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Gisela Madrigal collection.

Cover
Benjamín Serrano, *The Revolution in High Heels,* detail, ca. 1969, 110 x 160 cm (oil on canvas).

Museums

The Splendor of Mexico

North American Issues

Special Section

In Memoriam

CARLOS FUENTES

Reviews

Our Voice

The administration of Enrique Peña Nieto has just celebrated its first 100 days, with a provocative balance sheet framed in what has been dubbed the Pact for Mexico, signed by the country's three main political forces, the Institutional Revolutionary Party, the National Action Party, and the Party of the Democratic Revolution. With the aim of analyzing, debating, and reaching consensuses to reformulate five key spheres of political endeavor (economic growth, employment, and productivity; security and justice; civil liberties and social rights; transparency, accountability, and the fight against corruption; and the strengthening of democratic governability), the mere idea of breaking the perverse 15-year cycle of divided governments has irrupted onto the national scene as an encouraging sign.

In accordance with this, in the sphere of foreign policy, the Ministry of Foreign Relations has issued the call for the 24th Meeting of Mexican Ambassadors and Consuls and the "Mexico: Globally Responsible Actor" Public Consultation to create synergies for a new era in Mexican diplomacy, centered on the values of peace, inclusion, prosperity, responsibility, and quality education. The country has an enormous need to roll back the negative image created by violence and organized crime, seeking new ways to articulate the imperatives of domestic development with those demanded of us to link up to the rest of the world. If we take into account that, today, Mexico has only 75 embassies and about 68 consulates —in contrast with Brazil, with 128 and 168, respectively— the era that our foreign policy is now entering will not only bring enormous challenges, but the need for more funding and highly trained human resources.

This background about the sphere of Mexican political negotiations is complemented in this issue by inviting our readers to review Eduardo Pérez Haro's ideas about the country's economic growth and its unbreakable link to public policy.

The fundamental relationship our nation has with the United States is one of the crosscutting themes in this issue. Brandishing her exceptional narrative ability, Ambassador Roberta Lajous offers us a panoramic view of the history of Mexico's international relations. With our homeland marked by its geographical proximity to the world's hegemonic power and its well-known interventionist vocation, Lajous underlines the yearnings and domestic political vicissitudes Mexico faced to obtain recognition from other countries as a sovereign nation throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

While it is true that the coincidence of President Obama's re-election and Mexico's President Peña Nieto taking office has sparked certain expectations about a more ambitious turn in bilateral relations, the important issues continue to be linked to economic integration (with particular emphasis on the energy sector), security, and migration. In this issue, CISAN researcher Raúl Benítez Manaut contributes his thinking about the results of the Mérida Plan, warning that its weak points include, among others, both the context of corruption in Mexico and free arms sales in the United States.

Inter-American Dialogue states that more than the economic integration of our two nations, demographics is what distinguishes us from all others in the world. Just as an example, let us consider that 25 percent of the foreigners residing in the United States are Mexican, as are 60 percent of its undocumented migrants. Researcher Camelia Tigau's article deals precisely with the emigration of talented professionals from our country and Canada to the United States, sketching a critique of the U.S. immigration red-tape labyrinth whose quota system renders it exclusionary.

Based on testimony from different sources, specialist Jill Anderson tells us about the urgent dilemma Mexico finds itself in because of the growing number of young migrants deported by the United States, whose common denominator is having spent time in jail before arriving in Mexico City. Their being taken advantage of by their international call center employers and the absence of a Mexican government policy to deal with their needs increase their vulnerability.

This issue of *Voices of Mexico* also deals superbly with Mexico's relations with Canada, through Leonardo Curzio's splendid, provocative interview with Canada's Governor General David Johnston, who, among other things, states that North America can already be considered a community.

This issue's "Special Section" includes eight articles that take a comprehensive look at the effects of climate change from different conceptual points of view. They review the rhetoric, the influence of the media, the financial challenges for developing and implementing new technologies to counteract its effects, public policies, and science. They show that each of the authors, headed by specialists Edit Antal and Simone Lucatello, have taken on the dual task of combining knowledge with conviction.

We want to express our particular thanks for the contributions written by three celebrated members of our country's intelligentsia to pay well-deserved tribute to the great writer Carlos Fuentes: Elena Poniatowska, Hernán Lara Zavala, and Ignacio Solares. Fuentes was a universal Mexican who distinguished himself for his literary gift, his work as a diplomat, and his open commitment to criticizing those practices he never agreed with: authoritarianism, corruption, injustice, and human rights violations.

To conclude, we think that this first year of the new administration will be decisive for calibrating the character, determination, and perhaps some of the early results of the reforms promised by the Mexican first executive in the spheres of education, employment, telecommunications, and energy. It will also be decisive for President Obama to show signs of his skill in fostering immigration reform, resolving the problem of the fiscal deficit, and containing the hostility of his country's ultraconservatives. About what the two presidents might undertake together, it is better not to speculate.

Silvia Núñez García
Director of CISAN

Universidades

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Security: Obama and Peña Nieto in 2013

Raúl Benítez Manaut*

REUTERS/Kevin Lamarque

In this essay, I will deal with the state of the Mexico-U.S. bilateral cooperation program known as the Mérida Initiative, as well as its perspectives, given the changes in administration in both Mexico and the United States. The aim is to analyze the program: its design in 2007 and the way it has evolved during the administrations of George W. Bush (2007-2008) and Barack Obama (2009-2012), and see if the switch in parties in office in Mexico and the advent of Obama's second term in the United States will bring any changes in the initiative.

To analyze the scope of cooperation on security issues between the two countries, we must take into account the following elements: the balance sheet of the war against drug trafficking and its implications for Mexico's national security; the analysis of the increases in Mexico's federal security budgets; the state of the process of professionalizing the federal police force and the implementation of justice system reforms, plus the role of U.S. cooperation in backing both these reforms; the debate on regulating weapons trafficking and money laundering in the United States, as well as their impact on Mexico; and the trends in cooperation on intelligence and defense issues between the two countries.

From Self-Sufficiency To Cooperation Policies

When the war on drug trafficking was declared in 2007, the Mexican government requested aid from the United States. As a concrete response, the two countries jointly designed the Mérida Initiative, based on four mainstays: destroying the criminal groups; strengthening Mexican government institutions;

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From a list of 37 big criminal bosses, 25 were captured, killed in fighting or extradited to the United States (16 of them). However, it was not possible to detain the most important one, Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán.

and building a twenty-first century border and strong, resistant communities.[1] In all, between fiscal year 2002 and 2012, that assistance for security matters came to US$1 171 540 170 (see graph).

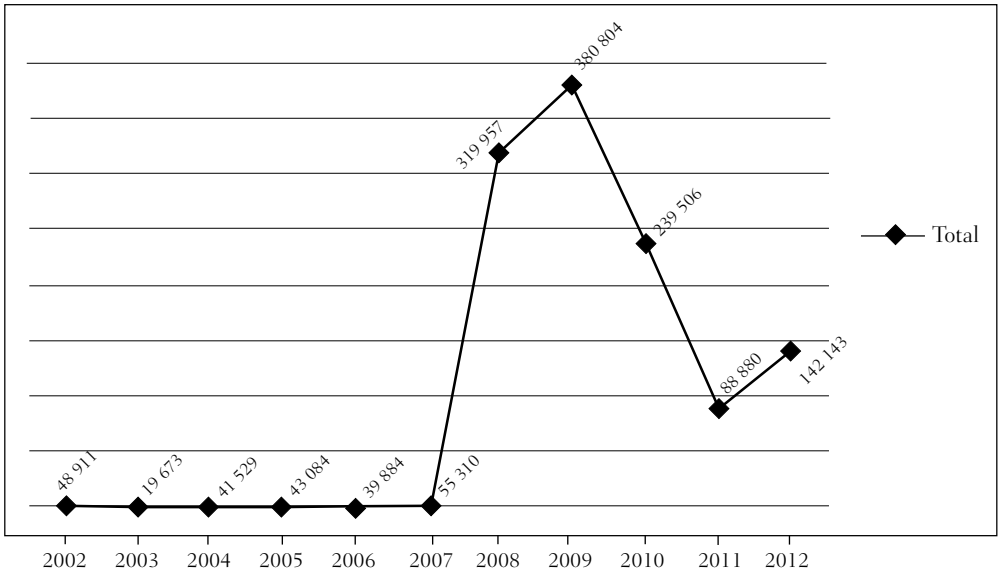
Today, we can say that all of Mexico's public security, migration, administration of justice, and intelligence agencies have participated in those assistance programs. For example, to strengthen security and intelligence information exchange between Mexico and the United States, the Investigation and National Security Center (CISEN) cooperates with the National Intelligence Office to reinforce Mérida Initiative activities; with the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI); with the offices of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF); the Department of Homeland Security (DHS); the New Mexico office of the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Program of the Office of National Drug Control Policy; the Texas Department of Public Safety on issues of terrorism and organized crime; and with programs like Global Entry.[2]

The Legacy of Felipe Calderón

Six years after Felipe Calderón began the war against drug trafficking in January 2007, the balance sheet is contradictory. On the one hand, the government proceeded to take on the criminal organizations frontally, attempting to strike at their structures vertically, like a pyramid. That is, the essence of the strategy was to cut off the heads of the cartels. From a list of 37 big criminal bosses, 25 were captured, killed in fighting or extradited to the United States (16 of them). However, it was not possible to detain the most important one, Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán.

This strategy led to what some analysts dubbed the "cockroach effect," that is, the dismemberment of the top structures and the appearance of more cartels, as well as their geographic expansion: they went from six in number to ten from 2006 to 2012, and after being concentrated in four states in 2006 (Sinaloa, Chihuahua, Baja California, and Tamaulipas), they spread geographically, mainly to Michoacán, Coahuila, Nuevo León, Guerrero, and Veracruz.[3] However, the unexpected

Mérida Initiative
Assigned resources by year (thousands of dollars)



Source: Center for International Policy, *Just the facts.*

consequence was the dispersion, and the war among the upper- and middle-level commands for control of the criminal organizations,[4] and the unbridled increase in the activities of hit men. For example, from 2001 to 2006, crime-related deaths totaled 8 901 according to the National Human Rights Commission.[5] Between 2007 and 2011, they came to 47 453; 2010 was the year with the largest number of organized-crime-related homicides: more than 15 000,[6] and in 2012, they totaled 9 913.[7] So, different sources estimate that during the Calderón administration, a minimum of 60 000 deaths were related to criminal activity, seven times more than the number under the administration of his predecessor Vicente Fox.

Taking into account the priority of the security system in the budget, the Mexican state has seen an unprecedented strengthening of its structures in recent years. Between 2006 and 2012, the budget of the Ministries of National Defense, of the Navy, and of Public Safety, as well as the Attorney General's Office and the CISEN more than doubled, rising from Mex$55.09 billion in 2006 to Mex$133.497 billion in 2012. At the same time, the gross domestic product (GDP) grew only 55 percent, increasing from Mex$9.14 billion in 2006 to Mex$15.62 billion in 2012. This makes it clear that security is the federal government's priority.[8] However, doubling the budget for security did not improve the population's safety.

Arms and Money: U.S. Deficit in the Fight against Organized Crime

Of all the weapons in circulation in Mexico, 90 percent come from the United States. Mexican criminal organizations bring them into the country through small-scale operations across land borders using private automobiles.[9] These weapons are mainly destined for Michoacán, Tamaulipas, Sinaloa, Sonora, Baja California, and Chihuahua.

According to the United Nations Office against Drugs and Crime (UNODC), of the 45 466 weapons confiscated by federal Mexican authorities between 2004 and 2008, almost 45 percent were registered with the ATF (about 20 800). This demonstrates the hypothesis that Mexico's cartels' main source for purchasing weapons is the United States (see table).[10]

The cultural and legal phenomenon that affects Mexicans' security has its origins in the United States, where the free sale of weapons and the self-defense culture, based on the Second Amendment to the Constitution, prevail. One example of how this happens and the difficulties governments face in their attempts to stop weapons trafficking was the ATF operation called Fast and Furious, which consisted of tracking arms sold to Mexican criminals in Arizona.

Of all the weapons in circulation in Mexico, 90 percent come from the United States. Mexican criminal organizations bring them into the country through small-scale operations across land borders.

The operation and the failure to trace the weapons were made public, causing a major bilateral problem. Only 700 weapons out of a total of 1 960 were traced, and in Mexico it is argued that 150 civilians were killed with the weapons distributed in the operation.[11] The U.S. congressional report analyzing Fast and Furious pointed out that its secrecy and unilateral nature affected the Mérida Initiative's performance.[12]

Mexico maintains that the U.S. federal government should improve its ability to control weapons sales. President Obama, for his part, published his 23-point strategy for weapons control given events in his own country, mainly the massacres in schools. However, the main obstacle is the political clout of groups like the National Rifle Association (NRA). The other factor affecting Mérida Initiative implementation is the limits on controlling earnings from criminal activities whose beneficiaries are favored by the financial system's weak mechanisms for avoiding asset laundering. Cash movements continue to be the main form of this crime, and governments have had a very hard time controlling cash flows.

Intelligence and Defense, Fundamental Axes of the War against Drugs

In Mexico, the intelligence services were not prepared to fight the criminal organizations. It was an issue on the "risk agenda," but not a very important one. In most cases, these services had tactical and operational intelligence, but lacked what is called "strategic intelligence." In addition, the biggest limitation on the U.S. side to sharing intelligence information with Mexico is distrust, the fear that that information might fall into the hands of a Mexican official who collaborates with the criminal organizations. Despite this, the Mérida Initiative includes a specific budget item for intelligence activities, for

Firearms Confiscated in Mexico by Federal Authorities and Total of weapons with ATF Registration (2004-2008)				
Year	**Individual Weapons**	**Assault Rifles**	**Total of Weapons**	**Total of Confiscated Weapons Registered with the ATF**
2004	3 520	2 057	5 577	2 900
2005	3 156	1 959	5 115	5 000
2006	2 487	1 733	4 220	1 800
2007	4 978	4 549	9 527	3 900
2008	9 105	11 916	21 027	7 200
Total	**23 246**	**22 214**	**45 466**	**20 800**

Source: UNODC, *The Globalization of Crime. A Trasnational Organized Crime Threat Assessment 2010*, Vienna, p. 138, www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/tocta/TOCTA_Report_2010_low_res.pdf. The figures for weapons with ATF registration are UNODC estimates.

example, biometric equipment for the National Migration Institute; Casa planes turned over to Mexico's navy, equipped with radar to intercept ships and planes coming from South America; data base and software projects for the CISEN; the Constanza project for the Attorney General's Office (valued at US$28 million); the postal inspection project for the Ministry of Communications and Transportation; x-ray and gamma-ray machines for customs stations; ion scanners for the Ministry of National Defense; support for building C-4 bunkers; support for the National Policy Registry; software and help for installing it for Platform Mexico (Ministry of Public Safety); polygraph equipment and personnel training; and projects for CISEN network security, among the most important.[13]

Politics and Diplomacy in the Bilateral Security Relationship

The most noteworthy case of the way in which politics has affected the appropriate development of the Mérida Initiative came as a result of the information released through Wikileaks. A January 2010 telegram from the U.S. embassy points to a lack of coordination and mistrust of Mexican agencies in dealing with the war against drugs, saying that this is the reason these efforts are failing. It says that there is great tension between the Ministries of Defense and of the Navy and that the latter has made some successful hits, while the army reacts slowly and has an "aversion" to taking risks. It also mentions that the entire military strategy implemented in Mexico is ineffective because the tactics used make it impossible to bring the cases to trial, thus benefitting the criminal organizations.[14] Added to this, the political and diplomatic tensions went to the extreme of creating such anger and lack of communication between the United States and Mexico in 2010 and 2011 that they endangered the success of the Mérida Initiative. This even led to the resignation of the U.S. ambassador to Mexico. One of the reasons President Calderón requested that the State Department have him resign was that he had been "invasive and interventionist."[15]

Because of Fast and Furious, the political and diplomatic tensions went to the extreme of creating such anger and lack of communication between the United States and Mexico in 2010 and 2011 endangering the success of the Mérida Initiative.

Conclusions

U.S. assistance has made important inroads, mainly in terms of professionalizing police and members of the justice system

as well as in defense and intelligence. However, the Mexican population does not perceive these benefits; on the contrary, it is frequently said that there is a great humanitarian crisis.

In summary, institutional weakness and corruption in Mexico, and the free sale of weapons and weak controls over money laundering in the United States are the fundamental obstacles to a program like the Mérida Initiative being successful. These factors outstrip the efforts of both governments and are rooted in the political culture of the population of the two countries, which is why the small effort at cooperation and assistance faces great barriers. Another achievement of the Mérida Initiative is that the government and an important part of the Mexican elites recognize the need for international cooperation. This is something new and is transforming the old nationalist ideology. VM

NOTES

[1] Government Accountability Office, *Mérida Initiative. The United States Has Provided Counternarcotics and Anticrime Support but Needs Better Performance Measures*, Report to Congressional Requesters, Washington, D.C., July 2010, http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d10837.pdf.

[2] Secretaría de Gobernación, *Cuarto informe de labores* (Mexico City: Segob, 2010), p. 21.

[3] In Nuevo León, mainly Monterrey, practically no organized-crime-related activity could be detected in 2006, but by the end of 2012, the number of homicides surpassed those in the state of Chihuahua.

[4] Eduardo Guerrero "La estrategia fallida," *Nexos*, December 2012, www.nexos.com.mx.

[5] Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos, "Segundo informe especial de la Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos sobre el ejercicio efectivo del derecho fundamental a la seguridad pública en nuestro país" (Mexico City: Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos, 2008).

[6] Presidencia de la República and Procuraduría General de la República, "Base de datos sobre fallecimientos por presunta rivalidad delincuencial," http://www.pgr.gob.mx/temas%20relevantes/estadistica/estadisticas. asp.

[7] "Ejecutómetro," *Reforma* (Mexico City), www.reforma.com, accessed January 15, 2013.

[8] Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público, "Presupuesto de egresos de la federación," several years. "Presupuesto del sector seguridad y defensa por dependencia 2000-2012," *Atlas de la seguridad y la defensa de México 2012* (Mexico City: Colectivo de Análisis de la Seguridad con Democracia, 2012), p. 145.

[9] Georgina Olson, "El tráfico de armas de Estados Unidos hacia México," *Atlas de la seguridad y la defensa de México 2012*, op. cit., p. 55.

[10] UNODC, *The Globalization of Crime. A Trasnational Organized Crime Threat Assessment 2010,* Vienna, p. 138, www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/tocta/TOCTA_Report_2010_low_res.pdf. The figures for weapons registered by the ATF are UNODC estimates.

[11] Katherine Eban, "The Truth about the Fast and Furious Scandal," *Fortune*, June 27, 2012, http://features.blogs.fortune.cnn.com/2012/06/27/fast-and-furious-truth/?hpt=hp_t.

[12] See http://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/7-31-12-FF-Part-I-FINAL-Appendix-III.pdf, and Georgina Olson, op. cit.

[13] *Just the Facts*, http://justf.org/.

[14] Wikileaks, telegram 246329, January 20, 2010 (embassy in Mexico; classification: secret).

[15] Wilbert Torre, *Narcoleaks. La alianza México-Estados Unidos en la guerra contra el crimen organizado* (Mexico City: Grijalbo, 2013), p. 267.

From Tijuana to Zucotti Park
A Mexican Caravan Clamors For Justice in the United States

Ruth A. Dávila Figueroa*

REUTERS/Henry Romero

Javier Sicilia (center, with raised arm), the leader of the Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity.

Not all parents are poets, but all children are poetry.[1]

A couple of months ago, the Caravan of the Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity passed through several U.S. cities to create awareness about the violence in Mexico caused by the war against drug trafficking. The caravan left its mark; a meeting with Obama was not possible, but there was one with Joe Arpaio, the fiercely anti-immigrant sheriff of Maricopa County, Arizona. It was not possible to convince people about controlling weapons sales to stop the violence in Mexico, but it was possible to create awareness about the situation of "illegal" migrants and about the need for the most vulnerable groups, Afro-Americans and Latinos, to join together.

The caravan brought civic organizations together. Some offered food and a place to sleep, and others took charge of the caravan's logistics as it went through the country, like Global Exchange (GX). Organizations in favor of legalizing drugs, or fighting for de-militarization, or against mistreatment of migrants, etc., plus multiple voices and positions came together around the caravan. In that same space, individuals participated who, without being direct victims, made known what Mexico is going through because of the so-called war against drug trafficking.

Rodrigo, Debora, and Louise shared their experiences during the caravan's journey, explaining the criminalization that Afro-Americans and Latinos are subject to, the mistreat-

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ment and humiliation migrants without legal status suffer in the United States, the criminalization of social protest, and the fetishism surrounding guns. What follows is the summary of the voices of three activists committed to their cause.

"Stop and Frisk"

The population most sympathetic to the caravan were African-Americans. "They felt sympathy for the migrants, the 'brownies' because as Afro-Americans they had lived with racism for decades and have fought for their civil rights, and they are familiar with that struggle, which is now also the struggle of non-legalized migrants," says Rodrigo. Today, the struggle of Afro-Americans and the "brownies," Latino migrants, is not only for civil rights or the legalization of immigration status, but against criminalization.

> Marijuana is still an illicit substance and the laws are still being used to justify the search, detainment, and questioning of populations deemed "untrustworthy" and "suspicious" by modern society, namely the poor and young men of color. A prime example is New York's Stop and Frisk program, which stopped nearly 700 000 people in 2011. Hailed as a strategy for removing guns and violent crime from the streets, this method of stopping and questioning "suspicious" individuals highlights the racial inequities associated with drug laws. From 2002 to 2011, African American and Hispanic residents made up close to 90 percent of people stopped. This is not limited to New York. In California, African-Americans are 4 times more likely to be arrested for marijuana, 12 times more likely to go to prison with a felony marijuana charge, and 3 times more likely to go to prison with a marijuana possession charge.[2]

The New York Police Department (NYPD) Stop and Frisk program is the best example to illustrate the growing criminalization of minorities, particularly Latinos and Afro-Americans. Since Michael Bloomberg became mayor of New York, this practice has increased 600 percent. Stop and Frisk actions target whites 9 percent of the time; Latinos, 33 percent of the time; and African Americans, 51 percent of the time. During these stops, officers have used force 9 765 times against whites, 53 107 times against Latinos, and 76 483 times against African Americans.[3]

There is a tendency to criminalize individuals according to race. Following the logic that he/she "is suspicious" because of the way he/she walks, dresses, and/or because of racial characteristics, NYPD officers detain and search, using physical force, offensive language, and discriminatory messages. Alvin, a young African-American student, was detained repeatedly. When he asks what the charges are, "At one point, an officer answers the teenager and tells him he's been stopped because he's a 'fucking mutt.'"[4]

The aim of the Stop and Frisk program is crime prevention; the idea is to arrest drug dealers. However, few detentions end in arrest. This leads one to suppose that the "detainees" have not committed any crime. The program has a big impact in the communities because they are discriminated against and criminalized simply for belonging to this or that racial group. One of the impacts is fear, but also the feeling that their rights are systematically violated, like the right to freedom of movement.

Get Your Brand New AK47s While They're Hot!

Debora and Rodrigo's most memorable —perhaps most surrealistic— experience involved weapons. Caravan participants witnessed the adoration, the fetishism, U.S. Americans have professed for weapons when they visited an armory and gun fair and exhibition. Weapons are a sticky issue because it involves the second amendment to the Constitution: for U.S. Americans, the right to bear arms is not under discussion, much less if it is foreigners who are trying to impose that discussion or it stems from something that, in their opinion, is a result of corruption.

It is generally believed that Mexican organized crime's weapons come from the North, from the armories north of the river. It is easy to purchase a gun in Texas, even for a foreigner. Weapons are big, profitable business. If you're a foreigner and you cannot buy one because it is illegal to do so, the owner of the armory "gives it to you." With no invoice, no sale has taken place: the gun is a gift. Rodrigo tells us,

The population most sympathetic to the caravan were African-Americans. "They felt sympathy for the migrants, the 'brownies' because as Afro-Americans they had lived with racism for decades."

Caravan participants witnessed the adoration, the fetishism, U.S. Americans have professed for weapons when they visited an armory and gun fair and exhibition. For them the right to bear arms is not under discussion.

A *compañera* from the caravan purchased a gun and asked the shop owner in her British accent if she needed to show any kind of document to make the purchase. He said it wasn't necessary because he was giving it to her, and it's completely legal to give away guns. Actually, what was happening there was a sale under the table, an illegal sale. . . . Another *compañero* told the armory owner that he was going camping and he needed a gun to defend himself from bears; the man brought out an enormous AK47 and handed it to him.

Gun store owners defend themselves saying that they sell, for example, a rifle for US$900, but if you purchase it wholesale, it costs US$500. That is where the corruption comes into play because, the gun store owner told Rodrigo, "Our government sells them to yours, to the army, and they distribute them to the drug traffickers. . . . They make the purchase for the army, but they're so frigging corrupt that they sell them to the drug traffickers." That is what the weapons dealer argued when confronted with the statement that the sale of weapons in the United States hurts Mexicans: for him, everything is the fault of the Mexican government and army, which resell wholesale the guns they purchase legally from the United States. What he was forgetting when he talked about corruption is that he had just sold a weapon illegally to a foreigner. For him, selling weapons under the table, as Rodrigo would say, is not corruption, and if there is no receipt showing there has been a sale, that weapon was a gift, and giving away AK47s is completely legal, besides being a nice keepsake to take back home to the United Kingdom.

At the Weapons Fair, the experience was no better. Rodrigo remembers that, being there amidst whole families, from grandparents to little children, he felt very strange, uncomfortable. He had never been so close to so many and so many different kinds of weapons, and "so many crazy people who love guns." One man, remembers Rodrigo, told him that "his grandson asked him what it felt like to kill a person. The man responded by making a silicon doll so his grandson could shoot at it." Rodrigo remembers, stunned, that "the man laughed as he told that story, happy, thinking that he was teaching his grandson a lesson."

Pensive, Rodrigo comments, "All those massacres, like at the premier of *Batman*, don't happen because of the movies or the music; they happen because they are surrounded by guns in real life." The United States is the country with the highest number of guns among civilians: almost 90 firearms per 100 inhabitants.[5]

Return to Zucotti Park

"I took a sabbatical to be able to participate in the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) actions; I participated for six months in Occupy the Congress, Occupy NATO, and others," says Debora. As she gets settled, the talk turns to the caravan's journey through the United States. Debora wears jeans and a red Occupy T-shirt and carries an enormous backpack where she keeps her camera and all the paraphernalia a good activist has to have with her.

She hasn't finished settling in when she interrupts herself to start her story: "They arrested me." I ask why. "I'm a free-lance photographer. Even though I participate in OWS actions, sometimes I separate from the group a little to take pictures. I was in Zucotti Park on the OWS anniversary taking pictures when they arrested me for obstruction of public right-of-way."

In New York City, police routinely abuse their authority to engage in the false arrest of protestors (or persons associated with protest) who are lawfully present on sidewalks. These unconstitutional actions send a threatening message to those engaging in political protest and to the public; free speech activities are viewed as criminal by the NYPD and those who participate in demonstrations, associate with them, or are just in the vicinity, assume a risk of police violence and false arrest.[6]

Debora remembers that in the vehicle that took her to the police station were at least three other journalists arrested on the same charge. In the United States, social protest and political activism are also criminalized, trampling on the most elementary rights and freedoms. This was Debora's case, who despite identifying herself as a journalist, was violently arrested as she demanded her First Amendment rights. "As I was walking toward the contingent to take my photo-

graphs, a 'white T-shirt,' a kind of supervisor, grabbed me from behind and pushed me against the wall. My arrest wasn't all that violent compared to what I've seen at the Occupy actions." Debora says that the plastic handcuffs they used on her hurt a lot. "I asked the officer to loosen them, but he didn't. On the contrary. And I was in a lot of pain. I was in them for about an hour and my fingers turned purple; they left marks." After showing us where she felt the greatest pain, Debora became pensive, saying,

> The New York police aren't in control. The limit they have is that they don't use tear gas in the subway. In Chicago, a few blocks from the anti-NATO demonstrations they were bashing heads, and the first ones I saw were the photographers. I was wearing a helmet, goggles, etc.; you go prepared for anything. A few blocks from the demonstrations there were two squads, one with federal cops and the other with Chicago police with rifles; and they didn't fire rubber bullets, they fired real bullets. The riot squad also carries guns. What for? [Debora is indignant.] I wasn't in the caravan representing the OWS. I was an odd case nobody was there representing Occupy. Originally, I wasn't going to accompany the caravan through the States because I didn't have a place, but they sent me a last-minute email telling me there was space, so I went, but not exactly representing Occupy.

The Caravan Planted a Seed

The Caravan of the Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity (MPJD) "sowed a seed, and for that seed to flower, there will have to be follow-up and lots of work," says Louise, a French activist with experience in the fields of human rights, resource use, the right to the land, and indigenous peoples' rights, above all in Guatemala and Argentina.

> I heard of the MPJD and the caravan through the United States for the first time in December 2011 because I wanted to work with GX [Global Exchange] on its Mexico and human rights program. When I started reading and studying about the caravans, the MPJD, and Javier Sicilia, I thought the situation in Mexico was gripping, terrible, and very important, and I did everything possible to become part of the team in the U.S.

But how did Louise find out about everything that was going on in Mexico, all the violence, the disappearances, etc.?

> Before approaching Global Exchange, I didn't know about the MPJD. I knew about the violence, the impunity, the power of the cartels, the corruption, the journalists murdered, because I worked on those issues with Guatemalan organizations and because in France I worked in the PBI [Peace Brigades International]. Through PBI, I heard of the urgent alerts for human rights defenders threatened in Mexico. I hadn't imagined the situation was so terrible and that it was rapidly worsening, or that there were so many dead, many of them civilians.

What does the violence in Mexico look like from Europe, I asked her, intrigued. She answered,

> In Europe, or at least in France, Mexico is viewed as a nice tourist destination, particularly southern Mexico. People know that it's a little dangerous because of common criminals, particularly in Mexico City. People don't know that Mexico City is almost the safest place in the country now, not because things have gotten better, but because it's much worse outside Mexico City. People don't know how powerful the cartels are, or that traveling through the South, staying in the hotels, you might be helping launder drug money. Recently, several articles dealing with the violence have been published in important media like *Le Monde*, but they usually just make a list of barbarous actions, like beheadings, people hung from bridges, but without analysing why this is going on. They focus more on the shock-value of the horror, on the spectacle that gets the public's attention. In France, it's very difficult to talk about Latin America because there's no strategic/political interest in the region, except for the case of Florence Cassez. People don't know there's a war going on in Mexico. From time to time, the press publishes an article about the arrest of some drug kingpin; this gives the Mexican state the image of making some headway, but there are organizations, activists, students who know what's really happening.

Louise emphasizes that she learned a lot during the caravan "about the impact of the prohibition of drugs and the

The Caravan of the Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity (MPJD) "sowed a seed, and for that seed to flower, there will have to be follow-up and lots of work," says French activist Louise.

repressive policy to deal with them. We have a lot to learn from the situation in Mexico so that we don't follow in Felipe Calderón's footsteps. During these times of crisis, unemployment, and the destruction of public services, fear and repression (because of drugs, terrorism, etc.) are a good way to keep the population quiet." For Louise, the caravan's greatest achievement in the United States was that it "sowed a seed; for that seed to flower, a lot of follow-up and work have to be done." Among the concrete achievements, she thinks, are the alliances forged and the fact that many people were directly sensitized to the issues, members of organizations and politicians both. She continues,

> In my work with GX, I contacted local groups to create organizing committees to receive the caravan, organize events, etc. First I had to explain the situation in Mexico, what the movement is, who Javier Sicilia is. Most people had no idea. Now they know and they have heard the victims themselves. I think many organizations and individuals realized that they had interests and objectives in common with the Mexican people and the MPJD, particularly African Americans, victims of mass jailings in the United States. But I think forging a Black-Brown alliance is a long term thing; it has a lot of opponents. We also learned a lot from each other on the caravan, and from the people we met along the way, since not all of us had the same political background. This will help the MPJD reorient its political strategy. I think that the achievements will be visible in the long run. But the big achievement is that we were talking in the United States about the situation in Mexico and raising our voices about the U.S. responsibilities (foreign policy, weapons trafficking, money laundering). This is very heavy symbolically, and an expression of dignity.

For Louise, the caravan's success will depend on the follow-up with the organizations in the United States. The end of the war on drugs has to be a bi-national and international, long-term fight; alliances will also have to be made with academics and universities:

> We have to keep this up, sending movement delegates to give lectures, etc. With Peña Nieto's election, prospects are terrible. As a foreigner, I can say that he seems to want to present the image of a democrat. The situation is very difficult for progressive and human rights organizations, but I believe that to protect themselves and to be able to exert certain pressure on the government, alliances with human rights organizations are important.

Debora and Rodrigo agree that it does not matter if Javier Sicilia has announced his withdrawal. His is only the most visible face. They think the movement will continue, adding, "There will not be any big differences with Peña Nieto in the presidency." Time will tell. VM

NOTES

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Mexico: A Backward or A Developing Nation?

Eduardo Pérez Haro*

Iván Stephens/Cuartoscuro.com

Mexico has not been able to create jobs at a rate even similar to the growth of the work force.

For Enrique de la Madrid Cordero

Introduction

Because Mexico has the world's fourteenth largest economy, it is part of the G-20. However, it is also prisoner of the tentacles of backwardness because 60 percent of its workers are in the informal sector (see Table 1), almost 50 percent of its population lives in poverty, and one-fifth of its inhabitants live in rural areas. Its possibility of becoming a developing nation is complicated by three conditions: accumulated structural insufficiencies; high centralization and control by the big economic elites; and the crisis of the developed countries, among them, the United States, on which our economy depends.

However, climbing out of backwardness and moving toward being a developed nation is no fantasy. In the history of mercantile-capitalist society, we have witnessed successive displacements of the hegemonic centers (Italy, Portugal, Spain, Holland, England, the United States, and even Japan and Germany); displacements and reestablishments, emergences and preponderancies. It is a history of movements motivated by the relationship between technological-productive (techno-productive) changes and forms of social, legal, and cultural organization in some countries *vis-à-vis* others (relative competitiveness).

This allows us to conclude that being inside a world system of exchange, today particularly linked together by electronic communications and multi-modal transportation, to a large degree, countries develop as a result of their internal conditions being placed in global competition, as well as the

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Table 1
Employment in the Formal and Informal Sectors by Kind of Employer (third quarter 2012)

Kind of Employer	Employed Population				
	Total	Formal	%	Informal	%
Total	48 732 252	19 461 229	39.94	29 271 023	60.06
Informal Sector	14 221 779	0	0.00	14 221 779	100.00
Employment Rate in the Informal Sector (TOSI), traditional measurement that the National Information and Geography Institute (INEGI) has presented since 2005, based on the National Survey on Occupation and Employment (ENOE)					
Paid Domestic Service	2 202 107	64 185	2.91	2 137 922	97.09
Companies, Government, and Institutions	25 570 482	18 816 934	73.59	6 753 548	26.41
Agriculture and Animal Husbandry	6 737 884	580 110	8.61	6 157 774	91.39
General or amplified rate called the Informal Work Rate (TIL) INEGI-ILO. Broad concept of informality that includes not only employment in un-registered economic units, known as the "informal sector," but also encompasses work done or not in economic units typical of the informal sector, which incorporates agricultural activities and paid domestic service as well as employees who participate in fully formal economic units' processes, but for whom those units do not recognize a work relationship and the obligations that this brings with it.					

Source: Developed by the author using information on the informal sector in Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI), "Boletín de prensa no. 449/12," December 11, 2012 (Aguascalientes, Mexico). For more information, see "Measuring Informality: a New Statistical Manual on the Informal Sector and Informal Employment," http://www.ilo.org/stat/Publications/WCMS_182300/lang--en/index.htm.

international cooperation systems and political-institutional alliances that give them greater protection. Consequently, Mexico will have to review its weaknesses and act solidly where opportunity presents itself, clearly observing the parameters of international competition. To do this, it will have to decide, in context, what, how, how much, and for whom it should produce. This implies changes in the pattern of development, the structural bases of which can be found in energy, infrastructure, technology, education, the organization of production, financing sources, links of the markets, and the institutional framework.

For Mexico, this means it must redefine the end and the means of the what and the how, using its current objective situation as a starting point: that is, the fact that it is lagging behind in the world's techno-productive and geo-economic restructuring, threatened by the systemic recession.

Barely into the second half of the 1960s, Mexico's wheels of progress began to spin in the muck, and no one knew how to get out or, rather, they did not want to. The former protagonists of structural change became conservatives.

Where Is Mexico Coming From and Where Is It now?

As I already mentioned, our country is trapped in the tentacles of backwardness; it is not a developing nation. Over the last 50 years, average growth has been 2 percent a year. This has been insufficient to overcome the socio-economic deficiencies that existed at the beginning of the current stage (1982), plus those that have accumulated until today as a result of this poor performance. At the same time, with this pace of economic growth, Mexico has not kept up with the average growth of countries that at that time had similar conditions and are now in the forefront of the markets, vying for regional hegemony. Among these we can mention the prodigious emerging countries like the Asian Tigers or the so-called BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa).

The paradoxical side of this is that Mexico was just emerging from a stage of sustained growth (from 1935 to 1965) averaging over 6.0 percent, when, suddenly, from 1966 on, it began to just spin its wheels, like the tires of a car stuck in mud that turn and turn but do not move forward. What happened in those countries that, starting with similar conditions, are now emerging countries, practically exemplary, and are a counterweight to the growth dynamic of the developed countries in crisis? Let's explain it by analyzing what happened in Mexico. What formula was applied in the growth stage and why did it stop being useful? What replaced it and what is recommendable for the near future?

With its pace of economic growth, Mexico has not kept up with the average growth of countries that had similar conditions and are now in the forefront of the markets.

Mexico's Sustained Economic Growth Model (1935-1965) And Why It Failed

Mexico took advantage both of internal and external conditions to organize the forces of production and adapted to both international and domestic market needs. The state distributed land and developed hydro-agricultural, warehousing, and communications infrastructure to make agriculture a factor in supporting industrialization. Later, it protected the economy through tariffs and adopted a model of manufacturing import substitution; it facilitated productive investments, created a banking system to foster production, and ensured both sufficient energy production (oil and electricity) and food supply to the work force at accessible prices.

In addition, it corporately organized workers and peasants, facilitating agreements and compromises in line with the industrialization project. It also took on the enormous task of basic and higher education to satisfy industry and related services' demand for technicians and professionals.

Parallel to this internal reordering effort, it reacted to external demand that increased enormously due to World War II. The need for food and raw materials by the main powers involved in the conflict spiked, so the demand for sugar, tobacco, grains, cotton, henequen fibers, energy, metals, etc., shot up at the same time that their ability to satisfy that demand diminished. Mexico was able to produce and sell in accordance with existing historic standards, which at the time were through industrialization.

Structural change was in its first phase, since the country's productive structure went from being above all agricultural to being predominantly industrial, and from being a rural society to one that was preeminently urban. Nevertheless, in that process, Mexico engendered a first generation of men who forged very powerful families that developed under the umbrella both of the private and the governmental sector. These families' fortunes grew and they enjoyed privileges derived from public power. This allowed them to dominate towns and territories and also made them resistant to change. And that ended by tangling up the growth model.

Industrialization, on the other hand, demanded moving away from the import substitution of manufactured goods (television sets, refrigerators, washing machines, etc.) to the production of capital goods (machinery and equipment). But before that could happen, Mexico ran up against the fact that the developed countries, having emerged from the ravages of war and reconstruction efforts, began to satisfy their own food requirements —except for tropical products— and a large part of their raw materials were replaced with synthetic fibers. The change in external demand strangled the entry of hard currency, and therefore the capacity to import machinery and equipment, even replacement parts. This meant Mexico stopped selling agricultural products and started buying them at the same time that its industry aged and became obsolete.

The End of an Era

The success story was a thing of the past. Barely into the second half of the 1960s, Mexico's wheels of progress began to spin in the muck, and no one knew how to get out — or rather, they did not want to, because, after three or four decades of success, the country's leaders had turned into a power elite and did not dare introduce political or economic or institutional change because they feared the risks. The former protagonists of structural change became conservatives.

The government clung to the same road, resorting to indebtedness, and, before the end of the 1970s, the possibilities for contracting debt rose enormously because of the

discovery of large oil deposits. However, expectations swiftly vanished after international oil prices fell in the early 1980s.

Mexico incorporated itself
—but only its most promising economic sectors—
into the world trend of economic neoliberalization.
Its masters were heir to the powers created
in the glowing previous period.

Development Strategy Change And the Causes of Meager Results (1982-2012)

Mexico was in debt and without a industry capable of fulfilling its needs as the world restructured on the basis of technology that demanded the liberalization of borders to make way for new forms of organizing production and the markets. The socialist world was disappearing, and the new wave of economic growth in the capitalist world became overwhelming.

The Mexican state aligned with the new liberal tendencies, and we entered the 1980s, first with a plan for savings and paying the public debt. Then, we moved toward re-formatting the government apparatus, which opted to not intervene directly in the economy and to eliminate trade barriers. Nevertheless, within this scheme of things, Mexico did not achieve the sustained growth it sought; much less did it lessen its imbalances and social, regional, and productive inequalities.[1]

That is, Mexico incorporated itself —but only its most promising economic sectors— into the world trend of economic neoliberalization. Its masters were heir to the powers created in the glowing previous period I mentioned. These people did not have a hard time of it, nor have they been affected by the crises. Quite to the contrary, they have been the spoiled beneficiaries of the market, both domestic (telecommunications, construction, etc.) and foreign (electronic parts, auto, cement, glass, winter fruits and vegetables, etc.) (see Table 2). What is more, their growth rates skyrocketed.

Thus, some Mexicans and their industries integrated themselves into the new world economy, amassing great fortunes and forging a relatively solid macro-economy to provide coverage to their specific companies. This placed the country among the emerging nations. However, that is not the national reality. And the most serious part of it is not the extreme indicators of inequality and poverty, or the size of the fortunes —the richest man in the world is Mexican— but the fragility caused by not having laid the national structural techno-productive groundwork for the medium and long terms.

So, what is the recommendable formula for growth and bringing down inequalities in Mexico? There is a clear basis on which countries must seek their perspective and to resituate, and that is making a priority of economic growth with formal employment and democratization with freedom and respect for human rights and the environment. This is the profile that the grassroots communities who make their wishes known demand, based on the information revolution of the current digital era; and that in turn is the basis for the new techno-productive capacity that defines today's prospects for humanity.[2] This presupposes that these grassroots communities and their vanguards, together with those in the forefront of the entrepreneurial productive sector and informed middle layers, must construct an organized ideology, creating a relationship of forces among the population that will make it possible for national states to reduce the perverse play of speculative finance capital that replaced productive capital, returning it to its function as an auxiliary to the productive sector. It is this productive sector that must create new products, make them more affordable, and accumulate on the basis of amplified reproduction in new enterprises.

With this perspective, Mexico must take advantage of the areas for opportunity that present themselves in increased food and raw material prices. These are rising for different reasons than during World War II, but the effect in the market and earnings are analogous, making the sector a co-participant in financing the modernization of industry and services, as part of the knowledge economy.[3]

In particular, the depression in the developed economies imposes forms of diversification toward the large emerging nations, but without losing sight of the fact that that is where the competition is and that much will still have to be done with the United States despite its crisis. Given the circumstances, the domestic market will be the place to emphasize; but, right now, the foundations must be laid by focusing on education. This implies assuming access to information as an obligatory condition and a human right in the strictest sense.

Infrastructure and technology must be linked to the development of small and medium-sized firms in order to integrate chains of value with a multiplying effect for productive capacity and employment. This must take into consideration a wide spectrum of goods and services and deal with the in-

ternational parameters of competition. It must be done in the framework of an open economy that shields strategic areas and the development of new productive areas like mining, fishing, energy, forest resources, environmental and agricultural/food services, telecommunications, transportation, the medical industry, etc., which continue to be sluggish. The state must be politically and socially strong, and monopolies must be dismantled in a very careful strategy to form capital with jobs and democracy.

Territorially, the implementation of these policies is based on reordering and the search for new balances among the country's different regions, where human and natural resources are under-utilized. All of this must come together in a national effort to develop by stages. These stages must include the consolidation of structural factors (energy, infrastructure, technology, education, productive organization, financing sources, links to markets, and the institutional framework) in a new way of producing (creation of new products with high domestic and external demand) and a new form of productivity (relative competitiveness).

In conclusion, we cannot buy into the idea that we are a developing country just because we are one of the world's 20 largest economies. Objectively, in Mexico, there are no techno-productive, socio-economic, or socio-institutional bases similar to those of the emerging nations that over the last 30 years have climbed aboard the train of world re-structuring.

To put ourselves on the road to development, we will need not only macro-economic stability, but also production-earnings bases in accordance with current demands. Undoubtedly we are talking about processes that will take time and be gradual, but they will take no longer than the time we have lost, aggravated by eroding our capabilities when "we allow the Devil to do what he will." Based on these coordinates, a new development strategy for the Mexican state must be built, particularly specifying new criteria for economic and political policy that will have their first full opportunity in 2014. VM

TABLE 2
MEXICO'S TRADE BALANCE (JANUARY-NOVEMBER 2012)

Item	Millions of Dollars	%
Total Exports	340 743.00	100
• **Oil-related**	49 200.10	14.44
• **Non-oil-related**	291 542.90	85.56
– Agriculture and Animal Husbandry	9 985.50	2.93
– Extractive Industry	4 540.80	1.33
Automotive	81 333.80	23.87
Non-automotive	195 682.80	57.43
Total Imports	341 543.70	100
• **Oil-related**	38 282.00	11.21
– Consumer Goods	17 516.40	5.13
– Intermediate Goods	20 765.60	6.08
• **Non-oil-related**	303 261.70	88.79
– Consumer Goods	32 585.90	9.54
– Intermediate Goods	235 513.40	68.96
– Capital Goods	35 162.40	10.30
Trade Balance	-800.7	-0.23

Source: Developed by the author using information from November, 2012, in Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI), "Boletín de prensa no. 458/12," December 27, 2012 (Aguascalientes, Mexico).

In Mexico, no techno-productive, socio-economic, or socio-institutional bases exist similar to those of the emerging nations that over the last 30 years have climbed aboard the train of world re-structuring.

NOTES

[1] Marina Trejo Ramírez, "Economía mexicana y política económica (1982-2006)", master's thesis (Mexico City: School of Economics, UNAM, 2012).

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Mexico's Human Rights Balance Sheet, 2006-2012

Rubén R. García Clarck*

Luis Carbayo/Cuartoscuro.com

Demonstrators in front of one of the National Human Rights Commission offices, a frequent occurrence during the Calderón administration.

During the Felipe Calderón administration, human rights protections in Mexico made important advances, but also displayed considerable deficiencies and setbacks. If we do a six-year-term balance sheet of assets and liabilities in this area, the negative outweighs the positive. So, incoming President Enrique Peña Nieto will face the challenge of reversing this worrying deficit. The most outstanding achievement was the 2011 reform that incorporated the safeguarding of these rights into the Constitution and established guarantees mandating all Mexican authorities to maximize them in their respective spheres. However, the number of complaints from the civilian population about human rights violations by the very bodies that by law or presidential mandate are charged with safeguarding public security have increased alarmingly. For example, between 2007 and 2011, complaints before the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) against the Ministry of Defense (Sedena) rose from 362 to 1 626.

Complaints by citizens about violations to their individual rights increased in the framework of the application of a failed strategy to fight organized crime.

Another important achievement was to have included in Article 3 of the Constitution mandatory high school educa-

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Calderón's position consisted of defending the impunity of the armed and security forces and favoring his personal religious convictions to the detriment of the constitutional mandate.

tion, although the deadline for total coverage of this right is not until 2022. By contrast, today's educational authorities, on a federal level and in the state of Michoacán in particular, have been incapable of guaranteeing secular primary education to parents who have requested it in the town of Nueva Jerusalén, where a group of religious fanatics destroyed the local public school with total impunity.

Complaints by citizens about violations to their individual rights increased in the framework of the application of a failed strategy to fight organized crime. Not the Mérida Plan, agreed on with the U.S. government, nor the national public security system included in the Constitution in this presidential term, nor the 2008-2012 National Human Rights Program implemented by the federal executive, nor any CNDH recommendations managed to guarantee behavior by the military and the police with minimum respect for the civilian population's human rights, much less prevent or at least bring to justice those responsible for approximately 90 000 violent deaths, the death toll during Felipe Calderón's six-year term.

Several complaints by Mexican victims had to make their way to the Inter-American Human Rights Commission and from there to the Inter-American Human Rights Court before the Mexican government was forced to pay reparations for the violation of the complainants' basic rights. The Inter-American Court's sentences have not been fully or promptly obeyed by the Mexican authorities involved. However, one of the cases, that of the forced disappearance of Rosendo Radilla, in which the Mexican Army was proven to have been responsible, has been influential in Mexico's Supreme Court deciding in several recent instances that human rights violations of civilians perpetrated by military personnel that did not involve the breaking of military discipline would not be tried in military, but civilian, courts.

The Supreme Court also decided that victims' family members have the right to demand civilian trials of military personnel for human rights violations against civilians. Definitely, the Supreme Court's check on the unconstitutional performance of military judges surpassed the timid presidential initiative of limiting military jurisdiction in cases of forced disappearance and rape and other sexual crimes, but not in the case of homicide.

If we focus the six-year balance sheet about human rights on the figure of the president, we will note Felipe Calderón's biased stance, which sparked not a few controversies among the different branches of government. These positions covered a broad range of issues: a staunch defense of the inviolability of military jurisdiction, which at the beginning of his term had its greatest expression in the exoneration of soldiers accused of raping and murdering Ernestina Asencio, and which Calderón later had to temper given the opposite decision by the Inter-American Court; the aforementioned Radilla case; the order the president gave the attorney general to contest the right to legally terminate a pregnancy, approved by Mexico City's Legislative Assembly; and his pressure on the members of the Supreme Court to not free the French citizen Florence Cassez, sentenced in Mexico for kidnapping, despite the fact that she had been a victim of a media montage ordered by Genaro García Luna, then head of the Federal Agency of Investigation and later the Minister of Public Security in Calderón's cabinet.

Calderón also pressured the highest court in the land to quash the case arguing the unconstitutionality of reforms approved by two state legislatures (those of Baja California and San Luis Potosí) that made the criminalization of abortion harsher in the name of a questionable "right to life from the moment of conception." This move openly coincided with the Catholic Church's traditional position and contradicts the international instruments signed by Mexico to protect women's reproductive rights, like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Belem do Pará.

Thus, President Calderón's position on human rights consisted of defending the impunity of the armed and security forces, and favoring his personal religious convictions to the detriment of the constitutional mandate that stipulates that military personnel must be tried in civilian courts when their victims are civilians, and to the detriment of due process and women's reproductive rights. In addition, to round out his administration, President Calderón confirmed his lack of interest in the rights of the victims of human rights violations, many produced by personnel under his command, when he froze the General Law of Victims promoted by the Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity and passed

by Congress by presenting a constitutional controversy to slow down the law's publication; to replace that law, he proposed a bill to protect victims with much less scope than the bill already passed.

Also, at the end of his term, Calderón ratified his vocation for maintaining impunity for high officials of the executive branch, both during his and previous administrations, accused of human rights violations. He did not hesitate at all to request that the U.S. government grant diplomatic immunity for former President Ernesto Zedillo, currently facing charges in Connecticut for his responsibility in the massacre of 45 Tzotzil indigenous in Acteal, Chiapas, in 1997. Obviously, this decision is preventive, foreshadowing any possible accusation against Calderón himself after his term is up and he probably acquires residence somewhere in the United States. We should not lose sight of the fact that in 2011, Felipe Calderón was accused before the International Criminal Court for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

No less biased were Calderón's actions during his entire term in the terrain of electoral politics for which he was cited by the Federal Electoral Tribunal without sanction for favoring his own National Action Party. He also showed bias in labor issues: he always sought impunity for management, such as in the case of the miners trapped in the Pasta de Conchos mine, and defended management interests through a labor bill he presented to Congress that eliminates historic rights won by Mexican workers.

This was the final onslaught against workers, which began with the persecution of union leaders, like miners' union leader Napoleón Gómez Urrutia and electrical workers leader Martín Esparza. It was a continuation of the elimination of the parastate electricity company Luz y Fuerza del Centro (LyFC), in which the government openly decided not to protect the workers whose jobs it eliminated. He had also already left the employees of Mexicana de Aviación, the company fraudulently declared in bankruptcy with government approval, swinging in the wind.

The institutional counterweights (the media and civil society human rights defenders) were insufficient in the face of Felipe Calderón's bias. This also has to do with the Supreme Court having conservative judges who have supported him and his attack on the judicial branch as a whole for its supposed propensity to "let criminals go," to the point that recently the Attorney General's Office made baseless accusations against certain federal judges. Journalists and human rights defenders are not being protected by the government, leading to an increase in the number of murders of both attributed to organized crime and local strongmen, but that the authorities are not investigating or effectively bringing perpetrators to justice for.

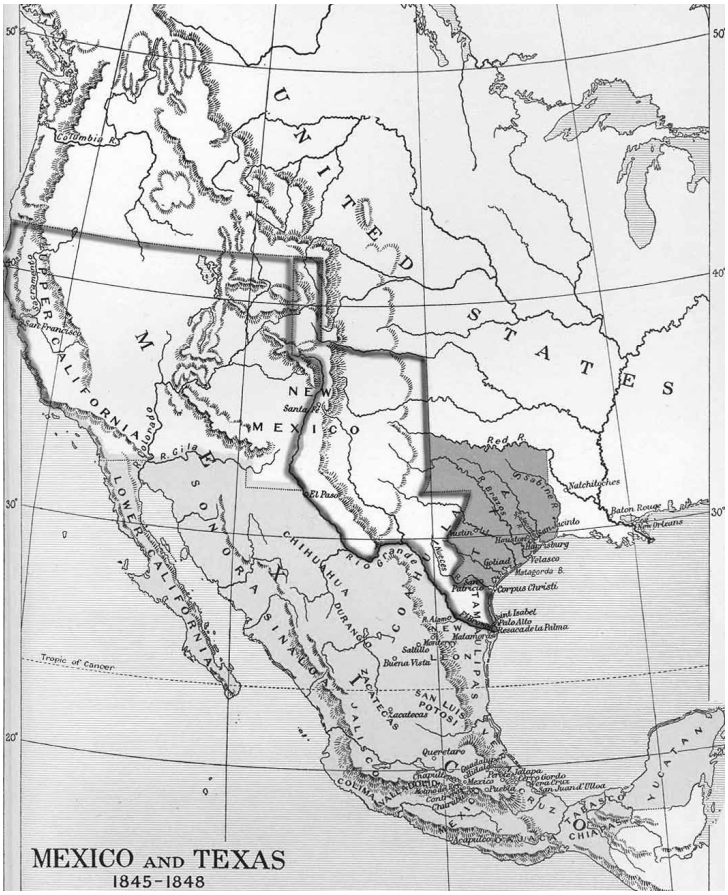
> Calderón's administration confirmed its lack of interest in the rights of the victims of human rights violations, many produced by personnel under his command, when he froze the General Law of Victims.

Finally, as if all this were not enough, the rights to access to information and freedom of expression have been severely hard hit by Felipe Calderón's administration. It has systematically refused to make government actions transparent and has put pressure on supposedly autonomous competition and communications monitoring bodies in favor of the Televisa-TV Azteca television duopoly. This pressure has been accompanied with reprisals against media outlets like MVS for not having fired news anchor Carmen Aristegui, who refused to retract her question about whether the president had problems with alcoholism. Another reprisal from the federal government against a bothersome media outlet was the refusal to place government ads in *Proceso* magazine; this was the subject of a CNDH recommendation in favor of the weekly and the rights of its readers to information.

Given the non-transparency of the Calderón administration, as president-elect, Enrique Peña Nieto formulated a bill to strengthen the Federal Institute for Access to Information (IFAI), giving it more powers and autonomy. Although the proposal is plausible, Congress should use its constitutionally established obligation to guarantee rights to adopt a broader, more comprehensive perspective on human rights. That perspective would limit the federal executive's margin for acting with bias, strengthen the autonomy of the federal judiciary, and fully guarantee the right to public security without these actions serving as a pretext for violating other human rights. The government and Mexican society should also make a joint effort to amend laws, institutions, and attitudes to strengthen democracy and social equity, foster economic growth and competitiveness without violating labor rights, and protect human rights defenders and guarantee freedom of the press without rewarding or punishing the media in accordance with the likes and dislikes of the sitting president. VM

Two Hundred Years Of Living Next Door

Roberta Lajous*



Source: *The Cambridge Modern History Atlas*, 1912

Map of Mexico and the United States before the 1846-1847 War, in which Mexico lost more than half its territory: what are now the states of California, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona.

The two constant objectives in Mexico's foreign policy have been, first, affirming its sovereignty and identity, and second, seeking the economic and human resources to speed its development once its federal republican form of government was consolidated. While it can be said that many other countries in the Americas that became independent while Europe was engulfed in the Napoleonic Wars have shared these aims, Mexico's historic experience is unique as the neighbor of the greatest power the world has ever seen, the United States of America. The history of Mexico's international relations develops in cycles of approaching and distancing itself from the powerful country with which it shares a border; this has made it possible for it to both affirm its identity and to modernize its economy.

Since its birth as an independent nation, the United States has been the most important country for Mexico as a model of prosperity for all and a model of political organization for many. Edmundo O'Gorman thought that when Mexicans

* Mexican ambassador since 1995. Author of the book *Historia mínima de las relaciones exteriores de México: 1821-2000* (Minimum History of Mexico's Foreign Relations: 1821-2000) (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2012), from which this article was taken and adapted.

became independent of Spain, they did not make the reforms needed to eliminate the institutions of its colonial past. With citizens who did not fully exercise their rights, it was impossible to achieve the kind of productivity that existed in the United States.

Civic political participation and the rapid expansion of small agricultural producers in the United States contrasted with the almost feudal nature of agriculture in Mexico that held back the political activity of the majority of the population throughout the nineteenth century.

During that same period, the United States achieved its current territorial boundaries, to a great extent by absorbing Mexico's northern territories of California, New Mexico, and Texas, which were never really governed either by the ephemeral Mexican empire or the republic in its first stages. In fact, Mexico began losing those territories because of the absence of immigrants who would have identified with the Mexican nation, then barely in formation.

The rulers of Mexico who signed the treaty ceding that territory in 1848, with the U.S. army occupying a large part of the country, including the capital, averted the complete disappearance of the nationality as such, or at least that the United States appropriated an even larger part of Mexico. The trauma of losing more than half the national territory and the risk of disappearing as a nation altogether consolidated the two political parties with incompatible national projects: the Liberals and the Conservatives.

The Liberals had to seek a political model different from that of the United States, a country they admired, but that had a different historical experience from Mexico's, since it had been born without colonial structures to tear down and whose expansionism had become the greatest threat for Mexico's national survival. They turned their gaze to Europe, where the countries on the Continent had managed to establish a separation of the Catholic Church and the state. France became the model that implemented the most advanced legislation, even with a Catholic majority like Mexico.

For their part, the Conservatives saw the restoration of the monarchy with a European Catholic prince as the only way to stop the U.S. threat, thus leading them to support the second Mexican empire. The Conservative project could only survive with the support of the invading French army, which fostered the same liberal reforms as those Napoleon III had implemented in France. It is an irony of history that the invasion contributed to the victory of the Juarista Reform by weakening the Catholic Church in Mexico.

Since its birth as an independent nation, the United States has been the most important country for Mexico as a model of prosperity for all and a model of political organization for many.

Sovereignty Is First

Between 1821 and 1871, the country that had reached no consensus about its form of government and that was born under the threat of the turbulence caused by Spain's attempts to re-conquer it, U.S. territorial expansion, and France's imperial ambitions in the Americas, had no foreign policy at all. National independence was consolidated a second time on the return of Benito Juárez to the capital in 1871 and his prestated aim of creating a foreign policy based on law: "Among individuals as among nations, respect for the other's rights is peace." The Conservative Party suffered a historic defeat by being identified with the foreign invader and clericalism, putting an end to it as a political force for more than a century.

When the Reform Laws came into effect, Mexico had healthy public finances for the first time in its history as an independent country. Since the reestablishment of diplomatic relations with European countries as equals took a certain amount of time, the nation had a breathing spell before it had to begin repaying the foreign debt.

Juárez not only established the principle of the sovereign equality of nations, but also between Mexicans and foreigners before the law. This was to prevent future interventions based on the much-reviled payment of reparations to the subjects of powerful countries. This put an end to Mexico's subordinate relations to other countries, at the same time that, worldwide, what prevailed was the right of conquest stipulated in international treaties.

Material Improvements

From the beginnings of the restored republic, U.S. rail magnates pressured to unite the two countries through the railroad, in order to develop trade and exploit Mexico's natural

resources. Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada feared the rapid economic penetration of the United States. Although during his tenure as foreign minister he had supported the alliance with Abraham Lincoln to expel the French army from Mexico, when he became president, he is said to have made the following harsh statement: "Between the powerful and the weak, the desert." Circumstances had changed with the victory of the Yankees in the U.S. Civil War, while Mexico continued to be isolated from Europe, where the powers were still in mourning after the execution of Archduke Maximilian of Habsburg.

It was not until Porfirio Díaz returned to power in 1884 and gained control over the entire national territory that Mexico developed an active policy to foster foreign investment as a means to achieve what were called "material improvements." With U.S. capital, the railroad lines so feared by his predecessor were built to the North. Díaz pacified the border region, which made direct communication possible with the United States, a country that soon became the main source of capital for recuperating mining and developing industry.

At the end of the century, the United States became a colonial power with the acquisition of Hawaii, the Philippine Islands, and Puerto Rico, and establishing a protectorate in Cuba. Given the concern over having the United States as a neighbor not only to the North, but also in the Caribbean, and in addition threatening to control countries south of its border, Porfirio Díaz initiated a diversification policy to counter U.S. influence with European capital. Once relations with Great Britain were reestablished, he cultivated personal contacts with European magnates to build infrastructure and develop the banking system and oil industry. He achieved all this without losing any territory during the greatest stage of imperial expansion the world had ever known.

The beginning of the twentieth century ratified the United States as the world's foremost power, a place occupied by Great Britain in the previous century. The United States intervened actively in Central America and the Caribbean by sending armed forces to control customs and establish order, which was a source of friction in relations with Mexico. When the anti-reelection movement began in Mexico, Porfirio Díaz's government had lost Washington's ear because of his growing independence in international policy, which had led him to grow closer to countries as far away as Japan.

In 1918, Venustiano Carranza announced the principles of Mexico's foreign policy, among them: sovereign equality of states; non-intervention in internal affairs; and the quest for international peace and cooperation through diplomacy.

The Carranza Doctrine and Non-Intervention

The 1917 Constitution jeopardized the thriving international mining and oil industries in Mexico. The governments of the great powers felt that their interests were threatened by the course the Mexican Revolution was taking, which they identified with the Bolsheviks when they took power in Russia. The U.S. economy emerged intact from World War I, allowing President Woodrow Wilson to impose a new world order at the Versailles peace negotiations. He promoted self-determination among the peoples of Europe, a principle that spread across the world to put an end to colonialism.

In this context, in 1918, Venustiano Carranza announced the principles of Mexico's foreign policy, which to this day are still part of the Constitution: sovereign equality of states; non-intervention in internal affairs; the equality of Mexicans and foreigners before the law; and the quest for international peace and cooperation through diplomacy.

The revolutionary current that restricted foreigners' rights on national soil took advantage of the international situation before World War II, through Franklin Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy, to nationalize the oil industry in 1938. Between 1918 and 1938, Mexico placed priority on projecting its nationalism in Latin America and the Caribbean, where it became the political and cultural paradigm for the region's progressive forces.

Among other things, revolutionary nationalism put an end to the liberal dream of fostering industrious immigration to Mexico. However, it generously opened the doors to political exiles form Europe, and later from Latin America and the Caribbean, who have contributed greatly to Mexico's cultural life. Immigrants developed important links to their countries of origin, and when they had the chance to return to office, like in the case of Chile, they helped build important political, cultural, and even economic ties that favored Mexico greatly.

The Alliance with the United States

In a context of national unity, President Lázaro Cárdenas began to collaborate with the United States in the fight against fascism. In 1942, Mexico established a military alliance with the United States to fight against the Axis. In 1947, when the Cold War between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) began, Mexico situated itself irremediably within the U.S. camp under its nuclear umbrella. While geography is destiny, Mexico had the diplomatic ability to negotiate room for autonomy that other more distant countries did not achieve, to a great extent thanks to its active presence in multilateral forums.

In contrast with the other countries in the region, Mexico preserved the validity of its Constitution and institutions during the entire Cold War, and began a period of exceptional economic growth known as the Mexican Miracle, which lasted more than three decades. When the Cold War ratcheted up in Central America, Mexico fostered intense diplomatic activity through the Contadora Group, which averted an armed U.S. intervention, supported a negotiated solution to the conflict, and strengthened Latin American consultation forums as the countries in the region returned to democratic regimes.

The model of industrialization via import substitution began to wear out in Mexico simultaneously with the decline of the international financial system created at Bretton Woods. However, the discovery of oil deposits made it possible to delay an economic and trade opening until 1986, when Mexico finally joined the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). When the Cold War ended, the European Community becoming the world's largest trade bloc and the creation of an economic region in Asia led Mexico to negotiate the creation of a North American market with the United States and Canada.

Diversification

The aim of decreasing the relative weight of economic treaties with the United States became urgent when the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) concentrated our relations with our neighbor. Just like the twentieth century's two world wars, NAFTA had the immediate effect of focusing our trade on the United States. As in the past, after getting closer to that country, Mexico made an effort to seek new partners and political relations with other countries and regions to avoid excessive dependence on a single market. However, a qualitative difference *vis-à-vis* previous periods was the increase of the number of Mexicans living permanently in the United States —the figure approached 10 percent of Mexico's total population by the end of the century— with a significant electoral impact in both countries. Regarding foreign policy, that migration has been expressed in both countries as a constant pressure to strengthen links and avoid conflicts that could affect the transit of a growing number of citizens from one country to the other over the border.

Mexican diplomacy has had the capability, sometimes to an epic degree, of ensuring the survival of its national identity, despite the increasingly conflictive 3 000-kilometer border with the world's greatest power.

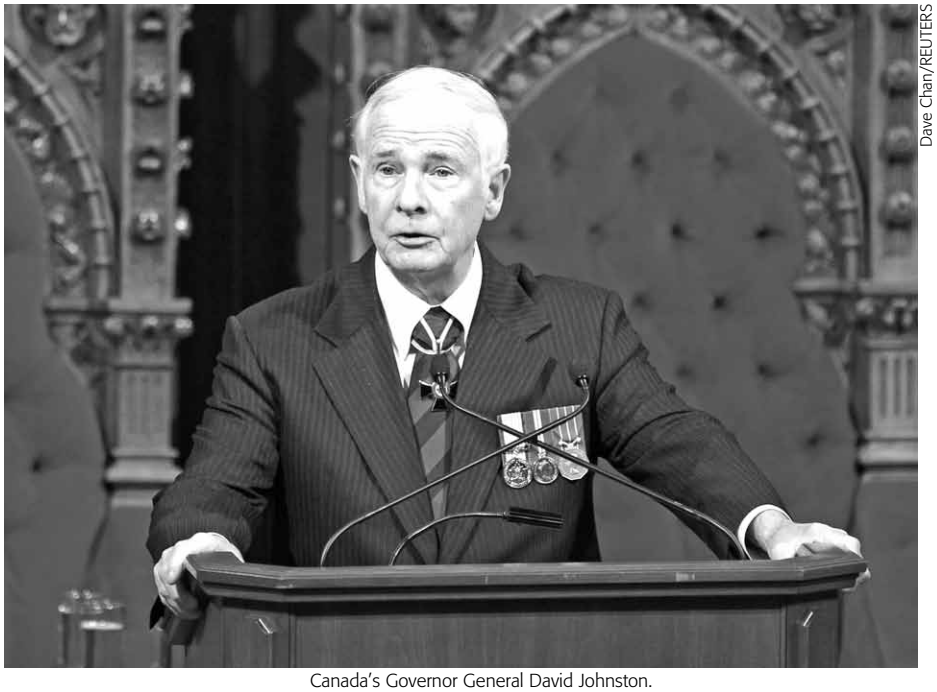
The emergence of a structure with more poles of world power has presented an international situation favorable to diversifying trade and investment. This situation motivated the negotiation of free trade and strategic partnership agreements with countries of Latin America, the European Union, and Japan. It also allowed Mexico to give new impetus to the UN agenda, which encountered resistance during the Cold War. Since the foundation of the United Nations, Mexico has had a significant voice on issues like disarmament, maritime law, economic development, the fight against drugs and organized crime, and the preservation of the environment, which has won it a prestigious place in the community of nations.

Mexico's foreign relations have been marked by alternating closeness to and distancing from its powerful neighbor. No other country has experienced this except Canada, which gained independence much later than we did and still preserves a formal link to Great Britain. Mexican diplomacy has had the capability —sometimes to an epic degree— of ensuring the survival of its national identity, despite the increasingly conflictive 3 000-kilometer border with the world's greatest power. In spite of the enormous challenges and difficulties, in 1994 the three countries of North America began a process to build one of the most competitive regions in a globalized world. Despite the doubts and suspicions this has inspired worldwide, NAFTA has contributed significantly to raising employment and consumption for most Mexicans. VM

Distant Partners? The State Of Mexican-Canadian Relations

Interview with Canada's Governor General

Leonardo Curzio*



Dave Chan/REUTERS

Canada's Governor General David Johnston.

Leonardo Curzio (LC): Let me begin this conversation with a question that is simple yet tremendously broad in scope: What is the state of relations between Mexico and Canada?

Governor General David Johnston (GDJ): It's good and strong, and we can strengthen it, improve it. We have had NAFTA since 1994 and I think the results have been extraordinary: our trade and investments have grown. There's good understanding of security and legal issues, as well as wonderful interpersonal interaction. Five percent of the Canadian population travels to Mexico every year, which is quite impressive. That is, what has been built over all these years is a kind of platform that we can raise higher.

LC: Can we go beyond NAFTA? Some academics and politicians talk about a North American community. Is that a utopia or could we actually create it in the near future?

GDJ: No. We are already a North American community, and I believe that it's important to move trilaterally with NAFTA; it's important for Mexico, Canada, and the United States to operate together as we look toward the world. Our economic exchange is consolidating as we develop external policies to have a common position on matters of international trade and diplomacy, while we seek our path forward *vis-à-vis* the Pacific alliance and the trans-Pacific association. These are areas in which the three countries should function together, but I think that another important aspect is also the relationships among people.

*Researcher at CISAN.

Canada has coexisted with the United States very positively and vigorously for many decades. I studied there for four years. Three of my children have done university and graduate work there. I would love to see that between Canada and Mexico: that we use education as a basis for uniting our peoples and developing those relationships for life, from which all the other things like trade and security would flow.

LC: In recent years a considerable flow of high school and university students has gone to Canada. A community of people very linked to Canada for diverse reasons has also emerged. I'll ask you straight out, aware that it's a delicate matter: Did the issue of visas complicate the development and the very existence of this community?

GDJ: I understand that there's real irritation around this issue, but it must be understood that Canada experienced abnormal growth in the number of refugees. To stop and control that, we had to set up that visa system. Today, I can say that the problem has decreased considerably and for that reason, our government is studying the issue with the government of Mexico. When the Mexican president visited our country, our prime minister told him that resolving this issue is a priority.

LC: So, in the near future we might touch on this difficult question?

GDJ: What our prime minister said at that meeting —a very cordial and positive one— is that both countries are aware that it's an uncomfortable issue. The visa requirement was set up to deal with a specific problem that is decreasing. So, we must analyze step by step how we will deal with it, attempting to come to a mutual agreement, based on which we will be able to ensure much more freedom for the citizens of both our nations. I trust that there is a firm desire on the part of Canadians to examine the issue and design solutions.

LC: As you know, we have a very profound conversation underway with our neighbor, the United States, about security. Do you think that we could establish a new security agenda in the trilateral arena, optimizing, for example, the judicial area in cooperation with Canada?

GDJ: Not only can we improve it, but we must improve it as the trilateral partners we are. It's a matter of supreme importance for Canada, the United States, and Mexico, but let's focus on the positive for a minute. Today, we are celebrating the inauguration of the new administration, the return of the Institutional Revolutionary Party. The elections were a peaceful exercise of Mexicans' democratic rights. That, in and of itself, is a great victory. The rule of law is increasingly present in Mexico and more and more valued; but it must always be based on justice.

We have serious security problems linked to drug trafficking, violence, corruption, etc. However, Mexico has taken a big step forward in terms of the administration of justice: its system has advanced from the inquisitorial investigation that it inherited from Europe and has returned to Roman law. For example, oral trials, the tradition for more than a thousand years in England and used currently in the United States and Canada, are now in use in Mexico. We have worked closely with you for years as you have guided your system in a different direction. The advantage of this system is that it is very transparent: first, trials are held in open court and are reported in the media. Secondly, it's a system focused on enforcing the law and impartiality; that is, of course, the essence of justice. And in the third place, the integrity of the system insures that all the officials are there to serve the interests of everyone and not any specific interest.

I am very interested in this project since my oldest daughter is a prosecutor for the Federal Department of Justice and has already gone on 11 missions, to conferences and workshops in Latin America, working with Mexican officials, who she feels very close to, to implement the system.

LC: How interesting! I also know that you're passionate about technological innovation and that sort of thing. Tell us a little about how we can advance in North American integration, specifically regarding competitiveness. How can we improve our region's competitiveness?

GDJ: Well, we spent a day and a half in Querétaro, and the last visit was to the Bombardier Aerospace plant. Why does

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Chris Wattie/REUTERS

I would love to see
Canada and Mexico use education
as a basis for uniting our peoples and
developing relationships for life.

Bombardier have eight different companies there, adding more value to the region?

LC: A Canadian company…

GDJ: Yes, a Canadian company, the builder of Challenger and the Global Express that travels around the world; and it's now building planes with a capacity for 90 to 130 passengers that will compete with the Boeing 737 and the Airbus 320. All of that is possible thanks to the very talented personnel from that region, the honest, intense participation of universities and colleges, and active leadership from the national government. Bombardier has set up in that part of Mexico because it recognizes the enormous advantage of having a supply line to this country. They are building the fuselage and systems here, and that is an excellent example of collaboration among governments, the private sector, and the educational system. And that's happening all over Mexico.

LC: We see almost the same example with Blackberry…

GDJ: I'm glad you mentioned Blackberry. (I'm taking mine out as we speak.) Blackberry came out of the institution that I was president of for 12 years, Waterloo University. The inventor is a man named Mike Lazaridis, who later became the university's chancellor. He founded Blackberry in 1984 when he was an engineering student. At our university, we alternate one academic semester with a working semester. The students are paid during their working semester so they can pay their tuition, but some of them don't work for an employer, but found their own company. And so, with the help of others, that's how he created Blackberry, which has been a huge success.

Today, they're preparing their tenth model, and guess where many of those cell phones are manufactured: here in Mexico. So, Mexico will probably be under a lot of pressure producing more telephones than we can imagine.

LC: We are trade partners, but sometimes we feel we're very distant. How can we be closer?

GDJ: First of all, we're going through a communications revolution that makes is possible for us to be closer, not only through text messages and e-mail, but also using high quality videoconferencing.

LC: It's also possible through tourism…

GDJ: Tourism is an outstanding option. As I already mentioned, five percent of the Canadian population visits Mexico every year, and personal contacts are very important as we develop strong ties of friendship, not just trade relations.

LC: Mr. Governor General, I consider it an honor that you have given us this interview. Thank you very much.

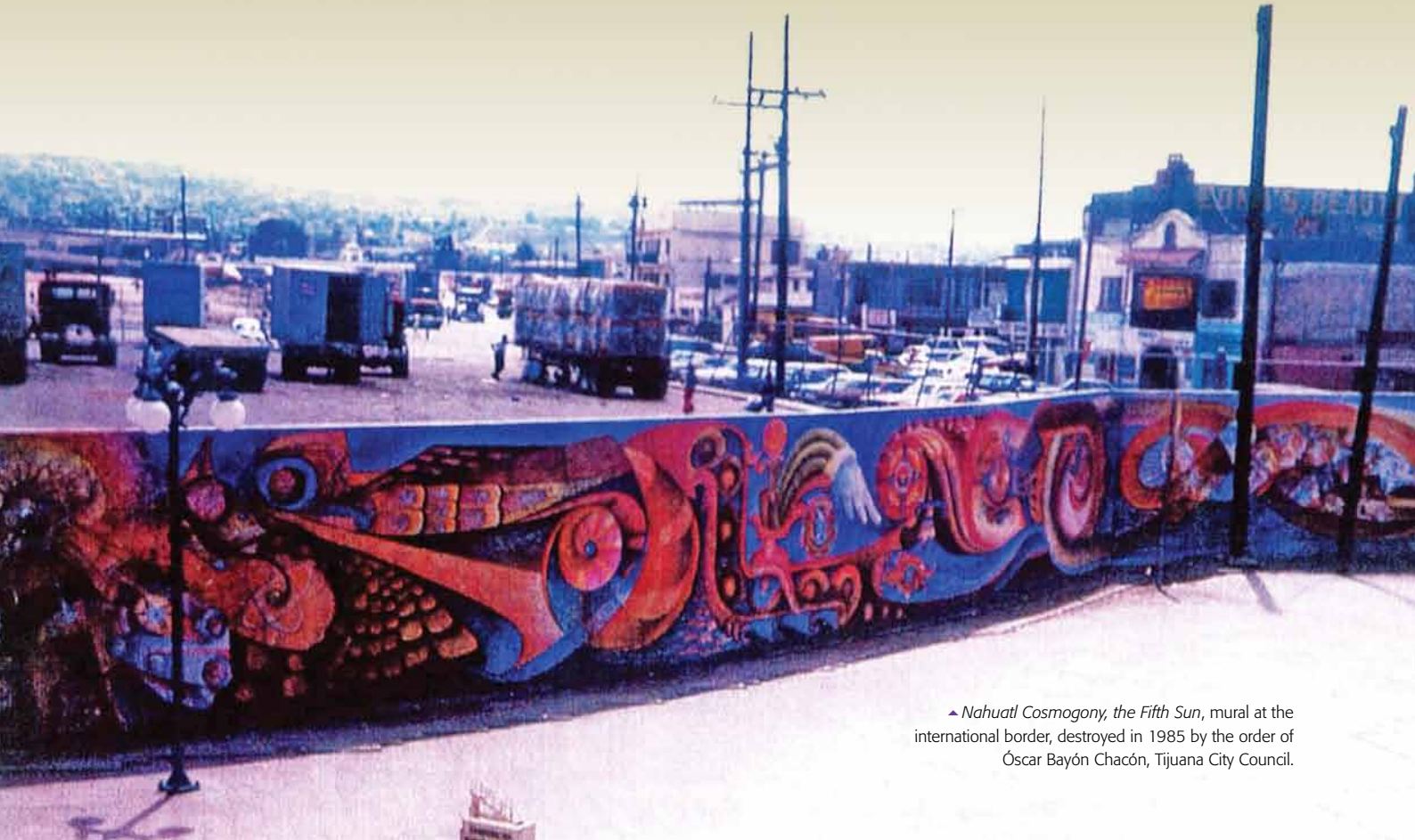
GDJ: It was a great pleasure. VM

THE BORDER

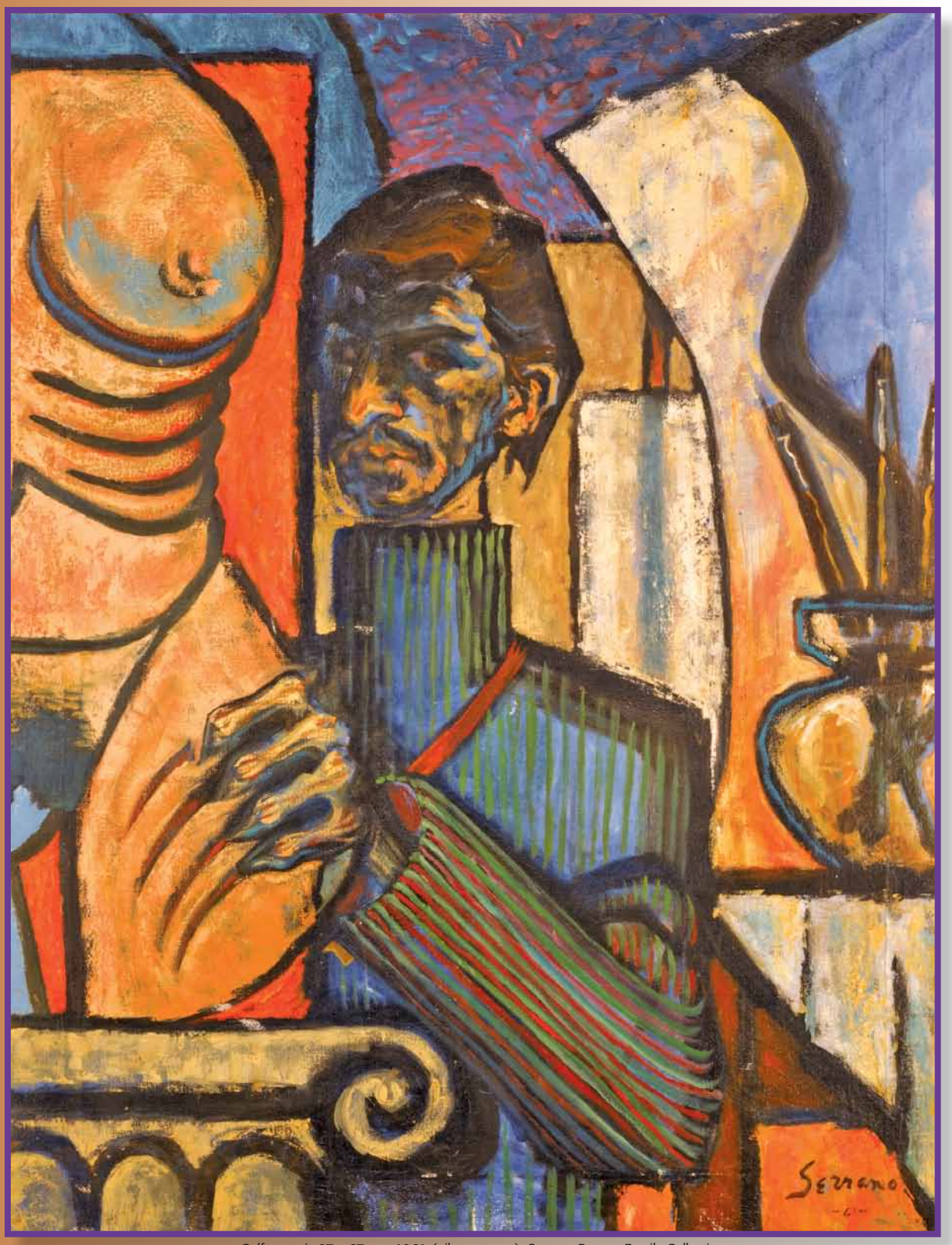
Art Brings Together what Fences Divide

Mexico and the United States are separate, divided, in places, by river water, in others by the rocks that higher and higher fences are built on. However, along that scar called a border is erected a diverse artistic geography of great expressive force that we have tried to reflect here, through the thinking and pictorial work by artists who develop their art on both sides of "the Line."

The art produced on the western end of the border, like Marcos Ramírez's multidimensional installations, would be unintelligible without the uniqueness of a city like Tijuana, which is constantly reformulating its significance and is in permanent communication with the neighbors on the other side of the fence, or without the legacy of Benjamín Serrano, the first artist born in Tijuana toward the end of the 1930s whose art found expression in the United States and became an axis for bi-national dialogue. To the east, the work of artists like Rigoberto A. González from Brownsville and Matamoros is enriched through a sincere, critical dialogue, transcending stereotypes, but that does not hesitate to make a statement against criminal violence or the suffering and injustice experienced in the winding path from one side to the other.



▲ *Nahuatl Cosmogony, the Fifth Sun*, mural at the international border, destroyed in 1985 by the order of Óscar Bayón Chacón, Tijuana City Council.



▲ *Self-portrait,* 87 x 67 cm, 1961 (oil on canvas). Serrano Banuet Family Collection.

Benjamín Serrano

Origins of Bi-cultural Dialogues In Tijuana

Olga Margarita Dávila García*

In the last 20 years, Tijuana has positioned itself as a symbol of the bi-national Mexican-U.S. dialogue in contemporary art known as the Tijuana Art Boom. Elsewhere, this production has consolidated itself as a proposal linked to the understanding between the two countries and a reference point and continual presence in the international art circuit. In the city itself, it is experienced as prolific activity, both by local artists and because of the innumerable bi-national, international, and national events hosted here.

In the 1990s, anthropologist Néstor García Canclini published a well-known book, *Culturas Híbridas* (Hybrid Cultures), in which he conceived of the concept of hybrid using Tijuana as a starting point. Sometimes, despite this, we overlook that this artistic boom is not the product of spontaneous generation: before the 1990s, artists with regional importance and others with international exposure had already settled in Tijuana. In the mid-1980s, under the tutelage of artist Felipe Almada, more than 20 artists lived bi-nationally, in a merger of cultures, in the Nopal Centenario (Centennial Cactus) Collective. Figures like Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Marco Vinicio Gonzáles, Papoleto Meléndez, among many others, coincided in Almada's time. Other precedents are unknown before that nationwide. However, most of the artists from Tijuana and California, as well as a large number of California museums and galleries, tell us that someone preceded all of them: Benjamín Serrano. Serrano was actually the first bi-national artist. In the 1970s, he created an artistic language that was the product of a bi-national experience and held shows in the best known centers in California, in institutes and museums in the United States, and in several galleries in Europe.

This does not mean that there had not been art that connected the two countries on the border before. If the visual mother of Tijuana is photography, as renowned Tijuana photographer Pablo Guadiana says,[1] we have numerous examples. These include the Parker brothers, Joseph and Francis, whose photographs made known the nascent Northern Territory of Baja California, from the Tía Juana ranch to False Bay in San Quintín, Baja California, around 1870. Another is photographer-businessman R. W. Magruder, who photographed tourists visiting Tijuana in the early twentieth century when they wanted a postcard, dressed up as bandits or Mexican revolutionaries, as a souvenir and something to share when they went home. And on the Mexican side, we have the prolific

Serrano was actually the first bi-national artist. In the 1970s, he created an artistic language that was the product of a bi-national experience and held shows in the best-known centers in the United States.

*Art critic and curator of the Benjamín Serrano Foundation and the Lineages and Geneologies-Contemporary Textile Art program at the Textile Museum of Oaxaca.

All photos are courtesy of Benjamín Serrano Foundation.

Fortunate as few Mexican artists,
Serrano managed to keep up a close connection with the United States and Europe that allowed him to always be aware of the international artistic expressions in vogue.

documentary work of Kingo Nonaka, who photographed nascent Tijuana society —not the tourists— between 1924 and 1942: guilds, unions, popular fiestas, lodges, and associations.

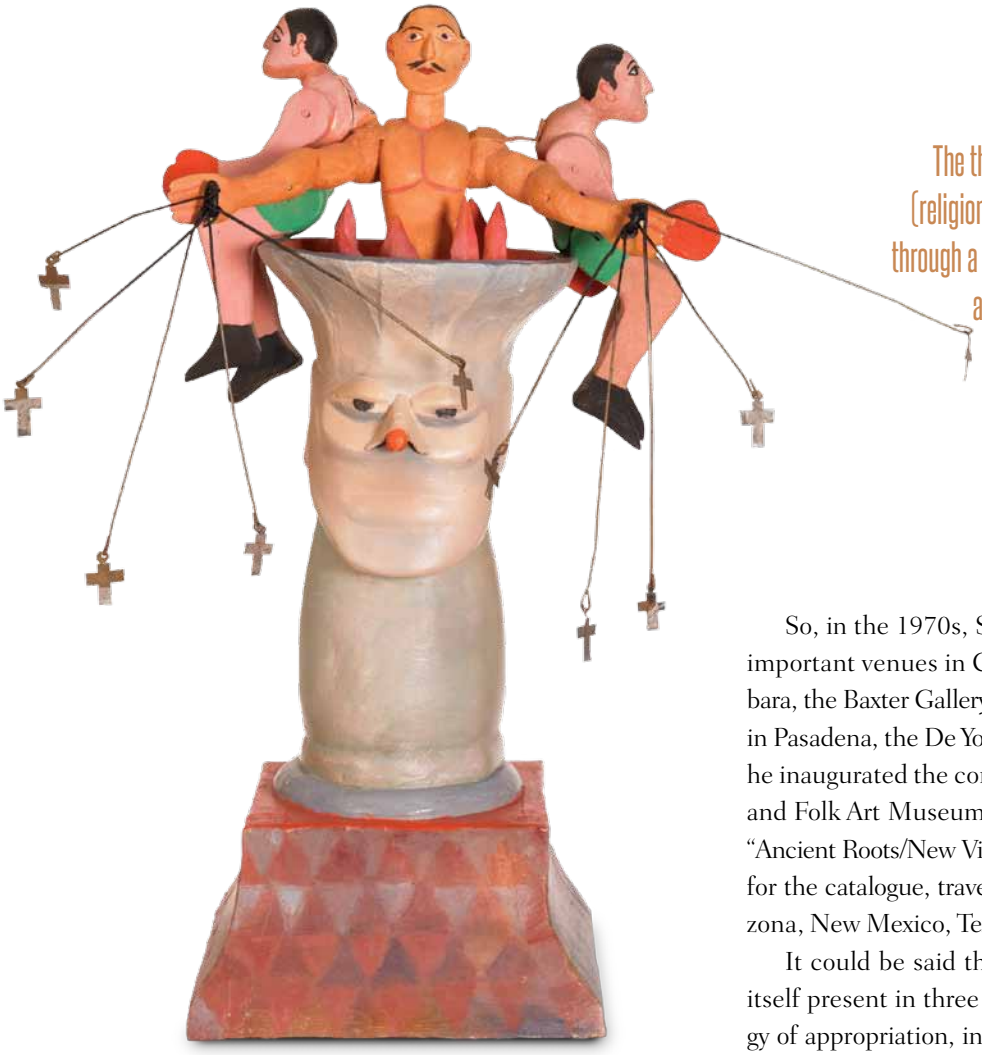
The singular thing about Serrano, however, is that he was the first artist trained as such, born in Tijuana, who enjoyed a prominent career in the United States, living and working in his native city.

Benjamín was born in Tijuana in 1938. He began his art studies at 15 in San Diego, California. In 1957, he enrolled in the School of Arts and Letters of Guadalajara in Jalisco, which he only attended for a year because he found the atmosphere very conservative, but at the same time he frequented Manuel Fernández's atelier. From 1959 to 1962, he studied at the San Carlos National School of Visual Arts in Mexico City. He returned for a year to Tijuana, but, unsatisfied with what he had learned until then, he decided to go to Paris. He studied there from 1963 to 1965 at the National School of Fine Arts and attended the atelier of Paul Cavigny, frequented by a large number of artists. It was there that he struck up his friendship with Francisco Toledo. In this formative period, Serrano acquired formal and conceptual techniques from different schools of art, like that of the Mexican school of painting and the European surrealist and geometrism schools.

Given the proximity of Los Angeles and Santa Barbara, Benjamín was familiar with the work of David Hockney, Ed Ruscha, Andy Warhol, and John Baldessari among many others. For the almost 10 years he spent away from Tijuana, Serrano returned twice or three times a year for family get-togethers or to go to special events. During those stays, he would visit the Ferus Gallery, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), and other centers. Fortunate as few Mexican artists, he managed to keep up a close connection with the United States and Europe that allowed him to always be aware of the international artistic expressions in vogue.

In 1963, the magazine *Art Forum* reviewed a collective show in San Diego, highlighting Benjamín Serrano's *Self-Portrait*.[2] From then on, he began to participate bi-nationally in collectives and contests. It was in one of those contests in which he participated as a judge that Eudorah Moore, a curator of design and crafts, first saw his work. Its originality and perfect unity of art and manual work surprised her. Since

▲ *Malintzin and Her Maintenance Team*, 210 x 420 cm, 1985 (oil on canvas). Serrano Banuet Family Collection.



▲ *Man's Imaginary Sins,* 75 x 42.5 x 37.5 cm, ca. 1973 (mixed technique, painted wood, and metal). Jean K. Wickersham Collection.

The themes of Serrano's work (religion, sexuality, and authority), through a filter of irony, make his work agreeably irreverent.

she was one of the key figures in developing Californian modernism (1954-1976), which dealt with the debate among craft, industrial innovation, and art, she thought it was a good idea to invite Benjamín to participate in the 1971 Design Triennial that she curated, organized by the Pasadena Art Museum. He contributed a work that was unique in style, was corrosively conceived, monumental yet homey, and organically fashioned, *The Archangel Gabriel with Adam and Eve, Holding the Wings of Masturbation, God in Command, and the Hand of the Virgin, Too.* Quite logically, after Benjamín Serrano entered this circuit, he received invitations to exhibit at the International Conference on Design in Aspen, Colorado, where, together with Robert Raushenberg, he represented art.

So, in the 1970s, Serrano's work was shown in the most important venues in California: the Museum of Santa Barbara, the Baxter Gallery, the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, the De Young Museum in San Francisco (where he inaugurated the contemporary art section), and the Craft and Folk Art Museum in Los Angeles. And with the exhibit "Ancient Roots/New Visions," his work, chosen as the cover art for the catalogue, traveled the United States, showing in Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Washington, D. C., and New York.

It could be said that the force of Serrano's work makes itself present in three dimensions. The first is in the strategy of appropriation, in which he takes elements from different artists and historic moments of art and makes them his, like in his *Untitled* (mouth and Coca-Cola). Because of this, we can say that Benjamín is perhaps Mexico's first post-modern artist, who for the first time utilizes this strategy, so common in today's art. The second is the theme of his works: religion, sexuality, and authority, seen through a filter of irony and biting critique, a form of expression distinctive of bi-culturality, as in *Malintzin and Her Maintenance Team*. This makes the works agreeably irreverent, to express it as an oxymoron. This was also something novel in Mexican artistic culture. Before Serrano, no other artist had combined these topics frontally without being crude or discourteous, and he achieves this through his mastery in the use of humor and sarcasm. And the third dimension is the unity of "high culture" (the fine arts) and folk culture. His works, for example, are nourished by clay figures of Ocumichu, of Atzompa, of wood carvings, and of ornamented, multicolored wood in colonial churches (see *Man's Imaginary Sins*).

All these decisive dimensions of Serrano's work are a clear construction of his geographical and cultural condition, where

"Everything I have smelled, eaten, seen, heard, and touched has been my greatest influence. The good, the bad, the sacred, and the evil have been my teachers."

Benjamín Serrano

▲ *The Archangel Gabriel with Adam and Eve, Holding the Wings of Masturbation, God in Command, and the Hand of the Virgin, Too,* 180 x 160 x 150 cm, ca. 1971 (multicolored wood, papier-mâché, and objects). Whereabouts unknown.

he was born and developed. We now understand them as the result of the encounter of the cultures of Mexico and the United States, and, thanks to numerous studies that have typed them as expressions of transborder, post-modern, hybrid, *pochas* (Americanized Mexican), post-historic, or bi-national cultural expressions, we can assimilate them as a late-twentieth-century and transition-to-twenty-first-century phenomenon. What is more, I think that Serrano's work is —to use the strictly military term, which I think he would love because of his fascination with authority— a "trans-pre-avant garde": "trans-" because it comes after the known artistic avant gardes, and "pre-" because it is the predecessor to what has been called "trans-border," which in the 1990s was the forefront and one of the vogues in contemporary art. All this because Serrano's full language was consolidated in the 1970s.

This is clear from the exhibit "Benjamín Serrano: Transcendence and Avant Garde from Tijuana" that opened on August 10, 2012.[3] For the first time ever, this exhibition brought together the artist's sculpture, paintings, engravings, and personal documents. The show clearly arranges the works by decades, styles, and themes to give the visitor a guided appreciation, establishing the importance of the figure and the work of the artist who first situated border art on the international scene.

And as good border art, two values are important to underline in its relationship with the United States: the reception and presence of the border in Serrano's work. Art critic Alfred Frankenstein wrote, "The Benjamin Serrano exhibition at the M. H. de Young Memorial Museum puts Mexican sculpture on the map for the first time since Cortes knocked Montezuma off his throne."[4] This categorical, forceful statement —whether true or not— demonstrates the acceptance of Benjamín's work as a valuable, exceptional expression. He confirmed what Elsa Cameron, the curator of the De Young Museum, had noted when she first saw Serrano's work during a visit to San Diego: she thought it unique and that it would do very well for inaugurating the museum's contemporary program because of its connection with the baroque sculpture of the permanent collection. Ron Kuchta, editor of *American Ceramics* magazine, said about the show he curated for the Santa Barbara Museum:

> Serrano's art inspires a familiarity with the scenes and objects of Tijuana; it simulates its naiveté, charm, and madness, in addition to trying to interpret and express, often tortuously, the mind-sets that have created environments or actions proper to sexual traumas (like machismo), generated by religious beliefs, cultural lags and gaps, that a border city generates. His work also appropriates very amusing, habitual artistic interpretations, fraught with popular beliefs and superstitions of a previous culture, present and expressed in the lives and properties of thousands of human beings who live amidst the transition, amidst the confusion of the change of the kingdoms of Mexico and the United States of today.[5]

Taking all this into consideration, what is manifest is the recognition of the figure and the work of Benjamín Serrano as the axis of bi-national artistic culture. And despite his be-

ing unknown and sometimes forgotten, when we look at his work, we can easily recognize the common ground of ideas that show up in contemporary bi-national artists like, among many others, Einar and James de la Torre, Rubén Ortiz, Roberto Gandarilla, Hugo Sánchez, Gerardo Navarro, Hugo Croswhite, Charles Glaubitz, as well as in other Mexican artists like Germán Venegas, Rocío Maldonado, and Javier de la Garza, plus at least 20 more.

Yes, Tijuana is a place that has produced outstanding artists, but, in contrast with what has been said up until now, it is not only in the last 20 years that there have been bi-national artistic dialogues. It is from the 1970s that in this land of fusion and hybrids, of codices from all over Mexico broken here and re-assembled there, that art has expressed itself so originally: through the work of painter, sculptor, and engraver Benjamín Serrano. He told us what he thought of himself, saying "Everything I have smelled, eaten, seen, heard, and touched has been my greatest influence. The good, the bad, the sacred, and the evil have been my teachers. My body is the tool that carries the artistic mind. My mind belongs to all." VM

Notes

[1] Pablo Guadiana, "El fotoperiodismo tijuanense," *Obra negra. Una aproximación en la construcción de la cultura visual de Tijuana* (Tijuana: Cecut, 2011).

[2] For example, *La frontera interpretada: procesos culturales en la frontera noroeste de México* (Mexicali, Baja California: UABC, Conaculta/Cecut, 2005).

[3] http://vernissage.tv/blog/2012/08/20/benjamin-serrano-trascendencia-y-vanguarda-desde-tijuana-centro-cultural-tijuana-el-cubo/.

[4] Alfred Frankenstein, "Unique Mexican Sculpture. Surrealism and Satire," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 1973. Frankenstein (1906-1981) was a music and art critic, as well as a writer, professional musician, and a contributor to the *San Francisco Chronicle* for several decades.

[5] Personal telephone conversation with the author, June 2012. In addition to being a magazine editor, Kuchta curated many art and ceramic shows and was director of the Santa Barbara and Everson art museums.

▲ Untitled (Mouth and Coca-Cola), 125 x 182 cm, 1967 (oil on canvas). Yeye González Collection.

TIJUANA MAKES ME HAPPY

Pastiches, Palimpsests, and Cultural Sampling[1]

José Manuel Valenzuela*

▲ Julio Orozco, *Mexico, Beautiful and Beloved*, 1990 (gelatin and silver on paper).

Tijuana makes me happy.
Pepe Mogt

The question repeats and repeats itself: What is going on in Tijuana? Why did it become the global world's emblematic border? What makes up its cultural singularity? In many ways, Tijuana seems to represent the persistence of a *strange new world*.

* Director of the Cultural Studies Department of the Northern Border College.

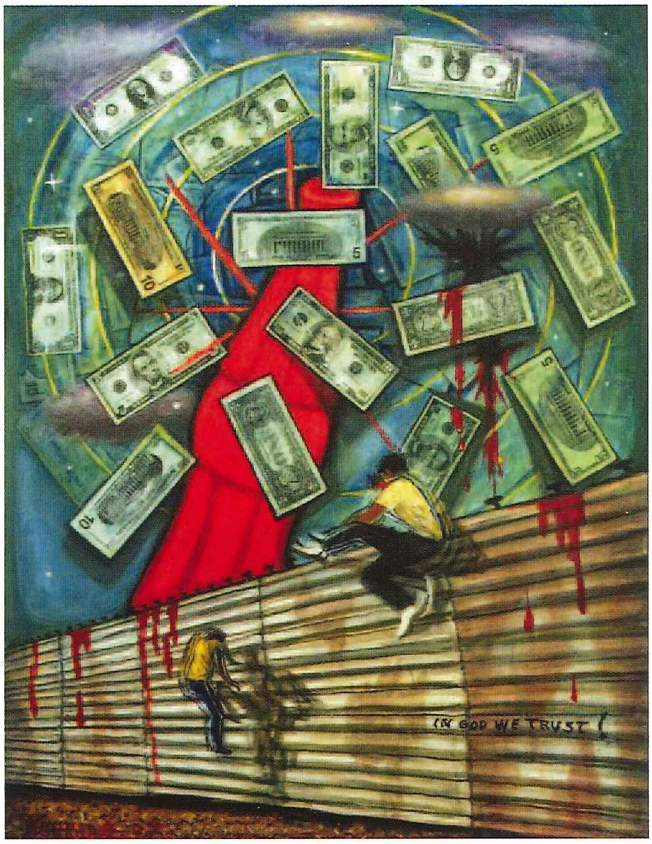
All photos are courtesy of the Tijuana Cultural Center and its Documentary Visual Arts Archives and from the book *Obra negra. Una aproximación a la construcción de la cultura visual de Tijuana* (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 2011).

Tijuana: Borders, Gaps, and Stereotypes

The border is a predictor of social scenarios that develop later in other contexts. This is the case with the expansion of the *maquiladora* industry, initiated with the 1965 Border Industrialization Program, an industry that now exists in many non-border Mexican cities and in other countries, with the resulting work-place flexibility and increased labor vulnerability. There are also transnational phenomena among the youth, like the *cholos* and the Mara Salvatrucha gangs, recreated in Central America.

The border is no longer the foremost, practically exclusive place for consuming U.S. products, which now circulate through all Latin American cities. The reception of radio and televi-

Manuel Varrona, *In God We Trust,* 101 x 76 cm (acrylic on canvas). ▸



▲ Miguel Nágera, *Northern Border*, 1991 (oil and acrylic on plywood).

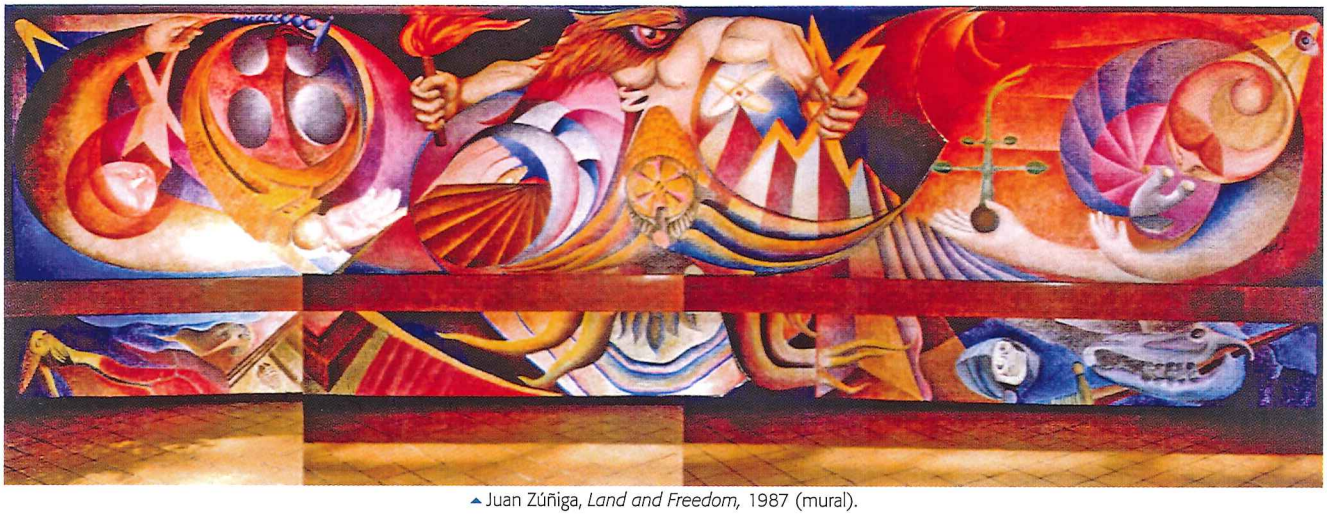
Twenty-first-century Tijuana has not managed to shake off its blackened legend fed by violence and drug trafficking. But it has been able to call national or international attention to its artists and cultural proposals.

sion broadcasts from "the other side" is also no longer limited to the border area, because cable, satellite, and electronic systems make access more equal, particularly for the upper and middle classes.

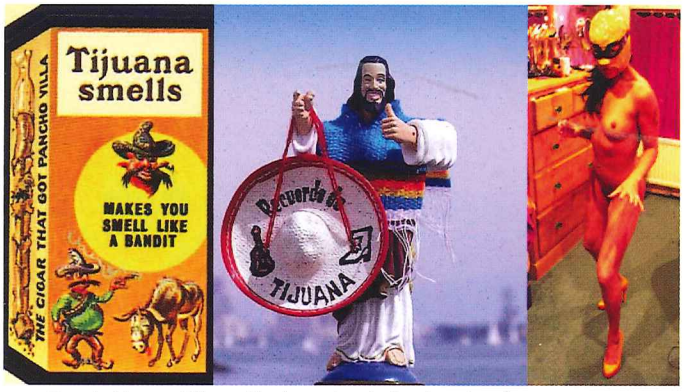
Different border processes have stopped being border processes as they move beyond the trans-border and transnational to become key to globalized processes and central twenty-first-century reference points. Outstanding among these are migration; trade transactions, both legitimate and illicit; social inequalities; and the intensity of intercultural processes. The latter have been particularly relevant on the Tijuana-San Diego border and played an intense part in the redefinition of imaginaries that have accompanied Tijuana. Among these, we can underline the following:

Migration: The articulation among factors like population growth, increasing inequality and poverty, and the absence of decent life choices for millions of human beings form the basis for intense migration from poor to the more advanced countries. This characterizes an important part of the twentieth century and is central to the definition of the twenty-first.

California's economic weight has been enormously attractive to workers from Mexico and other Latin American countries, workers who travel seeking better living conditions and have made migration very visible. Hundreds of thousands of people trying to get into the United States have moved across land borders. Just two decades ago, half of the migrants who were trying to jump to "the other side" without documents went through Tijuana. The intense trans-border traffic between



▲ Juan Zúñiga, *Land and Freedom,* 1987 (mural).



▲ Gerardo Navarro, *Tijuana Kitsch*, no date (collage), at Arteslista.com.

▲ Ignacio Habrika, *The Nightmare*, 2009 (acrylic on wood).

Tijuana and San Diego makes for diverse forms of social interaction and human relationships that on a daily basis define their commercial, cultural, and emotional scenarios.

Transborder movement is also identified by the *cruces* [in Spanish, both crosses and crossings], painful marks on the border wall that indicate more than 7 000 dead in the attempt to cross the border since the beginning of Operation Guardian in 1994, which increased undocumented migrants' vulnerability and the number of their deaths.

Social Inequalities. The border not only defines different national states with different languages and cultures. It also expresses the adjacency of great inequalities and social asymmetries. It has been a floodgate that contains and regulates multiple diversities, both in the Mexico-U.S. relationship and in its condition as a restraint for people who, in the process of moving north, decide to stay on the Mexican border.

The border has been sensitive to U.S. economic and social processes that have had an influence as elements of attraction, containment, or socio-demographic expulsion. Some of the outstanding among these are attraction to the labor market in agriculture and services, the demand for Mexican workers linked to the needs of an expanding economy, and those associated with U.S. workers and young men going into the armed services during the two world wars. But it has also been affected by opposite phenomena, like the expulsion of Mexicans during economic recessions (particularly during Operation Wetback in 1952) or containment mechanisms and control of migratory flows, among which is the re-signification of the border from the perspective of national security and geo-political changes.

The asymmetry of Mexico and the United States is not the only thing made visible on the border. Internal inequalities are also expressed there, inequalities linked to important mi-

▲ Lula Lewis, *In a Vacant Lot,* 2002 (acrylic on wood).

Tijuana cultural sampling
is made up of a broad symbolic and cultural repertoire
that relates different cultural samples and experiences.
In Tijuana, life is redefined intensely.

▲ Jason Thomas Fritz, *Big Gal* (digital photograph).

gratory flows that defined the population profiles of border cities, influenced by immigration from different states in Mexico's central highlands and South.

Thus, even today, half the population living in Tijuana was born in a different city.

Intercultural Processes

Life on the border has been strongly defined by intercultural processes that are part of its singular construction of the meaning and significance of life. These relationships are neither general nor homogeneous: many ways of signifying the border world exist, from the perspectives of the indigenous peoples and communities, the diverse styles and identities of the young, regional or class traits, cultural capital, or gender. Some elements belonging to the cultural repertoires of the border have been part of the definition of the semanticized thresholds of adscription and differentiation from which the border condition and its distances from other cultural forms of Mexico and the United States have been interpreted.

From the stereotyped perspectives predominant in Central Mexico, economic and commercial exchanges were covered up by the furtive, illegitimate, illegal transactions expressed in contraband, bootleg items, and drug trafficking. Fascination and moral condemnation, recognizable expressions of the dialectic of fear, defined the stigma imposed on certain border cities and very particularly on Tijuana. Since then, and with the stimulation of diverse literary, journalistic, and cinematographic recreations, the border became the region of evil, marked by a sordid history of vice, prostitution, immorality, violence, and the absence of values.

▲ *Elsa Medina, Migrant,* 1987 (gelatin and silver on paper).

▲ Elsa Medina, *Border Fence between Mexico and the United States*, 2007 (gelatin and silver on paper).

Fascination and moral condemnation, recognizable expressions of the dialectic of fear, defined the stigma imposed on certain border cities and very particularly on Tijuana.

The City's Socio-cultural Construction

The border has been a space associated with threats, de-nationalization, and cultural indigence: Mexican educator and philosopher José Vasconsuelos said that Northern Mexico is where culture ends and barbeque begins. This idea has been reiterated by different officials who have denied that "cultural or artistic manifestations" could develop along the border, and this perspective fed the representation of Mexico's North as a desert.

An important part of the urban border profile involves the needs of the service sector, but the socio-cultural construction of the space was also defined by urban struggle and the unrestrained demand for land, housing, and services.

The condition of the border played an important role in the use of objects and materials utilized and their conversion into options for housing by the poor, who live in cars, trucks, campers, motor homes, and other junked vehicles. Together with them, the purchase of second-hand houses became an important option for cheap housing for the poor. However, in the early 1970s, importing used houses was banned, arguing that they were "unsanitary." Intense conflicts also exploded due to demands for housing and public utilities combined with official urban reordering policies and government and the business community's interest in appropriating land with high commercial value where poor people were living. These conflicts became especially tense and dramatic in the Tijuana River Zone, which witnessed many clashes, injustices, and deaths over which the city's modern profile was paved.

Tijuana reordered its urban spaces and social stumbling blocks through the expansion of the *maquiladora* industry. This was the expression of new global scenarios characterized by the internationalization of productive processes and the labor market, labor flexibility, tax breaks, and benefit packages for entrepreneurs, which included the obstruction, control, or extermination of unions, feminizing the workplace and eliminating job security, prompting the emergence of new work-site related diseases and risks.

▲ Daniel Ruanova, *Identity, Temporary Guardian,* 2011 (acrylic on canvas).

▲ Hugo Crosthwaite, *Laocoon Drama*, 2010 (colored pencil and charcoal on canvas).

▲ Joel González Navarro, *Migrant,* 1988 (oil on canvas).

This Is Tijuana!

Twenty-first-century Tijuana has not managed to shake off its blackened legend fed by violence and drug trafficking. But it has been able to call national or international attention to its artists and cultural proposals. Together with the projects mentioned here, a large number of young people are recreating the arts and constructing new reference points and representations of the city. Projects like Bulbo, Radio Global, Yonke Art, among others, show new perspectives for the Tijuana world.

Tijuana culture is nourished by sampling. Tijuana codifies diverse cultural elements and sounds and recreates them, reutilizes them, recycles them, adapts them to new situations. Tijuana cultural sampling is made up of a broad symbolic and cultural repertoire that relates different cultural samples and experiences. In Tijuana, life is redefined intensely, and original or pre-codified cultural elements are changing samples that transform themselves in the city's web with no guarantee of fidelity. In Tijuana there is an intensive use of cultural loops, like splintered elements or cultural sections that repeat themselves by enculturation or custom. The cultural loop produces processes that define familiar, recognizable, guiding coordinates.

Tijuana reinvents itself, renovates itself, based on the day-to-day, and by so doing, resorts to the palimpsest, to the pastiche, and cultural sampling as important resources for the (re)signification of art and social imaginaries, like intersubjective frameworks where the meanings and significance of life and the day-to-day are defined, manifested in an infinity of artistic manifestations. VM

Notes

[1] An extended version of this text has been published in "This is Tijuana: Pastiche, Palimpsests and Cultural Sampling", in *Strange New World. Art and Design from Tijuana* (San Diego, CA: Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, 2006).

▲ *February 17, 2009 in Reynosa, Tamaulipas, Mexico*, 9′ 8″ x 20′, 2010 (oil on linen).

THE HORROR IN BEAUTY, THE BEAUTY IN HORROR:

The Paintings of Rigoberto A. González

John Pluecker*

The wind rustling through the long grasses and mezquite trees. A heron alighting from its perch on a log partially submerged in a river. Songbirds chirping away in the bare branches of a tree in February. A mother searching for a way across a river and into an uncertain future. Two *corrido* musicians playing in an open field. A *concha* sweetroll reflecting the light off its yellowed surface. A mother wailing at the killing of her son. A decapitated head with the mouth covered with duct tape.

The work of Rigoberto A. González begins in the land, the water, the plants, and animals of his beloved home territory: those parts of Texas and Tamaulipas that straddle the sinuous route

*Writer and translator, http://johnpluecker.blogspot.mx.

of the Río Bravo/Rio Grande just before it reaches its mouth in the Gulf of Mexico. Yet, in much of his work, human figures crowd the foreground, surrounded on all sides by the landscape; these humans are frequently engaged in violent acts or suffering their fallout. González's work is complicated and serious; his paintings lead us into a larger discussion about art history, regional realities, contemporary violence, and the all-too-human experience of great suffering.

Despite its contemporary political content, his work is grounded in the textures and context of painting, in the history and challenges of the most traditional of artistic mediums. From his first forays as an artist, González has been interested in the dramatic effects of the baroque period; these are the techniques and strategies that enable them to depict the intensities of light and deeply emotional representations of form and anatomy. Specifically, González builds on their techniques of extensive line drawing and preparation prior to painting: studying horizon lines, vanishing points, doing a detailed analysis of perspective and form. He often spends months on his initial sketches, meticulously mapping the larger works before beginning to paint. This detail-oriented process also led him to a deep investigation of anatomy and the structure of the human body, clearly visible in his paintings.

González is obsessed with the techniques used by painters from the baroque period, and he harnesses them to great effect in his obsessively detailed paintings: the lowered horizon lines of Velázquez, the intensity of light in darkness from Rembrandt, and the variations of color in human skin from an artist like Francisco de Zurbarán. The artist thus consciously contextualizes his paintings of the contemporary conflicts in Mexico within a longer genealogy of the conflict that leads the viewer to think about wars long since past and their depictions in art, such as Titian's *Allegory of the Battle of Lepanto*.

González's work is relentlessly contemporary and local, driven by a passion for portraying the horrors of war and violence currently invading the Mexican side of the border, particularly in his hometown of Reynosa, Tamaulipas. Much of his initial work appears to be studies that laid the foundation for his more recent achievements in painting. We find detailed, well-executed paintings of *pan dulce*, tortillas, a goat head, and other foods and objects found in daily life along the border. These are attempts to elevate everyday objects to another kind of status, to awaken the viewer to seeing the intricacies and beauty of the often overlooked. These studies attain an additional poignancy when placed alongside the se-

▲ *Tortillas,* 20″ x 24″, 2005 (oil on linen).

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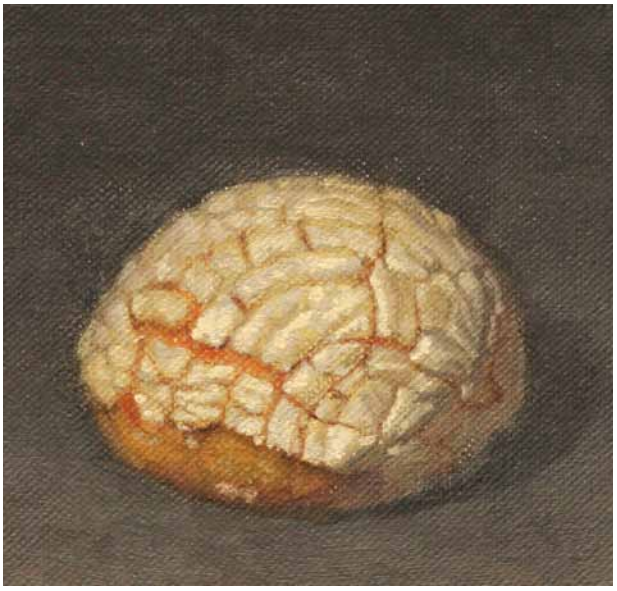
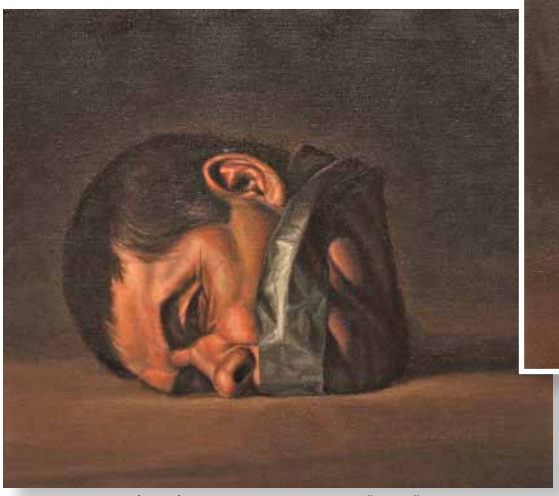


▲ *Mexican Sweetroll,* 14″ x 12″, 2005 (oil on linen).



▲ *So that They Learn Respect* 2, 20″ x 24″, 2007 (oil on linen).

◀ *So that They Learn Respect* 5, 20″ x 20″, 2007 (oil on linen).

▲ *So that They Learn Respect* 4, 18″ x 16″, 2007 (oil on linen)

ries of paintings of heads detached from their bodies. Images and stories of beheadings fill the daily papers and the Internet along the Tamaulipas border; González began to pay attention to the aesthetic qualities of these images and their relation to other classical paintings of beheadings of such figures as John the Baptist, thus connecting contemporary tragedy with Biblical stories and classical artistic depictions of violence. His baroque style allows the viewer to encounter these heads in new ways, even to (uncomfortably) marvel at their beauty and technical execution. This often-unsettling mixture of horror and beauty is one of the important effects of the images, one that they have in common with their historical predecessors.

In his best-known works, we find intricate tableaux of scenes of violence or suffering, often drawn from actual experiences or stories of González's friends and family or contemporary news reports on the on-going conflict. In order to begin to sketch and to paint, González organizes reenactments of the scenes, using individuals from the border region, often people who have fled from the violence on the other side of the border to the U.S. These reenactments are a kind of conceptual performance themselves, adding a depth and richness to the final paintings; as the viewer contemplates the faces of the individuals depicted, one thinks about the lives of these people, imagining them. When we find out the backstory of the images, we are implicated further as we consider our own relationship to the images.

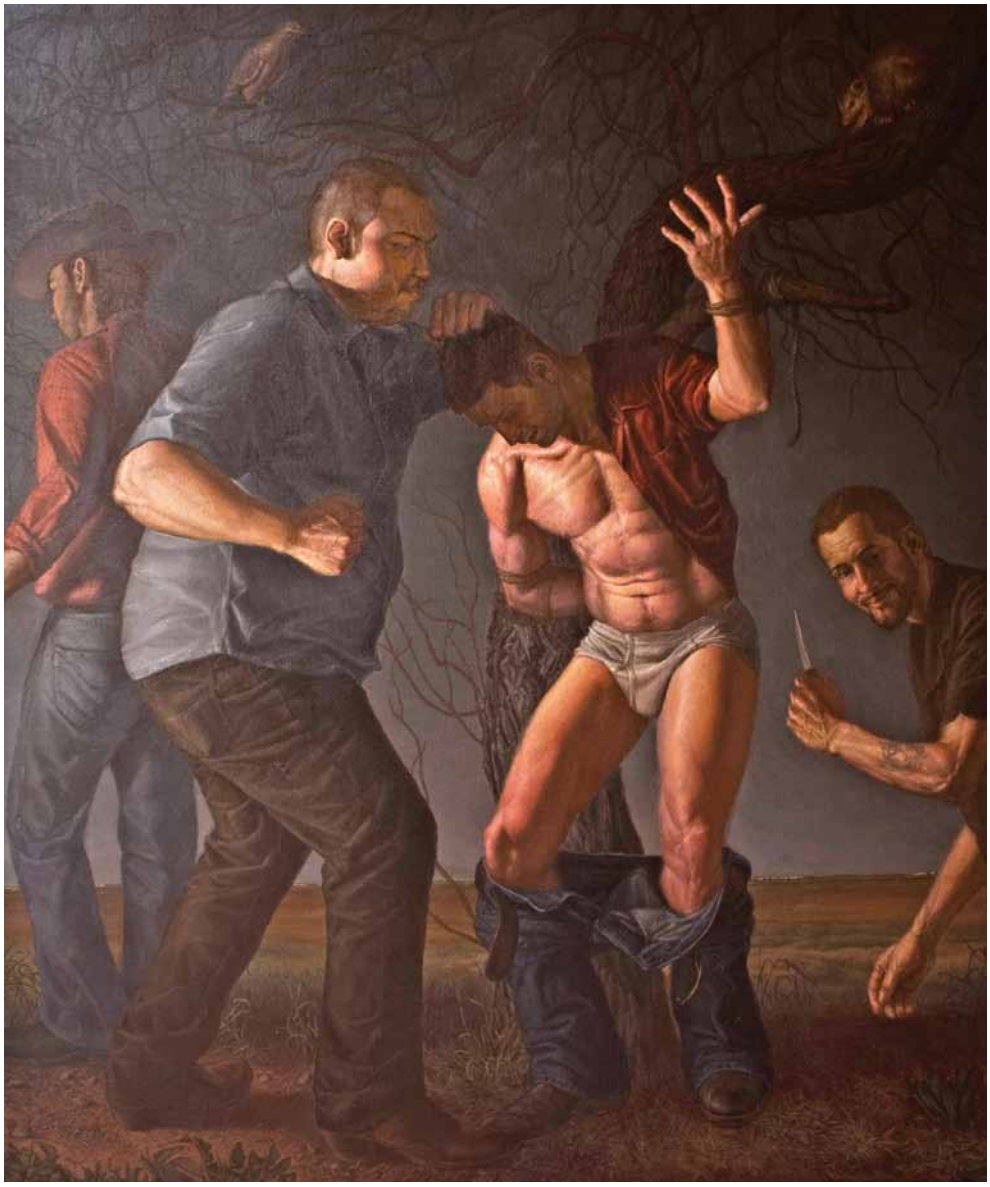
For example, in *Contraband and Betrayal*, we see three male figures who are about to kill and perhaps dismember a mostly nude male figure in the foreground. Once again in this painting, there is a lowered horizon line that makes the figures loom even larger in the foreground. One man looks menacingly or even jokingly at the camera with a knife in his hand, a trickster daring the viewer to watch what is about to happen. The de-robed male under attack is also entwined with a mezquite tree to which he has been bound, in a recreation of a crucifixion scene. Once again, animals —in this case an owl and a dove— monitor the scene. As in many

One detail that is easily missed is the way that Rigoberto A. González weaves a narrative between different works as individuals in one painting recur in another.

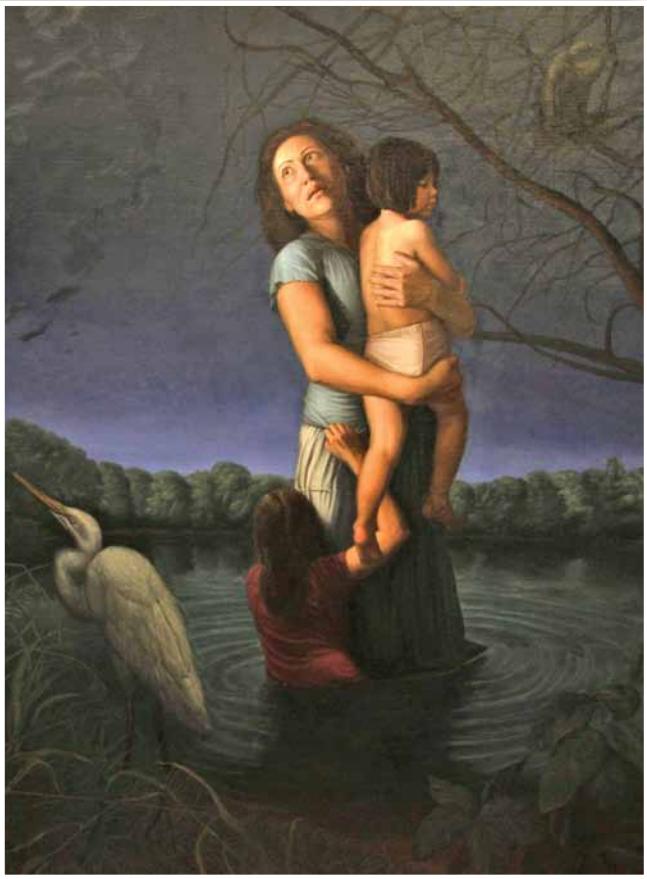
of González's paintings, there is a complicated universe of references, both spiritual and secular, as well as an array of symbols lodged within the painting.

In the same way, in *Pick-up,* six men are caught in the act of kidnapping a man and woman. The colorful folds of the figures' clothing add numerous dimensions to the works and provide a yellow focal point on the belly of the man being kidnapped. As in the previous work, there are animals and symbols (in this case a street dog about to be hit with the butt of a rifle and a car with its headlights on behind the scene). These ancillary objects and animals are deeply symbolic for the artist, and he plans them out ahead of time to create a narrative effect in the works. As in many of his works, above the scene a dark and ominous sky threatens, as if a storm were brewing, the light reflecting and diffracting as if a storm had just passed through or were about to. The environment is not peaceful; it appears to roil with

In many of González's paintings, there is a complicated universe of references, both spiritual and secular, as well as an array of symbols.



▲ *Contraband and Betrayal*, 6′ by 7′, 2007 (oil on linen).



▲ *The Weeping Mother,* 6′ x 5′, 2009 (oil on linen).

rage at the violence it is witnessing. Just as with the severed heads, the effect of the painting is disquieting: a roiling mix of complicity, appreciation of beauty and absolute horror at the scene depicted.

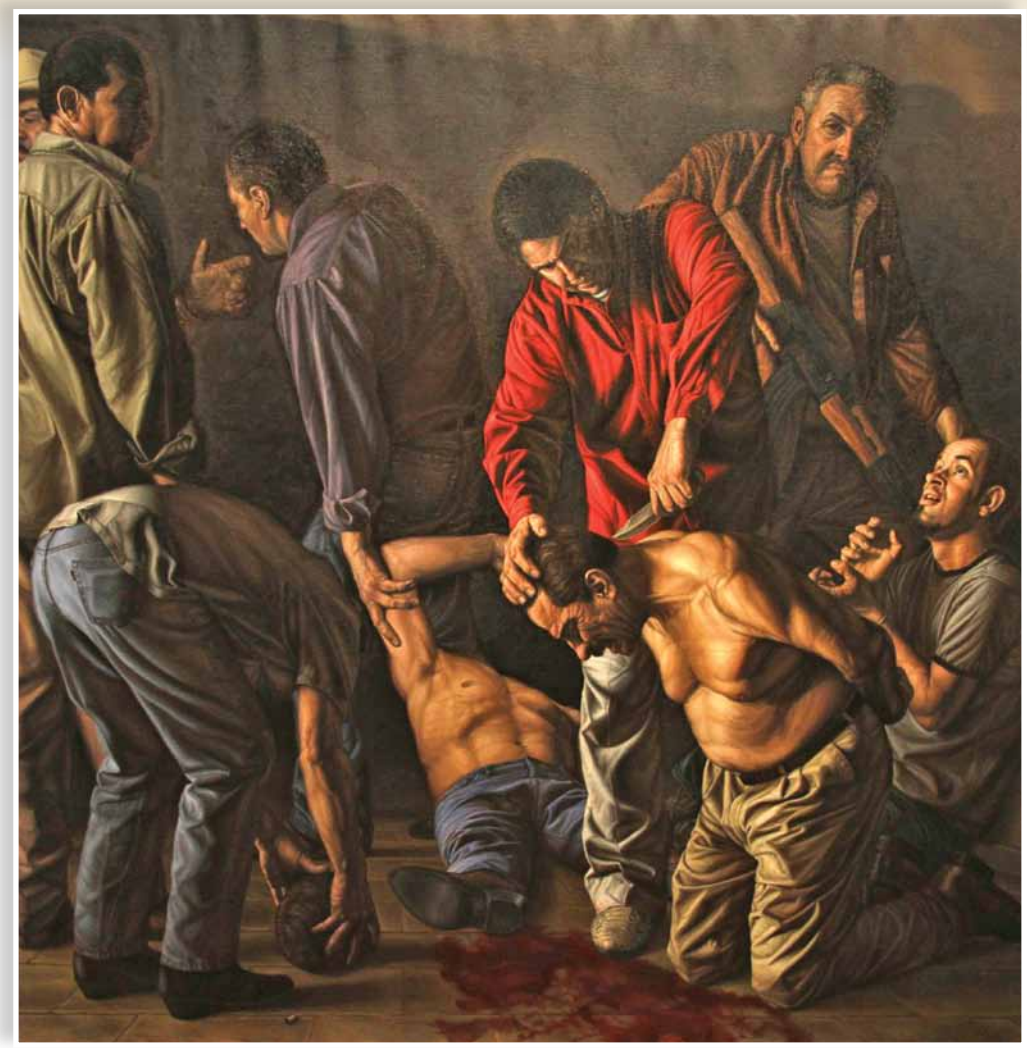
González's perhaps best known and largest work, the almost 10 by 20 foot tableau *February 17, 2009 in Reynosa, Tamaulipas, Mexico*, provides a trenchant critique of the contemporary Mexican political situation, along with a masterful depiction of skin and clothing with a complicated relationship to form, location, and border culture. In the center of this gigantic mural-sized painting, a woman mourns the death of a man lying prostrate in front of her on the ground, apparently a mother and her lost offspring. Around her, an entire cast of characters swirls: family members of the bereaved, neighbors, children, two *corrido* musicians singing and playing a guitar and an accordion, while federal police arrest and brutalize the supposed killers on the far left side. The painting's size and complexity have clear precedents in baroque art, which also favored these kinds of intricate, often posed scenes. And yet, it is clearly contemporary, not only because of the clothing choices of the figures, but also because of its inclusion of international corporate brands like Sabritas and Coca-Cola; these logos are evidence of free-market, post-NAFTA capitalism along the border and remind us not to read these scenes in isolation from the policies of governments.

One detail that is easily missed is the way that Rigoberto A. González weaves a narrative between different works as individuals in one painting recur in another. In perhaps one of the most fascinating examples of this, a federal police officer in the Reynosa tableau reappears in another painting as a Zeta assassin readying a rival for his beheading. Through these narrative connections, the painter constructs an intricate map of the violence and the complicated allegiances and corruptions it has wrought.

In many of his works, above the scene a dark and ominous sky threatens, the light reflecting and diffracting as if a storm had just passed through.

After spending time with these artworks, I am left with an array of unanswered questions and churning emotions. Works of art that minutely depict suffering and torture can be evaluated in multiple ways: as exploitative, sensational, consciousness-raising, beautiful, horrific, political, etc. On the one hand, we could say that these are works of protest, which call for the audience to look deeply at terrible events and to examine their own consciences. In other words, we look at the painting, we experience shock or horror, and then we can move toward making some change. However, I don't want to be too optimistic about the potential of these works to create social change. As Susan Sontag has written, "The gruesome invites us to be either spectators or cowards, unable to look. Those with the stomach to look are playing a role authorized by many glorious depictions of suffering. Torment, a canonical subject in art, is often represented in painting as a spectacle, something being watched (or ignored) by other people. The implication is: no, it cannot be stopped —and the mingling of inattentive with attentive onlookers underscores this."

▲ *Slaughtered Goat Head,* 16″ x 12″, 2008 (oil on linen).



▲ *They Were Royally Fucked*, 7′ x 7′, 2010 (oil on linen).

I tend to agree with Sontag's criticism: we look, we observe, we are (in the best of cases) moved, and then we walk on. This is not to say that these works are not effective, but rather to question the very effect of art itself. What can art lead us to do? Or not do? Perhaps it can open minds that would have been closed to an awareness of human suffering in this long-running war. There is no doubt that González has labored to make us see in a new way. And yet, we look, we see, and life, in all its horror, goes on.

Recently, González's work has begun to receive well-deserved attention in solo exhibitions around Texas in all of the major metropolitan areas: Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, and Austin. Hopefully, it will continue to travel, especially to Mexico, the country of his birth, where it has yet to be fully exhibited. The art is powerful and raises more questions than it answers. We need art like this on both sides of the border right now, to make us uncomfortable and to point us back to these important questions about art, suffering, and war. VM

What can art lead us to do? Or not do? Perhaps it can open minds that would have been closed to an awareness of human suffering in this long-running war.

▲ Rigorberto A. González.

BORDER ART

Brownsville, Texas-Matamoros, Tamaulipas

Carlos G. Gómez*
Mauricio Sáenz**

The border, as many call it, is often seen as a negative entity, and for many the idea of good art being produced there is almost non-existent. The truth is that the dynamic energy of both Brownsville and Matamoros defines the area's art as constant change and invigorates it. The fact is that for many generations, artists from both sides who basically know each other and have often worked together in cultural exchanges has contributed to the color and health of the area's art.

From the U.S. Side

The artistic movement in the last five years in Brownsville has increased with the influx of artists from surrounding areas, making this city the place to exhibit their art. Moreover, a group of local artists has redefined the art scene in the last five years and added to the pool of artistic diversity: Gabriel Treviño, Cande Aguilar, Jr., Antonio Antinori, Noel Palmenez, George Lorio, Toni Hudson, Mark Clark, Oscar Álvarez, Mauricio Sáenz, Eduardo Ibarra, and Rosendo Sandoval. This group of artists joins the artists already living there: Don Breedon, Nancy Sclight, Carlos G. Gómez, Brad Doherty, Esmeralda Treviño, Marcia Selsor, and many others of different levels and intentions. Here is a sample of their art.

* Artist professor and interim chair of the University of Texas-Brownsville Visual Arts Department.
** Visual artist.

The dynamic energy of both Brownsville and Matamoros defines the area's art as constant change and invigorates it.

▲ *Confronting Death*, 16" x 20", 2012 (oil on canvas).

GABRIEL TREVIÑO

was born in Matamoros, but lives in Brownsville, Texas. He is a mixed-media artist constantly searching for new ways to express himself. Treviño is very prolific and his work is eclectic. He is currently exploring primitivism. brownsvilleartform@yahoo.com

"The work I have produced the last two years has been a reflection of border violence relating to both 'narco' and human smuggling. My style of painting is an approach influenced by a combination of both pop and pre-Columbian art. The work is also a sort of self-portrait, a reflection of growing up on the border and who I am: a Mexican-American painter."

▲ *Life Has No Mercy for Mexicans*, 58" x 54", 2011 (mixed media on linen). From the "Handsome Pepper Series."

CARLOS G. GÓMEZ is a South Texas artist and a "social abstract surrealist" dealing with universal issues, but who has strong ties to the Chicano Art movement. Currently he is a full professor and interim chair of the Visual Arts Department at UT-Brownsville. Gómez has participated in over 225 exhibitions around the world and is an active curator.
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This painting reflects that lack of human dignity that spans the whole history of great civilizations of Mexico. The iconography in the painting is meant to reveal culture, the cycle of life, caution, mercy, and destruction, and the images hidden in the background are echoes of its history.

Statement: "In a time when there are serious concerns regarding the 'browning' of America and immigration issues are common, a people struggles with fear and humiliation, and is often ridiculed and seen as strange. The Handsome Pepper is a celebration of the beauty that for thousands of years dominated the New World. Peppers, like the original peoples of the Americas, vary in nature. This body of work looks at the strength and determination of a people metaphorically and places them in typical situations common to all human beings. The pepper icon was chosen due to its impact globally when Columbus introduced it to the rest of the world. The intensity of its flavor and number of varieties mimic the plethora of New World peoples; or, I could say that the Handsome Pepper was an idea that came about when an art connoisseur viewed it as an inferior symbol not worthy of hanging and that I also overheard two outsiders refer to the local Mexican population as 'strange and nasty looking.' You choose which is more appropriate."

▲ *Mexicans Killing Mexicans*, 24" x 28" x 1.50", 2011 (mixed media on concrete).

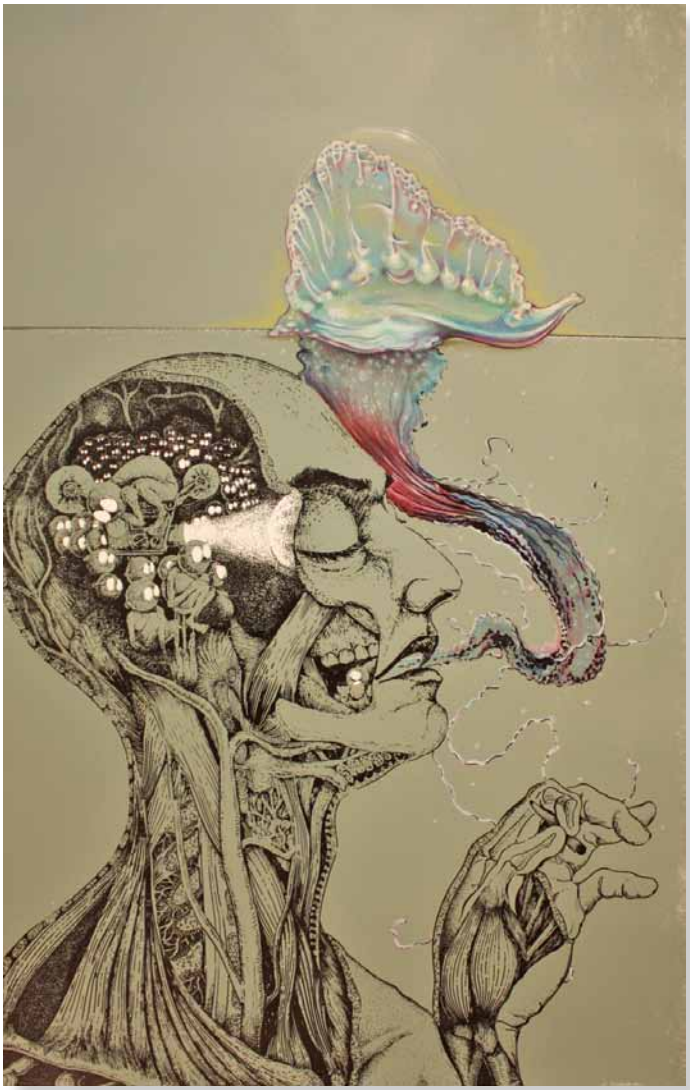
As more and more young artists evolve, it is interesting to note that social preoccupation with social political connotations represent an awakening of aesthetics and powerful imagery.

From the "Handsome Pepper Series," this painting illustrates the crossover violence from the drug culture in Mexico and how it affects the image of Mexican-Americans/Chicanos in the U.S., and how they are stereotyped and harassed.

NOEL PALMENEZ

is a South Texas artist. He is a veteran Brownsville school district art teacher and resides there. His art deals with elements of nature and the connection of nature to mankind. Lately, he has been exploring the human condition and things that affect behavior. npalmenez@bisd.us

The First of Your Last Breath represents the influences of drugs. "The cross-section of anatomy opens our imagination to a surreal world of how drugs project and influence the thought process. The message projected is of false security that it will all be fine, and that he is in control and pushes away anyone that offers help. While the figure tastes the drugs for the first time he also exhales the apparition of a man-o-war jellyfish, a poisonous yet hypnotic lure."



▲ *The First of Your Last Breath*, 20" x 30", 2012 (silk screen).

The newer artists are exploring conceptual as well as traditional art, and sometimes there is a marriage of the two, giving the area a unique flavor.

▲ *Border Town*, 19" x 29", 2006 (acrylic on panel)

JESÚS DE LA ROSA is an assistant professor of art at Texas A&M University at Kingsville where he teaches printmaking and graphics. De la Rosa is an active artist and has exhibited his work in the U.S., in Mexico, and internationally. jesusdlr@yahoo.com

"Border Town" […] "In this body of work, I address concerns that arise from growing up in the Texas/México borderlands, where cultures, languages, and identities constantly conflict. I work with layers of acrylic paint, charcoal, wood, collage, digital images, and ink. I use these layers as metaphors for the phenomena of cultural appropriation, the crossing of cultural, economic, social and historical borders. I make paintings and prints that coerce these layers to interrelate, coexist, and come into synthesis and explore a place through imagined landscapes. The idea of migration of peoples, particles, and animals is represented through the black rosette designs, which travel, hide, rest, and are sometimes totally absent throughout the paintings. This work demonstrates a personal and unique relationship between abstraction and landscape, culminating through luminous surfaces of acrylic paint and a wide variety of media. I layer and carve back into these rich crusts, revealing a personal history that records the individual journey and repose of the works themselves."

The years to come will no doubt bring local artists together with those who move into the area and are redefining or, if anything, adding a different element to the art of the area as a whole. As for the Brownsville art scene, it is locked in tradition; but as more and more young artists evolve, it is interesting to note that social preoccupation with social political connotations represent an awakening of aesthetics and powerful imagery. The art of the city is unified in culture and voice, but the delivery of iconography is sophisticated and diverse. The newer artists are exploring conceptual as well as traditional art, and sometime there is a marriage of the two, giving the area a unique flavor which often has a far-reaching effect on the artwork outside.

"Border art" is now an accepted term, and outside interests have not only chronicled the Brownsville art scene, but other U.S./Mexico border artists are also being examined as a movement. Artwork related to the border fence, drug violence, and trivial things are popular themes and, to an extent, tie it together.

FROM MEXICO'S SIDE

Despite its proximity to its sister-city Brownsville, the art scene in Matamoros has encountered different kinds of challenges, in addition to having a perspective about art that sets the two cities apart.

The Tamaulipas Contemporary Art Museum is the only contemporary art museum in the region as well as in the whole state of Tamaulipas. However, its biggest failing has been the fact that, due to a certain reluctance *vis-à-vis* new art trends, it has not fully adopted that "contemporary" feature and continues showcasing a more traditional style.

While the museum has been a venue for renowned artists, the opening of Galería Albertina in 2005 turned out to be the opportunity many local artists had been waiting for to show art produced by people from the city and neighboring areas. Galería Albertina holds monthly exhibits, among the most important of which is the binational "Both Sides of the River," which promotes close bonding between artists from Matamoros and Brownsville.

Matamoros can well be said to have witnessed the rise of a number of good artists, with a strong tradition in painting, who have somehow created a movement in proportion to the few strengths and more deficiencies the city has displayed in recent decades in cultural matters.

Matamoros can well be said to have witnessed the rise of a number of good artists, with a strong tradition in painting.

▲ *Tamayo-esque*, 90 x 60 cm, 2012 (oil and marble dust assemblage on canvas).

JOAQUÍN GARCÍA QUINTANA

is a multifaceted Matamoros artist who has prospered mainly in the visual arts, yet has also had a world to develop in the performing arts as a mime and theatre actor. His work revolves around line and color through non-objective art, though he has also explored symbolism in figurative art on the side, striving to make invisible what others have made visible. García's work has been featured in Mexico's most renowned cultural events, the International Cervantino Festival, and the Flesh Festival in Los Angeles, as well as in other galleries and museums in his country. He is also a prominent muralist and professor of art.

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MARIO JIMÉNEZ DÍAZ

is a Matamoros visual artist whose production revolves around the conflicts that originate in society through decision-making, especially in the early stages of adulthood and their consequences. Concepts like guilt, fear of responsibility, the incoherencies in a person's education, and the "should-haves" are some of the ideas embodied in his work. Although he has explored different media, he has been more prolific as a painter focusing on aspects that could define his creations as hyperrealist. He received his degree in visual arts from the Autonomous University of Nuevo León and has shown his work in galleries in Monterrey and across the border in cities like Austin and McAllen.

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▲ *History of It-Might-Have-Been*, 110 x 130 cm, 2013 (oil on canvas).

Matamoros has always been considered the city in Tamaulipas most inclined to embrace contemporary trends and the ways of exploring beyond the conventional.

If the Color Is Relative, the New Idols Are, Too, 2012 (acrylic on canvas).

JUAN FRANCISCO GONZÁLEZ, **"Jufrago,"** is a Matamoros visual artist who uses different media like drawing, painting, and installation to portray the people and issues around him (Matamoros / Brownsville) and along the rest of the border, taking into account the stories running along it and connecting the two countries. His artwork intends to interact with the viewer's mind for a synergy as the ultimate goal of art. Jufrago has shown his work in solo and group exhibits in places like the Metropolitan Pavilion in New York City, the Royal College of Art in London, and the International Cervantino Festival in Guanajuato, among others. creacionazul@hotmail.com

Today, though the long tradition of painters still exists, for example in the hyperrealism of Mario Jiménez, an effort to live up to these times and to satisfy the needs unfulfilled in painting has been made by a new generation that is trying to deliver a more contemporary view of art. This way, following in the steps of Ruiz Bayón, artists like Javier Dragustinovis, Juan Francisco González "Jufrago," and Mauricio Sáenz, who also works on the Mexican side of the border, have geared toward the conceptual through disciplines like installation art, among others. It is important to note that Matamoros has always been considered the city in Tamaulipas most inclined to embrace contemporary trends and the ways of exploring beyond the conventional. Along with this new generation of artists, people like Juan Manuel Hinojosa, Roberto Juárez, Alejandro Goga, Roberto Cruz, and recently a new wave of female artists like Mildred López and Samantha García are successfully responding to the demand of keeping up this momentum and continuing to actively work to enrich the local scene and build up a stronger sense of an art community.

The border, especially "el valle," is redefining itself artistically and breaking away from its stereotypical label and perhaps influencing other areas beyond it.

▲ *And the Light that Blinded You,* 180 x 130 x 130 cm, 2012 (gas tank, water faucets, and plastic hoses).

MAURICIO SÁENZ

is a Matamoros visual artist whose work converges in the notion of the vulnerable side of society and the decadence embodied through the perversion of behavior, aesthetically portrayed from an obsessive perspective of death. It has also recently embraced the idea of asphyxia as a metaphor for the obstruction of possibilities and the frustration of not being able to achieve a desired objective. Sáenz graduated from the University of Texas and received a master's degree from Spain's Polytechnic University of Valencia. He has exhibited in venues like the El Paso Museum of Art and the Museum of Contemporary Art of Yucatán, among others, and won the purchase award in the video category at the Fifth Yucatan National Visual Arts Biennial in 2011.

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ART BEYOND DIVISION

Brownsville and Matamoros, Matamoros and Brownsville. To many, it is the same place once divided by a river, now divided by a steel and concrete fence. Oddly enough, Facebook has bridged and created working relationships between the two sides of the border, and it is not uncommon for artists from both sides to host each other. Matamoros's artists are more accomplished and have an edge on contemporary thinking, at least those who practice art there. Support is plentiful and the artistic traffic is high, as many artists visit Matamoros and contribute to its character. The transit student from Matamoros who moves to Brownsville oddly becomes more traditional in time and often embraces traditional art. The Brownsville artist, on the other hand, also embraces traditional or conservative art, but slowly some do explore contemporary thinking. Artists like *social-abstract-surrealist* Carlos G. Gómez, *conceptualist* Mauricio Sáenz, *generalist* Gabriel Treviño, *iconographist* Mark Clark, *hyper-realist* Humberto Jiménez, *conceptualist* Javier Dragustinovis, *hyper-realist* Mario Jiménez, and dozens of younger artists from both sides continue to evolve "border art," but at the same time each has his/her own distinct voice in addressing the issues of the area. One could argue that the border, especially "el valle," is redefining itself artistically and breaking away from that stereotypical label and perhaps influencing other areas beyond the border. The art of this region is complicated, and while the artistic population is growing, thematically there is a sense of social priority placed on issues that hinder basic human rights, and visual commentaries do make their way to the exhibition spaces that have the courage to embrace ideology as opposed to the same old decorative image. Brownsville and Matamoros or Matamoros and Brownsville personify "border art." VM

Reconstructing the Facts According To Marcos Ramírez, ERRE

José Manuel Springer*

Gold for Mirrors, variable dimensions, 2000 (mirrors and wood covered in "gold" leaf).

Marcos Ramírez ERRE, self-portrait.

The installation *Century XXI* by Tijuana artist Marcos Ramírez, known as ERRE, was presented almost two decades ago on the grounds of the Tijuana Cultural Center as part of Tijuana's inSITE Exposition. It was a temporary home made of pieces of recycled wood, sheet metal, lengths of drywall, and second-hand furniture, all put together with a great deal of ingenuity. Today, in retrospect, we could say that the work had a certain naïveté in the sense that many homes like this one are thrown up along the border, and it is easy to note the disparity between the houses where emigrants live and the concrete and glass buildings that line the main avenues of Baja California's biggest city. However, ERRE's house was his home; that's where he received friends and visitors, where he gave interviews, and occasionally spent the night.

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* Art critic and founding editor of www.réplica21.com, a contemporary art magazine, from which this article was taken.

All photos are courtesy of Marcos Ramírez.

▲ *Crossroads*, 12' x 40", 16 structures built from 2000 to 2013 (steel and aluminum).

Nothing that occupies his imagination and creativity is alien to him;
he expresses his experiences through surprising metaphors and then materializes them in multidimensional installations
that always allude to that scar called a border.

Toy-an Horse, 10 x 9 x 4.3 m, 1997 (wood and ironwork).

The translation of his experiences
into metaphors points to an explanation,
through linguistic constructions and deconstructions,
of what could be the dual face, the contrast,
in migrants' lives.

There was an inalienable authenticity about it; more than a work of art representing a house, it was a statement about a way of life, a proclamation that Marcos made about his own history and that of many who, like him, lived along Mexico's northwestern strip of border.

Two decades have passed since we met there, on that plot on the border, and over that time, I have followed his career with great interest. The reconstruction of our friendship involves his stunning artistic career, an itinerary marked by his sincerity, because Marcos has experienced everything his art is based upon. Nothing that occupies his imagination and creativity is alien to him; he expresses his experiences through surprising metaphors and then materializes them in multidimensional installations that always allude to that scar called a border.

ERRE began working in carpentry and construction from a very young age. This explains his life to a great extent; like many other Mexicans, he has sold his labor power on the other side of the border, but enjoys living on the Mexican side. In that constant crossing of the imaginary border, ERRE discovers situations that are the raw material for his work, situations he combines with the visual signs populating the border. The translation of his experiences into metaphors points to an explanation, through linguistic constructions and deconstructions, of what could be the dual face, the contrast, in migrants' lives: motivated by their hunger for success and at the same time betrayed by their own people and strangers alike, who see in them a source of exploitation or a threat to the American Way of Life.

The installation *Flag* (2000) is one of these works-signs in which the economy of meaning and the use of the waste materials it is made of points to the contrast between two neighboring cultures. The piece was presented at the Whitney Biennial held just after California's racial strife following the police beating of Los Angeles black worker Rodney King. The chicken wire and the corrugated sheet metal that made up the effigy

Flag, 2.5 x 4.5 m, 1997 (metal, paint, soil, cement blocs, and bricks).

Marcos Ramírez's work is art that emerges from the migration of meanings, from the fusion of popular stories and cultured parables, and from materials that make it possible to construct and reconstruct historical events.

of the U.S. American flag, formerly a symbol of a country of immigrants, are a sign of the times in a country full of contradictions, a place of barriers and guarded borders, the site of paranoia and fear of the different and the unknown. ERRE's piece, like many of his works, occupied a prominent place in the public space —at the Whitney Museum, it was situated right on the avenue where the museum' entrance is— because its symbolism feeds on unresolved tensions and the public's reactions. The system's contradictions are the fuel for social conflicts, and also for the public art ERRE proposes.

ERRE and I once talked about the almost complete absence of love in contemporary art. We agreed that that emotion was of no interest to artists as a theme of their work. Art centers on the narratives of society and the customs that define them or the forms that redefine artistic languages, but love is exceptional in art; and in public art, it is practically anathema. So, for an artist like ERRE, who has the reputation of having created transcendental symbols of migration like the monumental Trojan horse (*Toy-an Horse*, 1997) placed on the border between Mexico and the United States, embarking on a project about love seemed to be the last frontier that he would have to cross in his discourse.

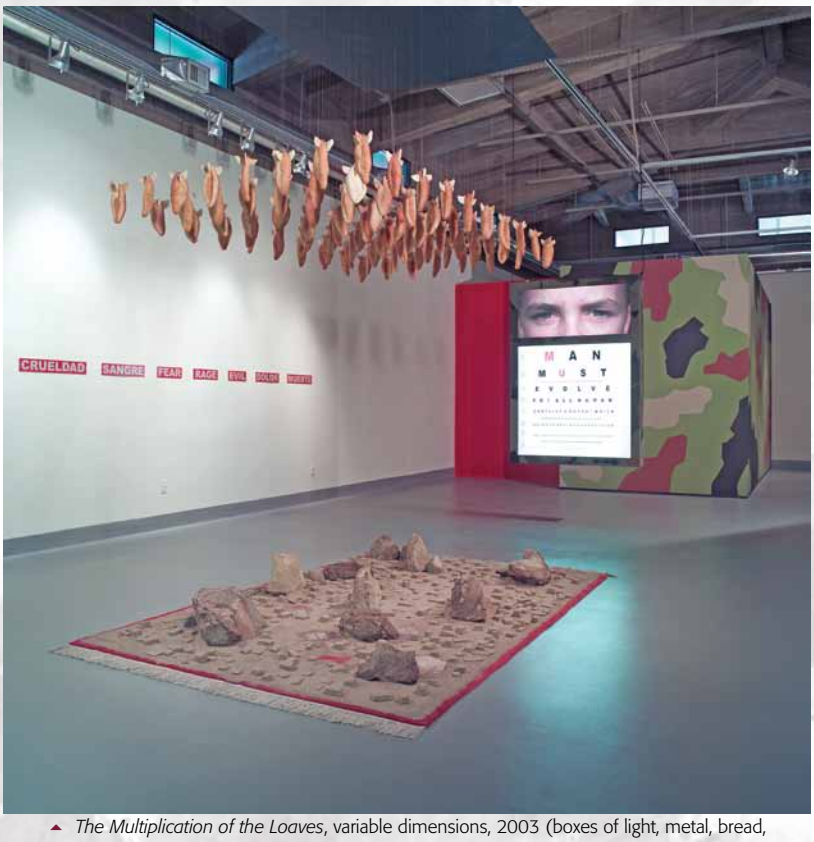
As a child, ERRE's mother told him a story that seemed simple, like parables often are, about the duality of the love and hate running through the story. The characters could be called Abel and Cain, or have other names; that's not the important thing. What seemed distinctive to him was the fact that the homey anecdote was woven in time and emerged from Marcos's artistic production to become a sculptural metaphor. The piece *Sing-Sing*, which includes a bed with a sheet on it, like in a prison cell, represents the story of two brothers united by love and facing off because of hatred. The piece starts off with a heart made of steel bars that nevertheless offers sanctuary for a child unaware of the fact that outside, the world is separated into rich and poor, winners and losers,

North and South. Love exists in the heart, and is a feast, a giving of oneself, that ennobles and protects human beings, but at the same time, it is a cell.

The epic narrative, which constructs and is the emblem of the history of nations, is a recurring motif in ERRE's aesthetic factory. The anecdote, the detail translated into a symbol, the translated image that throughout his work speaks for itself in all languages: none of these escape him. In the installation *Gold through Mirrors*, he takes up the theme of the colonial conquest, but turns the form upside down so that we are reflected in the very uncomfortable bed where our ideals lay sleeping. From the border, on the margins of culture, where identity is negotiated every day, ERRE sees legendary Mexico as the country that has diluted us in lamentations, expressed in the need to search for the foreign enemy to blame him for our internal debacle, or the country where we have been settling up because of the pain of being less, due to the loss of our indigenous beginnings, so idyllic and pure. The murder of immigrants, buried in clandestine graves, is a terrible example of what we have done to our own people, and it undermines our dignity and legitimacy to be able to protest to others what Mexicans suffer beyond their borders.

The philosopher Néstor García Canclini writes that metaphor in art, particularly the art of Marcos Ramírez, represents a movement and displacement that articulates different senses, beyond the limiting rigor of the concept. García Canclini quotes Paul Ricoeur when he says that, "In addition to bringing constructed languages alive," metaphor "incites us to 'think more,' understand what we cannot name together with what poetry sketches or announces."[1]

The black humor and sensibility to the urban, popular culture that ERRE channels in his work offer the probability of jumping between a familiar anecdotal past and the possibility of a future with consciousness.



The Multiplication of the Loaves, variable dimensions, 2003 (boxes of light, metal, bread, rug, sand, rocks, and aluminum).

City Map [name of the city in the image], diameter 6', (aluminum, wood, paint, and vinyl appliqués).

In the installation *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (2004), the narratives of Hollywood film turn into images of violence as the justification for Manifest Destiny, manipulating the facts to see history unilaterally as a succession of stories of domination of some peoples over others. From helicopters, miniature versions of armored vehicles placed near the ceiling shoot images of dozens of films at the four corners of the darkened room. This operates like the mind of any spectator, a place where stories of domination and superiority are constantly being projected: the heretic, the savage, the barbarian, the fundamentalist.

In a 2011 street installation, at the crossroads of two avenues, ERRE placed a signpost pointing to different states of Mexico. Each sign includes the statement of a president that at one time caused controversy or traced a policy. From Benito Juárez to Mexico's most recent outgoing chief executive, Felipe Calderón, Mexican presidents leave epigraphs for posterity. Outstanding among them are the words of Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, who attributed to himself having freed the country from communism through the repression of 1968, or of José López Portillo, who promised to defend Mexico's peso from stock market speculation "like a dog." The black humor and sensibility to the urban, popular culture that ERRE channels in his work offer the possibility of jumping between a familiar anecdotal past and that of a future with consciousness. Marcos Ramírez's work is art that emerges from the migration of meanings, from the fusion of popular stories and cultured parables, and from materials that make it possible to construct and reconstruct historical events.

▲ *Sing-Sing,* 16′ x 12′, 1999 (metal, wood, cloth, and pillow).

ERRE's work leaves to one side the furor about concept that has become generalized in today's art and centers on the translation of historical symbols into metaphors that give us food for thought to those of us who live in a present bereft of ideals. His bicultural experience allows him to see both sides of the wall of history: on one side is the land of invisible subjects who, in constructing their day-to-day lives, recycle the meanings of their existence, and on the other is the land of the powers that aim to erase the history of peoples, blocking out the sun with a hand. VM

Notes

[1] Néstor García Canclini, *La sociedad sin relato. Antropología y estética de la inminencia* (Buenos Aires: Katz Editores, 2010).

Behind the Scenes at Three Mexican Museums

At first glance, a museum is a place for art that seems to take on a life of its own, as though the objects there had come by themselves and decided to stay for years. And we don't always realize that behind that wealth is the work of a group of people. In this article, we've made a journey through exhibition rooms to see how three museum directors have put their own personal stamp on Mexico's artistic and cultural wealth. This is a conversation with Diana Magaloni, former director of the National Museum of Anthropology and History (MNAH); Graciela de la Torre, of the University Contemporary Art Museum (MUAC); and Miguel Fernández Félix of the National Art Museum (Munal). Although each has expressed his/her own personal style, the three agree that the most important thing for a museum is the public, and they target their efforts at familiarizing that public with the country's artistic resources.

National Museum of Anthropology And History
Updating Our Yesterday

More than three years ago, Diana Magaloni became the head of Mexico's most important space for pre-Hispanic art, the National Museum of Anthropology and History.* A trained restorer with broad experience at home and abroad, she has studied pre-Hispanic art in detail, specializing in mural painting. Under her tutelage, the pieces have taken on new angles that don't just express the ancient past, but also acquire new voices that dialogue with the visiting public.

Voices of Mexico **(VM):** What has your work as director been like?

Diana Magaloni (DM): Coming from a very plural place, like the university, where the work is interdisciplinary, and also my own personal experience, have given me the opportunity to show the public the museum contents, mainly

Zoomorphic yoke, 41.5 x 13.4 x 80 cm, classical period (AD100-850) (green stone).

* As this issue was going to press, Antonio Saborit took over as director of the National Museum of Anthropology and History.

All photographs are property of the National Anthropology Museum Collections Digitalization Archives, CONACULTA-INAH-MEX-CANON, and are reproduced by authorization of the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH).

▲ *Rain god Tláloc from Coatlinchan*, 676 x 412 x 393 cm, classical period (AD100-850) (basalt).

▲ *Mosaic disk*, 24 x 1.10 cm, early post-classical period (AD1000-1250) (wood, mother of pearl, turquoise).

archaeology and ethnography, in a different, more lively way. This means that anyone can understand, enjoy and ask new questions about the works on display.

VM: How do you link the collections of the past with the reality of today?

DM: Previously, the museum emphasized archaeology. That was all very well, but I think it's very important —and this is what we've been doing— to review the rooms, make exhibits, and develop an academic and outreach program for ethnographic events. The challenge in the future, in my opinion, is to make our museum the home of the indigenous peoples, because our identity as a nation is based on the culture of the first peoples of Mesoamerica, whose most direct exponents are the indigenous peoples. Any mixing of races brings its own problems, but we have not incorporated the indigenous peoples into our cultural reflection; we still owe them a cultural debt.

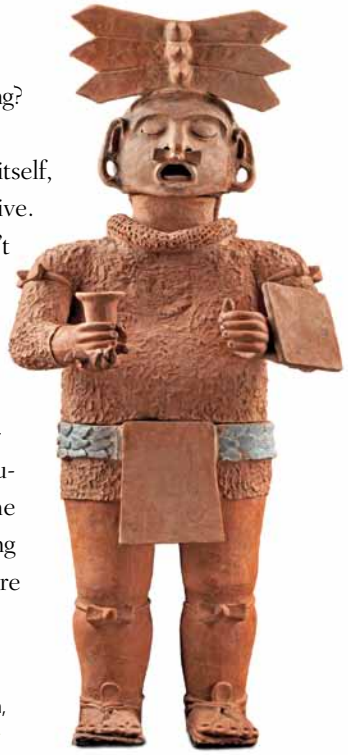
The challenge in the future is to make our museum the home of the indigenous peoples, because our identity as a nation is based on the culture of the first peoples of Mesoamerica.

VM: How does the museum dialogue with a changing, highly technical society?

DM: Like other outstanding world-class museums, we are part of the Google Art Project. Through the portal, you can make a virtual visit to our museum and access hyperlinks and extraordinary photos of the collections. This has meant that we have increasing numbers of visitors both in person and virtually. The other very important approach has been the big exhibits about civilizations, like the most recent ones about the samurai, Pompeii, or Persia.

VM: How do you make a museum exciting?

DM: This museum is exciting all by itself, but it still needs to be more interactive. And when I say "interactive" I don't mean machines. I think part of being interactive is imaginative capability, having certain didactic materials that propose imaginary journeys. To achieve that, it's very important to have interaction and collaboration among all the museum's areas: the museography, the curators, and the student services, among others, because this place is an entire universe unto itself.



The god Xipe Tótec, 110 x 51 x 63 cm, late classical period (AD750-900) (clay). ▸

University Contemporary Art Museum
The Conscience of Society

Graciela de la Torre has a master's in art history and has been the head of the University Contemporary Art Museum for more than a year. At the same time, as director of visual art, she also coordinates other museums at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. She has had a long career in the field of museums, and is an experienced cultural promoter. The University Contemporary Art Museum was inaugurated in 2008, and since then has opened its doors to the most diverse expressions of the contemporary art scene, as well as to reflection and discussion of what's happening in the world today.

Photos courtesy of the UNAM University Museum of Contemporary Art.

(VM): How do you direct the MUAC?

Graciela de la Torre (GT): Museums contain the best of human beings: the fruit of their creativity, their sensibility, their memory, and the key to directing a museum is not to look at it as a mausoleum or a warehouse, but to activate it for its audiences. This is a task that naturally implies education. I work with an extraordinary team that deals not only with organizing exhibitions, but also academic outreach, generating knowledge, educational mediation, with all the tools of interpretation and communicational promotion, both internally and externally. We work very horizontally, and I'm very proud of the team.

VM: How do you link up the content of the museum with an increasingly demanding public?

GT: What we try to do is be facilitators for learning and aesthetic enjoyment. We do this in a rather unorthodox way compared to other museums. We use *in situ* mediation strategies, that is, we use the interests and needs of the public as our

▲ Edgardo Aragón. *Shadows*, 2009 (video-installation), from the "For the Love of Dissidence, Edgardo Aragón ¼" exhibit.

Exterior of the museum, designed by architect Teodoro González de León.

One of our great challenges is to increasingly consolidate our position as an authentic university museum. University art centers have an enormous advantage because the university gives us the opportunity of generating knowledge.

starting point, more than those of the museum. More than instructing the public, what we do is to put people in learning situations, where the first experience is the space itself —a wonderful space—, and secondly, how we handle virtual communities. The MUAC was created with the philosophy of conceiving the public as a traveler in the museum's space, a traveler who traverses it, a traveler who can get lost and find him or herself, who is free to make his/her own choices, his/her own roads, and we are there to help him or her.

VM: What challenges do you have ahead?

GT: Our intention is to always find the way to know how to meet up with the public. One of our great challenges is to increasingly consolidate our position as an authentic university museum. University art centers have an enormous advantage because the university gives us the opportunity of generating knowledge. At the MUAC, for example, we offer a master's program in curatorial studies, as well as several seminars. All our activities are gauged for these two poles: education and the generation of knowledge. Our museum is also a place for debate, criticism; we can be a center for display, of course, and we have flagship exhibits, but we never forget our role as a place for the generation of thinking, debate, and criticism, and the great challenge is to maintain that profile.

VM: Compared to your work directing other spaces, what has this museum taught you?

GT: Contemporary art has taught me a great deal. First off, I've learned that nothing is set in stone. Contact with the artistic community has motivated me enormously and has also stimulated my ability to find new educational models. At one time I installed the first educational services for art museums, but finding a new model for the contemporary art museum is a big challenge for me. At the same time, seeing the museum full of students has been enormously gratifying.

▲ Carlos Morales, *History of Pirated Music, Necropolis,* 2009 (installation with CDs vinyl paint and electronic sound equipment), from the "Foreignness" exhibit.

The National Art Museum
The Treasure Chest

For Miguel Fernández Félix, if museums have not been his home, they have at least been an extension of it. That's why he has dedicated his entire professional life to his great passion: art. Today, he is the director of the National Art Museum, which boasts one of the country's most important collections, housing works from the sixteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries.

Miguel thinks that heading up this museum gives him a privileged opportunity to establish a dialogue with society.

(VM): What is the stamp you have put on this museum with the most important collection of Mexican art?

Miguel Fernández (MF): A very important trait for us is not just counting on the public that visits us, but on the public that makes a return visit. That is the result of having established a dialogue, communication, with the public. I would say that the public is our main asset; of course, the assets we have, that we are the guardians of, are the pieces of art. But that doesn't happen without the public because the works are there precisely to create a dialogue, to be visited. That's what a museum is all about: offering the elements that can bring people to that experience.

But for that, first, we need to establish communication internally. On the other hand, the issue of enjoyment is very present in a museum. Therefore, what interests me and what is a permanent challenge is for the Munal to generate an experience for the visitor. So, the crucial point for me is how we link up with Mexican art and with the museum's different publics: children, teens, the differently abled, researchers, a series of links with society that allow us to provide and

What interests me more is for the Munal to generate an experience for the visitor. So, the crucial point is how we link up with Mexican art and with the museum's different publics.

▲ Façade of the National Art Museum, designed by architect Silvio Contri (1911).

▲ David Alfaro Siqueiros, *Self-portrait,* 100.3 x 121.9 cm, 1943 (pyroxylin).

offer different activities, from the dissemination of the permanent collection to temporary exhibitions, to the development of innovative academic programs.

VM: What is the central axis for this orientation?

MF: I would say there are two main axes based on communication: first, internally among all the areas of the museum. For that reason, I have concentrated my thinking on this area and anchored it in an operations and evaluation system, an intranet that deals with how we organize ourselves internally and what effect that organization has on the public. If we want to communicate something to the exterior, we have to be well communicated internally, allowing us to set up strategies or policies. For me, all the areas of a museum, from those who do protection, conservation, and research to those who disseminate the collections, must be on the same level of importance and responsibility.

And in the second place is communication with society. With this idea of communication with the public, we constantly establish links with different contemporary Mexican artists, like Roberto Cortázar or Roberto Parodi, and we also open up an international dialogue —for example we did some very interesting work with the Museum of Philadelphia about prints— including exchanges with artists and institutions like the surrealism exhibition that we did with Paris's Georges Pompidou Center, about the connections between surrealism in France and in Mexico.

VM: How do you motivate your employees?

MF: What I do to motivate people is to promote decentralization. This means the areas are autonomous and I'm the central coordinator. Decentralization creates responsibility and fosters interdisciplinary work. Decentralization, autonomy, responsibility, and interdisciplinary work permeate the museum's two central axes: the areas (directors, technicians, clerical workers, and a very important board that has supported us for many years and is also our link to society) and the projects. The idea is that these two axes interlink and every area is strengthened. And, well, motivation also has to do with all of us being informed about what's going on in all the areas because this generates shared responsibility. Finally, my directorship is linked to an objective, which is the public, and all the areas work to link up the public's experience with the museum better. And I think we're on the right road.

VM: What has the museum given you?

MF: The museum has strengthened the vocation I've had since I was a very young man to foster that dialogue between culture and society. I think this is essential for the growth of human beings. Personally, it has allowed me to grow enormously; my directorship of the Munal has opened up the possibility of seeing life and transmitting it in another way, and this has made me much more receptive and respectful of the opinions of others. Just as a museum welcomes the public and is a space that has a collection it disseminates, on a personal level, I also see this as a metaphor: I receive an inspiration for living my daily life from a standpoint of appropriating, more than possessing. Appropriating affection and transmitting it is more important than anything else, and that is what the museum has given me at the end of the day. VM

Teresa Jiménez
Editor

▲ José María Velasco, *The Valley of Mexico from Santa Isabel Hill,* 77.7 x 57.2 cm, 1892 (oil on canvas).

Mexico City Down through Time...
AN INFINITE MAP

Isabel Morales Quezada*

A city that fades little by little from the collective memory reemerges where nostalgia, curiosity, and discovery converge. Created in February 2011, *La ciudad de México en el tiempo* (Mexico City Down Through Time…) is a Facebook page, conceived by a team of three Mexicans passionate about the city, who have managed to revive the memory of a sector of its inhabitants.[1] A number of albums show black-and-white and color photographs of the city, most from the twentieth century: its transportation, panoramic views of places, people, and important events.

The Villasana-Torres Archive is the main source for its images, although the site also uses material from other public archives and private collections. Carlos Villasana, one of the page's collectors and coordinators, says that his love for photography began when he was very small, when his father, Carlos Villasana Cedillo, who promoted the televised middle-school project, used to bring him postcards from the places he visited for work. The Villasana-Torres collection is made up of about 80 000 images, among them photographs, postcards, publications, and peculiar magazines.

What is important about a collection is not only preserving it, but sharing it. That is why Carlos Villasana, Juan Carlos Briones, and Rodrigo Hidalgo took on the task of creating this page. Currently, it has 170000 "likes," and the number is increasing by the minute. The scope of the social networks is surprising and limitless: in a single day, a photograph can be seen by 40 000 people. As Villasana says, "It would be difficult for that number of people to visit a museum in a single day."

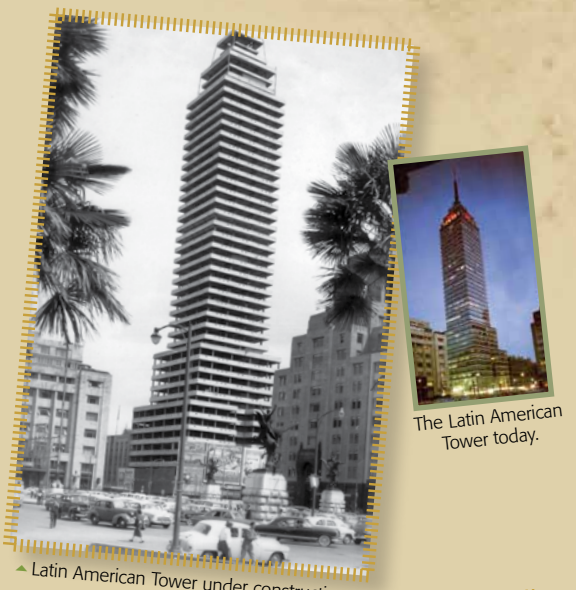
"The images show spaces that no longer exist in the city, and even people who have disappeared, like the neighborhood gendarme or the man who would lead a bear through the

La Parisiense pastry shop.


Metropolitan cathedral.

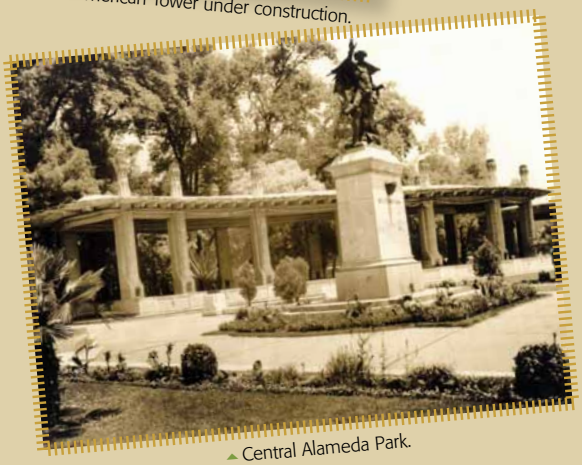

Guardiola Annex of the La Nacional, Seguros Latinoamérica building.

* Staff writer.



The Latin American Tower today.

Latin American Tower under construction.



Central Alameda Park.

The photographs show the city that existed before globalization. A city where movie theaters were enormous, each with its own name, like the Ópera, the Majestic, the Roxy. Many were demolished or abandoned to make way to the multiplexes of today.

The Encanto Cinema.

streets. Today, there are others that we might not like much. These are transformations that the city has gone through," he reflects. Nostalgia for these losses is one of the driving forces that make the page work:

> In the new millennium, hopes are extinguished or weakened, and the data about demolition spreads. We inhabit a description of cities characterized by fear and sensations of being besieged, signaled by the exhaustion of basic resources and the constant deterioration of the quality of life. We move among the instantaneous ruins of modernity and, due to the lack of an inventory, we make memories the institutions of discoveries and possessions.[2]

The photographs show the city that existed before that modernity, before globalization. A city where movie theaters were enormous, each with its own name, like the Ópera, the México, the Majestic, the Roxy, the Regis, the Hipódromo, the Centenario, and the Rivoli. It is said that the Rivoli seated 1950 people, complete with side boxes and a balcony. These cinemas had outstanding architecture from the period when they were built, like the elegant Ópera's art deco style, although later it was abandoned and became an almost phantasmagorical ruin. Most of these movie houses, inaugurated in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s still stood in the 1960s and 1970s. Later, many were demolished or abandoned to make way for the multiplexes of today.

The albums entitled *Cines y teatros* (Cinemas and Theaters), *Pulquerías y cantinas* (Pulque Bars and Saloons), and *Edificios abandonados y más…* (Abandoned Buildings and More…) show us spaces that are no longer there, have been remodeled, or have tumbled into ruin. Together with the spaces, customs and traditions have also disappeared or changed, like in the case of the *pulquerías* (*pulque* bars). Today, few people drink *pulque*, the most popular Mexican beverage in the nineteenth century, and few bars sell it since beer took its place many years ago. The experience of going to the movies has also changed: we no longer see long lines at the box office that used to trail down the sidewalk.

Another aspect of the city that has changed over the years is its transportation. The railroad and streetcars have disappeared, though their rails are still visible in some areas, and despite the fact that today the city has better and more means of transportation, people still yearn for them. The photographs spark nostalgia even among those who never knew them. Trolley cars and buses still exist, but the colors and

shapes have changed; memories are superimposed on them and the images help distinguish them, recover them.

Other images show the construction and evolution of infrastructure indispensable for city residents: the subway. It is curious how a single photograph can contain so much information, not just about the changes in the space as such, but in the people, fashion, or the number of people there were then; since the subway opened, it has served millions of people.

University City, a city of knowledge within the great metropolis, is another important icon. The images from its inauguration until our day demonstrate the growth of the student population to the point that, today, its space is insufficient. However, the beauty of its architecture has been respected, bestowing on it the category of World Heritage Treasure.

Two albums are dedicated to the 1957 and the 1985 earthquakes. In 1957, the most impressive event was the "fall of the Angel," that is, the monument to independence located on Reforma Avenue, one of the city's most important thoroughfares. Young people who visit the page cannot believe the image is real: the Independence Column without its crowning angel. Also shown are some buildings damaged or collapsed during that earthquake.

The second album is a testimony to the 1985 quake, which registered 8.2 on the Richter scale, revealing the defects of many badly constructed buildings. The most damaged sections of the city look like war zones; the city is barely recognizable under the rubble and dust. Many of the spaces left by fallen or damaged buildings were later turned into plazas or parking lots and the vacuum still does not seem to have been filled even today. The photos are the other scars of the wounds caused by the earthquake and testimony to the unity of a people amidst tragedy.

To these tragic events is added 1968, a year of contrasts. On the one hand, the student movement, and on the other, the Olympic Games, the two impossible to separate. "We don't want Olympics, we want revolution," chanted the young people of that time. The new venues to house the athletes and to witness their prowess, like the Olympic Village, the Sports Palace, the Olympic Pool, changed the urban landscape, and the students, with their rebellion and appropriation of the streets and public spaces, did the same. The colorful, festive images of the city during the Olympic Games alternate with those of enthusiastic students at marches, but also with the tragic events of police and military repression.

To situate these events and spaces in today's reality, the photos in the page's albums have a link to Google Maps,

▲ Statue of Carlos IV, known as "The Little Horse."

▲ Monument to the Latin American race.

▲ The Angel of Independence.

The page has become a meeting place for different generations, where a young man of 16 can converse with someone 50 or more. The comments under each reproduction are often nostalgic or enthusiastic about having discovered one space or another.

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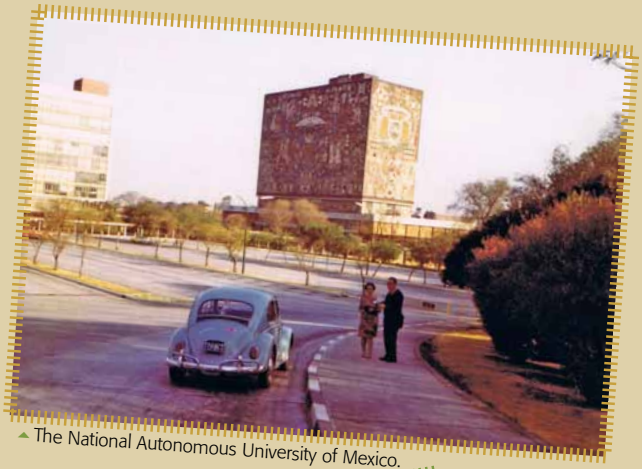
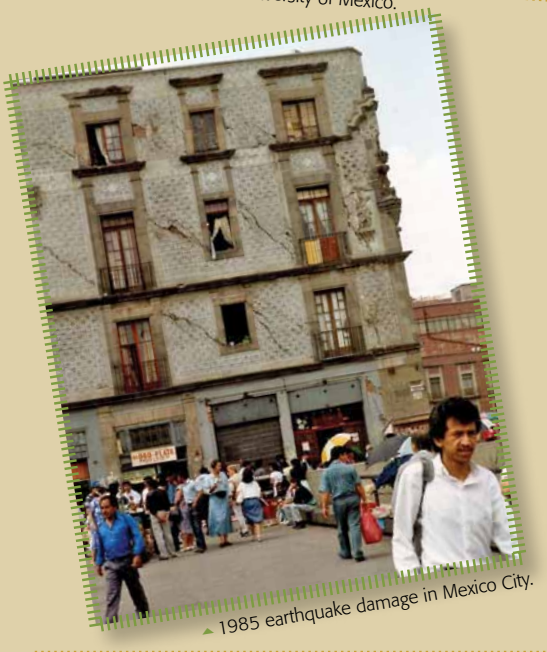


▲ The National Autonomous University of Mexico.



▲ 1985 earthquake damage in Mexico City.

▲ Streetcars.

where the visitor can access the location and see what it looks like today, both on the street level and in panoramic shots. But it is not only the physical spaces that are recovered through the images: what is also shown is what they represented for the city's popular culture. To do that, each photograph is accompanied by explanations or fragments of Mexican writers' works alluding to the places depicted.

Images and texts invite participation, reflection, and interaction. "The most impressive thing," says Carlos, "is how the page has become a meeting place for different generations, where a young man of 16 can converse with someone 50 or more." The comments under each reproduction are often nostalgic or enthusiastic about having discovered one space or another, and others mention personal stories or experiences:

> How great it is to see a photo of where I was born and still live! I had my first communion at that church and I also studied at the Mercedes High School. I would love to also see a photograph of the Castillito cinema where my parents used to take me to the movies.

> I have a vague memory from the early 1970s, when I was two or three, of taking the streetcar from the Del Valle Neighborhood to downtown, and having gone through that roundabout. I was with my grandmother and the streetcar was made of yellow wood. Does anybody have any idea if that could be true?

As time goes by, the stories get garbled and we make an effort to remember, to try to identify with others, and perhaps find an answer. Photographs are a way to recover the city and assign it the value it deserves. It is also a way to learn its history, since the city has not just been a stage where history unfolds, but, like in the 1985 quake, a protagonist and victim together with its inhabitants. Mightn't it be the case that we are the stage where the city happens. When I visit *La ciudad de México en el tiempo*, I think of all the cities that may exist in their inhabitants' memories, and not just in their memories, but in their dreams and desires. As many cities as photographs exist; and then I imagine the city as a jigsaw puzzle of interminable moments.

In the attempt to reconstruct the jigsaw puzzle, it was decided to open the page not only to visitors' comments, but also to their photographs. This way, you can share your little piece of the city. Sunday walks next to Chapultepec Lake, the Alameda, or the Fine Arts Palace, images of suburbs

that revolutionized the way of inhabiting the city, like Satellite City, a popular children's movie house, and family stories that took place there: these are the kinds of photographs people post. "It's like we were looking through a family album," says Carlos.

After a photographic tour, it is clear that Mexico City is no longer the same and is fading each day, borders blurring, and its inhabitants, seeing the images of what was, feel the impulse to hold on to what has been their home, where they and their forbears were born, to the experiences and stories that sometimes are also left under those "ruins of modernity" that Carlos Monsiváis talked about. The photos act as lifesavers against oblivion, they recover the need for identification, the pride in belonging to a place, and, in younger generations, they awaken desires to know more about the space where they live.

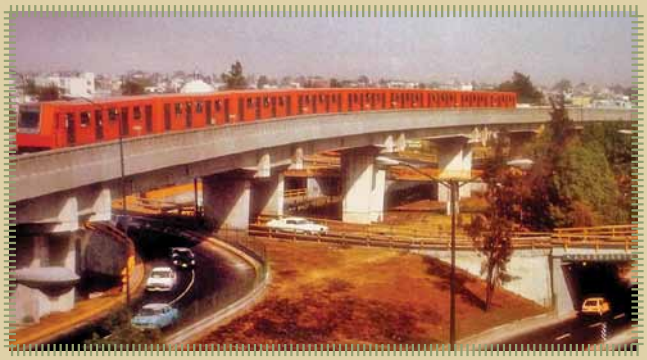
In that sense, *La ciudad de México en el tiempo* takes on a social function that consists in disseminating the history of a place through its images. That is why the album entitled *Pasado y presente* (Past and Present) shows photos comparing specific places in the city from more than 20 years ago and today.

Some of the photos show buildings that were part of the identity of capital dwellers and that were demolished or abandoned because of neglect and the lack of value place on them or due to interests contrary to preserving the city's patrimony. The images point to that carelessness, putting their finger in the sore, so to speak, recriminating for what was left undone or what was done to the detriment of a space that belonged to everyone. Preserving day-to-day spaces that are important for the inhabitants, and not just tourist spots, is one way of giving back the city its harmony.

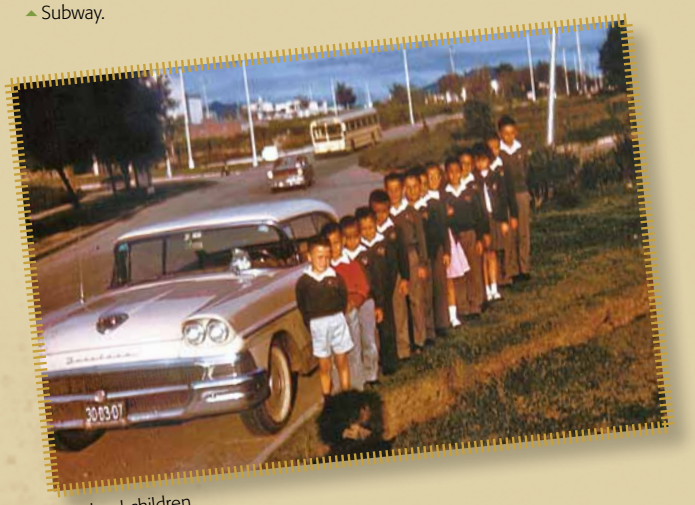
When a space disappears, the jigsaw puzzle is incomplete, and although some pieces can be repaired, others are lost forever. Thus, the only tangible, visible thing that remains of those spaces is the photographic record and the memory of its survivors. *La ciudad de México en el tiempo* reconstructs the map of the city through its photographs, from the memories of its inhabitants, and from the literary texts it has inspired. It is an infinite map, with many dimensions and as many possibilities for reading it as there are memories and yearnings in each of this great city's lovers. VM

▲ Mexico City's Fine Arts Palace.

La ciudad de México en el tiempo reconstructs the map of the city through its photographs, from the memories of its inhabitants, and from the literary texts it has inspired.



▲ Subway.



▲ School children.

Notes

[1] www.facebook.com/laciudaddemexicoeneltiempo.
[2] Carlos Monsiváis, *Apocalipstick* (Mexico City: Debolsillo, 2011).

Labor Market Liberalization In North America

Camelia Tigau*

REUTERS/Lucy Nicholson

Mobility of labour has been described as the missing link in globalization.[1]

How can migration be used to stimulate national and individual development? Is it possible to design policies that do not unfairly benefit some types of human capital —skilled— over others —semi-skilled or unskilled?

Solimano notes that a country may wish to "solve" its internal employment problems either by expecting foreign investment to generate jobs or by allowing people to migrate.[2] This second option releases the pressure caused by a surplus of labor on domestic markets. He notices that neither of the options occurred with the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which was expected to increase investment in Mexico by U.S. and Canadian companies and reduce migration up north. This is so because investment was not enough to stop emigration; furthermore, developmental gaps and wage differentials with the United States and Canada maintained Mexican migration, both documented and undocumented. As Solimano appreciates, the dilemma of capital going where cheap labor is available versus labor going where the jobs, higher wages, and capital are available tilted toward the second option.

NAFTA, which came into effect in 1994, stipulates special visas for businessmen, investors, professionals, and experts in information technology and communication. While the U.S. has designed the TN visas to facilitate the importation of Mexican and Canadian professionals, Canada has

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The dilemma of capital going where cheap labor is available versus labor going where the jobs, higher wages, and capital are available tilted toward the second option.

continued the same points system as before NAFTA. Mexico simply took advantage of the new emigration conditions. The Mexican president at that time, Carlos Salinas, declared that the agreement would allow the country to export goods, not people. Nevertheless, the evolution of migration ever since shows a significant increase in the migration of Mexican professionals to the U.S. and Canada.

United States

We invited guest workers, and got human beings.
Max Firsch[3]

The United States, the main immigrant destination country in the world economy, is currently a net importer of both capital and people, although in certain periods of the twentieth century it was a net exporter of capital. The U.S. has an "alphabet soup of visas,"[4] a system criticized by the skeptics who say that U.S. employers invent the scarcity of national skilled workers to justify importing cheaper, younger migrants.

The majority of skilled workers enter the country with the H-1B visas. Based on NAFTA, the U.S. also offers the TN visas, which are attractive for employers as they are easier to get: they require less documentation and are cheaper than the H-1Bs. Annual admission quotas are also bigger than for the H-1. In 2005, 50 000 Canadians were admitted on TN visas, compared to only 2 500 Mexicans. This difference is quite surprising taking into account that the same year, Mexico had a workforce of 43.4 million, compared to only 16.3 million in Canada.[5]

The United States offers special visas for investors: the E-2 visa, for which investors must show a net worth of US $1 million and intend to invest around US$750 000 in the country. It also offers the L-1 visa program, related to the productive sector and designed to facilitate the intra-company transfer of personnel. Finally, the U.S. 0-1 visa program deals with cultural and academic talent.

Apart from skilled migrants, the U.S. has to deal with an estimated 12 million unauthorized migrants who are fewer than the ones who enjoy permanent legal status but are treated as second-class citizens.[6] Their circumstances and public opinion against migration were exacerbated after 9/11 and the 2008 crisis.

After the 2008 recession, restrictive bills for local control of illegal immigration were adopted or discussed in several U.S. states, some of which were challenged in federal court.

The most controversial one was the Arizona law passed in April 2010 that, to quote CNN, "orders immigrants to carry their alien registration documents at all times and requires police to question people if there's reason to suspect they're in the United States illegally. It also targets those who hire illegal immigrant laborers or knowingly transport them." A 2010 Gallup poll showed 51 percent support for and 39 percent opposition to the Arizona law. Furthermore, legislators in about half of the U. S. states have promised a bill similar to Arizona's, and Southern conservatives are "stampeding to express solidarity with the Arizona governor and legislature."[7]

It is no wonder that President Obama was criticized for his "comprehensive immigration reform" that includes amnesty for "illegal aliens," loose enforcement, and higher levels of future legal immigration.[8] Krikorian, the leader of an anti-immigrant movement, also criticizes Obama for the e-verifying system. In his opinion, "a system that doesn't detain regular illegal aliens along with irregular ones" is a system that can't work.[9] The U.S. "e-verify" electronic employment eligibility verification system was a temporary, voluntary program that ended September 2012. A bill to establish a permanent, mandatory national electronic verification system is under review.

The good news is that in 2012, the Dream Act was passed, permitting regularization for undocumented high school graduates who came to the United States as children and who have at least two years of either military service or college attendance.

Canada

There is nothing more permanent than temporary foreign workers.[10]

According to the 2006 census, 19.8 percent of Canada's population is foreign born, a figure second only to that of Aus-

tralia (22.2 percent) and much higher than that of the United States (12.5 percent).[11] Canada is a significant host society: with 6.1 million migrants in 2005, it is among the top seven hosts of international migrants.[12]

Before the 1960s, immigration to Canada was racially based;[13] migration mainly came from Europe, the source of 90 percent of Canada's immigrants. Only 3 percent came from Asia.[14] By the 1990s, the leading source of immigrants to Canada was China, followed by India, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Taiwan.[15] According to figures collected for the 2006 census, 83.9 percent of immigrants to Canada between 2001 and 2006 were non-European.[16] Because of these changes, Canada experienced a threefold increase in its visible-minority population between 1981 and 2001.[17] Three-quarters of the immigrants who arrived in Canada between 2001 and 2006 were visible minorities.[18] In the 2006 census, 16.2 percent of the Canadian population was reported belonging to a visible minority.[19] StatsCan predicts that by 2017, if current immigration trends continue, between 19 and 23 percent of Canadian residents will belong to a visible-minority group.

These changes are mainly due to the point system for skilled workers introduced in 1967 and further reformed in 1993 and 2002. Points are calculated according to educational level, language skills, work experience, age, a job offer in Canada, and adaptability. Individuals who get more than 67 points on a scale of 100 are eligible for permanent residency. Despite the fact that it responds to the market needs, the Canadian system attracts fewer skilled workers that the U.S. one.[20]

Although immigrants constituted about 19.8 percent of Canada's population in 2006, they accounted for 45.7 percent of Toronto's population and 39.6 percent of Vancouver's that year.[21] In fact, in 2002 close to 50 percent of Canada's approximately 230 000 immigrants settled in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) alone.[22]

StatsCan predicts that Canada's visible minorities, most of whom are foreign-born, are likely to continue to locate in urban areas and that in 2017 close to three-quarters of Canada's visible minorities will be living in Toronto, Vancouver, or Montreal. According to StatsCan's projections, by that year the Toronto CMA will be home to 45 percent of Canada's visible minorities and the Vancouver CMA to 18 percent.[23] Visible minorities will be the "visible majority" in both CMAs.[24]

Temporary Workers Programs

Temporary foreign workers may stay in Canada only for a limited time, while the use of permanent residence pathways is encouraged if applicable, and departure if not. Transitions from temporary to permanent resident status are facilitated through avenues including the Canadian Experience Class, the Federal Skilled Worker Program, and the Provincial Nominee Program.

In 2010, Canada changed its integration program funding to a "modernized approach," uniting separate programs for settlement programming. Newcomer services are covered by a single funding agreement, simplifying the administrative process for immigrant-serving organizations, and allowing them to tailor their offerings to suit newcomers' needs. Since their introduction, the use of settlement services by newcomers has increased by 8 percent.

An evaluation of the Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP) 2002-2008 was published by CIC in 2010. While identifying several critical issues with the current selection system, principally fraudulent job offers, the evaluation showed that skilled workers with prior employment offers performed better, and that the 2002 changes led to selection of more highly educated workers, with better language proficiency, and more diversification of both countries of origin and occupation.

Nakache and Kinoshita observe that Canada's growing focus on short-term labor migration is unfair to the vast majority of temporary foreign workers and will not help the country meet its long-term employment needs.[25] They also consider a discrepancy between policy and practice with regard to temporary foreign workers' rights. A significant factor is the restrictive nature of the work permit: temporary foreign workers are often tied to one job, one employer, and one location, which can have the practical effect of limiting their employment rights and protection. Other problems include illegal recruitment practices, misinformation about migration opportunities, and lack of enforcement mechanisms. In the con-

The U.S. has an "alphabet soup of visas," a system criticized by the skeptics who say that U.S. employers invent the scarcity of national skilled workers to justify importing cheaper, younger migrants.

In Mexico, kidnapping of and violence against migrants has increased in recent years as drug cartels have moved into human trafficking.

text of employment, Canada seems indifferent to temporary foreign workers' future position in society.

On family unity and access to permanent residency, there are significant differences in their treatment, depending on their skill levels. Skilled workers are offered opportunities to access permanent residency to which the semi-skilled do not have access. The spouses of highly skilled workers are able to acquire open work permits, and highly skilled workers have the opportunity to get permanent residency from within. In contrast, the spouses of lower-skilled workers must apply for a restricted work permit, and lower-skilled workers, with few exceptions, have very limited opportunity to migrate permanently. Yet they can renew their temporary status so long as they have employment. Nakache and Kinoshita argue that Canada encourages the integration of highly skilled workers and is indifferent to that of lower-skilled workers.

Mexico

Migration is a neighbourhood affair.[26]

Mexico is by far the leading sending country to the United States. There were 11.7 million Mexican-born persons in the United States in 2007. More than half of these (55 percent) were unauthorized.[27]

Annual flows from Mexico to the United States have declined from 1 million to 600 000 from 2006 to 2009, largely as a result of a drop in illegal immigration. Legal immigration levels have remained largely unchanged. As a result, the overall number of Mexicans in the United States (constituting the country's largest immigrant group) has remained essentially unchanged during a period when it would have been expected to grow by 1 million.

U.S. population survey data show that while the annual number of new arrivals from Mexico to the United States was 653 000 between March 2004 and March 2005, and 424 000 between March 2007 and March 2008, the estimated annual inflow dropped to just 175 000 between March 2008 and March 2009, the lowest total this decade. This finding is reinforced by analyses of U.S. Border Patrol apprehension data showing that fluctuations in migrant apprehensions closely track changes in labor demand.[28]

Apart from the big "U.S." problem, Mexico has been subject to the reintroduction of a visa regime for Canada in 2009, due to the abuse of the Canadian refugee system by Mexican visitors. Mexico is also a transit country for irregular migrants from Central America heading to the United States; here, too, the flow has decreased steadily since 2005. In 2010, it was estimated at 140 000, 30 percent of the 2005 estimate. The same factors explain the decline of transit migration as Mexican emigration: lower labor demand in the United States; increased cost of cross-border smuggling; increasing risks and rising violence affecting migrants; and a relative increase in employment opportunities in Mexico. Kidnapping of and violence against migrants has increased in recent years as drug cartels have moved into human trafficking. Mexico signed a regional plan with Central American countries to coordinate cooperation, exchange information, educate migrants, and dismantle cartels involved in human trafficking.

The Mexican Migration Law

Given all these problems, 2011 certainly was an important year for migration legislation in Mexico, a country known for its "policy of no policy" on these issues and its difficulty in recognizing its Diasporas abroad. In January 2011, Mexico passed the Law on Refugees and Complementary Protection. In May 2011, Mexico adopted its first migration legislation, replacing the 1994 General Law on Population. The new law establishes the conditions for the entry and stay of persons in Mexico and addresses the social, economic and cultural integration of immigrants into Mexico. The number of migrant categories is reduced to limit the margins for immigration authorities' operating at their discretion. The migration law defines regularization procedures for undocumented migrants. It also doubles prison sentences for human trafficking and violence against migrants. Among the main changes is the acceptance of asylum applications after entry, the creation of the status of complementary protection, and the recognition of gender violence and discrimination as valid grounds for asylum. The Mexican

government is still preparing the regulations that will flesh out the implementation of the new law.

A constitutional reform in July of the same year improves the legal regimen for immigrants, so that Mexico now recognizes the right to asylum and refugee status, grants foreign citizens subject to expulsion the right to a prior hearing, and limits the maximum detention period, eliminating discretionary expulsion with no legal basis or court decision.

Discussion

According to Solimano, inequalities and disparities among the three economic systems and migratory flows in the NAFTA countries have determined the idea of a social contract on migration as an international task. This would be the only way to represent all the stakeholders: the migrants, the governments, employers' associations, labor unions, and civil society organizations in origin countries and destination nations. Advancing toward a social contract on international migration would require destination countries to be willing to obey the rules of international migration set in negotiated and consensual ways among origin and receiving countries and to refrain from consistently benefiting from a shadow labor market of instantly available foreign labor.

Inequalities among the three economic systems and migratory flows have determined the idea of a social contract on migration as an international task.

Is this idea pure utopia? Perhaps it can be used as a basis for negotiating such difficult and apparently unsolvable problems such as Mexican migration to the U.S. VM

Notes

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From U.S. Immigration Detention Center to Transnational Call Center

Jill Anderson*

Intermingled with the sounds of a broom on the sidewalk, the loud engines of the peseros *driving by, the click of the orange juicer as it opens and closes on one plump orange after another, and the tiny birds flitting above us in the trees, are the sounds of a group of young men speaking English with each other. "I have to get out of* pinche México. *The next chance I get, I'm going." The others laugh in mixed tones of commiseration and ridicule. "Where the hell are you going to go?"*

Having moved to the bustling neighborhood in Mexico City's historic center over four years earlier, I was surprised by such conversations in English riding above the rumble of the busy streets. Who were these brazen English speakers spouting anger interspersed with jokes for all to hear? Did they have anything to do with the recent appearance of the new graffiti on the *panadería*'s walls "Latin King5 Corona L__K Rey Latino"? Originally from Texas, I noticed that many of the young adults seemed to carry themselves and speak with the Mexican-American or Chicana/o modes that I was used to hearing and seeing back home. I started to ask around, and I soon learned that the young people I had overheard worked at a transnational call center that moved to the *colonia* in 2009.

Working at the call center is initially an attractive option for bilingual Mexicans who have just returned to Mexico after living in the United States for many years. Incoming employees receive Mex$45 an hour, substantially better than the average wage for a young adult in Mexico City. They receive health benefits and, after a year, a week of paid vacation. For many, such benefits are new, given that they worked in the massive semi-informal/undocumented economy of the United States during their adolescence and young adult years.

Jill Anderson

Unlike Mexican universities, as well as many Mexican businesses, the transnational call centers do not require official re-validation by the Ministry of Public Education (SEP) of their certificates of primary, secondary, and preparatory education abroad, making for easier integration and re-entry into Mexican society.[1] The call centers also offer a kind of community, or cushion, in the midst of a jarring, if not traumatic, return to Mexico. A new employee finds a critical mass of other people who have lived in the United States for many years, if not most of their lives. Speaking English with co-workers

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The lack of viable options for work and study in the U.S. for young adults from racially segregated and impoverished areas, especially true for immigrant youth without legal papers, contributes to gang involvement and criminal activity.

comes as a relief. They get the same jokes. They are dealing with the same things.

I started to approach the call center employees as they stood in small groups outside on short breaks. After introducing myself in Spanish, I asked, often in English, "Where are you from?" Some would say "Mexico," mixed with laughter and a knowing glance at their co-workers. And then, seeing that I recognized that my question was much more complicated than that, the real story would spill out with an eagerness to clarify. "I am from Los Angeles. I've been back for 7 months." "I'm from outside of Chicago, and they deported me two years ago." "I'm from Houston, and my whole family is there." "I'm from Reno, but I live in Ciudad Neza now." Several of these talented and articulate young people agreed to sit down with me and tell me more about their lives in the United States and their experience of returning to Mexico.[2]

Deporting Generation 1.5

With a chuckle, Alberto says, "Since most of them there [his co-workers] have been to prison, or deported, most of 'em are a part of something," i.e., a gang. Alejandra, another call center employee who moved back to Mexico voluntarily in 2010, observes that "on average, the normal guy at [the call center] has spent at least a year in jail." Many of her new friends "were deported when they were 23, but they've been going to juvenile hall [in the United States] since they were 13." "Once they get here [to Mexico]," she observes, "they're all friendly, they're like 'Dude, I used to represent 18, I used to represent this, I used to represent *vida loca*. . . .' They're like, 'that's what we used to do in the States, now we represent each other here.'"[3] Growing more serious, Alberto describes how "I see it every day, in writings, in the walls, in bathrooms, even outside. . . . It's written on the walls, it's a very common thing . . . the gangs from the States . . . I can tell, people, they come here, and I guess they're still a part of that, and being at [the call center], most of us have been a part of that, and I guess they gather each other up." For his part, he tries to "stay as far as possible from them," but he empathizes too. "Some of 'em just feel like 'I have nothing to do, I'm already here, there's nothing more for me to do.'"

The United States Department of Homeland Security deported, removed, or returned 4.4 million Mexican citizens between 2005 and 2010, a record-breaking 15-25 percent of whom had lived in the United States for one year or more.[4] Furthermore, the percentage of deported Mexicans who had lived in the United States for five years or more rose dramatically from 2 percent in the previous decade to 17 percent between 2005 and 2010. Since 2001, the federal government's deportation policies have shifted from an emphasis on "extended border control" to "post-entry social control," Daniel Kanstroom's terms for the United States' systemic and historical deportation infrastructure that dates back to the nineteenth century.[5] The increase in "post-entry social control" deportation operates under the assumption that every immigrant is a potential deportee and criminal. Post 9/11 innovations within the deportation system of the Department of Homeland Security in the United States have resulted in increased detention of undocumented immigrants for extended periods (including children and families in privately-owned detention facility companies) and increased processing of deportations from regions far from the Mexico-U.S. border. An increasing percentage of deportees are bi-cultural and bilingual immigrants with deep ties to their families and communities north of the border.[6]

Although there are few extensive studies about who has been deported and under what circumstances, a 2006 study by TRAC, a research project housed at New York's Syracuse University, found that a staggering 70 percent of deportees charged as "aggravated felons" had lived in the United States for more than a decade.[7] Many of these recently deported men and women are returning to a country they barely know. Children who accompanied their parents across the border in the 1980s and 1990s, they grew up in Mexican and Latino neighborhoods in urban centers like Los Angeles, San Diego, Chicago, Houston, and Las Vegas, neighborhoods notable for high rates of poverty, under-funded school systems, and gang activity. The lack of viable options for work and study in the U.S. for young adults from racially segregated and impoverished areas, especially true for immigrant youth without legal papers, contributes to gang involvement and criminal activity. Since the creation of the category

of "aggravated felonies" in the 1988 Immigration and Nationality Act, which was later greatly expanded in 1996 and 2001, a broader range of such criminal activities leads to automatic detention and deportation without due process.[8] An entire generation of Mexican citizens, brought to the United States as young children and educated in the U.S. public school system, is coming of age in a context of heightened surveillance and increasingly severe penalization by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

For many, like Alberto, post-deportation employment at the call center offers community, resilience, and opportunity in the midst of a traumatic and alienating return to Mexico City. Alberto moved to Houston with his parents and his sister when he was four years old. Although he held a green card, upon serving five years in prison for an aggravated felony committed at 18, he found himself deported to Mexico the same day as his prison release.[9] In spite of a deep and daily pain caused by the separation from his family (the most common theme shared by all deported and return migrants), he expressed gratitude for his well-paying job at the call center —"the best I've found so far." He is saving up and looking forward to purchasing a car, and eventually a home.

American Dreams with a Mexican Address

Call center employees navigate the intense, repetitive, and demanding nature of their job because the call center promises the financial possibility to realize their dreams, as well as a tenuous but real community of other self-described "Americanized" friends. In 2011, however, the employee turnover at one call center was close to 100 percent.[10] Rogelio, who also served a prison sentence before deportation and who would like to be a mechanic but has not been able to find a job that "pays good" in Mexico, remains unsatisfied. "I'm bored and I want to do something different, and I am moving up in my job, which is cool, but . . . I get frustrated." These companies are in a constant recruitment mode, as employees burn out, get fed up, or move on. On average, they work eight-hour shifts, six days a week, with few breaks and a half-hour for lunch. Punctuality, call conversations, and call quotas are closely evaluated and critiqued by floor managers. Call center employees describe conversations with callers during which their accents in English, even the slightest ones, are criticized; or, callers become frustrated upon learning that he or she is talking to someone outside of the United States. The irony of such U.S.-based, nativist customer preferences for service operators who speak English without an accent and who are located in the United States is not lost on these close-to-native English speakers. Similarly, these savvy and educated young adults know that the Mex$45 they receive as a good wage in Mexico City underwrites an immense profit margin in dollars for transnational, U.S.-based companies.

Since 2000, transnational call centers, a key feature of the telemarketing service industry, have experienced a phase of exponential growth outside of the U.S., Canada, and Europe. Between 2000 and 2010, the call centers based in Mexico and dedicated to foreign markets grew from 8 631 to 18 701 locations, a 116 percent increase.[11] Utilizing cutting edge technologies to manage and record massive numbers of service calls within a context of geographic flexibility, call centers have evolved to provide the dominant interface between consumers and companies around the world. According to one Mexico City call center's online website, the company currently employs approximately 44 000 people around the world who complete 3.5 million interactions with customers *each day.* Based in the United States, this company operates call centers in Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Ireland, Mexico, the Philippines, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Mexico City, Guadalajara, and León host the company's call centers in Mexico. The Mexico City call center clients include DISH Satellite Television and Time Warner Cable, companies based in the United States and who serve a predominately English-speaking population. Bilingual skills, and preferably U.S. American English with little to no accent, are a firm requirement for hire.

Given the high turnover requiring constant training and recruitment, considered a feature of the industry worldwide, transnational call centers that serve U.S. American clients have a vested interest in the current numbers and nature of deportations by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. In fact, transnational call centers employ bilingual adults via an axis of exploitation-opportunity within the same neoliberal, global economic system that structures massive un-

The deported Mexicans who had lived in the U.S. for five years or more rose dramatically from 2 percent in the previous decade to 17 percent between 2005 and 2010.

These young deportees were the classmates of the so-called "Dreamers" in the United States, undocumented youth who have bravely come out of the shadows to demand the approval of the Dream Act.

documented and underpaid immigrant labor within the United States, as well as the *maquiladoras* in Mexico's northern border zone. It is an effective and powerful geographical inversion of the region's political economy, the same political economy that motivated the irregular migration of the parents of the deported employees. The simultaneous emergence of these transnational call centers with the increasing deportations by the U.S. federal government (in addition to the related increasing numbers of return migration) demands further attention. Why are the turnover rates for call center employees so high? To what extent —if at all— does call center employment translate into long-term integration and stability for deported Mexicans once in Mexico? To what extent —if at all— do transnational call centers provide an effective alternative to continued gang and criminal activity? How are deported immigrants exploiting the transnational call centers to realize their own post-deportation dreams, or are they?

The Call Center as Crossroads

In my neighborhood, the transnational call center offers one path in the aftermath of deportation; the graffiti on the surrounding buildings testify to another competing course.[12] Alejandra and Alberto spoke of escalating gang activity in recent months, as more and more members of rival U.S.-based gangs seemed to be joining the ranks of the call center operators. Graffiti, marking territory around the call center location, testifies to the frustration and potential violence bubbling underneath the call center's slick recruitment posters. The future of young adult deportees in Mexico is a precarious one. Mexico's deported citizens are arriving in Mexico City every day with bi-cultural and bilingual fluency, a U.S. American high school education or higher, technological adeptness, and, for better and worse, the chance to start over.

These young people were the classmates of the so-called "Dreamers" in the United States, undocumented youth who have bravely come out of the shadows to demand the passage of the Dream Act in the U.S. Congress. On June 15, 2012, President Obama announced administrative relief through "deferred action" that closely follows the stipulations of the Dream Act, which has not become law despite three distinct but failed attempts before the U.S. Congress.[13] Over the past year, the "Dreamers" have gained notable visibility and legitimization as immigrants who arrived with their families, grew up as U.S. Americans in every way except on paper, and therefore should not be penalized as culpable under current immigration law.

Although there are otherwise eligible young people who were deported to Mexico before the June cut-off date, the majority of deported young adults in Mexico would not have met the requirements of the executive order nor the proposed Dream Act.[14] Most are former gang members and formerly incarcerated prisoners of the U.S. legal system, and the connection between criminality and undocumented immigration *seems* to be confirmed in their stories. However, the significant presence of call center employees who return with criminal records from the United States, offers a stark example that these young adults are returning with twenty-first century skills and the drive to use them, even under the most difficult of circumstances. It is abundantly clear that they are dreamers too.[15] VM

Notes

[1] The challenging circumstances that young adults, adolescents, and children face upon return to Mexico, including the obstacles to revalidation of U.S. educations, has received press coverage in the U.S. and Mexico in recent months. See Damien Cave, "American Children, Now Struggling to Adjust to Life in Mexico," *The New York Times*, June 18, 2012, Verónica Sánchez, "Frenan educación de los repatriados," *Reforma* (Mexico City), July 22, 2012.

[2] This article is based on a long-term research project with recently returned and deported Mexican citizens entitled "México y Estados Unidos ante la migración de retorno: del testimonio a la teoría."

[3] There are a number of large and small Mexican/Latino gangs in the United States and the U.S. prison system. Some of the largest, best-known ones include the 18th Street Gang, Barrio Azteca, Mexican Mafia, Sureños, Norteños, and the Texas Syndicate.

[4] These numbers are based on the PEW Hispanic Center's study entitled "Net Migration from Mexico Falls to Zero—and Perhaps Less," http://www.pewhispanic.org, accessed August 28, 2012. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the U.S. government body responsible for deportations from the interior of the country, deported 1.5 million, or roughly 30 percent of the overall total. These numbers include returns, repatriations, and enforced removals; http://www.ice.gov/removal-statistics/, accessed August 28, 2012.

[5] An overview of the legal infrastructure of the U.S. deportation system can be found in Dan Kanstroom's *Aftermath: Deportation Law and the New American Diaspora* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). U.S.

federal programs such as the recently discontinued 287(g) and the recently-expanded Secure Communities programs, which rely on database collaboration between local law enforcement and immigration officials, have been two pillars in recent U.S. federal policy.

[6] The aforementioned PEW Hispanic Center study reveals that return migration has doubled in recent years. U.S. immigration enforcement divides deportation into three different categories: returns (voluntary returns, voluntary departures, and withdrawals), repatriations, and removals. The timing, process of return, and the consequences of possible re-entry into the United States are different for each category, but for the purposes of this overview, a deportation refers to both returns and removals.

[7] TRAC Immigration Project, http://trac.syr.edu/immigration/reports/158/, accessed August 28, 2012.

[8] The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRAIRA) and the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA) were passed in 1996 and the Patriot Act in 2001. The newer laws affect legal residents as well as undocumented immigrants, and they are retroactive. If a crime was not categorized as an immigration violation at the time of the crime, it can still be held as a cause for removal within federal immigration proceedings.

[9] Based on the grounds for removal (i.e., deportation) from the U.S., immigrants may face a five-year, ten-year or lifetime ban from returning to the United States.

[10] Based on a conversation in a meeting with a call center recruitment manager in March 2012.

[11] Jordy Micheli Thirión, "El sector de *call centers*: Estructura y tendencias. Apuntes sobre la situación de México," *Frontera norte* vol. 24, no. 47 (January-June 2012), p. 163.

[12] Although returning to the United States is on the minds of many of those I have interviewed, the threat of federal jail time and further bars on legal re-entry deters many in Mexico City from making the dangerous and expensive journey back to the United States without papers. Most are hoping that immigration reform, as well as increased stability in Mexico, will lead to a legal pathway back to their loved ones there.

[13] President Obama's executive order is a temporary measure that does not change the federal immigration legal code, and provides a temporary work permit with no path to legal residency or citizenship for eligible immigrants. The Dream Act was first proposed in 2001. It came up for failed votes in 2007 and 2010.

[14] The requirements for "deferred action" are: 1) entry into the U.S. before the age of 16, 2) presence in the U.S. for the previous five consecutive years, 3) graduation from high school or the equivalent, or honorably discharged as a veteran of the U.S. Coast Guard or armed services, 4) age of under 30 years at the time of application, and 5) a clean criminal record with no felony convictions, no significant misdemeanor convictions, and no more than two misdemeanor offenses.

[15] While the connections between the gang affiliations and criminal backgrounds of deportees and Mexican organized crime should not be underestimated, particularly along the border, an over-simplified connection between *la cholada* and criminal activity dominates in Mexico's popular discourse about return migration. See Ibán Trápaga de la Iglesia's "Cholos: ¿Comunidad transnacional o cultura juvenil fronteriza? Apuntes teóricos para repensar los flujos migratorios México-EUA," *Refundación*, July 2010, for an excellent analysis of deportation and return migration of self-identified *cholos* in northern Mexico, http://www/refundacion.com.mx/revista/, accessed August 30, 2012.

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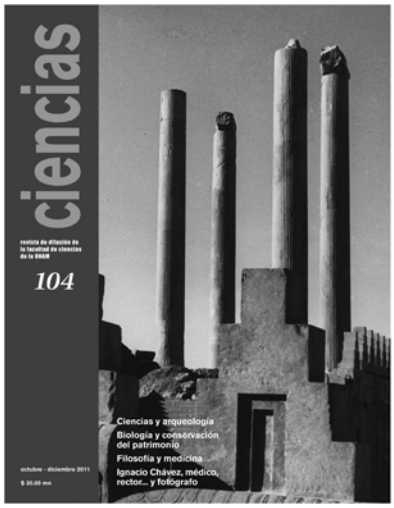

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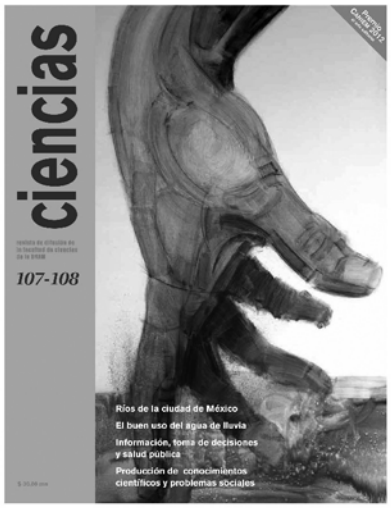

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Climate Change: Socio-environmental Outlooks

Climate change is the most important environmental phenomenon worldwide because of its impact on the planet's natural and social conditions. The changes in average temperatures are so obvious that it would be hard to deny the urgency of action. Ninety-seven percent of scientists in the fields of physics and the natural sciences agree that they exist and on their effects. Recent global climate events are constant signs of this change; however, physics and the natural sciences are not enough to explain the problems, because this is no isolated phenomenon. It is happening in a given social setting, and for that reason must be analyzed in the context of a complex socio-environmental system. This complexity, in turn, brings with it new interests and interpretations that arise in the light of social diversity.

REUTERS/Keiran Doherty

In this special section of *Voices of Mexico,* our aim is to analyze climate change from different standpoints, with contributions from different disciplines and epistemological focuses. The main premise, and where our outlooks converge, is that this is not a phenomenon that alters only the physical, natural space in which we live, but also ourselves and our social surroundings. In other words, climate change implies a profound change in physical reality, but also takes on a profound significance in the socio-cultural setting. Given the changes it brings with it, political and social actions, both at an individual and collective level, are absolutely necessary. In this special section, we take up the discussions both in Mexico and around the world about the actions needed, the actors who should take them, and at what levels they should be taken.

Edit Antal and *Simone Lucatello*

Narrative, Rhetoric, and Reality Of Climate Change Do We Need More?

Edit Antal*
Simone Lucatello**

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Climate change is a complex, multi-dimensional, multi-layered phenomenon. Simply studying it involves a large number of disciplines, from the abstract and empirical to natural and social sciences. It not only uses scientific, technical, and humanistic language, but also traverses the discourses and practice of economics, politics, and religion. This explains in part its long list of interpretations.

We know that as a socio-political and economic problem, climate change is huge, profound, and long term, and that the possibility of getting global cooperation seems increasingly remote given the lack of agreement among the major polluters like the United States, Europe, Japan, China, and Mexico, among others. Parallel to this, the use of the term itself is beginning to become so generalized that it pops up in all political and social discourses, in economic plans, in the mouths of politicians, businessmen/women, social groups, and even in day-to-day existence.

In the field of international development studies, for example, that "change" is increasingly associated with the discourse on vulnerability, risk, and the material conditions of the poorest communities; and the concept "adaptation" is the new ideological "mantra" for environmental efforts. For example, changes in hydro-meteorological patterns in agriculture are considered the greatest threats for the survival of a

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large part of the world's population, and the question arises: How do we adapt to those changes, and how can we avoid massive migration linked to the climate?

Climate change has broadened the security paradigm, when it is compared with one of the main threats to the world: terrorism. So great is the concern about its effects that it has merited the attention of the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), to the point that several of their documents consider it a threat justifying military intervention scenarios to control global natural resources.

Naturally, there are different understandings of climate change, and above all, other ways of solving the problem are available. Because the term is in vogue, it is beginning to take on a life of its own in everyday existence. This can be seen when it is used as a synonym for catastrophe, risk, or any radical, unexpected change. It has become a semantic umbrella term, then, to justify complex, uncertain scenarios for the planet: hurricanes, droughts, floods, but also waves of refugees, struggles for control over natural resources, the design of security geo-policies, and apocalyptic religious outlooks. All this tells us that it is not just a matter of rising global temperatures, but rather it is something complex that is beginning to take root in many socio-cultural spheres. So, it is not only an indisputable fact, but also a "plastic idea" that makes it possible to cross different ideological spectrums and constantly renovate the dialogue between nature and culture, spaces in which we humans are central actors.[1]

The idea's plasticity means it can be understood not only as a phenomenon that alters the natural, physical space where we live, but also our social surroundings. In other words, climate change is a physical reality, but it also has socio-cultural meaning.

This issue of *Voices of Mexico* dedicates part of its pages to the reflection on this complex phenomenology. The article by Juan Carlos Barrón Pastor analyzes the role of the mass media in creating the public's perception of climate change, beginning with a warning against the risk that comes with generalization and simplification. In this case, manipulation, over-reaction, and exaggerations about climate change promote the idea that a phenomenon like Hurricane Sandy was an inevitable catastrophe and that there is very little that we can do to avert climate change's negative effects. This involves a call to society to remain passive, since it makes the public believe that the experts might be able to do something, but that we mere mortals cannot. However, we know that there is nothing more false than this, since the most effective measure for alleviating climate change is to change our way of life and to waste less dirty energy.

In the 20 years of international climate change regime, the definition has changed significantly, revealing at least three narratives: mitigation, adaptation, and the most recent, resilience.

Carlos Domínguez and Marie Karaisl, for their part, compare the role technology plays in the solution of the problems climate change poses to the Prometheus myth: they warn against the supposition that what is needed is alien to the natural and social sphere, and in addition, remind us that every kind of technology has both benefits and risks.

As Ruth Zavala Hernández explains in her article, the carbon footprint that we can easily quantify with the aid of an Internet site is another instrument proposed for fighting global warming. Nevertheless, if carbon footprint information begins to be reported on product labels, discriminatory attitudes can be generated among countries because those who lack alternative-energy-source technologies, like Mexico, would be at a clear commercial disadvantage. Both sides of the coin need to be taken into consideration: this measure is an easy way to create awareness about how much we pollute and as a result change our customs, but it is also an unfair barrier to international trade.

In the 20 years of international climate change regime, the definition has changed significantly, revealing at least three narratives: mitigation, adaptation, and the most recent, resilience. These changes have been spurred by the interests of the main stakeholders who at different times promoted the regime, both in its first phase, which led to the Kyoto Protocol, and later, in its second phase, whose aim has been —and actually continues to be— to determine where post-Kyoto negotiations go.

Generally speaking, we can say that the main direction taken has been to move from mitigation of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to adaptation to the impacts of climate change. This shift is also reflected in other areas, such as the growing promotion of carbon capture and sequestration instead of actual reduction of emissions, emphasizing methane and other gases previously considered less important than CO_2, favoring the regional over the global, and insisting on the importance of national inventories and policies over international ones.[2]

As we already mentioned, the first narrative focuses on mitigation, which means the direct or indirect reduction of the six main greenhouse gases through a process of technology and financial transfers. In this process, the main actors were undoubtedly the industrialized countries, who were expected to proceed in two possible ways: reducing their own emissions or applying flexible or market mechanisms that would allow for the reduction of emissions outside their borders to be counted as national reductions.

The big problem with this first narrative is that the real mitigation actions are too subject to the results and commitments of international negotiations and global agreements, like the now defunct Kyoto Protocol. The result has been political and ideological vagueness and a high degree of uncertainty.[3] On the other hand, regarding the transition toward new mechanisms of GHG-emission reduction through appropriate national mitigation strategies, we still do not have enough details about the procedures, funding sources, and methodologies to be able to consider them valid replacements for the previously existing mechanisms.

The second narrative has focused on the concept of adaptation, which, despite being used since the early days of the international climate change regime, became stronger later, when the developing countries played a leading role in the working groups of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). In this narrative, instead of reducing GHG emissions, the emphasis was on developing capabilities to adapt to changing natural conditions, above all in the more vulnerable countries. Adaptation of human systems is a process requiring the commitment of a broad gamut of stakeholders who act on multiple levels and in almost all sectors of society. It is necessary to analyze the current exposure to climate scares and stress as well as to a series of models of future climate-impact models. We have to determine the vulnerability of individuals, families, and communities, as well as their institutional, political, social, and bio-physical surroundings.

For now, as mentioned above, most of the world economic commitments to deal in the long term with the effects of climate change come together under the heading "adaptation," the new ideological "mantra" on the world development agenda, which traverses the Millennium Development Goals.

In their article, Clemente Rueda and Tamar Jiménez emphasize the architecture of international climate financing, arguing that the current international climate regime recognizes the economic asymmetry among countries. For that reason, in international negotiations, one of the recurring themes is an option that allows countries to implement mitigation activities and societies to adapt to the phenomenon in order to move toward economies with less carbon. However, recognizing that climate change is an asymmetrical problem, the big question underlying the analysis of the financial issue remains: Who has to pay the price of this change's adverse impacts and to what extent?

Mitigating and adapting to climate change also mean reorienting the inertia of our society's productive development to channel it toward being harmonious with the environment. Initially, analysts thought that this would involve a direct confrontation between the interests promoting economic "growth" and the conceptions about environmental, prevention, and protection needed for the struggle against and adaptation to climate change. However, the scientific information from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has made it clear several times that the enormous economic risks and costs that global warming is bringing the planet and the swift changes in the climate are much greater than the resources needed to implement mitigation and adaptation measures.[4]

Along these same lines, Citlalli Becerril-Tinoco's article about water use along the Mexico-U.S. border touches on a crucial aspect of the relationship between climate change and development. Existing models suggest that in the course of the next century, our planet will warm up between 1.4°C and 5.8 °C, depending on GHG emission levels. These changes in climate will affect both the quality and the quantity of water available for human beings and the environment, and that border is one of the regions of the world that may be most affected by changes in weather patterns, with all the political, economic, and social consequences that this implies.

Finally, the third narrative —we might say that it is currently the dominant one— is the narrative of resilience, intimately linked to complex systems. This concept is actually very much utilized in other fields of knowledge, like psychology, engineering, and ecology, among others. In the social sphere, it refers to developing capabilities at the level of local communities affected by climate change, capabilities

In international negotiations, one of the recurring themes is an option that allows countries to implement mitigation activities and societies to adapt to the phenomenon in order to move toward economies with less carbon.

that, although they may be defined in many different ways, generally refer to the possibility of dealing with external tensions and disturbances as a result of social, political, or environmental changes. These resilient forms of behavior often include the ability to cushion the change, organize, learn, and adapt. In a certain sense, the concept replaces the idea of sustainability because it is broader and indicative of how to achieve the goal.

Our section includes texts that allude to this concept, relatively new in its application to the socio-environmental sphere. Rafael Calderón-Contreras directly explains the importance of resilience in climate change policies and places it in its empirical context by analyzing the case of biofuels as alternative energy sources. Daniel Rodríguez Velázquez's article also mentions resilience in relation to the social and human implications of climate change through his criticism of techno-naturalist visions; and he argues for recovering a social-environmental focus that implies the democratization of public policies and the participatory construction of local capabilities: in other words, resilient communities.

The concept of resiliency also brings up a big question about the role of sustainable development, traversed fundamentally by climate change, since it is not very realistic to think about a sustainable world, because to achieve it, stable conditions are needed, which, because of the effects of the phenomenon itself, will no longer exist.

If in the future we have to prepare ourselves to deal with extreme climate events that will take many lives, destroy cities, infrastructure, and crops, and deplete our water sources, does it make sense to continue to use the discourse of sustainability? Or would it be worthwhile to discuss the current paradigm and recognize that under today's conditions, what we need is resilient development? VM

NOTES

[1] Mike Hulme, *Why We Disagree about Climate Change: Understanding Controversy, Inaction and Opportunity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 21-23.

[2] Edit Antal, "Introducción. El futuro del régimen del cambio climático y el papel de América del Norte en ello. Una perspectiva histórica y analítica," *Norteamérica, revista académica*, special issue on climate change, no. 7, 2012, pp. 5-33.

[3] Simone Lucatello and Daniel Rodríguez, comps., *Las dimensiones sociales del cambio climático. Un panorama desde México. ¿Cambio social o crisis ambiental?* (Mexico City: Instituto Mora/ENTS, UNAM, 2011).

[4] IPCC, *4th Assessment Report 2007* (Geneva: UNFCCC, 2007).

Climate Change and the Media
Revelations of Catastrophes

Juan Carlos Barrón Pastor*

INTRODUCTION

Practically all civilizations have believed that the world we know is transitory and provisional, and that all societies are temporary. Depending on their knowledge and relationship to the world, almost all cultures have created images and representations of their own destruction. Today, climate change is the fashionable possible end of our civilization, and the mass media have taken it upon themselves to use it to feed the recreation of the collective imaginary of destruction.

Climate change is widely considered one of the greatest challenges to humanity today and for many decades to come. This scientific concern has permeated practically all the dis-

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Instead of the carefully argued, necessary debate about a very complex real problem or promoting mechanisms to prevent and diminish vulnerability, the mass media seem to appeal to people's morbid side.

REUTERS/Darren Staples

ciplines, and its complexity and scope can be inferred from the other articles in this section. But we also have to recognize that, very possibly, most of the information we have for understanding the phenomena commonly related to climate change comes from the mainstream media. A Google search quickly tells us that on Internet, at the end of 2012, the idea of climate change was associated with catastrophic events and particularly with the Mayans' supposed prediction of the end of the world.

It mattered little that scientists from almost the entire world explained that the change in the Mayan calendar could not be interpreted as a Biblical Apocalypse. Little is said about the difficulties these scientists had in coming to an agreement about the weight of the human factor in the current climate change, or about what the conflicts and challenges are that led many groups to consider the most recent Doha meeting a failure in its efforts to prevent it.

Instead of the carefully argued, necessary debate about a very complex real problem or promoting mechanisms to prevent and diminish vulnerability, the information presented by the mass media —what most people consume— seems to have to be spectacular, to appeal to people's morbid side, to be based on hardly any profound research, and also to present climate change as a chain of calamitous events that will irrevocably lead to a gigantic environmental crisis. However, clearly the idea of catastrophe creates fear, but at the same time intrigues us, and certainly refers to that paradoxical pleasure that must be much more lucrative than recognizing that unfettered consumption promoted by the media is ecologically unsustainable. So, when the mainstream media cackle that there are no alternatives to the current mode of production, it is possible to logically infer that climatic cataclysm is also inevitable. But this does not necessarily have to be the case.

In this article, I will explore how this media re-creation is based on a narrative well-known in almost all cultures: legend, using the style of apocalyptic revelations that have proven their effectiveness, permeating monotheistic religious thought for more than 2 000 years. Based on these narratives, the mainstream media generates a field of social representation that I will link to the concept of *moral panic*, for which they mainly use spiral amplification. To exemplify this, I will use the case of Hurricane Sandy, which devastated several Caribbean and Atlantic islands and part of the East Coast of the United States in late October 2012. I should point out that I will be referring to the mainstream media and not to the many, very courageous electronic alternative media and community radios that swim against the tide of the big corporations.

Legends and Revelations

According to the *Cambridge Dictionary*, "Legend is a very old story or set of stories from ancient times, or the stories, not always true, that people tell about a famous event or person." However, as Delehaye explained more than a century ago, to be able to work, the legend has to be sufficiently believable and have some kernel of truth at its core, and it is that real element that differentiates it from a myth.[1] The power of a legend lies in its capacity to build a convincing narrative of how a highly improbably, but sufficiently verifiable event happened. Revelations, on the other hand, according to the same dictionary, happen "when something is made known that was secret," or are "a fact that is made known." In many Middle Eastern religions, deities commonly reveal secrets or inspire a piece of knowledge among their chosen, initiates, or prophets, not through argumentation, but through a vision or divine message.[2]

Of course, legends and revelations cannot be considered reliable in scientific thought, which can only refer to them as a starting point for a hypothesis or as an object of study in cultural, humanistic, or social research. Nevertheless, the play between the plausible and the unbelievable and between disaster foretold, known by everyone, combined with the words of a select group of scholars warning of the need to heed the gravity of today's situation create an irresistible media cocktail for consumption.

Frankenstorm Sandy

Hurricane Sandy was given several nicknames, used to convey the information in the media and explain why it could combine with a winter storm that came a few days after the hurricane hit the East Coast of the United States. The most common were "Frankenstorm" and "superstorm." The first term seems to have been coined by Jim Cisco, but it was later banned by CNN and other media for "trivializing the tragedy." So then the term "superstorm" came into general use, but even this became polemical when in January 2013, *The Washington Post* used the expression the "so-called superstorm" to refer to the hurricane during a debate about the monies that should be earmarked for aid to those affected by it.

It is not my intention to minimize the tragedy or the lack of foresight that caused very high human and economic costs, despite the impressive deployment of resources in the days after the storm made landfall on the U.S. coast and even prompted President Obama to temporarily cancel his campaign activities. However, strictly speaking, Sandy was a type-two hurricane, even at its height in the Caribbean; and when it hit the U.S. coast, it was a type-one on the Saffir-Simpson scale, which classifies —very controversially— storms on a scale from one to five according to their wind velocity. That is, Sandy did not even come close to the 49 level-five hurricanes registered over the last century, nor was it comparable to others that have made landfall in recent years in the United States, like Katrina or Rita.

It is very possible, then, that using terms like "Frankenstorm" or "superstorm" overestimated the phenomenon. The question will be whether using this kind of expression achieved better forecasting and response to the disaster or if it only served to keep the audience captive for commercial reasons. What we can say is that to overestimate the phenomenon, a form of discourse was used in which, as I already mentioned, Biblical revelation and legend are combined. In that mix, the media seemed to be the chosen ones for revealing small doses of information that only an elite —in this case the media themselves— had complete access to. On the other hand, what was being said had a kernel of truth to reinforce the story's believability, but at the same time contained, and even promoted, magical, religious thinking. This handling of the discourse seemed to serve ideological and commercial ends more than fostering a culture of disaster prevention, since it seemed to promote the idea that there is little we can do to mitigate climate change and/or to make ourselves more resilient.

The Amplification Spiral and Moral Panic

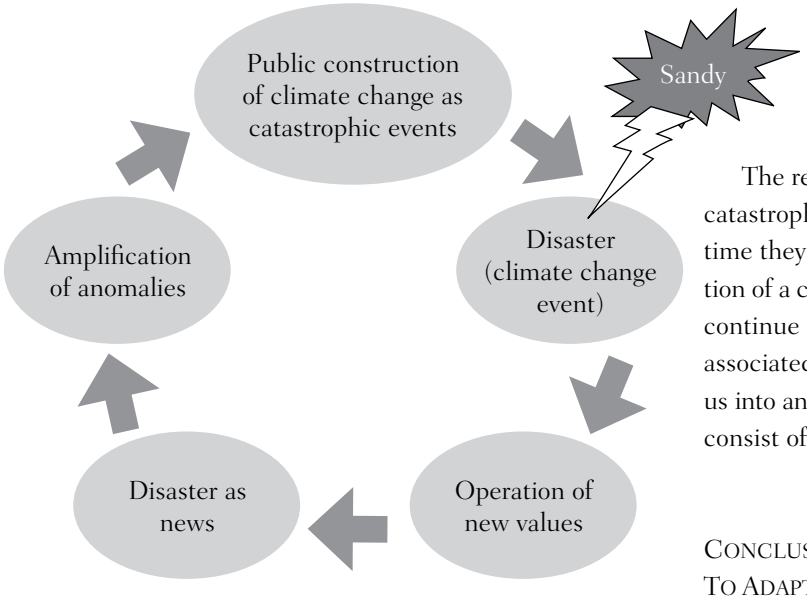
During Hurricane Sandy, the main broadcast news networks monitored by CISAN seemed to confuse "alerting" the population with "alarming" the population. They also seemed to focus on creating a form of what Cohen called *moral panic* through artificial mechanisms to create amplification spirals.[3]

Moral panics are social overreactions to an episode, a person, or group "defined as a threat to societal values."[4] It is even a concept commonly used to explain the reproduction of social stigma; in this case I use it to understand how the disruption of normality is constructed and amplified due to the so-called "superstorm." The mass media's exaggerated response to the hurricane created a kind of feedback loop often used in media studies to explain Cohen's concept of the amplification spiral.

As the figure in next page shows schematically, the media create, re-create, and amplify each of the elements that make up a social over-reaction to a climate event. At the same time, they continually define and redefine the notion of climate change as something preordained and expressed almost exclusively through disasters that lead to anomalous social behavior that is justifiable in exceptional circumstances and is the raw material for the news.

The mass media's discourse seemed to serve ideological and commercial ends more than a culture of disaster prevention; it seemed to promote the idea that there is little we can do to mitigate climate change.

Amplification Spiral to Create Moral Panic in the Case of Superstorm Sandy



Source: Developed by the author based on S. Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (Abingdon, Oxford, UK: Routledge, 2002).

From its baptism as "Frankenstorm," the media began constructing the notion of catastrophe itself and the identity of this event in particular. The media compete to convince the audience that it should stay glued to news channels where they reveal small doses of revelations by experts. Between one revelation and the next, the previously broadcast scenes and information are repeated over and over, and each time their content is broadened. For example, a particularly large wave washed up on a coastal street; it is just a wave, but now it will be repeated hundreds of times until another image and its respective revelation arrives. Or, a journalist had to do his report "on the scene" inside a huge puddle of water at the crossroads of two streets in a small New Jersey town. In the studio, images are gathered —the more eye-catching the better— and are used to create "informational spots" accompanied by music appropriate to the feelings that they seek to evoke. Studio commentators have to show their dismay and concern about what is happening "on the scene," while the images are being edited better and are jumbled together with other images and revelations to construct little by little the narrative of the catastrophe, the legend of what happened.

Entertainment industries could make the difference in creating awareness among the population about the huge impact of small day-to-day actions and about the provisions that would reduce our vulnerability.

The rest of the year, climate change offered up very few catastrophes, and the media resorted to its best shots every time they wanted to touch on the issue. The very construction of a catastrophe and the re-creation of the events jibe to continue developing the media narrative of climate change associated to inevitable calamities that will inexorably take us into an environmental crisis that —in this narrative— will consist of a cataclysm of gigantic proportions.

Conclusions: Media Potential for Helping To Adapt and Decreasing Vulnerability

Of course, climate change represents one of the main risks to the continued existence of our civilization. If we continue on the same path, the disasters related to it will continue to multiply. However, it is a much more complex problem than a conglomerate of legends and revelations, much more than a chain of "natural" disasters amplified in the media, and above all, it is not inescapable. A great deal can be done to lessen climate change as such, to reduce our vulnerability, and to adapt better to our planet both in times of calamity and in our everyday lives.

It is understandable that the mainstream media resort to millennia-old, multicultural narrative structures to try to seduce and captivate a larger and larger audience. However, it seems to me that these entertainment industries include people with immense creative potential who, even in the framework of their own interests, could make the difference in creating awareness among the population about the huge impact that small day-to-day actions could have and about the provisions that would reduce our vulnerability to these events.

Among the day-to-day actions that could be stepped up through media strategies are saving energy, purchasing from small local firms, supporting our communities' cultural projects, increasing our space for personal contact, or reporting on the importance of strengthening scientific, social, huma-

nistic, and technological research to build the alternatives that would move toward an ecologically sustainable planetary civilization.

In addition, during events like Hurricane Sandy, the media could help in not cooperating in the reproduction of amplification spirals of moral panic. It is one thing to report truthfully and in a timely fashion, and a quite different matter to use discourses that can spread scenes of states of exception, in which the values of survival are the ones that prevail, which can lead to desperate action that often complicates the situations more, increasing our vulnerability as individuals and communities. For example, they should discourage panic buying instead of promoting it, and stimulate solidarity and not insecurity and mistrust among people, sharing and not hoarding of resources, and facilitate interaction and neighborhood cooperation instead of people isolating themselves. VM

Notes

[1] Hippolyte Delehaye, *The Legends of the Saints: An Introduction to Hagiography* (London: University of Notre Dame Press/Longmans, Green, 1907), http://archive.org/details/legendsofthesaints012977mbp.

[2] Karen Armstrong, *The Great Transformation* (New York/Toronto: Alfred Knoft, 2006).

[3] Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (Abingdon, Oxford, UK: Routledge, 2002).

[4] Ibid., p. 9.

Climate Change, Infrastructure, and the Promethean Myth

Carlos Domínguez*
Marie Karaisl**

There is no technology without a negative social, economic, and/or environmental impact. This is the case whether a new automatized process displaces the use of labor in a particular economic sector or the more intensive use of solar panels drives up the demand for certain materials like cobalt or cadmium, often located in social and environmentally sensitive areas.

Indeed, benefits of technology might exceed negative side effects, but this requires finding the mechanisms to use part of these benefits to compensate negative impacts. The quest for social and economic development since the industrial revolution may be summarized in this way: it is not only a struggle to improve general living conditions (for example, health, education, or gender equality), but also a struggle to palliate the negative effects of our own efforts to achieve development goals.

In our times, innovation and technology are often understood by the layman as "new artifacts," but we are thinking of technology in a broader sense. Strictly speaking, technology does not only refer to new artifacts (e.g., the bicycle, the car, the solar panel, the smart phone, etc.). Technology and technological change also refer to human activities, to new knowledge, and to new ways in which existing knowledge is applied.[1] Thus, for example, the artifacts, methodologies, and strategies chosen to face the challenges of climate change include particular technologies (like wind farms and solar panels); new ways to think about existing ones (for example, hydro-electrical dams to reduce greenhouse gas emissions); and assess-

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Promoting and expanding infrastructure has been part of Mexico's general strategy to face the climate change, although it runs the risk of becoming the victim of the Promethean myth.

ment tools to decide which projects are appropriate and which are not (like strategic environmental assessment, or SEA).

What kind of technologies —in the broad sense—have we adopted to face the challenges of mitigation of and adaptation to climate change so far?

Infrastructure and all the technologies that this word entails is definitely part of the answer. When we talk about mitigation, inevitably we think of wind farms in La Venta, Oaxaca, and other places in the country; hydro-electrical plants in Chiapas and other states in Southeastern Mexico; new forms of transport in Mexico City and other urban areas, just to cite a few examples. When we talk about adaptation, inevitably we think of new dikes to control floods in Tabasco, Veracruz, and even the Riviera Maya; or channels to move water from one basin to the other (for example, the Cutzamala System or plans to take water from states in the South to states in the North of Mexico).

Promoting and expanding infrastructure has been part of the general strategy Mexico has chosen to face the challenges of climate change. Although it is difficult to argue that infrastructure has not been integral to promoting economic growth through more efficient and less costly connections, and to solving particular development problems such as water scarcity and waste management, Mexico runs the risk of becoming the victim of and suffering the consequences of the Promethean myth. That is, the myth that technology can be used to overcome any problem facing humanity, including those related to climate change and to the environment in general.[2]

The Promethean Myth and Climate Change Strategies in Mexico

Like any mythical narrative, the Promethean myth entails assumptions, actors, and metaphors. The main assumption is that human knowledge and creativity will always be enough to overcome any problem. In this view, "nature does not exist… as anything more than a store of matter and energy,"[3] and therefore, it is something malleable that does not pose an obstacle —that is, the real obstacle is human creativity. A key metaphor is that the world is mechanistic, and this involves the assumption that it can be fixed just like a clock or any other machine when it stops working. Moreover, it can be fixed forever, no matter how many times it breaks, *ad infinitum*.

The main actors are the experts who have the necessary knowledge to fix the world. Engineers, economists, and other technicians who can state climate change problems in a linear one-way route of thinking:

1) identify the problem (whether it be floods, emissions, water scarcity, deforestation, of mobility);
2) analyze and assess different alternatives *ex ante*:
3) choose the most appropriate, mainly according to accepted criteria of technical feasibility and economic efficiency;
4) assess *ex post* and, if something went wrong, correct and start again.

The most obvious danger of the Promethean myth lies in its one-dimensional account of the world and its radical optimism regarding the positive aspects of technology and the power of human knowledge and creativity. Is this not what some experts and politicians in Mexico and in other countries are professing when they say that projects and strategies to achieve climate change mitigation and adaptation can be valuable "win-win" solutions?[4]

When we talk about "win-win" solutions in the context of climate change, we are usually referring to projects that can be beneficial in two ways: they solve pressing environmental problems and, at the same time, they constitute significant opportunities to foster economic growth and generate business opportunities. In other words, the radical optimism of the typical Promethean myth is reflected in two assumptions. First, since there are positive environmental effects at the national or global levels (for example, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions), we forget that the so-called win-win solutions may entail environmental effects at the regional and local levels. Second, since they also generate economic benefits at the macro level, we forget that they may cause other social impacts worth considering.

Recent experiences in Mexico show the problems that may be caused by an unchecked Promethean posture. For example, it is worth remembering the emergence of social movements that have successfully organized to oppose the implementation of particular infrastructure projects. This is the case of

many dams (for example, La Parota in Guerrero or El Zapotillo in Jalisco) intended to produce electricity (therefore reducing Mexico's dependency on fossil fuels and reducing greenhouse gas emissions) or to supply water to regions and cities that face chronic undersupply of this resource, one of the most pressing challenges in the context of adaptation to climate change.

A dam constitutes the archetypical example of how a project promoted in the name of development, social wellbeing, national pride, and/or any other abstract principle may face widespread opposition from society due to the environmental and social impacts that it causes locally. One of the most serious impacts is the forced resettlement of communities that live near the planned reservoir. Under extreme circumstances, if forced resettlement is not planned and not executed adequately, it could entail the breach of a broad set of human rights including the right to personal security, to recognition before the law, to a community life, to own property, to have information, etc.

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Infrastructure itself is a desirable and necessary means to achieve certain social and economic development goals.

Yet, there are other technologies that entail negative local impacts that are less serious and have also encountered social opposition. Wind farms in the region of Tehuantepec, for example, have been contested by communities claiming that the compensations received for their land are unfair compared to the magnitude and benefits of these infrastructure projects. In the context of Mexico City, efficient means of transport such as the new subway line or the rapid transit bus system (Metrobús), which reduce emissions and accidents and improve commuting times, have also faced opposition based on potential environmental effects locally or on the displacement of existing sources of employment.

It is not possible to generalize and place all infrastructure projects in the same category. Some projects are not appropriate and can be labeled as "bad" for development, even during early conceptualization stages, because they are badly designed and are not the best technical alternative. Other projects have social and environmental costs that are excessive or unfairly distributed. Moreover, "being appropriate" is a relative concept that depends on many factors, including how urgent the problem is that it intends to solve, the availability of other policy alternatives, the overall costs and funding sources, and specific side effects, among other considerations. At the same time, given the complex and multifarious implications of many infrastructure projects, the "right" alternative depends on the specific weight assigned to different evaluative dimensions and development goals (for example, economic growth, environmental sustainability, or social and environmental justice).

When we talk about "win-win" solutions we are usually referring to projects that solve pressing environmental problems and, at the same time, constitute significant opportunities to foster economic growth.

Ultimately, the final goal of an infrastructure project is irrelevant; whether it targets climate change or seeks to address more general infrastructure needs, it always faces these kinds of dilemmas and difficulties. Forced displacement is equally problematic if caused by an airport or by a wind farm; ecocide is equally objectionable if caused by a dam to supply water for large transnational agribusinesses or by a hydroelectrical dam that legitimately reduces CO_2 emissions.

Infrastructure itself is a desirable and necessary means to achieve certain social and economic development goals. No doubt Mexico needs more wind farms, more efficient urban transport, more water treatment plants, and more landfills, just to mention a few examples. No doubt some of these technologies may also contribute to climate change mitigation and

adaptation. However, when the projects are justified through win-win discourses and other Promethean dreams, policy makers and experts in general run the risk of minimizing and obviating certain negative side effects. They run the risk of displacing problems rather than solving them.

Promethean "Green" Infrastructure and the Challenges Ahead

Policy makers may run the risk of considering without distinction that *all* infrastructure projects are "green" and contribute to climate change goals. In this extreme, every dam, water treatment plant, landfill, or transportation initiative would be considered beneficial and an integral part of mitigating or adapting to climate change. Even highways might enter into this category if they reduce transportation times and distances and thus, CO_2 emissions! Pemex's efficiency projects might also be labeled as part of mitigation strategies even if they only serve to improve productivity.

The proliferation of this kind of policy oxymorons has already been a danger in past administrations,[5] and it will be again during the administration of President Enrique Peña Nieto (2012-2018). As the new president gave his opening speech talking about passenger trains and other means of transport, telecommunications, and energy reforms, it seemed clear that infrastructure will again be a top priority for the federal government. This is not bad news *per se*. However, his announcements point to the above-described Promethean approach, which leaves aside many environmental and social implications that should also be considered.

Take the proposal of reactivating passenger trains. It is indeed a win-win solution as it could potentially promote economic development and reduce emissions by replacing the use of cars. It could even have other positive side effects such as contributing to decentralizing the population and economic activities from Mexico City to the "crown of cities" surrounding it.[6] However, it is not clear whether passenger trains would use new or existing rights of way. Depending on the concrete executive projects in each case, passenger trains could have environmental and social impacts worth considering. In some cases, the right of way will make the difference between the project being possible or not.[7]

Another example is the initiative to build a 520-kilometer-long channel to take water from the Pánuco Basin to the city of Monterrey. Although this project was originally analyzed —at least— during the past presidential administration, Peña Nieto already expressed his sympathy with it and desire to go ahead. Unfortunately, regardless of whether this aqueduct solves water problems in Monterrey and flooding problems in Veracruz and could represent significant business opportunities for construction companies, such large infrastructure would pass through four states of Mexico, potentially causing unforeseen social and environmental impacts.

If Promethean stances are irresponsibly optimistic, radical skepticism can lead to inaction. We want to promote development, but this also demands that we find ways to palliate its negative effects.

The Need for New Technologies (in the Broad Sense of the Word)

A critical view of the overconfident Promethean ideas and discourses that permeate Mexican policy debates is useful for shedding light on certain paradoxes and challenges, but is not necessarily the best way to come up with concrete proposals. If Promethean stances are irresponsibly optimistic, radical skepticism can easily be conducive to inaction. At the end of the day, we are dealing here with a familiar challenge: we want to promote development but this also demands we find ways to palliate the negative effects that accompany our own efforts to achieve development goals.

It is fine if Mexico needs infrastructure, and it is fine if infrastructure is considered a key component of our efforts to achieve climate change mitigation and adaptation goals, but we should leave behind simplistic win-win concepts and recognize that many of these initiatives might actually be win-win-lose alternatives. Like with any other development problem, technology may be part of the answer. However, a narrow definition of technology, understood as artifacts and constructed environment, is insufficient. We need a broad definition of technology as the rational process to create the means to an end.

What are the available means for achieving infrastructure projects that are more just, both socially and environmentally? What new technologies have we designed in Mexico to deal with local environmental impacts and to prevent widespread social discontent?

We have a few but they are clearly insufficient. Environmental impact statements are one example, but this tool is easily corrupted; it lacks professionalization at the local level; and even more important, the process does not grant enough importance to social impacts, particularly when a project entails forced displacement. Thus, we need new assessment technologies to screen impacts comprehensively and imaginatively and new social technologies that leave room for the point of view of different stakeholders; to implement social accountability tools to reduce corruption among project promoters; to modify a project before it is launched; to compensate those communities that will inevitably suffer negative side effects, particularly those who are vulnerable (women, children, and the aged); and to condition funding sources for those initiatives that have unacceptable costs.

Some of these are already in use in other countries. This is the case of "social licenses to operate," resettlement action plans, and operational rules that have been drafted by international agencies like the World Bank, which have had long and painful experience with these kinds of issues.[8] Others will require a sort of Promethean creativity before they are invented or before they are adapted to the Mexican context. We cannot talk of win-win solutions until we have these other tools in hand. VM

Notes

[1] Wiebe E. Bijker, "Why and How Technology Matters," in Robert Goodin and Charles Tilly, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 681-706.

[2] John Dryzek, *The Politics of the Earth*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[3] Dryzek, op. cit., p. 49.

[4] One example is Mario Molina who has stated, "If we adopt the appropriate measures, Mexico could —without sacrificing economic growth— enjoy sustainable development, guaranteeing our wellbeing and the wellbeing of future generations, and contributing as well to solve a world problem of utmost importance." See INE and PNUD, *Impactos sociales del cambio climático en México* (Mexico: INE/PNUD, 2008).

[5] It is noteworthy that Semarnat's (the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources) *Programa especial de cambio climático, 2009-2012* already considers this kind of projects as part of the mitigation and adaptation to climate change (MACC) strategies that Mexico should launch.

[6] The "crown of cities" refers to the main urban centers surrounding the Mexico City Metropolitan Area, which have a strong functional relationship with it, particularly economically. These include Pachuca, Toluca, Querétaro, and Cuernavaca, and other minor towns.

[7] In fact, one of the main reasons why the infrastructure program of President Felipe Calderón (2006-2012) did not achieve all its goals is precisely because of the difficulty of negotiating rights of way, in particular for new roads and highways.

[8] See, for example, World Bank, "OP 4.12 —Involuntary Resettlement," 2001, http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/PROJECTSEXTPOLICIES/EXTOPMANUAL/0,,contentMDK:20064610~menuPK:64701637~pagePK:64709096~piPK:64709108~theSitePK:502184,00.html. http://picturesstatic2.reuters.com/Doc/RTR/Media/TR3_UNWATERMARKED/A/C/E/4/RTR1NCCY.jpg

What Is the Carbon Footprint? Impacts on Mexico

Ruth Zavala Hernández*

Definition of the Concept

Although the term "carbon footprint" has only recently come into use, it is more and more common among specialists and the general populace as a result of the importance that climate change has taken on worldwide. But, what does it mean? Generally speaking, we can say that it is the calculation of all the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that a product, service, event, company, person, or state generates directly or indirectly, produced mainly by burning fossil fuels like oil, coal, and natural gas.

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There is considerable literature about this. One more specialized definition, recognized by the experts, is penned by Wright, Kemp, and Williams:

> A measure of the total amount of carbon dioxide (CO_2) and methane (CH_4) emissions of a defined population, system, or activity, considering all relevant sources, sinks, and storage within the spatial and temporal boundary of the population, system, or activity of interest. Calculated as carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e) using the relevant 100-year global warming potential (GWP100).[1]

It is interesting to note that this definition not only considers CO_2 emissions, but also methane gas emissions, and emphasizes the potential for causing global warming as well, which in turn creates climate change.

The carbon footprint is often identified and confused with the ecological or environmental footprint, as though they were synonymous. However, the first is much more specific than the others, since it is a very well defined measurement centered on the gases that cause climate change (which are included according to the definition picked). In this sense, the Kyoto Protocol includes the regulation of six gases: carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulphur hexafluoride. All these can be included in the carbon footprint and each has a different potential for global warming. The ecological footprint includes more variables, among them the water footprint, which, as its name indicates, refers to the total amount of water used in the production and commercialization of a good or service. The carbon footprint is measured in tons of equivalent carbon dioxide (tons of CO_2e); that is, the rest of the greenhouse gases are measured in equivalent quantities in order to simplify the reports.

Strategies for shrinking the carbon footprint aim mainly to decrease the amount of energy required as a result of substantial changes in today's life style and to use alternative energy sources.

International Regulation and Standardization

Strategies for shrinking the carbon footprint aim mainly to decrease the amount of energy required as a result of substantial changes in today's life style and to use alternative energy

REUTERS/David Gray

sources (solar, wind, geothermal, and bio-fuel, among others). These two points have been the center of the debate in UN climate change negotiations since 1992, which have moved forward slowly because the issue involves many opposing interests.

Despite the difficulty of negotiating worldwide agreements, several pieces of legislation exist, mainly in Europe, requiring companies to report on their products' carbon footprint (both goods and services). One example is France's Grenelle Law, which came into effect January 1, 2011, centered on imported products. In the United Kingdom, since March 2007, some manufacturing sectors began including a CO_2 label on their products through the Carbon Trust. In general, the European Union is a good example of strict legislation about greenhouse gas emissions. Different bills have been prepared worldwide to regulate the carbon footprint, which means that this will be a reality globally in the near future.

In other words, this is all about including in the final price of a product the cost of environmental externalities caused by its production, distribution, and commercialization that are not reflected in the market price. Climate change is only one of these costs. So, people who consume products that are too "dirty" (with a high carbon footprint) will have to pay more.

One of the main difficulties in calculating the carbon footprint is the absence of a standardized methodology. This has created a great deal of mistrust and uncertainty worldwide, since if each actor (the state, a company, a chamber of commerce, etc.) uses a different methodology, there will be no way of comparing the data.

The lack of measurement, reporting, and verification standards for GHG emissions mean the possibilities for negotiating among the stakeholders decline. Some of the first efforts to harmonize the measurement methodology were launched in 2012 through international norm ISO 14067 for products' carbon footprint, and ISO 14069 for organizations'. Nevertheless, given the weight of the issue, ideally, governments, not corporations, would determine norms and procedures.

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The other problematic issue is fixing the price of a ton of carbon, seen as a key for companies' competitiveness, since in the short or medium term, the carbon footprint will become a reference point for commercializing goods and services. Until recently, the public was not very aware of this because the environment was not seen as valuable as it has been since the 1990s. To the extent that environmental discourse has permeated different areas of life like politics, the market, society, health, etc., it has been put on the list of priorities.

All this is aimed at developing a sustainable economy and fostering technological transition. However, just as the effects of climate change are not the same for everyone, neither are its costs. In this sense, the effects on countries like Mexico that are considered developing nations will be reviewed. These are countries that survive based on exploiting their raw materials and do not have either the resources or the research and development capabilities needed to implement clean technologies, among other problems.

Myths and Realities Of the Carbon Footprint

When we talk about ecological debt, we recognize that those most responsible for the environmental crisis are the industrialized nations and that, therefore, they are the ones with the greatest obligation to deal with that crisis. This is the reason that both the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992) and the Kyoto Protocol (1997) establish the principle of *common but differentiated responsibilities*. This principle implies that the developed countries are obligated to reduce their GHG emissions, but the less developed nations are exempt from that obligation. However, in practice, the idea of ecological debt has undergone a transformation, since today's mechanisms transfer the costs of climate change from the industrialized to the developing countries.

To the extent that product prices reflect the cost of climate change, the carbon footprint will become the new form of commercial discrimination. This is one more reason for Mexico to look for effective mechanisms for implementing its recent General Law on Climate Change, which establishes the first steps for moving toward a low-carbon economy. However, it still lacks regulations and effective state and local enforcement.

Countries with strict environmental legislation that demands that products include carbon footprint information

labels are the main destinations for developing countries' goods, and this is beginning to limit the entry of products with a high carbon footprint. Most of the developing nations have neither the resources nor the research and development capability to use alternative sources of energy. Therefore, their products have a higher carbon footprint than those from developed countries.

The problem for Mexico and other developing countries without clean technologies and for whom it is cheaper to continue using fossil fuels is that some countries are planning to tax goods and services with a carbon footprint greater than that established in their laws. The environmental discourse consolidated in the 1990s centered on the idea that everyone was responsible for caring for the environment, but to differing degrees. Today it seems this principle has been put to one side and the costs of climate change are being transferred to the less developed countries that, in principle, are the least responsible for environmental deterioration.

What Will Happen to Mexico?

In the Mexican case, the consolidation of the carbon footprint can bring both benefits and disadvantages. Among the benefits is the pressure to effectively enforce the new climate change law, which will create great advantages, like the reduction of dependence on oil and investment in clean technology projects. Among the disadvantages is the fact that climate change has emphasized local and regional commerce, since transportation is one of the sectors that creates the most GHG emissions. This would contribute to Mexico continuing to do the vast majority of its trade with the United States (78.6 percent, according to the *CIA Factbook 2011*), and not seeking to diversify its markets. On the other hand, this has the advantage of fostering a stronger domestic market, since the prior state of affairs, in which long distances existed between where products are made and their destination market, would make them lose competitiveness. In addition, the carbon footprint could become a new kind of protectionism, which would have a negative impact on Mexican companies trading abroad.

To the extent that carbon footprint information is included on products' ecolabels, this piece of information will become a key aspect of competition for final consumers since, at the same time that governments and companies come to consensuses about managing GHG emissions, these discussions are permeating civil society through the media.

Just as the effects of climate change are not the same for everyone, neither are its costs. In this sense, the effects on countries like Mexico that are considered developing nations need to be reviewed.

Although the United States does not have a federal law on climate change, several states do have local legislation. Given the fact that our foreign trade is concentrated there, Mexico cannot be passive, and it has not been. Proof of this are the several measures taken under the administration of Felipe Calderón (2006-2012). However, Mexico has been characterized by being very efficient in legislating on many issues, but very ineffective when enforcing those laws. This will be much clearer once Enrique Peña Nieto announces his administration's environmental priorities.

There are Internet sites that can calculate an individual's carbon footprint: they use data like the number of inhabitants in each household, the efficiency of the transportation they use (whether by land, air, or sea), and their consumption of LP or natural gas and electricity. This is done to create awareness about the individual contribution to climate change, as well as to reflect on our life styles and how to decrease our environmental impact, since climate change is not only a problem of companies and states, but also of individuals.[2]

Undoubtedly, the term has taken on great importance, and in the coming years, it will be a decisive element for decision-making by governments, business, and individual consumers. Internationally, from 2012 to 2015, the terms of a new agreement to succeed the Kyoto Protocol will be negotiated, as determined in December 2012 in Doha, Qatar, where the steps that will be taken to consolidate a new international climate change regime were set out. VM

Notes

[1] L. Wright, S. Kemp, and I. Williams, "'Carbon footprinting': Towards a Universally Accepted Definition," *Carbon Management* vol. 2, no. 1, 2011, pp. 61-72.

[2] A couple of recommended sites for calculating our carbon footprint are www.calculatusemisiones.com/main.html and http://calculator.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx?lang=es.

Climate Change Financing

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Introduction

Today's international climate regime recognizes economic asymmetries among countries. Financing has therefore become a frequent topic of international climate change negotiations, since it could enable countries around the world to mitigate climate change and adapt to its effects and therefore move toward less carbon-dependent economies. In 2008, Mexico proposed creating the Green Climate Fund (GCF) at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) financial mechanism. In the Copenhagen Accords (Conference of the Parties 15, or COP 15), it was decided that this fund would operate with two financing mechanisms: one to take immediate effect, and the other for the longer term.

At the COP 17 (Durban, South Africa), it was agreed that the GCF would enter into force in 2020 under World Bank trusteeship. This decision raises the question: Why should developing countries be forced to take on debt in order to modify their current economies and opt for low-carbon structures, especially since historically they have not been responsible for climate change?

Climate Change Financing: The Legal Basis

The core objective of the international climate regime is to stabilize greenhouse gas emissions at a level that prevents dangerous interference with the climate system, while also allowing societies to adapt to the phenomenon (UNFCCC, Article 2).

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As of the beginning of 2013, the UNFCCC had been signed and ratified by 194 countries, compared to the 192 which signed the Kyoto Protocol. Yet despite the UNFCCC's clearly defined objective of the climate regime, it is implemented through the principle of common but differentiated responsibility. This implies the explicit recognition of asymmetries among signatory countries and means that, in the context of climate change, not every party has the same responsibility, but they undertake different tasks to achieve a common objective.

The Kyoto Protocol defines tasks for countries, whether or not they are Annex I countries, and it mandates —but does not obligate— the more developed countries to support the less developed ones with technology, training, education, communication, adaptation, and financing. Therefore, non-Annex I, the least developed and developing countries, are tasked with formulating domestic or regional programs to help improve the quality of greenhouse gas emission factors, drawing up emission inventories and preparing a domestic communication strategy on the issue (Article 10). However, in recognition of economic asymmetries, Article 11, Part 2, indicates that the least developed or developing countries shall have access to new and additional resources to be able to carry out these tasks, and these must originate, as mentioned above, from the most developed countries or, as indicated in Part 3, they may be obtained through bilateral, regional, or multilateral means.

In other words, this protocol has created a financial structure that is fundamentally sustained and justified on the basis that developed countries can provide resources to developing countries, but that these resources can also come from elsewhere. Given the legal basis for the existence of bilateral, regional, or multilateral financing, this then releases developed countries from their responsibility as providers without this constituting a violation of the international climate regime.

The Green Climate Fund

Although the protocol recognizes the diversity of funding sources, it also lacks its own financial mechanism (Article 11, Part 2). Therefore, to manage the second phase of the protocol, COP 13 formally agreed to create the Bali Action Plan. Two special working groups were formed for this purpose: one to manage the protocol's aforementioned second phase,

The core objective of the international climate regime is to stabilize greenhouse gas emissions at a level that prevents dangerous interference with the climate system, while also allowing societies to adapt to the phenomenon.

and the other was the so-called Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-Term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA).

In accordance with the precept of *mutatis mutandis* (making necessary alterations), at the AWG-LCA sessions held at COP 14 in Poznan, Poland, the Mexican government proposed the creation of the GCF to provide the UNFCCC with the financial mechanism referred to in the protocol. The Mexican government's original idea was that the GCF would be to the UNFCCC what the Montreal Protocol is to the Vienna Convention, which regulates ozone-depleting gases. However, the proposal presented in 2008 by Ambassador Juan Manuel Gómez Robledo did not lay out the plans in detail, but instead sketched a broad outline of what the fund should look like; it did not explain operating instruments or how financial resources would be obtained, or how they would be apportioned. In other words, this proposal did not provide an institutional blueprint for financing. Nevertheless, during the initial stages of the high-level talks at COP 15 (Copenhagen, 2009), the governments of the United Kingdom and Norway supported the Mexican government's original proposal, meaning that it would be presented as a tripartite contribution to the international financing negotiations on climate change.

Toward the end of COP 15, the GCF had turned into one of the key issues in the international negotiations. The fund was promoted in limited negotiations among the leaders of fewer than 30 countries (among them, the United States, China, Brazil, India, South Africa, Mexico, and European Union countries). It was decided that it would be implemented in the two operational phases mentioned above: one to provide rapidly available financing of up to US$30 billion for the 2010-2012 period, and a long-term mechanism that would enter into force in 2020, for funding of up to US$100 billion.

To bring in the first phase of rapidly available financing (2010-2012), developing countries were required to report to the UNFCCC on their work in cutting emissions and/or detailing the objectives that they aimed to achieve in this area

should they receive international financing. This information had to be submitted to the UNFCCC in the first two months of 2010; but despite many countries (over 80) meeting this requirement, COP 15 decided to only take note of the Copenhagen Accords (which mentions this situation). They were not part of the official resolutions of the conference, however, because many countries objected that the negotiations took place among a small group of countries.

A year later, the content of those agreements was included in the Cancún Accords. In fact the COP 16 resolution, adopted in Cancún, was that the information provided by the countries should be taken into account to create an institutional design for the UNFCCC fund and to show its operational scope. The Conference of the Parties decided to extend the AWG-LCA mandate for at least one more year to add details about the advantages of the existence of a UNFCCC fund. The rapid financing phase (the US$30 billion offered for 2010-2012) had caused some confusion around the world up until then because, although the countries had submitted their information by the deadline set by the Copenhagen Accords, it was never very clear how the funds in question would be channeled.

An important result of Cancún was the agreement that the GCF would become the UNFCCC's financial mechanism. Despite criticism from the Bolivian government delegation on the overall outcome, this COP praised the work of Mexico's foreign minister at the time, Patricia Espinosa, as well as the results of the event that took place in the Mexican Caribbean. Another notable effect of COP 16 was that the World Bank was invited to be the initial trustee of the GCF, given its experience in handling international funds.

In 2011, during COP 17, held in Durban, South Africa, it was decided that the GCF would enter into operation in 2020, and the rapid financing instrument was cancelled definitively. Countries were asked to send their nominations for the fund's board, and the AWG-LCA was mandated to start work on the GCF's operational and institutional design. One GCF resolution taken in 2012 was to make South Korea its permanent headquarters. And at COP 18 (Doha, Qatar), it was ratified that the GCF would only enter into force in 2020.

Given the inherent uncertainty of future climate change scenarios, it is easier to bet on the implementation of emissions-reduction strategies than on promoting strategies for adapting societies to unproven adverse impacts.

Conclusion: Financing for What?

A close reading of UNFCCC Article 2 reveals that climate change financing must serve two purposes: to decouple economic growth from greenhouse gas emissions and to allow for societies to adapt to this phenomenon. This expectation goes further than the mandate of Kyoto Protocol Article 10, which centers its hopes on the developing countries that have already submitted their first report to the UNFCCC updating their emissions inventories and preparing their subsequent national communiqués, and on that those that have not yet done so will begin this process. In this sense, financial resources are required to stabilize the climate system at a level so that the change does not become dangerous for current and future societies.

In 2005, for example, between US$60 billion and US$102 billion were invested in adaptation, and it is expected that by 2030 between US$109 billion and US$273 billion may be needed.

Given the inherent uncertainty of future climate change scenarios, it is easier to bet on the implementation of emissions-reduction strategies than on promoting strategies for adapting societies to unproven adverse impacts. Therefore, for some years the World Bank has promoted the low carbon economy; the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) has started to work on green growth; and the United Nations Environment Program has developed the idea of the green economy. In short, the three proposals seek to decouple economic growth from greenhouse gas emissions, leaving to one side societies' adaptation to climate change. However, if we consider that the World Bank has been recommended to coordinate the work of the GCF, we must ask ourselves: Why do developing countries not only have to pay for the loans provided by the GCF, but also the interest rates, to combat a problem which, as the UNFCCC has recognized, has been caused by the same countries that today are the most developed? Therefore, the debate surrounding climate change financing must not focus exclusively on the effectiveness and efficiency of economies' decarbonization; it must open the door to broader discussions on issues such as justice, fairness, ethics, and how this may help bring about less asymmetrical societies in the context of climate change. VM

U.S./Mexican Boundary Waters And Climate Change

Citlalli Aidee Becerril-Tinoco*

Introduction

The United States and Mexico, together with some other Latin American countries, depend on natural resources that are liable to be affected by climate change. Water will be one of the resources hardest hit, and this poses the biggest threat to the population and the environment. Changes in the climate alter temperatures and the amount of rainfall, leading to floods, droughts, and other disasters linked to an excess or lack of water. Human activities —past and present— also influence the situation.

As a result of climate change, the U.S. and Mexican governments are continuously faced with water problems created by changes in rainfall patterns along their shared border, since the phenomenon has had an impact on the amount of water available for the local population and the environment in general.

Natural weather phenomena such as the North American Monsoon,[1] "El Niño," and droughts are affected by these changes, and this has an impact on the amount of water in the area. Social problems arise due to the difficulty in distributing and managing the water that reaches the border area through rivers and aquifers. Of the existing water, 88 percent of the rivers' volume is designated for agriculture and 11 percent for human consumption. However, the population continues to grow, thus increasing demand. This article sets out to understand the effects of climate change on the amount of water along this border, and to examine the challenges facing both governments for managing and distributing water among the local population.

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Water in the U.S.-Mexico Border Area

This area covers part of the states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, and the northern regions of Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas in Mexico. The Tijuana, Colorado, Sonoíta, Concepción, Yaqui Rivers, plus the Río Bravo (or Rio Grande), share the border of both countries (see map).

The border stretches 3 110 kilometers, and rivers account for around 66 percent of its length. The Río Bravo (or Grande) delimits 2 020 km, coursing along part of the states of Texas and of New Mexico in the United States, and Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas in Mexico. The Colorado River separates Arizona and Sonora for 27 kilometers.

The area is supplied by water from rivers as well as aquifers; some of it belongs to Mexico and some to the United States. The difficulty in distributing the water that crosses the border along rivers and through aquifers lies in the fact that water is in constant movement, and so apportioning it creates conflicts due to the complication of defining how much belongs to each country, when it can be used, and the proportion to be distributed and supplied for agricultural, industrial, and domestic use.

Distribution-related conflicts are exacerbated since, apart from the effect of climate change, water is unequally distributed across the Earth's surface, and also because rainfall varies from place to place and from year to year. Both in northern Mexico and the southern United States, especially on the northwestern border of the Mexican side, summer rains have diminished but winter rains have increased by 10 to 20 percent.

Monitoring indicates that daytime temperatures have risen more sharply in the summer on the Sonoran side than in Arizona, due to increased desertification. Studies on how the climate is changing in the southeastern United States

have also predicted that in 15 years or more, temperatures will rise and evaporation will increase, exerting even more pressure on already scarce water supplies, creating distribution conflicts and damaging agriculture.

Climate Change and Boundary Water Management

Managing the water of these rivers and aquifers is a complex issue for the reasons explained above. Furthermore, the periods of drought in the southern United States have meant that most local and regional water suppliers have depended on groundwater to meet the demands of an increasing population, since the little available water is earmarked for agriculture.[2] Teasley calculated that on the Mexican side of the Río Bravo basin there are 4 800 km^2 of irrigated land, and on the U.S. side, around 4 020 km^2.[3] And since these border rivers do not provide enough water to irrigate all this land, aquifers from both sides have been used, especially those near large towns. This approach has aimed to affect the water supply for agriculture and for human consumption as little as possible. Unfortunately, many aquifers in the cities of the southwestern United States (Las Vegas, Phoenix, Tucson, and El Paso) have already been overused.

To find solutions to the problem of water availability, the governments have supported projects to manage this resource in the long term: these refer to the need to gain a thorough knowledge of water bodies and the climate and to recognize them as complex systems with equally complex borders that do not necessarily respect political boundaries. In this scenario, the distribution of shared water becomes an international challenge with global consequences: because water bodies need to be recharged with rainfall for water resources to be available.

Water Distribution and Mitigating The Effects of Climate Change

One of the measures implemented dates back to the signing of international treaties: in 1848 the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo established the border limits and defined the shared water. Other legal agreements would later become necessary to help improve water distribution: the May 21, 1906 agreement and the treaty of 1944. The 1906 agreement was the first to manage and equitably distribute the water of the Río Bravo (Grande), stipulating that water would be shared between the United States and Mexico for irrigating crops. With this treaty, Mexico accepted the construction of a reservoir in New Mexico that would help during periods of drought. With this measure, the United States guaranteed a supply of 74 million cubic meters (74 MCM) to Mexico each year from the Rio Grande, apportioned monthly. The reservoir's construction was completed in 1916 to ensure the existence of the agreed amount of water, with reserves for their irrigation purposes.[4] The treaty also specified that, in the case of drought, the amount of water provided to Mexico and the United States could be reduced in the same proportion.

The 1944 treaty defined more specific rules for distributing international water and reducing potential conflicts.[5] The amount of water to be provided to Mexico would be made conditional on the United States receiving an average of

REUTERS/Vincent West

As a result of climate change, the U.S. and Mexican governments are continuously faced with water problems created by changes in rainfall patterns along their shared border.

BORDER RIVERS BETWEEN MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES

Source: Javier Aparicio and Jorge Hidalgo, "Water Resources Management at the Mexican Borders," *Water International* vol. 29, no. 3, 2004, pp. 362-374.

431 MCM per year in 5-year cycles, from the same rivers that supplied water to Mexico.

Both countries have a vital need for water to irrigate their crops; it is highly important to have reserves to deal with emergencies caused by climate change because the drought periods are now longer and recurring. The 1944 treaty authorized the construction of two international reservoirs, La Amistad and Falcon, to control water flux to increase irrigation capacity in the lower parts of the Bravo Basin. These reservoirs are jointly managed by the U.S. and Mexican sections of the International Boundary and Water Commission (CILA and IBWC), also set up in 1944, to deal with distribution and border limits, which are continuously modified with the changing course of the rivers.

When the agreements were implemented, there was enough water to meet the demand of both countries. Unfortunately, today this area suffers one of the world's highest levels of water stress, and if we also consider the rapid population and economic growth there, an extra strain is being placed on already limited resources.

In 2007 the World Wildlife Federation (WWF) listed the Río Bravo (Grande) as one of the ten rivers endangered due to overuse. Both CILA and the IBWC are fully informed about new scientific and social studies, as well as climate change research, in order to make and implement decisions for the benefit of all parties, the population supplied by the water as well as agriculture and industry. The latest scientific understanding of water along the international border considers the impact that the use of water in one country has on the water of the other. Research also takes into account issues on which both countries agree, as well as the differences in the decisions implemented to prevent and plan future water-reduction scenarios.

The distribution of shared water becomes an international challenge with global consequences: bodies of water need to be recharged with rainfall for water resources to be available.

CONCLUSION

Conflicts also arise in border zones when water is unevenly distributed and when the information, power over, and location of this water is not clearly distributed or if agreements have not been reached satisfying both countries. Scientific research must continue to seek solutions for water distribution issues and the effects caused by climate change, and to improve water management; and the outcome of this research must be applied for the maximum benefit of the population, the environment, and the economy. Therefore, cooperation between both countries to reach agreements can facilitate making and implementing joint decisions that are beneficial to each party. VM

NOTES

[1] An increase in rainfall from a very dry June to a rainy July, also referred to as the Southwest U.S. Monsoon, the Mexican Monsoon, or the Arizona Monsoon.

[2] Zhuping Sheng and Jeff Devere, "Understanding and Managing the Stressed Mexico-USA Transboundary Hueco Bolson Aquifer in the El Paso del Norte Region as a Complex System," *Hydrogeology Journal* 13, 2005, pp. 813-825.

[3] Rebecca Lynn Teasley, "Evaluating Water Resource Management in Transboundary River Basins using Cooperative Game Theory: The Rio Grande/Bravo Basin," doctoral thesis presented at The University of Texas, Austin, 2009.

[4] Lynn Teasley, op. cit.

[5] International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC), "Treaty between the U.S. and Mexico," 1944, http://www.ibwc.state.gov/html/treaties.html.

The Concept of Resilience in Climate Change Policy Design In North America

Rafael Calderón-Contreras*

REUTERS/Jamil Bittar

The growing demand for energy and the high cost of fossil fuels have spiked interest in producing biofuels, at the same time that a debate is on-going about the benefits and possible impacts their production implies.

The discussion about global environmental change and the problems associated with it have been central to political, economic, social, and academic agendas in every country in the world. These problems have been catalogued as the greatest challenges facing humanity. When combined with other socio-political and economic processes, like dependence on hydrocarbons, the economic and energy crises, environmental deterioration, etc., their effects are intensified and they pose new challenges.

In their endeavors to deal with them, political and social agents worldwide have coined and used a series of concepts as the basis for designing public policies and strategies to reduce the associated risks. This means that mitigation, adaptation, and resilience have become important in the discussions about managing risks and vulnerability.

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By "mitigation policies," we understand those that aim to absorb the intensity of the effects of climate change. Efforts to reduce or prevent greenhouse gas emissions have been central in designing these mitigation policies. They also imply, among other things, using new technologies and renewable energy sources; designing and creating equipment that uses energy more efficiently; changing resource management practices; and even modifying consumers' behavior. These mitigation practices have brought forth public policies, like paying for environmental services and introducing low carbon-emission technologies.

Very important, high-impact public policies have also been designed to address adaptation to climate change. While mitigation deals with the causes, adaptation focuses on the consequences or processes derived from that change. Policies aimed at increasing adaptation are linked to a society's capability to respond to risks, thus reducing its vulnerability. Some examples include changing infrastructure and technology to absorb

By "resilience," we understand a system's capacity to absorb the effects of a disturbance and reorganize as the change takes place, maintaining essential characteristics like its structure and identity.

the effects of extreme conditions, like heat, flooding due to rains, or drought. Climate change increases uncertainty about seasons and the intensity of atmospheric events. That is, contrary to the general idea, this change does not exclusively imply increased global temperatures, but the intensification of normal climate processes or changes in their timing and seasonality. This is where resilience plays an important part.

Resilience in Climate Change Public Policies in North America

By "resilience," we understand a system's capacity to absorb the effects of a disturbance and reorganize as the change takes place, maintaining essential characteristics like its structure and identity. This includes the ability to learn, innovate, and change society's responses to the effects of climate change. For this reason, it is a key element for adapting to what a new global climate regime implies. The term is now being adopted in public and private spheres as the central idea behind public policies and adaptation and mitigation strategies.

Generally speaking, in North America, economic policies have ignored environmental issues. Global environmental change and the problems it brings with it have generated the need for the private and political spheres to design or include —as I already mentioned— precepts of mitigation, adaptation, and resilience in their normative frameworks. Nevertheless, despite the growing need for policies that take into account environmental change, their impact continues to be tangential in international treaties like the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) or the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), according to which economic growth and liberalizing trade are somehow beneficial to the environment.

Despite the growing importance of these terms in political discourse, today's public policies tend to leave to one side issues that would make it possible to improve local communities' resilience. For example, the emergence of new forms of cooperation and trade among the United States, Canada, and Mexico revolve mainly around the design of clean, renewable energy technologies that reduce regional dependence on hydrocarbons (adaptation measures), and, to a lesser extent, around the possibilities of increasing regional capacity to absorb the effects of climate change (measures to create resilience). Thus, sectors like fuel producers, transport, and electricity are highly integrated into the North American regional economy, while some local, decentralized efforts involving resource management remain isolated.

Climate change adaptation and risk mitigation policies in North America have used approaches, usually developed by the United Nations, that deal with resilience from a short-term perspective, and sometimes without taking into account local communities' adaptation processes. In addition, some adaptation policies have injured long-term resilience. One example that allows us to illustrate the problem is the production of biofuel using agricultural products.

Biofuel Production and Its Effect on Resilience

The production of biofuels has become of special interest due to the growing need to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. The development of clean, renewable energy sources has become one of the prime objectives of multinational agencies' policy efforts. The growing demand for energy and the high cost of fossil fuels have spiked interest in producing biofuels, at the same time that a debate is on-going about the benefits and possible impacts their production implies for development and environmental conditions.

One of the public policies that most affects long-term resilience in local communities in North America is the production of biofuels. Replacing agricultural species previously used for human consumption with others that can be used for producing biofuels has changed agri-food systems in local communities. Biofuels produced from agricultural production partially solve the problem of local energy demand, and this change in agriculture has profound repercussions on regional food demand.

The idea of partially replacing fossil fuels with biofuels has generated intense debate among academics, activists, politicians, and producers about their potential and risks. It puts on the table three fundamental dilemmas: first, whether biofuel production implies choosing between the demand for food and

the production of fuel; second, whether it really improves environmental conditions, specifically the effects of climate change; and third, whether it will translate into socio-economic development or the creation and distribution of wealth.

A vast body of literature focuses on these dilemmas and some countries' potential for producing biofuels. North America has become the object of innumerable research projects that indicate that, due to its agricultural capacity, it has enormous potential for generating biofuels. Favorable climatic conditions, the availability of good cultivable land, and the low labor costs have increased interest in developing biofuel production projects in some Latin American countries.

Biofuel production markets have been established today in Brazil, Colombia, and Argentina, while in other countries this is still very limited. In the case of Mexico, debate on the issue has intensified, mainly due to pressure from the world's two main bio-ethanol producers: the United States and Brazil, who represent 52 and 37 percent of production, respectively. However, these countries have become the main example of intensified competition between agriculture for human consumption and agriculture for producing biofuels, or agri-energy.

The demand for biofuels and their production illustrates the clash between the need to adapt to climate change (producing alternative forms of energy like biofuel) and increasing local communities' resilience in the face of the effects of climate change (by protecting local agri-food systems). We can see in this discussion that North American public policies waver between these two positions that at times become polarized.

On the one hand, the international trend of producing biofuels is based on crops with the potential to solve food problems in the countries producing them (particularly maize and sugar cane); and on the other hand, we know that public policies and the strategies for protecting the local agri-food system require including climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.

In the case of biofuel production, given the enormous social and territorial diversity in North America, where the spatial structure of natural resources is complex and population distribution is highly polarized, it is necessary to take into account local conditions for designing appropriate research strategies and technologies.

A successful adaptation to the effects of climate change must include a willingness to learn how to develop coherent principles that can provide new focuses for public policy for handling its effects. Generally speaking, climate change policy and economic policy are closely linked, but if public policy only focuses on the parameters for adaptation and mitigation, leaving to one side the notion of resilience, climate change policy will be skewed. A position that takes into account the three aspects will result in more effective action. VM

Territorial Risks and Climate Change

Daniel Rodríguez Velázquez*

Introduction

Territorial risks can be defined as processes that pose foreseeable threats to society and the environment due to a combination of political decisions, unregulated economic processes, and an absence of strategies to strengthen the resilience of local communities to cope with structural vulnerability. Thus the occurrence and persistence of climate-change-related disasters cannot be explained through a technocratic ideology that assigns an active role to climate processes and hydro-meteorological events.

This article sets out to reflect on the social and human implications of climate change. Such a complex subject cannot be understood solely through the prism of technology and science; analyzing it is difficult when using the time-based,

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measurable reference points that conform to short-term-oriented business and government interests, given their overriding concern with investment performance and immediate electoral results.

The convergence of environmental, territorial, and social factors establishes the need to identify the interrelationships between territory and climate, mediated by dominant political systems and economic processes, because the current stage of dangerous anthropogenic climate change derives from the repercussions of various territorial activities. For example, the massive deforestation of tropical jungles went from being a problem of conserving natural resources to one of carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions; environmental pollution from industrial processes also produces greenhouse gases (GHG) as well as damaging public health; transport is no longer just a matter of mobility and traffic, but one of the most climate-damaging activities due to the massive amounts of CO_2 released into the atmosphere as a result; in particular, private cars are the main cause of the use of fossil fuels, without forgetting other sources of emission as mentioned above. This gas accounts for almost 60 percent of gases emitted globally.[1] We should remember that risk levels are not explained by GHG emissions and concentrations, but by regional and social inequalities and the location of human settlements, and this requires the state and society to develop new development options.[2]

The convergence of environmental, territorial, and social factors establishes the need to identify the interrelationships between territory and climate, mediated by dominant political systems and economic processes.

REUTERS/David Gray

Environmental pollution from industrial processes also produces greenhouse gases (GHG) as well as damaging public health.

Focusing on Disasters

Disasters associated with climate change have been conceptualized from different epistemological angles. One is the technological-natural approach. This offers explanations based on the monitoring of geophysical, particularly hydro-meteorological processes, disaggregated from social considerations. It does not recognize the impact of economic processes, except in relation to GHG emissions, which can be regulated by the market itself. Socio-environmentalists approach argue for examining both social and environmental factors, not solely the ecological aspect. This theoretical approach suggests linking diagnostics and solutions with sustainable development and the democratic management of the territory, questioning the viability of solving anthropogenic climate change through financial and free-trade mechanisms.

The technological-natural approach reconsiders the conclusions drawn by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), whose fourth report in 2007 claimed that evidence exists that humans have influenced the current global warming process, based on the study of GHG emissions and various effects, including those related to increases in temperature, rising sea levels, and the melting of the ice caps and snow in the Northern Hemisphere.[3]

From an ideological standpoint, this approach ascribes climate change to external factors, understood as unconnected to society's activities. This is the prevailing argument in discussions and programs of some international organizations, as well as among most national governments. In the past few years, the importance of understanding "extreme" climate processes and hydro-meteorological events has been stressed, rather than fundamentally questioning contemporary social reality.[4]

The socio-environmental approach recognizes territorial vulnerability as a multidimensional process comprised of various

aspects such as environmental degradation, the fragility of the technological-manufacturing structure, the inappropriate model for territorial distribution, the inability to respond given the population's progressive impoverishment, the poor quality of regional infrastructure and housing, and a lack of foresight.[5]

The socio-environmental approach is therefore both aspirational and practical: it challenges emergency response policies that do not address the causes of climate-related disasters. Therefore, it also questions physical-spatial diagnostics, since it takes a holistic approach to various aspects of socio-natural reality, recognizing the differences between climate processes and hydro-meteorological events.[6] The former are slow evolving, cumulative cycles that generally have devastating effects, especially on underdeveloped countries, due to situations linked to rising sea levels, the salinization of agricultural land, desertification, water shortages, and food insecurity.

Hydro-meteorological events, on the other hand, are sudden disasters such as during hurricane seasons. For example, Mexico is suffering from the devastating consequences of rising river levels, storms, tropical cyclones, and flooding. These require damage-reduction measures for post-disaster recovery in the medium term.

The Question of Adaptation

Adaptation was not considered a strategic issue by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) from 1992 until 2007, when it was incorporated into the Bali Action Plan at the Conference of the Parties 13 (COP 13) in Indonesia. No significant progress has been made in its implementation, although its importance was restated at COP 16 (Cancún), where there were arguments in favor of assigning greater importance to adaptation as a required strategy for least-developed countries to reduce foreseeable disasters, through international cooperation and financing, specifically the Green Climate Fund (GCF). However, mitigation, in terms of reducing GHG emissions, remains the prime concern.

Socio-environmentalists approach argue for examining both social and environmental factors, not solely the ecological aspect, linking diagnostics and solutions with sustainable development and the democratic management of the territory.

Adaptation has not been given the same priority in the international debate. This can be explained by the technocratic approach to the problem that focuses on piecemeal, superficial solutions based on supposedly dispassionate science in order to avoid examining the root causes of the problem —an examination that would inevitably lead to a discussion of capitalism as the predatory mode of production, recycled with ecologist discourses but lacking alternative proposals that would impact the current logic of profit and speculation.

Adaptation presupposes reducing the risks of disaster through a preventive approach, over and above the idea of adapting self-sufficient ecosystems. In the case of human societies, explicit intervention is required by the state and by society; policies, projects, and specific measures are needed to reduce the inequality that creates different levels of vulnerability and situations of permanent risk facing most of humankind. Mexico, in particular, has seen an increase in disasters related to extreme hydro-meteorological dangers in recent years.[7]

Public Policies

When defining public policy options, it is relevant to move beyond the mechanistic methodology based on climate scenarios, including GHG emissions and estimations of concentrations of these gases in the Earth's atmosphere. These are designed in an isolated way, as a variable disaggregated from society in order to then define dangers or threats as the equivalent of disasters, and on that basis propose a vulnerability diagnostic. If we do not modify this analytical model, we will see a failure of adaptation strategies and policies since vulnerability is a core factor that helps explain climate change and climate variability as the result of society's own dynamic and not vice-versa. Countries, regions, and communities are highly vulnerable to dangers such as coastal and river flooding, prolonged droughts, intense rainfall and the resulting losses of biodiversity, farm land, and food sovereignty, and greater risks to health, deterioration of quality of life, and even the increase of migration from rural areas to cities and from poor countries to rich ones.

It is important to note that climate scenarios, modeled with analytical rigor from a nature-based approach, do not always consider root causes. This has made it possible to view climate change and the resulting climate instability as something unrelated to socioeconomic and territorial processes, to the point that when climate change is mentioned in poli-

Vulnerability is a core factor that helps explain climate change and climate variability as the result of society's own dynamic and not vice-versa.

tical discourses, it is argued that possible damage needs to be reduced given the inevitability of the disasters.

This argument enables a rhetoric that gives climate change the role of the active agent affecting a "passive" society, reminiscent of the discourse on inevitability, a term coined by institutions to describe disasters related to geological or hydrometeorological events as a synonym of "nature's fury," thus shifting the ultimate responsibility for disasters created by society onto nature itself by referring to "natural disasters." Evidence of this can be found in various government programs and funds, particularly the National Disaster Fund (Fonden), a financial instrument mainly used to repair or reconstruct damaged public infrastructure.

Therefore, developing capacities to combat climate change must not restrict the resilience to strengthening exclusively institutional capacities as happens with civil protection.[8]

Any exclusion of social resilience runs counter to the international agreements adopted by the Mexican government, such as the Hyogo Framework for Action, the axis of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. This capacity to recover and reduce harmful impacts must be a component of national and local development; therefore, civil society must take a more active role in prevention and adaptation strategies, instead of being dependent on bureaucratic decisions.[9]

Conclusions

Not magnifying climate change when designing public policies and in how the media handle the problem becomes important, since people are prone to be influenced by the sensationalism often found in news reports and by political manipulation of disasters. It is important to know the conditions prior to climate change and about socio-territorial vulnerability. These conditions, in addition to global warming and other problems like environmental devastation and the privatization of public goods, which reduce nation states' ability to offer comprehensive responses for preventing, adapting, and reducing GHGs, have led to the implementation of partial responses that lack a long-term vision. These responses are based on political uncertainty that seeks to maintain the status quo in terms of governance and social control mechanisms, in order to avoid taking responsibility, both domestically and internationally, where the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities is only partly applied.

We must go back to the socio-environmental approach. This will help reduce the risk of disasters that are expected to impact cities and rural communities in various regions across the country —either through lack of water or due to flooding— with effects that could worsen the difficult living conditions facing the majority of the population. Taking this approach would involve democratizing the management of public policies, considering development and fairness as the programmatic principles that affect daily life, that have the territory as the basis for social action to build up resilience and quality of life. VM

Notes

[1] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), *Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report. Summary for Policymakers*, 2007, http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/syr/ar4_syr_spm.pdf, accessed January 23, 2013.

[2] Gian Carlo Delgado, "Introducción," Gian Carlo Delgado Ramos, comp., *Transporte, ciudad y cambio climático* (Mexico City: CEIICH/PINCC, UNAM, 2011), pp. 9-15.

[3] IPCC, op. cit.

[4] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), *Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation. Summary for Policymakers* (Cambridge, UK, and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

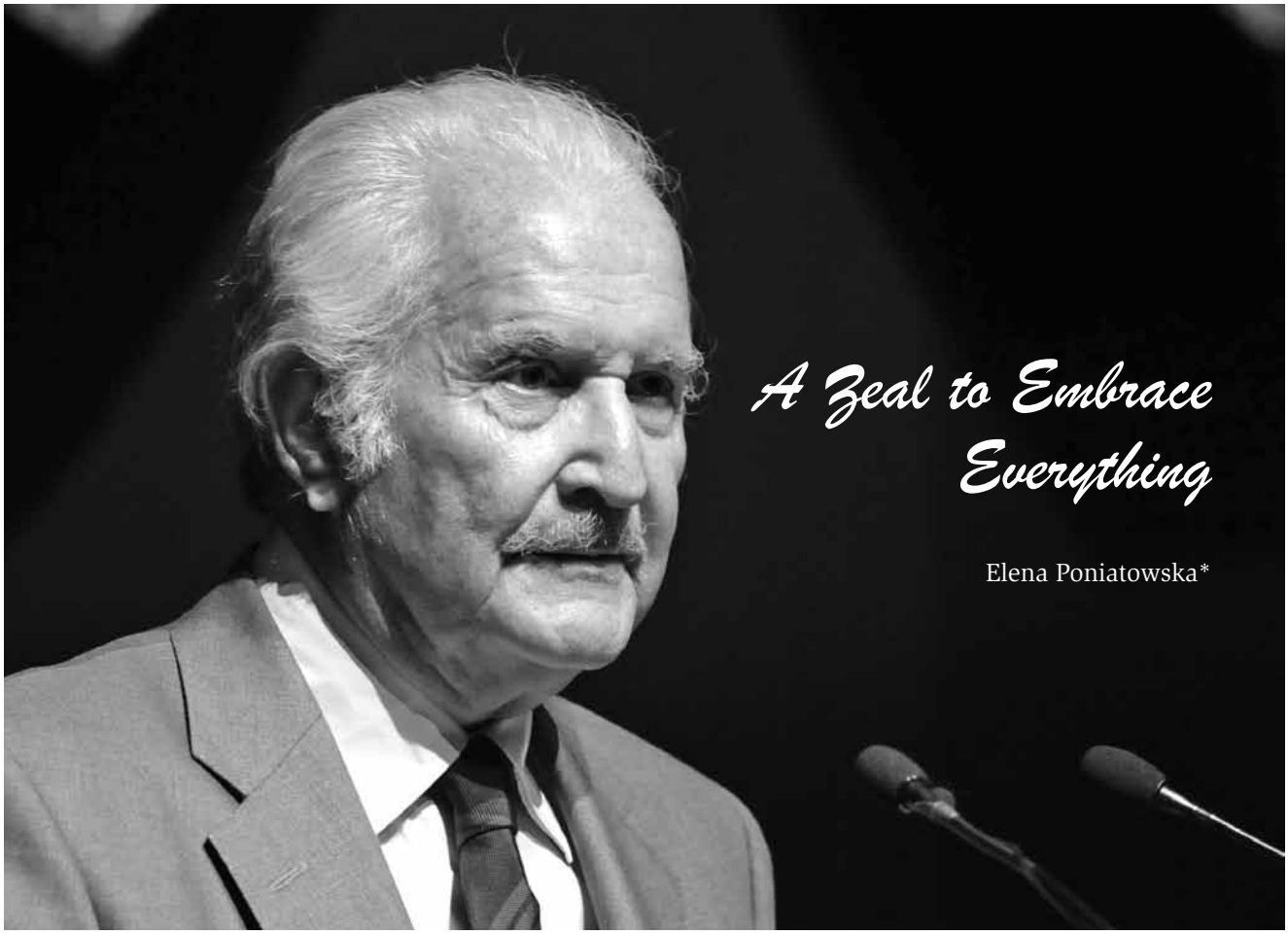
[5] Héctor Escobar Rosas, "La construcción social del riesgo en Chiapas," *Ciudades* no. 52, October-December 2001, Red Nacional de Investigación Urbana, Mexico City, pp. 38-39.

[6] Oli Brown, *Migration and Climate Change* no. 31, International Organization for Migration (Geneva), 2008, pp. 17-18.

[7] Inter-ministerial Comission on Climate Change (CICC), *Mexico. Fifth National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Executive Summary*, Mexico City, 2012, p. 14.

[8] Daniel Rodríguez Velázquez, "Adaptación y prevención de desastres en el contexto nacional de inseguridad," Simone Lucatello and Daniel Rodríguez Velázquez, comps., *Las dimensiones sociales del cambio climático: un panorama desde México. ¿Cambio social o crisis ambiental?* (Mexico City: Instituto Mora/Escuela Nacional de Trabajo Social, UNAM, 2011), pp. 143-144.

[9] Daniel Rodríguez Velázquez, "Social Resilience, Disaster Prevention, and Climate Change: Challenges from Mexico," *Journal of Disasters Research* vol. 5, no. 2, April 2010 (Tokyo), pp. 160-161.



DGCS, UNAM

A Zeal to Embrace Everything

Elena Poniatowska*

"What are you going to be when you're grown up?"

"Everything."

"What are you going do with your life?"

"Everything. I'll be absolutely everything."

"What do you mean?"

"I'll start a new era, shake up good consciences, change the status quo, take chances, be a writer, go into every house, slip into virginal and Victorian beds, shoulder everyone's guilt. I'll show all my contemporaries and their children and the children of their children all the corruption and hypocrisy of society passed down from the Mexican Revolution, let out all the sails, walk every parallel and every meridian, I'll dare to do everything, circle everyone's brains, every woman's waist."

"But you can't do everything."

"I can, because I'm the *icuiricui,* the *macalacachimba*."

Mexicans are hard nuts to crack. They either don't understand or they are wildly indifferent and cruel, and they refine their envy and rejection over time. They are also courtly and obsequious because in politics fine words bring you promotions. In his *Labyrinth of Solitude*, Octavio Paz analyzes our character traits, and Carlos Fuentes sets off in the right direction on a lifelong journey of discovery and encounters the ambitious banker who once spurred on his horse for the revolutionary cause, the genteel yet impoverished little rich girl, divested of her haciendas and fearful of being declassed if she marries the one who "the three hundred and a few more" consider their footman, the ambitious typist who shows off her legs, the middle-class teen whose only aspiration is to appear in the *Society* supplement of the national newspaper.

* Mexican writer. This article was previously published in Spanish ("El afán totalizador") in *Revista de la Universidad de México* no. 100, new era (Mexico City), June 2012, pp. 9-13.

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Photos in this section, courtesy of DGCS, UNAM.

"I'll start a new era, shake up good consciences,
change the status quo, take chances,
be a writer, go into every house, slip into virginal
and Victorian beds, shoulder everyone's guilt."

CARLOS FUENTES

Swiping as he goes, Carlos Fuentes collects his characters all the way from upscale Las Lomas and El Pedregal de San Ángel down to Bondojito and Candelaria de los Patos; he mixes them in the huge transparent blender of his writing and seats the prostitute and the prim girl at the same table to confront each other and to confront us with a Mexico that is making a painful transition toward what is today called modernity.

The 1950s, 1960s, 1980s, 2000s are Carlos Fuentes's years just as the 1930s belonged to José Clemente Orozco, Diego Rivera and David Alfaro Siqueiros, Alfonso Reyes, Martín Luis Guzmán, José Vasconcelos, Mariano Azuela, and the rest. If the Big Three paint, Fuentes writes about and derobes the city cursed by the name Federal District, while he invents a new narrative form. A dual revolution: revealing and naming, exploring and domesticating. The Carlos Fuentes phenomenon begins in 1958 with *La región más transparente* (Where the Air Is Clear), although, in 1954, before the main banquet, an aperitif —*Los días enmascarados* (The Masked Days)— has already been served. *Where the Air Is Clear* excites or enrages. Fernando Benítez's defense of it proves to be prophetic: "Whatever lies in store for Mexican literature, it has been saved from a future of miserable and stale critical snubbing."

The sophisticated, cosmopolitan young man then used his talent and iron discipline to prove that he was in control of himself and his work and that his work made him happy. Happiness is very important, and Carlos Fuentes's love of life shows through. Just as Pita Amor would arrive at Sans Souci or the Leda naked under her mink overcoat, which she would then open and shout, "I am queen of the night!", Fuentes says, "There are types of prestige that encompass everything." He sets off in the early morning to see what he can find; the days pass too quickly, as do the nights; he buzzes with energy; his eyes cannot take in everything he wants to see, but inside he has another pair of eyes. A key to success is having two sets of everything. Behind him there is a spare Fuentes. And another, better Mexico, another book in the making and an utterly different destiny than that awaiting the "fine and subtle" writers that Antonio Castro Leal listed in an anthology that got bored in the afternoon light like Agustín Lara's peacock. In Mexican literature, straying from the canon is as criminal as César Garrizurieta, who used to say that being outside the [public] budget is to be in error and a poor politician, a politician in poverty —he would later commit suicide. In this way, Fuentes writes off those *arrivistes* who abuse their power and rejoice in their cynicism and wealth.

I had the fortune to know Fuentes before he became a writer because we went to the same parties at the embassies and residences in Las Lomas, where I would watch him sitting beside the mothers and chaperones of the daughters, whom he would ask to dance and enquire without hesitation whether their handbag was Hermès or Cartier and their perfume Chanel No. 5, the same one that Marilyn Monroe used as a nightdress. "Oh what a charming and intelligent boy this Carlitos is!" In houses built in the Californian mission revival style with Hollywood-esque staircases, Fuentes pointed out to me, "Look closely, the walls are blotchy." "What do you mean, blotchy?" "That's right, blotchy, their skin is crawling. Look Poni, over there in each corner there are golden spittoons —Moctezuma's treasure, *my dear*— and see that distinguished father of the girl whose party it is? He spits into them." In the Barbachano home, Fuentes drinks one glass of *horchata* after another: "This soothes the soul," he'd say, lifting up his glass. "It washes away all your envies." After the party, at five in the morning, he would rush over to the rough Indianilla neighborhood for a soup and to speak with the sandwich-maker, the taxi driver, and the Christ of Alcalá, who spread his doctrine along the Canal del Norte and the Ferrocarril de Cintura and made the rats float in the waters of the drainage canal, La Bandida who wrote tunes so that politicians would not shut down his club, Gladys García, the prostitute on San Juan de Letrán, stationed on the corner of Madero street —"Hey, *güerito*, want me to sharpen your pencil?"—, the one who ended up as a turtle woman because she disobeyed her mother, the shoe-shine-boy, and the untouchable *noviecita santa* virginal girlfriend. Carlos gulped it all down, adjusting his pace to walk alongside the delivery man and the office worker out on the town, and back home he would write that Gladys García, with eyes like black cherries and a little body like a tamale, longed for a home where she could take refuge. Fuentes, sensitized to the point of exacerbation, was neither polished nor discrete, neither elegant nor subtle (essential characteristics for a writer in the 1940s); Fuentes, typing out with one finger a torrent of his spectacular obsessions: sexuality and excrement, nationalism and archae-

ology, verbal terrorism and political maneuvers, the child inside him, the same one who made him spoil himself and who discovered illnesses. (Fuentes, for example, chewed his food a lot; any gristle found would be made into a little ball and deposited carefully on his plate; once I counted ten little balls —the *steak au poivre* cannot have been up to scratch.) Fuentes wanted to take possession of everything (but without it hurting him).

At a fancy-dress party when we were both very young he once told me,

"I'm going to discover language."

"Language?"

"Yes, I'm going to lose my innocence; language will make me its own; words will make me live, and I'll live only for words, I'll become their master."

I didn't really understand, and only managed to ask, "And what about me?"

"I'm afraid you're never going to lose your innocence; you're naïve; you're like a little nun."

(And in fact I *had* just spent three years at the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Torresdale, Philadelphia.)

This exchange has stayed with me ever since I was 18.

As he did me, Carlos defined everything and read the future, and in deciphering the city, nothing stimulated him more than how people spoke on the streets. During his childhood and adolescence, he spoke the formal Spanish of diplomatic circles. Then he discovered another kind of language that was suggestive and magical, and he was excited by the possibility of recording it. You have to visit El Overol, El Burro, Las Catacumbas, El Golpe with its boxing ring where the Gladys Garcías were sashaying around. The large mirrors reflect a swinging crowd, illusions, and the "how gorgeous the sea must be." It might seem contradictory that this well-heeled boy, with a broken face and a broken-down suit, should go for the coarse "bronze race," but nevertheless the well-heeled girls find his enthusiasm contagious and share his nighttime adventures together with Enrique Creel, his close friend with whom he co-wrote his incomplete first novel, *Holofernes*. Carlos invites the beautiful people —always hungry for big new experiences— to the California Dancing Club. And when anyone approaches the porcelain dolls dancing mambo in a line (and who are also more than willing to get down with democracy), Carlos forestalls the fight in a state of agitation. His quips attract and repel in equal measure, his verve makes him adorable; Saturdays and Sundays are inconceivable without Fuentes, who introduces Amecameca, *because of Sor Juana of course*, days out in Teotihuacán, winding up the party in the market under cloth awnings where Fuentes tastes *garnachas* and *chalupas* in a joyful atmosphere and an exaltation that soothes his soul with a *horchata* drink or with one of those stridently sweet fruit drinks arranged on a bed of alfalfa.

All these experiences are part of his zeal for it all, of that vast enterprise: to change Mexico's destiny by reflecting its sorcery and putrefaction and not only that; to look for other authors who would like to inscribe the life and history of a continent into books and give them universal resonance. *Boom*!

Mexico, through Carlos Fuentes, is a conjuring trick, the meeting of civilizations, the confrontation between the down-and-out aristocrat from the Roma neighborhood —who could be Archie Burns, a Mexican writer critical of Fuentes— and the local gang leader or a gonzo from the Bondojito neighborhood. Fuentes is in a hurry. Images rush by and you have to snatch the conversations while you can, before they move on. Carlos keeps Enrique Creel on the move: "Hey, let's go whoring because I still have to do Chapter 13." The country is Mexico, and Carlos is going to show the nation's history like the muralists before him, the surface of corn, and the burnt water —pre-Hispanic symbol of sacrifice— all together but not mixed up because everything fits into a small jug if you know how to put things in.

Fuentes was the doyen of national literature at its "lift-off" during the presidencies of Miguel Alemán and Ruiz Cortines, in the period known as the Mexican Miracle. The country became industrialized, credit-worthy, and Las Lomas de Chapultepec —formerly Chapultepec Heights— became the emblem of the Mexican Revolution. The slogan for the last year in government is: "*Éste es el año de Hidalgo, pendejo el que deje algo*" (It's the year of Hidalgo, only a moron wouldn't take it all"), and everyone in government, ably assisted by their buddies and former schoolmates, sets about emptying the coffers. Since politicians see theft as something normal, everyone gets in on the act —from the president to the porter— each at his own level. Guillermo Haro used to say that this kind of politics would destroy us; Fernando Benítez argued that if politicians at least do something, then it does not

Fuentes writes about and derobes
the city cursed by the name Federal District,
while he invents a new narrative form.
A dual revolution: revealing and naming,
exploring and domesticating.

Avid, determined, nowhere is off-limits for Fuentes. If everything can be used in his work, Fuentes democratizes literature, gets it moving, turns it into an object of change.

matter so much if they steal. Guillermo Haro was proved right. We are the country of the bribe, and we were living in the times of winner-takes-all, and winning is screwing over others before they screw you.

Fuentes also inaugurated a surprising new phenomenon, something never before seen in Mexico: literature as a profession. Before Fuentes, writers were public officials who wrote on Sundays. Their writing was tinged with a gentle melancholy of sacrifice and service to the nation. Writers had a certain honor, yet that honor was not about the writing but the sacrifice in honor of the national flag. Under the fine cashmere, slowly but surely, the bellies of the new revolutionaries —the Federico Robles, the Artemio Cruzes— were growing. In the meantime, nothing was happening on Plateros Street, now called Madero Avenue, except for poor people being prohibited from stepping out of line and up onto the sidewalk. "You, Indian, walk in the middle of the street!" An acute observer, Fuentes squeezes us into Mexico wherever he can fit us in. He crams us with images, and gives us plenty to choose from. Avid, determined, nowhere is off-limits for Fuentes. If everything can be used in his work, if you know how to fit it in, Fuentes democratizes literature, gets it moving, turns it into an object of change. Readers return to Fuentes the author not just to be informed but to see their portraits and, in their reflection, find themselves. Literature is about real life and life is in books.

Fuentes's second achievement has been to give prestige to the writing profession, to make it glamorous, fun, and respected. Carlos leans toward Neruda, Arthur Miller, Moravia, Styron, Pasolini; he courts Shirley McLaine, Jean Seberg, Candice Bergen, Debra Paget, Susan Sontag, Geraldine Chaplin, María Casares; and in that boy who shouts, "Look at me, I'm here, look at me, pay attention to me," there is a lot of the adolescent who obliged Siqueiros to read his first novel on a beach at Mar del Plata. Buñuel loves Fuentes and he encourages him, shouting into his ear things that make him laugh. Mexicans used to stay on the sidelines, brooding over their resentments, thinking that if each successive distinguished visitor did not need them, they had no reason to turn up at the banquet. Fuentes saw the famous and Wham!, before you knew it he was already Fuenticizing them. A tongue-twister that I associate with Fuentes comes to mind: "*Perejil comí y me emperejilé ¿cómo me desemperejilaré*?" (I pigged out on parsley and parsleyed out, how will I ever even partly unparslify myself?) After reading *Where the Air Is Clear*, you think you might never get Fuentes out of your system, because nothing is quite as captivating and insatiable as seeing him move inside the skin of his characters.

By becoming a writer, Fuentes opened the door for those who would follow. Neither Agustín nor Sáinz were scared of their vocation: they had the example of Fuentes who at the same time as building a monumental work was conscientiously building his own monument.

Between 1958 and 1980, Fuentes wrote up to two books a year. In 1962, for example, two seminal works in Fuentes's career as a writer were published: *Aura* and *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* (The Death of Artemio Cruz). In pre-Fuentes Mexico, people were not professional writers. Alfonso Reyes himself advised him to continue studying law to be able to earn a decent living and especially to avoid being looked down upon. In those days, literature was a hobby that did not bother people, not even the author. But Fuentes launched himself pen first at the risk of cracking his head open, tackling everything from explanations of the national consciousness to recipes for *huitlacoche* crepes. Until the end of the 1950s, no writer possessed such a formidable work ethic. Carlos's life consists of writing, reading, feeding his brain, traveling his country, talking, and making love. His conversation is just like his prose: overpowering. Silence worries him. For Fuentes, Latin America's history has been silenced ever since Sor Juana was forbidden to write. Given this state of affairs, Fuentes feels obliged to introduce the history and life of a continent; his zeal for everything explains his fecundity. Just as the muralists accumulated kilometers of painting without leaving any gaps, without forgetting a single character, Fuentes fills his pages with signs. No writing is as bright or uneasy as his. Unlike Julio Torri, Fuentes acts out his emotions well; he is an extraordinary communicator of his own work. By 1972 the list is overwhelming: Arthur Miller, Alberto Moravia, Joseph Losey, John Kenneth Galbraith, Arthur Schlessinger, Kurt Vonnegut, Milan Kundera, Hermann Broch, Norman Mailer, William Styron, Gregory Peck, Susan Sontag, Shirley McLaine, Geraldine Chaplin, Jane Fonda, Debra Paget, Jean Seberg, Candice Bergen and her husband Louis Malle, and María Casares to whom he dedicated his play *El tuerto es rey* (The One-Eyed Man Is King). Carlos surely does not want to lose

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In his national homage, when he turned 80.

them as he lost his childhood friends, his classmates, when his father, Mexico's ambassador in Chile, Rio de Janeiro, Washington, took him by the hand to his new school to be taught in different languages. How many periods of exile did Fuentes live through? For each new country a new skin, a salamander boy, a boy who always sought to feel comfortable in his own skin or, as the French say, *bien dans sa peau*.

The Fuentes phenomenon devours the universe in which he no longer fits. For the moment, he lives away from Mexico; he chooses Paris, London, Berlin, or he is a visiting professor at Princeton after a time at the Smithsonian Institute. His books are required reading for getting a master's in Spanish in France and at universities in the United States. From reviews in "México en la Cultura" he graduated to the *New York Review of Books*, *Sunday Times*, the *Times*, "The Times Literary Supplement," *Nouvel Observateur, Le Monde, L'Express, Les Lettres Françaises*. His books are printed in paperback editions all around the world and, in 1974, when he was not yet 46, his complete works were published by Aguilar. Fuentes could sing at the top of his lungs the song "Antes de que tus labios me confirmaran que me querías, ya lo sabía, ya lo sabía" (Before your lips told me you loved me, I already knew, I already knew.)

Perhaps one aspiration of Latin American literature is to take control of man and his condition, just as Ortega y Gasset requested. But no one embodies this desire as strongly as Fuentes. Unlike European writers who seem to have run out of things to say, and North Americans who struggle to prevent the TV, movies, radio, social anthropology, the Internet, and the iPod from stealing their material, in Latin America everything is yet to be said, and Fuentes gives "a complete voice to a present that would not exist without his literature" and to a past "that lies there, inert, stiff, waiting to be recognized. This history of Spanish America is the history of a vast silence. . . . We have to rescue the past, use literature to break the silence and confront the lies of history."

In the prologue to *Fervor de Buenos Aires* (Passion for Buenos Aires, 1923) Borges writes, "If any of the following pages contain an accomplished line of verse, I beg the reader to forgive my impudence for writing it first. We are all one, our trifles are essentially the same, and our souls so influenced by circumstance that it is almost random that you are the reader and I the writer."

No such modesty for Fuentes; he is an unaccidental writer; he has worked hard at it. Readers remain in their place, and while Borges may want to include them, Fuentes does not open himself up to being belittled. Since his youth he was the city's shepherd —when Mexico City still had something to be shepherded. His incredible stories bear witness to this: in the seedy dive called El Golpe, the table suddenly begins to move and a lady dwarf pops up, complete with make-up and curly blond locks, rosy cheeks, and chubby arms. "Carlos, this isn't possible; you saw this in a Buñuel film." "No, believe me, she even took me out onto the dance floor. First this lovely lady was cross because she had been sleeping under the table, but once she had sobered up a little she was perfectly happy to sit on my lap. She brought her face close to mine, and I saw that she was old, old, old, like a 150 000 years old, her face a parchment, and her massively strident voice drowned out even the shrieks of Pérez Prado's mambo." Carlos depicts one adventure after another, and it is easy to sense that the dwarf is the dress rehearsal for a good chapter of *Where the Air Is Clear*.

Carlos Fuentes knew how to go it alone, to get at the past, to lose himself in order to rediscover himself, to write "your personal misery will be the fate of your possible greatness; you and I will fight against ourselves." His life has been heads *and* tails. Since *Where the Air Is Clear* he has inserted us into his novels and showed us alternatives to failure. He managed to expand us. At Berkeley I heard the writer J. J. Armas Marcelo say that no version of Spain is as important for writers between the ages of 30 and 40 as that written by Fuentes in *Terra nostra* from his Mexican perspective: "Fuentes achieved what we attempted." VM

Fuentes at a Distance

Hernán Lara Zavala*

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As early as when I read *Cantar de ciegos* (Song of the Blind), a book of short stories by Carlos Fuentes, I immediately perceived the attractive influence that, in addition to delighting us with his stories, transmitted something that a newcomer seldom does: the yearning to write. My favorite story in that collection, "Un alma pura" (A Pure Soul), moved me and made me identify with the characters, constructed very consciously on the basis of the device of the word and the intimate, melancholy tone sometimes produced by a story narrated in the second person. Starting then, I became a frequent visitor to Fuentes's work. I read *La región más transparente* (Where the Air Is Clear), which fascinated, disconcerted, and dazzled me by its experimental —though slightly chaotic— nature, its audacious treatment, and its dizzying rhythm. *Aura* followed, with its halo of magic and mystery about the theme of the double, and the play of mirrors inside the gothic, funereal room on downtown Mexico City's Donceles Street. And then *Los días enmascarados* (Masked Days), his first book, including what is now a legendary, emblematic story: "Chac Mool." In college, one class gave me the opportunity to read and carefully study *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* (The Death of Artemio Cruz) and admire the structure of that novel that shows the past, present, and future of the Mexican Revolution through the development of the character, who starts off as a well-intentioned hero and ends up corrupt and annihilated with the corresponding disillusionment of the revolutionary project itself. I read *Cambio de piel* (A Change of Skin), a car-

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Fuentes had proposed reading the work of younger Mexican writers without regard to what group, genre, or trend they might belong to. He read and supported an infinite number of writers, displaying enormous intellectual generosity and a diligent viewpoint, although always maintaining his critical distance: he was tolerant, but never indulgent.

nivalesque, pyrotechnical novel dedicated to Julio Cortázar, and *Agua quemada* (Burnt Water), a book of short stories via novel, and then the dense *Terra nostra*, his magnum opus, and so on, over the years. I did not always manage to keep up with his fast, broad, prolific, varied, ambitious body of work in its attempt to unravel the complexities of the Mexican being and its conflictive past.

The first time in my life that I saw Fuentes in person was one morning when I was browsing through the La Paz Avenue British Bookstore sometime in the 1960s. He was just a little over 40, but he was already "Carlos Fuentes." He began to look through the shelves, and as soon as he found what he was looking for —*The Dubliners* by James Joyce, if I remember correctly—, he went right to the cash register where he paid Gaby, the woman then in charge of the bookstore, and left as breezily as he had come in.

Fuentes as a public figure was always in the spotlight of the world of national culture. His first intellectual friends in Mexico may have been his fellow students at the School of Law, some of whom he had also studied with at the CUM (Centro Universitario México), like Mario Moya Palencia, Porfirio Muñoz Ledo, and Víctor Flores Olea. A few others like Enrique González Pedrero, Bernardo Sepúlveda Amor, and Javier Wimer joined the group that came to be known as the "Medio Siglo" (Mid-Century) generation. He also had a few older friends like Martín Luis Guzmán, Manolo Barbachano Ponce, Luis Buñuel, Fernando Benítez, Juan José Arreola (his teacher and the editor of his first book at the Los Presentes publishing house), Juan Rulfo, and, of course, Octavio Paz, who in the early stages of his career acted as a tutor, encouraging him to find his destiny and vocation. They remained very close until they made a break, foreseeable because teacher and student had entered into frank competition with each other. It had been Paz who suggested that Fuentes be the first editor of *Revista Mexicana de Literatura* (Mexican Literature Review) jointly with Emmanuel Carballo. The writer and critic would build a healthy collaboration to lead culture in Mexico. But in contrast with Alfonso Reyes, Paz, and Monsiváis, Fuentes was not interested in becoming a cultural strongman, or *cacique*, and he resigned as soon as he could from the editorship at *Revista Mexicana de Literatura* to pursue his work freely as a writer. Among his contemporaries in Mexico, Fuentes frequented José Luis Cuevas, Salvador Elizondo, "La China" Mendoza, Juan Ibáñez, Tomás Segovia, José Emilio Pacheco, and Carlos Monsiváis. Later, he developed his friendship with Gabriel García Márquez, and shortly after his arrival to Mexico with Álvaro Mutis. He never had good relations with García Ponce, and their stories "Un alma pura" (A Pure Soul) and "Tajimara," made into films directed by Juan Ibáñez and Juan José Gurrola, respectively, competed against each other at the 1964 Experimental Film Festival. Then came his great meeting with Julio Cortázar —"Is your father here?" "That's me, Carlos. Come in," and with Mario Vargas Llosa, José Donoso, and Juan Goytisolo, who created the Latin American boom in literature. And later, he frequented Sergio Ramírez, Tomás Eloy Martínez, and Nélida Piñon when the post-boom began to consolidate. Simultaneously, he made friends internationally, like with Milan Kundera, Jerzy Kosinsky, Arthur Miller, William Styron, Susan Sontag, and Harold Pinter, among many, many other first-class figures who enjoyed his personality and broad cultural background. I have the impression, however, that at the end of the day, Carlos Fuentes was always a fundamentally solitary person, although perhaps for that very reason he liked to make friends and meet people. He considered friendship one of the most important values a human being could enjoy ("What we don't have, we find in friends"). In this sense, perhaps his greatest friends in life were Julio Cortázar and Gabriel García Márquez.

When he broke with Octavio Paz, a gap opened in Mexican culture whose two camps were the contributors to the magazines *Vuelta* and *Nexos*. There, Fuentes made friends with Héctor Aguilar Camín, Jorge G. Castañeda, Federico Reyes Heroles, and José María Pérez Gay.

In those long-ago times, I never imagined, not even for a moment, that some day I would meet him personally and have the opportunity and privilege of chatting with him, exchanging

impressions, talking about books, film, plays, and authors, and even go to his home, meet him at the homes of mutual friends, and host him in my home. I never imagined that I would enjoy his friendship and generosity as a reader and a critic of my own work. Carlos Fuentes, the most renowned Mexican author, the most professional, the greatest, the one who as a baby sat on Alfonso Reyes's knee and later traveled the world before he came of age, who spoke four or five languages perfectly, who knew history, art, and politics, and looked a little like Jorge Negrete, who was attracted to beautiful women, particularly talented actresses, and who managed to find his "better half," Silvia Lemus, as beautiful as any actress, and who accompanied him in good times and bad, supporting his work all their lives. That Carlos Fuentes, who at 30 became an icon, a literary phenomenon unprecedented in our milieu, a giant of Mexican letters who gave himself over body and soul to structuring with indefatigable talent and effort, a great and unique body of work, a precursor of the Latin American boom and a unique, emblematic figure of that movement that revolutionized the literary world and revived the novel as a genre when the Europeans had already given it its last rites; that Carlos Fuentes was also, and for that very reason, one of the eternal candidates for the Nobel Prize for Literature.

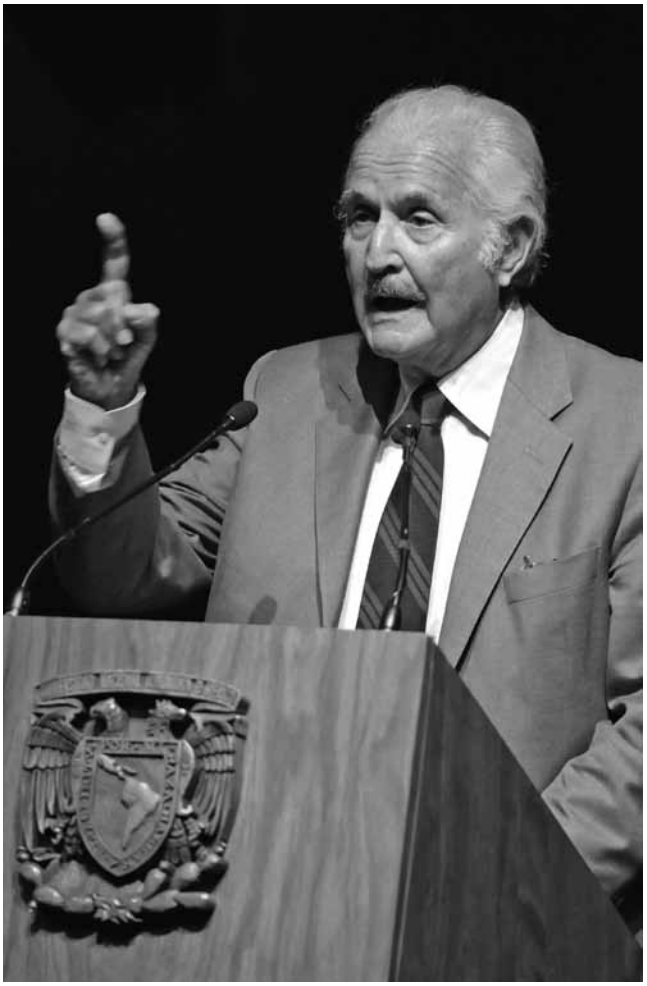
The first time I had the chance to speak to him personally was at a congress at Brown University, organized by another of his great friends, Peruvian critic and writer Julio Ortega; the reason for the meeting was the forthcoming publication of *Diana o la cazadora solitaria* (Diana: the Goddess Who Hunts Alone). Year after year, Fuentes gave a keynote, inaugural address at the different seminars Julio organized very ably and imaginatively in the city of Providence. On that occasion, I was invited, along with other writers. The reason Carlos was interested in talking to me was that I had surreptitiously —but not in bad faith— already read his novel while it was still at press. Carlos Aguirre, the designer for the Alfaguara publishing house, headed by Sealtiel Alatriste, was preparing the cover, and he was at my parents' house in Cuernavaca one weekend. I was terribly curious because it was about Fuentes's relationship with the actress Jean Seberg, so I asked him to let me give it a look, which he did without demur. As an editor, Sealtiel Alatriste had managed to infuse extraordinary vitality and prestige into the Alfaguara publishing house, leading it into an unprecedented boom: in just a few years, it was able to bring together the most important Latin American writers under its name, and very specifically, Carlos Fuentes. At that time, Alfaguara México was more important than Alfaguara Spain.

Fuentes was rather dubious about the fact that someone he didn't know, like me, had read his novel before it was formally published, and so he asked Sealtiel to introduce us for a short chat. Sealtiel came out in my defense: "I can assure you that Hernán won't do anything bad with his foreknowledge," he said. We met alone in a little adjoining room to where a toast was being made after the inaugural lecture, and without any great protocol, alone, seated facing each other, Fuentes asked me for my impression of his novel. His presence was rather imposing, not just because of his fame. He was a man of character and a penetrating gaze, not at all complacent, much less obsequious. I confessed to him that it seemed very different from the rest of his work and that I liked the frank autobiographical tone he had used. He didn't turn a hair. Looking at me directly, he asked me to elaborate, and I did:

> It's an autobiographical narrative in which you try to recover a love story from 1970 that you have now decided to write about, more than 20 years later, to relive it and give it its literary dimension, to evoke that moment when you and your character tried to be happy. Regardless of whether you managed it or not, I think that it approaches something that readers are looking for today: credibility above imagination, a real case peopled with famous but flesh-and-blood figures as protagonists, a testimonial novel in which you are risking your own fame as a man and as an intellectual, in your search for love, even if at that time you didn't realize what your relationship with Jean —or rather Diana— implied, but that life would take the responsibility for giving a tragic ending. It is your frankest novel to date, the bravest and the

"Literature is my true lover, and all the rest
(sex, politics, religion if I had one, death when it comes)
passes through the literary experience, which is the filter
of all the other experiences of my life."

CARLOS FUENTES



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most self-critical. It is part of the genre of confessional novels like those of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Michel Leiris, or Bertrand Russell.

I thought that I had not managed to strike an emotional chord with my comments, much less convince him. When he heard my answer, without a word, he got up, shook my hand, and said good-bye. I still think, however, that *Diana: the Goddess Who Hunts Alone* is one of his most authentic, interesting works, where Fuentes allowed himself the freedom to make several intimate confessions of different kinds, but above all about his view of the world: "Literature is my true lover, and all the rest (sex, politics, religion if I had one, death when it comes) passes through the literary experience, which is the filter of all the other experiences of my life."

But after that, my relations with Fuentes began to become closer. Sealtiel Alatriste took it upon himself to bring together a group of writer friends to him. Our meetings were sporadic. The first time we met at the Prego restaurant in Polanco. Fuentes had a martini and then a little white wine. By five in the afternoon, he had already left.

Fuentes never won the Nobel Prize, although in readers' hearts he is identified as though he had. Thus, he enters the ranks of Proust, Kafka, Joyce, Borges, Cortázar, and so many others.

When Harold Pinter came to Mexico, Fuentes offered to translate two of his brief works, *Moonlight* and *Party Time*. Through Gonzalo Celorio, at that time the coordinator of UNAM Cultural Dissemination Office, it was agreed that the play would be put on by Ludwik Margules in the Juan Ruiz de Alarcón Theater using Fuentes's translation and that simultaneously, it would be published by the UNAM Literature Department that I was heading up then.

From that time on, the relationship with Fuentes began to be more fluid. When he came to Mexico for Christmas, we would have a soirée in his and Silvia's honor and we began to get to know each other. He had proposed reading the work of younger Mexican writers without regard to what group, genre, or trend they might belong to, and that is noticeable in his most recent work, *La gran novela latinoamericana* (The Great Latin American Novel). In addition to his life-long friends, Fuentes read and supported an infinite number of writers, displaying enormous intellectual generosity and a diligent viewpoint, although always maintaining his critical distance: he was tolerant, but never indulgent.

Fuentes never won the Nobel Prize, although in readers' hearts he is identified as though he had. Thus, he enters the ranks of Proust, Kafka, Joyce, Musil, Durrell, Henry Miller, Borges, Nabokov, Cortázar, Updike, Graham Green, and so many others who never received the famous award, but who are more appreciated and read than many who did.

With the death of Carlos Fuentes, a great stage in twentieth century and early twenty-first century Mexican literature comes to its culmination. He served as the heir, champion, and literary witness of our day-to-day events and wrote the saga of the entire era marked by the Mexican Revolution and its consequences, fighting for a better country. His work will endure beyond history thanks to the power of literature, which was the justification for his life. VM

The Art of Dialogue With Oneself

Ignacio Solares*

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In the best Balzacian tradition, Carlos Fuentes carries on a continuing dialogue with himself in his work, introducing the reader into his own world. This is undoubtedly the most profound meaning of the creation of novels: the possibility of knowing and becoming intimate with ourselves, with ourselves and that "other" that we also are.

The manifestations of this incessant dialogue are practically inexhaustible in Fuentes's work. For example, on one page of *Aura* (1962), we find in the making the complete project of *Terra nostra*, which would come out 13 years later. The protagonist, Felipe Montero, says to himself,

> If you could save at least 12 000 pesos, you could spend almost a year doing your own postponed, almost forgotten work. Your great overall work about the Spanish discoveries and conquests in the Americas. A work that would summarize all the disperse chronicles, make them intelligible, find the correspondences among all the enterprises and adventures of the Golden Century, among the human prototypes, and the greater event: the Renaissance.

It is significant that in the author's shortest novel, he already announces —13 years ahead of time and with what

* Writer and editor of the UNAM's *Revista de la Universidad de México*. This article was previously published in Spanish ("El arte de dialogar consigo mismo") in *Revista de la Universidad de México* no. 100, new era, June 2012, pp. 42-44.

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Roger Caillois once said that
"nothing is more sacred than a great sacrilege,"
and in the work of Carlos Fuentes,
like in all great creation, death is abolished.

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precision!— his most ambitious, longest work. We also find this dialogue of the author with himself in works set in Mexico City and in the characters of his novels and short stories. For those who consider literature a verbal conquest of reality, there is no better way to possess something than by reading it: knowing its true name, that hidden name that every writer seeks even if he doesn't know it. Thus, literature is capable of impregnating certain cities and covering them with a sheen of mythology and resistant images over the years that are more lasting than the "real" architecture and history. This is what has happened with *La región más transparente* (Where the Air Is Clear), which continues to be the best portal we have to that Mexico City, so different from today's.

All that changed, and Carlos Fuentes has taken it upon himself to write a chronicle of that city that "threatens to eat each of its inhabitants alive, whether victims or predators," as he says five decades later in *Todas las familias felices* (Happy Families), where he writes "What was left of the old City of Palaces? A big supermarket full of cans of blood and bottles of smoke? Blood and hunger, basic consumer items in the monster-city."

From *Where the Air Is Clear* to *Happy Families*, the real Mexico City is the book itself, the books through which Carlos Fuentes shows us a cherished city "condemned to death," and its transformation into an atrocious urban sprawl, but subtly suspended in our memories.

Another example of Fuentes's ability to dialogue with himself through his texts can be found in *Cambio de piel* (A Change of Skin), published in 1967, but in which a topic is left unfinished and is taken up fully years later in *Instinto de Inez* (Inez), published in 2000. *A Change of Skin* portrays a group of Jews in a concentration camp singing their own prayer for the dead when they perform Verdi's *Requiem*. The conductor finds the instruments in the most unexpected places, and a chimney brush becomes an improvised bass fiddle. At one point, the conductor talks about that "other" place where the musical interpretation will really be performed —even though they have before them their own executioners— and says, "The human voice, just because it is one, invents a joy that goes before the sadness of death." That same human voice, with its implicit joy, that comes out of *A Change of Skin* is the true protagonist of *Inez*. The voice that takes on board the invention and the pain of the world and even our possibility of salvation.

Music, says Gabriel Atlan-Ferrara, the protagonist of *Inez*, is halfway between nature and God. With luck, it communicates the two. And with art, we musicians —he could say, "we writers"— are the intermediaries between God and nature.

We again encounter here the author in dialogue with his own work, but also with history, philosophy, psychology, art, and literary theory. Fuentes holds that the writer's obligation is to conjugate the times and tensions of human life verbally; imagine the past and remember the future; remember and write everything, from the beginning of time to the ultra-modern today and beyond. Every writer names the world, but Latin American writers —Carpentier, Rulfo, García Márquez, Cortázar, and Fuentes himself— have been possessed by the urgency of the discoverer: "If I do not name, no one will name; if I do not

write, everything will be forgotten; if everything is forgotten, we will stop being." Thus, it is possible to understand his anxiety and obsession for putting everything into an immense body of work, impossible to encompass like time, like history itself.

This is why the theme of a work like *Terra nostra* is the Latin American utopia; the will and the passion through four centuries of a common history between the old Spanish world and the new American world, a utopia that seems like the be-all and end-all of History, and against which History has never stopped conspiring.

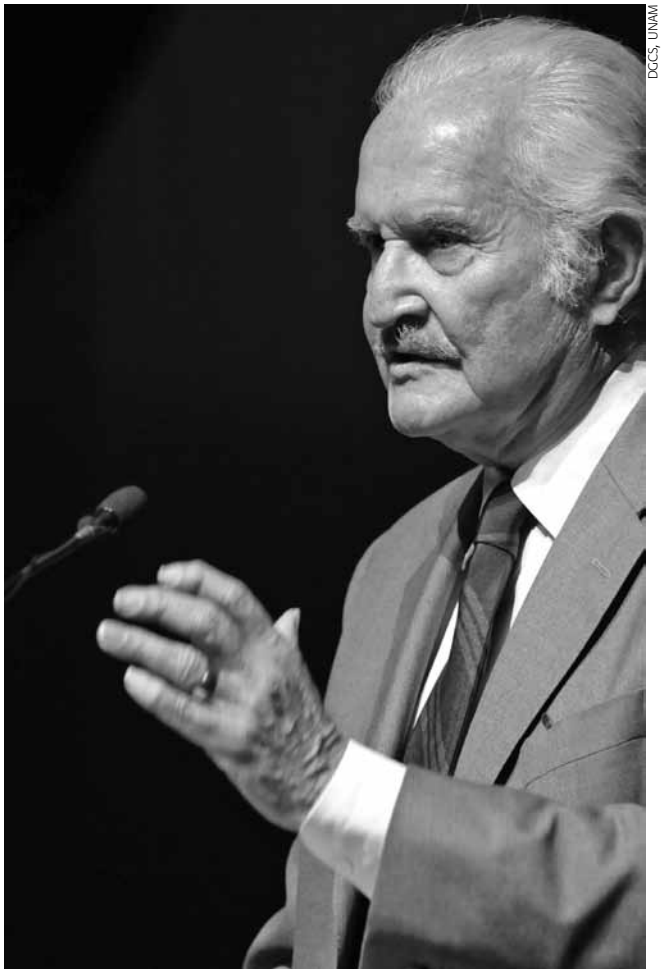
Beyond themes and situations, what is manifest is the search for a first and last heaven, the place that real history has not yet bitten, not yet lived at the expense of, the primitive beach that the protagonist of *Terra nostra*, that re-born Adam, naked, comes ashore on. It should be pointed out that in Fuentes's work, the characters always revive in that same land that saw their births, but that the art of the novelist has turned into "another" place. For example, in *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* (The Death of Artemio Cruz):

> You're going to live. . . . You're going to be the meeting place and the reason of the universal order. . . . Your body has a reason. . . . Your life has a reason. . . . You are, you will be, you were the universe incarnate. . . . For you the galaxies will light up and the sun will burn. . . . For you to love and live and be. . . .

Also, there are the three theses of *Cumpleaños* (Birthday), which could be the same ones for all the author's novels: "The world is eternal, therefore there was no creation; the truth is dual, therefore, it could be multiple; the soul is not immortal, but the common intellect of the species is unique and everlasting."

In *Terra nostra*, Spain is the old world that has ended up being recognized as uninhabitable and hopeless. By contrast, the Americas are the new, open world, offering spaces to build a new Golden Age. But in addition, living in both worlds there is a third that contains and transcends them: Eternity, the great illusion of History, where men are with God or are God; a world where History and Culture are the path and the battle of men from and toward that place.

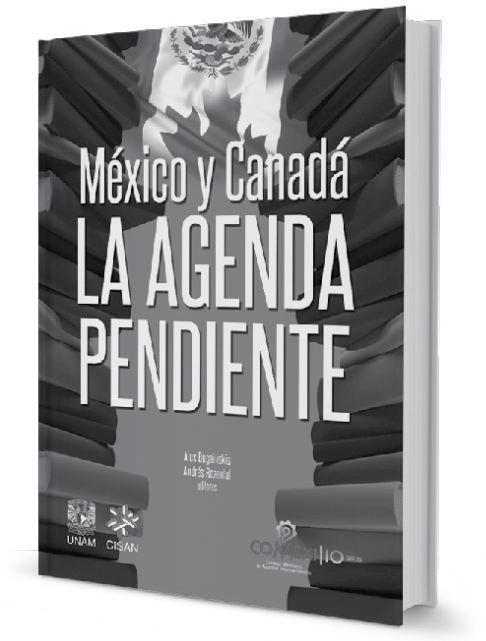
Fuentes sees himself as a heretic in the sense that Cervantes would use the term, someone who will continue the word of the only religion that we can deserve. He says, "Dogma was proclaimed so heresy could flower with deeper roots: all things change, all bodies with their metamorphosis, all souls are its transmigrations."



DGCS, UNAM

Roger Caillois once said that "nothing is more sacred than a great sacrilege," and in the work of Carlos Fuentes, like in all great creation, death is abolished. Thus, the writer, by assuming his own heresy, turns into the only true believer. This world and its utopias are not enough; what is needed is to create another, better world, even if only on paper, inside the particular universe of literature.

One of the highest qualities of Carlos Fuentes's work is that the reader really always reads between the lines. What he/she has in his/her hands, in the form of a book, is that immaterial, fleeting, and yet especially human substance that is life made memory, feeling, sensation, desire. It is the prism through which the narrator shows us the world —his world— and the avatar of his characters. And it is to them that is owed the particular atmosphere that he achieves in each of his novels from the very first lines: a suspended, subtle reality in which matter, and the very crystal that inspires it, seems to be endowed with the evasive quality of light. VM



México y Canadá: La agenda pendiente
(Mexico and Canada. The Pending Agenda)
Alex Bugailiskis and Andrés Rozental, eds.
CISAN/Comexi
Mexico City, 2012, 320 pp.

Regardless of their leaders' mistakes, for Mexican and Canadian civil societies the relationship continues to be dynamic because the citizens of the two countries have links of their own.

Beyond official rhetoric from Canadian and Mexican authorities who insist on prioritizing above all the two countries' economic relations, the truth is that in recent years, the bilateralism that existed after the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) came into effect has declined. This has mainly been because of the actions of Canada's Conservative government, which gained control of Parliament in early 2006, the year in which the second National Action Party administration began in Mexico (2006-2012).[1]

This contraction in bilateral relations has been part responsibility of the Mexican government due to its limited capacity for positioning its interests in the region. It has combined with a new strategy emanating from Washington, which seeks to put the priority on bilateralism with its two next-door neighbors, Mexico and Canada, to increase its own security after the 9/11 attacks. This has led to a reconfiguration of the dynamics in North America given that bilateral security issues have gradually replaced the festive official trilateral discourses of the 1990s and the early twenty-first century.

These new conditions, together with a government in Ottawa that is more interested in emphasizing its "special relationship" with the United States than in diversifying its links to Mexico, have joined with the Mexican government's performance, increasingly questioned because of the growing insecurity in the country, particularly during Felipe Calderón's six-year administration. These factors have configured a new reality in Mexico-Canada relations, analyzed from different standpoints in *México y Canadá: la agenda pendiente* (Mexico and Canada. The Pending Agenda). This work is an extremely current academic exercise focusing on bilateral relations in different, well-identified areas of opportunity.

The book's 26 articles show real concern about the Ottawa and Mexico City governments' strategy of moving ahead separately with their bilateral agendas with the United States. This weakens the trilateral spirit that prevailed when NAFTA came into effect in 1994. In this same order of ideas, the authors agree that the separate dynamic does nothing but weaken the possibilities of coming to regional consensuses in the face of a hegemonic United States, which has carved out greater space for furthering its own particular interests.

This circumstance has also meant that Mexico and Canada are gradually drawing apart. The clearest example of this is the creation of a visa requirement in July 2009 for Mexican citizens who want to visit Canada as tourists, a decision that profoundly disturbed the Mexican government, which in turn felt obligated to request a "special" visa for Canadian officials and diplomats seeking entry into Mexico.

Thus, in recent years there has been no significant advance in economic, cultural, or trade relations between the two countries due to their leaders' lack of strategic vision. U.S. academic Robert Pastor deals with this in his article when he says that Prime Minister Stephen Harper decided not to hold the North American Leaders Summit in 2010 despite his commitment at the Guadalajara summit a year before, and that

instead, President Obama met separately with each leader, setting up parallel organizations to deal with key border, environmental, and normative issues.[2]

What is interesting is that in this same work, other authors like Canadian security specialist and consultant Reid Morden argue that Canada should not be criticized for its prudence about entering into a new metaphoric world and that Mexico continues to be a new friend and partner, and that, beyond trade and leisure, the relationship still has some maturing to do, particularly in the closed world of security.[3]

These positions make the book a rich, plural piece of material, indispensable for analyzing relations between the two countries, given that, regardless of their leaders' mistakes, for Mexican and Canadian civil societies, the relationship continues to be dynamic because the citizens of the two countries have links of their own. In this sense, Canadian tourists continue to visit Mexico and Mexican citizens continue to visit and migrate to Canada, despite migratory red tape introduced by the Ottawa government in 2012.

Former Canadian ambassador in Mexico, Guillermo E. Rishchynski, points out in his article that although the level of interaction of Canadian and Mexican citizens, as visitors, students, workers, or businesspeople, has grown at unprecedented rates, the two countries are still prisoners of stereotypes, and they have not been able to generate a broader understanding of how they complement each other and the benefits they can offer each other as true allies.[4]

So, this book could not have appeared at a more opportune moment. Clearly bilateral relations between Mexico and Canada are going through a period of redefinition, and a different party taking office in Mexico in December 2012 may help make them more dynamic. This will be the case as long as that new administration seriously analyzes the mistakes of its predecessors in both domestic and international policy. This will mean that the new Mexican authorities will be able to reorganize Mexico's relations not only with Canada and the United States, but also with the rest of the world. VM

Óliver Santín Peña
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NOTES

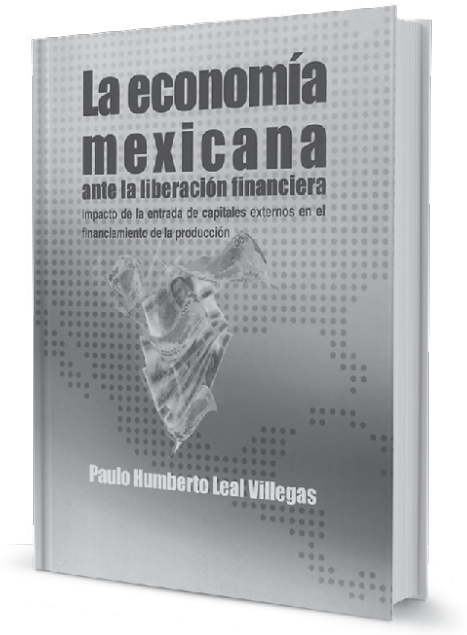
[1] The PAN is also a conservative party. [Editor's Note.]
[2] Robert Pastor, "América del Norte en 2010: dos visiones," Alex Bugailiskis and Andrés Rozental, eds., *México y Canadá: la agenda pendiente* (Mexico City: CISAN/Comexi, 2012), p. 211.
[3] Reid Morden, "Seguridad hemisférica: el dilema Canadá-México," Bugailiskis and Rozental, eds., op. cit., p. 249.
[4] Guillermo E. Rishchynski, "Lecciones aprendidas: seguir adelante," Bugailiskis and Rozental, op. cit., p. 309.

La economía mexicana ante la liberación financiera. Impacto de la entrada de capitales externos en el financiamiento de la producción
(The Mexican Economy and Financial Liberation. The Impact of the External Capital Financing of Production)
Paulo Humberto Leal Villegas
Plaza y Valdés
Mexico City, 2012, 196 pp.

The author of this book, a scholar at the National Autonomous University of Mexico School of Economics, based it on his experience as a teacher and student and several years as a government official both at Mexico's Chamber of Deputies and the federal Ministry of Economy. It is a novel interpretation and study of the Mexican economy, particularly the crisis of the productive sector —what is called the "real economy"—, based on the dynamics of monetary policy and Mexico's financial sector.

The work has four chapters: "Theoretical Framework and International Context"; "Capital Flows and Financial Crisis: From the Debt Crisis to the Banking Crisis"; "Capital Flows and Privatization of the Banks"; and "Capital Flows and Financing the Productive Sector." In the third chapter, he looks at capital flows and bank privatization during the six-year administration of Ernesto Zedillo (1994-2000), while the last chapter examines capital flows during part of the two following administrations (2000-2010) when the National Action Party was in office. The book has an interesting post-script that, in addition to updating it, taking into consideration the new conditions in the Mexican economy, problematizes and puts forward areas of debate that broaden the issues dealt with in the text. Among these are the financial and produc-

One of Paulo Leal's central tenets is that foreign capital flows did not go into the productive sector, but funneled into the speculative world to make short- and medium-term profits.



tive crisis provoked by the U.S. liquidity crisis leading to the mortgage crisis, whose effects were felt in Mexico's economy; the timeliness of the neoliberal state, given the perpetual propping up of a financial system that generates no value; Mexico's insertion into the world economy, almost exclusively through the United States (and the need to diversify trade relations); and the necessity of incorporating technological change and strengthening the domestic market, which implies redefining the national project.

The book also includes a vast amount of quantitative data like tables and graphs with indicators constructed based on primary sources to strengthen and support the author's tenets. These sources include the Ministry of Economy, Mexico's Central Bank, the National Banking and Securities Commission, the National Institute of Statistics and Geography, the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit, and reports from the federal government, the U.S. Federal Reserve, the ECLAC, and the OECD.

The book has an unorthodox theoretical framework, based fundamentally on Keynes, Minsky, and Kindleberger, plus Carlota Pérez, Duménil and Lévy, Dabat, and Harvey, among other theoreticians. However, the author emphasizes neo-classical theory's inability to deal with the study of national and world phenomena. He states that the neo-classical school is insufficient for understanding the complexities of the Mexican economy, contrasting its performance with inapplicable suppositions like free competition; the existence of perfect, complete, and symmetrical information; downward flexibility in the cost of labor; the existence *per se* of economic equilibrium; the eternal rationality of economic agents; the state's incapacity to influence the economic cycle; the a-historical vision of the economy nourished by the pretension of absolute independence from political events; or blind faith in the processes of financial globalization and liberalization. That is, his unorthodoxy separates him from the mainstream theory that has permeated decisions in world political economy, decisions, as the author states, that paved the way for the recent economic crises that we still have not been able to extricate ourselves from.

However, the principal theoretical foundation underlying the work is Marxist, based on the "money-commodity-increased money" (M-C-M') model of accumulation. In this model, money is valued based on the purchase of labor power (which is what creates value), and of the means of production for the productive process, something that makes it possible for actors to obtain "more" money in the act of buying and selling. With this classical accumulation model, and taking Mexico's situation in a specific world context as a starting point, the author argues why he speaks of a break in the formula for the functioning of capitalism. That is, he argues that from M-C-M', we move to M-M' (money-increased money): a scenario in which money "reproduces itself," increasing without having to go through any kind of productive process.

Based on this theoretical foundation, one of the book's basic objectives is to deal with the impact of the strategy of increasing capital supply to theoretically "finance" production in Mexico. Specifically, it analyzes the performance of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Mexico, explaining the proportion in which it has been used for gross capital formation, portfolio investment, and the purchase of shares. The book also studies the sources of financing of Mexico's main companies to see how much FDI supported the business sector, but it also evaluates the relationship of capital flows into Mexico with the 1994 economic and financial crisis.[1]

One of Paulo Leal's central tenets is that foreign capital flows did not go into the productive sector, but funneled into the speculative world of the financial sector to make short- and medium-term profits. This facilitated competition between the real and the financial economies; in Mexico's case, the financial economy did not make its profits from production, but from speculation. He adds that indiscriminate financial liberalization has produced juicy profits for the financial sector without involving production at all, and for that reason, the financial sector has become a competitor for production and not a support for it, as the discourse in favor of financial liberalization argued it would.

This break between the productive and financial sectors, says the author, originated in the contradiction of the financial system within the logic of the capitalist system. On the one hand, the financial system is the capital-money facilitator for the productive sector, but on the other hand, it funnels cash away from the productive sector; this is the underpinning for the gestation of a crisis. In addition, these events have resulted in the banking system not fulfilling its basic function, which is to facilitate credit to the productive sector for the creation of goods and services. For now, most of the investments in the productive sector are really self-financed. And Leal goes on to say that 65 percent of productive investment comes through suppliers, and that the financial sector participates only in a minor way with 20 percent.

For its part, the banking sector, an oligopoly of four institutions since it was re-privatized and fell into foreign hands, obtains its profits from the commissions for services rendered and a vast portfolio of consumer credit. In part, this consumer credit "has filled" the holes in social inclusion left by the Keynesian state and that the market intends to replace with credit from the private banking system. This has a very high social and economic cost due to the enormous debt incurred by individuals because of high active interest rates charged by the banks for this credit.

Leal argues that this scenario, in which foreign capital in Mexico that did not go into production, in which the banking system has stopped fulfilling its function as a receiver and lender of resources for the generation of goods and services, in which banking institutions make onerous profits through disproportionate service costs and their credit policies, has been possible thanks to a vacuum of power left by the state and its subordination to the financial sector, immersed in neoliberal policies.

Given this, he continues, it is necessary and urgent to have a new state that clearly sets the rules for the financial sector and international capital flows in order to funnel them into the real economy. This would foster the growth of gross capital formation and create jobs. However, he also writes that this state has to be established in the framework of a new national project.

For all of these reasons, critical texts like Paulo Leal's are to be recommended. Based on concrete reality, they question the orthodoxy of a model that does not allow for economic growth or the creation of our own technology (due to which we have to import capital goods). Given the fact that official figures state that seven of every ten people in the workforce are employed in the informal sector, Leal's proposals take on a certain importance: if it stays on the same road, given the deterioration of the U.S. economy, Mexico's will continue to be submerged in the great world crisis, the crisis of civilization that many authors are already talking about. VM

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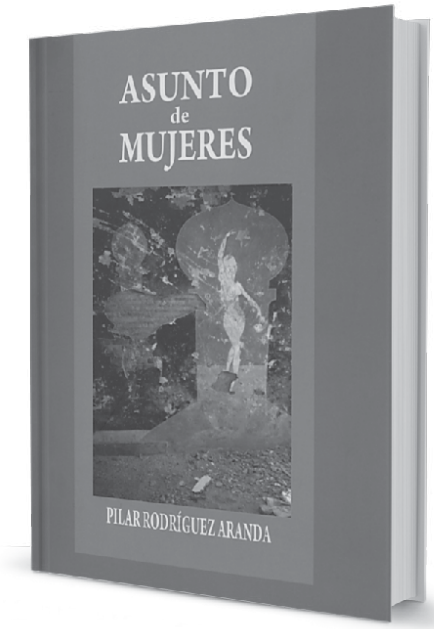
NOTES

[1] That was the last year of President Carlos Salinas de Gortari's administration and the beginning of Ernesto Zedillo's. [Editor's Note.]

Asunto de mujeres
(Story of Women)
Pilar Rodríguez Aranda
Editorial Cascada de palabras-Cartonera
Mexico City, 2012, 81 pp.

In "What is a Poet?" renowned Chicano poet Francisco X. Alarcón writes that a poet is a voiceless voice that is at once joy and rage. This would certainly apply to this collection of poems by Mexican poet, video-poet, and literary translator Pilar Rodríguez Aranda.[1]



With several grants and awards under her arm, she has published extensively in magazines and anthologies. *Asunto de mujeres* (Story of Women)[2] is her first published volume of poetry. *Poemas de Isla (Isla Poems)* appeared in CD form a couple of years ago. Born in the state of Morelos, now settled in Mexico City as a *chilanga* (that is, a proud Mexico City dweller), her life was shaped during 13 years in the U.S., when she became a great admirer of the literary strength of Chicana/o and Latina/o writing and poetry that have greatly influenced her creative work.

Although she has published both in English and Spanish, this volume in particular is intended mainly for Spanish-speaking readers. And I would venture to say that as such it is a culturally revealing poetic window.

The title *Asunto de mujeres* suggests from the outset an intimate approach that addresses and includes women in the plural. The poetic language of the 41 poems in this volume is textured from what is clearly a woman's perspective, informed by her own experience and sensibility. The scope is intentionally broadened at times to suggest a metonymical voice speaking for and to many women. At others the specificity of the experience of other women, of their herstories, gathers metonymical resonances. The ideal reader, however, is determined by sensibility rather than gender.

The volume's four sections are titled "Hay amores" (There Are Loves), "Historia de ellas" (Herstories), "Asunto de mujeres" (Story of Women) and "Amor en casa" (Love at Home). Whatever the themes and forms chosen, Rodríguez Aranda's poetry is nevertheless consistently simple and to the point, fluid and unpretentious, earthy and airy, strong yet poignant and vulnerable.

These poems wear well like grit stuck to walking shoes. We could also say they flower like buds in an open palm.

The dreams and hopes of a charmed life, of love and sharing, are shaped unexpectedly at times, mostly framed by day-in, day-out situations. The poetic voice remains on the whole dispassionate in a contained, healthy way, at times revealing the rough edges of sadness or fear. At other times a gentle gravity prevails and the reader encounters, too, moments of humorous zest.

The common comings and goings of love and loving undergo metamorphic stages as they shrink and spread, gaze into myriad mirrors without cringing. It is as if the poetic voice took delight in tracing with accuracy the fine lines of cracks in broken dreams. Evoking, as if in slow motion, their fall into fragments, like an earthen pot smashing on a tile floor. The contours of each piece outlined and acknowledged for what it was, for what it now is.

Bygones are bygones. Yet it becomes vital to document them. And at every turn of the page, time is revealed as an ally.

Rodríguez Aranda's style is fresh, unpretentious, and she consciously crosses easily from a loftier poetic mode to matter-of-fact reality: "La bruma se despeja/El smog se levanta" (p. 63) (The mists dispel/The smog rises). Some of the poems that revel in the erotic are set in the corners of daily life without becoming metaphorically overloaded or overly abstract, thereby remaining grounded.

The diversity of forms she resorts mirror a variety of perspectives that find a voice of their own. Among the several poetic strategies used is the contiguity of meanings that play off each other, that also function as interesting alliterative moments, such as "intimidado por la intimidad" (intimidated by intimacy) (p. 24) or "se atraganta sin garganta" (chokes without a throat) (p.27). Some effective word play is also featured, such as: "Ay amores / de pan y de nueces / Ay amores / de hambre y de sal" that juggle with the noun *¡ay!* (denoting pain or lamentation) and the verb "*hay*" (there are). These verses might be translated as "Oh, these / There are loves / of bread and nuts / Oh these / There are loves of hunger and salt").

One of Rodríguez Aranda's concerns is to find ways in which art and literature can become tools to face and disable violence, to cultivate peace consciousness. For many years

now she has been involved in individual and collective arts projects, such as A Prayer for Juárez, *Contra la violencia, el Arte* (Against Violence, Art), 100 Thousand Poets for Change, becoming what is known as an "artivist."

Asunto de mujeres explores the elusive and painful nature of violence against women: individually, collectively, anonymously, in intimacy. She does so with subtle and singular depth, with an informed perspective. The reader may well be left with a fine cactus spine under the skin: a barely perceptible yet persistent presence.

The poem simply titled "Ana Mendieta" is a lyrical rendering of one more herstory in the files of oblivion that is quietly evocative:

Sobre el pavimento neoyorkino	On the New York pavement
Ha quedado	now lies
Imperceptible	imperceptible
Su silueta	her silhouette

The reader is offered a footnote that informs us Ana Mendieta was a "Cuban-born visual artist who died at the age of 36 when she mysteriously fell from a tall building in New York" (pp. 35-36).

Several poems lay bare the finest fibers of what is all-too-simply termed "violence" in its multiple and insidious manifestations. They also often walk the tightrope between objectivity and the depths of pain and frustration.

"Una mujer muere" (A Woman Dies) shifts smoothly from the evocation of a single act of terrorist-attributed violence to media and public everyday indifference that results in amnesia. It thereby face-lifts the tragic irony of women as collateral damage.

Una mujer muere	A woman dies
Una bomba dirigida a su hijo	A bomb directed toward her son
le explota en la cara	explodes in her face
La culpa del sacrificio	The guilt of the sacrifice
es combustible para la prensa	is fuel for the press
es pobre excusa terrorista	is a poor terrorist excuse
es imagen pavorosa	is a horrific image
que olvidamos	that we forget
gracias al siguiente comercial	thanks to the next TV ad

In this poem Rodríguez Aranda poignantly involves and includes the reader through the use of the plural: "olvidamos" (we forget). The responsibility comes home silently —with a bang disguised as whimper. Media, collective and individual amnesia is everyone's irresponsibility.

> Whatever the themes Rodríguez Aranda's poetry is consistently simple and to the point, fluid and unpretentious, earthy and airy, strong yet poignant and vulnerable.

Some of the poems address domestic verbal violence; others deal with a wide range of "asuntos de mujeres," for instance the inner tearing women undergo while juggling myriad roles expected from them (mother, wife, lover, career person) while maintaining the thin thread of being true to themselves.

They also address the pain of loss, while others become odes to being a woman and to mothering. In this sense Rodríguez Aranda's poems are also a fresh celebration of life and art in every form. In "Cien mujeres" (A Hundred Women), the concluding poem of the volume, a wonderful weaving of individual and collective birthing is evoked with great rhythmic intensity. The poem begins: "Woman of dark complexión / a hundred women thrust behind you / A hundred waves of heat celebrate / the bubbling of what is birthed / from your volcanic crater" ("Mujer de rostro oscuro / cien mujeres empujan detrás tuyo / Cien olas de calor brindan / por el hervor del nacer / desde ese cráter tuyo"). Exuberant in its evocation of maternity as a major creative act, the poem continues, "Beyond pain / beyond fear / push / push /…A hundred women embrace you in silence" ("Más allá del dolor / más allá del miedo / empuja / empuja /….Cien mujeres te abrazan en silencio") (pp. 79-81).

There is no doubt that *Asunto de mujeres* brings forth the voiceless voice that is at once joy and rage that Alarcón identifies with poetic essence. VM

Claire Joysmith
Researcher at CISAN

NOTES

[1] Pilar Rodríguez Aranda's writing blogs are http://PilarPoeta.blogspot.mx, http://poemasdella-anarca.blogspot.mx/, and http://poemsheis.blogspot.mx/. Her website is http://anarcafilms.blogspot.com/.

[2] Borrowed from Claude Chabrol's 1988 movie *Une affaire de femmes*, translated as *Story of Women*.

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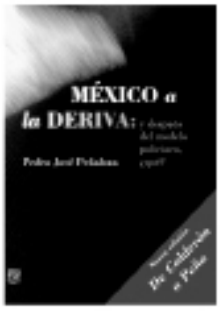

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