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Latin American Voices

## La amenaza hispana

### THE TROJAN BURRITOS

Jay Mitsche Sepulveda • José Antonio Aguilar Rivera • Mauricio Tenorio Trillo

Photography: **Graciela Iturbide** • Byron Brauchli / Exhibitions: **Joseph Havel** • Perla Krauze

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Pablo Boulosa • H. G. Carrillo • Óscar de Pablo • Rolando Hinojosa • Tanya Huntington  
Rodolfo Mata • Leticia Mora • Mónica María Parle • José Luis Rivas • Ana María Shua

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Recientemente, el departamento de estudios hispánicos de la universidad de Rice, bajo la dirección del doctor Maarten Van Delden, organizó un simposio titulado “*México y Estados Unidos: nuevas posiciones y contraposiciones*”. En él se analizaron múltiples aspectos de esta relación, que van desde la migración hasta las muertes en Juárez. Dado el interés particular de los temas ahí tratados se presentan en esta entrega dos ensayos de José Antonio Aguilar Rivera y Mauricio Tenorio Trillo en donde se analizan las diferencias y semejanzas de los debates sobre el multiculturalismo en ambos países y, respectivamente, el mercado de la imagen de México en el extranjero alimentada, en parte, por la elite intelectual mexicana.

Complementan nuestro número una muestra de la obra del norteamericano Joseph Havel, recientemente expuesta en el Fine Arts de Houston; la obra fotográfica de Graciela Iturbide, cortesía de la Galería López Quiroga, y del suizo norteamericano Byron Brauchli, más la obra gráfica de Perla Krauze. La sección literaria ofrece poemas y textos de José Luis Rivas, Rodolfo Mata, Rolando Hinojosa, H.G. Carrillo, Tanya Huntington, Pablo Boullosa, Ana María Shua y Óscar de Pablo.



Recently, the Department of Hispanic Studies at Rice University organized a symposium called *Mexico and the United States: New Positions and Counter Positions* under the direction of Dr. Maarten van Delden. Several aspects of the relationship between these two countries were explored, from migration to the deaths in Juárez. Due to the interesting nature of these topics, we've included two essays by José Antonio Aguilar Rivera and Mauricio Tenorio Trillo in which they analyze the similarities and differences of the multicultural debate on both sides of the border and, similarly, how the image of Mexico is marketed abroad, partly through the support of Mexico's intellectual elite.

Complementing our issue are a sample of Joseph Havel's work, recently exhibited in the Museum of Fine Arts of Houston; images by photographer Graciela Iturbide, courtesy of the Galería López Quiroga and the Swiss American Byron Brauchli; and graphic art by Perla Krauze. The literature section presents works by José Luis Rivas, Rodolfo Mata, Rolando Hinojosa, H.G. Carrillo, Tanya Huntington, Pablo Boullosa, Ana María Shua and Óscar de Pablo.

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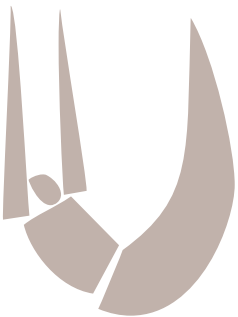
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# THE TROJAN BURRITOS AND THE BURDEN OF HISTORY

## HOW MEXICANS ARE COMING BACK FOR THEIR LOST LANDS

► JAY MITSCHÉ SEPULVEDA

You would be right, and the pun would be forgiven if, in trying to put a number on how many Mexican restaurants there are in New York City you were to call that a tall order. And you would not be alone in your ignorance, since neither the office in charge of keeping track of the vertiginous ethnic flavors of this city—the City’s office of Food and Services of the Health Department, nor, for that matter, most of the online search engines, seem to know for sure what the number is. It is not that they are bad at counting; it’s just that they cannot keep a day-by-day account of an industry that seems to multiply overnight. With the overall number of the city’s restaurants put anywhere between 17 and 20 thousand by the city government, depending on the research tool of your choice, it cannot be surprising then that *Switchboard.Com* says that there are only 190 Mexican restaurants in the city, while *Local.com* counts 970, *The Yellow Pages* 318, including those near the NYC area, and that *Google* lists 11,800, give or take a few, since, for example, it counts El Cibao Restaurant, on Smith Street, Brooklyn, as Mexican, when it is, of course Dominican. This minor inaccuracy speaks volumes about what interests us here, for if you haven’t guessed it yet, Mexican immigration, both legal and illegal, is what this piece is about, not the math of Mexican culinary science.

If we do the math on the data provided by the 2000 US Census, it turns out that of the 2,160,554 Hispanics counted in the five boroughs of the city, amounting to 27.2 percent of the overall population, only 186,889, a mere 8.65 percent of all Hispanics, were Mexican. Of course, given that the contingent of 400,000 to 500,000 illegal immigrants entering the country every year is assumed to be composed largely of Mexicans, a big bunch of whom wind up in New York, these numbers probably don’t count for much. So it seems likely that the percentages should be anted up. At least in theory there should be a proportional relation between the numbers of legal and illegal immigrants in a city and the number of restaurants from a given country this city boasts. Only that, since no one ever gets to know how many illegal immigrants there are, the numerical relation of that proportion cannot be established. This does not mean, however, that the *established* number of restaurants cannot serve as indicator of the growth or decrease in number of immigrants from a given country, especially if that country’s cooking is internationally prestigious, a bill Mexico’s is proud to fit. The reason is not that immigrant Mexicans, even if illegally here, have a need



to eat; it is that given that prestige, their kitchen always has a clientele on stand-by and therefore it can count on a healthy demand; with highly-skilled hands in good supply at a pay that’s never too high, you can afford offering reasonable prices, while profits is a sure thing, and since, as *The New York Times* recently reported, the workplace is the last place the immigration authorities go looking for illegal immigrants, it turns out to be a safe place to hide in broad daylight, or at any rate, in everyone’s sight. Call this The Trojan Burrito arrangement, which is a win-win thing for everyone.

And here is where Homer comes in. It is an old familiar story, which for this very reason gets easily forgotten. If you are a Greek, or Mexican, you know that the best way to take over an enemy’s fortress is to storm it from the inside; so if you cannot get a giant horse through its gate then you send in as best as you can countless thousands of Burritos (little donkeys, in Spanish), and see that they get the love of those being invaded, which, if they are Americans, is easily done with large quantities of cheese, beans, beef and rice. Then all your Trojan Burritos have to do is multiply, which seems to be what the untold numbers of Mexicans in the US cannot tell they are doing here.

But before you go patriotic on them and start calling for a Burrito boycott, remember that Americans, not Mexicans, were the ones who first stormed the fortress and took by force the lands that Mexicans and their Burritos appear to be trying to get back. It all began a long while ago in 1819 when Antonio López de Santa Anna, the then Mexican president, out of good faith,

*If you are a Greek, or Mexican, you know that the best way to take over an enemy's fortress is to storm it from the inside; so if you cannot get a giant horse through its gate then you send in as best you can countless thousands of Burritos (little donkeys, in Spanish), and see that they get the love of those inside, which, if they are Americans, is easily done with large quantities of cheese and beans and beef and rice. Then all your Trojan Burritos have to do is multiply, which seems to be what the untold numbers of Mexicans in the US cannot tell they are doing here.*

Tequila-induced insouciance, and ignorance of what Robert Frost was going to write a century later—that good fences make good neighbors—let 1500 farmers headed by Moses Austin and Stephen, his son, settle in Texas, when it was still the largest portion of the Mexican Republic. It was a decision he was soon going to regret. For these American immigrants to Mexico, by practicing their Protestant religion and by continuing to practice slavery in violation of the two conditions on which they had been allowed to come over, provoked, one might say knowingly, the violent, bloody attack by Mexican troops that gave the government of president James Polk the much-sought pretext the U.S. Army needed to cross the Texan border into Mexico, bringing about what in short order became the Mexican-American War. It was a set-up. Ever greedy for more lands than as today we are gluttonous for Burritos, after Texas we chugged New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Arizona, California and Nevada, and incorporated them, one after the other, into the Union. And so, John L. O'Sullivan's tongue-in-cheek prophecy was fulfilled. Known as "Manifest Destiny," published in *The Democratic Review* (1839) in his article "The Great Nation of Futurity," O'Sullivan seems to have read the futurity part of his oracle somewhat wrong. America could glut all the lands they could scarf down, as they did, but at a price: its Civil War, that *bled* the country into renouncing slavery for good, and that almost did away with the Union as such. Then as now, Mexicans have ever known there is no such thing as a free lunch. By abolishing slavery in 1829, Mexico had shown that it was the Hispanic people, not the Anglos, who were already stepping into the future; it is not a small accomplishment that it did it shedding not even a pint of blood.

That Mexico lost more than half of its territory, including its most fertile lands, is a fact that naturally has never sat well with the Mexicans, and that never will, especially because it was the bad result of an act of good faith, a major component of the naive Hispanic idiosyncrasy. And so, their territorial loss, and the Guadalupe-

Hidalgo treaty that made it official have never had the blessing of the Mexican people, rather, it is this loss that is central to their national identity. For Americans this might be a *fait accompli*, but for the Mexicans it is unfinished business. And this, besides the pedestrian explanation of the higher income, which is also true, is the real reason they keep coming: they try to make their identity complete through quietly repossessing their lands. That Mexicans are the enemy inside is what Samuel P. Huntington tried to say in his *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity*—but did not dare. But if Mexicans are indeed the enemy, they're an enemy that is getting a lot of love here: Taco Bell is an old Chihuahua with us and, as *Slate's* Daniel Gross notices, *Chipotle*, the Mexican fast-food joint that is becoming ever more ubiquitous in NYC, is owned and operated by McDonald's, and, at about \$40 a share, is doing pretty well. It's worth noticing here that while a regular two-piece Burrito has 331 calories, *Chipotle's* has 1,100: as we did to the Mexican lands, now we do it to their food. Americans, we *fatten* everything touch.

History, Marx believed, repeats itself only as a farce. But that is false; it repeats itself as a burden. Next time you find yourself handling one of those Burritos, think that Menelaus did not send his horse to Troy without a reason.



# MULTICULTURAL PERSUASION IN MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES / La persuasión multicultural en México y Estados Unidos [fragmento]

► JOSÉ ANTONIO AGUILAR RIVERA

*Translated to English by Shelby D. Vincent*

**E**n un discurso pronunciado en Washington hace cerca de un cuarto de siglo, Octavio Paz le espetó a los norteamericanos que lo escuchaban: “Para vencer a sus enemigos, los Estados Unidos tienen primero que vencerse a sí mismos: regresar a sus orígenes: pero no para repetirlos sino para rectificarlos: el otro y los otros —las minorías del interior tanto como los pueblos y naciones del exterior— existen”. Paz repetía un lugar común: nuestros países estaban separados por “diferencias sociales, económicas y psíquicas muy profundas”. México y Estados Unidos eran dos versiones distintas de la civilización de Occidente. La historia de nuestras relaciones era la de un mutuo y pertinaz engaño, generalmente —aunque no siempre— involuntario. Tal vez Paz tenga razón, aunque cada vez persuaden menos este tipo de explicaciones civilizatorias. Sin embargo, me interesa señalar aquí las coincidencias, no las diferencias, entre las experiencias nacionales mexicana y norteamericana. Ambos países se encuentran en un proceso simultáneo de introspección y redefinición de sus identidades. El multiculturalismo se ha convertido, tanto en México como en Estados Unidos, en un tema central del debate público. ¿Quiere decir lo mismo este término en los dos países? En principio, parecería haber diferencias semánticas. La palabra “multiculturalidad” es más empleada en países anglosajones, aunque en México está comenzando a sustituir a la fórmula de “pluralismo cultural” que se usó, según García Canclini, durante un buen tramo del siglo xx. Sin embargo, la palabra “sigue teniendo aplicaciones distintas. Los estadounidenses la utilizan para designar la coexistencia —separada— de grupos étnicos. Pese a haber predicado la mezcla cultural y consagrarla con la expresión *melting pot*, las identidades tienden a esencializarse y la pertenencia comunitaria se ha vuelto la principal garantía de los derechos individuales”. Según esta idea, en América latina, “las naciones modernas no se formaron con el modelo de las pertenencias étnico-comunitarias, porque en muchos países las voluminosas migraciones extranjeras se entremezclaron. La integración de etnias americanas y europeas se hizo dentro del modelo francés de república, adaptándolo más o menos a los procesos históricos latinoamericanos”. Según García Canclini, en los países latinoamericanos hubo una mayor disposición social y más variedad de estrategias político-culturales para hacer posible que la heterogeneidad se resolviera con mestizajes. Mientras en Estados Unidos los negros fueron mantenidos primero como esclavos y luego segregados en barrios, escuelas y otros espacios públicos, y los indígenas marginados en reservaciones, en los países latinoamericanos el exterminio y el arrinconamiento de negros e indios coexistió con políticas de mestizaje desde el siglo xix y con un reconocimiento (desigual) de su ciudadanía, que llegó

**IN A SPEECH GIVEN IN WASHINGTON, D.C. ALMOST A QUARTER OF A CENTURY AGO, OCTAVIO PAZ TRANSFIXED THE NORTH AMERICANS LISTENING TO HIM, “IN ORDER TO OVERCOME ITS ENEMIES, THE UNITED States must first overcome itself: return to your origins. Not to repeat, but rather to rectify. The other and the others: internal minorities—as certainly as external peoples and nations—exist.” Paz repeated a common cliché: our countries were separated by “profound social, economic, and psychic differences.” Mexico and the United States were two different versions of Western civilization. The history of our relationship was one of mutual and persistent deception, generally—although not always—unintentional. Perhaps Paz is right, though these types of civilizing explanations are less persuasive each time. Here, however, I am interested in highlighting the coincidences, not the differences, between the Mexican and American national experiences. Both countries find themselves in a simultaneous process of introspection and redefinition of their identities. Multiculturalism has become, as much in Mexico as in the United States, a central theme of public debate. Does this term have the same meaning in both countries? Theoretically, it would appear to have semantic differences. The word “multiculturalism” is more often used in Anglo-Saxon countries, although in Mexico it is beginning to replace the expression “cultural pluralism,” which was used, according to García Canclini, during a good part of the twentieth-century. Nonetheless, the word “continues to have different applications. Americans use it to designate the—separate—coexistence of ethnic groups. Despite having preached cultural mixing and consecrating it with the expression ‘melting pot,’ identities essentially tend to elevate themselves, and community membership has changed the principal guarantee of individual rights.” According to this notion, in Latin America, “modern nations don’t form using the model of membership in ethnic communities because in many countries extensive foreign migrations intermingle. Integration of American and European ethnic groups was carried out in the model of the French Republic, and adapted more or less to historic Latin American processes.” According to García Canclini, in the Latin American countries there was an older social arrangement and more varied politico-cultural strategies to make it possible for heterogeneity to be achieved with *mestizos*. While in the United States, blacks were first kept as slaves and later in segregated neighborhoods, schools, and other public spaces and indigenous peoples were marginalized on reservations; in Latin American countries the extermination and the pushing aside of blacks and Indians coexisted with the politics of miscegenation and the recognition of (unequal) citizenship until the nineteenth-century, arriving at the symbolic exaltation of**

a la exaltación simbólica de su patrimonio en el indigenismo mexicano. Racismo hubo en todas partes, pero las alternativas al racismo deben ser diferenciadas... mientras que en Estados Unidos el mestizaje y la hibridación han sido vistos predominantemente como escándalo, en los países latinoamericanos y caribeños, junto a las políticas y actitudes cotidianas discriminatorias, existe en amplios sectores una valoración positiva de las mezclas como impulso a la modernización y la creatividad cultural. Y “aunque el ‘negro americano’ como ‘el indio mexicano’ fueron el otro de la normatividad ciudadana de sus respectivos países, el indio en México fue ubicado como el sujeto mismo de la nacionalidad, sujeto que sería transformado por la educación y la mezcla racial”.

Esta historia, que sintetiza la visión dominante, debe revisarse pues es insatisfactoria. La comparación entre México y Estados Unidos ilumina sus insuficiencias. Para empezar, es inconsistente: si en México el paradigma de integración fue la idea laica de república, ¿cómo explicar la ideología racial del mestizaje en el centro del discurso sobre la identidad nacional? Lejos de tratarse de entendidos informales, el mestizaje era una teoría racialista hecha y derecha, que contó con teóricos que la sistematizaron. Esta no es una variación menor al modelo francés. El eje identitario fue el mestizo, no el ciudadano. Aunque muchas de las diferencias apuntadas son muy reales, otras lo son de grado. Después de todo, en la colonia, al igual que en muchos estados de la Unión americana, también existió un complejo sistema de clasificación racial que buscaba codificar las distintas posibilidades y grados de mezcla. Los censores coloniales deseaban saber quién era qué y en qué proporción para determinar el peldaño de la escala social que debía ocupar. El siglo XIX, que pretendió eliminar ese odioso legado, fue en muchos aspectos sólo un breve interludio en nuestro pasado racista. Al poco tiempo —para finales del Porfiriato— la noción de raza estaba de vuelta y acabó por afianzarse durante el periodo posrevolucionario. El mestizaje, que como fenómeno social es benéfico pues presume que no existen barreras étnicas o religiosas infranqueables para que los individuos se unan, es pernicioso como ideología nacional. En otros aspectos, el énfasis en la raza cósmica ha oscurecido importantes fenómenos, como la permanencia en el tiempo de minorías que no se mezclan: indígenas, menonitas, judíos, etc. Ha sesgado cómo pensamos y analizamos los procesos de integración.

### ESOS QUE NO SOMOS

En marzo de 2004 la revista *Foreign Policy* publicó un artículo escrito por el famoso politólogo de Harvard, Samuel P. Huntington. El ensayo, “El reto hispánico” fue un adelanto de libro que apareció poco después, *Who Are We? The Challenges to America’s National Identity (Quiénes somos, Paidós, 2004)* sobre el supuesto peligro que representa para la sociedad norteamericana la inmigración mexicana. “A mediados del siglo XX”, escribió Huntington, “los Estados Unidos de América se habían convertido en una sociedad multiétnica y multirracial caracterizada por una cultura mayoritaria dominante angloprotestante (bajo la que se englobaban múltiples subculturas) y por un credo político común enraizado en esa cultura mayori-



its patrimony in the indigenous Mexican. Racism was everywhere, but the alternatives to racism had to be differentiated...while in the United States miscegenation and hybridization had been predominately viewed as scandalous, in many areas of the Latin American and Caribbean countries, alongside the political and daily actions of discrimination, there was a positive valorization of those of mixed-race as an impulse toward modernization and cultural creativity. And “even the ‘Black American,’ just like the ‘Mexican Indian,’ were the other of the normative citizen of their respective countries; the Indian in Mexico was put in the position of being the subject of nationality, a subject that could be transformed through education and racial mixing.”

This history, that epitomizes the dominant vision, is unsatisfactory and thus needs to be revised. The comparison between Mexico and the United States highlights its deficiencies. To begin with, it’s inconsistent: if in Mexico the paradigm of integration was a secular republican idea, how can the ideology of miscegenation, as central to the discourse about national identity, be explained? Far from being a question of informal understandings, miscegenation was a full-blown racist theory relied on by the theorists who standardized it. This is not a minor variation of the French model. The central figure was the *mestizo*, not the citizen. Even though many of the noted differences are very real, others are only a matter of degree. After all, in the colonies, just as in many of the states of the American union, there was a complex system of racial classification that sought to codify the various possibilities and degrees of racial mixing. The colonial auditors wanted to know who was what and in what proportion in order to determine which rung on the social ladder they should occupy. The nineteenth century tried to eliminate that odious legacy but was in many respects only a brief interlude in our racist past. In a short time—by the end of the *Porfiriato*—the notion of race was back and became firmly established during the post-revolutionary period. Miscegenation, which as a social phenomenon is beneficial because it presumes that insurmountable ethnic and religious barriers do not exist for individuals who merge, is pernicious as a national ideology. In other respects, the emphasis on the cosmic race has obscured important phenomena,

taria. Sin embargo, tal y como se estaban sucediendo los acontecimientos a finales del siglo xx, Estados Unidos iba en camino de convertirse en una sociedad anglohispana bifurcada por dos lenguas nacionales. Esta tendencia era resultado, en parte, de la popularidad de la que gozaban las doctrinas del multiculturalismo y la diversidad entre las élites intelectuales y políticas, así como de las políticas gubernamentales de educación bilingüe y acción afirmativa promovidas y sancionadas por dichas doctrinas. De todos modos, la auténtica fuerza impulsora de la tendencia hacia la bifurcación cultural ha sido la inmigración procedente de América latina y, muy especialmente, de México”.

Años antes, en el controvertido ensayo aparecido en la revista *Foreign Affairs*, “El choque de las civilizaciones”, Huntington había considerado a México como un país cuya “civilización” no era occidental y, por tanto, distinta críticamente de la de los Estados Unidos. México era, como Turquía, un país “desgarrado” entre dos civilizaciones: la “latinoamericana” y la “norteamericana”. Trece años antes, el historiador Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. prevenía a sus conciudadanos en *The Disuniting of America*, uno de los libros clave en las guerras culturales de los noventa: “El impulso separatista no está confinado a la comunidad negra. Otra expresión notable es el movimiento bilingüe conducido ostensiblemente en aras de todos los no anglo parlantes, pero particularmente se trata de una empresa de los americanos hispánicos... En años recientes la combinación del culto a la identidad y una inundación de inmigrantes de países hispano parlantes le ha dado al bilingüismo un nuevo ímpetu”.

En su libro, Huntington se declara un patriota sin remordimientos: “todas las sociedades se enfrentan a amenazas recurrentes a su existencia. A las que, en un momento u otro, acaban sucumbiendo. Pero algunas, aun estando igual de amenazadas, son también capaces de aplazar su desaparición frenando e, incluso, invirtiendo los procesos de declive, y renovando su vitalidad e identidad. Creo que Estados Unidos es perfectamente capaz de esto último y que los estadounidenses deberían renovar su compromiso con la cultura, las tradiciones

such as the continuation over time of minorities that don’t mix—indigenous peoples, Mennonites, Jews, etc.—and has skewed how we think about and analyze the processes of integration.

#### WHO WE ARE NOT

In March 2004, the journal *Foreign Policy* published an article written by Samuel P. Huntington, the famous political scientist from Harvard. The essay, “The Hispanic Challenge” was the teaser for *Who Are We? The Challenges to America’s National Identity (Quiénes somos, Paidós, 2004)*, a book that came out a bit later about the supposed danger, for North American Society, represented by Mexican immigration. “By the mid-twentieth century,” Huntington wrote “America had become a multiethnic, multiracial society with an Anglo-Protestant mainstream culture encompassing many subcultures and with a common political creed rooted in that mainstream culture. In the late twentieth century, developments occurred that, if continued, could change America into a culturally bifurcated Anglo-Hispanic society with two national languages. This trend was in part the result of the popularity of the doctrines of multiculturalism and diversity among intellectual and political elites, and the government policies on bilingual education and affirmative action that those doctrines promoted and sanctioned. The driving force behind the trend toward cultural bifurcation, however, has been immigration from Latin America and especially from Mexico.”

Years before, in “The Clash of Civilizations,” the controversial essay that appeared in the journal *Foreign Affairs*, Huntington deemed Mexico a country whose “civilization” was not Western and, moreover, critically different from that of the United States. Mexico was, like Turkey, a country “torn” between two civilizations: the “Latin American” and the “North American.” Thirty years earlier, in *The Disuniting of America*, one of the key books in the cultural wars of the nineties, historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. warned his fellow citizens, “The separatist impulse is by no means confined to the black community. Another salient expression is the bilingualism movement, ostensibly conducted in the interests of all non-English speakers but particularly a Hispanic-American project... In recent years the combination of the ethnicity cult with a flood of immigration from Spanish-speaking countries has given bilingualism new impetus.”

In his book, Huntington declares himself, without compunction, to be a patriot and further asserts that: “All societies face recurring threats to their existence, to which they eventually succumb. Yet some societies, even when so threatened, are also capable of postponing their demise by halting and reversing the processes of decline and renewing their vitality and identity. I believe that America can do that and that Americans should recommit themselves to the Anglo-Protestant culture, traditions, and values that for three and a half centuries have been embraced by Americans of all races, ethnicities, and religions and that have been the source of their liberty, unity, power, prosperity, and moral leadership as a force for good in the world.”





y los valores anglo protestantes a los que los norteamericanos de todas las razas, etnias y religiones, se han adherido durante tres siglos y medio, y que han supuesto la fuente de su libertad, su unidad, su poder, su prosperidad y su liderazgo moral como fuerza de bien en el mundo”.

En México el alegato produjo encendidas respuestas. Enrique Krauze mezclaba la crítica de la xenofobia de Huntington con el acrítico aprecio de las virtudes mexicanas: “los mexicanos entienden bien las ventajas de la mezcla porque, desde hace siglos, su cultura es inclusiva. El mestizaje es el genio particular de México, país donde lo indio y lo español, con sus múltiples variantes, se han mezclado con admirables resultados de convivencia. Por eso, salvo excepciones, México no ha tenido guerras raciales”. En cambio, “la obsesión de Huntington por preservar una identidad desemboca en la idea de pureza, y ya hemos visto esa película: serbios, hutus, tutsis, etarras, ккк. Fanáticos de la identidad”. Paidós, la editorial que publicó el libro en español comisionó un conjunto de ensayos a académicos mexicanos en respuesta al alegato de Huntington. Más que una respuesta a Huntington —y al público que el profesor de Harvard tenía en la mira—, el libro fue un vehemente desmentido dirigido a los convencidos: los propios mexicanos. El tono de la mayoría de los ensayos, aunque erudito, no era mesurado. El libro de Huntington, decía el compilador en las primeras líneas del prólogo, “no tiene la menor importancia como trabajo académico”. La mayoría de los autores no comprendió dos aspectos innegables del libro. El primero es que las características de la inmigración mexicana que señala Huntington (ilegalidad, dimensión, etc.) son innegables, no así sus presuntas consecuencias. En segundo lugar, el alegato nativista si bien fue recibido críticamente por la academia, daba voz a un amplio sentir en la sociedad norteamericana. De ahí su importancia. Pocos de los autores comprendieron el lugar que dentro de los discursos de la identidad norteamericana tenía la jeremiada de Huntington. Uno de ellos concluía: “Huntington es sobre todo un estratega político, una especie de pequeño Maquiavelo en traje de predicador”. Pocos textos ofrecieron estadísticas y razonamientos alternativos a los de Huntington. Sin embargo, algunos textos iban más allá de la indignación. El ensayo de Mauricio Tenorio ofrecía una clave distinta para comprender *¿Quiénes somos?* El discurso de la diferencia ideológica no había sido inventado por Huntington; los filósofos de lo “mexicano” y los activistas del Consejo de la Raza eran cómplices en esa maniobra simbólica.

Aún los críticos que admiran en general el trabajo académico de Huntington reconocieron que el alegato carecía del proverbial realismo de sus otros libros. En lugar de la sólida interpretación de la historia de Estados Unidos, el autor ofrecía una “nostalgia romántica de la cultura anglo protestante”. Sin embargo, el argumento de Huntington parecería extemporáneo. La década de las guerras culturales en Estados Unidos fue la de los noventa. Ahí, durante diez años los encendidos debates sobre el multiculturalismo consumieron miles de litros de tinta y toneladas de papel. Mientras tanto, Huntington guardó silencio, preocupado por el choque de civilizaciones que tenía como escenario el mundo. Ahora, su mirada cree encontrar ese mismo choque en su patio trasero. Justo cuando se apagaban los ecos de las guerras culturales Huntington las revive con su



In Mexico the statement elicited fiery responses. Enrique Krauze combined criticism of Huntington's xenophobia with an uncritical appreciation of Mexican virtues, “Mexicans understand very well the advantages of racial mixing because, for centuries, their culture has been inclusive. Miscegenation is the particular genius of Mexico, a country where the Indian and the Spaniard, with their many variants, have mixed with admirable results of coexistence. Thus, with some exceptions, Mexico hasn't had racial wars.” On the other hand, “Huntington's obsession to preserve an identity leads to the idea of purity, and we have already seen that film: Serbes, Hutus, Tutsis, ETA, ККК. Identity fanatics.” Paidós, the publishing house that published the book in Spanish, commissioned an anthology of essays from Mexican academics in response to Huntington's statement. More than a response to Huntington—and to the audience the Harvard professor had in mind—the book was a vehement denial directed at the convinced: the Mexicans themselves. The tone of the majority of the essays, although erudite, was not reasonable. Huntington's book, the editor said in the first lines of the prologue, “doesn't have the least importance as an academic work.” The majority of the authors didn't understand two indisputable points about the book. The first is that the characteristics of Mexican immigration identified by Huntington (illegality, dimension, etc.), are evident, unlike their presumed consequences. Secondly, the nativist statement was critically well received by the academy, it gave voice to a far-reaching sentiment in North American society. Hence its importance. Few of the authors understood the place Huntington's jeremiad had in the history of the discourse on North American identity. Some texts, however, went further than indignation as they concluded that, “Huntington is above all a political strategist, a little Machiavelli dressed up as preacher.” Although few texts offered alternatives to Huntington's reasoning and statistics, Mauricio Tenorio's essay proposed a different interpretation for the understanding of *¿Quiénes somos?* in his suggestion that Huntington didn't invent the discourse of ideological difference, and that the philosophers of the “Mexican” and the *Consejo de la Raza* activists were accomplices in that symbolic maneuver.

Even critics who generally admire Huntington's academic work recognized that the statement lacked the proverbial realism of his other books. Rather than a solid interpretation of the

autoridad académica. ¿Por qué esta respuesta tardía? Algunas claves aparecen en la inusual respuesta de Huntington a la crítica de Alan Wolfe en *Foreign Affairs*. Además de acusar a Wolfe de interpretar erróneamente su trabajo, Huntington hace algunas precisiones reveladoras. Su libro, aduce, no se ocupa centralmente de la inmigración. Su preocupación central es “la prominencia y sustancia de la identidad nacional norteamericana”. La angustia de Huntington es la del ideólogo nacionalista. Huntington reconoce que los norteamericanos no siempre le han acordado la misma importancia a su identidad nacional en relación a otras identidades. Antes de la guerra civil la identidad nacional, comparada con la regional y la local era débil. En cambio, el siglo xx fue el siglo del “nacionalismo americano”. Huntington cree que el legado de las revoluciones culturales de los sesenta fue el debilitamiento de la identidad nacional. A partir de los sesenta y el movimiento de los derechos civiles, la importancia de las identidades raciales, de género y étnicas aumentó en relación a la nacional. Sin embargo, los ataques terroristas de 2001 “regresaron dramáticamente a la identidad nacional al centro de la atención. Como demostró la profusión de banderas, los americanos rápidamente redescubrieron su nación”. Huntington no está solo en hacer las loas del efecto edificante del miedo sobre el patriotismo. Algunos meses después de los atentados terroristas, otro politólogo de Harvard, Robert Putnam, escribió en la revista *The American Prospect*: “las últimas décadas del siglo xx hallaron a los norteamericanos menos conectados unos con otros y con la vida colectiva. Votamos menos, nos juntamos menos, dimos menos, confiamos menos, invertimos menos tiempo en los asuntos públicos y nos involucramos menos con nuestros amigos, vecinos e incluso familias”. Los atentados terroristas parecieron revivir el sentimiento patriótico en Estados Unidos. “La indecible tragedia del 11 de septiembre”, escribió Putnam, “interrumpió esa tendencia. Casi al instante redescubrimos a nuestros amigos, a nuestros vecinos, a nuestras instituciones públicas y nuestra fe compartida”. Como Huntington, Putnam celebra ese renacimiento cívico. Sin embargo, Huntington se percató de que el efecto catalizador duró poco. Los norteamericanos, después de la catarsis nacionalista, parecían volver a jugar boliche solos. En efecto, en las postrimerías de los atentados terroristas, la prominencia de la identidad nacional “se ha vuelto a erosionar; su futuro dependerá en parte de si los americanos experimentarán o percibirán amenazas de peso a su país”. La identidad nacional necesitaba un nuevo y duradero vigorizante. Se trata de una teoría maquiavélica, sobre la necesidad de la amenaza exterior y la guerra para preservar la virtud cívica de la república. Huntington entonces ubicó una amenaza más significativa, aunque su naturaleza fuera más ambigua que los atentados de fundamentalistas islámicos: el reto hispánico a la cultura histórica de los Estados Unidos. ¿Por qué le importa a Huntington la invasora cultura de los inmigrantes mexicanos? La respuesta es que ahí ha encontrado la fuente de la nueva amenaza. De acuerdo con el propio Huntington, ¿*Quiénes somos?* Es producto de la misma motivación que sus trabajos anteriores: “todos esos libros tienen su origen en mi preocupación moral con grandes problemas políticos y sociales, que a menudo han sido descuidados. Trato entonces de analizarlos de una manera estrictamente realista”.

history of the United States, the author offered a “romantic nostalgia for Anglo-Protestant culture.” Nonetheless, Huntington’s argument seemed untimely. The nineties was the decade of the cultural wars in the United States, when fiery debates over multiculturalism consumed thousands of bottles of red wine and tons of paper over ten years. Meanwhile, Huntington remained silent, preoccupied with the clash of civilizations that was the world’s backdrop. Now, in his mind’s eye he believes that he finds that same clash in his own backyard. Just as the echoes of the cultural wars were dying, Huntington revives them with his academic authority. Why this tardy response? Some clues can be found in Huntington’s unusual response to the critic Alan Wolfe in *Foreign Affairs*. In addition to accusing Wolfe of erroneously interpreting his work, Huntington makes some revealing clarifications. His book, he adduces, does not deal primarily with immigration. It’s central concern is “the salience and substance of American national identity.” Huntington’s angst is that of a nationalistic ideologue. Huntington recognizes that North Americans have not always accorded the same importance to their national identity relative to other identities. Before the civil war, national identity, compared to regional and local identities, was weak. On the other hand, the twentieth century was the century of “American Nationalism.” Huntington believes that the legacy of the cultural revolutions of the seventies was the weakening of national identity. Since the seventies and the civil rights movement, the importance of racial, sexual, and ethnic identities have increased relative to the national. Nonetheless, the terrorist attacks of 2001 “dramatically brought national identity back to the fore. As the profusion of flags demonstrated, Americans quickly rediscovered their nation.” Huntington is not alone in praising the useful effect of fear on patriotism. Several months after the terrorist assaults, Robert Putnam, another Harvard political scientist, wrote in *The American Prospect* journal, that “the closing decades of the twentieth century found Americans growing ever less connected with one another and with collective life. We voted less, joined less, gave less, trusted less, invested less time in public affairs, and engaged less with our friends, our neighbors, and even our families.” The terrorist assaults seemed to revive patriotic sentiment in the United States. “The unspeakable tragedy of September 11,” wrote Putman, “dramatically interrupted that trend. Almost instantly, we rediscovered our friends, our neighbors, our public institutions, and our shared fate.” Like Huntington, Putman celebrates this civic revival. Huntington, however, realizes that the catalyzing effect lasted didn’t last long, and after the nationalistic catharsis, North Americans have apparently gone back to bowling alone. Indeed, in the aftermath of the terrorist assaults, the salience of national identity, “has eroded; its future will depend in part on whether Americans experience or perceive major threats to their country.” National identity needed a new and lasting revitalization. This suggests a Machiavellian theory: the necessity of an exterior threat and a war in order to preserve the civic virtue of the republic. Huntington then identified a more significant threat, although its nature was more ambiguous than the assaults of the Islamic fundamentalists: the Hispanic challenge to the historic culture of the United States. Why did the culture of invading Mexican immigrants

## MÁS QUE UNA IDEOLOGÍA

Irónicamente, Samuel Huntington y Octavio Paz comparten una misma idea de la identidad nacional. Paz, por su parte, describió las oposiciones dialécticas magistralmente: los norteamericanos son crédulos, los mexicanos creyentes. Ellos aman los cuentos de hadas y las historias policíacas, nosotros los mitos y las leyendas. Ellos “son optimistas; nosotros nihilistas... los norteamericanos quieren comprender, nosotros contemplar. Son activos; nosotros quietistas: disfrutamos de nuestras llagas como ellos de sus inventos”. Ambas actitudes son, se supone, “irreconciliables”. ¿Cómo trazó Paz los contornos de esta diferencia? Comparando. Lo acertado de la distinción ontológica es aquí lo de menos. Lo importante es que para llegar a ella Paz siguió la dialéctica del espejo. Lo dice en las primeras páginas de *El laberinto de la soledad*: “debo confesar que muchas de las reflexiones que forman parte de este ensayo nacieron fuera de México, durante dos años de estancia en los Estados Unidos. Recuerdo que cada vez que me inclinaba sobre la vida norteamericana, deseoso de encontrarle sentido, me encontraba con mi imagen interrogante. Esa imagen, destacaba sobre el fondo reluciente de los Estados Unidos, fue la primera y quizá la más profunda de las respuestas que dio ese país a mis preguntas”.

Según Roger Bartra, el mito de carácter nacional “pareciera no tener historia; pareciera como si los valores nacionales hubieran ido cayendo del cielo patrio para integrarse a una sustancia unificadora en la que se bañan por igual y para siempre las almas de todos los mexicanos. Los ensayos sobre el carácter nacional mexicano son una traducción y una reducción —y con frecuencia una caricatura grotesca— de una infinidad de obras artísticas, literarias, musicales y cinematográficas”. Huntington, por su lado, está obsesionado con la “sustancia” de la identidad nacional norteamericana. Esa sustancia se refiere a lo que los norteamericanos creen tener en común y lo que los distingue de otros pueblos: el idioma inglés, el cristianismo, el compromiso religioso, los conceptos ingleses del estado de derecho, la responsabilidad de los gobernantes, los derechos de los individuos y el valor del individualismo, la ética del trabajo y “la creencia de que las personas tienen la capacidad y la obligación de crear un paraíso en la tierra, una ciudad en la colina”.

Lo notable, a contrapelo de estos lugares comunes que dibujan dos naciones intrínsecamente distintas, es la semejanza de las identidades que México y Estados Unidos forjaron para sí en el siglo xx, y que ahora están en crisis. Ambos procesos de construcción ideológica perseguían, en esencia, un mismo objetivo: integrar a grupos distintos en una unidad coherente. En México y Estados Unidos el siglo xx registra el ascenso y decadencia de dos poderosos imaginarios nacionales: la raza cósmica y el crisol. Ambos eran metáforas de fusión e integración. Desde su fundación los estados nacionales mexicano y norteamericano se enfrentaron a un mismo dilema: la diversidad cultural. El predicamento de ambas naciones es similar. Las “imágenes maestras” de la identidad nacional que forjaron para sí constituyen respuestas diferentes a preguntas similares.

Frente al dilema de qué hacer con los pobladores originales, España y Portugal, parecieron ofrecer una solución

concern Huntington? The answer is that he had found there the source of a new threat. According to Huntington himself, *Who Are We?* is the product of the same inspiration behind his previous works, “All these books have their origins in my moral concern with major political and social problems, which often have been neglected. I then try to analyze them in strictly realist fashion.”

## MORE THAN AN IDEOLOGY

Ironically, Samuel Huntington and Octavio Paz share a similar idea of national identity. Paz, for his part, magisterially described the dialectic of oppositions: North Americans are credulous, Mexicans are believers. They love fairytales and detective stories, we love myths and legends. They “are optimists; we are nihilists...North Americans want to understand, we want to contemplate. They are active, we are quietists; we enjoy our afflictions like they enjoy their inventions.” Both attitudes are, it is presumed, “irreconcilable.” How did Paz outline the contours of this difference? By comparing. Here, accuracy regarding the ontological distinction is the least of it. The important thing is that in order to arrive at it Paz pursued the dialectic of the mirror, as he suggests, in the first pages of *El laberinto de la soledad* [*The Labyrinth of Solitude*]: “I have to confess that many of the reflections that form this essay originated outside of Mexico, during a two year stay in the United States. I remember that every time I inclined toward North American life, yearning to understand it, I came face to face with my own questioning image. This image, conspicuous above the glittering depths of the United States, was the first and perhaps the most profound of the responses that country gave to my questions.

According to Roger Bartra, the myth of the national character, “would appear be without history; it would seem as if national values had fallen from the native sky to merge with the unifying substance in which the souls of all Mexicans bathe equally and forever. Essays about the Mexican national character are translations and reductions—and frequently grotesque caricatures—of innumerable artistic, literary, musical, and cinematographic works.” Huntington, on the other hand, is obsessed with the “substance” of North American national identity. That substance refers to that which North Americans believe they have in common and that which distinguishes them from other people: the English language, Christianity, religious commitment, the English concepts of the rule of law, the responsibility of rulers, the rights of individuals and the value of individualism, the work ethic and “the belief that humans have the ability and the duty to try to create a heaven on earth, a city on a hill.”

It is significant that the counter-point to these common clichés that paint the two nations as intrinsically different is the similarity of the identities that Mexico and the United States forged for themselves in the twentieth century, and that are now in crisis. Both processes of ideological construction pursued, in essence, the same objective: to integrate different groups into a coherent union. In Mexico and in the United States the twentieth century recorded the rise and the fall of

menos excluyente que Inglaterra. En Estados Unidos, desde el periodo colonial hasta finales de los sesenta, las uniones interracialmente estuvieron prohibidas. En las colonias españolas no existió esta estricta separación. Para los angloamericanos el mestizaje representaba una amenaza de contaminación racial, mientras que para muchos criollos fue, por el contrario, una forma de “blanquear” a sus países. Contra lo que cree Krauze, el racismo no ha estado ausente de las naciones hispanoamericanas. El indio siempre fue visto como un inferior. Sin embargo, es cierto que esta variedad hispánica de prejuicio fue más tolerante y menos rígida que la obsesión con la pureza racial y la estricta separación entre las razas de los norteamericanos.

Para fines de la comparación conviene apuntar una primera semejanza de origen. La matriz *ideológica* de México y Estados Unidos es, con matices, la misma: el liberalismo. Un principio *cívico* se afirmó en las fundaciones de ambos países. Como afirma David A. Hollinger: “el nacionalismo cívico es la variedad de nacionalismo desarrollado de manera más conspicua por los Estados Unidos y Francia después de las revoluciones de 1776 y 1789 y, también, por los países de América latina que declararon su independencia en los albores del siglo xix”. Los constructores de esos estados profesaron un “nacionalismo cívico”, porque la nación que imaginaban estaba formada por ciudadanos iguales frente a la ley, unidos por lazos de adhesión patriótica a un conjunto de prácticas y valores políticos compartidos. La comunidad política estaba formada por individuos sin distinción de raza, color o religión.

En ambos casos esta ideología universalista fue insuficiente para darle contenido a las identidades nacionales. Mexicanos y norteamericanos no podían imaginarse simplemente como ciudadanos. Requerían de un relato étnico, histórico y cultural que sirviera como columna vertebral a la nacionalidad. Las dimensiones cívica y étnica obedecían a principios opuestos y por ello, desde un principio, estuvieron en conflicto. En Estados Unidos, la esclavitud primero, y la segregación racial después, negaron los principios autoproclamados en documentos como la Declaración de Independencia. En México el esfuerzo por abolir la raza como eje de la nacionalidad duró bien poco. El xx fue, casi en su totalidad, un siglo racista. La ideología del mestizaje estuvo presente hasta su ocaso. Es evidente que ambas naciones han tenido problemas para digerir sus pecados originales.

\* Agradezco a Maarten Van Delden y a Mauricio Tenorio sus comentarios.

two powerful imaginary nations: the cosmic race and the melting pot. Both were metaphors of integration and amalgamation. Since their founding, the Mexican and North American national states confronted the same dilemma: cultural diversity. The predicament of both nations is similar and the “master images” of national identity that they forged for themselves represent different responses to similar questions.

Faced with the dilemma of what to do with the original inhabitants, Spain and Portugal appear to have offered a less exclusive solution than England. In the United States, from the colonial period until the end of the seventies, interracial unions were prohibited. In the Spanish colonies this strict separation didn't exist. For Anglo Americans miscegenation represented the threat of racial contamination, whereas for many *criollos*, it was a way to “whiten” their countries. Contrary to what Krauze believes, racism has not been absent from Latin American nations: the Indian was always seen as inferior. Nevertheless, it's true that this Hispanic variety of prejudice was more tolerant and less rigid than the obsession with racial purity and the strict separation between the races in North America.

To complete the comparison, it is appropriate to first point out the similarity of origin. The *ideological* matrix of Mexico and the United States is, with nuances, the same: liberalism. A *civic* principle was affirmed in the foundation of both countries. As David A. Hollinger asserts, “Civic nationalism is the variety of nationalism developed most conspicuously by the United States and France following the revolutions of 1776 and 1789, and also by the countries of Latin America who declared their independence early in the nineteenth century.” The builders of those states professed a “civic nationalism,” because the nation they were imagining was formed by citizens who were equal before the law, united by adhesive patriotic ties to a set of practices and shared political values. The political community was formed by individuals regardless of race, color, or religion.

In both cases this universalistic ideology was inadequate to suppress national identities. Mexicans and North Americans couldn't imagine themselves simply as citizens. They required an ethnic, historic, and civic tale that would serve as the vertebral column of nationality. The civic and ethnic dimensions obeyed opposing principles and thus, from the beginning, were in conflict. In the United States, first slavery and later racial segregation denied the self-proclaimed principles found in documents such as the Declaration of Independence. In Mexico the effort to abolish race as the axis of nationality didn't last long. The twentieth century was, almost in its entirety, a racist century and the ideology of miscegenation existed until its decline. It is evident that both nations have had difficulties of assimilating their original sins.

\* Thank you to Maarten van Delden and Mauricio Tenorio for their comments.

## CERCA DEL REINO Y OTROS POEMAS

► JOSÉ LUIS RIVAS

¿Te acuerdas?  
Maroata y su mar abierta

retumbante  
robando de repente

con arboladas olas  
todo nuestro equipaje

hasta los trajes  
de baño que imprudentes

dejamos abandonados  
en la orilla

con lo que el oleaje  
no quiso arrebatarnos

pude envolvarte  
con una gasa digna: tu nombre

(Vanesa)  
de mariposa délfica

la mar (de abisales aromas)  
y sus remolinos

no iban nunca a volvernós  
tu ropa íntima



El delta de tu pubis  
adonde llevo

de ningún lado  
a hirsuta parte

(que más da si va o viene)

siempre en vaivén  
de humedal excitante



Dos cuerpos gritan  
en noche de mucílago

¿son cuerpos de mujer  
y de hombre? ¿son bestias

traspasadas? ¿o bosques  
de ambrientos lobos? ¿mares

que un gran espasmo  
ha vuelto del revés?



Tupidos tulipanes de Gabón  
framboyanes inmensos

lluviasdeoro  
arrecian sus vilanos

que caen como mínimos

volantes de papel  
lanzados desde un aeroplano



Del residuo de un sueño, de esa materia retraída en el sopor entre la duermevela y la vigilia, proviene la frase "En mi tierra sembraré pájaros". Graciela Iturbide no recuerda el sueño completo, acaso sólo esta enunciación de un deseo que implica una paradoja: asociado al cielo y al aire, a la levedad misma, el pájaro se opone a la tierra, a la gravedad y sobre todo a la estaticidad. ¿Cómo anclar el vuelo, cómo hacer que permanezca? Y la autora habla también de su tierra (el lugar de origen), es ahí en donde quiere sembrar aves; y se siembra para ver crecer y cosechar y aquéllas buscan elevarse, volar y no estar aquí.

**Elizabeth Romero Betancourt**

**Fotografías cortesía de la Galería López Quiroga**

GRACIELA ITURBIDE  
OJOS PARA VOLAR









#### FOTOGRAFÍAS:

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Cementerio, Juchitán, Oaxaca, 1988

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Señor de los pájaros, Nayarit, 1984  
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Perros perdidos, India, 1997  
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Tlaxcala, México, 1999  
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Carretera, U.S.A., 1997

# ON THE BROWN ATLANTIS AND MEXICAN INTELLECTUALS

## / De la Atlántida morena y los intelectuales mexicanos [fragmento]

► MAURICIO TENORIO TRILLO

*Translated to English by Tanya Huntington*

**E**n 1940 México era ya una nación muy diferente a la de 1910, pero su imagen había quedado cristalizada de tal manera que ha cambiado muy poco desde entonces. Fue tan exitosa la imagen amalgamada en esos momentos post revolucionarios del mercado cultural mundial que es muy difícil salir de ella. Para la década de 1940 había un México sinónimo de Acapulco y la industria turística moderna, y un México sinónimo de la gran inversión en infraestructura e industrialización en el DF o Monterrey, pero esas postales no derrotaban jamás a la estampa más poderosa de México: fiestas, sombreros, revoluciones, violencia y muerte al son de la flor de campasúchil. Es una imagen que está conectada a una sintaxis cosmopolita de revoluciones, vanguardias, prejuicios raciales, preocupaciones sociales y religiosas. Y quien quiera vender a México en el mundo ha de hacer referencia a lo que esa imagen significa; todo lo demás es ininteligible, no es México, no existe porque de México sólo se quiere oír referencias a lo que México es para el mundo.

Resulta entendible pues que desde siempre las visiones intelectuales extranjeras de México (y algunas mexicanas) hayan desdeñado como afrancesado, europeizante, occidentalizado, aristocrático, burgués e irreal a toda perspectiva mexicana que no compartiera lo que por México se entiende en el mundo. Los periodistas *progressive* de la década de 1900, o los intelectuales socialistas de Estados Unidos que estuvieron en la ciudad de México entre 1919 y 1938, o inclusive hoy varios críticos culturales y académicos estadounidenses o ingleses que estudian a México, tienen una misma queja: a una parte de la inteligencia mexicana le interesa más Nietzsche, Bergson, Quevedo o Borges que su propio país (*meaning*, fiesta, siesta, sombrero). En julio de 1931, Hart Crane le escribía a Waldo Frank: México es mágico, lo único que vale es lo indígena, no “the average mestizo”; ni León Felipe ni Genaro Estrada valen un baladí, pues no están interesados “one iota on expressing anything indigenous; rather they are busy aping (as though could be done in Spanish), Paul Valery, Eliot.” Lo mismo creía el neoyorquino Waldo Frank en la década de 1920, o el catalán Pere Calders en los cuarenta, u hoy el connotado crítico México-estadounidense Ilan Stavans, el cual divide la cultura mexicana en una “occidentalizada” y otra proletaria —y uno debe concluir no occidentalizada—. En la cárcel de tu imagen, mexicano, *read no Proust, say no more, fiesta, siesta, sombrero*. En estas visiones académicas recientes, algunos líderes marxistas de movimientos indígenas aparecen como la verdadera cultura mexicana siempre ahí, lista a salir a la superficie de la falsedad occidentalizada; y si aparecen en sus estudios personajes occidentales, urbanos y cosmopolitas —digamos, Agustín Lara o Cantinflas—, éstos viran “intelectuales orgánicos” de lo no occidental: de alguna manera, el verdadero México.

**IN 1940 MEXICO WAS ALREADY A VERY DIFFERENT NATION THAN IN 1910, BUT ITS IMAGE REMAINED CRYSTALLIZED, TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT IT HAS CHANGED VERY LITTLE SINCE THEN. THE AMALGAMATED** image of those post-revolutionary moments for the worldwide cultural market was so successful, it has been very difficult to get out of. By the 1940s, there was a Mexico synonymous with Acapulco and the modern tourist industry, and a Mexico synonymous with great investments in infrastructure and industrialization in the capital or Monterrey, but these postcards would never defeat the most powerful stamp of Mexico: fiestas, sombreros, violence and death to the tune of the marigold flower. It is an image linked to a cosmopolitan syntax of revolutions, avant-gardes, racial prejudice, and social and religious concerns. And whoever wants to sell Mexico to the world has to refer back to what that image means; anything else is unintelligible, it isn't Mexico, it doesn't exist because there is interest only in hearing references to what Mexico is to the world.

It is understandable, therefore, that the foreign intellectual visions of Mexico (and a few Mexican ones) have forever disdained as Frenchified, Europeanizing, Westernist, aristocratic, bourgeois and unrealistic any Mexican perspective that doesn't share what the world understands Mexico to be. The progressive journalists of the first decade of the 20th century; or the socialist intellectuals from the United States who were in Mexico City from 1919 to 1938; or even today, several cultural and academic U.S. and British critics who study Mexico; all have the same complaint: a portion of the Mexican intelligentsia is more interested in Nietzsche, Bergson, Quevedo or Borges than in their own country (meaning fiesta, siesta, sombrero). In July 1931, Hart Crane wrote to Waldo Frank: Mexico is magical, all that's worthwhile is the indigenous, not “the average *mestizo*”; neither León Felipe nor Genaro Estrada are worth a song because they're not interested “one iota on expressing anything indigenous; rather they are busy aping (as though could be done in Spanish), Paul Valery, Eliot.” The New Yorker Waldo Frank felt the same way during the 1920s, as did Catalonian Pere Calders in the forties, or even today the well-known Mexican-U.S. critic Ilan Stavans, who divides Mexican culture into a “Westernized” portion and a proletariat portion—which, one must conclude, is not Westernized. From the jail of your image, Mexican, *read no Proust, say no more than fiesta, siesta, sombrero*. According to these recent academic visions, some Marxist leaders of indigenist movements appear as the true Mexican culture that has always been there, ready to rise to the surface of Westernized falsehood; and if Western, urbane and cosmopolitan characters do appear in their studies —let's say, Agustín Lara or Cantinflas—they spin them as “organic intellectuals” of the non-Western: in some fashion, the true Mexico.

Otra cosa fue México dentro del mundo de habla hispana. Zorrilla a mitad del siglo XIX o Valle Inclán a fines del mismo siglo, promovieron en castellano una imagen de México incluso más estereotípica que la que vendían viajeros y escritores de habla inglesa. En 1920, Katherine Anne Porter, la que tanto contribuyera a esa Atlántida morena, criticaba fuertemente un libro de Blasco Ibáñez sobre México (*El militarismo mejicano*): "See how I understand these people, you may imagine Ibáñez saying 'note the ease with which I tripped them up, and obtained their secrets. Really, dear friends, I was as amusing as a weasel in a Rat hole!'" Acusaba de odio racial a ese intelectual español que se había limitado a sentarse por unas semanas en un café de Bucareli y luego había escrito una "hateful autobiography of Ibáñez". En verdad, no es que del mundo de habla hispana se consumiera otra cosa por México que lo que comerciaba. Con mucho, Blasco Ibáñez decía lo mismo que doña Katherine Anne. Claro, son excepciones notable los viajes del franco-argentino Paul Groussac en la década de 1900, el periplo americano del brasileñísimo Erico Veríssimo en la década de 1930, los lúcidos comentarios urbanos de Juan Rejano en el exilio mexicano, o los poemas y prosas en *yddish* de Isaac Berliner, Jacobo Glantz, M. Glikowski y Zabludobsky.

Por lo demás, hasta antes de 1920 sólo Amado Nervo, y quizá Gutiérrez Nájera, eran productos de consumo en todas las variaciones del castellano. Es irónico, pero para 1940 México era imperial en el dominio de su imagen en el mundo de habla española. Es más, para 1950 México monopolizaba el significado de conceptos y territorios mayores: lo latino, lo hispánico, lo moreno, lo híbrido... Así, aún hoy los partidarios del Chelsea bajan las Ramblas de Barcelona con sombrero mexicano, y el Zorro es un personaje mexicano que amalgama moros, españoles e indios. Por un lado, en la década de 1940 México vendía charros, haciendas y bucolismo y, por el otro, productos profundamente urbanos, amalgamas mexicanas que con la radio y el cine hicieron de México lo más cercano a un imperio cultural: boleros, ficheras, Cantinflas, danzones y tangos proyectados desde "la voz de la América latina desde México". Imagen esta que, por cierto, no tuvo ni ha tenido casi ninguna traducción al mundo de habla inglesa. Ni tendría por qué tenerla.

Intelectuales tan importantes en la promoción de México como Frank Tannenbaum, Stuart Chase, Bertram Wolfe o André Breton, sólo muy accidentalmente repararon en ese México arrabalero e imperial culturalmente. Eso sí, recogían y traducían corridos, iban y venían a Tepoztlán y veían en la ciudad de México, no importa el año, una Atlántida morena poblada sobre todo por indígenas. Hace muy poco, en un congreso en Londres, una destacada historiadora del arte "latinoamericano" interpretaba el famoso cuadro de Juan O'Gorman que representa a la ciudad de México en construcción: grúas, rascacielos, concreto y al frente un albañil de overol azul, en la mano la paleta de hacer mezcla. El comentario de la historiadora rezaba sobre el contraste de las manos blancas —las de O'Gorman— que aparecen pintadas en el óleo, y "el indio" de overol. Entonces pregunto: "¿por qué indio si va de overol, es decir, viste con el símbolo inequívoco del proletariado urbano universal?" La respuesta fue tajante: "he is brown." Pero aún replico: "yo también." "No lo suficiente", contraatacó la destacada historiadora. Vencido por los guardianes de la Atlántida morena, callé.

Mexico within the Spanish-speaking world was another matter. Zorrilla in the mid-19th century, or Valle Inclán towards the end of the same century, promoted in Castilian an image of Mexico even more stereotyped than the one sold by English-speaking travelers and writers. In 1920, Katherine Anne Porter, she who contributed so much to that brown Atlantis, strongly criticized a book by Blasco Ibáñez about Mexico (*El militarismo mejicano*): "See how I understand these people, you may imagine Ibáñez saying, 'note the ease with which I tripped them up, and obtained their secrets. Really, dear friends, I was as amusing as a weasel in a Rat hole!'" She accused him of racial discrimination, this Spanish intellectual who had limited himself to sitting for a few weeks in a café on Bucareli and had then written a "hateful autobiography of Ibáñez." In truth, the Spanish-speaking world hadn't consumed anything as Mexico other than what was for sale. Blasco Ibáñez said the same thing as Miss Katherine Anne by far. Of course, there are notable exceptions: the travels of Franco-Argentinean Paul Groussac in the first decade of the twentieth century, the Pan-American odyssey of the very Brazilian Erico Veríssimo during the 1930s, the lucid urban commentary of Juan Rejano in Mexican exile or the Yiddish poems and prose of Isaac Berliner, Jacobo Glantz, M. Glikowski, and Zabludobsky.

As for the rest, up until 1920 only Amado Nervo and perhaps Gutiérrez Nájera were products for consumption in all variants of Spanish. It is ironic, but by 1940 the dominion of Mexico over its image was imperial throughout the Spanish-speaking world. Moreover, by 1950, Mexico had monopolized the meaning of broader concepts and territories: that which is Latin, Hispanic, Brown, hybrid... Thus, even today the fans of Chelsea stride down the Ramblas of Barcelona wearing Mexican sombreros, and the Zorro is a Mexican character combining Moors, Spaniards and Indians. On one hand, Mexico in the 1940s sold *charros*, haciendas and bucolic life while on the other, profoundly urban products, Mexican amalgams made Mexico something closer to a cultural empire through radio and cinema: boleros, *ficheras*, Cantinflas, *danzones* and tangos projected through "the voice of Latin America, from Mexico." An image, by the way, that didn't or hasn't received hardly any translation into the English-speaking world. Nor would there be any reason to do so.

Intellectuals as vital to the promotion of Mexico as Frank Tannenbaum, Stuart Chase, Bertram Wolfe or André Breton, only quite accidentally noticed this culturally imperial Mexico of the slums. That isn't to say that they didn't collect and translate *corridos*, or come and go from Tepoztlán to discover in Mexico City, no matter what the year, a brown Atlantis populated above all by indigenous people. Very recently during a congress in London, a renowned historian of "Latin American" art interpreted the famous painting by Juan O'Gorman representing Mexico City under construction: cranes, skyscrapers, concrete, and at the forefront a worker in blue overalls, a mixing spatula in his hand. The historian's commentary focused on the contrast between the white hands—O'Gorman's—that appear in the oil painting and "the Indian" dressed in overalls. Then I asked: "why an Indian, if he's dressed in overalls, that is to say, he's wearing the unmistakable symbol of the universal urban proletariat?" The answer was cutting: "He is brown." Still I rejoinder: "So am I." "Not enough," the renowned historian counterattacked. Beaten by the guardians of the brown Atlantis, I held my tongue.

Aventuro una definición de la Atlántida morena, una de andar por casa, nada profundamente teórico. Se trata de un lugar, sí, pero uno imaginario, de ahí lo de “Atlántida”. Un lugar cuya realidad esencial no es topográfica sino que radica precisamente en el hecho de ser simultáneamente una sólida presunción y una irrefrenable búsqueda. Atlántida por ser un lugar imaginario que se asume existente y al mismo tiempo se procura una y otra vez, y por tanto un ejercicio mental necesariamente ligado a tres cosas que hacen de la Atlántida sustantivo y verbo: escape (escapar), autenticidad (autenticar) y descubrimiento (descubrir). Por ello México como la Atlántida de varias generaciones de viajeros, activistas, escritores y artistas del mundo con frecuencia se revela el escape de casa, del industrialismo, de persecución de pacifistas y socialistas, de la comunidad perdida, de la decadencia de occidente. Se revela también un escapar constante de, por ejemplo, Nueva York a París o Taos o de ahí a la ciudad de México, de ahí a Tepoztlán o a Tehuantepec, porque para existir la Atlántida exige escapar en busca de la autenticidad *vis-à-vis* la falsedad de la que se proviene. Pero autenticar la Atlántida era vivirla y hacerla, por ello cada nuevo habitante creía poseerla, asumía haberla descubierto y la de los demás era falsa. Un descubrimiento colectivo pero a la vez un descubrir constante lleno de pleitos y visiones encontradas. Atlántida, pues, siempre *in the making*, por ello lugar pero físicamente etéreo porque empieza en Nueva York o en Taos o en la Ciudad de México y no termina realmente. Sin embargo, a los muchos escapes, autenticidades y descubrimientos que implica la Atlántida, algo los sostiene juntos en innumerables libros y comentarios inclusive hoy. Y son, creo, dos certezas irrenunciables que se juntan entre 1880 y 1940: raza y revolución. Por eso es morena la Atlántida mexicana y por eso es duradera, porque está hecha de tamañas certezas modernas.

Raza hace a la Atlántida morena, es decir, algo claramente ubicable en la geografía —México, el Estado-nación, cuya composición racial lo hace más concebible, dentro y fuera, que una imagen de satélite del territorio nacional. Para el mercado cultural mundial entrar a México es entrar a una dimensión racial en la cual puridades e hibridismos, diferencias y añoranzas, escapes y descubrimientos, son posibles. Y en México también la nación había sido una conjetura racial, en los porfirianos mestizofílicos o en los intelectuales posrevolucionarios indigenistas e igualmente mestizofílicos. En diferencias, sueños y obsesiones de raza pues, más que en hectáreas, hay que medir el territorio de la Atlántida morena.

Pero también la raza hace de la Atlántida un territorio temporal y espacialmente dúctil. La certeza es que existe esa diferencia racial y todas sus connotaciones históricas y morales, pero, por ejemplo, con esa certeza entre 1920 y 1940 —incluso yo diría que hasta hoy— intelectuales y activistas mexicanos y estadounidenses se apuntalan en la ciudad de México, entre sus calles, edificios, y su cosmopolitismo, confort, bohemia y riqueza, y desde ahí lanzan la idea de México como Atlántida morena, pero tal noción ignora o más bien rechaza a la ciudad de México. La certeza racial hace posible hacer de la ciudad la sede más importante que la Atlántida morena jamás haya tenido, y sin embargo no incluye a la ciudad, porque la Atlántida dicta raza y la verdadera, la que proporciona la autenticidad, el descubrimiento, es campo, milpa, es todo lo que la ciudad de México o Nueva York no son. Por eso la Atlántida

I venture a definition of the brown Atlantis, one for household use, nothing profoundly theoretical. This is a place, yes, but an imaginary one; therefore an “Atlantis.” A place whose essential reality is not topographic, but centered precisely on the fact of being simultaneously a solid presumption and an unstoppable search. Atlantis because it is an imaginary place presumed to exist and at the same time procured again and again, and therefore a mental exercise necessarily linked to three things that make the Atlantis both noun and verb: escape (escaping), authenticity (authenticating) and discovery (discovering). Therefore, Mexico, like the Atlantis of several generations of travelers, activists, writers and artists of the world, is frequently revealed as the escape of a lost community from home, from industrialism, from the persecution of pacifists and socialists, from the decadence of Western civilization. A constant escaping from, for example, New York to Paris or Taos or from there to Mexico City is also revealed, and from there to Tepoztlán or Tehuantepec, because in order to exist, the Atlantis demands escaping in search of authenticity *vis-à-vis* the falseness from which it comes. But authenticating the Atlantis was to live it and make it; therefore each new inhabitant believed in possessing it, assumed having discovered it and that the one of the others was false. A collective discovery, but at the same time a constant discovering filled with squabbles and conflicting visions. An Atlantis, then, always in the making and therefore a place, but physically ethereal because it begins in New York or Taos or in Mexico City and doesn’t actually end. However, the many escapes, authenticities and discoveries implied by the Atlantis are held together by something in innumerable books and commentaries even today. Two certainties, I believe, brought together between 1880 and 1940 and still retained: race and revolution. Therein the brownness and lasting nature of the Mexican Atlantis: because it is composed of sizeable modern certainties.

Race makes the Atlantis brown, that is to say, something that can be clearly located in the geography—Mexico, the nation-state, whose racial composition makes it more conceivable, inside and out, than a satellite image of the national territory. For the worldwide cultural market, to enter Mexico is to enter a racial dimension in which purities and hybridity, differences and longings, escapes and discoveries are possible. And also in Mexico, the nation had been a racial conjecture, among the *mestizophilic* Porfirians or the indigenist postrevolutionary intellectuals, who were equally *mestizophilic*. The territory of the brown Atlantis must be measured, therefore, not in acres but in racial differences, dreams and obsessions.

But race also makes the Atlantis a ductile territory in terms of space and time. The certainty is that this racial difference exists, as do all its historic and moral connotations. Yet from 1920 to 1940, for example—and, I would argue, even until today— Mexican and U.S. intellectuals and activists were shored up with this certainty in Mexico City, within its streets, buildings and cosmopolitanism, its comfort, bohemia and wealth, and from there they launched the idea of Mexico as a brown Atlantis; but said notion ignores or rather, rejects Mexico City. Racial certainty makes it possible to make of the city the most important venue that the brown Atlantis has ever had. And yet it does not include the city, because the Atlantis dictates race and the true Atlantis, the one that provides authenticity, discovery, is a field, a cornfield, it’s everything that Mexico City or New York are not. That is why the brown Atlantis

morena era Frances Toor en la calle Abraham González de la Ciudad de México, pero ahí para hacer *Mexican Folkways*, la revista que hablaba de eso que la ciudad no era, o que para encontrarlo en la ciudad había que ignorar muchas cosas. Encontraban corridos en Milpa Alta, pero nunca reprodujeron los sonidos y blasfemias de las calles de la Colonia de la Bolsa o de la Lagunilla. O era Stuart Chase en la ciudad de México, pero Tepoztlán. O era Gamio en la Ciudad de México o Nueva York, pero era Teotihuacan. O era Hart Crane emborrachándose en la Ciudad de México, buscando amantes entre los sirvientes, jóvenes y morenos—si lo eran, para él eran indígenas—, de la Ciudad de México o Mixcoac, para luego huir a Taxco o a Tepoztlán en busca de la Atlántida morena. O era el D. H. Lawrence de Taos a la Ciudad de México, odiándola y refugiándose en Chapala. O era Elsie C. Parsons hallando la Atlántida morena en Taos pero al ver que estaban ya demasiado occidentalizados los indios de por allá continúa su búsqueda hacia al sur hasta llegar a Mitla. O era John Collier en la década de 1920 al encontrar la *Red Atlantis* en Taos para en la década de 1940 encontrar la Atlántida morena desde la ciudad de México, con la ayuda de Gamio. México, pues, no es un lugar, es la Atlántida morena: un ejercicio mental que la certeza de la raza permita y demanda.

Revolución fue el ingrediente que en 1910 se mezcló con raza, en una era de revoluciones. La amalgama fue extremadamente poderosa y efectiva. Nos dura hasta hoy. Sueños modernistas de desencanto, vanguardias estéticas, se juntaron con críticas y utopías socialistas, comunistas, anarcosindicalistas, populistas. Ergo, la Atlántida morena cuyos referentes han sido más o menos estables por casi un siglo: es, tiene que ser, rural o de comunidades y pequeños pueblos, preferentemente indígena o anclada en una u otra visión de atávico racial; es cosmopolita como pocas cosas, sino no sería Atlántida, pero es militantemente nativista; no es ni nunca ha sido indígena—más indígena fue la ciudad de Dios que cada parroquia y cofradía creó en innumerables pueblos y ciudades a lo largo del continente—pero es indigenista, es visible en el desdén a lo urbano y arrabalero, precisa de cierta violencia, es por necesidad amiga de la mezcla, pero de corazón amante de la pureza y la permanencia.

¿Quién habita la Atlántida morena? Nadie en realidad en la vida diaria, ni en 1880 ni en el 2000. Pero aparece el vislumbre de la Atlántida morena cada que se quiere discernir una abstracción tal como “México”. Porque esa ilusión de la Atlántida morena fue una amalgama de ideas y realidades tan imperantes para la modernidad que no es posible pensar México, fuera y dentro, sin caer en los lugares comunes que exige la Atlántida morena. Para probar cómo sobrevive esa Atlántida entre nosotros suelo pedir un ejercicio mental de mis estudiantes en Estados Unidos. Imaginémos, les digo, en una calle de la Ciudad de México, de Monterrey o de Zacatecas hoy, y reparemos en los edificios, en la gente, en la calle, en los autos, en las labores que están desarrollando, en los tonos de sus voces, su sarcasmo y mala leche. Tratemos de poner la mente en blanco y de no asignarle un valor étnico o racial a lo que estamos viendo. Olvidémos de fiesta, siesta, sombrero y Frida Kahlo. Y entonces, pregunto, ¿qué sería México? Sigue el silencio. El mismo ejercicio que he hecho con mis alumnos en México causa un silencio momentáneo y luego cosas como “Juan Gabriel”, “el

was Frances Toor on Abraham González street of Mexico City, because from there he would make *Mexican Folkways*, the magazine that spoke of what the city was not, or at least in order to find it in the city, there were many things that had to be ignored. They found *corridos* in Milpa Alta, but they never reproduced the sounds or blasphemies on the streets of the Bolsa and Lagunilla Colonies. Or it was Stuart Chase in Mexico City, but it was Tepoztlán. Or it was Gamio in Mexico City or New York, but it was Teotihuacan. Or it was Hart Crane getting drunk in Mexico City, searching for lovers among the servants who were young and brown—and if they were, they were indigenous to him—of Mexico City or Mixcoac in order to later flee to Taxco or Tepoztlán in search of the brown Atlantis. Or it was D. H. Lawrence, going from Taos to Mexico City, then hating it and taking refuge in Chapala. Or it was Elsie C. Parsons finding the brown Atlantis in Taos, but upon seeing that the Indians from those parts were already too Westernized, she continued her search southwards until reaching Mitla. Or it was John Collier who, after having found the *Red Atlantis* in Taos in the 1920s, encountered the brown Atlantis in Mexico City in the 1940s with the help of Gamio. Mexico, therefore, is not a place, it is the brown Atlantis: a mental exercise that the certainty of race allows and demands.

Revolution was the ingredient mixed with race in 1910, an era of revolutions. The amalgam was extremely powerful and effective. It's lasted until today. Modernist dreams of disenchantment and aesthetic avant-gardes were joined with socialist, anarchist, anarchosyndicalist, and populist critiques and utopias. Ergo, the brown Atlantis whose referents have been more or less stable for nearly a century: it is, it has to be, rural or composed of communities and small towns, preferably indigenous or anchored in one vision of racial atavism or another; it is cosmopolitan as few things are, if not it would not be an Atlantis, and yet it is militantly nativist; is isn't nor has it ever been indigenous—the city of God was more indigenous, founded by each parish and brotherhood in countless towns and cities all along the continent—but it is indigenist, is it visible in the disdain for the urban setting and the slum, it requires a certain degree of violence, it is by definition friendly to blending, but in its heart it loves purity and permanence.

Who resides in the brown Atlantis? Actually, in daily life no one does, either in 1880 or in 2000. But a glimpse of the brown Atlantis appears every time one wants to discern an abstraction like “Mexico.” Because this illusion of the brown Atlantis was an amalgam of ideas and realities so essential to modernity that it is impossible to think of Mexico, inside or out, without incurring in the clichés demanded by the brown Atlantis. In order to prove how this Atlantis survives among us, I tend to require a mental exercise of my students in the United States. Let us imagine, I tell them, we are on a street of Mexico City, Monterrey or Zacatecas today, and let us consider the buildings, the people, the street, the cars, the labors being undertaken, the tones of their voices, their sarcasm and malice. Let us try to leave our minds blank and not assign an ethnic or racial value to what we see. Let us forget fiesta, siesta, sombrero and Frida Kahlo. And then, I ask, what would become of Mexico? A silence follows. The same exercise applied with my students in Mexico triggers a momentary silence followed by things like “Juan Gabriel,” “the PRI,” “your

pri", "tu puta madre", "la tuya"... Méxicos fuera de la Atlántida morena, sí existen.

#### OCTAVIO PAZ

En la segunda mitad del siglo xx, tres fueron los intelectuales mexicanos de mayor venta en el mundo: Octavio Paz, Carlos Fuentes y, de alguna manera, Jorge Castañeda. Por primera vez, dos mexicanos (Paz y Fuentes) sonaban para un premio Nobel. Paz fue la flor que el maguey de la inteligencia mexicana tardó tanto en dar y, al parecer, justo antes de morir... el maguey quiere decir, que suele morir al echar flor.

No hay duda de que Paz se volvió algo más que un proveedor de lo que pide la demanda internacional de la mercancía "México". Pero creo que lo que lanzó a Paz a los mercados internacionales fue, y es, una lectura muy particular de la colección de ensayos escritos en la década de 1940: *El laberinto de la soledad*. Y esa lectura, hay que reconocerlo, se acerca a los lugares comunes: fiesta, Malinche, chingada, angustia identitaria, muerte, *ethos* latino, *ethos* indígena... Es decir, quizá me equivoco pero Paz, queriéndolo o no, proporcionó al cliente internacional lo que pedía. Yo soy de los que cree que Paz ha sido mal leído y utilizado, al menos en las universidades y en la *media* estadounidenses. México fue y es definido, sin Paz pero también gracias a Paz, como atávicamente atado a una tradición colonial o indígena, no occidental, comunitaria, católica, híbrida, mestiza. Todos estos términos son una obviedad, no se me mal interprete, poseen una base empírica innegable. Mas si se definiera a México con conceptos como cosmopolita, industrial, orientalista, vanguardista, individualista, xenófobo, empresarial, rico, occidental... también sería un argumento empírico. En cuestión de consumo cultural, se consume lo que se vende, se vende lo que se pide, no necesariamente realidades. Lysander Kemp, por ello, fue un verdadero "cultural broker" entre Estados Unidos y México al traducir al inglés a Octavio Paz, Juan Rulfo y Carlos Fuentes. Cuando en 1961 produjo la primera traducción de *El laberinto*, los ejemplos de la chingada, el mestizaje, la angustia de la identidad viraron clichés de mexicanidad. Y por supuesto tales nociones eran temas tratados por Paz. Lo otro, quizá lo más importante, era la soledad que, en palabras de Paz, hacía a los mexicanos, "por primera vez contemporáneos de todos los hombres". Pero tan tremenda conclusión no ha pasado a formar parte del estereotipo de México que se consume en inglés, a pesar de décadas de alabanzas y críticas a Paz.

Octavio Paz era el creador de estereotipos, era también el poeta universal, el orientalista mexicano enamorado de la India y el habitante de la soledad humana. La búsqueda exotista de la autenticidad era y es tan poderosa en la demanda internacional por la idea de México que Paz es conocido esencialmente como el teórico, no el ensayista, de pachucos, Malinches y chingadas.

Creo que en inglés debería hacerse una relectura de *El laberinto*, una que empiece de atrás para adelante, del último ensayo, el de la soledad universal y de ahí a los ensayos particulares llenos de cosas que hoy son anacrónicas. Una lectura que marcara dos aspectos en especial: que un gran poeta

whose of a mother," "yours," all Mexicos outside the brown Atlantis that do exist.

#### OCTAVIO PAZ

During the second half of the twentieth century, there were three Mexican intellectuals who sold the most worldwide: Octavio Paz, Carlos Fuentes, and somehow, Jorge Castañeda. For the first time, it was rumored that two Mexicans (Paz and Fuentes) could receive a Nobel Prize. Paz was the flower that the maguey of Mexican intelligence took so long to give, apparently just before dying... the maguey, I mean to say, which has a tendency to die once it has blossomed.

Doubtless Paz became something more than a supplier of the international demand for "Mexico" merchandise. But I believe that what Paz threw into the international market was, and is, a very private reading of the collection of essays written in the decade of the 1940s: *The Labyrinth of Solitude*. And that reading, we must recognize, comes close to being a cliché: fiesta, Malinche, *chingada*, identity angst, death, Latino ethos, indigenous ethos... That is to say, perhaps I'm wrong but Paz, willingly or not, supplied the international client with what he'd asked for. I'm one of those who believe that Paz has been poorly read and used, at least in U.S. universities and media. Mexico was and is defined, without Paz but also thanks to Paz, as atavistically tied to a colonial or indigenous tradition, not as Western, communitarian, Catholic, hybrid, *mestizo*. Don't misinterpret me, all of these terms are commonplace: they possess an undeniable empirical base. Yet if Mexico were defined with concepts such as cosmopolitan, industrial, Orientalized, avant-garde, individualist, xenophobic, entrepreneurial, wealthy, Western... this would also be an empirical argument. In terms of cultural consumption, what is sold is consumed, what is sold is what is ordered, not necessarily a reality. Lysander Kemp, therefore, was a true "cultural broker" between the United States and Mexico upon translating Octavio Paz, Juan Rulfo, and Carlos Fuentes into English. When he produced the first translation of *The Labyrinth* in 1961, the examples of *chingada*, *mestizaje*, and the anguish of identity became clichés of Mexicanness. And of course, such notions were subject matter addressed by Paz. The other issue, perhaps the most important of all, was a solitude that, in the words of Paz, made Mexicans "contemporaries of all men for the first time." But such a tremendous conclusion has not yet begun to form part of the stereotype of Mexico that is consumed in English, despite decades of praise and criticism of Paz.

Octavio Paz was a creator of stereotypes. He was also a universal poet, a Mexican Orientalist enamored of India, and the resident of human solitude. The exoticist search for authenticity was and is so powerful in terms of the international demand for the idea of Mexico that Paz is known essentially as the theorist, not the essayist, of *pachucos*, Malinches and *chingadas*.

I believe *The Labyrinth* should undergo another reading in English, one that begins from back to front, of the final essay, that of universal solitude, and from there to the specific essays filled with things that are anachronistic today. A reading that would highlight two specific aspects: that a great poet found solitude to be a human category capable of surpassing the identity

encontró en la soledad una categoría humana capaz de superar los requisitos identitarios de la modernidad. Y uno de los mejores ensayistas del siglo xx haciendo uso de su oficio —que es casa y es espada—, esto es, utilizando al ensayo para lograr descubrir verdades del momento tratando, sin embargo, de escapar del día en que se escribe. Empero, lo cierto es que Paz es ante todo leído como el primer Paz fue leído, inclusive cuando se trata de alabarlo.

A partir de esta entrada, y gracias a la labor de traductores estupendos como Kemp o Eliot Weinberger —especialmente en lo que hace a la poesía—, Paz logró entrar de lleno a una elite intelectual planetaria, a la que otros mexicanos han accedidos después de él. Pero Paz llegó ahí primero por la demanda de lo mexicano, mas permaneció y se consolidó no por mexicano sino por Paz. Parte de su poesía y sus ensayos en *El arco y la lira*, lo han hecho cita frecuente en inglés, con otros pocos de lengua castellana —Cervantes, Ortega, Neruda y Borges—. Pessoa, un poeta —uno de los mejores en todas las lenguas occidentales del siglo xx— que escogió al portugués como su casa poética (¿o sucedió al revés?), fue marcado por su elección lingüística. Pudo haber sido poeta en inglés, pero se decidió por el portugués y él mismo sabía que con eso se condenaba a la marginalidad. Hoy el Nobel José Saramago es lo más vendido en esa lengua con una tradición poética envidiable. No hay espacio para más en el mercado mundial. El español era y es una lengua más hablada y económicamente más poderosa que el portugués, pero como en el mercado internacional la lengua española ha sufrido una suerte de exotización, no es de sorprender que, por ejemplo, al recibir el premio Alfonso Reyes, un políglota como Harold Bloom se lamentara de no haber leído ninguna novela de Octavio Paz. Un gazapo perdonable, porque un habitante de la inteligencia planetaria no está obligado a conocer la lengua castellana que, del siglo xix en adelante, y en especial por su vínculo inexorable con la llamada “América latina”, se volvió una suerte de lengua no occidental. El español, la lengua que más se estudia en Estados Unidos, la que ha introducido en el inglés términos aceptados como guerrilla, fiesta, sombrero, siesta o caudillo, es una lengua para hablar de esas cosas, no para leer clásicos “occidentalizados” como Quevedo, Góngora, lo mejor de Paz o Borges.

La verdad sea dicha, los innumerables contactos de Paz lo fueron promoviendo por el mundo sin necesidad de eso que otros empiezan a utilizar en la década de 1970: el agente literario. Como empleado del Estado, primero, y luego como patrimonio de la nación, Paz también fue promovido. Luego entró en contacto con una gran empresa de productos culturales, Televisa, y eso le trajo aún más visibilidad. Curioso, en aquellos años tal alianza fue considerada traición al modelo del intelectual mexicano, pero después de su muerte resulta que no hay intelectual mexicano que se respete que no tenga agente literario y relación con algún grupo editorial, alguna televisora o radiodifusora, además de cierto auspicio estatal. Hasta en eso, Paz fue pionero.

#### MÉXICO A LA VENTA

Después de la muerte de Paz (abril de 1998), las cosas han cambiado mucho en México. Carlos Fuentes, sin duda, continúa

requirements of modernity. And one of the best essayists of the 20th century making use of his trade—his home and his sword—, i.e., using the essay in order to successfully discover truths of the moment while trying, nonetheless, to escape from the time in which he writes. Regardless, the fact remains that Paz is above all read as the first Paz was read, inclusively when one attempts to praise him.

Parting from this point of entry, and thanks to the labor of stupendous translators like Kemp or Eliot Weinberger—especially where poetry is concerned—Paz managed to fully enter a planetary intellectual elite into which other Mexicans have gained access after him. Paz got there first because of the demand for that which is Mexican, and yet he remained and was consolidated not because he was a Mexican, but because he was Paz. Part of his poetry and his essays in *The Bow and the Lyre* have made him a frequent citation in English, together with a few others in the Spanish language—Cervantes, Ortega, Neruda, and Borges. Pessoa, a poet—one of the best in any Western language during the twentieth century—who chose Portuguese as his poetic home (or was it the other way around?) was marked by his linguistic choice. He could have been a poet in English, but he opted for Portuguese. He knew that he had thus condemned himself to marginalization. Today, Nobel Prize winner José Saramago sells more in this language, with its enviable poetic tradition. There isn't room for anyone else on the worldwide market. Spanish was and is a more spoken and economically more powerful language than Portuguese, but given that on the international market the Spanish language has undergone an exotification of sorts, it shouldn't be surprising that, for example, upon receiving the Alfonso Reyes Prize, a polyglot like Harold Bloom should lament never having read any novels by Octavio Paz. A forgivable slip, because an inhabitant of planetary intelligence isn't obliged to know a Spanish language that, from the nineteenth century, particularly due to inexorable link with the so-called “Latin America,” became a non-Western language of sorts. Spanish, the language most studied in the United States, the one that has introduced into English accepted terms such as guerrilla, fiesta, sombrero, siesta or caudillo, is a language made to speak of those things, not to read “Westernized” classics like Quevedo, Góngora, or the best of Paz or Borges.

Truth be told, the innumerable contacts of Paz gradually promoted him throughout the world without any need for what others began to use in the decade of the 1970s: a literary agent. Paz was also promoted, first as a State employee, and then as national heritage. Afterwards he came into contact with a grand purveyor of cultural products, Televisa, and that brought him even greater visibility. Curiously, in those years such an alliance was considered to be a betrayal of the model of the Mexican intellectual, but after his death, it turns out that no self-respecting Mexican intellectual doesn't have a literary agent or a relationship with some editorial group, television or radio broadcasting company, not to mention certain auspices of the State. Even in this, Paz was a pioneer.

#### MEXICO FOR SALE

After Paz's death (April, 1988) things have changed a lot in Mexico. Carlos Fuentes, beyond a doubt, continues to encom-

abarcando lo más cercano a la imagen global de México. Jorge Castañeda, hasta antes de salir del closet intelectual y confesar lo que siempre fue, un ideólogo, un político, fue sin duda una voz mexicana muy escuchada. Ambos, Fuentes y Castañeda, conocen muy bien, mucho mejor que Paz, el lado de la demanda. Conocen el mercado estadounidense, saben el matiz exacto que les permite entrar al mercado de ideas e imágenes, saben cuánto de plumas y sombreros, cuánto de latinoamericanismo, cuánto de ideas “progresistas” es necesario incluir para acceder al mercado sin parecer impresentables o estereotipables como un Pat Buchanan o un Michael Moore. Ambos conocen la lengua y el país (Estados Unidos) muy bien. Ambos con frecuencia tocan a la puerta de la Atlántida morena, la cárcel de la imagen mexicana: violencia, revoluciones, Che Guevaras, plumas, sombreros, muerte... Me ha tocado verlos en acción en Estados Unidos en diferentes foros y es memorable el manejo de su imagen pública como “yo soy México”. Fuentes, en perfecto inglés, hablaba de la Alhambra y del México de pasiones, para acabar con un intencionalmente acentuado inglés diciendo “*but I make love in spanish.*” Y Castañeda, en una de sus giras de presentación de alguno de sus libros por ahí de fines de la década de 1980, logró lo que nunca vi en una “lecture” académica: que afuera, así, a la puerta de un salón universitario, entre pizarrones, pupitres y el ir y venir de estudiantes, se pusiera chiringuito como vendedor de sus propios libros en inglés. Anécdotas mínimas que dicen nada de la calidad del trabajo de ambos escritores, pero sí algo de su conocimiento del mercado.

Por simple honestidad debe ser dicho: era yo muy joven cuando oí a Paz dar una conferencia en una prestigiosa universidad estadounidense. Era muy visible su desconocimiento de las modas políticas y académicas estadounidenses, su mal inglés hacía aún más monótono el didactismo de su expresión oral. Era, para mí, un aliciente saber que con tal acento y dicción se podía dar conferencias en inglés, y en mi aún peor inglés —seguro yo sería considerado por Castañeda uno de esos que no habla inglés— le pregunté algo. No recuerdo exactamente qué, algo sobre el “Nocturno de San Idelfonso” que entonces me entretenía. Recuerdo que al final se acercó a mí, quizá en un gesto de solidaridad en la marginalidad lingüística, y me preguntó quién era y qué hacía y sobre los estudiantes mexicanos en esa universidad. Él ignoraba que se había convocado un boicót a su plática por parte de los estudiantes del departamento de español y portugués. Me atrabanqué y dije no se qué cosas. Él sólo sonrió frente a mi comentario de que les faltó humildad... Dijo que se tomaría un café pero que los profesores que lo habían traído le tenían comidas preparadas con los escritores en residencia, que ellos pagaban y ellos mandaban. Unos meses después llegó a mis manos un memorando donde se especificaba lo que se había pagado a diferentes “speakers” en esa universidad. No recuerdo las cifras exactas, pero sí que el más barato de los tres —Fuentes, Castañeda y Paz— había sido el último. Esto era, por supuesto, antes del premio Nobel. No se me mal interprete, a mí me parece correcto que se pague por un trabajo, y bien, lo interesante es cómo se llega a tener un buen precio.

Cosas como éstas no ponen en entredicho la calidad de la obra de intelectuales como Paz, Fuentes o Castañeda. Lo que

pass the closest thing to a global image of Mexico. Jorge Castañeda, until before he left the intellectual closet and confessed what he’d always been: an ideologue, a politician, was doubtless a Mexican voice that was very much listened to. Both of them, Fuentes and Castañeda, know the demand side very well, much better than Paz. They know the U.S. market, they know the exact shade of meaning that allows them to enter the arena of ideas and images, they know how many feathers and sombreros, how much Latin Americanism, how many “progressive” ideas must be included in order to gain access to the market without seeming as unpresentable or stereotypical as a Pat Buchanan or a Michael Moore. They both know the language and the country (the United States) very well. They both frequently knock on the door of the brown Atlantis, that jail of the Mexican image: violence, revolutions, Che Guevaras, feathers, sombreros, death... I have been able to see them in action in the United States at different forums, and their management of their public “I am Mexico” image is memorable. Fuentes, in perfect English, spoke of the Alhambra and of the Mexico of passions, to finish by saying, in intentionally accented English, “*but I make love in Spanish.*” And Castañeda, in one of his book tours towards the end the decade of the 1980s, managed something I’d never seen before in an academic lecture: once outside, just like that, at the door of a university classroom, among chalkboards, desks, and the coming and going of students, he set up a stand and started hawking his own books in English. Brief anecdotes that say nothing about the quality of both writers’ work but something about their knowledge of the market.

In all fairness, it must be said: I was very young when I heard Paz give a conference at a prestigious U.S. university. His lack of knowledge of political and academic fashion in the United States was highly visible, his poor English made the didactic nature of his oral expression even more monotonous. It was, for me, encouraging to know that conferences could be given in English with such a poor accent and diction, and in my even worse English—I would doubtless be considered by Castañeda one of those who don’t speak English—I asked him something. I don’t remember exactly what, something about the “San Idelfonso Nocturne” that engrossed me at the time. I recall that towards the end he approached me, perhaps in a gesture of the solidarity of linguistic marginalization, and he asked me who I was, what I did, and about the Mexican students at that university. He wasn’t aware of the fact that students from the department of Spanish and Portuguese had organized a boycott of his talk. I was tongue-tied and went on about something or other. He just smiled at my commentary regarding their lack of humility... He said he’d like to have a coffee, but the professors who’d brought him had set up lunches with the writers in residence, that they were paying the bills so they were in charge. A few months later, a memorandum reached my hands specifying how much had been paid to different speakers at that university. I don’t recall the exact figures, but I do know that the cheapest of the three—Fuentes, Castañeda and Paz—had been the last. This was, of course, before the Nobel Prize. I don’t wish to be misinterpreted, I believe it is correct that work be compensated, and well paid, the interesting thing is how one arrives at a good price.

Things like this do not cast aspersions on the quality of the



quiero resaltar es que llenan el nicho “México” en la demanda por tal cosa en el mundo y proporcionan justo lo que el cliente quiere oír. Los cambios demográficos, culturales, políticos o económicos no afectan al producto. Sí lo afectan los cambios de igual talante en Estados Unidos. Y sí en la cultura política y académica estadounidense la identidad, la raza, el sexo y el modo se vuelven tema, entonces la demanda por la idea “México”, sin sacar a esa noción de su cárcel, se ajusta a los bemoles de lo que se pide. De tal manera entran variaciones sobre los mismos temas, ya no tanto Rivera sino más Frida Kahlo, ya no tanto énfasis en mestizos sino en el lucha indígena, vuelta a la raza, poco de violencia revolucionaria y más de violencia narco o guerrillera identitaria. Nuevas voces “mexicanas” entran a vender la mercancía México en inglés. Por ejemplo, en los últimos años la más alta visibilidad de lo mexicano en el mundo de habla inglesa ha sido alcanzada por dos o tres biografías de Frida Kahlo, una exposición de la obra de dicha pintora, *Como agua para chocolate*, la exhibición “Aztecas”... No está mal, pero es claro que estamos en los confines de la Atlántida morena.

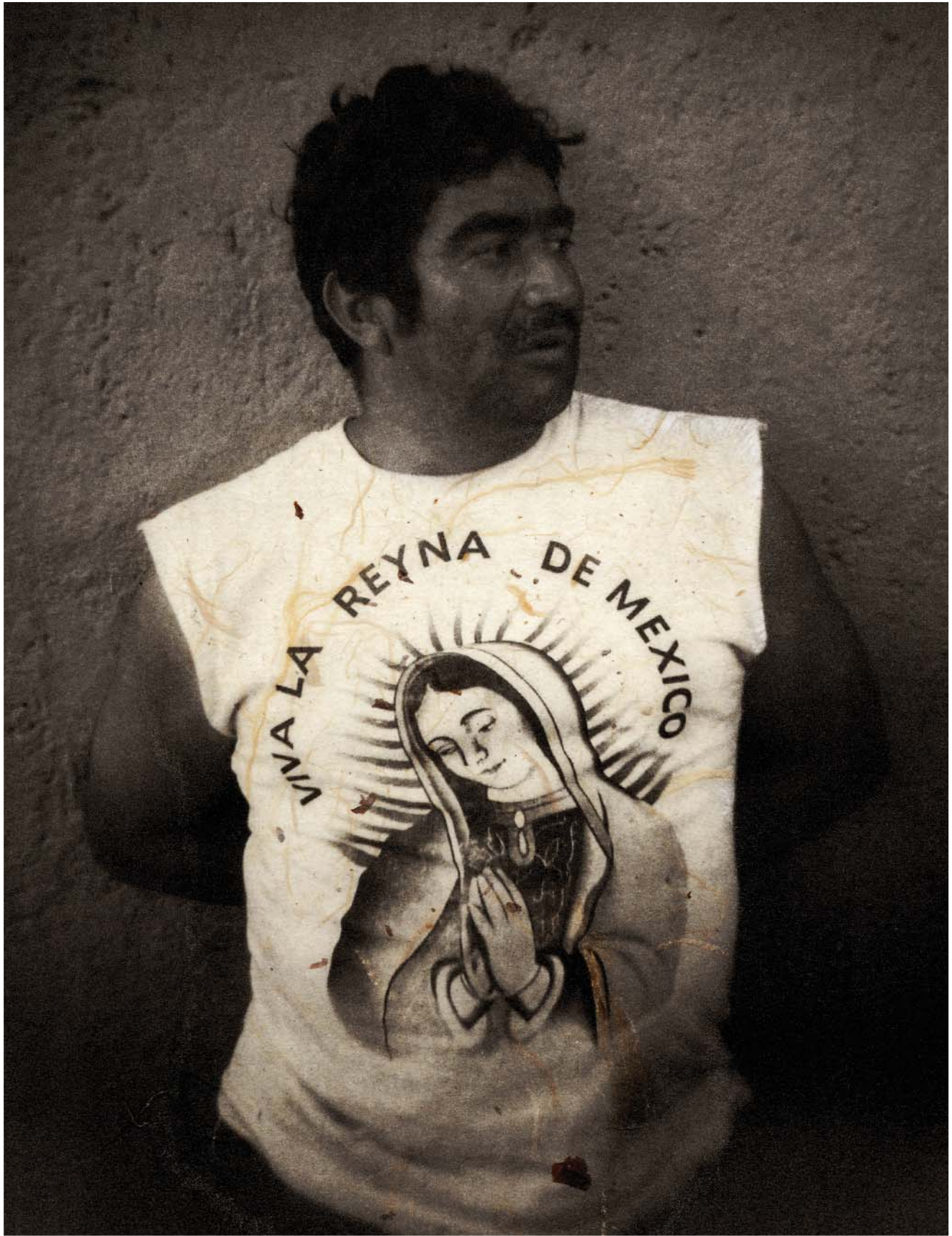
El nicho México en el mercado mundial es pequeño y se asume una suma cero: lo que el otro gana es pérdida de uno. No es de sorprender que los duelos de titanes en la inteligencia mexicana planetaria —por decir, Enrique Krauze vs. Fuentes—, dirimidos en inglés, han sido también un “quítate que ahí te voy”, a México yo lo vendo.

En el mundo de las universidades, donde México tiene su lugar también, lo que por México se entiende se acerca mucho a ese producto público, pero tiene sus bemoles, y existen lo que podríamos denominar *bestseller* académicos. Curiosamente, siempre andan cerca de la cárcel que vengo describiendo. Así los libros más leídos sobre México en los salones de clases de universidades estadounidenses son las traducciones de Paz y Fuentes, por supuesto; García Canclini, Elena Poniatowska o el crítico mexicano poco conocido en México, Ilan Stavans, que a la angustia de ser mexicano le suma ahora la de ser latino y judío, y eso vende. Krauze, con excelentes traducciones y correcciones de la editorial neoyorkina Knopf, se va abriendo paso con sus biografías del poder —que en inglés es un libro mucho más medurado y cuidado que en español—. Monsiváis no acaba de entrar de lleno porque su prosa en inglés pierde mucho de la densidad de intraducibles referencias a la erudición y a los arrabales mexicanos. De cualquier manera, esto tiene poco que ver con lo que se consume masivamente como México, que no ha variado mucho de lo que se entendía por México en 1920. Sienta usted las vibraciones del mercado de artesanías de la Ciudadela, y eso es. Poco más.

work of intellectuals like Paz, Fuentes or Castañeda. What I wish to highlight is that in order to fill the “Mexico” niche in the world demand for such a thing, they provide just what the customer wants to hear. Demographic, cultural, political or economic changes do not affect the product. It is affected only by changes on an equal scale in the United States. And if in U.S. political and academic culture identity, race, sex and the media become an issue, then the demand for the idea of “Mexico,” without freeing that notion from its jail, is adjusted to the sour notes of what is required. In this manner, variations on the same themes come into play, not as much Rivera but more Frida Kahlo, not as much emphasis on *mestizos* but more on indigenous struggle, a return to the *raza*, not so much revolutionary violence but more from drug lords or identitary guerrillas. New “Mexican” voices enter to sell Mexico merchandise in English. For example, over the past few years the highest visibility of the Mexican in the English-speaking world has been attained by two or three biographies of Frida Kahlo, an exhibit of the work of said painter, *Like Water for Chocolate*, the “Aztec” show... Not bad, but clearly we are still within the confines of the brown Atlantis.

The Mexico niche in the world market is small and assumes a zero sum: one person’s gain is another’s loss. It shouldn’t be surprising that the duels between titans in planetary Mexican intelligentsia—to give an example, Enrique Krauze vs. Fuentes—, expressed in English, have also acted as a “get outta my way or else,” to I’m the One Selling Mexico.

In the world of universities, where Mexico also has its place, what is understood by Mexico approaches this public product greatly, but it has its flat notes, and what we might call academic bestsellers exist. Curiously enough, they always go close to the cage I’ve been describing. Thus the most read books about Mexico in the classrooms of U.S. universities are translations of Paz and Fuentes, of course; García Canclini, Elena Poniatowska or that Mexican critic little known in Mexico, Ilan Stavans, who must now add to the anguish of being Mexican that of being a Latino and a Jew, which sells; Krauze, with excellent translations and corrections from the New York publishing house Knopf, has been parting waves with his biographies of power—in English, a much more measured and groomed book than in Spanish—. Monsiváis hasn’t been able to fully enter because his prose in English loses a lot due to the density of untranslatable references to Mexican erudition and slums. At any rate, this has little to do with what is massively consumed as Mexico, which hasn’t varied much from what was understood to be Mexico in 1920. Just feel the vibrations from the handcraft market in the Ciudadela, and you’ll get the picture. Not much else.



# La realidad como metáfora



## Byron Brauchli

Leticia Mora

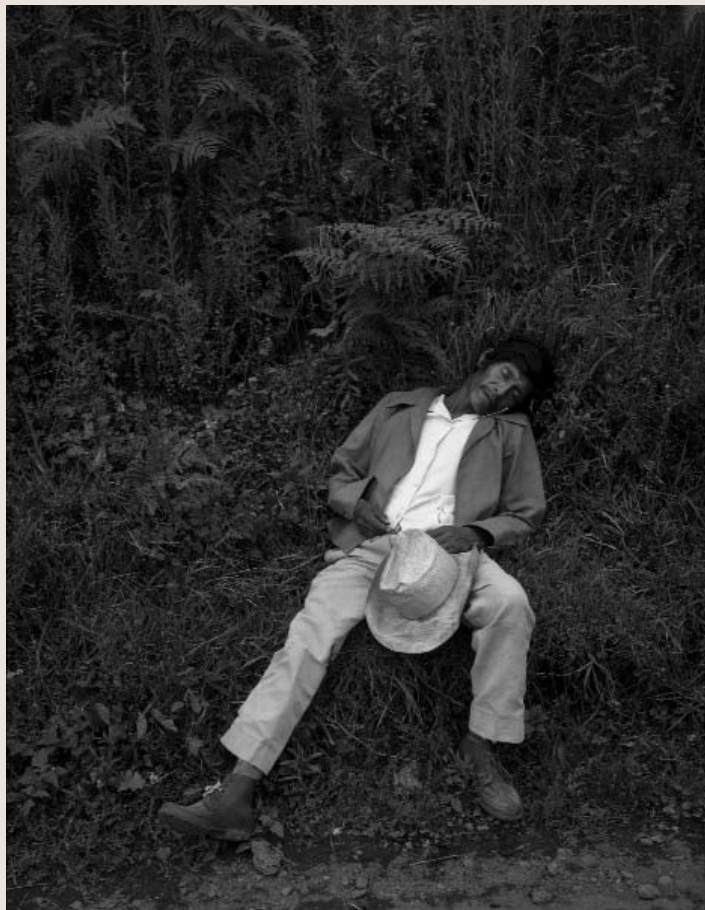
El fotógrafo Robert Adams solía decir que la habilidad del artista reside en su capacidad para reconciliar diversos elementos a su disposición y convocar una nueva mirada sobre ellos. Cuando uno observa las fotografías de Byron Brauchli, fotógrafo suizo-norteamericano residente en México, esta observación de Adams es evidente. Varios discursos entretienen la obra de Byron y se cuestionan entre sí. La mirada se detiene, en un primer momento, en la belleza de la fotografía de arte en cuyo formato se presenta; luego, llama la atención la yuxtaposición de una fuerte temática agudizada por la toma directa (*straight* versus montaje u otro tipo de manipulación) junto a técnicas asociadas con la corriente pictórica de la fotografía de finales del siglo XIX y principios del siglo XX, como el platino y el heliogra-

bado que suavizan la imagen. Es esta contradictoria combinación de elementos lo que convierte a la fotografía de Byron en una meditación visual sobre los límites en que se mueve la práctica fotográfica hoy día.

Si bien es cierto que las tomas directas en las que se finca la fotografía de Byron nos permiten identificar sujetos fácilmente reconocibles en la realidad a nuestro alrededor: las entrañas de un perro, un espan-tapájaros, un cochino descabezado, una bicicleta, un hombre dormido a la orilla de un camino; su sentido o significación no es inmediato y nos invitan a crear narrativas que las expliquen. Los títulos ahondan en la referencialidad, sobre todo espacial: Cuetzalán, Ciudad Juárez, Nogales, etc. A veces, por los títulos se intuye el tiempo de la toma,



pero nada nos dicen de las circunstancias en que fueron tomadas: ¿el hombre de *El sueño* está borracho? ¿Por qué el título de *Perro guadalupano*? ¿*Misa de bicis*? ¿Qué hace un espantapájaros en un deshuesadero como en *Espantapájaros yonke*? A este primer choque que cancela la inmediatez y referencialidad inherente al género fotográfico se suma el asombro ante la incongruencia de la refinada sofisticación técnica que utiliza el fotógrafo para la presentación formal de temas grotescos, peligrosos o rayando en lo documental como los peregrinajes guadalupanos. Así, si “la transparencia” de la instantánea se adivina manipulable por la práctica artesanal de las técnicas conocidas actualmente como alternas (al uso de la plata gelatina clásica) que requieren de un control impecable de los medios de trabajo en un proceso de fraguado arduo y lento de la imagen, la objetividad documental es atravesada por la técnica paradójicamente anacrónica del platino y el heliogravado y la belleza de la impresión de arte en relación con los contenidos de las imágenes; se dramatiza este efecto de romper con las convenciones fotográficas cuando el fotógrafo realiza unas tomas con una cámara de juguete que distorsiona juguetonamente el objeto fotografiado. Estas observaciones no apuntan a una meditación tan sólo formal sobre la fotografía, sino que son ellas mismas un espacio para la reflexión de la experiencia moderna. Como tales, son metáforas provocadoras de una serie de asociaciones que obligan a abandonar la concentración formal como un fin en sí mismo. Estas imágenes violentas nos obligan a interpretarlas en el diálogo que el fotogra-

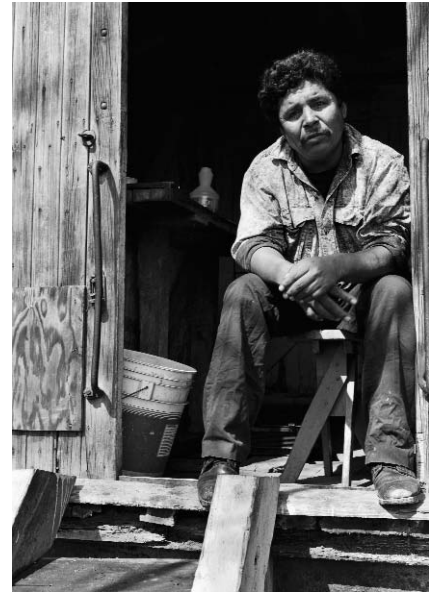


fo las ha colocado por medio de las alusiones referenciales dadas en los títulos, a la vez que inserta un aspecto lúdico en el uso de cámaras de juguete, que distorsionan el objeto fotografiado, y refleja la importancia histórica de retomar esos viejos procesos en nuestro mundo moderno.

La elección no puede ser casual, sino política: rechazo al consumo y a la tecnología, *ironic use of alternative process* para criticar la sintaxis visual compleja, la descontextualización.

La fotografía de Byron se convierte así en una metáfora provocadora de una serie de asociaciones que interrogan los límites de la práctica fotográfica en tres puntos importantes: la meditación formal sobre su sujeto, la referencialidad a la ilusión meramente representacional que acompaña al género fotográfico y, por último, resulta paradójicamente anacrónica la yuxtaposición de técnicas asociadas con la corriente pictórica de la fotografía de finales del siglo XIX y principios del siglo XX, como los procesos alternos de platino y heliogravado, posiciones que interrogan los límites de la práctica fotográfica.

La práctica artesanal de los procesos alternos rompe la inmediatez de la instantaneidad fotográfica, pues el proceso de desarrollo es arduo y lento. La yuxtaposición de estos elementos dramatiza el efecto de inmovilidad cuestionando el aspecto documental (transparente) y de referencialidad inmediata asociada a la fotografía en un mundo en constante cambio.



## FOTOGRAFÍAS:

**Página 26:** Abaja, derecha: *Brisas del mar*  
Viva la Reyna de México

**Página 27:** *Bici, perro y cruz*, El Carmen, Puebla

**Página 28:** *Espantapájaros yonke*, Ciudad Juárez  
**Página 31:** *Misa de bicis*, Ciudad de México

**Página 32:** *Cartel político*

**Página 29:** Arriba, izquierda: *Peregrino*, Huamantla, Puebla  
Arriba, derecha: *Ferrocarrilero*, Nuevo Laredo  
**Página 33:** *Ironwood sculpture*, Nogales, Sonora  
*Perro guadalupano*



## VALLEY CONFIDENTIAL / A Conversation with Rolando Hinojosa

► MÓNICA MARÍA PARLE

You won't find Belken County, Texas in a world atlas or even a Texas road atlas. Don't contact AAA for directions, and don't bother trying to find a key map of its flagship town, Klail City. This province exists in a fictional space, but its spirit lies very much in Texas' Rio Grande Valley and in the mind of fans and its creator, Rolando Hinojosa.

Hinojosa spent his youth in Mercedes, Texas, a small town in the Valley, where he saw the ins-and-outs of a town enriched by its geographical location along the US/Mexico Border. That bilingual, bicultural world springs into vivid, bustling color on the pages of his numerous novels set in the fictional town of Klail City. Beginning with the first novel in the series, *Estampas del valle*, Hinojosa is unafraid to tackle the conflicts his inhabitants face in harrowing world-scale situations, like *The Useless Servants*, where he charts one character's experiences in the Korean War. Nor does he ignore the more private, homefront battles, as in the case of *Becky and Her Friends*, or instances in which the community confronts local violence, as in his mystery novels featuring *Rafe Buenrostro*, *Partners in Crime* and *Ask a Policeman*. But even these distinctions are too easy; his novels brim with the sense that each community member is a player on a larger stage, and they return each time more complex in novel after novel, scene after scene. Throughout, Hinojosa's fiction allows the reader to be exposed to myriad voices and situations by bridging a wide-range of forms: from epistolary to dialogue to collage.

His latest, *We Happy Few*, revisits Belken's fertile fictional landscape, this time depicting a university in the midst of

change as its much-respected president battles a terminal illness. As in his previous efforts, Hinojosa isn't content to force the reader to stand outside the windows watching his characters from afar; instead, he brings us into classrooms, offices, and board meetings, allowing us access to the public—and often private—conversations and the constant swirling rumors that beset the university.

This atmosphere is familiar to Hinojosa, who has spent a significant portion of his life in academia. Born into a family of teachers, Hinojosa has taught for many years at the University of Texas at Austin, where he is the Ellen Clayton Garwood Professor of Creative Writing. He is also the author of a collection of poetry about his experiences in the Korean War, *Korean Love Songs*. Hinojosa has won numerous awards for his work, including the coveted 1976 Casa de las Américas prize. American literature has been indelibly influenced by his work.

Recently, I had the opportunity to exchange some emails with Hinojosa about his fiction and his influences.



**Mónica María Parle:** You're careful to note in *We Happy Few* that all the characters, the town, and even the university are fictional. Do you get asked to comment on the reality of the series?

**Rolando Hinojosa:** Yes, I'm often asked to comment on the reality of the characters. Readers, students and non-students alike, tell me that what they read in the Series is something they knew, read, saw, or heard of, and so on, usually in their hometown. This has been going on since '72 when *Por esas cosas que pasan* appeared in a number of *El grito*. A student in Kingsville said the killing had happened in San Juan. I said I was writing about a killing in Mercedes and that I changed some things; the weapon for one, the motive for another, as well as the time, and the place. I explained that was the way writers work, one uses an action and brings it to life through dramatization; the old Henry James advice. When readers usually identify with a character or with an event, they set about in making connections with real characters and real places. It's neither uncommon nor infrequent when they do so.

**M. P.:** The *New York Times* compared you to several of the greats of American and world literature, specifically mentioning Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha and Marquez's Macondo. Did you have either of these authors in mind when creating Klail City or Belken County?

**R. H.:** I don't think the quote in the Times compared me to either Faulkner or Márquez; it was more of a comparison of the





use of a place to set the writing. It would be beyond flattery to have me compared to Faulkner or to anyone of that stature. The earliest influence regarding a series came from reading Benito Pérez Galdós, *Novelas españolas contemporáneas*; years later, I read Anthony Powell's series *A Dance to the Music of Time* and I'd read some Proust off and on until I got serious and began reading his work systematically. But as far as influence, almost any writer whose work I've read over and over has influenced me and given me the idea of a series. Heinrich Böll did not write a series but the focus was on World War II and the years that followed and this too constituted continuity in characterization if not in characters.

**M. P.:** I read an interview you did in 2000 (in the *Bilingual Review*) where you talk about reading the World War I poets Sassoon as you were trying to write *Korean Love Songs*. Were there any fiction writers that particularly influenced the Klail City series?

**R. H.:** The origin for *Korean Love Songs* came from reading Paul Fussell's *The Great War and Modern Memory*. He wrote of the wartime experiences of young British soldiers, mostly public school boys such as Siegfried Sassoon, and Robert Graves, and others. I didn't think that a linear novel about the Korean War would be the way to write about the war, and I decided to write it in narrative verse. It worked; by the way, a writer doesn't know what will happen after publication, and K.L.S. is an example; it was published by Justa Publications in 1978 and followed with a second printing in 1980. Each run turned out 500 copies. I published parts of it here and there and it wasn't until thirteen years later that the bilingual German-English version was published by Osnabrück University under the dual

title, *Korean Love Songs/Korea Liebes Lieder*; the translation, and it's a fine one, was done by Wolfgang Karrer. That was it, I thought, but then some ten years after that, the United States Air Force Academy published it in toto. Parts of it began appearing here and there once again and then the chairman of the English Department at the United States Military Academy requested permission to use some of the pieces in his class. As I said, one never knows what will happen to one's writing after publication.

I've mentioned two of the writers who influenced the writing of K.L.S., but there was also Isaac Rosenberg, Rupert Brooke, Wilfred Owen, and others such as Edmund Blunden. I didn't read or study them to teach a course on World War I poetry, I wanted to see what it was they did, how they did it, and since I'm not a poet, narrative verse was the way to go.

American contribution to World War I prose fiction or poetry can be regarded as nil unless one brings up the poet Joyce Kilmer but, to paraphrase Alexander Pope, "Who now reads Kilmer?"

In passing, no Mexican American literary critic knows what I did regarding meter; I used Spanish syllables although I wrote in English. I used the six and eight syllable verses, the popular eight and ten syllables as well as hepta- and endecasyllables, the learned seven and eleven syllables introduced during Spain's Golden Age by Juan Boscán, the Catalan writer.

**M. P.:** One thing that I'm drawn to in your work is that it occupies a very real, if fictional, space. This is a community: characters overlap from novel to novel and the family, romantic, and professional relationships tie all of the characters together. When



you started out, did you envision this intricate web of works? Or does each new book evolve from a past book?

**R. H.:** When I started out, I didn't want to write a linear, nineteenth century novel. I wanted to present a people as the protagonist using various narrators and points of view. The idea of a place or places came from the Valley's geography where towns are separated on an average of six miles; some are closer, others farther apart, but six is the average. This is no coincidence; the farmers reached an agreement with the railroad builders that would help them bring their produce quicker to the railroad lines. Coming from an old family, that is, the settlers who came up from various towns and cities in Mexico in the mid eighteenth century, the blood and kin relationships became part of one's life. Also, as a high school youngster, I would hitch hike all over the Valley; it was safe then, or perhaps, safer and certainly much safer than it is now.

As for intricacy, and one should include intimacy and familiarity with the place, this arose from the writing itself. I use, with one exception, old Valley names: Salinas, García, Garza, Treviño, and so on. Some readers, unfamiliar with Valley names are surprised with the use of Buenrostro and Malacara as last names; a cursory look of the Valley telephone directory will reveal those last names on both sides of the Rio Grande. Buenrostro, again by the by, doesn't mean Goodface; it means Fairchild. The Valley includes both sides of the river, and, as you may know, I use both sides. Knowing the written and the oral histories of the place, as a child, listening to stories and events of the Mexican Revolution of 1910, and the coming of the Anglos in the Twenties and life itself helped, as all relationships are a help to writers. The Valley is not a valley, it's a delta, but it was so called by those who enticed the

Anglo settlers to the area during the first and second decades of the twentieth century.

The evolution of the Series came piece by piece; I had envisioned a picaresque novel but stopped in the middle of *Klail City y sus alrededores* and went on to write what I've produced since then. The use of humor is inescapable, after all, life contains ups and downs and the comic as well as other parts of humor: wit, satire, sarcasm, cynicism, and the sardonic, too, since each presents one all manner of writing opportunities.

**M. P.:** Another "real" aspect that is continually present in your work is the concerns of class, ethics, ethnicity, and racism. All of your books seem so conscious of this, however, the meat of *We Happy Few* is based on these tensions. Do you think that the university setting draws this out? That these discussions are just beneath the skin in the university climate?

**R. H.:** Class is important, as well as color; this is universal, it isn't a property of this country. And you're right in that ethics figure and play an important in the Series. As for ethnicity and racism, to eschew or to pretend that racism doesn't exist all over the world is naive; ethnicity in a multiethnic society such as ours is likewise part of our daily living as much as is accommodation, resistance, betrayal, and loyalty, themes which are presented in prose fiction because all play a part in daily living. Their inclusion is no accident; to exclude them would constitute deliberate blindness to reality or to take a political side that wishes to erase past and present history. That's not me nor is it my experience. Faulkner, in his Nobel speech said, among other important matters, that the writer cannot afford to be fearful; I've quoted him before on this, and it bears repeating.

When someone says all writing is political, some people blanch; well, writing is political. Some write that everything is right with the world and may be paid to write in that vein, but what they write isn't the truth. It resembles some prescriptive device that seeks to present only an optimistic point of view instead of a realistic one. A realistic view presents optimism as well, but it also seeks to present reality by way of contrast in a search, and this may sound self-important, in a search for truth. Of course, it's fiction, but not the type of fiction that presents one and only one point of view.

As for *We Happy Few*, there's racism among some professors but the majority is not racist; that's the same in this country where millions of our fellow citizens are racists, but they are outnumbered by more millions who are not, otherwise life would be unbearable for all, including the racists. If everyone is a racist, then who is there to hate? All universities are formed by conservatives and liberals and middle-of-the-roaders; there's nothing new there since they play the same role away from the academy. The larger section, *The Faculty*, shows much gossip, unfounded rumors, good-natured ribbing, recognition of talent among colleagues, and dedicated professors as well as time-servers. In brief, the world in an academic setting.

To me, the University climate is no different from the rest of the world. It is populated by a more educated class, and that's a difference, but you'll find few academics who are wealthy; most worked their way to earn their undergraduate and senior graduate degrees. That this gives them, or me, a more tolerant point of view may be due not only to the high



degree of education since one's family, acquaintances, and close friends also play an important part in the make up of those of us who profess.

What may make *W H F* different is not its setting; Mary McCarthy's *Groves of Academe*, Randall Jarrell's *Pictures from an Institution*, the David Lodge novels, or earlier ones, say, Stringfellow Bahr's *Strictly Academic* do not touch on high administration to any degree or to the members of the board of directors; they may make mention of them and the appearance of students is casual; not in *W H F* where everyone plays a part and shows the changes in higher education. Added to which, mine is a shorter novel. I haven't read a campus or an academic novel in years, but the mind retains them and mine adds one more genre of prose fiction to the Series.

**M. P.:** Each of the novels reflects a bilingual consciousness; characters function between two languages and cultures. Even their manner of speaking English is influenced by Spanish in terms of pacing, syntax, and word choice. In that 1999 interview you talk about switching between Spanish and English when you got stuck in both *Korean Love Songs* and *Useless Servants*. When you sit down to work on a project, do you make a conscious decision about what language you'll use?

**R. H.:** It is only natural common sense to reflect a bilingual and bicultural consciousness in the Series; Faulkner and Flannery O'Connor are conscious, of their culture as is Henry Roth when he presents us with his Jewish characters as does Philip Roth later on. One writes about what one knows is an old piece of advice. What's important is to know what you know. I'm not conscious in terms of syntax or word choice although I am regarding pacing; without it, novels get out of whack. That I balance a bilingual consciousness is inescapable. I lived the first seventeen years of my life in the Valley; I returned to it after college and then left it again to pursue graduate work after some nine years of working down there. But it was those seventeen years that did it. Some dispute the primacy of the early years and they're welcome to their opinion since what they express is an opinion, not a universal fact. My life down there, its history, its political, and the society's hierarchical structures formed part of my thinking; my leaving it, my subsequent education, and meeting all manner of people also helped. I didn't recognize it at the time, but I was ahead of the game since I come from a family of readers and teachers.

Regarding being stuck when you mention *Korean Love Songs*, that occurred when a Mexican friend heard part of the work in English and suggested I translate it into Spanish. I gave it a try, but it didn't work. My military life was not lived in Spanish and the same would go for *Servants* although I had and have no intention of doing a translation. I could rewrite it as a linear novel and it would be a different because of the form and structure I would have to use.

I don't believe I make a conscious decision regarding which language to use. To do so would perhaps, perhaps, force me to work from an outline or a detailed form. I can't do this. The writing may come from a phrase in one language or the other, an overheard word may trigger a piece of writing, but writing a novel is something else. Or it is with me, at any rate. I remember reading George Meredith's *The Egoist* and by the time I read the scholar's introduction and a third of the book, I stopped; not



out of boredom, you understand, but because Becky Escobar appeared and *Los amigos de Becky* was the result. From an air-head in *Mi querido Rafa/Dear Rafe* to a self-actualized person, to use that current term, was a lucky stroke for me. She was another person now; independent, mature, tired of her dull life and living for others and not for herself or for her children. She must have known for a long time that Ira her husband was a nothing, and she decided—and decisions of any kind are difficult for most people—she made the most important decision in her life. She realized she had some thirty-five more years on earth, and she was not going to spend them with him.

It came to me in Spanish and worked some seven months on it when I hit a wall; I couldn't go on. I rested up and started an English version and wrote much of it one summer in Iraq where I was setting up an American literature curriculum at Mosul University. Finished it, sent it to Nick Kanellos and he accepted it. After some months, I picked up the Spanish version and I told Nick of my plans to start it again. He said he'd look at it when I finished it.

How does one explain how writing works? How I chose one language, switched, and then returned to the original version? It's not confusing to me, but it is a mystery. And, both versions are a long way from Meredith's *Egoist*; it just happened that as I was reading it, Becky appeared from somewhere.

From your reading, you know that I did something new again; no narrator, no main character other than Becky who speaks in one version but not in the other, and the decision that multiple narrators, in first person, would carry the book.

## BACK SEAT

► TANYA HUNTINGTON

### MONTE ALBÁN

Those of us born in the age  
of television have forgotten  
how to speak of trees.  
Like this one I am lying under  
now instead of touring bas-reliefs  
of dancers carved in stone.

I wish I knew its name.  
Its many crooked branches  
drawn against the sky above me  
and its oval leaves pointed  
at the tiny, pale white blossoms  
—far too many for December.

Louder now, the sound of bees  
collecting pollen from the flowers  
has reminded me that I can never know  
this tree as well as they.

### BACK SEAT

Thanks to this poem,  
now I will not forget  
how you sat in the back seat  
of a red Nissan Platina  
and out of nowhere asked me  
whether sharks have tongues or not.

I didn't know the answer.

Then you passed me  
your binoculars so I could see  
the scribbled chalk marks

made by stars at 80 miles per hour  
against the blackness of  
a sky not marred by city lights.

And you told me that all written verse  
aspires to be a paradox:  
like singing without music.

Such is this song for you.



## LANCELOT

▶ RODOLFO MATA

### JUSTICIA SALOMÓNICA

No es justo que sea así  
que del sol bajen las cosas a mis ojos  
que el parpadear de la pantalla  
me saque de la noche  
que la mañana llegue sin pedir permiso  
a ponerme una sombra  
como si nada

Como si fuera justo mentir que así sea  
que del sol bajen las cosas a mis ojos  
ya no sé  
ya no sé si me importa,  
si  
vaya  
es justo que exista o no el silencio absoluto  
de la justicia  
que Salomón parta en dos  
el bebé que no ha llegado  
que nos tenga así  
mirando las pantallas  
como si nada

Porque no sé  
caramba, Salomón,  
si a ti te partieron  
cuando llegaste  
si has fingido que no tienes sombra  
o como un querubín  
andas con la cabeza entre alas  
y el cuerpo vagando  
en su propio infierno

### INVENTARIO

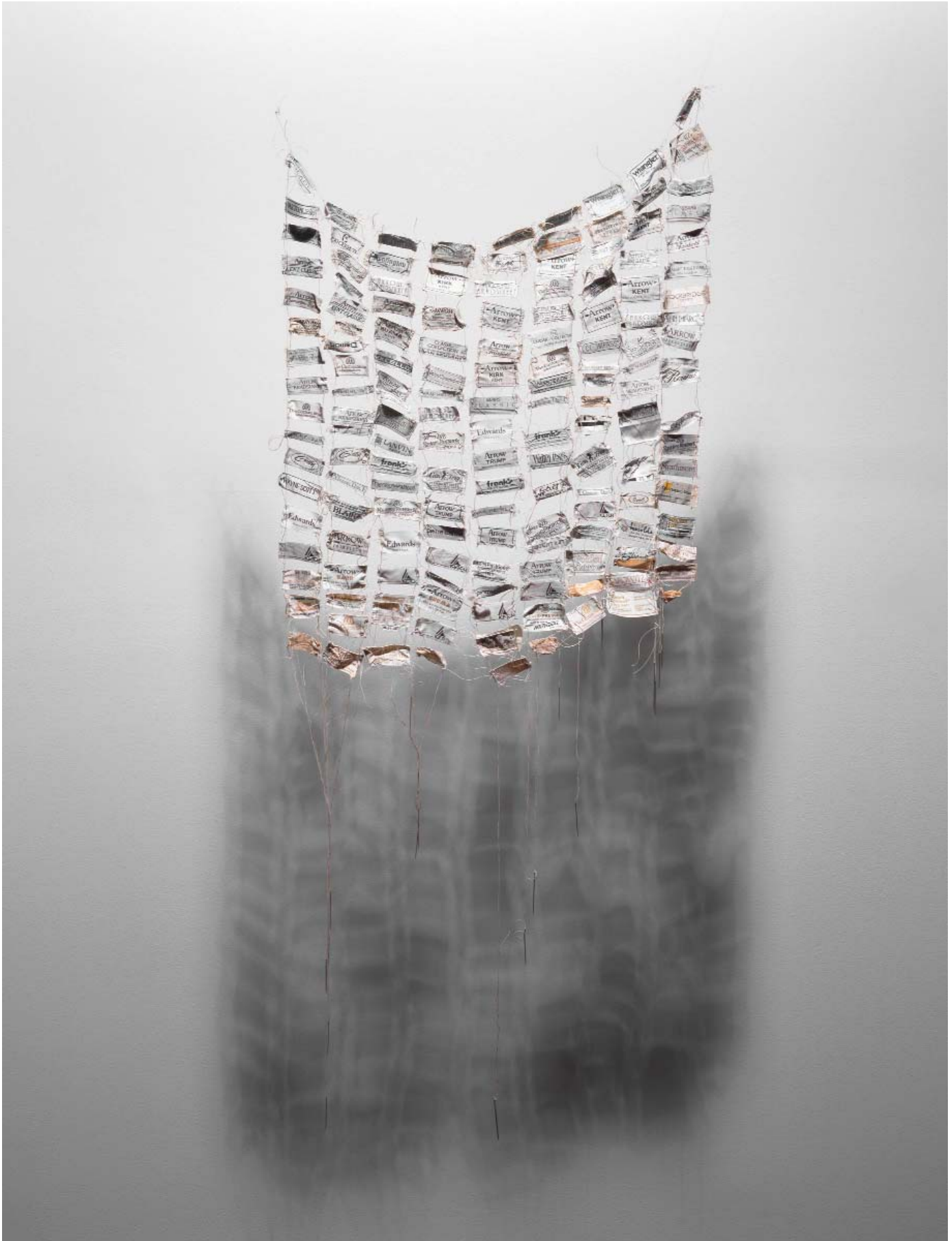
Escucha  
date el tiempo de escuchar  
el sonido del aire  
entre tus dientes

el placer de recordar  
el tiempo  
sin tiempo  
en que la fruta madura  
cae  
el agua corre  
y no resta nada  
nada que afecte  
el ruido del aire  
entre tus dientes  
nada que mine  
ese sol  
esa tibieza de invierno  
en que el viento  
acaricia  
tu regreso  
y se anida tenue  
entre tus dientes

### LANCELOT

Siete años de edad.  
Parado frente al estanque  
la vara que sujeto  
cruza la superficie  
y se quebranta

Entre las hojas hurgo  
y por un instante sé  
que algo me entrega  
la dama del lago  
algo que mudo y roto  
me enlaza a ella



*Fleece*, 1997. Shirt labels, thread, needles. Courtesy of the artist and Dunn and Brown Contemporary

Photography Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts of Houston

## Joseph Havel ▶ A Decade of Sculpture

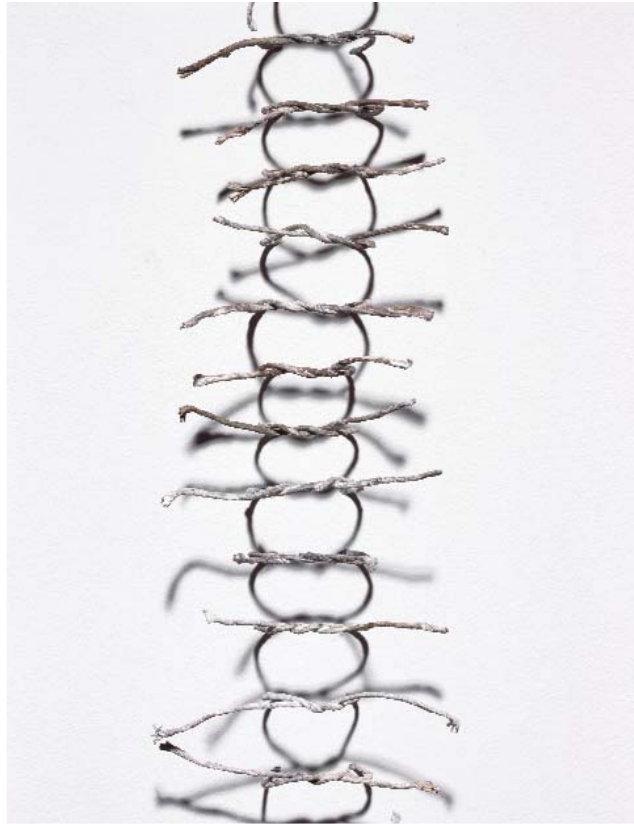


*Moon*, 1998. Fabric shirt collars and monofilament. (Collection of Suzanne M. Manns)

Joseph Havel sees art in everyday items that most of us rarely give a second thought. In his hands, shirts, bed sheets, and drapes mutate from the ordinary into something otherworldly. The museum is pleased to present this survey of Havel's work at this juncture in his critically acclaimed career.

Havel uses common materials in his art—white dress shirts, curtains, tablecloths—to reach out to a broader audience. He deftly addresses the technical and artistic challenge of translating limp fabric into flamboyant bronze sculptures and delicate constructions that quietly suggest movement. In a process that the artist has described as uncovering “the activity of still objects,” the meaning associated with the items is both amplified and changed, a psychological shift that challenges viewers to reassess what they know and what they feel.

**Peter C. Marzio**



Top:  
*Spine*, 1996. Fabric shirt collars and monofilament (Courtesy of Devin Borden Hiram Butler Gallery)  
*Sea*, 1996. Bronze. Courtesy of the artist

Bottom:  
*February*, 1996. Bronze with patina. Collection of Dr. Carolyn Farb  
*Three*, 1996. Bronze with patina. Collection of Beverley Kopp



*Aura*, 1995. Shirt collar, needle, thread, buttons. Claire and Doug Ankenman

## PLAZA LUIS CABRERA

► ÓSCAR DE PABLO

### PLAZA LUIS CABRERA

Desde su antigua noche, todas las plantas  
duermen: vela sólo el sopor,  
cocodrilo sonámbulo bajo el flujo del cobre,  
su pesadez transcurre,  
nutre la oscura tierra con su pulso de aceite:  
frescor, noche pulverizada en chispas  
diminutas.

Pero las cosas todas que aquí somos,  
las cosas y sus ecos, somos también  
la plaza: este silencio nuevo hecho de agua,  
los niños empapados, la tubería salobre y sus  
follajes  
internos, el sexo como un rostro en las ventanas,  
la anciana que se pudre  
con sus medias de nylon desvaídas

y la fuente,  
donde yace un relámpago tirado.

### MARCHA

Dejen juntarse las respiraciones, dejen  
que se oscurezca el cielo detrás de la parvada,  
oigan cómo el latir del pavimento, a sucesión de  
pasos  
en este solo término, en esta una misma grieta  
menor  
de la calle Madero,  
se la lleva consigo, hace fluir la grieta con los  
pasos  
bajo el cielo en común de pasos anegado,  
hasta llegar al centro. Los pasos y los pasos: ellos  
buscan su tacto en el tambor del polvo.

He fijado el oído en un punto concreto,  
en un solo resquicio debajo del torrente  
y lo siento avanzar: nada tiene de absurdo.  
Dejen andar la calle revuelta entre los pasos,  
déjenla entrar al Zócalo cantando.

### MATERIALISMO ERÓTICO

Aunque apenas ahora lo comprenda, vivir  
fue siempre esto: la horizontalidad terráquea del  
abrazo,  
el tacto innumerable, la caricia,  
el olor de la albahaca y del tiempo concentrado  
en su cuello,  
y ese goce irresuelto que no acaba. Ante el cálido  
roce  
de esa piel, de esa mano, nadie podrá hablar mal  
de la materia. Nadie  
podrá decir, mirándola a los ojos, que la belleza  
física  
es superflua. Nadie podrá decir  
que fuera de estas sábanas  
exista Dios o nada  
parecido.



## DIEZ MANERAS DE ENMENDAR LA PLANA

► PABLO BOULLOSA

1. “Los amorosos callan”, dice Jaime Sabines. ¿Por qué los odiosos no harán lo mismo?
2. “Dios es amor”, y por lo tanto es muy difícil que se te aparezca.
3. “La poesía no busca adeptos, sino amantes”, dijo García Lorca.  
Más que la poesía, son los poetas los que buscan amantes. Pero las amantes prefieren a los adeptos, que son los que no buscan, que son los que encuentran.
4. Desde un país tropical, Homero Aridjis escribe: “El hambre – es la hembra – del hombre”.  
Desde las estepas rusas, replican: “Lo mejor – es la mujer – del mujik”.
5. Cuando García Márquez dice “escribo para que me quieran más mis amigos”, consigue también que lo odien más sus enemigos.
6. “La ciudad ha perdido su Beatriz”, según un poema de Eduardo Lizalde.  
Pero le queda todavía su calle Dante.
7. El jueves leí este verso de Tomás Segovia: “Todo hombre sin mujer es un Crusoe”.  
Y con mujer un Viernes.
8. Amado Nervo: “Si tú me dices ‘ven’, lo dejo todo.” Incluso a ti.
9. Dice Rilke que “lo que finalmente nos salva es no tener abrigo”. Del frío, sí; pero no del calor.
10. Lennon: “Make peace, not war.”  
Rumsfeld: “Make war, not peace.”  
Osama: “Make war, there’s not such thing as the other one.”  
Fidel: “Fake war, peace is boring.”  
Iran: “We don’t want war, but peace wears out so nuclearly fast.”  
Israeli Airforce: “If you want peace on Earth, make war on heaven. But if you want war on Earth, then make peace on Heaven.”  
The Pope: “War as in Warsaw? Requestat in pace.”  
Evo Morales: “Forget about war and peace: make coca.”  
Microsoft: “Make money, not war nor peace.”  
Steve Jobs: “Make war as cool as peace and I’ll sell it.”  
Tolstoi: “Read both.”



# Perla Krauze ▶ P E R S P E C T I V A S

SPECIAL THANKS TO SONJA ROESCH GALLERY



# ELIZABETH

► H. G. CARRILLO

In the twenty-eighth week of his third life, Raúl Crisantez remembers that at one time he was the prettiest man he knew. Guapisimo, una negra hermosa with sea-colored eyes once told him as she rubbed liniment into his muscles. That was in Havana. Knowing where and when, and in which life what is and what was what, is important to him.

His boss' boss, Ms. Ruiz-Perkins, reminds him their meeting will only take a half-hour. She has a list of only thirty points, and they won't have to go through this again for another twenty-seven weeks.

She crimps her lips to look down and smiles when she looks back up at him.

Then you'll be hired on permanently, she reminds him, and checks something on the clipboard. Eligible for a raise, she smiles, not realizing she is recapping their first conversation, one they had only three months ago.

You understand, don't you? and she asks if anything she's said so far is confusing to him. And he says, Not too much.

Memory is a great concern of hers. Though she seems to have forgotten that-still rehabilitating at the time, seeing a physical therapist four times a week-he had managed to get some of the highest test scores and secure the best recommendations of any aide she had hired. She had said so herself. Though she had also said, You're a man and we don't get many men and I'm not sure if this is a fit. But she seems to have forgotten that too now.

The teachers love you, she says as she checks off something. Though she is the only one that he has seen looking at his chest and arms. He has caught her looking at his ass in a mirror once when he was bending over to pick up one of the children. And is certain she has seen him catch her.

The children, they love you too, she checks and checks again, and smiles and says, You're even good with the worst of the Mannys.

Which? he thinks.

There are four.

González, Suárez, Virgil, and Torres. A different intonation for each, all he has to do is say, Manny ven acá, and the right boy comes.

Suárez is all anger and hard shoes; tired or challenged, he'll throw himself red-faced on the floor. Torres, needs to be watched, will eat anything, vomits a lot and seems to enjoy it. González always shares, plays well, though shakes and shrieks and can only be calmed, only feels safe sitting in Crisantez's lap during thunderstorms; he occasionally wets his mat during nap time. Virgil stammers and wants to be Elizabeth.

Rosana Orosco likes to be in control of the tea set. She pours and asks around the table, Who will you be? The other girls know that she will always be María-Teresa, and Manny Virgil will say, I-I will be...I will be...I will be Elizabeth. At tea, he likes to wear a scarf on his head.

Ms. Ruiz-Perkins tells Crisantez that she appreciates his candor and honesty, and the patience that he displays. He is unsure of what she means, but thinks that it has something to do with the scar that cross-

es his face, bright red, from the left side of his forehead to the right side of his chin.

How did you get that? the Mannys Suárez and Torres-boys who play rough, like to tunnel under tables, desks and chairs; will hit, bite, scratch and throw things if allowed-will ask together nearly every day. Did it hurt?

Not too much, he tells them, he doesn't really remember. But says somewhere between his second and third lives he fell out of the sky cradling his welding gun in his arms like it was a baby.

The boys like to hear about the buildings he worked on. They beam when Crisantez rewards with a pat on the back of the head when every time that they ask he tells them it's a very smart question, Where? One along Collins, another, the one he fell from on Brickell Avenue, right in the middle of downtown Miami, right in the middle of the afternoon where everyone could see. Why? the boys always want to know. Now that's Why? and Why? is Why? Very different than Where? Where? is Where? he tells them, Why?...well, that is always something else. So he always gives a different reason.

For two egg and olive sandwiches and a thermos full of sopa de chorizo, he told them when they asked this morning, You know I can't do without lunch. It was falling, he says. And the boys laugh and tell him he's loco.

Crisantez has seen them each try on his limp, not in fun unless one catches the other one doing it. Just doing to do it for a while. They forget and ask again the next day or an hour later, try on his limp for a while and forget again.

He always says the same thing never knowing which parts are true and which parts were told to him. He remembers the building, and that there had been waves of heat coming off of the asphalt, but beyond that it's not one of the days that he has wanted back necessarily. Not one he has missed he's certain because he remembers where it happened, can point to the ordinals on a street map.

He asks his boss' boss to spell candor, and he writes it down in the black notebook he keeps in his breast pocket to look up later. Ms. Ruiz-Perkins crimps her lips any time he takes it out. Her nylons sigh as she unfolds and re-crosses her legs. She twists her wedding ring on her finger. He knows she knows that sometimes it is all the memory that he has.

Worn thin at the end of the day, he sometimes needs to check the map he has drawn in the back of the Moleskine that will lead him back to his brother-in-law's house where he has his own bathroom and kitchenette over the garage. Phone numbers, including his sister's new one, though he rarely called it, are in along the front inside flap, though he has drawn a map in case he ever needs to find her or when he wants to think of her in her new life. Next to it is the diagram that he drew for the arrangement of tables and chairs for craft time. And next to it, the one for snacks and lunch, and then the one that lines them all up against the far wall.

The time that Monica Umpiere is to have her medicine and how much, which parent is to pick up David de Consuelos on what day are things that present themselves as immediate, urgent as breathing. Names of books, movies, streets, however, come and go as easily or rest under the surface as mutely as a dull headache. Avis is the woman who serves breakfasts at the diner he likes. The state of Florida covers sixty-five thousand seven hundred and fifty-eight square miles; eleven thousand seven hundred and sixty one of them are water. Its flower is the orange blossom, its song Swanee River. Yet some facts in this new life can be slippery and unavailable and he'll find himself reciting his phone-or social security number to keep the rest of the world anchored.

Prompt, positive and orderly. A very good organizer of both time and person. Traits Ms. Ruiz-Perkins says she finds very necessary in the job, but she finds unusual in a man. She checks twice before writing something down. Though, she chastises, a couple of times I've passed through and seen you rough-housing with the kids before nap time, and that gets them riled up.

Though she doesn't indicate if this is good or bad, she crimps and uncrosses and re-crosses while he writes this down. I'm certain that you'll remember that, she says, You're a marvelously inventive man, all the teachers say so.

But he always takes notes. It's what he does.

If he's been to a game, he'll take down the vibration and hum of the seats, the sizzle in the air, and before naptime instead of reading to them as the other aides have, he tells the story of Ewaldo: The Ball Who Found Himself in Another Universe. They sometimes sit next to a horse he's found in one of the paintings in the museum. He asks them to lie on their mats, close their eyes, feel where it's smooth and where it curves, stroke its mane, and ride it over the green hill in the background, under the sun, over hill and hill and hill and another. They never ask why, they just go. He'll ask them to jump on the back of a red ant, and help him build his mound a grain of sand at a time. He tells them to be choosy; Yellow and pink ones make for nice outside walls; Green, brown and gray and blue ones would make the inside cool and smooth and easy in the hot summer days. They all nod and agree it's like living on the back of a turtle under a leaf, like he says.

Sometimes after the rains, he will take them outside to show them the little fishes that swim in the puddles left behind. He'll tear pages from the center of the notebook and fold them into boats.

The boys tend to want to know if he has a boat. The girls ask if he knows how to sail, if he goes out on boats. And he says, Not too much.

But they always press him to tell about the time he was a fish. They ask, Where? and wait for him to point three fingers downward to make the pendulous curve in the state, and, with his other hand, point to a space below it where they all imagine the plump emerald-colored swells, the kind he has told them that remind you of jelly candies but are brackish and burn. When? they ask.

And he tells them that between his first and second lives he spent twenty-three days on a raft. They ask about goldfish, and he tells them about schools of remora glittering under his belly, green and blue and pink and yellow. They ask about angelfish like the ones in the aquarium in the classroom, and he tells them about the sailfish-all blue and golden, green and glimmer-that spun out of the water and flipped him in. And about the gallons and gallons of seawater he swallowed, until he was gray and gill, and he felt pink and raw inside when the Coast Guard pulled him out like a tuna.

Were you scared? they ask and he tells them, Not too much.

And, Not too much, is what he answers when Ms. Ruiz-Perkins asks if he has any questions at this point. It hangs in the air between them for a while. She crimps and re-crosses. And he wishes he were sleek, delicate and refined, and felt less like a foot that's come out after months in a boot.

And it's her perfume as she shifts and checks and crimps and re-crosses that makes him want to tell her that in his first life he had been a boxer. Boxeador De Medalla De Oro. Treinta y Nada. Nada, nada, nada. A reporter for Prensa Latina called him Unbeatable.

He writes unbeatable in the notebook, she looks up smiles and looks down and checks again.

He had ridden on the shoulders of very fine men, he wants to tell her, and been a welcome visitor in the bedrooms of their wives and girlfriends. But, he also wants to tell her, You can only do that so long before you fall out of that sky too. Wants to show her something about him in this life that shows her he is just as pretty as she. But he doesn't because he knows it's not on her list, and he knows it wouldn't necessarily make her happy. It belongs to another life.

She checks and checks and checks, pressing hard. The flourish of her hand is official, accurate. Her point sharp sharp sharp, Now Now Now, it insists in the air, as she shakes her bracelets down onto her wrist again and pulls her hair away from her eyes with her free hand, there are to be no mistakes. She reads over what she has written, crimps and smiles and asks, Next year?

Where do you see yourself a year from now? she says as if he hadn't heard. In low voice, almost a whisper, sweet and slow, fat big words, as she leans in towards him in the same way that she would had he taken a ball or a truck or wouldn't sit when he was told or simply wouldn't give her something he had that she wanted.

Her blouse falls open a little and her necklace leans forward and teeters as she places her hand on her wrist and uses herself as an example. Where would she be, what would she do. She lists the people she would want to be in contact with and the car that she would like to be driving. There is a bit of powder between her breasts and the bra that she is wearing is pink.

And it is not that he doesn't understand the question, no need for him to see how it fits on her. He listens, but it's her hand on his wrist-not too long, but long enough-it's the question, like the uncrossing and re-crossing of her legs, the crimping of her lips that's clear and coils something sad in him for her that makes him hope that in this life she is the love of someone's life, and in her next life someone is the love of hers, and in the lives that follow she is able to remember each of the previous as if they were seconds ago.

He doesn't pull back. He lets her.

It's not that he doesn't understand, it's just something he's never felt, so he lets her and lets her. The same way that he looks away when Manny Torres wants to sneak a little paste, or Manny González will come sit in his lap on a day there isn't a cloud in the sky, and he will let Manny Suárez scream and throw his legs for a while before he goes over to soothe him; the same way-after the room is set for naptime and the teachers have gone to lunch-Manny Virgil will get the white tulle skirt from the dress-up box and will bring Swan Lake to be put into the stereo, and in the lulling of the orchestra, twirl around the mats of sleeping children, stop and reach both his arms for what Crisantez thinks looks like anything possible before he begins again.

## GEISHA HOUSE / CASA DE GEISHAS (SELECCIÓN)

► ANA MARÍA SHUA

*Translated to English by Rhonda Dahl Buchanan*

### EL RECLUTAMIENTO

Las primeras mujeres se reclutan aparentemente al azar. Sin embargo, una vez reunidas, se observa una cierta configuración en el conjunto, una organización que, enfatizada, podría convertirse en un estilo. Ahora la madama busca a las mujeres que faltan y que ya no son cualquiera sino únicamente las que encajan en los espacios que las otras delimitan, y a esta altura ya es posible distinguir qué tipo de burdel se está gestando y hasta qué tipo de clientela podría atraer. Como un libro de cuentos o de poemas, a veces incluso una novela.

### RECRUITMENT

*Initially, the women appear to be recruited at random; however, once assembled, a certain configuration in the group is noticeable, an organization, which if developed, could become a style. Now Madam searches for the missing women, and not just any will do, but only those who fill in the gaps left by the others, and at this stage it's now possible to determine what kind of brothel is in the works and even what type of clientele it might attract. Like a book of stories or poems, perhaps even a novel.*

### SIMULACRO

Claro que no es una verdadera Casa y las geishas no son exactamente japonesas; en épocas de crisis se las ve sin kimono trabajando en el puerto y si no se llaman Jade o Flor de Loto, tampoco Mónica o Vanessa son sus nombres verdaderos. A qué escandalizarse entonces de que ni siquiera sean mujeres las que en la supuesta Casa simulan el placer y a veces el amor (pero por más dinero), mientras cumplan con las reglamentaciones sanitarias. A qué escandalizarse de que ni siquiera sean travestís, mientras paguen regularmente sus impuestos, de que ni siquiera tengan ombligo mientras a los clientes no les incomode esa ausencia un poco brutal en sus vientres tan lisos, tan inhumanamente lisos.

### SIMULACRUM

*Of course it's not a real House and the geishas aren't exactly Japanese; when times are tough they can be seen working the docks without kimonos, and if they don't go by Jade or Lotus Flower, neither are Monica or Vanessa their real names. So why be shocked that those who feign pleasure in the supposed House, and sometimes love (but for more money), may not even be women, as long as they comply with health regulations. Why be shocked that they may not even be transvestites, as long as they pay their taxes, or that they may not even have navels, as long as their clients aren't bothered by that somewhat cruel absence on their smooth bellies, so inhumanly smooth.*



Illustration by Lucy Mistratov

### EN EL PATIO

En verano se baila en el patio, con faroles y lepidópteros nocturnos. La danza es lenta, las parejas se abrazan, los cuerpos se buscan y se unen, se adhieren los vientres y los pechos, la música es densa, el aire es viscoso, para despegarlos basta con sumergirlos un ratito en agua tibia.

### ON THE PATIO

*In summertime, there is dancing on the patio, with lanterns and nocturnal moths. Slowdancing, the partners embrace, bodies seeking bodies, interlocking, bellies clinging to bellies and chests to chests. The music is heavy, the air thick. To separate them, a quick dip in lukewarm water will suffice.*

### CARICIA PERFECTA

No hay caricia más perfecta que el leve roce de una mano de ocho dedos, afirman aquellos que en lugar de elegir a una mujer, optan por entrar solos y desnudos al Cuarto de las Arañas.

### SUBLIME CARESS

*There is no caress more sublime than the slight brush of a hand with eight fingers, declare those who instead of choosing a woman, opt to enter alone and naked into the Room of the Spiders.*

#### MIRONES

A los mirones se les hace creer que miran sin ser vistos. Se les dice que la pared transparente junto a la que se ubican simula ser, del otro lado, un espejo. En realidad, sólo un vidrio corriente los separa de los felices exhibicionistas. En estas combinaciones se destaca la madama, hábil en reducir costos.

#### VOYEURS

The voyeurs are led to believe they watch without being seen. They're told the transparent wall in front of them appears, on the other side, to be a mirror. Actually, just a pane of glass separates them from the jubilant exhibitionists. Madam, adept at cutting costs, excels at these combinations.

#### ATADURAS

Muchos prefieren que se los ate y la calidad de las ataduras varía, como es natural, de acuerdo con el peculio de la gozosa víctima: desde lazos de seda hasta lazos de sangre. Y es que en el fondo nada ata tanto como la responsabilidad de una familia (ciertamente el más caro de los placeres-sufrimientos).

#### BONDAGE

Many prefer to be bound, and naturally, the kind of bondage varies depending on the resources of the elated victim: from silk ties to blood ties. After all, when you get down to it, nothing's more binding than family responsibility—certainly the most expensive of all painful pleasures.

#### SÁDICOS

Para aquellos que se complacen en el sufrimiento o en la humillación del prójimo, se propone una combinación de estímulos placenteros de los que no se excluyen ciertos programas de televisión.

#### SADISTS

For those who take pleasure in the suffering or humiliation of others, a combination of gratifying stimulations are suggested, of which certain TV shows are not excluded.

#### ABARATANDO COSTOS

Algunos masoquistas disfrutan con la idea de que otros asistan a su humillación. Los que pueden hacerlo contratan dos o más pupilas. Pero para los verdaderamente ricos está prevista la participación de cinco mil extras y el alquiler del estadio. (Se rumorea que los espectadores son sádicos, que se les cobra la entrada.)

#### CUTTING COSTS

Some masochists relish the thought that others witness their humiliation. Those who have the means hire two or more girls. But for those truly rich, a stadium may be rented with five thousand extras. (It's rumored the spectators are sadists who are charged admission.)

#### SOFISTICACIÓN

Para los más sofisticados (pero admitamos que se trata de una perversión muy cara), la madama está en condiciones de contratar los servicios de su propia esposa.

#### SOPHISTICATION

For the most sophisticated (but let's admit that it's a very expensive perversion), Madam is willing to provide the services of the client's own wife.

#### LOS PULCROS SON ASÍ

Los pulcros usan muchas prendas de vestir y se las quitan lentamente. Al cabo del primer año se han sacado ya el sombrero y los calcetines, que acomodan con parsimonia sobre una silla. Cuando por fin están desnudos, miran a su pareja con cierta decepción y algunos exigen que se la cambien por una mujer más joven. Como todos los demás, pagan por hora.

#### PRISSIES

Prissies wear a lot of clothes and take them off slowly. By the end of the first year, they've already removed hats and socks, which they carefully place on a chair. When finally naked, they look at their partner with some disappointment and a few demand she be exchanged for a younger woman. Like all the rest, they pay by the hour.

#### LA QUE NO ESTÁ

Ninguna tiene tanto éxito como La Que No Está. Aunque todavía es joven, muchos años de práctica consciente la han perfeccionado en el sutilísimo arte de la ausencia. Los que preguntan por ella terminan por conformarse con otra cualquiera, a la que toman distraídos, tratando de imaginar que tienen entre sus brazos a la mejor, a la única, a La Que No Está.

#### THE GIRL WHO IS NOT HERE

None is more successful than The Girl Who Is Not Here. Although still young, many years of dedicated practice have perfected her in the very subtle art of absence. Those who request her end up settling for another, whom they possess with indifference, trying to imagine that they hold in their arms the best, the only, The Girl Who Is Not Here.

#### LAS MUJERES SE PINTAN

Las mujeres se pintan antes de la noche. Se pintan los ojos, la nariz, los brazos, el hueco poplíteo, los dedos de los pies. Se pintan con maquillajes importados, con témperas, con lápices de fibra. En el alba, ya no están. A lo largo de la noche y de los hombres, se van borrando.

#### THE PAINTED LADIES

The ladies paint themselves before night falls. They paint their eyes, nose, arms, toes, and the crease behind their knees. They paint themselves with imported makeup, acrylics, and pencils and brushes. By dawn, they have vanished. With each passing hour and each man, they fade away slowly but surely.

• From *Quick Fixes: A Collection of Sudden Fiction*. White Pine Press, forthcoming. 2006 NEA Fellow.

# C O L A B O R A D O R E S

**José Antonio Aguilar Rivera**, mexicano, obtuvo en 1996 su doctorado en ciencia política por la Universidad de Chicago; es profesor investigador del Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económica (CIDE) desde 1995. Autor de —entre otros títulos— *La sombra de Ulises*, *El fin de la raza cósmica* y, en colaboración con Rafael Rojas, *El republicanismo en Hispanoamérica. Ensayos de historia intelectual y política* (FCE, 2002).

**Pablo Boullosa** (México, 1963). Es autor de *40 y Safo* (2003). En 2005 publicó sus versiones de los *Poemas de amor de Marichiko* de Kenneth Rexroth en editorial Verdehalago. Es escritor y conductor de los programas culturales *La dichosa palabra* y *Domingo 7*, ambos del Canal 22.

**Byron Brauchli**, grabador y fotógrafo suizo norteamericano, se caracteriza por el uso de procesos fotográficos alternos y por sus estudios visuales México-Estados Unidos. Su obra se ha exhibido en galerías como *The Galveston Arts Center*, *The Houston Center for Photography*, *The Austin Museum of Art*, *El Museo de Antropología* de Xalapa, Veracruz y en el *Houston Fotofest 2006* (University of Houston-Clear Lake). Su trabajo se encuentra en colecciones como *The Center for Creative Photography*, *The Houston Museum of Fine Arts*, *The Photographic Collection at the Harry Ransom Center* de la Universidad de Texas en Austin y *The Wittliff Collection of Southwestern and Mexican Photography*.

**H. G. Carrillo** is a Ph.D candidate and instructor in the Department of English at Cornell University, where he received his MFA. He is Director of Creative Writing for *Vamos al Sur*, a Spanish and cultural summer program in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Carrillo is the author of *Loosing my Espanish* (Pantheon 2004), and his work has appeared in *Glimmer Train*, *Kenyon Review*, *Iowa Review*, *Bomb*, *Turnrow* and other publications. Awarded a Sage Fellowship, a Provost's Fellowship, a Newberry Library Research Grant, and the 2001 *Glimmer Train* Fiction Open Prize, he was the 2002 Alan Collins Scholar for Fiction, the recipient of both the 2001 and 2003 Arthur Lynn Andrews Prizes for Best Fiction, a 2003 short listing for the O. Henry Prize, a 2003 Constance Saltonstall Foundation grant to an Individual Artist and the 2004 Iowa Award. He divides his time between Ithaca, New York and San Juan, Puerto Rico.

**Joseph Havel**, a Minneapolis native, has a BFA in Studio Arts from the University of Minnesota and an MFA from Penn State University. His sculptures and drawings have been exhibited extensively including recent exhibitions at Galerie Gabrielle Maubrie in Paris, Dietch Projects in New York, the Soros Center for Contemporary Art in Kiev, the Huntington Beach Art Center in California, and Devin Borden Hiram Butler Gallery in Houston. He has received numerous awards including a national Endowment for the Arts Artist Fellowship in 1987, a Tiffany Fellowship in 1995, and a 1998 Purchase Award from the French Ministry of Culture. His work is included in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Dallas Museum of Art, and the Contemporary Museum, Honolulu.

**Rolando Hinojosa**, the Ellen Clayton Garwood Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Texas at Austin, is the author of the *Klail City Death Trip* Series of novels, which examine relations between Mexican Americans and Anglo Americans in the fictional Rio Grande Valley town, Klail City, Texas. He is the recipient of numerous literary awards, including the most prestigious prize in Latin American fiction, *Case de las Américas*, and the National Award for Chicano Literature in the United States. Several of his novels have been translated into German.

**T. G. Huntington**. Artista y escritora que vive en la ciudad de México, donde actualmente investiga su tesis doctoral sobre el autor de la novela de la Revolución Mexicana, Martín Luis Guzmán. Ha publicado traducciones y artículos en diversos medios, entre los cuales se encuentran *Letras Libres* y *La Jornada*.

**Graciela Iturbide** (México, 1942). Su obra fotográfica se ha expuesto en el Centro Pompidou, en el Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, en la Galería Juan Martín en la Ciudad de México, en el Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey, entre muchos otros. Ha recibido varios reconocimientos entre los que destacan el premio Eugene Smith (1968), el Gran Premio del Mes de la fotografía en París (1988), el Gran Premio Internacional en Hokkaido, Japón (1990) y el premio Rencontres Photographiques de la ciudad de Arles, Francia (1991). En 1996 presentó una gran retrospectiva, recogida en el libro *Graciela Iturbide: Forma y memoria*.

**Perla Krauze** (México, 1953) works and lives in Mexico City. She has been the recipient of various awards and grants like the FONCA Fellowship, the Residency, FONCA, Banff Centre for the Arts, Canada and the Dale Djerassi Fellowship among others. Her work is in many international collections.

**Rodolfo Mata** (1960). Poeta y ensayista. Es autor de "Mediciones" en *Ventana de visperas* (uv, 1989); *Parajes y paralajes* (Editorial Aldus, 1999). Es investigador en el Centro de Estudios Literarios de la UNAM y traductor de escritores brasileños como Rubem Fonseca, Milton Hatoum, Haroldo de Campos, Dalton Trevisan y Paulo Leminski. Es coautor de la antología *Horizonte de poesía mexicana* (<http://biblioweb.dgsca.unam.mx/tablada/> y [http://www.arts-history.mx/horizonte/home\\_1.html](http://www.arts-history.mx/horizonte/home_1.html)).

**Jay Mitsche Sepulveda** is an unpublished writer of fiction and non-fiction. He has completed a novel, *The Long Death of A Rilke Reader*, and *The Reluctant Americans*, a book on Hispanic/Latinos themes, among others. He has also written many short stories. He holds a Master's in Spanish from New York University and has an ABD (all but dissertation) in Spanish from the Graduate School at The City University of New York. He is currently searching for literary representation. He lives in Brooklyn with his Gruff, his brown Spaniel, and Olympia, his old typewriter. He was born in the Dominican Republic.

**Leticia Mora**. Ensayista e investigadora de la Universidad Veracruzana. Es coeditora de *Hacia el paisaje del mezcal* (Aldus, 2001) y tiene en prensa *Fronteras* (Universidad Veracruzana, UNAM y Universidad de Arizona). Ha escrito sobre literatura mexicana y, particularmente, sobre la relación entre la literatura y la imagen, en especial la fotografía.

**Oscar de Pablo** (Ciudad de México, 1979). Publicó en 2000 el poemario *La otra mitad del mundo*. En 2003 obtuvo la beca de la Fundación para las Letras Mexicanas en el área de poesía. En 2004 recibió el Premio Nacional de Poesía Joven Elías Nandino por el poema extenso *Los endemoniados*.

**José Luis Rivas** (Tuxpan, 1950). Su vasta obra ha sido recogida en su conjunto por el FCE en dos volúmenes: *Raz de marea* (1994 y 2000) y *Bajo un cálido norte* (en prensa). Es autor de *Un navío un amor* (Era, 2004). Ha traducido la obra poética completa de T. S. Eliot y de Arthur Rimbaud, *Omeros* de Derek Walcott, *La violación de Lucrecia* de William Shakespeare y la poesía erótica de John Donne (Aldus, 2005). Recibió los premios Carlos Pellicer, Ramón López Velarde, Aguascalientes y el Xavier Villaurrutia. Pertenece al Sistema Nacional de Creadores.

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