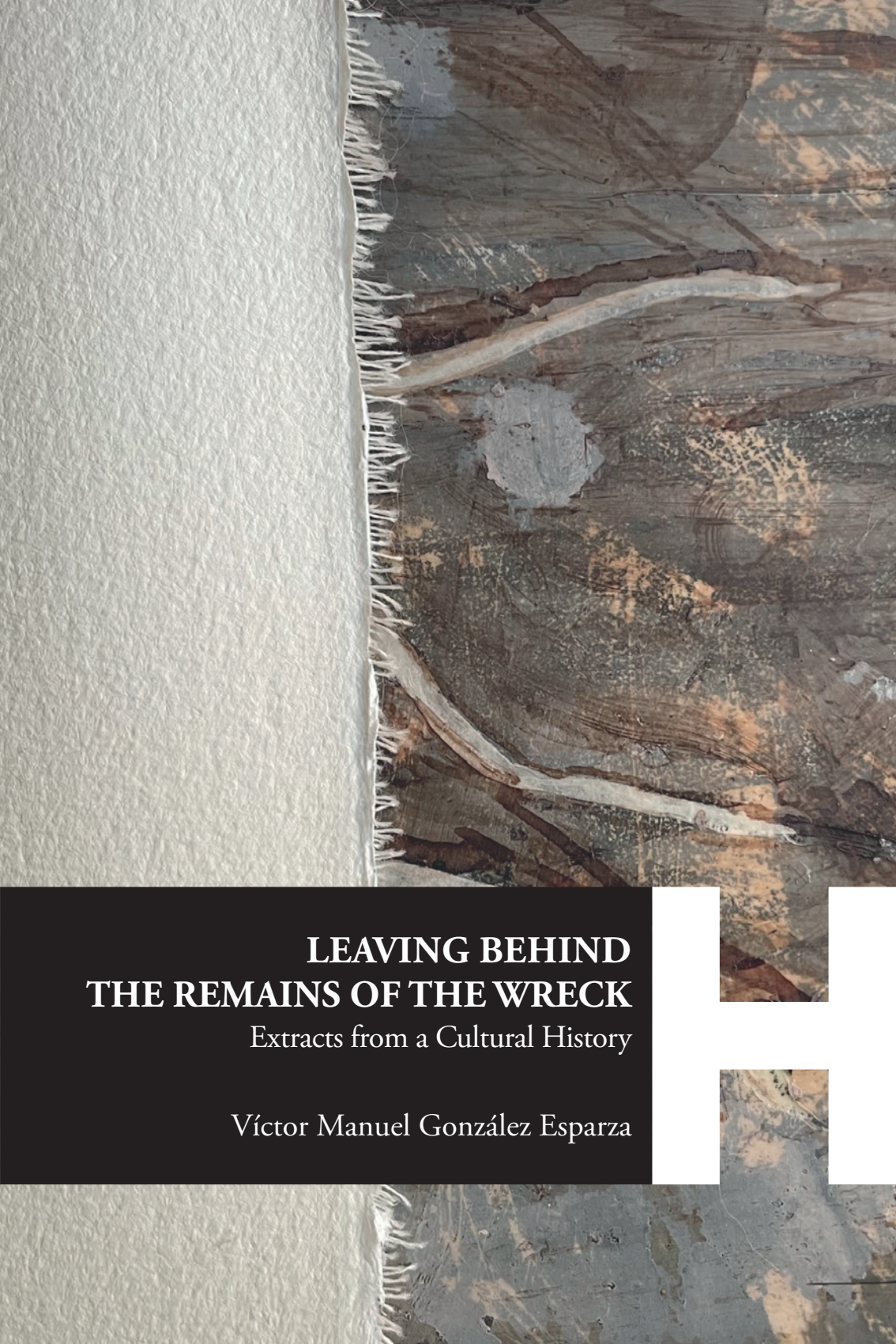

LEAVING BEHIND THE REMAINS OF THE WRECK

Extracts from a Cultural History

Víctor Manuel González Esparza

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UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA
DE AGUASCALIENTES

LEAVING BEHIND THE REMAINS OF THE WRECK
EXTRACTS FROM A CULTURAL HISTORY

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Introduction

The yesterday's world has finished. It finished forever. If we [...] have a chance to be saved is by understanding this obvious truth faster and better than others, by leaving behind the remains of the wreck. Lucien Febvre, *Combats pour l'histoire*

On April 21, 1923, Aby Warburg gave a lecture to the doctors and patients of the Kreuzlingen psychiatric clinic about the origin of the myth and ritual of the snake among the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico, whom he had visited eighteen years before. The conference was part of a self-healing program that aimed to show the cure of the schizophrenic condition by the patient's will. However, Warburg went beyond the initial objective: through the study of the serpent –a quintessential symbol of terror– he explained the needs of expression that the human being has based in the sensory experience of fear in a struggle to overcome the demonic forces of nature that exist inside and outside the human soul. At the same time, in a sort of warning about the contemporary world and knowledge, he suggested

the threat that technological changes signified for human rationality. His lecture ended with a criticism of modernity: "In its effort to spiritualize the connection between the human being and the surrounding world, mythic and symbolic thought makes of the space an area of contemplation or thinking that electricity makes disappear through a fleeting connection".[1]In this line of thinking, the transformations of mythical and symbolic thinking due to one of the representative elements of modernity gave rise to one of the contradictions of the 20th century: technological advances as a threat to the auratic world.

The end of the auratic era analyzed by Walter Benjamin, given the possibilities of technical reproduction of artworks, was a warning about the desacralization of art in the modern world and a continuity of Warburg's thinking, at the same time that it opened a field of analysis of the relationship between high culture and mass culture.[2] This line of thought about the "great divide," with enlightened bases, between fine arts and crafts, besides helping us to understand the contributions of the historical vanguardism, allows us to enter the world of art after postmodernity,[3] not from the perspective of a rejection of modernity but through the recovery of historical and artistic contexts and atmospheres. Hence the importance of the cultural history of art, in particular, the thinking about the transformations in the very concept of art based on the separation of fine arts and crafts.[4]

The essays gathered here are the result of a journey I started at Tulane University thanks to the excellent lectures by Mary Elizabeth Smith, one of the historians who taught me to love and appreciate, from the United States, the history of Mexican art. Moreover, I would not have met Master Smith if it were not for the wise advice of another great American historian: Richard Greenleaf, to whom I owe, additionally, the opportunity to study at that great university, which has one of the most outstanding libraries on Latin America in the world.

In Mexico, the teachings of Aurelio de los Reyes, the comments and the contributions by himself and his students in the

postdoctoral seminar he teaches at the Institute of Aesthetic Research in UNAM –indeed, an oasis in the Mexican academy due to the quality and solidarity of the participants–, allowed me to specify the relationship between these and the vanguards in Mexico through the history of the exhibition of popular arts. I, therefore, express my greatest gratitude to Aurelio and his "adorers."

The first essay is a consideration about cultural history and its possibilities of development in the history schools of the regions, as a follow-up of an essay about the way the regional histories can link to new forms of historiographic activities from the social and cultural history.[5]

The "smiling little faces" to which I alluded to in the second essay come from an ethnic group that flourished in the classic Veracruz –probably the Mayan-Mixe branch– of which we do not know the name and language, and whose singular work –the faces– remains as a unique legacy and, therefore, clearly identifiable with our pre-Hispanic past. Initially, this essay appeared in my previous book on art history: *Arte e identidades en México* [Art and Identities in Mexico], however, I have decided to recover it (as the one dedicated to the Codex Osuna) because it seems to me that the perspective taken about this topic shows precisely the complex relationship between the manifestations now recognized by us for their aesthetic and their historical contexts.

Although the Codex Osuna, examined in the third chapter, graphically expresses a historical conjuncture –the transition between *encomienda* and *repartimiento* in the 16th century– it also alludes to a particular form of claim by the displaced indigenous nobility as well as to the assimilation of the European artistic ways, thanks to which the colonial codices included the most impressive and original images. Similarly as the previous chapter, the historical contexts are crucial to recognize this type of manifestations –however, it is the works themselves that offer us the clues.

The tension between the popular arts and the fine arts, mainly since the "invention of art," has hardly been studied in the Mexican case. The "great divide" would have its expression in the separation

between the academy and the crafts or the so-called "minor arts," so it would be the vanguards, in its search for the "primitive" and the different traditions, which would encourage the effort to incorporate the popular arts to the new artistic manifestations. In the Mexican case, it would be Roberto Montenegro along with Jorge Enciso and Dr. Atl who, through the first exhibition of popular arts in September 1921, would carry out this aesthetic renovation process. Essays 3 and 4 are an expression of this analysis between the vanguards and the popular arts.

In the same way, I revisit the work of José Guadalupe Posada. It is a renewed essay since I initially analyzed the subject based on the discovery or invention of a tradition (which appeared in my book cited above), "La Invención de Posada," [The Invention of Posada] within a discovery process of the popular arts by who introduced a new conception about the art in the country. However, this essay establishes the link between Posada and the vanguards to conclude that, beyond the academy and the opinion about his not disputed genius, his work represents the first quintessential vanguardist work in the country.

In chapter 7, I also include two amusements: an essay about William Jackson's photography and an essay on art and eroticism, since both are rapprochements —from a cultural point of view— to one of the central themes of modern art: the representation and, above all, the history of gender since the transformation of the women roles.

Finally, the cultural history is also the possibility to ponder over the cultural policies in use. The last section is an analysis about the Survey on Cultural Habits and Practices conducted in Mexico in 2010, which offered us for the first time a national perspective, state by state, to begin to chart a new cultural mapcharted.

The metaphor of the journey started a few years ago makes me think that my intellectual experience is more a project under construction, on the road, than conclusive findings. I hope the reader enjoys this journey as much as myself have enjoyed it.

In an era of global art in which new codes are introduced to analyze polycentric and polyphonic proposals, recent transformations in art and its historiography allow us to revisit history, specifically art history, based on new maps that let us rediscover our past. In this exercise, we have learned that the history of art is fundamentally contextual, that based on the atmospheres the sense of different artistic proposals and practices can be recovered, and with that a reintegration not of the absolute sacredness of the art that Warburg spoke of, but fragments in a changing world where you have to leave behind the wreck.

Previously Published Essays

Leaving Behind the Remains of the Wreck

"Dejando los restos del naufragio." Fragmentos para una historia cultural. [Leaving Behind the Remains of the Wreck. Extracts for a cultural history.] In: *Argumentos* (Mexico), Vol. 26, No.72, Mexico, May/August 2013. Print version ISSN 0187-5795.

A previous version of this section "Acerca del legado de Marc Bloch y Lucien Febvre" [About the legacy of Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre] appeared in *Horizonte Histórico*, Revista Semestral de los Estudiantes de la Licenciatura en Historia, UAA, Year 2, No. 5, January-June 2012, pp. 40-44.

The Smiling Little Faces or the Pixies of Ecstasy

González Esparza, Víctor Manuel. "Las caritas sonrientes o los duendecillos del éxtasis" [The Smiling Little Faces or the Pixies of Ecstasy] in *Arte e identidades en México*, Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes, 1999.

The Codex Osuna or The Governor's Painting

González Esparza, Víctor Manuel. "Las caritas sonrientes o los duendecillos del éxtasis" [The Smiling Little Faces or the Pixies of Ecstasy] in *Arte e identidades en México*, Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes, 1999.

Exhibition of Popular Art in Mexico, 1921

González Esparza, Víctor Manuel. "La Exposición de Arte Popular o del surgimiento de la vanguardia, México, 1921," [Exhibition of Popular Arts or the emergence of the vanguardism, Mexico, 1921], in *Historias*, Revista de la Dirección de Estudios Históricos del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, No. 90, Jan-Apr, Mexico, 2015.

In the Way of A New Cultural Map?

Razón y palabra, First Digital Magazine in Ibero-America Specialized in Communication, ISSN 1605-4806 in: http://www.razonypalabra.org.mx/N/N88/Varia/26_Gonzalez_V88.pdf

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However, it is also necessary that the historian —and perhaps it is here where he can make his most useful contribution to the sciences of man— observe, with the same care within the chronological development, how the society as a whole received the cultural models coming from some privileged sectors. For in history, every culture is transmitted, and during that transmission, it merges with the internal movement that leads it to renew itself.

Georges Duby, *La historia cultural* [The Cultural History] (1969)[1]

When Georges Duby wrote about cultural history, he anticipated one of the most attractive tendencies in the face of the proposals crisis of the "*Annales* School." From then on, with different rhythms in its reception, cultural history acquired a relatively rapid academic status in European and American universities, in conjunction with the rise of cultural studies that have strengthened the analysis of "modernity and its disappointments." The "cultural turn" brought with it one of the

most important questionings to the "interpretative literalness" –that particular malady of the positivist historians–, which allowed the expansion of the territories of history, bringing it back closer to the other human sciences.

The cultural history has allowed a rebirth of the spirit of change that fed precisely to the founders of the *Annales*. It is therefore pertinent, I think, retrieving in the first place the legacy of those who made of the criticism of literality not only a theoretical or academic position but a form of commitment and resistance in the face of the crisis of the intellect. In particular, I will refer to the attitudes of Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre, who were vital to understanding the new directions in the light of this crisis. After that I will resume an itinerary of the history of art and culture that opened new ways to understand the contemporary world and, finally, I will get into the historiography of the history of gender, one of the most innovative areas of the new cultural history. In my opinion, these two areas –genre and art history– are essential for another history. All this leads to the purpose of creating an agenda with the ability to contribute to the renewal of studies of history in the country, especially from the regions, given the fragmentation due to the local history or Mexican microhistory.

About the Legacy of Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre[2]

[...] the world [...] belongs to those who love the new things [...].
Marc Bloch, *L'Étrange défaite*

The Scorned Historiography

One of the central themes in the revision of Mexican history is the disdain for the instrumentation of new and different histories and, even more, a change resistance in the ways of making history.

Although the central points of the French "historiographic revolution" or Italian microhistory have been divulged,[3] little of that has influenced in the way of making history in Mexico. A history based on the analysis (preferably comparative), an interdisciplinary nature or the dialogue between the times has had few followers in the country, in such a way that the new historiography seems to be just another discourse that can hardly materialize in the current historical studies.

Maybe it is possible to explain that by two characteristics in the ways of making history: a) by the resistance to change in the academic institutions (why risk it if academic success occurs traditionally); and b) by the fragmentation caused by microhistory, that is, by the implications of "*matria* history" in the curricula and study programs of the history careers in the country. Although Don Luis González took advantage of the new microhistory, his idea that everything is history tipped the balance towards the reconstruction of the local issues without an effectively innovative spirit; additionally, Don Luis's call in the sense that the "matria" history was a kind of revenge against centralism, privileged any type of local or regional history against the possibility of building a new history, perhaps because the novelty of Mexican microhistory was restricted only to the size of the scale and not included the methods that expanded the field of the historian in the 20th century.[4]

In this way, the spirit of change proposed by Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch and that would transform much of the 20th-century historiography (in addition to producing the best history books of this period), has hardly been continued by the new generations of Mexican historians. Therefore, it is pertinent to remember what these two historians faced and what prompted them to create a magazine that would house the new history; books that fight in favor of it and that show that there are other ways of writing it; projects and research institutions that would continue with the task and, above all, promote an attitude about the vital history close to life, which is often forgotten by the "antiquarians."

Criticism of Antiquarians

When a group of historians went with Lucien Febvre the day after Paul Valéry's book *Glimpses of the Modern World* (1931) was published to complain and propose that he responded on behalf of the corporation, Febvre replied that he would not do it merely because he "agreed" with Valéry.[5]

For Valéry, as for several intellectuals of the time, the world was at a crossroads, in an inextricable historical and political drama, and the history wrote little helped to understand it. Valéry argued against a nationalist and ideologized past; hence his famous phrase: "History is the most dangerous product that the chemistry of the intellect has elaborated." Valéry continues saying about this history: "It makes a dream, intoxicates the people, generates in them false memories, exaggerates their reflections, preserves their old wounds, torments them when are in repose, leads them to deliriums of greatness or persecution, and makes the nations bitter, arrogant, unbearable and futile".[6]

The emergence of the most relevant transformation in the historiography of the 20th century was possible, precisely, for the dissatisfaction after World War I, where history provided few answers in the middle of the social remnants of the time, but the failure of reason against Nazism exacerbated that.

Febvre and Bloch, despite their differences, maintained in unison a combative attitude against the "idols" of the historian: a) a history far removed from the problems of the present (hence the criticism of antiquarians); b) a historical speculation wrapped in great theories; c) a local history deprived of ambition to understand broader realities; d) a history attached to "what really happened" without reflection or analysis; e) the traditional political history of heroes and villains or immersed in a teleology that ends up justifying everything.

Marc Bloch, for example, until the end of his days maintained a concern for the way in which the past was reconstructed and transmitted, and for the role that a poor history or an ideological

past can play in decision-making; hence his permanent analysis of the "collective memory," taking up the concept of his friend Maurice Halbwachs. His explanation of the French "strange defeat" against the Germans was that it represented not only a military but also an intellectual defeat in the sense that the French leaders were not prepared to face new realities. Therefore, the need to write a new history that would also permeate the new generations; a history that would prevent the past from "weighing too much on the shoulders of men," as Febvre wrote,[7] a history close to life.

In a little-known discussion paper, possibly from after 1940, Marc Bloch refers to "the accusation so often made against history [...]. History, it is said, is a bad advisor." He mentions that it is an accusation that neither Paul Valéry nor Nietzsche invented so he cites to prove it to the old historian Volney, in a 1799 reading: "The more I analyze the influences that history exerts on the actions and opinions of men, the more I am convinced that this is one of the most fertile sources of his prejudices and his errors." Moreover, in the same text, Bloch makes a reflection on the collective memory and its way of transmitting: "The memory, thus understood, constitutes a vital element in all group mentality. [...] to know well a collectivity it is important, first of all, to find the image again, true or false, that has formed itself from its past. Like individual memories, Bloch continues, collective memory is often quite short. Above all, when it is created in theory to preserve, it constitutes a marvelous instrument of oblivion and distortions [...] because to the recording errors of the brain it adds the errors of transmission, almost fatally inherent in the exchange between human thoughts."[8]

In this way, Bloch, like Febvre, gives the reason to the old accusation (that history is a bad counselor), but also tries to explain it through the construction and transmission of collective memory and, even more, of how this, "elusive" as it is, has harmful effects on the communities themselves. For a badly remembered and badly told history can cause "the strange defeat" of the people. Hence, in *L'Étrange défaite*, a "testimony written in 1940" which was his first title, wrote Marc Bloch: "The Germans triumph was basically

an intellectual victory, and perhaps this is the most serious fact",[9] because the history in which the French resistance was inspired was not a living history that accepted the change and the possibility of continuing learning, but a history based on memories of old triumphs, a history ultimately useless in the face of the threats of the world. So this warning was Bloch's main legacy.

It would be necessary to remember the dedication of "*The Historian's Craft*" to Febvre to leave aside the questionings about the friendship between both:

> *We have fought, for a long time, together, for a broader and more human history. At the time I am writing in –says Bloch in 1941–, looms many threats. Not because of us. We are the provisional losers of an unjust destiny [...]. Among the ideas that I propose to support, no doubt more than one comes directly from you. Of many others, I could not decide, with full awareness, if they are yours, mine or both.*[10]

That said, the language of Lucien Febvre was combative. If yesterday's world ended forever:

> *[...] let's explain the world to the world. For history. However, what history? –wondered Febvre–, the one that tells the story of Maria Estuardo?, the one that for fifty years studied the last two segments of the fourth pair of legs? Sorry, I am confused [...] Well, no. We do not have time. The poor lessons of the losers of the 70's influenced too many well-trained and mindful historians (that is the worst), too many historians. They work well, of course! They make history in the same way that their grandmothers upholstered. Thoroughly. They are smart. However, if you ask them the reason for all this work, the best answer they can give, with a childish smile, is old Ranke's candid phrase: 'To know exactly how it happened.' In detail, of course.*[11]

However, what history are we talking about then, my dear Febvre? We speak of the history that "understands and makes understand," of history "that answers the questions that today's man necessarily asks," of that which offers "explanations about difficult situations," of that which works "with a good hypothesis of work in the head," because

> *[...] it is only worthy of this beautiful name (of a historian) who launches himself completely into life, with the feeling that by immersing himself in it, bathing in it, penetrating it of present humanity, he deploys his research forces, his power of resurrecting the past. From a past that holds and that restores, in exchange, the secret meaning of human destinies [this legacy of history is] what has always been, here, for Marc Bloch and me."* [12]

The vulgarization of the findings of these two great historians perhaps also contributed to the emergence of a manual to make history the "French style" and, with it, to the little fertility of this thinking for the Mexican case, except for a few occasions. Hence the "cultural turn" since the 60's of the last century, with the recovery of some social scientists such as Norbert Elías and Walter Benjamin, but also with the dissemination of the thinking of Bakhtin, Bordieu, and Foucault, gave the history the possibility of renewing the historical studies. Two fields seem particularly fertile in this journey: the history of art and culture, and the history of gender, which I will refer to the following sections. It is necessary to note that the "new" cultural history arises in a moment of deep questioning of the intellectual traditions, including the French historiography itself; consequently the new history of art recovers the tension between elitist art and popular art, and for that matter it goes beyond the traditional dichotomies; hence the "extracts of modernity."

Extracts of Modernity

[...] not only the producers of culture,
but also their analysts and critics,
were victims of the fragmentation [...]
Carl Schorske

However the multiplicity of studies about modernity/postmodernity, modernism and modernization, there is a need to create a cultural itinerary that is essential for cultural studies and cultural history. In this itinerary, a first observation is that the contradictions impregnate the relationship between modernity and culture.

This idea is fundamental to understand the new history of art. Perhaps it can be understood more clearly from the "great division" arisen by the "invention" of the fine arts in the enlightened world, in which the culture would have at least two different interpretations: that of the enlightened French world in which the beautiful arts would be part of "civilization," and that of romanticism, especially German, where culture (the "*kultur*") would be understood as a collective identity.[13]

This "great division" –the dissociation of art from life itself– would lead to the first questionings about modernity within the world of art, especially between Baudelaire and Coubert, to showing the popular language and the "primitive" forms of representation of the body starkly.

The "prehistory" of modernity took Walter Benjamin and Siegfried Kracauer to the Paris of Baudelaire and Offenbach, respectively, to recognize the fleeting, but also the fragmentary nature of the modern process. Along with George Simmel, who taught both, directly or indirectly, these thinkers would not rely on the great theories but "on the manifest fragments of social reality"[14] when analyzing the modern world.

This paradigm that has precedents in Marx and Nietzsche (in Marx because based on the goods, of the "minutiae," it would ana-

lyze capitalism, and in Nietzsche, for its criticism to the "disease of history" that would lead it to propose a method based on "the most insignificant world," on the insignificant fragments of culture) can be related to the *indicial* paradigm exposed by Carlo Ginzburg, but above all to his own proposal of microhistory. Moreover, Ginzburg helped to vindicate the figure of Kracauer by claiming that his book *History - The Last Things Before the Last* is: "the best introduction to microhistory".[15] In it, Kracauer goes from the reading of Proust to the cinematographic analysis where different planes intersect:

> *[...] seemingly, the historical ideas have lasting significance because they connect the particular with the general in an articulated and truly unique way. Since any of such connection amounts to an uncertain adventure, they resemble flashes that illuminate the night.*[16]

Kracauer's case is representative of the search for the marginal, the fragmentary, as a possibility to analyze the modern world. His interest in photography and film-making as well as in the dark novel at a time when the 19th-century aesthetics questioned the value of these creative practices, makes it the most contemporary of the theorists to us, victims of fragmentation. As a result of the work of both Benjamin and Kracauer, the "declassification" of art and elitist culture was part of the proposals of the analysis of modernity.

Benjamin's classic essay on *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* offers us a new perspective to understand the history of art, starting fundamentally with the passing from the "cult value" of the work of art and, in this sense, from the end of the "aura" of art and artists, to an "exhibition value" where the possibilities of reproduction broadened so a larger audience can enjoy the work, although at the same time it means the "politicization of the artwork" in terms of its link with the masses.[17] In the dream of democratizing culture and the arts, –warned Benjamin–, also nests the possibility of the serpent, that is, the totalitarian dreams nest; however, with the criticism of the aura of the elitist art of modernity,

Benjamin opened the opportunity to understand the link between mass culture, new technical possibilities, and contemporary art.

The questioning of Theodor Adorno about the "cultural industries," before his stay in the United States and in response to Benjamin's essay, coincided with that of art critics such as Clement Greenberg on mass culture and pop art as kitsch, in the sense of the loss of the "absolute" in art and, therefore, of the separation between art and life, a recurrent theme in modernism. After the great division, the reflection would allow overcoming the traditional dichotomies through the "aestheticization of daily life," of the game and irony as anti-authoritarian and libertarian practices in a search, not of the absolute, but make life itself a work of art. Among other things, this implied the recognition of cultural diversity, new cultural maps, and the gender perspective when questioning, for example, the modernist Eurocentrism, centralism, and chauvinism that identified the center as a spatial axis and the province and the women with the popular culture and, consequently, with a low culture.[18] Based on these thoughts, the "great division" became fractured, and the elitist world of modernism deconfigured derived from a more inclusive and permeable vision between high and low culture.

The "Great Division" in the History of Art

Along with the history of gender, the "postmodern" world relativized not only history but the concept of art itself. Hence, it is important to locate the thinking, not in the relativization of taste, but in the appearance of the concept "art" from which a new history can be written. In this journey we can use as a guide the consideration about the popular culture by authors such as Peter Burke and the findings of Carlo Ginzburg, but above all it is necessary to reconstruct the "paradigm" or system of conceptions, practices, and institutions that we know as "fine arts" in order to understand their innovations and also their limits, questioned in much of the 20th century. Moreover, the theme of the end of art should no be

alluding so much to the decline of artistic proposals but to the transformations that the paradigm of the fine arts has experienced.[19]

The new concept of art arises fundamentally from the "great division"[20] concerning crafts in the social context of the expansion of the middle class and creation of new institutions and practices such as the museum, the art market, and even the criticism. Thus, the new art halls, gatherings, concerts, and so on, began to differentiate the audiences between the educated and the popular arts, granting the new middle classes, on the one hand, the possibility of promotion to activities specific to the aristocracy and, on the other hand, the distinction through the fine arts or the "well-educated" arts. The idea of good education through the arts served, thus, to the new social classes as a way to obtain a unique identification; hence, the fine arts and new spaces corresponded to a broader social context.

That said, towards the end of the 18th century, the differentiation between art and crafts was achieved by incorporating concepts that characterized the former through freedom: originality, inspiration, imagination, creativity; characteristics expressed for the various "fine arts." For example, painters began to acquire greater freedom regarding their contracts given the new audiences and buyers; In the same way, musicians such as Haendel and Haydn managed to sell some concerts in advance (Mozart, for example, unlike Beethoven, sought greater freedom in hiring). Writers like Voltaire and Alexander Pope managed to attract new readers who paid for their works, and architecture was also included in these new libertarian airs. At the beginning of the 19th century, the separation between artist and craftsman became more explicit, as was evident in the dictionaries of languages. On the other hand, since the mid-18th century, the first academies arose so at the end of the same century there were about a hundred of them in Europe.

So in that way, a new aesthetic attitude arose, and institutions such as academies, museums, and concert halls began to proliferate as well as the practice of attending spaces dedicated to art as an observer, in silence and in an attitude of respect for what was being heard or observe. In this way, during the 19th century,

both in museums and in concert halls, virtually new artistic forms were created. According to Jacques Attali:

> *When the interpretation of the concert hall replaced the popular festivals and the private concerts in the court, the attitude towards music changed profoundly: in the rituals (popular festivals and concerts of the nobility) there was an element that was inherent part of the whole of life [...]; in the concerts of the bourgeoisie, the silence dedicated to the musicians was what created it and gave it an autonomous existence.*[21]

By this way, the ascent of aesthetics, as opposed to beauty, began. The very concept of the beautiful, although it still was used, began to be questioned by other values such as the sublime, the true, the real, the grotesque, etcetera, in such a way that the aesthetic took relevance as the new category of the arts. At the same time, a discussion about the relationship between art and society start due to the growing autonomy of the "fine arts."

Modernism can be interpreted as a product of these dilemmas since it is a conflicting movement in the sense that it makes deeper the "great division" at the same time that it rejects it. Moreover, modernism opened the possibility of expanding the borders of the arts with the incorporation of African masks, popular forms, sounds far from the canons, in short, the photography, cinema, and jazz as modern arts. In parallel, anti-art movements such as Dadaism rejected the elevation of art in order to reintegrate it into daily life, hence the works of Grosz, Duchamp, and Ray. However, after the World War II and the change of axis of the arts from Paris to New York, the criticism of modernism came from the great technical transformations, the rise of new social groups (such as students) and gender perspectives not included in the traditional modernism –hence the postmodernism.

The concept of "postmodernism" –currently in disuse– has ended up being associated with the logic of capital and even with the emptiness and superficiality of an era[22] fundamentally since the

postwar period and the beginning of pop art, when the traditional modernist barrier between high culture and popular culture was torn down between "the vanguards and the kitsch," as Clement Greenberg called it. However, beyond the very concept that was originally proposed by Federico de Onís in the 1930s as a criticism of modernism and disseminated in the postwar period by Lyotard as a criticism of metanarratives, it would be necessary to get the analysis of subsequent cultural transformations back to the traditional dichotomies in order to understand the possibilities of cultural democratization. There is no general agreement on the meaning of postmodernism. This one has even been frequently disqualified as a passing intellectual fad; however, it could be said, along with Mike Featherstone, that the concept of "postmodernism" made us sensitive to changes that occurred in contemporary culture: *e.g.* changes in the artistic, cultural, and intellectual fields; changes in the production, consumption, and circulation of symbolic goods (processes of de-monopolization and de-hierarchization of legitimized cultural enclaves), and changes in different groups that have developed new means to structure their identities. Postmodernism is a concept that coincides with the rise of culture as an element that encourages explanations and is not only explicable by other factors so that interest in culture is also a way to observe the great transformations of contemporary societies.[23]

In this broad journey on the history of art and culture we can find not only historical relativization, in the sense that the end of art can, in any case, refer to the end of the concept of art emerged in the 18th century, but also to the need to learn to see our own history based on the emergence of the great division and the tension between cultured art and the incorporation of popular forms, which is a way of thinking about the relationship between art and life. It is in this area that gender history acquires relevance.

History, Culture, and Gender[24]

The "new cultural history" (NCH), as it was called a selection of essays on the agenda of historians after the Marxism and the *Annales*,[25] seems to have stopped showing developments after two decades of expanding the field of history. Currently, although there are still redoubts of the old history, the popular phrase "all history is cultural history" presents some risks of simplifying the contributions of what has been one of the most relevant intellectual movements in the transformation of the work of the historian.

Hence the relevance of reflecting on the main contributions of the NCH, but also of offering new perspectives and new voices, as can be observed mainly in the history of women, the subject of this section. The transformations that the *history of women* has undergone can help us to understand the scope of cultural history so I will focus on some central contributions for the construction of the concept of *gender*.

Cultural history has had a long history —especially if we think about the history of art and culture seen from the invention of the fine arts—, representing one of the pioneering efforts to diverge from the political issues that marked traditional history.[26]

One of the main characteristics of the NCH has been, in addition to the multidisciplinary nature, the special consideration of four theorists who from different perspectives nurtured and problematized the work of the historian: Mikhail Bakhtin, Norbert Elias, Michel Foucault, and Pierre Bourdieu. Concepts such as "heteroglossia" (different voices of one text) and "social pressure oriented to self-control" within a civilizing process as well as the "distinction" as a tool for defining social classes and groups have been fundamental in order to raise new perspectives for the history.[27]

However, it has been Michel Foucault who has had the most influence on the NCH and especially for the history of gender: his ideas about the microphysics of power that permeates every relationship, the control exercised by authorities over bodies, the criticism of the teleological vision of history and its emphasis on

"ruptures" and "discourses" (as categories that organize the ways of thinking), contributed decisively to gender studies.

The Cultural Construction of Sex and Gender

The history of women, beyond the history of illustrious women, has its antecedents in the *Annales* school and Marxist historiography, especially in its claim to "total history" and the history of the subaltern classes. The link between the oppression of the female sex with the emergence of the family and private property, that is, the predominance of patriarchy, marked a large part of the Marxist studies, even with counterproductive arguments that took initiative and creativity away from the participation of the women, since these studies paradoxically started from androcentric models.

The criticism of the simplistic view (even of some feminists) of the natural inferiority of women, given centuries of exploitation, was one of the first tasks of historiography about women. In this sense, the work of Mary Bear on the strength and influence of women in history (1962) stands out as one of the starting points of this new story that, in the words of Mary Nash, would understand the "complexity of relationships between the sexes, the changes in the status of women, the process of formation of women's consciousness and the advances and setbacks in their social situation."[28]

At the time when Mary Nash writes (1982) and coordinates one of the first texts on the history of women, there was a booming in social history and demographic history, which had developed themes relevant to women such as the history of the family, the history of feminist movements and the history of women's health. It started the discussion about the "conscience" of being a woman and about the culture of women in a perspective that would be developed years later on the basis of the "cultural turn" and the theoretical influence of Simone de Beauvoir and Michel Foucault, putting emphasis in what Joan Scott argued as a "question of power."

Said that, which was the "cultural turn" for the history of women? Joan W. Scott has written key texts to understand the

transition from the history of women to the history of gender as a cultural construction from which it is difficult to continue talking and writing about "women's history".[29] In 1986, Scott published (in its original version) the essay "*Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis*," a broad discussion about the different meanings of the concept as a way of designating relations between the sexes and a way to analyze the meaning of oppression as well as class and race conceptions. All this as a way of giving academic legitimacy to feminist studies, but above all as a way of "denoting the 'cultural constructions,' the creation entirely social of ideas about the appropriate roles for men and women".[30] This way, it analyzes the gender studies from different approaches: the critique of patriarchy, including the Marxist tradition, and post-structuralist approaches linked to the psychoanalysis about the production and reproduction of gender identity. However, for Scott, it is in the analysis of politics and power that the concept of gender acquires its most precise meaning, as it would allow redefining old problems from new perspectives.

In a second relevant essay by Scott on "invisibility," originally published in 1989 after reviewing women's historiography, Scott concluded about the questions of women's historians in the following terms:

> *How and why ideas change; how ideologies impose, how such ideas set the limits of behavior and define the meaning of experience [...]. What the historians of women add to the discussion is a gender concern [...] perhaps it is in the examination of history as part of the "politics" of gender representation that we will find the answer to the question of the invisibility of women in written history in the past.*[31]

In this way, Scott established an agenda for historical studies of gender, relating the Marxist tradition with poststructuralism and psychoanalysis, and emphasizing the analysis of power as a tool to reconsider the cultural history.

In a historiographical essay, written at the same time as that of Joan W. Scott, Arlette Farge reached practically the same conclusions without using the concept of gender, but also warned of the contradictions that needed to be historicized in a subtle plot:

> *It is the delicate articulation of checks and balances, a secret plot of the social fabric, which should be scrutinized here in a proceeding that, primarily inspired by Michel Foucault, would introduce the dimension of the relationship between the sexes. Undoubtedly, this approach is both the most difficult and the newest. It would allow to break the too simple dichotomies and to do, in short, an inner history of family, social, and political power.* [32]

The French historian pointed out the possibilities of the influence of Foucault, who certainly opened new fields for the cultivation of the history of sexuality and power, to go beyond the traditional dichotomies, although at the same time he foresaw the complexity of this task.

In theoretical rather than historiographical terms, Judith Butler contributed –perhaps thanks to her radicalism– to academically legitimize gender studies, especially in the American intellectual world. His classic essay on Beauvoir, Wittig, and Foucault (also written in 1982), where the dichotomy between sex and gender is overcome by proposing that the idea of the body is a social and cultural construction, transformed the traditional idea about historical studies on sex and gender, besides anticipating problems that would develop in historical terms.

Based on Beauvoir's phrase "one is not born a woman, but gets to be one," which establishes a distinction between the biological being and the woman project, the Sartrean idea that we are what we choose is radicalized, and it comes to shape, without using it, the concept of gender. Thus, "gender is a contemporary way of organizing past and future cultural norms, a way of situating oneself in and through those norms, an active style of living one's own

body in the world".[33] Furthermore, according to Wittig, "man" and "woman" are political categories, since sexual difference does not have a necessary biological foundation, so this author's "lesbian body" is an effort to rewrite the traditional distinctions of sexual identity. Foucault, in turn, establishes strategies for the subversion of the gender hierarchy, the oppressed develops alternative forms of power. Hence, the case of Herculine Barbin (Alexina) illustrates the "ambiguity in sex and sexual identity." Butler concludes: "The history of gender could well reveal the gradual liberation of the genre from its binary restrictions".[34]

The history of gender as a "cultural construct" extended the possibilities of traditional academic history in an earnest questioning of the sources, methodologies, and theories used by androcentric history. While the academicist tendency is to judge certain perspectives as a fad, as if there were only one way to make history, the return to previous approaches of the NCH can hardly rule out the idea that gender is more than a piece of cloth. In any case, without a gender perspective, it will be difficult to expand and democratize our history.

However, in the case of Mexico, the historiographical production on the history of art and gender has been expanded in recent years from two productions of central institutions in the study of the history of art. These are the books compiled by Alberto Dallal and Karen Cordero and Inda Sáenz,[35] which are only a sample of the diversity and depth that the gender perspective has acquired in the historiography of the country.

Final Reflections

As a professor of a university outside the central academic circuits, I find worrying the disdain and even the oblivion of the main historiographic trends of the 20th century in the country. Therefore, originally this essay was dedicated to the possibility of the renewal of history based on the regions. With some exceptions, Mexican historiography, in general, has underestimated broader thinking about

the main changes in the field of history and, in some cases, even has considered them harmful for young historians.[36]

There is, thus, a resistance to change from the academic institutions themselves, which is evidenced by the fragmentation of the proposals. I began this essay by recovering precisely the "spirit" of the creators of the "French historiographical revolution" to warn us of the intellectual crisis that refuses to abandon "the wreckage." The great cultural transformations of recent years, particularly based on the new protocols for the knowledge provided by new technologies, warn us about continuing working with the same mental schemes of the last century. Hence the need to delve into the role that the historian can perform, beyond the postmodernity and the great doubts identified by the "cultural turn."

The fragmentation has characterized Mexican historiography caused, fundamentally, by "local" history or "matria history," or an overspecialization. All this, paradoxically, is a symptom of the rejection of reflection and particularly of the "metanarratives" characteristic of postmodernity. Perhaps, as recommended by our old masters, we must leave behind the wreck and learn to reconstruct our history based on the forgotten fragments. That has been, finally, the purpose of this essay.

1. Rioux, J. P. y Sirinelli, J. F. (Coords.). *Para una historia cultural* [For a Cultural History], Taurus, 1999, p. 453.
2. A previous version of this section on the "founders" appeared in *Horizonte Histórico*, Revista Semestral de los Estudiantes de la Licenciatura en Historia, UAA, Año 2, No. 5, Enero-Junio 2012, pp. 40-44.
3. Aguirre Rojas, C. A., *Contribución a la historia de la microhistoria italiana* [Contribution to the History of the Italian Microhistory], Prohistoria Ediciones, 2003; *Los Annales y la historiografía francesa. Tradiciones críticas de Marc Bloch a Michael Foucault* [The Annals and French Historiography. Critical Traditions from Marc Bloch to Michael Foucault], Ed. Quinto Sol, 1996. I am thinking of this author's last works.
4. Ginzburg, C., "Microhistoria: dos o tres cosas que sé de ella" [Microhistory: Two or Three Things That I Know about it], *El hilo y las huellas. Lo verdadero, lo falso, lo ficticio* [Threads and Traces: True False Fictive], FCE de Argentina, 2010, pp. 351-394. In this author, we find a relevant reflection for distinguishing the Italian microhistory contributions to the Mexican one.

5. Mastrogregori, M., *El manuscrito interrumpido de Marc Bloch. Apología por la historia o el oficio de historiador* [*Reconsidering Marc Bloch's interrupted manuscript: two missing pages of Apologie pour l'histoire ou métier d'historien*], FCE, 1998, p. 16. I thank Enrique Rodríguez Varela the recomendación and loan of this book by Mastrogregori. Of course, it is essential to read again Bloch, M., *Apología para la historia o el oficio de historiador* [*The Historian's Craft: Reflections on the Nature and Uses of History and the Techniques and Methods of Those Who Write It*], annotated edition by Bloch, Étienne, and with preface by Le Goff, J., FCE, 2ª reimp., 2006, which has become in a poorly understood handbook for all historians, along with Febvre, L. *Combates por la Historia* [Combats for History], Ed. Ariel, 3ª ed., 1974.
6. Cit. pos. Mastrogregori, M., Op. cit., p. 15.
7. Febvre, L., Op. cit., p. 244.
8. Cit. pos. Mastrogregori, M., Op. cit., pp. 41-42.
9. Cit. pos. Mastrogregori, M., Op. cit., pp. 48-51.
10. Bloch, M., Op. cit., p. 39.
11. Febvre, L., Op. cit., p. 68.
12. Febvre, L., Op. cit., pp. 70-71. Of course, I adjusted the Febvre's answers to regain in some way his style.
13. Kuper, A., *Cultura. La versión de los antropólogos*,[*Culture: The Anthropologists' Account*] Ed. Paidós Básica, 2001. In particular, the "Introduction" and Chapter 1. This book is helpful for an extensive reflection on these concepts. Huyssen, A., Después de la gran división. Modernismo, cultura de masas, posmodernismo [After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism], "2a. ed., Adriana Hidalgo editora, 2006. This book is key on the "great divide."
14. Frisby, D., *Fragmentos de la modernidad. Teorías de la modernidad en la obra de Simmel, Kracauer y Benjamin* [*Fragments of Modernity (Routledge Revivals): Theories of Modernity in the Work of Simmel, Kracauer and Benjamin*], Madrid, España, Visor Distribuciones, 1992, p. 27.
15. Ginzburg, C., "Microhistoria, dos o tres cosas que sé de ella" [Microhistory: Two or Three Things That I Know about it]. *Op. cit*., p. 380.
16. Kracauer, S., *Historia. Las últimas cosas antes de las últimas* [*History, the Last Things Before the Last*], Buenos Aires, Argentina, Los Cuarenta, 2010, p. 137.
17. Benjamin, W., "La obra de arte en la época de su reproductibilidad técnica" [The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction], en *Obras* [Works], Libro I, Vol. 2, Madrid, España, Abada Editores, 2008, pp. 7-85.
18. Huyssen, A., *Después de la gran división* [*After the Great Divide*]. *Op. cit.*, in particular Part I: "Lo otro evanescente: la cultura de masas" [The Vanishing Other: Mass Culture], one of the great contributions beyond modernity.
19. Shiner, L., *La invención del arte. Una historia cultural* [*The Invention of Art: A Cultural History*]. Barcelona, España, Paidós Estética, 2004, 476 pp.
20. Huyssen, A., *Después de la gran división* [*After the Great Divide*]. *Op. cit.*
21. *Cit. pos.*, Shiner, L., *Op. cit.*, p. 298.
22. Jameson, F., "*El posmodernismo y la sociedad de consumo*" [*Postmodernism and Consumer Society*], en *El giro cultural. Escritos seleccionados sobre el posmodernismo*

1983-1998 [Cultural Twist. Select Writings on Postmodernism], Argentina, Ed. Manantial, 1999.

23. Featherstone, M., *Cultura de consumo y posmodernismo* [*Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*], Argentina, Amorrortu Editores, 2000, 256 pp.
24. This section realized thanks to the seminar: "Metodología de género. Su importancia en el análisis histórico" [Gender Methodology. Its importance in the historical analysis] dictated by Dr. Carmen Ramos Escandón at Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes, May 30-31 and June 1-3, 2011.
25. Hunt, L. (Ed.). *The New Cultural History*, University of California Press, 1989.
26. Burke, P., "Fragmentos de modernidad" [Fragments of modernity] for art history and, in general, his work What is Cultural History?, España, Paidós, 2006, pp. 20-21. It can be seen there the previous section.
27. Burke, P., *Op. cit.*, pp. 71-78.
28. Nash, M., "Nuevas dimensiones en la historia de la mujer" [New Dimensions in Women History], en *Presencia y protagonismo. Aspectos de la historia de la mujer*, Barcelona, España, Ed. del Serbal, 1984, p. 13.
29. Scott, J. W. "El problema de la invisibilidad" [The Problem of Invisibility], en Ramos, C. (Comp.). *Género e historia*, Instituto Mora, México, 1992, pp. 38-65 y Scott, J. W. "El género, una categoría útil para el análisis histórico" [Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis], en Lamas M. (Comp.). *El género: la construcción cultural de la diferencia sexual* [Gender: Cultural Construction of Sexual Difference], UNAM/Porrúa, 1996, pp. 265-302.
30. Scott, J. W. "El género...", *Op. cit.*, p. 271.
31. Scott, J. W., "El problema de la invisibilidad", *Op. cit.*, p. 65.
32. Farge, A., "La historia de las mujeres. Cultura y poder de las mujeres: ensayo de historiografía" [Women History. Women Culture and Power: Essay of Historiography], en *Historia Social* 9 (Invierno 1991), Instituto de Historia Social, Valencia, España, p. 96. Maybe, more than talking about an "inner history of power" we could talk about an "intimate history of power."
33. Butler, J., "Variaciones sobre sexo y género: Beauvoir, Wittig y Foucault" [Variations on Sex and Gender: Beauvoir, Wittlg and Foucault], en Lamas, M. (Comp.). *El género... Op. cit.*, p. 308.
34. *Ibid*., p. 325.
35. Dallal, Alberto. *Miradas disidentes: género y sexo en la historia del arte* [Dissenting Glances: Gender and Sex in Art History], UNAM, 2007, 406 p.; y Cordero, Karen. y Sáenz, Inda. (Comps.). *Crítica feminista en la teoría e historia del arte* [Feminist Critique in the Art Theory and History], Universidad Iberoamericana/UNAM, 2007, 433 pp.
36. I remember that after the desert in a history congress in Zacatecas about the new historiography, a notable professor of El Colegio de México said that the new tendencies were "dangerous" for the young historians.

THE "SMILING LITTLE FACES" OR THE "PIXIES OF ECSTASY"

Among the rubble of the temples demolished
by the Chichimecas or the Spanish, on the pile of books
and hypotheses, the little head laughs [...]
Octavio Paz, "Laughter and Penance," *La magia de la risa* [Magic of Laughter] (1962)

The study of Mesoamerican art and history has undergone the same fate as the national history: after an era dominated by Mexica historiography about the interpretation of other cultures, the return to the regions shows so many peculiarities and differences that sometimes a comprehensive vision is challenging. Even within the same geographical region, such as the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, we can see not only the importance of the cultures developing there but also their diversity. What until a few years ago we considered homogenous, such as the Classic Veracruz, corresponds only to a geographical fragment: the South-Central region of the current State of Veracruz, given the diversity and importance of the cultures established on the Atlantic coast.[1]

From the observation of the cultural fragments, I analyze in the present essay the complex of expressive figures from the classic Veracruz, in particular, those known as "*caritas sonrientes*" (smiling little faces). At first, I discuss the interpretations in use and strongly influenced by the Aztec pantheon, and then go on to expose some hints that from my point of view pose a novel approach to the "smiling little faces."

Smiling little face [2]

Interpretations in Use

In the complex of smiling little faces, there are essential stylistic differences, both spatial and temporal. For example, the figurines from Remojadas II, the most representative, are very different from the Nopiloa and Isla de Sacrificios faces.[3] Also, this type of pottery is not exclusive to Central Veracruz, since it has also been found in the Mayan region (the Southern States of Campeche and Tabasco).[4] It is such a large number of figurines (in 1960, Medellín Zenil said that there were more than fifteen hundred) and they are so few the clues they give to us, that we still speculate about their meaning.

As is well known, in "Las máscaras rientes totonacas," [The Totonac laughing masks][5] one of the first interpretations about them, Vladimiro Rosado Ojeda associated the faces with Xochipilli, the

Mexica god of flowers, dance, and music. After describing them physiologically –most were "young people" with Mayan-style skull deformations– he cites one of the first explorations in the Papaloapan (that of Hermann Strebel at the end of the 19th century and that of Weyerstall in 1925), where it was found that the faces were part of censers and, because some of them had movable heads, were considered as representations of dancers. When he wondered about the famous "laughable rictus," Rosado Ojeda discusses the association with Xochipilli given that in the Aztec manifestations "this gesture is not perceived," although he ends up accepting the link with such a deity. He denies that the faces were portraits as indicated by the first explorers and, finally, suggests that some of the smiling female figures, those with decorated *huipiles* or skirts, were probably "priestesses or dancers who took part in the ritual ceremonies in honor of him [Xochipilli]."[6]

I have dwelled on this article because it highlights some important elements beyond the questionable claims about the "Totonac aspect": the association with Xochipilli, the context in which some figures were found and, finally, the observation about some of the moving figures, or dressed, of them being priestesses or dancers.

Up until that moment, at the beginning of the 1940s, things seemed clear concerning the smiling little faces. In 1948, Salvador Toscano, one of the first authors who offered a comprehensive vision of the Mexican and Central American pre-hispanic art, considered these figures as a part of the Olmec pottery:

> *Contemporary archeology has come to confirm the Olmec origin of these precious artistic manifestations; in fact, one of the monolithic heads from La Venta, Tabasco, timidly sketches a grimace in which we can already guess a smile, but it is in a female statuette of jade painted red, from that city –now in the National Museum of Mexico– where it was impeccable and finally sculpted that precious psychological gesture that distinguishes the man from other species of animals [...]. We ignore the meaning of these pieces. They have been supposed to*

> *be fragments of censers, pectorals, or ornaments and even representations of the god of joy, love, and dances, a Xochipilli of the Atlantic region of Mexico. However, the absence of mythological elements –as in the rest of the Olmec art objects–, gives to the masks, at the same time that an impenetrable character, a unique aesthetic character within the indigenous world. In the midst of those dramatic and terrible pantheons, with bloody gods that very often are repugnant to us, it is barely conceivable the existence of this island of small sculptures that dared to break with the hieratic tradition and sketch the joy of life in the most delicate of psychological expressions, that of the smile.*[7]

Both Rosado Ojeda and Toscano present doubts rather than claims about the bond of the smiling little faces with Xochipilli, although they lean towards a Xochipilli from the Atlantic region at least.

The archaeological explorations directed by Alfonso Medellín Zenil in the center of Veracruz in the early 1950s quantitatively and qualitatively transformed the study of smiling women. The interpretations began to diversify: some physicians thought about them as a part of the representation of the "indigenous pathology".[8] On the other hand, Fredrick A. Peterson, after associating the figurines with several deities (Xipe Totec, Tlaloc, in addition to Xochipilli), and of associated them with the "babies in the cribs" and the animals on wheels (another great originality of this culture from the classic Veracruz), suggests that they were used as toys.[9]

On his part, Medellin Zenil reaffirmed the version that associates them with the deity of dance, joy, and music since "the identification cannot be more exact because each one of these attributes has corporeity with the elements that characterize this type of sculptures".[10] Josefina Fernández Barrera supported this áinterpretation: "Because of the close relationship with the smiling and cheerful attitude of the faces, they have been associated with the

attributes of this god [Xochipilli], but nothing has been concluded at this respect, although the hypothesis is very acceptable".[11]

Medellín Zenil published with Octavio Paz "La magia de la risa" [The magic of laughter] (1962), in an attempt to offer a comprehensive vision of the complex of smiling figures. In this, Medellín emphasized: "It is obvious they have an affinity with the divinity that in the Toltec-Mexican era was named Macuilxóchitl Xochipilli (Five Flower, Prince of Flowers), which is, after all, an invocation of the solar divinity".[12] Paz, on the other hand, recognizes the little faces belonging to the cult of Xochipilli, which, he says with great insight, possessed an ambivalence: "The Magliabecchi codex represents the god of dance and joy dressed in a monkey skin. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the figurines laugh and shake their magic rattles at the moment of sacrifice. His superhuman joy celebrates the union of the two sides of existence, just like the blood stream of the beheaded becomes seven snakes, a bridge between the solar beginning and the terrestrial".[13]

Doris Heyden went ahead with the insight of Octavio Paz and argued based on the written sources: "I think the smiling figures represent the 'similarities' of the gods more than the gods themselves: the men and women who represented the deities in the monthly parties and those who were sacrificed during these holidays." Furthermore, Heyden suggests that, in order to keep the future victims happy, they were given an intoxicating substance.[14] A year later, the author published a modified version in which she emphasizes (after a personal conversation with Peter Furst) on the use of hallucinogens that provoke joy and laughter, possibly seeds of morning glory or seeds of the virgin (*Ololiuhqui: Rivea corymbosa*, now better classified as *turbina corymbosa*).[15]

I want to stop here the review of the most common interpretations of the smiling little faces focusing on Xochipilli, a deity with an ambivalent character: god of flowers and dance, but also of human sacrifice. Almost all the authors presented agree on this point, although they indeed mention other deities.

Smiling child with a slightly rounded body and movable limbs attached to the body with ropes.[16]

In Search for New Interpretations

At the end of one of her papers, Doris Heyden finished justifying the use of historical sources from the Valley of Mexico to interpret the cultures of the Gulf in the following way:

> *I consider the use of historical sources from the Altiplano for the interpretation of archaeological material of the Gulf permissible and logical, since from the Classic Horizon onwards almost all Mesoamerica had reached the same degree of civilization, and the manifestations of a region could, with small variations, shed light on others.*[17]

As I mentioned in the introduction, most interpretations of regional processes were observed in light of the Central events. In the case of Mesoamerica, this historiographic tendency is even more evident because the pantheon of the deities is Mexica. The names of other cultures are in Nahuatl because the language of that other

culture is unknown, as is the case of the authors of smiling little faces; in short, we know more about the Aztecs.

All this is not an advocacy of an interpretative autonomy that ignores any relationship with the dominant cultures, which would be a reductionism. However, it is essential to recognize that, sometimes, the regional differences within the same Mesoamerican cult may be more significant than we thought.

On the other hand, the interpretations in use have emphasized the worship of deities in order to offer undeniably omni-comprehensive worldviews in which artifacts, artistic representations, and associated ceremonies must fit. That is why starting from a new paradigm that emphasizes the tracking of clues can be more fruitful than the application of the Mexica pantheon on the smiling little faces.[18]

In the monograph about the ancient art from Veracruz, H. B. Nicholson, on the writing for Heyden, commented:

> *I would regard Heydens's suggestion that their jovial mien is the result of their being under the influence of a psychoactive agent ritually ingested, perhaps the seeds (olloliuhqui) of a morning glory (Rivea corymbosa or Hallier filius), as an exciting possibility, but I do not believe it can be convincingly demonstrated with available data.*[19]

This suggestion is more valuable than the other part of Heyden's interpretation since that one implied that the little faces represented victims of the human sacrifices perpetrated by this culture. The investigation of the use of hallucinogens in Mesoamerica, particularly in the South-Central area of Veracruz, may reveal more interesting aspects about the smiling little faces than the discussion of human sacrifice in the Classical Veracruz.

Notwithstanding the attractiveness of the idea posed by F. Petersen that the *caritas sonrientes* –particularly full bodies with articulated limbs and heads– may be associated with "toys" or "dolls," I don't find it convincing for the same reasons that have been used

to not thinking about the "figurines on wheels" as toys: given the care and fragility of the workmanship and the materials, as well as the state of preservation in which they have been found, it is difficult to imagine that they were toys used by children.[20]

Smiling little face. Anonymous Totonac culture. [21]

It is also worth clarifying that the articulation of heads and limbs is not exclusive to the smiling little faces. It was invented in the Maya region (in Kaminaljuyú-Tazumal, Guatemala and El Salvador) and spread through Mesoamerica to be sophisticated five hundred years later in Central Veracruz. Although the function of these figurines is still an enigma, for some authors it is associated with crops, so its symbolic connotation can still be accepted.[22] The recognition of this symbolism does not imply associating them with a world vision –often borrowed from other Mesoamerican cultures–; it rather means to reestablish their ritual and artistic use.

The studies of José García Payón on El Tajín, especially on the walls of the ball game, led to another interpretation about the smiling little faces: the cult of pulque:

> *The Sonrientes, one of the most distinctive of all the Veracruz figurines complexes, has frequently been labeled a "cult of*

> *laughter." Such a romantic appellation, based on the expressions of the figurines, is consistent with western posture and gesture but not with the somber reality of Pre-Columbian ritualism. It is far more likely that the happy faces with puffy cheeks and swollen protruding tongues are an expression of ritual drunkenness associated with a pulque cult. This cult grows in importance throughout the Classic and, in another format further up the coast, is a significant institution at El Tajín.*[23]

This author also explains the impressive amount of smiling little faces: a massive production that coincides with an autochthonous movement in the face of the rapid cultural change at the end of the Classic.[24]

Wilkerson's ideas are consistent with the findings in El Tajín; however, they do not offer much evidence about the relationship of smiling women with the pulque cult. Perhaps a broader discussion about the use of intoxicating and hallucinogenic beverages in Mesoamerica, especially in Veracruz, may offer us more evidence in this sense.

Contemporary interest in the study of hallucinogens used by the indigenous people in Mexico and, in ethnohistorical terms in Mesoamerica, is due in large part to the momentum from the New York banker R.G. Wasson who, particularly interested in the Mixteca, financed and accompanied several expeditions in the second half of the 1950s in search of the "sacred mushroom" or the "marvelous mushrooms."[25] The contribution of the Wassons in the expanding of the interpretive horizons about Mesoamerican cultures cannot be denied; nevertheless, the "mycolatry" spread indiscriminately not only to interpret different cultures but also to feed the anthropologists themselves and the *underground* movements. That was too much publicity for a relevant finding.

In an excellent comparative study on the use of the hallucinatory mushroom, Robert Ravicz, one of Wasson's companions in the exploration of the Mixteca in 1960, avoided making generalizations until not knowing other regions. Even though it refers

to a region different from Veracruz, this author reveals interesting elements that intervene in the ceremony with hallucinogens in the Mixteca: the mushrooms are the "little angels" or the "children." The mushrooms arise with the rains and must be picked up by a girl who must also prepare them. The healer speaks, sings, and dances for hours. Then, healer and "supplicant" eat the mushrooms (particularly in Huautla de Jiménez). The author suggests that this ceremony could have been more public in pre-Hispanic times since it is not only used as a supernatural ceremony (to be in contact with the gods) but also in a curative and pragmatic sense (focusing on the forecast of the future).[26]

About these ceremonies, I would like to underscore the role of "children." Furthermore, I emphasize the importance of the visions that the "supplicants" experience after eating the sacred food and that Ravicz does not consider: the appearance of "little men" or "little women," that is, dwarfs, or rather "pixies".[27] The problem with Wasson's work is that it does not compare, in other words, it does not clearly distinguish differences. The visions of dwarves or pixies are not part of the ceremonies of the Mixteca but belong to the Mixe zone.

Walter S. Miller, for example, when narrating the use of mushrooms in San Lucas Camotlán (in the Mixe zone) in the early 1950s, wrote:

> *The induced vision is always the same: two dwarves or pixies, a boy and a girl, appear to the mushrooms eater. They talk to him and answer his questions. They say where to find lost things. If something has been stolen, they tell him who the thief is and where he hid the missing thing. If he is planning a trip, they will tell him how lucky he will be.* [28]

The healer woman, priestess or witch plays another special role. I speak in feminine terms because women exercised mostly this job. According to Miller, "These sorcerers and witches deserve to be called 'priests,' in the absence of a better descriptive term since they

seem to be the guardians or 'repositories' of the knowledge of the *tonalamatl* and the agricultural calendar. Also, from what we saw and experienced, I concluded that they are also the guardians of the knowledge of sacred mushrooms".[29]

What I have tried to suggest with this discussion is that the smiling little faces are the pixies who talk with the "supplicants" in a ceremony to eat hallucinogenic mushrooms. The smiling women and men are the witch healers priests who accompany on the trip but also possess the secrets of mushrooms and, importantly, the secrets of the agricultural calendar too. Therefore, these ceremonies were more effective in the rainy season because it is the season in which mushrooms grow and because it is associated with the corresponding divinities in the Atlantic area to Xochipilli, Xochiquetzal, Tláloc, Xipe-Totec, etcetera.

Smiling little face. Anonymous Totonac culture.[31]

On the other hand, the creators of the smiling little faces are still enigmatic in many ways. However, once the Totonacs, who arrived late, a century before El Tajín began to decline, were ruled out,[32] the creators have been linguistically associated with the pre-

Maya Zoque group, especially with the Mixe. This point can also explain the findings of typically Mayan *sonrientes*.[33]

The following *Relation about the hallucinatory mushrooms* of Amatlán de los Reyes, Veracruz (near Córdoba), told by a 70-year-old woman whose mother was an empirical midwife in the 19th century, narrates in Nahuatl (although the area is Mixe) the ecstasy provoked by the ingestion of hallucinogenic mushrooms. For its clarity in the presentation of the elements that participated in the ceremony, this is a key document:

> *The ancient fathers and mothers used, when something was lost, or if they wanted to know something, either where their spouses are, or who bewitched them, or whether they want to know if they will heal, if their disease will take time: they took mushrooms which they called tlakatsitsin (little men), and they answered them, they told them what they wanted to know [...]. They say that in the harvest time of chili, in August, it is when they are easy to be found, then they pick them up, under the shrubs of chili they find them [...]. And they also say that they answer more if they take them at the festivity of yehwatsin [transfiguration of the Lord, August 6] [...]. These little men tell you all the things you want to know; if you lost something they will tell you who took it; if your husband goes elsewhere, they will tell you; if someone is angry against you, if they talk about you behind your back, if they dishonor you, you will know everything there. Also if you will ever be rich, if you will ever get stuck on the road [become poor] and you will have nothing, everything there you will know. If you are sick they will tell you how you will be relieved and who will cure you and also they will heal you, they will massage you. If there is something inside you, if something hurts you, then with their little hands you will be massaged, you can feel your stomach go down, your stomach and your guts will make noises, all the disease will go out. And if not, you will see that they will open your stomach, they will repeat-*

> *edly pass over you, they will take out the disease. The ancient women were very used to take them, but not anymore, now they are afraid of them. There were other seeds called the virgin's seeds, but these are over, they are no longer found, but the "little men" are, you can now find them when it rains, in the month of August.*[34]

Doris Heyden also commented on *olloliuhqui* seeds; Wilkerson referred to pulque; however, because of the references in the mentioned relations, the elves of the *sonrientes* correspond more to the effects of the *Cacahuaxochitl-Poyomatli-Quararibea funebris*, a tree that grows in Veracruz and Oaxaca,[35] although different hallucinogens could also be used, including pulque. In the smiling little faces, the rattles with seeds that some carry in their hands may be the dehydrated *poyomatli* or *olloliuhqui* flowers since some of them eat from the rattle while they sing and dance. At the Aztec festival of the harvest (*ochpanistli*), the dancers held in their hands the flowers of the *sempoaxóchitl*; the dance was called "the movement of the hands" (*tekomalpiloloya*).[36]

In short, the *caritas sonrientes* represent the pixies that appear in the evenings with hallucinogens, particularly in ceremonies linked to rain and harvest held with the seeds of *olloliuhqui* (the seed of the Virgin) or of *poyomatli*, even with pulque if it is a public festivity. The pixies are the hallucinogens that, as I said, are known in some areas of Mexico as "children" or "little angels." Some of the pixies have mobile joints and heads because of their relationship with the harvest festival and the dance of the movement of the hands; they refer to the agricultural cycle whose secrets, like that of the hallucinogens, are kept by the healer woman or priestess who dances and sings smiling too. The communication with the pixies was fundamentally pragmatic (I am going to be rich or poor, for example), although of course, the ritual could refer to several known deities of the Mexica: Xochipilli, Xochiquetzal, Tlaloc, Xipe-Totec, etcetera.

The fundamental question persists: Why did this culture represent the use of hallucinogens as one of the most human expressions: the smile or the full laugh? In one of the first articles on the smiling little faces, it was suggested that they were a spontaneous expression of a happy and festive people by nature, or that they were an expression of "a sensual and gifted life" typical of a wealthy area such as Veracruz.[37] However, along with the characteristic expression, the quantity also stands out. The mass production of *caritas sonrientes* has been interpreted as an effort to show cultural autonomy in an area and an era subject to attacks by other cultures.[38] The words here are originality, authenticity, permanence. This desire for transcendence, expressed through the mastery of technique, continues to surprise us, perhaps because it laugh at us, the mortals.

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14. Heyden, D., "Nueva interpretación de las figuras sonrientes señalada por las fuentes históricas" [A New Interpretation of the Smiling Figures Indicated by the Historical Sources], *Tlalocan*, Vol. VI, No. 2, 1970, p. 159.
15. Heyden, D., "A New Interpretation of the Smiling Figures", in *Ancient Art of Veracruz*, Ethnic Arts Council of Los Angeles, 1971, p. 37.
16. NOMA. New Orleans Museum of Art. Veracruz Culture Articulated Figure. In http://noma.org/collection/detail/59.
17. Heyden, D., "Nueva interpretación de las figuras sonrientes...," *Op. cit.* p. 162.
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23. "The smiling, one of the most significant figurines complex from Veracruz, have been labeled categorized as a 'laughter cult.' That romantic reference, based on the figurines expression, is congruent with the Western position and gesture, but not with the sober reality of pre-Columbian ritualism. It is most likely than the happy faces with puffy cheeks and sticking out tongues to be an expression of the drinking ritual associated with the pulque cult. This cult became important during the Classic period and, with other modes beyond the coast, is one of the main components of El Tajín." Wilkerson, S. y K. Jeffrey, 1987, p. 13.
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THE CODEX OSUNA OR THE PAINTING OF THE GOVERNOR

Proposals for a new reading

In Mexico, the study of the manuscripts painted by the indigenous people has been a clear recognition of Mesoamerican peoples "had a true historical calling and related and wrote down history".[1] The current crisis in the ways of narrating, not only history, has allowed —and promoted— access to different ways of understanding and counting time and space. Studying Mesoamerican painted manuscripts draws near to other iconographic and phonetic forms of narrating historical processes and, at the same time, questions our way of telling stories.

The purpose of this work is to explore the meanings of the Codex Osuna or *Pintura del gobernador, alcaldes y regidores de México* [Painting of the Governor, Mayors, and Councilmen of Mexico] (1565) that belonged to the collection of the Duke of Osuna and that currently resides in the National Library of Madrid. The painting shows a claim by the indigenous nobility against the

viceroy and the judges [*oidores*] of the Audience expressed to the visitor Jerónimo Valderrama, in order to the rent was paid for different personal services.

The painted manuscript deserves a more careful study. In the present essay I highlight two processes to contextualize the Codex Osuna: in the medium term, the transition from *encomienda* to *repartimiento* in the Valley of Mexico through the rental of personal services; in the shorter term, the visit itself of Valderrama. All this within a long process that includes the displacement of the indigenous nobility by royal officials and new chiefdoms, though this does mean the destruction of the pre-Hispanic organization of work and tribute. Even if stylistically the Codex Osuna is an excellent example of acculturation –since it introduces new European shapes under pre-Hispanic structures–, socially it could be said that it is an excellent testimony of the introduction of the Spanish forms of dominion and colonization over the pre-Hispanic labor and tribute structures.

The Comments

The *Painting of the Governor* is a manuscript that has not been well received by scholars even though it has the same importance as the Mendoza Codex.[2] Of the first facsimile edition made in Madrid (1878), it was said that "useless from all points of view [is] its description, since anyone can do it for the present facsimile," but also that "it is today the most notable extract of this kind of paintings, which, says Humboldt: 'served as process pieces', persisting in its use in the Spanish courts long after the Conquest".[3]

Luis Chávez Orozco, in the 1947 edition, published the reproduction of 1878 adding a series of documents that apparently constituted part of the 462 folios that preceded the *Painting of the Governor*. In his prologue, Chávez Orozco commented: The document is unique, not only from the plastic point of view but because of the news it contains. For its artistic purity, it is only

comparable with the Mendoza Codex; for its content, it has no equal, as it is the only document of this nature about the incipient municipal life of the indigenous people of Mexico City, confined, as is known, in the neighborhoods of San Juan, San Pablo, Santa María, and San Sebastián.[4]

This version also included a translation of the Nahuatl text and the Spanish paleography.[5] It attracts attention for its insistence on that both the Codex Osuna and the aggregate manuscript are: "the most valuable source of information about the political life of the indigenous people of Mexico City in the years between 1551 and 1565"; referring to "political life" to the forms of election and not to the "corruption" exposed by the visitor Valderrama, not only among Spaniards but also among the indigenous representatives.[6]

Francisco Rojas González said:

> *Ethnologists will take significant advantage of the inspection of the precious vignettes of this document where they will find elements described in wonderful drawings of the tools of work in the industry, in the construction, and, in general, of the mestizo technology during the first years of the colonial era.*[7]

The author, however, insisted on what Chávez Orozco said about the indigenous political life of the mid-16th century.

R.H. Barlow, defined by Gibson as a bridge between pioneering studies on indigenous people and the new indigenous history, wrote in 1948 that the texts found and added by Chávez Orozco were accusations against the governor and mayors of Mexico City, while that the *Painting of the Governor* referred precisely to the accusations of the governor and the mayors against the viceroy and the judges. Barlow agrees with Chávez Orozco on the importance of the manuscript, calling it "a knowledge mine about the life of the capital between 1555 and 1565, approximately".[8] Besides, he made a brief guide to the painted manuscript and divided it into seven documents to analyze its content, a division that I will discuss in more detail later.

In 1948, Heinrich Berlin, in another review, congratulated Professor Chávez Orozco for the texts he found in the General Archive of the Nation and for the success of including them with the black and white reproduction of the Codex Osuna. Likewise, he recognizes the importance of the codex to know the indigenous life in Mexico City in an enlightened way, since the publication of the *Actas de Cabildo* [Acts of the Town Council] covered the Hispanic side.[9]

Two more comments appeared about the book of the Codex Osuna. One by Manuel Toussaint, who had used the facsimile edition of Madrid for his work on the history of architecture and of the Cathedral of Mexico, in which he discusses the differences between the documents added by Chávez Orozco and the *Painting of the Governor* and proposes a new name for the book: "Codex Osuna and Contemporary Documents."[10]

The texts found by Chávez Orozco are not part of the trial promoted by the judge in charge of the peoples of Mexico City, Esteban de Guzmán, against the viceroy and the judges in front of the visitor Valderrama; they are, instead, lawsuits against the same indigenous authorities promoted by the inhabitants of the neighborhoods of Mexico City. However, as will be seen later, Chavez Orozco sensed some similarities in the texts and the painted manuscript.

In 1949, Howard Cline commented: "The codex provides a large amount of information on political and social issues, seen through indigenous eyes" and dwelled on some of the codex images: those dedicated to the judge Vasco de Puga and his wife, the expedition to Florida, and so on. Also, he made an accurate key observation to understand the codex: "The indigenous complaints about indigenous labor reveal much about the construction of buildings, and the paintings of wheeled vehicles [the wheelbarrow] and the European looms indicate the extent to which indigenous technology transformed".[11] Cline recognizes that the new texts provide new information.

I have followed these reviews in detail because they indicate the importance of the *Painting of the Governor*. The interest that aroused its publication in 1947 among scholars of Mexican art

and history contrasts with the absence of a complete and detailed study of painted manuscripts (despite the excellent facsimile edition of 1973,[12] the documents added by Chávez Orozco and others found). The painted manuscript is a mine of information that needs to be analyzed not only from its style but also from its context and intentionality.

The first to analyze the Codex Osuna in stylistic terms was Donald Robertson. As he said, the style varies in the codex since it deals with different manuscripts that refer to the same process during the visit of Jerónimo Valderrama between 1563 and 1566. For this reason, Robertson says: "The pictorial material contains ample information to reconstruct the daily life of the natives shortly after the middle of the 16th century, making the Codex Osuna a primordial source for the study of the acculturation of the natives".[13] *Acculturation* of the natives, not imitation or simple aggregation, but the recreation of old and new forms before the urgency of communication.

Robertson analyzed the codex from the division suggested by Barlow from the "content of the graphical part".[14] However, he did not only point out the significant differences between some of the manuscripts of the codex using as a starting point the existence or not from a landscape perspective, but also pointed out some of the stylistic similarities between documents I and VII.

In his analysis of the Mesoamerican pictorial manuscripts, John B. Glass included the Codex Osuna among the "economic manuscripts" although he considers it to be of a lower rank;[15] so he mentions it in the "miscellany," but without fully including it, since it recognizes that it has elements of a litigation regarding an illegal fact and tributary aspects. Thus, the Codex Osuna has not been able to be encased in some classification due to its thematic diversity and the difference of its styles.

In the study, "*Las filigranas del Códice Osuna*" [The latticework of the Codex Osuna] added as an appendix in the most recent version of the codex,[16] the paper marks are analyzed. Thanks to this it was discovered that the binding was done in the 19th century and

that not only blank pages were added but also, and very likely, the numbering from 1 to 39. In addition to confirming the authenticity of the manuscript of the 16th century, this analysis divides it into six "testimonies." Also, distinguishes thirteen different marks on paper, so it proposes a hypothetical ordering of the manuscripts.

This discussion is relevant not only because it proves once again the diversity of the manuscripts integrated into the Codex Osuna, but also because any division can be valid until all the complete documentation is known. In my opinion, the analysis can be simplified if we divide the codex both thematically and stylistically into four testimonies:

Testimony I: Lime accounts and personal services
A) Fol. 1-9 / 463-471
B) Fol. 11-13 / 473-475
C) Fol. 38-39 / 500-501

Testimony II: Weed accounts and personal services
A) Fol. 10v. / 472v.
B) Fol. 14-25 / 476-487
C) Fol. 26-27 / 488-489
D) Fol. 28-29 / 490-491

Testimony III: Accounts of food to Dr. Puga and companions
A) Fol. 30-33 / 492-495

Testimony IV: Tacuba tributary peoples
A) Fol. 34-36 / 496-498
B) Fol. 37/499

The most important testimony is the first so that I will focus my attention on it. However, it is essential to know some historical elements that contextualize the manuscript: the personal services of the Indians and their separation from the *encomienda*, their differentiation from the tribute with the introduction of payment for

their service and their transformation into *repartimiento*. I will analyze this last aspect after some of the folios of the first testimony.

Description of Folios

1. Fol. Turn / 12-474 and Fol. / 13-475: Doctor Puga.

These images are the most impressive of the Codex Osuna testimonies. Even before the publication of these painted manuscripts, Vasco de Puga was known for his *Cedulario de la Nueva España* [a collection of Spanish royal charters for New Spain], which was made in 1536 by order of Viceroy Luis de Velasco, according to the order of King Felipe II in 1560. The person in charge of collecting the laws, perhaps the person who knew the Novohispanic provisions and documents at the time,[17] is described committing frequent abuses against the natives, and with those acts, he denied the protective laws that he had compiled.

Vasco de Puga arrived in New Spain in 1559 to reinforce the Audience. He obtained the degree of doctor in Canons at the University of Mexico, which allowed him to reach the highest sphere of the government of New Spain.[18] With the visit of Valderrama, he was accused of more than two hundred charges, although only ten were recognized, among them having received large amounts of money from merchants eager to expedite justice. Moreover, although the mistreatment of the natives was imputed, it was not the reason why they suspended him for twelve years (suspension that was later revoked by the king) or why he faced a monetary penalty.[19]

The accusation of the Codex Osuna in these pages is as much for mistreatment to the natives as for lack of payment of some services. It should also be noted that the painting in which Puga names the sheriffs inadequately indicates the conflict of authority with the viceroy.

1. How Doctor Puga orders the arrest of two mayors and put them in a trap because they had not given him a *chichigua*, as fast as he was asked, as they have stated in their statements, and they spent three days in prison.
2. How Doctor Puga mistreated the Indian sheriffs who served him and particularly Miguel Chichimeca.
3. Doctor Puga to Miguel Chichimécatl, sheriff, mistreats him twice, against the wall of the house, beat him, fell face up.
4. How the Indians of Estacalco's farm carried bricks and adobes to Doctor Puga's garden, and they did not know if he would pay them or not.

5. The adobes are taken to the garden twenty *iztacalas*, those that make the house for him.
6. How Doctor Puga ordered that ten loads of grass be brought to Estacalco's stable, where he had his horses. And because Melchor Díaz, the principal Indian, told him that the *macehuales* were offended and could not comply, he sent him to the trap where he stayed for eight days.
7. How the wife of the mentioned Doctor Puga mistreated an Indian, his sheriff, grabbing him by the hair and throwing him on the ground, of which he was a few days bad because he did not bring her good fruit.
8. The wife of Doctor Puga also mistreated the sheriff Miguel Chichimécatl because they both did not like the oranges.
9. How the mentioned Doctor Puga ordered Pedro de la Cruz and Martín Cano, mayors, being jailed because they brought him a *chichigua* that did not have good milk. They were not in the trap, although here they are painted as a sign of the prison, they were imprisoned for two days.
10. Doctor Puga does not like the wet nurse's milk serum; he puts it in the center of his palm.

1. How Doctor Puga's wife ordered the sheriffs who served her, to bring her fruit and vegetables, and if she did not like them, she would hit them and asked them to return the money.
2. How Lázaro Martín, interpreter of the mentioned Doctor Puga, brings a sheriff from Estacalco's farm as his server.
3. How Doctor Puga ordered a sheriff in Mexico to be arrested, because he defended those from Estacalco's farm who should not fish in a lake that, by order of the viceroy, was forbidden and paid two pesos of expense and stayed in a trap for a week.

4. How Doctor Puga gave two sheriff's shafts to those in Estacalco's farm. Take notice. It must be investigated, asking those sheriff showing the order which entitles them to bring a shaft.
5. How a sheriff of Mexico who is in charge of the Indians' farming, went to Estacalco's farm and those of that farm brought him before the mentioned Doctor Puga who ordered him to be imprisoned and put in the trap, and he was imprisoned for seven days.
6. How twenty Indians from Estacalco's farm went to Tacuba for firewood for the mentioned Doctor Puga. They do not know if they were paid or not.
7. El Doctor Puga only offered to give them *topillis* (shafts) to the *iztacalcas*.
8. He brings the order there, with which he will make sure that the people till the soil.
9. Twenty men load firewood for Doctor Puga, in Tacuba.
10. How the Indians of Estacalco used canoes to get water from Culhuacán, two leagues from this city, and firewood from Coyoacán. And they did not know if he would be paid it or not.
11. Ten *iztacalcas* men give water to Doctor Puga.
12. Ten iztacalcas men give firewood to Doctor Puga.
13. How sixty Indians and two sheriffs work continuously in the houses of the mentioned doctor and they are paid for their work.
14. And all those who work for Doctor Puga are sixty Indians and two sheriffs.

2. Fol. / 38-500. Tecpan or Government Palace.

At the request of Viceroy Luis de Velasco, in January 1562, King Felipe II bought the last houses of Moctezuma belonging to Martín Cortés, Marquis of the Valley of Oaxaca and son of Hernán Cortés.[20] In them, the construction of the Tecpan or Government Palace, today National Palace, began.

There is little information on the reconstruction works of this building which certainly were done with forced rented services;[21] however, what the Codex Osuna claims are the indigenous services that were not paid: ten Indian males to sweep and ten Indian females to do the grinding for the *tortillas*.

It is worth noting the symbology of the four neighborhoods of the city that, as is known, were exempt from tribute in order to carry out public works until the arrival of Valderrama. The plan of the palace shows the disintegration of autochthonous forms with the introduction of different levels and entrances. The figures of the indigenous governor judge, Esteban de Guzmán, descendant of an old family of principals, and the viceroy Luis de Velasco with the speech symbol ("the one who commands") and that of the chair, which identifies the Spanish rulers and officials, are noteworthy.

1. Saint John.
2. Saint Paul.
3. Saint Mary.
4. Saint Sebastian.
5. Tecpan calli Mexico.
6. Don Esteban de Guzmán, judge.
7. Don Luis de Velasco, viceroy.
8. Community unpaid.
9. Ten Indians.
10. The government palace is swept by ten people who belong to the government, and now not all of them come.
11. Five Indians.
12. And women, also ten people that belong to the government come to grind to the palace, and also now not all of them come.

3. Fol. Turn / 38-500. Agriculture and Obrajes.

The passing of the "vassalage" of the *encomienda* to the hiring of labor is observed with greater clarity in agriculture.[22] This folio shows the indigenous labor no longer in the *encomienda* but in the Spaniards' orchards in a practically free labor system. It is interesting about these images that the Indians have stopped paying taxes and carrying out community work to be recruited in the Juan Gallego's orchard. Jerónimo de Mendieta wrote to the king in 1565:

> *So although some want to say that no Indian would prefer to be hired if he were not compelled, the opposite is the case: the Spaniards themselves have told me that in the cities of Mexico and Los Angeles, where takes place the entire concurrence of the Spaniards of New Spain, the Indians go to their homes to rent themselves, and many times more than they need, and particularly go where they know they are treated well.*[23]

Thus, what we now observe in these images is the work of the first Indians freely hired.

The same could be said of the work in the *obrajes* (or factories). First, it is surprising that, despite the mercantilist policy, the entrance of looms to supply the domestic market was allowed and, therefore, of new technology.[24] Later, the concentration of indigenous people under one roof for production. Finally, their preference for free labor, as can be seen in the folio.

However, recent research shows that the labor market of the *obrajeros* [obreros] was "imperfect" –free, forced, and slave workers coexisted in order to maintain an industry that could compete in other parts of the world. In this imperfection was found the main obstacle for the *obraje* to thrive as a fully capitalist company.[25]

1. In Mazatzintamalco, in the Spaniards' orchard, there are all kinds of people in this lot, the neighbors of the town, those who do nothing in their tribute, who do not do the communal work and nothing in their contribution that corresponds to the people in tribute. All these were written down, counted by Juan Gallego.
2. In the Spaniards' house, they spin, weave, all the neighbors of the town, all the people. All of them were registered, were counted by Juan Gallego. That nothing is their tribute, nor do the communal work, the Mexican tribute, and nothing is their contribution that belongs to the people in tribute.

4. Fol. Turn / 2-464 and Fol. Turn / 7-469. Expropriation of Land.

The land issue is undoubtedly relevant, so its inclusion in these testimonies offers a perspective from the indigenous principals or chiefs. The two folios here referred to have different content. The first illustrates the expropriation of lands to the principals carried out by the kingdom in favor of the *maceguales*, so it shows the decline of the power of the principals to contain their properties. In 1556, Esteban de Guzmán, the governor judge of Mexico, along with other principals, wrote to the king:

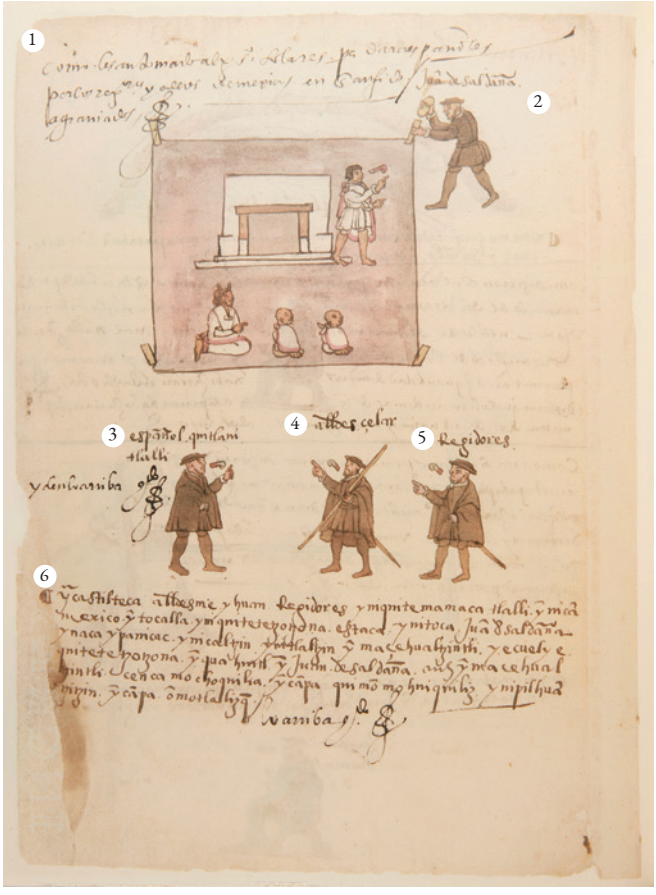
> *We have every day of so many needs, and we are so aggrieved, that in a very short time we will give out, every day we are wasting away, because they throw us out of our lands and dispossess of our estates, apart of many other works and personal tributes that each day increase.*[26]

This complaint also appears in the first referenced folio of the Codex Osuna schematically: a rectangle representing the lands, and inside a diadem with the speech symbol representing the principals.

The second folio is more explicit: the Spaniard Juan Saldaña places stakes –which symbolize the policy of consolidating of supposedly uncultivated land–, in the corners of a square inside which an indigenous family appears with their house. In the lower part

of the square appear Spaniards, mayors, and councilmen legitimizing this expropriation. According to the image, the expropriation is of the land of a principal, because it has the symbol of speech; however, the Nahuatl text refers to the lands of *maceguales*, not the principals. I think the complaint is one of the main ones against the expropriation of their lands since the manuscript comes from the governor and the indigenous mayors. It is understandable the concern for the *maceguales*, who worked the lands of the noble family,[27] since this broke the link with the nobility and, therefore, these peasants did not know where they were going to end, according to the codex. All this can be seen as a consequence introduced by the Valderrama reforms in two senses: the suppression of personal services for the nobility, even for the cultivation of their lands, and the policy of land consolidation, that is, the Spanish land titling carried out by Valderrama.

As Charles Gibson explained in his essay on the indigenous nobility, the position of the latter declined in the course of colonization for the centralizing efforts of Felipe II.[28] In this regard, Borah and Cook wrote: "The reforms of mid-century [XVI], which adjusted the weight of tributes to the ability of the indigenous population to bear them, meant in reality the liquidation of much of the ancient indigenous nobility and its reorganization on European bases".[29] Therefore, it is not unreasonable to think that many of the painted manuscripts of the colonial era, in particular, the genealogical, cartographic, and economic ones, are due to the insistence not only of the Spanish Crown to know the new lands but also to the efforts of the indigenous nobility to document a glorious past in danger of extinction.



1. How they have taken some plots to give them to Spaniards by the councilmen and mayors of Mexico, who have been aggrieved.
2. Juan de Saldaña.
3. Spanish *quitlani tlalli*.
4. Watchmen mayors.
5. Councilmen.
6. The Spanish mayors and councilmen then distribute the land here in Mexico, with our houses in the middle, so he strikes with stones, drives the stake, that who is called Juan de Saldaña. The one that is standing on the house, the land of the *macehual*, that already hits with stone, drives the stick is

Juan de Saldaña. And the little *macehual* whines, he will take his children over there, he will establish them over there.

1. Doctor Ceynos, judge.
2. How they have given Doctor Ceynos, judge, for the repair of his house after lately came one hundred and seventy-one loads of lime of a half *hanega* each load, without having been paid anything.
3. The lime of Doctor Ceynos, judge, one hundred and seventy-one loads that were loaded, which have not been paid.

4. They say that Doctor Ceynos has distributed among some *macehuales* of Mexico up to the amount of two *caballerías* of land, around two hundred fathoms from the lands of the lordship of Mexico to his detriment, and having been contradicted by the governor and mayors and councilmen of Mexico whom he did not want to hear.
5. Doctor Ceynos, there in Atlixxocan, already distributes the lands of the Lordship of Mexico, gives it to them in property, distributes them to the *macehuales*, to some four hundred fathoms, gives them to others two hundred, gives them the lands and the sown fields that belonged to the Lords. He gave them sown fields that not belong to them (the *macehuales*).

5. Fol. / 7-469, Fol. / 39-501 and Fol. Turn / 39-501.

Public Works and Cathedral

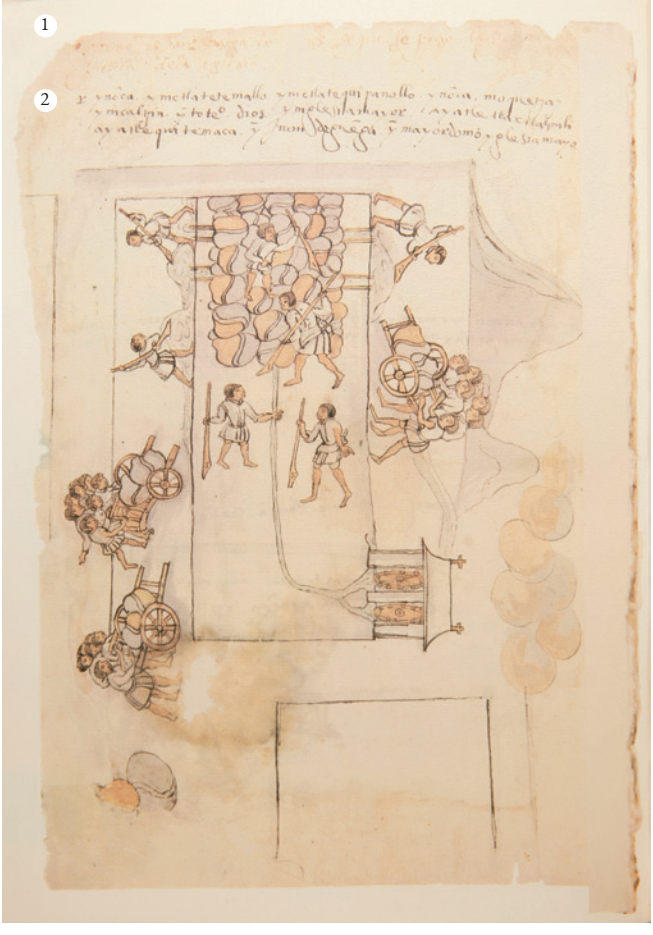
The supply of water has been one of the fundamental problems of Mexico City, although also have been the floods, especially in the 16th century, as some manuscripts relate.[30] Due to the flood of 1555 and the refusal of the council of Mexico City to carry out the works to solve the problem, the viceroy determined to make a wall and called the chiefs of the affected populations so that with all their people began to raise the walls. The chiefs gathered six thousand permanent workers and other temporary. The wall was known as the San Lázaro Levee.[31]

1. Lagoon Levee.
2. When the wall was erected, which is still unpaid by the guardians of our Sovereign, His Majesty, the treasurer, the accountant, the factor.
3. How the levee for the defense of the lagoon of this city was made by order of the mentioned viceroy and although they were promised they would be fed, they were not fed or anything else, in which all the people of Mexico and Santiago and its surrounding region worked for three months. Asked how many Indians would work in the mentioned work, they said that they do not know it for sure, but that in their opinion would work six thousand Indians on a regular basis, and more or less sometimes.

4. How now, seven years, more or less, they made a ditch in Iztapalapa, to bring the stone for the construction of the main church, in which a large number of the Indians of Mexico and Santiago worked for four months, and although they were told that they would be paid by Juan de Cuenca, who is in charge of the mentioned construction, they have not been paid anything for it.
5. When the canal was dug in Iztapalapa, which has not been paid to the *macehuales* by Juan de Cuenca, the administrator of the main church.

1. Tetzcoco.
2. Mexico.

3. Tlacopan.
4. The treasurer, the accountant, has not paid the levee that was raised; he still does not pay it to all the *macehual* people who made it.
5. The fence they did without pay.
6. Tetzcoco.
7. Mexico.
8. Tlacopan.
9. Chalco.
10. What was excavated by Iztapalapa is still not paid by Juan de Cuenca, the church administrator.
11. A ditch they made to bring the stone for the church. It has not been paid.



1. They have not been paid since the foundation stone of the church was laid down.
2. There when it was piled up, when the work was executed there where the House of Our Lord God, the Major Church, will rise, nothing is the payment. Nothing comes from Juan de Cuenca, the administrator of the main church.

The first commented foil (Fol. / 7-469) includes this wall seen from a new perspective; contains the text in Spanish with the unfulfilled promise of the viceroy that says he would feed a little over six thousand workers for three months. This picture refers in general to the Indians of Mexico and Santiago Tlatelolco. The second (Fol. / 39-501) presents the same drawing at the top, but refers to the Indians of Texcoco and alleges non-payment. The same argument is found in the lower part of both folios, although in this one it refers to the construction of a ditch to take the stone to the cathedral. The complaint, in this case, is against Juan de Cuenca, administrator of the principal church, and not against the archbishop because of the viceroy's attempts to separate the attributions of the State from the Church.

It is worth to note that the principals claim for the payment of these services between the end of 1555 and the beginning of 1556, in spite of then the neighborhoods of Mexico City did not pay tribute (they would do so since the arrival of Valderrama in 1563) dedicate precisely to the construction of the public works of the city; although it is possible that the viceroy has not effectively fulfilled the promise of food.

The foundation work of the second cathedral (apparently one was built between 1524 and 1532) is observed in the last folio (Turn / 39-501). There is information that Archbishop Montufar had agreed to build this new cathedral in 1554, although the project carried out by Claudio de Arciniegas in the late 1550s would not be approved until 1567; in fact, the foundation stone would not be laid down until 1573.[32]

The critical thing in this folio, in addition to the claim of payment, is the new European forms in an open space that Robertson clearly identified; forms that try to create a landscape from three different planes, unlike the indigenous one-dimensional plane. It is also worth to mention the use of the wheelbarrows, that is, the wheel that, as we know, was known by the pre-Hispanic inhabitants of the Classic Veracruz only as part of the figurines; here it appears as part of the new technology integrated into work.

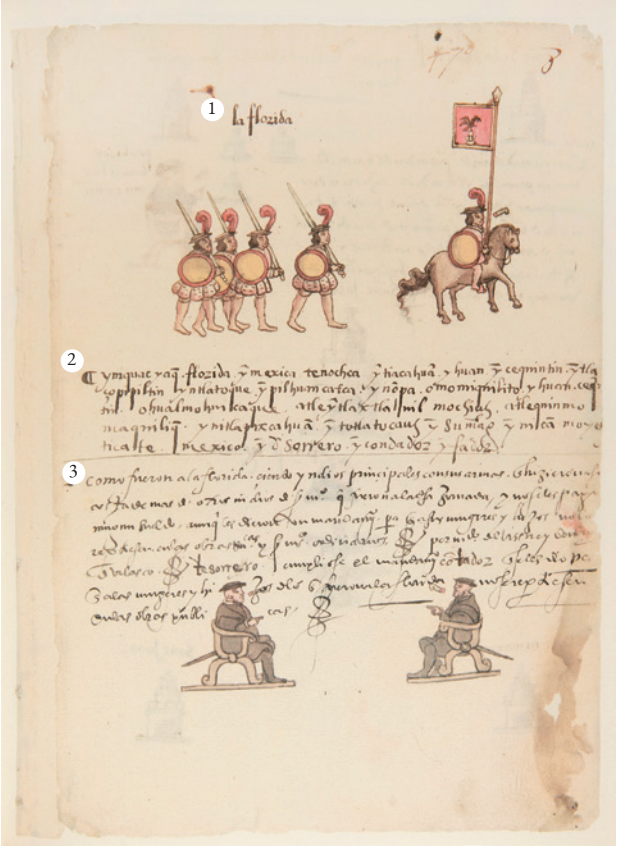
6. Fol. / 8-470. Journey to Florida.

According to the Spanish text of this folio, the expedition to Florida included "one hundred Indian principals with their weapons, who were made at their expense, in addition to other service Indians who went to the mentioned journey, and were not paid salary, although they were given a mandate so that their women and children would not be distributed in public works and ordinary services".[33] According to the text, the order was fulfilled, so again the principals claimed a payment.

Although the expedition took place in 1561, it required the rental of services since 1557. In a command, the judge Bravo urge the principals to deliver the 160 blankets contracted by the repartimiento regime; in a relation of 1559, appear tailors of the four neighborhoods (to make tents, quilts, and jackets), hatters, and silk workers, officials to make buttons, shoemakers, carpenters, etcetera.[34] This last relation reveals that there were substantial preparations, as the images of the Codex Osuna prove it: the principals are finely dressed in Spanish clothes but with all the paraphernalia of the pre-Hispanic warriors. Another detail that is striking is that the principal chief is on horseback and carries a flag with the "Mexican" symbology, that is, the eagle devouring a snake on a cactus.

In order to broaden the analysis of the meaning of the Codex Osuna regarding its context and intention, it seems necessary to deepen on two outstanding issues: the personal services of the Indians and the visit of Valderrama.

1. Florida
2. When the *Mexica Tenochca* went to Florida, the warriors and some esteemed princes who were sons of the Lords, they went to die there, and some returned. Nothing was paid, nothing we received from the guardians of our Sovereign, Your Majesty, who are here in Mexico, the treasurer, the accountant, the factor.
3. How a hundred Indian principals with their weapons, which they got at their own expense, went to Florida, in addition to other service Indians who went to the mentioned journey, and they were not paid any salary, although they were given an order for their women and children not to be distributed in public works and ordinary services by the viceroy Don Luis de Velasco. The command that was given to them so that the women and children of those who went to Florida were not distributed in public works was fulfilled.
4. Treasurer.
5. Accountant.



The Personal Services of the Indians

A linear idea about the evolution of labor from the Spanish conquest would be as follows: slavery as a right of war, *encomienda*, rental of personal services (or separation of these from the *encomienda*), *repartimiento* or forced hire of labor, until the peonage of the 17th century and henceforth. Under this scheme, the claims of the governor and the Indian mayors of the neighborhoods of Mexico City are inscribed at the period of transition from the *encomienda* to the payment of personal services; however, this scheme began to become complicated when other studies began to be developed both in the pre-Hispanic socioeconomic organization and

at the regional level. However, the scheme continued being valid for the Valley of Mexico and, therefore, to explain the Codex Osuna. However, the discussion that seems more relevant to me in this last aspect revolves around the permanence of pre-Hispanic institutions, particularly in the organization of labor and in the payment of tribute under Spanish forms of domination.

The hypothesis that Spanish domination, at least during the first century of colonization, was based on the forms of socioeconomic organization found at the time of the conquest, becomes increasingly valid. This idea, elaborated generally by Charles Gibson[35] and developed by several researchers,[36] has reframed the old controversy on the rationality and freedom of the Indians in a new light. Moreover, the reforms promoted by the New Laws (1542) and the rental of personal services (1549-50), interpreted within the Spanish humanist tradition of free labor,[37] must be revised from slavery (*tlacohtin*) and the rent of labor among the Aztecs (*mayeque*).[38]

As Gibson said:

> *In the search for new forms of labor that would replace and complement the encomienda, the viceregal government returned to a jurisdictional system that, in certain aspects, preceded not only the Spanish conquest but also the last period of glory of the Tenochca. The Spaniards used this system (repartimiento) in an intermediate period after the personal services had annulled the encomienda and before colonial institutions were adequately established at the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th.*[39]

The Spanish conquest ignored and, in certain aspects, destroyed the old institutions, particularly those of the high hierarchies, that is, those corresponding to the members of the pre-Hispanic nobility;[40] however, left intact the indigenous organization for the collection of the tribute and for the recruitment of labor, primarily since the new

labor laws were enacted. Therefore, the interest of the indigenous authorities in the *Painting of the Governor* for the collection of services.

This also explains that the enactment of freedom of labour and the rental of personal services (salaried work), under the organization of the Spanish State both in the setting of wages and in the recruitment of workers, was ultimately developed as a compulsory rental of personal services under the gaze of the distributing judges (*repartimiento*), displacing in the process the indigenous nobility in the control of the *macehuales*.[41]

On the other hand, this recovery of old forms of labor organization explains the regional diversity not only of *repartimientos* (*coatequitl*, *mita*, etcetera) but also of the different work systems; that is, it allows explaining the coexistence of slavery and *encomienda* with *repartimiento*.[42] Moreover, the Spanish empire expanded colonization by recovering forms of pre-Hispanic organization for labor and tribute from the second half of the 16th century, declining at the same time the role of the old indigenous nobility in the control of the population.

However, what does all this disquisition have to do with the Codex Osuna? The Codex Osuna is a claim by the governor and the indigenous mayors of the four neighborhoods of Mexico City that requires that the rent of different personal services be paid. This possibility of charging or claiming a payment was opened not only by the new legislation on the rental of personal services (the Indians "learned to complain," according to the Spanish version), but also the prior knowledge of the organization of the forced rental of labor; knowledge that included the number of tributaries and service providers.

It is paradoxical that in the *Painting of the Governor* the claim is against the viceroy and the judges, some of whom were highly corrupt, like the proven case of Doctor Puga; while in the documents added by Chávez Orozco in the 1947 edition, the claim is against governors and mayors by the *macehuales*. The charges are also precise: Indian governor and mayors have not paid for certain personal services of the *macehuales* (probably the same payment that mayors claimed the viceroy and the judges, as in the case of

lime and grass) so that these documents became one of the first criticisms of the chiefdoms.[43] In this sense, it can be said that the Codex Osuna reflects the concern of the indigenous nobility for losing their domains, such as the organization of labor where the distributing judges began to have critical functions.

However, why this wave of claims against the viceroy, judges, and chiefs? How to explain the existence of the Codex Osuna? The visit of Jerónimo Valderrama is the other key to answering these questions.

The Visitor

On October 25, 1556, Felipe II, in response to the abdication of the throne of his father Charles V, declared: "You give me a hefty burden".[44] A few months later, the emperor declared the first moratorium on the payment of the debt of the empire, so that the pressures to raise revenues increased: between 1556 and 1560, the Crown seized the gold and silver that came from the Indies in exchange for obligations with interest on real incomes.[45]

That is how the visit of Jerónimo de Valderrama, who had knowledge and experience in tax matters, can be explained: "The deep investigation of the state of the Royal Treasury in New Spain is perhaps one of the decisive reasons to send a visitor at that time".[46]

The primary purpose was met since according to the visitor, the tax increased between 1563 and 1565 from 21,000 bushels of corn to 83,067; and from 1,198 to 161,423 pesos.[47] In theory, the formula to increase the tax was straightforward: deepening in the implementation of the law, particularly regarding the separation of personal services from the tribute, forcing the payment of the former and increasing the second. According to Valderrama, the charges to the indigenous people decreased and the real income increased:

> *Doing the math of what the Indians used to pay, in money as well as in corn and other minutiae in which they paid and in personal services that they were ordered to do without payment by ordinances of the viceroy, it would seem very clear*

> *that they now pay much less than usual, and that the reduction will be made up for the increase in the tribute to Your Majesty, all of which was taken with great harassment from the Indians and got into the community to the detriment of the royal treasury. The corn of Your Majesty it is sold at a much higher price than it used to.*[48]

Criticism of Valderrama was inevitable; they were made by *encomenderos*, friars, viceregal officials, and chiefs, that is, by all those who precisely enjoyed the personal services on account of the tribute. Valderrama's visit disrupted the entire viceregal structure, although there is still no study that discusses dispassionately the consequences of the visit. About Valderrama and Velasco, José Miranda said: "The natives, publicly judging them, gave a lesson to the monarch: they named Velasco with the honorable title of 'father of the Indians' and they tarnished forever the memory of Valderrama naming him: 'Scourge of the Indians'".[49]

Either way, Valderrama not only accepted the denunciations against the viceroy and the *oidores* (*Painting of the Governor*) but also against the Indian caciques themselves.[50] It is also true that the Indians of the neighborhoods of the City of Mexico, even before the arrival of Valderrama, were free of tribute in exchange for the provision of various services to Spaniards and chiefs;[51] in general, the number of tributaries increased rapidly after the arrival of the Visitor.

It is difficult to answer if the conditions of the indigenous people in Mexico City improved or worsened with the Valderrama measures. What can be said is that the fate of the Indians remained in the hands of the viceregal officials, both in the taxation of tributes and in the payment of personal services. The visit of Valderrama represented a greater centralization of the organization of the tribute and the distribution of the jobs, and with this, more information was obtained regarding the tributary peoples of the pre-Hispanic era. All this explains the proliferation of manuscripts painted with economic themes during the second half of the 16th

century, manuscripts that according to John B. Glass represent 29% of the total.[52]

At the beginning of 1565, Valderrama began to present the charges against the viceregal officials. It was then when the *Painting of the Governor* was integrated since the testimonies have dates that go of January to August of that year. In November, Valderrama wrote to the king: "From the visit, it has been inexcusable to suspend doctors Puga and Villanueva ex officio. This writing will give the reasons why, and for some things not included I will give them".[53] This text matters not only for the charges and the sentence against the *oidores* Puga and Villanueva but also because it reveals the origin of the *Painting of the Governor*: they were writings sent by Valderrama to the king to give news of the results of his visit.

Even though the rulings given by Valderrama against the *oidores* are not known, there are those issued by the Council of the Indies. For example, the charges against Villanueva are more than one hundred; against Puga, there are more than two hundred including abuses against the Indians.[54]

By way of conclusion, the Codex Osuna is a set of pictographic testimonies –at least four of them contain eight different styles–, gathered by the visitor Valderrama (1565) as charges presented against the viceroy and the *oidores* by the governor and the mayors of the four neighborhoods of Mexico City. The subject that gathers them is the payment of the personal services requested based on the separation between them and the tribute. In other words, with the extension of the tributaries instrumented by Valderrama (hence the Codex Osuna also contains a list of Tacuba tributaries), personal services had to be paid based on a law of 1549; thus, the rent of personal services would be remunerated and controlled by the distributing judges (hence the *repartimiento*), not by the old indigenous nobility, although taking advantage of the organization of pre-Hispanic work known as *coatequitl*. The tribute, on the other hand, would be extended since Valderrama suppressed the exemptions in such a way that officials, priests, and even principals began to pay salaries for indigenous labor.

The Codex Osuna illustrates some of the changes brought about by the new legislation of the Indies and, like many other painted manuscripts, expresses the fear and complaint of the pre-Hispanic nobility for losing their old functions and domains. The scenes presented by the Codex Osuna, particularly those selected here, are an example of what Robertson called acculturation, that is, the introduction and recreation of new forms based on native structures, which offers beautiful and impressive images. Socially, as I have tried to show in this essay, they also represent processes of acculturation or, better yet, of greater penetration of Spanish forms of domination over ancient pre-Hispanic structures.

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BETWEEN 'CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION'

The Battle for the Arts in Mexico

The Great Divide

The reflection about the history and, in particular, about the history of art in Mexico has left an enormous vacuum between modernity and the vanguardism, as if it were a discussion only relevant to other latitudes, in particular for the Americans. For instance, the existing tension or contradiction between cult art and mass culture has become blurred for our territories. The purpose of this essay is to contribute to the reflection on this problem in order to break the traditional approaches or dichotomies inherent to our field.

"Since the mid-19th century, the culture of modernity has been characterized by a volatile relationship between high art and mass culture." This way Andreas Huyssen began his book *After the Great Divide*,[1] in a reflection about "modernity and its discontents,"

paraphrasing Freud. For although modernity brought along, at least since the "invention of art" or the concept of "fine arts," the insistence on the autonomy of the work of art and an open hostility to mass culture, at the same time both Courbet and Baudelaire, Cubism, Dadaism, etcetera –and for the Mexican case, post-revolutionary art–, appropriated both iconographically and formally from the popular language. In general, this process has been seen as a political appropriation of the legitimization of the regime; however, the analysis has left aside the aesthetic analysis, say, under the prevalence of the commonplace about the Mexican State. Hence, in the present, new approaches are sought to a subject that is effectively part of the "visual culture" of the Mexican 20th century: the "invention" of popular art as it has been called, but in which it is desirable that the perspective goes beyond postmodernity, in the sense of linking everything to the need to legitimize power.[2]

Therefore, at what point does the great divide between fine arts and craftsmanship, between high art and mass culture, arise? There are several works in this regard that I will analyze later, however, it can be said that it is a great divide that arises with the Enlightenment and with the different paths to the modernity of the national States based on two great models: the French, with the invention of the fine arts and which would be characterized as a Eurocentric model based on the concept of "civilization"; and the German, with the reinforcement of the identity elements emanated from the concept of *kultur*. Since then, this great divide will be present in the main cultural battles of modernity.

The question is pertinent because one of the significant tensions that have characterized the culture of modernity –but that also has to do with the emergence of the historical vanguards and with the questioning of postmodernism– is related to how the great divide between cult art and popular art takes place, as well as how both spheres are related. This is why for the history of art in the country it is relevant to investigate, for instance: 1) the origin of this rupture in New Spain, that is, the role reassigned to the guilds with the opening of the San Carlos Academy; 2) the prevalence of

art for art's sake or the emergence of the culture of modernity based on the introduction of symbolism; 3) the historical vanguardism (exemplified in the Mexican case by muralism) and its relationship with the popular arts.

The "Invention of Art"

Larry Shiner's book is an excellent introduction to a more significant consideration of contemporary art.[3] One of his most relevant proposals is that the (fine) arts, as we understand them nowadays, are a historical construction that evolves especially since the 18th century, mainly due to the great divide that some thinkers of the Enlightenment promoted between the "educated arts" and crafts, but also, as was explained, due to the creation of new institutions such as modern museums, halls of concerts, literary criticism, etcetera, which were directed to new audiences and markets of the arts which allowed this great transformation.

It is worth noting that, in the ancient world, there is no category in Greece or Rome equivalent to our concept of art. *Ars* referred to the technique and its perfection, but not to what was done by a group of creators. Maybe poetry was the closest thing to the concept of literature, but it was not part of the canon as in the modern world.

In the Classic Roman case, the divide between the liberal and vulgar arts could resemble the present date, although the idea of the artist was comparable with that of the artisan: with that of someone skilled. In this way, the function was different: artistic expressions fulfilled a more ethical than aesthetic function, that is, they were part of the formation of the political elite.

During the Middle Ages, despite all the complexity of this period, the difference between art and crafts was practically nonexistent, so aesthetic considerations had a religious or didactic functionality. In fact, Saint Thomas' appraisals of the uselessness

and, therefore, the ugliness of a crystal knife, tell us of utilitarian approaches to art, since the concept of art for art's sake was unknown.

In the Renaissance, painting, sculpture, and architecture enjoyed high prestige, even began to emerge new ideas that resemble modern ideas in the sense of the "autonomy" of some creators. However, the concept continued being that of "craftsman" even among those subjects of biographies by Vasari, like Michelangelo. He is portrayed as a heroic figure, but finally as a craftsman: a "court artist" who certainly stood out from the artists/craftsmen, but someone whose autonomy cannot be overstated. These artists worked in workshops to fulfill the orders of the Court and the Church; evidence of this is the existing contracts for the different works, for instance, those of Leonardo, which stipulated the motive and the type of materials to be usedstipulated. In the same sense, the writings of Shakespeare have the characteristic that they were malleable according to the public, so their quality stands out in a complicated and volatile context. "The greatness of Michelangelo and Shakespeare was not in separating the art of craftsmanship but in its ability to create incomparable pieces by holding together imagination and technique, form and function, freedom and utility".[4]

The modern concept of art has to do with a context in which the middle class expands and new institutions and practices are created, so it is necessary to dwell on this central aspect of the invention of art.

First, it would be necessary to consider that a new classification of the "fine arts" was created in conceptual terms. In 1752, for example, Jacques Lacombe summed up this change succinctly: "The (*beaux*) arts are distinguished from the arts in general, as long as the latter is destined for utility, while the former have the pleasure as their purpose. The *beaux* arts are the work of genius; they take the nature as a model, the taste for a teacher, the pleasure as a purpose [...] the golden rule for judging them is the sensation".[5] The contributions of Batteux and D'Alembert for the Encyclopedia took the same direction, but the most important thing was the new institutions of the fine arts established in the 18th century, such as art museums, concert halls, bookstores, cafes, and the literary criti-

cism in the periodical press. "These institutions embodied the new antagonism established between art and crafts by providing spaces in which both poetry, painting, and instrumental music could be the subject of experience and analysis regardless of their traditional social functions".[6] Thus, the new art halls, the gatherings, the museums, and the concerts began to differentiate the public from the aristocracy and from "popular culture," granting to the new middle classes, on the one hand, a possibility of promotion to activities of the aristocracy and, on the other, the distinction through fine arts or "well-educated" arts. Thus, the idea of good education through the arts served to new classes as a way to get a particular identification. Hence, the new spaces correlated with a broader social context.

Since the mid-19th century, the divide created between the fine arts and crafts became an abyss. Since then, the history was a process of assimilation of new fine arts such as photography or jazz, or rejection of this type of classification or divided art. Modernism can be interpreted as a product of these dilemmas since it was a contradictory movement in the sense that it deepened the divide while rejecting it, mainly based on the historical vanguards (*e.g.*, dadaism, surrealism or Bauhaus). In this sense, photography not only represented the trade-off between art and craft but it renewed this discussion based on other dilemmas: intellect versus mechanism, imagination versus technical skill, aesthetic versus instrumental, a single work versus several copies, and so on.

On the other hand, theoreticians like Marx took part in the questioning of the separation of the arts by advocating a utopian in which everyone could be artists since both men and women could realize their full potential. However, ironically, the movement of arts and crafts in Britain regained old ideas in new projects. For instance, through comprehensive art, women's proposals were kept away. In practice, additionally, the separation between the fine arts and the applied or decorative arts was maintained.

Along with Russian Constructivism, the Bauhaus tried to reestablish the relationship with technique and crafts, although according to its different directors (Gropius, Meyer, and Mies van der

Rohe) the emphasis was on technique and design. The purity for the first modernism exponents meant to deprive art of any element alien to its essence. Soon, the abstraction in painting, the atonality in music, and the experimentalism in literature associated with this search for purity. Kandinsky, for instance, recognized himself as the representative of a movement he had discovered: "the true nature of art." Dadaism on the other hand –an "anti-art" movement– did not really want to abolish art but to integrate it into life, to introduce it into everyday life. At the same time, philosophers such as Collingwood and Dewey considered the great divide between art and technique absurd: "The only basic distinction is that which can be made between bad art and good art".[7]

At present, the traditional great divide between art and crafts seems to be exceeded not only by the incorporation of "artistic crafts" to museums, but also by the consideration of architecture and photography as artistic forms where this, as a testimony of a fact social, paradoxically transforms into artistic testimony, neutralizing in some way its testimonial power. In the same sense, "mass art," although it has promoted more magnificent encounters between the fine arts and popular culture, seems to have self-destructive effects since the aura of the artist becomes a vanity fair that is away from the *aestheticization* of daily life.

Despite the ambiguities of contemporary art, well represented in Duchamp, the interest of anti-art vanguard can be summarized in the integration of art with life and society, an old project that continues to question traditional forms at the same time that opens the spaces for the future of art. There is no return in questioning the old system of fine arts generated since the 18th century; However, like the artwork *Fountain* by Duchamp, transgressive, anti-art contemporary art, with all the ambiguity of the case, will undoubtedly continue to find its sources in the aesthetics of everyday life, in the complexity of life itself.

The Teaching of Art in Mexico. The Reproduction of the Battle

Introduction

The historiography on the education or teaching of the arts in the country has recently enriched by a research group coordinated by Aurelio de los Reyes from the doctorate and postdoctoral program of the Instituto de Investigación Estética [Institute of Aesthetic Research] of the UNAM. In my opinion, his most recent publication, *La enseñanza del arte en la historia mexicana* [The Teaching of Art in Mexican History], is a significant contribution to the knowledge of what concerns us and occupies us. Its guiding thread has been the teaching of drawing from the first schools of arts and crafts of the colonial era, until the last years of the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes [National School of Fine Arts], also, of course, through the history of the Academia de Artes de San Carlos [Arts Academy of San Carlos].[8] His contribution is welcomed because it allows us to situate future research adequately, and, additionally, it shows us the relevance of arts education in our historical memory.

All memory, however, is nourished by some debates, explicit or not, between the actors of history itself. The truth is that we can only understand the history of arts education from some "cultural battles" that still permeate our present. I think of the existing dichotomy between an academic and professionalizing vision (which I will call *academicist*) and another social vision of culture and education (which I will call populist, for short). Both poles make up an intellectual and political movement that erupts precisely during the first years of the armed revolution, but that undoubtedly have a history in the very origins of the academies that took place during the European Enlightenment.

Moreover, the contemporary debate between culture as education and popular culture that, as we know, has grown from the anthropologists' view in the middle of the 20th century, has its origin in the diverse ways in which the first modernity had impact

on the nations, or how the battle between civilization and culture evolved[9] from the invention of art and its separation from crafts. In the Mexican case, this great divide can be exemplified in the battles that arose since the founding of the Arts Academy of San Carlos, but above all from the struggles for arts education in the post-revolution.

The Origins of the Academy

The creation of the academies of fine arts in the 18th century has been interpreted as a product of the expansion of the absolutist State, which would determine the relationship between art and power since then.[10] However, the link between art and power is more complex (even during absolutism), so by then it would be necessary to clarify the novelty of the concept of "fine arts" in its differentiation from crafts to the extent that we could speak of a broader process of "invention of art" such as it was known until the artistic vanguards.[11]

Indeed, what this "cultural revolution" (the "invention" of the "fine arts" concept) would come to mean derives from its differentiation from political power as a mediator in the construction not only of new concepts (such as those of art and artist), but also of values, practices, and institutions that would grant greater autonomy to artistic creation thanks, among other things, to the museums and the art market. In this way, the academies of fine arts would promote not only new forms of teaching, as would be the case of drawing, but a new concept of the artist, representing the spirit and creativity of an era (hence the great divide from the craftsmanship, which implied, in this sense, repetition), and the separation of the protection of patronages since the emergence of art markets to promote precisely "art for art's sake," away from any commitment to power. The academies, therefore, although they would have among their purposes to train professionals for the aristocratic courts –hence their stigma as conservatives– would also be the vehicle for the creation of new ideas and sensibilities of an era.

The creation of the Academy of San Carlos in 1783, in imitation of the San Fernando Academy in Madrid (1752), would have

to be placed within an enlightened Spanish world where schools and academies proliferated and new techniques and teaching methods spread. Faced with the existing prejudice that the colonial world was obscurantist and static, Francois-Xavier Guerra, in a text that is a crucial reference to understand the independence movements in Spanish America, discussed about a "vast educational structure" towards the end of the 18th century in New Spain, which allowed a sufficiently literate society (between 48% and 62% of children enrolled in school), to the point that the written texts became a civil war weapon.

> *As in Europe —I quote Xavier Guerra--, in New Spain, we see a multiplication of the enlightened societies, academies, and literary societies, such as Queretaro, which served as a meeting point for the conspirators of the 1810 insurrection.*[12]

The first general director of the Fine Arts Academy of San Carlos in New Spain was Jerónimo Antonio Gil. He was a Spanish engraver and translator of one of the most important books of drawing in this period and who initially arrived in Mexico City as a master engraver of the Currency House. The first fine arts taught there were: painting, sculpture, engraving, and architecture.

Notwithstanding the importance given to engraving in the academy due to the profession of its first director, the great divide of the arts was expressed in the Mexican case from the decline of the guilds and their ordinances –mostly by liberal critics to the corporations, but above all, as Revillagigedo said, for the lack of education of the craftsmen–, and the new formation in the academy based on principles of greater academic freedom.[13]

The Academy of San Carlos or the National School of Fine Arts, already in independent Mexico, maintained the bias of bringing Spanish or foreign artists to occupy its leadership positions, as the general director or as manager of any of its disciplines. Due to the Independence and facing shortage of resources, the academy was closed, and it was not until 1843 that it reorganized because Santa

Ana put: "in the hands of the Governing Board of the San Carlos Academy the resources obtained from The National Lottery".[14] One of the relevant issues through the various restructurings of the academy would be, in addition to the director's appointment, to bring teachers from abroad to renew the practice of fine arts. This was what happened with the arrival of Pelegrín Clavé, a Catalan painter, who along with Manuel Vilar, Eugenio Landesio, and Javier Cavallari, among others –all from the Academy of San Lucas in Rome–, promoted a generation of creators with a great drawing technique and, thanks to Landesio, also of landscape painting.

The first academies arose in Europe since the middle of the 18th century, so by the end of that century, there would be about a hundred of them throughout the continent. On the other hand, the academies in New Spain expanded from the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Let us recall that Francois Xavier-Guerra was one of the first authors to reflect on how this transformation occurred in the Spanish territories in America.

The academies were, of course, the primary vehicle for this new conception of art, although it is true that San Carlos in New Spain arose from the need to train engravers and drafters for the Currency House. It sponsored the Academy originally and included in its programs the teaching of architecture, painting, and sculpture.[15] In 1867, under the government of Benito Juárez, a comprehensive plan of artistic education was created, and the name of Academy of San Carlos was changed to National School of Fine Arts, achieving with this a better continuity in the studies and a greater professionalization of architecture. It was at that time that the new concept of "art" was clearly reflected in the policies of the institution and the country. This new idea, along with its great divide, was known in Mexico in one of the first texts that produced the history of Mexican art. It is the text of José Bernardo Couto, Diálogo sobre la historia de la pintura en México [Dialogue on the History of Painting in Mexico], published in 1872. At that time, Couto was director general of the National School of Fine Arts. His work narrates a dialogue between himself, the writer José Joaquín

Pesado and the painter and director of the painting faculty of the School, Pelegrín Clavé. In this document, the aesthetic criteria of the "invention" of art were established, which laid the foundations for classifying an artistic work: the correct drawing, the science of light-dark, perspective, and beauty.[16] Hence, about the question of whether there was painting before the New Spain's 18th century, which is when the history of Couto begins, it was commented:

> *Everything indicates that, in the indigenous races, the sense of beauty was not awake, which is where art comes from [...]. Where it is used the painting to write and where every writer is an artist, I am afraid that there must not be true painters. And that must have happened to the Mexicans, since they had no other system of writing, than hieroglyphs and paintings.*[17]

By leaving aside the pre-Hispanic works as a result of those criteria, they ignored all the Mexican "antiquities," but also the popular arts known as industrial arts, accentuating with it the great divide promoted mainly from Paris since the "invention" of the fine arts.[18]

There would be other changes in the legislation and the curricula (for instance with Justo Sierra); however, with the education of several young Mexican interns in Europe during the *Porfiriato* (such as Diego Rivera, Ángel Zárraga, Gerardo Murillo, Alfredo Ramos Martínez, etcetera), the possibility of change opened up, not only in academy but also in the very concept of art and the artist. Hence also the emergence of artistic nationalism in a desire to recover the own characteristics based on the new vanguardist trends, where even the role of the individual and solitary creator would be seriously questioned.

Against the Academicism

The historiography on the arts in Mexico has insisted that the Revolution brought along new airs and new ways of thinking. This struggle was also intellectual and was presided over by the Ateneo de la Juventud [Youth Athenaeum], where literate young people who

later became a central part of the leadership of the Mexican thinking in the first half of the 20th century participated. Among them were: Pedro Henríquez Ureña, a Dominican, but undoubtedly a figure who renewed the intellectual life in Mexico and several Latin American countries; Alfonso Reyes, José Vasconcelos, and Martín Luis Guzmán, among others. Their criticism focused mainly on the positivism prevailing in schools in Mexico, so they introduced the study of new authors that would allow a more comprehensive vision of the human being.

However, we should also mention Antonio Fabrés (a Catalan as Clavé, a sample of a particular influence), who promoted new methods of drawing and painting, thus renewing much of the national plastic arts. Among his students were Diego Rivera, Goitia, Herrán, Orozco, and others. I comment about that because the novelty in the painting with historical themes and nationalist motives is due to this type of teachers of the academy, without forgetting, of course, Mexican teachers like José María Velasco. On the other hand, José Clemente Orozco made very accurate criticisms in general. He mentions regarding Fabrés:

> *The teachings of Fabrés were instead of intense training and rigorous discipline, according to the norms of the academies of Europe. It was about copying nature photographically with the highest accuracy, no matter the time or the effort involved in it [...]. Among the favorite disciples of the master Fabrés, we must mention Saturnino Herrán, a real promise for Mexican painting and who would have become a notable artist in Mexico today [...]. By these means and working day and night for years, the future artists learned to draw, to draw truly, without any doubt.*[19]

The discontent of the young students of painting and sculpture, mainly, was provoked at first by the exhibition of Spanish painting organized for the celebrations of the Centennial, and that

was why, headed by Gerardo Murillo, the students of the academy proposed the first exhibition of Mexican painting. Orozco says:

> *The exhibition was a great success, completely unexpected. The Spanish painting was more formal and splendid, but ours, even if it was improvised, was more dynamic, more varied, more ambitious, and without any pretensions. It occupies the entire courtyard, the corridors, and all the rooms available. A similar exhibition has never been seen in Mexico.*[20]

Another of the critical moments of the academy was the strike of 1911 whose apparent reason was the irritation caused by the privileges of architecture students since this career had professionalized since the reorganization of the institution in the mid-19th century. Besides, the general director, Rivas Mercado, architect of training, maintained a permanent dispute with the other careers that did not reach a higher degree of professionalization. So, the student strike broke out on July 24, 1911. Jesús Ibarra, president of the student society, declared that the leading cause of the conflict was the students' petition to the Ministry of Education about "[...] the separation of the School of Architecture and that of Painters and Sculptors," petition that demanded, additionally, the removal of the general director of the School.[21] Rivas Mercado would not resign immediately (meanwhile, Madero came to power in November of the same year), until April 1912, as the situation became increasingly tense.

Finally, the strike did not provoke the academic separation of the architecture career (which would occur until the autonomist movement of the future university), but it did motivate the recovery of the name of the National Academy of Fine Arts, the incorporation of new curricula and programs of study, and the entry of key figures for the teaching of the arts, such as Alfredo Ramos Martínez, who would assume the direction of the school for the first time in August 1913 (during Huerta's dictatorship). Symbolically, Ramos Martínez established the first open-air school (in Santa

Anita, Iztapalapa), as well as popular centers for the teaching of painting. This fact is relevant because it would mark a watershed in front of the academicism, even marking two tendencies in the artistic education of the country.

José Clemente Orozco, as a good chronicler, mentions the fact:

> *Ramos Martínez was director; the first thing he did was open in Santa Anita, Mexico City, an outdoor school of painting pompously called "Barbizón," which was like founding on the river Seine, near Paris, a Santa Anita with trajineras, pulque, charros, enchiladas, huaraches, and cuchilladas two steps from the Eiffel Tower [...]. All this does not mean that Ramos Martínez did wrong; on the contrary, it was the natural reaction against the Academy already in total decomposition. For the proper academic methods of order and discipline had disappeared and only the ineptitude and routine remained. The bad thing was in the consequences of this innovation, of which we will talk later.*[22]

A key figure of this new path would be Gerardo Murillo, Dr. Atl, "the agitator," as Orozco called him. After his second stay in Europe, Murillo returned in 1914 to assume the direction of the newly named National School of Fine Arts under the Ministry of Public Instruction and Fine Arts (the rector of the UNAM, Ezequiel A. Chávez, had requested its incorporation in 1912). In his work program, in a document entitled *La acción: he aquí el programa* [The Action: Here is the Program] and in another specifically about the *Dirección General de las Bellas Artes* [General Direction of Fine Arts], Dr. Atl proposed to promote artistic creation from the government, "at the risk of falling into a sterile individualism," but, above all, the purpose of the new entity would be: "to democratize art."[23] Regarding this General Direction of Fine Arts, Dr. Atl proposed that not only the school but also the national museums of colonial art and archeology, as well as the Conservatory and the National Library, will become part of its jurisdiction.

This approach was accompanied by a profound criticism of the academies of fine arts, places where according to Dr. Atl "all the truly conscious elements move away, and in which only the mediocre spirits thrive." Moreover, he wondered (by the way, a question still posed by disoriented officials): "Where are there the great artists made by the academies?" Of course, at that time he could not see the budding contributions of Herrán, Rivera, Orozco, etcetera, and proposed as objectives of all arts education the "technical perfection, practical utility, and, above all, sincerity." Hence, Dr. Atl's proposal to transform all academic spaces into workshops, since the teaching of fine arts "must be essentially practical [and] a logical consequence of the social needs of the Republic [given that] Mexico is not in conditions to produce the artistic expressions that take place in Paris." It also ends with a sentence, maybe the source of the catechism of revolutionary nationalism:

> *If in this moment of universal renewal, Mexican artists, under the excuse of the serenity of their priesthood, remain inert and do not take part in the fry, in a virile way, consciously, if they let others work on their behalf, if they do not understand that is it is necessary to make the purity of their good will and the action of their energy felt within the great national movement, they risk that the ongoing avalanche will transform them into a heap of detritus.*[24]

Indeed, Dr. Atl broke new ground for the fate of arts education in the country, conceiving the creators/workers in a large national workshop from which the mural builders would emerge and would "narrate the glorious deeds of the Mexican revolution, as a part of a process of universal regeneration."

From the beginning of the academies, as well as the first open-air school and the desire to democratize the teaching of art, would come not only the cultural institutions of contemporary Mexico but also the central debate about the history of art education and our vision of culture. The 20th century would be the stage of this

controversy that has had different expressions. Dr. Atl's project certainly had many followers, particularly after the *Vasconcelismo*, and undoubtedly showed results with the Mexican artistic avant-garde; however, vanguardist artists (like Gerardo Murillo himself), of course, had been trained in the academies.

That is perhaps the paradox of this history, and through it, we can find alternatives for the present, beyond the traditional dichotomies of our history.

Mexicanizing the Influences

The Mexican Revolution was, above all, a cultural and educational revolution. An exceptional observer of the moment, now somewhat forgotten, is undoubtedly Anita Brenner. Her paper *Ídolos tras los altares* [*Idols Behind Altars*] is the first anthropological treatise ever made about popular culture and its relationship with Mexican art. Anita was born in Aguascalientes, the daughter of an Ashkenazi Lithuanian Jew and an American mother. Because the armed revolution, she and her family went to live in the United States. Thus, on her return, in the 1920s, her origins, which were nourished by an indigenous nanny ("Serapia," whom Anita remembered so much), and her talent, which would certainly make her an "exceptional woman" would allow her to be an extraordinary observer.

Today we would say that it was a cultural revolution in habits and customs, in practices and representations, based on an artistic, educational, and nationalist movement promoted by José Vasconcelos.[25] With the creation of the Department of Fine Arts within the newly created Federal Ministry of Public Education (1921), Vasconcelos managed to promote a renovating movement, a 'considerable change' according to his own words, in the education of arts in schools, by proposing creators to become teachers in classrooms guided by the Direction of Aesthetic Culture and the Direction of Drawing and Handicrafts.

Still in the rectory of the University (1920), Vasconcelos announced his most ambitious project before the university students: "The country yearns to educate itself; tell us what is the best way to

educate it [...] I ask you, and together with you all the intellectuals of Mexico, to come out of their ivory towers to seal a pact of alliance with the Revolution".[26]

Since the foundation of the Federal Ministry of Public Education (on September 5, 1921), the "promotion of culture and fine arts" was given prominence, as a consubstantial part of the organization of public education throughout the national territory. Moreover, for Vasconcelos, the "aesthetic emotion" was the ideal vehicle to acquire and transmit knowledge.

Alfredo Ramos Martínez returned to the direction of the ENBA (National School of Fine Arts) (in the mid-1920) and expanded his project of outdoors schools, as well as of alternative popular urban centers of the arts, such as those intended for workers with night drawing classes. Beyond Rivera's and Orozco's criticisms of Ramos Martínez's proposals (Rivera mentioned "people who miserably mimic all that came from overseas"), it is important to note that, for the first time, in his proposal to reorganize the school curricula and the hiring of new teachers, he proposed: "Dignify the teachers, as they deserve, considering them as true artists; meaning, giving them broad powers, leaving them all their personal initiative, because in that way they will be able to display their energies better to guide the students to the true path of art".[27] Years later, based on this proposal of freedom for the teaching staff, that some mistook with lack of discipline, the project of autonomy of the university that at that time meant essentially academic freedom.

Adolfo Best Maugard, a painter who had also studied in Paris, was entrusted with the teaching of drawing and handcrafts in the primary schools of the Federal District. Admirer of Mexican crafts (it must be remembered that the artistic vanguards took up the popular arts through a trend called "primitivism"), Best Maugard would elaborate a method of drawing named after him and that consisted in recovering, maybe influenced by *art nouveau*, the floral motifs of Mexican crafts, but based on three currents that Mexican art integrated: indigenous art (which Best Maugard rescued with the study of pre-Hispanic ceramics about which he prepared a

study for Franz Boas), colonial art (Dr. Atl published at that time a book on colonial architecture with photos of Kahlo, Frida's father) and oriental art (known of by the *Nao de China* trade).[28]

> *Everything happens; countries, races, and civilizations disappear; but many of their arts still exist. From this point of view, it is undeniable that promoting the evolution of national art –and by this, we mean popular art– is to become a nationality, it is to be patriotic.*[29]

During the tenure of Best Maugard (Fito Best, as he was known), were trained more than two thousand teachers who, in turn, at least in a programmatic way, would instruct about 130,000 students [...].[30] However, the lack of continuity –which has characterized our history of art education–, prevented the Vasconcelos' project from reaching the entire national territory.

The Vasconcelos model on artistic education came to permeate especially in the schools in the center of the country (according to data of the time: 87 schools of the Federal District, 67 in the rest of the country, 6 secondary schools, and 6 singing centers),[31] but it became undoubtedly in the paradigm of arts education throughout the 20th century.

However, there were other attempts to reinvent artistic education in the country. One of them was the proposal of Diego Rivera which, despite his brief period as director of the National School of Fine Arts (between August 1929 and May 1930), reflects the ups and downs of our cultural policy. The school had had a period of certain continuity with Ramos Martínez (his tenure lasted about nine years), even a "boom" since he created an inclusive institution despite the political movements and the bureaucratic dispute between the SEP (Ministry of Public Education) and the University. For starters, Rivera changed the name to Central School of Plastic Arts (following the idea of the group ¡30-30! which had provoked the fall of Manuel Toussaint as director). In addition to denying all previous experience, he proposed the "professionalization" of painters,

sculptors, and engravers, which would not have been bad if he had not equated them to "technical workers," so they joined together against him, both communists and conservatives. For Rivera, the opposition came from teachers and alumni, "acting in collusion to impede the effective education of painters and sculptors".[32]

In any case, the problem revived the "cultural battle" between academicism and populism in a debate for the construction of a national project for arts education. Unfortunately, the two main promoters in this period, both of the professionalization and the open-air schools, had to leave the country due to questionings to their work, leaving without continuity the work. In the early '30s of the last century, outdoors schools, despite the work developed by figures such as Gabriel Fernández Ledesma, Francisco Díaz de León, Julio Castellanos, and Leopoldo Méndez (by the way, from the group ¡30-30!), would also disappear.

From this debate, the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura [National Institute of Fine Arts and Literature] (INBAL, 1946) would subsequently emerge, with the stated purpose of expanding the coverage of arts education throughout the country, in addition to integrating pre-existing schools into a system. Its creation law depended on the SEP, and textually stated as goals –in an effort to reconcile the expansion of artistic education and academicism– the following:

> *Article 2º. The National Institute of Fine Arts and Literature will depend on the Ministry of Public Education and will have the following purposes:*
>
> *I. The cultivation, promotion, encouragement, creation, and research of the fine arts in the fields of music, plastic arts, dramatic arts and dance, the fine literature in all its genres, and architecture.*
> *II. The organization and development of professional education in all the fields of fine arts, of the artistic and literary education*

> *included in the general education that is taught in pre-school, primary, secondary, and teachers education institutes.*[33]

Also, the same article added:

> *For the coordination, planning, organization, and operation of the purpose to which this subsection is referred, a Pedagogical Technical Council will be created as an organ of the National Institute of Fine Arts and Literature, which under the leadership of its director will be composed of representatives of the corresponding technical dependencies of the Ministry of Public Education and of representatives of the technical departments of the Institute itself.*

At the same time, in addition to professional education, the law added:

> *III. The promotion, organization, and diffusion of fine arts, including fine letters, by all possible means and the latter aimed at the general public and especially the popular classes and the school population.*[34]

From its origin, the law contemplated the use of television so that the institute could fulfill its objectives. Let us remember that the Vasconcelos' utopia, of which Vasconcelos himself was very pleased, was precisely the incorporation of the creators into the teaching of the arts at different levels.

It would rescue the academy's desire to train creators of international stature, but it would also remind the ambition of post-revolutionary creators to bring quality art education to broad audiences. The *aestheticization* of daily life (typical of postmodernism) does not rule out that museums can be meeting institutions, that is, inclusive. From another perspective, the elitist training in the academies does not exclude that populism transformed into a

democratic proposal and that arts education,[35] is a tool for the construction of citizenship.

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THE EXHIBITION OF POPULAR ARTS OR THE EMERGENCE OF THE VANGUARDISM

Mexico 1921

To the post-doctoral seminar of Aurelio de los Reyes, an oasis.
Art has ceased to be esoteric and sumptuary. One of the enormous demands of the Revolution has been to take away those characteristics, tear art away from the "dead hands" of the academies and the privilege of the rich, redeeming it even from its official character, and taking it to the schools, assembly halls, and the offices of the town.
José Juan Tablada, *La función social del arte*
[The Social Function of Art]

The year 1921 was the year of the Mexican Renaissance; the year of optimism; that of the national unity and the year of the Suave Patria [Soft Homeland] *of Ramón López Velarde.*
Aurelio de los Reyes, *Cine y sociedad en México*
[Cinema and Society in Mexico]

The year 1921 marked the commemoration of the consummation of Independence and the beginning of the first oil boom. Mexico came to produce 25% of the world's oil in that year, which would allow, among other things, the celebrations

and the realization of Vasconcelos cultural project. It was a year of reconstruction and unity after the battles. Since its first year, the Government of General Obregón sought to legitimize itself through international recognition, especially from the United States, but also through a policy that we now recognize as "populist" or "for the masses." One of the events that allowed him to implement this policy was indeed the official appropriation of the centenary of the consummation of Independence.

As part of the festivities of the consummation, the Exhibition of Popular Arts inaugurated on September 19, 1921, would be the most significant event, paradoxically not for the celebrations themselves, but, as we shall see, for the history of Mexican art.

The topic of popular culture and arts in the history of Mexico has been studied mainly based on the stereotypes or characteristics that defined a national identity emerged from the revolution as part of a high point in the indigenism or, instead, as an instrument of the shaping of the authoritarian State and its relation with the post-revolutionary nationalism.[1]

However, the theme can be studied from new perspectives and thus open the opportunity to reflect on the 'historical vanguards'[2] in Mexico, that is, on the existing tension between modern art and popular art, since Mexico would stand out for anticipating (along with or perhaps under the influence of the Russian vanguardism) the reunification of the popular arts to the vanguard. All this entailed one of the most significant movements of modern art in general, but at the same time, by becoming a policy of the Mexican cultural State, the resource would be drained by the "museization" of the same popular arts.[3]

The first exhibition of popular arts has a special meaning in aesthetic terms. It can be understood as a rejection of traditional conceptions that accentuated the division between "major" and "minor" arts,[4] and at the same time as the construction of a new vision on art that would predominate well into the 20th century: a "social" art in front of the 19th-century conception of "art for art's sake." This new vision of art closely connected with the "historical

vanguards" breaks with the "great division,"[5] arose from the Enlightenment, between the concepts of art and crafts. So thanks to "primitivism"[6] or to "popularism," the Exhibition of Popular Arts would inaugurate a stage that would coincide with the expected "Mexican Renaissance".[7] It is, therefore, a relevant event for the history of Mexican art, traditionally studied from the political perspective about cultural nationalism,[8] which requires new views.

The origin of aesthetic modernity in Mexico can be differentiated by its symbolism and its revolutionary stages,[9] although it is worth noting that revolutionary modernism is the closest to the "historical vanguard" for its rescue and appropriation of popular arts, which led to a true "cultural revolution"[10] that detonated, particularly in the '20s of last century, new aesthetics.

The study of popular art and its relation with the vanguards in Mexico has been analyzed specifically by Karen Cordero Reiman. Although she recognizes the multiple strategies of modern Mexican art (Gamio's papers, "primitivism," etcetera), she mentions that interest in "manual arts" was inspired by John Ruskin without showing evidence for the Mexican case.[11] Delving into the Exhibition of Popular Arts can help us retrieve the signs of this aesthetic transformation and suppress some prejudices and inaccuracies.

The Consummation of independence

The commemoration of the consummation of the Independence marked a change regarding the celebrations of the centenary of the proclamation, which can be explained by the regime change that can be defined from "populism," meaning, a regime that would emphasize, starting from Obregón, its relation with popular organizations. If the celebrations carried out by Porfirio Díaz had accentuated the progress achieved in an elitist environment, those of the consummation at a moment of construction of the post-revolutionary State emphasized its closeness to the people.[12]

According to the president of the executive committee of the Centennial celebrations, engineer Emiliano López Figueroa, the festivities would have an especially popular character:

> *Let the parties be, as far as possible, eminently popular, because the Government's criterion is that the Mexican people are the ones who should enjoy them the most; they are the ones with the most right to them. Consequently, the executive committee that I honor myself to preside over will always have as a rule that the inhabitants of Mexico take part in the festivities since it is not the political triumph of a privileged class that we commemorate in the most transcendental moment we have, but the triumph of the people themselves. Therefore, the celebration to which the working classes can not attend will be very rare.*[13]

In this way, celebrating the consummation was a reason to differentiate from the Porfirian festivities and, politically speaking, the novelty was the discovery of the people, although celebrating the Treaties of Córdoba and the entrance of the Trigarante Army to Mexico City imply the contradiction that has surrounded the figure of Agustín de Iturbide.[14] Hence, the discussion about not celebrating the figure of the first emperor would mark the 1921 festivities in Mexico City. The initiative of Soto y Gama to change the name of the Chamber of Congress from Agustín de Iturbide to Belisario Domínguez prospered,[15] not so in some states of the Republic (as in Michoacán and Guanajuato) which vindicated the figure of Iturbide.[16]

The first to propose this celebration was the director of *Revista de Revistas*, the poet José de J. Núñez y Domínguez, who did it before the *Academia de la Historia* [Academy of History] to emphasize precisely the historical knowledge in the face of the political fluctuations. In a first editorial about the celebrations, "*La trascendencia del Centenario*" [The Transcendence of the Centennial], Núñez y Domínguez justified the recognition of the figure

of Agustín de Iturbide as the "finisher of national Independence," in the face of the oblivion he had surrendered for the good of the national unity. After emphasizing that the Homeland was of everyone given that it based on a common heritage where there are no winners or losers but free men, and also broken the channels with the immediate past (referring to Porfirio Díaz and Carranza) –the historian Nuñez y Dominguez continued–, the centenary celebrations would give the possibility of reaching such unity among the population, so "(they will have) illuminated the secular sadness of our people with parades of the same dawn that saw, for the first time, to wave over the Palace of the Viceroys, the national symbol of the *Tres Garantías*".[17] The argument about the national unity began again to be made, in a sense paradoxically similar to that of the *Porfiriato*, but in this case to vindicate the figure of Agustín de Iturbide.

The idea of celebrating the consummation of Independence was taken up by Alberto J. Pani, then Secretary of Foreign Affairs, in order to show that the country deserved an expanded diplomatic recognition, especially from the United States, which had postponed its acceptance, as well as to promote Mexico abroad as a peaceful (or perhaps pacified) country.[18] With the support of Montenegro, Enciso and Dr. Atl, Pani would carry out one of the most important events of the celebrations of the consummation: the Exposition of Popular Mexican Art. However, according to a manuscript of the official chronicle in the Foreign Relations archives, he mentions Noche Mexicana, a show prepared by Best Maugard with choreographies of t*ehuanas*, c*harros,* and c*hinas poblanas*, as "the largest effort and at the same time more focused of nationalism [...]".[19]

The festivities included all kinds of feasts. In addition to the reception of diplomatic missions, the visit to Teotihuacán guided by Manuel Gamio, the swearing in of the flag by the children ("the essential patriotic celebration among those conducted"), the floral festival with a dozen allegorical floats, the Centennial bullfight with Gaona (and with *chinas poblanas* and bulls, of course), the fireworks, the *charro* showcase, the festival of flowers in Xochimilco, in short, the distribution of toys and snacks to poor children, without

missing the party of the maids full of confetti. However, there were also "high social parties" at the Casino Español and the dance at the Country Club, as well as at the Syrian-Lebanese colony, in addition to sports events, among others. The Exhibition of Popular Arts, however, would not only represent the shaping of post-revolutionary national identity, like many of the festivities that would become civic rituals but would also broaden the existing idea on art.

Álvaro Obregón, Ramón del Valle Inclán, Jorge Enciso, Roberto Montenegro, Martín Luis Guzmán, and personalities in the first exhibition of popular arts, 1921.[20]

Montenegro in front of sets possibly from the 1921 exhibition.[21]

In a context full of optimism and as part of the idea of a "renaissance" in the arts, the first Mexican Exhibition of Popular Arts was inaugurated on September 19, 1921.[22] The newspaper that most extensively described the exhibition was El Heraldo of Mexico, in a chronicle that appeared on the front page, "The National Art Exhibition was inaugurated yesterday."[23]

After recognizing the presence of the President of the Republic, the efforts of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, as well as the artists Jorge Enciso and Roberto Montenegro, and praising the beauty of indigenous art, the anonymous chronicler describes the exhibition in some detail: Brightly colored flowers decorated the front and on the central balcony was an enormous Michoacán basin drawn by Montenegro that had also served for the allegorical float of the executive committee of the Festivities in the parade the day before; the hall painted with a bright red background showed poppies and yellow elements. When entering in a wide corridor were the tables for the snack served at the end; "fine *sarapes* and showy mats" adorned the stairs, as well as masks brought from Sonora and Guerrero. The first room had the serapes: in vibrant colors, those from Guerrero and Oaxaca and darker or fainter those from Aguascalientes or Zacatecas; between them highlighted valuable models, one with the Aztec calendar and others with images of Hidalgo and Juárez given as gifts by the President of the Republic.[24]

The chronicler mentions that in the same room there were showcases with silver filigree works, such as saddles and detailed miniature carriages, as well as crosses, earrings, and small fishes, all in fine silver and belonging to the collection of Margarita Casasús de Sierra. The central showcase contained objects of beading, coral necklaces of Quiroga, agate corals of Guanajuato, and in pottery were the pots and casseroles of Oaxaca, the demijohns and horns incrusted in shells of Cuernavaca, as well as figures made of sugar of Celaya over fine shawls of Tulancingo and Aguascalientes. Montenegro would decorate a small *Tapatío* room with flowers and branches predominantly in red and black, which would serve as background to show a very varied collection "in the shape of jars,

vases, flower pots, mugs, large bottles, etcetera," as well as the "*monitos*" of Guadalajara, wedding couples with priests, altar boys, and godfathers, all them "in a little cardboard of 3 x 3 centimeters," but also charros fighting with *machetes* or play cards on their *sarapes*.

The room most interesting for the visitors was the pottery 'imitation of Talavera' manufactured in Puebla and Aguascalientes, with blue and yellow motifs, "and that demonstrates the progress made by the craftsmen with a good artistic direction"; the walls were adorned with motifs of the crockery exposed against a golden backdrop and with verses of popular tune: "Cruel, ungrateful fortunes/I have come to know,/that they will see the cactus,/only when it has prickly pears."

In the next room would be the *jarcias* and *petates* [ropes and mats weaved with vegetal fibers], baskets of fine weaving, hats and a multitude of small objects of various shapes manufactured in Guanajuato; the "*tarascas*" were on exhibit, figures made with palm leaves, like that of Saint Michael Archangel or that of Santiago Apostle, "In other rooms you could see the unravellings of Aguascalientes, placed with art on the walls decorated with silver cactus and a deep blue background, and the Michoacán vases, since the huge one-meter-diameter tray, in which were painted red-petalled roses".[25]

After the visit to the salons, the President sat down to witness the typical Yucatecan dances and finally enjoyed the planned snack: "tasty *tamales* and milk *atole* served in glazed crockery from Jalisco."

The chronicle of Excélsior commented:

> *General Obregón arrived on time; the rooms turn out to be small [...], both national and foreign ministers were present [...]. A group of Yucatecan singers and dancers and the Centenario Orchestra delighted the crowd that savored delicious tamales [...]. General Obregón pleasantly impressed retired after congratulating the organizers, Messrs. Enciso, Montenegro, and Atl.*[26]

A brief journalistic note appeared on Sunday, September 25, 1921, in Revista de Revistas, on page 18, accompanied by two photographs: in one, President Álvaro Obregón appeared at the center of the delegation and the organizers under a wall of *sarapes*; in the other photograph: a corner of mats, baskets, and other basketry items. The note referred to two data not found in the other journalistic references: that the exhibition took place in the building with the number 85 of Juarez Avenue and that the guest of honor was "the distinguished Don Ramón María del Valle Inclán".[27]

At the end of the festivities, another editorial of the same magazine insisted on the themes of unity, by referring to the gathering of "the crowds" around the flag, and the need to bring joy to the people after the horrors of civil war. The festivities also provoked great demonstrations "of art, of nationalism, of vernacular 'folkelore' (*sic*)"; but above all, –concluded this editorial–, the festivities "offered a great opportunity for many people to learn more about our history".[28]

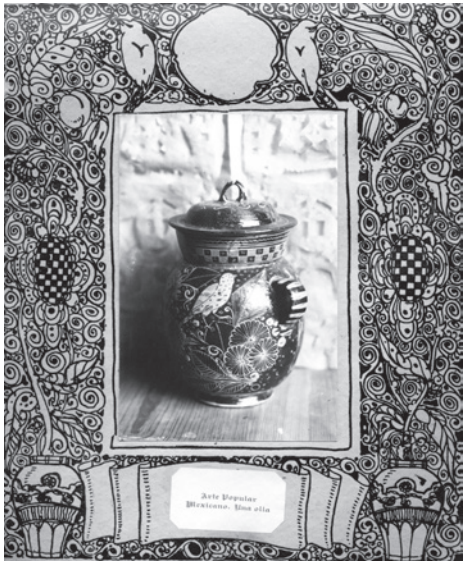
The Exhibition

Exhibition of Popular Arts of 1921, Roberto Montenegro.[29]

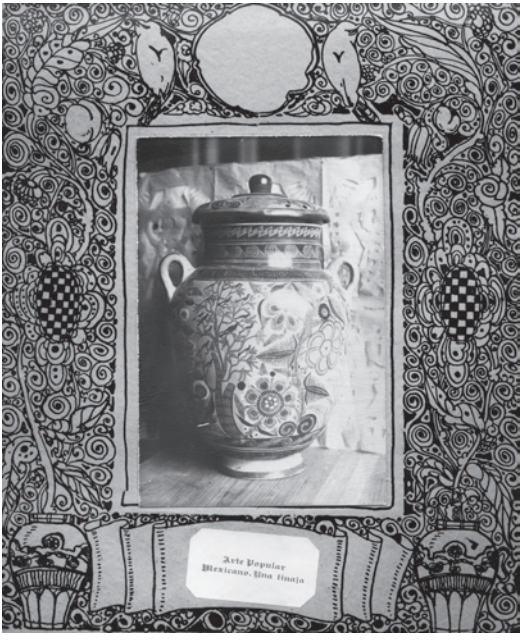

Arte Popular
Mexicano. Los famo-
sos sarapes de
Saltillo

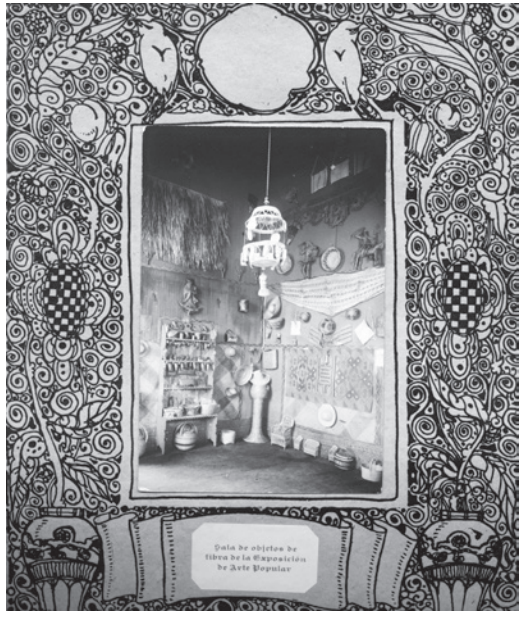

Seccion de Ceramica
en la Exposicion de
Arte Popular


Departamento de
Lacas en la Exposición
de Arte Popular
Mexicano


Arte Popular
Mexicano. Una olla


Departamento de
Cerámica de
Guadalajara


Arte Popular
Mexicano, Una Uuaja


Sala de objetos de
libre de la Exposición
de Arte Popular


Arte Popular
Mexicano.
Gaul antiguo


Una escultura
de barro


FIGURAS DE CERA Y TESPO.
ENRIQUE VALDES
Figuras de cera y
tespo de la Exposición
de Arte Popular


Una escena del Ballet


Uno de los vistosos
bailables del Ballet

Vasconcelos and the Patronage of the State

In the photos of the Exhibition of Popular Arts, Vasconcelos does not appear. Jean Charlot even commented that he was not invited.[30] However, the enmity of Vasconcelos with Alberto J. Pani ("Pansi", as he calls him in his *Memoirs*), as well as his rejection of the festivities in general and, in particular, to those organized for the centenary of the consummation of Independence, as Vasconcelos himself commented (the first and last time that would be held in commemoration of the Plan of Iguala), would be some of the reasons that would explain his absence in the Exhibition.[31]

The Exhibition of Popular Arts, maybe because of the conflict between Alberto J. Pani, its promoter, and José Vasconcelos, who organized in a school another parallel exhibition about the industrial arts,[32] or because of the hurry with which it organized, did not have in its moment the projection and relevance as a part of the celebrations. However, this exhibition contributed mainly to

propose a new aesthetic conception that would also link the Mexican State and its nationalist proposal with the indigenous peoples. It would also be the beginning of the Mexican cultural State, that is, the beginning of governmental patronage to the arts and culture as State policy.[33]

Indeed, José Vasconcelos did not participate in the organization of the celebrations of the consummation and the Exhibition of Popular Arts; however, his friendship with Montenegro allowed to anticipate some actions that contributed to the new revolutionary aesthetic. Specifically, Vasconcelos wrote in his memoirs the emergence of the works of Montenegro, Enciso, and Ledesma in favor of popular arts.

El desastre [The disaster], a work that narrates the rectorate of the National University from 1921 until the frustrating presidential campaign in 1929, begins precisely with a trip to the interior of the country accompanied by close intellectuals in order to promote educational reform in favor of federalization "on mission as a traveling agent of culture," said Vasconcelos himself. They accompanied him on that occasion, "as speakers Antonio Caso and Gómez Robelo; as the ambassador of painting, Montenegro; and Carlos Pellicer and Jaime Torres Bodet to satiate the eagerness of poetry that beats under the layer of their misunderstandings and their disappointments, in all the Mexican audience".[34] He mentions that it was in Aguascalientes that the approval of the educational reform coincided with their journey, so they organized a party, but also, in a solemn evening in the theater (Morelos, is assumed), philosophy and patriotism were discussed. The next day, "the artist Fernández Ledesma took the first steps for the creation of a ceramic school which had the purpose of gathering up and organizing the tradition of local workers, derived from the Colony".[35] Indeed, it was a symbolic act that would take up the tradition promoted by Lucas Alamán since the 19th century and which would later become an act of all cultural politics.

A little later, during his stay in Colima, besides mentioning the illusion of staying in the outskirts of Colima given the beauty

and spaciousness of the orchards and admiring the producers of the tuba, he wrote: "Montenegro and Fernández Ledesma went beyond of the sterile dreams. They painted watercolors of a tuba seller and other subjects amidst Colima houses and landscapes." Also, he states in one of his enlightening paragraphs that those "naive works were the beginning of the popular theme painting that later became a school."

Vasconcelos also says: "All the renaissance of the national ceramic start with the trip to Oaxaca made weeks before by Enciso and Montenegro. Enciso and Montenegro created some decorated dishes that were the foretaste of what is today an artistic industry." He placed on record this because he wants to make it clear "that industries and arts are not improvised nor spontaneously come from the people, but that the intervention of the cultured artist is always necessary to initiate or resuscitate the artistic production." Also, this paragraph concludes with a premise that would explain the foundation of the Mexican cultural State:

> *Hence, it also follows the need for the functions of the State fall on intelligent and well prepared people, because the artist cannot do anything left to their resources, and it is the government the only one who, in these times, can become patron and director, systematizer of the superior activities, as well as minor.*[36]

Vasconcelos himself established a distinction beyond the indigenist derivations entailed by the revival of the popular arts, establishing two critical points in this process: the participation of "cultured artists" in the revaluation of what is popular and the "patronage" by the State towards the creators of both "minor" and "superior" arts, 19th century concepts that reveal, despite everything, the subordination of these arts to the fine ones.

The Catalog

For the first time, as Dr. Atl said, the Mexican State supported the popular arts, "[...] it can be said that since that date (September 19, 1921, date of the exhibition) the Government of the Republic recognized officially the indigenous ingenuity and ability that had always been relegated to the category of pariahs".[37]

The catalog written by Dr. Atl about the Exhibition of Popular Arts has been interpreted from an indigenist vindication and of the shaping of post-revolutionary nationalism.[38] As Dr. Atl himself saw it on the mentioned exhibition: "The Exhibition of Popular Arts of the Centennial has been the first public manifestation that has been made in Mexico to pay official homage to the national arts, and it has been a starting point for its development and its transformation".[39] Since then, indeed, the cultural State and the governments, at different times and variable speeds, have promoted popular artists as part of national identity and, of course, have encouraged the creation of multiple popular art museums in various states of the Republic as a continuity of this "official tribute." Dr. Atl acknowledged the work of Roberto Montenegro and Jorge Enciso to carry out this process from the catalog itself and later in his memories:

> *The painters Jorge Enciso and Roberto Montenegro, promoters of the popular arts and their most fair appraisers, suggested to engineer Pani the idea of making an exhibition of those arts that they loved so much, to commemorate with dignity the Centennial of the proclamation of the Independence of Mexico. Pani welcomed the idea with enthusiasm, and thanks to his organizing spirit and the position he held —secretary of Foreign Affairs—, the exhibition could be carried out. Diego Rivera, Best Maugard, and Carlos Argüelles contributed to the resounding success.*[40]

When mentioning the foundation of the Ethnological Department of the National Museum, also comments the importance in this process of Luis Castillo Ledón, director of the Museum, and of Mendizábal,[41] manager of the same and where not only the pre-Hispanic pieces but also the products "of the current indigenous races" would be preserved. However, all agree that it was Montenegro and Enciso who promoted this exhibition. Tablada, who would be an excellent observer from afar, commented on the importance of both, but especially that of Enciso, in the appreciation of popular art.[42]

This event acquires a special value, symbolic we could say, for two central aspects that I now mention: 1) for the beginning of the Mexican cultural State by means of the support for the popular arts and 2) for the transformation of the aesthetic conceptions of the moment, from a traditional and academic aesthetic vision of "art for the art's sake," to another where the art acquires a "social function." These aspects were anticipated, the former by Dr. Atl; and the latter, maybe the most relevant figure in this effort, by José J. Tablada.[43]

The Attraction to the Primitive

Beyond the history of art based on the "big three," other figures stand out in this transformation. Among them jut out: Roberto Montenegro, Jorge Enciso, Adolfo Best Maugard, and, of Guatemalan origin, Carlos Mérida. They would also have their historian and critic: José Juan Tablada.[44]

Roberto Montenegro and Jorge Enciso shared a hometown, friendship, and passion for popular arts. Both were students of Félix Bernardelli[45] in his native Guadalajara and were also fellow students in Mallorca under the guidance of Anglada Camarasa. Enciso would be who first would incorporate popular elements in his painting, in addition to having a vision of preserving the pre-Hispanic and colo-

nial legacy.[46] However, it would be until the return of Montenegro in 1919 when both would create new ways of seeing the country.

It is thanks to the memories of Montenegro that we know the process of transformation in its conception of art, a process that presumably parallels that of Enciso. Montenegro wins a scholarship in the academy to study in Europe since 1906 thanks to a "coin toss" that won against Diego Rivera, who also earned a scholarship six months later. He spent two years in Spain where he met the Madrid intellectuals (Valle Inclán, Pío Baroja, Juan Ramón Jiménez, Gregorio Marañón, etcetera), besides studying engraving with Ricardo Baroja and, finally, going to Paris where his conception of art changes:

> *[...] when arriving and realizing the transformation that was in the environment of that time, all my knowledge and all my inclinations, all my experiences, came down before the unexpected movement that was happening in the City of Light. [Also, he continues:] The exhibition of the independents, Les Fauves, exhibitions of Picasso, of Braque, bewildered my intentions and in a moment of transition, I was isolated thinking about that bold and new vision of the painting that changed all my paths [...] I felt carried by the modern current and discovered in me a budding revolutionary, which transfigured in a moment all the classic historical foundation of my learnings for a new path that I did not know where it led me.*[47]

Due to the intervention of Dr. Atl, a fellow countryman, and companion of Parisian adventures, he not only became an "involuntary revolutionary"[48] but also met Henry de Régnier, who would write a preface for a portfolio of drawings that would momentarily consecrate him on the artistic scene. When the war broke out in Europe, he followed some of his friends and the teacher Hermen Anglada Camarasa and moved to Mallorca where he lived the "primitive" experience: "I still keep the primitive vision of my beloved

port of Pollensa, the landscapes of mountains, the blue seas, the four most beautiful years of my life".[49]

Julieta Ortiz Gaitán, who describes in detail the stays of Montenegro in Mallorca, wrote: "Our painters, marked with the boredom and disenchantment of 'civilization' and also fleeing from the horrors of war, built on the secluded beaches of Mallorca, their golden age".[50]

This primitive vision would allow him the alienation on his return to Mexico, shortly before Carranza's assassination, which would enable him to discover aspects not previously valued sufficiently in the country:

> *When I arrived, everything surprised me. I was arriving in an unknown country; everything captured my attention: colonial architecture, palaces, churches, had a new meaning for me. The indigenous subjects, their handicrafts, their folk art, the costumes, the dances, the customs that I really did not know, because the little time that I was previously studying in San Carlos was not enough to understand them, besides that it had not been revealed in me the sense of folkloric investigation; but as in the last days of my stay in Paris I saw an exhibition of Russian folk art in the Grand Palais, and I found in the decorations of its chests, its embroideries, its ceramics, a certain similarity in that art that reveals the artistic insights of the peoples. In any case, my country puzzled me [...].*[51]

This paragraph from Montenegro seems revealing to me because of the alienation that allowed him to appreciate popular art, where the approximation to the popular and the primitive is seen in a positive perspective (closer to the myth of the "good savage");[52] but also the text is relevant for a key to understanding its relation with the vanguardism: the exhibition of Russian folk art in the Grand Palais in 1913.[53]

Russian folk art was in vogue in Paris at the beginning of the 20th century thanks to the impressive Russian presence at the International Exposition in Paris in 1900, and to a good number of Russian creators in the city who contributed to the creation of the historical vanguards through of what we know today as "primitivism" or, perhaps better, "neo-primitivism."[54]

However, 1913 was a special year for Russian art: Russia celebrated the three hundred years of the Romanov dynasty with the Second Exhibition of Popular Arts. With this, Tsar Nicholas II wanted to relive the idea of great Russia and the ideological union of that dynasty with the people in the imperial botanical gardens of St. Petersburg.[55]

In the same year of 1913, Miss Nathalie Ehrenbourg, with the support of several collectors and especially the Russian artist Mikhail Larionov, organized in Paris, in the Salon d'Automne, one of the most influential exhibitions of contemporary art: Russian Folk Art in the Image, Toys, and Spiced Bread.[56] According to Yukev Tugendhold, in the prologue to the catalog of the exhibition the relevance of this exhibition was recognized, "the contemporary cult of the primitive is different from that of the romantic era or the era of Orientalism [...]. This old art, strong, expressive, always young, gives us the hope of renewal, of the 'rejuvenation' to use the word of Paul Gauguin." That same year, Alexandre Benois recognized that to knowing Cubism it was necessary to experience Russian icons, and vice versa: "Our young Russian painters are not purely Cubist. They have a lot of the *lúbok* and icons in them".[57]

As a way of differentiating itself from the symbolism and eclecticism that the Russians called *Art Nouveau*, in Stephanos' exhibition in Moscow in 1907 some paintings start to appear as a part of the "neo-primitivism" with authors precisely like Larionov, Natalia Goncharova, and the Burliuk brothers (David and Vladimir). This new style took inspiration from children's drawings, religious images, Izba wood sculptures, all within a perspective of questioning of the previous concepts of art, but based on new scientific concepts and with great freedom in the drawing, in different perspectives, in

simultaneity and with emphasis on humor. The return to the "collective tradition" and the "national myth" that began at the end of the 19th century made it possible for these artists to begin to study the "treasure of popular creation seen in the depths of the Russian regions".[58]

Years later, several "neo-primitive" artists were invited by Kandinsky to exhibit at the Hans Goltz Gallery in Munich from February to April 1912.[59] Among the guests were the members of the group known as "Donkey's Tail," including Larionov, Goncharova, and Malevich, and who would join them for the first time, Marc Chagall. Then came the exhibition of 1913 in the Salon d'Automne, which would meet, as I said, Roberto Montenegro, among many other artists who would disseminate these findings of Russian artists.[60]

This connection with the Russian vanguardism warns us that the "primitivist" influence was an appraisal of the popular and autochthonous in the face of Europeanizing influences and that it offered the possibility of "renewal" or "rebirth" in the face of the "civilized" world. All this allowed Mexico to position itself positively as one of the most attractive regions to live creatively and passionately, beyond the subsequent reading in which the world seems determined by politics.

On the other hand, before the criticism of the work of Montenegro for being "orientalist" or decorative against nationalism, it should be said that Montenegro went beyond the finisecular modernism and the symbolism precisely because of its experience in Paris and, above all, in Mallorca, by proposing the recovery of popular motifs, shapes, and colors as a vanguard act against Cubism and Futurism, for example, by Diego Rivera. Also, in this, the influence of Hermenegildo Anglada Camarasa would be decisive for the vision of Montenegro.

In 1918, at the Salón de Vilches in Madrid, Montenegro exhibited engravings with *Mexican motifs*, as he called them. A Madrid critic recognized the uniqueness of these engravings, especially in the exhortation to American artists: "It is a constant exhortation

to American artists, the exhibit that they cultivate in preference to any other environment, that where they were born".[61] That means that in advance, beyond Herrán and the works of Rivera and Siqueiros a little later, Montenegro proposed a new aesthetic that he would reconfirm upon his return to Mexico. On this journey, his travel companion would be Enciso and based on other proposals, Adolfo Best Maugard, as Tablada could clearly see.

Perhaps the best expression of this synthesis in Montenegro, as anticipated by Carlos Mérida, are his murals in the old College of San Pedro and San Pablo, notably La Fiesta de la Santa Cruz o La reconstrucción de México por obreros e intelectuales [The Feast of the Holy Cross or The Reconstruction of Mexico by Workers and Intellectuals], a mural begun in 1923 and that would culminate ten years later in a second stage. This mural acquires particular relevance due to its characteristic elements, nationalism, and didactic intention,[62] but also because it is a scene that co-occurs in life and in the mural (a New Spain building being restored, in which intellectuals, workers, and the State participate), leaving precisely a fresco of national reconstruction as in a fresco of the Renaissance.[63]

So, Montenegro together with his countrymen, Enciso and Murillo, as well as Best Maugard in another sense, achieved the ethical and aesthetic synthesis through their "democratizing" proposals of art for the people, as well as overcoming the dichotomy between the national and modern. Now, if a historical vanguard is defined more by self-criticism, the rereading of Montenegro, in the face of speculation and ideology, allows us to assess its contribution to the historical Mexican vanguardism:

> *For many years —Montenegro declared at his time of greatest artistic relevance in the country— I have drawn frivolities and trifles, which have no value to me today. I wish I could destroy all the previous drawings. An artistic work is done by study and perseverance, always evolving, within the new paths.*[64]

Another Vision of Primitivism: Fito Best

> *The drawing method proposed by Adolfo Best Maugard is undoubtedly one of the most systematic efforts to know the "primitivism" in the popular arts. I have referred to the introductory text of Tablada that, despite some reflections that had more to do with critics than with art criticism, managed to establish the great division in the art to synthesize the vanguard proposal in "the social function of art." For his part, Best Maugard in his text Del origen y peculiaridades del arte popular mexicano [About the Origin and Peculiarities of Mexican Popular Art], where he considers the generalities of primitive art and, at the same time, of the differences that each people establishes according to multiple factors, proposes a line of reflection about how the artistic products are acquiring a character of their own.*[65] *Moreover, comments on its purpose:*
>
> *In the case of Mexican art that we are going to study, what interests us, thus, is to discover the most remote manifestations of our aboriginal art that constitute the original motives that, as it is said above, correspond more or less to all primitive art [...] These Mexican motifs [...] constituted the true primitive Mexican art.*[66]

The text is worthwhile because primitive art or aboriginal art, unlike only indigenous art, will be a product of fusion and hybridization, and not only the result of the indigenous population. Undoubtedly, the country experienced one of the most successful moments of "indigenism" in the country as they began to recognize the rights of a part of the population that, as Dr. Atl said, had been marginalized. Precisely in search of that "primitivism" of a formerly unknown society, hundreds of foreigners arrived attracted by the cultural revolution that the country began to live.[67]

And it would be precisely Best Maugard one of the main promoters of this new era for the arts in the country since his stay in New York where he met and invited Katherine Anne Porter (who would especially recognize his central role in this Mexican "Renaissance"), Anna Pavlova, and Eisenstein, as part of the search to create their own vanguard art. Continue Best Maugard:

> *All these new influences are manifested today, no longer as a mere copy, but felt in the Mexican way and found in popular industries, in different ways and proportions, according to their origin: those that are distinctly indigenous have almost changed; those that have Spanish or Chinese origin keep most of these influences, for example, the influence of porcelains, brocades, lamés, flowers in manila shawls, Chinese lacquers, from the "Eibar", etcetera, but now showing a distinctly Mexican sense.*[68]

Moreover, he takes as examples the "*talaveras*" of Puebla with the whiteness of the milk and the blue of the sky, as used to say the Chinese; with the Arab-influenced heraldic elements of the Spaniards, and with the fretwork and grids of the indigenous craftsmen. The more force the invader used, the stronger was the reaction of the aboriginal artists to assimilate the external influence, so much so that "the continuity of the artistic feeling has not been lost but has remained firm and singular, consequently in the different manifestations of current art it is possible to notice a hidden characteristic, a strong and expressive feeling that makes it an unmistakable art".[69]

It could be argued about the effectiveness of the method that was finally implemented in schools in Mexico City, or about the traditional dichotomy between indigenism and miscegenation. However, beyond the controversy, what authors and creators such as Best Maugard offered were exits from the labyrinth. Finally, our history reconstructed without the great ruptures that had fragmented

our past. Moreover, that was a source of admiration for foreign observers before all descended into a sense of disenchantment.

The First History of Mexican Art

José J. Tablada was who systematically contributed to the appreciation of popular art in Mexico. While it is difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish between the ethical, aesthetic, and political aspects in this founding symbolic act of the Mexican cultural State, it has not been emphasized enough in this fact the change in the conception around the art itself, a subject that, in my opinion, was clearly anticipated by Tablada. This transformation of art in Mexico deserves more attention, mainly because, beyond its political and ideological aspects –which, of course, influenced the characteristics of the post-revolutionary State–, merely in terms of the history of art, the way in which the tension between art and life –between "major" arts and "minor" arts– in the country resolved could explain the contradictions inherent in our cultural modernity (and postmodernity).[70]

In his groundbreaking *Historia del arte en México* [History of Art in Mexico] (1927), groundbreaking because it was the first written and due to its breadth of vision (includes, for instance, topics about architecture and popular arts since pre-Hispanic times), Tablada criticized the dominant classes in the country for contributing to an "essentially barbaric" system, where the State, when it has supported the artists, has done so "always with an absolute lack of intelligence and with a miserable parsimony." He said: "The Church has been infinitely more civilizing, and we owe it the production and conservation of our main monuments and works of beauty." However, he immediately explained: "The only official effort in favor of national artists worthy of being taken into account and applauded is the one carried out by the Secretary of Education, Vasconcelos, when he commissioned the decoration of state buildings to a group of Mexican artists".[71]

Given his critical vision of the post-revolutionary State, Tablada was able to observe processes that other authors overlooked, especially his advocacy in favor of a social vision of art. In special, he addressed this topic in his prologue to the book by Adolfo Best Maugard entitled *La función social del arte* [The social function of art]. This text by Tablada is an argument against critics of the new trends in Mexican art, hence its controversial tone. It begins by defining the factors that contributed to the publication of the work: "The artists, one of whom created the philosophy that underpins it; the people, who will receive from them stimulating examples and abstract teachings that do not diminish their own personality; and the State, which for the first time in the history of our culture intervenes economically and systematically in the relations between artists and the people".[72]

Unlike other writings, in this Tablada praises the participation of the State in the expansion and support of the arts: "This preliminary study tends, then, to endorse the enlightened action of the State in the fertile incorporation of art to a democratic end, work to which Best Maugard concurs with his book and to which I cordially join [...]." That said, his main reflection has to do with the transformations in the conception of art, and that is why he begins by describing "the old esoteric art":

> *Art has ceased to be esoteric and sumptuary. One of the great demands of the Revolution has been to take away those characteristics, tear art away from the "dead hands" of the academies and the privilege of the rich, redeeming it even from its official character, and taking it to the schools, assembly halls, and the offices of the town [...], the official and bourgeois art was limited to the monotonous and contingent production of easel paintings, of that aberration, of that limitation that precisely began to take place when art stopped being a social function and became object of commerce.*[73]

And Tablada continues elaborating the backgrounds of art as a social function: "[...] of the own art created during the Colony thanks to the Moorish and Spanish artistic antecedents, which along with the indigenous as vivacious as them, built such a noble structure and filled domestic life with charm by means of furniture, fabrics, crockery, locksmith, all unique, all ours." Also, he mentions that in the face of the stagnation of the academy, remained the examples of the Cathedral and at its flank the Metropolitan Shrine "as a precious jeweler," and in front of the museum remained the picturesque *Mercado del Volador* which enriched the private collections with "the manifestations of the art applied to life, that is, of the vivacious and pulsating art." This vindication made by Tablada of the relation between art and life was indeed what the historical vanguards, like Dadaism, reassessed for art in general.

Thus, the "new social art" re-establishes the relation between art and life, as the peoples with an intrinsic culture have done: China, Greece, and Japan.

> *The apparent purpose of the Government is restoring our art to the social function that it has had in those peoples –Tablada reaffirmed–, democratizing it in its enjoyment and its applications, initiating the people in its practice and spread it throughout our lives, making it remunerative and productive to incorporate it into the economic mechanism of modern life, and the official publication of this book is evidence of that [...]. Such a function is capable of making Mexico the creative and cultural emporium of the continent, just as the United States is the emporium of industrial and reproductive civilization.*[74]

After this vindication, the author focuses the controversy on the critics and intellectuals based on a "rancid concept of beauty understood and superficially observed," and calls on to make an affirmative criticism and rethink what a work of art and its beauty mean in the modern world. In this sense, this small text by Tablada,

written in 1923 at the same time as his *Historia del arte en México*, represents one of the first writings about a new concept of art closer to the historical vanguards.

Tablada, it is worth to remember, was perhaps the sharpest art critic and with the most knowledge about the vanguards thanks to his voluntary exile, but mainly due to his friendship with Marius de Zayas, with whom he coincided in New York in December 1914.[75] Between 1908 and 1918, Marius de Zayas, together with Picabia in the small gallery of his friend Alfred Stieglitz, located at 291 Fifth Avenue (as well as in two galleries that he managed: Modern Gallery and De Zayas Gallery), introduced modern art in New York City.[76] He brought to the American continent, for example, the work of Rodin (his drawings), Matisse, Cézanne, Renoir, Toulouse Lautrec, Henri Rousseau, and, of course, he was the first to bring Picasso to the Americas. Just in the month and year in which Tablada meets De Zayas again, in December 1914, the exhibit that Tablada could see in that little gallery on Fifth Avenue (the Photo-Secession) was Wooden Statuary Made by the African Savages: The Root of Modern Art, the first exhibition held in the United States under the "primitivist" perspective.[77]

At the time in New York City, Tablada, dedicated to the study of Mexican history and art and to poetry, although with shortcomings, would anticipate modern criticism and the first *Historia del arte mexicano* [History of Mexican Art]; hence its clarity to observe from the distance the novelty in the homeland of López Velarde and the "social function of art" that would bring the revolutionary wind.

1. It can be useful to consult the works of Pérez Montfort, R. *Avatares del nacionalismo cultural. Cinco ensayos* [The Avatars of Cultural Nationalism. Five Essays], CIESAS, 1999; *Estampas de nacionalismo popular mexicano. Diez ensayos sobre cultura popular y nacionalismo* [Vignettes of the Mexican Popular Nationalism. Ten Essays on Popular Culture and Nationalism], CIESAS, 2002. The works of Alicia Azuela and Karen Cordero cited below can also be consulted.
2. Burger, P. introduced the concept in *Teoría de la vanguardia* [Theory of the avantgarde], Ed. Peninsula, 1974, where the "historical vanguard" is characterized by

self-criticism, in particular by the criticism of the autonomy of the concept of "art for art's sake."

3. I have taken the concept of cultural State from Fumaroli, M. in a book that reconstructs French cultural policy based on criticism of the outpouring of government participation. *Cf. El Estado cultural (ensayo sobre una religión moderna)* [The Cultural State: Essay About Modern Religion], Barcelona, Ed. Acantilado, 2007; and the concept of "museization" emerges from the reflection presented by Huyssen, A. about the obsession with the past and memory, but also with the political uses of the past. *Cf. En busca del futuro perdido. Cultura y memoria en tiempos de globalización* [In Search of the Lost Future. Culture and Memory in Globalization Times], FCE/ Goethe Institut, 2002, especially the first part dedicated to "Memoria: global, nacional, museológica [Memory: Global, National, Museological]."
4. Ovando S., C. M., *Sobre chucherías y curiosidades: la valoración del arte popular en México (1823-1851)* [About Trinkets and Curiosities: Assessment of the Popular Art in Mexico (1823-1851)], Doctoral thesis, UNAM, 2000. The author studies, among other things, the national exhibitions of industrial arts and the participation in the Great Exhibition of London of 1851. The synthesis can be found in Ovando Shelley, C. M.: "Las artesanías como artífices culturales de la nación" [The Crafts as Nation's Cultural Agents] in *La identidad nacional mexicana en las expresiones artísticas. Estudios históricos y contemporáneos*, Béjar, R. y Rosales Silvano, H., (Coords.), UNAM/ Plaza y Valdés, 2008, pp. 29-44. In the 19th-century there would be an appreciation of the "manial" or "mechanical arts" or artistic "trinkets and curiosities," mainly because of their economic possibilities, but also aesthetic (mainly because of their realism and perfection), although they were considered as minor arts given the division marked since the 18th-century with the emergence of the fine arts.
5. Huyssen, A., *Después de la gran división. Modernismo, cultura de masas, posmodernismo* [*After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*], Adriana Hidalgo, Editora, 2006.
6. Goldwater, R., *Primitivism in Modern Art*. Enlarged edition, Harvard University Press, 1986. The concept was used to understand the taste for the exotic and the primitive in front of the modern world.
7. Moyssén, X. in collaboration with Ortiz Gaitán, J., *La crítica de arte en México* [The Arts Critique in Mexico], UNAM/Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 1999, pp. 29-53. Although the theme of the Mexican Renaissance is found at different periods of crisis in the academy in the 19th-century, it was concretely located since the reflections after the death of Jesús F. Contreras in 1905.
8. A previous study of this exhibition can be found in López, R., "The *Noche Mexicana* and the Exhibition of Popular Arts: Two Ways of Exalting Indians," in *The Eagle and the Virgin. Nation and Cultural Revolution in Mexico*, 1920-1940, Edited by Vaughan, Mary Kay, and Stephen E. Lewis, Duke University Press, second print, 2007, p. 23-42. As a large part of the studies on this period, Lopez's emphasis is on national identity, the formation of the post-revolutionary State and indigenism. His book expands these connections: Lopez, R. *Crafting Mexico, Intellectuals, Artisans, and the State after the Revolution*, Duke University Press, 2010.

9. Ramírez, F., "El modernismo nacionalista en busca del 'alma nacional'" [The Nacionalist Modernism in Search of the 'National Soul'"], in *Modernización y modernismo en el arte mexicano*, UNAM/IIE, 2008, pp. 49-68. The author uses this divide to refer to the differences in Mexican art based on the text by José Emilio Pacheco on modern Mexican literature. About the connection with the popular, Ramírez comments: "Gedovius, Herrán, Ramos Martínez, and other painters already were painting clay pots, *sarapes*, *rebozos,* and other objects of popular use in their canvases to confer regional or national identity to the figurative characters, or they did it with a symbolic purpose, like Herrán in *El rebozo*. However, it can be assured that his contact with popular art did not have any effect in his style of painting." (page 61). He says that it was since the exhibition of Adolfo Best Maugard in 1920 when "popular art provided fundamental design suggestions, spatial solutions, color schemes, and iconographic motifs, supporting the artist's vision at a level previously unthinkable" (pp. 61-62). As we will see later, it was also the work of Montenegro, commented by Carlos Mérida against Herrán's, which proposed a "rupture" in the use of popular forms. *Cf.* Mérida, C., "*La verdadera significación de la obra de Saturnino Herrán: los falsos* criterios" [The true meaning of the work of Saturnino Herrán: the false criteria]," in El Universal Ilustrado, July 29, 1920.
10. Brenner, A. *Ídolos tras los altares* [*Idols Behind Altars*], Ed. Domés, 1983. The author saw this phenomenon when she mentioned that the Revolution was a turn in the "artistic style," that is, in the spirit, p. 363.
11. Cordero Reiman, K., "La invención del arte popular y la construcción de la cultura visual moderna en México" [The Invention of the Popular Art and the Construction of the Modern Visual Culture in Mexico], in Acevedo, Esther (Coord.). *Hacia otra historia del arte en México. La fabricación del arte nacional a debate (1920-1950)* [To Another History of Arts in Mexico. The Making of the National Art in Discussion (1920-1950)], Volume III, CONACULTA, 2002, pp. 67-90. The author says that Dr. Atl organized the Exhibition of Popular Arts and comments only in passing to Montenegro and Enciso, although she dwells more on the ex-votos and the first texts by Diego Rivera. It is difficult to demystify this story without specific references to Montenegro (she qualifies him as "official artist" of Vasconcelos), Enciso, and Adolfo Best Maugard. For the latter, it is useful the own work by Cordero Reiman, Karen. "Dos configuraciones de modernidad. Retrato de Adolfo Best Maugard (1913) de Diego Rivera y Autorretrato (1923) de Adolfo Best Maugard" [Two Configurations of Modernity. Portrait of Adolfo Best Maugard (1913) by Diego Rivera and Self-portrait (1923) by Adolf Best Maugard] en *Memoria*, Museo Nacional de Arte, Núm. 6, 1995, pp. 4-21. From her, also it can be consulted: "Fuentes para una historia social del 'arte popular' mexicano: 1920-1950" [Sources for a Social History of the Mexican 'Popular Art'"], in *Memoria*, Museo Nacional de Arte, Núm. 2, 1990, pp. 31-56; and Cordero Reiman, Karen. "La invención y reinvención del 'arte popular' en la cultura visual mexicana de los siglo XX y XXI" [The Invention and Reinvention of the 'Popular Art' in the Mexican Visual Culture of the 20th and 21st Centuries] in *Arte americano: contextos y formas de ver*. Terceras Jornadas de Historia del Arte, Juan Manuel Martínez editor, Santiago de Chile, RIL Editores 2006, pp. 233-240. The latter was also published as: "La invención y reinvención del 'arte popular' en los

discursos de la identidad nacional mexicana de los siglos XX y XXI" [The Invention and Reinvention of the 'Popular Art' in the Discourses Around the Mexican National Identity in the 20th and 21st Centuries] in *La identidad nacional mexicana en las expresiones artísticas. Estudios históricos y contemporáneos* [The Mexican National Identity in the Artistic Expressions. Historical and Contemporary Analyses], Béjar, Raúl y Rosales, Silvano Héctor (Coords.). UNAM/Plaza y Valdés, 2008, pp. 173-184.

12. De los Reyes, A. *Cine y sociedad en México, 1896-1930. Bajo el cielo de México, Vol. II (1920-1924)* [Cinema and Society in Mexico, 1896-1930. Under the Mexico Sky, Vol. II (1920-1924)], Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas/UNAM, 1993, p. 119. Aurelio says that, as happened in 1910, beggars and vagabonds were exiled from the first frame in Mexico City —about two hundred of them— and they were given khaki suits to replace their rags.
13. Interview with Emiliano López Figueroa in El Universal, published in the "Edición Conmemorativa del Primer Centenario de la Independencia Mexicana" [Commemorative Edition of the First Centennial of the Mexican Independence], September 1, 1921. The other members of the executive committee were: Vice President, Juan de Dios Bojórquez, replaced by Apolonio R. Guzmán; secretary, Martín Luis Guzmán; and treasurer, the deputy Carlos Argüelles. Several essays compare the two centennials: Lempériére, Annick. "Los dos centenarios de la Independencia mexicana (1910-1921). De la historia patria a la antropología cultural" [Two Centennials of the Mexican Independence (1910-1921) From the National History to the Cultural Anthropology] in Historia Mexicana, Vol. 178, Núm. 2, Octubre-Diciembre, 1995. Azuela, A. "Las artes plásticas en las conmemoraciones de los centenarios de la Independencia 1910, 1921" [The Plastic Arts in the Celebrations of the Centennials of the Independence 1910, 1921] in Asedios al Centenario, México, FCE-UNAM, 2009. Guedea, V. "La historia en los centenarios de la Independencia: 1910 y 1921" [The History in the Centennials of Independence: 1910 and 1921] in Asedios al Centenario, México, FCE-UNAM, 2009; and by the same author: "La figura de Agustín de Iturbide en los centenarios de la Independencia (1910 y 1921)" [The Agustín de Iturbide's Figure in the Centennials of the Independence (1910 and 1921)] in México y España: huellas contemporáneas. Resimbolización, imaginarios, iconoclasia, Volumen III, Col. Vestigios de un mismo mundo, Alicia Azuela de la Cueva y Carmen González Martínez Editoras, Universidad de Murcia, 2010, pp. 27-50. Lacy, Elaine C. "Obregón y el Centenario de la consumación de la Independencia" [Obregón and the Centennial of de Consummation of Independence] Boletín, Fideicomiso Archivo Plutarco Elías Calles y Fernando Torreblanca, No. 35, is an excellent introduction to the theme of festivities as a strategy to seek recognition of the United States, which would be achieved, however, until 1923.
14. Despite the contradiction of vindicating the figure of Agustín de Iturbide, the Obregon Government led the festivities to prevent the conservative group that launched the idea from taking advantage of them to question the revolutionary Government. *Cf.* De los Reyes, A. *Cine y sociedad... Op. cit.*, p. 121.
15. Cosío Villegas, D., *Memorias* [Memoir], Joaquín Mortiz, 1996, pp. 91-92. Regarding the figure of Iturbide in the festivities, which had begun in Cordoba, Veracruz, in order to remember the treaties signed there in August 1821, Cosío Villegas commented: "I

was impressed above all by two facts: that in the good number of speeches made on that occasion, not even jokingly was mentioned the name of Agustín de Iturbide, the Mexican who signed those treaties; likewise, the excess in the planning of the festivities, since they lasted almost a week, and in Cordoba, then a town of no more than ten thousand inhabitants. "Cosío Villegas, D., *Memorias*, *Op. cit*., p. 65. Cosío Villegas, who had participated in the festivities of the consummation as president of the student federation, also commented on 'the nationalist explosion': "And there was no house where there was not an Olinalá vase, a pot from Oaxaca or a *Quexqueme* from Chiapas. In short, the Mexican people had discovered its country and, most importantly, believed in it."

16. Virginia Guedea, comparing the two celebrations, comments that trying to erase the figure of Iturbide in 1921 not only contrasts with the celebrations of 1910 in which, although he was not the central figure, was considered within the "pantheon" of the men who fathered our homeland; leaving aside who consummated the Independence in 1921, anticipated a new way of remembering the revolutionary regime that would predominate years later. *Cf.* Guedea, Virginia. "La figura de Agustín de Iturbide...," in *México y España*... *Op. cit*. Tapia R-Esparza, F. J. For the Catholic impulse of these celebrations, especially in Michoacán, it can be consulted: "Los festejos del primer centenario de la consumación de la Independencia, nuevo impulso para el catolicismo social" [The Festivities for the First Centennial of the Consummation of the Independence, A New Impulse to the Social Catholicism], *Tzintzun*, Revista de Estudios Históricos, No. 52, Julio-Diciembre de 2010, pp. 11-46.
17. *Revista de revistas*, Año XII, Núm. 579, June 12, 1921, editorial: "La trascendencia del Centenario" [The Transcendence of the Centennial]. The Constitutional City Council of Mexico presented to the President of the Republic in February 1921 a very extensive project to commemorate the First Centenary of the Consummation of National Independence; it does not have an exhibition of popular arts, but it does include contests of dances and typical costumes. *Cf.* AGN, Fondo Obregón-Calles, Exp. 104-C-5, fs.63-73. I appreciate the generosity of Olga Sáenz by allowing me to use her materials related to these celebrations.
18. Cosío Villegas, D., *Memorias*, *Op. Cit.*, P. 64. Pani had participated in the Revolution with Madero and Carranza and had distinguished himself by his studies on hygiene and popular education in Mexico. As Secretary of Foreign Affairs, he intended with these festivities projecting Mexico internationally to show it as a favorable country for investment, and, of course, to seek recognition from the United States. *Cf.* The work mentioned above by Lacy, Elaine C., "Obregón y el Centenario de la Consumación de la Independencia," en *Boletín*, Fideicomiso Archivo Plutarco Elías Calles y Fernando Torreblanca, No. 35. Cosío Villegas commented that the festivities took place because Obregón wanted "to show the world that the United States was the only country that refused to give it (diplomatic recognition) when others gave it without bargaining."
19. Archivo Histórico de la Independencia de México, "Primer Centenario de la Consumación de la Independencia de México. Celebración y fiestas conmemorativas con tal motivo" (Décima primera parte). Mecanoescrito de la Crónica Oficial de los Festejos Conmemorativos del Centenario de la Consumación de la Independencia de México, Exp. III/822.3 "1921"/1 [First Centennial of the Consummation of the

Independence of Mexico. Celebration and Commemorative Festivities on That Occasion (Eleventh Part). Typed text of the Official Chronicle of the Commemorative Festivities of the Centennial of the Consummation of the Independence of Mexico, Exp. III/822.3 "1921"/1]. Paradoxically, there is no reference to the Exhibition of Popular Arts in this chronicle.

20. Fototeca INAH, Inv. 42658.
21. Fototeca INAH, Inv. 22102
22. The newspapers agree that it took place on Juarez Avenue; however, they differ in number. *Revista de revistas* of September 25, 1921, mentions that it was in the number 85 as well as *El Excélsior* of September 20, 1921; *El Heraldo of México* cites the number 5, and *El Universal* the number 8, of the same September 20, 1921. It is number 85 since even at present, the FONATUR shop is presumably in the same place that the Exhibition was on display.
23. *El Heraldo de México*, año III, tomo II, "La Exposición de Arte Nacional se inauguró ayer" September 20, 1921, pp. 1 and 2.
24. *El Heraldo de México*, "La Exposición de Arte Nacional ...," *Op. Cit.* Here the chronicler says that the exhibition would be taken the following October to the city of Dallas, a fact that did not occur until the following year, and in the city of Los Angeles.
25. *El Heraldo de México*, *Op. cit.*, p. 2. The chronicler comments that in other salons there would be balls of wool or cotton from Hidalgo, furniture from Santa Clara and Paracho, the embossed copper pans, the furniture from Irapuato, the coconut shells with figures inside, and "other thousand curiosities so dear, impossible to describe in a note like this one."
26. *El nacionalismo y el arte mexicano* [The Nationalism and the Mexican Art], IX Coloquio de Historia del Arte y Estética, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 1986, p. 177. *Cit. pos.* Acevedo, E. "Las decoraciones que pasaron a ser revolucionarias" [The Decorations That Became Revolutionary]
27. *Revista de Revistas*, Sunday, September 25, 1921, p. 18. Along with the note of the exhibition appears an article, "México. País de arte" [Mexico. Country of Arts], signed by Oliver Madox and translated from "North American Review" (New York), in which is said, after praising the love of the beauty of Mexicans, that Mexico would be one of the most exciting countries for its artistic future. This idea would frequently remain in the minds of Americans in their search of paradise in the neighboring country.
28. *Revista de Revistas*, "La utilidad de las fiestas centenarias" [The Usefulness of the Centennial Festivities], Año XII, Núm. 595, October 2, 1921, p. 3.
29. Fiestas del Centenario de la Consumación de la Independencia de México, 1821-1921 [Festivities of the Centennial of the Consummation of the Independence of Mexico]. Fideicomiso Archivos "Plutarco Elías Calles y Fernando Torre Blanca."
30. Charlot, J. commented: "From the crowd that remained outside, we overheard heated comments because to that party only were invited a select few." *Cit. pos*. Sáenz, O. *El símbolo y la acción. Vida y obra de Gerardo Murillo, Dr. Atl* [Symbol and Action. Life and Work of Gerardo Murillo, Dr. Atl], El Colegio Nacional, 2005, p. 313. It is interesting that Jean Charlot, in his work on Mexican muralism, when commenting on "popular roots" wrote about the catalog of Dr. Atl, but did not mention the work of Montenegro and Enciso, but did mention Rivera's and Orozco's.

31. Vasconcelos, J., "Un centenario forzado" [A Forced Centennial] en *El desastre* [The Disaster], prologue by Luis González y González, Ed. Trillas, 1ª. reimpr., 2000, pp. 76-80. In addition to ironing about Pani, Vasconcelos warns of the profligacy generated by such festivities, which contributed, according to the author, to deplete the reserves of the Obregón Government for social programs.
32. *El Demócrata*. "La exposición de la escuela La Corregidora" [Exhibit in the La Corregidora School] September 20, 1921, pp. 6 and 10.
33. Rodríguez Mortellaro, I. A recent study that shows the relationship between indigenism and nationalist art is: "Arte nacionalista e indigenismo en México en el siglo xx. El renacimiento de la mitología indígena antigua en el movimiento muralista" [Nationalist Art and Indigenism in Mexico in the 20th Century. The Revival of the Old Indigenous Mythology in the Muralist Movement] in *México y España: Huellas contemporáneas. Resimbolización, imaginarios, iconoclasia*. Volumen III, Col. Vestigios de un mismo mundo, Azuela de la Cueva, A. y González Martínez C. Editoras, Universidad de Murcia, 2010. The author does a review primarily about the work of Diego Rivera and the use in murals of some pre-Hispanic deities as such Coatlicue, Tláloc, etcetera. Even though, in the catalog of the Exhibition of Popular Arts, Dr. Atl link indigenism with popular art, as we see later, it seems to me that the reflection about popular art and vanguardism cannot just tilt to its political side, that is, to its role in the nationalism, but also its aesthetic side, and this implies a new appraisal of others figures beyond Rivera.
34. Vasconcelos, J., *El desastre*, *Op. Cit.*, P. 55
35. Vasconcelos, J., *El desastre*, *Op. Cit.*, P. 58
36. Vasconcelos, J., *El desastre*, *Op. Cit.*, Pp. 58-60. We find this same argument in the interview offered by Vasconcelos to Jean Charlot in 1945: "El pequeño testimonio de José Vasconcelos sobre el Renacimiento Pictórico mexicano. Escrito para Jean Charlot" [The Little Testimony by José Vasconcelos on the Mexican Pictorial Revival. Written for Jean Charlot] *Parteaguas*, Revista del Instituto Cultural de Aguascalientes, Año 5, No. 17, Verano de 2009, pp. 31-34.
37. Murillo, G., "Dr. Atl." *Las artes populares en México* [Popular Arts in Mexico], Vol. I, Publicaciones de la Secretaría de Industria y Comercio, Editorial Cultura, 1922, p. 21.
38. Murillo, G., "Dr. Atl," *Obras 3, Artes plásticas. Primera parte* [Works 3. Plastic Arts. First Part], El Colegio Nacional, 2007. This volume contains the most detailed edition of "Las artes populares en México." About the indigenist vision, please consult the work of López, Rick A. *Crafting Mexico, Intellectuals, Artisans, and the State after Revolution*, *Op. cit.*; and Cordero Reiman, K. "La invención y reinvención del 'arte popular' en la cultura visual mexicana de los siglo xx y xxi" *Op. cit.*
39. Murillo, G., *Obras 3*, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 13 and 15.
40. Murillo, G., *Obras 3*, *Op. cit.*, p. 13; Coronel Rivera, J. "*Animus popularis*," en *Arte popular mexicano, cinco siglos*, unam, 1997, p. 16. Interestingly, Dr. Atl mentions Diego Rivera. However, he would arrive in Mexico until the end of 1921, and after that, indeed, he would join to what was initiated by Montenegro and Enciso, including appropriating the resource.
41. Perhaps it refers to Miguel Othón de Mendizábal.

42. Tablada, *J. J., Historia del arte en México* [History of Art in Mexico], Compañía Nacional Editora "Águilas," S.A., 1927, pp. 242-243.
43. García de la Sienra, R., "La resurrección de los ídolos: la emergencia de un saber sobre la estética de la alteridad radical" [The Resurrection of the Idols: The Emergence of a Knowledge About the Aesthetic of the Radical Otherness] in *Educatio 5*, Revista Regional de Investigación Educativa, invierno 2008, pp. 70-90. It presents the duality of the aesthetic conception based on the work of José J. Tablada. The author, highlighting the duality between "demon/masterpiece" seems, in my opinion, to decontextualize the contribution of Tablada, as we will see later. More than the "resurrection of idols," the title of a novel by Tablada, what can be pointed out is the "insurrection of the idols" understood from a perspective in which popular or "primitive" arts will acquire a central role in the construction of the post-revolutionary cultural State and the relationship of the same popular arts with the historical vanguard initiated precisely by the promoters of this first national exhibition in 1921.
44. Ramírez, F., *Crónica de las artes plásticas en los años de López Velarde* [Chronicle of the Plastic Arts in the López Velarde Years], UNAM, 1990, is a book that contains an excellent hemoragraphic review between 1914 and 1921, before the Exhibition of Popular Arts and which observes the emergence of a "New concept of plastics" based on the exhibitions of these three creators. It forgets a key figure: Jorge Enciso. Xavier Moyssén, in collaboration with Ortiz Gaitán, Julieta. *La crítica de arte en México*, *Op. cit.* makes more explicit the participation of Jorge Enciso in the construction of a new aesthetic.
45. González Matute, L., "Félix Bernardelli (1862-1908). Un artista moderno en el Museo Nacional de San Carlos"élix Bernardelli (1862-1908). A Modern Artist in the National Museum of San Carlos] *Discurso Visual*, Revista Digital No. 11, Cenidiap/INBA, Julio-Ciciembre 2008, http://discursovisual.net/dvweb11/agora/agolaura.htm Retrieved on January 13, 2013.
46. Morales Moreno, J., "Obras de arte y testimonios históricos: una aproximación al objeto artístico como representación cultural de la época" [Artworks and Historical Testimonies: An Approximation to the Artistic Object as a Cultural Representación of the Period] in *Sociológica*, Año 24, Número 71, Septiembre-Diciembre de 2009, pp. 47-87. The essay concludes with an analysis of the work of Enciso and its central role in the creation of institutions for the conservation of the patrimonies.
47. Montenegro, R., *Planos en el tiempo. Memorias de Roberto Montenegro* [Planes in the Time. Memoir of Roberto Montenegro], Artes de México/Conaculta, 2001, pp. 36-37.
48. We must remember that Roberto Montenegro was the son of a Porfirian colonel, hence perhaps part of the oblivion of this character.
49. Montenegro, R., *Planos en el tiempo*, *Op. Cit.*, P. 100
50. Ortiz Gaitán, J., "Algunos datos sobre la obra de Roberto Montenegro en Mallorca" [Some Data on the Works by Roberto Montenegro in Majorca] in *Anales 61*, UNAM, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 1990, p. 194-195. The Latin American painters who followed the invitation of Anglada Camarasa, like Montenegro himself, were Jorge Enciso, Tito Cittadini, López Naguil, Roberto Ramaugué, among others. It can also be consulted the text by Gutiérrez Viñuales, Rodrigo. "Roberto Montenegro y los artistas americanos en Mallorca (1914-1919)" [Roberto Montenegro and the

American Artists in Majorca (1914-1919)] in *Anales 82*, UNAM, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 2003, pp. 93-121. Julieta Ortiz comments on Montenegro: "It was the contact with *Catalan modernism* and the *pollensina school*, particularly, which motivated the change in his plastic vision, producing what in the end will be the distinctive features of his work," "Algunos datos...," *Op. cit.*, p. 200. Rodrigo Gutiérrez in turn comments on the influence of Montenegro in Argentinian art, as well as the relevance of the stay in Mallorca of American artists for the recovery of indigenist and traditionalist themes and the rescue of popular arts, "Roberto Montenegro ... ," *Op. Cit.*, P. 119

51. Montenegro, R., *Planos en el tiempo*, *Op. cit.*, p. 108. Alicia Azuela has maintained the dichotomy created by Diego Rivera himself in the sense that Montenegro, Enciso, and Best Maugard were part of a "primitive decorativism" or a "decorative primitivism," as the author herself indifferently refers, privileging the ideologized position of Diego Rivera and David Alfaro Siqueiros. *Cf.* Azuela de la Cueva, A., "Vanguardismo pictórico y vanguardia política en la construcción del Estado nacional revolucionario mexicano" [Pictorial Vanguardism and Political Vanguard in the Construction of the Mexican Revolutionary National State] in *Historia de los intelectuales en América Latina. II. Los avatares de la "ciudad letrada" en el siglo xx* [History of the Intellectuals in Latin America. II. The Avatars of the 'Literate City' in the 20th Century], Carlos Altamirano (Dir.), Buenos Aires, Katz Editores, 2010, pp. 469-489. The author mentions who was Hermenegildo Anglada Camarasa who transmitted to Montenegro, Enciso, Best Maugard, and Dr. Atl "the spirit and the aesthetic root of his approach to the finisecular manifestations derived from the decorativist primitivism of orientalist tint, current that in Mexico, with a strong nationalist charge, was already fundamental to his own formal approximation and ethical-aesthetic reappraisal of Mexican popular art [...]." Azuela, A., "Vanguardismo pictórico ...," *Op. Cit.*, P. 477. It should be noted that Montenegro does not mention this clear influence in its *Memoirs*, in addition to the fact that the four could hardly coincide in Paris or Palma de Mallorca, especially Best Maugard. The concept of "primitivism" is used by the author based on anthropology (*e.g.*, Franz Boas), when the concept was specifically instrumented by Goldwater, Robert in *Primitivism in Modern Art* (1938), *Op. Cit.*, as the interest of creators in works of peoples called "primitive," misnamed we would say today, as an idealization of no "civilized" peoples. The debate has been extensive, and you can also see the work of Perry, Gill. "El primitivismo y 'lo moderno'" [The Primitivism and 'the Modern'"], in *Primitivismo, cubismo y abstracción. Los primeros años del siglo xx* [*Primitivism, Cubism, Abstraction: The Early Twentieth Century*], Charles Harrison, Francis Frascina y Gill Perry, Ed. Akal/Arte Contemporáneo, 1998.

52. There is an extensive literature on this subject of the "good savage." For the Mexican case, the texts of Roger Bartra could be consulted. In literary terms, there is a very deep vein if we consider the contrast between country/city, purity/impurity, goodness/badness, in an association. The case of López Velarde is a good example of the contrast between the "subverted Eden" and the city, or between the soft homeland and the urban world.

53. Montenegro mentions the Grand Palais; other sources mention in particular the Salon d'Automne that was initially in the Petit Palais, and from 1905 onwards it moved to room 7 of the Grand Palais dedicated to modern painting.

54. Marcadé, J-C., "Artistic Connections between the Russian Empire and Europe in the Early 20th Century," in *Chagall et L'Avant-Russe*, edited by Lampe, Angela, Editions du Center Pompidou, 2011, pp. 46-58. Marc Chagall lived in Paris during the first years of the last century and, under the influence of Gauguin and Cézanne, among others, he was able to integrate children's art and the Russian popular imagination into a proposal that we now recognize as "neo-primitivism." Warren, S. "Crafting Nation: The Challenge to Russian Folk Art in 1913," *Modernism/Modernity*, Vol. 16, No. 4, Nov. 2009, pp. 743-765. Fedor Solntsev had prepared the first significant exhibition for Tsar Nicholas I in 1853 with the antiquities of the Russian State.
55. Warren, S., "Crafting Nation ...," *Op. Cit.* Empress Aleksandra sponsored the exhibition, and the Grand Duke of Oldenburg organized it. The author comments that in parallel to the tsar's exhibition, Larionov organized another one in Moscow, especially on the icons and the *lubki* or *lúbok*, which represented an alternative vision about the popular, emphasizing the freedom of popular art against the linear vision of the ethnic identity *Cf.* pp. 757-758.
56. Tugendhold, Yakok in the prologue to *Russian Popular Art in the Image, the Toy, and the Spiced Bread, an Exhibition Organized by Miss Nathalie Ehrenbourg*, Autumn Salon 1913 (Paris: Kugelmann), *Cit. pos*. Marcadé, Jean-Claude, "Artistic Connections ...," *Op. Cit.*
57. Marcadé, J-C., "Artistic Connections ...," *Op. Cit.*
58. Tugendhold, Yakok in the prologue to *Russian Popular Art in the Image, the Toy, and the Spiced Bread, an Exhibition Organized by Miss Nathalie Ehrenbourg*, *Cit. pos.*, Marcadé, Jean Claude. "Artistic Connections ...," *Op. Cit.*
59. Marcadé, J-C. "Artistic Connections ...," *Op. Cit.* Previously, Kandisky had made the first exhibition of the *lubki* in Munich in the same Goltz Gallery. Kandinsky had discovered these traditional woodcuts in 1888-1889 and was amazed by how these prints reflected the artistic beauty of Russia's interior, especially the Vologda region. Chagall, for his part, was invited for the first time to a vanguard exhibition in 1912, in Moscow, together with some members of the "Donkey's Tail" group.
60. De Zayas, M., *Cómo, cuándo y por qué el arte moderno llegó a Nueva York*, Estudio introductorio y traducción de Antonio Saborit [*How, When, and Why Modern Art Came to New York.* Introductory analysis and traslation by Antonio Saborit], UNAM/DGE/Equilibrista, 2005. As another influence for Mexico can be explored the work of Marius de Zayas, a friend of Tablada in New York City, who was a bridge to bring modern art to America and also the first exhibitions of African art, particularly between 1910 and 1915. About the relationship between Zayas and Tablada, see *José Juan Tablada*, selection and prologue by Antonio Saborit, Ed. Cal y Arena, 2008, pp. 53-58.
61. *Cit. pos.* Ortiz Gaitán, J., *Entre dos mundos. Los murales de Roberto Montenegro* [Between Two Worlds. Roberto Montenegro Murals], UNAM/IIE, 2009, pp. 89-90. Rivera has frequently been presented as the promoter of "true" primitivism in Mexico, however, by the time he arrives (mid-1921), the relearning of Montenegro, Enciso, Dr. Atl, and Best Maugard had already occurred. A specific discussion between modernism and nationalism in the work of Montenegro can be seen in: Vidaurre, Carmen V. "Roberto Montenegro: lo nacional y el modernismo" [Roberto Montenegro:

The National and the Modernism] *Estudios Jaliscienses 72*, mayo 2008, El Colegio de Jalisco, pp. 5-18.

62. Ortiz Gaitán, J., *Entre dos mundos...*, *Op. Cit.*, p. 133
63. Ortiz Gaitán, J., cites the work of Clara Bargellini, "El Renacimiento y la formación del gusto moderno en México" [The Renaissance and the Formation of the Modern Tase in Mexico], where the similarity of this mural of Montenegro with *El buen gobierno* of Ambrogio Lorenzetti is mentioned. *Cf. Entre dos mundos...*, *Op. Cit.*, P.135.
64. *Cit. pos.* Ortiz Gaitán, J., *Entre dos mundos...*, *Op. cit.*, p. 100; it is a declaration by Montenegro to one of its critics, Roque Armando, who, like Cosío Villegas, questioned him in 1925 for not having achieved the "grandiosity" that the public expected. Perhaps one should explore Montenegro's attitude of self-criticism against the intellectual and artistic leadership that Rivera would exercise.
65. Best Maugard, A., *Método de dibujo. Tradición, resurgimiento y evolución del arte mexicano* [Drawing Method. Tradition, Resurgence and Evolution of the Mexican Art], Departamento Editorial del Arte Mexicano, 1923, p. 5.
66. *Ibidem*, pp. 6-7.
67. A stimulating reflection on the "primitive" in the Mexican context can be found in Bartra, R. "Paradise Subverted: The Invention of the Mexican Character," and Bartra, E. "About Alebrijes and Ocumuchos: Some Myths about Folk Art and Mexican Identity," both texts in *Primitivism & Identity in Latin America. Essays on Art, Literature, and Culture*, Edited by Camayd-Freixas, Erik and José Eduardo González, The University of Arizona Press, 2000. Eli Bartra distinguishes between crafts, folklore, and popular art, and discusses the idea that the "people" do popular art.
68. Best Maugard, A. *Método...*, *Op. Cit.*, P. 7
69. *Ibidem*, p. 13
70. García de la Sienra, R., "La resurrección de los ídolos: la emergencia de un saber sobre la estética de la alteridad radical," *Op. Cit.*, pp. 70-91. The author decontextualizes, in my opinion, the work of Tablada and that impedes him to appreciate the novelty of the theme that Tablada introduces concerning popular or indigenous art, and reproduces the commonplace on Tablada.
71. *Cf.* Tablada, J. J., *Historia del arte en México*, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 242-243. The book was written between March and November 1923, hence the reference to Vasconcelos. On the other hand, in his portrait of Jorge Enciso, he mentions that it was he "who first praised the excellence aspect of our artistic tradition and our popular arts," p. 245. One piece of information that is worth reflecting on is that in its Contemporary Era section he does not mention Dr. Atl.
72. Tablada, J. J., "La función social del arte" [The Social Function of Arts] prologue to Best Maugard, A. *Método de dibujo. Tradición, resurgimiento y evolución del arte mexicano*, Departamento Editorial del Arte Mexicano, 1923, p. IX.
73. Tablada, J. J., "La función social del arte," *Op. Cit.*, Pp. X-XII.
74. Tablada, J. J., "La función social del arte," *Op. Cit.*
75. Tablada, J. J., Selection and prologue by Saborit, Antonio, Ediciones Cal y Arena/Los Imprescindibles, 2008, pp. 57-58.
76. De Zayas, M., *Cómo, cuándo y por qué el arte moderno llegó a Nueva York*, *Op. Cit.*
77. Tablada, J. J., *Op. Cit.*, P. 58


POSADA

POSADA AND THE VANGUARDS

The past, while preserving the thrilling of the ghost,
will recover the life's light and movement, and it will be present.
Charles Baudelaire, The painter of modern life (1863)

Introduction

In one of the best known and most cited texts on Posada, Diego Rivera commented: "Posada was so big, that maybe one day people will forget his name. It is so embedded in the popular soul of Mexico, which may become entirely abstract".[1] However, rather than becoming abstract and his name was forgotten, Posada and his work have become a symbol of the Mexican identity, so his dynamics work independently of the historical referents, at a level that we have forgotten the reasons for its transcendence. Therefore, in my opinion, an approach that can help to understand Posada, beyond increasing the number of strictly historical investigations with more precise data about his life and his work, is to try a perspective that

allows us to reconstruct the contexts in which his work can find its most profound meaning.

Therefore, I believe that, if something novel can be said about Posada it can emerge from a reconstruction of the origins of "modernism" and the "historical vanguards" that made possible one of the most creative and contradictory periods of Mexican art.[2] The "modernism" and "historical vanguards" concepts arose from the criticism of tradition (especially the vision of art originated in the Enlightenment), but also from self-criticism –particularly from the vanguard–, by questioning the bases of the "autonomy" of modern art itself and its separation from concrete and practical life. Hence the search for the vanguards to reconcile art with life, to tear down the high wall between art and popular culture, a history that we know little about in the Mexican case given the emphasis bestowed to the relationship between art and power.

The historiography of the last generation on the relationship between art and the Mexican Revolution (such as the texts of Alicia Azuela, Esther Acevedo, Karen Cordero, Ricardo Pérez Montfort, among others) is characterized by exaggerating the role of the State and nationalism, to the degree of distorting the specificity of the work of art in terms of its appropriation by politics. Indeed, the post-revolutionary State financed and supported the Mexican vanguard from 1921 (especially after the first great Exhibition of Popular Arts), however, the little-known history is that of the "great division" that occurred after the 18th century between the fine arts and popular arts.

The "invention" of the fine arts, of the concept but also of new practices and institutions (e.g., museums, symphony orchestras, the art market, etcetera),[3] led to one of the great conceptual divisions of the modern world: art as a concept of high culture (the "fine arts"), to which in the best of cases it was possible to have access via education, and the concept of craftsmanship or, as it would be called, "minor arts." This separation included a greater autonomy of art against other manifestations, but also against the social

conditioners in a utopia that would soon see its contradictions, starting, for example, with Coubert and Baudelaire.

The aesthetic "modernity" brought along this "great division"[4] although it would be necessary to recognize at least two central traditions: the enlightened one and the romantic one, which would be conceptualized through the "civilization" and the "*kultur*," in one of the most attractive cultural battles of the modern world.[5] The first tradition would base on the vision of the homogenization of the processes in front of the tradition and defense of the autochthonous that allows the own identity of each people. This tension, or contradiction, would mark the different paths of modernity. For although the concept of the modern arises in opposition to the traditional, and modernity was characterized by the ephemeral in tension with the transcendent, what can be explored is the relationship and tension between the fine arts and the "indus-

trial or manual arts" to get to know the paths of each region to the aesthetic modernity.

In the Mexican case, the emergence of the Academia de San Carlos [Academy of San Carlos] would give rise to the two traditions. The "great division" would be developed in opposition to the "trinkets and curiosities" of the so-called "industrial or manual arts," yet nuanced by the incorporation of drawing and engraving with utilitarian ends.[6] Because the difference of modern art between the late 19th century and the post-revolution era, as part of a process of modernity, would be given by the incorporation of popular arts to the historical vanguard.

In this sense, two aspects can be clearly distinguished in our aesthetic modernity: through symbolism and the post-revolutionary vanguard. In the first aspect, from the painting field stand out among others Jesús F. Contreras and Saturnino Herrán; Contreras as an introducer of symbolism in Mexico and Herrán as the one who closes the cycle of this modernity; in the second, José Guadalupe Posada, although temporarily, was contemporary to the other tradition.

This gap can be explained not only by belonging to different social groups (although Herrán would also die in poverty, he had a "cultural capital" –had been prepared in the national academy– significantly higher than Posada's –student of the academy of drawing in Aguascalientes–), but by the transformations in aesthetic conceptions from the first decades of the 20th century.

Posada died in poverty, and we do not know how conscious he was of his vanguardism. In another essay, I even dared to mention Posada's "invention" as a process in which it created as part of the nationalist mythology. However, like many other processes, it is necessary to pinpoint the nationalist use of the vanguard in order to know more in detail the uniqueness of Posada in this case. Because if everything is part of the process of construction of identities and revolutionary nationalism, or the manipulation of power, it is difficult to distinguish the particularity of each work or character. That is why it is necessary to think of Posada from cultural history, understood from the processes of hybridization, for example, between art and the popular.

Revolutionary Posada? The "New" Historiography

Indeed, José Guadalupe Posada was not a revolutionary precursor linked to Magonist anarchism.[7] Posada's revolutionary character lies in his contribution to the "cultural and artistic revolution" that began at the end of the 19th century and ended in 1930, the year of the publication of the first catalog of Posada's work and the beginning of disenchantment and frustration for the revolutionary movement. The reconstruction of this process can contribute to finding the contributions of a humble engraver to the vanguards –not only national– of the early 20th century.

As is known, Posada was not known or better valued by the cultural elites while he was alive,[8] which is one of the great paradoxes of this "genius of engraving." He died in poverty, so his body was buried in the sixth section of the Dolores Pantheon, and then, in the absence of a complaint, he was transferred to the mass grave. We only have two testimonies by figures from the cultural elite: Rubén M. Campos and the then trainee drawer, José Clemente Orozco. The former comments on the "tiny workshop" of Posada, which is worthwhile to reproduce completely:

> *[...] it was a ravine inside an entryway, a kind of cage with broken windows and cardboard fixed with glue in the openings without glasses.*
>
> *There, in that "chiribitil," Posada received the most extraordinary commissions from the public: images to illustrate a prayer with indulgence; lamb, chicken or hare legs to illustrate cookbooks, teeth for advertisements of a dentist; jarano hats for a neighborhood hat shop, kitchenware, poles, and jars of pharmacies for advertisements, domestic remedies, and patent medicines.*

> *Everything pertaining to the field of work of the hack publicist of yore, was received by Posada with the same unbiased smile of the man as good as gold; and without any objection, he set to work with his rudimentary tools, without a previous drawing, without more than a glance to assess the reduction of the model to a fourth part of its size, or vice versa, the enlarging of a microscopic sample or the reduction of an imaginary model, using a simple written indication.*[9]

According to this testimony, Posada worked on a "*chiribitil*" and did his engravings on demand, which caution us of wanting to find any anti-Porfirist ideology. On the other hand, in the eyes of Campos, Posada was a great craftsman, an engraver with enormous technical skills, but not the genius and national symbol that would become years later.

José Clemente Orozco's testimony is more widely known, however, it is worth recovering:

> *Posada worked in the public eye, behind the window facing the street, and I stopped for a few minutes, on my way to school (the primary school attached to the Teacher's College), to watch the engraver four times a day, at the entrance and exit of the classes, and sometimes I dared to enter the workshop to steal some of the metal shavings that left when the teacher used his burin on the printing metal sheet painted*

> *with red lead. That was the first stimulus for my imagination which made me doodling the first figures on paper, the first revelation of the existence of the art of painting [...].*[10]

In his text, written decades after the event, Orozco recognizes in Posada "the art of painting" through the work of the engraving on the metal plate. Perhaps Orozco is who would most broadly recognize Posada not as a representative of the national soul, but as an engraver/artist capable of allowing the primal revelation in art.

We know that one article by Jean Charlot was the pioneer in the discovery/invention[11] of Posada's work, later reinforced by Anita Brenner,[12] Frances Toor[13] and, finally, established in the first catalog in 1930. Charlot, for example, calls him "Posadas, the engraver" (*sic*)[14] and comments that in front of many foreign values, his work proves the case of 'indigent' values that go unnoticed, but 'considered themselves, are recognized as admirable':

> *He, through two thousand plates, almost all illustrations of corridos from the Vanegas Arroyo house, created the genuinely Mexican engraving and created it with such strong, racial features that it can be compared with the aesthetic feeling of the Gothic or the Byzantine, for instance [...].*

After linking Posada to Italian primitivism, the game of proportion without regard for the laws of perspective, and what Americans call *dynamic symmetry*, finally a cinematic resource, Charlot links Posada's work with the Russian vanguardists, in particular with "the expressionist methods of spiritual representation that Marc Chagall employs today."[15]

In this way, beyond the "chauvinism" inherent based on the need to create a "national art," Charlot is the first to value Posada from a aesthetic point of view by comparing him to the artistic vanguards of his time: primitivism, changes in perspective (Picasso), the cinematographic resources to visually define a discourse, and

of course the expressionism and the Russian vanguards that would mark the Mexican vanguardism.

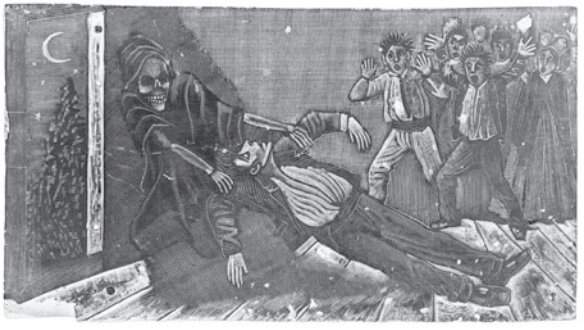
In her book *Ídolos tras los altares* [*Idols Behind Altars*] –titled initially "Mexican Renaissance" until the author changed it to the phrase suggested by Manuel Gamio —, Anita Brenner considered the Mexican Revolution more as a cultural and artistic phenomenon than strictly social or politician:

> *Within a generation –Anita wrote in 1929–, Mexico has come to its senses. Its first and definitive gesture has been artistic [...]. Health, jobs, and adequate laws are approached as by-products of art; because the Revolution is a change that occurs by a change in the artistic style or, if one wants to use a more common description, a change in the spiritual style.*[16]

As the case of Posada shows, this change in the artistic or spiritual style would be possible thanks to the incorporation of popular forms within the vanguardism (which we can link to primitivism or popularism), but also to his expressionist anticipation that would integrate clearly in muralism, although not exclusively.

Annita Brenner would see Posada[17] as the artistic expression of a "new social religion": "an ardent anxiety Mexico being true to itself"; moreover, for Anita, Posada prophesied:

> *[...] in the pure terms of the artist, the version that would follow, and the work that chiseled the new image in painting, music, and literature: an image that encourages a new philosophy, a new aesthetic, and a vigorous national art.*[18]



In her text, Anita Brenner includes the vision of a prophet armed with the burin who gave an account of the spiritual changes brought by the Revolution, an image popularized by Frances Toor, Diego Rivera, and, later, by the Leopoldo Méndez's engravings. However, Anita's comment is more subtle about the relationship between Posada and his vision of history: "Posada put an obsidian mirror in front of this country, and from there he extracted a deliberate, chosen image." Contrary to prevailing opinion, neither Anita Brenner nor Posada made revolutionary praise. By comparing Manilla with Posada,[19] Anita synthesizes Posada's tragic vision of Mexican history:

> *The women of Manilla are Arcadian and idyllic peasants; those of Posada are portraits of tragic women. His image of the national scene involves enough conviction –since it is a conscious portrait– and heralds the inevitable social outcome:*

> *a peasant family marching into exile and slavery; a patient crowd, a little restless in times of famine, and some women carrying their empty baskets; the plague and the baskets stacked in the cars.*
>
> *So he concludes: Posada gave skulls and skeletons to the dictator and his cabinet at the national carnival; he saw the police and federal soldiers as effeminate; he drew a dance of aristocrats (which was famous in his time) as a dance of perverts [...]. Madero enters the capital and Posada makes him bow and smile like a puppet; in the earthquake that frames its entrance at dawn, Posada destroys the Mexican universe in symmetrical forms.*[20]

Posada was a prophet and, in that way, a revolutionary in the arts because, like all vanguardist, he breaks with the past, even though not entirely in the selection of his topics and subjects, he does it in the way he portraits them. In front of the Francophile world of symbolism, according to Anita Brenner, Posada chose to be unknown, but widely distributed. Moreover, he chose to be enjoyed and useful.

Was Posada aware of his vanguardism? Most likely he was.

> *José Guadalupe Posada, the illustrator of corridos and songs, is ironically aware of the existence of the renowned National Academy of Arts within walking distance of his modest and dilapidated workshop. Undoubtedly, on some occasion, he even made use of the excellent library available at the school. Without a doubt, he also once greeted two restless youngsters who, returning from the lectures by the arts pedagogues, stopped in front of his window (as they would later on the scaffolding of the murals) and blocked the light. Orozco and Rivera were impressed by an object in that workshop, apart from the admiration that Posada and his art caused them:*

> *an excellent reproduction of Michelangelo's Last Judgment stuck to the wall.* [21]

Why the admiration of these two great muralists for the work of Posada? Anita also observes with acuity: Posada "had drawn –in two inches– monumental figures, national epics that were later magnified in numerous murals".[22] Posada's relationship with muralism, however, is known through the Rivera's eyes and murals, of course. The text he published about Posada was included in the catalog dedicated to the engraver in *Mexican Folkways*,[23] where he defined Posada's work as "the quintessential work of art." However, his text would be the origin of the nationalist ideology about Posada when he presented him as a precursor to Flores Magón and Zapata, as "a guerrilla of flyers and heroic opposition newspapers."[24] From then on, the vision of Posada as a revolutionary precursor would remain in the imaginary of Mexican nationalism; furthermore, it would be the caricature that some authors would prefer to question. However, as we know, Posada's novelty is elsewhere.

However, the aesthetic assessment of Posada, except in the case of Charlot and a certain sense, of Anita Brenner, concludes practically with the first catalog published in 1930, to later go to the typical places that would nurture post-revolutionary nationalism. However, there is a series of "aesthetics of obsolescence" –in the words of Hugo Hiriart– that would have to be unraveled from Posada's works since they are indeed engravings made without directly aesthetic purposes.[25] This contradiction leads us to reconsider the contexts of Posada, thinking directly about his work.

Primitivism or Popularism?

There are several discussions about the beginnings of modernity and modernism in Mexico.[26] However, even though an artistic movement does not start in a single year, there is a moment when different tendencies, facts, and figures coincide. In other words, it

is not possible to declare a "zero year" for modern art in Mexico. However, one can think of conceptual and practical changes that gave direction for the "historical vanguard" in the country, that is, the vanguard that made muralism possible, but above all the incorporation and appreciation of popular forms as a catalyst for the transformations in the conception of art in Mexico.

Now, the traditional view in the history of art is that it was with the arrival of Diego Rivera to the country at the end of 1921 that the origin of the transformations in Mexican art detonated; however, before that, it is possible to find the symbolist modernism of Herrán, for example, but above all the changes generated by the arrival to the country of Roberto Montenegro, Jorge Enciso, Adolfo Best Maugard, and the Guatemalan Carlos Mérida, who were attracted by what looked like the new "Mexican peace" with Carrancismo.

Like the symbolism (introduced in Mexico by Jesús F. Contreras and taken to its highest level by Herrán, two authors, by the way, from Aguascalientes), primitivism was one of the sources of aesthetic modernism and, more specifically, the vanguard of the early 20th century.[27] The latter, however, has been little analyzed for the Mexican case given the colonialist connotation of the concept itself.

Mexican aesthetic modernism, as I mentioned earlier, can be understood from two traditions: symbolism and the post-revolutionary vanguard. Alternatively, better, you can distinguish between modernism and vanguardism; the first with strong Parisian influence; the second, in its search for other traditions different from the Western one in open criticism of Eurocentrism. It was precisely this search that led a large part of the historical vanguards, including the Mexican one, to revalue the popular and, along with it, to return to the primitive.

Although the history of ethnological museums or of anthropology itself can be traced back at least to the end of the 18th century, it was in the 19th century that the rediscovering of Africa and Oceania, in other words of the experimenting of the exotic and the bizarre, nurtured the creators' imagination in a momentous

way. It is not possible to define primitivism as a school or current, but it can be defined as an attitude that did not transfer the African aboriginal forms of Polynesia, it was indeed a vital (or spiritual) attitude of going back to the basics.

[639]

As Robert Goldwater pointed out in his classic study on *Primitivism* (1938), it was in the third quarter of the 19th century that the "antiquities" museums of Berlin, London, Rome, Leipzig, and Dresden had a particular space for ethnological objects. In Paris, the ethnological museum was conceived during the universal exhibition of 1855, although it was not until the 1878 exhibition that its creation was definitively promoted and that it became known as Trocadero, with objects purchased in the Americas, especially in Mexico and Colombia. The recognition of the importance of the African art occurred since the English punitive expedition of 1897 that gave rise to the universal exhibition of Brussels that same year.

The great transformation of this moment manifested in the fact that the antiquities became artistic objects, in such a way that the creations of the so-called primitive societies entered fully into the history of art. From an early purely scientific-ethnological interest, these pieces became precious in aesthetic terms. This change in the assessment (today questioned because an ethnological piece cannot be valued only from aesthetic criteria), is due to the transformation in the vision and anthropological theories concerning the "primitive" peoples and their objects.

Thus, accessibility to the pieces and a new perspective caused fundamental changes in painting and sculpture. We should highlight Gauguin, who provoked a different attitude towards the exotic, despite everything; and, undoubtedly, also, to Picasso, who transformed the way of seeing the painting with "The Young Ladies of Avignon" (1907).[28]

In one of his favorite subjects, as he confessed, E. H. Gombrich refers "the preference for the primitive" not exclusively concerning the vanguards of the 20th century but as a recurrent phenomenon since classical antiquity; as part of a "history of rejection" of the predominant forms and styles. However, the rejection of the image of primitive man as savage among art scholars, Gombrich says, was initiated by the "great anthropologist Franz Boas [...] in his classic work on primitive art published for the first time in 1927."[29]

Franz Boas had great influence on the emergence of Mexican anthropology through Manuel Gamio, but also of numerous students like Anita Brenner. In the statement made by Gamio after the death of his teacher,[30] he says that since 1910, in the first visit of Boas to Mexico, he was named: "extraordinary teacher" by the newly created School of Higher Studies of the National University of Mexico, although he had previously maintained contact with him first through Zelia Nuttall and then through Gamio's studies at Columbia University. Thanks to the initiative of Boas and the enthusiasm of Ezequiel A. Chávez, the International School of American Archaeology and Ethnology, directed by Eduardo Seler,

was created in Mexico. Boas served as secretary of this school and promoter of the initiative given his interest in Mexican cultures.[31]

The implications of the Boas and Gamio's theories in art are found, for example, besides the texts that we have commented on Anita Brenner, in the organization of the Exhibition of Popular Arts on the occasion of the centenary of the consummation of Independence in 1921, which was possible thanks to creators today forgotten as Roberto Montenegro and Jorge Enciso. The same influence can be found, of course, in the catalog Dr. Atl made about that Exhibition, as well as in the theories of Adolfo Best Maugard to create his drawing manual based on the claim of a social and daily aesthetic that then it would be deformed by the aesthetics of revolutionary nationalism.[32]

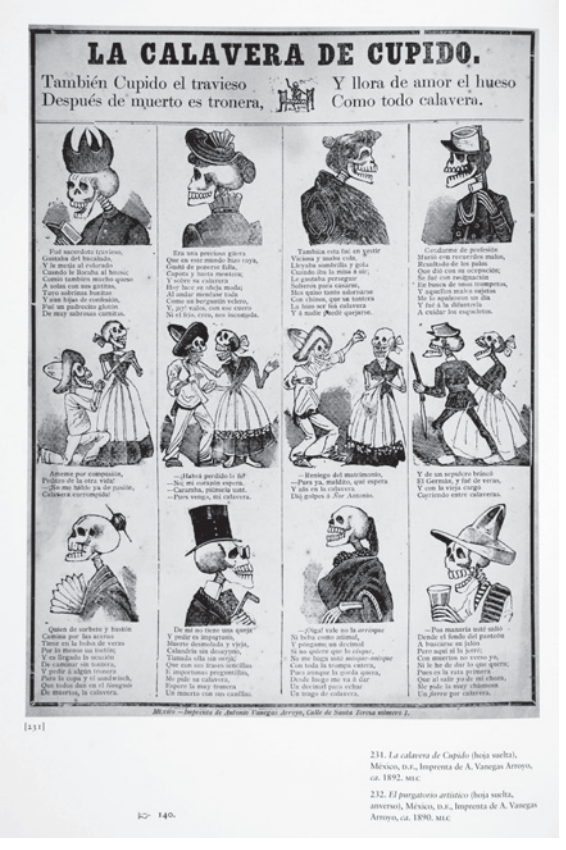
For some authors, the "zero year" of modern art in Mexico was 1921,[33] the year of the *Suave* [Soft Homeland] of Ramón López Velarde, that of the "Mexican Renaissance",[34] but, above all, that of the first Exhibition of Popular Arts.[35] Indeed, it is difficult to ignore the symbolist antecedents, particularly the relevance of Herrán in the change of perspective and contents in visual arts. However, the great transformation of Mexican art from the relationship with popular art would be carried out initially by Roberto Montenegro, a classmate of Herrán and Rivera in the academy at the beginning of the 20th century.

In fact, primitivism as such can be found, for example, in some paintings by Roberto Montenegro during his stay in Mallorca or some pieces by Enciso (see: Cuauhtémoc), by Best Maugard and by Rivera himself before his arrival to Mexico (e.g.: Paisaje, 1914), which confirms, in any case, the search for other traditions on which they based their proposals.

When the war broke out in Europe, following some of his friends and his teacher Hermen Anglada Camarasa, Montenegro settled in Mallorca where he lived the "primitive" experience. As explained in detail in the previous chapter, the Russian influence in this painter meant a change in his conception of civilization and art; in particular, concerning his way of conceiving the transcendence of the origins of popular or autochthonous art in Mexico and its relevance to the "civilized" world.

Since the second exhibition of Russian popular art of 1913 that took up the "treasure of the popular creation seen in the depths of the Russian regions," Montenegro assimilated new values of the "own" that, on his return to Mexico, translated into a synthesis of ethics and aesthetics of "democratizing" proposals of art for the people, besides overcoming the dichotomy between the national and the modern.

From this, the valuation of the popular as part of Mexican neo-primitivism would mark any reading about the vanguardism. It is there where the texts of Jean Charlot and Anita Brenner –Posada's discoverers– are explained, as well as the myriad of texts, speeches, and exhibitions that would emerge to this day.



[231]

231. *La calavera de Cupido* (hoja suelta). México, D.F., Imprenta de A. Vanegas Arroyo, *ca.* 1892. MLC

232. *El purgatorio artístico* (hoja suelta, anverso), México, D.F., Imprenta de A. Vanegas Arroyo, *ca.* 1890. MLC

The Popular Encyclopedia of Posada

There is a point with which I finish and that I think can open new perspectives for research. One of the central points of Bakhtin's work on Rabelais is the rescue of a tradition within popular culture that has to do with the comic and the grotesque. Let us remember that Bakhtin's critique of romantic and nationalist interpretations expanded the possibility of seeing the originality of the popular in Rabelais: its "unofficial" character of literature. "As we have said, says Bakhtin, popular laughter and its forms constitute the least studied field of popular creation".[36]

Under this criterion, it seems to me that it is necessary to rescue Posada from the comic and the grotesque. The macabre art would be linked to the modern world from the vanguards as a form of individual conscience and creative freedom by incorporating irony and sarcasm not only in the face of death but also in the face of social differences and personal or collective tragedies. From there comes the Posada's vanguard modernity.

There are engravings of Posada marked by the grotesque where the relationship with the body and its fantasies link his work with the medieval tradition and with a popular culture generally

hidden for the elites. I have already commented in another moment on the relationship of the skulls with the medieval macabre dance, so it is necessary to delve into another group of Posada's vast work. The series of "phenomena," such as a man giving birth to a baby, the eyes on the forehead, the buttocks with a face, the animal body or the four legs, but also Siamese or triplets, which are expressions of the grotesque within of the popular imagination about the body and its expressions.

The series of "lunatics" are part of this humor that ends in tragedy: the alcoholic man who kills his family or the children who kill his parents, all surrounded by the demons that stalk people inside the domestic spaces, or the serpent that surrounds those dominated by anger and violence.

Characters like "*Chepito Marihuana*" symbolize the common man who aspires to be a gallant and womanizer, looks for married women and ends up beaten and abandoned. He is a bullfighter, and a bull's horns injure him, or even pretends to be a revolutionary, but he is always disappointed; a character that shows the aspirations and vices of the same society with a comic vein based on failure.

In this sense, the romantic vision of the popular, based on nationalism and populism, will make it difficult to observe the contradictions of society itself. Hence the importance of returning to the relevance of the grotesque and the comic, of mockery tinged by failure where popular wisdom has secular roots in the face of everyday events. As if this wisdom allowed us to know the fate of our illusions, hence the resignation in the face of misfortunes, but also the doubt and skepticism about our realities.

The Anticipated Expressionism

Let us think for a moment that Posada was not the humble engraver who drank pulque or mezcal, but a relevant engraver (which he was), close to the first vanguard –such as Contreras or Herrán–,

with whom he shared the place of birth (even if they were living in Mexico City), but unfortunately not the closeness of a friendship such as Herrán with López Velarde. Despite the sensitivity of both to see a more intimate homeland, they did not know Posada.

Posada's work as a whole is like a great popular movie with an aesthetic of his own that he picked up from several teachers, such as Manilla, but managed to overcome. There is a characteristic that defines, for example, the difference between Manilla and Posada: the movement, the distortion to accentuate the expression.

What authors such as Jean Charlot and Rivera "discover" in Posada was precisely his anticipation of expressionism, understood as the ability to distort reality to bestow gestures and movements upon the characters within a certain symmetry. Unlike Rivera, for example, or of the engravers of the popular graphic, the treatment of the people is not condescending or populist in the case of Posada; in this sense, Posada's expressionism is closer to Orozco's or even Frida Kahlo's.

Hence the irrelevance of thinking of Posada as a revolutionary in political terms or of questioning this image. Posada, it must be specified, was revolutionary because he anticipated in aesthetic terms to his time, because he knew how to nurture on popular culture without falling into folklore or pamphlet, because his "primitivism," meaning, going to the basics, made him the first Mexican vanguardist.

1. Rivera, D., "José Guadalupe Posada," in *Textos de arte*, El Colegio Nacional, 2ª ed., 1996, p. 134, published initially in Toor, F. *Posada. Monografía de 406 grabados de José Guadalupe Posada, con introducción por Diego Rivera (1930)* [Posada. Monography of 406 engravings by José Guadalupe Posada, with introduction by Diego Rivera (1930)], first facsimile edition of Ediciones Toledo 1991, Editorial RM/SEP, reimp., 2012.
2. *Cf.* Burger, P., *Teoría de la vanguardia* [*Theory of the Avant-Garde*], Ed. Península, 2ª ed., 1997.
3. Shiner, Larry., *La invención del arte. Una historia cultural* [*The Invention of Art: A Cultural History*]. Barcelona, España, Paidós Estética, 2004.
4. Huyssen, A., *Después de la gran división. Modernismo, cultura de masas, posmodernismo* [*After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*], Argentina, Adriana Hidalgo Editora, 2ª ed., 2006.

5. Kuper, A., *Cultura. La versión de los antropólogos* [*Culture: The Anthropologists' Account*], Ed. Paidós Ibérica, 2001.
6. In the 19th century, there would be a assessment of the "manual" or "mechanical arts" or the artistic "trinkets and curiosities", mainly for their economic possibilities, but also the aesthetic ones (above all for their realism and perfection), although they were viewed as minor arts for the marked divided since the 18th century with the emergence of the fine arts. *Cf.* Ovando Shelly, C. M. *Sobre chucherías y curiosidades: la valoración del arte popular en México (1823-1851)* [About Trinkets and Curiosities: Assessment of the Popular Art in Mexico (1823-1851)], Doctoral thesis, UNAM, 2000. The author studies, among other things, the national exhibitions of industrial arts and the participation in the Great Exhibition of London of 1851. The synthesis can be found in Ovando Shelley, C. M.: "Las artesanías como artífices culturales de la nación" [The Crafts as Nation's Cultural Agents] in *La identidad nacional mexicana en las expresiones artísticas. Estudios históricos y contemporáneos*, Béjar, R. y Rosales Silvano, H., (Coords.), UNAM/Plaza y Valdés, 2008, pp. 29-44.
7. Barajas Durán, R., (*El Fisgón*). *Posada, mito y mitote. La caricatura política de José Gudalupe Posada y Manuel Alfonso Manilla* [Posada, Myth and Commotion. Political Caricature by José Guadalupe Posada and Manuel Alfonso Manilla], Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2009. The author challenges the "myth" or the caricature by the revolutionary Posada, even emphasize the character of the political caricature by Manilla. However, Posada relevance rests in another part, as I will try to prove.
8. Frances T. said: "Diego Rivera was around eleven years old when he met Posada. He studied in the Academy of San Carlos and used appearing in Posada workshop to watch an engraving representing "Final Judgment" by Michelangelo. The teacher noted his presence, call the youngster, and soon they became friends." In Toor, F. *Posada. Monografía de 406 grabados de José Guadalupe Posada, con introducción por Diego Rivera (1930)* Toor, F. *Posada. Monografía de 406 grabados de José Guadalupe Posada, con introducción por Diego Rivera (1930)* [Posada. Monography of 406 engravings by José Guadalupe Posada, with introduction by Diego Rivera (1930)], first facsimile edition of Ediciones Toledo 1991, Editorial RM/SEP, 2012. As a part of the Posada myth, this well could be another invention by Rivera.
9. Campos, R. M. *El folklore literario de México* [The Literary Folklore of Mexico] (1929), *Cit. pos.* Monsiváis, C. *Imágenes de la tradición viva* [Images of the Living Tradition], UNAM/Fundación Bancomer/CONACULTA-INAH, 2005, pp. 217-218.
10. Orozco, J. C., *Autobiografía* [Memoir], Ed. ERA, 8ª reimp. 1999, pp. 13-14.
11. Charlot, J., "Un precursor del movimiento del arte mexicano. El grabador Posadas (*sic*)" [A Pioneer of the Mexican Art Movement. The Engraver Posadas (*sic*)], en *Revista de Revistas*, August 30, 1925, p. 25. Charlot would publish several works about Posada which were essential to understand the vanguards.
12. Brenner, A., *Ídolos tras los altares* [*Idols Behind Altars*], Ed. Domés, 1983, "Posada, el profeta" [Posada, the Prophet], pp. 208-224. The book was first published in English in 1929. The text about Posada appeared initially in "The Mexican Prophet," *The Arts*, July 1928.
13. Toor, F., "Guadalupe Posada" en *Mexican Folkways*, Vol. 4, Núm. 3, Julio-Septiembre de 1928, p. 140-153. It is the first engravings "monography" or anthology known

about Posada, which would be published extended in 1930. The author says that she met Posada thanks to Charlot.

14. The mistake in the last name, unfortunately, is still made, even in academic and political circles, above all in Mexico City.
15. Charlot, J., "Un precursor...", *Op. cit.*
16. Brenner, A., *Ídolos tras los altares*, *Op. cit.*, 1983, p. 363.
17. Annita, born in Aguascalientes, paradoxically, says the engraver was born in León, Guanajuato, in 1864. *Cf.* Brenner, A., "Posada, el profeta", in *Ídolos tras los altares*, *Op. cit.*, pp. 208-224. It was Mr. Alejandro Topete del Valle who finally enlightened Annita and Charlot by finding and confirming the birth certificate of Posada in Aguascalientes.
18. Brenner, A., "Posada...", *Op. cit.*, p. 209.
19. However, El Fisgón would make the same comparison in the opposite way, that is to say, to prove that Posada was not a revolutionary.
20. Brenner, A., "Posada...", *Op. cit.*, p. 217.
21. *Ibidem*, p. 218.
22. *Ibid*, p. 222.
23. Rivera, D., "Las obras de José Guadalupe Posada, grabador mexicano" [The Works by José Guadalupe Posada, Mexican Engraver], *Mexican Folkways*, 1930, integrated to Rivera, Diego. *Textos de arte* [Texts on Arts], Obras I, El Colegio Nacional, 2ª ed., 1996, pp. 133-136.
24. Rivera, D., *Textos de arte*, *Op. cit.*, p. 134. There is a precedent of this idea of Posada as revolutionary pioneer in the text by Frances Toor. "Guadalupe Posada", *Op. cit.*
25. Hugo Hiriart wonders about the "posthumous metamorphosis" or the "surprising apotheosis" of Posada, the craftsman and finds an answer in the "aesthetics of obsolescence." *Cf. El universo de Posada. Estética de la obsolescencia* [Posada. Universe. The Aesthetics of Obsolescence], Martín Casillas Editores/Cultura/SEP, Col. Memoria y Olvido, 1982, pp. 9-10. He says about Posada: "In his works, we can see how the beauty takes over an object which has not been created intentionally for the aesthetic delight. All this is the aesthetic phenomenon we want vindicate and put on the table.
26. Ramírez, F., *Modernización y modernismo en el arte mexicano* [Modernization and Modernism in the Mexican Art], UNAM/IIE, 2008.
27. Nationally, this process has been studied by Ramírez, F., Modernización y modernismo en el arte mexicano, Op. Cit. However, about primitivism, except for Roger Bartra, its conceptualization has been little used for the Mexican case.
28. According to an anecdote of the time, Vlaminick was who discovered a black sculpture in a Bougival bistrot around 1907. When he takes it to his close friend Derain, he said: "It is almost as beautiful as Venus de Milo." "No," answered Derain, "is equally beautiful." As the friends could agree, they show it to Picasso, who said: "Both of you are wrong: it is more beautiful [...]." The anecdote is mentioned by Mario de Michelli in Las vanguardias artísticas del siglo XX [The Artistic Vanguard of the XX Century], 4ª reimpr., Alianza Forma, 2009, p. 62, where he cites Francis Carco, De Montmartre au Quartier Latin, Paris, 1927, p. 36. Other authors say the discoverer was Matisse. In any case, as de Michelli says: "What for them was important was another thing. It

was the fascination of a new vision, mirror of a collective soul free from links of civic enslavement." *Ibid.*

29. Gombrich, E. H., *La preferencia por lo primitivo. Episodios de la historia del gusto y el arte de Occidente* [*The Preference for the Primitive: Episodes in the History of Western Taste and Art*], reimp., 2011, p. 269.
30. Gamio, M. "Franz Boas en México" [Franz Boas in Mexico], in *Boletín bibliográfico de antropología americana (1937-1948)*, Vol. 6, No. 1/3 (Enero a Diciembre, 1942), pp. 35-42. Published by Pan American Institute of Geography and History.
31. Boas argued with Nicolás León and Antonio Peñafiel in their anthropometry class, for the racial criteria used in the skulls measurement, so he insisted in expanded the method to describe populations and cultures. *Cf.* Rutsch, M., "Entre Nicolás León y Franz Boas: una disputa y sus consecuencias en la antropología física en México" [Between Nicolas León and Franz Boas: A Dispute and Its Consequences in the Physical Anthropology in Mexico], VII Conferencia Internacional, Antropología 2004, Nov. 24-26.
32. In this respect, it is possible to see in this book the chapter about the Exhibit of Popular Arts.
33. Reyes Palma, F., "Vanguardia: año cero" [Vanguard: Year Zero], *Modernidad y modernización en el arte mexicano, 1920-1950* [Modernity and Modernization in the Mexican Arts, 1920-1950], Museo Nacional de Arte, 1991, pp. 43-51, *Cit. pos.* Ramírez, Fausto., *Modernización y modernismo en el arte* mexicano, *Op. cit.* p. 8.
34. De los Reyes, A., *Cine y sociedad en México, 1896-1930* [Cinema and Society in Mexico, 1896-1930], UNAM/IIE, p. 129.
35. For a detailed analysis about this, see: González Esparza, V. M., "La Exposición de Arte Popular, México, 1921" [The Exhibt of Popular Arts, Mexico, 1921], text typewritten, 2013.
36. Bajtín, M., *La cultura popular en la Edad Media y en el Renacimiento. El contexto de Francois Rabelais* [*Rabelais and Folk Culture of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*], Alianza Editorial, 3ª reimp., 2003.

TWO AMUSEMENTS: ART AND EROTICISM, AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY WILLIAM H. JACKSON

Art and Eroticism or the Pleasure of Metaphor

[...] to achieve this enjoyment, you cannot find a better collaborator of human nature than Eros.
Plato, *The Banquet*

Writing about art and eroticism may seem a reckless or fruitless enterprise after the studies of Octavio Paz[1] and recently of Margo Glantz[2] in Mexico, as well as of the classic treatises such as that of Denis de Rougemont[3] on love and the West, besides the excellent stories like those of Alyce Mahon.[4] On the other hand, I would not like to pass only as a theorist of these subjects, according to Aldous Huxley's curious definition of an intellectual.[5]

However, there is an aspect that art and eroticism have in common that seems central to clarify some polemics on both is-

sues. I refer to the modernity of concepts in the sense that, although there have been expressions since the origin of man both in art and eroticism (or together, since paraphrasing Picasso, both have to do with sexuality), the historical consciousness, emphasized as the criticism by others or ourselves on art and eroticism, arises at the end of the 18th century. This happened in the case of art, due to the emergence of concepts, practices, and institutions that individualized the proposals and distinguished them from crafts and, mainly, by the emergence of criticism; and, in the case of eroticism, by the changes that have taken place in mentalities about the human body, which has to do with the demographic revolution in which women began to acquire a better position in the world and greater control over their own body, making it possible to expand the possibilities of sexuality, that is, erotic pleasure.

The Transgression of Porn[6]

In conceptual and historical terms, before the Renaissance artistic expressions fulfilled a more ethical than aesthetic function; they were part of the formation of the political and religious elite. Therefore, the division between art and crafts did not exist, and the Latin concept of "ars" had to do more with its Greek origin as a technique. Although the practices reached beautiful examples of skill, they were regularly more utilitarian, and they were works made at the request of patronages since the concept of art for art's sake would begin until the Enlightenment.[7]

Now, the revolution in the concept of art began with a new classification of the arts, as explained in chapter 2, in the section: "The invention of art."[8] In this sense, the "fine arts" emerged with the identification of pleasure as an objective, thus creating a link with eroticism, which we will discuss later.

However, beyond the classifications of which the enlightened were very devotees, the most important was the new institutions for

the fine arts established in the 18th century, as has been repeated throughout the text.

> *These institutions embodied the new opposition established between art and crafts by providing spaces in which poetry, painting, and instrumental music could be the object of experience and analysis regardless of their traditional social functions.*[9]

The idea of good education through the arts served new sectors as a way to have a unique identification, hence the new spaces corresponded to a broader social context, precisely due to the change in social stratification (e.g.: the emergence of the "third state": the bourgeoisie), but, above all, the new role of women, thanks to the expansion of education.

The artistic practices were not indifferent to this great transformation. In the previous regime, the naked Venus showed their sensuality, but full of modesty, as we can see in the series that goes from *The Birth of Venus* (1482) by Botticelli to the *Venus at her Mirror* (1650) by Velázquez, passing through the sensual *Venus of Urbino* (1538) by Titian and the beautiful *An Allegory with Venus and Cupid* (1545) by Bronzino.

However, from the second half of the 18th century, the naked ladies will look directly into the eyes of the viewer. I think, for example, of *The Nude Maja* (1797-1880) by Goya, or of *Olympia* (1863) by Manet or *The Origin of the World* by Gustave Courbet. In the first two, the woman sees the potential spectator face to face and, in the case of the latter, one of the most striking paintings of the 19th century, the sex of the woman is exposed starkly, thereby questioning all the tradition in the sense of the Venus that dare not look into the eyes.

A special place deserves in this sense *The Young Ladies of Avignon* (1907) in the modern and erotic art, as they will not only represent women in a brothel –an aspect rarely seen except in the drawings by Toulouse-Lautrec and Degas– but also the incorpo-

ration of the Western, African and Asian tradition, as well as the multiple gazes trying to represent the movement and the plurality of points of view. Of course, there is a clear antecedent in *The Bathers* (1875-1877) by Cezanne, but particularly in *Bathers in a Room* (1908) by Kirchner. Although Picasso's work was completed in 1907, having as a background multiple studies a couple of years old, it is significant that the German Expressionist based on influences similar to the Picasso's. In any case, the work of Picasso also questions the link between pornography and prostitution, as it had traditionally been considered, which granted to pornography an aesthetic that would link it with eroticism through art.

Two authors of the 20th century should be considered in this sense: Duchamp and Magritte, but first, we will deal with the link between eroticism and this new way of understanding art.

Eroticism as a Metaphor

Art, like eroticism, we said, is a product of modernity. Of course, erotic expressions exist since the origin of humanity. Initially, during the Paleolithic period, eroticism was linked to the sacred as shown by the Venus of Willendorf, which, according to the context in which it was found, exerted a magical influence on the community. It is not a realistic representation, but it does express some characteristics of the conception of the beauty of the time, where fatness is also appreciated as a symbol of power, prosperity, and well-being: as an exaltation of life. Eros, therefore, is referred not only to the sexual aspects but to the desire and production of pleasure; moreover, it expresses opposition to death, Thanatos.

Eroticism, Paz tells us, "[...] is transfigured sexuality: metaphor. The agent that moves the same to the erotic act than the poetic (artistic we would say) is the imagination."[10] The difference lies therefore between biology and culture, which is the beginning of humanity. "At its root," Paz continues, "eroticism is sex, nature; because it is a creation and because of its functions in society, it is

culture. One of the goals of eroticism is to tame sex and insert it into society".[11] Therefore, we comment, art and eroticism are overly or very clearly human, since they start from the physical limits to transform thanks to imagination and creativity, which distances us from our animal condition. Unlike the sexuality of other animals, human sexuality is restricted by social customs, by taboos or laws. Historically, except for the golden age of the Paleolithic —the original paradise of the noble savage—, it emerged a sexual order which invented the Puritan couple and condemned the sexuality and pleasure of the body, even within marriage. Hence, eroticism related to the breaking of customs or laws, particularly to that sexual order that would also be challenged by the end of the 18th century. Rousseau and the enlightened philosophers would open a revolutionary option, "the hidden glory of the revolution": civil marriage, which would rest on the free consent of the couple.[12] This great liberal transformation would set for the first time the tone to invent an equal couple and with it the full eroticism.

Now, this type of eroticism would face the established sexual order. In the words of Georges Bataille, eroticism "presupposes man in conflict with himself".[13] Eroticism can be seen not only by power relations but also as an element of resistance, as a subversive potential that links it directly with art and where rules or purposes do not condition pleasure.

This awareness of the subversive power of eroticism is the central feature of modern art, particularly since the late 18th century. All this has to do with changes in the social context, specifically in the transformations of marriage and family and, in general, in the role of women in the modern world. The evolution from the large and extended family to a nuclear family with two or fewer children, thanks also to civil marriage, meant the change of woman's mind, especially concerning the control of their bodies. This great demographic revolution, with different intensity according to the social transformations of the different spaces, has to do fundamentally with the advance of the education of women and with the decision, also essential, to marry freely. In this way, the social liberation that

represents the freedom to decide, as part of the emergence or "invention" of human rights, is linked to the civilizing process that also incorporates the formation of citizenship.

We have already mentioned the work of artists that show a different woman, such as Goya, Monet, Courbet, in brief, Picasso. However, in the 20th century the work of Marcel Duchamp would introduce a new aesthetic against conventions, not only from the use of existing objects under different contexts (always with an erotic connotation "*Eros c'est la vie*"), but playing with the ambiguity of an alter ego: Rose Sélavy. She, according to the photo of Man Ray (1924), represents a woman of the 20's of the last century, flirtatious, stylish, in an apparent tribute to the independent woman of those years who wears a hat, smokes cigars and frequents jazz clubs. His work The Large Glass (1965-1966) represents, among other ideas, the great erotic frustration of women.

Another great artist of the 20th century, René Magritte, is linked to the surrealist aesthetic that painted the fears and repressed memory typical of the post-Freudian era, for example, through *The Lovers* (1928), a work in which a couple kisses, but with their faces covered by a blanket, remembering the strength of desire that must be contained; or, the representation of *The Rape* (1934), a surrealist symbol where a rejection of the conventions and the social restrictions is perceived.

The list of artists, particularly of the 20th century, could be extended widely since what is forbidden as eroticism is part of contemporary aesthetics. Even the traditional boundaries between pornography (as a prostitute thing and bad taste) and eroticism (as a reference to even spiritual pleasure) have been questioned by a good part of audiovisual productions of the second half of the 20th century. An excellent example of this is the *Sex Game Book. A Cultural History of Sexuality* (Assouline Publishing, 2004) by Denyse Beaulieu, in which, as a playful encyclopedia, it shows the fascination for sex in modern culture.

Recapitulating, I will only say that art, like eroticism, although with a great tradition in the history of humanity, reaches

full meaning through enlightened modernity, since the subversive potential of both was broadened by social transformations achieved based on education and liberation against the customs and restrictions of sexuality. If art and eroticism are a transformation of reality, a metaphor –as Paz would say–, then it depends on our imagination to enjoy them.

Omens of Modernity

The look of William Henry Jackson on Aguascalientes

Why does the "ardent desire" of photography, of photographing and being photographed arise? We know that officially its invention was announced since January 7, 1839, in the speech of Francois Arago before the French Academy of Sciences, and that in June of the same year the enthusiasm caused by the images of Louis Daguerre in the Chamber of Deputies finally combined with its acceptance at the meeting of the Academy of Sciences and Arts of France on August 19 of the same year of 1839. However, we also know that from the year 1794 until the mentioned year, twenty-four people from seven different countries (including a Brazilian and a Spanish) had claimed to be the first to have practiced photography in one way or another. Of all those experiences, only four had found truly original solutions.

What is relevant, as Geoffrey Batchen has well explored,[14] is verifying this "ardent desire" (in words of Nicéphore Niépce addressed to Daguerre) for capture the light made images —a desire perhaps with old references, but that until the Enlightenment would not become a reality through an object that finally acted as an "artificial eye": the camera.

For, in any case, how do we define photography or, better yet, how do we explain that need to capture images as if we were looking through a window? William Henry Fox Talbot, undoubtedly one of the founders of photography, managed precisely to,

through a photogenic drawing, portray one of the first images that symbolize the new way of printing light, and he did it by photographing precisely one window. Because, like the indiscreet window of Hitchcock, photography offers the opportunity to delve into the lives of others, to capture objects in images that acquire relevance and meaning when selected by the photographic eye, having an influence that way in the object itself. Photography, thus, gives identity but also transforms what is portrayed. William Henry Jackson's photographs of Mexico and, especially of Aguascalientes, express clearly all this.

The desire to find identity through the photographic mirror, and thus be able to influence the photographed arises essentially since the end of the 18th century coinciding with the transformations of art itself. As we have already mentioned, the "invention" of the fine arts with the Enlightenment gave new concepts, practices, and institutions that would coincide with the artist's height who, starting with the vindication of the subject, would present new contexts for the survival of art itself.

Although photography originally linked to scientific developments, it is also important to consider that the process in which photography became part of the fine arts was one of the most significant moments in cultural history. Within the reflection on "divided art," between fine arts and crafts, criticism of photography became a dichotomy between originality and copying, between art and technique. It would not be until many years after his invention that photography acquired its place in art thanks to the insistence of some creators such as Alfred Stieglitz or Edward Weston and Man Ray in the 20th century, for whom the important thing was, in the words of Stieglitz: "[...] what you have to say and how to say it. The novelty of a work of art refers both to the novelty of the expressed thing and the way in which it is expressed, just in poetry as much in photography or painting."[15]

The preponderance of the portrait in the first years of his invention, that practically eliminated the painting of miniature portraits but then move on to the photography of nature and land-

scape in the 19th century, tells us about what Susan Sontag,[16] in a thoughtful study on the work of Walt Whitman, would recognize as one of the great cultural revolutions of North America: the democratization of culture through photography, although the appropriation of the medium by large companies limited this revolution.

Therefore, we are experiencing two profound transformations regarding the history of the first century of photography: its incorporation into the fine arts and its contribution to the possibilities of democratizing culture. Another point to highlight is the identity creation of a country or a society through photography. The first images of a modern country were given of course by maps, which occurred in a generalized way in the 19th century. Later, the images of a country taken by its people were initially lithographies, but, as the extension of the technique progressed, photography occupied that place. The work of William Henry Jackson would have to be located here, not only for the case of the United States of America but also in the Mexican case. The paradox around our case is that for the 19th century foreign travelers imposed the images of our spaces and our people, in such a way that the "visual culture" of Mexico in that century would essentially have foreign eyes. Maybe this paradox explains Jackson's work for Mexico.

It is necessary to dwell on lithography as part of this process of construction of the visual culture on the Mexican essence, a technique introduced in the country by Claudio Linati, especially, the author of *Costumes civiles, militaires et religieux du Mexique* in 1828, work printed abroad that marked how the Mexicans of the 19th century were recognized abroad but, at the same time, reinforced certain stereotypes about the Mexican. In the same way, we should mention the lithographic works of Jean Decaen, who together with Agustín Massé, made the first large-format album printed in Mexico on *Monumentos de México tomados al natural* [Monuments of Mexico Taken Naturally] in the year 1841.[17] Later came the works by Mexican lithographers such as Ignacio Cumplido, Manuel Murguía, and Juan Campillo, and also by Casimiro Castro and Constantino Escalante, among many others, without

forgetting Trinidad Pedroza in Aguascalientes who started the work of José Guadalupe Posada. In this sense, lithography built images of the nation and the popular well into the 19th century. In parallel, however, photography began to occupy a place in this process of creation of the Mexican culture.

The desire and even "fury" for photography and especially for the daguerreotype began early in Mexico, as well argued Olivier Debroise and Rosa Casanova[18] among other scholars. Its adoption is due to a student from San Carlos, Joaquín Díaz González, who in 1844 installed one of the first daguerreotype workshops in the country, so the discussion between technique and art, fortunately in the Mexican case, had a successful start. Besides, this beginning was generous since according to a testimony of 1872: "The art of photography has become in our days of such general use that families have their photographer as they have their lawyer or physician."[19]

Photography democratizes the portrait, according to Alain Corbin; even more "it democratizes the desire for social approval." In the Mexican case, the possession of a daguerreotype or an ambrotype would become a very personal, intimate jewel, hence the luxury of the embossed leather cases lined with velvet made to protect this treasure. The portrait photograph showed the grace and discreet charm of the Mexican elite, in which Enrique Fernández Ledesma was able to see the fashion and customs of an era and a social group. "Born during the romanticism," says Enrique Fernández Ledesma, "the people of mid-century (19th) act romantic. They amplify their feelings, stylize their attitudes, and add, with the most fertile naturalness, novelistic brushstrokes in their social and intimate life".[20]

In the same way, photography in Mexico, particularly after the 1880s, would follow the road mapped internationally with the visualization of both rural and urban landscape with different interests either archaeological (such as those of Claude Désiré Charnay or Carl Lumholtz), touristic, or –like the case of William Henry Jackson and CB Waite– of progressive propaganda. Photographers of Progress, Olivier Debroise called them, promoters of investments

that would represent exotic Mexico with great historical monuments, but also that of ancestral poverty in search of progress.

William Henry Jackson (New York, 1843-1942) was not only a photographer, but he was also a creator of myths. In the United States, he is recognized as the creator of images of the American West and, thus, the promoter of the myth of freedom based on a heroic individualism and that of sustained freedom, defined and extended by the American soil and landscape.[21] His initial work as a "retoucher" of photographs and later as a photographer of the Union Pacific Railroad and mainly of the Office of Geology and Geography of the United States, between 1870 and 1876, would define him as the creator of the American landscape.[22] Moreover, his photographs would underpin Whitman's poetry and the discourse on the American frontier as an unlimited possibility of expanding freedom.

William Henry Jackson traveled several times to Mexico between 1883 and 1907, sometimes hired by the Central Mexican Railroad (FCM), but also for himself. The most important collections of these trips are in the Library of the Congress of the United States and the Photo library of the INAH [National Institute of Archeology and History]. The existing collection in the Library of Congress includes the images of his trip to Mexico in 1891 commissioned by FCM, in a route that went from the border of Chihuahua to Mexico City, passing through Durango, Zacatecas, Aguascalientes, and Querétaro.

According to a study conducted:

> *It is highly likely that Jackson's images were commissioned to show a positive vision of the country, the infrastructure of the FCM rail system and its possibilities to link agricultural and mining production centers. On the other hand, the passenger service meant 30% of the FCM's gross income and, given that the company was going through difficult times, it does not rule out that the images of Jackson had as a purpose attracting tourists.*[23]

In fact, Cayetano Romero, who was first secretary of the Mexican legation in the United States, used these photographs in an article about Mexico: "The Republic of Mexico" in *The New England Magazine*, published in Boston in 1892, in order to promote American investment in the country.[24]

Jackson stopped in Aguascalientes

His tour of our country and his stay in Aguascalientes was a marketing event which aligned the eyes of Jackson and the FCM with those of the Mexican elite. However, there is a plain fact that the different studies do not mention. According to Tania Gámez de León, as part of Jackson's 1891 contract, there are just over seventy photographs. However, Jackson took 40 photographs only of Aguascalientes. Apparently, for a particular interest, he stopped in the small state of the center of the country that would become the preferred place of American investment for the large railway workshops that would be installed a few years after his photos. In this way, the attraction for Aguascalientes would be confirmed not only by the investment by the Guggenheims but also by that by the Central Mexican Railroad. Hence the importance the photos of Jackson have for Aguascalientes and the country. Therefore, it is revealing to know them now in their entirety.

Jackson made two photographic sequences in Aguascalientes: the first of the Plaza and its surroundings; the second, of the Alameda and its baths, both of the irrigation ditches and Los Arquitos. The first sequence is a tour of the center with a panoramic shot; the Cathedral, the Government Palace with its Churrigueresque stucco, to later focus in the garden and the fruity drinks vendors; then the visit to San Diego and the Parian with its vendors; Guadalupe and San Marcos, and a house with the period décor and its ornate facade, the marbling of the quarry and the diamonds of the border. The other route starts at Los Arquitos, goes to the Alameda, pass through the landscape, sees the bathers in hot water

ditches, the washerwomen and portrays among them to a woman who dares to pose in front of the camera while prepares to bathe. Then, he again focuses in the washerwomen and the makers of *tortillas* and *gorditas* in the hotplate, to conclude pointing out the abundance of water in the state.

These photographs were intended for foreign eyes and represented an almost virgin world ready to receive the benefits of "civilization." A few years after these photographs, the fate of Aguascalientes was transformed to become a center of attraction for capital, commerce, and industry, thus altering the regional economy since the installation of the railroad workshops in Aguascalientes restructured the region giving it a primacy that it would maintain with ups and downs during a good part of the 20th century. In this way, William Henry Jackson revealed the image of Aguascalientes and at the same time foreboded, from his myth-builder artificial eye, the development of the state under the regime of Porfirio Díaz.

Jackson stopped over at Aguascalientes. Gallery[25]

Plaza de Armas, Aguascalientes, Mexico.

Aguascalientes Cathedral, Aguascalientes, Mexico.

Fruity drinks stand, Aguascalientes, Mexico.

Market arcade, Aguascalientes, Mexico.

San Diego market arcade, Aguascalientes, Mexico.

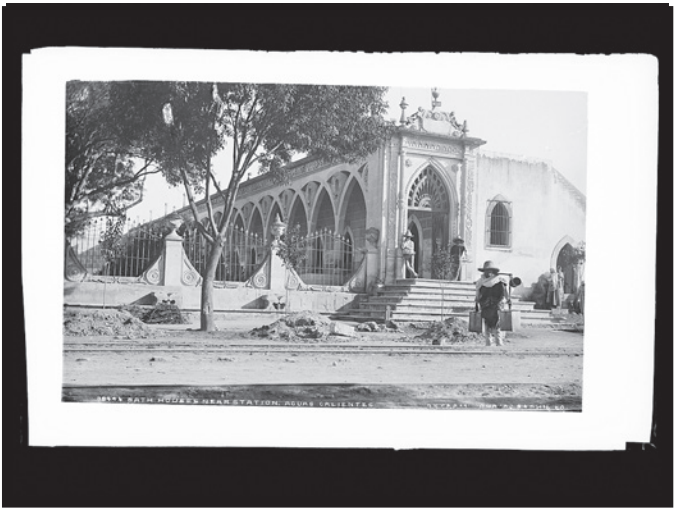
Market in Aguascalientes, Aguascalientes, Mexico.

San Diego Church, Aguascalientes, Mexico.

Guadalupe Church, Aguascalientes, Mexico.

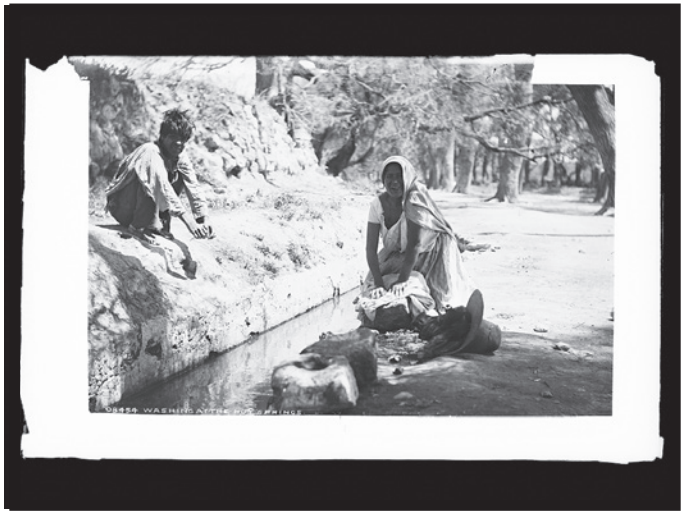
Entrance to the San Marcos Garden, Aguascalientes, Mexico.

A church near the San Marcos Garden, Aguascalientes, Mexico.



Baths near La Estación, Aguascalientes, Mexico.

Taking a bath in the ditch, Aguascalientes, Mexico.



Washing clothes in the hot waters, Aguascalientes, Mexico.

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TOWARDS A NEW CULTURAL MAP? PRACTICES AND CULTURAL CONSUMPTION IN MEXICO

The Uses of Consumption

Introduction

In the late '70s of the last century, Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood began a reflection on the relationship between culture and economy through consumption that, despite the length of time elapsed, is still relevant. Beyond the doubts about mass society and consumption, the degradation of culture against the show, the authors introduced a perspective that broadened the possibilities of cultural analysis.[1]

Consider consumption as a visible element of the culture that gives sense to life in society and that helps us to understand its complexity and merchandise as a more or less coherent series of meanings "that can be perceived only by those who know the code and scrutinize them in search of information" represented the fall of an intellectual wall or the creation of a bridge between anthropology and economy, between culture and society and, finally, between

art and life. "Let us forget," the authors continue, "that the goods serve to eat, dress, and protect. Let us forget its usefulness and try instead to adopt the idea that goods serve to think; we learn to treat them as a non-verbal means of the creative faculty of the human race". Now, one of the main problems of social life is that meanings only remain static for brief moments; therefore consumption "is a ritual process whose primary function is to make sense of the rudimentary flow of events."[2]

Make sense of the flow of events, that's what it's all about. Hence, entering into the world of cultural consumption implies an effort to unravel some of the broadest social trends and differences. The issue of cultural consumption and its relation to social differences has a permanent source of inspiration in Pierre Bourdieu. His work *Distinction* warns us to think about culture, aesthetic taste, and cultural consumption as floating in the air without referents of social differentiation. The universe of cultural goods provides "almost inexhaustible" possibilities for the investigation of distinction.

> *If among all the possible universes there are none like the universe of luxury goods and, among these, of cultural products, which seems so predisposed to express social differences, it is because the relation of distinction inscribes objectively in it, and it reactivates, whether it is known or not, whether it is wanted or not, in each act of consumption [...]. It is not only the affirmations of the difference that writers and artists endlessly profess as the autonomy of the field of cultural production strengthens but the immanent intention to the cultural objects themselves.*[3]

Cultural consumption has a social charge in language, in the system of ethical and aesthetic values that work automatically to make a difference: cult-uncultured, noble-vulgar, literate-illiterate; it reproduces the accumulated differences in cultural capital. In this sense:

> *[...] the science of taste and cultural consumption (to which Bourdieu undoubtedly contributed), begins with a transgression that has nothing aesthetic: in effect, it cancels the sacred frontier that makes legitimate culture a separate universe to discover the intelligible relationships that unite seemingly incommensurable 'choices' such as preferences in music and cooking, painting and sports, literature and hairdressing.*[4]

Bourdieu's work is one of the most prolific and influential among social scientists of the 20th century,[5] perhaps because Bourdieu managed to advance both theoretically and concretely in overcoming the traditional dichotomies that still today methodologically influence social disciplines: objectivity *vs.* subjectivity, structure *vs.* individual, specific analysis *vs.* theory, etcetera.

Bourdieu worked on different topics in the process of permanent theoretical construction. His research on Algeria, photography, the French academic world, public housing policies, the misery of the world of the lower classes and the world of art and culture show the broad spectrum of interests of the author. About this last subject highlight precisely *The Love of Art: European Art Museums and Their Public* and *Distinction*, investigations where through great surveys the author shows that the appreciation of works of art –the taste– is socially constructed in the interaction between the social structures and the practices of agents, mediated by the concept of *habitus* as a guiding principle of actions.

The concept of *habitus*, taken from scholasticism and in particular from the study made by the art historian Edwin Panofsky on Gothic cathedrals, offers an alternative to simplified schemes on culture, by being defined: "as a system of internalized schemes that allow engender all the thoughts, perceptions and actions characteristic of a culture."[6] *Habitus* is a concept useful to question the social determinisms of "rules," "models," and "structures" and to accept "the meaning of the game" in the strategies of social or individual agents.

The other concept is that of the *field* where the games occur, that is, where "configures the objective relations between positions",[7]

where the struggles for the conservation or transformation of the existing forces (or capitals) occur, so that one can speak of a cultural or significance field where the "cultural struggles" that prefigure the cultural map take place. In this sense, the research on practices and consumption offers the opportunity to distinguish the different forces that are at stake, the principles that guide the practices, as well as the structural determinations that reproduce the inequalities. From these two main influences are the first studies on cultural practices and consumption in Mexico.

Cultural Consumption in Mexico

Néstor García Canclini coordinated the pioneering study on cultural consumption in Mexico (1993), which analyzed the topics that would mark the agenda on the subject, and established the kind of conclusions that would be recurrent in such studies. For example, García Canclini outlined the different theoretical proposals that thus far, along with the works of Jesús Martín Barbero, continue being the "guide" for scholars of different social areas throughout Latin America.[8] By questioning the naturalist conception or the value of use of consumer goods, proposed the six most fruitful theoretical models at the time and launched a definition of cultural consumption as: "The set of appropriation processes and uses of products in which the symbolic value prevails over the values of use and of change, or where the latter configure in subordination to the symbolic dimension".[9]

In the section on *Needs, Consumption, and Modernization*, García Canclini pointed out some contradictions generated by modernizing policies in the face of a historically consolidated national structure, such as the challenge to the "centralist distribution of cultural goods and the inequalities that promote access to them." At the same time, it pointed to a "conceptual turn" in government policies that implied a profound revision of post-revolutionary integration, given that hegemonic neoliberalism implied a privatizing

and selective reorganization of priorities. Therefore, García Canclini concluded: "The study of cultural consumption thus appears as a strategic place to rethink the type of society we want [...]. To know what happens in consumption is to ask ourselves about the effectiveness of policies, about the destiny of what we all produce, about the ways and proportions in which we participate in the social construction of the meaning".[10]

In this same study, García Canclini along with Mabel Piccini, elaborated what would be the conclusions practically for any study of this kind, that is, conclusions that have been repeated constantly: a) the little correspondence between cultural infrastructure and urban growth; b) the low use of "classic" cultural assets and even of traditional cultural offers; c) contradictory communicational processes where generate "a homogenization and a differentiation" more accentuated than in the past; and d) the retreat towards private forms of cultural consumption as well as the intensification of the daily networks of family life. So they conclude suggesting an ethnographic analysis of everyday life to "design a *qualitative map* of cultural life and symbolic practices of the community."[11] Hence the suggestion of Ana Rosas Mantecón (2002) and Guillermo Sunkel (2002 and 2004) in the sense of deepening the analysis of access to rituals linked to culture, or recognize the so-called "cultural consumption" as part of a broader context and a socio-historical process of construction of new cultural categories or social groups.[12]

Since the early '90s of the last century to the present, two national surveys (2004 and 2010) were carried out in Mexico, as well as numerous state and local works that, with some differences that we will later indicate, have ended up concluding what journalists want to hear: the low level of correspondence between infrastructure and urban developments, and the low consumption of "classical" cultural services: theater, dance, symphonic orchestras, reading, and so on.

However, I think that between the proposal to analyze consumption as a relevant element to understand contemporary society, meaning, as "good to think," and the repeated conclusions about the low "cultural consumption" there is a qualitative leap that is

necessary to clarify to advance the studies. In the first place, it would be necessary to distinguish between cultural consumption, which implies indeed to recognize that involves socio-historical processes of appropriation and use of goods with symbolic value where, of course, cultural services are found, and artistic goods and the market of art, typical of cultural industries. This difference warns us of the change in the pattern of consumption of these goods and services where the cinema and the massive musical shows acquire relevance, but also the consumption of cultural goods from home in a process that has been called "digital connectivity" and that has to do with broader processes of the relationship between the youth and the media.[13]

I have highlighted the *socio-historical* nature of the processes since these analyzes did not consider enough the historical perspective, besides that we have not given meaning to the "classic" cultural assets, because we refer them only based on the first instance (usually the surveys) and not on the historical relevance that represents, for example, what Raymond Williams called the "long revolution": in other words, the cultural revolution that means the expansion of the reading audiences and the arts. Therefore, it is necessary to find the contexts that allow us to reconstruct the value of cultural consumption for the analysis of contemporary society. The possibility of carrying out this kind of study will not only systematize the information but also broaden the reflection about the transformations of Mexican society in recent years. It is therefore essential to include other perspectives, especially from regions where infrastructure and cultural services have made significant progress as part of a broader transformation of Mexican cities and society.

Finally, there is one more study on cultural practices and consumption in Mexico that we should consider: the analysis of the Survey 2004 (sponsored by CONACULTA and carried out by UNAM) carried out by Alfonso Castellanos Ribot which focuses on the data nationwide, although the survey allowed regional references.[14] It is a careful study, a synthesis of the National Survey on Cultural Practices and Consumption published by CONACULTA, which

corroborates the attendance patterns, for example, of cultural sites, as well as those of reading and Internet use: young people with higher levels of education and higher levels of income;[15] patterns, by the way, similar to those of other countries, including developed ones.

What, then, are the scopes of these surveys? Without a doubt, the question remains pertinent. However, the perspective changes if we begin to think about cultural consumption beyond the traditional dichotomies between high and low culture and consider it equally a practice of distinction and, in terms of participation, a base to reflect on cultural citizenship at a time when new obstacles emerge to the access and expansion of cultural goods and services.

Perhaps this is why it is essential to start thinking about the sector in its breadth, involving not only the "cultural intermediaries" but also the different publics, both those related to the services and those of the cultural industries. Precisely to meet these audiences there is a tool that has been little used so far: It is the 2010 National Survey on Cultural Habits, Practices, and Consumption[16] sponsored by CONACULTA and that for the first time allows us to approach the complexity of the audiences of the cultural sector throughout the country, given that it is the first survey of this kind that is representative of all states. Hence, we can speak of a new cultural map, as the following exercise on an Index of Cultural Participation shows.

Index of Cultural Participation

The need to know the scope and contradictions of a broad process of democratization of cultural goods and services has posed different possibilities for analysis, especially from surveys on cultural practices and consumption. Recently, however, it has emerged a current of analysis for the Latin American case, which has materialized in the proposition of cultural consumption indices that allow a higher degree of national and international comparison.[17]

For example, according to the Index of Cultural Consumption elaborated by the Alberto Hurtado University of Chile, which

in addition to offering an excellent methodology for the preparation of these instruments allows an international comparison, Mexico's position is below the European Union average: from 0.38 to 0.48; however, it is above that of Italy and even of Spain (see Table 1, Index of Cultural Consumption: Europe, Mexico, and Chile).

Table 1: Index of Cultural Consumption in Europe, Mexico, and Chile

País	**Índice de consumo cultural (ICC)**
Suecia	0.96
Dinamarca	0.95
Holanda	0.95
Luxemburgo	0.83
Finlandia	0.81
Estonia	0.78
República Checa	0.77
Inglaterra	0.72
Alemania	0.71
Letonia	0.69
Austria	0.62
Irlanda	0.60
Eslovaquia	0.60
Eslovenia	0.57
Francia	0.50
Bélgica	0.49
UE 27	0.48
México	0.38
Lituania	0.34
Italia	0.33
España	0.31
Hungría	0.31
Malta	0.24
Polonia	0.17
Grecia	0.11
Chipre	0.09

País	Índice de consumo cultural (ICC)
Rumania	0.06
Portugal	0.05
Bulgaria	0.04
Chile	0.02

Recently, for the Mexican case, Ernesto Piedras coordinated the elaboration of the Index of Cultural Capacity and Use of the States (ICACE), in which he favored the information based on infrastructure, cultural industries and federal budgets transferred to the states. (cultural offer), and included in the same package elements of the demand based on the question of whether: "have you ever [...]" of the 2010 Survey on Habits, Practices, and Consumption. Given that the index is a mixture where the infrastructure maintains a considerable weight, the results finally reiterate and privilege the concentration in the Federal District.

However, a more detailed analysis of cultural practices and consumption makes it possible to propose an Index of Cultural Participation for the country that effectively privileges consumption over twelve selected variables.[18] The objective of this Index of Cultural Participation is to establish at a glance the main characteristics of the different regions and states, regarding cultural practices and consumption. The variables were chosen based on the question: "In the last twelve months, how many times did you attend [...]?",[19] and not in general terms: "if you have ever attended," as it appears on the ICACE by Piedras. Therefore, it is a more limited proposal that allows more specific comparisons even at an international level.

The purpose of this new index is not to evaluate the performance of regions and states, but to point out some indicators that may contribute to clarify the determinants of cultural consumption and practices in the country and, as far as possible, to have better information for decision making.

It is worth noting in this index that the differences between states and regions are not as broad as one might traditionally think

given centralism. In the Piedras index, the deviation is very wide (the lowest indicator is 67.1 points, and the highest is 312), which tells us that the different variables used led to a higher concentration mainly in the Federal District. However, the Index of Cultural Participation indicates another process, which here we have called a new cultural map of the country where the differences start shortening.

If we look at the average of the regions, the difference is not so drastic, but that does not deny that the disparities persist. It should be noted that the Northeast region is the closest to the center, with the rest remaining practically at the same level.

Table 2. Index of Cultural Participation by regions

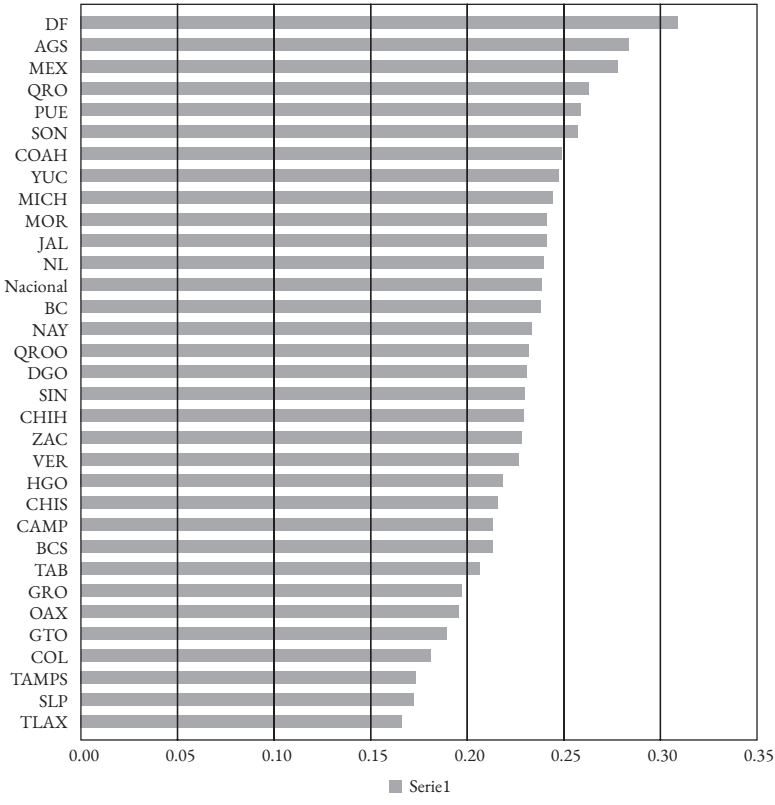
Total	Noroeste	0.223
Total	Noreste	0.237
Total	Centro-occ	0.228
Total	Centro	0.242
Total	Sur	0.226
Total nacional		0.232

Source: Author's creation with data obtained in http://www.conaculta.gob.mx/ encuesta_nacional.php.

Understanding the regional differences is necessary to detail and refer the analysis at the state level, which can be seen in Figure 1. This analysis shows a deviation where the Federal District maintains the lead, followed closely by Aguascalientes, the State of Mexico and Querétaro. Above the national average are twelve states, which reveals an expansion of this cultural participation nationwide.

From this first result, it is impossible to draw definitive conclusions, since more analyses of a process that has to do with different and diverse conditioning factors are required. It is a socio-historical process of appropriation of goods which needs more and better analyses. A factor generally mentioned is the level of spending both at the state and federal level, which can help to define some policies.

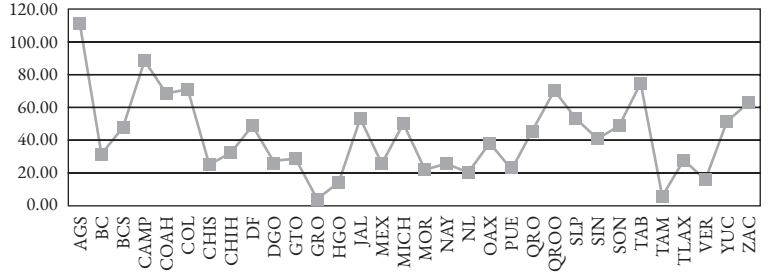
Graph 1. Index of Cultural Participation 2010 prepared based on twelve cultural practices and consumption



Source: National Survey on Habits, Practices, and Cultural Consumption, 2010, CONACULTA; in addition to public spending *per capita* on culture per state.

The budget for culture influences, but it is not determinant, in the explanation of these differences. As can be seen in Figure 2, cultural practices and consumption are not directly related to *per capita* spending in the states, although some states present a correlation between both indices, such as Aguascalientes and Quintana Roo.[20]

Graph 2. Spending *per capita* by state in culture, 2006-2011



Source: Author's calculations based on the data provided by the states to the Transparency Portal, elaborated with the assistance of Enrique Alejandro Jiménez Rodríguez.

The contributions to the states by the Federation have increased substantially in recent years, mainly by those labeled in the Culture Committee of the Congress. However, this factor does not explain the divergences in practices and consumption (see Chart 3). Moreover, if we analyze in detail the federal contributions, we observe that three states concentrate a large part of the budget in recent years: State of Mexico, Federal District, and Jalisco. Indeed, the three states are above the national average in the Index of Cultural Participation, which raises some questions: Should the federal budget support the states with the highest cultural participation? Should it support the most disadvantaged states?

What should be the criteria at the national level to define the federal contributions to culture? It seems to me that there should be a criterion of co-responsibility which remains in some federal programs (e.g., *Culturas Populares* or *Alas y Raíces*) and that unfortunately have been forsaken in the Congress budget allocations at a federal level. This co-responsibility should be measured according to the *per capita* expenditure with which each state contributes to the culture and, in that sense, federal contributions would support state initiatives. Otherwise, budget deviations create processes that make it difficult to maintain them from the states.

In recent years, budget allocations have been granted by the management of deputies who receive very diverse projects (from shell nonprofits organizations to proposals well underpinned by creators), without considering some criteria that had been established in several culture meetings.[21] An example: as a result of various meetings, the states achieved that the deputies would label a contribution for each state, which began with three million pesos until reaching 30 million pesos for each state, in addition to what each deputy, municipal president, and governor could manage on their own. However, this agreement left aside an essential criterion: the co-responsibility of each municipality and state of the Republic, since the allocations arrive more often for political management than for the presentation of projects based on a state process.

Table 3. Federal contributions to the states in culture, 2006-2011 (in pesos)

Aguascalientes	174,506,951.05
Baja California	243,840,791.58
Baja California Sur	104,304,350.59
Campeche	113,034,376.48
Coahuila	183,203,141.68
Colima 1	127,856,402.0
Chiapas	200,887,655.74
Chihuahua	213,543,749.82
Distrito Federal	968,222,051.56
Durango	184,602,502.67
Guanajuato	487,617,883.73
Guerrero	186,113,395.92
Hidalgo	148,651,633.16
Jalisco	330,751,328.69
México	423,022,635.14
Michoacan	303,223,215.21
Morelos	155,749,279.33
Nayarit	116,243,777.04

Nuevo Leon	407,070,573.15
Oaxaca	337,016,405.69
Puebla	209,231,068.19
Quéretaro	149,567,120.52
Quintana Roo	122,214,649.73
San Luis Potosí	191,865,870.55
Sinaloa	204,435,126.65
Sonora	164,044,337.35
Tabasco	197,978,658.02
Tamaulipas	114,167,040.78
Tlaxcala	199,200,791.96
Veracruz	273,161,809.35
Yucatán	166,842,135.56
Zacatecas	240,554,306.52
No Distribuible	778,477,499.58
Total	8,421,202,514.99

Source: Information provided by CONACULTA in 2012.

As we will see later, there are other determinants to explain the practices and consumption of Mexicans beyond budgets. Directly analyze some of the topics that emerge from the Survey on Habits, Practices and Cultural Consumption 2010 of Mexicans, can help us understand the complexity of the topic.

Cultural Consumption in Practice

There are different ways of analyzing cultural consumption, however, in the first section we comment on two perspectives that seem crucial to this type of analysis: 1) consumption serve to think, according to Mary Douglas and 2) Bourdieu's distinction to remember that consumption is a ritual process that gives meaning to events and that these practices have to do with consumption of goods and services generally associated with luxury consumption. The determinants of these processes have to do, for example, with

the existing infrastructure, with the proposed cultural policies and, of course, with the level of income of consumers.

Therefore, I will focus on one of the highly significant cultural practices: reading. It can be useful to understand some changes, modify the clichés and point towards some cultural policy criteria for the coming years.

The Readers

The most significant cultural practices have the reading as a paradigm, of course, because of the idea of culture involved since at least the invention of the printing press, but above all, because reading has to do with processes of self-affirmation and self-knowledge based on the creation of the private space and silent reading. That is why reading also has to do with democratization because, in the words of Michele Petit, it makes us better equipped "to resist some processes of marginalization or certain mechanisms of oppression. To elaborate or reconquer a position of subject and not only be the object of the discourses by others".[22]

Beyond the reflection on "digital convergence" and, of course, the different ways of approaching reading, we should recognize what is important to preserve, without discarding the possibilities of any novelty, such as the Internet today. Therefore, when asked: "How many complete books, which are not related to the school or your profession, have you read in the last twelve months?", I selected those who have merely read a book or more for the pure joy of reading, for pleasure. The result is as follows:

First, we must start with the number of readers in the country, according to an approximation in absolute terms of those who answered the question referred to in the previous paragraph: 19.1 million declared having read at least one book for pleasure (beyond requirements of the profession or the school) in the last year; 13.5 million reported buying books in the previous twelve months. A market, to put it in powerful words, not despicable at all. It is surprising, making a choice, that the consumers of cinema or live concerts (which are the cultural events of highest consumption,

after television), are 22 million in each practice. This, thus, places reading, against all stereotype, as one of the most widely performed cultural practices among the population.

García Canclini, in his brief dictionary on digital convergence, asked in the entry about "readers": "Why are campaigns to promote reading done only with books and so many new libraries include only paper formats?"[23] He answered himself: the assertions that the books would be over ceased to be concerns of cultural studies for several years, since, against all the predictions, the number of readers continues to increase, so the Internet reading is an excellent complement to that one that made in print.

Indeed, the rhetoric of decadence is misleading, as Fernando Escalante Gonzalbo commented in a profound reflection on the transformations of the world of books and reading, and especially the mediations that have hindered access to reading.[24] This author distinguished, among other things, that there was not a generic reader, but different public readers ("usual" and "occasional", as well as "non-readers"), and that between 15% and 20% of the population were "usual readers": "Something would be gained —in clarity, at least, says Escalante Gonzalbo—, if it could be admitted that the usual readers will always be a minority: at best, 15% or 20% of the population and fragmented, in addition, in groups of different interests so each one will read what they want. Even so, he continues, that minority matters and it is not the same being 2.5% or 20%; it would be desirable for it being as large as possible".[25]

It is worthy to note that even scholars have given little attention to existing data; perhaps the exception is Gabriel Zaid, who used the different available Surveys (on Reading 2006, on Cultural Practices and Consumptions 2004 and ENICH 2004) to show how little the university students read.[26] Even, as we will see later, within the group of young readers those who have an elementary and secondary education read more than university students. The critical thing to understand that is to analyze the existing information and reflecting starting from it.

Faced with the common idea that young people do not read –which has led to a series of nostalgic and even apocalyptic conclusions about the disappearance of the book and of civilization–, the data of the National Survey on Cultural Habits, Practices, and Consumptions 2010 (2010 Survey, onwards) shows a different panorama. Maybe not the desirable one, but not a despicable one either.[27]

According to this 2010 Survey, at a national level, it is precisely young people (considered here between 13 and 30 years of age) who make up the majority group (53.2%) that has read more than one book in the last year, beyond the requirements. At the segments level, they are mainly the young men, of secondary education (High School) and with a middle-class income, the ones who read the most. It is followed immediately by adult women (from 31 to 60 years old), with primary education and with average incomes, which in itself tell us of a previous generation to the current young women of reading women. A third group is that of young women with middle schooling and average income.

On the contrary, it is at least symptomatic of previous generations that the lowest profile, say the "non-reader," is found among adults over 60 (women and men almost equally), with higher education, but with a declared income of under three thousand pesos.

If we look at the following maps, it stands out that there are more young readers in the Center and South of the country; young male readers are practically all over the nation, which has to do with the growing participation of women in culture, but fundamentally with the possibilities of infrastructure, especially libraries and, of course, bookstores.

According to data from the Atlas of Infrastructure and Cultural Heritage of Mexico 2010, with data of 2009, there are 7,289 libraries in the country; and when asked if "they had ever gone to a library," 54.9% of those interviewed in the 2010 Survey declared having done so. Now, of those who visit libraries, it is necessary to make some precisions. At the national level and in absolute terms, according to the 2010 Survey again, 15.5 million people reported having attended libraries at least once in the last year; of the total,

69.2% are young people, 42.1% have an elementary education, 38.6% have secondary education and 19.3% have higher education. It must be remembered that the 2010 Survey was carried out on people aged 13 and over so that the majority population of children does not necessarily bias library attendance. For this reason, the fact that it is young people with elementary education who attend mostly libraries, and not university students, is striking.

Regarding where the most significant number of library attendees is located, the pattern of practice is similar to that of readers: young people (men and women) with average income and mainly with elementary and secondary education. Moreover, the majority of assistants to libraries have only an elementary education. The university students, in absolute terms, appear little within the habitual readers (14.1%) as well as regulars to libraries (19.3%).

Given the recognition that there are a significant number of readers, the next question is about what they read. The three options that had the highest response rate were: novel, personal self-improvement and, somewhat surprisingly, history; followed by paranormal phenomena (ghosts, vampires, etcetera) and cooking; in the next short list of three literary categories are juvenile books, poetry, and biography.

So, this section has generated several surprises: there is a growing number of readers, young, old and non-university, which can help us to get out of our commonplace. The unfortunate thing is that, as Zaid anticipated, college students read less for pleasure.

Final Reflections

First: It would be necessary to recognize a tradition in the studies of consumption and cultural practices that unfortunately has received little attention in the country. It is noteworthy that there are only two surveys of this type (2004 and 2010), not comparable to each other, and only one with data referenced for the states (2010). Therefore, it is difficult to establish comparisons and much more

analyze processes of change in these practices. We should also remember that, if these surveys allow a radiograph of a moment, the analysis of the processes of appropriation of cultural goods and services is still a pending issue.

The analysis proposed in this essay is a first approximation to cultural consumption at the level of each state of the country and has the purpose of pointing out inequalities in the process of appropriation of these goods and services through cultural practices, as well as the expansion of practices in some states (twelve in total) above the national average. To this end, I made an Index of Cultural Participation with twelve variables of the 2010 Survey, in addition to the incorporation of *per capita* expenditures in culture by each state, which unlike other measurements, allows observing with greater precision a new cultural map in the country.

Finally, I analyzed one of the most significant topics of consumption and cultural practices: reading, obtaining results that go beyond the commonplace, particularly when pointing to more than 19 million people who read for pleasure (who have read more than one book not by school or work obligation), and not counting children, since the survey was realized among the population over 13. A data that seems obvious, but has not been analyzed, is that the number of readers has expanded notably in the youth and particularly in women with middle education and middle income. These data demands a more detailed study of what happens in our universities, not only in reading but, in general, in cultural practices.

1. Douglas, M. e Isherwood, B., *El mundo de los bienes. Hacia una antropología del consumo* [*The World of Goods: Towards an Anthropolgy of Consumption*], CONACULTA/ Ed. Grijalbo, 1990.
2. Douglas, M. e Isherwood, B., *El mundo de los bienes...*, *Op. cit.*, pp. 77 y 80.
3. Bourdieu, P., *La distinción. Criterio y bases sociales del gusto* [*Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*], Ed. Taurus, reedition 1991, p. 223.
4. Bourdieu, P., "Consumo cultural" [Cultural Consumption], in *El sentido social del gusto. Elementos para una sociología de la cultura* [The Social Sense of Taste. Elements for a Cultural Sociology], Buenos Aires (Argentina), Siglo XXI Editores, 2010, p. 239.
5. Zalpa Ramírez, G., *Cultura y acción social. Teoría(s) de la cultura* [Culture and Social Action. Theory (ies) of Culture], Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes, 2011,

pp. 110-128. See this work for an excellent presentation of Bourdieu's works; in general, this author's proposal is a tribute to Bourdieu.

6. Bourdieu, P. In the postface in the book by Panofsky, cited by Genaro Zalpa, *Cultura y acción social*, *Op. cit.*, p. 119.
7. Zalpa Ramírez, G., *Cultura y acción social...*, *Op. cit.*, pp. 126-128.
8. Gómez Vargas, H., "Figuras del pensar. Los estudios sobre el consumo cultural en América Latina y la organización del campo académico de la comunicación en México" [Figures of Thinking. Analyses on the Cultural Consumption in Latin America and the Organization of the Academic Field of Communication in Mexico], in *Estudios sobre las Culturas Contemporáneas*, Época II, Volumen XII/Número 23/Junio 2006, pp. 9-43.
9. García Canclini, N., *El consumo cultural en México* [Cultural Consumption in Mexico], CONACULTA 1993, p. 34. I would add that they are "socio-historical" process of appropriation.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
12. Mantecón, A. R., "Los estudios sobre consumo cultural en México" [The Analyses on Cultural Consumption in Mexico], in Daniel Mato (Coord.). *Estudios y otras prácticas intelectuales latinoamericanas en cultura y poder* [*Latin American Intellectual Practices in Culture and Power: Experiences and Debates*], CLACSO/CEAP/FACES, Universidad Central de Venezuela, 2002. Sunkel, G. "Una mirada otra. La cultura desde el consumo" [Another Look. Culture From Consumption], in Daniel Mato (Coord.), *Estudios y otras prácticas...*, *Op. cit.*, pp. 287-294; y "*El consumo cultural en la investigación en comunicaciones en América Latina*" [The Cultural Consumption in the Communications Research in Latin America], in *Contornos*, Signo y Pensamiento 45, Vol. XXIII, Julio-Diciembre, 2004. And the classic: Sunkel, G., (Coord.). *El consumo cultural en América latina* [The Cultural Consumption in Latin America], Convenio Andrés Bello, 1999.
13. For a specific analysis of these changes. *Cf.* Gómez Vargas, H., *Jóvenes, mundos mediáticos y ambientes culturales. Los tiempos del tiempo: la ciudad, biografías mediáticas y entornos familiares* [Young People, Media Worlds and Cultural Environments. The Times of Time: City, Media Biographies and Family Environments], Universidad Iberoamericana León, 2010, CD.
14. Castellanos Ribot, A. "Las estadísticas básicas de la cultura en México" [Basic Statistics of the Culture in Mexico], in *Cultura Mexicana: revisión y prospectiva*, Francisco Toledo, Enrique Florescano and José Woldenberg (Coords.), Ed. Taurus, 2008, pp. 365-400.
15. *Ibidem*, pp. 371-372, 378.
16. The results released by CONACULTA can be consulted by state or in general in http://www.conaculta.gob.mx/encuesta_nacional.php. The study cited base on an analysis of the survey from own calculations.
17. Güell, P., Morales, R. y Peters, T., *Una canasta básica de consumo cultural para América Latina. Elementos metodológicos para el derecho a la participación cultural* [A Basic Basket of Cultural Consumption for Latin America. Methodological Elements for

the Right to the Cultural Participation], Santiago de Chile, Ed. Universidad Alberto Hurtado, 2011.

18. The variables used in this index are these, referred to specific questions in the National Survey on Cultural Habits, Practices and Consumptions, 2010:
1. P. 2 In the last three months, how many times did you go to the movies?
2. P. 13 In the last 12 months, how many times did you go to a dance show?
3. P. 24 [...] music concert or live music presentation?
4. P. 43 [...] to a theatre play?
5. P. 55 [...] to archeological zones?
6. P. 66 [...] to a museum?
7. P. 73 [...] to a library?
8. P. 83 How many full books, not related to school or your career, have you read in the last 12 months?
9. P. 96 [...] to a plastics arts exhibit?
10. P. 104 [...] to a visual arts exhibit?
11. P. 109 [...] to cultural centers?
12. P. 129 Do you use the Internet?

Additionally, I included the public spending in culture per capita in the states and not the federal budget directed to states, which presents more detailed information given the variation in the federal budgets in the last years.

19. Except in the case of cinema, which specifies: "In the last three months [...]."
20. The case of Aguascalientes appears in second place in cultural participation and with the highest spending per capita in the country in 2010, which deserves a particular analysis.
21. The cultural meetings have taken place since around ten years. In them participate the state culture heads along with CONACULTA officials, in theory, to set a common agenda. However, except in a few cases, these meetings have produced few results regarding coordination and the establishment of cultural policy criteria.
22. Petit, M. *Lecturas: del espacio íntimo al espacio público* [Readings: From the Intimate Space to the Public Space], Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1ª reimp., 2004, p. 104.
23. García Canclini, N. *Lectores, espectadores e internautas* [Readers, Spectators and Internauts], Gedisa Editorial, 2007, p. 80.
24. Escalante Gonzalbo, F., *A la sombra de los libros. Lectura, mercado y vida pública* [In the Shadow of the Books. Reading, Market, and Public Life], El Colegio de México, 2007.
25. *Ibidem*, pp. 140, 184 y 342-343. The author presents several calculations about the regular readers: for instance, when he talks about the first mediation, which is family and school, says: "Just one in every twenty people —surely less— can compare the novelties advertised as masterpieces of literature, critique or history, to a set of previous readings," p. 154.
26. Zaid, G., "La lectura como fracaso del sistema educativo" [The Reading as a Failure of the Educational System], in Letras Libres, noviembre, 2006.
27. Escalante Gonzalbo reflects about the "oligopolistic" mediation of the books market, a topic unfortunately not resolved by the Law of Books.

EPILOGUE

I have always believed that we must close the circle of any creation. In the case of this book that collects some of my essays, it is the reader who finally recreates what I present here, starting from a new history of art that avoids the great authors or the general styles and finds in the search between the popular and the fine arts different ways of seeing. Hence the idea of Lucien Febvre that gives this book its title, "leave behind the remains of the wreck" to find new ways to help us rethink our own history of art.

So, it seems to me that in the fragments that make up these essays I have been able to find clues to walk on paths without feeling confusion or despair, without feeling the burden that represents our past (again Febvre) which does not allow us to move towards other ways to explore and understand history.

For this reason, the first section, which gives the book its name, suggests the route through which I have walked: from social and regional history to cultural history and art, in a historiographical reflection that has allowed me recovering the questioning of literal history (even the well-done, but that little helps us to make

sense of the past) and suggesting at least a history of art in a context that allows to us new encounters and discoveries.

A history of art put in context. Not a social history precisely, but following the threads of a complex web of relationships between specific works, such as the smiling little faces or the Osuna Codex, or Posada and the first Exhibition of Popular Arts. A cultural history of art that can consider both the enormous changes –e.g., the "great division" between the fine arts and crafts or popular art, and the way in which the tension between both spheres was resolved– as well as a detailed perspective and suddenly knowing that something has been enlightened.

The texts of this anthology have as common features, the theoretical and analytical perspectives that go from the general to the detail to find other ways of seeing art and culture in Mexico.

Finally, the analysis of the only survey on cultural habits and consumption that has been carried out representing all the states of the Republic envisages a new cultural map in Mexico, beyond our traditional centralism, perhaps as an augury of positive changes in the country where art and culture do matter. It is addressed, finally, the search for the lost reader, because the whole is more than the sum of the fragments and contains a proposal for other routes.

LEAVING BEHIND THE REMAINS OF THE WRECK
Extracts from a Cultural History

El cuidado y diseño de la edición estuvieron
a cargo del Departamento Editorial
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