

# National Identities and Sociopolitical Changes in Latin America

Edited by  
Mercedes F. Durán-Cogan and  
Antonio Gómez-Moriana

NATIONAL IDENTITIES AND  
SOCIOPOLITICAL CHANGES IN  
LATIN AMERICA

## Hispanic Issues

- Volume 23 *National Identities and Sociopolitical Changes in Latin America*  
Edited by Mercedes F. Durán-Cogan and Antonio Gómez-Moriana
- Volume 22 *Beyond the Lettered City: Latin American Literature and Mass Media*  
Edited by Edmundo Paz-Soldán and Debra A. Castillo
- Volume 21 *Charting Memory: Recalling Medieval Spain*  
Edited by Stacy N. Beckwith
- Volume 20 *Culture and the State in Spain: 1550-1850*  
Edited by Tom Lewis and Francisco J. Sánchez
- Volume 19 *Modernism and its Margins: Reinscribing Cultural Modernity from Spain and Latin America*  
Edited by Anthony L. Geist and José B. Monleón
- Volume 18 *A Revisionary History of Portuguese Literature*  
Edited by Miguel Tamen and Helena C. Buescu
- Volume 17 *Cervantes and his Postmodern Constituencies*  
Edited by Anne Cruz and Carroll B. Johnson
- Volume 16 *Modes of Representation in Spanish Cinema*  
Edited by Jenaro Talens and Santos Zunzunegui
- Volume 15 *Framing Latin American Cinema: Contemporary Critical Perspectives*  
Edited by Anne Marie Stock
- Volume 14 *Rhetoric and Politics: Baltasar Gracián and the New World Order*  
Edited by Nicholas Spadaccini and Jenaro Talens
- Volume 13 *Bodies and Biases: Sexualities in Hispanic Cultures and Literatures*  
Edited by David W. Foster and Roberto Reis
- Volume 12 *The Picaresque: Tradition and Displacement*  
Edited by Giancarlo Maiorino
- Volume 11 *Critical Practices in Post-Franco Spain*  
Edited by Silvia L. López, Jenaro Talens, and Dario Villanueva
- Volume 10 *Latin American Identity and Constructions of Difference*  
Edited by Amaryll Chanady
- Volume 9 *Amerindian Images and the Legacy of Columbus*  
Edited by René Jara and Nicholas Spadaccini
- Volume 8 *The Politics of Editing*  
Edited by Nicholas Spadaccini and Jenaro Talens
- Volume 7 *Culture and Control in Counter-Reformation Spain*  
Edited by Anne J. Cruz and Mary Elizabeth Perry
- Volume 6 *Cervantes's Exemplary Novels and the Adventure of Writing*  
Edited by Michael Nerlich and Nicholas Spadaccini
- Volume 5 *Ortega y Gasset and the Question of Modernity*  
Edited by Patrick H. Dust
- Volume 4 *1492-1992: Re/Discovering Colonial Writing*  
Edited by René Jara and Nicholas Spadaccini
- Volume 3 *The Crisis of Institutionalized Literature in Spain*  
Edited by Wlad Godzich and Nicholas Spadaccini
- Volume 2 *Autobiography in Early Modern Spain*  
Edited by Nicholas Spadaccini and Jenaro Talens
- Volume 1 *The Institutionalization of Literature in Spain*  
Edited by Wlad Godzich and Nicholas Spadaccini

HISPANIC ISSUES  
VOLUME 23

**NATIONAL IDENTITIES  
AND SOCIOPOLITICAL CHANGES  
IN LATIN AMERICA**

MERCEDES F. DURÁN-COGAN  
AND  
ANTONIO GÓMEZ-MORIANA



EDITORS

 **Routledge**  
Taylor & Francis Group  
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2001 by Routledge

Published 2013 by Routledge  
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN  
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY, 10017, USA

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

Copyright © 2001 Routledge

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilized in any form, or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval systems, without permission in writing from the publisher.

The editors gratefully acknowledge assistance from the College of Liberal Arts and the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Minnesota.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

National identities and sociopolitical changes in Latin America / edited by Mercedes F. Durán-Cogan and Antonio Gómez-Moriana.

p.cm. — (Hispanic issues; v. 23)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Latin America—Social conditions. 2. National characteristics, Latin American.  
3. Latin America—Politics and government. I. Durán-Cogan, Mercedes F. II. Gómez-Moriana, Antonio. III. Hispanic issues; v. 23.

HN110.5.N38 2001  
306'.098—dc21                    00-065298

ISBN 13: 978-0-815-33061-5 (hbk)

ISBN 13: 978-0-815-33908-3 (pbk)

# **Hispanic Issues**

Nicholas Spadaccini  
*Editor in Chief*

Antonio Ramos-Gascón  
Jenaro Talens  
*General Editors*

Gwendolyn Barnes-Karol  
Luis A. Ramos-García  
*Associate Editors*

Nelsy Echávez-Solano  
A. Sarah Hreha  
*Assistant Editors*

\**Advisory Board/Editorial Board*  
Rolena Adorno (Yale University)

David Castillo (University of Oregon)

Jaime Concha (University of California, San Diego)  
Tom Conley (Harvard University)  
Patrick H. Dust (Carleton College)

Eduardo Forastieri-Braschi (Universidad de Puerto Rico, Río Piedras)  
David W. Foster (Arizona State University)

Edward Friedman (Indiana University)

Wlad Godzich (University of California, Santa Cruz)

\*Carol A. Klee (University of Minnesota)

Antonio Gómez-Moriana (Université de Montréal)  
Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht (Stanford University)

Javier Herrero (University of Virginia)

\*René Jara (University of Minnesota)

Susan Kirkpatrick (University of California, San Diego)  
María Eugenia Lacarra (Universidad del País Vasco)

Tom Lewis (University of Iowa)

Jorge Lozano (Universidad Complutense de Madrid)  
Walter D. Mignolo (Duke University)

\*Louise Mirrer (City University of New York)

Alberto Moreiras (Duke University)

Michael Nerlich (Technische Universität Berlin)

Iris M. Zavala (Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht)

Santos Zunzunegui (Universidad del País Vasco)

*This page intentionally left blank*

# Contents

Introduction National Identities and Sociopolitical Changes in Latin America Antonio Gómez-Moriana and Mercedes F. Durán-Cogan	xi
<b>Chapter 1</b> The Concept of Identity Jorge Larraín Ibañez	1
<b>Chapter 2</b> Towards the Sociogenic Principle: Fanon, Identity, the Puzzle of Conscious Experience, and What It Is Like to Be “Black” Sylvia Wynter	30
<b>Chapter 3</b> Words and Images. Figurating and Dis-Figurating Identity Mercedes F. Durán-Cogan	67
<b>Chapter 4</b> The Emergence of a Colonial (“Indian”) Voice: Inca Garcilaso and Guamán Poma Antonio Gómez-Moriana	110
<b>Chapter 5</b> Latin American Silver and the Early Globalization of World Trade Dennis O. Flynn and Arturo Giraldez	140
<b>Chapter 6</b> Ethnic Identity and the Zapatista Rebellion in Chiapas José Alejos García	160
<b>Chapter 7</b> The Indian Identity, the Existential Anguish and the Eternal Return ( <i>El tiempo principia en Xibalba</i> , by Luis de Lión) Tatiana Bubnova	178
<b>Chapter 8</b> Moors or Indians? Stereotype and the Crisis of (National) Identity in Ignacio Altamirano and Manuel de Jesús Galván Isabel de Sena	201

Chapter 9 Engendering the Nation, Nationalizing the Sacred: Guadalupismo and the Cinematic (Re)Formation of Mexican Consciousness Elena Feder	229
Chapter 10 The Rhetoric of Pathology: Political Propaganda and National Identity During the Military “Process” in Argentina James R. Cisneros	269
Chapter 11 National Identity and State Ideology in Argentina Victor Armony	293
Chapter 12 Caliban in Aztlan: From the Emergence of Chicano Discourse to the Plural Constitution of New Solidarities José Antonio Giménez Micó	320
Chapter 13 Between Iconography and Demonology: The Faces at the <i>Fiesta</i> of the <i>Señor del Gran Poder</i> Marcelo Nusenovich	352
Chapter 14 Valparaiso School of Architecture Dossier Various Authors	382
Afterword Latin American Identities and Globalization Horacio Machín and Nicholas Spadaccini	433
Contributors	445
Index	449



## Acknowledgments

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) for its continued and generous support of our research since 1995, as well as our indebtedness and appreciation to all the contributors to the volume for their unwavering support and collaboration with this research project.

*This page intentionally left blank*



## Introduction

# National Identities and Sociopolitical Changes in Latin America

Antonio Gómez-Moriana and Mercedes F. Durán-Cogan

This volume was conceived within the framework of the research group “National Identities and Sociopolitical Changes: Latin America Between Marginalization and Integration,” founded in 1994 at Simon Fraser University by Antonio Gómez-Moriana. It incorporates contributions by full-time and associated members of the group, as well as by a number of invited scholars whose work complements our research objectives. The long-term concerns of the group question the very basis of a research sector in the humanities and social sciences, specifically, the manner in which regional studies are conducted. As represented by this volume, we question the validity of any approach to regional studies that overlooks the interaction between different spheres of reality, and we aim to develop new theoretical and methodological paradigms capable of bridging gaps between previously disconnected fields of knowledge. With this aim in mind, our research group has undertaken the critical study of research tools as well as of their presuppositions and doxae, attempting to invalidate traditionally accepted (a)critical assumptions directly related to the ideological processes that permeate the politics of knowledge. In this volume we are approaching Latin America as a complex, conflictive, and interdependent totality while addressing, as a single object of knowledge, the interaction between all symbolic societal practices in a state of society. In so doing, we seek to develop a heuristic model that will help identify the ideological and aesthetic premises underpinning the institutionalized division of scientific work, prove the feasibility of

inter- and cross-disciplinary regional studies, and open perspectives for a new understanding of this region of the world. Departing from these theoretical and methodological premises, some of the contributions to this volume approach the object in an interdisciplinary manner and/or undertake a cultural studies perspective, while others have been selected precisely because their more disciplinary approaches (either from a humanities or a social sciences perspective) serve to illuminate the object in an inter- and/or cross-disciplinary manner within the “whole” represented by the volume.

As a consequence of the institutionalized division of scientific work, regional studies have been consistently elaborated within the framework of different disciplines that have not been put into dialogue. Similarly, geographic boundaries (often a result of the colonial heritage and other arbitrary historical or political factors) have proven to be an obstacle for a comprehensive understanding of the internal and the external forces regulating the coherence of specific groups. On the one hand, disciplinary boundaries present an insurmountable barrier to a comprehensive reflection on the historical, social, and discursive processes whereby identities are constructed. On the other hand, the use of society, nation, and state as the locus of identity (after which disciplinary divisions are largely modeled) is not only arbitrary but misleading. The inevitable result of centuries of religious proselytism, conquest and colonization processes, diasporic movements, occupation, annexation of territories through treaties or war, and economic and/or politically motivated migrations, is that religious, linguistic, ethnic, cultural, or political identity constructs and/or communifying practices rarely coincide with social, national, or regional boundaries. One of the consequences is that the dominant discourses on “the nation,” academic and non-academic alike, not only obscure their own interdependence, but contribute to the silencing of heterologic social and political processes both within and beyond borders. At the same time, the current organization of academic knowledge stands in the way of explaining, let alone prognosticating, moments of epistemic rupture and social crises.

The fact that the terminology, discourses, and codes used by academics in a given discipline takes the possibility of consensus through internal dialogue as its fundamental referent does not necessarily lead to the production of new knowledge. Instead, it often serves to maintain and reproduce canonized knowledges. On the basis of these institutional and geopolitical premises, the object of regional studies has been fragmented by political interests, nationalistic projects, and typologies of texts, and has been confined within rigid and reductive fields of study. Dominant trends in regional studies either privilege literary and cultural history or have an exclusive focus on contemporary political and economic issues, as is the case with so-called *area studies*. More often than not, literary scholars study practices and theories of (canonical) literature (and/or “popular”

literature, in the case of cultural studies) without relating them to political, economic, religious, or legal texts, practices, and/or theories, thus ignoring the fact that all of them interact within a common collective imaginary. At the same time, political and economic strategists elaborate projects of development and empowerment which ignore and often collide with the cultural traditions and religious values of a given region. Both trends in regional studies coincide in ignoring the existence of ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and religious groups whose identities rarely coincide with the political borders of the “region” (understood as the “society,” the “nation,” or the “state”). In the long run, the partiality and shortsightedness of such approaches has only generated limited, if not counterproductive, results.

In contrast to these dominant trends, we depart from the premise that every society is both intrinsically plural and conflictive and extrinsically interdependent. That is to say, every society must stratify antagonistic elements and regularize interests that are in conflict within it, while at the same time being subjected to, and obliged to negotiate, extrinsic forces that transcend its own internal logic. We believe that discourses and other symbolic societal practices always contain the ideological imprint of the group (or class) imposing the rules of their usage, and that words as well as images serve either to ensure and enhance the (social, political, religious, or artistic) coherence and integrity of the society that produces them or to undermine this coherence through the subversive, dysphonic, and disfigurating transgression of the society’s (social, political, religious, artistic) rules. Therefore, in contrast to the exclusionary, totalizing, or even totalitarian constructs traditionally accepted within a unitary, functionalist understanding of society, nation, and state, we are striving to present these constructs as being eminently complex, contradictory and conflictual. We depart from the assumption that identity processes are primarily mediated through images (sensorial or conceptual) that either confirm or subvert the ideological presuppositions that are the condition of possibility of such processes. Consequently, our working hypothesis assumes that the intricate web of discourses and other societal/symbolic practices that arise in a given society both results from and nourishes a complex dynamic of forces (and interests) at play in the making of the social. This dynamic constitutes for us a complex object of knowledge that can only be examined in its mediations, that is, at the crossroads where historical contexts, socio-political processes, and artistic or non-artistic, verbal or non-verbal “representations” interact. We call this dynamic the *momentum* of a society. Borrowed from physics, the term *momentum* refers here to the social dynamic resulting from the agonistic interaction between the “sayable” and the taboo, the “doxa” and the heterodoxy. It encompasses the tension between the institutional and the subversive, the (dominant) logic and the heterologic, the hegemonic and the marginal, the “control of the imaginary” (Costa Lima), and its

subversive transgressions (Gómez-Moriana). We believe that any partial approach to this complex object of knowledge can only be legitimized as a step that precedes its articulation in the whole. By approaching the interaction among all symbolic societal practices as a single object of knowledge, and taking the complex totality of Latin America as a “case study,” we are developing an analytical model that should evidence the ideological premises that support the institutional division of scientific work while, at the same time, proving the feasibility of inter- and cross-disciplinary regional studies.

Within the above-mentioned framework, this volume focuses on two very specific *momentums* in the making of Latin America: the colonial period, and Latin America’s contemporary integration into a “global world order.” The colonial trade-paths of slaves, silver, gold, silk, spices, and other commodities, together with the concurrent missionary enterprises that generally followed the same trade routes, established a network of economic and (involuntary) cultural exchanges that integrated the Americas (Mexico, California, the Caribbean, and Peru), Africa (Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Angola), Asia (the Philippines, China, Japan), and Europe (Spain and Portugal; later, Holland, France, and England) into an early and very complex “global world trade” whose consequences, in many respects, parallel our contemporary economic, social, political, and cultural concerns. This early worldwide circulation of human beings necessarily entailed a “circulation of symbolic goods” (Bourdieu): the religious and cultural heritages that individuals as well as groups carried with themselves. By examining these early processes of cross-pollination, we are attempting to apprehend and explain certain aspects of a historical moment whose relevance with respect to our present is still largely underestimated and unexplored. As we intend to exemplify through our present study of both *momentums* in the specific case of Latin America, some of their consequences are the long processes of adaptation and integration, differentiation and subversion still at work today throughout the world. The first three chapters of the volume comprise theoretical approaches to the concept of “identity” from very different perspectives. Chapters 4 and 5 explore the first *momentum*: the circulation of money, goods and people resulting from the colonial trade-paths and the concurrent missionary enterprises. Chapters 6 to 13 examine the ethnic, social, political, and cultural consequences of the colonial *momentum*, situating Latin America within the general frame of the contemporary *momentum*: that is to say, the place it holds within the construct of an interdependent “New Global Order.” The dossier that closes the volume revisits the Universidad Católica de Chile’s *Valparaíso School of Architecture* which, since its inception in the early sixties, has combined poetry, art, and architecture in its quest to determine and promote an architectural-spatial identity specific to Latin America.

Closely following the research group’s notion of society as intrinsically plural and conflictive, the volume offers a vast diversity of

opinions, methodologies, and analyzed corpus. It also varies greatly in the groups whose particular view of Latin America it puts forth: Indigenous, Black and Maroon Caribbean, Chicano, and so on. While this characteristic presented a challenge when attempting to organize the volume into thematic blocks and to establish the correlation among the different chapters (as is always the case when “society” and its cultural products are reflected upon beyond their “official” ordering), it is also the source of the volume’s richness. The collected essays converge on two points: first, they all promote a dialogue that weaves together various disciplines (philosophy, psychoanalytic theory, and sociology; religion, literature, and cultural studies; history and economics; political science and discourse analysis; sociocriticism and anthropology; film and gender studies; art history, iconography, cultural anthropology; poetry, art, and architecture), both within themselves and within the volume as a thematic “whole.” Second, they all question the integrity of the nation-state from at least one of several possible perspectives, including those of marginal identities (whether ethnic, linguistic, generic, or religious), those within the state and its dominant ideologies, and/or those of today’s commercial globalization, which threatens to submerge both hegemonic and marginal identities into a world without borders.

Whether from the perspective of a predominantly theoretical approach to the concept of identity, such as those adopted by Jorge Larraín Ibáñez, who follows the conflictual development of this concept throughout time, Sylvia Wynter, who places the concept itself in question, or Mercedes F. Durán-Cogan, who questions the presuppositions that sustain collective identitary constructs and specifically a “Latin American identity,” or from the more empirical and concrete perspective taken up by the other contributors, the questioning of the nation-state as an (artificial) means of unifying identities and interests surfaces in each chapter of the volume. Antonio Gómez-Moriana examines the origins of the nation-state, and exposes the paradox in which the mechanisms of its invention are enclosed. In this context, he reveals the emergence of a colonial (“Indian”) voice in the works of Garcilaso de la Vega (*el Inca*) and Guamán Poma. Dennis O. Flynn and Arturo Giráldez study the historical processes of the Spanish Empire’s integration and decadence through the role played by resources such as silver. Elena Feder shows the processes by which the nation-state appropriates the colonial sacred through an analysis of Guadalupismo in the formation of Mexicanidad in post-revolutionary Mexico, while José Alejos takes as point of departure the situation of the Maya in today’s Mexico. José Antonio Giménez-Micó works from the perspective of Chicano language and culture in the United States.

Through the analysis of “official” texts, James Cisneros studies the discursive mechanisms by which the state heralded a monolithic voice under the Argentine military, while Victor Armony analyzes the state’s processes by focussing on the acceptance of the globalizing

economy's neo-liberal doxa in post-dictatorial Argentina. Through the analysis of "literary" texts, Tatiana Bubnova approaches the five-hundred-year history of Ladino domination in Guatemala through the Mayan testimonials of this experience; Isabel de Sena studies Mexico at the end of the nineteenth century, revealing the presence of an "orientalism" which naturalizes and gives a lexicon to national problems, notably the treatment of indigenous people. Using a very different approach, Marcelo Nusenovich describes the masks used in a popular-religious festival in La Paz, Bolivia, and shows the social dynamic of their demonological dimension. Finally, the *Valparaíso Dossier* focuses on an architectural experiment that combines poetry, art and architecture in its attempt to configure a Latin American architectural-spatial identity in the praxis, reaching beyond the boundaries imposed by the nation-state.

Needless to say, this volume represents a sustained collaborative effort between scholars from very different disciplines, research interests, institutional affiliations, countries of origin and residence and cultural backgrounds. We hope that, in both content and form, it will inspire further discussions and similar collaborative efforts, thus helping to establish the new conditions of possibility that make working within and beyond established disciplinary, national, and regional boundaries at all possible. To all those who have supported and participated in this research adventure, sometimes crossing over boundaries beyond their initial expectations, our deepest gratitude.



## Chapter 1

### The Concept of Identity

Jorge Larraín Ibañez

Identity is in fashion and everyone speaks and writes about it, but this general interest has not usually been accompanied by intellectual clarity about the various meanings of the concept and the contexts within which its has been developed. This chapter will try to throw some light into these issues. First, it will show the evolution of the concept from an individual soul in the tradition of modern philosophy to a socially constructed phenomenon in the sociological and social psychological tradition. Then it will explore the social character of identity and clarify the role of "otherness" in its construction. In the following two sections, it will address the distinction between individual and collective identities and the relationships between national identity and culture. This is followed by a discussion about three alternative theoretical traditions which could be adopted in the study of national identities, and perhaps, of other collective identities as well. Finally, the issue of identity and globalization is explored in some relevant aspects.

#### **From Innate Essence to a Process of Social Construction**

The concept of identity has different meanings and is used in a variety of contexts, which need to be distinguished in order to avoid confusions. A first meaning of identity stems from the Aristotelian and scholastic metaphysical traditions which conceived of it as one of

the fundamental first principles of being and as a logical law of thought. The ontological principle of identity or non-contradiction affirms that everything is identical with itself, and therefore a thing cannot be and not be at the same time and from the same point of view. As a logical rule of thought the principle of identity establishes that two contradictory propositions cannot be true or false at the same time and that a contradictory idea (for instance, a square circle) is nonsensical. As a property of all beings, identity does not necessarily depend on whether a particular being is capable of reflection or not. A table is as identical with itself as a human being is with himself, even though the table is not aware of it and the human being may be.

For some modern philosophers nevertheless, reflexivity was crucial for human identity and marked an important difference with the identity of inanimate things or animals. This is why they insisted that self-consciousness or self-recognition was a necessary element of human identity. The problem for them was therefore to ascertain what guaranteed self-recognition over time. Memory seemed to have played a crucial role in this process according to many philosophers. Thus for instance Locke argued that “as far as this consciousness can be extended backwards to any past action or thought, so far reaches the identity of that *person*” (247). The continuity of consciousness over time was crucial in the constitution of the subject’s identity, and identity mattered because moral responsibility depended on it. Similarly, Leibniz maintained that “the intelligent soul, knowing what it is and being able to say this ‘I’ which says so much, does not merely remain and subsists metaphysically (which it does more fully than the others), but also remains morally the same and constitutes the same personality. For it is the memory or knowledge of this ‘I’ which makes it capable of reward and punishment” (44).

It has to be noticed though, that the main concern of these philosophers was not so much identity in itself, as the fact that moral responsibility seemed to depend on it. But of course, if this was their main concern, it would have sufficed for them to relate responsibility to self-recognition and this to memory; there was no need for them to make identity dependent on memory and self-consciousness. It could be argued that any individual human being that loses her memory continues to be ontologically identical with herself, although not necessarily morally responsible for acts s/he cannot remember.

The point is that in both of these variants, identity is reduced to a problem of individual sameness. In most cases, this is not an interesting problem for social scientists. Normally, one recognizes an object that is moved, or an animal that moves itself, from one location to another as being identical with itself. Normally as well one recognizes oneself as being the same individual who existed years ago as a child, or the same individual that traveled from A to B. True, there are medical cases, which are of interest to psychologists, in which some human individuals cannot recognize themselves at all; these are pathological extreme cases which do not affect the majority of people.

For these reasons, I am not going to use the concept of identity in this particular philosophical sense of individual sameness. I take this meaning of identity for granted.

Another, more promising meaning of identity leaves individual sameness aside and refers to a quality or conjunction of qualities with which a person or group see themselves intimately connected (Tugendhat, 1996, 29-40 and 1986, 254-62).<sup>1</sup> In this sense, identity has to do with the way in which individuals and groups define themselves by “identifying” themselves with certain characteristics. This conception is more interesting for social scientists because that with what one is identified can change and is influenced by social expectations.

In exploring this concept of qualitative identity, Tugendhat has emphasized the subjective character of the qualities which constitute identity and the fact that they can change. Qualitative identity responds to the question about what anyone would like to be. The answer to this question may be influenced by the past, but it is basically referred to the future. As he exemplifies, I may be a father in the biological sense but in another sense, which is crucial to identity, I am a father only if I choose to be (1996, 32-33). This applies to most qualities the adhesion which is important to identity.

Tugendhat believes that most literature about identity, since Erikson’s first writings to Habermas’s most recent ones, has been affected by a confusion between individual sameness and qualitative identity, and that only the latter is an adequate conceptualization. There is no doubt that qualitative identity provides a more relevant conception for social sciences and that Tugendhat’s description of it is insightful. But Tugendhat’s notion is still incomplete insofar as it does not fully clarify how and why different persons identify with different qualities. He argues that the qualities which make up identity are what Aristotle called “dispositions,” which consist in the capability to act in a particular manner (1996, 33). However, the problem of this explanation is that identity appears to be determined by purely internal and subjective factors. It may be true that Erikson conflated two different notions of identity, but he was clear that the social environment played a crucial role in its construction and that in answering the question “what would I like to be?” the judgement of others was crucial (22).

It is true that in his first study of self-consciousness Tugendhat insists on its social character by analyzing the work of George Mead and maintaining that a relation of oneself to oneself must be understood as an intersubjective process which involves a relation to others (Tugendhat, 1986, 219-23). But then, Tugendhat, who is a philosopher, is reluctant to fully relate this to the concept of identity, insofar as he considers identity to be a very unclear and ambiguous term developed by social psychology. When he does explore the concept of identity in a second study (1996), he does it in the context of a critique of Habermas and Erikson and is concerned almost solely

with distinguishing between individual and qualitative identity. But his analysis of qualitative identity, suggestive as it is, does not seem to emphasize its social character. Hence from a sociological perspective, Tugendhat's description of qualitative identity is rather limited and still shares some of the problems of the modern philosophical tradition which did not only conflate individual identity with qualitative identity, but also neglected the participation of social factors in the construction of identity. Tugendhat is a good critic of the former, but fails to insist on the latter. This is odd for someone who re-introduced Mead's approach into the analysis of self-consciousness.

The modern philosophical conception of identity was based on the belief in the existence of a self or inner core which emerges at birth, like a soul or essence, which remains basically the same throughout life, thus providing a sense of continuity and self-recognition. The self was conceived as an essence inherent in the human being, and, as Taylor has maintained, it was constituted by a certain sense of the interior; the only source of moral strength and self-control (1989, 111). This given or *a priori* self could be conceived as a thinking metaphysical substance (Descartes, Leibniz) or as the sensuous continuity of consciousness over time which memory provides (Locke, Enlightened French philosophers), but in any case it presupposed a sense of the interior.

Thus, Descartes sought to prove irrefutably the existence of an inner self by arguing that if there is thought there is bound to be something that thinks. Locke and the French philosophers of the Enlightenment, in their turn, wanted to leave metaphysics and the idea of substance behind but in conceiving of the self as based on the sense of continuity given by memory, they also emphasized an internal factor. Most of the early modern philosophers therefore, developed a conception of an individual and isolated subject, which is also the point of departure of many eighteenth-century philosophers.

What is absent from these philosophers is an analysis of the social character of the process of identity formation. Marx was one of the first authors within modernity to attack the individualistic conception of the subject as an illusion derived from the "Robinsonades" of "eighteenth century prophets" (1973, 83). He criticized Feuerbach for abstracting from the historical process and presupposing "an abstract-isolated-human individual." If there is a human essence this is in its reality "the ensemble of the social relations" and not an "abstraction inherent in each single individual" (1976, Thesis 6, 29). Marx detects a paradox in the fact that the era that produces the idea of the isolated individual is also the one which possesses the more developed social relationships (1973, 84). Human beings can individuate themselves only in the midst of society; they "become individuals only through the process of history" (1973, 496).

The idea of a subject produced in interaction with a variety of social relations became crucial for sociologists and social

psychologists. Thus for instance, William James, in his work *Principles of Psychology*, published in London in 1890, defines the human self in terms which clearly evoke the social relations referred to by Marx. The self is not given but is constructed upon the basis of three constitutive elements. First is the material element, which includes the body and other possessions, capable of providing the subject with feelings and emotions of intimacy. Second is the social element, which is the recognition that we obtain from other human beings, in relation to whom one develops several "social selves." James affirms that we show a different face of our personality to each individual that interest us, and that we cannot live with their constant disapproval. Third is the spiritual element, which is constituted by our psychic and mental capabilities and functions. James distinguishes between the I and the me. Just as I recognize my things because they remain the same over time and provide me with the same feelings of intimacy, the I recognizes the me as the same me that it knew before and was able to induce feelings of closeness. It is then clear that James also confused sameness with identity.

James's work, not exempt from contradictions and problems, insofar as it sought to combine social with transcendental elements, exercised nevertheless an important influence upon the subsequent development of social psychology. G. H. Mead is one of its most distinguished representatives. He argued that the conception of the self as a soul with which the individual was born had to be abandoned in order to study the "self in its dependence upon the social group to which it belongs" (Mead, 1). The self is not given but develops in an individual as a result of his/her social experiences. This is why the formation of the self presupposes the prior existence of the group. Unlike some modern philosophers for whom the memory of sensory perceptions was crucial for a sense of identity, Mead emphasized the role of language and communication:

The thinking or intellectual process—the internalization and inner dramatization, by the individual, of the external conversation of significant gestures which constitutes his chief mode of interaction with other individuals belonging to the same society—is the earliest experiential phase in the genesis and development of the self. (173)

However, the internalization of external attitudes does not make the self totally passive and purely receptive. The self is more than the mere organization of social attitudes. This is what Mead expresses through his distinction between the 'I' and the 'me.' The 'I' is the response, the reaction of the individual to the attitudes of the others; the 'me' is the organized set of attitudes of others, which is constitutive of the self (175). Mead accepts that because the self arises in the context of a variety of social experiences it is very complex, full of aspects or parts which make reference to certain social relations and

not to others. That is why it is even possible to speak of a variety of selves:

We carry on a whole series of different relationships to different people. We are one thing to one man and another thing to another. There are parts of the self which exist only for the self in relationship to itself. We divide ourselves up in all sorts of different selves with reference to our acquaintances . . . There are all sorts of different selves answering to all sorts of different social reactions. (142)

However, there is also a complete self which responds to the community as a whole. The unity and structure of the complete self reflect the unity and structure of the totality of the social processes in which the individual participates: “the various elementary selves which constitute, or are organized into, a complete self are the various aspects of the structure of that complete self answering to the various aspects of the structure of the social process as a whole” (144).

It can be concluded therefore that starting from the modern philosophical tradition a confusion has existed between two notions of identity, one referring to individual sameness and the other referring to qualitative identity. The latter seems to be a more appropriate conception for sociology, yet it is possible to distinguish two different versions of it. First, there is a subjectivist position, which conceives of identity as emerging from personal dispositions, and which neglects the role of the social environment. Second, starting from Marx onwards, many sociologists and social psychologists have developed a conception whereby the social expectations of others play a crucial role in the identification with some qualities. This aspect will be expanded in the next section.

### The Three Component Parts of Identity

If identity is not an innate essence but a social process of construction, we need to identify the constitutive elements upon which it is constructed. I propose the idea that these elements are three. First, individuals define themselves or identify themselves with some qualities in terms of some shared social categories. In forming their personal identities most individuals share certain group allegiances or characteristics such as religion, gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality, and nationality which are culturally determined and contribute to specification of the subject and its sense of identity. In this sense, it can be affirmed that culture is one of the determinants of personal identity. All personal identities are rooted in culturally determined collective contexts. This is how the idea of cultural identities emerges. In modern times, the cultural identities that have had some of the most

important influence in the formation of subjects are class and national identities.

Second is the material element that in William James' seminal idea includes the body and other possessions capable of providing the subject with vital elements of self-recognition. In his own words:

It is clear that between what a man calls *me* and what he simply calls *mine* the line is difficult to draw . . . In the widest possible sense . . . a man's self is the sum total of all that he can call his, not only his body, and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and his children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works, his land and horses and yacht and bank account. (291)

The idea is that in producing, possessing, acquiring, or shaping material things human beings project their self, their own qualities in them; they see themselves in them and see them according to their own image. As Simmel said,

All property means an extension of personality; my property is that which obeys my will, that is to say, that in which my self expresses and realizes itself externally. And this occurs before and more completely than anywhere else in our own body, which, for that reason, constitutes our first and indisputable property. (1939, 363)

If this is so, then objects can influence human personality. The extent of this influence was clearly appreciated by Simmel, both in the case of artistic creation of material things and in the case of exchange. In respect to the former he said that "the unity of the object which we create and its absence influence the corresponding configuration of our personality" (1976, 571). In respect to the latter he said that the self is in such solidarity with his concrete possessions that even "the giving away of values, whether it is in exchange or as a gift, may heighten the feeling of personal relation to the possession" (1990, 322).

It is through this material aspect that identity can be related to consumption and to both traditional and cultural industries. These industries produce commodities, consumable goods which people acquire in the market, be they material objects or forms of entertainment and art. Each purchase or consumption of these commodities is both an act whereby people satisfy necessities and a cultural act, in so far as it is a culturally determined manner of purchasing and consuming commodities. Thus for instance, I can buy a ticket to the opera because I love opera and it gives me pleasure. But I can also buy a ticket to the opera in order to be seen in the company of certain people that I deem important or of high status. I can buy a special car because I need mobility, but I can also buy it in order to

belong to a particular group or circle which is identifiable by using that particular kind of car. In other words, access to certain material goods and the consumption of certain commodities may also become a means of access to an imagined group represented by those goods; it may become a form of looking for recognition. Material things make one belong or, rather, give one the feeling of belonging to a desired community. To this extent, they contribute to shaping personal identities by symbolizing a collective or cultural identity.

In the third place, the construction of the self necessarily involves the existence of others in a double sense. The others are those whose opinions about us we internalize. But they are also those against which the self acquires its distinctiveness and specificity. The first sense entails that "our total self-image involves our relations to other persons and their appraisal of us" (Gerth & Mills, 80). The subject internalizes the expectations or attitudes of the others in respect to himself or herself, and these expectations of the others are transformed into his or her own self-expectations. Hence, the subject defines himself or herself in terms of how others see him or her. However, only the evaluations of others that are in some way significant to the subject really count for the construction and maintenance of his or her self-image. Parents are at the beginning the most significant others, but later a variety of others begin to operate (friends, relatives, peers, teachers, etc).

Thus it could be said that Mead's "complete self" responds to a "generalized other," which is composed of an integration of the appraisals and values of the significant others of the person (Gerth & Mills, 95). The socially constructed self is thus immensely complex and variable but at the same time it is expected to more or less successfully integrate its various aspects and become coherent and consistent in its tendencies and activities. In adults, self-image, although having arisen in various ways from the others's evaluations, normally tends to be strong enough to exist with a relative autonomy from the opinions of any particular other. That is to say, the adult, to a certain extent, has already constructed his or her self upon the basis of a large sequence of previous assessments occurred in the past. Indeed, if there were not a certain autonomy of the self-image and the adult totally depended on what particular others thought of him or her at specific times, he or she would be considered to be inadequate or lacking in character. The self-image that anyone has at a particular time is a reflection of the others' evaluations, but only insofar as they are modified by the self previously developed (Gerth & Mills, 85). It is still true though, that no individual identity can survive a total lack of recognition from all quarters.

Therefore, identity, in a personal sense, is something that the individual presents to the others and that the others present to him or her. The self presupposes the prior existence of the group and its evaluation of it. The meaning of identity responds not so much to the question "who am I?" or "what would I like to be?" as to the

question “who am I in the eyes of the others?” (Levita, 7) or “what would I like to be, considering the judgement significant others have of me?” Erikson expresses this idea by saying that in the process of identification “the individual judges himself in the light of what he perceives as the manner in which the others judge him” (22). According to Erikson this aspect of identity is not well understood by traditional psychoanalytic method because “it has not elaborated the terms to conceptualize the (social) environment” (24). The important thing to understand about this environment, which is expressed in German by the word *Umwelt*, is that it does not only surround us, but is also within us. In this sense, it could be said that identities come from without insofar as they are the manner in which we are recognized by the others, but come from within insofar as our self-recognition is a function of the recognition of others which we have internalized.

According to Honneth, the self-recognition, which makes identity possible, takes three forms: self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem (118-23). But, as I have already argued, the development of these forms of relation with the self depends fundamentally upon the subject experiencing the recognition of others, whom she/he also recognizes. In other words, the construction of identity is an intersubjective process of mutual recognition. This is equivalent to what Taylor has called the fundamentally dialogical character of human life (1994, 32).<sup>2</sup> For Honneth self-confidence arises in the child only in so far as the expression of his/her needs is met by a positive answer of love and concern on the part of the others in charge of him/her. Equally, self-respect depends upon others respecting the subject’s human dignity and, consequently, the rights which accompany that dignity. Lastly, self-esteem can only exist if the others recognize the contribution of a subject as valuable. In sum, a well-integrated identity depends upon three forms of recognition: love or concern for the subject, respect for his/her rights, and esteem for his/her contribution.

Simultaneously, Honneth argues that there are three forms of disrespect, which co-exist with the three forms of recognition, and which could contribute to the creation of social conflicts and to a “struggle for recognition” on the part of social sectors deprived of these forms of respect. The first form of disrespect is physical abuse or threats to the physical integrity of a person, which affects his/her self-confidence. The second form is the systematic and structural exclusion of a person from having certain rights, which damages his/her self-respect. The third form is the cultural devaluation of certain modes of life or beliefs which are considered to be inferior or deficient, which prevents the subject from giving social value or esteem to his/her abilities and contributions (Honneth, 132-35). The negative emotional reaction (rage, indignation) which accompanies the experience of disrespect represents for Honneth the motivational basis of the struggle for recognition: “for it is only by regaining the

possibility of active conduct that individuals can dispel the state of emotional tension into which they are forced as a result of humiliation" (138).

Then, for Honneth the experience of disrespect would be the source of collective forms of resistance and social struggle. But these are not the automatic result of individual emotional responses. Only if the means for the intersubjective articulation of such negative emotions into a social movement exist will collective forms of struggle arise. Honneth uses Mead's distinction between the "me" and the "I" to found the idea of a struggle for recognition. While the "me" reflects the expectations and images which the others have of me, the "I" actively seeks a wider recognition of my rights as part of a future ideal community (Honneth, 77-85). People are always struggling to expand the range of their rights, for the recognition of greater spaces of autonomy and respect. This is the basis for the development of society, a continuous process in which the forms of recognition are broadened to new forms of freedom as much as to new groups of individuals. Individual identity, therefore, presupposes group expectations, not only as past expectations, but also as future possibilities.

The importance of Honneth's thought and of his interpretation of Mead is that it allows us to understand identity, not as a merely passive construction, but as a veritable interaction in which the subject's identity is built not just as an expression of the others' free recognition, but also as a result of a struggle to be recognized by the others. This struggle responds to the experience of disrespect which is lived as indignation and rage and which the "I" does not accept. This struggle, at least in the case of the last two forms of recognition of rights and esteem, has the potentiality of becoming collective in so far as its goals could generalize themselves beyond individual intentions. At this point personal and collective identities meet.

The search for personal recognition can manifest itself and look for satisfaction in the struggle of the collective movement. But it can also manifest itself as a personal projection in consumer things, which have become symbols of the imagined community one wants to be a part of or respected by. By contrast to the collective struggle for recognition, the struggle for recognition based on consumption is highly individualized and atomized. It substitutes the vicarious aura of representative things for the real achievements of group struggle and, to this extent, it changes nothing in reality, but constitutes an alternative that disarms and detracts from collective struggle. Consumption can substitute for collective action but it can hardly change the attitudes of others to make them recognize you. So, although things are inevitably a part of anyone's identity, they may also become a devious way of struggling for recognition.

Identity also presupposes the existence of others who have different modes of life, different values, customs, and ideas. In order to define oneself the differences with others are accentuated. The

definition of self always involves a distinction from the values, characteristics, and modes of life of others: some groups, values, and customs are presented as belonging outside the community. Thus the idea of "us" as different from "them" emerges. Sometimes, in order to define oneself, differences from someone else are exaggerated. In these cases, the normal process of differentiation is transformed in a process of opposition and hostility against the other. The process of differentiation from others is indispensable for the construction of one's own identity; the hostile opposition to others is not. It constitutes a danger to the identity construction process.

This process of differentiation has always existed in all processes of identity construction; it is also culturally determined. The ancient Greek world divided human beings into Greeks and barbarians. *Bárbaroi* were those who spoke other languages and could not speak Greek; they became the "others" of Greek identity. However, as García-Gual has noted, from the principle of language differentiation very soon a form of contempt evolved: those who did not speak Greek were regarded as backward, rude, rebellious, and intellectually inferior. The very Greek language facilitated this transition from difference to contempt: the word *logos* had the double meaning of spoken word and reason, that is to say it meant both intelligible language and the realization of order. Thus the barbarian, who could not speak in Greek, was also easily judged irrational, lacking in order and logic. Greek language became the vehicle of reason par excellence. Thus, one can understand why Aristotle, Euripides, and Isocrates justified slavery as the result of the natural superiority of the Greek and the natural inferiority of barbarians (García-Gual, Vol. I, 7-9).

There is also evidence that these mechanisms of identification existed in pre-Columbian America among the various indigenous peoples. Sahagún's chronicles tell us how the *nahuas* in Central America considered *otomies* as lazy and lascivious fools, so much so that among the *nahuas* it was customary to call *otomi* somebody who was stupid and could not understand things quickly. Equally, they considered *huaxtecas* to be drunkards and impudent because they did not wear a loincloth. *Nahuas* also believed, like the Greeks, that their *nahuaatl* language was more refined and sophisticated than the unintelligible and rude languages of their neighbouring peoples (León-Portilla, 36-41).

There are also numerous historical examples of identification in which opposition to the other is exaggerated to the point of promoting exclusion in varying degrees: from marking a difference one can go to distrust, from distrust one can go to open hostility, and from here to aggression. This process of increasing exclusion is not of itself necessary, but it has happened too many times in history to be ignored as a remote possibility. By following Hilberg, Bauman describes the logic sequence which ended up in the holocaust of the Jews: "it starts with the definition of the stranger. Once it has been

defined, it can be separated. Once it has been separated, it can be deported. Once it has been deported, physical extermination could be the conclusion" (Bauman, 68).<sup>3</sup> This is the same logic that has more recently operated between Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda, or between Bosnia's Muslims and Serbs in the old Yugoslavia.

The other can be defined in at least three dimensions: time, space, and essential characteristics. By means of the temporal dimension, the other is located in the past; it is the antithesis of a new project. This is the way in which most theories typical of modernity understood modern society, in opposition to traditional society. The other of modernity is the old or obsolete, the primitive and backward. In many cases, modern societies conceive of primitive societies as imperfect anticipations of themselves, full of "artificial" institutions which did not allow them to thrive.

But the other can also be defined in terms of those who lack a fundamental characteristic. Most discourses of modernity, for instance, find in reason and civilization, and those who represent them, the most important source of cultural identity. This is why there are subordinate social categories and groups within modernity itself which assume the role of the other insofar as they represent the lack of reason and civilization. Wagner has identified the working classes, women, and mentally ill people as three main categories of "others" of early modernity, identified as such because of their lack of reason (39). The working classes were at the beginning considered dangerous classes with far too many boundless aspirations that introduced disorder in society. Women, in their turn, were systematically excluded from public and political life throughout the nineteenth century and a good part of the twentieth, because of their supposed "emotiveness," lack of control, and lack of rationality. Finally, mad and insane people represented as well those irrational "others" which have no control over themselves.

In the third place, by means of the spatial dimension, the other is defined as one who lives outside or comes from beyond the boundaries of a particular society, the barbarian or backward primitive who has still to be civilized. It is very important to understand that in the construction of the European cultural identities from the sixteenth century onwards, the presence of the non-European other was always crucial. The discovery and conquest of America in particular played a very important role because it coincided with the beginning of modernity, the beginning of capitalism, and the formation of the European nation-states. Therefore, the formation of European cultural identities at the beginning of modernity was carried out in opposition to some "others," who were provided not just by their own feudal past, not only by their own "non-rational" social sectors, but also by the contemporary but spatially different reality of America, Africa, and Asia. In all these cases, the opposition to the "other" seems to be determined by rationality criteria. Thus, a more or less complete

picture of the “others” of early modernity and their specific lack of reason might be like this: if the lack of reason is equivalent to

Wildness	(black people, savages, non-civilized peoples)
Tradition	(nobility, priests)
Disorder	(working classes, masses)
Emotiveness	(women)
Insanity	(mentally ill people)

Of course, some of these social sectors later ceased to play the fundamental role of “other” and little by little were incorporated into the mainstream society. This is especially true of the working classes and women, the two sectors closer to society itself and numerically very important. Their incorporation was partly the result of their own successful struggles and partly the consequence of social pacts, which gave them citizenship in exchange for moderation and order. The more advanced modernity becomes, the more “otherness” becomes concentrated in the spatial dimension, including those who live outside or come from abroad. This is the reason why ethnic factors have acquired preponderance in the contemporary definition of otherness. In contrast with these external others, the European intellectual elite thinks of itself as the point of reference for the interpretation of history, as the measure of other forms of life which appear as immature, incomplete, underdeveloped, or simply inferior. This form of identity is self-centered and exclusive: it knows itself as the center, as the spearhead of history and constructs the other as backward. On the other hand, the identity of the colonized countries, including Latin America, was also constructed in relation to the European countries as an identity fully conscious of its backwardness, peripheral nature, and dependency.

Nevertheless, the other internal factors have never ceased to have some presence as “others,” even if marginally. A notable example is the neo-conservative crusade of Prime Minister Thatcher in Great Britain, which made a serious attempt to renovate the old military values of English identity by adding to the external enemy, Argentina, an “internal enemy”: the trade unions, which had to be defeated in order to revert the country’s declining economic trends. Something similar was attempted by General Pinochet’s government in Chile, where workers and shantytown dwellers were reconstituted anew as dangerous classes for national security.

## Personal and Collective Identities

What is the relationship between personal and collective identities? This important question has to be answered before one can explore

national or regional identities. The first thing one has to say about this distinction is that personal and collective identities are mutually necessary and interrelated. There cannot be personal identities without collective identities and vice-versa. Which means that although there is certainly an analytical distinction between the two, they cannot be conceived apart and substantialized as entities which stand on their own without a reference to one another. This is because individuals cannot be conceived of as isolated entities and opposed to the social world conceived of as an external reality. Individuals are defined in their social relations and society reproduces itself and changes through individual actions. Personal identities are shaped by culturally defined collective identities, but these cannot exist separate from individuals.

I have already established above that in constructing their personal identities individuals share some group allegiances or characteristics which are culturally determined. Implicit in this is the idea of collective identities such as nationality, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and class. By following Stuart Hall, I have called these “cultural identities.” They are collective forms of identity because they refer to some culturally defined characteristics, which are shared by many individuals. Thus being Chilean or British makes us belong to a collective, it makes us part of a group which could be identified by some specific features. But in themselves, Britishness or Chileanness mean very little without a reference to concrete individual members who recreate it by means of their practices. Collective identities should not be hypostasized as if they had an independent existence and belonged to a fully integrated collective individual. As Giddens would put it, collective identities are continually recreated by individuals through the same means by which they express themselves as actors with an identity but, at the same time, collective identities make such activities possible. Thus, by paraphrasing Giddens, it could be said that a collective identity is the means and the result of the individual identity it recursively organizes (1984, chapter 1).<sup>4</sup>

In itself, a collective identity is purely a cultural artifact, a kind of “imagined community,” as Anderson puts it in the case of the nation (1983). What Anderson says of the nation is also partly applicable, I think, to other cultural identities like sexuality, ethnicity, class, gender, etc. In all these cases, the members of these imagined communities are limited but will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion (15). Still, it is clear that one cannot entirely assimilate these cultural identities to one other and that each of them has its own history and individual resonance. Many millions have died or killed for their nations since modernity started. Until today, on the contrary, being heterosexual has not been something that has inspired a great sense of fraternity, and certainly very few, if any, have died for it. Being a woman, a homosexual, or a black person has not involved nearly as much imagined fraternity as being Chilean or British, and

yet it has increasingly entailed degrees of involvement and personal commitment on the part of many individuals which are greater than those of the portrayed majority.

This means that each cultural identity demands a different amount of commitment from each individual member, or involves a different degree of imagined fraternity, and that this can change historically. There is nothing static about cultural identities. Class, nationality, and sexuality almost did not have a presence as cultural identities before modernity arrived and hence they could not count in the construction of personal identities. I have already indicated that there are signs that class and nationality are beginning to decline in late modernity. Early modernity brought about and spread nation-states everywhere; late modernity and accelerated globalization have begun to erode their autonomy. Collective identities therefore, historically begin, develop, and can decline or disappear.

Cultural identities can overlap and are not mutually exclusive. In the construction of personal identities always a number of them concur in varying degrees. But not all of them are strictly necessary in the same way. For instance, it is very difficult to escape from the determinations of nationality and gender, but there is little problem in not being a supporter of some football club or not having a particular religion. Some cultural identities can also subsume or be a part of other cultural identities. For instance, I am Chilean and simultaneously Latin American in the same way as any British person is also European. Further sub classifications may become significant in specific contexts. For instance, Western Europe could be contrasted with Eastern or Southern Europe and South America with Central or North America. All these divisions are culturally made, and the communities they refer to are imagined in different ways. It may be hypothesized, for instance, that Latin Americanness means more to Chileans or Venezuelans than Europeaness means to British subjects, and this would be the consequence of having shared the same conquerors, the same language, and many other cultural values.

Cultural identities work by producing meanings and stories with which individuals can identify. The more important the role of a collective identity for the construction of personal identities, the greater the appeal of meanings and narratives which are created to interpellate individuals so that they identify with them. The nation is a very special case in this respect because it has demanded and achieved a degree of commitment on the part of its members which is unparalleled by other cultural identities. Anderson has tried to explained the strength of such form of identity by drawing on its cultural origins which suggest an affinity and continuity with religion: both are concerned with death and immortality, yet with the ebbing of religious belief the nation represents a new way to continuity and immortality (1983, 18-19).<sup>5</sup>

Hall has shown various ways in which the discourse of the nation interpellates individuals so that they identify with it (1992, 293). For

instance, by telling and retelling the narrative of the nation, presented in national histories, in the literature, in the media, and in popular culture. Here one finds glorious historical events, images, symbols, landscapes, and rituals but also “invented traditions” which, purporting to be very old, try to express in a symbolic way the continuity with a great past (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1). Another way is the emphasis on the timelessness of origins and traditions. This is usually connected with a foundational myth in which reference is made to a pure, original people from which all virtues come.

## National Identity and the Two Poles of Culture

It is very important to realize that national identities exist in two different poles of culture (Johnson, 174). On the one side, they exist in the public sphere as articulated discourses, highly selective and constructed from above by a variety of cultural agents and institutions (such as intellectuals, universities, media, and research centers). On the other side, they exist in the social base as a form of personal and group subjectivity which expresses a variety of modes of life and feelings which sometimes are not well represented in public versions of identity.<sup>6</sup> Whereas public versions are coherent and rigorous forms of consciousness elaborated by intellectuals, private versions are developed by common people in more restricted and local spaces in the multiple conversations and exchanges of daily life and therefore are less articulated and have a more concrete, contradictory and common sense character. In order to better understand these two dimensions one could resort to Giddens's distinction between discursive consciousness and practical consciousness. The former consists in what social actors can say about the existent social and cultural conditions in the form of an articulate and elaborate discourse. Practical consciousness on the contrary consists in what actors know about their own reality but which they cannot express discursively (Giddens, 374-75).

Public versions of national identity frequently want us to believe that there is only one true version of it, that one can somehow determine with precision what belongs to it and what does not, and that it is more or less shared by everyone in society. In fact, the selective and excluding character of the construction process shows that there is nothing natural or spontaneous about it and that many other versions could be equally constructed around different selections and exclusions. The idea of a national identity is normally constructed around the interests and worldviews of some dominant classes or groups in society through a variety of cultural institutions such as the media, educational, religious and military institutions, state apparatuses, and such. The criteria for defining it are always narrower and more selective than the increasingly complex and diversified

cultural habits and practices of the people. In the public versions of national identity, diversity is carefully concealed behind a supposed uniformity.

This narrowing process in the discursive construction of a cultural identity is achieved through certain mechanisms (Johnson, 194-204). Thus, one can typically find a process of selection whereby only some features, symbols and group experiences are taken into account and others are excluded. There is also a process of evaluation whereby the values of certain classes, institutions, or groups are presented as national values and others are excluded. So a moral community is constructed with supposedly shared values while leaving out other values. A process of opposition is also frequently resorted to whereby some groups, ways of life, and ideas are presented as outside the national community. Cultural identity is defined as against these other groups: thus the idea of 'us' as opposed to 'them'. Differences are exaggerated in order to highlight the profile of one's own identity. Finally, one finds processes of naturalization whereby certain cultural features are presented as naturally given in the national character.

The distinction between public and private versions of identity does not mean that they constitute entirely separate worlds. Public versions of identity are constructed by selecting features from the modes of life of the common people, and, in their turn, they influence the way in which people see themselves. But this influence is not mechanical or automatic; many ethnic groups, regions or sections of society do not feel well represented by the dominant versions and do not share that sense of identity. R. Johnson has represented this as a clockwise circular process, which entails four moments starting at the base of the circle (191-94). At the basis, there is a complex society with an increasingly diversified culture and a huge variety of ways of life. From this big complex reservoir, cultural institutions such as the media, churches, educational, and political apparatuses produce some public versions of identity which select only those features that are considered to be representative while excluding others. These public versions in their turn influence the way in which people see themselves and the way they act through an active and critical process of reading or reception thus closing the circle. In this way the local and private cultures constitute as much the beginning as the end of the circuit. Public versions are constructed from ways of life but also constitute sites of struggle, which shape the plurality of ways of life. In order to do this, though, they require an effective relationship with the common sense of the people, a capacity to produce meanings, symbols, and images which capture the popular imaginary (Johnson, 192). This ability to shape everyday life is never simple and direct. Individual and groups actively transform, reject, appropriate, and reinterpret such discourses in their daily life.

I have underlined the role of cultural institutions in the construction of different discursive versions of national identity, but there is little doubt that there is one political institution, the state,

which has an enormous weight in articulating national identity discourses. It does this not only through its own cultural and educational institutions, not only through the discourses of other state institutions such as the army and a variety of mass media it controls, but also, apart from these obvious sources, through the provision or creation of many of the contents of identity discourses: traditions, ceremonies, celebrations, national days, remembrance days, military parades, and so on. The state ceremonial, the flag, the national anthem, or the national anniversaries are all state-created symbols which seek to enhance a sense of common identity by uniting and enacting the imagined community which is the nation.

The discursive processes that participate in the construction of a cultural identity can easily become ideological if they conceal real diversities and antagonisms in society. All attempts at fixing once and for all the contents of a cultural identity and all pretensions to having discovered the "true" identity of a people are likely to become ideological forms which are used by certain groups or classes for their own benefit. However, it is also true that certain versions of cultural identity, especially those developed by oppressed or discriminated groups in society, perform the role of being a means of resistance in the face of domination and exclusion and cannot therefore be considered ideological. Unlike the dominant versions, they do not conceal but highlight the contradictions. This shows the inherent ambiguity of the concept of cultural identity. On the one hand it may try to mask diversity; on the other, it may serve as a means of resistance.

### Different Theoretical Conceptions of National Identity

There are at least three theoretical traditions within which national identity can be understood. Richard Johnson has analyzed two theoretical traditions, constructivism and essentialism (180-86). Constructivism emphasizes the discursively constructed character of identity and therefore its openness to any change. Essentialism underlines the fixed character, and closeness to any change, of identity. To these I should add a third, intermediate position, which, for lack of a better name I call historical-structural. This approach stresses the fact that identity is constructed not solely by discourse but also by the solidified practices of a people and therefore it can change but in a materially conditioned manner. Constructivist theories derive from poststructuralist positions,<sup>7</sup> which concede crucial importance to discourse as the central element around which social life is organized. In this intellectual tradition subjects and actors, as much as social-political movements, are constituted by a variety of discourses. It is not the subject that creates discourses; it is the discourse that creates the subjects or the "subject positions" which can be filled by a

variety of individuals.<sup>8</sup> In the terrain of national identity, a constructivist version underlines the capacity of a discourse to construct the nation, its ability to interpellate individuals and constitute them as national subjects within a conception of the nation articulated by discourse.

Poststructural constructivism was born in an attempt to struggle against all essentialism, but especially against Marxist essentialism which gave primacy to the working class and its class interests as central premises of all progressive political action. Poststructuralism argues that privileged classes or interests do not exist and that all political practices depend on certain discourses which are indeterminate and free constructions which articulate ideological elements coming from different sources and fix "subject positions." Therefore, constructivism, in so far as national identity is concerned, overestimates the power of discourse to construct the nation as against essentialist visions which consider the national fundament as something given and not arbitrarily constructed by a discourse. In privileging the foundational role of highly articulated and coherent discourses, constructivism necessarily conceives of national identity as constructed "from above," in the public sphere, and neglects private and popular forms (Johnson, 180-83).

The overrating of public versions excessively simplifies the study of identity and ignores the complexity of the problem by assuming that there is a total correspondence between public discourse and the feelings of common people. But this correspondence cannot be simply assumed. No discourse can, by itself, simply assume its power to shape people's opinions. One has to avoid what Thompson has called the "fallacy of internalism," the tendency to "read off the consequences of cultural products from the products themselves" (1990, 105). All culture has a double aspect: there are the meanings present in the most articulate expressions of the public sphere, and there are the meanings sustained upon and congealed from the people's concrete modes of life. For this reason, Johnson maintains that

National identity cannot be reduced to discourse or narrative, especially not to a singular discourse or narration. Any cultural product only acquires weight and a long life by activating a complex moving web of discourses and narratives, already in process in many different public and private spaces. In these spaces the combinations of meanings are always closely connected to the histories, memories and psychic and other investments of individual and social groups. These associations occur in "bibliographical" clusters, hard to predict in advance . . . and depend on linguistic and other conventions (they are not outside discourse in this sense); but they are also anchored in repeated practices which constrain the formal fluidity of symbols and signs. (183)

The constructivist conception is unilateral and limited and tends to fall into a kind of voluntarism which would allow the construction of any type of national identity as long as the discourse which supports it, successfully interpellates the majority of the people. Of course, constructivism knows that the interpellation of individuals by a certain discourse can fail; but this is because there is an alternative discourse that succeeds. The problem with constructivism is not so much its idea that any public discourse can freely construct a national identity, as the fact that it does not conceive any conditions outside discourse which could explain why a particular discourse on identity could be more successful than others. Success or failure in constructing identities is thus conceived as a purely discursive problem or, rather, a problem of the interpellating capacity of a discourse. Constructivism ignores the repeated practices and the sedimented meanings present in the daily practices of the people, which condition their receptiveness or lack thereof to any discourse.

The essentialist conception, at the other extreme, conceives of national identity as an already established set of common experiences and shared fundamental values, which was constituted in the past, as an essence. In the words of Hall, it is “a sort of collective ‘one true self’, hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed ‘selves’, which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common” (1990, 223). According to this definition each people or nation has an essence, some shared experience of ‘oneness’ which provides a stable set of meanings, codes, and frames of reference which underlie the more superficial differences and historical changes of the people. A process of dehistoricization is employed whereby “an original history . . . is frozen as heritage, as tradition” (Johnson, 190). What was an original historical moment is converted into patrimony, into a legacy which is received from the past and which cannot be questioned. As García Canclini puts it, for essentialism “the ultimate end of culture is to convert itself into nature. Be natural as a given” (154).

This essence can be temporarily lost, it could even be abandoned or disregarded by sectors of the people, but it cannot totally disappear; it will survive and can be restored, re-discovered, excavated from some privileged reservoir which could be a language, a religion, or an ethnic group. The price of neglecting or disregarding such an essence is alienation and failure. No nation can indefinitely and with impunity go against its own true inner being. This conception of identity is not only selective and evaluative in the sense that only some features and values are taken into account and others are excluded, but it is also usually in opposition to some features. That is to say, it is defined against some values, ways of life, and ideas which are presented as outside the national community. Cultural differences are thus not only exaggerated but fixed forever. Above all, essentialism does not allow for any cultural identity to change or receive new

contributions, it is trapped in a rigid distinction between what is consider to be one's own patrimony and what is supposed to be alien.

The historical-structural conception, which I favor, wants to establish a balance between the two extreme positions just outlined. On the one hand, it conceives of cultural identity as something which is permanently constructed and reconstructed within new historical contexts and situations; as something in respect of which it can never be said that is finally resolved, or definitively constituted as a fixed set of values and common experiences. On the other hand, it does not conceive of the construction of identity as a mere process of public discourse, but considers also the practices and meanings accumulated in the daily life of people. The historical-structural version conceives of identity as a dynamic interrelation of the public and private poles, the two necessary moments of a circular process of mutual interaction. As Hall has put it, in a historical conception, identity

is a matter of "becoming" as well as of "being." It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous "play" of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in a mere "recovery" of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past. (1990, 225)

The final sentence of Hall's quotation could be interpreted in a constructivist way in so far as the point of reference seems to be only the narrative. In order not to fall again into a discursive constructivism, it is necessary to introduce the role which practices and modes of life play in the process of situating oneself in a narrative. In this way one could read Hall as saying that identity does not consist only in the process of being situated by the "narratives of the past," but also in the process whereby individuals situate themselves in relation to those narratives by means of their practices and modes of life.

It is important to underline that this conception does not only look at the past as the privileged reservoir of identity but also looks at the future and conceives of identity as a project. The question about identity is therefore not just who are we? but also who do we want to be? As Habermas proposes, "identity is not something pre-given, but also, and simultaneously our own project" (1992, 243). This has to be understood as much at the level of public discourse as at the level of individual and group experiences. It is clear that no project articulated

by a specific discourse could pretend the monopoly of identity construction without considering the popular forms, the meanings, and the traditions accumulated in daily life by long standing practices. But it is also true that in the construction of the future not all historical traditions have the same value. Not everything which constitutes a national tradition is necessarily good and acceptable for the future. It may be true that a nation cannot freely chose its traditions, but at least it can politically decide whether to continue or not with some of them (Habermas, 1989, 263).

## Globalization and Identity

The phenomenon of globalization has existed for a long time—at least since the beginning of modernity—but its pace has intensified and the processes of change that has induced everywhere have accelerated. New forms of organization and new technologies emerge in increasingly short lapses, thus causing the rapid obsolescence of products, ideas, occupational processes, fashions, and all sort of practices. In the second place, what Harvey has called “space-time compression” has acquired new connotations. Early modernity typically privileged time as the principal category through which progress and development could be understood; space was taken for granted. Now that spatial barriers have been drastically reduced, spatial categories have begun to dominate time categories, or, in other terms, time has become spatialised:

Space-time compression is the concept that refers to processes that revolutionize the objective qualities of space and time in such a manner, that we are forced to alter, some times in quite a radical way, the manner in which we represent ourselves the world. The word compression is used because the history of capitalism has been characterized by acceleration in the pace of life, while spatial barriers are surpassed to the point that the world sometimes seems to implode on us. (Harvey, 240)

In the third place, there has been an acceleration of the process of globalization of economic phenomena which affects all countries and regions of the world. This implies a relative decline of the nation-state and a growing trend toward the internationalization of the economy. Of the greatest importance is the change from the so-called Fordist model of capital accumulation, based on large companies with rigid patterns of organization and labor, toward a “regime of flexible accumulation,” based on smaller companies and more flexible labor systems that include part-time, temporary, and subcontracted work. Of equal importance is the trend to reinforce the international financial organizations, which acquire greater power to intervene in the life of

countries, due to the wider support they enjoy. The trend to form large trade areas presided by a powerful nation is also very important. For example, the free trade area controlled by the United States that includes Canada, Mexico, and in the future possibly Chile and the rest of Latin America; the trade area of the Pacific Ocean controlled by Japan, and the European Economic Community, where Germany has primacy. All these changes and developments have the effect of making it more difficult for all states having an open-market economy to implement policies significantly different from those of the rest of the developed world. In the fourth place, the process of globalization affects also communications, politics, and culture, which are increasingly interconnected and interdependent the world over.

The processes of globalization are also processes of domination and power, whereby the prevailing cultural patterns of the most powerful societies are converted into paradigms or models, which the others should follow and around which some forms of homogenization occur. The most important distinction which affects the construction of national identities, originating in the nineteenth century but still valid, is that of center and periphery. This terminology is used normally in development studies and is recognized as a basic economic distinction that even Marx anticipated when speaking of the conquest of foreign markets by industrial production.<sup>9</sup>

This economic distinction is furthermore the base for the construction of national identities: countries that have been at the center of the process of globalization as the principal powers have normally built their national identities as central and dominant, with a mission to fulfil in the world and feeling able to name all the other cultures as peripheral and inferior. Peripheral countries are conceived of as culturally subordinate and dependent upon central countries. In many senses, they see themselves in that manner. It is not mere coincidence that the so-called theories of dependency were conceived in Latin America. However, the process of globalization has clearly eroded the colonial or imperial identities. In a way, it is possible to argue that due to the phenomenon of globalization and the growing dissolution of the ancient boundaries and barriers, all national identities are under pressure.

The process of globalization occurring in late modernity has an important effect on cultural identities for three main reasons. First, because in the formation or construction of any cultural identity the idea of the “other” is crucial and globalization puts individuals, groups, and nations in contact with a series of new “others” in relation to whom they can define themselves. This can only happen through the media. As Thompson has noted, “the process of self formation is increasingly nourished by mediated symbolic materials” (1995, 207). The construction of personal identities has become more complex and open-ended because the media increasingly mediates it. The globalization of communications by means of electronic signals

has allowed the separation of social relations from the local contexts of interaction.

This means not only that in relation to each person the number of “significant others” has substantially increased, but also that such others come to be known not by means of their physical presence but through the media, especially through televised images. This loosens, “without destroying—the connection between self—formation and a shared locale” (Thompson, 1995, 207). Yet, the impact of relationships with absent “others” for the construction of identity is not to be underrated. Recent statistics tell us that almost throughout the world, children spend annually more hours in front of a television set than at school. This means that the media have increasingly mediated the construction of personal identities. As Kellner maintains “television and other cultural forms mediated by the media play a crucial role in the structuration of contemporary identities” (148).

But the way in which television influences the construction of identities should not be simplified. On the one hand television puts people in contact with the reality of far away worlds and shows other cultures and ways of living. In this sense, it contributes to the breakdown of national barriers. Language is no obstacle since television penetrates more through images, fantasies, and emotions; it attracts people as an entertaining spectacle more than through logical argument. In this sense people learn from it in a totally different way from school. And this leads to some kind of cultural homogenization in the world. But this influence is always actively reinterpreted in local contexts and sometimes with different purposes. Thus, for instance, research has shown that, until recently, the most popular soap opera watched by young people of Asian origin in Southall, London, was *Neighbours*, but it was used by the parents to reinforce traditional values and by the youngsters to challenge those values (Gillespie, 25-42).

Television may also try to help in the creation and recreation of national traditions. Thus for instances the Welsh language soap opera *Pobol y Cwm* seemed to perform that role in Wales (Griffith, 9-24), just as the game show *She and He* was adapted in Slovenia to reinvent and support family national traditions (Luthar, 43-50). National identities in late modernity are increasingly dependent upon the media creation of imaginary links among the members of a nation (Thompson, 1995, 50-51 & 198-99). Television, in particular, is very good at creating the fiction of intimacy and close interaction with the audience, and this quality has been exploited by nationalistic interests. The power of an entertaining spectacle transmitted through images is very useful to create and maintain traditions that boost national feelings. However, as Thompson has also shown, the media can also have negative consequences for self-formation: the intrusion of ideological messages, increasing self dependency upon the media, inability to assimilate the increasing number of messages (symbolic

overload), and obsessive attachment to media-transmitted symbolic materials (213-19).

Second, globalization has affected the construction of identities insofar as it has quickened the pace of change in all sorts of relations and this makes it more difficult for the subject to make sense of what is going on, to see the continuity between past and present, and therefore, to form a unitary view of herself/himself and to know how to act. Furthermore, the general explosion of communications, images, and simulacra makes it more difficult to conceive of a single reality both at the social and individual level. This makes the construction of personal identities a more complex and difficult process, subject to many leaps and changes. But identities have not been entirely dissolved or decentered (as postmodernists maintain); they are rather reconstructed and redefined in new cultural contexts. The difficulties produced by rapid change and time-space compression justify the emergence of these new feelings of ephemerality, contingency and lack of unity in individuals. However, they do not necessarily justify the idea of a totally dislocated subject.

The third reason why globalization is important for identity formation is that the big social transformations brought about by globalization tend to uproot widely shared cultural identities and, as a consequence, also affect the construction of personal identities. Processes of disarticulation and dislocation occur whereby many people cease to see themselves in terms of traditional collective contexts which provided a sense of identity (Wagner, 56). In early modernity, the cultural identities that had a most important influence in the formation of subjects were class and national identities. Precisely these two cultural identities are beginning to be affected by accelerated globalization. National identity, still being very strong, has nevertheless lost some of its appeal because of the erosion of the autonomy of the nation-state in the face of an increasingly internationalized economy, and because of the growing importance of supra-national organizations.

However, it would be a mistake to believe that there is simply a tendency to dissolve nationalisms, localisms, and regionalisms. The more profound the universalizing tendencies are the more particular peoples, ethnic groups or sections of society seek to reaffirm their difference and the more they become attached to their locality (Harvey, 33). One has only to look at the dissolution of the Soviet Union and of Yugoslavia to realize that nationalism is not dead in the nineties. National identities were strengthened as a form of resistance to the monolithic central power that used to rule those countries. But it is also true that the homogenization implicit in the globalization of culture and the internationalization of the economy are eroding national identities, and this trend can be clearly seen in the European community. In Latin America, a weakening of all sorts of nationalistic trends can also be observed.

Class identities have declined because of a series of factors. First, because the strength and intensity of class struggles has declined. Many oppressed classes have been relatively successful in their struggles to organize, to be recognized, and to have their rights respected in society, even if they are far away from material equality. Yet also in this very field the working classes of the developed world have obtained important improvements in their standards of living and in the social security provided by the welfare state. I am not saying that classes can ever entirely lose their importance in a capitalist society or that class struggles have disappeared. In fact, in the last decade, material inequalities have grown throughout the capitalist world, and strikes and forms of social unrest subsist everywhere. But it is true that at the end of the twentieth century, after years of economic development, the situation has changed considerably within advanced capitalist countries: politics has begun to be restructured in a different sense where classes and their traditional parties play a much more restricted role. A factor that partially explains this situation is the numerical decline of the working class due to technological change and robotization. But even more important is its increasing atomization due to the spatial dispersion of production, and the move to part-time and casual labor as more permanent features of the post-fordist era. This has impacted on the trade-union movement, which has been weakened throughout the world by loss of members and political defeats. The crisis of Marxism and the fall of communist regimes have also had an adverse ideological impact on class identity (Aronowitz, chapter 1).

Nevertheless, while some social categories decline new social contexts appear or become articulated as the most accepted providers of a sense of identity. Thus the decline of class and national identities is accompanied by the rise of other relevant collective contexts which are connected with the emergence of new social movements: ethnic identities (anti-racist movements), gender identities (feminist movements), sexual identity (homosexual movements), and many others. Personal identity does not disappear in total fragmentation and dispersion, as postmodernists imagine, it is reconstructed and redefined in other terms. It is true that globalization brings about a greater consciousness about one's own identity, a greater opportunity for self-definition, the idea that identities are constructed and can be modified within the boundaries of certain social relations. However, this does not mean that we are entirely free to adopt any identity we want.

Kellner argues that identity today has ceased to be a “serious affair” (153) like it was at the beginning of modernity. Then one defined oneself in terms of fundamental choices: one's own profession, class, nation, family, political affiliations, and such. Now, he argues, postmodern identity is a function of leisure and is grounded in play, in gamesmanship. This is the result of a society of television images and electronic messages. Identity has become “a

freely chosen game, a theatrical presentation of the self, in which one is able to present oneself in a variety of roles, images and activities, relatively unconcerned about shifts, transformations, and dramatic changes" (158). I do not think that this is entirely true. I accept that identities are no longer considered to be fixed forever, but they are not a game, nor are they freely chosen. One cannot change identities as one changes one's clothes. Identity is not solely about external appearances and role-playing. One has to distinguish between wishful self-presentations and actual ongoing social practices. The postmodern sweeping statements about the fragmentation of the subject "do not take the situation of actually living human beings really seriously, human beings who define their lives, act and are constrained from acting, in and by very real social contexts" (Wagner, 167-68).

What has happened in late modernity is that in many ways the fundamental variables of the definition of the self—which continue to be in the family, the educational institution, the profession, the political or sports affiliation, to mention some—have been disconnected from the traditional external appearances of style, dress, and presentation. People may wish to present a special image while keeping their more fundamental identities. The cultivation of special images may entail external changes in hairstyle, clothes, earrings, tattoos, modes of moving or speaking, but they do not necessarily impinge on the more basic aspects of identity. I accept that, because of the bewildering changes in late modernity, the construction of identities is a far more complex process than before, and that it is more difficult, but not impossible, for individuals to make sense of their lives and to have a clear sense of direction. But to postulate the total decentring of the subject is to accept the final loss of agency and purpose, the inability of the subject to attempt to change the circumstances, its inability to posit any rational alternative future. It is the end of all political practice of transformation. I do not believe that this has irreversibly happened or may ever totally happen.

## Notes

1. I follow here the distinction between individual and qualitative identity propounded by E. Tugendhat.
2. In this article Taylor develops the idea that identity is shaped by recognition or its absence in a way that complements Honneth's ideas.
3. I thank Jorge Iván Vergara for showing me and translating this quotation.
4. This idea is part of Anthony Giddens' structuration theory.
5. Referring to one of those rites typical of nationhood Anderson mentions for instance the importance of the tomb of the unknown soldier.
6. It is notorious, for instance, how football as a widespread practice in many countries has been increasingly nationalized, and yet practically no public version of national identity in the countries concerned takes account of this form of subjectivity.

7. Poststructuralism derives from and is a reaction against the Althusserian analyses of the subject and ideology. It is not surprising to find, therefore, that his representatives were originally disciples of Althusser: Michel Foucault in France, Paul Hirst, Barry Hindess, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe in Britain.

8. On the relationship between narrative and identity in this perspective see Margaret R. Somers (1994): "we all *become* what we *are* . . . by being situated or situating ourselves within social narratives which are rarely our own work." (606).

9. The following quotation from Marx (1974, Vol. I, 424-25) shows his awareness about this distinction: "by ruining handicraft production in other countries, machinery forcibly converts them into fields for the supply of its raw material . . . A new international division of labour, a division suited to the requirements of the chief centres of modern industry springs up, and converts one part of the globe into a chiefly agricultural field of production, for supplying the other part which remains a chiefly industrial field."

## Works Cited

- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso, 1983.
- Aronowitz, S. *The Politics of Identity, Class, Culture, and Social Movements*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Bauman, Zygmunt. "Der Holocaust ist nicht einmalig. Gespräch mit dem polnischen Soziologen Zygmunt Bauman." ("The holocaust is not unique. Interview with the Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman"). Interview with Helga Hirsch. In *Die Zeit* 17 (April 23, 1993): 68.
- Erikson, Erik. *Identity, Youth and Crisis*. London: Faber & Faber, 1968.
- García Canclini, Nestor. *Culturas Híbridas: Estrategias para entrar y salir de la modernidad*. México Grijalbo 1989.
- García-Gual, Carlos. "La visión de los otros en la antiguedad clásica." In *De Palabra y Obra en el Nuevo Mundo*, ed. M. León-Portilla et al. Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1992.
- Gerth, Hans and C. Wright Mills. *Character and Social Structure*. New York: Harbinger Books, 1964.
- Giddens, Anthony. *The Constitution of Society*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984.
- Gillespie, Marie. "Soap Viewing, Gossip and Rumour amongst Punjabi Youth in Southall." In *National Identity and Europe, the Television Revolution*, ed. Drummond et al. London: BFI Publishing, 1993.
- Griffiths, Alison. "Pobol y Cwm, the Construction of National and Cultural Industry in a Welsh Language Soap Opera." In *National Identity and Europe, the Television Revolution*, ed. Drummond et al. London: BFI Publishing, 1993.
- Habermas, Jurgen. "Historical Consciousness and Post-Traditional Identity: The Federal Republic's Orientation to the West." In *The New Conservatism*, Jurgen Habermas. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Limits of Neo-Historicism." Interview with J.M. Ferry. In *Autonomy and Solidarity*, Jurgen Habermas. London: Verso, 1992.
- Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." In *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. J. Rutherford. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990.
- Hall, Stuart, David Held & Tony McGrew. *Modernity and its Futures*. Cambridge: Polity Press and Open University, 1992.
- Harvey, David. *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989.
- Hobsbawm, Erik and Thomas Ranger. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: CUP, 1988.
- Honneth, Axel. *The Struggle for Recognition*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995.

- James, William. *The Principles of Psychology*. London: Macmillan, 1890.
- Johnson, Richard. "Towards a Cultural Theory of the Nation: A British-Dutch Dialogue." In *Images of the Nation*, ed. A. Galema et al. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1993.
- Kellner, Douglas. "Popular Culture and the Construction of Postmodern Identities." In *Modernity and Identity*, ed. S. Lash y J. Friedman. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992.
- Leibniz, Georg. *Philosophical Writings*. London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1973.
- León-Portilla, Miguel. "Imágenes de los otros en Mesoamérica antes del encuentro." In *De Palabra y Obra en el Nuevo Mundo*, ed. M. León-Portilla et al. Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1992.
- Levita, David J. de. *The Concept of Identity*. Paris: Mouton & Co., 1965.
- Locke, John. *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. London: George Routledge, 1948.
- Luthar, Breda. "Identity Management and Popular Representational Forms." In *National Identity and Europe, the Television Revolution*, ed. Drummond et al. London: BFI Publishing, 1993.
- Marx, Karl. "Theses on Feuerbach." In *Collected Works*, K. Marx and F. Engels. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1976.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Capital*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1974.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Grundrisse*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973.
- Mead, George H. *Mind, Self, & Society*. Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 1974.
- Simmel, Georg. *La Filosofía del Dinero*. Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Políticos, 1976.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Sociología*. Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1939.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Philosophy of Money*. London: Routledge, 1990.
- Somers, Margaret R. "The narrative constitution of identity: a relational and network approach." *Theory and Society*, Vol. 23 (1994): 605-49
- Taylor, Charles. "The Politics of Recognition." In *Multiculturalism*, ed. A Guttman. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Sources of the Self, the Making of the Modern Identity*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1989.
- Thompson, John B. *Ideology and Modern Culture*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Media and Modernity, a Social Theory of the Media*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995.
- Tugendhat, Ernst. "Identidad: personal, nacional y universal." *Persona y Sociedad*, Vol X, No. 1 (April 1996): 29-40
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Self-Consciousness and Self-Determination*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1986.
- Wagner, Peter. *A Sociology of Modernity: Liberty and Discipline*. London: Routledge, 1994.



## Chapter 2

### Towards the Sociogenic Principle: Fanon, Identity, the Puzzle of Conscious Experience, and What It Is Like to Be “Black”

Sylvia Wynter

Reacting against the constitutionalist tendency of the late nineteenth century, Freud insisted that the individual factor be taken into account through psychoanalysis. He substituted for a phylogenetic theory the ontogenetic perspective. It will be seen that the black man's alienation is not an individual question. Beside phylogeny and ontogeny stands sociogeny . . . (Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks*, 1967)

Conscious experience is a widespread phenomenon. It occurs at many levels of animal life, though we cannot be sure of its presence in the simpler organisms, . . . (Some extremists have been prepared to deny it even of mammals other than man) . . . But no matter how the form may vary, the fact that an organism has conscious experience *at all* means, basically, that there is something it is like *to be* that organism . . . (F)undamentally an organism has conscious mental states if and only if there is something that it is like *to be* that organism—something it is like *for* the organism. We may call this the subjective character of experience. (Thomas Nagel, “What it is like to be a bat,” 1974, 1979)

Against reductionism, I will argue that consciousness might be explained by a new kind of theory. The full details of such a theory are still out of reach, but careful reasoning and some

educated inferences can reveal something of its general nature. For example, it will probably involve new fundamental laws, and the concept of information may play a central role. These faint glimmerings suggest that a theory of consciousness may have startling consequences for our view of the universe and of ourselves. (David Chalmers, *The Puzzle of Conscious Experience*, 1995)

This chapter proposes that Frantz Fanon's dually third person and first person exploration of the "lived experience of being black" in his book *Black Skins/White Masks* was both to develop the earlier insights of Black American thinkers such as W. B. Dubois with respect to the conflicted "double consciousness" of the "Negro" in western civilization (Dubois, 1986: 364-65) and to put forward, as the explanatory cause of this "double consciousness" a new theoretical object of knowledge, which enabled the calling in question of our present culture's purely biological definition of what it is to *be*, and therefore of what it is *like to be*, human<sup>1</sup> While Fanon gave to this new object of knowledge the name *sociogeny* (Fanon, BS: 11), I have adapted the term *the sociogenetic principle*<sup>2</sup> on the basis of this concept in order to both relate it to, and contrast it with, the genomic principle defining of the species-identity of purely organic life. I shall further propose that Fanon's new conception of the human, one generated from the ground of his own, as well as that of his fellow French Caribbean subjects' lived experience of what *it is like to be* black (Epigraph 2), also opens a frontier onto the solution to the problem defined by David Chalmers as that of the "puzzle of conscious experience." The puzzle, both as to how "a subjective experience could possibly arise from the neural processes in the brain" (Chalmers, 1995: 80), as well as to why all this processing has to be" accompanied by an experienced inner life." (Chalmers, 1996: vii) Why, in effect, is there the imperative of *experience*, or the necessity of consciousness? Against the reductionism of the physicalistic thesis which proposes that mind or consciousness *is*, simply, *what* the brain does, Chalmers puts forward the hypothesis (cited in Epigraph 3) of the existence of as yet uncovered "fundamental laws" that are specific to the phenomenon of conscious experience. Because, he further argues, such laws, as ones that may "centrally involve the concept of information," would have to be based on the proposition that "conscious experience be considered a . . . feature, *irreducible to any thing more basic*," they should also be ones that are able to cross the explanatory gap in order to specify *how* conscious experience-as-a-feature-in-itself, can nevertheless depend "on underlying physical processes" (Chalmers, 1995: 83).

In this context, because the question on the issue of consciousness specific to New World black thinkers from W. B. Dubois to Fanon himself, has been, rather than the purely third person question of the

why of conscious experience as posed by Chalmers, a socially situated and first person one based directly on the painful, conflicted nature of their own consciousness, and, therefore, of their identity as "Negroes" or "Blacks," this chapter will propose the following: Fanon's explanatory concept of *sociogeny* put forward as a third person response to his own first person questioning, serves, when linked to the insights of Thomas Nagel's 1974 essay "What it is like to be a bat" (Epigraph 2), to verify Chalmers' postulate with respect to the empirical functioning of psychophysical laws, as these laws function at the level of *human* experience. Further, that such laws are not only redefinable at this level as sociogenetic or nature-culture laws, but also as ones whose processes of functioning, while inseparable from the physical (that is, neurobiological) processes which implement them, would, at the same time, be non-reducible, as the indispensable condition of what it is like to *be* human, to these processes alone and, therefore, to the laws of nature by which those processes are governed. Further, if, as Nagel proposes, an organism can have "conscious mental states" only if "there is something it is like to be that organism," something it is like *for* that organism, for, therefore, its identity as such an organism, then Fanon's exploration of the "lived experience of the black," and thereby, of the processes of functioning of these psychophysical laws within the terms of our present hegemonic modes of identity, (as itself, but *one* variant of the hybrid *nature/culture* modes of being unique to us as humans), can at the same time also provide insights into the functioning of these laws as they function at the level of purely organic forms of life. That is, insights into the laws which govern the realm of lived subjective experience, human and non-human, which govern, therefore, the interrelated phenomena of identity, mind and/or consciousness.

### **"Stop Acting Like a Nigger!" On the Qualitative Aspects of the Mental States of the Caribbean Negro before He Goes to France**

But I too am guilty, here I am talking of Apollo! There is no help for it. I am a white man. For unconsciously I distrust what is black in me, that is *the whole of my being* . . . When I am at home my mother sings me French love songs in which there is never a word about Negroes. When I disobey, when I make too much noise, I am told to 'stop acting like a nigger.' (Fanon, BS: 191)

We'll see that the third-person approach seems not sufficient to explain all first-person phenomenon. Let's start with qualia. Qualia are the qualitative aspects of our mental states, such as color sensations, the taste of chocolate, pleasure and pain. Looking at a red patch triggers a pattern of nerve firings. Why is there such a rich subjective sensation? Why this sensation

and not green? And how personal that sensation is. (Stan Franklin, *Artificial Minds*, 1995: 32)

In his first chapter the *Negro and Language*, Fanon analyses the situation of the French Caribbean Black or Negro before he goes to France, before he encounters “white eyes” as the only “real eyes.” In the Caribbean, the pervasive cultural imposition of France and Europe, together with their systemic denigration of all things of African origin, led to a situation that when he and his peers, as children, behaved badly—either made too much noise, disobeyed, or spoke Creole (the Afro-French vernacular common to the Francophone Caribbean)—they were sharply admonished by their mothers to “stop acting like a Nigger!” (BS: 191).<sup>3</sup> However, while still in the Caribbean, they had an option. Although Negroes, they could opt not to *behave like one*, thereby not falling entirely into non-being, the negation of being human. A useful parallel arises here, one that enables us to make use of the idea of the transcultural space or perspective on human identity that was put forward recently by Mikhail Epstein. Epstein had argued that, because “culture . . . is what a human being creates and what creates a human being at the same time, the human being should be seen as being (simultaneously) creator and creation.” While “in the supernatural we have the world of the creator, and in nature we have the world of creations,” it is however of “the coincidence of these two roles in a human being that makes him a cultural being.” The problem here, nevertheless, is that while culture freed us from nature it was able to do so only on the condition of subordinating us to its own categories, since it is through all such culture specific categories that we can alone realize ourselves, as, in Fanonian terms, always already socialized beings. Epstein’s proposal here is therefore that it is only *transculture*, the space opened between different cultures, that can free us from our subordination to the categories of the single culture: through the mediation of transculture we come to realize experience ourselves as human beings.

The transcultural parallel here is that the injunction “stop acting like a nigger” functioned for Fanon and his middle class French Caribbean peers in the same way as for the Vodunists of Haiti. In the terms of Haiti’s originally African-derived and now Afro-Catholic syncretic religion, the imperative of refraining from what were proscribed as antisocial behaviors was sanctioned by its subjects’ fear of being transformed into a zombie as punishment by the secret society of Bizango, whose members were and are entrusted with the role of punishing such behaviors. For if “normal” being, or identity, was/is, for the Vodunist, to be anchored in one’s *ti bon ange* (i.e. “that component of the Vodun soul that creates character, will-power, personality”), to be made into a zombie—by means of the administration of the powerful toxin tetrodotoxin, which induces a physical state enabling the victim to be misdiagnosed as dead (Davis, 1988: 9)—was/is made to become cataleptic, a state believed to be

*caused by the loss of one's "ti bon ange,"* of one's soul. Since, once robbed of one's soul, the body is but an empty vessel subject to the commands of an alien force who would maintain "control of the *ti bon ange*" (Davis, 1988: 9), for the Vodunist, the threat of experiencing zombification is the threat of a death more real than physical death itself.<sup>4</sup>

If in the case of the symbolic belief system structuring of the Vodunist's sense of self, it "is the notion of external forces taking control of the individual that is so terrifying to the Vodunist," what Fanon enables us to see by analysis is not only the way in which the culturally imposed symbolic belief system of the French bourgeois *sense of self* also structures the *sense of self* of the colonized French Caribbean middle class Negro, but also that it is a *sense of self* for which the notion of "acting like a nigger," and thereby lapsing into non-being, that—like the threat of zombification for the Vodunist—serves as the internalized sanction system which motivates his/her behaviors, thereby functioning in the same way as a "garrison controls a conquered system." In this context, a transcultural perspective on two quite different injunctions related to two quite different *senses of the self*, yet functioning to the same end, enables us to recognize that the qualitative mental states which correlate with aversive sensations, or fear of behaving, in the one case, in such an antisocial way as to make the threat of zombification real, and, in the other as to make the threat of "negrification"<sup>5</sup> real, are of the same objectively instituted and subjectively experienced modality, even where the cultural conception of identity, or of what it is like to be human, is different.

However, as Fanon's exploration enables us to see, as long as the Caribbean Negro remains in Martinique or Guadalupe, he does not experience himself as a *nigger*. Rather, his sense of self, one which impels him to void "acting like a nigger," is, as Fanon shows, produced as normal and thereby as a "*white self*"; in effect, produced as the French bourgeois mode of the self, in whose terms he has been socialized through the mediation of the formal as well as familial educational processes. His "black skin" therefore literally wears a "white mask," but it is a contradiction that, while in the Caribbean, he is not compelled to confront. It is therefore only after his arrival in France, that the shouted cry "Dirty Nigger" will compel him to experience himself as being concretely, that *Nigger Other* which had functioned only as a threat in the social sanction system of his Caribbean colonial society. Nevertheless, in order to fully understand the major features of the "lived experience" of the Caribbean Negro even before going to France, we need to recognize the crucial role of the language, of the imposed system of meaning, in whose terms the Negro is induced to see himself as the direct result of his "colonialist subjugation." Central to this language there had been a specific conception of what it is to be human, and therefore of his prescribed role in this concept. "No one," Fanon writes,

would dream of doubting that its major artery (i.e. of the Negro's self-division) is fed from the heart of "those various theories that have tried to prove that the Negro is a stage in the slow evolution of monkey into man." (BS: 17)

What Fanon alerts us to here is that the ascribed role of the Negro in these theories is an indispensable function of our present culture's purely ontogenetic conception of the human, one that represents the species as existing in a purely continuist relation with organic life, defining it on the model of a natural organism (Foucault, 1973: 310). In consequence, given the far-reaching nature of this conception of human identity, it is not enough to have merely understood the causes of the Negro's self-division. The imperative is instead to end it. To do this, one must recognize that "to speak" does not mean only "to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language." It means, above all, "to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization" (BS: 17-18). The situation which the Negro confronts in the Caribbean, therefore, is that within the logic of the specific civilization in which he finds himself, within the language which it speaks and which speaks it, one, as a "Negro," will find oneself being "proportionately whiter" and thereby proportionately "closer to being a real human being," in "direct ratio" to one's mastery of the French language; or as in the U. S. A. and the Anglophone Caribbean, in direct ratio to his/her mastery of the English language in its standard middle class (or "good English") form.<sup>6</sup> In consequence, the Negro of the Caribbean, because he also speaks an Afro-French (or Afro-English) Creole vernacular language, "has always to face the problem of language." This, as part of a vaster matrix, determines his/her lived experiences both as "Negro" and as "colonized" native. This is so in that "every colonized people," that is, "every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality," must now find itself "face to face with the language of the civilizing nation," that is, with the culture of the mother country. In this situation, the colonized Negro is not only elevated "above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards," in addition, he "becomes whiter" to the extent that he "renounces his blackness, his jungle" (BS: 18). While, given that the logic of these new cultural standards has "totemized" being fully human (i.e. the ostensibly farthest from the primates and thereby most highly evolved), in the European physiognomy and culture-complex, it is to the extent that the Caribbean Negro "renounces his blackness, his jungle" that he experiences himself as *more human*. As a result, formally educated to be both a member of the French bourgeois elite and white, for the Caribbean Negro the dream of going to France had logically been the Holy Grail. Indeed any one of this group who had gone to France and, through rigorous practice, come to speak the "French of France," finds that this is one of the

things "that marks him when he returns, as one who has lived in the mother-country, as a demi-god." The phenomenology of the one-who-has-gone-to-France, thereby undergoes a definitive restructuring—that is, he experiences himself in quite different terms:

The black man who has lived in France for a length of time returns radically changed. To express it in genetic terms, his phenotype undergoes a definitive, an absolute mutation. Even before he had gone away, one could tell from the almost aerial manner of his carriage that new forces had been set in motion. (BS: 19)

Fanon further explains, here in a note, that by this, he means that "Negroes who return to their original environments convey the impression that they have completed a cycle, that they have added something to themselves, literally returning *full of themselves*." At the same time he also goes on to propose in the body of the text that this transformation of the subjectively experienced identity of the Caribbean Negro is one that arises directly from a specific *socio-cultural situation*, which serves to activate a specific biochemical and therefore physicalistic correlate; in Bohm's terms, transformed meanings have led to transformed matter, to a transformed mode of experiencing the self. What Fanon makes clear here is that it is for the French Caribbean Negro, imprisoned on a poverty stricken colonial island, and lost "in an atmosphere that offers not the slightest outlet," that the appeal of Europe is like "pure air which he breathes in." It is for him that the world will only seem to "open up" once he leaves his island and arrives in France. Hence, at the news that he is indeed getting to France, getting, thereby "a start in life," he is jubilant. He makes up his mind to change. We see, however, Fanon writes, that with the change of his cultural situation from a closed and blocked situation to one of relatively more open possibilities, his "structure" before any reflective process on his part, "changes independently." To support this thesis Fanon cites an example given by two U. S. scholars who had found through a series of research studies that they had undertaken that in married couples, at some stage in their marriage, "a biochemical alteration takes place in the partners."<sup>77</sup> It would therefore be "equally" interesting to "investigate the body fluids that occur in Negroes when they arrive in France." Or simply "to study through tests the psychic changes that take place" (BS: 22).

What Fanon is revealing here, in the terms of the issues posed by Chalmers and Nagel, is that there are subjectively experienced processes taking place, whose functioning cannot be explained in the terms of only the natural sciences, of only physical laws. As the case of the Caribbean Negro going to France demonstrates, the transformation of subjective experience is, in the case of humans, culturally and thereby socio-situationally determined, with these

determinations in turn, serving to activate their physicalistic correlates. In consequence, if the mind is what the brain *does*, *what* the brain *does*, is itself culturally determined through the mediation of the socialized *sense of self*, as well as of the “social” situation in which this *self* is placed. Fanon is here again, therefore, centrally challenging the purely biocentric premise of our present culture’s conception of the human, as this conception is elaborated not only by psychology, but by all the disciplines that comprise the human sciences. For, as he argues here, these disciplines “have their own drama,” and it is a drama based on a central question. Should the inquirer postulate, as in the standard approach, a “type for human reality and describe its psychic modalities only through deviations from it”? Or should the imperative of the inquirer be rather that of striving “unremittingly for a concrete and ever new understanding of man”? (BS: 22).

In the terms of the answer given by the standard approach of the human sciences, one is able to read, for example, “that after the age of twenty-nine, a man can no longer love and that he must wait until he is forty-nine before his capacity for affect revives.” Reading this, “one feels the ground give way beneath one.” It is therefore imperative, if one is to recover one’s balance, to recognize that there is a central purpose to this standard approach, to understand that “all these discoveries, all these inquiries lead only in one direction,” have “only one goal”; that the specific aim of this goal is to “make man admit that he is nothing, absolutely nothing—and that he must put an end to the narcissism on which he relies in order to imagine that he is different from other ‘animals’” (BS: 22). Yet, to admit this, to admit that the human is a purely biologically determined mode of being<sup>8</sup> “amounts to nothing more nor less than *man’s surrender*.” Refusing to accept “man’s surrender,” Fanon therefore puts forward a counter-manifesto with respect to human identity. Having reflected on the possibility put forward by the standard approach, he declares, “I grasp my narcissism with both hands and I turn my back on the degradation of those who would make man a mere mechanism. Further, even if “there can be no discussion *on a philosophical level*—that is, the plane of the *basic needs of human reality*—I am willing to work on the psychoanalytical level—in other words, the level of the ‘failures,’ in the sense in which one speaks of engine failures” (BS: 23).

For it is at this level that certain discoveries can be made. Such as the fact that when a specific (biochemical) change occurs in the Caribbean Negro who arrives in France, the change occurs *only* “because to him, the country *represents* the Tabernacle.” This is not an arbitrary or contingent representation. Not only has everything in his earlier schooling and everyday life in Martinique culturally indoctrinated him in the terms that enabled him to experience such a representation as gospel truth (pun intended), but it has also led to “the amputated sense of self” for which the experience of full being could only be enabled through the mediation of France and its

cultural artifacts. The change in the phenomenal properties of the Caribbean Negro's *sense of self* (together with its biochemical correlates) can therefore occur only because of a specific process of socialization that had been effected and verified at every level of his existence in his French colonial island. His socialization as a subject, therefore, is at one and the same time as both French and colonial "native," and/or Negro—in effect, both Man and Man's Other.

It is therefore only to this French colonial "native" subject, to his *sense of self* together with the particular point of view to which it gives rise, that power and full being can necessarily emanate only from the colonizer centre, France. Culturally amputated in his psyche by the everyday structures of Martinique, the "man who is leaving next week for France creates round himself a magic circle in which the words Paris, Marseilles, Sorbonne, Pigalle become the keys to the vault." As he leaves for the pier to set sail, "the amputation of his being diminishes as the silhouette of his ship grows clearer." At the same time, in "the eyes of those who have come to see him off he can read the evidence of his own mutation, his power. 'Good-by bandanna, good-by straw hat . . .'" He has been chosen; he has become one of the few selected ones allowed to escape the stereotype of exotic non-being imposed upon those non-chosen who must remain at home. The implication here is that the biochemical events taking place in his being as he reads the "evidence of his own mutation, his power" in the others' eyes (and thereby the evidence of his own recognition in the terms of the dominant culture and its bearers) are determined by the change in his cultural situation: the shift from an amputated experience of being to the experience of almost "full" (that is, almost white), almost French bourgeois, being. Meaning, in Bohm's sense, positively marked, has here affected matter-positively.

Then he arrives in France. The cry "Dirty Nigger" startles him into the shocked awareness that in the eyes of those who now surround him—white eyes as, Fanon notes, the "only real eyes"—he no longer has the option to behave or not to behave *like* a nigger! In those eyes, he *is* a nigger. And the cry fixes him in that subhuman status as a "chemical solution fixes a dye" (BS: 109). The glances of those eyes and the cry have activated the phenomenal properties of the new qualitative mental states that Fanon explores in his fifth chapter as "the lived experience of the black." Meaning, negatively marked, has likely affected matter (that is, physiology) negatively.

### **"Dirty Nigger!" "Look, a Negro" "Mama, the Nigger's Going to Eat Me Up!": My Body Was Given Back to Me as an Object . . . Sprawled out, Distorted**

My body was given back to me sprawled out, distorted, recolored, clad in mourning on that white winter day. The Negro is an animal, the Negro is bad, the Negro is mean, the

Negro is ugly; look, a nigger, it's cold, the nigger is shivering, the nigger is shivering because he is cold, the little boy is trembling because he is afraid of the nigger, the nigger is shivering with cold, that cold that goes through your bones, the handsome little boy is trembling because he thinks that the nigger is quivering with rage, the little white boy throws himself into his mother's arms: Mama, the nigger's going to eat me up! (Fanon, *BS*: 113-14)

(A)lthough the concepts themselves are connected with *a particular point of view* and a particular *visual phenomenology*, *the things apprehended from that point of view are not*. (Nagel, "What it is like to be a bat," 1974)

Fanon begins chapter 5, "The lived experience of the black," with an account of his subjectively experienced response to the hurled epithet, for instance, "Dirty nigger" or simply "Look, a Negro"! At this moment, his idea of himself as one who had come into the world infused "with the will to find a meaning in things," one whose spirit had been "filled with the desire to attain to the source of the world" is shattered. With that hurled epithet, that exclamation, "I found that I was an object in the midst of other objects" (*BS*: 10). All attempts to escape that "crushing objecthood" eventually fail. The "glances of the other fixed me there, in the sense in which a chemical solution is fixed by a dye" (*BS*: 109).

I was indignant; I demanded an explanation. Nothing happened. I burst apart. Now the fragments have been put together again by another self.

This "put together" other self then analyzes his experience, seeing it as one common to all black men. The quality of this experience, he recognizes, was new in kind. They had not known it when they had been among themselves, still at home in the French island colony of Martinique. Then, "he would have had no occasion . . . to experience his being through others." Here he must directly confront a reality that had not revealed itself in all its starkness before his arrival—the reality of the "being of the black man."

For not only must the black man be black; he *must be black in relation to the white man*. Some critics will take it on themselves to remind us that this proposition has a converse. I say that this is false. The black man has no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white man. Overnight the Negro has been given two frames of reference within which he has had to place himself. His metaphysics, or, less pretentiously, his customs and the sources on which they were based, were

wiped out because they were in conflict with a civilization that he did not know *and that imposed itself* on him." (BS: 110)

Fanon has here defined the central prescription of what he had earlier identified as the mode of sociogeny, in whose terms, both black and white are socialized. While the black man must experience himself as the *defect* of the white man—as must the black woman vis à vis the white woman—neither the white man or woman can experience himself/herself *in relation to* the black man/black woman in any way but as that fullness and genericity of being human, yet a genericity that must be verified by the clear evidence of the latters' *lack* of this fullness, of this genericity. The qualitative aspects of the two group's mental states with respect to their respective experiences of their *sense of self* are not only opposed, but dialectically so; each quality of subjective experience, the one positive, the other negative, depends upon the other. Because in Martinique, among his own group, the recognition of this dialectic had been muted, the black man arrives in France unprepared for that moment "when his inferiority comes into being through the other."

And then the occasion arose when I had to meet the white man's eyes. An unfamiliar weight burdened me. The real world challenged my claims. In the white world the man of color encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema. Consciousness of the body is solely a negating activity. It is a third-person consciousness. (BS: 110)

A vast distinction now separates the way he experiences his body "in the middle of a spatial and temporal world" from the way he is made to experience it through the "glances of the white Others." In the first case, the spatio-temporal, if he wants to smoke, he knows that certain movements will be called for. In order to get the cigarettes which are at the other end of the table, he will have to extend his right arm across the end of the table, to get to the matches which "are in the drawer to the left" he will have to "lean back slightly." The movements that he will make "are made not out of habit but out of implicit knowledge." This implicit knowledge is that of certain pre-given schema—one as specific to what it is like *physically* to be human (that is, the human in its purely phylogenetic/ontogenetic dimension) as is the unique pre-given schema specific to the bat. One can therefore speak here of a world governed by biologically determined assumptions—assumptions verified by the objective facts of what it is like to be a member of the human species. This is not the way, however, that he will experience this self, this body, in the specific culture-historical world in which he must necessarily realize himself as human, through his interaction with "normal" others, who are here, necessarily white. In this interaction, he is no longer in control of the process of the effecting of "a composition of the self" based on

implicit knowledge of the biological schema that is his body. Here, another mode of conscious experience takes over. This mode is one that compels him to know his body *through* the terms of an always already imposed “historico-racial schema”; a schema that predefines his body as an impurity to be cured, a lack, a defect, to be amended into the “true” being of whiteness.

For several years,” he writes, “certain laboratories have been trying to produce a serum for ‘denegritification’; with all the earnestness in the world, laboratories have sterilized their test tubes, checked their scales, and embarked on researches that might make it possible for the miserable *Negro* to whiten himself and thus to throw off the burden of that corporeal malediction. Below the corporeal schema I had sketched a historico-racial schema.” (BS: 111)

The central questions posed by Stan Franklin (in the context of his summary of Chalmers’ 1991 discussion of the hard problems “of consciousness”), arise here. Why, Franklin had asked, with respect to sensory qualia, does red look like red, or like any thing at all? Further, why with respect to mental content, if things are about something, say white elephants, and if “by our physicalistic assumptions thoughts arise from neural firings,” why should “neural firings *have to do* with white elephants” (Franklin, 1995: 31) or, in our own case, with “Dirty Nigger!”? Why, in addition, should the neural firings which underlie the glances of the “White Others” that Fanon is made to experience have to do with the “corporeal malediction” placed upon the black body, in the terms of a specific “historico-racial schema” in which both the bearers of this body and the white glancers at this body find themselves entrapped? Why further should the specific mental state and its specific phenomenal properties of the glancers, (i.e. of those who are in the process of living the experience of being “white”), as well as the mental state and its phenomenal properties of those who are glanced at and who must experience the negative effects of these glances as part of living the experience of being black, *have to be those specific states at all?*

Fanon gives an answer. Unlike the image of his body as it functioned in a purely spatio-temporal world devoid of White Others, this other *self* that he is being called upon to experience, is one that has been constructed for him “by the other, the white man, who had woven me out of a thousand details, anecdotes, stories.” In consequence, the “mental contents” of his new qualitative view of his body, and the “neural firings” with which they correlate, are non-arbitrarily linked through the mediation of those “anecdotes,” those “stories” out of which he had been woven; stories which elaborate the very historico-racial schema and “corporeal malediction,” whose negative meanings imposed upon his being. There is an imperative dialectic at work here. In that it is precisely by means of the same

anecdotes and stories, (if in the binarily opposed terms, of “corporeal *benediction*,” rather than of “*malediction*”), that the *sense of self* of the white subject, from whose point of view the color and physiognomy of the Negro must be seen negatively and reacted to aversively, is also woven as “normal”; at the same time, it is this always already woven normal sense of self which in turn “weaves” the negro, as its negation, its other, out of a “thousand anecdotes.” Anecdotes and stories that are therefore, as constituting of the normal subject as “White” as they are of its abnormal Other as “Black.”

Hence the logic by which Fanon, confronted by eyes which see him through the mediation of these woven networks, finds that where he had thought that he merely had to “construct a physiological self, to balance space, to localize sensations,” he was now called upon to do more. That is, to construct himself in the terms of those pre-determined elements, in order to “verify” the “truth” of the others’ glances, the “truth” of their order of consciousness, and to do so in order to confirm both the purely biological identity of being human in its bourgeois conception, as well as its normative definition in “white” terms. In effect, to make himself into a fact of negation, which alone enables the experience of being “white.” And for this to be done, within the plotlines of the narratives which alone make it possible, he must experience the corporeal reality of his body, as one that has always already been transformed by the negative stereotypes placed upon it into a subhuman reality. In several encounters he experiences the effects of this substitution. Traveling on a train, for example, he feels himself “assaulted at various points,” his “corporeal schema crumbled, its place taken by a racial epidermal schema.” As he seats himself he finds that now, “it was no longer a question of being aware of my body in the third person but in a triple person.” He is given not one but three places.

I existed triply: I occupied space. I moved toward the other . . . and the evanescent other, hostile but not opaque, transparent, not there, disappeared. Nausea . . . (BS: 112)

His body had been reified into a type which triggers the reflexly aversive behaviors that are inseparable from the aversive sensations of qualitative mental states felt collectively by all those who avoid him; these mental states are likely activated by the pervasive sequence of negative associations, which predefine him, making him “responsible at the same time for his body, his race, his ancestors who are all necessarily cannibals.” So total is this that he is compelled to see himself as he is seen by those “white” eyes, which are the only “real” eyes because they are the only “normal eyes.”

I subjected myself to an objective examination, I discovered my blackness, my ethnic characteristics; and I was battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency,

fetichism, racial defects, slave-ships, and above all else, above all: ‘Sho’ good eatin.’ (BS: 112)

He now begins to experience himself through the mediation of stereotyped concepts *specific to a particular point of view* and *visual phenomenology*; in other words, *not* as he is, but as *he must be for* a particular viewpoint. Yet what had been the origin of that particular viewpoint, that visual phenomenology? The culture-specific source of the “anecdotes, the stories,” by which both had been and still continue to be constructed? Here, if as Michel Foucault pointed out in his *The Order of Things*, *Man* as a new (and ostensibly universal because supracultural) conception of the human had in fact been invented by a specific culture, that of western Europe, during the sixteenth century (Foucault, 1973: 386), the anthropologist Jacob Pandian notes that this invention had been made possible only on the basis of a parallel invention (Pandian, 1985: 3-9). This had been so, he explains, because while western Europe was to effect the transformation of its medieval religious identity of the *True Christian Self* into the now secularizing identity of *Man*, it was confronted with the task of inventing a new form of binarily opposed Otherness to *Man*, one that could reoccupy, in secular terms, the place that its conception of the *Untrue Christian Self* had taken in the matrix of the religio-cultural conception of the human, *Christian*. In consequence, where the Other to the *True Christian Self* of medieval Europe had been the *Untrue Christian Self* (with the external Others being *Idolaters* and/or *Infidels*), with the invention of *Man* in two forms (one during the Renaissance in the context of the intellectual revolution of civic humanism, the other in the context of that of Liberal or economic humanism which took place at the end of the eighteenth and during the nineteenth century), Europe was to invent the Other to *Man* in two parallel forms. And, because *Man* was now posited as a supracultural universal, its Other had logically to be defined as the Human Other.

In the first form, it was to be the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean and the Americas, who, classified as “Indians,” were to be discursively constructed as the physical referent of the “savage” and thereby *Irrational* Human Others to the new “sense of the self” of *Man*, defined as *homo politicus* and as the Rational Self. At the same time, the enslaved transported African peoples, classified as *Negroes*,<sup>9</sup> were to also be assimilated to this *Irrational* Other category, as its extreme form: that is, as a mode of the human so irrational that it constituted the missing link between (the divinely created) rational human species and the (equally divinely created) animal species. As such, it had to be governed and mastered for its own good. However, with the reinvention of *Man* in new terms, in the wake of the Darwinian Revolution (which replaced the cosmogony or Origin Narrative of Genesis, and its model of Divine Creation or Design with that of the hybridly scientific and cosmogonic Narrative of Evolution

together with its model of Natural Selection), a shift was to occur. It was now to be the category of the Negroes, defined as comprising all peoples of African hereditary descent, whether unmixed or mixed, together with their origin continent of Africa, that were to be discursively constructed as the physical referent of the conception of *Man's Human Other*. It was therefore to be in the terms of this specific historico-cultural schema and constellation, that a "corporeal malediction" was to be placed upon all peoples of African hereditary descent, as the ostensibly non-evolved dysselected and therefore "racially inferior" Other (Pandian, 1988) to the true human, *Man*, and made to reoccupy the now purely secularized form of the matrix *Untrue Christian Self* (Pandian, 1985: 3-9).

As with Du Bois earlier, Fanon, socialized through his bourgeois education to be *Man* and, therefore, to be "normal," must experience himself in doubly conscious terms, as being both norm and Other. Had he been "white," he would have experienced no disjunction: indeed he would have been unable even to conceive of what it is like to be not *Man*, to be "a black man" and as such the negative other to the human, the bearer of a "corporeal malediction." It is only therefore out of his own lived experience of being both *Man* (in its middle class definition) and its liminally deviant Other (in its race definition), that Fanon will be enabled to carry out his dually first and third person exploration of what it is like to be at one and the same time, both *Man* in the terms of our present ethno-class conception of the human, and the embodiment of its anti-Negro, anti-human criterion. "Look, a nigger!" "My body," Fanon writes, "was given back to me sprawled out, distorted, recolored, clad in mourning in that white winter day." He experiences a disjunction between himself and his body; he sees it as the normative "white" consciousness sees it, and finds himself shattered by the terms in which he is seen by that consciousness. He begins here a series of associations which his own doubly conscious perspective will enable him to predict in its pre-determined and inevitable progression. It is at this moment that, although he is the target of the sensations activated by this series of associations, he is enabled to see himself as he must, and objectively *be for* a "particular point of view and visual phenomenology"; even more, for a point of view and phenomenology that is now globally hegemonic—as is its *sense of self* in whose terms he too has been socialized into normative subjectivity. He becomes aware of his skin of his body, his physiognomy, as if it were indeed a uniform, a livery—"I had not seen it. It is indeed ugly. I stop there, for who can tell me what beauty is." Since from that "particular point of view," within the terms of the qualitative aspects of the mental states specific to the sense of self, or mode of sociogeny of our present ethno-class conception of what it is like to be human, how can the black skin color and Negroid physiognomy *not* be experienced as aesthetically *ugly*? Indeed, how can the state of being a Negro not be that of experiencing oneself as being of a different *genus* to the "True"

human, within the terms of a specific conception of the human which represents itself, by means of a founding rhetorical strategy<sup>10</sup> as if it were isomorphic with the human itself? "(A)lready," Fanon writes,

I am being disjected under white eyes, the only real eyes, I am fixed . . . (T)hey objectively cut away slices of my reality I am laid bare. I feel, I see in those white faces that it is not a new man who has come in, but a new kind of man, a new genus. Why it's a Negro. (Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks*, 1967: 116)

### **On the Why of Subjective Experience, the Artificial and Relative Nature of Being Human, Identity and the Fundamental Laws of Consciousness**

Why should subjective states exist in the first place? (Stan Franklin, *Artificial Minds*, 1995: 31)

Continuing to take stock of reality, endeavoring to ascertain the instant of symbolic crystallization, I very naturally found myself on the threshold of Jungian psychology. European civilization is characterized by the presence, at the heart of what Jung calls the collective unconscious, *of an archetype*: an expression of the bad instincts, of the darkness inherent in every ego, *of the uncivilized savage*, the Negro who slumbers in every white man. (BS: 187)

The indigenous peoples of the Congo are all black in color, some more so, some less so. Many are to be seen who are the color of chestnut and some tend to be more olive-colored. *But the one who is of the deepest black* in color is held by them to be the most beautiful . . . There are some children who although their parents are black, are born white-skinned . . . And these are regarded by the Congolese as monsters . . . Given the fact that a black skin is so highly regarded among them, we Europeans appear ugly in their eyes . . . As a result, children in those areas, where a white has never been seen before, would become terrified, fleeing in horror from us, no less than our children here are terrified by the sight of a black also fleeing in horror from them. [Antonio de Teruel, *Narrative Description of . . . the Kingdom of the Congo* (1663-1664) Ms. 3533: 3574 National Library, Madrid, Spain]

Since this world of nations has been made by men, let us see in what institutions all men agree, and have always agreed. For these institutions will be able to give us the universal and

eternal principles, such as every science must have, on which all nations were founded and must preserve themselves. (Giambattista Vico, 1744/1970: 53)

We do not need to explain away the subjective experience. *We are what we experience ourselves to be.* Our self-experience of intentions and ‘will’ are not epiphenomenal illusions. (Terence W. Deacon, *The Symbolic Species: The Co-evolution of Language and the Brain*, 1995: 458)

Why indeed should subjective states exist? Why should *experience* be, as Chalmers proposes, a fundamental feature in its own right? The proposal here is that Fanon’s thesis, that besides phylogeny and ontogeny stands sociogeny, reveals that the cultural construction of specific “qualitative mental states” (such as the aversive reaction of white Europeans and of blacks ourselves to our skin color and physiognomy), are states specific to the modes of subjective experience defining what it is like to be human within the terms of our present culture’s conception of what it is to be human; and, in the terms of its sociogenic principle, like the bat’s subjective experience of what it is like to be a bat, they are states defining what it is to *be* the lived expression of a species-specific genomic principle. How did this come to be? In his book *Rhetoric and Philosophy: The Humanist Tradition*, Ernesto Grassi points out that our human mode of being was to come into existence only by means of the rupture that the species was evolutionarily pre-programmed to effect by means of its unique capacity for language, with the genetically ordered governing “directive signs” that motivate the behaviors of purely organic forms of life, by the replacement of the hegemony of these signs by the new directive signs of a governing human code inscribed in the Word, or Sacred Logos of religious discourse. This discourse, by ritually prescribing what *had* to be said, and what *had* to be done, was now to no less compulsorily *necessitate* the behaviors of its subjects than the genetically programmed “directive signs” compel and necessitate the species-specific behaviors of purely organic forms of life (Grassi, 1980: 106). Arguing further that the new directive signs of the Logos could only have emerged in the life of the planet at a time when for a single species the genetic “directive signs” had come to be experienced as “*insufficient*,” Grassi proposes that it was this initial insufficiency that led to the rise of the Word and thereby to that of a new governing *human code*, through whose verbal mediation “life was now to receive a completely different meaning compared to that of biological life” (Grassi, 1980: 110).

Two scholars, one a sociologist, Donald Campbell, the other a linguist, Philip Lieberman, have defined this insufficiency in parallel terms. Campbell proposed that although as humans we live in societies that are even more complex and more large-scale than those of the social insects, we, unlike the latter, are not integrated on the basis of

the high degrees of genetic similarity which makes social cohesion possible for the insects. For while the social insects are able to display altruistic behaviors towards the members of their group (with some categories such as the sterile castes giving up their own possibilities of reproduction so as to carry out tasks that enable the overall reproduction of, in the case of bees, the hive), their high degrees of genetic similarity ensure that their own genetic information will be transmitted by their siblings. This is not so in the case of humans. Humans, like all members of the mammalian primate family, followed a different evolutionary pathway, one which led to high degrees of genetic individuation, and, therefore, of reproductive competitiveness. At the same time, the runaway evolution of the human brain correlated with its option for bipedalism; the upright stance made it necessary for their infants to be born early, and the protracted stage of helplessness of their young now called for a mode of cooperative rearing and therefore for a mode of eusociality which went beyond the limits of the modes of genetically determined kinship characteristic of the primate family (Campbell; 1972: 21-23, 1988: 31-32). The genetically programmed modes of an eusociality characteristic of all other forms of organic life proved insufficient for the human species.

In the same context, the linguist Philip Lieberman was also to propose that the evolution of the human capacity for language was to provide the answer to the need for the kind of more inclusive selfless behaviors indispensable to human modes of eusociality. For, while at the genetic-instinctual level, humans are able to respond altruistically only to those within the narrow limits of the circle of their genetic kin, at the level of language, they can be induced through the mediation of words and meanings, to display a more generalized and inclusive mode of altruism (Lieberman, 1991: 166-72). Induced, that is, to display it to those made *artificially* similar to them, through the institutional processes of socialization, by means of which, as now cloned subjects, all participating in the same order of symbolically coded consciousness constituted about each culture's governing sociogenic principle and its code of "fake" similarity, they could now subjectively experience themselves as culturally co-defined conspecifics, or symbolic kin. As Campbell also argued, it is with respect to the indispensable nature of the conditioning processes needed to override the narrow limits of genetic kinship, and to artificially induce the modes of more inclusive altruism needed for the cohesion of human orders, that we need to understand the pervasive presence of the schemas of "sin and temptation in the folk morality of our religious traditions" (Campbell, 1975: 22). Schemas, whether in their religious or in their now secular forms, can be recognized as the "artificial" behavior motivating "narratives" whose "vernacular languages of belief and desire" (Miller, 1992: 182) structure our culture-specific orders of consciousness, modes of mind, and thereby of being. It is these schemas and the coercive nature of their systems

of meaning that make it possible for each mode of sociogeny and its artificially imprinted *sense of self* to be created as one able to override, where necessary, the genetic-instinctual sense of self, at the same time as it itself comes to be subjectively *experienced as if it were instinctual*; it is thereby enabled not only to reoccupy the formerly hegemonic place, of the genetic self, but also to harness its drives to its now culturally defined sociogenetic own.<sup>11</sup>

If we see, therefore, that the experience of *what it is like* to be human is only made possible by means of the, at first, sacred religio-cultural and, now in our contemporary case, objective secular-cultural discourses and their coercive semantic technologies by means of which the genetic-instinctual self of the individual is transformed through processes of social conditioning into that of each order's culturally prescribed *sense of the self* or sociogenic principle, then it is this principle, and the institutions by means of which it is imprinted that gives the constant able to provide a transculturally applicable "common reality": the constant that Vico, in the context of his call for a New Science specific to human societies, predicted as the institutional complex that would be found to be common to all societies (Vico, 1970: 53). While because, in this context, it can now be also proposed that the phenomenon of "mind," as the mode of consciousness unique to the human, is the emergent property of these programmed and thereby "artificial" or socialized *senses of self*, a corollary logically follows. This is that the laws or rules which govern the nature-culture processes inscribing our modes of socio-genetic being, and thereby of "mind," can be identified as the human form of the psychophysical laws whose existence has been postulated by Chalmers. In consequence, the identification of such laws, as they function at the hybrid level of our modes of being human, should not only be able to solve the puzzle of conscious experience at the level of human forms of life, doing so by revealing its role as the indispensable concomitant of our culturally relative modes of being or *senses of self*, but it should also be able to provide an answer to the related question as to the *why* of subjective experience in general, as well as the *why* of the centrality of the experience of identity to our experience of what it is to be human.

The thesis put forward by the neuroscientist Gerald Edelman is illuminating. Edelman points out that each organism, as it confronts its environment, must necessarily know and classify the world in terms that are of *adaptive* advantage to the organism, terms that can orient the behaviors needed for its own survival, realization, and reproduction. In other words, it must know and classify its world *adaptively*, in spite of the fact that the way it knows the world is not necessarily concordant with what that world veridically *is*, outside the terms of its own viewpoint (Edelman, 1987: 26). What becomes clear here is that while the organism knows and classifies the world in these adaptively advantageous terms, it does so, as proposed by the biologist Richard Dawkins, for the long term good and stable reproduction of

the genes which comprise its genome, genes for whose reproductive imperative the organism is merely a vehicle (Dawkins, cited by Eldridge, 1995: 180). That long-term goal can, nevertheless, *only be secured* through the mediation of what the “vehicle,” that is, the individual organism, *feels* to be to its own advantage as a mode of being in the world. Through the mediation, therefore, of what it subjectively experiences as “good” or “bad” *for itself*, it interacts with its environment, displaying the behaviors that are of adaptive advantage to its realization, survival, and reproduction.

If, therefore, we postulate by analogy, that the “socialized” normal subject of each order must, like the organism, also know and classify the world in terms that are of adaptive advantage to its “artificial” or culturally constructed “sense of self,” rather than in terms of the veridical truth of what that world empirically *is* outside its own viewpoint, the same corollary follows. This is that while its mode of viewpoint-knowing is adaptively advantageous, in the long term, to the stable reproduction of the sociogenic principle instituting of its culture-specific mode of being human, it can continue to be so *only* through the mediation of what the individual human subject *feels* to be to its own adaptive advantage (i.e. to be “good” and bad for itself), as it interacts with both its physical and its sociohuman environments or “worlds.” This is to say, the individual must filter the external through the mediation of what he/she is socialized to experience with reference to his/her culture-specific identity as “good” or “bad.” Fanon makes evident that the middle class educated black is socialized to experience his/our own physiognomic being, as well as his/our African cultures of origin, as “bad,” as archetypally Evil, in Aimé Césaire terms, as “le part maudite,” from which one must separate oneself if one is to be fully human<sup>12</sup> to “feel good” in the terms of our present ethno-class conception of the human.

Here, Franklin’s question “why are there subjective states?” can be answered by the posing of another question. How, exactly, at the level of organic life, does each organism come to *experience* objects in the world, in the specific terms of its nervous system’s order of perception and categorization, as being to its adaptive advantage (good) or not to its adaptive advantage (bad)? Further, at the level of human forms of life, how *exactly* is a “normal subject” made to experience objects in the world, in the terms of its specific culture’s system of perception and categorization, as being to its own adaptive advantage (good) or not (bad)? Here the findings of biochemists, made in the wake of the remarkable discoveries during the seventies and eighties of the existence of indigenous morphine-like molecules or opioid peptides in the brain, the nervous system, and indeed throughout the body of all species, suggest an answer. And this answer not only explains why, as Chalmers proposed, *subjective experience* should be seen as a fundamental feature, irreducible to anything more basic; it also answers Nagel’s question with respect to how “objective

processes can give rise to subjective states," as well as validates Fanon's identification of the socio-cultural objective processes that leads to the "aberrations of affect" of both White, non-White/non-Black, anti-Black racism, and Black autophobia. These aberrations become common to all subjects culturally westernized in the ethno-class terms of *Man*.

In his book, *Addiction: From Biology to Drug Policy*, the neurobiologist Avram Goldstein, in the course of his discussion of the neurochemistry of pleasure and pain, put forward the hypothesis that in all living species "a natural opioid system exists for signaling both reward (probably by beta-endorphin) and punishment (by dynorphins)." Further, "the balance of these opposing opioid peptides may regulate many aspects" of what is experienced is a "normal state of mind." He then speculates that it is these reward systems, "that drive adaptive behaviors." For these systems "signal 'good' when food is found and eaten by a hungry animal, when water is found and drunk by a thirsty animal, when sexual activity is promised and consummated, when a threatening situation is averted." When "harmful behavior is engaged in or when pain is experienced," on the other hand, "they signal bad." So that as "these signals become associated with the situations in which they are generated, and they are remembered," their functioning "seems to represent the necessary process by which an animal learns to seek what is beneficial and avoid what is harmful . . ." (Goldstein, 1994: 60).

What Goldstein suggests here is that the phenomenology of subjective experience (what *feels good* and what *feels bad* to each organism) is neurochemically determined in species-specific behavior motivating terms. It is therefore this *objectively* structured biochemical system that determines the way in which each organism will perceive, classify, and categorize the world in the adaptive terms needed for its own survival and reproductive realization as such an organism. Yet, it is only through the mediation of the organism's *experience* of what *feels good to* the organism and what *feels bad to* it, and thereby of what it feels like to *be* that organism (*the only entity for which these specific feelings exist*), that the specific repertoire of behaviors that are of adaptive advantage both *for* that organism and for the reproductive transmission of its genetic information, will be stably motivated and displayed. This, at the same time as those that are disadvantageous for both the organism and its genome, will be demotivated, because they are made to be subjectively experienced as "bad" by the organism. So that, if the genes that comprise each species-specific genome are to be reproduced by means of behaviors adaptively suited to deal with the specific challenges of the environment in which the vehicle-organism (to use Dawkin's formulation)<sup>13</sup> finds itself, such behaviors can be ensured *only* through the mediation of the subjective experiencing by the organism of what is biochemically made to *feel good* and *feel bad to* it as it interacts with its ecosystem: only through the experience, therefore, of what it is like to *be* that organism. The

why of subjective experience, as found in the fact that Nagel's bat, for example, classifies the world in terms of what *feels good* and what *feels bad* for it, is as objectively determinant of the stable reproduction of that organism's mode of species being, or genomic principle, as is its physiological architecture, by means of whose species-specific natural opioid system, such a mode of subjective experiencing by the individual organism is made possible.

But what of ourselves as human subjects? As subjects of our contemporary order? As Fanon points out, for us it is "normal" to be anti-Negro, within the case of Negroes socialized in the terms of *Man*, a central contradiction being set up between the natural opioid system (in whose genetically determined terms our physiognomic being should be experienced as "good"), and the reality of a cultural mode of identity and therefore of sociogeny, in whose terms this physiognomic being must be experienced as "bad." Goldstein is of no help in this respect. Given that because his hypothesis, as it relates to humans, is put forward on the basis of the purely ontogenetic, and thereby biocentric, conception of the human, which functions as the non-questioned premise of our present epistemological order, his conclusion logically presupposes that these opioid reward and punishment behavior-motivational systems function in exactly the same way for us as they do for all forms of purely organic life. He puts forward this conclusion in the course of his argument against the legalization of addictive drugs. The widespread contemporary use of addictive drugs, he argues, can only be understood in an evolutionary context, given that when seen from this perspective, the "feel good" quality of these drugs can be recognized as being due to the fact that they are "not even foreign to the body," since what they do is to "merely mimic or block the neurotransmitters that function normally to signal reward." What is thereby being disturbed by widespread drug addiction is "the delicately regulated system" that "was perfected by evolution over millions of years to serve the survival of all species," as a system whose undisturbed natural functioning allows humans to "experience pleasure and satisfaction from the biologically appropriate behaviors and situations of daily life" (Goldstein: 1994: 60).

But do we, as humans, experience pleasure and satisfaction only from *biologically appropriate* behaviors? Does the opioid system in our case function only *naturally*? If, as Goldstein would propose, the answer to both of these is a *yes*, then how do we account for the fact, that, as the description of the early seventeenth century Congolese reveals, what was subjectively experienced as being aesthetically "correct" and appropriate by the Congolese (their qualitative mental states of dynorphin-activated aversion on the one hand, and their beta-endorphin activated "pleasure and satisfaction" states on the other) was entirely the reverse of what is subjectively experienced by western and westernized subjects as being aesthetically correct and appropriate? How can the same objects, that is, the white skin color

and Caucasoid physiognomy of the Indo-European human hereditary variation and the black skin color and Negroid physiognomy of the African/Congolese human hereditary variation, give rise, in purely biological terms, to subjective experiences that are the direct opposite of each other? Stan Franklin points out that *qualia* is the term used for the qualitative aspects of our mental states such as color sensations, the taste of chocolate, pleasure and pain (Franklin, 1995: 32) and, therefore, the aversive sensations of horror. Then, why did the still culturally autocentric Congolese experience their own black skin color and the white skin color of the Europeans in binarily opposed terms to the way in which these skin colors are subjectively experienced by the Europeans who shout "Dirty Nigger"? By Blacks who experience their/our own physiognomic and skin-color aversively? Could the aversive sensation of horror (that is, the specific qualitative mental states) experienced by the Congolese at the sight of the white skin and Caucasoid physiognomy be attributed *only* to a genetic-instinctual revulsion to a people whose physiognomic appearance differs so markedly from their own, and vice versa? If this is so, how do we explain the central symbolic role of sacred and liminally deviant monstrosity mapped onto the white-skinned albino Congolese, within the terms of their then still autocentric traditional culture,<sup>14</sup> whose cultural category of abnormal deviance—a category whose members, as Teruel also tells us, "are regarded by the Congolese as monsters"—the equally white-skinned Europeans were assimilated? Are we not here confronted with the fact that it is because, as ethnographic studies now make clear, the figure of the *albino* played a parallel archetypal role in the cultural constellation of the traditional Congolese, in Agrarian polytheistic religious terms, to the one that, as Fanon notes (Epigraph 2), is played, in our now purely secular "cultural constellation" by the figure of the "Negro"? The "Negro" is now the analogue of the "boundary marker" of normal being, and as such, in our biocentric conception, the "expression of the bad instincts," of the "uncivilized savage" who threatens to overwhelm the "normal," "white," and middle class subjects of our contemporary order.

Are we not in both cases dealing here with the processes of functioning of two differently culturally programmed opioid systems, two different *senses of the self* of which they are a function? How else explain, in the case of the sensory qualia correlated with the shouted cry "Dirty Nigger!," that the same aversive response is subjectively experienced not just by western peoples, but also by, as Fanon explores, black peoples who have, ourselves, been westernized? Indeed, the descendants of the once "normal" Congolese subjects are now classified, in the terms of the culture imposed upon them, as "Negroes," and, as such, as abnormal? Does this not make it clear that the proposal that subjectively experiencing "Black" and "White" as merely the expression of two different genetic-instinctual narcissistic somatic norms, one White, one Black, will not hold up?

Seeing that were it a purely somatic issue, we should then be compelled to inquire as to what has happened to the somatic narcissism, not only of Blacks who wear white masks (that is, desire a white appearance), but also to that of the millions of non-Europeans who now increasingly make use of plastic surgery to secure for themselves a physiognomic appearance nearer to that of the Indo-European in its bourgeois configuration. Why should there be such widespread anxiety for Semitic noses to be clipped and shortened, Mexican-Indian noses to be heightened, the folds of Asian eyelids removed, the shape of the eyes rounded? Why, even more ominously in the brave new world of our bio-tech century, is the term “genetic enhancement” (a euphemism for eugenics) used to refer to the biogenetic engineering processes designed to ensure the birth of babies with blue eyes, European type noses, and European type eyes; to ensure only the “production” of those physiognomies sculpted in the terms of the hegemonic aesthetic of the western-bourgeois conception and criterion of being human?<sup>15</sup>

The comparison of, in Nagel’s terms, two differing viewpoints and psychoaffective responses, on the basis of the perspective of a “common reality” outside the terms of both, here enables us to propose, after Fanon, that it is the culturally constructed sociogenic principle that, in both cases, by mapping or totemizing negative/positive meanings (as part of a cultural series) on the non-humanly instituted difference (as a natural series),<sup>16</sup> that activates, by their semantic reprogramming, the opioid system in culture-specific terms? Does this thereby enable the radically opposed qualitative subjective responses to what is, in effect, the same *objects*? Fanon’s hypothesis that, in the case of our own culture, *Black skins wear white masks*, being but a special case of the fact that all humans wear cultural masks (“besides phylogeny and ontogeny there stands sociogeny”), results in that, although born as biological humans (as *human skins*), we can *experience ourselves as human* only through the mediation of the processes of socialization effected by the invented *tekhnē* or cultural technology to which we give the name *culture*. If this is so then the recognition that, as Terence Deacon points out, (Epigraph 2) we are, as humans, *what we experience ourselves to be* (in effect, what we are culturally-verbally socialized to experience ourselves to be), not only provides the answer to Franklin’s question, but at the same time, enables Chalmers’ puzzle of conscious experience to cease being one. Seeing that because all modes of human conscious experience, and thereby, of *consciousness*, can now be seen to be, in all cases, the expression of the culturally constructed mode of subjective experience specific to the functioning of each culture’s sociogenic *sense of self*, the same recognition can now be analogically extrapolated to the species-specific *sense of self* expressing the genomic principle defining of all forms of organic life. In both cases, therefore, specific information states can be seen as being inseparable from each form of life’s (whether purely organic or

hybridly human) subjective experiencing of what it is like to *be like/to be* each such mode of being, and, to thereby behave appropriately (biologically or culturally) in the modalities necessary to the realization, survival, and reproduction of each such mode of being.

In this context, we can invert the analogical process in order to propose that if it is the information-encoding genomic organizational principle of the bat (including centrally the neurochemistry of its species-specific opioid reward and punishment) that serves to induce its appropriate behaviors, through the mediation of each bat's subjective experience of what *feels* good and what *feels* bad to and for it. It is, then, in the case of the human species, the sociogenic principle, as the information-encoding organizational principle of each culture's criterion of being/non-being, that functions to *artificially* activate the neurochemistry of the reward and punishment pathway, doing so in the terms needed to institute the human subjects as a culture-specific and thereby verbally defined, if physiologically implemented, mode of being and *sense of self*. One, therefore, whose phenomenology (that is, the parameters of its qualitative mental states, order of consciousness and mode of subjective experience) is as objectively, constructed as its physiology, like the bat, is objectively, because biologically, structured.

### **The Natural-scientific Language of Neurobiology, or the Hybrid Nature-culture Language of Fanon's Sociodiagnostics and Césaire's Science of the Word? To Reinvent Nagel's "Objective Phenomenology"**

I grasp my narcissism with both hands and I turn my back on the degradation of those who would make man a mere mechanism. (BS: 23)

Contrary to common opinion, the prime metaphysical significance of artificial intelligence is that it can counteract the subtly dehumanizing influence of natural science, of which so many cultural critics have complained. It does this by showing, in a scientifically acceptable manner, how it is possible for psychological beings to be grounded in a material world and yet be properly distinguished from 'mere matter'. Far from showing that human beings are 'nothing but machines', it confirms our insistence that we are essentially subjective creatures living through our own mental constructions of reality. (Margaret Boden, 1977: 473)

The above hypothesis takes us back both to Fanon's proposal for a *sociodiagnostic* as the only possible "cure" for the aberration of affect induced in the black by the massive "psychoexistential complex" in which he/she finds him/herself entrapped, as well as to

the challenge of Nagel to which it is related. This is the challenge with respect to the possibility of elaborating an objective phenomenology on the basis of a methodology analogous to that of the natural sciences, yet different from it. As such, one that would be able to take its departure from the “particularity of the point of view” of the subjectively experiencing subject, yet be able to postulate a “common reality” outside the terms of that point of view. Here it seems to me that both Nagel’s call for an objective phenomenology and Chalmers’ call for the identification of fundamental laws specific to consciousness, when linked to Fanon’s hypothesis, with respect to the hybrid nature of human identity, enables the positing, in the case of the human species, of laws beyond those of natural laws. Ones that, nevertheless, function in tandem with the latter, so as to bring into being the hybrid nature-culture modes of being or forms of life specific to being human. With the result that, if, as Jonathan Miller pointed out in a 1992 essay, while consciousness “is implemented by neurobiological processes,” “the language of neurobiology” still remains unable to convey what it’s *like to be* conscious, then the proposal here is that the finding of a new “language” able to do this could be made possible only on the basis of the new postulate: that of the existence of autonomously functioning laws of culture, as laws which “in their accustomed course” (*cursus solitus culturae*) give rise to our adaptive orders of consciousness, modes of subjective experience, of sensory qualia, or “qualitative mental states.” It did this in the same way as the “language of neurobiology” was made possible only in the wake of the intellectual revolution of the Renaissance of humanism and of its then new poetics, in whose terms alone, as Ferdinand Hallyn has identified in his study on Copernicus and Kepler, the postulate of the non-arbitrarily and autonomously functioning (rather than divinely and arbitrarily regulated) laws of nature (i.e. *cursus solitus naturae*), indispensable to the emergence of the natural sciences, was to be conceptualizable.<sup>17</sup> At the same time as it was to be the new postulate, in the reoccupied place of the millennial belief in Divine Supernatural Causation, of autonomously functioning laws of nature as the “cause” of the functioning of physical processes and, in the wake of Darwin, of biological processes, that was to emancipate the levels of physical and purely organic reality from having to continue to be known adaptively, rather than veridically, thereby enabling the emergence of a new natural scientific mode of human cognition.

Parallelly, a new language able to convey what *it is like* to be conscious outside the terms of each culture-specific order of consciousness, would also have to be one only findable within the term of the postulate of autonomously functioning laws of culture, as laws specific to the third (beyond the physical and the purely biological) and hybrid level of ontogenetic/sociogenetic existence—at the level that would be the specific domain of inquiry of this new language. Given that if the parameters of what it is like to be human,

to be *us*-in other words, the parameters of our orders of consciousness and modes of subjective experience-are instituted in consistent ways specific to each culture's *sense of self* or sociogenic principle (with the aversive mental states and shout of "Dirty Nigger!" by "normal" white subjects, and of those of autophobia by "normal" black subjects, being as determined by our present *sense of self* and its conception of what it is like to be human as those of the Congolese, to the white skin color and physiognomy of the Europeans had been determined by that of the Congolese culture's *sense of self* or sociogenic principle), it is only such a new "language," that would provide the answer in both to Nagel's call for an objective phenomenology, as well as in response to Fanon's call for a sociodiagnostics.

For if the processes of motivation that are determinant of the behaviors, not only of human subjects, but also of the species-specific behaviors of purely organic life, *can only function through the mediation of subjective mental states*, with such states thereby being the indispensable condition of each organism or each human subject's realization as such an organism, or subject, at the same time as they are the condition of the replication of, on the one hand, the sociogenic principle and, on the other, the genomic principle, of which each the organism and the human subject is the lived expression, then the paradox we inescapably confront is: how, in the case of humans, is the *particularity* of the viewpoint of each such mode of conscious experience, and therefore of each such culture-specific mode of the subject, to be *recognized* by each such subject *outside* the terms of the sociogenic principle which institutes him/her as such subject or specific mode of being and outside, therefore, the terms of the order of consciousness which institutes it as such a subject? Here a point made by Jonathan Miller in his essay reveals the dimensions of this paradox. In the course of his argument against the possibility of the "language of neurobiology" and its purely physicalistic assumption ever being able to come to grips with the phenomenon of consciousness, Miller pointed out that although neuroscientists have illuminated the ways in which consciousness is neurophysiologically implemented by the brain, and while consciousness is self-evident to anyone who has it, it, nevertheless, cannot be found or identified as a *property of the brain*; (Miller, 1992: 182) and thereby a property identifiable, in Nagel's terms, as that of a "common reality."

The key issue to be noted here is that of what Miller rightly identifies as the *self-evidence* of consciousness to those who have it. Yet it is precisely this self-evident consciousness that Fanon has found himself not only compelled to call in question, but also to indict, as it itself is the cause of the black's autophobia as well as the white's anti-black "aberration of affect." So that if, as Miller further argues, the language of neurobiology cannot "convey what it is like to be conscious," then the self-evident consciousness can clearly convey

what it is like to be conscious *only* in the terms of its own consciousness as the culture-specific “normal subject” *for* and to whom such a specific, and necessarily adaptive, order of consciousness can be experienced as being self-evident. Seeing such self-evidence can be recognized as a property in itself of the terms in which each subject has been socialized into a specific mode of being human; these terms then prescribe the adaptively advantageous parameters in which each such subject must necessarily know, as well as psycho-affectively respond to, Self, Other, and World as the conditions of the adaptively advantageous reproduction of each such mode of being human. The logical consequence is then that, in the case of our contemporary order of consciousness, modes of subjective experience expressed on the one hand by anti-black and anti-non-white racism, and on the other, by black autophobia, are, like all the other correlated *isms*, the expressions of a self-evident order of consciousness to its subjects. Yet it is simultaneously an order of consciousness that is indispensable to the dynamic institution and stable reproduction of our present ethno-class conception/criterion of the human, as well as to that of the/our contemporary global order as the specific socio-global field in which it is alone realizable as such a mode of being and genre of human identity. So that if this is indeed so, if the black/white psycho-existential complex, as well as the respective “aberrations of affect”—that is, that of anti-black racism, as well as that of black autophobia—are not only of “normal” adaptive advantage to our present mode of being human, to its governing sociogenic principle, how do we extricate ourselves? How, as centrally, was it possible for Fanon himself to set afoot the possibility of our emancipation by means of his redefined conception of what it is to be human?

In his 1973 study of Borana peoples of Ethiopia and their traditional cultural order, the anthropologist Asmarom Legesse provided us with a transcultural perspective with respect to the self-evidence of consciousness. On the basis of data from his research, Legesse proposed that the intellectuals of the Borana order, like those of all human orders, including our contemporary own, must necessarily function as the guardians, elaborators and disseminators of the instituting prescriptive categories on which their societies are founded. As the condition of the dynamic realization and stable reproduction of their specific social orders, therefore, Borana intellectuals, like all such intellectuals, including ourselves, remain normally imprisoned in the very structural models that they/we elaborate—that is, in the adaptive “native model” of reality that we ourselves construct as the condition of the production and reproduction of our culture-specific modes of being human, as well as of the specific social orders that is the condition of their enacted expression. As a result, he further argues, it is only from the ground of the lived experience of the liminally deviant category of each order, through the mediation of whose negated mode of “abnormal” difference the “normal” society is enabled to experience itself both

as “normal,” and as, a socially cohesive community (Legesse, 1973: 114-15), that the normative order of consciousness generated on the basis of their own ontological negation can come to be critically questioned and have its self-evidence called in question (Legesse, 1973: 269-71). In effect, while there can be, for the mainstream intellectuals as the grammarians of their/our respective orders, no “outside” to the “native model” on whose basis what makes the “normal” normal, the real *real*<sup>18</sup> and the self-evident, self-evident, for their societies and their societies’ mode of *being human*, it is the liminal category from which the experience of its necessarily conflicted order of consciousness and inside/outside relation to the “native models” point of view, that, in seeking to emancipate itself from its systemically imposed role, can alone “remind us that we need not forever remain prisoners of our prescriptions” (Legesse, 1973: 271). Prisoners, that is, of the self-evidence of the order of consciousness that is everywhere the property of each culture’s sociogenic principle, and of the mode of nature-culture symbiosis to which each such principle gives rise.

Fanon’s exploration of the ground of the lived experience of the black can therefore be recognized here as one carried out from the liminal perspective of what it is like to be both *Man* (as an educated middle class and westernized subject) and its Nigger Other; to be both the embodiment of the western bourgeois criterion of what it is to be a good man and woman of its kind (and, as such the positively inscribed bearer of its self-evident normative consciousness), and its anti-criterion, and as such the negatively marked symbolic death of its “bad” genetic-instinctual self. It is from this conflicted perspective that he is therefore able to alert us to the possibility of our attaining to the full dimensions of our human autonomy, one inseparable from the possibility not merely of, in Nagel’s still acultural terms, an objective phenomenology but, more comprehensively, of, in Vico’s terms, a new science, specific to the human, or in the terms put forward by Fanon’s fellow Martinican poet thinker Aimé Césaire, in 1946, that of a new science of the Word. If we compare Fanon’s thesis (made on the basis of his analysis of both the educational material and everyday literature in whose terms both the French Caribbean middle class black and the French middle class themselves are educated and socialized)<sup>19</sup> that it was and is *normal* for the first to be as anti-Negro as the second with the no less culturally normal reflex aversive reaction of horror experienced by the normal traditional Congolese subject of the sight of what was, to them, the albino-type deviant monstrosity of the white skin of the European, we are able to identify the Fanonian concept of sociogeny as that of a transcultural constant that can constitute a “common reality” separate from the particularistic *points of view* of both cultures. The natural scientific description of the human experience of *sound* as a “wave phenomenon” provides an extra-human viewpoint description which does not, in any way, negate the reality of the human’s *subjective*

experiencing of the phenomenon as *sound*, is also able to provide the possibility of an objective description of these two opposed yet parallel qualitative mental states or modes of subjective experience; our description, in the same way, does not call for their respective culture-specific subjective experiences of what it is like to be human, and therefore of what it is like to be self-evidently conscious, in the terms of each of their culture's adaptive order of consciousness—the phenomenon identified by Marx as that of ideology or “false consciousness”—to be reduced.

Unlike the “common reality” of a wave phenomenon, however, the sociogenic principle is not a natural scientific object of knowledge. In that if, in the case of humans, this transcultural constant is that of the sociogenic principle as a culturally programmed rather than genetically articulated *sense of self* with the “property” of the mind or human consciousness being located only in the dynamic processes of symbiotic interaction between the opioid reward and punishment system of the brain and the culture-specific governing code or sociogenic principle (as the semantic activating agent) specific to each of our hybrid nature-culture modes of being, and thereby, of experiencing ourselves as human, then the identification of the hybrid property of consciousness, which such a principle makes possible, would call for another form of scientific knowledge beyond the limits of the natural sciences—including neurobiology, whose natural-scientific approach to the phenomenon of consciousness is paradoxically based on our present culture's purely biocentric and adaptive conception of what it is to be human.

If, in the above context, it is this purely biocentric conception of the human, one that reduces him/her to the purely organic status of an animal, against which, Fanon, “grasping his narcissism in both hands,” posited his counter-manifesto of what it is to be human (“besides ontogeny there stands sociogeny”), then his call for a sociodiagnostic itself suggests the need for a new scientific order of knowledge, able to confront and deal with the hybridity of our modes of being human. Specifically, it must be able to deal with the fact that, as Nagel pointed out, the methodology called for, in the case of an objective phenomenology, would no longer be the natural-scientific methodology based on the setting aside of the way things subjectively appear to us. Instead, we need a methodology that would take both the way things appear regularly and consistently to us as normal subjects of our order, and are therefore *self-evidently* evident to our consciousness, and as well, as in the case of Fanon's French Caribbean anti-Negro Negro, our reflex qualitative mental states and/or *sensory qualia*, as the objects of our inquiry. It is these subjective experiences that alone would provide us with objective data of the processes of the culture-specific governing code or sociogenic principle in whose terms we have been socialized as subjects, and which is, thereby, determinant of all such states, as well as of the behaviors to which they lead.

Such a new science would therefore have to be (as already suggested by Fanon's exploration of the lived experience of the black) one able to harness the findings of the natural sciences (including the neurosciences) to its purposes, yet able to transcend them in the terms of a new synthesis able to make our uniquely hybrid nature/culture modes of being human, of human identity, subject to "scientific description in a new way" (Pagels, 1988: 330-39). It is such a new science that Fanon's fellow Martinican, the Negritude poet, essayist, and political activist, Aimé Césaire, coming from the same lived experience of being both *Man* and its liminal Other, had called for in 1946. In a conference paper, delivered that year entitled *Poetry and Knowledge*, Césaire, after pointing out that the natural sciences, for all their triumphs with respect to the kind of knowledge able to make the natural worlds predictable, had nevertheless remained "half-starved" because of their inability to make our human worlds intelligible, then proposed that, in the same way as the "new Cartesian algebra had permitted the construction of theoretical physics," so too "the word promises to be an algebraic equation that makes the world intelligible," one able to provide us with the basis of a new "theoretical and heedless science that poetry could already give an approximate notion of." A science, therefore, in which the "study of words" would come to condition "the study of nature" (Césaire, 1946/1990: xxix).

My own conclusion here is that it is only in the terms of such a new science, one in which the "study of words" (in effect, the study of the *rhetoricity* of our human identity)<sup>20</sup> will link the study of the sociogenic principle, as a transculturally applicable constant able to serve as the "common reality" of our varied cultural modes of being/experiencing ourselves as human, to that of the biochemical/neurophysiological correlates that its positive/negative meanings activates (the study of nature) that the realization of Fanon's call for a sociodiagnostic, Nagel's for an objective phenomenology, Chalmers' for the identification of the fundamental psychophysical laws specific to conscious experience, will all be made possible; we shall be able to, in Fanon's terms, "set man free." Given that within the viewpoint specific to our present culture's biocentric conception of the human, not only must the phenomenon of mind and conscious experience remain a puzzle, but the processes by means of which we objectively construct ourselves as, as Margaret Boden points out, "subjective creatures living through our own mental constructions of reality"<sup>21</sup> must as necessarily continue to remain opaque to us. The result becomes that we are left unable to move beyond the limits both of our present adaptive order of objective knowledge, as well as of the no less adaptive psychoexistential complex of qualitative mental states (in which the *Dirty Nigger!* cum autophobic aversive response is only one, if the most extreme, of a series of interchangeable such responses to a series of also reified Others),<sup>22</sup> to which our present culture's biologically absolute notion

of human identity, as expressed in the “normal” Self of *Man*, gives rise.<sup>23</sup> “I should remind myself,” Fanon wrote in the conclusion of his *Black Skin/White Masks*, “that the real leap consists in introducing invention into existence.” . . . I am a part of Being to the extent that I go beyond it” (BS: 229).

## Notes

1. Editors Note: due to the volume’s size constraints, this chapter had to be heavily edited. In order to preserve the integrity of Sylvia Wynter’s argument, however, we have limited the cuts to the introductory sections, which dealt with the historical background of the chapter.

2. I first used this concept in an essay entitled, “After Man, Its Last Word: Towards The Sociogenetic Principle.” This essay was published in a Spanish translation by Ignacio Corona-Gutierrez, as “Tras ‘El Hombre’, Su Última Palabra: Sobre El Posmodernismo, *Les Damnés Y El Principio Sociogenico*” in *Nuevo Texto Crítico*, Vol. IV., no. 7, Dept. of Spanish and Portuguese, Stanford, California, 43-83.

3. Fanon reveals here the role played by both school and family, as agents reinforcing each of the Other, in socializing the colonial Caribbean subject of African descent to be anti-Negro, by introducing him/her to despise all things African. The subjective experience of black autophobia as of anti-black racism is therefore shown by Fanon, to be objectively constructed. See specifically the two chapters cited in the note above.

4. In his book, *Passage of Darkness: The Ethnobiology of the Haitian Zombie*, (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), Wade Davis, in spite of the unfortunate implications of the first part of his title, nevertheless, de-stereotypes the process of *zombification*, both by showing its institutional role as a deterrent sanction system, as well as by revealing the properties of the toxin used by the members of the Bizango Secret Society to induce the “death-in-life” state of being a zombie.

5. What Fanon enables us to see here is that the threat of “negrification” also functions as a threat of non-being within the terms of our present cultural (and class) conception of human identity; within the terms, therefore, of its governing sociogenetic principle. It is in this context that the desire for “lactification,” which he also explores, can be seen as a desire for being fully human within the terms of our present conception of being human. See for this BS.111, and 47.

6. The recent visceral reaction to, and furore over, the proposal in the U. S. by the Oakland School Board of California, that the rules governing the Afro-English Creole (which they unfortunately labeled as *Ebonics*) needed to be understood by the teachers of standard English whose largely inner city students spoke it as their everyday vernacular, should be understood in a parallel context. The suggestion, further, by the School Board that the African linguistic origin of many of the grammatical usages of Afro- or *Black English* be explained, met with the same negative response that is reflexly showed to all things African, not only by the white middle class, but also by several prominent members of the Black middle class intelligentsia. What might be defined as a pervasive Afrophobia can here be recognized as an attribute that is indispensable to the realization of “normal” identity in the terms of our present option of the human “Man,” as a phobia directed towards the signifier of non-being within the terms of its criterion of being fully human.

7. Fanon referred to these scholars as Pearce and Williamson. He gives the name of their Research Center as Peckham, but without further details [BS: 22].

8. It is within the terms of the conception of the human as a purely biological being that both peoples of African hereditary descent, (*Negroes*) as well as those of all non-whites and formerly colonized “native” peoples, (including, centrally, the “native” peoples of the Americas classified as *Indians*), must be seen as a Lack of the generic or normal human status of the Indo-European peoples; that, in addition, peoples of African hereditary descent must be seen as the missing link between primates and the truly human.

9. This classification had a meaning specific to the Judeo-Christian cultural and cosmogonic identity field of the West. The report given by the Spanish Capuchin Antonio de Teruel, (as cited in Epigraph 33), enables us to recognize the cultural specificity of the European usage of the term. The Congolese, Antonio de Teruel recounts, told the Portuguese slave traders that they were not to call them *negros*, but blacks (*prietas*). *Negros* for them were *slaves*. And within the terms of the traditional Congolese culture, the name *negros* referred only to a specific social category who were considered to be legitimately enslavable. This was the category of those who had fallen out of the protection of their lineage, and who, rather than continuing to belong to the normative status category of the order (i.e. to the status of being free-born men and women who were as such full members of their lineages), were instead *lineageless men and women*. For the monotheistic Judeo-Christian Portuguese, however, *all* peoples of African hereditary descent, because classified as the descendants of the cursed figure of the Biblical Ham, were *negros*, that is, were all potentially enslavable, buyable, and sellable. See in this respect also Georges Balandier, *Daily Life in the kingdom of the Kongo from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, Trans. Helen Weaver, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1968).

10. Paolo Valesio defines this strategy as the *topos* of iconicity. He demonstrates the functioning of this figure in his analysis of a fragment from Heraclitus in which a specific mode of life, related to the bow, is made synonymous with the process of life itself. This strategy should be linked to the formulation made by Whitehead and Russell with respect to the difference that exists between a class of classes (or “machinery”) and a mere member of the class (i.e., tractors, cranes, etc.). The *topos* of iconicity absolutizes a mode of life, a member of the class of classes, human life in general, thereby enabling, in Todorov’s terms, the conflation of species with genus, genus with species. See Paolo Valesio, *Nova Antiqua: Rhetorics as Contemporary Theory* (Bloomington Indian, 1980); and Todorov, *Theories of the Symbol*, trans. C. Porter (Ithaca, New York, 1982).

11. In his *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche made the illuminating point that human life came into existence as the unique form of life that it is only due to the “tremendous labor” that the species was to effect upon itself, through the mediation of the “morality of mores.” As he further noted, “the labor performed by man upon himself during the greater part of the existence of the human race, his entire *prehistoric* labor finds in this its meaning, its great justification notwithstanding the severity, tyranny, stupidity, and idiocy involved in it: with the aid of morality of the mores and the social straitjacket, man was actually *made* calculable.” See Walter Kaufmann, ed. and translator, *Basic Writings of Nietzsche* (New York: Modern Library, 1968, 495).

12. See Roger Toumson and Simone Henry-Vallmore, *Aimé Césaire, Le Nègre Inconsolé* (Paris, Syros, 1993, where they report an interview with Césaire, 212).

13. Although Dawkins argued in his book *The Selfish Gene* that organisms are the “survival machines of genes,” he also proposes that the human and human consciousness, can be seen “as the culmination of an evolutionary trend towards the emancipation of survival machines as executive decision takers from their ultimate

masters, the genes.” He argues that this has been made possible by the “new soup of human culture in which *memes* as units of cultural transmission take over.” See the extract on “The Evolution of Consciousness” from *The Selfish Gene* which is republished in Connie Barlow ed. *From Gaia to Selfish Genes: Selected Writings in the Life Sciences* (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 216-22). My suggestion here, is that, once in place, the sociogenic principle is no less “selfish.”

14. See Georges Balandier, o cit., 217-19.

15. In his book *Towards The Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (Madison Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), George Mosse shows the inter-relationships between the new bourgeois aesthetics and modern racism, with the eighteenth century postulate of the Greek Ideal type coming to be represented from the Enlightenment as a biologically determined and “normal” ideal of beauty: and therefore with the Negroid and Jewish physiognomies coming to be stigmatized as its negation.2-3, 12-35.

16. In his classic essay, *Totemism*, Claude Lévi-Strauss pointed out that the animal totems of traditional cultures, were not “good to eat” as earlier anthropologists had thought, but were rather “good to think” with. In that, in a case where each clan, for example, had as its totem say, an eagle, a bear, a seal, the *natural series* of species difference was then mapped onto the series of invented *socio cultural differences*. If we see this further as the way in which the latter as a humanly *invented* system of difference is absolutized by being mapped onto the differences of the natural series, then the belief system of *race*, can be seen as a form of totemism. Seeing that the constant of human hereditary variations (a natural series) is used to absolutize the differential social hierarchies and identities which are invented by our contemporary order. The White/Black opposition, for example, enables the status organizing principle of genetic difference represented as an evolutionarily determined mode of value-difference, to be mapped onto, and thereby, to legitimate, the invented social hierarchy of class.

17. See Fernand Hallyn, *The Poetic Structure of The World: Copernicus and Kepler*, Trans. Donald M. Leslie (New York: Zone Books, 1990).

18. This very important point with respect to the ways in which different cultures make “the normal normal” and the “real real,” doing so in different terms, is made by Michael Taussig in his book *Shamanism, colonialism and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing*.

19. Fanon makes the point clear when he shows how the mythic origin narrative central to French history in its bourgeois or class conceptualization—i.e. “our ancestors the Gauls,” (as opposed to that of the nobility who claimed aristocratic descent from the Franks), was solemnly repeated by black students in Martinique as part of the standard curriculum in which they too were taught. The black schoolboy in the Antilles,” he writes: “who in his lessons is forever talking about ‘our ancestors, the Gauls,’ identifies himself with the explorer, the bringer of civilization, the white man who carries truth to savages—an all—white truth. There is identification—that is, the young Negro subjectively adopts a white man’s attitude. He invests the hero, who is white, with all his own aggression . . . Little by little, one can observe in the young Antillean the formation and crystallization of an attitude and a way of thinking and seeing that are essentially white. When in school he has to read stories of savages told by white men, he always thinks of the Senegalese . . . Because the Antillean does not think of himself as a black man, he thinks of himself as an Antillean. The Negro lives in Africa. Subjectively, intellectually, the Antillean conducts himself like a white man. But he is a Negro. That he will learn once he goes to Europe; and when he hears Negroes mentioned he will recognize that the word includes himself as well as the Senegalese” (147-48). Then, in a footnote, referring to the “our ancestors, the Gauls” origin myth that had been transposed from France to

her black colonized subjects, he writes: "One always sees a smile when one reports this aspect of education in Martinique. The smile comes because the comicality of the thing is obvious, but no one pursues it to its later consequences. Yet these are the important aspects, because three or four such phrases are the basis on which the young Antillean works out his view of the world" (147).

20. This is the central point made by Ernesto Grassi in his book *Rhetoric as Philosophy: The Humanist Tradition* (University Park and London: The Pennsylvanian state University Press, 1980). Here his concept of the verbal and culturally relative modes of human identity coincide with Fanon's hypothesis that "in the case of the human besides phylogeny and ontogeny there stands socioency." See especially Chapters, "Language as The Presupposition of Religion: A Problem of Rhetoric as Philosophy," 103-14.

21. See Margaret Boden, *Artificial Intelligence and Natural Man* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 473.

22. Aimé Césaire brilliantly captured the interrelated nature of this series when he wrote in his poem, *Notebook of a Return to a Native Land*: As there are hyena-men and panther-men, / so I shall be a Jew man / a Kaffir man / a Hindu-from-Cuttacca man / a man-from-Harlem-who-hasn't-got-the-vote. / Famine man, curse man, torture man, you may seize / him at any moment, beat him, kill him—yes perfectly / well kill him—accounting to no one, having to offer an / excuse to no one / a Jew man / a pogrom man / a whelp / a beggar. See his *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal/Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*. In *Aimé Césaire: The Collected Poetry*. Ed. and trans. Clayton Eshelman and Annette Smith. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California P, 1983. 32-85.

23. Our "imprisonment" in our present biocentric conception of identity, and therefore, in its adaptive modes of knowing and feeling, leads logically to the kind of "normal" behaviors, whose collective consequences can range, on the negative side, from the small humiliations of everyday life, to vast deprivations of hunger and poverty as well as to the large-scale genocide that has now become characteristic of the twentieth century. In his book already cited (see Note 27), George Mosse makes this clear with respect to the Holocaust whose major target was the Jews of Europe, (together with other groups also classified in biological terms as "life unworthy of life"). It is apposite here to note that one of the central stigmas placed upon Jews by the Nazis was that of their being an "Afro-Asian mongrel breed." See also Henry Friedlander, *The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution* (Chapel Hill, 1995), where he makes the central point that "Nazi genocide did not take place in a vacuum." Rather, it took place in the context of an ideology of genetically determined human inequality put forward by the biological sciences that had a reason in the nineteenth century in the wake of Darwin. This ideology was to be inseparable from the purely biological description of the human and the genetic/racial ideology to which it gave rise. Within the frame of this ideology, all population groups classified as genetically inferior (i.e., "as life unworthy of life"), whether the handicapped, the mentally ill, the aged, the homosexual, or the "racially inferior" (i.e., Gypsies and, most totally, the Jews), were slated for extermination.

## Works Cited

- Balandier, Georges. *Daily Life in the Kingdom of the Kongo from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*. Trans. Helen Weaver. New York: Pantheon Books, 1996.
- Boden, Margaret. *Artificial Intelligence and Natural Man*. New York: Basic Books, 1977.
- Bohm, David. Interview. In *Omni*, January, 1982.
- Campbell, Donald. The Two Distinct Routes Beyond Kin Selection to Ultra-Sociality: Implications for the Humanity and Social Sciences. In *The Nature of Pro-Social Development: Interdisciplinary Theories and Strategies*, ed. Diane L. Bridgman. New York: Academic Press, 1982.
- Chalmers, David. *The Conscious Mind: In Search of a Fundamental Theory*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Puzzle of Conscious Experience." In *Scientific America*, Dec. 1995.
- Césaire, Aimé. "Poetry and Knowledge." Intro. to *Aimé Césaire: The Collected Poetry*, ed. Clayton Eshleman and Annette Smith. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: U of California P (1983) xxix.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Notebook of a Return To a Native Land. In *Aime Cesaire: The Collected Poetry*, ed. and trans. Clayton Eshelman and Annette Smith. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: U of California P (1983) 32-85.
- Danielli, J. F. "Altruism and the Internal Reward System or the Opium of the People." *Journal of Social and Biological Sciences III* (1980). 87-94.
- Davis, Wade. *Passage of Darkness: The Ethnobiology of The Haitian Zombie*. Chapel Hill & London: The U of North Carolina P, 1988.
- Deacon, Terence W. *The Symbolic Species: The Co-evolution of Language and the Brain*. New York, London: W. W. Norton and Co., 1997.
- Dennett, Daniel C. "Consciousness Explained." Interview with Wim Kayser. In *A Glorious Accident: Understanding our Place in the Cosmic Puzzle*. Companion to the Public Television Series. New York: W. H. Friedman and Co., 1997.
- Dubois, W. B. *Writings*, ed. Nathan Huggins. New York: Library of America, 1986.
- Edelman, Gerald M. *Neural Darwinism. The Theory of Neuronal Group Selection*. New York: Basic Books, Inc. Publishers, 1987.
- Eldridge, Niles. *Reinventing Darwin: The Great Debate at The High Table of Evolutionary Theory*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1995.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs*. Préface (1952) and Postface (1965) of Francis Jeanson. Paris: Edition du Seúil, 1952.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Wretched of the Earth*. trans. Constance Farrington. New York: Grove Press, 1963.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Black Skins, White Masks*. trans. C. L. Markham. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things; An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. New York: Vintage Books, 1973.
- Franklin, Stan. *Artificial Minds*. Cambridge, MA.: M. I. T. Press, 1995.
- Geertz, Clifford. *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretative Anthropology*. New York: Basic Books, 1983.
- Godzich, Wlad. Foreword to *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, by Michel de Certeau. trans. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1986.
- Goldstein, Avram. *Addiction:From Biology to Public Policy*. New York: W. H. Freeman, 1994.
- Grassi, Ernesto. *Rhetoric and Philosophy: The Humanist Tradition*. University Park, PA: U of Pennsylvania P, 1980.

- Hallyn, Ferdinand. *The Poetic Structure of The World, Copernicus and Kepler*. Trans. Donald M. Leslie. New York: Zone Booty, 1990.
- Judy, Ronald A. T. "Fanon's Body of Black Experience." In *Fanon: A Critical Reader*, ed. Lewis R. Gordon et al. Oxford, U. K.: Blackwell Publishers, 1996.
- Legesse, Asmarom. *Gada: Three Approaches To The Study of an African Society*. New York: The Free Press, 1973.
- Lieberman, Phili. *Uniquely Human: The Evolution of Speech, Thought and Selfless Behavior*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1991.
- Miller, Jonathan. "Trouble in Mind." In *Mind/Brain*, a special issue of *Scientific American*. September, 1992.
- Nagel, Thomas. "What it is like to be a bat." In *Mortal Questions*. Cambridge/London: Cambridge UP (1979): 165-80.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Basic Writings of Nietzsche*. Trans./ed. William Kaufman. New York: The Modern Library, 1968.
- Pagels, Heinz R. *The Dream of Reason: The Computer and The Rise of the Sciences of Complexity*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988.
- Pandian, Jacob. *Anthropology and The western Tradition: Towards in Authentic Anthropology*. Prospect Heights, Il.: Waveland Press, 1985.
- Teruel, Antonio de. *Narrative Description of . . . the Kingdom of the Congo*. (1663-664) National Library: Madrid, Spain, Ms. 3533-574.
- Vico, Giambattista. *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*. Trans. from the Third Edition (1744) by Thomas Goddard, Bergin and Max Harold Fisch. Revised and Abridged. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1970.
- Wynter, Sylvia. "Columbus and the Poetics of the Propter nos." In *Discovering Columbus Annals of Scholarship*, VIII, ed. Djelal Kadir. (1991): 251-86.



## Chapter 3

# Words and Images. Figurating and Dis-Figurating Identity

Mercedes F. Durán-Cogan<sup>1</sup>

Any reflection on identity implies a meditation on memory, history, and values: a philosophy of the cultural or national “self.” Collective identities are inextricably associated with narrative: at their inception we are bound to find myths of origin, biographies of their founding fathers, accounts of the legendary exploits of their heroes. From an historical, literary, and philosophical standpoint, the inquiry about identity in western cultures begins with Plato’s *Republic* and continues in Aristotle’s *Politics* and his *Poetics*, where we also find references to the nation-epos relationship. It is not incidental that the rediscovery of Aristotle’s *Poetics* in the sixteenth century should coincide with the emergence of the first nation-states in Europe and the reappearance of this theme as a pressing concern. The Greek term “epos” has traditionally been applied to the epic genre or, in the more ample sense used by German medievalists, to a body of narrative poems, epics, and/or mythical stories that are tied to the origin of a community. Thus, the term epos designates a body of literature through which the canonical foundational values of a community are established.

In consequence, the epos is the locus in which language as an aesthetic—and not merely communicative—instrument, and a community’s political, ethical, and religious ideals converge. Once established, the epos will structurally affect subsequent reflections about identity: the constellation of norms and values propounded, as well as their transmission and canonization through literature and

other forms of representation, configure, through the collective imaginary, the manner in which a community perceives, constructs and represents its cultural heritage. In western cultures, the consolidation of a vernacular language and the concomitant amalgamation of an ideologically coherent collection of narratives appear to be associated with the elusive shift that changes a community into a nation. This perceptual translocation usually marks the emergence of a sense of "national identity," and the acceptance of the community as a nation by others. The aggregate of myths, epics, chronicles, and records, and the incessant addition of (historical and/or mythical) accounts of new heroes and their exploits, eventually constitute what will be known as a "national history."

On the other hand, religious proselytism, conquest and colonization processes, diasporic movements, occupation, annexation of territories through treaties or war, economic and/or politically motivated migrations often result in that religious, linguistic, ethnic, cultural, and/or political identitary constructs rarely coincide with national or regional borders. In fact, despite its forced ties to the nation-state and modern nationalism, the epos does not need to be bound to a territory. Even when all contact with the geographical space associated with its origins has been lost, a community can maintain its cultural and/or religious identity over centuries of diaspora solely through its epos. Since many of the myths associated with the origins of a community were meant to record territorial boundaries, the original territory may attain such an enormous power in the imaginary that the hope of a return is incorporated as a religious, cultural, and/or political value into the epos. In other instances, the transcendence of a particular epos and its heroes will reach well beyond the territorial and/or cultural boundaries of the community in which it originated, often by means of religious proselytism and/or colonization processes. In consequence, we find religious, political, military, cultural, or revolutionary figures that are sacred to, or admired by, individuals belonging to many different national, ethnic, or cultural groups.

My working hypothesis assumes that every society is always plural, and therefore conflictive. From this theoretical standpoint, the epos can only be understood as a monological interpretation of a nation's history made according to those interests that are at play at a given time. Since the epos serves to preserve and transmit a particular identitary construct, new values that respond to ethical, political, or social changes will either be rejected and/or ignored, or the body of narratives in which the community finds its roots will be manipulated and/or reinterpreted accordingly. In consequence, the epos of a community will emerge through a process of pre-selection, interpretation, and/or manipulation of texts made according to a particular hegemonic hermeneutic practice. In other words, it is the reception of these texts at a particular historical or political moment that determines the values and ideological presuppositions that will be

accented through them. Religious or social rituals, political rhetoric, literature, and other non-verbal forms of representation (statues, paintings, national emblems, coins, and the like) then take over the task of conveying the purported meaning of these narratives (and of the heroes portrayed within them) to the community. At the same time, there will always be ethical, social, political, and/or religious interests that are in conflict with the established status quo and the epos that supports it. Therefore, we are also bound to find transgressions, more or less successful attempts to oppose, subvert or de-stabilize the accepted (social, religious, ethical, and/or political) order within a community. Although challenges to an established epos often have an undermining effect that will induce social change over time, profound and expedient modifications to the epos can only be effected through revolutionary processes or extreme political or social changes. In those instances, different interpretations of present heroes and their supporting narratives are made, alternative heroes and narratives are reclaimed, or new foundational narratives, heroes, and symbolic representations of the current state of affairs are created. Former exegesis, narratives, heroes, or symbols will not disappear completely from the collective imaginary, however. They will wait more or less close to the surface until they are, once again, reclaimed by disenfranchised groups.

In other words, regardless of the underlying ideological presuppositions that may sustain a state of society, the epos will always be in operation as a communifying instrument. In this sense, the epos may be defined as an ethical-axiological projection inflicted on a generally pre-existent narrative and symbolic corpus for ideological reasons. Within a monological notion of society, the epos will “naturally” appear to be the expression of a community’s “essence,” as is the case with the Herderian notion of *Volksgeist*. Insofar as the epos serves to impose and glorify a monological view of the past that wants to represent the “oneness” of the nation, it functions as a very effective ideological tool. On the one hand, it hides a society’s plurality of thought and interests by omitting or disqualifying divergent interpretations of the nation’s history and rejecting present dissent as “seditious.” On the other hand, it creates an illusion of homogeneity and social coherence that helps maintain the internal status quo, allowing the nation to view and present itself as a cultural, linguistic, and historical whole. In a certain manner, the epos operates as a kind of synecdoche in that it offers a part (a single, monological perspective) for the whole (a plurilogical diversity of perspectives).

As Gómez-Moriana proposes, the usage of words is never “innocent”: in a given society, it will either contribute to the system’s integrity, efficacy, and coherence, or question them through the disphonic transgression of its rules. Therefore, any given text will contribute not only to the evolution of the system or subsystem to which it belongs, but to the evolution of all practices—verbal or non-

verbal, artistic or non-artistic—within the society that produces and consumes it (1993: 15). Although this proposal stems from, and refers to, the literary text, it can be expanded to encompass all cultural practices and utilized for their analysis. Thus, I will reformulate it as follows: within a given society, any cultural practice will either contribute to maintaining the integrity, efficacy, and coherence of the established order (social, political, religious, artistic, etc.), or will question and subvert this order through any of its dimensions. Consequently, within the cultural production of a community, the means used to construct, represent, convey, consecrate, preserve, or subvert elements that are directly connected to the community's sense of collective identity, such as heroic figures, cover an ample spectrum. Given the diversity of factors that influence the imaginary configuration of a collective identity, and the corresponding diversity of elements that I analyze in this chapter, I will use the term *epos* as a *collective singular* that designates the aggregate of functional elements serving in the construction of collective identities. That is, besides narrative, the term *epos* will encompass any idea, image, form, figure, or cultural practice that, at a given time, nourishes the collective imaginary of a community under the sign of its identity.

## **The Question of a Latin American Identity**

As in many regions where the colonizer imposed his language and his culture, the problem that arises in Latin America is that the acquisition of a language is always tied to the acquisition of values and models of conduct: together with the language, the individual acquires the imaginary and the *epos* of the colonizer. Consequently, the colonized subject will be affected both at the epistemological and ethical-axiological levels. In the case of Latin America, to the long process of colonization can be added the problematics of identity that appear when the “criollos” (Creoles) attempt to establish independent states, as Simón Bolívar expresses in his well-known “Carta de Jamaica” (1815):

But we, who barely keep the vestiges of what once was, and that, on the other hand, are neither Indians nor Europeans but an intermediate class between the legitimate owners of the country and the Spanish usurpers: in sum, being Americans by birth and our rights those of Europe, we have to dispute these rights from those born in the country, and to keep ourselves in it against the invasion of the invaders; thus, we find ourselves in the most extraordinary and complicated circumstance. (69)<sup>2</sup>

These considerations take us to the heart of the problem that I will address here. If language comprises that which is intrinsic to a culture; if, following Bakhtin, our word is always inhabited by the values and aspirations of others, what happens when we attempt to define that which is “intrinsically ours” with words-ideas inhabited not only by our cultural imaginary, but also by the values and intentions of (an)other that excludes us? Is it possible to define an identity departing from the internalized discourse of a divergent identity that precedes us? Here, I believe, lies the paradox in which the theorists of a “Latin American identity” are enmeshed: words, ideas, figures, and images shared by at least two voices, two imaginaries, and two frequently opposed desires. The deep uneasiness that appears when this cultural schism becomes evident has left deep imprints in the immense production centered around the identitary question, particularly when the authors undertake the task of determining a Latin American identity using epistemological parameters conceived to define and preserve an identity which is alien (and often hostile) to Latin America.

Essays in all their variants, historical narratives, biographies and autobiographies, including testimonies, are denotative genres, which seek to demonstrate, indicate, reveal or signify a “truth.” Attempting to describe within these genres a (historical, political, cultural) “truth” concerning Latin America’s identity results in the following paradox: Latin America is—historically, politically, culturally—different from European and Indigenous models, and has emerged as a community of states by breaking its ties with Europe; however, its roots (and therefore, its epos) are inextricably buried in Europe. Nonetheless, to accept as one’s own the epos of the invader and the Conquistador as a hero is not only culturally incorrect, but also politically unacceptable; on the other hand, to adopt the Indigenous hero is equally problematic. In the first place, the Latin American identitary essay operates mostly from Hegelian parameters from which Latin America’s Indigenous culture is openly excluded: it was a “purely natural culture which had to perish as soon as the spirit approached it” (Hegel, 163). Secondly, as the Conquistador, the Indigenous hero is, to a certain extent, also alien to the Latin American epos that these essayists are attempting to build. The configuration of an epos on the basis of Independence heroes (in their great majority “criollos”) is a return to the European epos; finally, in those nations that had a subsequent revolutionary process, such as Mexico, an epos developed through the heroes of the Revolution (be it regional “Caudillos” of popular roots, or members of the “criollo” elite) will necessarily be partial and sectarian; for obvious reasons, however, these last two options are the least problematic, or at least their figures are the ones utilized more often.

The new awareness that rises through post-colonial discourse during the late sixties and seventies and its spin-offs (theologies and/or philosophies of liberation, for example), have contributed to a greater

acknowledgement—at least rhetorical—of previously ignored factors such as the Indigenous and African cultural presence in Latin America. However, from the perspective of the Latin American identitary essay, most attempts to define a Latin American identity point towards a pan-Americanism that ignores the existence of differentiated groups, while propounding the integration of Latin America into the “Universal History” postulated by Hegel. Paradoxically, this would end in differentiated groups (from the Indigenous to the nation) dissolving within the pretended specificity of a Latin American pan-identity, and the latter ultimate disappearance within the global totality of the West. The difficulty of configuring an epos at the level of the nation-state through traditional elements explains in part the interest in defining a Latin American pan-identity. The internal lack of cohesion and homogeneity of each component can be easily concealed within a vicarious trans-national epos which is efficient (and very useful) at the international level.

The implicit or explicit presence of Hegel in the work of a substantial number of Latin American thinkers underlines his importance within the Latin American identitary debate. In particular, Hegel’s notion of “progress of history,” developed in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, has deeply affected not only the Latin American historical and/or philosophical identitary essay almost from its origins (Bello, Sarmiento and Vasconcelos among many others), but also certain novels and other cultural manifestations.<sup>3</sup> Since the roots of the Latin American philosophical discourse are European, Hegel is recognized as a heroic figure in the history of philosophy, and his premises are often unquestioningly accepted and absorbed. One of the consequences is that many Latin American essayists believe it is imperative to integrate Latin America into the Hegelian *grand récit*. However, since the West represents the highest stage in the development of both spirit and world history, and Europe is “the center and end of the Old World, i.e. absolutely the West” (Hegel, 191), Latin America can only be, as Hegel affirmed, outside of history and deprived of spirit, or (should it manage to overcome Hegel’s objection) in a permanently inferior position with respect to the development of the spirit and of world history. The enormous difficulties that the theoreticians of a Latin American identity confront while attempting to escape this frame without completely renouncing it are obvious. At the same time, in the section “Geographical Basis of World History” of this same work, Hegel also recognizes, if not Latin America’s historical spirit, at least the possibility of its playing a substantial role in the development of universal history, while adopting a critical position with respect to America, its culture, and “the Americans,” a category in which Hegel does not include either Creoles or Europeans.<sup>4</sup> Although they are seldom explicitly mentioned, these comments drive the underlying argumentation of a surprising number of essays dedicated to the Latin American identitary question.

Costa Lima describes center-periphery relations as a process of socialization via mimesis through which the periphery, when adopting the center's imaginary, has to situate itself within the values of that imaginary and internalize them as its own. This process implies a tense and often conflictive dialectic between assimilation and differentiation. If the "production of difference" does not progress and/or the process of assimilation is too powerful, the "new individual" becomes a necessarily imperfect copy of the original model (viii-ix). On the other hand, Cornelius Castoriadis argues that the creation of a social and political identity does not depend on an imaginary that would reflect the image of the hegemonic "other," but rather that it emerges through the dialectic in which both are engaged, through "the unceasing and essentially undetermined (social-historical and psychical) creation of figures/forms/images, on the basis of which alone there can ever be a question of 'something'" (vi, Castoriadis's emphasis). Until now, the dynamics of these processes and their consequences have been studied only within the frame of the relations between a center and a periphery which are material and extrinsic; for example, in the relations between the United States or Europe and Latin America.

My working hypothesis holds, however, that the conflictive dialectic between assimilation and differentiation compromises the very foundations of the Latin American identitary construct (and the reflections upon it) by originating an internal center-periphery dialectic; that is, a dialectic that operates within both the peripheral society and the individual. I agree with Castoriadis that collective identitary processes essentially depend on the creation of new images which are often conflictive (but not always "undetermined"), and with Costa Lima in his appreciation of a process of internalization, partly mimetic, of the values of an alien imaginary. I believe, however, that due to the convergence of at least two imaginaries that are, in part or in whole, divergent, the result of this process is not a society that is an "imperfect copy" of an original model unless it assumes "the mark of its difference" (viii). The result of this process is the emergence of an identitary schism within which this model is simultaneously rejected and absorbed, a situation which necessarily impedes the acceptance—and hence the production—of difference. The considerable tension that stems from this impasse manifests itself partly in the need to define an identity different from *and* equal to the European models.

On the one hand, similarity always implies some degree of difference from the model; this results in the model becoming the parameter against which the segment of identity which coincides with it is measured; with respect to the model, this segment will frequently consider itself to be (or will be treated as) an "imperfect copy," with the consequent instability. At the same time, since there is a segment of identity which does not coincide with the model, the latter can be denounced as antagonistic, particularly as the identity which seeks to

assert itself is wholly or partially excluded from it. On the other hand, assimilation to the model results in the segment of identity that coincides with it assuming the model's discourses as its own. When these discourses are exclusive, the inevitable outcome of their assimilation is the rejection or omission of the segment of identity which does not coincide with their assumptions, and, of course, in the rejection or exclusion of the "radically extrinsic," the Indigenous. Thus, the final result of this conflation is an identitary schism that involves both the individual and the society in question.

In the work of Leopoldo Zea this schism manifests itself in two simultaneous and contradictory levels, which reflect the premises of the previous paragraph and the problematic outlined above. On the one hand, western discourse is accepted as normative with respect to Latin America (which is consistently measured up against its parameters), or denounced as exclusive and oppressive. This produces frequent discrepancies in the text's explicit plane, as well as contradictions between its explicit and implicit levels: behind Zea's apparent rejection of Hegel, there is a profound epistemological correspondence with Hegel. On the other hand, western discourse (particularly Hegelian) permeates both the structure and the epistemological frame of Zea's work; again, this results in constant contradictions between the implicit and explicit textual planes, ambiguity with respect to "mestizaje" (be it ethnic or cultural), and the rejection or exclusion of the Indigenous. In his article "En torno a una filosofía americana" (1942) Zea writes about what it means to be an "American:

We do not feel ourselves to be, as an Asian does, the inheritors of an autochthonous culture. Yes, there was an Indigenous culture—Aztec, Mayan, Inca, etc.—but this culture does not represent for us, contemporary Americans, what the ancient Oriental Culture represents for contemporary Asians. While an Asian continues feeling the world as his ancestors did, we Americans do not feel the world as an Aztec or Maya did. If this were the case, we would feel the same devotion for the gods and temples of the pre-Columbian culture that an Oriental feels for his own ancient gods and temples. To us, a Mayan temple is as alien and without meaning as is a Hindu temple.<sup>5</sup> (1942, 66-67)

The "we" that initiates Zea's fragment is clearly alien to the "autochthonous culture" that he obviously considers dead, as the use of the past tense (*existió*) indicates. The first two sentences recognize the ethnic and cultural Indigenous presence while isolating it and placing it in opposition to the "us" which includes Zea. While this distancing occurs in the explicit plane, Zea's comparison between contemporary Asians and Americans implicitly suggests an Indigenous foundation. Zea continues:

That which is ours, that which is unquestionably American, is not in pre-Columbian culture. Could it be in European culture? Now, with respect to European Culture something unusual happens: we use it, but we do not consider it ours, we feel we are imitating it. . . . European Culture has for us the meaning that pre-Columbian culture lacks. However, we do not feel it is ours. We feel like bastards who arrogate goods to which they have no right. . . . There is something that inclines us towards European Culture but that, at the same time, resists being part of that culture. That which inclines us towards Europe and, at the same time, resists being Europe, is the unquestionably ours, the American. . . . This is why we feel inhibited, inferior to Europeans. The problem is that we feel that the American, that which is unquestionably ours, is something inferior.<sup>6</sup> (1942, 67)

European culture is simultaneously recognized as part of one's own and as alien to one's own; a model to be imitated and a source of meaning that Zea's "we" does not own and to which it has no "right." Again, there is a contradiction between the implicit and explicit planes, as is shown by the use of the term "bastardos," which this time indicates European descent. The Hegelian parameters have been internalized by Zea to the extent that Hegel's pre-determination of America and its aboriginal cultures as "inferior" to European (western) culture has been transformed into a "feeling" of inhibition and cultural inferiority. Having rejected the Indigenous cultures as alien, and distanced the remaining "Americans" from the European culture, "the unquestionably ours, the American" (perhaps the culture ensuing from the ethnic and cultural mestizaje?) can appear only in the space of resistance—or rather in the silence—that Zea must use to describe it. It is within that which cannot be named from the parameters (or through the words) of the philosophical discourse Zea uses that the "unquestionably ours" must be sought. The intrinsic has no parallels. It resides and must be found in the silences.

In *La filosofía americana como filosofía sin más* (1969), Zea asserts: "Latin America is now conscious of its initial lack of authenticity, of the fact that it uses alien philosophies to create a suitable ideology for its order, for its politics . . . They would seem to be only echoes of an alien life, reflections of something alien, but it is really not so"<sup>7</sup> (1969, 34). After asking himself "How should this originality that Hegel mentions, and recommends for the Americans, be?", Zea continues: "When the Latin American accepts and appropriates that philosophy, he transforms it into an authentic universal philosophy. . . . This is the most legitimate expression of adoption and adaptation, where the core of authenticity and originality can be found. . . . In the right not to merely copy, but to adopt and make its own those values which are presented as universal"<sup>8</sup> (1969, 38). In the process of explaining his position Zea

also exposes the uncomfortable space that the Indigenous cultures and mestizaje continue to have within his discourse, although there are some significant changes that reflect transformations in the cultural and social climate:

We must . . . accept consciously what, often unconsciously, we have done from the very first moment in which we merge, as Americans, with western history; from the very first moment in which, as Indigenous people, our incorporation is initiated and, as westerners, we prolong that history in our history. That is, . . . we recognize the fact that Latin America and the rest of the world is westernized, as well as the universality of western philosophy. What cannot be accepted is the situation that has been assigned to peoples and men like ours within the western world. (1969, 39-40)<sup>9</sup>

The word “Americans” now has a double referent: the Indigenous, whose incorporation to western (Hegelian) history “is initiated,” and the “western,” which appears to represent (and therefore “prolong”) western history. There is no mention of mestizaje, but it appears to be implicit in the whole citation, and particularly in the last sentence. Although there is a double referent, it continues to be fragmented and uneven: the Indigenous specificity is only recognized after, and because of, its incorporation to western history. In fact, the main rhetorical maneuver of this paragraph is directed to include Latin America within Hegelian universal history. With the same purpose, a few years later Zea changes the meaning of Hegel’s *Aufhebung*: instead of interpreting it as the negation or cancellation of an opposition, as he has consistently (and correctly) been doing until now, Zea begins to interpret it as union or synthesis, as Vasconcelos had done before him: “The origin of everything lies in that the domination imposed by Europe . . . will impede the integrative mestizaje that was particular to European culture. The mestizaje that Hegel will summarize in the word *Aufhebung*, and that will seem alien to the racial and cultural mestizaje which appeared in our America”<sup>10</sup> (1977, 291).

In his *Discurso desde la marginación y la barbarie* (1988), Zea attempts to demonstrate that the premises which sustain exclusion are false or have been overcome. However, Zea does not question the epistemological basis that sustains those premises in his previous work or in this book. This fact alone condemns Zea’s approach to failure from a philosophical as well as a historical perspective. In the preface to the *Discourse*, Zea announces that his purpose is to place “Latin America’s history within the context of Universal History” both in relation to an “order and center of universal power known as the West,” and in relation to other peoples that have also been marginalized by this center. Among the latter Zea includes Europe,

since “the center of western power has been displaced . . . to the United States,” which is now “the maximal and actual expression of the western World” (9). This sentence closely echoes—and responds to—Hegel’s perception of Europe as the “center and end of the Old World” and “absolutely the West” (191). Zea does not seem concerned with the fact that, with respect to Latin America, the United States continues to play the same role (and to establish the same margins) that Europe did. Throughout the book the Indigenous (or at least the mestizaje) is incorporated and framed within the dialectic relationship between “civilization” and “barbarism,” which, in turn, Zea rejects or adopts, as will be evidenced in the following excerpts. When Zea affirms: “There are no “civilized” and “barbarous” peoples . . . Man, every man, is equal to any other man. Moreover, this equality does not stem from a man or a people being, or not being, the exact copy of another, but from his own peculiarity”<sup>11</sup> (1988, 19), we again find a well understood Hegelian *Aufhebung*: Zea negates the opposition between “civilized” and “barbarous.” However, Zea contradicts himself repeatedly, as this excerpt from the epilogue shows:

The others, the ones that know themselves to be incomplete, the marginal and barbarian, are showing western Europeans their own marginality and barbarism. . . . Barbarism, . . . as alleged immaturity, has changed its location. When Prospero looks at the mirror, he feels himself watched by Caliban, who will turn out to be the true Prospero. The marginalizer feels marginalized, outside a society that no longer belongs to him. (1988, 241-42)<sup>12</sup>

Thus, the “civilized” and the “barbarians” have not ceased to exist, as he has stated, and neither have the “center” and the “periphery.” Zea simply has changed the location of “barbarism” to the former “center,” Europe, which has lost its hegemony to the New World. The long and complex agony of Europe has affected Zea’s perspective: he now writes from a comfortable “margin” and seems to embrace reparation more than ecumenism. At the end of the epilogue to his *Discourse*, Zea affirms that the theme of his book has been:

The dialectic relationship between civilized and barbarian. The barbarian who can transform himself into civilized man and set new limits to barbarism. . . . Now, Prospero only has to accept and forgive to be forgiven. But it is not so much a question of forgiving Caliban for having confronted him, rather than a question of forgiving himself, and asking for help to save himself by first pleading forgiveness.<sup>13</sup> (1988, 254)

Zea opens his *Discurso* with an excerpt from Herodotus's *History*: "this history has been written in order that the great and wondrous deeds of both, Greeks and *barbarians*, may not be effaced by time or deprived of renown" (Herodotus in Zea, 21; Zea's emphasis). Since Zea only addresses the disastrous deeds of the West toward the barbarians, placing his book under the sign of Herodotus seems to indicate that Zea's real objective is similar to Herodotus's real aim in his *History*, although from the opposite perspective. If Herodotus's main purpose is "pointing out" the person whom he knows "to have been the first guilty of injustice towards the Greeks" (I-5), the barbarian king Croesus, Zea's purpose also seems to be "pointing out" the "first guilty of injustice" towards Latin America, in this case Europe. Although Herodotus continually incorporates the barbarian's perspective, his *History* is written from the perspective of a Greek, and addressed to a Greek receptor. Zea, however, sees Latin America's history and condition through a western perspective and addresses his discourse to the West. Thus, he never questions the Hegelian notion of the "progress of history" or concepts such as "center" and "periphery" (often transposed into the Greek opposition of "civilization" to "barbarism"), upon which his arguments rest. In other words, Zea is unable to distance himself from Hegel and his lens, which are essential links in the chain he is trying to break; instead, he sees with Hegel's eyes and through Hegel's lens, a self-defeating proposition for his attempt to establish an autonomous identitary discourse.<sup>14</sup>

## Pre- and Post-Generic Writing: Latin America's Epic Novel

The novelist does not escape from this conflict: he also works from epistemological and axiological parameters of western origin and depends, to a greater degree than the essayist, historian, or philosopher, on a European market to disseminate his or her production. Novels, however, are not restricted to demonstrating a "truth." Their business is to evoke a particular social, political, and/or cultural reality and to narrate a series of "possible" and "probable" events that may have taken place within that context. Implicitly or explicitly, the fundamental dialogism (Bakhtin) of the novel will show that cultural reality in its complexities and paradoxes. If Cartesian rationalism obliges the philosopher or the historian to silence (or adapt) a troublesome reality, the "unreasonableness" of reality appears efficaciously in the novel in an ironic dialogue with Descartes, as in Carpentier's *El recurso del método*, for instance. At the same time, there is a type of "truth" (of "historical reality," if I may) that can hardly be expressed—and I do not only mean censorship—by any other literary means. For instance, the constellation of possible events, emotions, and circumstances that surround a body floating

face down in a river exceeds what can be conveyed through a journalistic, philosophical, or political essay, a historical account or a political manifesto. It is precisely here, when “facts” are not enough, that the possibilities of conveying “reality” through a denotative genre end. And it is here where individual and collective memory and imagination come to work, when “myth” and “fiction” start playing a substantial role as conveyors of a knowledge that is often much closer to what individual and collective memory recognizes as “truth.”

The chasm that today separates rational from irrational, real from imaginary, truth from fiction, and history from myth and *poiesis* has its origins in Greek thought. The classification of *poiesis* as “fiction” and its subsequent division into genres also originates here, as does the division of knowledge that disassociated the “objective” sciences from hermeneutics. In Greek thought we also find the multifaceted concept of mimesis and the role that words, images, and emotions play in mimetic processes, as well as the *exemplum*, a repetition which, in history and in *poiesis*, is capable of transforming the singular into universal. The fundamental continuity of western philosophical thought causes Descartes, for instance, to conclude that the individual use of reason can lead to premises of universal value, and causes Hegel to postulate that all that is rational is real and all that is real is rational, or infer that European reason and history have universal significance. In this section I intend to establish a parallel between a form of writing that preceded the division into genres and a form of writing that cannot abide by genre boundaries (a “post-generic” writing, perhaps), as appears in the novels I will briefly discuss here.

Both Plato and Aristotle share a certain skepticism over the value of the “historical fact,” albeit for different reasons. In his quest to take away the authority from *poiesis* and myths and ensure that the past corresponds to the present needs of the state, Plato slides history towards *pseudos* (fiction) when he proposes that the state should create new myths that portray a more suitable past: “We can make use of [falsehood] in the myths we are . . . discussing; we don’t know the truth about the past but we can invent a fiction as like it as may be” (138). For Aristotle, on the other hand, historical events are no longer protected by the sacredness of the myth; thus, they can fall within the realm of the “possible” and the “probable”: “and if [the poet] should come to take a subject from actual history, he is none the less a poet for that; since some historic occurrences may very well be in the probable and possible order of things; and it is in that aspect of them that he is their poet” (636). Aristotle’s argument in favor of *poiesis* has two main points which are of particular interest here: on the one hand, *poiesis* describes what is possible and projects it towards the future, while history only describes what has been once. On the other hand, *poiesis* deals with experiences, values, and beliefs of a universal order (common to all humanity), while history can only deal with the singular:

The distinction between historian and poet is not in the one writing prose and the other verse—you may put the work of Herodotus into verse, and it would still be a species of history; it consists really in this, that the one describes the thing that has been, and the other a kind of thing that might be. Hence poetry [*poiesis*] is something more philosophic and of graver import than history, since its statements are of the nature rather of universals, whereas those of history are singulars. (*Introduction to Aristotle. Poetics*, 635-36)

Probably because of his reading of Herodotus, in his *Rhetoric* Aristotle affirms that the *exemplum*—the repetition or “setting apart” of a particular event, anecdote, or incident in order to show its value as an example—is capable of transforming the singular into universal not only in *poiesis* (as he has affirmed in the *Poetics*), but in history as well.

Embracing as a universal norm literary theory grounded in the particular development of western literature has set serious limits to literary analysis, limits which are particularly evident when analyzing texts produced outside the West, or so-called post-colonial and/or emergent literature (Godzich, 1994). A summary review of the essentially European canonic corpus used in the elaboration of these theories will provide ample evidence in this respect. In his *Theory of the Novel*, Georg Lukacs asserts that, although there is a fundamental continuity between the epic and the novel as narrative, a profound break is also apparent in the type of hero they portray. In the novel, the hero has become problematic, his world conflictive. His experience is individual, his adventures are psychological, his quest is self-knowledge. On the contrary, the epic deals with the relationship between singular and universal, between the individual and the totality to which he belongs. The subject of the epic is not the fate of the hero, but the fate of the community whose destiny is bound to, and crystallized in, the hero’s life. Thus, the events that take place acquire meaning only through their relevance with respect to the well-being or suffering of the community. Their purpose is to evidence the unbreakable bond between the hero’s individual destiny and the destiny of the community as a whole. For Bakhtin, the epic genre has completed its cycle; in *The Dialogic Imagination* he summarizes the differences between epic and novel: the subject of the epic is a national past, while the novel deals with contemporary realities; its source is national tradition, not personal experience and free thought; finally, absolute epic distance separates the epic world from contemporary reality. For both Lukacs and Bakhtin, the myth has disappeared from the novel. Without entering into a detailed analysis of these and other theories of the novel, I will just mention that, while accepting a basic continuity between epic and novel as narrative, they all coincide in asserting a fundamental break between them, in a number of aspects. I will articulate this break as the disappearance of

the mythic element (understood in its most ample sense) from the novel, as well as the fracture of the bond that tied the destiny of the hero to the destiny of the community, and both of them to history.

Four Latin American novels offer good examples of the capacity of *poiesis* to go beyond the limits imposed by genre and the canonical order of discourses: *El Señor Presidente* (1946) by Miguel Ángel Asturias, *El Recurso del método* (1974) by Alejo Carpentier, *Yo El Supremo* (1974) by Augusto Roa Bastos, and *El otoño del patriarca* (1975) by Gabriel García Márquez. These novels focus on a syncretic figure that fuses characteristics from a number of well-known dictators that ruled in different periods and countries of Latin America. They share a “collective protagonist” (Kirschner), also syncretic: the nation whose collective destiny is tied to the fate of the dictator. The syncretism of the dictator-nation nucleus encompasses a timeframe that goes from the colonial period to the mid-seventies of this century, and a geographical space that covers most, if not all, of the Spanish speaking countries in Latin America. This characteristic alone serves to establish a clear parallel between these novels and the identitary essay’s preoccupation with a “supranational” Latin American identity. These novels also share two characteristics that were not supposed to be found in the novel according to European theories of the genre: the overwhelming presence of myths, be it as a web of intertextual and inter-discursive dialogues and cultural references, or through the “mythification” of the dictator figure itself, as well as the fact that what is at stake in these texts is not the particular destiny of an anguished and solitary individual, but the collective destiny of an anguished community of nations which, since their emergence as independent states, had suffered more than a century and a half under the unconstrained power of dictators. In a certain sense, these novels are post-colonial “epic” narratives, although they amply exceed the limits accorded to the epic as a genre. The dialectical relationship between the concrete and the general, implied in the historical referent that has been evoked and in the syncretism of the figure that represents it in these novels, has a double function: on the one hand, it speaks to the individual and his national community; on the other, it extends this social projection to a transnational community. Thus, it has a double commemorative value: it awakens in the individual memory resonances of a particular dictator while presenting the Latin American social and political experience as a collective identitary construct.

During a conversation that has been widely quoted, Cardoza y Aragón comments to Carpentier that, in Latin America, reality is more fantastic than how it appears within the Latin American “dictator” novels of the Seventies. Carpentier answers that if the novelists attempted to portray reality as it was, their novels would be completely implausible. “Reality is implausible,” replies Cardoza, “and there is something else: your imagination cannot conceive a Somoza.” Commenting on this anecdote, the political historian González

Casanova adds that social scientists face similar problems when attempting to analyze Latin American social, political, or historical realities: "If the novelist has to say less than what he knows has really happened so that his novel can be plausible, or if his imagination, ample as it may be, cannot reach that reality, the historian, the politician or the revolutionary have enormous difficulties to grasp it or to change it. Also to expose it: some accusations are inconceivable, they cannot be believed" (222).

Thus, the implausible reality of Latin America finds refuge in the novel, where it appears almost "natural" amidst the mythical, fictional, and fantastic. Sometimes it also finds a place within social scientists' texts, usually in the footnotes: too inconceivable to be discussed in the main body of a historical or political essay, too significant or well-known to be completely ignored. For instance, Carrera Damas mentions that the terror Juan Vicente Gómez aroused was such that "people avoided articulating his name, which is why he was referred to using other names" (185, note 7). Referring to Gómez's "simultaneous inaccessibility and omnipresence," Carrera Damas uneasily asserts: "it was impossible to reach Gómez unless he authorized it, but he was present always and everywhere. This created a kind of superstitious perception of his presence" (195, note 38). Gómez's practice of faking his own death and "resurrecting" afterwards, and his having escaped unscathed the many attempts on his life, were behind the popular belief in his occult powers and the "eternal" quality of his life—to the extent that when he died not even his enemies believed it. Pablo E. Fernández complains that historians have a difficult time assessing the intricacies of Gómez's government since the dictator never declared his intentions and when he did "he used a parabolic style or wrote dates and words that only he could decipher in small pieces of paper" (16).

In his introduction to *El señor presidente*, Navas Ruíz asserts that the same phenomenon happened with Estrada Cabrera (direct referent for Asturias's tyrant), who was always referred to with the ritual formula "El señor Presidente" or simply as "El Hombre" due to the terror that articulating his name aroused in everyone (XX, note 4 and XXII, note 6). In "*El señor presidente* como mito" Asturias comments: "When el señor Presidente [Estrada Cabrera] was brought down and taken to prison people believed that it was not the same person. The authentic [Estrada Cabrera] was still protected by the myth. The man that was in prison obviously was not, and the simplest explanation was that the mythical señor Presidente had ceased to exist and the man in jail was just anybody" (305). In the same article, Asturias affirms that during the last period of his government, Estrada Cabrera surrounded himself with famous Indigenous Shamans brought from different places in the country, which only added to the aura of mythical power that surrounded him, and comments: "The Maya-Quiché's Indigenous god Tohil . . . demanded human

sacrifices. What else did el señor Presidente demand? Human sacrifices. They were not executions, but sacrifices."

It is difficult to understand the impact that the long association of power, terror, and myth embodied by the dictator has had in the Latin American collective imaginary, or the imprint left on it by practices such as Ubico's habit of extracting, by his own hand and without anesthetic, the molars of his generals in a chamber of the Presidential Palace specially adapted for this purpose, Duvalier's relentless extermination of all the black dogs in Haiti because he believed that one of his enemies had taken the shape of a black dog to escape from him, or Rodríguez de Francia's edict by which every man in Paraguay above the age of twenty one had to get married.<sup>15</sup> It is even more difficult to assess the effects of more than a century and a half of dictatorship, with its attendant political persecution, terror, and torture always shrouded in secrecy and simulation. Pretended "subversive activities" that hide the randomness of terror; feigned executions that serve to terrorize political prisoners; falsified "suicides," "attempted escapes," and "disappearances" that conceal torture and violent death; presumed "craziness" that hides from the world the painful truths secured within popular memory (see James Cisneros' chapter in this volume). And, of course, simulated progress, democracy, justice, peace, and social coherence. In the article mentioned above, González Casanova insightfully reviews these and other practices that have consistently placed "reality" into question in Latin America, and the profound crisis created by what he calls "the unbelievable reality of terror and the real theatre of the dictators" (237-39).

In different degrees and by different means, novels, essays, canonic and non-canonic history, and popular lore reflect the mythical character of the dictator while, at the same time, feeding the topic of the mythical dictator. If the canonic discourses are compelled to silence Latin America's implausible political and social reality, or to relegate it to the footnotes, the implausible reality of Latin America appears "natural" amidst the mythical, fictional, and fantastic elements that conform these novels. On the other hand, since these novels combine and reflect a number of historical, political, social, and/or cultural elements and emotions that are recognized by the Latin American collective memory, they acquire a symbolic significance within the collective imaginary that exceeds the value generally accorded to the merely literary or ludic. This explains why their authors can be simultaneously acclaimed by the establishment (their novels can be dismissed as "fiction" while their international recognition gives honor to their countries and to Latin America), and by marginal and insurgent groups. Although examples of this abound, I will mention the 1996 kidnapping of Juan Carlos Gaviria, brother of Colombia's former president Cesar Gaviria, by the revolutionary group "Dignidad por Colombia." Among the conditions for his release, the group demanded that President Samper renounce his position, and that writer García-Márquez accept the

presidency of the Colombian government. I do not intend to demonstrate that these novels have a “historical” basis, or that the incidents narrated in them did in fact happen: my objective is to show that these novels combine specific (historical, political, cultural) elements, practices and beliefs that are present in Latin American praxis as well as in its collective memory and imaginary; that within these texts Latin America’s implausible reality becomes “naturally” implausible; and that this process necessarily subverts the dictator and its mythical power while at the same time validating some aspects of Latin America’s collective historical, social, political, and cultural experience which are rarely recognized by any other means.

As I have stated above, I also intend to demonstrate that, in order to express this reality, some Latin American novelists resorted to a “pre” (or “post”) generic style of writing in order to bypass the internal and external limits imposed upon them. To accomplish this, I will briefly return to Herodotus. The repetition of motives and themes in Herodotus’s *History* gives them the character of an *exemplum*, which corroborates the epideictic quality of the text: his history is addressed to an Athenian receptor and it is clearly (albeit subtly) intended to glorify the preeminence of Greek thought, gods, and way of life. Although in his opening statement Herodotus declares that his *History* has been written “in order that the actions of men may not be effaced by time, nor the great and wondrous deeds displayed both by Greeks and barbarians deprived of renown” (I), a few paragraphs later he announces “I, however, am not going to inquire whether the facts were so or not; but having pointed out the person whom I myself know to have been the first guilty of injustice towards the Greeks, I will then proceed with my history” (I-5). While pursuing his quest, Herodotus succeeds in persuading the reader that Greek gods are behind the defeat and humiliation of Croesus and the ensuing loss of his empire, while Croesus’s awareness of Greek philosophy (through Solon, who visited him at the peak of his power) is what ultimately saves his life. Moreover, Herodotus makes clear that what permits the continuous prosperity of the Persian empire (to the Greeks’ own misfortune) is also the knowledge of Greek thought that Persian kings such as Cyrus and Cambyses have acquired through Croesus (then Cyrus’s prisoner), most particularly the value of *exemplum* that individual experience can have when it is projected into the universal.

Herodotus’ writing, which predates western taxonomy of genres—owed mostly to Aristotle—as well as the division of knowledge, has the same freedom, the same kind of approach to “reality” as the four Latin American novels I have mentioned above. Within the space of Herodotus’s text, as well as within the textual spaces of these four novels, coincide and collaborate myth, recent and ancient history, storytelling, philosophy, information about contemporary events, politics, geographical and cultural data, “poiesis” in the Aristotelian sense, as well as an array of different voices, different “witnesses,” real or imaginary, telling it all.

Herodotus establishes Croesus as an *exemplum* through repetitions that take place within the text itself. The continuous presence of tyrannical dictators for more than one and a half centuries in Latin America (and the common experience of the nations that suffered under their power) creates a repetition in the socio-political praxis. These four novels transform this repetition in *exemplum* through the syncretism of dictator and collectivity, time and space. In turn, this syncretism generates a process of recognition and identification that takes place in the memory of the Latin American reader in such a manner that the act of reading itself becomes an evocation, a cathartic commemorative ritual shared by all those that participate in it, regardless of the time, place, and privacy in which the individual act of reading was performed.

In Herodotus's *History*, myths, (hi)story, news, popular lore, or chronicles can converge with absolute ease because his writing predates restrictions of genre and divisions of knowledge. Since the deeds of "Greeks and barbarians" had not yet been told, Herodotus feels compelled to write about them, and he does so by giving voice to various local sources and including all the "possible and probable" variants (including the mythical) in which the deeds and the cultural reality of both, Greeks and barbarians, are enveloped. In the case of Latin America, the deeds and the socio-political and cultural realities of "civilized and barbarians" have been told from a western (historical, political, philosophical, and literary) perspective and at a time in which *poiesis* and myth have already been severed from "history" and "truth" by restrictive genre barriers. These barriers (which, in the last instance, are socio-political and philosophical as well) find confirmation in a historical, philosophical, and critical thought that responds to the European literary, historical, and political praxis. If the European perspective has not been able to reflect the Latin American cultural experience since Descartes (and obviously since Hegel), even less can this experience be expressed from within genre barriers established by the West. Thus, the authors of these novels find in a pre-generic (or post-generic) style of writing the means to express what was silenced by the European canon: the style of their texts (as well as the style of many other novels, such as García-Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, for instance) has more parallels with Herodotus's *History* than with any contemporary European novel.

Besides this post-generic style of writing, these four novels offer a veritable web of intertextual allusions that ties them to a number of texts and cultural traditions that were alive in their respective contexts of production: greco-latin classics, biblical texts from the Old and the New Testaments, philosophical and theological treatises of the western tradition and, of course, Indigenous cosmogonies. However, as is particularly evident in García-Márquez's *El otoño del patriarca*, the referential wealth of these novels is not limited to the anecdotic. At the discursive level, it constitutes a crucial element, since it ordains their

narrative programs and the internal logic of their arguments. The parallels between a writing that precedes the western taxonomy of literary genres and the writing in a number of novels—not limited to the ones I have mentioned here—that appear in countries that have emerged from a process of colonization, point to a simple fact: the cultural, political, and social “realities” of these countries cannot be expressed within the limits (literary, philosophical, historical, etc.) imposed by the “colonizer,” in the most general sense of the term. Contrary to the denotative genres, *poiesis*, which is not tied to a predefined “truth” and can take into account the “possible” and the “probable,” is capable of evoking cultural realities which are “unsayable” from within the western canon.

Numerous biographical details in *El señor Presidente* point to Estrada Cabrera as the direct historical referent of Asturias’s tyrant, although he is never identified by name and acquires a syncretic character. The most obvious mythical referent within Asturias’s novel is the Maya-Quiché god Tohil, after whom he entitled the first edition of the novel (Costa Amic, 1946) followed by an epigraph taken from the Popol Vuh: “Y entonces se sacrificó a todas las tribus ante su rostro” [“and then all the tribes were sacrificed in front of his face”]. This epigraph appears framed within the history of the Cakchiquel. Tohil owned the fire, the sustainer of life. In order to obtain it, Tohil had ordered the tribes to offer him human sacrifices, to which the tribes had agreed. Seeing the carnage that ensued, one of the tribes, the Cakchiquel, rebelled against Tohil: they decided to steal the fire and, acting “as a single body,” kill all the gods, chieftains and priests to stop the sacrifices: “Levantémonos en un solo cuerpo para ir todos sobre ellos” (130) [“let us raise ourselves as a single body to go against them”]. Thus, if the use of Tohil points to the infinite power of the myth and to its relation to the president’s power (see, for example, Cara de Ángel’s dream in chapter XXXVII of the novel), the use of the epigraph is a clear call to rebellion against the present gods, chieftains, and priests in order to stop the contemporary “human sacrifices.” Besides the many references to the Indigenous cosmogony within Asturias’s novel, there is also a complex system of references which opens an intertextual dialogue with mythical narratives of the Judeo-Christian cosmogony, and in particular with the Prophetic texts of the Old and New Testaments. These references can be found throughout the text, and the interpretative wealth they provide is immense.

As an example, I will briefly mention the articulation that appears through the name “Miguel Cara de Ángel” and the comment that follows it: “era bello y malo como Satán” [“he was beautiful and evil like Satan”]. The relationship between “Miguel Cara de Ángel” and Miguel (Arc) ángel, the Archangel Michael, is explicit in the text (24). The Archangel Michael’s name appears only three times in the Bible: once in Daniel’s prophetic Book, again in a brief Epistle by St. Jude that precedes St. John’s Apocalypse, and finally within St. John’s

Apocalypse itself. In Daniel's book Michael is mentioned within a series of fragments entitled "Luchas del pueblo de Dios y su liberación" (X, 5-21 to XII 1-4) ["Battles of God's people and its liberation"], which are closely echoed in Cara de Ángel's encounter with the woodcutter (24) as well as in other fragments of Asturias's text. The brief Epistle by St. Jude (5-19) is an indictment of the "false doctors," all those whose envy, ambition, interests, cowardice, passions, or pride make them "accomplices of tyrants and betrayers of God's people"; the echoes that fragments 10-19 find on page 181 of Asturias's text, for instance, are notable. Finally, St. John's Apocalypse (XII, 7-12) depicts a battle in heaven in which Michael and his angels battle the dragon, the "old serpent," Satan; the passage ends with an admonition: Satan has been hurled down to the world, and he is full of fury because his time is near. If "Michael" has referred us to Satan and this passage in the Apocalypse (the only instance in which Satan is discussed at length), "Bello" refers us to Lucifer or Luzbel, the name given to Satan in the Old Testament: a beautiful Angel who, out of ambition and pride, compares himself to God and is thrown down to the Gehena, hell. Lucifer is mentioned extensively only two times in the Old Testament, both in the Prophetic Books: in Isaias's prophecy announcing the fall of a tyrant, Babylon's king Sargon, whose destined death is compared to Lucifer's fall (XVI, 4-26), and in a beautiful prophecy by Ezequiel, who also compares Lucifer's fall with the fated fall and death of another tyrant, Tyro's king Itobaal.

These references (and numerous others that can be found throughout the text) provide such a complex subtext to Asturias's novel that it becomes a palimpsest in which the gradual unveiling of the earliest writings serves to uncover new meanings that elucidate the latter. The use of these elements in Asturias's novel, and therefore its discursive organization, is very similar to the one found in Herodotus's text. Myths, religious, political and historical references, gods, tyrants, prophecies, prophets, or angels serve in both texts to accomplish the same goal: explain to those who can understand the meaning of their own history and the causes of the present. Both texts attempt to demonstrate the influence of a particular political, religious, and/or philosophical thought with respect to the cultural, political, and social reality in which their authors lived. Both texts attempt to identify those "first guilty" of injustice towards the people, as well as the "first causes"—mythical or historical—that explain the present. Both use the *exemplum* (Croesus in Herodotus, Cara de Ángel in Asturias) to demonstrate: in Herodotus' case, the positive influence of Greek thought even in barbarous tyrants, and its value to transform reality; in Asturias' case, the invalidity of Cartesian rationalism and its attendant political-ethical values, embodied by the tyrant and Cara de Ángel, with respect to Latin America's reality. García-Márquez, Roa Bastos, and Carpentier will accomplish the same discursive operation in their respective texts.

The “sacred text” of Carpentier’s “Primer Magistrado” is not the Bible, however, but Descartes’s *Discourse on Method*, which has the same effect in *El recurso del método* that the biblical and mythical references have in *El señor Presidente*: Carpentier’s text becomes a palimpsest that cannot be fully understood without having the earliest text as a reference. For the Magistrate, Descartes is a personal guide whose recommendations in the *Discourse on Method* he follows closely: all his actions within the novel respond, directly or indirectly, to Descartes’s admonitions. The “sacred words” of Descartes that initiate each chapter or section determine not only their contents and the Magistrate’s actions, but also their discursive organization. Besides Descartes, the Magistrate frequently supports his views in the words and thoughts of other well-known European thinkers, mostly French rationalists; for example, the last paragraphs of his harangue at the inauguration of the newly-erected “Capitolio” are a direct quote of Renan’s “*Prière sur l’Acropole*” (171). As any genuine rationalist would be, the Magistrate is terrified of myths: “no quiero mitos. Nada camina tanto en este continente como un mito” (232) [“I don’t want myths. Nothing walks more on this continent than a myth”]; thus, the Indigenous myths will be sent to a French museum, together with their ancestral mummies.

Since the Latin American reality is perceived from the Cartesian perspective of the Magistrate and his European friends, it appears barbarous and chaotic, to his great distress: “no crecen plantas carnívoras, no vuelan tucanes ni caben ciclones en *El discurso del método*” (22) [“carnivorous plants cannot grow, toucans cannot fly, there is no place for hurricanes in the *Discourse on Method*”]. Although in Carpentier’s case, the cult of the “Goddess Reason” and the myths that evolve around her are used to demonstrate the direct bearing they have upon a reality that does not correspond to their tenets, as was also the case in Herodotus’s *History*, there are some important differences between them. From the perspective of European reason’s claim to universal truth, which is absolute and exclusive, Latin American praxis is unreasonable, barbarous, and chaotic. Therefore, Carpentier’s Magistrate uses tools provided by European reason to adapt Latin America to European norms and values. On the other hand, Herodotus clearly believes that the (political, religious, social, cultural) practices of the barbarians are the result of their different conceptions of the world. Thus, he accepts the barbarian’s cosmogonies, histories, and cultural practices as equally relevant than the Greeks’, even while believing in the Greeks’ religious, philosophical, and cultural preeminence. Perhaps it also plays a role the fact that, at least in the case of the Persian Empire, the barbarians are an enemy whose military power and economic and political influence with respect to the Greeks’ future are to be respected and feared, which is clearly not the case of Latin America with respect to Europe.

According to the New Testament, through the intervention of the Holy Ghost (traditionally represented by a dove) and without having carnal contact with a male, Mary conceives a son whose messianic destiny is announced to her by the Archangel Gabriel. Without losing her virginity, Mary gives birth to her son in the midst of a journey, among the animals in a barn in which she has taken refuge; within Christian doctrine, Mary's son one day will be "king of the universe." In García-Márquez's parody, "in the origins of time," a nomadic bird-catcher who follows the troops conceives "de nadie," "from no one" (the plurality of possible fathers makes the paternity anonymous) a son whose Messianic destiny is announced to her in a dream. This son will be "mal parido" (miscarried) at the entrance of a monastery (135) and one day will also be "king" (139) of a people without hope. As the Christian Trinity reunites three divine persons (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost) in a single "true God," García-Márquez's Patriarch (the only "true god" of his people) will be born three times from this woman whose identity is impossible to establish because "In the archives of the monastery where she had been baptized, her birth certificate could not be found; instead, they found three different birth certificates of the son, and in each of them he was three times different, conceived three times in three different occasions, miscarried three times by mercy of the makers of the fatherland's history" (152).

Perhaps this brief example will suffice to underscore that García-Márquez's Patriarch not only synthesizes characteristics of many of Latin America's rulers from the Independence's period leaders, caudillos, and caciques to contemporary dictators, but incorporates the New Testament's Holy Trinity, a construct around which the mythical level of the narration evolves. Although this literary tour de force is extremely effective to address (and subvert) the role that the church has played in Latin America's destiny since the Christian faith was first introduced by the Spaniards, the syncretic amalgamation of a construct whose sacred value is still active with the political construct that is being exposed at a more explicit textual level (as well as in the political realm when García-Márquez's novel appears), explains the ambiguity (or the overt uneasiness) with which *El otoño del patriarca* has often been received. At other levels, the incessant polyphony of narrative voices effectively incorporates the people both into the story that is being narrated as an anonymous collective protagonist, and into the narration of the story, which becomes collective and plurilogical—also happens in Roa Bastos's novel. The continuous changes in the narrative and referential times (both the historical and the mythical) produce the effect of a-chronic, continuous time in which the horrors of the past and those of the present converge. On the other hand, the indistinct use of memories, testimonies, anecdotes, myths, experiences, and identifiable historical events from the conquest to the present transform this novel in a plurilogical and polyphonic subversion of Latin America's canonical history.

Although the parallels with many elements in Herodotus's text are obvious, there is also a very significant difference. Herodotus attributes the barbarian tyrants' good fortunes to their assimilation of Greek thought and to the help of Greek gods (who granted their auguries to Greeks and barbarians alike, provided their offerings were substantial), while the tyrants' misfortunes are often due to their disregard for Greek wisdom or their misunderstanding of the oracle's words. Asturias attributes the misery of the people to the mythic value of the tyrant's power, to the betrayal of the interpreters of the "sacred texts" (from the Bible to the Constitution) and, above all, to the calculated complicity of the society's power structure with the president. Carpentier solves the problem by making his tyrant a true believer and zealous advocate of the contemporary faith in the goddess reason and Descartes's sacred text. Thus, what is exposed here is the conflict between European reason, represented by the Magistrate, and a reality that cannot be reduced to its parameters, a conflict that will reappear along the same lines in Roa Bastos.

On the other hand, García-Márquez's novel is narrated from the perspective of Herodotus's "barbarians": an autochthonous tyrannical patriarch, and with him a people, find themselves "discovered" and repeatedly invaded by at least two allegedly civilized foreign nations (Columbus's vessels share the port with North American warships). These invaders bring with them and impose, besides their god, "their Bible, and their syphilis," their institutions, values, economic, political, and philosophical thought, and so on. Furthermore, the interests of the intruders are radically opposed to the interests of the invaded and their cruelty and/or callousness exceeds by far "the worst barbarisms" of the initial situation. García-Márquez's subtlety, ambiguity, and originality consists in portraying his patriarch-god and the people he governs as hybrid products of the original invasion (or perhaps it would be more apt to say as products of the "original sin"). Within this scheme, it is quite plausible that the patriarch might identify himself with god, that he might conceive his power as a "divine right," misconstrue his will as "god's will," and frame his political designs for the "future of the nation" within a "divine plan" of salvation: after all, these have been common practices among innumerable emperors, kings, dictators, tyrants and caudillos throughout western history.

Roa Bastos also identifies his Supremo with the Christian god, although he secularizes it: he transposes the attributes of the Holy Trinity (clearly identifiable in the different incarnations of El Supremo) and the wishes of the particular Supreme god it denotes, to a "worldly" sphere, as is evident in the following paragraphs:

Moses needed 40 years to take his people to the Promised Land. . . . I have needed less time; in 26 years I have imposed my three capital commandments and taken my people not to the Promised Land, but to the Fulfilled Land. . . . The New

Testament states that Jesus fasted 40 days in the desert and was tempted by Satan. I have fasted 40 years in this desert and I have been tempted by 40 thousand Satans. I was not vanquished and will not be crucified alive. . . . The Dictator of a Nation, if he is Supreme, does not need the help of any Supreme Being. He himself is it. As such, what I did was protect religious freedom. My only imposition was that the cult had to be subservient to the interests of the state. (355-57)

The Supremo's power is human, his political ambition is human, and his time and destiny are human. Roa Bastos's battle is with history, not with the Christian, Indigenous or secular myths that sustain that history, as is the case with Asturias, Carpentier, and García-Márquez. In Roa Bastos's text "I," the Supreme, fights a losing battle with the version of "He" that canonic and non-canonic history will create. The multiplicity of voices—of his contemporaries, of the many witnesses to and scribes of history, myths, chronicles, information, anecdotes, of the "compiler" and of El Supremo himself—within Roa Bastos' text results in El Supremo being framed by questions that have an endless number of possible answers. All these novels are deeply concerned with history (canonical and non-canonical) and/or historiography, but not with "historical facts."

It is perhaps unnecessary to remark how similar the multiplicity of (reliable and unreliable) voices that compose the "Compiler's Final Note" (467) is to the multiplicity of narrative voices in García-Márquez and, of course, to the multiplicity of voices that attest in Herodotus's *History*. The use of mythical elements in Roa Bastos and Herodotus, however, offer some parallels worth mentioning here. Within both texts, myths and gods have an epideictic function: they are addressed to a particular receptor and are meant to construct or reinforce a particular history. Herodotus is not interested in questioning the validity of the barbarian or Greek gods, but on the value they have with respect to the formulation of his *History*. Similarly, Roa Bastos is not interested in questioning the validity of the Indigenous or Judeo-Christian cosmogonies, but on the value they have with respect to the formulation of his singular and collective (hi)story of El Supremo. Neither Herodotus nor Roa Bastos is interested in finding out "whether the facts were so or not" (I-5); as Herodotus, Roa Bastos is interested in pointing out the person he knows to have been responsible for either the first injustice towards the Paraguayans, should El Supremo be declared guilty by its collective author-reader-judge, or for the first justice towards (and within) Latin America, should he be declared innocent. Thus, in Roa Bastos's text, the people is the collective author of El Supremo's history, and the final judge that will decide the value of his actions and the significance of his historic "being," in a perfect historical-mythical parable of obvious Marxist origin.

In a sense, these four novels embark in a massive re-writing of mythical, religious, historical, and philosophical tenets, be they of Judeo-Christian origins (García-Márquez), Indigenous and Judeo-Christian origins (Asturias and Roa Bastos), or supported by more recent western myths such as Cartesian reason (Carpentier) or history and historiography (Roa Bastos). Besides having been written *through* mythical-historical discourses, all of them focus on, and work within, mythical-historical elements which are present in the collective memory and imaginary. Power, reason, and history are myths which transcend cultural and/or geographical boundaries in this late stage of modernity, and which, in the first case, resonate deeply within universal human experience. Thus the difficulty of Asturias, whose central preoccupation in *El señor presidente* is the mythical value of power, to expose, subvert, and de-canonize the myth through ironic distancing. Asturias manages to show the President as a grotesque figure, and to expose the web of terror, secrecy, superstition, and economic and political interests that sustain him. However, the ultimate mythical value of this power, and its prolongation through time, remains untouched: when Asturias wrote his novel, it was probably impossible to foresee an end to the tyrannical dictator's era in Latin America. This aspect is best resolved through the ironic distancing present in the other three novels, all written when the transition to military dictatorships (a less "personalized" system of tyranny) was already under way.

Asturias and García-Márquez's texts, which attack the very foundations and presuppositions of Judeo-Christian thought, are far more controversial than Roa Bastos and Carpentier's novels, which deal more directly with contemporary myths (the writing of history and rationalism). Given the firm ties that bind "history" and "truth," and the unquestioned acceptance of Cartesian rationalism as the only possible way of approaching and understanding human experience, these two texts are often approached as reflections on contemporary problematics, rather than as subversive re-evaluations of the myths that sustain modernity. In any event, the web of intertextual and interdiscursive references that refer us to a number of "sacred texts" belonging to different cosmogonies, as well as to their respective argumentative order, their discourses, has barely been explored. The use (and abuse) of texts, figures, forms, images, themes, and ideas that have been present in the collective memory and imaginary for a long period of time has the potential of exerting a deep influence (cohesive or subversive) in both the collective imaginary and the socio-political praxis of Latin America.

In Herodotus's *History*, myths, (hi)story, news, popular lore, or chronicles could converge because his writing predicated restrictions of genre and divisions of knowledge. Latin America's socio-political and cultural realities have been told from a western (historical, political, philosophical and literary) perspective at a time in which *poiesis* and myth have already been severed from "history" and "truth" by

restrictive genre barriers. Thus, the authors of these novels find in a pre-generic (or post-generic) style of writing the means to express what was silenced by the European canon, and transform the repeated presence of tyrannical dictators in Latin American in a cathartic and commemorative *exemplum* through the syncretism of dictator and collectivity, time and space, within their texts.<sup>16</sup>

## Cultural Ideograms: Towards a Sociography of the Collective Imaginary

One of the manners in which memory evokes the past is through images inextricably tied to, and able to convey, a particular experience and/or feeling. If we want to verbalize it, we will mesh or transfer the emotional and experiential meaning of these images into a congruent narrative that must allow us to articulate the emotive experience being evoked while maintaining our present coherence as individuals. In the social realm, this particular faculty of memory has long been put to use. Totems, idols, fetishes, masks, or amulets can be tied to it in oral cultures. In the ancient world, the statues of gods and heroes, or of political and military figures, were the locus where the memory of their deeds, and therefore their meaning, resided. Emotions are at the heart of the sacred. The emotive power of images explains the significance of theatrical representations in ancient Greece and lies behind Plato's prohibition of certain dramatic depictions in *The Republic*. During the Middle Ages, images that represented vices and virtues in human form (allegories) were commonly used for didactic purposes. At the same time, increasingly graphic images that conveyed specific emotions and ideas (such as, for example, pain and suffering, love, fear of sin, punishment and death, hope, acceptance, etc.), mostly through New Testament figures, were adopted and widely utilized by the church as effective vehicles for religious ideas, emotions, and values. They accompanied the Spaniards to the New World, and many are still in use today. Renaissance imagery centered on the emblem and the *impresa*, an attempt to remember a moral or spiritual intention through its similitude to an image, as Aquinas had originally intended.<sup>17</sup> Although the enduring memory of the printed book loosened the ancient ties between memory and image, the commemoration of past and present religious, political, military or civic heroes through public monuments and other forms of representation remains common practice throughout the western world.

The ties that bind images of heroes to emotions will remain unbroken as long as their professed meaning for a community is remembered, as can be demonstrated by the public outrage aroused whenever their (public) subversion is attempted. For example, the scandal caused some years ago by the exhibit of Serrano's work "Piss-Christ," a crucifix submerged in urine, or the recent

controversy surrounding Nigerian-born artist Chris Ofili's portrait of a black Virgin Mary, in which the image appears splattered with elephant dung and sexually explicit cutouts.<sup>18</sup> The emotive meaning attached to the public statues of military, political, or revolutionary heroes can be promptly demonstrated by the fate they suffer whenever there is a profound change in their supporting political structure: news media images of the statues of Stalin and Lenin being pulled down by eager citizens of the former Soviet Union are still fresh in memory. But I will return to this later in more detail. At the moment, I propose that, even in our age of literacy, it is not only (perhaps not even mainly) through written words, but through an array of cultural manifestations within which "emotive images" play a crucial role, that the memory of a community—and therefore its *epos*—is maintained.

In other words, I am assuming that individual and collective identity processes are primarily mediated through emotive images, both sensorial and conceptual, and that this relates to the manner in which individual and collective memory (mirroring each other) function and have been put to use throughout history. In the socio-political and religious realms, emotive images are also linked to the particular constellation of ideas that, through time and by different means, has evolved around them in order to consign their historical, social, political, or religious significance. If the memory of their meaning is lost—usually because it becomes irrelevant for the existent (social, political, historical or cultural) state of affairs—and they are allowed to slide into oblivion, their value as vehicles for a particular identitary construct is also neutralized. The emotive image will remain dormant until the particular constellation of ideas and values it represents again becomes pertinent to the identitary construct of one or more groups within a society. Then, its presence in the collective memory will be reawakened, the ideas and values contained—and represented—by it will be propounded, and—once again—the image's ties to emotion will convey those ideas and values' "intrinsic truth."

An emotion is the *experience* of the emotion in and by itself; in other words, love is the experience of the feelings aroused and set into internal motion when we love. Thus, emotions do not require empirical proof or rational explanation of their existence: our *experience* of them—and perhaps *only* this experience—confirms their actual "reality." At the same time, an emotion is often related (at least potentially) to a cluster of other feelings intrinsic to the experience of that emotion. An image able to convey an emotion such as love (for one's country, for example), will also be tied implicitly to fear (of its loss), pride (on the feats of its heroes), anger (towards its enemies), and so forth. Within the national identitary construct, the image of the hero is bound not only to the memory of his deeds, or the values he represents, but also—and primarily—to the emotions that made those deeds and values possible in the first place, and of

which he is the (social, political, historical) repository and model. It is this proximity to emotions—and the efficacy of mimesis—that makes images so valuable in the transmission and perpetuation of collective memory and identity.

As I have already mentioned, certain unorthodox representations of a hero (in the most ample sense of the concept: a historical, religious, social, cultural, and/or political figure which has acquired “heroic” dimensions within a particular collective imaginary) are capable of eliciting vast public and institutional outrage, especially when commented upon and/or disseminated through the mass media. The ensuing press accounts of these responses will often disclose the dominant values of the society (or groups within it) that find them offensive. A close examination of these “subversive” images will reveal that, in order to exert this effect, some elements of their iconic canonical models have been changed and/or new elements added, and that these modifications and/or additions are always discordant with the canonical constellation of meanings and values attached to the image. It can also be noticed that enough components are left intact (or barely modified) for the canonical model(s) to be recognizable in the new construct. Thus, it can be deduced that the symbolic meaning of certain images is obtained through a composite of concrete elements that belong to a particular canonical discourse, and that these components can be “ungrouped” and substituted or modified in order to obtain a new, and often subversive, meaning. It is also evident that, within any collective imaginary able to recognize them, these images can convey meaning and awaken emotions without the intervention of words.

This manner of communicating meaning is similar to that of ideograms in many ideographic writing systems, such as Egyptian hieroglyphics, the ideographic representations used in many (North and South American) Amerindian languages, or Chinese ideograms. In ideographic writing systems, meaning is conveyed through graphic symbols (ideograms or ideographs) that represent a thing, emotion, or idea directly, without representing the sounds of the word(s) for the thing, emotion, or idea. Moreover, in most of these systems the meaning of a particular ideogram is attained by a sum of discrete graphic symbols, each having a separate and distinct meaning. Different combinations of components achieve different final meanings. I propose that the canonical versions of images deemed to represent a particular (historical, social, political, and/or religious) collective identity, are constructed and function like “cultural” ideograms—which explains why their intended meaning can be easily manipulated or subverted through the modification of any of their components. The usage and/or the misappropriation of a cultural ideogram denotes the positioning of the individual, which will either confirm or subvert the ideological presuppositions that are the condition of possibility of all collective identitary processes.

The aggregate of cultural ideograms associated to a particular identitary construct configures a sort of cultural (social, political, historic and/or religious) ideographic system within which the canonical "ideography" of any cultural ideogram (and its subversions) through time and space can be traced. That is, it is possible to identify the norm of a cultural ideogram (a representation of Saint James, Simón Bolívar, or Abraham Lincoln, for example) within a specific collective identitary construct by studying the different canonical iconic representations that have been made of this particular figure since it was first depicted. Identifying the norm will also allow us to identify its subversions. A synchronic study of the cultural ideograms "in use" in a particular society and/or culture (and their subversions) at any given time should allow us to trace a "sociography" of that society's collective imaginary—to "map" it, in a sense, given that cultural ideograms must have a topological evolution. That is, through the analysis of these images we should be able to understand the ideological and ethical presuppositions that operate within the collective imaginary of a particular collective construct under the sign of its identity, as well as the influence and efficacy that these images have in the making of the social.

In other words, I am assuming that when an iconic representation of a hero is received and portrayed as subversive or offensive, what it offends is a specific imaginary construct of that hero, already embodied, reproduced, and circulated through public monuments, paintings, coins, bills, stamps, historical or literary treatises, school texts, documentaries, feature movies, and the like. When imaginary constructs such as these evolve into an "official" physical materialization, they become what I have called cultural ideograms; that is, "authorized" iconic representations which seem to symbolize not only the hero and his attributes, but the attributes and characteristics of a particular collective identity as well. By examining the socially, politically, and/or culturally accepted representations of a particular national hero through time (his or her canonical cultural ideography) we can identify the attributes (the basic components) which have remained constant since it was first depicted, that is, the "norm," as well as any evolutions and/or transgressions affecting this norm at any point in time. From the ideography of this national hero we can then infer some of the characteristics and values associated with that collective identity, as well as identify which segments of the society have been excluded from it. At the same time, by analyzing the official and public responses to any alleged "misrepresentation" of the hero it becomes possible to trace a sociography of that society's collective imaginary and demonstrate the crucial role cultural ideograms play in the making of the social (and of the "nation" as such): cultural ideograms not only "represent" but also "constitute" social reality.

I will illustrate the above through some examples. Within the Spanish cultural imaginary, Saint James (Santiago) is strongly

associated with the so-called Re-Conquest of Spain from the Muslims, having purportedly “intervened directly” in the decisive battle of Clavijo. Traditional Spanish iconography of “Santiago Matamoros” (“St. James Slay Moors,” one of the “norms” of Santiago’s cultural ideography) depicts him as an equestrian warrior, right arm raised brandishing a sword, left hand often holding a pennant, wearing the wide-brim hat and white cape typical of his Order, while his white horse tramples over dead and maimed bodies of Muslims (Figures 1 and 2). In his *Nueva Córónica y buen Gobierno* (1583-1615), the Indian Guaman Poma describes a cruel battle with the Spaniards, which he illustrates with an image of Santiago—to whose “direct intervention” he attributes the Spaniards’ victory—that apparently follows the traditional Spanish iconography; however, Santiago’s hat has turned into a conqueror’s helmet, and his white horse does not trample over the bodies of Muslims, but over the bodies of Indian warriors (Figure 3). We can presume that, if the emotional registers and values conveyed by this image were perfectly congruent with the conqueror’s imaginary (the conquest as a sacred crusade blessed by God, as proven by the direct intervention of Saint James in aid of the Spaniards), it must have awoken very different emotions and played a very different role in the Indigenous imaginary (the Spaniards, their God, and Saint James as merciless conquerors). A century later, when the two editions of Cervantes’s *Don Quixote* taken to America have already circulated, we again find Poma’s motif in colonial religious imagery, this time as a cult image of Saint James in one of Puebla’s churches. Santiago’s cultural ideogram, however, now incorporates some of Don Quixote’s normative iconographic attributes (such as his hat—an inverted barber’s soap-dish—and his lance) while his horse is still trampling over Indian bodies.



Santiago Matamoros (Anonymous). Figure 1: Escuela Cuzqueña (XVII century). Figure 2: Potosí, Bolivia (XVIII century). Reproduced from the catalogue of the exhibition "Santiago y América" (Santiago de Compostela, 1993), courtesy of the Arzobispado de Madrid.

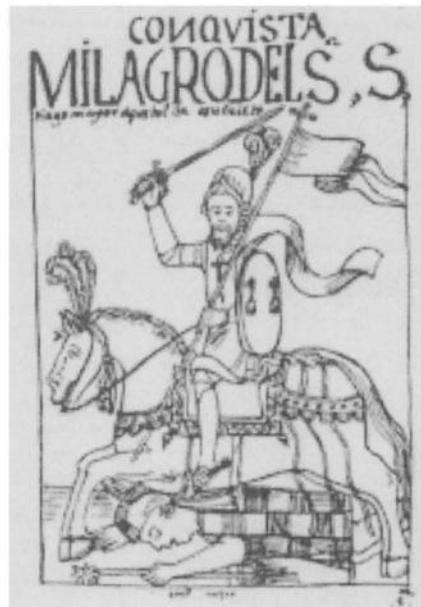


Figure 3  
Santiago "mataindios" by Guamán Poma (Codex)

I will examine in more detail a recent example of the subversion of a cultural ideogram, also in a Latin American context. In 1994, an oil portrait of the Venezuelan/Latin American Independence's hero Simón Bolívar, by the Chilean painter Juan Dávila, caused a serious diplomatic incident which prompted a number of front pages and numerous articles both at national and international levels. The painting in question is an equestrian portrait of Bolívar, part of a very large painting that had been exhibited in London's Hayward Gallery during the month of February of that year. The image of Bolívar appeared in a fragment of the painting that evoked Latin American landscapes and contained other images which made reference to different aspects of the colonial period in Latin America, in an ensemble that has been described as an "epic landscape." Bolívar is represented in an apparently traditional manner: proud gesture, wide shoulders, wearing a military gala cassock, mounted in a white horse whose back quarters remind us of an equestrian statue, possibly the monument to Simón Bolívar in Caracas (Figure 4).



Figure 4  
Statue of Simón Bólivar (Plaza Bólivar, Caracas, Venezuela). Photograph by the author

However, if we look carefully at Dávila's portrait of Bolívar, we will discover that the epic model has been sourly betrayed: the front quarters of the horse dissolve into the flat, cardboard-like shape of a

lowered bull's head and front legs in an attitude reminiscent of the "corridas de toros." Its bright colors include, quite prominently, the red and the yellow of the Spanish national flag. Furthermore, the face of Bolívar clearly exhibits "mestizo" traits and his short, open cassock exposes female breasts; below the cassock Bolívar's body appears naked, disclosing a narrow waist and wide hips while the pubic area, partially covered by the saddle, shows a recognizable fragment of a penis; the legs are covered by embroidered boots to mid-thigh; finally, the middle finger of Bolívar's left hand is extended in an obscene gesture (Figure 5).



Figure 5  
"El Libertador Simón Bolívar," by Juan Dávila  
(print courtesy of the painter)

As part of a project supported by FONDART (the Chilean equivalent of the Arts Council in Canada) initiated a few months earlier, the Chilean Government financed the production and mailing of several editions of 500 postcards each, reproducing works of contemporary Chilean painters, Dávila among others. For his postcard, Dávila chose this image, which he entitled "El libertador Simón Bolívar." Once the postcard was distributed, the Governments of

Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, and Bolivia presented a formal protest to the Chilean Government. The conflict reached the front pages in all of Latin America after a reproduction of the painting with the heading "Liberator Unleashes Diplomatic Row" appeared on the front page of London's newspaper *The Independent*. As did many other newspapers throughout Latin America, the Chilean newspaper *El Mercurio* reproduced the offensive postcard together with a six-column article and an insert showing the front page of *The Independent*. The reactions multiplied all over Latin America: in Caracas the Chilean flag was burned; there were well-attended public demonstrations of "solidarity" in front of Chilean Embassies and Consulates all over Latin America, denouncing and deplored the "support" and "complicity" of the Chilean Government to the "denigration of a Latin American Hero"; countless news editorials and public statements by government representatives from several countries in Latin America demanded official apologies from the Chilean government, not only to "Venezuela, motherland of The Liberator, but to all of Latin America." At a certain point, the possibility of a break down of the diplomatic relationships between Chile and Venezuela was feared and publicly debated (*El Mercurio*, 8/28/94).

It is most interesting to note that in Venezuela, a country with a highly visible proportion of "mestizaje," the emphasis was placed solely on the alleged "insult to the manhood" of Bolívar, while in Chile most reports—particularly at the beginning of the scandal—emphasized the fact that Bolívar was portrayed with "rasgos mestizos" (metis traits), "rasgos negroides" (negroid traits), or "rasgos mestizos e incluso semi-negroides" (metis and even semi-negroid traits). The Venezuelan newspapers, which had been reporting and quoting freely the Chilean side of the affair, did not mention the racial aspects of the Chilean reaction to the painting, although perhaps the abundant references to the "arrogance" of the Chileans constituted a cryptic response to this. Neither country's press mentioned Dávila's obvious references to Spain and the Creole character of Bolívar. Mostly in Venezuela, Dávila was accused of "residence in a foreign country" (New Zealand), "mental problems," "sexual aberration," and "homosexuality," among more blunt and uncivil assertions. In general terms, the press in both countries described Dávila's painting as an insulting portrait of Bolívar with "hermaphroditic traits," "effeminate traits," "feminine traits and making and obscene gesture," "with a woman's breasts and loins," or "as if he [Bolívar] were a sexual pervert," and denounced it as "blasphemous," "irreverent," "heretical," "insulting," "immoral," "depraved," "offensive," and "grotesque," among other designations.

The ensuing deluge of patriotic rhetoric stemming from most Latin American countries included declarations by government ministers, ambassadors, journalists, newspaper editors, Bolivarian

associations, an array of public figures in the cultural and/or political life of different countries, and, of course, "Official statements" on the part of the Venezuelan, Colombian, Bolivian, and Chilean governments. I will give some examples of these interactions. In particular, note the strong emotions awakened, the sacred character of the image of the hero, the importance of "manhood" (*hombría*), and the relationship between the cultural ideogram of the hero and the concepts of "national identity," "sacred values of the nation," and "honor of the nation."

Strong international protests has generated the mockery and disrespect to [Bolívar's] manhood that the southern painter Juan Dávila has made through Bolívar's image . . . an offence which has been made to the most representative figure of our nationhood and the historic quest for a free América, as our Ambassador in Santiago has declared. . . . The scandal has achieved extraordinary dimensions: across the continent people feel that through "The Giant of America," all Latin Americans have been offended. . . . It is expected that the Chilean government will apologize for this offense to the most heartfelt feelings of our nationhood . . . It was commented in the Venezuelan Embassy . . . that this is part of a campaign against Venezuela . . . against the dignity and honor of all the Venezuelan people. (William Ojeda, *Ultimas noticias*, 8/14/94)

The following is an excerpt of the "Official statement" from the Government of Venezuela, delivered through its Embassy in Santiago to the Chilean Government on August 10, 1994:

The Embassy of Venezuela, confronted with a defamation campaign against the most sacred values of our nationhood, as shown by the display of *El Libertador SIMÓN BOLÍVAR* in publications that we consider undignified and contemptuous of the immortal genius of America's independence, protests and deplores these displays. . . . The reproduction of a post-card offensive to the Father of the Nation. . . . has originated our protest and those of other Bolivarian countries, since it affronts the national dignity of the Venezuelan people and its democratic institutions, which feel deep sorrow at seeing how the figure of The Liberator is denigrated. . . . There are values that are indestructible and feelings that are deeply entrenched. . . . While protesting and deploring this biased publication, we are deeply grateful to the many Chilean citizens who have shown us their support. . . . at a moment in which our Fatherland has been affronted in the innermost portion of its being . . . IN ITS NATIONAL HONOR . . . Santiago de Chile, 10 de agosto de 1994. (*Ultimas noticias*, 8/14/94; uppercase in the original)

In the context of this chapter, one of the most interesting statements about Dávila's portrait was provided by Jorge Mario Eastman, Ambassador of Colombia in Chile at the time: "La pintura es blasfema desde el punto de vista histórico" ["The painting is blasphemous from a historical perspective"] (quoted in *Ultimas noticias*, Caracas, 8/15/94).

It is evident that Dávila's alleged representation of Bolívar as androgynous, feminine, or "mestizo" is perceived not only as a desecration of the hero, but as a desecration of the countries that associate their national identity with him. Some of the reactions that appeared in the Chilean press evidenced a subtle distinction between "us, Chileans" and "them" (the rest of Latin America). This differentiation, which responds to a number of factors that I cannot analyze here, permits attributing the "excessive" reaction to Dávila's painting to, among other things, the relatively better economic situation that Chile enjoyed at the time. Both, however, obviously share certain values and presuppositions that belong to a supranational collective imaginary, such as a positive evaluation of "machismo," Bolívar as a Latin American hero, or the ambiguity with respect to the "mestizaje." To be able to measure the strength of a Cultural ideogram in the collective imaginary and in the socio-political praxis, its subversive counterpart needs to reach ("invade" is perhaps more appropriate) the public realm: what prompted the public outrage was not Dávila's painting per se—the minority that had access to it while it was being exhibited in London did not share the same cultural values and/or evaluated it as an art object—but its reproduction as a postcard and the massive distribution of the image through the mass media. In the same manner, what allows us to measure the representative value of Bolívar's cultural ideogram within the Latin American epos and its constitutive value within the Latin American praxis is neither Bolívar's cultural ideogram, nor Dávila's subversive image (which only marks his individual positioning), but the institutional and public reactions provoked by the latter intrusion into the epos and (as) reported by the mass-media.

By closely examining the official and public responses to any alleged misrepresentation of a cultural ideogram, it becomes possible to measure at least some of the characteristics and values that conform that particular collective identity and to identify the segments that are being excluded by a particular cultural ideogram, by the official discourses that promote and distribute it and, in consequence, by the identitary construct to which it supposedly belongs. If we ask ourselves which America the official statue of Bolívar represents, the answer will be male, white, of European origins and culture, and Creole. In other words, a male—perhaps I should say "macho"—white, upper class, America of Spanish lineage. As is often the case with subversions, Dávila's image brings a new proposal to the Latin American identitary question: an America that is, simultaneously, male and female, Indigenous and African, Creole and

European; an America whose “independence” is still in question. The raised finger of the horseman/woman signals the proper attitude to carry this complex burden: arrogance. In October 1996, Dávila presented a new exhibition under the general title “ROTA” in the Gallery Gabriela Mistral in Santiago de Chile, this time sponsored by the Department of Culture of the Ministry of Education. The name ROTA is the feminine of “roto” (broken, cracked, shredded, damaged, defective), a word that in Chile and other parts of Latin America is used colloquially to refer to an individual of the poorest segment of the population.

In one of the paintings exhibited, Dávila reexamines his own image of Bolívar and establishes an interfigurative dialogue with it while offering yet another subversive alternative to Bolívar’s cultural ideogram. This third image can only be understood with the second one as an intermediary: once the cultural ideogram of an equestrian Bolívar has been desacralized, dis-figured, and transformed into the more complex object of Dávila’s second image, Dávila can heroize the most slighted and neglected element in the Chilean society—and in many Latin American countries: el “roto” (Figure 6). To achieve his goal, Dávila uses a caricature image of “el roto” that is well established in the Chilean collective imaginary: the comic character “Verdejo,” an epitome of the “rotería” that circulated in the ’50s, ’60s and ’70s through Chilean newspapers as a syndicated comic-strip, as well as in numerous comic books, many of which are still in circulation today. Having subverted what the image of Bolívar, the official hero, represents, Dávila has created a space in which a new kind of hero can be introduced into the imaginary. Through his image of the breasted, pregnant, drunken, half-naked, arrogant “roto,” Dávila offers the dais of the hero to the unprotected and disenfranchised segments of Latin America, empowering them: the index finger that “el roto” raises in Dávila’s image indicates a new direction; for “el roto,” for the Latin America that it wants to represent, there is no other place to go but up. The identitary construct represented by Bolívar’s traditional representation, its cultural ideogram, is restrictive and excluding. The Latin American identity represented by Dávila’s inclusive metaphor, his “broken hero” (*héroe roto*), integrates all the previously disenfranchised segments of the continent.



Figure 6  
"El héroe-roto," by Juan Dávila (print courtesy of the painter)

We can equate the role of denotative genres such as the essay with that of cultural ideograms on the basis that both, albeit in different manners, "represent" the epos and contribute to maintain and promote the socio-political and cultural status-quo of the collective identity this epos embodies. We can also draw a second parallel between the novel and other forms of artistic representation as particularly apt means to subvert the epos and affect (or at least expose) the ideological presuppositions that are the condition of possibility for its existence. The epos represented by (and constructed through) denotative genres and cultural ideograms functions like a synecdoche: it offers us the part for the whole. The subversive capabilities inherent to poiesis and other forms of visual representation can break this synecdoche and offer new possibilities for the analysis of culture.<sup>19</sup>

## Notes

1. The author recognizes the generous support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). The author would also like to express her gratitude to the Exmo. Señor Don Eugenio Romero Pose, Auxiliary Bishop of Madrid, who generously parted with his rare copy of the "Santiago y América" exhibition's catalogue and gave permission to reproduce its images. Thanks are also due to Juan de Luis Camblor and Roberto Godoy Arcaya, for their constant support and their help in locating rare documents. Finally, the author wishes to express her sincere gratitude to the painter Juan Dávila for the images and information he so generously provided.

2. Unless otherwise indicated, all English translations are my own.

3. Such as, for example, the work of the Mexican muralists, deeply influenced by Vasconcelos's notions (Minister of Education during Obregón's government, and their sponsor). As an example, I will mention Rivera's monumental mural "Historia de México" (1929-1935), located in the stairs of the National Palace in México City. The influence of Hegel/Vasconcelos on the Mexican muralists was explored in depth in a paper delivered by Sabine Mabardi during the Congress of the Canadian Association of Hispanists in Calgary (1994). Unfortunately, I have been unable to ascertain if this study has been published.

4. I include here two excerpts taken from the initial and closing fragments of Hegel's section on Latin America: "America and its culture, especially as it had developed in Mexico and Peru . . . was a purely natural culture which had to perish as soon as the spirit approached it. America has always shown itself physically and spiritually impotent, and it does so to this day. . . . Culturally inferior nations such as these are gradually eroded through contact with more advanced nations which have gone through a more intensive cultural development" (Hegel, 163-64). "It is up to America to abandon the ground on which world history has hitherto been enacted. What has taken place there up to now is but an echo of the Old World and the expression of an alien life" (Hegel, 170-71).

5. "Nosotros no nos sentimos, como el asiático, herederos de una cultura autóctona. Existió, sí, una cultura indígena—azteca, maya, inca, etc.—pero esta cultura no representa para nosotros, americanos actuales, lo que representa la antigua Cultura Oriental para los actuales asiáticos. Mientras el asiático continúa sintiendo el mundo como lo sintieron sus antepasados, nosotros, americanos, no sentimos el mundo como lo sintió un azteca o un maya. De ser así, sentiríamos por las divinidades y templos de la cultura precolombina la misma devoción que siente el oriental por sus antiquísimos dioses y templos. Un templo maya nos es tan ajeno y sin sentido como un templo hindú."

6. "Lo nuestro, lo propiamente americano, no está en la cultura precolombina. ¿Estará en lo europeo? Ahora bien, frente a la Cultura Europea nos sucede algo raro, nos servimos de ella pero no la consideramos nuestra, nos sentimos imitadores de ella. . . . La Cultura Europea tiene para nosotros el sentido de que carece la cultura precolombina. Y sin embargo no la sentimos nuestra. Nos sentimos como bastardos que usufructúan bienes a los que no tienen derecho. . . . Hay algo que nos inclina hacia la Cultura Europea pero que al mismo tiempo se resiste a ser parte de esta cultura. Lo que nos inclina hacia Europa y al mismo tiempo se resiste a ser Europa, es lo propiamente nuestro, lo americano. . . . De aquí este sentirnos cohibidos, inferiores al europeo. El mal está en que sentimos lo americano, lo propio, como algo inferior."

7. "Latinoamérica es ya consciente de su inauténticidad inicial, del hecho de que utiliza filosofías extrañas para crear la ideología propia de su orden, de su política . . .

Parecieran ecos de ajenas vidas, reflejos de algo que les es extraño, pero en realidad no lo son.”

8. “El latinoamericano hace de esa filosofía, al asumirla y hacerla propia, una auténtica filosofía universal. . . . Tal es la expresión más legítima de adopción y adaptación, donde se encuentra el meollo de la autenticidad y originalidad. . . . Esto es, en el derecho no ya a copiar sino a hacer propios los valores que se presentan como Universales.”

9. “Se trata de . . . aceptar conscientemente lo que, de una manera a veces inconsciente, se ha hecho desde el mismo momento de nuestra incorporación, como americanos, a la historia del mundo occidental; desde el mismo momento en que, como indígenas, se inicia nuestra incorporación y, como occidentales, la continuación de esa historia en nuestra historia. Esto es, . . . se reconoce el hecho de la occidentalización de Latinoamérica y del resto del mundo, y con ello el de la universalización de la filosofía occidental. Lo que no se reconoce es la situación que, dentro de este mundo, se señala a pueblos y hombres como los nuestros.”

10. “El origen de todo está en que la dominación impuesta por Europa . . . imposibilitará el mestizaje asuntivo que fuera propio de la cultura europea. El mestizaje que Hegel resumirá en la palabra *Aufhebung*, y que aparecerá como extraña al mestizaje surgido en esta América, tanto racial como cultural. . . . Será la misma Europa la que ahora trate de impedir el mestizaje asuntivo.”

11. “No existen pueblos civilizados y pueblos bárbaros . . . El hombre, todo hombre, es igual a cualquier otro hombre. Y esta igualdad no se deriva de que un hombre o un pueblo pueda ser o no copia fiel de otro, sino de su propia peculiaridad. . . . Es este peculiar modo de ser de hombres y pueblos el que debe ser respetado.”

12. “Los otros, los que se saben incompletos, los marginados y bárbaros, le están mostrando al europeo occidental su propia marginación y barbarie. . . . La barbarie . . . como supuesta inmadurez, cambia de lugar. Próspero al mirarse en el espejo se siente mirado por Calibán que va a resultar ser el verdadero Próspero. El marginador se siente marginado, fuera de una sociedad que ya no le pertenece.”

13. “La relación dialéctica entre el civilizado y el bárbaro. El bárbaro que puede transformarse en civilizado y marcar nuevos límites a la barbarie. . . . Próspero sólo tiene ahora que aceptar y perdonar para ser perdonado. Pero no tanto perdonar a Calibán, que lo ha enfrentado, como perdonarse a sí mismo y pedir le ayuden a salvarse, solicitando para ello ser perdonado.”

14. For a detailed study of the presence of Hegelian discourse in Leopoldo Zea's work from this perspective, see my article “La barbarie de la razón, la razón de la barbarie. Hegel, Zea y la problemática identitaria latinoamericana” (*Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos*, forthcoming).

15. Although only a small proportion of the stories that circulate about the “implausible” deeds of the Latin American dictators has been compiled by biographers and/or historians, in the particular case of Juan Vicente Gómez more than five hundred have been classified and published by different authors. This number can perhaps give an approximate idea of the enormous amount that are actually in circulation in Latin America (see Germán Carrera Damas, 184, note 6).

16. For a detailed study of these four novels from the perspective outlined here, see my article “Escritura pre y post-genérica: Herodoto y la novela épica Latinoamericana” (forthcoming).

17. As Frances A. Yates mentions in *The Art of Memory*, the connection between emotion and devotional imagery that took place during the Middle Ages is mostly owed to Thomas Aquinas' transformation of the “memory images” aroused by emotional affects mentioned in the *Ad Herennium* (III, xvi-xxiv) into “corporeal similitudes” of spiritual intent that should be contemplated in and with *sollicitudo*,

solicitude (*Summa Theologiae*, II, II, quaestio XLVIII), which implies “cleaving with affection” to the things to be remembered through the image (86).

18. Part of a Brooklyn Museum of Art exhibit entitled “Sensation,” Ofili’s portrait caused irate interventions by the Mayor of New York and John Cardinal O’Connor, and prompted several public demonstrations of outrage in front of the Museum.

19. For a detailed study of cultural ideograms and their effects on the social, see my article “Figurating and Dis-Figurating Cultural Icons: Towards a Sociography of the Imaginary” (forthcoming).

## Works Cited

- Aristotle. *Poetics. Introduction to Aristotle*. ed. Richard McKeon. New York: Random House, 1947.
- Asturias, Miguel Ángel. “*El Señor Presidente* como mito.” Postdata a *El Señor Presidente*. Edición crítica de las obras completas, Vol. 3, 295-306. Publicado originalmente en *Studi di letteratura Ispano-American*a. Milán: Instituto Editoriale Cisalpino, 1967.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *El Señor Presidente*. Edición crítica de las obras completas, Vol. 3. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1978.
- Bolívar, Simón. *Escritos políticos (1812-1830)*. Selección e introducción de Graciela Soriano. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1983.
- Carpentier, Alejo. *El recurso del método*. México: Siglo XXI, 1974.
- Carrera Damas, Germán. (1986). “Juan Vicente Gómez: la evasora personalidad de un dictador.” *Dictaduras y dictadores*. Julio Labastida Martín del Campo, coordinador. México: Instituto de investigaciones sociales UNAM. Siglo Veintiuno Editores (1986): 179-203.
- Castoriadis, Cornelius. *The Imaginary Institution of Society*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987.
- Costa Lima, Luiz. *Control of the Imaginary. Reason and Imagination in Modern Times*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1988.
- Fernández, Pablo Emilio. *Gómez, el rehabilitador*. Madrid-Caracas: Jaime Villegas Editor, 1956.
- García-Márquez , Gabriel. *El otoño del Patriarca*. Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 1975.
- Gómez-Moriana, A. *Discourse Analysis as Sociocriticism. The Spanish Golden Age*. Minneapolis/London: U of Minnesota P, 1993.
- González Casanova, Pablo. “Dictaduras y Democracias en América Latina.” *Dictaduras y dictadores*. Julio Labastida Martín del Campo, coordinador. México: Instituto de investigaciones sociales UNAM. Siglo Veintiuno Editores (1986): (222-39)
- Hegel, G. W. F. *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*. Translated from the German edition of Johannes Hoffmeister by H. B. Nisbet. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1975.
- Herodotus. *The History*. English translation by George Rawlinson (1858). New York: Tudor Publishing, 1932.
- Kirschner, Teresa J. *El protagonista colectivo en Fuenteovejuna de Lope de Vega*. Salamanca: Ediciones de la Universidad de Salamanca, 1979.
- Lukacs, Georg. *Teoría de la Novela*. Barcelona: EDHASA, 1971.
- Navas Ruiz, Ricardo. “*El Señor Presidente*; de su génesis a la presente edición.” *El Señor Presidente. Edición crítica*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica (1978): XIX-XXXIV.

- Plato. *The Republic*. Translation and introduction by Desmond Lee. England: Penguin Classics, 1987.
- Popol Vuh. Las antiguas historias del Quiche*. Traducción, introducción y notas por Adrián Recinos. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1990 (Primera edición, 1947).
- Reyes, Alfonso. "Notas sobre la inteligencia americana." *Sur* No. 24, 1936.
- Roa Bastos, Augusto. *Yo el Supremo*. México: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1974.
- Sagrada Biblia*. Nácar-Colunga. Versión directa de las lenguas originales por Eloíno Nácar Fuster, Canónigo Lectoral de la S. I. C. De Salamanca, y el muy Rvdmo. P. Alberto Colunga, O. P., Profesor de Sagrada Escritura en el Convento de San Esteban y en la Pontificia Universidad de Salamanca. Prólogo del Excmo. y Rvdmo. Sr. D. Gaetano Cicognani, Nuncio de su Santidad en España. Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1953.
- Thucydides. *History of the Peloponnesian Wars*. London: Penguin Classics, 1972.
- Yates, Frances A. *The Art of Memory*. London: Pimlico, 1996. (First edition: 1966).
- Zea, Leopoldo. "En torno a una filosofía americana." México: *Cuadernos Americanos*. Vol. 3, Año I, mayo–junio, 1942. (first published 1969).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *La filosofía americana como filosofía sin más*. México: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1992.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "América Latina: Largo viaje hacia sí misma." *Fuentes de la cultura latinoamericana*. Leopoldo Zea, comp. México: Tierra Firme, 1993. (first published 1977).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Discurso desde la marginación y la barbarie*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1990. (first published 1988).



## Chapter 4

# The Emergence of a Colonial (“Indian”) Voice: Inca Garcilaso and Guamán Poma

Antonio Gómez-Moriana

Translated by James Cisneros

In the Spain where I was born and raised, I was taught as a child that the “divine mission” assigned to and accomplished by my native country throughout its history was significantly different from the trajectory followed by other nations. Franco proclaimed himself “Caudillo of Spain by the Grace of God,”<sup>1</sup> while Franquismo declared the Spanish to be “God’s chosen people,” thus drawing a tacit comparison to the Jews, who had been forced to abjure their faith or leave the territories centuries earlier<sup>2</sup> and who continued to be denigrated in the Spanish collective imaginary (as was evident in numerous idiomatic expressions. In fact, this solemn claim echoed the words of Juan Donoso Cortés (1809-1853), a liberal Catholic whose political philosophy was recovered by Franco’s nationalist *doxa* through the 1946 edition of Donoso’s complete works in a series entitled the “Library of Christian Authors” (*Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos*). In one of his parliamentary speeches, Donoso Cortés affirms that

Ha habido en la tierra dos pueblos que han sido elegidos o predestinados: el pueblo judío y el pueblo español. . . . El pueblo judío fue el representante, el solo representante en la antigüedad de esta idea religiosa de la unidad, de la espiritualidad de Dios entre los pueblos idólatras y materialistas; el pueblo español ha sido el representante del catolicismo entre los pueblos protestantes. El pueblo judío

derramó su sangre por la fe en Asia, y el pueblo español en las regiones de Europa y el continente americano. . . . Yo pido al pueblo español lo que hizo el pueblo judío: el pueblo judío ha conservado intacta su fe a pesar de la dispersión. . . . Y yo pido al pueblo español conserve intacta su fe a pesar de las revoluciones. (II: 26)

Two peoples on earth have been chosen or predestined; the Jewish people and the Spanish people. . . . The Jewish people were the only representatives of the religious idea of God's unity, and spirituality amongst the idolatrous and materialist peoples in antiquity; the Spanish people have been the representatives of Catholicism amongst the Protestants. The Jewish people spilled their blood for their faith in Asia, and the Spanish people have done the same in regions of Europe and on the American continent. . . . I ask the Spanish people to do what the Jewish people have done. The Jewish people have kept their faith intact despite their dispersion. . . . and I ask the Spanish people to keep their faith intact despite revolutions.<sup>3</sup>

In this way, Franquismo endowed Spain with an *autohistoriography* (a term I consider as legitimate as *autobiography*) that highlighted a series of "differences." Spain was characterized as "different" in its "creation" of a radically *New World* and in its fight, "throughout History," against any new current of thought or mode of understanding reality that was not its own. It fought against "infidels," "heretics," and "deviants" at the close of the Middle Ages; against the "pagan" Renaissance, American indigenous ritual practices and the Protestant Reformation at the dawn of Modernity; against "the ideas" of the French Revolution; and finally, in our century, against the struggles inspired by the Bolshevik Revolution and other "international" movements considered to be deadly enemies of *Catholic Spain*: "International Judaism," "International Freemasonry," "International Capitalism," "International Communism," and, of course, the Socialist International.

During the years I was subjected to the so-called Formation of the National Spirit (the rubric given to one of the core courses of the school curriculum under Franco), the Spanish Minister of Information and Tourism disseminated an advertising slogan that announced this "national" characteristic in English: "Spain is different." This self-definition contributed greatly to the development of Spain's tourist industry, temporarily aiding the battered national economy, and permanently destroying the seaboard's ecosystems. Another English term then in circulation, "Typical Spanish" [sic], referred to the much pursued Hispanic male, whose religious oppression and consequent sexual repression undoubtedly contributed to the surfacing and consolidation of the legendary "Spanish

temperament" that attracted tourists who were looking for more than the sun and the coast. In soccer, a national passion, this temperament was known as "the Spanish rage" (*la furia española*). Other terms incorporated into the ranks of the "typically Spanish" were the scarcely Castilian *Nacionalsindicalismo* (the official denomination of Franco's political system) and *Nacionalcatolicismo* (its unofficial label). Only the initiate knew that these latter linguistic calques indicated the pretension to imitate not only the lexical structures of the German language, but also the political system they described. Meanwhile, Franco's linguistic policies applied such pressure to Spain's other regional languages—Basque, Catalan, and Galician—that they would have disappeared completely if the plans to unify them under Castilian had been fully implemented.

Franquismo's definition of Spain as "different" coincided, as if by chance, with the opening of Spain's national borders to tourism and the consumer products of multinational corporations seeking new markets after World War II. Significantly, it also coincided with a new exodus of Spaniards, emigrant workers whose remittances contributed decisively to the balance of payments required for the importation of these new goods. At this time, Spain was recruited to "defend the West"—despite its exclusion from NATO—through the installation of the U.S. military bases on Spanish soil. In this context, the discourses defining Spain's identity as "different" are revealed to have been (ideologically) instrumental in obfuscating both the contradictions of domestic policy and the international political, and economic pressures which provoked radical changes in Franco's isolationist foreign policy.

This was nothing new. Centuries earlier, Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragón had created Europe's first nation-state on the basis of a similar strategy. The "differences" solemnly proclaimed by General Franco's regime were in fact an ostensive return to the (anachronic) transhistoric continuity of the nation-state created by the Catholic Monarchs, whose "spirit" was said to "reign" in the songs taught to all schoolchildren. For centuries, the mix of religious, ethnic, and linguistic elements in official Spanish autohistoriographical discourse veiled the interests behind the formulation of an exclusive identity, as well as its unfortunate social, economic, and cultural consequences. The contradictions of Franco's regime also reproduced a paradox inherited from the Catholic Monarchs' political efforts to create a nation-state under "one faith, one people and one language in one territory, under one Crown" (or in the case of Franco, under one *Caudillo*, an ambiguous title that drew parallels to the leading warriors of Castilian expansion during the medieval "*Reconquista*," and served as an equivalent to the German *Führer* and the Italian *Duce*).

Shortly after their marriage on October 18, 1469, united the two great Christian kingdoms of the Iberian peninsula, Isabella and Ferdinand began preparations for the conquest of the Islamic

kingdom of Granada. The long process of the region's political, religious, and "national" unification under Christian rule was crowned in 1492, a symbolic year in Spain's autohistoriography which marks the conquest of the last Islamic bastion on the peninsula, the expulsion by decree of the Jews, and the printing in Salamanca of the first grammar of "the Castilian or Spanish language." Of course, 1492 is also the year of what has been called (from an arrogant Eurocentric perspective) the "Discovery of America," or, since the 500 year celebrations, the "Encounter between Cultures" (although not without a hint of cynicism)—a term that masks the "*Requerimiento*" of religious conversion imposed on the American aboriginal. In any case, this is the foundational act of the Spanish Empire. The Catholic Monarchs combined a domestic policy of religious, if not ethnic, "purification" with a "foreign" policy of territorial expansion, a double political movement which reveals that the culmination of the process leading to the formation of the nation-state paradoxically motivates a destructive dynamic that is directed at the very basis of its own conditions of possibility. The Spanish Crown's decree to expel the "Other" from the Iberian peninsula, and the subjection of other territories and their inhabitants set into motion a transnational (and transcontinental) circulation of people, which inevitably led to the emergence of minority and marginal ethnic groups who were subjected to colonial rule from a distant Spain or uprooted from their original homelands and who were, in either case, grafted onto territorial units that consequently became ethnically, religiously, linguistically, and culturally polyvalent.

As I have shown elsewhere (Gómez-Moriana 1989, 1993a, 1993b, 1993c), Christopher Columbus's *Navigation Journal* and *Letters* coincide with Elio Antonio de Nebrija's prologue in the *Gramática de la lengua castellana o española* in signaling the Spanish Crown's expansionist politics as well as the manifest desire to conserve the unity of language and religion. The convergence of religious and economic discourses in these texts, as well as in the *Crónicas de Indias* more generally, point to the contradictions that will envelop both the internal and external politics of the Catholic Monarchs (and of the *Austrias* in later years). This same political dynamic instigated changes of another order. While it created the *derecho de gentes*, the basis of International Law, it also prompted new patterns of trade that transplanted African slaves to American soil, as well as vegetable species which adapted to new environments and proliferated in the passage from one continent to another. In addition, it created the necessary infrastructure for the worldwide commerce of silver, gold, silk, spices, and other consumer products. The integration of America and Europe thus extended to Asia and Africa, which were incorporated by will or by force into flows of trade that transcended geographic and political limits on an unprecedented scale. And this global commercial network for the exchange of goods and people—part of the massive displacements of missionaries, soldiers,

colonists, *encomenderos*, and adventurers to the “new” territories—implies a “circulation of [their] symbolic goods” (Bourdieu) that define an individual or group’s cultural heritage. This circulation has produced various forms of religious syncretism and has provoked the contemporary movements of differentiation—if not movements of socio-political and cultural autonomy—that Lyotard has called the “postmodern condition,” and that others, such as Marc Angenot, have preferred to call the “ideologies of resentment.” These movements of difference, manifested and concretized in fragmentary *petits récits*, coincide precisely, as if by chance, with the most profound economic and cultural globalization in history.

It should now be clear that the *petit récit* with which this study began, a “testimonial” narrative of my own life, is inscribed within the greater narrative of Spain’s national autohistoriography. In fact, every autobiography is inscribed within a greater narrative context, however individual or “authentic” it appears to be, and however much it is oriented *against* the current of a hegemonic national autohistoriography. Furthermore, situating the account historically and establishing the receptive context of its narration reproduces parameters of an ideological nature. This is the case when I describe the false consciousness of my early Spanish education, when I explain the processes of *prise de conscience* that led me to choose exile in my youth, and finally, when I relate my reflections upon those experiences in the moments I took to write the text you are presently reading. Regardless of my desire to escape this state of things, I cannot define my subjectivity beyond the moments of “false consciousness” or *prise de conscience*. I am the result of these and other past experiences, which condition even the choice of this very topic for my contribution to a volume on identity. Accordingly, I maintain that testimonial narrative should not be studied immanently, as an autotelic, isolated, and self-sufficient text, but should rather be studied as an entymema that is situated within a greater dialogical context. My principal aim in the pages that follow is therefore to analyze the bound relationship of identity discourses and the mechanisms of subjectivity’s *prise de conscience*. Every individual looks into the social mirror and internalizes the role that society assigns to him or her, either accepting it with the vain illusion that its adoption is self-motivated or resisting it by (paradoxically) accepting the stigma that society projects, as part of a marginalizing process, on the individual’s group, class, lineage, race, gender, or “deviant” condition. These socializing mechanisms, which elsewhere I call the “reciprocity of perspectives” (Gómez-Moriana 1988, 1990, 1993b), are also the mechanisms that set into motion the processes of *prise de conscience* for both collective identity and individual subjectivity, as well as the touchstone for changing values—alongside the themes and motifs that accompany them—in the evolution of the autobiographical and biographical genres, of the confessional and

testimonial subgenres, and of what I have been calling autohistoriography.

### Some Methodological Premises

I take as given two basic postulates and their respective corollaries:

1) Every society is plural, given the collision of interests between the individuals and groups which constitute the social fabric. The conflictual plurality of every society also implies its (conscious or unconscious) fragmentation into antagonistic groups. This first postulate yields a corollary: if culture is constituted by a series of enunciative and performative positions that are regulated and codified within a social state, then any cultural study must include the "other" sites implied by these privileged places as well as the contradictions and struggles generated by the institutions and *doxas* of the entire social state.

2) Ideology, understood as "false consciousness," plays an important role in maintaining the hierarchical order (as a guarantee for the stability and continuity of a given social state). A second corollary: the social dynamic at play in the processes of *prise de conscience* contributes to the progressive deterioration of the established order, which will eventually and inevitably give way to another.

These are the guiding premises of the MARGES research group I created and directed for ten years at the Université de Montréal. My decade of work with MARGES (1984-1994) coincided with a period of instability (if not crisis) in the social and human sciences, which came to be considered a luxury that "developing" societies "still" allowed themselves in the era of "postindustrial capitalism." We witnessed the series of changes in perspective (which was sometimes only a change of fashion) that characterized the second half of the eighties, and the first years of the nineties. We participated in the debate on cultural studies, contributing to the development of this new paradigm for the investigation and analysis of artistic and non-artistic, verbal and non-verbal societal practices of symbolic value. We gradually progressed from a sociocriticism of (canonical and non-canonical) literature that was based on an analysis of the discourses produced and consumed by a society, to the observation and analysis of all that society's symbolic practices. After opposing a social, "transindividual subject" (Goldman) to the "author" as a concrete, individual subject—whose intentions continue to be the object of study for a positivist philology based on the cult of artistic genius' transcendent vision—we turned our attention to consciousness (always collective, if often false) as a determining factor in either securing the social dynamic's order or upsetting its precarious balance (Gómez-Moriana, 1985).

The first postulate led me to focus on the “hierarchical rank” or “social mark” that characterizes any given sign—or group of signs—by incorporating its social dimension (*diastraty*) to the temporal and spatial dimensions (*diachrony* and *diatopy*) evident in the etymology of Bakhtin’s *chronotopos*. Further, it led me to analyze the status of these signs’ legitimate users as well as the discursive division of labor that takes place within the plural and conflictual social frame where these signs are produced and circulated. The impetus behind the second postulate was to circumvent the priority given to the author’s knowledge and intentions, or to his or her degree of consciousness before the text, and to instead determine the position of the textual product in relation to the hierarchical stratification of social practices and practitioners that all texts (*nolens/volens*) either support or challenge. Our two working premises questioned the rituals (repetitive and blind by nature) of cultural practices and, therefore, helped analyze the possibility of resistance to a hierarchical, diastratic order. After a survey of its past work and its current perspectives, we offered a definition of the social dynamic in which the individual product confronts the series, individual action opposes the ritual and transgression violates the rule, as the “defiance of the margins.”<sup>4</sup>

In our first collective publication, *Parole exclusive, parole exclue, parole transgressive*, we walk a fine line between the resigned acceptance of the norm—as though it were a fixed system—and an excessively optimistic belief that it can be overcome through resistance. The first of these tendencies is characterized by an excessive insistence on “structures” (fixed, immune to any possible change) that (inexorably) determine a concrete form of cultural production within a given social context. This is the case with various forms of structuralism, frequently used to explain the “state of things,” and to elucidate its “genesis” by describing it deterministically. This positivist position is sometimes opposed by the excessive optimism of those who believe they can convert their aspirations into reality by the verbalization of their own unfulfilled dreams. In this way, those who adopt the second tendency repeat the well-known mechanism of the manifesto, producing illusions of novelty and change by the simple act of proclaiming their objectives and ideals. In our second collective volume, *L’«Indien», instance discursive*, we therefore oppose the diverse interventions of (multiple) voices’ “inventions” to the totalitarianism implied by essentialist and universalist theories which posit a (single) world “representation.” Our objective in this volume is to highlight the importance of language in the cultural (social) construction of “reality,” and to denounce the illusion of radical change that has emerged with “postcolonial” theory’s espousal of an allegedly authentic autochthonous voice. In my response to each of these tendencies, I emphasize the social role of the transgressive word—what I call a “third dimension” of language (the third part of MARGES’s first

volume)—and posit the possibility of a gradual *prise de conscience* as well as the corollary possibility of a slow but definite deterioration of a given social state's ideological supports. Within this progressive decline of a society's *precarious equilibrium* (what I call its *momentum*), I believe it possible to detect, analyze and promote the destructive and creative double action (*Umbau*) of the "defiance of the margins."

We should avoid the temptation to excessive optimism, however, which might lead us to give the name of "new world order" to what is perhaps nothing more than an ideological ruse to perpetuate residual elements of our (a)critical past. This also applies to its designation with terms such as "postcolonialism," "postmodernism," "postmarxism," and so many other "posts," and "isms" currently circulating in our academic (and political) environments. In any case, I would like to denounce the serious contradiction I perceive in the combination of the temporal prefix "post"—which declares the end of one era and marks the beginning of another—and the suffix "ism"—which marks an affiliation to this "new era" (new ideology?)—that one finds in the lexicon of those who have the audacity to declare "the end of ideologies," and "the end of the historical *grand récits*" (by which they mean the manifestos, and especially the one that proposes a new paradigm for historiography, among other things: *The Communist Manifesto*). Each of these terms constitutes, in the densest narrative form (*narrema*), both an *idéologème* and a *grand récit*. Each also constitutes an effective manifesto. The remarkable success of these terms shows how a pamphleteer's colorful language has converted each of them into the elements of a genuine fashion, a fashion which coincides, moreover, with the consolidation of global commerce and the ideological declarations, voiced by today's (dogmatic) (neo)liberalism, that deny the relevance of any research on ideology. To attain its effects of (false) consciousness and deflect every possible attack, this *doxa* proclaims (with the tone of a manifesto) that ideologies are at their end and have no role to play in politics, history, or the economy. But if these neoliberal postulates were to constitute a generalized way of life, dictating new relations of production and a new form of unplanned and opened political economy, they would in fact produce the definitive triumph of the bourgeoisie. And it is precisely this ascendancy of the bourgeois mentality that the *grand récit* of *The Communist Manifesto* declares, with premature optimism of course (although perhaps with the intention of accelerating the proletariat's revolutionary action), to be a *fait accompli*:

The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part. The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his "natural superiors," and has left remaining no other

nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous “cash payment.” It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervor, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom—Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusion, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation. The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honored and looked up to with reverent awe. (82)

### An Indian, a Prince, a Grammar

José Rabasa (1995) calls our attention to a “quasi-utterance” favored by Garcilaso de la Vega: “Because I am an Indian.” This phrase, which recurs with a few variations in Garcilaso’s work, indeed seems to place him on the margin of every possible historic discourse: “In that writing, there was no class that could assimilate the Indian, mestizo, or bastard as an element of its own” (Susana Jákfalvi-Leiva cited by Rabasa). For Rabasa,

Garcilaso was demonstrably capable of appropriating European forms of discourse, but the very borderline social status that would never allow him to cross over and become a Spaniard was also what made him unique in Spanish American letters. (81)

Margarita Zamora, who has written extensively on Garcilaso’s ability to appropriate European forms of discourse, clearly coincides with Rabasa on this point. With the fortune inherited from his father, Garcilaso was able to receive a humanist education in Europe which provided him with the techniques of argumentative rhetoric he would later use in defense of his language and people. But in his testimonial confession, “Because I am an Indian,” Garcilaso excludes himself as an “author” just as “an alternative authorship and subjectivity” (Rabasa) seems to become possible. It is true, as Rabasa points out, that few Spanish American writers have openly declared themselves to be Indian. Rigoberta Menchú’s testimonial account seems to be an exception to the rule, but an exception that confirms the earlier case of Guamán Poma de Ayala, who by calling himself “Don,” “Author,” and “[Indian] Prince,” constitutes himself as a legitimate interlocutor of Spanish King Philip III. On the basis of his titles, he lays the foundation for both his competence as a chronicler and his (self) designation as a “royal counselor” capable of analyzing and describing the possibilities for “good government” in the colonies. On the one hand, Garcilaso and Guamán Poma evince an acute

awareness of their own origins, while on the other they demonstrate consciousness of the knowledge attached to those origins by the West and, most importantly, an understanding of how to use it. Each uses his "Indian knowledge" to constitute himself as an "authority" (and therefore as a discursive subject). Guamán Poma explains to the Spanish Monarch the unfortunate consequences of organizing the agricultural cycles according to criteria that ignore the peculiar qualities of his homeland; Inca Garcilaso protests against the Spaniards' corruption of his native language, correcting their transcriptions and pronunciation of Quechua. In his *Comentarios Reales [Royal Commentaries]*, Garcilaso writes:

Para atajar esta corrupción me sea lícito, pues soy indio, que en esta historia yo escriba como indio con las mismas letras que aquellas tales dicciones se deben escribir. (II: 5)

To put a stop to this corruption I am justified, because I am an Indian, in writing this history with the letters that should be used when the diction of an Indian is written.

Following a comparison that Hugo Rodríguez-Veccini establishes between *Don Quixote* and *La Florida del Inca*, Rabasa claims that Garcilaso adopts the same ironic tone used by Cervantes:

The insistent repetition of "porque soy indio" suggests an extended metaphor whereby one thing is said and another meant—that is, an ironic allegory of the privileged claim of the "West" to write "the rest of the world." (104)

Margarita Zamora differs from Rabasa on this point, interpreting the phrase's recurrence as evidence that Garcilaso consciously exploited the prestige enjoyed by philological knowledge in Renaissance Europe. This prestige is evident in the extensive studies of biblical and classical languages during the period, as well as the many exegeses of the sacred scriptures and (re)reading of the classical authors.<sup>5</sup> Garcilaso appropriates these "western" values to benefit his own language (and people). Just as Guamán Poma, in the "Prologue to the Christian Reader" of his *Primer nueva corónica*, equates diverse indigenous languages to Spanish by placing them in the same series—"Joining to the Castilian language and *quichua ynga, aymara, poquina colla, canche, cana, charca, chichaysuyo, andesuyo, condesuyo*, all the Indian words [*todos los bocablos de yndios*]'" (9)—Garcilaso does not hesitate to draw parallels (at least implicitly) between his own efforts to correct Quechua grammar and Nebrija's drive to consolidate Castilian grammar. An example of Garcilaso's use of Philology is offered in his explanation of the name for the Inca's god of creation *Pachacámac*, by which he claims that this god,

known to the Incas through the “natural light of reason,” is the same deity as that of the Judeo-Christian faith:

Es nombre compuesto de Pacha, que es mundo universo, y de Cámac, participio presente del verbo cama, que es animar, el cual verbo se deduce del nombre cama, que es alma. Pachacámac quiere decir el que da ánima al mundo universo, y en toda su propia y entera significación quiere decir el que hace con el universo lo que el ánima con el cuerpo. (II: 74)

This name is composed of Pacha, meaning world universe, and Cámac, present participle of the verb cama, meaning to animate, which is derived from the noun cama, soul. Pachacámac means that which animates the world universe and in the whole of its proper signification it means that which does with the universe what the spirit does with the body.

We should also note that in his self-denomination as an “Indian” Garcilaso consciously dissents from the contemporaneous Spanish usage, which would have classified him as a “*mestizo*.” In *La Florida del Inca*, for instance, Garcilaso modifies the terms used by the Spaniards with qualifiers such as “así nos llaman” [as they call us], or simply “llaman” [they call]:

El gobernador Hernando de Soto con mucho contento de haberlo hallado [el paso que diez años antes había cruzado Pánfilo de Narváez con su ejército], mandó a dos soldados naturales de la isla de Cuba, mestizos, que así nos llaman en todas las Indias Occidentales a los que somos hijos de español y de india o de indio y española, y llaman mulatos, como en España, a los hijos de negro y de india o de indio y de negra. Los negros llaman criollos a los hijos de español y española y a los hijos de negro y negra que nacen en Indias, por dar a entender que son nacidos allá y no de los que van de acá de España. Y este vocablo criollo han introducido los españoles ya en su lenguaje para significar lo mismo que los negros. Llaman asimismo cuarterón o cuatrato al que tiene cuarta parte de indio, como es el hijo de español y de mestiza o de mestizo y de española. Llaman negro llanamente al guineo, y español al que lo es. Todos estos nombres hay en Indias para nombrar las naciones intrusas no naturales de ellas. (149-50)

Happy at having discovered a new passage, the Governor [Hernando de Soto] issued an order to two soldiers, *mestizos* as they call us, who were natives of the island of Cuba. In all of the West Indies, those of us who are born of a Spanish father and an Indian mother or vice versa are called *mestizos*, just as in Spain those who are born of a Negro father and an Indian

mother or vice versa are called *mulatos*. The Negroes designate all persons *criollos* who have been born in the Indies of either pure Spanish or pure Negro parents, thus indicating that they are natives of the Indies and not of Spain. Likewise, the Spaniards have already introduced the word *criollo* into their language, attaching to it the same significance. The man who is a fourth part Indian, such as the son of a Spanish father and a *mestiza* mother or vice versa is known as a *quarteron* or *quatralvo*, whereas a native of Guinea is simply called a Negro and a native of Spain, a Spaniard. All of these names, as one can surmise, are used in the Indies to distinguish intruding from indigenous races. (105-106)

The authority Garcilaso and Guamán Poma claim by virtue of their status of "Indian" does not exclude the (ironic) use of the rhetoric topic of *moderatio*. Therefore, in *La Florida del Inca's* "Proem to the Reader" Garcilaso states:

Las faltas que lleva se me perdonen porque soy indio, que a los tales, por ser bárbaros y no enseñados en ciencias ni artes, no se permite que, en lo que dijeren o hicieren, los lleven por el rigor de los preceptos del arte o ciencia, por no los haber aprendido, sino que los admitan como vinieren. (69)

I plead . . . that I be pardoned its errors because I am an Indian. For since we Indians are a people who are ignorant and uninstructed in the arts and sciences, it seems ungenerous to judge our deeds and utterances strictly in accordance with the precepts of those subjects which we have not learned. We should be accepted as we are. (xiv)

Garcilaso's use of the topic of *moderatio*, based on his condition of being an "Indian," is comparable to the following excerpt from the letter by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz "Respuesta de la poetisa a la muy ilustre Sor Filotea de la Cruz," in which her condition as a woman plays a pivotal rhetorical role.

Y así, confieso que muchas veces este temor [a tratar asuntos sagrados, cosa que le prohiben su sexo, su edad, y sobre todo la costumbre] me ha quitado la pluma de la mano, y ha hecho retroceder los asuntos hacia el mismo entendimiento, de quien querían brotar: el cual inconveniente no topaba en los asuntos profanos, pues una herejía contra el arte no la castiga el Santo Oficio, sino los discretos con risa, y los críticos con censura; y ésta, *iusta uel iniusta, timenda non est*, pues deja comulgar y oír misa, por lo cual me da poco o ningún cuidado, porque según la misma decisión de los que lo calumnian, ni tengo

obligación para saber, ni aptitud para acertar; luego si lo erro, ni es culpa ni es discrépito. (118)

And so I confess that many times this fear [of treating sacred themes, which is prohibited by custom to those of her age and sex] has taken the quill from my hand, and made those themes recede to the very understanding from which they were attempting to spring: an inconvenience that does not touch on profane matters, since heresy against art is not punished by the Inquisition [*Santo Oficio*] but by discreet laughter and critics' censure; and this, *iusta uel iniusta, timenda non est*, as it allows me to receive communion and hear mass, and therefore leads me to take little or no caution, since, according to the calumniators' own decision, I have no obligation to know nor aptitude to be correct; if I err, then, it is not my fault and not to my discredit.

Guamán Poma also uses the topic of *moderatio* in his “Prologue to the Christian Reader”:

Para sacar en limpio estas dichas historias ube tanto trauajo por ser cin escrito ni letra alguna, cino no más de *quipos* [cordeles con nudos] y rrelaciones de muchas lenguaxes ajuntando con la lengua de la castellana y quichiua ynga . . . todos los bocablos de yndios, que pasé tanto trauajo por ser serbicio de Dios Nuestro Señor y de su Sacra Católica Magestad, rrey don Phelipe et terzero. (9)

To make sense of these stories cost me much work, since it was done without any writing or letters, but only with *quipos* [knotted cords] and stories related in many languages, joining to the Castilian language and quichiua ynga . . . all the Indian words. I worked a great deal because it was in the service of God Our Lord and his Sacred Catholic Magistrate, King Philip III.

José Rabasa places Garcilaso's text in parodic contrast with the following excerpt from Fernández de Oviedo's *Historia general y natural de las Indias*:

Si algunos vocablos extraños e bárbaros aquí se hallaren, la causa es la novedad de que se tracta; y no se ponga a la cuenta de mi romance, que en Madrid nascí, y en la casa real me crie, y con gente noble he conversado, e algo he leído, para que se sospeche que habré entendido mi lengua castellana, la cual, de las vulgares, se tiene por la mejor de todas. (I: 10)

If there are some strange and barbaric works, the reason is the novelty of the subject matter; and should not be ascribed to my Spanish, since I was born in Madrid and bred in royal quarters and conversed with noble people and read some, and so there should be no question whatsoever of my understanding of the Castilian language, which, of all the vernacular tongues, is the best. (Rabasa's translation, 92)

In my opinion, however, it is more likely that Garcilaso and Guamán Poma parody the national project that Nebrija outlines in his *Dedication* of the *Gramática de la lengua castellana o española*, by applying the same principles Nebrija formulates for imperial Spanish to the indigenous languages they espouse. In his *Royal Commentaries*, Garcilaso not only posits a correspondence between language and nation, but further demands correct usage of that language as a sign of belonging to that nation. Garcilaso writes that "It is a shame that [Quechua] should be lost or corrupted, being so elegant a language" ["Es lástima que se corrompa, siendo una lengua tan galana" (II: 6)], adding, in reference to the colonial Spaniards, that "I tire somewhat of pointing out from Spain the principles of their language so that they might maintain its state of purity" ["Que yo harto hago en señalarles con el dedo desde España los principios de su lengua para que la sustenten en su pureza" (*ibidem*)]. In *La Florida del Inca*, Garcilaso conceives of indigenous language and territory as a unified, constitutive component of a nation's identity:

Y pues yo soy indio del Perú y no de S. Domingo ni sus comarcas se me permita que yo introduzca algunos vocablos de mi lenguaje en esta mi obra, porque se vea que soy natural de aquella tierra y no de otra. (142)

Since I am a Peruvian Indian, and not from Santo Domingo or its vicinity, I feel it my privilege to introduce into this work certain words of my own language so as to make it clear that I am a native of Peru, and not of some other land. (95)

I question Rabasa's dichotomy between Europe and the West, synonyms of a "universal episteme" (*grand récit?*), on the one hand, and indigenous thought, conceived as an expression of the particular (*petit récit?*) on the other. Instead, I maintain that European universals have paradoxically provided Garcilaso, Guamán Poma and others with the necessary foundation for their constitution as discursive subjects capable of proclaiming their differences. In the example outlined above, the universalization of language's recognized values allows Garcilaso to petition for his own language and even for his own dialectal modality, just as Nebrija had done for Castilian. It also allows Guamán Poma to place indigenous languages in the same series as Castilian, implying an equal and parallel status. In 1492, Nebrija

dedicates his *Gramática de la lengua castellana o española* to Isabella I with words that reveal an embryonic national consciousness and contain an interpretation of the Spanish nation-state's recent consolidation and processes of imperial expansion, which language, "companion to empire," would serve. In this sense, perhaps Garcilaso's text is nothing more than the echo of the linguistic, religious, and political convergence we find in Nebrija, appropriated by the Inca to express the consciousness of his own identity. By universalizing the values proclaimed by Nebrija, Garcilaso learns how to give value to his original language and incorporate it as one of his identity's constitutive elements. At the same time, Garcilaso disturbs (if not destroys) the exclusive position that Nebrija attributes to the Castilian language, one of the pillars of the Spanish nation-state, by reducing it to one of the many languages spoken in the Spanish Empire.

In contrast to the subtle shades of rhetoric and appropriation we find in the work of Garcilaso and Guamán Poma, Columbus's descriptions of his first voyage across the Atlantic show little respect for indigenous languages or their denominations for the places he progressively "discovers" for the Spanish Crown. In a brief letter addressed to Luis de Santángel, dated February 15, 1493, Columbus writes:

Señor: Porque sé que avréis plazer de la gran victoria que nuestro Señor me ha dado en mi viaje vos escribo ésta, por la cual sabréis cómo en treinta y tres días pasé a las Indias, con la armada que los illustríssimos Rey e Reina, Nuestros Señores me dieron, donde yo fallé muy muchas islas pobladas con gente sin número, y d'ellas todas he tomado posesión por sus Altezas con pregón y vandera real estendida, y non me fue contradicho. A la primera que yo fallé puse nombre Sant Salvador a conmemoración de su Alta Magestad, el cual maravillosamente todo esto a dado; los indios la llaman Guanahaní. A la segunda puse nombre la isla de Santa Marfa de Concepción; a la tercera, Fernandina; a la cuarta la Isabella; a la quinta la isla Juana, e así a cada una nombre nuevo. (167)

Sir: Since I know that you will be pleased at the great victory with which Our Lord has crowned my voyage, I write to inform you how in thirty-three days I crossed from the Canary Islands to the Indies with the fleet which our most illustrious sovereigns gave to me. I found very many islands with large populations and took possession of them all for their Highnesses; this I did by proclamation and with the royal standard unfurled. No opposition was offered. I named the first island that I found "San Salvador" in honor of Our Lord and Savior who has granted me this miracle. The Indians call it "Guanahani." The second island I named to "Santa Maria

de Concepción," the third "Fernandina," the fourth "Isabela," and the fifth "Juana"; thus I renamed them all. (115)

Similarly, after his first description of American indigenous people, Columbus writes in his *Navigation Journal* that he proposes to return to Europe with "six of them" so he may show them to the Monarchs and "so that they may learn to speak" ["para que deprendan fablar" (96)].

Columbus's travel narratives are marked by a conflictive double bind: he must evoke known references that can make an *unprecedented* experience *recognizable* to his readers, especially the Catholic Sovereigns, and thus make his account of reaching the Indies by a western sea route credible (*verisimilar*). The equivocal term "Indian" is produced when Columbus, grasping for the familiar, (mis)applies the word to the American aboriginal. Meanwhile, in taking possession of the "new" territories for the Spanish Crown, "by proclamation and with the royal standard unfurled," Columbus further appropriates the islands and inhabitants he encounters on his maritime voyage through the speech act of naming, by giving them new names. Although Columbus's words may be "already inhabited" and belong to a language marked by social use, he nevertheless ignores, with Adamic arrogance, the denominations that precede his voyage across the Atlantic. In addition to this double bind, characteristic of the passage of (individual) desire through the (social) discourse that expresses it, Columbus confronts an epistemological double restriction imposed by the historical context in which he writes: on the one hand, he faces the need to evoke the written text as an authority that is still in effect, while on the other he faces the increasingly undeniable primacy of experimental evidence as a necessary condition for all *true* knowledge.

Like Don Quixote in Cervantes's novel, Columbus acts as a "man of the book" who considers that the written word guarantees the legitimacy of his mission. If Columbus therefore begins the *Navigation Journal* of his first voyage with non-specific references to "those lands" ["aquellos tierras"], "islands," or "the people of that island" ["la gente de aquella isla"], he soon identifies them by names such as "the Island of Cipango" or "the people of the Great Khan" ["las gentes del Gran Can"]. He also states his determination of continuing on to the city of "Quinsay" in order to deliver the Catholic Monarchy's letters to the "Great Khan," and return with his reply (103). To ensure the credibility of his account, Columbus follows Pierre d'Ailly's *Imago mundi vel eius imaginaria descriptio* (Louvain, 1480), and Marco Polo's *Travels* (Venice, 1485) to the letter, but he also appropriates what is already-there and already-named ("the Indians call it . . .") by naming it anew, an act of the most radical violence that Derrida calls "the originary violence of language." Discussing the experiences with the Nambikwara that

Levi-Strauss describes in *Tristes Tropiques* (1968), Derrida seems to comment on the anthropologist's statement that "one never names, but rather classifies, the other" ["On ne nomme jamais, on classe l'autre"] (1962: 285):

To name, to give names that it will on occasion be forbidden to pronounce, such is the originary violence of language which consists in inscribing within a difference, in classifying, in suspending the vocative absolute. To think the unique *within* the system, to inscribe it there, such is the gesture of the arche-writing: arche-violence, loss of the proper. (112)

But Columbus does not merely give "new names" to the lands and inhabitants that he encounters along the western sea route to the Indies. In his portrayal of these lands, he also resorts to the pre-constructed, the "already-said," by seeking inspiration in Biblical descriptions of Eden and the state of "original innocence"—that is, before the Fall—and in classical descriptions, especially from Virgil and Ovid, of the *locus amoenus* and the natural goodness and pulchritude of man and woman in the Golden Age. He constructs an image of the "Indian" whose authenticity will not be questioned, since on the one hand it derives from direct empirical knowledge, and on the other confirms the image that has been *prefigured* in the "texts" of both the "sacred," and "classical" authors. Rather than being contested, this image soon became the point of reference for the debates and controversies that followed. It is precisely this "image," which Columbus (re)creates and refers to in the word "Indian," that will become the principal object of study and "knowledge" within a disciplinary complex of theology, philosophy, jurisprudence, politics, and economics. The different "testimonial" accounts given by the protagonists of the American conquest (soldiers, missionaries, *encomenderos*, and others), and, more significantly, the controversies and debates over the "nature of the Indian" (Bartolomé de las Casas/Ginés de Sepúlveda) and over "Spain's titles of dominion" in America (Bartolomé de las Casas/Francisco de Vitoria), that take place in the universities of Valladolid and Salamanca during the sixteenth century, make the (equivocal) word "Indian" a discursive instance, a "place" (*topos*) of convergence, within the discursive division of labor, for all the discursive formations belonging to that era's different fields of knowledge.

As I have shown in previous works on the *Crónicas de Indias* (Gómez-Moriana 1989, 1990, 1993a, 1993b, 1993c), colonial historiography is marked by both a universalization of the western modes of representation, dominant in this form of writing and a Manichean dualism that either demonizes or idealizes the American aboriginal. Various readings of Columbus's *Journal*, from Pedro Martir de Anglería and Bartolomé de las Casas to the echoes of these debates that we find well into the twentieth century with Menéndez

Pidal (1958),<sup>6</sup> have marked this dualism in their construction of the "Indian." I will therefore limit myself to a brief sketch of two conceptual axes along which the American indigenous people have been named—and classified—over the centuries. Depending on the dominant religious or secular (that is, "scientific") parameters of a given historical moment, the word "Indian" has signified either the "Other" of the (Christian) faith, alongside terms such "beings in a natural state" and "infidels," or the "Other" of (western) civilization with terms such as "primitive," "savage," and "barbarian." This binary system, which finds its most synthetic expression in the dualism of civilization/barbarism, has profoundly marked five centuries of Spanish and western historiography on "the Indies." For Pedro Martir de Anglería and Bartolomé de las Casas, for instance, the "Indians" lived in a state of natural goodness before being subjected to slavery in the name of the gospel. The Spaniard did not bring the law of God, but avarice, envy, and wrath, to the hearts of those whom Columbus had described as living in a state of "original innocence." For López de Gómara, chronicler of Hernán Cortés, however, the conversion and colonization of America represents the (epic) feat of "redeeming the world's most primitive people," who had practiced "cannibalism," "polygamy," "polytheism," and "bloody human sacrifice" before the arrival of divine redemption in the figure of the Spaniard. These two apparently irreconcilable positions in fact share the same epistemological base, differing only in the alleged "facts" they select (*inventio* in ancient rhetoric) for the construction of an argumentative narrative that either endorses or condemns the way the conquest was achieved. But the legitimacy of this conquest is never put into question, not even by those who outline its most nefarious consequences.

In this context, Inca Garcilaso and Guamán Poma de Ayala's appropriation of the adversary's rhetoric creates a space for an indigenous voice and a model of resistance which presents another vision of colonial history. This specular use of the dominant discourse's rhetoric finds antecedents in the practices of marginalized groups of sixteenth century Spain, which resisted negations of alterity and discourses of submission through a "subversion of ritual discourse" (Gómez-Moriana 1985). Moreover, the means designed to control dissidence (such as autobiographical confessions, spiritual exercises, and other practices by which an individual is made to examine his or her conscience), which first emerged in medieval Europe and were later developed by the Catholic Monarchs, paradoxically create and institutionalize, well before Cartesianism, mechanisms of introspection and self-thematization as well as discourses of (individual and collective) subjectivity. While for centuries the Inquisition operated as an ideological apparatus promoting "the true faith," it also unwittingly assisted dissident individuals and groups to become conscious of their differences as subjects. If certain insular collectives (crypto-Judaism, for instance)

risked forgetting their rituals or beliefs, the Inquisition continually recalled them through the “edicts of grace” by which it invited individuals to confess to their participation in those rituals or to recognize them in the practices of their families or neighbors. The edicts became catalogues of beliefs not only for Jews and Moors, but also for Lutherans, visionaries, indigenous people and so on, as well as indices for possible modes of resistance to the teachings of the Catholic Church: blasphemy, heresy, witchcraft, and such. The catechisms and confessor’s manuals which accompanied the rites of the Inquisition were equally comprehensive inventories of sin, including “deviations” from “straight” sexuality and phrases affronting the “good customs” sanctioned by the church and the state as the sole means of integration into Imperial Spain’s social framework. In this way, the lists of forbidden books classified materials that informed, or could inform, Jews, Moors, Lutherans, and so on, about their respective group’s “identity.” The paradoxical double politics of the Catholic Monarchs and their successors resurfaces in this context, which is perhaps the richest in (multi)cultural consequences for both the “national” territories and the colonies.

As opposed to contemporary processes of globalization, which seem to integrate cultures by eradicating their differences, this first globalization built intercultural bridges between displaced people. The consequences of these displacements are the long processes of adaptation, integration, and subversion that continue vigorously in Latin America and around the world today. The testimonial literature that has proliferated in past decades seems linked to this tradition. Besides placing a “personal” identity consciousness on display, this literature also unfolds a dominant focus on the “group” (rather than the “class,” in the Marxist sense of the term) and on the *prise de conscience* of its own social conditions. This may be the *prise de conscience* of what I call a “social group,” by which I mean a collective that has suffered a nearly universal form of discrimination across geographies and through history (as is evident in women’s testimonies, for instance), or a dispossessed and exploited group that can be identified in diverse geographical areas at different moments in history (such as peasants who occupy land with the declaration that it belongs to “those who work on it”), or, finally, an ethnic group that constitutes a “separate class” in relation to the society or societies upon which it is grafted. Despite the reservations of some Marxists towards these movements, which supposedly weaken the legitimate cause of the (industrial?) proletariat, these testimonial narratives are inscribed (*nolens/volens*) into the international and ideological struggles of the oppressed classes and, therefore, into the same double frame of the Marxist *grand récit* that Lyotard—alongside the adherents of “post-Marxism”—declares to be dead in his own Hegelian “*grand-récit*.”

My conception of the group is not meant to be an element of the discourse that "postmodernity" (or as others call it, "postmodernism") opposes to "modernity," which in this context is a synonym for "western" or "European" thought. Contrary to Amaryll Chanady's understanding of the "postmodern challenge," the novelty of "postcolonial" thought on Latin American identity does not derive from its (textually explicit) self-definition as "different." This was present in Franco's Spain, as we have seen, and is the daily bread of many contemporary forms of nationalism. Furthermore, this form of argumentation, that is, the discourse that affirms this difference, is often a calque of the (hegemonic) discourse and its values.<sup>7</sup> Chanady discusses three "ways" in which "difference" is considered to be the "constitutive element" of identity construction in Latin America: one locates this difference in the presence of an indigenous population; another defines Latin America by its difference in relation to the European or North American "other"; and a third posits an "internal" difference due to the "hybrid" nature of the newly developing societies in the New World and the heterogeneous influences they received" (xxii). But none of these ways leads us to a properly or characteristically Latin American identity. These attempts to integrate such vast diversity into a "total" Latin American identity lead us to ignore or forget the profound social conflicts existing between its diverse and antagonistic elements. Even concepts like "hybrid" or "hybridization," so widely used and abused since García Canclini (1989) adopted them to define Latin America's distinctiveness, could be applied in greater or lesser measure to most ancient or contemporary societies. Like another fashionable term, "*mestizaje cultural*," these concepts produce an (ideological) unification—ordered, well defined, and clearly demarcated—of the conflictual diversity of the societies to which they are applied. As such, they are totalizing and totalitarian terms reminiscent of the colonial term "mestizo," which, as we have seen, Garcilaso rejects in favor of a term that corresponds to his actual social condition: "Indian."

Basing ourselves on the premise that every society is plural and conflictive, our conception of (individual or group) identity remains associated to (group or class) consciousness. It is an analytic paradigm that illuminates the internal conflict existing in every society, rather than a synthetic element that unifies a society at a given moment in its history. The nation-state created by the Catholic Monarchs at the dawn of modernity is inscribed within the latter category, as are the European nationalisms of the nineteenth century, at the apogee of modernity, and the various totalitarian, fascist and populist movements that arose in the present century. These movements neutralized class struggle (at least momentarily) and made us forget profound forms of discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, religion, language, or culture, in the "interest" of the people or in the name of national unity.

## Overcoming the Hegemonic Word Through Ironic Distance

Podemos [los argentinos, los sudamericanos en general] manejar todos los temas europeos, manejarlos sin supersticiones, con una irreverencia que puede tener, y ya tiene, consecuencias afortunadas. (Borges 1964: 161)

We [Argentines and South Americans in general] can handle all European themes without superstition and with an irreverence that can have, and has already had, fortunate consequences.

In this passage, Borges claims that Argentines and other South Americans are in an “analogous situation” to that of the Jews (just as Donoso Cortés does with the Spanish) and the Irish, in so far as each is able to judge European culture. It is interesting to note that Borges’s short text places in dialectic opposition the two elements we have highlighted in our study. If it seems to betray an inevitable dependence on European thematic content, it nevertheless emphasizes the subject’s potential to desecrate European thought at a formal level by taking ironic enunciative distance from the discourse it uses. In any event, Borges’ text echoes the transgressive/subversive tradition of appropriating and (ab)using the hegemonic discourse through the use of irony, a tradition it shares with the modes of (indigenous and non-indigenous) resistance to the Catholic Monarchs’ discriminatory politics. This brings Borges’s thought close to Oswald de Andrade’s metaphorical description of Brazilian (national) culture as a form of “(cultural) anthropophagy.”<sup>8</sup> Borges’s text also brings to mind Bakhtin’s concept of the “carnival,” although the Russian’s work was probably unknown to Borges, given his late introduction to western Europe and America.

The carnival, and the transgression it manifests, is where we most perceive the need to analyze the sign in its complimentary distribution with its users and its socio-ideological supports. Any understanding of an aesthetics of transgression is limited if it cannot account for the mechanisms by which a discourse, marked by its social users, is usurped by those who are excluded from it. Therefore, I have recently attempted (1998) to approach the problematic of the Bakhtinian *chronotopos* from a point of departure that analyzes the rules of social operation constituting all discourse, as well as their possible (ab)use or transgression by marginalized subjects. Yet this does not imply that I have overlooked memory or the collective imaginary, each of which offers equally important perspectives towards understanding all cultural practices. The continuity and spatio-temporal limits of every cultural practice—and of every literary genre as a discursive practice—are always contingent on a process of *socialization* by which the individual internalizes a “ritual” that is maintained in collective memory. The complex nexus we call *culture*

therefore embraces a psychic mechanism (in the process of internalization), a socio-political orientation (given its role in the maintenance of a *social order*), and dimensions of time and place (given that it is only fully operative in a determined *hic et nunc*). We recall that the etymology of the word "culture," like the word "cultivation," reveals the dynamic established by living traditions in an area of collective life (such as the cultivation of vineyards, coffee, or fierce bulls) and in its practices or social uses (the harvest or bull fights, for example, or the rituals of religious cults and the codes of chivalry). Once these practices are inscribed into a well defined tradition, they generate and maintain *castes* or *social subjects*, that is, clearly defined groups within the community, insofar as they distribute the "exclusive rights" to perform certain acts to specific subjects and make these privileges socially recognizable.

The premise that a complementary relationship exists between social groups and organized verbal usage largely overlaps with what is designated by the term *sociolect*, although it attempts to discover the conflictive character and social dynamic of discourse instead of merely describing it as a (purely) linguistic phenomenon. Although my conception of "group" is not identical to Marx's concept of social class, it nevertheless subscribes to the Marxist premise that society is constituted of conflicting interests. I am sure that the reader has also recognized the influence of Michel Foucault's insights into the "order of discourse" ("*l'ordre du discours*") in my theoretical approach. In the case of Foucault (as with Bakhtin), however, I have attempted to emphasize an underlying premise that he leaves insufficiently developed: that every discursive order is marked by a triple variable which is temporal (diachrony), spatial (diatopy), and social (diastraty). The mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion inherent in every discursive formation take root in this triple variable, as does the consequent distribution of a hierarchical order—and *every* social order is hierarchical—among the subjects that constitute the social body. In his concept of *episteme*, Foucault privileges the diachronic over the diatopic dimension of discourse—which is perhaps due to an (unconscious) Eurocentrism—and leaves undeveloped the conflictive character implied by social hierarchization that is the diastratic dimension of discourse. Foucault gives the social dynamic secondary importance in his study of the triple variable defining discourse as the conjunction of a subject, an object, and the circumstances of enunciation, or, in his words, as the "privileged or exclusive right of the subject," "the taboo of the object," and "the ritual of circumstance" which together mark the "external limits" of discourse (38-39). It is precisely this socio-historical dynamic that Bakhtin's concept of "carnival," so often misinterpreted, allows us to understand.

Bakhtin's concept of carnival reveals the possibility of opposing the event to the system, the act (of writing or reading) to tradition and actual use to the norm. It is instrumental to his primary concerns with

historic processes, change, and the consequent aesthetic (and social) effects that the tension between norm and transgression produces in every speech act and text that is not a purely mimetic reproduction of a model of verbal usage. Irony, parody, “carnivalesque” subversion—in the wide sense of the term developed by Bakhtin—as well as every use and abuse of what Bakhtin calls the “word of the other” (*chuschaia riech*), can only be grasped within a socio-historical process of signification. These (ab)uses simultaneously disrupt the system’s rigidity and notions of pure creative subjectivism precisely because they are socio-historical semiotic games that address both the history of the implied verbal sign and its legitimate users within a given society. The passage from the epic to the novel as it is presented in *Don Quixote* offers a brief example of this discursive subversion. Although Bakhtin considers *Don Quixote* only insofar as it is a precursor to the polyphonic novel, I believe that Cervantes’s work also presents the transition from the epic to the novel exactly as Bakhtin himself describes this passage in *The Dialogic Imagination*. Bakhtin defines the *chronotopos* of the chivalric novel as “a miraculous world in the time of adventure,” and describes its hero as follows: “His lineage is miraculous, as are the conditions of his birth, his childhood, his youth, his physique, and so forth. He is flesh of the flesh and bone of the bone of this miraculous world, its best representative” (154).

Bakhtin circumscribes the chivalric *chronotopos* within the mark of a mythic past that defines the epic genre and its hero as distant in time and space from the story teller and his audience. The epic narrative accentuates the inaccessibility of its hero, as admirable as he is inimitable, because his universe has nothing in common with the quotidian experience shared by its readers or auditors. Bakhtin further claims that “to portray an event on the same time-and-value plane as oneself and one’s contemporaries (and an event that is therefore based on personal experience and thought) is to undertake a radical revolution and to step out of the world of epic into the world of the novel” (14). Cervantes takes this step, confronting the epic-chivalric dreams of his conflicted hero to fictional characters that share the same time, space, and social conditions as his readers. Ironic distance destroys epic distance. But epic distance effects social values as well as the temporal and spatial dimensions of narrative. The grotesque contrast between the world of chivalry books, *Don Quixote* enacts in his speech and gestures, as well as the very armor he wears, and his contemporaries’ horizon of expectations—priests, barbers, laborers, merchants, and prostitutes—not only demythologizes the chivalric hero, but also denounces and demystifies the social order resting on the feudal collective imaginary. Given that this imaginary produces books of chivalry, which nourish it in turn, the reduction of its values to grotesque representations affects the very bases of that mentality and its social order. This is precisely how certain literary practices (and cultural practices more generally) can influence social practices

such as word and gesture and, through these, intervene into the collective imaginary.

Borges understood this dimension of Cervantes's text. In "Pierre Menard, Author of *Don Quixote*," Borges presents a doubly mimetic reproduction of Cervantes's novel. We recall that Pierre Menard goes to great lengths to express himself as the original author without copying or transcribing him *per se*, learning seventeenth century Spanish, recuperating the Catholic faith and appropriating the most minute details of Cervantes's idiolect and style. It is impossible to overlook the parallel between these (utopian) efforts and those of *Don Quixote* himself, whose pathologically deformed reading of chivalric novels motivates him to adopt the archaic Spanish that will make possible his anachronic epic project. Moreover, Borges's reading of *Don Quixote* follows Cervantes's reading of chivalric novels to the letter. Just as Pierre Menard's transhistoric homosemanticism converts him into the *Don Quixote* of our own time, Borges's role as this story's narrator converts him into the second Pierre Menard that he claims is a necessary condition for the detailed reconstruction of the steps taken by the first Pierre Menard. This relation between Borges and the second Pierre Menard reminds us of the relation that Cervantes establishes between himself and the (alleged) author of *Don Quixote*, Cidi Amete Benengeli. Neither of these mimetic readings is purely innocent, since both create an ironic distance capable of desecrating their respective texts' productive processes and the genres they represent. García-Márquez adopts a similar strategy in *The Autumn of the Patriarch* when he imagines the arrival of Columbus to the New World, opposing historic to contemporary indigenous perspectives of this first contact in a deliberate, studied anachronism that has the "Indians" speak twentieth century Spanish (noticing the difference between "el mar," and "la mar," and between "javelins," and "harpoons"), and places a U. S. Navy battleship alongside Columbus's caravels. By incorporating literal citations from Columbus's *Navigation Journal*, García-Márquez parodies the Admiral's Adamic position, discussed above, and poignantly questions European attitudes towards colonization:

Y por fin encontró quien le contara la verdad mi general, que habían llegado unos forasteros que parloteaban en lengua ladina pues no decían el mar sino la mar y llamaban papagayos a las guacamayas, almadías a los cayucos y azagayas a los arpones, y que habiendo visto que salíamos a recibirlos nadando en torno de sus naves se encarapitaron en los palos de la arboladura y se gritaban unos a otros que mirad qué bien hechos, de muy fermosos cuerpos y muy buenas caras, y los cabellos gruesos y casi como sedas de caballos, y habiendo visto que estábamos pintados para no despellejarnos con el sol se alborotaban como cotorras mojadas gritando que mirad que de ellos se pintan de prieto, y

ellos son de la color de los canarios, ni blancos ni negros, y dellos de lo que haya. (44-45)

and finally he found someone to tell him the truth general sir, that some strangers had arrived who gabbled in funny old talk because they made the word for sea feminine, and not masculine, the called macaws poll parrots, canoes rafts, harpoons javelins, and when they saw us going out to greet them and swim around their ships they climbed up onto the yardarms, and shouted to each other look there how well-formed, of beauteous body, and fine face, and thick-haired, and almost like horsehair silk, and when they saw that we were painted so as not to get sunburned they got all excited like wet little parrots, and shouted look there how they daub themselves gray, and they are the hue of canary birds, not white not yet black, and what there be of them, and we didn't understand why the hell the were making so much fun of us general sir. (41)

In *The Harp and the Shadow*, Alejo Carpentier takes excerpts from Columbus's *Navigation Journal*, presents them in a tone that is particular to the language of the Roman Curia and, through this mimetic writing, parodies the ideals of that Curia and the languages it uses. The "gesture" of "the greatest event witnessed by man since the world had received the Christian faith" (16; 7) is thus profaned. This is also the case with the "hero," "Christo-phoros," who is reduced to a "Genoan sailor" who will finally confess, in a grotesque and anachronic posthumous dialogue with his colleague and fellow Genoan, Andrea Doria, that he was "turned down" for canonization ("Me tumbaron") (199-204; 155-58). The ritual (and canonical) procedures are the primary object of a *prise de conscience* that denounces them through the ironic distance evident in the many indirect free style citations punctuating Carpentier's novel. In *El recurso del método* Carpentier satirizes Cartesian rationalism, converting it into an unscrupulous Latin American dictator's instrument of power, and distances himself from both logical (European) thought and the autobiographical organization of Descartes's testimonial narrative, *Discours de la méthode*. In *Pantaleón y las visitadoras*; Mario Vargas Llosa mocks the language of the military and its most modern and efficient administration. Similarly, in *Boquitas pintadas*, Manuel Puig reduces the "representation" of communication in various "media" to a farcical instrument by which some individuals deceive others as well as themselves, while in *La traición de Rita Hayworth* he gives a grotesque echo of Hollywood's model lifestyle and idealized mode of verbal expression.

Contemporary thought on Latin America has repeatedly attempted to define its "spirit," either in its totality or in the selected

characteristics of an individual country or region. Since independence this has been one of the principal orienting tasks of philosophical essays which could generally be defined as a series of variations on the theme of identity. Now, while these identity discourses attempt to define a characteristic difference or specificity, they nevertheless imply a more dominant argument in (apologetic) defense of an (ideological) position that articulates "(Hegelian) universal" values. In this way, the stereotypes projected by hegemonic (colonial) thought onto the "Other" become present to the dissenting discourses of (counter) argumentation.

An example of this form of argumentation is found in the contemporary essays on Latin American identity that "respond" to Hegel's classic "accusations" about the (geographic and human) characteristics of America and its inhabitants. In his *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der [Welt]Geschichte*, Hegel states that the American subcontinent and its great valleys "are not apt to become cultured countries" ["sie bilden große Täler, die aber nicht zu Kulturländern geeignet sind" (108)] and that the Mexican and Peruvian indigenous cultures were "primarily natural, and therefore had to expire upon their first contact with the Spirit" ["Von Amerika und seiner Kultur, namentlich in Mexiko und Perú, haben wir zwar Nachrichten, aber bloß die, daß dieselbe eine ganz natürliche war, die untergehen mußte, sowie der Geist sich ihr näherte" (107)]. This "necessity" responds to the "physical and mental impotence" of America's aboriginal people ["Physisch und geistig ohnmächtig hat sich Amerika immer gezeigt und zeigt sich noch so" (108)], who are naturally inferior, "even in stature" [Die Inferiorität dieser Individuen in jeder Rücksicht, selbst in Hinsicht der Größe, gibt sich in allen zu erkennen (109)], and whose "condition" is the principal reason for "Negroes having been brought to America" ["Die Schwäche des amerikanischen Naturells war ein Hauptgrund dazu, die Neger nach Amerika zu bringen" (109)].

In fact, Hegel's remarks about the "New World" are merely a brief *excursus* in his Eurocentric work—"The World is divided into *Old* and *New*; the name of the *New* having originated in the fact that America and Australia have only lately become known to us [*sic!*]" (107; 80)—and he claims to enter the "scene of the World's History" ["Schauplatze der Weltgeschichte"] only when his discussion passes from the New World to the Old: "Dismissing, then, the New World and the dreams to which it may give rise, we pass over to the Old World—the scene of the World's History" (115; 87).

The haunting presence of Hegel in contemporary Latin American identity discourse introduces a very particular case study of reception. My aim is not to demonstrate this by seeking out explicit citations of Hegel's work (which are also present) in the essays of thinkers such as Vasconcelos, Zea or even Enrique Dussel (despite the expressed intention to show the opposite), but by its presence in the discursive construction of the Latin American identity. Unlike the marginalized

individual or group's subversion of ritual discourse in Imperial Spain, a tradition that runs from the anonymous author of *Lazarillo de Tormes* and Cervantes to Inca Garcilaso and Guamán Poma and through to the contemporary Latin American novel, several essays which construct arguments "in defense" of a given mark of identity uncritically adopt epistemological principles and "discursive calques" from the hegemonic discourse, as Mercedes F. Durán-Cogan demonstrates in Chapter 3. Every defense must give proper attention to the terms of the accusation in order to prepare an adequate response, permitting the prosecution to set the terms for the trial itself. This reality perhaps explains the frequent presence in Latin American identity discourses of relative terms such as "civilization" and "progress" vs. "barbarism," or "logic" and (Cartesian) "rationalism" vs. "myth," or "real" vs. "magical," or of combined terms such as "magical realism." The discourse of defense thus becomes a discursive calque of the discourse of accusation. Although it may adopt the opposite argument by necessity, the defense often reproduces the scheme of the prosecution's argument—occasionally borrowing from its texts—without implementing any changes other than the inversion of a positive into a negative construction. This discursive necessity constitutes a paradox that is especially conflictive in the case of Latin America and its identity discourses: an identity which defines itself as "different" from the European one must nevertheless construct that difference on the basis of European models of expression. The fact that this model is precisely Hegel's *Philosophy of History* is at once a necessity and a contradiction: the paradigm of a rational paradox.

## Notes

1. The national mint stamped the words "Francisco Franco Caudillo de España por la Gracia de Dios" on every national coin.
2. Two weeks after Franco declared victory over the Spanish Republic, Pope Pius XII confirmed the Franquista claim that the Spaniards were in fact "God's chosen people": "La nación elegida de Dios como principal instrumento de evangelización del nuevo mundo y baluarte inexpugnable de la fe católica acaba de dar a los precursores del ateísmo materialista de nuestro siglo la prueba más excelsa de que, por encima de todo, están los valores de la Religión y del espíritu" (April 16, 1939).
3. I have listed page references in parentheses after the text for both original citations, and previous translations. Existing translations may have been modified; unless otherwise noted, translations are my own [Translator's note].
4. This is the title of MARGES's third collective volume, forthcoming in the *Cotextes* collection published by the Centre d'Études et de Recherches Sociocritiques in Montpellier, France.
5. The authority of philological knowledge during the European Renaissance roughly corresponds to that of the "native speaker" in today's linguistics.
6. Cf. *El Padre las Casas y Vitoria . . .* Summarizing the first essay of this book ("Vitoria y Las Casas") Menéndez Pidal points out that "We have shown what these two illustrious Dominicans thought of Spain's activities in America. On the one

hand, the, andalusian Las Casas, of an intelligence limited by his passionately blinded heart, a tireless writer of thousands of pages, pretentious, in a hurry to publish his views in the various works published in Sevilla. . . . On the other hand, Vitoria, that old Castilian, modest, silent, and whose contemporaries regretted his being an enemy of writing in spite of his prodigious intellectual qualities." (36) In the second essay ("Una norma anormal del Padre Las Casas"), Menéndez Pidal simply eliminates the *mentor* of the *Leyenda negra* by declaring him mad: "Exaggeration is contempt of truth, and unbridled, habitual, and irrepressible exaggeration is contempt with pathological tendencies. Las Casas, while deploying monstrous quantitative hyperboles, reaches an extreme qualitative exaggeration." (42). Even if the conclusion of this syllogism is not explicit, it is clear that the modifier *perturbado*, later attributed to Las Casas, is the consequence of this argument. See Gómez-Moriana 1993b: 121-23.

7. "The term calque is taken from interlinguistics, where semantic calque indicates the type of lexical construction adopted by one language from another through the translation of its components. The Spanish words *balompié* or *baloncesto* are semantic calques of the corresponding English words football, and basketball. By analogy, discursive calque stands for the adoption of one or more discursive practices by a text in the strategic ordering of its components" (Gómez-Moriana 1993b: 14) [translator's note].

8. Oswald de Andrade introduces this metaphor in 1928 with the "Manifesto of Anthropophagy" and develops it more fully in an essay from 1950 entitled "The Crisis of Messianic Philosophy" ("A crise da filosofia messianica").

## Works Cited

- Andrade, Oswald de. *Do Pau-Brasil a antropofagia e as utopias*. 1950. Rio de Janeiro: Civilizaçao Brasileira, 1978.
- Angenot, Marc. *Les idéologies du ressentiment*. Montreal: XYZ, 1996.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *The Dialogic Imagination*. 1924. Ed. Michael Holquist. Trans. Carly Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. *Discusión*. Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1964.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Pierre Menard, autor del *Quijote*." In *Ficciones*. Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1974.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Choses dites*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1987.
- Carpentier, Alejo. *El arpa y la sombra*. México: Siglo veintiuno editores, 1980. [English: *The Harp and the Shadow*. San Francisco: Mercury House, 1990].
- Chanady, Amaryll, ed. *Latin American Identity and Construction of Difference*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1994.
- Colón, Cristóbal. *Diario de navegación*. 1492. In Fernández de Navarrete, *Colección de los viajes y descubrimientos que hicieron por mar los españoles desde fines del siglo XV*. Madrid: Atlas 1954 (Biblioteca de Autores Españoles: 75). 86-166. [English: *The Four Voyages of Christopher Columbus*, ed. and trans. by J.M. Cohen. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969].
- \_\_\_\_\_. Carta a Luis de Santángel de 15 de febrero de 1493. Ibidem. 167-70.
- Cruz, Sor Juana Inés de la. "Respuesta de la poetisa á la muy ilustre Sor Philotea de la Cruz." 1691. In *Fama, y obras póstumas del fénix de México, dézima musa, poetisa americana, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz* . . . Facsimile of the Madrid edition (Imprenta de Antonio González de Reyes, 1714) by Fredo Arias de la Canal. México: Frente de Afirmación Hispanista (1989): 114-66.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*. Trans. G. Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1974.

- Donoso Cortés, Juan. *Obras completas*, ed. Juan Juretschke. Madrid: La Editorial Católica, 1946. (*Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos*).
- Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, Gonzalo. *Historia general y natural de las Indias*. 1535-1547. Madrid: Atlas, 1959. (*Biblioteca de Autores Españoles*: 117-21).
- Foucault, Michel. *L'ordre du discours*. París: Gallimard, 1971.
- García Canclini, Néstor. *Culturas híbridas. Estrategias para entrar y salir de la modernidad*. México: Grijalbo, 1989.
- García-Márquez, Gabriel. *El otoño del Patriarca*. Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 1975. [English: *The Autumn of the Patriarch*. New York: Harper & Row, 1976].
- Garcilaso de la Vega, Inca. *La Florida del Inca*. 1605. Ed. Sylvia L. Hilton. Madrid: Historia 16, 1986. [English: *The Florida of the Inca*, eds. and trans. John Grier Varner, and Jeannette Johnson Varner. Austin: U of Texas P, 1951].
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Comentarios reales*. 1609. In *Obras completas del Inca Garcilaso de la Vega*, ed. Carmelo Sáenz. Madrid: Atlas, 1960. (*Biblioteca de Autores Españoles*: 134-37). Vols. 2-4.
- Goldman, Lucian. *Sociologie de la littérature*. Bruselas: Éditions de l'Institut de Sociologie de l'Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1975.
- Gómez-Moriana, Antonio. *La Subversion du discours rituel*. Longueuil (Québec): Les Éditions du Préambule, 1985.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Pragmática del discurso y reciprocidad de perspectivas. Los juramentos de Juan Haldudo (*Quijote I*, 4) y de Don Juan." *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica* 36 (1988): 1045-1067.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Narration and Argumentation in the Chronicles of the New World." In *1492-1992: Re/Discovering colonial Writing*, ed. René Jara and Nicholas Spadaccini. Minneapolis: The Prisma Institute, 1989.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Introduction. Pragmatique du discours et reciprocité de perspectives. In *Parole exclusive, parole exclue, parole transgressive. Marginalisation et marginalité dans les pratiques discursives*, ed. Antonio Gómez-Moriana and Catherine Poupene-Hart. Longueuil (Québec): Les Éditions du Préambule (1990): 11-49.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1993a). "Cómo surge una instancia discursiva: Cristóbal Colón y la invención del 'indio.'" *Filología* 26 (1993): 51-75.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1993b). *Discourse Analysis as Sociocriticism. The Spanish Golden Age*. Minneapolis-London: U of Minnesota P, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1993c). "Christophe Colomb et l'invention de l' 'Indien'." In *L'«Indien», instance discursive. Actes du Colloque de Montréal 1991*. ed. Antonio Gómez-Moriana and Danièle Trottier. Candiac (Québec): Les Éditions Balzac, 1993. 19-35.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Triple dimensionalidad del cronotopos bajtiniano: diacronía, diatopía, diastratía." *Acta Poetica* 18-19 (1998): 153-88.
- Guamán Poma de Ayala, Felipe. *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno*. 1615. Ed. John V. Murra and Rolena Adorno. México D.F.: Siglo Veintiuno, 1980.
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*. 1827-1829. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1973. [English, *The Philosophy of History*. Trans. by J. Sibree. New York: Dover Publications, 1956].
- Jákfalvi-Leiva, Susana. *Traducción, escritura y violencia colonizadora. Un estudio de la obra del Inca Garcilaso*. Syracuse: Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, 1984.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude. *La pensée sauvage*. Paris: Librairie Plon, 1962.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Tristes tropiques*. Paris: Librairie Plon, 1968.
- Lyotard, Jean-François. *La condition postmoderne*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1979.
- Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. *The Communist Manifesto*. 1848. New York: Penguin Books, 1986.

- Menéndez Pidal, Ramón. *El P. Las Casa y Vitoria. Con otros temas de los siglos XVI y XVII.* Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1958.
- Nebrija, Antonio de. *Gramática Castellana.* Facsim. of the 1492 edition by R.C. Alston. Menston: The Scholar Press, 1969.
- Rabasa, José. "'Porque soy indio': Subjectivity in *La Florida del Inca.*" *Poetics Today* 16 (1995): 79-108.
- Rodríguez-Vecchini, Hugo. "Don Quijote y La Florida del Inca." *Revista Iberoamericana* 48 (1982): 587-620.
- Zamora, Margarita. *Language, Authority and Indigenous History in the "Comentarios reales de los incas."* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988.



## Chapter 5

# Latin American Silver and the Early Globalization of World Trade

Dennis O. Flynn and Arturo Giraldez

The birth of world trade has been described by C.R. Boxer in the following terms:

Only after the Portuguese had worked their way down the West African coast, rounded the Cape of Good Hope, crossed the Indian Ocean and established themselves in the Spice Islands of Indonesia and on the shore of the South China Sea; only after the Spaniards had attained the same goal by way of Patagonia, the Pacific Ocean and the Philippines—then and only then was a regular and lasting maritime connection established between the four great continents. (1969, 17)

Boxer did not pick a specific date for the birth of global trade, but his logic leads us to choose 1571—the year the city of Manila was founded. Manila was the crucial entrepot linking substantial, direct, and continuous trade between America and Asia for the first time in human history.

Global trade emerged when all important, populated continents began to exchange products continuously—both with each other directly and indirectly via other continents—and in values sufficient to generate crucial impacts on all the trading partners. Since there had been no direct trade link between America and Asia prior to 1571, the world market was not yet fully coherent or complete. To understand the global significance of the direct Pacific trade between America

and Asia, it is useful first to discuss the underlying economic forces that motivated profitable world trade in the early modern period. The single product most responsible for the birth of world trade was silver. More than the market for any other commodity, the silver market explains the emergence of world trade. China was the dominant buyer of silver. On the supply side, Spanish America (Mexico and Peru) erupted with an unprecedented production of the white metal. Conservative official estimates indicate that Latin America alone produced about 150,000 tons of silver between 1500 and 1800 (Barrett 1990, 237), perhaps exceeding 80 percent of the entire world production over that time span (Cross 1983, 397).

Despite America's dominance in silver production over three centuries, Japan may have been the primary exporter of silver to China in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, shipping probably close to 200 tons per year at times. According to the calculations of Barrett, Japan may have produced about 30 percent of the world's silver in the sixteenth century and around 16 percent in the seventeenth century:

The amount of Japanese silver pouring into foreign trade in the heyday of Japan's overseas trade between 1615 and 1625 (through Japanese, Chinese, Dutch, Portuguese and other ships) reached tremendous value, estimated at roughly 130,000-160,000 kilograms (equal to 30 percent or 40 percent of the total world silver production outside of Japan). This explains why European and Asian merchants were so enthusiastic about developing trade with Japan. (Iwao 1976, 10) Although Japanese silver exports fell off dramatically in the second half of the seventeenth century (Innes 1980, chap. 6), the central point of our argument is simply that all the great silver mines in both hemispheres sold ultimately to China. (1990, 225)

We intentionally emphasize the role of China—and its tributary system (Hamashita 1988)—in the silver trade because scholarly literature in general has neglected this pivotal country, and certainly in terms of recognizing China as a prime causal actor. The extant literature on New World treasure is huge and multi-faceted, but it is unified in one central respect: it focuses virtually exclusively on Europe as the fulcrum. Europe is considered the epicenter of early modern commercial activity. Europe's Dutch and English East India Companies, for example, are often viewed as prototypes of the modern multinational corporation. Scholarly literature recognizes that huge quantities of silver flowed to Asia, of course, but this phenomenon is treated as a reflection of Europe's balance-of-trade deficit with East Asia.<sup>1</sup> Europeans developed a far more enthusiastic taste for Asian finery than the other way around, according to conventional wisdom, which is alleged to have caused treasure to flow

from West to East to pay for Europe's trade deficit. In short, all the key issues are normally framed in terms of European perspectives.

Acceptance of a global perspective in place of the predominant Eurocentric view outlined above yields a startlingly different view. It becomes clear that Europeans did indeed play an important role in the birth of world trade, but their role was as middlemen in the vast silver trade. Europeans were prime movers neither on the supply side (except Spain in America), nor on the demand side of the worldwide silver market. They were instead mostly intermediaries in the trade between the New World and China, as well as between Japan and China. Massive amounts of silver traversed the Atlantic. Artur Attman (1986, 6) conservatively estimates that 150 tons of silver passed through Europe into Asia on an annual basis. Attman emphasized that his estimates include only specie shipments (meaning bullion is excluded from consideration) and that he had studied only port records (meaning overland trade is excluded). If Attman had included bullion shipments through ports, as well as specie and bullion shipments over land routes, his estimate of West-to-East silver flows would obviously have been far greater.

The Pacific leg of the China trade has not received the attention it deserves. Writing about the period 1571-1620, TePaske states that an enormous quantity of silver passed over the Pacific, especially out of Acapulco and through Manila on its way to China. In fact, at the opening of the seventeenth century the drain of pesos from Mexico to the Asian mainland through the Philippines was estimated at 5 million pesos [128 tons] annually, with a reported 12 million pesos [307 tons] being smuggled out in 1597 (TePaske 1981, 436). These are shocking figure because this alleged average of 5 million pesos over the Pacific, at the turn of the century, is 85 percent of the 150 tons (minimum) that Attman says was shipped via Europe to Asia on an annual basis. Moreover, the 12 million pesos for 1597 is more than double Attman's estimate for the entire European leg of the journey of silver to China. These may seem like fantastic figures to some, but Barrett (1990, 236) has pointed out a glaring discrepancy between Spanish American production figures and estimated exports to Europe, with production exceeding exports by 5.5 million pesos (135 tons) per year. Barrett reasons that this 5.5 million pesos surplus must have either remained in America or have been exported through the Philippines. Cross (1983, 420) talks of a vast smuggling trade in the sixteenth century: "Quantities of silver left the New World through the ports of Buenos Aires and Sacramento and through the Manila Galleons. At the peak of these activities, perhaps as much as 6 million pesos per year (159,000 kg), or half the output of Peru, was diverted to these channels from the Seville trade." It will become clear shortly that exportation of such a vast amount of silver through Manila and other channels makes little sense in global terms, while its retention in the New World makes little sense in terms of the global marketplace.

How have Asian scholars perceived the Philippines trade? Using the Blair and Robertson collection of primary sources, Chuan (1969, 79) has estimated that at least 50 tons of silver (2 million pesos) passed over the Pacific annually throughout the seventeenth century. In other words, silver shipments did not decline slightly after 1620 and precipitously after 1640, as was previously argued by Chaunu (1960, 250). Chaunu's conclusions were based on study of the *almojarifazgo* duties, which applied to only the taxed portion of the trade. It is widely recognized that smuggling was characteristic of commerce passing through Manila, however, and sources from the Asian side of the Pacific provide much larger estimates of silver exports than Chaunu's misleading numbers suggest (Flynn and Giraldez, 1994 and 1995). How significant were 50 tons in relative terms? In the seventeenth century, fifty tons of silver equaled the average annual exports to Asia by Portugal and the Dutch and English East India Companies combined (Flynn and Giraldez, 1994). Fifty tons of silver was also the amount shipped through the entire Baltic trade (the Russian and Polish-Lithuanian markets), according to Attman (1986, 81). It is instructive to compare the historiographic notoriety of the Portuguese trade, in combination with that of the East India Companies, with the relative anonymity of the Manila galleons on the Pacific side: each may have shipped approximately equal quantities of silver annually, yet the Pacific trade is rarely acknowledged.

Manila served no purpose other than the trade in silver and silk. Yet, Manila's population circa 1650 is estimated at 42,000 inhabitants (including about 15,000 Chinese, 7,350 Spaniards, and 20,240 Filipinos), approximately the same total population as Barcelona, Danzig, Marseille, and other cities with more broadly based economies (Phelan 1959, 178; Mols 1977, 42-43; De Vries 1984, app. I). Silver's Pacific route to China was Spain's only avenue for entry into the lucrative Asian marketplace because trade out of Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was controlled first by the Portuguese and later by the Dutch. Spain's Manila galleons initiated the birth of Pacific Rim trade more than 425 years ago.

Widespread Eurocentric views predispose many to assume that the East India companies injected dynamism into backward Asian economies in the early modern period. Recent scholarship (Hamashita 1988, Marks 1997, and von Glahn 1996, for example) suggests that the European companies simply plugged into the pre-existing network of intra-Asian trade. The export of Japanese silver provides a good example of this process. As was the case in the West-to-East trade, first the Portuguese—in competition with Chinese junks and Japanese red-seal ships, and after 1639 with the Dutch—played the role of intermediaries in this crucial Sino-Japanese trade. Within Asia's marketplace, the European role is again most accurately portrayed as that of middlemen, not prime mover. Europeans were important, but potentially disposable intermediaries who could

be—and in the case of the expulsion of the Portuguese from Japan in 1637, were—replaced at the convenience of Asian trading powers.

The early modern production and distribution of silver in the western hemisphere has been studied extensively, but the world's biggest end customer, China, is routinely eliminated from the story. This is most peculiar. Today, no scholar would think of analyzing the world's oil industry without paying considerable attention to the major oil importing industrial regions. Arguably, China's dominance as an importer of silver was at least as pivotal during the birth of world trade as is, in today's global marketplace, the industrialized world's dominance as importers of oil. Godinho (1963, 432-65) aptly describes China as a "suction pump" (*bomba aspirante*), a "vacuum cleaner" that attracted silver globally for centuries. Yet surprisingly few scholars have continued to investigate the nature of China's metamorphosis into a seemingly bottomless silver sink; Atwell (1977, 1982, 1986, 1988) provides perhaps the most consistent exception to this bias.

The market value of silver in Ming territory was double its value elsewhere. This fact is reflected in the bimetallic ratios reported in Chuan (1969, 2): "from 1592 to the early seventeenth century gold was exchanged for silver in Canton at the rate of 1: 5.5 to 1: 7, while in Spain the exchange rate was 1: 12.5 to 1: 14, thus indicating that the value of silver was twice as high in China as in Spain." According to Richard von Glahn (1996, 127) "the gold/silver ratio hovered around 1: 12 in Europe, 1: 10 in Persia, and 1: 8 in India." Divergent bimetallic ratios created tremendous prospects for profitable arbitrage trade. Economic theory predicts that gold should have flowed out of China, where it was undervalued relative to the rest of the world, in exchange for Japanese and western silver, which was relatively overvalued in China compared with the rest of the world. This is precisely what happened from the middle of the sixteenth to the middle of the seventeenth century (Chaudhuri 1978, 1986; Flynn 1986).

It is crucial to focus on silver to understand the underlying motivation of world trade: it was the high value of silver inside China that created the opportunities for profit around the globe. Rather than explaining the West-to-East flow of silver as a reaction to Europe's trade deficit with Asia, we contend that the cause of the silver trade centered in China and its tributary system. Demand-side causation was of Asian origin, to which the rest of the world reacted. Europe was not the causal center in early modern trade; moreover, the East-versus-West "trade imbalance" was not the mechanism driving world trade. There was no "trade imbalance" for which to compensate, so long as we recognize that silver itself was the key commodity distributed globally and that it was exchanged for items—mostly silk and porcelain, but also gold—from the Asian mainland. Causation was located in the silver market itself, with America and Japan anchoring the supply side and China dominating the demand side.

China's metamorphosis from a paper-money system (dating at least from the eleventh century) to a silver-based economy was crucial. Over-issue of paper money in China had reduced the value of this fiduciary medium to virtually nothing by the middle of the fifteenth century (Gernet 1982, 415). Daily commerce required a medium of exchange to replace the worthless paper money, and silver evolved as the metal of choice. Along with gold, copper coinage was a candidate for monetary preeminence. Geiss explains how silver defeated copper, in a passage worth quoting at length:

The value of the coin lay in the metal, not in the mint. In that respect copper coins were hardly different from silver; each was valued as a piece of precious metal. While silver could, if necessary, be assayed for purity, copper coins could not. To assay a copper coin entailed its destruction. The only way to ascertain the copper content was to melt the coin, and this would defeat the purpose of coining money. But with coins of varying weight and metallic content in circulation, setting a price in copper coins became a tricky business. The rice merchant would have to specify what kind of copper coin he had in mind, each had a different value in the marketplace, and the price of the merchant's rice depended on the type of coin offered in payment. How much simpler to set the price in silver, and that in fact is what happened. Silver came to be the preferred medium of valuation and exchange. (1979, 155)

Geiss' explanation is compelling. Silver's gradual "conquest" of the Chinese economy may seem relatively innocuous to some at first glance, but this development fundamentally altered the direction of international commerce. It also influenced the structure of power among nations throughout the world.

The Ming tried repeatedly to retard the intrusion of silver into (and from) the coastal centers of merchant power. Silver's penetration was irresistible, however, and local governments in maritime regions began specifying that taxes be paid in silver. Gradually Ming rulers abandoned their resistance to silver and implemented the Single-Whip tax system around the 1570s (Huang 1974; Liang 1970). The Single-Whip system specified two things: first, myriad existing national levies were consolidated into a single tax; second, all tax payments were to be made in the form of silver. Considering that China contained perhaps one-fourth of the earth's population by the seventeenth century, with urban centers of up to 1 million inhabitants (five to seven times greater than the largest cities in western Europe), the "silverization" of China inevitably had global ramifications. Conversion of the world's largest economic entity to silver caused the metal's value to skyrocket in China relative to the rest of the world. Moreover, because of China's extensive tributary system, domestic

silverization created a ripple effect reaching far beyond Chinese borders. Takeshi Hamashita summarizes this relationship:

The entire tribute and interregional trade zone had its own structural rules that exercised a systematic control through silver circulation and with the Chinese tribute trade at the center. This system, encompassing East and Southeast Asia was articulated with neighboring trade zones such as India, the Islamic region and Europe. (1994, 97)

The early-modern world silver trade involved structural transformations. The process yielded prodigious profits for key individuals and institutions. From mines in the Andes and Japan to the streets of China, profit was the motive force at each stage of the trade. European middlemen profited mightily from intercontinental trade and perhaps even more from the inter-Asian trade linkages, but the truly grand profiteers in the silver saga were those entities that controlled the centers of production: Imperial Spain and the Tokugawa Shogunate. The silver trade may have contributed indirectly to the overthrow of the Ming dynasty (Goldstone, 1991, Chapter 4; Flynn and Giraldez, 1995b). The richest silver mine in the history of the world was discovered at more than 15,000 feet altitude in the Andes in Potosí (present day Bolivia), a one-way journey of two and a half months via pack animal from Lima. Nothing grew at that altitude, so there was no population at the time silver was discovered in 1545. During the ensuing sixty years, Potosí's population swelled to 160,000, almost equal to that of London or Paris (de Vries 1984, app. I).

Potosí's Cerro Rico (rich mountain) may have produced 60 percent of all the silver mined in the world in the second half of the sixteenth century. Cross states that "despite the decline of Potosí, beginning in the 1640s, the viceroyalty of Peru accounted for 80 percent of the world's silver production in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries." (1983, 404) In addition to naturally bountiful deposits, a series of new production technologies were introduced by the Viceroy Francisco de Toledo, including the mercury-amalgamation "patio process," construction of water mills, and creation of the "mita" (an indigenous system of forced labor): "Supplemented with gold from Colombia, the mines of Mexico and Peru yielded quantities of bullion greater than the world had ever seen" (Cross, 403). The Crown directly controlled the famous mercury mines near Huancavelica on the Peruvian coast. This supply-side phenomenon in Spanish America was particularly fortuitous because it coincided chronologically with the extraordinary rise in the value of silver caused by the Chinese demand-side forces culminating in the Single-Whip tax reform. The combination of low supply-side production costs in Spanish America, along with powerful Chinese-led

demand-side pressure on silver's value in Asia, generated probably the most spectacular mining boom in human history.

No entity reaped greater rewards from the silver industry than did the Spanish Crown, which wisely allowed certain "private sector" entrepreneurs to operate New World mines, rather than attempting to do so itself. The most famous tax was the *quinto*, a 20 percent severance tax on gross value, but there were many indirect taxes as well (for discussion of the *quinto*, which frequently amounted to far less than 20 percent, see Brading and Cross, 1972). According to Hamilton (1934, 34), 27.5 percent of total registered precious metals entering Seville between 1566 and 1645 belonged to the Crown of Castile. These external revenues were crucial for the Crown. Spain was a small country of perhaps 7.5 million inhabitants, about half the population of France in the middle of the sixteenth century (Elliott 1961, 57). Elliott has described Castile of 1600 as "an economy closer in many ways to that of an East European state like Poland, exporting basic raw materials and importing luxury products, than to the economies of West European states" (1961, 291). Many historians classify Spain as backward domestically, substantiating the observation that the financial foundation of the Spanish Empire was based on resources outside the Iberian peninsula, the fundamental ones being the silver mines of Peru and Mexico. Mine profits were enormous, and there was no comparable profit center elsewhere. Spanish imperialism "was financed out of the resources of America and of Castile which had itself received regular injections of silver from the silver-mines of the New World" (Elliott 1977, 291).

Too much attention has been paid to the quantities of silver entering Spain. The important thing was not so much the amount of silver secured by the Spanish Crown, but its purchasing power. The statement that Spanish or European prices—in silver-content terms—rose three or four-fold during the "long" sixteenth century simply means that silver coins fell in value to one-third or one-fourth of their previous level. Comparing the Spanish Crown's silver imports during the interval 1591-1595, with imports for the interval 1596-1600, for example, Hamilton (1934, 34) found that the Crown's silver imports increased in quantity by 9.5 percent, from 10.023 million pesos to 10.974 million pesos. Since Spanish prices (in silver-content terms) simultaneously rose 12.85 percent between these two periods, however, inflation-adjusted Crown receipts actually fell over 3 percent (Hamilton 1934, 403). The Crown received roughly 10 percent more silver, in other words, but each piece of silver received had lost 13 percent of its purchasing power. The Crown had collected almost a million more pesos in nominal terms during the 1596-1600 interval, but the total purchasing power of that greater quantity of silver fell by more than a quarter of a million pesos (Flynn 1982, 142).

Decline in the purchasing power of Crown silver continued into the first half of the seventeenth century, at a time when the quantity of official, taxable silver imports also declined. Antonio Dominguez

Ortiz reports that this was devastating in terms of the fiscal viability of the Royal Treasury:

Having mentioned the violent causes for the decrease in the arrival of precious metals, we should make reference to other causes which are less apparent but more important because they are continuous and profound. One which is not usually mentioned, although it is among the most important, is the decline in buying power of silver; the enormous amounts of this metal that had arrived in Europe had satiated to some extent, the tremendous scarcity that at the beginning of the Modern Age had been felt in precious metals. (1960, 284)

Mark Steele has documented the systematic impact of silver's declining value (otherwise known as "silver-content price inflation") on the reduced purchasing power of Crown revenues. The famous *ad valorem* (sales) tax, the *alcabala*, was converted to a fixed-payment *encabezamiento* in 1523; by 1534 two-thirds of the tax was paid under this new system. Charles I was thereby stuck with fixed payments for a quarter-century during which time the general level of prices in Castile rose by 60 percent (Steele 1986, 146-47); in other words, the fixed *encabezamiento* had fallen over one-third in terms of purchasing power. The "bankruptcy" of 1557 resulted (an event which Steele regards as re-negotiation of terms of the debt rather than a true bankruptcy). The second *encabezamiento* in 1560—40 percent higher than the first—can be viewed as a sort of medium-term solution to the problem of silver's falling value, but again it remained fixed for many years while price inflation continued to eat away at Crown revenues. The third *encabezamiento* was instituted in 1575, during a year of real fiscal bankruptcy, but that amount was cut some 30 percent in an agreement with the Cortes in 1577. Phillip II's total revenues (from all sources, including the *encabezamiento*) did indeed triple during the second half of the sixteenth century, while prices only doubled, but the costs of war continued to outstrip growth in revenue sources. The Crown's financial dilemma continued well into (and worsened during) the seventeenth century:

To bridge the deficit caused by Habsburg imperialism, the government was compelled to borrow on a grand scale. In 1557, at Philip's II accession, the Castilian national debt stood at thirty-six million ducats; in 1598, when the king died, it stood at eighty-five million. Two years after Philip's II accession, in 1623, the total public debt had risen to 112 million ducats—equivalent of at least ten years' revenue; two years after his death, in 1667, the debt stood at 180 million. This five-fold increase in a little over a century was caused in large measure by Spain's insistence on heavy military spending in the Low Countries: the periods of fastest increase

in the debt corresponded with the periods of greatest expenditure in the Netherlands. (Parker 1979, 188-89)

Similar numbers for the Crown's debt can be found in Braudel (1972, I: 53), Castillo (1963, 52) and Koenigsberger (1958, 312). Even at the apex of the influx of American treasure (the 1590s), Crown expenditures, exceeded not only the Crown's portion of the American treasure imported but the total influx of treasure to Spain, both public and private (Vilar 1974, 203).

In the absence of the "silverization" of China, it is hard to imagine how Castile could have financed simultaneous wars, spanning generations, against the Ottomans in the Mediterranean, against England, Holland, and France in Europe, in the New World, and in Asia. Even the giant Chinese market place, however, could not prop up Spain indefinitely. As tens of thousands of tons of silver accumulated on the Asian mainland, its value gradually fell there—as it had been doing for some time in the West and Japan—toward the cost of producing the white metal. Imports eventually glutted even China's vast silver market. We know that this portrayal of silver's loss of value is accurate because, by circa 1635, it took about 13 ounces of silver to buy an ounce of gold in China, while a half century earlier it had taken only 6 ounces of silver to purchase the same ounce of gold (Geiss 1979, 165).

Unavoidable structural difficulties plagued Spain's America-based economy. Decline in silver's market value not only reduced the Treasury's purchasing power, but silver's price decline also led to the elimination of mine profits for the private sector. The Crown suffered because of the declining purchasing power of its silver receipts, in other words, but private operators suffered doubly because their share of per-unit profit fell (in addition to the fact that each unit of silver was losing purchasing power). The Crown was not burdened with the additional worry of directly producing silver at a profit.

At some point in time, the price of silver must have fallen to the point that it exceeded cost of production by precisely 27.5 percent (then, later, by less than 27.5 percent). When silver's price exceeded cost of production by precisely 27.5 percent, the Crown's 27.5 percent in taxes (of gross value) would have equaled 100 percent of the economic profit yielded by the New World mining industry. With no residual profit left for private operators, subsequent reduction in silver's price must have forced private sector participants to either smuggle (to avoid Crown taxes), or cease mining activities. In response to the inevitable increase in smuggling, the Crown eventually responded by reducing its own *quinto* (normally defined as a 20 percent severance tax) to a *diezmo* (10 percent), and sometimes less. The archives and secondary literature are in fact full of anecdotal evidence suggesting increased smuggling over time, a practice that only exacerbated the Crown's financial nightmare. Contraband was present from the beginning of the silver trade, but Crown fiscal

pressure made the practice more pervasive in all the trade routes connecting America with other continents over time. Zacarias Moutoukias' work on American contraband trade is enlightening on this score. There has long been vigorous debate, of course, over the fraction of overall silver trade comprised by smuggling activity (1991). Moutoukias' study suggests that contraband trade was far more significant than is normally acknowledged.

Anecdotal evidence concerning illegal practices is abundant. In the case of a shipwreck between Cadiz and Gibraltar in 1555, for example, 150,000 pesos in treasure were officially registered, but the quantities actually recuperated from the shipwreck proved that unregistered treasure was double the declared amount. Spanish authorities were well aware of this situation, as attested in a letter from Emperor Charles V to his daughter Juana in March of 1557, where he complained about a ship carrying a large amount of undeclared treasure with the cooperation of officials at the *Casa de Contratación*. Prior to the arrival in Seville or Cadiz, fleets or single ships could and did stop over in the Azorean islands or Portuguese ports under some pretext to drop off quantities of silver (Carande 1990, T.1, 238). The Canary Islands were likewise involved in illegal trade. Nearly a century later, in 1650, Alonso Melo de la Fuente complained that "all the silver and gold that comes unregistered, usually eight times . . . goes from the merchant ships to the foreign ships that are waiting for them in the ports of Cadiz and Sanlucar . . . without paying any taxes" (quoted in Boxer 1970, 470). According to Moutoukias (1991, 339), between 1630-1640 undeclared precious metals were double the amount legally registered; smuggled treasure represented between 40 percent and 90 percent of the total treasure transported between 1650-1659; and, with respect to the Rio de la Plata, the *Navios de Registro* indicate that skippers declared only 10 percent to 20 percent of the precious metals they transported to Spain.

The two Spanish fleets that annually plied the Atlantic were the main carriers of silver in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, but American silver also found outlets outside the galleons of the Spanish Crown. European powers were engaged in active contraband trade with Spanish America during the seventeenth century, all of which implied flows of silver. One of the most important routes of illegal trade was the commercial axis between the Spanish enclave of Buenos Aires on the Rio de la Plata, and the Viceroyalty of Peru. Trade between Potosí and Buenos Aires began almost immediately upon the arrival of Spaniards. Local products—sugar from Brazil, European manufactures, and slaves introduced by the Portuguese since 1595—were all exchanged for Peruvian silver. A good example of exchange of local products stimulated by the silver trade were the four thousand cows and sixty thousand mules that were exported from Tucuman, Argentina, to Peru in the single year 1610; such figures were common in prosperous years (Helmer 1953, 206). Trade down the east side of the Andes was the so-called Back Door for the

Viceroyalty of Peru, one of the routes through which enormous quantities of silver escaped the control of Spanish kings: "During its most successful years, no less than 1-2 million pesos (roughly 25,000 to 50,000 kg) flowed illegally from the mines of Peru out through the port of Buenos Aires" (Cross 1983, 414). These totals may have equaled 15 percent to 30 percent of the silver output of Potosí. According to Moutoukias several European powers participated actively along the Rio de la Plata: "From 1648 to 1702, about 200 ships entered the Plata River without permits—of which, 129 could be verified—amounting to more than two-thirds of total Atlantic traffic (with and without authorization). Fifty per cent of them were Dutch: in order of importance, the rest were Portuguese, English, and French" (1991, 27).

Fraud was also customary within Peru. Maria Helmer mentions the practice of transporting silver to poor districts offering lower tax rates; contraband in mercury from Huancavelica was also very active. Helmer concludes that, due to tax avoidance behavior, official mercury figures cannot be used to accurately estimate mine production: "There is no way of determining the silver production that was spread over the world during the great days of Potosí" (Helmer 1953, 204-205). In addition, production of silver was sometimes stopped at an intermediate stage of refining (*piña*) so as to avoid paying the *quinto* tax, but *piñas* nonetheless circulated as currency within the viceroyalty.

Smuggling along the Pacific side of the silver trade was rampant. To discourage contraband via the Acapulco-Manila galleon route, Philip IV sent a *visitador* Pedro de Quiroga in 1635 to enforce regulations applicable to the trade, including the collection of all taxes due. The Crown strategy backfired. For two years merchants in Manila refused to send merchandise until the customary practice of permissiveness was resumed. Merchants had no choice but to refuse to comply because, by this date, payment of full taxes would have left them with negative profits. Evidently partial tax payments were judged superior to none at all, since the Crown yielded to pressure and removed Quiroga, so that business could resume on a normal basis. Solid evidence of fraud has been documented in the case of the galleon San Francisco Javier, sunk in the vicinity of Manila Bay in 1654. This ship was found to have carried 1,180,865 pesos, 228,000 of which belonged to the *situado*, and another 11,049 of which was earmarked to help with construction of a cathedral; only 418,323 pesos were registered, however, so nearly two-thirds (64.58 percent) of the treasure was unregistered contraband (Prieto Lucena 1984, 50).

Official estimates of overall trade activity via the Pacific are unreliable because of the prevalence of contraband. "That the Philippines siphoned off large sums of silver from the New World cannot be denied, but measuring that flow is virtually impossible," according to TePaske (1983, 437). Chuan (1969) has provided figures indicating that 2 million pesos annually crossed the Pacific via

the Manila Galleons throughout the entire seventeenth century. Chuan's numbers are consistent with other indicators. Since most of the seventeenth-century silver exported from Acapulco to China (via Manila) was smuggled, however, it is obviously difficult to directly document the value of the Acapulco-Manila trade. We (1996, 52-68) approached this problem indirectly by citing evidence that 2,000,000 pesos in Chinese silk crossed the Pacific annually via Manila: again, all available evidence suggests that the silk trade flourished throughout the seventeenth century. Since the Acapulco-Manila trade involved a straightforward silk-for-silver swap, the high and sustained value of silk imports into Acapulco provide strong evidence in favor of an equal value of silver exports from Mexico.

In addition to silver's falling value, rising mining costs also quickened the erosion of overall mining profits. Per-unit production costs rose as mines were deepened; deeper shafts were of course more susceptible to flooding, and myriad other production difficulties arose as veins played out. Concerted (sometimes frantic) effort was devoted to implementation of new cost-reducing production technologies in American mines, occasionally with spectacular success; still, costs ultimately crept up as readily available ore became more scarce over time. In sum, both the Crown and private operators were caught in a double squeeze; product price fell ineluctably while the cost of producing silver simultaneously rose as time marched on. Fortunately for the Crown, the enormity of demand-side forces emanating from China postponed complete elimination of above-normal silver profits until somewhere around 1640. That is, even with the advantage of augmented Chinese demand, the decline in silver's world price continued (albeit a reduced rate) until about 1640, having reduced both Crown purchasing power and overall mining profitability in the process.

It is interesting to note the years that Adam Smith, an early proponent of a cost-of-production thinking about price inflation, felt best represented the end of the Price Revolution: "Between 1630 and 1640, or about 1636, the effect of the discovery of the mines of America in reducing the value of silver, appears to have been completed, and the value of that metal seems never to have sunk lower in proportion to that of corn than it was about that time" (Smith 1776, 192). Stabilization of silver's value, in other words, implied the end of differences in bimetallic ratios around the world, and the end of the Price Revolution. Stable and even deflationary (silver content) price levels, in fact, characterized the last two-thirds of the seventeenth century throughout the world. Our contention is that Imperial Spain's deepening financial crisis was connected to the protracted fall of silver's value. At the dawn of the seventeenth century, the Spanish Crown found itself in an untenable financial position. The Crown repeatedly hit its credit limit while the purchasing power of Crown revenues continued to fall; in any case, a growing proportion of New World remittances had already been pledged by the Crown. The silver

carried by the fleets from 1638 through 1639, for example, was not enough to pay the *asentistas* and in 1640, "the gravest for the Hispanic Monarchy," these bankers provided only 6,361 escudos, in contrast with requirements of 300,000 escudos per month for troops in the Netherlands alone (Dominguez Ortiz 1977, 386). What we are suggesting is that the loss of purchasing power from the Crown's American enterprise was inevitable; moreover, the state's well documented relentless pressure for increased taxation within Castile, and elsewhere within the Empire, was—given global commitments—mandatory in order to compensate for lost external purchasing power. The Spanish European Empire finally collapsed under Philip IV (1621-1665).

According to Dominguez Ortiz, the hegemony of Spain in Europe lasted until 1618 and, although weakened, the Spanish Habsburgs did manage to remain a force with which to contend during the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648). Philip IV's accession to power, however coincided with the renewal of an expensive war with the Dutch in 1621. Spain's financial problems dated back to the sixteenth century, as Steele (1986) demonstrates, but the Empire's final debacle began in 1621 with the expiration of the Twelve Years Truce. Relentless fiscal pressure to finance renewed war ruined the Castilian economy and was a powerful contributor to political turmoil throughout the Empire.

The army of Flanders' annual expenditures alone had been running about 1.5 million ducats at the beginning of hostilities in 1621, helping to bring "the total expenditure for the year to well over 8,000,000 ducats" (Elliott 1970, 459). These additional costs were disastrous for Crown finances. Expenditures for 1622 rose to an estimated 9,161,845 ducats, but even the assembly of all possible sources enabled the Council of Finance to raise only 2,2296,500 ducats revenue up to 1626 [not counting silver from America belonging to merchants and bankers, nor the millones already assigned for particular expenditures] (Dominguez Ortiz 1960, 16). Confronting this dismaying situation, Olivares wrote a memorandum to the King in which he outlined a plan to unify various territories of the Spanish monarchy into a single administrative unit, the famous "Union de Armas" promulgated as a decree in 1626. Behind this administrative reform was the pressing need to collect higher taxes from territories of the Empire in order to finance the war in Europe. Aragón and Valencia reluctantly accepted the requirements, but the Catalans refused to increase their contribution. The meeting of the 1626 Cortes was a failure and the assembly was adjourned in 1632 without any success for the central government.

The Dutch confrontation was global. Vast sums were sent to fortresses and outposts in the Caribbean with even heavier sums remitted to the Philippines and the Moluccas. According to a Dutch source in 1630, the annual cost of Spanish defense in the East Indies was equivalent to 5,000,000 guilders (Israel 1982, 295). Expenditures

for distant fortresses and fleets obviously diverted remittances which otherwise could have helped finance the war in the Low Countries. This diversion increased pressure for fiscal contributions from Flanders, Portugal, and also Spanish America. Hapsburg Italy was an important financial source as well, but "the new resources of Spanish Italy (9.2 million ducats between 1631 and 1643) could not compensate for the fall in the financial power of Castile" (Parker 1972, 157). In other words, despite partial success in spreading taxes more uniformly through the Empire, Castile was left to shoulder the main financial burden itself.

The war with France in 1635, and the conflicts in Portugal and Catalonia, exacerbated an already critical situation. The solution to this predicament was to increase domestic taxes. The Cortes were pressured for larger contributions. Duties on foodstuffs, the *millones*, were raised. New fiscal devices were implemented: There was a tax on salt, another on the sale of paper, and the *media anata* allowed the Crown to retain half of new appointees' income during the first year. The nobility and the clergy were under relentless pressure to grant loans and give gifts, *donativos*. The *hidalgos* served in the army at their own expense, and the high nobility was expected to maintain companies of infantry. Offices of the Crown, rents, titles, and villages were sold and royal pardons were granted to criminals in exchange for payment. In 1635 the Crown "confiscated half the yields of all *juros* held by natives, and the entire yield of those belonging to foreigners—a device imitated in whole or in part almost every year thereafter" (Elliott 1970, 465).

The disorder caused by the war with France in 1635 prompted a rebellion in Barcelona, which was supported by Cardinal Richelieu. The Crown's fiscal pressure on Portugal, coupled with the Dutch attacks on the Portuguese Empire, were the causes of Portugal's drive for independence, an event immediately supported by the French and the English. The Portuguese peace treaty with the Dutch in 1641 resulted from Portugal's desire to maintain their empire in Brazil and Africa.

The financial pressures of these external wars were exacerbated by an array of costly conflicts and rebellions within the Empire's own territories. The year 1640 brought the Catalan revolt and the independence of Portugal. A conspiracy by the Duke of Medina Sidonia and the Marquis of Ayamonte to separate Andalusia from the Crown followed in 1641. Numerous popular uprisings prompted by rising prices for foodstuffs and higher taxes occurred in Vizcaya (1632), Evora (1637), and Naples and Sicily (1647). External conflict and internal disintegration signaled the dramatic twilight of the Empire: "From the end of 1640, Spain and Spain's international power were visibly crumbling." (Elliott 1970, 470) The territorial arrangements after the Thirty Years War acknowledged the demise of Imperial Spain. The King of Spain accepted the Netherlands' independence in the Treaty of Munster in 1648. The Peace of

Westphalia sealed the defeat of the Habsburgs of Vienna and Madrid; a new European map was drawn based on independent states: "Until the days of the French Revolution, the Peace of Westphalia was considered to be the basis of the European state system" (Beller 1970, 358). The ceding of Artois, Rousillon, and part of Cerdagne to France in the Treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659 reflected the continuation of Spanish imperial disintegration. Finally, the independence of Portugal was formalized in the treaty of Lisbon in 1688, during the minority of Charles II.

Another means by which to increase Crown revenue was manipulation of *vellon*, the copper coins issued since 1603 by Philip III. Seigniorage rates for petty coins reached as high as 91 percent (Motomura 1994, 118). Coinage and re-coining of copper was a desperate measure and yielded a benefit of 13,52,000 ducats in the first six years, while the re-coining of 1636 yielded 4,700.00 ducats, compared with 10,000,000 ducats in 1641, 6,000,000 in 1643, and 11,000,000 ducats in 1651 (Dominguez Ortiz 1960, 272-73). These are significant revenues compared with the King's average consignment of only 1,000,000 ducats from galleons arriving in Seville in those years. A more detailed recent study of Castilian signiorage corroborates the general picture painted by Dominguez Ortiz: "After 1626, the petty money stock fluctuated with military spending . . . The petty currency did not stabilize until two decades of peace after 1680 eased the fiscal pressures on the Monarchy" (Motomura 994, 118-19). By this time there had been state bankruptcies in 1627, 1647, 1656, and 1664. The Crown had exhausted every avenue to continue financing the Empire, but to no avail. There simply was no substitute for dwindling New World profits. Having benefited from neither an agricultural revolution nor a transformation of the manufacturing sector, Empire financing was largely dependent upon American mines. Elimination of mine profits contributed mightily to the decline of Spain. Faced with declining profits its silver industry, Castile could no longer afford its vast empire, but even China's prodigious demand for silver could not prevent the eventual erosion of mine profits and therefore the decline of Spain. Spain vanished as a serious western power as its silver basis eroded.

It is useful to keep in mind the distinction between the silver trade's pre 1640 "arbitrage phase" versus its post-1640 "non-arbitrage phase." This distinction helps reduce confusion when confronting such things as the mounting evidence that seventeenth-century silver production/ exports were considerably larger than previously realized (Morineau 1974). Again, we need to think in terms of industry profits as opposed to quantities *per se*. Spanish American exports of silver appear to have been relatively robust after 1640—with no decline at all visible via the Pacific route—but the point is that extraordinary profits had already been squeezed out. American silver continued to gravitate toward China after 1640

because Japanese mines began to play out, but more importantly because normal profits were sufficient to induce shipments into a strong market. This later period contrasts sharply with the explosive pre-1640 arbitrage phase, characterized by above-normal profits and the associated trade frenzy that accompanied the opening of global trade opportunities. Normal post-1640 profits were not sufficient, however, to continue to finance an aberration on the scale of the Spanish Empire. The fact that Spain's empire owed its financial foundation to distant Ming China is a forceful reminder that much of what passes for local history in the early modern period can only be understood in terms of world history.

We have consciously neglected any attempt to tie the African continent into the global trade of silver. Nonetheless, it seems that the Portuguese swapped huge numbers of (mostly smuggled) African slaves for (mostly smuggled) New World silver via the colony of Sacramento on the Rio de la Plata:

Between 1619 and 1623, port officials seized a total of 3,656 slaves from illegally landing vessels; their market value in Lima would have approached two million pesos. These numbers do not include those slaves legally imported and those that evaded port officials. The size of these figures clearly indicates a flourishing and considerable illicit trade up the Rio Plata from the 1580s until probably the 1640s. (Cross 1983, 414)

Not all the slaves were plantation laborers. Palmer (1995) has provided demographic information suggesting that between 10,000 and 20,000 Africans were domestic slaves in Mexico City in the early seventeenth century. Since, as we have argued, the Spanish enterprise in America was financed by the world silver market (as were the activities of the Portuguese traders), and since China was the dominant factor in the global silver market, then it appears that the transatlantic slave trade was heavily, though indirectly, influenced by monetary and fiscal developments in Ming China. In other words, end-customer China created profitable trade in the New World, and profitable trade in America created the demand for African slaves.

Scholars have long been interested in the impact of Europeans on Asia (and the rest of the world). The focus has shifted in recent years, however, especially among Asian scholars who increasingly emphasize the dominant historical role of the intra-Asian marketplace. These revisionists view Europeans as having participated in a vast and sophisticated existing Asian commercial network, rather than as having introduced modernization to backward Asia.<sup>2</sup> We argue that the economic impact of China on the West was far greater than any European influence on Asia in the early modern period.

The physical presence of Europeans in Asia in early modern times—and the simultaneous physical absence of Asians in the

West—has understandably led scholars to pay attention mostly to the impact of the West on Asia. Superior naval firepower may partially explain the evolution of the European presence in Asia, but the most powerful economic undercurrents ran in the opposite direction. Without the Chinese demand for silver, there would have been no financial foundation for the Spanish Empire, no century-long price revolution, and the birth of world trade would have been delayed to some unknowable extent. But China did convert, both monetarily and fiscally, to silver. This fact reverberated across all continents and gave birth to world trade in 1571, providing a powerful force in shaping the modern world.

## Notes

1. See especially the work of Marks (1998), Pomeranz (2000), von Glahn (1996), and Wong (1997).
2. There are a couple of notable exceptions to this Eurocentric bias. Frank's (1998) controversial new book is certainly not Eurocentric. His argument is consistent with ours in most respects; he emphasizes the centrality of the Chinese marketplace and views silver as crucial to the birth of global trade. Chaudhuri (1978) has also long emphasized the causative role of precious metals markets in terms of global trade.

## Works Cited

- Attman, Artur. *American Bullion in the European World Trade, 1600-1800*. Goteborg: Kungl. Vetenskaps-och Vitterhets-Samhallet. 1986.
- Atwell, William S. "Notes on Silver, Foreign Trade, and the Late Ming Economy," *Ch'ing-shih wen t'I*, vol. 3, no. 8, (1977): 1-33.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "International Bullion Flows and the Chinese Economy circa 1530-1650." *Past and Present*, 95 (1982): 69-80.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Some Observations on the 'Seventeenth-Century Crisis' in China and Japan." *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol.XLV, n. 2 (1986): 223-44.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Ming Observations of Ming Decline: Some Chinese Views on the 'Seventeenth-Century Crisis' in Comparative Perspective," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, n. 2, (1988): 316-48.
- Barrett, Ward. "World Bullion Flows, 1450-800." In *The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long Distance Trade in the early Modern World, 1350-1750*, ed. James D.Tracy. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, (1990): 224-54.
- Beller, E.A. "The Thirty Years War." In *The Decline of Spain and The Thirty Years War 1609-48/59*, vol. IV of *The New Cambridge Modern History*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, (1970): 306-58.
- Boxer, Charles R. *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 1415-1825*. New York: A. Knopf, 1969.
- Brading, D. A., and Harry E. Cross. "Colonial Silver Mining: Mexico and Peru." In *The Hispanic American Historical Review*. Vol. 52, (1972): 545-79.
- Braudel, Fernand. *The Mediterranean and the Mediiterranean World in the Age of Philip II*. New York: Harper and Row, 1972.
- Carande, Ramon. *Carlos V y sus banqueros*. 4a. ed. Barcelona: Critica, 1990.

- Castillo, Alvaro. "Los juros de Castilla: Apogeo y fin de un instrumento de credito." *Hispania*, vol. 23, (1963): 43-70.
- Chaudhuri, K.N. *The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company, 1660-1760*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1978.
- Chaunu, Pierre. *Les Philipines et le Pacifique des Iberiques (XVIIe, XVIIIe, XVIIIe siecles)*. Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1960.
- Chuan, Hang-Sheng. "The Inflow of American Silver into China from the Late Ming to the Mid-Ch'ing Period." In *The Journal of the Institute of Chinese Studies of the Chinese University of Hong-Kong*. Vol. 2, (1969): 61-75.
- Cross, Harry E. "South American Bullion Production and Export, 1550-1750." In *Precious Metals in Later Medieval and Early Modern Worlds*. Ed. J.F.Richards. Durham: U of North Carolina P, 1983.
- DeVries, Jan. *European Urbanization, 1500-1800*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1984.
- Dominguez Ortiz, Antonio. *Politica y Hacienda de Felipe IV*. Madrid: Editora de Derecho Financiero, 1960.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *El Antiguo Regimen: Los reyes Católicos y los Austrias*. 4a. ed. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1977.
- Elliott, J.H. "The Decline of Spain." In *Past and Present*, n. 20, (1961): 441-63.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Spanish Peninsula 1598-1648." In *The Decline of Spain and the Thirty Years War 160-1648/59*, vol. IV of *The New Cambridge Modern History*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1970.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Imperial Spain, 1469-1716*. New York: New American Library, 1977.
- Flynn, Dennis O. "Fiscal Crisis and the Decline of Spain (Castile)." In *Journal of Economic History*, 42, (1982): 139-47.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Microeconomics of Silver and East-West Trade in the Early Modern Period." In *The Emergence of a World Economy, 1500-1914: Papers of the IX International Congress of Economic History*. Ed. W.Fisher, R.W. McInnis, and J. Schneider. Stuttgart, (1986): 37-60.
- Flynn, Dennis O. and Arturo Giraldez. "China and the Manila Galleons." In *Japanese Industrialization and the Asian Economy*. ed. A.J.H. Latham and H. Kawakatsu. London: Routledge, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Born with a 'Silver Spoon': The Origin of World Trade in 1571." In *Journal of World History*, vol. 6, no. 2, (1995): 201-21.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Silk for Silver: Manila-Macao Trade in the 17th Century." In *Philippine Studies*, 44/First Quarter (1996): 52-68.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Monetary Substances in Global Perspective: An Introductory Essay." In *Metals and Monies in an Emerging Global Economy*. ed. D.O. Flynn and A.Giraldez. Aldershot: Variorum, 1997.
- Frank, Andre Gunder. *ReORIENT: Global Economy in the Asian Age*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1998.
- Geiss, J.P. "Peking under the Ming, 1368-1644." Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1979.
- Gernet, Jacques. *A History of Chinese Civilization*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982.
- Godinho, V. Magalhaes. *Os descobrimentos e a economia mundial*. Lisbon: Editora Arcadia, 1963.
- Hamashita, Takeshi. The Tribute System and Modern Asia. *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Tokyo Bunko*, 46. Tokyo: 1988.
- Hamilton, Earl. *American Treasure and the Price Revolution in Spain, 1501-1650*. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard UP, 1934.
- Huang, Ray. *Taxation and Governmental Finance in Sixteenth-Century Ming China*. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard UP, 1974.

- Innes, R.L. "The Door Ajar: Japan's Foreign Trade in the Seventeenth Century." Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1980.
- Iwao, Seiichi. "Japanese Gold and Silver in the World History." In *International Symposium on History of Eastern and Western Cultural Contacts*. Tokyo: 1959.
- Koenigsberger, Helmut G. "Western Europe and the Power of Spain." In *The New Cambridge Modern History. Vol. 2 The Reformation 1520-1559*. Ed. G.R. Elton. 301-33. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1958.
- Liang, Fang-Chung. *The Singl-Whip Method of Taxation in China*. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard UP, 1970 (Second printing of 1956 edition).
- Marks, Robert B. *Tigers, Rice, Silk and Silt: Environment and Economy in Late Imperial South China*. New York and London: Cambridge UP, 1997.
- Mols, Roger (1977). "Population in Europe, 1500-1700." In C. Cipolla (ed.) *The Fontana Economic History of Europe*. London: Collins/Fontana.
- Morineau, Michel. *Incroyable gazettes et fabuleux metaux. Les retours des tresors americains d'apres les gazettes hollandaises, XVIe-XVIII siecles*. London, 1974.
- Motomura, Akira. "The Best and Worst of Currencies: Seigniorage and Currency policy in Spain, 1597-1650." In *Journal of Economic History*, 54, (1994): 104-27.
- Moutoukias, Zacarias. "Una forma de oposicion: el contrabando." In *Governare il mondo. L'impero spagnolo dal XV al XIX secolo*. ed. Massimo Ganci and Ruggiero Romano. Palermo: Societa Siciliana per la Storia Patria, 1991.
- Palmer, Colin. "From Africa to the Americas: Ethnicity in the Early Black Communities of the Americas." *Journal of World History*, 6 (1995): 223-36.
- Parker, Geoffrey. *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road 1567-1659*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1972.
- Phelan, John L. *The Hispanization of the Philippines: Spanish Aims and Filipino Responses*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1959.
- Pomeranz, Kenneth. *Extraordinary Changes in an Ordinary Place: Market-Driven Growth, Ecological Constraints, and Overseas Extraction during the Early Modern World Economy*. Princeton: Princeton UP (forthcoming).
- Prieto Lucena, Ana Maria. *Filipinas durante el gobierno de Manrique de Lara 1653-1663*. Sevilla: Publicaciones de la Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 1984.
- Smith, Adam. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. New York: Random House, 1776 (Modern Library Edition 1937).
- Steele, Mark. "La Hacienda Real." In *Historia General de Espana y America*, Tomo VI, ed. V. Vazquez de Prada. Madrid: Ediciones Rialp, 1986.
- TePaske, John J. "New World Silver, Castile and the Philippines, 1590-1800." In *Precious Metals in Later Medieval and Early Modern Worlds*, ed. J.F. Richards. Durham NC: Carolina University Press, 1983.
- Von Glahn, Richard. *Fountain of Fortune: Money and Monetary Policy in China 1000-1700*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1996.
- Vilar, Pierre. "El tiempo del Quijote." In *Crecimiento y Desarrollo*. Barcelona: Ariel, 1974.
- Wong, R. Bin. *China Transformed: Historical Change and the Limits of European Experience*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1997.



## Chapter 6

# Ethnic Identity and the Zapatista Rebellion in Chiapas

José Alejos García

A most intriguing paradox on this turn of millenium is that the general process of globalization is being accompanied by an also general trend of individual and collective search for identity, by the re-creation and growth of ethnicities and other forms of social identities. It seems as if the reaction towards social integration and cultural homogenization could only be a re-evaluation of roots, traditions, ancestors. Ethnic revitalization movements are on the rise throughout the world, full of energy and support, shaking the foundations of national states, radically questioning the legitimacy of dominant cultures over ethnic minorities and native peoples. In the face of an aggressive process of globalization and of neoliberal western thought and policies, ethnic groups are taking strong measures in their struggle for survival, for their right to exist and prosper. This social process is taking place in the world at large, and its importance is evident in the ethnic issues present on a variety of discourses, in academic as well as in political arenas. In fact, ethnicity has become a powerful symbol of political and armed movements everywhere; certainly, it has become a major aspect of violent struggles, as shown in contemporary civil and international wars.

The overall result is that the notion of ethnic identity is undergoing radical changes. Until recently, modern national states maintained as part of their political agenda the ideological goal of turning people into uniform citizens unified by one general national identity. Within such nationalistic environment, to have a specific ethnicity other than the dominant one meant to be anachronistic,

retarded, backward. Ethnicity appeared like a burden that a person should hide or get rid of in order to live in good terms with society. But in present times, ethnic identity is starting to be seen in a new light: as an elemental human right, a distinction, a privilege to those that are not merely undifferentiated citizens. Therefore, in contrast with the recent past, when ethnic traits were an outright object of discrimination, they are now becoming an important theme of human and political rights, as well as a basic source of social identity, including current forms of nationalisms.

In America, this contemporary ethnic movement has its own history and dynamics. For over five centuries, native peoples throughout this continent have suffered the invasion and expansion of Western Europeans, the imposition of their own culture and political domains. Many broad intercultural and social relations have been shaped by this historical fact, and the general life conditions of the native populations of America are clear expressions of such history of subordination. The term *Indian* was the generic name given to the latter by Europeans, and at least in Latin America, it bears with it an old racist prejudice that has acted as an important ideological argument to exploitation and domination (Cf. Gómez-Moriana 1994, Martínez Peláez 1998).

It is in this context of confrontation and historical claims that Indians all over the continent took 1992, year of the quintcentennial *celebration of discovery* for western society, as a time marker, but one with an altogether different symbolic meaning. For the Indians, the year 1992 was also a major chronotope, but one whose referent was invasion, oppression and destruction, and one that ought to mark the beginning of the end of a tragic epoch. A chronotope with the power of new ethnic interpretations of history and the ideological force to unite the native people. Indians actions show how they are breaking the silence and the traditional barriers which had kept them separate; they are becoming protagonists of their own history: they now have their own leaders and representatives in government, and organize meetings to share and discuss their problems, views, and strategies. There is an increased self awareness, and a commitment to rescue and enrich their cultures. An expression of this social process is the flowering of Indian arts, as in the Maya movement,<sup>1</sup> which is producing a critical re-evaluation of the self in its expanding relations with the other.

Indians in America are not alone in their contemporary ethnic revitalization movements, as there are others who, within their own ethnicities, ways, and horizons, identify with their cause. There are other people, institutions, and even nations that are working on their side, providing them with assistance, resources and solidarity. One must realize that it is a movement taking place in a cybernetic world; such a means of communication provides the power to transform traditional identities and to create new consciousness, new encounters of Indians with other selves and with different others. It is indeed a

complex phenomenon of ethnic identity re-creation taking place between Indians and the cultural entities with whom they interact.

From the other side, from the perspective of the traditionally dominant western groups within society, the Indian movement is creating diverse reactions, mostly adverse: there is an increasing sense of danger to their status quo and to their own construct of society. These dominant others are worried about the rise of Indian consciousness, because their own self is being questioned; instead of opening themselves up towards dialogue and allowing the Indian voices to be heard, they are returning to violence and closing the possibility of mutual understanding. Hence, what could have been the beginning of a new and more equitable relationship, or at least a firm base for better communication, is turning into an arena of confrontation, struggle, and monologue between the parties involved. The complex ethnic dimension of the self and the other, of Amerindians and the West, may be said to be on a collision course.

This situation of ethnic growth and lack of intercultural dialogue is evident in Latin American countries like Peru, Mexico, and Guatemala, whose Indian populations are quite significant. The recent conflicts and wars in those countries are clear testimonies of this. In the present article I shall discuss these problems of ethnicity, taking the Zapatista rebellion still going on in Mexico's southern state of Chiapas as an interesting, paradigmatic case of the general trend in ethnic movements. Special attention will be placed on the changes to, and re-creation of, ethnic identities produced by this Maya Indian military and political uprising. My anthropological perspective on this problematic is based largely on the seminal thought of the Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin, particularly on his theoretical concepts of dialogics and identity. Accordingly, identity is regarded as a relative and relational phenomenon, a complex of relations between the self and the other, a dialogic, dynamic process of mutual interaction. Bakhtin proposes an ontology in which the self is constructed precisely in the concrete relation to the other, and where both are complementary entities, much more than mere sameness and otherness.

The insufficiency, the impossibility of the existence of one consciousness alone. I know myself and get to be myself only by showing myself to the other, through the other and with the help of the other. The most important acts that conform self consciousness are determined by the relation to the other consciousness . . . To be means to be for the other, and through the other be for myself. Man does not have an internal sovereign territory, but instead, he is totally and forever on the frontier; looking inside of him, man finds the eyes of the other, or sees with the eyes of the other. (Bakhtin 1982: 327. The translation is mine)

The world, Bakhtin says, is a space of ethic acts, because they are produced for the other, under the gaze of the other.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, identity is intrinsically a social phenomenon, a dialogic one, something that changes as a response to the events of the world. Being, Bakhtin tells us, is an ongoing event. Thus, ethnic identities are social products, outcomes of this phenomenological architectonic build up between 'I' and 'the other', and certainly a sociopolitical reality of major concern of our times, one that lays behind countless movements and conflicts of local, national, and global scope. We may say that this contemporary search and struggle for ethnic identity respond to a growing awareness of the ethical responsibility of being, to a new sense of identity, to a need to recognize in time and space the self, the other, and their intrinsic relationship.

### Indians, Ladinos, and the West

A dialogic understanding of the contemporary ethnic movement in Chiapas must consider in depth the impact of the European presence in America, as it is within that historical and broad sociocultural context where the voices of the Maya Indians ought to be heard. The ways in which westerners have related historically with the former have established over time a system of social distinctions, of ethnic differentiations and interrelations that are now under attack by the Indian movement. It is a system of racial discrimination similar to a society of castes, based on a cultural hierarchy made up of ideas, rules, and powers, that place people within an established social order in which, in general terms, the white westerners constitute the elite on top, the blacks and the métis (the latter are called *Mestizos* or *Ladinos*), are in the middle, and the dark Indians stand on the bottom.

As mentioned above, a major historical chronotope of the intercultural relations in question is the so called conquest of America. This topic has turned into an important discursive issue that for the groups involved represents the starting point of a whole new era of discoveries and human encounters. Indeed, it is an historical event that revolutionized the world, confronting an *us* with a multiplicity of new *others*, generating in the process whole new identities and interactions among them, which have grown in intensity since that initial moment. In Middle America these encounters took place in a land of highly civilized societies, but tragically, to a great extent they occurred in the form of warfare, of military and ideological confrontations lead by the conquering postures of the Spaniards and by their drive towards economic gain, and this situation marked the character of future relations. Early Maya Indian texts transcribed to Latin characters, such as the Popol Vuh, the Cakchiquel Annals, or the Books of Chilam Balam, reveal the massive scale of the loss and destruction produced by the conquest. Todorov (1987) has written an interesting study on the matter from a dialogical perspective, discussing the semiotic

aspects of the conquest of Mexico, and examining the contrasting horizons held by some of the main historic protagonists on both sides, as well as their obvious difficulties in communication. Superiority in the means of communication was, according to Todorov, an important factor for the victory of western civilization in America, but such a superiority was established at the expense of a communication with the world (Todorov 1987: 261).

The violent encounters between Spaniards and Middle American Indians cancelled the possibility of a dialogical understanding, as the material and cultural world of the latter was destroyed, and most of what remained was subordinated to the dominion of western thought. From then on, Spanish has been the language of communication, leaving the Indian languages on the margins, with the prejudiced status of "dialects," forced to disappear. Under such adverse conditions the Indian voices have been silenced and a continuous monologic speech from their counterpart has prevailed. For centuries, the West has maintained a discourse on the Indian that conceptualizes him as "barbarian," and later on as "primitive," "premodern," and "underdeveloped." Such discourse has adopted diverse ideologies that range from the romantic utopia of the "good savage" to the annihilation programs of recent times.

The philosopher Emmanuel Levinas has formulated a powerful critic to what he considers a totalitarian mode of western thought. For him, western philosophy has often been an ontology, but one that has exercised an "ontologic imperialism" that reduces the Other to the Same. "Knowledge comes to be an apprehension of the Being . . . [a] taking of its otherness" (1977: 67). Levinas stresses the necessity to break away with that mode of thought, by the recognition of the exteriority of the other, its absolute otherness, in order to restore the level of symmetry needed to achieve a real communication. For Levinas, there is an ontology in western philosophy, specifically in the one developed by Heidegger, that is essentially egotistic and tyrannical.

The relation with Being, which functions as an ontology, consists in neutralizing the Being in order to comprehend or apprehend it. Thus, it is not a relation with the Other as such, but a reduction of the Other to the Same. That is the definition of liberty: to maintain oneself against the Other in spite of the relation with the Other, assuring the autarchy of an I. (1977: 69. Translations are mine)

The apprehension, the conceptual explanation of the other in terms of the self as practiced by such totalitarian way of thought, is an act of violation that engenders a silence, a refusal to talk and to express the self, an introjection and even hatred towards the self and the other.<sup>3</sup> This philosophical insight has dramatic expressions in the ethos of colonized societies. Latin American people share serious

problems of identity derived from the colonial past, from the system of social and ethnic inequities established by Western Europeans in America, and of that system's evolution within the "independent" republican states. In comparison to other societies, we seem to have only incipient identities, but ones that are full of colonial traits expressed in racism, discrimination, and violence. There prevails a confusion about who we are, where are we heading to, unclear views about the self and the other, that lead us to division, struggle, and even hatred among us—that makes us despise our own heritage, and worship instead the looks, images, and symbols of the dominant others.

On the other hand, intellectuals and government officials that conform Latin American national elites have seen the issue of identity as an important element for the consolidation of the emerging republics, but in reality, the construction of a national identity has been strongly conditioned by the ambivalence and even contradictory relations of these elites among each other, with the native peoples, and with westerners, to mention only the main actors. With the latter, these elites maintain strong relations of identity that feed the imaginary of their western *identity*, a cultural ideology that does not allow them to be fully conscious of the heterogeneous components of their own national society. That affiliation and ideological dependency toward the West finds crude expressions in the economy as well as in politics: the enclave plantations, dictatorships, corruptions, and false democracies.

Aside from their primary alliances with the West, Latin American elites have sought to establish a sort of independence of 'their' nations constructing imaginary frontiers that distinguish them from Europe and North America, as a means to create a sort of national identity of their own. This ambivalent affinity and distance with respect to the "mother culture" has strongly influenced the relationships of the dominant groups with the indigenous cultures; in Guatemala and Mexico, the nationalistic elites have constructed an ideological discourse in which the Indian is actually given a place as a distinct element that marks their countries' specific difference, an ancient ethnicity participating on the foundations of the nation. Thus, they talk proudly about the greatness and knowledge of the ancient civilizations, about the indigenous roots of "our identity" and of the purity and the folklore of present day Indians, while in fact, those elites have always practiced diverse forms of racism, ethnocide, and extermination policies towards the former.

Trying to construct progressive nations with identities of their own, but doing so from the periphery and under the Euroamerican cultural dominance, has led Latin Americans through wrong paths, where equal rights, respect for cultural differences, and peaceful ways of living among the ethnic communities have not been achieved. The paradigm of the West has weighed too heavily on the national elites, so much that well established and balanced relations among the

ethnicities present in the national society have not been conformed. If a clear goal has ever existed among those elites, it has been to convert Latin America into a "really" western society.

To a large extent, Latin American intellectuals who have approached the indigenous world have been conditioned by that ideological complex, they have been biased by their own western background and by their social position within the national structure, and they have therefore been unable to overcome the hegemonic cultural paradigm that hangs over their heads. "Indigenista" literature and policies exemplify such paradox.

### Society and Ethnicity in Chiapas

How is this western domination exercised in the arena of ethnic identities in Chiapas? Which are the identities confronted, who are the social actors participating in this complex interplay between the self and the other in that conflictive Mexican state? I have mentioned before a broad conflictive relation between Indians and westerners in which both categories appear as protagonists of a social and cultural conflict. But in local contexts, at the level of the small villages scattered throughout the Chiapanecan countryside, western culture and its agencies may not readily be perceived, and thus may be ignored by foreign visitors. In the type of communities usually studied by anthropologists, the immediate and strong neighbor may not be the *gringo*, or another foreign category. Instead, the contrasting ethnicity that appears *vis à vis* the Indian is often another "native," the *Mestizo* or *Ladino*. They conform a broad ethnic group, a historical outcome of the conquest and the colonial process, consisting of a mixture of Indians, Africans, and Europeans. Ladino people are usually defined as a non-Indian by outside observers, mainly due to their discursive adherence to "western culture," and thus, seen as an emic interpretation of their own identity, Ladinos are "non-Indians." But from an ethnological perspective, Ladinos are a mixture of bloods and cultures, a hybrid social actor that in history has played the role of a mediator between two worlds, and who, due to the weight of the dominant culture, feels strongly identified with the West, and despises his Indian—and, in certain cases, African or Asian—heritage. In this sense, Ladinos act as *pretenders* who refuse to acknowledge their own reality, who avoid the responsibility of their being; people who, as a consequence, have developed anomalous, conflictive social identities.<sup>4</sup>

For over one century western anthropologists have done intensive research on the Maya people, and in the huge amount of literature that has been published, there stands out a rather constant view about Indian identity. Even when the term itself is not used, Indian identity is conceptualized as a set of distinctive cultural traits, those that have seemed the most "pure" and/or "exotic" to investigators. In brief, it

has prevailed a positivistic image of culture based on the idea of Being as an isolated object, a system composed of empirical, ordered elements, transcendental traits, that research is supposed to uncover. The Indian identity has been the absolute center of interest, usually described in terms of the Indian self, or as the "essence of the Maya people," while the supposed other, the "non-Indian" Ladino, is left in the background as someone already known, unproblematic. This has lead to a partial and even distorted image of the "natives' identity," where the Indian appears as absolutely different from the Ladino, each with an identity of his own, unrelated to the other.

The Ladino is taken simply as *the other* opposed to the Indian. According to such a model, Indians and Ladinos conform the two parts of a dyadic society, and anthropological discourse has often oscillated between these two categories; social and cultural reality have been explained exclusively in terms of "them," leaving the West offstage, excluded as an actor.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, until recently, western anthropologists in Middle America have not seen themselves, nor their own people, as an important part of the world described. This ought to include the power exercised by the very act of writing, of interpreting, the others' being. The powerful influence of western minorities in local and national affairs has been practically ignored in their accounts.<sup>6</sup> Their interest in "the natives" has certainly brought out important knowledge about the cultures studied, for, as Bakhtin points out, the other's exotopal vision may *complete* the identity of the other, may enrich our understanding of his culture; but unfortunately it has too often produced in the scholar a nearsightedness, a cultural bias that contributes to the formation of what Latour has named a Great Divide between us and them. Their ethnographic books are reports to the West, written accounts about the other from the horizon of a cognizant I, an I that observes, aware of its being there, but that for the same reason does not appear in the text.<sup>7</sup>

Chiapas is the most southern state of Mexico, and shares with Central America a long political border, and many of the historical, cultural, and political traits of the area. Chiapas is part of the former Maya territory, a land of tropical forests that in ancient times witnessed the flourishing of a remarkable civilization. From the times of the Spanish conquest until Independence in 1821, Chiapas belonged to the colonial state of Guatemala, and in the years to follow maintained close familial ties with that new republic. Both countries shared a huge, almost uninhabited jungle where political borders were nonexistent until recent times, when 'modernization' and demographic growth abruptly changed most of the former wilderness into rural settlements, cattle pastures, and oil fields. Currently, Chiapas bears one of the largest Indian populations in Mexico. Over one million aboriginal people dwell in the state, mainly in the central highlands and in the northeastern tropical areas. Most of the Indians in Chiapas belong to the Maya culture, distributed in several ethnic groups, the main ones being Ch'ol, Lacandon, Mam, Tojolabal,

Tzeltal and Tzotzil. The rest of the state's population is of quite diverse origin. The traditional Ladinos number nearly two million, plus a growing amount of immigrants from all over Mexico. Then, there is an old minority of Spanish descent and other Europeans, Germans in particular, who have settled there since the end of the nineteenth century. Chinese immigrants and seasonal workers from Central America complete the ethnic mosaic. Yet, Chiapas' ethnic diversity is accompanied by the highest levels of poverty. Of all the Mexican states, and in spite of its natural wealth, Chiapas presents one of the highest indexes of poverty in the country.<sup>8</sup> To the misery of Indians' life conditions must be added now the violence, criminality, and political genocide that is sweeping the Chiapanecan society, particularly the Maya villages in the hinterland.

Born with the colonial system, but recreated along the twentieth century, the successive western elites in Chiapas have maintained the old social structure based on the racist ideology of the caste society, and through it, the monopoly of resources and political power. This strong oligarchy, commonly known as the *Chiapanecan Family*, is composed of individuals of Spanish descent, known as *Criollos*, European immigrants, Mexicans, and also Ladinos, and they have established kinship relations that allow them to expand their economic and political power at national levels. To a great extent, Ladino population is poor and has kinship ties with the Indians, although this fact is commonly denied due to the prevailing racism that makes Ladinos aspire to be "white," and thus, they tend to ally with the dominant elite in the exploitation of Indian labor and in the appropriation of their lands. In the last three decades land tenure has become one of the most acute problems in Chiapas. Oligarchic monopoly of land combined with a rapid demographic growth and immigration created a severe agrarian crisis, to which the Mexican government responded by opening the Lacandon jungle to agricultural exploitation, with the consequent ecological devastation and political unrest.

### Ethnopolitics and the Zapatista Movement

The conception of western anthropology examined above is presently at work in current explanations on the armed rebellion in Chiapas. The same theoretical model used to account for the past war and the continuing conflicts in Guatemala, that is, a narrative of an internal conflict among "the natives," or "the nationals," Indians and Ladinos,<sup>9</sup> is now being applied as a general framework to explain the Zapatista<sup>10</sup> uprising. A considerable amount of literature and mass media images on the topic focus their discourse on the conflicts between Indians and Ladinos, or in the confrontations of the former among themselves. Anthropological research, supposed to be an account at a grass roots level, continues viewing the Indian as a

cultural entity opposed merely to a "Ladino world," an ambiguous concept that at times includes the national government and its agencies. This image of an internal ethnic conflict has been magnified and spread worldwide through the media, giving the (wrong) impression that external influences are minimal. On certain reports the latter may appear in the background, as is the case with foreign news agencies, research and intelligence personnel, religious institutions, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), but conceived as a whole, they are not seen as protagonists of the ongoing drama. At most, the Mexican Army and national political parties are given a more influential role, as actors in an arena of power where the Zapatistas are involved in the labyrinth of national politics.

Among the scholars concerned with Chiapas, there is a widespread opinion according to which the Zapatismo is a genuine Maya movement, that is, one in which Indians are the main actors, breaking their long silence and making their word be heard. They are up in arms in defense of their ethnic identity and their dignity (Cf. Collier 1994, Le Bot 1997, Monod 1994). Here, the Zapatista movement appears as a new Indian rebellion against Ladino domination. It is a simple, even elegant, model, based on a structural dyad with direct empirical referents. As a matter of fact, the movement *is* Maya in its social basis, Indians and Ladinos *are* the majority of the population in Chiapas, and they certainly have conflictive social relations and severe crisis in their ethnic identities. The situation is similar to neighboring Guatemala, but just as well, the Zapatismo is another good example of how local ethnopolitics are expressions of a larger phenomenon. To reach a better understanding of the problematic, it must be examined in a wider perspective, historical as well as cultural, taking into account the participation of all of the actors involved, in a space where Indian and Ladino actions are evaluated not just in their own terms, but also in accordance with external powers, and where the rebellion itself may be seen as part of a major sociocultural process which boundaries are, more than ever, of a global scope.

Historically, Indian uprisings have not had the Ladinos as their main opponents, as the struggle has been directed basically towards the alien system of domination established with the conquest, exercised by Ladinos only at local or regional levels. Some decades ago, foreign western investors were in control of the economy of Chiapas, and made their profits exploiting the precious woods of the tropical forests, or from their rubber, banana, and coffee plantations that employed thousands of Indian and Ladino workers. These foreign enterprises radically transformed local identities, turning peasant Indians into plantation peons, and rural Ladinos into peons, muleteers, labor contractors, and supervisors (Cf. Alejos García 1994, 1999; Benjamin 1989; De Vos, 1988). More recently, the presence of the West has adopted other forms and contents, such as the coffee trade markets and the tourist industry in the economy, the mass media, the churches, the scholars, and the activists in the ideological, political,

and cultural fields. In fact, the involvement of the West in local affairs may be said to have increased throughout the years.<sup>11</sup> The participation and solidarity of Europeans in particular in the Zapatista movement is an interesting case of a peculiar western identity built out of empathy towards the Maya, and of a certain dislike for Ladinos and Mexican national agencies.

The increasing control of the Mexican state in Chiapas is another important factor involved in the ethnopolitical movement. Both Indians and Ladinos have changed deeply in the face of the overwhelming presence of government powers and agencies. The Mexican army, with an estimated fifty thousand troops in the conflict zone, is the most obvious and powerful factor in the social changes occurring in rural Chiapas. Besides, the immigration of Mexican people from all over the country certainly has an impact on local identities, as these people enter into an already complex Chiapanecan social structure. A governmental political slogan of the early eighties read "All of Chiapas is Mexico" has become true today. Let us remember that the abrupt devaluations of Mexican currency, the neoliberal policies, as well as the NAFTA agreement are said to be key factors that triggered the Zapatista rebellion.<sup>12</sup> In fact, the very day that the free trade agreement came to effect, on January 1st. 1994, Chiapas and the whole nation were shaken by the Zapatista uprising with an army composed mainly of Maya Indians from the state's highland. They seized the colonial city of San Cristobal and other provincial cities in Chiapas. The movement proclaimed their radical opposition to the federal government, and their intention to take over Mexico City and overthrow the "bad government."

Justice and dignity were two of the main vindications of the Zapatistas, which since that moment have spread throughout the country, but also to other nations. Their movement may be said to be "ethnic," in terms of the strong demands in favor of the Indian peoples of Mexico, and because of the massive involvement of the Maya in the rebellion; but it bears as well a nationalistic character, as it aims to transform the political culture as a way to revolutionize the national power system. The Zapatista conception is based on the principle of an "obeisant ruling" ("mandar obedeciendo" in Spanish), a democratic idea according to which a proper government ought to be exercised for the good of the people, and with their consent, with the direct participation of the social bases and institutions. The Indians of Mexico have been particularly moved by the Zapatismo, which is transforming their awareness of the political power of ethnicity, and of the possibilities of changing their social conditions within the country. In spite of the risks involved, Indians of Chiapas sympathize with a movement that offers to improve their lives and their place in society (see in particular Collier 1994, Le Bot 1997, and Monod 1994). They recognize that the demands in favor of their rights and dignity have become a major issue of the national debate, that legislature reforms are under way, and that times are finally

beginning to change their way. This ethnopolitical movement also counts with the sympathy of Mexicans from all social classes, as can be seen in their involvement in marches, humanitarian campaigns, and in the current discussions on national politics, where the Zapatista issue has gained an important space. The massive internal and external support in favor of *the insurgents*, a term that in Mexico has a historic positive meaning, was a key factor in the early shift from an “armed solution” to a political one, and later on, in the start of a dialogue between the government and the Zapatistas. But the so called dialogue looks indeed more like a monologue in the Bakhtinian sense, for it does not seem to be getting anywhere, as the initial *San Andres Accords* have not followed course, and the whole negotiation has been entangled into the broad arena of national and international politics.

In ideological terms, the Zapatistas have shown to be an ethnopolitical movement with the power to recompose the architectonic of ethnic identities among the Indians of Mexico and of the larger society as well. “Those without a face,” as they call themselves, have created a new self image, which can be assumed by others who sympathize with their cause and who may then become part of an “us,” of a revolutionary panethnic community. In this modality, an absolute other turns out to be the one that despises the Indian, as may be the case with other Mexicans who do not recognize the Indianness as part of their own identity. Zapatistas have been able to “express the other,” to act as a mirror, in the sense that through their projected image others have seen themselves, have identified with the Zapatistas’ otherness, and thus may feel themselves as participants of a social process that aims to create a new nation, one in which “everyone has a place.” “Never again a Mexico without us,” calls another one of their slogans, indicating the Zapatistas’ intention to link their movement to the nation, to construct identity ties between the Indians of Chiapas and the Mexican people.

There is also a growing perception among intellectuals in regards to this movement as one that it is questioning old traditional ideas and theories on economics, politics, and ethnicity. In fact, Zapatista leaders seem to be well informed on certain current theoretical social issues discussed by western intelligentsia, as it is suggested by the Zapatista published discourse.

### The “Sub” Commander Marcos

The Bakhtinian notion of identity as a relative and relational social phenomenon that takes place on the frontier between the self and the other, is well exemplified in ethnic issues such as the one under discussion here. The ethnicity processes we have examined at intergroup, national, and global levels may be observed at a personal level, in people’s specific identity, particularly in that of main protagonists, of heroes, in their portrayed images in social narratives.

An outstanding case in that sense is that of a Zapatista hero, commonly known as Marcos, or *The Sub*(commander), a charismatic leader who reflects in his own personality the myriad of ethnic and social actors participating in the Zapatista movement. “White” or “westerner” in his appearance and in his intellectual background, Marcos incorporates as part of his own identity other ethnic categories such as *Mexican*, *Ladino*, *Indian*, and that of a *Citizen of the World*, producing the ideological effect of an emblem in which “we can all fit,” to use another one of the Zapatistas’ slogans. Besides Marcos’ powerful image, to a certain extent a media creation, his “anthropological” life experience among the Maya of Chiapas, in the years before and after the uprising, certainly provides him with an exotopic perspective that allows him a richer understanding of cultures, of ethnic and national problems. His life in the Lacandon rain forest, as a member of an heterogeneous group of insurgents, has certainly been a factor in the construction of a poliethnic identity that unites distinct peoples in a common revolutionary cause.

Formally under the command of the Indigenous Revolutionary Committee, Marcos acts as the main spokesman to the Zapatista army, as the intellectual head in charge of communication with the “outside.” His poetic language and rhetoric, disseminated through newspapers and through an increasing number of books, as well as his abilities in cybernetic communications, are well known features that have contributed significantly to the success of the Zapatista messages getting across to the media. By making communication possible, fluid and appreciated, Marcos has inaugurated a space of intersubjectivity, of intercultural relations between a multiplicity of selves and others, that is uniting peoples from all over the world in an unprecedented “postmodern” revolutionary movement. An aura of warrior, of hero, surrounds the image of insurgent Marcos. Indians, Ladinos, nationals and foreigners, all seem to share this new mythical hero, although each may hold a different idea of heroism. In his ability to communicate with the Indians, even though he is not fluent in a Mayan language, and also in his skills to talk and deal with the powers abroad, Marcos is an effective cultural mediator, a translator of distinct ethnic voices. Although the movement counts with an heterogeneous ethnic personnel acting at various levels, “white westerners” included, Marcos as a sort of cultural hero seems to recreate a historic tradition of other white or métis heroes that have organized Indian rebellions in the past.<sup>13</sup>

Besides the Indians’ loyalty and the empathy he has inspired among Mexicans, the effect Marcos has produced in the West is outstanding. On the one side, because of his representation of the Maya people in the revolutionary movement, as his formal role is that of a sub-commander, a military rank that puts him under the orders of the Indian army committee. He is the translator, and the spokesman of the Mayas up in arms. But on the other side, in the “outside world,” he is perceived as “one of us,” a contemporary

hero, a legend in his own time, one who is fighting for the rights of the oppressed. He is a writer, a poet, an intellectual, with the moral power to interpellate the people and the state of Mexico, but also the people abroad. Besides, cybernetics are on his side, giving him and his revolutionaries the means of instant communication and the power to act in this global world in which we live.

Still, Marcos protagonism and heroic image ought to be seen in a politically correct perspective, not merely as a personal endeavor, but essentially as an Indian act in its own right. His image and actions are a construct that belongs to the Indian strategy to communicate with the other, and to make that other identify with the self. At the end, the Maya of Chiapas (and those who identify with them) are the ones struggling to change their lot, suffering the brutal aggressions of their enemies, and taking responsibility for their own actions and dreams. They are the ones who decided to stand up in arms and are changing the face of a whole nation.

## Conclusion

One of the main purposes of this chapter has been to discuss and try to understand the Zapatista rebellion in terms of its dialogic nature, of the interplay of the ethnic identities participating in this ethnopolitical movement. From my anthropological perspective the uprising may be seen as a contemporary outburst of an old, historical struggle. This time, in their profound wish to overcome the burden of their present life, the Maya of Chiapas are taking a radical stand and acting in accordance, with the help of their allies and in spite of those who oppose them. And it may be precisely there, in the unity of various distinct peoples joining their voices in a common ethic utterance, that lies the possibility of overcoming that ancient ethnic confrontation in America. The Zapatista movement shows how this may be possible through the construction of a self's consciousness *vis-à-vis* the other, in which the self may be able to keep what is proper, and at the same time, give to and take from the other on a more equitable basis.

So far, that is still an ongoing project more than an achieved reality. Racism and violence of all sorts prevail and permeate Chiapanecan society. The ideological image of western identity, a fictitious one at that, still weighs too much and too heavily in the spirits of "the natives," particularly in the imaginary identity of Ladinos, so troubled with the "whiteness complex." In this sense, the figure of Marcos as a multicultural hero, as a mediator between distinct worlds, has a lot to say, not only to Ladinos, but to Indians and westerners alike. This rebellion shows the importance of ethnicity as an ideological symbol in current political movements and social struggles throughout the world. Ethnicity appears as a major component of social identity, as a basic human right, and as a uniting force in times of disruption. It offers a renovated hope for indigenous

peoples who have been subordinated to colonial states, to oligarchic regimes based on racism and other forms of discrimination. But ethnic movements are also creating a kind of mirror where images of the self and the other are confronted, and where profound changes in identity are produced as a result of this ideological interplay: one may find the other inside one's own self, or see that same self in the other, and decide to act in consequence. An effect of such an awareness may be the recognition of the mistakes inherent to the previously held idea of culture, nation, and identity in general.

Zapatistas are producing a special kind of awareness, they are opening a window to intra- and intercultural understanding, in part by focusing world attention on the living conditions of the Maya of Chiapas, and, by extension, on the other Indian peoples of the country. To that end, the mass media coverage has had an important impact on the official policies toward the rebels, which otherwise could have been much harder. Television images of recent massacres and defenseless Indian women facing the armed soldiers have traveled many times around the world, generating strong protests and humanitarian campaigns. Westerners have been particularly touched by this conflict, as their historical relations with the Indians go back a long way, and the moment seems right to overcome old disputes and misunderstandings. Expressions of sympathy and solidarity flowing into Mexico are in a sense an extension of the movement itself, which by that fact becomes a global phenomenon, one that in itself is uniting east and west, north and south.

According to Bakhtin, identity is always created on the frontier, on the borderline of at least two consciousness. The transformation of Maya identity that we witness here is an ongoing event taking place precisely on a frontier, in a new chronotope in which the Indian people confront, and respond to, their own reality through the presence of others, thanks to (or in spite of) those others. This violent struggle interpellates the Indian self, but by the same token interpellates an "us," and by doing so, dialogue becomes a possibility, the possibility of a new encounter, of a new understanding between *us* and *them*.

## Notes

1. See as an example, Judith Thorn's (1997) bakhtinian essay on the literatures of Rigoberta Menchú and Victor Montejo, both Mayan Indian intellectuals and activists. Thorn considers this literature as an important step from oral tradition to the written text that is allowing Indians to communicate with the world, as well as to develop "a canon of national literature for the Mayan people . . . characterized by both individual author and collective consciousness" (1997: 119).

2. According to our thinker, there is a concrete architectonic of the actual world of the performed act, composed of three basic moments: I-for-myself, the-other-for-me, and I-for-the-other. "All the values of actual life and culture are arranged around the basic architectonic points . . . All spatial-temporal values and all sense-content

values are drawn toward and concentrated around these central emotional-volitional moments" (Bakthin 1993: 54). See also Bubnova 1994.

3. The testimonial work on the life of Rigoberta Menchú (Burgos 1988) has crude examples of the systematic repression and terror lived by the Maya people, as well as the responses they have given to them.

4. For a Bakthin discussion of the notion of pretender, see (1993:42).

5. See my critic to Maya cultural anthropology in Alejos García (1994, 1996).

6. One exception to the rule is Sullivan's study on the relations between the Maya of Yucatan and their western visitors (1989), where the author explicitly acknowledges the intense and historical relationship between both categories. It is relevant to notice how Sullivan's discourse is overtly addressed to the West, in order to create an awareness of the political and cultural importance of such relationship.

7. In his critic to the western idea of modernity, Latour identifies an ideological construction that he calls a Great Divide that has separated "them—all the other cultures—and us—the westerners . . . We westerners are absolutely different from others!—such is the modern's victory cry, or protracted lament . . . In westerners' eyes the West, and the West alone, is not a culture, not merely a culture . . . we also mobilize nature . . . invented science" (Latour 1993: 97).

8. Benjamin (1989) has written an interesting study on the modern history of Chiapas, where he examines in depth the contents of the Chiapanecan paradox of being a rich land with a poor people.

9. This theoretical diadic model has a long history in the cultural anthropology carried out in Mexico and Guatemala. Studies that illustrate the present uses of it in the analysis of the latter country are Adams 1995, Carmack 1988, Le Bot 1995, Smith 1990, Stoll 1993.

10. Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) in Spanish; in Mexico is commonly referred to as the "EZ." It draws its name from the revolutionary peasant hero Emiliano Zapata, who, at the beginning of the twentieth century, organized and commanded a peasant army that protagonized what is known as the Mexican Revolution.

11. Henry Favre has published an interesting critique on Indian identity transformations in Latin America. He points out the urban and western roots behind the Indian movements, as well as the active interventions of anthropologists in the same. They "provide scientific legitimacy to the discourse of Indianism . . . and certificate the authenticity of Indian identity" (1994:82. Translation is mine).

12. See among other literature, the documents and messages of the Zapatista Army in EZLN 1994.

13. In a recent published interview, Marcos is said to be the "only white, or métis, among the Zapatista army. [that] has gained a confidence among Indian communities thanks to his respectful distance, . . . he can function as a window or bridge between both worlds" (Le Bot 1997: 17. Translation is mine). Indeed, he does show a "respectful distance" with the Indians, as he does not pretend to have simply turned into one of them, and he is also that "window or bridge," but he certainly is not the "only white or métis" involved, as Le Bot suggests.

## Works Cited

- Adams, Richard N. *Etnias en evolución social*, Mexico: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, 1995.
- Alejos García, José. *Mosojäntel. Etnografía del discurso agrarista entre los ch'oles de Chiapas*, Mexico, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1994.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "Dominio extranjero en Chiapas. El desarrollo cafetalero en la Sierra Norte," *Mesoamérica* 32, (1996): 283-98.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Ch'ol/Kaxlan. Identidades étnicas y conflicto agrario en el norte de Chiapas, 1920-1940.* Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1999.
- Bajtín, Mijaíl. *Estética de la creación verbal.* Mexico: Siglo XXI Editores, 1982.
- Bakhtin, Mijaíl. *Toward a Philosophy of the Act.* Ed. M. Holquist & V. Liapunov. Austin: U of Texas P, 1993.
- Benjamin, Thomas. *A Rich Land, a Poor People. Politics and Society in Modern Chiapas.* Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 1989.
- Bonfil Batalla, Guillermo. *Méjico profundo. Una civilización negada.* Mexico: SEP-CIESAS, 1987.
- Bricker, Victoria. *The Indian Christ, the Indian King.* Austin: U of Texas P, 1981.
- Bubnova, Tatiana. "El texto literario, producto de interacción verbal. Teoría del enunciado en Bajtín." *Acta Poética*, Mexico (4-5) (1983): 215-33.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "El lugar de la filosofía del acto ético en la filosofía del lenguaje de Bajtín." In *Escritos. Semiótica de la cultura*, ed. A. Giménez-Welsh. Oaxaca, Mexico: Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez (1994): 173-84.
- Burgos, Elizabeth. *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú y así me nació la conciencia.* Mexico: Siglo XXI Editores, 1988.
- Cardoza y Aragón, Luis. *Miguel Ángel Asturias. Casi novela.* Mexico: Ediciones Era, 1991.
- Carmack, Robert, editor. *Harvest of violence: The Mayan Indians and the Guatemalan crisis.* Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1988.
- Colby, Benjamin. *Ethnic relations in the Chiapas Highlands of Mexico.* New Mexico: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1966.
- \_\_\_\_\_. and Pierre van den Berghe. *Ixil Country. A plural society in Highland Guatemala.* Berkeley: U of California P, 1969.
- Collier, George. *Basta! Land and the Zapatista Rebellion in Chiapas.* Oakland, California: Food First Books, Institute for Food and Development Policy, 1994.
- De Vos, Jan. *Oro verde. La conquista de la Selva Lacandona por los madereros tabasqueños, 1822-1949.* Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1988.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Vivir en frontera. La experiencia de los indios de Chiapas.* Mexico: CIESAS-INI, 1994.
- Dussel, Enrique. *Filosofía ética latinoamericana.* Mexico: Edicol, 1977.
- Eriksen, Thomas Hylland. *Ethnicity and Nationalism. Anthropological Perspectives.* Boulder, Colorado: Pluto Press, 1993.
- EZLN. *Documentos y comunicados.* Mexico: Ediciones Era, 1994.
- Favre, Henry. "¿En qué se han convertido los indios? Las metamorfosis de la identidad india en América Latina." *Cuicuilco*, Mexico, (1994): 77-84.
- Gómez-Moriana, Antonio. "Cómo surge una instancia discursiva: Cristóbal Colón y la invención del "indio."" In *El indio, nacimiento y evolución de una instancia discursiva*, ed. E. Cros. Montpellier: Paul-Valéry University (1994): 125-49.
- La Farge, Oliver. "Maya Ethnology: The Sequence of Cultures." In *The Maya and their neighbors [1940]*, ed. Linton et al. New York: Cooper Square Publishers Inc. (1973): 281-91.
- Latour, Bruno. *We have never been modern.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1993.
- Le Bot, Yvon. "Mouvement indien et pouvoir Ladino." *Ethnies* (4-5), France, 1986.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *La guerra en tierras mayas.* Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1995.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Subcomandante Marcos. El sueño zapatista.* Barcelona: Plaza & Janés Editores S.A., 1997.
- Levinas, Emmanuel. *Totalidad e infinito. Ensayo sobre la exterioridad.* Barcelona: Ediciones Sígueme, 1977.

- Martínez Peláez, Severo. *La Patria del Criollo*. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1998.
- Monod, Aurore. *Feu Maya: Le Soulevement au Chiapas*. France: Ethnies, 1994.
- Morson, Gary and Caryl Emerson. *Mikhail Bakhtin. Creation of a Prosaics*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1990.
- Pitarch, Pedro. *Ch'ulel: una etnografía de las almas tzeltales*. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1996.
- Sieder, Rachel. *Costumary Law and Democratic Transition in Guatemala*. London: University of Latin American Studies, 1997.
- Smith, Carol, editor. *Guatemalan Indians and the state, 1540 to 1988*. Austin: U of Texas P, 1990.
- Stoll, David. *Between Two Armies. In the Ixil Towns of Guatemala*. New York: Columbia UP, 1993.
- Sullivan, Paul. *Unfinished conversations. Mayas and Foreigners Between Two Wars*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989.
- Thorn, Judith. *The Lived Horizon of My Being. The Substantiation of the Self & the Discourse of Resistance in Rigoberta Menchú, MM Bakhtin and Víctor Montejo*. Tempe: Arizona State University Center for Latin American Studies Press, 1996.
- Todorov, Tzvetan. *La conquista de América. La cuestión del otro*. Mexico: Siglo XXI Editores, 1987.
- Viqueira, Juan Pedro and Mario Humberto Ruz, editors. *Chiapas. Los rumbos de otra historia*. Mexico: UNAM-CIESAS-CEMCA-Universidad de Guadalajara, 1995.
- Voloshinov, Valentín. *El marxismo y la filosofía del lenguaje*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1992.

## ◆ Chapter 7

### The Indian Identity, the Existential Anguish and the Eternal Return (*El tiempo principia en Xibalba*, by Luis de Lión)

Tatiana Bubnova

Translated by Cristina Santaella

Yo lo sabía; sabía que una gran oscuridad nos esperaba, una gran oscuridad, un tiempo sin tiempo, un huracán de piel de sapo marino, terriblemente vengativo . . . todo esto es viento, sólo viento, viento que no deja de pasar. (M. A. Asturias)

I knew it; I knew that a great darkness was awaiting us, a great darkness, a time without time, a hurricane with sea toad-like skin, terribly vindictive . . . All of this is wind, only wind, wind that will not let up . . . (will not acquiesce?)

El tiempo es una mierda cuando uno se da cuenta que no viene sólo por joder. (Luis de Lión) [Time is shit when one realizes that it doesn't come only to screw us.]

#### For What Do Those Who Write Novels Write?

We are born, we live, and we die in a world populated by “others.”<sup>1</sup> The world belongs to them. I exist, “we” exist, because we can differentiate ourselves from the rest, from the “others.” We can conceive the world that surrounds us, inhabited by people other than ourselves, as a space of our actions, or rather a space of indispensable interaction, inevitable and necessary, with the others. Such acts will be subjected to a specific responsibility that comes from this ubiquity

and necessity of the other, without whom life loses not only its interest but also its very possibility.

Now, if the dynamics of the other's existence changes me, if it changes my orientation in the world, the other—I suppose—experiences something analogous in relation to me. Our interaction has the character of an event, a flow which depends on both of us. In a certain manner, the other inaugurates me, I depend on him in many ways. Our relationship is not symmetrical but for hypothesis. Lived from within, it shows me that the “other” is different: he is in another place, he possesses other things, he is and he looks unique, and I do not know with certainty what it is that he carries in his interior. He is “other-for-me.” When I think about myself, I know intuitively that it is not the same thing to be I-for-me than I-for-other. What I do for myself is different from what I do for another. However, almost everything I do (perhaps everything), I do “for another.”

A novel written with(in) this breath is an act for another, the result of the other's intervention. In this space of ethical acts—my actions accomplished with the other in mind—the novels that are worth the while are written.

This peculiar “ethic,” in the Bakhtinian sense of relating to the other, questions and makes us reconsider the endlessly discussed autonomy of aesthetics. For literature, as for any other art, an autonomy is claimed with respect to other fields of human activity, be these science, religion, or politics; above all with respect to the latter. We all know that the correct thing to do is to believe that “commitment” in art refers only to art itself. Within this logic, art is above all only for itself. This is not the appropriate place to discuss the kind of problems (my objective is very much another, but suddenly I see that everything is related) which are usually called “esthetic problems.” But all of us who read literature know, at the same time, that we are dealing with a domain that makes possible to conceive the novel as a genre of “ultimate issues,” issues which we must “solve” in order to understand, to know. One acts thus through the novel; for (an)other, with the urgency to solve something vital, be it intimate or universal. A novel can also be read thus: as the writing of someone who presents me with and/or helps me solve my own “ultimate issues.”

How to inscribe within this problematic the highly disreputable—for its supposedly non-aesthetic quality—“committed literature”: committed from the social point of view? One has to assume that a writer writes about what matters the most to him in the first instance, because he cannot refrain from writing. And if what matters the most to him is literature—for example—it is about literature as an autotelic domain that he will write, as if it were the most important issue in the universe. On the other hand, one can write only about oneself, placing in the center of the universe one's own reason for being, writing intimately and “subjectively.” One writes of the

pain of one's own "I," of knowing or not knowing who one is, the quest for, or the loss of, a place of one's own in the world—not only as an existential anguish—the pain of being, the "nausea" of living. The latter can stem from deep within oneself, from a discontent with oneself.

But this disagreement with one's own way of being can also emerge in a place, physical or virtual, but axiologically marked, one that has been disputed for more than five hundred years in the most ruthless of manners, and from a position of strength, thus questioning the very right to one's existence. Seen from this point of view, the anguish of existing (living) can also very well be the most important issue to talk about, to write about. How does a marginalized, oppressed, and displaced being live the rejection that is inflicted upon him by the "external world" (say, the "others")? How does he live it in his most intimate being?

Thus, by speaking about a novel by the Guatemalan writer Luis de Lión (1939-1984?), disappeared by the military dictatorship during the years of the most merciless repression against the Indian insurgency,<sup>2</sup> I wish to underline, almost as an apology,<sup>3</sup> the existential character of the author's concerns, beyond any indigenism, beyond a merely social and vindicating preoccupation, and much less, an ethnological one. The work was probably written around 1970, given that it won a literary award in a 1972 competition. It was published for the first time in 1985. We are speaking of a practically unknown writer, a Cakchiquel Indian by origin, school teacher and university professor, and author of two short-story books and a novel. The so-called indigenist novel seldom tries to account for the internal world of the Indian, and when it achieves this, it does not do it in a convincing manner: in the best of cases it isolates a social problem treated from the point of view of non-Indian groups. Another way of recuperating the Indian consciousness is the one I would call mythopoetic, but it is similarly undertaken from the outside.<sup>4</sup>

Luis de Lión attracted the attention of post-civil war literary criticism precisely due to his originality and vigor, from the aforementioned point of view: he spoke from the inside of an I split by the social and axiological radical rupture of society. The novel depicts in a very internalized manner the relationship between the Mayan population of Guatemala and the outside world dominated by *mestizo* otherness, or by the generically called *Ladino* otherness. The latter exclusively attributes to itself the Guatemalan nationality, seeing the overwhelming Indian majority of the country as the *others*, alien and hostile, but paradoxically necessary. Luis de Lión situates the internal experience (*vivencia*) of this conflict within the intimate territory of the Indian, in the I of his peasants characters, showing in this way the social effect of the deep wound of identity that permeates the social fabric of the Mayan people.<sup>5</sup> The type of conflict and the characteristics of the language that the author employs—the Guatemalan Spanish, stylized to obtain a specific effect of Indian

orality—invite an unsettling reflection about the relationship between the I and the other, which takes place in this world of ours at the end of the century and the Millennium.

### A Dialogue in the Grand Time

The most important antecedent to understand the work of Luis de Lión is, admittedly, the cultural context, and particularly the literary context of Guatemala. But, above all, the work of Miguel Angel Asturias (Nobel Prize 1967) is important, for Asturias is considered to be an indigenist writer and the author of works related to the traditional Indian world, such as *Leyendas de Guatemala* (1931), *Hombres de maíz* (1949), and the trilogy *Viento fuerte* (1950), *El papa verde* (1954) and *Los ojos de los enterrados* (1960),<sup>6</sup> in which ancient mythology, as well as syncretic beliefs and superstitions of the present-day Mayan population of Guatemala have a fundamental importance. Without touching upon the issue of influence and literary relations, I only wish to stress the fact that without the presence of Miguel Angel Asturias' work in the Hispanic American literary horizon, the work of Luis de Lión would have been impossible in many aspects (to start with, Asturias' own linguistic work clearly precedes, on Indian themes, that of Luis de Lión). However, when the *explicit*—not the *implicit*—absence of a direct reference to Asturias' work in Luis de Lión's novel becomes apparent, it also becomes a significant fact. In a certain manner we can assume that for Luis de Lión Asturias' work is the sort of “other” with which he cannot but establish a relation of rejection and estrangement within his text.

From the point of view of the dialogical relations<sup>7</sup> on which the social existence of man and, above all, of culture, is based, the *de facto* absence of Asturian topics in Luis de Lión's work *has* a meaning: it is a given that confers the utterance the characteristics of an entimema (Voloshinov 1926: 251).<sup>8</sup> The tacit presuppositions of an utterance with a global sense—the work of Luis de Lión is this kind of utterance—confer it this quality of response that characterizes it. The not-said, that which is deliberately omitted, as well as what is not sayable—that which is impossible to utter in a specific historical moment, for different reasons—are an important part of the dynamics of an utterance, which is the basis of the quotidian and trans-historical dialogical communication. This structural proposition possesses the same validity for a literary utterance. I remind the reader that a complete work can be seen<sup>9</sup> as a specifically conclusive utterance (conclusive mainly from the aesthetic point of view, but also as an utterance to the extent that, being a replica of a more extensive dialogue, it can be contested) if we consider it in its capacity of participant in a larger dialogue that encloses it. In this case, we are dealing with the great historical dialogue—a violent one—about the Guatemalan man's identity and, widely speaking, about the

relationship that all the Latin American nations have with the indigenous population. I do not intend to contest here the reasons for this virtual absence, manifested in different ways, by the country's two most important novelists of this century, both of whom wrote about similar themes.

But it is valid to assume that the political meaning that Asturias's image acquired (inside and outside of the country) during the successive dictatorships that went from the thirties to the sixties, endowed his work with the halo of the unacceptable, without his work justifying this attribution.<sup>10</sup> The long period that Asturias would spend in Europe, and, at the same time, his "pacific co-existence" with the Guatemalan dictatorships, his Lenin award in 1966, followed by the Nobel Prize in 1967, his role as ambassador of his country to France during the sixties: all these purely biographical facts constitute the background of a situation which for many, without a doubt many, projected a shadow of mistrust on the work of the great Guatemalan writer. I suspect that Asturias' was a tacit but significant presence (perhaps, in a way, somewhat ambivalent) in the literary horizon of Luis de Líon. There is an implicit dialogue with the work of Asturias and with the man himself in the pages of *El tiempo principia en Xibalbá*,<sup>11</sup> a hidden dialogue which acquires sense beyond any biographical circumstance of the personal and historical micro-time, and develops within the *grand time*, speaking in Bakhtinian terms. This historical and extra-textual *grand time* is also manifest in the text at the level of the integrated myth, as we shall see below.

## Architectonics

To set the focus that will be given to this essay, I will resort to the way in which M. Bakhtin describes the architectonics of the relationship between the I (of the subject) and the world. The element that is most important for me—and external to myself—is the subject, (an)other I, (an)other person(s) who constitute my immediate surroundings. One of the fundamental characteristics of this other for me is its radical *exotopy*: its location in a space external to myself due to which the other configures the world that he perceives from a point of view radically different from mine. The act of placing oneself on the outside symbolizes the absolute difference of the other with respect to the I. But in some way, the other has a sort of advantage over my vision of the world: *he is capable of seeing in me that which I, from my subjectivity, cannot see, even within myself*. In this way, I must accept that the vision of the other precedes mine and that his existence is prior to mine: *I also am*, but the other *is* before I am.<sup>12</sup> According to this, I organize my world from the standpoint of three fundamental optics—those which I have already anticipated—all based on the presence of the other: I-for-myself, I-for-the-other, the-other-for-me. The existence of the other is a condition for the existence of myself: it

is foundational for my subjectivity, because everything I do, I do taking the other into account, in one manner or another. All my valuation of things, acts and concepts stem from my relationship with the other. My relationship with the world is an act that I realize for, of, or under the gaze of the other, or else, in the absence of the other, an absence that also possesses a sense. Subjectivity is the manifestation of my doing for the other.

This vision of subjectivity can be transferred to larger social and cultural structures, yielding results that are extremely unsettling and revealing. *Us and the others* is a kind of fundamental relationship which human collectivity has known since primeval times, and its architectonics, obviously, are not articulated in a manner identical to what goes on at the intersubjective level: that which is "ours" is ancestrally good because it is ours; that which belongs to the others is often not good for not being ours. Relationships between entire societies, and moreover, between cultures, is a theme to which contemporary human sciences assign a preferred place. One is capable of realizing one's own characteristics only upon transgressing the frontiers of sameness, upon trespassing the axiological terrain of the other, upon sharing a part of his optic from without. This is an aspect through which it becomes easier to manipulate the collective beliefs and actions.

This field of problems of philosophical anthropology has turned out to be especially fecund for ethnology and other similar disciplines, particularly to come to terms with the fact that the object of study of human sciences possesses the characteristics of a subject and can only be known thoroughly by means of a dialogical relationship, beyond the traditional objectification of the Cartesian gaze.

### **Architectonics and Anthropology**

De todas maneras te decían:—Indio! (Luis de Lión)  
[Anyway, they always called you:—Indian!]

With respect to the semantics of the Mayan people's social practice, J. Alejos has studied the ethnic denominations of the social groups that inhabit the historical zone of Mayan towns, a classification that is imposed on the groups that use it from without, and which does not reflect the reality of the Mayan social relationships. Each ethnic group has a self-denomination in its own language, as well as names to describe other groups which are often different from those attributed to them by other groups. This type of differences often turn out to be very revealing because they reflect the intrinsic valuations which the speakers of specific languages use during the process of denomination of the others. Thus, the division Indian/Ladino adopted by mestizo society, and which traditional anthropology has inherited,

among the Choles of Chiapas (Mexico) becomes *winik* (people) to designate themselves in opposition to the *kaxlanes*—all the others, the strangers, the non-Indians—whereas the name *Latinos* designates only the mestizos.<sup>13</sup>

Exotopy is the principle that can—and must—be applied to the analysis of intercultural relationships wherein, above all, the relationship between the oppressor and the subjected prevails. Topics such as the formation of national identity, the claim to ancestral rights, or interracial relationships, for instance, imply situations in which some individuals observe and treat others as if they were absolutely alien objects, strange and negative, questioning (and, in fact, denying them through what could be called extra-discursive resources) the very right to their existence. Another manner of relating to otherness is by assigning it, as opposed to sameness, a subaltern mark; a dependent, and, in fact, a slave role. In the Latin American context (and in the Caribbean), these themes are being widely revived and discussed, especially in the works of José Enrique Rodó, Frantz Fanon, Roberto Fernández Retamar, Tzvetan Todorov, among many others who have formulated a field of definition of identity problems in terms which are presently shared among all those interested in the theme. For each country, this theme presents particular statements and acquires specific tinges, according to the country's social-historical condition and its relationship to its internal and external *other*.

The definition of a way of being, that is, of an identity, implies this dynamics of being either inside or outside (of the group): a consciousness of frontiers. How do I relate to someone who is an absolute other for me, without treating him as my enemy, as a pure negation of my values, or as an imminent danger? And, above all, why do it? How can I take hold of my own identity, if not by means of a relationship with the other, from his standpoint, and through an interaction with him? As members of varied social groups, we usually assert ourselves through the negation of *the others*. Exotopy is directly related to ethics in a specifically Bakhtinian sense. Ethics as the analysis and axiology of the relationship with the other is not a source of values but rather a manner of relating to such values.<sup>14</sup>

## Architectonics and Literature

Ultimately, the other's exotopy is one of the most powerful instruments of literary creation. Being that the hero is a central element of artistic creation, he is part of a “reality” that meets the author as a recognizable and acceptable form in each specific art. The relationship between the author and the hero is a complex “web” of attitudes which oscillates between identification and empathy, and which the author lives according to his character and to the attitude of estrangement and esthetic conclusion, both of which are necessary for the hero to be depicted as such: a reality of an

exclusively artistic order (if only imposed on the author as a *given* reality). The author transforms what is *given* to him in an artistic imperative, turning it into something which, for him, has been propounded or projected. The finished product of his esthetic activity is that which is created. Even if the artistic object which has been created carries with it a certain element of the given as a finished product of an esthetic activity, it is revealed as an art object in its full meaning only through the artistic act's process of reception by its intended receptors. An art object is an actuality of a borderline nature: a book is a book only when it is read. Such is the dynamic of the relationship between *the other* transformed into a reality of an artistic order, and the reality of *the other*. From this standpoint, in true art nothing is invented but rather taken from life, depicted, submitted as an idealized and transformed objective—created and re-created—as a product which only becomes an art object through a relationship with the other.

Exotopy of the ethnological type, exotopy as an encounter with the exotic, or as a quest for roots, and, in the last analysis, for identity, constitutes the different degrees of being inside or outside a specific “social” problematic. One’s origins, for example, can be manifested to us as a sort of “otherness,” and it can become the object of a legitimate disquisition in its own way. But to be in disagreement with oneself because of one’s origin, and due to the concrete consequences that such origin produces over one’s own life, could very well become the motive for an existential crisis. The Jews of the Diaspora must know plenty about this, for example. In this sense, it is necessary to remember the fragmentary and fragmenting version of Indian reality from the standpoint of traditional anthropology, especially that of North American anthropology: the isolated community as a privileged focus of the researcher’s interest, without taking into account its inscription within the widest context of the zone, of the country in which it exists, its relationship with *other* analogous or distinct communities, with *other* villages, *other* languages, *other* socioeconomic and cultural relations in their widest sense. Luis de Lión, at first sight, takes hold of this “anthropological” gaze: his novel’s world is that of an Indian village. However, under his gaze, the world of the Cakchiquel community has a correlative within the universal and cosmic order. Moreover, the effect that the community has had on the external world is revealed. Now, it is interesting to note the absence of the larger universe of his “national” culture: the word Guatemala is absent from the book.

Silences and omissions, as I have said, are a legitimate and significant part of the utterance. What remains unsaid, what is tacit or intentionally silenced, forms part of or contributes to the semantics of totality. Upon the conflicts with the Indians—let it be considered that they are the majority in a country where, as Cardoza says, “the Indian is not seen” (is invisible?)—during the civil war, and in some way due to the international opinion and the struggle of international

organizations, the “Indian” is at last acquiring his own voice within the great world-dialogue, and what he says is not agreeable to the ears of his “other”: the White, the *Mestizo*. Regardless of (or perhaps because of) subsequent controversies, an example of this new situation is the political figure and the personal history of Rigoberta Menchú, the Guatemalan woman who speaks to the world in favor of her people, from the inside of their ethnic and social life-world.

But this new vision is also not self-indulgent, as it happens in Luis de Lión’s novel. The identitary constructs of Miguel Angel Asturias<sup>15</sup> or even those of Luis Cardoza y Aragón around the Guatemalan nationality, pale in comparison with those found in the work of the author in question. The conflict that his book posits touches upon the intrinsic territories of the subject, but its deepness and importance are far larger than those which can be seized by the extremely exotopic, meagerly empathetic gaze of the major actors of Guatemalan literature.<sup>16</sup> Here, an analysis of the topic of the “indignity of speaking for others”<sup>17</sup> is in order by those who want to be the voice of people who do not have one. The “true” Indian literature must be written by Indians (Mariátegui). In general, Indigenist literature has of late been imputed with this exotopic defect. (However, Cardoza y Aragón sees Asturias’ situation with respect to the Indian world in a totally different manner, and, in my view, quite fair: he rescues it with its Indian side through its mestizo identity on the one hand, and on the other, through creative imagination).

### **Language, Identity, and the Esthetics of Verbal Creation**

Complexity: a problem of language and cultural identity; supposedly, language is a sort of agent that contributes to transforming the Indian into Ladino in the first instance. The school teachers, the local politicians (such as the municipal presidents), and such figures within Indian communities have been primarily susceptible to take the step of abandoning the values of an oppressed culture that lacks prestige (the Indian culture), and is prone to integrating into another: the mestizo, the Ladino culture. Luis de Lión writes his work as a Cakchiquel, but the language in which he writes is Spanish, the same Guatemalan Spanish that Asturias used in *El señor presidente* and in his novels about the banana plantations. The acculturation of a school teacher, later a university professor, can be considered from a certain standpoint as an infidelity towards the cause of his people.<sup>18</sup> However, with the same right it can be said that the gender of the novel, as well as the literary concept within which the novel can be possible, is also “western.” In the Spanish language filtered through the Guatemalan crucible, Luis de Lión not only speaks to his people: he speaks to the whole country, as well as to all the Spanish-speaking world.

From the artistic point of view, Asturias faced the same problem before: which Spanish do his Indians supposedly speak in *Hombres de*

*maíz?* Many other writers have been confronted with the same challenge: Rulfo, with the language of the peasants from the Mexican state of Jalisco which he supposedly reproduces; Borges, whose characters often used the vernacular language of the “arrabal porteño” of Buenos Aires.

The most significant case is that of José María Arguedas, whose “mestizo” language was at one point the critics’ object. We shall see what the Peruvian writer—who grew up in the environment of the Quechua language and learned Spanish afterwards—has to say about his Indigenist Spanish:

Era necesario encontrar los sutiles desordenamientos que haría del castellano el molde justo, el instrumento adecuado. Y como se trataba de un hallazgo estético, él fue alcanzado como en los sueños, de manera imprecisa. Yo resolví el problema creándoles un lenguaje castellano especial, que después ha sido empleado con horrible exageración en trabajos ajenos. Pero los indios no hablan este castellano ni con los de lengua española, ni mucho menos entre ellos. Es una ficción. Los indios hablan en quechua. Toda la tierra del sur y del centro, con excepción de algunas ciudades, es de habla quechua total. (*Apud Cardoza* 28-29)

It was necessary to find the subtle disordering that would make of (Castilian?) Spanish the just mold, the adequate instrument. And since this was an aesthetic finding, it was achieved (reached, seized) as in dreams, in an imprecise manner. I solved the problem by creating for them a special Spanish which has later been employed with dreadful exaggeration in the works of others. But the Indians do not even speak this Spanish with Spanish-speaking peoples, much less among themselves. It is a fiction. The Indians speak in Quechua. All the Southern and Central land, with the exception of some cities, is wholly Quechua-speaking. (revisar) (*Apud Cardoza* 28-29)

Arguedas is clear: he is creating a language *ad hoc*, hybrid, non-existent in reality, but veritable; he is creating an artistic reality which in its Aristotelian mode (manifestation?) can be superior to historical facts.

This artistic hybridization of language with the purpose of stylizing a speech that does not exist empirically but that produces the effect of a sociologically characterized manner of speech is one of the esthetic procedures that Bakhtin mentions as those which are utilized for the creation of the “image of language,” one of the fundamental objectives of the novel. This idea should not be understood from a formalistic point of view as a purely esthetic quest: if we consider the fact that language is a world-vision, an ideology, a particular optic and

a given (and socially marked) mode to say things, the image of language that Luis de Lión creates meets artistic objectives which are inscribed in the totality of his *ethic act* as an inalienable part. Luis de Lión writes in an stylized Spanish which attempts to represent the speech of Cakchiquel Indians who (in real life) speak the Cakchiquel language, but that, when represented through the Guatemalan *chapín*, creates precisely this effect.<sup>19</sup> I do not intend to suggest that one is dealing with a “recorded reproduction” of this “social language,” but rather with an artistic recreation within a dialogically manifold context where the use of a verbal modality signifies at least a triple orientation: towards the object of representation (the problem of the split identity), towards one’s own manner of expression (the selection of a colloquial modality of Spanish), and towards other social tongues and languages (other registers of Spanish, particularly “literary” Spanish, and especially the Guatemalan Indian languages, primarily the Cakchiquel). This situation is far removed from the purpose of humbly serving some social register or particular style; it is rather oriented towards the creation of an image of language capable of exposing the existential problem that the author presents. From this point of view, the timely selection and exaggeration of specific lexical-semantic and syntactic features is viable with respect to the language’s empirical reality, as well as the creation of linguistic moments that are in fact alien to any empirical reference but which are nonetheless “veritable.”<sup>20</sup>

The esthetic objectives go beyond any racial or tribal fundamentalism; through a work of language one speaks to the world. Thus, through the realities of the surrounding life, and through this sort of *koiné* that is the Guatemalan *chapín*, the search for a new object is undertaken: that of the literary work, which as an aesthetic object will be read—in conjunction with the author—by you and me, its readers.

## The Novel

[Gracias, inditos, por su buen corazón! (Luis de Lión)  
 [Thank you, *inditos*, for your good heart!]

The work is entitled *El tiempo principia en Xibalbá* (Time begins in Xibalbá). *Xibalbá*, or *Xibalbay* was, for the ancient Mayas, “the nether region” where the mortal enemies of men lived. In Cakchiquel language, *Xibalbá* signifies “the demon, or the dead,” while in Yucatán the same name was assigned to “the devil” (Ruz, 52). Other researchers attenuate the diabolic character of the etymology of *Xibalbá*, accentuating instead the ambivalence and the positive pole, always present in Indian mythology, of the places associated with death. It is the Mayan infra-world, which can have a function of purification and give birth to a new life.<sup>21</sup>

It presents a two-plane structure, in such a way that it evokes at the same time circularity, as the cyclical time in Mayan mythology, and the linearity of History and of micro-history, with its private and collective everydayness. A cosmic plane situates whatever goes on in the novel in a mythical atemporality governed by the law of the eternal return. But at the same time, the novel refers us to present-day events, ideologies, and values through the evocations of a world of current objects and concepts. There is also the realization of a certain degradation, given that many objects of Indian material culture lack its original semantic richness and its spiritual background—religion—which were taken away from them. Its vestiges, mingled with Christianity, have diminished their value faced with the supposed “dignity”—prestige, material wealth, freedom—of a capitalist consumers’ world to which the village has integrated itself, however limited, partial, and degraded this integration may be.

The chapters’ index accounts for the crafty structure of this short novel:

- First was the wind
- The other half of the night they could not sleep anymore
- And truly, they were alive . . .
- And the day came . . .
- Epi . . . taph
- Prologue

Thus, the penultimate chapter is an epilogue that turns into an epitaph, and the last is a prologue which refers us to the eternal return. In fact, it refers us to the beginning of the novel. And because the first chapter is entitled “First was the wind . . .” it evokes the cosmogony of the *Popol Vuh* wherein the Mayan trinity “the Sky’s heart” or *Hurricane*, is among the first forefathers.<sup>22</sup> “The first one is called *Caculhá Huracán*. the second, *Chipi-Caculhá*. The third is *Raxa-Caculhá*. And all three are the Sky’s Heart” (*Popol Vuh* 24). *Huracán* (*Hurricane*), is a one-legged god, master of lightning and lightning flash.<sup>23</sup>

This is a particularly cultured reference which today comes from written sources compiled within specific cultural frames: a school, a university, and even within a nationalistic cultural project.<sup>24</sup> If this reference is overlooked, the meaning of the beginning of the novel, which narrates the arrival of a great wind of cosmic proportions to a Mayan village, would be truncated. Similarly, it has been noted that Luis de Lión’s novel begins right where Asturias’s *Viento fuerte* ends. It is there where the tacit presence of the great Guatemalan writer emerges; precisely in Asturias’ novel (Part One of a trilogy devoted to life within the banana plantations), the hurricane that kills the “positive” heroes Lester and Leland is also the instrument of a cosmic revenge by the Indian deities, one that reaches its completion in the second part of the trilogy: *El papa verde*. Asturias’s trilogy

deals with the confrontation between the traditional and tribal cultures of the Guatemalan peasants and the new values imposed, violently, by the force of the North American globalizing mercantilism. Lester and Leland's deaths turn the new local plantation workers, who abandoned their tribal universe only yesterday, into the heirs of their millionaire "gringo" colleagues. A sort of poetic justice is thus accomplished, which contains the meaning of the trilogy's second part. They are Indians undergoing a process of "Ladinization."

The wind is also the element that carries away historical time in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) by Gabriel García-Márquez. The wind is an active factor in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (1980); the wind plays a central role in many of Rulfo's works. At first, Luis de Lión's novel does not escape its inscription within the Latin American literary history (as it does not evade its Hispanic lineage, although obstinately disallowing it—which, if we think of the author's name, provides the novel with an additional dialogical dimension).

Thus, the wind arrives, or rather, "it was not the wind. It was an animal in the shape of the wind. Or a person in the shape of an animal" (Lión 4).<sup>25</sup> It brings devastation and the events caused by it are lived in a cosmic order.<sup>26</sup> The wind is followed, significantly, by a "slight smell of blood," by a scream, by silence, by a ghostly cold, by dance and celebration evocative of hell.<sup>27</sup> Fear, terror, and the presence of death are the semantic elements that predominate in this sequence. The arrival of evil is announced with the passage of a primeval wind through the indigenous universe, but this wind has the attributes of a violent and negative force which is associated with the annihilating symbolism of war. The cosmic stage is set; it possesses features of a universal allegory, of a sort of paraphrase which would transcribe the human events into the cataclysmic language of the *Popol Vuh*.<sup>28</sup>

The wheelbarrow of the infra world, which is heard throughout the street, points, however, to the house of a concrete character, and this is how the passage from the cosmogonic level to that of the everyday history of a Guatemalan village lost in the mountains takes place. Later on, we will learn that the door mentioned is that of someone who is known by the paradoxical epithet of Juan *Caca*, which is in fact an antiphrasis because it refers to a character that is a model of physical and moral cleanliness. The discourse marks the change of levels through a permanent introduction of the phrase, "a memory that . . .," a discursive clutch that appears every time it becomes necessary to situate the story in the here and now. This turn takes the narration out of the non-temporal and cyclic dimension, and makes possible a "(hi)story": history as narrative fact, "history" against the circularity of myth.

It is necessary to resort to the title of the book (the title is an important interpretive part of the text, a clue that transmits the authorial opinion about its own utterance, a discursive element pertaining to literary enunciation), in order to understand that the

aforementioned transition of levels is inscribed in a evaluative manner: "time begins in Xibalbá:, in the infra world of the Mayas, ambivalent hell, at once origin and end of life, an infra world whose Lords have to be vanquished by the civilizing heroes Hunahpú and Ixbalanqué, the divine twins. At the same time, in the Cakchiquel texts, "Xibalbay" is invoked as the "precious" and "beautiful" place of origin (see Demetrio Sodi's translations). Does the wind arrive from Xibalbá to the village? Or rather, does it arrive in the Xibalbá that is the village?

At the center of narration, or rather of the narrator's "memory," three main characters are found: Juan Caca,<sup>29</sup> Concha the whore, nicknamed "Virgin of Conception," and a certain Pascual, all three related to the main event of the narration: the abduction and "rape" of the wooden figure of the real Virgin of Conception [*sic*], whose home is the local church.

Juan Caca is a wealthy devotee. These two characteristics determine the third: he has an obsession with aseptic cleanliness; his house, of a "deadly" whiteness, possesses a perfectionist purity, to such an extent that the reader can initially confuse it with a priest's quarters or a parish. The affluence and devotion of Juan Caca are two characteristics that differentiate this character from the rest of the people in the village, and they are symbolized through an obsessive neatness which excludes any human presence by the utterly symbolic gesture of immediately cleaning the place where the transgressor of his house's unpolluted cleanliness has just been. The demarcating line that Juan Caca establishes between himself and the rest of the village also carries with it the sense of racial division, one that equally obsesses this character in a clandestine manner, according to what we learn through the events portrayed through the narrator's comments about Juan Caca's attitude towards the Virgin of Conception:

Recordás que durante mucho tiempo la visitaste a solas, . . . que en tu casa la soñabas desnudita en tu cama, . . . y no pensando en si era virgen o madre o puta sino mujer blanca, ladina, mujer de otro lado, de la otra raza a la que vos te querías integrar por tu dinero, por la blancura de tu casa, de tu alma, a pesar de la indiez de tu cara, de tu rabadilla, de tu pelo. (Líon 65)

You will remember that for a long time you went to visit her alone, . . . that in your house you dreamed of her stark naked in your bed, . . . not thinking that she was a virgin, a mother, or a whore, but a white woman, a ladina, a woman of the other side, of the other race to which you wanted to belong because of your money, because of the whiteness of your house, of your soul, in spite of the Indianness of your face, of your ass, of your hair.

These two topics—racism and self-hatred—which are mutually related, are, in my opinion, the interpretative key of the novel *Time Begins in Xibalbá*, a text not at all complacent with Indian reality and which at the same time shows, as a great tragedy, the problem that affects the unity of the Guatemalan people: the internal division of self-valoration and of the cosmovision of an intrinsically contradictory world. Prestige and desire are attached to what is hated: the values and the goods pertaining to the oppressive Spanish and Ladino culture. People wish to abandon that which is their own, they live consumed by the wish of abandoning their “selfhood,” their spirituality, their very essence, in order to take possession of the objects which symbolically represent the Ladino culture, which the Ladino Virgin and her intruder son represent, thus affecting the self-valorating and cosmovisional horizon of the Indian.

The fact is that Juan Caca, the model of all Christian virtues and one of “those who can” in the village, is involved with Concha, the prostitute, the object of all tacit and manifest concupiscence in the village. In this sense, the priest is also under suspicion: as in the song to the Llorona (the weeper), his hands almost drop the wafer<sup>30</sup> upon the apparition of Concha in his domain. The foreigners, the village men, married and single alike, are all after Concha, they all know the taste, the scent, and the most intimate voice of the woman Juan Caca is marrying, marking, once again, a double division within the village: he marries the most desired and most repudiated woman, an “untouchable,” so to speak, thus hurling yet another challenge at the village. Incidentally, Concha is the living image of her divine namesake set up in the church, of the Ladino Virgin dressed and adorned with all the attributes imposed by Catholic religion. Only that Concha is dark and Indian, whereas the other “Concha” is alien, foreign, a coveted Ladina, a “kaxlana,”<sup>31</sup> as present-day ethnologists would say.

But Juan Caca, despite his legal possession of the parochial “Magdalene,” does not cohabit with her, although she is a highly sexual woman. Concha, “don’t be such a whore,” he says to all her attempts to make him fulfill his marital obligations. The lack of sexuality of the husband is imposed on Concha as yet another marker of the rejection of difference: they say that the Indian of the mountain range is “cold” and rejects the “lewdness” characteristic, for example, of the seacoast people (by the opposition of high/low, cold/hot, pure/impure) like yet another sort of “otherness.” The rejection of sex is thus turned, paradoxically, into an instrument of marginalization conductive to violence. And Concha abandons Juan Caca.

Subsequent to these events, Pascual, another marginalized character, returns to the village. An army deserter and previously a young rebel without a cause, sadistic and merciless, Pascual is in search of his place of origin, after verifying time after time his marginal position also in the outside world. As I have said, he had

been a soldier, a deserter, a thief, and the chief of a band of burglars; he even participated in a foreign revolution, he has traveled, he knows languages and has seen more world than anybody in the village. But in any of the places where he could have been, everywhere, his racial difference has destroyed any expectation of change for improvement. Even the woman who once loved him refused to be the mother of his son to avoid seeing the latter as an Indian, like his father.

Concha tries to seduce Pascual and is rejected. The reason is the same that moved Juan Caca: she is Indian and does not meet the requisites of his ambition. Because Pascual has higher aspirations; he covets the Ladina who lives in the church, the Virgin of Conception. Finally, he abducts the Virgin from the House of God to assault and rape her. Pascual as a marginalized being “other but same” (speaking in Bakhtinian terms), is rejected, as I have said, twice and thrice: in the first place from within the village, then, in the outside world, and finally, for his abduction of the Virgin upon returning to his world.

When the disappearance of the Virgin becomes known, the town’s male population is not so much enraged about a profanation and a sacrilege, but rather for not having dared to do the same with the “other,” who has always been the most coveted object of desire of all men. And the town’s female half, knowing she has always been their rival, hates the “Ladina” for being so. In this manner, the relationship with Catholic religion, the main agent of the Indians’ acculturation from the first times of the Conquest, is presented as a conflict that Luis de Lión uncovers in the most unrelenting of ways. In this sense, the narrator’s voice “identifies itself” (but does not fuse) axiologically with that of the village, through the appropriation of the problematic of self-esteem and that of the integration of the surrounding social universe. In particular, the narrator’s point of view is able to establish empathy with that of Juan Caca, and even with that of Pascual.

The issue of Christian religion is such a thorny one that it is impossible to avoid provoking controversy and conflicts in any discussion around it. The moral justification of the Conquest continues to be the main element for the vindication of the Indian culture within the context of religious belligerence (yesteryear, exclusively Catholic, but for a long time now, also Protestant). This is a situation that has never stopped being racist. In Luis de Lión’s perspective, the issue loses all idyllic nuance, showing the true axiological crux of a situation of implicit conflict created at the bordering zone between ancestral and archaic Indian religion, in spite of having absorbed numerous elements of the invasive “western”<sup>32</sup> culture and the local Spanish Catholicism.

There is a considerable amount of blasphemy, carnivalesque inversions, and simple questioning of religious elements: Concha’s sex is at once a gate to hell (as in the best tradition of the Medieval novella) and a heaven, a “nether heaven” (86). The erotic projection of the town’s men is described as “the soul turned into a cataract of

boiling lather" (16), a clear allusion to "the army of Indian sperm" (20). A guardian angel is the same as "a guardian devil" (37). The abducted and assaulted Virgin "seemed like a street-woman, a whore" (60), and even an "anti-woman" (77). Not to mention the priest's image: "And the father came, he first listened to all, then he scolded them and voted in favor of the one he knew had more money" (62). "The big saint that was" Concha's husband, the merciless Pascual, and the rest of the town's men, as we have seen, do not think of the Virgin in terms other than those of a desirable Ladina, an "other" woman, the white one, the one they want to "taste" in a sort of self-esteem survey so as to fulfill a merely sexist curiosity about the world of the "Kaxlanes."

Subsequently, the "night" of violence which connects the cosmogonic level with "history," has its correlate in the *Popol Vuh*. Men confront each other, fathers against sons, brothers against brothers, and so on, apocalyptically, in a night anterior to light and "time." But the time engendered or originating in Xibalbá will be the time of "the other," uncanny and sinister. It is cyclical and circular, and it undergoes a stage of purification and renaissance: only this can be the teaching of Xibalbá.<sup>33</sup> In this light, Pascual is a sort of incarnation of this position which at once denies and searches for "sameness": Pascual disowns his parents, his Indianness, and at the same time he feels obliged, or rather called, to return to it and to embrace it. But the return and the quest do not happen in a pacific and non-conflictive manner—just like the five hundred years of Indian "integration" into the unity of the conquered countries which were anything but pacific—but rather in a permanent agony due to oppression, internal splits, and humiliation. On the contrary, Pascual's bordering and "Ladinicized" position finally leads him to death.<sup>34</sup> These episodes of Luis de Lión's novel can be read as an allegory to the current tragedy of Mayan peoples, divided, confronting each other, marginalized, and disowned by their major social surroundings: the official geography of Latin America.

Todorov mentions "a new exotopy (to speak like Bakhtin), an assertion of the other's exteriority which runs parallel to his recognition as a subject." This recognition can not take place (or may not be manifest) in a painless and pacific manner. In the Guatemalan case this mutual recognition has taken particularly difficult forms.<sup>35</sup> As Luis Cardoza y Aragón has noted, "the Indian has been forced to be grateful for the place he occupies and to value it as the best of his destiny. It is a degradation of five hundred years during which the most prodigious thing is the very fact of existing, even when many of them do not refuse their living conditions and live without the audacity of envisioning a future; because to have a future is a senseless hope" (115). After this, he adds, foreseeing the future, "in Guatemala it is not only necessary to take the Indian into account, but rather that tomorrow the Indian will takes us into account" (idem). Within the extreme social violence even when not in war, a violence

that rejects any attempt on behalf of the Indians to raise their head in a co-existence of permanent subordination, subjection, and disdain—all of which is the custom that had become second nature in mestizo societies with respect to the Indian—we find ourselves still very far removed from the mutual recognition of which Todorov speaks. And to presume that achieving this ideal imperative of exotopy regarding the other's recognition is only a matter of religious and moral conscience, of social co-existence, of good education and civility, is only a colossal and selfish hypocrisy.

Luis de Lión transcribes these type of issues into a vernacular situation without saying it; he tries to show these issues as internal experiences of the Indian as a subject of his own life, his self-definition, and the *putting-into-diegesis* of his own self. Having to be among the Ladinos who hate him, the Indian ends up hating himself as such, hating his "Indianness." Thus is the experience of Pascual, and that of Juan, although the latter is barely sketched. The Spanish priest symbolizes religion as imposition and oppression. When the conflict around the "Ladina" Virgin erupts, hatred is no longer directed towards the exterior but rather towards the other-people: fathers against sons, women against husbands, and so forth. As a result of this confrontation, all the town's "men of maize" die. Women, children and domestic animals are left behind, and . . . Juan Caca lives an unexpected "sexualization," either through an act of the imagination or through the intervention of an unknown woman. But immediately after this, he feels that he is disintegrating. He searches himself in the mirror as an "other," and he can only see a skull. Death meets him precisely at the moment of his "birth" into life, through sex. After the second to the last scene of the hunger of the survivors and Juan Caca's possessions looting and abuse, the life of the village is once again described at the mythical level. Times of incredible and fabulous abundance arrive; but all this ends in an equally sudden manner, and it is then that the wind returns . . . Time, which begins in Xibalbá, will initiate a new cycle.

To summarize, in his novel, Luis de Lión shows the individuality of the Indian subject in conflict with himself and in a state of social decomposition due to a conflict with the outer world, hostile and inhospitable: each one for himself and God against all. A "syncretic" and conflictive religiosity (the Ecclesiastes or the Apocalypse, but also the *Popol Vuh*) erupts as the nodule of the problem I/other, which the Indian society has lived from the beginning of the Conquest. A gaze from the subject's inside in conflict with himself due to external causes is instated: a kind of experience that can be undertaken by the introspective twentieth century. In this sense, and because of his resources, Luis de Lión is as much a Latin American writer as any other. His originality, however, does not even consist in introducing the inscription of a modern consciousness within a mytho-poetic frame, but rather in the very angle of the gaze: it is not an anthropological, an Indigenist, a social protest, a museum gaze, or any

such exclusively exotopic gaze. The place of its origin—the Indian consciousness—is what makes this gaze so unsettling. The Indian does not want to be a mestizo (Asturias' project), neither does he want to become the object of an ethnographic exhibition. He does not want to continue to accept, without a protest, the ideological impositions of the other. He feels with the same lacerating force of an end-of-the-twentieth-century subject (exactly as his other, who has reserved only for himself the privilege of aesthetic and intellectual sensitivity, questioning that of the Indian), and his feelings bring about rebellion and chaos. But it seems that this is not a terminal interpretation of western History: its apocalyptic taint is neutralized when the conflict is expressed in the cosmogonic terms of the “pre-Hispanic” world-conception: hope lies in the fact that everything can be repeated; but it can, at the same time, be re-done. A return to the point of departure offers minimal hope for a renovation of the world.

## Notes

1. One can discover the others in oneself, realize that we are not an homogeneous substance radically strange to everything oneself is: I is another. But the others are I's: subjects like I, that only my point of view, in which all are *there* and only I am *here*, separates and distinguishes itself truly from me. I can conceive those others like an abstraction, like an instance of the psychical configuration of every individual, like the Other, the other and other in relation with the I; or else as a concrete social group to which *we* do not belong. That group can in turn be within society: women for men, rich for poor, demented for “normals”; or it can be external to it, that is to say, to another society that will be, according to some cases, close or removed: beings that everything brings close to us in the cultural, moral, historical spheres; or else unknown beings, strangers whose tongue and customs I do not understand; so foreign are they that, in an extreme case, I hesitate to recognize our common kinship with a same species” (Todorov 1987: 13).

2. Conscious of the ideological debate around the ethnic and cultural character of the above-mentioned war, and of the questioning brought forth in some sectors by the idea of the Indian insurgency (it is said that it was organized and guided by Ladino leaders indoctrinated by international communism), I wish to underline that the mass involved in the conflict has indeed been mainly Indian. On the other hand, it is precisely during that war that the Indian peasant becomes conscious of his position regarding the conflict, from the seventies on, and especially during the eighties. However, the clear indigenist tinge of this process is symbolized in the fact that the commander Rodrigo Asturias (son of the writer who was adamantly opposed to Rodrigo's stance/performance) adopts as his battle name (*nomme de guerre?*) that of Gaspar Ilom, one of the protagonists of his father's indigenist novel: *Hombres de Maíz*.

3.. I say this because I would like—although I do not really know if I can—to avoid the immediate labeling/to which us critics are prone: indigenist work, anyone will say. Indigenism was primarily a literary species bred from the outside of a culture that describes; the work of Luis de Leon belongs to the species that observes the contemporary Indian world from within: one would say: from its heart, from its hurting soul.

4. Among the valid attempts to represent a dialectic from the inside and the outside we can consider some works by the Equatorian Jorge Icaza (*En las calles*), or Juan Pérez Jolote, by the Mexican Ricardo Pozas. Of course, the novelistic production of José María Arguedas is a case apart (*Ríos profundos*, *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo*).

5. In this sense, the situation of the *Ladino* or *mestizo* is equally complex and it can be envisioned in both the case of the work and the very biography of Miguel Angel Asturias, in accordance with the analysis of Cardoza and Aragón's book cited in this article.

6. The trilogy is a sort of epic of the banana companies' period in Guatemala, and therefore, it refers to the mestizo world, in spite of the fact that some of its protagonists are North Americans (as in the case of *El papa verde*). However, references to the Indian world and the Indian substratum of the mestizo are permanent, and in a way, they grant structure to the novels, especially to the first two.

7. Which can be seen as the very ethical act or as its integral part.

8. That is, of a syllogism with one of its premises either omitted or over-understood.

9. Cf. Bakhtin, "El problema de los géneros discursivos," in *Estética de la creación verbal*, pp. 248-93.

10. About Asturias' work as independent from the social and literary figure of its author, see the above-cited book by Cardoza and Aragón, *passim*.

11. I agree with the following curious interpretation of Bakhtinian dialogism, taken from a summary in Internet, by A. Ponzio: "Bakhtinian dialogue excludes all forms of equality, reciprocity between self and you, the dialogic relationship is asymmetrical, non-reversible . . . In Bakhtin's view dialogue is not the result of an initiative we decide to take, but rather it is suffered, something we are subjected to. Dialogue is not the result of an open attitude toward the other, but rather the impossibility of closure which emerges from tragic-comical attempts at closure, indifference." (Extracted from the advertisement of the Italian version of the Bakhtinian book of 1929, *Problemi dell'opera di Dostoevskij*, trad. Margherita De Michiel, ed. De Michiel and Augusto Ponzio).

12. To this end, please note that the European (and the *mestizo*) is also in America, but the Indian has already been there before the arrival or the very appearance of the others.

13. In this way, as we shall see later, in Luis de Lión's text—in which the image of the Indian native language is created through the Spanish—the characters supposedly speak in cackchiquel. But being translated into Spanish categories, their language will lose some of the value-charged characters proposed in the "original." Thus, Luis de Lión's text deals with *ladinos*, where the native tongue should be *kaxlanes*. The word *kaxlan* is derived from the 'castellano' and can be found practically in all the Mayan languages.

14. I have borrowed this concise definition of Bakhtinian ethics from S. G. Bocharov, Bakhtin's disciple and the editor of his works.

15. Asturias, for example, at one point in his trajectory, presented as the only way towards the Indian's "salvation" from his ancestral backwardness, his acculturation, his integration into the western world.

16. I consider this assertion to be fair to a certain extent only within the other-for-me modality, in which the I is Luis de Lión and the other, Asturias. For Cardoza y Aragón (Miguel Angel Asturias. *Casi novela*) the architectonics would be very different.

17. Cf. this purpose of the "borrowed voice" in Cardoza's cited book: "We cannot appeal to the condemnation imposed on us by the Indian. I have offered him, apart from my equitable voice, my fervor" (219).

18. Definitely, the image of language is what creates the impression of authenticity of an Indian speech. Rulfo, José María Arguedas, Asturias have done the proper (same)thing. Cf. Cardoza 28-30.

19. For Luis de León, the definition that Cardoza gives to Asturias' writing is valid: "Being so personal, his writing is collective" (107).

20. Cf. Bakhtin 1975: 149 (in *The Dialogic Imagination*: 336-37).

21. Its relationship to the cosmic and spiritual world is underlined by Sotelo 77-92.

22. In reality, '*hurricane*' means 'one-leg' ('uno-pierna'), and the other combinations are the different versions of lightning or lightning flash ('thunder,' according to Brasseur). In spite of all this, *racán* (or *rricane*) means big or large in Quiché and in Cakchiquel, (Recinos' commentary to the *Popol Vuh*, 166-67).

23. In reality, the etymology of this divinity (deity) does not have so much to do with the wind, as the name suggests: in this respect, see further down. But it does have to do with the way in which Miguel Angel Asturias handles the *Popol Vuh*.

24. These kinds of nationalistic projects in Latin America often include in their rhetoric the greatness of the ancient Indians, while the contemporary Indian always remains at the margins in a permanent cultural lagging behind, and is often seen, by the official optic, as a factor of backwardness against the modernization of the respective countries. A vision that, as is well-known, acquired a discursive form with the civilization-barbarism dichotomy but which really goes back to the Conquest and the Colony.

25. In the imaginary of the Mayan people, the wind can be *nahual* of somebody and, as such, a harmful factor in agriculture, for example. In any event, the wind is an entity endowed with moral attributes.

26. General feature of the Meso-American world-vision. Cf. for example Gruzinski 1995: 25, about the nahuas: "For the ancient nahuas, mythical time—that of successive creations which had seen the precursors of man, and subsequently, the apparition of men themselves—exerted a determinant influence over human time, to the extent that the encounter or the coincidence of a moment of this time with one of the everpresent moments of mythical time, determined the substance of the lived instant."

27. Of the infra world, (nether world?) anthropologists would correct me. However, whether or not it is an element of cultural syncretism, the really infernal characteristic of the wind's presence even allows this presence to be read as an allegory of a cataclysmic and apocalyptic war. But, perhaps, not a final one; cf. *infra*.

28. The wind also has a great importance as an atmospheric, meteorological fact in the peasant economy that unfolds around the sowing and care of corn (Personal communication with anthropologist Jose Alejos).

29. Note the ambivalence of the epithet in the colloquial Guatemalan Spanish: to be "caca" is also to be "important." Something similar can be found among the colloquialisms of Mexico: "to believe one self to be a great caca . . ." with the oral consequence widely known, is precisely to believe oneself to be someone important. However, the expression's ambivalence within the novel is quite clear: there are some (like the cantinera [canteen attendant?]) who disown/discard the "positive" part of the ambivalence, refusing to recognize in the character in question, a subject who can be called "Juan Caca." On the other hand, Concha (see *infra*) hates Juan, significantly, because she does not want to stain her hands with shit.

30. One should recall the text of the song: "cuando entrabas a la iglesia, Llorona, / te divisó el confesor. / Se le cayó la custodia, Llorona, / porque temblaba de amor." ["when you entered the church, Llorona / the confessor noticed you. / He dropped the sacrament, Llorona, / because he was shaking of love for you"].

31. A derivation of "castellanos," "Kaxlanes" is a common denomination of the non-Indian among the Mayan people of Chiapas.

32. There is a manifest paradox in this adjective (in fact, an epithet full of ideological valorizations): Is there a more western culture than that of the American Indians? But we know very well that the valorative dichotomies East/West, as well as North/South, have very little to do with real geography.

33. The Mayan infra world has Kaktinbak (K'ajtinbajk in another Mayan language) as another name, a "place for the igneous purification of bones." This is a highly positive sense of renovation and rebirth, an interpretation that goes back to the same series of myths: the divine twins Hunahpú and Ixbalanqué accept death by fire during their stay in Xibalbá, but they demand that the bones' ashes be collected and kept. Once these are thrown in a river waters, the twins return to life in their previous form. I am impressed by the coincidences of the Bakhtinian interpretations of carnavalesque semantics based, according to the Russian philosopher, on the agrarian visions of the world, and prior to the class society of European humanity, and the ambivalence of the Meso American "hell." Another coincidence is the rituality of existence, which is directly tied to the mythic cyclicity of the universe, in both cases.

34. There is an onomastic symbolism in the novel that is worth taking into account. I already explained the ambivalence of Juan Caca's name. The Indian Concha and the Ladino Concha (the Virgin) possess a sexual symbolism that does not need further explanation. Regarding Pascual, the third of the most important characters, his name is related to the death cult celebrated in Chiapas and Guatemala, through the Saint called San Pascual el Rey, represented as a skeleton. Pascual's trajectory in the novel, a character that abandons his place of origin in order to go beyond otherness, and from which he returns to be symbolically sacrificed because of his double and triple transgression, completes the frame.

35. In reality, two cultures co-exist, the Indian and the western: the Indian, I would dare say, is so smothered that it exists only in an agonizing way and it survives diminished. It is not a tranquil existence; there is a heavy, deaf, and extremely violent existence . . . In the Indian, there is a cosmic impulse at all levels, which moves him to educate himself, to fight, to be. The task of the exploiter has been to stop such impulse. We do not exactly live the dilemma of two cultures, the hegemonic one has almost torn to pieces the great Indian culture.

## Works Cited

- Alejos García, José. *Mosonjantel. Etnografía del discurso agrarista entre los ch'oles de Chiapas*. Mexico: UNAM, 1994.
- "Anales de los Cakchiqueles." Trans. Demetrio Sodi. *La literatura de los mayas / La literatura de los aztecas*. Anthology by Demetrio Sodi and Angel Ma. Garibay. Mexico: Promexa Editories, 1979, 79-90.
- Asturias, Miguel Angel. *Obras escogidas*. Madrid: Aguilar, 1955.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Estética de la creación verbal*. Mexico: Siglo XXI, 1982.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Hacia una filosofía del acto ético y otros escritos*. Barcelona: Anthropos. Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1997.
- Cardoza y Aragón, Luis. *Miguel Angel Asturias. Casi novela*. Mexico: Ediciones Era, 1991.
- Cros, Edmond, editor. *El indio. Nacimiento de una instancia discursiva*. Montpellier: Editions du C.E.R.S. Actes du Colloque de Montréal, 1994.

- Garza Cuarón, Beatriz and Georges Baudot, coordinators. *Historia de la literatura mexicana, I. Las literaturas amerindias de México y la literatura en español del siglo XVI*. Mexico: Siglo XXI Editores-UNAM, 1996.
- Gruzinski, Serge. *La colonización de lo imaginario. Sociedades indígenas y occidentalización en el México español siglos XVI-XVIII*. Trans. Jorge Ferreiro. Mexico: Fondo de Cultural Económica, 1989.
- Lión, Luis de. *El tiempo principia en Xibalbá*. Guatemala: Artemis-Edinter, 1996.
- Mariátegui, Jose Carlos. *Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana*. Lima: Empresa Editora Amauta, 1971.
- Navarrete, Carlos. *San Pascualito Rey y el culto a la muerte en Chiapas*. Mexico: UNAM, 1982.
- Popol Vuh. Las antiguas historias del Quiché*. Translated from the original text. Introduction and comments by Adrián Recinos. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1952.
- Ruz Lhuillier, Alberto. *Costumbres funerarias de los antiguos mayas*. Mexico: UNAM, 1991.
- Sotelo Santos, Laura Elena. *Las ideas cosmológicas mayas en el siglo XVI*. Mexico: UNAM, 1988.
- Todorov, Tzvetan. *La conquista de America. La cuestión del otro*. Trans. Flora Botton. Mexico: Siglo XXI Editores, 1987.
- Voloshinov, V.N. "La palabra en la vida y la palabra en la poesía" (in Russian). *Zvezda* 6 (1926): 244-67.



## Chapter 8

### Moors or Indians? Stereotype and the Crisis of (National) Identity in Ignacio Altamirano and Manuel de Jesús Galván

Isabel de Sena

No concibo el triunfo de la justicia en el Nuevo Continente sino mediante la rehabilitación de la raza abrumada por la conquista, envilecida por el coloniaje, desamparada por la Independencia, y esa rehabilitación me parece imposible en tanto que la fusión no dé por resultado una raza que, poseedora de la inteligencia de los conquistadores, tenga también la sensibilidad de los conquistados . . . pero [que tenga] el carácter interior y el aspecto exterior de la raza que más ha padecido. (Eugenio María de Hostos, "El Cholo," 1870)

I cannot imagine the triumph of justice in the New Continent except through the rehabilitation of the race defeated by the conquest, degraded by colonialism, forgotten by the Independence, and this rehabilitation seems impossible as long as the fusion [of races] does not result in a race endowed with the intelligence of the conquerors, but also with the sensibility of the conquered . . . may it have above all the inner character and the external appearance of the race that has suffered the most.

The search for autochthonous values in response to the need for definition of (new) American identities coupled with the differentiation among countries emerging from a totality whose

fragmentation is accelerated by the movement of independence led Latin American writers in the nineteenth century towards indigenism, among other similarly inspired literary modes. This tendency is amply demonstrated by the proliferation of works, such as Ignacio Altamirano's *El Zarco* or Manuel de Jesús Galván's *Enriquillo*, which are written with the manifest purpose of creating a national literature. In so doing novels such as these reconstruct history from a new perspective, reinvent the nation through the definition of social types and the defense of particular values (the Indian, local, or regional traditions). Certain moments and characters are chosen to retrospectively configure, that is to say, they become *figures* of a reality that is seen to reveal itself over time. Yet if we consider the success of the orientalist vogue in Europe, within and without Spain, as well as the cultural ties that persisted between Spain and its ex-colonies in spite of the will to independence, it seems natural that at different moments of this long crisis of self-affirmation writers who are trying to establish foundational fictions make use of some of elements of that orientalism as they reelaborate an American social imaginary.<sup>1</sup> This is all the more so since orientalism is prevalent in much of the Spanish imaginary throughout its history since the Middle Ages, and it was itself reconfigured in nineteenth century European literature (see Carrasco Urgoiti 226-28). This imaginary of the Spanish Moor<sup>2</sup> supplies a codification established through literary use and the very presence of the Hispano-Arab in the Peninsula for several centuries, providing a series of situations and characters whose essential traits are always and already familiar. That is to say, the tradition provides a typology and a broad selection of situations in which tensions and conflicts from another historical moment can be inscribed.<sup>3</sup> They are cultural spaces which can be filled in response to a particular historical need or ideological conflict, and which depend on what Homi Bhabha, reelaborating Franz Fanon's concept, calls "stereotype" (1994).<sup>4</sup> But though Spanish orientalism includes in embryonic form a broad spectrum of characters and situations, it tends on the whole to present the Moor positively, structurally underlining reconciliation and tolerance. In contrast, nineteenth century European literature accentuates other situations where the Moor is frequently denigrated, or simply demonized. That is to say, even though the essential traits of the Moor's character—easily enamored, passionate, brave, bold, courteous, impetuous, sensuous, cruel—were already present in the Spanish tradition, the nineteenth century orientalist vogue foregrounds a series of negative traits which allow for the redefinition of the character and broaden the ductility of the stereotype for articulating social or cultural tensions.

From this perspective, the concept of the stereotype enables the identification and analysis of the uses of orientalism in the ambivalent discourse and cultural practices of the new (Spanish) American countries, whether it be during the first years after the independence,

or during the long process of self-definition: directly imported from Europe, the orientalizing vogue assures the success of an Italian opera company in Mexico for four years (1831-1835), thus revealing its capacity for regeneration and usefulness as mask in the construction of ambivalent positions and antagonisms, inherent in the post-colonial process. Fifty years later, the novels of Ignacio Altamirano and Manuel de Jesús Galván illustrate the uses to which orientalism can be put in an America that both wants and does not want to be Spanish. In this sense we can see Foucault's principle at work, to the extent that the relation established between knowledge (for our purposes, literature) and power within the apparatus is always a strategic response to an urgent need in a given historical moment (see Bhabha 73-74). Looking at three distinct moments in two different countries will enable us to see how the stereotype of the Moor need not be deployed in works wholly dedicated to orientalist themes, but rather that, being a stereotype, the Moor or traits associated with him can be invoked in a given narrative discourse and signify recognizable positions which nevertheless can be endowed with different ideological objectives according to the manner in which the referential mode of the stereotype is invoked. To write in this manner turns out to be a way of inhabiting an intermediate space between the inversion of a paradigm and the emergence of a new concept that will replace it (Hall 1-2).

Mexico's independence was brought about by a colonial elite that continued to maintain close relations with Spain. However, in succeeding years, those relations become increasingly difficult, and three decrees of expulsion are enacted against the remaining Spaniards from the old Virreinato, the last of which coincides precisely with the presence of an Italian opera company (1831-1835) that had been invited by the Mexican government. In her study on the role of the orientalist discourse in the first days of post-colonial Mexico, Nancy Vogueley analyzes the company's repertoire, focusing on the multiple operas of orientalist theme, and compares them to works on analogous themes that opened in the Mexican capital during the same period. She concludes that the presence of the Italian company and its repertoire serve a complex function. On one hand, it is a sign of acquisition of a certain cultural capital and a form of legitimization of a new government which attempts, through this "civilizing" initiative, to establish a cultural program. On the other hand, it also signals a Mexico that has little or nothing to do with its (mythical) Indian past, and less with its indigenous realities.<sup>5</sup> In addition, and in spite of the difficulties that operas sung in Italian might suppose for the Mexican public (4), this initiative is also a strategy of decolonization: precisely the proposal of a repertoire consisting of a series of conflicts different from those that had been imposed up to then, during the colonial period, facilitates the ambivalent articulation of internal tensions. Among these stand out the increasing antagonism of the Creole minorities towards Spain (3-

5), and the ambivalence of the new Mexican state with regard to other European powers and the United States, as well as its complex problems concerning the indigenous population (5).

In contrast to the Spanish tradition,<sup>6</sup> where the confrontation between Moor and Christian tends towards harmonious solutions, and chivalric values triumph in the end, the Italian opera repertoire provides a new critical space that enables a complex ideological panorama. This emerges clearly in the comparison between Rossini's *Mahometto II*, which premiered in Mexico in 1832 (Vogueley 3) and *Malek Adhel* by the (Spanish) Duque de Rivas, which was staged and performed for several weeks around the same time (8). While Rossini's opera demonizes the Moorish character (among the less flattering epithets he is called a barbarian seven times and ends up provoking the suicide of the Christian heroine, who is unable to solve her conflict between her love and her faith and patriotism), in the play by the Duque de Rivas the Moor and Christian share the same chivalric code, and the demonized character turns out to be the British character, who murders the Moor (8-9). The ideology articulated in the second case becomes evident when we consider what no one could ignore at the time (in Europe or in America): Britain's role in dismantling the Spanish empire and its concurrent increasing presence in the Americas. What is implicitly articulated, therefore, is the need for harmony between the two supposed antagonists (Spain and its former colony) that they may more effectively face their common enemy, something very different from the ambivalent ideological readings that *Mahometto II* facilitated in Mexico in 1832. Moreover, the moment when the definition of *mexicanidad* is in crisis, which may or may not include a degree of *mestizaje* (racial, cultural) that permits the indigenous to coexist with the Hispanic without incurring the risk of sliding from civilization into barbarism (a constant anxiety in the imaginary of the new countries), coincides with the need to turn to orientalism. In this way, different aspects of the stereotype can serve different ideological functions.<sup>7</sup> Ignacio Altamirano will serve as an example of how, towards the end of the century, orientalism in Mexico had become lexicalized and naturalized as a stereotype in the articulation of national problems, above all where the indigenous problem is concerned.

Like so many other writer-politicians in nineteenth century Latin America, Altamirano tries to fill the (perceived) gaps in the history (or historiography) of his country with novels that will explain to a broad public the formative moments of Mexico's identity as a nation.<sup>8</sup> An Indian and a passionate defender of the equally Indian Benito Juárez, his novel *El Zarco* (written between 1885 and 1888, but only published in 1901) is a panoramic picture of a country on the verge of chaos, since the action takes place between 1861 and 1863, immediately after the Guerra de la Reforma.<sup>9</sup> More than fifty years had passed between the independence and the moment of writing,

which permits the novel to operate on a clear inversion of European values then in vogue (Franco 89-90): in contrast to the dominant typology in European romanticism, according to which blond characters are systematically good while the dark ones tend to be identified with evil,<sup>10</sup> in Altamirano's novel the two leading white characters, both blond, are unequivocally bad: Zarco, the leader of the *plateados*, whose moral traits are reflected in the "blanco impuro" (25) of his skin, and Manuela, his fiancée. On the other hand the two dark-complexioned characters, the Indian Nicolás and his dark fiancée, Pilar, embody the exemplary values of the nation. But these characters represent more than the color of their skin. It is not enough to be ethnically Indian to be a Nicolás: his exemplarity is not strictly racial, but cultural as well; it stems from the isolation his forebears maintained by remaining in the "montañas salvajes" (52), the only way to assure "una honradez altiva" and a "carácter limpio" (52), which distances him precisely from the other kind of assimilated Indian, the "indio abyecto y servil" (11) engendered by colonialism.

Zarco, on the other hand, represents the worst of Spanish presence and its descendants in the continent. He is the apparent inversion of the conservative elites who, with the collaboration of bandits, have sunk the country into misery and chaos: he is covered with gold and silver on the outside (10), goes about "vestido de plata" (27), the symbolic inversion of those who are "llos de plata" (the well-to-do families) (27). It does not follow from this that Altamirano essentializes whites under a negative stereotype. Zarco is the son of "honrados padres, trabajadores en aquella comarca, que habían querido hacer de él un hombre laborioso y útil" (24). His inclination toward evil is not determined by his being white, but rather by his own moral character. But no less important for the understanding of the crisis of identity that this novel relives and articulates, is the awareness on the part of the reader that the political and ideological radicalization that led to chaos in Mexico also provided the opportunity for foreign intervention in the country: by France, Britain, Spain, and finally the unfortunate Maximilian's short interregnum. Even if all these historical moments fall outside the strict narrative frame chosen by Altamirano they are a source of inherent anxiety nonetheless. It is from this perspective that it is interesting to focus on racial bipolarity in *El Zarco* since, though a commonplace in nineteenth century narrative, the tension between the two leading camps in this moral tale is already lexicalized and naturalized from the beginning, overdetermined by a stereotype, by orientalism.

Orientalism is already present in the title and name of the homologous protagonist. He is the personification of the betrayal of the homeland due to his lack of solidarity with the national project of harmonization and consolidation: we never know his real name, only that he is called Zarco, because of "sus ojos de ese color azul claro que el vulgo llama zarco" (25). And *zarco* is a word of Arabic origin. On the other hand, Yautepec, where most of the action of the novel

takes place, is a “pueblo mitad oriental y mitad americano”: “Oriental, porque los árboles que forman ese bosque . . . son naranjos y limoneros, grandes, frondosos, cargados siempre de frutos y azahares que embalsaman la atmósfera con sus aromas embriagadores” (3). [“Oriental because the trees that compose these thickets . . . are orange trees and lemon trees, large, with luxurious foliage, and always laden with fruit and blossoms that perfume the air with their intoxicating scent.”]

There is no shortage of elements of the oriental stereotype in this description:<sup>11</sup> sensuality, exoticism, even a suggestion of oriental luxury (the trees are laden with “pomos de oro”) and though somewhat tamed by the American presence (“este conjunto oriental se modifica en parte por la mezcla de otras plantas americanas”: bananas, mameyes, zapotáceas), the oriental aspect dominates the landscape by its very profusion, and finally imposes itself over the American through its economic importance: “Los vecinos vivían casi exclusivamente de estos preciosos frutales, y antes que existiera el ferrocarril de Veracruz, ellos surtían únicamente de naranjas y limones a la ciudad de México” (24). [“The local inhabitants depended almost exclusively on these precious fruit trees for their subsistence, and before the train from Veracruz appeared, they were Mexico City’s single suppliers of oranges and lemons.”]

If sensuality and exoticism meet in this landscape, it is because the Moor has become the split image of Spain, not only an Other, but a complementary being, and when Spaniards land in America, in terms of the imaginary that is symbolically reconstructed here, they bring with them those character traits. Yet Altamirano is alluding also to the introduction of oranges in the Iberian Peninsula, a cultural determinant that owes its origin to the Arabs, so that in this passage coalesce two forms of industry and a cultural symbiosis: Arab and European, the Moor and the Christian, but also Spanish and American. The Moor and the Christian, as complementary articulations, are the palimpsest antecedent of the ecosis<sup>12</sup> occurring in the American landscape. Altamirano himself suggests as much at the end of the first chapter: “la población toda [de Yautepec] habla español, pues se compone de razas mestizas. Los indios puros han desaparecido allí completamente” (4). [“the whole population [of Yautepec] speaks Spanish, since it is ethnically composed of mestizos. Pure Indians have completely disappeared from the place.”]

Nevertheless, and in spite of this complete *mestizaje* in the landscape delineated by the author (pure Indians having completely disappeared), Altamirano brings out the pure Indian (for his race, but particularly for his character, associated with the highlands, the “mountain,” that is to say, the periphery of the social practices dominant in his time, but paradoxically in contrast with this landscape) and the “impuro” white (equally isolated from the social practices marked by industry and productivity) in order to polemicize the tension one sees already intrinsically participant in the social

landscape: if the assimilated Indian is, unlike the idealized Nicolás, an abject and servile being, the white man, whenever he embodies the worst of a political faction that is seen as contributing to fragmentation, turns out to be a deviant, a split, from the honesty and industriousness that have propitiated precisely that ecosis, the landscape ambiguously *mestiza* and prosperous that is Yautepec, so similar to all the other pueblos “de las tierras calientes de la República” (3), in other words, every place.

A split is therefore operative in this novel, so that the symbolic weight of the negative stereotype of the Moor is displaced onto the negative character (Zarco), who brings together the historic presence of the Moor embedded in the linguistic heritage and the inversion of the Moor reinvented by nineteenth century literature and art. On the other hand, since for Altamirano the catalyst for all characters’ actions lies in their character and not in the political forces that obtain around them, which would seem at first to inhibit the homologation of national or cultural characters to antagonistic ideological positions (such as those one might find in the nineteenth century Spanish production of the chivalric type), Altamirano reconfigures to his ends the balance between the Moor and Christian confronting each other as knights: unlike these, Zarco’s character is a deviation from its “natural” path (his parents are honest and wanted to make an honest man of him). What’s more, the historical tension the novel articulates is already inscribed in the initial landscape, which circumscribes the geography of action and provides a symbolic map of its binarism under the sign of harmony and miscegenation as cultural creation, cultural ecosis. Orientalism, it turns out, is deeply rooted in the Mexican imaginary, as becomes evident in no less a figure than Octavio Paz (among others) when, echoing Ramón López de Velarde,<sup>13</sup> he says that Mexicans are “hijos pródigos de una patria que ni siquiera sabemos definir, empezamos a observarla. Castellana y *morisca*, rayada de azteca” (183, emphasis mine).

However, it is in *Enriquillo*, by the Dominican Manuel de Jesús Galván, written shortly before *El Zarco* (the first part was published in 1879, the entire novel in 1882) where the broadest range of references to the stereotype of the Moor are deployed, an index of a prevalent ambivalence with regard to the racial and cultural identity of the Dominican Republic. The plot of *Enriquillo* reconstructs the early history of the conquest and colonization of Santo Domingo (the subtitle of the novel is instructive: *leyenda histórica dominicana (1503-1533)*) and narrates the life of the *cacique* Guarocuya, better known under his Christian name, Enriquillo, a protégé of Bartolomé de las Casas who rose up against the Spanish crown and, together with his indigenous companions, was able to resist for many years in the mountains of the Bahoruco, until a treaty is signed with Charles V granting them freedom in exchange for laying down their arms. The novel begins with the destruction of the kingdom of Anacaona and ignominious execution of the queen, and covers the final period of

Ovando's government of the island, as well as all of Diego Colón's. The majority of the characters are historical: the Colóns, María de Toledo, Las Casas, Diego Velázquez, Cristóbal de Cuéllar and his daughter María, Juan de Grijalva, Hernán Cortés, Fray Antonio Montesinos, etc. Mentioned, although they do not participate in the plot, are Francisco Roldán and, obviously, Cristóbal Colón. But that is not the case with the most repugnant of the Spanish characters, Pedro de Mojica, for whom no one has yet been able to find a historical referent.

Galván succeeds in interweaving the political intrigues of the period with the life of the *cacique*, from his childhood among the friars who raise him to his relations with his godfather, Diego Velázquez, his protector, Las Casas, and his stay in Francisco de Valenzuela's. Valenzuela never defines the young *cacique*'s legal situation, something his son Andrés takes advantage of upon his father's death. With Pedro de Mojica's collaboration, they reduce Enriquillo to complete servitude. There follows the uprising, resistance, the repeated if failed attempts by the Spaniards to defeat Enriquillo and his men, and finally the reconciliation at the end. Throughout this complex tapestry is told the story of three interwoven marriages: two happy ones, that of Diego Colón and his wife María de Toledo, and Enriquillo with the *mestiza* Mencía (niece of Anacaona), and an unhappy one, that of Diego Velázquez to María de Cuéllar, which is immediately followed by the bride's death, presumably because of her passion for Juan de Grijalva, an episode not founded on historical documentation. The author completes his "leyenda histórica" with numerous footnotes, as well as an extensive appendix where he quotes several works by Las Casas, Herrera's *Décadas*, Quintana's *Vidas*, and even some verses from the *Elegías de Varones ilustres de Indias* by Juan de Castellanos, who sings the lassitude that has invaded the Spaniards after the first impetus of the conquest. All of this is aimed at emphasizing the historical in the legend, and therefore to authorize his work as a foundational myth of his country. And it is here also where, in using the Indian as a representation of an America ambiguously rebellious and submissive, that here submits, the Indian becomes, again without relation to his everyday unreality, an overdetermined character always and already removed to a mythical past when the land is submitted to the Spaniard that he might civilize "her." This seems to be the underlying ideological message of works like Jesús Galván's.<sup>14</sup> No less interesting is the fact that Galván's cultural and racial bipolarity is articulated precisely through an exuberant orientalism, deployed in a wide range of references that go from the history of Spain to the *romancero morisco*, or even the neo-Moorish literature then in vogue.

Right at the beginning of the novel we are faced with a variety of orientalizing allusions: the *guanos*, the large palm trees characteristic (here) of the American landscape with which the Indians build their huts—"tienen cierta semejanza con las esbeltas columnas de que tan

feliz uso ha sabido hacer la arquitectura árabe” (25). The Arabic element is here introduced as a “naturally” civilized element, a tone the author will return to now and again. What might seem uncharacteristic is the allusion to the Arab, based, one assumes, on the architectural presence of Hispano-arabic culture in the Peninsula which naturalizes, lexicalizes, the comparison. As in the previous case of Altamirano, mention of Spain and things Spanish seems to bring embedded in them its Other, the Arab. But the analogy also serves to call attention to the fact that if both Arab and the Taíno are superior civilizations by virtue of their analogous arches, both were also conquered by Spain, and at the same time (if one collapses the Reconquest and the conquest of Granada, and the conquest of America with the destruction of Taíno civilization in the Caribbean region). This overlapping frame of reference—civilization and conquest—reappears in the text in different forms. For instance, in a excursus about the relationship between war and the civilizing advances to which it gives place, Galván takes as point of departure the tyrannical father of the unhappy María de Cuéllar, the young woman who dies a few days after marrying Diego Velázquez. Cristóbal de Cuéllar belonged, says the text, “por sus principios y sus ideas, al siglo en que había nacido . . . que cierra la tenebrosa Edad Media con la caída del Imperio de Oriente, la conquista de Granada y el descubrimiento del Nuevo Mundo” (77). [“because of his values and ideas, to the century in which he had been born, which brings the dark Middle Ages to a close with the fall of the Empire of the East, the conquest of Granada, and the Discovery of the New World.”]

Spain, the conqueror of Granada, the last outpost of Arab civilization in western Europe, dangled between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, but it was also the link between Europe recivilized by oriental (byzantine) knowledge and the new world it contributed to make. The civilizing impetus came to Spain from Italy, itself recivilized by the Orient: “Mitad sombra y mitad luz, aquella centuria, al expirar, preludiaba dignamente al gran siglo del Renacimiento de las letras y las artes, a que tanto contribuyó la inmigración a Italia de los más ilustres sabios y literatos de la ya mahometana Constantinopla” (77).<sup>15</sup> [“Half shadow and half light, the end of that century was an appropriate prelude to the great century that witnessed a Renaissance of art and literature, to which the immigration to Italy of the most illustrious sages and literary figures of the already Muslim Constantinople contributed greatly.”]

This civilizing wave was opposed to a Medieval period considered “grosera, que tenía por base el despotismo de los señores, y el envilecimiento de los vasallos” (77). In this order of thinking, Galván locates Fernando, husband of Queen Isabel, at the root of all evils of hispanism at the moment when it was spreading itself through the world in the form of conquest and colonization, while Charles V represents for him the new concept of tolerant monarchy. This is the ideology that informs the emperor’s magnanimous attitude towards

the rebellious *cacique*. Fernando, to whom in fact are owed the political and ideological bases on which Charles's empire will later be founded, becomes the very principle of all that is despicable in the Middle Ages, solely because his actions do not seem to favor the party of the Colóns and their demands.<sup>16</sup> Be this as it may, by connecting the civilizing influence of the Arabs to the *guanos* of the American landscape, Galván establishes an analogy between the Other of Europe, admired and despised above all in Spain, and the natives of Santo Domingo.

On the other hand, the same Indians, in this case the rebels in the Bahoruco, as long as they were a defenseless population, and, one should not forget, retrospectively vanquished by the Spanish military might, were directly related to the conquest of Granada. The demonization of the Moor is taken to such an extreme that his defeat in Granada is considered glorious for the Spaniard while the repetition of the same deeds in America is considered a profanation:<sup>17</sup>

apareciendo por los tres puntos a la vez la hueste española,  
precedida del fragor de los arcabuces, del áspero ladrido de  
sus perros de presa, y al grito en Granada poco antes glorioso  
de ¡cierra España! intempestivo y profano en aquel monte,  
cargando con ciega furia a salvajes inofensivos e indefensos.  
(38)

preceded by the clamor of their weapons, by the hoarse barking of their hounds, the Spanish hordes simultaneously appeared from three different points, to the sound of the previously glorious interjection “Charge, Spain!,” outrageous and profane in that hill, attacked with blind fury the harmless and defenseless savages.

Even so, Galván does not loose sight of the difference between historiography and its linguistic dimension, for example, in the contrast between the hunting dogs [perros de presa] and “dogs” as an insult directed at those who are to be marginalized, reduced to their minimal expression, whether it be as enemies in war (*el moro*) or those to be reduced to instrumentation (the Indians, homologues of the *morisco* peasant). It is precisely over such an issue that we find Enriquillo pondering the contradiction between the letter of the law and the reality of the treatment meted out to the Indians, an extremely humiliating condition above all for those who, like himself, are both aristocrats and *encomendados*, feeling at every step the needling of

las agudas espinas del desdén brutal que ostentaban respecto a  
toda la raza india los más de aquellos hidalgos y colonos,  
educados en los campamentos de Andalucía e Italia,  
acostumbrados a aplicar el mote de perros a los soldados

enemigos, y que, con mayor convicción que a los moros y los franceses, consideraban y trataban como animales a los salvajes indios en general. (177)

the sharp thorns of the brutal disdain exhibited towards the Indian race by most of those nobles and colonists, educated as they were in the military campaigns of Andalucia and Italy, who were used to referring to the enemy's soldiers by the sobriquet "dogs," and one that, with even greater conviction than when applied to Moors and the French, generally considered so and treated the Indian savages as animals.

If in this context the Moor of Granada is the enemy of Spain, the Other (ethnic or religious marginalization: the heathen dog), who paradoxically becomes the reason why the Spanish conquerors have become brutes, the excess of stereotype is inverted to underscore the system of values in which the cultural capital of the Indian is inferior to a hunting dog. But that does not mean that at another point the Moor might also be the enemy/hero celebrated by the *romancero* tradition, a moment when the image of the Spaniard as Christian and Crusader is invoked, thus establishing an explicit link between the Islamic "Orient," Granada, and the New World:

Baracoa, población incipiente, cuyas pocas y modestas casas parecían como intimidadas con la vecindad de los gigantescos palmares, no podía aspirar todavía a la pompa de las decoraciones urbanas, y por lo mismo prefirió que el teatro de las fiestas semejara un campamento que por el lujo pudiera competir con el de los príncipes cruzados frente a Jerusalén, o, según los recuerdos coetáneos, con el de los reyes católicos en los primeros tiempos del célebre Sitio de Granada. (153-54)

Baracoa, incipient settlement, whose few and modest houses seemed as if intimidated by the nearness of the gigantic palm trees, could not yet aspire to the pomp of urban decoration, preferring instead to have the stage of the celebrations imitate a camp that in sumptuousness might compete with those of the Crusading princes before the gates of Jerusalem, or, according to testimony from the period, with those of the Catholic monarchs during the first years of the famous siege of Granada.

The paradoxes increase, since the incipient little town feels intimidated by the palm trees, whose leaves before were compared to Arab arches. The narrative frame for the festivities is the conquest of Cuba. However, the plot further complicates the symbolism of the scene because the result of this conquest is the marriage between Diego Velázquez and María de Cuéllar, a celebration that had been

postponed more than once, in part because of the bride's illness, in part through the intervention of friends or protectors of the girl, in particular María de Toledo, the Viceroy's wife. Once the island is conquered, Velázquez insists on his "prize," the marriage: thus a symbolic link is implicitly suggested between the woman and the island, so that María's death a few days after her marriage prefigures the destruction of the island after the conquest.<sup>19</sup>

Not all the orientalizing elements in the novel are equivocal in their explicit articulation. For example, Diego de Velázquez's excellent Andalusian wine is what seduces and subdues the old Indians so that they will reveal where the rebels are hidden in the mountains (26). But far more interesting is the case of Tamayo, the servant and faithful vassal who cares for the child Guarocuya/Enriquillo: "Su amo le había impuesto el nombre español de Tamayo, por haber encontrado semejanza entre algunos rasgos de la fisonomía del indio con los de otro criado de raza morisca que tenía ese hombre, y se le había muerto a poco de llegar de España a la colonia." (32). ["His master had imposed on him the Spanish name Tamayo, because he found a similarity between the Indian's physiognomy and that of another servant of his, of the Moorish race, who was so named, and who had died shortly after his arrival in the colony."]

Tamayo, an Indian with a *morisco* name and looks, seems to be predestined by virtue of the genealogy invented by Galván to be the heir of the traits, as well as the *excesses* that can be attributed to a stereotype. It is as if the *morisco* servant exists only to die on the American shore that he may be reincarnated by an Indian. Furthermore, the person who named him is not his present master but the previous one: Francisco de Roldán, the first rebel against the Colón family. Tamayo's character is therefore overdetermined by the double association: to the excess implicit in the stereotype of the Arab (we don't even need to know what this *morisco* servant was like) is added the propensity for rebellion against the legitimate authority of the Admiral: "El antiguo escudero de Roldán parecía haber heredado el aliento indómito de aquel caudillo, primer rebelde que figura en la historia de Santo Domingo" (32-33). ["Roldan's former squire seemed to have inherited the indomitable spirit of that caudillo, the first rebel to appear in the history of Santo Domingo."]

As part of his assimilation to Spanish ways, Tamayo has skillfully learned the use of Spanish arms (33), and even boasts a hat "a usanza española" (33), but his spirit "el más osado y el más fogoso de todos" (33), is part Indian and part hero of a Moorish romance. However, on the margins of Tamayo's figuration as a latent rebel is the image of the Moor as disorder, as inversion. In order to disauthorize Enriquillo and to take away from him the last of his rights as *cacique* and *jefe de caserío* of la Higuera, the colonists invoke precisely this aspect of the stereotype of the Moor, when they find that the Indians on Andrés de Valenzuela's land "estaban fuera de los términos de toda policía legal habiendo [los enemigos

españoles de Enriquillo] observado por sí mismos *el desorden y abandono en que vivían, holgando por su cuenta como moros sin señor*" (231, emphasis added). ["they were beyond all legal bounds, and they [Enriquillo's Spanish enemies] had observed with their own eyes the disorder and abandon they lived in, disporting themselves like Moorish [servants] without a master."]

In the legal farce that follows, Enriquillo is condemned and accused of being responsible for "las zambras que se organizan en su aduar" (231, my emphasis). Once again, the choice of words of Arabic origin, both with denigrating connotations, is intentional. But the most radical extreme the stereotype can attain is not only in its link to the disorderly Moor, but also in the link between the latter and the Black slave, to which we will return later.

I have mentioned before that the most evil of Spanish characters is also the one that is blatantly fictional: D. Pedro de Mojica, whose character condenses all the evil of which a Spaniard is capable. It comes as no surprise therefore that this is also a man of unrestrained sensuality, to whom is attributed the seduction and moral corruption of an Indian woman, Ana, as well as the responsibility for Andrés de Valenzuela's attempt to rape his own protégée, Mencía, nor that he "tañía la guzla morisca con mucha habilidad" (51, emphasis added). In fact, Mojica even gives Enriquillo several lessons on how to play this instrument, which, though "pronto y bien aprovechadas" (51), do not seem for all that to corrupt the young *cacique*'s character. His preferences incline rather towards the martial airs of the hunting horn he heard at the home of Diego de Velázquez, and thenceforward he prefers this "sobre el laúd árabe" (51). The polarity thus introduced early in the novel is not casual: we find it again at the end when, during the successive attacks carried out by the Spaniards against the unassailable Indian military organization under Enriquillo's leadership (who to this end dedicated himself to studying history in his youth, as the text tells us) his preference for the martial horn is remembered (266) in a similar sequence of scenes, where it will also become clear that Mojica is a coward.<sup>20</sup>

Within the orientalizing symbolic economy of the novel, we find an interesting pivotal element: this is the mare Las Casas gives Enriquillo as a wedding present, and which becomes a point of reference in the ambivalent relationship between Enriquillo and Andrés de Valenzuela. Not surprisingly, it is a "brioso caballo andaluz" (53), therefore again an element associated with Arab cultural contributions to the Peninsula. Once in Enriquillo's possession, this mare, Azucena (yet another word of Arab origin, meaning lily, or white), will provoke Andrés's envy and desire. We will return to this issue later.

Diego Velázquez, on the other hand, feels attracted to the ambiance of the new court presided by the Admiral's son, Diego Colón, recently married to the beautiful Castilian María de Toledo.

This ambiance is evoked once again under orientalizing colors, through a reference to Granada:

sometido a la influencia de aquella atmósfera donde se confundían y combinaban los misteriosos efluvios de la juventud, la belleza y la opulencia delicada y sensual, sentía la impresión de un bienestar y una dicha no gustados por él hacía mucho tiempo. Pasaban por su imaginación, como ráfagas de luz y armonía, las reminiscencias de los encantados cármenes de Granada, en donde se habían deslizado entre risas y placeres, como las corrientes juguetonas de límpido arroyuelo entre flores de ameno prado, los días de su feliz adolescencia. (72)

under the influence of that atmosphere where the mysterious balm of youth, beauty, and an opulence both delicate and sensuous blended or were fused, he felt a delight and wellbeing such as he had not enjoyed for a long time. Like gusts of light and harmony, reminiscences of the gardens on the hills of Granada crossed his imagination, those gardens where he had spent his happy adolescence, among laughter and pleasure, like the playful waters of a limpid rill running through the flowers of a pleasant meadow.

The description is so effective one is bound to be lulled by its charm and forget that this picture of oriental luxury and synesthetic delights is the product of nineteenth century imaginations like Washington Irving's and his homologues, not fifteenth or sixteenth-century sources. In Spanish literature one would have to wait for Góngora to encounter a similar kind of (subversive?) evocation of a past irremediably lost, a sly celebration of what has been proscribed.<sup>21</sup>

Among the feminine characters, the one that stands out for her association with the Arab stereotype is Elvira. Her very name is the Latin version of Granada. Elvira, one of the many damsels who have accompanied María de Toledo to Santo Domingo, is the "ligera granadina" (197), "apasionada andaluza" (197), always in some way associated in an undefined, diffuse way, with an excess she must atone for before she can marry Andrés de Valenzuela at the end. But it is precisely through Elvira that Galván reveals how much of his orientalism is a product of nineteenth century literature. Elvira "tenía los ojos de fuego y esas mejillas color de cereza que son tan comunes en la siempre morisca Andalucía" (197), she is "la bella compatriota de los abencerrajes" (197). At another moment we find a dialogue between Elvira and Mencía, Enriquillo's young and innocent bride who does not know what love is. Left alone with her friend, and bewildered by her future husband's probing questions, Mencía asks Elvira: "para casarse dos ¿es preciso que se digan esas mentiras que solo te he oído a ti, cuando nos cuentas historias inventadas o cantas

los amores de Zaida?" (176). ["for two people to get married, are those lies I have only heard from you, those invented stories you tell, and the songs you sing about the loves of Zaida, really necessary?"]

Galván explains in a footnote at this point that "en boca de una niña poco instruida, y en aquella época, no estaba mal dicho *historia inventada en vez de novela*" (176). He thus reveals the origin of his *morisco* imaginary. Zaida is an invention that appears much later than the conquest and colonization of Santo Domingo: "el amor caballeresco y la galantería son el núcleo temático de la poesía morisca [during the Golden Age], surgiendo pequeños ciclos en torno a personajes totalmente ficticios de nombre bello y sonoro: Zaide, Jarifa, Gazul, Celindaja" (Carrasco Urgoiti 51-52). ["Chivalric love and gallantry are the thematic nucleus of Moorish poetry [during the Golden Age], a cycle of tales emerging around totally fictitious characters with beautiful sounding names: Zaide, Jarifa, Gazul, Celindaja."]

This is how Lope de Vega develops the love casuistry of Gazul, Zaide, and Zaida, under which he veils, and reveals, his complex relationship with Elena Osorio, in *romances* that will eventually be incorporated in the *Guerras civiles de Granada*, source in turn of Washington Irving's *Tales of the Alhambra* and *The Conquest of Granada*. It is not a great stretch of the imagination to suppose that Galván was familiar with these works, whose author also wrote a biography of Columbus which served as source for the novelistic elaboration of *Enriquillo* (Meléndez xi).<sup>22</sup>

In spite of this colonial ambiance contaminated by an orientalism of much later elaboration, Diego de Velázquez was a Castilian from Cuéllar (Morales Padrón 201), as was the unfortunate young woman whom he married and her father: María and Cristóbal de Cuéllar. But what is important here is to notice that Galván's puritanism requires him to split love from sensuality and to displace eroticism towards orientalism, towards the excess embedded in the stereotype of the Moor. As a narrative strategy, the displacement enables the novelist to color or locate Diego Velázquez's love, which is allied to the greed and tyranny of the girl's father, in contrast to the romantically naturalized spontaneity of the (invented) love between María and Juan de Grijalva. Inevitably, this Castilian girl finds herself associated and typified by the same stereotype: "Estas dulces y gratas memorias, a una con la magia de unos ojos negros como el azabache, que vertían el fuego de sus fascinadoras pupilas sobre la arrogante y simpática figura de Velázquez, causaron en el pecho del impresionable comandante súbito incendio de amor" (72). ["These dear, sweet memories, together with the charm of a pair jet black eyes that poured the fire of their fascinating pupils over the arrogant and attractive figure of Velazquez, provoked in the breast of the impressionable commander a sudden fire of love."] A passion that rises out of such sign could hardly come to fruition in Galván's universe, where love, like everything else, needs to be subdued by reason.

Equally touched by the erotization of the oriental is Juan de Grijalva, Velázquez's rival for the love of María de Cuéllar, a novelistic episode without basis in historical fact. In spite of also being from Cuéllar,<sup>23</sup> when we first meet Grijalva for the first time he is described as "un joven dotado de rara hermosura, de tez morena y sonrosada, y cuyos labios rojos como la amapola apenas estaban sombreados por el naciente bozo" (72), which includes the darker skin typical of the stereotype of the Moor. Immediately after, Velázquez asks Diego Colón who was that "mozo de aire afeminado" (73). And to complete Grijalva's sensuous characterization, all we need is a horse. Diego Colón describes him "cabalgando en un endiablado potro cordobés, negro como la noche y fogoso como una centella" (73) and it will not be the last time that he will appear in association with fiery steeds. Grijalva, like other characters in this novel, will be trapped by Mojica's web of lies and intrigues, and the latter "estaba seguro de tocar, cuándo y cómo quisiera, las fibras del corazón de Grijalva, haciéndolas vibrar a su antojo, como si fueran las dóciles cuerdas de su vihuela morisca" (92). ["he was sure to play, when and how he wanted, the threads of Grijalva's heart, making them vibrate at will, as if they were the docile strings of his Moorish lute."]

This is the same instrument that Mojica insists Enriquillo should play in a serenade organized by him in honor of María de Cuéllar, which Enriquillo refuses (107). And points to the contrast in moral fiber between the "enamoradizo" subtly orientalized Grijalva and the incorruptible Enriquillo, who is fonder of hunting horns. Mojica, being a consummate politician, takes advantage of Enriquillo's refusal to create animosity between the young *cacique* and his godfather, Velázquez. The association between horses, music, and eroticism, on the other hand, are a means of figuring in the novel the desire that forms part of the mirror stage of Lacanian differentiation: it becomes singularly evident in the rivalry between Andrés and Enriquillo, which, as mentioned above, is framed by the circulation of a referent, the mare Azucena.

The mare is an early wedding gift of Las Casas to his protégé, Enriquillo, who is to marry Mencía, Mojica's niece, against the wishes of the latter and of Andrés de Valenzuela. Both are intent on preventing this marriage. And if it is true that the systematic expoliation of both Enriquillo and Mencía's property and status is the direct result of Mojica's intrigues, it is no less true that the beginning of the antagonism is insinuated in the competition for the attention of the father (D. Francisco), for whom Enriquillo becomes the ideal son—industrious, honest, sportsmanlike—whom Andrés cannot displace. But curiously this mare is also intimately associated with the concept that Enriquillo has of himself as an assimilated Indian, as "hispanizado"; "Dejaré de ser quien soy" (164) he tells D. Francisco, when he decides not to give Andrés the coveted mare (who will then take her by force, as he will also try to take Mencía, and will in fact take all of Enriquillo's possessions). At the end of the novel,

when the action moves to the fighting in the Bahoruco mountains, Enriquillo, now returned to his “natural” kingdom, saves Andrés’s life (threatened by Tamayo, the Indian with *morisco* character and name), and then magnanimously offers him the mare “pues que dejé de ser quien era” (264). In the process of becoming christianized and assimilated, Enriquillo is latently exposed to the corruption immanent in the ambiance that surrounds him, and when he recuperates his freedom, returning to his real self—the great *cacique*—Enriquillo also sheds the values implicit and inscribed in this ambiguous landscape that includes the negative stereotype of the Moor (and occasionally the Jew). The mare then is endowed with symbolic significance since its very name figures purity and incorruptibility—Azucena—though in reality it has become the object of Andrés’s envy and desire, the symbol of everything that Andrés wants to destroy and corrupt.

Throughout all this Galván has gone to great lengths to show that Indians and Spaniards can barely be told apart by their racial characteristics, finding in Las Casas the basis for this stance;<sup>24</sup> a similarity Galván also tries to emphasize in other ways. This is, for instance, the case with Mencía, who seemed to “copiar los modelos de la estatuaria griega” (168), which inadvertently conflates the Arabic culture analogous to the American palm leaves (Mencía is Anacaona’s niece, the queen of the Taíno) used in native building with ancient Greece’s sculpture. But the ultimate example of racial analogism is the physical aspect of Enriquillo himself, whose description makes clear Galván’s strategy:

Vestía con gracia y sencillez el traje castellano de la época, en el que ya comenzaba a introducir algunas novedades la moda italiana, sin quitarle su severidad original . . . En suma, la manera de vestir, es despojo de sus porte y sus modales, como la regularidad de las facciones del joven cacique, le daban el aspecto de uno de tantos hijos de colonos españoles ricos y poderosos en la isla; aunque la ausencia de vello en el rostro, la lez ligeramente bronceada, y lo sedoso de sus cortos cabellos, acusaban los más señalados atributos de la raza antillana. (168)

He wore the Spanish dress of the period with elegance and simplicity, at a time when Italian fashion was beginning to introduce some novelties, though it lost none of the severity of the original . . . In sum, the way of dressing, the simple ease of his bearing and manners, as well as the regularity of the features of the young cacique, made him look like one of the many sons of the rich and powerful Spanish settlers; even if the absence of hair on his face, the slightly bronzed complexion, and the silkiness of his short hair indicated the most noteworthy characteristics of the Antillan race.

Galván looks for ways to introduce comparisons that will erase any obstacle to the harmonious assimilation of white and Indian, including racial assimilation. If Grijalva is darker skinned, or *moreno*, Enriquillo is nearly white, so that almost nothing distinguishes him from his creole counterparts, they themselves so often children of indigenous mothers. This bespeaks a smooth miscegenation process, in which some indigenous traits may remain (that slightly bronze skin, the silky hair) while European values are incorporated, thus bringing to fruition Eugenio María de Hostos's ideal quoted in the epigraph to this essay: Enriquillo is emblematic of the new race that should have the character and appearance of the native American, but the mind or intelligence of the conqueror. Enriquillo, who has since his childhood been greatly attached to the study of history (51, 136), from which he has extracted "gérmenes fecundos de honradez y rectitud" (51), finds in Viriato his preferred hero (51). This identification with the early Portuguese hero whose death through political betrayal enables the Roman conquest prefigures the (potentially) tragic destiny of the hero, temporarily conquered but saved by the magnanimousness of Charles V. Above all it reveals the polarization between a world where Galván attempts to resolve the white/Indian split by fusing them into the single caste projected into the future, elements that are therefore essentially harmonious, not antagonistic. The split occurs in fact in the category Indian, since the enslaved, conquered Indian, the *naborí*, is always called "vil" (13), just as he is in Altamirano's novel, while the Indian who resists slavery and recedes back into the wilderness of the mountain, retroactively recuperating his cultural and racial "purity" (even as it provides women to wife and mother the new conquerors), is configured as a precursor of an ideal of liberty retrospectively implicit in the national character. In the Hispaniola recreated by Galván there are not yet the *mestizos* of Altamirano, since the nearly white creoles Galván speaks of are the forebears of a ruling class on its way to becoming white. What is present already is the assimilation of the possibilities of the stereotype in the articulation, and the elision, of the problem of race in the definition of national identity. And the great problem of the Caribbean, and the Dominican Republic in particular in the nineteenth century, are not the Indians, who were already practically extinct at the end of the historical period encompassed by the novel (1503-1533),<sup>25</sup> but Blacks.

If, in order to sustain his moral manicheism,<sup>26</sup> Galván makes use of certain aspects of the stereotype of the Moor, it is above all in the semantic field of the savage and its association with the African slave, the other "heir" of the Indian, that the excess of the stereotype is more clearly deployed, in its manifestation as disorder, as chaos.<sup>27</sup> The first reference to Africans in the text occurs in a footnote. When he mentions the uprising of the *cacique* of Guaroa, which preceded Enriquillo's, Galván makes it clear that his intention was to make himself invisible to the Spaniard, to extricate himself with his tribe from the Spaniards (32). In the corresponding note, Galván adds that

"no era absurdo el propósito de Guaroa. En 1860 se capturaron en las montañas del Bahoruco tres *bienbienes*, pertenecientes a una tribu de salvajes de raza africana, que aún existe allí alzada, y de que sólo dan noticias incoherentes y tardías algunos monteros extraviados" (32). [“Guaroa’s purpose was not ill-conceived. In 1860 three Bienbienes were captured in the mountains of the Bahoruco, who belonged to a tribe of savages of the African race, still extant there as rebels, about whom we have only incoherent and belated news reported by monteros who lost their way.”]

The note suggests that slave uprisings, first Indian then African, were recurrent phenomena since the early colonial period, but it is interesting to note the association of savage/ry with the African. Indians are only called savages in a rather benign way, when the objective is to characterize the Spaniards as cruel<sup>27</sup> or, in one or two cases, when their behavior goes against Spanish interests, in particular those of the Colón family. They are called savages, for instance, when they refuse to help Christopher Columbus in Jamaica (45). On the other hand, the earliest mentions of African slaves are made in innocuous enough fashion, as property of negative Spanish characters: Ovando (87), Cristóbal de Cuéllar (192). After these references Africans disappear completely from the narrative until the end, when they erupt not totally unexpectedly (that is, if the reader has been attentive enough to remember the footnote above concerning the *bienbienes*) to become the protagonists of a violent explosion: they are a collective character, undetermined, onto which is displaced unequivocally the excess figured in Tamayo. Let us recall that Tamayo had been from the first associated through his name and the suggestion of character with a *morisco* servant of Francisco de Roldán's, and also, because of his association with the latter, with rebellion. A representative of violence, he is, with the Indian Camacho, the advocate of peace, one of the counselors who give voice to Enriquillo's moral dilemma. The more Tamayo becomes impatient with Enriquillo's resignation, the more he constitutes himself as the potential catalyst of disorder, of irrationality. His leadership imposes itself but is distinguished by the “fiereza y salvajismo” (278) that characterize his actions or intentions, from attempting to burn alive his Spanish prisoners enclosed in a cave (267), to the “depredaciones” that run the risk of tarnishing Enriquillo's “rational” uprising (275). It is precisely into Tamayo's “horda sanguinaria” that the African slaves are incorporated:

Durante la última permanencia de Diego Colón en Santo Domingo, que fue hasta 1523, las dificultades que le suscitaron sus émulos no le permitieron hacer otra cosa memorable que la represión de un levantamiento de esclavos africanos que dieron muerte al mayoral en una hacienda del mismo almirante . . . los alzados fueron fácilmente vencidos, y

de ellos los que pudieron escapar con vida se incorporaron a la horda de Tamayo, con consecuencias devastadoras. (278)

During Diego Colón's last stay in Santo Domingo, until 1523, the difficulties brought on by his rivals did not allow him to do anything memorable other than to repress an uprising of African slaves who killed the overseer in a hacienda belonging the Admiral himself . . . The rebels were easily defeated, and those among them who were able to escape alive joined Tamayo's horde, with devastating consequences.

Everything associated with Tamayo ends in violence, irrationality, and disorder, and to it is added the African element.<sup>28</sup> The novel displaces onto the African the semantic field of rebellion and violence, and Tamayo provides the link: Tamayo, Indian, and *moro*.<sup>29</sup> But the footnote has already converted his rebellion into a kind of historical anachronism, reduced to the *bienbienes* lost in the mountains uselessly fighting against a textual fantasm (Bhabha 81-82. See note 4).

But through its interplay between the fictitious and the historical, the novel also ends up displacing the Indian from its textual purity into a historical anachronism: in the last note of the appendix, there is a kind of necrological notice regarding Enriquillo which inscribes the legitimization of the history reconstructed in the narrative: a “señora respetable” and friend of the author has informed Galván some news concerning the presumed “sepulcro de Enriquillo y los últimos vástagos de sus indios” (292). The tomb corresponds to personages who lived much later, yet local tradition, particularly an old woman who, it was claimed, was Enriquillo’s last surviving descendant, maintains that that the tomb is truly his. Another old woman, a descendant of another of Enriquillo’s companions, has been granted a pension by the government (of general Pedro Santana), an act of legitimization of the historization of indigenism (and of historical legend). That is to say, what is thus inscribed into the text, though quietly, is the admission that the Indian’s racial or cultural purity is as much an historical anachronism as a cultural fiction. But what is also established is the fiction of the solidarity between the Spaniard and the Indian, beginning with the “próspero acontecimiento” (the one where in Tamayo “como en todos los indios alzados, las ideas y los sentimientos belicosos” (284) are, as it were, put to sleep), the peace signed between Enriquillo and the emperor.

More serious, if possible, is the idea that the African is implicitly inscribed as servile, quiescent slavery being the only role permissible, since in his rebellious form he is either vanquished by force (see the quote above regarding Diego Colón’s suppression of the slave rebellion on his property) or only admitted as historical anachronism (*bienbienes*). But one cannot forget the real history of the Dominican Republic, the one that began in 1821 when Santo Domingo became the Dominican Republic. A year later, the incipient republic was

invaded by the troops of the Haitian Jean Pierre Boyer and occupied until 1844, though the treaty that put an end to this interregnum was only signed in 1874. Among the first acts of Boyer's occupation was the abolition of slavery, not of the Indians who no longer existed, but of Africans, who would have preferred annexation to Haiti. After the second independence (1844), the attitude of the president of the Republic, general Pedro Santana (the same who granted the pension to the old woman of Boyá), concurs with that of his secretary, Manuel de Jesús Galván: faced with an uncertain present and the terror of a replica of the Haitian case (or, as in ancient rhetoric, its salutary negative example), the official homage and the novel both are analogous attempts to reconfigure the history of the country starting from a heroic indigenous past that must be urgently recovered, in addition to a racial formula for miscegenation that distances the African from the center of the symbolic economy that struggles to affirm itself as essentially Dominican and American.<sup>30</sup> Santana, whose presidential mandate is defined by his resistance to Haiti, was president until 1861, when the country voluntarily reverted to Spanish tutelage, though not without popular opposition. And the negotiations for such a unique development among all Latin American countries were entrusted to his secretary, the novelist, Galván. That is to say, it is much more gratifying to look at oneself in the mirror of an atavistic, nearly white Indian who either took to the hills, or if a woman, quietly mixed with the *moreno/moro* Spaniard, than to see the everyday mulatto, especially if there's a possibility that he might prefer annexation with the decidedly Black Haiti.<sup>31</sup>

Galván was not alone in choosing the Indian over the African in his bipolar proposal for national identity. The above mentioned Eugenio María de Hostos, a contemporary of Galván, defends (in 1870) a social typology in which the new American mixes “el carácter interior y el aspecto exterior de la raza que más ha padecido” (165), that is, the Indian, and “la inteligencia de los conquistadores” (164), and even Martí himself, the ideologue of Cuban independence, discursive model to this day of another revolution, and the author of the letter that serves as prologue to the editions of *Enriquillo* since the 1909 edition, declares that Galván's novel is “cosa de toda nuestra América,” and when he invokes the paradigms for the new American pedagogy (“Nuestra América”), he forgets to include in his long gallery of heroes of the American resistance to European colonialism the Haitian ex-slave and antagonist of the Spaniards, Toussaint L’Ouverture, as well as the man who so ironically bears the same names as Enriquillo and Columbus, a rebel and founder at once, Henri Christophe. This omission is all the more surprising since Haiti supported Simón Bolívar in the struggle for independence of Nueva Granada, and the abolition of slavery in Santo Domingo is owed to the Haitian occupation of 1801.<sup>32</sup> In this way it becomes clear that what Galván's narrative articulates is the need to fix the identity of the country in a specular relation between Spain and a mythic indigenous

América, in order to elude the drama of the Haitian specular image. A drama that is not about just racial anxiety, but also a historical trauma, that of a revolution of Black slaves that becomes the anti-model for all the subsequent independences and revolutions in Latin America.

But this would be a different story. What we can surmise is that in trying to come to terms with the problems of identity in a country whose being is defined more by a lack—the definition depends on what one is not—than by the presence of traits that are established and recognized as essential and unique, Galván and Altamirano, among others, make use of the stereotype of the Moor in order to articulate the political and cultural tensions of their day. The stereotype facilitates the construction of ambivalent positionalities and antagonisms that permit them to negotiate an identity for their vulnerable, incipient countries, always on the verge of yet another foreign invasion, and neither quite Indian nor quite white.

## Notes

1. My notion of Imaginary is based, first of all, on Gilbert Durand's anthropological definition. Durand, in analyzing the organizing (26) and pluridimensional (29) dynamism of imagery, states that the latter is "rooted in a constant interchange at the level of the imaginary between the subjective and assimilating impulses and the objective stimuli emanating from the cosmic and social environment" (38, my translation). Equally central to my argument is also the lacanian definition of Imaginary. From this perspective the Imaginary is a transformation that occurs in the subject at the mirror stage, when it assumes the form of a discrete image that permits the postulation of a series of equivalences, analogies, identities, among the objects in the world around it (Bhabha 77. See also Hall.). My objective, however, is not so much to establish a typology of the Imaginary restricted to Moor and Christian as to call attention to its organizing and multidimensional aspect, which permits the codification of different ideological positions.

2. I will use the word Moor [*moro* in Spanish] in the sense that the literary tradition has given it, as much as Spanish historiography, that is to say, as a polyvalent and ambivalent term which signifies the Hispano-Arab and can include ethnic categories (North-African immigrants today), ethnographic categories (Northern Africa), as well as religious categories (Muslims). This indefiniteness is convenient for my argument with regard to the deployment of the stereotype as a discursive practice to articulate ideological tensions.

It is also important to define "orientalism" here. For Said (1979, 1986), orientalism consists of a series of discursive practices based on a dialectic of information and control. These discursive practices are facilitated by the production of an image—exotic, erotic, totalizing—of the Other (of the Orient, the oriental, the opposition to Europe) which constitutes itself as a subject of study and as a consequence into a space of intervention (in this case, British and French imperialism during the nineteenth century). Said wisely omits Spain in his analysis, and one could argue that the renewed interest in all things Moorish in the nineteenth century coincides with the decline of the Spanish empire in America. But in fact there are more coincidences than differences between Spain and western Europe in this regard since the colonizing impulse also reawakens in Spain in the nineteenth

century, this time oriented towards Africa (Ricard, Morales Lezcano) accompanied, as in the British and French instances, by the emergence of a parallel academic and erudite discourse (See also Bhabha for a theoretical refocusing of Said; and my notes 7, 10, 11, and 26 below). It would also be interesting to study more closely why Spain becomes the Other of Europe in the nineteenth century, being itself so systematically orientalized.

3. Doris Summer (1992) notices the Moorish vogue in Spain, contemporaneous to Zorrilla de San Martín's *Tabaré*, without establishing any connection between orientalism and the different types of indigenism commented on in the same article.

4. According to Bhabha, more than a false image that serves as scapegoat for a series of discriminatory practices, the stereotype is "an ambivalent text of projection and introjection, metaphoric and metonymic strategies, displacement, overdetermination, guilt, aggressivity; the masking and splitting of 'official' and fantasmal knowledges to construct positionalities and oppositionalities" (81-82)—in this case, the construction of a national image in which are erased but also inscribed the racial problems engendered by colonialism and the socio-political conditions of the moment. Analogous to the process of national identity formations, the stereotype is characterized as much by excess of what can be proven empirically (Bhabha 66, Hall) as by a lack, but as sign of a cultural, historical, racial difference, it also supposes a fixity, which guarantees its repetition in different historical or discursive moments, and permeates its strategy of individuation and marginalization (Bhabha 66).

5. Vogueley informs that during the first decades after the independence all reference to indigenous themes were omitted from artistic forms (15) and that even the interest in pre-colonial Mexico was in large part an European invention carried out by Jesuits and other Spanish exiles, or Frenchmen and Germans, for instance (14-15). In two cases, the earliest efforts to recover the indigenous past—the novels *Jicoténcal* and *Guatimoc o Guatimocsin*—were published outside Mexico (the first anonymously in Philadelphia, and the second, by a Colombian author, in Paris) (15). The rejection was deliberately extended to the available operatic repertoire on analogous themes (10).

6. I am referring here to the attraction to Moorish themes in the Spanish *romancero*, amply described by Carrasco Urgoiti, between the fifteenth and the seventeenth centuries, which posits the equality of Moor and Christian, and sometimes openly favors the Moor.

7. Deliberate orientalization of Spain or Spaniards has a long history: already in the sixteenth century, the opening sentences of the preface to the French edition of Las Casas's *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de Indias* (Anvers 1579) represent the Spaniards as the offspring of a dual paternity of violence—first came the Goths ("leurs premiers pères") and then the Saracens ("leurs seconds pères"); a genealogy of savagery that irrevocably makes the Spaniards similarly barbaric (and "non-European"), their bloodlust finding hyperbolic outlet in the West Indies: "Ils ont plus détruit de pays que la Chrétienté n'est grande trois fois" (Milhou 73). On the other hand, *criollos* on the eve of the independence were not above demonizing Spaniards in analogous terms. Thus, for instance, the Peruvian Juan Pablo Viscardo y Guzmán (1748-1798) spent his life trying to persuade the British to intervene in Peru to usher in independence, but he had no sympathy for Tupac Amaru's revolt of 1781 (Brading 535-39); nevertheless, he claimed in a memorandum written in 1797, comparing the progress of the United States with the poverty of Latin America, that the Spanish monarchy in America was "but an oriental despotism, more similar in government and spirit to the realm of the Great Turk than to any free society" (Brading 538). The Argentinian Sarmiento, on the other hand, deploys a more complex use of the stereotype. For instance, in the first chapter of *Civilización y barbarie* (1845), he

begins by associating the vast expanses of land with an exotic “tintura asiática,” bathed in an oriental moon, breathing “soledades asiáticas” (37). Between the *pampa* and the *llano* we find the same spirit that mediates “entre el Tigris y el Eufrates” (37), the mule caravans remind him of the camel caravans headed for Bagdad and Smyrna (37). In spite of this romantic vision (Sarmiento only visited Argelia later in his life, and for a brief time), he reserves the worst of his opprobrium for those whose character he assimilates to the “Orient.” As a result the provincial *caudillo* is “como en Asia el jefe de la caravana,” (38) while the Indians who harass and kill the mule drivers are the “beduinos americanos” (38). Surely the marriage of the descendants of the Hispanoarabs with the American bedouins will produce some despicable offspring, and that, in essence, is the *gaucho*. In fact, Sarmiento does say baldly that the fusion of the three races (Spanish, Indian, and African) has produced an homogeneous totality whose identifying characteristics are their “amor a la ociosidad e incapacidad industrial” (39). Curiously, he is more generous towards the African, whom he considers a “raza inclinada a la civilización, dotada de talento y de los más bellos instintos de progreso” (39). For his further orientalizing of Spain, and his instructive view of Algeria, then in the process of being intensively colonized by the French, see the corresponding letters in his *Viajes*.

8. Without mentioning Altamirano, Sommer points out how frequently Latin-American writers are politicians, some of whom became presidents of their own countries: Mitre, Sarmiento, and so on. (1986: 48-49).

9. The subtitle of the novel is significant, *Episodios de la vida mexicana entre 1861-1863*, with its overtones of journalistic or *costumbrista* descriptions, and covering a period when the author was striving for the creation of a national literature and to achieve peace among the warring political factions (Monsiváis 9-10).

10. This is evident, perhaps surprisingly, even in George Sand's *Indiana* (1833). In spite of the author's feminist revindications, the servant is dark, exotic, rather untrustworthy, endowed with an uncontrollable sexuality, and, inevitably, she dabbles in spells and magic. Compare her to the dark antagonist (and illegitimate sister) of the blond Cecilia in the indigenist novel by the Brazilian José de Alencar, *O Guarani* (1857), identical to her French sister. The erotization and exoticism of the dark woman is a cliché in nineteenth century literature. Nevertheless it would be worth investigating this phenomenon from the perspective proposed here, as a useful tool for the re-orientalization of Spain itself, a process of marginalization that the dominant powers in Europe systematically impose on it throughout the century. Examples range from national contributions (Bécquer's “Yo soy ardiente, yo soy morena / Yo soy el símbolo de la pasión”) to the various Carmens, beginning with Mérimée (1845) and Bizet (1875).

11. Compare with Madame de Staël: “les noms retentissants de l'espagnol, ces noms que ne peuvent être prononcés sans que déjà l'imagination croie voir les orangers du royaume de Grenade et les palais des rois maures” (quoted Carrasco Urgoiti 228).

12. Ecosis is a term proposed by León Portilla to signify the internal structuration of a group or nation with its own cultural identity, as well as its forms of adaptation to the environment it occupies and the use it makes of its natural resources (11). Broadening a concept derived from Thucydides, León-Portilla defines ecosis as the group of transformations carried out by a community for its well-being, in acting upon a geographical area into which it settles with the purpose of developing and transforming it into its “home” (11).

13. Post-modernista Mexican poet (1888-1921), whose work, after the double trauma of the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War serves as the foundation, like others of his generation, for the new myth of literary genesis constructed by Paz's generation (González Echevarría 2: 341).

14. For an analysis of Galván's political and ideological conservatism see Conde (1978) and Sommer (1983, 1991). Sommer's radically new reading of nineteenth century Spanish-American fiction served as one point of departure for the ideas that led to this article.

15. Galván is surely echoing Burckhardt in this passage, whose *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* was published in Basel in 1860.

16. Galván's attitude towards Fernando is ambivalent. On one hand, and in this he closely follows Burckhardt, he sees in Fernando the beginning of the Renaissance. Fernando is "el profundo político" who "había sabido fundar en España la preponderancia del poder real sobre las sediciosas pretensiones de los grandes." This creates a problem for Galván because, for that very reason, he "nunca podía desistir de amenguar las prerrogativas hereditarias del hijo de Colón" (64).

17. Galván generally speaking follows the Lascasian ideology with regard to the Indians, constantly alluding the original texts by Las Casas. But it is also true that he chooses the Las Casas he wants, the defender of the Indians, but not the Las Casas who, at the end of his life, advocates the restitution of the land to its inhabitants and the reduction of the number of Spaniards on American soil to just a few, as he did in the Letter to Carranza in August of 1555 (Las Casas).

18. The connection between woman and city, or fortified place, is a commonplace in medieval literature, and was already part of the Ovidian love casuistry. It is curiously also to be found in the *romancero* tradition, for instance in early ones like the *romance* of Abenámar (conquest in the form of love petition) or "Yo m'era la mora Moraima" (conquest as rape).

19. Inevitably, in a text like this, the other most frequent of Peninsular stereotypes would have to appear: this is the Jew, who shares numerous character traits with the Moor, in particular the sensuality. But, unlike the Moor, the Jew is constantly accused of cowardice in the Middle Ages. Here it is Tamayo who calls Mojica a "marrano" (196).

20. The *moriscos*, usually poor Hispanoarab peasants, were variously expelled from Spain in 1609, 1611, and 1613.

21. On the multiple Zaidas that Washington Irving's *Spanish Romances* and his *Crónica de la Conquista de Granada* spawned in novel and opera, see Carrasco Urgoiti (238-56).

22. Herrera, whom Galván quotes in the Appendix as the source of his information, says that Grijalva treated Diego de Velázquez "como deudo (aunque no lo era)" (289-90).

23. Galván quotes the *Apologética historia* (Cap. XXIV), where Las Casas praises the physical beauty of the native population and says that the indigenous women whom the Spaniards married were "casi blancas como las mugeres de Castilla" (cit. 289). According to Las Casas, there were several noblemen "casados con mugeres indias naturales de aquella tierra," a fact that "muy común fué en las gentes de aquella provincia más que en todas las desta isla" (cit. 285). Both Las Casas and Galván are endorsing the extent of miscegenation in the island from the very earliest settlements, although their strategies and ideological objectives are far less similar than Galván would have us believe with his insistence on these quotes.

24. In truth the pact signed between Charles V and the historical Enriquillo reveals a more complex situation and a less "pristine" character: the treaty conceded freedom to Enriquillo and his group in exchange for catching and returning to the Spanish colonists Indian *encomendados* or African slaves who had rebelled and might hide within range of the Bahoruco. That is to say, Enriquillo bought his freedom selling slaves (Sommer 1983: 63-64. See also note 25 below).

25. Says Galván in a footnote: "Suplicamos al lector que no nos crea atacados de la manía *indófila*. No pasaremos nunca de los límites de la justa compasión a una raza

tan completamente extirpada por la cruel política de los colonos europeos, que apenas hay rastro de ella entre los moradores actuales de la isla." (34, n. 1). Later he also indicates that already at the time of the episodes narrated (around 1516) "las pragmáticas vigentes prohibían sacar ningún indio de la Española para las otras islas, a causa de la despoblación ya muy sensible de aquélla" (188). Soon after this he alludes to the "indios mal habidos," those who were brought illegally from the Lucayas (now Bahamas) and Trinidad (206), in order to supply the need for *encomendados*, making it clear throughout the novel that we are before a genocide very few Indians managed to survive. What he systematically omits, and only allows in the equivocal note about the *bienbienes* seemingly forgotten by time and history, is that the Bahoruco seems to have been from very early on one of the most important epicenters of *marronage*, so that even Enriquillo's band was most likely already less than purely Indian in make up. Soon after the events narrated, the Bahoruco was already, and historically remained until the nineteenth century, a site of continuous African resistance (Heinl 29-30, Fick 51-52).

26. The displacement of the less flattering characteristics of Spaniards (and later *criollos*) onto the African is already documented in the sixteenth century, where they are already demonized as transmitters of the evils introduced by colonization, or their executioners, and often appear undifferentiated, a collective character identified as savage. A letter sent by the Dominican friars to M. Xèvres from Santo Domingo in 1516 indicates that Spaniards would hand over Indians to Africans to be killed by them (see Durán Luzio, 114-40). In Colombia *conquistadores* and even a bishop complain that Heredia, the Spanish governor of Cartagena beginning in 1532, had loosed his fifty African slaves in the recently discovered tombs of Cenú, a province of Cartagena, where large quantities of gold had been found as part of indigenous funerary rites for the *caciques* in the region, thus preventing all access to them. A number of surviving Spaniards, for instance, complained of how Heredia kept his African slaves well-fed so they could dig the graves for gold, while the Spaniards were left to starve (Friede, no. 720, 721, 722, 756, etc.). In 1522, a year after the conquest of Mexico by Cortés, an epidemic of smallpox decimates hundreds of people, an event that then is used to explain that many Indians were not killed by the Spaniards, but rather perished through disease. Many years later, Juan Cano, a *conquistador* who had come to Mexico after Cortés and the epidemic and who married Isabel, daughter of Moctezuma, tells Oviedo, who repeats it in his history, that smallpox was brought to Mexico by an African who had come over with the Spaniards (Oviedo Libro 33).

27. For Ovando, for instance, Indians are "salvajes rebeldes" who must be submitted by reason of state through "saludable terror" (35). Ovando is evidently one of the most ignoble characters in the narrative, an paradigm of tyranny (v. 37).

28. Once again history is falsified with ideologically motivated pieties: Enriquillo frequently descended from the mountains to pillage among the colonists (Sommer 1983: 73-74).

29. It is perhaps an unconscious historical irony on Galván's part that the greatest and most devastating of the leaders of the early Haitian uprising, François Macandal, who was originally from Guinea, by contemporary accounts had Arab blood, spoke some Arabic, and professed Islam (Heinl 27).

30. There are nevertheless notable differences in the history and ethnic formation of both countries, a factor that cannot be completely ignored: at the end of the eighteenth century, the Spanish colony included 60,000 African slaves, that is to say, less than half of the total population of the country, which also included 40,000 whites and 25,000 mulattos or free Blacks. By contrast, Saint Domingue, the French colony, which had systematically increased the importation of African slaves throughout the eighteenth century, had 30,000 whites and 27,000 mulattos and free Blacks, but perhaps as many as 700,000 African slaves (Haggerty 8, Heinl 25).

31. Yet another irony is present if we notice that the book, as Galván himself states in his dedication to the edition of 1882, was inspired by the act of proclamation of the abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico, which the author attended (Meléndez 134). But the text is nevertheless an act of decolonization in relation to Haiti, since the book seeks to recover the space of the Spanish conquest as the definitive moment of the founding of Dominican nationality.

32. In "Nuestra América" Martí mentions exclusively indigenous heroes. Moreover, in the same essay we find phrases that seem to echo Hostos's ideas, such as "El hombre natural es bueno y acata y apremia la inteligencia superior, mientras ésta se vale de su sumisión para dañarle" (125), or, "con los pies en el rosario, la cabeza blanca y el cuerpo pinto de indio y criollo, vinimos, denodados, al mundo de las naciones" (126), and he concludes with an invocation of the great Zemí of the Caribbean isles. It is, once again, the golden age of pre-colombian América. Only when he speaks specifically of Cuba (in "Mi raza") does he discuss the mix/union of Blacks and whites, but does not mention anyone in particular.

## Works Cited

- Altamirano, Ignacio Manuel. *El Zarco. La navidad en las montañas*. Introd. de María del Carmen Millán. Sepan cuantos 61. México: Porrúa, 1995.
- Bhabha, Homi. "The Other Question: Difference, Descriimination, and the Discourse of colonialism." In *Literature, Politics and Theory: Papers from the Essex Conference, 1976-84*, ed. Francis Barker et al. London: Methuen, 1986. 148-72. Revised and reprinted as "The other question: Stereotype, discrimination and the discourse of colonialism" in *The Sexual Subject: A Screen Reader in Sexuality*. Ed. M. Merck. London and NY: Routledge, 1992, and *The Location of Culture*. London and NY: Routledge, 1994. All quotes are from the last edition.
- Brading, D. A. *The First America. The Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots, and the Liberal state. 1492-1867*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991.
- Carrasco Urgoiti, Marfa Soledad. *El moro de Granada en la literatura (Del siglo XV al XIX)*. 2a. ed. Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1989.
- Conde, Pedro. *Notas sobre el Enriquillo*. Santo Domingo: Taller, 1978.
- Durán Luzio, Juan. *Bartolomé de las Casas ante la conquista de América: las voces del historiador*. Heredia, Costa Rica: EUNA, 1992.
- Durand, Gilbert. *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire*. Paris: Bordas, 1969.
- Fick, Carolyn E. *The Making of Haiti: The Saint Domingue Revolution from Below*. Knoxville: The U of Tennessee P, 1990.
- Franco, Jean. *Historia de la literatura hispanoamericana*. Ed. revisada y puesta al día. Barcelona: Ariel, 1973.
- Friede, Juan. Documentos inéditos para la historia de Colombia. Bogotá: 1956.
- Galván, Manuel de Jesús. *Enriquillo. Leyenda histórica dominicana (1503-1533)*. Introd. Concha Meléndez. Mexico: Editorial Porrúa, 1986.
- González Echevarría, Roberto, and Enrique Pupo-Walker, eds. *Cambridge History of Latin American Literature*. 3 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996.
- Haggerty, Richard A., ed. *Dominican Republic and Haiti. Country Studies*. Washington, DC: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1991.
- Hall, Stuart. "Introduction. Who needs 'Identity'?" In *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay. London: Sage, 1996.
- Heinl, Robert Debs, Jr., and Nancy Gordon Heinl. *Written in Blood. The Story of the Haitian People. 1492-1971*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1978.

- Hostos, Eugenio María de. "El cholo." In *Conciencia intelectual de América. Antología del ensayo hispanoamericano*, ed. Carlos Ripoll. New York: Las Américas, 1966.
- Las Casas, Bartolomé de. *Obras escogidas*, ed. Juan Pérez de Tudela. 5 vols. Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, 1957-1958.
- León-Portilla, Miguel. *Endangered Cultures*. Trans. Julie Goodson-Lawes. Dallas: Southern Methodist UP, 1990. Trans. of *Culturas en peligro*. 1976.
- Martí, José. *Prosa y poesía*. Estudio preliminar y notas de Iber H. Verdugo. Buenos Aires: Kapeluxz, 1968.
- Meléndez, Concha. Introduction to *Enriquillo. Leyenda histórica dominicana (1503-1533)*, by Manuel de Jesús Galván. Mexico: Editorial Porrúa, 1986.
- Milhou, Alain, ed. *Bartolomé de las Casas. Tyrannies et cruautés des espagnols* (Trad. Jacques de Miggrode, Anvers 1579). Paris: Editions Chaudaigne, 1995.
- Morales Lezcano, Víctor. *Africanismo y orientalismo español en el siglo XIX*. Madrid: Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, 1986.
- Morales Padrón, Enrique. *Historia del descubrimiento y conquista de América*. Madrid: Gredos, 1990.
- Monsiváis, Carlos. Prólogo. *Ignacio Manuel Altamirano. El Zarco*. México: Ediciones Océano, 1986.
- Oviedo, Gonzalo Fernández de. *Historia general y natural de las Indias*. Ed. Juan Pérez de Tudela Bueso. Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 120. Madrid: Atlas, 1959.
- Paz, Octavio. *El laberinto de la soledad*. New York: Penguin USA, 1997.
- Ricard, Robert. "Contribution à l'étude du mouvement africaniste en Espagne de 1860 à 1912." *Bulletin hispanique* 48 (1946): 181-96.
- Sarmiento, Domingo Faustino. *Facundo o Civilización y barbarie*. Prol. de Carlos Alberto Erro. Buenos Aires: Editorial Sur, 1962.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Viajes por Europa, África y América. 1845-1847 y Diario de gastos*. Ed. Javier Fernández. Hispanística XX. Buenos Aires: Colección Archivos, 1984.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage, 1979.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Orientalism Reconsidered." In *Literature, Politics and Theory: Papers from the Essex Conference, 1976-84*, ed. Francis Barker et al. London: Methuen, 1986. 210-29.
- Sommer, Doris. *Foundational Fictions. The National Romances of Latin America*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1991.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Not Just Any Narrative: How Romance Can Love Us to Death." In *The Historical Novel in Latin America. A Symposium*, ed. Daniel Balderston. Nashville: Ediciones Hispamérica, 1986.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *One Master for Another: Populism as Patriarchal Rhetoric in Dominican Novels*. Lanham: UP America, 1983.
- Vogueley, Nancy. "Turks and Indians: Orientalist Discourse in Postcolonial Mexico." In *Diacritics* 25.1 (1995): 3-20.



## Chapter 9

# Engendering the Nation, Nationalizing the Sacred: Guadalupismo and the Cinematic (Re)Formation of Mexican Consciousness

Elena Feder

Cinema is the richest medium of expression ever made available to humanity . . . The arts, every skill, history, the world, the cosmos, all bow down before it with devotion. (Emilio “el Indio” Fernández<sup>1</sup>)

In *Dying To Be Born: The Vicissitudes of Birth in Life and Culture*, the doctoral dissertation in the context of which this essay was first written, I analyze three culturally distinct and historically-specific inscriptions of difference in films, literary texts, and theories of semiosis, which have recurred, however unselfconsciously, to the all-too-obvious metaphors of birth and conception at crucial moments of their exposition. Establishing a direct connection between the generative properties of biological birth and the coming into being of symbolic forms, my hypothesis is twofold. First, that the deeply unconscious, autonomous processes of ideation constitute both mimetic and mythic responses to the only three modes of reproduction known in nature: sexual, asexual, and parthenogenesis; and second, that birth or, more specifically, each of the three generative laws of natural conception, are somehow constitutive—in every sense of the word, that is, *generative, formative, signifying, and foundational*—as much of the structure structuring a work as of each and every sutured articulation of its body. The structure of structure cannot but obey the same constitutive laws as the form of the form it both informs and comes to embody.

*Guadalupismo*, a complex interweaving of history, myth, Church doctrine, and popular belief—that, I argue, is fundamental to the constitution of Mexican national identity or *mexicanidad* since First Contact—corresponds to parthenogenesis, the least common of the three reproductive modalities. I call this mode of meaning-making at the margins of representation “parthenogenetic (re)production” because, in spontaneously engendering an epiphanic instance yet to be embodied in the sign and ostensibly untouched by history, it replicates the mode of biological reproduction whereby progeny are produced spontaneously by the mitotic division of parental cells, without involving a normal meiotic sexual circle. As a culturally-specific manifestation of parthenogenetic conception, then, *Guadalupismo* can be said to both engender and be enGendered by narratological simulations of the biological process of spontaneous generation whose imaginary and epistemological equivalent is none other than the “Immaculate Mother’s” virgin birth—*parthenoi* in Greek—aptly defined by scripture as the virginal conception of Christ in the immaculately conceived Virgin through the non-carnal intervention of the Holy Ghost.<sup>2</sup>

Looking at birth and reproduction from an epistemological perspective—that is, not solely in relation to the weight that culturally-specific differences bring to bear on the symbolic role played by Woman and Mother in a particular social imaginary, but equally to the point, in terms of the partial and disjointed impact of culture on the reproduction of everyday practices and institutions—I analyze *Guadalupismo*’s contribution to Mexican cinema’s involvement in the gendering, racialization, and secularization of the sacred during the (re)formation and consolidation of modern Mexican national identity or *mexicanidad*, in crisis since the Revolution of 1910, and follow the traces of its involvement from as early as the first-known cinematic representation of Mexico City (1905) up to the melodramas directed by Emilio “el Indio” Fernández in collaboration with his legendary cinematographer Gabriel Figueroa between 1943 and 1956.

Translating Lacan’s germinal *mise-en-scène* of the constitutive phase of identity formation into a Mexican context, I cast the (re)productive modality of these films as narrative simulations of parthenogenesis: a function of their particular mode of gendering as well as racializing meaning. I then (re)stage the figure of the Indian (M)Other within the mirror of Mexican national identity so as to undo the double erasure of both Woman and Indian from dominant notions of *mexicanidad*, and reassert the historical significance of *Guadalupismo* and the dual principle it embodies in the constitution of mestizo Mexican national identity before and since the Revolution.<sup>3</sup>

Because this generative trope of unsurmounted duality, between whose pre- and post-Columbian poles the roots of mestizo identity

oscillate, manifests itself in the melodramas created by Fernández/Figueroa by means of the unstable conflation of Indian and (M)Other, narrative alone is unable to account for its uncanny emanations. Sparked spontaneously by the figure of the Virgin at junctures where mestizo identity is in the process of being reconstituted, *Guadalupismo* disrupts narrative cohesion “like a flash” (Benjamin 1978: 335), challenging the dominant versions of national identity with an Indian-inflected, unsurmountably dual, vision of *mestizaje*. From the “luminous folds and secret depths of the sacred” (Kristeva 1980: 260) that these films seek to recover, the Indian (M)Other’s unrepresentable semiotic pulsations reverberate throughout their baroque *mise-en-scènes*, reconnecting the master signified of liberal bourgeois individualism momentarily challenged by the Revolution, Mexico’s short horizon of historical memory, to its long horizon of colonial memory.

In what follows, then, I will map out some of the cinematic articulations and mythopoetic effects of *Guadalupismo* on the interactions between culture, technology, and religion, departing from the premise that Mexican cinema’s participation in the secularization of the sacred—an unevenly—realized effect of modern adaptation to urbanization, massive industrialization, and integration into the world-capitalist system, where commodity fetishism tends to replace all other forms of worship—cannot be understood outside the historical and symbolic role played by *Guadalupismo* in both enGendering and temporarily laying them to rest.

## A (new) Beginning

In *Y cuando el cine llegó* [And When the Cinema Arrived] 1900–1904, the inaugural segment of the documentary series *Dieciocho Lustros de la vida de México en este siglo* (90 Years of Mexican Life In This Century), coordinated by silent-film historian Aurelio de los Reyes, the first-ever celluloid version of Mexico City opens to the tune of a grandiloquent voice-over, the narrator’s excitement about the reproductive wonders of modernity hardly tarnished by the rusty crackling, typical of early recordings. “Juan de Dios Peza,” he ceremoniously announces, “recites his ode to the nineteenth century in an Edison cylinder, Mexico City, at Dolores.”

The visual backdrop to the announced recitation—a turn-of-the-century ode to the dawn of the age of mechanical reproduction, which I will soon quote in full—is a still-camera panoramic view of the city. A five-minute long take, it opens with a point of view shot that emerges from below ground level, from the earth’s entrails as it were, tilts slowly up towards the light, rises past grass, reeds and endless rows of *maguey* cactus lining the earth’s surface, stops momentarily, as if in

awe, to register the sprawling city laid out at its feet, and, before abruptly coming to an end, pans left, right, and back to center, zooming out (or so it seems) so as to fully embrace the entire valley and surrounding hills. Far in the horizon, lie the snow-covered peaks of the dormant volcanoes Popocatépetl and Ixtlacíhuatl, mythical son and daughter of the sun and the moon, legendary protectors of the valley's inhabitants, competing in their majesty and atavism with the capital's *fin de siècle* splendor, from a distance both spatial and temporal.

Here, then, at the constitutive moments of its birth, are already implanted the visual seeds that will distinguish Mexican cinema for a long time to come. In less than five minutes, and before the addition of recorded sound, its anonymous forefather has managed to visually encapsulate, not only the profound nationalist pride, positivist self-confidence and belief in the promise of Progress, but also the atavistic pull of centuries of heritage and tradition, inscribed silently, though by no means less forcibly, in the landscape that has been its backdrop: endless skies adorned with sculpted clouds, fertile valleys, mythical volcanoes and, of course, the ubiquitous *maguey* cactus.



Figure 1  
Jesús Helguera, "La leyenda de los volcanes," ca. 1941

The belated addition of asynchronous sound amplifies the redemptive promise of the image. As if to prepare us, blind(ed) viewers that we are, to receive, at one and the same time, daylight, the

poet's message and the dawning age of technology, the promise of Edisonian bliss trumpeted by the omniscient narrator at the opening moments of the shot is here followed by the faint ticking of a clock. Like a heart beating life into the embryonic body of this text, its steady ticking leads our gaze out of the chthonic darkness, growing louder and to a halt as the camera reaches the earth's surface and the awaited voice of Juan de Dios Peza emerges to cast new light on the image. Paradoxically, however, rather than a more appropriate elegy to the wondrous birth of the cinema, or to a new century for that matter, Mexico's foremost Romantic poet recites instead his "ode to the phonograph," "glory of the nineteenth . . .," a pan-nationalist sacralization of technology and the body that grows progressively into a metonymically unstable signifier which slides incessantly between the phenomenon of sound recording, to which it sings its praises, and that of visual reproduction, which it is meant to complement. Here is how the bard records this foundational moment:

*El pueblo americano* [the American people] rise and reach their zenith with their great and marvelous inventions. Far among them shines the phonograph, which is a miracle (*un prodigo*). It reproduces the human voice and transmits it generation after generation. It copies what was once believed to be uncopiable, seizes the incorporeal, captures the intangible, makes it possible for parents to listen to the voices of their prematurely dead children, and for the children those of their parents . . . , even after they go on to sleep the dream from which there is no awakening. . . . It behooved Edison, the immortal Edison, to discover this marvel, which the illustrious Christian father Tortoledo compares to the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Eucharist because, only in this manner, does the Divine One conceive human incarnation to be without blemish, as when it descends intangible, incorporeal, and invisible, into the white host before which believers prostrate themselves. . . . Nothing real, nothing material remains in the phonograph of that which man carries in his coarse and crude body. Nonetheless, his voice can be heard pure, vibrant, as if he who emits it were still alive long after becoming dust in the grave. . . . Hail, and once again hail, marvelous invention, glory of the nineteenth century, glory of Edison. THE END (my translation)

### The Sacred in a Secular World

Such sweeping prophesies of heaven on earth on the modernizing wings of art and technology may ring strange to our secular ears,

unaccustomed as we have become to linking human invention to sacred design. Yet, as the uneasy superposition of Juan de Dios Peza's ode upon the first cinematic representation of Mexico's national destiny unwittingly exposes, the displacement from God onto the machine, and from scripture onto art, of the belief in the possibility of human redemption from the restrictions of the flesh and history—the *sine qua non* of enlightened modernity, embodied in the secular ideal of the nation-state—can hardly be said to have happened overnight, let alone been easily accomplished, arguably if at all, either in Mexico, the Americas or, as recent events have shown, in Europe for that matter.

Marx's critical yet empathic recognition that religion is “the heart of a heartless world” and its wretchedness is “at once the expression of and a protest against real wretchedness” (*Critique* 131) has been recently echoed by Leo Bersani in *The Culture of Redemption*, a revision of cultural modernism in Europe and the United States, where he puts into question the widely accepted notion (promoted by both the European and Latin American historical avantgardes) that, having taken the place of religion, art can redeem life and save us from the catastrophes of history and sexuality—an idea equally at the core of high- and low-brow Mexican *modernismo* and *vanguardismo*, and their own theories of the essence of national identity or *mexicanidad*.<sup>4</sup> Not only, as Bersani argues, do “such apparently acceptable views of art's beneficially reconstructive function in culture depend on a devaluation of historical experience and of art” (1). They trivialize life itself. To focus exclusively on the beneficent aspects of art, as Heidegger painstakingly uncovered in tracing the work of art to its source, is to ignore the violence and strife of creation to which the work owes its truest meaning, when not its grandeur.

Both these poles, the creatively redemptive and the violently destructive, are inherent to that ineffable dimension of experience that Georges Bataille, Roger Callois, René Girard, Julia Kristeva, and Denis Hollier, among others students of culture concerned with its secular mythopoetic dimensions, have subsumed, each in their own way, under the rubric of the sacred. In brief, a social as much as imaginary dimension of experience, the sacred is both reinforced and transformed through communifying rituals instituted by culture in order to bring our innate violence, revenge fantasies, and pain of loss under control, however temporarily. Whether religious or secular, all rituals interpellate subjects in fantasy by means of a complex interplay of mostly contradictory social, economic, and cultural fields of hegemony formation. Modern day secular rituals, such as wars (hot and cold), revolutions, rock concerts, sports, the drug culture, state-sponsored museums, public art and television shows, and the cinema, also mediate, like their religious predecessors, our connection to the ineffable, always already un(der)represented, site of the Other—that

liminal elsewhere place where a *bricolage* of ever-changing identity formations endlessly congeal and disintegrate to congeal again, like the fragments of a broken amphora in Walter Benjamin's celebrated image ("The Task of the Translator"), propelled in more than one direction as much by history as by the never-ending pulsations of desire, both individual and collective.

The varieties of religious experience, modern secular ones included, are but the most widely recognized manifestations of the sacred; each as archaic as ineludibly marked by the moment of its eruption into history and culture. Whereas sacralizing reactions to the estranging advent of technology are equally common to other cultural modes of production—witness, for example, Henry Adams at the Great Paris Exposition, not coincidentally held in the centennial year 1900, who experienced "the forty-foot dynamos as a moral force, much as the early Christians felt the Cross" (Didion 1996)—in Mexico, until the defeat of the Catholic Church in the Cristero War (1927-1929) cleared the way for the institutionalization of a secular state in the early '30s, divine providence, figured by the Virgin of Guadalupe since First Contact, was not *officially* rejected, not even disguised as or supplanted by but, rather, entirely *identified* with progress, enlightened or otherwise. Indeed, for the vast majority, the pre-Columbian, Catholic, and Socialist utopian beliefs, pulsations, and practices continuing to fuel this identification have continued to inform Mexican national identity and culture long after the separation of the Church from the revolutionary state.



Figure 2

Anonymous. "Defensores de la patria y de la religión," ca. 1952

## A Matter of the Heart

In her classic essay “*Stabat Mater*,” Julia Kristeva observes that secularization and the demise of the cult of the Virgin has left both men and women without a satisfactory discourse on motherhood. While her concern that feminist critiques of traditional representations of motherhood have not produced new insights into the psycho-social constitution of the maternal imaginary have since begun to be addressed, given the widespread resurgence, and politicization, of the cult of the Virgin worldwide, there continues to be a need for what Toril Moi describes as “a ‘post-virginal’ discourse on maternity, one which would ultimately provide both women and men with a new ethics: a ‘herethics’ encompassing both reproduction and death” (*Reader* 161).<sup>5</sup>

My reframing of Mexican cinema within *Guadalupismo*’s imaginary and symbolic contexts is intended, at one and the same time, as a response to Julia Kristeva’s call for a new “herethics”—with all the admittedly essentializing dangers that attaching imaginary constructs to gender- and race-specific formations entail—and as an attempt to figure from the perspective of Mexican cinema the specificity of Mexican modernism as opposed to an Euro- or Anglo-centered one. A crucial distinction to keep in mind throughout is that between the *lived experience* of the mother-child bond and the genotextual operations of primary narcissism. In Kristeva’s words,

“We live in a civilization where the *consecrated* (religious or secular) re-presentation of femininity is absorbed by motherhood. If, however, one looks at it more closely, this motherhood is the *fantasy* that is nurtured by the adult, man or woman, of a lost territory; what is more, it involves less an idealized archaic mother than the idealization of the relationship that binds us to her, one that cannot be localized—an idealization of primary narcissism.” (*Stabat Mater* 161)

The nurturing of this fantasy, one which translates into a never-ending search for a lost territory in the caverns of primary narcissism, is no less than the springboard of artistic creativity. Seeking to assess its pulsations and marks of lived experience in Giovanni Bellini’s, Leonardo da Vinci’s, and Giotto’s pictorial renditions of the Madonna and Child, Kristeva observed that, despite fundamental differences among them, it is here that painterly change can best be assessed: “Nowhere else but here, it seems, in the luminous folds and secret depths of the sacred that painting strives to capture; with regard

to it, the myth of the maternal figure is nothing but a screen, a foreground, or an obstruction to be broken through" (1980: 260).

Kristeva establishes a direct connection between the origins of the work of art and the idealization of the archaic mother of phantasy—a connection that, as we will see later, the Fernández/Figueroa films take implicitly for granted—departing from the basic premise that in “the imaginary, maternal continuity is what guarantees identity,” and going as far as to state that it is “The imaginary of the work of art that is the most extraordinary and the most unsettling imitation of the mother-child dependence.” It is “its substitution and its displacement towards a limit which is fascinating because inhuman . . . . The work of art cuts off natural filiation, it is patricide and matricide, it is superbly solitary. But look backstage, as does the analyst, and you will find a dependence, a secret mother on whom this sublimation is constructed” (*Reader*: 14).

A screen, a foreground, an obstruction, a mediational structure, ambi-valence, paradox, the dual principle, all of these are linchpin terms referring us back to the imminently sublatable (M)Other/Child dyad in the mirror. Redefined by Kristeva as the semiotic *chora*, this sacred/secular liminal space/place is where and wherefrom drives and stases erupt spontaneously into the world of law and language, to remind us, not only of the fragmented and fragmentary nature of identity formations, such as *mexicanidad*, but also of their resilience as promissory notes to be cashed in an ever-receding, future-perfect temporality, such as *Guadalupismo*'s.<sup>6</sup>

Carrying the weight of Revelation, *Guadalupismo*'s promise stands out as both the effect and condition of possibility of Mexican culture's sacral-secular design. Exemplary among colonial analytics of cultural difference, its constitutive, syncretic, and transcultured dual function articulates *mexicanidad* along two complementary agonistic race- and gender-specific axes of signification: one White and phallogocentric, the other Indian and gynologocentric. Buried under an excess of maternal presence, the function of the gynologocentric axis is predominantly one of mediation. Set in motion by/as the dual principle, it works with and against the semiotic instability ensuing from the para-doxical *simultaneity* of absence and presence. Oscillating between the memory of plenitude and the memory of lack, its richly textured, historically re(de)fined mediational structure not only negates by overdetermination and baroque excess the Indian (M)Other's syntactic status as the minus-in-origin which permeates the dominant versions of *mexicanidad*; by constantly reactivating the racialized oscillations between Self and (M)Other in the loop of transference on which subjectivity is predicated, it is also fundamentally constitutive of Indian-White transculturation, hence as much of *mestizaje* as of *mexicanidad*.

## ***Guadalupismo's Visual Vernacular***

The persistence of religion in Mexico, and of the cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe in particular, has been noted, albeit tangentially, by artists, filmmakers, and students of Mexican culture alike. Carlos Monsiváis, for example, who recently remarked that the Catechism, or Book of Christian Doctrine, continues to be the most widely circulated publication in the country, has often commented on the stranglehold of religious ideas on the values and ethics of modern Mexican society. In reference to the formative years of Mexican cinema, he dolefully notes: "During the first half of the twentieth century, *Moral* was whatever the Church, the Family, the state and Society found admissible. *Immoral* was everything outside (*lo de fuera*)" ("Mitologías" 13, my translation).

Suggesting a similar connection between the secularization of the sacred and the continental success of Mexican melodrama, Laura Podalski opens her insightful reframing of the genre in the context of post-revolutionary nationalism in the 1940s with a quote by Carlos Fuentes, where, projecting the functional link between Mexico's melodramatic imagination and Catholicism to the rest of Spanish-America, he states: "only in the Pope and in [the soap opera] *Simplemente María* do we Latin Americans recognize each other ecumenically" ("Disjoined Frames" 57).

It is Octavio Paz, however, who takes such observations to their logical conclusion in his 1976 forward to *Quetzalcóatl and Guadalupe: the Formation of Mexican National Consciousness 1531-1813*, Jacques Lafaye's groundbreaking analysis of the socio-symbolic interactions between the Catholic Church, the colonial state, and the practices of everyday life from First Contact to Independence. Updating his own classic mid-century analysis of Mexican culture, where he had portrayed a society where class, race and gender were construed in sole accordance with *secular* cultural myths of popular origin, most notably that of *la Malinche* or *la Chingada*, here Paz goes as far as to claim, not without a pinch of sardonic resignation, that "The Mexican people, after more than two centuries of experiments and defeats, have faith only in the Virgin of Guadalupe and the National Lottery" (Lafaye xi).

Recognition being but the first step towards meaningful transformation, it still remains to be seen to what extent and in which ways *Guadalupismo*—the sacred/secular paradigm formed around the cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe and related figures, constitutive of the maternal imaginary underpinning Mexican national identity since First Contact—will become integrated into the dominant discourse of "Mexicanas" in the future. The glaring omission of *Guadalupismo* and of the recognition of its importance insofar as the symbolic constitution of Mexican society and culture—from Vasconcelos to

Ramos to Zea to Paz—all but echoes the anticlericalism of the post-revolutionary intellectual and artistic elites who, beginning with the *Contemporáneos* to the *Muralists* to the *Estridentistas* to most Golden Age cinema *auteurs*, endorsed a secularist cultural developmentalism, whose New World political/aesthetic Socialist utopias have clearly not succeeded in preparing the ground for a thoroughly secular society to flourish.

The importance of *Guadalupismo* to the formal constitution of *mexicanidad* has not only been neglected by dominant analyses of Mexican culture, it has been overlooked by critical approaches to Mexican cinema. As a rule, scholars tend to attribute its enormous popularity exclusively to a combination of linguistic accessibility, nationalist nostalgia, the economic disparities between national film industries in the continent, or the democratizing impulse of melodrama and its sub-genres. This widespread omission is all the more surprising when we think of the primary role Mexican Cinema has played in the consolidation of post-revolutionary formations of *mexicanidad*, and of the degree to which *Guadalupismo* has both informed and transformed the hotly contested paradigm of *mestizaje* underpinning these formations.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, when *Guadalupismo* is addressed at all, as has been increasingly the case in the last few years, rarely is an explicit connection drawn between its race and gender determinants. And when the connection is noted, the relation between its mythopoetic dimensions and its political implications is generally left unexplored. More often than not, it is used either to cast all or some of its paradigmatic manifestations (Guadalupe, Malinche, Llorona, Tonantzin, Coatlicué, etc.) under the ideal light of a prelapsarian Indian past, with the aim to reappropriate, as in the case of a large number of Chicana/o and Latina/o scholars, negative mythemes of feminine identity to positive ends, or, alternatively, to set in motion some or all of these manifestations by turning them into the ground and springboard to be surmounted in order to allow for a reconstituted sense of identity to come into place—an operation generally performed by holding onto its vanishing image by a barely discernible thread, while at the same time disassociating her dual figure from the Indian roots of the *mestizo* dyad that she has symbolically embodied from the start.

A notable recent example of this mode of sublation is Mexican anthropologist Roger Bartra's *The Cage of Melancholy*, a complex overview of the discursive history of *mexicanidad* that is well-worth a closer look. Although Bartra devotes an entire chapter to a discussion of the function of the traditional feminine "archetypes" in the psycho-social constitution of Mexican identity, diegetically and extradiegetically he all but constrains their structural function to the minus-in-origin on which subsequent meanings rely. Subtitled "A la

Chingada" this chapter comes immediately before the last one in the book, "Expulsion," where he announces, in no uncertain terms, the demise of "the political culture of revolutionary nationalism," the fall from the illusion of national grace, for which "A la Chingada" set the stage (176).

In Bartra's psychodrama of *mexicanidad*, the "orphaned and fatherless" (male) subject is caught between "that exacerbated *machismo* and fanatical love for the mother in the figure of the Virgin of Guadalupe," and the negative "shadow next to her: the Indian mother, the indigenous gods [sic], the Malinche" (147). Cortez's Aztec bride, epitome of betrayal, is condemned, like the legendary Llorona and all Indian women, to wash with her tears the pain of a nation born as a result of the constitutive moment of her purportedly willing submission to rape. Ostensibly to debunk the unresolved contradictions of the virgin-whore paradigm, Bartra coins the awful neologism "Chingadalupe," a contraction of the Guadalupe-Malintzin dyad that he defines as "an ideal image which the Mexican male must form of his companion, who must fornicate with unbridled enjoyment and at the same time be virginal and comforting." Remarking, in one and the same breath, that "all Mexicans are Juan Diegos, protecting in the Tepeyac of their psychic depths the image of their mothers," Bartra then attributes the complex "logic of eroticism in the Mexican paradise" to a flaw in the Mexican psyche, going as far as to mock the commonly held assumption that, short of doubting God and the purportedly eternal logic of the universe, this flaw is in fact endemic to human nature, hence punishable by expulsion (160-62).<sup>8</sup>

As biting and to the point as these kinds of observations often seem to be, Bartra falls short of exfoliating their implications to the fullest. Never mind, for example, that Mexicans are neither born equal or equally guilty, that guilt and responsibility are not equally let alone fairly borne, or that Juan Diego's desire to protect his Indian mother from a rapist *conquistador* can hardly be said to resemble that of Bartra's contemporaries—if for no other reason, because, from an Indian animistic perspective, the Virgin of Guadalupe functions as the embodiment of the feminine side of the sacred under a new guise, and from a mestizo perspective, because Guadalupe's negative other, the earthly Mother/second Eve, Malintzin/Doña Marina/Malinche, "a profoundly Mexican myth" (Bartra 167), was in fact transformed into a negative feminine symbol only well after Independence.

It is but a legacy of liberal positivist thought that Guadalupe's actions and behavior, symbolically equated in early colonial days with no less than those of "chivalric heroes from the Spanish literary tradition and biblical figures such as Joseph in Genesis" (Lafaye 9), should have come to be subsumed under her purportedly eager acquiescence to an equally presupposed ravishment. Little is made in

such readings of this living myth of the relation between the radical negation of the (M)Other's symbolic value, or of the fact that the event that engineered the inversion also exacerbated the ever-growing split between the rural and urban populations, increasingly divided along racial lines—a fact all the more disturbing given that it was both this negation and this inversion that were instrumental in preparing the ground for the secularization of the governing institutions and ideological apparatti of the state, a move consolidated during the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas in the early '30s.<sup>9</sup>

### The Other Mask of the Sacred

This is not the place to map out the long and complex social, political, and cultural history which led Lafaye to unequivocally conclude that “The cult of Guadalupe is the central theme of the history of Creole consciousness or Mexican patriotism” and that “[e]very study of that subject must inevitably lead to that cult or take it as its point of departure” (299). Suffice it to say, we can hardly overestimate the importance of his conclusions to the study of Mexican cinema’s involvement in the secularization of national consciousness during the consolidation of the post-revolutionary state.

Fundamental to popular culture’s adaptive resistance to the requisitions of modernity and capitalist expansion after the Revolution, *Guadalupismo* continues to enGender passionate debates within and beyond Mexico’s geographic borders to this day.<sup>10</sup> Current signs of widespread devotion to the Virgin range from the more traditional bare-kneed processions to Guadalupe’s regal Basilica and elaborate altars in homes, taxis, trucks, and buses, to body tattoos and a growing number of new sightings: from Watsonville, San Francisco, and Seattle to Toronto and Medjugorje.<sup>11</sup> In the cinema, it is rare to see an interior shot of a Mexican home that does not include an altar to the Virgin, and the recurrence of her name at landmark moments of Mexico’s visual vernacular history—from María Félix to “La India María” to María Rojo, and from *María Candelaria* (Emilio Fernández 1943), described by García Riera as a “tragedia campesina de Madre tierra” (a peasant tragedy about Mother earth (García Riera 1987: 51), to *María de mi Corazón* (Jaime Humberto Hermosillo 1979) to the soap opera *Simplemente María*—simply defies the laws of probability.

As with the rest of Latin America, the fact that the cult of the Virgin has survived in Mexico as a site of resistance to both modern secularization and cultural colonialism is hardly accidental. More than any other Catholic figure throughout the hemisphere, in fact more than Christ himself, the cult of the Indian Virgin embodies the long history of hopes and aspirations, fears and defeats of both her devout

and lay followers. An intricate palimpsest of popular devotion, high theology, and Church as well as lay politics woven in the course of five centuries, the American-Baroque mode of its design has enabled the cumulus of voices enshrined in its folds to say without saying what they were barred from expressing in the dominant discourses of national identity (MacCormack and Salles-Reese).

As with the Virgin of Copacabana and similarly transcultured Virgins throughout the Americas, the color of Guadalupe's skin stands out among the many other iconic signifiers of unsurmounted duality that she embodies. Signifier of mediation, *mestizaje*, and transculturation *par excellence*, its unique oppositional *as well as* inclusionary properties have functioned as ground for the tensions and oscillations between the two racially-coded poles of *mestizo* identity underpinning *mexicanidad*. Indian and White, nubile yet with child, this olive-skinned, New World-Old World Virgin Mother has figured and prefigured the multiple guises of transculturation and hybridity that characterize the hemisphere since First Contact, and has done so in accordance with a dual or dialogic mode of meaning-making indigenous to this continent to begin with. It should therefore not be a surprise that the mediational structure she embodies is played out in the panoply of hybrid and transcultured identity formations enGendered throughout Mexico's social history—*criollo*, *mestizo*, *pelado*, *lépero*, *marimacho*, virgin/whore, *axolote*, and so on—nor that it has been dialogically constitutive of Mexican cinema since the foundational moments of its mechanized birth.

### ***Guadalupismo and the Political History of Mexicanidad***

As the narrator/midwife of our cityscape's exemplary *alumbramiento*/delivery of Mexico's epiphanic patriotism did not fail to observe, it is by no means insignificant that the ode's liturgical glorification of the enGendering power of electronic technologies of reproduction (if I may be allowed to stretch the meaning from biology to epistemology once again) was to have been recorded for posterity at Dolores, the historical birth-site of Mexican Independence less than a century earlier. Not only because *el panteón de Dolores* has always housed the land's dead—and like Renan has remarked, of the “two things, which in truth are but one, that constitute [the nation's] soul or spiritual principle,” namely, “present-day consent” and the “cult . . . of the ancestors,” the latter “is the most legitimate, for the ancestors have made us what we are” (19)—but also because, as in the case of the priests who rallied for national Independence in the name of the Virgin of Guadalupe and of secularizing Enlightenment ideals, both at one and the same time, Juan de Dios Peza's own “grito de Dolores” too re-enacts the original paradox

constitutive of every Mexican “present-day consent” from First Contact to the present.<sup>12</sup>

The Virgin of Guadalupe’s foundational apparition to the “poor and humble” Indian Juan Diego did more than simply consolidate the Catholic belief in the providential nature of the Conquest, which cast the Virgin Mother as the embodiment of the Second Coming, her son Christ having embodied the First. It also enGendered a new epistemological framework where(by) the wide spectrum of subjective experience would henceforth be both negotiated and contained.

For the dominant *criollo* minority, the Virgin’s apparition was received as affirmation of their privileged status in the historical and providential unfolding of Scripture. It enabled them to identify themselves as the new chosen people, chosen by divine Providence to prepare the world for the third stage predicted in Revelation—the arrival of the Spirit that was to realize in the Indies what the eighteenth century writer Balbuena called “Heaven of earth” (in Lafaye 54).<sup>13</sup> For the Indians, however, who proved their humanity by demonstrating their capacity for conversion by translating one set of beliefs into another, the Church’s acceptance to build the Basilica on Mount Tepeyac guaranteed the fulfillment of their own millenarian hopes—which explains, at least in part, what Lafaye describes as “the[ir] enthusiastic adherence . . . to the cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe, protectress and guarantor of salvation” (22).<sup>14</sup>

If Lafaye is right, and O’Gorman, Poole, and Becker seem to agree, how else but as the effect of urban secularism do we explain the 180 degree turn shrouding the dominant discourses of *mexicanidad* in a negativity characterized as betrayal, solitude and melancholy? Casting a dreary shadow over the immensely optimistic, indeed providential sense of national purpose adumbrating *mexicanidad* for centuries, this negativity continues to widen the gap between the rural/Indian and urban/White poles of *mestizaje* that *Guadalupismo* works to hold together as much as to keep apart.

While to recover the world from which emerged the Indian response to the contradiction within Christianity itself between its monologotheistic impulse and Marian worship is obviously impossible, there is little doubt that *Guadalupismo*’s dual principle still functions symbolically as the “positive” common denominator that *mexicanidad* promised to be from the start. When the time for political liberation came, not the *Independista* allegiance to the Virgin of Guadalupe, not even the negotiated settlement that put the “Indian” Benito Juárez at the helm of the budding nation-state, let alone the 1910 peasant uprising on whose military defeat the integrationist state apparatti’s *Indigenista* neo-primitivism hinged, helped reverse the harsh realities of the Conquest. If during the colonial period, to quote Lafaye one last time, “[i]t was the need to resolve theological problems that sometimes led religious thinkers of

this period to assign to the Indian (and sometimes to his origin, past, and beliefs) a spiritual worth which, despite all the evils, guaranteed his survival in the colonial society of the Indies over three centuries" (49), during Reconstruction, Indians were not nearly as lucky. Most of the remaining ethnolinguistic groups succumbed to the pressure of assimilationist policies, such as, for example, the gargantuan educational reforms masterminded by Vasconcelos, Secretary of Education since 1921, disseminated by an army of barely-trained educators who, like the idealistic teacher-cum-virginal matriarch played by María Félix in Fernández's *Rio Escondido* [Hidden River 1947], peddled his convictions to the furthest corners of the land, when not on foot or horseback, on the trains that earlier carried revolutionaries, *soldaderas*, *bandidos*, and *federales*.<sup>15</sup>

It is but a sad irony of history that eliminating the balance of power between church and state which protected the surviving few for nearly four centuries should have worked to the detriment of indigenous peoples. With all forms of religious worship relegated to the private sphere and the scope of the national culture reduced to ways that left little room for indigenous cultural and social practices in the public sphere, all remaining hope for Indian participation in the hegemonic formation of the post-revolutionary state was to be buried deeper under Guadalupe's mantle.

### The Gamble of Juan Diego's Maguey-Fiber Mantle

What I have been proposing so far is that the spiritual substance that emerged during the viceroyalty of New Spain continues to carry within it both the genuine aspirations of the first proponents of *Guadalupismo* and their mode of symbolic articulation. The timely miracles of a bouquet of roses out of season and the imprint of the Virgin of Guadalupe's likeness on Juan Diego's maguey-fiber mantle offered a much needed ideological compromise. Sparking the first and arguably the most important theological debates of the New World, her apparition was seen by the Creoles as the manifestation and bestowal of God's grace, both justifying the fact of the Conquest and endowing the New World Church with a providential meaning and purpose independent from that of the continent. For the Indians, on the other hand, it not only made it possible to make sense of this cataclysmic event in terms coherent with their past beliefs and experience, but also to inscribe their animistic mode of meaning-making for the future.

One such mark of future perfect temporality is Juan Diego's maguey-fiber mantle. In its materiality, this sign takes us as far back as to the archaic roots of the Mexican Mariophany, the pre-Columbian Goddess Mayáhuatl. A chthonic deity, Mayáhuatl is

depicted in Aztec codices as the originary mother of four hundred gods, with her multi-breasted body covered, like the Ephesian Artemis-Diana's, with representatives from every corner of the animal world. According to the ancient myth, Mayáhuel's gift to the Mexican people was to metamorphose into the *maguey* cactus so as to continue nurse their physical bodies and sacred souls with the plant's milky sap. As befits a sacred/secular communifying beverage worthy of the name, the milk destined for the gods has since been transformed into the two primary national drinks: the indigenous, lower class *pulque* or Mescal, and the upper-class Tequila, its colonial distillation.



Figure 3  
Mayáhuel, Diosa del Maguey (Codex Borgia)

Though widely acknowledged by Guadalupe's infallible semblance in the nation's *pulquerías*, her association with Mayáhuel has yet to be recognized. The reason may well be that their identification survives indexed in a register even more evasive than that of form, content or structure: that of substance itself. In accordance with the animistic belief that things speak as loudly as words, however, the historical and imaginary connection between them remains encoded in and by the famous mantle where, according to the myth, the new Indian Virgin's likeness 'appeared' magically imprinted to convince Archbishop Zumárraga to build the Basilica on Tepeyac, where Juan Diego's *lienzo* (canvas or mantle) of maguey-fiber cloth is said to hang in perpetuity.



Figure 4

Virgin rising out of a maguey plant. Collection from the Iglesia de la Profana

But the communifying power of the maguey is re-enacted and recorded not only during the intoxicating rituals that accompany both the consumption of the two national drinks obtained from the sacred plant and its symbolic representation. Featured in innumerable cinematic representations of the Mexican landscape, the plant often functions indexically, both as a signifier of sexuality at the crossroads, as in the castration scene in Landeta's *La Negra Angustias* (1943), and of death, as in the battle siege scene in de Fuentes's *Vámonos con Pancho Villa* (1934), where a line-up of embattled revolutionaries fall sequentially into the plant's embrace while preparing to meet their maker. Indeed, it is in the folds of memorable moments of Mexican film history like these that instances of wounded primary narcissism, masked by a fantasy of the maternal specific to this land, lie recorded.

Every act of recording implies a double temporality that implicates the body in the act of re-membering. Etymologically, the verb refers both to scripting or registering and to reminding or remembering; from the Latin *recordari*, whose root is *cor* or heart, as in learning by heart. As the immaculate re-recordings of our two Johns of God, Juan Diego of First Contact and the Romantic Juan de Dios Peza, bear witness, it is at moments of severe epistemic crises, when time and space vex paradoxical and the distinctions between inner/Self and outer/Other become blurred, that the copy looks much like the original and the spontaneously manifested presence of the (M)Other appears to be within reach.

### The Guadalupean Melodramatic Imagination

With its generative structure already at work at the moment of Mexican cinema's turn-of-the-century birth, *Guadalupismo's* constitutive role in the cinematic (re)formation of post-revolutionary Mexican national consciousness reached its apogee, and perhaps

ultimate sublimation, in the unique body of historical, epic, and maternal melodramas created by the two legendary figures: "el Indio" Fernández and Gabriel Figueroa. While there are fundamental differences within Mexico itself between their melodramas and those of their contemporaries, the Guadalupean foundations of the genre distinguish Mexican melodrama from other non-Catholic melodramatic traditions. While due to its quietly subversive reappropriation of the maternal imaginary, melodrama lends itself naturally to the Guadalupean coordinates that I have been weaving so far, nowhere is the ritual re-enactment and structural transposition of traditional and religious values into modern social mores more fraught with tensions and contradictions than in Mexico's contribution to the genre.

Associated since its inception in eighteenth-century France with the popular, the private, the domestic, the feminine, and the maternal, melodrama developed in Mexico into a veritable hybrid of generic and stylistic traditions. Though widely acknowledged as instrumental in the consolidation of post-revolutionary ideology, in the hands of Fernández and Figueroa melodrama served to expose the genre's inherent contradictions. Working to disrupt the apparent seamlessness of contemporary *mexicanidad*, it lent a privileged place to the syncretic figure of the Indian (M)Other, embodiment of the dual principle, often calling upon it to expose and resolve societal tensions resulting from the complex clash between pastoral and urban values—a fundamentally modern clash which, in the context of post-revolutionary Mexico, translated into a conflict between, one the one hand, the syncretic Indian/Spanish Catholicism and the semi-feudal societal structures inherited from colonial days and, on the other, the vying demands of capitalist modernization, secularization, nationalism, and the Marxist-inflected ideas of the early artistic and political avantgardes.

As was the case during the European transition to secular Enlightenment values shortly after melodrama's birth on the eve of the French Revolution, Mexican melodrama constituted the crucial cultural link between the modern re-formation of Mexican national consciousness and its earlier historic-religious derivations. Over and above simply compensating for the waning of religion in the public sphere, once religious practice became relegated to private life, when not outright forbidden by law, and the public sphere increasingly identified with the ideological apparati of the modern Secular state, melodrama helped to fill the growing spiritual void.<sup>16</sup> Linking the two spheres, it functioned discursively as an heterogeneous site of identity formation, where often-clashing categories, such as, Woman, Indian, Mestizo, White, Gringo, Priest, Peasant, Child, Mother, Father, Family, and Work, were constantly reconfigured in order to renegotiate

*mexicanidad* in ways that adapted to and resisted the separation of church and state.

Mexican melodrama, as film historian Emilio García Riera has noted, has in fact been the “the supporting ground of the national cinema” since the industry’s inception (1988: 18). Until 1936, when the film production company CLASA released *Allá en el Rancho Grande*—the last in Fernando de Fuentes’s dystopian trilogy of the Revolution, the first rural melodrama *ranchero* in Mexico’s cinematic history and its first international success—what characterized national film production were, what Riera despectively describes as, the “more than twenty . . . middle class family *melodramitas* per year, crying out for a powerful mother capable of protecting everyone from the dangers of history” (1988: 11). In contrast to rural melodrama’s short-lived success, however, it was maternal and historical melodrama what kept the industry alive until the Fernández/Figueroa team came along and, aided by U.S. protectionist policies during World War II, revitalized the genre and the industry taking both to thereto unheard of heights.<sup>17</sup>

The process of secularization already at work in the earlier melodramas, disparaged by Riera, continued throughout the ‘30s with films such as *Santa* (Saintly Woman, Antonio Moreno 1931), the industry’s first talkie and early articulation of the saint/whore paradigm.<sup>18</sup> By the time *Cuando los hijos se van* (When the Kids Leave Home, Juan Bustillo Oro 1941) came to launch the decades-long onslaught of melodramas starring Sara García, the venerable mother *cum* grandmother of Mexican cinema, the secular-sacred roots of post-revolutionary matricentrism had already grown deep and wide. Though religious melodramas, the vast majority with the Virgin as the central theme, continued to be made intermittently throughout the ‘30s and early ‘40s, they all but disappeared between 1943 and the late ‘50s, notably, the period of greatest popularity for the Fernández-Figueroa films. After their collaboration came to an end, moreover, what best describes the dominant position *vis à vis* religion is a guarded ambiguity.<sup>19</sup> For example, in Roberto Gavaldón’s denunciation of international capital’s interference with the nationalization of petroleum under Cárdenas, *La rosa blanca* (The White Rose 1961), also shot by Figueroa, the *gringo* agent’s villainy (indexed by his desecration of an image of Guadalupe left at his bedside) is almost as questionable as the naïveté of his devout hosts, who misjudge his character on the basis of his fake outward signs of devotion to the Virgin at the cost of their property and lives.

Gavaldón’s position differs only in tone from those of the secularist urban elites filling the ranks of the Mexican avantgarde in the ‘20s, ‘30s, and ‘40s, who, while looking for much-needed guarantees of authenticity in regionalism, folklore, and myth, ignored the dialogic syncretism between pre- and post-colonial religious and

ritual practices underpinning the profound religiosity of indigenous peoples, divesting *mexicanidad* of its Guadalupean roots.<sup>20</sup> In contrast to Fernández, they oscillated between the homogenizing forces of international cultural capital and the need for a homemade national identity. Pumping new blood into an imaginary Indian, they raised the ruins of Tenotchitlán, Tula, and Chichen Izá to heights as great as Neruda's Machupichu, but neglected to intervene in the cultural genocide of living Indians, their Other within. Consequently, they unwittingly helped realize what was essentially an Europeanized educational project whose underlying principle can be summarized in Vasconcelos words: "what the country needs, is to begin reading *The Iliad*. I am going to distribute one hundred thousand Homers in the national schools and in the libraries we are about to install" (in Blanco 109).<sup>21</sup>

Though riddled with contradictions, or perhaps because of them, "el Indio" Fernández's vision for a genuinely dual *mestizo* nation invites and enables, instead, the perception of a radical alterity. Oscillating between the Chosen/Chingado antipodes of *mexicanidad* in ways that emphasize the Indian (M)Other underbelly that sustains the mythico-historical dimensions of the hybrid mode of cultural formation we call *mestizaje*, his particular brand of *indigenismo* works to expose the double exclusion of Indian and Woman at the root of the nostalgic nationalism that characterizes dominant analyses of *mexicanidad* since Independence. For him, the myth of a Virgin Mother is a living myth, the cornerstone of his fictions, and *Guadalupismo*'s oscillations are less about breaking through and surmounting than about bringing out and reinscribing its dual logic. This is not to say that the gynologocentric axis, their thetic as well as ethic and aesthetic point of reference, eliminates the distance between the elusive object of desire and a fragmented desiring subject inescapably condemned to its oscillations, but simply that, by embracing contradiction and paradox, its pulsations tone down their agonism and dissidence.

Few among us need to be reminded of Angel Rama's indictment of the foggy glasses with which the Indian has been used to (re)generate and justify our national myths (*Transculturación* 12). Harder to grasp is the radical Otherness of the matricentric world spontaneously enGendered in "el Indio's" fictions—a world where the inseparability of race, class, and gender is self-consciously framed in terms of a cultural-political intervention rooted in colonial times. As late as 1980, in an interview with Julia Tuñón, Fernández continued to reiterate his thwarted desire to construct an all-inclusive version of *mexicanidad*. Translating the Zapatista slogan, "the land belongs to those who work it," into the phrase, "cinema belongs to those who make films," he bitterly states: "*Those of us who have worked in film are dying of hunger. It's amazing!* During the presidency of López

Portillo [1976-1982] the situation was even more extreme because *they are Spanish, they are Criollos . . . we [Indians] have not been able to make a film*" (60).

This bitterness would have been unwarranted forty years earlier, when the cinematic apparatus of the fledgling modern state was put lavishly at his disposal. Whether this was due to the enormous financial success of his films or to a Revolution that brought to a head his people's "incommensurable experiences of struggle and survival" (Bhabha 302), the fact remains that his films stand out like a sore thumb the primitivist/internationalist pole of the modernist binary opposition that articulated the continent's adaptive resistance to the social and cultural impact of modernity in the '30s and '40s. To this day, their Guadalupean logic bears the marks of adaptive resistances that remind us that to ignore the centrality of the maternal imaginary to Mexican culture is to continue to see but one of the constitutive poles of *mestizo* identity, hence of *mexicanidad*.

### *Pas de deux. Re-Figuring AnOther Mestizo Nation*

The arrival of Fernández and Figueroa in the cinematic arena of the '40s helped reconcile the split between the opposing secularist and religious tendencies of post-revolutionary *mexicanidad*. With state support and the influx of U.S. venture capital during World War II, Fernández set out to correct racial and economic injustice, proposing a fairer allocation of land and freedom in the name of the Indian (M)Other and an imaginary Father enGendered by the Revolution—a recurring theme until as late as *Un dorado de Pancho Villa* (1966)—while Figueroa contributed a dialectic approach to form which, fulfilling what Eisenstein saw as "art's task to make manifest the contradictions of Being" (*Film Form* 46), coincided with *Guadalupismo* dual principle.<sup>22</sup>

Their rendering of Mexico's melodramatic imagination differs from traditional ones mainly in that, not only did it re-appropriate its discursive history from a subaltern perspective that allowed the new national subject to emerge as the enunciative product of an historically-specific intersection of race and gender. Speaking simultaneously from the locus of the Other, and with the Other's other Other always in mind, it also reopened a dual space where signifying yet unaccounted for traces of the Indian side of the *mestizo* dyad of *mexicanidad* could be discerned. Through the reactivation of dual ways of seeing and being, their films exposed the trials and tribulations of their ideal Indians' every day lives before an urban audience impervious to the racist implications of the pigmentocratic order they had inherited. Both contesting and reifying the borders of post-revolutionary *mexicanidad*, they put into question unexamined

practices like the exotization of Indians in contemporary art, attributing the responsibility for the potentially dire consequences of this widespread practice to the blindness of the contemporary art establishment. As early as *María Candelaria* (1943), their second film, the responsibility for the heroine's death ultimately falls upon the shoulders of a painter of European descent (indexed by his Spanish accent and dandyesque manners). Blind to fundamental cultural differences in the perception of the body and sexuality, he pieces together a woman's body and the face of the Indian María Candelaria, after she refused to pose in the nude for a painting later described by a contemporary critic as the "image of the nude peasant virgin" (Angel Lázaro, in García Riera 1987: 51)—a reckless act interpreted as the epitome of *malinchismo* by her people, who deal with her ostensible betrayal by stoning her to death.

Another recurring theme in these films is the tension between spiritual, material, and traditional values and practices. It is taken to its extreme in *Rio Escondido* [Hidden River 1947], where, at a turning point in the narrative, the town's terrified Indians are rounded up like cattle by the landowner's henchmen and vaccinated against smallpox against their will. The human hunt is ordered by the ruthless landowner (Carlos López Moctezuma) after the itinerant city doctor (Fernando Fernández) made the vaccination a condition for saving the infected villain's life, without taking into account the people's reliance on native healers and their distrust of modern medicine. A total massacre is finally averted thanks to the visiting schoolteacher (Maria Félix, love object of both the *caudillo* and the doctor), who prods and pleads with the parish priest until his dignity and courage are sufficiently restored to toll the church bells so that both henchmen and Indians calm down and the latter flock to their vaccination as if under a hypnotic trance. Fernández's lack of sentimentality and complex understanding of the contradictions implicit in this set up are evident in his portrayal of the historically beneficent role of the "Mother Church" in Indian life, alongside the drawbacks of Indian subservience to a church dominated by economic interests since First Contact, a church now made powerless as much by endemic corruption and *machismo* as by the secularist impulses of the modern state.

The Guadalupean bias of this film is further underscored by the unusual casting of Maria Félix as virginal heroine. Not surprisingly, the winning card in *Rio Escondido* is the solidarity of schoolteacher and field doctor with the plight of the town's sucked-dry Indians. Ideal heirs of the Revolution, they are emblematic of the hundreds of equally idealistic teachers and doctors who flocked to the countryside to educate and heal the rural poor without a clue as to their culture and beliefs. But while the doctor's involvement with the people stems from the courage of his convictions, the teacher's comes from her

heart. In ways that only melodrama can contain, she rebuilds the dilapidated school, adopts the town's orphans, helps the doctor rid it of its plagues, shows the village priest that the Book is mightier than the Sword, and shoots the unredeemable villain dead shortly before dying herself from a weakened heart. Her devotion to the town's children and her admiration for Juárez—the first and only Indian president of Mexico, whose portrait hangs prominently on the wall while she feeds the children an alphabet coated with the desire for justice he has become associated with—firmly establish her as the secular embodiment of the immaculate mother of the budding nation. As with other pulsations hidden in the Guadalupean folds of the Virgin (M)Other, her words carry the weight of centuries of hope and determination to transform the world portrayed in the woeful stories flowing through the veins and deeply furrowed faces of the old townswomen, like the hidden rivers indexed by the title.

Whereas Fernández actively promoted a modern adaptation of the historical allegiance of Indian peoples to the *Iglesia Indiana*, Figueroa's avantgarde aesthetic was instrumental in creating a visual idiom that made accessible to an illiterate audience the mythico-discursive space of *mexicanidad* in ways that held the usual terms of dominance and subservience in abeyance, when not voiding them of justification. His figural and structural experimentation with cinematic space—particularly in the use of deep focus and curvilinear perspective, which splits the viewing subject and the object of the gaze along more than one axis of identification at any given time—helped graft a psychosocial language, grounded in a maternal imaginary, sutured in phantasy, in accordance with the dual principle. In *Maria Candelaria*, for instance, two axes of identification function simultaneously inside the church where the eponymous heroine came to seek refuge from stoning. One of them triangulates the gaze so that the camera eye is identified with the Virgin's by placing the camera above and behind the altar so that she is seen/shown looking compassionately down at her pleading daughter. The second axis is foregrounded after Maria Candelaria recriminates the Virgin in a moment of desperation and loss of faith reminiscent of Christ at the Cross, where the Virgin's perspective is replaced by the priest's, who scolds the heroine for her "heretical" behavior.

An important characteristic of the Fernández-Figueroa melodramas is their uncanny ability to pull together a most diverse set of visual idioms and cultural strands, ranging from the popular to the highbrow to include Posada's and other, lesser-known, popular engravings; Jesús Helguera's calendar art; the graphic innovations of the *Taller de Gráfica Popular*; the multiperspectivism of the Spanish painters Velázquez and Goya; the constructivism of Eisenstein; and the formal experimentalism of the Muralists. But while Figueroa, who is largely responsible for this range of visual experimentation, was

proud to be considered the Muralist of the moving image (Exhibition catalog 1996), “El Indio” struggled with the neo-primitivism of his elite contemporaries and remained largely in the margin of their social lives (Tuñón *passim*).

This is not to say that Fernández did not engage in a good dose of exoticism and self-exoticising himself. However, exoticism takes on a different flavor in his films. It not only brings out the negated beauty and wisdom of a living culture that Fernández experienced as his own, but also makes of the self-defeating atavisms and vengeful brutality of the oppressed a tragic flaw.

When in *Un dia de vida* (One Day Left to Live), released seven years after *Flor Silvestre* [Wildflower 1943] (the national allegory that propelled the pair into fame), Coronel Lucio Reyes (Roberto Cañedo) returns briefly home to sign over legal ownership of the land to his widowed mother before being executed for a non-descript crime, his actions reflect more than a simple re-inscription of the atavistic identification of Earth and Mother naturalized uncritically in all of Fernández’s films. In the shadow of Zapata, whose portrait hangs in a shrine surrounded by banners and candles in Belén Martí (Columba Domínguez) bedroom—the visiting Cuban reporter and love-interest of the film, whose name refers us both to Christ’s birth site and to the eulogized hero of Cuban Independence—Indian rights to the land become the fulfillment of a promise literally earned with blood, sweat, and tears. If in 1943, the revolutionary slogan “the land belongs to whose who work it” was handed down by an Indian Mother to her fatherless Mestizo Son, by 1950, with the nationalist utopia drowning under the overflowing tears of another Mater Dolorosa, the sacrifice of four sons and a husband will have earned both her and her poor and humble loyal flock the right to remain in the hacienda, with legal title to the land in hand, even though they can hardly read its contents.

### **Guadalupismo and the (Re)constitution of *Mestizo* Masculinity**

The issue of land rights, U.S. intervention, and the role of the church after the Revolution were clearly in Fernández’s mind when he shot *Enamorada* (Woman in Love 1946), a free adaptation of both Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew* and the Spanish classic by the Infante Juan Manuel, *El Conde Lucanor*, Example XXXV (“Of What Happen’d to a Lad When Marrying a Very Fierce Woman”). Filmed shortly after “El Indio” tried in vain to obtain the rights to *Los Cristeros: La guerra santa en los Altos*, a popular 1937 novel by J. Guadalupe de Anda, *Enamorada* was later adapted for an English-speaking audience in a co-production retitled *The Torch* (1949), with Paulette Goddard instead of María Félix as the female lead.

*Enamorada* is dedicated to the *soldaderas*: faceless women who, as General José Juan Reyes (Pedro Armendáriz) tells the proud shrew, followed their men into battle, cooked their meals, washed their clothes, and fought alongside them during the Revolution, “asking for nothing in return.” Exulting their heroism and humility, the film invites its female viewers to choose between a *gringo* and a *mestizo* suitor and follow the example of the tamed shrew, who renounces the privilege of her class to end up walking behind her beloved’s horse’s behind in the closing shot of the film.

The shrew, however, is not the only one to be tamed in *Enamorada*. Betraying Fernández’s own conflicted class and religious values, a complex sequence placed midway through the narrative, depicts the hero’s own transformation from bully into gentleman. General Reyes he has come to ask his childhood friend, Father Rafael Sierra (Fernando Fernández), to intercede on his behalf with the beautiful Beatriz Peñafiel (Félix), daughter of the richest man in town, with whom, alas, he has fallen helplessly in love. The scene takes place in the same church where the victorious general presided over a one-man court at the opening of the film, ordering the priest and “*los ricos del pueblo*” to surrender their wealth to the coffers of the Revolution before engaging his old seminary pal in a heated debate as to the place of the priesthood in the Revolution. Their role, he then argued, was to fight on the side of the poor for the realization of the Heaven on earth envisioned by the founding sixteenth-century Mendicant friars, not by simply saving their souls for the here and now, but by returning to them the land that they needed in order to feed their bodies.

Mapping the rejected general’s return to the Mother Church he had abandoned after many years as a seminarian, the sequence begins with a medium-to-long exterior shot of the now-wounded hero of the people. Signaling the complex fraternal bond that once existed between the two men, the general’s once towering figure now is shown dwarfed against the church’s magnificent façade by the long establishing shot that frames his return. The exterior long shot reverts to an interior medium shot of a choir composed of poor children and cuts below to the parallelly dwarfed figure of Father Sierra who, both puzzled and inspired by his friend’s presence, will continue to sing with them the “Ave María” throughout the whole sequence. Guided by the Marian liturgy, the camera begins to track the wounded lover’s journey as he stomps down the nave (the center aisle of a church, its navel, so to speak), before stopping abruptly at the sight of an old Indian man in rags who sits absorbed in prayer between him and the camera eye, as if carved in stone. Foreclosing the classic camera-subject-object triangulation of the general’s and the camera’s voyeuristic gaze by neither returning the gaze nor seeing himself being seen, the impervious old man ends up embodying an uncannily

absent presence spontaneously generated to interpellate our hero, turning him into the object of his Indian Other's absent look.

The uncanniness of this effect is achieved by situating the camera to the left and at the same level as the sitting Indian's front-facing head. From there, it records the general standing on the aisle to the right of the old man before kneeling for the first time—a gesture of respect ostensibly inspired by the Indian's devotion—and slowly removing the spurs from his boots while looking at the hieratic figure from the corner of his eye until the camera cuts to the priest rapturously singing solo the verse “Benedicta . . .” (Blessed in spirit). The consistent presence of the soundtrack quadrangulates the unusual economy of the gaze set loose by this encounter, diagnostically drawing the general into a virtual space from where he will emerge fundamentally transformed while extradiegetically underscoring the “otherplaceness” of his experience.

At this point, the hero's journey is halfway completed. Mediated within his field of vision by the absent presence of an Imaginary Indian Father up to now, his final return to the folds of the Mother Church will be mediated by her incorporeal calling. The frontal framing of the next reverse shot shows a humbled Reyes slowly preparing to stand up, spurs in hand. He takes a brief look at the ancestral paternal figure before raising his head to the ceiling and, beckoned by the music, prepares to move on down the nave and, his spurless boots as firmly (im)planted on the church's nave as he is to his *chora*, undergo the transformation that his return to her womb will make possible.

The breathtaking marriage of image and sound that follows will not only restore his masculinity from its wounded state, enabling him to win the love of the woman he desires, but will help him recover a fraternal love lost when the seminarian friends chose to follow differing paths towards heaven as well. If from his re-conversion to the *Iglesia Indiana* the general emerged as the representative of the poorest of the poor, from the folds of the Guadalupana he will emerge entitled by this devotion to desire a woman of a class higher than that of the *soldaderas* he admires as well as as the priest's true equal: two fraternal leaders of the flock, products of a revolution whose success is contingent on their shared devotion to the Indian Virgin.

General Reyes's Guadalupean rebirth follows a very unusual sequence of shots. After he stands up, the camera switches abruptly from a horizontal to a vertical plane and begins tracking the intricately carved ceiling from top to front in the direction of the altar from his perspective. After stopping momentarily to register an image of the Virgin and Child, it moves on along the ceiling until it reaches the middle and highest of the three towers, at the center of which is embossed the sun-like sign of the Holy Spirit. The heretical identification of the Holy Spirit with the Virgin, a characteristic of the

*Iglesia Indiana* (Mexican Church) since colonial days, accompanied by the first synchronization of soundtrack and image in the next shot, is duplicated when the hero's entranced look in the direction of the dome is joined by the priest's while the choir repeats the words "Ave Maria" in the background.

Cutting back to the church nave at this crucial point in the sequence, the next reverse shot frames the general's halter-strapped chest against the gilded ceiling from an extremely low angle, and, as if to connect the Holy Spirit to her newly-born son, still attached exotically by an imaginary umbilical chord to her nave(l), the camera begins to rise along his body in an upwardly-rotating pan while tracking backward in the opposite direction at one and the same time. This utterly disconcerting long shot has the uncanny effect of a body first lowered into the ground and then lifted towards the ceiling in a semi-circular motion. In the next reverse shot, where the camera finally reverts back to the horizontal plane, image and soundtrack coincide once more to show the priest singing the aria where Maria is asked to intercede on behalf of her sinning children (*Ora pro nobis, pecatoribus*). In the next, medium-to-close shot, a newly-born Reyes looks intently at two oil canvases near the altar: one that depicts the Virgin showing off her newborn son in the manger, the other, of the Assumption. When the long-lost friends finally meet face to face, the careful parallel framing firmly establishes their positions as equals

It is as equals that the two men will resume a dialogue broken earlier in the film. Reyes will confess his failed attempts to win Beatriz's love, Father Sierra will agree to intercede on his friend's behalf, and the parallelism between the secular ideals of the post-revolutionary state and their sacred ecclesiastical origins will be firmly established. The sequence that follows resembles a hall of mirrors where distinctions between copy and original are posited and teased out, and where the duality and parallelism of a number of complementary pairs are repeatedly underscored in both the dialogue and the *mise-en-scène*.

The exchange now concerns yet another painting, the "Adoration of the Kings," a seventeenth-century rendition of the biblical story by some Nicolás Rodríguez Juárez, object of the earlier argument between the two men. But where, in response to Father Sierra's earlier comment that this was "the most valuable object in the church," Reyes had remarked that its value lay more in the name of its creator than, by implication, in its commodity status—a comparison which would turn the Mexican Golden Age painter into an uncanny future anterior simulacrum of Juárez—this time around, it is the coincidence with his own name (Reyes is Spanish for Kings) that is the object of the pun. The coincidence spontaneously generates two distinct yet parallel loops of transference, not only allowing Reyes to occupy two subject positions simultaneously, but also establishing a parallelism

that joins the nation's pedagogical metanarrative to its performative present.

In the first, the figure of Reyes emerges as the uncanny embodiment of his biblical namesakes, "*Los tres Reyes Magos*, symbols of power, riches, and oppression," who ended up "in a manger," "kneeling before the Holy Child whose birth taught us to love the brotherhood of man," because, like him, their sympathies lie with the "poor and humble." The second loop, where Reyes is identified with the Holy Child, transferentially mirrored in/by his immaculate (M)Other's adoring gaze, is that of a sacrificial lamb providentially reborn after the Revolution. This uncanny identification with Christ is rendered by a frontal medium shot, where Reyes's body is partitioned in four by the thick shadow of a cross superimposed on his body while he draws a parallel between the blood shed in the Revolution and Christ's: "When his blood was shed at the Calvary Cross," he murmurs in awe, "He made charity, purity, and goodness flow from the nails of his wounds."

The crucial point to remember here is that the parallelism between the two men goes beyond simply assuaging Reyes's skepticism about the sincerity of the Church's representatives in revolutionary times. At a more profound level, it works to reinscribe the long horizon of a colonial memory into the short horizon of historical memory marked by the Revolution, proposing as a model of revolutionary theology the kind of Church described by the newly-enlightened Father Sierra—whose name too connects him animistically to the mountain ranges of rural Mexico where many a revolutionary has hid—as "the work of the sixteenth-century missionaries who not only devoted their lives to fighting for the *material as well as spiritual* well-being of men, but even lost their lives in the process" (my emphasis). It is this early-colonial model that will make it possible for the two men to iron over their differences with respect to the cause they both support, despite their fundamentally opposing economic interests *vis-à-vis* the peasant demand for land and freedom.

Although the condensation of sacred and secular values entailed a displacement of the Revolution's historical role onto the *Iglesia Indiana* which may have satisfied Fernández's audience's immediate need to come to terms with the space of death that was both their legacies, it also had the long-term effect of hermeneutically turning the latter event into the providential realization of the former. Suspending the linear pedagogical time of the nation to make way for the spontaneous generation of Guadalupean coordinates whose doubling effect helped shed new light on the enduring confrontation between the uncanny figure of the people and the virtual chronotope of the nation, it opened the way for a different reinscription of this confrontation in the future while linking it to the history of

Catholicism's involvement in the foundational moment of *mexicanidad*.

### **Modernity's Time and the Cinematic Time of the Mexican Nation**

As we have seen, *Guadalupismo*'s resilient historical, symbolic, and imaginary dimensions are crucial to our understanding of Mexican identity formations, and especially of those that its cinema helped to articulate from the start. As indebted to Edison's phonograph as to the Revolution, the clock ticking at the heart of the foundational cityscape, with which I opened this foray into Mexican nationalism, marked the birth of a cinema inextricably bound up with the late-modern culture of time and space experienced worldwide at the turn of the century (Kern). Coinciding in Mexico with the end of the Porfiriato and the beginning of an electrified and electrifying age of revolution and social change, the onward clocking of industrial time in the bosom of the motherland did more than simply transform space into nation and geography into destiny. By casting a delirious and more-or-less effective veil over the real fissures that were splitting open a petit-bourgeois world fit for melodrama—a world aptly described by Monsiváis as “refined, religious . . . decent, and of noble sentiments, loving the home as if it were the fatherland (*patria*) and venerating the *patria* like a mother” (*Amor perdido* 20)—it also helped graft modern technology into the array of site- and time-specific sacred/secular ontologies between whose agonistic poles Mexican identity has oscillated since First Contact.

As Juan de Dios Peza's sacred/secular “Ode to the Phonograph” indicates, the uncanny effect of two or more spatio-temporal worlds held together in suspended animation is to reveal radical differences in the appropriation of technology and the implantation of modernity by any given nation at any given time. From the cityscape's all-embracing perspective, the materiality of the clock and other metadiegetic elements furrowed into its body (such as the crackle of the phonograph and the first recording of the human voice) function as indexical signs of the emergent nation's future at an irreversible moment in Mexican history.

Whereas, as Marshall Berman writes, in the twentieth century as a whole, “the processes that bring this maelstrom into being, and keep it in a state of perpetual becoming, have come to be called ‘modernization’” (16). In Mexico, this state of perpetual becoming appears to have been the norm rather than the exception since First Contact. Similarly ascribed by Kern solely to a post-technological sensibility, the baroque temporality where past and future coexist as mutually transformative mirrors that reflect one another in a monumental space/time continuum is, in fact, a fundamental

characteristic of a Catholic eschatological hermeneutic, whose mode of meaning-making is shared by Mexico and other Catholic cultures inflected by the baroque ethics and aesthetics of the Colonial Church—a church, we should note, as impervious to the minimalist streak of the Reformation as to its exclusion of the cult of the Virgin.

Cast as a cinematic promissory note, the cityscape set out to transform Mexico, Latin America's capital of the nineteenth-century (modeled after Paris, its European double) not solely into what had to have been an awesome sight in 1900, but also into a site for future sights. Looking, at one and the same time, into the past so as to compare the nation's accomplishments to its pre-Columbian glory, it tapped into the short and long horizons of historical memory, endowing linear time with messianic meaning and providential purpose. Past and future thus mutually transformed, the present was left free to become a process of perpetual becoming.

## The Monumentality of Mexican Cinema

The all-encompassing construction of the cityscape with which we opened our foray into Mexican nationalism is exemplary among sacral-secular attempts to replicate an ideal harmony between the multiple historical and mythical layers of the nation-pre-Columbian, Catholic, Porfirian, and Modern. In its deployment of space, it attempts to cast a pedagogical veil over the long history of unresolved yet binding antagonisms whose imaged silences resonate contrapuntally, like the chorus of a Greek *aria*, with the disembodied voices of the sound recording to add up to the narrative's providential promise. Its tense is the future perfect, that strange temporality which Kristeva, Bhabha, and Zizek have associated solely with the time of the modern nation.

In Nietzsche's spatial abstraction of a tri-partite model of time at the end of history, on which the others are based, infinite time meets finite space at periodically recurring spatio-temporal points in the endless spiraling motion of monumental time. The interstitial or liminal points, where space is met again and again by time, both reinscribe and remain inscribed as gaps sutured by historical memory. In differing and deferring ways, their liminality radically threatens the ongoing rigidity and structural cohesion of both linear and circular time, while keeping in motion the endless spiral of monumental time that contains them. Similarly, in our microtext of Mexican nationalism, the messianic linear time of the bourgeois Porfirian nation meets the millenarian space-time of pre-Columbian myth and *Guadalupismo*, the onward march of the former embedding itself in the circularity of the latter so as to reinscribe past, present and future into a monumental providential space-time continuum pedagogically

sutured by the guarantees offered by the emergent technologies of communication.

By contrast, in the Fernández/Figueroa melodramas, the linearity of the long horizon of colonial historical memory intersects the circularity both of *Guadalupismo*, and a pre-Columbian episteme remembered not as myth but as history, preserving and reinscribing their millenarian pulsations and marks of lived experience in the nation's monumental time. Their reinscription of its providential nature is guaranteed, not so much by the messianic linearity of progress and its technological underpinnings, as by the providential circularity generated both by the dual principle and by the Revolution—the event whose foundational ‘error,’ (Zizek) the demand for “Land and Freedom,” was aimed at reversing the onward march of time and capital that made it a necessity.

While the cityscape’s pedagogical narrative set out to police contradictions that are bound to arise when attempting to bridge the gap between a future predetermined by myth and scripture and one yet to be scripted, without forfeiting the former’s spiritual guarantees, in the Fernández/Figueroa films contradictions work to rupture the seamlessness of the narrative of *mexicanidad* in ways that allow for the inclusion of an *Indian* understanding of *mexicanidad*. In other words, both narratives image and imagine the modern nation as a potentially stable and endlessly inclusionary sovereign space where, as with the “Black Maria”—old Californian slang for “paddy wagon” after which Edison’s first recording studio was named, but which Mexicans still call “*corazón de madre*” (a mother’s heart)—there is always room for one more.<sup>23</sup> But while past, present, and future add up in the cityscape to the Porfirian nation’s providential monumentality, by underscoring the historical exclusion of the Indian (M)Other from power and the law, the Fernández/Figueroa melodramas render instead a vision of *mexicanidad* where the narrative adds to but does not entirely add up to the monumentality of the post-revolutionary nation.

Indeed, rather than identifying technological prowess with divine providence, as we saw, the Fernández/Figueroa films evince a profound ambivalence towards the wonders of technological invention. Whereas the cityscape displays narrative’s uncanny ability to incorporate whatever may stand in its way into its providential body—including the real threat of the homogenizing power of late-capitalist expansion steadily ticking at the heart—the Fernández-Figueroa films approach technology as a means rather than an end. At most, they explore the technical prowess and mass-inclusionary potential of the cinematic apparatus, while at the same time equate it thematically with degeneration and ethical turgidity. Simply put, Fernández wants his people to learn to read, write, reap the benefits of modern medicine, let go of atavistic practices such as stoning, and

presumably go to the movies, yet to also remain loyal to the ancestral values and secular principles prescribed by the sacred cult of the *Guadalupana*.<sup>24</sup>

However short-lived the experiment and bittersweet its success, these films did reconfigure the Vasconcelos's ideals for the post-revolutionary state. Even if in the end he remained—like the pre-Columbian ruins resurrected by Eisenstein, whom Fernández so deeply admired—subject to the enduring force of centuries of a colonialism that relegated Indians to a shining artifact of the past while using their symbolic brilliance as a shield against the homogenizing thrust of other colonizations; notwithstanding, in the cinema as in most of the visual arts, the Indian pole of the Mestizo dyad continues to remain as far and as close as the traces we find in the word “aboriginal,” where the prefix *ab* functions as potently as a signifier of repression as the one that Freud found modifying the root of *un-heimlich*, the German equivalent for uncanny, with which it shares the connotations of separation and departure from the origin, not to mention its uncanny returns.

When Juan de Dios Peza's compared the phonograph's materialization of the voice to “the mysteries of the Eucharist” and the Immaculate Conception, he was not simply toying with the theological and philosophical conundrum of ascertaining the nature of the relation between copy and original, or, to use a more contemporary idiom, between simulacrum and referent. The cityscape's prophetic addition of sound technology to the silent enactment of Mexico's chthonic birth, delivered by the camera, worked effectively to enGender a talking picture *avant la lettre*, endowed with the capacity to incarnate, as the illustrious father Tortoledo would have had it, the appearance of reality in its full ontological density.

In the context of Mexico's unique modes of national identity formation, the interpellatory powers of such enGenderings are, as I hope to have shown, indissolubly linked to the phenomenon of *Guadalupismo*. The cityscape's “Grito de Dolores,” which cried out anew in the centennial year of 1900, was not meant to function solely as moving proof, emotionally and cinematically, of the historic and providential realization of the Republican project or, for that matter, of the third stage of spiritual understanding predicted nearly four centuries earlier, but rather to confirm modern Mexico as the incarnation of the yet to be understood mongrel marriage between Catholic dogma and Enlightenment ideals like liberal individualism, sweeping away the continent since Independence.

While the cityscape's ingenious superimposition of technologies of the aural and the visual may have uncannily predicted the second coming of film, as the Fernández/Figueroa melodramas figuratively foresaw, the technophilia sustaining these predictions was not only ill-

equipped to forestall the demise of the world that was its condition of possibility hardly a decade later. Its promise of a new New Age gallantly propelled into the future by the steady onward clocking of an age of speed and Taylorized production, covered the inclusion of Mexico among the modern nations in what we have been taught to call the developed First World—a promise that, for better or for worse, is yet to be realized.

## Notes

1. Interview with Julia Tuñón (1988: 65), my translation.

2. The capitalization of the letter G in enGender is meant to indicate that the generative process, be it biological, semiotic or symbolic, is always already both gendered and gendering, and that, as a primary marker of difference, it both enGenders and racializes meaning in specific and unique ways in different social and historical contexts.

3. This is not at all to deny the importance of other Virgin figures, such as the Virgen del Rosario or the Virgen de la Candelaria, in the Mexican maternal Pantheon, but simply to underscore Guadalupe's central importance as concerns the formation of mestizo *mexicanidad*.

4. For an in-depth analysis of Marx's ideology critique of religion and its bearing on the production and reception of art, see, Peter Bürger 7-11.

5. Significant are Mary Jacobus's investigation of the symbolic and biological maternal body; Kaja Silverman's insightful redefinition of "the *choric* fantasy," which posits a figure of Mother inscribed in the Symbolic; and Teresa de Lauretis's critique of Jacobus, Silverman, and Kristeva.

6. Kristeva refers to the mirror stage as both engendered by and retroactively constitutive of the semiotic *chora*, a complex term borrowed from Plato's *Timeaus* which means "womb" or "receptacle" in Greek. Fine-tuning the Lacanian scenario, she distinguishes between the *genotext* and the *phenotext*, identifying the latter with the code and deep structure of language (*Langue*), and defining the former as the topological, as opposed to algebraic, extension of the semiotic *chora*. "Even though it can be seen in language," the *genotext* "is not linguistic (in the sense understood by structural or generative linguistics). It is, rather, a [semiotic] process that tends to articulate structures that are ephemeral . . . and non-signifying: in the sense that, as primary processes which displace and condense both energies and their inscription, they lack the double articulation necessary for insertion into a symbolically meaningful signifying chain" (*Revolution* 93 and *passim*). Kristeva posits the *thetic* as the first successful intervention of the symbolic in the semiotic—successful in the sense that it leaves a mark that fixates what were before temporary and unstable articulations of drives and stases. The *thetic* is the first symbolizable transposition. It demarcates the first break or boundary between the fledgling subject and the body of the mother. Its rhythms and pulsations activate both signification and the loop of transference that binds subject to object in fantasy, continuing to modulate intersubjectivity even after the resolution of the Oedipal crisis. (*Revolution* 102-11).

7. The dominant definition of *mestizaje* goes back to Vasconcelos's view of miscegenation. For Vasconcelos's importance to the formative years of Golden Age cinema, see Susan Dever.

8. As pious tradition would have it, the Virgin of Guadalupe appeared in America to the first-generation converted Indian Juan Diego in 1531, ten years after Hernán Cortés's soldiers and Indian allies, destroyed Tenochtitlán, capital of the Aztec empire. Not surprisingly, her request, to be delivered by the "poor and humble" Indian to the first Archbishop of the recently configured viceroyalty of New Spain, the Franciscan Father Zumárraga, was that a temple be built in her name on the hill of Tepeyac, ancient site of worship and of sacrificial celebrations in honor and appeasement of the Mother-Goddess Tonantzin. After two failed attempts and a miracle—a bundle of fragrant red roses picked in the desert, which Juan Diego delivered in a mantle woven from *maguey* fiber, on which her image has purportedly remained miraculously imprinted to this day—the newly appointed Archbishop was finally won over to her cause, sparking the first and arguably one of the most important theological debates in the New World.

9. Only in this context can we begin to account for the relation between the nostalgic neo-primitivism of post-revolutionary art that followed the quelling of the 1910 peasant uprising which sparked the Revolution, or to make sense of why Indian peasants would have fought in such massive numbers on the side of the Catholic Church during the Cristero War, of unprecedented carnage. The Cristero war ended in 1929 closing the final chapter of what Hector Aguilar-Carmín and Lorenzo Meyer describe as a "virulent dispute between the federal government and the high authorities of the Catholic Church" their administrators, priests, and massive Indian following, which ended with a negotiated defeat (84).

10. For the myth as a "true story . . . of unlimited value because sacred, exemplary, and meaningful," as opposed to "fable," "invention," or "fiction," see Mircea Eliade (9).

11. In the former Yugoslavia. In "Our Lady of White Oak," Frank Bardacke recounts her apparition and politicized role in the labor struggles at the fish-packing plant of Watsonville.

12. Independence was led by three Catholic priests: Fray Servando Teresa de Mier, whose *Historia de la revolución de Nueva España antigamente Anahuac*, first published while in exile in London, managed to translate European Enlightenment ideas, at the core of which stood the separation of church and state, into evangelical design. Father Hidalgo rallied the insurgents around the banner of the Virgin of Guadalupe, and Father Morelos required all Mexican patriots to wear her emblem as protection from the Crown's deadly blows. "Accused of heresy and apostasy, the two liberators [Hidalgo and Morelos] consistently protested their submission to the Roman, Apostolic, Catholic Church" Lafaye 28.

13. The rationale for this belief rested on an interpretation of Joachim di Fiore's millenarian theories, themselves ostensibly founded on an interpretation of Revelation of Judaic origin. In brief, the supernatural destiny of mankind, its providential history, was divided into three successive stages: the time of the Old Testament, the time of the letter of the New Testament (the Word made Flesh), and the time of spiritual understanding. Since the last could only be realized after the Gospels' truth spread over the surface of the Earth, the "discovery" of America was interpreted as the missing link. In the conception of the Franciscan pioneers, New Spain was to be as radically new in relation to traditional Spain as the New Church was with respect of the Roman church. For more on this subject, see Lafaye 31-32.

14. On the difference between the two kinds of conversion exercised in the colonial period, see Sabina MacCormack.

15. First postulated in *The Cosmic Race*, Vasconcelos's socio-cultural eugenic ideas were put into practice while he served as Secretary of Education. Among other

things, his project consisted of a wide-reaching educational campaign, propped up by “the biggest editorial campaign in the continent” (Guillermo Sheridan 102). Sheridan describes Vasconcelos’s gargantuan educational program as follows: “As of October 1921, the resources invested in education doubled: the budget for education was five times larger *per capita* than the one allotted by Diaz in 1902. As a result, over a period of three years the number of teachers and students doubled in relation to the previous year, *continental solidarity was promoted*, a plan was worked out to incorporate Indians to the national plan, intellectuals and students arrived from every corner in America; rural education was put into effect, as were technical and training schools, elementary and upper level urban night schools, in charge of university faculty and students; *the country as a whole was inundated with books by classical authors*, the walls of public buildings were handed over to the painters, etc.” (100-101). (Italics and translation mine.) Given that the liberal anticlericalist measures of Carranza and Obregón coincided with the secularist ideals of the largely socialist urban intelligentsia, it is hardly a coincidence that the nationalization of Church-owned land, nominally redistributed to the peasants after the Cristero defeat of 1929, should have taken place the same year as the independent candidacy of Vasconcelos, during which “the country experience[d . . . ] the first civilian dissidence of the educated middle classes against the *caudillo* political domination that had emerged from the post-revolutionary restoration” (Hector Aguilar-Carmín and Lorenzo Meyer 78). Both of these events laid the foundations for the consolidation of a secular modern Mexican state.

16. This is Peter Brooks’s general thesis in *The Melodramatic Imagination*. In a footnote to his classical essay, Thomas Elsaesser makes a distinction between melodramatic traditions in terms of religious difference: “it ought to be remembered that there are melodramatic traditions outside the puritan-democratic world view: Catholic countries, such as Spain, Mexico (cf. Buñuel’s Mexican films) have a very strong line in melodrama, based on the themes of atonement and redemption.” (68, note 3). Rousseau is credited with inventing the term in an attempt to separate reason from passion by displacing dramatic emotion from the words to the music (melo).

17. For a history of U.S. policy *vis a vis* the film industry during the war, see Schnitman (1984) and John King (1990). For the Mexican Golden Age Cinema, see Riera and Jaime Tello.

18. Sergio de la Mora’s forthcoming “Melodramas of Prostitution” offers an insightful analysis of post-revolutionary reworkings of the virgin/whore paradigm both in the film, and the nineteenth century novel on which it is based.

19 Some titles are: *La Virgen de la sierra* (The Virgin of the Sierra, Guillermo Indio Calles 1938), *La Inmaculada* (The Immaculate, Louis Gasnier, U.S.-Mexico 1939), and *La Virgen roja* (The Red Virgin, Francisco Elías), *La Virgen morena* (The Dark Virgin, Gabriel Soria), and *La virgen que forjó una patria* (The Virgin Who Forged a Nation, Julio Bracho), all three from 1942.

20. See, for example, Diego Rivera’s recounting of his last day in Church as a child in *My Art, My Life* 5-8, and Orozco’s description of the transformation of a Church into a printing shop in Aguilar Carmín and Meyer 51-52.

21. Artaud, who spent over one year in the Tarahumara Sierra (1936-1937), remarked on this inconsistency. Critical of petty-functionaries who punished the performance of sacred ceremonies, he wrote: “My admission to the Rites of the Ciguri depended, in part, on my position *vis a vis* the resistances which the *mestizo* government of Mexico opposes to the exercise of Tarahumara rituals. In spite of being *mestizo* this government is pro-Indian, because those who conform it are more red than white. But they are unevenly so, and all their mandataries in the mountains

are of mixed blood. And they consider the practices of the ancient Mexicans dangerous. In the indigenous mountain schools founded by the present government, the education which Indian children receive is a carbon copy of that delivered in French municipal schools . . . The School director . . . who was also in charge of keeping order in Tarahumara territory as a whole, and had in his disposal an entire cavalry regiment . . . was more concerned about his sex, which served him to possess every night the school teacher, a *mestiza* like him, than in their culture or religion" (24-25).

22. This coincidence may also explain Eisenstein's own fascination with Mexico. Given the singularity of their collaboration, it is difficult to understand why other than for this coincidence their films would be generally considered "emblematic of the national film industry and Mexican national identity" (Podalski 1993: 28). According to contemporary French critic Raymond Borde, Fernández "personified during a whole period the symbol of Mexican cinema itself" (*Positif* 16).

23. Built in Menlo Park by Thomas. A. Edison, the so-called father of the movie studio, the Black Maria was used both to record and screen half-minute long filmstrips for his growing Kinetoscope Parlors. See Mast 15, and *The American Film Institute Catalog*.

24. The distinction is clearly drawn in *Rio Escondido*, where the fetishism of commodities, indulged by avaricious *caudillo* at the expense of the townspeople, is associated with hoarding rather than progress. Killer of women, children and the old, he not only insults Pancho Villa's memory by imitating his pose for a photograph; to seduce the schoolteacher, he invites her into her banished predecessor's quarters, where he proceeds to show off its modern conveniences, notably, a phonograph and a shower fed via a cistern with the town's drinking water.

## Works Cited

- Aguilar-Carmín, Hector and Lorenzo Meyer. *In the Shadow of the Mexican Revolution: Contemporary Mexican History, 1910-1989*. Trans. Luis Alberto Fierro. Austin: U of Texas P, 1993.
- The American Film Institute Catalog of Motion Pictures Produced in the United States: Film Beginning, 1893-1910-A Work in Progress*. Vol. A. Compiled by Elias Savada. Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 1996.
- Artaud, Antonin. *Los Tarahumara*. Barcelona: Tusquets Editores, 1979, my translation.
- Bardacke, Frank. *Good Liberals and Great Blue Herons: Land, Labor and Politics in the Pajaro Valley*. Santa Cruz: Centre for Political Ecology, 1994.
- Bartra, Roger. *The Cage of Melancholy*. Trans. Christopher J Hall. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1986.
- Bataille, Georges. *Inner Experience*. Trans. with an introduction, by Leslie Anne Boldt. Albany: SUNY Press, 1988.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Bataille: Writing the Sacred*. Ed. Carolyn Bailey Gill. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Becker, Marjorie. *Setting the Virgin on Fire: Lázaro Cárdenas, Michoacán Peasants, and the Redemption of the Mexican Revolution*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1995.
- Benjamin, Walter. "The Task of the Translator." *Illuminations*. Trans. Harry Zohn. New York: Schoken Books, 1969.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "On The Mimetic Faculty." In *Reflections*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, ed. Peter Demetz. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978.
- Berman, Marshall. *All That is Solid Melts Into Air*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982.
- Bersani, Leo. *The Culture of Redemption*. Berkeley: Berkeley UP, 1995.
- Bhabha, Homi K., ed. *Nation and Narration*. London: Routledge, 1990.
- Blanco, José Joaquín. *Se llamaba Vasconcelos*. México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1980, my translation.
- Borde, Raymond. "Emilio Fernández." In *Positif*. Paris (May 1954).
- Brooks, Peter. *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama and the Mode of Excess*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1976.
- Burger, Peter. *Theory of the Avantgarde*. Trans. Michael Shaw. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1984.
- Castillo, Ana, ed. *Goddes of the Americas*. Austin: U of Texas P, 1997.
- Callois, Roger. *L'Homme et le sacré*. Paris: E. Leroux, 1939, Galimard, 1974.
- De Lauretis, Teresa. "The Seductions of Lesbianism: Feminist Psychoanalytic Theory and the Maternal Imaginary." *The Practice of Love: Lesbian Sexuality and Perverse Desire*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994.
- Dever, Susan. "Re-birth of a Nation: Mexican Movies, Museums, and María Félix." *Spectator* 13.1 (Fall 1992).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Celloid Nationalism and Other Melodramas: From Post-Revolutionary Mexico to Post-Rebellion Los Angeles*. Doctoral Dissertation. Stanford University, September 1997.
- Didion, Joan *The Nation*. Sept. 30, 1996: 24.
- Eisenstein, Sergei. *Film Form*. Ed. and trans. Jay Leda. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1949.
- Eliade, Mircea. *Aspects du mythe*. Paris: Gallimard, 1963.
- Elssaesser, Thomas. "Tales of Sound and Fury: Observations on the Family Melodrama." In *Home is Where the Heart is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film*, ed. Christine Gledhill. London: BFI, 1987. First published in *Monogram* 4 (1972).
- Fanon, Franz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969.
- Feder, Elena. "A Reckoning: Interview with Gabriel Figueroa." *Film Quarterly* 49, 3 (Spring 1996).
- Freud, Sigmund. "The Uncanny." In *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey. Vol. XVII, 217-52. London: Hogart Press, 1961.
- Gabriel Figueroa y la Pintura Mexicana*. Exhibition catalog, Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, Mexico (August-September 1996).
- García Riera, Emilio. *Emilio Fernández 1904-1987, Colección Cineastas de México*. Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1987.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Cuando el cine mexicano se hizo industria." *Hojas de cine*. Vol. 2. Mexico: SEP, UAM, Fundación Mexicana de Cineastas, 1988. Originally published in *Revista de la Universidad de México*, XXVI, 10 (June 1972). My translation.
- Girard, René. *La violence et le sacré*. Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1972. Translated into English by Patrick Gregory as *Violence and the Sacred*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1977.
- Heath, Stephen. "Difference." *Screen* 19, 3 (Autumn 1978).
- Heidegger, Martin. "The Origin of the Work of Art." *Basic Writings*. Trans. Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper & Row, 1977. First published in 1960.

- Hollier, Denis. *The School of Sociology 1937-1939*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1988.
- Jacobus, Mary. *First Things: The Maternal Imaginary in Literature, Art, and Psychoanalysis*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- James, William. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. New York: Penguin Classics, 1982. First published 1902.
- Kern, Stephen. *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1983.
- King, John. *Magical Reels: A History of Cinema in Latin America*. London: Verso, 1990.
- Kristeva, Julia. "Giotto's Joy." *Desire in Language*. Trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia UP, 1980.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Stabat Mater." In *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi. New York: Columbia UP, 1986.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Women's Time." In *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi. New York: Columbia UP, 1986.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Revolution in Poetic Language*. Ed. Toril Moi. New York: Columbia UP, 1986.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Les Cahiers du GRIF* 32, 23. Quoted in Introduction to *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi. New York: Columbia UP, 1986.
- Lafaye, Jacques. *Quetzalcóatl and Guadalupe: The Formation of Mexican National Consciousness 1531-1813*. Trans. Benjamin Kern. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1976.
- Lázaro, Angel. "La imagen de la virgen campesina desnuda." *Excélsior* (24 January, 1944). Quoted in Emilio García Riera, 1987.
- López, Ana. "A Cinema for the Continent." In *The Mexican Cinema Project*, ed. Chon A. Noriega and Steven Ricci. Los Angeles: UCLA Film and Television Archive, 1994.
- MacCormack, Sabina. "'The Heart Has Its Reasons': Predicaments of Missionary Christianity in Early colonial Peru." *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 65, 3 (1985).
- Marx, Karl. *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1970.
- Mast, Gerald. *A Short History of the Movies*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1981.
- Memmi, Albert. *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1967. Originally published in French in 1957.
- Messinger Cypress, Sandra. *La Malinche in Mexican Literature: From History to Myth*. Austin: U of Texas P, 1991.
- Monsiváis, Carlos. "Las mitologías del cine mexicano." *InterMedios* 2 (June 1992).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Amor perdido*. México D.F.: Ediciones Era, 1978.
- Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Visual and Other Pleasures*. Bloomington: U of Indiana P, 1989.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Use and Abuse of History*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957.
- Paz, Octavio. *The Labyrinth of Solitude*. New York: Grove Press, 1985. First published in Spanish as *El laberinto de la soledad* in *Cuadernos Americanos*. Mexico, 1950.
- Podalski, Laura. "Disjointed Frames: Melodrama, Nationalism, and Representation in 1940s Mexico." *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* 12 (1993).

- \_\_\_\_\_. "Patterns of the Primitive: Sergei Eisenstein's *Que viva México!*" In *Mediating Two Worlds*, ed. John King, Ana M. López and Manuel Alvarado. London: British Film Institute, 1993.
- Poole, Stafford. *Our Lady of Guadalupe: The Origins and Sources of a Mexican National Symbol, 1531-1797*. Tucson: U of Arizona P, 1995.
- Rama, Angel. *Transculturación narrativa en América Latina*. Mexico: Siglo veintiuno editores, 1985. My translation.
- Renan, Ernest. "What is a Nation?" *Nation and Narration*. Ed. Homi K. Bhabha. New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Reyes Nevares. Salvador. "El machismo mexicano," *Mundo Nuevo* 46 (1970).
- Rivera, Diego. *My Art, My Life, An Autobiography*. With Gladys March. New York: Dover Publications, 1991 (1960).
- Rodriguez, Jeanette. *Our Lady of Guadalupe: Faith and Empowerment among Mexican-American Women*. Austin: U of Texas P, 1994.
- Sheridan, Guillermo. *Los Contemporáneos Ayer*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1985.
- Schnitman, Jorge A. *Film Industries in Latin America: Dependency and Development*. Norwood, N. J.: Ablex Publishing Corp., 1984.
- Silverman, Kaja. *The Acoustic Mirror*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1988.
- Tello, Jaime. "Notas sobre la política económica del 'viejo' cine mexicano," *Hojas de cine*. Vol. 2. México: SEP, UAM, Fundación Mexicana de Cineastas, 1988.
- Tuñón, Julia. *En su propio espejo*. Mexico: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, 1988.
- Vascocelos, José. *La raza cósmica*. Mexico: Editorial Aguilar, 1966.
- Viqueira Albán, Juan Pedro. *María de la Candelaria, India Natural de Cancuc*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1993.
- Zizek, Slavoj. "Paranoia and Politics-Fragments," unpublished paper delivered at Stanford University, 1996.



## Chapter 10

# The Rhetoric of Pathology: Political Propaganda and National Identity During the Military “Process” in Argentina

James R. Cisneros

In history textbooks, the *desaparecido* has become the representative figure of the Argentine military's abuses of power during the so-called Process of National Reorganization. Produced by the regime's attempts to eradicate all voices of dissent from the public sphere, this figure belongs to a series of discourses and practices that are inscribed in a greater cultivation of silence: during the Process, the victims were silenced, the discourses they used fell silent, and the government kept its silence about the *desaparecidos'* existence and whereabouts. Even the protest of the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo addressed people's unwillingness to hear with the desperate silence of mute photographs, white handkerchiefs and a ritual movement in Argentina's most symbolic square. The military complemented this censorship with a form of propaganda that further blanketed public discourse with the homogenous drone of white noise. In its investigation of the *desaparecidos*, the National Commission reports that “covering up the truth and misinformation were essential to the most important acts of the military governments between 1976 and 1983” (CONADEP 1986: 52). Accordingly, the military's official voice saturated the public sphere, rushing into the vacuum created by the radical censorship of leftist discourse and its actual or potential speakers. The totalizing propaganda transformed the shadow of the *desaparecido* into a “Marxist subversive” who waged a “dirty war” against the Argentine way of life: “Argentinians have had the opportunity of seeing an abundance of television programmes, of reading countless newspaper and magazine articles, as well as a full-

length book published by the military government, in which those acts of terrorism were listed, described, and condemned in minute detail" (CONADEP 1986: 6). This extensive campaign of propaganda assimilated public discourse into a unitary ideological voice that presented the military's vision of national identity and the process that would implement it.

Much has been written about the modes of resistance to the regime's totalizing voice. Taken together, this work has defined the official discourse constituting the unnamed yet dominant backdrop that tacitly informed the dialogue of all that era's cultural production. The Argentine novels produced during the Process, for instance, have been shown to employ various fragmentary narrative strategies that put into question the seamless, progressive version of national history espoused by the regime. Other work on the novels written and published in Argentina during the repression focuses on the discursive tactics used to circumvent the military's rigid censorship, so extreme that it prohibited *Le Petit Prince* and stopped short of meddling with mathematical textbooks, and compares these strategies to the very different discursive constitution of the literature written in exile. Studies of other media, such as *Humor* magazine, the "Teatro Abierto," "el rock nacional," or the film *La historia oficial*, has complemented this research on literature, further delineating the external limits of the regime's monopolization of discourse.<sup>1</sup>

This study takes the opposite approach. Rather than the texts that successfully evaded censorship, it analyzes the discursive strategies of the propaganda that buttressed the regime. I have chosen to focus on the magazines published by Editorial Atlántida precisely because they faithfully reproduced the regime's discourse through the worst repression and the most irresponsible economic ventures; and although the magazines abandoned the regime only after its ill-conceived campaign in the South Atlantic, I have chosen to concentrate on the material produced during the first year of military rule. Countless articles elaborated on speeches, interviews, and public statements given by high-ranking members of the military, packaging the official line in the popular terms characteristic of *Gente*, for instance, or in the more sophisticated terms favored by *Somos*. While this propaganda was only associated to the state unofficially—although *Somos* was inaugurated, as if by coincidence, six months after the coup d'état—it was widely identified with the regime, and was roundly criticized after censorship was lifted with the return to democracy. The articles in these magazines present an amplified and more textured sample of the military's "total" voice, and should be placed at the same level as the official sound-bites around which they were written. While the medium's tremendous capacity to filter into public discourse certainly does not derive from its subtlety, in obvious contrast to the texts escaping censorship, its measured banality and the innocuous quality of its unerring repetition in fact make it all the more insidious: the magazines' relative

insignificance is precisely what makes them effective as propaganda and worthwhile as an object of study.

In contrast to the well-researched perspective of resistant voices, a study of these magazines can trace the internal contours of the military's hegemony as the positive expression of an identity construct. Following Henri Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, I understand hegemony to be a momentary securing of meaning in the discourses which together constitute a society's verbal practices.<sup>2</sup> With them, I adopt Foucault's conception of discourse, focusing on the double sense he gives to the word "discipline" as a form of discursive control and as a series of techniques related to the production of knowledge. In *L'Ordre du discours*, Foucault defines discipline as a regulator of the internal distinction between true and false statements and the external criteria that determine whether any statement can be considered "within the true." Mediated through the institution, discourse limits who can speak of what object under what circumstances: it rarefies legitimacy. In *Discipline and Punish*, "discipline" is further qualified as a series of techniques—such as the visual observation, examination, and writing which Foucault relates directly to medicine and the hospital (1995: 187-95)—that are used to secure meaning by fixing the individual body within a web of power-knowledges. Disciplinary power, and the deployment of discourse it implies, produces reality and rituals of truth in a relationship of genuine presence and virtual identity with what it denotes (1995: 194).

The military's dual imposition of censorship and propaganda on the discursive field established hegemony by saturating the specific socio-historical context of the Process with a characteristic mark of "identity." In what follows, I focus on the problematic of "national identity" as it is constructed from the institutional apparatus of a dominant and centralized power. As a representational projection of the "people," this unitary conception of the collective is inscribed into a paradigm of knowledge inherited from the European Enlightenment, and especially Hegelian philosophy, in which the national character is constituted of local and particular instances where this universal force of "civilization" eradicates "barbarism," and where science conquers myth.<sup>3</sup> The central importance of these values during the Process is evident in the military's preoccupation with the recovery and restitution of a lost or endangered "*ser nacional*" (national spirit), an ideologeme that has long been placed under the rubric of "national identity." Although I am limited to discussing this dominant construction, I nevertheless point to the penumbra of that greater notion of "identity" which lies in the interstices of the dialogical struggle between hegemonic and subaltern uses of discourse. References to the transgression of the hegemonic order are meant to serve as an oblique index for the series of actions and cultural practices which, like de Certeau's *arts de faire*, are only ever ephemeral and artificially present.

During the Process, two discourses repeatedly surfaced to express myriad contemporary and past events, to tickle the *topoi* of the collective memory and give flesh to the regime's economic and political programs: national history, including the methodological problems of historiography; and medicine, especially that part of the discourse related to pathology and surgery. This discursive repetition, the *sine qua non* of all propaganda, should not be mistaken for the application of an extended metaphor to multiple referents. Rather, it discloses a fundamental aspect of how these discourses referred to each other in an order of mutual consolidation: "History . . . is always contemporary. That is why Plato and Aristotle are our age and not, as some people believe, old museum pieces. History is our biography. It is our medical record. There is no remedy for today's ills if we don't know our past."<sup>4</sup> This brief citation presupposes two coincident elements that allow the privileged discourses to be interwoven. The first is the isolation of a differentiated entity, expressed either as a historically determined collective—"we" must know "our" past—or as an ill-defined yet integral body. Both discourses have long been used to mark the difference between "self" and "other," and have often been brought together to give the collective a spiritual and material topography. In this sense, they are both discourses of "identity." The second element is the discourses' parallel temporality. The progressive temporal dynamic emphasized in this citation is the underlying presupposition of all historiography and a pivotal quality by which the regime employed medical discourse to express its long-term political agenda. In both historical and medical discourse, the temporal structure is conceived as a "process" linking events into a causal series that is predictable insofar as it reproduces structures previously discovered by "scientific" means. Their interdiscursivity should therefore be studied chronotopically, for their shared temporal movement is indelibly mapped onto the integral body of the *ser nacional*, and, consequently, onto the individual bodies of the political detainees subjected to the disciplinary power of the state.

Understood as the *ser nacional* or as a (social) body, the problem of identity during the Process is inscribed into the nexus produced by the overlapping of the regime's privileged discourses. This discursive convergence (over)determines the definition of identity as a "referent" by compounding the repetition internal to each discourse with an external interdiscursive recurrence. As a way of anchoring the significance of a topic, such discursive inter-referentiality is not limited to "identity" or any other "object," but traverses the field of societal verbal practices in order to bring them within the institutionally sanctioned language of the state. The partial fixing of meaning in discourse—what Laclau and Mouffe call hegemony—is thus secured by a network of language that envelopes the public sphere. This does not imply that the network is invulnerable to subversion. On the contrary, the interdiscursive borrowings or

“calques” that Gómez-Moriana has studied as transgressions of a monologic or dominant order are perhaps most effective in the repressive environment that characterized the Process;<sup>5</sup> many of the discursive and narrative strategies mentioned above show this to be the case. Nor should one hold fast to the opposite preconception, however, which maintains that the network of discourses imposed by the military was not transgressive of another discursive order. In fact, the regime’s appropriation—and every *discursive* appropriation subverts another’s intention—of medical discourse was a transparent claim to scientific legitimacy. This appropriation of science, the most rarefied discourse, was a means of marking their representational mode of history as “true” in the face of innumerable lay versions informed by common sense. As Hannah Arendt points out, the difference between history and the natural sciences is not the essence of their approach but the range of individuals who can competently use each discourse (88). One of the regime’s ideologues, García Venturini, touches on this problem by insisting that the terminology in the humanities have a standardized usage that is more characteristic of scientific discourse; ironically, he later appropriates scientific terms, contributing to the very degradation he wishes to prevent: “The word ‘neuron,’ for example, moves in an environment which differs from that of the word ‘democracy.’ The laboratory preserves; the street, the office, the committee do not. So the meaning of such words must be restored” (“Un filósofo que habla de cosas serias y también de ‘chantas’” *Gente* 11/11/76: 78).

### The “Process” Between History and Science

The name adopted by the military for their regime, the “Process of National Reorganization,” places the problem of national identity at the ideological center of its political program. Conjuring the spirit of the liberal vision of national organization drafted by the generation of 1837 and consolidated by that of 1880 (Corradi 116), the military presented the “Process” as the marker of a new historic era that would reestablish national unity. The acute historical consciousness evident in the echoes of Argentina’s foundational era was concretized in the newly created Ministry of Planning. In his inaugural speech as Minister, General Díaz Bessone declared that the bureaucratic institution was indispensable to the national reorganization made necessary by the excesses of the “corrupt and demagogic” Peronist regime: “A new historic cycle demands a fundamental change: revitalize the values of the national spirit (*el ser nacional*)” (“La segunda organización nacional” *Somos*, 1/10/76: 10). Along with the repeated claim that the “lost” *ser nacional* had to be recuperated, the series of articles written on the new Ministry continually emphasize the disintegration of the national institutions and the need to keep pace with the “acceleration of history.” The following description of

how the military intended to “recreate the Nation” outlines the agenda in both medical and historical terms:

[Las] autoridades nacionales, surgidas tras una calamidad histórica, deben encontrar la medicina apropiada para curar en vida los males de la Nación y, luego de una prudente convalecencia, trazar los caminos del crecimiento. Por eso se ha creado el Ministerio de Planeamiento, noveno escaño del gabinete nacional, cuyo primera tarea es la de pensarse. Pero el Presidente Videla, de parte de las Fuerzas Armadas, presentó una idea durante su visita a Tucumán que servirá como un valioso punto de partida para que el nuevo Ministerio justifique su misión: “El 24 de marzo, se cerró un ciclo histórico en Argentina. (“Planeamiento: trabajar para el futuro” *Somos* 8/10/76: 10)

Surfacing after a historical disaster, [Argentina’s] national authorities must find the appropriate medicine to cure the ills of the Nation and, after a prudent convalescence, lay down the paths of growth. This is the reason for the creation of the Ministry of Planning, the national cabinet’s ninth seat, which has before it the primary task of thinking itself. But a valuable point of departure which will justify its very purpose is given in the idea expressed by President Videla, on behalf of the Armed Forces, during his visit to Tucumán: “On the 24th of March, a historical cycle concluded in Argentina.”

The self-conscious appropriation of history in the articulation of national identity derives from the impossibility, in Latin America, of basing this identity on linguistic lineages. As Benedict Anderson points out, attempts to give historical depth to nationality through language threatened to blur the “memory of independence” from the Spanish metropolis. The means by which the region marked its difference from the colonizer and by which the nascent nations distinguished themselves from their neighbors was therefore found in “History, or rather History emplotted in particular ways” (197). These “particular ways” are measured by the distinction, within national(ist) historiography, of the officially sanctioned “emplotment” of events—including their selection as “facts” from a mass of documented or undocumented contingencies, and their concatenation in a given order of priority—from subaltern histories that do not represent the universal perspective of the nation-state. The founding of new nations in America and the rise of nationalism in Europe during the nineteenth century were therefore accompanied by the institutionalization of history as a ‘discipline,’ established through the creation of university chairs, curricula, and journals. This new discipline adopted the scientific parameters established by the natural sciences: discrimination between different versions of historic events

was based upon the strictures of scientific methods and a discourse of "fact," causality, and general laws, that was then characteristic of biology, geology and physics; the scientific method was believed to efface the historian through an "objective process" in which the explanation "emerged naturally from the documents themselves" (White 1973: 141). This is as much the case with the histories written by von Humboldt and Ranke as it is with the philosophies of history erected by Hegel and Marx. Now, while the scientific conception of historiography could affirm the objectivity of "official" history against the "ideologically motivated" subaltern histories, it further served to control the collective imaginary through a veto of literary, "fictional" discourse (Costa Lima). The conception of a "national literature" that surfaces early in the nineteenth century—I am thinking here of Mme. de Staél and the Schlegels—is a genre of narrative prose which complements historiography through its subordination within a scientific hierarchy of discourse. On this benchmark of the imaginary, "national" fictional literature sits beside unofficial, subaltern historiography.

In Europe, the spectrum of discourse running between scientific historiography and fictional literature entered into an order of reciprocal support with the "national" language. In Latin America, however, national identity remained under the tutelage of historiography until each "national" literature learned to differentiate itself from the metropolis and its neighbors by cultivating local speech or dialect, a *prise de conscience* which in some cases took place only with the advent of *Indigenista* movements of the early twentieth century. In Argentina for instance, the generation of 1837, a handful of intellectuals who became formally associated through their meetings at the Literary Salon, produced not only the foundational texts on issues related to history and biography, as well as education, constitutional theory, government, and the financial organization of the state, but also produced what one critic has called "the literary works that rank among the most important in Argentina's and Hispanic America's entire nineteenth century repertoire."<sup>6</sup> The overlap of Argentina's literary canon with its historiography indicates the centrality of the latter in the construction of national identity, and further implies a concomitant amplification of the historiographer's claims to scientific legitimacy.

Two figures of the generation of 1837 are especially relevant to the recent use of history by the military regime: Bartolomé Mitre, the first president of a unified Argentina and the "chief creator" of the nation's official history,<sup>7</sup> and Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, author of the seminal *Facundo, o civilización y barbarie*, and the president most dedicated to literacy. While both were men of science, the "science" we find in their writings takes on a somewhat different expression. Mitre defended his biography of Belgrano against the criticisms of Vélez Sarsfield by appealing to notions of objectivity, impartiality, and proof based on extensive documentation (see Shumway 210), that

is, by appealing to the contemporaneous principle of scientific truth in historiography. If Sarmiento similarly inherited this scientist conception of historiography, his texts would further adopt scientific language—especially rich in medical imagery—in the description of historico-political obstacles to national development. In *Galería de celebridades argentinas*, Mitre cites a passage from Sarmiento that describes General Lavalle's rash decision to execute Dorrego as a necessary “blood-letting” which sought to avoid a “slow-growing cancer” (in Shumway 205); many other examples are found in *Conflicto y armonía de las razas en América*, where Sarmiento writes that

Están mezcladas a nuestro ser como nación, razas indígenas, primitivas, prehistóricas, destituidas de todo rudimento de civilización y gobierno; y sólo la escuela puede llevar al alma el germen que en la edad adulta desenvolverá la vida social; y a introducir esta vacunación, para extirpar la muerte que nos dará la barbarie insumida en nuestras venas, consagró el que esto escribe su vida entera, aunque no fuese siempre comprendido el objeto político de su empeño. (1993: 410)

Combined with our spirit as a nation [*ser como nación*] are indigenous races, primitive, prehistoric and devoid of the rudiments of civilization and government; and only the school can give the soul the seed that will develop social life in later years; and introducing this vaccination, so as to extirpate the death that will befall us from the barbarism that runs in our veins, has been a lifelong dedication of he who writes these pages, although the political objective of his undertaking has not always been understood.

*Somos*'s use of medical terminology—cure, ills, convalescence—to describe the role of the Ministry of Planning in mapping the “paths of growth” and guiding Argentina into its “new historic cycle” is in keeping with this tradition. Like the name of the “Process of National Reorganization,” these terms stand in the shadow of the ideological edifice constructed by the generation of 1837. Therefore, the regime’s search for the “lost” *ser nacional* necessarily entailed the resurrection, in the style of Michelet, of the porteño liberals who had consolidated national identity through historiography and literature. And if the elicited parallel between eras was predictably drawn—“Without wanting to compare men or epochs, at this juncture President [Videla] seems to demonstrate that he has decided to be a Mitre”—then so was the conclusion that the relationship between history and science had changed in the interim—“Who can occupy the scientific space of the process?” (“Prepararse para un nuevo ciclo histórico” *Somos* 1/10/76: 12). While during the better part of the nineteenth century the discipline of

history was still considered to be scientifically legitimate, by the twentieth its distance from the hegemonic physical sciences became too great to sustain its prestige. The regime's need for history in the redefinition of the *ser nacional* therefore implied the need for science, and more specifically, a historical discourse that was at once scientifically grounded. Raising the constellation of discourses that contributed to the formation of identity during the previous century therefore required reviving the scientific validity of the study of history. Although the scientific sheen of Mitre's official history faded with the prestige of the discipline as a whole, Sarmiento's use of medical discourse, which incorporated the scientific legitimacy of nineteenth century historiography into its very method of argumentation, sufficiently retained the mark of science to be adopted massively by the military of the Process.

The regime's use of medical discourse fell within the greater project of appropriating science to confirm the reality of the "new historic cycle." Innumerable articles, written in reference to incommensurable topics, confirmed the advent of this cycle to be a palpable truth that could be verified by the methods of positivism. The disparity in the themes of these articles is not without interest. For instance, the military's "war against subversion" was written into a specifically national historic cycle by continued references to its role in independence. The military gave the name of *Operación Independencia* to its mission in Tucumán, which produced "heroes" who were presented as a single "ageless soldier, a synthesis of all the nameless faces that have taken up arms since 1810 to ensure that the Fatherland (*Patria*) continues to live" in the face of the "endemic diseases" that threaten it ("El escenario de los héroes" *Somos* 1/10/76: 13). Other articles compare Argentina's leading role in fostering regional development to the reunification of the colonial Viceroyal territories, inscribing this "historic step" within a recurring frame patterned on the colonial era ("Para provecho de todos" *Somos*, 5/11/76: 17). The ever-greater loops of the cycle gradually embraced the whole of western culture. A curious example is provided by an article on youth culture which proclaims that the "post-nihilist era" tacitly prophesied by the Beatles is now discernible, through the cloudy aftermath of senseless and "demonic" violence, just as the arrival of the Renaissance had surely been anticipated by those living in the fifteenth century ("Una nota para leer dos veces" *Gente* 7/10/76: 82-84).

The profusion of discourse produced around the supposed arrival of the historic cycle, whether this is presented as being sensed, intuited, deduced, or reasoned from historical knowledge, offer a mass of unprocessed, disparate facts that justify the use of a methodology that can abstract their common elements and give them sense. In a single stroke, it legitimized science and simultaneously confirmed the insight that science's methods gave into contemporary, empirically evident occurrences. While only the first of the above examples uses medical

discourse in the description of Argentina's cyclical historic movement, all the articles taken together—and this is only a sample—both confirm the validity of a scientific explanation of historic change and provide the raw material and variables, as it were, for the scientific process. In the following statement, García Venturini, who elsewhere calls for greater restrictions on the use of scholarly language, explicitly bases his argument for historic change on the bedrock foundation of scientific method:

Aplico la teoría de la relatividad de Einstein a la historia. Saco una serie de coordenadas, aceleración, compresión de la historia, incremento de la masa y la energía histórica, de donde resultan claves formidables para entender un montón de cosas. Todo esto me lleva a hablar del fin de la historia. Estoy convencido de que estamos en el fin de una era histórica. ("Un filósofo que habla de cosas serias y también de 'chantas'" *Gente* 11/11/76: 78)

I apply Einstein's theory of relativity to history. I measure a series of coordinates—the acceleration and compression of history, the increments of historical mass and energy—all of which provide the key to the understanding of various things. All this leads me to speak of the end of history. I am convinced that we are at the end of an historic era.

Since science confirms the arrival of the “new historic cycle,” it runs alongside and becomes bound to other discourses that similarly make this ideologeme resonate with consequence and portent. The idea that we have reached the “end of history” is part of the “Western, Christian” heritage and universal (Hegelian) values that the regime repeatedly espoused. But just as the cycle’s widening embrace gradually included a period that began with the Renaissance, its increasing orbit also absorbed values that lay far beyond the possible limits of scientific justification. Although this adaptation of Einstein’s theory clearly attempts to refurbish history’s prestige and legitimacy, the application of the laws of physics to an obviously secular and mundane conception of history is immediately followed by a paradoxical statement that brings it together with the Christian discourse of divine providence. The role of science in confirming the closing of the historic era and the opening of the “new cycle” thus leads to its consolidation with realms of human existence even more extraneous to it than the “unscientific” discipline of history. In this way, Einstein and Adam are made to walk side by side on the nation’s paths of growth:

Hablo de una nueva *era*. Nosotros somos la última generación de un eón histórico que se inició con Adán y se cierra con nuestra generación. . . . Es como si se clausurara el ciclo

adánico, venciendo aquellos signos que iniciaron la biografía de los hombres. Vea usted que, por primera vez, desde que Caín se fue al Este del paraíso, la familia humana constituye nuevamente una unidad y por primera vez, también desde entonces, puede autoextinguirse como especie con un solo gesto. (*Ibid.*, 79, original emphasis)

I am speaking of a new *era*. We are the last generation of an historic eon which started with Adam and is closing with our generation. . . . It is as if an Adamic cycle were concluding, overcoming those signs that started the biography of men. For the first time since Cain went east of Eden the human family is again constituted as a unit, and for the first time, also since then, it can exterminate itself as a species in a single gesture.

As the harbinger of the “new historical cycle” in the history of Argentina, the military’s mission was to align the nation with the scientifically verifiable close of the Adamic era. The “western, Christian” values it sought to recover indicate the institutional importance of the church in extending the regime’s hegemony into society, and in compensating for the junta’s lack of democratic, institutional legitimacy. The conflation of Christian and scientific discourses under the rubric of a “new historic cycle” is in keeping with the Catholic hierarchy’s open support for the military’s fight against “atheistic subversion.” In this context, the incompatibility of modern physics and antimodern Catholicism underlines the ideological investment in the scientific verifiability of the military’s prescience. This bond, a centripetal force in the discursive field, is here articulated alongside medical discourse to reinforce the already overstated scientific orientation of the argument:

Para [que los marxistas pudieran penetrar con su infección un grupo de teólogos católicos en Europa y, después, principalmente en América latina] ello se comenzó con cambiar el objetivo y los métodos de la teología, que, en lugar de “ciencia de Dios” comunicada al hombre por las verdades reveladas a través del Magisterio de la Iglesia y organizada científicamente con la ayuda de las verdades naturales y el concurso de la razón, se presentó como una “nueva teología,” cuyo objetivo era “analizar críticamente la praxis”—concepto de acuñación netamente marxista—es decir, los métodos revolucionarios comunistas [sic]. (“El caso de la Biblia cuestionada” *Gente* 24/10/76: 14)

So that [Marxists could penetrate, with their infection, a group of Catholic theologians in Europe and, later, and to a greater degree, other groups in Latin America,] they started by changing theology’s methods and objectives and by

presenting, in the place of a “science of God” communicated to man by the truths revealed through the Church’s magisterium and organized scientifically with the help of natural truth and the exercise of reason, a “new theology” whose objective was to “critically analyze practice”—a concept that is clearly of Marxist origins—that is, [whose objective was to use] communist revolutionary methods.

The uneasy marriage of science and Catholicism in these excerpts takes the “new historic cycle” from the preoccupation with a national identity to the global context of Cold War paranoia. In this and other articles it is clear that “pathological” Marxism is understood as a “science” which claims to have discovered the “laws of history,” and which is therefore contested on ideological grounds with an equal and opposite figure, inspired by Hegelian philosophy, that the military ideologue García Venturini calls the “Spirit of the West.”<sup>8</sup> In the terms of history and science we have been following here, however, the concern over “the penetration of infected Marxists” is perhaps less revealing than the reference to nuclear technology’s total planetary reach, the “single gesture” that can extinguish the human “family.” While the continued confrontation with Marxism indicates an historical consciousness that was virtually global at the time, nuclear technology’s historical role of transporting humanity into a new “era” touches on a fundamental aspect of the relationship between the scholarly disciplines. As Hannah Arendt has shown, technology, and especially nuclear technology, is precisely where the natural and historical sciences are fused together in modern research: “Since the beginning of the twentieth century, technology has emerged as the meeting ground of the natural and historical sciences” (58). This further implies a common, underlying conception of “process” that arose when investigation in the sciences shifted from the “what” to the “how,” and when an unprecedented priority was given to time and time-sequence:

Technology, the ground on which the two realms of history and nature have met and interpenetrated each other in our time, points back to the connection between the concepts of nature and history as they appeared with the rise of the modern age in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The connection lies in the concept of process: both imply that we consider everything in terms of processes and are not concerned with single entities or individual occurrences and their special separate causes. (61)

The military’s attempts to conjoin science and history is encapsulated in the very notion of process it expresses in terms of national historical regeneration, itself confirmed by its underlying

methodological and epistemological coincidence with the scientific process. According to Arendt, the interest in processes arises from a conception of knowledge that is related to how something comes into being. Vico turned away from nature and towards history because the latter, "made by men," could be known through the *hic et nunc* experience of its creative process, whereas men could never witness the divine creation of nature and could therefore never truly know it. A consequence of the conception of "making history" is that "the object" being made must reach a stage when it has been completed. The heterogeneous processes started by human action are thus subordinated to a single over-all process that gives meaning to individual events and disparate occurrences by opening an eternal time-space into which they flow, despite their apparent contradictions. The "scientific" evidence heralding the "end of history" in the Einstein citation above—or in the more recent work of Fukuyama—operates along this line of thought. It is this universal conception of "process" that the military placed at the heart of their ideological program.

Yet the palpable evidence of the "new historical cycle" indicates a position that remains outside the "over-all process," contradicting its supposed comprehension of all heterogeneous historical movements, whether national, modern, western, or biblical. This reveals the paradox of the military program, which claims to represent a unifying "process" while simultaneously constructing it through an (inter-)discursive operation. Indeed, Arendt's analysis of the relationship between the natural and historical sciences reveals that the advent of modern technology makes all research self-conscious of the discursive act, a pivotal point to understanding the specific national context we are studying here. That technology now "points back" to the notion of a universal process signals the corruption of that process and the possibility of recognizing its limitations. The historical sciences had originally borrowed the metaphor of "laws" from the natural sciences on the premise that the object of the latter was in fact immutable and predictable. This conception of "making" changes with modern technology, however, leads us to "act into nature," to start new natural processes, and therefore to "make nature" to the same degree that we "make history." Arendt shows that the most profound consequence of "acting into nature" is to put into question the architectural integrity of the universal process. Whereas "making" has a definite beginning and a predictable end, "action" is an unpredictable endeavor whose sole consequence is provoking new and random series of events. The notion of "the laws of nature" is compromised by our ability to start new natural processes—such as the splitting of the atom—that express our domination of nature as much as they force upon us the realization that nature has been contaminated by the unpredictability of our own actions. Technology thus indicates, practically and epistemologically, another conception

of process that escapes the objective universality of a teleological understanding of history.

Following Heisenberg, Arendt outlines the implications of this by stating that “man, whenever he tries to learn about things that neither are himself nor owe their existence to him, will ultimately encounter nothing but himself, his own constructions and the patterns of his own actions” (86). We might add that these constructions and patterns are discursive in nature, and that they change with the array of discourses that are directed at the “object.” Heisenberg claims that with the advent of nuclear physics two irreconcilable and “definite ways of asking questions” can converge on the same object without contradiction (quoted in Arendt 48-49), leading to the conclusion Thomas Kuhn would later reach, although by a different route, that language is not neutral or transparent and that said “constructions” are therefore in essence discursive. The different questions we ask make a different nature speak; we “act into” nature—we “make” nature—by probing into it with discourse. Accordingly, Arendt concludes that

we can take almost any hypothesis and *act* upon it, with a sequence of results in reality which not only make sense but *work*. . . . The assumption which underlies consistent action can be as mad as it pleases; it will always end in producing facts which are then “objectively” true. . . . the process of action, if it is consistent, will proceed to create a world in which the assumption becomes axiomatic and self-evident. (87-88)

The political implications of this form of action include notions of “an engineering science of human relations” and other measures designed to make action more predictable. Although Arendt does not discuss these implications in terms of “discourse,” the questions that are asked obviously influence the “answers” that are given and the reality that is consequently created as an “objective” truth. The *discursive* mode of implementing this control undermines the very notion of modern process that the Argentine military regime consciously adopted as an “ideological” compass. Paradoxically, their attempts to refurbish history by making it scientific pivot on a discursive appropriation that subverts the very possibility of an “objective” science placed at the apex of the learned disciplines. This discursive context opens an ironic space where the “science of God” and the application of Einstein’s theory of relativity to an Adamic cycle of history cease to be contradictions, becoming instead different moments in a series of “questions” that appropriate this conception of science in the interdiscursive construction of hegemony. Below, I discuss how this hegemony partakes in the process of asking specific questions to political detainees, of engineering a “culture of fear” (Corradi) by interrogating one individual about another to create a

chain of information that gradually penetrates the social network. The military's action into the Argentine social body by use of medical discourse is a form of "technology," in the sense of Foucault, which subjects the docile body to the hegemony of the state.

### Time and Depth in Medical Discourse

Medical discourse is a modality of the claim to science. Unlike nuclear physics, its terms are more or less accessible to lay understanding and are therefore more amenable to the same common sense attitudes directed towards different interpretations of history. The familiarity with medical terms also stems from its use by Argentine thinkers such as Sarmiento, as we have seen, and from its repeated use in the tradition of political philosophy. In *The Republic*, Plato uses an extended medical metaphor to discuss his ideal state, drawing an "exact analogy" between the need for a state to have justice and the need for a man to have his health. Another example is presented in the figure of Thucydides, whose histories contain very precise appropriations of several terms from Hippocratic medical science. In contrast to the utopian time found in Plato, Thucydides's use of terms such as *prognosis*, meaning "inference in advance," opens a temporal axis which runs between the past and the indeterminate future, a *discurrere* in which the individual event is overshadowed by its similar or analogous recurrence (Luce 80-99). The legacy of both thinkers, however distant and transformed, is evident in the paradoxical use of medical discourse by the military Process: whereas Plato uses medicine to *divide* the social landscape into analogical parts which subjects the individual to the "larger field" of the state, Thucydides uses medical discourse to *unify* individual occurrences in a subordinate relation to a projected temporal flow.<sup>9</sup> Both elements are indispensable to understanding the disciplinary process running between the individual and society: the sculpting of space into the form of the human body, which is conceived as integral, contained and whole, should be situated within the forward-looking projection of medical discourse's temporality.

If in the words of Althusser's Lenin, "science unites without dividing," then the added advantage of medical discourse is that it divides from within a given unity without risking contradiction. Bodies can be divided, separated or recombined, while their greater integrity or identity remains intact. In the above example, medical discourse marks an internal difference between a doubly universal "science of God" and the irrational Marxist and communist methods—collapsed into a single category—"infecting" the proponents of liberation theology. The prevalence of this divisive use of medical discourse during the Process has been noted by several historians and sociologists who have written on the widespread use of medical terminology to liken "subversives" to bad blood, a disease or

a cancer. Donald Hodges states this briefly as follows: "those infected by the bug of subversion automatically lost their right to citizenship" and were therefore "slated for extermination" (181). Others have discussed the use of surgical "imagery" for economic matters and as a "metaphor for punishment" related to problems of institutional democracy, civil society, and Marxist subversion.<sup>10</sup> Yet these are limited conceptions of the problem, since the notions of "metaphor" and "imagery" cannot account for the extensive and heterogeneous use of medical discourse. While examples of medical discourse's application to these problems are indeed abundant, there is little written about the use of medical discourse to express anything that threatened the integrity of the regime's tenuously constructed hegemony: the national deficit, inflation, development, corruption, sin, liberation theology, theories of history, and historical figures as well as gender and ethnic differences.

Now, the use of medical language can certainly be understood "metaphorically," but this must be qualified in the discursive terms developed here. Hayden White (1978) reminds us that the movement of a trope consists in the deviation or turning away from a "literal" to a "figurative" meaning. He adds, however, that this movement is discursive. And discourse, from *discurrere*, meaning "back and forth" or "a running to and fro," constitutes not only the significance of the two poles in relation to each other, but also constitutes the very ground whereupon it will be decided what is literal (or what is "fact") and what deviates from that expected meaning. If discourse moves between notions of "reality," "truth," and "possibility," as White suggests, then the time it takes to run between the poles and give them significance is one of its constitutive elements. The divided ground between the "literal" and the "figurative" is thus held together by a temporally defined discursive movement running from one to the other. It follows that this is also the case for the "concrete" or "real" terms to which they supposedly refer, including the individuals who are "truly" Argentine and those who have "deviated" from the national spirit. The temporality of medical discourse is therefore fundamental to understanding the division of the (social) body and the corrective process whereby medical technology inscribes the *ser nacional* onto individual bodies. That the military appropriated the temporality of medical discourse as consciously as they endorsed the "new historical cycle" only emphasizes its importance.

During the Process, the temporality of medical discourse served to underline the protracted period required by the military to implement its chosen political and economic programs. As we have seen, only a "prudent convalescence" could ensure that Argentina would again find the "paths of growth" and development which had been lost in the sandstorm of Peronist "demagoguery." The need for extended time required for economic reforms becomes clear after a cursory look of the regime's ambitious economic policies. Despite its

traditionally nationalist orientation, the dominant faction of the military was committed to supporting the implementation of a neo-liberal economic program over the long term; they were committed “to objectives, not deadlines.” This is reflected in the length of Martínez de Hoz’s term as finance minister, which lasted for five years while the average tenure for this position over the previous thirty-two years had been eleven and a half months (Corradi 127-29). His secure hold on the office, during which time the military ensured a stable, predictable political environment, was pivotal to the effectiveness of policies based on free international competition, privatization, state down-sizing, and, most importantly, the flexibilization of labor. This last element was at once a necessary factor of the economic program’s success and one of the crucial aims of the military’s political program. Labor’s command of the political scene during the previous thirty years made it the principal target of macro-economic policies designed to reduce its share of the national income, which fell by some 20 percent during the first two years of the regime alone (Hodges 236). It also made it the main target of repressive forces and state terrorism.<sup>11</sup> The military’s “new historic cycle” announced the end of the periodic alternation between democratic and *de facto* regimes that had defined Argentina’s political history since 1930. To break the political deadlock, the military chose to disenfranchise labor of the power it had accrued during the years of Peronism. Like the intended restructuring of the economy, the formidable goal of reversing labor’s entrenchment into the political terrain required extreme measures and an extended period of time.

The abundant material produced around the economy presents a clear profile of medical discourse as it was used by the military, and reveals other elements that became nodes of signification in relation to the primary emphasis on time:

[La población debe prepararse para] la inevitable suba de precios que continuará, inevitablemente, hasta que las raíces del mal reciban una cura radical. Un enfermo grave necesita una larga recuperación. La nación, profundamente desquiciada, también. La gente debe saberlo primero y entenderlo después. (“La inflación: un enemigo que exige acción correctora y esclarecedora” *Gente* 22/4/76; my emphasis)

[The population should prepare for the] *inevitable* rise in prices that will continue, *inevitably*, until the roots of the illness are given a radical cure. A seriously sick individual needs a long period of recuperation. The nation—deeply unsettled—as well. The people should know this first and understand it later.

The prolongation of the problems, expressed as the doubly “inevitable” inflation, is translated into terms of bodily depth by the etymological echo of “roots/radical.” In other instances of this discourse’s use, bodily penetration is underlined by the ever greater complexity of the problems. Inflation, from which the “deeply unsettled” national body would already require a long recuperation, is only a superficial fever caused by a far deeper and multi-faceted problem:

De una vez por todas tenemos que destapar la olla y ver cuáles son los males del país para tratar de curarlos. Tratar de frenar la inflación fijando precios máximos es trabajar sobre los efectos de un problema y no sobre sus causas. Es como si uno quisiera curar un enfermo dándole simplemente aspirinas en lugar de inyectarle penicilina que es lo que realmente necesita. Hay que atacar la infección, no lo [sic] fiebre que es uno de sus efectos. . . . La infección es el déficit del presupuesto nacional. (“Dos horas con Martínez de Hoz” *Gente* 29/4/76: 7)

Once and for all, we must determine the country’s ailments so we may attempt to cure them. Trying to halt inflation by fixing price ceilings works on the effects of a problem and not on its causes. It is as if one wanted to cure a patient by giving him aspirin instead of injecting him with penicillin, which is what he really needs. We must attack the infection, not the fever it causes. . . . The infection is the national deficit.

This use of surgical terminology—the injection, the penetration of the body with a surgical implement—is one of many examples from articles about the economy. In a brief commentary on the “euphoric” reopening of the stock market, one subtitle reads “we know what the disease is and the necessary remedy as well,” while another reads “Martínez de Hoz: Diagnosis, operating room, scalpel [*diagnóstico, quirófano, bisturi*]” (“En marcha un nuevo plan” *Gente* 8/4/76: 73-74).

Two elements that are characteristic of the military’s use of medical discourse emerge in these articles about the economy, both of which extend the “prognosis” and length of time needed for full recuperation. First, the “disease” is conceived as an ever-active threat that continues to penetrate the body despite seeming to be contained or otherwise terminated. This is a transparent allegory for the regime’s claim that the subterranean activities of terrorist groups continued unabated despite the cessation of their forays into public space. Second, the body is opened to reveal the depths in which the “disease” is securely lodged. The depths of the (social) body revealed by medical discourse also translates into an “inner” space housing both the spirit of individual consciousness and a collective

sense of community. Bodily depth maps the contours of an internal physical and social landscape; it is the topographical dimension of medical discourse's projected time. These dominant elements, which emerge clearly in the area of economic policy, are consistently present wherever medical discourse is used to define alterity. In an anonymous article, signed by "A Friend," the discursive regularity of these elements becomes evident outside of an economic context:

Después del [golpe de estado] 24 de marzo de 1976, usted sintió un alivio. Sintió que retornaba el orden. Que todo el cuerpo social enfermo recibía una transfusión de sangre salvadora. Bien. Pero ese optimismo—por lo menos en exceso—también es peligroso. Porque un cuerpo gravemente enfermo necesita mucho tiempo para recuperarse, y mientras tanto los bacilos siguen su trabajo de destrucción. ("Carta abierta a los padres" *Gente* 16/12/76: 78)

After [the military coup d'etat on] March 24, 1976, you felt relieved. You felt that order was being reestablished. That all the sick social body was receiving a transfusion of life-saving blood (*sangre salvadora*). Good. But that optimism—at least in excess—is also dangerous. Because a body that is seriously sick needs a lot of time to recuperate, and meanwhile the bacilli continue their destructive work.

The lengthy "recuperation" and the continued activity of the "bacilli's destructive work" echo the inevitability of the medical prognosis outlined above. The bodily space opened by the technology of the surgical process—the injection, the scalpel—also discloses a "spiritual" dimension which is less discernible in the articles on the economy. Blood, which is here injected into the veins of the social body, sketches the shadow of an internal space which houses a religious or national entity. We have seen how the discourse emanating from the church was interwoven with the ubiquitous medical terminology used for the economy, subversion, and civil society. Representing Christ's martyrdom, the ambivalent term *sangre salvadora* is perhaps the most powerful symbol of the Catholic Church; shed for our sins, it represents the possibility of forgiveness, redemption, and the recuperation of lost souls for the Kingdom of God. Sin and salvation, the backbone of the Catholic conscience, is again described in medical terms by President Videla's confessor:

El pecado es una necrosis. Las células muertas en el cáncer proliferan a pesar de muertas. El pecado es una necrosis que entra en el corazón del hombre, en la mente del hombre, y prolifera. Esa necrosis acaba en un momento con el individuo y puede acabar también con la sociedad. ("Quién es y qué piensa Monseñor Tortolo" *Gente* 8/1/76: 16)

Sin is a necrosis. The dead cells in the cancer proliferate despite being dead. Sin is a necrosis that enters into the heart of man, into the mind of man, and proliferates. That necrosis finishes off the individual in a moment and can put an end to society as well.

The privileged space of the body unveiled by medical discourse reveals the penetration of the disease into the “heart and mind of man and society,” thus transposing the medical references to cancerous cells into a Christian discourse articulating the “inner” space affected by sin. Interpreting these medical citations through a religious optic reveals that the “long convalescence” is the road to divine providence, which the penitent must follow through steps of ritual introspection.

The term *sangre salvadora* also reintroduces the problematic of the *ser nacional*. The notion of “blood” has long been written into discourses circulating around the nation-state, whether it is related to the religious variation found at the dawn of modernity or to later forms of nationalism constructed around conceptions of “ethnicity.” The earliest example is given by Ferdinand of Aragón, whose exploitation of “the mantle of religion” in the formation of the first modern nation-state led Machiavelli to call him a “new prince.” Ferdinand’s appropriation of the term “*pureza de sangre*,” which was firmly inscribed into the practices of the Inquisitorial juggernaut, illustrates his able use of blood’s diverse symbolic and “natural” significations. Although the religious connotations of blood have faded along with the power of the church, it has nevertheless been a highly charged term in forms of nationalism which are based on conceptions of the “people.” As an ideological charm or as an ethnic element, “blood” played a pivotal role in forming European nationalisms during the nineteenth century and has also been formative in the nation-building of ethnically divided countries throughout the developing world in this century. As discussed briefly above, Sarmiento resorted to this nationalist sentiment to decry the “barbarism that runs in our veins” and to promote the scientific and educational institutions that could liberate the *ser como nación*. Sarmiento’s appeal to the unity of “blood,” so characteristic of his time, resurfaced with force during the Process. Blood spilled by the military for the *Patria* speckled every article about its historic (epic) feats or its contemporary struggle against the “dirty war”: “The blood of Argentina’s martyrs and heroes,” pronounced President Videla, would ensure order and stability for the nation; the regime revoked the citizenship of several of its antagonists because, in the words of one General, they could no longer be considered “brothers” merely by virtue of having been born in Argentina.<sup>12</sup> Hodges echoes this sentiment in the relation he draws between “the bug of subversion” and citizenship.

Once the depths of the body are defined as both national and spiritual, as medically and scientifically demarcated meeting places for the individual soul and the fraternal, consanguine collective, the social body is further specified in relation to its different constitutive groups. It is here that the identity of the *ser nacional*, woven by layers of concentrated and dispersed historical and scientific discourses, is applied to the individuals of the body politic. During the Process, the dissemination of propaganda effected this division in public discourse by constructing the figure of the “subversive,” while censorship suppressed all oppositional discourse and information about the *desaparecido*. The relationship between these two figures, each the condition of possibility and consequence of the other, is perhaps most evident in the presence of medical discourse in the clandestine detention centers. Because medical discourse was consistently present in the dual strategy of propaganda and censorship—of the disappeared individuals themselves or of knowledge concerning their whereabouts—and in promoting the need to remove the “infection” from the social body, it resurfaced in the testimonies of former *desaparecidos* who survived their illegal confinement. Two excerpts from the report compiled by CONADEP read as follows:

Despite the bonds on the “grill” [*parrilla*] one jumps, twists, moves about and tries to avoid contact with the burning, cutting iron bars. The electric prod [*picana*] was handled like a scalpel and the “specialist” would be guided by a doctor who would tell him if I could take any more. After a seemingly endless session they untied me and resumed their questioning. (1984: 35; 1986: 30)

When I took off my blindfold, I could hardly recognize myself. I was black with marks, as if I’d been rolling in barbed wire, covered in burns from cigarettes and the electric scalpel; I was the map of misfortune [*mapa de la desdicha*]. The “electric scalpel” cuts, burns and cauterizes. . . . I still have scars from it on my back. Electrodes or scalpel? (1984: 37; 1986: 32)

Medical knowledge’s pivotal role in the interrogation sessions manifests itself in the presence of the doctor, in the nomenclature of the instruments and in the description of their practical use: penetrating and exiting the body, gaining more knowledge, closing it up, and leaving a mark. Medical discourse “guides” the act of questioning which writes the individual into a political discourse of subversion and censorship. The full implications of the modality of action discussed by Arendt emerge in the process of directing questions to the *desaparecido*. Probing the torture victim furnishes a series of “facts” that are “objectively” true precisely because they are produced within a discursive context which presumes the guilt of

the detainee. The pledge of ignorance voiced by so many of Argentines—"si lo detuvieron, por algo será," ("if he was arrested, there must be a reason")—is a sad testament to the *a priori* guilt implied by the individual's mere presence in the detention center. Such statements partially explain how a "culture of fear" was imposed on Argentine society, and reveal how the production of discourse and a social vow of silence partake in what Arendt calls the "engineering of human relations."

According to Foucault, this process of (discursive) action must be further credited with the production of the individual. The writing of medical "discipline," in both senses of the word, is part of a technology of power that fabricates the real individual and the knowledge gained of him or her (1995: 190-94). Placed at the center of a web of power-knowledges, the docile body is molded into a series of positions that adequately express its subjection to the state. This is a cartographical process. It traces the "paths of growth" of the rediscovered *ser nacional* onto the bodies of dissent, confusing the surgical instruments with the implements of torture—"electrodes or scalpel?"—and binding medical discourse to a discourse of political repression. The *mapa de la desdicha* is the product of this process; the *desaparecido* is a hidden map of this era's volatile memory.

## Notes

1. The valuable collection of essays edited by Daniel Balderston includes work on literature written during the Process in Argentina and in exile, as well as essays on the problems of historical narrative and on the resistance to the official voice presented in different media. On *La historia oficial* see Cisneros.
2. The debate over whether discourse should also include non-verbal practices, a position Laclau and Mouffe take against Foucault, would take me well beyond the central concerns of this essay with printed, literary material. The use of images in these magazines, and especially *Gente*, deserves a more concentrated focus than I am able to give here. Also, while they use Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge*, I use the terms and implications developed in *L'Ordre du discours* (translated to English as "The Discourse on Language" and included as an appendix to *Archaeology of Knowledge*) and *Discipline and Punish*.
3. See Gómez-Moriana in this volume.
4. "Un filósofo que habla de cosas serias y también de 'chantas'" *Gente* 11/11/76: 78. Henceforth references to articles published in *Gente* and *Somos* will be included in the text, listing the title, date, and page numbers. All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.
5. Gómez-Moriana studies the repressive environment of the Inquisition, showing how the *Lazarillo de Tormes* appropriates certain "discursive calques" to subvert Inquisitorial practices.
6. Katra continues: "Heading the list is Sarmiento's *Facundo, o civilización y barbarie* (1845), a work that brilliantly joined sociological, historical, biographical, and political material in a powerful novelized biography of the caudillo Facundo. Quiroga and memorable sketches of the character types of the pampas. Mámrol's novel, *Amalia* (1851, 1855); Echeverría's long narrative poem, *La cautiva* (1837);

the same writer's powerful story, "El matadero" (written 1837?; published 1871) . . . " (9-10). José Hernández, author of another cornerstone of Argentine literature, *El gaucho Martín Fierro* (1872), also wrote historiography and engaged in politics, being elected to the senate.

7. Shumway, 188. "For most Argentines the liberal porteño histories are Official History, the version of the past that entered the schoolbooks. The chief creator of official history was Alberdi's and Urquiza's arch-rival: Bartolomé Mitre."

8. "[We have a response to Marxism in] the Spirit of Occident as an antagonistic worldview—says García Venturini—in the style of the definitive fights between the giants of Greek mythology—supporting itself on its fundamental values: monotheism, *reason and science*, liberty or the right to differ, the republic in the sense of the thing for everyone, and progress for all. Concepts that have been the principal targets of communism in its stage of advance against these notions" ("El espíritu de Occidente" *Somos*, 19/11/76: 13; my emphasis).

9. Thucydides deserves the accolade "scientific" that he receives from the moderns not because he rejects divine explanations for historical events, but rather because he anticipates the notion of process described by Arendt, and because he executes a properly discursive confluence of different forms of knowledge.

10. A few examples of this research are as follows: Hodges highlights the relationship between subversion, infection and citizenship; Frontalini and Caiati specify the use of medical terminology for left-wing violence; In a section entitled "metaphors of punishment," Corradi discusses its use for social problems that came "from below" and must be extirpated "from above," and is one of the few researchers who also discusses its use for problems of the economy; Shumway makes a quick half-page reference of this imagery in discussions of subversion and the economy, as does Luis Alberto Romero.

11. In *Nunca más*, CONADEP reports that of the cases studied, 48.1 percent of the disappeared persons were union members, of which 30.2 were blue collar workers (1986: 348).

12. This is from a statement by Army commander Agustín Feced, quoted by Frontalini and Caiati.

## Works Cited

- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition. New York: Verso Press, 1991.
- Arendt, Hannah. *Between Past and Future*. New York: Penguin Books, 1993.
- Balderston, Daniel (ed.). *Ficción y política: la narrativa argentina durante el proceso militar*. Buenos Aires: Alianza; Minneapolis: Institute for the Study of Ideologies and Literature, University of Minnesota, 1987.
- Cisneros, James. "Censura, violencia política y memoria colectiva: La historia oficial." *Nuevo Texto Crítico* 6 (1997): 19-20.
- CONADEP (Comisión Nacional Sobre la Desaparición de Personas). *Nunca más*. Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1984.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Nunca Más (Never Again): A Report by Argentina's Commission on Disappeared People*. London: Butler and Tanner, Ltd., 1986.
- Corradi, Juan. *The Fitful Republic: Economics, Society, and Politics in Argentina*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1985.
- Costa Lima, Luis. *Control of the Imaginary: Reason and Imagination in Modern Times*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1988.
- Foucault, Michel. *L'Ordre du discours*. Paris: Gallimard, 1971.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage Books, 1995.
- Frontalini, Daniel and María Cristina Caiati. *El mito de la guerra sucia*. Buenos Aires: Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales, 1984.
- Gómez-Moriana, Antonio. *Discourse Analysis as Sociocriticism: the Spanish Golden Age*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1993.
- Hodges, Donald. *Argentina's 'Dirty War': an Intellectual Biography*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991.
- Katra, William H. *The Argentine Generation of 1837*. London: Associated University Presses, 1996.
- Laclau, Ernesto and Chantal Mouffe. *Hegemony & Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. London and New York: Verso, 1993.
- Luce, T.J. *The Greek Historians*. London and New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Romero, Luis Alberto. *Breve historia contemporánea de la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica de Argentina S.A., 1994.
- Sarmiento, Domingo Faustino. "Conflicto y armonía de las razas en América, conclusiones." In *Fuentes de la cultura latinoamericana*, ed. Leopoldo Zea. México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica (1993): 403-11.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Facundo, o civilización y barbarie*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada S.A., 1963.
- Shumway, Nicolas. *The Invention of Argentina*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1991.
- White, Hayden. *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. Baltimore and London: John Hopkins UP, 1973.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*. Baltimore and London: John Hopkins UP, 1978.



## Chapter 11

# National Identity and State Ideology in Argentina

Victor Armony

This chapter deals with the conceptions of national identity conveyed by presidential discourse during the first democratic decade in post-authoritarian Argentina. After the savage dictatorship enforced in 1976 and the absurd war waged against the United Kingdom in 1982, the Argentine society has undergone a process of reconstruction in its collective life.<sup>1</sup> We intend to provide an overview of the two ideological projects that have prevailed in this period of deep political and economic transformation. Let's point out that the term "ideological" is not used here in a pejorative way—as intrinsically false or irrational—but as a reference to public ideals of the good and the just for society as a whole, or, in other words, the normative models of society's constitution and goals.<sup>2</sup> In short, our aim is to determine which are the answers given by the two democratically elected presidents to these questions: What kind of country *can* we have? What kind of country *should* we have? What kind of country do we *want* to have? These are not trivial questions in a country where the state has killed its citizens by the thousands, and many citizens have killed each other in the name of a particular conception of the national essence, but they become critical in a democratic transition where the institutional foundations of social order have to be rebuilt. In this context, the analysis of the state's ideological role is extremely relevant because, as O'Donnell (1993) puts it:

The state (more precisely, the state apparatus), claims to be and is normally believed to be a state-for-the-nation. The state claims, from explicit discourses up to the recurrent invocation of the symbols of nationhood, that it is the creator of the [social] order as well as—in contemporary democracies—of the individual and associational rights that underlie this order.

Although Argentina is often deemed to be a somewhat atypical Latin American country, it may also be considered *prototypical*: the core conflicts and societal strains found in most countries of the region usually appear to be exacerbated in Argentina. This has consistently been the case with regard to phenomena that are quintessential to Latin American history. Let's mention, for example, the civil wars that took place during the process of nation-building in the nineteenth century, the democratic mobilization followed by military interventions in the early twentieth century, the emergence of a populist coalition after the 1930s world crisis, the advent of the “bureaucratic-authoritarian regime,” the rise of urban and rural guerrillas in the 1960s and 1970s, and more recently the trends towards constitutional governance and open markets. Argentina is, of course, different from the rest of Latin America. Every nation has followed its own path and is molded in a unique way. But it can be argued that, in its complex way, Argentina epitomizes the region's turbulent trajectory. Even Argentina's most distinctive feature, the fact that its original population was largely immigrant, reveals perhaps more clearly than in any other country the tensions at the gist of Latin American political culture. The concept of *mestizaje* (race mixture) has been glorified as a national symbol in most countries of the region: it reflects both the desire to create a “New World society”—based on the major ideals of social organization originating in the Enlightenment and embodied in the English, French, and American revolutions—and the longing for a cohesive and transcendent community.<sup>3</sup> As many authors have shown, national identity formation in Latin American is driven by a complex and problematic interplay between past and present, potentiality and achievement, unity and diversity.<sup>4</sup> The case of Argentina is paradigmatic in this respect:

Argentines joke that theirs is ‘the country of the future, always has been and always will be.’ But Argentina seems to be living entirely in a present determined by various interpretations of the past, not in a present oriented towards the future. (Calvert and Calvert, 1989)

As we will see, any discussion regarding Argentina's collective identity must address two questions that could also be applied to nearly every Latin American country: why has the nation been always divided, and why has it never achieved its full potential? These

questions evoke of course the image of Latin America as a “failure”: Latin America as the “Other” within the western tradition, the “shadow” of the successful “New World” liberal capitalist societies stemming from the European Modernity (such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand). The notion that something went terribly wrong—that a promise was not fulfilled, that ordinary political dissension led to unimaginable violence—is central to any reflection on Argentina (Rock, 1987). In order to tackle this twofold question (Why did Argentine fail? Why is Argentina a divided country?), we have to take into consideration what we will call the two basic myths of the Argentine identity: the *Myth of National Destiny* and the *Myth of National Unity*. Being myths, they imply contradictions, they certainly entail paradoxical effects, but they are nevertheless extremely powerful (Quattrocchi-Woission, 1992). We will claim that they have played a key role in the way in which Argentines have shaped their society during the first democratic decade, under the presidencies of Raúl Alfonsín and Carlos Menem.

Raúl Alfonsín, a human rights advocate and leader of the center-to-left Radical Party (*Unión Cívica Radical*), became president in 1983, in the first truly free election after decades of political and economical turmoil. Alfonsín gained support as a candidate by promoting the ideas of reconciliation, trust, and tolerance (Halperin Donghi, 1994). He promised that a new society, based on democracy and justice, would put an end to Argentina’s spiral of violence and decay. Although he managed to accomplish some extremely important deeds, like launching the human rights trial against the military Juntas, he quickly became the target of almost every vested interest in the country: the business and finance community, the labor organizations, the Army, and the Catholic Church (Ayerbe, 1991). Alfonsín’s economic programs were unsuccessful—partly because of their own limitations, and partly because of the gross lack of cooperation from the other actors—and the country eventually faced a mix of deep recession and hyperinflation that nearly led to a breakdown of social order (Sigal and Kessler, 1996). Alfonsín saw his leadership crumble and resigned six months before the end of his term, in a context of food riots, military rebellions, and extreme political uncertainty.

Carlos Menem, a Peronist leader, was elected in 1989 on a nationalistic and populist platform, and later reelected in 1995 after carrying out an all-embracing free-market reform.<sup>5</sup> His public image is hardly that of a conventional statesman, and his discourse has been dismissed by intellectuals as the “stubborn repetition of a small number of ideas” (Sarlo, 1993: 61). Menem’s presidency is unquestionably full of paradoxes in its mechanisms and effects.<sup>6</sup> To mention only some examples, let’s point out that while Menem’s economic agenda has reflected since the very beginning the interests of the wealthy classes and the big national and international corporations, his government has persistently found a strong electoral

support in the lower socio-economic segments (Borón, 1995; Corradi, 1995). In terms of social policy, the president has held on to the traditional Peronist rhetoric and imagery, but he has dismantled the very foundations of the welfare and union-centered structures designed by Juan Perón.<sup>7</sup> In the political arena, Menem's government has granted an amnesty for the high-ranking officers sentenced during the Alfonsín administration, but it has also weakened the military to the point that they have significantly less power to intervene in public issues. And even though key national sovereignty concerns have been completely left aside (such as the state control over monetary policy), the president consistently addresses the profound nationalistic sentiments of many Argentines who believe that their country is bound to reach "the First World."

## Presidential discourse

In this chapter we call attention to the importance of examining the way in which *the social order is thought*. In social as in psychological terms, thinking is not merely responding to or reflecting a given reality, but it is also constructing it. Collective representations, as Durkheim noted, help to make sense of the world, by expressing, symbolizing, and interpreting social relationships. We do not assume that reality *is* in discourse, neither do we disregard the fact that what is said in politics is largely determined by strategy and opportunism. But we also consider that it is a mistake to neglect the impact of what the state—and the president in Argentina *is* the state—promotes as an ideal of social life.<sup>8</sup> We can be tempted to dismiss official discourse as hollow. This can be especially true in the case of Carlos Menem: Argentines know that their president can talk carelessly about any topic, that he can utter whatever thoughts cross his mind in a given situation. Argentines have come to expect that what Menem *says* does not bear any material consequences on what he actually *does*. As with much of contemporary politics in this era of technocratic efficiency and economic adjustment, *Menemism* appears as little more than a naked quest of power, legitimized retroactively by the outcome of its policies (Ferrer, 1992).

The analysis of political discourse has always been an important area of research in Argentina. Strongly influenced by the French trends in this field, sociologists and political scientists have consistently shown a keen interest in the extremely ideological struggles that have shaken the country for decades.<sup>9</sup> Peronism was, of course, a textbook example of what ideologies could accomplish in the "real world" of politics. There was the charismatic leader, the emotional appeal for cohesion, the utopian design, the founding myths, the friend-and-foe cleavage. Then, the military imposed their paranoid worldview—the "national security doctrine"—and all public debate was blocked between 1976 and 1983. But, later, with

Alfonsín, there came a renewed and widespread interest in political discourse. There was again a leader who was able to reach out and touch some profound fiber in the soul of many Argentines. Alfonsín gave back legitimacy and credibility to the public life of the nation. One could be with or against him, but nobody could deny that he was putting forward clear and distinct ideas, that he was relentlessly—and we could add courageously—articulating a *project*, a model of what Argentina was and should become.

Alfonsín seemed to be ‘the right person for the time’ . . . Argentines were ready for a benign, industrious leader, and Alfonsín played the part well, devoted as he was to putting government back into the service of citizens. . . . Alfonsín began as a popular president, making it easy for wishful thinkers to view him as the founding father of a new Argentina. (Wynia, 1986: 171-90)

*Menemism* would then appear to belong to another era, something some would call a “post-ideological” era. After the *Semana Santa* crisis in 1987—when the military demanded certain concessions and the government secretly compromised—political language as a tool of consensus-building began to lose ground in Argentina. Alfonsín, the man who measured himself to the highest ethical standards, the man who promised that he would stand unconditionally by his word, lied blatantly to the people (or appeared to do so, which had the same effect). And later, when the economy began to sink into a deep crisis, the *Alfonsinist* project came to be seen, at best, as the wishful thinking of an idealist, or, at worst, as a parade, the egomaniac vision of some European-minded intellectuals who convinced the president that Argentina could become a social-democracy-type country, like France or Spain. The arrival of Carlos Menem to the political scene seemed to confirm a major shift in the public life of the country. A traumatized, disenchanted, cynical society was now ready to turn its attention to *form over content*. Postmodern cultural trends seemed to become dominant as the nineties approached (Arfuch, 1993; Sarlo, 1993). The esthetic, histrionic, media-driven, make-believe instantaneous contact was apparently bound to displace rational argument and debate.

Carlos Saúl Menem exemplifies the new Argentine-style politics. The president is a quick study and a constant charade. His political ups and downs, linked to the fortunes of his extraordinary economic reforms, are revealing. . . . At the same time intuitive and out of touch, Menem may well be South America’s first postmodern president. He has transformed Argentine politics from stern moral drama to ribald vaudeville, full of scandal and pantomime. (Corradi, 1992: 83)

The 1989 electoral campaign epitomized the clash of two political styles, the one brought about by the *Alfonsinist* experience—which had even had a strong influence on the Peronist reformers, known as the *Renovadores*—and the one conveyed by the *Menemist* coalition. The contrast was so obvious that many commentators saw in it a contest between Rationality and Irrationality, or even between Modernity and Tradition. In some ways, Carlos Menem embodied the conventional populist style: plain, colloquial language, colorful expressions, personal charm, and the typical formulas about the desires and needs of the working people, the quest for social justice and the attachment to the fatherland (Portantiero, 1995; Nun, 1994). But there was more to it than mere old Peronist rhetorical revival. The candidate's personal appearance and behavior was central to his message, as well as his display of emotional and joyful gestures. Much like an electronic-era preacher, he would utter: "Brothers and sisters, I bless you, I love you" (Novaro, 1995). Dressed in white, parading on his "Menem-mobile," hugging and kissing his supporters, he was actually closer to Evita's conventionally feminine approach than to Juan Perón's populist, yet hierarchy-minded and comparatively stiff relationship to the common people.

Carlos Menem took office, dramatically changed course, and implemented one of the most sweeping market-oriented reforms in Latin America (Smith, 1991), and then proceeded to win election after election until 1997.<sup>10</sup> That is where the main paradox of the *Menemist* experience lies. In order to understand the scope of this phenomenon, its ideological dimension has to be taken into account. Although there would seem to be *no* ideological content in it, other than some vague references to symbols and collective memories, we should not conclude that this discourse is therefore "empty." Seemingly, Menem just said "Follow me, I will not let you down," and then, once elected, in a purely opportunistic move, he espoused the neoliberal agenda. However, this simplistic interpretation cannot explain what happened afterwards: for several years, the lower-classes and the upper-classes have voted for the *Menemist* project, and also some significant parts of the middle-classes, as well as some mainstream institutions, gave what we could consider some sort of passive consent to the economic plan (Sidicaro, 1995). There are of course various hypotheses on this question, but we can range most of them in two opposing views: (1) People do not care about ideology; they vote for results. (2) People are blinded by ideology; they vote for images, symbols, and illusions.

The first kind of hypothesis would explain why people vote rationally and consciously for a "stability" plan which is either beneficial for them or appears to be the least bad alternative (this explanation would cover the upper-class vote and the lower-middle-class vote; the former profit from neoliberalism, and the latter carry large debts and fear devaluation and hyperinflation). So, in this view, people do not really pay attention to Menem's discourse, they only

care for what his government *does*. The second kind of hypothesis would explain why the lower-class citizens vote against their own interests: they are blinded by the president's rhetoric and continue to believe that Menem is a true Peronist and that what he does is actually for the good of the people and the country. In this view, people are trapped in the same type of ideological device that held together the Peronist identity.

We will contend that both hypotheses are too limited. On the one hand, to assert that people are completely oblivious to ideology means validating the core premise of rational choice's hardest version, an approach which regards human beings as purely self-interested, cost-benefit-calculating agents.<sup>11</sup> It goes without saying that this view raises too many problems when applied to the sociological analysis of the ideational realm: people have good reasons to act in one way or another, but those reasons have to be culturally and subjectively *meaningful* to them. On the other hand, asserting that people are systematically duped by the official dogma, this in a context where there is, undeniably, an important degree of freedom of expression, means considering that people are very easily manipulated. At the same time, we ought to admit that both explanations contain a grain of truth. Individuals are capable of rational assessment in terms of their own interests and opinions, but they are also receptive to inspiring images and emotional appeals. That is, we cannot begin to explain the success of the *Menemist* experience if we do not accept the possibility that Menem has successfully produced and conveyed a somewhat coherent and convincing discourse that addresses conceptions and beliefs deeply rooted in the Argentine collective mind. Even if *Menemism* has originally stressed form over content, even if the president displays a rather nonchalant attitude towards political language and rational debate, even if we acknowledge that possibly many Argentines have supported the government in a purely cynical and self-interested way, we have to accept nevertheless the fact that the state, as the key regulatory apparatus, has consistently promoted a given normative representation of the social order. This representation is not necessarily banal, untrue, or inaccurate. By idealizing, demonizing, selectively remembering and forgetting things and events, it constitutes an *ideological narrative*. As Pocock (1984: 39) puts it, political discourse "is performative in the sense that it does things to people. It redefines them in their own perceptions, in those of others and by restructuring the conceptual universes in which they are perceived." It is in this perspective that it becomes crucial to carefully examine and compare what the Argentine presidents have been telling the nation since the end of the dictatorship.

It is important to understand that our focus is not set on the presidents themselves, rather, it is on the way in which each of them has embodied and furthered a specific image of *what Argentina is and what it ought to be*. This approach emphasizes one very important but often-disregarded aspect of democratic transition: the

ideological underpinning of such fundamental institutional transformation. The concept of “democratic transition” is usually taken for granted. It is generally used to describe the changes undergone by a country where an illiberal system of social relations collapses. A democratic transition is usually characterized by the adoption of some form of competitive electoral mechanism and the judicial protection of individual rights, such as freedom of speech, mobility, and private initiative. In other words, it is about the two dimensions of democracy: representation and the rule of law. But, ironically, the “transition” itself is usually quite sudden. To be sure, what is long and “transitional” is the process of reconstruction of the social order on the new democratic premises. And, in this regard, political discourse, and particularly presidential discourse, is a chief factor. Alfonsín’s emblematic promise was that his government would be the starting point of “a hundred years of democracy.” Menem’s promise is that Argentina will come to rank among the “top ten countries in the world.” As we will see, these promises touch two realms of the Argentine collective psyche: the longing for a *United Argentina*, and the dream of a *Great Argentina*.

## Representing the Nation

In order to analyze the Argentine post-authoritarian presidential discourse, we have compiled a large corpus of utterances by Raúl Alfonsín and Carlos Menem. Specifically, six hundred speeches were selected on the basis of several formal criteria in order to ensure the best possible sample. The speeches were computerized and managed as a single database comprising more than one million words. The methodological approach was based on the idea that, even if there is no “objective” way of analyzing discourse, it is possible to go further than simply reading and underlining a few key documents, as interesting and revealing as they might be. Contrary to some commonly held assumptions, a computer-aided approach is not at all incompatible with typical qualitative activities that require “closeness” to the raw data. To apply search-and-retrieve procedures to a corpus does not imply adopting a reductionist view of text as mere information to be schematized: both qualitative and quantitative word-based procedures can be used to gain insight into different aspects of the enunciated object (semantic associations, situationally-determined vocabularies, and so on) and the enunciating act (the inscription of the speaker in his own utterance, the operations of logical modalisation, and so on) through non-linear readings (Duchastel and Armony, 1996). As we cannot address here all the aspects of our research, we will focus on some results we have obtained, and we will discuss the main conclusions of our analysis.<sup>12</sup> Figure 1 shows the database structure.

Figure 1. Database structure

President	Speeches	Pages	Words
Alfonsín	302	1,392	604,696
Menem	310	1,440	484,461
Total	612	2,832	1,089,157

The figure below offers a snapshot of what differentiates Alfonsín from Menem in terms of key notions and preferred verbal phrases (Figure 2). The terms shown have been selected through several computerized techniques: they characterize each speaker in terms of absolute and comparative frequencies (they are sorted by their quantitative importance). The goal of this procedure is to give a preliminary idea of the distance between the two universes of meaning; the key notions retrieved in our corpus reflect the issues and themes that the speakers have consistently and distinctively emphasized during their respective terms in office, whereas the list of preferred verbal phrases provides an insight into their communication style, that is, the form in which the presidents enunciate their discourse.<sup>13</sup>

Figure 2. Key Notions and Preferred Verbal Phrases by President

	ALFONSÍN	MENEM
KEY NOTIONS	Democracy Society Effort Modernization Latin America Institutions Transition Rights [Peaceful] Coexistence Necessity Togetherness/ Totality Crisis Authoritarianism	Brothers Sisters Argentina Perón Fatherland God state Community Market Transformation Heart Corruption Work
PREFERRED VERBAL PHRASES:	I am sure We will do/make We are doing/making I am convinced We are convinced We all know	I want I insist I come [here] God bless you To set going I summon you

If we try to summarize the content of Alfonsín's discourse to the nation between 1983 and 1989, we can say that he focuses on the need of an effort to be made by the entire society in order to solve the crisis and achieve democracy and modernization. To this end, he underscores the importance of rights and institutions in the transition from authoritarianism to a new form of peaceful coexistence (the core notion of *convivencia*, that is, tolerant and cooperative coexistence). Alfonsín's preferred verbal phrases convey the purpose of a proactive, conscious, and collective achievement. In his enunciation, the ideas of knowledge and conviction appear as the prerequisites of any action. The examination of all sentences in our database that include Alfonsín's key notions and preferred verbal phrases has allowed us to single out certain "typical" formulations.<sup>14</sup> For instance: "The fundamental responsibility of us all is to be protagonists of a new era. (Speech at the *Centro Cultural General San Martín*, 6/28/1985). We are all here facing the need of building a great Argentina . . . convinced as we are of the need of this effort . . . It is, after all, together that we are going to make that Argentina that we want to leave to our children. (Speech in *Villa Regina, Río Negro*, 1/17/1986).

The notion of democracy is at the center of a complex semantic network of values and representations. The concern about "recuperating," "consolidating," "strengthening" democratic institutions is central, as well as their social dimension: "social welfare," "social change," "social conscience," "social development," "social justice," "social progress," "social meaning," "social solidarity." The path toward democracy implies, in Alfonsín's view, both economic modernization and ethical development. Much more than a political system, democracy is a "way of life," the "indispensable framework to build the desired country," the "only thing that separates us from barbarism." As he puts it, a society that has known "the horror of violence" can understand that that there is no freedom or justice outside the constitutional order. By observing the words that are strongly associated with the notion of society in Alfonsín's discourse, we are able to capture the conception of collective life that he is trying to convey to the Argentine people.<sup>15</sup>

Figure 3. Main terms associated to *Society* in Alfonsín's discourse (statistically significant collocations)

SOCIETY	Democratic Egalitarian Fair Free Modern Modernization Open Participation Pluralist Solidarity Tolerance Values
---------	---

The theme that consistently stands out in Alfonsín's discourse is the will of building a new social order, where unity springs from the respect of diversity. This is presented as a collective effort which must summon a moral premise: "We have to learn to live together, to converse, to respect each other, to debate about our differences in the framework of a common rationality and under a horizon of shared principles" (Speech to the *Segundo Congreso Pedagógico Nacional*, 4/4/1986). In this context, the term "society" appears at the core of the representation of collective life, and a large variety of values are associated with it: equality, solidarity, tolerance, justice, liberty, pluralism (Figure 3). Alfonsín's key concern is to assert that a democratic society involves much more than an open and competitive political system: "it implies a conception about life and about behavior, a conception about human beings and their interrelations within society" (Speech to the *Fundación Eugenio Blanco*, 12/16/1986). Alfonsín invites his fellow citizens to create a "new Argentina." However, he is careful to point out that this task involves an "extraordinary effort," not as a one-time exceptional endeavor, but as part of a long-term commitment to a "culture of effort." The challenge is not a minor one: "it is about the reconstruction of our life as a people and as a nation. It is an epic comparable with the one that took place during the times of nation-building" (Speech to the *Primer Encuentro para la Consolidación del Patrimonio Cultural Argentino*, 3/21/1989).

By means of a computer-aided procedure, we can identify the most frequent word combinations in the corpus. That is, we are able to detect the non-random consistent coupling of two or more terms. Among the most usual word sequences in Alfonsín discourse, we observe the following: "our country," "all together," "all Argentines," "our children," "everybody's effort," "all of you." This recurrent appeal to a collective involvement is a trademark of his

discourse. This is also demonstrated by the fact that, in Alfonsín's speeches, the use of the first person plural (the pronouns "we" and "us") is between 3 and 10 times (depending on the period considered) more frequent than the use of the first person singular (the pronouns "I" and "me"). Significantly, in Menem's speeches, the ratio is slightly higher than 2.

Contrary to Alfonsín, Menem puts himself at the center of his discourse: he is the one who summons the people "to set Argentina going" (*poner en marcha*). Carlos Menem addresses the people by appealing to their hearts and feelings of brotherhood and sisterhood. He mentions repeatedly the name of the country and uses the emotional term *patria* (fatherland), he calls upon God, Perón, and the community. He urges his fellow countrymen to transform Argentina by fighting the corruption created by an overblown state, which not only prevents the market to function properly, but rewards vested interests instead of honest and hard work. It is no wonder, then, that Menem advocates a "capitalism that is no longer associated with the Welfare state." The state, in his view, "has a purpose as long as it is useful to the nation." To support an interventionist state is to validate and reproduce ideological conceptions that are "absurd," "static," "false," "sectarian," "capricious," "hollow," "blind." As the president puts it in an address to a meeting of philosophers: "We have a national doctrine, because we believe that the nation comes before any ideology, any partisan conception. The nation comes before the state . . . The state only has a justification inasmuch as it serves the people and the society." (Speech to the *Congreso de Filosofía*, 11/17/1989).

Menem invites his fellow citizens to an "epic that begins in the soul of each Argentine." Insisting on the need of "an union among the Argentine brothers, civilians and military," the president portrays a "fraternal country" that is being salvaged from the "most deep decay." The goal is to see Argentina become "a nation that its people can be proud of." A typical sentence depicts a relationship where love and trust provide the social amalgam: "This president will always have his hand held out and his heart opened to say, 'Brother, let's keep on working for the greatness of our fatherland and for the happiness of its people.'" The vision for the new country is put forward by Menem in unambiguous terms: "Argentina is one of the greatest countries of the world, because of its spiritual grandeur and its economic development." The president contends that Argentina "deserves a future of happiness and glory," not "this situation of decline and stagnation," and that what he wants is to "change Argentina's gray, dark history," in order not to "miss the train of history." If we perform a collocation analysis of the term "Argentina" in Menem's discourse, we observe that the associated terms evoke an idealized, even romanticized, image of the country (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Main terms associated to *Argentina* in Menem's discourse.  
(statistically-significant collocations)

ARGENTINA	Change Cherished Fatherland Great Greatness Happy History New Transformation World
-----------	---

Let's point out that the term "world" emerges as a key element in Menem's discourse. Its use increases steadily during his presidency, along with a set of other words such as "millions," "dollars," "reform," and "resources," all of them connected to the issue of economic liberalization. The presidential discourse makes frequent references to the country's relative position in a changing international context: "some decades ago, we were one of the ten best countries in the world," then "we fell down to the hundredth rank in 1989," and now "Argentina is already among the best thirty countries." In 1993, the president was eager to announce that Argentina had become "the most powerful country in Latin America and in some parts of the world." The objective basis for these statements is, at best, precarious. But this is hardly a predicament for a president who affirms that "we have succeeded in doing what others have not achieved in sixty years, not here, not anywhere in the world." This most challenging deed is, of course, Argentina's "insertion in the new international order." In this "new world being born," the "only border that remains is between the new and the old world." Menem emphasizes the importance of "working and producing efficiently," and the need of "becoming partners with the best" and, more precisely, with "the biggest power in the world which, obviously and thanks to God, is in this hemisphere." The following excerpts clearly show Menem's conception of what Argentina should become in the wake of globalization: "I want to tell you once again that Argentina and its people were born to triumph, they were born to win, they were born to become a great nation, a powerful state" (Speech at the launching of *Plan Llamay*, 12/9/1989); "National unity is the dynamic engine of the muscle that moves us to recuperate the lost and forgotten greatness of the nation" (Speech to the *Asamblea Legislativa*, 5/1/1990).

Terms like "change," "transformation," "new," and "history" are repeatedly used to represent the turning point in the political and economic evolution of the country. It is not surprising that the presidential discourse systematically suggests the existence of a

dichotomy between the Argentina of the future and the Argentina of the past. By using emotionally charged words, Menem simplifies the country's choices, and offers an overly optimistic perspective to his fellow citizens. The table below (Figure 5) shows a sample of the expressions used by the president.

Figure 5. Selected adjectives used by Menem to characterize Argentina

The Future	The Past
a coherent Argentina	a chaotic Argentina
a glorious Argentina	a closed Argentina
a great Argentina	a decadent Argentina
a growing Argentina	a disintegrated Argentina
a powerful Argentina	a frustrating Argentina
a transcendent Argentina	a hypocrite Argentina
a truly capitalist Argentina	a sleeping Argentina
a vital Argentina	a suffering Argentina
an Argentina with a capital A	an isolated Argentina

The study of word frequencies can sometimes give us an insight into a speaker's worldview. By consistently using or avoiding certain terms, the speaker manifests a set of ingrained preferences. Obviously, this kind of analysis must be carried out on large amounts of data, in order to detect clear tendencies. A very interesting quantitative feature of Menem's discourse is the variation in the relative use of the two main markers of national identification: the terms "Argentina" (the country) and "Argentines" (the people). Figure 6 reveals a strikingly stable trend that can hardly be dismissed as the result of random fluctuations. With an almost geometrical configuration, the table shows how the ratio between the two terms grows steadily from 1.6 in 1989 to 7.4 in 1993. What is the meaning of this increasing use of the name of the country, correlated to a decreasing reference to its inhabitants? Although it is extremely difficult to provide a definite answer, we can make the assumption—given the overall nature of Menem's discourse—that the president is more and more focused on the *idea* of Argentina, this entity that has to realize its potential and find its proper place among the nations, than on the individual fate of the men and women who happen to be part of it. Thus, we could say, Argentina—its prominence, its glory—becomes an end in itself.

Figure 6. Use of the Terms *Argentina* and *Argentines* in Menem's Discourse.  
Relative Frequencies (1 per 10,000)

Term Used	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
Argentina (a)	33.9	39.6	47.2	51.1	61.3
Argentinos (b)	21.1	17.5	17.6	10.5	8.3
Ratio (a)/(b)	1.6	2.3	2.7	4.9	7.4

As Calhoun (1995) suggests, there are “three different but interrelated modes of claiming a broader political community, one outside the state apparatus”: people, public, and nation. The nation refers to the “unity of the whole,” the people to the “difference between rulers and ruled,” while the public is the “differentiated citizenry” that constitutes the “proper referent of public discourse and the ground for democratic claims of self-governance” (Calhoun, 1995: 240). It seems clear that the conception of the political community conveyed by the president is mainly based on the representation of the putative “needs of the nation,” which go beyond “sectarian interests,” “pusillanimous attitudes,” or the complaints made by certain “privileged minorities.” And the public itself—the citizenry formed by all Argentines—becomes a dwindling referent in Menem’s discourse.

In order to summarize our findings, we have set up a table that highlights the fundamental differences between Alfonsín’s and Menem’s normative models regarding the purpose of collective life (Figure 7). We can see that their respective answers to the questions we raised at the beginning (What kind of country can we have? What kind of country should we have? What kind of country do we want to have?) are not only different, but they are based on clearly diverging views of the good and the just for society as a whole: Alfonsín’s portrayal of a “pluralist society” implies collective volition and cooperation, while Menem’s idea of a “great Argentina” corresponds to what he beholds as the country’s predestined future. But to have a more accurate understanding of these two ideological projects, we have to evaluate to what extent they are linked to Argentina’s persisting national myths. We will explore them in the next pages.

Figure 7. Analytical summary

Alfonsín (1983-1989)	Menem (1989-1993)
Pluralist Society <i>(what we want Argentina to be)</i>	Great Argentina <i>(what Argentina is meant to be)</i>
Main values: Effort and Solidarity	Main values: Destiny and Fraternity
<i>Sample:</i> “Only by means of a shared effort based on solidarity, working all together to make the country we deserve, we will materialize our illusions and attain the goals we have set for ourselves.” <sup>16</sup>	<i>Sample:</i> “Let’s hold our hands and go now towards our destiny of greatness.” <sup>17</sup> “That is why we have to keep our faith, our love, our illusions, but also our hope.” <sup>18</sup>

## The National Myths

Torn between its European pretensions and its Creole roots, ambivalent towards its Hispanic heritage, always haunted by the cry of “civilization or barbarism” at the origin of the nation-building process, and crippled by the memories of ideological fractures which have all too often led to the annihilation of the opponent, Argentina has shown itself to be, among the “new countries,” a paradigmatic failure in what concerns the construction of a community: since the nineteenth century, a “mythology of exclusion” has pervaded, breaking off all attempts at compromising or settling political differences in a peaceful manner (Shumway, 1991). But, being a land of paradoxes, Argentina is frequently cited as one of the excelling examples of ethnic integration in the Americas: no other society, not even the United States, would seem to have so successfully achieved the proverbial Melting Pot. As an author observed more than a half-century ago: “One of the first things that impresses a newcomer in Argentina is the extent to which the various European nationalities have been assimilated. . . . Not only do the foreigners speak Spanish, but they almost immediately become ardent Argentines” (White, 1942: 295).

However, many Argentines will contend that this homogeneity, which seems so obvious to those who visit the country from abroad, is to be considered a mere illusion: for them, this “national identity” is no more than the rationalization of the Argentine elite’s stereotypes and self-glorying image (Carrizo, 1994: 360). This fabricated patriotism, instilled into all citizens by the national institutions (the most important of all being the elementary school), should then be seen as yet another ideological tool for the domination and alienation of the people. This hypothesis underlies many a critical analysis of the “official nationalism,” of its fetishes and clichés in the name of which the worst indignities have been committed by the state. But this perspective—as well as its counter-point, which considers the nationalistic sentiment a stronghold of popular authenticity and resistance—are by far too reductionist. The existence of class cleavages does not suffice to explain the paradoxical way in which Argentines hold on to their identity: “As everyone has doubts about the Argentinity of his [her] neighbor, everyone is equally certain of his [hers], and his [her] nationalism is all the more virulent as he [she] is not able to define its cultural basis” (Abou, 1972: 25).

Contemporary Argentina must be interpreted in the light of the ambiguous relationship Argentines have with their country. On the one hand, the Argentine identity has been said to be “broken” (Quattrocchi-Woission, 1996). On the other, not only have millions of immigrants rapidly become “true Argentines,” but their national sentiment has even reached peaks of chauvinism. Already in the 1920’s, President Marcelo T. De Alvear pointed out this trait of the “collective personality”:

Argentines refuse to accept any truth which makes them inferior to anyone else. Theirs is the greatest city in the world, their frontier mountains the highest and their pampas the widest; theirs the most beautiful lakes, the best cattle, the richest vineyards, and the loveliest women. They accept no qualifications nor the fact that there might be some other country which surpasses them in anything. (quoted in Bruce, 1953: 7)

Easily compared to Canada and Australia at the turn of the century, Argentina emerged as a rich, progressive, and open country. The rapid economic development of the pastoral and agricultural industries led the elites to favor the widest possible expansion of market opportunities. A special relationship was established with Great Britain, which became the main market for Argentine products and the main supplier of capital and technology. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Argentina was the most prosperous country in Latin America and one whose per capita income surpassed those of most European countries at the time.<sup>19</sup> It is no wonder that this new country evoked the American dream and attracted immigrants like other frontier societies. The elites actively fostered immigration, as the need for labor force in the rapidly growing economy was pressing. But this was not just an economical strategy. The founders of the nation-state believed in the creation of a “new society.” Inspired by the example of the United States, but also infused with the ideas of eighteenth-century French philosophers, these “founding fathers” believed that Argentina should become the land of a new breed of citizens who would combine the best of the developed European races and the American ideals.<sup>20</sup>

The Canadian and Australian experiences resemble it, but because Argentina’s population was so small when immigrants started arriving in 1870—only 2 million—the demographic impact of 6 million who had arrived by 1915 was enormous. (Wynia, 1986: 34)

Political discourse in Argentina, be it from the left or the right, has always tended to posit a causal connection between the problems of national disunity and the fact that the country has not raised to the level it should “naturally” have: in this kind of explanation, a given group is to blame for not acting in concert with the rest of society towards the accomplishment of Argentina’s “manifest destiny.” But one can argue that the causal link between the two problems actually goes the other way around. The conservatives blamed the undisciplined immigrant, then the Peronists blamed the “oligarchy” and its associates, after that the military blamed the Peronists and later the “leftists.” It is even possible to assert that political and social

divisions in Argentina were not infrequently magnified ideologically in order to provide an account for the country's failure to attain the prominence to which many believe it was predestined. Otherwise, Argentines would have to face the fact that their country is not inherently important, and that in spite of its dreams of splendor and distinction, its fate has never been much different from that of other Third World nations.

The frustration over the failure to fulfill the original promise is embedded in the way in which Argentines think and act regarding their collective life. What was at one point a self-evident truth for everybody—that Argentina was meant to become one of the greatest countries—became, by way of overcompensation, a zealot's faith when things began to go wrong.<sup>21</sup> To understand Argentina, we have to understand this extreme patriotic feeling, which is not necessarily ethnic, but which nevertheless entails a deep feeling of "exceptionality." To be sure, the notion that one's country is somehow "unique," unlike any other in the region or in the world, is quite widespread in Latin America. Some very well-known slogans show the strength of this feeling: "*Dios es Argentino*" ("God is Argentine"), "*Como México no hay dos*" ("There is none like Mexico"), "*Brasil, o mais grande do mundo*" (Brazil, the world's greatest"). But this "exceptionality" appears to be conceived in terms of "potentiality." In other words, the country has an exceptional destiny, but in order to accomplish this destiny, it has to overcome present obstacles. Argentina exemplifies perhaps like no other country in the region this tension between the "New World" promise—the western dream of recreating the human society on rational, positive, progressive grounds—and the fact that this promise remains forever unfulfilled. In a way, it can be said that national pride is not so much based on a shared past—as it is the case in older regions of the world—but in a shared future. This can lead to resignation and frustration, when things do not work out as supposed, or to blind optimism, when destiny seems to be at the reach of the hand. We will argue that in order to fully understand Menem's discourse (and to begin to comprehend its effectiveness), we have to interpret his project in the light of the larger ideological framework set by this national mythology.

## **Neopopulism and Neoliberalism**

*Menemism* can be a very perplexing object of analysis. It is embedded in the Peronist tradition, and yet it has clearly departed from the original tenets. How did Menem convinced the Argentines to accept his economic reform policies? They voted for him in the first place because he promised high salaries, full employment, and social welfare, and yet they reelected him to deepen his program of widespread deregulation, and privatization. Does this mean that

Menem fooled the low-income voters who continued to believe that their leader cared for their interests? Or does it mean that he has persuaded the Argentine people that an extremely open economy is better for everybody? As we have already suggested, these hypotheses may be partially right, but they are assuredly insufficient. Menem had to submit his program to those who were against the very idea of market liberalization. And he needed to gain enough credibility to have a great part of the population believe that higher unemployment, less social security, and more concentration of wealth was actually good for them, perhaps not immediately, but in the long run.<sup>22</sup>

There is one obvious aspect that has to be taken into account. Menem's plan stopped inflation. One has to live in a context of hyperinflation to understand its devastating effects in everyday life. Hence, we could say that people voted for Menem, not once but several times, to support this key aspect of the economic plan.<sup>23</sup> Again, this is true, but only to a certain extent. It is difficult to assert that voters, especially those of lower income, clearly evaluate that low inflation is better than high unemployment, lower wages, and less job security. That is why we claim that the ideological factor is highly relevant in order to understand the scope of *Menemism*. Ideology does not necessarily determine electoral behavior, but it can provide the decisive push to trigger it. Peronist supporters had to find some kind of continuity in Menem's discourse, some clue to let them be sure that what their leader was doing was what Juan Perón himself would have done under the same circumstances.

The successful control over inflation—which in fact created the illusion of a strong currency by pegging its value to the American dollar—the immediate macroeconomic effects of the sudden economical liberalization, and the praise from key international actors—the Wall Street Journal talked about the “Argentine Miracle” (11/9/1992)—gave credibility to the government's discourse about Argentina finally getting on the right track to meet its great destiny. Thus, Menem reactivated the myth of a *Great Argentina* by shifting the blame from one or other of the usual suspects to what has become the great and sole culprit: the bureaucratic state. Suddenly, the whole civil society is victimized, Peronists and non-Peronists, the military and the social movements, the middle class and the working class. The image of a divided country is again utilized, but this time the opposition is between the state and the nation. The main argument is that the state has continuously benefited some privileged minorities and thus handicapped Argentina's “natural” development.

We will argue, as a conclusion to our analysis, that *Menemism* has successfully integrated a populist worldview with the neoliberal *doxa*. The Argentine experience, as well as that of other countries in Latin America and elsewhere, would tend to demonstrate that this kind of seemingly odd mixture is feasible, even easy to accomplish.<sup>24</sup> What is much more difficult to establish, is how this mixture can work so well in the ideological domain. We have to begin by acknowledging the

incredible strength of the neoliberal conception of society. Once again, we have to be wary of the simplistic idea that people everywhere surrender and accept neoliberalism as a fact of life or because they are just forced to, and that nobody (except those who directly profit from them) really adheres to neoliberal conceptions. Neoliberalism has become the common sense to many, and that is precisely the sign of a dominant ideology. But neoliberalism does not easily mix with all worldviews. One could maintain, for instance, that it is incompatible with Raúl Alfonsín's discourse. This does not mean that if he was today in office he would necessarily reject it; but he would not be able to simply adapt and integrate neoliberal notions to his own discourse. He would have to radically change it, and he would probably lose his political identity in doing so. Carlos Menem, on the other hand, was able to blend both ideological configurations into a functioning whole. And this was possible because Peronism and neoliberalism share, at some level, a common philosophical background. Roberts (1995: 113) advances an explanation for this seemingly paradoxical link:

The theoretical nexus between populism and neoliberalism, then, is grounded in their reciprocal tendency to exploit—and exacerbate—the desinstitutionalization of political representation. Ultimately, the two phenomena are mutually reinforcing.

But, what do we mean by “neoliberalism”? As the term “postmodernism” was coined to describe a specific architectural style and later came to designate a whole societal trend, the term “neoliberalism” stems originally from a narrow domain in economic theory, but now can be used to refer to a comprehensive conception of the social order. The neoliberal ideology can be characterized, in essence, as being based on an atomistic and fatalistic conception of society. It is atomistic because society is considered to be composed of discrete agents who seek to maximize their own gain, rather than equal partners sharing a set of fundamental civic rights, social entitlements and mutual obligations. In this view, collective identities and institutional mediations bear little relevance outside the individual’s private life. Furthermore, the neoliberal ideology is fatalistic because it focuses on the achievement of a superior goal, the success of the country—measured in terms of total utility—as a contender in the globalized marketplace. That is to say, the richer the country gets, the better, regardless of distribution issues and procedural concerns. Instead of asserting the idea that a society is an open project, it presents the path as being “natural”: it is “normal” that the state should not intervene, that borders must fall down in order to enhance international trade, that nations must submit to external competition in order to achieve internal welfare. Of course, as Wallerstein (1997: 122) underlines, the “newness” of this phase, as

well as the assumption that it constitutes a logical corollary of liberalism are, to say the least, highly debatable.

The neo-liberal offensive has been made possible by this widespread popular disillusionment with the Old Left. It has garbed itself with an essentially false rhetoric about globalization. The rhetoric is false in that the economic reality is not at all new (certainly the pressure on capitalist firms to be competitive in the world market is not new), but this alleged newness has been used as the justification for abandoning the historic liberal concession of the welfare state. It is precisely for this reason that neo-liberalism cannot be considered a new version of liberalism. It has adopted the name, but it is in fact a version of conservatism, and conservatism is, after all, different from liberalism.

The model of society put forward by the Alfonsín government was clearly based on a different, even opposite, conception of the good and the just regarding collective life. The *Alfonsinist* project can be characterized as universalistic and constructivist. It is universalistic because citizenship is assumed to be the prevailing integration principle: the core idea is that society is an elective association where men and women define collectively the kind of society they want to live in. This kind of approach focuses on the issue of social fairness: the problem of the distribution of rights and benefits that stem from social cooperation. As Taylor (1989: 12) puts it, this implies "to conceive people as active cooperators in establishing and ensuring the respect which is due to them." The *Alfonsinist* project is also constructivist because it recognizes that once bound by the social compact, citizens share a common responsibility and desire to maintain and further their collective autonomy and identity, expressed through representative democracy. The *institutionalization* of social life stands out as the main objective of this approach; it is accomplished by reinforcing the commitment of individuals and groups to a voluntary and inclusive citizenship where diverging interests are recognized and dealt with by means of rational procedures. Contrariwise, Menem's "anti-political" approach, through which he "poses as the embodiment of national unity and the public interest against the dispiriting divisiveness of partisan or particular interests," promotes in fact "a fragmentation of civil society, a destructuring of institutional linkages, and an erosion of collective identities" (Roberts, 1995: 98; 113).

Was Alfonsín a strange interlude, an aberration in Argentina's history, and does Menem mean going back to the customary narrative that we can summarize as follows: to get Argentina moving (to meet its *Destiny*), we have to overcome division (to achieve its *Unity*) and remove the obstacles (such as getting rid of the internal enemies) on our path? (This time, as *Menemism* vehemently asserts it, the obstacle to remove—the enemy to eliminate—is the state as welfare provider and development promoter.) In regard to this question, we cannot help but remain ambiguous. *Alfonsinism* was indeed something new

and radically different in Argentina's recent history. But we can argue that its exceptional nature, made possible by the trauma of dictatorship and war, expressed nevertheless a real change in the way Argentines conceive society's constitution and goals. For one thing, democratic institutions are still working—with their usual shortcomings—and the civil society has been thriving in many ways since 1983. And the shift to a more open economy is, to a certain extent, a logical and healthy step in the process of liberalizing society at large. But when Menem's discourse presents the current trends of global liberalization as the normal and desirable course of human history, it strengthens one dimension of Modernity—the individualistic strive for a better life—at the expense of the other, embodied by Alfonsín—the never-ending process of building a meaningful community of citizens, which, at least for the time being, cannot but coincide with national borders and state-centered democracy. As Calhoun (1997: 77) puts it:

The nation is thus not simply a static category but a creature of common commitment to the whole and to the principles it embodies. It is as a whole that its members have the potential right to self-determination and a state as singular as they are.

Neoliberalism's atomistic and fatalistic dimensions are frequently hidden in a narrative that presents globalization as an unstoppable movement and dismisses nationalisms as atavistic ideologies that are bound to disappear. However, globalization does not presuppose the extinction of national identities. Actually, each country is conceived as a player within a global dynamics of production and consumption, and each country is expected to maximize its total utility in the exchange between "Us" and "Them." Like in a populist conception of the "social whole," the individual destiny is presented as being linked to the national community's: every person who is apt to contribute and yet does not take part in the collective effort is considered a liability in regard to the national economic performance. This discourse encompasses a moralistic call to all citizens: they ought to perform their duties to the country. We could say to conclude that society becomes, in this type of conception, an enterprise, not in the sense of a collective and daring undertaking, but in the plainest sense of the word: a mere business operation.

## Notes

1. The government led by Juan Perón's third wife, María Estela Martínez (nicknamed Isabelita), was overthrown by the military, who claimed that, because of the pervading "social and economic chaos" and the extreme threat posed by communist terrorism, the nation was on the very verge of total "dissolution" (see Quiroga, 1994). Some years later, nationalist sentiments were aroused again by the

regime in order to justify the attempt at “recovering” the Malvinas/Falklands: The invasion of the islands and the war that followed were presented as a “crusade” to restore “national integrity” (see Escudero, 1996).

2. To be able to bring about a sense of collective purpose, any modern society has to *ideologically*—or “imaginarily” to paraphrase Benedict Anderson (1991)—defuse the inherent contradictions between unity and plurality (Bhabha, 1990), between community and individuality (Leca, 1991), between abstract universality and ethnic particularity (Schnapper, 1994).

3. About the concept of “mestizaje” in Latin America, see Safa (1998). The Native populations have contributed decisively to the process of identity formation, though from a clearly subordinate position. The “imagined community,” the mythic origins of the nationality, and the legitimacy of the state in each Latin American country are based on a narrative that celebrates the “mixture of races” and the fusion of cultures, but the core theme has always been the “promise of the New World”—which is, of course, “new” in terms of the European colonization.

4. See, for example, Eisenstadt (1998), Shumway (1997), and Guerra (1995). Latin American societies reflect in their institutions and societal organization a constant tension between “extreme modernity” and tradition, as well as a worldview with roots in the Southern European heritage, that of absolutist Counter-Reformation Spain and Portugal.

5. Peronism is the populist and nationalist movement created by charismatic leader Juan Perón in the 1940s. Peronism has played a central role Argentina’s political life ever since.

6. Even United States President Bill Clinton has noticed the paradoxical character of Menemism: “[W]hat a sort of metaphor for the transformation of our whole common hemisphere in this generation, that President Menem, who came out of the Peronist tradition, would have led Argentina to such a remarkable transformation.” (Bill Clinton, public speech during his meeting with Carlos Menem, Washington, D.C., 5-22, 1995).

7. The contrast between the two Argentine populist leaders, Perón and Menem, has been a source of fascination for many foreign observers: “Where Juan Perón nationalized, Carlos Menem privatizes. And where Juan Perón won ovations and elections by demonizing the United States, Mr. Menem loves to boast of the ‘carnal relationship’ he has established between Buenos Aires and Washington.” *The New York Times* (4/9/1993).

8. The presidential discourse is undoubtedly the main tool of political legitimization in highly centralized and personalized systems such as the Latin American ones. See Mainwaring (1990).

9. See, for example, the following: de Ipola (1983), Landi (1985), Sigal and Verón (1986), Podetti, Qués and Sagol (1988), Goldman (1992), Sidicaro (1993).

10. About the electoral coalitions that support the Menem government, see Gibson (1997). He states, for example, that the Peronist party’s “changing metropolitan social profile appeared to be moving in an increasingly discontinuous direction between 1989 and 1995. Its support was strongest at the bottom and the top of the social ladder, and weakest in between, suggesting a possible displacement of the old working-class-based electoral coalition by one with distinctively popular-conservative markings” (Gibson, 1997: 365-66).

11. Rational-choice theory conceives the social order as the spontaneous outcome of exchanges among individuals who seek personal gain. The idea of “calculative” individual actions is problematic, to say the least, when applied to the analysis of social life, and especially to the realm of symbolic phenomena.

12. For a detailed presentation of this research, see Armony (1997).

13. The original terms in Spanish are: Alfonsín: democracia, sociedad, esfuerzo, modernización, América Latina, instituciones, transición, derechos, convivencia, necesidad, conjunto, crisis, autoritarismo. Menem: hermanos, hermanas, Argentina, Perón, patria, Dios, Estado, comunidad, mercado, transformación, corazón, corrupción, trabajo. The original phrases are: Alfonsín: estoy seguro, vamos a hacer, estamos haciendo, estoy convencido, estamos convencidos, todos sabemos. Menem: quiero, reitero, vengo, que Dios los bendiga, poner en marcha, los convoco.

14. We will only provide the translated excerpts in order to alleviate the text.

15. The analysis of collocations is a procedure aiming to obtain, for a given term in a corpus, the list of highly correlated words. The correlation is measured in terms of statistically significant co-occurrence. When a word is consistently used in the same sentences where the term under analysis occurs, it can be said that the former is a “sentence collocate” of the latter. A statistical test compares the actual number of sentence collocations against the expected number of collocations which would occur if these collocations were random.

16. Speech to the Asamblea General Ordinaria de las Asociaciones de Cooperativas (10/28/1986).

17. Speech at the Cumbre de Presidentes de Centroamérica (6/4/1992).

18. Speech at the *Programa Arraigo* (6/22/1992).

19. At the turn of the century, foreign observers were mesmerized: “This marvelous country of Argentine is destined to be one of the greatest nations of the world” (Hirst, 1911: xxvii).

20. In Argentina, instead of serving as a means of excluding the immigrant from the national community, cultural nationalism had a strong integrationist thrust. As Delaney (1997: 118-19) puts it, “What cultural nationalism offered Argentines was a nation-building project based on the evolution of a putative Argentine race, rather than on political participation and the civic incorporation of immigrants.”

21. President Carlos Pellegrini wrote in 1904: “Our national ideal is to become tomorrow what the United States are today, and to occupy some day the same position that country occupies today” (quoted in Di Tella, 1996: 34).

22. Let’s mention that the name given by the Menem administration to its own policy reveals a wish to compound tradition (Peronism as socially-oriented ideology) and renewal (liberalism): “*Economía Social de Mercado*” (Social Market Economy). In Mexico, Carlos Salinas de Gortari showed the same inclination for this kind of hybrid (some would say oxymoric) labels with his “*Liberalismo Social*” (Social Liberalism). For an analysis of neoliberal presidential discourse in Mexico, see Márquez (1998).

23. The argument that the trauma of hyper-inflation was the main reason for the support given to the neoliberal program can be found in Teichman (1997).

24. For a perspective on the articulation between neoliberalism and populism in Brazil, see Boito (1998).

## Works Cited

- Abou, Selim. *Immigrés dans l'autre Amérique: autobiographies de quatre Argentins d'origine libanaise*. Paris: Plon, 1972.
- Arfuch, Leonor. “Biografía y política.” *Punto de Vista* 47 (1993): 18-21.
- Armony, Victor. *Du volontarisme politique au fatalisme économique: analyse des discours présidentiels en Argentine*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Université du Québec à Montréal, 1997.
- Ayerbe, Luis Fernando. “A transição para a democracia na Argentina (1984-1989): um balanço do governo Alfonsín.” *Perspectiva* 14, (1991): 149-71.

- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. New York: Verso, 1991.
- Bhabha, Homi. *Nation and Narration*. New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Boito, Armando. "Neoliberal Hegemony and Unionism in Brazil." In *Latin American Perspectives* 25, no. 1, (1998): 71-93.
- Borón, Atilio. "El experimento neoliberal de Carlos Saúl Menem." In *Peronismo y menemismo: avatares del populismo en la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: El Cielo por Asalto, 1995.
- Bruce, James. *Those Perplexing Argentines*. New York: Longmans & Green, 1953.
- Calhoun, Craig. *Nationalism*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1997.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Critical Social Theory: Culture, History, and the Challenge of Difference*. Cambridge: Mass., Blackwell, 1995.
- Calvert, Susan and Peter Calvert. *Argentina: Political Culture and Instability*. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 1989.
- Carrizo, Jorge Hugo. "Construcción de la identidad nacional y proceso histórico en la Argentina." In *Globalización, integración e identidad nacional: análisis comparado Argentina-Canadá*, ed. Rapoport, M. Buenos Aires: Grupo Editor Latinoamericano (1994): 353-62.
- Corradi, Juan E. "The Argentina of Carlos Saúl Menem." In *Current History*, (1992): 80-84.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Menem's Argentina, Act II." In *Current History*, (1995): 76-80.
- de Ipola, Emilio. *Investigaciones políticas*. Buenos Aires: Nueva Visión, 1989.
- Delaney, Jeane. "National Identity, Nationhood, and Immigration in Argentina: 1810-1930." In *Stanford Humanities Review*, vol. 5, no. 2, (1997): 118-19.
- Di Tella, Guido. "El renovado papel de la Argentina en el mundo." *Revista de Occidente* 186, (1996): 31-46.
- Duchastel, Jules and Victor Armony. "Textual Analysis in Canada: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Qualitative Data." *Current Sociology*, vol. XLIV, no. 3 (1996): 259-78.
- Eisenstadt, S. N. "Modernity and the Construction of Collective Identities." *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, vol. 39 (1998): 138-58.
- Escudero, Lucrecia. *Malvinas: el gran relato. Fuentes y rumores en la información de guerra*. Barcelona: Gedisa, 1996.
- Ferrer, Christian. "El hombre pantalla." In *Política y comunicación: ¿hay un lugar para la política en la cultura mediática?* Ed. H. Schmucler and Mata, C. Buenos Aires: Universidad Nacional de Córdoba/Catálogos, (1992): 77-91.
- Gibson, Edward. "The Populist Road to Market Reform. Policy and Electoral Coalitions in Mexico and Argentina." In *World Politics* 49, (1997): 339-70.
- Goldman, Noemí. *Historia y lenguaje: los discursos de la Revolución de Mayo*. Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1992.
- Guerra, F.-X. "La nation en Amérique espagnole." In *La Pensée politique: la Nation*. Paris: Gallimard/Le Seuil, (1995): 85-106.
- Halperín Donghi, Tulio. *La larga agonía de la Argentina peronista*. Buenos Aires: Ariel, 1994.
- Hirst, William Alfred. *Argentina*. New York: C. Scribner, 1911.
- Landi, Oscar. *El discurso sobre lo posible (La democracia y el realismo político)*. Buenos Aires: Estudios CEDES, 1985.
- Leca, Jean. "Individualisme et citoyenneté." In *Sur l'individualisme: théories et méthodes*, ed. P. Birnbaum and J. Leca. Paris: Presses de la fondation nationale des sciences politiques, (1991): 159-209.
- Mainwaring, S. "Presidentialism in Latin America." *Latin American Research Review*, vol. XXV, no. 1 (1990): 157-79.

- Márquez, Pedro. "Power, Politics and the Myth of 'Social Liberalism': A Critical Hermeneutic Approach to Carlos Salinas Discourse." Paper presented at the Canadian Association for Latin American and Caribbean Studies Annual Meeting, Vancouver, 1998.
- Novaro, Marcos. "Menemismo y peronismo: viejo nuevo populismo." In *Política y sociedad en los años del menemismo*, ed. R. Sidicaro and J. Mayer. Buenos Aires: Oficina de Publicaciones del CBC, (1995): 45-73.
- Nun, José. "Populismo, representación y menemismo." *Sociedad*, no. 5, (1994): 93-121.
- O'Donnell, Guillermo. "On the state, Democratization and Some Conceptual Problems: A Latin American View with Glances at Some Postcommunist Countries." *World Development*, vol. 21, no. 8 (1993).
- Pocock, J. G. A. "Verbalizing a Political Act: Toward a Politics of Speech." In *Language and Politics*, ed. Michael Shapiro. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, (1984): 25-43.
- Podetti, Mariana, María Elena Qués, and Cecilia Sagol. *La palabra acorralada: la constitución discursiva del Peronismo renovador*. Buenos Aires: FUCADE, 1988.
- Portantiero, Juan Carlos. "Menemismo y peronismo: continuidad y ruptura." In *Peronismo y menemismo: avatares del populismo en la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: El Cielo por Asalto, (1995): 101-17.
- Quattrocchi-Woissen, Diana. *Un nationalisme de déracinés: l'Argentine, pays malade de sa mémoire*. Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1992.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Le rôle de l'histoire et de la littérature dans la construction des mythes fondateurs de la nationalité argentine." Paper presented at the symposium *Mythes fondateurs nationaux et citoyenneté*, Montréal, 1996.
- Quiroga, Hugo. *El tiempo del "Proceso": conflictos y coincidencias entre políticos y militares, 1976-1983*. Rosario: Editorial Fundación Ross, 1994.
- Rock, David. *Argentina, 1516-1987: From Spanish Colonization to the Falklands War and Alfonsín*. London: Tauris, 1987.
- Safa, Helen. "Introduction," *Latin American Perspectives*, vol. 25, no. 3 (1998): 3-20.
- Sarlo, Beatriz. "Notas sobre cultura y política," *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, no. 517-19, (1993): 51-64.
- Schnapper, Dominique. *La communauté des citoyens: sur l'idée moderne de nation*. Paris: Gallimard, 1994.
- Shumway, Nicolas. "La nación hispanoamericana como proyecto racional y nostalgia mitológica: algunos ejemplos de poesía." *Revista Iberoamericana*, vol. 63, no. 178-79, (1997): 61-70.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Invention of Argentina*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1991.
- Sidicaro, Ricardo. *La política mirada desde arriba: las ideas del diario La Nación, 1909-1989*. Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Poder político, liberalismo económico y sectores populares en la Argentina, 1989-1995." In *Peronismo y menemismo: avatares del populismo en la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: El Cielo por Asalto, (1995): 119-56.
- Sigal, Silvia and Gabriel Kessler. "Comportement et représentations dans une conjoncture de dislocation des régulations sociales: l'hyperinflation en Argentine." Unpublished paper, 1996.
- Sigal, Silvia and Eliseo Verón. *Perón o muerte. Los fundamentos discursivos del fenómeno peronista*. Buenos Aires: Legasa, 1986.
- Smith, Anthony. *National Identity*. London: Penguin, 1991.
- Taylor, Charles. *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. Cambridge: U of Cambridge P, 1989.

- Teichman, Judith. "Mexico and Argentina: Economic Reform and Technocratic Decision Making." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 32, no. 1, (1997): 31-55.
- White, John W. *Argentina, the Life Story of a Nation*. New York: Viking Press, 1942.
- Wynia, Gary W. *Argentina: Illusions and Realities*. New York: Holmes & Meier, 1986.



## Chapter 12

# Caliban in Aztlan: From the Emergence of Chicano Discourse to the Plural Constitution of New Solidarities\*

José Antonio Giménez Micó

Translated by James Cisneros

## Calibanesque Discourse: Functionality and the “Invention” of Identity

Since the 1940s, and especially since the 1960s, several emerging social identities have questioned the western schema used to understand and dominate the world. There are numerous symptoms of the ensuing crisis: the ever-growing importance of the feminist movement, especially in France and the United States; the rerudescence of national liberation movements in colonized countries, notably in Africa; the triumph of the Cuban revolutionary movement and its impact on the Latin American universe of discourse; campus manifestations by students in the major cities of Japan, Europe, North America, and Latin America; the civil rights movement, tied to the vindication of minorities, and mass opposition to the war in Vietnam.

Movements associated to these social identities have reappropriated alienating denominations that had previously been considered shameful: “negritude” is recuperated in Africa and the Caribbean, “Indian” in Latin America, “*Mambi*” (a term for maroon slaves before abolition) is recovered by Cuban revolutionaries, and “Chicano” by United States residents of Mexican origin. Within these movements, one finds a rejection of traditional historiographic representation and a consequent will to rewrite history from the point of view of the vanquished. Significantly, authors from the nations of

the periphery have rewritten Shakespeare's *The Tempest* from the perspective of the "deformed and savage slave" Caliban rather than from the perspective of Prospero or Ariel.

Caliban—an anagram of the Spanish *caníbal*, which is itself a deformation of the Amerindian *caribal* used for the inhabitants of the Caribbean islands—is the ultimate colonized subject. The western tradition has made this figure the symbol of the most radical alterity: instead of being identified by a specific differential trait, it is characterized by the *absence* of everything tied to western epistemology and axiology: culture, language, religion, civilization. . .<sup>1</sup> This traditional representation of non-western alterity is the central problematic of "Calibanesque discourse," which can be described as follows: a modality of identity discourse representing a collective that has been formally decolonized but which nevertheless continues to be oppressed by imperialism or, in other words, by western neo-imperialism. The Cuban intellectual Roberto Fernández Retamar offers a remarkable example of this discourse:

La palabra más venerada en Cuba—*mambí*—nos fue impuesta peyorativamente por nuestros enemigos, cuando la guerra de independencia, y todavía no hemos descifrado del todo su sentido. Parece que tiene una evidente raíz africana, e implicaba, en boca de los colonialistas españoles, la idea de que todos los independentistas equivalían a los negros esclavos —emancipados por la propia guerra de independencia—quienes, por supuesto, constituían el grueso del ejército libertador. Los independentistas, blancos y negros, hicieron suyo con honor lo que el colonialismo quiso que fuera una insulto. Es la dialéctica de Calibán. Nos llaman *mambí*, nos llaman *negro* para ofendernos; pero nosotros reclamamos como un timbre de gloria el honor de considerarnos descendientes de *mambí*, descendientes de negro alzado, cimarrón, independentista; y *nunca* descendientes de esclavista. (34-35)

The most venerated word in Cuba—*mambí*—was disparagingly imposed on us by our enemies at the time of the war of independence, and we still have not totally deciphered its meaning. It seems to have an African root, and in the mouth of the Spanish colonists implied the idea that all *independentistas* were so many black slaves—emancipated by that very war of independence—who of course constituted the bulk of the liberation army. The *independentistas*, white and black, adopted with honor something that colonialism meant as an insult. This is the dialectic of Caliban. To offend us they call us *mambí*, they call us *black*; but we reclaim as a mark of glory the honor of considering ourselves descendants of the

*mambí*, descendants of the rebel, runaway, *independentista* black—never descendants of the slave holder. (16)

Fernández Retamar uses Calibanesque discourse's recurring strategy of legitimization to recuperate and give new value to terms which had originally carried a negative charge, and, by doing so, denounce the marginalizing designs of hegemonic discourses. This argumentative strategy of axiological inversion, which serves the primary function of countering the nefarious effects of "self-hatred,"<sup>2</sup> is of course not without its problems. In fact, it presupposes an *a contrario* recognition of the hegemonic schematization it sets out to topple. Fernández Retamar is conscious of this fundamental constraint belonging to discourses that attempts to vindicate and reclaim any given identity: "In proposing Caliban as our symbol, I am aware that it is not entirely ours, that it is also an alien elaboration, although in this case based on our concrete realities. But how can this alien quality be entirely avoided?" (16) The final question is undoubtedly rhetorical: it is impossible to "entirely avoid" this "alien quality" simply because that "other," alien element—or "enemy" element—is now a part of "ourselves." This is precisely what Edward Said means by "the partial tragedy of resistance," which "must to a certain degree work to recover forms already established or at least influenced or infiltrated by the culture of empire" (210).

We should not summarily reject Calibanesque discourse by arguing that it is merely the reflection of the dominant discourse: like every ideological phenomenon, every identity discourse is in a continuous dialogical interaction with "its" alterities, even if rhetoric necessarily attempts to mask and tame this inter-identity dependence.

Identity is not something that is given once and for all, even if identity discourse tends to present it as original and authentic, as eternal. In fact, to the degree that identity is a discursive figure, it can never be completely "new," or, more precisely, it can never *be formulated* as absolutely new if it is to be effective. This is evident in the weak mobilization of the "*optionaliste*" thesis, proclaimed by the ideologues of the French Revolution in dialogical opposition to the "primordialist" notion of the German Romantics (Sosoé 56-57). In vain, these theorists appeal to "reason" and to "the citizens' free will" as the only acceptable criteria for a here and now construction of the modern nation-state; but the crowd does not fling its *bonnets phrygiens* into the air until it hears the first lines of the Marseillaise, "*Allons enfants de la Patrie*." Despite its "*optionaliste*" intentions, the republican identity discourse cannot keep from resorting to "essentialist" arguments such as "the *return* of the French people to freedom" or "the *resurrection* of France." All these figures of identity—*la Patrie*, *la France*, the French people—must *be formulated* as always already there and, therefore, as merely having been "revived" by the revolution.

The utterance of every new identity discourse necessarily surfaces in a state of tension, or even contradiction, with the very fact of its enunciation. The discourse produces, in the *hic et nunc* of the performative act, an "all new" people-subject which must allow for the "elimination of the *ancien régime*" or, stated otherwise, for the modification of the social structure in a way that was previously impossible. But this hinges on whether the enunciating subject can put forth a pedagogical utterance in which the people-object is presented as always already there.<sup>3</sup> In other words, the *here and now* construction of an identity, which is always paradoxical because it is always changing, is all the more effective if it can present itself as "authentic," "natural," and outside of time, as the reference to a distant and prestigious foundational time.

One can limit oneself to reveal this fundamental paradox residing in the notion of identity, as does Werner Sollors in his discussion of the invention of ethnicity:

The forces of modern life embodied by such terms as "ethnicity," "nationalism," or "race" can indeed be meaningfully discussed as "inventions." Of course, this usage is meant not to evoke a conspiratorial interpretation of a manipulative inventor . . . but to suggest widely shared, though intensely debated, collective fictions that are continually invented . . . Ethnic groups are typically imagined as if they were natural, real, eternal, stable and static units. They seem to be always already in existence. As a subject of study, each group yields an essential continuum of certain myths and traits, or of human capital. The focus is on the group's preservation and survival, which appear threatened. Conflicts generally seem to emerge from the world outside of the particular ethnic group investigated. (1989: xi-xiv)

By choosing to sketch this paradox, Sollors is criticizing the extreme fragmentation of the U.S. market of social identities, reflected in the proliferation, since the sixties, of university departments and programs oriented towards the study of minority groups. But this observation of identity discourse's fictive character, widespread in contemporary criticism, is no less "fictive" than the "ethnicities" themselves.

Let us be clear: the notion of identity invention does not falsify or contrive the conditions it takes as given (we could even say that it is perfectly "objective"), but carries out an ideological obfuscation of the historical exclusion and exploitation that have forced certain groups (Chicanos and African-Americans in the United States, Amerindians throughout the Americas, the Irish in Europe and women everywhere) to adopt a Calibanesque discourse of resemblance, however contradictory this may seem upon detailed analysis. From this point of view, the different Calibanesque

discourses function as legitimate instruments of resistance whose objective is the cultural, political, and economic autonomy of oppressed groups in the United States and elsewhere.

Accounting for the socio-historical circumstances involved in the (re)production of identities obviously renders the problem confronting the researcher more complex, presenting an object of study consisting of irreducible and contradictory elements. Instead of reconciling opposite theses dialectically, the researcher should attempt to understand dialogically how they coexist in a given sociocultural environment, and then sketch the consequences of their cohabitation.<sup>4</sup>

### The Inevitable and Impossible Representation of the Other

Placing the term *mambí* in the perspective developed above, we must first recognize that its new use by the Cuban revolutionaries confirms one of dialogism's fundamental traits, by which the word, "the ideological phenomenon par excellence . . . sensitively reflects all social shifts and alterations," and shares the same "vicissitudes of the society of word-users" (Bakhtin 1973: 157). On the other hand, the proud recuperation of the term "*mambí*" as a symbol of Calibanesque discourse does not necessarily imply that it ceases to be viewed as an element belonging to the "other." This reinforces the thesis that an identity that aims to be effective cannot present itself as anything but an ensemble of autarchic and immutable differential traits, even if it necessarily engages in continuous dialogical interaction with "its" alterities.

Yet "dialogue" does not necessarily mean "inter-understanding." The "*mambí*" of the landowning slavers before independence has little to do with the "*mambí*" of the Cuban revolutionaries. Fernández Retamar's social audience is in fact very different from that of the Spanish colonists, since it is inscribed into an entirely *other* enunciative (as well as ideological, axiological, diachronic, and diatopic) context. In this sense, Edmond Cros correctly affirms that "alterity cannot be represented, since the identification with the other can only be made through discursive models that were produced to express nothing but what I know, what I am, and what I imagine" (49). One could nevertheless object that this non-representable alterity is unceasingly represented in all identity discourse, Calibanesque or otherwise.

It is undeniable that "our gaze upon the other is always of a projective nature and cannot have any foundation or reference that lies outside our own culture" (Ladmiral and Lipiansky 135), yet this should not lead us to conclude that identity and alterity constitute self-sufficient universes. On the contrary, each of these entities is constantly determined by the other. Like every other binary schema of the world (hot/cold, man/woman, good/evil, and such) the opposite concepts "same/other" reciprocally invest each other with meaning.

While the self can only ignore the other because it is foreign, it paradoxically owes its existence to this other and must therefore inscribe it implicitly or explicitly into its own discourse. The representation of the other is thus at once impossible and inevitable; the only means of escaping this aporia—which is obviously not the same as resolving it—is to construct a simulacrum of the other that can easily be reduced to our own discursive models (see Maingueneau 110). From this point of view, verbal interaction is a source of continual misunderstanding rather than a means of communication which results in the satisfactory, mutual comprehension of its interlocutors. This problem is elucidated by the notion of the “process of generalized inter-incomprehension,” a conceptual tool that Dominique Maingueneau has developed to define polemical discourse:

Considered as a network of semantic interaction, discursive space defines a process of generalized *inter-incomprehension*, a condition of possibility for diverse enunciative positions. For these positions, there is no dissociation between the act of enunciating according to the rules of their own discursive formations and of “not understanding” the meaning of the Other’s utterances; these are two factors of the same phenomenon. (25)

This remark invalidates a naive conception of dialogism that limits it, alongside parallel Bakhtinian concepts such as *polyphony* and *polyglossia*, to a consensual place where all voices have “at last” been given the “democratic” right to express themselves. In fact, discursive movement traverses a double process of misinterpretation-refunctionalization (Culioli and Descles 25). Fernández Retamar, for example, can only construct his own anti-colonialist discourse by “misinterpreting” (interpreting otherwise) colonialist discourse, just as the first Christian theologians did with the Torah and the ideologues of the 1789 Revolution did with the discourses of monarchical France.

According to the premises outlined above, I have developed the following working hypothesis: *representation of the self, which founds identity discourse in general (and consequently Calibanesque discourse), passes through the necessary and impossible representation of the other; necessary, because the “same” is inconceivable without the reference to the other; impossible, because it cannot be “faithful” to the other’s own schematizations.*

## Making the Discursive Object “Mexican” Inferior: Historical Antecedents

The very concept of social identity presupposes the existence of a supra-individual entity—an ethnic group and/or people and/or social class and/or gender and/or oppressed nation, etc.—that is not necessarily given. In many cases, the first task of Calibanesque ideologues is to forge a consciousness of belonging, founded on diverse identity criteria, among the members of a group which until then has only been a more or less virtual community. In 1982, Tomás Rivera, a Chicano writer and university scholar, draws the following conclusions from an article he publishes under the title of “Chicano Literature: The Establishment of Community”:

Up to the present time, one of the most positive things that the Chicano writer and Chicano literature have conveyed to our people is the development of such a community. We have a community today (at least in literature) because of the urge that existed and because the writers actually created from a spiritual history, a community captured in words and in square objects we call books. (1992: 405)

We should note in passing that Rivera is uncertain about the success Chicano literature has had in mobilizing the community. On the other hand, he does not present the community as a primordial—natural and eternal—given, but as something that must be constructed and “captured in words,” that is, as the product of a specific discursive practice. The assailants of “essentialist ethnic identities” in the style of Werner Sollors would surely be surprised to read this “constructivist” reflection in the pages of one of the principal (self-declared) “inventors” of the Chicano community. Further below I comment on the ins and outs of this reflection, which proves to be essential to understanding Chicano discursivity’s present situation and to predicting its possible future trajectory. First, however, I present a brief synthesis of the long and difficult trek which led U.S. residents of Mexican origin to affirm their identity.

In 1824, the Mexican government allowed foreigners to settle on various parcels of land in Texas. In 1835, numerous colonists originating from the U.S. rebel against the central Mexican power. The U.S. government, long interested in annexing Texas, supported the rebellion covertly while officially declaring itself to be neutral. The victorious colonists declared the independence of Texas in 1836 and joined the Union in 1845. This provoked the outbreak of the Mexican-American War in 1846. It concluded two years later with the signing of the Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty, in which the defeated Mexicans ceded nearly half their territory to the United States, including California, New Mexico, Arizona, and part of what is now Utah and Colorado (Acuña 1-120). Since then, the discursive object

"Mexican" has been loaded with various pejorative stereotypes and incorporated into a long-lasting topic in U.S. social discourse, the consequences of which are evident in the marginalized position occupied by citizens of Mexican origin today.

Legitimate enunciating subjects employ a discursive strategy that is as effective as it is lacking in originality, making the marginalized subject, divested of the right to speak, responsible for its own pitiful socio-economic condition (due to its supposed indolence, apathy, "laziness," and so on). Of course, this marginalizing mechanism is not directed solely at the "Mexican." In the tradition of the United States, it would not be difficult to find similar strategies of marginalization directed at the various "alterities" of the legitimate Anglo-Saxon speaker: Amerindians, Blacks, women, workers. The conflictual heterogeneity of U.S. society is neutralized by a strategy that reduces all voices to one. *E Pluribus Unum*. It would indeed be difficult to give a more precise definition to this most homogenizing of hegemonic discourses.

Although it may aspire to immobilism, discursive hegemony is always in movement. This is evident in the apparently banal act of employing a specific term rather than a "synonym." Here is an example. In 1929, an organization was founded in the Southwest by U.S. residents of Mexican origin who formed part of the emerging middle class, and who were seeking greater integration into Anglo-American society. Its name was the *League of United Latin American Citizens* (L.U.L.A.C.). This invites the question: Why "Latin American" and not "Mexican" or "Mexican American," or any other denomination including the term "Mexican"? Perhaps the association pretended to represent citizens from all over Latin America, although there were few Latin Americans of non-Mexican origin in the United States at the time. The first president of L.U.L.A.C., George Sánchez, shows that the response is even more simple: "We had to adopt a euphemism and call ourselves the 'League of United Latin American Citizens' because 'Mexican' or even 'Mexican American' was not fashionable" (Steiner 181). Or, without euphemisms: after nearly a century of pejorative representations, the "Mexican" was greatly depreciated in the eyes of the dominant Anglo-Saxon group. If U.S. residents of Mexican origin wanted the right to speak, they could not identify themselves explicitly with the absolutely illegitimate discursive object "Mexican."

Some years later, the term "Mexican-American" seems unremarkable in the United States. "Americanization," by which I mean the ideologeme of the *melting pot*, underwent a massive expansion due to growing immigration, especially from Europe (Muñoz Jr. 28-29). In this context, the middle class groups of Mexican origin willingly adopted the term "Mexican American," thus breaking the previous Manichean dichotomy of "Mexican (-) vs. American (+)." The transition from "Latin American" to "Mexican American" is a good example of the validity of Bakhtin's principle of

dialogism: “there is no word or form that would be neutral or would belong to no one, every word smells of the context and contexts in which it has lived its intense social life” (Bakhtin in Todorov 56-57).

### The Calibanesque Project of *Chicano Studies*

In the context of a new skepticism towards the hegemonic western values—most notably the U.S. concept of the melting pot—and of a growing will to rewrite history from the “other” point of view, students of Mexican origin began to openly criticize U.S. imperialism as well as the assimilationism of their 1960s predecessors. In 1964, a student delegation that had visited Cuba issued a communiqué entitled “Venceremos! Mexican-American statement on Travel to Cuba” that is highly significant in this respect.

The Mexican in the United States has been . . . no less a victim of American imperialism than his impoverished brothers in Latin America. In the words of the Second Declaration of Havana, tell him of “misery, feudal exploitation, illiteracy, starvation wages,” and he will tell you that you speak of Texas; tell him of “unemployment, the policy of repression against the workers, discrimination . . . , oppression by the oligarchies,” and he will tell you that you speak of California; tell him of U.S. domination of Latin America, and he will tell you that he knows that Shark and what he devours, because he has lived in its very entrails. The history of the American Southwest provides a brutal panorama of nascent imperialism. (Valdez and Steiner 215)

The reflections of these U. S. students of Mexican origin clearly coincide with the anti-imperialist “Calibanesque” position represented by Roberto Fernández Retamar. If he describes Cuban revolutionaries as children of the “*mambís*,” the students respond by proclaiming themselves “sons of Mexican manual laborers” (217), that is, children of “Chicanos.” In fact, the word “Chicano”—whose etymology is as obscure as that of *mambí*—was traditionally used by “Anglos” and certain assimilated “Mexican-Americans” as a negative designation for the most marginal residents of Mexican origin, particularly the *braceros*: cheap manual labor consisting largely of Mexican born individuals who have often immigrated illegally to the United States. By recuperating the term with pride, *Chicanismo* becomes the visible symbol of resistance to oppression.

The new Chicano speakers linked their proposals to a series of discourses that are more or less legitimate in Latin America, including the principal discursive tendencies of *Indigenismo* and the Calibanesque Latin-Americanism mentioned above. The manifesto preceding the foundational document of cultural nationalism, written

during the Denver Conference and known as the “*Plan de Aztlán*” (1969), overtly appropriates the well known Americanist-*indigenista* topic exalting pre-Columbian civilizations and adapts it to new circumstances of enunciation:

En el espíritu de una Raza que ha reconocido no sólo su orgullosa herencia histórica, sino también la bruta invasión gringa de nuestros territorios, nosotros los Chicanos habitantes y civilizadores de la tierra norteña de AZTLAN, de donde provinieron nuestros abuelos sólo para regresar a sus raíces y consagrarse la determinación de nuestro pueblo del sol, declaramos que el grito de la sangre es nuestra fuerza, nuestra responsabilidad y nuestro inevitable destino. Somos libres y soberanos para señalar aquellas tareas por las cuales gritan justamente nuestra casa, nuestra tierra, el sudor de nuestra frente y nuestro corazón. AZTLAN pertenece a los que siembran la semilla, riegan los campos, y levantan la cosecha, y no al extranjero europeo. No reconocemos fronteras caprichosas en el Continente de Bronce. El carnalismo nos une y el amor hacia nuestros hermanos nos hace un pueblo ascendiente que lucha contra el extranjero gabacho, que explota nuestras riquezas y destruye nuestra cultura. Con el corazón en la mano y con las manos en la tierra, declaramos el espíritu independiente de nuestra nación mestiza. Somos la Raza de Bronce con una cultura de bronce. Ante todo el mundo, ante Norteamérica, ante todos nuestros hermanos en el Continente de Bronce, somos una nación, somos una unión de pueblos libres, somos AZTLAN.

In the spirit of a Race (*Raza*) that has recognized not only its proud historical heritage but also the brutal gringo invasion of its territories, we Chicanos, inhabitants and civilizers of the northern land of AZTLAN, from whence our grandfathers stemmed only to return to their roots and consecrate the determination of our people of the sun, we Chicanos declare that the cry of blood is our strength, our responsibility and our inevitable destiny. We are free and sovereign to set the tasks for which our house, our land, the sweat of our brow, and our hearts justly clamor. AZTLAN belongs to those who sow the seed, water the land and harvest the crops, and not to the European foreigner. We do not recognize capricious borders on the Bronze continent. *Carnalismo* unites us and brotherly love makes us a rising people that fights against the foreigners who exploit our riches and destroy our culture. With our hearts in our hands and our hands in the earth, we declare the independent spirit of our mestizo nation. We are the Race of Bronze with a culture of bronze. Before the world, before the United States, before all our brothers on the Bronze continent,

we are a nation, we are a union of free people, we are AZTLAN. (in Castañeda Shular et al. 83-84)

The manifesto of Aztlán can be considered the principal foundational act of the Chicano people; it is not by chance that it starts by narrating their history. It matters little to what degree it is “faithful” to the past and it matters little if the utterance is “romantic” (and we are familiar with the negative—essentialist and statist—connotations that this adjective evokes when placed in relation to the concept of identity); what is truly significant is that the enunciative act of narrating this history has finally become possible.<sup>5</sup> It is thus that “the power to narrate, or block other narratives from forming and emerging” (Said xiii), *conditio sine qua non* for the construction of every identity, ceases to be the monopoly of the ruling group.

Rewriting history from the dominated group’s point of view implies the task of deligitimizing the current hegemony: the privileged position that “you” occupy is the final outcome of a series of injustices and violations committed against an idealized preceding order where—in the case of the Chicanos—“we” were the only masters of a space that “you” stole. This reterritorializing mechanism, made possible by the recuperation of their indigenous ancestry, demanded that the Chicano people denounce the “brutal gringo invasion of its territories.” Now, the Chicanos did not reclaim the former Mexican possessions which were now the states of California, Texas, and New Mexico—they did not want to “liberate” those territories in order to annex them to Mexico or form a new independent state—but the mythic territory of Aztlán, the “territory of the North” (in nahuatl) which the Aztecs had left to found Tenochtitlan centuries before the arrival of the Spanish. Aztlán, seemingly idealized in the pedagogical story drafted by the Chicanos, should be envisaged less as a nostalgic quest than as a strategy of identity employed by Chicano ideologues to construct a pedagogical story that could give them a foundational time and space,<sup>6</sup> and, consequently, allow them to gain access to already existing institutions of the United States: the *Raza Unida* party wanted access to the municipalities and the school boards, the Chicano intellectuals to the university.

In fact, *Chicanismo* was essentially a university movement. The subtitle of the *Plan de Santa Barbara*, the student movement’s foundational manifesto, is “A Chicano Plan for Higher Education” (Muñoz Jr. 97). The Chicanos, like the Mexican-Americans who preceded them, give capital importance to university education. But this education was no longer a tool for the individual to better integrate into existing social structures. The Chicano students’ Calibanesque project implied the appropriation of the university institution by a group which aimed to radically transform the structures of society as a whole. Inspired by the experience of the

Black student movement, the Chicano students succeed in putting into motion *Chicano Studies Programs* throughout the southwestern United States, most notably in California. This institutional support allowed Chicano intellectuals to undertake a project whose primary objective was to oppose the pejorative reduction of the discursive object "Mexican" that has been in force since the nineteenth century.

Chicano intellectuals intend to appropriate academic language and conceptual tools to better denounce the marginalizing aims of hegemonic practices without, however, renouncing their own means of expression. Chicano researchers have therefore favored studies of the Anglo teaching system, demonstrating how the mandatory use of English in schools and the punitive mechanisms directed against the use of Spanish cause young Chicanos to develop a diglossic consciousness in which the language and culture of their parents are considered inferior and contemptible in relation to those of the hegemony. Alfredo Mirandé has rightly noted that

the traditional model [of education] abets the colonization of Chicanos and the view that their culture and language are inferior. The school thus assumes a critical role in the process of colonization. As the primary institution of socialization and Americanization, its predominant function has been to extinguish the culture of Chicanos and to mute their language. . . . Chicanos can be incorporated only if they reject their culture and abandon their native tongue, yet this does not guarantee their success or advancement. (97)

It is evident that the better part of Chicano intellectuals is conscious of, and tries to remedy, the marginalization of its community. This community spirit is in fact already present in the *Plan de Santa Barbara*, which insists that the Chicano intellectual truly place him or herself in the service of the collective: "*Chicanismo* simply embodies an ancient truth: that man is never closer to his true self as when he is close to his community" (cited in Muñoz Jr. 192). And Chicano intellectuals and students have in fact chosen to work in the *Barrios* as community organizers and to offer night and weekend courses for free.

### **The Chicano Autobiography: The Individual Story Serves the "Cause" (*Barrio Boy*)**

The seventies ushered in a feverish production of Chicano novels, theater, and poetry. Other non-fiction is published by various university presses in the United States. In 1971, the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, published a key text: *Barrio Boy*, Ernesto Galarza's autobiography of his youth.

Galarza became the first student of Mexican origin to study at Stanford University, where, according to the author, the other students regarded him as a "curiosity" and "didn't know what a Mexican looked like or what to expect of him" (cited in Muñoz Jr. 22). At the close of the twenties, he also becomes the first Chicano to obtain a Ph.D. in the United States, having studied History and Political Science at Columbia University. For the duration of his studies, Galarza was an impoverished university student who used his vacations to make money working as a "bracero":

It was during the summer vacation that school did not interfere with making a living, the time of the year when I went with other *barrio* people to the ranches to look for work. . . . In the labor camps I shared the summertime of the lives of the *barrio* people. They gathered from barrios of faraway places like Imperial Valley, Los Angeles, Phoenix, and San Antonio. (261-62)

Since most of his coworkers did not know how to write or otherwise communicate in English, Galarza became the spokesman for the modest demands they made of their employers and, if necessary, of the *Autoridades*. The last pages of Galarza's autobiography recount his participation in an incident that cost him his job:

The only way to complain or protest was to leave. . . . In a camp near Folsom, during hop picking, it was not wages but death that pulled the people together. Several children in the camp were sick with diarrhea; one had been taken to the hospital in town and the word came back that he had died. It was the women who guessed that the cause of the epidemic was the water. For cooking and drinking and washing it came from a ditch that went by the ranch stables upstream. . . . I was appointed by the camp committee to go to Sacramento to find some *Autoridad* who would send an inspector. . . . The inspector came and a water tank pulled by mules was parked by the irrigation ditch. At the same time the contractor began to fire some of the pickers. I was one of them. (264-65)

In 1929, Galarza writes an article in defense of Mexican workers' rights ("Life in the United States for Mexican People: Out of the Experience of a Mexican" in Muñoz Jr. 44). In 1964, he publishes *Merchants of Labor*, the first in a series of works that attack the bracero program. Considering the university to be a "cemetery of ideas" (Muñoz 142), Galarza was never interested in holding a teaching position. Instead he opted for trade unionism, first organizing a socialist union for workers in Louisiana and then another for peasants, most of whom were of Mexican origin, in California (Muñoz 48).

The most committed Chicanos consider Galarza a sort of pioneer of the movement. Unlike most of the intellectuals of his generation, he did not submit in the least to the hegemonic assimilationist ideology and, furthermore, succeeded in reconciling what seemed impossible in this context: higher education and Mexican culture. It could also be said that Galarza's stance beside the most disadvantaged popular masses of Mexican origin applied the collectivist spirit of the *Plan de Santa Barbara* avant la lettre. *Barrio Boy* can therefore be considered a Chicano *exemplum*, in the rhetorical sense of this word; the preface by Julian Samora serves the exact function of leading the reader to an "exemplary" interpretation of the text:

In this vivid and dramatic autobiography, Professor Galarza provides us with exciting and incisive insights into the process of acculturation. Chicanos who have lived through and survived the acculturative process will appreciate the numerous obstacles to, and the struggle for, self-identity in a strange culture, while resisting complete "Americanization."

### **The Chicano Counter-example (*Hunger of Memory*)**

In 1982, only eleven years later, an autobiographical work which was strikingly similar to Galarza's book was published under the title *Hunger of Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez*. Like Galarza, Rodriguez grew up in Sacramento, studied at Stanford, worked during his studies and earned a doctoral degree at Columbia University. Rodriguez finally rejected an academic teaching position just as Galarza had, choosing instead to follow a career as an essayist and journalist. Excepting the minor difference between their disciplines of study (Rodriguez earned a Ph.D. in English Literature) and their post-academic career choices, the principal difference between the two authors lies in the fact that Galarza was born in Mexico and immigrated to the United States at a very young age, while Rodriguez, whose parents are Mexican, was born north of the border a few decades later.

At the very beginning of his autobiography, Rodriguez refers to Caliban in an explanation of how he appropriated the conceptual tools that had previously been the exclusive property of the dominant group: "I have taken Caliban's advice. I have stolen their books" (3). This open declaration of principles seems to trace Rodriguez's text to Fernández Retamar's "Calibanesque" practice, or to place it within the context of the Chicano movement outlined above. But this is only an ephemeral illusion. In fact, Rodriguez does not identify with any colonized or marginalized subject at all. This is why, for example, the indigenous pedagogical enunciation which made possible the performative action of Chicano identity discourse is of no interest to

him. His Caliban is clearly not the same as that of the anticolonialist movements:

Perhaps because I am marked by indelible color they easily suppose that I am unchanged by social mobility, that I can claim unbroken ties with my past. . . . but I reject the role (Caliban won't ferry a TV crew back to his island, there to recover his roots). Aztec ruins hold no special interest for me. I do not search Mexican graveyards for ties to unnameable ancestors. (5)

Rodriguez's argumentation, which quickly distances itself from the double identity character and from the resistance of Chicano cultural nationalism, reaches the point of negating all legitimacy to the denomination "Chicano":

When . . . Mexican-American students began to proclaim themselves Chicanos, they taught many persons in the barrios of southwestern America to imagine themselves in a new context. *Chicano*, the Spanish word, was a term lower-class Mexican-Americans had long used to name themselves. It was a *private* word, slangish, even affectionately vulgar, and, when spoken by a stranger, insulting, because it glibly assumed familiarity. Many Mexican-Americans were consequently shocked when they heard the student activist proclaim himself and his listeners Chicanos. What initially they did not understand was that the English word—which meant literally the same thing (Mexican-American)—was a *public* word, *animated by pride and political purpose*. (158-59, my emphasis)

The words I have highlighted ("private vs. public") constitute the skeleton of a binary diglossic schematization upon which Rodriguez bases most of his argument: the language and culture of Mexicans, unequivocal signs of backwardness, poverty, and a lack of culture, are and will always be "private." Conversely, everything associated with the "Anglos" represents the "public" world: democracy, equality, modernity, success, individualism, and the social mobility that Rodriguez is able to attain.<sup>7</sup> This "social" mobility is curiously individual, making the social structures seem paradoxically immutable.<sup>8</sup> Rodriguez, happy that his first teachers insisted that his parents speak to him only in English,<sup>9</sup> is accordingly opposed to any project for bilingual education:

Supporters of bilingual education today imply that students like me miss a great deal by not being taught their family's language. What they seem not to recognize is that, as a socially disadvantaged child, I considered Spanish to be a *private*

*language.* What I needed to learn in school was that I had the right—and the obligation—to speak the public language of *los gringos*. Without question, it would have pleased me to hear my teachers address me in Spanish when I entered the classroom. I would have felt much less afraid. I would have trusted them and responded with ease. But I would have delayed—for how long postponed?—having to learn the *language of public society*. (19)

Rodriguez can only agree with the partisans of the Chicano movement on the negative images lying at the origins of the word "Chicano." He seems to forget, however, that this is exactly why Chicano militants recuperated the term with the explicit intention of using it to construct an identity strategy aimed at transforming existing social structures. Rodriguez only considers the assimilationism implied by the term "Mexican-American" to be "animated by pride and political purpose," precisely the two qualities that the Chicano movement believes the assimilationist to lack.

Tomás Rivera has derisively qualified *Hunger of Memory* as a "classic work. 1930 Mexican vintage" (1984: 13). Richard Rodriguez, we suspect, is indeed much closer to Mexican-American assimilationist ideology than to Chicano cultural nationalism. Like the assimilationists of the thirties and forties, Rodriguez considers education to be a means of approaching the "wealthy": "I went to college at Stanford attracted partly by its academic reputation, partly because it was the school rich people went to" (130).

Whereas Ernesto Galarza staggered his studies at Stanford with summer work as a bracero, Rodriguez recalls how his mother reprimanded him for spending too much time in the sun and allowing his skin to darken: "You won't be satisfied till you end up looking like *los pobres* who work in the fields, *los braceros*" (113). Rodriguez's co-workers during the summer are not braceros, but "*middle-class Americans*. They certainly didn't constitute an oppressed society. . . . They were not *los pobres* my mother had spoken about" (134).

In his autobiographical narrative, Richard Rodriguez repeatedly qualifies himself as "middle-class. American man. Assimilated" (5). He claims to feel more at ease with white middle-class Americans than with a group of marginalized "Mexicans" who are sometimes hired to do the "dirty" work: "On two occasions, the contractor hired a group of Mexican aliens. They were employed to cut down some trees and haul off debris. . . . Anonymous men. They were never introduced to the other men at the site" (134).

Rodriguez will later reflect on those "alien" and "anonymous" Mexicans. He successfully differentiates himself from them by applying, as always, the "private/public" binary schematization: "The wages those Mexicans received for their labor were only a measure of their disadvantaged condition. Their silence is more telling. They lack

a public identity. They remain profoundly alien. Persons apart. People lacking a union obviously" (138).

Despite the few decades separating them, Galarza and Rodriguez nevertheless surmise that the braceros have no union and that their wages are miserable. But their reactions to these common conclusions are diametrically opposed: Galarza identifies with the Chicanos so deeply that he dedicates himself to improving their living conditions; Rodriguez distances himself from them, identifying with the *gringos* to the point of internalizing the dominant society's negative topics towards the "Mexican." This comes close to Theodor Lessing's notion of "self-hatred,"<sup>10</sup> a phenomenon which seems particularly evident in the following passage from *Hunger of Memory*:

One night when I was eleven or twelve years old, I locked myself in the bathroom and carefully regarded my reflection in the mirror over the sink. Without any pleasure I studied my skin. I turned on the faucet. . . . With a bar of soap, I fashioned a thick ball of lather. I began soaping my arms. I took my father's straight razor out of the medicine cabinet. Slowly, with steady deliberateness, I put the blade against my flesh, pressed it as close as I could without cutting, and moved it up and down across my skin to see if I could get out, somehow lessen, the dark. All I succeeded in doing, however, was in shaving my arms bare of their hair. For as I noted with disappointment, the dark would not come out. It remained. Trapped. Deep in the cells of my skin. (124)

It is no coincidence that *Hunger of Memory*'s subtitle is *The Education of Richard Rodriguez*. All too often, the author insists that he was able to integrate the Anglo "public world," the middle-class, by virtue of his education: "It is education that has altered my life. Carried me far" (5). It follows that Rodriguez is vexed by the irruption of Chicano student movements on campus universities:

My relationship to many of the self-proclaimed Chicano students was not an easy one. I felt threatened by them. I was made nervous by their insistence that they still were allied to their parents' culture. Walking on campus one day with my mother and father, I relished the surprised look on their faces when they saw some Hispanic students wearing sarapes pass by. I needed to laugh at the clownish display. (159)

Rodriguez is troubled because empirical reality cannot be accommodated to his diglossic schema, which places *serapes* in the private world of the house or the barrio and not in the public world of the university. A student of English literature who as a child was obliged to renounce the "private" culture of his parents, "who are no longer my parents, in a cultural sense" (4), Rodriguez can only think

of students who pretend that it is possible to reconcile the two worlds as ridiculous.

Rodriguez is not precisely the archetype of the *Plan de Santa Barbara's* intellectual, who is "close to the community," and working alongside the most marginalized Chicanos in the barrio is certainly not one of his academic priorities:

I never worked in the barrio. . . . I envied those minority students who graduated to work among lower-class Hispanics at barrio clinics or legal aid centers. I envied them their fluent Spanish. (I had taken Spanish in high school with *gringos*) But it annoyed me to hear students on campus loudly talking in Spanish or thickening their surnames with rich baroque accents because I distrusted the implied assertions that their tongue proved their bond to the past, to the poor. I spoke in English. (159-60)

In his autobiography, Rodriguez recounts a significant anecdote which took place while teaching English literature at Berkeley University towards the conclusion of his doctoral studies. A group of students asked him to give a course on "Chicano literature" (he says "minority literature") at a barrio community center on Saturday mornings:

They were certain that this new literature had an important role to play in helping to shape the consciousness of a people lacking adequate literary representation. I listened warily, found myself moved by the radiant youth. When I began to respond I felt aged by caution and skepticism: . . . I really didn't agree with them. I didn't think that there *was* such a thing as minority literature. (161)

Note that Rodriguez does not disparage the quality of Chicano literature or dismiss its consciousness raising objective as either futile or unattainable. He simply denies the existence of a body of literature in which his own work ineluctably participates, whether he likes it or not.<sup>11</sup> To convince his listeners of his point of view, he employs an argument which presents this literature as doubly incompatible with its object:

Any novel or play about the lower class will necessarily be alien to the culture it portrays. I rambled: . . . the relationship of the novel to the rise of the middle class in eighteenth-century Europe. Then, changing the subject to Alex Haley's *Roots*: That book tells us more about his difference from his illiterate, tribal ancestors than it does about his link to them. More quickly: The child who learns to read about his

nonliterate ancestors necessarily separates himself from their way of life. (161)

Benedict Anderson would agree with Rodriguez about the relation between the rise of the bourgeoisie (as usual, Rodriguez speaks of the “middle class”) and the genesis of the modern novel. Following Said, we could further state that novels, among other cultural practices, “were immensely important in the formation of imperial attitudes, references and experiences” (xii). But these circumstances, which may have been true *during a given historical time*, do not imply that the novel should *forever* be the exclusive property of the “middle class” group with which Rodriguez identifies. Like every other cultural practice, literary genres are subjected to the discursive movement of a multiple and interlinked society. In fact, if fictional narratives were “at the heart of what explorers and novelists say about strange regions of the world,” they have also become “the method colonized people use to assert their own identity and the existence of their own history” (Said xii). Nothing is easier to understand if one adopts the premise that inter-identity relationships largely determine the ongoing construction of identities. The fact that certain Chicanos appropriated this cultural practice in the early seventies is a symptom of the discursive movement Rodriguez either chooses to ignore or simply does not see.

Rodriguez’s second argument is again founded on a static vision of society in which a *status quo*, presupposed as eternal, is reproduced *ad infinitum* by all social relationships. This can be phrased as follows: “the culture of your ancestors is an oral tradition; *ergo*, you necessarily distance yourself from that culture upon attempting to approach it by means of writing.” Rodriguez fails to account for the fact that neither Alex Haley nor the Chicanos intend to “resuscitate” the societies from which they claim to descend. As discussed above, the evocation of those ancient societies belongs to a pedagogical utterance that makes possible the performative act, well-anchored in the present, of discourses that reclaim and vindicate marginalized ethnicities.

Rodriguez obviously fails to convince the Chicano students. His argumentation only could have been effective if there had been a prior agreement between the speakers, which does not seem to be the case. Rodriguez, in grand professorial style, does nothing but answer questions that his listeners never ask, and would never think to ask given the simple fact that *such questions never arise* in their schematization of the world.

I saw one of my listeners yawn. Another sort of smiled. My voice climbed to hold their attention. I wanted approval; I was afraid of their scorn. But scorn came inevitably. Someone got up while someone else thanked me for my “valuable time.” . . . After that I was regarded as comic. I became a

"coconut"—someone brown on the outside, white on the inside. I was the bleached academic—more white than the *anglo* professors. (161-62)

### The "Coconuts" Also Serve a "Cause"

In *Beyond Ethnicity*, published in 1986, Werner Sollors recuperates the "coconut" metaphor in defense of those spurned by the members of their original marginalized group for having internalized the dominant ideology and axiology:

A series of recent slurs, often hurled by some in-group speakers against people who threaten the fixity of mental boundaries based on race, scolded blacks as Oreos, Asians as bananas, Indians as apples, and Chicanos as coconuts—all with the structurally identical criticism "they're white inside!" (1986: 29)

Sollors writes favorably of Rodriguez several times in his book. In 1989, Sollors invited him to contribute to a volume called *The Invention of Ethnicity*, and Rodriguez responded by submitting a ten page essay entitled, significantly, "An American Writer." In the introduction, Sollors qualifies Rodriguez as a kind of apostle of *métissage* who is antithetical to the conception of "racial purities" and those who defend it:

His version of Chicano identity, far from claiming any racial "purity" or any immediate access to "Mexican" identity, may yet be seen as the vanguard of a future American melting-pot identity. His statement was recently echoed by Virgil Elizondo, the Catholic priest of San Antonio Cathedral (Texas), who, in a book published in France with a preface by Léopold Sédar Senghor, proclaimed, "*L'avenir est au métissage*" (The future belongs to the mixture). (1989: xvii)

One can only agree with Sollors about the undesirability of any thesis based on racial purity. It therefore seems troubling that Chicano discourse uses the syntagma "*La Raza*" more often than any other term in designating the "people" that the *Chicanistas* claim to represent, and seems to further justify Sollors's mistrust of the discourses which reclaim ethnic identity.

The syntagma "*La Raza*" has led a hard life. To my knowledge, it is first used in print by the assimilationists of the thirties and forties: Félix Gutiérrez, the editor of *Mexican Voice*, adopted the pseudonym of "Manuel de la Raza." The Chicano "cultural nationalists" of the sixties and seventies appropriated this syntagma because of its acceptability to U.S. residents of Mexican origin. Accordingly, the

founders of the only Chicano political party in history avoided the term “Chicano” (and its negative connotations) by calling it “El Partido de *La Raza Unida/La Raza Unida* Party.”<sup>12</sup> They could only hope to be elected if they employed the most neutral denomination they could find.

In contrast to what Sollors may presume, “*La Raza*” has absolutely no implications of “purity” or cultural immobility for assimilationists, cultural nationalists or the most serious Chicano researchers (see for example Rosaldo 409-10). Since the *Plan de Aztlán*, even the most radical Chicano militants have advocated the mixed character of the Chicano people: “With our hearts in our hands and our hands in the earth, we proclaim the independent spirit of our racially mixed nation [*nación mestiza*]” (in Castañeda Shular et al. 83-84). In this way, Chicano discourse joins a heterogeneous current of Americanist discourses—spanning from Bolívar to Fernández Retamar, and passing through Martí, Vasconcelos, Carpentier, José María Arguedas, and many others—which claims that Latin America’s specificity resides precisely in its *métissage*. This concept has penetrated Chicano artistic production since the movement’s inception. It explains why Chicano writers’ literary texts often play thematically with the hybrid and unstable quality of their identity and its “*entre-deux*” aesthetic, which is “between two worlds, between two languages, between two temptations. An ambiguous and paradoxical aesthetic of mediation and dissipation, of roots and exile, of anchorage and errantry, of harmony and dissonance” (Grandjeat 146). A brief perusal of literary texts, academic research and Chicano identity strategies invalidates the argument constructed around the supposed “fixity of mental boundaries based on race” by which Sollors characterizes “ethnic” discourse. The qualification of Richard Rodriguez as the “vanguard of a future American melting-pot identity” therefore seems to be either a simple reworking of the old concept of the “melting pot” so dear to Sollors, or, barring this possibility, a simple joke.<sup>13</sup>

Let us be clear. The *made in the USA melting pot* is not, as a rule, such a bad thing. It is undoubtedly preferable to the retreat of identity taking place around the world today. Now, although the consequences of this retreat are far more pernicious, in a certain sense these two movements of identity share an axiology which is based on the same rejection of difference. To use a medical metaphor, the partisans of ethnic “purity” seek to materially eliminate the individuals “infected” with alterity, while the proponents of the “melting pot” try to “cure” and transform them: “Americanize” them. Fill the pot with Blacks, Jews, Latinos and Amerindians, brew them up and *voilà*: at the end of the operation you have the average “American,” a champion of the most “universal” values that exist.<sup>14</sup> *E Pluribus Unum . . .*

Skin color is therefore less important than individual “success” in identifying oneself with the values of the dominant group. A final

citation from *Hunger of Memory* illustrates this definition of the melting pot's assimilationist ideology. In the following passage, Rodriguez expresses his relief upon realizing that he cannot be confused with the braceros, whose physical appearance is so similar to his own. His rendition of "métissage" is undeniably very "American" . . .

The registration clerk in London wonders if I have just been to Switzerland. And the man who carries my luggage in New York guesses the Caribbean. My complexion becomes a mark of my leisure. Yet no one would regard my complexion the same way if I entered such hotels through the service entrance. . . . My skin, in itself, means nothing. . . . That summer I worked in the sun may have made me physically indistinguishable from the Mexicans working nearby. (My skin was actually darker because, unlike them, I worked without wearing a shirt. By late August my hands were probably as tough as theirs.) But I was not one of *los pobres*. (137-38)

Upon analyzing *Hunger of Memory*, the critic should neither complacently accept Rodriguez's explicit argumentation nor reject it outright—two strategies of reading which in fact amount to the same thing. Nor should the critic seek out textual marks that might allow for an ironic interpretation, excepting perhaps the insistence mentioned above. This is insufficient in my opinion, however, since the social audience (the U.S. public in general or the Chicano—or Latino—public in particular) has always interpreted *Hunger of Memory* very seriously—regardless of whether it has exalted or denigrated it—despite the potentially ironic "intentions" of the author. Consequently, it is more appropriate to approach the text as a kind of "disclosure" of the conflicts peculiar to U.S. society. We must attempt to discover the possible reasons implicit to this nearly monomaniacal thematic treatment of U.S. values, reasons which must be sought in the sociocultural environment outside the text, where the enunciating subject, Richard Rodriguez, is situated. Does such thematic treatment not demonstrate that, despite himself, Rodriguez is (considered) a Chicano, even for the legitimate representatives of "mainstream culture"? In any case, this is precisely how Sollors qualifies him in the introduction to *Invention of Ethnicity*: "In his thoughtful personal account, 'An American Writer,' Richard Rodriguez provocatively emphasizes his polyethnic Spanish-Indian-African background. His version of Chicano identity . . ." (1989: xvii).

Indeed, the title of his essay should give us pause. Would a "truly American" writer, meaning a WASP, give the title of "An American Writer" to an essay being published in the *Invention of Ethnicity*? Rodriguez's repeated claim that he is "American" has been in vain,

for the “Americans” listen to him only as a “Chicano.” His intentions are of course “heard” since they can be adjusted to what the majority of his readers would like to hear but dare not declare in public: he speaks out against affirmative action, against bilingual education, against identifying with “our ancestors,” in short, against all the concrete objectives of Calibanesque discourses as well as the rhetorical expedients upon which they are founded. Now, Rodriguez is “listened to” primarily because he *is not one of* “us.” Rodriguez’s favorable reception in the Anglo environment echoes a dominant voice which says: “You see, it is one of *you* who is showing the flaws in *your* discourse.” In the context of the work’s reception, Rodriguez is as distant from Caliban as he is close to Ariel, who is always subjected to Prospero but *never (con)fused with him*.

The Rodriguez “case” perfectly illustrates the fundamental aporia of the assimilationist discourse insofar as it warns us against “an anti-assimilationist politics. It legitimizes a normative value system by transforming *difference* into *deviance* and, therefore, into a cultural flaw” (Grandjeat 49). From this point of view, *Hunger of Memory*’s narrator’s obsession with the denial of his mother tongue and culture is mostly a vain attempt to expiate this original “sin.”

Contrary to Sollors’s claim, Rodriguez is not the Prophet Announcing the Arrival of a New Order of the Melting Pot. Nor is he a “traitor” who should be anathematized. Despite himself, Rodriguez cannot be perfectly accommodated to either of the two opposed discursive practices, “ethnic” (Calibanesque) *vs.* “anti-ethnic” (assimilationist). In spite of the author’s strict personal motivation and beyond the different interpretations readers will make according to their own receptive context, *Hunger of Memory* is neither “revolutionary” nor “reactionary.” It is simply, and dialogically, significant. It “signifies” the contradictions of a divided discursive hegemony which is not yet capable, in the words of Edward Said, “to think concretely and sympathetically, contrapuntally, about others” (336).

### **Chicano, Chicana/o, Mexican, Latino, Hispanic. A Plural Constitution of New Solidarities**

Said outlines a point of view that surpasses the dichotomy between essentialist notions of identity on the one hand, and, on the other, positions which simply dismiss the identity problematic under the pretext that identities *are nothing but* constructions (which leaves us with the understanding that they simply *are not*). This perspective attempts to reconcile the contemporary epistemological horizon, insofar as it is concerned with the concept of “identity fiction,” and the unquestionable empirical fact that identities exist despite—and by virtue of—their constant (inter-)construction:

No one today is purely *one* thing. Labels like Indian, or woman, or Muslim, or American are not more than starting-points, which if followed into actual experience for only a moment are quickly left behind. Imperialism consolidated the mixture of cultures and identities on a global scale. But its worst and most paradoxical gift was to allow people to believe that they were only, mainly, exclusively, white, or Black, or western, or Oriental. Yet just as human beings make their own history, they also make their cultures and ethnic identities. No one can deny the persisting continuities of long traditions, sustained habitations, national languages, and cultural geographies, but there seems no reason except fear and prejudice to keep insisting on their separation and distinctiveness, as if that was all human life was about. Survival in fact is about the connections between things; in Elliot's phrase, reality cannot be deprived of the "other echoes [that] inhabit the garden." It is more rewarding—and more difficult—to think concretely and sympathetically, contrapuntally, about others than only about "us." But this also means not trying to rule others, not trying to classify them or put them in hierarchies, above all, not constantly reiterating how "our" culture or country is number one (or *not* number one, for that matter). For the intellectual there is quite enough of value to do without *that*. (336)

It is as unacceptable to reject discourses of difference by claiming that they are "constructions" (as if the "construction" of ideologies, religions, myths, sciences, history or any other schematization of the world does not shape "reality"!) as it is to use those discourses in order to deligitimize a given speaker (insider or outsider) who does not adjust to a group's inner doxa. This double remark is not simply an ethical declaration of principles, but proves to be especially efficacious for an analysis of certain texts which explicitly question "the politics of identity as given," while showing, at least implicitly, "how all representations are constructed, for what purpose, by whom, and with what" (Said 314).

In the captivating work *Chicano Narrative: The Dialectics of Difference*, author Ramón Saldívar discusses a U.S. current of criticism which started thirty years ago "to free us from the reification of American Literature as a singular, homogeneous entity" (204). His list of examples includes Toni Morrison, who in an article published in 1989 reclaims the African-American, Chicano, Asian-American, and such, presence in so-called "American" literature—meaning literature from the United States. She thus questions the universality and pretended transcendence of aesthetic and, consequently, ideological values in traditional literary historiography. Saldívar opposes this form of criticism to what he calls a "revisionary" current represented by Sacvan Bercovitch (1986) and Werner Sollors, among

others. Saldívar writes the following lines in response to Sollors's claim that we must go beyond ethnicity and "look at American culture anew" in order "to approach and question the whole maze of American ethnicity and culture" (Sollors 1986: 6):

This sounds wonderful, perhaps even after we notice that both Bercovitch's and Sollors' key words, "consensus" and "consent," "dissensus" and "dissent," "integrative" and "integration," "legitimacy" and "privilege" themselves ring with the unmistakable clarity of their origins in the liberal-democratic bourgeois political theories that form the foundations of the hegemonic American ideological consensus. The crucial factor here is that, often, these terms refer to consensus and dissent among the ruling groups alone and to their legitimacy as members of the ruling elite state apparatus. That is, consensus and dissensus do not apply to those *outside* the ruling group or their educational, cultural, and political state apparatuses: working-class people, people of color, gays and lesbians, women. In short, even this new integrative model can in practice turn out to be a counterhegemonic move to renew, defend, and modify, but not to *undo*, the earlier forms of dominance. (216)

Saldívar concludes that the voices which have been traditionally excluded from "American" literary historiography remain difficult to "integrate" into this new "revised" version of what he calls "the hegemonic American ideological consensus." The Chicano researcher therefore proposes the construction of a dialogical system of interpretation

that might help us better understand both the canonical master works that were sanctioned by the American ideological consensus and the antagonistic resistance literatures, like Chicano narrative, that were not sanctioned. By placing the masterworks in different frameworks that include the voices to which the master texts were covertly opposed, voices that were and continue to be silenced by the hegemonic culture, we might indeed formulate a new literary history of a truly integrated American literature. (218)

Saldívar's argument is convincing because it bases itself on the reality of a traditionally systematic practice of marginalization that perpetuates itself with more or less subtlety in today's era of so-called multiculturalism. Now, such a system can only be efficiently applied to literary *historiography*, to a representation of *the past*. Pretending that this model is equally valid for the *future* unwittingly reestablishes an indelible division of the discursive field where, in this case, the Chicano narrative is "condemned" to always be an "antagonistic

literature of resistance"; in the same stroke, the texts by "American" authors, as well as the canonical "western" authors more generally, retain the privilege of constituting *the canon* of literature—and retain it *forever*, to the great satisfaction of Harold Bloom & Co.

The only weak point of Saldívar's thesis is that it implies, at least apparently, a sort of elementary "Calibanism" in which the "world," in this case the world of history and, more specifically, "American" literary historiography, is divided into two uniform and perfectly coherent sections. One is comprised of hegemonic, canonical literature, and is sustained by an institutional apparatus which conveys "the hegemonic American ideological consensus"; the other consists of the multiple "voices" which are opposed to this consensus. Now, over the last thirty years U.S. society has been much transformed by many factors, including the actions of the Calibanesque movements. Contemporary society is "now more than ever lacking a minimal consensus" (Angenot 1995: 39), and instead manifests an uncertain consensus which paradoxically consists in managing all existing dissensus in terms of "multiculturalism." The fact that the traditional hegemonic groups have adapted to this new reality (they were of course in the best position to make the adjustment) or that these same groups have finally managed the contemporary dissensus only negates the reality of this situation at a superficial level.

The wave of discord that rose in the sixties has surely contributed to the deconstruction of some of Modernity's meta-narratives. This is especially true of the melting pot, intimately tied to the traditional and individual "pursuit of happiness" which has been made the right of every U.S. citizen by the solemn Declaration of Independence. But the discord has also dissolved the opposite meta-narrative, which declares the equality of rights, liberties, and opportunity for all the members of every collective group, and which gives legitimacy, cohesion, and a transcultural (trans-ethnic, trans-sexual, trans-ideological) national identity to the Calibanesque wave itself, however unstable and circumstantial it may seem. The self-dissolution of this meta-narrative has sometimes led to the fragmentation of a collective into small groups which become increasingly disconnected from an outside that is progressively growing. Gloria Anzaldúa, a Chicano writer and professor of "Women's Studies" at San Francisco state University, evinces an acute consciousness of this fragmentation's negative consequences when she writes that "For the politically correct stance we let color, class, and gender separate us . . . So the walls grow higher, the gulfs between us wider, the silences more profound" (in Anzaldúa and Moraga 206).

It seems that we are far from the spirit of intra- and inter-ethnic solidarity expressed in the Chicano movement's foundational documents, particularly the *Plan de Santa Barbara*. In fact, the ideal of the *entire Mexican American community's* mobilization seems foreign to contemporary concerns, even if in 1990 "Chicano separationism . . . [found] a renewed popularity amongst students"

(Benjamin-Labarthe 29). The new students, skeptical about the possibility of improving living conditions in the barrios and far from dreaming about transforming society, "are no longer ashamed of their parents' immigrant status, but are proud—as they were in the sixties and seventies, but for different, non-ideological reasons—to belong to a different group that can associate itself with the dissensus which now seems to be the constitutive element of American consensus" (*Ibid.*).

Is this a more realistic, "pragmatic" perception of society in the United States? Perhaps. In any case, it leads to the question of whether the Chicano intelligentsia realized its targeted objectives; briefly, whether the establishment of the community (to use Tomás Rivera's expression) was in fact successful:

In the last ten years [1970-1980] Chicano literature has established community, myth and language. Or at a minimum, it has reflected the urge and desire to establish such elements of the Chicano ethnic group. . . . The anxiety to have a community, the urge to feel, sense, and be part of a whole was the most constant preoccupation and need for Chicano students and faculty alike in academia in the past ten years. Surely this was also the case for the Chicano community outside the walls of academia (or it was not? I do think we have to ask the question) which was trying to form something out of a very diffused nation or a very diffused tribe. (Rivera 1992: 398)

Tomás Rivera's reasoning cogently reflects a heterogeneous reality which is in motion and has not ceased to develop since the beginning of the Chicano movement. The question in parenthesis ("or it was not?") suggests something that Rivera is perhaps unable to confess openly: that *Chicanismo*, as either a political or identity project "was never able to establish solid popular support" (Benjamin-Labarthe 45). The intellectual work of *Chicanismo*'s ideologues, whether literary or academic,

does not reflect the views of the class it is supposed to represent because it pretends to be a mirror held up to the Chicano people, an entity which it constructs rather than reflects. Who knows whether the street Chicano dreams of Aztec Indians or of a blue-eyed America? The social message . . . thus becomes ambiguous, for it surely does not reach the group to which it is directed. (*Ibid.* 34)

If *Hunger of Memory* has any merit, it lies in showing the discrepancy between the fundamentally unitary community that the Chicano intellectuals wanted to forge at the movement's outset and the multiple and contradictory collective that is empirically evident

today, a discrepancy that does not reveal how many Chicanos have opted for pure and simple assimilation as Richard Rodriguez seems to have done. As Rudolfo Anaya and Antonio Márquez have shown in the introduction to their anthology of new Chicano literature, contemporary Chicano writers work "both within and outside the context of . . . El Movimiento" (vii). These two critics recall the watchword issued in the first anthology of Chicano literature, published in 1969: "to know themselves and who they are, there are those who need no reflection other than their own" (*Ibid.*). Far from submitting to the reductive poetics of engaging with the Chicano cultural separatist project or following the solipsistic avenue opened by some Calibanesque movements, a good part of Chicano arts and literature echoes the constitutive plurality of the whole of "American" society and, more specifically, of the collective of U.S. citizens of Mexican, Latino, or Hispanic origin.

Yes, the community has in fact established itself, or rather continues and will continue to establish itself, like every other group, nation or society. Of course, this community is not the homogeneous one imagined by the most orthodox *Chicanismo*, in part because the "mainstream" which serves as a point of reference has been undergone profound transformations.<sup>15</sup> The number of U.S. inhabitants originating from regions of Latin America other than Mexico has grown considerably and become increasingly diverse, causing new solidarities to be forged and provoking new forms of dissensus between Chicanos and Nuyoricans (New Yorkers of Puerto Rican origin), Cubans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Nicaraguans, and so on. And if the term "Chicano"—which has never been unanimous, even when *Chicanismo* was most effervescent—has not been abandoned altogether, it has become increasingly subordinated to other, more global and heterogeneous identity denominations such as "*Latino*" or "*Hispanic*," terms that have provoked similar controversies.<sup>16</sup>

But that is another *story*. A *history* that will be written *in the plural* or not at all.

## Notes

\* The author recognizes the generous support of the University of Calgary Research Grant Programme, the Faculty of the Humanities of the University of Calgary, and the Research Excellence Programme (Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development).

1. Western colonialist discourse often defines its alterities (whether "African," American "Indian" or Australian "aborigine") "in relation to an absence: an absence of (Christian) gospel or a lack of (western) civilization" (Gómez-Moriana, 31).

2. Minorities "have been induced to adopt a depreciatory image of themselves. They have internalized a picture of their own inferiority, so that even when some of the objective obstacles to their advancement fall away, they may be incapable of taking advantage of the new opportunities . . . Their first task ought to be to purge

themselves of this imposed and destructive identity" (Taylor 25-26). Concerning colonized people, "it is held that since 1492 Europeans have projected an image of such people as somehow inferior, 'uncivilized,' and through the force of conquest have often been able to impose this image on the conquered. The figure of Caliban has been held to epitomize this crushing portrait of contempt of New World aborigines" (26).

3. According to Homi Bhabha, the "nation as narration" is articulated "in the tension signifying the people as an *a priori* historical presence, a pedagogical object; and the people constructed in the performance of narrative, its enunciatory 'present' . . . The pedagogical founds its narrative authority in a tradition of the people . . . The performative intervenes in the sovereignty of the nation's *self-generation*" (298-99).

4. "Dialogue, in the narrow sense of the word, is, of course, only one of the forms—a very important form, to be sure—of verbal interaction. But dialogue can also be understood in a broader sense, meaning not only direct, face-to-face, vocalized verbal communication between persons, but also verbal communication of any type whatsoever. A book, i.e., a *verbal performance in print*, is also an elemental of verbal communication . . . A verbal performance of this kind also inevitably orients itself with respect to previous performances in the same sphere, both those by the same author and those by other authors. It inevitably takes its point of departure from some particular state of affairs involving a scientific problem or a literary style. Thus the printed verbal performance engages, as it were, in ideological colloquy of large scale: it responds to something, objects to something, affirms something, anticipates possible responses and objections, seeks support, and so on." (Bakhtin [Voloshinov] 95).

5. Some critics, such as Bhabha and Said, emphasize the relation between the act of narrating and identity construction. Said writes: "The main battle in imperialism is over land, of course; but when it came to who owned the land, who had the right to settle and work on it, who kept it going, who won it back, and who now plans its future—these issues were reflected, contested, and even for a time decided in narrative. As one critic [Bhabha] has suggested, nations themselves *are narrations*" (Said xii-xiii).

6. "The capacity of certain ancestors to function as cultural capital in a contemporary struggle is what renders the claiming of these ancestors a potentially empowering step" (Hollinger 127).

7. "I have come to *embrace* the city's values: social mobility; pluralism; egalitarianism; self-reliance" (107).

8. Although "the diglossic situation, founded in disequilibrium, contains elements of instability which threaten to break the supposed functionality of the system, the diglossic mentality implies a fundamental focus that insists on the balanced and stable nature of the situation which constitutes an order where any of the antagonical elements will contribute to its integrated function" (Ninyoles 37).

9. "One Saturday morning three nuns arrived at the house to talk to our parents . . . 'Do your children speak only Spanish at home, Mrs. Rodriguez?' While another voice added, 'That Richard especially seems so timid and shy' . . . With great tact the visitors continued, 'Is it possible for you and your husband to encourage your children to practice their English when they are home.' Of course, my parents complied . . . The moment after the visitors left, the change was observed. '*Ahora, speak to us en inglés,*' my father and mother united to tell us . . . At last, seven years old, I came to believe what had been technically true since my birth: I was an American citizen" (20-22).

10. "Theodor Lessing, who would become famous for his analysis of the German Jew's 'self-hatred,' writes a revealing passage in his autobiography where he

describes being treated like a Jew by his classmates. This troubles the author, who was raised without any consciousness of being Jewish, and he therefore asks his mother what a "Jew" is upon returning home. On the street, his mother points out a man wearing a caftan and a hat, a bearded man with *pajes* at the temples, an Eastern Jew in other words, and tells him: 'Here is a Jew!' For her, as for the majority of assimilated German Jews, the Jews were the others who were outside the *Bildung* and the *Kultur*" (cited in Robin 31).

11. "If Richard Rodriguez has hunger of memory, Chicano literature hungers for community. Those who labored, in the 1960s and 1970s into the 1980s to establish a literature in the United States and that it was to be in languages understandable primarily to the Mexican-American community . . . This literature does not interest Richard Rodriguez even as a curiosity—even though, paradoxically, he is now inextricably part of that contribution" (Rivera 1984: 11).

12. "The use of *La Raza*, as opposed to *Chicano*, in the party's name had the purpose of providing a broad designation that would be accepted by all people of Mexican origin in the United States, and conceivably by other Latin American people who at some time in the future might come under the banner of the party. It was a commonly used term, a self-description rather than an imposition, and did not have the negative connotations among the Mexican American community associated with the term *Chicano*" (Muñoz Jr. 117).

13. Sollors is not alone in legitimizing Rodriguez's work. In fact, Rodriguez started writing articles against bilingual education and affirmative action at the beginning of the seventies (when the Chicano movement was at its apogee) for widely circulating publications such as the Wall Street Journal.

14. Appearing at the beginning of the twentieth century, the melting pot soon "became associated with an antithetical, conformist impulse to melt down the peculiarities of immigrants in order to pour the resulting liquid into pre-existing molds created in the self-image of the Anglo-Protestants who claimed prior possession of America" (Hollinger 91-92).

15. "The Chicano is entering the mainstream, the middle class. There is no doubt about that" (Jussawalla et Dasenbrock, pg. 234, credit this point to Anaya). But in contrast to the somewhat "old-fashioned" case of Richard Rodriguez, the Chicano is entering the middle class by combining his language and his culture with those of the Anglos, rather than renouncing them entirely (and English is also part of this culture): "If there are more than 250 Spanish-language radio and television stations in the United States, more than 1500 publications in Spanish, and a high interest in Latin American literature and music, it is not only because there is a market of 20 million "Hispanics," or 8 percent of the U.S. population (38 percent in New Mexico, 25 percent in Texas, and 23 percent in California). It is also due to the fact that so-called Latin culture produces films like *Zoot Suit* and *La bamba*, the songs of Rubén Blades and Los Lobos, aesthetically and culturally advanced theatres like that of Luis Valdez, and visual artists whose quality and aptitude for making popular culture interact with modern and postmodern symbolism incorporates them into the North American mainstream" (García Canclini 231).

16. The term "Hispanic," used by the federal administration for demographic purposes and affirmative action, is far from being unanimous. Gloria Romero, professor of psychology at the University of California at Northridge, criticizes the term as follows: "I think this is a critical issue with respect to self-esteem and identity. If you look at the bulk of psychological studies that examine the importance of ethnic identity in young children—those children, teenagers, don't know who they are. The message being given to individuals, very subtly, is that to be Indian, to be Mexican, is less than European. I find it very offensive. I will not identify myself as 'Hispanic'" (in Benjamin-Labarthe 31).

## Works Cited

- Acuña, Rodolfo. *Occupied America*. New York: Harper & Row, 1981.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London and New York: Verso, 1991.
- Angenot, Marc. "Les idéologies du ressentiment," *Discours social / Social Discourse* 3-4.4, 1992.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Nouvelles censures et nouveaux débats," *Discours social / Social Discourse* 7-12, 1995.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria, and Cherríe Moraga. *This Bridge Called my Back. Writings by Radical Women of Color*. New York: Kitchen Table, Women of Color Press, 1983.
- Bakhtin, M.M. and V. N. Voloshinov. *Marxism and Philosophy of Language*. New York and London: Harvard UP, 1973.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Le marxisme et la philosophie du langage. Essai d'application de la méthode sociologique en linguistique*. Paris: Minuit, 1977.
- Benjamin-Labarthe, Elyette. Présentation. In *Vous avez dit Chicano. Anthologie thématique de poésie Chicano*, ed. E. Benjamin-Labarthe. Paris: Maison des Sciences de l'Homme d'Aquitaine, 1993.
- Bercovitch, Sacvan, ed. *Reconstructing American Literary History*. Cambridge: Harvard UP. 1986.
- Bhabha, Homi. "DissemiNation: time, narrative, and margins of the modern nation," in *Nation and Narration*, ed. H. Bhabha. London and New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Castañeda Shular, Antonia, et al. *Literatura Chicana. Texto y Contexto*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1972.
- Cros, Edmond. "Le semblable et l'altérité: structuration de l'instance discursive du Nouveau Monde," in *L'«Indien», instance discursive*, ed. A. Gómez-Moriana and D. Trottier. Actes du Colloque de Montréal (Université de Montréal, 1991). Candiac: Balzac, 1993.
- Culioli, A. and J.-P. Descles. *Systèmes de représentations linguistiques et métalinguistiques*. Paris: Université de Paris VII, 1981.
- Fernández Retamar, Roberto. *Calibán. Apuntes sobre la cultura en nuestra América*. Mexico: Diógenes, 1974.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Caliban and other essays*. Translated by Edward Baker. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1989.
- Galarza, Ernesto. *Merchants of Labor*. Santa Barbara: McNally & Loftin, 1964.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Barrio Boy*. Notre Dame / London: U of Notre Dame P, 1971.
- García Canclini, Néstor. *Hybrid Cultures. Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*. Minneapolis and London: U of Minnesota P, 1995.
- Gómez-Moriana, Antonio. Christophe Colomb et l'invention de l'«Indien». In *L'«Indien», instance discursive*, ed. A. Gómez-Moriana and D. Trottier. Actes du Colloque de Montréal (Université de Montréal, 1991). Candiac: Balzac, 1993.
- Grandjeat, Yves-Charles. *Aztlán: terre volée, terre promise. Les pérégrinations du peuple Chicano*. Paris: Presses de l'École Normale Supérieure, 1989.
- Hollinger, David A. *Postethnic America. Beyond Multiculturalism*. New York: Basic Books, 1995.
- Jussawalla, Feroza, and Reed Way Dasenbrock. *Interviews with Writers of the Post-colonial World*. Jackson/London: UP of Mississippi, 1992.
- Ladmiral, Jean-René, and Edmond Lipiansky. *La communication interculturelle*. Paris: Armand Colin, 1989.
- Maingueneau, Dominique. *Genèses du discours*. Bruxelles: Pierre Mardaga, 1984.

- Mirandé, Alfredo. *The Chicano Experience. An Alternative Perspective*. Notre Dame, Indiana: U of Notre Dame P, 1985.
- Muñoz, Jr., Carlos. *Youth, Identity, Power. The Chicano Movement*. London and New York: Verso, 1989.
- Ninyoles, Rafael Luís. *Idioma y poder social*. Madrid: Tecnos, 1972.
- Rivera, Tomás. "Richard Rodriguez' *Hunger of Memory* as Humanistic Antithesis," *Melus* 11.4, 1984.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Complete Works*, J. Olivares, ed. Houston: Arte Publico (U of Houston P), 1992.
- Robin, Régine. *Kafka*. Paris: Belfond, 1989.
- Rodriguez, Richard. *Hunger of Memory. The Education of Richard Rodriguez*. Boston: David R. Godine, 1982.
- Rosaldo, Renato. "Chicano Studies, 1970-1984," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 14, 1985.
- Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993.
- Saldívar, Ramón. *Chicano Narrative. The Dialectics of Difference*. Wisconsin and London: U of Wisconsin P, 1990.
- Sollors, Werner. *Beyond Ethnicity. Consent and Descent in American Culture*. New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Introduction. In *The Invention of Ethnicity*, ed. W. Sollors. New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989.
- Sosoé, Lukas. Conscience nationale en Allemagne. In *Discours et mythes de l'ethnicité*, ed. N. Khouri. Montréal: Acfas, 1992.
- Steiner, Stan. *La Raza. The Mexican Americans*. New York: Harper, 1970.
- Taylor, Charles. *Multiculturalism and "The Politics of Recognition."* Princeton: Princeton UP, 1992.
- Todorov, Tzvetan. *Mikhail Bakhtin. The Dialogical Principle*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1984.
- Valdez, Luis, and Steiner, Stan. *Aztlan. An Anthology of Mexican American Literature*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972.
- Vasconcelos, José. *The Cosmic Race / La raza cósmica*. A Bilingual Edition. Translated and annotated by Didier T. Jaén. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1997.



## Chapter 13

### Between Iconography and Demonology: The Faces at the *Fiesta* of the *Señor del Gran Poder*

Marcelo Nusenovich

Translated by Elena Feder

In the early years of our century, the young South American nations claiming Spain as their mother country were involved in the complex task of inventing a tradition for themselves, one that included an iconicity and an iconography coupled with a story adequate to their “true national identity.” Among Andean nations, modernity was incorporated into the history of *cholo* culture producing cultural goods such as the religious popular *Fiesta*. The *Fiesta del Señor del Gran Poder* (Lord of Great Power) originated at a time of urban development, and it is celebrated once a year in La Paz, Bolivia. Ch’ijni, a peripheral neighborhood of La Paz, bordering the Altiplano, owes so much of its growth and prosperity to the Lord of Great Power that it has even changed its name to *Zona del Gran Poder*. Following its beginnings as a neighborhood phenomenon, the *Fiesta* has become one of the most important celebrations in the region, competing today at a national level with the Oruro Carnival and the *Fiesta* of the Virgin of Urqupiña in Quillacollo for first place in international fame, tourism potential, beer consumption, and aesthetic display.

In writing about the *Fiesta* as a ritual, I have turned to Victor Turner and Michael Taussig, each for opposite reasons: the first, for his understanding of ritual order; the second, for his presentation of ritual disorder and the fragmentary character of rituals. Thinking about culture in ritual terms led me to question some of the postulates of anthropology and the social sciences associated with the so-called Classical Norms of Social Analysis (Rosaldo 1989), not least the separation between substance and experience. When one views the

*Fiesta* and other similar manifestations of the ephemeral arts from a perspective that holds cultural content to be separate from social practice, the tendency is to consider them a mirror where society finds itself reflected and inverted. From a substantialist perspective, culture consists of thoughts, states of mind, beliefs, and values, that is to say, of all that remains after withdrawing what people really do in their social practices (Wuthnow et al. 1988).

Between 1992 and 1995, both Gustavo Blázquez, an anthropologist, and myself, an art historian, developed together alternatives to the substantialist position, looking to find points of contact between our respective fields with the help of semiotics and discourse analysis. Our point of departure was our curiosity. Bolivia seemed (and continues to seem) to us, an exotic place.

The next step was a project of virtual draftsmanship, inspired by Marcel Mauss's concept of the total social phenomenon. We soon realized that, because it is always in movement, this project of virtual draftsmanship could only be accomplished in the third dimension. As a total social phenomenon, art would then be the local result of internal relations between all the points (social elements), since each point is determined by all the others (Blazquez and Nusenovich 1992). We have approached the *Fiesta of the Lord of Great Power* from this perspective, all the while trying, as Artaud suggests in the First Manifesto of the Theater of Cruelty, not to put into play metaphysical ideas, but rather to create something akin to temptations, to invite, that is, aerial equations around these ideas (Artaud 1979).

The question I find important to define when I undertake an aesthetic journey is its artistic value. I do not conceive of art and non-art as two mutually-devaluating aesthetic categories, but rather as differential categories which rank locally the beauty of certain objects, actions, sounds, odors, and flavors. Art is that of which we can never speak sufficiently, which is perhaps why it is one of the things we speak about the most, at least in the West (Geertz 1983). While this thought might seem quite devastating to those of us who indulge in artistic practices that involve speaking and reading about art, it is nonetheless to a great extent true. Geertz, who obviously belongs to this type of individual, writes in a literary manner—that is to say, in a beautiful style, brimming with intentional aesthetic marks—about the fact that, in order to understand art, it is necessary not only to place it in the context of other expressions of human life, but also within models of experience which people hold collectively. An art object is always culturally situated, and therefore it is always a local issue. To study art means to explore a sensibility, a collective sensibility, as Geertz would say—although I prefer to see it as simultaneously collective and individual, thus bringing myself closer to Piercean semiotics. The foundations of these sensibilities, then, are as wide, general, and complex as those of social existence as a whole, and their interpretation is as simple, closed, and verifiable a project as the description of a day in the life of an individual, such as, for example,

the journey of Joyce's Ulysses. As Deleuze and Guattari maintain, there is always a collective, even when we are alone (1980).

The least baggage the subject carries is his or her body (and with it some kind of clothing). That the body is a social construction is no novelty for Anthropology, a field where this idea has been present from the start, even if it has not always been willing to include it in its agenda. It is, however, a novelty for Sociology, where interest in the body is a more recent development. This "corporization" of culture coincides with a process where the mythic paradigm is being abandoned for a ritual one, and where the frame of reference for both transpositions is the questioning of structuralism and a growing interest in Piercean semiotics. *Actions* and *body positions*, as DeCoppett states (1994), are more characteristic of ritual than words. This is true for every linguistic transaction, beginning with the most trivial conversation, since language as well as ritual are of a bellicose nature. Each time a locutor takes the floor, he or she creates an interlocutor whose juridical situation is thus modified, regardless of whether or not he or she is capable of responding (Austin 1962). To think of the *Fiesta* as a ritual is also to see it as a game—though we need to distinguish between games whose rules are elaborated in the process of playing, and those where the elaboration of events departs from a structure. Wagers formulated in the former, create ever-new situations for ever-new players, since situations, rules and players are produced in the context of the dynamism inherent in social relations, which construct them all.

From the point of view of wagers, practice, and experience, the *Fiesta* is a spectacle without a stage, an author, or spectators, in the sense that there are no outside observers. Of all the Bakhtinian positions, this is the one with the greatest impact on anthropology. Bakhtin speaks of a carnivalized body, related in the long duration to archaic rituals of renewal, the place where the festive expression of themes relative to permutations, birth, death, contradiction, and inversions originate. Like an eternal reflowering, popular culture is reborn and strengthened during the carnivalization process, where another type of corporeal representation, that of the grotesque body, is re-instated. At this social and stylistic moment, all that is tall and closed about the body, that which lends it direction, is denigrated by all that is short and open, disorganized and out of control—perhaps not unlike the body without organs conceived by Deleuze and Guattari. The abrogation of the spectator is connected to the scene of cruelty that Artaud wanted to inaugurate, where words are less important than gestures and where the figure of whistleblower (who dictates the words) is suppressed because there remains no one capable of pointing out the correct word.

Bakhtin opposes the popular or festive body to the bourgeois body. During the *Fiesta* that we are analyzing here, the conflict between the popular and the classic (which is another way of saying the bourgeois or official body) is superposed onto the racial conflict.

And while some want to “close down,” that is, to westernize, others want to “open up,” that is to say, to drink from the roots of an “authentically” Bolivian nationality, equated here with the Indian.<sup>1</sup> Designations of skin color have strong repercussions on the manner of dress, ruled by the local canon of fashion, with the two oscillating between the traditional and the avantgarde. While Spaniards and Indians as well as *criollos* and peasants continue to function like actants or representative roles, they do not conform to the most numerous Bolivian categories (Spedding 1994). Nevertheless, the drama of the Conquest that is replayed during the *Fiesta* continues to confront Whites and Indians, for example, in the case of the Incas, where the struggle between Pizarro and Atahualpa (which ended with the latter’s sacrifice) is represented in Hollywoodesque manner.

A contemporary definition of *Cholo* denotes those Indians who have come to the city, and who, from the point of view of *decent people* (a moral character emitted in accordance with purity of blood), have left behind their assigned place in the countryside in order to invade their space, which is urban—a difficult and unstable position which, as Abercrombie has observed (1992), is seen by both peasants and *criollos* as closer to the other side. Mestizo *Cholo* culture, vast and complex as it is, has a deep cultural past, is mobile and constantly in transit, and traverses ranking tests which impose differentiated forms of consumption and aesthetic attributes on all social classes, ranging from the peasant to the upper class.

A style, like a body, is always the expression of a sensibility that is simultaneously individual and collective. To see the style of the *Fiesta* as a product or substance that cannot be modified is to folklorize tradition, to impose closure on its interpretation. In this essay, I will try to set up a relationship between a number of terms, many of them coming from disparate contexts. The sole fact of their proximity lends the *Fiesta* its order (or disorder, if we prefer). Mainly, I will closely analyze the set of aesthetic practices that can be observed during the *Fiesta del Señor del Gran Poder*: the Lord’s body, in its multiple and cloned representations; the Devil’s mask, main actant of the dance known as the *Diablada*; the image of Lucio Chuquimia, principal *preste* and “creator” of the “Entrada del Gran Poder”; and the bodies of the China Supay and of the *Señoras Paceñas* (Ladies from La Paz). These, then, are the main symbols which will be placed in relation to one another, the point of departure being a demoniacal reading actualized in the tension created by the open and closed nature of bodies and symbols. Through this particular reading of these manifestations, my intention is to demonstrate that the labor of interpretation of aesthetic-ritual symbols would be better served by leaning more towards a demonology, abandoning, albeit partially, the iconological model.

## The Fiesta of the Lord of Great Power

Scheduled to coincide with the Catholic festivity of the Holy Trinity, the *Fiesta of the Lord of Great Power* originated during the twenties in Ch'ijini, a *barrio* located in the periphery of La Paz. The religious nucleus of this *Fiesta* is an oil canvas by an anonymous eighteenth-century painter, probably from the popular Collao School, which represents the mystery of the Holy Trinity as a single body with three identical heads (Figure 1).



Figure 1

"Señor del Gran Poder" with three faces. Anonymous. (Public circulation)

The consecratory gesture whereby this image was given the name of *Señor del Gran Poder* can be traced back to Seville, where a confraternity of the same name has existed since the Middle Ages. There, the image continues to play a very important role during the well-known Holy Week, figuring prominently in the Holy Friday procession. The author of the consecrated image is Juan de Mesa (1583-1627), one of the most important sculptors in Seville, who sculpted the image using an exceedingly realist style in 1620. Another image of the Lord of Great Power which can be seen in Sucre (Bolivia), at the Church of Santo Domingo, is a crucified Christ, whose consecration most likely refers to Juan de Mesa's original likeness. It is said that the image appeared "miraculously" in the Inquisition Palace (known as the "Casona del Gran Poder").

The first known reference to the La Paz canvas dates back to the early nineteenth century, when it entered a convent as part of the dowry of a novice, Genoveva Carrión. It was moved from there later by her heirs.<sup>2</sup> By 1904, many already believed that the had great curative powers. When, following the illness of Mica, one of the Carrión sisters, it was moved to the infirmary (where it was surrounded

with flower and candle offerings even at her deathbed), the image was declared “counter rite” by the religious authorities, hence barring it from official worship. In addition to violating iconographic clauses condemning this way of representing the mystery of the Trinity, it is very likely that local readings also had some effect on the Church’s decisions, notably those stemming from the perception that the Aymara who were involved in the process of urbanization drew from a figure with such characteristics. It is said, for instance, that some prayed to the face at the center for themselves, to the one on the right for their friends, and to the one on the left for damages and revenge.

During the first decade of this century, the Convent of the *Purísima Concepción*, which housed both the Carrión dynasty and their dowry, moved to a different building. According to official history, when the religious community’s finances were adversely affected, the Carrión sisters (this time, Irene and María Concepción) had no choice but to leave the convent without the painting, albeit returning soon thereafter to reclaim it as their rightful inheritance. Steadfast in their faith, the Carrión sisters of the day continued to defend with great zeal and unshakeable faith the sacred character of their Lord. With him they did the rounds of the city of La Paz, providing a succession of homes for the canvas. At every stop, and thanks to the miracles, healings, and punishments attributed to the image, new believers were added to its worship, creating a nomadic cult and a subaltern discourse around the numinous character of the Lord.

Between 1910 and 1920, negotiations aimed to finding a permanent chapel for the canvas were held with members of the lower echelons of the Church; they were to no avail, given the official prohibition that continued to weigh over the image. A private home was later found for it in Ch’ijini, at a point in time that coincided with the neighborhood’s early urbanization, where it continued its underground trajectory. In 1923, the first *Fiesta* was held in its honour, following which the recently formed *Ch’ijini Owners Association* decided to invest in the construction of a chapel. Inaugurated in 1932, it is known today as the *Iglesia del Gran Poder Antiguo* (Church of the Ancient Great Power) or the *Templo de Arriba* (Upper Temple).<sup>3</sup>

In the final stages of the chapel’s construction, the Bishop of La Paz, Monsignor Sieffert, ordered the suppression of the two lateral faces belonging to the trinitary image, and had them replaced by the sun that today surrounds the face at the center (Figure 2). It is said that the task fell on two Peruvians because no local artists were willing to tamper with the image. According to the myth, “witnesses attest that when one the Peruvians—both of them given to debauchery and drunk when lending the final touches to the canvas—slid the brush over the eyes, the head of the portentous figure moved and the eyes turned with reproach” (Vilela 1948: 372). In Bakhtinian terms, then, this gesture was read a sign of resistance, emitted by the open head, to

the official actions bent on closing it, not only iconically, but also in the ritual practices with which it was associated.



Figure 2  
Señor del Gran Poder. Anonymous. (Public circulation)

As the decade neared its end, a Dutch community of Augustinian Fathers settled in the same neighborhood. Since their function was to organize systematically the worship of the Lord of Great Power, which had already grown to alarming proportions in the eyes of the controlling powers of the Church, they decided to build a new chapel. This move lent itself to heated battles between neighbors, which reached their climax when the decision was made to move the image from the old to a new temple on Max Paredes street, located only three blocks from the former, albeit quite a bit lower due to the steep La Paz streets. The *upper* neighbors then decided to steal the image to prevent the move, for which they were excommunicated. The conflict was finally resolved in the mid-forties, when two parishes were established. On the one side, we have the Upper or *Templo del Gran Poder Antiguo* (Temple of the Old Great Power), where the oil canvas continues to be housed and where a more traditional modality of worship was eventually developed. On the other, there is the Lower or *Iglesia del Gran Poder Nuevo* (Church of the New Great Power), also known as *Parroquia de la Santísima Trinidad* (Parish of the Holy Trinity), which owns a mass-produced version of the image, and which developed a more modernizing catechistic practice. Both Churches maintain antagonistic relations, competing today in the number of sacraments that are given, without however coming close to the virulence of the forties.

We can read this form of rivalry as a *tinku*. The multiple meanings of this Andean concept include: a limit or border, ritual combat, equilibrium, and the point of confluence of two rivers (Bouysee-Cassagne 1987). Since 1923, when the *Fiesta* began to grow in popularity, these *Tinkus* were (re)edited, (re)presented, and (re)drawn scenographically, with games and verbenas consistently being added to the procession of the adorned image. In 1927, the Fraternity of the *Embroiderers Diablada* (Devil Dance) was founded. This Fraternity continues to participate in the *Fiesta* to this day although, at that time, it performed only around the block where the Upper Church now stands. At the end of the sixties, the first *Entrada* was organized. Scheduled to take place the day before Holy Trinity, it consisted of a parade featuring the folkloric fraternities which established Ch'ijini as the zone of the Great Power. During the seventies, a qualitative leap occurred when the *Fiesta* abandoned the neighborhood and descended upon the city. This moment is associated with Lucio Chuquimia Aguirre, who in 1974 founded the *Asociación de Conjuntos Folklóricos del Gran Poder* (Association of Folkloric Groups of the Great Power), which replaced the *Junta de Vecinos* (Neighbors Society) that was then in charge of organizing the *Fiesta*. We will return to this figure later.

Preparations for the *Fiesta* begin shortly after Christmas. In accordance to the widespread institution of the *Preste*, fraternities start organizing and programming rehearsals whose frequency and duration depend on the economic power of each and every sector.<sup>4</sup> As the day of the *Entrada* approaches, the commercial activity of the zone begins to increase. Among all, it is the work of the embroiderers, mask-makers, the hairdressers, and other specialists of bodily beauty that experiences the most notable increase. When the night before the Saturday that precedes Holy Trinity arrives, and with it the *Entrada*, the various *comparsas* (masked groups) descend into the center of the city, accompanied by hundreds of people who applaud feverishly the length of their trajectory. The two central points of the route are the Upper Church, before which they stop to pray, and the official box, where the choreography is displayed in full regalia with the aim of winning the prize given by a Jury composed of prominent public figures.

The principal social actors of the *Fiesta* are the *mestizo* or *cholo* sectors of La Paz society, who occupy a middle place—a wide, diffuse, and heterogeneous frontier—between the Indian peasants and the urban elite, who think of themselves as White. These actors imagine themselves in an arena with borders as diffuse as those of their own bodies during the *Fiesta*, the latter serving to discuss, search for, or construct an identity, a self-representation which, as always, also implies a representation of others. A folklore is created in the search/construction of identity, describing both the “authentic” Indian (as in the case of the Inkas or of the Tobas), or the *authentic* Black (as in the case of the *Negritos* or *Morenada* dancers). This

folklore, whose importance for popular culture is equivalent to that of the Encyclopaedia for Enlightened European spirits, allows for the positioning of this uncomfortably ambiguous class as the cultural repository of the nation. As stated by an artisan, “The practice of folklore is for us the practice of citizenship (*hacer patria*), the support of the country’s identity.”

### **The Divine Face of the *Fiesta* of the Lord of Great Power**

Iconography, a fashionable science during the Counter Reformation, continued its historical development in America at a time when Europe, and especially Spain, inspired no doubt by its recent “unification” and the expulsion of Moors and Jews, was involved in a witch-hunt and in the extirpation of idolatries. Both of these hunts were led by Jesuits, the spokesmen of the Counter Reformation.

We have seen that the *Fiesta* of the Lord of Great Power was woven around a trinitary image. I will now attempt to read in the discourse constituted around this image, as well as in the attempts by the official hierarchy of the Church to control it, some local marks of the Spanish spirit and the transformations it suffered in the milieu where it appeared and developed.

This trinitary representation consisted originally of a body with three identical heads, used to represent the famous Catholic Mystery. The painting itself, as currently guarded by the Old Church of the Great Power, has suffered several modifications. It is even possible, although we lack available data to prove it, that it may be a fragment of a larger painting.<sup>5</sup>

The representation of the Trinity was a crucial problem for the Catholic Church. It constitutes the essence of Christianity, distinguishing it radically from the other two revealed religions, Judaism and Islam. In contrast to both, Christians believe in the Trinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who together are the one and only God, alive and true, the God of Revelation who resides among men through Jesus Christ, and in man through the Holy Spirit. Based on Mathew (28: 19), this doctrine was expounded by St. Augustin in *De Trinitate*.

The topic has always posed a problem for the definition of an iconographic repertoire, and is absent from the iconography of primitive and medieval Christianity. The Trinity was represented by abstract ideograms (such as three joined circles) to forestall a transgression of God’s unknowable and invisible essence. The Trinity as we know it appeared for the first time in the twelfth century. Here, God the Father is depicted as an old man with a white beard and patriarchal demeanor, to whom a triangular halo is sometimes added. He stands behind and above Christ, who is on the Cross, holding either the crosspiece or an open book, where the letters alpha and omega are displayed, with his feet sometimes resting on a Globe. Inspired by the

words of John the Baptist, "I have seen the Holy Spirit descend from the Heavens like a dove and rest upon Him" (John 1:32), the Holy Spirit is represented by a dove.

In 1649, *Arte de la pinture, su antiguedad y grandezas* (The Art of Painting, Its Antiquity and Greatnesses) is published in Spain. The author, Francisco Pacheco del Río (1564-1654), who was also Velázquez's father-in-law and teacher, worked for the Inquisition as a consultant for the interpretation of the content of religious images, on which he was a specialist. We should not forget that we are also in the midst of a witch-hunt, a period of rapid growth for Demonology, lateral knowledge to Iconography, then endowed with an official character.

Brought to America by the Jesuits, Pacheco's work stood as the main iconographic reference for the Hispanic world. One of the most problematic issues addressed by this compendium was the representation of the Trinity. This was due as much to its centrality for Christianity as to the equilibrium necessary, both internally and externally, in the relationship of each sign to all the others in the triad. Like the Peircean sign, the doctrine of the Trinity, that great contribution of Christianity, consists of a dynamic movement, since, as with the figure of the interpreter, the integration of the divinity is present in each and every Christian believer, a movement that condenses collective norm and individual history.

Pacheco noted that the correct way of representing the Mystery was to assign to God the Father the features of "a solemn and beautiful old man, not bald but rather with long hair and a venerable beard," to the Son, those of a thirty-three year old young man "with a gorgeous face and a very beautiful nude body, with wounds on the hands, feet, and flank, draped with a red mantle, and leaning against the Cross"; and, finally, to the Holy Spirit the features of a Dove.

This canon was modified in the American schools of painting, which were organized in the manner of medieval workshops with Indians as apprentices. The modification consisted of the suppression of one sign, that of the dove, because it reminded the eradicators of idolatries of some of the zoomorphic gods who preceded their arrival. The preferred formula thus became that of three identical persons, seated holding a scepter and a crown or tiara. When the Holy Spirit, one of the three, was singled out from the others, the figure was dressed in a white tunic, sometimes carrying a white dove with folded wings over the shoulder as an attribute.

Here we see already, at the representational origins of the religious nucleus of Christianity in American lands, the conflict between the opening and closing of the sacred body, between a trinitary iconography and its demonic readings. Against this image, ideally closed, or rather foreclosed by the discursive and iconographic practices of the Counter Reformation, other local readings emerged. By superimposing the Dove upon representations of Andean divinities, these readings tended to open the interpretation both of the

image and the practices to which it was related. As far as the Spaniards were concerned, this kind of hybridization, which reinforced the idea of the sacred in the referential field, drew the divine and the demonic dangerously close, since only the Devil, never God, could be said to have animal appendages like claws, wings, tail and hooves. This interpretative conflict with respect to the mystery of the Trinity, and especially to its image, destined, as we know, to fulfill a pedagogical function, would finally determine the new iconographic canons, the new operations for the closure of the polysemy of the Holy Trinity in America. Closures whose intention was to (re)construct a divine, pure and homogeneous world, radically separated from a demonic, hybrid, and heterogeneous one, were thus confronted at the level of discourses and practices with openings attempting to (re)construct other worlds of meaning, closer to the everyday experience of their creators.

The representation of the Holy Trinity inscribed in the Lord of Great Power was repeated many times throughout the viceroyalty (Gisbert 1980). Although it stood against the specific norms of the Pacheco canon—who argued that the Devil had appeared with three identical faces in the year 1221, which indicates not only that the history of this form of representation can be traced back to Spain, but also that demonologic temptation itself formed part of the discursive universe of the Conquistadors—at the time of the extirpation of idolatries, this iconographic choice constituted the most harmonic solution.

Despite the fact that the painting was now directed towards the elimination of “pagan” readings, new conflicts were to emerge during the early years of the next century. It is possible, for instance, that the Church saw the same ominous character who, according to Pacheco, appeared in 1221, in what they presumed Indians saw while worshiping the Lord of Great Power. But it was no doubt dangerous readings of native practices such as these, readings that kept opening the meaning of the image constantly, that led the official Church hierarchy to declare the image sacrilegious, hoping to thereby bring its religious power to an end. Confronted by the inefficiency of this measure, the Church eventually decided to lay hands and brushes directly on the matter by hiding from view the two lateral faces of the Holy Trinity.

It is possible to imagine the painting’s original features when we compare it either with earlier examples that have survived more or less intact, or with contemporary representations that usually appear during festive times, where the Lord recuperates his crossed out faces. We should note that it is likely that aesthetic interventions were not limited to painting a flat background, especially since a new outline and a new hairstyle had to be created for the frontal face—a matter of great concern to an iconography so preoccupied with divine hair. Let us also not forget requirements such that God “not to be bald” or other signs specifically related to “facial hair,” as opposed to hair in other parts of the body.<sup>6</sup> In this case, where the result has been a head

disproportionate to the torso and arms, the ecclesiastic erasure broke not only with the trinitary head, but also with the body as a whole. The arms, the only extremities that are exposed, appear in quite an uncomfortable position, hardly appropriate for a resuscitated Christ.

As a result of this corrective operation, the face lost its absolute axial symmetry (only one of the ears remains to be seen), altering the divine equilibrium of Christ's image. It lost, that is, the most important referent for the control of an ideal relation between the gaze and power in the eyes of the Church; in the sense that this face is, for the believer, a presence alluding to an absence. In semiotic terms, the face is an icon, a type of sign that exists independently of its object, that is, it is not an "idol," a full presence, or "materialization" of the divinity.

In order to establish a contour capable of permanently fixing the economy of relations between the infinitude of the model and the finitude of the image, sustained by the face, the Catholic iconography of the Counter Reformation was forced to carefully regulate the relations between the finitude of presence and the infinitude of absence contained by it. This was a political problem since it pitted borders against the universe, or representation against presentation. As Baudinet points out, it is there, in his son's face, where God behaves like the great Econome whose expenditure is precisely the sacrifice of the Father who sends his son into exile for the duration of his life on earth.<sup>7</sup>

The facial features are, furthermore, related to two women. The first is Mary, in whose womb these features were molded. Mary's case introduced a later ecclesiastical debate, as a result of which the Church found itself obligated to assign the Marian cult a proper place. The problem remained all but resolved until the Quattrocento, when a theoretical system of painting was elaborated in a more systematic fashion. While the effective unity of the stories resided in the human figure, in general, individual character depended less on physiognomy than on gesture (Baxandall 1978). The exception was precisely the face of Christ, for whom there supposedly existed both the description of an ocular witness and a portrait. Thus in order to attribute conditions of verisimilitude supported by "biology" to the icon, experts referred back to the body of the Virgin in their investigations.<sup>8</sup>

The second woman directly connected with Christ's countenance is Veronica, his first portrait painter. Veronica, who speaks in the first person in the apocryphal *Actas de Pilato*, is said to have captured Christ's likeness during the Calvary, which she followed as a spectator.<sup>9</sup> It is the iconography of a Holy Face with elongated features and long, curly, and light brown hair and beard, purportedly created by this original portrait painter, what has remained fixed to this day. This is the image that Monsignor Sieffert was trying to copy when he ordered that the canvas of the Lord of Great Power be modified, not only to transform it—or at the least attempt to—into

one more image in the wider universe of representations of Christ. By erasing the lateral faces under the claim of “idolatry,” Monsignor Sieffert sought to erase its exceptional or sacred quality as well.

These attempts notwithstanding, the image continued to open, each aperture marking a specific wager in the history of the barrio, its inhabitants, and the *Fiesta*. The official designation of the cult of the Lord of Great Power, the different attempts to confiscate the canvas on the part of the Church, and the struggles with the Ch’ijini Neighborhood Association, determined new strategies for the operations of semic opening to materialize. Deprived of agency over the canvas once the image became public, agents began a tradition of mass reproduction which deprived the Church of its much desired monopoly over the image. By transforming the Lord’s two-dimensional likeness into a three-dimensional sculpture so as to dissolve conflict between the Upper *cholos* and the Lower Dutch, a new mode of conflict resolution which consisted of cloning the image was thus established. In this manner, the *Upper Church* would end up with two mass-produced representations of the Lord, both of them destined for the procession; Lucio Chuquimia owed his own cloned likeness, and it is not unlikely that other agents owed their own clones as well.

Thus, as we can see, the more the aura of the religious icon is maintained or augmented, the more it is reproduced. Most likely because no one doubts that it is precisely an icon, and not some “thing” that lost its unique character in the process of reproduction. By not losing its unique character, the multiplication of the image allows not only for the dispersion of meaning, but also of the practices of appropriation produced in its creation. In other words, the body/face of the Lord of Great Power is being permanently re-created through the struggles and negotiations that take place between those agents whose intentions are to close it, and those interested in opening it up. These struggles around and about a definition of the operations expected to take place with respect to the Holy Image, enable the structuring of a community who (re)presents itself by means of the *Fiesta* as a specific group whose role is to *safeguard the true Bolivian tradition and identity*, both with respect to La Paz, Bolivia, and, considering the new communication technologies, perhaps also to the planet as a whole.

### **The Diabolical Face in the *Fiesta del Gran Poder***

His victims assume it is him when he makes himself visible, so solicitous and syrupy that he deceives the most forewarned and worldly of men with his cleverness and sagacity. He personifies disloyalty, perfidy, a refined perversity and a doleful irony. The *Anchanchu* is a sinister deity who smiles all the time. Always smiling, he prepares and causes the worst damage, bringing desolation into the

home, and destroying buildings and sown fields" (Rigoberto Paredes 1965: 69).

No "face" exists in a natural state. Each is always ruled by the regime of gestures and, sometimes, poses. A mask, on the other hand, is an ambivalent sign; perhaps because it expresses as much laughter as control, that is to say, spans both grotesque realism and classicism. Exaggeration, permutation, aperture, and prolongation are all characteristics of the first of these two styles. Masks are classic in the sense that they are closed as well sanctioned, since in them, as in *Langue*, we cannot introduce synchronic variations without altering their ritual meaning. This is why masks fall as much on the side of "popular" as of "official" genres, and why they are easily located in a liminal space.

As one of the genres favored by grotesque realism for the design of a comic physiognomy (Bakhtin 1987), the mask is the "true" face of the *Fiesta*. Andean *Fiestas* are especially lavish when it comes to masks. We will analyze the Devil's mask with the aim of relating both its diabolic-grotesque and divine-classic contents to the faces of the Lord of Great Power, where I have found similar contents.

Iconography did not lend nearly as much attention to the representation of the Devil (whatever the contents assigned to this figure where all evil is concentrated) as it did to the divine canon. Demonology, lateral discourse in fashion in the Europe of the Inquisition at the moment of the "encounter" between the two worlds, was, like the mask, a discourse situated in the relations between the actions of auspicious and inauspicious powers. To live surrounded by the actions of these powers represented a danger, fundamentally because temptation could tilt the scales at the time of the Last Judgement, when Good and Evil, God and the Devil, become engaged in their last, definitive battle.

As opposed to Iconography, a science whose object is precisely the visible, concerned as it is with unveiling formal relations between sets of signs, Demonology is a science whose object is that which is hidden, that which is not visible yet exists. But to organize the visible in western religious terms is somehow to also organize the occult. This organization can be read not only in the relations of visibility instated by the relations of power and knowledge through iconographic discursive practices, but also in the relations woven into the (not invisible) shadow cone constituted by iconographic discourse.

This is why to make visible the diabolical, that is, to historicize it, is also to make visible relations of power *vis à vis* themes such as woman, the body and sexuality, be they imposed or negotiated. All of these are as hidden or as lateral as the Devil himself in the Judeo-Christian tradition, hence associated with evil.

In the West, evil can be historicized beginning with Israel, where the malefic power instigating evil in man and bringing him harm was first invoked through the Babylonian figure of Lilith, Eve's predecessor and lover of both Adam and Eve. Genesis insisted that

evil resided at the origin, and introduced sin and death. The Devil—a transcription of the Greek word signifying slanderer or denigrator—was used by the Greek translators of the Old Testament to designate Satan, who fulfills the function of both tempter and prosecutor in the Divine Tribunal. This last attribute was slowly lost, at least in the imaginary of the fine arts. The porticos of some Romanic churches already show the diabolical as one half of a clearly divided world, without any possibility of cooperation with the other, divine half. In the medieval world, these porticos often served as drop curtains during *Fiestas*, popular fairs, and theatricalized catechisms, like those analyzed by Bakhtin.

If the enormous malignity attributed to Satan was already plentifully associated with this figure by late-Judaism, the New Testament widened the association even further. Satan appears in this text under a great number of denominations: Diabolos, Satanas, Bee(l)zebub, the Malign, the Bad, the Chief of this world, the Adversary, and is sometimes also identified with the Dragon and the Serpent.

Jesus is his enemy. Since his healing is interpreted as an expulsion, Jesus's miracles are a sign of his victory over the Devil. These are, however, only partial victories, waged within each and every Christian, since full dominion over his adversary will only be achieved by Jesus during the Apocalypse, that is, at the end of time.

In spite of the contributions of Demonology to Christian art and theology, it has never been the object of doctrinal definitions, other than those destined to eliminate the dualist speculations stemming from movements such as Gnosticism and Manicheism, which lasted until the time of the Catharists in the Middle Ages (Grelot 1985). Christianity came slowly together amidst certain theories of late Antiquity which affirmed the duality of body and soul. From here to identifying the corporeal with the malignant was but a short step. With sexual impulses condemned the hardest and a social structure now largely dominated by the men, the demonization of the feminine was only a breath away. Woman became the ideal accomplice of the Devil (Silverblatt).

In another sense, the diabolic also represents the key that opens the door to modernity. The “Man of Progress,” last metamorphosis of Goethe’s Faust, generic figure of modern man, is another accomplice of the Devil. Faust’s pact consists, in effect, of acquiring the power to imitate a god who conceives—which, as Berman (1982) has demonstrated, is the tragedy of Progress. Given that the Faustian project requires capital and control over a large number of people, the modern Devil, who satisfies the desire for growth and development by allowing us to supercede the contradiction between productivity and stagnation, is thus the modern political figure *par excellence*. The meaning of Faust’s pact with the Devil resides in that human power can only grow by means of what Marx calls infernal power, the dark and frightful energies capable of erupting with a force beyond all

human control. If Modernity has a malignant face, something that could destroy it, it is its own impulse to grow and develop. The malignant face of modern aesthetics is Kitsch, the current form of Rococo, Baroque, and the Gothic.<sup>10</sup>

We can compare Kitsch to those emotional styles, closer to the sensorial than the classic, where curvature and the ornamental clearly predominate over the straight line and the constructed. The latter are related to a heroic *masculine* rationality (neoclassicism is the strongest example), the former to a *feminine* sensibility and voluptuousness. The same kind of associations that link ornament to the feminine also link it to the diabolical. Like the flames surrounding his habitat, all of the Devil's attributes are undulating. Fire is diabolical breath, an aspect of the Devil linking as well him to the Dragon.

From the point of view of western aesthetics, today's Devil's mask, made from recycled tin and parts related to automotive culture, is a good example of this style. Many people find in these masks Chinese features, perhaps due to the aesthetic prestige enjoyed by the color red and by glitter in both the Chinese and Kitsch styles, or perhaps due to formal similarities such as a taste for ornament. The Dragon is another figure appropriated by both European and American orientalisms to symbolize the Devil, most of all in his capacity as guardian of chthonic treasures. Cerberus, the three-headed guardian dog of Hades (not at the entrance but at the exit, since his function was to prevent the dead from escaping) who appears on the crown or crest of the mask, is apparently a contribution from Greek mythology.

Satan's essential characteristic, which he shares with the grotesque body, is to be unfinished. This is why he continues to exhibit animal appendages to which he owes his hybrid character. In Medieval and Renaissance art, for instance, we see devils falling and their tails and hoofs growing during their fall. It is not until the sixteenth century, however, that this theme, generally found in bestiaries, is combined with the theme of the war between the Archangel St. Michael and the Dragon (Apocalypse 12: 7-9). The Devil, central figure of the demonological discourse, can be thought of as a discursive instrument whose object is the desacralization of absolute distinctions in the Natural order, as opposed to that of Culture, sanctioned by Judeo-Christianity by means of the concept of a pure God, free of any mixture.

In the context of the popular *Fiesta*, the Devil is defeated time after time by St. Michael during the *Diablada*, a dance whose origins can be traced to the theatricalized catechism we imagined in front porticos or arcades described earlier.<sup>11</sup> Inspired by the Confession and the Eucharist, once transported to America these dramatizations underscored the antagonistic relation that existed between pre-Christian forces, which were both chthonic and diabolical, and the civilizing powers of Christianity (Abercrombie 1992).

This conception was based on the idea that the Devil landed in America before God, who was finally brought here by the

Conquistadors along with the true faith. Spanish appraisals of pre-Columbian religion were thus distorted by a demonological tradition, which, because it lacked a theological status, it also lacked a unified or unifying version of the diabolical. This elasticity led the Spaniards to see the same struggle between good and evil in the New World. As opposed to this radical separation between good and evil, in the Andean worldview, the relation between opposing forces was one of reciprocity and complementarity. For the Spaniards, native gods were but façades hiding the Devil's actions. Since the Devil was as much the enemy of the Christian world as of civilization, his worship was perceived as a challenge both to the Church and to colonial society as a whole. If the eternal adversaries are Jesus and Satan, the Archangel St. Michael is no doubt on the side of Jesus and the Dragon on the side of the diabolical. For the Church, the struggle between Michael and the Dragon is equivalent to the struggle between God and the Antichrist. The *Diablada* summarizes the divine hosts in a single actant, luminous and clear: God, represented in Michael. Dressed classically, Michael confronts the demonic hosts, who consist of a large number of demons, a mass of elder and younger devils, and the Seven Deadly Sins, also represented in the form of devils. From the perspective of high art, St. Michael's iconographic attributes are reproduced with exactitude during the Fiesta, including a coat of mail, a shield, a sword and/or a lance. In contrast to St. George, who is not an angel, St. Michael has wings. He is a winged Centurion.<sup>12</sup>

Among the *Diablada*'s aesthetic signs, the figure in furthest opposition to Michael is Lucifer. Lucifer's extremely elaborate mask is widely recognized as the symbol of the Oruro Carnival itself and, metonymically, of the Bolivian nation. Cast in plaster in olden times, these Devil masks have now been largely replaced by lighter ones, made of tinplate. Each mask consists of three parts: the face, the horns and the crown.<sup>13</sup> Its orifices and protuberances are equally emphasized. Its features are more animalesque and fantastic than human. The idea of disjunction—present in all masks—is highlighted here by a use of color whose main characteristics are abrupt contrast and discordance. The dominant color is red—nothing more infernal or hot—followed by yellow and orange. When combined with violet, blue, and a certain shade of green, in addition to magenta and metallic colors, the color effect of the mask is fiery and incandescent. In the traditional Andean imaginary, the sign contrast=disjunction is expressed both through language and through a number of aesthetic practices, the most common being the well-known intricate weavings, where *Allq'a*, the native term denoting contrast, also denotes disjunction (Cereceda 1987).<sup>14</sup> In the Devil's mask, all signs point more to aesthetic disjunctions than to conjunctions (Figure 3).

The popped out eyes seem to attest to this situation of extreme contrast or bewilderment.<sup>15</sup> At times, the eyes are made from plain light bulbs, thereby augmenting their luminous effect. This is often the case with representations of the *Tio* or *Supay*, one of the local

designation of the Devil found primarily at the entrance to the mine, and iconographically related to the Devil's mask. The body of these icons, sculpted in different sizes, is built from the mineral extracted from the mine (tin). The face and extremities are made of clay. As mentioned, the Tio's bulging eyes are often made from light bulbs or from shiny scraps of metal, as are his sharp teeth, which can be either glass or crystal. The teeth are visible through the half-opened mouth, ready to receive coca leaves and cigarette offerings, just as the spread-out arms are ready to receive offerings of liquor (Taussig 1980).



Mask of the Devil (Photograph by the author)

He can sometimes assume the form of a blond *gringo*, rubicund and wearing a cowboy hat—a representation that we could assign to ethnographic realism in that it describes the technicians and foreign managers of the mine.<sup>16</sup> He can also appear as a *sucubus*, bringing to mind the traders in souls and riches found in medieval bestiaries. Other times he is ithyphallic, endowed with a gigantic penis. Another diabolic characteristic is his lack of sincerity, which he shares with the *Anchanchu*, another chthonic entity, whose main means of expression is mockery and irony. The lack of sincerity is expressed through the evil nature of his smile, the parading of a sharp and menacing set of triangular teeth, including two sharp incisives that remind us of the serpent, with whom he shares the aim to deceive, seduce, and hide his always evil intentions.<sup>17</sup>

If we read the mask iconographically as one where the Devil is subdued by the triumphant Archangel Michael and the forces of Good, it gives the impression of a closed artifact, one whose signification has been brought to a close, susceptible to becoming a museum piece, or even to be presented as the very image of the *most authentic Bolivian tradition*. A demonological reading, on the other hand, invites us to think not only of the materials employed in its construction, but also about the cycles of production and consumption, and their use in the context of the *Fiesta*.

The materials with which the mask is made—empty tin cans of lubricant, light bulbs, automobile parts—connect it with the modern world, electrically illuminated and moved forward by the propelling force of the machine. Other materials, such as sequins and paints, give it a glitter that is generally read as exaggeration. The chthonic beings who accompany it, and who appear to be evoked metonymically by the mask itself, point both to its relation to the mines and to a mode of obtaining wealth associated with an excessive lack of restraint, as opposed to the prudent accumulation associated with agriculture and cattle raising.

This lack of fiscal restraint can also be found in relation to the making, selling and buying of masks, as well as to the idea of monetary prestige related to their use and possession. This, in turn, connects it to the world of commerce to which the principal agents using it belong. The lack of restraint is not only present in the colors, glitter, economic and symbolic or capital forms associated with it, but also, and perhaps more emphatically, in the number of dancers conforming the troupe.

The mask is presented as an isolated object only by those who pretend to apply a closed/iconographic reading to it. If we follow the shadow cone produced by such a reading, however, we can observe the opening strategies utilized by the agents. The diabolical bodies constructed by the mask are not destined to tell the story of their submission to Judeo-Christian forms, symbolized by the Archangel Michael. This story serves, on the contrary, to take over the streets officially, where forms of differentiated and differentiating capital are openly exhibited before those who pretend to close the *cholo* body. Thus constructed by iconographic discourse, the Devil's moral excess finds forms of agency that enable the agents to speak about their own economic, symbolic, ethnic, and aesthetic excesses. These take on a diabolic character only for those situated on the side of Good (the White elites, Pentecostal groups, folkloric discourse, etc.).

Whereas the diabolic traits of the tricephalus face of the Lord of Great Power lean towards closure, in the Devil's mask capitalist relations tend rather to an openness, susceptible of closure only at the hand of Michael, the sacrificer. However, in neither case can we speak of a definitive victory; what prevails in the end is more an idea of conflict than the resolution of a binary equation.

## The Human Face in the Fiesta of the Lord of Great Power

The *Entrada* or Parade of the Great Power can be understood as an event whereby the contract between the artisans and businessmen of Ch'ijini and a power whose diabolic/divine nature we have been scrutinizing becomes official.<sup>18</sup> The Fausts of *Cholo* culture invested in an idea of personal, family, and neighborhood development, express abundance and permanent change in the squandering of commodities realized through the contract. Given that waste is to the economy as speech is to language, in the sense that it too possesses "codes," ritual codes, it too can be analyzed as a form of redistribution and exchange. These exchange ceremonies, similar to those of the *potlach* analyzed by Mauss, can be compared with the *tinku*.

I have been able to analyze from the perspective of the *tinku* several dramatic units or festive actions interwoven both with the biography of Lucio Chuquimia Aguirre, a Faust who is especially proud of his contract with the Great Power, and with the *tinkus* reenacted under his protection. The Chuquimia clan is very involved with the Fiesta. Lucio is a direct descendant of the president and vice-president of the first Fraternity of the Great Power, the Embroiderers' Diablada of La Paz, founded in 1927, as well as of Lucio Chuquimia Illanes who was named *preste* in 1944, and of Chuquimia Illanes, his successor.<sup>19</sup> "In 1972," he writes, "I received *preste* from the Lord of Great Power, together with my wife, whereupon we decided to change the organization of the Fiesta in a transcendental way, introducing more diversity into the program" (Chuqimia 1993: 33).<sup>20</sup>

Don Lucio received us in the *Lluvia de Oro* (Golden Rain) Hotel, a many-storied building which belonged to him, located at the heart of the Great Power zone, where only one of the floors is occupied while the others remain vacant. He shares this dwelling with a mass-produced image of the Lord of Great Power that he keeps in a small private chapel. From this floor, Don Lucio communicates with the external world through two efficient *cholas paceñas* (from La Paz) who work downstairs around an intercom lined with a crochet sheath downstairs.

It was these two sentinels who allowed us to see their boss, not before subjecting us to a telephone interrogation by Chuquimia himself, where we had to explain our intentions and place of origin. Chuquimia is an impressive man, as is the massive gold ring embossed with an X on his finger, emblem of his fraternity. In 1970, when he was so besieged by financial problems that he was about to immigrate to Miami with his family, he told us, salvation in the form of cash materialized on top of his desk. "Imagine," he stressed, "up to this day I ignore the source of this respectable amount of money. It may be hard to believe, but that is how it was. Besides, believe me that the Xs of the Great Power do quite well, I mean well financially. Sure we

may lose for a period of a few months but everything, everything works out well in the end for us."

The identification of health with financial problems displaces the metaphor health-illness onto capitalism, which is to say from the territory of the body to that of the economy. In Chuquimia's narrative, money was not invested in productive activities. Instead, his decision was to spend it wastefully in the organization of a *Fiesta*, a decision which he claims brought him even more money in return. Over time, the relationship between Chuquimia and the Lord became so intimate, that they ended up living under the same roof. In fact, it was Chuquimia who commissioned the bust version of the image used repeatedly as the centerpiece of the *Entrada*.<sup>21</sup> It now rests on an altar in his private chapel, maintained by priestesses who keep the place impeccably clean and ordered.

One of the biggest stakes in the wager made by this particularly well-situated player was to found his own social group and then choose an adequate name for it. The main objective of the groups formed around the *Fiesta* is to present a specific dance at the *Entrada*. Functioning as the nucleus for different social sectors, each group tends to organize itself around a shared activity. For example, the *Morenada Comercial Eloy Salmón* brings together people who sell home appliances and whose businesses are located on the street of that name. Some groups are organized around a place of residence, as is the case with *The Truly Authentic Viacha Roses*. Others around a fantastic concept, like the *Lost Fu Manchú Kullagwas*.

The idea of prestige is evident in the line-up of the *Entrada*, where accreditation is given to each group in order of antiquity. The first to enter is always the *Diablada* of the *Embroiderers Union of the Great Power* (the one founded by Chuquimia's predecessors), followed by the previous year's winner. Each successive place in the *Entrada* is carefully measured, discussed, and negotiated. Sometimes negotiation procedures are inscribed in the length of the group's name, as was the case with the above-mentioned *Truly Authentic Viacha Roses*, or with the *Kullagwas* from the *Always Terrible White Pearl Gauchos of the Great Power*.<sup>22</sup>

Since it is in this game that Chuquimia has to hedge his bets, in order to be effective he needs to overshadow all previous wagers, and, as far as possible, all future ones as well. This is why we cannot help but admire his rhetorical flair in naming his own group *Los X del Gran Poder* (The X of the Great Power)—a brilliant, Dada-like aesthetic gesture, since no bet can surpass the X, the absence of a name.

The thorough knowledge he has of the place he occupies in the game he is playing is also expressed by the nucleus around which his group is brought together. It is neither related to a place, skill, occupation, or nationality, nor to something fantastic; instead, it is dedicated to the idea of power itself: the only idea that traverses all the others without losing its religiosity in the context, and that always

generates new and renewed conflicts. This idea puts him in the place of protégé/protector of the Lord of Great Power and distinguishes him from all of the other players.

Chuquimia's triumph over his adversaries could not have been more complete—including his victory over official religion and national political power, which he acquired by taking upon himself the role of both celebrant and sacrificer. In this manner, he not only displaces the priest, but also comes uncannily close to an aesthetic which we associate with the Theater of Cruelty. As with Artaud's proposition of a theatre without spectacle, Chuquimia has (partially) displaced God from the scene and appropriated the word for himself.

Another one of his triumphs in the art of gambling is the concentration of the *Fiesta* in the *Entrada*, framing it as a trajectory or peregrination consisting of distinct moments, where vision cannot help but be continuous, and where it is possible to establish certain clear points in the hierarchy. Each one of these points along the trajectory of the *Fiesta* gives rise to a *tinku*, including, for example, the Old Church of the Great Power, the places where the absent presence of the priest is key, or the official box where distinguished citizens gather to settle the aesthetic conflict.

As a result of all the bets he has won and to the prestige of his name alone, when people refer to the Lord of Great Power, it is not clear in certain contexts to whom they actually are referring at any particular time. Lucio Chuquimia is the *Mallku* (a man with authority and prestige) of the zone of the Great Power, yet it is precisely due to his power and to his intimacy with the conflictive divine image, that he is also a *laika*, that is, the person in charge of the cult of the powers of darkness, a man-witch.

Located ambiguously between the divine and diabolic, Chuquimia has come to be identified with the same conflict that sustains the religious nature of the ancient trinitary image. His power, like that of the image of the Tío, is dangerous—which proves Taussig's argument, that epistemologies of the diabolic and of capitalism are capable of founding subaltern ethics that maintain the same relations of darkness with respect to official power (political, religious) as those maintained by demonology with respect to iconography.

The difference between his body and that of the other vertexes of the trinity we have analyzed is that somehow his body, while alive, has access to action. This action is channeled politically and aesthetically so as to find in an *authentic* Bolivianness his own. Sovereign ruler of the Court of the Great Power, he regulates the aperture of the courtly bodies, divine/diabolic model and anti-model of the rules of etiquette.

### **The Feminine Face of the Lord of Great Power**

Garments are one of the most privileged areas to speak about the aesthetics of the diabolical in the *Fiesta* of the Great Power. *Fiesta*

aesthetics can be thought of as privileged with respect to local fashion and the embellishment of the body.<sup>23</sup>

In Bolivia, Indian traditional clothing comprises an enormous variety of local styles. Rather than static, these styles not only have a history but are also modified in the course of their representation in the *Fiesta*—where they follow the dictates of a festive fashion whose cannon responds to aesthetic ideals where the signs “Authentic,” “Diabolic,” “Indian,” and “Modern” reverberate with particular emphasis. The meanings of these festive signs are intertwined with clothes that pertain to non-festive times, themselves susceptible to their own classifications. Women’s clothing is identified with language through clearly marked categories, hierarchically set at three levels: the *aksu*, which denotes homemade outfits; *de pollera* or *Chola* skirt, metonymically related to traditional woman; and *de vestido* or dress, an entirely western category, lacking a specific ethnic identity (Abercrombie 1992).

The feminine conflict between the women *de vestido* and *de pollera* in the *Fiesta* is summarized in the aesthetic conflict between the *China Supay* dress and the *pollera* of the *Señora paceña*, respectively, two very important figures of the Diablada and Morenada, the most prestigious dances of the *Gran Poder*. The *China Supay* is the Devil’s concubine in the Diablada, his accomplice. She dances wearing a mask and is, as we saw, a sexy figure. Her skirts have shrunk year after year, reaching the extreme of today’s dizzying miniskirts to allow for a show of legs increasingly saturated with a high erotic content by the Andean male gaze. In the Morenada, the *Señora paceña* dances perfectly in line with the *Señores Morenos*, their mates during and beyond the time of the *Fiesta*. On this occasion, they display their best jewelry (*tupus*, earrings), an outfit made especially for the occasion after the latest local *pollera* fashion, the classic Bowler hat, and shoes lined with the same material as their skirt.<sup>24</sup> Women’s clothing is the main mode of ostentation among women *de pollera*. While a difference in style may not be so easily perceived as a sign of wealth, wealth is forcefully manifested in the quality of the material from which the skirts are sewn. There are also fashion styles, like the *pollera terno* (skirt suit), which comes as a complete set, including the skirt, blouse, sweater, shawl, apron, and shoes, all of the same color since the desired effect is a closed homogeneity, lacking in contrasts. These aesthetic signs place the women in line with tradition, closing their bodies in order to allow the bodies of the men to open in ostentatious display.<sup>25</sup>

*Polleras* are very wide, bell- or corolla-shaped skirts, with multiple hems dividing it transversally in rings. Whereas the shape denotes the social position of the person who wears it, the material indicates the occasion for which it is to be worn (Spedding). Even the poorest peasant strives to have a beautiful *pollera* for festive occasions. Rich women’s *polleras* have between four and five very wide hems, and are made of shiny and expensive material. Younger women wear a skirt,

distinguished from the *pollera* in that they lack hems. Aprons, another accessory complementing the look of the *pollera*, are emblematic of the business woman. *Chompas* are sweaters or cardigans, worn in layers of variable numbers. The *mania* or large shawl, worn on top of the outer layer, is a square piece of cloth folded in two, draped over the shoulders. It is secured by a very large safety pin, which is replaced during the Fiesta by piece of gold jewelry with pearls. Another accessory *de rigueur* in a woman *de pollera*'s wardrobe is the *Aguayo*, a large striped weaving composed of two rectangular pieces sewn together in the middle. It is endowed with a wealth of meanings in as far as their use and gift donation.<sup>26</sup> The aesthetics of the Fiesta introduces kinship categories of a moral character, such as that of concubine and wife, superposed onto those of *de vestido* and *de pollera*. The first, as we saw, is that of the Devil and the China Supay who, like a *femme fatale*, acts in provocative and exhibitionistic ways for the male gaze. By contrast, the ideal of beauty for *de pollera* women is to completely hide their behinds and hips with their voluminous petticoats and skirts. Breasts are not taken into account at all, displacing the male erotic interest to the legs instead, and admiring those that are rather thick and well-rounded (Spedding).

The China Supay is presented as especially transgressive, not only because she maintains a clandestine sexual relationship with the Man-Devil, but also because she displays precisely that which masculine desire itself tends to both create and force to hide as a sign of decorum: the legs. A purely masculine invention, this characteristic embodied by the China Supay is re-enforced by the knowledge that originally it was transvestite men who occupied this scenic position. The practice was suppressed officially during the dictatorship of Hugo Bánzer, who began the process of transforming the China Supay into a representative of the "beauty of the Bolivian woman." This process can be read as an attempt to close the feminine body (albeit not necessarily the body of women) proportionally to the shortening of her skirt. The more her body is open to the male gaze, and transformed into an icon of the *new* Bolivianness, the more it becomes closed.

### **The Diabolic Aesthetic in the Gran Poder**

In Peru, sorcerers and ministers of the Devil also had the habit of smearing themselves. And it was infinite that great multitude that existed of these soothsayers, sortileges, sorcerers, fortune tellers, and a thousand other such sorts of false prophets . . . More pointedly, there were a type of sorcerer among those Indians, allowed by their Inga kings, who are like warlocks, adopting whichever figure they wish, flying through the air to cover long distances in a very short time, so as to see what is going on. They speak with the Devil, who answers them through certain stones or other objects that they venerate greatly

. . . Some say and affirm that they use some unguents. Indians say that old women practice this custom ordinarily (Acosta 1945: 172).

I have suggested that, beyond the face of Christ which the official power of the Church tried to close without much success, the other two faces are opened by this Andean Fiesta are those of the Devil and Lucio Chuquimia. The three mentioned signs are open because they lack clearly marked limits, going so far as to sometimes overlap in the midst of ritual disorder. In addition, the three bodies share the characteristic of a glittering which endows them with conditions of visibility that differ from other signs whose destiny is to struggle to transcend their opacity.

Because of the disjunctions they express, their *allqa* character makes it impossible to assign to them a single meaning, be it benefic or malefic, as would be the tendency within iconographic discourse—which is consequently exposed as insufficient when it comes to containing them. The three powerful *Señores del Gran Poder* are as much *mallkus* as *laikas*. The *Señor* in the painting has, in fact, both curative and contaminating powers. The *Señor* who dances in the Fiesta has the authority of either handing out enormous mineral or commercial wealth, or of punishing those who seek it. Finally, due to the contact he has with the other two, the *Señor* who organized the *Fiesta* occupies an important, albeit ambiguous place with respect to the two other Bolivian powers, the national and the religious.

For the Aymara, the word *religion* denotes Christian practice exclusively (Van Kessell 1992). Autochthonous religious celebrations, called *customs* instead, are celebrated within the Aymara's own world (field, home), where, in contrast to the official religion, the celebrant and the sacrificer are one. Somehow, *custom* and *religion* became combined both in the representation of the Trinity as a tricephalous body, and in the local religious practices surrounding this representation. However, since from the point of view of the self-appointed one and only true religion, *custom* was considered synonymous with a "diabolic," *Cholo* culture—situated between *custom* and *religion*, and Indian/Peasant and Spanish/Criollo—was interpreted as pagan, hence as a challenge to the established order.

Chuquimia's private worship is closer to *custom* than to *religion*. The audacity of his wager against the Church spills over to the other political and national powers. He is, in a few words, a figure with a great deal of power, someone with whom it is necessary to negotiate.

As with any other feudal contract, God and the Devil offered help and protection in exchange for absolute submission, a characteristic shared both by the Lord in the painting and, through his role as *preste*, by Chuquimia himself. Women intervene in all the power exchanges we have analyzed, since their bodies are constituted in the encounter between God and Devil and through the gaze of the three masculine faces.

The feminine body can be constituted in the tension wife-concubine, legal concepts through which masculinity opens/closes it.

The concept of the Devil's lover, the *China Supay*, is a body apparently opened by this gaze, whereas the wives' bodies appear to be closed. In reality, both bodies are equally closed by the powers of the *Fiesta*. The *Señoras paceñas* are displayed during the Fiesta as women *de pollera* who are on the side of tradition, while *Chinas Supay* are situated on the side of modernity and the forward-thrusting force of Bolivian youth.

The aesthetic wager in the discussion between *China* and *Señora* in the Fiesta is moved forward by exhibiting/hiding some parts of the eroticized body (the legs), as well as through the relationship between face and mask, another way of betting inside the same conflict. The *Señora* does not wear a mask. The mask of the *China Supay* has western ethnic characteristics. It is pink, the eyes are light colored, and the nose is aquiline.

What I have been suggesting with the above comments are certain connections between the official and the subaltern, trying to call attention to a science of the occult, namely demonology, as a possible means to restitute to artistic production a gesture lost (as Artaud points out) behind the words. From an iconographic perspective, the struggle between God and the Devil does not presume an intellectual wager since we know beforehand who the winner is. The same is true for the *Fiesta* of the Great Power, which proposes only an aesthetic vehicle, an arena for that struggle to take place so that we can experiment with conflict and formulate the large amount of wager that are constantly being renewed.

My own wager in writing this text has been to think about iconographic contents from a demonological perspective, one which, from my point of view, attempts to introduce lateral and marginalized knowledges, struggles and wars of meaning. This wager has allowed me to come closer to the conflicts that give form to the *Fiesta*'s ritual symbols, conflicts, that is, which mark the plurivocality and polyphony present in any symbol.

## Notes

1. An analysis of these issues can be found in Blázquez and Nusenovich (1995).

2. Novices took on servants and orphans as wards, who usually ended up professing the faith, acquiring, in recompense for their services, the family name of the novices under whose charge they had been. In this manner were founded, as in the case of the Carrión sisters, true matrilineal dynasties within religious congregations (Albó and Preiswerk 1984).

3. The upper/lower designations refers to the city's vertical topography, as a result of which the Old Church is located uphill in relation to the new one, built later. (translator note).

4. *Prestes* are sponsors or patrons, local "chiefs" who engage in a war of redistribution akin to the *potlach*. At the local level, the *preste* is a complex system practiced in relation to most Catholic holidays in a syncretic manner. It is a system whereby certain individuals and families assume, each in turn, the social and financial

responsibility of housing a particular effigy for the whole year, as well as of hosting the event and ensuring its success.

5. This hypothesis is supported by the two figures at the foot of the sacred image, which appear to be incomplete. If this were due to a fortuitous trim, typical of the baroque style, the borders of the painting would have respected the integrity of the halo over their heads.

6. On the relation of hair to the public and private, as well as sacred, representations of the body, see Anthony Synnot (1993).

7. For a closer analysis of the relations between the face of Christ and the Church, see Marie-Jose Baudinet (1990).

8. The fifteenth century fixed the representational canon for the of Christ's body. It was founded on a falsified report presented by the fictitious Lentulus, Governor of Judea, to the Roman Senate: "A man of moderate or common height and very distinguished . . . His hair is the color of ripe hazelnuts. It falls straight, almost to his ears; and from there on, it curls thickly and abundantly, hanging down from his shoulders. In the front, his hair is split in two, with a line at the center . . . His forehead is wide, soft and serene, and his face has neither wrinkles nor any other mark. He is touched up with a slightly red hue, a soft tone. His nose and mouth are impeccable. His beard is thick, similar to the nascent beard of a young man, and the same color as his hair, which is not particularly long, and split in the middle. His aspect is simple and mature. His glowing eyes are mobile, clear, splendid . . . No one has ever seen him laugh, though no one has seen him cry either. His chest is wide and erect; his hands and arms beautiful . . . He is the most beautiful of all sons of man."

The Dominican Gabriel Barletta adds some details about the appearance of the Virgin—a very polemical iconographic problem despite the presumed existence of a portrait by Lucas, one of the four Evangelists: "You ask: Was the Virgin light or dark? . . . Maria was an alloy of colors, partaking in all, because a face that partakes of all colors is beautiful . . . And despite all this, says Alberto, we have to admit that she was closer to the dark side. There are three reasons for this belief: the first reason pertains to color, since Jews tend to be dark-skinned and she was Jewish; the second reason pertains to testimony, for Saint Lucas painted the three portraits hanging in Rome, Loretto and Bologna, and they indicate the color brown; the third reason is one of affinity. Sons usually look like their mothers, and viceversa. Christ was dark, thus. . . ." (Baxandall, 1978: 78/79)

9. Veronica, whose name means true image—*vera icon*—was purportedly menstruating while rendering Christ's image directly on the canvas. By being miraculously "cured" at that moment, the human and impure (and perforce feminine) blood of the menses is set in contrast to the Divine and extremely pure blood with which the Holy Face ended up being imprinted on the canvas.

10. It is very likely that Frank Wedekind, author of "The Spirit of the Earth" and "Pandora's Box," was also thinking about Woman (Lulu, Lilith) when he defined Kitsch as Baroque, Rococo, Gothic, that is, as sensorial, sensible, *feminine*, and with evil powers.

11. The Diablada of Oruro is the core symbol of this city's famous carnival, one of the best known worldwide. This term denotes as much the dance ensemble and the fraternity as it does the performance rooted in the *auto sacramental*, the culminating moment of the ritual. The origins of this ensemble are very old, and its main characters, all of them masks, are Lucifer, other Devils, Michael, China Supay, and the Seven Deadly Sins. The Bear and the Condor are later additions.

12. In Christian iconography, St. Michael bears another important function: that of weighing the souls of the dead in the Last Judgement. This function relates him to Hermes and Mercury, which explains why he is sometimes depicted wearing a caduceus (staff) and winged hat. He always carries a set of scales, with a minuscule

naked body on each plate, one heavier than the other. As a meteorological deity, St. Michael was well received in America, where he was associated with lightning.

13. I call a "part" an element of a contemporary tinplate mask that can be taken apart individually. Elsewhere, I called each of these "parts" a "maskareme" (Nusenovich 1993).

14. See Verónica Cereceda's interesting analysis of the relation between *allqa* and *k'isa*, Quechua words denoting disjunction and conjunction in weavings and other verbal and non-verbal expressions.

15. As is the case with Kwakiutl Xwéxwé masks analyzed by Levi-Strauss (1979), which are also related to wealth and the chthonic.

16. Taussig (1980) writes that these protective spirits differ completely between a peasant to a miner context, since, as opposed to the latter, where the figure of the salaried man intervenes, the former exercise real control of the means of production. In peasant communities, the icon is the mountain or sacred place itself, whereas in the mines there always mediates a plastic representation and rituals are much more numerous.

17. Another notable smile is that of the *China Supay*, although in this case it is hard to know if the half-opened mouth indicates pleasure or fright, so ambiguous is its position with respect to the other signs included in the mask and the outfit—particularly the increasingly exposed legs in proportion to the ever-shorter skirts, or the bulging eyes, which appear to be seeing something horrendous or are as bedazzled as her concubine's. Like him, she carries a crown and horns on her head, albeit shorter and straighter. Whether she smiles or is frightened, there is no doubt that she is the sexy figure of the *Fiesta*.

18. The use of the word "Entrada" or entrance, connotes the incursion of the mythic space into the historical space, and their crossovers. TN

19. Two years after, the First International Exhibition commemorated the Fourth Centenary of Bolivia's Independence, where the artisans and embroiderers presented the techniques and motifs that, with some variants, have fixed the iconography of the *Fiesta*. Fortunato Yanata, President of the Combined Association of Self-Taught Embroidery Artists described these techniques as follows: "The costumes were made up of raw materials sewn, in turn, by the embroiderers themselves, as is the case with the braided silver thread links, which were made by enameling thread previously twisted by hand. The stones were made from stained glass cut into small squares and circles, covered with tinplate. The pearls were made with plaster and an especially prepared mastic, painted with silver and gold paint after drying . . . All of this was done according to the embroiderer's imagination, since nothing was imported from abroad then, as it is today" (1993: 43). In effect, a great part of the raw materials comes today from abroad, especially from the East (pearls, sequins, shiny cloth), which might explain the Chinese-like style of the costumes and masks.

20. Lucio Chuquimia defines *prestes* as follows: "(people) who are nominated by distinguished members of the *barrio*, and who stand out as the most affluent" (1993: 32). The *preste* was in charge of organizing the *Fiesta*, which implied a great financial challenge. The contract's layout is of a feudal type, which is why Chuqimia's gesture of receiving the honor directly from the Lord of Great Power takes on a special meaning.

21. Rather, Chuquimia found the image, since he was forced to have one made at short notice due to a conflict with the "pious ladies" (sic) who did not allow the mass-produced image to be taken out on the streets to preside over the *Entrada*. He was rejected by a sculptor due to lack of time, whereupon, he writes, "as a result of this situation, I left very disappointed and frustrated, yet searching everywhere with the faith and conviction that someone would be able to do the job. The answer was the same everywhere until I finally found a man whose last name was Santander, who

lived on Villa San Antonio. Initially, he refused the job after I explained my situation, but gave me a tour of his workshop and asked if a face that he chose to show me would ‘do the job’. I answered yes overwhelmed with emotion, since it was the very image of the Lord of Great Power. Then, little by little, he began to take out several pieces, some corresponding to the legs, others to the hands, etc. In short, what was impossible became reality, the image was made already” (Lucio Chuquimia 1993: 33).

22. The names of the dancing troupes correspond to the 1972 *Entrada*.

23. The transition between “Indian” and “Cosmopolitan” clothing is much more drastic than first meets the eye. Indian garments are handmade locally, mostly by men’s hands (Abercrombie 1992). When someone wants to leave behind his condition as Indian, one of the first things he desires is a store-bought suit. Shoes entail an even more drastic change, since here the choice is whether to wear them or not. Beside the ethnic elements, moreover, elements of a more “purely” aesthetic nature are to be taken into account, such as, for example, the sophistication and luster promised by cosmopolitan clothing, as well as their conditions of exhibition in commerce and the graphic media.

24. Spedding’s (1994) analysis of feminine fashion in La Paz is excellent. A fine *pollera* or skirt, made of velvet or brocade, can cost up to one hundred dollars. Rich women have dozens of *polleras*, in addition to *mantas* (large shawls) made of vicuña wool or embroidered with silk thread, as well as several sets of petticoats, shoes, silk stockings, Borsalino hats, gold earrings and broaches. Customarily, a woman *de pollera* wears an undershirt or long slip, on top of which she dons one or several petticoats or *mankanchas* (“decent” women wear no less than two of these wide and heavy pieces). Between the shirt and the *mankancha* she wears a wide woven wool belt for warmth, especially during pregnancy. She does not wear a brassiere, and many wear underpants only to sleep or during menstruation. Atop the undershirt, belt, and *mankancha*, she wears a blouse and a *pollera*, both of which are already public garments.

25. In effect, the *Morenada* is the most ostentatious of all the dances performed by the well-to-do sectors. We have studied the representation of Black within this Gran Poder dance among the *Negritos* and the *Caporales Morenos* (Black Foremen) (Blásquez and Nusenovich 1993).

26. *Aguayos* are wedding gifts, commissioned by the suitor with the name of his beloved woven in. Contemporary examples include a name, a date, and a place. On those made for commercial ends, we also read “La Paz,” the year of sale, and other similarly homogeneous information. Used to carry everything, *aguayos* are typically used to carry children on the back of the women—a custom so closed to Indianness and so rarely put into question that even middle-class women allow their children to be carried in their servant’s *aguayos* (Spedding).

## Works Cited

- Abercrombie, Thomas. “La fiesta del caranval postcolonial en Oruro: Clase, etnicidad y nacionalismo en la danza folklórica.” In *Revista Andina* 10(2) (1992): 279-352.
- Acosta, Juan de. *Historia natural y moral de las Indias*. Madrid: BAE, 1954 (1550).
- Albó, Xavier & Matías Preiswerk. *Los Señores del Gran Poder*. La Paz: Centro de Teología Popular. Taller de Observaciones Populares, 1986.
- Artaud, Antonin. *El Teatro y su Doble*. Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1979.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Carta a los Poderes*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Argonauta, 1988.

- Austin, John. *How to do things with words*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1962.
- Bajtin, Mijail. *La cultura popular en la Edad Media y el renacimiento. El contexto de François Rabelais*. Madrid: Alianza Universidad, 1987.
- Baudinet, María José. "Rostro de Cristo, Forma de la Iglesia." In *Fragmentos para una Historia del Cuerpo Humano*, ed. Michel Feher, Ramona Nadaff, Nadia Tazi. Madrid: Taurus, 1990.
- Baxandall, Michael. *Pintura y Vida cotidiana en el Renacimiento*. Barcelona: Gustavo Gili Editor, 1978.
- Berman, Marshall. *All that is solid melts into air. The experience of modernity*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982.
- Blázquez, Gustavo & Marcelo Nusenovich. El vértice estético. Un enfoque interdisciplinario de la fiesta andina. In *Las Artes en el debate del V Centenario*. Buenos Aires: Universidad de Buenos Aires Press, 1992.
- \_\_\_\_\_. El poder en el Gran Poder. In *Arte y Poder*. Buenos Aires: Universidad de Buenos Aires Press, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_. La fiesta, o el juego de lo público y lo privado. In. *El Arte entre lo público y lo privado*. Buenos Aires: Caia, 1995.
- Bouysse-Cassagne & Olivia Harris. "Pacha: En torno al pensamiento Aymara." In *Tres reflexiones sobre el pensamiento andino*, ed. J. Medina. La Paz: Hisbol, 1987.
- Cereceda, Verónica. "Aproximaciones a una estética andina: De la belleza al Tinku." In *Tres reflexiones sobre el pensamiento andino*, ed. J. Medina. La Paz: Hisbol, 1987.
- Chuquimia, Lucio. "Reseña Histórica de la Festividad del Señor del Gran Poder." In *Alcaldía Municipal de La Paz. 1993. Gran Poder*. La Paz: H.A.M., 1993.
- Deleuze, Gilles & Félix Guattari. *Mil Plateaux (Capitalisme et Schizophrénie)*. París: Les Editions de Minuit, 1980.
- Geertz, Clifford. *Local Knowledge. Further essays in interpretative anthropology*. Basic Books Inc., 1983.
- Gisbert, Teresa. *Iconografía y Mitos indígenas en el Arte*. La Paz: Gisbert, 1980.
- Grelot, Pierre. Satán. In *Diccionario de las Religiones*. Barcelona: Herder, 1985.
- Levi-Strauss, Claude. *La voie des masques*. Paris: Plon, 1979.
- Nusenovich, Marcelo. Cuando el Diablo baila en la Fiesta. Research in Progress 1 (1), 1993.
- Panofsky, Erwin. *Estudios sobre Iconología*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1972.
- Paredes, Rigoberto. *Mitos, supersticiones y supervivencias populares de Bolivia*. La Paz: Burgos, 1973 (1920).
- Rosaldo, Renato. *Culture and Truth. The Remaking of Social Analysis*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1989.
- Silverblatt, Irene. s/d. *Dioses y Diablos: Idolatrías y Evangelización*.
- Spedding Alison. *Wachu Wachu. Cultivo de coca e identidad en los Yunkas de La Paz*. La Paz: Hisbol, 1994.
- Synnott, Anthony. *The Body Social*. London: Routledge Press, 1993.
- Taussig, Michael. *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America*. Chapel Hill: The U of North Carolina P, 1980.
- Turner, Victor & Edward Bruner, ed. *The Anthropology of Experience*. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1986.
- Van Kessel, Juan. *Cuando arde el tiempo sagrado*. La Paz: Hisbol, 1992.
- Wuthnow, Robert, et all. *Ánalisis Cultural*. Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1988.
- Yana, Fortunato. "Historia del Bordador." In *Alcaldía Municipal de La Paz. 1993. Gran Poder*. La Paz: H.A.M., 1993.



## Chapter 14

# Valparaiso School of Architecture Dossier

Various Authors

Dossier compiled by Mercedes F. Durán-Cogan  
Chapter edited by Rafael Gómez-Moriana

## Contents

### Introduction

The Valparaiso School and the Construct(ion) of Regional Identity  
Rafael Gómez-Moriana

### Part One

“Eneida-Amereida”  
Godofredo Iommi

### Part Two

Regarding Perception at the Valparaiso School of Architecture  
Roberto Godoy Arcaya

### Part Three

The Voyage as an Integral Part of Study and Conceptualization at the School of Architecture of the Catholic University of Valparaiso  
Bruno Barla Hidalgo

### Afterword

Building Culture: A *Travesía* Across the Open City at Ritoque  
Herbert Enns

## Introduction

### The Valparaiso School and the Construct(ion) of Regional Identity

Rafael Gómez-Moriana

The School of Architecture at the Catholic University of Valparaíso is an important experiment in architectural pedagogy that speculates on the possibility of a distinctly Latin American architecture founded upon values of artisanship and mytho-poetics. The utopian Open City in Viña del Mar, built by students and faculty of the Valparaíso School, is a physical manifestation of these values. Taken in the context of the currently prevailing model of western architecture, the Valparaíso School and the Open City represent, respectively, an implicit critique of—and an explicit alternative to—the industrialized and standardized building practices that dominate much of the built environment today.

With their emphasis on a poetics of place, the activities of the Valparaíso School can be vaguely described as ‘regionalist’ in their disposition. Since the late eighteenth-century rise of modern technoscience, regionalism has represented a *de facto* ‘architectural resistance movement’ to the technical and positivistic imperatives of a hegemonic, universalizing western civilization. Alan Colquhoun describes regionalism as an “approach [according to which] architecture should be firmly based on specific regional practices based on climate, geography, local materials, and local cultural traditions” (13). Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre write: “Regionalism has dominated architecture in almost all countries at some time during the past two centuries and a half. By way of a general definition we can say that it upholds the individual and local architectonic features against more universal and abstract ones” (apud Frampton 20-21).

Regionalism is thus an architectural theory that espouses the application of (anonymous) vernacular principles toward the (authored) work of architecture. The word ‘vernacular’ refers, of course, not only to a local style of building, but also to a local language or dialect. It is precisely language that distinguishes architecture from building, as Miriam Gusevich writes, referring to Adolf Loos’s famous aphorism that an architect is a builder who has learned Latin:

The term ‘architecture’ is of Greek and Latin provenance; ‘building’ on the other hand, has Anglo-Saxon roots. In common parlance, both have the same referent (structure, construction, edifice); they are synonyms. Nevertheless, they have different connotations: architecture meaning something superior to building. (8)

The ‘poetic regionalism’—a wordplay on the term ‘critical regionalism,’ coined by Tzonis and Lefavre and elaborated by Kenneth Frampton (for a critique of critical regionalism, see Fredric Jameson)—of the Valparaiso School, however, complicates this language-based architecture-building opposition: it is a school of ‘builder-architects’ who write poetry and who, in addition, undertake *travesías*, or poetic voyages across the South American continent. These activities of travel, writing, and construction are, in the field of architecture, often academic or techno-scientific by nature. At the Valparaiso School, however, they are mainly poetic.

Architectural travel originates in the eighteenth-century Classical Grand Tour of the ruins of ancient Greece and Rome, where it is mainly an activity comprising historical research and aesthetic contemplation. But the Valparaiso School’s *travesías* mark a significant departure from this tradition in that ‘travel’ here becomes, effectively, a form of artistic ‘performance work’ (interestingly, the French word for ‘work,’ *travail*, is the etymological origin of the English word ‘travel’). Not unlike Mexico-based conceptual artist Francis Alÿs, who, in one particular performance work, traveled “from Tijuana to San Diego without crossing the border between Mexico and the United States by flying via Santiago, Shanghai etc. to Vladivostok and Vancouver before arriving in California” (Ferguson 54), the Valparaiso School’s *travesías* are not necessarily means-to-ends but also very much poetic ends in themselves.

Secondly, the written text has a tradition in architecture usually as background research, construction specification document, design explanation, and architectural theorization or manifesto. In most cases, these are (con)textual complements to *a priori* architectural graphic representations or actual buildings. While theoretical texts or manifestos have, at times, been written in a poetic style, the writing of actual poetry is rare in architectural practice—a notable exception is Le Corbusier’s “Poème de l’angle droit” (1955). Just like its *travesías*, the Valparaiso School’s poetry is artistically autonomous and not intended as a caption or explanation for a privileged architectural image.

Finally, the ‘hands-on’ involvement of architects in the actual, physical construction of buildings is also quite exceptional. The architect usually *oversees* a building project: ‘designer-builder’ architects do exist, but they are considered marginal or underground among mainstream architects, who largely perceive this activity as a threat to the profession’s elite social status. The Open City in Viña del Mar attests to the priority that the Valparaiso School places on the hand-made, on the artisanal, on a degree of ‘authenticity.’

Here, it is important to appreciate that as the bureaucratic and technical processes of building have become more complex in this century, and as new professionals such as construction managers and highly specialized technical consultants have become integral components of these processes, the division of labor between designer

and builder has widened significantly. With architects increasingly playing more of a mediating or coordinating role between all the parties involved in a complex building project, the *art* of architecture and the very notion of authorship this entails becomes increasingly anachronistic. Of course, architecture can never be a 'pure' art, one that is free of contingency, since it is differentiated from art, at least traditionally, according to the criterion of functionality: architecture is always *functional* to some degree; while art is precisely *non-functional*. Furthermore, artists usually initiate and carry out a work themselves, while professional architects work mostly on commission and provide a set of blueprints, or instructions, for builders to carry out the actual construction. But architecture is not purely engineering either. In engineering, the design solution to a *problem* must always be the optimal one in terms of efficiency. Architectural design is not only a question of quantitative problem-solving, but also, if not more so, a question of giving meaningful expression—indeed *identity*—to built form, for which there is never a single, optimum 'solution.' It is interesting to note, however, that architects and artists have begun to reverse these traditional roles and definitions. Many contemporary artists are today creating environments, furniture, and other objects that aspire to functional use, while at the same time contemporary architects are increasingly exploring the poetics of architecture through more autonomous practices such as installation art, artist's books, sculpture, drawing, and painting, objects that have traditionally resided in the art world. While artists are increasingly involving industrial collaboration in their work, a new generation of architects is making things by hand, eschewing industry. It is precisely in this expressive realm that the Valparaiso School researches the poetics of architecture.

It is with the poetics of architecture that the Valparaiso School is mainly concerned. Here, the notion of the architect as an overseeing professional is eschewed in favor of the architect as an artisan, as a *maker* of things. Indeed, students participate collectively and hands-on in the very construction of the Open City, thus actually bringing designs beyond the level of representation in the form of reduced-scale drawings and models, and to fruition in the form of actual buildings. The role of the architect as a technician, a planner, or an 'engineer' who designs in order to foresee all potential problems in advance, is cast aside, along with the reliance on Cartesian geometry that a division of labor between designer and builder entails. This allows for more organic forms, as form is liberated from the imperative to be efficiently translated, via conventions based in geometry, from drawing to building. Form, at the Open City, is also not principally dictated by *function*, another external imperative, but by the poetic intent of the artisans. Finally, buildings at the Open City bear no individual stamp, but are the result of collective decision-making, thus rebuking the hero-myth of the architect as a lone genius.

The Open City shares, in this regard, some affinity with counterculture settlements built in the 1960s and '70s in many pockets along the North American West Coast. An example of this is Hornby Island on the west coast of Canada, where a 'back-to-the-land' design-build culture emerged whose trademark is a highly expressionistic and rustic architecture built largely out of locally scavenged materials. As in the Open City, Hornby Island's designer-builders cite the natural land and its mystical and poetic dimension as the source of inspiration for their work. Hornby Island's structures are also built without first planning and drawing every detail, thereby inviting improvisation to the design-build process. Bo Helliwell and Michael McNamara, two Hornby Island designer-builders, write that:

. . . bureaucratic controls, conventional space standards, manufactured building materials, service grids, mortgages—all of these would quash the spontaneity and delight of these self-build fantasies. None of these homes was the product of a drawing board, but rather a response between a place and its people. (454-55)

Like those of The Open City, Hornby Island's buildings were constructed in adaptation to their physical and social sites rather than the sites adapted, through the use of earth-moving equipment, to any pre-determined building plan. As in the Open City, many of Hornby Island's buildings have been freely altered and modified over many years, while others have been left entirely to the mercy of natural forces:

These houses, with their natural materials and often amorphous forms, show a conscious effort to blend into the landscape—in some cases, they actually disappeared. An attitude toward landscape and building is revealed—an attitude of respect . . . This could be contrasted to another attitude: progress, development, wholesale land clearing and servicing—white houses on the hill. (*Ibid.* 453)

But whereas Hornby Island represents a self-consciously marginal and countercultural withdrawal from the rest of its continent, the Valparaiso School differs in this regard, appropriating instead the entire South American continent as a site for poetic-architectural action. This is apparent in the very word 'Amereida', the title of the poem by Valparaiso School co-founder Godofredo Iommi, which is an amalgamation of the words "América" and "Eneida" (*Aeneid*). By making reference to Virgil's poem recounting the myth of the founding of Rome, *Amereida* presents itself as no less than a founding myth for a new South American destiny. Iommi's poem effectively represents, for the Valparaiso School, a mission statement or a

manifesto, a call for poetic action that is regularly invoked in the writings, *travesías*, and constructions carried out by the School.

Describing South America's interior as an "abyss," an "internal sea" that represents "the unknown," *Amereida* suggests that the South American continent is open to re-conceptualization and re-discovery, but this time by Americans themselves. For Iommi, America is an alien construct that can only be authentically reconstructed 'at home.' He suggests that myth, if not history, can be reinvented, and that a new beginning, assuming a new identity, is legitimate. But this re-construction, however regionally focused, must embrace the world because "no aborigines ever lived in America—they lived in the world, the universe." Thus *Amereida* represents, in fact, a global outlook with a regional perspective. The Valparaiso School has published and mounted exhibitions internationally. Bruno Barla's contribution contains a full bibliography.

Such a global outlook, from the particular viewpoint of postcolonial South America, is precisely what the French architect Le Corbusier urged in a series of lectures given in 1929 in Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro, during these lectures giant sketches were drawn before the audience in a manner that bears striking resemblance to Bruno Barla's lectures at the Open City. In these lectures, Le Corbusier addresses South American identity and its place in the world with characteristically modernist urgency: "You in South America are in a country both old and young; you are young nations and your race is old. Your destiny is to act now" (245). Furthermore, Le Corbusier also invokes Virgil while explaining a scheme to replicate his famous Villa Savoie near Paris in Argentina:

This same house, I should set it down in a corner of the beautiful Argentine countryside; we shall have twenty [of the same] houses rising from the high grass . . . The inhabitants, who came here because this countryside with its rural life was beautiful, will contemplate it, maintained intact, from their hanging gardens, or through the four sides of their long windows. Their home life will be set in a Virgilian dream. (139)

The globalism Le Corbusier invokes, then, is that of industrial standardization and mass-production, an attitude that the Valparaiso School clearly rejects. Ann Pendleton Jullian, in her book on the Open City, points out that

It is significant that the founders of the institute [the Valparaiso School] were influenced by the words of Le Corbusier, removing from the entire body of work its plastic qualities, which are clearly influenced by the 'modern' promises of technology; extracting his attitude toward the

making of architecture, toward creativity, and these in relation to poetry and the poetic, from his forms and materiality. (50)

The Valparaiso School's importation of some ideas while rejecting others from the same models—even models as dogmatic and totalizing as Le Corbusier's—and its sampling and synthesizing from different traditions betrays an embrace of 'hybridity' and free experimentation. This attitude is especially evident in two of the contributions that follow: Godofreddo Iommi's poetic address to the students of the School, and Bruno Barla's incorporation of an 'American sense of vastness' in his drawings of Palladio's architecture in Italy. Both Barla's montage of text and image and Roberto Godoy's discussion of the 'tangible' and the 'intangible' phenomena of a 'cause-place' outline poetic methods for transforming observation and poetic reflection into architectural action. Observation and making are, in this regard, seen as reciprocal—if not ambiguous—activities. The ephemeral 'works of architectural openness' that are built during the Valparaiso School's *travesías* are themselves ambiguous in that they serve both as devices for perceiving the land in a certain way and as interventions that transform the land itself into architecture, into *landscape*. The relation of The Open City to its landscape is illustrated and discussed further by my colleague Herb Enns, whose text and photographs of The Open City serve, in conjunction with this introduction, to frame the contributions of Iommi, Barla and Godoy.

The Valparaiso School proves, in the final analysis, that *poiesis* has a rightful place in architecture, and a poetic architecture a rightful place in shaping the identity of a region. Appropriately, it does not argue this proposition logically, as I am attempting to do here, but poetically and passionately. Ultimately, the activities of The Valparaiso School convey a passionate love for the craft of making, whether it is that of a poem or of a city. "If the language analogy has something to offer to architectural theory, it would seem to be the discourse of poetry to which we should look, rather than to the discourse of science with its true or false assertions; to rhetoric rather than to logic" (Harries 89).

## Works Cited

- Colquhoun, Alan. "The Concept of Regionalism." In *Postcolonial Space(s)*, ed. Nalbantoglu, Gülsüm Baydar and Wong Chong Thai. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997.
- Ferguson, Bruce W. "Restless Productions." In *Walks/Paseos*, ed. Francis Alÿs. Mexico: Museo de Arte Moderno, 1997.
- Frampton, Kenneth. "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance." In *The Anti-Aesthetic*, ed. Hal Foster. Seattle: Bay Press, 1983.
- Gusevich, Miriam. "The Architecture of Criticism." In *Drawing Building Text*, ed. Andrea Kahn. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1991.

- Harries, Karsten. *The Ethical Function of Architecture*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1998.
- Helliwell, Boh and Michael McNamara. The Hand-Built Houses of Hornby Island. In *Architectural Design Profiles 14* 48 (1978): 450-55.
- Jameson, Fredric. The Constraints of Postmodernism. In *The Seeds of Time*. New York: Columbia UP, 1994.
- Le Corbusier. *Precisions on the Present state of Architecture and City Planning*. Trans. Edith Schreiber Aujame. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1991. French original: *Précisions sur l'état présent de l'architecture et de l'urbanisme*. Paris: Crès et Cie., 1930. Reprint: Paris: Éditions Vincent Fréal et Cie., 1960.
- Pendleton Jullian, Ann M. *The Road That Is Not a Road and the Open City, Ritoque, Chile*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1996.

## Part One

### Eneida-Amereida

Godofredo Iommi<sup>1</sup>

Translated by Cristina Santaella and Mercedes F. Durán-Cogan

Many are the ways of reading, and all are legitimate. We can read with boredom, hesitating with fatigue or with daydreams, suspended by perplexity. Sometimes we read with delight, along the groove of the culture in which one has matured; yet other times we read to learn, to shine in the reflections of our memory. Sometimes, not often, reading touches us, awakens us, warns us, or summons us. The manner in which it happens does not matter if reading is transformed into a touch, a call. It could be said then that reading befalls us like an experience. Defining experience, Heidegger used to say that the best manner to understand it was through popular expressions, as in “the house tumbled down on me,” or “the world collapsed upon me.”<sup>2</sup> When something falls upon us there is experience. In the same manner that a wound alerts and reveals the body, this experience opens us, prompts questions and suggests answers simultaneously. And then there is tradition.

I want to clarify what we understand by tradition: for us, tradition opens up the new and supports and slides out of the works which renovate it with language and existence. It is common to present the terms “tradition” and “novelty”—or, as some would say, tradition and adventure—as almost opposite. Sometimes the logical inclination to assert and deny things can lead us towards deceit under the appearance of clarity, and a certain laziness of intelligence plays a part in this process. To be brief, let’s take certain givens as a point of departure; for example, the given that tradition is inherited. This often means that tradition is maintained by repeating the past in order not to adulterate it by transitory changes. But tradition and heritage can be thought of in another manner. For example, heritage as something that illuminates, something that is brought to light or given light, like a woman giving birth to a child, thus pointing towards, indicating, or rather opening up an existential field. Rather than ascribing to or preserving axioms, heritage spouts and springs creatively. Tradition incites the heritage that brings it to light in such a manner that it seems life itself. As such, it would be ever-present everywhere, and therefore always immediate. But its immediacy conceals it just as the immediacy of the surface does not let the wall be recognized. Heritage, or in this case to inherit, would mean to bring tradition to light: that is to say, to listen to its call in order to unveil it. Tradition or actual history in its temporal essence would be manifested in the act of concealing and

appearing, ascending and descending, like high and low tides that respond to the invisible attraction of the moon, for example. Tradition would thus be the very rhythm of our existence.

Perhaps, then, the essential aspect of tradition is not so much what is inferred from an initial postulate, but rather from its own call that suddenly breaks in, that is obeyed or disobeyed, that is fulfilled or unfulfilled, and that conceals itself until it reappears once again.

Perhaps cultures are constructed in this manner. Tradition through heritage is an invitation to recreate it, as if its emergence were its own being. Perhaps it is because of the peculiar way in which only some men, and not others, hear the call of tradition, that peoples become different peoples. Perhaps. It would seem that the history of a people is like a melody (high and low notes) that designs the mode in which tradition is recreated within it. More than a tradition established once and forever, one which would tend to be maintained, there is a pulsation that at times manifests itself and gives birth to one of its profiles. Other times, after being heard anew, tradition will reveal another of its facets, or perhaps its unedited countenance. And thus, successively, this pulsation discovers an always hidden diamond that summons us—if we can hear it—to make it shine anew. Where then lies this tradition, always so immediate and so hidden, always so much alive, waiting to be inherited and renewed? Is it in the dream of a future? In the memory of a past? In the West at least, tradition lives in certain modes of quotidian existence, and above all in what is most immediate for man—in the word, in language. When there is some fracture, some rupture of what is obvious, of that which is immediate in language, when language breaks up, we can hear tradition speak through this fissure, it is through this opening that tradition comes alive. It will present itself as a motion of the soul, as a furtive spark in our thought, as an echo's resonance or an abstraction, as a dream or a vague inclination. But it never abandons us again.

Thus, there are readings that touch existence beyond psyche, as if language were listening to itself as the sound of the sea hidden within the shells we listen to when we were children. And we can hear language's most precious and hidden self—its variegated diamond. Tradition, always renewed, blooms and bustles around, weaving language out of Poetry: language for the sciences and for the crafts, for the body and for the mind, language for language itself. I want to deal with the question of our American “*ser*,” our being, our spirit. This also refers to “destiny,” which in this case is not intended to mean “fatality,” but rather the lot of fortune and misfortune, the rhythm of fortune and misfortune that touches us, that concerns us; the rhythm with which and in which we resonate, and through which we become persons (*per-solare*). Ultimately, the question about our American being cannot be a scientific one, for it does not belong to a demarcated field in which we can find predictable and verifiable answers. Rather, it is a poetic question in its all-inclusive and

ambiguous complexity. The answer to the question is also poetic, which is why it opens up to us with signs but without certainties.

We receive tradition within our heritage, but what is the heritage and the tradition we receive? None other than language and a love for the unknown, which is inherent to all fatherland seekers. In language we become, we live, and we die. If we are not as alert as a wound is—but a pleasing, soft wound like a lip (lips are a wound, a wound that speaks)—our love of the unknown will be veiled, it will hide from us. Without language and without love for the unknown we are not within tradition, we do not receive a heritage. What is improper for us? To lose the meaning of the present, our present, and become safely ensconced in comfort and happiness. Neither Carthage nor Dido should make us forsake the meaning of the present, which is our soul. Not the soul as a vital principle, but rather in the sense of a melting void where America can be finally reunited with itself. Only from this void would we be able to undertake the journey of the dead and listen to the shapes, the rhythms it will take along its path, those it must appropriate, both in language and in the love of the unknown, and ultimately, in destiny.

Our grandmothers never told us bedtime stories about America; nobody has ever been cradled in America, except the aboriginal peoples who did do it, not for America, however, but for this their world. Nobody has nurtured us with stories dealing with the discovery of America, its conquest, or its fight for independence. In other places, children are still lulled to sleep with stories about Achilles or Siegfried and the witches, which also have the same origin. The first thing that this reveals to us is that we still do not know where our dead rest. But we have to confront them. And we have two possible ways, two possible leads to do so. One of these leads comes from Asia, but it has reached us through Europe for many centuries. It amounts to the conception of death as a seed that lives and ripens within the fruit, thus giving birth to another seed that will re-engage another fruit. In the word of a poet such as Rilke, this seed will come to be called "death itself." Each human being carries within him throughout his life his own death, his own manner of death, which slowly matures with him, like the ripening seed itself. Behind this there are many unexplored possibilities.

The second lead we can follow takes us to an open death, an improper, ill-timed death. *The Iliad's* heroes die unusual deaths, uncommon, un-proper, not "proper," "common" deaths. Both the seed-death and the improper death are rooted in the most profound and obscure reaches of human tradition. But we must confront them lest we die in an ordinary manner. To these two kinds of death we could add a third one: a common death, one that is as ordinary as a piece of bread. A common death is an irrelevant death, one that has not been revealed to us, one that has no meaning. We have to confront death so that we may know how to live and may decide what kind of death we want. Our pietas is founded on gratitude, on not losing, not

forgetting the sense of the present, on opening up to the world. Our opening up to the American world is not a political, economic, or anthropological problem, not even a historical problem. Our own being depends on it. And why do we place our being into opening up America to the world? Because our heroism—that is to say, our Eros—our manner of gratitude, our way of loving is to assume the unknown. But the unknown at all levels, the general and the immediate level, the concrete level that we have at hand. We could also speak of the unknown in gratitude, in the present, in death. We could also speak of the unknown in human relationships, in the relationships which will bloom one day among the human beings of America, who will have a distinct character. And there is also the geographically unknown. When one speaks of geography it is usually thought that the term refers to objective things that belong to heaven and earth. But heaven and earth are invented things, not natural things. Geography does not exist. Geography is a way of creating nature. And we have characterized the unknown as a sea, an ocean, as an open invitation to the great shipwrecks of America. The internal sea of America and the Pacific Ocean. Journey of the want, journey towards the improper, journey of the dead, journey as the way of living and dying in the light of *The Aeneid*.

Recognizing ourselves as Latin means to embrace the Aboriginal, the Mestizo, the Black, and all the races, the colors, and the mores of the world. Our structure is still an obscure one, but it is dense, and it is our own. It is rooted in the tradition of all those who shaped America. I do not claim to speak the truth, but if what I say here is true, if what I enunciate is possible, we must undertake this journey through Amereida, again and again, as we did once. Because we will not free ourselves from want, from impropriety, from the dead, from our way of living and dying in only one journey. History does not behave like this. As I said at the beginning, History conceals and manifests itself, it appears and disappears. It is the rhythm of our own existence. Periodically, we should look at ourselves under this light in order to re-initiate the journeys, lest we fall asleep again.

## Notes

1. Compiler's Note: This text originated in a seminar given in 1974 by the poet Godofredo Iommi at the Valparaiso School of Architecture—founded by him and the architect Alberto Cruz. Lost in the archives of the School for a quarter of a century, I include it here for its historical as well as its poetic value. Due to space constraints we have had to edit Iommi's beautiful but lengthy analysis of Virgil's *The Aeneid*, a segment in which he traced the parallels between Aeneas' quest and the quest for a Latin American identity. Other than this, Iommi's text appears as it was delivered to the students at the newly-opened School of Architecture. (M. F. Durán-Cogan).

2. Translations of the Spanish colloquialisms “se me cayó la casa encima” and “se me cayó el mundo encima,” which denote an overwhelmingly adverse state of emotion or situation.

## Part Two

# Regarding Perception at the Valparaíso School of Architecture

Roberto Godoy Arcaya

Translated by Mercedes F. Durán-Cogan

Founded in 1952 by a group of poets and architects, the School of Architecture of the *Universidad Católica de Valparaíso* in Chile has enjoyed a long and adventurous process of consolidation that deeply influenced Valparaíso, the city in which it is located, and evolved into the design and establishment of a new city, the *Ciudad Abierta*. From its inception until today, the members of the school have consistently assessed every decision and every step taken, changing course along the way and following new, uncharted paths whenever the circumstances required it. This unusual willingness to change enabled the school to establish the *Open City* on the sand dunes at the edge of the Pacific Ocean, to draw the Southern Cross over the American continent and generate *Amereida*, and to institute the yearly *Travesías* that send students and professors deep into the vast territories of América. However, this *andadura*, this journeying, embodies something substantial that persists and acts within it: the poetic foundation that directs and permeates every undertaking of the School, illuminating it, giving it a meaning. It is precisely the poetic foundations of its thought that have given the School an eminent presence in contemporary reflections about architecture.

In these notes I will attempt to define how an architectural work identifies itself with the space that will receive it, according to my understanding and experience of the postulates embraced by the School. I will attempt to explain the mechanisms that allowed the School's creative persistence to emerge, and the manner in which we learned to experience and develop within this poetic creativity as a means to experience and develop a particular understanding of architecture. Since a poetic experience is always singular, what I will describe here should only be understood as a constellation of signs open to multiple interpretations. I hope that they will also open the way for a renewed reflection and dialogue on Latin America's architecture and on architecture in general.

## The Poetic Foundation

The Valparaiso School's theoretical approach is grounded on the conviction that, to genuinely integrate with its environment, an architectural form *must have* a poetic foundation. In consequence, student's training focuses on the need to understand and embrace poetry—in its most ample sense—as the essential impulse that sustains any architectural work. From their first year at the School, the student's comprehension and application of this notion in every project they undertake is essential, and will continue to be expected of them once they become architects. The dictum “listen to the origin” is repeated constantly at the School. And, for students and teachers alike, this sentence conveys the poetic universe that engenders architectural forms, that causes them to rise above the ground, that sustains their materiality and gives meaning to their functions.

Of course, it does not refer to “all” or to “any” poetry, but to the poetry that can reveal, that can *cause a place* in our continent, in América; a poetry that can cause and signify that a befitting place to receive the word and the scope of those who undertake this search has been found within our geographical space. The poetic basis for the school's pursuit—and claim—of a distinct Latin American “cause-place” was elaborated in *Amereida*, a collective book written by a group of poets, architects, sculptors, and painters affiliated with the School who journeyed through Latin America, from Cape Horn to Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia.

Any space can become the “cause-place” that generates and determines an architectural work. Thus, all geographical territories, in their ancestral movement that encompasses all that which is constant, and all the aggregate of notions, events, and teguments left on them by the persistence of human life, are open to this encounter with the poetic word. This possibility—that reveals that there is “cause-place” and acceptance—must be the force that propels us towards our continent, América, the inhabited and the unclaimed; her vastness generates words which assert that we must establish new cities, new forms that will be born under the sign of a poetic principle: there is cause; there is place; there is cause to place. The implementation of this claim will be the task of those who are willing to create their architectural work from the foundations provided by the poetic word. This is not, of course, the exclusive right of architects: others may create different substances drawing out their energy from a poetic source, or create a poetic source drawing out their energy from different substances. But in these pages my concern is to draw out, to leave a testimony of what the architects from Valparaiso do, or should be doing, according to their own poetic principles.

## Perception

Access to the poetic origin of the forms must be instituted at the same moment that a reflection about the space is entered into. That is, when word and hands, concerted by the gaze, bestow their freedom upon the creative thought and follow unhesitatingly its insight about how, where, and under what form a work of architecture will be erected. The essential element to establish the connection between poetry and architecture is perception.

To perceive is to situate oneself at the chosen space, motionless or walking, observing, smelling, touching, sensing, knowing; with spirit and mind opened to what the senses perceive about its forms, light, color; receptive to intuitions, to the voices of others, to what the flight of the birds may indicate. From the communication that has been established between the space of the chosen place, and the observer open to perceive and receive its signs, certain elements emerge that can now be designated by words, by sentences that will evoke, convene, define and discern the events that took place during the observation. This is the "word" that can be enunciated by those willing to situate themselves within the realm of perception.

The observer—an architect or a student at the Valparaiso School—that looks at the spaces of the city with the purpose of designing a work of architecture, will always situate himself at eccentric points that look into the center where events take place. To perceive is to be one of—one with—the shadows of the place; from within them, the observer will visualize, organize, and determine what is that "takes place" within his chosen space. At other times, the observer will be slowly assimilated by the center, will become a new element that intervenes and transforms the space. This will happen when he chooses to act on it, either alone, or as a participant in the course of a Poetic Act, as it will be explained later. It will, of course, always be the case when he places an actual work of architecture within the space. But in these, as in many other circumstances, he must continue perceiving. Thus, the body of the architect becomes a sieve that organizes what is constantly developing and taking place in the spaces he has selected.

### Perceiving the Tangible

Within the same observation of a space, there is a difference between perceiving the *tangible*, the recognizable, and perceiving the *intangible*, that which cannot be recognized. In this section, I will describe a personal experience that exemplifies how the perception of the tangible is developed. In the following section, I will proceed to explain the latter.

I had just been admitted to the School as a student when Alberto Cruz Covarrubias, founder of the School and professor of architecture, assigned to all first year students in the Architectural Studio course the task of observing the city every night during a

week. The only explanation Cruz offered us was that the city continued to evolve and transform itself during the night; that many processes, specific to the city, unfolded and concluded while most of its inhabitants were asleep. Specifically, the assignment consisted in drawing anything we saw that had a particular meaning for us, or that we found subjectively interesting; around, above, or below our drawings, we were to write the words or sentences that best described our thoughts about what we were observing, perceiving and drawing. In conclusion, every night for a week we were to walk throughout the city, with our minds opened up to its signs, until one of them—a particular corner, or a tree among buildings—touched our senses and made us stop; we had to experience the urge, not only of looking at it, but of studying it, drawing it, attempting to define its attraction through words and sentences. These words and sentences could either comment and clarify the drawing itself, or be used to express new perspectives about the configuration and meaning of this particular encounter with the city. This piece of paper, inscribed with drawings and words, is what the School calls “a sketch”: the essential observation tool of the architect, of the student of architecture, and of anyone wishing to unravel the labyrinthine conundrum of physical elements that surround our bodies.

In order to complete the project, I drew and wrote about what, for me, was the most immediate and evident element of the night: the street lights. Within the space covered by their brightness, outlines, figures, forms, and presences of the city—both animate and inanimate—appeared. Thus, my drawings delimited an urban profile based in artificial points of light that, necessarily, could only reveal fragments of what was there or took place there. The rest was obscured, immersed in twilight and shadows, or totally absent, engulfed by darkness. The sketches I made to demonstrate this observation were drafted over white paper; the points of light and the figures illuminated by them were drawn with a lead pencil, which I also used to write my observations. Thus, the resulting sketches inverted the white and black of what I was drawing: the extensive darkness and the points of light would have been more accurately rendered by drawing with white pencil over black paper. Still, the sketches managed to be appropriate, to convey the particular urban occurrence I had observed. This enigmatic event, that suggested that some sort of mediations and “translations” were taking place, made us, first year students, suspect something that would later be confirmed through experience: our scripted sketches were a deeply intellectual equation; it originated in our perceptions, was elaborated within us, and returned to the perceptible world as a recognizable visual formula, a symbolic representation capable of being transmitted to all those that understood architectural thought. In consequence, our sketches were neither “illustrations,” nor “pictorial creations,” but acts of “reflection”—understood as image, deliberation and observation—that should be prolonged indefinitely.

Throughout these seven urban nights, my recurrent theme—artificial light as source of images of the city—gradually expanded, giving me access to other aspects of the same phenomenon. Thus, I made sketches of illuminated windows, isolated, framed and suspended by the dark air of the night; over them, I made annotations that, for example, elucidated the manner in which a particular window appeared almost disconnected, weightless, amidst the mesh of dark, sleeping windows that surrounded it. At the neighborhood near the harbor, I also sketched flickering assemblages of lights that identified doors opening into the night life of Valparaiso; and I sketched and explained how, behind these doors, an endless dance took place; and how there were other doors within, concealed behind faint, deliberate lights, that opened into the furtive spaces of meager love.

After the week was over, we had to present our observations—that is, our scripted sketches. It was necessary to create an order, a certain continuity of thought, and to reach some tentative conclusions. Each student selected and arranged his or her sketches, pasting them over large cardboard displays which became poliptychs that ascertained our thought's journeys on the streets and spaces of the city. Over the displays, new inscriptions and drawings were made attempting to give coherence to the whole; in turn, these were traversed by lines, circles and arrows that, at a single glance, attested to, and expressed, the difficult path that must be followed to reveal the spaces object of our observations.

I still remember the now distant conclusions I reached on that first project. The city was fastened by spherical and quadrangular patches of light, and diffused by gaps of solitude and silence; this combination revealed, or at least suggested, its concealed and penetrating motions. Perhaps this vague recollection reflects the impact of my first night's experience with the city. I can still recall the dimensions of the ellipses of light thrown by the street lamps, and the larger areas of darkness between them; I remember the imagined measurements of a particular window, carefully calculated through the black contour of a man's upper body leaning lazily against its frame. The brightness that surrounded his dark silhouette, and the luminosity emerging from similar, more distant windows, shaped an intricate web that was, at once, motionless in the magnitude of the night, and flowing with the hidden existences that caused its radiance. Finally, I remember the frequency and speed of the buses that turned a particular corner, their illuminated windows offering glimpses of tired and sleeping passengers. All my observations attempted to explain the serene, almost languid penetration of light in the city's nocturnal space, only heightened by the presence of nocturnal life, by the sounds at the taverns, by the swiftness of the buses cruising the night streets.

I was aware, however, of not being able to fully express what I had perceived; something else was there, something disquieting that I could not formulate. It was the "intangible," that which could not be

recognized, and that later I would come to understand. Other students were presenting different observations, had followed different paths; some had climbed the cliffs of Valparaíso and depicted the multitude of shining specks that covered the urban topography; some had situated themselves at the seashores, on the harbor, on top of rocky ledges, and observed the firm and fluid somber boundaries that determined the city's relationship with the sea. Others, like me, had chosen to wander through the labyrinthine streets of the city, and sketched open spaces with trees, crossroads, men carrying supplies, glimmers in the pavement, terraces, cornices, or solitary people seated on park benches.

Each of us freely chose the path of architectural observation he or she should follow along this penetration of the city's domain. During a full semester, week after week, always with different tasks of observation within the city—the night was never again a specific assignment, but we all returned freely to it—a whole macrocosm of observations and perceptions was slowly coagulating within us. In sequence, these observations shaped a constellation made of places and speculations that, at the end, would enable us to formulate and implement the architectural work each of us had to present as project at the end of the semester. The constellation of sketches, texts, layouts, and conclusions conformed an effective mechanism that, suddenly or gradually, provided the means to design the architectural form we had chosen. The process of consolidation culminated at the end of the semester when, under the supervision of the Studio professor—in this case, Alberto Cruz Covarrubias—each of us planned an architectural work based on our observations; it was left to us to decide the location, function, construction method, building materials and, of course, the architectural style. Our projects turned into blueprints and scale models, which were exhibited together with the scripted sketches we had produced during the semester. The aim was to demonstrate how, from the diversity of our observations, a distinct and singular process of architectural thought and work had emerged. Although it should be obvious, let me clarify that, concurrently with Studio, we had to take many other theoretical courses that provided us with the technical and humanistic knowledge every architect should have. The information acquired in these courses had to be, one way or the other, incorporated into our Studio projects, as were our personal experiences, readings, travels, encounters and attitudes. Observation is not an act that binds a particular individual with a specific place in an exclusive manner. Rather, from the first perception of a space, an attempt should be made to establish the web of correlations that, ultimately, will constitute the substance, validity and coherence of an architectural work.

In consequence, even as students or apprentices we had to demonstrate a solid cohesion between our observations and the work we had designed—as should be the case for any architectural work that wants to claim a measure of authenticity; in addition, our

observations had to be comprehensible to anyone wanting to know the foundation and justification of any particular architectural project. As with most creative work, often these projects revealed some unexplainable segments: zones or aspects that were clearly unlike the totality in which they appeared; it was almost as if a different materiality had penetrated the whole—or a fragment—of the work, giving it a singular, indefinable quality. It could be a border, a stain, a trace, a veiled intensity towards the center or the periphery, but it was always an atypical extension of the observed. The presence of something imperceptible, *intangible*, was precisely what revealed that a particular work had surpassed the limits of the factual and tangible, to reach into the origins of the “cause-place,” that is, into the work’s poetic foundations.

### **Perceiving the Intangible**

The perception of the intangible transcends and resolves the process of conscious observation from which it arises: it addresses precisely that which cannot be easily communicated, establishing new kinds of relationships with the events that originated the conscious observation. At its origin, the intangible is that which cannot be expressed logically, is apparently devoid of references, and does not have a recognizable name. However, the intangible resides and endures as a spatial form, luminous and enigmatically enveloped in the sum of assertions, definitions, explanations, and registers that complement the elaborated graphic and intellectual representations of that which has been observed, or an already consolidated architectural project. The poetic emergence of the “cause-place,” first detected during the process of observation, begins now to coalesce and unfold as an active entity. Consciously or inadvertently, the observer is able to unveil this ignored nucleus of the space. There are certain signs or paths that may be heeded in order to retrieve these singular, inexpressible zones of observation. To explain them, in the following sections I will deal with what the eyes see, the words say, and the hands design, during these specific and revealing moments of an observation.

It is necessary to clarify that I am not solely referring to the learning process at the Valparaiso School of Architecture, but to the poetic gestation of any architectural work, as I understood it during my years of study there. It is from this perspective that I have narrated what a first-year student understood about the city and its multi-faceted forms. From the very first moment—with only minimal, precarious weapons at his disposal—he had to immerse himself, and accomplish, acts of reflection normally expected of full-fledged architects. In due time, the students that persevered would find themselves—and their various conceptions of architecture—deeply evolving while accomplishing these principles.

## What the Eye Sees

I have mentioned before that the body of the observer has to be entirely and tensely positioned within his chosen space. During his observation, sight is perhaps the sense that will have the most prolonged and methodical role: it perceives and determines the reproduction of certain forms in the sketching pad and, throughout the process that culminates in the architectural work itself, its language will be the link between the spatial form and its graphic representation. Sounds and scents will, of course, be assimilated into the observation and can even determine the final shape of a work; for instance, when the space is destined to become a concert hall. However, these aspects will only be addressed while defining the functions of the building: its physical appearance must always be a visual perception that will envelop them, give them a permanent spatial configuration. The envisioned building—that will necessarily include textures, that is, a tactile dimension—is a fixed system that incorporates all that can be apprehended by the senses.

The eye—that is, the gaze—is the main tool for the accurate perception of a space during an act of observation. The first task of the architect during an observation is to understand and organize the different effluences perceived by his gaze, since these constitute his particular cognizance of the observed space. The full spectrum of the observed space can thus appear within his sketches, essential images whose meanings have already been examined and assimilated and can, therefore, be elucidated through a discourse that may be accessible to many. Albeit, this does not comprehend everything there is during an observation. In every observation of a space there will always be something that eludes our capacity to unveil. It may be only a curve that, depending on the direction of the wind, seems to uncover a tunnel; or a particular angle where the sun brushes a sliding piece of fabric, or any of all those impalpable things that we are able to perceive with strength and amazement, but unable to translate their wonder into the canon of recognizable—and therefore manageable—images: at the end, we are left with the feeling that they exist beyond the particular order we are attempting to establish. Thus, we know we have perceived something that “takes place”—full of unexplored potential—but, unable to define it, to render it precise, to determine its limits, we can only become conscious of its existence. But this awareness is already a major step in any process of observation.

There is yet another fortuitous element of which we can never become conscious: it appears unexpectedly and spontaneously in observations and projects. Sometimes its force is such that it becomes the main factor that makes a particular work of architecture truly exceptional. Both the conscious and the unconscious observation of the intangible conform the thread that ties the poetic emergence of the “cause-place” with the sensible wholeness of the completed work of architecture.

### **What the Words Say**

We have become aware that not all the images our eyes perceive during an observation can be translated into recognizable forms in our sketches. It is now that, through the language of words, we will seek to gradually unveil, describe, and define that which could not be determined through the glance. During this process, our perception will attempt to find precise, appropriate words to convey something which, seemingly, is no more than an impression without known sources or consequences. Guided by inspiration, suddenly or with great effort, our mind must find, our lips must pronounce, and our hand must write, the sentences that will give meaning and brightness to the inscrutable image.

The words in these sentences configure the outer limits of the intended images, making them shine, leaving them open to contemplation and endless interpretation. The sentences themselves instate and construe the poem that will be manifested, embodied by the architectural work: there is cause to place. And if it so happens that the observer believes that these sentences are not sufficiently expressive, that the perceived image is far more complex and poignant than what was communicated through them, he may resort to loose words, invocations almost, that will strive to give a more subtle or brutal meaning, a transparency, an almost audible resonance or reverberation to the observed.

And if these invocations cannot reveal the inscrutable dimensions of the observed space, perhaps he will resort to isolated sounds, breaking thus the silence that surrounds this singular, intense side of his observation. Finally, if we continue our penetration into that which is intangible and inscrutable, and recognize what is unutterable as well, we will be left ultimately with silence, with the suspension of all attempts at recognition, and—perhaps—with a perfect feeling of wonderment and fascination. Whatever its expression, the poetic origin of the “there is cause to place” will continue to emerge and evolve.

### **What the Hand Sketches**

As I have said before, the process of observation, of perceiving and naming, culminates in the sketch. The hand draws the sketch with the awareness that it is only reproducing what the eye has seen and the words have uttered. It attempts to render that which has been already recognized as the particular significance of the space, be it tangible or intangible, as a sketch whose meaning will reveal the perception and understanding of this significance.

However, there is something more in a drawing: that which the hand traces without the conscious participation of the observer, unintentional traces that appear immersed within the deliberate design that demarcates the observed space. Often, the observer will discover them while revising his or her sketches, and realize that these unconscious traces are quite different. They may be minimal as a dot,

or considerable as circles or other tangible shapes: whatever the case, they will appear enigmatic and solitary as an island, if there is only one in a sketch, or perhaps as archipelagoes, if there are many and are dispersed throughout it. The observer may want to reveal and integrate them into the mainstream of his observation, or may choose to ignore them, to let them receive the breakers of the conscious, deliberate sketch. Even if he resolves the latter, these traces will not remain isolated: somehow, they will penetrate the aggregate of observations and conclusions that configure an architectural project, and become the equivalent of what the eyes have seen without comprehending and what the words have been unable to enunciate.

I have described three elements—the glance, the word, and the drawing—according to the emergence of causal images during an observation, and implied a sequential order during this process of recognition. I must now clarify that this order is open to modifications: the equation can be quite different; for example, the sketch can be effected almost concurrently with the glance and, after carefully comparing the actual space with its representation, words may be added as clarification. Or the process of observation may commence with words conceived beforehand, poetic words that will prompt the observer to search for the particular space that will enrich and transform them, or that will correspond to—and with—their. That is to say, there are no rigid stages in the process of observation. What I have described until now are those elements that, according to my understanding of the Valparaiso School and my own experience as architect, are considered to be basic tools that facilitate and help accomplish the observation of a chosen space. These elements include intangible, unrecognizable images that, in their fluidity, will accentuate and modulate the brilliance of the poetic “cause-place.”

## The Poetic Act

To better understand the poetic origin of architectural forms initiated during a process of observation, it is helpful to describe the *Poetic Act*, a concept elaborated by another founder of the Valparaiso School, the poet Godofredo Iommi, under the sign of “the poetry created by all.” Poetic Acts, conceived to reveal a space, are always initiated by the convocation of the word; all trades and individuals that so wish may attend, but the poets of the “cause-place” are in charge of determining which paths the different relations among the participants may follow. Potentially, there are infinite manners of generating and accomplishing a Poetic Act. To assist in the understanding of what has been explained above, I will describe a particular Poetic Act that still remains vividly in my memory; besides poets and diverse people, numerous architects, sculptors, and painters—all of them creators of material forms—participated in it. I

will characterize only their most essential actions, without entering into more complex details.

As was almost always the case, the Act commenced with the words of the poets, followed by the words of all those present, in a circle that unveiled the preliminary contact and poetic inquiry with what was the purpose of the convocation and the ground in which it was taking place. During this Act, when those whose trade is to build, erect, or extend forms through the air or the surfaces—as the architect, the sculptor, or the painter—had to intervene, besides their words they utilized their hands to draw, connect materials, design continuities and ruptures, paint, sort stones, sculpt or build. First, they named what they were perceiving; then, they announced what they were about to create with their hands; finally, they constructed it in front of everyone and—once made—left it as a sign within the circle. These newly created physical forms transformed with their presence the space of the convocation, and these transformations elicited new verbal interventions: through their sentences, those present attempted to decipher the poetic messages that now emerged from the chosen space. In turn, these waves of words prompted either the manufacture of new aggregates that enriched the forms already made, or else the creation of different forms that were then placed alongside of the existing structures within the circle, thus suggesting new paths for the continuation of the poetic discourse. As long as words and forms continued to evolve, reveal, and germinate each other through these interactions, the process I have just described could continue indefinitely.

This particular Act culminated after a collective decision was made to bring all the constructed signs to the middle of the circle and have all the participants write significant words or sentences on their surfaces. The whole was to be considered an emblem that expressed both, a poetic definition of the used space, and the meaning of the convocation that had caused its existence as such. Once this was accomplished, we all left the place. The Act had concluded. However, at its deepest level of meaning, its intrinsic character indicates that it could continue *acting*, perhaps permanently, in the same singular space. Thus, in the same encompassing and sequential manner a whole city can be erected, an ideal city built upon collective words and forms. The *Open City* I have mentioned at the beginning of this article has been built under this impulse. It reveals all the complexity and the rhythm of a process that fuses the passage of time and the successive poetic unveilings of the place.

It is in this manner that the words and the hands of those that participate in a Poetic Act are, in fact, revealing that the space in which it is taking place can—by mediating its constitutive elements—motivate a work that should be defined as a continuance of the space's identity: it will reflect the traits that characterize it, that have endured and adopted the transformations brought about by its own nature, by the continual occupation of man, or simply by the

passage of time itself. This is why these Acts can be considered foundational: because above that space and above the poetic word that emerges from it, sketches, graphics, and blueprints will take form and, ultimately, a work of architecture will be erected. This building will attest to the ancestral identity of a place and its invisible poetic message with the purposes, needs, and functions of the people that will inhabit it. And America is still a territory in need of foundations.

### America, Amereida, and the “Travesías”

The Valparaiso School of Architecture limited the practice of observation as a method of study mostly to the cities and regions within easy reach of the students. It is evident that the act—or the attitude—of observing, as it has been described, can be practiced by any architect, anywhere in the world. In the Valparaiso School, this method served to unravel the meaning of an approachable and recognizable America. But it also served to unveil an unknown America, an America that exists, full of potency, beyond the reach of most people. For a long time, it was also beyond the reach of the Valparaiso School of Architecture: the needs of the academic institution—Universidad Católica de Valparaiso—to which it belonged limited the School of Architecture to the implementation of pre-planned academic programs that did not contemplate extended absences from campus on the part of the students and faculty of the School. It was only a few years ago that the School was able to implement, now as part of its reformed curriculum, the “Travesías”: prolonged journeys through Latin America undertaken by its faculty and students; these journeys are meant to facilitate architectural research (both observation and production) that attempts to discover the “true face” of America, the appearance that will open the possibility of designing architectural works in accordance with its destiny. The Travesías find their foundations in the 1965 book *Amereida*, in which these territories were referred to as “the interior sea of America”: in Spanish, the word *travesía* is used to describe a sea voyage.

Because of this “interior sea,” South America is a continent that still cannot constitute itself as such, as a container. The Spaniards founded cities and occupied its borders, but they left vacant its innards, the interior territories; this produced an internal hollow, a void which is both a sign of the depletion it suffers, and the thing that prevents it from becoming a whole, recognizable body. It also illustrates how intensely powerful and far-reaching that void can be: as a material entity, it puts into question that which could coalesce the identity of a continent. Thus, America’s “interior sea” is a latent presence, poetic and inspiring in all its extension. The aperture of the School towards the continent is rooted on *Amereida*, which sought to unveil the face of America through persistent poetic foundations.

*Amereida* describes a journey completed by poets, architects, sculptors and painters in 1965; the group traveled from Cape Horn to Santa Cruz de la Sierra in Bolivia as a first stage in the tracing—trailing—of the projection of the Southern Cross over South America. *Amereida* was the poetic impulse that, in 1984, inspired a profound change in the programs of study at the Valparaíso School of Architecture, propelling it towards the empty spaces of America's "interior sea" and the voids that stem from its hollow presence. This impulse materializes in the Travesías, which every year take all the Studio classes at the School towards different regions of America in order to encounter and define the "cause-place" of the continent. It was during the *Amereida* journey that America's empty spaces—its voids—were found capable of revealing the continent's poetic origins, were found to be the source of a secret, unfamiliar, but active identity that encompassed from the most primeval forms and spaces of its physical existence, to the multitude of villages submerged in its unexplored nature. Thus, *Amereida*'s poetic stare appeared as an answer born of the need to penetrate, traverse, and reveal the continent's hidden being.

"America is abysmal," says *Amereida*, and this means that is impregnated by voids that may suddenly appear near or around places in which we assumed we had "ground," poetic foundations; when these voids open, we sometimes find that the (poetic) ground is already occupied by inhabitants whose existence evidences a preceding and evolving history. These are effects, reverberations of the interior sea that unfolds ceaselessly throughout America's territories. The abyss invites us to undertake the Travesías, it appears to us as the source for the poetic unveiling of South America's true identity. Then, we have to lay the foundations there, in the abyss. And, for the School, to "lay the foundations" means to recognize what a place is, and to establish there an architectural work that—by bringing together everything that has been revealed within its margins—will open a path towards the identity of the continent. It is not a matter of populating lands, or tracing roads: is a matter of (poetically) understanding what the abyss is expressing, and responding to it by material means, means capable of establishing a tangible communication between the abyss and those that come from the "ground" and have had access to it. This response, that can be a minimal architectonic construction, will attempt to utilize all the signs emanating from the undetermined portion of the interior sea that has been reached by the Travesía.

In that particular place, this response—the work of architectural openness, which is the seed of all future attainments within the architectural trade—becomes a material sign that indicates and reveals what America is. Considered as foundations that penetrate the interior sea of the continent, their sum total may shape, at some future time, a true constellation in which every speck will be tied to the rest through subtle bonds made of words. If this happens, these architectural

foundations will conform a mesh of such magnitude that—in and by itself—could bring to life, rebirth, a real continent with a poetic destiny, full of substantiality, and with infinite “grounds.” They may also become the seed of many future cities. Says *Amereida*:

sólo se consuela la tierra sólo se logra suelo cuidando del abismo  
sólo es suelo lo que guarda el abismo lo que da cabida a la irrupción  
y proporción al trance

[earth may only be consoled ground may only be attained taking care of  
the abyss  
ground is only that which guards the abyss that which gives space to  
the irruption  
and proportion to the trance]

In South America we have the fortune of having an abyss, an interior sea that gives us the poetic grounds to take action, to act until, as architects, we are able to define architectural works and cities that possess a distinctive and profound identity of forms, dimensions, and functions that are specific to our continent, completely different from other architectural forms at use. Observation as a method of study and unveiling has created a path that leads towards the intangible: it attempts to find its tangible expression through words and sketches. And through words and sketches that express the intangible we are searching for America.

## The Voyage as an Integral Part of Study and Conceptualization at the School of Architecture of the Catholic University of Valparaiso, Chile



In Valparaiso, in 1929, the School of Architecture of the Catholic University of Valparaiso is founded; in 1952, Alberto Cruz, a Chilean architect, and Godofredo Iommi, an Argentinian poet, re-found it together with a group of Chilean and Argentinian architects, painters and sculptors.

-Poetry and Architecture-  
"This is its origin"



In 1960, in Europe, the first poetic acts illuminating architectural work are realized.  
Under the sign:  
"Poetry made by all"



In 1970, the Open City is founded in Ritoque, north of Valparaiso; a matter of creating an architecture free of reference points in a simultaneity of life, work, and study.

The work of architecture generated by "ronda": a round-table discussion.

Since 1984 the entire school, professors and students, go once every year to a different place in the South American continent in a travesía that opens the way for architectural constructions and drawings.

Works in a truthful magnitude that give capacity to a "round-table of the professions."

By Bruno Barla Hidalgo, Architect and Professor at the Catholic University of Valparaíso; adapted for this occasion from an original drawing by Bruno Barla and Alberto Cruz, first published in the 1998 yearbook of the C.U.V. Translated from the Spanish by Rafael Gómez-Moriana.

3

In 1964, the constellation of the Southern Cross is poetically lowered and projected onto South America. It is a sign in the teaching of architecture: sheltered in the book *Amereida I*, a poetic calculation for a travesía of the South American continent.

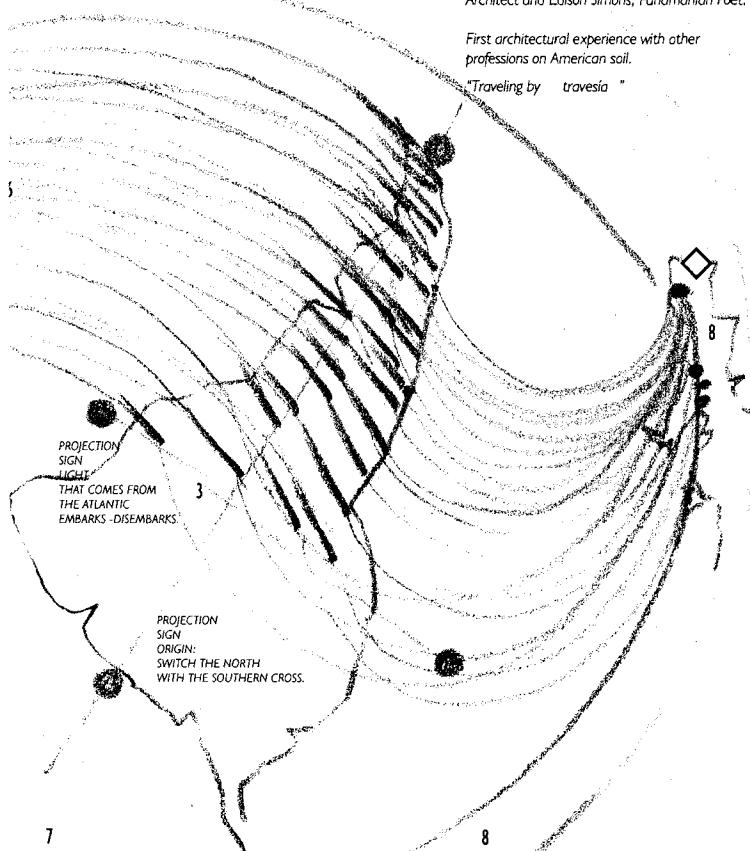
"Architecture co-generated with poetry".

4

Poetry awakens America in 1965, when a group of architect-professors of the School of Architecture, together with sculptors, painters, philosophers and poets, depart from Cape Horn toward Santa Cruz de la Sierra; the log-book of the travesía is written: *Amereida II*. In 1966, poetic travel to Vancouver along the Pacific Coast by Alberto Cruz, Chilean Architect and Edison Simons, Panamanian Poet.

First architectural experience with other professions on American sail.

"Traveling by travesía"



In 1992, an initial dialogue with European architects is opened, but to go, do we disembark on islands or immediately on to the European continent? Workshop together with the University of Madrid. A "round-table" with European architects.

"Amereida" in Europe

Disembarkation in Europe: "Amereida in Europe" 1996 Barcelona, Merán, Vicenza, 1997; Gorizia. Poetic-architectural thinking is presented to other universities besides graphic design and the design of objects.

Initiation of a "dialogue with other professions" in another continent.

9

But today, for example, with this text, "Amereida" is present in the northern part of this same continent.

U.C.V., Muelle Prat, Plaza Matriz, Museo Nac. de BB. AA.



#### ARQUITECTURA

Taller Inv. Arq. U.C.V. 01 - 1967.  
Dilemas nº2.  
Univ. de Stgo.

#### ARQUITECTURA PUNTO DE VISTA

Taller Inv. Arq. U.C.V. 1981.  
Edic. Taller Inv. Gráf. Esc. Arq.

#### THE VALPARAISO SCHOOL

Fernando Pérez Oyarzún  
*The Harvard Architecture Review* nº 9, 1993.  
Rizzoli International Publications, New York.

#### DE LAS RELACIONES ENTRE ESTUDIOSOS.

Cuadernos de Ameréida.  
Taller Inv. Arq. U.C.V.. 1995.  
Taller Inv. Gráf. Esc. Arq. U.C.V.

#### EXPOSICIÓN DE FUNDAMENTO

ESC. ARQ. U.C.V.  
(Museo de Bellas Artes)  
Taller Inv. Arq.  
En Rev. AUCa Nº 30, 1972.  
AUCA Ltda. Stgo.

#### FUNDAMENTOS

DE LA ESCUELA DE ARQUITECTURA U.C.V.  
Taller Inv. Arq. U.C.V. 1971.  
Taller Inv. Gráf. Esc. Arq. U.C.V.

#### DISEÑO DE OBJETOS

FAC. ARQ. DE URBANISMO .  
Taller Inv. Diseño de Objetos Esc. Arq. U.C.V . 03 - 1987.  
CA nº 47.  
CA Stgo.

#### DIEZ SEPARATAS

DEL LIBRO NO ESCRITO  
"Relación entre Arquitectura y Gráfica "  
Taller Inv. Diseño Gráfico  
Esc. Arq. U.C.V. 1985.  
Taller Inv. Gráf. Esc. Arq. U.C.V.



Poetic acts in Valparaíso, Chile  
Exhibitions in Santiago, Chile



Poetic acts in Europe

Ikworth, Bois des Vosges - Paris, Reims



#### REVUE DE POESIE N° 100

Hölderlin  
April - June 1964.  
Edit. M. Deguy. / Paris, France.

#### REVUE DE POESIE N° 40

La Parole Dite  
October 1964.  
Edit. M. Deguy. / Paris, France.

#### REVUE DE POESIE N° 80

Ode a Kappa  
May 1965.  
Edit. M. Deguy. / Paris, France.

#### REVUE DE POESIE N° 70

Dante  
January 1966.  
Edit. M. Deguy. / Paris, France.

#### REVUE DE POESIE N° 50

Améréide  
May 1968.  
Edit. M. Deguy. / Paris, France.

#### REVUE DE POESIE N° 40

Pindare  
February 1971.  
Edit. M. Deguy. / Paris, France.

◆ ③ ◆ ④ Poetic acts during "Travesía Amereida" from Cape Horn  
to Sta. Cruz de la Sierra

Punta Espora, Cañadón Bombaló.



#### AMEREIDA VOLUMEN I

Taller Inv. Ciudad Abierta.  
1<sup>a</sup> Edic. 1967.  
Coop. Lambda, Sígo.  
2<sup>a</sup> Edic. 1986.  
Taller Inv. Graf. Esc. Arq. U.C.V.

#### AMEREIDA VOLUMEN II

Taller Inv. Ciudad Abierta.  
1986.  
Taller Inv. Graf. Esc. Arq. U.C.V.

#### EPICA AMERICANA

Taller Inv. Ciudad Abierta.  
Hombre y Universo N°2, 03 - 1983.  
Relac. Cult. Est. de la P.U.C.

#### EL CAMINO NO ES EL CAMINO.

Taller Inv. Ciudad Abierta.  
Memoria de título D.G., "Oda". 1980.  
Taller Inv. Graf. Esc. Arq. U.C.V.

#### NAHUATL AMERICA

América Sin Patria.  
Taller Inv. Ciudad Abierta.  
En: Libro "Tres Odas" 1972.  
Univ. Valpo.

#### PARA UN PUNTO DE VISTA

LATINO AMERICANO DEL OCEANO PACIFICO  
Taller Inv. Arg. U.C.V.  
Estudios del Pacífico N°2, 09 - 1971.  
Centro de Estudios del Pacífico, V alparaiso.

#### DIALOGO ACERCA DE LA CRUZ DEL SUR.

Taller Inv. Arq. U.C.V.  
Memoria de DG, 1987.  
Taller Inv. Gráf. Esc. Arq. U.C.V.

#### INTRODUCCION AL PRIMER POEMA DE AMEREIDA.

Taller América Esc. Arq. U.C.V. 1982.  
Taller Inv. Graf. Esc. Arq. U.C.V.

#### ENEIDA AMEREIDA.

Taller Inv. Ciudad Abierta. 1982.  
Taller Inv. Graf. Esc. Arq. U.C.V.

#### LA ENEIDA Y AMERICA.

Taller Inv. Ciudad Abierta.  
Artinf N°31-32, 03 - 1982.  
Buenos Aires.

#### AMERICA, AMERICAS MIAS

Taller Inv. Ciudad Abierta.  
Ateneo separata. N°447, 1983.  
University of Santiago.

#### AMEREIDA POESIA Y ARQUITECTURA.

Taller Inv. Arq. U.C.V. 12 - 1992.  
Arq. P.U.C

5 Poetic acts - classes - exhibitions in the Open City, Valparaiso, Chile

Ritoque, north of Valparaiso



**LA CIUDAD ABIERTA EN VALPARAISO**

Enrique Brown, Arq.  
SUMMA n° 214, 07 - 1985.  
Buenos Aires.

**L'UTOPIA DI RITOQUE**

Giancarlo De Carlo, Arq.  
Spazio e Società n° 66, 04 / 06 - 1994.  
Edic. Gangemi Editore, Rome.

**LA STRADA CHE NON E UNA STRADA  
E LA CITTA APERTA DI RITOQUE, CILE.**

Ann M. Pendleton - Julian, Arq.  
Spazio e Società n° 66, 04 / 06 - 1994.  
Edic. Gangemi Editore, Rome.

**CIUDAD ABIERTA**

Enrique Brown Y R. Rodrigo Pérez de Arce  
A A Files n° 17, Spring 1989.  
The Architectural Association, London.

**CIUDAD ABIERTA**

Rodrigo Pérez de Arce, Arq.  
Abitare n° 353, 07 / 08 - 1996.  
Milan.

**CITTA APERTA VALPARAISO, CILE**

Open City Group  
DOMUS n° 7 / 8 / 9, 01 - 1997.  
Milan.

**THE ROAD THAT NOT A ROAD  
AND THE OPEN CITY IN RITOQUE, CHILE.**

Ann M. Pendleton - Julian, Arq. 1996.  
The M.I.T. Press Cambridge Mass.

**THE WISE MAN BUILT  
HIS HOUSE UPON THE SAND**

World Architecture n° 48, 07 / 08 - 1996.  
London.

**THE ERRANT'S LODGE**

ARQ (Architectural Research  
Quarterly) v2 n°2. Winter 1996.  
London

**ALBERTO CRUZ**

Cooperativa Ameridea ( Chile ).  
A. Cruz - Taller Inv. Arq. U.C.V.  
Zodiac N° 8, 02 - 1993.  
Milan.

**AMEREIDA UNA EXPERIENCIA  
ARQUITECTONICA CHILENA.**

A. Cruz - Taller Inv. Arq. U.C.V.  
SUMMA N° 214, 07 - 1985.  
Buenos Aires.

**ritoque CIUDAD ABIERTA**

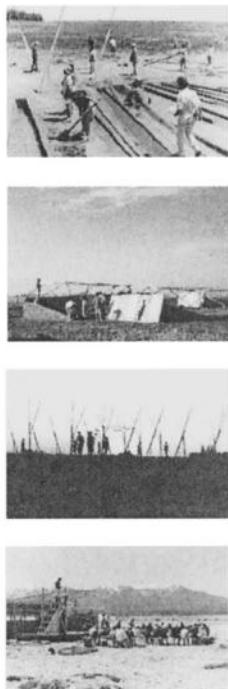
A. Cruz - Taller Inv. Arq. U.C.V.  
Arquitectura Panamericana N° 1, 12 - 1992.  
Santiago.

**CIUDAD ABIERTA**

A TREINTA AÑOS DE LA FUNDACION  
DEL INSTITUTO DE ARQUITECTURA.  
Taller Inv. Arq. U.C.V., 1982.  
Bibl. Esc. Arq. U.C.V.

6 Works constructed during travesías through the South American continent

Cochicó, Guaminí, Colpasa

**AMEREIDA Volumen III****"Travesías"**

Taller Inv. Arq. U.C.V. 10 - 1991.  
Edic. Taller Inv. Gráf. Esc. Arq. U.C.V.

**TRAVESIA AL MAR DULCE  
O DESEMBOCADURA URBANA  
DE LA HIDROGRAFIA  
DE AMERICA LATINA**

En "apéndice", Bitácora de Travesía, 1985.  
Taller Inv. Arq. U.C.V. 1985.  
Edic. Taller Inv. Gráf. Esc. Arq. U.C.V.

**ATHNEEA**

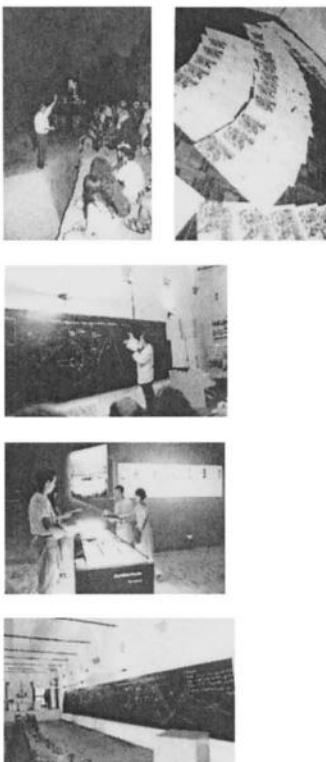
Taller Inv. Arq. U.C.V. 03 - 1990.  
En Rev. "ARQ" nº 14, 03 - 1990.  
Edic. ARQ Stgo.

**EXPOSICION 40 AÑOS ESCUELA  
DE ARQUITECTURA U.C.V.**

Taller Inv. Diseño de Objetos,  
Lsc. Arq. U.C.V. 01 - 1993  
Edic. Bibl. Esc. Arq. U.C.V.

7 8 Poetic acts and exhibitions in Europe

Madrid, Barcelona, Vicenza, Merano, Gorizia

**AMEREIDA - PALLADIO**

**"Carta a los Arquitectos Europeos"**  
A. Cruz - Taller Inv. Arq. U.C.V. 1998.  
Edic. Taller Inv. Gráf. Esc. Arq. U.C.V.

**ENTREVISTA A ALBERTO CRUZ**

Correo Universitario 1996  
Edit.: Oficina de Extensión y Comunicación U.C.V.

**PALLADIO Y AMEREIDA**

Correo Universitario 1996  
Edit.: Oficina de Extensión y Comunicación U.C.V.

**AMEREIDA EN BARCELONA**

Taller Inv. Ciudad Abierta, 1996.  
Edic. Taller Inv. Gráf. Esc. Arq. U.C.V.

## AN ARCHITECTURAL EXPERIENCE

-FROM SKETCHING WHILE CROSSING THE EUROPEAN CONTINENT

-FROM SKETCHING AND CONSTRUCTING WORKS OF ARCHITECTURE WHILE TRAVELING  
THE SOUTH AMERICAN CONTINENT

-FROM SKETCHING, CONSTRUCTING WORKS AND REFLECTING ON THE ARCHITECTURAL PRESENT IN  
THE SOUTH AMERICAN SOUTHERN CONE

This is a text constructed far from the place where it will be edited, that will be read by persons unfamiliar with the reality of its place of origin. But I will deal with origin later. I travelled to Europe many times, there is a part of my ancestry there, that which forms the first part of my family name; the second is also European but has taken root in America long ago. These travels are from various periods of my life, from childhood, youth, and my current age as a practicing architect.

I admire the work of Andrea Palladio, architect of the European Renaissance, I see his work as an "origin" of architecture, and I draw it slowly so that on the blank page -intermediary between the

Reduction of an original drawing  
of 110 by 36 cm. made in situ in 1984.



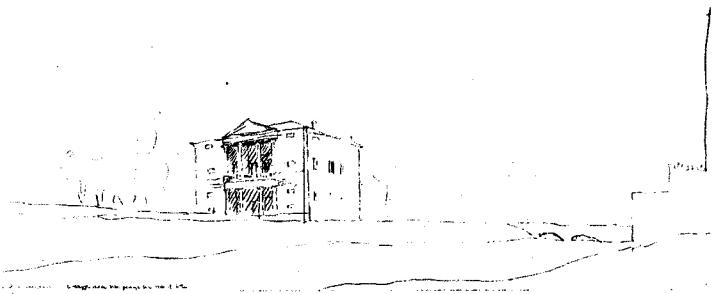
**Passage 1 (first moment)**

In Europe -the Veneto- I draw what I observe from afar,  
slowly with traces of black graphite on white paper.

One year in Italy, two hundred large drawings made before the works.

**On the drawing:** The Villa Emo, by Andrea Palladio, focusses from afar upon the extent of the Veneto landscape, such that the work of architecture expands into nature.

Reduction of an original drawing  
of 110 by 36 cm. made in situ in 1984.



**Passage 1 (second moment)**

In Europe -the Veneto- I draw what I observe from up close,  
slowly with traces of black graphite in strokes that reconstitute the shadow and bring light to the volume.

**On the drawing:** The Villa Pisani, up close,  
attracts toward itself the distance of the Venetian territory. In its diagonals, it anticipates the region.

OR ON STRIKING A BALANCED THINKING IN THIS LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY  
 CONCERNING THE PROPERTY THAT AN ARCHITECT OF THE FIFTEENTH  
 CENTURY CAN CONSTITUTE;  
 IN FIVE PASSAGES AND TEN MOMENTS ACROSS THE DRAWING.

By Bruno Barla Hidalgo, Architect, Professor, Catholic University of Valparaiso

*person who is drawing and the work- one feels architectural beauty and observes that it is in the intimate space that establishes itself between the viewer and the work viewed where occult and not easily recognized relations are revealed.*

The work of architecture does not see itself alone, but together with the nature on which it is sited, so that one could say that the work and nature make a closed world. Here in America, there is an unfinished world with only the vastness of the American land. This is why when seeing the works of Palladio in Europe I see them as if they were in America and I incorporate them with this vastness.

Passage 1 is in Europe, with the drawing that observes from afar and up close the original works of architecture.



documentation of the geographic extent



We could say that this way of seeing incorporates -together with the three dimensions of architecture, which are height, width and depth- a fourth dimension which we could say is the continent. Upon returning to Valparaiso, account is given of what was observed in Europe by means of ten meters of blackboard two-and-a-half meters high positioned in a continuous row to create a large black screen that receives drawings of observations made in front of Palladio's works; they are the same observations, the same drawing but the one is made there and the other here; there they were made in black graphite on white paper, here they are white chalk on

Blackboard drawings: V. Valparaiso, 1986.

**Passage 2 (first moment)**

In South America - Valparaiso- a drawing that shows nearness and distance in the representation of works of architecture in luminous traces of white chalk.

**On the drawing:** In Valparaiso account is given of the observations collected in the Veneto through chalk drawings that grant white light to the black sketch. The observation drawing expands across the blackboard.

Blackboard drawings: Vicenza, 1996.

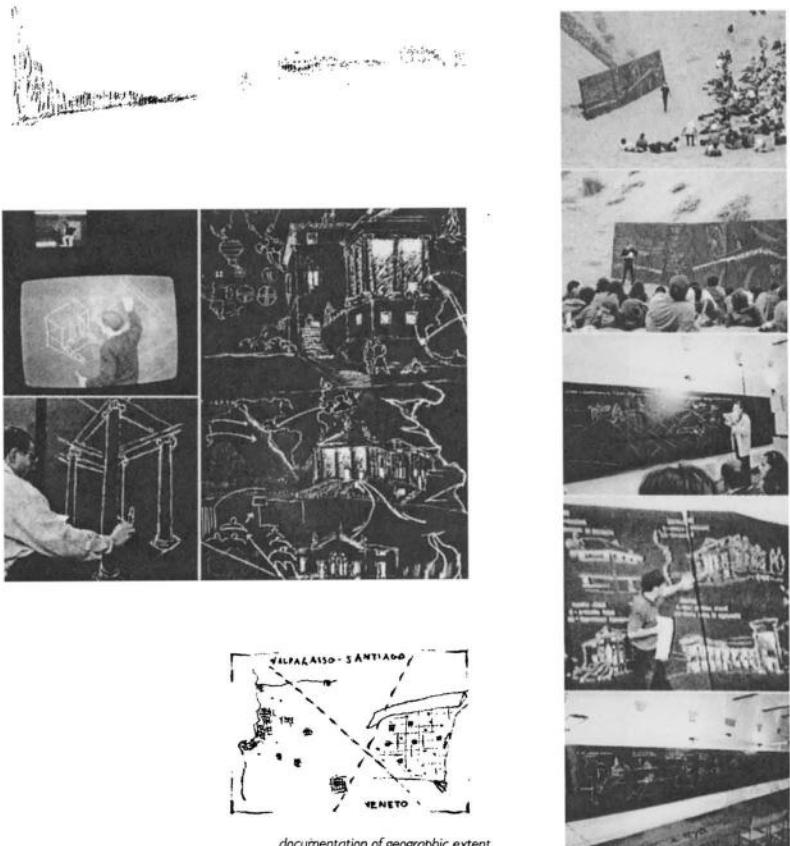
**Passage 2 (second moment)**

In Europa - Vicenza, Merano and Gorizia- an abstract drawing that shows nearness and distance and presents architectural works in luminous white traces of chalk.

**On the drawing:** In Vicenza and Merano account is given of the observations collected in the Veneto, elaborated in Valparaiso and reinterpreted in their site of origin. The original sketch is transformed from white with black traces to black with white traces to the abstraction of black with white traces that brings to those who listen the extension of the American landscape.

a black background. There the drawings were large but here they turn into giants. There the shadow is black and grants depth to window openings and doorways, here the same shadow is transformed by the whiteness of the chalk into a luminous brilliance. It is these transformations, brought to conclusion with fidelity to the essence of the work of Palladio, that constitutes an architectural region. This is to say a portion of the earth that, through the architectural work, becomes architecturalized.

*Passage 2: from here to South America and from here to Europe anew. This is the post of the studio that exhibited the observations of the originals in the passage of luminescent shadow and pure light in Palladio's works. An exhibition that invites study.*



documentation of geographic extent

I have observed this relationship between the work of architecture and the large geographic magnitudes of regions (Veneto - Friuli - Venice - Giulia) or continents (the Southamerican cone) at the Catholic University of Valparaíso in voyages that have come to be called "travesías." Many of these have been carried out, penetrating rivers and fiords, climbing the ridges and plateaus of mountain

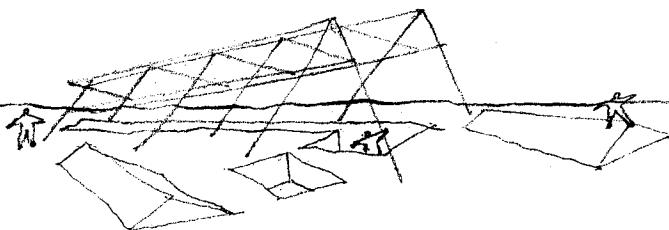
Drawing of a travesía, Argentinian prairie, 1990.

**Passage 3 (first moment)**

In South America -Cochicó prairie- the working drawing of works of architectural openness concentrates itself within the extent of the place.

*On the drawing:* To arrive in the middle of the prairie and draw as a preliminary gesture, a drawing that observes the extent and projects the nearby.

Drawing of a travesía, Argentinian prairie, 1990.

**Passage 3 (second moment)**

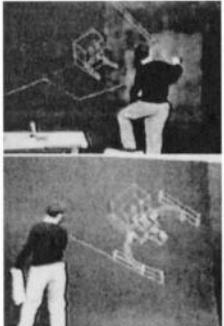
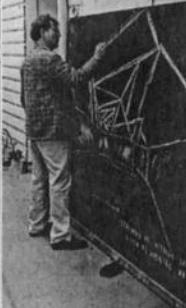
In South America -Cochicó prairie- the working drawing of works of architectural openness expands itself over the soil.

*On the drawing:* In Cochicó, on the uniform gradient, three levels are constructed in order to observe the extent of the prairie, thereby revealing its occult mystery.

ranges, crossing the deserts and the plains, sailing to islands and inhabiting cities in ways that are not habitual. During these travesías, at some points, works of "architectural openness" have been constructed, something which we, professors and students, have persisted in doing for the last fourteen years.

*"Possage 3: To see America with the experience previously gained in Europe. Traveling across the South American continent in "travesías". constitutes, for him, the present of this studio that sees theses and interprets it in works of architectural openness."*

documentation of original drawings



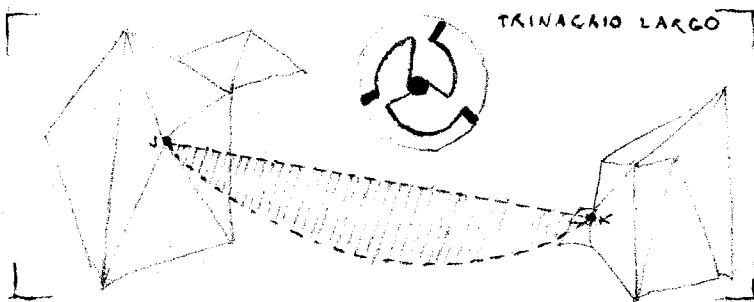
documentation of geographic extent



documentation of drawing as an architectural act on a blackboard in front of students

But this continent has to be looked at not only superficially but also beneath the surface: there we find the vestiges of the people who lived in these lands before the Spanish conquest. They inhabited the valleys as farms, the hills as defenses and the mountains as ceremonial centers; after observing these subsoils we find another network that underlies that which we inhabit and that appears by means of isolated points when one escapes the surface.

Drawing of a travesía Lonquén, 1995.

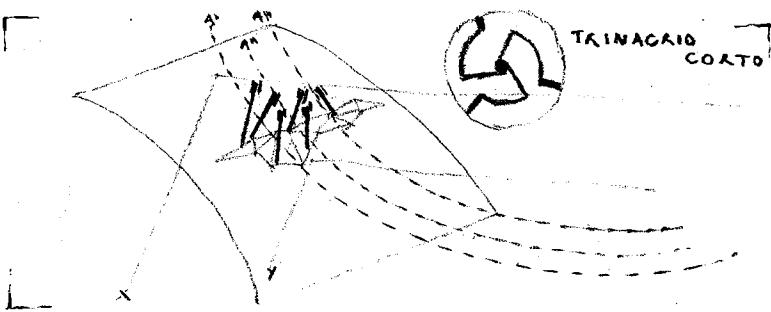
**Passage**

(first moment)

In South America -the hills of Lonquén y Chena- the geometric abstraction of the geography finds itself with the geometric abstraction of architecture.

*On the drawing: South of Santiago de Chile, between the mountain range of the Andes and the Coastal mountain range, two mountains -islands- Chena y Lonquén. The first with vestiges of a pre-Incan "Pucará," the second is where a work of architectural*

Drawing of a travesía, Lonquén, 1995.

**Passage**

(second moment)

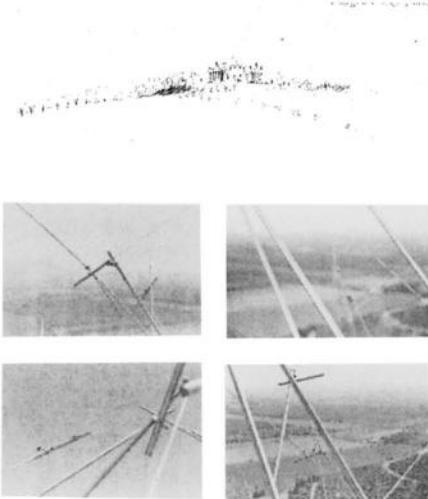
In South America -the hills of Lonquén- the geometric abstraction of the geography finds itself with architectural abstraction as well as with the abstraction of the geometric drawings of the ceramics (pre-Hispanic "Trinacrio")

*On the drawing: In the hills of Lonquén a portico of architectural openness for the distant observation of the pre-Hispanic "Pucará."*

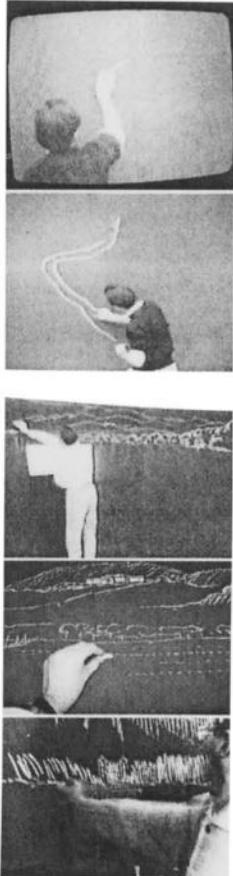
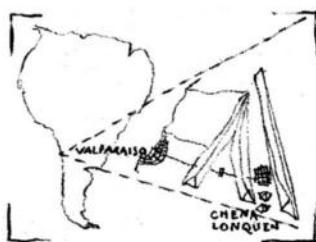
Let's look at vestiges of fortifications - "Pucarás." To observe them we build porticos of "architectural openness," without which we can't observe them. We need a construct(ion) that brings us closer to this remoteness that is so often incomprehensible for us today.

PASSAGE 4: To travel the South American continent in "Travesías" constitutes, for him, the present of this study that sees the vastness and interprets it in fragments as an intention to study an architectural region in America.

documentation of original drawings



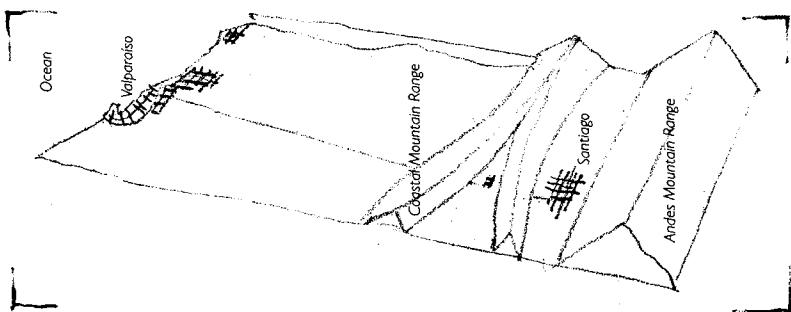
documentation of geographic extent



documentation of drawing as an architectural act on a blackboard in front of students

The architectural *regall/region* is formalized by means of a drawing that gathers the large, significant features of the natural environment through elemental planes that render the geographic form abstract and that we could call a drawing of a three-dimensional strip. This three-dimensional strip is the base from which to study human settlements, both prehispanic vestiges in the subsoil as well as the present region; landscaped land as well as the architecturalized region of a utopian future.

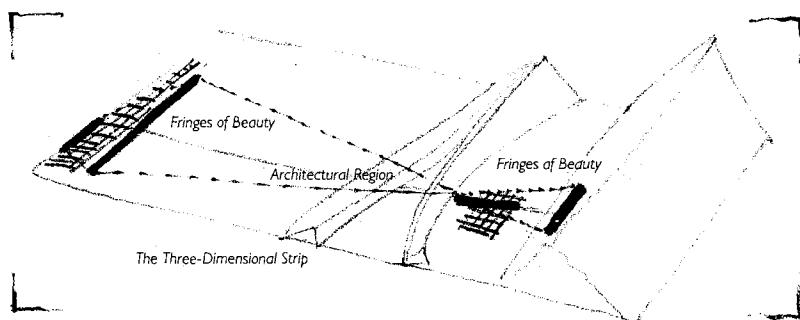
Study drawing: central strip of the Pacific watershed,

**Passage 5 (first moment)**

In South America -the drawing that closely reflects the architectural future of a region- the central strip of the Pacific watershed of the *Cono Sur*. The geometric abstraction of the geography is the South American land mass conceived as large elemental planes that try to trap the form of the extension through a drawing that interprets a "three-dimensional strip".

**On the drawing:** Between the Aconcagua River and the Maipo River, and between the Pacific Ocean -where these drain- and the Andes Mountain Range where these are born.

Study drawing: central strip of the Pacific watershed,

**Passage 5 (second moment)**

In South America -the drawing that closely reflects the architectural future of a region- the central strip of the Pacific watershed of the Southern Cone. The geometric abstraction of the geography marries the geometric abstraction of the Fringe of Beauty (Possibility of architectural works in harmony with the territory).

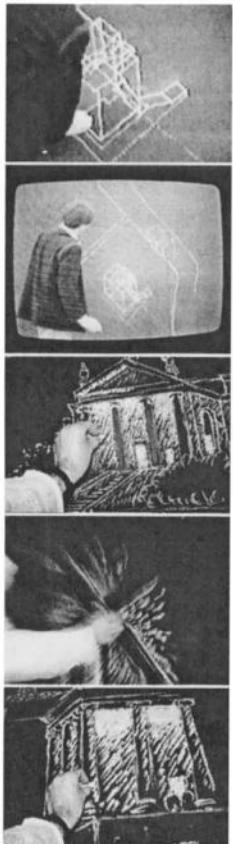
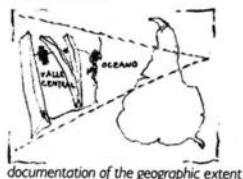
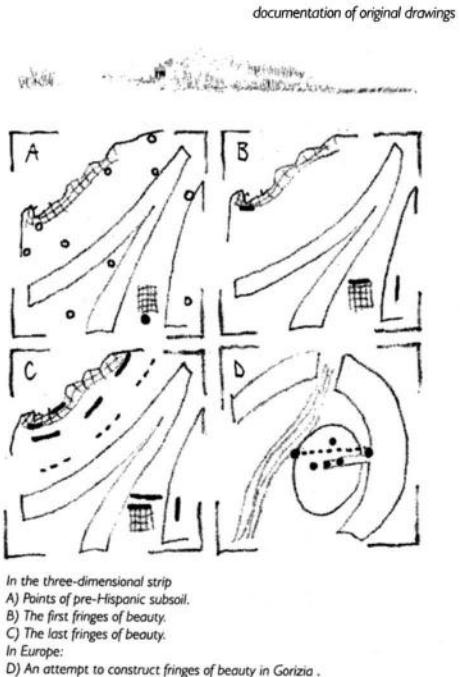
**On the drawing:** The strip becomes an "architectural region" when it gives capacity to the distant joining of fringes into a constellation.

These five passages with their ten moments surge from having heard the poetic word of "Amereida," regarding the "abyssal."

"America is abysmal, surging like a monster for us and an impediment for the landscape."

In order to reach attainment, these five steps with their ten moments are an attempt at the beginnings of a thesis.

Passage 5: Here the American land mass is constituted in strips. Fringes constituting the architectural region occur in these three-dimensional strips. This is the future of the studio: the power to constitute an architectural vision from a part of a continent.



*Summary of the first article (double-page map, bibliography and photographic documentation)*

Drawings, photographs and a bibliography give account of the action  
of the School of Architecture  
of the Catholic University of Valparaíso.  
That realizes voyages: "travesías" in which  
works of "architectural openness" are constructed  
on the South American continent.

Summary of the second article: AN ARCHITECTURAL EXPERIENCE...

This is a text of the relationship that is possible today in South America, at the end of the twentieth century, with a European architect of the sixteenth century, in that the latter can help us to think the South American present as well as the prehispanic past that is hidden by the very present.

A relationship that is established fundamentally through drawing. In five steps, each with two moments.

**Step 1:** The drawing that observes architectural originals.

*First moment:* Observe from far away.

*Second moment:* Observe from up close.

---

**Step 2:** The drawing that exposes the originals.

*First moment:* Expose while representing.

*Second moment:* Expose while presenting.

---

**Step 3:** The drawing of construction of works of architectural openness.

*First moment:* Construction that concentrates on the breadth.

*Second moment:* Construction that expands the breadth.

---

**Step 4:** The drawing that studies an abstraction of geography.

*First moment:* Abstraction of geography that finds itself with abstraction of architecture.

*Second moment:* Abstraction of Architecture that finds itself with the abstraction of the geometric drawing.

---

**Step 5:** The drawing that reflects closely on the architectural future of the region.

*First moment:* Close reflection of a three dimensional strip.

*Second moment:* Close reflection on an architectural region.

## Building Culture: A *Travesía* Across the Open City at Ritoque, Chile

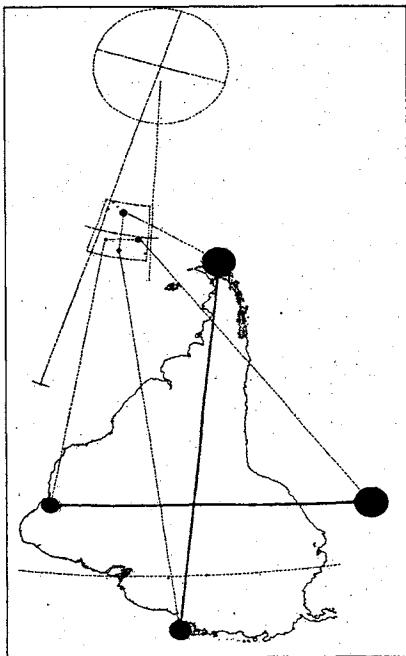
Herbert Enns

Amongst the sand dunes of the Pacific Ocean on the west coast of Chile, the building experiments by the architects and poets of the Open City forge an idealistic design initiative and propose a radical cultural reconfiguration. This city of hope, built and inhabited by the faculty and students of the School of Architecture of the Catholic University of Valparaíso, is a unique poetic-architectural project that forms a base-camp for the many *travesías*, continental travels to unknown and unexplored sites where temporary works of architectural openness are built. The Open City is thus an ambitious architectural project that simultaneously re-examines the notion of *terrain vague* across the peripheral and uncharted regions of South America.

The architects and poets of the Open City propose, in effect, a re-territorialization of South America. Visible and explicit borders have been redrawn according to invisible, implicit, idealistic, and sub-conscious stimuli. Weak colonial boundaries have been superseded by a new strong geographic, ideological, and theoretical cartography. At the Open City, cultural transformation is linked to place, land, architecture, and a mythology that originates from epic poetry. The vague utterances of desire are summarized in the concept of *Amereida*. "...There is place."

The myth of the Open City is informed by the dual ideals of settlement and nomadicism—an architectural paradox familiar to the explorers and settlers of the Americas over the past century. For these poets and architects, the city as a fixed place and the city as odyssey, journey, or quest co-exist in a contradictory composite of stasis and motility, permanence and ephemerality. The production of the school incorporates many temporary and semi-permanent installations and buildings. Their legacy is an understated presence; a network of fragments; a profound imprint on the land and on a community. Their search for the imperceptible and the invisible in society and geography results in a purposeful, perpetual and immutable state of lostness; a forceful disorientation on this *terrain vague*.

The inversion of the map of South America in the poem *Amereida* is an act of de-colonization and re-territorialization, constituting a spatial maneuver of enormous significance. The north arrow—a European invention—is dispensed with, and the Southern Cross, a constellation of stars, takes its place as primary orienting device. The suspension of all preconceptions



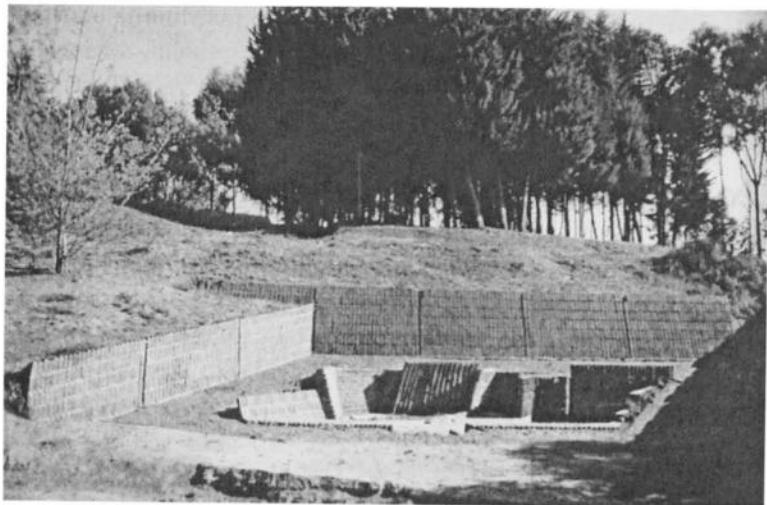
*figure 1 (left): The Southern Cross over South America*

*figure 2 (above): Trajectory*

and preconditions—and the return to first principles and origins—inform this making of a new *Amereidian* culture. Within this inverted continent, traditional architectural conventions are challenged. The continent becomes a city, walls become ambiguous, and borders become obscure, a profound shift of perspective that calls into question many of the prerequisite and founding principles related to architectural orthodoxy. In place of an emphasis on the floorplan as architectural generator, the architects of the Open City substitute the unpredictable and gradually unfolding ‘non-plan.’ Rather than a preoccupation with formal codification, the architecture aspires towards a dissolution of objects. Where the profession is preoccupied with predictability and efficiency of replication, the *Amereidian* commitment relies on the anti-determinism of an open and experimental architectural methodology. Together, these influences mitigate against the entrenched view of architecture as self-reliant commodification and as a market driven, self-referential, and autonomous enterprise without a significant cultural role. At the Open City, architecture is understood as a constituent element of cultural change.

The program for such development is entrenched in ideal but not in form. The architects of the Open City forego the by-laws or codes that typically govern development. Rather, they concentrate on philosophical and spiritual stimuli, on integrating architecture with landscape; on communal decision-making and shared responsibility; and on the acceptance of perpetual change and openness as projects evolve in unforeseen ways.

Recreating a *travesía* of the Open City at Ritoque illuminates critical aspects of the philosophical, spiritual, social, and material agenda. A reenactment of a crossing allows one to discuss observable phenomena as evidenced by the architecture and the landscape. Through such an eye-witness account, it is possible to convey a composite image of the place. The journey across the site begins at the gateway to the cemetery: beginnings and endings are intertwined and coexistent. While the conversation between a visitor and the host may dwell on the minutia of phenomenological description—shade trees, experiments in land manipulation and design, the acoustical and luminous qualities of the bricks that form retaining walls, walkways, walls, sub-surface rooms, etcetera—the essence of a first walk through the site resides in the spiritual realm. The gardens of the cemetery allow for the contemplation of the necessity of death to enact a profound beginning, supporting the belief that value resides in life *and* in death, and that the extension of culture depends upon such a profound life-cycle. The Open City is a life-work.



*figure 3: Cemetery*

Further down the slope of sand, the early buildings of the Open City merge with the open dunes. In consideration of a pedagogical commitment to drawing and sketching as a fundamental design tool, the Open City itself is inclined to be understood as a linear or axial metaphor. The north-south and east-west horizontal axis of the Southern Cross overlaid on the inverted map of South America informs its spatial model. The implied vertical axis—the third dimension—is the *leitmotif* that represents accrual, gathering, settlement, permanence, and rootedness. It implicates the layering of narratives of lives lived in one place.

This is best illustrated by a description of the Music Building, arguably the most important project on the site. Based on a nine-square grid in plan, the central square of the wooden building is open to the sky. Glass walls lining this shaft of light can be raised, allowing the sea air and sky light to infiltrate the surrounding space. The floor boards under the opening in the roof form a porous grate, allowing rain to fall through the center of the building and drain into the sand below. This void is the focal point of the Open City. It is here that the faculty, their families, and guests meet every Wednesday morning to discuss the ongoing work of the Open City. The working meetings are always followed by a communal meal, with tables set around the nine-square plan, leaving the central square vacant.

The perimeter walls of the Music Building are lined with adjustable grass mats which shape the space according to acoustical constraints. The grand piano reminds the visitor of those aspects of European culture which have not been jettisoned: classical music, painting, sculpture, and a generous and cultivated way of life that seeks to raise the mundane exigencies of the everyday to the level of profound ritual. This is not a revolutionary movement in architecture, rather it is a selective and transformational proposal for a new way of living. The elegant life within the buildings speaks to the reciprocal effect of experimental buildings on their inhabitants.

The architecture of the Open City is redolent with maritime nomenclature: mast-like columns and sail-like roofs and screens resemble ships or vessels floating in and on the slowly shifting waves of the sand dunes. The architects dispense with the orthodox rules of fixed building, striving for a weightless and ephemeral architecture. While a degree of stasis is inevitable, the projects have mobile qualities, and each ‘floats’ upon the land in a distinct fashion. The ground is constantly shifting as if alive. In some cases—the industrial design workshop, for example—the buildings are very nearly submerged in the sand, and in one case—the temporary exhibition space—the building has been inundated and the cloth sail/canopy swept away. The maritime metaphor is effective in supporting an agenda of flex-

ibility and movement, providing a certain fluidity of concept and thought.

Thus the desire for permanence is relinquished for the reality of transitory, transitional, and provisional architecture, making for a profound inversion of architectural value: permanence as artifice, and the temporary as real. The buildings emphasize landscape and site as a continuum, a changing and mutating condition, a dynamic landscape-in-motion. By casting aside the architectural imperative of stasis and statics, the architecture is liberated by its very transforming context. Freed from preconception, and engaging an ambiguous terrain—a middle-zone part maritime and part earthen—the architects and poets of the Open City have developed a geographically induced hybrid.

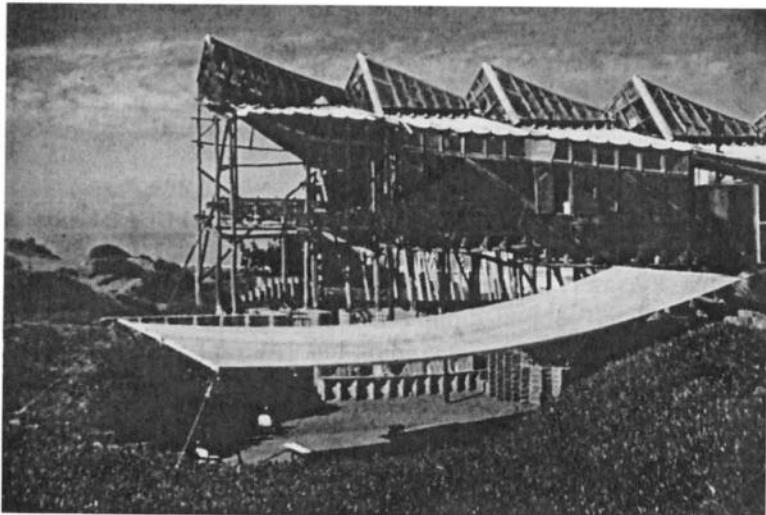


figure 4: *Hospedería*

The Southern Cross, a navigational guide in the oceanic absence of landmarks, is another maritime metaphor, representing a horizontal embrace of re-territorialization. Borders appear and disappear as a function of horizontal delineation, borders are transgressed horizontally, and a *travesía* is essentially a horizontal movement that transgresses borders. The eminently borderless state and infinite space of the open ocean is thus appropriated to dry land, with the *travesías* providing a way to navigate the crossing of a continent.

At the Open City on the coastline of the Pacific Ocean, the tidal ebb and flow of cultural ambition is expressed as a multi-faceted amalgam of architecture, geography, construction, and experimental living. Across the western boundary of its 240 acre site, the rhythm of the prevailing south-western waves washes across the landscape, imbuing it with a distinct and all-pervasive aural and material quality. Plans and experiments proceed daily, weekly and annually to the slow-motion metronome of the waves. This production, like the *travesías*, implies knowledge gained through experience, momentum, and a persistent searching; of action leading to thought only to be translated into action again. The buildings in the dunes are the application of lessons learned during *travesías*, an embodiment of an open research methodology that accepts disorientation and spontaneity.

*This page intentionally left blank*



## Afterword

### Latin American Identities and Globalization

Horacio Machín and Nicholas Spadaccini

The present volume deals with the subject of national identities and sociopolitical changes in Latin America, viewing the latter as a “complex, conflictive and interdependent totality, while addressing, as a single object of knowledge, the interaction between all symbolic societal practices in a state of society” (xii). Within this framework, some of the contributors write from an interdisciplinary perspective while others follow a more disciplinary approach with either a humanities or social sciences orientation.

A premise of the volume is that national, regional, and social boundaries rarely coincide with identity constructions (religious, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, or political) and its social imaginary; another is that “every society is both, intrinsically plural and conflictive, and extrinsically interdependent” (xiv). Identity construction is seen as being complex, contradictory, and conflictual. And while discourses and other symbolic societal practices are deemed to contain the “ideological imprint of the group (or class)” (xiv), words and images are said to ensure the integrity of the groups that produce them. The volume editors’ working hypothesis is that “the intricate web of discourses and other societal/symbolic practices that arise in a given society, both results from and nourishes a complex dynamic of forces (and interests) at play in the making of the social. This dynamic is the *momentum* of a society which constitutes “a complex object of knowledge that can only be examined in its mediations” (xiii). The two specific *momentums* are

the colonial and the contemporary, the latter representing Latin America's integration into the global order.

The volume contains an introduction followed by thirteen essays and a dossier, the work of specialists who seem to converge on two points: 1) the promotion of a multidisciplinary dialogue on identity construction either from above or from below; and, 2) the implicit questioning of the nation-state as a fixed and privileged construct of historical and sociocultural identity.<sup>1</sup> Our own reading highlights three related topics, namely, discursive images (chapters 2, 3, 10, 12, 13, 14); ethnic identity (chapters 6, 7, 8, 9); and national identity and globalization (chapters 1, 4, 5, 11). We might add that our classification is suggested by the critical questions raised in the essays themselves. These three topics are not only interconnected among themselves but also appear as discursive axes in connection with processes of transformation which, in line with the editors' own position, blurs Latin America as a specific region but not as an object of knowledge and/or political imagination. Finally, we are cognizant of the fact that, as with all classifications, ours is characterized by what it includes as much as what it.

## 1) Discursive Images

In the essays reviewed below, critics display a proto-political/epistemological interest as well as an interdisciplinary preoccupation within their respective analytical concerns. These essays deal variously with the relationship between words and images, power and scientific knowledge, medical discourse and punishment, hegemony and resistance, and regional identity (not as an object of area studies but as a poetics of space). This polysemic and cross-disciplinary openness is seen especially in Silvia Winter's essay, "Towards the Sociogenic Principle: Fanon, Identity, the Puzzle of Conscious Experience, and what it is like to be Black," (chapter 2) which, in line with Fanon's illuminating insights into the lived experience of blacks and his views on eurocentrism, argues for an epistemological and political approach which might harness the findings of the natural sciences while, at the same time, transcending them "in terms of a new synthesis able to make our uniquely hybrid nature/cultural modes of being human, of human identity subject to 'scientific description in a new way'" (60). Winter also follows Aimé Césaire's poetic anticipation of a science in which the "study of words" or, what she calls *rhetoricity of identity*, would condition "the study of nature" (60). In the end, the sociogenic principle is put forward as a new theoretical object of knowledge which might help solve the "puzzle of conscious experience" (Chalmers) and build a new "science of the word" (Césaire) beyond the limits of neurobiology and its purely natural scientific methodology. In Winter's essay the connection between identity and ethnicity, culture

and nature, signs, and poetry is dealt within a perspective which seeks to make the case for a new imagination, one that is able to rethink the mind/body problem in a post objectivist epistemology of conscious experience.

In “Words and Images. Figurating and Dis-Figurating Identity” (chapter 3) Mercedes F. Durán-Cogan focuses, among other things, on cultural ideograms as a point of departure toward a sociography of the collective imaginary. The essay explores the relationship between cultural practices and ideology by looking at the role that literature and images play in the construction of collective identities. The body of texts analyzed consists of narratives of cultural identity (as exemplified in the essays of Leopoldo Zea and in the Latin-American epic novel) which “combine and reflect a number of historical, political, social and/or cultural elements and emotions that are recognized by the Latin-American collective memory” (83). The symbolic significance acquired by those texts is said to go well beyond the value that is usually accorded to the merely literary or ludic, thus explaining their resonance with the establishment as well as with marginal and insurgent groups. Perhaps the most interesting part of the essay is Durán-Cogan’s exploration of the characteristics of a national collective identity and the segments of society that are either included or excluded from it. Focusing on the example of a pictorial representation of Bolívar by the Chilean painter Juan Dávila (a representation used to turn Bolívar into a mass icon on a postcard), she seeks to show how the traditional Latin-American ideas/images of hero are deconstructed by the painter: Bolívar is represented as a woman with bare breasts and mixed Indian-African traits. While Durán-Cogan focuses on the diplomatic problems caused by Dávila’s reading of the Latin-American hero, from our perspective her analysis also provides an excellent opportunity to enter into a broader discussion regarding Chile’s cultivation of a neoliberal cultural image at a particular juncture of its recent history. One might add that the use of this deconstructive image of Bolívar constitutes a failed attempt to erase a collective imagined identity (Bolívar’s dream of Latin-American unity).

In “The Rhetoric of Pathology: Political and National Identity During the Military ‘Process’ in Argentina,” (chapter 10) James Cisneros studies the discursive propaganda produced by the Argentine military regime during the first year of the dictatorship in 1976, concentrating his analysis on the magazines *Somos* and *Gente*, both published by Editorial Atlántida. Cisneros’s aim is to “trace the internal contours of the military’s hegemony as the positive expression of an identity construct” (271), focusing on the military’s preoccupation with the recovery of a “ser nacional” through a bridging of the parallel military discourses of history and science. In Cisneros’s account “national identity” is viewed as a construction from the institutional apparatus of state power (state terrorism).<sup>2</sup> Following a Foucauldian reading, medical discourse is bound to

political repression and plays an important disciplinary role in introducing the individual into the military's discourse of subversion and censorship (290).

In his essay "Caliban in Aztlan. From the Emergence of Chicano Discourse to the Plural Constitution of New Solidarities," (chapter 12) dealing with Chicano discourse, solidarity, and identity construction, José Antonio Giménez-Micó centers on differences between discourses of assimilation and dissent by focusing on axiological and epistemological implications of terms such as Mexican-American and Chicano, keeping in mind the respective autobiographical narratives of Ernesto Galarza and Richard Rodríguez. The struggle over identity construction is also seen through other important documents. One is the *Plan de Aztlan* (1969), a foundational manifesto of cultural nationalism which is said to "appropriate the well-known Americanist-*indigenista* topic exalting pre-Columbian civilizations and adapts it to new circumstances of enunciation" (329); another is the *Plan de Santa Barbara* which attempts to define *chicanismo* in terms of a politics of everyday life—working in the *Barrios* and serving the community (331). For Giménez Micó the politics of identity is an ongoing process of differentiation, subject to change and redefinition. Thus he is cognizant that the community today cannot be the one imagined by those Chicano intellectuals of the late 1960s who sought to generalize their perception by speaking for the whole group. Moreover he is aware that ambiguity is part of identity politics and is willing to recognize the fact that as the number of US inhabitants originating from Latin America has become increasingly diverse, even the word "Chicano" has become subordinated to "more global and heterogeneous identity denominations such as 'Latino' or 'Hispanic'" (347), terms which are also politically charged, especially the latter which is used for administrative and demographic purposes but is rejected by some because of its ethnocentric European connotation. What is interesting about this essay is that it does not fall into essentialisms, even if the treatment of identity as something unstable could be dismissed in certain quarters as impractical for purposes of cultural and political mobilization.<sup>3</sup>

In "Between Ideology and Demonology: The Faces at the *Fiesta* of the *Señor del Gran Poder*," (chapter 13) art historian Marcelo Nusenovich examines the well-known religious *fiesta* of the "Lord of the Great Power" in La Paz Bolivia, opting for a demonological reading rather than an iconological interpretation. Reading the *fiesta* in accordance with a demonological code is "to make visible the diabolical, that is, to historicize it, is also to make visible relations of power *vis à vis* themes such as woman, the body and sexuality, be they imposed or negotiated" (365). Thus the diabolic introduces "lateral and marginalized knowledges, struggles and wars of meaning" (377) and "opens the door to modernity" (366). Nusenovich's reading also highlights the materials used in the construction of masks and related apparatus as well as the cycles of production and consumption

in the strategic context of the *fiesta* and its agents (396). In the end he seems to propose a kind of political aesthetics of the *fiesta* as a configuration of strategies concerning power, every-day life, and the constitution of antagonistic national identities.

The final essay dealing with what we referred to as discursive images centers on the “Valparaíso School of Architecture Dossier,” (chapter 14) which encompasses a discussion of the pedagogical program of The School of Architecture at the Catholic University of Valparaíso, Chile. This program postulates a Latin-American regional identity founded upon the values of “artisanship and mytho-poetics” (383) and deals with a poetics of architecture as a regional space and/or identity construction. One of the program’s distinctive features is the builder-architects’ poetic voyages or *travesías*—a form of artistic performance—which they undertake across the continent, perceiving the landscape as open to reconceptualization and rediscovery (386). The claim for the School’s agenda is that “*poiesis* has a rightful place in the architecture, and a poetic architecture a rightful place in shaping the identity of a region” (388). This dossier may be seen as a socio-poetic laboratory for the construction of spatial identities. In this sense its architectural poetics connects with the process of regional identity construction (symbolic and/or political region) and the search for a self-reflexive collective image of Latin America.

## 2) Ethnic Identity

The essays in this grouping deal variously with issues such as ethnic identity and national states, the conflictive relationship between the “I” and the “other,” the concept of stereotype and national identity, and the cinematic representation of gender and nation. It is perhaps in these essays that the three analytical categories that we are stressing in our reading (discursive images, ethnic identity, national identity and globalization) are at the greatest level of interconnectedness. Using different theoretical frames these essays show in various ways that in order to account for identity formation or to reflect on the consequences of ethnicity, it is necessary to explore how consciousness is socially and symbolically constituted within the boundaries of language and discourse.

In “Ethnic Identity and the Zapatista Rebellion in Chiapas,” (chapter 6) anthropologist José Alejos García considers identity as a complex of relations between self and other (in line with Mikhail Bahktin’s dialogical imagination). The essay displays a careful awareness of the profound changes that the notion of identity is presently undergoing in terms of human and political rights, plural identities and globalization. Key questions raised by the essay are: “How is western domination exercised in the arena of ethnic identities in Chiapas? Which are the identities confronted, who are the

participating social actors in this complex interplay between the self and the other in that conflictive Mexican State?" (166). The author argues that for an understanding of the problematic of Chiapas one must take into account the actors involved, "in a space where Indian and Ladino actions are evaluated not just in their own terms, but also in accordance to external powers, and where the rebellion itself may be seen as part of a major socio-cultural process which boundaries are, more than ever, of a global scope" (169). The relationship between the local and the global becomes apparent in this discussion, especially in the manner in which the emblematic figure of Marcos articulates his own identity with ethnic categories that include *Mexican*, *Ladino*, *Indian* and cultural citizenship in cyber space, producing an ideological effect in which "'we can all fit,' to use another one of the Zapatistas' slogans" (172). This essay connects with questions that are still open to discussion and negotiation, among them, plural identities, life-style politics and globalization, and the new theorization of new social movements.<sup>4</sup>

A consideration of identity in terms of the two *momentums* posited in the introduction to this volume is evident in Tatiana Bubnova's, "The Indian Identity, the Existential Anguish and the Eternal Return (*El tiempo principia en Xibalba*) by Luis de Lión," (chapter 7). A literary critic, Bubnova examines the relationship between the Mayan population of Guatemala and an outside world dominated by Ladino otherness (193), underscoring the wounds of identity which permeate the social fabric of the Mayan people. According to Bubnova, the type of conflict and the characteristic of the language employed by de Lión invite us to reflect on the relationship between the "I" and the "other" in our contemporary world. The essay examines the writer's movement away from an indigenism that failed to take into account the internal world of the Indian and opted instead for "speaking from the inside of an 'I' split by the social and axiological radical rupture of society" (193). Bubnova points out that unlike Miguel Angel Asturias's project in which the Indian seeks to be a *mestizo*, de Lión's unsettling gaze (cultural, political, and aesthetic) does not allow for compromises. She argues further that, ultimately, if there is an opening in the narrative it is present in a pre-Hispanic cosmogonic view; in the fact that everything can be repeated and re-done (196). One might say that what we have here is an aesthetization of self-identity so that cultural memory is neither negotiated (as is the case with Asturias's narrative or Marcos's postmodern strategy as discussed in Alejos García's essay) nor does it have claims to a multicultural public space.

In "Moors or Indians? Stereotype and the Crisis of (National) Identity (chapter 8) Ignacio Altamirano and Manuel de Jesús Galván," Isabel de Sena, a literary critic, explores the stereotype of the "Moor" in *El Zarco*, a novel by the Mexican writer and politician Ignacio Altamirano and in *Enriquillo*, a novel by the Dominican Manuel de Jesús Galván. Both narrative were written with the explicit

purpose of creating a national literature and are said “to illustrate the uses to which ‘orientalism’ can be put in an America which both wants and does not want to be Spanish” (203). De Sena’s conclusion is that the authors in question use the stereotype of the Moor “in order to articulate the political and cultural tensions of their day. The stereotype facilitates the construction of ambivalent positionalities and antagonisms that permit them to negotiate and identify for their venerable, incipient countries . . . neither quite Indian nor quite white” (222). Thus a cornerstone of the essay is the uses of the stereotype for the reinvention of tradition as a relentless process of identification. In this sense de Sena’s approach to the stereotype in the making connects with current questions of identity construction.

The question of ethnicity and identity is further problematized in Elena Feder’s “Engendering the Nation, Nationalizing the Sacred: *Guadalupismo* and the Cinematic (Re) Formation of Mexican Consciousness,” (chapter 9) through the use of the conceptual tools of film and gender theory. Feder examines the imaginary and socio-symbolic transformation of *Guadalupismo* in Mexican cinema from the 1930s to the early 1950s. Stressing the communifying power of *Guadalupismo* and its presence in the formation of nation, race and gender, Feder especially underscores the contributions of filmmaker Emilio “el indio” Fernández and his proposal of a dual/*mestizo* model of *mexicanidad* while arguing at the same time that his contributions have been mostly erased through a hegemonic reformation of Mexican identity. Fernández’s vision for a dual *mestizo* nation emphasizes “the Indian (M) Other underbelly that sustains the mythico-historical dimensions of the hybrid mode of cultural formation we call *mestizaje*,” while his brand of *indigenismo* “works to expose the double exclusion of Indian and Woman at the root of the nostalgic nationalism that characterizes dominant analyses of *mexicanidad* since Independence” (249). The multidisciplinary scope of Feder’s essay is quite evident as it focuses on the polysemic phenomenon of *Guadalupismo* in Mexico through a discussion of the cultural impact of new technologies and hegemonic strategies on the cinematic reformation of Mexican identity.

### **3) National Identity and Globalization**

In three of the essays discussed below (those of Jorge Larrain Ibáñez, Antonio Gómez Moriana, and Victor Armony, respectively) national identity is viewed as a socio cultural construction (individual and/ or collective) and its relationship with contemporary issues of globalization is tied to a late modern (rather than postmodern) approach to questions of cultural identity. According to this argument the changes in the social order of post-industrial society do not constitute a substantial social change; rather, they prolong the logic of modernization.<sup>5</sup> A fourth essay written by Dennis O. Flynn and

Arturo Giraldes deals with the relationship between the local and the global in an economic process of early globalization, focusing on the circulation of silver between America (source of production/supply), Europe (middleman) and China (source of demand). In their essay globalization is viewed as a historical process which commenced several hundred years ago.

In "The Concept of Identity," (chapter 1) Jorge Larraín Ibáñez deals with the polysemic spectrum of the concept, exploring its evolution from Aristotle to modern thought. Keeping in mind self-reflexivity and/or self-consciousness (as a necessary element of individual responsibility), he examines the concept from the notion of an individual soul, in the tradition of modern philosophy, to one of a socially constructed phenomenon in the sociological and socio-psychological tradition. Following G.H. Mead's pragmatism and social psychology, Larraín Ibáñez explores the social character of qualitative identity and its "otherness,"<sup>6</sup> and points to the confusion that has existed (starting with modern philosophical tradition) "between two notions of identity, one referring to individual segments and the other to qualitative identity" (6). For him "there cannot be personal identities without collective identities and vice-versa" (14). This assumption becomes a cornerstone for an exploration of the constitution of national or regional identities. Larraín Ibáñez accepts the notion that identities are no longer fixed, but resists the postmodern notion that identities are freely chosen or easily changed. The total decentering of the subject would imply for him the acceptance of a loss of agency and purpose and, with it, "all political practice of transformation"(27). His conclusion leaves open the possibility of a realistic utopia in line with recent developments of social theory.<sup>7</sup> His more or less utopian answers for the future presuppose the hope for a compromise between modernity and postmodernity—what Giddens (1990) calls high modernity.

In "The Emergence of a Colonial ("Indian") Voice: Inca Garcilaso and Guamán Poma," (chapter 4) Antonio Gómez Moriana focuses, among other things, on an analysis of the ideological mechanisms which bridge identity discourses and subjectivity's *prise de conscience* (both for collective identity and individual subjectivity) in the evolution of autobiographical and biographical genres, confessional and testimonial subgenres, and autohistoriography. His objective is to highlight "the importance of language in the cultural (social) construction of 'reality,' and to denounce the illusion of radical change that has emerged with 'postcolonial' theory's espousal of an allegedly authentic autochthonous voice" (116-17). Taking into account the testimonies of el Inca Garcilaso de la Vega and Guamán Poma de Ayala whom he sees in confrontation with the testimonies of Nebrija and Columbus, and keeping in mind the two *momentums*—the colonial and the contemporary—Gómez Moriana argues that contrary to present-day globalization processes which aim at integration by erasing cultural differences, early globalization

tended to serve as an intercultural bridge within a greater dialogical context. The parallels that he establishes between a first globalization—which coincides with the colonization of Latin America—and the process of “total globalization” (which coincides with today’s neoliberal hegemony) allow him to delve into the ideological presuppositions behind some well-known postmodern narratives (end of *grands récits*, end of ideology, etc.).

In “Latin American Silver and the Early Globalization of World Trade,” (chapter 5) Dennis O. Flynn (an economist, who has written on early modern monetary theory) and Arturo Giraldez (a literary and cultural critic) postulate the importance of silver as the single most important commodity in the emergence of world trade, focusing on the demands for this product in Ming China and its impact worldwide. The authors adopt a world-system perspective rather than a traditional eurocentric one, pointing out that the “European companies simply plugged into the pre-existing network of intra-Asian trade” (143) and that the opportunities for profit around the globe were due to “the high value of silver inside China” (144). The attention usually given to the supply-side of the equation by traditional scholarship is balanced by the author’s focus on the question of demand (China): “The combination of low supply-side production costs in Spanish America, along with powerful Chinese-led demand-side pressure on silver’s value in Asia generated probably the most spectacular mining boom in human history” (146-47). The eventual change in demand is said to have had world-wide ramifications as evidenced by the fact that while Spanish American silver exports were relatively robust after 1640, the purchasing power of silver had deteriorated to the point where it was no longer sufficient to finance the activities of the Spanish Empire. Their conclusion is that “much of what passes for local history in the early modern period can only be understood in terms of world history” (156) and that “the economic impact of China on the West was far greater than any European influence on Asia in the early modern period” (156). Their thesis turns much of the work that has been done on the silver trade from the supply side upside-down and establishes a case for interconnectedness during the earlier phase of economic globalization. Their essay also connects with contemporary critical discussions regarding eurocentrism and their historical narrative illuminates theoretical questions which the essay itself does not pose.<sup>8</sup>

In the final essay of this grouping, “National Identity and State Ideology in Argentina,” (chapter 11) Victor Armony compares two different conceptions of national identity in post-authoritarian Argentina (1983-1993) during the “process of reconstruction of collective life” (293). By studying the presidential discourses of Raúl Alfonsín and Carlos Menem respectively, Armony seeks to understand the way in which each of them has embodied and furthered a specific image of the country, of what Argentina is and what it ought to be, arguing that any discussion of Argentina’s collective identity

must take into account both “the Myth of National Destiny and the Myth of National Unity” (295). Using qualitative-conceptual with quantitative-statistical methods of discourse analysis, Armony evaluates the two ideological projects and their links to these myths. One of his premises is that a discursive analysis of political narratives must account not only for its own reasons but also for its inspiring images, emotional appeals, and cultural meanings. He concludes that while Alfonsín’s discourse promoted a “Pluralist Society” based on the values of “Effort and Solidarity,” Menem’s promoted a “Great Argentina” based on the values of “Destiny and Fraternity,” integrating an authoritarian populism within the neoliberal *doxa* (311). In the latter discourse, society becomes “a mere business operation” (314). Thus the national state-centered liberal democracy of Anfonsín’s project is displaced by a global, neoliberal discourse that disarticulates the traditional liberal role of the national state. As an incisive analysis of political discourse in post-authoritarian Argentina, the essay invites further reflection on a period of Argentina’s history marked by scarce social visibility and rapid social changes. Such a reflection might involve the connection between presidential discourses, re-democratization, and the extent to which a residual culture of fear may be an obstacle in everyday life.<sup>9</sup>

A reflection on the volume’s premises and, more specifically, on the substance of each of the essays suggests a series of timely questions: how identity is connected to every day experience and life politics in contemporary processes of globalization; how the concept of plural identities might be dealt with in terms of the particular/universal relationship;<sup>10</sup> how identities are constructed across different discourses and practices; what kinds of tensions (social and/or symbolic) arise “between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization” (Apparadui 1990, 5); and how the increasingly relational notion of a Latin-American identity is explored specifically in terms of its political consequences, keeping in mind the narrowing of the traditional public sphere, the erosion of the nation-state, the contemporary national/transnational new social movements, and the emergence of a cybernetic public sphere.

Most of the essays in this volume seem to reserve a space for political action or for rethinking the political in light of globalization. They also stress the proto-political importance of a social imagination as a precondition for a new collective politics and hint at the increased levels of adjustments that individual and collective identities are compelled to make in order to improve their capacity for social and cultural creativity. It is fair to say that the present volume provides leads for further research into the elusive questions of Latin-American identities, political imagination and social transformations at the dawn of the twenty-first century when identity is no longer what it used to be.

## Notes

1. Much has been written regarding the erosion of the nation-state and its ability to remain the major source for the reproduction of social relations. Externally, globalization reduces the capacity of the state to regulate economic processes while, internally, the fragmentation of identities is seen as an inevitable and irreversible process that challenges the state's ability to ensure political regulation. See, for example, Gilles Bourque and Jules Duchastel (1999, p.183).
2. For a typology of authoritarian regimes in Argentina over the course of several decades and the cultural sedimentation of fear as an instrument of policy (state terrorism), see Corradi (1992, 283).
3. These very questions have been theorized through a discussion of the identity/difference relationship within a global culture economy. On this score, see Arjun Appadurai (1996, 15): "many groups are consciously mobilizing themselves according to identitarian criteria. Culturalism, put simply, is identity politics mobilized at the level of the nation-state."
4. On the Zapatistas in the age of cyberspace, see Castells (1997, 72-83). For a discussion of the role that social movements play in more localized civil society and the complex relations between local places and global flows, see Hamel, Lustiger-Thaler, and Maheu (1999, 165-80).
5. See Giddens (1990, 1991).
6. According to Dunn (1998), Mead's self-reflexivity has a collective dimension and his pragmatism provides the tools for "theorizing how identity develops within a social process while appreciating its discursive character" (220). Yet, it has also been pointed out (Garner 2000) that "micro-sociological insight remained largely disconnected from macro-sociological analysis. In its early years, micro-sociology gave little attention to issues of inequality, differences within society, and linkages between self and small groups on the one hand and larger structures and historical change on the other hand" (179-80).
7. See, for example, Giddens (1994); Bourdieu (1998); and Wallerstein (1991).
8. See, for example, the recent reflections of Dussell (1998) and the debate between McLennan (1998) and Wallerstein (1998).
9. For an incisive interdisciplinary approach to fear as a political and cultural construct see Corradi et al (1992).
10. Bauman (1999) argues incisively that "Universality is not the enemy of difference; it does not require 'cultural homogeneity,' nor does it need cultural purity.' . . . The pursuit of universality does not involve the smothering of cultural polyvalence or the pressure to reach cultural consensus. Universality means no more, yet no less either, than the across-the-species ability to communicate and reach mutual understanding. . . . Such universality reaching beyond the confines of sovereign or quasi-sovereign communities . . . is the sole alternative to blind, elemental, erratic, and controlled, divisive and polarizing force of globalization" (202).

## Works Cited

- Appadurai, Arjun. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy." *Public Culture* 2, 2 (Spring 1990): 1-11; 15-24.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Modernity at Large. Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1996.
- Bauman, Zygmunt. *In Search of Politics*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1999.

- Bourdieu, Pierre. "A Reasoned Utopia and Economic Fatalism." *New Left Review* 227 (January–February, 1998): 125–30.
- Bourque, Gilles and Jules Duchastel. "Erosion and the Nation-State and the Transformation of National Identities in Canada." In *Sociology for the Twenty-first Century. Continuities and Cutting Edges*. Ed. Janet L. Abu-Lughod. Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 1999. 183–98.
- Castells, Manuel. "Mexico's Zapatistas: The First Informational Guerrilla." In *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, Vol. II: *The Power of Identity*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997. 72–83.
- Corradi, Juan. "Toward Societies without Fear." In *Fear at the Edge. State Terror and Resistance in Latin America*. Ed. Juan E. Corradi, Patricia Weiss, and Manuel Antonio Garretón. Berkeley: U of California P, 1992. 267–92.
- Dunn, Robert G. *Identity Crises. A Social Critique of Postmodernity*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1998.
- Dussell, Enrique. "Beyond Eurocentrism: The World-System and the Limits of Modernity." *The Cultures of Globalization*. Ed. Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi. Durham: Duke UP, 1998. 3–31.
- Garner, Roberta. *Social Theory: Continuity and Confrontation, a Reader*. Toronto: Broadview Press, 2000.
- Giddens, Anthony. *Beyond Left and Right*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990. 55–63.
- Hamel, Pierre, Henri Lustiger-Thaler, and Louis Maheu. "Is There a Role for Social Movements?" In *Sociology for the Twenty-first Century: Continuities and Cutting Edges*. 165–80.
- Jameson, Fredric, and Masao Miyoshi (eds.). *The Cultures of Globalization*. Durham: Duke UP, 1998.
- Lechner, Norbert. "Some People Die of Fear. Fear as a Political Problem." In *Fear at the Edge: State Terror and Resistance in Latin America*. 26–35.
- McLennan, Gregor. "The Question of Eurocentrism: A Comment on Immanuel Wallerstein." *New Left Review* 231 (September/October 1998): 153–58.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel. "Questioning Eurocentrism: A Reply to Gregor McLennan." *New Left Review* 231 (September/October 1998): 159–60.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Unthinking Social Science*. London: Polity Press, 1991.

## ◆ Contributors

**José Alejos García** is Professor of Anthropology at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). His academic and research interests, as well as many of his publications, deal with the constitution of indigenous identities in the Guatemalan-Mexican area (particularly Chiapas), examining them in reference to the Spanish colonizer, the present Nation-State (Mexico) and the different Maya groups.

**Victor Armony** is Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Ottawa and has taught Latin American comparative politics at the University of British Columbia. He has published extensively in the field of political discourse analysis and is the author of *Représenter la nation: le discours présidentiel de l'Argentine post-autoritaire* (2000). Recent investigations have taken him into the area of Latin American political cultures and national identities in the context of globalization.

**Bruno Barla Hidalgo** is Professor of Architecture at the Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Chile, and a practicing architect. He has written extensively on Italian architecture, particularly on the work of Andrea Palladio.

**Tatiana Bubnova** is Professor of Literature at El Colegio de México and at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) and is the official translator of the works of M. M. Bakhtin into Spanish. Among her books is *F. Delicado puesto en diálogo: las claves bajtinianas de La Lozana andaluza* (1987).

**James R. Cisneros** is currently a SSHRC post-doctoral researcher at Harvard University. He is also a member of the National Identities and Socio-Political

Changes in Latin America Research Group at Simon Fraser University. His most recent publication is “Censura, violencia política y memoria colectiva: la historia oficial” (1997).

**Isabel de Sena** is Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature at Sarah Lawrence College, NY. She has published numerous articles on issues of identity in Latin America, and has also written on Latin American and Portuguese literature of the early modern period.

**Mercedes F. Durán-Cogan** is a SSHRC post-doctoral researcher at Stanford University. She has taught Spanish and Latin American Literatures and Cultures at Simon Fraser University, the University of British Columbia and the University of California at Santa Barbara. She is the coordinator of the National Identities and Socio-Political Changes in Latin America Research Group at Simon Fraser University. Her recent publications include “Instancias de poder en El corazón del espantapájaros” (1997) as well as “La puesta en escena como subversión” and, “Hegel, Zea y la problemática identitaria latinoamericana” (forthcoming). Her book *Des-Figurando la identidad. Ideas-imágenes y escritura pre-génerica en la configuración de un epos latinoamericano* is currently under review for publication by Editorial Sudamericana.

**Herbert Enns** is Associate Professor of Architecture at the University of Manitoba, Canada. His research and teaching focuses on regional culture and architecture, industrial design, and landscape architecture. A practicing architect, he won the 1996 Canadian Architect Award of Excellence for his Seasonal Residence at Shoal Lake, and has recently completed the design of the Centre for Architectural Structures and Technology at the University of Manitoba.

**Elena Feder** is a SSHRC Post-Doctoral Fellow at Simon Fraser University, where she is affiliated with the National Identities and Socio-Political Changes in Latin America Research Group. She has recently curated and implemented “Nations, Pollinations and Dislocations: Changing Imaginary Borders in the Americas,” a film and video project supported by The Canada Council for the Arts. Among her publications are “Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz or the Snares of Con(tra)dic(t)ion” (1992); and, “In the Shadow of Race: Forging an Image for Women in Bolivian Cinema” (1998).

**Dennis O. Flynn** is an Alexander R. Heron Professor of Economics at the University of the Pacific. He has published over thirty essays on early-modern monetary history since 1978, fifteen of which have been reproduced in *World Silver and Monetary History in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (1996). He has co-edited *Studies in the Economic History of the Pacific Rim* (1998) and *Pacific Centuries: Pacific and Pacific Rim History since the Sixteenth Century* (1999), and is General Editor of *The Pacific World: Lands, Peoples, and History of the Pacific, 1500-1900* (forthcoming).

**José Antonio Giménez Micó** is Assistant Professor of Spanish and Latin American Studies at Concordia University, Canada. He has published several articles on Hermeneutics, Semiotics, and Literary Theory, as well as on French, French Caribbean, Spanish, and Latin American Literatures. He has published a monograph titled *'Todas las sangres. Ética y estética del mestizaje y la transculturación'*. His book *L'irruption des autre* is forthcoming.

**Arturo Giraldez** is a Professor of Spanish Literature at the University of the Pacific. He holds a PhD in Spanish Literature from the University of California, Santa Barbara (1990) and a doctorate in History from the University of Amsterdam (1999). Author of more than a dozen articles on early-modern monetary history, Giraldez is co-editor of *Metals and Monies in an Emerging Global Economy* (1997) and General Editor of the Variorum/Ashgate series, *The Pacific World: Lands, Peoples, and History of the Pacific, 1500-1900* (forthcoming).

**Roberto Godoy Arcaya** is a practicing architect and writer who shares his time between Chile and Spain. He is the author of several books and he has edited and directed the series *Guías Raras y Completas de Territorios y Habitantes de España* (IMPROTUR).

**Antonio Gómez-Moriana** is Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada (English and French Academies) and Professor of Humanities at Simon Fraser University. He is also Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature at the University of Montréal, where he taught from 1974 to 1996 and was founding director of the Department of Comparative Literature. He is founder and director of the National Identities and Socio-Political Changes in Latin America Research Group at Simon Fraser University. Founder and Director at Editions Balzac of the Monographic Series *L'Univers des discours* (60 volumes since 1985). Among his many publications are *La subversion du discours rituel* (1985) and *Discourse Analysis as Sociocriticism* (1993).

**Rafael Gómez-Moriana** is Assistant Professor of Architecture at the University of Manitoba, Canada. His research focuses on theoretical and cultural aspects of architecture and he is currently working on a book project funded by the Canada Council for the Arts which examines alternative suburban housing prototypes.

**Godofredo Iommi** is a world-renowned poet and one of the founders and directors of the School of Architecture at the Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Chile.

**Jorge Larraín Ibañez** is Professor of Social Theory at the Department of Cultural Studies and Sociology at the University of Birmingham, UK, where he has taught since 1977. At the present time he also serves as Head of the Department of Social Sciences at the Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Santiago,

Chile. His well-known publications include *The Concept of Ideology* (1979); *Marxism and Ideology* (1983); *Ideology and Cultural Identity: Modernity and the Third World Presence* (1994); *Modernidad, razón e identidad en América Latina* (1996); and, *Identity and Modernity in Latin America* (2000).

**Horacio Machín** is Assistant Professor of Spanish American Literature and Culture at the University of Minnesota. His publications include several essays in the area of Latin American cultural studies and his present research spans a number of issues, including the changing concepts of nation and nationalism in the current process of globalization. His forthcoming volume (co-edited) is titled *Old Nations/ New Nations: Hispanic America, a Comparative Perspective*.

**Marcelo Nusenovich** is Professor of Art History at the Universidad Nacional de Córdoba (Argentina). His approach to Cultural Analysis intertwines theoretical tools from Art History, Anthropology and Semiotics. Recent publications include (with Gustavo Blázquez), "La fiesta, o el juego de lo público y lo privado" (1995); "Caras cordobesas. La Sala de Precursores en el Museo Dr. Genaro Pérezí de Córdoba," (1997); "El cuerpo del Duce: La manipulación en el programa estético fascista (1997); and "Detrás de todo gran hombre" (1997).

**Nicholas Spadaccini** is Professor of Hispanic Studies and Comparative Literature at the University of Minnesota. He has written on Spanish Golden Age literature and culture and has co-edited several volumes of literary and cultural criticism. Some of those publications include *1492–1992: Re/Discovering Colonial Writing* (1990); *Amerindian Images and the Legacy of Columbus* (1992); *Through the Shattering Glass: Cervantes and the Self-made World* (1993); and, *Rhetoric and Politics. Baltasar Gracián and the New World Order* (1997).

**Sylvia Wynter** is Professor Emerita at Stanford University, where she held a joint appointment in Spanish and Portuguese and in the Program of African and Afro-American Studies from 1977 to 1994. Her most recent essay is "Columbus, The Ocean Blue and Fables that Stir the Mind: To Reinvent the Study of Letters" (1997). She is now preparing a collection of her essays for publication under the title *The Third Event: Essays Towards The Human, After Man.*



# Index

*Compiled by A. Sarah Hreha*

- Abercrombie, Thomas 355, 371, n380  
aboriginal, aborigines - *See also* Indian, Amerindians 113, 125, 126, 127, 387, 393  
acculturation 193, 333  
advantage, adaptive 49-51, 57  
adventure 390  
aesthetic, aesthetics 130, 179, 367, 373, 437  
*ad valorem* (sales) tax 148  
African-Americans 323  
Africans 156, 166, 218, 219  
agonistic xii, 237, 258  
*alcabala* 148  
Alejos García, José xv, n175, 183, n198, 437-438  
Alfonsín, Raúl 295-296, 297, 300-304, 312-313, 441  
*Alfonсинism* 313  
*Allq'a* 368  
*almojarifazo* duties 148  
Altamirano, Ignacio 202, 203, 205, 206, 207, 209, 218, 222, n224, 438  
alterity, alterities 249, 321, 324, 327, 340, n347  
Althusser, Louis n28, 283  
*Amereida, Eneida-Amereida*: journey (*andadura*) through Amereida - *See also* travel, *travesías* 386, 387, 390, 393, 394, 395, 405, 406, 407  
Americanization 327, 331, 333  
Amerindians 162, 323, 327, 340  
amnesty 296  
Anacaona, kingdom of 207  
anachronic 112, 133, 134  
analysis: literary analysis; sociological analysis; analysis of culture, of intercultural relations, of political discourse xv, 4, n28, 34, 58, 62, 70, 187, 202, n222, n262, n264, 281, 293, n316, 323: xv, 80, 115, n197, 343, n393; n175, 238, 299, n348, 352, n443; 105, 115, 184, 238, 239, 249, 296, 304, 308, 310, 311, n315, 353, n378, n379, n380, 435, 440, 442  
Anaya, Rudolfo 347, n349  
ancestors, cult of the 242  
*Anchanchu* 364, 369  
Anderson, Benedict 14-15, n27, 274, n315, 338  
Andes 146, 150  
*andesuyo* 119  
Andrade, Oswald de 130, n137  
antagonic, antagonistic xiii, 18, 73, 115, 129, 203, 204, 207, 216, 218, 221, 222, n224, 259, 288, n291, 344, n348, 358, 367, 437, 439  
anthropophagy, cultural 130  
anticlericalism 239  
Antillean n64  
anti-Negro 51, 58, 59, n61  
antiphrasis 190  
Anzaldúa, Gloria 345  
appropriation: appropriation of history - *See also* discursive appropriation 124, 127, 168, 193, 258, 273, 283, 288, 330, 364: 271, 282  
Aquinas, Thomas 93, n107-108  
Arab, Arabs 206, 210, 212  
arbitrage: arbitrage phase; non-arbitrage phase 144: 155, 156; 155  
archetype, archetypes 45, 239  
architectonic, architectonics n197, 406  
architecture, architectural: architectural form, place of poiesis in, poetic, poetics of area studies - *See also* regional studies 383-388: 394-395, 399-400, 405-407, 437  
Arendt, Hannah 273, 280-282, 289, 290, n291  
Argentina xv, 13, 150, 269-292, 293-320, 387, 435, 441, 442, n443  
Arguedas, José María 187, n197, n198, 340  
Ariel 321, 342  
Aristotle 3, 11, 67, 79, 84, 272, 440

- Armony, Victor xvi, 300, n315, 439, 441-442
- Artaud, Antonin n264, 353, 354, 373, 377
- artificial intelligence 54
- asexual: asexual mode of reproduction - *See also* sexual 229: 229
- assimilation, assimilationist policies 73, 218, 244, 436
- Asturias, Miguel Ángel 81, 82, 86-87, 90, 92, 178, 181, 182, 186, 189, 196, n196, n197, n198, 438
- Atahualpa 355
- Attman, Arthur 142, 143
- Atwell, William S. 144
- Aufhebung* (Hegelian) 76, 77, n107
- authenticity, lack of 75
- author, authorship 115, 118, 385
- authority, authoritarianism 119, 302
- autobiography 111, 114, 331, 332, 333, 337, n348
- autochthonous: autochthonous culture; autochthonous values; autochthonous voice - *See also* Colonial, Indian voice 90: 74; 201, 376; 116, 440
- autohistoriography 111-115
- autonomy: cultural, economic, political autonomy 8, 58: 10, 15, 25, 114, 179, 313, 323
- autophobia 50, 50-57, n61
- avantgarde, avantgardes 234, 247, 248-249, 355
- Aymara 119, 357, 376
- Aztec, Aztec empire 74, 245, n263
- Aztlán 329-330, 340, 436
- Bakhtin, Mikhail 71, 78, 80, 116, 130-132, 162-163, 167, 171, 174, n174, n175, 182, 187, 194, n197, n198, n199, 324, 328, n348, 357-358
- Balandier, Georges n63
- barbarians, barbarous, barbarism 11-12, 77-78, 85, 88, 90-91, 127, 204, 271, 288, 302, 308
- Barla, Bruno 387, 388
- Baroque 367, n378
- Barrett, Ward 141, 142
- bastard 118
- Baudinet, María José 363, n378
- Bauman, Zygmunt 11-12, n443
- beauty, ideal of 375
- Benjamin, Walter n175, 231, 235
- Benjamin-Labarthe, Elyette 346, n349
- Berman, Marshall 258, 366
- Bhabha, Homi 202, 220, n222, n223, 250, 259, n315, n348
- Bible 86-87, 89, 90
- black, black peoples 13, 14, 30-32, 36, 39-40, 42-46, 52-54, 56-57, n61, n62, 163, 218, 327, 339, 340, 359, 393, 434
- Black English n61
- black skin 45, 52, 53
- Black Skin/White Masks* 30, 45, 61
- Blades, Rubén n349
- blasphemy 128
- Blásquez, Gustavo 353, n377, n380
- blood - *See also* sangre 288, n378
- Boden, Margaret 54, 60, n64
- body: bourgeois, carnivalized, festive, national, official, popular, social body - *See also* corporation of culture 354, 372, 376-377: 286-288, 354, 361, 369, 372, 374, 375, 377, n379, 436
- Bohm, David 36, 38
- Bolívar, Simón 70, 96, 99-104, 221, 340, 435
- Bolivia xvi, 98, 101, 146, 352, 374
- borders: national borders; political borders; regional borders xii, xv, 250, 305, 359, 363, 378: 112, 146, 314, 329, 333; xiii, 167, 312, 405; 68, 241
- Borges, Jorge Luis 130, 133, 187
- boundaries: disciplinary boundaries, geographical boundaries 23, 26, 79, 169, 339-340, 399, 437, 438: xii, xvi, 12, 68, 92, 433
- Bourdieu, Pierre xiv, 114, n443
- bourgeois, bourgeoisie 117-118, 338
- Boxer, Charles R. 140, 150
- braceros* 328, 335, 336, 341
- Brading, D.A. 147, n223
- Brazil 150, 154, n316
- bricolage* 235
- Bubnova, Tatiana xvi, n175, 438
- building, building practices, built: (the) architecture - building opposition; built environment; the industrialized and standardized building practices - *See also* vernacular, local style of building

- 10, 23, 170, 217, n264, 382, 383, 384: 383, 384; 383, 386; 383
- Cabrera, Estrada 82, 86  
cacique, caciquismo 89  
*Caculhá Huracán* 189  
Cakchiquel: Cakchiquel community; Cakchiquel Indians; Cakchiquel language 86, 186, 191: 185; 180, 188; 163, 188, n198  
Calhoun, Craig 307, 314  
Caliban, Calibanism 77, n107, 321-322, 333-334, 342, 345, n348  
calque: linguistic calque, discursive calque 112, 129, n137: n137  
Campbell, Donald 46, 47  
*cana* 119  
*canche* 119  
cannibal, cannibalism 42, 127  
canon, canonical: literary canon; Argentina's literary canon xii, 67, 80-83, 85-86, 91, 93, 95-96, 134, 344, 355, 361, 362, 365, n378: 115, n174, 345; 275  
capital 22, 248, 323  
capitalism, capitalist 12, 22, 26, 111, 115, 304, 372, 373  
Cárdenas, Lázaro 241, 248  
Cardoza y Aragón, Luis 81, 185-187, 194, n197, n198  
Caribbean, the xiv, 33, 153, 209, 218, 321  
carnival, carnivalization process - *See also* carnivalized body, subversion, and transgression 130-132  
Carpentier, Alejo 78, 81, 87-88, 90, 92, 134, 340  
Carrasco Urgoiti, María Soledad 202, 215, n223, n224, 225  
Carrera Damas, Germán 82, n107  
Cartesianism 127  
Castile, Castilian: Castilian language, Castilian grammar 112, 119, 119, n137, 148, 153, 155, 213, 215: 112, 119, 122-124, 187  
Catalan 112  
Catharists 366  
Catholic, Catholicism: Catholic Church 129, 193, 238, 243, 247, 258-259, n264, 287, 360: 128, 235, 238, n263, 287, 295  
*Caudillo, caudillos* 71, 89, 112  
cause-place 388, 395, 400-401, 402-403, 406  
censorship 270  
center - *See also* periphery 23, 73, 77  
Cereceda, Verónica 368, n379  
Cervantes, Miguel de 97, 119, 125, 132, 133  
Césaire, Aimé 49, 58, 60, n62, n64, 434  
Chalmers, David 31-32, 36, 41, 46, 48, 49, 53, 55, 60, 434  
Chanady, Amaryll 129  
*charca* 119  
Chaunu, Pierre 143  
chauvinism 308  
Chiapas, Chiapanecan 163, 166, 167-171, 172-174, n175, n199, 437-438  
Chicana, Chicano, *Chicanismo*: Chicano literature; Chicano movement; Chicano Studies 333, 326, 328, 329-331, 332, 333-334, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340-342, 347, n349: 326, 331, 337, 340, 343-347; 320, 333, 335, 339, 340, 345; 328, 331  
*chichaysuyo* 119  
Chichen Izá 249  
Chile 13-15, 100-104, 394  
China xiv, 141-146, 149, 152, 155-157, 441  
China Supay 355, 374-377, n378, n379  
*Chingada* 238, 240  
*Chipi-Caculhá* 189  
*Ch'ol* 167  
*Cholo* 355  
(semiotic) chora 237, n262  
Christ 230, 252, 257, 363-364, 376, n378  
Christian, Christianity 90-92, 189, 204-206, n223, 235, 238, 360-361, 368  
Christophe, Henri 221  
*chronotopos*, chronotopically - *See also* diachrony, diastratry, and diatopy 116, 130, 132  
Chuan, Hang-sheng 143, 144, 151-152  
Chuquimia Aguirre, Lucio 355, 359, 364, 371-373, 376, n379-380  
church: church and state 89, 93, 128, 230, 238, 244, 255, 257, 259, n263-264,

- 280, 287, 364, 368, 375-376, n377: 235, 244, n263
- chuschaia riech* 132
- cinema, cinematic apparatus: Mexican cinema 229, 233, 249, n264, n265: 230-232, 236, 238, 242, 246-247, 258, n264, 439
- Cisneros, James xvi, 83, 110, n290, 320, 435
- citizens, citizenship 284, 288, n291, 293, 314, 360, 438
- Ciudad abierta*, Open City at Ritoque (Valparaíso, Chile) 394
- civilization 77-78, 127, n198, 203, 271, 308, 329, n347-348, 368, 383, 436
- CLASA 248
- class, social class: class struggle 14, 238, 249, 326, 344, 345: 26
- Coatlicúe 239
- Colombia 83, 101-103, 146, n223
- Colón, Diego 208, 213, 216, 219, 220
- colonial, colonized, colonialism: colonial heritage; (Spanish) colonial rule xiv, 34, 81, 167, n198, 201, 205, 219, n222-223, 241, 243, 261, 277, 321: xii, 167, 112-113
- colonization, de-colonialization - *See also* re-territorialization xii, 70, 133, 207, 331
- (Christopher) Columbus, (Cristóbal) Colón 113, 124, 126, 133-134, 208, 215, 440
- commodities n265, 371
- communications 23, 25
- communism, communist 26, 111, n196, n291
- community: imagined communities; panethnic community 67-70, 95, 171, n175, 186, 244, 295, 304, 307-308, n316, 326, 346-347, n349, 364, n379: 11, 14, n316; 165
- competition, competitiveness 47, 285, 312
- CONADEP 269, 289, n291
- condesuyo* 119
- conquest xii, 92, 126-128, 164, 167, 193, 195, n198, 202, 208, 209, 218, 243, 244, 355
- Conquistador, Conquistadores 71
- consciousness: collective consciousness; double consciousness; false consciousness - *See also* Ideology; Mexican national consciousness; self-consciousness; self-recognition 16, 30, 31, 32, 40, 44, 47, 55-58, 59-60, 128, 241, 331, 437: 124, 129; 30; 59, 115
- consensus 344, 345, n443
- constructivism, constructivist theories 18-21, 252
- Contemporáneos* 239
- contraband - *See also* trade 150, 151
- convivencia* 302
- copy 256, 261
- corporeal, the 366
- Cortés, Hernán 127, 208, n263
- cosmogeny, Indigenous 85-86, 91
- Costa Lima, Luis xiii, 73, 275
- Counter Reformation 360, 361, 363
- coup d'état* 270
- creole, *criollo* 33, 70-71, 72, 103, 204, 218
- Cristero War 235, n263
- Croesus 78, 84, 85, 87
- Cros, Edmond 324
- Cross, Harry E. 141, 142, 146, 147, 151, 156
- (Spanish) Crown 113, 124-125, 147-149, 150-152, 207
- Cruz Covarrubias, Alberto n393, 396-397, 399
- Cruz, Sor Juana Inés de la 121
- crypto-Judaism 127
- Cuba, Cubans 120, 211, 328, 347
- culturalism n443
- culture, cultural: corporization of culture; cultural practices; cultural studies - *See also* mestizaje cultural 53, 72, 130, 174, 202, 235, 238-239, 331, n349, 352, 367, 390, 434: 354; 353; 115
- da Vinci, Leonardo 236
- Darwin, Charles 43, 55, n64
- Dávila, Juan 99-105, n106, 435
- Dawkins, Richard 48, 50, n62-63
- de Certeau, Michel 271
- de Lión, Luis 178, 180-182, 183, 186-187, 188-189, 190, 193-196, n 196, n197, 438

- de Rivas, Duque 204  
 de Sena, Isabel xvi, 438-439  
 de Stael, Mme 275  
 de Toledo, Francisco Viceroy 146  
 de Toledo, Maria 208, 212-214  
 Deacon, Terence W. 46, 53  
 dead, death 58, 236, 367, 392-393  
 decolonization 203  
 defiance (of the margins) 116-117  
 Deleuze, Gilles 354  
 democracy, democracies, democratic 83, 270, 273, 284, 293-294, 295, 300-303, 313-314, 442  
 demon, demoniacal, demonization, demonology - *See also* the *Diablada* 355, 361-362, 365-367, 373, 377, 436  
 denegritification 41  
 denotative (literary) genres 71, 79, 86, 105  
 dependence, dependency 13, 23, 322  
*derecho de gentes* 113  
 Derrida, Jacques 125-126  
 desacralization, desecrating - *See also* sacral, and sacralization 103, 130, 133, 248, 367  
*desaparecido* 269, 289-290  
 Descartes 4, 78, 85, 88, 90, 134  
 detainee, detention centers 282, 289  
 development 284, 302, 352, 371  
 deviance, deviant condition, deviants 111  
 Devil, devils 362, 365-369, 374-377, n378  
 DeVries, Jan 143, 146  
*Diablada* (dance) 355, 367, 374  
 diabolic: diabolic aesthetic 365-367, 373-374, 436-437: 374  
 diachrony - *See also* diastraty, diatopy, and *chronotopos* 116, 131  
 dialect, dialectical - *See also* local language 164, 275, 383  
 dialectic: center-periphery dialectic; dialectic of difference 41, 46, 73, 77, 81, n197, n222, 250, 321: 173; 343  
 dialogic, dialogical, dialogically: dialogical dimension of the novel - *See also* monologic, plurilogic 78, 162, n348: n197, 327-328  
 diasporic movements xii  
 diastraty - *See also* diachrony, diatopy, and chronotopos 116, 131  
 diatopy - *See also* diachrony, diastraty, and chronotopos 116, 131  
 dictator, dictatorship 81, 89, 92-93, 299, 314  
 Didion, Joan 235  
*diezmo* 149  
 difference, differentiation - *See also* assimilation, and dialectic of difference 73-74, 113-114, 216, 229, 237, 251, 282, 340-342  
 diglossic situation, the n348  
 dirty war 269, 288  
 disarticulation, processes of 25  
 discipline 271, 290  
 discourse: "Calabanesque discourse"; iconographic discourse; literary (fictional) discourse; presidential discourse; public discourse 71, 74, 92, 112, 114, 129, 171, 203, 277-279, 283, 290, n290, 296, 299-300, 305, 309, n316, 320-325, 327, 339, 342, n347, 353, 357, 365, 370, 388, 401, 434, 435, 436, 437, 440, 441-442: 321-325; 370, 376; 388, 404; 293, 299, 302-307, 310-314, n315, 442; 270, 290, 307  
 discursive practices 365  
 dissensus 344, 346, 347  
 dissent, dissidence n264, 290, 436  
*Dolores* 242, 261  
 domination - *See also* exploitation, and subordination xvi, 437-438  
 Dominguez Ortiz, Antonio 153, 155  
*Don Quixote* 97, 119, 125, 132, 133  
 Donoso Cortés, Juan 110, 130  
 doxa: Franco's nationalist doxa; neo-liberal doxa xii: 110; xvi, 110  
 Dubois, W.E.B. 31, 44  
 Durán-Cogan, Mercedes F. xv, 382, 390, 394, 435  
 Duvalier, François 83  
 East India Companies 141, 143  
 economic, economy 126, 143, 145, 284-285  
 ecosis 206-207, n224  
 Edison, Thomas A. 233, n265  
 (bilingual) education 334, 342, n349

- Einstein, Albert 278, 281, 282  
 Eisenstein, Sergei 250, 252, 261, n265  
 elegy 233  
 Elliot, T.S. 343  
 Elliott, J.H. 147, 153, 154  
 emotion, emotional: experience of emotion  
 empathic, empathy: empathic recognition  
*encabezamiento* 148  
 enemy 13, 211  
 enGendered 230, 242, 243, 249, 250  
 Enlightenment 242, 247, 261, 294  
 Enns, Herb 388  
 entymema 114  
 epic distance 132  
 epic: epic narrative; epic novel - *See also* epic distance 67, 80, 99, 303-304: 80-81, 132-133; 435  
*episteme* 131  
*epos* 67-72, 94, 103, 105  
 Epstein, Mikhail 33  
 Eros 393  
 eroticism 240  
 essence: innate, national essence 4, 20, 69, 167, 360: 1, 6, 20, 234, 293  
 essentialism 19, 20, 436  
 (the) *Estridentistas* 239  
 ethics n197, 373  
 ethnic, ethnicity: ethnic minorities; ethnic movement - *See also* ethnic identity 14, 160, 174, 288, 323, 326, 344, 434, 437-439: 323, 346; 233; 170  
 ethos 164  
 eurocentrism 131, 434, 441  
 Europe xiv, 15, 43, 67, 72-73, 76-77, 88, 111, 113, 119, 123, 130, 141-143, 146, 148, 153, 165, 182, 202-203, 209, n222-223, 234, 275, 392, 440  
 European Economic Community 23  
 eusociality 47  
 evil 365-366, 368  
 exceptionality 310  
*exemplum* 79, 80, 84, 85, 87, 93  
 exile 114, n223, 270, n290, 340  
 exotic, exoticism 253  
 exotopy, exotopic, exotopical: exotopic gaze 182-185, 194: 196  
 exploitation - *See also* domination, and subordination 328  
 Fanon, Frantz 30-46, 50, 51-53, 54-61, n61, n62, n63-64, 184, 202, 434  
 fantastic 82, 83  
 Father 250, 255  
 fatherland or *patria* 277, 298, 301, 304-305, 392  
 Feder, Elena xv, 352, 439  
 Félix, María 241, 244, 251  
 feminine, femininity: feminist movements 236, 366: 26  
 Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, Gonzalo 122  
 Fernández Retamar, Roberto 322, 324, 325, 328, 333, 340  
 Fernández, Emilio "el Indio" 230, 231, 247-257, 260, n265, 439  
 feudal, feudalism 12, 117, 132, 247, 328, 376  
 fiction, fictional 79, 83, 220  
 fictions, foundational 202  
 Figueroa, Gabriel 230, 231, 247-248, 250, 252, 260  
 figurative 284  
 figures - *See also* forms, images, and imaginary 68, 70, 71, 73, 93, 102, 142, 186, 202, 209, 238, 240, 247, n262, 275, 284, 289, 322, 359, 374, n378, 397  
 financial organizations, international 22  
 First World 262, 296  
 Flynn, Dennis O. xv, 143, 144, 146, 147, 439  
 folklore 248  
 FONDART 100  
 forms - *See also* figures, images, and imaginary 250  
 Foucault, Michel 43, 131, 203, 271, 283, 290, n290  
 Franco, Francisco 110-112, n136  
 Franco, Jean 205  
 Franklin, Stan 33, 41, 45, 49, 52, 53  
*Franquismo* 110-112  
 Freud, Sigmund 30, 261  
 Fuentes, Carlos 238  
 Fuentes, Fernando de 246, 247  
 function, functional, non-functional, functionalism, functionality: functionality in architecture 385, 395, 399, 401: 405  
 Galarza, Ernesto 332-333, 335, 436

- Galván, Manuel de Jesús 202, 203, 207-211, 215-222, n225, n226, n227, 438
- García Canclini, Néstor 20, 129, n349
- García Márquez, Gabriel 81, 83, 85, 87-92, 133, 190
- García Riera, Emilio 241, 248, n264
- García Venturini, Jorge 273, 278, 280, n291
- Garcilaso de la Vega, el Inca 118-124, 127, 129, 440
- gaze: anthropological gaze - *See also* exotopic gaze, and perspective 183, 186, 196, 252, 255, 324, 363, 374-375, 396, 401: 186
- Geertz, Clifford 353
- Geiss, J.P. 145, 149
- gender 14, 238, 249, 250, 326, 345, 437
- generation of 1837 273, 275
- generic: pre-generic / post-generic (style of) writing xv, 247: 78, 79, 84, 86, 93
- genetic, genetical: genetic/racial ideology - *See also* racism, and biocentrism 36, 46-48, 50-53, 55, n63: n64
- genetic kinship 47
- genocide: political genocide n64, n226, 249: 168
- genomic: genomic principle - *See also* the sociogenic principle; ontogeny; phylogeny, sociogeny 31: 31, 46, 51, 53, 56
- genre: genre barriers; literary genres; - *See also* pre-generic / post-generic writing 57, 114, 133, 238, 247-248, 365, 440: 79, 81, 85, 93; 67, 71, 79-81, 84-86, 96, 105, 130, 132, 179, 275, 338
- Gente (magazine)* 270, 273, 278, 279, 285-287, n290, 435
- Giddens, Anthony 14, 16, n27, 440, n443
- Giménez-Micó, José Antonio xvi, n436
- Giraldez, Arturo xv, 143, 146, 440
- Girard, René 234
- global, globalism: Le Corbusier's globalism - *See also* global trade of silver 387, 434, 438, 440: 387
- globalization: early globalization; contemporary globalization xv, 1, 15, 22-27, 114, 160, 305, 313, 314, 434, 437-438, 441, 442, n443: 128, 440-441; 439, 442
- God 87-90, 97, 122, 127, 234, 240, 282, 301, 304-305, 360, 362, 363, 365, 367-368, 373, 376-377
- Godinho, V. Magalhaes 144
- Godoy, Roberto 388
- Godzich, Wlad 80
- gold 145, 149, 205
- Golden Age, the 126
- Goldman, Lucian 115
- Goldstein, Avram 50-51
- Gómez Moriana, Antonio xi, xiii, 69, 113-115, 126-127, n137, 273, n290, n347, 439, 440
- Gómez, Juan Vicente 82, n107
- Gómez-Moriana, Rafael 382
- González Casanova, Pablo 81-82, 83
- Gothic 367, n378
- Granada 113, 209-211
- grand récit - *See also* petit récit 72, 128
- Grandjeat, Yves-Charles 340, 342
- grand time 181-182
- Grassi, Ernesto 46, n64
- Great Britain 13, 309
- grotesque: grotesque realism 92, 101, 132, 134, 354, 367: 365
- groups: cultural groups, ethnic groups, national groups, social groups xii, xiv, 3, 10-12, 16-17, 19, 23, n64, 69, 72, 83, 94, 95, 115, 127, 131, 162-167, 180, 183, 279, 286, 289, 313, 323, 327, 344-345, 370, 372, 433, 435, n443: xiii, 17, 25, 68, 113, 160, 183-184, 244, 323, 352, 359
- Guadalupe-Malintzin dyad 240
- Guadalupismo* xvi, 230, 237, 241, 243, 244, 249, 250, 258, 259-260, 261, 439
- Guamán Poma de Ayala, Felipe 97, 119-124, 127, 440
- Guatari, Félix 354
- Guatemala xvi, 162, 167-169, n175, 180-181, 182, 185, 194, n197, n199, 438
- Guatimoc o Guatmocsin* n223
- Guerra de la Reforma* 204
- Guerras civiles de Granada* 215
- (rise of urban and rural) guerrilla 294
- Gutiérrez, Félix 339
- Habermas, Jurgen 3, 21
- Haiti 83, 221, n229

- Haley, Alex 337  
 Hall, Stuart 14-15, 20-22, 203, n222  
 Hallyn, Ferdinand 55, n63  
 Halperín Donghi, Túlio 295  
 Hamashita, Takeshi 141, 143, 146  
 Hamilton, Earl 147  
 Hapsburgs, of Vienna and Madrid 155  
 Harries, Karsten 388  
 Harvey, David 22, 25  
 Hegel, G.W.F. 71-74, 75-78, 85, n106, n107, 275  
 hegemony, hegemonic - *See also* margins, and marginal 77, 234, 271, 279, 283, 284, 327, 330-331, 342, 345, 434, 435, 440  
 Heidegger, Martin 164, 234, 390  
 Helguera, Jesús 232, 252  
 herethics 236  
 Hermosillo, Jaime Humberto 241  
 hero: broken hero; mythical hero n63, 71, 80, 95-96, 99, 101-104, 132, 134, 172-173, 184, 211-213, 218, 254-255, 435: 104; 172  
 Herodotus 80, 84-85, 87-93  
 heterologic xii-xiii  
 Hispano-Arabs 202, n222  
 historical-structural (conception of identity) 18  
 historiography: colonial historiography; nationalist historiography - *See also* autohistoriography 92, 126, 210, n222, 272, 275-277, n291, 343-345: 126, 274  
 History: national, official, universal history; "end of history"; "laws of history" 72, 76, 79, 84-86, 88, 91-93, 111, 156, 190, 196, 229-230, 234-235, 244, 259, 272-275, 277, 279-283, 294, 313-314, 328, 330, 338, 343, 345, 387, 390-391, 393, 441: 68, 72, 76, 270, 272, 285; 275-277, n291, 313-314, 357; 259, 278, 281; 280  
 Hobsbawm, Erik 15  
 Hodges, Donald 284, n291  
 Hollier, Denis 234  
 holocaust 11, n64  
 homogeneity, homogenization 24, 25, 308, n443  
 homosemanticism, transhistoric 133, Honneth, Axel 9-10, n27  
 Hostos, Eugenio María de 201, 218, 221, n227  
 Huang, Ray 145  
*huaxtecas* 11  
 human, ontogenetic conception of 35  
 Hunahpú 191  
 hybridity, hybridization 129, 338  
 hyperinflation 311, n316  
 Icaza, Jorge n197  
 icon, iconic, iconicity, iconography n62, 352, 360-364, 373, n378, n379  
 identitary: identitary schism; identitary constructs 71-73, 96, 103: 73, 74; xii, 68, 73, 94-96, 103-104, 186  
 identity: identity formations; identity invention; individual, collective, cultural, ethnic, exclusive, national, ontological, personal, poliethnical, qualitative, regional, social, supranational identity; construction of identity; locus of identity; mark of identity; principle of identity; search for identity xii, 2-3, 5-7, 8-13, 13-16, 16-18, 18-22, 22-27, 33, 35, 37, 55, 57, 60-61, n61, 68-69, 165-166, n222, 242, 321, 323, 340, 342, 435, 436, 437, 438, n443: 4, 20-21, 25, 26-27, n27, n64, 174, 230, 235, 237, 242, 247, 258, 261, 294, n315; xv-xvi, 1, 3-4, 7-27, 33-34, 42, 49, 51, 70-72, 94, 96, 102-105, 112, 114, 123, 128-129, 160-163, 164-167, 169-172, 174, n175, 184, 186, 201, 207, 218, 221-222, n224, 230, 234, 239, 242, 248, 250, 258, 270, 270, 273-275, 277, 280, 293-294, 299, 308, 311-314, 320, 323, 326, 333, 336, 339-345, n249, 352, 374, 387-388, 405-407, 433-437, 439-442; 4, 8, 11-12, 17-18, 20-22, 23-25, 26-27, 129, 167, 171, 239, 271, 277, 313, 323, 338, 342, n348, 433-437, 438, 439; xii, 162, 440; 180; xv, 2-3, 272, 330; 160, 359  
 ideogram: cultural ideograms 95, 360: 96-97, 99, 103-105, n108, 435  
 idéologème 117  
 ideologies, construction of 343

- ideology, ideologies: ideologies of resentment 59, 115, n225, 311-312, 333, 335, 339, 435: 115
- images: image of language - *See also* figures, and forms xii, 10, 16, 17, 24, 26-28, 71, 73, 79, 92-96, 99, n106, n107, 165, 168, 171, 174, n290, 298-299, 335, 361, 398, 401-403, 433, 434, 435, 437, 442: 187-188, n198
- imaginary xii, 68, 69-71, 73, 83, 92-93, 95-97, 103-104, 110, 130, 132-133, 202, 204, 206-207, 215, n222, 230, 236-238, 246, 250, 252, 275, 284, 295, 366, 368, 433, 435
- imagined communities 14
- imperialism 147, 148, 164, n222, 321, 328, 343, n348
- Incas 120, 335
- Independence: Mexican 201-222, 238, 274: 169, 203
- independentistas* 321
- Indian, Indianness: assimilated Indian; Indian orality; Indian subject; Colonial, Indian voice; Indian world; the word "Indian" n62, 70, 97, 121, 123, 126-127, 133, 131-174, n175, 180-181, 186-189, 194-196, n196, n197, n199, 202, 203, 206, 208-211, 217-218, 220-221, 239, 243-244, 248, 250-252, 261, n263, 339, 355-360, 362, n380: 190, 205, 207, 216, 230; 180, n197; 43, 161, 180, 194-195, 218; 161, 164, 230; 119, 180-181, 186, 192, n197, 240, 438; 125
- Indigenous, indigenism xvi, 72, 74-77, 82, 124-125, 127-129, 172-174, 180, 182, 190, n196, n197, 202-204, 217, 220-221, n223, n227, 240, 244, 248, 330, 438
- Indigenista* 166, 243
- industrialization 231
- insurgency, (the) insurgents 171, 172
- interdependence xii
- interdiscursivity 272
- intersubjectivity n262
- Iommi, Godofredo 382, 386, 388, 403
- ironic distance 132
- irony, ironic - *See also* ironic distance 130-132, 369
- Irrationality 298
- Irving, Washington 215, n225
- Ixbalanqué 191
- Ixtlacíhuatl 232
- Jákfalvi-Leiva, Susana 118
- James, William 5, 7
- Jameson, Fredric 384
- Jews, Jews of the Diaspora 11, n64, 110, 112, 128, 130, 217, n225, 340, n348-349, n378
- Johnson, Richard 16-20
- Joyce, James 354
- Juan Perón 298
- Juárez, Indian Benito 204, 243
- Jung, C.G. 45
- justice: social justice 83, 295, 302: 298, 302
- kaxlana, kaxlanes* 184, 192, 194, n197
- Kellner, Douglas 24, 26
- Kern, Steven 258
- Kessler, Gabriel 295
- Kirschner, Teresa J. 81
- Kitsch 367, n378
- Kitsch, as malignant face of modern aesthetics 367
- Koenisberger, Helmut G. 149
- Kristeva, Julia 231, 234, 236-237, 259, n262
- Kuhn, Thomas 282
- Lacan, Jacques 230
- Laclau, Ernesto n28, 271, 272, n290
- Ladina, Ladino: Ladino culture; the Ladino Virgin 166-167, 168-170, 176, 186, 194-195, n196, 437: 168, 170, 172; 192
- Lafaye, Jacques 238, 241, 242-244, n263
- language: language and (cultural) identity; language and nation; scholarly language xvi, 11, 70, 95, 187-188, n198, 237, 272, 276-278, 285, 331, 335, 346, n349, 354, 391-392, 401, 437: 187-188; 275; 70, 278
- Larraín Ibáñez, Jorge xvi, 439-440
- Las Casas, Bartolomé de 126-127, n136-137, 207-208, 213, 216-217, n223-224
- Latin-Americanism 328
- Latour, Bruno 167, n175
- Lefavire, Liane 384

- Legesse, Asmarom 57  
 Leibniz, Georg 2, 4  
 León-Portilla, Miguel 11, n224  
 Lessing, Theodor 336, n348-349  
 Levinas, Emmanuel 164  
 Levi-Strauss, Claude n63, 126, n379  
 Levita, David J. 9  
 Liang, Fang-chung 145  
 liberation: philosophy of liberation; theology of liberation 71, 87, 243, 320-321: 283-284  
 Lieberman, Philip 46, 47  
 literature: Indigenist literature; literary canon; literary tradition: national literature; resistance literature; testimonial literature xii, 79-80, 179, 186, 202, 207, 214, n224, 276, 326, 333, 337, 343-346, n349: 186; xii, 275, 344-345; 240; 202, n224, 275, 438; 344-345; 114, 128  
 Llorona 192, 198, 239-240  
 Locke, John 2, 4  
 logic, logical 388  
*logos* 11, 46  
 Loos, Adolf 383  
 L’Ouverture, Toussaint 221  
 Lukacs, Georg 80  
 Luthar, Breda 24  
 Lyotard, Jean-François 114, 128  
 MacCormack, Sabina 242, n263  
 Machiavelli 288  
*machismo* 103, 240, 251  
*maguey cactus* 246  
 Maingueneau, Dominique 327  
*Malinche, malinchismo* 238-240, 251  
*Mambí* slaves 320-321, 324, 328  
 Manicheism 366  
 Manuel, Infante Juan 253  
 Marco Polo 125  
 Marcos 171-174, n175, 438  
 margins, marginal: marginalizing processes; defiance of the margins - *See also* hegemony, and hegemonic 76-77: 327, 344; 116-117  
 Marian worship 243, 363  
 Mariátegui, Jose Carlos 186  
 Mariophany 244  
 market, marketplace: global markets; open markets 143, 149, 156, n157, 169, 304, 308, 313: 142, 312; 294  
 Marks, Robert B. 143, n157  
 Márquez, Antonio 347  
 Maroon slaves, *marronage* n225-226  
 Martí, José 221, n227, 340  
 Marx, Karl 4-6, 23, n28, 59, 131, 234, 275, 366  
 Marxism 26, 279, n291  
 mass media 95, 169  
 masterworks 344  
 maternal, maternity, matricentrism: post-virginal discourse on maternity 236-237, n262: 248; 236  
 Mauss, Marcel 353, 371  
 Maya, Maya-Quiche: Mayan mythology; Mayan trinity xvi, 74, 82, 86, 161, 166-167, 170, 172-174, n174, 180, 183-184, 188, n198: 181, 188, 191, 244; 189  
*Mayáhuatl* (pre-Columbian goddess) 244-245  
 McNamara, Michael 386  
 Mead, George 3-6, 8, 10-11  
 medical prognosis 287  
 melodrama, melodramatic: melodramatic traditions; Mexican melodrama 297, 252, 257: 248, n264; 247, 260-262  
 memory: individual, collective memory 93, 130, 231, 237, 256, 258-260, 438: 83, 92, 94-95, 130, 271, 298, 435  
 Menchú, Rigoberta 118, n175, 186  
 Menem, Carlos 295-301, 304-306, n315, 441  
*Menemism, Menemist experience* 296-299, 304-306, n315  
 Menéndez Pidal, Ramón 126-127, n136  
 Mesa, Juan de 356-357  
*Mestiza, Mestizo, Metis* 100, 103, 118, 120, 129, 163, 166, 186, 195, n197, 239-240, 250, 261, 393  
*mestizaje: mestizaje cultural; mestizaje racial* 74-77, 101, 103, n107, 204, 206, 231, 237, 239, 242, 249, n262, 294, n315, 439: 129, 241; 77, 241  
 metanarrative 257, 345  
*Mexicanidad*, Mexicanness, Mexican national identity xvi, 204, 230-231,

- 234, 237, 239-240, 242-243, 246-250, 252, 258, 260, n262, 327, 436, 439  
 Meyer, Lorenzo n263, n264  
 Middle Ages 93, n107, 111, 202, 209-210, 356, 367  
 Miller, Jonathan 47, 55-56  
*millones* 154  
 mines: New World mines; silver mines 152, 156; 147, 149-150; 141, 146-147  
 Mirandé, Alfredo 331  
 miscegenation 207, 218, 221, n225, n262  
 Mitre, Bartolomé n224, 275-277, n291  
 modern, Modernity, modernization 12-13, 14, 22-26, 92, 111, 129, 156-157, 167, n175, 231, 234, 236, 241, 247, 250, 258, 288, n291, 295, 298, 301-302, 314, n315, 352, 436, 439  
*modernismo* (Mexican) 234, 236  
 Moi, Toril 236  
 Mols, Roger 143  
 the (Spanish) Monarchy 153, 155  
 monarchs, the Catholic Monarchs 112, 113, 125, 127, 129, 130, 211  
 monologic, monological - *See also* dialogic 68, 69, 164, 273  
 Monsiváis, Carlos n224, 238, 258  
 Montesinos, Fray Antonio 208  
 Moors, Moriscos, Moorish: neo-Moorish literature 202-204, 206-207, 210-212, 216-218, 222, n223, n225, 360, 438: 207  
 Moraga, Cherríe 345  
 Moreno, Antonio 248  
 Morineau, Michel 155  
 Morrison, Toni 343  
 Mosse, George n63, n64  
 (M)Other: (M)Other/Child dyad; the Indian (M)Other 237, 241, 252: 237; 230-231, 237, 240, 247, 249-250, 253, 260, 439  
 Motomura, Akira 155  
 Mouffe, Chantal n28, 271, 272, n290  
 Mount Tepeyac 242  
 Moutoukias, Zacarias 150-151  
 movement, movements: anticolonialist, anti-racist movements; Black movements, Calibanesque, Chicano, ethnic, ethnopolitical, feminist, Indian, Indigenista 26, 231, 311, 320, n443: 26, 334; 162, 170, 173, n175, 275, 331, 334-336, 344, 346, n349  
*Mulata, Mulato* 221  
 Muñoz Jr., Carlos 327, 330, 332  
 (Mexican) Muralists 239, 252-253  
 mytho-poetic 383, 437  
 myths: Christian, foundational, Indigenous, religious, secular myths; myths of origin; the circularity of myths; the (Argentine) myths of National Destiny, and of National Unity 79-82, 85-92, 230, 248, 271, 295, 323, 346, 387, 441; 80, 91, 238, 244, 249, n263, 296, 330; 68; 190; 295, 307  
*Nacionalcatolicismo* 112  
*Nacionalsindicalismo* 112  
 NAFTA 170  
 Nagel, Thomas 30-32, 36, 39, 49, 51, 53, 55-56, 58-60  
*nahuas, nahuatl* 12  
 narrative, narratives: foundational narratives; testimonial narratives; narrative voices n28, 67-70, 93: 69; 128; 91  
 nation: nation-state - *See also* state xii, 15, 18-19, 69, 81, 96, 102, 160, 165, 202, 257, 260-261, 271, 273-274, 294, 297, 300-306, 310-311, 314, n314, 327, 340, n348, 368, 437, 439: xv-xvi, 12, 15, 22, 25, 67, 112-113, 124, 129, 234, 274, 288, 310, 322, 434, 442  
 nationalism, nationalistic 26, 247, 288, 308, 323  
 NATO 112  
 Navas Ruiz, Ricardo 82  
 Nebrija, Elio Antonio de 113, 119, 123-124  
 Negritude 60, 320  
 Negro, Caribbean Negro 30-33, 34-41, 43-45, 50-52, 59, n61, n62, n63-64  
 (Western) neo-imperialism 321  
 neoliberalism 170, 298, 312-314, n316  
 neopopulism 310  
 New World 53, 77, 93, 111, 129, 133, 141-142, 147, 149, 151, 155-156, 209, 211, 244, n263, n315, 368  
 new world order 117  
 Nietzsche, Friedrich n62, 259

- Novaro, Marcos 298  
 novel - *See also* chivalric novel 132, 179-180, 331  
 Nusenovich, Marcelo xvi, n377, n379, n380  
 Nuyoricans 347
- O'Donnell, Guillermo 293  
 Ofili, Chris 94, n108  
 Ojeda, William 102  
 Old World n106  
 oligarchy 309  
 ontogeny: ontogenetic perspective 30, 45, 53, 59, n64: 30, 35, 51  
 Open City 383, 385-388, 394, 403  
 oppressed, oppression 26, 184, 328  
 orientalism: Spanish orientalism xvi, 202-205, 207, 209, 214-215, n222, 366, 438: 202  
 orientalist vogue 202  
 Ortiz, Antonio Domínguez 148  
 Osorio, Elena 214  
 other 8, 12-13, 38, 40-42, 44-45, 56, 58, 60, 113, 129, 132, 163, 178-180, 184-185, 192-193, n195-197, 206, 210, n222, 234, 241, 249-250, 255, 324-325, 438:  
 otherness - *See also* sameness 1, 13, 180, 184-185, 191, 249, 438, 440
- Pachacámac* (Inca god of creation) 120  
 Pacheco del Río, Francisco 360-362  
 Pagels, Heinz R. 59  
 Palmer, Colin 156  
 pan-Americanism 72  
 Pandian, Jacob 43-44  
 Paredes, Rigoberto 365  
 Parker, Geoffrey 149, 153  
 parthenogenesis - *See also* spontaneous generation 229, 230  
 Paz, Octavio 207, n224, 238-239  
 Pendleton Julian, Ann 387  
 peripheral countries 23  
 periphery - *See also* center, and center-periphery dialectic 23, 73, 77, 166  
 Perón, Juan 295, 301, 304, 311, n315  
 Peronism, Peronist: Peronist party 285, 296, 309, 324-325, n315: n316  
 Phelan, John L. 143
- Piercian semiotics 353-354, 361  
 Pigalle 38  
*Plan de Santa Barbara* 330-333, 337, 345, 436  
 Plato 67, 79, 93, n262, 272, 283-284  
 plurilogical - *See also* monologic 69, 89  
 Pocock, J.G.A. 299  
*poiesis* 78-80, 85, 92, 105  
 polyglossia 325  
 polyphony 325  
 polytheism 127  
 (the) Popol Vuh 86, 189-190, 194-195, n198  
 Portantiero, Juan Carlos 198  
 positivism 277  
 postcolonial, postcolonialism:  
     postcolonial theory 117, 129: 117  
 postfordist era 26  
 postmarxism 117, 129  
 postmodern, postmodernism,  
     postmodernity: postmodern challenge;  
     postmodern condition 25, 27, 117, 129, 313: 129; 114  
 poststructuralism 18, n27  
 Poupeney-Hart, Catherine 114, 126  
 power 93, 271, 290, 368, 372, 376, 436  
 primitive 12, 127  
 privatization 284, 311  
 process: (Argentina's) Process of National Reorganization 278, 280-282, n290, 308, 354: 269, 271, 273, 276-277, 284-285  
 profane, profanation - *See also* sacred, sacralization, desacralization, and desecrating 122, 134, 210  
 Progress: promises of Progress 83, 239, 259, 302, 368: 232  
 Prospero 76-77, n107, 319, 341  
 psychoanalysis 31  
 Puig, Manuel 135  
*pulque* 245
- qualia: sensory qualia 33, 53: 40, 54, 57, 61  
 Quattrochi-Woissen, Diana 295, 309  
 Quechua (language) 119-120, 123, 186-187
- Rabasa, José 118-119, 122-123

- race, racial n63, 321, 238, 250-251, 323, 339, 354, 439  
 racism, racist - *See also* genetic/racial ideology, and biocentrism 49, 57, n61, 192  
 Rama, Ángel 250  
 Ranger, Thomas 16  
 Rationality, rationalism 78, 87, 93, 134, 298, 367  
*Raza Unida* party 330, 340  
 reading 386  
 reason 88, 90, 93, n265, n290  
 reciprocity of perspectives - *See also* social expectations 114  
*Reconquista*, Reconquest 112, 219  
 region, regional, regionalism, regionalist: critical regionalism; poetic regionalism; regional studies - *See also* Area Studies 249, 379: 379; 379; xi-xiv  
 religion, religious: syncretic religion - *See also* religious syncretism 16, 34, 193-194, 236, 238, 248-249, n262, 343, 368, 375: 34, 196  
 Renaissance 111, 219, n224, 279-280  
 Renan, Ernest 87, 243  
 representation 95, 296, 300, 312, 321  
 repression 436  
*Requerimiento* 113  
 resistance 323, 434  
 Retamar, Roberto Fernández 184  
 Revolution, revolutions 111, 155, 236, 248, 294, 321, 323, 325, 329  
 rhetoric, rhetorical 68, 295  
 rights: equality of rights; human and political rights 301, 332: 346; 438  
 ritual: ritual discourse; sacred, secular rituals 130, 236, 247, 354, 356, 375, n378: 372; 68, 111, n264  
 Rivera, Diego n106, n264  
 Rivera, Tomás 326, 335, 346-347, n347  
 Roa Bastos, Augusto 80, 87, 89-93  
 Rock, David 294  
 Rodó, José Enrique 184  
 Rodriguez, Richard 119  
 Rodríguez-Vecchini, Hugo 242  
 Rojo, Marfa 218, 222  
 Roldán, Francisco 214, 322  
 Romantics, romanticism 164  
*rotería* 104  
*el roto* - *See also* broken hero (*héroe roto*), *rotería* 104  
 Rousillon 155  
 Rulfo, Juan 188, 190, n198  
 sacralization of technology - *See also* profanation, desacralization, and desecrating 233  
 sacred: sacred texts; secularization of the sacred - *See also* sacred rituals, and secular 94, 230-231, 236-237, 242, 361: 89, 93; 231, 240  
 Said, Edward n222, 323, 330, 339, 344-345, n350  
 Saldívar, Ramón 344-345  
 Salinas de Gortari, Carlos n316  
 Salles-Reese, Verónica 242  
 Samora, Julian 343  
 Samper, Ernesto 84  
 Sánchez, George 327  
 sangre (blood): *sangre salvadora*; *pureza de sangre* 110, 288, 329: 287-288  
 Santaella, Cristina 178, 386  
 Santana, Pedro 220  
 Santángel, Luis de 123  
 Sarlo, Beatriz 295  
 Sarmiento, Domingo Faustino 75, n223, 277, 283, n290  
 schism - *See also* identity schism 71-74  
 secular, secularization - *See also* sacred, and sacralization 242, 244, 248-249  
 self: cultural, national self; sense of self; self-recognition; self-representation - *See also* self-consciousness 5-8, 9-10, 35, 37, 39, 42-43, 48-49, 57, 60, 163, 173, 192, 324, 438: 47-48, 67; 35, 38, 40, 43-44, 47-48, 52-54, 56, 59; 9, 9  
 semiotics 355  
 Senghor, Léopold Sédar 339  
 Sepúlveda, Ginés de 125  
*ser nacional*, national spirit 272-275, 278, 285, 289-291, 436  
 sexuality 14, 436  
 Shakespeare, William 252, 320  
 Shumway, Nicolas 277, n290, 208, n216  
 Sidicaro, Ricardo 298, n317  
 Sigal, Silvia 295, n317  
 Sigfried 388  
 silence 270, 289

- silver: silver industry - *See also* silver trade, and silver mines 146-153, 155-157, 215, 440, 442: 147, 155
- Silverblatt, Irene 367
- Silverman, Kaja n262
- Simmel, Georg 7
- simulacrum 261
- slavery: abolition of slavery 11, 126, 219: 220-221, n226
- slaves: slave rebellion n62, 113, 150, 156, 223, 229-230, n226, 320-321: 218, 220-221
- Smith, Carol 152, n175
- social: social classes; social relations - *See also* class struggles, and social imaginary xiii, 5, 96-97, 108, 203, 296, 372, 433: 12-13, 18, 26; 170, 184, 256
- Socialist International 111
- socialization: process of socialization 130, 332: 53
- society: caste society; dyadic society; state of society xi-xiii, 10, 12, 58, 69-70, 76-77, 95, 115, 117, 166, 173, 196, 240-241, 244, 284, 289, 293-294, 301-303, 308, 310, 312-316, 325, 327, 335, 338-339, 341-344, 350, 358, 368, 439-440, 443: 174, 195; 168; 239
- sociocriticism 115
- sociodiagnostic 55-56, 60-61
- sociogenic, sociogenic principle, sociogeny, sociogenetic principle 30-31, 40, 44, 46-49, 52, 53-54, 56-61, n61, n63, n64, 435
- sociography 96
- sociolect 131
- Sodi, Demetrio 191
- Sollors, Werner 323, 326, 340-345, n357
- somatic norms, genetic-instinctual narcissistic 53
- Sommer, Doris n222-224, n226
- Somos* (magazine) 270, 274, 276, 277, n290, n291, 435
- Somoza, Anastasio 81
- Soto, Hernando de 120-121
- sound: sound recording 261: 247
- Spain xiv, 97, 101, 111-113, 121-122, 127-128, 141, 143-144, 146-147, 149-150, 153-156, 203, 205-208, 211-212, n305, 221, n222-225, n264, 297, 344, 355
- Spedding, Alison 354, 374, n380
- Stalin, Joseph 95
- state: - *See also* nation, nation-state, and church and state xii-xiii, 18, 79, 90, 127-155, 173, 240, 244-245, 248, 252, 257, 273, 276, 283, 285, 289, 293, 296, 299, 301, 304, 309, 312-315, n316, 437, 443
- Steele, Mark 148, 153
- Steiner, Stan 327
- stereotype: oriental stereotype 209, 212, 218-221, n222-223, n225, 327, 437: 206
- structuralism 116, 343
- subaltern, subalterity 251, 276, 377
- subject: enunciating subject; individual subject; transindividual subject 4, 8, 27-28, n28, 38, 42, 48-49, 52-53, 56-57, 59-60, n61, 70, 119, 131, 182, 186, 197, n197, 240, 251, 253, n262, 320, 327, 334, 345, 356, 440: 322, 327, 342; 4, 115; 115
- subjectivity 114, 127, 183, 239, 441
- subordination - *See also* domination, and exploitation 33, 161, 195, 275
- subversion, subversive - *See also* carnival, and transgression 83, 131-132, 280, 284, 289-290, n291
- symbolic: symbolic kin xiv, v, 25, 113: 47
- syncretic, syncretism: religious syncretism 94, 249: 113
- taboo xiii
- Taino* 212
- tangible 397, 400
- Tausig, Michael n63, 354, 369, 372, n379
- Taylor, Charles 4, 9, n28, 313, n348
- tekhnē 53
- Tenochtitlán* 249, n262, 330
- TePaske, John J. 142, 151
- terrorism, terrorist groups 270, 286-287, n316, 436, n443
- Teruel, Antonio de 45, 53, n62
- testimonial: testimonial account; testimonial confession; testimonial narrative xvi, 114, 128

- text, texts xvi, n174, 191, 345  
 Thatcher, Margaret 13  
 Thompson, John B. 19, 23-24  
 Thucydides n224, 283-284, n290  
*tinku* 358, 372, 373  
 Todorov, Tzvetan n62, 165, n174, 184, 195, n196-197  
*Tohil* 82, 86  
*Tonantzin* 239, n262  
*topos, topoi* n62, 272  
 trade: Acapulco-Manila trade route; silver trade; global, world trade of silver - *See also* contraband 140, 142-143, 146, 150-152, 156, 314: 151; 141, 144, 146, 149-152, 155, 157, 442; 140-141, 144, 157  
 tradition 13, 16, 20, 24, 298, 338, 354, 366, 368, 370, 386-389, 438  
 transculturation: Indian-White  
     transculturation 34, 242: 239  
 transference 239, 256  
 transgression - *See also* carnival, and subversion xii, 69, 96, 116, 130-131, 271, 273, 360  
 travel: architectural travel - *See also*  
     Amereida, travesías, and voyage 378: 54  
*travesías* 379-380, 382, 384, 393, 405-406, 437  
 truth: (scientific) truth in historiography 71, 78, 85, 88, 93-95, 272, 283, 285: 277  
 Tugendhat, Ernst n 28  
*Tula* 249  
 Tuñón, Julia 250, 252, n262  
 Turner, Victor 354  
 Tzonis, Alexander 379  
  
*Unión Cívica Radical* 295  
*Union de Armas* 153  
 unity 274, 289, 304-305, 312  
 urbanization 231, 356  
 utopia, utopian: (Socialist) utopian  
     beliefs; political/aesthetic (Socialist)  
     utopias 252, 440: 237; 241  
 utterence, quasi-utterance: pedagogical  
     utterance 118, 121, 173, 181, 185, 192, 308, 322, 325, 330: 323, 338  
  
 Van Kessell, Juan 376  
 Vargas Llosa, Mario 135  
 Vasconcelos, José 72, 76, n106, 241, 244, 250, 260, n263, 340  
 Velázquez, Diego 208-209, 212, 214, 216-217, n225  
 Vico, Giambattista 46, 47, 59, 281  
 Vilar, Pierre 149  
 Villa Savoie 383  
 Villa, Pancho n265  
 violence: violence of language 125, 162-173, 192-194, 219, 220, 234, 277, 295, n291, 302: 125-126  
 Vitoria, Francisco de 125, n135  
 Vodun, Vodunist 33-34  
 Vogueley, Nancy 204, n222  
 voice: official voice - *See also*  
     autochthonous voice, and Colonial, Indian voice n198: 270  
*Volksgeist* 69  
 Voloshinov, V.N. 181, n346  
 von Glahn, Richard 143-144, n157  
 voyage: poetic voyages - *See also*  
     architectural travel, *Amereida*, and *travesías* 124-125, 382, 405: 384, 437  
  
 Wagner, Peter 12, 25, 27  
 Wallerstein, Immanuel 313, 443  
 western, westernized, westerners 15, 123, 130, 149, 164, 167, 172-174, n174, n199  
 white, whiteness 33, 39-42, 44-45, 52-54, 56, n63, 205, 207, 217, 354  
 White, Hayden 276, 284-285, 309  
 Wynia, Gary W. 297  
 Wynter, Sylvia xv, 61, 434-435  
  
*Xibalbá* 189, 191, 194, 196, n198  
  
 Zapatismo, Zapatista: Zapatista  
     movement 168-174, n176, 252, 443: 169-171, 173  
 Zapatista slogans 172  
 Zea, Leopoldo 74-78, n107, 241, 435  
 Zizek, Slavoj 259  
 zombie, zombification 34, n61  
 Zumárraga, Archbishop 246, n262