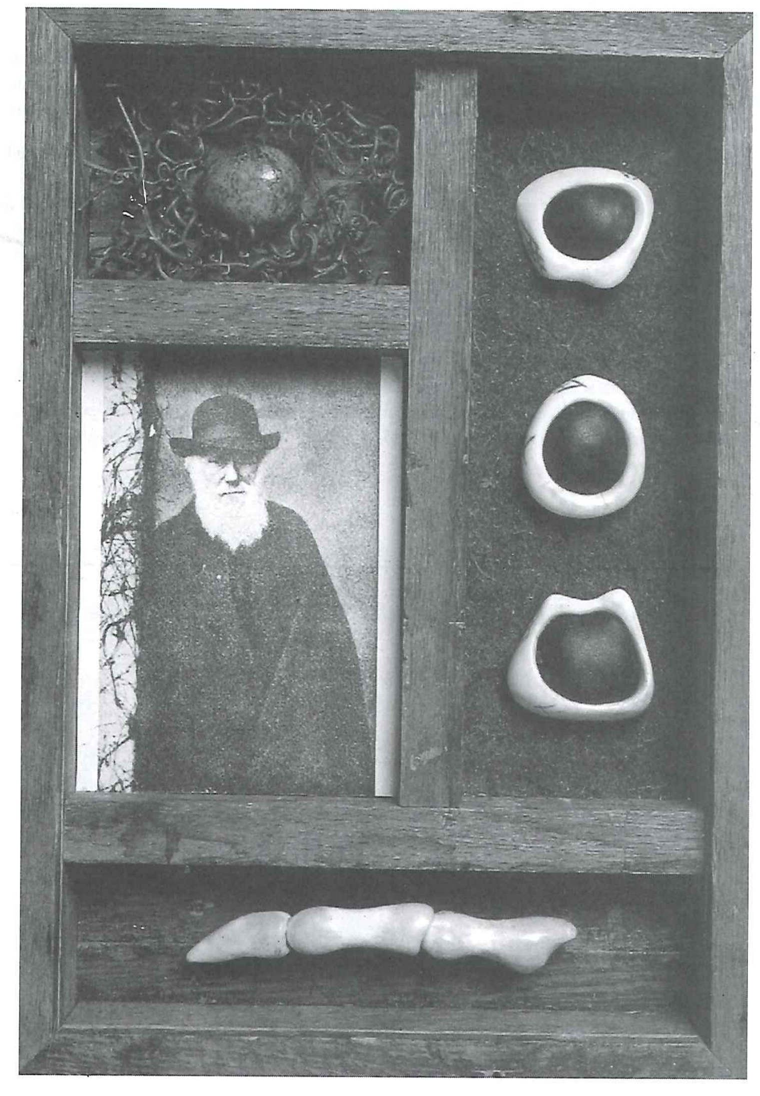

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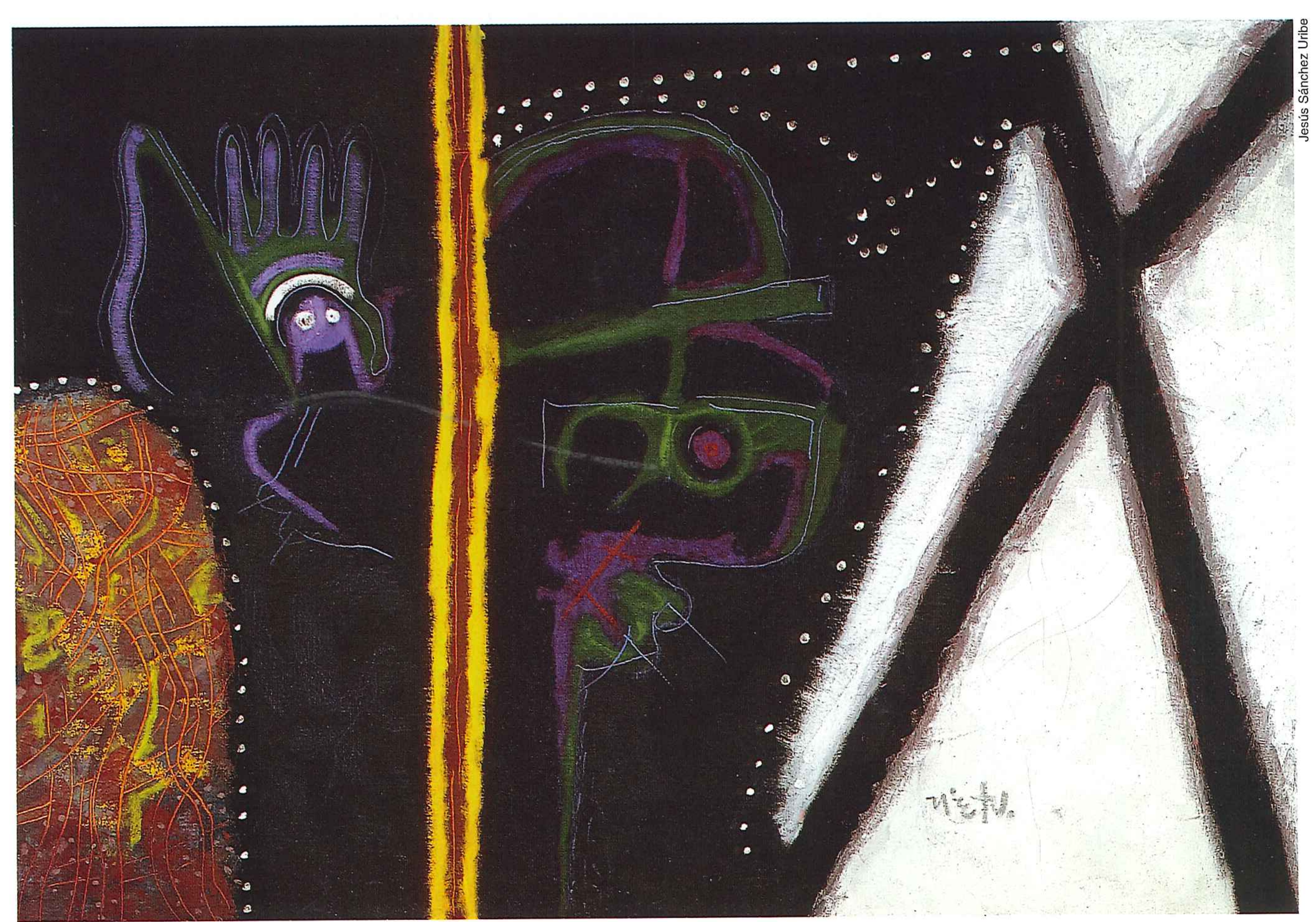

Jesús Sánchez Uribe

RODOLFO NIETO
Fraternal Beings

*Jaime Moreno Villarreal**

His mental figures,
that fluctuate between animals and anthropomorphic beings,
introduce art that boldly attempts
to give form to the invisible through the visible.

Carlos Alcázar

Little Horse in the City, 75 x 100 cm, 1957 (oil on canvas).

The work of Oaxacan painter Rodolfo Nieto (1936-1985) can be divided into five major periods. The first, only three years long, from 1956 to 1959, begins with his initial training at the La Esmeralda academy and lasts to his definition of a highly personalized pictorial language. In this period he began to excel and his career took off. With the impetus of a colorist who dialogues with abstractionism and bases himself on the icons of the Mexican cult of death, Rodolfo Nieto was able to establish a figuration radically distinct from realism that synthesized its symbols (heads, skulls, eyes, bones, etc.), fertile in its encounter with a form of its own consisting of a "mental figure" that, alone or accompanied by another, ruled over surfaces painted by sections which are either complementary or contradictory.

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* Mexican writer.

Photographs reprinted courtesy of Martha Guillermoprieto.

Preceding page: *Man Beneath the Night*, 112 x 161 cm, 1966 (oil on canvas).

Character II, 115 x 67 cm, 1967 (collage).

Juan Francisco Ríos

Blue Dog, 69 x 89 cm, 1976 (oil on canvas).

This precipitous development suffered a sudden relocation: Nieto went to Paris in 1959 and was soon signed to an exclusive contract with the Galerie de France, with which Pierre Alechinsky, Zao Wou-Ki and other first-rate artists also worked. This began the second period of his work, from 1960 to 1966, when he reached maturity. It was then that he had his first Paris showing for which Octavio Paz, who had introduced him to the French artistic and intellectual milieu, wrote the introduction "Pinturas de Rodolfo Nieto" (The Paintings of Rodolfo Nieto). In this period, Nieto produced a totally innovative, memorable and definitive body of work. His mental figures, that fluctuate between animals and anthropomorphic beings, introduce art that boldly attempts to give form to the invisible through the visible. The canvas has been transformed into a place of apparitions; the uncertainty that will always stalk him borders on mystery. From this time on, Nieto's art would be a study and conjuring of the

presence. As his palette got darker, obeying the light of an interior world subjected by the grey Paris sky, the night occupies his reflections. Formally, he continued to treat the canvas by sections, forcing the viewer to balance and deal with his/her nerve and unease. At the same time, lines, stains, rhythms, figurations surge from the depths to the surface: the sensation is one of the visible event coming from behind, from the depths of the canvas, like something ineffable that the painter is recovering and reestablishing, but that nevertheless remains absorbed in thought.

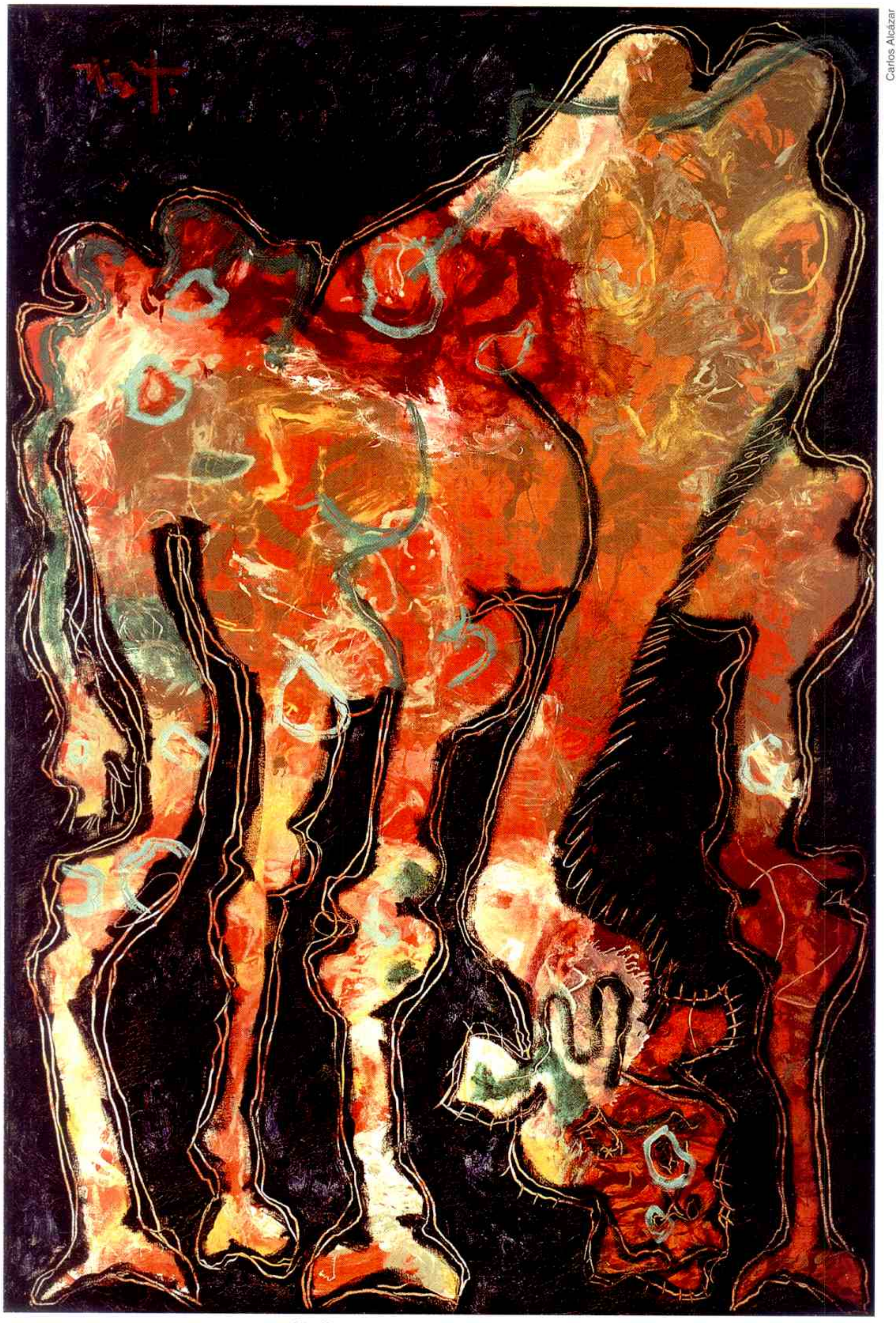
He closed this second stage with collages made from hand-made publishing paper enriched with other bits of paper and graphics transferred to the canvas. Although this kind of work was originally a sort of *divertimento*, it would soon become a strain that would grow prodigiously.

In February 1967, during a stay in Basil, Switzerland, Nieto visited the zoo, sketch pad in hand, and, with the fruitfulness of a rencontre with his childhood, did an extraordinary series of pencil and charcoal sketches of the penned animals. The child who —as he confessed— lost his happiness when he moved to Mexico City at the age of 13, found in these beasts the manifestation of those kindred spirits he had left behind, forgotten, on the family plot: domestic animals, barnyard animals, wild animals and toy animals. In the zoo, he was able to alleviate that intuition of the creatures, halfway between fervor and horror, that populates his canvases, with the presence of fraternal beings. Nieto was entering into his third period.

Openly admiring French painter Jean Dubuffet, who would call the pictorial quest for brute human inventiveness by withdrawing from knowledge and technique "art brut," Nieto —without completely obeying these principles, but looking through them— oriented his work to experimenting with spontaneity. The result was the revelation of a plethora of similar beings, in which zoology gave way to what Alberto Blanco called *sología*, or "the study of lone-ness": "That part of natural history that deals with the loneliness/lone-ness of human beings."[1] The problem of existence (Who am I? Who are you?) that had taken the form of mental zoological figures (in the series "Mental Zoology," ca. 1964) embraces the real presence of animals.

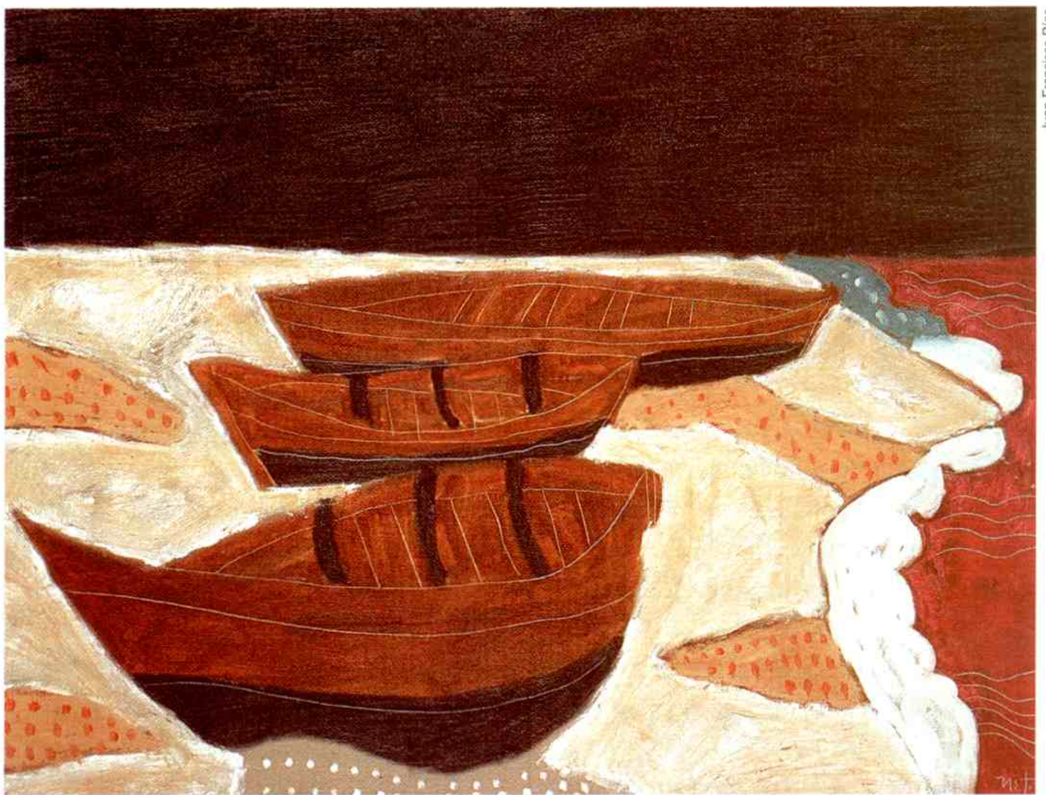
As he developed his bestiary, he continued to work in collage and brought together the exhibition "Laboratory in Paper" (1969), whose catalogue included an introduction by his close friend, the Argentinean writer Julio Cortázar. In those years, Nieto waffled about what would be his complicated return to his native land. After a first visit to Mexico in 1968, he returned to France and unsuccessfully tried to settle there again. That was a period of crisis in which he produced some profound, violent works. It would not be until 1972 that Rodolfo Nieto would definitively return to live in Mexico.

That return marked his fourth period. In much of his work done at that time, paper cut-outs in the form of feet appear to walk through maps in the background: plausible images of the instability and lost feeling of a man who wanted to return to a self-imposed exile. Other works show Dubuffet-like goats lording over the scenery,



Carlos Alcázar

Giraffe, 130 x 195 cm, 1968 (oil on canvas).



Juan Francisco Ríos

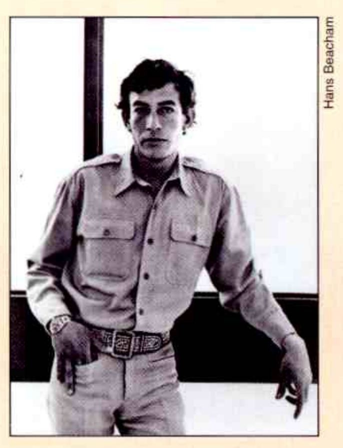
Boats, 89 x 116 cm, 1982 (oil on canvas).

moments in the quest for the roots that Nieto only found when he returned to Oaxaca, in the surroundings of his origins and his renewed passion for the aboriginal, the cornerstone and also the vital justification of his new path of development. Other presences inhabit his canvases, but now he called them "personages" and they came out of the pre-Hispanic Zapotec ceramic ware that he began to collect.

The artist who quite young had found the ideal means for his own, very personal form of expression, culminated the curve of that expression with new mental figures before giving over the last decade of his life to the influence of and convergence with Rufino Tamayo. Newly chosen affinities would shine then, not only related to this older painter who he admired so much, but also to the bestiary of Mexico's streets and countryside and with the personages that the city would offer him. Never satisfied with himself or his painting, Rodolfo Nieto left in his wake a series of invoked presences in which he was always, to the end, subordinated to life. It can be said, without reproach, that his talent was his wound. **VM**

Notes

[1] Alberto Blanco, "Manual de zoología fantástica de Rodolfo Nieto," *Rodolfo Nieto. Bestiario*, catalogue (Mexico City: Galería López Quiroga, 1993).



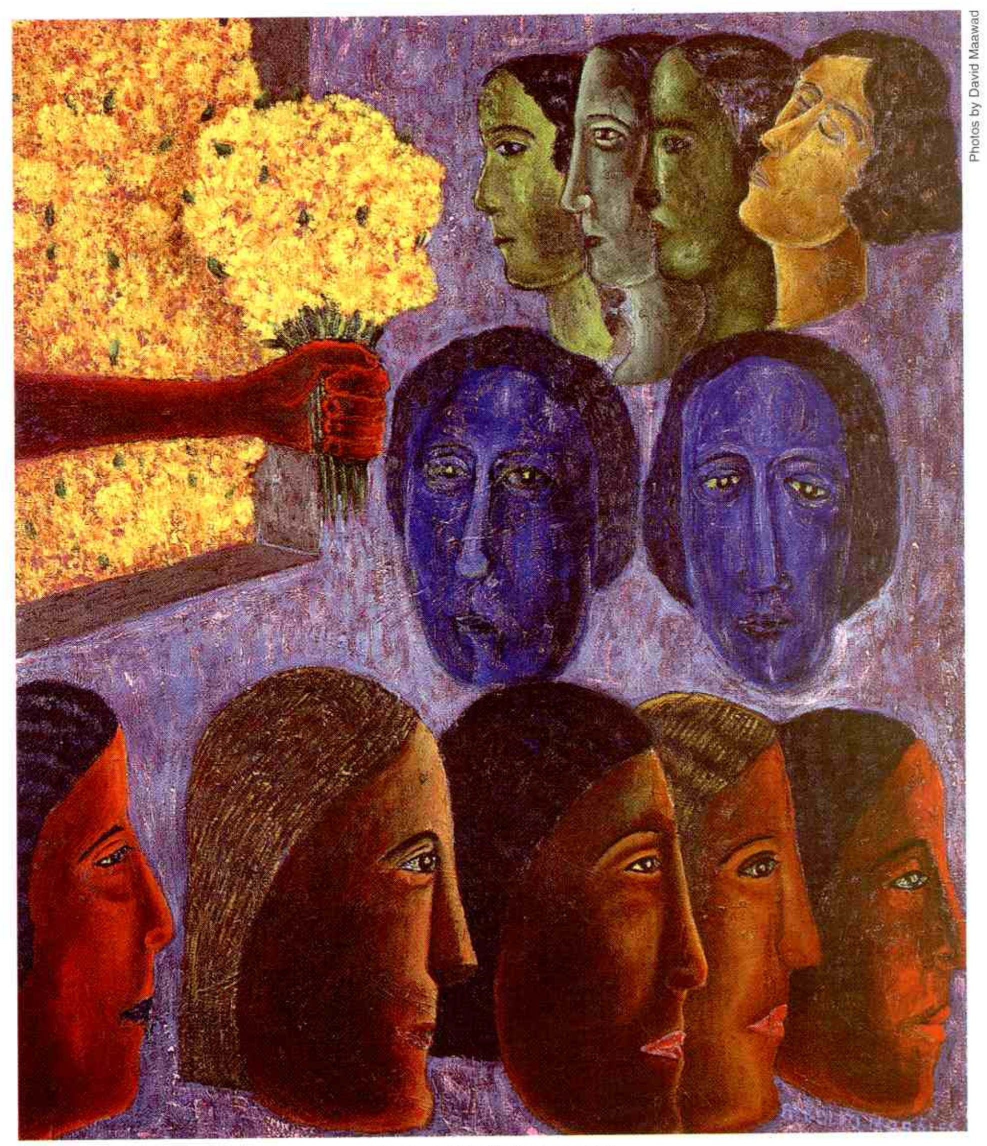
RODOLFO NIETO

Rodolfo Nieto was born in the city of Oaxaca and studied in Mexico's La Esmeralda National School of Visual Arts from 1953 to 1954. Four years later he traveled through Europe, settling in Paris from 1960 to 1972. While there, he studied graphic arts at famous ateliers like Mourlot's lithograph studio and Hayter's engraving workshop; he was named the Galerie de France's exclusive painter; and he made friends among European and Latin American painters and writers like Octavio Paz, Julio Cortázar and Carlos Fuentes. In addition to other awards, he was twice given the Paris Biennial prize, in 1963 and 1968.

Nieto has been recognized as one of Oaxaca's master painters along with Rufino Tamayo and Francisco Toledo. He worked with extraordinary skill in oils, silk screening, lithography, engraving and water colors. He designed scenery for the theater, illustrated books like *La zoología fantástica* (Fantastic Zoology), by Argentinean writer Jorge Luis Borges, and *Bestiario* (Bestiary) for the Manus Press publishing house in Stuttgart.

In 1972, Nieto returned to Mexico and worked in the lithographic studio of Mexican painter Vlady and the wood engraving studio of Leo Acosta. From 1980 to 1982 he lived in his home state, where he did tapestries in the town of Teotitlán del Valle. He died in Mexico City in 1985.

Lent, 47 x 83 cm, 1958 (oil on canvas).


Photos by David Maawad

Untitled, 1992 (oil on canvas).

RODOLFO MORALES
The Nostalgic Company of Loneliness[1]

*Antonio Rodríguez**

The silence of Morales' characters
depicted in groups are reminiscent of those mystical conversations
about religious art in which no one speaks to anyone else.

Untitled, 1992-1993 (oil on canvas).

Sometimes we get the impression that Morales marks what he does not show, what he hides, with a sign contrary to what he wants to express.

Untitled, 1993 (oil on canvas).

At first glance, few artists are as simple and straightforward as Rodolfo Morales. Everything in his work is clear and open; it all goes in through the eyes effortlessly: women, plazas, hamlets, trains, facades, public buildings, churches, flags, dogs, musical instruments.

His painting also looks so spontaneous. The colors of his palette are so natural and his forms so far from classical perfection that it is not at all difficult (for some at least) to think of him as an innocent or populist painter, who takes from his native Oaxaca (or from Russia or Spain) what among common people are "fiesta," "happiness," "revelry," and "color," "lots of color."

For us, on the contrary, the more we penetrate his work, the harder it is to read, the more complex and full of mysteries it seems to both our reason and our senses. Everything in him is, of course, "simple," if we take no note of the paradoxes that this simplicity brings with it.

The plazas, by nature the proper places for encounters, are almost always depicted empty, empty, at least, of human beings.

His women, frequently dressed as brides, wait eternally and in vain for the yearned-for husband to appear. Sometimes, the silence of Morales' characters depicted in groups are reminiscent of those mystical conversations about religious art in which no one speaks to anyone else.

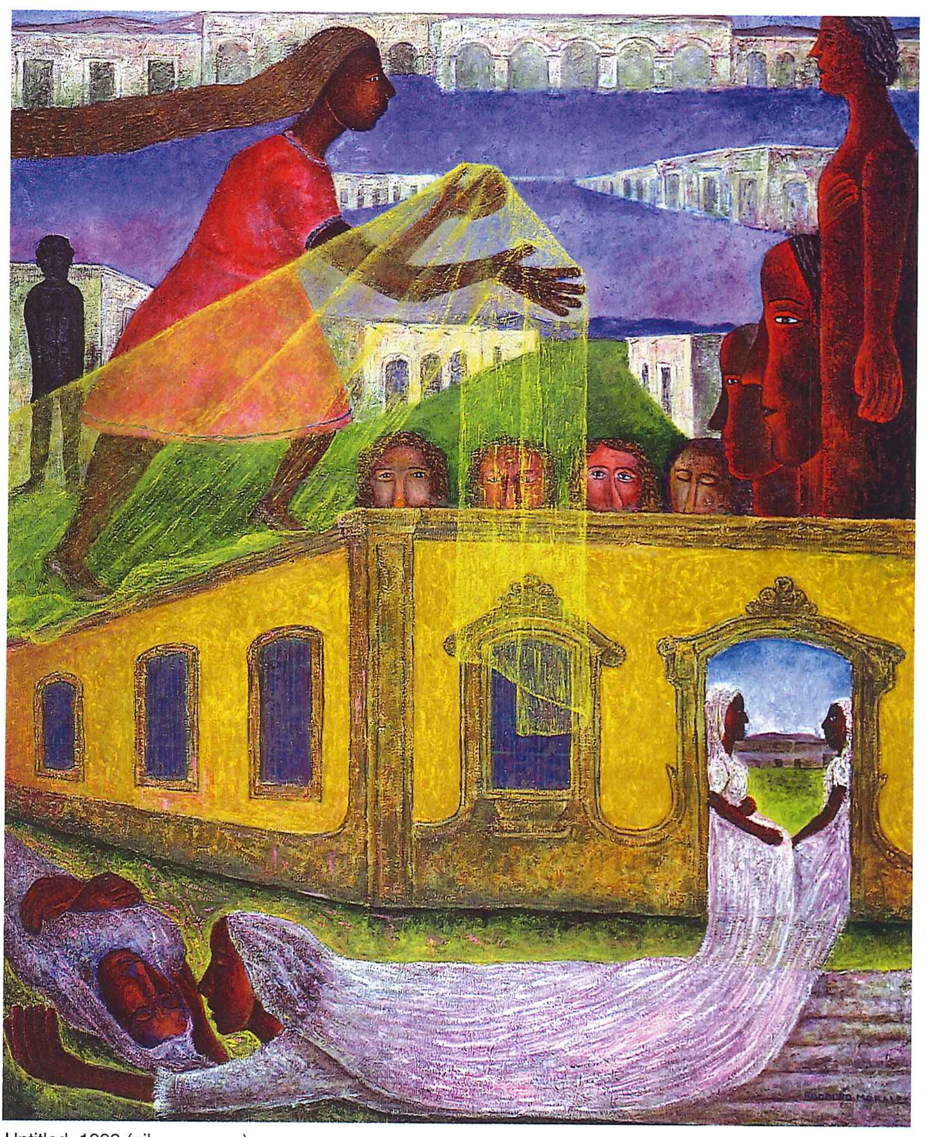
His trains, a symbol of movement, that shorten distances and take man from one world to another, are always stationary, even when the locomotives spew smoke. The music that his oft-portrayed instruments suggest is never heard, and what outwardly has the trappings of joy fills us with melancholy.

The very color, so seemingly "festive," bears within a grave, austere harmony, as though it were a nocturnal color fooling itself with promises of sun.

Sometimes we get the impression that Morales marks with a sign contrary to what he wants to express what he does not show, what he hides.

His empty plazas negate themselves; his groups of silent figures only affirm the nostalgic company of loneliness. Even in the few scenes in which his women speak or try to speak, conversation is impossible because they are all absent, immersed in loneliness, even though present, because in Morales' work, everything is vain waiting, an arrival that never comes, lone-

* Mexican art critic.
Photographs reprinted courtesy of the Art Gallery of Oaxaca.



Untitled, 1992 (oil on canvas).

liness that never ebbs: loneliness, in short, which everyone ends up getting used to.

It would serve little purpose to use the word "surrealism" for what in this work seems voluntary or undesired incongruence: trains that fly; airplanes stopped in mid-air; seats placed, complete with occupants, in the air. More than the incongruence of a waking dream, the "absurdities" of the formal representation so frequent in his work present us, certainly, with a desire to rebuild everything, under the influence of an artistic will that is free only in the exercise of creation.

This is the only way we can explain that Morales inverts reality by placing —in a multifaceted ambiguity— a landscape going in and out of the room, turning the countryside into a painted wall and the painted wall into a screen of illusions, the walls into mountains and the roofs into the foundations of an imaginary, uninhabited city.

Scrutinized with a certain superficiality, Morales' work is similar in its apparent clumsiness to naive painting. He changes the proportions; he creates in a single painting three or four different perspectives with separate vanishing points; he distorts architecture. There is no ingenuousness in this, however, but rather the disdain that imaginative artists of the people have for "perfection" (almost always cold, almost always inert), while favoring emotional earthquakes. Perhaps for this very reason the artist, so closely in contact in his childhood with folk art, with crooked domes, with twisted altars, does not shy from following his own aesthetic conviction and breaking the rules of harmony with dissonant notes that, since they cause surprise and discomposure, arouse paroxysm and emotion.

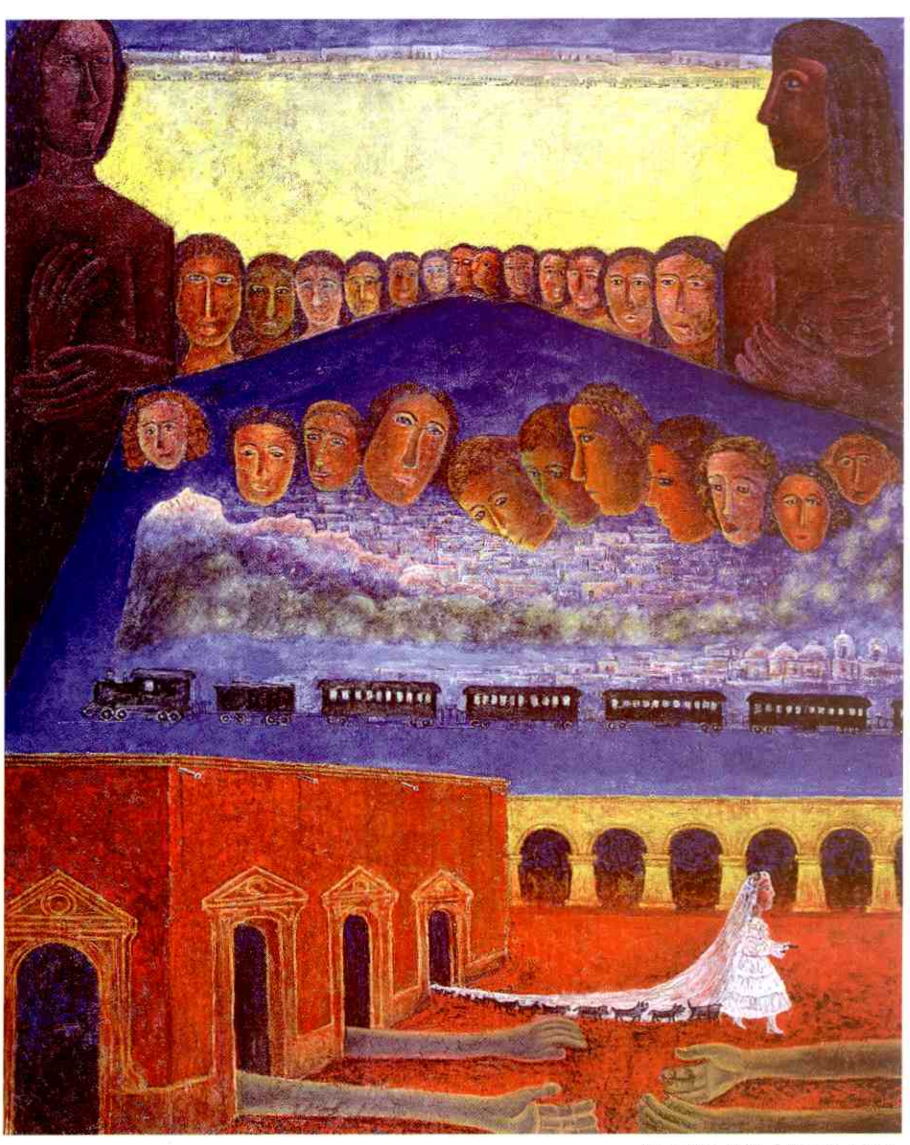
His pencil sketches are extraordinarily fine, very often without chiaroscuro, pure lines. Clearly it is in this field where the artist trains with utmost rigor for the unrestricted flights of his imagination. Once in the picture, he allows the drawing to take the course that fan-

tasy requires; but he subjects it, without torture, to the demands of his expressive needs.

In his tonal harmonies, the color recalls the painting of María Izquierdo,[2] for whom he professes great admiration, but his palette is more charged with mystery and denser. He is nocturnal when he paints the day and phantasmagoric when he evokes the nights illuminated by sleep.

Even without figures, the color would still attract the imagination and the eye; it could live on its own, apart from the mountains and the valleys, the plazas and the trains. It is a great abstraction that unites well with what Morales designs and paints; it is a vital element of his organicity.

It is difficult to find in a painting from another part of the world a color of equal resonance; but it is certain that he did not take it from Mexican folklore nor from the outward look of things. His baroque facades, a constant in his work —he is an eminently baroque painter— start off, without a doubt —and he himself admits it— from the surroundings in which he spent his childhood. But not the color! The color is born, for him, in the cradle of hallucination. The composition is a game of chance in which the only rules are the ones the painter decides not to follow.



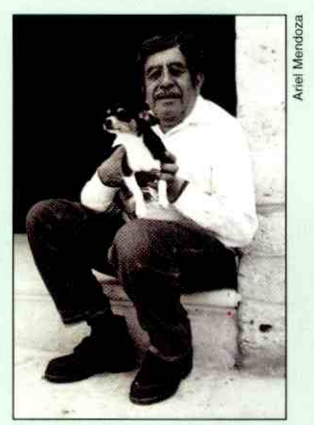
New Life, 1991 (oil on canvas).

This is why Morales, who appears to burst forth in all his simplicity from the soil of his hometown, is a challenge to anyone trying to scrutinize the mysteries of his complexity. **VM**

Notes

[1] Abridged version of the original pamphlet, *Rodolfo Morales. La nostálgica compañía de la soledad* (Mexico City: Instituto Politécnico Nacional, October 1981).

[2] See Teresa del Conde, "María Izquierdo: Melancholic Nostalgia," *Voices of Mexico* 38 (January-March 1997), p. 29. [Editor's Note.]



RODOLFO MORALES

Born in Ocotlán de Morelos in the state of Oaxaca, May 8, 1925, Rodolfo Morales went to Mexico City at the age of 23 to study at the San Carlos Academy. From 1953 to 1985, he taught drawing in a Mexico City high school. An untiring traveler, he visited Europe, Latin America and the United States.

At a 1965 *posada* or pre-Chirstmas party, in the home of sculptor Geles Cabrera, Morales' collages were used as decorations. Geles, excited by the work, proposed a trade: one of his sculptures in exchange for a Morales canvas. This kind of recognition was the stimulus Morales needed to decide to dedicate himself fully to painting.

Rufino Tamayo "discovered" him at his first exhibition. After that he had a series of showings in Europe, the United States and, of course, Mexico. In May 1998, Rodolfo Morales painted a mural for the Mexico City subway line Fine Arts Palace station, entitled *France Through Mexican Eyes* and inaugurated by French President Jacques Chirac.

Today, as a sort of repayment to his native Oaxaca, he contributes the proceeds of his work to the Rodolfo Morales Cultural Foundation, the aim of which is to foster Oaxaca's cultural values and support young people from Ocotlán in their studies.

White Flowers, 1990 (oil on canvas).

Photos by Jesús Sánchez Uribe

Devils Playing with Rings, 150 x 110 cm (oil on linen).

LUIS ZARATE
Sorcerer of Form[1]

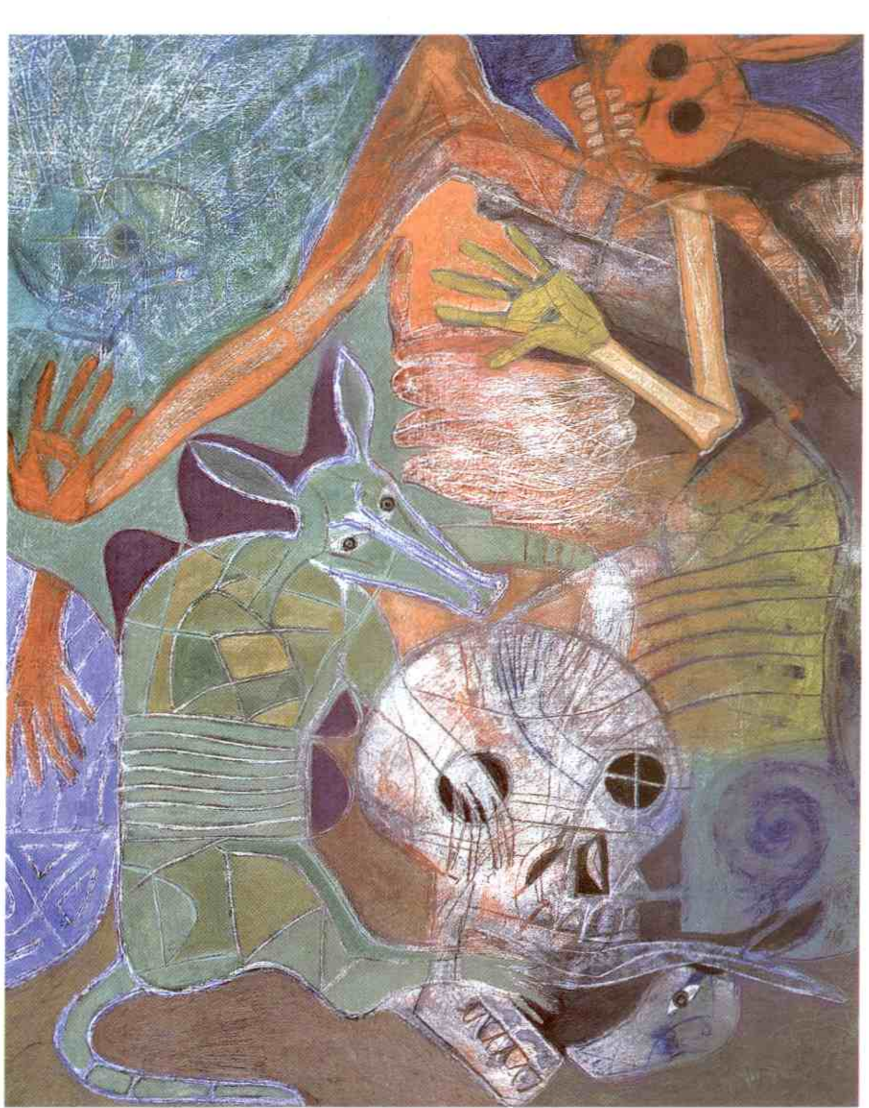
*Christine Frérot**

Like Morales and Toledo, Luis Zárate exercises the art of de-multiplication, repetition, visual incentives of that magic that the artist distills with the tip of his brush.

Fish, 188 x 206 cm (oil on linen).

His colors have a sort of savage brilliance,
and some of his compositions possess the mystery and magic of the rites
and offerings whose timelessness he extends.

Zarate's painting has always seemed to me to be like a game of mirrors (and drawers?) in which the cracks and cuts dramatize and desiccate the image, also fragmented on the inside by a new weave of striates, streaks and stripes that the artist is currently practicing. "I want to give my colors the look of weaving." A "tidy" painting, without dribbles, drawn with care, in which the artist, in a kind of scaling of space, builds a false chaos that must put the multiple shinings of the human kaleidoscope back into their proper place. In this organized, sometimes hermetic, chaos, Zárate's syntax introduces the chain of forms and characters in which the correspondence of forms and ideas reveals a will to unity.



The Armadillo's Dance, 100 x 80 cm (oil on linen).

Like Morales and Toledo, Luis Zárate exercises the art of de-multiplication, repetition, visual incentives of that magic that the artist distills with the tip of his brush. The exalted variegation of his paintings merges with the pleasure (or angst, as he himself underlines) of painting. This implosion of the structure, this delirium of colors, simultaneously dull and shining, opaque and transparent ("to keep my distance from drawing, thanks to the streaks and stripes"), this tactile aspect of matter, have liberated his painting from the subjection to line. They have opened his space to visual vibration, to a cinetism that multiplies the viewer's readings. Fragmentations, transparencies and coverings recreate infinite combinations, the incisions that cut the images are more than mere formal artifices; they are the expressions of gestures anchored in the painter's memory, who is also a sculptor: the pictorial dough is kneaded with the hands, like the earth; the forest is opened with machete blows, to let the light filter or pour in.

Zárate does not like to talk about his history. There is a profound permanence in his truth, that of painting and that of living, both closely linked and inseparable. Zárate is a solitary man and it is not easy to penetrate his mystery. Probably he is at one and the same time as simple and as complex as his painting, which requires subtle reading. His life in Oaxaca with his children and his dogs is slow and follows the rhythm of the Earth. All the baroque-ness

* Art critic.

All photographs reprinted courtesy of Luis Zárate/Quetzalli Gallery of Oaxaca.

Grasshopper Scribes, 110 x 140 cm (oil on linen).

Zárate has picked his side.
It is the side of the whisper and trembling of the forest,
of the shining of long banana leaves, of the power of horses and bulls
and of the erotic tenderness of women.

that emerges on his canvas comes from the night of time, from the poetry and beliefs of his ancestral culture and from nature. While Mexico is what inspires Zárate and what he paints, his imaginings should not be confused with the "Mexican-ness" that he distances himself from and denounces, saying, "At the beginning, it is a resource necessary to painting, but it can become definitive. Sometimes it is a kind of refuge from fear. It is a form of retreat and in that retreat lies the danger of Mexican-ness. I think that if we should fear anything it is that thing called 'Mexican-ness.'" He also has his reservations about the Oaxacan school. "I think it is very limiting to talk about a school. For me, it was a market that created that school and that market demands the existence of a typically Oaxacan style. We should be cautious and very prudent."

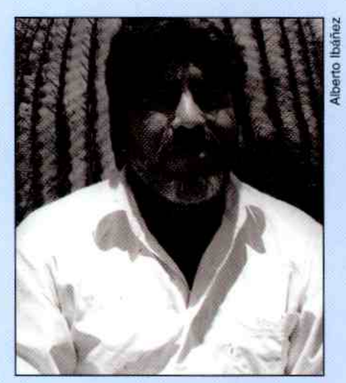
Three Heads, 46 x 65 cm (oil on linen).

Zárate says that the quest for identity "is also a Western discovery" and that he cannot see things like that. "To a certain extent, identity is conscious, but it disappears when you paint." Zárate, however, has picked his side. And it is not, as might be thought, the side of the past. It is the side of the whisper and trembling of the forest, of the shining of long banana leaves, of the power of horses and bulls and of the erotic tenderness of women. The artist is not an illustrator of myths, but a creator; his work, in a true sexualization of reality, is dedicated tacitly or explicitly to creation and copulation. Neither messages nor literature should be sought in his painting. Rather, what should be understood is that we are dealing with the essential elements of an invisible, syncretic, metaphoric order where you experience a life cycle in which women are the chosen.

Zárate makes no reference to any pro-indigenist hypothesis, to any Mexicanist exoticism. He paints alone, more for himself, for the idea that he has of life. Beyond fashion, currents, obligations, in the solitary pleasure of finding himself, in love with that rural world of which he partakes, Zárate has nevertheless been able to renew the teachings of his Oaxacan mentors by creating new images. The sunflowered vibrations of his colors have a sort of savage brilliance, and some of his compositions possess the mystery and magic of the rites and offerings whose timelessness he extends. **VM**

Notes

[1] Abridged version of the original article published in the catalogue *Les Sorciers de la forme* for the collective, itinerant showing of Oaxacan painters in France (Paris, 1992).


Alberto Ibáñez

LUIS ZARATE

Luis Zárate was born in 1951 in Santa Catarina Cuanana, Tlaxiaco, in the state of Oaxaca. From 1974 to 1986 he lived in Paris, where he studied first in the National School of Decorative Arts and later at the famous Atelier 17. During that stay, he purified his line and nourished the obsessions that always parade through his paintings, whether hidden or visible: horses, women, birds.

Zárate had showings before he left for Paris. Over the years, he has had more than 100 exhibitions in different countries of Europe and the Americas. Among his most significant individual exhibitions are the 1970 show at Oaxaca's Ex-Convent of Santo Domingo, "The Spirit of Metamorphosis" in the Xalapa Anthropology Museum in the state of Veracruz in 1992 and his most recent, this year, "The Oscillations of the Imagined" at Oaxaca's Quetzalli Gallery.

Among the group exhibitions are "Latin America in Paris" (1982) at the Gran Palais and "About Juan Rulfo," at the Mexican Cultural Center in Paris (1984). In 1986, he participated in the Magic-Image Collective which presented *Documenta*, a collective work, in Kassel, Germany, where many of the latest trends in art converge. In 1992, he participated in "The Sorcerers of Form" in France, as well as in the inaugural exhibition of the Contemporary Art Museum of Oaxaca. He has received several international prizes.

In addition to painting, Zárate has another passion to which he dedicates part of his free time: plants. He is also part of the Technical Committee of the Santo Domingo Cultural Center's Botanical Garden in Oaxaca, where he currently resides.

Talking with the Dog, 52 x 93 (oil on linen).

Dante Barrera

The Rufino Tamayo Museum
Of Pre-Hispanic Art of Mexico

*Alicia Pesqueira de Esesarte**

The Rufino Tamayo Museum of Pre-Hispanic Art of Mexico opened its doors 25 years ago, in 1974, the realization of a dream for the great Oaxacan painter who wanted to enrich the cultural patrimony of Oaxaca, his native city.

Rufino Tamayo began his impressive artistic career with his contact with pre-Hispanic visual arts while working in Mexico City's National Museum, where he acquired both knowledge and a taste for this part of our culture. This later led him to amass a significant collection of pre-Hispanic pieces from all over Mexico. To gain recognition for the quality of this art, Tamayo told the authorities of his home state he intended to donate his collection to the public.

To hold the pieces, the Oaxaca state government donated and completely restored a house in the state capital dating from the viceroyal period, and with the aid of the well-known Mexican museographer, Fernando Gamboa, installed the collection.

Rufino Tamayo insisted that since the main value of these pieces is aesthetic, they should be considered works of art and therefore come under the auspices of the National Institute of Fine Arts (INBA) and not the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH), as has been the norm. Mexican legislation stipulates that "all works dating from before the twentieth century will come under the jurisdiction of the INAH, while those produced in this century will come under the jurisdiction of the INBA." The implication here is that there was no art in Mexico until January 1, 1901, and that our baroque churches —and in Oaxaca there are unique examples— or the Mayan and Zapotec creations in Uxmal and Monte Albán, or the beautiful pieces of our museum, celebrated by Mexicans and foreigners alike, just to mention a few examples, are nothing more than anthropology or, in any case, history.

The pieces housed in the Rufino Tamayo Museum of Pre-Hispanic Art of Mexico did not acquire their value with time; they have been beautiful since the moment they were made by the anonymous artists who conceived them. It was precisely their aesthetic value that made them survive through time and come to the attention of Tamayo, that great artist of the twentieth century, for whom age or origin were lesser values. Their very beauty made these pieces an undeniable source of inspiration for him, as can be seen in many of his works. VM

The museum opens Monday and Wednesday to Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.; Sunday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. It is closed January 1, Good Friday, May 1 and December 25.

* Director of the Rufino Tamayo Pre-Hispanic Art of Mexico Museum in the city of Oaxaca.

Photographs reprinted courtesy of the Rufino Tamayo Museum of Pre-Hispanic Art of Mexico.

1999 THE YEAR OF RUFINO TAMAYO

Jesús Sánchez Uribe

Rufino Tamayo, *Man*, 548 x 320 cm, 1953 (vinylite on three masonite panels).
Dallas Museum of Art Collection, Dallas Art Association Commission, Neiman-Marcus Company Exposition Funds (1953.22), Dallas.

Between Heaven and Earth is Man
with his yearning for the infinite.

Rufino Tamayo

On the centennial of his birth, Mexico and the world are paying homage to Oaxacan painter Rufino Tamayo (1899-1991), a visual artist among the most representative of twentieth century art, which is nourished on constant experimentation and speaks a universal language.

Tamayo was born in the city of Oaxaca at the close of the nineteenth century. His mother died when he was seven and he was brought up by his aunt; together they moved to Mexico City a few years later, and Rufino worked in the family fruit business. In 1917 he began formal painting classes, but his disagreement with the traditional conceptions of art led him to explore other paths. One decisive experience was his work as head of the ethnographic sketching department at the National Archeology Museum. Pre-Hispanic art led him to a rediscovery of light, color and form. This, together with his contact with other artistic expressions and languages during his long stays in New York and Paris, transformed his art into an absolutely personal manifestation of a universal way of seeing the world.

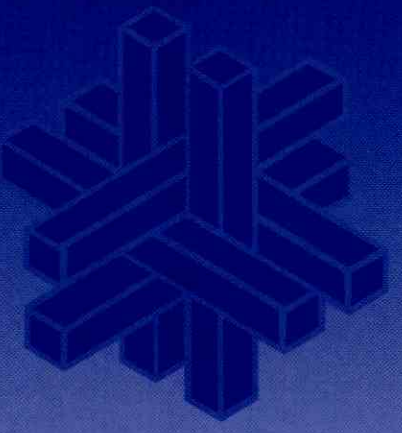
In contrast with the nationalist school represented by the three greats of Mexican muralism, Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros and José Clemente Orozco, Tamayo refused to turn his indigenous, Mexican roots into his only source of inspiration. For Tamayo, opening new roads was the only way to create art and his loyalty to this principle is demonstrated in his constant experimentation with color, form and textures for more than seven decades of artistic production.

Tamayo was widely recognized during his lifetime: beginning with his first individual exhibition in 1926 at New York's Weyhe Gallery, the list of his exhibitions and retrospectives at the world's main museums and galleries is interminable. His paintings can be found in important private collections, and his murals grace walls from the commissions room at the UNESCO's conference hall and the library in the University of Puerto Rico, to the Dallas Museum of Art or Mexico City's National Museum of Anthropology.

Tamayo left the people of Mexico two important legacies. The first is his collection of pre-Hispanic sculptures, on view from 1974 in the Rufino Tamayo Museum of Pre-Hispanic Art in his native Oaxaca. The second is the collection of paintings, sculpture, sketches, engravings and tapestries that he and his wife Olga gathered, including pieces by Picasso, Bacon, Motherwell, Tàpies, Miró and Rothko, in addition to his own work. All these works are the permanent collection of the Rufino Tamayo International Contemporary Art Museum, inaugurated in Mexico City's Chapultepec Park in 1981.

This year, in commemoration of the centennial of his birth, this museum has organized the exhibition "Tamayo, His Idea of Man" from August 28 to October 31. More than 50 paintings, representative of all his periods, show us Man in Tamayo's language: Man in his attempt to understand the mystery of life and his own destiny; his meeting with the universe, with solitude, joy, anxiety, music. We reproduce here one of the works exhibited in this show, the moveable mural *Man*, commissioned by the Dallas Museum of Art. Margarita Nelken wrote about this work, "Man as an objective and a summary. Man in his greatest yearning for infinity. Man divesting himself, in a superhuman effort, of everything that ties him to earthly servitude and, yet, setting his feet firmly on the ground. Man in his most decisive gesture of freedom and, nevertheless, never free of his condition as Man" (*Rufino Tamayo 1899-1991* [Mexico City: Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Internacional Rufino Tamayo, 1993] p. 11). **VM**

Elsie Montiel
Editor

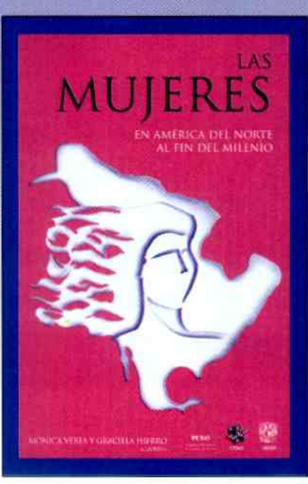


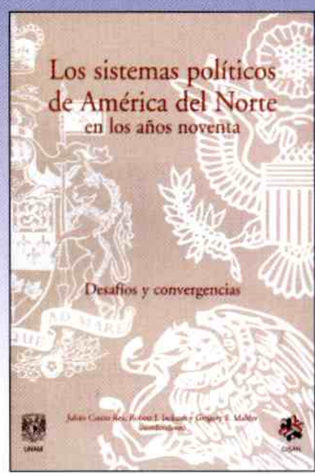
CISAN
p u b l i c a t i o n s

Las mujeres al fin del milenio en América del Norte
Women in North America, Towards the End of Millenium

Mónica Verea and Graciela Hierro, compilers

A pioneering concept, this book is a collective look by Canadian, U.S. and Mexican women academics, officials and artists at the work of today's women and the role they have played in North American societies.





Los sistemas políticos de América del Norte en los noventa. Desafíos y convergencias
(North American Political Systems in the nineties. Challenges and Convergence)

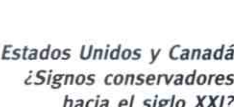
Julián Castro Rea, Robert J. Jackson and Gregory S. Mahler, compilers

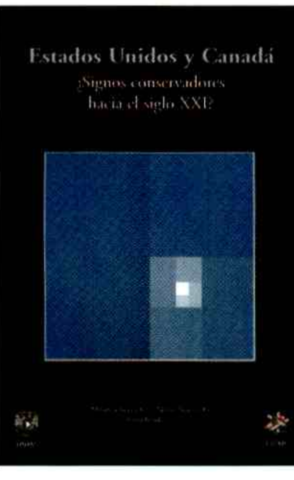
This book takes a comparative approach to the Mexican, U.S. and Canadian legal systems, constitutions, federalism, government institutions, domestic and foreign policies.

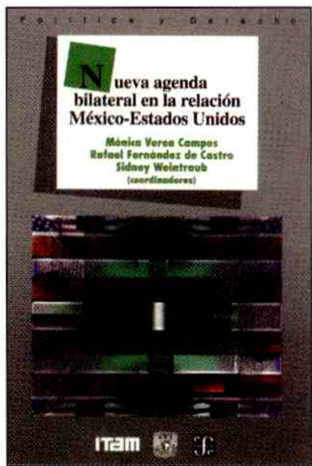
Estados Unidos y Canadá ¿Signos conservadores hacia el siglo XXI?
(U.S. and Canada. Signs Towards a Conservative XXI century?

Mónica Verea C. and Silvia Núñez G., compilers

An exploration of conservatism in both countries. It points to the questions the North American societies are going to have to answer in the next century.







Nueva agenda bilateral en la relación México-Estados Unidos
(A New Agenda for Bilateral Mexico-U.S. Relations)

Mónica Verea C., Rafael Fernández de Castro and Sidney Weintraub, compilers

A presentation from different angles of the most important items on the new bilateral agenda for the two neighboring countries.

Forthcoming: *Los procesos electorales en América del Norte en 1994.* (Elections in North America in 1994)

For further information contact: CISAN: Centro de Investigaciones sobre América del Norte.
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CISAN
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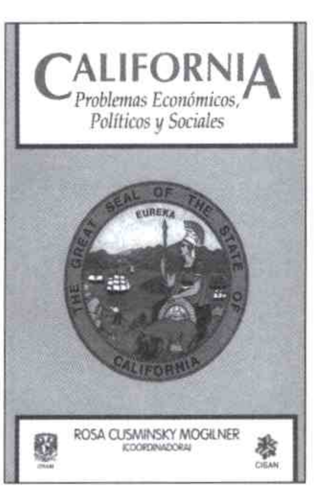
California: Problemas económicos, políticos y sociales

Rosa Cusminski (coord.), 291 pp.

Despite its recent crisis, California is still one of the strongest economies in the world. Specialists from Mexico and the United States examine different aspects of its social, legal, historical, economic and political life.



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Julián Castro Rea (coord.) 152 pp.

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Silvia Núñez and Ana Luz Ruelas (coords.), 155 pp.

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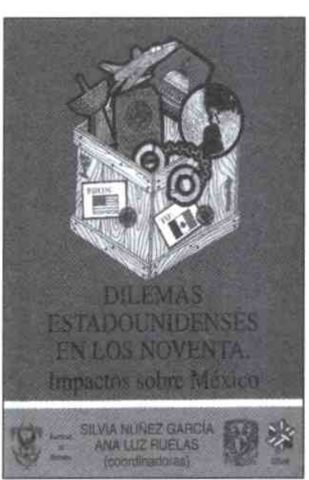
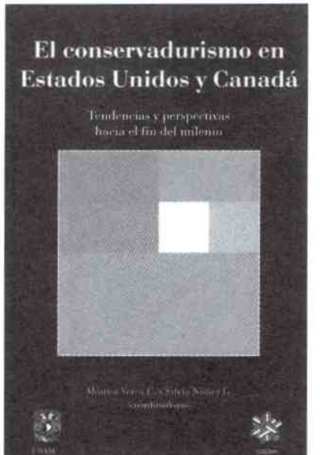




El conservadurismo en Estados Unidos y Canadá. Tendencias y perspectivas hacia el fin del milenio.

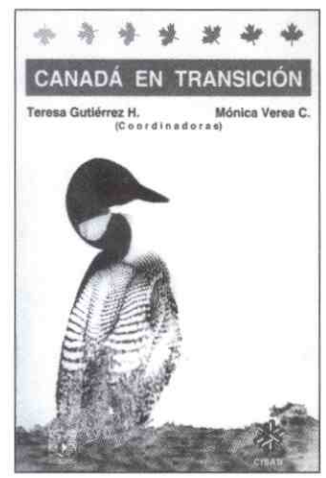
Mónica Verea C. and Silvia Núñez G., compilers. 342 pp.

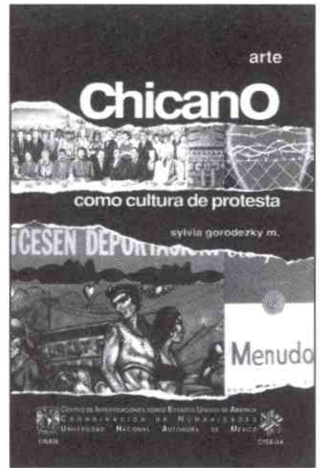
Different analytical approaches and scholarly perspectives to characterize what is generally called "conservatism". The authors start from a recognition of multiple theoretical, conceptual frameworks in their endeavor to overcome stereotypes.

Canadá en Transición

Teresa Gutiérrez H., Mónica Verea C. (coords.). 683 pp.

An overview of Canada today offering essays aiming to define the nature of the Canadian situation so as to be able to better understand the previously unknown, recently discovered northern Mexico's trade partner.





Arte chicano como cultura de protesta

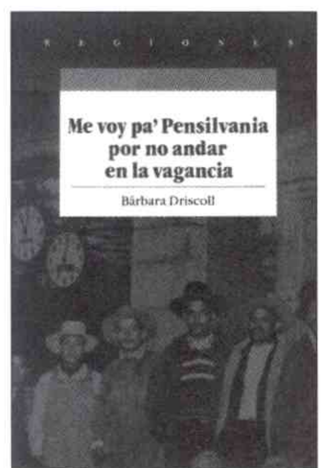
Sylvia Gorodezky, 169 pp.

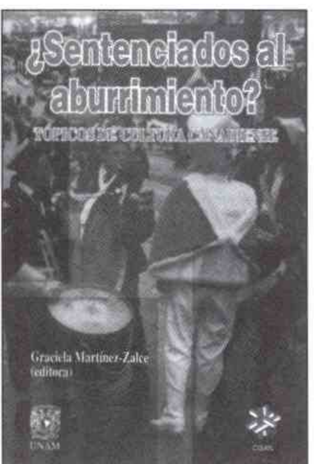
An analysis of the paradoxes of Chicano art based on an overview of Chicano artists and their situation vis-à-vis Mexico and the United States. Includes color prints.

Me voy pa' Pensilvania por no andar en la vagancia. Los ferrocarrileros mexicanos en Estados Unidos durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial

Bárbara Driscoll, 278 pp.

A look at the little known story of nonagricultural Mexican migrant workers in the United States under the Railroad Bracero Program instituted during the Second World War by both the Mexican and U.S. governments.





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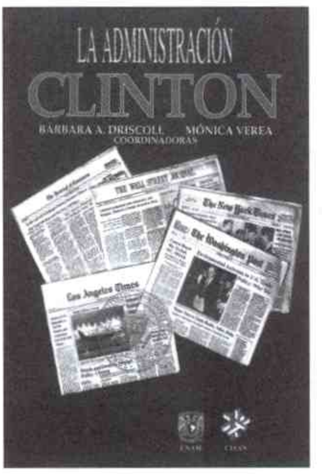
Graciela Martínez-Zalce (editor). 212 pp.

This work brings together different approaches and opinions about Canadian culture and identity. With a look at music, painting, film, literature, television, theater and history, cultural manifestations inherent in Canadian society, it questions the existence of a national identity and culture.

La gestión de la basura en las grandes ciudades

Pamela Severini. Avances de investigación Series. 61 pp.

This book compares Canadian and Mexican programs on the treatment of solid wastes in Mexico City and Montreal. Severini states that the problem can only be explained by institutional, demographical and economic reasons and could soon result in some serious conflicts.



La administración Clinton

Bárbara Driscoll, Mónica Verea (coords.) 404 pp.

An analysis of the beginnings of the Clinton administration. A basic sourcebook to explain the transition to a Democratic Administration and to evaluate current political events.

Putting Yourself On the Line with the Camera

*Mario Pacheco**

As the source of 90 percent of the films shown in Mexican movie houses, Hollywood has a practically captive audience in a country that in the 1950s could boast of seeing itself reflected on the big screen with its own movies.

Just as the rest of the world's domestic film production has suffered from insufficient funds to compete with U.S. films, and with movie audiences who are very often reluctant to explore national productions, Mexico demands —and quite rightly so— quality cinema that it can be proud of.

Because of this, and above all because of their enormous passion for film, the Mexican directors Alfonso Cuarón, Guillermo del Toro, Luis Mandoki and Gabriel Retes are today at the forefront of the art of motion pictures in Mexico. They have even transcended their borders and made their stories universal.

Only with Your Partner (1991), Cuarón's comedy of errors; Del Toro's vampire horror film *Cronos* (1993); Mandoki's urban thriller *Motel* (1983); and the family drama *The Package* (1991) by Retes are part of a conscious effort to return to the genres of the golden age of Mexican cinema.

For a long time, moviemaking was subjected to the zigzags of each presidential administration. Banks to support motion picture production were created and then disappeared; official lists were drawn up of favored moviemakers who could work unfettered; and the cinema of drug trafficking and B-girls was even taken up as the only commercial weapon for competing

Mexican directors Alfonso Cuarón, Guillermo del Toro, Luis Mandoki and Gabriel Retes are at the forefront of the art of motion pictures in Mexico.

* Film critic.

Photos reprinted by permission of the Cineteca Nacional/CNCA.

Gaby. A True Story by Luis Mandoki (1987).

with Hollywood and reaching a broader audience in Mexico. There were those, however, who thought things could be different.

THE REBEL

An ideological survivor of the 1970s, Gabriel Retes sees in the cinema the possibility of rebelling against the system. Even today, his films reflect dissatisfaction with things as they are, at the same time that they show the minute care taken to transmit the message in a clear, entertaining way to the audience.

To finance his work, 30 years ago Retes and a group of moviemakers created the Río Mixcoac Cooperative, which became a living example that Mexican directors do not need the government to make movies. "Moviemakers cannot wait for a paternalistic government, but we can expect more solid support from the state," explains the 52-year-old director.[1]

In keeping with that thinking, Retes participates in as many round table discussions and fora as possible to talk about how to make more and better movies. He also supported the New Law of Motion Pictures that proposed earmarking 5 percent of every movie ticket to a film production fund.

"I don't think there was sufficient awareness for the 5 percent of box office take to be put back into production, but I'm pleased that the Chamber of Deputies unanimously approved that 10 percent of all films projected in the country's movie houses must be Mexican," he said early this year when a new attempt at reviving the domestic motion picture industry made some gains in terms of showings.[2]

Son of actors Lucila Balzaretti and Ignacio Retes, Gabriel grew up in an environment where theatrical ability is one of the most valued traits, particularly as a means to bring to the fore the different ways society throws the human spirit into crisis.

In the early 1970s, Retes took a super-8 camera and began making movies that helped him discover his voice. In 1975 he debuted in the industry with *Chin Chin the Drunk*, in which he developed one of his favorite themes: the clash between generations. In the Tepito[3] neighborhood, kids from the generation born in the 1960s fight with their parents, born in the 1940s.

His 1977 *Paper Flowers* narrates the kidnapping of an industrialist by his employees. Here, Retes was trying to create awareness of what happens to workers when company executives' lives are divorced from their subordinates' concerns and dreams.

A year later, he would create a polemic with *A New World*, that presents the idea that the appearances of Our Lady of Guadalupe were a fabrication of the Spanish conquistadors to control the Mexican population. But it would be in 1991 that Retes' style showed signs of having reached maturity, with the film *The Package*, of interest both to general audiences and intellectuals. Editorialists

> Spielberg bought the story rights to Rete's *The Package* to adapt it to make a film about a Vietnam vet who wakes up after decades in a coma.

When a Man Loves a Woman by Luis Mandoki (1993).

Cronos by Guillermo del Toro (1993).

dedicated their columns to the journalist Lauro (played by Retes himself), who after the violent June 1971 government-student clashes goes into a coma and wakes up 20 years later to find himself in a very different Mexico, far from the ideals he had pursued.

Steven Spielberg bought the story rights to *The Package* from Retes with the idea of adapting it to make a film about a Vietnam veteran who wakes up during the Gulf War after two decades in a coma.

Only with Your Partner by Alfonso Cuarón.

In 1994, Retes premiered his tragicomedy *Bienvenido-Welcome*, about a couple (played by Luis Felipe Tovar and Lourdes Elizarrarás) who get AIDS because the husband has a fling, at the Toronto Film Festival. Here, as in other of his films, Retes acts, writes and directs.

Retes always tries to include social criticism in his work. His most recent film, *The Sweet Smell of Death* (1999), a denunciation of this kind, deals with the conflicts in a town in the state of San Luis Potosí after a young girl is killed during the night and people speculate on who murdered her.

"It's a modern tragedy in which at some point I make a break and give myself the luxury as a moviemaker of putting forward many, many concerns about my country's problems with its twisted human situations," says Retes. "I wanted to get close to an unknown Mexico —rural and savage— because with the crisis that Mexican motion pictures have been through in recent years, it was way too expensive to shoot in the countryside."[4]

Retes' next project, *The Two Corners of the Circle*, will focus on trafficking in children in Mexico and try to bring out the family tragedy that results when the lives and freedom of children are threatened.

The First One to Dare

In 1983, when movies about B-girls and drug traffickers were commonplace and experimental film was far from being accepted by mass audiences, Luis Mandoki premiered his movie *Motel*.

Motel is a thriller of dark passions involving two lovers who decide to murder the woman's husband. The two clash over where to put the body and how to get away with it, bringing out both characters' personalities as their weaknesses emerge.

Given the crisis of the industry, Mandoki has said that if he had stayed in Mexico, he would not have been able to continue making films at the rate that his maturation as a director required. His solution, naturally, was to emigrate.

A specialist in dramas dealing with conflicts in men-women relationships, Mandoki directed Cuban actor Andy Garcia and Meg Ryan in *When a Man Loves a Woman* (1993).

"I never thought I would come to Hollywood. It didn't interest me. But circumstances decided differently....At that time I had to make *Gaby. A True Story* (1987) in English, because it was the only way I could get funding. People began to see it in the U.S. and like it, so much so that actresses Liv Ullmann and Rachel Levin were nominated for the Golden Globe and the Oscar.

"So I said to myself, 'They're opening the doors for you. Don't leave.' Later came the chance to do my first Hollywood

movie, *White Palace* (1991). I realized that if they were using me it was because I had something other people didn't. So I stayed."[5]

As a specialist in dramas dealing with conflicts in men-women relationships, Mandoki later directed Cuban actor Andy Garcia and Meg Ryan in *When a Man Loves a Woman* (1993), in which Ryan plays an alcoholic.

For a long time, Mandoki was a standard for many Mexican moviemakers, who saw in him proof that it was possible to be somewhere where the work was well paid and had international projection. Ironically, for a Mexican, access to mass audiences in his own country continues to be easier with a movie made abroad, in this case in the United States, than with a movie made at home.

"In Mexico, there is no movie industry, no system, no continuity. Sometimes working is the whim of a particular administration. Everything depends on an independent financing council. Very few have the ability of an Arturo Ripstein (*Divine*, 1998) or a Jaime Humberto Hermosillo (*The Homework*) to hook up with people in Europe to make their movies.

"I'm delighted that my career is an incentive to other Mexicans because we are a people who need the stimulation of recognition, and it doesn't seem out of the ordinary to me. To me it's just a job, a job I love, but in the end just a job.

"Here in Hollywood they don't care where you come from; just that you have talent and are dedicated to your work," says Mandoki.[6]

The Little Princess (1995) made Alfonso Cuarón the most sought after director of the moment.

Bienvenido-Welcome by Ignacio Retes (1994).

In 1999, Mandoki became a lifeline for Kevin Costner, star of *Dance with Wolves*. Costner had had a series of box office upsets with his *Water World* (1995) and *The Postman* (1997). Luis says it is the first time an actor had called to offer him a movie; Costner thought Mandoki's intimate style would make him look good on the screen with the plot of *Message in a Bottle*, where he shared billing with Paul Newman and Robin Wright-Penn.

"Mandoki was the one who opened up the field for Mexican directors in Hollywood, and my movie *Like Water for Chocolate* (1992) opened the door for people like Cuarón, Del Toro and myself," says director Alfonso Arau.[7]

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Alfonso Cuarón began with the most difficult genre, comedy, and the most complicated topic, AIDS, and the final product, the film *Only with Your Partner*, put his name up in lights in Mexico and abroad.

Though *Only with Your Partner* never showed in the United States because of the U.S. public's reticence to use the tragedy of AIDS as a pretext for fun, the film was Cuarón's letter of introduction because it shows his ability to create interesting characters and tell their stories visually. An editorialist of the show business daily *Variety* said of the film, "Everybody wants the director, but nobody wants the movie."[8]

Cuarón was ready to run in the big Hollywood race. He did not see this as an end in itself; he saw it as a means to access bigger budgets and audiences and the possibility of making his career.

Cuarón soon received kudos from the industry when his direction of an episode

of the cable TV series *Fallen Angels* won him the ACE award for best director.

"During filming I was very nervous: I had Alan Rickman, Laura Dern and Diane Lane on the set. But they came to me and asked me to relax: they had chosen to work on this low-paying television project simply because they liked my way of telling stories," explains Cuarón proudly in a restaurant in New York, his new home.[9]

His first full length feature, *The Little Princess* (1995), based on Frances Hodgson Burnett's novel, which got great reviews, made him the most sought after director of the moment.

Newsweek film critic David Ansen said it was good to see Mexican movie makers like Alfonso Cuarón, who put his own stamp on *The Little Princess* even though he made it in the United States. His film was two votes away from beating Mike Figgis' *Leaving Las Vegas* for best picture by Los Angeles critics, which is why he predicted a good future for him in this industry.

Despite its not doing so well at the box office because of what Cuarón said was Warner Brothers' not knowing how to promote it, the film was nominated for two Oscars: one for best production design, a nomination that went to Bob Welch, and the other for best photography, to Mexican cinematographer Emmanuel Lubezki.

Classmates at the University Film Studies Center of Mexico (CUEC), Lubezki and Cuarón have created a visual narrative style based on back lighting, green tones and warm lighting to accompany their characters.

They gelled their visual style with the premier of their next project, *Great Expectations* (1998), starring Ethan Hawke, Gwyneth Paltrow and Robert de Niro. The film's box office take came in second as the new version of *Titanic* (1997) was still monopolizing first place in the U.S.

"*Great Expectations*, based on Charles Dickens' novel, is a movie with lots of different levels....It's a story about destiny and a study of class differences dealing with human behavior when this kind of difference comes to the fore," says Cuarón, who explains that he is interested in making more personal films that do not need a big budget and whose characters say things that engage him.[10]

"Guillermo del Toro is a brilliant star in the firmament of horror," said director David Cronenberg (*The Fly*).

A Horror Story

One midnight in 1993, Guillermo del Toro found himself impatient, nervous and just a little drunk, walking down the streets of New York, waiting for *The New York Times* to come out with the review of his movie *Cronos*, his ticket to Hollywood.

What Del Toro read as his destiny changed before his eyes called him "the new blood" of horror films.

Ecstatic, Del Toro ran back to the hotel where his family was staying and announced that there was a future for his moviemaking career in the same country where his teachers —and now friends— Stan Winston (*Jurassic Park*) and James Cameron (*Terminator*) honed their craft.

An obsession with comic books and monsters marked the artist that Del Toro would become before the horror movie magazine, *Fangoria*, and the music pub-

The Little Princess by Alfonso Cuarón (1995).

lication, *Rolling Stone*, put the Guadalajara-born director on the map as one of the genre's new talents. When he founded his own make-up company, Necrofilia, to create the characters for the Mexican television series *The Appointed Hour* (on which his friend Alfonso Cuarón also worked), Del Toro trained in the art of the horrific and spent six years of his life writing the script of *Cronos*.

Cronos is the story of a mature man (played by Federico Luppi) who discovers a strange mechanism in an artifact that pricks his hand and sucks his blood, and thanks to this, the old man is rejuvenated.

Del Toro's first surprise was that *Cronos* won 9 Ariels (the Mexican equivalent of the Oscar), including best picture. His second surprise was participating in the Cannes Film Festival and winning the Critics International Grand Prize.

"The film was finished using my credit card, and just when I was making the last expenditures, they rejected the card because it was maxed out. But I didn't care because we had finished it," he said at the time. "I was also about to lose my house because we bet everything we had on that production. But it was worth it because people received it enthusiastically all over the world."[11]

Producers offered him *Alien IV*, the long awaited sequel of the *Alien* trilogy, and the thriller *Seven*, but Del Toro turned them down. He preferred to tell a story that said more to him. That decision was the beginning of *Mimic* (with Mira Sorvino and F. Murray Abraham), a horror film set in the New York subway, where mutant cockroaches kill people left and right.

"In *Mimic* I say that humans are dysfunctional animals, with almost no sense of community and only a few survival traits. The monsters in the movie are not terrifying because they're bad or perverted, but because they're trying to survive."[12]

Another director, a passionate devotee of the horror genre and characters who make it possible to make analogies with human nature, David Cronenberg (*The Fly*), said, "Del Toro is a brilliant star in the firmament of horror."

At 34, this October Del Toro will begin filming *The Devil's Backbone*, co-produced by well known Spanish director Pedro Almodóvar, at the same time that his project *The Count of Montecristo*, backed by Francis Ford Coppola, goes into pre-production.

"Supporting new directors is a commitment I have made since I got into this very difficult business. I prefer helping people who have already done something and, well, that's not easy because even though I already filmed a movie in Hollywood, I realize I'm in the same boat I was in when this dream began, because getting financial backing is one of the most problematic things about the job," says Del Toro.[13]

THE LONG, WINDING PATH

"It's a lie that we Mexicans are gaining ground in Hollywood. These people —most of whom are my friends— have had to fight a lot," says Roberto Sneider, the director of the film *Two Murders*. "In Mexico, the audience is not big enough for our movies. That's why some of us see in Hollywood the possibility of doing stories with bigger budgets, but movies that would interest both Mexicans and Americans."[14]

After hearing the stories of these four directors, clearly, whether in Hollywood or in Mexico, the cinema continues to require the courage and passion of its artists. And while California requires scripts like Retes' and offers directors like Cuarón, Del Toro and Mandoki opportunities to work in the movies, they and those who come after them will take advantage of these opportunities, making it very clear that maintaining their own vision and personality is the most important thing. VM

NOTES

[1] *Reforma* (Mexico City), 8 May 1999.

[2] *Reforma* (Mexico City), 13 February 1999.

[3] Tepito, one of Mexico City's most populated neighborhoods, is considered unsafe if you do not live there. [Editor's Note.]

[4] *Reforma* (Mexico City), 15 March 1999.

[5] *Reforma* (Mexico City), 19 March 1999.

[6] *Reforma* (Mexico City), 22 March 1999.

[7] Interview with the author.

[8] Notimex News Agency (Mexico City), October 1995.

[9] Interview with the author.

[10] *El Norte* (Monterrey), 3 November 1997.

[11] *El Norte* (Monterrey), 10 September 1997.

[12] *El Norte* (Monterrey), 10 September 1997.

[13] *El Norte* (Monterrey), 6 November 1997.

[14] *Reforma* (Mexico City), 4 November 1997.

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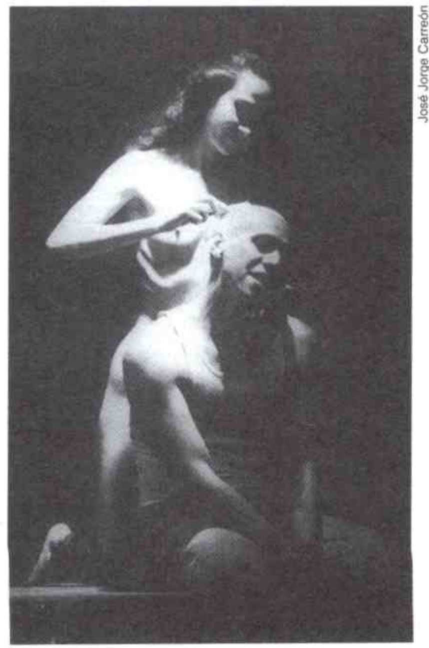
Dolores, or Happiness by David Olguín.

Young Mexican Theater

*María Tarriba Unger**

By young Mexican theater we mean theater by creator-directors, dramatists and actors born in the 1960s, whose aesthetic proposals not only lead them to break with previous generations, but also brings about a true renaissance in the performing arts. Both in play writing and direction we have artists of rigorous academic formation, no impediment to their using all their imaginative potential, audacity and a great sense of humor, often to explore the darkest facets of human nature.

Less than a decade ago it would have been unthinkable to talk about a "generation." Young people in the performing arts had to work alone or under the tutelage of already well established directors. Many limited themselves to imitating their teachers, and their initiatives in pursuit of an authentic proposal were rather timid. Today, despite the fact that these young people's stagecraft and play writing differ widely, they do form a group. According to Mexican playwright Víctor Hugo Rascón Banda, "They are total theater people because they have lived it from the point of view of different crafts, or rather, from the point of view of all the theatrical crafts. They are not like the writers of the previous generation who devote themselves exclusively to the craft of writing. They are extremely active. They do not wait at home for a producer or director to come along. If there is no director, they direct. If there is no producer, they figure out how to produce their works austerely. If they cannot find the right actor, they go up on the stage themselves. If there are no critics, they do their own critiques. They live in the theater; they form workshops, reading groups, and they help each other."[1]


José Jorge Carreón

Bar and Desert by Jorge Celaya.

These young people do not seem to be particularly interested in strictly national political questions. Their topics deal with issues that can be situated anywhere in the world. Corruption, the abuse

* Mexican theater critic.

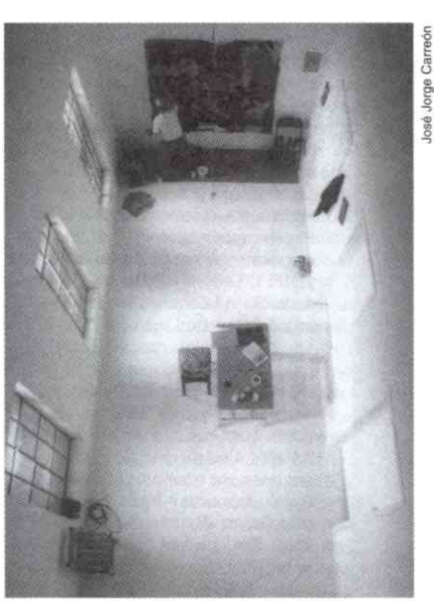
Reprinted courtesy of David Olguín and Ediciones El Milagro

Dolores, or Happiness by David Olguín.

of power and other questions that are part of a social critique are perceived more generally and often as an intrinsic part of the dark side of humanity. We could speak of an "intimist" theater in the sense that the problems in the family (the abuse of power, just to mention one) are the same and have the same dynamic as problems on the level of the whole society. The search goes from the microcosm to the macrocosm, with a non-specific geographic location, an eclecticism of form that shamelessly mixes the classics with rock stars, pornography with existentialist inquiry, in what seems to be an attempt to find the nature of a human essence underlying the multiplicity of forms.

Given the precarious financial support assigned to cultural activities, doing theater in Mexico means being willing and prepared to do almost anything: it is common for a director or a playwright to have to simultaneously act in soap operas, translate, work in an architect's office or as a waiter. For a long time, the theater has been a wonderful example that confirms Darwin's theories: those who survive are the ones most able to adapt and, in this case, those who also have an overriding passion for the theater. Lack of resources often translates into surprising displays of imagination that in the end make up an un-predetermined aesthetic. Public garbage dumps may well provide interesting possibilities for an imaginative set designer. Mónica Kubli designed a set for a play by Jorge Celaya (one of this generation's playwrights, actors and directors) in collaboration with a steam roller operator who squashed metal garbage cans scavenged from the public garbage dump, making futuristic columns reminiscent of Stanley Kubrick. This recycling technique, made obligatory by lack of resources, would be to the liking of more than one ecologist.

Young Mexican theater seeks to establish a critical dialogue with today's reality.



José Jorge Carreón

Room in White by Estela Leñero.

"It is unfortunate that adults have lost the good habit of listening to the young," complained Oscar Wilde. In this same vein, we have our new playwrights who have shown that you can be young and profound at the same time. The prolific young dramatist Estela Leñero surprises us with texts about personal worlds in which it is hard to identify any influences. Experimentation seems to be the impulse that drives each of her creations. She moves agilely between the planes of reality and the world of symbols. One of her recurring themes is anxiety. Rascón Banda, to whom we owe the broadest study to date about the work of these young people writes, "Their characters suffer internal anxiety; they live in uncertainty; they confront the unknown and

try to break the ties binding them."[2] One of Leñero's most noteworthy works is the piece *Insomnia*, where she experiments with silence on stage. In this production, the audience takes on the role of voyeurs as they sit behind a window and observe a woman trying unsuccessfully to go to sleep. From their comfortable, nosey position, each member of the audience imagines his or her own story through the silent images of this woman's intimacy.

Considered a dramatist of ideas and conceptions of his own, David Olguín has been able to make his own statement with a wonderful sense of humor, despite the fact that his questions are often acid and skeptical. His stage language uses poetic imagery, metaphors and symbols. It is surprising how this director can present a desolate, pessimistic landscape of the human condition in performances where the dominant note is a sense of humor. In one of his most brilliant productions, *Dolores, or Happiness*, David Olguín takes us through the absurd, laughable labyrinth where our obsessive desire to "be happy" takes us, leaving us dismayed at the prospect of spending our lives like rabbits running after the carrot on the stick, to finally ask ourselves about the nature of happiness and whether it is possible to experience anything similar in our lives on Earth. According to Rascón Banda, "David Olguín is a special author who follows uncharted paths in our play writing. A cultured and well-informed man, surprising in each of his production proposals because of their construction of worlds with laws of their own and his wisely polished texts, where work on the values and destiny of Man can be observed ... his theater goes beyond an examination of immediate reality. His characters move in non-temporal spaces, go through profound existential conflicts, and in them, one can see a serious ontological analysis being carried out about values like happiness, power and death."[3]

José Jorge Carreón

Luis Mario Moncada's *Super Heroes of the Global Village* directed by Martín Acosta.

Creator-directors use their imaginative potential to explore the darkest facets of human nature.

José Jorge Carreón

The Door at the End by David Olguín.

Another central figure in young Mexican theater is Martín Acosta (1964). Far from conventional theater, Acosta has always focused on theater liberated from the absolute tyranny of the script to bring out the potential of the other performing arts. In most of his work, movement and the actors' gestures reveal and detail other meanings underlying the text. Lighting and set design combine with blocking to make a language where symbols and metaphors predominate. His shows, subjected to the exploration of abstract scenic visual arts, have not succumbed to the danger that threatens this kind of exploration, that is, the dispersion and darkness that often torment the daring audiences of experimental theater. Martín Acosta's works

Both photos on this page are from *The Motel of Intercepting Destinies* by Luis Mario Moncada.

Fernando Moguel

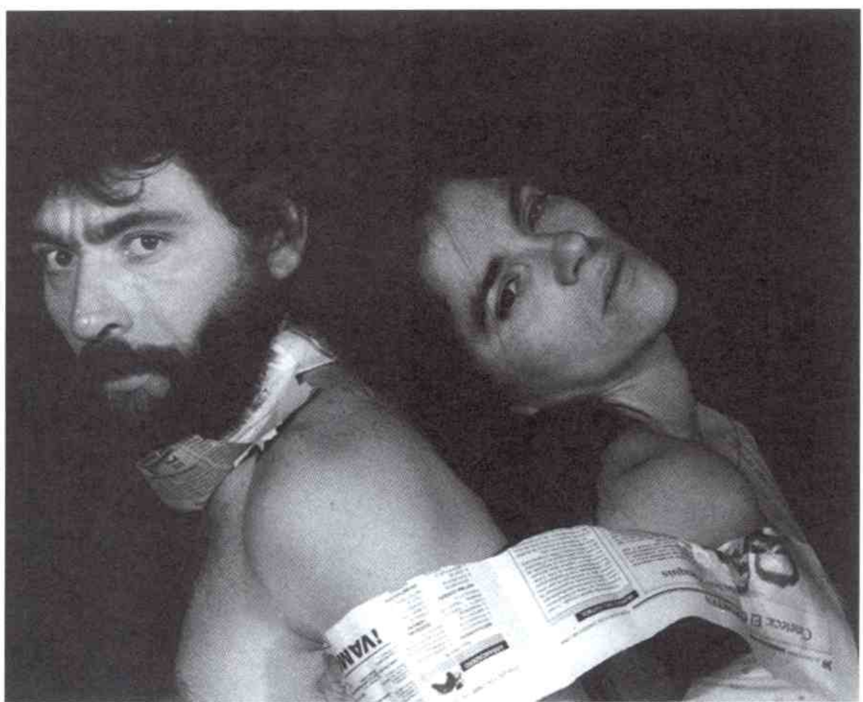
are neither dark nor dense. He has something to say, he knows what to say and, most importantly, he knows how to say it. His success is due to a balance of poetic imagination, a sense of humor and, last but not least, good sense.

Despite any explicit concern with political questions, young Mexican theater seeks just the right material in Mexican history to confront critically and establish a dialogue with today's reality. One of the pieces with the most impact on audiences is *Servando, or the Art of the Fugue*, written and acted by Jorge Gidi. Here, Gidi presents the adventures of Friar Servando Teresa de Mier, a figure famous for his flamboyant life and polemical discourse about Coatlicue, the mother goddess of the Aztecs. Teresa de Mier held that Our Lady of Guadalupe, a key figure in Mexican culture, was sneakily used by the Spaniard missionaries to take Coatlicue's place in order to more effectively convince the indigenous population to embrace Christianity. Needless to say, this discourse brought the audacious friar a step away from being burned at the stake. While the amusing anecdotes of the life of Friar Servando entertain the audience a couple of hours, Jorge Gidi, like his colleagues, takes advantage of the story to explore the language of the stage. His use of virtual reality is impressive. After almost 15 minutes of watching a stage crammed with images, where numerous actors portray different characters, with lights everywhere, impressive costumes and many set changes, the audience is suddenly confronted with a bare stage, white light discharging the humble function of illuminating a few actors dressed in crude black mantles. We owe this impressive experience to able handling of the different languages that make up the theater. The director knows how to amalgamate them so that each could express itself in harmony with the others. Movement, music, gesture, costume and choreography speak, and the result is a sort of symphony of signs that invite the audience to submerge itself in a very particular stage experience allowing much of the production to be constructed in the imagination.

Fernando Moguel

Playwright, actor, director and cultural official, Luis Mario Moncada may be the prototype of the multifaceted dramatist of this generation. His sense of the absurd, as well as his absolute lack of solemnity, have meant that often his creations are dubbed irreverent. The fact is that in his productions of works like Shakespeare's *Hamlet* or James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Moncada has been able to transform "great literature" into a stage production of immense vitality that manages to establish a very contemporary dialogue with today's audience. About one of his most controversial works, *Super Heroes of the Global Vil-*

lage, Víctor Hugo Rascón Banda writes, "This is theater with no borders, that breaks through space, time and dramatic convention. It is a new written theater which requires a new stage production and, therefore, a new audience. Here we do not have a story, a dramatic line and a plot in the conventional manner. The penetration of Nintendo and Atari in day-to-day activities, the creation of media that generate myths, the accumulation of data without analysis or reflection and the reign of cybernetics has transformed the audience and the genre of theater. For the audience that does not require a story and sees the world and its events in fragments, this show is end-of-century theater....Like on a screen, robotized punks appear on the stage in an interminable march, as do the tired heroes created by the mass media, some of whom are surprised in decisive situations and others in futuristic fictions. The myths by couples: a cunning Fidel Castro, a survivor of himself, and a sick, tired Che Guevara; the singer Sid Vicious and his girl Nancy, moments before death.... The dramatic material is fresh and up-to-date in this sociological essay of our times and the mass culture that fragments life."[4]



Fernando Moguel

Wolf by Jorge Celaya.

This obsession with finding new possibilities for the language of the stage may be considered something that all the proposals of the new Mexican theater have in common. As the young director Iona Weissberg says, "There is concern with searching for a theater that would be effective as a means of communication, and to find it, we start with establishing new conventions, the rules of the theatrical game, that can be identified by the audience. Once the appropriate convention is established, the audience has the codes that allow it to submerge itself in the aesthetic experience of the show."[5]

In addition to the concern for the language of the stage, the new Mexican theater sets itself up as a forceful answer to the complex and very often chaotic situation of Mexico today. These men and women of the theater are not trying to preach or give absolute answers to a disquieting reality. Rather, they seek to elicit new questions and reflections from the audience through a language which literally submerges it in an unusual aesthetic experience, establishing the bases for a solid proposal where the planes of imagination and dreams coexist with the harsh reality of the daily life of the Mexican people. **VM**

José Jorge Carreón

Vicente Leñero's *Don Juan in Chapultepec*, directed by Iona Weissberg.

NOTES

[1] Víctor Hugo Rascón Banda, introduction to *Nuevo Teatro* (Mexico City: Ediciones El Milagro/Conaculta, 1997), p. 1.

[2] Rascón Banda, op. cit., p.2.

[3] Rascón Banda, op. cit., p. 3.

[4] Rascón Banda, op. cit., p. 6.

[5] Iona Weissberg in a conversation with the author.

Gender Equality In Contemporary Mexico

*Estela Serret**

Graciela Iturbide

The term "gender equality" can have different meanings. However, according to the tradition from which it emerged, commonly called "feminist theory," the idea of gender equality is a normative reference for judging the objective state of the social relationship between men and women basically on two levels: the political-legal and the socio-cultural.

Usually, the degree of gender equality found in the legal and political order of a society is symptomatic of that society's effective level of equality (of opportunities, autonomy and prestige) between men and women. Certainly, the legal recognition of gender equality —not at all a simple subject, encompassing several different planes— cannot be considered a direct expression of the degree to which equality is a part of cultural values or translated into equitable forms of social interaction. Nevertheless, we can consider legal recognition a useful indicator that allows us to observe how the notion of gender equality itself is positively valued by important groups in a society, frequently cultural or political elites, who have decided to push for its cultural recognition and social practice. For this reason, any consideration of gender equality in Mexico must take into account both its formal expression in legal and political structures and specific indicators of inequality in the cultural and social sphere.

If we use this approach to begin examining the topic, prospects are rather pessimistic. Even if we avoid a detailed examination of the cultural perceptions in Mexico that continue to shore up clearly unequal patterns of gender representations in the collective consciousness, a simple review of a few facts pursuant to how inequality molds social relations between men and women in this country reveals its continued, sometimes dramatic, effect on the lives of millions of Mexican women.

In this respect, one of the most frequently mentioned issues is the feminization of poverty: our country is very

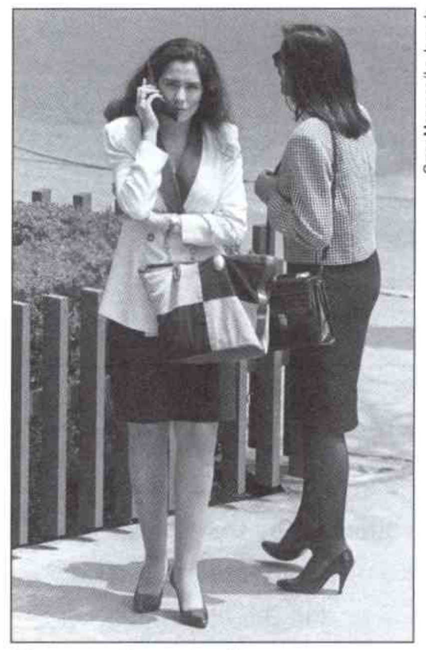
* Professor and researcher at the Autonomous Metropolitan University, Azcapotzalco campus.

close to the international mean of women being 70 percent of the world's poor, despite their creating a very important part of the country's —and the world's— wealth.[1] It is important to point out here that not only do women not appropriate all the wealth they create, but neither does the wealth they generate correspond to the amount of work they have to put in to create it. On the average, women of all ages work longer days than men though their economic productivity is significantly lower than that of their male counterparts. This is because women are usually assigned the worst paying, low prestige jobs, in sectors of the economy targeted for little or no investment to increase productivity. In Mexico, then, non-domestic jobs for women are centered in agriculture, the informal sector, services and manufacturing, areas with little social prestige and/or which drop in value socially when occupied by women.

This unequal access to the labor market is due to two fundamental factors, associated in turn with others: the low levels of training Mexican women have access to in a milieu that puts the priority on education for men and earmarks most family income destined for education to their training as providers, and the socially accepted idea that women do not work,[2] or, if they do, it is only as a way to supplement male labor.

But women's low income in Mexico is not explained solely by the kind of jobs they hold: despite the Constitution, it is still common to find women who earn less than men even in equivalent posts. In 1992, then, Mexican women's wages in the formal sector, even in exactly the same posts, were still 93 percent of those of men.

Figures on women's marginalization in education are equally harsh: one-third of adult women in marginalized areas are illiterate and almost 80 percent of all illiterate adults in our country are women. Similarly, almost 60 percent of those who have no formal education after the age of 12 are women.



Omar Meneses/La Jornada

Women usually earn less than men.

Some authors maintain that, except for wartime, the most dangerous place for women is the home. This is probably true in Mexico, where 65 percent of women of all ages are subject to domestic violence. Of this overall figure, only in a very small percentage of cases do women bring charges, and of those, only a few result in the aggressor being penalized in any way.

The violence women and girls are subjected to by members of their own families varies widely. It goes from physical abuse ending in anything from slight injuries to death, to psychological mistreatment and sexual violence. Even though women in Mexico are commonly subjected to a broad gamut of sexual innuendos and attacks in public and in their places of study and work, the greatest number of rapes continue to occur in the family circle. It hardly needs pointing out that the different kinds of mistreatment women and girls are subjected to at home are often considered a private problem, something linked inevitably to masculine behavior and in most cases conceived of as the legitimate exercise of "natural" authority.

The cultural mores that feed ideas like these also give rise to other expressions of gender inequality, sometimes with dramatic repercussions: for example, the frequent practice in rural areas of women eating the males' left-overs —when there are any— or of sending only little boys to school while the little girls work to pay for their brothers' education.

If we weigh the effect on political representation of the inequality of men and women, the outcome is the same. Just to cite a few examples, in today's Fifty-seventh Congress, only 13.7 percent of senators and 17.2 percent of federal deputies are women; there have been only six female cabinet ministers since 1981; only 4.5 percent of Mexico's municipalities are headed by women; and of the 4,200 seats in the Chamber of Deputies since 1953 (when equal political rights were established for men and women), only 398 have been held by women. All this despite the fact that 52 percent of all registered voters are women.

The panorama sketched by this brief review is far from an ideal picture of gender equality. Nevertheless, and despite the great challenges that these figures point to, we believe that there are reasons for optimism about the future because in recent years different indicators have emerged

Antonio Nava/AVE

Figures on women's marginalization are harsh.

that make it possible to hope that the brutal results of this kind of inequality that millions of women are subjected to, particularly among Mexico's marginalized population, could be dealt with effectively in the next few years. These indicators come basically from the growing attention that gender inequality is being paid by the political class, both those in power and the opposition.

This attention is engendering different measures, suggested, supported and implemented by different groups of Mexico's academic and political feminists with the aim of getting at the root and the manifestations of inequality. As I mentioned above, while public policy design, the passage of laws and the creation of institutions with the aim of fostering gender equality do not immediately translate into a change in the mentality and social relations that generate and reproduce inequality, these measures have proven to be an indispensable condition and driving force behind more profound transformations. Let us review them, and evaluate the formal changes that will surely bear fruit in the short and medium term.

Gender inequality is being paid growing attention by the political class, both those in power and the opposition.

In the first place, we should examine the factors that have led to the progressive incorporation of the question of women's subordination on the agendas of a political class as attached to traditional ideology on the matter as Mexico's.

Undoubtedly, 1975 can be considered the starting point for official positions on women's condition in Mexico as well as the context for the origins of this surprising concern. Not only was 1975 International Women's Year, but it also marked the first of a series of conferences held by the highest international bodies that began to periodically analyze problems and share experiences and solutions to women's subordination worldwide. Then, as now, the balance of forces inside these bodies meant the more influential countries conditioned different kinds of aid to developing countries on the basis of the latter subscribing to certain agreements about social, economic, cultural or health policy.

In this context, Mexico asked to be the host country for the first international women's conference and in that same vein some of the most important successes in gender equality public policy have been accomplished in recent times. Today, the most important expression of these achievements is the National Women's Program and the Chamber of Deputy's Equality and Gender Commission. Both institutions embody the spirit of the 1995 Beijing Conference, where Mexico was represented by both official and independent delegations.

The National Women's Program 1995-2000, Alliance for Equality (Pronam) was created to respond to the chief executive's concern voiced in the National Development Plan about the problem of gender inequality and the resulting women's subordination. The program, developed by the Ministry of the Interior and approved by presidential decree August 21, 1996, is based on a minute diagnostic analysis of the causes, characteristics and consequences of gender inequality in Mexico. The basic arguments for the program and its objectives testify to the participation of specialists in the question called upon to participate on different levels of the program's development and implementation. This is significant because it attests to the consolidation of institutional participation of independent feminists who for many years were excluded (and self-excluded) from government policy making.

A national program, Pronam has aimed to establish a diagnostic analysis of women's condition in Mexico that would make it possible to draw up appropriate objectives and strategies to fight the causes and lessen the effects of women's subordination. The presidential decree that created it states that all policies designed in this area will use Pronam guidelines and be coordinated by it, with the aim of implementing them effectively and coordinating them with other government programs, as well as involving social organizations, particularly those that carry out different kinds of work with and about women.

Carlos Cisneros/La Jornada

The future of the fight against inequality is promising.

The current administration has distinguished itself in its use and dissemination of language that avoids the supposed gender neutrality of Spanish.

The National Women's Commission (Conmujer) was created in 1998 as an decentralized administrative body under the auspices of the Ministry of the Interior. Its founding regulations state that among Conmujer's main functions are "establishing the policies, guidelines and criteria for setting up the National Women's Program..., [monitoring their observation] by federal institutions..., fostering implementation of the policies, strategies and actions included in said program to promote equal opportunities for women and full equality in the exercise of their political, economic, social and civil rights, underlining the importance of human, reproductive, health and educational rights as well as their access to training, social security and work in the framework of the National Development Plan."[3]

Federal government policies carried out under the current administration to deal with problems derived from gender inequality are characterized both by their emphasis on the seriousness of the problem and the language and mechanisms used to fight its impact. The current administration has distinguished itself in its use and dissemination of language that avoids the supposed gender neutrality of Spanish and makes women's presence felt explicitly in all facets of life. This is important because while this way of using language has become commonplace elsewhere, it is novel in our country, where it was only partially exercised in some circles of the left in the last decade. Therefore, despite the enormous resistance —expressed almost always through mockery— to ending the inclusion of women in masculine forms of speech under the pretense of neutrality, the use of careful language by the chief executive himself in a country with a strong presidentialist tradition has clearly had the effect of spreading its use in both federal and local government milieus.

On the other hand, Mexico's process of democratization has also made it clear to both opposition forces and the party in government itself how important women are in different social movements and their decisive weight as voters. In contrast to just a few years ago, today political parties, civic organizations and the media are significantly receptive to the question of inequality, which often becomes at least an incipient attempt to change the sexist use of language.

Perhaps what is most significant in this context has been the recent creation of the Chamber of Deputies Equity and Gender Commission. While its creation was prompted by an international initiative signed by the Mexican government in 1997, this multipartisan commission's activities have begun to bear fruit that goes beyond the boundaries of institutional formality. Despite its not being a permanent commission and its activities being seriously limited in terms of drafting bills to be discussed on the chamber floor, the

Equity and Gender Commission, through the executive branch, has already been able to organize and present a bill on preventing domestic violence, the approval of which represents a significant transformation of official thinking on the question. But perhaps the commission's most important impact in the medium and long terms will be related to something that although subtle, is no less decisive in changing the cultural mores that favor gender inequality: a gradual sensitization of Mexico's political class as to the seriousness and importance of this kind of inequality.

In this way, despite the gravity of the social effects (not to mention the ethical, political and cultural effects) of women's subordination in Mexico, the future of the fight against inequality has never looked as promising. This does not imply, of course, that simple solutions or immediate results are in the offing. Undoubtedly, any process leading to a change in society's perception of the relationship between men and women making them more equal in all aspects of life directly affects discriminatory practices.

The unprecedented media attention given to the celebration of International Women's Day in 1999 is a good example of how society's way of looking at women's subordination has begun to change. At least —and this is no small thing in this country— it has begun to be perceived by some sectors as a social problem that should be given consideration other than just misogynist jokes and conservative protests about the damage feminism does to family unity. **VM**

NOTES

[1] See the following sources, among others, for the data presented in the following paragraph: V. Maqueira and M.J. Vara, *Género, clase y etnia en los nuevos procesos de globalización* (Madrid: Instituto Universitario de Estudios de la Mujer, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 1997); GIMTRAP, *Las mujeres en la pobreza* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1994); "Discusión parlamentaria en torno a la creación de una comisión de equidad y género," *Diario de Debates* (Mexico City: Cámara de Diputados del Congreso de la Unión, Poder Legislativo Federal LVII Legislatura, 24 September 1997); Ma. Luisa González Marín, comp., *Mitos y realidades del mundo laboral y familiar de las mujeres mexicanas* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI and the UNAM Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 1996).

[2] This is because housework is not considered work, but a natural, essentially feminine activity that creates no prestige, recognition or pay. See Mercedes Barquet, "Condicionantes de género sobre la pobreza de las mujeres," GIMTRAP, *Las mujeres en la pobreza* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1994), pp. 73-89.

[3] Reglamento interno de la Secretaría de Gobernación, *Diario oficial de la Federación* (Mexico City, 21 August 1998).

SIGLO VEINTIUNO EDITORES XXI

LA SELVA MAYA

CONSERVACIÓN Y DESARROLLO

RICHARD B. PRIMACK, DAVID BRAY, HUGO GALLETTI, ISMAEL PONCIANO (EDITORES)

Cada dieciseís días un satélite LANDSAT pasa callada y velozmente sobre la Selva Maya de México, Guatemala y Belice. Desde el ventajoso punto de vista del espacio esta combinación de bosques, ríos y sabanas es un solo prado verde que cruza el diafragma de Mesoamérica. Se extiende desde el estado mexicano de Chiapas hasta el norte de Guatemala y el sur de la península de Yucatán, y a través de Belice. En la actualidad los descendientes modernos de los antiguos mayas mezclan las tradiciones del pasado con la tecnología contemporánea para forjar nuevas adaptaciones en un medio ambiente que cambia con rapidez. La tasa actual de destrucción forestal en la Selva Maya sobrepasa las 80 mil hectáreas al año.

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The *Casa de Depósito*
A Protective and Punitive Institution For Problematic Women[1]

*Lee M. Penyak**

CNCA-INAH-INBA/Clio Photo Archive

Plaza Santo Domingo, in nineteenth century Mexico City.

Every society creates methods of social control to enforce gender norms and sexual roles. In Mexico, *casas de depósito* functioned as one of a broad sweep of protective and punitive institutions for adolescent and adult women during the colonial period and throughout much of the nineteenth century. The *depósitos* were houses of good reputation where magistrates placed problematic females so that they could benefit from the "decent" example of their hosts. Some women were confined so that they would enjoy safe harbor during ecclesiastical divorce proceedings or engagement; others were placed in compulsory custody because they had failed to abide by norms regulating appropriate female behavior. Sometimes these females were removed from their customary social networks and spaces by ecclesiastical and civil officials because they had failed to fulfill their proper roles as daughters, señoritas, mothers or wives; other times women voluntarily interned themselves so as to facilitate change in their own lives.

This article evaluates 82 cases dealing with *casas de depósito* in Mexico City and central Mexico from 1750 to 1865 and primarily focuses on illicit sexuality and violence such as premarital sexual relations, adultery, incest and rape. References to women guarded, protected and punished in private homes are found in both ecclesiastical and secular records.

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The *depósitos* were houses of good reputation where magistrates placed problematic females so that they could benefit from the "decent" example of their hosts.

Seventy-one percent of the cases occurred between 1750 and 1820; 29 percent between 1830 and 1865. It explores the basic nature of the *depósito*, examines the responsibilities of both host family and guest, and suggests how this institution changed over time. Of particular value is the way research demonstrates the contested nature of gender right, and how adolescent and adult women sometimes used this institution to foster change in their own lives. This study of *casas de depósito*, therefore, serves as an acute lens on gender in Mexico and allows the reader to develop a feel for relations between the sexes and between parents and children.[2]

An 1805 trial from Mexico City includes some of the special instructions that these custodians received. María Ruiz, who claimed that she had been raped by Manuel Lanuza, was placed in the home of a certain Don Miguel Almonte. Almonte and his wife were told "to look after her upkeep and conduct" and to notify magistrates "in the event that María Luisa showed signs of disorder." Unruliness might be used by hosts as justification to evict women. On June 14, 1852, Doña Merced Jacine Anaya, owner of the house in which Adela Arcinas had been confined, wrote a letter to the judge stating that "she cannot continue here beyond today; I've achieved nothing, and every day it becomes more inconvenient for me to keep the said child." Adela was transferred to her godfather's house.[3]

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Husbands whose wives had sought *depósito* frequently had the right to place restrictions on whose house might be selected. They sometimes rejected the homes of their wives' relatives, especially their mothers, on the grounds that these women might give their wives troublesome advice or try to prevent the couple's reunion. The fathers of women placed in *depósito* occasionally rejected the homes that had been selected by their daughters or the court. Therefore, although women might state their preferences for a particular host, their male relatives were at times successful in convincing judges to replace the home with another.

Family members of a woman housed in *depósito* were expected to provide the host family with money for her sustenance and clothing and even, at times, a bed. But not all families or partners cooperated with the *depositarios*, nor did they all fulfill their financial responsibilities. As a result, the personal comfort and security that many such adolescent and adult women experienced varied from case to case. Some stated that they lacked personal goods such as adequate clothing or a bed, while others went out of their way to laud the goodwill of their sponsors. An 1841 case provides examples of both hardship and gratitude. Francisca Hermenegilda Osollo had fled her adopted mother's house because of alleged physical abuse. *Licenciado* Luis Ezeta, the owner of the house in which Osollo was subsequently enclosed, testified that the effects of these beatings were displayed on the young woman's body when she arrived at his house with nothing more than the clothes on her back. Two weeks later he appeared before the magistrate to complain that the girl's mother had continually refused to provide clothing, and that "the girl cannot even leave her bedroom because she is so dirty and ashamed of the undergarments that have covered her body for nearly a fortnight." Officials ultimately went to the mother's house and requested Francisca's clothes. Francisca's situation had notably changed a year later, however, when she wrote a letter to court officials stating that she now desired to live with her father. She also thanked *Licenciado* Ezeta and "every member of his family" for providing her with "the best treatment ... a good education and Christian exam-

ple." Information on this case ends with Ezeta's recommendation that the court respect Francisca's wishes.[4]

Judges declared that finding houses that were considered "decent, honorable and safe" was not always an easy task. Part of their difficulty undoubtedly stemmed from their own preconceived ideas as to which members of society could fulfill the role of trustworthy custodian. A 1761 adultery trial from San Antonio Singuilucan suggests that officials preferred the homes of Spaniards. Domingo Larraguibel, the ecclesiastical judge, said that María Micaela Alemán, accused of adultery, was being held prisoner in one of the rooms of the parish house because "Spaniards have few houses in this area and those that do are usually away with their businesses; for this reason she can not be placed in *depósito*." Officials frequently designated their own homes or those of their relatives as among the select few appropriate for the care of these women. Eusebia María, accused of adultery by her husband in 1780, was assigned to the home of the Lieutenant Nicolás de Barreda. Other examples include María de la Merced Santiago, accused of adultery in 1802, who was sent to the house of the *escribano* Joaquín Barrientos, and Juana Inés, accused of adulterous incest with her brother-in-law in 1755, who was sent to the house of Don Juan Manuel de Guzmán, the *alguacil mayor* investigating her case.[5]

Hosts who chose to receive women may have offered their own homes for reasons of prestige or because they truly wanted to help educate and support these women. Philanthropy was a longstanding goal in New Spain and the good intentions demonstrated by the owners of these homes undoubtedly helped a state with limited resources. Nine documents specifically mention, however, that women were sent to work as servants, sometimes receiving a salary, and that hosts clearly benefited from their labor. Even in those cases wherein *depositarios* did not make specific reference to the responsibilities of women interned in their homes, it seems probable that these women were expected to participate in household chores and provide services in return for their maintenance. In 1810, for example, María Apolinaria García —Spanish, single and 13 years old— was enclosed in a house after her stepfather raped her. The owner of the house intervened when the girl's mother requested that she be sent elsewhere. He said that the young girl had demonstrated herself to be "rather weak" during the three months that she had been "earning a salary as a servant in his house."[6] María Ruiz provides yet another example. In 1805 when she was placed in Don Miguel Almonte's house, she worked as a servant. And María Marcela Rivera, a 30-year-old, single Indian woman from Querétaro, was confined to the house of Don Manuel de los Ríos in 1792 "with salary and relief appropriate to her class."[7]

Many women asked to be placed in *depósito* to resolve their own situations. Their actions support Steve Stern's contention that "women mobilized the patriarchs of the local infrastructure —village authorities, priests, [and] local elders— so that they could use the legal system to their own advantage."[8] Some requested safe havens so they could make marriage plans without familial influence or so they could proceed with ecclesiastical divorce cases. Others sought refuge from abusive and negligent spouses or because they desired to leave their parents' homes. All were determined to adapt this sometimes punitive institution into one that could protect them and provide them with the time they needed to assess their best course of action. In 1832, for example, Antonia Manuela told

Whether protective or punitive, the *depósito* was used to control female sexuality. No comparable institution existed for men.

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a judge in Mexico City that she feared her husband's notorious cruelty so much that "it would be best ... that I be placed in permanent *depósito*." To avoid further violence, the judge had her placed in the home of Juan Cruz Alvarado. Paula de Rosas, kidnapped and raped in Ixmiquilpan in 1757, told the magistrate assigned to her case that she also feared for her life. "She asked me to place her in safety," stated the official, and for that reason he ordered that she be sheltered "in the house of one of the honorable residents of this town."[9]

While some women asked to be given temporary shelter, others must have found their conditions under temporary custody unbearable, since they requested a transfer to other homes or chose to run away. In a case from 1840, for example, Guadalupe Figueroa told a judge that she could no longer stand the hunger and abuse she suffered in the home of Doña Tomasa Castañeda. Instead, she fled to the house of Don Ignacio Yáñez, who agreed to hold her at the disposition of the court. Juana Inés, an Indian widow from Xilotepec charged with having an illicit relationship with her brother-in-law, also fled her *depósito*. On September 27, 1755, she was sent to the home of the *alguacil mayor*, Don Juan Manuel de Guzmán, who was told to "keep her completely under guard, in confinement." Sixteen days later, however, Guzmán reported that "the prisoner" had waited until everyone was asleep the previous evening and then had opened the door of his house and run away. The magistrate ordered that officials employ "all means possible" to capture her.[10]

Enclosure in *casas de depósito* shows no evidence of bias based on ethnicity. Regardless of whether they were Indian or Spaniard, adolescent and adult women were equally likely to be placed in *depósito* and then sent to jail or vice versa. The same apparent lack of bias is found when women were sent to work as servants. Five of nine such cases provide information on ethnicity; three women were Indian and two Spanish. In none of these five instances did family members strongly intervene on behalf of these women. It seems likely that those sent to work as servants were poor or had no family and, therefore, no means of support.

There was, however, an obvious gender bias in the institution of *casa de depósito* and in punitive prison sentences. Whether protective or punitive, *depósito* was used to control female sexuality. No comparable institution existed for men. This double standard was especially made clear in the cases associated with spousal choice. Women were confined to private homes whereas their male partners continued to enjoy freedom of movement. Moreover, as previously demonstrated, males also had the right to restrict the placement of their female relatives to homes they deemed appropriate.

Those few documents that mention *depósito* after 1841 deal with either marriage disputes, parent-child disputes or child custody battles. The decrease in documentation is probably related to the success of the Reform movement when liberals, through laws and the Constitution of 1857, curtailed the privileges of ecclesiastical and military courts and the right of these institutions to own real property and gave the state sole responsibility of registry. These "efforts to widen the realm of secular powers," as Richard Sinkin notes, "left [their] mark on every aspect of Mexican life." This new perspective on state authority and obligation influenced the evolution of protective and punitive institutions. In her study of foundling homes in Mexico City, for example, Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru found that by the 1860s the attention given to "children without parents was no longer the charity work of good souls but rather the obligation of the government." Josefina Muriel determined that *recogimientos* were neither established during Maximilian's reign (1864-67) nor promoted during the Restored Republic. "Liberal ideas," she states, "initiated the destruction of those colonial concepts that placed women at the same level as a child ... [in need of] protective institu-

tions." Similar forces were at work with the *casa de depósito*. Philanthropic families continued to house and aid women and children in need, but over time their charity was less and less coordinated by the state. Women who desired to separate from their parents in order to plan their marriage might seek refuge with one of these families or make their own arrangements and pay for this service in private homes. The Reform signaled the end of *casas de depósito* as a juridical option for magistrates.[11]

Women who engaged in pre-marital sex, adultery, incest or prostitution in Mexico between 1750 and 1865 challenged gender roles by demonstrating sexual independence. In these cases, the government used the *casa de depósito* as a social control mechanism to punish unacceptable behavior. In other instances, such as engagement and ecclesiastical divorce proceedings, *depósito* was used as a custodial institution to protect women from abusive familial situations. Whether protective or punitive, the *casa de depósito* furthered male-dominated social discipline. But, as Stern suggests, documents dealing with gender and patriarchy also reveal that adolescent and adult women contested gender right and obligation and "did not consent passively to the implications of their status." Women used the *casa de depósito* to obtain protection from violent or potentially violent husbands and relatives, temporary safe haven when abducted, raped or deceived and separation from parents who had placed unreasonable demands on them. Mexican society restricted and stereotyped the role of women and created tools to enforce its values, but these tools could also be wielded by those they were meant to control.[12] **VM**

NOTES

[1] Parts of this article were originally published as "Safe Harbors and Compulsory Custody: *Casas de Depósito* in Mexico, 1750-1865" in *Hispanic American Historical Review* 79:1 (February 1999), pp. 83-99. The author wishes to thank Hugh Hamill and Debbie Ramón for their valuable comments.

[2] For further analyses of the *casa de depósito*, see Marina Arrom, *The Women of Mexico City, 1790-1857* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), pp. 212-217; and Patricia Seed, *To Love, Honor and Obey in Colonial Mexico: Conflicts over Marriage Choice, 1547-1821* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), pp. 78-79, and 178.

[3] Archivo General de la Nación (AGN), Mexico, Criminal, vol. 536, exp. 10, fol. 270, María Ruiz (1805). Archivo Judicial del Tribunal Superior de Justicia, Mexico (AJTSJ), Depósitos de Personas, leg. 1, exp. 18, fols. 9, 14, Adela Arcinas (1852).

[4] AJTSJ, Depósitos de Personas, leg. 1, exp. 14, fols. 6, 8, 23 and 24, Francisca Osollo (1841).

[5] AGN, Criminal, vol. 622, exp. 1, fol. 6, María Micaela Alemán (1761); AGN, Criminal, vol. 123, exp. 8, fol. 124, Eusebia María (1780); AGN, Criminal, vol. 362, exp. 3, fol. 168, María de la Merced Santoyo (1802); AGN, Criminal, vol. 24, exp. 6, fol. 353, Juana Inés (1755).

[6] AGN, Criminal, vol. 41, exp. 5, fol. 340, María Apolinaria García (1810).

[7] AGN, Criminal, vol. 536, exp. 10, fol. 270, María Ruiz (1805); AGN, Presidios y Cárceles, vol. 20, exp. 16, fol. 307, María Marcela Rivera (1791).

[8] Steve J. Stern, *The Secret History of Gender: Women, Men, and Power in Late Colonial Mexico* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), p. 101.

[9] AJTSJ, Penales, leg. 12, exp. 10, fols. 4-5, Antonia Manuela (1832); AGN, Criminal, vol. 584, exp. 1, fol. 6, Petra Paula de Rosas (1757).

[10] AJTSJ, Depósitos de Personas, leg. 1, exp. 13, fols. 1-2, Guadalupe Figueroa (1840); AGN, Criminal, vol. 24, exp. 6, fols. 348, 353-56, Juana Inés (1755).

[11] Richard N. Sinkin, *The Mexican Reform, 1855-1876: A Study in Liberal Nation Building* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979), pp. 116-169; Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru, "La Casa de Niños Expósitos de la ciudad de México: Una fundación del siglo XVIII," *Historia Mexicana* 31:3 (1982), p. 427; Josefina Muriel, *Los recogimientos de mujeres: respuesta a una problemática social novohispana* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1974), pp.143, 218-224.

[12] Stern, op. cit., p. 85.

The Legacy of an Ambiguous Relationship

Nineteenth Century Mexico-U.S. Relations[1]

(Part Two)

*Jesús Velasco Márquez**

In part one of this essay (*Voices of Mexico* 49), the author examined the different stages of Mexico-U.S. bilateral relations from the time the United States recognized Mexico as a sovereign nation (1832) to the end of the French intervention (1867): from an alliance between both nations in 1832, the break-off of diplomatic relations (1837), their renewal (1839) and the war of 1846-1847, to their becoming partners of convenience in 1867. All that time, Mexico was the weak, subordinate partner, while the U.S. exercised expansionist policies in its attempt to achieve hegemony over the entire hemisphere. The second part of the article, printed here, deals with the zigzags in relations during the last stage of the Juárez administration and the whole Porfirio Díaz period.

With the end of the French intervention, the Mexican government took a position on foreign policy for the first time. The "Juárez Doctrine" shaped the doctrine for Mexican foreign policy during the twentieth century. Its principles were non-intervention, self-determination and the sovereign equality of states. It isolated Mexico from the European powers that had broken relations with Mexico after the execution of Maximilian of Habsburg.[2] This isolation strengthened U.S.-Mexican relations with a dual effect: it generated new vulnerable spots in Mexican sovereignty but also opened up new opportunities for the reconstruction of the Mexican economy.

One important reason why Mexico and the United States became partners of convenience in 1867 was that the American leadership and the victorious Mexican liberal cadre shared the perception that the European powers were a menace to the security of their respective countries. It is important to underline that, during that period, the European powers' position did not offer a clear alternative to Mexico to compensate for the increasing U.S. influence in the Western Hemisphere. Spain was busy with its internal conflicts, with no clear idea of its international role; France was caught between maintaining its continental role or becoming an imperial power; and, finally, Great Britain was already a dominant empire with a pragmatic outlook in which Mexico was of only secondary interest.

The year 1876 was a turning point in the history of Mexico and the United States. In Mexico, it brought the victory of Porfirio Díaz's inner circle over the Juárez group of liberals, and in the United States, it saw the end of the Reconstruction with the election of Rutherford Hayes. By then, the United States was gaining control of the enormous resources throughout its territory, developing its technological tradition and consolidating its internal market. These trends would rapidly make it a leader in international affairs. At the same time, Mexico needed resources to develop its economic potential, but the scope of alternatives was not very broad due to its self-imposed international isolation. Also, the political, entrepreneurial and intellectual elites in both countries were influenced by social Darwinist positivism, which emphasized material progress over social concerns. Hence, the political upper echelons in both countries were in

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a basic agreement. On the other hand the European powers entered into a period of rearrangement of their own interests inside and outside their continental realms, and were permeated by a neocolonialist drive directed mostly at Africa and Asia, without altogether leaving aside the Americas.

During the Porfirio Díaz presidency, bilateral relations were cordial after President Rutherford Hayes' refusal to recognize the government of the Mexican general. Cooperation during this period was possible due to several factors. On one hand, Mexican diplomacy was very nimble in the exploitation of American investors' interests, creating a real Mexican lobby. On the other hand, border and claims issues were dealt with on a case-by-case basis so that none were harmful to the big picture of bilateral relations.[3] It is very likely that the model for today's pattern of cooperation in bilateral relations is the one implemented in those years. However, the cornerstone of this diplomacy was the Mexican government's interest in allowing American investment in key economic sectors to foster national growth. Railroads and mining received a significant amount of American investment. In 1880 a second trade reciprocity treaty was negotiated, but it never went into effect because the U.S. House of Representatives never issued the tax laws required for its implementation. Nonetheless, in the early years of the twentieth century, the U.S. was the recipient of 76 percent of Mexico's exports, and it was the country of origin of 50 percent of Mexican imports. U.S. assets accounted for 38 percent of foreign investment in Mexico.[4]

Cooperation in political and economic relations were not, however, significant enough to change latent Mexican distrust toward the United States. Porfirio Díaz always remembered the Hayes administration's conditioning U.S. recognition of his government when he first seized the presidency. Some of his cabinet helped him not to forget it. Consequently, a counterweight foreign policy was developed. Relations with European powers were reestablished, fostering investment in Mexico, and closer diplomatic relations were forged with countries in Europe, Latin America and Asia, especially Japan. By 1910, the Mexican government had developed a highly diversified network of international relations, which had allowed it to compensate for the significant presence of U.S. interests. Yet, the hemispheric policies of the United States were growing and forcing Mexico into its security and geopolitical domain, thus imposing further burdens on Mexican foreign policy, as social conditions deteriorated.

The United States again made a priority of its foreign policy objectives at the beginning of the twentieth century. The extraordinary economic growth of the 1880s and 1890s forced the adoption of an aggressive economic strategy to compete for international markets with old European powers like Britain and France and with new powers like Germany, Italy and Japan. The Western Hemisphere and the Pacific Rim were termed vital areas of influence for U.S. national security and economic growth.[5]

The new policy for the Americas was developed in the call for the First International American Conference in 1889, with the aim of establishing a customs union and a dispute settlement mechanism.[6] This initiative was followed by two corollaries to the Monroe Doctrine: Richard Olney's in 1895[7] and Theodore Roosevelt's in 1904. The United States would unilaterally become an arbiter in conflicts between the countries of the region and extra-continental powers. At the same time, its victory in the Spanish-American War of 1898 and the control of the Panama Canal Zone in 1903 resulted in virtual American control over the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean and Central America. "Dollar Diplomacy," the U.S. government's instrument to protect American investment interests abroad, was also part of this new foreign policy.[8] The European powers, particularly England, permitted these U.S. policies to some extent.[9] So, by the turn of the century, Mexico was close to being swallowed up in the strategic area of the United

States. Mexico's predicament, then, was to overcome that threat.

The Porfirio Díaz government was aware of these circumstances and tried to design policies to diminish the risks involved. On the domestic front, this meant pursuing a policy of reaffirming Mexico's Latin cultural background and subsequently reasserting Mexican nationalism, mostly in terms of patriotic concepts. Internationally, it meant tying Mexico to the countries with Iberian or Latin backgrounds; Spain, France and the Iberoamerican countries. In foreign policy, it meant pursuing four aims: the first was to seek closer relationships with potential important rivals of the United States: Germany and Japan.[10] The second was aimed at seeking agreements among the Latin American countries to counteract U.S. demands or intentions. The third was to maintain a sort of neutral position on critical international issues, such as the Venezuelan crisis of 1895 and the War of the United States against Spain in 1898. The fourth was to foster international recognition of the tenets of the Juárez Doctrine and legal principles in dealing with problems of foreign citizens in a host country, within the recently created Pan American Union.[11] To a certain extent, Mexico upheld the Calvo and Drago Doctrines.[12] By 1910, then, Mexico was pursuing a realistic foreign policy aimed at making the country a middle-sized power in order to maintain some degree of autonomy in its international relations and reduce the risks of being engulfed by the United States. Yet, the cooperation with its northern neighbor was never abandoned,[13] and it can even be said that on the eve of the Mexican Revolution, it had reached an unexpectedly high level.

At that time, unfortunately for Mexico, the leading elite's policy design had overlooked the country's internal conditions. From 1900 on, Porfirio Díaz's rule progressively lost legitimacy and commitment to the nation. At the same time, in the United States the reform movements, particularly Progressivism, were moving forward. Hence, sympathy toward the authoritarian Mexican regime began dropping in some political circles; even private organizations provided assistance to the growing number of Mexican dissidents on U.S. soil, which in turn bred apprehension within the ruling Mexican cadre. At the end of the Porfirio Díaz regime, there was a premonition of the conflict that was about to arise. **VM**

NOTES

[1] This work was carried out under the auspices of the Mexican Association for Culture.

[2] Daniel Cosío Villegas, "La Doctrina Juárez," *Política exterior de México. 175 años de historia* vol. 2 (Mexico City: SRE, 1985), pp. 712-729.

[3] Daniel Cosío Villegas, *Historia moderna de México. El porfiriato. La vida política exterior.* Part 2 (Mexico City: Hermes, 1963).

[4] Josefina Zoraida Vázquez and Lorenzo Meyer, *México frente a Estados Unidos (Un ensayo histórico, 1776-1993)* (Mexico City: FCE, 1994), p. 116.

[5] James Chase and Caleb Car, *America Invulnerable. The Quest for Absolute Security from 1812 to Star Wars* (New York: Summit Books, 1988), p. 109 on.

[6] Howard Jones, *The Course of American Diplomacy* vol. 1 (Chicago: The Dorsey Press, 1988), p. 231.

[7] Walter La Feber, "President Cleveland and the Venezuelan Crisis of 1895-1896," William Appelman Williams, ed., *The Shaping of American Diplomacy* vol. 1 (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1971), p. 305 on.

[8] Gordon Connell-Smith, *Los Estados Unidos y la América Latina* (Mexico City: FCE, 1977), pp. 133-173.

[9] Walter La Feber, op. cit.

[10] Roberta Lajous, *México y el mundo. Historia de sus relaciones exteriores* vol. 4 (Mexico City: Senado de la República, 1990), p. 112 on.

[11] Julius Pratt, Vincent O. De Santis and Joseph M. Siracusa, *A History of United States Foreign Policy* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1955), p. 161.

[12] The Calvo Doctrine was delineated by Argentine diplomat and historian Carlos Calvo in his work *El derecho internacional teórico y práctico* (1868), in which he stated that foreigners must enjoy conditions equal to those of the citizens of the country in which they reside; hence diplomatic protection was a tool used by stronger nations against weaker ones. The Drago Doctrine was put forward by the Argentine foreign relations minister in 1902: it considered the use of force by creditor nations to seek payment from debtor countries unlawful.

[13] Ricardo Ampudia, *Los Estados Unidos de América en los informes presidenciales de México* (Mexico City: SRE/FCE, 1997), p. 59 on.

The Oil Dumping Controversy Mexico's Perspective

*Andrés Antonius González**

Oil prices are determined by the international market regardless of production costs.

Introduction

The world's oil industry has recently begun to recover from a period of extremely depressed prices. The unstable world economy of late 1997 and 1998 significantly reduced the growth of global oil demand.

In October 1997 the International Energy Agency (IEA) predicted that world oil demand would reach 75.6 million barrels per day in 1998. By December 1998, after most of the year had gone by, the IEA revised that number down to only 74.3 million barrels a day.

As a result, oil prices reached their lowest levels, in real terms, since the Depression. Oil companies saw their revenues fall substantially, and slashed their capital expenditure budgets. No company or oil producing country escaped.

On June 29, 1999, a group of 12 independent U.S. oil producers, primarily from the Midwest, organized under the name "Save Domestic Oil," submitted their Petition for the Imposition of Antidumping and Countervailing Duties to the U.S. Department of Commerce and the U.S. International Trade Commission.

In the petition, Save Domestic Oil alleged that during 1998 and the first quarter of 1999, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela and Iraq regionally saturated the U.S. oil market by dumping or selling crude oil at less than its "normal value." Basically, this means selling crude oil either at less than the fully allocated cost of production, or at less than the prices at which crude oil is sold in the home market or a third market.

In the petition, the independent producers also alleged that their companies could not compete against Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela and Iraq

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because, they said, these countries subsidize their state oil companies.

The petitioners requested the U.S. government impose antidumping duties on crude oil imports of 33.37 percent for Mexico, 84.37 percent for Saudi Arabia, 102.61 percent for Iraq and 177.52 percent for Venezuela. They also requested an additional countervailing duty of U.S.$6.18 per barrel be imposed on the imports of each of the four nations to compensate for the subsidies they supposedly apply.

Mexican Minister of Energy Luis Téllez.

Last August 9, 42 days after Save Domestic Oil filed its petition, the U.S. Department of Commerce announced that it would not initiate the investigation to impose antidumping and countervailing duties because the petition lacked the required support from or standing in the U.S. oil industry.

The Mexican government firmly rejected the allegations presented against its crude oil exports into this market. This was not a dumping problem.

MEXICO'S POSITION

The depression of world oil markets from late 1997 to early 1999 made for difficult times not only for independent U.S. producers, but for all oil producing countries. The price of Mexican crude, for example, reached lows unheard of since the beginning of the second phase of its oil history in the mid-1970s. As a result the government was forced to revise revenue projections downward and make three major budget cuts totalling U.S.$3 billion during 1998. This implied scaling back or canceling several public projects and imposing austerity measures.

Nevertheless, the drop in Mexican crude prices, as well as the drop in every other crude, was due to world oil supply temporarily exceeding demand. Since the petition was filed before the U.S. authorities, the Mexican government firmly rejected the allegations presented against its crude oil exports into this market. This was not a dumping problem.

Oil is a commodity heavily traded around the world in transparent, well established markets. Every day approximately 75 million barrels of oil are consumed worldwide for innumerable activities. Oil prices are set openly in these markets by the forces of international supply and demand. Pemex, like practically every other oil company in the world, prices its oil in accordance with world markets. Taking into account quality differentials, its pricing mechanism uses widely known formulas that translate the prices of leading benchmark crudes, such as WTS, LLS and Brent, into equivalent prices for Mexican crudes. Therefore, Mexican crude prices move in strict relation to the prices of leading benchmark crudes. They do not follow a predatory or dumping policy.

On the other hand, a country like Mexico, where population growth continues to be significant and the satisfaction of social needs are a tremendous challenge, simply cannot afford to waste resources on subsidies to a company like Pemex.

Due to its low extraction costs, Pemex is profitable and an important source of government revenue, accounting for between 30 and 40 percent of total state income (depending on the year). Since Pemex's taxes and profits underwrite a large portion of Mexico's federal budget, any dollar used to subsidize Pemex is one dollar less for government spending. It would make no economic, social or common sense to do so.

Mexico does not subsidize Pemex and its oil operations in any way. Moreover, any subsidy of Pemex would directly countervene national interests.

POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR MEXICO

Over the past 20 years, Mexico has been able to diversify its economy. Today, oil exports represent less than 10 percent of total export earnings, versus 78 percent in 1982. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, oil continues to be a significant part of Mexican government revenues.

Either antidumping or countervailing duties on Mexican exports of oil to the U.S. would have

made Mexican oil uncompetitive there and would have resulted in its being exported to other important oil consuming countries.

While in the long run this displacement from the U.S. market would have little effect beyond the absorption of increased transport and handling costs (since other major oil markets are farther away), it would have created problems in the short run. Most Mexican oil, like that of other countries, is sold under medium-term contracts and has certain characteristics that make it difficult to easily switch markets at short notice.

This short-term disruption in Mexican oil exports would undoubtedly have temporarily reduced oil revenues and therefore government revenues. Either of these measures would have temporarily affected the economy.

Conclusion

The antidumping and countervailing duty petition presented by Save Domestic Oil has potentially alarming implications and would not have helped anybody, even the petitioners.

No one can argue that the situation of the U.S. oil industry was good. However, neither can it be argued that the petition would have improved it now or in the future. What is clear is that it could have negative consequences for everyone.

These duties would have provided little relief for independent U.S. producers. Once the short term change in trade flows took place, oil prices in the U.S. would have remained largely unchanged, as the duties would have simply reshuffled the destinations of countries' oil exports.

They would have only reduced the imports of oil from these four countries, but as these countries diverted their exports to other important markets in Europe and Asia, other exporters would have shifted their exports toward the U.S. market, quickly filling the gap.

Moreover, the transition would have been very difficult for all oil producers. The rerouting of more than 4 million barrels of oil a day is not an easy task and would have been accompanied by a brief period of uncertainty and volatility in world, and hence U.S., oil prices. The final impact this volatility would have had on prices is anybody's guess, but what is clear is that uncertainty would have hurt all producers.

The petition was against the spirit and essence of free trade and the basic principle that markets work. In recent years, Mexico has sought to establish a strong bilateral relationship with the U.S. The North American Free Trade Agreement, the signing of numerous treaties and accords and cooperation on a wide range of issues all show the strong ties between Mexico and the U.S. Both Mexico and the U.S. have benefited significantly from this close relationship, and there is no apparent reason why they should not continue to do so.

The case brought by Save Domestic Oil against Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela and Iraq was dismissed because opposition to the petition exceeded support for the petition from U.S. producers. Consequently, it lacked adequate domestic industry standing.

Mexico welcomes the decision made by the Department of Commerce. The Save Domestic Oil petition was spurious and false and contained erroneous information that in no way provided evidence that Mexico engaged or engages in unfair trade practices in oil.

The risk of a petition of this nature being submitted is always present in a trade relationship of this importance and magnitude. That is why it is of utmost importance that goodwill prevail and the proper mechanisms be in place for the solution of any trade controversy in strict compliance with the law.

The successful resolution of this process is an excellent example of how future trade disputes should be addressed. VM

Mexican crude prices move in strict relation to the prices of leading benchmark crudes. They do not follow a predatory or dumping policy.

Mexico and the United States At the End of the Twentieth Century

Between Fear and Hope

(Part One)

*Remedios Gómez Arnau**

INTRODUCTION

If we lent an ear only to the fears of some U.S. analysts about Mexico's future, or to the ones who even recommend that the United States think about intervening militarily in Mexico, relations between the two countries might seem very similar at the end of the twentieth century to what they were at its beginning. The truth is, however, that important changes have occurred, some in matters of form and others, more important, in matters of substance.

The changes in form can be seen basically in the new bilateral government institutions charged in the 1980s with dealing formally with the bilateral agenda. Since 1994, when the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) came into force, bilateral issues have increased in number and importance. The changes in substance go from the worldwide change in civilization with the new globalizing/fragmenting trends affecting all countries to recent modifications in Mexico's economic and political structure, the growing presence of Mexicans in U.S. society and the very existence of NAFTA with its present and future commitments.

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The U.S. government considers greater democratization in Mexico positive.

While it is true, then, that at the end of the twentieth century many of the problems, prejudices and fears that characterized bilateral relations in the first decades of this century persist, it is also the case that new conditions have emerged in both countries that contribute to promoting links and contrasts at the same time, thus consolidating clear asymmetrical interdependence.

Though some considered that after the signing of NAFTA, the relationship between the two countries would continue within a more stable, predictable framework, current challenges show that this is not the case. Therefore, the fears that inevitably stem from what is perceived as an uncertain future continue, just like at the beginning of the century. Today, however, the reasons for the uncertainty are different, and even though they center on what might happen in Mexico, what may happen in and in relation to the United States is also a matter for concern. The fact is that both countries are going through internal changes that derive from the transformations the world is experiencing and that can be summarized as the transition from one civilization to another.

As Alvin and Heidi Toffler have pointed out,[1] since the 1960s the world has been going through a radical transformation, going from the civilization of the "second" —or industrial— "wave" to that of the "third" —or knowledge and communications— "wave." This change has been having a substantial impact on all countries and societies, including the United States and Mexico, in addition to their being affected by the traditional inertia of bilateral relations marked by their complementary and disparate circumstances.

Fears of Ungovernability and Civil War

As though we were still in 1910, Steven R. David published an analysis of Mexico-U.S. relations in *Foreign Affairs* magazine stating, in short, that Mexico's future is uncertain and threatened with a civil war, thus putting in jeopardy strategic U.S. interests and increasing the probability of U.S. intervention.[2] David bases his fears on corruption financed by drug lords, the end of the single party era, the advent of armed uprisings led by the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) and the People's Revolutionary Army (EPR) and the economic crises that have shaken Mexico in recent years.

M. Delal Baer, in another article in *Foreign Affairs*,[3] considers that while there are many reasons for optimism about Mexico's future because of growing democratization, the process of privatization of the economy, governmental fiscal responsibility and NAFTA's operating, it is also the case that if the 2000 presidential elections eject the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) from office after 70 years, enormous pressure will be brought to bear on the country's new, fragile institutions. She also thinks that the economic reforms are only partially consolidated and therefore continue to be susceptible to the sweep of the political pendulum. For this reason, Delal Baer contends that the specter of political violence in Mexico has become very real, to the point that the assassination of a presidential candidate or even the president elect is not outside the realm of possibility. She also warns that events in Mexico should be closely followed because the worst scenarios are possible, though not inevitable.

> If the political transition in Mexico sparks internal strife, U.S. influence may make itself felt through either acts or omissions.

Recently, moreover, Asma Jehangir, the United Nations special relator for extralegal, summary or arbitrary executions, who visited Mexico from July 11 to 24 stated, "During the elections the country is politicized and each of the armed groups in Mexico has a political agenda. Everyone will seek power at all levels: federal, state and municipal. Given the existence of so many arms and groups, the possibility of confrontations cannot be excluded, even in the time before elections."[4]

Just like at the beginning of the century, the main concern among U.S. analysts —and even those from elsewhere— is Mexico's future stability. While there are substantial differences between General Porfirio Díaz staying in power for 30 years and the PRI's 70 years in office, the fact is that both constitute a prolonged grip on political control in Mexico, prompting fears that a change would generate great instability.[5] And now, like at the beginning of the century, Mexico's being a neighbor to the United States and such a high concentration of trade, investment and migration with it make it inevitable that the U.S. interest itself in what goes on in Mexico and seek to influence

events one way or another. Like during the Mexican Revolution, if the political transition in Mexico sparks internal strife, U.S. influence may make itself felt through its acts or omissions. Now, as then, U.S. policies and interests in Mexico will undoubtedly be brought to bear.

For the moment, what can be said is that while Mexico's democratization is a product of domestic forces, it has also been supported and fostered by the United States. Not only have different U.S. officials stated that one of the pillars of its foreign policy is to promote democracy in the world, but concretely in the case of Mexico, the U.S. government has also cultivated relations with representatives of opposition parties, facilitated the presence of U.S. electoral observers in Mexico and maintained as the fifth of its embassy in Mexico's six priorities that it "carries out United States programs that support Mexican efforts to broaden political participation by all elements of society."[6]

This does not mean that the U.S. government is unaware of the strides forward made in democracy in Mexico promoted by the PRI governments themselves. In fact, the report that the U.S. State Department has disseminated about Mexico goes into detail about them, saying concretely that "Numerous electoral reforms implemented since 1989 have aided in the opening of the Mexican political system, and opposition parties have made historic gains in elections at all levels."[7]

It is clear, then, that the U.S. government considers greater democratization in Mexico positive. However, it also seems clear that certain analysts of bilateral relations are very concerned about the instability that could arise out of the 2000 presidential elections, in a context in which serious problems continue unresolved. Although some of the scenarios being considered may seem extreme, that does not mean they should be ignored. Quite to the contrary, they should be taken into account and evaluated in the light of the undeniably weak foundations of Mexico's political and economic advances

THE ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CLOSER TIES

U.S. analysts are generally optimistic about the economy. Both government and academic observers concur in pointing to the benefits of economic opening policies and the limitation on Mexican state participation in the economy. They also attribute a good part of Mexico's recent economic achievements to the NAFTA. Specifically, they explain the quicker recovery from the Mexican crisis of December 1994 and the effects of the 1998 international financial upsets pointing to the fact that Mexico could continue to generate revenues through exports in the framework of NAFTA. They also recognize that "sustained economic growth is vital to Mexico's prospect for a succesful evolution to a more competitive democracy.... Mexico's level of economic prosperity has a direct though proportionally smaller impact on the United States, as it affects trade and migration."[8]

> Just like at the beginning of the century, the main concern among U.S. analysts is Mexico's future stability.

In that sense, and to emphasize the benefits of having signed NAFTA with Mexico, U.S. scholars underline that after five years, bilateral trade has increased, benefitting both our countries. Concretely, they point to the fact that in 1998, U.S. exports to Mexico and Mexican exports to the U.S. were 90 percent and 140 percent higher respectively than in 1993, before NAFTA came into effect. They estimate that in 1999, U.S. exports to Mexico will probably have doubled compared to pre-NAFTA levels and the U.S. trade deficit vis-à-vis Mexico will have changed to a surplus. They also point to the fact that in 1997 Mexico was already the United States' third largest trade partner, representing 10 percent of its foreign trade. By 1998, the U.S.$79 billion in U.S. exports to Mexico were far more than U.S. exports to Japan, which only totaled U.S.$58 billion, making Mexico the second most important destination for U.S. exports, surpassed only by Canada, despite the fact that the Mexican economy is only one-seventh the size of Japan's.[9]

NAFTA has contributed to consolidating the United States as Mexico's main trade partner: while in 1986, Mexican exports to the United States represented 66 percent of its total, by 1998, they represented 88 percent. And while in 1986, 60 percent of Mexican imports came from the United States, by 1998, 78 percent originated there.[10] If at the beginning of the century (1911), U.S. investors already

accounted for a substantial part of foreign investment in Mexico and controlled 38 percent of total foreign investment, in 1998, at the end of the century, foreign direct investment from the United States made up 60 percent of the total.[11]

What these statistics do not explain is that, even though bilateral trade has grown, it has been mainly the result of intra-firm trading, since the main U.S. exports to Mexico are auto parts, electronic equipment and agricultural products and Mexico's main exports to the United States are also automobiles, electronic equipment and oil. Therefore, the main beneficiaries of this increased trade have been Mexico's approximately 3,000 maquiladora plants (90 percent controlled by foreign capital), and the U.S. companies that use them. At the same time, the importance of oil to Mexican exports has been maintained and the Mexican market has increased its importance as a target for U.S. agricultural products. According to Lucía Pérez Moreno's analysis in *Expansión* magazine,[12] despite the existence of NAFTA, in its first five years, due to profound, age-old problems in Mexico, the number of companies that jumped on the exporting bandwagon increased only from 20,000 to 33,000, which represents only five percent of the country's firms. It is also important to point out that of these 33,000, a mere 500 control 60 percent of foreign trade.

According to Pérez, all of this speaks to the fact that "in Mexico there are two economies: business in dollars and business in devalued pesos. The former, obviously, is the one that has taken best advantage of NAFTA." About greater Mexican dependence on the U.S. economy, Pérez says, "What this means is that we have to keep our fingers crossed in the hope that our northern neighbor's economy does not weaken."[13]

But these economic indicators are not the only instrument for seeing that a closer link has developed between Mexico and the United States in recent years that will probably have an impact on the understanding that each society has of the other in the future. Other useful indicators include continued Mexican migration to the United States: today between 38 percent and 50 percent of Mexicans, depending on the source, acknowledge having a close relative living in the United States.[14] Consumers of Mexican origin are proliferating in the United States, now totalling about 17.7 million people who have contributed to the increase in the sale of Mexican products like tortillas, beer, tequila and hot sauces.[15] Mexican-owned companies in the U.S. have increased to about 650,000, with sales of approximately U.S.$69 billion dollars a year.[16] Today, Mexicans have greater contact with the English language and U.S. culture in their own country, just as U.S. residents have more contact with Spanish and Mexican culture.[17] Finally, Mexicans and non-Mexican U.S. residents seem to have an increasing interest in traveling, establishing links and getting information about the others' country.[18] **VM**

Notes

[1] For a summary of their main hypotheses, see Alvin and Heidi Toffler, *La creación de una nueva civilización. La política de la tercera ola* (Mexico City: Plaza&Janés, 1996).

[2] Steven R. David, "Washington and the Civil War in Mexico," *Foreign Affairs* (New York) (January-February 1999), pp. 30-45.

[3] Taken from a summary published in the Mexico City daily *Reforma*, 2 and 3 July 1999, p. 8A.

[4] Exclusive interview published on the front page of the Mexico City daily *Reforma*, 25 July 1999.

[5] About the end of the Porfirio Díaz regime and the fears it caused, see Josefina Zoraida Vázquez and Lorenzo Meyer, *México frente a Estados Unidos. Un ensayo histórico, 1776-1993* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1994), pp. 114-119.

[6] See the U.S. Embassy's web page section "Priority Issues for the United States Embassy," at http://www.usembassy-mexico.gov/emenu.html.

[7] http://www.state.gov/www/background_notes/mexico_0599_bgn.html."Background Notes on Mexico," May 1999, released by the Bureau of Western Hemispheric Affairs, U.S. Department of State.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Data taken from "Background Notes on Mexico" and from Lucía Pérez Moreno, "Informe especial sobre el TLC. Entre festejos y lamentos," *Expansión* (Mexico City), 2 December 1998, pp. 38-60.

[11] Taken from "Background Notes on Mexico" and Vázquez and Meyer, op. cit., p. 116.

[12] Pérez Moreno, op. cit.

[13] Ibid, p. 38.

[14] Robert A. Pastor, *Integration with Mexico. Options for U.S. Policy* (New York: The Twentieth Century Fund Press, 1993), p. 11; "Background Notes on Mexico," op.cit.; Vázquez and Meyer, op. cit., p. 116.

[15] Laura Martínez Ruiz-Velasco, "¡Viva El Alamo! La cultura mexicana permea el diario vivir en Estados Unidos," *Latin Trade* (August 1999), pp. 52-54.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid. This information comes from reports about Hispanic companies and their sales, estimating that about half of their business is done with Mexicans.

[18] This can be seen in the number of magazines and books currently on sale about Mexico and the United States, their respective cultures, ways of doing business, tourist attractions, etc., in both countries. Also, commercial flights between the two countries are on the rise.

Photos by Elsa Medina

Views from South of the Río Bravo

Migration to the United States as a Field of Inquiry

(Part One)

*Barbara A. Driscoll**

However simplistic an observation it may seem, international migration is *ipso facto* a bilateral process that encompasses both sending and receiving countries in a web of interrelated social, political and economic processes and phenomena. Mexican migration to the United States is most patently no exception. Spanning the greater part of the twentieth century, and arising from factors in both countries, Mexican migration stands as a particularly significant development for understanding the economic development of the United States and the border region it shares with Mexico and constitutes one of the principal migratory movements of the twentieth century.

Mexican immigration has attracted significant scholarly attention in the United States since the turn of the twentieth century, some of it quite good. Victor Clark, Carey MacWilliams and Paul S. Taylor number among the earliest U.S. academic researchers, although others have produced biased and often less useful research. It was not until the 1970s, however, that Mexican immigration became a principal focus of a generation of U.S. scholars representing many disciplines, methodologies and perspectives. Particularly significant is the research produced by the first cohorts of Mexican American scholars trained in the 1960s and 1970s who bring a unique point of view to the study of immigration from Mexico.

Nonetheless, before the 1970s, Mexican immigration and immigrants received scant attention in Mexican universities. First, the extremely centralized Mexican government, from its vantage point in Mexico City's Federal District, did not assign much importance to the border. Moreover, Mexican immigration northward did not generate much interest in cities since it was basically rural in origin until the 1980s, and jobs in the United States seemed to alleviate problems of unemployment and underemployment endemic in many sending areas, such as Jalisco and Zacatecas. In addition, Mexican immigrants residing in the United States traditionally sent money home (as they still do), thereby contributing substantially to local economies.[1] Funding to finance field research among Mexican immigrants in the United States was not widely available in Mexico until the 1970s.

This is the first part of a two article series that addresses major directions in Mex-

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ican academic research on immigration over the past 30 years; this first installment summarizes major research from the early 1970s to the North American Free Trade Agreement.

The official end of the bracero program[2] in 1965 at the insistence of the Mexican government symbolized the heightened awareness in Mexico of the myriad abuses and problems associated with legal and undocumented immigration north. Substandard treatment and very low wages, particularly of undocumented Mexican workers, attracted the attention and ire of many observers in the United States, resulting in nationally circulated reports and documentaries. This reinforced and broadened intensifying concern in Mexico about extending protection to undocumented Mexican immigrants that would eventually motivate much early research about immigration.

True, renowned anthropologist Manuel Gamio received grants from the Social Science Research Council to do field work in the United States in the 1920s among Mexican immigrants, and his publications, available in both English and Spanish, represent an auspicious beginning of academic research based in Mexico. Both his overview of Mexican immigration and compilation of oral histories of migrants still constitute important sources of data.[3] Twenty years later, Roberto "Cuba" Jones was commissioned by the Pan American Union to undertake a study of the bracero program during its first years, 1942-1944. Although an American researcher, he later settled in Cuernavaca, Mexico. His monograph "Mexican War Workers in the United States" was published simultaneously in English and Spanish and is still a valuable source of first-hand information about the wartime bracero program.[4] After World War II, Edmundo Flores, now a distinguished researcher at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) studied the bracero program for a master's degree in sociology in Wisconsin and devised an analysis that portended the very critical position that many scholars would assume much later toward temporary contract labor programs. Although Flores devoted a relatively short research time to studying Mexican immigration, his approach opened a new avenue toward understanding the significance of the bracero program.

During the height of the bracero program, theses[5] began to appear about various aspects of immigration. In 1954, Mario Ojeda, who went on to write extensively about U.S.-Mexican relations and serve as the president of the Mexican College, wrote a *licenciatura* thesis about the diplomatic protection of Mexican immigrants, a concept crucial for understanding the relationship between consulates and Mexican nationals in the United States. In 1964, Gloria Vargas y Campos wrote a *licenciatura* thesis about the bracero program.

The 1970s

However, several factors converged in the 1970s to spur research in Mexico about immigration, in the process establishing it as a priority for academic researchers. The termination of the bracero program in 1964 unexpectedly exacerbated undocumented migration to the United States, which increasingly responded to intense demands in some U.S. regions and industries for Mexican immigrants. The growing presence of undocumented Mexican immigrants in the United States became not just a legal problem, but an internal political one that required responses. Throughout the early 1970s, the U.S. Congress held hearings to consider the size and implications of the undocumented Mexican immigration community for the United States. Not surprisingly, undocumented immigration from Mexico became a pivotal issue for the burgeoning Chicano Movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Indeed, the pioneering work of Mexican sociologist Jorge Bustamante in the early and mid-1970s provided the impetus for further scholarly studies in Mexico that focused on undocumented immigration to the United States not exclusively within the parameters of traditional sociological and migration theory but within a paradigm that balanced push factors in Mexico with pull factors in the United States, similar to what we call today, a binational labor market. Although Bustamante had already published in academic journals in the United States and France and had contributed to the highly acclaimed *Los Mojados: The Wetback Story*[6] with Julian Samora and Gilbert Cárdenas, he launched his research in Mexico at the Mexican College with a working paper entitled "Espaldas mojadas: Materia prima para la expansión del capital norteamericano" (Wetbacks: Raw Material for the Expansion of U.S. Capital) published in 1975 by the Center for Sociological Studies of that institution. Bustamante has since researched and published extensively in Mexico and many other countries on undocumented migration, the maquiladora industry and other aspects of the border region, the Mexican American community, and, also founded

the Northern Border College in Tijuana, Baja California. His work has been pivotal in opening public debate in Mexico about the importance of migration and the border, and indeed his research is a point of departure not just for academic research in Mexico but in the United States as well.

In 1979, the Mexican College's International Studies Center published *Indocumentados: Mitos y realidades* (The Undocumented: Myths and Realities), a compilation of presentations from a conference about undocumented migration. Bustamante was the only Mexican researcher who actually wrote about immigration for the publication, although demographer Francisco Alba offered an analysis of international migration as the failure of Mexican employment programs. All other co-authors were from the United States.

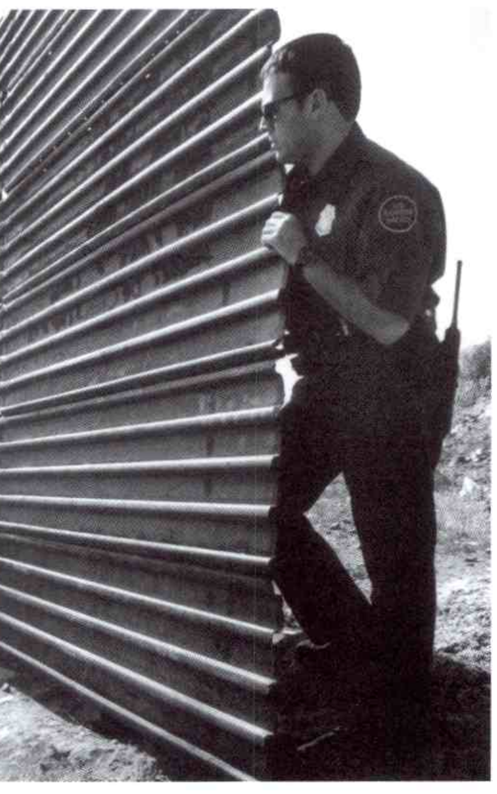
However, two books appeared in Mexico in 1982 about immigration. Mónica Verea Campos (the founding director of CISAN) published *Entre México y Estados Unidos: los indocumentados* (Between Mexico and the United States: Undocumented Migrants), in which she provides an extensive overview of undocumented immigration and explains its consequences for the economies of both countries, showing that it had become a political problem for the United States and for Mexico. Around the same time, journalist Patricia Morales published *Indocumentados mexicanos* (The Mexican Undocumented Migrants), a study that addresses not just undocumented immigration, but explains the larger historical context of undocumented migration, especially the bracero program and the evolution of U.S. immigration policy. Finally, in 1991, the UNAM published a doctoral thesis in law, *Migración de trabajadores mexicanos indocumentados a los Estados Unidos* (Migration of Mexican Undocumented Workers to the United States) by lawyer María de los Angeles Gastélum Gaxiola, that focuses on the dilemma of immigrants in the United States as a product of internal politics and compares it to European migration policy, using in part interviews she conducted among deported Mexican immigrants at the border.

Parallel to research about contemporary migration issues, some significant historical studies have been published. In 1974, *Los mexicanos que devolvió la crisis, 1929-1932* (The Mexicans the Depression Sent Back, 1929-1932) written by Mercedes Carrera de Velasco clearly documented the processes of forced repatriation that many Mexican immigrants, both legal and undocumented, suffered in the early years of the Great Depression. Although subsequent research has been published in both Mexico and the United States about the effects of the Depression on Mexican immigrants, Carrera de Velasco's widely recognized work continues as a basic point of departure for this particularly difficult topic.

In 1985, the magazine *Historia Mexicana* (Mexican History) published an article by Camille Guerin-Gonzales about the process of voluntary repatriation through the historical experiences of families as an option exercised to maximize binational networks. In the same year, the Northern Border College published a monograph entitled "El programa de braceros ferroviarios" (The Railroad Bracero Program) by Barbara Driscoll about the railroad segment of the bracero program during World War II. In 1990, Remedios Gómez Arnau published with CISAN a historical

study of the concept of diplomatic protection used by Mexican consuls in their diplomatic activities on behalf of Mexican immigrants in the United States, *México y la protección de sus nacionales en Estados Unidos* (Mexico and the Protection of Its Nationals in the United States).

Threatened changes in U.S. immigration policy through the 1970s and the 1980s that finally culminated in the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) generated a variety of responses in Mexico. The journal of the Mexico College's International Studies Center, *Foro Internacional* (International Forum), for example, dedicated one issue to immigration, that included Mexican scholars Francisco Alba, Gerardo Bueno, Jesús Tamayo, Gustavo Verduzco, Mónica Verea Campos and Samuel I. del Villar. For many years, the same center also published anthologies about the state of Mexican-U.S. relations that included specific articles about immigration.



The bitter domestic politics in the United States revolving around the issue of undocumented Mexican immigrants that emerged after the end of the bracero program in the mid-1960s made it patently clear that Mexico would have to develop alternative sources of information and data to be able to present alternative perspectives on migration in international fora. It was during this time that we saw the first data bases and large-scale surveys in Mexico that over the last 25 years have provided primary data regarding immigration. The Ministry of the Interior's National Population Council and the National Institute of Geography, Statistics and Data Processing (INEGI) have taken the lead, although other government agencies have participated. The Northern Border College has also created significant data bases about diverse aspects of migration, at times using innovative techniques (such as taking photos at the border cross points). This development of extensive primary data banks allows Mexican researchers to propose analyses that can differ from those based on U.S. data.

Finally, I would like to mention a trend in immigration research that became particularly significant in Mexico in the 1980s, that of emphasizing the regional origins of the immigrants. As is well documented, some Mexican states send more immigrants than others, and those regional governments have increasingly become aware of the implications for their planning and development. The Michoacán College has organized many significant studies about migration from that state. For example, *La casa dividida: un estudio de caso sobre la migración a Estados Unidos en un pueblo michoacano* (A House Divided: A Case Study on Migration to the United States in a Michoacán Town) by Gustavo López Castro utilizes local historical archives and other resources to focus on the consequences of long-term permanent and temporary migration for local villages. We also find similar studies in other migrant sending states such as Jalisco, Zacatecas and Guanajuato, among others.

Academic research published in Mexico during the 1970s and 1980s about many aspects of immigration conducted by an increasingly varied group of professionals has provided a firm basis for continuing investigation into what is a particularly complicated dilemma for both countries. Not only was this scholarship based on primary and secondary sources from the United States, but national and international funding enabled academic and government researchers to generate data in Mexico that would provide the vision that only a migrant-sending society can provide. If, indeed, Mexican immigration to the United States is a process that involves the sending as well as the receiving country, then research in Mexico is absolutely essential to developing a fully comprehensive analysis of what Mexican immigration is, and how it affects its participants and their families and communities. These two decades witnessed the first large-scale academic efforts in Mexico to study the phenomenon in a meaningful context. **VM**

Notes

[1] My analysis of Mexican scholarship concerning immigration began with an article developed for an international congress on U.S. studies. "Migración a Estados Unidos: su visión desde México," *Estados Unidos desde América Latina: Sociedad, política y cultura* Víctor A. Arriaga Weiss and Ana Rosa Suárez Argüello, comps. (Mexico City: Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas, El Colegio de México and Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José María Luis Mora, 1995) pp. 362-382.

[2] The bracero program was a formal temporary contract labor program negotitated by Mexico and the United States during 1942-1943 that recruited unskilled laborers in Mexico for agricultural and later railroad work. The railroad portion ended with World War II, but the agricultural segment lasted until the 1960s. The bracero program has justifiably received much criticism in both countries for many reasons.

[3] Manuel Gamio's work is widely available in a 1971 reprint of his seminal work *Mexican Immigration to the United States: A Study of Human Migration and Adjustment* (New York: Dover, 1971).

[4] Robert C. Jones, *Mexican War Workers in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Pan American Union, 1945).

[5] In Mexico, not only do graduate degrees ordinarily require theses, but the completion of a *licenciatura* (roughly the equivalent of a bachelor's degree) requires one. Unpublished theses often constitute a particularly valuable source of research and data.

[6] Julian Samora with Jorge Bustamante F. and Gilbert Cárdenas, *Los Mojados: The Wetback Story* (South Bend Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1971).

The Driving Force Behind Canadian Economic Growth

*Elisa Dávalos**

While domestic demand has traditionally been the driving force behind the enormous U.S. economy, exports have been an essential component of Canada's development.

More than 80 percent of Canadian exports go to the United States. For this reason, Canada has benefited by the expansion of the hemisphere's largest economy, that of the United States, which has performed extraordinarily well since April 1991 in its longest period of uninterrupted growth since World War II.

In contrast with the U.S. situation, the world economy is still feeling the after effects of the Asian crisis, which hit Japan above all, but also the European Union with the contraction of the demand for its exports. Japan is experiencing the highest unemployment rate in its post-war history (3.4 percent). Germany's economy has grown slowly, as have its exports, while its government has implemented job creation programs. The same thing is going on in Japan, where the government has also made efforts to bolster consumption. In the European Union, only the countries that, like France, have centered their growth in domestic demand have grown considerably.

While consumer demand has been very weak in Japan in 1999, and moderate on the average in the European Union, in the United States it continues to drive growth, with the service sector pivotal for job creation.

Simultaneously, this dynamism has stimulated Canada's economic growth through the demand for its exports. As can be seen in graph 1, exports have displayed an uninterrupted tendency to grow, even if there are monthly variations. Auto exports, a very high percentage of total Canadian exports to the United States, have been affected by labor problems and strikes in both countries, which, together with other factors, made for unstable but growing performance.

Canadian exports to the United States have been successful despite problems faced by its natural resources sector, such as nickel and zinc ore. Oil, gas and wheat prices have suffered ups and downs on international markets.[1]

These goods have not benefited as greatly from the U.S. economic boom as consumer goods have. This is logical if we consider that private consumption, and not investment required by productive inputs, has fueled the U.S. economy. Therefore, Canadian manufactured goods have benefited most from the expansion.

In contrast to its southern neighbor, Canada has experienced a very moderate growth in domestic demand, taking into account both private consumption and investment, and therefore its imports have grown very slowly. Comparing its export and import growth rates, we can see that Canada's trade surplus has grown noticeably, particularly with regard to the United States, its main trade partner. In the first quarter of 1999, total exports reached almost Can$3 billion.

The biggest beneficiary of this has been the province of Ontario where the largest amount of Canadian manufacturing is concentrated.

The history of Canadian industry revolves basically around the Ontario economy. Industry is highly concentrated in the southern part of the province, although a certain amount is also located in Quebec. In 1995, Ontario produced 52.4 percent of the total value of national output; Quebec, 24.2 percent; British Columbia, 8.8 percent; and Alberta, 7.3 percent. Ontario was also the leader that year in 15 of the 22 main industrial sectors, including four of the five most important: transportation equipment, foods, chemicals and electrical and electronic equipment.[2] Clearly, then, Ontario's weight in manufacturing is decisive.

For this reason, external demand has been directed to a great degree at this

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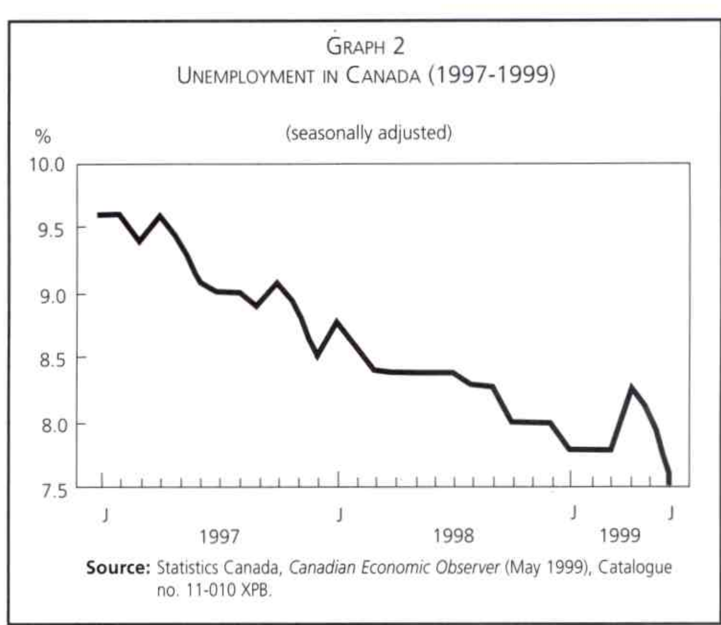
GRAPH 1
CANADIAN EXPORTS (1994-1998)

Source: Statistics Canada, *Canadian Economic Observer* (March 1999), Catalogue no. 11-010 XPB.



GRAPH 2
UNEMPLOYMENT IN CANADA (1997-1999)

Source: Statistics Canada, *Canadian Economic Observer* (May 1999), Catalogue no. 11-010 XPB.

province's economy. In addition, tourism from the U.S., the single largest place of origin for visitors to Canada, centers mainly in Ontario, increasing its foreign income even more. This trend has been strengthened by the exchange rate of the Canadian dollar vis-à-vis the U.S. dollar.

This gives credence to Canadian researcher Kenneth Norrie's assertion about the effects of NAFTA on Canadian provinces that, "In sum, North American economic integration appears to have had its great impact on central Canada. This is not entirely surprising since NAFTA had its greatest liberalizing effects on manufacturing and service industries, and these activities are disproportionately located in these two provinces."[3]

Manufacturing and services, then, have been the greatest sources of growth in Canada, and in Ontario in particular, stimulated by U.S. demand. It is important to emphasize that the most dynamic factors in the moderate growth of Canadian domestic demand have been communications and computing, a reflection of structural changes in the Canadian economy.

The dynamism in the demand for Canadian exports has also had its impact on unemployment, undoubtedly one of the government's greatest concerns, at the center of the debate since the beginning of the 1990s because of the stagnation of job growth contrasted with the growth of output after emerging from the recession of the beginning of the decade. Since 1997, noticeable strides have been made in the fight against unemployment (see graph 2).

Nevertheless, certain features of the situation demand staying alert. The U.S. economy cannot remain the driving force of Canada's economic growth indefinitely. In fact, there are some elements of concern for the U.S. government.

Inflation and interest rates remain at historically low levels; inventory growth lagged behind sales, while the increase in spending was broadly based in both the domestic and external sectors. One unusual feature was the personal saving rate, which hit its lowest level since the Depression as some households leveraged their capital gains from the stock markets to spend more.[4]

The Canadian economy itself must spur investment and domestic consumption growth in order to be able to solidly face the convulsions of an increasingly globalized international economy. VM

NOTES

[1] Natural resources (vital exports from some provinces like Alberta) are highly volatile goods that depend a great deal on international supply and demand; they drop sharply when their prices change, as do earnings and exports.

[2] F. John Davis, "Geographical and Economic Relations Issues in US-Canadian Relations," *The USA and Canada 1998* (London: Europa Publications Limited, 1998).

[3] Kenneth Norrie, "The Impacts of North American Integration on Canadian Federalism," Paz Consuelo Márquez Padilla and Julián Castro Rea, comp., *El nuevo federalismo en la región de América del Norte* (Mexico City: CISAN-UNAM, at press).

[4] Statistics Canada, *Canadian Economic Observer* (May 1999), Catalogue no. 11-010 XPB.

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Oaxaca's Community Museums A Door to the Future

*Teresa Morales Lersch**
*Cuauhtémoc Camarena Ocampo**

Community museums tell stories that reveal the knowledge, beliefs and experiences of the indigenous peoples of the state of Oaxaca, whose strength still lies in the great value they place on community organization.

Photo by Jorge Acevedo

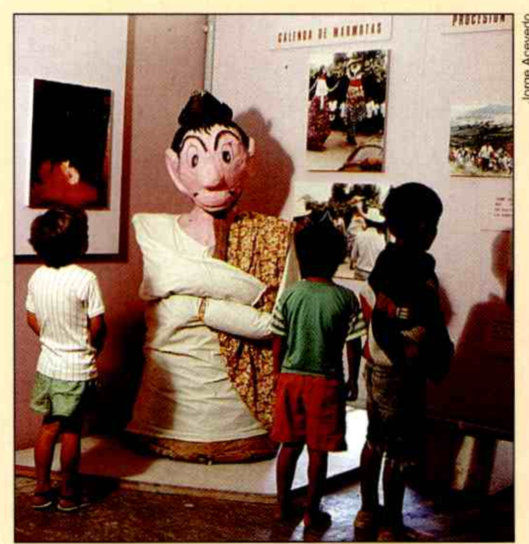
"The community museum is the cornerstone around which we are going to try to build another future for ourselves; besides reconstructing our past, we are also going to build our future....It is a door so that we indigenous peoples can give something to the world we are part of, as well as receive,"[1] says Jacinto Simón Leocadio, a member of the council of communal lands of San Miguel del Progreso, a town in the Mixtec Highlands of Oaxaca. Their museum, Note Ujia, or "Seven Rivers," opened its doors in 1996, after five years of community research, fund raising and construction of the building itself. Town residents decided to recover and present historical documents and photographs of their long struggle to defend their land. They also decided to include the description of their pre-Hispanic sites and an explanation of their traditional craft, weaving with back-strap looms. Today they offer workshops on topics of use and interest to the community, like developing writings in their own language, Mixtec, and improving the quality of their lands by using organic fertilizers.

* Anthropologists at the Oaxaca office of the National Institute of Anthropology and History and coordinators of the Oaxaca Program of Community Museums.

Oaxaca boasts a total of 12 community museums open to the public, created on the initiative of the communities themselves, and motivated by the discovery of important pre-Hispanic remains, the existence and recovery of documents and buildings from the colonial period, or a growing awareness of the need to document and strengthen traditional cultural practices. While support for craft production and attracting visitors were other important goals, perhaps the most important factor in all the cases is the need to make their voices heard.

The particularities can be seen in the selection of topics. The Shan-Dany ("At the Foot of the Hill") Museum in Santa Ana del Valle, Tlacolula, chose to display local archeological finds, the traditional Zapotec weavings made of wool and the history of the Feather Dance, as well as to document their local experiences during the Mexican Revolution. At the beginning of this century, when the town was attacked by General Carranza's forces in an attempt to penetrate the Juárez Mountains and defeat the mountain rebels, Santa Ana residents watched their crops being burned and their houses destroyed. In their struggle to survive, they retreated to the hills and dug trenches; the women helped grind powder and make bullets for the men who supported the mountain guerrilla fighters. It was a year of hunger, but also of victory because Carranza's troops never overcame their resistance.

The Balaa Xtee Guech Gulal (Shadow of the Old Town) Museum in Teotitlán del Valle displays the town's archeological finds, its woolen crafts and a theme characteristic of the community, a traditional wedding. This municipality is well known for the size and magnificence of its weddings. Old customs and values expressed in the wedding celebration are emphasized, although the exhibit also includes recent photographs of dances where up to 300 people participate and trucks filled with presents for the bride and groom, including stoves, wardrobes and refrigerators. One scene calls to mind the work that the prospective son-in-law has to do for an entire year before the wedding, like sweeping the patio and carrying firewood, to win the approval of his prospective in-laws. Other displays show the generous presents of fruit and ceremonial candles that the groom's family must take to the bride's, the traditional dress of both bride and groom and the family altar where they still receive the blessing of their godparents and relatives, practices that continue to this day.


Jorge Acevedo

"Cerro de la campana" Community Museum.

The Jna' niingui ("Hill of the Great Conch") Museum of San Miguel Tequixtepec, Coixtlahuaca, opened in 1997, with an exhibit of palm-leaf crafts. The town meeting picked this topic, says Juan Cruz Reyes, president of the museum committee,"because it is something we do every day, something inseparable from our lives,and yet we see it with different eyes when the total process and history is gathered all together."[2] The committee and artisans who participated were trained in oral history techniques and the exhibit was opened during the town's main fiesta. Juan Cruz, remembering that even people who had emigrated came back to visit it, said, "Many were interested because it made them remember how much they had suffered as children because they had to weave palm leaves to help out at home.[3] Others took the opportunity to see how our people had lived years ago. I think our people established a link to their past...and were able to value their own experiences more."[4]

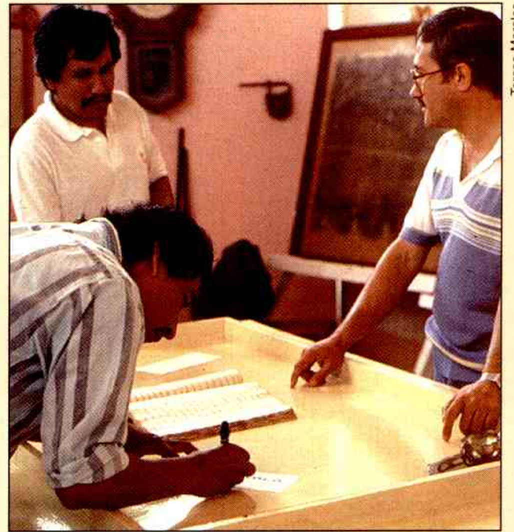
For the Hitalulu ("Pretty Flower") Museum of San Martín Huamelulpan, Tlaxiaco, the town meeting decided to present its rich archeological collection and focus on traditional medicine. Members of the community did the research themselves and picked four main topics: birthing, *empacho* (severe indigestion), *el mal de aire* (evil wind) and *espanto* (fright). Long interviews with both men and women traditional healers documented how people take fright (or suffer from *espanto*) for example, when someone is upset by an unusual event, like a twister or a coming upon a snake, or because they go by a place where violent acts have been committed. It can also happen because the person sleeps in the countryside, when "we make contact with

the land and body of the place or *bandolera*,"[5] explains traditional healer Carlos Cruz Pablo. Piedad García says, "The land becomes angered when you suddenly touch it; it becomes angered because it already has an owner, the *bandolera*, the owner of the land."[6] The museum's exhibit explains that to appease the offended land an offering should be made of *aguardiente* spirits, cacao, cookies and cigarettes, buried at the four points of a cross drawn in the place where the *espanto* occurred. Special prayers should also be said asking that the land free the spirit of the afflicted person. Sometimes a cigarette is lit and "the land smokes it."

These museums' profound roots are closely linked to the strength of indigenous community organization. The town meeting or assembly, the highest authority in each community, approves and appoints the members of the museum committee. Those named to these posts accept them as part of the community service they must perform throughout their adult lives. The responsibility of caring for and fostering the community's cultural patrimony is taken on with great seriousness and commitment.[7]

Since 1985, anthropologists, archeologists, historians and museographers from the Oaxaca regional offices of the National Institute of Anthropology and History have supported and advised the communities in developing their museums.

In 1991, the museum committees joined together in a statewide association the Union of Community Museums of Oaxaca, where they can exchange experiences and learn together. The association currently has three main projects. The first is a training center that organizes community workshops, intensive workshops for individual committees and joint workshops for committees and municipal authorities. The second is the Regional Child's Museum, located in Santa Ana del Valle, Tlacolula, the first museum aimed particularly at Oaxaca's children, with the objective of fostering their overall development and strengthening identification with their mother culture.


Teresa Morales

Members of the San Pablo Huixtepec museum's committee preparing an exhibit.

The association's third project is organizing a cooperative to offer community tourism services. Since 1995, it has been selling cultural tours to groups of children and teenagers, university personnel and senior citizens. The aim is to develop tourism that respects community culture and preserves their historical and natural heritage in the framework of mutual exchange and learning. After one such visit, a Yale University alumnus said, "The chance to see and experience the efforts of a small indigenous community to affirm its individuality and uniqueness is what I liked the best. The warm friendliness of the people, especially the school children, was a new window for us into the real Mexico."[8]

These museums are tools for meeting the challenges of change and encouraging community development. Internally, they help create a collective awareness of the community's past and evaluate the possibilities for its future. Externally, they are a space for exchanging with other people and peoples, where outsiders can admire the diversity and wealth of these cultures. **MM**

Notes

[1] Jacinto Simón Leocadio, quoted in Darina Robles "Catálogo de los museos comunitarios 'Cerro de la Campana' de Santiago Suchilquitongo y 'Note Ujia' de San Miguel del Progreso, Oaxaca," (Bachelors thesis) (Universidad Iberoamericana, January 1999).

[2] Collective interview by the authors December 10, 1996, with Juan Cruz Reyes, president of the San Miguel Tequixtepec Museum Committee; Alberto López Córdoba, mayor of San Miguel Tequixtepec; and Israel Soriano, museum volunteer.

[3] During the 1940s many children could not go to school because they had to stay home and help with the weaving. Children were faster and better in the craft, so even when parents were penalized for not sending them to elementary school, they still refused to do it, preferring to pay. [Editor's Note.]

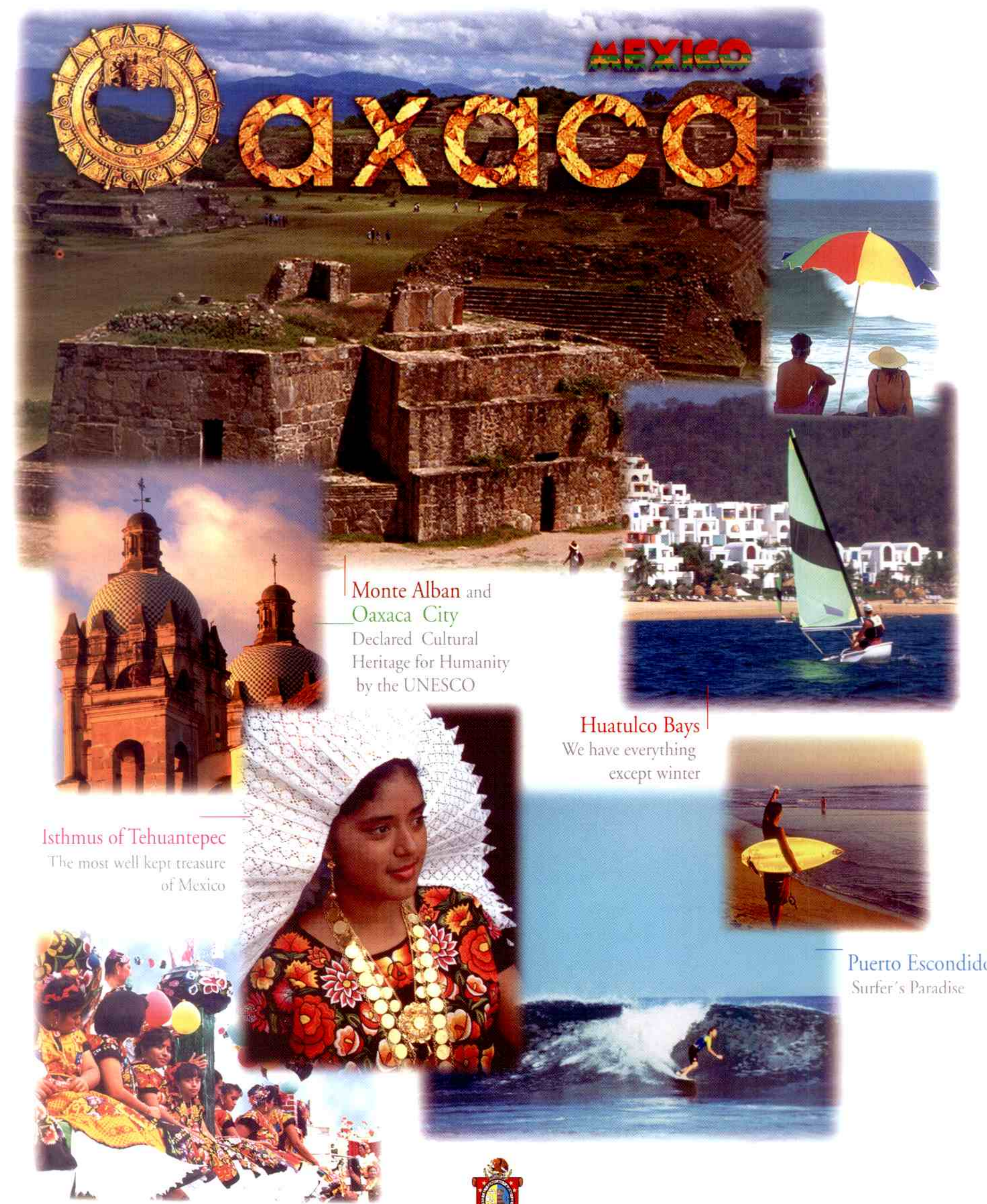
[4] Ibid.

[5] Comité Municipal del Museo Comunitario and H. Ayuntamiento Constitucional de San Martín Huamelulpan, *Guía del Museo Comunitario Hitaluhu* (Oaxaca, Oaxaca: Centro INAH-Oaxaca, 1991), p. 17.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Teresa Morales, "Cultural Appropriation in Community Museums," *Bulletin of the Center for Museum Studies* (Smithsonian Institution, October 1996).

[8] Evaluation sheet filled out by the Yale Alumni Association visitors to Santiago Suchilquitongo, Oaxaca, January 7, 1997.



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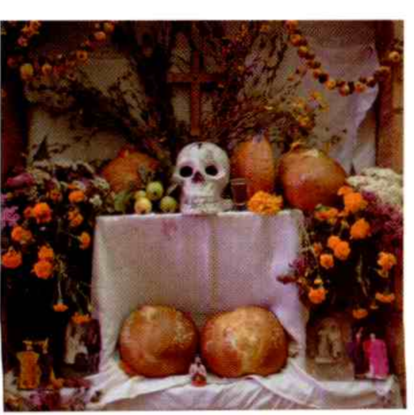
Elaborate offerings are made to welcome the dead.

Oaxaca's Traditional Celebrations

Centuries of pre-Hispanic, colonial and post-independence history have left our country with a legacy of traditions and fiestas that are still meaningful, even though the way they are celebrated has changed with time. Oaxaca is no exception: the celebration of traditional rites and fiestas, from the cities to the most isolated towns, is a part of day-to-day life throughout the year.[1]

The Cult of the Dead

In the dual world view of the pre-Hispanic peoples, life and death were inseparable; both ruled the passage of Man on Earth. The cult of the dead was part of Mesoamerican peoples' everyday life. Like most, the Mixtecs, Zapotecs and Mixes believed that the spirits came to visit every year, and they held festivities to celebrate the visit. When the Spanish conquistadors and religious orders arrived, they tried to transform this custom and adapt it to Christianity. The Catholic Church declared November 2 All Saints Day. Church altars were adorned as for a funeral, all in black, and decorated with an offering. Years later, the tradition of placing these altars in the churches was eliminated and the offerings began to be put up in people's homes.



The tradition of erecting altars is centuries old.

In Oaxaca, on October 31 and November 1 and 2, the graveyards are festooned with flowers and most people prepare elaborate offerings with which to welcome their dead. October 31 is reserved for going to the "Plaza —or Market— of the Dead" to buy everything necessary. Wooden boxes in the shape of coffins are put on a table and covered with white sheets or paper cut-outs, over which arches made of sugar cane or another kind of cane are erected. On this "coffin" they place the offering: *mole* sauce, pumpkin cooked in brown sugar, Day of the Dead sweet buns, local fruit, chocolate, water and mescal, among other things, prepared specially for the spirits of the dead to savour their aromas and quench their thirst after their long pilgrimage from the other life to Earth. But the road the spirits travel must be well lit, so white or yellow candles or an oil lamp are also included. Copal or incense are lit

The Night of the Radishes. Children showing their skills.

La Calenda processions from different churches meet around 11 p.m. in downtown Oaxaca.

to attract them with their aroma, and *cempasúchil* flowers cover the rest of the table. Paper and clay figures are also included, arranged in different ways to mock death.

The "little angels," children who died after being baptized, arrive October 31, around three in the afternoon and begin their return journey at the same time the next day, on November 1, to make way for the adult spirits, who stay at the celebration until the afternoon of November 2, when the living leave their homes to visit the graveyards.

THE NIGHT OF THE RADISHES

The Night of the Radishes is celebrated December 23 in Oaxaca's Zócalo, or central square. It is a community fiesta in which truck farmers, flower growers and craftsmen —both children and adults— exhibit figures made of radishes, the "immortal flower" (a local flower that is left to dry naturally) and *totomoxtle* (dry corn husks). Entire traditional, historic or biblical scenes are made out of these materials and all compete for prizes in different categories.

This tradition originated at the end of the last century when vegetable farmers

Carving begins three or four days before.

who brought their produce to market began to arrange them artistically to attract buyers, trimming each stand with figures made of radishes, cauliflower leaves and little flowers made from small onions. This custom led to the first contest to elect the market's best decorated stand on December 23, 1897.

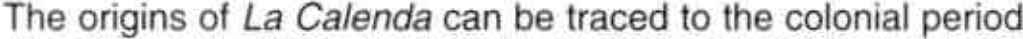
Initially, the competition only included figures made of radishes and the "immortal flower" and *totomoxtle* were added later. Until a few years ago, the radishes used were grown by the truck farmers themselves. Today, they are planted in the *tequio*, or common land, a garden-park on the outskirts of the city, and the organizers distribute them to the contestants. Different sized radishes are used, some up to 50 cm long and 3 kilograms in weight.

The carving begins three or four days before the festivities. Children between the ages of 6 and 12 participate in a special workshop on December 23 and exhibit their work along with the adults. Prizes are given out about 9 p.m. and the fiesta ends with fireworks.

LA CALENDA

One of the oldest traditions in the city of Oaxaca is *La Calenda*, in which community religious processions leave from different churches in the city and wind through the streets the night of December 24, to meet in downtown Oaxaca and then return to their churches to hear midnight mass.

The origins of *La Calenda* can be traced to the colonial custom that every church or chapel that had its own Christ child would name *padrinos* (community sponsors) for celebrating the Nativity. At least three days before Christmas, these *padrinos* would take the Christ child to their homes and build a nativity scene around it, inviting the neighbors in to pray and celebrate with food and drink. On the 24th, the child would be placed in a basket and serenaded as the spon-


The origins of *La Calenda* can be traced to the colonial period.

La Calenda is one of the oldest traditions in the city of Oaxaca.

sors served *atole*, a hot drink made from corn flour, and tamales to the neighbors who would then acompany him at nightfall on a walk downtown where all the Christs gathered at about 11 p.m. Each procession would then return to its own church to celebrate midnight mass.

Each church organizes the procession, *La Calenda*, that will accompany the child on his walk. They give participants little colored-lanterns —each church has a different color—, whistles and flares. The cavalcade is headed by a lantern with the name of the church it belongs to, and accompanied by people costumed like biblical figures (Joseph and Mary, the shepherds, the Three Wise Men); the famous giant figures, enormous structures covered in paper or cloth that originally represented the different races that formed the empire of Jesus; musicians, fireworks makers, and women carrying large baskets of flowers. In recent years, *La Calenda* has included elaborate floats. **VM**

Elsie Montiel
Editor

NOTES

[1] Information for this article was provided by the Oaxaca state Ministry of Tourism.

Errata

Our last issue, *Voices of Mexico* 48, contained some errors.
The following are the corrections.

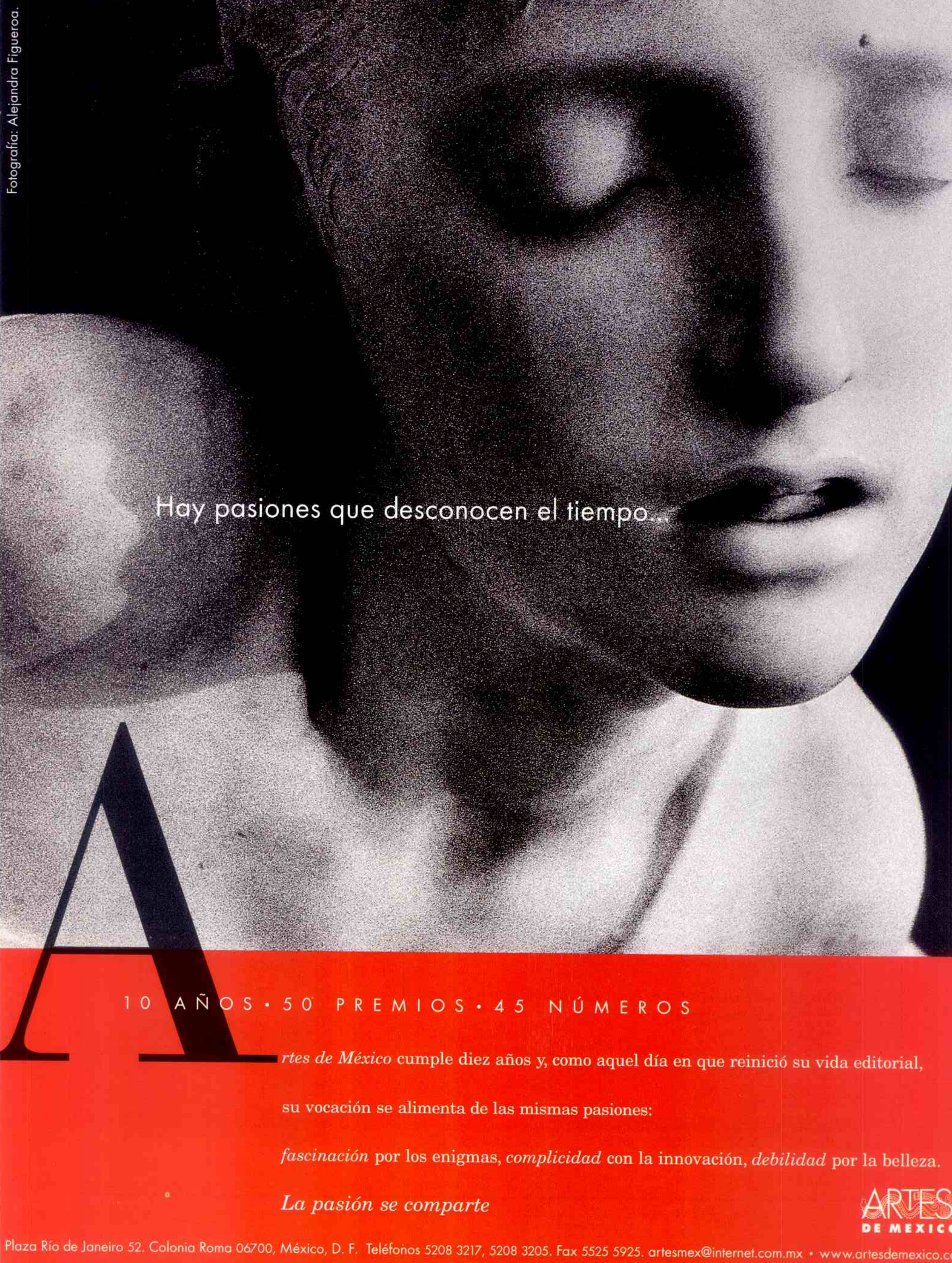
Page

37 The illustration appears up side down.

84 The blouse pictured is from Santiago Yaitepec and not Mazatlán, as it says in the caption.

85 The top illustration says "Pinotepa de Don Luis, Mixtec", and should say "Chinantec" *Huipil.*

We apologize to painter Sergio López Orozco, and author Ruth Lechuga for these errors.


Fotografía: Alejandra Figueroa.
Hay pasiones que desconocen el tiempo...
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Artes de México cumple diez años y, como aquel día en que reinició su vida editorial,
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Graciela Iturbide

Traditional Fare
From the Isthmus of Tehuantepec

*Natalia Toledo**

To my grandmother,
Doña Florencia Toledo,
who nurtured my taste for cooking.

I am Natalia Toledo, a woman from Juchitán, Oaxaca, a city in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Juchitán has a little over 100,000 inhabitants, mostly bilingual: there the language spoken is Zapotec, a language filled with metaphors and beautiful sounds. When people speak Zapotec, they constantly paint, sing and imagine the words: for example, to say "beach", you say "*ría nisadó*" that translated literally means "the lips of the sea." To say "the dawn", you say "*siadó guieru*," or "the opening flower," a morning, a possible flower. I have always thought that this constant painting with words is the reason there are so many visual artists in Juchitán, the native land of painter Francisco Toledo.

This place is famous for the beauty of its women and the courage of its men. Down through the years, important artists like Henri Cartier-Bresson, Tina Modotti, Miguel Covarrubias, Graciela Iturbide and more have visited it, as have writers like Anaïs Nin, who dedicates a paragraph of her diary to Juchitecan women, or André Pieyre de Mandiargues, who wrote a chronicle of the trip he made here with his beautiful wife Bona, a painter, who in Paris had been the girlfriend of Mexico's Nobel-prize winning poet, Octavio Paz.

Many have been fascinated by and fastened their gaze on Juchitán.

*Bilingual poet (Spanish-Zapotec).

Well, I'm from those lands, a Juchiteca who lives in Mexico City, writing a little poetry in the indigenous tongue and Spanish, and cooking food from the isthmus.

Something we always take with us wherever we go are the smells and flavors of the kitchens of our childhood. In the house of my grandmother Na Aurea, the meeting place then and now for the whole family that for whatever reason has scattered throughout the country, the food is delicious. When you get to Na Aurea's house in the morning, you lie right down in one of the cotton hammocks hanging like pendulums in the corridor or in the patio under the black olive tree while she makes breakfast, which could well be a plate of iguana meat in mashed wild green tomato sauce with red tomatoes.

The iguana is cooked in a pot with garlic, onion and sea salt; then, the green tomatoes are squashed with the hands and popped right into the pot along with some green chili peppers already burst in boiling water. Those in the know say that this dish cures anaemia. It is served in its sauce and can be garnished with a scoop of very dry refried beans and dark, almost burned, fried onions. Women go door to door selling this dish in almond tree leaves.

In Juchitán, tortillas are hand made, cooked on a *comiscal*. The *comiscal* is a hollow clay pot buried in a base of mud and river sand in which firewood is burned until it becomes charcoal; inside, the raw tortillas are stuck to the walls by hand and, once cooked, removed with tongs. A great variety of tortillas are made like this; for example the *gueta zuquii* are typical fat little tortillas with three or four little holes in the center; the *gueta bicuni* looks like a dog's leg; and the famous *totopos* are large, thin tortillas with thousands of little holes that look like they are always laughing. This same clay oven is used to roast *tepalcates* or banana tree leaves, fresh or smoked fish, or the tiny *lisa* river fish wrapped in *totomostle* (corn husks), and meat.

Graciela Iturbide

Ricardo Hernández

In Juchitán tortillas are hand made.

My grandmother Aurea's table never lacks a white corn *atole* drink, or *búpu*, a pre-Hispanic drink made of cacao, or *guie' chachi* (May flowers) and *guie' xhuba* (jasmin flowers).

At the time of the large midday meal, my grandmother might surprise us with a shrimp *mole* or a pot of *bizaa dxima*, beans from the Chimalapa forest between the states of Chiapas and Oaxaca. I will explain how my grandmother makes these dishes:

For a shrimp mole, buy a half kilogram of salt dried shrimp, a handful of squash seeds, a half kilogram of tomatoes, a fist-sized ball of corn meal, a sprig

Graciela Iturbide

Ricardo Hernández

of *epazote*, two or three *cuaresmeño* chili peppers, a piece of *achiote* chili pepper paste and four eggs. Take the heads and tails off the shrimp and soak them in water for about 10 minutes. Separately, pour the ground and strained tomatoes, garlic, onion and green chili peppers into a pot with hot pork lard and bring it to a boil. Brown the squash seeds and grind them together with the shrimp heads and the corn meal; add this mixture to the pot. When the mixture boils again, add the shrimp, the *achiote* paste dissolved in a tablespoon of water and the *epazote*. Beat the eggs and ladle them into the liquid; allow the mixture to boil again. Serve with limes, dry cheese and *totopos* for a delicious meal.

Ricardo Hernández

The *comiscal*. A great variety of tortillas are made in it.

Graciela Iturbide

The *bizaa dxima* is a tiny, very black bean that is toasted and reduced to a powder that is dissolved in a gourd full of water. Heat three tablespoons of pork lard in a pot and add the bean liquid, stirring constantly to prevent sticking. Simultaneously, add a teaspoon of lard, bits of *epazote* and salt to 1/4 kilogram of corn meal and roll into little balls, adding them to the soup. When the mixture comes to a boil, add four raw eggs.

This can be served with a goodly piece of armadillo meat in chili pepper sauce. (Armadillos are raised in Juchitán and consumed rationally; they have been part of the indigenous peoples' diet since pre-Hispanic times.)

For supper, grandmother Na Aurea takes us to the portals downtown, the restaurants under the arches surrounding the central plaza, for some delicious *garnachas* or *garnachero* chicken[1] and a good cup of coffee.

This is what I can eat in one day in my hometown.

The other days are the same, only the recipes change: roasted *mecate* meat or pork ribs browned with *achiote* paste and garlic, *cuajada*, *lisa* caviar, bulls' blood with eggs, chili peppers and onion, and more. Oh! and dessert: almond sweets, *jicaco* or some *anonas*; plums or *nanche* fruit preserved in alcohol.[2]

Cooking is an art as long as whoever is doing it is passionate. **VM**

Notes

[1] In Juchitán, *garnachas* are corn tortillas covered with meat, onions, hot sauce, dry cheese and cabbage in vinegar; *garnachero* chicken is chicken fried in garlic served with sauce, cabbage in vinegar, potatoes and fried onions. [Translator's Note.]

[2] *Mecate* meat is salt-dried meat in the form of a rope or *mecate*; *cuajada* is very fresh cheese; *jicaco*, a pink or black seed, cooked with sugar to make a sweet; *anona*, a fruit similar to the guanabana; *nanche*, a fruit native to southern Mexico. [Translator's Note.]

Graciela Iturbide, *Gossipers*, 1986 (Juchitán, Oaxaca).

Graciela Iturbide

THE MYSTIQUE OF DAILY LIFE

Graciela Iturbide uses the camera to discover the world. Her lens participates in the lives of men and women, in their fiestas, rites and customs, to deliver images that capture the mystique of daily life.

Graciela's camera has been recognized in Mexico and abroad for pictures like the ones she took in *Juchitán de las mujeres* (Juchitán of Women) (Elena Poniatowska and Graciela Iturbide [Mexico City: Ediciones Toledo, 1989]), a place unlike any other in Mexico, where women experience their eroticism without apology and enjoy men without inhibition. The words of Elena Poniatowska join with Graciela's images to transport us to that Zapotec land that women are mistresses of, to the delight of their men. It is they who organize the economy, both in the home and of the town, who trade in the market, who keep tradition alive, participate in protest marches, defy the law and face life with a smile on their faces and in their sexes.

Graciela Iturbide, born in Mexico City, studied at the UNAM University Center for Cinematographic Studies and at master photographer Manuel Alvarez Bravo's workshop. She has ventured into film and contributed to numerous Mexican newspapers and magazines.

Photographs in this page by Dante Barrera

The Canvases of San Miguel Tequixtepec An Age-Old Treasure

*María de los Angeles Romero Frizzi**

Located in southern Mexico, Oaxaca is a land of contrasts: it is one of the country's poorest states, but at the same time possessor of an impressive cultural wealth. In the 1980s, the state of Oaxaca had the highest index of marginalization in the entire country, 24.95 percent, which later studies show has not changed substantially.[1]

Oaxaca is the state with the largest indigenous population in Mexico: 39.1 percent of its inhabitants speak a Mesoamerican language.[2] The impoverished heir to the cultures that flourished in these lands in the centuries before the European conquest, its current situation is the fruit of the complex dynamics between indigenous societies and colonial rule (1521-1821) and later the conformation of Mexico as an independent republic. Certainly we can say that the contradictions that unite material poverty with cultural wealth are the result of that history. These precarious living conditions and cultural wealth side by side can be seen in all of Oaxaca's communities, isolated in the mountains and hours away from anywhere else by dirt road or on foot. Usually, visitors to Oaxaca do not notice this situation because they stay only a short time or only see the capital city and its environs. But, if they roam a little further, they can see the other side of Oaxaca up close. I will cite a single example among hundreds: the town of San Miguel Tequixtepec, in the western part of the state.

San Miguel Tequixtepec is a small community a few kilometers from the new highway that links Oaxaca city to central Mexico. It is a small town with a few more than 200 families who make their living growing corn and wheat and weaving hats out of palm leaves. The crops are rain fed and it is not unusual for people to lose the entire harvest because, after planting all their land, the rains do not come. This has forced many of the town's inhabitants to emigrate to Mexico

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Photographs of Tequixtepec Canvas I reprinted courtesy of the Santo Domingo Cultural Center's Friar Francisco de Burgoa Library.

Right: The light green glyph shows the two volcanoes of Central Mexico. Between them is a tree, the glyph of Huexotzingo, a town that still exists in the state of Puebla. Tequixtepec Canvas I.

Below: Tequixtepec Glyph. The figure of a sea shell surrounded by a hill represents the name of Tequixtepec in the Mesoamerican system of writing. Above the glyph are two royal couples identified by name. Tequixtepec Canvas I.

Jorge López

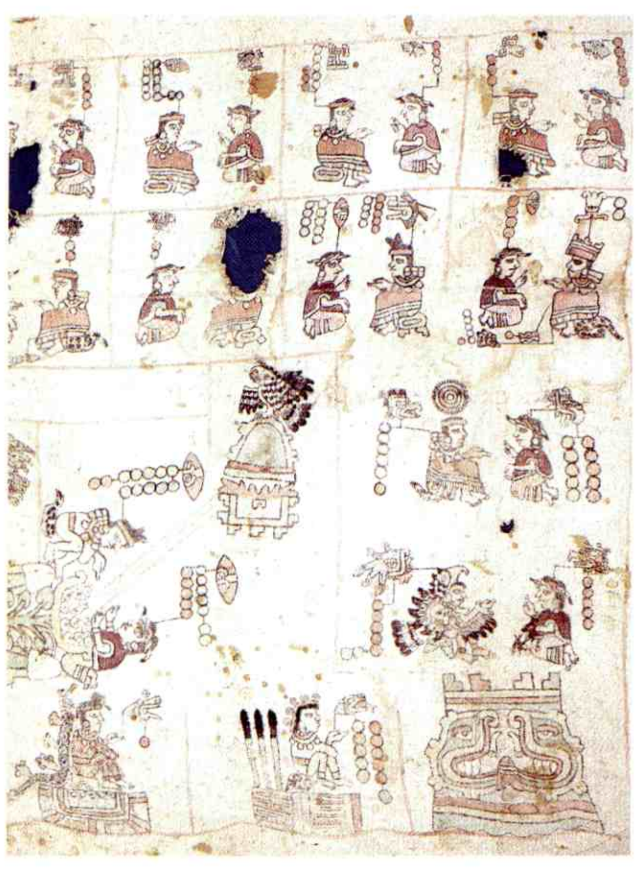
Jorge López

City in search of better living conditions. Those who remain supplement their income by weaving hats out of palm leaves that they sell for a few pesos to intermediaries who give them the final touches and sell them outside the area. Today, San Miguel Tequixtepec is just one more town in Oaxaca, but in ancient times, before the Spanish conquest, it was an important Chocholtec kingdom.[3] In the sixteenth century, despite the ravages of the war of conquest, San Miguel Tequixtepec was able to adapt to the new conditions, continuing its intense political life and important economic activities and establish two animal husbandry centers, at that time a very lucrative activity. Two sixteenth century canvases preserved by the town testify to life there in those years.

What kind of canvas are we talking about? Why are they important? About six centuries before the Spanish conquest, Oaxaca's indigenous kingdoms established the custom of representing the most important events in their daily lives and religion in different kinds of documents. Sometimes they were written on long strips of deerskin and spread out like folding screens; other times they were painted on lengths of cotton cloth woven on waist looms. The canvases of San Miguel Tequixtepec, part of this age-old tradition, are of the second type.

The most impressive of the two canvases, called San Miguel Tequixtepec I, is made of four strips of cloth sewn together, measuring 2.90 meters high and 2.35 meters wide. Done in the purest style of the pre-Hispanic painters, it is a true jewel and work of art of Mesoamerican literature. Examining it carefully, we can see the hand that painted so many details: the mountain lion skin on the rulers' thrones, the snow-capped mountains, the noblewomen's embroidered *huipiles*, the feathers of the eagle gentleman and a thousand more. Thanks to this canvas, we understand precisely what we mean when we say that in a single place we find both wealth and poverty.

In the sixteenth century, Oaxaca's indigenous peoples and those from other parts of Mexico continued their literary tradition. Their writing changed and adapted to the conditions of colonial rule, but continued to be a central part of their lives. There were different kinds of codices,



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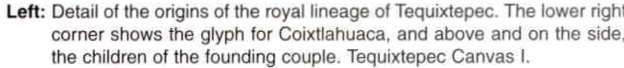
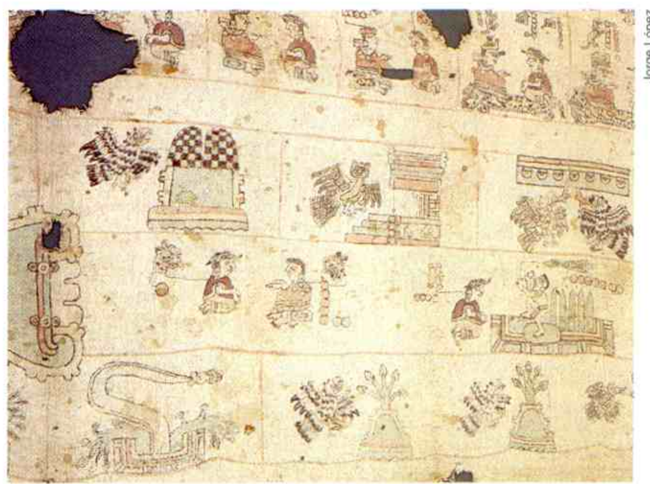


Left: Detail of the origins of the royal lineage of Tequixtepec. The lower right corner shows the glyph for Coixtlahuaca, and above and on the side, the children of the founding couple. Tequixtepec Canvas I.

Below: Tequixtepec's founding fathers traveled the four points of the compass before settling down and starting the town. Tequixtepec Canvas I.



Jorge López

but most important during the colonial period were those that spelled out the rights of the towns over their land. For the Mesoamericans, these documents were sacred books registering the divine origins of their rulers, the lineage of the ruling couples and the map of their lands. Just as the Bible narrates the origin of the Jewish people and its history through its prophets and patriarchs until the time when God led them to the promised land, the codices are Zapotec, Chocholtec, Mixtec or other Mesoamerican people's Bibles. They narrate the origin of the founding couple, their feats and the taking of the land that their gods gave them. The San Miguel Tequixtepec canvas deals with these three themes. On the lower part is painted the origin of the couple from whom the ruling line of San Miguel Tequixtepec descends and then registers the journey that this couple's progeny made through different places until they arrived at the land they took possession of. The central part speaks of the line that governed San Miguel Tequixtepec for centuries. Finally, the upper section is a map with the glyph for San Miguel Tequixtepec, its name in the ancient writing, at the center.

Practically all the communities of Oaxaca must have had a canvas or a map with similar contents, but many were handed over to the colonial and national authorities during litigation over the land down through the years. Others were lost and, in the last century, some were even exchanged for food. Others, however, have been zealously preserved by town officials, among them those of San Miguel Tequixtepec. Here, the responsibility for caring for the canvas falls to the mayor, but a smaller copy will soon be placed in the local museum so the entire community can see this incredible heritage from its ancestors. Anyone else who wants to see a piece of this Oaxaca of contradictions is also invited. VM

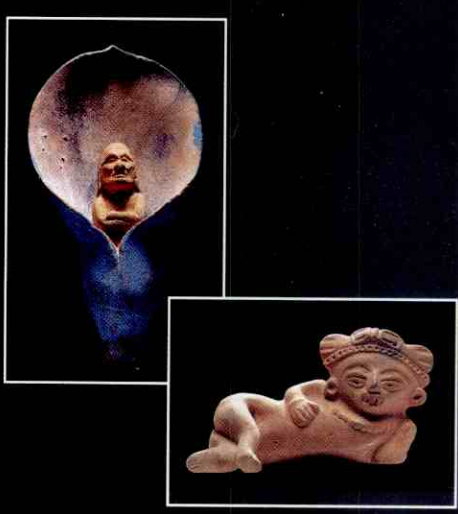
NOTES

[1] Jorge Hernández Díaz, "Condiciones de vida y diferenciación social en la población indígena oaxaqueña," *Cuadernos del Sur* 13 (Oaxaca, Mexico: UABJO-INI-INAH-CIESAS, 1998).

[2] *Censo de población* (Mexico City: INEGI, 1990).

[3] The Chocholtecs are one of the 15 ethno-linguistic groups that live in Oaxaca today.

Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso / *Recinto Universitario*



LOS MAYAS

Magna exposición que reúne 540 piezas del mundo maya: Guatemala, Honduras, Belice, El Salvador, Costa Rica y México. Los Mayas es la muestra más completa y actualizada que sobre esta civilización se ha realizado en el mundo hasta la fecha.

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Sábado 10:00 a 21:00 hrs. / Domingo 10:00 a 18:00 hrs.

Potos by Dante Barrera

THE CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM OF OAXACA

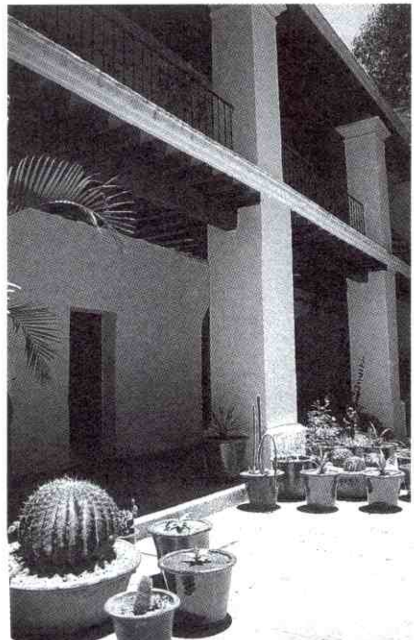
*Jorge Pech Casanova**

The Contemporary Art Museum of Oaxaca (MACO) was founded in 1992 by the state government under the prompting of a group of members of the public and artists, among them several of Oaxaca's most important painters. Their aim was to preserve and increase the state's cultural patrimony with a space where modern art could be viewed by residents and visitors alike.

The MACO is located in the historic downtown of Oaxaca's capital in a mansion built in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries by the Pinelo Lasso de la Vega family. In this colonial building, modern art finds a space for itself and gives an unexpected dynamism to the aged, fretworked, green stone walls where fragments of the frescos that decorated the house hundreds of years ago are still visible.

Local inhabitants wrongly call this building "Cortés' House," but the Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés died in 1547 and the Pinelo Lasso de la Vega began construction more than a century later.

There is certain evidence, however, that Mexico's conquistador built a home (that he never lived in) across from what is today the Benito Juárez Market, one block from Oaxaca's central plaza, or *zócalo*. Perhaps Cortés' being named marquis of the Valley of Oaxaca by Emperor Carlos V contributes to the misconception that he actually made his residence there. What is historical fact is that he had property line conflicts with the first inhabitants of the town of Antequera (Oaxaca's previous name) in the course of which he tried three times to stop the king from proclaiming it a city and expelled residents by force, all the while issuing lofty —and ultimately useless— decrees.



The city of Oaxaca prospered despite Cortés' disapproval. The contemporary panorama its historic downtown area still preserves is ample proof of that prosperity: centuries later, its streets once again paved with stone stave off the doubtful "progress" of asphalt.

Amid these colonial surroundings, the Contemporary Art Museum of Oaxaca merges viceroyal history with an aim that includes but transcends modernity: exhibiting avant garde art so it can be assimi-

* Coordinator of exhibitions of the Contemporary Art Museum of Oaxaca.

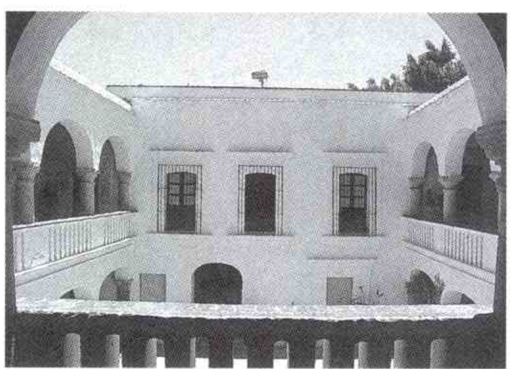
lated and reshaped by a public with an acute aesthetic sense.

Oaxaca's ambiance, in addition to being steeped in tradition and history, is appropriate for developing new art thanks to the vision and contributions of a handful of creators who visually nourish the imagination of an entire people. It is no coincidence that in the land of Rufino Tamayo, Francisco Toledo and Rodolfo Morales, contemporary art occupies a privileged position from which it can be disseminated and reshaped.

The Pinelo Lasso de la Vega mansion passed from hand to hand down through the centuries and in 1986 was sold to the Oaxaca city government which used it for the City Museum for six years. Mexico's National Fine Arts Institute, the Oaxaca state government, the Friends of the Monterrey Contemporary Art Museum Association and the Rufino Tamayo and José F. Gómez Foundations all joined efforts to create the Contemporary Art Museum of Oaxaca. As a result of that unprecedented collaborative effort of the public, artists and government officials, the MACO opened in the former Pinelo mansion February 28, 1992.

The MACO has not limited itself to showing contemporary Oaxacan art, but has also exhibited a wide selection of Mexican and international works: from Alechinsky to traditional African carving; from Zúñiga's sculpture to landscaping from the pre-Hispanic times of Nezahualcóyotl.

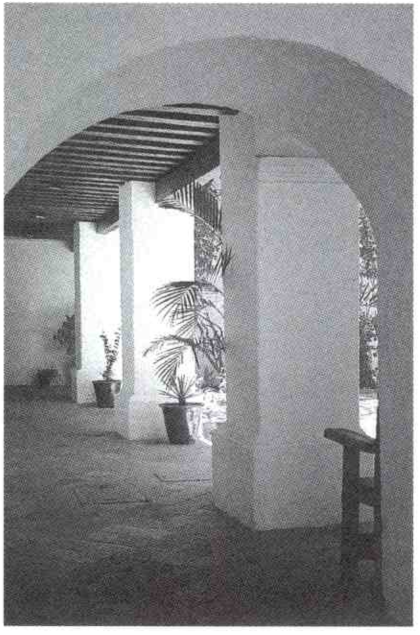
But, does pre-Hispanic, traditional work not contradict modernity? Modernity is a convention that can be invested with different values. One of them, however, is its essence: the standpoint of the viewer. So, to an eye that values surprise, a work of



pop art is no more modern than an eighth-century Teotihuacan container; an early twentieth-century African fetish is no less disquieting (and therefore, "modern") than the metal structures reminiscent of hospitals that Thomas Glassford fashions on the eve of the twenty-first century.

Oaxacan visual arts have created a tradition in the twentieth century thanks to their greatest exponents: Rufino Tamayo, Francisco Gutiérrez, Rodolfo Morales, Rodolfo Nieto and Francisco Toledo. And the MACO shows the work of these five artists regularly.

The museum also offers visual arts workshops to start children off in painting, clay modeling and engraving; courses on visual arts and literature; concerts; lectures; book launches; guided visits; and other cultural activities. The building's third patio is given over to the La Veranda restaurant.



New proposals in painting, sculpture, photography, architecture and multimedia all find a place in its rooms. Founded on a site of the Renaissance of the Americas, today, under Oaxacan skies, the museum continues to project artistic expressions that give new meaning to the visual arts in a world moving toward a new millennium.

August 1999 marked the centennial of Rufino Tamayo's birth, for which the MACO prepared a series of exhibits from August 27 to October 27 to honor this Oaxacan master. The most important, "Living a Century," includes 67 of Tamayo's sketches and watercolors, many exhibited in public for the first time, as well as some of his personal belongings.

"Cardinal Point. Homage to Tamayo" presents the work of 31 painters and sculptors, organized around Tamayo's work *The Sleeping Women Musicians*. Among the participating artists are Francisco Toledo, Leonora Carrington, Gunter Gerzso, Vicente Rojo, Manuel Felguérez, Roger von Gunten, Rodolfo Morales, Gilberto Aceves Navarro, Gabriel Macotela, Miguel Castro Leñero, Roberto Turnbull, Sergio Hernández, Filemón Santiago, Boris Viskin, Demián Flores, Rubén Leyva, Germán Venegas, José Villalobos and Alberto Ramírez.

Finally, a photo exhibition by Rogelio Cuéllar "Glances in the Sanctuary," completes the museum's homage to Tamayo at century's end. **VM**

Mexico's New Poetry Julio Trujillo and Luigi Amara

*Eduardo Hurtado**

The years between 1929 and 1936 were incomparable for Spanish-language poetry: *Poeta en Nueva York* (Poet in New York) by Federico García Lorca was published (1929), as were *Sermones y moradas* (Sermons and Dwellings), by Rafael Alberti (1930); *Residencia en la tierra* (Residence on Earth), by Pablo Neruda (1933); *La destrucción o el amor* (Destruction or Love), by Vicente Aleixandre (1935); *Nocturnos* (Nocturnes) by Xavier Villaurrutia; *Muerte sin fin* (Death without End), by José Gorostiza; and some of Ricardo Molinari's and Luis Cernuda's best poems. The Spanish Civil War and World War II interrupted this brilliant flood.

From the end of the 1930s to the second half of the 1940s, Spanish-language poetry oscillated between two enthusiasms: political didactics and neoclassical rhetoric. José Lezama Lima, a Cuban poet who managed to distance himself from avant garde prescriptions and, at the same time, take advantage of its initial lessons of freedom began the reaction against this dual trend. One characteristic title is *La fijeza* (Fixed-ness) (1944). For Lezama, poetry goes beyond the fetishes of the time: novelty and change. Together with the great explosion he represented, a notable constellation of poets emerged: Octavio Paz, Enrique Molina, Nicanor Parra, Jaime Sabines, Roberto Juarroz, Alvaro Mutis. For all of them, originality stopped being a determining criteria. The poet was no longer the creator of an unusual voice, but one of the many voices that converge in the invention of a poem.

The critique of the idea of the author, fundamental for reformulating ideas about poetry current at the time, became sharper in the 1960s: the poet elaborated verbal objects that lacked an existence of their own; a poem is an artefact that changes with each reading, or, in other words, with each reading, a different poem occurs.

From the strictest point of view, good poems, those destined to become classics, contain the potential for reading the reader, for compensating him for a world that only exists within him. The poem explodes in a here-and-now that may happen anywhere and at any time: a poem dated Mexico City, 1972, begins again one evening in 1999 in the hands of a Peruvian reader in some Lima neighborhood. The past and the future stop being the place for nostalgia or postponed assurances; poetry is a place where all times converge.

A generation is defined by its affinities and differences with preceding generations. Poetry does not evolve; it experiences the changes that each new writing engenders in its changing order. Every time a poet finds a characteristic expression, it forces tradition to readjust. Like gestures previously unnoticed, some traits of poetry written today by authors born in the 1960s and 1970s become visible in that written by their predecessors: there they were, waiting for a future poem to give them body and shadow.

* Director of Mexico City's House of the Poet.

It is not strange, then, that when we approach the best poems of the new Mexican poets, we get the impression that poetry from before is revived: we read Octavio Paz and Xavier Villaurrutia, Alí Chumacero and Rubén Bonifaz Nuño, Jaime Sabines and Salvador Novo with other eyes. Or, their poems read us in another way: they spell the changes that our recent reading have effected in us. We can expect the same effect in the future: the poetry of poets born in the 1990s is already unthinkable without the attempts by those who will shortly become their colleagues of the soon-to-be-past millennium. This means, as T.S. Eliot wanted, an essential agreement between the new and the old.

From that point of view, it should not be surprising that Julio Trujillo (Mexico City, 1969) will become a classic of Spanish-language poetry. His work enters the tradition through the doors of the second Latin American avant garde, that other avant garde, disillusioned and secret, that opposes a furtive passion, exploring, to the obligation to innovate at all costs. This is where it meets up with that abundant national postmodernism (Ramón López Velarde, José Juan Tablada, Alfonso Reyes) and the singular Mexican version of pioneer avant gardes: Carlos Pellicer —above all Pellicer— José Gorostiza, Xavier Villaurrutia, Salvador Novo and Jorge Cuesta.

Julio Trujillo's incursions pick that territory where the interior and the exterior commune: language. However, for the author of *Una sangre* (One Blood),[1] language cannot be "processed". Quite to the contrary: the poet is the laboratory of language. Perhaps for this reason, all the voices that sing out in his poetry surprise us with their different timbre: Trujillo gives them an extraordinary trust in the powers of the word. For example, the way in which a tinge of Neruda submits to the nakedness of the things that celebrate coinciding with themselves in "This Lemon."

An essential note in this book: the categorical elimination of the word "*como*" (like). For Trujillo, the shortcut that separates language from things is not to be found either in the thing or in the language, but in the consciousness that names it. When he tells us, "Everything is what the eyes manifest,"[2] he is saying that the fruits of language mature in the light of the viewer's glance. To make things show themselves it is enough to call on them with the glance, "the eyes of thought." Trujillo's particular conceptism begins and ends with the senses: if Gorostiza's intellectual circumspection bends over language until it freezes in the transparency of a glass, the reasoning hedonism of this young author spins the emblematic glass in the deepest recesses of the eye until it reinvests it with its truth as a glass:

> (the glass rises
> because it spins toward the iris
> if it weren't such a clean vortex
> one breath would easily shatter it).[3]

A decisive presence: Carlos Pellicer, particularly the twenty-something Pellicer of *Colores en el mar* (Colors in the Sea), *Piedra de sacrificios* (Sacrifice Stone), *6, 7 poemas* (6, 7 Poems), *Hora y 20* (20 after the Hour) and *Camino* (Road). From the joyous, celebratory voice that lives in these titles, Trujillo obtains the confidence in the world and the body that fans his poetry. But if Pellicer attempts to discover an essential underlying order every time he is confronted with the world's confusion, Julio Trujillo rejoices in finding beautiful names for chaos, like in this fragment of "Xurandó":

> It's barely raining.
> Droplets are told by a hidden zinc.
> The rain forest
> has always been a full sponge:
> It all overflows
> all its pores are pools
> and each pool lives drowning
> in its own excess.[4]

Trujillo's enthusiasm takes off in meandering blood, an addicted, scouring blood that like the sea, fluctuates between "outside" and "in here", between surprise and anxiety. This is why the poet lives in wait of everything liquid: the sea, water, blood: a trip toward the germ, a race toward the navel, an immersion in verbal water that as it absolves us of form, disseminates us.

If in Trujillo, the outside is a challenging space, a place inhabited by noisy fauna, for Luigi Amara (Mexico City, 1971), the tumult of the world awaits invisible on the walls of his room. In his second book, *El cazador de grietas* (Hunter of Crevices),[5] Amara traces a providential space for the immobile traveler:

> At the poem's center there is a dwelling
> where silence spreads
> like one clear drop
> advancing across the paper.
>
> You appreciate the dead air,
> four naked walls,
> not one shape to muddy
> the floor's indolence.[6]

The bareness of the walls that recreate the whiteness of the paper is the key to this poetics of the imminent: Amara lives pursuing what is coming, what only exists as a "next-to-you-ness." This is not exploring visible crevices, but waiting for their appearance. To meet the white abyss (the wall, the sheet of paper, death), the pursuer waits for the rent, a fault in the irreproachable surface of all becoming. The Ahab of these poems is permanently bound to his fascination for calm surfaces, a window of a world in which the things "that happen" repeat themselves unto immobility.

Surprise awaits in the most trivial of appearances: a spider that like a shooting star crosses the ultra-white firmament of a wall; the body of an insect falling on the impeccable surface of a reservoir. The quietude that perturbs Luigi Amara nests in the "reservoir of the spirit." And the changes that barely break that propitiatory quietude only confirm the supremacy of silence, of the vacuum. "Not one shape more for the multiplicity of things," he says, and then immediately turns inward to the density of the vacuous.[7] This author seems to assume that writing is done from the silence in this book in which silence assumes body and volume until it becomes the fine fabric on which the music of the world trembles. To prove this, suffice it to listen to "El sonido del lápiz" (The Sound of the Pencil).

Amara's music resounds in its meanings, which is why the rhythm and melody seem to subordinate themselves to the meaning in his poems: not a word that fills a sonorous line, but, as Richard Aldington wanted, "the word that stabs with an image of beauty, disgust or weariness."[8]

As writer Gabriel Zaid quite rightly says, it is uncommon in Mexico for young poets to write the newest poetry. Trujillo and Amara are two exceptions, and today we must add them to the list of noteworthy poets: Ramón López Velarde, Carlos Pellicer, Jaime Sabines and Ricardo Castillo. **VM**

Notes

[1] Julio Trujillo, *Una sangre*, Tristán Lecoq Coll. (Mexico City: Trilce Ediciones, 1998).

[2] Julio Trujillo, "Celebración de las cosas," op. cit., p. 23.

[3] Julio Trujillo, "Hacia el germen," fragment, op. cit., p. 19. Translated by John Oliver Simon.

[4] Julio Trujillo, "Xurandó," op. cit., p. 56. Translated by John Oliver Simon.

[5] Luigi Amara, *El cazador de grietas* (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes-Fondo Editorial Tierra Adentro, 1998).

[6] Luigi Amara, "Cuatro muros desnudos," fragment, op. cit. p. 15. Translated by John Oliver Simon.

[7] Luigi Amara, "Cuando falta el invierno," op. cit., p. 20.

[8] Richard Aldington, "Notas personales sobre la poesía", José Luis Justes Amador, trans., in *Poesía y poética* (México City) (Fall, 1997), p. 34.

TWO POEMS BY JULIO TRUJILLO

ADDICTED BLOOD

A slender thread
of untamed blood
bends
away from the riverbed
and in a slow wave, uneven,
it spreads,
like some stubborn grass
escaping
the lawn.

It serenely
derails:
lava peering and snuffling
through intuitive ways.
It desires,
not knowing what it desires,
everything forms a path
for this blood,
every rut
unexpected.

How it surrounds and enwraps what it touches,
this blood like a waistband,
a ring,
an amorous eel
in the slow serpentine
of its wake,
a voracious embrace,
a red dress
for the thicket!

Dissolved skin towards somewhere,
in what furnace forged your ease?
in what singular saucepan
you simmered?
what spice bites you
to make you move like this,
like a zephyr so smooth
and so liquid
following
your own dance?

What you leave behind
is uncoiled entrails,
a body surprised once efficient,
now happy in its disorder,
and breaking its rhythm
when you go by
in your spiral of blue foam
against the grain,
rising in curves
suspended from above!

Animal blood,
steaming snout,
weaving slippery turtles,
odd fish,
dispersed reptile,
lush ox-tongue, just listen
to those horns!
Ah, flock of male doves
plunging under,
their wings brushing by!

On high you're suspended,
addicted blood,
necklace of fat fruit,
and the heart
discloses its lettuce
to absorb your own bath
tumbling down,
to soak up its sponge
addicted to you,
my questing blood.

THIS LEMON

I know this lemon
encodes some answer
in its tight oval.

Sack of glass and water,
hieroglyphic
mansion!

From its thousand of lips
preparoxytones
flow forth.

I don't understand
its hurrying
hooked tongue.

It observes me.
Not easy to sustain
such a gaze.

Irritates me,
incites me, bites me,
won't shut up.

This hive of lights
knows no calm:
whatever it knows lights it up.

What can I ask
this cross-eyed
wrathful pedant?

This lemon is screaming at me,
tugs at my sideburns,
unsheathes a sword.

Its zigzagging steel
wounds my little fingers,
has bitten my tongue.

What do you want, cockscomb?
Why do you punch out
my tranquillity?

I lean down my ear,
my elbow,
I listen with my fingertips.

Lemon lemon,
turbid
spark of air.

Lemon
thick
insinuation.

Concentrate.
Spin yourself back
into the marrow.

Oh my bitter
indecipherable friend:
forget me and yourself.

Translated by John Oliver Simon

Julio Trujillo was born in Mexico City in 1969. He is the author of a book of poems, *One Blood* (Mexico City: Trilce Editions, 1998), 61 pp.

TWO POEMS BY LUIGI AMARA

LACKING WINTER

Not one shape more for the multiplicity of things.
Not one pearl of dust for this empty room.

The scene must be prepared once again.
Mow the field
where the sleeping senses graze.
Perfect the art of subtraction,
remove the wrappings in silence,
this patina of habit
which has grown upon the forms,
the dust suggesting a false thickness.
Put the fingernails to work.

File down
and polish until that shine repeats
the subtle truth of its existence:
until the radiant hues
find true expression.

The monster must be reinvented in each particle,
in the crumb of daily bread,
in the whirlwind which opens
between one idea and another.

Purify the limits of attention
until the radio of vision
overflows its banks,
until all that's heard is the gong;
the gong of the singular,
of beauty
which cannot resist the etcetera.

THE SOUND OF THE PENCIL

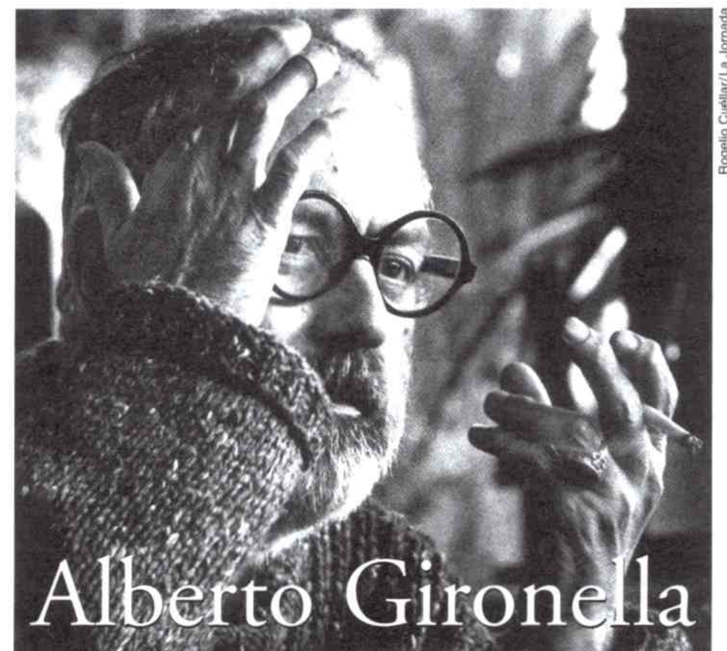
Almost like the pleasure of finding a finger
that was lost for a long time
somewhere between the thumb and index,
I listen to the graphite's song,
that strange melody
ignored while thinking.

Calmly as the gesture
of scratching with the pencil,
a fruit grows in the afternoon.

Not the sudden
instantaneous fire
of a match-head:
a glowing whisper
slowly rising
out of the paper.

Translated by John Oliver Simon

Luigi Amara was born in Mexico City in 1971. His two books of poems are *Said and Stained* (Mexico City: UAM-X, 1994) and *The Hunter of Crevices* (Mexico City: National Council for Culture and the Arts/ Fondo Editorial Tierra Adentro, 1998), 66 pp.



Rogelio Cuéllar/La Jornada

Alberto Gironella

Transfiguring Irreverence in Art (1929-1999)

Born in Mexico City, September 26, 1929, to a Catalonian father and a Yucatecan mother, Gironella was part of a new generation of visual artists in the 1950s who opposed using art as a medium for political propaganda. Their starting point was the internal, subjective world which, through the prism of the artist's personal concerns, is revealed in different forms of visual expression. Gironella was a pioneer of installation art in Mexico, even though he personally detested "installationists" and hated being identified as one. He liked to say that his birth coincided with the second surrealist manifesto, the premier of Dalí and Buñuel's *Un Chien Andalous*, Wall Street's Black Tuesday and the invention of Coca-Cola.

Before he became a painter, Gironella wanted to be a writer. Two of the writers who had the most influence on him with their critical narratives were Ramón Gómez de la Serna and Ramón del Valle-Inclán. In 1949, his interest in literature prompted him to found the art and literature magazine *Clavileño* together with painter and philosopher Arturo Souto[1] and philosopher Luis Rius, both Spanish refugees. Also, in 1957 he enrolled to study Spanish literature at the National Autonomous University of Mexico and founded another literary magazine, *Segrel*. Around that time, he began to write poetry and a biographic parody, *Tiburcio Esquirla*, which was never published.

In 1952, Gironella and painters Héctor Xavier and Vlady opened the Prisse Gallery, where he exhibited for the first time. From then on, he continued to have shows both in the Americas and Europe. In 1953, he married journalist Ana Cecilia Treviño, with whom he had two children, Bárbara and Alberto. Later on, he would have a third child, Emiliano, with his second partner, painter Carmen Parra. That year, he moved to Guanajuato and decided to dedicate himself exclusively to painting. Four years later, he opened the Proteo Gallery.

Irreverence and Art

In 1959, Gironella visited New York where a portrait by Diego Velázquez inspired him to paint the first of a long series of canvases about Queen Mariana of Spain, wife of Felipe IV, in the studio of anarchist painter Bartollí. In 1960, he won the prize for the Paris Biennial of Young Painters and his work was included in the exhibit "Fifteen Laureates of the Paris Biennial" in the Lacloche Gallery. In 1963, he exhibited "Death and Transfiguration of Queen Mariana," a series of canvases that comprise a sort of treatise on decay, how a gem gradually becomes carrion or a horror, to use Valle-Inclán's term.

In Paris he met the Belgian painter and engraver Pierre Alechinsky and Mexican poet Octavio Paz; in Mexico, film maker Luis Buñuel, with whom he forged a deep friendship. Gironella adopted Buñuel's corrosive analogical method of narration,

placing dissimilar elements, like life and death, on the same plane and uniting them with a fascinating, ferocious process of transfiguration, as a way of painting the effects of the passage of time on the object. Gironella practiced this surrealist method in his own way, even in his private life: his house contained an enormous mix of apparently useless objects from different periods, arranged with the criteria of a connoisseur of design, texture and color. A wooden Christ would sit in secret harmony with an old sewing machine, which in turn would live with a stuffed dog and owl and the beret of naive painter Francisco Tartosa. Many of these objects appear in his canvases, adding a farcical character to the work (like some beer cans in some of the canvases of Queen Mariana), or are transfigured: a mirror ends up being a sarcophagus, the back of a chair becomes a torso, etc.

André Breton, the founder of surrealism, considered Gironella one of the best painters he had ever seen. The link between literature and the visual arts is clear in his work.

In 1963, he designed the scenery for *The Opera of Order*, by Alejandro Jodorowsky, which had some rather scandalous moments, like the appearance on stage of Gironella himself singing a Spanish couplet the words of which aroused the wrath of Mexico's Catholic Youth. The play was closed the day after it opened on the advice of movie director Alberto Isaac, and Gironella was disinherited by his father.

When awarded a Guggenheim fellowship in 1966, he spent it traveling through the states of Yucatán, Campeche and Oaxaca with painter Corneille. He then did a series of lithographs to illustrate the first edition of writer Carlos Fuentes' *Terra Nostra* (Our Land). In 1980, together with Pierre Alechinsky, he did a series of 12 canvases on the theme of the bullfight which were exhibited in 1983 in Madrid's Spanish Museum of Contemporary Art. In 1984, the Rufino Tamayo Museum in Mexico City organized a retrospective entitled "This Is a Rooster," the by-word he inscribed on practically everything. The phrase refers to Orvaneja, a painter mentioned in *Don Quixote*, who was so bad that he had to write, "This is a rooster," every time he painted a rooster so that the viewer could identify it.

Alberto Gironella was part of a movement that broke with the dominant Mexican school of painting, represented among others by muralist David Alfaro Siqueiros. He did not like to be identified as part of a break, however, but as a baroque or surrealist painter (without the prefix "neo" in either case). Others of the same generation include Lilia Carrillo, José Luis Cuevas, Manuel Felguérez, Vicente Rojo and Vlady. They refused to make their painting a place for political propaganda and the representation of indigenous and nationalist themes.

Nevertheless, Gironella was a passionate reader of history, philosophy and art. He admired and sometimes associated with people who, although very different, had made history in dif-

Frida Hartz/La Jornada

ferent ways: Emiliano Zapata, Luis Buñuel, actress Ofelia Medina, Sub-commander Marcos and Madonna, to whom he send one canvas a month and who responded by personally giving him pass number 000 to her first Mexico City concert.

Gironella mounted a polemical exhibition about Zapata, the series "The Burial of Zapata and Other Entombments" in 1972. He presented Zapata as a poor caudillo beaten by consumerism, shot down, riddled with a spray of bottle caps. He would say in a 1982 interview, "I painted Zapata like he ended up: a sieve ... because some politicians want to keep him alive to be used by the scoundrels." The exhibition, presented in Mexico City's Fine Arts Palace, cost the director of the National Institute of Fine Arts his post.

Last Projects

Gironella kept on painting until the last. Even when he knew death was approaching, he was planning several projects: the exhibition "Potlatch from Alberto Gironella to Octavio Paz", in autumn in Barcelona, a monologue of collages, a sort of conversation with recently deceased Octavio Paz, his friend of 30 years; an homage to Nietszche on the centennial of his death in the year 2000; the 12 book covers of a collection of Spanish classics, done together with his great friend editor Hans Meinke.

Shortly before his death on August 2, 1999, Alberto Gironella requested that some of his canvases be placed in his room together with his brushes and other beloved objects, and he asked his son Emiliano to read him Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo*. Emiliano suggested he read something a little happier, like *Don Quixote*, but unbending and rough until the end, Gironella said he did not mind dying with the saddest novel ever written.

In his will he instructed that his ashes be deposited in an execution wall built in his home and that a plaque be placed there with the inscription, "This is a rooster." His will also stipulates that a foundation be created, headed by his son Emiliano, to safeguard his work, making his home in Valle de Bravo in the State of Mexico a museum, library, archive and cultural center. **VM**

María Cristina Hernández Escobar
Assistant Editor

Notes

[1] Gironella attributed his start in the visual arts and his first painting to Arturo Souto. After going to a Souto exhibition in 1952, he went home and began to paint a bohemian version of Paris, complete with long-haired violinists and prostitutes with dark circles under their eyes. He also recognized the influence of Velázquez, Goya, El Greco and Picasso.

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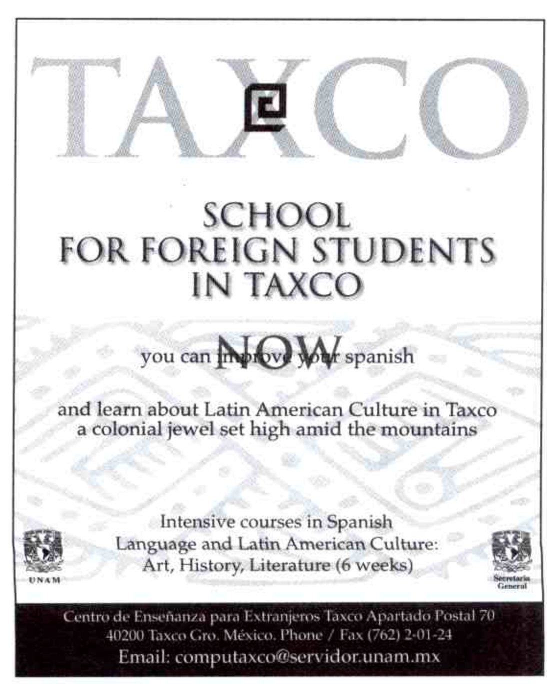
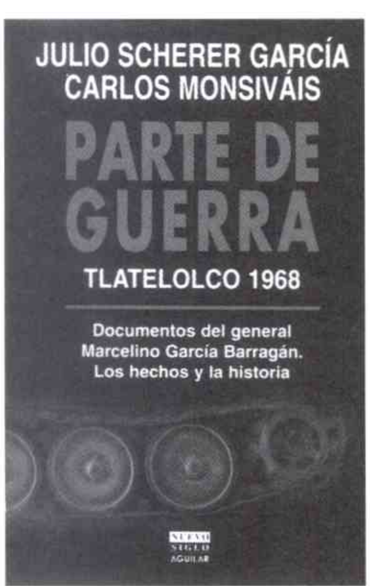


Reviews

Parte de guerra
(War Dispatch)
Julio Scherer García and Carlos Monsiváis
Aguilar, Mexico City, 1999, 269 pp.



The publication of this book by Julio Scherer García and Carlos Monsiváis (the former an obligatory reference for courageous, intelligent, honest journalism in Mexico; the latter a writer and chronicler as original as he is encyclopedic) brings the public for the first time, with appropriate commentary, an essential part of the government version of the bloody repression that practically ended Mexico's student movement on October 2, 1968. That essential part is nothing less than the version of then-Minister of Defense General Marcelino García Barragán.

Neither the general himself nor his son, politician Marcelino García Paniagua, both of whom had promised the documents to Julio Scherer, delivered them. Only a few years ago, after both the general and his son were dead, Javier García Morales, the son of García Paniagua and general's grandson, finally tendered them. I mention this because I think it important to note the general and his son's extreme reticence that made them postpone delivery time and time again and in the end, never hand them over, according to Scherer himself. This reticence contrasts with the willingness that many participants in the 1968 student movement have shown in presenting their own accounts in a multitude of books, magazines and newspapers, from then to now, practically the end of the century.

Actually, no one ever believed, either inside Mexico or abroad, that the killing of dozens (if not hundreds) of students, children, men and women in Tlatelolco's Three Cultures Plaza was the responsibility of armed students, as the official dispatches alleged on the day of the events that bloodied Mexico City. But now, in light of the document written in the hand of General Marcelino García Barragán himself, more about that somber October 2 is becoming clear.

And aiding in that clarification are the "war dispatches" of a secret document that Scherer also publishes, dating from July 29 to October 2, 1968: General José Hernández Toledo (second in command of operations on October 2, wounded almost from the start of the events) "sign[ed] a secret document, 'Aztec Mission,' and beg[an] the record of a real and imaginary war" (p. 57).

A real war because from the very beginning, as is clear from Hernández Toledo's document itself, authorities saw the students as an enemy army to be vanquished; this is the only explanation for the presence of troops on Mexico City streets poised for repression from the end of July on. An imaginary war because

the students and popular groups that supported them at no time acquired the characteristics of armed communist revolutionaries that official paranoia ascribed to them.

In the end, General Marcelino García Barragán's version of the events is even more important: he blames the beginning of the fire fight on another general, Luis Gutiérrez Oropeza, at that time head of the president's joint chiefs of staff who met and came to decisions daily and directly with then-President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz. The following is, in my judgement, the essential, unvarying nucleus of the events as seen in this account, told several times in detail throughout the document: on the very night of October 2, Gutiérrez Oropeza requested that García Barragán free two officers assigned to the joint chiefs of staff who had fallen into army hands. "General, sir, I assigned officers armed with machine guns to shoot at the students; all managed to get out of there except two; they are dressed in civilian clothes; I fear for their lives. Could you please order that they be kept safe?" This is a terrible, decisively corroborating confession.

However, General Marcelino García Barragán does not refer to the existence of the Olympia Battalion, a special corps of army soldiers and officers. According to an overwhelming number of statements by members of the National Strike Council (CNH) (the leadership of the movement whose members were arrested October 2 in the Three Cultures Plaza), it was members of the Olympia Battalion who, also dressed in plain clothes and wearing white gloves on their left hands, began the fire fight, to which the army immediately responded. The students and their supporters at the rally, then, were fired at from both sides by the Olympia Battalion and the army.

It seems impossible that General Marcelino García Barragán could not know of the existence of the Olympia Battalion, composed of members of his own army. What is clear and can be deduced from the revelations of García Barragán himself, is that there was a total lack of coordination between the military bodies that perpetrated the massacre that day. One decisive element demonstrates the existence of the Olympia Battalion: a few years ago, former student leader and CNH member Raúl Alvarez Garín published a complete list of its members.

The book's second part, by Carlos Monsiváis, entitled "'68: The Ceremonies of Injury and Memory," is a magnificent chronicle of the many faces, both personal and collective, who met together that tumultuous year. In the first pages, Monsiváis points out that the government, authoritarian and paternalistic, had to take sides in the Cold War.

The Mexican government, like all the others in the U.S. sphere of influence, exchanged brutal repression of the legitimate desire for democracy, equality and social justice for a denunciation of Soviet totalitarianism.

Thus, in the view of Gustavo Díaz Ordaz and his collaborators, the National Strike Council became the malignant brain behind a vast, profound "communist conspiracy" with no less an aim than overthrowing the government and inaugurating a dictatorship like Cuba's or the Soviet Union's.

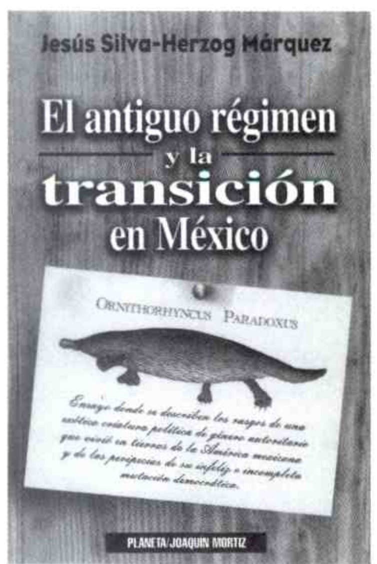
This is a false and falsified idea of what the student movement really was. It was an opposition movement, to be sure, but fundamentally a legal one that raised democratic demands which Monsiváis alludes to time and again: the students' leit motif was the demand for respect for human and civil rights.

But the anticommunist view of Díaz Ordaz and the rest of Mexico's top civilian and military authorities took on monstrous proportions in 1968, exactly the proportions of a "real war" against the students and their followers. On several occasions, Monsiváis simply transcribes fragments of the "war dispatches," that list the troops and arms mobilized against the imaginary enemy, practically defenseless, except for the sticks, stones and molotov cocktails carried by some, facing the exaggerated, disproportionate military force that unleashed all its madness on October 2 in Tlatelolco.

Thus, Monsiváis tells us, alluding to the authoritarian essence of the regime, the repression of October 2 can be understood as the highest point of a series of actions of incivility and infamy originating long before 1968. "But the massacre of Tlatelolco transcends ritual and is, gratuitously, the most caustic description of the frailty of a civilizing process. Tlatelolco is no isolated event, the day when barbarism suddenly confronted the students and their willing or circumstantial allies. On the contrary, Tlatelolco is the logical answer of a political apparatus spawned and shaped in impunity" (p. 238).

Roberto Escudero
Former member of the CNH.
Philosophy professor at the Autonomous Metropolitan University, Iztapalapa campus.

El antiguo régimen y la transición en México
(The Ancien Régime and the Transition in Mexico)
Jesús Silva-Herzog Márquez
Planeta Joaquín Mortiz
Mexico City, 1999, 150 pp.



Practically no political actor, academic or media opinion maker has refrained from expressing him or herself about the transition to democracy in Mexico. In the last few years, the issue has been fashionable in the political sciences, political journalism, and even in the party or institutional speeches of members of both the government and the opposition. It is so widespread that one could practically argue that a whole new branch of political science has been born: "transitology."

While this trend is not restricted to Mexico alone (let us not forget the pioneering work by Juan J. Linz, Guillermo O'Donnell, Phillipe Schmitter and Laurence Whitehead), here it has become the driving force behind political change and, therefore, the banner of politicians and parties.

In this context, the publication of Jesús Silva-Herzog Márquez' book is a pleasant surprise. Using a forceful style unhesitatingly without undue concern for the consequences, it describes a process that while it means a positive and encouraging change in Mexico's political life also brings with it serious risks due to the equivocal way it has been carried out. Among those risks is the permanent danger of a reversal, but not the complete restoration of authoritarianism.

Speaking metaphorically, Silva-Herzog Márquez is the architect who designed a building which, in the first part, "The Ancien Régime," establishes the foundation for understanding recent political developments, explored in the second part, "The Transition." The book concludes with an excellent epilogue, full of warnings and questions that could make the entire edifice quake.

For many political analysts and actors, Mexico's is probably the longest transition to democracy in history. Silva-Herzog Márquez even warns that sometimes one gets the impression that the process is no longer a process but has become an institution in itself, a regimen. This peculiar political regimen that prevails in Mexico could be called a "transitocracy." However, the author himself actually holds a different position. For him, the transition concluded at the moment in which transparent, independent, legitimate electoral procedures were established and functioning in Mexico, guaranteeing real political competition in conditions of equality. This does not mean —far from it— that the country can boast of being in a state of "democratic normalcy." What the future holds is the consolidation of democracy, which has as its primary task the redesign of democratic institutions, the transformation of political culture and the creation of a participatory citizenry with full political rights. This road is full of obstacles as well as the worrisome signs of current Mexican politics that indicate difficult times ahead, times of institutional breaks.

One of Silva-Herzog Márquez' undeniable merits is his penetrating depiction of the main problems being faced in the transition. He dedicates a chapter, for example, to the analysis of the none-too-encouraging current situation of our party system, pointing to the fact that "the big three" (the National Action Party [PAN], the Party of the Democratic Revolution [PRD] and the Institutional Revolutionary Party [PRI]) in the main have not contributed positively to the transition because they have all centered on furthering their own ends and not on forging consensuses and common national projects that any successful transition needs. The author concludes, then, that the future of our party system is at risk since if the parties continue in this vein, some of them may well not survive the year 2000's elections.

His diagnosis includes other boulders on the road of transition, which makes the Mexican process sui generis and not

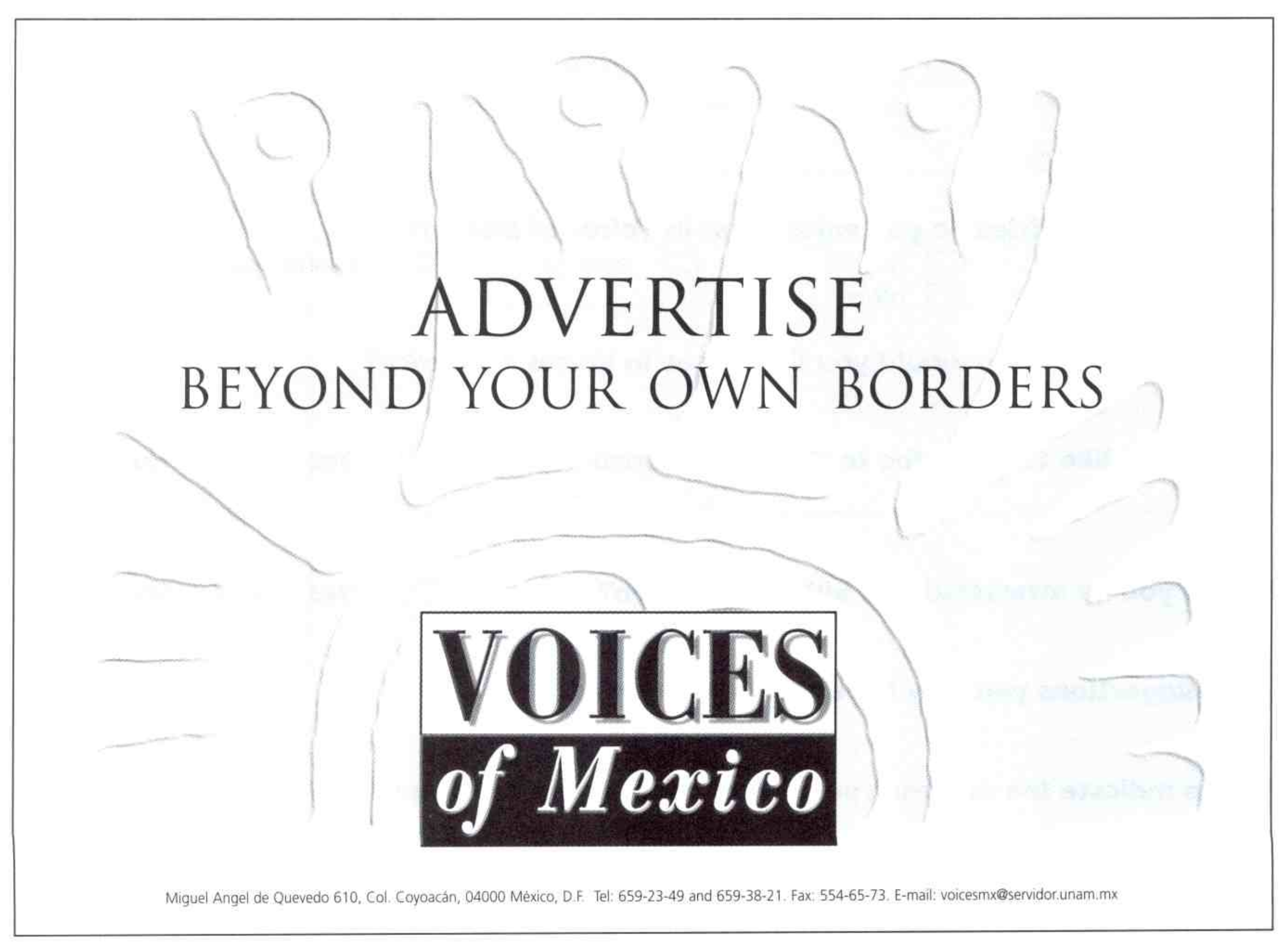
comparable to that of examples like Spain, Eastern Europe or even other Latin American nations. No climate of national reconciliation has been created, for example, or even a sincere coming together in search of consensus. Rather, those who should head up the transition have either adopted Jacobin strategies (the total elimination of the ancien régime), or they have tried to mold the new circumstances to the political past and effect a restoration. The former, observes Silva-Herzog Márquez correctly, have fallen into "democratism," that infantile disorder of democracy, which sees in it the magical, mechanical solution for all evils; they even propose changing traditional, democratic, representative institutions into a "popular" democracy based on a diffuse civil society. The latter hold fast to more or less cosmetic transformations in a kind of democratic obfuscation.

The prospects, then, do not lend themselves to optimism because the Mexican transition has not had the actors it needs. In a certain sense, as Silva-Herzog Márquez very aptly puts it, it is a transition with no head. The process itself has outstripped the actors.

Another merit of this brief book is that it may be read in different ways given that it is a collection of essays, each of which stands alone. It is part of the author's architectural purpose that we may explore each room without having to go into the others.

I would recommend reading above all the second part of the book and the epilogue, the rooms where Silva-Herzog Márquez makes his real contributions.

Diego Bugeda Bernal
Editor-in-Chief



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