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# VOICES *of Mexico*

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## Women and Politics

María del Carmen Alanís Figueroa

## Poblanos in New York

Luz María Valdés

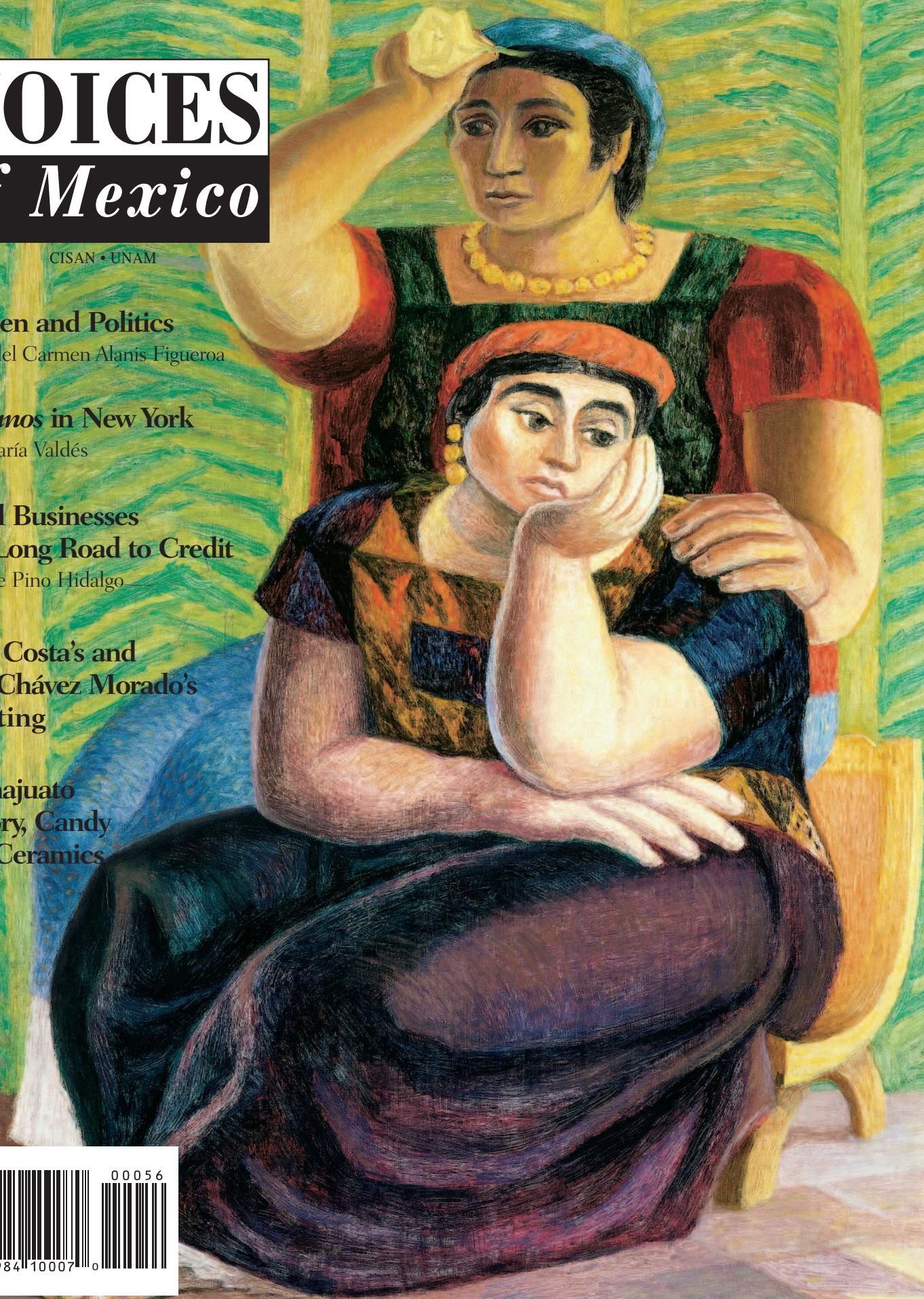
## Small Businesses

## The Long Road to Credit

Enrique Pino Hidalgo

## Olga Costa's and José Chávez Morado's Painting

## Guanajuato History, Candy And Ceramics



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to Mexico*



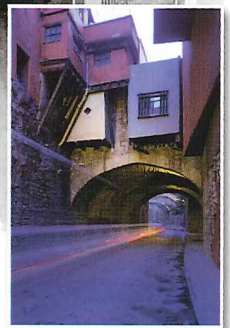
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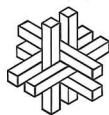
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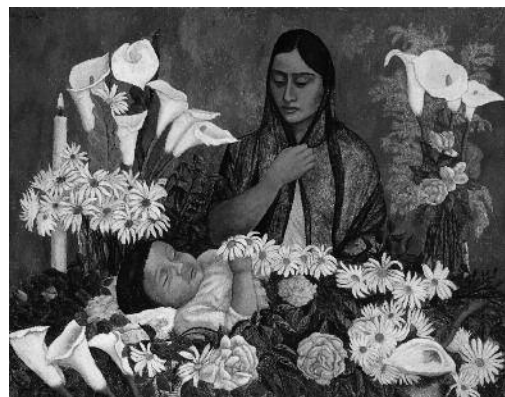
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### **Cover**

José Chávez Morado, *Tehuanas*, 81 x 67 cm, 1949  
(oil on canvas). Edgardo Villafranca collection.



### **Back Cover**

Olga Costa, *Dead Child*, 82 x 104 cm, 1944  
(oil on canvas). Private collection.

# OUR VOICE

Elections were held recently to designate the member countries for United Nations working commissions. For Mexico and our North American neighbors, the decisions about which countries were to be part of the Commission on Human Rights and the UN International Narcotics Control Board were particularly important.

Surprisingly, the United States was not elected to either of these two commissions. There are two probable explanations for this. The first is that this is the result of the U.S.'s lukewarm attitude in everything regarding the United Nations, reflected in the fact that the new administration has not yet named its ambassador to the General Assembly (who will very probably be John Negroponte, former U.S. ambassador to Mexico). The U.S. government trusted too much in its allies and did not even take the trouble to negotiate their support in this case.

The second probable explanation is more profound and is related to the clear anger on the part of the U.S.'s European allies, Russia and China. In the first place, they are clearly very unhappy with the U.S.'s unilateral, arrogant actions, particularly with regard to the world's next 30 years of nuclear security. They are also displeased with the U.S. refusal to support the Kyoto Protocol, which regulates the carbon emissions into the atmosphere that are responsible for global warming. Although not all the European countries have yet ratified it, they still blame the United States for the protocol's non-application. There is also increasing irritation among the world community with the U.S. government for its reticence to sign the treaty to create the International Criminal Court. At the same time, while outlawing capital punishment is now a condition for European Union membership, President Bush has distinguished himself as a defender of the measure in many different fora.

Seemingly, it was a combination of all these factors that led to teaching the U.S. a lesson, with such unfortunate results for the United States. The lesson: the multi-polar world of today is not willing to just forgive and forget, not even with the only surviving world superpower. The unfortunate outcome for the world community could lie in the consequences that the U.S. absence from two such internationally important commissions could have.

Two scenarios are possible: in the first, if the U.S. decides to take its revenge, it could opt for unilateral action, ignoring the United Nations, and for stopping payment on its UN debt, in a clear challenge to the international community, that would have grave consequences for the viability and possibilities for the organization's action. The other alternative is that the United States take on board the implications of its allies' discontent and try to build a new consensus to legitimize its positions. Undoubtedly, this last scenario is the less probable one, but it would also be the most beneficial in today's international context.

\* \* \*

Women are acquiring more and more importance in political activity in Mexico. María del Carmen Alanis explores this issue in her contribution to our "Politics" section. Alanis points to the fundamental role women played in last year's federal elections and their important contribution to the consolidation of our democracy. However, she also notes that despite certain advances in gender equality in politics, women's participation in important elected posts is still at a minimum. She suggests the need to promote a political culture that takes gender equality as one of its fundamental points if we really want to have an important impact among women.

Also in “Politics”, we present our readers with a contribution from international relations expert Alonso Gómez-Robledo, who makes a profound analysis of the general principles guiding Mexican foreign policy and the importance of their having been elevated to a constitutional level in 1988. Gómez-Robledo reviews each of these principles, and he looks at the different interpretations that each has been subjected to in international law and their underlying ideological and geopolitical interests.

We close this section with an article by Tanius Karam about another of the political actors that have had an important impact on society at the turn of the century in Mexico: alternative positions in the Catholic Church, represented above all by the Christian base communities and liberation theology. Karam describes how today, when politics has “gone to the right,” the movement has lost ground and influence with regard to the space it occupied from the 1960s to the 1980s. He also says, however, that, far from disappearing, the movement is still alive since clearly the conditions that gave rise to it continue to exist, as shown by the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas.

With these contributions, *Voices of Mexico* continues its practice of analyzing the role of new political and social actors in Mexico at the beginning of the millennium. That is why we have also included in our “North American Affairs” section an article by John Dickson, which looks at the important contribution that we must expect from academia in our three nations for understanding the new situation created by globalization and the expansion of international free trade. Dickson introduces the issue of the viability of a Free Trade Area for the Americas (FTAA) by 2005, one of the priorities in the discussions and accords at the recent Quebec Summit and shares his thoughts on the political significance of the anti-globalization protests.

We have dedicated our “Science, Art and Culture” section to painters Olga Costa and José Chávez Morado, who made their home in the city of Guanajuato where they had fruitful lives as artists and promoters of art and culture. José Chávez Morado, born in Silao, Guanajuato, is one of Mexico’s outstanding painters, committed not only to his art, but also to his political and social convictions. Carlos Magdaleno has contributed to this issue with his personal, intimate view of the life and work of Olga Costa, whom Carlos Mérida defined as “the white angel of Mexican painting.” This section also includes a brief description of the next International Cervantes Festival, which for 29 years has been celebrated in the city of Guanajuato. Lastly, Juan Marcial’s article “Popocatepetl. Living in Danger” reminds us of the perils of living in the shadow of a volcano.

Micro- and small businessmen and women will undoubtedly play an important role in the Mexican economy in the early part of this century. Traditionally, this sector has contributed the majority of jobs in the economy and a high percentage of the creation of wealth. In our “Economy” section, Enrique Pino looks into the obstacles that micro- and small companies have confronted in getting credit, training and access to new technology. He also looks at the new Mexican administration’s policies with regard to them: the Fox program of supporting “hole-in-the-wall” businesses, says the author, will undoubtedly foster this sector’s dynamism to a certain extent, but by no means is it sufficient nor does it correspond to its importance in the nation’s economy.

Mexican taxi drivers are seen as true ethnographers and political analysts of the society in which they live by U.S. author Kathy Taylor. In a delightful article for our “Society” section, Taylor describes how her original project of doing an ethnographical study of Mexican taxi drivers became a work of literature full of anecdotes and reflections on Mexican culture from the point of view of taxi drivers. Taylor’s article makes us want to read her novel, published both in English and in Spanish, *Through the Rearview Mirror/Por el espejo retrovisor*.

“Society” also includes Jesús Rodríguez Zepeda’s article about one of the most difficult and complex problems facing Mexico today: discrimination. Rodríguez maintains that discrimination, far from decreasing, has reached unprecedented levels in contemporary Mexico. One of the reasons is that Mexican legislation does not contain clear and precise wording on the question, but only vague considerations that give rise to differ-

ent interpretations and therefore an evasion of responsibility. Until there is a political culture of equality and legislation that specifies what constitutes discrimination and the corresponding sanctions, it will be very difficult to combat. One strategy could be the design of affirmative action policies such as those that resulted from the civil rights movement in the 1960s and 1970s in the United States.

Luz María Valdés has written a revealing article for the “Mexico-U.S. Affairs” section about another important social actor in North America: migrants. She specifically looks at the migration from the state of Puebla to New York. People from Puebla, *poblanos*, according to Valdés’ field research, have been able to successfully incorporate themselves into productive life in the Big Apple. They are already the largest group of Mexican migrants in New York with impressive networks of family contacts there that facilitate newcomers getting jobs when they arrive.

Kelly O’Donnell has contributed a well documented article to “Canadian Issues” about the trend toward neo-conservatism in Canadian politics that has already affected two of the main provinces, Alberta and Ontario. The prime ministers of both are a clear jump toward the right from traditional Canadian centrist ideology. O’Donnell describes how these politicians have achieved great popularity, among other things, because of their neo-populist style and their images as “ordinary guys.” This strategy has functioned much better for the charismatic Ralph Klein in Alberta, recently reelected for a new term, than for Mike Harris in Ontario, who has been severely criticized by the opposition.

“The Splendor of Mexico” section takes us this time to the city of Guanajuato. Aurora Jáuregui de Cervantes takes us for a brief trip down through the past of this colonial mining city, an almost inexhaustible source of wealth and witness to important events for the nation’s history, whose original underground street, whimsical urban layout and architectural beauty have merited its being declared a World Heritage Treasure. The article “The Delights of Guanajuato” tells us briefly about Mexican confectionery, which is fighting to preserve its identity at the same time that it must adapt to the demands of modernity. We have also dedicated several pages to the world of ceramics in Guanajuato, that takes us back to both pre-Hispanic and colonial times, a world whose techniques have been handed down to us to produce pieces that can be classified as works of art.

Guanajuato is home to many museums. We have included two of them in this issue: the People’s Museum of Guanajuato and the Olga Costa-José Chávez Morado Art Museum. Both are housed in outstanding examples of local architecture and are committed to the promotion of art and culture in the city.

Our “Ecology” section consists of an article by Gerardo Vázquez Marrufo about Guanajuato state’s Santa Rosa Mountains, whose importance as a center of biological diversity was recognized from the times of von Humboldt, but which only now are being systematically studied with an eye to their conservation.

Mexico City, an archipelago of many cities –its neighborhoods, old and new–, the great creator of nightmares and dreams in third dimension. One author who has succumbed to the temptation of narrating the city is Luis Miguel Aguilar, from whose short story “Nuevos tipos mexicanos” (New Mexican Types) we publish two fragments that accompany the second part of Lauro Zavala’s essay about urban narrative in Mexico.

Without a doubt, the name Román Piña Chan will always be associated with contemporary archaeological research. Piña Chan’s contributions have benefitted entire generations of scholars. In an article by anthropologist Joel Santos Ramírez, *Voices of Mexico* pays homage in our “In Memoriam” section to this member of a generation of great archaeologists who began to emerge in the 1920s.

Paz Consuelo Márquez Padilla  
**Director of CISAN**



# Women and Politics

María del Carmen Alanís Figueroa\*



In the Chamber of Deputies.

Antonio Nava/INE

Without a doubt, the successful organization of the most recent federal elections was a definitive step toward the consolidation of democracy in Mexico, particularly with regard to the public's trust in elections. And, I am entirely convinced that its success is due in great part to women's committed political efforts.<sup>1</sup>

On July 2, great numbers of women participated in the most diverse ways: as polling booth officials, party representatives at polling booths, electoral observers, electoral officials and councilors in all levels of electoral councils and, of course, as candidates and vot-

ers (we might note, however, that we did take one step backward in that no woman ran for president in this race).

This could lead us to believe—erroneously—that, in addition to other democratic objectives reached, important advances had been made with regard to gender equality in political participation. This would be even more the case if we take into consideration the November 22, 1996 electoral reform which stipulated that:

National political parties will include in their by-laws the stipulation that the number of candidacies for deputies and senators filled by a single gender will not exceed 70 percent and that they will promote greater political participation of women.<sup>2</sup>

And women's candidacies grew from 25.4 percent in 1997 to 33.4 percent in 2000. The Social Democracy Party (PDS) registered the greatest number of women hopefuls (40.4 percent) and the Party of the Democratic Center (PCD), the fewest (30.25 percent).

However, paradoxically, the number of women actually elected to the Fifty-eighth Congress dropped from 18.8 percent in 1997 to 17.2 percent (that is, in the Chamber of Deputies, there are only 86 women, compared to 414 men).<sup>3</sup> In the Senate, only 17.2 percent of the seats are held by women (22 out of 128). In absolute numbers, there are 8 fewer women legislators than in the Fifty-seventh Congress.

Internal organization of the Chamber of Deputies follows suit: of 40 reg-

\* Executive director in charge of electoral training and civic education, Federal Electoral Institute.

ular commissions, only five (12.5 percent) are presided over by women: Attention to Vulnerable Groups; Health; Science and Technology; Equity and Gender; and Population, Borders and Migration.

Of the Senate's 49 commissions, only 11 are headed up by women: Indigenous Affairs; Social Development; Equity and Gender; Youth and Sports; Environment, Natural Resources and Fishing; Agrarian Reform; Parliamentary Rules and Practices; Foreign Rela-

tions for North America; Foreign Relations for Latin America and the Caribbean; Foreign Relations for the Asian Pacific Region; and Foreign Relations for Europe and Africa.

This contradiction between having a greater number of female candidates and a smaller number of women actually elected is due to the fact that most parties applied the letter, but not the spirit of the law. They relegated women to secondary positions such as the candidacy for alternate (in the case of deputies elected by absolute majority) and the last places on the lists for proportional representation. Worse than that, they did not fulfill their own by-law requirements that demand that they effectively promote women's political participation in public decision-making through greater access to elected positions.

Despite this, however, we should point to women's enormous political responsibility in organizing and monitoring the 2000 federal elections.

Women made up 51.68 percent of all registered voters and 51.75 percent of the final voters' list for the July 2 elections.<sup>4</sup>

More women than men acted as polling booth officials after all proposals had been drawn by lottery from the registered voters' list. Of the 452,125 people who monitored voting and

Most parties applied the letter, but not the spirit of the law. They relegated women to secondary positions such as the candidacy for alternate and the last places on the lists for proportional representation.

counted the votes at the 113,405 polling stations nationwide, 240,998 (53.3 percent) were women and 211,127 (46.7 percent) were men.

We should point out, however, that women are under-represented among the Federal Electoral Institute's (IFE) leadership bodies and operational executives. This is clearest in the makeup of its General Council, composed of eight men and only one woman, each with full voting and speaking rights. In the lower decision-making bodies, 1,319 (66.21 percent) of the electoral councilors were men, and 673 (33.79 percent), women, out of a total of 1,992. Of the IFE's six Executive Departments, only one (16.6 percent) is headed up by a woman (for the moment, another is temporarily headed by a woman, but under the title of "office head"). Of the 1,660 officers of Local and District

Councils on July 2, 1,424 (85.78 percent) were men and only 236 (14.22 percent), women.

A total of 38,433 Mexican citizens participated as electoral observers, of which 21,606 (56.21 percent) were men and 16,827 (43.78 percent) were women. Among the 860 foreign observers registered with the IFE, 586 (68.13 percent) were men and 274 (31.86 percent) were women, indicating that electoral gender inequality is also a concern in other countries.

The *Reforma* newspaper put voter participation at 63.9 percent, of which 48 percent were women and 52 percent, men.<sup>5</sup>

I think that the underlying basis of this brief review of women's electoral participation is our level of political culture. Let me explain. In my opinion, there is still a deeply rooted—and erroneous—understanding that women are less effective in performing public functions.

In any case, I think it is very important to look further into the consequences that this step backward in gender equality could have for women's social and political interests with regard to their participation in formal politics. And I use the expression "formal politics" intentionally because women's political participation is not limited to attaining public office or participating in elections, nor is the struggle for their equality restricted to the political sphere.

The figures show what many political analysts and studies done from a gender perspective had already uncovered: that women's participation in public decision-making bodies does not correspond to their level of effective overall participation in political activities.

The July 2 election results —so transcendental for the democratic life of the country in general— are not quite so positive if looked at from the vantage point of gender equity. The 86 women deputies and 22 women senators in the Fifty-eighth Congress are by no means proportional to the 51.68 percent of women registered to vote. Nor does their number correspond to the proportion of women who undoubtedly sympathize with and are active in political parties, working very hard during the campaigns and on election day as party representatives at both polling stations and the IFE's councils. Much less does it correspond with the spirit and intention of the law fostering gender equity.

Innumerable studies have already been done about the relationship between advances in gender equality in legal and political regulations, legal bodies and political parties' founding documents and the real levels of equality in society.

It is true that legal recognition of gender equality and its explicit expression in the Constitution and many pieces of legislation are a positive symptom of the perception by certain social groups (generally an elite like academics, party leaders, independent professionals and some sectors of government) who have the duty to propitiate women's political equality. This equality is understood as equal opportunities, autonomy and prestige. An example of this can be found in the recent National Women's Institute Law,<sup>6</sup> which stipulates that the institute shall promote, coordinate, execute and follow up on actions and programs designed to guarantee equal opportunities to women in legal matters and in the country's political, cultural, economic and social

life. Among its tasks will be the fostering and strengthening of public, governmental and social policies that make non-discrimination and equal treatment for the sexes possible.

To that end, the law posits the importance of stimulating a culture of non-violence toward women, as well as the promotion and supervision of compliance with international treaties aimed at protecting women and fostering their development, as well as encouraging every part of the federal

The July 2 election results are not quite so positive from the vantage point of gender equity. The 86 women deputies and 22 women senators are not proportional to the 51.68 percent of women registered to vote.

administration to include a gender perspective in all their programs. However, this is not enough.

If we compare the formal expression of gender equality in the law and political bodies with the specific indicators of inequality on a social and cultural level, we will be faced with a rather pessimistic panorama. The spirit and intention of the law is not even remotely reflected in real relationships in society.

Suffice it to point out that in the new president's cabinet, only three ministers (16.67 percent) are women (tourism, social development and agrarian reform). In addition to the aforementioned dearth of women in the federal Congress, the situation is no better —rather, it is even worse— in the case of women's participation on a state and municipal level. According to the Na-

tional Women's Commission (Conmujer), today, only 115 out of 2,487 of the country's mayors are women (an insignificant 4.6 percent). Of the country's 2,167 *síndicos* (a kind of city manager),<sup>7</sup> only 107 (barely 4.94 percent) are women, and of Mexico's 14,692 city councilpersons, 2,474 (16.84 percent) are women.

State legislatures follow the same pattern: of the 1,113 state deputies in the 32 local legislatures, 954 (85.7 percent) are men and only 159 (14.3

percent) are women. The one with the best ratio is Mexico City's Federal District, whose Legislative Assembly has 18 women (27.3 percent) and 48 men, followed by the states of Tlaxcala, with 25 percent women deputies; Yucatán, with 24 percent; Sinaloa, with 22.5 percent; and Chihuahua, with 21.2 percent.

In the other 27 state legislatures, fewer than 20 percent of the deputies are women. Of all 745 state congressional commissions, only 14 percent are headed up by women, many of whom, obviously, lead commissions in charge of gender and equity issues, family care, childhood, youth, senior citizens and the physically challenged. To cite a few examples, in Durango, no legislative commission is headed up by a woman, whereas in Aguascalientes, only the Style Commission is lead by

a woman. A certain qualitative difference is the case of Campeche, where a woman heads the Industrial Development, Economy and Tourism Commission.

I think that the underlying reasons for this unequal participation of women in what is called “formal politics” are the cultural perceptions that in Mexico continue to reinforce clearly unequal patterns of imaginary representation between the genders.

For that reason, it is absolutely necessary to reinforce cultural policy—as

with the issues, their implications and the context in which their participation takes place); and responsible, in the sense that concrete actions make possible the conciliation of individual interests with those of the general good.

The IFE takes particular care to imprint a gender perspective in the design of the content and materials for its civic educational programs, regardless of the public at which they are aimed, be it children, young people, marginalized sectors, politically vulnerable groups or people with limitations in democra-

The underlying reasons for this unequal participation of women in “formal politics” are the cultural perceptions that in Mexico continue to reinforce clearly unequal patterns of imaginary representation between the genders.

the IFE has done with its strategic lines of action and annual programs—if we want to help change women’s political participation in national decision making.

The IFE has included among its principles and long- and medium-range objectives the design of strategies for civic education that imply the dissemination of the appreciation and understanding of democratic values, practices and institutions among the general public. As part of this task, one institutional priority is fostering citizens’ participation with strict respect for the legal framework; peaceful by nature, divorced from any form of violence; free, not subject to any form of pressure or impositions from without, and therefore the product of individuals’ self-determination to become involved in public matters; informed (which implies a minimum, objective familiarity

tic political culture. Beyond this, we have also assigned ourselves the task of designing civic educational and dissemination programs on democratic political culture specifically for women.

We have commissioned specialists to do research projects on the state of democratic culture in general and society’s perception of women’s political participation in particular in order to design these programs. One such study is “Citizens and Democratic Culture in Mexico,” by Yolanda Meyenberg and Julia Flores of the National Autonomous University of Mexico Institute for Social Research; another is “Women and Policy: Balance Sheet and Perspectives,” by Autonomous Metropolitan University researcher Anna María Fernández Poncela.

Among their conclusions, Meyenberg and Flores state that, in effect, there is a slightly lower level of politi-

cal socialization on the part of women than of men. According to Fernández Poncela, however, the degree of interest and involvement in politics is similarly and equally low among both. She also says that the truly important indicator for political participation is schooling levels, since greater education corresponds to higher interest and vice versa.

These studies also lead us to conclude that, socially speaking, people perceive men as better qualified for political posts, although this perception is less pronounced among young people.

When Flores and Meyenberg asked people, “Who do you think is better qualified to be the president of Mexico?” only 14.2 percent said women. Of those surveyed, 37.3 percent responded that men were; 37.3 percent said either; and 11.2 percent said they did not know.

Perhaps the most worrying thing about these figures is that some women also share these perceptions, which could lead us to conclude that perhaps, some of them are less socialized to and interested in politics, have less information and participate less in organizations of all kinds. This is a serious matter given that women make up 51.71 percent of registered voters, or over 31 million adults.

What is clear to us at the IFE after reviewing these research results is that in terms of political culture and social practices, a serious lack of information has a negative effect on women’s political participation. For that reason, one of the main challenges we face in civic education is having an impact on political culture and even on some institutional policies in order to foster increased women’s political participation, not only

quantitatively, but particularly qualitatively. That is why the IFE includes in its strategy the idea of becoming a space for different institutions and public, social and private organizations interested in providing information, designing and developing programs for women about their rights and obligations in a democratic political system to come together and reflect on how to do that.

The aim is to establish a common agenda that will aid in creating a democratic political culture with gender equality, that will propitiate a faster transformation of the legal and political precepts contained in our Constitution, legislation and treaties, conventions and other international instruments that Mexico has signed<sup>8</sup> into a reality of the social relations between men

and women. We must recognize that women are social actors with their own interests, needs and specific demands and that, therefore, this agenda must include all the social phenomena that involve women, with a priority on those directly linked to their condition as women, among others, reproductive health, intra-family violence, the access to health, education, employment and wages similar to those of men and, of course, effective access to the exercise of political power. ■■■

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Cecilia Tapia Mayans, Susana Garaiz Flores and Diego Bugada Bernal for their invaluable help in gathering and systematizing the information used in this article.

<sup>2</sup> *Código Federal de Instituciones y Procedimientos Electorales* (Cofipe), Article 22 (Mexico City: IFE, 1996).

<sup>3</sup> Interview with the Chamber of Deputies Press Office, 9 January 2001.

<sup>4</sup> The final voters' list is made up of all those registered voters who picked up their voter registration cards. [Translator's Note.]

<sup>5</sup> *Reforma* (Mexico City), 3 July 2000, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> *Diario Oficial de la Federación* (Mexico City), 12 January 2001.

<sup>7</sup> *Síndicos* are elected officials who work under the mayor in different executive capacities that vary from town to town. They may be members of the opposition since they are not elected as part of a slate with the mayor.

<sup>8</sup> I am referring specifically to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Platform of Action that came out of the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1996.

**SIGLO VEINTIUNO EDITORES**

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**GLOBALIZACIÓN, IDENTIDAD  
Y DEMOCRACIA** MÉXICO Y AMÉRICA LATINA

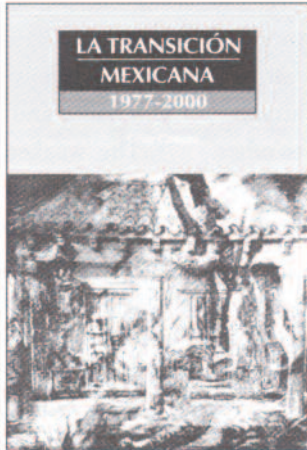
*coordinado por Julio Labastida Martín del Campo y Antonio Camou*

América Latina enfrenta cambios políticos de integración regional y desarrollo en una nueva coyuntura internacional definida por un proceso de fuerte globalización y creciente interdependencia. Es en este nuevo orden internacional, aún en ciernes, donde se replantean las relaciones externas y los patrones internos de organización económica, social y política, así como las instituciones y valores que caracterizan a las culturas nacionales y las identidades étnicas. Tres problemáticas íntimamente vinculadas integran el presente libro: los desafíos de la gobernabilidad democrática en América Latina, la democratización y gobernabilidad en México y la economía de América Latina en el contexto de la globalización.

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# Elevating Foreign Policy Principles To the Constitutional Level

Alonso Gómez-Robledo Verduzco\*

Mexico cannot give itself the luxury of a foreign policy that bends to the circumstances of the moment, a mere glittery garment, ready to be put on or taken off as the momentary needs of this or that passing political situation dictate.



Courtesy of the Senate

In Mexico, the Senate approves overall foreign policy guidelines.

## INTRODUCTION

In 1988, Mexico's Constitution was amended to include the guiding principles that the president must use to develop foreign policy:

- Non-intervention;
- Self-determination of peoples;
- Peaceful solution of disputes;
- Banning the use of threats or force in international relations;
- The legal equality of states;
- International cooperation for development;
- The fight for international peace and security.<sup>1</sup>

The first question we have to ask ourselves is if there was a real need to amend the Constitution to expressly include these foreign policy principles. At first glance, there does not seem to be a real need because these principles are included in a multitude of international instruments that Mexico has signed, approved, ratified or adhered to. Suffice it to mention Mexico's ratification of the United Nations Charter on November 7, 1945, and of the Organization of American States Charter on November 23, 1948.<sup>2</sup> The guidelines of our foreign policy are expressly stated in the principles, proposals and objectives of both these charters. In addition, they are also delineated in one form or another, clearly, precisely and legally unquestionably, throughout the chapters referring to the rights and obligations of member states.

According to article 133 of our own Constitution, both these charters are international treaties approved by the

Senate and, therefore, "the supreme law of the land." We also cannot deny that the guiding principles established in Article 89, Fraction X of our Constitution are part of "international common law," that is, the law that is obligatory for all nations, regardless of international treaties, pacts, accords or conventions.

Now, if we review the precept about foreign policy guidelines that has been amended, we cannot know if it is a mere enunciation of the guidelines or if it

Non-intervention is a principle of international common law. However, the extremely multifaceted nature of intervention in international relations means that respect for this principle is very random.

purports to be an exhaustive list. This could cause delicate problems of constitutional and international policy in the future, which would undoubtedly lead to a restatement of "new principles" and, therefore, new and problematic constitutional reforms. However, possibly its greatest merit is elevating our foreign policy guidelines to a constitutional level, which makes for their greater dissemination, a greater understanding of their significance and breadth and compels a more careful analysis of them, both from the point of view of legal theory and that of political practice.<sup>3</sup>

## OUR FOREIGN POLICY GUIDELINES

*I. Non-interventionism*

Non-intervention is a principle of international common law. However, the

extremely multifaceted nature of intervention in international relations means that respect for this principle is very random. According to The Hague International Court of Justice 1986 decision, the existence of the principle of non-intervention in the *opinion juris* of states is fundamentally based on well established and significant international practice. This principle can be understood as a corollary of the principle of sovereign equality of states.<sup>4</sup> The interven-

tion prohibited must, therefore, affect issues or matters about which the principle of sovereignty of the states allows each of them to decide upon with absolute freedom. Concretely, says the court, this freedom is reflected in the free determination of each state's political, economic, social and cultural system and the formulation of its foreign policy. Therefore, all states must abstain from applying, fostering or causing the use of economic, political or other measures to force another state to subordinate the exercise of its sovereign rights in order to obtain any kind of advantage or benefit; they must also abstain from organizing, aiding, fostering, financing, provoking or tolerating armed, subversive or terrorist activities aiming to violently change the regimen of another state; and they must abstain from attempting to intervene in the internal struggles of any other state.<sup>5</sup>

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## II. *The Self-Determination of Peoples*

Most international doctrine and jurisprudence agrees that the notion of self-determination became a key principle of contemporary international law when the United Nations Charter was adopted.

One of the UN's aims is "To develop friendly relations among nations based

peoples," initially proposed by Nikita Khrushchev, was insufficient for these peoples to achieve self-determination, a principle universally accepted as obligatory under international law. However, we must also recognize that subsequent juridical evolution made it possible to situate this right on the same plane as other principles, such as the prohibition of aggression or

A people subjected to the domination of a foreign power has the right to become independent. But, said "domination" would not exist if the state had a government representing all people under its rule.

on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples" (Article 2, Paragraph 2).

Article 55 of the charter stipulates, "With a view to the creation of conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, the United Nations shall promote: a) higher standards of living...b)solutions of international economic, social, health and related problems... [and] c) universal respect for, and observance of, human rights."

Resolution 1514 (xv) adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1960 is considered the true basis for the decolonization process that would give rise to the creation of numerous states that would, in turn, gradually become part of the international organization itself. It should be recognized that this "Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Nations and Peo-

that of the peaceful solution of controversies. International history and practice would be responsible for giving the principle its full legal value, parallel to its undoubted political value as a democratic ideal.

However, none of the UN's many resolutions and declarations includes a precise definition or a single connotation about what should be understood by the word "people." The main reason seems to be that this right to self-determination is not linked to the particular characteristics of a collective body, but to the concrete situation in which that body finds itself. In that sense, the "peoples" who may enjoy this right would be those who are subject to foreign domination or exploitation.

Here arises another, related problem: the phenomenon of secession, particularly grave in the case of new states, which frequently involves a very heterogeneous population and a political power whose effectiveness is weak or

non-existent. It is not difficult to understand that a well-rooted, consolidated people, with a thousand-year-long history, strong both internally and externally, could, in a concrete case, tolerate the secession of an ethnic group that has not assimilated to the rest of society. But the consequences would be quite different in the case of states composed of 20 or 30 different ethnic groups that may be hostile to each other. In this case, if the state allows the secession of one group, it runs the imminent risk of being swept up in a secessionist whirlwind that would soon condemn it to disappear altogether. Undoubtedly, the right to self-determination put into practice by "peoples" integrated in a sovereign state questions and, therefore, endangers, a real or supposed national unity and territorial integrity.

According to several UN resolutions, a people subjected to the domination of a foreign power has the right to become independent. But, these same resolutions also include the idea that said "domination" would not exist if the state in question had a government representative [sic] of the whole of the people under its rule. It is here, precisely, that the ambiguities, contradictions and fluctuations involved in this controversial, ticklish issue of self-determination become clear.<sup>6</sup>

Regardless of this, diplomatic practice shows that a given "people" with a sufficiently structured organization to be capable of autonomous international action and broad recognition in the international community, can and must be considered an international actor, based fundamentally on the principle of effectiveness.

If we examine United Nations practice, we could think that it has adopted



the idea according to which self-determination should be considered an anti-colonialist and anti-racist principle or a principle of liberty as opposed to the oppression of a foreign state. Nevertheless, this same practice would also seem to indicate that the principle of “self-determination of peoples” does not include or cover the rights of minorities and nationalities that inhabit a single sovereign state.

In this last sense, I have said that the principle of territorial integrity of states plays a fundamental role, since it constitutes a kind of barrier that the principle of self-determination cannot ignore, barring those exceptional cases of colonial domination or of a racist government. Nevertheless, the process of decolonization produced the formation of many new states, most of which were immersed in absolutely dramatic underdevelopment. These states’ international action, particularly in the UN General Assembly itself, would give birth to “International Development Law,” with an eye to achieving economic and cultural independence along with the already completed political independence; in other words, with an eye to building a new international economic order.<sup>7</sup>

Throughout its history, Mexico has proclaimed the right of peoples to self-determination, and, without a doubt, this is one of the principles that has guided its foreign policy. In addition, it has signed and ratified very important international conventions in which this principle is stipulated, such as the International Pact of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Pact on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, legally binding for Mexico since 1981.

### III. *The Peaceful Solution Of Controversies*

This principle is part of most international instruments regarding the maintenance of peace and security. States are obliged to solve their international controversies by peaceful means. To escape this obligation, they can claim that the conflict they are facing—that

International history and practice would be responsible for giving the self-determination of peoples principle its full legal value, parallel to its undoubted political value as a democratic ideal.

may have led to the use of force— does not constitute a “dispute,”<sup>8</sup> or they may even admit that there is a controversy, but that it does not constitute an international controversy.

This principle predates the prohibition of the use of force. It was under this principle of seeking peaceful solutions that The Hague Convention of 1907 was signed, with the idea of preventing the use of force in international relations as far as possible.

In international law, all the procedures for the solution of controversies are “voluntary measures.” In that sense, we can point to a contradiction between the general obligation to solve controversies and the eminently facultative nature of each of the means and procedures that make it possible to fulfill the general obligation.

This is why different techniques and procedures make it possible for the states to commit themselves to submitting a dispute to the framework of the previously negotiated instrument. This is pre-

cisely the aim of the so-called “commitment clauses” of arbitrating treaties, of conciliatory accords or even of the famous “facultative clause of obligatory jurisdiction,” whereby the states recognize *ipso facto* and without special convention, the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice with regard to any other state that has accepted the same obligation.

Now, the difference between “diplomatic means” and “jurisdictional means” is a classic and essential distinction in international law. “Diplomatic means,” such as good offices, mediation or those offshoots of “parliamentary diplomacy,” inside international organizations, are means that can be used and appropriated for any kind of dispute, and the decision will not be binding. By contrast, “jurisdictional means” cannot be used except for in the case of juridical disputes; they imply an arrangement or solution that emanates from a body established so that, at the end of a process, it can make a decision based in law.

### IV. *The Prohibition of Threats And the Use of Force in International Relations*

This principle is probably the central cog in the United Nations security mechanism. However, it does bring

with its certain limitations and ambiguities that have become clear in the history of international relations. These limitations arise mainly out of the fact that recourse to the use of force is prohibited only in the framework of international relations and because of its design: that is, that it be used against the territorial integrity and political independence of any state, or in any other way that would be incompatible

political, economic and other forms of pressure.

It is important to point out that the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (ratified by Mexico in 1974 and in effect since 1980) stipulates in sections 51 and 52 that coercion exercised on a representative of a state to express his/her consent to bind his/her represented state by a treaty will have no legal effect (will be absolutely null

If we examine UN practice, we could think that it has adopted the idea that self-determination should be considered an anti-colonialist and anti-racist principle or a principle of liberty as opposed to the oppression of a foreign state.

with the aims of the United Nations. This means, even if only implicitly, that recourse to the use of force can be legitimate under certain circumstances or in order to pursue certain ends or objectives.

The main exception to the prohibition of using force is “the legitimate right to self-defense,” whether it be individual or collective. While the need to include this fundamental exception is indisputable, its breadth is considerable and its application brings with it an extremely difficult problem: as Michel Virally says, neither more nor less than the definition of what an “aggression” is, which will justify or legitimize the right to self-defense.<sup>9</sup>

One of the problems that the prohibition of the use of force has always come up against is determining whether “force” should be understood as only military force or, if, as the countries of Latin America have always argued, it also includes all kinds of force, including

and void) and, on the other hand, any treaty that has been signed under threat or as a result of the use of force, in violation of the principles of the UN Charter, will be equally void. The conference also approved a declaration condemning the recourse to threats or the use by any state of pressure in any of its forms, whether it be military, political or economic.<sup>10</sup>

#### *V. Juridical Equality of States*

This principle means first of all that despite differences in power, development or industrialization, all states, as subjects of international law, are entitled to the same rights and capabilities.

One of the UN’s fundamental principles is that “The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members” (Article 2, Paragraph 1).

The Charter of the Organization of American States also proclaims this principle, but in more detail, saying, “States are juridically equal, enjoy equal rights and equal capacity to exercise these rights, and have equal duties. The rights of each State depend not on its power to ensure the exercise thereof, but upon the mere fact of its existence as a person under international law” (Article 9).

It might have been better to speak in terms of “sovereign equality,” as the UN Charter does, given that, strictly speaking, independence is a corollary and concrete manifestation of “sovereignty.”<sup>11</sup>

A first and essential right in matters of immunity theory is derived from this principle of juridical equality of states: that no state shall be brought to justice under foreign domestic jurisdiction if it has not given its express consent.

It follows as a corollary that no legal action can be brought by the court against any state’s goods, rights, assets or sites in foreign territory. In other words, immunity of execution supplements its immunity of jurisdiction, which is a cause-effect relationship.

The Declaration on the Principles of International Law with Regard to Friendship and Cooperation Among States in Accordance with the United Nations Charter (UN General Assembly 1970 Resolution 2625) also deals with the principle of sovereign equality of states. In general, most doctrine accepts that the 1970 declaration is one of the most important ever adopted by the international community and that it has had much greater impact and influence than was originally thought with regard to the development of international law. It does not

amend the UN Charter, but clarifies its basic principles contained in Article 2 and elsewhere.

#### VI. *International Cooperation For Development*

Despite the primacy given in the UN Charter to problems of international security, economic and social cooperation also occupy an important place.

International cooperation should above all make it possible to create the conditions of stability and well-being needed for peaceful and friendly relations among nations based on the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, as stipulated in the Charter's Article 55. While it is clear that the final objective is political in nature, goals of an economic character are also defined, among them, that of promoting a "higher standard of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development" (Article 55, Section a).

These objectives were based on the belief that underdevelopment was worldwide in nature, that it brought with it disturbing consequences not only for the countries directly involved, but for the world as a whole, threatened by grave instability because of severe economic disequilibrium.

The division among industrialized and non-industrialized countries, the latter marginalized from benefits of science and technology, is much more grave and has many more long-lasting effects than ideological divisions. As Michel Virally says, the abyss separating developed from developing countries introduces an element of fundamental imbalance in the world economy, the long-term political consequences

of which are unpredictable and highly dangerous and cannot be suppressed or softened except through a substantial improvement in the most backward economies.

The ideology of decolonization together with that of development were undoubtedly for a long period the most powerful driving force in the United Nations system for countries with precarious, highly unstable economies.

One problem that the prohibition of the use of force has always come up against is determining whether "force" should be understood as only military force or if it also includes political, economic and other forms of pressure.

#### VII. *The Struggle for International Peace and Security*

Together with the Dumbarton-Oaks Proposals, the UN Charter postulates the maintenance of peace and security as the organization's first and main aim. Nevertheless, the peace it is talking about is peaceful international relations. This would seem to mean that its express intention is not to intervene in internal wars.

This principle is the aim of the organization simply because without it, its other principles cannot be complied with, nor can the basic conditions be established that would make possible the achievement of the organization's other aims.

Clearly, the UN Charter offers no magic formula capable of dealing with every kind of situation that threatens international peace and security. It merely offers a specific framework for its application, giving each and every

one of its member states a series of rights and obligations for acting collectively and in concert every time there is a threat against the peace of any of them.

The very system of security is founded on a mechanism of cooperation in order to be able to act jointly in the defense of a state that is a victim of aggression. At the same time, the system's proper functioning depends on the cooperation of the permanent members of

the Security Council and, in general, of the global effectiveness it shows.

Another important aspect is that to maintain international peace and security the states must peacefully achieve the "adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace" (Article 1, Paragraph 1).

In addition to recognizing the degree of interdependence of foreign policy principles, it is also important to note that, while it would be utopian to think that all disputes can be solved through traditional means, as the former president of the International Court of Justice in The Hague, Manfred Lachs, used to say, there is always the possibility of "adjusting" international situations in the interests of the parties involved. The settlement of controversies is a very ambitious operation, whose objective is bringing litigation to a close. However, both "settlements" and "agreements" are meant to prevent a breach of the peace.

Lastly, we should note that while the system of collective security was characterized from the start by its realism, it was also very ambitious. The instrumentation of the military apparatus that was the key in the system through the “special accords under article 43,” committing themselves to put at the disposition of the Security Council the necessary armed forces for the purpose of maintaining international peace and security, never happened, and therefore, the whole edifice was condemned to collapse.<sup>12</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

We should be fully convinced that international law cannot be a secondary aspect of the foreign policy of a country like Mexico.

We cannot give ourselves the luxury of a foreign policy that bends to the circumstances of the moment, a mere glittery garment, ready to be put on or taken off as the momentary needs of this or that passing political situation dictate.

International law must be our instrument par excellence to maintain our political independence. This is pure realism, not “legalistic” posturing.

Good sense has always shown that a weaker country must always seek the establishment of a system that will not allow the more powerful to have complete freedom of interpretation of the legal system in direct proportion to their military and economic might. ■■■

in the federal official gazette, the *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, 11 May 1988.

<sup>2</sup> The OAS Charter was amended by the Buenos Aires Protocol of 1967 and the Cartagena de Indias Protocol of 1985.

<sup>3</sup> In that sense, “Once the possibility of framing our international doctrine in the Constitution is opened up, it is possible that the new norm would not include all Mexico’s fundamental, permanent principles regarding this matter. What is more, it could be the means whereby each president stated his momentary preferences in the matter.” Emilio O. Rabasa, “Nota introductoria,” *Los siete principios básicos de la política exterior de México* (Mexico City: Comisión Nacional de Asuntos Internacionales, 1993), p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> *Affaire du Déroit de Corfou (fond), “Arrêt du 9 avril 1949,” Recueil des Arrêts, Avis, Consultatifs et Ordonnances. Opinion Individuelle de M. Álvarez*, p. 45, point VIII.

<sup>5</sup> See N.A. Ouchakov, “La compétence interne del États et la non-intervention dans le droit international contemporain,” *Rec Cours Ac. H.*, book 1, vol. 141, 1974, pp. 1-86. Article 2, paragraph 7 of the UN Charter, which prohibits the intervention in “affairs that are essentially of the internal jurisdiction of the States,” was already part of the founding document of the League of Nations (Article 15), but allowed the League of Nations’ council or assembly complete latitude in exercising the functions of mediator or conciliator. For its part, the OAS Charter establishes the principle of non-intervention in its Article 18, which excludes any type of influence “prejudicial to the state.” See Antonio Augusto Cançado Trindade, “The Domestic Jurisdiction of States and the Practice of the UN and Regional Organizations,” *International Law and Corporative Quarterly*, 1976, pp. 715-765.

<sup>6</sup> A. Sureda Rigo, *The Evolution of the Right of Self-determination-A Study of the United Nations Practice* (The Hague-Boston: A.W. Sijthoff-Leiden, 1973), p. 397. Sureda was quite right when he said, “After all, self-determination started off as an individual right, and became a collective right because it was thought

that individual rights could be better exercised within a demonstrably coherent human group” (p. 356).

<sup>7</sup> Alonso Gómez-Robledo V., *La soberanía de los Estados sobre sus recursos naturales* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1980).

<sup>8</sup> The notion of “dispute” implies a very circumscribed object, in contrast with the “situation,” which is more diffuse and almost always prior to the emergence of a controversy. But the notion of “dispute” also implies the notion that there are “parties” among which diverging points of view have arisen; and, since the “dispute” is international, said parties are no other than the states.

<sup>9</sup> Michel Virally, “L’Article 2: Paragraphe 4,” *La Charte des Nations Unies*, Jean Pierre Cot and Alain Pellet, comps. (Paris: Bruilant, 1985).

<sup>10</sup> *Conferencia de las Naciones Unidas sobre el Derecho de los Tratados, Documento oficial A/CONF.39/11/Add 2*. This important declaration was the most that the developing countries could achieve; obviously, since it is part of the final statements of the conference, it is not legally binding.

<sup>11</sup> Guy Lacharrière, “L’influence de l’inégalité de développement des États sur le droit international,” *Recueil des Cours de l’Académie de Droit International*, vol. 2 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), pp. 227-268. We should be clear that, in fact, it is because states are not equal that a proclamation of the principle of equality is necessary.

<sup>12</sup> Michel Virally, *L’Organisation mondiale*, op. cit., pp. 468-482. As long as the Military Staff Committee does not function according to Article 45 of the UN Charter and as long as permanent armed forces and the necessary logistical means are not put at the disposal of the Organization, the United Nations will always depend on the powers for its armed might. See Marie-Claude Smouts, “Le Conseil de Sécurité,” *Aspects du Système des Nations Unies dans le cadre de l’idée d’un nouvel ordre mondial* (Paris: Pedone, 1992), pp. 61-69.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Fraction IX, Article 89 of the Constitution was amended by the decree published

# Other Voices in the Mexican Catholic Church

Tanius Karam\*



## TRENDS IN MEXICO'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Catholic Church is no uniform monolith. Its view of itself and understanding of its mission and presence in history varies from one time, country or region to another. This article takes a look at one of the faces of the manifold complex that is the Mexican Catholic Church. To do that, we need to establish minimum criteria.

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Juan Bautista Libanio says that the model of “Catholic identity” —that is, institutional doctrine, practice and structures with a firm, coherent, stable legal basis— appeared in the sixteenth century with the Council of Trent and remained almost unquestioned and without significant fissures until Vatican Council II (1963-1965). After that date, the ecclesiastic zeitgeist can be explained by the attempts at restoration or destruction of that identity, by the different reactions it has caused and, consequently, by the different pastoral projects that have grown out of it. In this context, Libanio distinguish-

es four tendencies in the post-Council church:

- a) The **postmodern position** considers the current situation irreversible and favors the disappearance of a common identity, leaving the task of perpetuating the message of Christ to the free will and spontaneous choice of small groups.
- b) The **conservative position** does not recognize the irreversibility of the collapse of the identity inherited from the Council of Trent and diligently attempts to maintain and rebuild it.
- c) The **moderate, neo-fundamentalist tendency** proposes creating an

identity that would be the true codification of Vatican II. This tendency is based on two suppositions: the irreversibility of the dissolution of the identity established by the Council of Trent and the need for a clear common identity for all. Their strategy is to proceed with the reforms of Vatican II in the fashion of the Council of Trent; that is, to develop a compact, simple message and resort to ecclesiastical authority as the main unifying factor.

- d) The **tendency of pluralism and commitment** strives for a more dia-

Because the other voices in Mexico's Catholic Church are a minority and because they receive scant if any media coverage, I think it is useful to present some of the characteristics of this other face, the critical "other" within the church that falls into the category of Libanio's pluralist-commitment tendency.

#### LIBERATION THEOLOGY

In 1971, Peruvian theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez published his *Teología de la*

With the exception of a minimal opening between 1969 and 1971, motivated by the cruel events of October 1968, Mexico's Catholic hierarchy has been a faithful follower of the Vatican line.

lectical, historical and dynamic Catholic identity that would be built through commitment and pluralism in today's Latin America, in the spirit of the Latin American Bishops Conferences of Medellín, Colombia (1968) and Puebla, Mexico (1979).<sup>1</sup>

In general, the Mexican Catholic Church continues to be vertical, centralized, hierarchical and conservative. With the exception of a minimal opening between 1969 and 1971, motivated by the cruel events of October 1968,<sup>2</sup> Mexico's Catholic hierarchy has been a faithful follower of the Vatican line. This can be explained by relations between church and state in the last two centuries in Mexico.

*Liberación* (Liberation Theology) in which he summarized the tendencies and orientations derived from the second and third Latin American Bishops' Conferences (CELAM). They originated in documents that came out of the Vatican Council II, such as *Lumen Gentium* and the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, which redefine the church as the "people of God" and promote the active participation of lay people in the world. The Latin America bishops effected their own reading of Vatican II from the point of view of the Latin American situation, leading to the second Latin American Bishops' Conference in Medellín, Colombia in 1968.

Liberation theology interprets Christian faith from the point of view of the

experience of the poor. It attempts to help them see their own faith in a new light so that the reading of the Scriptures will give them the sustenance for affirming their dignity and worth, as well as their right to fight together for a better life. Poverty is considered the product of a social structure, and therefore this theology is critical of that structure which makes it possible for a few to have so much while millions and millions live in destitution. Liberation theologians have criticized those ideologies that justify this inequality, including the use of religious symbols.

Berryman describes this theology starting from three points: the interpretation of Christian faith through suffering, the struggle and the hope of the poor; a critique of society and the ideologies that support it; and a critique of Church activity and that of Christians from the point of view of the poor. At the same time it is a new interpretation of the meaning of Christianity and the recovery of a prophetic tradition found in the Bible.<sup>3</sup>

#### ECCLESIASTIC BASE COMMUNITIES

One of the main movements inspired in this conception of faith and of the church is that of the ecclesiastic base communities (CEB), which arose inside the Catholic Church in the late 1960s in the turbulent context of that time: stagnation and crisis of national economies, emergence and consolidation of authoritarian and military regimes, particularly in the Southern Cone of the Americas, and the emergence of new social theories like dependency theory. The CEBs' novelty consisted in their ability to mobilize and their redefini-

tion of religious faith from the perspective of poor people when surrounded by an ethos that for decades had sought to reproduce and maintain the established order.

The CEBs define themselves as communities because of their lifestyle. Usually, each CEB is made up of 10 to 15 people who meet once or twice a week to discuss their problems and solve them according to the Gospel. Each has a coordinator whose function is to preside over celebrations, moderate group member participation and foster discussion. Their conception of religion is not divorced from the transformation of the world and for that, they use a methodology known as “see-judge-act”: “see” the people’s situation and identify both social and ecclesiastic projects and practices; “judge” and think about the kind of society the members want in both socio-political and Biblical-theological terms; and, finally, “act,” that is, implement strategies for organized action in the construction of a more just order of things.<sup>4</sup>

Mexico’s first CEB appeared in 1967 in Cuernavaca with Fathers Rolland and Genoel, and the Movement for a Better World (MUMM), led by Father Orozco, promoted them. In 1968, the MUMM coordinated different meetings to turn the parish into a true Christian community. The following year saw the first national meeting of CEBs. Many of these communities were born linked to the Biblical movement and other kinds of groups that did not have the same orientation as the CEBs. At the end of 1969, a first national meeting of Mexican theologians was held where participants promoted the need to create new secular movements like the CEBs. In the first stage,<sup>5</sup> the analysis the CEBs had of the situation was often naive

and idealistic; sometimes, they were a mere inventory of proposals. They did not integrate fully into the popular movement and action was centered mainly on thinking about council documents and on courses and workshops about the lay people’s apostolate, the church as missionary and the situation of the church in today’s world.

In 1973 the working method changed to using the needs of the grassroots community as its starting point, beginning a liberating Biblical reflection and affirming that faith should lead to a critique of social reality. The groups were

One of the main movements inspired in Liberation Theology is that of the ecclesiastic base communities, which arose inside the Catholic Church in the late 1960s in the turbulent context of that time.

better organized and the communities began to grow, particularly in those dioceses in which they had support from the bishops. CEB members studied the relationship of faith to political commitment, critically read the Mexican bishops’ letter called *El cristiano ante las opciones sociales y políticas* (The Social and Political Options Facing Christians) and discussed attitudes contrary to the Gospel in society and politics. From the methodological point of view, they advanced somewhat by discovering that their methods for analyzing the world had to be consistent with the kind of society they aspired to. In those years, new analytical methodologies were developed and communication with a community, educational and popular perspective was strongly promoted.

In January 1979, in the framework of CELAM III in Puebla, attended by Pope John Paul II on his first visit to Mexico, the CEBs analyzed the road they had travelled since 1968 and took advantage of the opportunity to meet and dialogue with theologians and bishops from other parts of the hemisphere. The *Document of Puebla* that came out of the meeting took on board and followed the general orientation of what had been said in Medellín, confirming the CEBs in their work. A year later, in March 1980, some members of the Mexican communities participated in

the hemisphere-wide meeting of CEBs in Redonda, Brazil.

#### GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE CEBs

CEBs are not evenly distributed in all of Mexico. The states with the largest number of these groups have dioceses whose pastoral activity is different from most, dioceses, with a critical perspective, more open to social issues. It was in Morelos that they appeared first, with the complete support of Monseigneur Sergio Méndez Arceo (1907-1992), one of the most important figures in the current called “the Church of the poor.” For 20 of the 30 years of his bishopric, from 1963 to 1983, he acted with a li-

beration theology perspective. In 1983, when he retired because of age, he founded the Óscar Arnulfo Romero Solidarity Committee to continue his work with the peoples of Central America, an outstanding feature of his years as bishop. With his death in 1992, liberation theology lost one of its main defenders and an individual with an extremely high international public profile.

Other areas of the country with a high concentration of communities is Veracruz, particularly the region called La Huasteca, the industrial area of La Laguna (Torreón, Coahuila and Gómez

García, bishop of San Cristóbal de las Casas, stand out. Both Lona and Ruiz labored in the framework of pastoral activity open to political, economic and social dimensions, and their lives were often threatened or directly endangered, as were those of the people who worked with them.

Don Samuel Ruiz came into national and international public view with the January 1994 events of the Chiapas Highlands, but his work dates back to 1960 when he was named bishop of the San Cristóbal diocese. Two years after his arrival, he initiated an ambi-

At the end of the 1980s, nongovernmental organizations began to multiply nationwide and became an alternative space for creative participation for many Christians who wanted a more active commitment to the oppressed groups of society.

Palacio, Durango) and Chihuahua, particularly the Tarahumara Mountains, because of encouragement from its bishop, Monseigneur Llaguno, who particularly fostered pastoral activity among the indigenous people there. I should also mention Monseigneur Talamás, bishop of Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, and Monseigneur Robalo, former bishop of Zacatecas, as some of the few who supported liberation theology and the CEBs. The dioceses of the southern Pacific area (Oaxaca and Chiapas) deserve special mention: for some years they were the site of important church activity, growing participation with an orientation to social commitment and non-traditional positions. Here, figures like the bishop of Tehuantepec, Monseigneur Arturo Lona, and Samuel Ruiz

tious program to train indigenous people as catechists. He started schools and ensured that his was one of the first dioceses to ordain indigenous deacons. In 1974 he organized the Indigenous Congress, attended by 2,000 indigenous delegates representing the just under 400,000 indigenous people living in the state of Chiapas. In general, his work is widely recognized.

In 1993, papal nuncio Girolamo Prigione organized a campaign to promote Samuel Ruiz's removal arguing, among other things, "deviations in doctrine." In the midst of that campaign came the Zapatista uprising of January 1994, after which Ruiz became an important mediator between the indigenous and the federal government. This did not stop the ecclesiastic dispute, but it did

clearly show up Prigione's intentions. Years later, amidst a shower of negative opinions, Prigione was removed by the Holy See. In accordance with canonical law, Samuel Ruiz resigned his diocese when he turned 75 in 1999.

In the 1990s, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the regimes of so-called "real socialism" many groups went into crisis, particularly after Brazilian theologian Leonardo Boff left the priesthood.<sup>6</sup> These events shattered and dispersed the communities in Mexico, but they did not disappear completely. In 1992, at their fourteenth national meeting, the communities estimated that there were 10,000 CEBs nationwide, located in 40 of the country's dioceses.

#### THE EMERGENCE OF NGOS

At the end of the 1980s, nongovernmental organizations began to multiply nationwide and became an alternative space for creative participation for many Christians who wanted to experience their faith as part of a more active commitment to the oppressed groups of society.

Many civic human rights organizations have been created because of a concern about justice and the justice system in Mexico. The decline in living standards has meant that the fight for justice has been taken up by civic associations committed to the defense of human rights like equality before the law, security, individual liberties, freedom of association, etc. Several dioceses throughout the country—particularly in the more conflict-ridden regions—have human rights centers. This is the case of the dioceses of Tehuantepec and San Cristóbal de las Casas.



Some parishes, like San Pedro Mártir in the outskirts of Mexico City, have a high level of participation and their own human rights center. Others are not located directly in parishes or dioceses but do belong to religious congregations from where they carry out defense and promotion of these rights. This is the case of the Jesuit Miguel Agustín Pro Center and the Dominican Fray Domingo Vitoria Center, both in Mexico City.

In the 1990s, the most visible CEB participation was in solidarity movements and activities at different specific political moments like during the Xi'Nich March<sup>7</sup> and the "Exodus for Democracy."<sup>8</sup> These were moments and spaces in which Christians, CEB members committed to grassroots causes, together with other groups, have demanded justice in matters of human rights and democracy.

#### SOME FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Liberation theology and the CEBs have been minority and marginal but very vibrant movements. Some priests, religious and lay persons have given their lives or been subject to harassment and violation of their basic rights as they have supported grassroots struggles, as is the case of Bishop Samuel Ruiz.<sup>9</sup>

The last Latin American Bishops Conference held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, in 1992, was the scene of a battle to maintain the spirit of the decisions of Medellín and Puebla. It was not an easy battle, since large sectors of the church distrust liberation theology's doctrinal proposals. The new balance of forces—with the presence of more conservative sectors—made for a more centralist orga-

nization of the conference than formerly, making it difficult for the bishops to present a position that more faithfully represented their own. The Santo Domingo document reaffirmed the preferential option for the poor, but not with the vigor of previous documents: there are fewer allusions to social issues than in the Medellín and Puebla documents, and the language to deal with the ones that are mentioned has been modified.

The CEBs do not act together as a compact movement. Rather, they are linked to communities or networks that agree on certain values contained in the spirit that founded them.

We can conclude that liberation theology and the CEBs in Mexico are not as visible as they were in the 1970s; although their participation, such as in the cases of the Xi'Nich March and the "Exodus for Democracy," has been picked up by the media, in general they receive less and less coverage in both secular and religious media. Nevertheless, some events show how the preferential option for the poor—which implies a more horizontal, collegiate vision of ecclesiastical relations—continues to be alive and well among some groups. In the last few years—side-stepping the old social-analytical categories—religious congregations and other groups have founded many civic organizations from which people are trying to struggle for the creation of a less unjust world. **MM**

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Juan Bautista Libanio, *La vuelta a la gran disciplina* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Paulinas, 1986) as quoted in José de Jesús Legorreta, comp., *La Iglesia católica y la política en el*

*México de hoy* (Mexico City: Universidad Iberoamericana, 2000), pp. 134-135.

<sup>2</sup> Miguel Concha Malo et al., *La participación de los cristianos en el proceso de liberación popular* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1986), pp. 91-96.

<sup>3</sup> Phillip Berryman, *Teología de la Liberación* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1989), p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Comisión de Análisis de la Biblia y Teología de las CEB, *CEB y compromiso político* (Mexico City: n. p., 1988), pp. 8-12.

<sup>5</sup> See Miguel Concha Malo et al., op. cit., pp. 225-247.

<sup>6</sup> In 1985, Franciscan theologian Leonardo Boff published *Iglesia: carisma y poder* (Church: Charisma and Power) (Salamanca, España: Editorial Sígueme), in which he questioned matters such as the infallibility of the pope. Boff was ordered to abstain from writing or giving lectures for a year and, in exemplary fashion—surprising even church authorities—he obeyed the order. Church authorities lifted the prohibition before the year was up, but the relationship continued to be tense until Boff finally left the priesthood in 1992.

<sup>7</sup> The 1994 Xi'Nich March began in Palenque, Chiapas, and culminated at the Our Lady of Guadalupe Basilica in Mexico City. Indigenous people and their organizations from Chiapas demanded the freedom of unjustly jailed prisoners, the implementation of promised public works projects and the return to the communities of money that had been "lost" by local mayors. After the march, the Xi'Nich Organization was formed. This group was decorated by the French government in December 1999 for its human rights defense work and its support for other sectors of the Chiapas social movement.

<sup>8</sup> In March 1999, an estimated 15,000 Party of the Democratic Revolution activists began the "Exodus for Democracy," a march from the Gulf state of Tabasco to Mexico City to demand honest elections and the investigation of the murder of Aurelio Peñalosa by the Federal Electoral Tribunal and then-President Ernesto Zedillo.

<sup>9</sup> For a more detailed description, see Miguel Concha Malo, op. cit., p. 158 onward.



# PUBLICACIONES UNAM



## EL ARTE DE LA TRACI3N O LOS PROBLEMAS DE LA TRADUCCI3N

*Frost, Elsa Cecilia:* Compilaci3n  
Direcci3n General de Publicaciones y Fomento Editorial  
Colecci3n Biblioteca del Editor  
2ª edici3n: 2000, 80 p3gs.

Libro que contiene las experiencias que los autores han tenido sobre los problemas de la traducci3n en varias ramas del conocimiento, tales como: historia, religi3n, literatura, lenguas cl3sicas y lenguas ind3genas. Su prop3sito fundamental es servir de apoyo a quienes se inician en esa labor de pasar lo que est3 escrito o dicho en una lengua a otra, pues consideran que la traducci3n es fundamental para la difusi3n de la cultura.

## CALIDAD DE VIDA, SALUD Y AMBIENTE

*Daltabuit, Magal3; Mej3a, Juana y 3lvarez, Rosa Lili3a:*  
Coordinaci3n  
Centro Regional de Investigaciones Multidisciplinarias  
Instituto de Investigaciones Antropol3gicas  
Instituto Nacional Indigenista  
Colecci3n Multidisciplina  
2000, 456 p3gs.



Este libro contiene los trabajos presentados durante el Segundo Simposio sobre Calidad de Vida, Salud y Ambiente. En ellos se revisa el concepto de calidad de vida ubic3ndolo dentro de la situaci3n de crisis social y ambiental que tenemos en nuestro pa3s, los paradigmas donde se han sustentado su an3lisis y su dimensi3n hist3rica. En 3l se cuestiona la metodolog3a para su evaluaci3n y se recalca la necesidad de incluir los aspectos subjetivos y la importancia de considerar la dimensi3n cultural y ambiental que abarca el concepto te3rico.



## EX LIBRIS Y MARCAS DE FUEGO

*Torre Villar, Ernesto de la*  
Direcci3n General de Publicaciones y Fomento Editorial  
Colecci3n Biblioteca del Editor  
2ª edici3n aumentada: 2000  
180 p3gs.

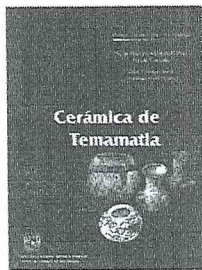
Las marcas de fuego y los ex libris, indicadores de pertenencia espec3fica personal en bibliotecas particulares o de pertenencia comunitaria en las bibliotecas institucionales, como las de tipo p3blico o las de los diversos centros educativos muestran la necesidad de comunicar un signo de propiedad de los libros para salvaguardarlos y preservarlos de hurto. En esta edici3n, el maestro De la Torre Villar enriquece el conocimiento bibliogr3fico de M3xico al exponer el desarrollo de las marcas de fuego mexicanas empleadas desde fines del siglo XVI hasta principios del XIX, as3 como el desarrollo del ex libris mexicano durante los siglos XIX y XX.

## GLOBALIZACI3N EN M3XICO Y DESAF3OS DEL EMPLEO FEMENINO

*G3n3lez Mar3n, Mar3a Luisa:* Coordinaci3n  
Instituto de Investigaciones Econ3micas  
Colecci3n Jes3s Silva Herzog  
2000, 323 p3gs.



Se presentan los estudios de la 3ltima etapa del proyecto de indagaci3n "Integraci3n M3xico, Estados Unidos y Canad3 y su impacto en la escolaridad y el mercado de trabajo femenino". El hilo conductor que articula los trabajos es el de conocer los efectos sociales y econ3micos que el proceso de globalizaci3n ha propiciado en el empleo femenino durante los 3ltimos a3os. En este libro se ven las caracter3sticas del trabajo femenino en M3xico por sectores econ3micos como servicios, comercio, agricultura e industria; y se tocan dos temas de especial inter3s: los cambios en el nivel de escolaridad de las mujeres y el rumbo que sigue la ocupaci3n femenina hacia el a3o 2015.



## CER3MICA DE TEMAMATLA

*Ram3rez, Felipe; G3mez, Lorena y G3n3lez, Fern3n Serra, Mar3 Carmen:* Coordinaci3n  
Instituto de Investigaciones Antropol3gicas  
2000, 178 p3gs.

El sitio arqueol3gico de Temamatla es un asentamiento prehisp3nico que se encuentra al sureste de la cuenca de M3xico; pertenece al municipio del mismo nombre y al distrito de Chalco, en el Estado de M3xico. En este libro se presenta el an3lisis de 15 830 t3stos de vasijas cer3micas correspondientes al Horizonte Formativo (1000 aC a 1) de ese asentamiento. Se ofrece informaci3n detallada sobre los trabajos arqueol3gicos realizados; la localizaci3n de las vasijas analizadas; la elecci3n de la tipolog3a y cronolog3a utilizadas en el an3lisis; y los criterios utilizados en la descripci3n.

## LA GRAN FRONTERA. ZONA DE GUERRA. FRANJAS FRONTERIZAS M3XICO-ESTADOS UNIDOS TRANSFORMACIONES Y PROBLEMAS DE AYER Y HOY. T. II

*Bassols Batalla, 3ngel:* Coordinaci3n  
*Delgadillo Mac3as, Javier:* Compilaci3n  
Instituto de Investigaciones Econ3micas  
Coordinaci3n de Humanidades  
Colecci3n M3xico y Am3rica  
1999, 463 p3gs.



En este tomo se insiste en ponderar la importancia del medio f3sico regional; se analizan algunos aspectos del desarrollo econ3mico, social y pol3tico de las franjas fronterizas a partir del porfiriato; el impacto de la Revoluci3n mexicana en el espacio fronterizo; algunos problemas urbano-regionales, as3 como otros referentes al deterioro ecol3gico y a la emigraci3n de los trabajadores mexicanos a los Estados Unidos.

# The Quebec Summit

## The FTAA and Academic Research

John Dickson\*



Shaun Best/Reuters

The three North American heads of state at the Quebec meeting.

Academic research is vital for understanding the new situation in the three countries of North America and the entire hemisphere and for taking advantages of current opportunities —non-existent one or five years ago— for improving our peoples' quality of life by dealing with the problems of the environment, water, energy and organized crime that affect each country differently, but that cannot be solved in isolation.

\* Minister Counselor for Information and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Embassy in Mexico.

I will focus on three questions: the new situation in the hemisphere, the results of the Quebec Summit and some reflections on the protests that took place at the time of the summit.

I have observed new and surprising events in my country that I never thought to see when I came to Mexico 18 months ago. The first is demographic: this year's census confirms a trend that we all suspected even though we lacked the empirical data to prove it. The figures indicate that Latinos are the largest minority group in the United States: almost 12 percent of

U.S. inhabitants are Latino. This sector of the population has grown almost 50 percent since the 1990 census (increasing from 22 million to 33 million) and is expected to reach 43 million by the year 2010, making the United States the second largest Spanish-speaking nation in the world, after Mexico.

The second change is linked to the impact of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on our three countries. Seven years after coming into effect, the United States' two main trade partners are the two other co-signers of this treaty. Trade among

the three countries has more than doubled (going from U.S.\$289 billion in 1993 to U.S.\$659 billion in 2000) and almost tripled in the case of bilateral trade between the U.S. and Mexico (rising from U.S.\$89 billion in 1993 to U.S.\$263 billion in 2000). The number of jobs also grew.

These figures are very linked to a new political attitude. I never imagined that congressmen like Phil Gramm

stand the process, which deserves serious study and analysis, and take advantage of all the benefits it has to offer.

What happened at the Third Summit of the Americas in Quebec is a new example of this convergence. Nevertheless, summits or negotiations—such as the one to create a new free trade area—are not, in my judgement, what drives convergence in the hemisphere, but rather an indicator of what

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—much less Jesse Helms— would visit Mexico bringing with them the message that we should work together with its government in migratory matters and in our efforts against organized crime, water and energy integration. This attitude of my country reflects an enormous change with regard to previous years, when Proposition 187 was passed in California and anti-immigrant measures passed in the 1996 migratory legislation.

All of this—demographics, politics, trade— helps explain why President Vicente Fox has begun to use the term “convergence” when he talks about our societies and their future relations. Our actions, ideas, values and economies are merging, integrating rapidly; there is a process of convergence in the hemisphere, whether we like it or not, and it has a life of its own that we do not want to turn around. In fact, we could not do it in today’s world interconnected by new communications technology. It is preferable to under-

stand the process in and of itself.

The two summit results most commented on by the media were the approval of a democracy clause and the renewed commitment to developing a hemisphere-wide free trade agreement by the year 2005. In fact, there are two distinct mechanisms: one is the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas and the other, the summits.

The April meeting dealt with many other topics in addition to free trade. For example, the hemisphere’s leaders approved an almost 40-page work plan that includes 18 concrete actions that their governments want to carry out in areas as diverse as strengthening democracy, protecting migrants’ rights, improving access to health and educational services and integrating disaster prevention measures.

Another example of the U.S.’s new political attitude that was clear in Quebec is linked to President George W. Bush’s statements and participation in

the meeting. It was obvious to everyone that the president has a particular interest in the hemisphere and in using his own weight to further the integration process. Proof of this is that he announced six U.S. initiatives that very practically expressed the leaders’ concerns:

- **Third Border Initiative:** an effort to deepen cooperation between the United States and Caribbean nations, particularly with regard to HIV/AIDS, natural disaster response and law enforcement.
- **Andean Regional Initiative:** its aim is to foster stability and democracy in this region. In the budget President Bush has requested for fiscal year 2002, he apportions U.S.\$882 million to finance international projects, create democratic institutions, contribute to development and support anti-drug programs.
- **The creation of three Hemispheric Centers for Teacher Excellence** in the hemisphere to train teachers, increase literacy and support basic education.
- **A new American Fellows Program** aims to foster mutual understanding and excellence in governing in the hemisphere through exchange programs for outstanding medium- and high-level government officials.
- **The creation of an Inter-American E-Business Fellowship Program** aims to offer young professionals in the hemisphere the opportunity to learn computer technology.
- **Increased funding for the Tropical Forest Conservation Act**, will allow the nations of the hemisphere to swap reduction or restructuring of their debt for tropical forest conservation measures.



Protesters in Quebec.

Lastly, President Bush underlined the importance of free trade and promised that he would ensure the approval of the fast track procedure —now called “trade promotion authority”—before the end of the year. This implies that the U.S. Congress would give the executive the authority to negotiate trade treaties, while the Congress itself would have the power to approve or reject the treaty as a whole, but not change it. This authority does not mean negotiations cannot go forward, but rather is another sign of the president’s commitment.

I would like to make three observations about the demonstrations in Quebec during the Summit of the Americas.

First of all, I think the rights of assembly and of protest are an indispensable part of democracy, as long as these rights are exercised peacefully. Acting violently to capture the attention of television is not the only way to be heard. In fact, the world did not

understand these groups’ demands because they were obscured by the violence used.

Secondly, all of those present agreed on pointing to the importance of each leader being democratically elected and that his/her mandate be the product of a vote; that is, that each leader represent his/her people’s choice. Despite the differences in the size of their economies, all the leaders signed the agreements because they thought that the process included the needs of all the peoples. In that sense, it is important to note the broad range of decisions made in Quebec in the framework of this plan of action. I think that the leaders speak to the demands of civil society in issues such as migration, the eradication of poverty, the environment and many others.

Thirdly, the critiques of globalization by some of the so-called “globalphobes” are paradoxical. If it were not for the very nature of globalization (interconnection, technology and rapid

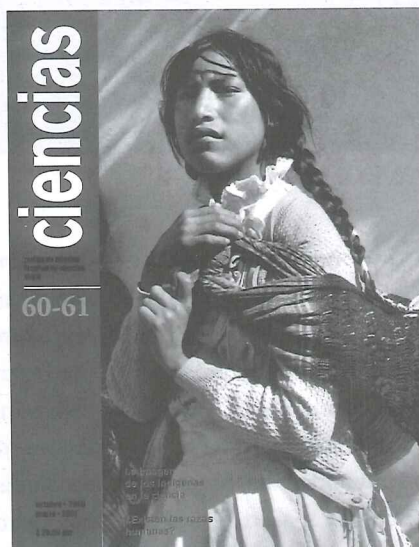
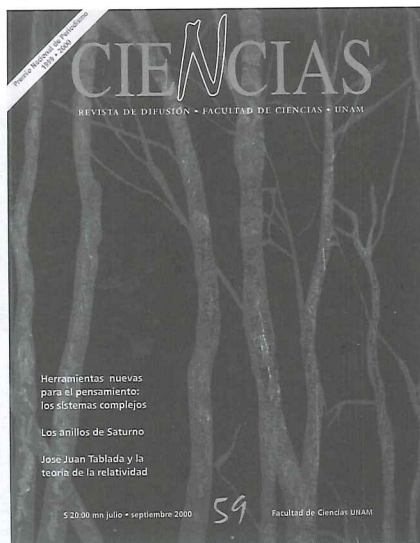
communications), no one would know about these groups’ criticisms. They are taking advantage of and benefiting from the system they criticize to disseminate their messages. In fact, the world knows much more about the problems of the environment, armaments, mines, human rights, etc., because of globalization. From my point of view, civil society has used its network to keep up to date about the summits, participate in the discussions and contribute positively to the results.

Lastly, in this context, research plays a very important role. Supporting the process, understanding what happens at the summits, ensuring that governments do what they commit themselves to doing are the challenges facing university researchers. This summit is an enormous forum for discussion of issues that must be studied, analyzed and supported in economic, political, cultural, sociodemographic and educational research projects. **MM**

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# Olga Costa and José Chávez Morado



Olga Costa, *The Bride*, 70 x 55 cm (oil on canvas). Private collection.



José Chávez Morado, *Bird Seller*, 36.5 x 33.5 cm (crayon sketch). Echeverría Zuno Family collection.

Photos reproduced courtesy of the Guanajuato State Cultural Institute

Olga Costa and José Chávez Morado not only shared a long married and productive artistic life together, they also loved Guanajuato and its people to whom they donated their house and several art collections. Here we pay homage to their artistic achievements and their generosity and interest in the promotion of art and culture.

# José Chávez Morado



Photos reproduced courtesy of the Guanajuato State Cultural Institute

*A Portrait of the Nation*, 70 x 90 cm, 1961 (oil on canvas). Artist's collection.



*Cart of Crazies*, 70 x 91 cm, 1950 (oil on canvas). Artist's collection.



# A Man of Another Age<sup>1</sup>

Talking about José Chávez Morado is one of the greatest difficulties a modern Mexican art lover or critic could have. Part of this is his diverse, prolific, eclectic and paradoxically unified body of visual work: in addition to being a painter, sculptor, engraver and designer, he was also an outstanding political and union activist, educator, cultural promoter, museographer and essayist. He is a man of another age, an age in which man's efficiency was not measured in quarter-hours or bits of knowledge.

His professional training did not take place mainly in schools. He did study at Chouinard School of Art in Los Angeles and at Mexico City's National Fine Arts School, but José Chávez Morado can be characterized as the prototype of permeability and eclecticism in formal matters. Although he has remained faithful to his creed and political practice—he is a leftist—he has also participated in government activities to promote art.

José Chávez Morado was born in Silao, Guanajuato, January 4, 1909, into a family with republican traditions, from which part of his political beliefs stem. His paternal grandfather, Isidro Chávez, was a militant of the Benito Juárez movement despite the tenacious opposition of the opulent mine- and landowner society in the region. José's parents were José Ignacio Chávez, merchant, and Luz Morado, housewife.

His initial education was basically what modestly-positioned families "of good principles" try to give their children. José's paternal grandfather had a sizeable library where he broadened out his interests and filled his mind with fantasies. There, he soaked up history, poetry, science and fiction; some of these books were illustrated and fanned his desires to sketch. His family atmosphere concentrated the pure roots



*The Kite*, 161 x 76 cm, 1970 (oil on canvas). Agustín Salvat collection.

of Spanish Catholicism—a motley mix of popular religiosity, superstitions, artfulness and profound humanistic spirituality—and certain local elements that, despite modification—or precisely because of them—flower with surprising brilliance in domestic customs, popular fiestas and particularly in the folk art of the region.

At the age of 16, probably feeling oppressed by the closed-in, small-town atmosphere of his home, he took an adventurous trip to the United States, where he worked as a laborer on fruit farms in California. Apparently, it was in this

got off to an auspicious start in set design, a field in which several visual artists were particularly interested.

Chávez Morado's first mural was on the central staircase of the Veracruz Normal School in Xalapa and was entitled *The Antiimperialist Struggle in Veracruz*. It was commissioned after a recommendation from the Revolutionary League of Writers and Artists (LEAR) to the Minister of Public Education, Gonzalo Vázquez Vela. Chávez Morado, a LEAR member, published communist-leaning engravings in the organization's maga-

The most common theme in Chávez Morado's work is urban and rural landscapes, mainly those of the highlands and the area around Guanajuato.

period that he decided on his vocation as an artist; he increased his habit of sketching by making diagrams and notes on the human figure. It was at this time that he first came into contact with Mexican muralism when he watched José Clemente Orozco work on frescos at Pomona College in Claremont, California.

In 1931, once back in Mexico, he enrolled at Mexico City's National Fine Arts School, where he studied engraving with Francisco Díaz de León, painting with Bulmaro Guzmán and lithography with Emilio Amero. The germ of Chávez Morado's vocation as a monumental artist can be seen in his education, since the inclusion of geometrical and lyrical elements and critical concepts formulated in the composition of his graphic message reflect the overall situation of visual integration and urban art. In 1933, he first manifested what would be one of his constant concerns, artistic education, that he dealt with as a teacher, as an organizer of schools and study plans and as a promotor of museology.

In 1935 he began his career as a muralist, an employee of the Ministry of Education and a married man, having married a student at the Fine Arts Central School, Olga Costa. He also

participated in the LEAR Mexican delegation to the International Alliance of Antifascist Intellectuals congress in Valencia, Spain, where he was in charge of setting up the exhibit, "One Hundred Years of Revolutionary Mexican Art." He was also a journalist; in 1942 he published four issues of a mural-magazine or poster-newspaper called *El Eje-Le*. A few years later, under the pseudonyms Juan Brochas and Chon, he contributed to the Mexican Communist Party newspaper *La voz de México* (The Voice of Mexico) in which in 1944 he polemicized against David Alfaro Siqueiros' idea of creating a Center of Realist Art. Salvador Toscano, then director of the National School of Visual Arts, Guillermo Ruiz, director of La Esmeralda art school, Diego Rivera, María Izquierdo, José Clemente Orozco and Manuel Rodríguez Lozano, among others, also participated in that discussion.

In 1938, Chávez Morado joined the Popular Graphics Workshop, a response to Mexican progressives' enormous need for visual communication. He remained there until 1941, doing a considerable part of his work in graphics, mainly in linoleum and lithographs. His easel paintings of those years had recurring themes and are

testimony to his loving identification with urban scenes and an imitation of the discourse of the popular customs that marked the production and the impetuous course of his life.

One of the most notable aspects of Chávez Morado's work as an educator has been his promotion of museums. Together with Olga Costa he promoted the Spiral Gallery, an experiment that aimed to disseminate the work of artists of different ages and currents. Out of those efforts came the Modern Art Society. In 1944, he organized his first individual showing in the Mexican

His work includes  
fantastic fancies satirizing  
backward attitudes  
in society.

Art Gallery, and in 1945, he won the engraving competition organized by the Mexico City government to commemorate the thirty-fifth anniversary of the Mexican Revolution.

The concept of visual integration became a constant concern of Mexican art from the time the idea of incorporating public monumental art into general programs of cultural development became current. Chávez Morado's position would merge all aspects of the visual arts, whether monumental or not, in the urban setting. He was in favor of pluralism and considered both private and government initiatives positive.

Thirty-two murals were painted in Mexico by artists like Juan O'Gorman, Diego Rivera and David Alfaro Siqueiros in 1952, most of them in University City, then under construction. Chávez Morado did three of them: *The Return of Quetzalcóatl* and *The Conquest of Energy*, both mosaics, and *Labor, in vinelita*. In 1955, educational authorities and the Guanajuato state government commissioned him to decorate the stairwell of the Alhóndiga de Granaditas granary building with the mural *The Abolition of Slavery by Don Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla*. Ten years later, on the second staircase, he painted *Song to Guanajuato*.



*Little Stairways*, 100 x 120 cm, 1973 (oil on canvas). Echeverría Zuno Family collection.



*Cross on the Scaffold*, 100 x 75 cm, 1943 (oil on canvas). Jorge Espinoza Ulloa collection.



*The Oath*, 24 x 29 cm, 1947 (ink and distemper). Juan Evenchutz collection.

In 1956, at the Mexican Visual Arts Winter Salon, Chévez Morado won first prize for his oil painting *Miners* and worked intensely on the organization of the National Visual Arts Front exhibits.

In 1966, retired from his post as director of the School of Design and Crafts, he and his wife Olga went to live in Guanajuato at the former mining hacienda Torre del Arco, which was to be both their house and studio. An untiring cultural promotor, he soon became involved in adapting the Alhóndiga's museography. In 1967, he took charge of new projects for the museum, which he directed for a decade.

In 1974, Chévez Morado received the National Prize for the Arts, and in 1975, he began the paperwork necessary for the state government to acquire a colonial monument, the family home of the Marquis de Rayas, to house the People's Mu-

seum of Guanajuato, to which he and his wife donated their art collection and which he directed until 1982. In what had been the building's chapel, Chévez Morado painted *The Fractured Pilaster*, *The Real de Minas de Guanajuato* and *Guanajuato Society in the Nineteenth Century*.

The most common theme in Chévez Morado's work is urban and rural landscapes, mainly those of the highlands and the area around Guanajuato. Some examples are *The Awnings* (1941), *Symptoms of Decadence* (1945), *Prickly Pear Tree* (1952), among others. Popular fiestas and customs, usually related to profoundly significant religious allegories allusive to national political and economic situations can be seen, for example, in *Black Mexico* (1942) and *Scene at a Fair* (1950). He ponders the process of the mixing of the races as the bulwark of cultural and ethnic integration of modern Mexicans in *Self-Portrait*



*The Witches' Sabbath*, 30 x 55 cm, 1944 (gouache). Mr. and Mrs. Jorge Espinoza Ulloa collection.

with *My Nana* (1948), *A Portrait of the Nation* (1961) and *Toltec* (1961), among others.

Women, particularly indigenous women, are an important presence in his work. A few examples: *Tlacotalpeñas* (1936), *Tehuanas* (1949), *The Great Tehuana* (1936), *The Girl of the Cage* (1974). His work also includes fantastic fancies, usually satirizing backward attitudes in society, for example, *The Witches' Sabbath* (1944), *Cart of Crazyes* (1950), *State of Grace* (1969). Paintings like *Nocturnal Construction* (1959), *Requiem* (1950) and *Tzompantli* (1961) present both the spectacle of advanced technology and the dispossession of the laborers who work with it. His body of work is rounded out with a small number of still lifes and the self-portraits painted from 1973 to 1980.

From the formal point of view, Chávez Morado's work can be considered prototypical of

the realism that sprang up parallel to post-revolutionary muralism, with many folk art influences. International influences like surrealism (*The Witches' Sabbath*, *Nameless Fable*), cubism (*Pair of Arches No. 1*) or action painting (*The Tangle*) can also be detected, however. This shows his eclectic receptiveness and a critical historical view.

Today, José Chávez Morado, whose rich and diverse body of work is part of a trend in which social conditions have an impact on artistic production, continues to paint in Guanajuato. **NM**

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Summarized version of José de Santiago Silva, *José Chávez Morado. Vida, obra y circunstancias* (Guanajuato: Ediciones La Rana, 2001).

# Olga Costa

## A Brief Look at a Serene Life

Carlos Magdaleno\*

It was early summer 1993 when José Chávez Morado invited a small group of friends to witness a solemn ceremony in the Arcos House at one end of the Pastita neighborhood in Guanajuato. In the patio, near a curved stone bench on a small cement pedestal was an enormous honey-colored flower pot whose base had

already set. The ceremony began once everyone was there.

Accompanied by an assistant, Chávez Morado slowly emptied fresh earth from the base of holm oak and pingüica trees from the Santa Rosa mountains into the flower pot. Suddenly, he stopped and his assistant began mixing it slowly. Chávez Morado then went into the house to the dining room table where he picked up a small polished bronze urn.

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\* Director of the Gene Byron House-Museum, Guanajuato City.



Photos reproduced courtesy of Guanajuato State Cultural Institute

*The Fruit Seller*, 195 x 245 cm, 1951 (oil on canvas). Modern Art Museum collection, Mexico City.

When he returned, the assistant had finished making a hole in the dirt inside the pot. There was a profound silence as Chávez Morado took a small folded piece of paper out of his pocket. After reading a brief, hand-written message, more loving than sad, addressed to a single person, he prepared to carry out the ceremony we had been invited to witness. The silence now was tense and emotional. José Chávez Morado slowly and delicately deposited the contents of

After all this, one asks oneself who Olga Costa had been, was and is.

The Kostakovski family residing in Odessa abandoned Russia and set up housekeeping in Leipzig at the beginning of the twentieth century to avoid the difficult political situation that heralded what would later be the October Revolution. Don Jacob Kostakovski continued his violin lessons there at the same time he began his career as a composer. Olga Costa was born

It would be impossible to scrutinize  
the entire cosmic tumult that occurs naturally  
in the objects Olga Costa illustrated, with no other  
tools than your eyes.

the urn in the earth, taking care that not even the slightest speck of dust was swept into the air. When he finally finished depositing the ashes, he covered them with another handful of dirt and then a *siempreviva* plant (*siempreviva* means “forever alive”). He did all this alone. With that, the ceremony had come to an end.

The flower pot, a sturdy, sober piece of thick clay, had been thrown especially by ceramist Gorky González. The inscription is a name and two dates in black paint: Olga Costa 1913-1993.

It was the end of a painful pilgrimage that had begun in November 1988 and had meant the intermittent voyage through hospitals, clinics, convalescence, vigils, diets, abstention from many pleasures, frequent bouts of sadness and the melancholy of a person who had known, extracted and shared a myriad of pleasures and delights, permanent residents of the most lively part of her sensibility.

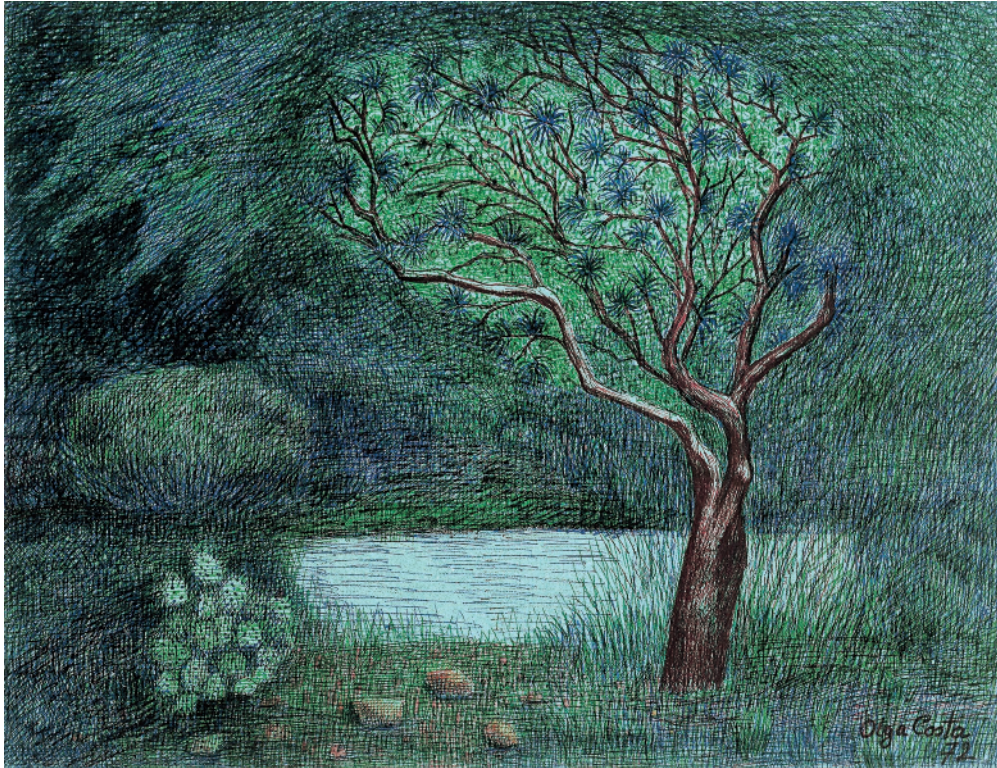
When we left what had been the home of the Chávez Morado-Costa family, since April 1992 the Olga Costa-José Chávez Morado Art Museum thanks to their legendary generosity, one would like to think that we all took with us the inspiring impact of having been privileged—though sad—witnesses to a good-bye to a very dear loved one.

in that German city, August 28, 1913. The Kostakovskis went to Berlin with their two daughters Lya and Olga in 1914, when World War I was breaking out.

Also for political and economic reasons—and perhaps also ethnic reasons, for they were Jewish—the Kostakovski family decided to move to Mexico when Olga was 12 years old. They arrived in the port of Veracruz in 1925. Let us stop here a moment.

During their stay in the port of Veracruz, two things happened, one real and the other hypothetical. The real event: the family was robbed of all its belongings when it arrived in Veracruz and for that reason—because of the legal investigations involved—they had to stay there for about a month.

The hypothetical event is that perhaps the child Olga Costa perceived the existence of another world for the first time in her life, a world bursting with a surprising and explosive variety of vegetation, men and women with dark skin and curly hair, undoubtedly diametrically opposed to what she would have seen in what was then a poor, rabidly hostile, aggressive, grey Europe. This other world was intensely warm and voluptuously rich in fruit and floral aromas. When I use the term hypothetical, it might just



*Landscape in Penumbra*, 30 x 38 cm, 1972 (felt pen). Artist's collection.



*Portrait of José Chávez Morado*, 55 x 40 cm, 1939 (oil on canvas). Artist's collection.



*Bejeweled Woman*, 64 x 49 cm, 1965 (felt pen and ink). Artist's collection.





*Pilgrims*, 50 x 60 cm, 1968 (oil on masonite). María Asúnsolo de Colín collection.



*Green Vase*, 40 x 30 cm, 1971 (oil on canvas). Private collection.



*Red Quelite*, 120 x 100 cm, 1980 (oil on canvas). Moisés Djaddah collection.

mean that it is a leisurely lapse of reflection, since this seizing of intense color, that sudden accumulation of the goods of nature are what best represent the vast body of work that came out of Olga Costa's soft, kind brush. She would develop it in full in the 1930s after her 1935 marriage to painter José Chávez Morado and having Mexican-ized her last name.

Once the Kostakovski family set up house in Mexico City, while Don Jacob gave his violin and music lessons and continued maturing as a composer, Olga and Lya enrolled in the German College. After that, Olga's life continued without incident until the early 1930s when she began studying with her first teacher, Guatemalan painter Carlos Mérida, who said something we still consider valid: "Olga Costa is the white angel of Mexican painting."<sup>1</sup>

When exactly was Olga Costa's desire and affinity for painting born? It is difficult to pin down a date: it has been said that she was interested in Diego Rivera's murals, which she may have watched being painted for a good time, increasing her interest in colors. She also remembered moments of political upheaval expe-

rienced by artists of the time, such as Diego himself and Siqueiros, just to mention two. Olga Costa would have had to have seen the creative side of these public figures, even if at the same time she noted the political events of the times.

Sergio Pitol has commented that in 1936, already married, on a trip to Jalapa, Olga painted some good canvases, even though she did not take herself very seriously. However, her stay in Jalapa has left us with some notable paintings like *Bathers*, *Bouquet with Blue Background*, *Lady in Green*, *Women Bathers*, *Nude*, just to mention a few. They are a brief but firm example of the explosive chromatic form of her painting. This experience was the beginning of a long, successful road that she would abandon only a couple of years before her unfortunate death.

Her career from 1936 on is known to all of us. Sergio Pitol defined Olga Costa's great themes as follows:

- a) Scenes laced with humor, which she called "the irony of the cure;"
- b) still lifes and portraits;



*My Garden*, 120 x 70 cm, 1979 (oil on canvas). John Nevin collection.

- c) scenes of Mexican customs, such as a dead child, pilgrims, etc.; and
- d) her final period: an immersion in the open spaces until she arrived at the fantastic gardens of her last years.<sup>2</sup>

In each of these stages, with the distinct forms created by her visual personality, her profound individuality, her paintings never attempted to be more than that: painting.

It would be impossible to review and scrutinize the entire cosmic tumult that occurs naturally and simply in the objects Costa illustrated, painting by painting, sketch by sketch, without any more inspiration or emotional tools than just your eyes. The selection of each of the objects to be reproduced—in this case, re-created—might be explained perhaps in the urgent yearning for seeing and feeling the extension of her own skin. That profuse and varied chromatism comes about in Olga unsurprisingly, as she proceeds with her routine of taking care of her plants and flowers, that is, in the accidents of everyday life. But they also occur when she discovers things there and even when they are not

really there, such as in the case of her imaginary pieces. Here, I am talking about paintings like *Green Vase* (1971); *Golden Fish* (1980); *Untitled* (1981); *Stained Glass* (1982); and especially in this example, *Island of the Air* (1963) and *The Puddle*. These are works that form a whole of smiling riddles, visual explosions in which she never stopped using what was always a constant: temperance and a playful, comic air; firmness and a smile.

Olga fits, as no other artist, Pitol's definition: "Olga Costa's life is her painting."<sup>3</sup> And even if cloistered—or more aptly, confined to—the Mexican school of painting—which Olga neither denied nor flaunted—Pitol's comment can be emphasized even more, but in the opposite sense, in the case of other women of her generation, such as Frida Kahlo or Tina Modotti. Their creations, their artistic endeavors were rudely surpassed and sometimes absorbed by peripheral activities, mainly political struggles. In Olga Costa, any attitude on the margins of painting (except for, of course, her unequivocal solidarity with the political and social causes that her generation and her fellow painters defended,



*Two Profiles*, 44 x 59 cm, 1964 (oil on paper). Artist's collection.



*Plain Landscape Planted with Marigolds*, 36 x 83 cm, 1977 (oil on wood). Dr. and Mrs. Luis Muñoz Castellanos collection.

particularly those that activist José Chávez Morado championed) would have been a simple intellectual accessory. They would have separated her irremediably from her only possible task, painting. Costa, one might add, is her own serenity.

In 1944, Fernando Gamboa, Mexico's greatest museographer, commissioned Olga to paint a canvas that is still one of the fundamental icons of great Mexican painting. For her, in addition, it represents her own visionary panorama. That painting is *The Fruit Seller* that has belonged since then to the Modern Art Museum.

Anyone who has the good fortune to stand in front of this masterful canvas will have felt the surprise and satisfaction of recognizing his/her own piece of identity. The joy in viewing it manages to banish all our analytical, technical or academic pretensions. With this canvas, Olga Costa has reached a plateau; there she affirms and unfolds everything she had ever painted throughout her entire life as an artist, characterized by her obsessive, detailed, laborious recreation, celebration and consecration of the mysterious gifts of nature.

In 1990, Olga was given the National Prize for the Arts and attended the ceremony pushed in her wheelchair by José Chávez Morado, who had received the same prize in 1973.

That year she had gone through several severe health crises. A little while later she had her last exhibition at the People's Museum of Guanajuato, which she had founded with Chávez Morado in 1979. Her last show consisted of a small group of paintings, among them a white porcelain vase with thousands of tiny, different flowers. Chávez Morado named the work *The Resurrection*. It could not be more eloquent: it combines the vitality of that kaleidoscopic turbulence that made up the total, absolute creative act of Olga Costa, who left us two years later, on June 28, 1993.

But that is not completely true. Olga Costa cannot leave us, nor can she be very far from us. The portentous chromatism revealed in her untiring creative efforts will be a perennial presence and the certainty of the premise that, "Olga Costa's life is her painting." And her painting is more alive than ever. **MM**

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Olga Costa mentioned this comment when talking about the time when Carlos Mérida was her teacher; it was one of her favorite phrases.

<sup>2</sup> Sergio Pitó, *Olga Costa* (Guanajuato: Ediciones La Rana/ Instituto de Cultura de Guanajuato, 1998), p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Pitó, *op. cit.*

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Henry Romero/Reuters

# In the Shadow of the Volcano

Popocatepetl Volcano gave signs of life in December 1994 with an emission of ash that covered the nearby city of Puebla in a fine film. This simple reminder put citizens and authorities alike on notice about the risks of living on the flanks of a volcano. Alerting scientists, it was the signal needed to prompt joint work by them and authorities to monitor volcanic activity and evaluate the risks of an eruption for nearby towns.

Six years later, between February and September 2000, Popocatepetl once again showed signs of disquiet. Then, from October on, volcanic activity increased until mid-December. The magnitude of the signals were monitored and the very high rate of lava production –by December 18, it was estimated between 15 million and 19 million cubic meters–formed the largest dome observed in the episode and gave rise to the fear of an imminent eruption. Municipal and state authorities stepped up the alert and established a security radius of 13 kilometers where they began to evacuate towns between December 15 and 16, including a few outside the security radius. On December 18 and 19, in three episodes, the volcano ejected large amounts of hot debris onto

its flanks hurtling them, scientists believe, a maximum of 5 to 6 kilometers from the crater. After December 19, activity decreased and the next expected period of activity –around December 23 according to the time-predictable model– did not occur, indicating that the magma supply had changed. What is believed to be the first dome-destruction explosion occurred on December 24, ejecting incandescent debris 3.5 kilometers from the volcano and producing an ash plume 5 kilometers above the crater. This was the largest energy-release eruption of Popocatepetl ever monitored with instruments.

Authorities reduced the security radius to 12 kilometers and since no towns are located in that area, people returned to their homes.

An estimated 10 to 20 percent of the new dome volume has been destroyed by the activity since December 18. Because the dome mass has been removed by small to moderate explosions in many of the previous dome growth-and-destruction episodes since 1996, a similar scenario is expected in the near future.

Fortunately, the crisis was not as severe as predicted. But no one knows what Popocatepetl –or “Don Goyo,” as local residents call the volcano– has in store.

**Note:** Based on a Cenapred report, published by *Bulletin of Global Volcanology Network* 12 (Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, December 2000).

Special thanks to Dr. Carlos Valdés González of Cenapred.

# Popocatépetl Living in Danger<sup>1</sup>

Juan Marcial\*



Ramiro Ramirez/Reuters

Mexico is situated in a region of great volcanic activity. Of its approximately 3,000 volcanoes, 14 have recently been active, including the Parícutín (1943), Chichón (1982), Tacaná (1986), the Colima volcano, with great activity in recent years, and Popocatépetl (December 2000). Every year between 50 and 65 volcanoes in the world become active, but only a few cause loss of human life

and property damage. The effects on the population are not necessarily proportional to the size or violence of eruptions, but rather to the proximity and number of human settlements surrounding the volcano.

Popocatépetl, 5,452 meters above sea level and more than 700 million years old, with its majestic, ancestral beauty, is undoubtedly a high-risk volcano. Throughout its long history, it has had numerous minor eruptions, a few major ones and has produced great paroxysmal events that

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\* Mexican free-lance journalist.



Henry Romero/Reuters

The situation would be more dangerous if the volcano did not continuously liberate energy.

are more dangerous because they liberate a great deal of energy in a short time. Between 1993 and 1995, the kind of activity the “Popo” has shown seems similar to that of 12 other episodes reported since the sixteenth century: underground eruptions that liberate great quantities of magmatic gases along with old material deposited in the volcanic cone.

#### THE INVISIBLE

The volcano has been stable since January 1995 because the possible source of disturbance in the deeper areas has been smaller than the volcano’s ability to liberate its energy. Until now, there has been no extreme danger. If the volcano did not have the capacity to benignly liberate accumulated energy, as it does now, the balance would be disturbed and the scenario would be much more dangerous.

The possible break in that equilibrium will depend on the reasons why energy is being gen-

erated in the depths of the volcano. One reason would be the introduction of new magma into that area. A mix of new and old magma rapidly cause an accumulation of energy that could lead to a major eruption.

Continuous monitoring—every few days or weeks—is carried out to observe the processes taking place in the volcano’s depths. Based on these observations, scientists attempt to detect sufficiently ahead of time whether this mix of magma is occurring, if it is accelerating or if new magma is being introduced. Apparently, in the depth of the volcano and its conduits today, there is no serious accumulation of energy. As Dr. Servando de la Cruz from the UNAM Geophysics Institute says, however, we can predict nothing in the long run. We cannot even assign statistical probabilities since we do not know what is happening at a deeper level, more than 10 kilometers down, and no equipment can give us more precise data.

Dr. De la Cruz defines Popocatepetl as a mature stratovolcano capable of remaining dormant





Daniel Aguilar/Reuters

Despite the danger, the view of the volcano can also be spectacular. December 19, 2000.

for long periods or evolving toward more dangerous phases. He also says that no periodicity is possible in volcanology. The current eruptive activity of the volcano reminds us, he says, that the risk is there, has been there and will continue to be there, because it is always possible that the volcano will reactivate. If it became more actively eruptive, however, he concludes, fortunately today we have better scientific and technical resources to lower the risk and reduce the vulnerability of surrounding inhabitants, as was shown in December 2000.

#### THE VISIBLE

The moderate seismic and fumarolic activity that began in 1993 prompted authorities to set up monitoring stations. Today, joint work by the UNAM Institutes of Engineering and Geophysics and the National Center for Disaster Prevention (Cenapred) is done at 11 telemetric stations. Cenapred also has a center for data gathering

and processing and carries out four kinds of monitoring: visual observation and seismic, geodesic and geochemical monitoring.<sup>2</sup>

Visual observation consists of watching for physical changes in the volcano, like rock or mud slides, deformations, fumaroles, emissions of ash or gases, or any other indication of perceptible change. To accomplish this, a video camera has been aimed at the north flank of the volcano, transmitting day and night directly to Cenapred, where the information is analyzed.

Seismic monitoring is one of the most important kinds of observation. The vibrations it registers and measures make it possible to infer where the hypocenters are generated and located, the points inside the volcano where energy is liberated. This makes it possible to locate bodies of magma underneath the volcano and to discern whether the magma tends to rise or open up new avenues toward other conduits, how it will evolve and how deep the seismic activity is. In the case of Popocatepetl, this activity is developing between 3 and 10 kilometers underneath



Daniel Aguilar/Reuters

Pyroclastic flows, explosions, a rain of incandescent material and lava emissions are the potential dangers to nearby settlements. November 29, 1998.

the crater, basically directly beneath it, slightly to the east (in the direction of the city of Puebla).

The volcano's seismic activity is only local and should not create concern that it will shift or cause major earthquakes because it is the result of magma that is attempting to escape, the pressure of which creates fractures and sometimes gas emissions.

Geodesic monitoring is carried out at three stations, each equipped with tiltmeters that register the slope or deformation of the soil as a

result of pressure from inside the volcano.<sup>3</sup> This data is useful, based on the hypothesis that a large eruption will be preceded by significant deformations in the volcanic edifice.

Geochemical monitoring is the chemical analysis of gases, fumaroles, geothermal springs, the composition of ash, lava and other products of the volcano. Other variables associated with volcanic activity that are also monitored are winds, temperatures, precipitation, PH and radon gas and sulfur dioxide emissions.

## THE THEORY

Based on the studies of deposits derived from Popocatepetl Volcano, the following potential dangers to nearby settlements have been identified: pyroclastic flows and waves and explosions; mud slides, gigantic slides of parts of the volcanic edifice (avalanches of debris); a rain of pyroclastic material and ballistic projectiles; the emission of lava spills and possible associated domes.<sup>4</sup> In the case of Mexico City, the greatest risk would come from the air pollution caused by great amounts of volcanic ash being expelled from the mountain.

## PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Since the moderate eruption of December 1994, significant advances have been made in civil and disaster prevention. In June 1994, the government began a campaign directed at local residents through pamphlets, leaflets and videos. At the same time, Cenapred called on civic authorities in charge of public safety in Puebla, the State of Mexico, Morelos, Tlaxcala and Mexico City to develop a joint plan to facilitate their own coordination in the case of a high-risk scenario. Out of those efforts came the Popocatepetl Volcano Operational Plan which delineates each state's responsibilities in case of an emergency and instructions on how to proceed. The plan has been perfected to the point of developing its Emergency Planning Map, dividing the whole area into different risk zones so that the population can be evacuated according to the risks in each area. The scientific community developed a code for a volcanic alert, dubbed "the volcanic alert stop-light" by Cenapred. For practical purposes, the alert system has been likened to a traffic stop-light: green represents a normal situation and causes no change to people's day-to-day activities; yellow is an alert, meaning that normal activities can go on as usual, but everyone must keep informed of any changes; and red is an alarm, signalling the need to begin getting people away from the high-risk areas and protect them.

## WHAT REALLY HAPPENS

Even though authorities carry out the campaign to inform the public about how to differentiate between a normal and an alert situation, what to do and where to go in case of danger, on the slopes of the volcano, people cling to a glimmer of hope to convince themselves day in and day out that there is no danger at all; the threat of death has always been part of their lives.

For Professor Teodoro Romero Carreón, principal of National Anthem Primary School, "the public has been overwhelmed with information" from official sources. For that reason they see things in the long term. They understand that a danger exists, but they do not accept the idea that it is imminent. Their attachment to their homes and their religion make them insensible to the threat and are two of the reasons why many local residents refuse to abandon their homes despite the danger. Professor Romero thinks people with a different attitude should go house to house explaining the risks involved "and not frightening people because they're not frightened anyway, and most people are willing to die on their land no matter what happens." ■■■

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> This is an abbreviated version of the article "Popocatepetl, vivir en peligro," first published in the UNAM School of Science magazine *Ciencias* 41 (January-March, 1996), pp. 50-55.

<sup>2</sup> Cenapred's web site provides up-to-date information: <http://www.cenapred.unam.mx/mvolcan.html> [Editor's Note.]

<sup>3</sup> Tiltmeters are set on a concrete base and measure variations in slope caused by any kind of pressure to a thousandth of a degree.

<sup>4</sup> Initially, pyroclastic and mud flows are considered the most dangerous threats to surrounding towns. Giant avalanches and mud slides can only happen if part of the volcanic edifice collapses; they would travel at 100 kilometers per hour for 80 kilometers, destroying everything in their path.

# Did you know...?

**Magma** is a word coined in the nineteenth century by the Englishman George Poulett Scrope, and refers to the molten material found underneath the earth's crust and from which igneous rock is formed by cooling and crystallization.

A volcanic eruption is simply the emission of certain materials from inside the Earth. The different kinds of eruptions are named after typical volcanos which become models for the others. Therefore, geologists speak of Hawaiian, Icelandic, Merapean and Pelean eruptions (the latter is named after Mount Pelé in Martinique, a French possession in the Caribbean).

All eruptions fall between two extremes: **effusive eruptions**, with the emission of large quantities of lava, and **explosive eruptions**, in which most of the material is expelled from the volcano as hot, solid fragments. Among the explosive eruptions are the Plinian and Pelean, and among the effusive are the Hawaiian and Icelandic. Vulcanean and Strombolian eruptions are considered intermediate.

Eruptions differ with regard to the chemical composition and varied gas content of the materials involved. The gas content is very important because it determines the viscosity of the magma: non-viscous magma makes for an effusive eruption, while highly viscous magma causes an explosive eruption.

Explosive eruptions are the more dangerous of the two. Hawaiian-type effusive eruptions emit great lava flows that form rivers and lakes, but cause little loss of

human life, although they may well cause great economic and social damage. Pelean-type explosive eruptions expel solid fragments known as pyroclasts (from the Greek *piros*, for fire and *clastos*, for broken) along with a mixture of hot gas and water. They may even tear off part of the volcanic cone or form an enormous column that will spill over the sides of the volcano. This kind of an avalanche is highly mobile and can move at several kilometers an hour. Explosive eruptions can also create huge columns and clouds of gases and particles, capable of traveling long distances and depositing ash in far-off places.

## THE RISKS

The greatest risk is from volcanoes that have remained dormant for long periods since inactivity makes people forget the danger.

The old definition of volcanoes as extinct or active is not very precise, since it is difficult to establish a time limit that would make it possible to classify any volcano as extinct. Previously, scientists considered that if a volcano had not erupted within human history, it could be classified as extinct. However, history begins at different times for different continents and regions and the eruption of volcanoes previously considered extinct has shown how wrong this criterion was. Today, scientists think in terms of probabilities, and volcanoes are classi-

fied as high risk if they have erupted in the last few tens of thousands of years.

## VOLCANIC ACTIVITY IN MEXICO

In Mexico the great majority of the large stratovolcanoes (volcanos composed of explosively erupted cinders and ash with occasional lava flows) and many fields of monomagnetic volcanism (volcanism includes all phenomena connected with the movement of heated material from the interior to or toward the surface of the Earth) are concentrated in the Trans-Mexican Volcanic Band, a 1,200-kilometer long, 20- to 150-kilometer wide volcanic elevation facing east-west. Another volcanic region is the peninsula of Baja California. Our country also has solitary volcanoes, whose origin is less clear, like the Chichón, San Martín Tuxtla and the Tacaná, which we share with Guatemala and is part of the Central American chain.

The most disastrous volcanic event in Mexico in historical times was the eruption of the Chichón or Chichonal in 1982. The volcano shot up a column of gas, steam and smoke almost 18 kilometers high, showering ash and pyroclasts for miles around, covering some towns close to the volcano with meters of debris. About 2,000 people died as a result, and the region's economy was severely damaged after 153 square kilometers were completely devastated and 30,000 square kilometers were covered with at least one millimeter of ash.

**Note:** Fragments taken from the article by Juan Manuel Espíndola and José Luis Macías Vázquez, "El vulcanismo," *Ciencias* 41 (Mexico City), January-March 1996, pp. 12-22.



Photos reproduced courtesy of the International Cervantes Festival

## A Festival for a New Time

Today, the International Cervantes Festival (FIC) is a world-class festival combining imagination, memory and artistic creativity.

The upcoming twenty-ninth International Cervantes Festival's programming reflects new times, times of diversity, encounters and dialogue.

Art and culture are the only road to erasing geographical and spiritual borders, the only way our differences and specificities can be reconciled. Culture knows no borders.

The twenty-ninth festival will distinguish itself for its artistic excellence and its pluralism of currents and genres of universal, world culture. The pur-

pose is to ensure that the FIC is marked by the plural, generous dialogue of different cultures.

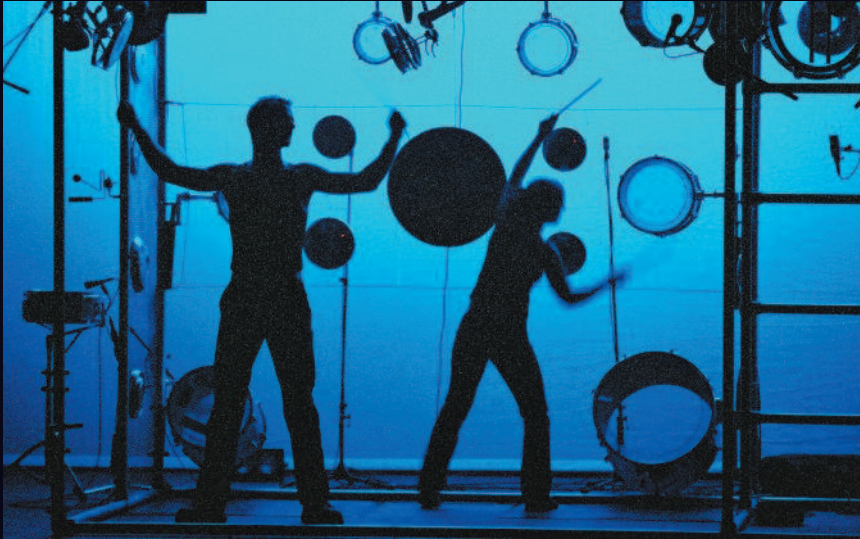
One of the roads a society must follow to get to know itself is the road to re-encounters, above all with its longest-lasting works, works of the imagination and art.

For the first time, the International Cervantes Festival has its own internal governing body, composed of federal, state and municipal officials, who share both authority and responsibility. This new form of joint participation has made it possible for the FIC to become a model of working, programming and organization that will guarantee its per-

manence, continuity and positive impact on Mexico's cultural development.

It is also the first time that the FIC has had a consultative council made up of artists from all the disciplines to establish a rigorous dialogue among the arts that will make up the Festival's yearly programming and guarantee its excellence.

The FIC's tradition and deep roots in Guanajuato and Mexico have created powerful links of identity and recognition, links so profound and determinant in the cultural and artistic national memory that they have made it part of Mexico's cultural patrimony. The International Cervantes Festival has



become the world's third most important festival and Latin America's first.

The new times are being forged with the active participation of everyone, men and women, citizens who know the value of their decisions and demand the right to express themselves and be part of what is happening. In that sense, the International Cervantes Festival is a participant in the creation and transformation of habits of participation in cultural life, in order to have a direct impact in the consolidation of a democratic culture.

Fundamental protagonists in the next festival are the street and its people. This is the public space where art is reconciled with life, becoming its mirror and revealing the deepest secrets of Man. Plazas and alleyways will be the main stage where life and art meet, a place for fiestas, where the privileges of enjoyment are reserved for both audience and artist.

The audiences' diversity demands that we have a system of discounts to allow everyone access to this rich, lesson-filled programming. Also of benefit to Guanajuato residents who collaborate with the festival in a myriad of ways will be the creation of the Friend of the FIC card, to be inaugurated this year.

The world will be watching Guanajuato from October 10 to 28 this year, when all the arts, every form of expression—from the strictly classifiable to those that don't even have a classification yet, given their innovative nature—come together.

The guest continent for this festival is Oceania and the country represented, Australia. From Mexico, the guest region is the Southeast and its state guest of honor, Veracruz. In all cases, programming aims to make a profound understanding of cultural processes available to the public and will

include performing arts, visual arts, film, literature and academic encounters.

As of now, the International Cervantes Festival expresses its commitment to broadening audiences' cultural horizons. The objective is to foster audiences capable of participating in artistic processes; this will include students and amateurs joining workshops, practical demonstrations, master classes and lectures in which participating artists take part. Specialized international workshops will be given and co-production, co-participation and exchange mechanisms created to foster the development of Mexican artistic creativity.

The International Cervantes Festival is possible thanks to the joint efforts and economic support of the federal government through its National Council for Culture and the Arts, the government of Guanajuato state and the support of sister countries and the private sector, which, with their dedicated participation have contributed to thinking about culture as one of the driving forces behind our country's development.

A festival for a new time is not possible without public participation. The FIC awaits you in Guanajuato.



# XXIX FESTIVAL INTERNACIONAL CERVANTINO

## para los nuevos tiempos

FOROS HORARIO	Teatro Juárez 21:00	Teatro Principal 18:00	Teatro Cervantes 18:00	Auditorio del Estado 20:00	Plaza San Roque 20:00	Explanada de la Alhóndiga 20:00	Auditorio de Minas 17:00	Templo de la Valenciana 12:00
MIÉRCOLES 10	INAUGURACIÓN OSEM REQUIEM DE VERDI AUSTRALIA - MÉXICO					INAUGURACIÓN VERACRUZ MÚSICA Y CORAZON 19:00 HRS. MÉXICO	AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA AUSTRALIA	
JUEVES 11	C.N.O. MACBETH MÉXICO	THE LITHUANIAN NATIONAL DRAMA THEATRE MASCARADE LITUANIA	TOLD BY AN IDIOT SHOOT ME IN THE HEART REINO UNIDO	SYDNEY DANCE CO. SALOME AUSTRALIA		OSEM- R. WOODWARD-M. KEYS AUSTRALIA-MÉXICO	CAPELLA DELLA PIETÀ DE' TURCHINI ITALIA	ENSEMBLE RESONANZ ALEMANIA
VIERNES 12	CICLO DE MÚSICA CONTEMPORÁNEA O.S.U.G. GUANAJUATO, MÉXICO	THE LITHUANIAN NATIONAL DRAMA THEATRE MASCARADE LITUANIA	TOLD BY AN IDIOT SHOOT ME IN THE HEART REINO UNIDO	SYDNEY DANCE CO. SALOME AUSTRALIA	TEATRO DE LA UNIVERSIDAD DE GTO. ENTREMESSES CERVANTINOS MÉXICO	NOCHE DE VERACRUZ RECORDANDO A AGUSTIN LARA MÉXICO	CAPELLA DELLA PIETÀ DE' TURCHINI ITALIA	JUAN MANUEL ARPERO TROMPETA Y ÓRGANO GUANAJUATO-MÉXICO
SÁBADO 13	C.N.O. MACBETH MÉXICO	THE LITHUANIAN NATIONAL DRAMA THEATRE RICARDO III LITUANIA 21:00 hrs.	MADELAINE SAMI TWO NUMBER TWO NUEVA ZELANDA	SYDNEY DANCE CO. SALOME AUSTRALIA 12:00 y 20:00 hrs.	TEATRO DE LA UNIVERSIDAD DE GTO. ENTREMESSES CERVANTINOS MÉXICO	FOLKLORE ENSEMBLE KARPATY REPÚBLICA DE ESLOVAQUIA	KOH GABRIEL KAMEDA PIANO JAPÓN	
DOMINGO 14		THE LITHUANIAN NATIONAL DRAMA THEATRE RICARDO III LITUANIA 12:00 y 18:00 hrs.	MADELAINE SAMI TWO NUMBER TWO NUEVA ZELANDA			IN THE NURSERY MAN WITH A MOVIE CAMERA REINO UNIDO	ROGER WOODWARD PIANO AUSTRALIA	CICLO DE MÚSICA CONTEMPORÁNEA O.C.B.A. MÉXICO
LUNES 15	KIM YOUNG-HEEM/DANCE REP. DE COREA			COMPAGNIE DANIEL LARRIERU CENZAS FRANCIA		LOS LEONES DE LA SIERRA XICHU GUANAJUATO-MÉXICO		
MARTES 16	KIM YOUNG-HEEM/DANCE REP. DE COREA	RICOCHEAT DANCE CO. THE ENIGMAS OF SIN REINO UNIDO	MIME OMNIBUS BEAUTES DIVINES QUEBEC, CANADA	COMPAGNIE DANIEL LARRIERU CENZAS FRANCIA	LEGEN-NABARLEK CROACIA-AUSTRALIA		OLGA KERN PIANO RUSIA	
MIÉRCOLES 17	LOS TIEMPOS PASADOS THE TERRA NOVA CONSORT MÉXICO - EU	RICOCHEAT DANCE CO. THE ENIGMAS OF SIN REINO UNIDO	MIME OMNIBUS BEAUTES DIVINES QUEBEC, CANADA			JAZZ BAJO LAS ESTRELLAS MÉXICO	OLIVER KERN PIANO ALEMANIA	
JUEVES 18	OPERA SLASKA NABUCCO POLONIA		MIME OMNIBUS BEAUTES DIVINES QUEBEC, CANADA	CLOUD GATE DANCE THEATRE SONGS OF THE WANDERERS TAIWAN	TW. SIEMASZKOWA DEBALLAGE POLONIA	B. F.M. HOMENAJE A AMALIA HERNÁNDEZ	JOSÉ MANUEL SANDOVAL PIANO MÉXICO	CAPELLA GUANAJUATENSIS GUANAJUATO MÉXICO
VIERNES 19	OPERA SLASKA LA TRAVIATA POLONIA	CITY DRAMA THEATRE GAVELLA A MONTH IN THE COUNTRY CROACIA	EL CAMARÍN DON JUAN COLOMBIA	CLOUD GATE DANCE THEATRE SONGS OF THE WANDERERS TAIWAN	TW. SIEMASZKOWA DEBALLAGE POLONIA	B. F.M. HOMENAJE A AMALIA HERNÁNDEZ	ALEXEY GRINYUK PIANO UCRANIA	ÁGNES SZAKÁLY CIMBALO HUNGRIA
SÁBADO 20	OPERA SLASKA NABUCCO POLONIA	CITY DRAMA THEATRE GAVELLA A MONTH IN THE COUNTRY CROACIA 12:00 y 18:00 hrs.	EL CAMARÍN DON JUAN COLOMBIA	CLOUD GATE DANCE THEATRE SONGS OF THE WANDERERS TAIWAN	TW. SIEMASZKOWA DEBALLAGE POLONIA	MIRI BEN-ARI ISRAEL ESTUDIANTINA DE LA UNIV. DE GTO. 38 AÑOS	SEBASTIÁN FORSTER PIANO ARGENTINA	ORQUESTA DE CÁMARA MAYO ARGENTINA
DOMINGO 21	ORQUESTA BARROCA DE MONTREAL QUEBEC, CANADA 12:00 hrs. OPERA SLASKA LA TRA	CITY DRAMA THEATRE GAVELLA A MONTH IN THE COUNTRY CROACIA	EL CAMARÍN DON JUAN COLOMBIA		TW. SIEMASZKOWA DEBALLAGE POLONIA	BALLET FLAMENCO DE ANTONIO CANALES TORENO ESPAÑA	NATASHA KORSKOVA VIOLIN RUSIA	ORQUESTA DE CÁMARA MAYO ARGENTINA
LUNES 22				EL CUERPO MUTABLE- TEATRO DE MOVIMIENTO ARQUEOLOGÍA POSTMODERNA:TRILOGÍA MÉXICO		STRIKE NUEVA ZELANDA		
MARTES 23	EL CONEJO Y EL COYOTE 18:00 hrs. MÉXICO	TEATRO SUNIL CARBONE 14 VISITATIO SUIZA-QUEBEC, CANADA-MÉXICO	T. DE BELLAS ARTES LOS ZORROS CHINOS MÉXICO	EL CUERPO MUTABLE- TEATRO DE MOVIMIENTO ARQUEOLOGÍA POSTMODERNA:TRILOGÍA MÉXICO	INST. DE CULTURA DEL EDO. DE GTO. - FIC LA VIDA ES SUEÑO MÉXICO	BALKANIKA YUGOSLAVIA	GUADALUPE PARRONDO PIANO MÉXICO	
MIÉRCOLES 24	EL CONEJO Y EL COYOTE 18:00 hrs. MÉXICO	TEATRO SUNIL CARBONE 14 VISITATIO SUIZA-QUEBEC, CANADA-MÉXICO	T. DE BELLAS ARTES LOS ZORROS CHINOS MÉXICO		INST. DE CULTURA DEL EDO. DE GTO. - FIC LA VIDA ES SUEÑO MÉXICO	BANDAS DE GUANAJUATO MÉXICO	LEE CHIN SIOW VIOLIN SINGAPUR	
JUEVES 25					INST. DE CULTURA DEL EDO. DE GTO. - FIC LA VIDA ES SUEÑO MÉXICO	NATIONAL TROUPE OF NIGERIA YEMOJA: A SPECTACLE OF PASSION NIGERIA	RAMZI YASSA PIANO EGIPTO PRESENTACIÓN DISCO "BOLEROS" F. DE LA MORÁ	NANA BABAEVA VIOLIN-AZERBAIJÁN I. BORENKO-A. MADJAROVA VIOLIN-ARPA UC
VIERNES 26		PEP BOU AMBROSSIA ESPAÑA	THEATRE MLADINSKO SUEÑO DE UNA NOCHE DE VERANO ESLOVENIA	COMPañIA NACIONAL DE DANZA MULTIPLICIDAD, FORMAS DEL SILENCIO Y VACÍO ESPAÑA	TEATRO DE LA UNIVERSIDAD DE GTO. ENTREMESSES CERVANTINOS MÉXICO	NATIONAL TROUPE OF NIGERIA YEMOJA: A SPECTACLE OF PASSION NIGERIA	RAUL TEO ARIAS VIOLIN MÉXICO	LOS TIEMPOS PASADOS GUANAJUATO, MÉXICO
SÁBADO 27	T. DE BELLAS ARTES SANTA JUANA DE LOS MATADEROS MÉXICO	PEP BOU AMBROSSIA ESPAÑA 12:00 Y 18:00 hrs.	THEATRE MLADINSKO SUEÑO DE UNA NOCHE DE VERANO ESLOVENIA	COMPañIA NACIONAL DE DANZA MULTIPLICIDAD, FORMAS DEL SILENCIO Y VACÍO ESPAÑA	TEATRO DE LA UNIVERSIDAD DE GTO. ENTREMESSES CERVANTINOS MÉXICO	HORYZON TRINIDAD Y TOBAGO RONDALLA SANTA FE 30 AÑOS MÉXICO	CONTRASTES FRANCIA	TRIO ZURICH SUIZA
DOMINGO 28	T. DE BELLAS ARTES SANTA JUANA DE LOS MATADEROS MÉXICO	PEP BOU AMBROSSIA ESPAÑA	THEATRE MLADINSKO SUEÑO DE UNA NOCHE DE VERANO ESLOVENIA	COMPañIA NACIONAL DE DANZA MULTIPLICIDAD, FORMAS DEL SILENCIO Y VACÍO ESPAÑA		CLAUSURA FIESTA MEXICANA FDO. DE LA MORÁ- OSUG MÉXICO	JORGE LUIS PRATS PIANO CUBA	TRIO ZURICH SUIZA

FOROS	Ex Hacienda San Gabriel de la Barrera	Pinacoteca del Templo de la Compañía	Basílica	Salón del Consejo Universitario	Patio de Relaciones Industriales	La Cancha de Cristal Universidad de Gto.	Teatro Manuel Gálvez	Teatro María Grever
HORARIO	12:00	19:00	12:00	12:00		20:00	20:00	20:00
MIÉRCOLES 10								
JUEVES 11	ENSAMBLE DE METALES DE LA OSEM MÉXICO		CICLO DE ÓRGANO STEPHAN KOFLER ITALIA				C.N.D. LA BAYADERA MÉXICO	ME XHC CO TEATRO MUJERES EN EL ENCIERRO MÉXICO
VIERNES 12			CICLO DE ÓRGANO RODOLFO PONCE M. MÉXICO	CICLO DE MÚSICA CONTEMPORÁNEA CUARTETO LATINOAMERICANO MÉXICO			C.N.D. LA BAYADERA MÉXICO	ME XHC CO TEATRO MUJERES EN EL ENCIERRO MÉXICO
SÁBADO 13	EVANGELOS Y LIZA DUO DE GUITARRAS GRECIA	CORO DE MADRIGALISTAS MÉXICO		CICLO DE MÚSICA CONTEMPORÁNEA CARLOS PRIETO Y EDISON QUINTANA MÉXICO	LA FLAUTA MÁGICA MÉXICO 19:00 hrs.		C.N.D. LA BAYADERA MÉXICO 19:00 hrs.	OLGA KERN PIANO RUSIA 19:00 hrs.
DOMINGO 14					LA FLAUTA MÁGICA MÉXICO 19:00 hrs.		O.S.N. MÉXICO 19:00 hrs.	EVANGELOS Y LISA DUO DE GUITARRAS GRECIA 19:00 hrs.
LUNES 15				CICLO DE MÚSICA CONTEMPORÁNEA PENTAMÚSICA MÉXICO			IN THE NURSERY MAN WITH A MOVIE CAMERA REINO UNIDO	
MARTES 16				CICLO DE MÚSICA CONTEMPORÁNEA TRIO NEOS MÉXICO	CICLO DE JAZZ NILS PETTER MOLVAER NORUEGA 21:30 hrs.		OPERA SLASKA NABUCCO POLONIA	TW. SIEMASZKOWA DEBALLAGE POLONIA
MIÉRCOLES 17				CICLO DE MÚSICA CONTEMPORÁNEA WATER AND STONE EU - MÉXICO	CICLO DE JAZZ NILS PETTER MOLVAER NORUEGA 21:30 hrs.			TW. SIEMASZKOWA DEBALLAGE POLONIA
JUEVES 18			CICLO DE ÓRGANO VICTOR URBAN MÉXICO	CICLO DE MÚSICA CONTEMPORÁNEA ALBERTO CRUZFRIETO MÉXICO				ÁGNES SZAKÁLY CIMBALO HUNGRIA
VIERNES 19	CARNATIC INDIA	THE TERRA NOVA CONSORT EU	CICLO DE ÓRGANO KEVIN CLARKE EU	CICLO DE MÚSICA CONTEMPORÁNEA TAMBUCO ENSAMBLE DE PERCUSIONES DE MÉXICO	CICLO DE JAZZ JAZZ BAJO LAS ESTRELLAS MÉXICO 23:00 hrs.		TUYO QUEBEC, CANADA	
SÁBADO 20	ENRIQUE VELASCO GUITARRA VERACRUZ, MÉXICO	CORO DE LA UNIVERSIDAD Y VOCES DE SALAMANCA GUANAJUATO, MÉXICO		CICLO DE MÚSICA CONTEMPORÁNEA RESONADOR PENDULAR MÉXICO	CICLO DE JAZZ JAZZ BAJO LAS ESTRELLAS MÉXICO 23:00 hrs.		TUYO QUEBEC, CANADA 19:00 hrs.	MIME OMNIBUS BEAUTES DIVINES QUEBEC, CANADA 19:00 hrs.
DOMINGO 21								MIME OMNIBUS BEAUTES DIVINES QUEBEC, CANADA 19:00 hrs.
LUNES 22							ORQUESTA BARROCA DE MONTREAL QUEBEC, CANADA	
MARTES 23							ORQUESTA DE CÁMARA MAYO ARGENTINA	TEATRO STUDIO T CUENTOS DE NIEBLA VERACRUZ-MÉXICO

# XXIX FESTIVAL INTERNACIONAL CERVANTINO

## para los nuevos tiempos

FOROS	Ex Hacienda San Gabriel de la Barrera	Pinacoteca del Templo de la Compañía	Basílica	Salón del Consejo Universitario	Patio de Relaciones Industriales	La Cancha de Cristal Universidad de Gto.	Teatro Manuel Doblado León	Teatro María Grever León
<b>HORARIO</b>	12:00	19:00	12:00	12:00		20:00	20:00	20:00
<b>MIÉRCOLES 24</b>					CICLO DE JAZZ STRINGS HAITI 21:30 hrs.	VERACRUZ, VERACRUZ MÉXICO		TEATRO STUDIO T CUENTOS DE NIEBLA VERACRUZ-MÉXICO
<b>JUEVES 25</b>					CICLO DE JAZZ STRINGS HAITI 21:30 hrs.	VERACRUZ, VERACRUZ MÉXICO	UX ONODANZA THE KITSCH (EN) AND THE X(EGGS) MÉXICO	
<b>VIERNES 26</b>			CICLO DE ÓRGANO MASSIMILIANO MUZZI ITALIA		CICLO DE JAZZ DON BUIROWS AUSTRALIA 23:00 hrs.	VERACRUZ, VERACRUZ MÉXICO	UX ONODANZA THE KITSCH (EN) AND THE X(EGGS) MÉXICO	TRIO ZURICH SUIZA
<b>SÁBADO 27</b>	ALACRÁN DEL CÁNTARO GUANAJUATO, MÉXICO				CICLO DE JAZZ DON BUIROWS AUSTRALIA 23:00 hrs.	VERACRUZ, VERACRUZ MÉXICO	NATIONAL TROUPE OF NIGERIA YEMOJA: A SPECTACLE OF PASSION NIGERIA 19:00 hrs.	BAJO LUZ EL BARÓN RAMPANTE MÉXICO 19:00 hrs.
<b>DOMINGO 28</b>						VERACRUZ, VERACRUZ MÉXICO	NATIONAL TROUPE OF NIGERIA YEMOJA: A SPECTACLE OF PASSION NIGERIA 19:00 hrs.	BAJO LUZ EL BARÓN RAMPANTE MÉXICO 19:00 hrs.

SIMBOLOGÍA: ÓPERA MÚSICA TEATRO DANZA PAIS REGIÓN INV. ESTADO INVITADO

BOLETOS A LA VENTA EN TICKET MASTER 5325-9000

### PROGRAMACIÓN CALLE Y NIÑOS

	San Fernando	Plaza Mexia Mora	Plaza de la Paz	Plaza Cervantes	Mina la Valenciana	Mina Rayas	Las Palomas	Escenarios de la Yerbabuena	Los pastos	Auditorio de la Univ. de Gto.	Plaza Los Ángeles
<b>MIÉRCOLES 10</b>					"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Casi Mimus 17:00 hrs. México	"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Teatro Lo'il Maxil de Chiapas					
<b>JUEVES 11</b>	Stalker Theatre Company 19:00 / 22:30 hrs.		Contar con Guanajuato Muestra Internacional de Narración Oral Escénica Mujeres con y sin sobresaltos 17:00 hrs. Cuba	A capa y espada México 17:00 hrs. México	"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Casi Mimus 17:00 hrs. México	"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Teatro Lo'il Maxil de Chiapas					
<b>VIERNES 12</b>	Stalker Theatre Company 19:00 / 22:30 hrs.		Muestra Internacional de Narración Oral Escénica Diversidades 17:00 hrs. México Noche de Fandango 21:00 hrs. México	Diviértete con el Quijote 17:00 hrs. México	"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Casi Mimus 17:00 hrs. México	"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Teatro Lo'il Maxil de Chiapas 17:30 hrs.				Teatro Infantil de Carlos Converso 18:00 hrs. México	
<b>SÁBADO 13</b>	Stalker Theatre Company 19:00 / 22:30 hrs.		Muestra Internacional de Narración Oral Escénica Cuentos y Carcajadas 17:00 hrs. Panamá	Diviértete con el Quijote 17:00 hrs. México	"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Casi Mimus 17:00 hrs. México	"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Teatro Lo'il Maxil de Chiapas 16:30 hrs. Pink Inc. 18:00 hrs.				Voladores de Papantla y danza de Guaguas 12:00 / 17:00 hrs. México	Teatro Infantil de Carlos Converso 12:00 hrs. México
<b>DOMINGO 14</b>	Teatro Tascabile di Bergamo 21:00 hrs. Italia	Diviértete con el Quijote 17:00 hrs. México			"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Casi Mimus 12:30 hrs. México	"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Pink Inc. 11:30 hrs. EU	"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Teatro Lo'il Maxil de Chiapas 11:30 hrs. México			Voladores de Papantla y danza de Guaguas 12:00 / 17:00 hrs. México	Teatro Infantil de Carlos Converso 12:00 hrs. México
<b>LUNES 15</b>	Teatro Tascabile di Bergamo 21:00 hrs. Italia										
<b>MARTES 16</b>	Teatro Tascabile di Bergamo 21:00 hrs. Italia	La Salamandre 21:00 hrs. Francia									
<b>MIÉRCOLES 17</b>	Teatro Tascabile di Bergamo 21:00 hrs. Italia	La Salamandre 21:00 hrs. Francia			"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Grupo local 16:30 hrs. Will Shaw	"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Pink Inc. 17:30 hrs. EU					"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Agostino & Co. 15:00 hrs. EU
<b>JUEVES 18</b>	Xarxa 21:00 hrs. España	La Salamandre 21:00 hrs. Francia		A capa y espada 17:00 hrs. México	"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Grupo local 16:30 hrs. Will Shaw	"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Pink Inc. 17:30 hrs. EU					"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Agostino & Co. 15:00 hrs. EU
<b>VIERNES 19</b>	Xarxa 21:00 hrs. España	La Salamandre 21:00 hrs. Francia	Noche de Son y Danzón 21:00 hrs. México	Diviértete con el Quijote 17:00 hrs. México	"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Grupo local 16:30h. Will Shaw 18:00 hrs.	"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Pink Inc. 17:30 hrs. EU	Balkanika Yugoslavia Legen Croacia Nabaříek Australia Los Atercioplados Colombia			Teatro dibujado de Praga 18:00 hrs. República Checa	"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Agostino & Co. 15:00 hrs. EU
<b>SÁBADO 20</b>	Xarxa 21:00 hrs. España	La Salamandre 21:00 hrs. Francia	"Strange Fruit " "Spheres" 22:30 hrs. Australia	Diviértete con el Quijote 17:00 hrs. México	"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Grupo local 6:30 hrs. Will Shaw 18:00 hrs.	"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Pink Inc. 17:30 hrs. EU	D.J. Borderline D.J. Smoke D.J. Unknown D.J. El Fusible D.J. Tobi Temple D.J. El México Terrestre D.J. Lina D.J. Martin Parra México 21:00 hrs.		Voladores de Papantla y danza de Guaguas 12:00 / 17:00 hrs. México	Títrii tábara México-Gto.	"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Agostino & Co. 15:00 hrs. EU
<b>DOMINGO 21</b>	Xarxa 21:00 hrs. España		"Strange Fruit " "Spheres" 22:30 hrs. Australia	Diviértete con el Quijote 17:00 hrs. México	"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Grupo local 11:30 hrs.		"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Will Shaw 11:30 hrs. México-EU		Voladores de Papantla y danza de Guaguas 12:00 / 17:00 hrs. México	Ludus Teatro 15:00 hrs. México-Gto. Teatro dibujado de Praga 2:00 y 17:00 hrs.	"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Agostino & Co. 10:00 hrs. EU
<b>LUNES 22</b>	Xarxa 21:00 hrs. España		"Strange Fruit " "Spheres" 22:30 hrs. Australia								
<b>MARTES 23</b>			"Strange Fruit " "Spheres" 22:30 hrs. Australia								
<b>MIÉRCOLES 24</b>					"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Hercule Flocon 17:00 hrs. Francia	"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Teatro ambulante 16:30 hrs. Marionetas Ge y Ma 18:00 hrs. México					
<b>JUEVES 25</b>	The Lunatics 21:00 hrs. Holanda	A capa y espada 17:00 hrs. México	Strange Fruit The Field 19:00 / 22:30 hrs. Australia		"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Hercule Flocon 17:00 hrs. Francia	"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Teatro ambulante 16:30 hrs. Marionetas Ge y Ma 18:00 hrs. México					
<b>VIERNES 26</b>	The Lunatics 21:00 hrs. Holanda	Diviértete con el Quijote 17:00 hrs. México	Noche de Huapango 21:00 hrs. México		"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Hercule Flocon 17:00 hrs. Francia	"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Teatro ambulante 16:30 hrs. Marionetas Ge y Ma 18:00 hrs. México	Strike Nueva Zelanda Te Vaka Nueva Zelanda Los de Abajo			Naivní Divadlo Liberec 18:00 hrs. República Checa	
<b>SÁBADO 27</b>	The Lunatics 21:00 hrs. Holanda	Diviértete con el Quijote 17:00 hrs. México	Strange Fruit The Field 19:00 / 22:30 hrs. Australia		"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Hercule Flocon 17:00 hrs. Francia	"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Teatro ambulante 16:30 hrs. Marionetas Ge y Ma 18:00 hrs. México	Cubaché México-Cuba Te Vaka Nueva Zelanda Jorinismos, Horyzson		Voladores de Papantla y danza de Guaguas 12:00 / 17:00 hrs. México	Naivní Divadlo Liberec 12:00 hrs. República Checa	
<b>DOMINGO 28</b>	The Lunatics 19:00 hrs. Holanda	Diviértete con el Quijote 17:00 hrs. México	Strange Fruit The Field 13:00 / 17:00 hrs. Australia		"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Hercule Flocon 11:30 hrs. Francia	"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Marionetas Ge y Ma 11:30 hrs. México	"Las minas y estas ruinas que ves" Teatro ambulante 11:30 hrs. México		Voladores de Papantla y danza de Guaguas 12:00 / 17:00 hrs. México	Naivní Divadlo Liberec 12:00 hrs. República Checa	

SIMBOLOGÍA: AUSTRALIA Y VERACRUZ TEATRO DE CALLE RITOS Y DANZAS PREHISPÁNICAS

Nota: Salida de la Estudiantina de la Universidad de Guanajuato 38 años rumbo a la Alhóndiga de Granaditas del Jardín de la Unión a las 21:00 hrs.



# Small Businesses

## The Long, Winding Road to Credit

Enrique Pino Hidalgo\*



Antonio Nava/AE

Micro-, small and medium-sized businesses provide most of Mexico's jobs.

In Mexico, only one-third of the work force has access to credit in the national financial system. This restriction is even greater for businesses. At the end of 2000, only 29 percent of Mexican businesses enjoyed some form of credit from any kind of banking institution. This is basically due to three factors: high interest rates, the banks' reluctance to grant loans and economic uncertainty. In any case, Mexican banks are not in sync with

the economic and financial modernization the country requires.

Six years after the 1994-1995 financial and productive crisis, the Mexican banking system has only just begun to reactivate credit lines to productive sectors. It is, however, far from satisfying the demand, and, above all, the financial needs of hundreds of thousands of micro-, small, and medium-sized entrepreneurs, whose companies provide the majority of the country's jobs. Obviously, the difficulties and challenges these businesses face are not reduced to getting resources from formal and informal financial markets.

In addition to scarce and expensive credit, they face problems in the commercialization of goods and services, the labyrinthine tax structure, accounting and management skills.

The federal government recently announced that it will take a three-pronged approach to reactivating credit to the country's productive sector:

- a) A broad restructuring of the development banking system;
- b) the reactivation of commercial credit; and
- c) a program of "popular" banking and micro-financing.

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Given the commercial banking system's inability or disinterest in supporting micro-businesses, the role of development banks and social banking institutions becomes more important. By their very nature, these institutions are more oriented to linking up with the real economy since their

tions accept contributions from their members with the aim of covering specific emergency expenditures the members may confront, such as funeral costs, emergency health care or other extraordinary expenses; they usually operate on a community, neighborhood or factory level.

Micro- and small businesses range all the way from women who make tacos on portable grills to craftsmen making wrought iron screens in workshops in Tlaquepaque, Jalisco, filling orders for stores in Manhattan.

objective is to promote and orient production by micro-, small and medium-sized companies, which numbered more than 3.5 million in 1996.

In Mexico, the "popular" banking system is made up of more than 600 institutions that take in resources from low- and medium-income households. As a sector, it is very heterogeneous and deals with different financing needs. For example, credit unions receive monies both from their members and government development banks that they channel as loans to productive projects. Savings and loan associations are local; they receive monies from their members and give loans only to members. Cooperatives, on the other hand, are usually part of a regional or state federation and receive savings from their participants and grant loans to both members and non-members with collateral.

Community savings associations are local organizations that receive monies from their members and grant them relatively small loans. And, finally, mutual aid or solidarity associa-

These financial institutions cover more than 2.5 million people. Despite its relative geographic and demographic dispersion, the social banking system represents less than 1 percent of all the assets of the commercial banking system. In any case, the potential and social and economic importance of these kinds of intermediaries is clear (see table on popular savings and credit).

This article will present a panorama of the new credit options for micro- and small businesses, as well as a few initial observations about the "Social Banking and Micro-credits Program" announced by President Fox and the "Micro-credit Program" promoted by the Mexico City government. As we shall see, these policies suffer from considerable limitations, both due to the overall amount earmarked for loans and the size of the loans granted. However, I think both programs will have a positive effect in the reactivation of micro-business credit markets that until now have been practically non-existent.

#### STRATIFICATION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF MEXICAN BUSINESSES

Mexico has different kinds of micro-, small and medium-sized businesses. In some cases, micro-businesses are classified as part of the informal economy and include self-employed workers and non-paid family-member workers. In other cases, they are classified as family businesses, the informal sector or even as part of the criminal layers of society.<sup>1</sup> They range all the way from women who make tacos on portable grills and sell them on the sidewalks outside their front doors at night to craftsmen making wrought iron screens in workshops in Tlaquepaque, Jalisco, filling orders for stores in Manhattan. The International Labor Organization's (ILO) more or less standard definition is based on the number of jobs they provide and the amount of annual sales or income they take in: micro-businesses have up to 6 employees (except in manufacturing where they can have up to 16), while small non-manufacturing businesses have from 7 to 15 employees.<sup>2</sup> In the category of micro-businesses, the definition includes:

*Family businesses*, which are less developed and operate in traditional industries. Frequently, they are a survival strategy and aim their production at the local market. Generally, their owners lack basic skills and instruments for competing in the marketplace.<sup>3</sup>

*Competitive micro-businesses*, which are more developed. Their owners know more about the market and institutions that provide advisory and other financial and non-financial services. They have permanent, waged workers whose labors are supplemented by temporary employees when the market demands it.

POPULAR/COMMUNITY BANKING SYSTEM (2000)				
Type of institution	Number	Members (1000s)	Savings regulated by law	Effectively regulated and supervised
Credit unions	32	19	Yes	Yes
Savings and loan associations	11	675	Yes	Yes
Cooperatives	157	1,081	Yes	No
Mutual aid associations	210	190	No	No
Community savings associations	247	633	No	No
Total	657	2,598		
<b>Source:</b> National Savings Bank (Patronato del Ahorro Nacional).				

*Micro-businesses articulated in consortia*, which are usually linked horizontally or vertically to larger companies and have reached significant levels of productivity, with their output aimed at export or national domestic markets.<sup>4</sup>

More generally speaking, the companies are characterized by the size of the wages they pay, production and sales levels, the value of fixed assets and, of course, the kind and amount of financing they require for setting up and getting started. These variables also act as indicators of entrepreneurial activity and certain behavior that corresponds to patterns associated with the size of the firms. From that point of view, conventional economic theory suggests that efficiency increases as companies move from being micro to medium-sized to large, but that is now a matter for debate.

In Mexico, micro- and small companies have the following characteristics:

- a) They operate with small-scale production and employ labor-intensive production techniques.

- b) They use technologies adapted to employees whose abilities and skills have been learned on the job or through informal educational systems outside formal schools.
- c) They are frequently owned by a single family and financing comes from their own pockets.

In our country, companies classified as micro-, small and medium-sized make up more than 95 percent of the total 2,187,000 establishments and provide more than 50 percent of all jobs.<sup>5</sup> The majority—55 percent—of these firms are in wholesale and retail trade.

In 1994, large corporations employed 3.374 million workers; medium-sized companies 1.518 million workers; small firms, 1.697 million; and micro-businesses, 2.76 million.

#### SELF-EMPLOYMENT COEXISTING WITH INTERMEDIATE PRODUCTION

Micro-businesses are extremely varied and encompass survival strategies linked

to self-employment as well as intermediate production units. They include different forms of commerce and services that can even generate greater income than the wages earned by some workers in formal sectors. For example, Doña Francisca, who sells newspapers from a pushcart on a corner of two major streets in southern Mexico City for 6 hours a day, may sell up to 150 papers a day. Making one peso per paper, she takes in at least twice the minimum wage, while a bookstore or stationary store employee usually only makes minimum wage for an 8-hour day. (Forty percent of Mexico's work force makes twice the minimum wage or less a day.)

In the Mexican economy, micro-businesses are a manifestation of the heterogeneity of entrepreneurship and a response to their owners' own need for employment. In reality, micro-businesses are a mechanism to substitute for the lack of jobs and/or a reaction to the low wages prevalent in the formal job market. Regardless of why they arise, the economic role and weight of these

companies is significant both because of their sheer number and the number of jobs they provide—almost 3 million nationwide.

Usually, micro-business owners have part of the capital they need to invest; for that reason they require financing and other kinds of support

Micro-businesses encompass survival strategies linked to self-employment as well as intermediate production units.

They include different forms of commerce and services that can generate greater income than the wages earned in formal sectors.

like accounting and merchandizing advice. Owners may very well not possess the characteristics of the “classic businessman (or woman)” (being creative, innovative, etc.), but they represent a social situation and a financial demand that cannot be ignored. In that sense, one segment of micro-firms are subsistence producers who have set up shop because of the economic and social effects of the economic crises and recessive adjustment programs that sharpen unemployment: this might include the woman—laid off from her job or unable to get a job in the formal market—who sells tacos on her doorstep. Prolonged recessions nourish the expansion of micro-businesses, while sustained economic recovery and growth would probably reincorporate many of their owners into the formal job market.

In this sector, we also find waged workers and professionals who decide to set up a business based on self-employment; for example, computer designers and/or technicians or accountants who work out of their homes.

These are also self-generated jobs, but with the tendency to a broader outlook in which their owners are closer to the “classical” entrepreneur, with their organizational capacity, business sense, etc. These are “medium-level businessmen.” From the sociological point of view, these economic actors have

been classified as “the entrepreneurial middle class.”<sup>6</sup>

In brief, in some cases, micro- and small businesses are subsistence strategies or temporary employment, while in other cases, they correspond to projects with more integral, long-range visions that require financial and technical support for their consolidation. These projects can become stable, successful productive units and, therefore, may be a viable alternative in an economy with high degrees of structural unemployment such as Mexico’s.

#### LOW CAPITAL INVESTMENT AND RESTRICTED ACCESS TO FINANCIAL MARKETS

It is interesting to note that even in developed economies, micro- and small businesses also face obstacles to their entry into bank financing systems. For example, in Canada, development banks are considered absolutely indispensable institutions for supporting

small businesses so that they can play an effective role in growth and social well-being. However, small businesses systematically face difficulties in getting loans since most of the commercial banks’ money goes to large corporations.<sup>7</sup>

To foster the long growth cycle that led to the Asian Pacific economies’ industrialization and modernization, their governments encouraged long-term programs that gave preferential credit to small companies. In South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, etc., state banks contributed decisively to industrialization by providing stable, long-term loans to small and medium-sized companies.<sup>8</sup> An illustrative example is the Financial Corporation for the Small Company in Japan. Founded in 1953, this corporation granted long-term loans to small and medium-sized companies to be used for acquiring installations and equipment.<sup>9</sup>

In the case of Mexico, micro- and small businesses generally have little capital and very limited or absolutely no access to financial markets. We should remember that since 1994, financial support for businesses has dropped 91 percent. Five years ago, in 1996, more than 136,000 companies were granted loans; by 2000, only 12,000 had been so favored.<sup>10</sup> This is crucial for understanding how these kinds of companies have developed novel mechanisms for financing and have built informal markets through intermediaries like community savings funds, local savings and loan associations and credit unions. The universe of micro-, small and medium-sized businesses is a natural sphere of action for financing by development institutions and the social banking system.

## GOVERNMENT LOAN PROGRAMS ARE INSUFFICIENT

Recently, the new Vicente Fox administration defined its strategic objective of strengthening production and employment, both very hard hit by the 1994-1995 financial and productive crisis. The administration defined five overall lines of action:

- 1) Access to credit;
- 2) deregulation;
- 3) support for exports;
- 4) the creation and strengthening of productive chains; and
- 5) coordination among government bodies linked to economic growth and development.

The government's emphasis on how urgent it is to reconstruct the fabric of production to make it more efficient, competitive and capable of stimulating economic growth is noticeable in its diagnosis of the situation. To achieve this end, it gives important space to the performance of the country's micro-, small and medium-sized companies.

In that context, President Fox announced the "Social Bank and Micro-credits" program, with its initial fund of 1.2 billion pesos, of which 800 million pesos come from the National Fund for the Support of Solidarity Companies (Fonaes), and the rest from the Ministries of Economy and Finance. It is hoped that the loans will go out to more than a million companies and will ensure the self-employment of 1.3 million Mexicans.

To that end, the federal government has established the prerequisite that the companies operating in the informal sector of the economy must

make the decision to become part of the formal sector. This will give them a "boarding pass" for loans. In addition, they will be given access to vital input and other governmental support like discounts in utility rates, special tax brackets and access to lists of government suppliers.

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To implement the program, the federal government will be using the community savings associations and credit unions as its main conduit for granting loans, particularly to the *changarros* or "hole-in-the-wall" businesses that feed Mexico's extensive informal economy. The program has been given the Hollywood-esque slogan of "Own your own dream."

The country's chambers of commerce and industry do not share Mr. Fox's proverbial optimism about the whole project and have pointed to the high cost of the loans. In effect, micro-financing agencies —mainly community savings associations and credit unions— will be given the funds at an interest rate determined by federal treasury certificate (Cetes) earnings (which came to 15 percent at the beginning of April 2001) plus one point. The loans will be made to the companies themselves at from 2.5 to 6 percent a month,<sup>11</sup> which makes for more than 30 percent a year in interest, making the cost of these loans equivalent to that of commercial banks.

The advantage of the program, however, is that it practically eliminates the collateral requirement, allowing access to formal financing to firms that would not otherwise have it. It also would free micro- and small businessmen from the loan sharks in the informal credit market, who loan money

at 5 percent a day! (A typical example of this are the loans available at Mexico City's central market.)

Mexico City's Federal District government is attempting to present its own alternative to President Fox's proposals: it has also announced a "Micro-credit Program" of 100 million pesos for the year 2001. This program's stated objectives are to increase the number of jobs and turn micro-companies into small companies, contributing in the long term to the consolidation of the city's patrimony. Mexico City Mayor Andrés Manuel López Obrador's proposal is to earmark 70 million pesos for micro-credits and 30 million for small businesses.

Most of the loans will not exceed 2,500 pesos (about U.S.\$250) and will go to the small family and subsistence businesses that proliferate in the informal economy. The repayment periods are extremely short: 16 weeks with a fixed weekly rate of 0.7 percent, or 33.6 percent annually. It is true, therefore, that the program has very high financing costs, putting it on the same level

as the commercial banking system, but these tiny businesses have no access to those kinds of loans. Loan candidates will be all those people who were previously already organized, whose groups will act as co-signers.

An important chapter in the federal government's financial reform is the creation of a single legal framework for the intermediaries of the "popular" banking system. Currently, the lack of legislation has meant that the 600 intermediaries in this banking sector have no security deposits to guarantee the savings of thousands of Mexicans who put their money into these institutions.<sup>12</sup> The legislation approved in May by the Congress requires such deposits. Since many savings associations do not have the wherewithal to comply with this stipulation, the Finance Ministry will begin the sector's reorganization with a first step: a one-time Finance Ministry endowment to create the savings association insurance fund. In addition, the new legislation establishes a framework for the prudential regulation and supervision that will guarantee depositors' savings. This is particularly important given the recent failure of several of these associations due to fraud that left thousands of depositors with nothing.

## CONCLUSIONS

The two new loan programs mentioned have the merit of recognizing the existence and the economic contribution of micro-, small and medium-sized companies. Nevertheless, their scope is very limited in two ways. First, the overall sum they will be offering the small business community is very limited: Fox's 1.2 billion-peso program

represents less than 1 percent of the 140 billion-peso increase in revenues that the federal government hopes for with its controversial "distributive fiscal reform." Secondly, the costs of the loans are quite high.

However, we can anticipate that the micro-credits will have positive effects given the total absence of other resources available to micro- and small businesses. At the same time, the programs will stimulate Mexico's credit markets in general by showing that the projects financed are viable. Micro- and small businesses will be able to show that they are profitable and, as such, should be eligible for commercial credit.

Probably the most important factor in the whole plan will be the change in legislation on the social banking system which will facilitate its reorganization as an alternative for savings and loans for the enormous world of micro-businesses and for large sectors of low-income Mexican working people. **MM**

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> J. J. Thomas, *Informal Economic Activity* (London: Ed. Harvester, 1992).

<sup>2</sup> According to Mexico's Trade and Industry Ministry, large companies employ more than 250 workers and have net annual sales of 2,010 times the daily minimum wage or more. A medium-sized company has from 16 to 249 employees and annual sales of less than 2,010 times the daily minimum wage. Micro-businesses employ up to 15 workers and annual sales for up to 110 times the minimum wage (SECOFI, *Compendio Estadístico de la Industria Nacional* [México City, 1997]). According to the National Micro-business Survey, micro-businesses are those who work in goods, trade, services, construction and transportation that

employ up to six workers, except in manufacturing, where they can have up to 16 employees (INEGI and STPS, *Encuesta Nacional de Micronegocios* [Mexico City: INEGI and STPS, 1996]).

<sup>3</sup> ILO, *Integración del sector informal al proceso de modernización. La legislación laboral y su impacto en la microempresa* (Lima: ILO, August 1997).

<sup>4</sup> An interesting case is the subcontracting to networks of small and micro-businesses around Tijuana's maquiladora industry, capable of stimulating interindustrial cooperation and entrepreneurial learning. Ariel Moctezuma and Alejandro Mungaray, "Subcontratación entre maquiladoras y pequeñas empresas en México," *Comercio Exterior* vol. 42, no. 2 (Mexico City), February 1997.

<sup>5</sup> This estimation is arrived at on the basis of counting all the companies not considered "large," which is why the figure covers micro-, small and medium-sized businesses. See the interesting study sponsored by Coparmex, BDEA and FUNDES Mexico, *El fenómeno de la empresa media mexicana en estadísticas* (Mexico City: Ed. FUNDES México, 1998).

<sup>6</sup> Coparmex, BDEA and FUNDES Mexico, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> Donald Layne, "Políticas financieras nacionales para la promoción de la pequeña empresa" (paper read at the International Seminar on the Role of the Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Company in the Process of Globalization of the World Economy, Mexico City, March 1993).

<sup>8</sup> Kato Kimihiko, "Esquemas de financiamiento para la pequeña y mediana empresa en el Japón" (paper read at the International Seminar on the Role of the Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Company in the Process of Globalization of the World Economy, Mexico City, 1993).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> "Reactivaremos las uniones de crédito: Nafin," *El Universal* (Mexico City), 28 March 2001.

<sup>11</sup> "Tasas de interés quitan el sueño," *El Financiero* (Mexico City), 21 February 2001.

<sup>12</sup> "En una mar de incertidumbre nace programa de microcréditos," *El Financiero* (Mexico City), 21 February 2001.

# Through the Rearview Mirror Reflections on Ethnography from The Edge of Fiction

Kathy Taylor\*



Antonio Nava/AE

Mexican taxi drivers: amateur ethnographers of their own culture.

What do Mexican taxis have in common with the Internet? Instead of a virtual chat room, imagine a kind of mobile discursive space where you can step in and out of a collective conversation about the topics of the day. And the server is the taxi driver himself (“*su servidor*”), an amateur ethnographer of his own culture and self-appointed storyteller. Sound like a novel?

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Some years ago I realized that whenever I took a taxi in Mexico, I would learn more about what was going on locally and even nationally than from any other single source. Sometimes the conversations were so engaging that it was hard to get out of the taxi. Once I had tapped the driver’s wealth of information and opinion, it wasn’t easy to stop the flow, and I would find myself still listening at each stage of trying to exit the cab—even standing at the open door to hear the end of the story. I was especially taken with taxi drivers’ gift for storytelling and the love of

conversation that often overpowered the urgency of looking for work and keeping the taxi moving. And so began my relationship with taxis and the ethnographic research for my bilingual book, *Por el espejo retrovisor/Through the Rearview Mirror*, which at some point during the process of writing turned into a novel.

The book was published last fall in Mexico, but I am continually reminded that it isn’t really finished. Nor is it really mine. In Mexico it seems that everyone has had experience with taxis, and most have their own stories to add

to the collection. I especially enjoy telling taxi drivers about the book to see what reaction I will get. They are almost always eager to tell me their stories, and usually do so with great style and passion. In the words of one *taxista*:

“I’ve been driving taxis for 23 years. I have lived some incredible stories. If I told them, they would leave you with your mouth open and your eyes wide. If I were to write a journal, for example, people just wouldn’t believe it. They would say it was a novel.”

There are special moments of encounter  
in a taxi —moments that are so vivid that they  
become suspended in a kind of fictional bubble that can be  
replayed and reread in the mind as if outside of time.

In both its ethnographic and fictional aspects, this book was and clearly still is a collective project. Its themes invoke universal yet profoundly personal experiences of conversation and storytelling from within the anonymous but intimate space of the taxi.

Everyone talks about the danger of hailing taxis on the street, especially the green and white “*bochos*” that are the most economical and prevalent. I have heard all kinds of stories and I generally warn my students not to take them. However, I often find myself in a position where I need to get somewhere quickly and these taxis are the easiest solution at hand. I have never had a bad experience with them, nor even failed to have a great conversation. Recently I got in one of these taxis with my 83-year-old mother, and thought to myself that this could be the time that would justify all those admonitions. Statistically it was bound to hap-

pen sometime. But we were soon involved in a wonderful conversation about the meaning of life and religion, and I mentioned my book. Suddenly the car broke down and the driver managed to pull to the side of the busy six-lane highway. After getting out and inspecting the engine, he came back shaking his head to give us the news. “I’m so very sorry, *señora*, but you will have to take another taxi,” he said as he helped us out of the car. He then hurried to flag down a taxi and led us across the street, holding the

traffic while we passed. After making sure that we were settled, he shook his head and apologized again, adding “What a pity, we were having such a wonderful conversation.” He seemed to have forgotten his stalled car, the heavy traffic, and the general struggle to make ends meet in his disappointment over the loss of the conversation.

There are special moments of encounter in a taxi —moments that are so vivid that they become suspended in a kind of fictional bubble that can be replayed and reread in the mind as if outside of time. Although the conversation is moving through the very real traffic and topics of daily life, these “freeze-frame” moments seem to envelop it all —the research, the writing, the casual conversation about the book—in a larger fictional field; as though it were all part of a novel. On one recent occasion I had again taken my chances with a “*bocho*” taxi, although not with-

out precautions. As I got in, a Mexican friend of mine said loudly not to worry, that she had written down the driver’s ID number. The *taxista* smiled at me in the mirror and sighed. “Ah, *señora*, we all have to pay for the sins of a few, no?” That began a warm and animated conversation without need of an introduction. He talked of his life as a taxi driver and I told him about my book. He was fascinated and began to tell some of his own stories that could have been included. Suddenly he paused to look at me in the mirror. “What is the title of your book, *señora*?” he asked. “*Through the Rearview Mirror*,” I answered smiling. His eyes lit up as we met in the mirror with the shared understanding that both of us were part of a larger story. The threads of connection between us were stronger at that moment than our obvious differences. I have learned from these encounters to take seriously the phrase on the side mirror, *Objects in the mirror are closer than they appear*.

But perhaps I should start at the beginning of the story. The project began in the early 1990s as an ethnographic one, a study of the lives of taxi drivers in a small provincial city in central Mexico. Three students went with me to Mexico and we talked to many different groups related to the taxi business. We took a lot of taxis. Through casual conversations we heard their opinions on the topics of the day and collected their stories. Over the next several years I returned to Mexico often and the conversations continued. As time went on, the stories began to take on the shape of fiction and the project grew organically as a disciplinary hybrid, fertilized by my interests in current theoretical discussions of representing culture in both literature



and ethnography. In recent decades, there has been rising interest in writing from the border regions between traditional disciplines. The socio-literature of testimonial narrative has found itself alongside oral history, journalistic and ethnographic fiction and other collaborative interdisciplinary texts. The multiple perspectives, fragmented narrative and metafictional self-examination that characterize much of postmodern writing raise questions about who should tell the stories, with what authority and for whom. The process of writing is revealed in these texts and the reader is invited to participate in the construction of the narrative. Even in formal academic writing the challenge has been not only to write the definitive interpretation of the text or object studied, but also to examine the influence of one's own perspective in the process.

These multiple visions and meta-commentary have become common markers of postmodern literature and have also impacted ethnographic writing. The essays in *Writing Culture*,<sup>1</sup> for instance, look at ethnographic discourse through the lens of literary textual analysis, developing new models of postmodern ethnography. Kamala Visweswaran writes more recently in her *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography*<sup>2</sup> about the close ties between literary forms and anthropological writing; discussing both the fictions of ethnography and the idea of fiction as ethnography. In her essay "Betrayal," she uses a dramaturgical form as a way of revealing and even subverting relations of power by exposing their unfolding in the telling of the story. The writer is on stage with the actors, constructing and deconstructing her text as we read.

The focus of traditional ethnography was to interpret another culture, to translate it for the understanding and elucidation of the modern world. To "organize the chaotic reality" as Bronislaw Malinowski said, "subordinating it to the laws of science."<sup>3</sup> Postmodern ethnography, in the words of Stephen Tyler, privileges discourse and dialogue over text and monologue, and emphasizes the cooperative and collaborative nature of the study over the ideology of the transcendental observer. The ethnographer tries to

There seems to be a natural forum in the taxi business for exchange of information and opinions, a kind of collective conversation that keeps its finger on the pulse of the times.

understand another culture through the eyes and experiences of the people of that culture. The story that is written is a dialogue between the vision from within the culture of the "informants" and the observations from without by the ethnographer. The text that emerges is a weaving of the story of a culture, the story of the experience of the ethnographer in writing the text, and the reflection of the identity of the latter on the text. It is a discursive experience. James Clifford suggests that culture is a relational concept, "an inscription of communicative processes that exist historically between subjects in relations of power."<sup>4</sup> It is a montage of voices and conversations, a continually present dialogue. Instead of fixed points of observing and being observed, it is a discursive space that is mobile and relational.

A symbol *par excellence* of this mobile discursive space is the ubiquitous

taxi that is found in the very center of daily life in many parts of Latin America. Since many Mexicans don't own cars, they must rely heavily on public transportation, and taxis make up as much as half of the traffic on the street in towns such as the one represented in the book. As storytellers and guides to the cultural landscape, taxi drivers often become important mediators of information and opinion. There seems to be a natural forum in the taxi business for exchange of information and opinion, a kind of collective conversa-

tion that keeps its finger on the pulse of the times and the continual construction of Mexican identities. Often leading multiple lives, *taxistas* represent many walks of life, and working as they do at the crossroads of a culture, they become entangled in the unfolding dramas of all sectors of society. Perhaps also a mariachi, teacher, *campesino*, mechanic, butcher, former gymnast, soccer coach, fisherman, or small businessman, for example, they may become involved in adventures of romantic intrigue, kidnapping, political corruption, prostitution, robbery, as well as performing small acts of kindness and heroism in the daily life of their community. For some, driving a taxi is a transition, a temporary substitute for something else that has failed. Or perhaps a way to make a little extra money on the side during a lean period. For others, it is a way of life, a constant, at times desperate, strug-

gle to survive. “Times are hard, *señora*”, I heard over and over, followed by the familiar refrain “*Esto ya no es negocio*” (You can’t make money at this anymore). A few seem to enjoy a reasonably good income and they appreciate the freedom their job offers them. Whatever their experience, *taxistas* are there in the middle of modern life; observing, listening, interpreting and telling stories.

Over a number of years I collected stories, conversations, opinions and cultural interpretations from my behind-

“encounters the other in relation to itself, while seeing itself as other.”<sup>5</sup> Thus, in postmodern or self-reflective ethnography, the rhetoric of objectivity of traditional ethnography gives way to autobiography and ironic self-portrait.

This reflective experience of writing ethnography can be personally profound. One sees one’s own otherness reflected in the eyes of the other. I am other because they see me as such. The look of the other defines us, as Sartre said. But I am also other be-

We recognize (or re-cognize) ourselves in the mirror of another culture. Through the intimate dialogue with that culture, subject and object are confused and the writer becomes a character in her own work.

the-wheel ethnographic partners. Not only did I quickly become aware of their positions as ethnographers within their own culture, I also realized that I was often their captive informant as well as a traveling reader of their stories. When faced with the question of how to write my book, it became clear that I would not be able to leave the back seat of the taxi. The ethnographer/author doubles as both director of the play and actor in it, seeing her own image reflected in the rearview mirror as she tries to write about the other.

Frederic Jameson writes about a kind of self-observation in the process of interpreting another culture. As we struggle to understand the other, we end up interpreting our own culture and the position from which we are observing. The text comments on its own commentary. Clifford also refers to this metacommentary in his discussion of reflective ethnography, which

cause I am no longer the same person as before. The encounter transforms me and I leave my own fingerprints on the situation that I study. Vincent Crapanzano discusses the paradox of the ethnographer like that of the translator, of trying to make the foreign familiar, while still preserving its very foreignness. But what happens when the foreign ceases to seem foreign? When the ethnographer finds her own place in the conversations and complex relationships of another culture, does she stop translating? Or does she begin to translate herself? In Mexico I have discovered an “other” in myself, a part of me that has a different voice and sees a different image in the mirror. “We are all others,” wrote a friend of mine in a song. “*Todos somos otros — los otros, nos-otros, vos-otros...*”<sup>6</sup> We study the other to discover our own otherness. We recognize (or re-cognize) ourselves in the mirror of another cul-

ture. Through the intimate dialogue with that culture, subject and object are confused and the writer becomes a character in her own work.

While riding around in taxis researching the book, I couldn’t escape the feeling of being in a postmodern novel infused with the magical-literary quality of daily life in Mexico. Everything was always already there; the fragmentation and multivocality of the text, the mobile discursive perspectives, the absent center signified by the mirror in which the reader’s image is reflected, the commodification of everything, the encounter with the other and continued re-fashioning of identity against the backdrop of late capitalist economic relations. I wrote about what I saw and heard and the stories I was told. I also imagined other stories. But my imagination could never outdo the wild inventions of reality in Mexico. And my informants/literary characters moved easily back and forth across the hazy border between ethnography and fiction so as to confound even the author. A few real-life characters inserted themselves into the story. One such character, already legendary in the town, hardly needed literary embellishment to make her “well-rounded” or “fleshed out.” In the early stages of the project, when I had three students working with me on the research, the two male students went with a Mexican friend of mine to a late night hangout in the red light district of the town, known as the “*Zona de tolerancia*”. (There is even a bus route called “*foco rojo*” —“red light”— whose final destination is the famous “Las Vegas” of the town.) A popular place for taxi drivers to gather after work, we were told in no uncertain terms that the only women who entered there were “going to

work”, so we decided that only the men would go. When they entered the bar, a woman, who they later learned was the senior prostitute, quickly greeted them. “Did you come to interview me?” She asks them. “Everyone does, you know.” So what could I do? I had no choice but to let her into my book.

After the book was published, another real-life character (a mariachi-taxista) walked into a store to buy a copy of the book, asking for a discount because he was in it. I would not be too surprised if Zapata himself appeared to claim his very real part in the story. Some *taxistas* have since told me that I left an important story out of the book, the one about the phantom passenger. As the story goes, along a certain stretch of road leading out of town a mysterious

woman stops taxis to catch a ride. Later when the driver turns to talk to her, she has vanished. Whether or not she is “real” is less important to them than the truth of the story, of which they were all convinced. I have often felt like that phantom passenger, imagining my way in and out of taxis and blurring the lines of definition between the actual and the possible, the text and the pretext. The book has grown beyond its covers now, to be revised and retold with each new encounter in a taxi. I find it hard to resist raising my hand to catch just one more ride, one more conversation through the rearview mirror. The reflections in that mirror help us see pictures of who we are, framed against the backdrop of where we’re going. Our realities and our dreams are reflected in

the eyes of others. We see them as they see us, our eyes meeting in the mirror in the very act of seeing. **MM**

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds., *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).
- <sup>2</sup> Kamala Visweswaran, *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).
- <sup>3</sup> Bronislaw Malinowski as quoted in Trinh Min-ha, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Post-coloniality and Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), p. 56.
- <sup>4</sup> James Clifford, “Partial Truths”, James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds., op. cit., p. 15.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.
- <sup>6</sup> Gray Cox, “Todos somos otros”, 1990, unpublished song.

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# Against Discrimination

Jesús Rodríguez Zepeda\*



Octavio Nave/AE

Discrimination against the physically challenged is not explicitly prohibited in the Constitution.

Discrimination is an asymmetrical relationship of dominance, that is, a political relationship. Any strategy for reducing discriminatory practices in Mexico must start off from that simple, often underestimated, fact. Therefore, any means of fighting against the different forms of discrimination in Mexico must first comply with the obvious but essential prerequisite of recognizing that it exists, that it is widespread and that it is part of

the most deeply rooted representations among the population.

The fact that discrimination is practiced in those areas that scholars consider “private” or “non-public,” like the work place or the family, creates the illusion that its reduction should be sought mainly through education or the transformation of value systems, without involving legal and political action by the state. That illusion has solid reasons for existing. In contrast with forms of behavior that damage people’s physical integrity, property or legitimate economic expectations, discriminatory acts seem to remain in the terrain of sym-

bolic relationships, subjective attitudes or even in the area of freedom of expression and opinion. The central issue, then, is not whether discrimination is a fantasy, but whether in public life it frequently becomes “invisible” given the legal order defined by liberal abstract universalism.

This is particularly true in the Mexican case, in which the Constitution expressly prohibits all differentiated treatment for citizens by public bodies in the definition of their individual and citizens’ rights.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, with the exception of what Article 4 stipulates—that is, the multicultural nature of

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the Mexican nation and the equality of men and women— other forms of discrimination, like those based on ethnic origin, being physically challenged or sexual preference, are not explicitly prohibited. For that reason, acts of discrimination seem to be above all practices of civil society whose nature makes them very difficult not only to prosecute, but even to formulate as crimes. In Mexico, if the differences in treatment that implies disparaging vulnerable social groups are not prohibited in legislation, discriminatory practices will only be seen as forms of cultural backwardness or community inertia, but not as serious deficiencies in the legal-political order.

Even though including discrimination in the law is a demand for justice, the problems arising out of the broad gamut of discriminatory practices cannot be overcome if legal action against them is limited to the formulation of “negative” rights, that is, the right to protection vis-à-vis the action of other individuals or the state. Together with these “negative” protections, a strategy of affirmative action must be established by the state for the development of the basic capacities of social groups vulnerable to discrimination.

For that reason, the fight against discrimination must be taken on as a variation of what Amartya Sen has conceptualized as the struggle for freedom. According to Sen, “Attention is thus paid particularly to the expansion of the ‘capabilities’ of persons to lead the kind of lives they value—and have reason to value. These capabilities can be enhanced by public policy, but also, on the other side, the direction of public policy can be influenced by the effective use of participatory capabilities by the public.”<sup>2</sup> Government pro-

motion of the abilities of vulnerable groups makes it possible to protect them against society’s undervaluing them and also—and this is probably more important—to equip them as citizens with a sense of self-respect, able in time to demand the respect of

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others for their rights. In this sense, affirmative action must lead to the empowerment of these groups. In this way, discrimination must be made visible in our legislation not only to punish it, but also to compensate for the damage suffered by groups subjected to it and to prevent further discriminatory practices through both education and the fear of legal penalty.

An example that contrasts with the Mexican case but is revealing in terms of the political nature of discrimination is the civil rights struggle in the United States in the 1960s and part of the 1970s. There, explicitly citing discrimination in the law in some states opened the way for the Supreme Court to come to very concrete deci-

sions that led to a political process of social, educational and employment integration that had consequences that are still felt and that opposed the practices, traditions and values of some specific communities.

For that reason, even though it is true that the different forms of discrimination are intertwined with historically established cultural practices that are difficult to change, they should be seen above all as a series of political practices that can be fought through legislation, education and the socialization of the values of reciprocity and mutual recognition. No single strategy will be effective for attacking discriminatory practices. But, since it is fundamentally a political problem, it is necessary to change the legal framework, not only so it can show up discrimination, but also to allow for the state to protect vulnerable groups.

Acts of discrimination are direct violations of basic human rights. Article 1 of the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, signed in 1948, clearly stipulates the universality of freedom, equality and human dignity.<sup>3</sup> If we define discrimination as differentiated treatment that tramples human dignity even if hidden behind formal respect for freedoms and legal or political equality, we would have to say that a society does not offer real protection for an individual’s inalienable rights as long as it permits discriminatory practices to occur.

In practice, differentiated treatment based on discrimination sooner or later leads to limitations on fundamental freedoms and unequal political and legal treatment, just as the absence of civil rights and legal and political equality foments discrimination against the most vulnerable groups in society. Dis-

crimination is part of the spiral of authoritarian domination since it tends to stigmatize social groups, specific practices and world views and to lead to the cancellation of their rights and civic, legal and political guarantees. The converse is equally true: the existence of politically authoritarian societies is the ideal breeding ground for discriminatory practices.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has become an insufficient basis upon which to defend the demand for the respect for human dignity. As a model, it was based, of course, on the triumvirate of rights (civil, political and social) that characterized the model of social and democratic rule of law that reached its normative zenith in the 1980s. Nevertheless, the demands by ethnic groups, women, the differently enabled and those with non-conventional sexual orientations that they be recognized has made the fight against discrimination a kind of contemporary version of the civil rights movement. That is how Nicola Matteucci sees it, for example, when she says, "It is significant that, while the trend in our century and the last [speaking of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries] seems dominated by the struggle for social rights, we are now seeing conversely an upsurge in the battle for civil rights."<sup>4</sup>

This judgement is acceptable as long as we remember that a great part of this new battle is for a new generation of civil rights, such as the recognition of non-conventional sexual orientations or ecological rights.

In that sense, any debate in Mexico on a constitutional amendment expressly prohibiting discriminatory acts should take into account the fact that the United Nations is on the brink of for-



Retirees demonstrating outside the Chamber of Deputies, September 12, 2000.

mulating its own declaration on discrimination. This is a good political opportunity to make our legal steps forward in this matter coincide with the explicit, militant support of an international charter of the right to equal treatment and redress for harm caused by discrimination. In September 2001, the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance will be held in South Africa. The conference will probably produce a universal declaration conceiving the protection against discrimination as a human right that requires protection and promotion by United Nations member states.

The ideal scenario would be that public debate in Mexico about constitutional protection against the different forms of discrimination establish its priorities, local tasks and arguments based on our national experience and that, therefore, its conclusions be defended in the UN conference. In this way the oft-repeated experience of the Mexican government accepting inter-

national conventions without the nation's political forces really making their topics a priority could be avoided.

A political discussion and even a constitutional amendment prior to the international debate on discrimination would reverse the usual order of events with regard to the treaties Mexico has signed in the past. In the first place, that kind of prior discussion would establish the political and legal conditions needed to ensure that the international agreement would not just be a general declaration with no specific consequences, preparing its application in the different laws it would have to be included in. In the second place, it would make Mexico's signing the convention a demand based on domestic policy and not, as is often the case, a kind of external imposition whose only actors seem to be the diplomats familiar with it. And finally, making domestic and international law jibe would give greater normative strength to the fight to end the different forms of discrimination in Mexico.



In a symbolic ceremony outside Mexico City's Fine Arts Palace, gay and lesbian couples were "married," February 14, 2001.

Attempting to create a constitutional amendment and different regulatory laws dealing with discrimination is a way of defending the idea that a just political system must preserve the rights of minorities from abuse by the majority. This idea was formulated almost simultaneously by Alexis de Tocqueville and John Stuart Mill in the mid-nineteenth century. Mill offered up an argument that could be applied with almost no modification to the current Mexican situation:

The notion that people have no need to limit their power over themselves might seem axiomatic, when popular government was a thing only dreamed about....In time, however, a democratic republic came to occupy a large portion of the earth's surface....The will of the people, moreover, practically means the will of the most numerous or the most active part of the people, the majority....The people, consequently, may desire to oppress a part of their number, and precautions are as much need-

ed against this as against any other abuse of power.<sup>5</sup>

The achievement of a democratic regimen necessarily poses the problem that the majority may try to use its now recognized strength to dominate the minorities. The establishment of constitutional limits on the action of the majority and the corresponding special protections for minorities are the only way of avoiding the risk of a "tyranny of the majority." Even in a democracy, the problem does not lie so much in the majorities' trodding on the minorities' rights because of inertia or to further vested interests, but in the depth of passionate feelings like racial hatred, homophobia or sexism.<sup>6</sup>

Discrimination is fed by social passions long nurtured in a nation's political culture, passions like racism, sexism, the rejection of non-conventional sexual identities and a disproportionate sense of the majority groups' self-worth. That is why educational and cultural efforts and all attempts to convince

will be insufficient in reducing discrimination if they are not regulated and guided by a profound legal and political reform capable of dealing with it for what it is: a violation of fundamental human rights. ■■■

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> For example, Article 1 of the Constitution guarantees protection for everyone without exception; Articles 6 and 7 guarantee freedom of expression and of the press; Article 24, religious freedom and freedom of conscience; Articles 13 and those that follow, the rights guaranteed under the rule of law; and Article 35, citizens' political rights, such as the right to vote and be voted into office. Article 4 is a special case in that it explicitly states the special protection for the languages, customs, and forms of organization of indigenous peoples. Nevertheless, until now, this article has not been regulated in law to ensure its implementation in specific circumstances and, of course, to punish its not being respected.

<sup>2</sup> Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Anchor Books, 1999), p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> The article reads, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." Article 7 explicitly prohibits discrimination, saying, "All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination."

<sup>4</sup> Nicola Matteucci, "Derechos del hombre," N. Matteucci and N. Bobbio, eds., *Diccionario de política*, vol. 1 (Mexico City: Siglo XXI Editores, 1987), p. 516.

<sup>5</sup> John Stuart Mill, "On Liberty," *On Liberty and Other Essays* (Oxford: World's Classics, Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 7-8.

<sup>6</sup> This idea that the attacks by majorities on minorities are guided in many cases by passions and not only by interests appears in Jon Elster, "Majority Rule and Individual Rights," Stephen Shute and Susan Hurley, eds., *On Human Rights, The Oxford Amnesty Lectures 1993* (New York: Basic Books, 1993).

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# Late Twentieth Century Migration *Poblanos* in New York

Luz María Valdés\*



Rodolfo Bravo

The last two decades of the twentieth century saw thousands of *poblanos*—people from the state of Puebla—arrive in New York. Little by little, the Big Apple took in people born in Chinantla, Chiautla, Piaxtla, Ahuehuetitla, Tulcingo del Valle, Chitela, Tecomatlan, Tehuitzingo and many, many more towns from Puebla and surrounding states.

I would like to reflect here about this population flow. While it began in the 1940s, its expansion changed life in the places of origin and day-to-day existence in destinations like the state of New York and several counties in New Jersey and Connecticut.

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The road from the Mixtec area of Puebla to New York is long and dangerous. You have to cross most of Mexico, stay for a while in the border city where you have a contact (usually Tijuana), pay a large sum of money in dollars and take your chances, risking your life to cross the border, trying to avoid immigration officials, to illegally enter the United States. And all this, in the hope of finding in New York the good fortune so ardently desired by many and so harshly won by so few.

Oral history has it that a single family started out on this route in the late 1930s, but it was almost 40 years later when migration of *poblanos* to New York became a clear social, demographic, economic and political trend. All of this has been dealt with by experts in

the question like Roberto Smith of Columbia University—whom I met in New York—who has been studying this migration for many years.

U.S. census data shows how New York has become a top priority destination for Mexicans. The census, in addition to reporting the size of the population, its socio-demographic characteristics and territorial distribution, also has political and economic functions, as Víctor Arriaga says, “determining the number of congress-persons from each state, the number of votes in the Electoral College and the apportionment of almost U.S.\$38 billion [in 1990] in federal funding to the states and cities for education, health and housing.”<sup>1</sup>

An item in the census gives us the rate of inclusion of Mexicans when each

person who identifies him- or herself as Mexican is automatically included in the group designated as “Hispanics,” where their origin is specified.

The 1990 census registered 22,354,059 Hispanics in the United States, 13,495,938, or 60 percent, of whom were of Mexican origin.<sup>2</sup> The 2000 census registered 39.2 million Hispanics. If the proportion remains the same, this would mean that today there are 22 million persons of Mexican origin or descent in the United States, that is, the equivalent of all the Hispanics in 1990. If we then add in the undocumented migrants—not included in the census—and the natural population increase in recent years, we would get a much higher number, possibly close to 30 million.

According to the 1970 census, New York was not a favorite destination of Mexican migrants, who were concentrated mainly in California (41 percent) and Texas (35 percent), and to a lesser extent in Arizona (5 percent), Illinois (3.5 percent), New Mexico (2.6 percent) Colorado (2.3 percent), Michigan (1.4 percent), Washington (0.7 percent) and Florida (0.5 percent).

However, between 1970 and 1980, migration to New York increased, a trend which has continued until today. In 1980, there were 39,000 persons of Mexican origin in New York State, while ten years later, the 1990 census registers 93,244. This makes for an average yearly increase of 8.8 percent. Just as New York became a new destination for Mexicans, in the 1980s there was also an increase in states like Oregon, Nevada and Kansas. Only Nevada registered a higher rate of increase in that decade. In 1980, then, the Mexican population in the United States began to be redistributed due to a change in migratory flows.

### Jobs in Mexico and New York and Educational Levels

	Mexico	New York	Junior High School Level or More
Managers	1	1	1
Professionals	6	1	1
Technicians	9	5	4
Office clerks	3	5	4
Semi-skilled services	15	138	80
Agricultural jobs	8	16	17
Commerce and artisans	37	26	12
Non-skilled agricultural, commerce and service jobs	121	94	53
Armed forces	6		
Students	99	4	—
Housewives	21	21	—
Total	326	311	172

**Source:** Taken from the 1991 survey on employment done by the author.

Today, according to the 2000 census, New York has 2,867,583 Hispanics, or 15 percent of the state population; in 1990, they represented only 12 percent. New Jersey registered 1,117,191 Hispanics in 2000, 13.3 percent of the population, whereas in 1990, they constituted only 9.5 percent. If the proportion of Mexicans among the Hispanic population remains the same as it was in 1990, this means that there are now 114,703 Mexicans there, a figure that shows an important underestimation of this group in that part of the country, which may be due to the fact that, to protect themselves, undocumented migrants tend to avoid being counted in the census.

In 1992, I witnessed the return of 73 undocumented workers who were deported to Tijuana by plane by immigration officials. That was a Thursday; the following Monday, 69 of these people reported for work in the U.S.

#### RESEARCH ON THIS MIGRATORY FLOW

For more detailed information on the migratory flows, we have data from my 1991 research project which was gathered from two sources: first, Mexico's Consulate General office in New York which gave me access to almost 2,000 personal files of people who requested proof of nationality so they could return to Mexico; and second, a month-long survey done among 340 individuals in different parts of the city.

#### COMPOSITION OF THE SAMPLE

In the early 1990s, the presence of Mexicans in the whole city became more and more visible, prompting research into the ones entering New York illegally.

During my research, I observed that services are in the hands of Mexicans,

particularly domestic and gardening services. In a great many vegetable, fruit and flower shops, the sales personnel are Mexican and the owners, Korean. Corner flower vendors who exhibited their wares in supermarket carts were Mexican, as well as dry cleaners' employees and waiters in innumerable restaurants, from the most up-scale to the informal. There are even places with veritable reproductions of a Mexican neighborhood diner—complete with jukebox, folding metal tables advertising a Mexican beer company and plastic tablecloths—where you can order Mexican soft drinks like Jarritos or Orange Crush and Pepsi-Cola bottled by Embotelladora La Nostalgia, from Chicago, Illinois. You can also meet barmen from the Metropolitan Opera House who offer to introduce you to Plácido Domingo and see Mexican street vendors offering *churrros*, tacos and chewing gum. And around Mexican Independence Day, Mexican flags abound.

#### METHODOLOGY

This whole spectrum of Mexican colors and aromas was basic for designing the survey that aimed at determining the place of origin and demographic, social and economic profile of these Mexicans. The survey was applied in metropolitan New York at the Mexican consulate, where people who want to return to Mexico go to get the papers they need to do so, places where baseball, basketball and soccer are played, Hispanic churches, Mexican restaurants and vegetable shops.

The documents in the Mexican consulate indicated that 45 percent of those who requested proof of nation-

ality were from Puebla, 13 percent from Oaxaca, 12 percent from Mexico City's Federal District, 7.5 percent from Guerrero, 4.9 percent from Morelos, 4.4 percent from the State of Mexico, 3.1 percent from Michoacán and 1.5 percent from Tlaxcala. Seventy percent of these migrants were between the ages of 20 and 39, and 46 percent between the ages of 20 and 29. Ninety-two percent of the migrants were of peasant origin, mainly children of agricultural laborers, although they had a wide variety of jobs in the United States: salesperson, accounting clerks, carpenters, welders, auto body mechanics, primary school teachers, businessmen, soldiers, artisans, painters, watchmakers and itinerant singers.

Of those surveyed, 47 percent came from Puebla; 15 percent, from Mexico City's Federal District; 8 percent from Guerrero, 7 percent from Oaxaca; 6 percent from Morelos; 4 percent from the State of Mexico and 3.5 percent from Michoacán. Also, 63 percent were between the ages of 20 and 29 and 74 percent were men.

The survey also indicated that 70 percent of the migrants entered the U.S. through Tijuana, while others came in through Nogales, Laredo, Agua Prieta or Mexicali. The average cost was U.S.\$867, which included crossing the border and the air fare from Los Angeles or San Diego to New York. Only 8.1 percent arrived through the international airport in New York; that is, this is the number who had their immigration papers in order. Seven percent traveled with their spouse or children, while 43 percent traveled alone.

A central factor feeding migration are established social networks: when asked why they had chosen New York,

63 percent of those canvased said they had relatives there and 17 percent responded that they had a job. However, 80 percent came looking for work. They also said that in New York, immigration officials treat Mexicans better than elsewhere.

In terms of housing, 5 percent paid less than U.S.\$500 a month rent; 56 percent, between U.S.\$500 and U.S.\$999; and 7.5 percent, between U.S.\$1,000 and U.S.\$1,500. Because rents are so high, apartments are often shared by more than two people so that the monthly rent per person ranges from U.S.\$200 to U.S.\$500. Group solidarity in matters of housing, seeking employment and leisure time is one of the characteristics of the Mexican population in New York.

Educational levels were high: only 10.6 percent of those interviewed had not finished primary school, while 17 percent had a complete primary school education; 11.8 percent had not concluded junior high school, but 31.8 percent had; 21.4 percent had finished high school or had some college; and 3.2 percent had graduated from college.

People from the state of Puebla generally had a lower educational level, but more personal contacts and less difficulty in finding a job. ■■■

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Víctor Arriaga, "Demografía y participación política en la sociedad estadounidense," *Censos y elecciones* (Mexico City), October-December 1990.

<sup>2</sup> United States Department of Commerce, *Census Bureau Releases 1990. Census Counts on Hispanic Population Groups* (Washington, D.C.), 12 June 1991.

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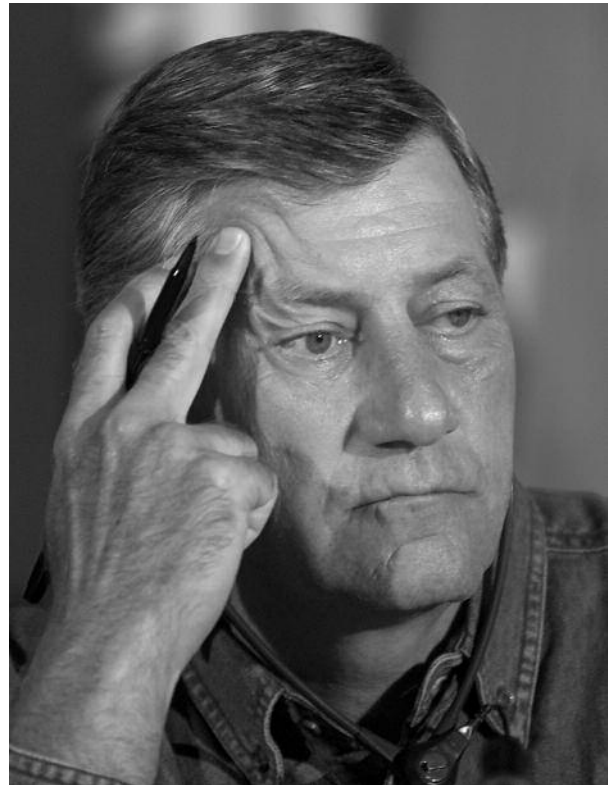
# “Welcome to Ralph’s World”

## Neo-Conservatism Takes Hold in Canada

Kelly O’Donnell\*



Ralph Klein



Mike Harris

In Canada, the influence of neo-conservatism, a dominant trend in today’s world, needs to be studied carefully. Alberta and Ontario are two provinces where the neo-conservative agenda dominates, promoted by their respective premiers, Ralph Klein and Mike Harris. While Albertans are gen-

erally relatively accepting of the Klein government’s right-wing policies, Ontarians are not as welcoming of Harris’. Although they are the first two provinces to suffer major provincial cutbacks and both have been swept by ideological changes based on right-wing mentalities, different political cultures in the two provinces and the leadership styles of their premiers account for differentiated public responses to policy. Ontario’s massive public opposition to

government cuts and restructuring is due to a failure in Mike Harris’ leadership, and to a political culture that supports organized interests, which can mobilize protests against the provincial government. Alberta’s comparative lack of opposition to the Klein government’s policies is attributable to his phenomenal popular support and to the province’s right-wing political culture that abhors dissent and public criticism of authority.

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In this article, I will examine neo-conservatism in the Canadian context. I shall discuss in the recent re-election of Ralph Klein in Alberta and his leadership, comparing it to Mike Harris' and then look at the implications for Canada as a whole.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE RECENT ALBERTA ELECTION

"We believe those that would vote Liberal or NDP don't deserve to live in Alberta" read a sign in Winfield, Alberta. Such a sign might be considered

Last year the Klein government introduced Alberta's Health Care Protection Act, which allows for private medical clinics in the province.

The act is a perfect example of the move toward privatization.

somewhat undemocratic in other Canadian provinces. However, you must keep in mind that this is Alberta, known as the Texas of Canada. Democracy and liberty are not primary concerns in a province where the premier was quoted saying, "I believe in free speech, as long as you say the right thing."

The Klein Conservatives just won a landslide majority in Alberta, garnering 74 of 83 seats in the provincial legislature "Welcome to Ralph's World" is how Klein began his recent victory speech. The fact that they won their third term is not surprising considering that Alberta has been a virtual one-party state for the last 30 years. (Dictatorships often conduct elections in order to legitimize their regimes, do they not?) What is surprising, however, is that the rest of Canada seems to be following in the Klein government's

footsteps. Canada is experiencing a dramatic shift in ideology at both the provincial and federal levels, edging further and further toward the right of the political spectrum. Alberta's premier, known to most Albertans as Ralph, is a highly adept politician. His re-election demonstrates the growing strength of neo-conservatism in Canada. Alberta, under his government, was the revolutionary province that began this well-publicized fiscally conservative crusade to eliminate government deficits and debt without raising taxes. Ontario, under the Harris

government, soon followed in the footsteps of Klein's "revolution" with its own Common Sense Revolution.

For the purposes of this article, the terms right-wing and neo-conservative are understood as the same. They include, but are not limited to, a fiscally conservative attitude that adopts the corporate agenda and social conservatism. Neo-conservatives seek less government intervention in society and less government in general and thus include trends like privatization of government services on their agenda. Other authors call this approach to government and economic policy neo-liberal, but I am using the term neo-conservative to describe the new way of doing politics more comprehensively. I refer to it as neo-conservative because it is a clear departure from a more traditional Conservative (Tory) approach to politics in Canada.

According to the United Nations, Canada has one of highest standards of living in the world, which many Canadians equate with our social welfare system. However, Canada is now moving away from its traditional welfare state policies. Last year the Klein government introduced Alberta's Health Care Protection Act, which allows for private medical clinics in the province. The act is a perfect example of the move toward privatization. Neo-conservatives seek to minimize the role of the welfare state in society. This is reflected by policy that reduces welfare benefits, education and health care budgets and the number of public sector employees. When examining how the two provinces reacted to their neo-conservative governments, it is important to consider how these regimes came about. Leadership is a key factor in provincial politics —particularly in this equation. While Klein and Harris differ in some ways, their similarities are quite remarkable. Both have often been greatly underestimated. While they lack much formal education, Klein and Harris have not only risen to high political office, but have managed to instigate neo-conservative "revolutions" in their respective provinces. Their leadership styles and popularity, or lack thereof, and the concept of populism will also be addressed in this article. In both cases, the relationship between leader and electorate has had important ramifications for the success of the neo-conservative agenda.

KLEIN

"Lauded by the *Wall Street Journal*, *Baron's*, *The New York Times*, and the *Globe and Mail*, awarded by both the Fraser

Institute and the National Citizens' Coalition, poster-boy for *Saturday Night* and *Maclean's* magazines, Ralph Klein—Canada's 'original' Newt Gingrich—is big news."<sup>2</sup> The Premier of Alberta is well known in Canada and around the world. His government's reforms are seen as innovative and he is viewed as a revolutionary. His political success is quite remarkable considering his modest beginnings.

Klein has not lived what one would consider a normal politician's life. First of all, he is not formally educated. He dropped out of high school and held a number of different jobs before entering politics, including working at a college, public relations and journalism. As a journalist he worked on radio and then on television as a reporter. Many people knew of Klein the journalist, and that position is often credited with allowing him to become mayor of Calgary, Alberta, Canada's fastest growing city, for three consecutive terms from 1980 to 1989. He then moved to provincial politics and has since won three elections.

Klein's unusual career path is just one of the elements that makes him a unique leader. He has achieved an amazing feat for a politician: "the public sees [him] as 'nonpolitical'."<sup>3</sup> This fact is mostly due to Klein's personality, or more specifically, his public persona. He appears to be an ordinary guy. "The image of Ralph Klein as 'ordinary' is deeply embedded in the minds of Albertans as one of his greatest assets."<sup>4</sup>

Klein is also very aware of the effect of the media; a natural entertainer, he likes attention and uses it to his advantage. As mayor of Calgary, Klein displayed his media savvy in his "ability to manipulate ... particularly front-line re-

porters and columnists, [which] stemmed from his own experiences in TV journalism."<sup>5</sup>

Television is a useful tool in politics; Klein's use of this medium is part of what makes him such a successful leader. "He practise[s] political leadership based largely on communication."<sup>6</sup> His record demonstrates that he doesn't have a clear ideology. He determines what ideology is important, what ideology will keep him in power. Today Klein is known as the premier who fights debt and deficits. He is credited as being the "poster boy" for

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fiscal conservatism. This is despite the fact that as mayor, Klein left Calgary with a \$1.6 billion debt. It was only after his move to provincial politics that he "became a born-again fiscal conservative."<sup>7</sup> Television allows Klein to project the image that he wants to, for he is a convincing actor. Hence, his record is often forgotten by Albertans. Television is all about image, and Klein is adept at controlling his.

One of Klein's most useful leadership techniques is his annual televised provincial address. He makes his speech to Albertans across the (relatively) unmediated airwaves. His talk is rehearsed, and there are no political adversaries nearby to refute or question his statements. Klein uses a private television station, despite the fact that the public-owned station has reportedly offered him time, but the public sta-

tion would also have offered time to his opponents. After watching an address, the electorate would find it difficult not to believe that Klein is their friend who is doing what is right for the people of Alberta. In his latest provincial address, Klein was "interviewed" by a reporter. In fact, the reporter—if you can call him that—asked Klein predetermined questions and the premier read the answers off a teleprompter. The reporter had obviously been given the questions ahead of time. The address is not usually in the form of an interview; this alternate format was perhaps

meant to lend it some credibility. However, for anyone who paid close attention to the broadcast, it was a farce.

Klein uses his televised addresses to simplify issues. He once used a "family" metaphor to discuss the province's economy. The province was to be viewed as a family household. Alberta was described as getting its "financial house in order."<sup>8</sup> In this way, Klein simplified complex issues into easy-to-understand more familiar ones. Furthermore, this metaphor allowed Klein to justify his government's policies: "Once Albertans had come to accept these stories of the spend-thrift family, it was easy to convince them that cutbacks to public services were not just a necessary evil, but good medicine."<sup>9</sup> These addresses provided an unmediated avenue for Klein to tell Albertans what he wanted them to be-

lieve. Klein's public status as ordinary person allowed him to tell Albertans about the difficult times ahead: "Only an 'ordinary guy' like Ralph Klein could brag about cutting people off welfare, and get away with it."<sup>10</sup> Television is indeed one of Klein's greatest leadership devices.

Many analysts believe that Klein draws some of his strength from being underestimated.<sup>11</sup> This underestimation may stem from his ordinary guy image. Amazingly, "Faults that would



have destroyed almost every politician... are tolerated with Ralph."<sup>12</sup>

Albertans generally tend to separate Klein from his government's policies. This is what most likely accounts for his continued popularity despite his government's harsh cut-backs. Klein's 1993 victory was impressive, given the electorate's dissatisfaction with his predecessor, Don Getty. Since then, Klein's popularity has remained very high and only dipped during the debate surrounding Alberta's Health Care Protection Act. While there has been some public disapproval of certain policies, this was at no particular political cost to Klein.<sup>13</sup> "After two years of 'revolution' in Alberta, opinion polls and the general political climate in the province show[ed] that the effective discourse of the Klein government [had]

been extraordinarily convincing."<sup>14</sup> Klein remains very popular today. His "government resonates with the radical new conservatism"<sup>15</sup> in Canada, and particularly in Alberta. It will have eliminated the provincial debt before any other province. In doing so, it has set a template for other provincial governments, such as the Harris regime in Ontario. Klein has a unique style of leadership, which includes his public persona, his use of television to convey his message, his populist



airs, his corporatism, and his scapegoating. He has managed to maintain power in Alberta through popular support, despite his government's harsh cutbacks. Consequently, he is accurately described as "the most adept politician in Canada today."<sup>16</sup>

His "followers are personally and devoutly loyal to him."<sup>17</sup> This is where the idea of populism comes into question. Many analysts debate whether or not Klein is a populist. While his government is certainly not a classical populist government, it does have some populist traits. Before discussing them, the term "populist" should be clarified. Populism is defined as: 1) a mass political movement 2) based on an imagined personal (i.e., unmediated) relationship between leaders and followers 3) mobilized around symbols and tra-

ditions congruent with the popular culture 4) which expresses a group's sense of threat 5) arising from powerful external elements.<sup>18</sup> It is widely accepted that populism played an important role in Alberta's political history. The question is, however, is this still true today?

The fact is that the Klein government owes its popular appeal largely to its leader, as does Alberta's Progressive Conservative Party. The provincial government took to describing itself as



Ralph's Team. The elections have largely been based around Klein himself. In one campaign, billboards all over the province read, "He Listens, He Cares" and featured a picture of Klein's friendly face. In focusing on Klein's so-called listening and caring attitude, the government "incorporated the rhetoric of listening and responsiveness into the restructuring program, arguing that its key initiatives have been shaped by Albertans themselves."<sup>19</sup>

It is debatable whether or not Alberta was in need of Klein's heroism. His government, it is argued, exaggerated the province's financial situation in 1993 in order to create a crisis that it could use to justify its policies. "The Klein government has worked hard to rewrite history, portraying the [previous] Getty government as extravagant



spenders who drove Alberta to the brink of financial ruin... [due to] out-of-control spending."<sup>20</sup> This was the claim at the center of the Klein government's regime.<sup>21</sup> This populist technique created legitimacy for its policies. "Through careful maneuvering, the Klein government has achieved astonishing political success"<sup>22</sup> for, at the end of 1996, "Albertans ha[d] been convinced that the cutbacks of Ralph Klein's government were necessary to conquer runaway public spending."<sup>23</sup>



In addition to blaming the previous administration, Klein's government blamed numerous other factors for the province's financial "crisis," including special interest groups, such as public unions. Avoiding responsibility for one's actions by focusing the blame elsewhere, scape-goating, is often quite efficacious when it comes to politics. Furthermore, Klein defines those who accept his reforms as "ordinary Albertans"; this is a politically loaded term implying that there are Albertans who are abnormal simply because they do not support his government's policies. Klein uses terms like "communists," "whiners," and "left-wing nuts" to describe those who oppose his policies.<sup>24</sup> By focusing the debate on an "us vs. them" mentality, the Klein government has avoided a lot of criticism.

While the Klein administration uses populist techniques, it is not a genuinely populist regime because "its corporatist practices are at variance with classic populism."<sup>25</sup> Corporatism is "a system of organizing functional interests and influencing public policy that involves the incorporation into society of 'members' (individuals, families, firms, or various groups) through a limited number of monopolistic, differentiated, hierarchical and involuntary associations."<sup>26</sup> Klein's govern-



ment is accurately described as "right-wing and corporatist, although certainly not without 'popular' support."<sup>27</sup> It has even been stated that Klein "clearly ran a government in partnership with business —government as a joint venture."<sup>28</sup>

The Klein government is known for its attempts to quell its opposition in the province. This is not a populist tactic. Furthermore, "a government which claims to listen to the people, has instead centralized power, curtailed civil democracy and privatized public life."<sup>29</sup> Some analysts argue that, "Klein and the people around him reinvented the structure of public discussion"<sup>30</sup> in Alberta. This was illustrated by the government's 1993 "round table" discussion. In a seemingly populist move, the government sought public input

regarding policy decisions. However, the round table discussion was a facade to legitimize the government's actions. After all, it was the Klein government that controlled both the agenda and who participated in the talks.<sup>31</sup> In addition, the government turned the results from the education round tables "inside out."<sup>32</sup> "The report suggested little support for cutting kindergarten funding in half or for creating charter schools. Half a year later, the government went ahead with both. They still claimed



their reforms were legitimate reflections of the opinions of Albertans as gathered in the round tables."<sup>33</sup> Thus, while the Klein government seemed to be practicing populism, it was a facade used to justify its policies. Albertans generally tend to separate Klein from his government's policies and this is what most likely accounts for his continued popularity despite his government's harsh cutbacks.

Klein is described in a variety of ways. "To his supporters, he is the ebullient maverick of the Canadian northwest frontier, a cunning and savvy loner who is reestablishing the private values and public mores of rural self-reliance and urban entrepreneurship."<sup>34</sup> To his opponents, he is the leader who is ushering in a new form of government that threatens the welfare

state that many Canadians value. Klein is either “loved or hated [by Albertans]... there is no middle ground.”<sup>35</sup>

#### HARRIS

Not unlike Klein, Ontario’s Mike Harris is described as a “down-homey guy” who is “remarkably determined.”<sup>36</sup> Characterized as “an outsider geographically, professionally and politically,”<sup>37</sup> he dropped out of college and drifted between jobs for fifteen years. His

career path is quite unusual for a premier of Ontario. He taught elementary-school math and science; he was a golf-pro; he served as a trustee on a school board; and eventually he chaired the board. “This background is particularly interesting in light of Harris’ later antipathy towards public education and government funding.”<sup>38</sup>

gary mayor, he oversaw huge spending increases and was widely suspected to have Liberal sympathies. Mike Harris, by contrast, is a lifelong small-government Tory who drafted his Common Sense Revolution 18 months before the 1995 election that brought him to power.<sup>41</sup> Nonetheless, he has followed Klein’s lead. Harris admits that “while [his] plan was tailored to Ontario’s needs, the province needed the kind of leadership which Ralph Klein had shown in Alberta,”<sup>42</sup> and that the “blueprint” for change is in

Being an outsider to the party elite  
is another similarity between Harris and Klein.

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party organizations.

Alberta.<sup>43</sup> There are numerous similarities between Harris and Klein. Harris’ public persona is that of an ordinary guy, just like Klein’s. Critics suggest that while “he work[s] hard at creating an image as a populist... the real Mike Harris [is] not quite as folksy as he appear[s].”<sup>44</sup> Harris’ populism is quite questionable, despite the fact that his government was recently reelected.

Harris is criticized by his opponents for not listening to his electorate and his government is described as authoritarian, not populist. “The right-wing ideologue and populist are evident in the scripted moments, while the rigid authoritarian with the petty streak appears when the premier strays from his game plan.”<sup>45</sup> Thus, “If people disagree... with his agenda, so be it. They [are] free to protest, and he [is] free to ignore

them.”<sup>46</sup> Moreover, “For Mike Harris, consultation seemed to mean speaking with those who agreed with his views.”<sup>47</sup> That lack of communication with the electorate has been demonstrated often during the Harris years and is perhaps a motivating factor in the electorate’s various responses to the administration. It is difficult to defend the premier’s claim to populism when one considers the evidence against it.

Harris is often described as a political outsider because of his middle-class origins and the fact that he comes from the political periphery of Northern Ontario. Being an outsider to the party elite is another similarity between Harris and Klein. Despite this disadvantage, however, both men managed to seize the leadership of established, mainstream party organizations with long histories in government. Even more remarkable is that they did so despite considerable opposition from their party’s traditional elites. In a sense, Klein and Harris hijacked their own parties, something they could do only because their parties were temporarily in trouble, out of power and out of favor with the voters.<sup>48</sup> Unlike Klein, Harris is not widely regarded as having populist tendencies despite their similar outsider status. The Harris government, unlike Klein’s, has faced a lot of public criticism. Critics blame the confrontation in Ontario on “the premier’s abrasive personality and his government’s authoritarian management style.”<sup>49</sup> At the heart of the problem “is the premier himself”;<sup>50</sup> this is the opposite from Alberta. The Harris regime seems to be plagued by confrontation. Some critics blame the speed with which the Harris government implemented reforms, under-

scored by Ontario's "megaweek" of legislative changes. During that week it was claimed that: "Mike Harris [might] surpass Ralph Klein as Canada's most revolutionary premier."<sup>51</sup> While this claim has not been substantiated, Harris' speed of reform is noteworthy.

"Harris has always maintained it was the agenda of the 'Common Sense Revolution,' not his personality or his government's style of managing public affairs, that produced four years of confrontation, violent protest and occasional riots in the streets of normally sedate Ontario."<sup>52</sup> However, polls have demonstrated that people are not satisfied with Harris' leadership; "the character of the man in charge... is directly responsible for the problems his government has had in implementing its agenda."<sup>53</sup> Harris, say his critics, is not living up to the expectations that Ontario voters have of their political elites.<sup>54</sup>

Harris resembles Klein insofar as he has loyal supporters. Klein, however, has not experienced the same level of personal attacks as Ontario's premier. Mike Harris has endured endless assaults on his character. He was even nicknamed "Chainsaw Mike" by Bob Rae, the former premier of Ontario. The level of public outrage demonstrated in Ontario is in part attributable to certain campaign promises that the Harris government broke: it stated that it would not touch health care and education, and once elected, proceeded to do so. Ironically, Harris once said, "I think it's reasonable that politicians who campaign in a direction or on a platform for things that are within their control, that they ought to resign or go back to the people if they in fact are going to change their minds."<sup>55</sup>

He has obviously changed his stance on the issue. This is in direct contrast to Klein in Alberta who is so confident in his recent record that he campaigns using the slogan, "He keeps his promises." Harris blames all opposition to his agenda on special interest groups. Just as Klein has done in Alberta, Harris is attempting to create an "us vs. them" mentality in Ontario. This kind of leadership technique, however, does not seem to be working as well as it did in Alberta; the evidence is in the sheer number of Onta-

Harris is attempting to create an "us vs. them" mentality in Ontario. This kind of leadership technique is not working; the evidence is in the sheer numbers of Ontarians who have participated in the protests.

rians who have participated in the protests. This can perhaps be explained by Ontario's political culture: Ontario has a long tradition of group rights and unions, and other organized interests which are much more powerful in Ontario than in union-wary Alberta.

By contrast, Alberta does not have a history of collective protest, making it easier for Klein to successfully blame any opposition on special interest groups. Thus, political culture accounts for the success of Klein's strategy in individualistic Alberta, and for the relative failure of that Harris leadership technique.

While Harris has faced massive protests, the fact remains that he continues to lead Ontario. His government was reelected in 1999. He received 45 percent of the vote. Most of his supporters were upper-middle class and urban.

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR CANADA

"While Alberta is not alone in embracing 'new right' fiscal policies... it is notable for the pace and intensity of its approach, making it an illuminating and timely case study in the Canadian context."<sup>56</sup> The Klein government has "used its crusade against the deficit... [to initiate] a government program of social engineering, the re-ordering of societal institutions and priorities to fit a particular ideological mould that is virtually without precedent in

recent Canadian history."<sup>57</sup> While six other Canadian provinces were projecting balanced budgets for the 1995-1996 year, these accomplishments were overshadowed by Alberta.<sup>58</sup> Alberta is now regarded as a model for neo-conservatism in Canada and elsewhere around the world. The province is viewed as a trend setter. "It isn't Ontario that is leading Canada down this path towards a market based morality... It's Ralph Klein's Alberta."<sup>59</sup> Ontario is following in Alberta's footsteps.

The evidence suggests that: "Alberta's greatest export used to be its oil; now, as Ontario attests, it's Klein's model of how to remake government."<sup>60</sup> Moreover, "the unexpected 1995 election of Conservative Premier Mike Harris in Ontario and the reelections of two other budget-balancing premiers, Tory Gary Filmon in Manitoba and Social Dem-

ocratic Roy Romanow in Saskatchewan, indicate... that the sustained popularity of Premier Klein's tough, austere government is more than just ...quirky Alberta."<sup>61</sup> The success of the Klein revolution illustrates a shift in ideology: "Until recently, only the lunatic fringe of Canadian politics has voiced support for the extreme right-wing ideas that underlie the pathology of American life... With the Klein government, however, these ideas have at last found a Trojan Horse for entering into Canadian public discourse and

the center of the political spectrum and moving to the right. Neo-conservatism has the potential to profoundly influence Canadian politics. It already dominates the agendas of the provincial governments in two of Canada's most important provinces.

#### CONCLUSION

Despite the different reactions to neo-conservatism in Alberta and Ontario, an important fact remains: both

Both Alberta and Ontario have demonstrated authoritarian tendencies. Neo-conservatism has the potential to profoundly influence Canadian politics. It already dominates two of Canada's most important provinces.

policy, and thereby fundamentally changing the nature of Canada."<sup>62</sup> Canada's current status as a welfare state is in jeopardy, as is its sovereignty and democracy.

Both Alberta and Ontario have demonstrated authoritarian tendencies that threaten democracy. These tendencies include hurrying bills through the legislature to avoid debate, attempting to by-pass the legislature's authority by asking it to pre-approve cabinet decisions on blank sections of legislation and discouraging public input by ignoring certain portions of their respective electorates. These trends are quite disconcerting and have the potential to influence more than just Alberta and Ontario as other provincial governments begin to follow the Klein government's lead. Canadian ideology is shifting away from

the Klein and Harris governments were reelected. The right-wing mentality has most assuredly begun to permeate into the rest of Canada at both the provincial and federal levels. The question is, therefore, not if neo-conservatism will influence Canadian politics more pervasively, but when it will, and how the rest of the Canadian public will react to it. **MM**

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Special thanks to Dr. Julián Castro Rea for his input on this article.

<sup>2</sup> Trevor Harrison and Gordon Laxer, "Introduction," *The Trojan Horse*, Trevor Harrison and Gordon Laxer, eds. (Montreal: Black Rose Books Ltd., 1995), p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Joanne Helmer, "Redefining Normal: Life in the New Alberta," *The Trojan Horse*, Trevor Harrison and Gordon Laxer, eds. (Montreal: Black Rose Books Ltd., 1995), p. 72.

<sup>4</sup> Gillian Steward, "Klein the Chameleon," in *The Trojan Horse*, op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>6</sup> Marc Lisac, *The Klein Revolution* (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1993), p. 78.

<sup>7</sup> Steward, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>8</sup> Kevin Taft, *Shredding the Public Interest: Ralph Klein and 25 Years of One-Party Government* (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press/The Parkland Institute, 1997), pp. 85-86.

<sup>9</sup> Idem.

<sup>10</sup> Steward, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>11</sup> Frank Dabbs, *Ralph Klein: A Maverick Life* (Vancouver: Greystone Books, 1995), p. 174.

<sup>12</sup> Barry Cooper, *The Klein Achievement* (Toronto: University of Toronto, Faculty of Management, Center for Public Management, 1996), p. 46.

<sup>13</sup> Claude Denis, "Government Can Do Whatever It Wants," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 32 (3), August 1995, p. 370.

<sup>14</sup> Idem.

<sup>15</sup> Dabbs, op. cit., p. 173.

<sup>16</sup> Trevor Harrison, "Making the Trains Run on Time: Corporatism in Alberta," *The Trojan Horse*, op.cit., p. 123.

<sup>17</sup> Trevor Harrison, "The Changing Face of Prairie Politics: Populism in Alberta," *Prairie Forum* no. 1 (spring 2000), p. 111.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 108.

<sup>19</sup> Karen D. Hughes et al., "Public Attitudes Towards Budget Cuts in Alberta: Biting the Bullet or Feeling the Pain?," *Canadian Public Policy* 22 (3), September 1996, p. 271.

<sup>20</sup> Taft, op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>21</sup> Idem.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> Idem.

<sup>24</sup> Harrison, "The Changing Face of Prairie Politics: Populism in Alberta," p. 117.

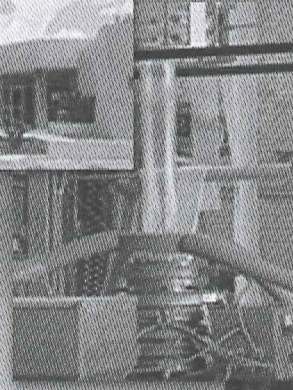
<sup>25</sup> Idem.

- <sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 118.
- <sup>27</sup> Trevor Harrison, "Making the Trains Run on Time: Corporatism in Alberta," op. cit., p. 119.
- <sup>28</sup> Lisac, op. cit., p. 152.
- <sup>29</sup> Harrison and Laxer, op. cit., p. 3.
- <sup>30</sup> Lisac, op. cit., p. 143.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 144.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 145.
- <sup>33</sup> Idem.
- <sup>34</sup> Dabbs, op. cit., p. 173.
- <sup>35</sup> Idem.
- <sup>36</sup> Anthony Wilson-Smith, "The Mike Harris School of Politics," *Maclean's*, vol. 110 (45) 10 November 1997, p. 9.
- <sup>37</sup> Brooke Jeffrey, *Hard Right Turn: The New Face of Neo-Conservatism in Canada* (Toronto: Harper Collins Publishers Ltd., 1995), p. 152.
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 153.
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 157.
- <sup>40</sup> Wilson-Smith, op. cit., p. 9.
- <sup>41</sup> Colby Cosh, "A Megaweek to remember: Mike Harris may surpass Ralph Klein as Canada's most revolutionary premier," *Alberta Report* vol. 24 (8), 3 February 1997, p. 11.
- <sup>42</sup> Christina Blizzard, *Right Turn: How the Tories Took Ontario* (Toronto, Dandurn Press Ltd., 1995), p. 95.
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 96.
- <sup>44</sup> Jeffrey, op. cit., p. 156.
- <sup>45</sup> Ibid., pp. 156-157.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 214.
- <sup>47</sup> Idem.
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 440.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 152.
- <sup>50</sup> Idem.
- <sup>51</sup> Cosh, op. cit., p. 10.
- <sup>52</sup> Jeffrey, op. cit., p. 151.
- <sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 149.
- <sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 150.
- <sup>55</sup> Mr. Silly's Friends, *Quotations from Chainsaw Mike* (Toronto: ECW Press, 1997), p. 62.
- <sup>56</sup> Hugues et al., op. cit., p. 270.
- <sup>57</sup> Idem.
- <sup>58</sup> Melville L. McMillan, *Leading the way or missing the mark? The Klein government fiscal plan* (Edmonton: University of Alberta, Western Center for Economic Research, 1996), p. 2.
- <sup>59</sup> Harrison and Laxer, op. cit., p. 1.
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid, p. 2.
- <sup>61</sup> Dabbs, op. cit., p. ix.
- <sup>62</sup> Harrison and Laxer, op. cit., p. 4.

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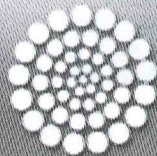


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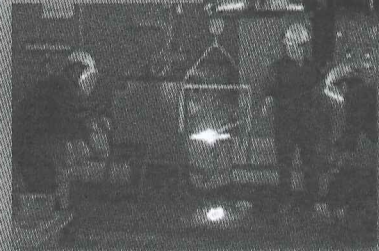
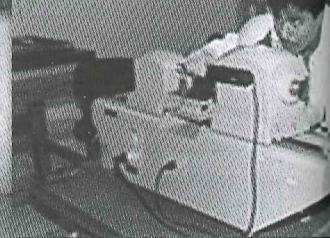
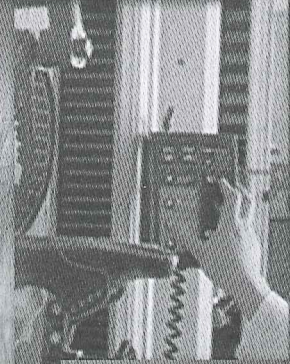
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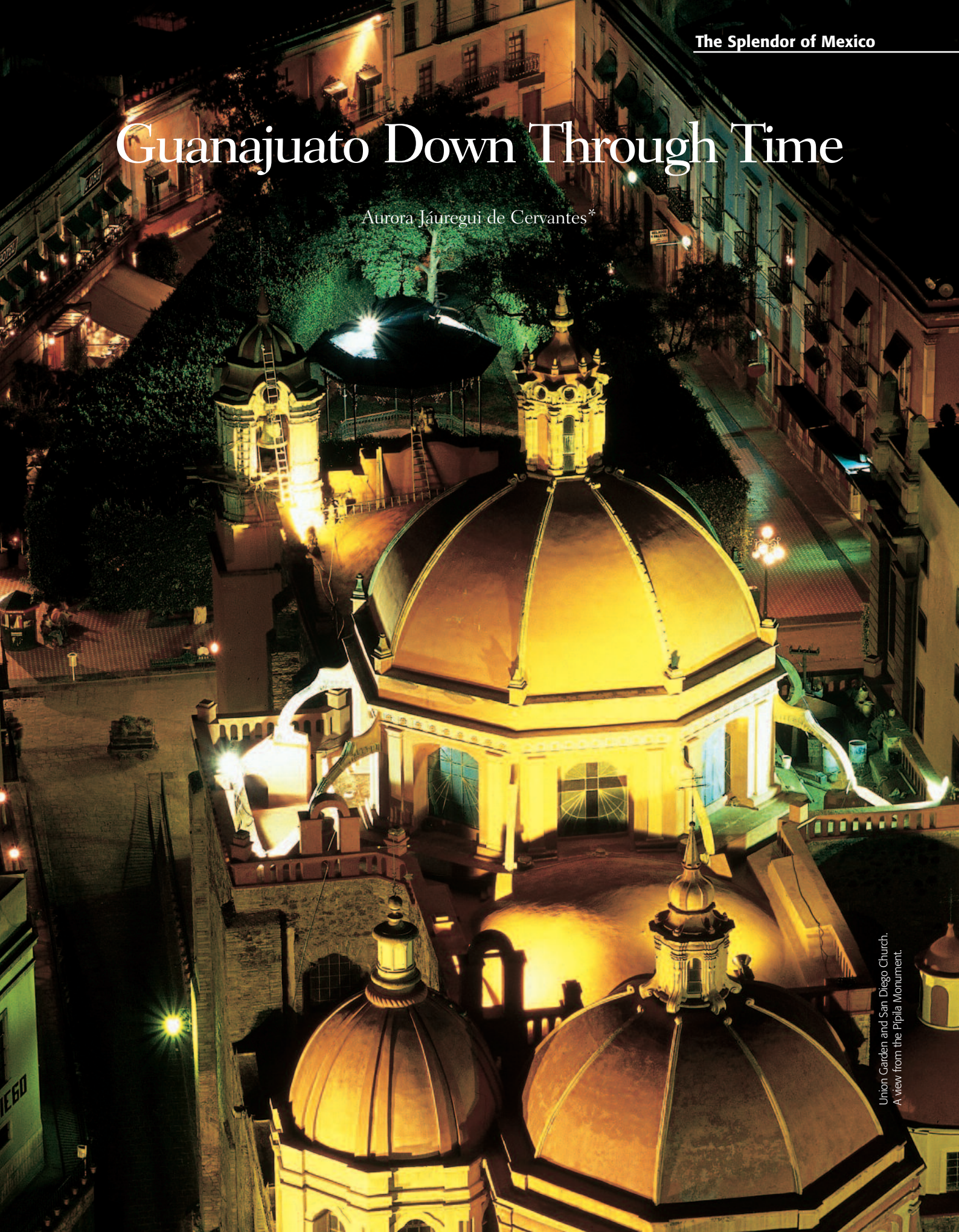
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# Guanajuato Down Through Time

Aurora Jáuregui de Cervantes\*



Union Garden and San Diego Church.  
A view from the Pipila Monument.



Any city that has made history has a singular origin, and Guanajuato is no exception: it was born by chance during the Spaniards' search for metal ore in the region they knew as "The Great Chichimeca," and it grew where they dug their mines. This and the agricultural and cattle ranching haciendas made the area self-sufficient.

Guanajuato took shape slowly. It took a few streets, many alleyways, several plazas—like the one called Cuesta del Marqués, today Plaza de la Paz; the San Diego or San Pedro Alcántara Plaza, now the Union Garden; and the San Roque Plaza—and many bridges over the river that ran through the bottom of the gorge bordering on the mining haciendas to make the beginnings of an urban area. All this can be seen in the city maps and the Indias and Rozuela Archives.

The climate and beautiful scenery makes the geographical area where Guanajuato lies

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\* Former chronicler of the city of Guanajuato.

ideal. Its urban layout is irregular since it developed with no specific planning. Originally, the area was a woody glen inhabited at different times by different pre-Hispanic tribes. Some of them settled in what is today the Pastita neighborhood: the Otomíes called it Mo-o-ti, or "place of metals"; the Nahoas called it Paxtitlán, or "place of hay" or "ancient place"; and the Purépechas called it Quashuato, or "mountainous place of frogs."

The primitive Real de Minas de Santa Fe—as it was called—which included the Reales of Tepetapa, Marfil and Santa Ana, was elevated to the category of *alcaldía mayor*, or town, in 1574. In 1679, it was given the rank of *villa* and in 1741, that of city, by decree of King Felipe V. The cover sheet of the document of incorporation as a city, deposited in the Alhóndiga de Granaditas and the mayor's office, has the city seal representing faith and the words, "Title of City conferred by His Majesty Señor Don Felipe V—may God keep him— on the Villa de Santa

Guanajuato, land of legend,  
perfect for combining  
fantasy and reality.



Plaza de la Paz.



The Alley of the Kiss, an obligatory stop for any visitor.

Unless otherwise specified photos by Daniel Munguia



Fe y Real de Minas de Guanajuato, for its merits and services.”

The document then enumerates the qualities taken into account to raise it to the category of a city:

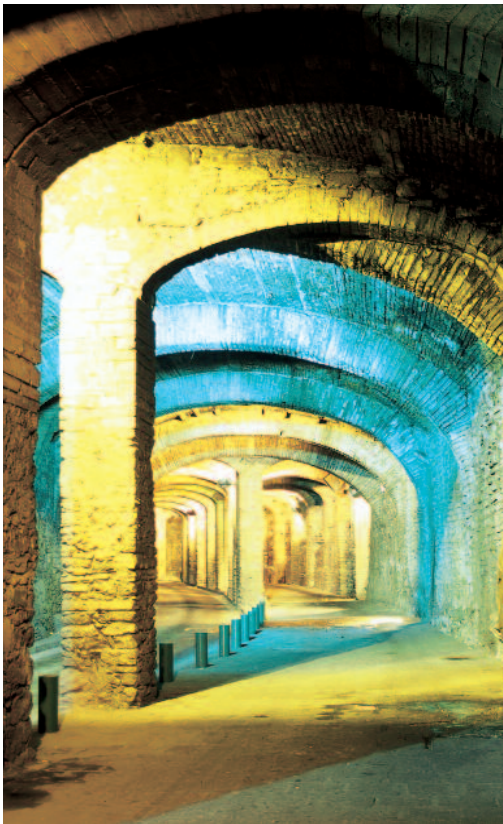
Its situation and temperament... its good and copious fruits... benign climate, purity of air and water and other prerequisites stipulated in the First Law, Title Five, Book Four of the Compendium of the Indies, for the obtainment of the title of City, in addition to the advantageous conveniences of its abundant silver and gold mines; its area, population, buildings, haciendas, rooms have increased considerably, and many visitors pass through for its increased trade and commerce, attracted by its wealth and abundant riches; and that it is at present one of the most useful mining towns in New Spain, so much so that it is singular and estimable, among all those discovered and worthy of the most distinguished honors for its copious contribution and the splendor of its

most important neighbors....This *villa* is situated near one of the mines themselves, the main ones of which are called Rayas, Mellado and Cata... becoming a City it will be to the benefit of my Royal Treasury. Therefore, by my Royal Title, I wish and it is my will that the said *Villa* will henceforth and always be known perpetually as the city of Santa Fe y Real de Minas de GUANAJUATO...

I, THE KING (signature)

The title of city was not actually bestowed on Guanajuato in the town itself until 1746 because bureaucratic red tape had slowed down the process. But the celebrations to commemorate the royal decree began on July 31 of that year, celebrations which lasted several days.<sup>1</sup>

At the time the city was incorporated, the Mina de Rayas mine, worked by Don José Sardaneta y Legaspi, was bringing in 17 million pesos for the crown. When this mine passed to his son and grandson (the first and second



The underground street, an impressive example of colonial engineering.

The underground street's winding pattern follows the river on the banks of which Guanajuato was founded.



The University of Guanajuato, a center for academic and cultural activity.



Plaza San Fernando, ideal for a rest or having a snack.



The Basilica, where Our Lady of Guanajuato is worshipped.



Plaza El Baratillo, where indigenous peasants used to sell their produce and grain.

Marquis de Rayas, respectively), they each paid the same amount annually. The city's golden age spanned 100 years, from the end of the seventeenth century to the end of the eighteenth century.

In the late eighteenth century, the La Valenciana Mine was very productive: according to Alexander von Humboldt, it sometimes produced as much as the entire kingdom of Peru. "If we contemplate the Guanajuato Mining District, just two mines of the mother lode annually produce the seventh and eighth part of all the silver produced in the Americas."<sup>2</sup> The La Valenciana Mine made an annual profit of between 400 million and 600 million pesos for 40 years, which is why Humboldt classified it as the richest mine in Mexico.

Guanajuato has a glorious past as the hearth where our nationality was forged. Here and in the surrounding area, the mixing of the races took place more rapidly than in other parts of the country. Notable civic buildings and the city's churches began to be erected in the mannerist and baroque styles in the seventeenth century. This process continued in the eighteenth century, producing such buildings as the Saint Pedro Alcántara (San Diego) Monastery, the San Francisco Church (previously Saint Juan), the Parish Church (today the Basilica), the Belén Monastery, the Holy Conception, Company and Valenciana Colleges, etc.

In 1786, Guanajuato became the seat of one of Mexico's 12 intendancies, created in that year. At that time, it had 80,000 inhabitants and was at the height of its splendor. The central plaza already held the mansions of the Counts of Rul and Pérez-Gálvez, of the Marquis of San Clemente; and in Pocitos, the mansion of the Marquis de Rayas. In 1809, the Alhóndiga de Granaditas, the great granary, was finished in the neoclassical style. One year later, on September 28, the first battle of Mexico's War of Independence took place there, led by Don Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla. On March 25, 1824, after many years of struggle brought independence, Guanajuato became the capital of the state and, in 1858,

under President Benito Juárez, the capital of the republic.

In 1903, state Governor Joaquín Obregón González invited President Porfirio Díaz to inaugurate several important public works built in the late nineteenth century: the Juárez Theater, the Legislative Palace, the Esperanza Dam and two monuments (one dedicated to peace, built in the old Central Plaza, which then changed its name to Peace Plaza; and the other dedicated to Don Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, in Las Acacias Park).

Today the city has grown beyond the original canyon and the population has increased. The State College became the Autonomous University of Guanajuato, with a substantial campus and a symphony orchestra. Under the city are many tunnels and underground streets that give the area a mysterious, legendary air.

In 1982, Guanajuato was declared a national monument, and in 1988, it was given the title of Cervantes City by the mayor of Alcalá de Henares, Spain, where Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra was born. Guanajuato has been the host of the International Cervantes Festival for 29 consecutive years. This festival is one of the reasons cited by the director general of the UNESCO in 1988 when he declared Guanajuato and its mines a World Heritage Treasure, given that its commitment is not only to preserve the past, but to build a new future through fostering culture, creativity and education. In short, this is a city that people fall in love with and is well worth visiting. **MM**

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> That particular day was picked because it was the day of the city's patron saint, Saint Ignatius of Loyola. Since 1557, the city already had its own virgin, Our Lady of Guanajuato, also honored during the celebrations, which were, therefore, religious, civic and community festivities combined.

<sup>2</sup> Alejandro von Humboldt, *Ensayo político sobre el reino de la Nueva España* (Mexico City: Porrúa Editores, 1973), p. 402.



Guanajuato State Tourism Office

The Juárez Theater, one of Mexico's oldest and most beautiful stages.



Quijote Plaza, in honor of Cervantes.



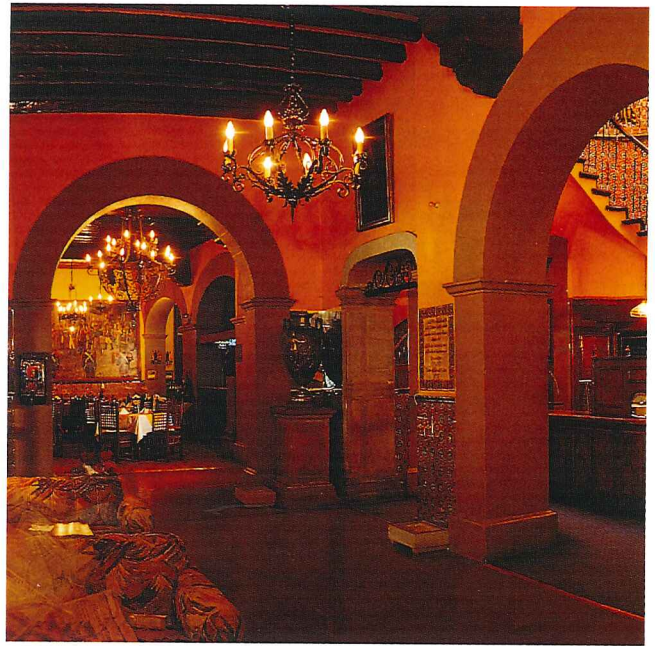
La Valenciana Church's gold-leaf altarpieces are a magnificent example of baroque art.



Probably the oldest hotel in Guanajuato and certainly the best known, the Posada Santa Fe is the place to stay in town. Not only does it house a venerable collection of the works of local artist and historian Manuel Leal, it also has the most desirable tables for soaking up the local atmosphere - right on the lively Jardín de la Union.

Enter the magnificent lobby and you could be in one of the finest hotels in Mexico. Lofty beamed ceilings, delicate chandeliers and antique chairs all fade into insignificance alongside the giant paintings dominating the walls. The off-lobby restaurant has the same setting, as does the lounge, with antique chairs and couches perfect for pre-dinner cocktails.

Guest rooms are approached up a winding staircase, with a colorful tile surround. The rooms themselves vary from the high ceiling suites at the front of the hotel to simpler decor at the back. All



have a certain charm, a slightly faded grandeur, yet updated with modern facilities.

The hotel has been owned and managed by the same family for several generations, and although there are exciting plans for future improvements, the emphasis is on retaining the historic and the traditional.

Meals served in the restaurants are as good as the setting, and the location is the best in town. Guanajuato itself is not short of attractions and your only problem could be trying to drag yourself away.



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# The Delights of Guanajuato



Guanajuato State Tourism Office

Mexico is famous for the variety and extent of its cuisine. Each region delights the palate with dishes from the finest and simplest to the most exotic and sophisticated, depending on their ingredients, preparation and presentation. Fish and seafood, different meats and fowl, vegetables and all kinds of dishes made from corn, the indispensable ingredient in our cooking, prepared in a thousand and one ways, give Mexican cuisine unrivaled and unforgettable flavors and aromas. Desserts and sweets could do no less.

Traditional Mexican candy-making is the sum of the history and customs that go back to pre-Hispanic times, with its taste of fruit, honey and seeds like amaranth, passing through the colonial period and the exquisite *mestizaje* that

adds milk and sugar. Then, with the centuries, other ingredients and recipes from each locality join in to develop a regional identity. Modernity adds alien and often artificial flavors to which Mexican confectionery adapts to and must coexist with.

Many kinds of candy have become the symbol of certain festivities or are associated with certain times of the year and are only made then: the best known of these are the little sugar (and now chocolate) skulls made for the Day of the Dead in many parts of the country. Others become veritable works of art and compete in contests like Guanajuato's famous *alfeñiques*. In these cases, sight replaces taste as the main sense satisfied. Most have gone beyond the realm of the family kitchen and are



Confectioners make many different figures out of *alfeñique* paste.



The La Catrina shop carries more than 200 products from all over Mexico.



*Jamoncillo* covered with walnuts, a delight to the palate.

mass produced and sold in specialty shops, markets and streets where passersby can buy them to take home or as gifts.

Today's traditional Mexican candies have acquired local or regional passports and are known as confections from Puebla, Morelia, Guadalajara or Guanajuato —just to mention the most famous.

Guanajuato's candy is extremely varied, but is basically made of three ingredients: milk, sugar and every imaginable fruit. Custards; *cajeta* or milk-based caramel cream; *jamoncillo*, a milk and sugar paste, filled with nuts, dates, dried plums, pine nuts, almonds or figs; coconut bars made with milk, with or without wine, with nuts and raisins; coconut bars made without milk and with fruit like pineapple or figs; *palanqueta*, or nut brittle, made of peanuts, pine

nuts, almonds or walnuts; dried, candied fruit (candied strawberries are typical of Irapuato, dubbed the world's strawberry capital); preserves; jam; *ate*, or fruit paste. The list is unending.

Don Ignacio Agreda, who has been making candy in Guanajuato since 1953, says that the most important thing is to maintain the tradition of good candy, made without adding any preservatives or chemical ingredients, and which stays fresh for several months thanks to the knowledge and experience used in its manufacture. The procedures are simple, most based on boiling the ingredients. The art is in the rendering, in knowing when the mixture is cooked just right. Don Ignacio says that it is easiest to see when *jamoncillo* paste is done, but that fruit takes longer and need more care because it absorbs the syrup more slowly. Today, with the advent of thermometers, it is no longer necessary for confectioners to put their fingers in the pot to see if the mixture is ready—but the good ones still know how to if the need arises.

Candy also changes with the times and confectioners have to know how to adapt to modernity. In Guanajuato, classic candy-making exists side-by-side with modern methods and one or two derivatives of the two. For example, the *charamuscas*, a candy that dates back to the early twentieth century, was a favorite of

Taken from *Atrasmás de Guanajuato*, Guanajuato State Gov., 1995

Daniel Munguia

Daniel Munguia



Daniel Munguia

Charamuscas and *trompadas*, the most typical local candies.

Daniel Munguia

El cubilete, manufacturers of local candies for almost 50 years.

Guanajuato families, originally made with *pi-loncillo* (unrefined, brown sugar blocks) and citric acid, made in the shape of a bar or representing the town's famous tourist attractions, the mummies. This is also the case with the *trompadas*, made with the same ingredients, but filled with coconut, walnuts or almonds. Around the 1960s, these were still the best known candies, but they lost the battle with the advent of the *jamoncillos* and other milk-based candies. Today they are only a few among hundreds of varieties that one can buy in Guanajuato's candy stores, and some day soon they may well be forgotten. Celaya's famous *cajetas* or Irapuato's candied fruits seem to have more staying power.

Don Ignacio also explains that candy-making is also a seasonal affair. During summer vacations, when thousands of Mexican and foreign tourists visit the city, shop shelves fill with *jamoncillos* and coconut candies, just like during the International Cervantes Festival held yearly in October. For the celebration of All Saints' Day, sweet-potato candy and candied fruit come on the scene. And they lead to experiments: Don Ignacio introduced a sweet-potato and guava paste that was used to decorate the intricate offerings made to the dead on the Day of the Dead. It was so successful that



Daniel Munguia

Dried, sugared strawberries and milk- and sugar-based *cajetas*.

it is now becoming a tradition. At the end of the year, dried fruit is a much appreciated dessert at Christmas tables. It is also used to make fruit cake (not a Mexican tradition). Caramel figures are another custom, as is *colación*, a mix of sugar-coated almonds and peanuts and multi-colored sugar candies, until a few years ago absolutely indispensable for the traditional pre-Christmas fiestas or *posadas*.

Visitors can find sweets from faraway parts of Mexico, or that have originated there but are now produced in Guanajuato, as well as traditional local varieties. But in any case, they are all delights worth taking home so as to bring a little taste of Guanajuato.

Elsie Montiel  
Editor



## Museo Casa Diego Rivera

Birthplace of Diego Rivera, Mexico's greatest painter, the museum houses the Marte R. Gómez Collection of more than 100 of Rivera's paintings from different periods and with different techniques.



Museo Casa Diego Rivera

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Instituto Estatal de la Cultura



## Museo del Pueblo de Guanajuato

The beautiful seventeenth-century home of the Marquis de Rayas today houses a museum offering visitors a view of an eighteenth- and nineteenth-century civil and religious Mexican art collection. Of particular interest are the nineteenth-century paintings by Guanajuato's Hermenegildo Bustos, a portraitist, and the Baroque Chapel, featuring José Chávez Morado mural.



Positos 7, Guanajuato, Gto., Mexico  
Tel. - Fax (4) 7 32 29 90

Open: Tues.-Sat.: 10am.-19pm, Sun.: 10am.-15pm.



## Museo de Arte Olga Costa José Chávez Morado

The home of artist Olga Costa and José Chávez Morado highlights furniture, pottery, crystal, wooden altarpieces, charming ornamental sculptures, masks and more. Of particular interest are the 500-piece pre-Hispanic art collection and more than 70 paintings by both Costa and Chávez and others.



Pastita No. 158, Torre del Arco, Guanajuato, Gto., México  
Tel. Fax (4) 731 09 77  
Open: Tues.-Sat.: 9:30am.-17pm, Sun.: 9:30am.-16pm.



## Museo José y Tomás Chávez Morado Silao, Gto.

The birthplace of José and Tomás Chávez Morado, contemporary Mexican artists. The museum houses an important collection of their early works, prior to their greatest murals and monumental sculpture (1930-1990), a permanent painting exhibition by José and sculpture by Tomás.

Guerrero No. 1, Silao, Gto., México  
Tel. Fax (4) 722 50 38  
Open: Tues.-Sat.: 10am.-19pm, Sun.: 10am.-14:30pm.







Majolica ware by Gorky González.

## Guanajuato's Ceramics<sup>1</sup>



Majolica ware by Capelo.

**E**arth, water, air and fire. These are the elements with which the potter, the porcelain maker, the ceramicist, the master craftsman (or woman) —artists all— give inert materials the permanent form of vessels and all kinds of objects, from the most humble pot, jar or griddle, to the most elaborate, majestic urns, large china jars, platters or intricate sculptures. They are all part of folk or fine art, pieces respected for their technical and aesthetic attributes as well as their sociocultural significance.

Guanajuato's pottery emerged in the Chupícuaro culture and developed for more than 25

centuries in unparalleled beauty and perfection. Shortly before the arrival of the Spaniards to the Americas, under Purépecha influence, it began taking on amusing shapes and multi-colored hues. With the conquest, the indigenous and Hispanic elements melded in the austere or richly decorated vitreous clay, while the smooth or burnished china maintained its pre-Hispanic characteristics. Fine majolica ware, a legacy from the Arabs and the Spaniards, was the crowning glory; according to popular tradition, it was introduced by Don Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, the father of Mexico's independence, in the town of Dolores.

Photos by:  
 1 Daniel Munguía  
 2, 3 Guanajuato State Cultural Institute



Chupicuaro ceramics in the Alhóndiga de Granaditas Museum.

### PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES

To produce anything made of ceramics, inorganic raw materials are used, basically clays (made up in turn of silica and aluminum, the most common elements in the earth's crust) of different kinds, textures and colors. It is common to combine different clays to make a ceramic object. When mixed with water, the clay becomes so malleable that other non-clay materials must be added. The skeleton of anything ceramic is made up of minuscule fragments of rocks and minerals, sand or tiny mollusks.

The way ceramics are made differs according to the organization of the makers. Sometimes men are in charge of the entire process; sometimes women take on a large part of the work; and it is common for children and old people to help at different stages when production is done by families. Today there are still family workshops as well as factories with highly skilled workers. In either case, the craftsman/woman must have a great deal of experience based on trial and error, as well as great dexterity and a perfect knowledge of the materials' properties.

The oldest techniques are based on molding with the hands or creating strips or rolls of paste that are superimposed on top of each other, or a single strip that is worked as a spiral, pinching the places where it is joined. Stone, wooden, ceramic or plaster molds are also used, producing objects of a relatively homogeneous size. The

conquest brought to Mexico an instrument unknown to indigenous cultures: the potter's wheel. Built with wheels or spinning plates and a system of pulleys and gears powered by the foot or a motor, the wheel moves while the artisan molds the piece with his/her hands. The next step is decoration and firing.

### VARIETIES OF MESTIZO CERAMICS IN GUANAJUATO

*Vitreous Pottery.* Vitreous pottery, seldom fired at over 900 degrees Celsius, is made with red or brown porous clay and has a smooth, shiny, waterproof surface. This kind of pottery is used to make everything from pots, water jugs, other kinds of jugs, plates, platters and flat bowls for serving and reheating all kinds of food on an open flame, to ornamental pieces like flower pots and items like glazed tubs and chamber pots. Vitreous pottery is appropriate for making miniatures and was even sometimes used for construction materials like flagstones, gargoyles and drainage pipes common until the early twentieth century in many Mexican cities.

It is produced in many parts of the state of Guanajuato, such as San Felipe Torres Mochas, Dolores Hidalgo, Coroneo, Acámbaro and the hamlet of Las Flores, near San Miguel de Allende.

*Majolica.* From the technical, ornamental and aesthetic point of view, majolica ware was the



Vessel in the shape of a duck.  
 Mestizo pottery.



Pulque barril. Mestizo pottery.



Tiles by Alfredo Carrillo. Dolores Hidalgo.

best porcelain produced in New Spain and newly independent Mexico. In Guanajuato, many specific refinements were added, and a regional tradition arose that is still carried on by some ceramicists today. Majolica ware uses enamel that may have been created in pre-Islamic Egypt and was used extensively in ninth-century Baghdad. It was an attempt to achieve a white porcelain similar to the kind made in China, covering the paste—a reddish or yellowish white clay mixture—with a white color made from the tin.

Because of its quality, this kind of ceramic was used especially to make sets of dishes, large jars and flower pots. During the viceregal period, many kinds of containers were made for preserves, vinegars, brine and cacao beans. It was also common to see majolica ware jars in drug stores holding all kinds of medicines, resins and aromatic oils. It was also used to make candle holders and candelabra, boxes, chests, water basins and jugs and elegant chamber pots called *condes* (counts).

The particular Spanish style called Talavera is a variety of majolica ware painted blue on a white background with designs that include animals, human figures and floral patterns, all motifs still used in contemporary majolica ware from Puebla and Guanajuato. Today, however, the colors are not limited to blue but also include green and orange.

Today, imitation majolica ware is made with a white glaze made with china clay or kaolin applied

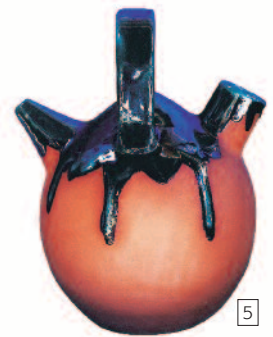
to the still wet piece, decorated with incisions. In Guanajuato, this is often painted green and brown, sobering somewhat the profusion of its graffito designs.

*Industrial pottery.* Dolores Hidalgo's pottery and ceramic production occupies one of the foremost places in Mexico. It is said that Don Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla fostered many industries and trades among both the indigenous and mestizo people. In the 1930s, the manufacture of tiles began or reappeared; the demand was such that eventually the old family workshops could not satisfy it without modernizing and adapting to new forms of production. Today, there are almost 10 factories and many workshops that produce tiles in considerable quantities at reasonable prices.

The old procedures have been streamlined: the clays are ground in electric mills; industrially produced substances to cause opacity have been substituted for the tin. Sand from sand pits around Dolores, however, is still added to create the "Talavera" or creamy "Mexican" white. In any case, the traditional mix of black and red clays from the area around Dolores or the Santa Rosa Mountains is still combined with yellow clay from the mountains.

Stencils are used to produce panels with intricate decorations or series of tiles for covering walls with flower-covered branches and other designs influenced by Puebla, Spanish and Italian patterns. The enamel colors are applied with

Photos by:  
 4. Guanajuato State Cultural Institute  
 5. Daniel Munguía



Vitreous pottery. Guanajuato State Cultural Institute's Folk Art Collection.



Majolica ware by Gorky González.

machinery and the traditional oak- or *pingüica*-wood-fueled kilns were replaced first by electric ovens and then by industrial gas kilns.

In addition to the tile factories, plates, platters, large jars and other pieces are made in Dolores Hidalgo, emulating majolica ware from Puebla or Guanajuato. The designs are extremely varied: sunflowers, calla lilies, fruit, fish, birds, the Sun with a friendly, human face, Guanajuato scenery, simple still lifes. That is, everything imaginable.



[1], [3] and [4] *Chupicuaro* ceramics at the Alhóndiga de Granaditas Museum. [2] Tar-covered piggy banks and [5] miniatures from San Luisito neighborhood.

*High Temperature Ceramics.* Stoneware is a ceramic made with very hard, completely vitrified paste that sometimes contains kaolin and other clays. It is very resistant and when struck, makes a metallic sound. It is also known as high-temperature ceramics since it is fired at a temperature of at least 1,200 degrees Celsius. The color of the paste varies from grays, yellowish white and brown to reds, depending on their components. In different parts of Mexico, indigenous and mestizo communities as well as some artisans and independent artists produce this kind of ceramics, making with it vases, boxes, decorative plates and ashtrays. This kind of ceramics is made in places like La Soledad neighborhood in Acámbaro.

*Paste Ceramics.* To make this kind of white porcelain, different industrially prepared pastes are mixed with other industrial components and water. The final mixture is poured into plaster molds where it is left to dry and then polished. Later the pieces are fired and covered with a vitreous glaze made of lead, borax or another transparent enamel that is sometimes colored with ceramic pigments. The designs vary; sometimes even decals are used. Gold and black are very common colors, as are typical

scenes of Guanajuato. These objects have flooded the market, creating jobs for many people in Dolores Hidalgo and Guanajuato, particularly in Mineral de Cata.

*Tar-covered China and Miniatures.* In the 1960s, very simple procedures were developed to make ceramic figurines: one example is the so-called tar-covered china mass produced in the San Luisito neighborhood of Guanajuato. This china is worked on a lathe, sanded, fired and finally covered with tar dissolved in diesel

fuel or gasoline. This technique is used to make perforated lamp bases incrustated with marbles, tea or coffee services, candle holders and ashtrays that were popular until a few years ago.

In the same neighborhood, other family-based workshops produce small pieces made on lathes to be used as toys or candy dishes. Since one of the kinds of candy they hold is tamarind-fruit candy, they are called *tamarinderas*.

The San Luisito potters use red and black clay from the Santa Rosa mountains and grind it manually or with machines, letting it settle in troughs. The pieces they make and fire may not be very artistic, but they can be very useful and curious to look at. They are made with techniques that used to be utilized to make vitreous porcelain.

Regardless of the name applied to the ceramics—a craft, minor art or even fine art—it will always be a product of human beings and society that we can see everywhere—despite the nefarious advent of the plastic age—and that continues to be useful and beautiful. ■■■

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Summarized version of *La cerámica de Guanajuato* (Guanajuato, 1995), non-published research by Carlos Castañeda, Patricia Fournier and Lourdes Mondragón, Guanajuato State Cultural Institute.



Majolica ware by Gorky González.

# Gorky González' Workshop

More than 40 years ago, ceramicist Gorky González —whose workshop is in Guanajuato's Pastita neighborhood— decided to try to recover the tradition of majolica ware ceramics made with viceregal techniques. His love of clay and form has always been the *raison d'être* of the activity that has given him both satisfaction and local, national and worldwide recognition. Two years in Japan, where he studied with master ceramicists considered “national treasures,” added the courage and simplicity of the Asian spirit to his abilities.

Visiting Gorky's workshop is a revelation, uncovering the unexpected at the different moments of the process. The porcelain balls tumbling in the grinders where the craftsmen mix and prepare their own colors and enamels. The careful preparation of the clay —giving the word “plasticity” meaning— which requires care since greater plasticity makes for greater ease of handling but also for more shrinkage as the piece dries before firing. Pieces made in molds do not have this difficulty, but Gorky's workshop is known precisely for making all the round-



ed pieces by hand in the traditional manner.

A high point is seeing the pieces shaped by the potter, who uses the wheel as an extension of himself, watching him add handmade forms and figures to make, for example, a frog out of what had been a container. The darkroom is key since the gradual drying process, out of the way of drafts and direct sunlight, diminishes breakage and cracks. The pieces are fired for the first time; then the enamel is applied; and then the artist-craftsman paints colored figures onto the piece. Each artist has his own paintbrushes made of horsehair and squirrel tail because, with use, they are shaped to the intensity of his individual brush stroke. Then comes the second firing and the piece takes on a personality of its own. It is ready to take its place on shelves or in display cases, dining rooms or the corner of the house reserved for our most treasured objects.

*Elsie Montiel*  
**Editor**



Photos by Daniel Munguía

# Two Art Museums

Juan Manuel Ramírez Palomares\*



Cuauhtlato State Tourism Office

Main entrance to the People's Museum.

The city of Guanajuato is renowned as the birthplace and scene of important events in Mexico's history, for its particular urban layout and architecture, for its mineral wealth and for its contributions to art and culture.

This small city, home to university teachers and students, is both traditional and cosmopolitan, with many little corners just right for contemplation and enjoyment. Its museums are outstanding. Here we feature two of them.



Daniel Munguía

Facade of the Baroque Chapel, People's Museum.



Daniel Munguía

José Chávez Morado mural, Baroque Chapel interior.

#### PEOPLE'S MUSEUM OF GUANAJUATO

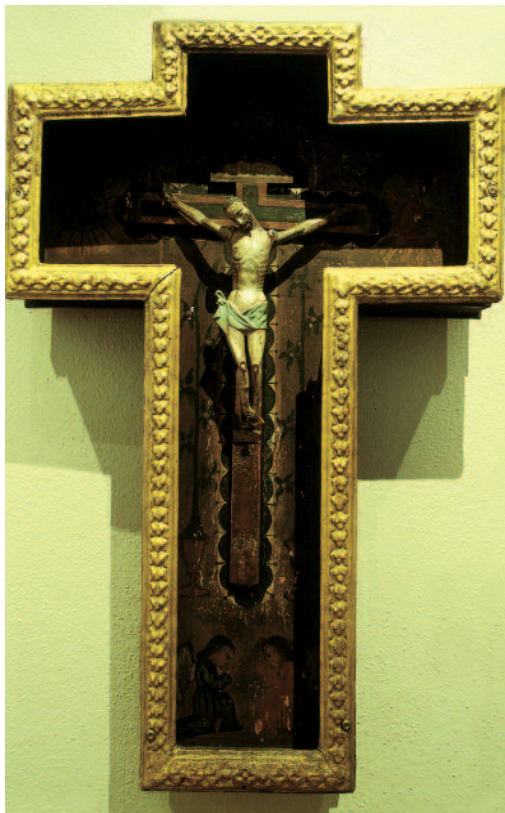
The Museo del Pueblo de Guanajuato (People's Museum of Guanajuato) is housed in what was the seventeenth-century home of the Marquis de Rayas, the oldest noble mansion in the city.

The Marquises de Rayas were great promoters of change in this mining town, contributing

to its economic development, giving part of their fortune to build important works like the curtain of the La Olla Dam.

The second Marquis de Rayas, Don Mariano de Sardaneta y Llorente, was a supporter of independence and a personal friend of founding father Don José María Morelos y Pavón. He supported the insurgent army financially and, after the War of Independence, was one of the signers of the document formalizing the creation of the new country.

\* Coordinator of Literature, Theater and Reading Promotion, Guanajuato State Cultural Institute.



Daniel Munguía

Colonial art from the People's Museum permanent collection.



Daniel Munguía

Facade, Olga Costa-José Chávez Morado Museum.

The People's Museum  
of Guanajuato was opened in 1979 on  
the initiative of painters José Chávez  
Morado and Olga Costa.

The People's Museum of Guanajuato was opened as a cultural center in 1979 on the initiative of painters José Chávez Morado and Olga Costa, who donated their eighteenth- and nineteenth-century art collections to make up part of the museum's permanent collection. Among the institution's objectives are exhibiting art from both the past and the present and fostering plurality of thought.

Today the museum has three floors of exhibition halls. One is dedicated to the permanent collection, including eighteenth- and nineteenth-century religious and civic art, with works by such renowned artists as Miguel Cabrera (eighteenth century), Hermenegildo Bustos, Juan Nepomuceno Herrera and José María Estrada (nineteenth century), as well as a small pre-Hispanic and folk art collection.

The building still contains the family chapel with its original baroque facade with pilasters in the form of inverted pyramids. Inside is a mu-

ral by José Chávez Morado painted as a triptych that depicts the story of one stage in the history of Mexico.

Other spaces in the museum are used to show the very diverse themes, idioms and techniques of the work of well known contemporary artists, including José Chávez Morado, Masaharu Shimada, Juan Manuel de la Rosa, Pedro Asencio, Jesús Gallardo, Juan Soriano and Manuel Álvarez Bravo.

The State Institute of Culture supports the museum's activities, which in addition develops programs for schools and social institutions and extension services to all the municipalities in the state.

Museo del Pueblo de Guanajuato  
Pocitos # 7  
Downtown  
Tel. (743) 229-90  
Open Tuesday to Sunday  
9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.





The ground floor of the Olga Costa-José Chávez Morado Museum holds the artists' personal belongings.

The Olga Costa-José Chávez Morado  
Museum retains its  
original structure and  
functions.

OLGA COSTA-JOSÉ CHÁVEZ MORADO  
ART MUSEUM

The history of the building that houses the Museo de Arte Olga Costa-José Chávez Morado (Olga Costa-José Chávez Morado Art Museum) could be told like a legend. Two beings bathed in light, overwhelmed by form and color, took up residence around the well of the Peñafiel mine on a mining hacienda, located in the Paxitlán ("place of pastures") neighborhood, one of the roads most traveled by Purépechas and Chichimecas.

Two artists lived there: Olga Costa grew her garden and José Chávez Morado contemplated the history of his people. They did part of their visual work here. Olga, full of color, passionately interpreted Mexican features; José, an example of the dignity of giving oneself over to life's just causes, is the edifier of a difficult simplicity.

The Olga Costa-José Chávez Morado Art Museum is, then, a love story, like the inscription of their two names on a tree trunk.

After living in the house for 46 years, they donated it to the public. It opened its doors in April 1993, and Olga died two months later. Her ashes are deposited in a large urn in the patio in which a beautiful *siempreviva* has been planted.

The site retains its original structure and functions: visitors can view the furniture and objects collected by its previous owners throughout the world and over time: ceramics, embroidery, gold work, tin devotional folk paintings and altarpieces. Marvels.

The museum also has temporary exhibits of work by contemporary artists.

Museo de Arte Olga Costa-José Chávez Morado  
Pastita # 158 Barrio de Pastita  
Tel. (473) 109-77  
Open Tuesday to Sunday  
9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.



Traditional majolica ware. Olga Costa-José Chávez Morado Museum.

# The Santa Rosa Forest In Guanajuato

Gerardo Vázquez Marrufo\*



Guanajuato State Tourism Office

The state of Guanajuato has beautiful,  
ecologically and economically important natural scenery.

The Santa Rosa Forest is one example. It is one of  
the 151 areas nationwide set aside as a priority for conservation.

Although not very well known for its wild areas, the state of Guanajuato has beautiful, ecologically and economically important natural scenery. The Santa Rosa Forest is one example,<sup>1</sup> crossed by Father Hidalgo and his followers on their march from the town of Dolores to the city

\* Researcher at the National Polytechnical Institute's Center for Research and Advanced Studies (Cinvestav), Irapuato campus.

of Guanajuato where the first battle of the 1810 independence movement, the historic battle for the granary and powder warehouse known as the Alhóndiga de Granaditas, would take place.

Guanajuato is situated in Central Mexico in a transition zone between the temperate climates of the North and the tropics of the South. The Santa Rosa Mountains, in the central part of the state, are part of the Guanajuato Moun-

tain range, on the central highland. It is one of the 151 areas nationwide set aside by the National Commission for the Research and Use of Biodiversity (Conabio) as a priority for conservation.

The forest is made up mainly of holm oak (*Quercus* spp.) that share the ecosystem with other trees like two species of silk-tassel trees (*Arbutus glandulosa* and *Arbutus xalapensis*) and the *pingüica* (*Arctostaphyllum pungens*).

## SOME HISTORY

Not much is known of the peoples who inhabited or crossed what is now the municipality of Guanajuato, particularly the Santa Rosa Forest, in ancient times. The indigenous peoples of the region have been given the generic name of Chichimecs, which seems to

boldt calculated the forest to be 2,815 meters above sea level. Interestingly, his calculation is not far off what modern maps state about the different peaks of the mountain range, that go from 2,350 to 2,800 meters above sea level. In the forest, he discovered, described and named the “carnivorous” plant *Pinguicula grandifolia*, which can still be observed

today the University of Guanajuato. He formed his natural history collection with specimens from the region and others sent from different parts of the country and abroad by friends and naturalists with whom he maintained contact. In addition to his two books *Fauna del Estado de Guanajuato* (Fauna of the State of Guanajuato)<sup>6</sup>



Guanajuato State Tourism Office

be the name for a rather heterogeneous group of nomadic or semi-nomadic tribes that inhabited the arid reaches of pre-Hispanic Central and Northern Mexico. Some authors say that the Pamechichimecs and Guamares inhabited what is now the state of Guanajuato.<sup>2</sup> Documentation about these groups' knowledge and use of the forest is scant given that they left very limited traces.<sup>3</sup>

Santa Rosa is an important forest nationally and regionally from the historical-scientific point of view. The Austrian Alexander von Humboldt arrived in Guanajuato in 1803 and wrote up several observations and technical descriptions during his stay, including a map of the city and its environs. Situated at a still unidentified point, von Hum-

boldt calculated the forest to be 2,815 meters above sea level. Interestingly, his calculation is not far off what modern maps state about the different peaks of the mountain range, that go from 2,350 to 2,800 meters above sea level. In the forest, he discovered, described and named the “carnivorous” plant *Pinguicula grandifolia*, which can still be observed during the rainy season from June to September. Today, the specimen collected by von Humboldt is in the Natural History Museum of Paris. He also described the *Cucheria socialis*, “a larva that inhabits the silk-tassel trees and produces the indigenous silk,”<sup>4</sup> but whose existence in the forest has not been documented scientifically.

It was the French doctor, Alfred Auguste Delscautz Dugés, who made the first lists of flora and fauna in the state of Guanajuato. Dugés arrived in Mexico in May 1853, and from 1861 until his death in 1910, he made his home in the city of Guanajuato.<sup>5</sup> In addition to holding several different public posts, the doctor taught zoology and botany at the State College,

and *Flora i Fauna del Estado de Guanajuato* [sic] (Flora and Fauna of the State of Guanajuato),<sup>7</sup> he wrote a number of articles about the region's species. A hundred years later, Dr. Dugés' description is still the most complete compendium of the state's flora and fauna.

Although he was particularly interested in herpetology, Dugés also did botanical work about the flora of Guanajuato. In 1879 for example, he described the new genera of plants from the *Rammaceas* family based on his study of specimens collected at the Mellado Mine in the municipality of Guanajuato.<sup>8</sup> Probably many of the species Dugés included on his list were observed and collected in the mountains; however, the natural history col-

lection he left us requires a new evaluation to see if these species still exist in the forest.

#### BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE

Given their extension and location, the Santa Rosa Mountains have an impor-

tant influence on the climate, acting as a regulator of temperature in nearby areas, including the state capital. They also have high summer rainfall, which contributes to replenishing water supplies in a wide region that includes some agricultural areas of the very productive Bajío region. However, the importance and breadth of that climatic regulation has yet to be evaluated.



Guanajuato State Tourism Office

the golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), considered an endangered species.<sup>9</sup>

Our working group has found more than 50 species of wild mushrooms in the Santa Rosa Forest, some of which are used for food by local rural communities during the rainy season. For example, several species are in the form of coral from the *Ramaria* genus, others

ters on the large species of holm oak used for firewood and making charcoal, although the silk-tassel trees and the *pingüica* are also logged. The extensive cattle ranching and rain-fed cultivation practiced in the mountains are mainly for subsistence or local markets. The growth of cities, the construction of the Guanajuato-Dolores

from the *Amanita* and the *Lycoperdon* genera. The species *Amanita caesarea* and *Amanita muscaria*, found by our working group in collaboration with Joaquín Cifuentes' UNAM team, are included on the list of protected species, the former as deserving special protection and the latter as an endangered species.<sup>10</sup>

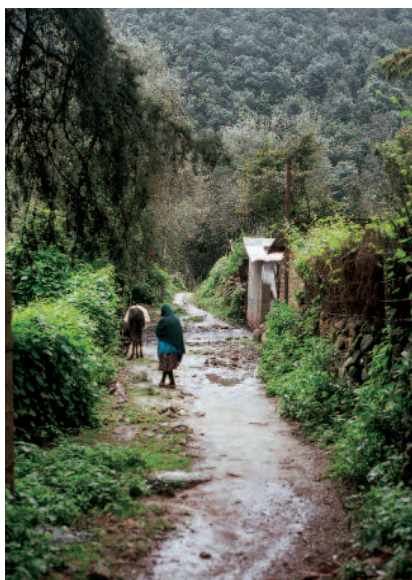
Forestry activity and mining—both intense activities for 400 years—are the most important factors in anthropogenic environmental changes on the borders and inside the Santa Rosa Forest. Wood was the first input needed both by mines and residents in the mining towns around the forest, among them the city of Guanajuato and the town of La Luz. Today, logging cen-

Hidalgo highway, tourism and recreational activities are the most recent anthropogenic factors in environmental change whose effect on the ecosystem and local species have still not been determined.

The diversity of wild animal, plant and microorganic species in the Santa Rosa Forest, together with the genetic stock that each one represents, are part of the flows of matter and energy in this ecosystem and are a potential source of new resources, products and processes for local communities' socioeconomic development. Unfortunately, the scant number of ecological studies has slowed the sustainable use of this biological wealth that would allow for the conservation

of the ecosystem and its species in the long term.

The knowledge that the inhabitants of these communities have about many of the plant, mushroom and animal species is in itself a cultural resource that must be preserved. It is in danger of being lost due to the constant migration of local inhabitants to



urban areas and the changes in lifestyles because of regional development.

Santa Rosa is also important as a natural laboratory for the study of the evolutionary processes and ecological dynamics of temperate holm oak for-

ests. In addition, this forest has long been an area for rest and recreation for inhabitants of nearby cities.

#### RECENT STUDIES

Today, knowledge about the animal, vegetable and microorganic species that



inhabit the Santa Rosa Forest has begun to increase thanks to studies by different ecological groups and researchers working in the area. The group from the Center for Research and Advanced Studies, Irapuato campus, to which I

belong, has been documenting the species of wild mushrooms for the last five years in collaboration with researchers from the UNAM. We also study some of the effects that logging for firewood and for making charcoal has on the trees' physiology and the physical-chemical characteristics and microbe composition of the soil. We hope that all these



Photos on this page by Gerardo Vázquez-Mantufo

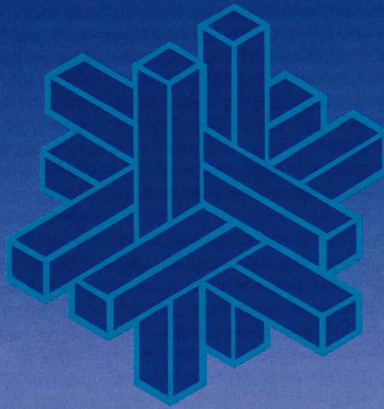
studies, together with those of other working groups, will make it possible to develop strategies for using, conserving and regenerating the Santa Rosa Mountains so this forest may be admired and enjoyed by future generations. **NM**

#### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> A large part of the information in this article was taken from the National Commission for Research and Use of Biodiversity's web site: <http://www.conabio.gob.mx>, concretely from the section "2000. Regiones terrestres prioritarias de México," compiled by L. Arriaga, J.M. Espinoza, C. Aguilar, E. Martínez, L. Gómez and E. Loa.
- <sup>2</sup> A. J. J. Dávila, *¡Chichimecatl! Origen, cultura, lucha y extinción de los gallardos bárbaros del Norte* (Mexico City: Universidad de Coahuila/El Ateneo Fuente, 1967).
- <sup>3</sup> Research about Santa Rosa is recent and there are practically no scientific articles about the

- area. Therefore, most of our working group's research results (the author does ecological research on the anthropogenic impact on the structure and function of the Santa Rosa Forest) and that of other researchers have been collected in undergraduate and graduate theses.
- <sup>4</sup> C. Minguet, *Alejandro de Humboldt. Historiador y geógrafo de la América española (1799-1804)*, vol. I, Jorge Padín Vela, trans. (Mexico City: UNAM, 1985), pp. 212-215.
- <sup>5</sup> E. Beltrán, A. C. Jáuregui and A. R. Cruz, *Alfredo Dugés* (Guanajuato: Gobierno del Estado de Guanajuato, 1990).

- <sup>6</sup> Beltrán et al., op. cit.
- <sup>7</sup> Alfred Dugés, *Flora i Fauna del Estado de Guanajuato* (Guanajuato: Impresos de la Dirección General de Educación Pública, Gobierno del Estado de Guanajuato, 1924).
- <sup>8</sup> Alfred Dugés, "Descripción de un nuevo género de la familia Ramnáceas," Elías Trambulse, *Historia de la ciencia en México. Siglo XIX* (Mexico City: Conacyt/Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1985), pp. 58-61.
- <sup>9</sup> The golden eagle was declared endangered by Mexican Official Norm NOM-ECOL-059-94.
- <sup>10</sup> Mexican Official Norm NOM-ECOL-059-94.



# CISAN

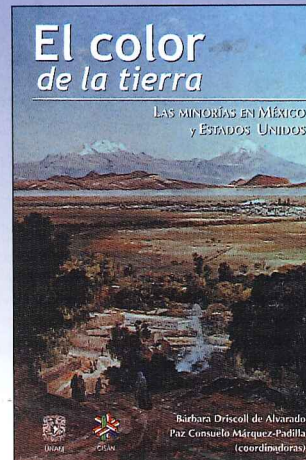
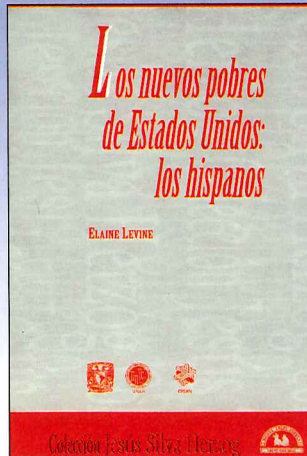
p u b l i c a t i o n s

***Los nuevos pobres de Estados Unidos: los hispanos***

Elaine Levine

Since the 1980s, Hispanics in the United States, compared with other groups, have dropped back socio-economically in three overall areas: the labor market, the educational system and social security.

This book looks at and analyzes this deterioration and its underlying causes.



***El color de la tierra. Las minorías en México y Estados Unidos***

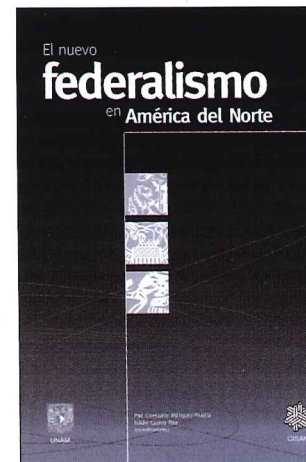
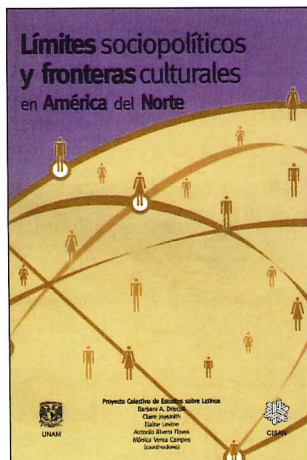
Barbara Driscoll de Alvarado and Paz Consuelo Márquez-Padilla, compilers.

This work looks at diversity from different perspectives: in particular, it deals with the construction of the Afro-American identity and the struggles of this group, the implementation of public policies in support of minority groups and the obstacles to their equal integration into all facets of life in Mexico and the U.S.

***Límites sociopolíticos y fronteras culturales en América del Norte***

Barbara A. Driscoll, Claire Joysmith, Elaine Levine, Antonio Rivera and Mónica Vereá, compilers.

A multidisciplinary group of Mexican and foreign specialists study the growing presence of the Latino community in the economic, political, social and cultural life of the United States.



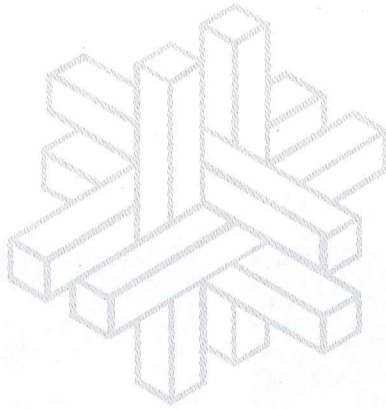
***El nuevo federalismo en América del Norte***

Paz Consuelo Márquez Padilla and Julián Castro Rea, compilers.

This book explores the origins, successes and contemporary dilemmas of the federal system in Mexico, Canada and the United States. In brief, the book looks at the factors that have an impact on federalism in North America today and recent trends in its transformation.

**For further information contact:**

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México, D.F. Tel. 5623-0015; fax: 5623-0014; e-mail: [cisan@servidor.unam.mx](mailto:cisan@servidor.unam.mx)



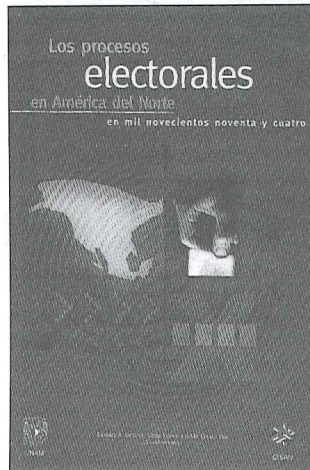
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p u b l i c a t i o n s

**Los procesos electorales  
en América del Norte**

Barbara A. Driscoll, Silvia  
Núñez and Julián Castro  
Rea, compilers.

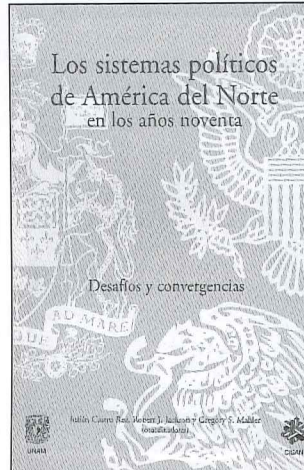
The importance  
of examining the elections  
in the U.S., Canada and  
Mexico in 1994 is that they  
were the first elections  
to take place under NAFTA.  
The convergence of political  
spaces affected by these  
elections cannot help but  
have an impact on  
all three countries.



**Los sistemas políticos  
de América del Norte  
en los noventa.  
Desafíos y convergencias**

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

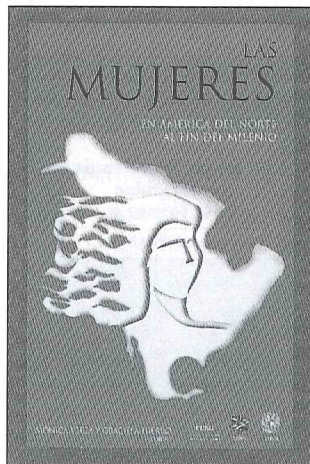
This book takes a  
comparative approach  
to the Mexican, U.S. and  
Canadian legal systems,  
constitutions, federalism,  
government institutions,  
domestic and foreign  
policies.



**Las mujeres al fin  
del milenio en América  
del Norte**

Mónica Vereá and  
Graciela Hierro, compilers.

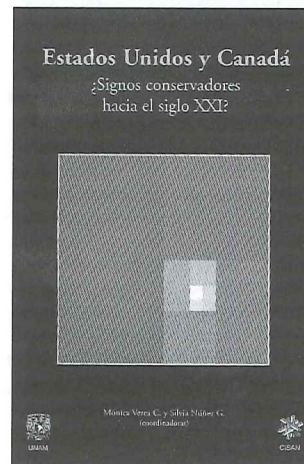
A pioneering concept, this  
book is a collective look by  
Canadian, U.S. and Mexican  
women academics, officials  
and artists at the work of  
today's women and the role  
they have played in North  
American societies.



**Estados Unidos y Canadá  
¿Signos conservadores  
hacia el siglo XXI?**

Mónica Vereá C. and Silvia  
Núñez G., compilers.

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



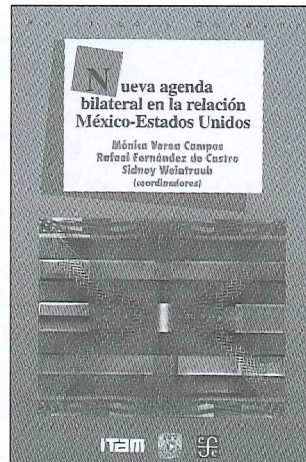
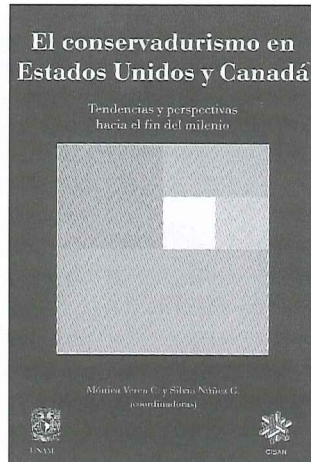
**Forthcoming:**

*La globalización y sus manifestaciones en América del Norte.  
El voto de los mexicanos en territorio estadounidense. Impactos nacionales y binacionales.  
Desde el sur. Visiones sobre Estados Unidos y Canadá desde América Latina.  
Las relaciones de México con Estados Unidos y Canadá. Una mirada al nuevo milenio.*

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

Mónica Vereá C. and Silvia Núñez G., compiler.

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.



***Nueva agenda bilateral en la relación México-Estados Unidos***

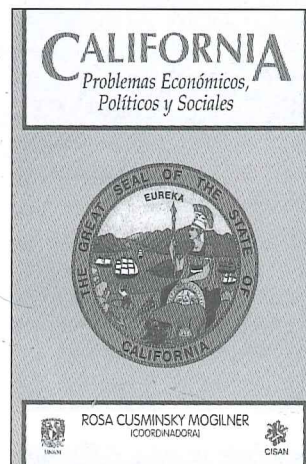
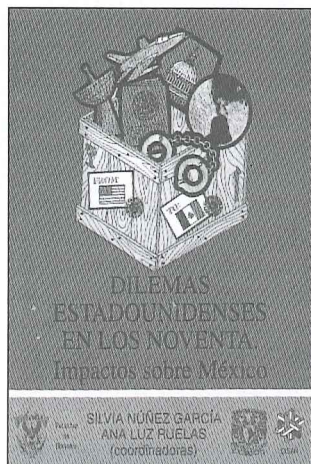
Mónica Vereá Campos, Rafael Fernández de Castro and Sidney Weintraub, compilers.

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

***Dilemas estadounidenses en los noventa. Impactos sobre México***

Silvia Núñez and Ana Luz Ruelas, compiler.

Reflections on the inevitable integration offers the reader a more horizontal look at current U.S. problems and their impact on Mexico: among others, the crisis of the welfare state, antiimmigrant paranoia, the changeover from a war economy to a more competitive civilian economy.



***California: Problemas económicos, políticos y sociales***

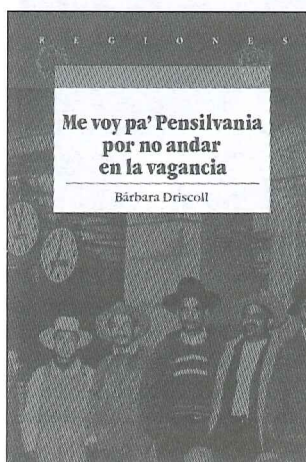
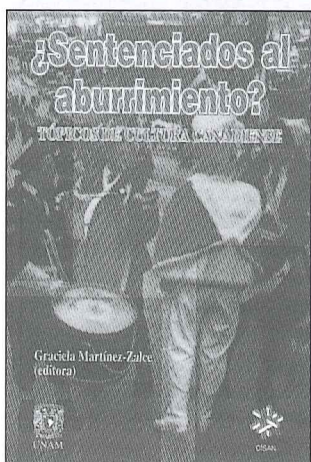
Rosa Cusminski, compiler.

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

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

Graciela Martínez-Zalce, editor.

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.



***Me voy pa' Pensilvania por no andar en la vagancia. Los ferrocarrileros mexicanos en Estados Unidos durante la segunda guerra mundial***

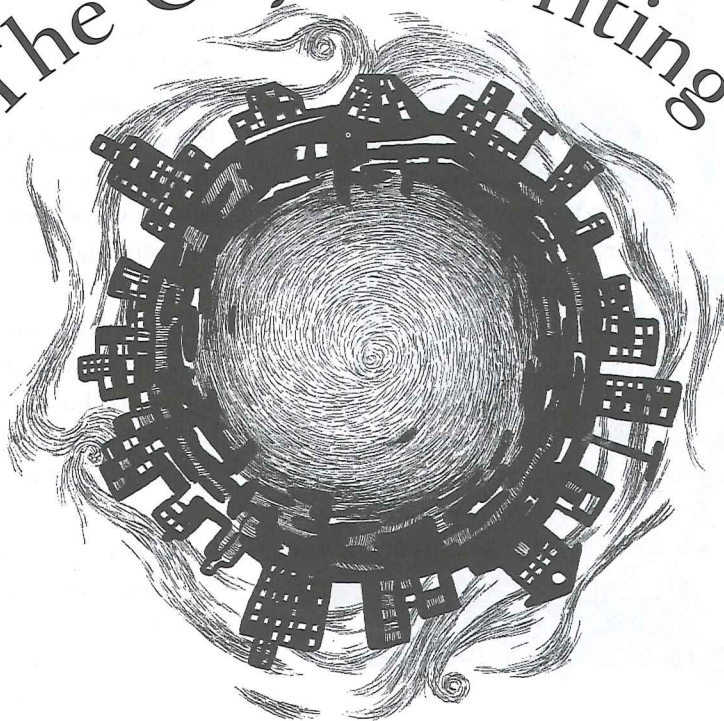
Bárbara Driscoll

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.





# The City in Writing



## Humor and Irony in the Contemporary Mexican Urban Short Story

### Part II

Lauro Zavala\*

#### AN ATOMIZED CITY

Contemporary Mexican narrators seem to recognize that Mexico City is in reality many cities and have therefore opted to tell the story of day-to-day urban life in very specific milieus.

Each writer offers his or her own testimony of our way of life and death in Mexico City in the last years of the millennium. Each of them takes as his or her own one of the many cities

that make up the conglomerate that we call Mexico City: Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl (Emiliano Pérez Cruz), the historic downtown area (Guillermo Samperio), the Condesa neighborhood (Luis Miguel Aguilar), the Roma neighborhood (Ignacio Trejo Fuentes), the Peralvillo neighborhood (Pepe Martínez de la Vega), the Obrera neighborhood (Paco Ignacio Taibo II) and University City (Guillermo Sheridan).

In the paradigmatic story "Oh, That Woman!" by Guillermo Samperio, we find the portrait of one of the most typical characters found in government offices in Mexico City's historical downtown area (although probably the traits described

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\* Critic and literary editor and researcher in the Autonomous Metropolitan University, Xochimilco campus. zavala@cueyatl.uam.mx



here would be just as familiar to the inhabitants of any other city):

With all due respect and without any hidden meaning or double entendre, the woman who sticks in our mind could be called Big Mama. She's a Big Mama in good faith and by the grace of her caste. In good faith because she goes decidedly out to meet the Mexican compliment *par excellence*, "Hey there, Big Mama!" said frankly and energetically. She loves it when they shout it out to her from any distance and they aim it at her ass....

During any talk with her, her lips will produce sensual pouts, childish smiles, accidental bites and highfalutin adjectives. Her hands will touch the excited man she is talking to on the shoulder by way of an intimate confession, on the arm after something funny, on the thighs while relaying sexual gossip, until she naturally ends up taking microscopic specks off his jacket and concentrates on perfecting the knot of his tie.<sup>1</sup>

Guillermo Samperio's narrative universe is peopled with almost archetypical characters of the urban geography, like the Man of the Keys, the Simple Woman of Noon and the Man of the

Shadows. They are vignettes that make it possible to recover the human dimension in the office-reality of big cities.

Paco Ignacio Taibo II has created a more political urban mythology. The adventures of The Spider, a proletarian hero of union struggles in Mexico City's poor neighborhoods, in addition to having endings that are both surprising and entertaining, are also narrated in a strangely romantic ambiance amidst the debates and marches of the working class. So, for example, in the short story "Loves," marginalized spaces are eroticized, immediately giving rise to a reflection about the act of writing:

What could be more romantic on the face of the asphalt than the sunsets red with foundry smoke that sparkled in miniature in her eyes? Where was there more tenderness than in the corner, cold, clinging to each other waiting for the complaining old bus? What embraces more sultry than those in the back seat of the collective taxi on the way to La Villa, knowing all the while that you just had to avoid the neon light every 15 seconds and with 14 seconds to explore each other's skin? How could you compare other loves with the love-with-fear conveyed by a sweaty hand when the horizon became blue with mounted police, sabers in hand?

They were love stories of movies that would never be made. Loves without the subtitles on the bottom of the TV screen; socialist realist novels that nobody would write because back then the little fat man had not been possessed by the fever of beginning to play with our past in the name of the sacred testimony.<sup>2</sup>

On another part of the social spectrum, Luis Miguel Aguilar and Rafael Pérez Gay present us with an ingenious and complex portrait of the educated middle class, particularly those living in areas like Coyoacán, Condesa and Copilco (the three C's of Mexico City's urban intellectual map).

These exercises of emotional confession contain enough material for parody. Let us see the

obvious allusion to Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* in a brief dialogue between the narrator and a couple of phone company workers, from "Godzilón y Clavería, telefonistas beckettianos" (Godzilón and Clavería, Beckettian Phone Workers):

*The set consists of a sidewalk, a lamp post and a Telephone Company truck. Godzilón and Clavería are on stage. Enter You.*

You: Give me a hand, won't you? I've been without a phone for three months. It's right nearby. I'll pay you. I promise.

Clavería: We can't go.

You: I'm begging you. I've already reported it 15,000 times and nobody comes.

Clavería: We can't go. (To Godzilón) We can't go, can we?

Godzilón: (Looking away) We can't go.

Clavería: We can't go.

You: Please. I'll pay you.

Clavería: (Moving his head as he looks at the ground) No, we can't go.

You: So, you can't go?

Godzilón: No, we can't.

Clavería: We can't go.

You: Well, thanks.

Clavería: Thanks for what? We can't go.<sup>3</sup>

This dialogue of the absurd—a faithful rendition of many dialogues *a la Mexicana*—is part of a New Mexican Types series, which also includes "El Barrendero a la Hitchcock" (The Street Sweeper in the Hitchcock Style); "El Taxista Heraclíteo" (The Heraclitusian Taxi Driver); "Toñito, el Velador Impasible" (Toñito, the Ugly Night Watchman); "El Marchante del Duino" (The Merchant of Duino) and "No Pus No': El Carpintero Buonarrottiano" ("No, Er, No': The Buonarrottian Carpenter). These parodies appeal to readers' familiarity with U.S. and European U.S. movies, poetry, sculpture, novels and theater. Using this strategy, an examination of one's navel acquires the dimensions of erudite cosmopolitanism and chronicles of day-to-day urban life reach the heights of an unparalleled feat.

#### DOMUS AND POLIS

##### FROM THE STREET TO THE HOME

In the period covered by this essay (1975 to 2000), the number of studies about urban cultural identity has multiplied. Almost all of them point to transformations in the symbolic organization of urban areas, and in particular of the functions assigned to the distinction between domestic and public spaces, between the home and the street.

From a synchronic perspective, this distinction makes it possible to understand a new assignation of gender roles. Today, segregation of urban space in terms of its belonging to one gender or another is no longer as absolute as before; while more and more women are in the work place, men are now relatively more secluded in the domestic space when they turn their own homes into offices, using electronic communications.

The diachronic perspective has also directed attention to momentary changes, pointing to how consumption and cultural recreation have moved from the street into the home. In the 1960s, the spaces for casual and sometimes ritual encounters with others were parks, plazas, stadiums, bars or dance halls. But in the 1990s, homes were outfitted with televisions, computers, telephones, radios and newspapers,





which seemed sufficient to inform and entertain urban residents.

These transformations have been dealt with in different ways in contemporary short stories. In the stories in the collection *Mi vida privada es del dominio público* (My Private Life Is a Matter of Public Domain), Bernarda Solís links both aspects of the urban experience (the private and the public) in paradoxes. The protagonists' personal conflicts are narrated with considerable critical distance given the intimist tradition typical of the first half of the century. It becomes clear here that the conflicts are caused by the conventions of a city in which women have been relegated to a secondary role.

Few writers have explored women's internal world as solidly and with as much of a sense of humor as Elena Poniatowska. In her "De noche vienes" (You Come By Night), we see the district attorney interrogate a woman who has been married to five different men for seven years without any of them suspecting that the others existed. The apparent ironic indifference of the interrogator is clear from the beginning of the story:

"But, aren't you unhappy?"

"Me?"

"Yes, you."

"Sometimes, a little, when my shoes are too tight..."

"I mean aren't you unhappy because of your situation, ma'am." He emphasized "ma'am", letting it sink to the bottom of Hell "Ma'am."

"And everything that comes out of it. Doesn't it make you unhappy?"

"No."

"Were you examined by the doctor on duty?"

"No. Why?" protested García. "This isn't a rape case."

"Oh, yes. Right. They're the ones who should be examined," laughed the questioner, making vulgar motions with his hands.<sup>4</sup>

Urban narrative also shows signs of black humor. This is the case of Francisco Hinojosa, who uses it even in his very popular stories for children, like *La señora más fea del mundo* (The Ugliest Woman in the World). In "Nunca en domingo" (Never on Sunday) —part of a genre the author himself created that consists of writing a story in the form of a novel with 100 very brief chapters— we encounter a tone more of parody than journalism, as part of the urban tradition of the crime genre. They are all crimes related somehow to the tedium and routine of urban life, told with the cynicism of an indolent narrator. The crime story tradition is already part of our urban identity, as the symptom of hidden violence, always on the point of surfacing. Irony freezes our smile into a rictus of skepticism, similar to the one so familiar to us when we meet up with our neighbors.

#### THE TRADITION OF URBAN BESTIARIES

Some sub-genres of the short story are traditionally urban, like the police story and science fiction. Anthologies also cover urban bestiaries, social fiction and political prophesies.

Let us look at three examples of fantasy narrative and contemporary science fiction, each of them an allegory of our urban condition.

Guillermo Sheridan's *El dedo de oro* (The Golden Finger) is a political science fiction novel about the presidential succession in Mexico. The chapter called "Depende" (It Depends) can be read as an independent story. The following is a fragment that gives an indication of the Kafka-esque labyrinths of the Mexican bureaucracy and the everyday climate of influence brokery:

"Yes?"

"We want a passport."

"You want or you wanted?"

"We wanted."

"Did you want an inside track or did you want to get it yourselves?"

"What's better?"

"That depends."

"Depends on what?"

"On who you are."

In a quick glance, Baldy and Sofía exchanged the fear of being someone.

"We're not anybody," said Sofía, smiling humbly.

"Well, then, what ya need is to take out some influence."

"And how do you do that?" asked Baldy.

"Go to window 322 and ask for an application form."

Sofía dropped her eyes and Baldy pressed her hand.

"Where's that window?"

"Depends."

"Depends? Depends on what?"

"On whether y'r goin' to the Ped offices or the Sumo offices..."

"Which is better?"

"They're both just as bad."

"And what's next?"

"Well, you fill out the application form for some influence."

"And are they gonna give it to me?"

"Depends."

"On what?"

"That there's any available."

"Hmmm..." Baldy looked at the ceiling.

"Next!" yelled the half face behind the window.<sup>5</sup>

Guadalupe Loeza, in her "La rosa púrpura de San Lázaro" (The Purple Rose of San Lázaro), proposes a parody of Woody Allen in which the narrator is watching the minister of the interior on television as he answers opposition criticisms in the Chamber of Deputies:

"Inflation dropped from 150 percent to 60 percent, an important difference and, undoubtedly, an achievement of our policy," he said to the PSUM deputy.

"Yes, but what was the cost?" I exclaimed suddenly. At that very moment, the minister raised his head and looked straight at me.

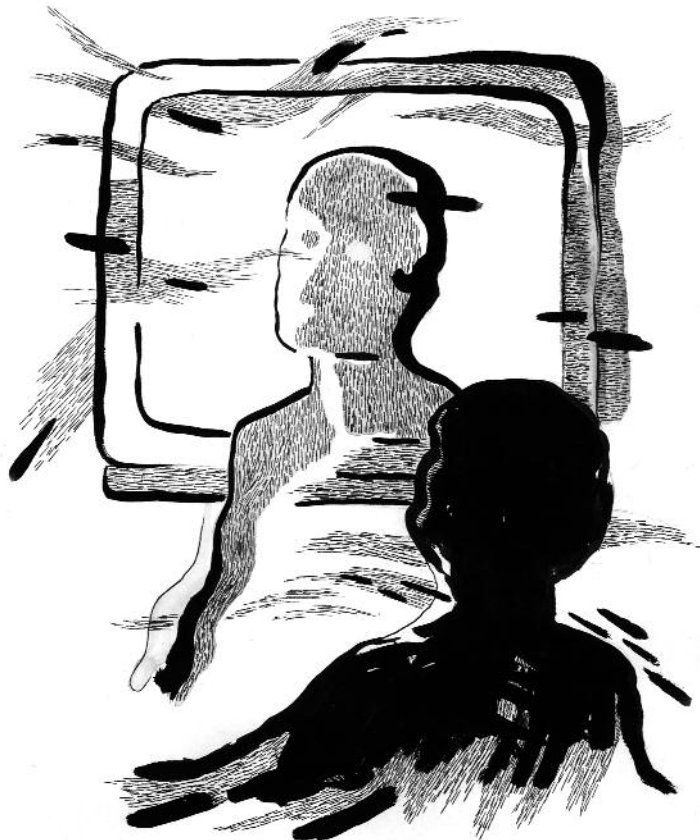
"What did you say?" he asked me.

"Me?" I asked incredulously, surprised.

"Yes, yes, you."

"Are you talking to me?"

"Yes, you've been sitting in front of your television for hours."



I couldn't believe it. The same thing was happening to me that had happened to Cecilia (Mia Farrow) in Woody Allen's last movie, *The Purple Rose of Cairo*. And just like Tom Baxter decides to come down off the screen, I watched Jesús Silva-Herzog come out of the television.

"Why did you say that?" he asked, standing in front of me.

We quickly got into my Volkswagen and headed downtown. Since the traffic was holding us up, we decided to take the subway. The minister couldn't believe his eyes.

"Why are there so many people?" he asked.

"Oh, it's always this full, Mr. Minister. This is Mexico City."<sup>6</sup>

Science fiction is also creating a tradition of its own. It has become mature enough to enjoy the luxury of parodying the genre's conventions, adapted to the Mexican context. Héctor Chavarría narrates the reactions of Mexico City residents when they hear a nuclear alert. In "Lo último de nuestras vidas" (The Last Thing in Our Lives), each of the inhabitants of Mexico City decides to do whatever he or she had never dared do under normal conditions, like "the TV commentator who ends up doing a strip tease on the freeway to the delight of passersby."<sup>7</sup> In the end, it all turns out to be a computer hacker's joke, although the lives of those who did not commit suicide changed radically and, sometimes, ridiculously.

These forms of pessimism about the country's future seem to fit into the paranoid, hopeless climate also shared by a surprisingly growing number of cyber-punk writers who adopt the perspective of what some have called a post-apocalyptic narrative.

#### AFTER THE END

Each form of humor contributes to the collective portrait of a common space, precisely because of each writer's vocation to show a particular vision of the apocalypse and give voice to the city's many characters.

Humor is a narrative strategy and can also be a life style, a vehicle for social criticism, a symptom of a break with convention, an exploration of what is different, a voyage toward the other and, perhaps, at the end of the day, the beginning of a more satisfactory dialogue with reality.

Humor can also be a symptom of the collective aspiration to a climate of discussion and criticism that would make the city a democratic space for living together in a civilized fashion. After all, the city is many cities, and the literary city is just as complex and diverse as the political city.

In all these cases, it is always the reader who has the last word. **MM**

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Guillermo Samperio, *Gente de la ciudad* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1981), pp. 33-37.

<sup>2</sup> Paco Ignacio Taibo II, *El regreso de la verdadera araña* (Mexico City: Joaquín Mortiz, 1988), p. 109.

<sup>3</sup> Luis Miguel Aguilar, *Nadie puede escribir un libro* (Mexico City: Cal y Arena, 1997), p. 56.

<sup>4</sup> Elena Poniatowska, *De noche vienes* (Mexico City: Era, 1979), pp. 149 and 151.

<sup>5</sup> Guillermo Sheridan, *El dedo de oro* (Mexico City: Alfaguara, 1996), pp. 223-228.

<sup>6</sup> Guadalupe Loaeza, *Las niñas bien* (Mexico City: Cal y Arena, 1988), pp. 136-138.

<sup>7</sup> Héctor Chavarría, "Lo último de nuestras vidas," Gerardo Horacio Porcayo, comp., *Los mapas del caos* (Mexico City: Ramón Llaca, 1997), p. 8.



# Toñito, The Ugly Night Watchman<sup>1</sup>

Luis Miguel Aguilar\*



He guards the cars at a parking lot next to the house, but, after 7 p.m. and for a not-so-symbolic fee, he also keeps an eye on the cars in the neighborhood, including ours. His Spanish is as strange as the way he tells us something has happened.

“Some unrelaxed young fellas took away your car’s radio antenna.”

“How was it they did that, Toñito?”

“Well, they were unrelaxed. In love with trouble. They’re from the junior high school next door. They twisted the antenna until it broke and then they took it with them. But they’re only doing it for fun because, what good is it to them?”

“But you saw them. Why didn’t you stop them?”

“No. They were just kids. I have my gun here.”

“But, Toñito, you saw them. Why didn’t you say anything to them?”

“No. Nobody steals cars here. I have the gun. The other day some crooks came around and were shooting. Didn’t you hear the shots? They broke that window. They were after my boss. I don’t know what he owes them. But I didn’t go out. He wasn’t here. There was no need to go out. Nobody steals cars around here.”

“No. I didn’t hear anything. But now I don’t have an antenna. Why didn’t you stop them?”

“Yes, they were the friends of trouble. The antenna is no use to them. It was just fun.”

“Well, it’s not the first time, Toño. The other night a friend who came to visit parked his car here, and they stole his stereo.”

“No. I have the gun. Don’t be afraid. Nobody steals cars here.”

“And the other day I came out and the alarm on my car had a clothes hanger sticking out of it. Somebody tried to force the alarm and couldn’t. And you didn’t even notice.”

“No, if they want to steal the car I have the gun. Nobody steals cars around here.”

“But they steal antennas and radios and they force alarms. And look at the dent the car has here. I’ve been wanting to ask you about that dent. I didn’t make it.”

“No. The ones who took the antenna were just some unrelaxed young guys. I have the gun.”

“I’m not asking you to shoot at them. I just want you to tell them to go away if you see them at it.”

“No. I watch them from here. I have the gun.”

“So you’ve left me without an antenna.”

“No. It was the unrelaxed kids.”

“You should at least have told me about it so that I could say something to them. It was 8:30 at night.”

“No. Nobody steals cars around here. I have the gun.”

“Good night, Toño.”

“Right. Good night.”

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\* Mexican writer.

# The Heraclitusian Taxi Driver



**Y**ou get into his taxi and tell him the address you're going to. He says that you should tell him the way. So, you say, "From here on, straight ahead and we're there."

He says, "You don't say? There was no way we'd get there if we went backwards."

Instead of insulting him, you say, "I mean that this street takes us directly to Mazatlán Avenue, which is where I'm going."

"You don't say? I thought you were going in the cab. Ha, ha."

Instead of smashing his head against the windshield, you sit in fuming silence. That is, useless silence.

"Oh, I've figured out where we are," says the cab driver suddenly. "It's here."

"No. It's not here. This is Tamaulipas. I said that straight ahead we would get to Mazatlán."

"Well, we'll fix that right away. What's the problem? All these streets have islands in the middle. The island that goes that way comes back the other way. In the end, all streets meet."

"You don't say?" you say, given the minimal opportunity of pre-Socratic vengeance. "That is to say, if you're going down one street, you'll come to another?"

"So, it got your goat. It got your goat, young man. But you see that anybody who gets burned, dies from it. There's nobody here who won't get a head of steam in a fire."<sup>2</sup>

At the next corner he makes a U-turn.

"You see? Without even asking directions we got there. Nobody's lost forever."

"Let me out over there by that grey car. The grey car. You passed it."

"That's what I tell my old lady. Give me three yards in reverse and I'll open up a road to heaven. Don't you think? Sometimes we only move forward by going backwards. If everything in life were only like losing your way. You see? Mazatlán and Tamaulipas are not two different streets like you said; in the end, they're the same street. Everything returns. Everything is together. We've arrived, haven't we?"

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The title of the short story on page 117 alludes to the Graham Greene novel, *The Ugly American*, which was translated into Spanish as *El americano impasible*, or "The Unfeeling American". Therefore, the original title of this short story in Spanish would be literally translated "The Unfeeling Night Watchman." [Translator's Note.]

<sup>2</sup> In Spanish, "getting burned" includes doing something silly, and the original text has the person dying from the burns, "el ardor", which also means ardor.

Both stories are fragments of Luis Miguel Aguilar's short story "Nuevos tipos mexicanos," in *Nadie puede escribir un libro* (Mexico City: Cal y Arena, 1997).

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# Román Piña Chan

## An Exemplary Archaeologist

Joel Santos Ramírez\*



Photo reproduced courtesy of the [www.inah.gov.mx](http://www.inah.gov.mx) Institute for Anthropological Research

**D**r. Román Piña Chan (born, 1920) died last April 10. But, who was he and why do we say his academic career was exemplary? Dr. Piña was one of Mexico's most prolific archeological researchers. He wrote innumerable books and articles describing his field work and effected studies on almost all of Mexico's cultural regions, but, above all, he contributed enormously to our knowledge about pre-Hispanic cultures. He was the last of a series of great Mexican archaeologists that began with Manuel Gamio in the 1920s and continued with Alfonso Caso and others like Eduardo Noguera in the following decades.

His contributions can be divided by regions and topics, but a common thread runs through all of them; they all complement each other and are connected to a broader,

more general idea. In the excavations he did in some parts of the Mexico Basin, among them Tlatilco and Tlapacoya, Piña Chan defined a cultural stage characterized by the adoption of forms of village life, settlements that may have been rudimentary technologically speaking, but with very broad social development that even allowed them to establish relations with other cultures, among them the Olmecs. He called this stage the preclassical horizon (1955), now also known as the formative period.

The preclassical cultures, like the Gulf cultures and the Olmecs, are topics that he wrote several works on. But his contributions do not stop there. He also did studies at sites like Chalcatzingo and Xochicalco in Morelos, and Jaina, Bonampak, Chichen Itzá, Uxmal and Palenque, among others in the Maya region. His exploration of the Teotenango site in the State of Mexico from 1970 to 1975 constituted one of the most important interdisciplinary studies in Mexican archaeology.

He also studied the cultures that settled in the West, the Huasteca area, Central Mexico and, of course, the Maya region. His knowledge of practically the entire Mesoamerican horizon allowed him to build what he called in one of his works "a vision of pre-Hispanic Mexico" (1967).

No less important than his excavations were his works as an ethno-historian. For Piña Chan, research was unfinished and had no value if the scientists did not compare its results with documentary sources: archaeology with a historic tradition. His hypotheses in this field were polemical. For example, he created a controversy when he posited the Maya culture's influence on the Toltecs (1972), a hypothesis that contradicts the idea that the highland cultures were disseminated throughout the Southeast during the post-classical period.

Another of his proposals fixed the origin of Tamoanchán (a mythical paradise, the birthplace of the gods). In a 1997 lecture, he said, "So many years after having developed this

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hypothesis, today I would only change the title to 'Xochicalco, a Historical Tamoanchán.' I would also correct the place in which the cult of Quetzalcóatl originated to 'the place where a special form of the cult of Quetzalcóatl developed.' I believe the rest is still valid."

An unfortunate accident in 1984 while excavating in Beccán, Campeche, left him without the use of his legs. It halted his field work, but did not stop him from continuing his research and making brilliant contributions. Although he no longer went to the sites himself, until a few months ago he did direct a research project in Oaxaca through one of his students. He continued to be a prolific writer: a little over a year ago he published a new book about the Cacaxtla paintings, and at the time of his death, he was preparing other works that will now remain unfinished.


Despite his health, Piña Chan never stopped teaching. For many, his classes were determinant in their training, and he acted as thesis advisor to many students. From its beginnings almost six years ago, he encouraged the publication

*Actualidades Arqueológicas* (Current Archaeology), a magazine published by archaeology students all over the country. He was its honorary president. Every year, a group of students organize a symposium in his honor; this year will be the sixth, the first he will miss. His presentation was to be about the Tingambato, Michoacán, archaeological site, one that he excavated.


Piña Chan was an experienced excavator and an outstanding theoretician; many of his proposals continue to be valid today, while others continue to cause debate. He did not write only for academia, however; he also published materials for the general public, museum guides, pamphlets and guides to archaeological sites. But, his most outstanding characteristic, one that made him an exemplary teacher, was his modesty: the cordiality with which he and his wife welcomed students into their home, the patience he displayed when a topic was not understood, his passion for teaching and his immeasurable love for his profession, archaeology. **MM**

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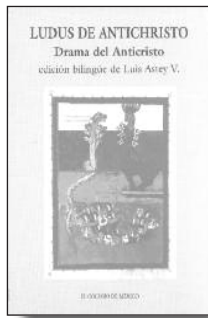
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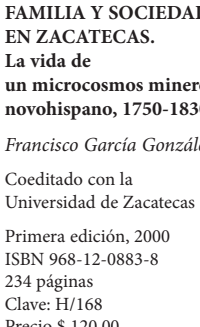
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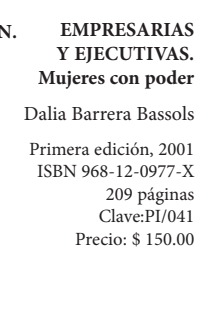
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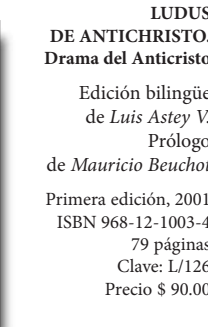
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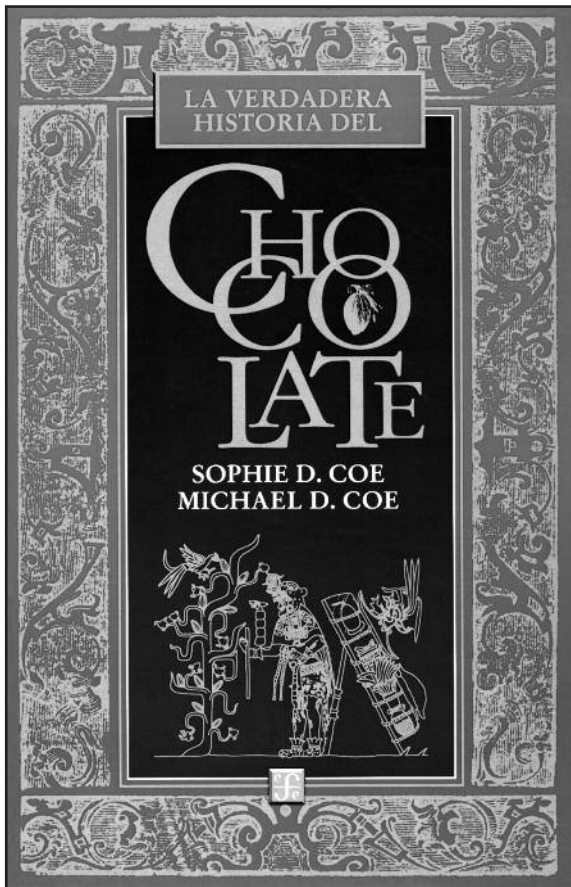
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# Reviews



## **La verdadera historia del chocolate**

(The True History of Chocolate)

Sophie D. Coe and Michael D. Coe

Fondo de Cultura Económica

Mexico City, 1999, 396 pp.

The ancient Maya drank it hot, mixed with different flavorings like chili peppers and vanilla; the much-coveted foam was produced by pouring the liquid from one recipient to another. With the Mexicas, the flavors of chocolate diversified. Sahagún tells us of chocolate flavored with chili peppers, vanilla flowers, *huitzteculli* flowers; there was brilliant red chocolate, white chocolate and black chocolate, all tinted with flowers. It could also be prepared with black *zapote* seeds or with corn. It was usually drunk cold. After their arrival in Mexico, the Spaniards

—especially the women— became fervent addicts. English traveler Thomas Gage, who was in San Cristóbal de las Casas around 1629, relates how the most important ladies of the town could barely sit through mass and the sermon at the cathedral and that, to help them through the long service, they would send for foamy little cups of chocolate and plates of sweets. When the bishop threatened to excommunicate them if they continued to eat and drink in the house of God, the feisty criollas went to hear mass at other churches and the cathedral stood empty. A short time later the over-conscientious bishop became ill and died; he had drunk chocolate laced with a slow poison (the strong flavor of the chocolate masked the flavor of the poison). The most extraordinary excesses of chocolate came about, however, in the Old World, when the novel drink took hold of the European courts and elites. The notorious Marquis de Sade, protagonist of so many other excesses, had to live up to his reputation when it came to chocolate. Gossip mongers say that during a party in Marseilles, the marquis mixed chocolate and Spanish-fly in a dessert. When it took effect, the entire evening became a fantastic orgy; the most upright found themselves prisoners of “the most amorous frenzy,” and the most respectable women were “incapable of resisting the uterine furor.” The marquis himself, who spent more than 30 years of his life in different prisons, was a great chocolate addict and repeatedly asked for tablets, wafers and cakes “as black from chocolate as the Devil’s ass is from smoke.”

These are only some of the most famous episodes of *La verdadera historia del chocolate* (a title which alludes to Bernal Díaz del Castillo’s *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España* [The True History of the Conquest of New Spain]). The book, begun by Sophie D. Coe, who did most of the research, was finished after her death by Michael D. Coe, the renowned Mayanist. Perhaps Michael’s part in the book explains some of the generalizations, at times superficial, that tend to present the Europeans in an unfavorable light vis-à-vis the indigenous peoples: the book talks of Felipe II’s fanaticism; the “silliness” of Western medicine, particularly the theories of humors; and Oviedo’s

contempt for the indigenous. But these slips do not overshadow the book's merits.

It is a history of chocolate crossed by several parallel histories: the conquest of Mexico by the Europeans, but also the conquest of Mexico by Europe, particularly through its plants and fruit; the economic relations among four continents (Europe, the Americas, Asia and Africa) manifest in the exchange of slaves, spices and raw materials; European medicine, with its myths, beliefs and confusions; the social, cultural and political meaning of fashions in food; the links between the culture of the elite and the culture of the masses. Chocolate is always the protagonist of the book and the story is told through its captivating adventures. The result is an enjoyable, seductive read, that at the same time opens up roads for future exploration.

The story starts in Mexico and Central America, where the cacao tree originated. Even the scientific name of the cacao tree, *Theobroma cacao* (thus named by Lineus in the eighteenth century), implies its destiny as the representative of the meeting of two worlds. The first part of the name, *theobroma*, is from the Greek, meaning "food of the gods." The second part, *cacao*, seems to be the Maya word, *kakav*. After this etymological digression —of which there are several in the book— Sophie and Michael introduce the different varieties of cacao trees. There are external and native cacao trees: the former are more resistant and account for 80 percent of today's international cacao crop. The criolla variety produces a superior flavor and aroma and is still used to make the best, deluxe chocolates. The criolla variety was the one used mainly among the Maya and the Mexica, or rather, among their elites: chocolate was a luxury. Therefore, among the Mexica, only the members of the royal household, warriors and the upper merchant class enjoyed it. To this high social value corresponded a high monetary value: cacao beans were used as currency and, according to Francisco Cervantes de Salazar, Moctezuma's royal treasury held more than 40,000 measures, or 960 million cacao beans. During the colonial period, cacao continued to be used as currency and some cases of counterfeiting were even registered.

After its arrival in Europe, chocolate continued for a long time to be a luxury beverage destined only for the upper class. But, before it became more popularly consumed, it went through a period in which it was rejected and adapted; it had to overcome three major barriers: the barrier of taste and ecclesiastic and medical objections. The first

European tales about chocolate describe it as a repugnant drink that brought to mind the human sacrifices so abominable to the conquistadors. Oviedo watched in horror as the natives drank chocolate flavored with *achiote*, a paste made of different chili peppers, that stained the lips and mouth red as though they had drunk blood. Soon, with the mingling of the two cultures (and above all the assimilation by the Spanish women of the indigenous women's customs), chocolate, like so many other native products, won the acceptance of the Europeans. At the same time, the use of spices familiar to the European palate like cinnamon, anise and black pepper in making chocolate contributed to its crossing the taste barrier.

To overcome the medical barrier, chocolate had to open up a favorable space for itself in the theory of the humors that, with certain variations, ruled Western medicine from the time of Hippocrates until the eighteenth century. According to the theory of the humors, food (as well as human beings or places) were classified in four categories (warm, cold, humid and dry, which had little to do with today's concepts of hot or cold). Health was due to the equilibrium of the four humors in the body (black bile, blood, phlegm and yellow bile) and illness came about when one of the humors prevailed over the others. In that case, the rebellious humor had to be countered with its opposite: a hot disease was attacked with cold foods. In this repertory, cacao was cold and humid, even if, when prepared as chocolate with the addition of spices, the final result was hot. Among the main medicinal uses of chocolate was for the relief of constipation (the Spaniards, great consumers of meat, were in serious need of laxatives) and its supposed aphrodisiac properties. Therefore, initially, chocolate crossed the Atlantic as a medicine.

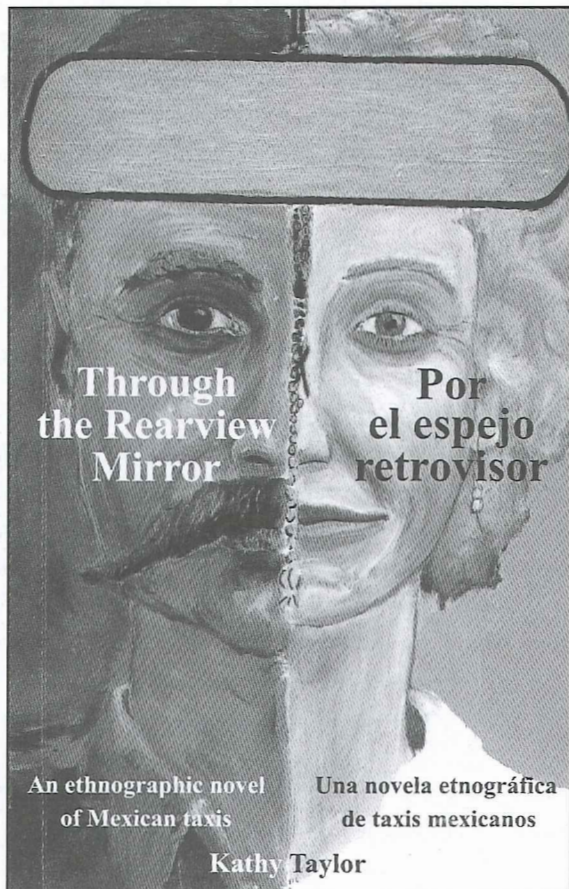
By the seventeenth century, the non-medical consumption of chocolate had spread so much in the religious community that it was the subject of serious theological debates. The dispute, in which much ink was spilled, could be reduced to whether chocolate broke the ecclesiastic fast or not. The Jesuits, devotees and traders in chocolate, insisted that it did not break the fast; the Dominicans, always more abstemious, argued that it did. A story from the Florentine Giovanni Batista Gudenfredi offers an ingenious truce for the debate in 1680: during her arduous penitence, when she was at the point of physical collapse, Saint Rosa of Lima (the first saint of the Americas and a Dominican!) was visited by a benevolent angel who invited her to a frothy

cup of chocolate. Rosa recovered her strength and went back to her devotions.

Once all objections had been overcome, chocolate met with little resistance and, one by one, conquered the courts of Europe. During the baroque period, it became extremely sophisticated: more and more elaborate recipes were invented; special serving dishes were developed (*mancerinas* and *chocolatières*), as well as rituals for drinking it. Its cultural and political space with regard to other stimulants like coffee and tea was also beginning to develop. Chocolate was associated with Catholic, absolutist regimes, while tea and coffee began to represent the Protestant culture. It was not until the nineteenth century that new manufacturing processes democratized chocolate. Parallel to this, solid chocolate began to be popular. This is the time of the benevolent chocolate dictators, like the famous American Milton S. Hershey, the Henry Ford of chocolate manufac-

turers. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Hershey created a model town—surprisingly enough, named Hershey—near Philadelphia. A utopia dedicated to chocolate production, the town was organized around a central factory, “the heartbeat of the community,” crisscrossed by two main avenues, Chocolate and Cacao, with five churches, a Hershey zoo, Hershey bank and Hershey hotel. The town is still visited by thousands every year, and other large chocolate producers have followed this Disneyland-like inspiration by opening their own theme parks. These captivating manifestations of a new chocolate cult may make a bag of Hershey’s Kisses seem sickly sweet. And then again, they may not. Meanwhile, a no lesser delight is this book by Sophie and Michael D. Coe.

Miruna Achim  
Writer



**Through the Rearview Mirror. An Ethnographical Novel of Mexican Taxis/Por el espejo retrovisor. Una novela etnográfica de taxis mexicanos**

Kathy Taylor

Graphic Type de México

Mexico City, 1999, 248 pp.

Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges’ words, “cada encuentro una cita” (“every encounter is a date”), seem to etch travelling paths into larger patterns of unknown meaning. Such crisscrossing of destinies is acknowledged in Kathy Taylor’s *Through the Rearview Mirror. An Ethnographical Novel of Mexican Taxis/Por el espejo retrovisor. Una novela etnográfica de taxis mexicanos* by translating notes from an ethnographic project into the realm of fiction. In doing so, she not only maps uncharted paths in fiction-as-ethnography-as-fiction but also creates a unique space for unheard voices to participate in a complex intercultural and bilingual mirroring of otherness in motion.

In this novel Kathy Taylor uses ethnographic field notes collected during myriad taxi rides in Mexico (mostly within a small town that appears under the pseudonym of Topeplán) and translates them into narrative devices such as the literal insertion of a lined notebook page scribbled with field notes and newspaper clippings. She also structures the entire novel using mostly single-page vignettes that give an identi-

ty to each anecdote and episode, thereby creating a fragmented whole that reminds the reader of the hair-thin borderline between storytelling and experience, fact and fiction, between who observes and who is observed.

The narrating voice shifts its narrative focus continually, emulating the movement of the taxis weaving routes through the town, moving from one taxi-driver's perspective to another, from them to other taxi riders and to the central character, the *señora güera* (none other than the ethnographer-writer's alter-ego). Narrated dialogues between a taxi-driver and a taxi-rider mirror both taxi occupants as they observe each other: "He sees her watching him again as they talk. Surely she sees him seeing her too. Neither says anything." (p. 22) The crisscrossing paths bring several separate destinies together so that part of a larger warp is made visible. The surprise ending becomes merely one more of destiny's unforeseen paths, where otherness becomes itself and other simultaneously and cruises the city's streets in a never-ending story/journey.

The taxi drivers portrayed in this book are itinerant ethnographers, perhaps even underemployed and underrated cultural analysts, observers of current political and social realities in Mexico, of varying visions of Mexico and of the U.S. They are protagonists in daily realities of poverty, illness, *asaltos* or hold-ups, death; into the habit of undaunted optimism and unswerving faith in the presence of Zapata as both myth and reality. Above all, they are storytelling agents that bring collectivity and orality to a fictional framework.

Kathy Taylor's book not only highlights their unique social role but also translates them into a very different kind of informant by enabling their storytelling gifts to become more than mere ethnographic anecdotes, to become intrinsic parts of a creative whole, inserting them as allies in the process of creating narrative fiction and in problematizing the complex politics of otherness.

What is perhaps most outstanding about *Through the Rearview Mirror/Por el espejo retrovisor* is its linguistic and cultural interplay. Kathy Taylor's initial notes in Spanish for the ethnographic project grew into a novel written entirely in Spanish, in which she is completely fluent even though it is not her native tongue. She then translated it into English to share it with fellow English-language speakers. Yet, due to the fiction-ethnography interplay, the process became even more fascinating when, during the revision of the text in English, the author-turned-translator began to re-write it, altering the original Spanish version accordingly, in a mir-

roring effect that encouraged further fictional creativity, within a rare linguistic and cultural dialogue, after which the final version in Spanish was revised by her (with the cooperation of Irlanda Villegas from the UNAM). Thus, two versions of the novel were created, each contemplating the ideal reader of each culture and language. In this sense the mirror of the title *Through the Rearview Mirror/Por el espejo retrovisor* became more than a metaphor. It was a creative impetus since, as Kathy Taylor has said, each text "revealed new things about both cultures as I tried to think about the different perspectives that each language would offer to each audience."

In this mirroring dialogue, writer, ethnographer and translator were one and the same, yet they had a different say in the novel. In this sense, these three carried on a dialogue not only amongst themselves but with the real-life informants, the taxi-driver characters and the fictional protagonist, *la señora güera*, in an interesting and unique interplay of the politics of presences. As if each obtained the right to a role within a democratic game facilitated by fiction.

One of the immediate challenges of a bilingual venture such as this would be the translational task of remaining faithful to the cultural as well as the linguistic tone of the original Spanish text in the English version. Kathy Taylor does this by inserting certain "clue" words in Spanish that create a specific illusion reminding the reader that the conversation, for instance, is actually taking place in Spanish. This apparently simple device is of vital importance to the effect of the narrative as a whole and is achieved only through acute observation of linguistic and cultural profiles.

The fact that both Spanish and English versions of this novel share the exact bilingual cover—underscoring duality/unity by having a dark-skinned Zapata (on the left) and the *señora güera* (on the right) merge into a single head-portrait—although each version is printed separately indicates the need to target different readerships and cultures by means of a "bridge-cover". This also reminds the reader that mediation between cultures/languages is best mapped where several kinds of borders cross, in spaces created as unique interstices for the creation of new exchanges and new meanings.

(Versions of this book in English and in Spanish are available from [graphictype@alfa-mex.com](mailto:graphictype@alfa-mex.com) or [kathyt@earlham.edu](mailto:kathyt@earlham.edu))

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*Olga Costa*