

# VOICES *of Mexico*

CISAN • UNAM

## Corporatists Versus Merchandisers Six Different Campaign Styles

José Buendía  
Nicolás Alvarado

## Translation As Metaphor, Canadian Publishing

Graciela Martínez-Zalce

## Mario Palacios Art's Very Own Tempo

## The State of Hidalgo Monasteries, Haciendas And Mines



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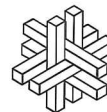
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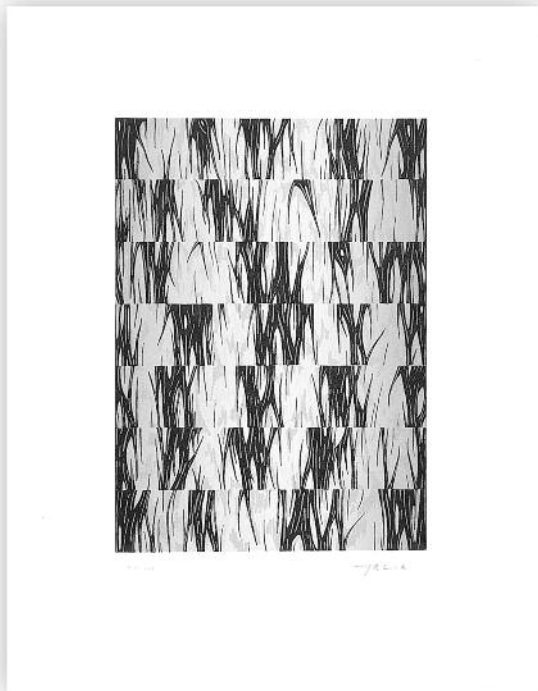
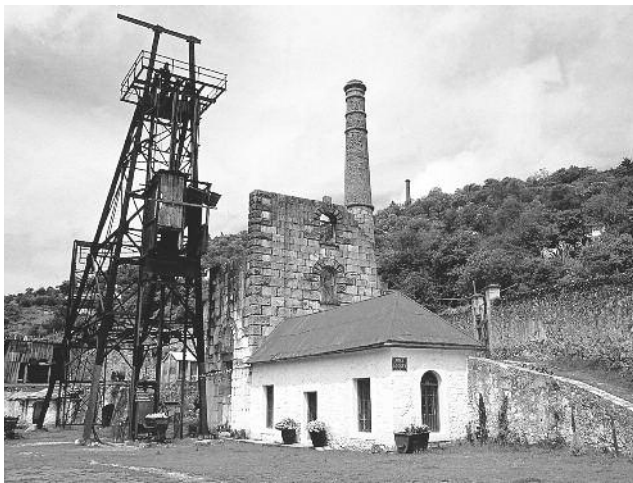
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Mario Palacios, *Theorem, a Place of Fire*,  
70 x 50 cm, 1996 (oil on canvas).

# OUR VOICE

When this issue of *Voices of Mexico* goes into circulation, the results of the July 2 elections will already be known. Regardless of who wins the presidential race, the important thing for the country will be that the elections have been transparent, well organized and the results, rooted in democratic practices, accepted by everyone. These, the first elections of the new millennium, are a confirmation of the path Mexico has followed in recent years toward the consolidation of democracy. The changes have been slow and difficult, of course. That can be seen in the emergence of the Zapatista National Liberation Army in 1994 and other armed groups in later years and the political assassinations of hundreds of activists and sympathizers from different political parties, but particularly of Luis Donaldo Colosio and José Francisco Ruiz Massieu in 1994. Interpreting all this is not an easy task. What is clear is that Mexican society is moving toward greater political participation and a democratic culture.

Things have changed in the country since 1994. Although it is still unacceptable that 40 million Mexicans live in poverty and the country's wealth is concentrated in very few hands, the economy may well now be able to change that. Unemployment is at its lowest in many years. However, increasing numbers of our countrymen and women continue to emigrate to the United States. One of the possible explanations is the enormous wage gap between Mexico and the U.S., the world's leading power. Undoubtedly, an upward shift in wages will be one of the new president's most important challenges.

Today, a great many municipalities, state congresses and governors' chairs and even the Chamber of Deputies are in the hands of the opposition. We have advanced in creating a culture of negotiations and pacts characteristic of pluralistic societies, and when agreements cannot be reached, the players involved pay a political price. We have moved forward in the construction of an institutional framework that impedes imposition; the next president will not be able to ignore the other two most influential political forces, their impact and representativeness in society give them the legitimacy needed to participate in all matters of national interest. Their positions and demands will have to be seriously considered and included in the design of public policy to guarantee governability and the effectiveness of federal programs. The next step is the perfecting of our systems for accountability. Government actions and resources should be absolutely transparent. Only that will enable us to say that our transition to democracy has concluded.

The way the political campaigns ended leads us to reflect on the transformation they have gone through in modern democracies: they have changed from campaigns of ideological persuasion based on concrete governmental programs in direct contact with people to campaigns waged mainly in the media, using marketing techniques, in which the voter is seen as a consumer of a particular product: a candidate's charisma. In our "Politics" section, José Buendía and Nicolás Alvarado take a look at the Mexican elections, presenting us with a rigorous analysis of each of the six presidential campaigns. In the same section, internationalist Edmundo Hernández Vela offers our readers a panorama of recent changes in international relations from the viewpoint of globalization and the end of the Cold War. The current model of multilateral international relations embodied in the United Nations has become ineffective and no longer guarantees justice and stability internationally. We need, then, a new model that can break out of the hegemony imposed by the United States, a model fostered by countries like Mexico that find themselves at a disadvantage in the dynamic of globalization.

In this issue of *Voices of Mexico*, our “Science, Art and Culture” section presents our readers with the work of Mexican painter Mario Palacios, an artist who has surprised critics and the national artistic circles alike with his most recent proposals. In his article, poet Eduardo Milán asks himself, “How does one build in a universe whose most evident symptom is deconstruction, not only in social terms and human values, but also with regard to the meaning of art?” Art critic Sylvia Navarrete offers us a review of the different stages in his artistic growth and a direct exchange of views with him. She says that Palacios’ work is in a certain way ahistorical since it situates itself outside the main currents of national visual arts and the Mexican social and political events to embody a spiritual, philosophical proposal that has produced works based on research into universal, archetypical symbols.

This section also includes a piece by curator and art critic Judith Alanis about installation art in Mexico. She brings us a fascinating conversation with Guillermo Santamarina —director of the Ex-Teresa, Mexico’s cultural space most specialized in avant garde art— dealing with the development of concept and object art in Mexico, as well as the work of important installation artists.

Our “Economy” section begins with a balance sheet of the first six years of the North American Free Trade Agreement by economist Carlos Arriola. For Arriola, the effects of NAFTA on the Mexican economy have been positive, particularly if we take into account the negative results of previous protectionist policies. In his article, he looks at different economic indicators like job creation, exports, imports and foreign investment, among others, and finds that the results are generally positive since the treaty came into effect. He does acknowledge, however, that these benefits have not translated into higher wages, or, in general, a better living standard for most Mexicans.

This section concludes with an article by researcher Elizabeth Gutiérrez about —appropriately— productivity and competitiveness in the era of globalization. In her opinion, both phenomena have become key for attracting international investment; in fact, she sees productive investment as part of an overall redefinition of economic frontiers. Proof of this is the recent increase in intraindustrial and intrafirm trade in the three countries of North America.

Since February 1999, the National Autonomous University of Mexico has been fraught with the most serious conflict of its history; two of the most negative consequences of this conflict have been the shut-down of academic activity for almost 10 months and the temporary jailing of many university students. Today, university functioning is practically normal and all the students have been freed. The conflict itself, however, is far from over. The “Society” section of this issue includes an article by UNAM researchers Hugo Casanova and Roberto Rodríguez analyzing the conflict giving its history and presenting their critique of the positions of everyone involved.

Undoubtedly, one of the main concerns of both political actors and society itself in both Mexico and the world is corruption. Our “Society” section continues with an article by Antonio Santiago Becerra about the institutional, legal measures Mexico has taken to fight it. Arguing that it is neither new, nor a problem limited to a single country or region, he begins by accepting that the problem does exist and requires changes both in individual value systems and in public policy to solve it. Mexico has recently undertaken important changes to fight this scourge, such as the creation of the Federal Controller’s Bureau. At the same time, argues Santiago Becerra, it is necessary to consolidate a culture of accountability so that public spending and accounts are truly public.

In the “United States Affairs” section, we include two articles about the on-going drug trafficking problem, both analyses of U.S. government policy, focusing on recent legislation like the Money Laundering Abatement Act, the International Emergency Economic Powers Act and the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act, and how it affects the future of certification. Researcher Silvia Vélez presents a critique of

the new laws, pointing out that they have not really been effective when applied in Colombia despite being touted as successful. More than attaining their goals, such as the lessening of drug trafficking and of the violence associated with it, she maintains they have been used with political intent in the current U.S. presidential races. For specialist Miguel Angel Valverde, certification by the U.S. Congress is wearing out its usefulness given its unilateral, extraterritorial character. This is borne out, he says, by the new strategy reflected in the legislation designed to seek out individuals responsible for drug trafficking and not blame entire countries. These measures continue to be risky for countries involved, however, he says, since the laws can be applied without due process and used politically.

Our “Canadian Issues” section is made up of a very well documented article about the Canadian publishing industry written by specialist Graciela Martínez-Zalce. This industry, like its counterparts the world over, has gone through enormous changes due to globalization. In the case of Canada, the problem may be magnified if we consider that it is a bicultural and bilingual society. Martínez-Zalce looks at the translation of Canadian literature into Spanish, alerting us to the need that the translation be done in Mexico and other Latin American countries given that many expressions used by Spanish translators are strange or incomprehensible for Latin American readers.

The “History,” “The Splendor of Mexico” and “Museums” sections are all dedicated to the state of Hidalgo, rich in tradition, history and culture. Hidalgo’s cultural wealth goes back further than the colonial period. Osvaldo J. Sterpone and Juan Carlos Equihua offer us an evaluation of the growth of the city of Tula, built by the Toltecs during the first millennium of our era, based on recent stratigraphic findings by different archeologists working in what are today the ruins of one of ancient Mexico’s finest old cities.

Famous from colonial times for its mineral wealth, Hidalgo was the preferred seat for Spanish colonizers, attracted by its natural resources and nearness to Mexico City. For these reasons, many religious orders began their missionary efforts there, leaving behind them an impressive number of monasteries and other colonial monuments. Víctor Ballesteros writes about Hidalgo’s marvelous monasteries, as well as about the monumental architecture of the *pulque*-making haciendas of the Apan Plains, an area known for the production of this, one of Mexico’s traditional alcoholic drinks.

Belem Oviedo explores the intimate relationship between the mines and the inhabitants of the region and their culture in her article about one of the state’s most beautiful towns, Real del Monte. Oviedo also contributes a piece on the Mining Museum located in the state capital, Pachuca.

Gerardo Ceballos fills our “Ecology” section with his article about western Mexico’s Chamela-Cuixmala Biosphere Reserve, covering more than 13,000 hectares. Ceballos’ description of the yearly drought-rain cycles in this area vividly explains why the reserve should be expanded and biological corridors established connecting to other reserves in order to preserve biological diversity.

The “Literature” section delves into Mexican theater, with an article by director Rodrigo Johnson Celorio reviewing the development of stage productions in Mexico from the colonial period to today, centering on the work of playwright David Olguín. The section’s center piece is a play by David Olguín himself, *International Airport*, which, as usual in his work, presents us with unsettling dialogue and moral problems with no easy out.

Our “In Memoriam” section is dedicated to playwright and director Héctor Azar, the founder of many of the Mexican theater’s existing institutions, and the representative of a great tradition in both university and extra-university theater.

*Paz Consuelo Márquez Padilla*  
**Director of CISAN**



# Corporatists vs. Merchandisers

## Six Different Campaign Styles

José Buendía\*  
Nicolás Alvarado\*\*

If the possibility of really alternating in office is one of the last chapters of a transition to a full democracy, Mexico's transition—which seems as long as a Dickens novel printed in installments—has come to a definitive moment, a kind of dramatic climax. From a virtual single-party model in which elections, if anything, served as plebiscites, we have moved to a system of parties that allows for real competition (albeit, as we shall see later, in profoundly inequitable terms), in which not knowing who will win is an encouraging sign of a desire for change.

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The road to quality democracy presupposes changes in the behavior of the main political and social actors. One of those actors, the Mexican media have gone through profound transformations, as did the Spanish and the Chilean media before them.

In the previous order of things, the Mexican communications media followed what we could call a “closed” model: radio, television and print media owners carried on a kind of permanent, barely disguised flirtation with those in power. More than a form of totalitarian state control à la Goebbels, the relationship between the hegemonic party-government and the communications media looked like one of mutual convenience, with an absolutely necessary system of



Octavio Navea/AE

Vicente Fox's media campaign, simple and catchy, contrasted sharply with Labastida's more traditional image.

illicit perks given the extent of government's involvement in media activities. Electronic media licenses were granted in a totally arbitrary and discretionary fashion. The state had a monopoly over the paper industry: those were the "good old days" of the government-owned Paper Producer and Importer Corporation (Pipsa), when "[if] the government wanted to support a newspaper or magazine, it stopped charging it for paper, and likewise, when it wanted to exert pressure, the editors were simply pre-



Octavio Nave/AVE

Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas used traditional forms of political persuasion.

sented with their back invoices."<sup>1</sup> All this, plus favors granted in cash or in kind to select pens and voices among journalists guaranteed a resigned and sometimes happy obsequiousness by the media, who had no qualms about publishing press bulletins word for word or about having their columns or editorials dictated to them from government offices.

This kind of thing could not go on *ad infinitum*, however. The country's political opening, timidly begun with the 1977 electoral reform, favored pluralism and with it, a gradual but palpable distancing between the media and the powers-that-be. While the effects of that opening would begin to be seen in 1988 with the popularity of the National Action Party's presidential

candidate, Manuel Clouthier, and the much-debated victory of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas at the polls, the opposition parties still had to carry out their campaigns in the streets and not in the media, which were still held in check by the proverbial intimidating phone calls from government officials to city room editors and muzzled by the possibility of being hit in their pocket books.

The transition process would receive new impetus in 1991 when the electoral reforms that culminated in the creation of the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) gave the political parties greater access to the media, guaranteeing their relative impartiality, even in the context of marked general inequality like the case of the 1994 federal elections. The subsequent 1996 electoral reform, a key moment for understanding political campaigns in Mexico, deepened the media's progress toward impartiality, even though it left a legacy of a kind of "political inflation": expensive campaigns and restricted access of the emerging parties to the media. Open payments gradually began to substitute the old hidden complicities as relations between the communications media and political parties became more and more subject to the logic of the market. Although electoral competition was still very unequal (the electoral system, after all, had been designed by the political parties to their specifications and went from being a monolith of one to a monolith of three in which the opportunities for founding new political forces is limited from the outset) and absurdly long electoral processes made for disproportionately large budgets that perverted competition and have led the media to be guided more by the logic of the cash register than by proposals, the government no longer controls absolutely all financial resources for political campaigns. Now it is the parties who can pay, and they have shot to the top of the media's client lists.<sup>2</sup>

In this new atmosphere, the print media and the radio made outstanding efforts to better reflect the diversity of the political scene and create a more serious, less officialist journalism. The reason behind this may be that both these

fields of journalism are very competitive (in Mexico City alone there are more than 25 newspapers and 20 morning radio newscasts), plus external factors (the radio earned credibility with its public spirited efforts after the 1985 earthquake, and the Pipsa monopoly finally came to an end) and the financial difficulties they both face (television accounts for about 90 percent of Mexico's advertising expenditures). Television, until very recently marked by the Televisa monopoly and its owner Emilio Azcárraga Milmo's political preferences, has advanced more slowly on the road to openness, which is extremely serious given its importance in political campaigns.

However, despite the lack of certainty in electronic media licensing and the use of government advertizing as a control mechanism by the ancien régime to keep some media alive artificially despite low circulation or ratings and practically no real market, today's government-media relationship is different. It is less characterized by the distribution of perks and privileges and more by payment for publicity campaigns.

Mexico's political and commercial opening has been accompanied by a cultural opening, the fruit of the much maligned globalization. Information about electoral experiences in other countries, together with the decline of corporatism, should translate into a general but steady trend toward making the communications media the political campaign arena par excellence. Today, in Mexico like in the rest of the world, "at least half the time of a head of state and of a party is used for 'communication.' In his court, the 'image consultant' replaces the technician, the ideologue and the literati as the favorite for the simple reason that the prince needs him all the time....The strategy of power has gone from arguments to sound bites."<sup>3</sup>

While publicists entered the field of political propaganda in the United States in the late 1940s, Mexico had to wait until the 1990s. In 1994, Régis Debray was already talking about a world in which political campaigns were "analyzed like a purchase [of time and space] in which you speak to the citizen as a consumer,

appropriately polled, sampled, classified and listed for marketing."<sup>4</sup> Mexico set out on that road with very little tradition and experience of real political competition, not to mention communications strategies and techniques vis-à-vis voters. Most of our parties and candidates trusted their electoral activities to what they presumed was the strength of their leaderships or their supposedly charismatic figures. The corporatist political education of Mexican politicians



Octavio Nava/AVE

The PRI built its campaign around mass rallies and solemn publicity.

translated into a reluctance to mold leadership to marketing, something that has only changed little by little.

That is the backdrop for the campaigns of Mexico's six presidential hopefuls: Manuel Camacho, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, Vicente Fox, Francisco Labastida, Porfirio Muñoz Ledo and Gilberto Rincón Gallardo. Clearly, the candidates made big efforts to veer their campaigns away from what in Mexico is known as "plaza politics," or activities characterized by enthusiastic and supposedly spontaneous support by masses of human beings organized in a corporatist way, to make them into media campaigns, directed at the citizen taken as an individual, perceived as more urbane and educated, and clear-

ly more representative of the real electorate. However, the inertia of Mexico's electoral customs and usage is difficult to overcome. One example should suffice. Better yet, why not six?

MANUEL CAMACHO  
THE RISKS OF PERSONALISM

Party of the Democratic Center (PCD) candidate Manuel Camacho's campaign was one of the



Octavio Nave/AVE

Manuel Camacho's campaign was unimaginative and without clear strategies.

most traditional of all. While other candidates had foreign or national advisors, creative, well known advertising executives or at least journalists or experienced audio and video producers to support them, Camacho trusted the development of his campaign activities to two things: first, the attraction that his personality could exert over the voters, and, to a lesser extent, to the votes he could get from small networks of patronage seekers, mostly street vendors organized under the banner of "The Strength of Commerce," concentrated in Mexico City.

Opinion polls and the media, however, showed that he bet wrong. In an unimaginative campaign, Camacho's team tried to spotlight him, but were unable to position him clearly: street

publicity and billboards presented him as modestly triumphant, but gave no content or meaning to his face. In fact, they made no attempt to familiarize the public with his campaign slogan. His radio presence was nil, and his appearances in the printed media sporadic. His television spots, a cornerstone of his publicity campaign, were slightly more fortunate, seeking to exploit his anti-PRI stance and present him as a better alternative for change than the leading opposition candidate, Vicente Fox. However, once again, the messages did not offer the viewer concrete reasons to back up this supposedly better alternative. Camacho went to the media without a clear strategy, as though his mere presence would suffice to make his campaign a success. If we add to all this that his patronage-based constituents are very few in number and almost exclusively located in Mexico City, we can see why Camacho has been condemned to the sidelines, the victim of his own personalist campaign in which resources were scarce, followers few and the raw materials—his personal charisma—apparently lacking the attraction it once had.

CUAUHTÉMOC CÁRDENAS  
TRADITIONAL POLITICS WEARS THIN

Alliance for Mexico candidate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas' campaign was also traditional,<sup>5</sup> but the results were slightly more successful and above all more consistent. The idea was once again to bet on the charismatic leader and corporatist mobilization; the media strategy sought merely to reflect these two crosscutting campaign themes and imbue them with the candidate's central message: the defense of nationalism.

Through 12 years of almost constant campaigning (Cárdenas has been a presidential hopeful three times and ran successfully for mayor of Mexico City in 1997), he has managed to establish himself as a paradigmatic figure in the eyes of a sector of voters. He is the symbol of an almost institutionalized opposition and an emblem for the desire for change. His ability to mobilize, in

part due to the rank and file of his own Party of the Democratic Revolution and to a lesser extent to Labor Party members, is considerable, frequently making his public rallies newsworthy. However, his attraction is limited and what gave his campaign consistency also kept it from surpassing his initial “ceiling.” The Alliance for Mexico candidate’s campaign strategists bet on reminding the electorate of what it already knows: that Cárdenas has been a leader for more than two administrations. What they did not achieve was a proposal more identifiable than a catalogue of nationalist good intentions or a renewed image, given that his is wearing increasingly thin. Creativity was scanty; the efforts were confusing (the central slogan and graphic identity changed several times during the campaign); and the overall effect was tedious and lukewarm. Cárdenas’ campaign used traditional forms of political persuasion in excess, and as a result, bored an electorate that identifies him less and less as a fresh alternative.

#### VICENTE FOX POLITICS AS PUBLICITY

Of all the presidential hopefuls, Vicente Fox was the only one whose career had been more centered in business than in the political arena. A former top executive of Coca-Cola’s Mexican subsidiary, Fox was not only well versed in the universe of marketing, but also attempted to incorporate into his political vision concepts of entrepreneurial efficiency like “total quality.” He sought to present himself as a practical, simple man and a good administrator dedicated to defeating Institutional Revolutionary Party candidate Francisco Labastida, presented by the Fox camp as the heir to 70 years of corruption, dishonesty and shady deals. The dream Fox tried to paint was of a Mexico without the PRI in the presidential residence of Los Pinos, which presumably would make the country more prosperous and productive.

The Alliance for Change has little in the way of a corporatist tradition.<sup>6</sup> Therefore its candidate bet on merging Peronist-like populism with

the most up-to-date marketing techniques to turn himself into the providential man, a paradigmatic figure who could embody the citizenry’s dissatisfaction with the hegemonic party’s performance and its yearning for concrete results. Vicente Fox’s campaign centered on the media and, as such, was successful. He maintained good relations with the press; his publicity was simple and catchy. His strategy seemed fortunate, achieving broad coverage, clear positioning and an attractive image. However, many of the



Octavio Nava/AE

Gilberto Rincón Gallardo was the only candidate who admitted publicly he was not expecting to win.

more enlightened sectors of society criticized him for being a chameleon. And, in effect, his public statements were contradictory; his political proposal, vague; his solutions verging on pure effect-seeking. Fox sacrificed substance to form, allowing advertising to take the place of politics, which may well have cost him dearly in a context of out-and-out electoral war. He did, however, avoid paying old political bills.

#### FRANCISCO LABASTIDA WHEN THE SUM IS LESS THAN ITS PARTS

The Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the political force that has governed Mexico for

more than 70 years, is today on the receiving end of national discontent. It is a traditional party with a solid territorial structure built on immense patronage networks. It also has government support which, although somewhat diminished by the new conditions of electoral equity, still counts for a lot. For the vast majority of the population, the PRI's image is not only bad, but seemingly irreparable. Its corporatized rank and file, although very large, was not enough to guarantee an automatic victory at the



Porfirio Muñoz Ledo resigned as PARM candidate and joined Fox's team.

polls, and it therefore had to resort to an intense media campaign. In previous electoral years—the most representative of which is the presidential campaign of the *annus horribilis*, 1994—<sup>7</sup> the PRI has made stability its mainstay in the elections. However, given that strategy's diminishing returns (in 1997, it was not able to preserve its traditional congressional majority), Francisco Labastida opted for boarding the train of change and offered up his version with an air of certainty. The new plan consisted of mixing the patronage tradition with media innovation. However, the results were not altogether satisfactory. Caught between making use of PRI strongmen who could bring in hundreds of thousands of votes through their patronage networks but whose presence

would hurt his public image, and a media campaign that tried to remake the party image into one of political legitimacy and internal democracy (concerned about a vacuous but exceedingly confident Vicente Fox), Labastida ended up running a kind of mixed “non-campaign” that used corporatism and marketing simultaneously. It was built around mass rallies and solemn publicity and marked by his reluctance to face up to other candidates in public fora. His image was grey; his discourse, that of a victim; his proposals, those of a renovator, but incongruent.

Octavio Nava/AVE

#### PORFIRIO MUÑOZ LEDO WHEN CHARISMA ISN'T EVERYTHING

Perhaps the least fortunate of all the campaigns was Porfirio Muñoz Ledo's, running for an alliance of the Authentic Party of the Mexican Revolution (PARM) and New Republic, a social democratic current that Muñoz Ledo created when he became dissatisfied with his former party, the PRD. When he accepted the PARM nomination, the then-flamboyant candidate enjoyed the support of about 7 percent of voters polled. This was the product of his image as a cultivated, well-spoken politician, a good negotiator, tempered by his experience as the coordinator of the PRD congressional caucus. Later on, a month before the elections, opinion polls gave him only 0.5 percent of voter support, a depressing result attributable to a great extent to the disorganization of his campaign.

Since the PARM is a weak party, virtually without any structure or ideological basis, Porfirio Muñoz Ledo decided to bet everything on his personal charisma. He is, indeed, respected, at least among more educated sectors of society, for his intellectual capability and celebrated for his frequent bon-mots. His was eminently a media campaign, although plagued by severe budget shortages; initially he tried to capitalize on his own personality traits, although too obviously and directly, without really using marketing techniques or an attractive, creative propos-

al, but using a traditional approach to the media. As a result, the voters were presented with an overly solemn, often impulsive candidate who, at the end of the day, bored them with attempts to appeal to the need to strengthen the rule of law without ever making concrete proposals about how to do it. In May, Muñoz Ledo and Vicente Fox came to a kind of informal “convergence” pact and, later, after a political scandal, Muñoz Ledo’s relations with the PARM leadership became tense almost to the breaking point. His remaining a candidate became increasingly untenable, a sad, unexpected end for a charismatic, often brilliant politician. At the beginning of June, then, he resigned his candidacy in favor of Vicente Fox.

GILBERTO RINCÓN GALLARDO  
AGAINST ALL ODDS

The campaign of the Social Democracy Party (PDS) candidate achieved a good combination of a solid, modern political program that dealt with twenty-first century topics like sustainable development, the new family and minority rights, with a reasonable, innovative use of marketing techniques. Social Democracy is not a party with a large corporatist base, and, as a matter of fact, part of its strategy has been to decry other parties’ use of patronage networks. Therefore, Gilberto Rincón Gallardo decided to invest almost all his scant resources in a media campaign aimed at making the defense of women’s rights, and sexual, ethnic, religious or political minorities the party’s main campaign planks.

Rincón Gallardo faced a great challenge: a candidate seen more as an analyst than a political actor, he decided to organize his campaign around a fairly radical program, including decriminalization of abortion, legalization of drug consumption to solve the drug trafficking problem, etc. These proposals were couched in attractive language and targeted at a very specific segment of the electorate: young urban voters with an above average sociocultural level. The strategy was successful, particularly after his performance dur-

ing the first presidential candidates’ debate, in which he came across as the “defender of the minorities” and as an upright, coherent, responsible politician. This put him in fourth place among voters. Gilberto Rincón Gallardo was also the only candidate nominated by one of the new parties who admitted publicly that he was not expecting to win the race and who concentrated all his promotional efforts on what he considered a real need: that the democratic left, willing to negotiate, get to Congress. “There are many more than two of us” was one of his campaign slogans;<sup>8</sup> another was “Vote Differently,” referring to the polarization that the PRI and PAN candidates generated as the front-runners. ■■■

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Raúl Trejo Delarbre, *Volver a los medios: de la crítica a la ética* (Mexico City: Ediciones Cal y Arena, 1997), p. 227.

<sup>2</sup> From 1997, a campaign year, to 1998, when there were no elections, the earnings of seven radio networks with more than 720 stations dropped more than 50 percent.” Javier Corral Hurtado, “Breve historia de un intento legislativo,” *Diálogo y Debate*, year 2, no. 8 (Mexico City), p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Régis Debray, *Vida y muerte de la imagen: historia de la mirada en Occidente* (Barcelona: Paidós, 1994), p. 280.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 282.

<sup>5</sup> The Alliance for Mexico was a coalition of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), the Labor Party (PT), the Party of the Nationalist Society (PSN), the Party of the Social Alliance (PAS) and Convergence for Democracy (CD).

<sup>6</sup> Fox headed up the Alliance for Change, a coalition made up of the inexplicable marriage of the National Action Party (PAN) to the Green Ecologist Party of Mexico (PVEM), the country’s only environmentalist party.

<sup>7</sup> The authors refer to 1994, the year of, among other things, the emergence of the Zapatista National Liberation Army in Chiapas and the assassinations of then-PRI-presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio and José Francisco Ruiz Massieu, the PRI general secretary. [Editor’s Note.]

<sup>8</sup> This phrase comes from a well known Latin American 1960s protest song that was somewhat of an anthem for the left of the time. [Translator’s Note.]

# Mexico and Worldwide Challenges On the Threshold of the New Millennium

Edmundo Hernández-Vela\*

Man is at a crossroads, faced with the choice between continuing on the same path he has been traveling or changing course. For that reason, this is an appropriate moment to draw up a balance sheet of the world's situation, assess its future and propose the policies and actions we should set into motion.

To evaluate the challenges that must be faced in the next millennium, we have to look at the current situation of the international community.

Since 1989 we have been going through the third stage of the international order that emerged from the Second World War, characterized by instability and uncertainty. We have witnessed turning points in history, like the fall of the Berlin Wall; the implosion and fragmentation of the Soviet Union and the rise of a Russia convulsed by its own economic conversion while it tries to contain the new and remaining centrifugal tendencies with an authoritarian, opportunistic and negligent leadership; the resurgence of "Greater Germany" under the protection of the United States and with the complicity of the former European powers, busy with the construction of the European Union aimed at recovering their world leadership; the annexation of the German Democratic Republic by the Federal Republic of Germany; the dissolution of the socialist bloc; the continuance of essentially strategic military bipolarity, and therefore, of a certain degree of detente.

The war economy of the United States is in full flower, with its military budget practically untouched and a growing interventionist impetus; the industrialized countries are submissive and obedient toward the United States, opportunistically cashing in on relative benefits. At the same time, worldwide problems and conflicts—like nationalism and revenge-seeking—are deepening, some caused, fostered or exacerbated by structural adjustments to the international system, and capitalized on by the leaders of the ruling ideology, not only to avoid their own self-criticism and correction of their mistakes, but to actually accentuate their domination. This is possible because the great majority of those who suffer the effects of all this labor under groundless illusions; they are either indecisive and tolerant or simply unable to join forces to stop subsidizing the wealth and power of a privileged minority.

The United Nations, with no real autonomy or authority, is held hostage by the great powers. Since its reform is not progressing, there is a grave and imminent danger that it will continue on the road of increasing gentrification laid out by the United States and its main allies, and that it will further boost its opposition to complete compliance with the essential tenets laid down in the preamble of its own charter.

## RICH COUNTRIES' PERSPECTIVE

In international society, just as in individual countries, perspectives vary according to the position of the observer.

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For a privileged minority, the world is moving ahead, progress is being made and expectations are high. For another minority —not always so privileged— that of those who think it is better to close your eyes and not notice anything, things are just fine the way they are.

However, for the vast majority of people, things continue to get worse. Some of them fight to better their lot, but most have resigned themselves to their fate, thinking nothing can be done.

From the rich nations' point of view, the only countries with problems are the ones that refuse to adopt the wealthy nations' paradigm, or cannot manage to implement it properly, thus making it inappropriate or even immoral to lend them aid.

Untiring spokespersons for the wealthy countries spread the new Gospel among the less developed nations: history has concluded with the imposition of capitalism; this is the era of neoliberalism and globalization; the nation-state is on the road to extinction, given that sovereignty no longer exists and the rich benefactors of international society have the right to intervene whenever, wherever and however they consider it prudent for supposedly "humanitarian" reasons and to continue to mold the world to their whim. Clear examples of compliance with this "sacred civilizing mission" are Haiti, Liberia and the former Yugoslavia.

This new massive interventionism comes on the tail of the interventionism practiced openly for more than two decades by the United States and its developed partners through the international financial agencies headed up by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and their select clubs of Paris and London, along with the merciless, inhuman imposition of structural adjustment on all their debtors by conditioning funding.

#### DEPENDENT COUNTRIES' PERSPECTIVE

Meanwhile, the weak countries struggle to survive, albeit without joining forces, more spurred on by an instinct for self-preservation than by

conviction. The strong continue inflexibly and in concert to oppose these efforts and even enjoy the support of some of the weak countries for their policies.

The United States and the developed world have managed to turn the foreign debt of the developing countries —a debt they themselves induced— into an bottomless well of resources to continue to finance their privileges, regardless of the fact that this permanent burden is heavy indeed for those countries that have to carry it.

In 1997, the total foreign debt of developing countries came to almost U.S.\$2.2 trillion.<sup>1</sup> The 41 countries most affected by this are classified as the very indebted poor countries, 33 of them

From the rich nations' point of view, the only countries with problems are the ones that refuse to adopt the wealthy nations' paradigm or cannot manage to implement it properly, thus making it inappropriate to lend them aid.

in Africa. Their debt, which came to U.S.\$245 billion in 1996, overwhelms their public budgets, absorbs the resources needed for human development and stunts economic growth. Their ability to provide food and health and educational care to their peoples is particularly affected.

Official sources state that as of June 30, 1999, Mexico's foreign debt came to U.S.\$160.078 billion, or 35 percent of its gross domestic product; U.S.\$97.025 billion (60.6 percent) was owed by the public sector and U.S.\$63.053 billion (39.4 percent) by the private sector.

The poorest countries' debt has skyrocketed since 1980, two-thirds of it resulting either from interest or prior debt. The nature of the debt has also changed: in 1980, more than half of all debt was owed by the private sector, while by 1997, it only owed one-fifth. The current debt crisis involves the increasing public debt owed to multilateral institutions like the IMF and the World Bank.

Under the current world order, international bodies —among them, the U.S. champion, the IMF, the World Bank, the European Develop-

ment Bank and the Interamerican Development Bank—must promote the interests of the United States and make sure they prevail. Otherwise, they would be destined to disappear or be ostracized.

As of February 28, 1999, member states owed the United Nations a total of U.S.\$2.948 billion: U.S.\$1.7 billion for peace keeping, U.S.\$1.1 billion for operating expenses and U.S.\$148 million for international tribunals. The United States alone, the UN's largest debtor, owes two-thirds of all this: U.S.\$1.7 billion for the normal operating budget and U.S.\$1.07 billion for peacekeeping and international tribunals.<sup>2</sup>

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#### A NEW INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

The main challenge of our time is building an egalitarian, just, advanced international society. This would mean an international order in which all peoples would effectively have the opportunity of participating in all aspects and stages of the process, particularly in decision making, as well as the security and guarantee that they would be able to achieve similar conditions of real, lasting development in all spheres and for all individuals.

This means that world health must be enhanced by looking at all sensitive areas, including Man and his environment. And, that involves taking on tasks such as the preservation of the biosphere, biodiversity and our cultural and natural patrimony, severely hampered and endangered by inequality, poverty and marginalization; hunger and disease; the arms race and war.

New and more vigorous action in favor of a real restructuring of the international order is

needed, above all by countries like Mexico which enjoy an international reputation as defenders and promoters of the rule of law, justice, peace and development, a country which on not a few occasions has put a stop to the plans of its powerful neighbor, only to suffer the consequences.

#### CONCLUSIONS

We cannot allow the developed nations to shape international society to their liking alone. The policies our countries implement must include concrete actions that successfully meet the fundamental challenge of our time; we must participate in the deliberations of international bodies which have these powers, such as the Security Council, in order to defend the interests of the majority of the world's nations.

Developing countries, particularly the most advanced, like Mexico, must be self-critical and recognize that we have allowed, tolerated and not infrequently been accomplices in our own misfortune and that, therefore, we bear a great share of the responsibility for it. We must be aware that we have to develop the will to work for real change and leave behind the comfort of indolence, given that the developed countries are not going to give up or share their privileges voluntarily.

Today's inertia leads only to a worsening of the inequality and arbitrary nature of international power relations and the increase and sharpening of risks, not only because of the use of weapons of mass destruction, but due to the progressive, accelerated deterioration of the environment. ■■■

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, "La deuda: necesidad de tomar medidas en forma acelerada," *Informe sobre desarrollo humano 1999* (Madrid: Ediciones Mundi-Prensa, 1999), p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, *The UN financial crisis* (New York: Department of Public Information, August 25, 1999).

# Mario Palacios

## Art with Its Very Own Tempo

Eduardo Milán\*



Photos courtesy of Mario Palacios

*Map*, 120 x 120 cm, 1997 (oil on canvas).



*Theorem, a Place of Fire*, 70 x 50 cm, 1996 (oil on canvas).

Mario Palacios, born in 1953, surprised the Mexican art world with his work *Theorem* (1999), a series of 84 serigraphs and three drawings, his re-connection with a centered pictorial universe. The work is based on a pictorial order of

things practically without precedent in Mexico: perhaps only the painting of Vicente Rojo hints at this kind of fervor for ordering. This experimentation, in effect, presupposes a *contretemps*, in the sense that the myth operates when it critiques the overflow of history in a given present.

The *contretemps* happens when a work presents itself in a context in which

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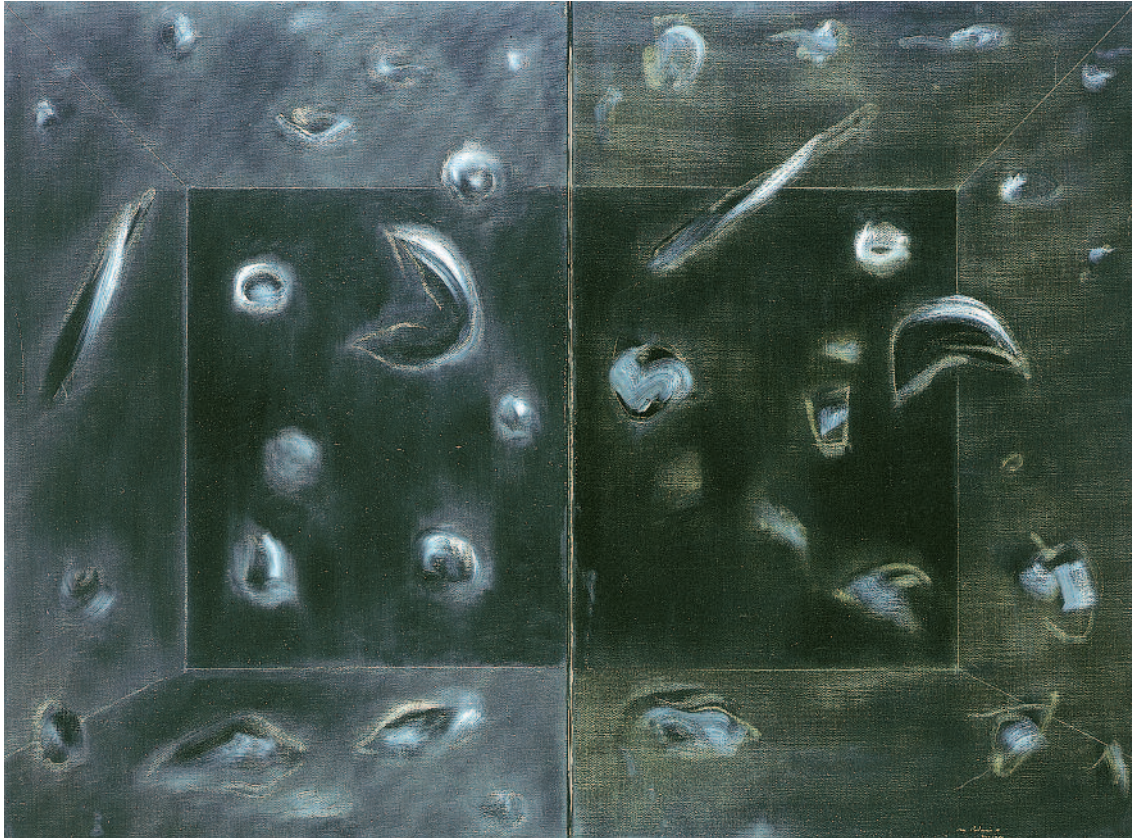
\* Uruguayan poet and essayist who has lived in Mexico since 1979.



*Theorem*, 70 x 50 cm, 1992 (oil on canvas).

most works of art try to imitate facts and situations. Thus, a state of formal decadence would correspond to a state of social decadence; a devaluing of the aesthetic form would correspond, as a result, to a loss of human values, given that the former should emerge in accordance with the historic moment. For Palacios, in contrast, the work of art

continues to have its very own tempo. The work is not a reflection; that is to say, social time does not act through it, contaminating it as a form, but places itself before reality like a mirror in which the viewer, whose gaze originates in reality, can find an alternative in the form and accede to an order different from the free play of appearances.



*Suspended Dinner*, diptych, 90 x 120 cm, 1989 (oil on canvas).

Order, center, delimitation of the line, clarity in the process of construction. This last word, “construction,” is just right for Palacios’ efforts. His search presupposes the question, “How does one build in a universe whose most evident symptom is deconstruction, not only in social terms and human values, but also with regard to the meaning of art?”

Palacios’ answer is rigorous: the inherited symbolic universe does not depend on the zigzags of history. The archetypes underlying the symbols remain intact, outside the game of cultural becoming. Palacios builds a graphic work in which form recalls ancient presences, like the icon, but they are naked presences in which the aspiration to an order of things, repeated as



*Nature Reserve*, 70 x 90 cm, 1991 (oil on canvas).

the central figure of his serigraphs, makes itself felt as pure form. It could be no other way without making a parody of the demand to link up again with sacred levels. Palacios builds a pre-figurative environment in which the rigorousness of form deprived of any attribute that is not its presence becomes the icon of a formless divinity. Palacios' art has a necessity of origin

which would explain the obsession in his serigraphs for repeating rectangles whose centering in the work indicates that there is no up or down, that the notion of origin to which it aspires invalidates any exercise of power. The idea of origin regulated by a conceptual management is not demanded. We are dealing here with a notion of origin that appeals to the viewer's individual



*Three Questions to a Landscape*, 55 x 37.5 cm each, 1990 (serigraphy on paper).

centering to give him/her back the consciousness of his/her lost symbolic being.

After seeing a work like *Theorem*, the question would be if Palacios' work has continuity. What comes after the clear presentation of a quest whose motives show the imperious necessity of linking up again with a symbolic layer lacking in modern Man?

What comes after a series of variations around an obsessive center that becomes a presence via pure form? This is hard to answer.

For the time being, we are left with a certainty: Palacios' graphic work leaves behind it a rigor uncommon in Mexican visual arts. ■■■



# Mario Palacios

## A Biographical Sketch

Sylvia Navarrete\*



*Theorem*, 70 x 90 cm, 1997 (oil on canvas).

When I asked Mario Palacios why he had been self-taught, he smiled placidly. “Because I didn’t like school.” Clearly, however, his vocation and learning did not come out of nowhere. Born in Mexico City in 1953, from the time he was a small boy, he drew little figures and caricatures of his teachers, fellow students and relatives. Having a family

of businessmen and industrialists was not particularly conducive to a future as a professional artist. In the midst of adolescence, a friend gave him two books of Toulouse-Lautrec paintings. They were a revelation. From that time on, in an intense voyage of self-discovery that became a therapy in itself, he began to paint and visit book stores where he spent many afternoons sitting on the floor leafing through art books.

Aware that technical training was

essential, in the late 1960s, Mario went to different workshops to learn to draw from a model and spent time in Luis Nishizawa’s group at the San Carlos Academy. Without actually thinking of all this as a hobby, he still was not ready to admit to himself that it might be a life option. He enrolled as a business administration major at the Iberoamericana University, but continued to frequent museums and galleries. He traveled to Europe twice and

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\* Researcher and art critic.



*May 1996, 70 x 50 cm, 1996 (oil on canvas).*

visited the great museums there. A passionate devotee of art, he was consumed by the need to paint; but he would not really accept the decision unconditionally, and he continued to think of this growing need as research.

When his first son was born in 1984, perhaps as a catharsis, Mario gave in to his vocation and produced mountains of drawings and a canvas or two. He tried to enter the artistic scene. Know-

ing no one, he followed the advice of painter Ricardo Martínez, and presented his portfolios to the directors of different galleries. Patricia Sloane, from the Sloane Racotta Gallery, was impressed and in 1988 organized his first one-man show of drawings and collages. The show was named “Calesthenia” in reference to what would continue to be for him warm-up exercises. The following year he did large

minimalist drawings in charcoal on the walls of a white cube in an office of the Mexico City government Department of Culture, a piece of ephemeral art that anticipated the “Perishable Drawings” that he would do at the Sloane Racotta Gallery, a factory, a stable and on the walkway of a swimming pool in Oaxtepec, Morelos.

From then on, his work has been sought out for many collective exhibits



*June 1991, 90 x 70 cm, 1991 (oil on canvas).*

and been entered in national competitions like the Rufino Biennial and the La Estampa Biennial, both sponsored by the National Institute of Fine Arts. Then the Expositvm and A Negra Galleries offered two consecutive one-man shows for him. In 1992, Mario did a portfolio of engravings with printer Alejandro Ehrenberg and another of serigraphs at Pablo Torrealba's workshop. The engravings, titled "Other Senses," are like micro-

scopic close-ups, shadows in fugue, delicate alterations and rips on the surface of the paper that betray almost epidemic work on the copper plate.

The senses are both a tool and a language in Mario Palacio's work. In "Other Senses" this is revealed in the blending of forms that evoke throbbing matter in its brute, primal state. It is not exactly eroticism, but rather an almost mystical contemplation of creation. It should

be noted that Mario is highly knowledgeable in theosophy, esoterics, alchemy and Asian philosophy.

In his recent work, Mario goes further in his experimentation and has integrated all human capacities (emotion, instinct, the intellect and skills) to achieve what he calls "an efficient artefact." He composes his work in the simplest and most rigorous way around the research of universal, archetypal sym-



*Theorem, Ninth A*, 187.5 x 135 cm, 1998 (serigraphy and gold on paper).

bols: the cross, for example. What meaning does the cross have for him and the collective memory? The horizontal line refers to time, to the horizon, to circumstance: it is the expression of the landscape, of the representation of the world without including Man. The vertical line symbolizes Man's energy and, schematically speaking, is his portrait. In some paintings, this vertical may disappear, replaced by a reflection, a shadow. In

this way, his works are similar to systems. They combine strict, controlled geometry like scaffolding with backgrounds in the manner of freer weaves, made up of organic, gesturing figures. His palette is spare, almost austere.

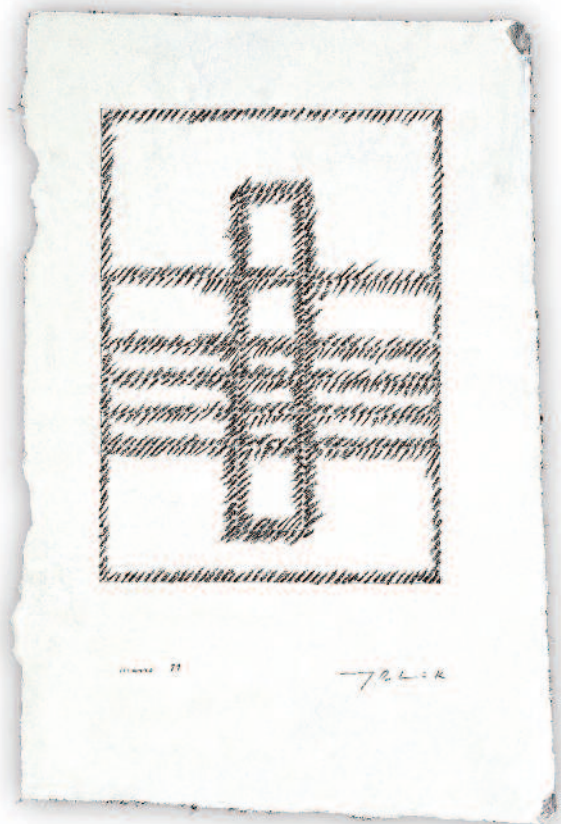
This unity of structure and figure reveals the power that the artist attributes both to geometry and reason, and to philosophy and spirituality. "The archetypal symbols are truths in

which one can read and learn in day-to-day living, with which one can understand more deeply the human condition," Mario told me.

He developed these new ideas about painting, drawing and serigraphy in the "Theorem" series, an itinerant exhibit shown in the Oaxaca Contemporary Art Museum, the Sinaloa Art Museum and the Risco House in Mexico City in 1999 and 2000. How Mario's work evolved in



*Shadows in the Botanic Garden*, 56 x 43 cm, 1997 (serigraphy on paper).



*Theorem, March 1999*, 37.5 x 25 cm, 1999 (carbon pencil on paper).

the eight years he did not exhibit is clear. He no longer intends to show its spontaneous, visceral aspect. Rather, he makes Georges Braque's phrase, "I love the rule that corrects emotion," his own. His intentions have changed: now he seeks visual purity, a language of certain classical characteristics and a permanent articulation of that language. A theorem is the statement of a provable truth. What Mario Palacios proposes is to

demonstrate his conviction that art is a way of approaching truth, just as scientific discourses are. For him, life and art are processes of transformation and continual construction of consciousness.

I asked Mario why he had taken so long to consider himself a professional painter, why he had voluntarily isolated himself from the artistic milieu. It did not surprise me when he said he was reluctant to push himself forward and

promote himself. Neither has he ever been enthused by the stereotype of the Bohemian artist. He is a "builder of machinery," a maker of "formative images that make sense, that work." Persevering, methodical in the extreme, far from all the noise, Mario Palacios has effectively found a poetic of the synthesis of forms and models of thought, in a process of maturation that leaves little room for improvisation and paroxysm. ■■

# Installation Art in Mexico

Judith Alanis Figueroa\*



Gabriel Orozco, *Altered Car*, 114 x 140 x 480 cm, 1993.

*This essay is dedicated to the melancholy.*

Writing about something as spottily studied in Mexican contemporary art as installation, with its origins in the 1960s “conceptualisms,” is risky because you have to take into account that you are dealing with very complex forms of expression. Oh well, here goes...

Throughout the twentieth century, the visual arts have been marked by a zeal to expand beyond traditional two-dimensionality to the third dimension. As Simón Marchan mentions in his classic book *Del arte objetual al arte del*

*concepto* (From Object Art to Concept Art),<sup>1</sup> as early as Allan Kaprow’s legendary 1958 “environments,” defined as an artistic form that surrounded the spectator and used all possible materials (visual, tactile and manipulative), many ways of relating to spaces developed.

Forty years later, with the coming’s and going’s and up’s and down’s of non-object languages, the transformation of traditional physical bases for art, the technological trends, the proliferation of hybrid or simply non-conventionally classifiable genres, globalization, the crisis of nationalism and the value placed on the new, what can we say about the alternative proposals in Mexico that include installation art?

In the essay “Tratado de Libre Comer” (Free Eating Agreement),<sup>2</sup> that Abraham Cruz Villegas wrote for the exhibition “Myself and My Circumstance,” we find fundamental comments for the beginnings of a historiography of contemporary art in Mexico.

Cruz Villegas mentions that at the end of the 1960s and during the 1970s, different collective strategies emerged influenced by post-object movements, called by scholars “the Generation of the Groups.” New, fresh means of expression came to the fore, including street art, mail-art, environments, derived from concept art, performances and non-object art, always signed by associations as diverse as Proceso Pentágono, Tetraedro, No-Grupo, SUMA,

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\* Mexican art critic and curator.

Germinal, Tepito Arte Acá, Mira, Marco, the Visual Research Workshop, the Art and Ideology Workshop, etc.

In the 1980s, along with postmodern neo-Mexicanism, amidst the crisscrossing trends in traditional art, a possibility for experimentation opened up called the Salon for Alternative Spaces. On five different occasions, this salon hosted the work of artists who were trying to go beyond the familiar formulae already attempted by the artists from the groups. And so, surprising formats and ideas arose, sometimes risky ones like installation environments and so-called object-art.

Intolerance led to institutional panic, however, and the Salon for Alternative Spaces was closed indefinitely with no explanation whatsoever, at the same time that all state participation in unorthodox artistic activities came to a halt.

From that time on, it became clear that the opportunity for development was not to be found in institutions, schools or museums. Criticism, on the other hand, had become a craft consisting in writing descriptive reviews of exhibitions, an attempt to explain or reject work a priori. Although some artists continued to hold on to the 1970s slogan of “taking over spaces,” this gradually became “creating spaces” and a concern for generating their own space for development, either alternative or peripheral to institutions.

People had to work with what they had at hand and improvise. Isolated actions led to the creation of what at a distance could be seen as a parallel movement of artists’ spaces and promotional strategies, like the Agency Gallery and the Des Aztecas Salon, among others.

In 1989, Guillermo Santamarina, Fulvia González Rossetti and Gabriel

Orozco organized the show “Speaking Of,” using Joseph Beuys’ work to explore the possibilities of art in situ. Held at the ex-Desierto de los Leones Monastery with the support of the Goethe Institute, this can be considered the first exhibition made up completely of installation art, until then unknown on the Mexican artistic scene.

Under these conditions, contemporary artists have built their own scenarios at improvised, uncomfortable and sometimes contradictory moments,

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giving rise to structures for production, distribution and consumption of their own works and projects.

In addition to the El Chopo University Museum, which in 1993 became another institutional space, the ex-Monastery of Santa Teresa (or the Ex-Teresa, as it is commonly called), under the auspices of the National Institute of Fine Arts, became a center for the promotion and dissemination of what was called “alternative” art. The Performance Art Festival held at the El Chopo changed venue, moving to the Ex-Teresa, where it has made its permanent home, together with installation and video-art.

However, works linked to this “alternative” art received greater recognition after 1995, when, 10 years after the

close of the Salon for Alternative Spaces, the National Fund for Culture and the Arts (Fonca) incentive program for young creators opened up a special category for alternative media.

In the 1990s, many independent spaces opened their doors and have sought official funding: among them, The Bakery, Blue Zone, the Tower of the Winds, Art Deposit, Box Two, Art & Idea, The Office, etc. These projects, although not independent, have operated autonomously of the broad official cultural “line,” maintaining freshness in the spectrum of aesthetic proposals that were increasingly self-critical and open to international dialogue.

At the end of the 1990s, the museums and galleries opened their rooms up to the most recent productions done by young artists, in formats linked to new technologies and languages, without hiding their avowed interest in keeping up with the pace of the general mobility of contemporary art.<sup>3</sup>

#### ALTERNATIVE LANGUAGES AN OVERVIEW

The second part of this essay is an interview the author did with Guillermo Santamarina, the director of the Ex-Teresa Today’s Art, curator and cultural promotor specialized in alternative languages.<sup>4</sup>

*What are the differences between environment art, installation and in situ art?* The differences are very subtle, but we could say that installation is a resource for expression/communication that uses physical, sensory and intellectual relations present in the contexts in which the “subject” is placed, as well as the ability to situate itself, regardless

of the terrain where the exhibition is presented, whether it be a gallery or site-specific, which imposes the elements of an autonomous subject, distancing itself from any contact with the “exterior.”

A few years ago I wrote about this, trying to define two types of installation according to their contextual relationship: “concentric” and “excentric.”

Specificity (a condition of the in situ experience) corresponds to a process of integration of elements and can be related to other categories of today’s visual arts: public art, the “performative” installation, intervention or interactive conceptualism.

I would consider installation which does not establish specific links to its surroundings and whose constituting elements, therefore, free from external burdens, are ordered inflexibly, more a sculpture, organized according to the norms of “concentricity.”

The idea of an environment —up until the 1980s this term referred to almost any expressive development that occupied a space, but is now included in the broad category of installation— is related to the sensory experience that an installation projects, whether in site-specific conditions or not. It is an experience specific to our senses, due to its graphic, luminous, aural, olfactory, gustatory, climatic or other effects which are controlled (as in the concentric case) or contextualized (in the excentric case). Its distinctive charge is undoubtedly poetic, but almost never develops with more complex structures where the semiotics, for example, would be the “nucleus” (the subject) of the work. The environment is, perhaps, predominantly “formalist.”

We would still have to describe what until recently we called “interven-

tion,” which could be conceived of as a more precise kind of environment, particularly in its contextual formulation.

*Who are Mexico’s most representative installation artists and why? What are some of their most outstanding works?*

I will mention only three of the at least eight dozen artists who have explored this field. After the muralists, Frida and Tamayo, Gabriel Orozco is Mexico’s best known artist abroad. One of his most



Gabriel Orozco, *Crazy Tourist*, 1991.

talked-about installations was presented at and together with New York’s Museum of Modern Art (*Home Run*, 1993). It “intervened” the windows of apartments and offices next door to the museum garden with an element, oranges. Another occupied an entire men’s club, a totally Victorian institution, in downtown London (*Empty Club*, 1996), commissioned by Art Angel. Another work by Gabriel which has made a lot of noise is his project for the last “Documenta” exhibition, the installation of a gigantic ferris wheel half buried in the ground. Apparently, this will be presented soon at the Hanover Fair.

Born in Belgium, Francis Alÿs began to develop as an artist in Mexico City during the second half of the 1980s.

He is the other international star whose work is displayed at very prestigious venues. Right now, for example, he has a very successful presentation at London’s Lisson Gallery. Francis is tireless and prolific, and so I’ll only mention one of his installations: the dualist video projection that he presented at the last Sao Paulo Biennial, *Paradox of Praxis* (1998-1999) and that we also included at Montreal’s exhibition, “Myself and My Circumstance.”

I will include someone who has not yet achieved the high profile of the other two, but who will soon, one of our key artists today, Santiago Sierra. Although he’s Spanish (he arrived in Mexico City only about five or six years ago), he is already recognized as a representative of contemporary Mexican art. As with Francis Alÿs, Mexico has been both his inspiration and a platform from which to launch his work. He is a radical conceptualist in the style of those innovators who sparked the American school of the 1960s and 1970s, Graham, Smith and Burden. Some of his work even looks like these artists’. His links to his surroundings are always provocative, or even offensive, such as in the case of the five-minute blockade



of Mexico City's Periférico freeway at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, which he achieved by crossing all lanes, including the side road, with a trailer truck. Until January of this year, the Rufino Tamayo Museum exhibited the remains of an action, *455 Paid People* (1999), carried out in its Room 7, a new institutional channel for this kind of installation.

*What are the "external" influences in the work of these artists?*



Francis Alÿs, *Francis Alÿs and the Collector*, 1991.

I don't understand what you mean by "external" influences on their work. They usually structure their processes in close contact with reality, with the flow of the everyday, in a kind of "new realism" outside the workshop. Only very sporadically do they "create" a work space like other artists dependent on traditional materials (although Francis Alÿs occasionally paints models that are then reproduced by helpers). Energetically tied to the street, they become "perpetual pedestrians," or traveling tourists, if you will. None of the three consciously takes on the theme of national identity or the codification of native cultural roots. None manifests any specific political position, but they cannot be catalogued as apolitical, either.

*What does the future hold for these languages?*

That is hard to predict. I think these languages are particles of an infinite capacity for expression which cannot return to being fenced in by authorized techniques, white-walled galleries, the tyranny of appraising critics, the cosmetic prescription, the judgement of decoration or —the one I like the best— conciliation with the foolhardy note of certainty.

*What contributions do Mexican installations make both inside and outside the country?*

I think the visual arts long ago shed the idea of making an important contribution to society. Gabriel Orozco's frequent presence on the international scene has generated curiosity among curators and influential institutions worldwide about Mexico's artistic community.

*What are the pro's and con's of the installation-institution binomial?*

I don't remember the pro's. The Ex-Teresa represents the determination of an eminently conservative institution to take on board at least two events that involve this medium of expression: the

"opportune" form of "hairbrained" freedom in selecting support for art "for young people" and the possibility of a dialogue close to what the "great world" out there considers timely and sophisticated. Beyond that, there are slip-ups and potholes. I doubt that Mexican institutions are sensitive enough to broaden out their notions about the role of contemporary art in the critical sphere of a society like ours.

The con's, in addition to the short-sighted definition, in which installation and other "new" languages are no more than "crazy," "fashionable" and "opportunistic," and which does not accept that the activities associated with these languages and carrying out a work require funding efforts different from those needed by "white paint, a hammer and nails."

\* \* \*

With this I conclude my review of installation in Mexico. I hope this space can serve to speak of spaces: public spaces, open spaces, exterior spaces; private spaces, closed spaces, interior spaces; transgressed spaces and transgressing spaces. ■■■

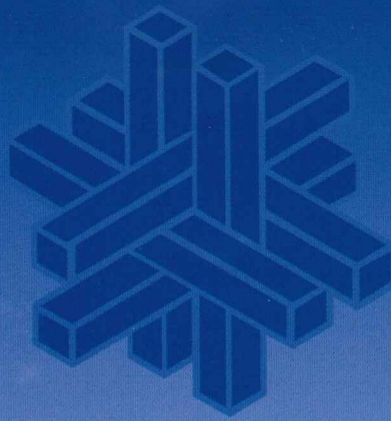
## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Simón Marchan Fiz, *Del arte objetual al arte de concepto. Las artes plásticas desde 1960* (Madrid: Alberto Corazón Editor, 1972).

<sup>2</sup> This is a play on words in Spanish: the term for "free trade agreement" is "tratado de libre comercio", and the word for "eat" is "comer." Thus, "free eating agreement" sounds even more like "free trade agreement" than it does in English. [Translator's Note.]

<sup>3</sup> Fine Arts Museum catalogue, November 4, 1999-February 5, 2000, *Yo y mi circunstancia. Movilidad en el arte contemporáneo mexicano* (Montreal: INBA, 1999).

<sup>4</sup> Interview with the author in Mexico City, February 11, 2000.



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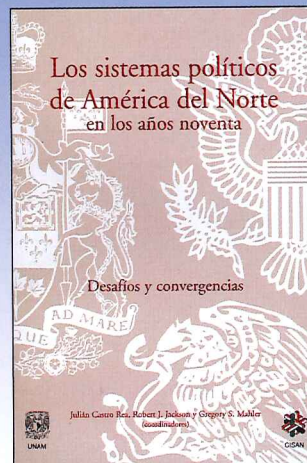
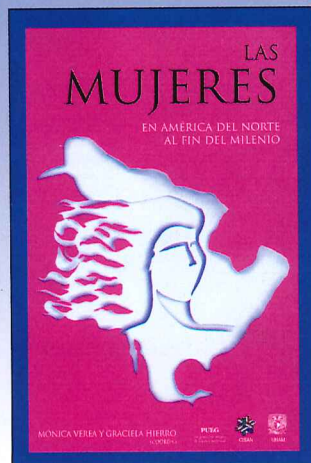
**p u b l i c a t i o n s**

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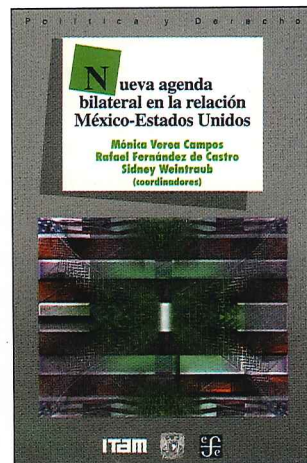
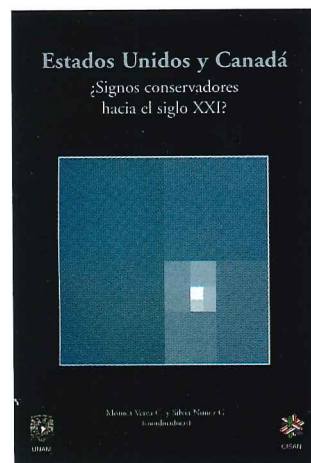
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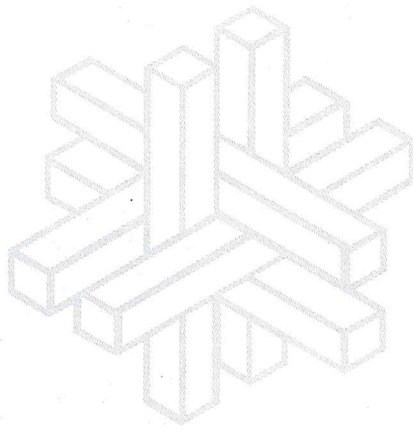
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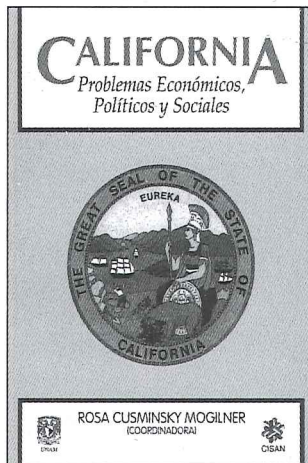
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p u b l i c a t i o n s

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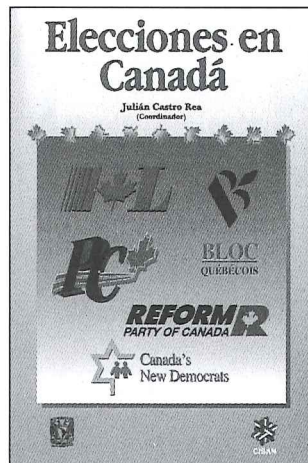
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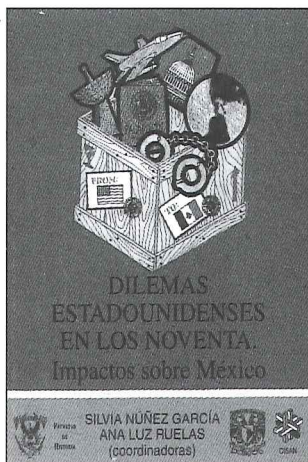
A review of one of the most complex and controversial elections in Canadian history. These studies probe the outcome of the 1993 elections called in a questioned, divided Canada.



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Ana Luz Ruelas  
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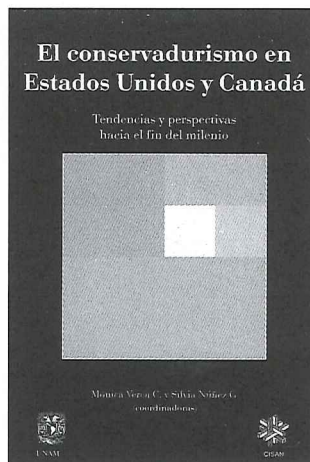
**El conservadurismo en  
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Tendencias y perspectivas  
hacia el fin del milenio

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Estados Unidos y Canadá.  
Tendencias y perspectivas  
hacia el fin del milenio.**

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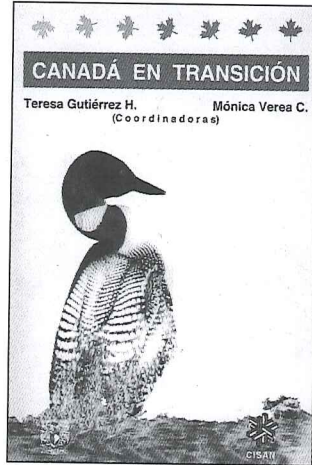
Different analytical approaches and scholarly perspectives to characterize what is generally called "conservatism". The authors start from a recognition of multiple theoretical, conceptual frameworks in their endeavor to overcome stereotypes.



**Canadá en Transición**

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

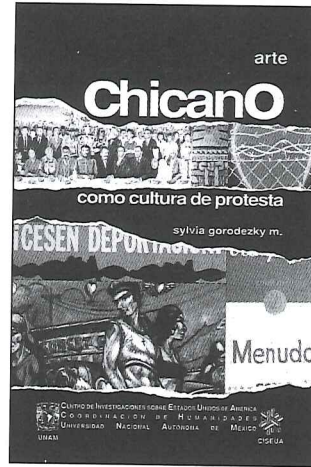
An overview of Canada today offering essays aiming to define the nature of the Canadian situation so as to be able to better understand the previously unknown, recently discovered northern Mexico's trade partner.



**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.

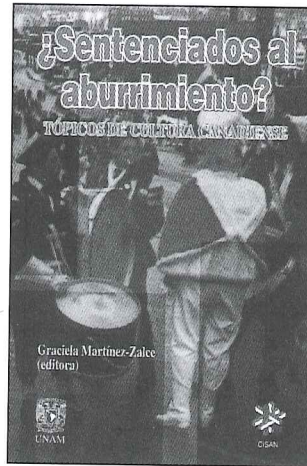
A look at the little known story of nonagricultural Mexican migrant workers in the United States under the Railroad Bracero Program instituted during the Second World War by both the Mexican and U.S. governments.



**¿Sentenciados al aburrimiento? Tópicos de cultura canadiense**

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.

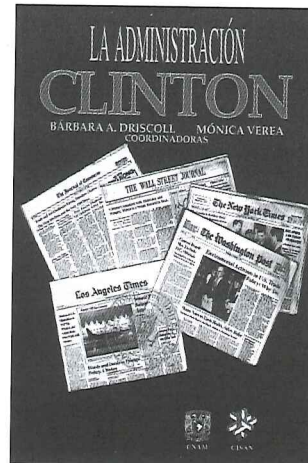
This book compares Canadian and Mexican programs on the treatment of solid wastes in Mexico City and Montreal. Severini states that the problem can only be explained by institutional, demographical and economic reasons and could soon result in some serious conflicts.



**La administración Clinton**

Bárbara Driscoll, Mónica Vereá (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.



# NAFTA in Perspective

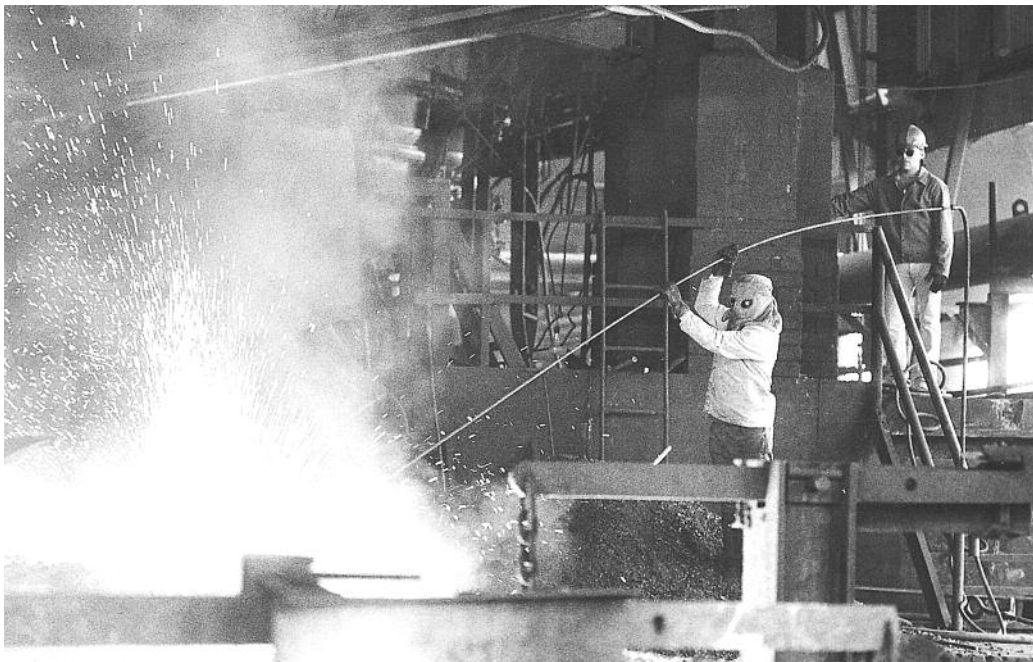
Carlos Arriola\*

In the last decade, few topics have sparked as broad a discussion as the announcement that a free trade agreement was to be negotiated with the United States. What is more, a guerrilla group picked the day the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) went into effect, January 1, 1994, to stage an armed insurrection. The head of this group declared, "The compañeros decided to rise up on that day to respond to the death sentence that NAFTA imposes on them (sic)."<sup>1</sup> The political groups, parties and leaders that had opposed the treaty's signing throughout the negotiations magnified the armed uprising with a view to the presidential elections slated for July of the same year. To everyone's surprise, the Institutional Revolu-

tionary Party (PRI) won an undisputed majority of 50.18 percent of the votes and the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), the firmest opponents of NAFTA, only received 17.08 percent. The other opposition party, the National Action Party (PAN), which had not as a block opposed the treaty, was favored with 26.7 percent of the ballots.

These figures were not far from what the public opinion polls said the public's perception and approval rating of NAFTA was. Recognition and support for the treaty grew from 1990 to 1993 and by September 1993, 51 percent of Mexicans approved of the treaty, while only 14 percent disapproved. Of those polled, 21.7 percent declared themselves "indifferent" and 14 percent either did not answer or said they had no opinion.<sup>2</sup>

\* Mexican economist.



Marco Antonio Cruz/Imaginatina

Six years later, NAFTA was not a campaign issue. Today, it enjoys a broad consensus despite initially having been blamed for the 1995 crisis when, actually, it was what made it possible for the country to get out of that crisis more quickly. These changes in the public's perception of NAFTA deserve to be examined retrospectively.

#### THE INDISPENSABLE OPENING

Since the end of the 1960s, many voices could be heard warning of the difficulties for the country's continued growth in a closed economy. In May 1971, at a lecture in Austin, Texas, a high, influential government official said that the "inward evolution" characteristic of the previous period had to make way for a more open and competitive model of growth.<sup>3</sup>

Since the end of the 1960s, many voices could be heard warning of the difficulties for the country's continued growth in a closed economy. Despite the fact that development was properly conceptualized, no viable solutions were proposed.

This statement was not made by a technocrat or a neoliberal economist, but by a full-fledged politician, then vice minister of the president's office, Porfirio Muñoz Ledo. He also stated on that occasion, "The increase in export capacity is key to the current economic situation and explains the extraordinary attention that the administration has paid to establishing promotional bodies, tax breaks and financial support. That is why income distribution, educational reform and scientific research and technological adaptability have been spotlighted as strategic factors of development."

Despite the fact that development was properly conceptualized, no viable solutions were proposed, such as Mexico's entry into the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the deregulation of the economy and negotiating

access to other markets. The attempts to promote exports through the now-defunct Mexican Institute of Foreign Trade, created by President Luis Echeverría Álvarez (1970-1976), failed because, as one of its directors said, there was nothing to sell.

Since the economy remained closed, producers did not have access to the low-cost, quality inputs that would have allowed them to compete abroad. What is more, Muñoz Ledo's text itself proposed measures that counterposed the ends being pursued since he also considered it necessary to regulate even further the process of import substitution in order to "more closely tie the production of manufactured goods to the availability of material and human resources." We should not be surprised, therefore, that regulatory measures proliferated during the Echeverría administration that accentuated the Mexican economy's lack of competitiveness. This was the case of foreign investment and the transfer of technology.

In addition to changes on the domestic front to raise competitiveness, in order to promote exports, the importing countries must acquiesce. This obvious thought is relevant because, when negotiations for NAFTA were proposed, some sages proposed signing important treaties with Europe, Japan and the rest of Latin America to "diversify the dependence" on the United States, as though picking trade partners depended only on the will of one of the parties involved.<sup>4</sup>

Muñoz Ledo's lecture contained several messages and one of them, directed at the United States government, was for it to open its markets to Mexican products. The moment was not at all favorable since at that time the U.S. was facing serious balance-of-payments problems that forced it to devalue the dollar and, in August 1971, to impose an additional 10 percent duty on all its imports. Mexican efforts to obtain an exemption based on the two countries' supposed "special relationship" were unsuccessful, as were attempts to gain access to markets of other countries and regions of the world.

To finance his public spending, Echeverría resorted to increasing the country's foreign debt, with well known results. At the same time, the price of oil rose, which gave the Mexican government a breather. But it also delayed the solution to the real problem: the Mexican economy's lack of competitiveness.

For some inexplicable reason, President José López Portillo (1976-1982) refused to take Mexico into the GATT in 1980 as proposed by Finance Ministry economists, headed up by future President Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado (1982-1988). It was not until 1986 that Mexico finally opened its doors to the economic growth that had been limited for 12 years, despite the considerable revenues from oil sales abroad and public and private loans. What is more, these extraordinary revenues had serious repercussions in the country's economy.

#### WHY FREE TRADE WITH CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES?

The first and most obvious answer to this question is that the three governments were willing. But, in addition, in Mexico's case, there were other weighty reasons.

Since the nineteenth century, around 70 percent of Mexican exports and almost 50 percent of its imports had gone to and come from the United States. World War II saw an increase in trade between the two countries and led to the signing of a trade agreement in 1942, although it was abrogated a short time later with the idea of protecting Mexico's incipient industrialization.

Table 1 shows the composition of Mexican exports from 1935 to 1965: the export of mined and extracted raw materials dropped substantially and that of manufactures rose. From the 1970s on, exports of manufactured goods gradually continued to grow: from U.S.\$836,400 in 1972, it rose to U.S.\$2.4 million in 1977. In the five years from 1978 to 1983, they doubled, jumping from U.S.\$3.1 million to U.S.\$6.3 mil-

lion; and from 1983 to 1986, they increased a little over U.S.\$2 million, from U.S.\$8.2 million to U.S.\$10.6 million. By contrast, after Mexico entered GATT, in only two years, exports of manufactured goods rose 70 percent, from U.S.\$10.6 million to U.S.\$17.4 million.

By 1989, the first year of the administration of Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994), Mexico was already the third exporter to the United States and its main supplier of television sets, modular sound systems, refrigerators and bathroom fixtures. It was its second supplier of cement, tape recorders and tubing, and its third largest supplier of automobile engines, metal furniture and room fans, among other products.

Mexican exports to the United States came under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) created by the U.S. to set up exemptions

When negotiations for NAFTA started, some sages proposed signing important treaties with Europe, Japan and the rest of Latin America to "diversify the dependence" on the United States.

of duties for all developing countries. This system's benefits were limited: on the one hand, the United States unilaterally decided year after year what products would be included under the GSP. On the other hand, if exports surpassed certain limits, tariff exemptions could be canceled.

Another Mexican product exported to the United States since World War II has been textiles. Given that this is a very competitive market, in 1973 importing and exporting countries signed what was called the Multifiber Agreement. Two years later, Mexico had to sign another accord on the matter to gain access to the U.S. market, an arrangement which was extended five times, most recently in 1988. Despite the achievements, the agreement restricted the export of woolen suits, pants, skirts, shirts, acrylic

thread and cotton fabric, products in which Mexico is highly competitive.

Steel exports also had to be carried out under the terms of the Voluntary Restraint Agreement.

These examples show that the main external problem for increasing Mexican exports to the United States was the lack of a legal framework that would both eliminate tariffs and non-tariff barriers like quotas and create security by establishing norms, procedures and controversy-solving bodies for the frictions that inevitably arose as trade between the two countries grew.

There were sufficient economic reasons, therefore, to seek a legal instrument that would ensure Mexican products access to the U.S. market. As early as President De la Madrid's administration, two "understandings" were signed, one in 1985 and another in 1987; two more were agreed upon during President Salinas' first year

The main external problem for increasing Mexican exports to the U.S. was the lack of a legal framework that would both eliminate tariffs and non-tariff barriers and create security by establishing norms, procedures and controversy solving bodies for the frictions that inevitably arose as trade grew.

in office. But neither in his inaugural address nor in the National Plan for Development or the Trade Ministry's Industrial and Foreign Trade Modernization Program of 1990-1994 was mention made of seeking an agreement that went further than these "understandings."<sup>5</sup> The idea was too daring even for a president as audacious as Carlos Salinas.

Everything changed with the 1989 events in Eastern Europe. The breakdown of Marxism made for an ideological vacuum that permitted modernization policies to move forward without any obstacles, and the fall of socialism created a political vacuum that the governments of the European Community rushed to fill. In the February 1990 Davos meeting, Salinas analyzed the prospects and understood the danger of Mexico remaining on the sidelines of the world's

political and economic repositioning. Canada and the United States had just signed a free trade agreement in January 1988; Japan and the Asian Tigers were already a de facto bloc difficult to penetrate. And 30 years of good intentions had never blossomed into free trade with Latin America.

A question was planted in an interview with President Salinas in Davos: "What do you think of Mexico becoming part of a North American free trade zone or common market?" The answer was, "We are not thinking of entering into a common market; but, we do want more of a relationship with the United States and Canada." In other words, the president accepted the idea of a free trade zone.

#### NAFTA'S CONTENT

Few people have studied the content of the 1,200-page document itself, and therefore, it is worth summarizing its main chapters before evaluating its initial results.

1. The elimination of quotas and tariffs. Recognizing the differing degree of development of the three countries, it was agreed that more Mexican products would be allowed into the U.S. and Canada without tariffs than U.S. and Canadian products into Mexico. Mexico immediately eliminated tariffs on some goods, mainly those not produced domestically like telecommunications and electronic equipment, airplanes, machinery, etc.

Time frames of 5, 10 and 15 years to totally eliminate all duties on other products were stipulated, a condition that has been gradually implemented, with duties dropping a specified percent each year.

2. Special provisions were made to protect jobs in certain productive sectors, like textiles, which at the time the treaty was signed provided jobs for 800,000 in Mexico, or auto, which at that time employed 450,000 workers.

The quota system was immediately suppressed for textiles and duties eliminated on almost 50



percent of the Mexican textile products exported to the United States. Canada did the same with 19 percent of Mexico's textile exports. Mexico, for its part, immediately eliminated tariffs for 20 percent of its purchases from the United States and 4.7 percent of those from Canada.

In addition, tariffs on Mexican textile exports, which had in some cases gone as high as 65 percent, dropped to 20 percent and have gradually diminished each year and will disappear completely in 2004. This sector, together with the auto industry, is one of those that has expanded the most in the six years since the treaty came into effect.

The United States immediately began to eliminate all duties on automobile exports; export duties on pick-up trucks were eliminated in five years, by 1999, and heavy trucks will be free of all export duties in 2004.

For its part, Mexico eliminated import duties on pick-ups in five years and will levy none on automobiles and heavy trucks after 10. Used vehicles of all kinds will enter Mexico free of tariffs and duties as of 2020. However, reality moves faster than the treaty, as Mexico's illegally imported vehicle problem shows.

3. Mexico has never been an agricultural power. Its mountain ranges and irregular rainfall have rendered it not very competitive in grain production. By contrast, it is competitive in other fields, like the cultivation of flowers, vegetables and fruits, particularly in the wintertime.

Therefore the chapter on agriculture put a priority on the export of Mexican products such as strawberries, flowers and honey and, in the winter, tomatoes, squash, watermelon and eggplant, among others. Since 1994, Mexico has also exported oranges, mangoes, raspberries, blackberries, carrots and canned fruits and vegetables tax free. A similar procedure was followed with exports to Canada.

The United States and Canada benefited from the immediate elimination of Mexican taxes on sorghum, dried fruit, jellies and jams, lentils and Christmas trees, among other things. As of the year 2000, pears, plums, goat meat and vegetable juices are also included. Corn, beans and powdered milk were slated for protection for 15 years. Five years have passed and there is still no clear policy to convince producers in the traditional sector to make use of their comparative advantages in the new market. This is a difficult task because it encompasses economic, cultural and training questions, but it must be the main endeavor of a Ministry of Agriculture.

4. In addition to goods, the three countries exchange services such as transportation, tourism, communications, banking and insurance. All of these were included in the appropriate chapters of the treaty. The recently privatized Mexican banking system had been very protected, which ended up being bad for the country. Very probably, if the country had been open to competition,

TABLE 1  
KINDS OF MEXICAN EXPORTS (PERCENTAGES)

	1935	1952	1960	1965
Mining and oil extractive industries	74.5	29.1	17.1	12.5
Agriculture	15.5	39.7	41.8	36.6
Manufacturing	1.0	11.4	12.5	23.3
Tourism and border transactions	9.0	19.8	28.6	27.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

there would have been no need for the Savings Protection Bank Fund (Fobaproa) and the productive sector would have had access to timely, cheaper credit.

5. Free trade does not imply the total absence of norms, but it does mean that existing norms must be clear and not subject to the whims of one of the parties. Throughout the treaty there are stipulations specifying the rules of the game. For example, it specifies the percentage of parts manufactured outside the North American region that a product may contain to qualify for tariff exemptions. These specifications, known as “rules of origin,” are extremely important for the three countries’ development.

Also specified are sanitary and phytosanitary measures for the agricultural sector, as well as environmental and technical norms and rules for avoiding dumping and export subsidies. In-

The growth in exports and changes in their composition have made sales abroad a determining factor in the country's development. The total amount of non-oil exports began to grow significantly because of the economic opening.

tellectual property rights were protected and temporary safeguards spelled out.

Since all these measures can be erroneously interpreted, institutions and procedures for solving controversies were also provided for.

This simple sketch of the treaty’s contents provides an idea of the breadth and complexity of the topic that demanded a long, patient negotiation. Many very important interests were at stake since not all the sectors nor all producers were to benefit or be affected equally.

#### SIX YEARS LATER

Since 1990, when the negotiations of the North American Free Trade Agreement were announced, it became the central thrust of government mod-

ernization policy. For more than one reason it gave a coherence and political meaning to other measures such as deregulation and the struggle for greater competitiveness. At the same time, NAFTA’s economic results have conferred legitimacy on the new model of development. Let us look at the main indicators.

1. *Exports.* The growth in exports and changes in their composition have made sales abroad a determining factor in the country’s development.

The total amount of non-oil exports began to grow significantly because of the economic opening. After 1994, the leap was amazing, going from U.S.\$40 billion to U.S.\$136.703 billion in 1999.

In addition, the composition of sales abroad changed radically. In 1985, oil made up 63 percent of all exports and manufactured products, 30 percent; in 1999, they made up 7 and 90 percent, respectively.

This change has had positive effects on the job market and wages. According to Finance Ministry data, half of the 3 million jobs created since 1995 are linked to exports and employees in those companies earn 33 percent more on the average than employees in non-exporting firms. Companies that export 80 percent or more of their output pay up to 59 percent higher wages than the rest of industry. It should be pointed out that Mexico exports more to the United States than all the rest of Latin America does.

As expected, Mexican imports from the United States increased: from U.S.\$27 billion in 1989 to U.S.\$142 billion in 1999. The composition of imports is very significant since in 1999 capital goods (machinery, for example) represented 14.4 percent; intermediate goods, 77 percent; and consumer goods, only 8.6 percent. In other words, Mexico imports to produce and produces to export. Although the trade deficit was U.S.\$5.36 billion in 1999, this is manageable because there are other sources of income.

2. *Foreign investment.* For many years, dependency theorists saw foreign investment as a threat to the so-called “autonomous development” of less advanced countries. Mexico’s Law



Hercón Alemán/Imagenlatina

Non-oil exports increased significantly after NAFTA went into effect.

of Foreign Investment, promoted by President Echeverría, was a clear example of this mistrust, since it excessively regulated private capital coming from abroad. Faced with insufficient domestic savings, the government preferred acquiring public debt to private foreign investment.

Changes in the world economy, particularly the internationalization of productive and distribution

processes, made dependency theory obsolete, and today, all countries compete to attract capital.

Private foreign investment goes to countries that have greater advantages, not in terms of tax breaks, but in terms of offering skilled labor and above all access to large markets.

In the case of Mexico, the evolution of foreign direct investment (FDI) is very clear: before

the economy opened up, between 1980 and 1985, average FDI was only U.S.\$1.299 billion annually. From 1986, the year Mexico entered the GATT, to 1993, it rose to an average U.S.\$3.468 billion a year, or more than double. Since NAFTA came into effect in January 1994, the yearly average has been U.S.\$9.791 billion.

It is very important to look at where FDI goes. Most, 58.5 percent, goes to manufacturing; second, to commerce, with only 13.4 percent; banking, 11.5 percent; transportation and communications, 7.2 percent; other services, 7.1 percent; and construction and other sectors, 1.1 percent.

Thanks to FDI and exports, in a single year Mexico was able to come out of the 1995 crisis, the result of the political problems of the previous year which had led to a loss of confidence and an abrupt flight of capital invested in the stock market. As is common knowledge, President Salinas

Those responsible for the negotiation and signing of NAFTA always emphasized that it was not a panacea for age-old problems, but rather a unique opportunity to move forward toward their solution. This solution does not lie in the past but in a future based on more education and training.

and his finance minister refused to devalue the peso and left the problem to President Ernesto Zedillo's incoming administration.

#### FINAL REFLECTIONS

Like many others, we must ask ourselves why all this has not meant higher individual incomes.

The first answer is negative, and therefore insufficient. Without the opening of the economy and NAFTA, things would be much worse because Mexico would not have been able to get out of the impasse it had faced since 1970, an impasse in which neither jobs nor wages could grow in a healthy and sustained way because the artificial increase of either led to scarcity or price hikes. Today people have forgotten that wage hikes

decreed in that period led immediately to higher prices that canceled out the hikes.

In the second place, we have to take into account that the new development model began to operate in 1986 with Mexico's entry into the GATT and the gradual opening of the economy. After six years, NAFTA is only half way on the road to full opening.

In the 14 years since the new model began to be implemented, it has been necessary to clean up public finances and sell or close hundreds of state companies that depended on heavy subsidies and for the most part were neither strategic nor necessary (like movie theaters, bicycle production, etc.). Also, the generalized subsidies had to be rationalized since, though they did not always benefit those who most needed them, they were a heavy burden on public finances.

In the third place, we must consider that political will on the part of the state is not sufficient to change the development model. The full concert of society is needed, particularly when the new model confers greater responsibilities on the private and social sectors of the economy. The emergence of a new productive culture takes time since it does not imply only training new personnel. It is above all a problem of leadership and entrepreneurial initiative that must be developed by top and medium-level executives and management personnel. Some estimates indicate that no more than 10 percent of Mexico's 150,000 industrial firms export consistently and, as has already been mentioned, wages in these more productive companies are 30 percent higher than average. This means that employees in the remaining firms—that is, the majority—earn less by carrying out tasks that are not very productive. However, Finance Ministry figures indicate that more than 35,000 mostly small and medium-sized industrial companies sell their products abroad.

In the fourth place, demographics must be taken into account, although very few people like to deal with it. If we note that the population of Mexico has quadrupled since 1950, we can see

income distribution problems in another light, particularly because no country with scarce resources can create jobs at that rate. In addition, the state was forced to spend enormous amounts of resources on education and health services that would be inaccessible to most of the population if they were in the hands of the private sector. If the state did not have to use such enormous amounts of resources in social spending, it could invest more in scientific research, in the development of technology or in improving transportation infrastructure to increase the country's competitiveness, for example.

On the other hand, the unchecked population growth combined with low levels of schooling and training forces wages down. There are many applicants for even the unskilled jobs available.

Spain, which entered the then-European Common Market late in the game, was able to do it with relative ease since its population growth rate was and is almost nil, and it had an abundance of skilled labor.

Almost all over Mexico, the average population growth rate has dropped, but in Chiapas, for example, it is still around 4 percent.

In the fifth place, we should point out that 1986 was a key year, a dividing line between a protected economy with low productivity and no prospects of growth without inflation, and another economy, competitive and capable of healthy, sustained growth. That moment was also definitive for separating the competitive companies from the ones with low productivity, regardless of their size. It divided the regions and states that knew how to make use of their competitive advantages from those that have not. It also drew a dividing line between productive individuals and those who are not, whether they are professionals, entrepreneurs or management personnel, operators, peasants or medium-level cadre. Today, income is distributed more according to criteria of effectiveness than of privilege. This makes it less difficult to correct, but it will take time. The criterion of effectiveness is, undoubtedly, more democratic than that of privilege.

## CONCLUSIONS

Modernity has never spread evenly in any country or period in history. The nations considered the most developed, however, are the ones that have been able to extend it throughout their territory by broadening out education, training and culture. The socialist states demonstrated that trying to achieve a more just society without modernizing the productive apparatus—which in turn requires a free market—fails.

Those responsible for the negotiation and signing of NAFTA always emphasized that it was not a panacea for age-old problems, but rather a unique opportunity to move forward toward their solution. This solution does not lie in the past—which was not at all idyllic—but in a future based on more education and training that will grant the majority of the population access to more productive, better paying jobs. This is the only way to close the income distribution gap. ■■

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Perfil*, supplement to *La Jornada* (Mexico City) 19 January 1994.

<sup>2</sup> INDERMEC-Louis Harris poll taken after the approval of NAFTA by the U.S. Congress, published in *El Nacional* (Mexico City), 26 November 1994.

<sup>3</sup> Porfirio Muñoz Ledo, "Apertura política para el desarrollo," a lecture presented at a colloquium organized by the University of Texas Institute for Latin American Studies, published by the Association of University Professors of Mexico, May 30, 1971.

<sup>4</sup> "Las relaciones comerciales de México con el mundo," *Memoria del Foro Nacional de Consulta* (Mexico City: Senado de la República, 1990).

<sup>5</sup> All these documents are included, with their respective sources, in Carlos Arriola, comp., *Documentos básicos del TLC* (Mexico City: Secofi, 1994).

# Universidades

REVISTA DE LA UNIÓN DE UNIVERSIDADES DE AMÉRICA LATINA

19

Enero – Junio

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# Globalization, Competitiveness And Foreign Direct Investment In North America

Elizabeth Gutiérrez Romero\*

Among the most conspicuous and dynamic aspects of economic globalization are international capital and trade flows. Although this might seem like nothing new since throughout the history of capitalism, the integration of markets has been a constant, today, the productive, trade and financial internationalization carried out by the large multinational corporations meet with no national obstacles or barriers.

A central axis of economic liberalism in the transition and restructuring that the world economy is going through is the flow of foreign direct investment (FDI), which is redefining the concept of borders and that of national competitiveness in terms of a country's productive and trade performance.

Despite productive investments not amounting to even 10 percent of the world's financial flows given that speculative financial activities are very profitable, FDI has grown since the 1980s. Between 1983 and 1990, for example, FDI grew 34 percent annually, while trade in goods grew at 9 percent annually in the same period.<sup>1</sup>

Today, burgeoning international productive investment is a more significant stimulant than trade itself and contributes to the restructuring of world production. On the other hand, although FDI is concentrated particularly in manufacturing, trade in goods also fosters competition in services like advertising, insurance and banking, all needed for buyers and sellers to interact.

Therefore, it brings with it increased economic activity and contributes to creating jobs, the use of new technology and of modern methods of organizing production.

The North American countries strive for competitiveness both regionally and globally even with their profound economic, social and political asymmetries derived from their different historical development.

For Mexico and Canada, productive and trade internationalization has been defined mainly in relation to the United States, hegemonic throughout a long process of economic interdependence. Regional trade conforms to the U.S. market's dynamic which represents the "international or globalized market" par excellence for Mexico and Canada. On the other hand, U.S. FDI has been crucial in the process of regional economic and productive integration. Historically, not only for geographic reasons, but for a series of cultural and political reasons as well, Canada was the country which captured the greatest amount of U.S. FDI until being replaced by Great Britain around 1990. According to Rolf Hackmann, in 1950 U.S. FDI was U.S.\$12 billion, 69 percent of which went to Canada and Latin America (30 percent to Canada and only 3.5 percent to Mexico). However, the important thing is that U.S. FDI was distributed mainly in the Western Hemisphere. By 1990, U.S. FDI had reached U.S.\$430 billion, but its distribution had changed: almost half went to Europe while Mexico and Canada received 2.4 percent and 16.1 percent respectively.

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At the same time, the U.S. economy had begun to be the target of FDI from other countries, which means that, by 1993, 14 percent of the value added in U.S. manufacturing, almost 25 percent of the exports of goods and 35 percent of imports is no longer in the hands of U.S. citizens.<sup>2</sup>

#### INDUSTRIAL RESTRUCTURING AND INTEGRATION IN NORTH AMERICA

Foreign direct investment, or productive capital, is cardinal for countries of medium development like Mexico given that it is usually considered a mechanism for transferring technology and expanding export capacity, in theory leading to greater potential for productive linkages, thus fostering domestic economic development.

As we know, trade has intensified and become concentrated in North America, as is the case in other economic blocs, and NAFTA has formalized the previously existing productive and trade interdependence commanded by the United States.

Both processes of integration tend to change the nature of trade in the region from interindustrial to greater intraindustrial and intrafirm trade. This means that trade among the region's countries, and especially between Mexico and the United States, is not only of products from different industrial sectors, but that there is increased exchange of products within the same industry. It is important to look at the nature of these transactions and not only volume because it relates to changes in the organizational structure of production and the market, which in turn influence the results of international competition.

#### OLIGOPOLISTIC COMPETITION

Today, the central element defining the structure and organization of production is that a few large companies compete oligopolistically. These companies try to cut costs by increasing volume or by relocating their plants geographically, mak-

ing themselves more competitive than smaller firms. These strategies are important for Mexico since they have increased its intraindustrial trade in some sectors, like for example the autoparts industry, which between 1994 and 1998 boosted its intraindustrial trade from 58 percent to 93 percent. Between 1996 and 1998 alone, with the effects of NAFTA, intraindustrial trade in autoparts rose in internal combustion engines, engine parts, bodies equipped with engines and other accessories.<sup>3</sup>

#### FRAGMENTATION OF PRODUCTIVE PROCESSES

The significance of intraindustrial trade for Mexico is that part of it may be within a single company, something that happens above all in companies that locate different parts of their production process in different countries. In fact, when a company divides its production among plants both inside and outside its country of origin, it results in a series of fragmented but linked processes, thus producing intrafirm trade. This mechanism has led to the development and spread of the maquiladora industry in Mexico and other countries. The fragmentation of productive processes by U.S. companies has been a particularly important phenomenon for the productive integration of Mexico and the United States for several decades given some U.S. industries' loss of competitiveness on both the international and domestic markets.

The lag in competitiveness, caused among other things by the decline in productivity growth rates and high labor costs, particularly in basic industries like auto and textiles, led these industries to change their production strategies.

With the fragmentation of their production, a series of sub-processes were transferred to Mexico, slashing their production costs—among them, labor costs—and contributing to the increase in these goods' competitiveness on international markets. Therefore, the development of the maquiladora industry in Mexico and the new forms of FDI such as contracting out and joint produc-



tion, the accords for technology transfer, etc., have fostered intrafirm trade.<sup>4</sup>

As is well known, intraindustrial and intrafirm trade are now more intense worldwide. It should not surprise us, then, that around 40 percent of U.S. exports and imports come under this heading.

#### REPERCUSSIONS FOR MEXICO THE MAQUILADORAS

The maquiladora industry has played a significant part in Mexico's exports of manufactured goods: in the 1990s, nearly 50 percent of non-oil, manufactured exports came from the maquiladora industry, while only 29 percent of imports were destined for it.<sup>5</sup> This explains why the maquiladora trade balance was positive between 1990 and 1999. This kind of activity,

associated with intrafirm trade, benefits both countries, although this does not mean that it should not be transformed. ■■■

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Paul Hirst and Graham Thompson, *Globalization in Question* (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 1996), p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Rolf Hackmann, *U.S. Trade, FDI and Global Competitiveness* (New York: International Business Press, 1997), pp. 6-10 and 412-413.

<sup>3</sup> I would like to thank Marcela Osnaya for gathering the statistics used in this section.

<sup>4</sup> Jorge Mattar and Claudia Schatan, "El comercio intraindustrial e intrafirma México-Estados Unidos," *Comercio Exterior* 43, no. 2 (Mexico City), February 1993.

<sup>5</sup> Data developed using information from the Banco de México (<http://www.banxico.org.mx>).

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## Siglo XXI Editores



### LOS 100 GRANDES POEMAS DE ESPAÑA Y AMÉRICA

JULIO ORTEGA

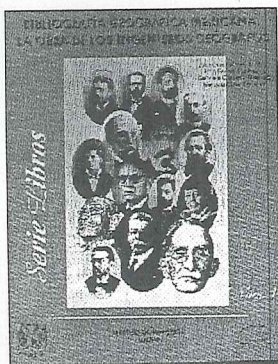


El fin de siglo ha prodigado las revisiones del canon literario, así como los balances y las revaloraciones. Esa actividad seguramente hace patente la precariedad de los juicios literarios y la fugacidad del gusto, pero también la necesidad del lector de elegir por su cuenta y hacer más pertinente la actualidad de su lectura. Recogiendo ese desafío, Julio Ortega se ha propuesto convocar al lector a elegir *los cien grandes poemas de España y América*. Para ello procedió a revisar buena parte de sus antologías de la poesía española latinoamericana, y constató una suerte de consenso crítico sobre ciertos poemas elegidos como fundadores o fundamentales. Esa parte de la "memoria" poética, sin embargo, le resultó insuficiente, ya que nuestra actualidad, y hasta nuestro sentido del futuro, según nos supone, están hechos con los instrumentos de una poética más inmediata, que no se propone confirmar el museo o el archivo sino afirmar los procesos del presente y los anuncios del devenir. De allí que en lugar de los "mejores" poemas, que confirman lo que ya sabemos. Ortega se anima a proponernos aquí los "grandes" poemas, aquellos que son o serán memorables, pero que sólo tienen sentido porque siguen construyendo, desde la lectura, este presente cuestionado, este futuro imaginable y quizá compartible. Por eso, en lugar de otro libro en la biblioteca, éste quiere ser una herramienta para que el lenguaje diga y haga más con las palabras.

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# PUBLICACIONES UNAM



## Bibliografía Geográfica Mexicana. La obra de los ingenieros geógrafos

José Omar Moncada Maya y otros  
Instituto de Geografía  
Serie Libros, Núm. 1  
1999, 259 págs.

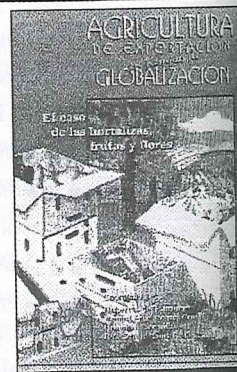
Este trabajo tiene el propósito de dar a conocer la obra escrita de los geógrafos, mostrando que de ninguna manera se limitaron a la cartografía, sino que, por su amplia formación científica, pudieron hacer contribuciones en diferentes disciplinas, tales como astronomía, matemáticas, física y geodesia. No obstante el reducido número de personas que obtuvieron el título de ingenieros geógrafos, la mayoría desempeñó un papel importante en la vida cultural y política del país. La bibliografía sobre dieciocho creadores y la antología de veinte textos de sus escritos que aquí se presentan es una muestra del desarrollo profesional alcanzado por esos expertos, que se dio en diversas instituciones, tanto de docencia como de investigación. Su participación en ellas les facilitó la posibilidad de dar a conocer los resultados de su trabajo en las revistas científicas de mayor prestigio, tanto nacionales como internacionales, debido a que eran los órganos de difusión de las principales sociedades científicas, de las cuales la mayoría de los ingenieros geógrafos eran miembros destacados.

## Agricultura de exportación en tiempos de globalización. El caso de las hortalizas, frutas y legumbres

Hubert C. de Grammont, Manuel Ángel Gómez Cruz, Humberto González, Rita Schwentesius Rindermann: Coordinación  
Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales

Centro de Investigaciones Económicas, Sociales y Tecnológicas de la Agroindustria y la Agricultura Mundial  
Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social  
1999, 378 págs.

Se presentan once trabajos que estudian diversas facetas de la problemática socioeconómica de cultivos que se comercializan frescos en los mercados nacional y de exportación. Para las empresas de pequeña, mediana y gran escala que los producen y/o comercializan es una realidad habitual la integración del mercado nacional con el mercado de otros países, tomando en cuenta las oportunidades y restricciones de un comercio abierto a las importaciones de otros países. Se ofrecen distintos niveles de análisis: economía política, estudio comparativo, examen de casos y cadenas de producción y distribución sobre una amplia gama de productos: jitomate, pepino, calabaza, chile Bell, cebolla, aguacate, naranja, hortalizas orgánicas, flores, entre otros.



## Servicio de Prensa Mexicana. Abril 1992-diciembre 1998

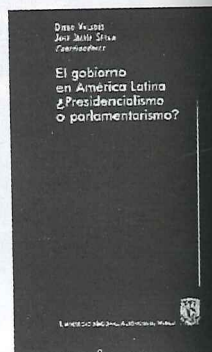
Hemeroteca Nacional de México  
Instituto de Investigaciones Bibliográficas  
1999, edición en CD

El disco compacto SERPREMEX (Servicio de Prensa Mexicana) es un producto electrónico que sistematiza y sintetiza los contenidos de la prensa mexicana que resguarda la Hemeroteca Nacional de México. La indización de cinco periódicos y dos revistas de circulación nacional - *Excélsior*, *La jornada*, *El nacional*, *Reforma*, *Uno más uno*, *Nexos* y *Vuelta* - comprende los últimos siete años (1992-1998) del quehacer político, económico y social del país, tanto en el aspecto informativo como en el de opinión. La elección de las publicaciones tuvo como base la demanda de su consulta por parte de los usuarios de la Hemeroteca. El objetivo de SERPREMEX es poner a disposición del público en general, vía Internet o mediante consulta en red en las instalaciones de la Hemeroteca Nacional, la información y los comentarios periodísticos que se generan en torno al momento de transición que vive nuestro país en su nueva etapa histórica. Las referencias hemerográficas están clasificadas en los siguientes temas y subtemas: Sistema político, cuestiones agrarias, cuestiones laborales, derechos humanos, ecología, economía, educación, relaciones Estado-iglesias, Tratado de Libre Comercio. El acceso a la información tiene múltiples entradas: por autor, por publicación, por rango de fechas, por temas y subtemas y por palabras clave o descriptores.

## El gobierno en América Latina ¿Presidencialismo o parlamentarismo?

Diego Valadés y José María Serna: Coordinación  
Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas  
Serie Doctrina Jurídica, Núm. 23  
2000, 255 págs.

En los últimos años se ha dado una amplia discusión sobre la forma de gobierno en América Latina y, dentro de ese tema, respecto a algunos de los sistemas presidenciales que existen en el continente, los cuales buscan el equilibrio de poderes que fortalezca los sistemas democráticos actuales. De acuerdo con la realidad de cada uno de los países del continente y para profundizar sobre el tema, la presente obra nos presenta las propuestas de algunos tratadistas que han intervenido en dicho debate. Los trabajos que se incluyen en este volumen fueron presentados con motivo del Seminario Internacional sobre Forma de Gobierno en América Latina, llevado a cabo del 15 al 19 de marzo de 1999. Los temas que se refieren a nuestro país son: México: ¿sistema presidencial o parlamentario? Una segunda generación de reformas: la gobernabilidad. El sistema semipresidencial de Argentina y la reforma del Estado en México. La elección del presidente como parte de la renovación constitucional.



# University and Politics in Mexico

## The UNAM Conflict

Hugo Casanova Cardiel\*  
Roberto Rodríguez Gómez\*

When in February 1999 a group of students announced their disagreement with the tuition hike at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), Mexico's main university and the largest in Latin America, very few analysts imagined that the student strike that followed would become the UNAM's most serious crisis in modern Mexico.

For 10 months, almost all the university facilities were in the hands of the student group called the General Strike Council (CGH), and not only did the conflict in the UNAM become sharper and sharper, but it also involved other aspects of Mexican public life willy-nilly. Despite the fact that the strike ended in February 2000 when a recently formed police force, the Federal Preventive Police, retook the university and handed it over to university officials, the conflict continues and awaits a negotiated solution between UNAM authorities and the student group opposed to the institutional reforms.

We can put forward some critical factors for characterizing the conflict. In the first place, the list of six student demands continually expands, involving other problems on Mexico's political map, like the capital city's urban community movement.

At the same time, the conflict has felt the impact of different national political phenomena,

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\*\* Researcher at the UNAM Center for University Studies.



Antonio Nava/AE

among which the 2000 presidential race is one of the most important. The presidential candidates, the parties and other political forces have made statements at different times during the conflict, whether in favor or against CGH demands and supporting or rejecting university officials' actions.

In addition, anyone who expressed an opinion almost inevitably became a protagonist in the conflict. Thus, figures from Mexican political life, intellectuals, spokespersons for big business, the media, nongovernmental organizations and even the Catholic Church have been compelled by the dynamic of the conflict itself to take a stand, thus increasing its complexity and

Mexico applied a series of reforms to its higher education system over the last 20 years. Financial restrictions and a modernizing discourse began to create a new identity of higher education as a whole, a process which of course was not without its tensions and disputes.

raising it to the level of a national crisis. We should emphasize that it is an ongoing, as yet unsolved conflict, and therefore we must be particularly careful in analyzing its causes, its evolution and its possible effects.

#### THE TECHNOCRATIC REFORM OF MEXICO'S HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

We have to look back to the 1980s for the most important precedents of Mexico's current development model: the problems that would come to the fore in 1999-2000 originated then.

Like other countries of the world, Mexico applied a series of reforms to the higher education system over the last 20 years, eventually touching on each one of our universities. Financial restrictions and a modernizing discourse began to create a new identity of higher education as a whole, a process which, of course, was not without its tensions and disputes.

On the level of the relationship between university and the state, the idea was to formulate a new "contract," and to that end, a series of forms of evaluation and new criteria for funding were developed. At the same time, conditions for redefining the relationship between the university and society were established. Institutions were compelled to create greater links with society's problems, to transform themselves internally and devise better procedures for accountability. The need to increase society's participation in financing higher education, until then almost exclusively subsidized by the government, was also put forward.

In the mid-1980s, the federal government made decisions that affected the profile of the university system by slowing public university growth and stimulating the participation of the private sector.<sup>1</sup> In the 1990s higher education policy included relative growth of overall enrollment based on strengthening the technological sector and increased availability of private universities; lower government spending; and changes in institutional norms and organization based on a model structured for efficiency.

It is important to point out here that the opening up of Mexico's economy and political life, its linking up to international bodies like the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), brought productivity focuses for Mexico's higher education that jibed with the corresponding international bodies' recommendations.<sup>2</sup>

UNAM institutional policy stayed in step with government policies for those two decades. In that context, UNAM authorities have continued their relations with the federal government at the cost of a relative distancing from academic communities. Beginning in the 1980s, different conflicts arose and Rectors Jorge Carpizo in 1986 and José Sarukhán in 1992 had to stop their respective reforms. Basically, students were successful in maintaining free tuition in the UNAM and, for students graduating from UNAM high schools, automatic admittance to university level studies.<sup>3</sup>

## THE 1999-2000 CRISIS

At the end of the 1990s, Mexico's situation was complex, combining both structural and temporary problems. The transition to democracy still has its dark corners and the state lumbers on with minimum legitimacy. On the political scene, several things should be taken into account: the bank bail-out, an economic question that turned into a political problem; the conflicts caused by armed groups in southern Mexico; the victory of the opposition Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) in the elections for the governorship of Mexico City; and splits and regroupments in the left and right opposition. Naturally, however, the first stirrings in 1999 of the race for the presidency were the defining factor for the political atmosphere of the time.

The economic disparity between rich and poor deepened, and government policy was manifestly incapable of alleviating the deterioration in living conditions or making a dent in the poverty of the majority of the population. Federal spending was cut three times, in January, March and July 1998, due to the drop in international oil prices. These cuts did not keep the country from servicing its foreign and internal debt, but they did affect social spending. Among the items hit was the budget for higher education, which was docked 8 percent.

In late 1998, the background for Rector Francisco Barnés' proposal to increase UNAM student tuition was the adjustment in the budget. In addition, it was no different from the tuition policies implemented by the rest of the country's public universities from the 1980s on. An interesting fact is that when the UNAM announced its tuition hike, it was the only remaining Mexican university that was practically free for its students. Lastly, it should not be forgotten that among the 1996 OECD recommendations to the Mexican government for reforming the higher education system was that of "accompanying the increase in student contributions to the cost of their educations with the development of a scholarship program."<sup>4</sup>

## THE PHASES OF THE CONFLICT

The UNAM conflict has gone through three phases: 1) *Rise* (February-May 1999). This phase began with the expectation by the university reformers that the conflict would not deepen and the positioning of the different student groups. Chronologically, it goes from the announcement of the proposed reform to the proposal to repeal the General Payments Regulation. The reform itself would have basically increased tuition per semester from Mex\$0.20 to Mex\$1,300 for high school and Mex\$2,100 for undergraduate stud-



Antonio Nava/AE

Current UNAM Rector Juan Ramón de la Fuente.

ies (at a time when the U.S. dollar was worth 10 pesos). This decision was made in the traditional manner: after consulting exclusively the university collective bodies and, as we shall see, it was implemented without achieving sufficient consensus. The argumentation on which it was based spoke essentially to the economic viability of the project, and only in the second place to academic questions. The political estimate of reactions to the reform was obviously wrong, and the blossoming student movement grew stronger.

The institutional sector—and probably the government—was confident and sought to convince by presenting the community with a *fait accompli*. The press published opinions to the effect that the left had been consulted, emphasizing that it supported university authorities in

the matter. The appreciation was that traditionally critical sectors were outside the UNAM (in the Mexico City government or busy with partisan activities) and that they would not intervene. Other voices, however, did question both the decision and the way it was implemented, although as yet without success.<sup>5</sup>

On April 20 the student strike broke out; while Rector Barnés stated to the news weekly *Proceso* that he was “prepared for a long strike,” the General Strike Council (CGH) said, “We can last.” The CGH put forward four demands:

- Abrogation of the new General Payments Regulation (which stipulated the tuition hike)

In late 1998, the background for Rector Francisco Barnés’ proposal to increase UNAM student tuition was the adjustment in the budget. An interesting fact is that when the UNAM announced its tuition hike, it was the only remaining Mexican university that was practically free for its students.

- No retaliation against strikers
- Rescheduling of classes missed during the strike
- Holding a university congress with decision-making power.

Soon, two more demands would be added:

- Repeal of the 1997 reforms (that limited automatic admission to the university for UNAM high school graduates)
- Severing of UNAM ties to CENEVAL (a private body that accredits and evaluates to select which applicants will be admitted to the country’s high schools and undergraduate university programs).

2) *Confrontation* (May–November 1999). This phase began with the out-and-out clash between university authorities and the activists who held the university facilities. Divisions inside the CGH also deepened and the limits of university institutionality began to show. There was no effective leadership in the UNAM conflict and the officials and academic groups were noticeably disperse. The CGH gained strength

vis-à-vis the authorities, but conflicts also began to arise within it, conflicts that would lead to the expulsion of groups accused of being “moderate” and to the incorporation of social organizations totally divorced academically from the university.

In this phase, the University Council accepted the modification of the General Payments Regulation originally approved in March, which essentially meant that tuition once again became voluntary. The CGH, however, would no longer accept this solution and insisted that all its demands be met.

During the strike, several schools held extramural classes. CGH activity concentrated on trying to prevent them. However, most of the students who went to class outside official classrooms passed by taking special exams.

The inability of the CGH and university authorities to come to an agreement led groups of intellectuals and well-known academics to take action as mediators, proposing several different ways out. This fanned hopes of a solution and was even backed by the rector’s office, but was finally rejected by the CGH which, from then on, demanded to be recognized as the “only spokesperson” for solving the conflict.

The position of Mexico’s president, Ernesto Zedillo, was very important at this juncture: he called those who requested the intervention of police forces “barbarians” and demanded that members of the university community explain what they meant by “applying the rule of law.” The ministers of the interior and education and the attorney general confined themselves to calling for harmony and saying that the state’s position was one of “non-intervention” in university matters.

Isolated by the state, although he continued to enjoy the support of the University Council, Rector Barnés presented his resignation in November 1999.

3) *Containment and new scenarios*. We are still in the third phase, one of containment of the conflict (November 1999–May 2000). It has brought the participation of the federal govern-

ment, police and an important part of the academic community who agreed with keeping the conflict within bounds. The UNAM Board of Governors named Juan Ramón de la Fuente, until then Mexico's minister of health, as the new rector.

De la Fuente took office with the explicit commitment to foster dialogue and negotiate a way out by consensus. He set up a dialogue in which CGH and UNAM representatives participated. He also held numerous meetings with different academic communities to try to come up with a collective proposal. After agreeing with the CGH on the conditions and format for a dialogue with binding results, the rector's office presented a general proposal to carry out a university congress in which all the CGH demands would be discussed.

The university authorities also offered to put a lid on all the reforms that had caused the conflict until after the congress. In exchange, they requested the university grounds and buildings be returned and that academic activities be renewed. The CGH rejected the proposal, and the rector put it to the vote in a university plebiscite in January 2000. The results were favorable: the vast majority of the university community who voted supported the rector's proposal, seeing it as a way to end the conflict. Striking student groups questioned how representative the plebiscite was, stating that only half the university community had participated.

Under these circumstances and after a few attempts to renew the dialogue, on February 6 the Federal Preventive Police occupied the UNAM. One thousand students were arrested during the police operation, the facilities were returned to the authorities and activities were renewed in University City and other schools, although not without some difficulties.

Little by little most of the arrested students have been freed. The president assumed responsibility for the intervention of the federal police and the rector called for reconciliation. Activities resumed Monday, February 14, although some groups of strikers continued to try to take

over university buildings again. In May, dialogue resumed between the authorities and the CGH, but with no positive results. Students continue to stage sudden take-overs of some schools and are keeping up the political pressure. The university congress is by no means a certainty.

#### POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

This conflict has had many repercussions, both for the UNAM and all UNAM participants and externally, including the state, political parties and society at large.



Octavio Nava/AE

In the university sphere, the most visible problems are the loss of two semesters of classes, many students' abandoning their studies and the paralysis and slow-down in the country's most important research center. Other effects are the unprecedented polarization of the university community; the break in different levels of institutional codes of coexistence; and the community's wariness with regard to institutional decisions.

Externally, the electoral process itself has been influenced by the university conflict: the candidates from the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) became involved in the movement and that has affected their campaigns. In the end, President Zedillo's administration had to

make the decision to use force to open the university. The Mexico City government has also been accused of influencing one of the sectors of the student movement and negotiating behind the strikers' backs. Paradoxically, given that the movement considers itself progressive and close to the left, the party that has been most negatively affected by the conflict has been the PRD, since one of its most important arenas is the university and it has paid a higher price than its political adversaries.

More broadly speaking, Mexico's left and intellectuals have also suffered and been noticeably divided as a result of the conflict. Business

In the university sphere, the most visible problems are the loss of two semesters of classes, many students' abandoning their studies and the slow-down in the country's most important research center. Externally, the electoral process itself has been influenced by the university conflict.

and religious groups have questioned the role of the UNAM, and the legislature initially attempted to act as a mediator, but was totally unsuccessful.

At this writing, we can say there is an impasse in the university crisis. Both the rector's office and the CGH are facing a series of dilemmas, the unraveling of which will define the direction the conflict will take and its eventual solution. Above all, the rector of the UNAM will have to decide between hastening the activities to prepare for the university congress or waiting in hope of a more favorable balance of forces. The CGH, for its part, is not interested in taking its demands to a congress organized by university authorities, but rather aims to achieve them through a direct dialogue in which binding decisions can be made with the rector's representatives.

If UNAM authorities manage to rally the different currents of opinion in the university community around the need to hold a congress as the only way out of the crisis, this could be the final solution. With or without a congress, how-

ever, we should expect CGH activism to continue indefinitely, including actions to block the full reestablishment of normal academic operations and institutional governability.

In the context of a highly complex political situation and given the most competitive presidential elections in 70 years, the UNAM's 1999-2000 crisis has had an impact on both the elections themselves and on the domestic and foreign image of the current administration. As we pointed out in the beginning of the article, it has been the most serious crisis in the contemporary history of the UNAM. It is the responsibility of the members of the university community, but also of the holders of public office, to create the conditions to solve it and ensure that the institution recover its academic stature. Whatever the eventual solution to the conflict, it must be kept in mind that the UNAM's future as an institution is at stake, and that, in a broader sense, the end of the university conflict will help define the direction that Mexico's political and social processes will take. ■■■

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> In 1986, guidelines were announced to control public university growth: a) Universities with more than 35,000 students should stop expanding; b) Those with an enrollment of between 15,000 and 35,000 should aim for moderate growth; c) Those with fewer than 15,000 students could grow up to 25 percent. ANUIES, *Programa Integral para el Desarrollo Educativo (PROIDES)* (Mexico City: ANUIES, 1993).

<sup>2</sup> For example, in the document "Seguimiento de las reseñas de políticas educativas nacionales" (Follow-up on Reviews of National Educational Policies), published by Mexico's Public Education Ministry in April 2000, the Mexican government reports to the OECD its advances in the implementation of 1996 OECD recommendations (see <http://se-sic.sep.gob.mx/ocde/>).

<sup>3</sup> The UNAM offers three different levels of education: high school, undergraduate degrees and graduate programs. UNAM high school graduates have the prerogative to go right on to undergraduate college-level studies at the UNAM without taking an entrance exam.

<sup>4</sup> OECD, *Examen de la política educativa de México* (Paris: OECD, 1996).

<sup>5</sup> Among others, the Union of UNAM Workers (STUNAM), some academic groups and, in general, the organized left.



# Corruption in Mexico Looking to the Future

Antonio Santiago Becerra\*

Corruption is by no means a modern evil. Historical evidence shows that it is at least as old as the Egyptian invention of the scales, later to become the symbol of impartial justice. Some researchers date the oldest signs of corruption in the ancient world at about 3000 B.C., when the idea that the population should not be forced to make offerings in return for government actions began to gain currency.

Age-old adages and proverbs also reflect the popular vision of corruption and what goes along with it; “Opportunity makes the thief,” for example, or, “There is not the thickness of a sixpence between good and evil,” are common sentiments. Judging by both these sayings, the *vox populi* seems convinced that the dikes containing corruption are not built with ethical principles, but with arrangements and measures that eliminate or at least abate the possibility of making off with other people’s property.

Scholars argue, however, that just as important as creating policies against corruption is seeking a change in individuals’ attitudes. For example, writer Federico Reyes Heróles, president of the Mexican chapter of Transparency International, says, “If societies do not change their values, if they do not foster personal integrity, corruption will always find a breeding ground for it to rear its head and reproduce.”<sup>1</sup> Solid ethical values and behavioral norms would make illicit wealth unacceptable to many people in society. The other great antidote against corruption is public policy, on which we will center our attention for the Mexican case. In this country, the fight against corruption was a central

part of the debate and proposals during the year 2000 presidential campaigns.

## INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CONTROL

In Mexico, anti-corruption policies are applied through two types of budget controls. One is the internal, or self-control that each of the branches of government exercises. In the executive branch, internal control is enforced by the Ministry of the Controller and Administrative Development (Secodam); in the legislative branch, by an internal controller’s office; and in the judicial branch, by the Federal Judiciary Council.

Since the executive branch spends most of the federal budget, it merits a closer look at its internal control. To carry out its duties, the Secodam depends in turn on the internal control mechanisms set up for each body of the federal government.

Secodam has the right to freely appoint and dismiss officials, controllers and the heads of the areas of complaints, auditing and the departments which decide and apply penalties (called in Mexico, the “responsibilities area”). The administrative authority that the law gives to these internal controllers and the heads of the “responsibilities area” enables them to apply all types of administrative and economic penalties to public servants guilty of wrongdoing; it also gives them the power to directly bring charges before the corresponding district or state’s attorney when they suspect a crime has been committed.

Now, the other type of control over public funds is external, the responsibility of the Chamber of Deputies. The Chamber of Deputies has a tech-

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\* Political analyst.

nical body called the Finance Controller's Office, which has jurisdiction over the executive, judicial and legislative branches. Since it is the highest monitoring authority, it is responsible for reviewing the federal government's public accounts and, federally, for one of the essential rules for maintaining a democracy: ensuring the accountability of government officials.

In Mexico, both internal and external controls have traditionally had to deal with a complicated tangle of administrative corruption, irregularities linked to the violations of norms and the abuses committed by public servants for their own benefit or that of third parties.

#### CORRUPTION LEVELS

In Mexico, both internal and external controls have traditionally had to deal with a complicated tangle of administrative corruption, irregularities linked to the violations of norms and the abuses committed by public servants for their own benefit or that of third parties. The spectrum of corrupt practices detected over the years is considerable. Just as examples, we can cite arrangements with private companies so they can pad their invoices for goods or services sold to the government; charging for work that has not been done or goods that have not been delivered at all; setting up dummy companies that simulate being intermediaries; or accepting fake receipts to cover items in the budget. Transparency International's 1999 Perception of Corruption Index (IPC) put Mexico in fifty-eighth place among the 99 countries it examined, with 3.4 points on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 10 (extremely honest), tying with Byelorussia, China, Latvia and Senegal.<sup>2</sup> This implies that, according to the perceptions of businessmen, risk analysts and the general public, of the 99 countries scrutinized, 57 had fewer problems of corruption than Mexico, and 41 had more.

Thus, internationally, Mexico is not on the extreme end of the spectrum, but that does not

mean it is not a concern for Mexicans. Quite to the contrary, fighting corruption to the very core is one of the most recurrent social demands in Mexico, and political parties of all stripes often put it among the basic planks of their electoral platforms and strategies.

We can get a better idea of the Mexican case if we situate it in the Latin American context, which allows us to compare it to countries whose history, culture and level of economic development are closer to Mexico's than those of the United States, Canada, Europe and the rest of the world. The IPC estimates that Guatemala, Nicaragua, Argentina, Colombia, Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Honduras suffer from more corruption than Mexico. Chile (which occupies position 19, between the United States and Israel), Costa Rica, Peru, Uruguay, Brazil, El Salvador and Jamaica are cited as having less.

#### THE FUTURE

Since Mexico's corruption levels continue to be a concern, the question we must answer is, what innovations in public policy are being put forward to deepen the fight against it? The answer to this essential question must necessarily take into consideration the two levels of control that we have already mentioned. In terms of internal controls, we will have to wait for the new administration to take office on December 1, 2000, when it will formulate its overall plan to confront this problem.

We can already say that whoever is elected president July 2 will have to deepen the fight against administrative corruption, for his results will exert a powerful influence on whether that same political force will win the following presidential elections in 2006.

With regard to external controls and the accountability of government officials for their spending of public funds, in 1999 a transcendental step was taken that will have a profound impact on the efficacy and credibility of monitoring in Mexico: the Chamber of Deputies' Federal Con-

troller's Bureau was created. The constitutional amendment that created this technical body officially became law July 30, 1999, when it was published in the official gazette, and went into effect January 1, 2000.<sup>3</sup> The new body will replace the Finance Controller's Office, which, although it has existed since 1824, never achieved credibility as a monitoring body in the eyes of either the other branches of government nor Mexican society as a whole. What is more, very few Mexicans even know of its existence or what its attributions are.

A question, therefore, inevitably arises: What is different about the Federal Controller's Bureau that might lead us to think that government officials will now be made accountable in an atmosphere of institutional credibility and public trust?

Truth to tell, before looking at the attributes of the new institution, we must examine the changes around it. This transformation can be summarized in the following way: the Chamber of Deputies, traditionally a quasi-monopoly because of the overwhelming presence of legislators from the party in power, is now not only pluralist, but also the scene of lively political rivalry, to the degree that today most deputies are from the opposition. This unprecedented plurality, which seems at least essentially irreversible, has made for greater interest on the part of legislators in strengthening the accountability process, fostering its effectiveness and evaluating the results of its functioning.

The amendment to the Constitution gives the new Federal Controller's Bureau a great deal of technical and operating autonomy, which implies a substantial change in the dependence that the previous body had vis-à-vis the Chamber of Deputies. This innovation is highly significant because it will permit the new bureau to carry out its technical activities free from any pressure or partisan orientation that could bias the selection, planning and execution of its audits.

The way the head of this body is designated is another fundamental aspect of its independence. The Chamber of Deputies will elect him/her

by a two-thirds vote of members attending the session. The current head was approved by 74 percent vote of the deputies present in the session the day of the vote. This means that whoever heads up the bureau has no reason to feel specially indebted to any of the parties in Congress.

With regard to auditing functions, the constitutional amendment also establishes that the

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new bureau will be in charge of examining income and expenditures after the fact; management, custody and application of funds and resources of the different branches of the federal government and public enterprises; and achieving federal program objectives.

This is a reflection of legislators' interest in broadening out the audits to activities involving the performance of public functions. That is to say, reviews will not only involve financial aspects such as proving and justifying spending, but will include government programs. The aim here will be to verify that they are completed both in time and content, that they actually offer the quality services they were supposed to and that they reach their goals in terms of numbers of beneficiaries. This is a great leap toward review capabilities including the evaluation of efficiency levels in the use of public funds. We should remember that society is not only damaged by illicit but also by inefficient use of funds. Another positive thing about the legislation is allowing the auditing body in exceptional situations to require the institution or individuals it is scrutinizing to review the items it considers pertinent and to account for them, regardless of whether they report annually or not. This opens up the possibility of acting in a more timely fashion to avoid anomalous situations becom-

ing worse. A fundamental innovation is that the Federal Controller's Bureau will be able to fix blame directly on public servants when a review or audit reveals that the public trust has been violated. Until now, the auditing body has only been authorized to formulate observations and recommendations.

Lastly, another important question is that once the bureau turns in its report to the Chamber of Deputies, it will be made public. This shows that the underlying spirit of the reform is the intention that the media and society at large should be informed down to the last details about the accountability process to make sure it is both legal and fulfills its ends.

At this point we should remember how Norberto Bobbio correctly defined democracy: as "the government of public power in public." Thus, insofar as management and monitoring of the funds that belong to Mexican society are made public, the media and social organizations

will be given enormous potential for participating in Mexico's democratic development. ■■■

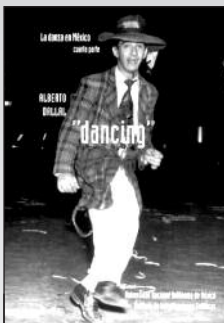
NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Federico Reyes Heróles, *Memoria del 1er Foro Internacional sobre Fiscalización Superior* (Mexico City: Contaduría Mayor de Hacienda de la Cámara de Diputados, 1999), p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> Transparency International explains that the Perception of Corruption Index (PCI) classifies countries according to how different sectors of society perceive corruption among public officials and politicians. The 1999 PCI is based on 17 different canvasses and surveys done by 10 independent institutions among businessmen, the general public and country experts. At least three surveys are done for each country.

<sup>3</sup> Given that regulatory legislation has not yet been passed, however, the Chamber of Deputies' Finance Controller's Office continues to function.

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# Will the Colombian Remedy Work in Mexico?

Silvia Elena Vélez Quero\*

Last December 5, President Clinton signed the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act into law.<sup>1</sup> In effect as of January 1, 2000, it mandates several U.S. federal agencies and departments to publish every June 1 a list of the world's most important drug traffickers and the companies and businessmen associated with them.<sup>2</sup> Proposed by Senators Paul Coverdell of Georgia and Dianne Feinstein of California, the law aims to isolate identified drug traffickers. Clinton himself will make his own call in selecting "the most important drug traffickers from countries like Afghanistan, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, Thailand and Mexico,"<sup>3</sup> and the companies somehow linked to them.

The law's main objectives are 1) to put drug kingpins out of business; 2) to strengthen the government's efforts to identify the assets, financial networks, and business associates of major foreign narcotics trafficking groups in an effort to disrupt these criminal organizations and bankrupt their leaderships; 3) to combat the insidious effect of drug trafficking; and 4) to punish some of the worst criminals alive today.

As Senator Coverdell puts it, "Taking legitimate U.S. dollars out of drug dealers' pockets is a vital step in destroying

their ability to traffic narcotics across our borders. This is a bold but necessary tool to fight the war on drugs."<sup>4</sup> These objectives are said to be founded on the successes of President Clinton's Executive Order 12978,<sup>5</sup> put into practice in 1995 against four Colombian drug traffickers and their associ-

Drug traffickers have applied chemical technology to cocaine to disguise it, developing a new product, "Black cocaine", odorless and transparent. This will facilitate its illegal sale and make detection more difficult.

ates. Basing itself on national security considerations, this order blocked financial, commercial and business deals by 150 companies and 300 individuals involved in the ownership and management of the Colombian drug cartels' "legitimate" businesses, from poultry farms to pharmacies, which were financially isolated by banks and other genuine companies.<sup>6</sup> This also affected the four criminals' relatives and partners since bank and financial accounts of both individuals and companies were confiscated or frozen.

The Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act broadens its field of action to the whole world and regulates the actions applied to Colombia under the executive order. The ample powers that this law confers include, among many others, investigating, regulating or banning "any transactions in foreign exchange, currency, or securities, transfer of credit or payments between, by, through, or to any banking institution."<sup>7</sup> Its targets are those foreign companies or individuals designated as "materially assisting in, or providing financial or technological support for or to, or providing goods or services in support of, the international narcotics trafficking activities of a significant foreign narcotics trafficker so identified."<sup>8</sup> It also zeroes in on any foreign person that the secretary of the treasury—in consultation with the attorney general, the secretaries of state and defense, and the heads of the CIA, the FBI and the DEA—"...designates as owned, controlled, or directed by, or acting for or on behalf of, a significant foreign narcotics trafficker so identified."<sup>9</sup>

If the "success" obtained in Colombia is measured in the United States solely in terms of the number of drug traffickers and other individuals and companies affected, the number of frozen bank accounts, etc., it is not very spectacular. This evaluation criteria is much more linked to U.S. elections

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than to the National Drug Control Strategy 1999's five goals since:

a) It does not increase the safety of America's citizens by substantially reducing drug-related crime and violence (goal 2).<sup>10</sup> If, as we think, the equation [availability of drugs + growing consumption = crime and violence] persists, it is useful to know that in the United States, drug abuse has grown among adolescents.<sup>11</sup> Also, "the use of illicit drugs among eighth graders is up 150 percent over the past five years."<sup>12</sup>

b) This kind of evaluation has also not reduced the health and social costs of illegal drug use to the public (goal 3): drug-related deaths in the United States rose from 9,463 in 1990 to 14,843 in 1996 and drug-related hospital emergencies rose to record highs, in excess of 500,000 a year.<sup>13</sup>

c) It has not shielded America's air, land and sea frontiers from the drug threat (goal 4), if, as McCaffrey says, the state of affairs in Colombia has deteriorated to an emergency. Cocaine production will grow even more in the immediate future and flood U.S. towns, cities and streets.<sup>14</sup>

d) It has not eliminated foreign and domestic drug sources (goal 5) if Colombian coca and poppy crops have increased 222 percent in the last four years despite the "military treatment" of drug trafficking there; if Colombia's economic, political and social instability becomes more severe every day; if, as some U.S. congresspersons say, Colombia's situation is the main threat to security and stability in the hemisphere.<sup>15</sup>

In my view, the implementation of the executive order did not decrease drug trafficking. It only —temporarily?— got some individuals and companies out of the business. What is more,



Photos by Tomás Bravo/Imagerlatina

Every year, Mexico's certification by the U.S. Congress causes irritation in Mexican society.

its failure has created new, bigger problems because the already difficult fight against drug trafficking in Colombia is further complicated for the United States by the close link between the drug lords and guerrilla movements and paramilitary organizations. This is because, "The bulk of our [U.S.] effort...is to provide in many ways the critical military equipment required to deal with the special facets of the problem in Colombia."<sup>16</sup> This is all happening at a time when, as Undersecretary of State Thomas Pickering said recently, the anti-drug decisions implemented by Washington are having a direct or indirect impact on the conflict with the guerrillas, as the dividing line between counterinsurgency measures and actions in the fight against drug trafficking becomes more and more blurred.<sup>17</sup> The seriousness of the situation in Colombia is such that the U.S. Congress has approved U.S.\$1.6 billion for the Colombia Plan.

It is also probable that some of the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act's objectives will not be reached in

the medium term, since drug traffickers have applied today's chemical technology to cocaine to disguise it, developing a new product. "Black cocaine" is odorless and transparent, although it sometimes comes with color added (red, black, yellow or blue).<sup>18</sup> These new characteristics will facilitate its illegal sale and make detection even more difficult.

#### COLOMBIA'S "REMEDY" IN MEXICO?

So, is Colombia's "remedy" really the prescription for Mexico? The new law will have a greater impact on Mexico than any other country because of its geographical location, its long common border with the United States and its rapid geopolitical, economic, commercial, financial and social integration with the U.S. One of the possible consequences is the threat to NAFTA and Mexico's success as the U.S.'s second trade partner due to the cancellation of vitally important import-export transactions upon which the majority of new



Drug trafficking might have destabilizing effects for Mexico-U.S. relations.

jobs and their permanence depends. There may also be a chain of damages that will affect other key sectors of our economy, which evidence optimistic but clearly fragile statistics.

We should also remember that Mexico-U.S. trade is 20 times greater than Colombia-U.S. trade, and therefore, the potential risk is 20 times greater.<sup>19</sup> The financial panorama looks even more complex given the symbiosis between the Mexican and U.S. banking systems and the enormous sensitivity of Mexico's stock market.<sup>20</sup>

It should be pointed out that the time limits stipulated by the new law (June 1 for publishing the first list of kingpins and companies and July 1 for Congress reviewing its implementation) could be thought of as having been "hatched in Hell" and calculated to break up the delicate atmosphere of Mexico's national elections, adding greater tension just prior to the July 2 balloting.

The publication of the lists of the kingpins and the companies and individuals involved with them comes in

the midst of our hazardous transition to democracy. Its unilateral nature causes irritation in Mexican society. And, even though it is directed against individuals and not countries, its predictable economic destabilizing effects herald a greater deterioration of Mexico's delicate political and social situation.

So, is Colombia's "remedy" really just what the doctor ordered for Mexico? We shall see. ■■■

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Congress passed it November 5, 1999, as part of the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000.

<sup>2</sup> These include Departments of the Treasury (through its Office of Foreign Assets Control, OFAC), Justice and State, and agencies like the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

<sup>3</sup> *Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000-Conference*, S.R. 14951, 106th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 145, no. 165 daily ed. (19 November 1999). Hereafter, I will refer to this document as the IAAFY2000-Conference (<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query>).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> This order allowed for the use of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) to sanction four international drug traffickers and their organizations operating out of Colombia. H.R. 3164, 106th Cong., 1st sess., p. 2, lines 17-23.

<sup>6</sup> IAAFY2000-Conference, *op. cit.*, Senator Paul Coverdell's statement.

<sup>7</sup> H. R. 3164, 106th Cong., 1st sess., p. 15, lines 4-8.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11, lines 11-22.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12, lines 1-2 and 7-9.

<sup>10</sup> White House, Office of National Drug Control Policy, Appendix: "Drug Related Data," *National Drug Control Strategy*, 1999 (Washington D.C.: n.p., 1999), *passim*.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, Table 8, p. 117.

<sup>12</sup> *Legislate*, Report for the 106th Congress (28 April 1999). Prepared Statement of Brian E. Sheridan, principal deputy assistant secretary of defense, before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Emerging Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee, April 27, 1999.

<sup>13</sup> *Legislate*, Report for the 106th Congress (28 April 1999). Testimony of Barry R. McCaffrey, director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Emerging Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee, April 27, 1999.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Ricardo Vargas, "Informe," *El Espectador* (Bogota), 6 October 1999, quoted in "'Narcoterrorismo' en Colombia declara el gobierno estadounidense," *Excelsior* (Mexico City), 7 October 1999, p. 2A.

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Department of State, *U.S. Support for Plan Colombia*, Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (<http://www.state.gov/www/regions/wha/colombia/>).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Legislate*, Report for the 106th Congress (28 April 1999), Barry R. McCaffrey, *op. cit.*

<sup>19</sup> In 1998, the U.S. exported U.S.\$3.2 billion to Colombia and imported U.S.\$5.6 billion; in the same year, it exported U.S.\$78.3 billion to and imported U.S.\$100.2 billion from Mexico (See <http://www.census.gov/FOREIGN-TRADE/sitc1/1999/c3010htm/>).

<sup>20</sup> We should remember, for example, the Citibank-Salinas link to illegal money laundering. See "Citibank's Reed Faces Senate Questions on Salinas," *Wall Street Journal*, 10 November 1999, p. A2.

# Good-bye to Certification

## The New Focus of U.S. Drug Policy

Miguel Angel Valverde Loya\*

Every year, U.S. certification of the Mexican government's fight against drugs becomes a potential source of tension and distancing in our bilateral relations. This process, however, condemned by the countries certified and questioned by the U.S. public itself, shows signs of winding down. Simultaneously, a series of possibilities have appeared that, while they would not substitute for certification, may well coexist with it in the short and medium term.

### A QUESTION OF "INTERMESTIC" POLICY

Certification allows U.S. congresspersons to participate in policy making in the fight against drugs, thus responding to their constituents' concerns about the aims and control of U.S. funding to foreign governments. Drug trafficking is a matter of "intermestic" policy (where the line separating the international from the domestic is blurred): at the same time that it has an "immediate" impact on the local community, most Americans consider it one of the top priorities of foreign policy in the post-Cold War era. The intensity of the congressional debate each

year (and the drafting of motions to decertify) is linked to the specific domestic context, how to increase one's popularity with the voters by taking a "hard" line against drug trafficking or the opportunity of causing problems for a president from a rival political party by

U.S. certification of the Mexican government's fight against drugs is a source of tension in our bilateral relations.

This process, however, condemned by the countries certified and questioned by the U.S. public itself, shows signs of winding down.

opposing his anti-drug strategy. The position and interests of the members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House International Relations Committee are fundamental, as are the support of the leaders of both houses.

The U.S. executive tends to emphasize the more general, strategic view in international matters, stressing global objectives and the national interest. High government officials in Washington are aware of Mexico's importance as a trade partner and its role in the

international economy. However, there are divisions within the executive branch, and important federal officials have considerable independence from the president and strong ties to the congressional committees that supervise their own spheres of activity and backed their nominations. This is why the directors of the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) can openly disagree with the president before Congress. At the same time, General Barry R. McCaffrey, head of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), in charge of coordinating the executive branch's policy and who enjoys President Clinton's trust and support, has had differences over the way anti-drug policy has been implemented with former DEA Director Thomas Constantine, with the heads of other agencies and even with the Department of Defense about budget questions.

To head off a possible conflict with Congress, the White House and the Mexican government organized a series of activities to improve performance and the bilateral coordination of the fight against drugs and convince members of the U.S. Congress that their efforts have been successful. This includes announcing programs with huge budgets, daring, spectacular blows against drug trafficking—that often cause more concern than relief since they show

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just how big the problem is— and reciprocal visits of high-level officials, all on the most convenient dates.

Even when a motion is presented in Congress to decertify, denying the consideration of “national interest,” by no means is it a foregone conclusion that it will get enough votes to pass, particularly if the White House and the embassy of the country involved mount an intense lobbying campaign. Naturally, not all countries have the same priority or weight in U.S. foreign policy. For example, the Colombians, who have been decertified on a couple of occasions in recent years, complain that their only sin may well be not having a common border with the United States.

When the mood in Congress is very hostile, or someone tries to condition certification, the president first attempts to negotiate. If he is unsuccessful, he can veto the proposal, knowing that it will take a two-thirds congressional vote to override his veto. However, this whole process is very wearing and even humiliating for the countries subjected to it because it is a unilateral, extra-territorial measure. The anger that certification causes internationally, and in Latin America in particular, is evident and justified. Both the U.S. Congress and the executive understand this, as well as that the results are very questionable and it puts the good will of the governments involved at risk.

#### NEW ALTERNATIVES

Given this, both the U.S. government and Congress have opted for changing their strategy for dealing with drug trafficking. On the one hand, they have decided to assign substantial budget increases to the fight against drugs, which

in the fiscal year 2001 will come to U.S.\$18.9 billion. More importantly, they have decided to develop medium-term programs emphasizing prevention of consumption, particularly among U.S. teenagers, through intensive, sweeping media campaigns. The amount of resources and the effort invested in this are considerable and General McCaffrey seems to be sincerely committed to this fight. However, the balance between fighting supply and fighting demand continues to weigh in clearly in favor of the former. Law enforcement agencies receive a substantial part of the increased funding, and this year the president has request-



Mariano Herrán Salvatti, head of Mexico's anti-drug efforts.

ed a special amount, U.S.\$1.6 billion, for an aid program to Colombia, which is confronting an emergency because of increased drug production and the violence linked to drug trafficking. Paradoxically, to a great extent the problems in Colombia are the result of anti-drug policy successes in Peru and Bolivia, achieved thanks to U.S. support. Similarly, with drug transport routes closing down in the Caribbean, the flow through Mexico, and the Pacific Ocean has increased.

Another aspect of U.S. strategy consists of more effectively attacking the

money laundering that goes along with drug trafficking. With White House approval, Senator Carl Levin (D-Michigan) sent Congress a bill for the Money Laundering Abatement Act which, among other things, makes it illegal for U.S. banks to deal in funds from “questionable” sources, presumably the product not only of drug trafficking and other crimes, but also of corruption. Americans consider corruption—particularly when it happens in other countries—a serious problem that hinders the war against drugs, and fighting it has now become a foreign policy priority.

Motivated by frustration at what

The anger that certification causes is evident and justified. Both the U.S. Congress and the executive understand this, as well as that the results are very questionable and it puts the good will of the governments involved at risk.

they consider meager results more than by how the certification process disturbs foreign governments, some U.S. congresspersons have also sought alternatives. The International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) allows the Department of the Treasury to track and freeze within U.S. territory resources and assets belonging to people who in their judgement represent a threat to the national security of the United States. This legislation includes penalties to be levied on companies of any nationality that do business with the transgressors. Based on this law,

the U.S. government made up a list of Colombian drug traffickers and the companies that they allegedly use to launder their money, and since 1995 have proceeded to apply these penalties as part of a strategy to hit the traffickers “where it hurts them the most,” in their pockets.

According to some congresspersons, the “successes” of this measure in the Colombian case (freezing more than U.S.\$200 million in bank accounts and assets) justified its being applied to more countries. Last year, bills were presented to both the Senate and the House of Representatives to put drug

To a great extent the problems in Colombia are the result of anti-drug policy successes in Peru and Bolivia, achieved thanks to U.S. support. Similarly, with drug transport routes closing down in the Caribbean, the flow through Mexico and the Pacific Ocean increases.

traffickers from other countries and the companies they supposedly deal with on the list. This sparked a heated legislative debate and vigorous lobbying by certain foreign corporations, among them several from Mexico, that are “under scrutiny.” The Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act (FNKDA), that extends the reach of the IEEPA, was finally approved by Congress and signed into law by President Clinton in November of last year. The first lists made up under this law were to be completed in June 2000.

In theory, the FNKDA could help ease the tension caused by the certification process since now, instead of certifying an entire country or its government, the idea is to penalize only groups or specific sectors involved with drug trafficking. On the other hand, this law appeases U.S. congresspersons who want to influence anti-drug trafficking policy. However, since its discussion in Congress, the possibility existed that there could be abuses in its application based on insufficient evidence that could affect the interests of legitimate businesses. The Mexican government also has voiced its concern that the lists



General Barry R. McCaffrey.

could be made up with political criteria without a solid legal basis or be used to impose protectionist measures. The U.S. government, for its part, knows how to place the onus on Congress and this law could well become an effective instrument for pressuring the government of Mexico. In an attempt to avoid further disruption, both congresspersons and high U.S. federal officials have suggested that the Mexican government be informed and consulted before making these lists public.

Another component of U.S. anti-

drug trafficking strategy is the Clinton administration’s support for the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM), created within the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission of the Organization of American States (OAS). The MEM establishes a voluntary evaluation procedure for both consumer and producer countries and the creation of programs and funds to improve national law enforcement institutions with the coordination and cooperation of other international agencies. The idea is to emphasize shared responsibility, and results are expected by the year 2001. However, even though the drug abuse commission is a common framework that allows for a more equitable participation of Latin American countries, U.S. influence on the OAS and the fact that U.S. agencies will probably be relied upon for support in operational, information-gathering and intelligence matters will allow the United States to continue to exert enormous influence on the hemisphere’s anti-drug trafficking policy. This jibes with the general U.S. foreign policy strategy of acting in multilateral bodies with the greatest possible degree of consensus from the international community.

Latin American diplomats and U.S. officials say that, optimistically, the MEM will lessen the importance of the unilateral certification process and could even come to take its place. However, U.S. congresspersons are reluctant to see their participation in foreign policy restricted and argue that this mechanism lacks effective punitive measures for those who refuse to cooperate. Legislation on certification applies to countries outside Latin America and only Congress can revoke it. On the other hand, the FNKDA offers Congress an alternative for ensuring its participation in

the periodic evaluation of the fight against drug trafficking in other countries by giving it the right to impose sanctions. At the same time, the legislation makes it possible to at least partially contain the accusations of affected countries that certification is unilateral, thus lowering diplomatic tensions. But, for Congress to consider the elimination of certification, it must first be satisfied with the results of the combination of the multilateral evaluation and the FNKDA.

DRUG TRAFFICKING  
AND MEXICAN-U.S. RELATIONS

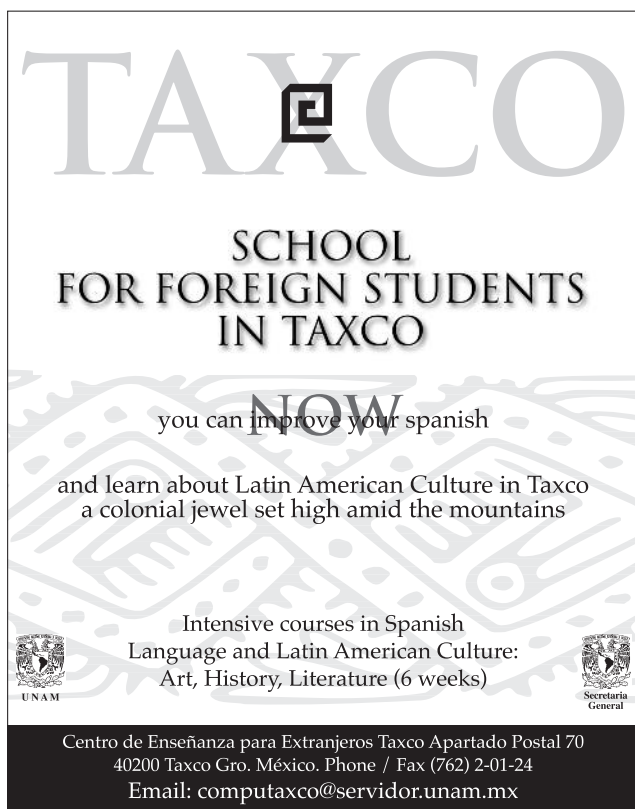
To analyze the fight against drug trafficking from the point of view of Mexican-U.S. bilateral relations, it is important to be grounded in reality and to recognize

the enormous asymmetry of power. It is hard to deny the evidence of corruption in our country and reproaching the Americans for also suffering from it is neither justification nor consolation for Mexicans. The violence linked to drug trafficking is an unhappy reality, particularly in places like Ciudad Juárez, Tijuana and Sinaloa. There is efficient and well intentioned collaboration between high government circles in Mexico and Washington, but, beyond that, there is an understandable mistrust due to both the difficulties in keeping drug traffickers from penetrating Mexican organizations and the abuses committed by U.S. agencies.

The defense of the principles of sovereignty is always important, but so is implementing a pragmatic foreign policy that makes it possible to defend

democratic values and take maximum advantage of the benefits of international cooperation. The troublesome certification process should be eliminated, but it is also important to understand the logic behind the U.S. strategy. U.S. domestic legislation should be understood in the U.S. domestic framework, seeking allies and getting backing from the legal system.

It is in Mexico's best interest to encourage both bilateral and multilateral programs aimed at curbing consumption, training and support for law enforcement agents, as well as making it possible to obtain equipment and technology. International bodies, despite their limitations, can be useful instruments, not for confrontation, but to curtail international pressure and channel it to our advantage. **MM**





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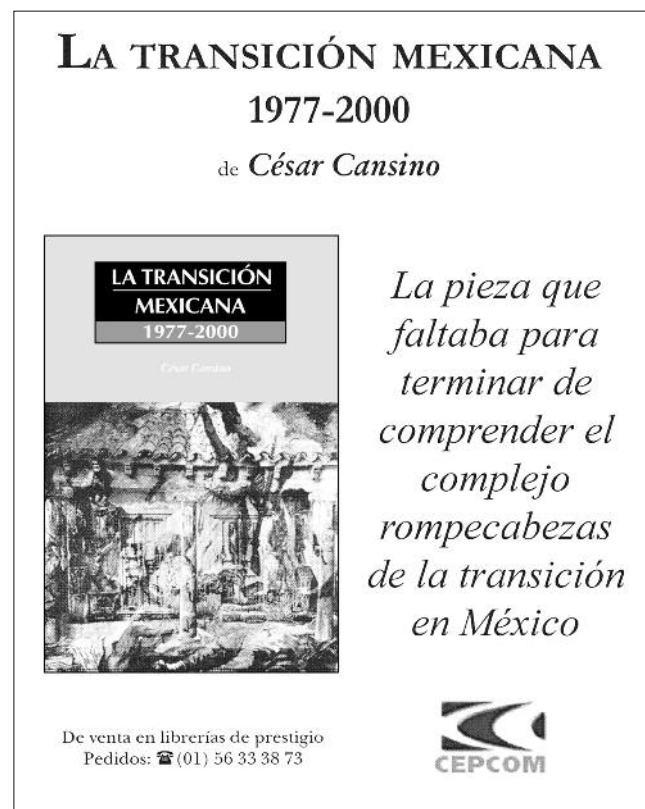
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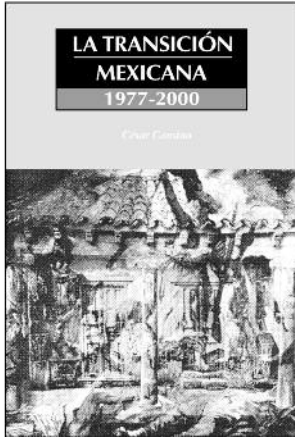
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# Translation A Metaphor of Globalization The Case of the Canadian Publishing Industry

Graciela Martínez-Zalce\*

## CULTURE AND GLOBALIZATION

*Through radio, TV and the computer, we are already entering a global theater in which the entire world is a Happening. Our whole cultural habitat, which we once viewed as a mere container of people, is being transformed by these media and by space into a living organism, itself contained within a new macrocosm or connubium of a supraterrrestrial nature.*

Marshall McLuhan  
*Playboy* interview<sup>1</sup>

Like a postmodern Julius Verne, Marshall McLuhan predicted two things in the 1960s that today seem obvious: the global village and the end of printed books (brought about by the watershed of electronic development—that is, television and computers—in human life).<sup>2</sup> A few years later, Northrop Frye said that the fact that Canada's publishers produced a veritable avalanche of literature exactly at the time of McLuhan's prophecy was a typically Canadian irony.<sup>3</sup>

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\* Researcher in the CISAN Canadian Studies Area.

Globalization has had diverse consequences in the field of culture. One is that we live in translated worlds, where languages intertwine and nourish each other. This is a familiar experience for

Translation is a metaphor to explain our times, a tangible representation of a secondary or mediated relationship to reality.

Canadian literature which from its inception has been produced in two languages, English and French. Translation has been indispensable. The second repercussion of globalization is that the spaces of knowledge we inhabit are an ensemble of ideas and styles with different origins, coming to us mainly through the massive dissemination of cultural products from all over, like the citizens of the mosaic that is Canada today. The third effect is that,

due to transnational communications and frequent migration, each cultural site has become a crossroads and a meeting place, just as the great Canadian cities like Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal have been for decades.

In our time, many places of the world have a culture of the diaspora, a hybrid culture. As a result, people accept that all identities are mobile. Languages participate in the processes molding individuals and collectives. In addition, as awareness of the cultural authority of language and the position of speakers within dominant codes increases, linguistic and cultural stories have acquired a new weight, as they reveal the relationships between the self and the other. This began in Canada long before it happened in the rest of the world.

Theoretician Sherry Simon says that cultural studies have used the discipline of translation as a metaphor to explain our times.<sup>4</sup> Translation serves as a rhetorical figure to describe both the growing internationalization of cultural production and the fate of those struggling between two worlds and two languages. This happens, writes Simon, because the craft of translation is a tangible representation of a secondary or mediated relationship to reality;

translation represents the difficulty of access to language and exemplifies the feeling of exclusion from the code of the powerful. It is, she concludes, a metaphor for the ambiguous experience of those marginalized by Western codes in the dominant culture that has permitted them to find a new place for cultural production, a new position from which to speak, as well as overwhelming evidence of the hybrid nature of communities imagined in a transnational sense. I should note here that Simon has constructed her theory on the basis of her experience as a translator of Québécois literature for the Anglo-Canadian public.

Globalization has spurred the destabilization of cultural identities and become the basis for new modes of cultural creation. Its characteristics have spotlighted translation as a fundamental activity of our day because its processes are present in any type of cultural interchange. It is also important to point out that translation is indispensable in a country like Canada with two official languages.

#### TRANSLATING IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

*Word for word, Galland's version is the worst written of them all, the most deceitful and the weakest, but it was the most widely read. Those who became intimate with it knew happiness and wonder. Its Orientalism, that today seems frugal to us, dazzled everyone who took snuff and plotted five-act tragedies... We mere anachronistic twentieth-century readers, perceive in it the dulcet flavor of the eighteenth century and not the fading Oriental aroma that determined its innovation and glory two hundred years*

*ago. There is no guilty party in the dis-  
encounter, least of all Galland.*

Jorge Luis Borges, "Los traductores  
de *Las 1001 noches*"<sup>5</sup>

Traditionally, translation has operated as a democratization of printed culture: it gives us access to a multiplicity of works written in tongues we do not speak; it has allowed us to have contact with a wide variety of authors, genres, traditions. But, it is the theorization of the exercise, spurred by both globalization and the dissemination of cultural studies, that has made translation a pivotal mechanism in the creation and the transmission of cultural values.

Globalization  
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This is why it can no longer be seen as a series of technical procedures, free of all values. Translating implies creating intercultural and interlinguistic life lines, transferring a text from one significant form into another, transporting works from one historical framework to another, following the track of the migration of meanings from one socio-cultural context to another.

I have spoken in general terms, but I would like to be more specific and

deal now with literary translation. Theoretician José Lambert explains that "literature in translation [is] a complex system,"<sup>6</sup> in which a specific literature applies its own principles of selection, even vis-à-vis very different literatures and foreign works. In this system, the target literature obeys a certain strategy in its translation method. Translations function like an organization. But, in addition, they must be situated in the target literary system and in relation to it.

Although not always completely acknowledged, translations somehow become part of our own literary tradition. They are a different form of literary production. They allow us to establish links with the original works and, with that, are windows onto other cultures.

But, as Bella Brodski says, translation is also a form of redemption that ensures survival, the longevity of the original text through the infusion of otherness. Given this transfusion, the text lives longer and better, beyond the means available to the author. The original continues living after and through its translation. The link between the original and its translation is one of appreciation and indebtedness. A work is only translated when it is considered worthwhile; its ability to be translated is a sign of its aesthetic and political importance.<sup>7</sup>

It is here, however, that I would like to point out the specific stamp that the era of globalization has placed on the signifiers of translation,<sup>8</sup> because today translating not only means transferring a story from one language to another or transmitting and transponding cultural values from one tradition to another. It also means signing contracts, ceding rights, seeking out market targets, that is, choosing what is to be translated, who will be translated, where it will be

published and sold. For the contemporary publishing industry, the act of reading implies something more than *poiesis*, *anagnorisis* and *catharsis*, something more than a bridge between creation, reception and effect. It implies first of all an act of buying and selling, the consumption of a good: a book.

#### THE BOOK PRODUCED

#### THE BOOK READ

*Not only does print vividly discover national boundaries, but the print market was itself defined by such boundaries, at least for early printers and publishers. Perhaps also the ability to see one's mother tongue in uniform and repeatable technological dress creates in the individual reader a feeling of unity and power that he shares with all other readers of that tongue. Quite different sentiments are felt by preliterate or semiliterate people.*

Marshall McLuhan, 1960<sup>9</sup>

The merger of companies for international markets is one of the main characteristics of the era of globalization. Large publishers absorb small ones; thus, a single company may own several publishing houses, each specializing in certain kinds of books.<sup>10</sup>

However, the Canadian publishing industry has operated differently. Several Internet pages shed light on its general panorama.<sup>11</sup> In addition, we have data from Statistics Canada, which can also be consulted on the Net, and academic articles that have outlined this sector's situation in the era of globalization.<sup>12</sup>

In Canada, books are put out both by Canadian and foreign publishing houses producing their own original

titles, covering all production costs and risks. Books by foreign authors are also published by purchasing the rights, or imported by different means (direct purchase abroad, purchases directly from the publisher for libraries, readers' circles, Internet). These books are destined for two very different markets: 82 percent go to the English-language market, dominant not only because it generates a great many titles, but also because it includes imports and distribution; the other 18 percent are books in French, which are more expensive. Publishing in either language has low profit margins given that most of the companies are small and many orient to academia or the cultural market.

Lorimer presents a series of statistics invaluable for understanding how the Canadian publishing industry has behaved given the harsh conditions imposed by globalization.<sup>13</sup>

Between 1981 and 1992, the publication of Canadian authors rose 52 percent, and publishers were concentrating more on Canadian authors, who sell 3.5 times more books than foreign authors published by Canadian firms and eight times more than foreign authors published by companies from abroad. In that same period, books by Canadian authors had increased their domestic sales and exports by 62 percent. Lorimer considers this a valuable discovery from a cultural perspective, which means that Canadian publishing houses have greatly contributed to the ability to decide Canadian priorities, realities, images and symbols. They have provided Canadian authors with an effective vehicle for reaching the public, so effective, in fact, that book sales by Canadian authors have grown more rapidly than the market as a whole.<sup>14</sup>

The link between authors and readers so effectively achieved by the publishing houses and their marketing techniques is surprising. Seventy percent of their own new titles and reprints are by Canadian authors, whose sales of books published by Canadian firms come to:

- 96 percent of national sales;
- 97 percent of all book exports that are not textbooks or paperbacks for the mass market;
- 91 percent of overall book exports; and
- 98 percent of book sales abroad.

All these figures taken together show the dominance of Canadian-owned publishing houses in Canada in terms of title output (85 percent), percentage of books by Canadian authors (96 percent) and number of firms (288). Canadian publishing houses dominate the market, sales and the production of titles; in addition, they practically monopolize exports. The figures are conclusive, belying the prejudice that it is foreign publishers that make authors internationally successful (we will come back to this point when we discuss translation and publishing in Spanish).<sup>15</sup> The conclusion Lorimer reaches is that Canadian companies' publishing and marketing strategies are effective given that the overwhelming bulk of their activity centers on titles by Canadian authors who can have enormous cultural significance.

Cultural significance. Herein lies the difference: while the Canadian publishing industry is economically successful due mainly to the grants that subsidize it, I would venture to say that its true success lies in the fact that a market niche or community of readers has been formed for these books. The Canada

Council gives grants for culturally significant books as well as for publishing programs that make a contribution to Canadian literature in the following genres: children's literature, drama, narrative, essay, poetry and short stories. The number of copies sold under this program between 1985 and 1993 increased 37 percent. In general, there is a commitment to the idea that the industry fulfills a social function in that it contributes to the generation of ideas, makes information available and promotes the development of authors. Many firms nationwide seek out titles and authors as a reflection of that responsibility.

Complementing this, Lorimer thinks the liveliness of the Canadian literary community and its pan-Canadian perspective attest to its tolerance of differences. As a cultural policy, encouraging heterogeneity is a powerful weapon.

At the risk of speculating (since it means looking at content), I would go even further with this interpretation. Combining both these conclusions, I would say they are both at the root of the success of the literature produced by contemporary Canadian authors.<sup>16</sup> On the one hand, the support policies to the industry have flourished, and its effectiveness has managed to bring together both men and women authors with a readership that finds in them an enriching interpretation of their own reality. On the other hand, the policy of heterogeneity corresponds to the circumstances of our world of today, reflected in Canadian literature and linked to what I mentioned at the beginning of this article: the translated worlds that have destabilized cultural identities and become the basis for new modes of cultural creation. Canadian literature, in which translation has been fundamental, reflects this

intensity of cultural exchange: it is successful because it is the product of a society which is a microcosm of the global village.<sup>17</sup>

Paradoxically, as I pointed out at the beginning of this section, the Canadian publishing industry has stayed on the sidelines of globalization. At the same time, the international market has become more important for it in three ways: it has achieved book sales, the sale of rights to publish elsewhere and the sale of advisory services through internationalization.<sup>18</sup> Canadian companies are active exporters: 34 percent of their profits come from international markets.

Why is this the case? Lorimer and O'Donnell say that in the name of cultural sovereignty, the Canadian federal government has constantly developed a vigorous policy for the industry to make it economically successful and keep it in the hands of Canadians. (It is enough just to look at the diversity of subsidy and grant programs available on the Internet.)<sup>19</sup>

This policy's results are contradictory because industry priorities mixed with cultural goals have led to support for Canadian ownership of the firms. However, Lorimer and O'Donnell say that the fact that publishing houses are Canadian-owned is less important than the size of the firm for the cultural orientation versus a primarily commercial orientation. The industry's priorities always lead to problems of profitability. That is, the profitable firms are generally commercially oriented. In the minds of policy makers, profitability is linked to size and therefore, they give more support to large firms. However, the companies that print the most poetry and narrative, particularly first works, are very often small and medium-sized publishing houses scattered across the country.

The Canadian publishing community has two interest groups. The first group, large publishing houses, should take the road of globalization in the mass entertainment markets for the distribution of world products. They can do this only insofar as legislation allows them to protect their national territory to preserve cultural sovereignty. It would be important that the second group, small, culturally oriented publishers, seek internationalization and favor small Canadian producers over large foreign ones.

Lorimer and O'Donnell come to an important conclusion that contradicts the laws of the market of globalization: it is misleading to think that a policy supporting the industry and directed at cultural publishers will lead to the establishment of commercially successful publishing houses with a cultural orientation, both able and willing to become global giants. I do not think we can emphasize too greatly that the real importance lies in the fact that success is proven at another level, the level of the encounter of books and their readers.

A BOOK SOLD

A CANON TRANSFORMED

*Perhaps the most potent of all as an expression of literacy is our system of uniform pricing that penetrates distant markets and speeds the turn-over of commodities.*

Marshall McLuhan, 1964

The Canadian publishing industry is an exception today since throughout the world subsidies to culture are disappearing daily and cultural industries are expected to be profitable.

“The big fish eats the little fish” seems to be the norm in today’s publishing industry.<sup>20</sup> Companies merge; large publishing firms absorb little ones; a single corporation may own several different firms, each with its own specialty. Book fairs look like stock markets: agents representing authors meet with company heads to sell publishing rights to this or that region of the world. Book prizes beget prestige, thereby creating communities—or market niches—interested in the book selected and in other works by the same author.<sup>21</sup> Publishing houses, like any other company, want to get their investment back: once the work is printed, posters are distributed, book launches organized, interviews come out in the mass media and press kits are made up with reviews of the book.<sup>22</sup>

How does this affect the formation of the literary canon?<sup>23</sup> Robert Lecker

says that it is necessary to research and critique the forces of ideology and discourse that make up the hierarchy of what we value.<sup>24</sup> The canon is the perception of what literary merit is, and today, the values associated with the canonic heritage still have power and exert influence on what is written, what is published and how things are transmitted or taught.

We cannot deny that, at least until recently, the canon was formed on the basis of the aesthetic value that readers, critics and academics found in a book, plus the maxim that all of us who have studied literature have heard: that a text withstands the passage of time without getting old. The recognition of these values was crowned then, by translation, the journey into another language, the possibility of moving into another literary tradition. This is how a piece became a classic of universal literature.

To underline what I said at the beginning of this section, I agree with Lecker when he says that the ideal examination of any canon should include a study of market forces, of the publishing industry and book sales. (He also adds several points that I had not taken into account: the development of school and university curricula, government attempts to foster national literatures and their promoters, as well as the dissemination of literary values in newspapers, magazines, academic publications and books.)

Contracts for translations are drawn up in the same way as those for publications. For example, based on a market study, an author whose work is excellent but complicated because of its structure will be published by one of the lesser firms because in his/her homeland—where no one is a prophet—he/she has not sold enough. This

**TABLE 1**  
**CANADIAN BOOK SALES AND EXPORTS**  
(Thousands of Canadian Dollars)

	1991-1992	1992-1993	1993-1994	1994-1995	1996-1997
<b>Sales in Canada</b>					
In English	981,261	979,780	978,016	1,103,218	1,191,752
In French	264,121	277,572	287,620	306,474	304,167
<b>Publication of Original Titles (1)</b>					
In English	437,655	439,158	443,751	529,940	577,772
In French	144,072	159,192	162,252	164,895	160,649
<b>Exclusive Agents</b>					
In English	543,606	540,622	534,265	573,278	613,980
In French	120,049	118,380	125,368	141,579	143,518
<b>Exports and Other Foreign Sales</b>					
In English	205,933	244,452	322,302	357,390	388,047
In French	20,222	29,764	21,677	12,373	17,729

(1) Includes only publishing activities.

Source: <http://www.statcan.ca/english/pgdb/People/Culture/arts02.htm> and <http://www.statcan.ca/english/pgdb/People/Culture/arts05.htm>



implies that the printing run will be small, and the books will be distributed only locally. At the same time, another author, of lesser quality but easier to read and who therefore guarantees sales, is published by the multinational firm and distributed over a wide geographic area. Two things happen then:

a) The kind of recognition that translation implies will be the reward for profits on book sales, not literary quality;

b) The works included in literary traditions different from that of the culture of origin may be neither its most representative nor its best.

What alternatives do authors have, then? Among the Canadians, the best known authors also have a literary agent.<sup>25</sup> The others have to make direct contact with foreign publishing houses to promote their work outside Canada or wait until foreign publishers become interested in the titles that have been given prizes and therefore, covered with the aura of prestige, can be offered with a guaranteed seal of approval of quality.<sup>26</sup>

#### CANADIAN LITERATURE FOR EXPORT

*Translating the spirit is an ambition so huge and so phantasmagoric that it may well be considered harmless; translating the exact words, a precision so extravagant that there is no risk it will be undertaken. More serious than those infinite aims is the conservation or suppression of certain details; more serious than these preferences and forgotten oversights is the movement of syntax.*

Jorge Luis Borges, "Los traductores de *Las 1001 noches*"

The sadly renowned English patient, played by the beautiful Ralph Fiennes,

unfortunately focused the eyes of the world on Canadian literature. And I say unfortunately because I ask myself if those who met him in the darkness of the movie theater will ever make the link between Canadian-Sri Lankan author Michael Ondaatje and the work of Anthony Minghella. In addition, if they do, and they actually buy the novel (Please note: the cover was changed to jibe with the movie's poster —after it became a box-office success, of course), I ask myself if they will not be disappointed by the novel's complex structure, closer to a jigsaw puzzle than a conventional love story.

Until recently,  
literary canons  
were formed on the  
basis of the aesthetic  
value of a text, but  
the ideal examination  
of any canon should  
include a study  
of market forces.

This digression allows us to see the pattern of how translations of Canadian literature come to the Spanish-speaking world, whose publishing industry has definitely suffered the effects of globalization: the multimedia conglomerates include large publishing houses with headquarters in Spain that have absorbed small local publishers.

These publishing houses operate in the following way:<sup>27</sup> the rights for a given text can be decided directly with the author or through a legal representative, whether a literary agent or any other authorized person. The contract

can be for publishing or for the acquisition of rights. The specific case that interests us here is the publication of translations. The rights for a work in any other language are purchased from the owner of its copyright or directly from the author. The contract for the translation must be a separate document, signed by the person who bought the rights and the translator.<sup>28</sup> Rights are given for a specific geographic area and a specific time period.

Let us speak of the market we are part of, Mexico. Very little literature comes to Mexico from Canada. When originally written in English, most of it has been translated and printed in Spain, so our knowledge of the complete works of some Canadian authors is subject to the zigzags of globalization.

Mexico City book stores sell different works by Douglas Coupland, who invented the term "Generation X";<sup>29</sup> novels and stories by Margaret Atwood, the world's most widely recognized Canadian author; three novels by Carol Shields, the most famous of which is *The Stone Diaries*, for which the author won Canada's most important literary award;<sup>30</sup> *The English Patient*, with a translation that does not seem to me to respect the original structure very much, to say the least,<sup>31</sup> and *In the Skin of a Lion: A Novel*, both by Michael Ondaatje, winner of the Booker Prize. We can also find several novels by Margaret Laurence. I find the list significant because it is all by English-language authors, and we should remember that 82 percent of the books produced in Canada come out in English. The multimedia groups based in Spain, then, are providing us with titles from a dominant culture: we should remember that English has been the language favored by globalization.

We already said that translation implies transferring elements and values from one culture to another. What does it mean, then, for us Mexican readers to receive Canadian authors in a doubly foreign way?

To exemplify, I would like to look at two cases, by chance, by the most famous authors.

Two stories in Margaret Atwood's *Dancing Girls: And Other Stories* refer to Mexico.<sup>32</sup> One, "A Travel Piece", a parody of travelogues that look at everything about a country, including its inhabitants and customs, through a rose-colored glass because readers do not want to know about its drawbacks; in other words, they refuse to look at the truth. The protagonist is a reporter whose plane crashes into the Caribbean on the way back to Canada. With her is a group of tourists. The absurd thinking given the context, the characters' increasingly savage attitudes, more and more like animals and less like humans, make up this story in which the only reference to Mexico is in the closing scene in which a pig is slaughtered on a beach to satisfy the imbecilic whims of an American tourist. Making tourism the theme and presenting it as a ridiculous, pointless activity stands out because of the story's ironic tone, which brings out the snobbery and lack of commitment of anyone who enjoys it. The translation is no problem here.

The second story, "The Resplendent Quetzal," takes place in Yucatán (at least, this Mexican reader surmises that it does). In this case, it is interesting to approach the text through a translation done in Spain, because it gives a foreign, alien tone to everything the protagonists see and experience. The references to archeological sites, the descriptions of buses and little restaurants

seem familiar and yet, because they are written in a Spanish that is not our usage, we seem to be looking at them from far away. The plot is built around a sacred *cenote*, or deep pool typical of Yucatán, translated back into Spanish as "*el pozo*," which in Mexico means a well, and a Christ Child from a Nativity scene, translated "*el belén*" instead of the more familiar Mexican "*el nacimiento*," from Tlaquepaque in Jalisco state, as well as sacrifice and rebirth. The plot is well conceived, alternating between the points of view of the two main characters, a man and woman, both Canadians, who are spending

Mexican readers receive Canadian authors in a doubly foreign way, as most of their books have been translated and printed in Spain.

their vacations on the Yucatán Peninsula, where they go through an epiphany that will change their relationship as a couple for the better. Here, the vocabulary used in translation is important for the Mexican reader's reception: the description of something familiar to us with words that are not quite so familiar maintains a distance between the characters and the reader.

Another example is the case of Douglas Coupland's *Generation X*.<sup>33</sup> Coupland's novel is American on purpose: he has decided to set it in California and not Toronto or Vancouver because

somehow, one of the things that distinguishes North America is the preeminence of the United States, particularly in the dissemination of popular culture, and, in turn, life styles. In this sense, of course, it also refers to globalization and one of its paradoxes, the link to local issues. As Mexican readers, if we have access to the original version in English, we have no difficulty in understanding the references to consumerism, to the products of popular culture, to brand names. We have no problem decoding what a Barbie doll is. Those of us who grew up watching television can all remember the Brady Bunch.

In fact, our Spanish is full of Anglicisms. The Mexican upper-middle class lives in a very similar circuit, definitively marked by the flow of cultural products that flood in from the north (although we should be clear that no one is immune from transculturation). But it is difficult for a Mexican reader to understand "*todas las chicas parecen bolleras pelirrojas*" ("all the girls look like red-headed dykes"). While we Mexicans might understand the use of *chica* instead of our more common *muchacha* for "girl," we are totally baffled by the use of *bollera* instead of our word for dyke, *tortillera*. We also have a hard time imagining a pair of Californians asking each other, "How do you and Rain stand each other?" (*¿Y qué tal os soportáis tú y Rain?*), when what is really meant, is "How do you get along with Rain?" which in Mexican Spanish would be "*¿Cómo se llevan tú y Rain?*" Maybe it's the influence of dubbing. What the translation does do in this case is distance us from a life style, the very leitmotif of Coupland's novel, which is then rendered rather ineffective in the context of Mexico,

like watching a Woody Allen film in a movie theater on Madrid's Gran Vía.

Several anthologies have been published in Mexico, the majority of which are by Quebequois authors, thanks to the funding for translation and the many scholarships given by the Quebec government. The spectrum offered to the Mexican public is quite broad, taking in both poetry and narrative. Among other anthologies of French-language literatures, Laura López Morales' book includes chapters about Quebequois literature, with authors who do belong to the canon.<sup>34</sup> In contrast with the prologues or introductions in other anthologies, she presents brief histories of Quebec literature and very complete bibliographical and biographical notes about the authors, so that although it is not completely dedicated to the topic, her work is the one that gives us the most complete overview.

An anthology of Anglo-Canadian short stories edited by John Metcalf has also been published,<sup>35</sup> and another, *Desde el invierno, 23 cuentos canadienses*, edited by Margaret Atwood and Graeme Gibson.<sup>36</sup>

Two magazines have also published monographic issues on the topic. In 1996, when Canada hosted the Guadalajara Book Fair, *Viceversa* put out an issue jointly with the Montreal magazine of the same name, printing narrative and poetry by five different authors. Later, *Blancomóvil* compiled and translated work by several Quebequois poets.

Nicole Brossard's *Le Désert mauve* (Mauve Desert) is the first Quebequois novel to be published in our country.<sup>37</sup> Its appearing under the Joaquín Mortiz label has two implications: first, for all faithful buyers of Mexican literature, it is a guarantee of quality; second, it means that the multinational Planeta decided

to invest in a translation for the national Mexican market.<sup>38</sup> We should not forget what was said at the beginning of this essay: translation implies many things, including a dialogue between cultures, a form of legitimation and, therefore, the introduction of new elements into a literary canon. In the case of Brossard's novel, translated by Mónica Mansour, another interesting detail is that it deals with a marginalized subculture and comes from a culture not considered dominant. Lastly, the leitmotif of the novel itself is translation.

It is pertinent here to speculate once again and ask ourselves why *Mauve*

Small markets  
are of no interest  
to the global publishing  
houses. In Mexico local  
importers decide what  
materials to select,  
purchase and  
distribute.

*Desert* is the only Canadian novel translated in Mexico. One reason, of course, is its importance within the national canon; another is the author's importance both in the field of creative writing and in literary criticism. But, in addition, it is because *Mauve Desert* is a North American novel: it takes place in the United States; it has links to Mexico; and the literary conceit of its being found by the translator places the discovery in Quebec. Precisely the non-obviousness of its links to matters Quebequois, its North American-ness, makes us think not only about lan-

guage, but also about national cultural paradigms and their translation for foreign readers. The novel puts forward what has been the main problem for the creation of a canon for Canada as a whole, the creation of a single cultural identity. Since the novel centers around writing and, therefore, on language — one's own and an acquired language — the characters make us think about taking on an identity on the margins of the official discourse. North American-ness is expressed in the leitmotif of the words in English that accentuate the presence of a dominant English-speaking culture that has to change and be appropriated through translation, the conversion from one language to another, from one cultural code to another. For all these reasons, translation as interpretation becomes fundamental.

And here is where a concern similar to Douglas Coupland's arises, although expressed in a much more elaborate and complex way.

I have dedicated more space to the analysis of this novel because it is the first book by a Canadian author "exported" directly for the Mexican reading public. It is an effort which, as I mentioned in another case, seems wasted because it merits both better promotion and better distribution. I can make this observation about the anthologies, also: they also deserve to reach a wider readership.

In conclusion, I would just like to point out that a series of things would lead us to believe that the big multinationals headquartered on other continents are not interested in the exchange among cultures that share a common territory. There is still no market in Mexico for Canadian literature: it has not been publicized enough. Except for

*Mauve Desert* and the anthologies, most Canadian books are imported and therefore expensive. We should remember that a characteristic of globalization that has had an effect on the publishing industry is that some markets are so small that they are of no interest to the global publishing houses. This is precisely the case of Mexico. As a result, local importers are the ones who make the decisions to select, purchase and distribute materials.<sup>39</sup> The selection is left in the hands of Mexican book sellers, who decide on the basis of two possible attitudes: making books that sell well available to the public, or making books that disseminate the significant features of other cultures available to

the public. Although still insufficient, the distribution of Canadian literature to Mexican readers seems to have been done on the second basis. ■■■

NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Erik McLuhan and Frank Zingrone, *Essential McLuhan* (Ontario: Anansi, 1995), pp. 233-269.

<sup>2</sup> For a look at this thinker's most important works, see Erik McLuhan and Frank Zingrone, eds., *Essential McLuhan* (Ontario: Anansi, 1995).

<sup>3</sup> Frye also adds that McLuhan has been irresponsibly misquoted out of context since he never actually predicted the end of the book. Northrop Frye, "Conclusion," *Literary History of Canada*, vol. 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1976), pp. 318-332.

<sup>4</sup> Sherry Simon, *Gender in Translation, Cultural Identity and the Politics of Translation* (New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 134-167.

<sup>5</sup> Jorge Luis Borges, "Los traductores de *Las 1001 noches*," *Historia de la Eternidad*, in *Obras Completas*, vol. 1 (Barcelona: Emecé, 1996), pp. 397-413.

<sup>6</sup> José Lambert, "La traducción," *Teoría literaria*, Marc Angenot, Jean Bessière, Douwe Fokkema and Eva Kushner, eds. (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1993), p. 177.

<sup>7</sup> Bella Brodski, "History, Cultural Memory and the Tasks of Translation in T. Obinkaram Echewa's *I Saw the Sky Catch Fire*," *PMLA* vol. 114, no. 2 (March 1999), pp. 207-220.

<sup>8</sup> This observation could be expanded to include publishing industry procedures in general.

<sup>9</sup> Erik McLuhan, op. cit., pp. 270-297.

<sup>10</sup> Following Lorimer and O'Donnell's nomenclature, by globalization we will understand that markets for finished media products (film,

**TABLE 2**  
**BOOK PUBLISHERS AND LITERARY AGENTS BY LANGUAGE (1)**

	1991-1992	1992-1993	1993-1994	1994-1995	1996-1997
<b>Companies</b>					
English Language Publishers	207	201	197	207	351
Literary Agents (English)	30	27	26	26	35
French Language Publishers	115	122	119	119	160
Literary Agents (French)	17	14	13	14	16
<b>Titles Published (2)</b>					
English	6,548	6,346	7,218	7,536	8,078
French	2,604	3,155	3,039	3,084	3,322
<b>Titles Reprinted (2)</b>					
English	3,198	3,532	3,936	3,850	4,004
French	2,867	3,249	3,312	3,483	3,537
<b>Total at Press (2)</b>					
English	38,621	39,313	42,299	44,306	52,113
French	23,494	24,653	28,540	30,642	35,836

(1) For the English-language publishers, this includes "other languages."  
 (2) Includes only the publishers activities.

**Source:** <http://www.statcan.ca/english/pgdb/People/Culture/arts02.htm>  
<http://www.statcan.ca/english/pgdb/People/Culture/arts05.htm>

- video, television programs, musical recordings, books, magazines, newspapers) expand from certain centers in developed countries to other developed and less developed countries. Rowland Lorimer and Eleanor O'Donnell, "Globalization and Internationalization in Publishing," *Canadian Journal of Communication*, vol. 17 (1992), pp. 493-509.
- <sup>11</sup> The Association for the Export of Canadian Books (AECB) and Canadian Heritage's "Books on Canada" page (<http://accb.org>) provides links for specific interests: for a list of Quebecois publishers, the Association National des Éditeurs de Livres page; for literary publications, the Canadian Book Review Annual page; for information on the Book Publishing Industry Development Program and export market technology and participation in international trade events like fairs and salons, the International Marketing Assistance Programs page published by Canadian Heritage and AECB; for information about cultural industries, figures, development plans, cultural policies, the Canadian Heritage Cultural Industries Branch page; for criteria for eligibility for scholarships and financial support, the Cultural Development Homepage; for criteria for federal support, the Canada Council for the Arts page.
- <sup>12</sup> Rowland Lorimer, "Book Publishing," *The Cultural Industries in Canada. Problems, Policies and Prospects*, Michael Dorland, ed. (Toronto: Lorimer, 1996), pp. 3-34.
- <sup>13</sup> The tables can be consulted in Lorimer, op. cit. They are not included here because for the purposes of this article, I was interested above all in interpreting the data. However, table 1 in this article presents current statistics developed by Marcela Osnaya, to whom I owe my thanks, about the Canadian publishing industry's trade.
- <sup>14</sup> Lorimer, op. cit., p. 10.
- <sup>15</sup> Canada's most famous men and women authors launch their novels simultaneously with Canadian, U.S. and/or British publishing houses, which is what the aforementioned prejudice refers to.
- <sup>16</sup> This is the case not only inside Canada, but also abroad.
- <sup>17</sup> To look more closely at postmodernism in Canada, see Linda Hutcheon, *The Canadian Postmodern* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988) and *Splitting Images. Contemporary Canadian Ironies* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1991). I am aware that certain critics think Hutcheon is insufficiently audacious (Speaking of Canadian ironies, perhaps she is too Canadian) and that she normalizes the postmodern condition in Canada. See Lorraine Weir, "Normalizing the Subject: Linda Hutcheon and the English-Canadian Postmodern," Robert Lecker, ed., *Canadian Canons. Essays in Literary Value* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), pp. 180-195.
- <sup>18</sup> By internationalization, I mean the subdominant, longstanding and still existing form of international media operations directed at world audiences; it is the trade in products for national audiences or special interest groups among media producers located in different nations. See Lorimer and O'Donnell, op. cit., p. 494.
- <sup>19</sup> See the articles published on the Working Group on Cultural Policy's web page about the Canadian Conference of the Arts, "Preliminary Findings of the Working Group on Cultural Policy for the 21st Century," 1998; Gary T. Neil, "MAI (Multilateral Agreement on Investment) and Canada's Cultural Sector" (October 1997); and Lesley Ellen Harris, "Copyright Issues in Trade Agreements" (October 1997).
- <sup>20</sup> M. Rodríguez Rivero, in his article "El libro, divertido accesorio de moda" (The Book: A Fun Fashion Accessory) published in *Babelia*, the supplement of the Madrid daily, *El País*, talks about mega-book shops and what they will mean to the reader who will become a consumer of books, objects dependent on fashion.
- <sup>21</sup> Although the information is not completely up to date, for details of the Mexican publishing industry, see María Hope, "Industria editorial. Las batallas en el desierto," and "Libreros y editores. A punto del salto mortal," *Expansión* (30 August 1995), pp. 20-29.
- <sup>22</sup> For a Mexican perspective on this, see Ricardo Nudelman's article "Sobredosis. Apuntes sobre la situación actual del sector del libro," *Hoja por hoja*, bibliographical supplement, *Reforma* (Mexico City) (6 February 1999). Nudelman explains that publishing has not escaped the mechanisms of globalization, where in the long run, only a handful of multimedia groups and distribution chains will be left and that they need to launch a great many new products to be able to recoup their investment: he calls this "flexible quality books." To this we can add the lack of policies to promote reading and the creation of readers.
- <sup>23</sup> It could be observed here that there has already been one literary movement created by the publishing houses: the Latin American boom, the exoticism of our lands published and promoted for European audiences.
- <sup>24</sup> Robert Lecker, "Introduction," *Canadian Canons. Essays in Literary Value* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), pp. 3-16.
- <sup>25</sup> Margaret Atwood, Michael Ondaatje, Carol Shields and Douglas Coupland all have agents in charge of making deals, and they are the ones who have been published by the giant multinationals.
- <sup>26</sup> I thank Professor Rowland Lorimer for answering the questionnaire I sent him about the export of titles and translation of Canadian work, via Internet, September 17, 1999.
- <sup>27</sup> I would like to thank Freja Cervantes Becerril for her help in designing the questionnaire for publishing houses Tusquets and Alfaguara about copyright law.
- <sup>28</sup> Translations are also protected by copyright law.
- <sup>29</sup> Douglas Coupland, *Generación X* (Barcelona: Ediciones B, 1993).
- <sup>30</sup> The case of *The Stone Diaries* is interesting because book distributors had imported half a dozen copies for the Guadalajara Book Fair dedicated to Canada, but only after they were sold out did they order another half dozen for sale in book stores. This anecdote shows how the market is gauged: practically by direct order.
- <sup>31</sup> Michael Ondaatje, *El paciente inglés*, Carlos Manzanao, trans. (Madrid: Plaza&Janés, 1995). There is also a Mexican reprinting of the 1997 original paperback.
- <sup>32</sup> Margaret Atwood, *Chicas bailarinas*, Víctor Pozanco, trans., Colección Femenino Lumen 40 (Barcelona: Lumen, 1998).
- <sup>33</sup> Douglas Coupland, *Generación X*, Mariano Antolín Rato, trans. (Barcelona: Ediciones B, 1993).
- <sup>34</sup> Laura López Morales, comp. and trans., *Literatura francófona* (Mexico City: FCE, 1996).
- <sup>35</sup> John Metcalf, ed., *Cuento canadiense contemporáneo: Breve antología* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1996). With an inexplicable waste of funds, the anthology with the same contents has been published in two different editions. This is surprising given that the efforts to disseminate Canadian literature in Mexico are so embryonic.
- <sup>36</sup> Margaret Atwood and Graeme Gibson, ed., *Desde el invierno, 23 cuentos canadienses*, Blanca Acosta and María Teresa Ortega, trans. (Havana: Ediciones Unión and McLelland and Stewart, 1997).
- <sup>37</sup> Nicole Brossard, *El desierto malva*, Mónica Mansour, trans. (Mexico City: Joaquín Mortiz, 1996).
- <sup>38</sup> Joaquín Mortiz, now part of Planeta, for many years produced an important part of Mexican literature by young authors who currently are part of the established canons of Mexican literature. Its publishing continues along the same lines, but its print runs are significantly smaller than those of other firms owned by the multinational.
- <sup>39</sup> Lorimer and O'Donnell, "Globalization and Internationalization in Publishing," op. cit.

# The Urbanization of Tula

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Juan Carlos Equihua Manrique\*\*



The ancient Toltec capital, Tula, grew in complexity and size from the ninth to around the thirteenth century. Urbanization began at Magoni Hill, continued across the Tula River toward Tula Chico and culminated with the colonization of Tula Grande. New research shows that these transformations were never orderly and lineal. This article uses stratigraphic research, the examination of the layers of material found in archeological digs, done at Tula Grande to examine the city's history.

Tula's urban development began after the decline of Teotihuacan.<sup>1</sup> Evi-

dence of how human beings transformed the landscape is to be found in the vicinity of where the Rosas and Tula Rivers meet, in the southwestern part of the state of Hidalgo.

Due to their size and monumental architecture, two sites are regarded as key in the formation of urban Tula. The first was a 4-square-kilometer settlement founded in the seventh century A.D., located near the west bank of the Tula River and the piedmont and top of Magoni Hill. The second, a 5- to 6-square kilometer settlement, was located straight across the river, on the east side, at Tula Chico, and its construction began in the eighth century A.D. Tula Chico was abandoned in the tenth century and a new civic and ceremonial complex was built at El Tesoro Hill, also known as Tula Grande. At that time the urban area covered 13 square kilometers and by the eleventh

century expanded to 16 square kilometers.<sup>2</sup>

Excavations undertaken during the 1997 National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) maintenance program in Tula Grande recorded a sequence of strata that pose some questions on explanations previously offered to account for Tula's growth. By analyzing the sequence of deposits of two important buildings located on the northern side of Tula Grande's main plaza, Building B or the Tlahuizcalpantecutli Pyramid and Building 3, or the Quemado Palace, this article will discuss an archaeological tradition that holds that Tula's urban development spread from a hilltop from west to east.

But first, it is important to understand the origin of the arguments used in the opening statements of this paper. Therefore I will try to outline how archaeo-

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logical research has contributed to the explanation of Tula's development.

We owe most of what it is currently known about Tula Grande to Jorge R. Acosta,<sup>3</sup> who unearthed and restored the main buildings located at El Tesoro Hill. Acosta developed a stratigraphic sequence for Tula Grande based on the excavations of Buildings B, C and 3. He describes three main stages of construction for Building B. The first stage, during Period I, started with the erection of a five-tiered rectangular platform that had two adjoining low platforms to the east and west. During this period, the building was covered with smooth rectangular slabs of volcanic rock. By Period II the building had been resurfaced with carved slabs and the adjoining platforms had been enlarged. During Period III the building facias were resurfaced again using smooth slabs, and extensive adobe work

was done to enlarge the east side platform where Building 1 or the Quetzalcóatl Palace was erected. The west platform was leveled off to make way for the construction of Building 3 or Quemado Palace. The Coatepantli, a wall surrounding the north and east sides of the Tlahuizcalpantecutli Pyramid, was also constructed at this time.

Using ceramic sherds found at several excavation sites in Tula Grande, Acosta concludes that they represent two different cultural stages; the black-on-orange complex corresponding to that of Tula's invaders, the Chichimecs, and the Tula-Mazapa complex, corresponding to the city's builders. Sherds from the Coyotlatelco complex are grouped in the early stages of Tula's development.

Acosta was interested in ceramics only insofar as they would provide archaeological confirmation of ethnohistorical accounts of Tula's destruction by Chi-

chimec migrants from the north. His excavation reports are ambiguous about the correlations between stratigraphic and ceramic analysis, such as the relationship between the Coyotlatelco or Tula-Mazapa ceramic complexes and the description of the three periods of architectural development of Building B. After reviewing stratigraphic events and ceramic descriptions, the reader is left to analyze both sets of data to reach his or her own conclusions about how they relate to each other.

In the 1980s, the study of ceramics as an indicator of urban development and cultural change in Tula was undertaken by the INAH and the University of Missouri Tula Archaeological Project. Dr. Robert Cobean's analysis produced a comprehensive ceramic classification to place sherd types in chronological order.<sup>4</sup> He describes four ceramic complexes for Tula:

## TULA

Sixty-five kilometers north of Mexico City in the state of Hidalgo is the archaeological site of what was one of ancient Mexico's most important cities, Tula. Although as this article argues, construction dates back as early as the seventh or eighth centuries, migrants from central Mexico, the Toltecs, probably made it their capital in the tenth century A.D. and it eventually grew to between 30,000 and 40,000 inhabitants, covering nearly 16 square kilometers. From there, their influence spread throughout Mesoamerica, including parts of the Maya areas to the south, until the city was destroyed by

nomadic tribes from the north, the Chichimecs. The Toltecs' is the oldest documented empire in the northeastern part of Mesoamerica.

One of Mesoamerica's most widespread religious beliefs, the legend of the cultural hero, the supposedly white-skinned and bearded Quetzalcóatl, centers around Tula. Although the stories vary depending on where they are told, the broad outline is that he ruled in Tula until being tricked into committing incest with his sister and fleeing in shame to the West, where, after swearing to return, he threw himself onto a bonfire. Like

their military and economic influence, the Toltecs also spread this belief. Centuries later, then, the Mexicas, or Aztecs, still believed the legend, and their leaders considered that the conquistador Hernán Cortés might be his descendent coming to fulfil the prophesy.

The Tula archeological site of today includes what was the main ceremonial center, with remains of magnificent palaces, painted with brightly colored frescoes, ball courts and several pyramids. (**Source:** Yolotl González Torres, *Diccionario de la mitología y religión de Mesoamérica* (Mexico City: Larousse, 1999).



The remains of Tula's main pyramid in the city's ceremonial plaza.

#### Prado phase complex

A.D. 700-800

#### Corral phase complex

A.D. 800-900

#### Terminal Corral phase complex

A.D. 900-950

#### Tollan phase complex

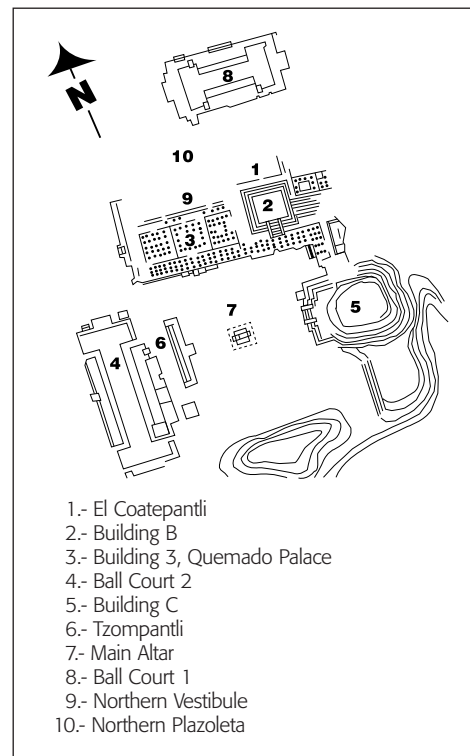
A.D. 950-1150/1200

Thus, field research carried out on a regional scale and in the vicinity of the confluence of the Tula and Rosas Rivers allowed them to define settlement sizes and composition from A.D. 700 until A.D. 1150/1200, over 300 years of cultural transformations that led to the construction of the legendary city.

Acosta's work at Tula Grande discovered Corral phase ceramics. INAH and University of Missouri field surveys in this locality did not find traces of landscape transformations related to that phase, however. Therefore, Tula Grande's archaeological evidence, including

Acosta's description of Building B stratigraphy, was not taken into consideration to explain its urban development. The 1997 Archaeological Maintenance Program provided evidence to evaluate Acosta's work and the outline of Tula's chronological development. Archaeological stratigraphic excavations<sup>5</sup> were conducted in Building 3 and the North Plazoleta to repair the drainage system located in the sunken patios of Rooms 1, 2 and 3.

Building 3, known as the Quemado Palace, was constructed by the Toltecs during Period III, at the same time as the Coatepantli and the Quetzalcóatl Palace, a colonnade that Acosta discovered on top of the adobe platform to the east of Pyramid B.<sup>6</sup> The Quemado Palace rests atop a large platform that encloses the northern side of the main plaza of Tula Grande. It is rectangular, subdivided into three large rooms or halls, each of which has a sunken patio or



Tula Grande's main buildings.

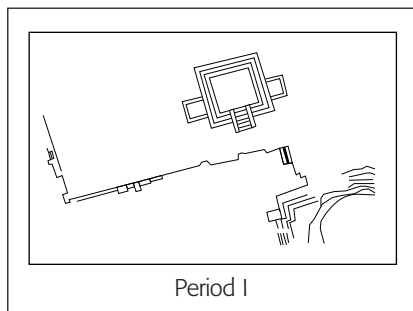
- 1.- El Coatepantli
- 2.- Building B
- 3.- Building 3, Quemado Palace
- 4.- Ball Court 2
- 5.- Building C
- 6.- Tzompantli
- 7.- Main Altar
- 8.- Ball Court 1
- 9.- Northern Vestibule
- 10.- Northern Plazoleta

impluvia in its center that would have been under a hole in the roof, or compluvium, that would have allowed light into the building.<sup>7</sup> Six small rooms were built adjacent to the north wall; then the halls and rooms were enclosed on the north, west and south by three elongated narrow colonnaded rooms or vestibules.

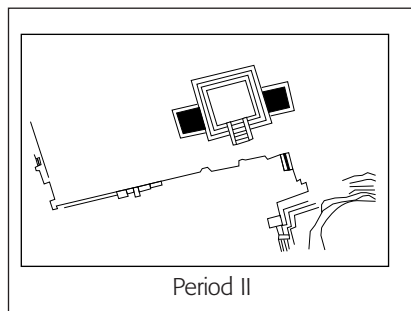
The drainage systems of Halls 1, 2 and 3 were explored by stratigraphic excavation. Halls 1 and 2 drain north and excavations were conducted from the impluvia to a main drainage collector; room 3's impluvium drains west. The entire system was cleaned and the final section rebuilt. The drainage system was originally built using square slabs of volcanic rock, the same material used to face Building B and bench decorative reliefs, to form a square conduit to drain rain water collected in the impluvia.

During the excavation process several stratigraphic units and feature interfaces were found and their deposi-

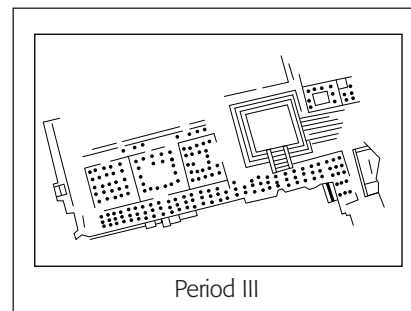




Period I



Period II



Period III

Acosta's three-period stratigraphic sequence.

tional order are a record of events that predate Acosta's periods of architectural development described for Building B's west side. The depositional sequence was found to be more complex than Acosta's descriptions account for. After removing the strata of surfaces in use today archeologists found:

#### BUILDING 3, HALL 1

1. A 1.1-meter wide horizontal feature interface adobe wall running east-west the whole width of the interior, parallel to and 1.31 meter from the northern bench and wall of Hall 1. This wall formed the northern limit of a building erected before Building 3. Evidence shows that it is divided in two, with an inner enclosed room to the south and an outer open space to the north.

2. Two superimposed stucco floors on either side of the adobe wall, representing the original construction and at least one remodeling of the building prior to Building 3. The stucco floor on the northern side was severely damaged by water from the roof. This represents a time when the building received no maintenance and was abandoned.

3. After removing an adobe under-flooring layer in the center part of Hall 2's impluvium, a pink-orange, stuccoed volcanic rock slab floor was found.

4. Under the stone floor was a horizontal feature interface of a white stuccoed, slanted 86 cm talus wall that runs north-south. This talus lies on a basalt stone wall.

#### ENTRANCE CORRIDOR TO TULA GRANDE'S MAIN PLAZA

The corridor entrance located between Buildings B and 3 was explored. Excavations revealed a stuccoed floor paving the way, facing the east side of Building 3's wall, and a horizontal feature interface of a basalt stone wall located off the center of the corridor that runs north-south the whole length of Building B. Acosta's 1956 archaeological report<sup>8</sup> describes an adobe wall here forming the outer facade of Building B. The wall collapsed after a heavy rain storm and the whole facade decorated with horizontal vermeil lines on red, blue, yellow ocher, pink ocher, white and black bands was lost.

#### BUILDING 3, HALL 2

Excavations conducted in Hall 2's Building 3 uncovered two stucco floors similar to the ones found in Hall 1. In exploring the drains we found that large sections of the drain canal had

been looted and that the system used during Building-3 times had been in operation since the construction of the first building lying underneath it.

#### THE VESTIBULE AND THE NORTHERN PLAZOLETA

1. Two large excavations were conducted on the Northern Vestibule and one on the Northern Plazoleta. Most interesting were the deposits found during explorations within the Northern Vestibule on the northern side of Hall 2. Here we found a 3.50-meter talus and cornice platform with two levels. Its facade was built with small basalt stones and finished with a thin layer of lime plaster. This platform was covered by a reticular system of basalt wall foundation and fill, for the architectural development of the Vestibule and Northern Plazoleta. The facade's plaster finish showed signs of not having received proper maintenance before being buried.

2. At the Northern Plazoleta, 15 meters to the north of this last exploration, excavations revealed a 6.60-meter-deep stratigraphic sequence before reaching the hardpan. Two types of strata were found: vertical strata of chalk adobes laid to form the reticular wall foundation of the Northern Plazoleta, and six stuccoed floors that paved dif-



Tula's famous atlantes, statue-columns almost 5-meters high.

ferent stages of use of the open area between Building 3 and ball court number 1.

Preliminary analysis of sherds recovered in this location identified attributes from Prado A.D. 700 to Tollan A.D. 1150-1200 ceramic types.<sup>9</sup>

Several conclusions can be drawn from the archaeological evidence presented above. The most obvious is that further research needs to be done in and around Tula to evaluate its urban and cultural development.

So far our research has shown that:

1. Strata and interfaces found during the 1997 fieldwork season in Tula Grande showed a continuous process of building and remodeling from the Corral phases and perhaps earlier, with at least one major episode of the abandonment of the urban area or its deliberately being given no maintenance. This was the case for the construction under Building 3 and the two-stepped platforms located under the Northern Vestibule.

2. Acosta's interpretation of Buildings' B and 3 stratigraphy is not very accurate. According to the stratigraphic record,

Building 3 and the adobe facade that once covered most of Building B, together with the adjoining adobe platform to the east and Building 1 on its summit belong to the same period interface. The three superimposed facades under the adobe deposits of Building B were never in view during Building 3's existence. They belonged to the same period interface as the construction under Building 3, and the ceramic types are related to the Late Corral phase.

3. We have tentatively placed the construction of the two-level platform under the Northern Vestibule during the Early Corral phase. Ball court number 1 was also constructed at this time. The fifth stuccoed floor found in Northern Plazoleta correlates with the plaza floor that extends north of the Corral platform. The remains of an adobe building and another stuccoed floor are still under this. We have not been able to determine the date of their deposition.

Contrary to common belief about Tula's urban development, we found that large civic buildings were in use at Tula Grande at the same time as in Tula Chi-

co. Tula Grande was remodeled but not definitively abandoned as was Tula Chico. A great deal of construction began after the two-level Corral platform was abandoned, and ceramics still being analyzed show that this major development occurred during the Terminal Corral phase. The construction under Building 3 and the bas-reliefs and smooth stones facing Building B belong to that same period interface. Research is still being carried out at Tula, and we will have to evaluate our findings based on new stratigraphic data. ■■

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Richard A. Diehl "Tollan y la caída de Teotihuacan," *El auge y la caída del Clásico en el México central*, Joseph B. Mountjoy, Donald L. Brockington, eds. (Mexico City: UNAM, 1987), pp. 129-143.

<sup>2</sup> Alba Guadalupe Mastache F. and Robert H. Cobean, "Tula," *Mesoamérica y el centro de México, una antología*, Jesús Monjarás-Ruiz and Emma Pérez Rocha, comps. (Mexico City: INAH, 1985), pp. 273-307.

<sup>3</sup> Jorge R. Acosta, *Archaeological Report from 1940 to 1964 Field Season* (Mexico: Archivo del Consejo de Arqueología-INAH, inédito).

<sup>4</sup> Robert H. Cobean, *La cerámica de Tula, Hidalgo*, Colección Científica del INAH, no. 215 (Mexico City: INAH, 1990).

<sup>5</sup> Edward Harris, *Principles of Archaeological Stratigraphy* (London: Academic Press, 1992).

<sup>6</sup> Jorge R. Acosta, op. cit. 1947-48, pp. 6-8.

<sup>7</sup> Blanca Luz Paredes Gudiño, *Unidades habitacionales en Tula, Hidalgo*, Colección Científica del INAH, no. 210 (Mexico City: INAH, 1990).

<sup>8</sup> "Interpretación de algunos de los datos obtenidos en Tula relativos a la época tolteca," *Revista Mexicana de Estudios Antropológicos* 14, second part (Mexico City), 1956-1967, pp. 75-110.

<sup>9</sup> Cobean, op. cit.

# Sixteenth-Century Monastery Architecture in the State of Hidalgo

Víctor Ballesteros García\*

The Spanish conquistadors were not satisfied with taking over these lands and becoming the lords and masters of the inhabitants.

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Reproduction of the photos of monasteries authorized by the National Institute of Anthropology and History, CONACULTA-INAH-MEX.

The goal of the Spanish Crown was to enlarge its empire with true vassals, not just new payers of tribute. A solid way of enlarging their domains was to reproduce their own culture in the recently vanquished lands. Transplanting the culture and creating a country ideologically similar to the metropolis was a truly titanic enterprise.

Nevertheless, the conquistadors had the help of an important part of the Catholic Church, undoubtedly the most active, educated and enthusiastic clergy of its time. Hernán Cortés asked Carlos V to send Franciscan friars to preach Christianity in New Spain. The friars's rules of behavior were different from diocesan priests: their vows of



Portal at the entrance of the Epazoyucan monastery, sixteenth century.

poverty, chastity and obedience were a good example for other Christians. They did not remain isolated in a monastery like monks, but lived with the people, who they comforted and preached to. They built their headquarters, then called convents, now known as monasteries, with the aid of indigenous labor and funds from the *encomenderos*, the owners of landed estates granted by the Crown complete with their inhabitants. The size and quality of these monasteries depended on the demographic and economic importance of the towns where they were built.

The first 12 Franciscans arrived in 1524; the Dominicans sent 12 friars in 1526; and the Augustinians, seven, in 1533. After that, each of these orders increased their numbers and their activities. The Franciscans were distributed in almost the entire country; the Dominicans preached in the South and the Southeast; and the Augustinians went into the state of Morelos and west to Michoacán, but they had already sent missions north and to what is now the state of Hidalgo. In that area they built some of the artistically and architecturally most interesting buildings in sixteenth-century New Spain.

These convents were not only religious centers. Along with Christianity, the friars transmitted cultural models, a new language and new customs; they adapted plants, taught skills, recovered the indigenous languages and history—even though in the end they imposed their own—and their presence determined the relocation of entire towns. In accordance with the precepts of their order, the Franciscans built simple, relatively unadorned monasteries, whose austerity transmits a feeling of serenity. An excellent example is the church of San Francisco de



The Epazoyucan Monastery, founded in 1540 by the Augustinians.

The friars did not close themselves up in a monastery. They lived with, comforted and preached to the people at the same time transmitting a new cultural model and language.



Sixteenth-century mural at the Tepeapulco Monastery depicting the martyrdom of Saint Sebastian.



The Epazoyucan Church displays monograms with the abbreviation for Christ in Latin and Greek.



Saint Paul before his conversion to Christianity, an example of viceregal art in Tepeapulco.

The conquistadors had the help of the most active, educated and enthusiastic sector of the Catholic Church to reproduce their own culture in the vanquished lands.

Tepeapulco, also of great historic importance.

#### THE TEPEAPULCO MONASTERY

When the Franciscans arrived, Tepeapulco was an important center where pre-Hispanic tradition and customs thrived. In the mid-sixteenth century, this was still the case and therefore the celebrated Friar Bernardino de Sahagún, who worked gathering information about indigenous culture, decided to establish himself there between 1558 and 1560. He gathered around him several elders familiar with the indigenous religion who used pictograms and stories to describe to him different ceremonies and the deities they honored. The documents he wrote describing this were known as the *Primeros Memoriales* (First Memorials), which form part of his great opus, *Historia de las Cosas de la Nueva España* (History of the Things of New Spain).

By 1528, Friar Andrés de Olmos, a scholar of the most important indigenous languages of the time, had founded a hospital in the town dedicated to the Immaculate Conception.<sup>1</sup>

The Franciscans who arrived in the area in 1528 came from the Texcoco monastery. Friar Toribio de Benavente, known as Motolinía by the indigenous people, describes it in the following way:

The first time that friars came to this place [Tepeapulco], it was one afternoon and, as the people were gathered, they began to teach them; and in the space of three or four hours, many ... knew how to cross themselves and how to say the Our Father...This town of Tepeapulco sits on a very high hill where



Actopan. Saint Nicholas of Tolentino Church and the monastery built by the Franciscans in 1550 merit more than one visit.

one of the great, handsome temples of the Devil was, a temple they then tore down; because, since the town is large and has many other subjects, it had great *teocalli* or temples to the Devil.<sup>2</sup>

Tepeapulco relocated around the church and the monastery. The construction had a large atrium, now a tree-lined garden, from which the chapels at each end and the stone cross that should have been in the center where there is now a fountain have disappeared today. The church and monastery were built at the top of a great staircase.

The church's facade is sober but very beautiful: its only adornment are stone carvings of flowers, and in the arch, amidst the foliage, figures of felines, perhaps ocelots, with small riders astride them. Above the arch is a relief depicting the moment in the life of Saint Francis of Assisi when Christ appears in the heavens to him with the wings of a cherubim as he prayed at Mount Alvern and transferred to him the wounds in his hands made by the nails and in his side made by the sword. Friar León, who was the only witness



Actopan's impressive cloister. The high pink stone gothic arches on the ground floor contrast with the semi-circular Renaissance arches of the upper part.

to the miracle, dozes on one side. The carving shows evidence of having been done by indigenous stone masons.

The interior has a vaulted ceiling and close to the great altar a large dome built in the eighteenth century. Simple pictorial decorations adorn the walls, among them three full-length effigies of Saint Francis, Saint Domingo and Saint Augustine. To one side of the main altar, a great stone cross was imbedded, adorned with the reliefs of symbols of the Passion of Christ; the skull, the nails and the lances, among

other things, are clear. There is a similar, but smaller, cross on the wall of the facade. One of these may have been the cross that was originally in the atrium. Next to the main church is the chapel of the third Franciscan order, its facade adorned with mortar reliefs in the baroque style popular in the seventeenth century.

The visitor enters the monastery through the pilgrims' portico, which dominates the entire atrium, used as an open chapel. In the place of the altar is a small stone cross flanked by two



Actopan. The different sized cells are small museums in themselves, their walls covered with paintings depicting different moments of the viceregal period.



The omnipresent Christ the Redeemer, an icon for missionary work.



Actopan Monastery. The impressive main stairwell with sixteenth century paintings depicting the Augustinians' most outstanding figures from the Middle Ages until the time they were painted.



human figures. After going through the entrance, the visitor comes to the beautiful cloister whose arches surround a garden with an old cistern in the middle. At the top of the corridor's walls is a black and white border depicting symbols of good and evil. Here, we find a small museum that exhibits pre-Hispanic stone and clay artifacts discovered locally. Some of these rooms show signs of the drainage and water gathering system used in the building, left exposed by the restorers so visitors could see it. They also preserved the

old cooling system in the kitchen that worked by water flowing through conduits in the stone walls.

The corridors of the second-floor cloister still preserve sixteenth-century murals, one representing a miraculous mass officiated by Saint Gregory during which Christ appears at the altar at the moment of consecration; another shows the martyrdom of Saint Sebastian, tied to a tree with his body pierced by arrows. Yet another depicts passages in the life of Saint Paul: in the first, before his conversion to Christianity,

he is holding a sword symbolizing the persecution of the Christians; in the background is the scene of his conversion, after being knocked off his horse by a lightning bolt; and last, the scene of his decapitation for preaching Christianity. It is said that when his head fell, it struck the ground three times and that each time a spring came forth; the painting symbolizes this with three circles each enclosing Christ's monogram.

South of the building was an immense orchard and vegetable garden. Today, all that is left is the portal to the field and an upper terrace where visitors can enjoy a moment of tranquility just as the friars did in the past.

#### THE EPAZOYUCAN MONASTERY

Thirty kilometers north of Tepeapulco, the Augustinians founded the Epazoyucan Monastery in 1540. Thanks to the size of the population, they were able to raise a small church and their monastery in just a little over seven months. A few years later, this building was replaced by the current construction, finished around 1562. The atrium

is a large square with several little, beautifully decorated processional chapels on the ends and a stone cross at the center. To the west there is a large stairway and, above, an open chapel, the church and the monastery. The stone doorway is sober and elegant, flanked by slender columns and sturdy moldings, all drawn in perfect balance and harmony with the open chapel and the tower.

Inside the church, the choir is worth seeing, built with enormous carved wooden beams, with an inscription in Latin and Nahuatl on its upper railing. The walls are decorated with monograms with the abbreviated name of Christ in Latin and Greek, which reach up to where the vault begins. The entrance to the monastery is decorated in stone in the plateresque style with spirals carved on each side and small birds in the arch, a small masterpiece of sixteenth-century art.

The portico that led into the monastery crumbled and some of its arches were rebuilt only two decades ago. The cloister has more to offer the visitor in the way of art. Its two floors are held up by stone columns that support slender round arches. The mural of symmetrical designs with foliage, window lattices and arches motifs is worthy of note. At the ends of the corridors are paintings depicting the Passion of Christ, some very well done like *The Road to Calvary*, a reproduction of a fifteenth-century German engraving, copied later by a French artist and reproduced here by an anonymous painter. Other scenes include *Calvary*, *The Descent from the Cross* and the *Ecce Homo* or *The Presentation of Jesus Scourged*. Above the door leading to the stairway is *The Assumption into Heaven of the Virgin Mary*, the moment when she dies surrounded by the apostles,



Actopan. This baptismal font is still in use.



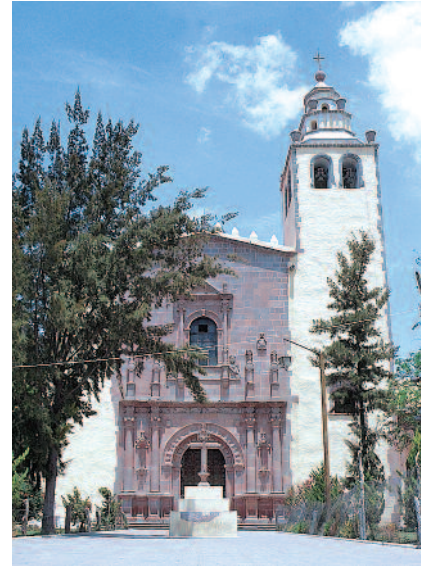
Actopan's entrance hall. A great mural depicts the legendary history of the founding of the order and the life of the Augustinians in New Spain.

with a contingent of angels at hand showing that her body will be borne to Heaven. Above that scene is another in which the Virgin is crowned queen of the heavens by the Trinity, as written in the Psalms. This is undoubtedly one of the best examples of mural painting from sixteenth-century New Spain.

Around the cloister are the refectory and its anteroom, which also conserve remnants of murals, as well as the kitchen. Closer to the church is the old

sacristy that boasts another interesting series of paintings about the Passion of Christ: *The Last Supper*, *The Mocking of Christ the King*, *The Flagellation*, *Calvary* and *The Descent from the Cross*. There are remains of *The Resurrection*, *The Descent into Hell* and *The Ascension*. The font in which the priest washed himself before officiating mass is another beautiful example of plateresque art, with its relief of the Augustinian crest, framed by two small col-





While the Franciscan friars' vows of poverty are reflected in their buildings, the Augustinian monasteries and churches are more ostentatious, as any visitor to Ixmiquilpan can attest to.

umns with shafts in the form of a spiral or tresse and a small arch decorated with rosettes.

The upstairs part of the cloister was used for the friars' cells, although many have been rebuilt and they only preserve pieces of borders painted with religious sayings. Visitors can also view a photographic exhibition about the monastery and life in the town of Epazoyucan, as well as an exhibit of pre-Hispanic objects.

#### THE ACTOPAN MONASTERY

The Augustinian monasteries were the most ostentatious, as any visitor to Actopan can attest. We begin with its monumental open chapel, renowned as one of the largest vaulted spaces built during the sixteenth century. It measures 17.5 meters long and more than 12 meters high making it larger than the vaulted ceilings of the cathedrals of Amiens, Paris and all of

the ones in Spain except Gerona's.<sup>3</sup> Its interior is painted with colorful scenes from the Bible, from the Creation to the Final Judgement, useful to the friars in explaining Christian doctrine.

The walls have small paintings depicting the most common sins of indigenous people and Spaniards. But, what most captures a visitor's attention are the sinners' being tortured in Hell by different kinds of demons in



a sea of fire. Despite their deterioration, the paintings are still impressive.

Saint Nicholas of Tolentino Church is also worth seeing. Its crenelated walls flanked by sentry-boxes makes it look like a fortress; its square tower, measuring almost 38 meters high, and the plateresque facade features several pairs of columns and a large trumpet-shaped arch decorated with rosettes. At the top are the coats-of-arms of the Augustinian order, hearts pierced by arrows of divine love. The interior has graceful vaults, and the sacristy preserves the remains of a sixteenth-century mural.

Friar Andrés de Mata began the construction of this monastery in 1550. The entrance is a three-arched door held up by solid pillars reminiscent of Roman arches of triumph, with back-to-back pilasters decorated with three medallions. The interior of the portico was completely decorated with paintings and the vault with sets of bows and ribbons in geometric Mudéjar-style designs. The effigies of the Virgin Mary and several saints were placed on medallions. On the north wall is a painting of Saint Augustine (A.D. 354-420) depicted as a bishop and founder of the

The interiors  
and exteriors of  
anything built by  
Augustinian monks are always  
both aesthetically and  
ideologically symmetrical  
and spectacular, as in  
the case of the  
Ixmiquilpan  
Monastery.

order, protecting his flock under his cape (although strictly speaking, the order was not founded by Saint Augustine, but by congregations of friars inspired by his writings in the Middle Ages).

The monastery's cloister is impressive, with high pink stone Gothic arches reinforced with buttresses. The upper part, in contrast, boasts Renaissance semi-circular arches held up by beautiful small columns in the Tuscan style.

The room that was once the entrance hall, also known as the De Profundis room, has a great mural depicting the legendary history of the founding of the order and the life of the Augusti-

nians in New Spain: the young Augustine reading the Gospels that converted him is followed by scenes of his baptism and his life of retirement and meditation. It also contains a miraculous scene in which Saint Augustine attempts to understand the mystery of the Trinity and the Baby Jesus appears to him on a beach to say that it is easier to put all the water of the oceans into a small hole than to explain that mystery. Above, we see the saint explaining to the friars the rules of their order, the friars at prayer, penitence and study. On the right side of the mural are the friars on solitary walks, confronting wild beasts, finding refuge in caves, building churches and in general carrying out all the activities of spreading the Gospel in the missions in Hidalgo's Sierra Alta Mountains and New Spain in general, in their attempt to banish the Devil that stood in the way of the Christianization of the natives. The mural also includes the defeated Devil abandoning New Spain.

On the south side is the monastery's enormous kitchen and refectory, its painted vaulted ceiling covered with sunken rosettes and the pulpit tradi-

tionally used by one of the friars to read to the community during meals. Outside is what is left of the orchard and vegetable gardens and a great elevated gallery used by the friars to meditate, walk or rest.

The main stairwell that leads to the upper story boasts sixteenth-century paintings depicting the order's most outstanding figures from the Middle Ages until the time they were painted. Saint Augustine and some of his contemporaries appear in 38 scenes, and as the visitor climbs the stairs he or she sees theologians, bishops, cardinals, generals of the order and exemplary friars like Saint Nicholas of Tolentino (1249-1305) and Saint Guillaume of Aquitaine (twelfth century), whose names are written in ribbons over their heads.

The upper hallways, whose vaulted ceilings and walls are also covered with paintings, lead to the friars' cells. Here, near the choir, is a room called "The Chamber" painted with a Calvary, a large Augustinian coat-of-arms and an enormous crown of leaves held up by angels monogrammed with the name of Jesus. Some of the cells have seventeenth- and eighteenth-century sculptures and oil paintings.

In the early seventeenth century, this monastery housed the most important school in the province. The Augustinians left Actopan in 1750 and were replaced by a diocesan priest. During the nineteenth century, the atrium, the open chapel, the orchard and surrounding areas were nationalized and sold to private individuals. Today, the

main buildings of the monastery are managed by Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History.

The size and decoration of the building makes it merit not one but several visits. **MM**

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Luis Azcué y Mancera et al., *Catálogo de construcciones religiosas del estado de Hidalgo* vol. 2 (Mexico City: Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público, 1940-1942), p. 235.

<sup>2</sup> Friar Toribio de Benavente, *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España* (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1969), pp. 80-81.

<sup>3</sup> John McAndrew, *Open Churches of Sixteenth Century Mexico* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 479, 481 and 700.



## EL PARAISO HOTEL

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# Haciendas in the State of Hidalgo History and Art

Víctor Ballesteros García\*

**O**n the southern plains of the state of Hidalgo, among magueys, nopal cacti and a *pirul* tree or two, high old stone or adobe walls jut out of the ground, the

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\* Researcher at the Autonomous University of the State of Hidalgo.

remains of large buildings, some in ruins or abandoned and others partially standing or occupied by their owners. They are noteworthy not only for their size, but for the watchtowers that seem to guard their fronts, for their architecture and the refined ornamentation of their facades, with oval

windows, Moorish balconies or neo-classical portals often contrasting with the stark rural landscape. The wealth of their chapels compete with the region's most important churches. The state of Hidalgo has about 200 of these singular complexes, called *cascos de hacienda*, or the central build-



ings of the hacienda, including the main house.

#### VICEROYAL OPULENCE

Haciendas originated in the colonial period. In their search for wealth, the

Spanish conquistadors became *encomenderos* by royal decree, the lords of indigenous towns that had to pay them tribute. When the indigenous population declined drastically in the sixteenth century, the tribute that the conquistadors' sons and grandsons received also dropped precipitously, and

they began to seek other sources of wealth, which they found in the ownership and working of the land. Through *mercedes*, grants of land, rents or noble titles by the crown as a reward for services rendered or a simple favor, an individual could accumulate hundreds of hectares.<sup>1</sup> The hacienda became the



Tecajete Hacienda. Peaceful patios filled with flowers and trees are common features in Hidalgo's haciendas.

At the foot of a volcano of the same name, Tecajete Hacienda's superb colonial architecture is still impressive.



The chapel, a peaceful refuge and a delight to the eye.



The drawing room, witness to four centuries of conversations.

agricultural and cattle raising production unit par excellence until the twentieth century when social and political processes obliterated it. The last heyday of Mexico's haciendas came during the *Porfiriato* (the regime of Porfirio Diaz from 1876 to 1911). Despite many being abandoned after the 1910 Mexican Revolution, their ruins bear witness to their stateliness and luxury. The ones

saved from destruction are of interest to the visitor as testimony to a very important stage in Mexico's history.

#### THE APAN PLAINS

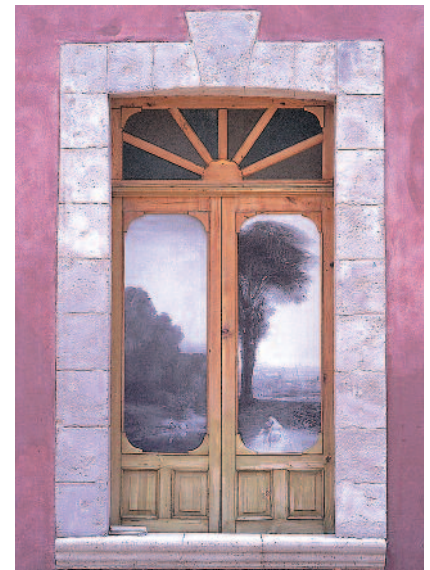
The southern part of the state of Hidalgo, known as the Apan Plains, about 70 kilometers northeast of Mexico

City, has always been good land for growing maguey plants. The haciendas in this area, surrounded by immense maguey fields, used them to produce *pulque*, a traditional Mexican drink. *Pulque* is made by fermenting the sap of the plant, called *aguamiel*, or "honey water." Workers called *tlachiqueros* went from plant to plant collecting the *aguamiel* (*tlachique* in Nahuatl), and

The economic boom provided hacienda owners with the funds to indulge their desire to show off, using a broad variety of ornamental styles on their chapels and "big house."



The Santiago Tetlapayac Hacienda has been the location for several movies.



they took it to special buildings called *tinacales*, or fermenting sheds, where they poured it into large leather recipients. As the days passed, the fermenting liquid became *pulque*, which was then emptied into casks and sent to consumers, mainly in Mexico City. It was so profitable that the hacienda owners amassed great fortunes and created large companies that came to

control hundreds of *pulque*-selling establishments in the country's capital. Some even built their own railway lines to hook up to the main commercial railways in order to distribute their product.

This economic boom provided hacienda owners with the funds to not only improve the production buildings (fermenting sheds, stables, patios and workers' quarters), but also to indulge

their desire to show off, using a broad variety of ornamental styles on their chapels and "the big house" where they lived with their families.

#### A VISIT TO SOME HACIENDAS

The Santiago Tetlapayac Hacienda, 17 kilometers southeast of the town of



Tetlapayac Hacienda dates from the colonial period.

At the end of each day, the peons and *tlachiqueros* sang a song of praise to God and the Virgin Mary known as the *alabado* before a small altar.



The Santiago Tetlapayac Hacienda's chapel is an excellent example of the popular Hidalgo baroque style.





The wisdom and flavors of at least two cultures met in the kitchen.



*Tlachiqueros* at work, immortalized in a mural by Ernesto Icaza.



Tetlapayac's *tinacal* still stores all the vats, tools and utensils needed to make *pulque*.

Apan near the border with the state of Tlaxcala, dates from the colonial period. Its enormous doorway, flanked by two tall watchtowers, leads to an immense patio that holds the small workers' houses and the corrals for the cattle. At the back, the red walls of the two-story big house can be seen. To the right

of the entrance is the fermenting shed, large enough to comfortably hold under its arched roof all the vats to store the *pulque* and all the tools and utensils needed to make it. At the end of each day, the peons and *tlachiqueros* sang a song of praise to God and the Virgin Mary known as the *alabado* before a

small altar. The painter Ernesto Icaza (1866-1935), famous for his scenes of work in the countryside, was hired to paint three murals on these walls illustrating the entire process.

Perhaps the most important room in the entire complex was the office, where the owner and his administrator kept





The San Antonio Tochatlaco Hacienda dates from the nineteenth century. Its name means “in the rabbit’s brook.”



Haciendas like Tochatlaco had their own railway lines to transport the *pulque* to the commercial train station.

detailed records of the hacienda’s financial, material and human resources. Tetlapayac has preserved the original office furniture, the account books as well as old maps and photographs from the *Porfiriato*.

The central part of the hacienda is an elevated garden, a sort of terrace, oppo-

site two series of arches. On the southern end is the chapel, an excellent example of the popular Hidalgo baroque style. Its entrance has two levels capped with decorations and flanked on either side by slim columns; over the entry arch are two full high-relief figures of archangels. The upper window has

small baroque columns. The tower and dome are also decorated in the baroque fashion, but in stucco; the walls and interior vaults boast brightly colored reliefs.

The central altar has a seventeenth-century gold-covered wooden altarpiece that originally had paintings, which were stolen in 1995, but still preserves an old equestrian statue of Saint James the Apostle.<sup>2</sup>

Because it is so beautiful, this hacienda has been the location for more than a dozen movie shoots. Russian director Sergei Eisenstein filmed *¡Que viva México!* there in 1931 and some of the scenes from *The Mask of Zorro* were filmed there in 1997.

The Chimalpa Hacienda, 10 kilometers to the west of Tetlapayac, dates at least as far back as the eighteenth century, as is shown by the baroque ornamentation on the facade of one of its two chapels. The other chapel was built in the early-twentieth-century neo-Gothic style. The name “Chimalpa” is derived from the Nahuatl words *chimalli*, meaning “shield,” and *pan*, meaning “over”; so *chimalpa* means “in the place of the shield.”

The hacienda’s many buildings were added at different times to a long central patio: granaries, *tinacales*, stables and more patios, all ended up forming an intricate labyrinth, making it one of the region’s largest rural architectural complexes. The hacienda was painted by Mexico’s celebrated landscape artist, José María Velasco, in 1893, with the Popocatepetl and Iztaccíhuatl volcanoes in the background.

The name of the San Bartolomé de los Tepetates Hacienda may well refer to the terrain on which it is built: *tepetate* means “hardpan” or “bedrock” a brittle rock used to make lime. About



Tochatlaco. A kitchen that has seen almost three centuries of culinary history.



Tochatlaco. The furniture and decoration of all the rooms are from the beginning of the twentieth century.

15 kilometers northwest of Chimalpa, San Bartolomé is one of the region's oldest haciendas, as shown by written records from the sixteenth century. Tradition has it that it was Hernán Cortés himself who began its construction; it later passed through different hands. Its livelihood was based on the cultivation of barley and corn, *pulque* production and hog raising. Its main patio is surrounded by hallways lined with slim stone columns. The chapel has been remodeled and therefore no longer pre-

serves its original decoration. The main house was rebuilt in 1845 and later, the granaries, the hacienda store (the equivalent of the company store), the peons' houses and the watchtowers were remodeled by architect Antonio Rivas Mercado (1853-1927).<sup>3</sup>

Tecajete Hacienda, 40 kilometers north of Tepetates, was built in the sixteenth century at the foot of a volcano of the same name. A spring born here feeds the aqueduct built by Friar Francisco de Tembleque that went all the

way to the town of Otumba, 32 kilometers away. Tecajete was a typical *pulque*-producing hacienda, owned by General Manuel González, president of Mexico between 1880 and 1884.

Also designed by architect Antonio Rivas Mercado, the main facade has two enormous watchtowers that dominate a closed patio around which the chapel and other buildings were erected.

The San Antonio Tochatlaco Hacienda, dating from 1840, sits 10 kilometers east of Tecajete. In Nahuatl, its name means "in the rabbits' brook." The chapel, granaries and *tinacales*, as well as the big house, all give onto a large closed patio. The rails of a small tram go up to the entrance. The furniture and decoration of all the rooms are from the *Porfirian* period: the living room, dining room, bedrooms and kitchen still look like they did more than 100 years ago. The interior patios are not very large, but very cozy. A bowling room attests to the owners' hobbies. Outside the main house are the old stone walls of the peons' houses. The corrals and the well only supplemented the economy of this hacienda specialized in *pulque* production.<sup>4</sup> ■■

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Gisela von Wobeser, *La formación de la hacienda en la época colonial. El uso de la tierra y el agua* (Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas-UNAM, 1983), pp. 11-25 and 49-67.

<sup>2</sup> José Vergara Vergara, *El barroco en Hidalgo* (Pachuca, Hidalgo: Gobierno del Estado de Hidalgo, 1988).

<sup>3</sup> Virginia Armella de Aspe, *San Bartolomé de los Tepetates. Historia de una hacienda* (Mexico City: Diesel Nacional, 1988).

<sup>4</sup> Marco Bellingeri, *Las haciendas en México. El caso de San Antonio Tochatlaco* (Mexico City: INAH, 1980), pp. 43-76.

# Real del Monte The Rooftop of Mexico

Belem Oviedo Gámez\*

Real del Monte, mines  
and magueys, the hardest oak that  
holds up the skies, conifers that stop cirrus clouds  
and mist. The gallows frame and chimneys of La Rica, Dificultad, Dolores,  
Acosta, Purísima... Inhabitants of Real del Monte live on  
the rooftop of Mexico, on the mountains' flowing  
mane. That is why the hamlet of Real is spread  
out and the vein tastes of ground stone.

**Eugenio Martín Torres**



Unless otherwise specified, photos by Luis A. Aguilar



The signs of mining in Real del Monte cannot be hidden; they are the lifeblood of one of the few mining districts in Mexico that has practically never stopped working since colonial times, furnishing us with gold and silver, and with an entire cultural and industrial heritage.<sup>1</sup>

If you're not careful, Real del Monte is the kind of place that will captivate you. If you know how to see through the eyes of your soul, it will charm you and instill respect and a desire to know a little more about that world "down below" so manifest in the town's features. On its old lanes, the houses still have their roofs made of shingles or with the tops of the cyanide kegs used in working the mine. Old houses that

If you're not careful,  
Real del Monte is the kind  
of place that will captivate you.  
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the town's features.

hide a history, a legend, someone always willing to share his/her stories, his life in the mine, in the cantina with his buddies, the buddies united by the courage it takes to face death every day and the complicity of sharing a single love, a love that, like the love of Real, you never forget: the mine.

The visitor is welcomed to one end of Real del Monte by the old gallows

frame (the metal frame that holds up the shaft elevator) of the Providencia Mine, a faithful reflection of early twentieth-century mining technology. On the other end, the El Hiloche forest opens its arms inviting us in.<sup>2</sup> For years its oaks and firs have provided shade and fed the imagination of families organizing their fiestas under their boughs, artists who have painted their centuries' old magnificence, photographers who have captured the moment and immortalized the El Hiloche sheltering the mist. Miners like Don Manuel García, who ran fruitlessly after a fairy to get him to show him where the treasure was, the treasure that years later, "some workers building the highway" would find.

In the heart of El Hiloche is one of the oldest mines, the Purísima Concepción, two of whose old steam boilers are still in use. Continuing on the same highway, we come to another mine, San José La Rica, where the ore from

<sup>1</sup> Director of the Mining Historical Archive and Museum and president of the Mexican Committee for the Preservation of the Industrial Heritage.

Real del Monte is concentrated to be sent through a seven-kilometer tunnel to the city of Pachuca, where it is worked. Then, all we have to do is go past a curve in the road and we come to a town covered in red roofs, some of them gable roofs. In the distance is the English Cemetery, the last resting place of those English miners and their descendents who in the nineteenth century founded today's mining company. At that time, the company was appropriately named the Company of Gentlemen Adventurers in the Mines of Real del Monte.<sup>3</sup> Only a group of adventurers, as they called themselves, could have dared to dream and trust in the greatness of Mexican mines and the superiority of their own technology.

Downtown Real del Monte now boasts an old-fashioned cantina and barbershop, recently inaugurated after the town's remodeling. In the very center of the town is the Sanctuary of Our Lord of Zelontla, the patron saint of miners, who every January "visits" Our Lady of the Rosary in her parish: Our Lord of Zelontla is carried to her parish where he remains for a day, and the next day,

the virgin, carried by the parishioners, walks him halfway home to finally say good-bye until the following year.

#### THE COUNT AND THE TOWN'S INHABITANTS

Mining began in this town that the pre-Hispanic peoples called Maghotsi in 1528 with the arrival of the Spaniards in the general mining area of Pachuca and Real del Monte.

Colonial life in the region was marked by two things. First, Pachuca was the place where the patio or amalgamation system of silver refining developed by Bartolomé de Medina was perfected in 1555. Second, the wealth of the Real del Monte mines would be enough to win its owner, Don Pedro Romero de Terreros, the title of Count of Regla. Real del Monte miners and some of its women would have to face this man, considered at the time one of the world's richest men, to defend the "*partido*" payment system (a variation of a piecework system used after the men fulfilled a daily quota)

and to protest against abuses by his overseers.<sup>4</sup> This marked a precedent in labor organization and was the preamble to strikes in Mexico. To his credit, we must recall that Don Pedro, together with his partner José Alejandro Bustamante y Bustillo, built the Moran adit, the first great drainage tunnel in New Spain, which still exists today, and also founded the Monte de Piedad, Mexico's national pawnshop.

Don Pedro and his successors maintained control of mining in the area until Mexican independence in the early nineteenth century, when the third Count of Regla sold his holdings to a group of English businessmen.

#### THE ADVENTURERS OF REAL DEL MONTE

In 1824, a group of miners from Cornwall went to London to set up the Company of Gentlemen Adventurers in the Mines of Real del Monte and immediately organized an expedition to Mexico. Administrators, engineers and skilled workers crossed the Atlantic with valu-





The English left indelible traces of themselves behind: the English Cemetery, lying solemnly on the hillside, and a solid technological infrastructure that would turn their successors into the country's second-largest silver producers.

able cargo, their modern steam-run machines, to begin what would be one of England's great adventures—and failures—in Mexico. The crossing was only the first of the problems they would face during their 25 years at the head of the company. First, the workers came down with yellow fever on their arrival at the port of Veracruz; then, the transfer of the machinery to Real del Monte would take almost a year. They were then disappointed to see that their pumps were insufficient to clear the water out of the deepest levels of the

mine where they had hoped to find veins as rich as those from colonial times. Lastly, communications with the majority stockholders in London were very slow and relations with the Mexican government were very bad.

One of the English miners, probably a technician, who came with the first group wrote in his diary,

June 10... At noon we made our solemn and triumphal entry into Real del Monte, or into the place where Real del Monte once existed, and where it will 'ere long raise its head again. I say once existed because it has now the air of a village sacked by a horde of Cossacks, or something yet more desolate. The *tempus edax* of the poets has here used his scythe with inexorable cruelty. The roofs are perforated and falling in, the walls crumbling down, and in short, the whole village converted into a mass of ruins. The two or three habitations which are thought the best are scarcely habitable. We may, therefore, bid good-bye to comforts. The cause of this decay is obvious enough. This district



has no resources when the mines are not worked.<sup>5</sup>

In 1849, despite the fact that the local inhabitants had welcomed them with the ringing of church bells, as the diary attests to, and rejoicing in the church to pray for the success of the enterprise, the English sold their shares in the mine to a group of Mexican investors, at a loss of Mex\$5 million. The Mexican investors founded the *Sociedad Aviadora de las Minas de Real del Monte y Pachuca*, which lasted from 1849 to 1906, and used a system of loans to eventually monopolize production in the Real del Monte, Pachuca, Mineral de El Chico and Mineral de La Reforma Mines.<sup>6</sup> The English left indelible traces of themselves behind: the English Cemetery, lying solemnly on the hillside; a solid technological infrastructure that would turn their successors into the country's second-largest silver producers; the *pasty*, the typical food of Cornish miners, that, adapted to Mexican cuisine, has become the obligatory dish of all visitors



Marco Antonio Hernández Badillo

to “The Rooftop of Mexico,” sold on practically every street corner.

The United States Smelting, Refining and Mining Company that ran the Real del Monte mines from 1906 to 1947, substituted the cyanide process for the old amalgamation process of refining the ore. This was just one of the technological innovations that made Real del Monte and Pachuca the world’s biggest silver producer in the 1930s.

#### THE SYMBOLS OF REAL DEL MONTE

On the way to the English Cemetery is the Dolores Mine, one of the region’s oldest.<sup>7</sup> It was in this place that the first Count of Regla hid in 1766 while fleeing from the workers defending the “*partido*” pay system.<sup>8</sup>

Following the highway down, we come to the Acosta Mine, where we find the remains of three different centuries’ architectural styles: the outer walls and the aqueduct from the colonial period; the machinery shed built by the Mexican

owners in 1857 in the Cornish style to house the Williams’ Perran Foundry Co. steam engines; and the shed for the hoist, an enormous metal gallows frame and the bins where the ore was stored, built by the U.S. company after 1906. This mine is currently being remodeled to include a museum.

The Acosta Mine’s horizontal entrance tunnel leads to level 160 of the La Dificultad Mine. Both have become the symbol of the inhabitants of Real del Monte, the *realeños*. When Acosta is operating as a museum, the plan is to sign an agreement with the Real del Monte and Pachuca Company to allow visitors to go into it by way of the Dificultad Mine’s shaft.

La Dificultad is located at one of the entrances to Real del Monte, on the Pachuca-Huejutla highway, making it a “must” for visitors.<sup>9</sup> The mine has a Mexican-style machine shed which has been the pride of the town since its inauguration in 1890 when the most powerful steam engine in Mexico was installed there: a Woolf 580-horse-power rotary steam engine and a fixed 80-

At the Acosta Mine we find the remains of three architectural styles: the outer walls and the aqueduct from the colonial period; the machinery shed in the Cornish style constructed in 1857; and the shed for the hoist, built after 1906.

horse-power hoist. A newspaper of the day considered it “a true milestone in the history of Mexican mining.”<sup>10</sup> The governor of the state, the director of the Real del Monte Company and “notables from Pachuca, Real del Monte and even Mexico City...were all invited, who, together with an immense multitude of our working class filled the vast La Dificultad building.”<sup>11</sup>

Unfortunately, the steam engine was dismantled and sold as scrap in 1987. The machine shed has been preserved, however, as has the steam hoist, the shed for

the electric hoist used during the first half of the twentieth century that still functions, as well as a dwelling and the large gallery in which the Mining Historical Archive and Museum (AHMM) non-governmental organization proposes to coordinate with the Real del Monte and Pachuca Company to set up a permanent exhibit about the history of the mine.

The rock used for the foundations of the La Dificultad machine shed were originally from a chapel in the San Felipe Cemetery located right next to the mine, according to AHMM documents.

The Acosta Mine  
Site Museum will be  
open to the public at the  
end of this year. The museum  
will be a starting point for  
a cultural tourism corridor  
based on the recovery  
and conservation of the  
region's industrial  
heritage.

In the cemetery, like everywhere in Real del Monte, we find clear vestiges of mining, in the graves of those who were buried thanks to the efforts of the mutual aid societies or the gravestone of a miner made of the rock that crushed him in the mine. This is an example of the kind of humor that survives in the stories and poetry of former miners or in the contests of double entendres about the mines that can last for hours on end.

Across from La Dificultad Mine and close to the San Felipe Cemetery, the local inhabitants have put a mural commemorating those who organized “the



first workers strike in Latin America” in 1766, the miners of Real del Monte.

#### THE MUSEUMS

The AHMM is currently working to set up a labor medical museum in what was the Miners Hospital. The museum, slated to open in 2001, will include a room on the history of Real del Monte, a library, an oral history archive and rooms for workshops.

Another museum that will serve as a well deserved homage to those who

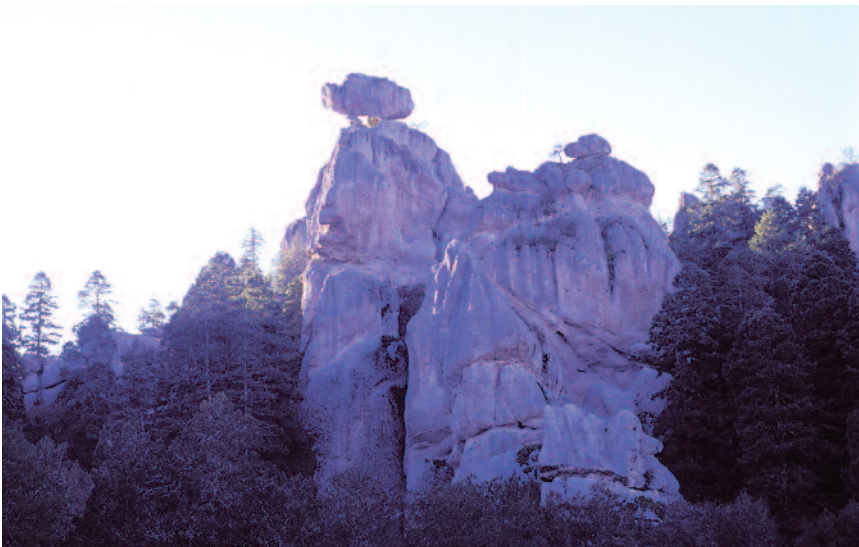
built the town with their work is the Acosta Mine Site Museum. This project, coordinated by the AHMM since 1998, will be open to the public at the end of this year. In addition to being the first of its kind in Mexico, the museum will be a starting point for a cultural tourism corridor based on the recovery and conservation of the region's industrial heritage.

Real del Monte, “The Rooftop of Mexico,” tastes and smells like the mine that shares with us the life it holds in its depths, reminding us how much it has





An old truck used for transporting the ore at the Acosta Mine.



Peñas Cargadas, an ideal place for mountain climbing, just 5 kilometers from Real's downtown.

given us and how we tend to forget that the town is really the mine, no matter how worn out her veins might be. The mine can continue to give us life, fill hearts and surprise both us and those from outside when the mist creeps into its streets and children run through El Hiloche. Soon, when children and adults alike go down into the Acosta Mine, they will get a tiny taste of what the lives of their fathers, their grandfathers, their ancestors, their town, were like. They will know that Real del Monte is a mine that openly and without false

modesty offers itself so that its people can go on, learning and living from it, always proud.

“The Rooftop of Mexico” is not there only for local residents, but for all lovers of mining, landscape, nature and life; for those who want to see it, learn from it and fall in love with a marvelous mining town: Real del Monte.<sup>12</sup> **MM**

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The government of the state of Hidalgo remodeled the downtown area of Real del Monte in

1997 and the nongovernmental group Mining Historical Archive and Museum (AHMM) has been working for 13 years to restore and conserve the industrial heritage of the Real del Monte-Pachuca area.

<sup>2</sup> The government of the state of Hidalgo declared this forest a protected ecological reserve in 1998. One hundred years before, the neighboring El Chico forest, excellent for mountain climbing, was made a national park.

<sup>3</sup> For more information about the company, see R.W. Randall, *Real del Monte: una empresa minera británica en México* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1977).

<sup>4</sup> Some historians consider this movement the first workers' strike in Latin America. The AHMM and Mexico's National Archive have preserved documentation about it, including a list of participants.

<sup>5</sup> One of the first Detachment sent by the Real del Monte company, *Journal Descriptive of the Route from New York to Real del Monte by way of Tampico* (Biblioteca Juan Barrón: AHMM, photocopy).

<sup>6</sup> See Rocío Ruiz de la Barrera, “La empresa de minas de Real del Monte (1849-1906)” (Ph.D. diss., Colegio de México, 1995); Inés Herrera Canales, “Empresa minera y regional en México. La compañía de Minas de Real del Monte y Pachuca (1824-1906),” *Siglo XIX: Revista de Historia* (July-December 1989) (Nuevo León Autonomous University), pp. 103-124.

<sup>7</sup> Five kilometers further along this same road, though within the same municipality, is Peñas Cargadas an ideal place for mountain climbing that caught the interest of travelers and artists in the nineteenth century.

<sup>8</sup> The general guide to the Historical Archive of the Real del Monte and Pachuca Company includes a bibliography on this topic.

<sup>9</sup> Belem Oviedo Gámez, “La ritualización de la tecnología. La Mina Dificultad: ejemplo de tecnología minera 1886-1890,” *Un recorrido por archivos y bibliotecas privados*, vol. 3 (Mexico City, AMABPAC/Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1999), pp. 119-128.

<sup>10</sup> *El Herald, Diario Católico* (Mexico City) 16 January 1890.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> For those who want to learn more about the history and mining culture of Real del Monte, the historical archive (1556-1967) and library are open to the public at Calle Mina 110, Colonia Centro, Pachuca, Hidalgo. Telephone and fax: (7) 715-09-76. E-mail: ahmm@prodigy.net.mx

Ministry of Tourism of the state of Hidalgo

# Pachuca's Mining Museum

Belem Oviedo Gámez\*  
Marco Antonio Hernández Badillo\*\*

Pachuca's Mining Museum<sup>1</sup> is an homage to the workers who have sculpted the entrails of the earth for almost five centuries, members of one of the world's most valiant, zestful and noble trades: the miners of Real del Monte and Pachuca. It is a door to the history of the activity that gave rise to the cultural and economic development of this part of Hidalgo state.

That history begins long before the Spaniards arrived, when the residents of Teotihuacan had the monopoly of the obsidian mines around Pachuca; arrowheads, idols and even mirrors that still reflect the majesty of the pre-Hispanic world came from those mines.

The arrival of the Spaniards in the sixteenth century opened up new vistas. The San Buenaventura, San Miguel and San Antonio Regla ore-refining haciendas are extant witnesses to that time; their construction cost the lives of many indigenous workers and slaves, whose price on the auction block depended on their physique (for the men) and whether they were pregnant or not (for the women). The beginnings of class consciousness among the miners and their wives date from that period, when they initiated their uninterrupted struggle for their

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\*\* Assistant director for museums and exhibits of the Mining Museum.



Unless otherwise specified, photos by Marco Antonio Hernández Badillo

rights, a struggle that culminated only centuries later with the founding of the National Miners Union in 1934.

In the nineteenth century, the mining culture diversified and flourished noticeably. A group of English businessmen,

In the twentieth century, in contrast to the general exhaustion of the ore, the cultural veins continued to grow, now with the contribution of U.S. technology and labor. Something seemingly irrelevant to the daily life of the town,

cyanide, or their tops, instead of the traditional shingles. Gabled roofs made of these materials are one of the town's most obvious characteristics.

Also, the presence of foreign engineers motivated Mexicans to train and seek places for themselves in mining; the workers also became aware of a need to study. By the end of the twentieth century, then, Pachuca and Real del Monte boasted workers who had become writers, poets, safety supervisors and empirical or practical engineers.



As soon as you walk in the door, you are surrounded by history.

#### THE "CASHIERS WINDOWS" OF SAN RAFAEL

The Mining Museum is located in what were the old "cashiers windows," or offices, of the San Rafael Mining company, in the middle of the city's downtown area. In the past, the building had



Miners with their equipment in 1927.

AHMM photo archive

The exhibitions aim to bring visitors closer to mining history and give them an idea of the process of mining ores like silver and gold.

engineers and workers voyaged to the legendary mines of Real del Monte and Pachuca. Their presence and that of an enterprising group of Mexican entrepreneurs after mid-century would leave an indelible mark on the culture and appearance of these mining towns.

like the substitution of the cyanide process for the old amalgamation process of refining the ore, actually had a profound, visible impact on it. For example, the inhabitants of Real del Monte began to build their roofs with the corrugated metal tanks used for the

a dual function: on the ground floor were the general offices, several special rooms for keeping coins and silver ingots; two rooms for files and another for the horses' barley. The second floor was a beautiful mansion, the living quarters of the company's director and

the general manager and their families, as well as guest rooms for distinguished guests.<sup>2</sup>

In 1944, the building was used as a primary and junior high school, as well as a teachers college, and since 1987 it has held the offices of the Mining Historical Archive and Museum non-governmental organization.

### THE GALLERIES

The museum has three areas for permanent exhibitions, two for temporary exhibits, a multi-purpose hall and an Industrial Archeology Space. The exhibitions aim to bring visitors closer to

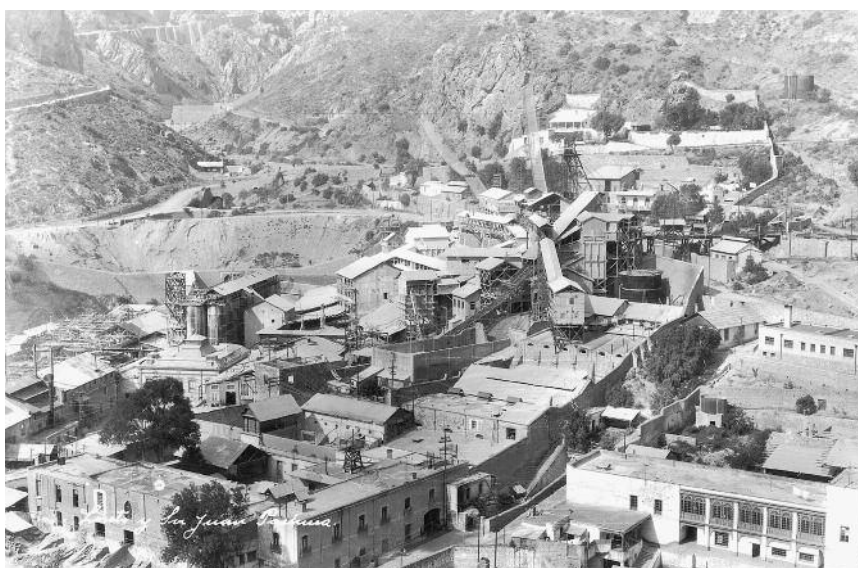
A visit to the  
Pachuca Mining Museum  
is a visit to the bowels  
of the earth that helps us  
understand the work  
needed to get at  
the riches of  
Mother Earth.

mining history and give them an idea of the process of mining ores like silver and gold.

The main gallery is divided into five sections: geological exploration, extracting and processing the ores, the miners' union and industrial safety. The first three deal with the technical processes involved in silver mining and the other two look at the social and labor aspects, like worker organization and owners' and employees' efforts to reduce the number of accidents in the mines.



A shredder and office equipment.



The Loreto Refining Hacienda and San Juan Pachuca Mine in Pachuca, Hidalgo, ca. 1929.

This room also offers the visitor a collection of samples from different mining centers in Mexico, maps of nineteenth century mines, contemporary and nineteenth-century photographs of the interiors and exteriors of mines, miners working, mine hoists, mining and refining haciendas, civic buildings and workers' daily life.

There is also an exhibit of a collection of drills made in the Maestranza Foundry workshops, patented by the Real del Monte and Pachuca Company

(CRMYP) when it belonged to U.S. owners, as well as other mining tools and implements.

### THE INDUSTRIAL ARCHEOLOGY SPACE

The Industrial Archeology Space in the main patio and gardens exhibits heavy machinery: a late-nineteenth century steam drill and Mack trucks, dubbed "parrots" because they are painted green, that transported the ore from



The permanent exhibition hall.



Diamond-tipped steam drill.

the Loreto refining hacienda to the train station. One of the most impressive pieces is an 80-ton crane manufactured by Cleveland's Brown Hoisting Machinery Co. The crane was first steam-driven and then adapted to run on diesel and used in the Maestranza workshops until they closed in 1987. Other heavy equipment on display are the mine cars (also known as "shells" or "gondolas"); a pneumatic shovel that the miners called "the ant"; soldering plants with their own coal deposits; diamond-



Nineteenth century steam crane.

tipped drills; bedding pots, melting pots, a radial drill and a skip.

The museum recently acquired a functioning Hickok Harrisburg shredder that saw over a century of service in the CRMYP print shop.

#### ADDITIONAL SERVICES

The two temporary exhibit rooms are used to foster and disseminate the visual arts. The work of Francisco Toledo, Se-

bastián Salgado, Francisco de Goya, Alfredo Zalce, Gilberto Aceves Navarro, Oscar Bachtold, Nicolás Moreno, Pablo Ortiz Monasterio and Pedro Ascencio, among others, has been shown there.

The multi-purpose room is used to show a video about the history of mining in the area, as part of the guided tours offered in both English and Spanish. It has also hosted lecture series about both the history of mining and the visual arts.

The museum is part of an institution that was born to restore and preserve the archives of the CRMYP, broadening them out to include documents dating from 1556 to 1968 and information about other mines, photograph and map collections and a library.

It has become a medium for encouraging research into these old mines and the families and lives of the residents of Pachuca and Real del Monte.

A visit to the Pachuca Mining Museum is a visit to the bowels of the earth; a visit that helps us understand the work needed to get at the riches of Mother Earth, who, loving but demanding, covers the miners with her cloak at the same time that she demands payment for everything torn from her.<sup>3</sup> **VM**

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The museum is part of the AHMM, a nongovernmental organization sustained by Xavier Autrey y Maza and Alonso and Jorge Ancira, and by donations from the Steel Group of the North.

<sup>2</sup> José Eduardo Bejos Paredes, "Restauración de las Antiguas Cajas de San Rafael, Pachuca, Hgo." (Instituto Tecnológico de Pachuca: undergraduate thesis, 1993).

<sup>3</sup> For more information about the institution's services or to make donations, please contact: Calle Mina No. 110, Centro Pachuca, Hidalgo, México, C.P. 42000; or telephone or send a fax to (52) (7) 715-0976. E-mail: ahmm@prodigy.net.mx

# Natural Rhythms Of an Endangered Ecosystem The Chamela-Cuixmala Biosphere Reserve

Gerardo Ceballos\*



Photos by Gerardo Ceballos

Delta of the Cuixmala River.

We take off from Colima early for the Jalisco coast in a little bi-plane. As we leave the city behind in what seems an alien world, a valley stretches out before us full of irregular geometric designs, a mosaic of corn and sugar cane fields. We make a slow ascent in the direction of the Manantlán Mountains, with its abrupt slopes standing proud, formidable obstacles. We pass over an arid valley, a lost corner of the country between the Nevado de Colima Volcano and the Manantlán mountains that inspired Juan Rulfo to write his book

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\* Researcher at the UNAM Ecology Institute.

*El llano en llamas* (The Plain Afire). Up until now, the flight has gone smoothly. At the top of Manantlán we encounter a wide, very well preserved plateau covered with pine, oak and a few fir. After the mountains, we descend toward the Pacific coastal plain. Now the landscape is very different, dominated by hillocks and very special vegetation: tropical dry forests. I look out toward the horizon, the ground seemingly covered by unbroken forest, and I ask myself how long it will last and continue to shelter innumerable species of plants and animals. A sudden bump brings me back to reality. We're about to arrive, the air pockets moving the lit-

tle plane as though it were a sheet of paper. We land close to Chamela Stream on a dirt runway lined with enormous fig trees. We have arrived at our destination, the Chamela-Cuixmala Biosphere Reserve.

Created in 1994 by presidential decree, the reserve covers more than 13,000 hectares and holds more than eight different kinds of vegetation, the most important of which is tropical dry forest, dominant on the hillsides. The rest of the reserve, located on the alluvial plain of the Cuitzmala River, protects a beach, a medium-sized forest and riparian vegetation, as well as a series of more humid environments,

including permanent lakes, mangroves, *manzanilla* forests and land covered with reed-grass. One thousand two hundred species of vascular plants have been recorded here, and of these, almost half are to be found only in the dry forest.

The fauna of the Chamela-Cuixmala reserve is spectacular, including more than 440 species of vertebrates and thousands of species of inverte-

brates. One of its most outstanding characteristics is that it houses a great number of endemic species, exclusive to Mexico. Of the vertebrates, approximately 30 percent are endemic, 25 percent considered endangered. Jaguars and pumas still wander through the dry stream beds of the area; three species of marine tortoises lay their eggs on its beaches; the mangroves are home to a growing population of crocodiles; and parrots and spoonbills dot the horizon. The drama unfolding outside the reserve is alien to all of them.

The tropical dry forest is characteristic of a vast region of the Pacific coast, extending from southern Sonora to northern Chiapas and reaching throughout the Balsas River Basin to the states of Mexico and Morelos in the center of the country. In Central America it used to extend from Guatemala to Costa Rica, but today is very limited. The tropical dry forest owes its name to some of the traits that give it its special appearance: the average height of its trees is no greater than 20 meters and

begins in winter. With the passing weeks, the forest becomes desolate and gray, as though devoid of life. The last vestiges of humidity disappear under the lash of the implacable, white-hot sun. The withered leaves fall off the branches to form a dense layer on the forest floor. Heeding imperceptible signals, many plants, already leafless, flower simultaneously in a few days' time, in-



The contrast between the rainy season (left) and the dry season (right) is very sharp in the tropical dry forest.

their tops are wider than their trunks. However, its main characteristic is that most of its plants lose their leaves in the dry season, creating the impression that they have died from drought.

#### THE CYCLES OF THE TROPICAL DRY FOREST

Water-land, heat-cold, rain-drought: dualities that have marked the rhythms of nature from the beginning of time. For thousands, perhaps millions, of years, the rain-drought cycle has marked patterns and cadences in the tropical dry forest. Each year, the long dry season

creates the likelihood of pollination. This explosion of intense colors dresses the forest periodically in white, yellow, pink and red flowers. After the flowering period, they produce abundant fruit and seeds.

The dry season is a difficult time for the fauna. Each species, however, has developed different strategies to deal with it. For some, like the mouse opossum, the coati and the chachalaca, nectar, flowers and fruit are essential for surviving the periods of food scarcity. Others, like insects, frogs, tortoises, rattlesnakes and Gila monsters (or beaded lizards), become completely inactive to reduce their expenditure of

energy, burrowing underground, under stones or into the bark of trees. They come out of these refuges only when the rains arrive. Finally, others, like the green macaw and the long-tongued bat, migrate to other areas dozens or hundreds of miles away seeking food and shelter.

In the middle of June, clouds herald the coming rains. In just a few days, the air becomes heavy with humidity, the clouds turn dense and dark and on the horizon, lightening and thunder shake heaven and earth. One day, with no warning, it starts to rain, sometimes in downpours, sometimes only enough to dampen the ground. Drop after drop, the incessant rain saturates the soil, forming tiny torrents that weave together until they form small flows, first becoming streams and creeks and later flowing rivers. The forest is transformed and resumes its activity. In a few weeks the plants are covered with foliage of a thousand colors, giving the forest back the lushness that it will retain for the next five or six months. Now the nights are warm and humid and filled with singing frogs, toads, grasshoppers, and crickets. Tadpoles, frogs and snakes move through the puddles and ponds. Night rains are frequent and lightning an everyday sight. The organic matter accumulated in the soil during the dry season decomposes rapidly under the action of innumerable beautiful-colored fungi.

But the abundance of water is ephemeral. At the end of November, the first leaves will fall from the trees in a dance that in a few weeks will pull them all down in a dizzying avalanche. Once again the days will be clear, cloudless. Once again the environment dries. Activity in the forest will slow considerably. Nothing will be left of the

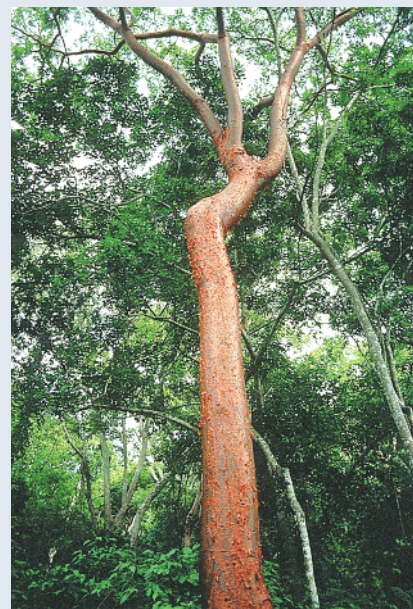


Ghost bat (*Diclidurus albus*).

rush of water whose force months before created stream beds, now dried up. The days will be shorter and the nights longer. The transition between the season of life and the season of latency begins. Soon, very soon, drought will have its way with this land.

#### THE CHALLENGE OF CONSERVATION

In the spring the sounds of axes and saws invade the forest. One by one, thousands, perhaps millions of trees are felled mercilessly, pulling down orchids, vines and frogs with them, bringing down all forms of life as they fall. The piled up trees will be burned a few weeks later. The magnitude of the destruction is such that on some days the sky is black with the smoke of the fires. After several weeks of almost uninterrupted burning the smoke is extremely thick and the outline of the Sun can just barely be seen. What was a garden teeming with life will now give way to pastures and decrepit crops. Exotic grasses will replace the exuberance of the natural vegetation, and cows and goats will take the place of deer and peccaries.



Mulato tree (*Bursera simaruba*).

It is said that when the Spaniards set foot on this hemisphere for the first time, a squirrel could have traveled through the tropical dry forest from Sinaloa all the way to Panama over the tree-tops without ever touching the ground. Now, that is a tale out of the past. Every year, an average of 300,000 hectares of these forests —the equivalent of an area three times the size of Mexico City— are destroyed mainly because of the encroaching agricultural and pas-





Leatherback turtle young (*Dermochelys coriacea*).



Spring tree (*Tabebuia Donnell-Smithii*).

ture lands. This rate of deforestation and that of the humid forests are the highest of all the ecosystems in Mexico. Year after year, the area covered by dry forests gets smaller and smaller, and, if things continue this way, the last ones will disappear in coming decades.

Every year, in the region of Chamela-Cuixmala, the reserve is increasingly strangled by advancing deforestation. In many other regions of the

country, there are now only patches of forest sitting amidst pastures and crops, like islands surrounded by deep seas. For the fauna and flora, the fragmentation of the vegetation has severe consequences, most of the time practically irreversible. For many species, a pasture or a cultivated field is an insurmountable barrier, and this means that with time the populations isolated in the remaining stretches of forest tend to die out.

In the Chamela-Cuixmala Reserve, the National Autonomous University of Mexico's Biology and Ecology Institutes and the Cuixmala Ecological Foundation promote scientific research for the conservation and appropriate management of the forest. For example, with the collaboration of colleagues and students like Lorena Morales, Ricardo Ayala and Andrés García, I am doing a study on the magnitude of the effects of the fragmentation on the biological diversity of areas where cultivation, pasture land and the remains of forests coexist. There is a great deal that we need to learn: What are the general effects of fragmentation on biological diversity? What makes some species

more susceptible to fragmentation than others? What percentage of the original flora and fauna can survive in an area whose ecosystem has been disturbed and where the remains of a forest now exist side by side with cultivation and pasture land? What are the consequences for environmental services of the loss of biological diversity? How can the impact of the fragmentation of areas that now support productive activities like cattle raising and agriculture be mitigated? Our studies and those of other biologists have shown that it is important to increase the area protected by the Chamela-Cuixmala Reserve to be able to maintain regional biological diversity and that this reserve must be joined by biological corridors to others nearby like the Manantlán Biosphere Reserve.

#### EPILOGUE

Given the seriousness of the circumstances of the country's tropical dry forests, the creation of the Chamela-Cuixmala Reserve was a triumph of reason. At the peak of the El Mirador Hill, one of the highest points in the area, the splendor of the reserve is an example of what must be repeated elsewhere. The last rays of the sun fade before the imminent arrival of the night, repeating an infinite cycle. I listen carefully to the sounds of the jungle and hope for the success of the efforts to find solutions to the conflict between short-term development and conservation. Our future quality of life depends on them. And in time, with the centuries' old rhythms that eventually change everything, this heaven and this earth will see other horizons, with no man-made smoke in the sky. ■■■

# Performing a Performance

Rodrigo Johnson Celorio\*

In contrast with the visual arts or even literature, Mexican theater is not very well known and even less appreciated outside the country. I must recognize, sadly, that very often the same is true for inside the country.

Aside from pre-Hispanic performances —of which we know very little but in which dance is supposed to have dominated— Mexico's theater from the colonial period has been studied very little and performed even less.

From that period, we are familiar with Juan Ruiz de Alarcón and Sor Juana, but we forget about mystery plays, the popular theater tradition and political theater, usually all lumped together under folk culture.

Of the authors from after independence, everyone remembers José Zorrilla, who wrote *Don Juan Tenorio*, performed year in and year out, to the eternal misfortune of the author, a Spaniard who loyally followed orders from the House of Hapsburg.

It is not until the twentieth century that we can see clear indications of a truly Mexican theater, or at least a search for something different and original. In the twentieth century, writers who wanted to be considered as such had to test the waters of all the genres: poetry, essays, chronicles, journalism, short stories, novels and, of course, theater. Without the latter, they were incomplete.

It was a slow process —which does not necessarily make it beneficial— that brought playwriting into its own, giving it an independent place.

We would begin a short review with the Ulysses Theater —full of poetry and influenced

by France and the modernism of Rubén Darío— represented by members of the Contemporáneos group, among them Xavier Villaurrutia and, above all, Salvador Novo.

Productions worldwide and, slowly, in Mexico began to change. From *zarzuela* light operas, bedroom dramas, romantic heroes, swordplay and weeping and wailing —never, of course, with your back to the audience— the theater changed in an attempt to communicate with the Mexican audience, to create something that would assume all its national influences and speak to a specific audience. To everyone's relief, the theater began to breathe. Rodolfo Usigli brought us reality: postrevolutionary Mexico was a fertile source of stories, events and characters. The experiences of the relatively recent civil war contrasted with the previously popular melodramas that the Spanish theater companies put on year after year. The world had changed and the theater had to reflect the new ways of understanding reality.

Usigli is in the last analysis the first great master of Mexican playwriting. In his classes, he educated a first generation of writers dedicated wholly to the theater: Jorge Ibarguengoitia, Luisa Josefina Hernández and Héctor Mendoza,



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\* Mexican theater director.

just to mention the most outstanding. Parallel to this emerged the figure of Emilio Carballido, who would be the teacher of the next generation.

In the late 1950s, Héctor Azar founded the Theater in Coapa almost at the same time that the Poetry Aloud movement emerged, including writers like Octavio Paz, Juan Soriano, Juan José Gurrola and, above all and to the forefront, the intelligence and sensitivity of Juan José Arreola.

This began a snowball effect. Each new playwright trained his disciples. In the 1970s we witnessed the onset of what has been called The New Theater.

Voices emerged like those of Vicente Leñero and Hugo Argüelles, the product of playwriting workshops, and they, in turn, encouraged a new generation that included Víctor Hugo Rascón Banda, Jesús González Dávila, Sabina Berman, Tomás Urtusuástegui, Oscar Liera, Alejandro Licona and many more. Creators like Hugo Hiriart and Juan Tovar coincide in time with that generation, although they are not considered part of the same group.

Mexican theaters, until then dominated by foreign playwrights, particularly the authors of Broadway and London hits, went through a radical change. Today, 80 percent of Mexican theaters are running plays by Mexican authors of all ages.

Although it sounds precipitous and risky, I would venture to say that the Mexican theater is currently going through a golden age. Never have so many generations and different proposals coincided in time, and, slowly, old audiences are beginning to revive and new ones be formed.

David Olguín is part of this important moment. Born in 1963, he graduated in acting from the University Theater Center (CUT), has a bachelor's degree in Spanish literature and studied stage direction at the University of London.

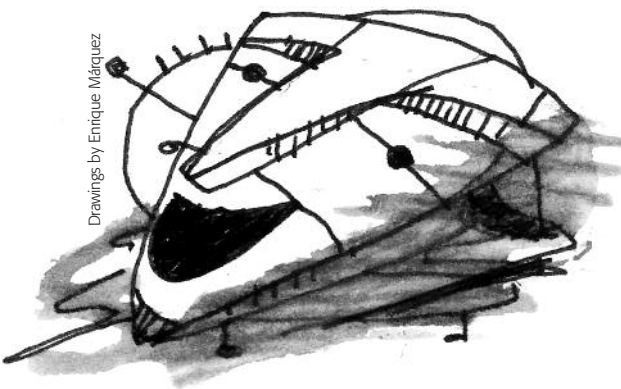
I think it is important to mention these studies because one way or another, they are a constant in today's theater in Mexico. People who do theater involve themselves in a much more overall way in productions, and this is visible in the results. Until not long ago, writers were only writers, directors directed and actors acted. Today, it is not only commonplace, but practically indispensable that a playwright direct, a director adapt and write or an actor do all three. The results are very clear. Plays are written for the stage, taking into account production needs and the real situation of our stages and audiences. This is one of the main characteristics of David Olguín's work. His plays are alive; many of them he stages himself and, perhaps most importantly, the theater becomes one of the main characters in his plays.

Seeing the stage as a reflection of reality or a metaphor for the world and existence is nothing new. In the Spanish tradition we can hark back to no less a personage than Pedro Calderón de la Barca and his *Gran teatro del mundo* (Great Theater of the World), in which performing appears as a passing form of existence, the stage as a mirror and reality as a drama that is unfolding.

In *La representación* (The Performance) (1984), David Olguín's first play, Ricardo Freyre, a neurotic, authoritarian writer, manipulates reality and the people around him. Ana, an out-of-work actress, willing to interpret the supposed ideas of a future play, becomes involved in Freyre's nightmarish world. Her identity becomes confused with that of Freyre's wife, a deaf-mute servant who reminds us somewhat of Harold Pinter's enigmatic characters, one of the most noticeable influences in Olguín's work.

In *La puerta del fondo* (The Door at the End) (1990), Olguín again resorts to theatricality to look deeper into his characters' world. Old Bartle,

Drawings by Enrique Márquez



a mediocre civil servant, is on the point of suicide. Before the mirror and in his mind, his married and work lives are presented to us in a flashback. The pathetic young Bartle is humiliated by his wife, a sinister Dr. Ramos and Mr. Rameau (both played by the same actor, according to the stage instructions. Another constant in Olguín's work is the mix of planes and blurring of realities). The games his wife plays with Dr. Ramos and Rameau are representations of frustrated fantasies: Emma Bovary as a cardboard tyrant in a boring, senseless world. Once again, theater within theater, and a sense of black comedy that incisively mocks the greyest day-to-day existence.

In *Bajo tierra* (Under Ground), Olguín turns to one of the origins of twentieth-century Mexican theater, particularly in the revolutionary period: historical drama. A student of Juan Tovar and clear admirer of Jorge Ibargüengoitia (in fact, he is currently rehearsing the National Theater Company production of Ibargüengoitia's *El atentado* [The Attack]), Olguín uses the figure of engraver José Guadalupe Posada to delve into a new metaphor of what the play presents. Like in a macabre medieval dance, death stalks Posada to take him to the underworld. The ingenious caricaturist, who did the best drawings of "the bony one herself," manages to temporarily elude Death by appealing to her vanity. His constant flight forces him to disguise himself and relive a good part of the history of the Mexican Revolution while coming into contact with a great many of its important figures.

Here, again, theater serves to perform the point of view of the playwright within a performance.

David Olguín is one of the clearest voices in Mexico's theater today. Just as the scene is always taken into account in his plays, his work has made dialogue a central part of the scene. Adaptations, staging, versions of other plays and translations are part of his constant work. Today, David Olguín is working on a series of short plays like the one *Voices of Mexico* publishes in this issue.

Several of Olguín's obsessions are clearly visible in *International Airport*: reality as something questionable and unknown that has to be unraveled throughout the performance; the violent, aggressive character who pulls the strings and knows the fate of others; the theater as a way of pulling off blindfolds and opening eyes; the ambiguous ending, open to the audience's reinterpretation, with no easy, moralizing conclusions; the mysteriousness of the scene that must be deciphered by the intelligence of the viewer who sees him/herself represented on the stage. ■■

## David Olguín

Born in Mexico City in 1963, David Olguín studied Spanish and English literature at the UNAM and acting at the University Theater Center (CUT). He has also studied directing with Ludwik Margules and did a masters in theater direction at the University of London. Among his published pieces are *Sábado: ida y vuelta* (Sábado: There and Back), an essay (1987); and the plays *Bajo Tierra* (Under Ground), (1982); *La puerta del fondo* (The Door at the End) (1984); *La representación* (The Performance) (1985); and *Dolores o la felicidad* (Dolores, or Happiness) in the anthology *El nuevo teatro* (The New Theater) (1998); and the novel *Amarillo fúnebre* (Funereal Yellow) (1999). He also edited the *Antología de teatro norteamericano contemporáneo* (Anthology of Contemporary American Theater) (1995).

He adapted or collaborated on the adaptation of productions like *Los enemigos* (The Enemies), *Querida Lulú* (Dear Lulú), *Jacques y su amo* (Jacques and His Master), *De la mañana a la media noche* (From Morning to Midnight), and *Morir, dormir, soñar* (To Die, To Sleep, Perchance to Dream), based on texts from Shakespeare. In addition to directing plays of his own like *Bajo Tierra* (Under Ground), *La puerta del fondo* (The Door at the End), *El tísico* (The Consumptive), *Dolores o la felicidad* (Dolores, or Happiness), and *¿Esto es una farsa?* (Is This a Farce?), he has also directed Strindberg's *Miss Julia*, Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River*, Federico García's *Así que pasen cinco años* (So Five Years Go By), Jorge Ibargüengoitia's *El tesoro perdido* (The Lost Treasure) and Larry Tremblay's *The Anatomy Lesson*. He has received grants from the Salvador Novo organization, Mexico's National Fund for Culture and the Arts, the British Council and the U.S-Mexico Fund for Culture, as well as Mexican government support for his productions. He has been an editor at the Ediciones El Milagro publishing house since 1992 and a member of the National System of Artists since 1999.

# International Airport

David Olguín

*Oh, how difficult it is to know the heart of Man!*

Friar Antonio de Guevara

## Cast of Characters

JUAN

the Tourist, a young man of 17.

JONATHAN

the Traveler, a man of 65 with a foreign accent.

He is robust, powerful in spite of his age; his hands look like claws.

They are dressed somewhat alike;  
the old man's clothes are perhaps a little the worse for wear.

## Place

The waiting room of an international airport. White light.

The place breathes loneliness. It is a cold Hell.

## Time

???

*The waiting room is empty except for the Tourist and the Traveler, who is reading a newspaper in Arabic. We do not see his face until he puts the paper on his lap and cleans his glasses. The Tourist seems impatient. The Traveler continues reading as the Tourist gets up and walks back and forth listening to the echo of his footsteps on the marble floor. The Traveler stops reading and concentrates on watching the young man.*

TRAVELER: What use is an untouched heart?

TOURIST: *(Distracted)* Sorry?

TRAVELER: I asked you what use a heart is if it hasn't suffered?

TOURIST: No...I don't understand.

TRAVELER: Forget it.

TOURIST: What?

TRAVELER: Forget it. *(Pause.)* My name's Jonathan.

*(The Tourist barely nods. Pause.)*

TRAVELER: What time do you have?

TOURIST: *(Looking at his watch)* It stopped. It says 12, but it must be...two-fifteen.

TRAVELER: Are you always so positive? If your watch says 12, how do you know it's two-fifteen? What makes you so sure?

TOURIST: There's nobody here. My flight is scheduled for four-thirty in the morning and nobody seems to be around. You get to the waiting

- room an hour before take-off and it's been a while, but not that long, since they announced that 502...  
*(The Traveler smiles disparagingly.)*  
 What are you grinning at?
- TRAVELER: You didn't take into consideration the time you were asleep...
- TOURIST: I was asleep?
- TRAVELER: ...and you woke up and went back to sleep.
- TOURIST: *(Alarmed)* Did they call for British flight 502?
- TRAVELER: Of course not.
- TOURIST: Hey, are you sure?
- TRAVELER: *Bien sûr que non.*
- TOURIST: Really?
- TRAVELER *(Looking at his watch)*: It's exactly two. Your flight leaves at four. *Il est deux heures en point.*
- (Pause)*
- TOURIST : *(Puzzled)* You have a watch.
- TRAVELER: I do. I always wear a watch. Time is important to me.
- TOURIST: Since you asked me the time...
- TRAVELER: Is it a sin to ask the time? Time is important to me, but its internal workings, its implacable exactitude. Precision, detail... I always pay attention to details. That's my living, boy...watching, observing, analyzing... I don't just study a person's external movements, but their internal ones. They're what interest me the most.  
 The essence.
- TOURIST: *(Puzzled)* What is it you do?
- TRAVELER: Me? What difference does it make? Forget it. I just wanted to check the exact time. I've been waiting so long that I'd better know if time is following its course.
- TOURIST: I don't understand what you mean.
- (The Traveler shrugs.)*
- TOURIST: *(Uncomfortable)* And where are you going?
- TRAVELER: I don't know.
- TOURIST: You don't know where you're going?
- TRAVELER: No. I don't know. I never have. I don't care. Do you know?
- TOURIST: To London.
- TRAVELER: London! Portobello Market, Bloomsbury, the National Gallery, the theaters, Soho, warehouses—both sordid and elegant—peep shows. A great place.
- TOURIST: Have you been there?
- TRAVELER: Often. I congratulate you. It's a good choice for a trip. But why London?
- TOURIST: Well, the truth is...
- TRAVELER: What?
- TOURIST: ...it could have been New York, Buenos Aires, Beijing, Cairo. It was all the same to me.
- TRAVELER: Why is that?
- TOURIST: I don't know.
- TRAVELER: Is it always the same to you? Is everything in your life the same to you?
- TOURIST: I don't know. I just wanted to get away.
- TRAVELER: Well...
- TOURIST: That's it... to get away...
- TRAVELER: ...to forget myself, to be someone else in another place, with other people. *(Pause.)* I know the feeling.
- TOURIST: Yeah?
- TRAVELER: Run away, split. And you'll do anything to put a distance between you and your home, your mother, your father, your city and everything around you. If you could, you'd destroy the universe to just get it to present itself in a different guise. And since that's impossible, all the fury turns in on you. You feel like you want to disappear.

(*Silence. Pause.*) Is this the first time you take a trip?

- TOURIST: Yes.
- TRAVELER: You must be really excited.
- TOURIST: More like relief.
- TRAVELER: Exactly. That's what you feel. There's nothing new under the sun. I love traveling, looking at people, watching them in the most varied landscapes. I've been everywhere. To the heart of Africa. Rivers, mountains, cities. I've gotten lost in the bowels of the earth, in labyrinths. I've seen so much.
- TOURIST: And what city did you like the best?
- TRAVELER: You want me to be honest?
- TOURIST: Yes. I mean, you're experienced.
- TRAVELER: One day, one painful day, I understood that the landscape changed, but something stayed the same: the interior landscape, my own little homeland of the soul. That's been the same since the first time I ever sat in a waiting room. When I understood that, or rather —because it wasn't a matter of understanding— when I felt it, it was as though I had been chained to a chair where the exterior is different. It moves, but you wait, you wait forever, in the same waiting room, in the same chair. Time, when you think about it, is an illusion. Sometimes I feel like I've been chained to this spot for centuries. Like I had been looking at you forever. You understand? (*The young man looks bewildered.*) *Compris? Capisco? Begreifen? ¿Entiendes?*
- TOURIST: I think so.
- TRAVELER: Well I don't think you do. I don't think you have the faintest idea what I'm talking about. And that's not fair, you know? Staying clean...

Unawareness? Shit. Purity gets in the way. *¿Mi segui?*

- TOURIST: I don't understand.
- TRAVELER: You see?

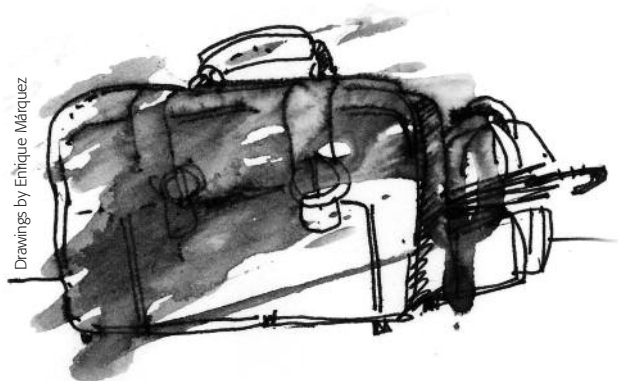
(*Pause.*)

- TOURIST: (*Uncomfortable*) And now you're going to London? On the 502?

(*The Traveler looks at him, laughs and then falls silent.*)

- TOURIST: (*Timid*) Excuse me...
- TRAVELER: Look at me. Do you really see me?
- TOURIST: Yes.
- TRAVELER: Look at me closely, face to face, first at my eyes and then look at the details of my body. It all talks. If I were you I wouldn't be here. *Tu comprends?* My skin is thick. Look. It's wrinkled. Like an elephant. But I warn you, I don't have its natural goodness.
- TOURIST: What do you mean?
- TRAVELER: The elephant. The natural goodness of an elephant.
- TOURIST: What about it?

(*The Traveler raises his shoulders. The Tourist discovers that his hands are shaking involuntarily. He controls them. There is fear in his silence, so much so that he prefers to talk.*)



Drawings by Enrique Márquez





bello. Miranda, Miranda. And she, douce, Miranda was with another client, an Arab or a black, a Hindu, a Pakistani, somebody else that was doing her with all his might and she was singing, singing the same thing she always sang, the same thing you'd heard so many times. "I've got you under my skin mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm... I've got you..." Miranda Parker.

TOURIST: You're totally out of your mind.  
*(The Tourist gets out of his seat, picks up his suitcase and starts to walk away. The Traveler, humming the Cole Porter song, goes after him calmly, takes him by the collar and throws him onto the other seat.)*

TRAVELER: What use is an untouched heart?  
 TOURIST: Hey, what the hell is going on?  
 TRAVELER: Answer me.  
 TOURIST: Let me go. Let go. Help! Police!  
 TRAVELER: I am the police, sweetheart.  
 TOURIST: Help! Help!  
 TRAVELER: *(Shaking the Tourist)* And I'm also the Pope and an organ grinder's monkey and a flower and the black-eyed serpent stalking you. And I've been a cock-sucking transvestite stealing watches from frustrated cretins. And a beast and a lamb. I'm the sore, the hand and the knife. The cause, the dark motive, the dirty bottom at the bottom of the bottom of your eyes. And I'm also the cold look that lights the dead sun on fire in your pure little head. *Capisci?* Words corrupt. I have the hooves of a goat, black hair on my hands and tatoos all over my body. Do you understand who I am? Where I'm at? Where I come from and where I'm going, sweetheart? That's it.

Quiet. Be very quiet. I could destroy you. Tear you to bits. Now that I look into your eyes I think that I've always been filled with a terrible feeling of failure. Only one thing has changed: I'm someone else; I came close to God. But if you want to know Him, you have to repent and it all begins and ends in a name: Miranda Parker. Remember? Do you remember her?

TOURIST: No.  
*(The Traveler gives him a sharp slap. The young man weeps.)*

TRAVELER: And now?  
 TOURIST: No, no. I don't know who you're talking about.  
 TRAVELER: *(After punching the Tourist in the stomach)* Really? Eyes black like coal. Portobello, Notting Hill Gate, London, England. I'm a cop, but I also consider myself your friend. *(He kicks the Tourist.)* Remember now? Confess!

TOURIST: Yes.  
 TRAVELER: Now, tell me, Juan, how many times did you shoot her before you cut her throat?

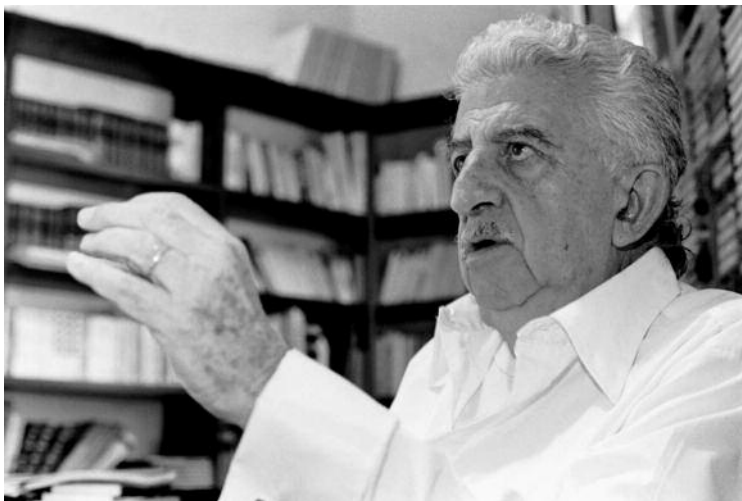




# Héctor Azar

## Until We Meet Again

Rabindranath Espinosa\*



Omar Meneses/La Jornada

*The goats bleat in Biblos and I hear them through a window near my back, from where I catch a glimpse of the Monastery of Marun Sea, just as from the Inmaculada I can see San Miguel's Hill with its convent on its slopes.*

“Palabras habladas”

**Héctor Azar**

“El Puerto Libanés, Bonetería fina,” the family clothing store, at 6 Independence Avenue in Atlixco, Puebla, would be the jumping off point for a passionate life and life's work.

Place: Atlixco (“face of nurturing water” in Nahuatl)

Date: October 17, 1930.

Name: Héctor Azar Barbar

Destiny: Untiring creator

Nickname: Zoon Theatrykon

The pendulum of Azar's baroque oscillates between the Lebanese and the Mexican. An enriching, maddening, explosive, marvelous and brutal combination, it produced third-degree burns that never healed.

Azar, the teacher, talked about how on Mexican Independence Day, his Mother, Perla or Lúhulu, would dress him up in the full regalia of a traditional Mexican “charro” cowboy dress suit, but that on his shirt, instead of a Mexican eagle, she would put a cedar of Lebanon embroidered by his sister Guadalupe.

The first part of his childhood transpired among images and events that would be the source of creativity for his literature. Amid the gunfire between members of the Mexican Workers Confederation (CTM) and the Revolutionary Confederation of Workers and Peasants (CROC); the virginal Inmaculada and her little dog Colombina, white like her

owner who visited Doña Perla and her inseparable Singer sewing machine in the early hours of the afternoon. From that time dates the Octagón soap box that the precocious Héctor would make into a little theater where the life force of this Dionysus would grow. In his hometown, little Héctor became aware of the horror of rumors, gossip, scorn, religious hypocrisy, of pretense and smothering immobility. All this is in his poetry and his characters in plays, short stories and novels.

I want to think that his vocation for restoring historical monuments was born during his service as an altar boy in the San Agustín Church. This vocation came to fruition when he directed the Alarcón Festival in Taxco, Guerrero, and when he was minister of culture of the state of Puebla. Recovering the past, not allowing it to be forgotten, making sure new generations were aware of who had preceded them were

\* Coordinator of the Center for the Dramatic Arts (CADAC).

his concerns as a restorer, a great promoter and disseminator of culture. His generosity was limitless.

The premature loss of his father is another determining factor in Héctor Azar's work: the search for the figure of the absent father, present —though not physically— in all his theatrical work; something like Hamlet's father, the spark that sets off catastrophe for the young prince of Denmark.

Blessed childhood, how much it gives us, how much it takes away! Sometimes an entire life passes and we cannot let go of our "tin drum." The shadow of Oscar Matzerath pursues us as the only possibility of staying alive.

In 1938, the family moved to Mexico City. "El Puerto Libanés" became "La Cenicienta," at 759 Mar Okhotsk in the very tough Tacuba neighborhood. This place, like Atlixco, had a perturbing fantastic zoology. The nearly adolescent Azar found himself in a rough and tumble world, where lives rode on a throw of the dice, where everyone knew they were in the here-and-now because who knew about tomorrow. But as often happens in the sordid episodes of life, you either drown in the river or swim to the other side and walk out; young Azar not only walked, he ran, flew and is now immortal. He resolved in those surroundings the Shakespearean dilemma of "To be or not to be." And he was.

His schooling began to make sense. His concerns began to take form: in chemistry, in his triangle for geometric drawing, in the lines of technical drawing themselves and, of course, in literature. His active, creative spirit was being nourished. This stage of his life took place in the schoolrooms and hallways of the Junior High School Number 4, of National Preparatory School Number 1 and the Law School of our

dear, mistreated National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). His first inclination for chemistry was satisfied by links with Breton and his taste for cooking as a marvelous encounter of cultures. Sharing a table with him was always a special experience. He was a great connoisseur of food and drink and a creator of both. In his quest for life, his interest in drafting and line made him an honorary member of the Mexican Architectural Academy (1991) and of the Society of Mexican Architects (1994). His secret love of letters, however, became his encounter with freedom and life.

His experience at the UNAM was definitive in his career as a teacher, creator, researcher, cultural promoter and founder of institutions. Dignity, equality, honesty and a vocation for service were not only ideas to him: combined with his pride in being part of Mexico's foremost center of higher learning, they were values that marked his life and all his professional activity.

From the hinterlands of UNAM High School Number 5, the university theater and the Theater in Coapa (1955), he would cross the Atlantic in an Intercontinental flight carrying a banner saying "Bon Voyage to the University Theater Company" and arrive in Nancy, France in 1964. He would bring back the first prize from the First World Festival of University Theater, with a production of Ramón Valle-Inclán's *Divinas palabras* (Divine Words), directed by Juan Ibáñez, the first and only international prize of that stature that Mexican theater has ever won.

In the UNAM, Héctor Azar founded the University Theater Center (CUT), the theater magazine *La cabra* (The Goat); he was a first-generation teacher at UNAM High School Number 5, the

director of the House on the Lake cultural center and of the Theater Department, a teacher in the School of Philosophy and Letters and researcher at the Institute for Philological Research. In 1987, the UNAM bestowed on him the National University Teacher's Prize. He was about to renew his teaching at UNAM's School of Philosophy and Letters, but since he saw how mistreated the university was, he preferred that the delicate, nourishing breeze Motolinía had found in the state of Puebla pick him up, *auream post meridiem*, and softly carry him to the promised land.

His work in the National Institute of Fine Arts was no less productive. He inaugurated the Julio Jiménez Rueda Theater, the Center for Children's Theater, the Trashumante Theater and the Seasons of Student Theater; he founded and directed the National Theater Company. On February 2, 1975, the heavy pine doors at 26 Centenario in Coyoacán opened to begin a fascinating adventure that 25 years of work had made a reality: the Center for the Dramatic Arts (CADAC) opened in Mexico City. It would be followed by the CADACs of Atlixco in 1985, of Taxco in 1989 and of Puebla in 1992.

His works, honors and activities are innumerable. *Estancias* (Sojourns) and *Días santos* (Holy Days) were his first incursions into poetry. In theater, we have *La apasionata*, *El alfarero* (The Potter), *El corrido de Pablo Damián* (The Corrido of Pablo Damián), *Olímpica*, *Inmaculada*, *Higiene de los placeres y los dolores* (Hygiene of Pleasures and Pains), *Doña Belarda de Francia* (Doña Belarda of France), *Las alas sin sombra o la historia de Víctor Rey* (Wings without a Shadow or the Story of Víctor Rey), *Juan de Dios o la divina tragedia de amar y ser amado* (Juan de Dios or

the Divine Tragedy of Loving and Being Loved). Among his novels, *Las tres primeras personas* (The Three First Persons) and *Locura de Juan Ciudad* (The Madness of Juan Ciudad); his short stories, *Palabras habladas* (Spoken Words); art books, *Teatros de México* (Theaters of Mexico), *A la luz de la Puebla* (In the Light of Puebla), *Crónicas de Coyoacán* (Chronicles of Coyoacán), *Facetas poblanas* (About Puebla), *Juan de Dios Santo en acecho* (Juan de Dios Santo in Wait), *San Angel entre las horas detenido* (San Angel Detained within the Hours).

Now for the avalanche of prizes and accolades: he had a fellowship from the Writers Center of Mexico and another from the Guggenheim Foundation. He received the Xavier Villaurrutia Prize

for literature five times; the Academic Palmes from the French government; the Order of the Ceders of Lebanon; and the Nezahualcóyotl Medal given by the General Society of Writers of Mexico. He was a full member of the Mexican Language Academy and of the Seminar of Mexican Culture and was given an honorary doctorate by the Autonomous University of Puebla. He was awarded the Ignacio Zaragoza Prize by the Puebla state government; the Duarte, Sánchez and Mella Medal by the Dominican Republic; the Benito Juárez Medal by the Geographical and Statistical Society; the National Prize for Culture from the state of Guerrero; and a diploma and gold medal from the International Institute of the Mediterranean Theater in Cairo.

Héctor Azar, how much the culture of this nation owes you! Now you are with your gods of the holy theater: Shakespeare, Sophocles, Tirso de Molina, Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, Lope de Vega, Brecht, Ibsen, Strindberg, Valle-Inclán, Wilde, Shaw, Cervantes, Ionesco...

Héctor, our teacher, you had "such a big heart that it didn't fit in your chest. The holy firmament of glory opened up to await you; Paradise bloomed awaiting you body and soul." Here on Earth, here in CADAC, here in our hearts, now and forever, beloved teacher.

I dedicate this to your wife, Tony, and her infinite tenderness, and to your children: to the Phoenician Cecilia Guadalupe, to the Etruscan Francisco Xavier, to Carlos Eduardo from Palenque and to Virginia, the invincible sister. **MM**





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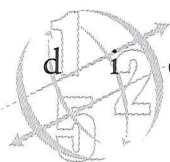
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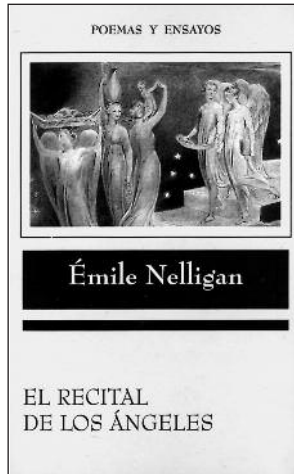
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# Reviews



## El recital de los ángeles

(Recital of the Angels)

Émile Nelligan

Bilingual edition (French-Spanish)

Claude Beausoleil, ed.

Marco Antonio Campos, León Plascencia Ñol and

Françoise Roy, trans.

Coordinación de Humanidades, UNAM-Écrits des Forges-

Editorial Aldus

Mexico City, 1999, 161 pp.

Je suis le *Ténébreux*,—le Veuf,—l'Inconsolé,  
Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la Tour abolie:  
Ma seule Étoile est morte, —et mon luth constellé  
Porte le *Soleil noir* de la *Mélancolie*.  
**Gérard de Nerval**, “*El desdichado*”

In the vast museum of literature, some people's destiny is marked by unhappiness. Émile Nelligan (Montreal, 1879-1941), the precursor of modern French-Canadian poetry, is one of these. His life and work can be summed up in ten words: a poet ahead of his time, misunderstood by his contemporaries. Since his life and his work alike personified poetry and the poet, they both drew criticism. The brevity of his productive literary life contrasts with his prolonged stays—42 years—in two psychiatric hospitals.

The literary prestige and value of his work—that dips into romanticism, Parnassianism, decadentism and symbolism, all reworked in his own way—lies in the fact that he was the first Québécois poet to use the poetic “I” (in his case, the critics call it “symbolic intimism”), an element that many of his fellow Québécois poets would later use, each in their own way.<sup>1</sup>

A great deal of his poetry reflects the tribulations of his life and artistic anguish: among them, an untiring search for Beauty as a poetic ideal from which pure Poetry can be derived.

His themes are recurring, like a leitmotif: sadness, failure, restlessness, a yearning for childhood, beauty, pain, music and poetry (Nelligan said, “Poetry cannot be communicated without music”), Eden as an allegory for a longed-for place of pleasure and the Manicheanism incarnated in the angels of goodness and evil.

Most of his verses were fashioned in the classical sonnet form, or as songs, rondeaus, prose poems and, here and there, a different foot of verse, such as “La romance du vin” (The Romance of Wine), which can be read as a bacchanalian poem like *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*, but which is also “an impassioned response to the detractors of poetry.”<sup>2</sup>

Nelligan's body of work includes 170 poems, 50 of them included in the very fortunate selection edited and published in Quebec by Claude Beausoleil, *Le Récital des anges* (Recital of the Angels), in 1991 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the death of the poet, the so-called Arthur Rimbaud or Gérard de Nerval of Quebec. The title is one Nelligan himself would probably have approved of. This is the original that Marco Antonio Campos, León Plascencia Ñol and Françoise Roy applied their poetic efforts to in a bilingual French-Spanish edition that is the object of this review.

*El recital de los ángeles* is divided into five parts. In the first part, Nelligan pays homage to “Poetry” and three of its masters: Dante, Georges Rodenbach and Charles Baudelaire, to whom he owes a poetic debt. *Maître, il est beau ton Vers; ciseleur sans pareil/ Tu nous charmes toujours par ta grâce nouvelle./* (Master, beauteous is your verse; unique chisel-

er,/You charm us always with your new grace...); *Et tu vivras, ô Dante, autant que Dieu lui-même,/ Car les Cieux ont appris aussi bien que l'Enfer/ À balbutier les chants de ton divin Poème* (And you shall live, oh Dante, as long as God himself,/for the heavens learned, as did Hell,/ to stammer the songs of your divine Poem).

In the second part, he honors "Childhood," and we hear the lamentations from the doorway of the memory of a gone childhood. *Et bien loin, par les soirs révolus et latents,/ Suivons là-bas, devers les idéales côtes,/ La fuite de l'Enfance au vaisseau des Vingt ans* (And very far, in the nights now past and secret,/we continue to the perfect coasts,/ to childhood's flight in the ship of twenty years). Here, he emphasizes the image of an angelical mother.

In the third part, "Music," the word "Eden" expresses Nelligan's poetic likeness: it is a metaphor for the lost paradise of childhood, of fleeting happiness, mercurial and impossible to grasp, creating verses on a par with melancholic musical motifs. *Et c'est pour vous que sont pleurées/ Au luth âpre de votre amant/ Tant de musiques explorées* (and sheds its tears for you/ the ungentle lover's lute/ in so much disconsolate music).

In the section dedicated to "Time," space cannot be overlooked. The poet's surroundings, usually adverse because of the climate, influence his moods, pushing him to desperation, the breaking point, despair and evasion. *Ah! puisses-tu vers l'espoir calme/ Faire surgir comme une palme/ Mon coeur cristallisé de givre!* (Ah, that you, for calm hope,/ might make my heart, a frosted glass,/ burst forth in recompense).

In the last section, "Life, Death," the reader hears grief, can feel the tedium and see the sad, dying fluttering of a soul on the mental edge.<sup>3</sup> *Quelqu'un pleure dans le silence/ Morne des nuits d'avril;/ Quelqu'un pleure la somnolence/ Longue de son exil./ Quelqu'un pleure sa douleur/ Et c'est mon coeur...* (Someone weeps in the sad/ silence of the April nights;/ someone weeps for the long/ doze of his exile;/ someone weeps his pain,/ and it is my heart...).

In the spacious museum of literature, some writers—like Thomas de Quincey and Friedrich Hölderlin, or the Latin Americans Macedonio Fernández and José Antonio Ramos Sucre, just to name a few—lead parallel lives, writers who, like Nelligan, have known madness in the form of neurosis, insomnia, hallucinations, loneliness or being misunderstood. Any of them could call the other, in Baudelaire's words, "my brother, my fellow."

Émile Nelligan, an angel thrown into the abyss by his nightmares, transcends the regional and projects himself universally and timelessly like another of the poets of pain. His spirit is spread through the pages of *El recital de los ángeles*. Part of it is touched on in Nerval's epigraph, and the rest, in a few verses of "Mon Âme" (My Soul), in which he laments having celestial candor and the purity of February snow; in which he grieves for having a subtle, sensitive soul, so sweet and mystically tender that it makes him *...de tous les maux souffrir,/ Dans le regret de vivre et l'effroi de mourir,/ Et d'espérer, de croire...et de toujours attendre!* (suffer all the evils/ of the dislike for living and the terror of dying/ and of waiting, of believing... and always of waiting!). ■■■

Hugo A. Espinoza Rubio  
Staff writer

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Étienne Shalom, "Le poète tourmenté," *Horizon Canada*, vol. 10 (Quebec: Centre d'Études en Enseignement du Canada-Université Laval, 1987), p. 2736.

<sup>2</sup> Nina Milner, "Archives de poésie canadienne. Émile Nelligan (1879-1941)," at <http://www.nlc.bnc.c/canvers/bios/fnelligan.htm>, 25 May 2000, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> William Styron, *Esa visible oscuridad. Memoria de la locura*, Salustiano Masó, trans. (Mexico City: Grijalbo, 1992).



#### **Liberation and Development: A Latin American Perspective**

James Fogarty  
Minerva Press  
London, 1998, 134 pp.

December 1994 marked the winter of Mexico's discontent. The house of cards assembled by Carlos Salinas



collapsed and the Mexican economy went spinning into the void. It was just 11 months after the much touted NAFTA agreement had been signed and “free trade” made its debut in Mexico.

Not at all coincidentally, the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) also came into existence 11 months earlier. The same day, in fact, that the NAFTA treaty was signed, a directive from Commander Marcos was sent from the jungles of Chiapas. To the Zapatistas, as to many Mexicans, NAFTA spelled trouble from the start. Whole sections of industry would be faced with bankruptcy, they warned, profits would end up in the hands of the few, the rich would get richer, the poor poorer, and foreigners would be calling the shots.

For James Fogarty, a Catholic missionary working in poor Mexico City neighborhoods, it became clear that the new order of unfettered capitalism had provoked a poverty crisis. Mexico, forced by the free trade agreement to stop protection of its domestic industries, to buy more U.S. imports, to pay debts to U.S. banks with a decreasing number of dollars, would do so at the expense of the poor by cutting back funds allocated for social services and domestic growth. In the first months of NAFTA Mexico had chalked up a U.S.\$12 billion trade deficit. The Salinas regime created 22 new billionaires but Mexico’s poorest group, unable to afford the basic food staples basket, had grown from 14 million to 21 million. In the winter of 1994, the new president, Ernesto Zedillo, had inherited the whirlwind. On December 21 the peso fell from 3.40 to the U.S. dollar to 6.50. The stock market dropped 12 percent. The Mexican meltdown had begun and Zedillo scrambled for help.

The U.S. and the International Monetary Fund came to the rescue. But the U.S.\$52 billion bailout (U.S.\$20 billion from the United States itself) would carry a price. Loss of autonomy, a shameful lien on the patrimony of Mexican petroleum and increased poverty for Mexican people. “In effect,” notes Dr. Fogarty, “the masses who did not contract the debts were condemned to suffer the austerity measures imposed by foreign creditors. These measures included drastic cutbacks in public spending and social services, so that a greater percentage of the GNP could be set aside for foreign debt servicing and repayment.”

The price of tortillas (the basic Mexican staple) rose 100 percent in the first 24 months of the crisis. According to a study conducted by the National Bank of Mexico (Banamex), nearly half the Mexican population of 92 million had

a caloric intake below the UN minimum nutritional standard. Social programs were eviscerated; U.S.\$22 billion left Mexico in capital flight as the rich cashed in their chips.

Free trade, NAFTA, foreign loans and economic “development” by first world nations have resulted in “increased job insecurity, a rising crime rate, and growing social inequality,” according to Dr. Fogarty. The crisis of 1994 and its repercussions simply expanded the field of victims to include “small and medium-sized business owners and employees, urban wage earners, women, rural communities and children,” notes Fogarty.

“Not without reason, some Latin American critics of this latest version of laissez-faire capitalism are calling it *capitalismo salvaje* (savage capitalism) which in turn gives rise to what they call ‘economic genocide’ in the sense that it leads to the elimination of the poor who are superfluous to this economic model.”

Fogarty, a proponent of liberation theology and social reform, calls for drastic changes in policies and structures which will allow the poor to become protagonists of their own emancipation from injustice and exploitation. Critical of the traditional role of the church in Latin America, Fogarty calls for a new commitment to social change. He urges clergy and lay people alike to abandon the neo-capitalist and developmental policies which have ravaged Latin America, and work instead for “a more humanistic approach aimed at attacking the root causes of injustice, poverty and social unrest.” He points out the success of alternative models such as Costa Rica which reduced its poverty level by two-thirds in the difficult decade of the 1980s.

Former President Bush’s prediction in 1990 that the free-market system would bring peace and prosperity to Latin America has failed to materialize. What has resulted instead from NAFTA and increased foreign development is social unrest, increased unemployment, higher poverty levels and an unprecedented disparity of classes. “It seems a fact of human experience that when peaceful evolution becomes impossible, violent resolution becomes inevitable,” writes Fogarty. His analysis and final conclusions will upset many readers comfortable with the new economic order. Perhaps that is his intention. ■■■

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