

disloyalty to the craft of writing because of having dedicated too much time to women, chess and literature. This is a disquieting confession that, 55 years after his 1943 personal diary entry, likens him to the old aristocrat Alfred de Vigny, secluded in the gloomy castle of Turón, continually regretting with inconsolable melancholy having wasted his life.

Memory and oblivion are intertwined in this “long, labyrinthine conversation” between Orso Arreola and his father, making a more finely sifted picture of the man and the artist possible. We cannot at all, however, fix exact limits between the two and, after all, perhaps it is not worth trying. “I play myself; I invented my own character and I will die with him; I am the other who has never been happy with himself; I am the one who stood staring at his face in the mirror and could no longer get out of it; for better or for worse, I have been my own performance.”

The difficulty in finding the image that brings together Arreola's desideratum is precisely the center of interest in this vast circumnavigation. But it also pushes the reader of *El último juglar* to jump the intervals, those “shreds of reports” that Paul Valéry talked about when he tried to establish the continuity of a whole life of a well known individual who has become part of our imagination. In the case of Arreola, the images in the minds of his contemporaries are those of an ironic writer, the pessimistic lover, the teacher who expected nothing in return, the university professor who in 1968 protested the massacre at Tlatelolco, the cultured, sharp polemicist or conversationalist, the steadfast friend, the generous, daring editor, the actor and lover of classical theater, the cultural promoter, the husband and the father. However, the complementary, or even fragmentary or contradictory, facets of personality, as well as the long cycles and grand temporary perspectives, are what spur a good reader of memoirs.

Orso Arreola had the good sense to include considerable portions of the diaries from Juan José Arreola's youth, as well as absolute jewels like the letter Julio Cortázar wrote him from Paris in September 1954. I cannot resist the temptation of transcribing here some comments from that letter: “And I think the best thing about *Confabulario* and *Varia invención* comes from the fact that you have what Rimbaud called “*le lieu et la formule*,” the way of taking the bull by the horns and —Ah!— not by the tail like so many others who wear out the print shops of this world.” And another: “I am amazed at what you are able to achieve with so little verbal material.”

The best homage and show of affection that we can make to Juan José Arreola is in not admiring or abusing him confusedly and in daring, when reading *El último juglar*, to reconstruct the character. Because, when all is said and done, we cannot and do not want to be free of him. **MM**

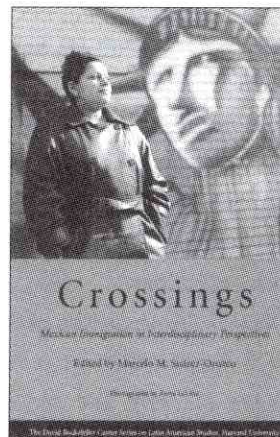
Mauricio Grobet Vallarta  
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### Crossings: Mexican Immigration In Interdisciplinary Perspectives

Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco, editor

The David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies,  
Harvard University

Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1998, 440 pp.



As a one-volume study on Mexican immigration, *Crossings* successfully synthesizes much research currently being done on what editor Suárez-Orozco considers to be the key issue in understanding the mosaic of recent Mexican immigration to the United States. Based on a conference held at Harvard University in April 1997, and developed as a project of the newly expanded David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies at Harvard, *Crossings* brings together distinguished U.S. and Mexican researchers from several disciplines in examining Mexican immigration through distinctive methodologies and perspectives.

Like many others who tackle the daunting question of Mexican immigration, Suárez-Orozco contends that the growing presence of Mexican-origin communities through immigration and natural increase challenges U.S. society like no other. While many other countries from Latin America and Asia, and to a much lesser extent, Europe, are represented in this “new” immigration, Mexican immigrants comprise the largest group, and will continue to do so into the next century. Each article in *Crossings* approaches the implications of recent Mexican immigration through a different prism and together they form a guide to the field.

To set the broad parameters for individual discussions, Mexican scholar Enrique Dussel Peters writes about recent changes in the Mexican economy that contribute to sending immigrants, while Susan González Baker, et al.<sup>1</sup> provide a detailed, long-term demographic analysis of the legal and undocumented Mexican immigrant population. Moreover, González Baker et al. lay out key issues parallel to immigration, such as the forces behind migration, and citizenship and settlement.

Nonetheless, a meaningful and successful incorporation of Mexican immigrants into U.S. society invariably means steady, well paid jobs. Wayne Cornelius writes about the intensifying dependence on unskilled Mexican workers in various sectors of the San Diego County economy, particularly among immigrant entrepreneurs. Especially disturbing is a study by Dowell Myers that clearly demonstrates that the present Mexican origin community cannot reasonably expect the social and economic mobility of previous generations.

Further, regarding the incorporation of the Mexican origin community into U.S. society, *Crossings* includes a study about intermarriage between Mexicans and non-Mexicans by Jorge Durand of Guadalajara, an analysis of the access to health insurance and medical care for the children of Mexican immigrant families by a research team of the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research led by E. Richard Brown,<sup>2</sup> and a discussion by Enrique Trueba about the challenges that Mexican origin children face in acquiring an education in the United States.

Most innovative in the organization of the volume is a section entitled “Psycho Cultural Themes.” Ricardo C. Ainslie explores the process of adaptation every immigrant goes through of balancing the losses and gains, and the attendant search for constructing a new cultural identity. Further, Mexican American historian David G. Gutiérrez approaches the accommoda-

tion of the Mexican origin population through their efforts to transform U.S. “social space,” by organizing cultural activities, participating in the political system, engaging in grass roots organizing and exploring many other phenomena. Likewise, Peter Andreas contributes an insightful analysis of how the recent much-publicized efforts of the U.S. government to secure its border with Mexico succeeds, not in necessarily controlling the movements of undocumented immigrants or their employment, but in enhancing the image of a federal government that seems to be able to defend its territorial integrity. Finally, Thomas J. Espenshade and Maryann Belanger examine the ambiguous evolution of U.S. public opinion regarding legal and undocumented immigration and immigrants, and conclude by remarking that while most U.S. residents do not identify immigration as a top national priority, it receives disproportionate attention in public discourse.

In short, *Crossings* provides an exceptional introduction and/or update to current research and salient issues in the area of Mexican immigration. However, for readers unfamiliar with the topic, the organization of the book as well as its content belie the vast amount of past research conducted in many parts of the United States and to a lesser extent in Mexico about Mexican immigration.

Moreover, while the editor should be commended for including both Mexican and U.S. researchers as authors, the absence in the bibliographies of information generated in Mexico is notable. If nothing else, the *Binational Study*<sup>3</sup> confirmed that a large cohort of experienced researchers publish in Mexico about immigration and related topics. While the immigration process is intrinsically bilateral, commonly available information about it is not always so. Yet the view south of the Rio Grande enriches analyses about Mexican immigration and often provides necessary complementary data about the impact of migration on local communities. Recent innovative studies in both countries about the increasingly transnational character of Mexican immigration clearly demonstrate the binational char-

<sup>1</sup> Susan González Baker, Frank D. Bean, Agustín Escobar Latapí and Sidney Weintraub.

<sup>2</sup> The authors are E. Richard Brown, Roberta Wyn, Hongjian Yu, Abel Valenzuela and Liane Dong.

<sup>3</sup> *Migration between Mexico and the United States, Binational Study: Estudio binacional: México-Estados Unidos sobre migración* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1997).



acter of immigration; indeed, the *transnacionalización* of recent Mexican immigrant experience and its implications promises to be the next frontier of immigration studies.

If *Crossings* is any indication—and I am sure it is—Mexican immigration will persist well into the next century. Its long-term consequences for both countries will broaden as the Latino population of the United States grows and matures, and Mexico comes to terms with emigration's multi-faceted effects on sending communities. ■■

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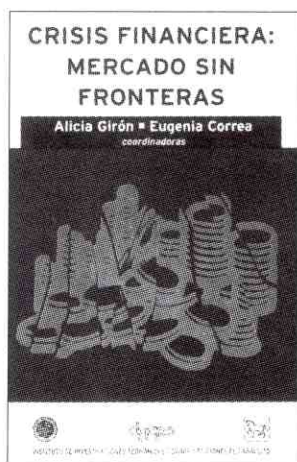
### **Crisis financiera: mercado sin fronteras**

(Financial Crisis. A Market without Borders)

Alicia Girón and Eugenia Correa, compilers

Ediciones El Caballito

Mexico City, 1998, 404 pp.



Once we recognize the decay of the post-war financial order, and take into account all the current signs in the economy, we can discern the major trends and changes in international financial markets. This includes problems derived from today's world situation and the relative inability of monetary policies to resolve them due to their inefficiency and the

scant supervision they receive, as well as the difficulties encountered by institutions like the International Monetary Fund and each country's lack of monitoring systems and public policies. This means weakness in the face of the need to appropriately channel enormous financial flows and the growing necessity of facing financial contingencies and emergencies caused by the decline and adjustments in capital flows.

In *Crisis financiera*, Alicia Girón and Eugenia Correa contend that, given progressive, constant financial instability and fragility, the limitations of international financial bodies and U.S. financial authorities have generated responses that have not led to a stable expansion of financing. On the contrary, these institutions and officials insist that the world should pay the consequences of the banking crises with many years of low economic growth and a decline in social welfare standards.

Among the major tendencies at play are the expansion of different inter-bank financial operations, as well as an increase in extra-bank intermediation. This generates greater market valuation and liquidity, a growing presence of various types of non-banking financial intermediaries, as well as deregulation processes in the markets and an increase in the limits and difficulties in control by financial authorities of each country. This is imposed by the very innovation of the financial system, since financial markets operate 24 hours a day, which has contributed to rapid changes in payment systems as a mechanism to diminish systematic risk levels. For traditional banking activity, this has implied the recognition of the inability of local banks to restore insolvent bank creditors' payment capacity through debt restructuring and financing. It has also led to the rise of foreign financial intermediaries that have slowly been imposing their own cost and margin structure on banking system operations. This raises the possibility of losing control over the payment system on a national level, which would underscore the emergency situation prevailing in very weak national financial systems.

The authors argue that one sign of instability is that innovations in and the growing development of financial derivative markets have resulted in major losses to several countries and bankruptcies of credit institutions that tend to carry out these types of transactions without the appropriate information.

In Latin America, financial instability and weak and erratic economic growth are factors in the transformation of international capital markets, and, in particular, in the increasing importance of the U.S. economy in the region. Therefore, capital