

MACLAS

LATIN AMERICAN ESSAYS

Volume XVIII

MIDDLE ATLANTIC
COUNCIL OF
LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

LATIN AMERICAN ESSAYS

MACLAS

Vol. XVIII

Selected Papers Presented at the 25th Annual
Conference
Of the Middle American Council of Latin American
Studies

Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA
February 20-21, 2004

Christina Turner
Virginia Commonwealth University
Managing Editor

Maria Mercedes Andrade
CUNY, Baruch College
Associate Managing Editor

Joan Marx
Muhlenberg College
Associate Editor

Vera Reber
Shippensburg University
Associate Editor

Managing Editor's Preface

The eighteenth volume in the in the series of *MACLAS: Latin American Essays* presents a selection of nine papers given at the Twenty-Fifth Annual Conference of the Middle Atlantic Council of Latin American Studies held at Muhlenberg College, in Allentown, PA, February 20-21, 2005.

Acknowledgements

The Editorial Board wishes to thank Virginia Commonwealth University and its School of World Studies for the financial and human resources support for the publication of Volume XVIII. Phillip Simoy assisted editorially.

**Visit the MACLAS web page:
www.maclas.vcu.edu**

Offprints of articles in MACLAS are available from

The Gale Group
362 Lakeside Drive
Foster City, CA 94404
(formerly Information Access Company)

ISSN: 1525-125X

Copyright © 2005 by MACLAS
No portion may be reproduced without
the express permission of MACLAS.

Submissions to *MACLAS: Latin American Essays*

We, the editors, invite submission of papers presented at the XXVI Annual Conference of the Middle Atlantic Council on Latin American Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA, April 8-9, 2005 for Volume XIX of *MACLAS: Latin American Essays*.

Deadline for submission is August 1, 2005. Submission should be within the normal length parameters of the respective disciplines and will be rejected if the length is excessive. Send one hard copy and one diskette (or email attachment) in a Word File (.doc) or a Rich Text File (.rtf) to:

Christina Turner
School of World Studies, Box 842021
Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, VA 23284-2021

cbturner@vcu.edu

Literary articles from MACLAS are listed in the *MLA Bibliography*. Copies of back issues of the journal are available at the Library of Congress. Essays will also be available from The Gale Group, 362 Lakeside Drive, Foster City, CA 94404. After you submit your article, a team of four reviewers will review it. The reviewers may vary by discipline. You should receive notice of the status of your submission by the first of the year.

Languages of submission include English, Spanish, Portuguese, and French. If you provide translations of phrases or sentences, set them off within parentheses.

Humanities contributors should follow the MLA format outlined in *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, fourth edition. See especially Chapter Five, pages 183-205. Social science contributors should use in-text citation format customary to the discipline. If your discipline customarily employs a different note style, kindly make the *MACLAS* editors aware of the style format you are following.

Proofread before submission. THE EDITORS CUSTOMARILY REJECT ARTICLES WHICH ARE NOT SUBMITTED IN A PROFESSIONAL FORMAT WITH CORRECT GRAMMAR AND SPELLING. WE EXPECT TO RECEIVE YOUR FINAL COPY, NOT A "WORKING" PAPER.

Table of Contents

Political Science

Rebecca Bill Chavez	Divergent Experiences With The Rule Of Law: A Comparative Analysis Of Chile And Argentina	1
Brian Turner	State Reform and Anti-Neoliberal Rhetoric in Paraguay	20
Ivani Vassoler	A Woman on the Front-Lines Against the Last Bastion of Colonialism in Brazil	38

History

Jack Child	The Politics and Semiotics Of Argentine Postage Stamps	55
Kevin Coleman	Historical Narratives On The Banana Industry Imperial Arguments In U.S.- Honduran Encounters	86
Ken Lehman	History On Its Head With An Historian At The Helm Bolivia's Gas War—Precedent And Aftermath	106

Literature and Language

Carlos Rodríguez McGill	El Naturalismo Con Sabor Argentino De Eugenio Cambaceres: Transculturaciones Lingüístico-Culturales, Xenofobia Ilustrada E Imaginario Para Los "Recien Llegados"	134
Perla Sassón-Henry	Borges And His Legacy In Hyperfiction: A Study Through The Lenses Of Deleuze And Guattari's Rhizome Theory	148
Dawn Slack	<i>Conversación Al Sur</i> : Rescate De La Memoria	157

Maclas Prize Winners-2004		167
----------------------------------	--	-----

Maclas Officers		168
------------------------	--	-----

DIVERGENT EXPERIENCES WITH THE RULE OF LAW: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CHILE AND ARGENTINA

**Rebecca Bill Chavez
United States Naval Academy**

Chile and Argentina are neighbors in the Southern Cone of Latin America, yet their experiences with the rule of law are worlds apart. Although the two nations share the Spanish colonial legacy and the civil law tradition and they both recently underwent transitions from harsh military rule, they have been on opposite ends of the judicial autonomy continuum for most of their histories. Chile has had more success than Argentina in establishing a strong rule of law that includes a judiciary that is independent of the executive branch. In a rule of law system, state agents and private actors that wield significant power are subject to legality. Otherwise, these actors can use their power to violate the formal rules of the game. An autonomous judiciary on its own is not sufficient to ensure the rule of law, but it can aid in the establishment by binding powerful actors. In the context of Latin American ultrapresidentialism, the judiciary must have the capacity to act as a control on the executive branch.

Competitive politics has fostered the rule of law in Chile with its multiparty system, whereas dominance by a single, relatively homogenous party has obstructed the rule of law in Argentina. These cases illustrate that party competition fosters judicial autonomy. On the other hand, when elected officials in the executive and legislative branches are united against the courts, the courts typically cave under political pressure.

In a competitive environment, the judiciary can act as an arbiter among political actors rather than a tool held exclusively by a single dominant actor. Due to the plurality of strong interests, the emergence of state institutions that check and balance one another is likely. Political parties can serve as the mechanism for competitive politics. Judicial independence is in part a product of a balance of power between at least two political parties of relatively equal strength. Party balance creates a climate in which an autonomous judiciary can emerge. The executive cannot prevent its emergence and may even see advantages in a judiciary that acts as a control.

In a competitive party system, the president's party cannot maintain a majority over time. Party balance encourages divided government and frequent rotation of the party in power, both of which permit the legislature to check the president. Without a majority in Congress, the president cannot push through legislation that would subordinate control organs such as the

judiciary. Institutional factors including the number of parties and electoral laws play a role in determining whether there is divided government. When there are more than two relevant parties, divided government is likely. Electoral rules that call for non-simultaneous legislative and executive elections also foster divided government.¹

In addition, party balance encourages the rotation of the party in the executive branch. Whereas divided government means that the executive cannot eliminate agencies that check its power, party rotation means that the executive does not want to eliminate or undermine these agencies. A party that foresees its displacement has incentives to fortify the system of checks and balances, which includes the judiciary. Organs that protect the opposition today may protect the ruling party tomorrow when it becomes the opposition.

In contrast to competitive politics, monolithic party control, defined as a prolonged period of unified government under a highly disciplined party, can denude the judiciary of its capacity to act as a control on the executive. Strict party discipline exacerbates the effects of unified government by increasing the president's partisan powers.² Without discipline, co-partisanship does not ensure legislative acquiescence to the executive's will. Unified government occurs at times in virtually all democracies and does not necessarily undermine the system of checks and balances. Legislators and the president may have countervailing ambitions. By compelling legislators to respond to the executive rather than to their constituents, strict party discipline eliminates competing executive-legislative preferences. Discipline is in part a function of nomination and election procedures. Closed party lists, for instance, encourage discipline because of party leaders' influence over a candidate's reelection.

This article proceeds as follows. Section I analyzes to what extent actual practice has upheld constitutional guarantees of judicial autonomy in Chile and Argentina. It contrasts the high level of judicial independence in Chile with the executive subordination of the courts that has characterized Argentina. Section II explores the factors behind Chile's tradition of a strong rule of law. In particular, it shows how inter-party competition provided incentives for politicians to develop a judiciary that can constrain executive power. Section III explains how monolithic party control has enabled the executive to subvert the courts in Argentina.

The Judicial Autonomy Continuum: Chile vs. Argentina

The constitutions of Chile and Argentina provide the formal guarantees of judicial independence. Both constitutions prohibit the

reduction of judges' salaries and grant judges life tenure during good conduct. Indeed, standing on their own, both constitutions indicate a high degree of judicial autonomy. An analysis of actual practice, however, demonstrates that Argentine presidents have not respected the formal guarantees. Informal practices that erode the separation of powers have prevailed throughout much of Argentina's history. For most of Chilean history, on the other hand, practices have upheld the formal rules that protect judicial autonomy.³

In contrast to the Argentine judiciary, the Chilean courts enjoyed a high a degree of autonomy until the country's 1973 military coup. This section contrasts Chile's transparent, merit-based selection process with the highly politicized judicial appointment process of Argentina. The section also demonstrates that unlike the Chilean executive, Argentine presidents have violated judges' tenure protection. These indicators suggest that the two countries lie at opposite ends of the judicial independence spectrum.

Judicial Autonomy in Chile

The Chilean judiciary's long history of insularity from the political branches has its roots in the nineteenth century. Chile and Argentina had very different points of departure following their recent democratic transitions. After Argentina's 1983 transition, the country faced the challenge of constructing a rule of law from scratch rather than restoring independent judicial institutions. In contrast, when Chile emerged from military dictatorship in 1990, it had a long history of political stability, a competitive party system, and independent legislative and judicial branches upon which to draw. Indeed, before Chile's 1973 military coup, the judicial branch was autonomous of the executive. Valenzuela describes the pre-1973 courts as "largely insulated from political control and partisan battles" and argues that they "exercised important governmental functions drawing on formal authority and institutional clout."⁴

Until 1973, compliance with the constitutional rules regarding the appointment and removal of judges enhanced the Chilean judiciary's autonomy from the executive branch. Unlike Argentina with its long history of executive violation of the formal appointment process, the selection process in pre-authoritarian Chile was insulated from the president's control. Chile's appointment system was the product of a 1925 effort to reduce political influence over the selection of judges. The original process as stipulated by Chile's 1833 Constitution gave nominating power to the Council of State, a partisan political body. The 1925 Constitution abolished the Council's intervention and gave the judiciary a voice in the selection of

judges. Since 1925, presidents have selected nominees from lists provided by judges. According to the constitution, the president appoints Supreme Court justices and appellate court judges from lists of candidates submitted by the Supreme Court itself. Appellate court judges provide the president with lists of nominees for the first instance courts. Furthermore, the Senate must approve the executive's appointees, which further dilutes the president's discretion.⁵

In addition, Chilean presidents have complied with the formal rules outlined in the constitution that exclude them from the process of removing judges. In contrast to Argentine presidents, Chilean presidents' respect for judges' tenure protection has bolstered judicial independence. Argentina experienced six Supreme Court purges between 1946 and 1983, whereas the only Supreme Court purge that occurred in Chilean history was in the wake of the 1924 coup.⁶

In Chile, the Supreme Court initiates removal proceedings. Each year, the Court reviews or "qualifies" all judges, meaning that the Court places each judge on one of four lists. Judges who ranked on the lowest list must resign within sixty days and those who appear on the second lowest list for two consecutive years must resign.⁷ Due to the Chilean Supreme Court's intervention in both the appointment and removal process, the threat to judicial autonomy comes from within the judiciary itself rather than from the executive. Although the Chilean judiciary is independent of the political branches, what Carlos Peña González calls "external independence," the judiciary lacks "internal independence," meaning that lower courts are not autonomous from higher courts. The Chilean judiciary's internal independence is lower than in Argentina, but its external independence is higher.⁸

The Pinochet Years: A Break in Chile's History of Judicial Autonomy

In the wake of the 1973 military coup, General Augusto Pinochet reversed Chile's long history of judicial autonomy from the executive. Like military regimes in Argentina, Pinochet subordinated the courts behind a façade of legality. Pinochet's respect for the tenure of Supreme Court justices did not signal a respect for judicial independence. The general had no reason to purge a Court that supported the coup. In order to regularize relations with the new military regime, the Chilean Court accepted the de facto doctrine, which first emerged in Argentina in 1865, over a century before its adoption in Chile.⁹ The Court upheld Pinochet's seizure of emergency powers, including the dissolution of Congress and the use of military courts to judge civilians accused of political crimes. Furthermore,

the Court did little to prevent human rights violations. Between 1973 and 1983, the Court rejected all but 10 of the 5,400 habeas corpus petitions filed by the Catholic Church's legal aid society, the Vicaría de la Solidaridad.¹⁰

In addition, Pinochet used the judiciary's hierarchical structure to subordinate the lower courts. He pressured the acquiescent Supreme Court to dismiss over fifty leftist lower court judges. In response to the pressure, the pro-Pinochet Court censured or suspended lower court judges who denounced the military's human rights abuses. The Court ranked these judges on the lowest of the four lists, thereby compelling them to resign.¹¹

Furthermore, Pinochet used inducements to get vacancies in the courts. In his effort to fill the Supreme Court with young pro-military justices before the 1990 transition, Pinochet offered a high pension to elderly judges. As a result, nine judges resigned in 1988, permitting Pinochet to appoint nine new justices before he stepped down.¹² After the 1990 return to democracy, President Patricio Aylwin faced the challenge of reconstructing an autonomous judicial branch.

Executive Subordination of the Courts in Argentina

In stark contrast with Chile, Argentina has a long history of executive subordination of the judiciary. Since Juan Domingo Perón assumed the presidency in 1946, most Argentine presidents have used an opaque appointment process to select pliant judges and have violated judges' tenure protection. Such practices suggest a weak rule of law. In Argentina, informal practices have shaped the incentive structure in such a way that judges have been unlikely to challenge the executive. For instance, because presidents have had the power to remove judges, judicial figures have accepted their subordinate and passive roles.

The Appointment Process in Argentina

Unlike Chile's long history of a transparent, merit-based appointment process, most Argentine presidents since 1946 have used a secretive process to appoint docile judges. In 1947, Perón replaced four of the five justices with his allies. Perón rushed the approval of his nominees through the Peronist-dominated Senate. After the 1955 and 1966 coups, the military governments appointed anti-Peronist justices with ties to the armed forces.

President Carlos Menem (1989-1999) embraced an opaque appointment process as a means of enhancing executive dominance over the courts. The majority of Menem's appointees had weak qualifications and demonstrated loyalty to his party, the Partido Justicialista (PJ or Peronist

Party) before joining the Court. Menem used his appointment power to create a pro-government majority in the Court, known in Argentina as the "*la mayoría automática menemista*," or the automatic Menemist majority.

In order to ensure Senate approval, Menem did not abide by a transparent process when he appointed four justices following his 1990 expansion of the Supreme Court from five to nine. The speed of the proceedings precluded thorough evaluation of the nominees. Menem submitted his candidates to the PJ-controlled Senate just one day after announcing the expansion. The two Unión Cívica Radical (UCR) representatives on the Senate Appointment Committee were absent during the meeting that approved Menem's candidates. When the Committee's recommendation reached the floor, the Senate approved Menem's list in a secret session only seven minutes long with no UCR senators in attendance.¹³

Like Perón's 1947 appointees, Menem's appointees had close ties to the president. Menem selected his allies Rodolfo Barra, Mariano Cavagna Martínez, Julio Nazareno, and Ricardo Levene to fill the new seats. All four were staunch PJ members. In 1993, Barra stated, "I cannot dictate a ruling that is against the government. I only issue rulings that are favorable to administration officials."¹⁴ Menem declared that when faced with legal challenges, Barra would "fix the problem."¹⁵ Cavagna Martínez often attended social gatherings of Menem functionaries. Nazareno had lived in La Rioja, Menem's home province, where he worked in a law firm with Menem's brother. In 1986, Menem, who was governor of La Rioja at the time, appointed Nazareno to the provincial Attorney General's office and then to the La Rioja Supreme Court. Levene had been an advisor to Menem's Undersecretary of Justice.¹⁶

The 1995 appointment of Menem ally Adolfo Vázquez also illustrates noncompliance with the formal appointment process. The approval process was replete with irregularities and lacked transparency. By the time of the Vázquez appointment, the 1994 Constitution was in effect, which increased the Senate approval requirement for justices from a majority to two-thirds. Menem foresaw difficulties in securing the necessary two-thirds after December 10 when new opposition senators would take their seats. Thus, the PJ attempted to delay the entrance of UCR senators. When that strategy failed, the PJ violated Senate rules to rush the approval process. According to Senate rules, judicial nominees must be open for citizen consideration for seven days. The PJ violated this rule in order to hold the Senate vote before December 10.¹⁷ Vázquez's public statements demonstrate his loyalty to Menem. He admitted that his friendship with the president was the criterion

for his appointment, and he publicly declared that he would not rule against the administration's interests.¹⁸

Violations of Tenure Protection in Argentina

Since 1946, actual practice has not supported the constitutional guarantee of judges' tenure protection in Argentina. Supreme Court terms have tended to be coterminous with presidential terms. The Court experienced purges in 1946, 1955, 1966, 1973, 1976, and 1983. The methods of removal included impeachment, purges following military coups and civilian resumption of power, and forced resignations.

Perón embraced the practice of dismissing judges. In response to unfavorable rulings, the Peronist-controlled Senate impeached four of the five justices in 1947. The only justice who retained his seat was a militant Peronist. After the 1955 and 1966 coups, the military governments bypassed constitutional channels when they purged the Court. In 1973, the PJ administration of Héctor Cámpora dismissed the entire Court by decree. Moreover, on the day that it seized power in 1976, the military junta issued a decree removing all justices.

The practice of purging the Court continued after Argentina's 1983 restoration of democracy. President Raúl Alfonsín rejected the formal impeachment process when he announced his intention to dismiss the Court by decree. The justices resigned upon learning of Alfonsín's plan. Like Cámpora who also inherited a Court from a military government, Alfonsín's rejection of formal impeachment proceedings reinforced an informal practice that had undermined judicial autonomy since Perón's first term. Compliance with the constitution would have been an important step toward restoring a constitutional guarantee that presidents had violated since 1946.

Menem tried to bypass the formal impeachment proceedings for judges. Upon assuming office, he attempted to induce Alfonsín's appointees to resign. For instance, he offered Justice Carlos Fayt the ambassadorship to Colombia.¹⁹ When the inducement strategies failed, Menem used another informal mechanism of control: he expanded the size of the Court in 1990. Menem resorted to inducements again in 1994. In the 1993 Olivos Pact, Menem had pledged to replace three Supreme Court justices with individuals acceptable to the opposition UCR.²⁰ He finally secured two vacancies when Barra and Cavagna Martínez yielded to pressure in 1994. Their career paths following their resignations suggest that inducements influenced their decisions. Barra became Justice Minister, and Cavagna Martínez became Argentina's ambassador in Rome. Because Levene conditioned his

resignation on his absolution in an impeachment suit, Menem pressured PJ legislators to dismiss the charges.²¹

Explaining Chile's Rule of Law: The Role of Competitive Politics

This section explores the factors behind Chile's tradition of a strong rule of law. It demonstrates that until 1973, party competition permitted the courts to constrain the president. In the wake of the 1973 coup and until the 1990 transition, however, Pinochet's monopoly on political power permitted him to subordinate the judiciary. Since 1990, Chile has experienced a return to competitive politics.

Competition among highly institutionalized political parties permitted the construction of the rule of law in Chile.²² No single party has dominated the Chilean political landscape, and party discipline has been lower than in neighboring Argentina. Unlike much of Latin America, monolithic party control did not characterize the Chilean political landscape for most of the country's history, which permitted the creation of an effective judiciary. Until 1973, competitive politics provided the courts with insularity from the political branches. The 1973 coup brought about an end to competitive politics, and the future of the rule of law in Chile depends in large part on whether leaders are able to draw on the pre-authoritarian balanced dispersal of political power to eradicate the Pinochet legacy.

The Party System and Electoral Rules in Pre-Pinochet Chile

Party balance and electoral rules in pre-Pinochet Chile encouraged the frequent rotation of the party in power and divided government, both of which permitted the legislature to check the president and prevented executive manipulation of the judiciary. Moreover, elements of the Chilean electoral system discouraged party discipline. Although Chilean political parties have been hierarchical with party leaders at the top, discipline has been lower than in Argentina. In contrast to Argentina with its closed-list ballots, Chile has used open-list ballots. Political parties have not determined the order of candidates on ballots, and citizens have voted for specific candidates rather than for a party list. In addition, adequate independent sources of campaign finance have undermined threats of punishment from party leaders. Furthermore, in contrast to Argentina, Chilean senators who have been expelled by party leaders have tended to change party affiliation rather than lose their seats.²³

Competition among at least three relevant parties has prevented the executive's party from holding a majority in the Chilean Congress for a

sustained period of time. Throughout pre-Pinochet Chilean history, three to five parties of comparable strength had representation in the legislature. For most of the twentieth century, five relevant parties competed for seats in Congress: the Partido Comunista (PC) and the Partido Socialista (PS) on the left; the Partido Radical (PR) or Partido Demócrato Cristiano (PDC or Christian Democrats) in the center; and the Partido Conservador and the Partido Liberal (PL) on the right. As a result, coalition government was common, making it difficult for the executive to control a disciplined majority in Congress.²⁴

The pre-Pinochet electoral rules contributed to divided government. Along with multipartism, a modified D'hondt proportional representation electoral system made it difficult for a single party to hold over one-third of the seats in either the House of Representatives or the Senate. Non-simultaneous legislative and executive elections and partial reelection of the Senate also fostered divided government. Presidents served six-year terms, the entire House was elected every four years, and one third of the Senate was elected every three years to serve nine-year terms.

Indeed, as a result of the competitive party system and electoral rules, divided government was the norm, forcing presidents to bargain with the opposition in Congress. In fact, from 1932 through 1973, no single party captured the executive branch and both houses of Congress. For instance, when Salvador Allende of the leftist Unidad Popular (UP) assumed the presidency in 1970, he faced a Congress dominated by the opposition. Although the Christian Democrats were part of the coalition that brought Allende to power, they abandoned Allende in 1971. Both the centrist Christian Democrats and the PN on the right opposed UP initiatives.²⁵

Without a majority in Congress, Chilean presidents did not have the partisan powers necessary to subordinate Congress and other organs of control, countering provisions in both the 1833 and 1925 Constitutions that concentrated power in the executive. Divided government mitigated the president's formal powers even after the 1970 constitutional reform that increased executive prerogatives.²⁶ Political scientists Pakenham, Agor, and Scott point to the pre-Pinochet Chilean legislature as one of the strongest in Latin America.²⁷ Although the Chilean Congress was strongest during the 1891-1925 Parliamentary Republic, the party system and electoral rules helped it maintain its status as one of the region's strongest legislative bodies.

Competitive Politics and the Rule of Law in Post-Pinochet Chile

The balanced dispersal of political power has reemerged in post-authoritarian Chile despite Pinochet's attempts to prevent a resurgence of multipartism. In contrast to Argentina where horizontal accountability had been stripped from the political culture beginning in 1946, democratic leaders in Chile following the 1990 transition had an institutional and cultural inheritance on which to draw.²⁸ In Chile, the rule of law had decades to become institutionalized and to seep deep into the political culture, facilitating its resurrection.

Despite the military regime's electoral engineering meant to reduce multipartism and over-represent the right, Chile's political parties survived with their distinct identities and platforms in tact.²⁹ The two main electoral forces, the Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia (Concertación) on the left and the Renovación Nacional (RN)-Unión Demócrata Independiente (UDI) on the right, are loose alliances rather than unified parties. For instance, four distinct parties comprise the Concertación: the Christian Democrats, the Socialists, the Partido por la Democracia (PPD), and the Partido Radical Social Demócrata (PRSD). Unified Concertación government would not lead to monolithic party control because the undisciplined nature of the coalition would preclude a monolithic majority.³⁰

Explaining Executive Subordination of the Courts in Argentina: Monolithic Party Control

In contrast to the competitive politics of Chile, monolithic party control in Argentina has permitted the executive to maintain a monopoly on power and to violate judicial independence. Due to the lack of significant inter-party competition coupled with a high level of party discipline, the executive branch has faced incentives to concentrate power and has been able to do so. Monolithic party control has been the norm in Argentina since Perón's first term in the presidency. Unified government and party discipline provided presidents with the congressional support necessary to manipulate judges behind a façade of judicial autonomy. Presidents such as Perón and Menem took advantage of a particular party configuration to violate formal rules and subordinate the courts.

The year 1946 marked the beginning of a prolonged period of unified government and party discipline. This monolithic party control coupled with frequent military coups was behind the executive subordination of the courts. From 1946 through 1983, Argentina had only three years of divided government. The dominance of two parties, the PJ and the UCR,

increased the likelihood of unified government. The president's party had majorities in both houses from 1946 through 1955, 1958 through 1963, and again from 1973 through 1976. Moreover, the military regimes of 1955-1958, 1966-1973, and 1976-1983 had a monopoly on political power that was tantamount to monolithic party control. This monolithic control facilitated informal practices such as court purges.

Monolithic control provided Perón with the legislative support necessary to subordinate checks on his power. In 1946, Perón's party captured two-thirds of the House and all but two seats in the Senate. Moreover, Perón engaged in gerrymandering and intimidation to ensure that his party gained seats in the midterm elections. In 1948, the Peronists gained total control of the Senate and fourteen additional House seats.³¹

A high level of party discipline contributed to subordination of the courts. Under Perón, the PJ was highly disciplined with Perón at the top of the hierarchy. He came to power as the head of heterogeneous coalition of three parties, but by 1950 he had eliminated all internal factions. Shortly after the 1946 election, Perón announced a merger of the three parties into the Peronist Party. Perón used his authority as party president to expel his opponents from the party. In 1947, Perón visited Congress where he warned that he would punish those who threatened party unity: "If we have to use a knife, we will use it."³²

Monolithic party control also characterized the Unión Cívica Radical Intransigente (UCRI) administration of Arturo Frondizi (1958-1962), permitting him to violate judges' tenure protection. Frondizi had a two-thirds majority in the House and absolute control of the Senate. Moreover, like Perón, Frondizi held the reins of a highly disciplined party. In fact, 90 percent of UCRI legislators supported Frondizi's bills. Frondizi expelled party members who dissented.³³

As is true in virtually any military regime, the military administrations that governed Argentina had a monopoly on political power that enabled them to subordinate the courts. After each coup, the dissolution of Congress led to the concentration of power in the ruling junta. This "unified" military government permitted the manipulation of courts. As discussed above, in the wake of the 1955, 1966, and 1976 coups, the military bypassed constitutional channels to purge the Court.

The 1946-1983 period was characterized by only three years of divided government. From 1963 through 1966, Arturo Illia of the Unión Cívica Radical del Pueblo (UCRP) faced divided government, which prevented him from manipulating the courts. He won the 1963 presidential elections with only 26 percent of vote, and he did not have a majority in Congress.³⁴

The strong legislative opposition blocked his 1963 attempt to expand the size of the Supreme Court.

Under Menem, unified government led to extreme concentration of power in the executive and enabled him to subordinate the judiciary. The informal judicial institutions of the 1946-1983 era reemerged.³⁵ From December 1989 until the 1997 congressional elections, Menem's PJ controlled both houses. The PJ had an absolute majority in the Senate throughout Menem's ten years in the presidency, which contributed to his discretion over judicial appointments. The Senate never rejected a justice nominated by Menem. The PJ dominated the House from 1989 through 1997. During Menem's first term (1989-1995), the PJ and its ally, the conservative Unión del Centro Democrático (UCeDé), held a majority. The PJ held an absolute majority from 1995 until 1997.

Party discipline exacerbated the effects of unified government in Menem's Argentina. PJ legislators practiced a moderate to high level of discipline, which enabled the president to pass legislation with relative ease. As de facto PJ president, Menem had a set of tools to produce discipline. As Levitsky explains, due to the decentralization of the PJ, leaders must produce discipline; it does not arise naturally.³⁶ Although the PJ charter prohibits the Argentine president from serving as president of the PJ, Menem acted as the party leader. In order to maintain the appearance of respect for party rules, the PJ designated Menem as party president and then placed him on sabbatical. In reality, however, he acted as party president. Menem's dual role as PJ leader and national president allowed him to create incentives for PJ legislators to support his policy preferences. In contrast to the Chilean system of open-list ballots, Argentina uses a D'hondt system of proportional representation and closed party lists. Thus, PJ legislators owe their political careers to the national party. Menem used his discretion over access to PJ electoral lists, to economic resources, and to party leadership posts to counter the decentralized nature of the party. With these valuable resources, he rewarded PJ legislators who voted according to his orders and punished those who strayed.³⁷

Under Menem, PJ legislators' voting behavior demonstrated a high degree of discipline. The infrequency of roll call votes suggests that Menem did not have to resort to these votes to get discipline. The PJ voted as a unified bloc in the congressional committees that produce *dictámenes*, the majority and minority reports on bills. PJ committee members voted for the same *dictamen* in 496 of 507 House votes, or 98 percent, and 519 of 525 Senate votes, or 99 percent.³⁸ This high level of party discipline coupled with unified PJ government enhanced Menem's ability to subvert the judiciary.

Conclusion

As the cases of Chile and Argentina illustrate, competitive politics has been a necessary condition for judicial autonomy. By focusing on judicial independence, a key component of the rule of law, this article demonstrates that the balanced dispersal of political power among competing actors fosters the establishment of the rule of law. In the ultrapresidential regimes of Latin America where the problem of establishing judicial autonomy is especially acute, party competition can be the catalyst. In contrast, monolithic party control obstructs the rule of law. In order to bolster judicial independence, reformers must address the problematic nature of prolonged periods of unified government, especially when there is a high level of party discipline.

The diachronic study of Chile and Argentina illustrates that the same formal system of checks and balances may have different consequences—depending on the dispersal of power and competitive politics. A counterargument to the claim that competitive politics is a necessary condition for the rule of law is that constitutional guarantees of judicial autonomy are a sufficient condition. As a result of the concentration of power, however, informal practices that allow Latin American presidents to control the courts are often stronger than the formal guarantees of judicial independence. The Argentine case demonstrates that where a system of checks and balances exists in theory as part of the constitutional structure, informal practices can persist, undermining the potential for sustainable democracy. In much of Latin America, the power relationships embodied in informal practices diverge from the formal rules. The gap between rules and practices highlights the need to focus on informal patterns of power. An understanding of informal practices is crucial where actual behavior is inconsistent with formal constitutional provisions.

Notes

¹ See Matthew Soberg Shugart, "The Electoral Cycle and Institutional Sources of Divided Presidential Government," *American Political Science Review* 89 (June 1995), 327-43.

² Scott Mainwaring and Shugart, "Introduction," in *Presidentialism and Democracy in Latin America*, Mainwaring and Shugart, Eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 4-10. The number of relevant parties in the legislature and the level of party discipline determine the executive's "partisan powers."

³ For an in-depth discussion of the importance of analyzing the gap between formal rules and informal practices, see Rebecca Bill Chavez, *The Rule of Law in Nascent Democracies: Judicial Politics in Argentina* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

⁴ Arturo Valenzuela, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Chile* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 14.

⁵ Jack Spence, *Search for Justice: Neighborhood Courts in Allende's Chile* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1979), 5.

⁶ Chile has experienced three military coups: 1891, 1924, and 1973. The military governments did not tamper with the Court's composition after the 1891 or 1973 coup.

⁷ Carlos Peña González, "Informe Sobre Chile," in *Situación y Políticas Judiciales en América Latina*, Jorge Correa Sutil, ed. (Santiago: Escuela de Derecho Universidad Diego Portalis, 1993), 329-30.

⁸ Author's interview with Peña González, Dean of Universidad Diego Portalis Law School, Santiago, 14 May 1999. See Jorge Correa Sutil, "The Judiciary and the Political System in Chile: The Dilemmas of Judicial Independence during the Transition to Democracy," in *Transition to Democracy in Latin America: The Role of the Judiciary*, Irwin P. Stotzky, ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1993), 100.

⁹ The de facto doctrine refers to the Court's acceptance of the legitimacy of laws passed by governments that came to power by force rather than by election. For a discussion of the de facto doctrine in Argentina, see Chavez, *The Rule of Law in Nascent Democracies*.

¹⁰ See Brian Loveman, "Misión Cumplida: Civil Military Relations and the Chilean Political Transition," *Journal of Interamerican and World Affairs* (Fall 1991), 50-52; Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela, *A Nation of Enemies: Chile Under Pinochet* (New York: Norton, 1991), 117-34. The military courts sentenced approximately 200 Chileans to death between 1973 and 1976.

¹¹ Author's interview with Correa Sutil, Santiago, 13 May 1999.

¹² Author's interview with Correa Sutil. At the onset of his term in 1990, President Patricio Aylwin considered increasing pensions to induce Pinochet appointees to resign. Aylwin's ultimate rejection of the inducement strategy signaled a return to the historical respect for tenure protection.

¹³ Horacio Verbitsky, *Hacer la corte: La construcción de un poder absoluto sin justicia ni control* (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 1993), 52; *Clarín* (Buenos Aires), 20 April 1990; *Nación* (Buenos Aires), 20 April 1990.

¹⁴ Raúl Baglini, Angel D'Ambrosio, y otros, *Juicio a la Corte* (Buenos Aires: Mecanografix, 1993), 101-02.

¹⁵ Marcela Goldin, "Una Corte descartable," *Revista Noticias*, 10 October 1993, 78.

¹⁶ Baglini, 81; *Nación*, 22 December 1993; *Ámbito Financiero* (Buenos Aires), 11 April 1990.

¹⁷ *La Prensa* (Buenos Aires), 29 November 1995; *Ámbito Financiero*, 29 November 1995.

¹⁸ *La Prensa*, 29 November 1995; *Clarín*, 30 November 1995. In a 1997 public appearance, Vázquez declared, "When there is a case against the government, I do not rule against the administration." See Lucas Guagnini, Santiago O'Donnell, and Ernesto Semán, "El estado contra Vázquez," *Tres Puntos* 1 (1997), 10.

¹⁹ Author's interview with Fayt, Buenos Aires, 29 October 1998.

²⁰ In the Olivos Pact, the UCR agreed to support a constitutional reform that would permit Menem's reelection in exchange for the creation of new controls on executive power. The 1853 Constitution prohibited reelection for a second consecutive term.

²¹ Both Barra and Cavagna Martínez attribute their resignations to their desire to help Menem fulfill his 1993 pledge. Author's interviews with Barra, Buenos Aires, 13 November 1998 and Cavagna Martínez, Buenos Aires, 27 November 1998. See *Crónica* (Buenos Aires), 12 October 1993; *Ámbito Financiero*, 19 March 1994.

²² See Scott Mainwaring and Timothy R. Scully, "Introduction," in *Building Democratic Institutions: Party Systems in Latin America*, Mainwaring and Scully, eds. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 6-17.

²³ See Ronald H. McDonald and J. Mark Ruhl, *Party Politics and Elections in Latin America* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1989), 193.

²⁴ The center was the focal point for governing coalitions. For instance, the centrist PR occupied the presidency from 1938-1952 in coalition with the two leftist parties. In the late 1950s, the Christian Democrats (PDC) replaced the PR as the dominant centrist party. In 1967, the two parties on the right merged to form the Partido Nacional (PN). For an analysis of Chile's highly institutionalized parties, see Scully, *Rethinking the Center: Cleavages, Critical Junctures, and Party Evolution in Chile* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).

²⁵ Weston H. Agor, *The Chilean Senate: Internal Distribution of Influence*, Latin American Monographs no. 23, Institute of Latin American Studies (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971), 22, 77-78; Valenzuela and Alexander Wilde, "Presidential Politics and the Decline of the Chilean Congress," in *Legislatures and Development: Dynamics of Change in New and Old States*, Joel Smith and Lloyd D. Musolf, eds. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1979), 197-99; Valenzuela, *Breakdown*, 37, 70-72.

²⁶ Valenzuela and Wilde, "Presidential Politics," 195-96.

²⁷ Robert A. Packenham, "Legislatures in Political Development," in *Legislatures in Developmental Perspective*, Allan Kornberg and Lloyd D. Musolf, eds. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1970), 544; Agor, "Introduction," in *Latin American Legislatures: Their Role and Influence*, Agor, ed. (New York: Praeger, 1971), 293; Robert E. Scott, "Legislatures and Legislation," in *Government and Politics in Latin America*, Harold E. David, ed. (New York: Ronald Press, 1958), 293. Agor characterizes the Chilean legislature as a deviant case among the "rubber stamp" legislatures of Latin America.

²⁸ Horizontal accountability refers to the set of government institutions that hold one another accountable to the law and to the public. A system of horizontal accountability is necessary to constrain arbitrary government action and to ensure that state actors comply with the constitution. Where power is dispersed and embedded in multiple institutions that act as horizontal accountability agencies, the rule of law is possible. Without these agencies, dominant actors have little or no incentive to relinquish power but rather have incentives to ignore or eliminate these institutions. An independent judicial branch is part of a larger system of overlapping and mutually reinforcing agencies of horizontal accountability. For a discussion of horizontal accountability, see Guillermo O'Donnell, "Delegative Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 5 (January 1994): 61-62.

²⁹ In order to create incentives for parties to coalesce, Pinochet shifted from multi-member districts to two-member electoral districts for both houses. In the binomial system, coalition building has been imperative for a party's survival. The two-member magnitude prevents small parties from running on their own because they cannot win congressional seats with only a small proportion of the vote. Only parties on the two winning lists in a given district gain representation in Congress. See Patricio Navia and José Miguel Sandoval, "Binomial Electoral Law and Multi-Party System: The Chilean Contradiction," paper presented at the 1998 Latin American Studies Association meeting, Chicago, IL, 24-26 September 1998; John M. Carey, "Parties, Coalitions, and the Chilean Congress in the 1990s," paper presented at the 1998 Latin American Studies Association meeting, Chicago, IL, 24-26 September 1998, 1; Peter M. Siavelis, "Executive-Legislative Relations in Post-Pinochet Chile: A Preliminary Assessment," in *Presidentialism and Democracy*, 345-348. Siavelis argues that three blocs have survived beneath the bipolar surface.

³⁰ Ironically, Pinochet's electoral engineering was the source of divided government. In order to prevent unified Concertación government, the 1980 Constitution allowed the pro-Pinochet right to choose nine of the forty-six senators who began their eight-year terms in

1990. In addition, it stipulated that former presidents have lifetime seats in the Senate, guaranteeing Pinochet a Senate seat. As a result, Presidents Aylwin (1990-1994) and Eduardo Frei (1994-2000) faced a conservative majority in the Senate even though their Concertación won a majority of votes. In 1989, the Concertación won 54 percent of the Senate vote, which translated into only 47 percent of the seats. The pro-Pinochet alliance won 35 percent of the vote yet assumed 53 percent of Senate seats. In 1993, Concertación won 56 percent of the vote but only 45 percent of the Senate seats, whereas the conservative coalition's 40 percent translated into 55 percent of Senate seats. See Jorge Nef and Nivaldo Galleguillos, "Legislatures and Democratic Transitions in Latin America: The Chilean Case," in *Legislatures and the New Democracies in Latin America*, David Close, ed. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1995), 126.

³¹ Félix Luna, *Perón y su tiempo: La Argentina era una fiesta* vol. 1 (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1984), 292-305; Robert J. Alexander, *Juan Domingo Perón: A History* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1979), 48-61.

³² Cited in Robert Crassweller, *Perón and the Enigmas of Argentina* (New York: Norton, 1987), 189. See Alexander, *Perón*, 48-50, 57-61.

³³ Daniel Rodríguez Lamas, *La presidencia de Frondizi* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1984), 72-73; Peter G. Snow, *Political Forces in Argentina*, rev. ed. (New York: Praeger, 1979), 46-47. In the 1950s, the UCR split into two parties: the UCRI and the Unión Cívica Radical del Pueblo (UCRP).

³⁴ Luigi Manzetti, *Institutions, Parties, and Coalitions in Argentine Politics* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993), 43, 93-94.

³⁵ The divided government of the Alfonsín administration (1983-1989) led to steps that brought informal practices in line with the formal rules that call for judicial independence. For instance, Alfonsín complied with the formal rules governing judicial appointments. For an in-depth analysis of the Alfonsín era, see Chavez, *Rule of Law in Nascent Democracies*, 29-52, 59-62.

³⁶ Steven Levitsky, "An Organized Disorganization: Informal Structures and the Persistence of Mass Organization in Argentine Peronism," paper presented at the 2000 Latin American Studies Association meeting, Miami, FL, 16-18 March 2000, 3-4, 12-20.

³⁷ Ana María Mustapic, "Oficialistas y diputados: Las relaciones Ejecutivo-Legislativo en la Argentina," paper presented at the conference Legislaturas en América Latina: Perspectivas Comparadas, CIDE, México, 6-7 February 1998, 12-13.

³⁸ Mark P. Jones, "Explaining the High Level of Party Discipline in the Argentine Congress," paper presented at the 1998 Latin American Studies Association meeting, Chicago, IL, 24-26 September 1998, 7, 10-12; Jones, "Evaluating Argentina's Presidential Democracy: 1983-1995," in *Presidentialism and Democracy*, 279; Mustapic y Matteo Goretti, "Gobierno y oposición en el Congreso: La práctica de la cohabitación durante la presidencia de Alfonsín (1983-1989)," *Desarrollo Económico* 32 (1992), 251-69.

References Cited

- Agor, Weston H. *The Chilean Senate: Internal Distribution of Influence*. Latin American Monograph Series, no. 23. Institute of Latin American Studies, University of Texas at Austin. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971.
- Alexander, Robert J. *Juan Domingo Perón: A History*. Boulder: Westview, 1979.
- Baglini, Raúl, et al. *Juicio a la Corte*. Buenos Aires: Mecnografix, 1993.
- Carey, John M. "Parties, Coalitions, and the Chilean Congress in the 1990s." Paper presented at the annual Latin American Studies Association meeting, Chicago, Ill., September 1998.
- Chavez, Rebecca Bill. *The Rule of Law in Nascent Democracies: Judicial Politics in Argentina*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004.
- Constable, Pamela, and Arturo Valenzuela. *A Nation of Enemies: Chile Under Pinochet*. New York: Norton, 1991.
- Correa Sutil, Jorge. "The Judiciary and the Political System in Chile: The Dilemmas of Judicial Independence during the Transition to Democracy." in *Transition to Democracy in Latin America: The Role of the Judiciary*, edited by Irwin P. Stotzky, 89-106. Boulder: Westview, 1993.
- Crassweller, Robert D. *Perón and the Enigmas of Argentina*. New York: Norton, 1987.
- Guagnini, Lucas, Santiago O'Donnell, and Ernesto Semán. "El Estado contra Vázquez." *Tres Puntos* 1 (25 September 1997): 10-11.
- Jones, Mark P. "Evaluating Argentina's Presidential Democracy: 1983-1995." In *Presidentialism and Democracy in Latin America*, edited by Scott Mainwaring and Matthew Soberg Shugart, 259-299. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- _____. "Explaining the High Level of Party Discipline in the Argentine Congress." Paper presented at the annual Latin American Studies Association meeting, Chicago, Ill., September 1998.
- Levitsky, Steven. "An Organized Disorganization: Informal Structures and the Persistence of Mass Organization in Argentine Peronism." Paper presented at the annual Latin American Studies Association meeting, Miami, Fla., March, 2000.
- Loveman, Brian. "Misión Cumplida: Civil Military Relations and the Chilean Political Transition." *Journal of Interamerican and World Affairs* (Fall 1991).
- Luna, Félix. *La Argentina era una fiesta, 1946-49*. Vol. 1 of *Perón y su tiempo*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1984.

- Mainwaring, Scott, and Timothy R. Scully, eds. *Building Democratic Institutions: Party Systems in Latin America*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995.
- Mainwaring, Scott, and Matthew Soberg Shugart, eds. *Presidentialism and Democracy in Latin America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Manzetti, Luigi. *Institutions, Parties, and Coalitions in Argentine Politics*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993.
- McDonald, Ronald H., and J. Mark Ruhl. *Party Politics and Elections in Latin America*. Boulder: Westview, 1989.
- Mustapic, Ana María. "Oficialistas y diputados: Las relaciones Ejecutivo-Legislativo en la Argentina." Paper presented at the conference Legislaturas en América Latina: Perspectivas Comparadas, Mexico City, February 1998.
- Mustapic, Ana María, and Matteo Goretti. "Gobierno y oposición en el Congreso: La práctica de la cohabitación durante la presidencia de Alfonsín, 1983-1989." *Desarrollo Económico* 32 (July- September 1992): 251-69.
- Navia, Patricio, and José Miguel Sandoval. "Binomial Electoral Law and Multi-Party System: The Chilean Contradiction." Paper prepared for the annual Latin American Studies Association meeting, Chicago, Ill., September 1998.
- Nef, Jorge, and Nivaldo Galleguillos. "Legislatures and Democratic Transitions in Latin America: The Chilean Case." In *Legislatures and the New Democracies in Latin America*, edited by David Close, 71-87. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995.
- O'Donnell, Guillermo. "Delegative Democracy." *Journal of Democracy* 5 (January 1994): 55-69.
- Packenham, Robert A. "Legislatures in Political Development." In *Legislatures in Developmental Perspective*, edited by Allan Kornberg and Lloyd D. Musolf, 81-96. Durham: Duke University Press, 1970.
- Peña González, Carlos. "Informe Sobre Chile." In *Situación y Políticas Judiciales en América Latina*, edited by Jorge Correa Sutil, 285-381. Santiago: Escuela de Derecho Universidad Diego Portales, 1993.
- Rodríguez Lamas, Daniel. *La presidencia de Frondizi*. Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1984.
- Scott, Robert E. "Legislatures and Legislation." In *Government and Politics in Latin America*, edited by Harold Eugene Davis. New York: Ronald Press, 1958.
- Scully, Timothy. *Rethinking the Center: Cleavages, Critical Junctures, and Party Evolution in Chile*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992.

- Shugart, Matthew Soberg. "The Electoral Cycle and Institutional Sources of Divided Presidential Government." *American Political Science Review* 89 (June 1995): 327-43.
- Siavelis, Peter M. "Executive-Legislative Relations in Post-Pinochet Chile: A Preliminary Assessment." In *Presidentialism and Democracy in Latin America*, edited by Scott Mainwaring and Matthew Soberg Shugart, 259-299. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Snow, Peter G. *Political Forces in Argentina*. Rev. ed. New York: Praeger, 1979.
- Spence, Jack. *Search for Justice: Neighborhood Courts in Allende's Chile*. Boulder: Westview, 1979.
- Valenzuela, Arturo. *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Chile*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978.
- Valenzuela, Arturo, and Alexander Wilde. "Presidential Politics and the Decline of the Chilean Congress." In *Legislatures and Development: Dynamics of Change in New and Old States*, edited by Joel Smith and Lloyd D. Musolf, 155-86. Durham: Duke University Press, 1979.
- Verbitsky, Horacio. *Hacer la corte: La construcción de un poder absoluto sin justicia ni control*. Buenos Aires: Planeta, 1993.

Personal Interviews

- Barra, Rodolfo. Argentine Supreme Court Justice (1990-1994). Buenos Aires. 13 November 1998.
- Cavagna Martínez, Mariano. Argentine Supreme Court Justice (1990-1994). Buenos Aires. 27 November 1998.
- Correa Sutil, Jorge. Professor at Universidad Diego Portalis Law School. Santiago. 13 May 1999.
- Fayt, Carlos. Argentine Supreme Court Justice. Buenos Aires. 29 October 1998.
- Peña González, Carlos. Dean, Universidad Diego Portalis Law School. Santiago. 14 May 1999.

Periodicals

- Ámbito Financiero* (Buenos Aires).
- Clarín* (Buenos Aires).
- Crónica* (Buenos Aires).
- Nación* (Buenos Aires).
- La Prensa* (Buenos Aires).
- Revista Noticias* (Buenos Aires).

STATE REFORM AND ANTI-NEOLIBERAL RHETORIC IN PARAGUAY

**Brian Turner
Randolph-Macon College**

On August 15, 2003, Nicanor Duarte Frutos was sworn in as the new president of Paraguay, extending the period of continuous control of the executive by the Colorado Party that began in 1947. Duarte Frutos surprised observers with a stinging critique of "savage neo-liberalism" and promised that his government would struggle against imperialism. These comments must have pleased a number of the presidents in attendance, including Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, Cuba's Fidel Castro, Nestór Kirchner from Argentina, and most importantly, Lula Da Silva of Brazil. Indeed, many observers felt that the historic election of Lula in December 2002 opened an important new space for official rhetoric against the "Washington consensus" that dominated the discourse about political economy in Latin America in the 1990s.

The surprise caused by Duarte Frutos' comments is due to a mistaken perception that the new president would align his country with "leftist" critiques of neo-liberal economics. Instead, Duarte Frutos' comments are more accurately understood as reflecting the momentary conjunction of Paraguayan domestic and foreign policies with external political processes that have little to do with any leftward tendency in the Paraguayan government. More specifically, Duarte Frutos' rhetoric reflects three aspects of this conjunction: his connection to a faction of the Colorado Party that never embraced neo-liberalism because of its threat to the party's control of the state bureaucracy and the patronage that comes with that control; Paraguayan subservience to Brazilian interests; and the rhetorical environment created by the election of Lula and, to a lesser degree, Kirchner.

Other elements of Duarte Frutos' campaign and inaugural speech suggest the contradictions he faces that will most probably define the government elected to serve until 2008. Duarte Frutos promised state reform and an uncompromising fight against corruption. While fighting corruption per se does not suggest a need for neo-liberal policies, Duarte Frutos' proposals clearly indicate that he will address the closely related problems of a state that does not function and corruption with neo-liberal solutions. In spite of his Lula-pleasing rhetoric, Duarte Frutos is actually responding to Brazilian pressures that support adoption of neo-liberalism.

Brazil's primary concerns regarding its MERCOSUR partner include the rampant corruption that permits a flourishing contraband trade in arms, narcotics, and falsified goods that undercut legitimate Brazilian commerce.¹ Brazil's concerns about corruption and illegality coincide with the policies of other important international actors such as the United States and the international lending agencies. All of these international actors call for state reforms that are the contemporary expression of neo-liberalism. Contemporary neo-liberalism demands deregulation of the private sector and fiscal austerity in government, but also improvements in social spending. The other key concern of Brazilian foreign policy regarding Paraguay is the fate of the so-called "brasiguayos," Brazilians living in Paraguay, especially those who control soy production. The expansion of the soy fields has generated new conflicts over land and agrarian policy between the soy growers and Paraguayan peasants. Itamaraty supports the rights of brasiguayo soy growers, connected to capital and global markets through Brazil, over the claims of the Paraguayan peasants. This too places Brazilian foreign policy in support of neo-liberal policies that give most weight to the rights of property obtained through ostensibly market mechanisms and minimal regulation of economic activity.

On the other hand, Brazil expects MERCOSUR to present a solid front against the global economic policies of the United States. Lula has effectively mobilized a tacit alliance of a number of large Third World² countries to challenge U.S. hegemony in global and regional trade negotiations.³ And at home, many Colorados have pressured the government to defend the patrimonial state rather than to reform it. Thus anti-neo-liberal rhetoric is utilized to accommodate and balance these interests. I argue in this paper that, for the Brazilian government, the rhetoric and the accompanying posturing in international forums is enough, and that what Brazil really expects from Paraguay is more neo-liberalism. The rhetoric must mask essentially neo-liberal policies from the opponents of neo-liberalism at home. Since opposition to neo-liberalism comes from two diametrically opposed positions, the rhetoric also seeks to divide the opposition between the statists in the Colorado party on the one hand and the progressive social movements on the other.

Nicanor's Inaugural Address⁴

President Nicanor Duarte Frutos was sworn in to a five-year term as president on August 15, 2003. In the first sentence of his inaugural address he acknowledged the presence of his compatriots. In the second sentence he acknowledged foreign heads of state, beginning with Luiz Inacio Da Silva

and ending with Fidel Castro. The presence of Fidel, in his first visit to Paraguay, captured all of the headlines, but Duarte Frutos recognized geo-political reality by acknowledging Lula first.

Early in his address Duarte Frutos stated "We are conscious, Sr. President of the Congress, that as you say we need real reform and not just new make-up, but this reform must be considered from deep within Paraguayan reality, not from formula repeated like dogma by the oracles of unemployment, misery, and alienation. Neoliberalism has been a failure because it denies and subjugates human dignity." By his reference to the President of Congress, Senator Carlos Mateo Balmelli from the opposition Partido Liberal Radical Auténtico, Duarte Frutos linked the Liberals to neo-liberalism, which he also connected to the failure of the Paraguayan state. He ignored the fact that the Colorado Party in power has, haltingly, been responsible for the implementation of neo-liberal policies.

Duarte Frutos continued: "One cannot force social, cultural, and moral change on a people through the imposition of economic conditionality in an exclusive way. The human being is more than the market. We will make a just State, finally the servant of free men. We will build a society with equal opportunities in order that development has a human face and that democracy will be the cement for social equity." In this passage, the new president connected neo-liberalism with foreign interests and foreign ideas. This type of critique has deep roots in Latin American nationalism and in the mentality sometimes called "arielismo." President Duarte then turned his attention to the internal "compradores" (no, he did not call them 'running dogs', but he might have): "Compatriots, we remember always that we do not have a mimetic culture and we do not serve foreign interests, and still less do we respond to the interests of the mafia and of the unproductive local oligarchies who want us to continue being their lackeys in government defending their privileges. This will end in Paraguay."

The next passage may have made some of his allies in the Colorado Party uncomfortable, although they may have understood it to be rhetoric unlikely to be connected to action. Duarte said: "This long political crisis suffered by the country makes it imperative that we put an end to the patrimonial State which has enriched some in office and their courtiers, but which has never served the working Paraguayan people." The degree to which Duarte Frutos pushes this agenda will undoubtedly define his administration, and potentially determine how long he remains in office.

The response to the inaugural was generally positive. Along with much coverage of Fidel, the Asuncion dailies featured Duarte Frutos' anti-neo-liberal comments. Lula was favorably impressed, and argued to Kirchner the need for the MERCOSUR giants to assist Duarte Frutos in his efforts.⁵

Meeting with high-ranking Brazilian and Paraguayan military officers at the Palacio de López, President Duarte pronounced himself in favor of the redefinition of “many concepts ... because there is a new spirit in South America, and it is from South America that we must look at the world.” Duarte Frutos said that he is for “the liberation of our pueblos, our South America, so that its protagonism and influence in the world will grow.” South America will not be a region “led by force and the humor of other countries.” Finally, he expressed the “great philosophical, political, and spiritual agreement he shares with President Lula.”⁶

Duarte Frutos has been cited by foreign journalists as part of the “winds of change” in the region.⁷ Perhaps ironically, his government has also been greeted positively by the U. S. State Department.⁸ Duarte Frutos’ visit to the White House on September 26, 2003, went “very well” according to State Department sources, with the Paraguayan president agreeing generally with President Bush regarding fighting corruption and terrorism. Duarte Frutos met with Lula shortly after his return to South America from Washington.

Politics and Neoliberalism before Nicanor

The dictatorial regime of Alfredo Stroessner (1954-1989) was based on a system of patronage rewards delivered pre-eminently through the structures of the Colorado party (Martini and Yore 1998, 53-88). Although the Colorado party had historically developed an ideology of agrarianism and nationalism, the ideology of the “stronato” was essentially that of “anti-communism,” used instrumentally to repress any challenge to the control of resources by the political elite connected to the dictator, and the “right to rule” by the Colorado Party in alliance with, and subordinated to, the armed forces (Masi 1989). Agrarianism and nationalism were subordinated to the interests of the elites, who engaged in a massive land grab at the expense of the campesinado and permitted the massive expansion of Brazilian interests, including the immigration of over 300,000 Brazilians (Nickson 1981).

The coup that ended the reign of Stroessner on February 3, 1989, was generated by a conflict of interests within the ruling elite, which had become increasingly acute throughout the 1980s, a period of economic stagnation. Although personal ambitions and interpersonal alliances account for much of the in fighting within the Colorado Party both before and after the coup, broadly speaking three tendencies can be identified. One tendency was that of the so-called “Barons of Itaipú,” who Paraguayan historian Juan Carlos Herken has called the “fraudulent bourgeoisie” of private executives with political connections to the Stroessner regime who

built fortunes contracting for public works on the great hydroelectric projects (Martini and Yore, 1998, 63; Paredes 2001; Paredes 2002, 131). This wing of the Colorado Party is most clearly represented by Juan Carlos Wasmosy, who with the firm assistance of allies in the military and the government of Andrés Rodríguez (1989-1993), stole the party primary in 1992 and was elected president in 1993 (Flecha and Martini 1994). Wasmosy pushed neo-liberal economic policies tepidly during his administration, but lacked majorities in Congress to push through his program effectively. The "government of national unity" of President Luis González Macchi (1999-2003) also pursued neo-liberal formulas for the privatization of state enterprises, but by 2002 congressional opposition and popular protest derailed the government's plans (Paredes 2002, 117; Nickson and Lambert 2002, 169). González Macchi also lacked clear legitimacy and a majority in Congress to pursue his programs (Yore and Palau, 2000).

The second wing of the party, that most committed to the rhetoric of agrarianism and nationalism but in fact wedded to the maintenance of a patrimonial state in the hands of the Colorado caudillos, is represented by the "last caudillo of the twentieth century" Luis María Argaña.⁹ Until his assassination in 1999, Argaña led the "traditionalist" wing of the party, which is most directly threatened by neo-liberalism's requirements to diminish the size of the state and privatize many of its functions. The Colorado Party has traditionally depended on the maintenance of a large state sector to reward supporters with state jobs and opportunities for corruption, practices which are clearly contradictory to the neo-liberal formula. Rhetorically, the argañistas have used nationalism and vague "party traditions" to criticize neo-liberal policies. President González Macchi was an argañista, who permitted massive corruption during his administration. Current President Duarte Frutos Duarte Frutos was Argaña's running mate in the 1997 presidential primary elections, and won the party presidency, and finally the presidency of the Republic in 2003, at the head of the argañista ticket.

The third wing of the party represents its populist authoritarian traditions even more clearly than do the argañistas. This wing, led by General Lino Oviedo,¹⁰ developed as an autonomous faction outside of the traditional party structures, financed by access to state resources (Morínigo 1999).¹¹ The oviedistas believe that they most clearly represent the Colorado party traditions of agrarianism and nationalism, with an important dose of intolerance and violence towards political opponents. This wing of the party, now divided between those still in the party and those who have formed a new political party (Partido UNACE), is deeply opposed to neo-liberalism for reasons quite similar to those of the argañistas. The key

difference between the two wings is in their relative acceptance of democratic principles of governance.

Duarte Frutos is the first president of the post-coup period (indeed the first in 70 years) to have unquestioned electoral legitimacy. He has effectively used patronage power within both the administration and the party structure to attract support from some ovidistas and to marginalize the children of Argaña, competitors for party control. Although he does not have majority support in the Senate, he has the clearest opportunity of any president in recent years to pursue coherent policies and create a legacy. His first actions in office have been to stabilize state finances and to unleash a fight against corruption, which appears to date to be selective, such as in the campaign to clean up customs but to protect powerful but corrupt allies in the state oil distribution monopoly, and mixed with his own ambitions to remove limits on presidential power, as seen in the successful removal of six of the nine Supreme Court justices.

Brazil's Policies towards Paraguay

For Paraguay, the election of Luis Inacio Lula da Silva as President of Brazil has not represented a major change in relations with its gigantic neighbor. Itamaraty has maintained remarkable consistency in its policies towards Paraguay. The Brazilians continue to take measures to limit contraband trade coming from Ciudad del Este, occasionally slowing border crossings to a crawl and even using police repression against the sacoleiros, or those who cross the bridge from Foz do Iguacu to Ciudad del Este on foot to purchase goods and introduce them into Brazil without paying duties.

Further, Brazilian state officials, particularly in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, continue to support the expansion of the soy fields ever deeper into Paraguay, extending the reach of the Brazilian economy and culture further from the international border.¹² The aphorism "Brazilian sovereignty ends where the last Brazilian lives" is felt to accurately reflect the reality in Paraguay (Paredes 2002, 109). In 1990, one saw encampment after encampment of landless peasants in tarpaulin tents in sieges to gain access to lands, many of which were illegally granted to high officials and Brazilians during the Stroessner area, along Ruta VI, which links Encarnación with Ciudad del Este. By 2004, the area was converted to extensive soy fields populated largely by Brazilians. Capitalist interests in this region have won the class struggle and the peasants have been routed. Struggles over land with Brazilians now take place in departments not located on the frontier, such as San Pedro, Caaguazú, Caazapá, and Guairá.¹³

Nevertheless, Lula has embraced Duarte Frutos, encouraging President Kirchner to help their neighbor, and even inviting the Duarte Frutos family to vacation with the da Silvas at an exclusive beach resort in Brazil. This is distinct from the treatment given to Uruguayan president Jorge Batlle. At the December 2003 MERCOSUR summit Lula failed to meet individually with Batlle, host for the meetings in Montevideo.¹⁴ Uruguay has been less forthcoming in supporting the Brazilians in international trade negotiations, and the Brazilian government undoubtedly was looking forward to the predicted electoral victory of the leftist Encuentro Progresista later in 2004.

Duarte Frutos responded positively to the Brazilian entreaties. Paraguayan Foreign Minister Leila Rachid de Cowles backed the MERCOSUR position at both the World Trade Organization meetings in September 2003 in Cancún and at the Free Trade Area of the Americas negotiations in November 2003 in Miami.¹⁵ Paraguay also decided not to sign a bilateral agreement with the United States granting immunity to U.S. officials from the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court.¹⁶ The United States therefore denied Paraguay direct military assistance. It was important to Brazil that MERCOSUR present a united policy against the United States position on the new court. Uruguay however did sign such an agreement with the U.S.

Current Brazilian policies intensify the underdevelopment of Paraguay's position in the geo-political economy of the MERCOSUR region (Paredes 2002, 85). Part of Paraguay has become thoroughly incorporated into the industrialized soy economy based in Brazil, while the historic heartland of Paraguayan population and peasant culture remains marginalized from the economic center of the region connecting the Río de la Plata region with the industrial powerhouse of São Paulo (Müller 2003).¹⁷

However, the weakness of the Paraguayan state and the informality of its economy pose a threat to Brazilian interests. The so-called mafias that operate inside Paraguayan state institutions create political instability and generate high rates of transnational criminality. The increasing dislocation of peasants from soy regions and the failure of the Paraguayan government to develop plausible solutions to the resultant problems of both rural and urban poverty creates the environment for violent conflicts over access to land, with Brazilian citizens' property and lives threatened.

Nicanor's Policies: Neo-liberalism with a Human Rhetoric

The new administration inherited a nearly bankrupt state. The González Macchi government had exhausted its legitimacy and had emptied state coffers through corruption and misspending. Paraguay had entered

selective default on its debt, as it was simply unable to meet payments on certain of its obligations. The country was in the fifth year of economic recession, marked by a notable increase in poverty (Nickson 2004).

One of the first requirements of the new government was to reach a stand-by accord with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) by the end of 2003. If successful, new credits were to be made available by the World Bank and by the Inter-American Development Bank, and investor confidence in the Paraguayan economy would increase. The new finance minister, Dionisio Borda, an academic without ties to political parties, was put in charge of designing the policies necessary to convince the IMF that the Duarte Frutos government would take the difficult steps to put the economic house in order.

The government successfully negotiated an accord with the IMF. The nine points of the accord commit Paraguay to the rationalization of spending in the 2004 budget, pension reform (the *Caja Fiscal*), tax reform (both in the administration of tax collection and in tax rates), implementing a new customs law, passing a new law on the restructuring of public debt, reform of the public credit institutions, improve efficiency in public enterprises and in the management of the social security system, and passage of a new law on ministries and decentralized entities.

The new government's strategy for achieving these reforms was to negotiate with the political parties with representation in Congress before actually submitting legislation, so as to limit the opportunities to lobby by the sectors likely to be opposed to the reform package. The President's legitimacy and general popularity in public opinion polls strengthened his ability to maintain discipline within the Colorado party in Congress, and thus improved the credibility of these accords for the opposition parties. By the end of 2003, Duarte Frutos had gotten most of the reform legislation he wanted from Congress. The president submitted seven key bills,¹⁸ the most controversial of which were the reform of the pension system, the 2004 budget, and the tax reform bill.

Neo-liberal reforms of the state pension system strikes at the patronage that has sustained the Colorado Party in power for over 50 years. Pension benefits have been part of the rewards to state employees, who until 1989 were usually required to be members of the party. In the rural parts of the country, the only people drawing a salary, and the only representatives of the Paraguayan state, are schoolteachers. The Ministry of Education and Culture has been reluctant to abandon political patronage in the assigning of teachers posts (Galeano 2002, 81).¹⁹ Teachers represent an important base of support for Colorado politicians in every part of the country. Indeed, the decline of support for the Colorado party among the

general electorate has meant that state employees represent a greater share of the party's base.

12.5% of the economically active population (EAP) is covered by state pensions, including public sector employees, police and military, and special grantees who receive pensions by acts of Congress. Only public sector employees, about one-half of the total, pay into the system from their monthly paychecks, and the system runs at a deficit. The accumulated deficit over the past six years is about \$52 million. The 2003 deficit was \$15 million (Rodríguez Silvero 2003). The government's proposal included an increase in the years of service requirement for teachers from the current 25 years to 40 years, and an increase in salary contributions from 14% to 16%.

These proposals provoked a teachers' strike in November 2003, just as students were preparing for end of year exams and while an IMF team was in the country. The teachers produced an impressive mobilization in Asunción, with some 20,000 teachers and public sector employees taking to the streets on November 6, chanting "Nicanor is a liar!" and "Nicanor breaks his promises!" The teachers called their mobilization "No to the grandmother project," in reference to the advanced age teachers would reach before obtaining their retirements. The government responded with criticism of the small "privileged" public sector receiving subsidies that deny the rest of the population funds for services that could otherwise be provided. The strike lasted almost two weeks with some 90% of the 55,000 teachers walking out of their classrooms. The mobilization produced a negotiated end to the strike, with the government and teachers accepting 28 years of service for retirement and 16% salary contributions.

Duarte Frutos seemed pleased enough with this accord, suggesting that the 40 years of service was merely a bargaining position, and/or the President was making the best of a significant government retreat. The agreement was a modest victory for the government, in that it forced some change in spite of powerful resistance, and a clear but not complete victory for the teachers, who demonstrated their ability to resist and to negotiate. However, the teachers failed to significantly challenge the neo-liberal principles underlying the reform measure, and the President was able to demonstrate to the IMF his ability to produce change. Congress quickly passed the compromise measure with few changes.

The administration's 2004 budget proposal included spending ceilings, as a key component of the accord with the IMF was to eliminate the fiscal deficit and produce a surplus by the end of 2004. In the era of debt crises in Latin America in the 1980s, Paraguay generally avoided deep deficits. However, after 1995 fiscal deficits became an increasing constraint on the government, and the state was in danger of defaulting on its

obligations. By the end of the González Macchi administration, the government was already in selective default on various debts. The 2003 deficit was projected to reach 2.2% of GDP. The government projected a surplus of 0.1% of GDP for its proposed 2004 budget.

Limitations on spending threaten the interests of a venal legislature and its patronage resources (Cox and Morgenstern 2001). Congress, particularly the Chamber of Deputies where the Colorados control one-half of the seats, rebelled against provisions of the bill that most clearly threatened access to patronage, and the erstwhile leader of the Colorado caucus in Deputies and close ally of the president, Cándido Aguilera, accused the president of being a “paloma tupa’o” (church dove in Guaraní), because he craps on his own believers. Finance Minister Borda’s proposal included funds for severance pay and retraining for 5,500 state employees who would be laid off in administrative reforms. However, in the face of congressional opposition the executive removed the budget line for the severance pay, and the Congress then removed the lay-off plan altogether from the bill.

The Bicameral Budget Commission then presented a bill to the full Congress that increased spending above the established ceiling by about \$50 million, without providing measures to fund the increases. The increased expenditures were mostly dedicated to salaries for new positions in the judicial branch (\$12.5 million) and the prosecutor’s office (\$14 million). These positions represented new patronage opportunities for the recently elected legislators. Education was to get over \$6 million more, and the National University of Asunción (UNA) about \$4.5 million. Once the bill was submitted to the lower house, the Deputies further larded the bill to exceed the ceiling by \$200 million, adding more spending for new positions, increased spending for the departmental governments,²⁰ “pay” increases for Senators,²¹ and tax free automobile imports for members of Congress.²²

Finance Minister Borda pressured the Senate to remove the ceiling-busting proposals passed in the lower house by suggesting that the budget that came out of Deputies threatened the IMF’s approval of the stand-by agreement. The President of the Chamber of Deputies, Benjamín Maciel Pasotti, blamed the bicameral budget commission for the increases in the budget and not the Chamber of Deputies. Adjustments to the budgets for the departmental governments and for the public universities in the interior were necessary, he said, or else monthly tuition would have gone to G. 500,000 (approximately \$85). As Maciel Pasotti said, “it is very easy to make a budget in the cabinet in four walls in order to stay in good standing with the IMF, but it is quite different to make a budget that attends to the needs of the people.”²³

The Senate cut most of the Deputies' increases, and when the bill was returned to the deputies, they insisted only on increases to the departmental governments and on the chamber's operating expenses. Therefore, the 2004 budget bill exceeds the executive's proposal by just about \$4 million, which is a clear victory for the Duarte Frutos administration and especially for Finance Minister Borda, who has no political base of his own. However, according to an analysis prepared by the United Nations Development Program and UNICEF, social expenditures, those that contribute to improving the quality of life of the population, will decline by 1% from the 2003 budget, to about 7.6% of GDP. Social expenditures represent only 36% of central government spending for 2004, well below the average of 42-46% for the post-1989 period.²⁴ The new government was able to impose a harsh austerity budget in order to meet IMF demands. Funds for Paraguay's deepening social needs will not be forthcoming, at least until the state gets control of its deficit.

Clearly the most controversial proposal by the government was the proposed law of administrative reform and tax restructuring (from here forward "tax reform").²⁵ Opponents labeled this bill the "impuestazo," or tax increase. The administration admitted its goal is to increase the overall tax pressure on the economy, from about 8.7% of GDP to over 10%, which would still be one of the lowest rates in the region. The value-added tax (VAT), currently 10%, collects only 4% instead of 10% of GDP. The 46 categories of current exemptions account for 2.5%, so 3.5% is the result of tax evasion. The government hopes to reduce evasion by eliminating most exemptions. The proposal would also reduce the corporate income tax rate from 30% to 10%, again with the idea that lower tax rates will improve collection. Another component of the proposal is to phase in a personal income tax. The Finance Ministry estimates that the package will increase tax collection by over \$113 million, helping to close the \$200 million fiscal deficit.

The generalization of the VAT tax has drawn the most fire, especially from book publishers, cooperatives, and producers of raw agricultural products. The book publishers and cooperatives feel that the tax reform violates constitutional protections to cultural products (Article 83) and cooperative formation. Agricultural producers argued that the primary generators of foreign exchange should not carry the burden of increasing fiscal income as well.

The administration responded to opposition with invitations to negotiate at Mburuvicha Róga, the presidential mansion. On November 14, 2003, the government struck an accord with most of the producer organizations, in which the government offered some compromises in return

for the organizations not lobbying against the bill in Congress. Congressional leaders were present at the meeting, and in interviews with caucus leaders none expressed concern over this form of corporatism. Congressional leaders instead appreciate how this facilitates passage of legislation. Nevertheless, two organizations, one representing the savings and loans cooperatives and the Coordinator of Agricultural Producers (CAP), rejected the accord and announced that they were prepared to lobby in Congress and mobilize in protest of the "impuestazo." The CAP has famously mobilized several successful "tractorcades" in the last several years. In response, Minister Borda announced that cotton, tartago, sesame, and sugar cane would not be taxed for the first three years after implementation of tax reform, and that soy would not be taxed for one year. Government concessions were designed so that the bill "could be studied in Congress with no opposition." Still, the CAP and peasant organizations expressed their opposition.

The government sought congressional action on the bill before the IMF decision on the stand-by agreement, taken in Washington on December 15, 2003. The executive introduced the bill to the Senate, but the Senate was unable to study the measure because another important initiative of the government, the impeachment trial of six Supreme Court justices, was occupying all of the Senate's attention. The bill was thus released to the Chamber of Deputies on December 1, but that chamber took no action until December 29. Fortunately for the government, the IMF approved the stand-by accord, noting significant political will on the part of the Duarte Frutos administration to meet its obligations. Duarte Frutos still hoped for some action before the congressional recess, but the opposition argued for postponing consideration until Congress reconvened in March 2004. The opposition, in control of 40 of the 80 seats in Deputies, can deny the body a quorum, and sought to do so to prevent consideration of the bill. However, one deputy from the Authentic Radical Liberal Party (PLRA) was convinced to stay in the chamber, which permitted that body to pass parts of the bill before heading into recess. When Congress returned into session in March 2004, the PLRA led the opposition against the tax reform bill, but the pro-business Patria Querida party broke ranks with the opposition block and voted for the measure, giving Duarte Frutos a hard-fought victory.

Along with these legislative proposals, Duarte Frutos spent his first year in office taking some important but also contradictory steps against corruption and pursuing "judicial reform," mainly through the forced resignations of four Supreme Court justices and the impeachment of two others. Fighting corruption is opposed only by the corrupt, so in this area the President enjoys wide public support if not complete credibility. Judicial

reform was presented to the public as necessary to provide judicial security, which would permit attracting more foreign investment. The judges in question, and several others not threatened with impeachment, had clearly lost the capacity to maintain the public's confidence in their honesty and competence, and were thus vulnerable to intense political pressure. While some see this as a positive step in fighting corruption, others expressed concern about the exercise of presidential power against judicial independence.

Important and comprehensive initiatives to resolve the country's many social problems were completely absent in the first months of the new administration. The Mesa Coordinadora Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas (MCNOC) had it right when it characterized the government's policies as a "neo-liberal economic program,"²⁶ which the MCNOC rejects. Tax reform, pension reform, the austerity budget, and even judicial reform all clearly respond to a neo-liberal prescription negotiated with the IMF.

Neo-liberalism's Opponents

While Colorado party politicians, teachers, and state workers are opposed to neo-liberalism because of its ill effects on the patrimonial state, the campesinos are engaged in a class war against neo-liberal policies that have permitted the massive expansion of the soybean economy, connected firmly to Brazilian capital.

Soy production has expanded dramatically over the past decade and Paraguay is now the fourth-largest exporter of soybeans in the world. In 2000, 1.2 million hectares of soy were sown in Paraguay. According to the organization representing the soy industry, CAPECO, 1.7 million hectares were in soy in 2004.²⁷ The soybean frontier has expanded from the Brazilian border deep into Paraguay's traditional peasant heartland, accompanied by massive deforestation. Areas of the border region that were contested by landless peasants and still forested in the early 1990s are now massive soy fields, in what has been a near total route of the peasantry, and has led to "disarticulated development" (*desarrollo desintegrado* in the frontier region (Falabella and Masi 2003). The environmental and social damage have been extensive. For example, the mixed-use protection zone around the Nature Conservancy-owned Mbaracayú forest reserve has been increasingly turned to soy fields, leaving the reserve an island and diminishing its capacity to sustain biological diversity. Large landowners in the long-settled regions of San Pedro, Guairá, Caazapá, and Misiones have resisted land invaders by turning their lands over to Brazilian renters who produce soy.

The government welcomes soy production because it produces foreign exchange, and because it links production to the agri-industrial sector, which in alliance with Brazilian capital, purchases, stores, and transports raw product to Brazil and through Paraguayan facilities at the Brazilian port of Paranaguá to the global market. The soy economy is dynamic and self sustaining, requiring the state to secure property rights and otherwise leave it as free from intervention as possible. On the other hand, the peasant cash crop, cotton, requires more state intervention through public credit agencies and technological support. Cotton continues to be promoted by the state, but only recently has cotton recovered from a deep decline in production caused by declining international prices, boll weevil infestations, and failed state policies in seed provision. Furthermore, the state has retreated from direct support of the cotton sector, with the outsourcing of extension services and the retraction of public credit. Duarte Frutos' proposal to unify the public lending agencies into a single entity is rightly seen by campesino groups as a further retraction of public credit for small growers.

Peasant resistance to the soy growers threatens powerful interests connected to the state. But for many campesinos, resistance to soy is essential to their survival, and the ethnic segmentation between soy and cotton production presents certain tactical advantages for that resistance. Peasant groups have presented their struggle against soy as a nationalist, environmentalist, and human rights struggle.

The fact that many large soy growers are Brazilian nationals, or in some cases nationalized "brasiguayos," makes them vulnerable to nationalist criticism, which often appeals to Paraguayans' cultural anxieties. Peasant leader Jorge Galeano described his community's steps to prevent soy growers to fumigate their fields as a "patriotic act."²⁸ That Brazilian "colonists" speak Portuguese adds to cultural experts' anxiety about the continued vibrancy of Guaraní as the national marker of Paraguayan identity. Senator José Nicolás Morínigo of the leftist País Solidario party has taken the lead in articulating the ill effects of soy on peasant communities, which find themselves living in unlivable environments with the social fabric weakened to the point of dissolution. Economic nationalists are concerned about the fact that the soy economy is not connected to Asunción, but rather to Brazil through border intermediaries.

Industrialized agriculture requires the use of agro-chemicals. Soy growers have access to credit and use agro-chemicals routinely, while peasant growers may use such inputs more sparingly. Peasant activists have made their struggle an environmental struggle against the "indiscriminate" use of "agro-toxins," citing many cases of agro-chemical poisoning.

Typically, the medical proof of the specific cause of a poisoning is difficult to obtain, and soy interests and their supporters in the government and the media have tended to dismiss the claims of agro-chemical poisoning. On the other hand, the media and the Ministers of Agriculture and Ranching and of Health and Social Welfare have acknowledged the existence of such cases and taken some steps to improve regulation. However, the weak Paraguayan state is unlikely to seriously control the use of agro-chemicals in the face of the powerful soy industry, which has been reported to fly crop-dusters across the border from Brazil, who fumigate and then fly home, never touching Paraguayan soil.

Human rights groups have also been attracted to the struggle against soy, due to the violation of environmental rights (Silvero 2003) and because of the specific cases of police brutality and excessive use of force in the repression of peasant protestors (Valiente 2003). Thus peasants have attracted significant sources of support. Municipal authorities in the department of San Pedro have organized to improve the regulation of land use and agro-chemical use in response to intense peasant protests there.²⁹

However, peasant strategies to confront the expansion of the soy fields more generally do not enjoy as much support. The confrontational strategy employed by Jorge Galeano's organization in Vaquería has led to a murder of an employee of a Brazilian soy grower and accusations against Galeano and other peasant leaders as the moral authors of the crime. Peasant protests draw criticism in the media, and few politicians are willing to go further than calling for appropriate regulation of agro-chemical use. While the campesinos have made effective use of a public health concern, few have joined them and Senator Morínigo in the criticism of the lack of a coherent agrarian policy that would sustain peasant communities. Government inattention is promoting a process of de-peasantization and impoverishment, as campesinos migrate in ever-larger numbers to the small cities near Asunción to search for scarce opportunities to work in a micro-commerce economy (Galeano 2002, 71).

Resolution: Rhetorical Contradictions

President Duarte Frutos faces a difficult challenge in reconciling the government's actions with his rhetoric. This suggests that the optimism in some circles that greeted Lula's victory was at least partially misplaced, in that the forces at work in the world suggest that there really is only one way to run a "serious country," and Duarte Frutos himself has set the making Paraguay a "serious country" in the eyes of others an important goal for his administration. While Lula has undoubtedly been successful in opening up

new points of dialogue in the international conversation about the global economy, the agenda for that dialogue has not been fundamentally changed.

To the extent that Duarte Frutos has had success, it is in using his denunciations of corruption as a cornerstone of rhetoric that masks other, less popular, initiatives. Fighting corruption is to Duarte Frutos as fighting terrorism is to George W. Bush. To the extent that other initiatives are connected to this fight, the president is likely to maintain the popularity and credibility necessary to deliver binding agreements among the powerful actors. However, fighting corruption creates enemies in the president's own base. The public must perceive that the rhetoric is indeed serious and connected to action, or else the mafias will be able to turn public cynicism to their own advantage.

Notes

¹ For example, see "Brazil to Step Up Antismuggling Effort," *The New York Times*, 10 August 2004, Washington edition, p. A11.

² I still use the phrase "Third World" for lack of a satisfactory replacement. "Global South" strikes me as a phrase that is hopelessly geographically-challenged, and the various versions of "developing" never seem adequate, especially in the context of the processes of globalization. Besides, "Third World" used in this context recalls one of the first meanings of "Third World" which emerged at the 1955 Bandung Conference.

³ Teo Ballvé, "Globalizing Resistance in Cancún," *NACLA Report on the Americas*, Vol. XXXVII, no. 3, (November-December 2003), pp. 16-19.

⁴ Presidencia de la República, "Discurso del Excelentísimo Doctor NICANOR DUARTE FRUTOS, Presidente Constitucional de la República del Paraguay. Acto de Asunción al mando presidencial." Transcripción no oficial. Accessed 2/4/04.

<http://www.presidencia.gov.py/presidencia/Discursos/>

⁵ *ABC Color*, 29 October 2003.

⁶ *ABC Color*, 31 October 2003.

⁷ See for example Spanish journalist Jesús María Alonso for EFE, 9 November 2003, in *ABC Color*.

⁸ As reported to me by the State Department sources, 3 October 2003.

⁹ Argaña had served the Stroessner regime loyally until a purge in 1987, and provided civilian support to the coup of 1989. He was denied the party nomination in 1992 even though he won the primary election, denied victory in the primary election of 1997 even though he was the party president at the time, but still managed to be elected vice-president in 1998. He was poised to become president in 1999 as the impeachment of President Raúl Cubas Grau (1998-1999) appeared imminent, but he was assassinated on March 23, 1999, unleashing the tumultuous events popularly termed the "marzo paraguayo."

¹⁰ Then-Colonel Oviedo was one of the leaders of the coup against Stroessner, and rose rapidly afterwards to the rank of head of the armed forces under Wasmosy. He was instrumental in engineering the rebound of the Colorado Party in the constitutional convention elections of 1991, and in the manufacturing of victories for Wasmosy in the party primary of 1992 and the national election of 1993. However, when Wasmosy

attempted to remove him from his post in 1996, he refused, provoking a constitutional crisis ultimately won by Wasmosy. Oviedo then began his campaign for president, winning the party primary in 1997. He was denied his spot on the national ballot by judicial rulings which found him guilty of attempting a coup in 1996. His running mate, Raúl Cubas Grau, was elected president in his place. Both Oviedo and Cubas fled the country as a result of the "marzo paraguayo," in which both were implicated in the assassination of Argaña and the massacre of protesters in the main plaza. Oviedo has subsequently ordered the creation of a new political party and remains an important political actor.

¹¹ See also the report of the Comisión Bicameral de Investigación, "Investigación del asesinato del Vicepresidente Constitucional de la República del Paraguay, Dr. Luis María Argaña, de la matanza y desaparición de personas como consecuencia de los hechos de violencia acaecidos entre los días 23 y 28 de marzo de 1999 y la supuesta participación, directa o indirecta, de Senadores y Diputados en los hechos mencionados." Asunción, October 1999.

¹² Mato Grosso do Sul authorities filed suit against the government of the state of Paraná for the latter's prohibition of the planting or transport of transgenic soy. Much of the soy grown in Paraguay is transgenic, even though transgenic crops are currently illegal in Paraguay. *ABC Color*, 28 November 2003.

¹³ See *Informativo Campesino*, Asunción monthly, which regularly tracks the expansion of the soy frontier and the conflicts this has generated.

¹⁴ *El País*, 15 December 2003.

¹⁵ Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador and Peru all succumbed to pressures and withdrew from the group led by Brazil. *ABC Color*, 13 December 2003.

¹⁶ *ABC Color*, 29 October 2003.

¹⁷ The Brazilians, and especially the government of the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, are keenly interested in developing transport across the Chaco to link Mato Grosso with northern Argentina and the port of Iquique, Chile. If implemented, this would dramatically improve the market outlets for the Mennonites settled in the central Chaco. A bridge already has been built over the Río Pilcomayo between Paraguay and Argentina, and Mato Grosso do Sul has offered to build a bridge over the Río Paraguay at Puerto Murtinho. However, the Paraguayans have been slow to meet their promises to pave the connecting roads, instead preferring links to Santa Cruz, Bolivia. Seen in geo-political terms, it is understandable that Asunción would be reluctant to see the central Chaco develop links other than those with the Paraguayan capital, and attempt to encourage Bolivia to seek its outlet to the sea through Paraguayan rather than neighboring territories. See for example *ABC Color*, 18 November 2003.

¹⁸ The seven bills are "de Garantía de depósitos para el sistema financiero"; "de Racionalización de las cajas fiscales"; "el Presupuesto General de la Nación equilibrado"; "emisión de bonos del Tesoro para recalendarización de la deuda interna"; "de Reordenamiento administrativo y adecuación fiscal"; "reforma del Código Aduanero"; and "reforma de la Banca Pública".

¹⁹ Ironically, Duarte Frutos twice served as Minister of Education and Culture, in the Wasmosy and the González Macchi governments.

²⁰ The Chamber of Deputies is elected from department-wide constituencies. Deputies can be expected to provide more resources for the departmental governments, although this has not always been the case.

²¹ Senators and Deputies receive the same pay, but Deputies have higher allowances for travel and for maintaining offices. The argument has been that the Deputies, many of whom come from distant departments need these resources. The fact the press and

members of Congress, as well as the public, see such allowances as “pay” confirms the patrimonial view legislators have of their public positions.

²² This practice was ended at the end of the Stroessner dictatorship. Legislators abused their privilege by reselling the vehicles at a tidy profit. The new proposal was to permit the import of one vehicle with a value of up to \$50,000.

²³ *ABC Color*, 18 November 2003.

²⁴ *ABC Color*, 5 December 2003.

²⁵ Ley de Reordenamiento Administrativo y Adecuación Fiscal.

²⁶ *ABC Color*, 25 November 2003.

²⁷ *ABC Color*, 20 November 2003.

²⁸ Presentation to the Red Rural de Organizaciones Privadas de Desarrollo, Asunción, 11 December 2003.

²⁹ *ABC Color*, 23 November 2003.

References Cited

- Carter, Michael R., Bradford L. Barham, and Dina Mesbah. 1996. “Agricultural Export Booms and the Rural Poor in Chile, Guatemala, and Paraguay.” *Latin American Research Review* 31 (1): 33-65.
- Cox, Gary W., and Scott Morgenstern. 2001. “Latin America’s Reactive Assemblies and Proactive Presidents.” *Comparative Politics* 33 (2): 171-189.
- Falabella, Gonzalo, and Fernando Masi. 2003. “Límites y oportunidades del desarrollo fronterizo: Estudio exploratorio del Alto Paraná.” Paper presented at FECON 2003, Universidad Autónoma de Asunción, 22 November.
- Flecha, Víctor-jacinto, and Carlos Martini. 1994. *Historia de la Transición: Pasado y futuro de la democracia en el Paraguay*. Asunción: Última Hora.
- Fogel, Ramón. 1989. *La concentración de la tierra en los departamentos fronterizos*. Serie Tierra No. 1. Asunción: Comité de Iglesias para Ayudas de Emergencia.
- Galeano, Luis A. 2002. *La sociedad dislocada*. Asunción: Centro Paraguayo de Estudios Sociológicos.
- Martini, Carlos, and Myriam Yore. 1998. *La corrupción como mecanismo de reproducción del sistema político paraguayo: Apuntes para una radiografía de la impunidad*. Asunción: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and CIDSEP.
- Masi, Fernando. 1989. *Stroessner: La extinción de un modelo político en Paraguay*. Asunción: Ñandutí Vive/Intercontinental Editora.

- Morínigo, José Nicolás. 1999. "La disolución del poder dual y el origen de una nueva legitimidad política." In *Marzo de 1999: Huellas, olvido y urgencias*, Morínigo, comp., pp. 29-97. Asunción: Universidad Católica "Nuestra Señora de la Asunción.
- Müller, Ulrich. 2003. "Descentralización 'desde abajo' – Marco conceptual y experiencias de Desarrollo Local apoyados por el proyecto DESAD," paper presented at FECON 2003, Universidad Autónoma de Asunción, 20 November.
- Nickson, R. Andrew. 1981. "Brazilian Colonization on the Eastern Border Region of Paraguay." *Journal of Latin American Studies* (May), 111-131.
- _____. 2004. "Development Prospects for Paraguay under the Government of President Duarte Frutos." Fundación Real Instituto Elcano de Estudios Internacionales y Estratégicos, Madrid. <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/analisis/558.asp>
- Nickson, Andrew, and Peter Lambert. 2002. "State Reform and the 'Privatized State' in Paraguay." *Public Administration and Development* 22, 163-174.
- Paredes, Roberto. 2001. *Los colorados y la transición*. Asunción.
- _____. 2002. *La lucha de clases en el Paraguay (1989-2002)*. Asunción.
- Rodríguez Silvero, Ricardo. 2003. "Paraguay 2003: Discusión política en torno a los sistemas locales de seguridad social y status actual en materia de proyectos de ley." Paper presented at FECON 2003, Universidad Autónoma de Asunción, 21 November.
- Silvero, Beatriz. 2003. "La falta de políticas públicas y de instituciones como contraste." In *Derechos Humanos en Paraguay 2003*. Asunción: CODEHUPY.
- Valiente, Hugo. 2003. "Derecho a la vida: Violencia policial, fatales desenlaces." In *Derechos Humanos en Paraguay 2003*. Asunción: CODEHUPY.
- Yore, Myriam, and Marielle Palau. 2000. "Presidencialismo Moderado y Gobierno de Coalición. Emergencia y fracaso de una experiencia inédita." Documento de Trabajo No. 101. Asunción: BASE Investigaciones Sociales.

A WOMAN ON THE FRONT-LINES AGAINST THE LAST BASTION OF COLONIALISM IN BRAZIL

**Ivani Vassoler
State University of New York, Fredonia**

While the process of independence in Brazil was a relatively peaceful political development, in contrast to the protracted wars of liberation in other Latin American countries, less attention has been paid to Brazil's late-colonial revolts that challenged the country's separation from Portugal, officially declared in 1822. Eager to keep the status quo and the benefits provided by it, a group of colonialists in the state of Bahia, backed by the Portuguese crown, did not obey the orders to disarm, thus posing for a considerable amount of time a staunch resistance to the nationalist, pro-independence forces under the command of the Brazilian emperor Pedro I. Battles ensued in the following months, and the independence was finally consolidated in July 1823, after a successful military campaign in which a young woman, Maria Quitéria de Jesus,¹ played a critical role in the struggle against the Portuguese.

Despite their relevance to a critical juncture for Brazil, the accomplishments of Maria Quitéria have been overlooked for more than a century. Fallen into a quasi-anonymity, in a neglect that has been recognized by the Brazilian Army (Soriano Neto 2003), Maria Quitéria remains largely a marginal figure in Brazil. Although she received the Imperial Medal from the hands of the emperor Pedro I, and in 1996 was posthumously honored by the Brazilian Armed Forces with one of the highest military decorations,² the history books pay scant attention to her. The neglect is due in part to the fact that Maria Quitéria, herself, became submersed in an obscure life after her feats on the battlefields, retiring from public life to become a wife and mother living in poverty and leaving behind her heroism, which fell into oblivion.

Another reason for the oversight seems to be the historiography of Brazil, in which the independence struggles are primarily focused on the ultimate sacrifice of Joaquim José da Silva Xavier, better known as Tiradentes (the tooth-puller), an unschooled yet skilled dentist who, together with other professionals and intellectuals from the then province and now state of Minas Gerais, organized an unarmed and unsuccessful revolt against the Portuguese rulers. Identified as the head of the *Conjuração Mineira* (Minas' Conspiracy), a civil disobedience protest inspired by the ideals of the American revolution, Tiradentes was hanged in 1792 and the pro-independence movement was crushed (Sabsay 2003). Yet, the rebels' Latin

slogan *Libertas quae sera tamen* (Freedom even if late), and their ideals did not die, and Tiradentes is by his own right the martyr of Brazil's independence. Yet, the country's journey towards liberation was made with the efforts of other heroes, among them several women from different walks of life who bravely confronted the Portuguese, like Quitéria, and also the nun, Joana Angélica,³ another forgotten female fighter against Portuguese rule.

Following a well-established pattern of almost complete disregard for the role of women during the independence movement, references to Joana Angélica seldom appear in Brazil's history books.⁴ More recently, however, a group of intellectuals from Bahia have embarked on a mission to rescue that heroic religious woman from anonymity, through the publication of sketches of her life, patriotism and sacrifice (Haroldo 2004). Living in absolute seclusion, Joana Angélica, at 61, was the abbess of *Convento da Lapa*, one of the largest monasteries in Salvador, Bahia. As the movement for independence was gaining strength in Brazil, at the same time that in the Bahia province the Portuguese were unwilling to concede, Joana Angélica, a cloistered nun, was impeded to join the society's struggles for the country's liberation. She fought, nevertheless, giving her life for the cause. With the tension rising in Salvador, amid combats between the nationalist and the colonialist armies, Joana Angélica resisted, unarmed and alone until February 19, 1822 when a group of Portuguese - military and civilians - invaded the convent. She tried to persuade the intruders to leave, and cried: "Retreat barbarians. Respect the house of God. Nobody will occupy the convent, unless they go over my dead body" (Haroldo 2004, 2). She was fatally stabbed on the spot.

The Lower Status of Women in Colonial Societies

The actions of Quitéria and Angélica are not only relevant because of their bravery and patriotism, but also for their defiant attitude against the social norms that by and large excluded women from political life. In colonial Brazil (and in fact until the first half of the 20th century) women were not considered full citizens because their political rights were denied, as they were in the rest of Latin America under Spanish rule.⁵ Gender inequality throughout the region was pervasive. As explained by Socolow (2000, 178), in colonial Latin America, "men were supposed to be intelligent, active, independent; women were usually portrayed as silly, passive, dependent creatures...Men could freely come and go, but women's physical movement was closely scrutinized...Colonial Latin American women lived in a patriarchal society, a world in which men occupied positions of authority and

power...Men also defined acceptable female conduct, and controlled the justice system, which punished those who overstepped the established boundaries of acceptable behavior.”

Although gender inequality was widespread, there is also evidence that “the culture of patriarchy was never as absolute in reality as it was in theory” (Socolow 2000, 178). Challenging the machismo of those times, women did find ways to participate in public of life. In addition, although the Church, in alliance with the State, played a critical role in keeping women in a subordinate position, religion, ironically, provided a refuge for women willing to escape the traps of male domination. Those who embraced the monastic life were liberated from arranged marriages, and paternal control. In seclusion they were able to preserve their individuality, devoting their time to meaningful tasks, like Joana Angélica, who in the monastery had the mission of educating other women. Intellectual development was another possibility, as demonstrated, undoubtedly, by sor Juana Inés de La Cruz.⁶

In Brazil, the clamor for independence provided some venues for women to vent their political views. In a compilation of press materials and pamphlets that circulated in some Brazilian cities immediately before and after the proclamation of the independence, (Neves 2002) brings the letters of a group of women who identified themselves as “liberal matrons” (*matronas liberais*). Published by a newspaper from the province of Pernambuco (now a state), the letters revealed that those Brazilian women were not indifferent to the profound changes taking place in the country. In the letters they observe that “they represent half of the human society”, manifesting their willingness to “take up arms, together with our husbands, fathers, sons and brothers and launch a bloody war against the followers of the heinous despotism” (Neves 2002, 59).

Equally patriotic and heroic, decided to make a difference in her country and also in her life, Quitéria overcame gender stereotypes and entrenched social norms by becoming a soldier in a battalion that defeated one of the staunchest remaining colonialist strongholds. Her trajectory from a secluded life on a farm to the condition of a full combatant in a male-dominated environment corroborates the claim that despite the lower status, some Latin American women, during the colonization, were capable to participate in politics and public affairs, thus making a contribution to women’s empowerment. Maria Quitéria, herself, made clear that her cross-dressing and enlistment in the armed forces were motivated by more than mere patriotism when she wrote: “a secret voice whispers to me that I also fight for myself. I am fighting, yes, to liberate Maria Quitéria de Jesus Medeiros from the paternal tyranny, from the painful domestic chores, from

an unsavory life. Oh, I fight with water over my breasts for the liberation of women, for the new woman that will emerge" (Pólvora 2004, 2).

From the backwoods to the battlefields

Quitéria was born in 1792, the same year that Tiradentes died for the independence of Brazil. Her birthplace, the rural village São José of Itapororocas, in the state of Bahia, was latter renamed Maria Quitéria and today is a district of the city of Feira de Santana (Lima 1976; Reis Júnior 1953, Milton 1979). In the 18th and 19th centuries, the most important commercial center in the region was the town of Cachoeira, nowadays a tourist center for its colonial architecture (and in this regard surpassed only by the capital of Bahia, the city of Salvador). Historical accounts depict Cachoeira as one of the most prosperous cities of colonial Brazil, with an economy based on sugar cane and tobacco plantations. The city's prosperity is what may explain why the Portuguese community there was unwilling to accept the proclamation of independence, as the radical political change would affect the power, resources, and businesses of the colonizers. Yet, there is no indication that the Portuguese parents of Maria Quitéria, who settled in Bahia as small landowners, supported the forces loyal to royal family in Lisbon. In fact, the existing literature suggests that her father was somewhat sympathetic, although never publicly, to idea of Brazil's liberation.

According to the few scholarly works dedicated to her life story (Lima 1976; Reis Júnior 1956),⁷ at the age of 10, Maria Quitéria suffered a major loss, the death of her mother. Feeling deeply lonely, she found solace only in nature by spending her time riding horses, watching birds, and playing in the woods of her father's property. She and her two younger siblings received only a rudimentary education, and she grew up as a typical female in those times, confined to the house and in charge of domestic chores. Through her adolescence and as young adult, Maria Quitéria saw her father remarry twice, acquired several half-siblings, and never developed a very close relationship with her stepmothers. Around 1810, by decision of her father, the family moved to a nearby farm, Serra da Agulha, which Reis Júnior (1953) describes as a bucolic environment. There, Quitéria became still more attached to nature, "where she found a more cordial company that she had in her home" (Lima 1976, 36). At the age of 20, she was already a hunter and a skilled shooter, without losing her femininity. Maria Graham (1824, 292-294), a 19th century English writer who met Quitéria, observed that Maria's features, "especially eyes and forehead, have the strongest characteristics of Indians. She is illiterate, but clever. Her understanding is quick, and her perceptions keen. I think, with education, she might have

been a remarkable person. She is not particularly masculine in her appearance, and her manners are gentle and cheerful."

In the plenitude of her life, at the age of 30, Maria Quitéria, fell in love. Her suitor was Gabriel Pereira de Brito, a cowboy without a permanent job, and a resident of the same region. Quitéria's father repudiated the relationship, alleging that his eldest child deserved a better partner, that is, someone of a certain status (Lima 1976). While her father tried to persuade Quitéria to abandon marriage plans, political developments were in the end what led her to renounce love and make a decision that would change her life and impact her country forever. Living somewhat in isolation in a rural area in Bahia, far away from Rio de Janeiro, the busy capital of colonial Brazil, she heard with astonishment of the events that were unfolding down in the south where the pro-independence movement was gaining strength.

A mix of power ambition and concerns with his own fate led Pedro, the prince regent, to bow to the pressures of nationalists seeking the separation of Brazil from the Portuguese empire. Son of the king of Portugal, Pedro was the heir to the crown and was raised to take charge of his country of birth and its vast colonial holdings. Yet, Pedro, who was living in Brazil, realized that the clamor for liberation was contagious in times when independence wars were engulfing Latin America, causing devastating and irreversible losses to the Spanish rulers. Following the instruction of his closest adviser, José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva,⁸ Pedro broke ties with the royal family and on September 7, 1822, when visiting São Paulo, proclaimed the *Grito do Ipiranga*,⁹ which transformed Brazil into a constitutional monarchy separate from Portugal. A few months later, he was coronated as the first emperor of Latin's America largest country (Macaulay 1986; Freyre 1970). Although without major bloodshed, the independence was not a fait accompli as late colonial-revolts emerged in Bahia, defying the newly established regime.

While the elimination of pockets of resistance was a priority, the new government in Brazil faced the same problem that worried liberators in other Latin American countries and also, decades earlier, the continental army during the American revolution: the lack of men willing to join the fight against the colonial forces. Desperate for soldiers, in the same way that George Washington's army was,¹⁰ the emperor Pedro, now settled in his palace in Rio de Janeiro, dispatched envoys to Bahia in hopes of recruiting volunteers. Soon after the declaration of independence, one of those imperial envoys knocked on the door of Gonçalo, Quitéria's father. The request was unsuccessful and Gonçalo lamented that he did not have a male child old enough to be enlisted in the armed forces (Reis Junior 1953).

Quitéria heard the conversation, and according to Souza (1972, 124) the following dialogue took place between daughter and father:

-- It is true that you do not have a son, my father, but remember that the women in Bahia handle firearms, and the practice of hunting is not as noble as the cause of the nation. I have my heart in flames; let me go in disguise to take arms in this so just war.

-- Women spin, weave and embroider, but never go to war.

Quitéria secretly developed a plan to enlist, yet had serious doubts that it would materialize. She realized that deception would be the only way to engage herself in the last battle for the consolidation of Brazil's independence. Quitéria contacted one of her half-sisters, Teresa, with whom she had always had a close and warm relationship. Quitéria asked for some clothes of her brother-in-law, José, and Teresa agreed. (Reis Júnior 1953; Lima 1976; Souza 1972; Graham 1824, Milton 1979). For both sisters, the challenge was to keep the plan secret, and they were obviously anxious given the social norms and gender constraints of the times, in addition to prejudices attached to cross-dressing. Controlled by men, women were expected to obey their fathers, husbands, and brothers; female work outside the house was allowed only in exceptional circumstances; a woman traveling alone was highly suspicious, and the idea of a female soldier was unthinkable. Yet, determined to go ahead, Quitéria cut her hair short and dressed in José's attire. Riding a horse, she went to Cachoeira and looked for the officer in command of a regiment. There she presented herself only by last name, Medeiros, which was her brother-in-law's surname (Reis Júnior 1953; Lima 1976; Souza 1972).

In mid-September 1822, dressed as a man, Quitéria – by now soldier Medeiros – enlisted in the Battalion of the Emperor's Volunteers, later renamed the *Periquitos* (Parakeets) for their green uniforms and feathered helmets. The situation was tense in Cachoeira, where the colonialists were up in arms and ready to shoot. Concerned with the whereabouts of the disappeared Quitéria, her father looked for her, and Teresa could not hide what had happened to her sister. Gonçalo talked to the military commanders in Cachoeira, but was unable to convince Quitéria to return home. Angry, he said good-bye, disavowing her by saying "I am not your father anymore" (Lima 1976, 117).

Her true identity had been revealed, but the presence of a woman in the regiment apparently did not bother the soldiers. The commander, Major Antonio Silva Castro, was in fact sympathetic to her, stressing that in a

moment of need, gender was not important (Lima 1976, 116). For Quitéria, the disclosure was a relief that made her free. According to Pólvora (2004), she did not have to deceive any more; carrying a sword, she took her feminine condition to the battlefield, against the colonialist forces headed by General Madeira de Melo, who had the full support of the Portuguese crown.

Her baptism of fire took place in October 1822 in the battle of Pirajá, in the area of Salvador, the state capital. There the nationalist troops, under the responsibility of General Pedro Labatut, faced the Portuguese soldiers, who outnumbered the Brazilians. Since her condition was already known, the soldier Medeiros went to the battlefield with a slightly different uniform: she added a small skirt to it, in a Scottish style. She experienced a mix of patriotic feeling, pain, and fear when, for the first time, she shot and killed a Portuguese soldier in one of the numerous skirmishes in Pirajá, where the shootings and ambushes lasted for weeks. In the end, the Brazilian army forced the retreat of the colonialists, but the orders coming from Portugal were clear: the fight must continue.

In January 1823, Itapoã, a lovely beach near Salvador, was transformed into a bloody battlefield where the soldier Medeiros ascended to the status of "heroine of the Independence." With the death of Lieutenant Aguiar, the leader of her unit, Quitéria took command of the troops. Sword in hand, she led her soldiers to the trenches of the enemies who, in the end, were defeated. Humiliated, some of them were made prisoners by the orders of Quitéria, who alone took them to the commander of her battalion. According to Lima (p. 140) "...those strong prisoners, who were warriors, used to the chaos of combat, and who fought bravely, heard then a soft voice and they looked at each other. The voice of a woman! Looking down, submissive, and carrying the wounded, [the prisoners] marched quietly, crestfallen, sad and humiliated."

For her heroism, the council of the interim government in March 1823 granted her a promotion from soldier to cadet. Although there is not a specific document to corroborate it, there is some reason to believe that in same month, Quitéria married one of her colleagues, the soldier João José Luiz, in an act celebrated inside a garrison by the Benedictine monk José S. Bento Damázio.¹¹ Lima (p. 142) observes, "their honeymoon was naturally amid combat, under the roar of heavy guns, the shootings, the noise of the soldiery. And life was going on in an agitated atmosphere of military maneuvers, roll calls, military barracks, marches, confrontations, attacks, retreats, advances and victories."

A few days after marrying the soldier Medeiros in early April was again on the front lines, in one of her proudest moments both as a woman and soldier: she received the command of a female battalion in the battle on

the banks of the river Paraguaçu, from which a Portuguese gunboat had attacked the town of Cachoeira. By now, she had followers and they were women, who in military uniform obeyed the orders of their leader (Milton 1979). All women together headed to the river to face the enemy, always following the soldier Medeiros, who was shouting "to the attack, to the attack." Caught by surprise, the Portuguese soldiers fled. Quitéria, as narrated by Pólvora (2004, 1), described the confrontation on the banks of Paraguaçu:

I would like to be naked in the river if I were on the ranch of my father. However, I am here among men...and we are forced to bathe in the Paraguaçu. The Portuguese in a gunboat attacked Cachoeira, and then a group of Periquitos, among them myself and five or six women, went to the river, in pantaloons, boots and gaiters...and a silent bayonet. We wanted the enemies to come close to the margins. And they came, screaming. They brought weapons...some of them in their teeth. The clash took place on a sandbank, with water to our waists. I felt when the cold water touched my legs, my thighs, spreading over the groin. It was an unpleasant cold touch. In the heat of the fight, it became warm. And for a moment, I had water on my breasts. I felt the hardening of my nipples under the tunic. I thought of my ranch, the hammock in which I used to rest. There everything was warm, in an invitation to sleep. Here, we fight for life, for our Cachoeira, our homeland. My bayonet tears the guts of a Portuguese man who does not want to recognize the independence of Brazil that was declared there in the South, by the emperor Pedro.

In the end, the events on the river Paraguaçu with a string of Brazilian military successes precipitated the fall of the colonialist forces. In May, the Portuguese general, Madeira de Melo, observed with dismay that his troops were in a dire situation. They were besieged in Salvador, facing new nationalist regiments sent by the emperor Pedro. A report from *Hora do Povo*, a local newspaper, describes that on the evening of July 1, 1823, Madeira de Melo and his 10,000 subordinates capitulated, left the trenches, and started the arrangements for a long voyage back to Portugal aboard 84 vessels.

While the escape of the enemy outraged the Brazilians, it represented at the same time the victory long awaited by many: the liberation had arrived. With the events in Bahia, other smaller colonial rebellions in the north almost immediately vanished. Brazil was finally a free

country and on July 2, the Brazilian forces and with them the soldier Medeiros made a triumphal parade in Salvador. About three weeks later on July 24, the supreme commander of the Brazilian military, called at that time the *Exército Pacificador* (Pacificatory Army) produced a document recognizing the participation of Maria Quitéria in risky military operations and highlighting her bravery and intrepidity (Milton 1979, 227). Soon after she joined a group of combatants who went to Rio de Janeiro to commemorate the independence in the imperial palace. Dressed in her peculiar military uniform with the highly visible skirt, Quitéria arrived in what was then the nation's capital on August 17, as reported by the *Diário do Rio de Janeiro*, in its edition of August 19, 1823.¹² There she met the English writer Maria Graham, who for some time worked as a tutor in the royal palace. Although it was a relatively brief meeting, it is of historical relevance as Graham seems to be the first who recorded and printed the story and appearance of Maria Quitéria. According to Graham (1824, 294):

Today I received the visit of Maria de Jesus, the young woman who has lately distinguished herself in the war of the Reconque.¹³ Her dress is that of a soldier of one of the Emperor's battalions, with the addition of a tartan kilt, which she told me she had adopted from a picture representing a highlander, as the most feminine military dress. Maria told me several particulars concerning the country, and more concerning her adventures. She is smart...and she has not contracted any thing coarse or vulgar in her camp life, and I believe that no imputation has even been substantiated against her modesty. One thing is certain, that her sex never was known until her father applied to her commanding officer to seek her. There is nothing peculiar in her manners at the table, excepting that she eats farinha with her eggs at the breakfast and her fish at the dinner, instead of bread, and smokes a cigar after each meal; but she is very temperate.¹⁴

On August 20, Quitéria met the emperor Pedro and the empress Leopoldina, in a proud moment for that provincial woman who had left a life in the backwoods to become a critical figure in the country's history. In the royal quarters, Quitéria was honored by the emperor, who declared that "in order to grant Mrs. Maria Quitéria de Jesus a distinction for the military services she provided with determination, in a rare feat among those of her sex, for the cause of the independence, in the proud restoration of the capital of Bahia, I will authorize her the use of the Knight's Ensign of the Imperial Order."¹⁵

Quitéria was moved and stunned. Pólvora (2004, 4-5) narrates her own account of the meeting:

I never thought I would one day put my feet in a palace. Look at me, raised barefoot, with loose hairs in the wind. What did they do to me? Better, what did I do with my life? I never thought that by taking arms and waging that war in the Recôncavo, I would end up here, in this royal reception. The emperor is coming...A distinguished gentleman, proud and handsome. Angry with his Portuguese compatriots, on his horse he proclaimed the independence. It was easy here in Rio de Janeiro and also in São Paulo because there was a José Bonifácio, and there were others who favored the Independence. It seems to be good to live here, in luxury, but I prefer my bushes, the countryside of my land. I feel dizzy... Hold Quitéria, I say to myself... after all, aren't you a soldier? The emperor is in front of me, and I want to touch his black beard, which is like silk. But my hands are callous. The emperor gives me a medal, another guy reads a piece of paper announcing that I will receive a stipend for life.¹⁶ The nation is thankful, but I was not thinking about compensation. The emperor's fingers touch my neck, rub my breasts. Oh, I am dying of shame. Who would say that Quitéria, a damsel raised in the countryside in the company of animals, would be the center of the attention in this palace in São Cristóvão? The ladies in long dresses dragging on the floor look at me...My face and ears are burning. Will I have a nervous attack in public?

Pólvora also recounts the dialogue between Quitéria and the emperor (p.8):

- Congratulations, madam. You are a heroine. The nation will be forever indebted.
- I just complied with my citizen's duty.
- May I be of any other assistance, madam?
- I would like to ask you a favor, a huge favor...
- Tell me.
- I would like that you talk to my father, and ask for his pardon on my behalf.
- But for what reason?
- Because I did not obey him, I fled home to go to the war.
- You are forgiven. And I will let you father know that I forgave you.

Before she left Rio, Quitéria received from the government two monthly salaries in advance, as part of a life stipend granted for her services (Ministério 1823).¹⁷ In addition, after the joyful days in the imperial capital, the soldier Medeiros started a long journey back to Bahia. At this point, the history becomes murky regarding the fate of Quitéria's husband, João José. The indications are that she went to Rio de Janeiro without him, and then returned alone to the ranch of her father, in Serra da Agulha. Either as a widow or simply an estranged wife, Quitéria in 1825 married her sweetheart, Gabriel Pereira Brito, the cowboy who many years earlier had been repudiated by her father (Pólvora 2004, 8). Yet, this time, Gonçalo consented to the marriage and provided a dowry, giving the couple money, a slave, two horses, and a heifer, according to his will registered in the notary of Feira de Santana, Bahia. (Lima 1976, 204). She left her father's house to settle nearby with her second husband. Their union generated a child, a daughter who received the name Luiza Maria da Conceição.

The days of heroism and fame very soon faded for Quitéria, who immersed herself in an anonymous life, isolated from her former soldier colleagues, leaving no known memoir, and basically forgotten, in an neglect deeply lamented by Francisco Lima, who wrote (p. 189-190):

Life has these kinds of contrasts. Everything would fade and her deeds, very soon, would fall into oblivion. The great heroes, like the great inventors and the great artists, are quickly forgotten. People are voracious in matters of novelty. But everything that has passed is ancient. Only the present is what matters, and sometimes the future. Until today the important dates are only commemorated on a single day. People are immensely ungrateful. It is not surprising, therefore, that after the enthusiastic moments with the celebrations of the victory over the Portuguese forces, the Brazilians would forget their heroes. In 1834 her father died, and apparently she also lost Gabriel, her second husband.

Living with her daughter with very scarce resources and suffering from a progressive blindness, Quitéria that year initiated a new battle, one that she never would win: she tried, unsuccessfully, for almost two decades to get her part of the estate of her father, but was never able to overcome the morose Brazilian bureaucracy and the stubbornness and greed of her stepmother, who refused to share the property with Gonçalo's heirs. Quitéria submitted numerous petitions to the courts in order to protect her rights. No judge paid attention to her plight. Defeated and tired, Quitéria moved to

Salvador, the capital of Bahia, where she died in August 1853. The cause was a liver infection, according to the local obituary registry. Only 10 years later, the estate of her father would be resolved when Quitéria's daughter received her part of the inheritance.¹⁸

Defying the Notion of Masculine Primacy: A Final Thought

In retrospect, the bravery demonstrated by Maria Quitéria on the battlefields of Bahia was as remarkable as her courage in defying the social norms of her times. In this sense, her trajectory is similar to other women whose devotion to a larger cause was accompanied by a strong determination to escape the trappings of male domination, social discrimination, and the limited roles assigned to women in patriarchal societies. In an acclaimed biography, Alfred Young (2004) recounts, for instance, the life of Deborah Sampson,¹⁹ who, in the 18th century, also resorted to deception and impersonation to enlist in George Washington's army, where she spent 17 months as soldier Robert Shurtliff. In a critical review of Young's work, Alan Taylor (2004, 35) observes that Sampson "was an exception in a society that expected females to live either with father or husband...she ran away from a stultifying small town in search of the wider options enjoyed by young men with mobility."

Given the strong gender hierarchy of colonial times, when the prevailing ideology was that men were superior to women, it is intriguing that when the true identities of Quitéria and Sampson, were disclosed, they were not repudiated by their bosses, and their governments provided them with life stipends. One possible explanation for the leniency towards Quitéria and Sampson may be found in the nuanced character of colonial societies where the gender hierarchy was sometimes subverted. As stressed by Socolow (2000, 1978), during the colonial period "there was always some room for negotiation, for protecting a woman who had failed to adhere to the rules of the game." The fact that their defiance and impersonation met sympathetic ears in a male-dominated world has to do less with the absence of bigotry, and more with the political interests of those with whom those women were associated. Because they fought with determination, and for their exemplary service, they were rewarded. Sampson, who fought the British, was never punished by her contemporary male colleagues in the United States. In the newly independent Brazil, Quitéria was honored, in person, by the country's emperor. One only can guess what could have happened to those women had they dressed as men exclusively to show their contempt for gender roles, or worse, just to display a particular sexual orientation, that is, homosexuality.²⁰

Nevertheless, even if the State and liberation armies acted according to convenience, this does not obviously obfuscate the unique value of those women. Valiant, smart, and aware of the context in which they were living, they had a vision of what they wanted for their lives and their countries. They were the pioneers who challenged the entrenched social codes that stressed the supremacy of men in both private and public life. Why did they escape humiliation and punishment? Certainly because of their outstanding service and because they were in the right place, at the right time. Borrowing an insight from Taylor (2004), those women were not chastised because their bosses, who were victorious against the enemy, also felt great, unselfish, forgiving, and tolerant toward those who had fought heroically.

Among the three female personalities reviewed in this article, Joana Angélica was the greatest victim, as her life was tragically abbreviated by a soldier's bayonet. Quitéria, after her glorious, albeit brief, days as the Heroine of the Independence, had a melancholic end. Sampson, undoubtedly, was the most successful. According to Taylor (2004), in 1797, she made arrangements with a scholar to write her story at a time when biographies of women were scarce. Although it was not common or expected for American women to call attention to themselves, Sampson went to New York City on a book tour and between 1801 and 1802 she was fully engaged on the lecture circuit, despite warnings against self-promotion. By publicizing her life story, she got recognition and a congressional pension. She also asked for a greater compensation, alleging that she had been partially disabled by the wounds sustained in combat, and in the end the Congress granted her a lump sum of \$960. This, Taylor says (p.37), was at that time "enough to buy a small farm."

Maria Quitéria was unable to protect her interests and unwittingly consumed her life in a web of red tape that she never could disentangle, thus preventing her from receiving the sum to which she was legally entitled, according to her father's will. Incapable of increasing her meager income, sick and poor, she died alone, and there is even some dispute regarding the actual location of her burial site (Pólvora 2004).²¹ It was a depressing end for someone who treaded uncharted waters to liberate her country and herself. Perhaps the greatest contribution of Quitéria's trajectory for present-day scholarship is that it shows how women, despite discrimination and patriarchal oppression, are capable of developing what they believe are their true roles in society, both privately and publicly. Additionally, a close focus on her accomplishments also enhances the historiography of Brazil in at least two ways: first by showing that Brazil's transition from a colony to the status of an independent nation, although a largely peaceful process, still faced some critical and tempestuous moments, as the late-colonial revolts

demonstrate; second, that the country's political struggles for liberation were made by many heroes, regardless of their gender.

Notes

¹ She was born in Bahia, Brazil, in 1792 and died in the same state in 1853.

² Maria Quitéria de Jesus is *Patrono do Quadro Complementar de Oficiais do Exército Brasileiro* (Patron of the Auxiliary Body of Officials of the Brazilian Army). Presidential Decree, June 28, 1996.

³ Born in 1761 in Bahia; died in 1822.

⁴ My own archival research identified only two titles in the collection of the Biblioteca Nacional in Rio de Janeiro. See Baggio (1976) and Souza (1972). Both books are out of print.

⁵ Ecuador was the first Latin American country to recognize women's political rights in 1929; in Mexico, women earned the right to vote in 1953. See Jaquette (1997). In Brazil and Costa Rica the right to vote was granted to women in 1934; Dominican Republic, in 1942; Guatemala, 1945, and Argentina in 1947. See Amador (2003).

⁶ Born in Mexico in 1651; died in 1695. Poet, scholar and nun, and an early feminist. In her 1691 poem *La Respuesta* (The Answer) she defends women's right to knowledge.

⁷ These are comprehensive biographies. Other authors focus only on her participation in the armed forces. See for example, Souza (1972) and Milton (1979).

⁸ Also known as the Patriarch of the Independence. A Brazilian statesman born in 1763 in the city of Santos; he graduated in Law and Natural Philosophy from the University of Coimbra, Portugal. In Brazil, he served as counselor of the Prince Regent and persuaded him to declare the country's independence. He died in 1838 in Rio de Janeiro (Rupert 2003).

⁹ Literally the "Cry of Ipiranga," when Pedro shouted *Independência ou Morte!* (Independence or Death). Pedro issued the *Grito* on the banks of the creek Ipiranga, in São Paulo, on September 7, 1822.

¹⁰ See Taylor (2004) and Young (2004).

¹¹ There is no printed record of her marriage. Yet both Lima (1976) and Reis Júnior (1953) believe that the union between Quitéria and João José took place on March 28, 1823. The authors base their claim on the Ordinance Book from the provisional government of Cachoeira, in which an entry of March 31, 1823, asserts that a military uniform was handed to the soldier João José Luiz and "also to his wife, Maria Quitéria, a pantaloon and a pair of boots" (as cited by Reis Júnior, p. 48).

¹² As cited by Lima (1976), p. 178.

¹³ Reference to *Recôncavo Bahiano*, a region of about 5,000 square miles surrounding Salvador, the capital of Bahia.

¹⁴ The meeting took place on August 29. Also thanks to Graham, subsequent generations know how Quitéria was physically, her looks, her face, and the shape of her body. Graham asked a draftsman, Augustus Earl, to draw a picture of the female soldier in her military uniform. The pencil illustration appears in Graham's book and has been reproduced in several Brazilian books. The same illustration served as the model for the Brazilian artist, Presciliano Silva, who painted Quitéria in oil and canvas, the only known portrait of the Heroine of the Independence of Brazil. The painting was inaugurated in July 2, 1933, and displayed in the hall of Casa da Bahia, a cultural center (Souza 1972).

- ¹⁵ Emperor's decree, Brazil's National Archives, as cited by Lima (1976, 184).
- ¹⁶ Milton (1979, 281) confirms that on August 20 1823, the emperor Pedro agreed with the monthly salary for Maria Quitéria.
- ¹⁷ Ordinance of the Ministry of War, Brazil's National Archives, as cited by Lima (1976, 189).
- ¹⁸ Based on Lima's archival research.
- ¹⁹ Sampson was born in 1760 in Massachusetts. She died in 1827.
- ²⁰ Some gay groups in Brazil question the gender orientation of Maria Quitéria de Jesus, associating her to "the right to be a transvestite."
- ²¹ Lima (1976, 230) claims that Quitéria was interred in a church cemetery in Salvador, Bahia, according to the records of the vicar Joaquim Cajoeiro de Campos. Yet Pólvara (2004, 6) argues that her precise burial place is unknown.

References Cited

- Amador, Rubén. 2003. 50 Anos del Voto Femenino en México. *Sepiensa*.
<www.sepiensa.org.mx/contenidos/voto/voto1.html>
- Freyre, Gilberto. 1970. *Order and Progress: Brazil From Monarchy to Republic*. New York: Alfred Knopf.
- Haroldo, Nelson. 2004. De Joana `as Duas Marias. *O Bizú de Salvador*. Ano 1, n. 58, Sep 9, 2004, Salvador
<www.portalcen.org/revistas/bizu/008.htm>.
- Graham, Maria D. (Lady Maria Calcott). 1824. *Journal of a Voyage to Brazil and Residence There During Part of the Years 1821, 1822, 1823*. London: Longman.
- Jaquette, Jane S. 1997. Women in Power: From Tokenism to Critical Mass. *Foreign Policy*, Fall/97, n. 108: 23-38.
- Lima, João Francisco. 1976. *A Incrível Maria Quitéria*. São Paulo, Brazil: Nova Época Ed.
- Macaulay, N. 1986. Dom Pedro: *The Struggle for Liberty in Brazil and Portugal: 1798-1934*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Milton, Aristides A. 1979. *Ephemerides Cachoeiranas*. Salvador, Brazil: Universidade Federal da Bahia.
- Ministério da Guerra. 1823. *Portaria do Ministro da Guerra*. Rio de Janeiro: Arquivo Nacional.
- Neves, Lúcia Maria Bastos. 2002. Cidadania e Participação Política na Época da Independência do Brasil. *Cadernos Cedex* (Campinas, Brazil), v.22, n.58, Dezembro 2002: 47-64.
- Pólvara, Hélio. 2004. *Maria Quitéria: Heroína das Guerras pela Independência do Brasil*. Portugal: Vidas Lusófonas.
www.vidaslusofonas.pt/maria_quiteria.htm>.

- Reis Júnior, Pereira. 1953. *Maria Quitéria*. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: MEC.
- Rupert, Josh. 2003. *Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva, José*. Historical Text Archive. <www.historicaltextarchive.com/sections>.
- Sabsay, Fernando. 2003. *Protagonistas de América Latina*. Buenos Aires: Editorial El Ateneo.
- Socolow, Susan Migden. 2000. *The Women of Colonial Latin America*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Soriano Neto, Manoel. 2003. *Maria Quitéria de Jesus: A Patrono do Quadro Complementar de Oficiais do Exército (Algumas Considerações)*. Brazil: Centro de Documentação do Exército. <www.sgex.eb.mil.br/cdocex/CDocEx/Quiteria.html>.
- Souza, Bernardo José. 1972. *Heroínas Bahianas*. 2nd. ed. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: Ed. Paralelo.
- Taylor, Alan. 2004. "Transformer". *The New Republic*. June 21 2004: 32-37.
- Young, Alfred F. 2004. *Masquerade: The Life and Times of Deborah Sampson, Continental Soldier*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

THE POLITICS AND SEMIOTICS OF ARGENTINE POSTAGE STAMPS

By Jack Child
American University



Figure 1: a. "Con fronteras"

b. "Sin fronteras"

The stamp on the left (figure 1a) led to a number of diplomatic protests because of the placement of many of the borders. The countries protesting were Chile (the Patagonian and Tierra del Fuego frontier), Peru (the border with Ecuador), and Great Britain (the Malvinas/Falklands). To placate these countries, with the exception of Great Britain, the map was redrawn (figure 1b). Subsequently, during the Perón years, Argentina's Antarctic claim was added.

As these two illustrations suggest, postage stamps can offer new perspectives on a country such as Argentina. This MACLAS essay argues that applying the tools of semiotics to postage stamps as an expression of a nation's culture can further contribute to a greater understanding of that nation. Argentina is an especially appropriate country for this approach since it has a rich vein of postage stamps, with an equally rich production of stamps with political and international themes.¹

Semiotics is the branch of linguistics that studies signs, their meaning, and the messages they convey. It is especially significant in the analysis of speech, folklore, multimedia communication, advertising, and propaganda. It can also be applied to other fields of human cultural activity including, as argued here, postage stamps, which can convey a number of messages in a very confined space. The father of semiotics, Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) created a complex and useful typology of signs, which at its simplest level, classified a sign as:

- An index, which points to something and takes the observer there. The classic example is smoke, which takes one to the fire that caused it. Another common example is the written or printed word (typography).
- An icon, which is a graphic representation of an object, and could be a picture, photograph, or design. The term "icon" also suggests widespread popular acceptance and instant recognition of the link between sign and object. Example: Elvis Presley is an icon of American music.
- A symbol, a conventionally accepted sign which stands for something else. For example, the sign "\$" stands for the monetary unit.

From a semiotic perspective, Argentine stamps offer an illustrative example of the problems and advantages of using typography as a semiotic index. The problem is the official name of the country ("República Argentina"), and the fact that all Argentine stamps carry this name as a semiotic index taking the viewer to the country of origin. Argentina, as is the case with the other Latin American countries, has not been able to come up with an icon or symbol, which can also serve the indexing function identifying the country. Great Britain has done this with the profile of the queen, and France with the image of Marianne. These images have permitted Great Britain and France to dispense with the name of their country on the stamp, France on an occasional basis, and Great Britain on a consistent and permanent one. Since Argentina has not achieved this, its postal administration must put the full name of the country on the stamps, thus occupying valuable space, which could be used for iconic or symbolic purposes.

Argentine stamps have several examples of the use of a graphic as icon. One is the image of Independence hero General José de San Martín, whose face is familiar to every Argentine (and many Latin Americans), and who stands as an icon of Argentine values and nationhood. A second iconic

graphic, albeit a political one, is the portrait of Evita Perón. After her death, the only stamps that could be used in Argentina were the ones showing her portrait, and initially it was not felt necessary to put her name on the stamps.²

As of late 2000, Argentina had produced a grand total of 3,047 different postage stamps in several different categories (regular mail, air mail, semipostal surtax issues, and stamps for official government correspondence).³ This is in addition to the early (1858-1878) postage stamps issued by several provinces, including Corrientes, Córdoba, and Buenos Aires. Many of these 3,047 stamps carry identical themes, and frequently use the same graphic with a different monetary value or color variation. A careful examination of the standard Scott Postage Stamp Catalog, and the author's personal collection, yielded a total of 1576 different types between 1858 and 2000.

Another perspective on Argentine postage stamps can be gained from the number of new stamps issued yearly, and by decade. In some of the early 19th Century years, no new designs were introduced, and there are many long-lasting definitive series, which reflect both financial stability (i.e., no or low inflation) as well as a lack of interest in using new postage stamps to promote national goals. This situation changes with the 1910 Centennial of Independence commemorative series, and there is a slow rise in the number of new issues after that. In 1935 a new and long lasting, definitive series produced 28 new designs that were in use until 1951. The Perón years (1943-1955) saw a sharp rise in the number of new issues, as well as their political messages. In the decades since the Perón years, there have been a steady number of new designs each year, to the point where at present questions can be raised as to the postal need for so many new stamps.

The "Classical Period," 1858-1892

We turn now to an analysis of Argentine stamps as they evolved over time. The first period is the so-called "Classical" one between the first stamps (1856) and the first commemorative ones (1892). The earliest Argentine stamps were issued by the separate provinces of Corrientes (1856-78), Córdoba (1859-62), and Buenos Aires (1858-59). The mere existence of these provincial stamps reflects the reality that Argentina was hardly a single organized country in that period, but rather a loose federation of some very independent provinces. There is a charming story surrounding the preparation of the Corrientes 1856 stamp: that it was designed and engraved by a baker's delivery boy, Matias Pipet, who had served as an

apprentice to a French engraver before arriving in Corrientes. Since no one in the Corrientes provincial government had any experience preparing stamps, the boy was asked to undertake the task, and he simply copied the stamp he knew best, an early French stamp bearing the head of the Roman goddess of agriculture, Ceres.⁴ The stamps referred to in the following pages are identified by their number in the Argentine section of the most widely used reference, the Scott Standard Catalog of Postage Stamps.

The first stamp of Argentina as a nation was a rather crude lithographed seal of the Confederation (Scott #1 to 4, figure 2), followed in 1862 by the seal of the Argentine Republic (#5 to 7). From 1864 to the first commemorative in 1892 a total of 24 different designs were issued. The majority of these stamp designs were small portraits of famous men, principally of the Independence period (figure 3). The stamps do not identify these heroes of independence, so they would have meant little to anyone who was not familiar with Argentine history. Bushnell has analyzed the "próceres" appearing on these stamps, and concludes that they were primarily of the "liberal" current in Argentine political history, reflecting the principal trend after the fall of the dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas in 1852.



Figure 2. Confederation Seal (1858)



Figure 3. Bernardino Rivadavia

The dominant figure was "the greatest of all the founders of Argentine liberalism, Bernardino Rivadavia..."⁵

One locally used postage stamp from this period bears mentioning because it shows Argentina's lack of national consolidation, especially in the distant reaches of the territory: the Tierra del Fuego local stamps. These were issued by a Rumanian mining engineer named Julius Popper. Who in 1891 prepared his own postage stamps to cover the cost of postage from the scattered mining camps of Tierra del Fuego to the closest points of the Argentine or Chilean postal system in Sandy Point (Punta Arenas), on the Strait of Magellan, or Ushuaia on the Beagle Channel. The Popper locals were not recognized by the central government in Argentina or Chile, which required that their own stamps be added once letters from the Popper mining camps entered their postal system. The stamp itself is well-designed, with mining tools, the "Tierra del Fuego" label, and a partially hidden letter "P" for Julius Popper.⁶

The First Commemoratives (1892-1910)

The 400th anniversary of Columbus' journey was the motive for much celebration in the Hemisphere, and in Argentine philately, it was the occasion for the first commemorative, a small but well-designed graphic of Columbus' ships with the dates 12 October 1492 and 12 October 1892 (#90 and 91).

In this period Argentina issued a stamp that could have become, in semiotic terms, an index, icon and/or symbol: the allegory of seated liberty, (#122 to 138), which was in service from 1899-1903. The design was simple: liberty rests her hand on the seal of Argentina and gazes out over the ocean to the rising sun. A second possible iconic stamp was the head of Liberty, with no allegorical symbolism, issued as a stamp for official mail (#O31-36). However, neither of these became generally accepted as a sufficiently strong symbol of the nation to become iconic.

More impressive was the high-quality 1910 Centennial commemorative set which in a series of 16 stamps lays out the events and main characters of the 1810 break with Spain under Napoleon. The 1810-1910 dates make the purpose of the stamp plain, and two of the stamps (#160 and 171) capture some of the more enduring images of Independence: the monument in the Plaza de Mayo, and the rainy morning of the 25th of May 1810 when demonstrators outside of the Cabildo in that same plaza launched the Independence movement. The presidential resolution of 1 July 1909 authorizing the issue gives an indication of the increasing awareness of the propaganda value of stamps: "...considering that

the postage stamp, besides serving as postage, will also permit the country's achievements to be known abroad..."⁷



Figure 4. Independence Commemorative, 1910

One unusual set of stamps in this period were the government fiscal stamps (not for postage) used to pay for the medical inspections of prostitutes in Rosario, which were issued by the "Servicio Sanitario" (public health service) in that city from 1893 to the 1920's. Prostitution was legal and controlled during this period, and government regulations required a monthly medical inspection, for which the woman had to purchase a fiscal stamp to cover costs. The stamp would be placed on her medical identification card, which she was required to show to customers, with a cancellation to indicate she was either healthy, infected, or "under observation" (i.e., inconclusive results). The fiscal stamps varied from one to

4.5 pesos, the higher values presumably for late exams or failure to get treatment.⁸

The 1910-1943 years: long-run definitives, commemoratives, and the appearance of politics.

In the years that followed the 1910 Independence stamps, there was a gradual increase in commemoratives, a number of long-running definitive stamps, and the initial blatant entry of politics into Argentine postage stamp design. The first long-running definitive theme was the 1911-1915 "labrador," or agriculture stamp, showing a farmer in his field, looking past the furrows to a rising sun on the horizon. The Post Office's decision to use this allegorical theme reflects the continuing search for a national icon: "Postage stamps should show, by means of an allegory, the outstanding characteristics of our national life."⁹



However, the laborer, like the seated liberty allegory before him, failed to be a sufficiently convincing icon. As a result, in 1916 the new postal director felt that it was impossible to find a single symbol, which could represent a complex nation with so many accomplishments in so many fields. He chose instead to use the figure of San Martín as the one man who best represented Argentine ideals,¹⁰ and this definitive theme in various forms was used until 1933 (figure 5).

Figure 5. San Martín definitive (1916-1933)

Commemoratives were numerous in this period. The 9 July 1816 Declaration of Independence in Tucumán was duly celebrated, although not to the extent of the 1910 Independence commemoration. "Hispanidad" (the glorification of things Spanish) was on the rise, and in 1929, the 437th anniversary of Columbus' voyage was celebrated with a three-stamp set

honoring Spain. The decree authorizing the stamp was appropriately hyperbolic: "Considering ... that the discovery of America is the most transcendental event that humanity has carried out throughout all time... and considering that it was Spain the discoverer and conqueror which poured into this enigmatic and magnificent continent the bravery of its warriors, the fearlessness of its explorers, the faith of its priests, the perceptions of its geniuses, the work of its artisans..."¹¹

International relations themes also emerged. The 1928 centennial of peace between the United Provinces of the River Plate and the Empire of Brazil was noted (#369-370), as was the visit of Brazilian President Getulio Vargas in 1935. The two stamps issued at that time carried the iconic figure of Liberty with the crests of the two countries; a second stamp showed a handshake of peace and friendship set against both flags (#416-7). Argentine-Chilean relations had been strained over border issues from time to time, but the occasion of a Eucharistic Congress in Buenos Aires was celebrated with a stamp symbolizing fraternity and peace, and picturing the massive statue of the Christ of the Andes placed precisely on the Chilean-Argentine border at the Uspallata Pass, one of the highest crossing points of the Andes (#414).

The Eucharistic Congress was one of many international meetings held in Buenos Aires in this period. These included the 1932 International Refrigeration Congress for which a stamp was issued with a graphic showing a refrigeration compressor sitting on top of a globe; the stamps were rather crudely printed, leading a U.S. philatelic commentator to note: "Anyhow, Argentina, in the true commercial spirit, presents us with a hideous set of poorly lithographed stamps to tell us about it."¹² Esthetically more pleasing were the stamps for the Universal Postal Union Congress of 1939, which featured scenic views of Argentine national parks, as well as an allegory of "Argentina, land of promise" (#465). The Peace Conference which settled the 1936 Chaco War (Paraguay-Bolivia) in Buenos Aires was presided by Argentine Nobel Prize winner Carlos Saavedra Lamas, and was attended by Franklin D. Roosevelt, who thus became the first sitting U.S. President to ever visit South America. The commemorative stamp shows a shield of union and 21 flags representing the attending nations. However, to avoid protocol problems the designer deliberately omitted details of the flags so that they could not be identified.¹³

Probably the most significant set of stamps in this 1910-1943 period was the 1935 definitive series, which was in use until 1951. The significance derives not only from this very long period of active use, but also for the variety of themes and the full realization of economic, nationalistic and

political messages to be delivered by the postage stamps. In a November 1932 letter¹⁴ from the Postal Director to the Minister of Interior which discussed plans for the stamps, the following policy guidelines were expressed: the design of a postage stamp must have a determined purpose, be it patriotic, ideological, or commercial, but always with cultural and educational value to the people. Economic themes should be stressed because this would be free propaganda of unquestioned value, inasmuch as the postage stamp, circulating throughout all the countries of the world, will bring to mind the country of origin and its products and will thus awaken new markets. The same letter goes on to say that that the lower face values, which in general would be used for internal domestic mail (# 418-423), would carry nationalistic and patriotic themes while the higher values would feature economic themes. These economic-themed stamps presented a balanced and comprehensive portrayal of the country's agricultural wealth, and included a prize bull (#440), a laborer in his field similar to the 1911 issue (#441), a Merino ram (#442), sugar cane and an "ingenio" (#443), fruit (#147), wine grapes (#449) and cotton (#450). This series also included the infamous map stamps (figure 1), which caused diplomatic problems with Chile, Peru, and the United Kingdom (#445-446).



Figure 6: Stamp of the 1935 definitive issue

This period also saw the first direct insertion of politics into a postage stamp issue. The event was the 6 September 1930 coup, which removed the aging and unpopular Radical President Hipólito Yrigoyen

from office. The issuing decree of 30 September 1930 explains the reason for the stamp¹⁵: "This is the most beautiful example of the communion of ideals between the Army, the Navy and the Air Forces, joined with the people in their struggle to return full constitutional freedom to the country." The semiotic messages contained in the two stamp designs make clear the



Figure 7: The 1930 Revolutionary Issues

notion of a joint civilian-military revolt (figure 7): the first (#374-380) shows military and armed civilian revolutionaries standing side by side with an allegorical figure of Liberty in the background. The second design (#381-405) is larger in format and features a civilian flag-bearer in a dramatic pose in the foreground, next to a military drummer who leads a victory march of intermingled civilians and military. The line of the horizon is broken by a pattern of raised arms, bayonets, naval ship masts, and soaring aircraft. The stamps were prepared in haste, and were issued only three weeks after the coup; they contain numerous errors and irregularities.

The First Perón Era, 1943-1955

The years of the first Perón era witnessed dramatic changes in Argentine postage stamps. Although Perón did not assume presidential office until 4 June 1946, a discussion of this period begins with the military coup of 1943, which marks the start of his rise to power.

The changes in the Perón era were in part quantitative, since a full 26% of all the postage stamps up to that time (1858-1955) were issued in the 1943-1955 period. However, what was more significant about this era were the changes in stamp design, size, quality, and especially the semiotic messages in support of the Peronista government. An intriguing possible explanation for this change lies in the similarity between the Perón era stamps and many stamps of the Mussolini era in Italy. Perón was the Argentine military attaché in Rome from 1938 to 1940, studied the techniques of the Fascist movement, and professed admiration for Mussolini.¹⁶ Italian stamps of that period stressed the historical glories of Rome, the output of Italian industry and culture, and incorporated the symbols of fascism in almost all the designs, and these symbols became semiotic indices pointing to the Fascist government.¹⁷ Some of the design features of Italian stamps of this period appear in Argentine stamps of the Perón years, such as classical and historical themes, and the heavy use of Peronista symbols of work, agriculture, as well as the icons, which illustrated the Peronist movement's rise and consolidation of power. Italian cancellation markings in this period made heavy use of slogans, a feature that was also repeated in the Perón years in Argentina.¹⁸ Walter B.L. Bose, the dean of Argentine philatelic writers, notes that an Italian design team came to Argentina after World War II and was influential in the preparation of a number of important stamps in the Perón years.¹⁹ Perón himself admitted to U.S. philatelic writer Ernest Kehr that he had "an amateur's interest in stamp collecting,"²⁰ and discussed Argentine stamps with Kehr during one of his visits to Argentina.

The 1943 Coup and Revolution

Compared to the 1930 revolution that brought down Yrigoyen (and the stamps that celebrated its joint civilian-military nature), the 1943 coup was considerably more militaristic, rejecting significant civilian participation and showing the strong influence of the “Grupo de Oficiales Unidos” (GOU), in which Perón had played a leading role. The first stamp celebrating the new regime (1943, #508-11) was semiotically revealing: a national crest, the date (4 June 1943), and the GOU slogan “Honesty, Justice, Duty.” A first anniversary stamp uses the same national crest, but omits the slogan, leading critics to comment waggishly that the officers seem to have lost their original revolutionary values.²¹

One of the key moments in the early Perón years was the effort he organized as Secretary of Labor and Social Welfare to aid the victims of the devastating 15 January 1944 earthquake in the Andean province of San Juan. He met Eva Duarte at a benefit performance in support of the earthquake relief, and their powerful political partnership dates from that encounter. Philatelically, a postal cancellation was prepared (“Ayude a las víctimas de San Juan”), and a set of surtaxed stamps was issued to raise funds. Over the years, Argentina has made heavy use of surtaxed stamps, and the San Juan stamp was among the first. The basic stamp value was five centavos (the going postal rate for internal mail), but the surcharges were available in four denominations: +5 and +10 centavos, and +1 and +20 pesos. At the time the exchange rate was four pesos to the U.S. dollar, so the higher value represented a considerable sum of money. Despite their political and charitable significance, the stamps did not do well: a total of 3,600,000 were printed, but only about 278,000 were sold; the rest were destroyed. The 20-peso value had especially modest sales: of the 100,000 printed, less than 14,000 were sold.²²

The 1946 inaugural

Perón’s presidential inaugural on the 4th of June of 1946 was commemorated with an allegory showing Liberty in front of an Argentine flag and administering the oath of office to Perón, who is represented by only his right hand resting on the Constitution (#552, figure 8). This ingenious design device was used to get around the Argentine philatelic tradition (shared with the United States) of not placing the face of any living Argentine on a postage stamp. A first anniversary stamp features an allegory of justice, but no Perón hand.



Figure 8: Perón inaugural and 17th of October commemorative

The 17th of October "Loyalty Day"

A major landmark in the history of Peronism is the 17th of October 1945 "Loyalty Day" when massive demonstrations by Peronista workers in Buenos Aires forced the military to release Perón from jail, and launched him on a virtually unstoppable trajectory to the presidency. The set of stamps (#553 to 7, figure 8), issued on 17 October 1946 show an allegory of Argentina receiving acclaim and popular support from the masses of Peronista supporters, who include workers, professionals, women, children, and the elderly. Two years later the anniversary is noted by a commemorative (#581) showing Liberty surrounded by the symbols of Peronista progress, with a strong resemblance to Mussolini-era Italian stamps.

The focus on San Martín

The Perón administration made heavy use of the figure of Independence hero General José de San Martín, converting him into something of a semiotic symbol, which came to represent the Argentine nation at home and abroad.²³ Perón himself was often associated with and compared to San Martín by his followers.²⁴ Besides the definitive sets featuring San Martín (especially the 5 centavo red stamp which was by far the most commonly used postage stamp in this period), these years include a lavish and well-designed set of stamps honoring San Martín on his death centennial (1950, #587-593), which was proclaimed "the Year of the Liberator San Martín." The transfer of the remains of his parents to Argentina was also celebrated (#569-570), and several other issues featuring San Martín followed (#628-631; #642). Numerous cancellations in this period also honored San Martín, with slogans such as:²⁵ "America gives eternal homage to General San Martín;" "Glory to the Liberator General San Martín on the Centennial of his death;" "San Martín consolidated the liberty of America with his sword;" "San Martín's triumph in the Battle of Maipú determines the independence of Chile;" and "San Martín lives eternally in the Argentine people."

The Peronista Constitution of 1949 and the Perón stamp that never was (until his death)

A major development in the Perón years was the re-writing of the old national constitution and its replacement by the Peronista Constitution of 1949. The engraved stamp commemorating the new Constitution (#585,

figure 9) is attractive and well designed, the product of the Italian team mentioned by Bose. The head of the allegorical figure of Liberty dominates the central medallion, which is surrounded by the symbols of Peronismo: agricultural products, drafting tools, a hammer, the cogs of industry, a blacksmith's anvil, the scales of justice, and a medical caduceus; those symbols representing industry and agriculture are to left, and the arts and sciences to the right. There is a story behind the design. The original proposal of the Italian designer Renato Garrasi was to portray the bust of Perón in the central medallion, but the President apparently rejected that idea based on the precedent that no living Argentine appears on a postage stamp. The sequel is that when the Carlos Menem administration sought to honor Perón on the 1995 Centennial of his birth, the 1949 Constitution stamp was resurrected and the Perón bust indeed placed in the center of the design (#1902). Although Perón never appeared on an Argentine stamp during his lifetime, he, along with his friend General Alfredo Stroessner, did appear together in an April 1955 series of Paraguayan stamps (#486-490) celebrating Perón's visit to the neighboring country.²⁶ Only a few months later Perón fled into exile on board a Paraguayan gunboat conveniently placed near Buenos Aires on the River Plate.



Figure 9. Peronista Constitution of 1949

The “descamisado” voluntary label

One of the scandals of the Perón era was the scheme to raise funds for an enormous monument in the central Plaza de Mayo dedicated to the “descamisado,” the prototypical and mythological urban worker and supporter of Perón who was supposedly too poor to even own a shirt. To raise funds for the project, the Post Office printed over seven and a half million stamps (figure 10), which were technically non-postal “labels” since they would not actually carry the mail (regular postage was required in addition to the “descamisado” label). The labels were placed on sale in early 1947, and there is no publicly available data on how many were sold nor



Figure 10: The Peronista “descamisado” voluntary label

how much money was collected. The face values of the labels ranged from 5 centavos (equivalent to the normal letter postage rate) up to \$100 pesos, equivalent to \$25 U.S. dollars. To increase the likelihood that they would be purchased, the government decreed that no charity seals (used to support campaigns such as the fight against tuberculosis) would be sold for the next several years. There were also no surtax stamps sold between 1944 and 1950. The author, who lived in Buenos Aires during this period, recalls the forceful campaign to place these "voluntary" stamps on all mail, and it was generally assumed that postal patrons wishing to get their mail past pro-Peronista mail clerks had best include a generous number of the descamisado labels next to their regular postage stamps on letters. The monument itself was never built; apparently, the funds went into the Peronista political coffers.²⁷

International themes were well represented in the Perón years, although many of them simply celebrated international congresses or anniversaries, as might be expected. Others carried political messages, such as those related to the Malvinas issue or Antarctic sovereignty employing maps and slogans such as "Las Malvinas son Argentinas." The 1946 stamp honoring U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt (#551) was somewhat surprising, considering the often strained state of Argentine-U.S. relations during those years. These strains peaked at the time of the 1946 election campaign when Perón accused the United States of interfering with the process. A possible clue to the interest in honoring Roosevelt lies in the legend on the stamp, which calls him "the standard-bearer for new social justice," a label which Perón applied to himself. A year later a set of three stamps celebrating Argentine children's crusade for world peace seemed innocuous enough, but may have been intended to support Perón's speech calling for world peace that same year.²⁸

Economic themes

These continued via the previously mentioned 1935-1951 set of definitive stamps, which featured the basic strengths of Argentina's agricultural economy in the higher values of the 24-stamp set, intended to for use abroad. National Agriculture Day was celebrated with a 1948 stamp (#580), as was wheat and cattle in the new definitive series of 1954-59. However, the Perón administration was more interested in promoting economic development and the image of a modernizing, industrializing, and technologically advanced nation. Therefore, we have stamps honoring

Argentine industry (#559, and #634), aviation (#566 and #645), including a celebration of the 10th anniversary of the state-owned airline (#C59), the nationalization of the railway system (1949, #584), communications, including television (1954, #622-4), and the National Productivity and Social Welfare Congress of 1955 (#644). Most notable in the economic category are the stamps issued to propagandize the "Plan Quinquenal" (Five Year Plan), in 1951 (#595-7, #C60). These were created by the Italian team, and feature elegant designs which blend mythological figures or wildlife with the major elements of the Plan: to illustrate transportation Pegasus is shown racing a train; Mercury is set against communication equipment, a dolphin is following a vessel of the national steamship line, and a condor is accompanying a modern airplane.

The influence of Evita

Perón's wife Evita (María Eva Duarte de Perón) had the most significant direct and indirect impact on Argentine stamps of the 1943-55 period. Evita was instrumental in achieving voting rights for women, and this event was celebrated in a well-designed stamp showing the allegorical figure of a female Argentina protecting a woman, who holds a ballot on her way to the polls (#598, figure 11). The building housing the "Fundación Eva Perón" appeared on a 1954 stamp (#632), and an extraordinary high surtax stamp to support the Foundation was produced in 1951. The stamp itself (#CB6) is an attractive presentation of Michelangelo's "Pieta" showing the Virgin Mary cradling the body of Christ. However, the air postage rate of \$2.45 was surtaxed with \$7.55 destined for the Eva Perón Foundation, costing the postal patron an even \$10 pesos to mail a letter normally requiring \$2.45. The decree authorizing the stamp explains its rationale: "...this stamp has as its purpose to exalt the laudable work of universal transcendence carried out by this institution, and providing it with funds coming from the users of the stamps as well as philatelists..."²⁹

Evita's tragic death of cancer at the young age of 33 in 1952 had great philatelic impact. Evita stamps were but one among many tributes that were caught up in the paroxysm of national grief at her death. To honor the President's wife the Postal Administration proposed (and Perón accepted) the suggestion that a whole series of stamps bearing her likeness would be immediately issued, and that no other stamps would be sold or would be valid for the period of one year; an executive decree gave the suggestion the force of law.³⁰ Besides the political aspect, there was a financial consideration, since all other types of stamps were invalid for one year, and persons holding stocks of these stamps were forced to buy the

Evita stamps and thus provide the government with additional revenue. Although the idea was new to Argentina, other countries had also promulgated edicts that prohibited all but certain types of stamps for specified periods of time. A relevant example was Franco's stamp portrait in Spain, which was the only one authorized in the postal system for a period of several months in 1941.³¹

The Argentine stamps bore an attractive likeness of a young and smiling Evita (#599-618, figure 12), and immediately raised the troubling question of how



Figure 11. Women's vote

they were to be cancelled. It would clearly not do to have the beautiful and venerated face of Evita insulted by an ugly black cancellation mark. There was, however, a precedent for the solution Argentine authorities reached. In the 19th Century King Ferdinand II of Sicily ordered that his likeness on stamps not be touched by black ink cancellation marks, and the postal authorities prepared a special hand-cancellation device which had a cut-out to prevent this from happening. A similar approach was taken with Spanish stamps of Queen Isabella II.³² Therefore, the order went out in Argentine postal channels that clerks must be extremely careful not to cancel the face of Evita, under severe penalties, which could include being fired. Cancellations of the Evita stamps in this period show a generally careful attempt to have the black ink touch only the frame, and not the face of Evita. The discerning philatelist will also find examples of cancellations that do touch the face of Evita, perhaps out of carelessness or political opposition to the Perón regime. When Perón fell in September 1955, the Evita stamps

were still in circulation and a number of cancellations after that date show a deliberate attempt to cancel the stamp squarely on Evita's face.³³

Figure 12: Evita stamp cancellation



From the Mid-1950's to the Mid-1980's

The period since the fall of Perón in 1955 is characterized by a significant and constant rise in the number of postage stamps. The average annual production of new Argentine stamps in the 1950's was 10.5 per year, increasing to 21.1 per year in the 1960's, 23.8 in the 1970's, 39.0 in the 1980's, and 41.1 in the 1990's. This growth is not unique to Argentina, which indeed had a modest increase compared to countries such as Paraguay and some of the former Commonwealth Caribbean nations. Nevertheless, the sheer volume leads one to wonder how many of these stamps saw serious postal usage, and how many were merely produced for the philatelic sales market, or to satisfy the requests of key individuals or organizations.

When the military "Liberating Revolution" deposed Perón in September 1955 a celebratory stamp was quickly produced in little over a month (#647, figure 13). It was an allegory of a semi-nude Liberty breaking her chains who, according to some irreverent observers was supposed to be Evita, or a female "descamisada." A second stamp was issued on the first

anniversary of the Revolution (#657), and this time the allegorical female figure was fully clothed. The military government also celebrated the 104th anniversary of the Battle of Caseros, when the tyrannical strong man Juan Manuel de Rosas was defeated by General Justo José de Urquiza. Commemorative stamps are usually issued on centennial anniversaries, and the 104th anniversary is unique, but there is a political reason for this anomaly. Perón was often associated with Rosas, and especially the similar aspects of their regimes, such as a strong, unified government. Presumably, the Peronista officials would not issue a stamp on the centennial of Rosas' defeat in 1852.³⁴ When it issued the stamp commemorating the Battle of Caseros, and featuring General Urquiza (#649), the 1955 military government was reminding the nation that it too had defeated a tyrant. A similar motive was probably behind the Esteban Echeverría stamp of 1957 (#666), since this Romantic author (1805-1851) had written bitter essays against Rosas, the most notable being "El matadero," in which the "slaughterhouse" is a metaphor for the Rosas dictatorship. The 1956 journal of the Argentine Communication Ministry noted that the history of the last few years (i.e., the Perón period) had forgotten Echeverría, and this honor due him now had an added urgency.³⁵ The 1955-1958 military government also moved to do away with the 1949 Peronista Constitution, and commemorated this effort with an allegorical stamp showing the head of Liberty (#667); the issuing decree noted that this accomplishment (Reform of the Peronista Constitution) "was an event of undoubtable historical repercussion, and will make manifest the unbreakable will of the Nation to recover democracy, and that therefore the issuing of a stamp will perpetuate this process and will also symbolize the return of Argentines to the path shown by the forgers of our nationality."³⁶

Presidential successions (except for ones caused by military coups) were all recognized by Argentine stamps in this period. When the post-Perón military government headed by general Aramburu turned power over to the elected President Arturo Frondizi, there was much hope that this would mark the end of military involvement in politics (a vain hope). The three-stamp set issued to commemorate Frondizi's inaugural (#673-5) featured an allegorical figure of Argentina, the Argentine flag (mounted on a shaft with a decorative sprig of wheat, symbolizing Argentina's economic wealth), and the words "Liberty and Democracy." The issuing decree³⁷ noted that "the officials elected by the vote of the people in exemplary and absolutely democratic elections will take charge of the destinies of the nation, and for this reason it is opportune to provide for the issuing of commemorative postage stamps which will remember and perpetuate the event."



Figure 13. Fall of Perón

Fronzizi's tenure was cut short by a coup, and after a short interim government the new President, Arturo Illia, took office, an event celebrated with a commemorative stamp (#751) featuring the Casa Rosada (government house). During Illia's presidency the previously much maligned Radical President Hipólito Yrigoyen (1916-1922, 1928-1930), whose removal from power in 1930 was the occasion of numerous stamps, was himself honored by a stamp (#77). Presumably neither the Peronistas or the military wanted to see him so honored during their tenure in office, and thus it required the assumption of the presidency by a Radical leader.

As happened with Fronzizi, Illia's term in office was cut short by a military coup which led to a series of military presidents (Generals Onganía,

Levingstone and Lanusse), none of whom commemorated their accession to power with a postage stamp, although, as we shall see below, the military governments had other ways of leaving their mark on philately.

By the early 1970's it had become clear that neither elected Radical Party leaders nor the generals could effectively run Argentina, and the military's last president in this period (General Lanusse) reluctantly allowed a Peronista party functionary (Hector Cámpora) to run for the presidency with the slogan "Cámpora a la presencia, Perón al poder." Cámpora's accession to the presidency was noted by a stamp (#1000) featuring the chair of Bernardino Rivadavia (symbol of the presidency), along with the national crest and colors. A stamp (#1003) honoring Evita was quickly issued, showing her delivering one of her fiery speeches, with the words "Eva Perón

– Eternal in her people."

The Cámpora presidency was short-lived, and was immediately followed by the second administration of Juan Perón, which on short notice issued a stamp commemorating the anniversary of the 17th of October 1945 Peronista "Loyalty Day" (#1075, figure 14)



Figure 14. Peronista Loyalty Day (1975)

Military themes in the 1955-1983 period

We noted above that the military did not issue stamps upon taking power in a coup, except for the September 1955 removal of Perón. Shortly after the celebratory 1955 stamp showing Argentina breaking the chains of Peronismo, the military government issued a stamp (#648) with the symbols of the army, navy and air force and the words "Brotherhood of the Armed Forces of the Nation." Apparently, to suggest the unified front of the military in the face of divided civilian political factions represented by the Radicals and the still-powerful Peronistas.

An analysis of the presence of military themes among new stamps for the various periods of military government shows a marked tendency for this theme to appear in military regimes as opposed to elected civilian ones. In the 1955-58 years of direct military rule, there were 37 "military" themed stamps, which represented 27.0% of all the issues. In the following years (1958-66), this included the civilian regimes of Frondizi (1958-62) and Illia (1963-66), military themes constituted only 9.8% of the total. The 1966-1973 return to direct military rule (Generals Onganía, Levingstone, Lanusse) witnessed a sharp increase of military stamps, which reached 20.7% of the total. In the brief administration of Juan and Isabelita Perón (1973-76) this dropped to 13.4%, only to rise to 17.65% during the years of the military "Proceso" government of Generals Videla, Viola and Galtieri.

The most common stamps with military themes celebrated Army Day, Navy Day, and less frequently Air Force Day. A typical Army Day stamp would feature a soldier wearing the uniform of an Independence regiment (#857). Navy Day stamps usually displayed an icon of an historic ship (#858), while the Air Force frequently included one of its early aircrafts (#1157). Military themed stamps often featured patron saints of units or branches of the service. St. Barbara is the traditional patron saint of artillerymen (supposedly because her martyrdom was accompanied by lightning bolts which killed her torturers), and in 1967, during the presidency of General Onganía, a stamp (#848) declaring her patron of Argentine artillerymen was issued. During that same presidency, a stamp (#854) declared Archangel Gabriel the patron saint of the Army Communications Corps. The Archangel was selected because he communicated the news of the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary, and Leonardo da Vinci's painting of the event was featured on the stamp.

International military conferences were also noted in this series of military themed stamps: the Seventh Conference of American Armies (held in Buenos Aires) was celebrated with a colorful map stamp (#810) with the flags of all the attending nations. The issuing decree, signed by President-General Onganía, noted "...the significance of issuing a commemorative postal stamp, destined to show America and the world the joint decision of its armies to fight together for the peace and liberty of the continent..."³⁸

During these 1976-1983 years Argentina was wracked by increasing violence between armed groups on the left and right of the political spectrum, as well as the military itself, as they became increasingly involved in what became the "dirty war." Postage stamps were occasionally issued to note the assassination of key military figures by opposition guerrillas. As an example, when a military housing unit was named in honor of a junior officer killed by guerrillas, a stamp was issued (#1240), as was one honoring

President-General Pedro Aramburu (#1272) after his assassination by Peronista Montoneros, supposedly because of his role in hiding the corpse of Evita after the fall of Perón in 1955.

Historical and nationalistic themes in this period included the 150th anniversary of the 1810 and 1816 Independence declarations, as well as the anniversary of the defense of Buenos Aires against the "English Invasions" of 1808-1809 (#664), an event which in Argentine military history is only one of several times they have defeated the British. The issuing decree noted that the event had "unquestioned historical repercussions."³⁹ The creation of the Argentine flag by General Manuel Belgrano was noted (#918-9), and several definitive issues of this period contained variations on the theme of the national colors (#1204).

The most significant sport stamps were those associated with the 1978 World Soccer Cup held in Buenos Aires, when a dictatorial military government which was anxious to present a positive image to the world, and also to distract its own people, used the games for political purposes. This included a large number of postage stamps and souvenir sheets (#1147-8, 1179, 1180-84, 1188-91, 1192), culminating in a rapidly issued overprint (#1193) proclaiming "ARGENTINA/ CAMPEON." The Argentine stamps and philatelic souvenir sheets of this period feature stylized soccer players, stadiums, and tourist views of venues where the games were played. Politics intruded in the stamp production process: a preliminary design of the 1978 World Cup stamps had been prepared towards the end of the second Perón era in 1976. However, when the military government examined the designs it was felt they contained Peronista political significance and were replaced with a more nationalistic symbol showing cupped hands in blue and white holding a soccer ball.⁴⁰

The current period, 1983-

This period encompasses the elected civilian administrations of Radical Raúl Alfonsín and Peronist Carlos Menem. Stamps were issued for both presidential inaugurals: Alfonsín's 1983 one (#1455) featured a 19th Century coin with the inscription "Union and Liberty." Menem's 1989 inaugural (#1659) used a reproduction of a bronze bust of The Republic. The serious inflation-taking place at the end of Alfonsín's term meant that the stamp had to be overprinted with a higher value before being usable for postage. During the Menem administration, several Peronista icons appeared on the stamps of the period. There was for example, the 1995 centennial of the birth of President Perón (#1902), which used the design of the 1949 Constitution stamp. This was followed by a 1997 stamp of Evita issued to

celebrate the 50th anniversary of women's vote in Argentina (#1974). Evita was honored again late in this period on the 50th anniversary of her death with a series of controversial stamps, attacked by some as presenting an unduly harsh, ugly and even violent image of Evita (figure 15).⁴¹



Figure 15. Evita Perón

The most politically controversial stamp of the period was the one issued in 1967 on the 30th anniversary of the death of Che Guevara in Bolivia (figure 16). A number of countries commemorated this anniversary in a variety of ways, to the point that a Spanish news source spoke of the prevailing fever of "Chemanía" which was using the arts to recreate a human being now converted into a myth.⁴² President Menem justified the decision to issue the stamp on the basis that Che was a universal figure, and that the stamp was "a way of moving forward towards peace and understanding among Argentines." The official decree expressed the wish that "this stamp would show an Argentina which excluded no one for ideological reasons," and that it represented the "philosophy of concord" inspired by such events as the repatriation of the remains of Juan Manuel de Rosas (celebrated by stamp #1728) and the social revindication of Eva Perón and Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. Other observers were not as charitable: the Buenos Aires newspaper *Clarín*⁴³ quoted Radical party politician Juan Manuel Casella: "this is an election maneuver by President Carlos Menem which uses the commercial fetishism of the image of Che to compensate for the lack of support from the right." *Clarín* also quoted the conservative "Tradition, Family and Property" group as saying that this official homage "favors the revolutionary dynamism which already had bloodied the country in the decade of the 1970's."

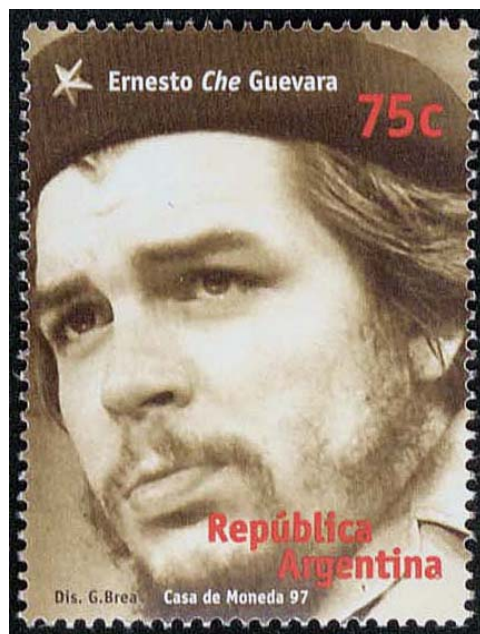


Figure 16. Che Guevara (1997)

The number of military-themed stamps dropped sharply in this post-Proceso period, an unexpected trend in light of the military's withdrawal from the active political stage after the disastrous experiences of the Malvinas conflict, the economic crisis, and the "dirty war." A set of three stamps commemorating the fallen in the 1982 conflict was issued, one each for army, navy, and air force personnel (#1767-9). Perhaps the most significant military-themed stamp was one issued in 1998 honoring United Nations peacekeepers, since the Argentine military (and especially

the Army) had been actively involved in several UN peacekeeping missions as a way of restoring some of its lost prestige and "reinserting" the nation into the international political system as a respectable member.⁴⁴

International relations themes continued to be present in this period, not without some controversy. The Malvinas/Falklands disaster was followed by the issuing of a 1983 stamp (#1411) that implied a future "second recovery" of the islands and featured an Argentine flag set against a map of the South Atlantic, stretching from Tierra del Fuego to the South Sandwich Islands of Antarctica. Unfortunately for Argentine-Chilean relations the key Beagle Channel islands, which had long been disputed between these two countries, were shaded the same brown tone as mainland Argentina and the Malvinas. What is more, Cape Horn Island, which is under Chilean control but is sometimes claimed by Argentina, was labeled as Argentine, causing official unhappiness in Santiago.⁴⁵

Economic themes stressed tourism (#1543-8), Argentina's national airline (#C-151-154), soon to be privatized by Menem, and a well-designed set showing Argentina's main agricultural products in connection with a series of conferences organized by the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization. A series of six Argentine postage stamps in 1998 had a clear international political message as well as an economic one (#2006-2011).

The six stamps featured the principal Argentine beef cattle breeds, and all carried the slogan "Argentine Republic: A country free of hoof and mouth disease" ("aftosa" in Spanish). The significance was that for many years Argentine beef, regarded by many as the best in the world, could not enter U.S. and other markets because the U.S. Department of Agriculture (with some lobbying from the U.S. cattle industry) argued that it was contaminated with the highly infectious hoof and mouth disease. By 1998, Argentina had finally managed to convince U.S. authorities that the country was free of the disease and its importation was ultimately authorized.⁴⁶

Stamps in the fields of culture and medicine showed some refreshing originality in this period. Comics, such as Mafalda (#1730) and Patoruzú (#2017) were honored, as were famous authors Jorge Luis Borges with a picture of a maze, and Julio Cortázar with a hopscotch game, both symbols of their most famous literary works (#1972-3). Argentine films were celebrated (#1500, 1779-83), as was the iconic tango singer Carlos Gardel (#1502-4). Gardel was honored by stamps in a number of countries, including Uruguay (which claims he was born on its soil), and Spain, which used his image to celebrate "the day of Argentine Hispanidad," linking the two countries together.⁴⁷

Postage stamps were used extensively in public health campaigns, including those to prevent blindness (#1551), avoid drugs (#1681, 1776), and prevent AIDS (#1786-7). The latter presented the rather startling graphic (figure 17) of a comic drawing of a wiggling condom, with the legend "I am a defense (against AIDS). Protect yourself."

Figure 17. Campaign against AIDS

The world of sports was well represented in Argentine stamps in these years, to include various World Soccer Championships, and celebration of two of Argentina's most famous athletes: racing car driver Juan Manuel Fangio, and soccer player Diego Maradona, called "the most famous Argentine in world philately." This comment was made by a Spanish news service, which researched the number of times prominent Argentines have appeared on stamps around the world, and listed Maradona first (43 stamps of 33 countries),



followed by General José de San Martín (30 stamps), and Che Guevara (24 stamps).⁴⁸

One curious use of postage stamps was to publicize Argentine hopes to be selected as the site of the 2004 Summer Olympics. On two occasions stamps were issued (1996, #1927-8, and 1997, #1965), listing Buenos Aires as a candidate for the honor, and the second stamp noted that Argentina was a finalist in the competition, which unfortunately did not end up selecting Buenos Aires.

Conclusion

This brief survey of the historical, political and semiotic features of Argentine postage stamps suggests that the postage stamp is yet another tool useful in a multi-disciplinary attempt to understand and teach about this country. From a semiotic perspective, Argentine stamps are rich in the Peircian categories of index, icon, and symbol, frequently with political implications. Argentine postage stamps developed and matured from the crude and unattractive lithographic issues of mid-19th Century to the colorful and well-designed examples from the Perón period to the present. In the process, they give us a new perspective and insight into many aspects of Argentine life.

Thank you

I am indebted to Leah Sand (and three anonymous referees) for commenting on this essay and contributing numerous useful suggestions.

Notes

¹ For a detailed analysis of the political implications of the individual "próceres" featured on some Argentine stamps, see David Bushnell, "Postal Images," *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture*, no. 1, 1982, pp. 91-105.

² James A. Mackay, *Encyclopedia of World Stamps*, (New York: McGraw Hill, 1976), p. 35.

³ Data from *Scott Postage Stamp Catalog for 2002*, (Sidney, OH: Scott Publishing Co., 2001), vol. 1, pp. 361-415.

⁴ *Philatelic Magazine*, "Engraved by a Baker's Roundsman," 31 October 1958, pp. 731-2.

⁵ Bushnell, *op cit*, p. 92-93.

⁶ Otto Hornung, "The Man from Tierra del Fuego," *Stamp Collecting*, July 1982, pp. 598-605. Jere Hess Barr, "History of the Tierra del Fuego Stamp," *Philatelic Congress Book*, (Washington: PAU, 1943), pp. 89-101.

⁷ Antonio Deluca, *Sellos y otros valores postales*, (Buenos Aires: Ministerio del Interior, 1939), p. 365.

⁸ Ann Trigg, "The Prostitute Revenue Issues of Argentina," *Scotts Stamp Monthly*, vol. 15, no 1, November 1996, p 16.

⁹ Deluca, *op cit*, p. 254.

- ¹⁰ Ibid, p. 270.
- ¹¹ Ibid, p. 431.
- ¹² Winthrop Boggs, "Argentina: Refrigeration Congress," *The American Philatelist*, vol 46, no. 2, 1932, p. 118.
- ¹³ Deluca, op cit, pp. 463-5.
- ¹⁴ Ibid, p. 299.
- ¹⁵ Ibid, p. 437.
- ¹⁶ Barbara Tenenbaum (ed), "Perón, Juan Domingo" *Encyclopedia of Latin American History and Culture*, (New York: Scribner's, 1996), vol. 4, p. 352. For discussion of the link between European fascism and postage stamps, see Harlan J. Straus, "Politics, Psychology and the Postage Stamp," *41st American Philatelic Congress Book*, (Washington: APC, 1975) p. 167, and *Linn's Stamp News*, 9 December 2002, p. 34.
- ¹⁷ For examples of Mussolini-era Italian stamps, see (Scott numbers): 1932, #290-305 (10th Anniversary of the march on Rome and the Fascist Government); 1936 #355-8 (Italian industry); 1938 #400-409 (Proclamation of the Empire), and 1941 #413-8 (Rome-Berlin Axis; Mussolini and Hitler).
- ¹⁸ "Italian cancels used for ads, propaganda," *Linn's Stamp News*, 12 August 2002, p. 40. For data on Argentine propaganda cancellations, see Greher, op cit, "Las bandeletas," 1961.
- ¹⁹ Walter B. L. Bose and Julio C. Sáenz, op cit, p. 184.
- ²⁰ Ernest A. Kehr, "Juan Perón, Philatelically Speaking," *Washington Star*, undated clipping (1955), Argentina folder #3 of the Kehr clipping files, American Philatelic Research Library.
- ²¹ *New York Times*, 11 June 1944, II, p. 8.
- ²² Gibbons Monthly, "Argentine Reminders," undated clipping (1945?) in the Kehr clipping file, folder #3, American Philatelic Research Library. Also *New York Times*, 12 March 1944, II, p. 4.
- ²³ On a personal note stemming from his birth and 18 years of residence in Argentina, the author recalls vividly the serious and formal "Acto de Desagravio" carried out at his English-style boarding school outside Buenos Aires, after an inebriated English faculty member broke and insulted the obligatory statue of San Martín at the school.
- ²⁴ Mariano Ben Plotkin, *Mañana es San Perón*, (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, Inc, 2003), pp. 28, 126.
- ²⁵ Juan Omarío, "Bandeletas Sanmartinianas," *Revista de Comunicaciones*, #288, August 1961, pp. 37-38, 48.
- ²⁶ *New York Times*, 24 Oct 1954, II, p. 10.
- ²⁷ *Linn's Stamp News*, 8 January 1996, p. 50. Also correspondence between H.G. Stanton (in Buenos Aires) and Ernest Kehr, 1947, in the Kehr clipping files, Argentina folder #3, op cit.
- ²⁸ *Revista de Correos*, September 1947, pp. 5-9.
- ²⁹ Argentina, Ministry of Communications, *Decreto*, 22 December 1951, "Emisión Sello Postal Extraordinario con Sobrecargo 'Pro Fundación Eva Perón'."
- ³⁰ Argentina, *Boletín Oficial*, "Decreto 3.399," 31 July 1952. *New York Times*, 28 July 1952, p. 15.
- ³¹ *New York Times*, 26 January 1941, X, p. 6.
- ³² Richard John Sutton, *Stamp Curiosities*, (New York: Philosophical Library, 1958), p. 14.
- ³³ José R. Merlo, "Politically Incorrect Cancel," *American Philatelist*, November 2002, pp. 1000-1001.
- ³⁴ Arthur P. Whitaker, "Argentina," *Spectrum*, 1964, p. 111. Robert A. Potash, *The Army and Politics in Argentina, 1945-1962*, (Stanford University Press, 1980), p. 141.

- ³⁵ *Revista de Comunicaciones*, August 1956, p. 47.
- ³⁶ Argentina, Poder Ejecutivo, *Decreto no. 9862*, 22 August 1957.
- ³⁷ Argentina, Poder Ejecutivo, *Decreto*, 17 July 1957.
- ³⁸ Argentina, *Boletín Oficial*, 9 December 1966, p. 10.
- ³⁹ Argentina, Poder Ejecutivo, *Decreto no. 3850*, 17 April 1957.
- ⁴⁰ For commentary on the stamps and political aspects of the soccer World Cup, see *New York Times*, 19 March 1978, II, p. 42, and Tom Ryder, "World Cup Soccer," *Minkus Stamp Journal*, vol. XIII, no. 3, 1978, p. 6.
- ⁴¹ *CNN en Español* web site, 26 July 2002, "Eva Perón: medio siglo de pasiones encontradas y leyenda."
- ⁴² *El Nacional* on line, 9 October 1997. <http://www.el-nacional.com/cultura/cultural.htm>.
- ⁴³ *Clarín Digital*, on line, 8 October 1997, "Una estampilla para el Che," <http://old.clarin.com/diario/1997/10/08.htm>.
- ⁴⁴ Jack Child, *The Central American Peace Process*, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner, 1992), p. 105.
- ⁴⁵ *Excelsior*, 17 June 1983, p. 16A.
- ⁴⁶ *Revista Filatélica Argentina*, November 1998, p. 48.
- ⁴⁷ Jose Campo y Fernández, "Filatelia Gardeliana," *Revista FAEF*, September 1998, p. 46-53.
- ⁴⁸ *EFE News Service* web site, 4 November 2001.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVES ON THE BANANA INDUSTRY IMPERIAL ARGUMENTS IN U.S.-HONDURAN ENCOUNTERS

**Kevin Coleman
Indiana University**

Historical Narratives on the Banana Industry Imperial Arguments in U.S.-Honduran Encounters

Regardless of one's political or theoretical orientation, bananas are important in the history of U.S.-Latin American relations. Bananas represent the first large-scale influence of the United States in much of Latin America. With giant corporations, such as the United Fruit Company, came the U.S. government, its private citizens, and their culture. In turn, Hondurans responded in various ways, from opportunistic accommodation to strategic rejection of foreign cultural forms and coercive practices. Other Hondurans came north adapting and adjusting to living in the United States, often returning to their native country as cultural hybrids. Indeed, the mass production and distribution of bananas spawned multiple new social and cultural fields.

On the U.S. side, one adaptation of old thought was the application of imperialist and anti-imperialist arguments to the mass cultivation of bananas in the Latin American tropics. Fresh from the Industrial Revolution, and at a time when domestic industries needed new markets and more raw materials to keep up with rapid advances in productivity, some North American writers were euphoric about the business and cultural opportunities in Central America. Reflecting attitudes of "American exceptionalism" that have manifested themselves in various ways since the birth of the republic, the imperialist arguments of the early twentieth century were a potent mix of old and new as they were thrown behind the United Fruit Company. By the 1930s, with critics of capitalism attacking from all sides, strong anti-imperialist denunciations were directed at the fruit companies, their practices abroad, and at the esoteric righteousness of "exceptionalism" that was being cast over realities of exploitation. These critiques were rooted in a different tradition, one of cultural self-criticism that can be traced back through Twain, Thoreau, and further.

For nearly 90 years, the conversion of many regions of Latin America into banana-exporting enclaves has been written about in opposing terms: some championing the modernizing project that the banana companies undertook and others excoriating their actions as crass imperialism. The multifaceted responses of Hondurans—from political elites who controlled the economic resources of their country to the peasants and workers of various ethnicities—are nearly absent from all but the most recent histories. These recent interpretations indicate that while entrepreneurs, diplomats, and mercenaries from the U.S. were increasing their country's economic and political power, Hondurans were responding by consolidating a unique Central American nation-state, a state that would later weather the storm of the 1980s with relatively little state-sponsored violence.¹ In attempting responses to what made Honduras and Costa Rica different from Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala during the 1980s, historians are looking back to the 1870s-1940s for clues embedded in the formative years of these nation-states, the years when Central America first came under the tumultuous influence of the U.S.²

This paper analyzes two key historical narratives concerned with the justification for U.S.-owned fruit companies in the tropics of Latin America, with a focus on the activities of these companies in Honduras. Both the books under review were written during the period when Honduras became linked to the economy of international capitalism. This seventy year period, from the 1870s to the 1940s, represents the years when U.S. banana and mining companies established themselves in Honduras, initially benefiting local producers, but later acquiring vast stretches of land, wresting concessions from the Honduran government, and always affecting profound cultural, ecological, economic and political changes.

Within the context of the political economy of culture, several questions rush to the fore. How was this time-period imagined? How did U.S. citizens view their expanded reach? What were the arguments for and against U.S. commercial expansion into Latin America? This essay probes these questions by critically examining two exemplary texts—*Conquest of the Tropics* (1914) and *The Banana Empire* (1935). These texts will be used to explicate early twentieth century claims of the benefits and costs of an imposing U.S. presence in Central America.³ This paper attempts to show that the two narratives—imperialist and anti-imperialist—are not equally unsophisticated relics of the time-period in which they were written. Instead, they represent enduring traditions, one of which serves the goals of a hegemonic state, while the other is an empirically based challenge to an ideology that masks violence and exploitation. After separating out the basic features of one imperialist and one anti-imperialist argument, recent

historical literature will be presented to show how both accounts, in very different ways and to different degrees, provided one-dimensional portraits of the United Fruit Company's operations in the region. Finally, the staying power of these arguments, presented 90 and 69 years ago, will be discussed with reference to recent political discourse.

Conquest of the Tropics, a Cognitive Map of the U.S. Business Class around 1914

Perhaps one of the best cognitive maps of the U.S. business class in the early years of the twentieth century is a literal one. On the inside covers of Frederick Adams' 1914 hardbound edition of *Conquest of the Tropics* are sketched maps of the region from southern Florida to northern Peru. What these maps include, as well as what they fail to include, is highly significant. There are no words on these maps, no labels to designate particular countries, only symbols. The most obvious elements of the rough maps are the U.S. flags (the only flags on this map), waving above Puerto Rico and the tiny Cayman Islands and flying high over the Panama Canal. Great ships also steam from the banana enclaves along the Caribbean coasts of British Honduras (latter-day Belize), Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, Panama, and Colombia. Radio antennae beam their signals from high above the banana plantations toward the United States. The plantations themselves are already set in firm relief against a barren, unremarkable, and certainly unproductive vastness that was Latin America for the early twentieth century entrepreneurial imagination of the U.S.

On these maps, the only signs of life are the eighteen determined steamships, whose courses are charted directly from the banana enclaves to their U.S. ports, the radio ("wireless telegraphy") antennae, the banana plantations, and a sugar plantation and refinery on the north coast of Cuba. There is no indication of any human activity in the non-U.S. touched expanses of the American Tropics, only smoke billowing from Latin American volcanoes and an occasional, nearly imperceptible palm frond. This sketched map in Adams' 1914 book is meaningfully constructed, illustrating how Latin America was imagined by the U.S. business class of that epoch—that is, as a vast, unpopulated, unexploited, and unproductive frontier awaiting "American" ingenuity and industriousness. The symbolic violence of these sketches is fully consistent with that of Adams' text, which we turn to in the next section.



The inside covers of Adams (1914) *Conquest of the Tropics*.

Conquest of the Tropics, Priming “Americans” for Full-Scale Imperialism

a. Imagining the “Other”

In Chapter One, “Our Neglected Tropical Neighbors,” Adams starts out with an appeal for sympathy toward “our neighbors” in Latin America, while scolding “Americans” for their lack of concern for the welfare of their neighbors.

It is a peculiar and mysterious trait of a considerable portion of the people of the United States know little and seem to care little about their national neighbors to the tropical south. This is a regrettable, expensive, and inexcusable fault.⁴ From this point forward, empathetic consideration of Latin Americans is as common as non-U.S. life was in the sketches on the inside covers of his book, that is, scant to non-existent. The few times that Adams makes even oblique references to Latin American peoples are written such that “they” are understood to be uncivilized, warring and unproductive groups that the (superior) people of the U.S. have a duty to save. For example:

Cuba raised nothing but revolutions, anarchy, and chaos until the U.S. was compelled, against its will, to interfere for the purpose of eradicating an international nuisance. Haiti and San Domingo were confining their activities almost exclusively to pillage and bloodshed. Central America was not yet on the commercial map. Jamaica was in the happy position of not enjoying self-government—being under the domination of Great Britain and denied the pastime of “revolutions”—but her people were devoting their lands and energy to the cultivation of sugar-cane, pending the time when enforced peace would permit Cuba to take her proper place as the great sugar-producing section of the globe. Mexico—well, Mexico was in its normal condition. Porfirio Diaz had not yet clubbed its semi-savage factions into a coma of temporary peace and prosperity.⁵

This was the picture that Adams painted of Latin Americans: savages who needed “us” (the White business class of the U.S.) to save them from themselves, and one way that we could successfully rescue Latin Americans from their inherent inferiority was to enforce monoculture agro-exports. Put bluntly, Adams’ racism was connected to a self-interested strengthening of the U.S. economy.

With regard to Honduras, *Conquest of the Tropics* made only occasional mention of the country, as a nation with wild jungles to be tamed and made productive by “great enterprises performing great services scientifically.”⁶ The citation below illustrates key elements of the White Man’s Burden—denial of the Other and the saving nature of that which is “American:”

The natives of the American tropics raised no bananas in commercial quantities. They had no extensive banana groves and plantations, flourishing or otherwise. There was no native agriculture in the American tropics to “exploit,” and it may astound the reader to know that there never has been and that none exists today. These tropics are productive just about in proportion as American initiative, American capital, and American enterprise make them productive.⁷

The truth was that Hondurans had been producing bananas for fifty years prior to the arrival of entrepreneurs from the United States.⁸ Racism, though not introduced to the region by North American businesspersons,

played in an important role in the successful integration of Latin America into the periphery of the capitalist world economy.

To summarize this aspect of Adams' 1914 argument, we see that U.S. intervention is justified on grounds that Latin Americans are of an inferior culture (that is, "they" are doomed to intra-cultural anarchy, chaos, pillage and bloodshed without "us"), and our military and economic activities abroad bring greater peace and prosperity to Latin America. Recall, Rudyard Kipling's 1899 poem entitled "The White Man's Burden," which urged the United States to take over the Philippines after the Spanish American war by arguing that imperialism benefited the "half-savage" races rather than the imperial power. In words reminiscent of Kipling, Adams argues that it is the burden of the United States and the "American" people to civilize our neglected tropical neighbors and to make them economically productive.

b. Imagining "Ourselves"

Though the first chapter of Adams' book is entitled "Our Neglected Tropical Neighbors," after the second paragraph he too neglects our neighbors, making only two passing references to Latin Americans in the subsequent nineteen pages supposedly written "for them." Instead, he launches into a focused argument for full-scale U.S. imperialism in Latin America, *à la* United Fruit Company. The third paragraph of the book reads:

The great nations of history are those, which encouraged their citizens to go out into the world and develop it commercially and industrially. [...] Spain became great because of merchants who followed fast on the heels of her *military adventurers*, and because of colonies, which sprung up in all parts of the world. Great Britain is great because her sons have been trained for centuries to know and act on the truth that there are no geographical boundaries and no national limitations to the enterprise of a British subject.⁹

Adams' depiction of Spain's "military *adventurers*" is consistent with his racist portrayal and/or exclusion of Latin Americans from his historical narrative; apparently, it is of no consequence that millions of Native Americans were slaughtered during the "adventures" of Spanish conquest. In this way, Adams is laying the ideological groundwork for imperial conquest. He does so by noting the benefits that European countries have reaped from their colonial exploits. He also targets the "American" psyche by offering colonial models that the reader may compare against his/her nation. Adams' vehemence is two-pronged: one, he ignores the dignity of colonized/ "colonizable" peoples, and, two, he seeks to inspire feelings of inferiority in his U.S. audience with the hope of spurring them into greater colonial competition with the Europeans.

In a species of "internationalist" argument, Adams writes:

No nation is sufficient unto itself. We of the United States of America have great resources, we possess wonderfully varied products of the soil, but despite the boastings of the uninformed we cannot create from them all of the necessities which belong to modern civilization and which are at the easy command of commerce. We are of the temperate zone. [...] [Therefore] we are dependent upon the real tropics for the numerous indispensable foods and fruits foreign to our own soil.¹⁰

After advocating the international division of labor, Adams explains why the American Tropics were not participating in "the stupendous progress of all other tropical sections:"

Instability of their governmental conditions has stopped the capital and the enterprise of the world from undertaking the development of their wonderful tropical resources. For this state of affairs the United States is largely to blame. Our national sins are not those of commission, but of omission. We have paid no attention to the welfare of our tropical neighbors for the purely selfish and ignorant reason that we did not consider the matter worth our while. It has not yet dawned on our political leaders that our tropics are a great but unused asset.¹¹

With this, the argument for imperialism is made: the United States has a duty to intervene in the "anarchy" of Latin America so that all may prosper.¹² "Any enterprise or any statesmanship which increases the productivity of these tropical sections adds directly to the assets and welfare of all the people of the United States."¹³ Adams' argument is clear: the U.S. government must support U.S. businesses militarily and diplomatically in "the peaceful and honorable conquest of a portion of the American tropics."¹⁴ In yet another act of exclusion, Adams makes no mention of the material, environmental, and social costs borne by the banana-growing regions in the "creative enterprises conducted by the United Fruit Company."

Summary of Conquest

Our discussion of *Conquest of the Tropics* focused on key aspects of an early twentieth century argument for expanding the commercial and governmental activities of the U.S. into the American Tropics. Adams'

justification for U.S. imperialism consists of two basic rhetorical moves. First, there is an imaginative alienation, demonization, or erasure of the "Other." The map on the inside covers of Adams' book illustrates this first step toward imperialism. Second, there is a moral appeal to "civilized peoples" to save the inferior "others" from themselves.

Nearly one hundred years later, we can test Adams' claims of U.S. mandated peace resulting in agricultural wealth for the tropics of Latin America. We find on the front page of *The New York Times* (June 29, 2003), Karla Sánchez, a native of San Pedro Sula, Honduras—home of the fertile lands that The United Fruit Company first graced 100 years ago. Sánchez, a Sunday school student and sixth-grade beauty queen, fled a low-wage job in a blue jeans factory in San Pedro Sula in search of better opportunities, closer to the core of the capitalist world economy (*ibid.* A23). Now she is "charged with recklessly causing the deaths of 17 immigrants" as she worked to smuggle at least 77 immigrants from the economic periphery. Adams' promises, made nearly a century ago, that "the peaceful and honorable conquest of a portion of the American tropics," by "the greatest agricultural enterprise of which we have any record," would bring "stupendous progress" and prosperity to "the backward republics" have yet to bear. For the poor of Honduras, much more than subsistence wages producing bananas and blue jeans for export. The resistance continues in "living wage campaigns," the "anti-globalization" and "anti-sweatshop" movements, and in the growing demand for organically grown, Fair Trade Certified bananas (coffee, tea, and other commodities).

The Banana Empire, challenging ideology with evidence

In 1935, Charles David Kepner, Jr. and Jay Henry Soothill challenged prevailing understandings of the success of the United Fruit Company. Kepner and Soothill's book, *The Banana Empire: A Case Study of Economic Imperialism*, documents the business practices of the United Fruit Company up to the mid-1930s. Their historical and economic analyses of the specific actions of the United Fruit Company debunk the mystifications of Adams' book.

To invoke Wallersteinian concepts, *The Banana Empire* is essentially a focused study of one expansionist movement driven by the modern world system. That is, Kepner and Soothill capture what happens as the capitalist world economy expands its geographic boundaries, thereby creating "new loci of production to participate in its axial division of labor."¹⁵ Initially, Honduran planters were empowered by foreign trade, especially when several U.S. companies competed to buy their products. But eventually,

these companies came to control the means of production in Honduras. Hence, Honduran producers were gradually marginalized from the benefits, though they continued to suffer the costs, of being linked to the capitalist world economy. This portion of my paper analyzes how Kepner and Soothill describe these processes of economic and political integration and marginalization.

a. Situating the Authors

The introduction to *The Banana Empire*, written by Harry E. Barnes, offers short biographies of the book's authors. Charles Kepner Jr., Barnes writes, began studying the United Fruit Company and Latin America as a graduate student at the University of Chicago in a course by Professor Jacob Viner.¹⁶ Kepner "continued his studies of imperialism in Central America at Columbia University."¹⁷ We gather that Kepner approached the subject primarily from an academic angle; although, before writing *The Banana Empire*, he took an extensive tour of the "Fruit Republics."

Regarding Kepner's coauthor, Barnes writes:

Mr. Jay H. Soothill has had intimate first-hand contact with Central America since he first entered the services of the United Fruit Company in Costa Rica in March 1912. He was progressively promoted and held several important and responsible executive posts with the United Fruit Company until his voluntary resignation in April 1928.¹⁸

Thus, Soothill brought an insider's perspective to the analysis of the United Fruit Company in Latin America during the early twentieth century. Together, Kepner and Soothill had a rare combination of theoretical expertise and years of field experience with which to collaboratively analyze the actions of the United Fruit Company in Latin America.

b. The Banana Empire, the argument

Working back from conclusions to premises, I would like to cite an extended passage from Kepner and Soothill's summary comments in *The Banana Empire*:

During the thirty-five years of its existence the United Fruit Company has engineered the production, transportation and distribution of approximately two billion bunches of bananas. In

carrying on these economic activities it has expended in the tropics a great deal of money—part of which it has recovered in the tropics through steamship, railroad, radio and other tariffs and through commissary purchases and payments for hospital treatment. In its pursuit of profit it has transformed tangled jungles into centers of human activity, at least temporarily; it has constructed buildings, railroads and other works of modern material civilization; it has erected well-equipped hospitals; and it has reduced, although it has not eliminated, the menace of tropical fevers. These economic, material, and sanitary achievements are appraised in detail elsewhere [e.g., Adams' *Conquest of the Tropics*].

Coincident with accomplishing these and other “constructive” tasks, this powerful company has throttled competitors, dominated governments, manacled railroads, ruined planters, choked cooperatives, domineered over workers, fought organized labor, and exploited consumers. Such usage of power by a corporation of a strongly industrialized nation in relatively weak foreign countries constitutes a variety of economic imperialism.¹⁹ With that, Kepner and Soothill recapitulated the preceding 335 pages of their book.

The thesis of their book is summed-up in its title: *The Banana Empire: A Case Study in Economic Imperialism*. The idea is that the United Fruit Company became so powerful both at home and abroad that it constituted an empire unto itself, beneath which Caribbean governments cowered. In Kepner and Soothill's words:

The banana empire is not primarily an aggregation of mutually interacting governmental and industrial agencies, but the expansion of an economic unit to such size and power that in itself it assumes many of the prerogatives and functions usually assumed by political states.²⁰

In order to become an empire, the United Fruit Company relied upon close ties to the U.S. government and military.

In addition to documenting U.S. military interventions on behalf of the United Fruit Company, Kepner and Soothill criticize the imperialist discourse of their epoch. Apparently they were not alone. They cite a Representative Blaine, speaking to the United States Congress on February 3, 1928. According to Blaine:

In Honduras the imperialism practiced consists of the acts of an American Minister and two American corporations which constitute the dominating and controlling powers, sometimes assisted by marines, under the alleged claim of protection of American life and property—yes, protecting the very instrumentalities that are there for one purpose, and that is material exploitation.²¹

Kepner and Soothill were equally clear in their denunciation of economic imperialism.

c. Abusing trust and wresting concessions: Railroad, Land, and Loans

Chapter Five of *The Banana Empire* is entitled “Power through Concessions.” This chapter details how Honduran land was gradually ceded to U.S. companies in return for empty promises. Kepner and Soothill emphasize that for eight decades Honduran leaders dreamt of a National Railroad, from Caribbean ports on the North Coast to ports in the Gulf of Fonseca on the Pacific Coast.²² This dream led the Honduran political elite (a) to trade fertile land—their principal economic resource—and (b) acquire new foreign debts (directly to the United States and J. Pierpont Morgan Company) for (c) numerous stillborn promises to build a railroad. Nearly a century later, sixty percent of the arable land in Honduras is owned by two U.S.-based transnationals, United Fruit and Dole Food Corporation;²³ Honduras is still deeply in debt, even after its World Bank debt was erased in 2000, following the destruction of Hurricane Mitch; and the only railroad that exists is owned by the fruit companies on the North Coast. Through the tragic story of the Honduran National Railroad, Kepner and Soothill detail how Honduran dependency was cultivated, by U.S. investors and the U.S. government, in the formative years of its consolidation as a modern nation-state.²⁴

These years, from 1853-1911, during which Hondurans struggled for national development but ended up progressively giving away their economic resources to foreigners, were quintessential moments in the capitalist world economy. For Wallerstein, capitalism is “the rise of the optimal combination of free and coercive labor relations beneficial to the capitalist system as a whole.”²⁵ As Honduras was systematically weakened by coercive labor (i.e. increasing public and private debts, loss of the means of production—fertile land, the need for workers to accept scandalously low wages on foreign-owned land, and monopolistic purchasing and hiring practices), the core

capitalist economy in the U.S. saw its wealth and control grow exponentially. In other words, as the periphery was increasingly exploited, wages and profits grew in the United States. A century and a half of U.S. involvement in Honduras, exemplified by the alliance between the United Fruit Company and the U.S. government, resulted in a classic case of what Andre Gunder Frank called "the development of underdevelopment."

d. Anti-Systemic movements, labor organizes

As early as 1930, Honduran workers began to unite in their common struggle for decent wages. In April 1931, the workers brought the Honduran banana trade to a standstill in response to the Honduran government renewing irrigation contracts to the fruit companies. The following is only a brief example of how Kepner and Soothill discussed worker's resistance movements:

At the same time that the farmers were resisting reduction in purchase price, another revolution broke out and a strike of considerable proportions was declared by the workers of the Tela Railroad Company. About 800 employees had been discharged and the wages of others had been reduced about 20 percent. Discontented over the wage cut, the dockworkers struck and the transportation workers joined them on January 3rd. The United Fruit Company brought in strikebreakers to carry on its work. The [Honduran] government, under martial law, sent troops into the area and told the strikers to accept the reduction in wages and prices "for the national interest of Honduras."²⁶

In this way, the introduction of agro-export capitalism provoked the formation of movements seeking to transform it as a system. That is, the Honduran strikers were by-products of the very system of "increased polarization of reward over time" that they sought to change.²⁷

Connected to the resistance of the Honduran strikers are Kepner and Soothill. Their book represents interstate solidarity with Honduran workers in a common struggle, taking place at separate loci of influence. The strikers were acting directly at the point of production, while Kepner and Soothill were seeking to change how U.S. citizens thought and acted in response to U.S. fruit companies backed by the U.S. diplomatic and military corps.

e. Construction and deconstruction—filling-in what Adams left out

If Adams' (1914) *Conquest of the Tropics* is a construction to rationalize U.S. imperialism in Latin America, then Kepner and Soothill's (1935) *The Banana Empire* is a deconstruction, seeking to expose the effects of U.S. imperialism. To this end, their text is peppered with quotations from Honduran sources, giving Hondurans some voice in the discussion of the banana trade. For example, Raimundo Mendoza R. wrote in *El Nacional* of San Pedro Sula on February 13, 1931, concerning the time 'when the Honduran was the proprietor of his cultivations in this famous section of the north':

'The eye-witnesses of what took place here in those days affirm that it was a pleasure to see the native farmer receiving weekly large sums of money for sale of his produce. They also tell us it was a common sight to see in the streets of the northern towns groups of farmers carrying their hats brimful of greenbacks, and paying no attention to the spilling over of an occasional one; in those days they were in control, for they were the only banana producers on this coast. For the speculators who today infest Honduras were then restricted exclusively to purchasing the fruit which was famous in foreign markets for its quality.' In spite of obvious exaggeration, this picture suggests that private planters had certain advantages when the foreign companies, their operations limited to the purchase of fruit, did not compete with them in the growing of bananas, but did in most cases compete among themselves in purchasing the same.²⁸

This passage is strikingly different from Adams' text in two ways. First, a Honduran voice is quoted rather extensively, in a deliberate attempt to give representation to those who had been excluded from discussion of the United Fruit Company; this was something that Adams never did. Second, Kepner and Soothill take seriously the nostalgic message conveyed by this Honduran, rather than dismissing his words as those of a "semi-savage." The message was, to put it simply, 'things were better here in Honduras before the foreign fruit companies owned the land.' In short, by considering the costs of the banana trade to Hondurans, Kepner and Soothill question the presumed benevolence of U.S. hegemony while simultaneously recognizing the dignity of Hondurans.

However, *The Banana Empire* does not constitute a piece of ethnographic research on Honduran workers. In this way, perhaps the

authors could be criticized for not giving more space to distinct Honduran voices in their questioning of the effects of U.S. imperialism. Nonetheless, there are several reasons why I would not subscribe to such a criticism.

Since the story of Kepner and Soothill is told at all levels in macroeconomic terms and not as ethnography, the authors are fair to each ethnic group involved. On the other hand, Adams' wandering narrative tells a one-sided story in which rich detail is afforded to the brave "Americans" who "dared" to "venture into the American Tropics," while Latin Americans are cast as inherently inferior, in terms such as "semi-savage" and "anarchic." By contrast, Kepner and Soothill recognize the agency of Hondurans, particularly that of the workers who organized popular demonstrations against the fruit companies and that of Honduran professionals who spoke out against the exploits of the companies. Finally, if Wallerstein is correct in arguing that since the capitalist world economy crosses the boundaries of "politico-cultural" structures, the most appropriate "unit of analysis [for historians of this epoch] is an economic entity, the one that is measured by the existence of an effective division of labor."²⁹ Then Kepner and Soothill were right on target because they anticipated Wallerstein's approach.

Conclusions: What has become of the arguments of *Conquest and Empire*?

This essay compared two very different historical narratives in order to examine the justifications for, and against, the imposing presence of the U.S. in Latin America. It can be argued that *Conquest of the Tropics* is an apologetic history reflecting the imperial surge of the early twentieth century and that *The Banana Empire* is a muckraking account of banana imperialism akin to the New Deal criticisms of capitalism at home. Both of these descriptions are accurate. Yet, historicist moves, such as these, which attempt to render these kinds of texts as mere cultural artifacts with no bearing on reality do more to hinder our understanding of the past than they do to illuminate. I have attempted to show that these texts were not morally neutral and that indeed the anti-imperialist text corresponded more closely to the realities that it sought to depict than the imperialist text. The imperialist text, on the other hand, should be understood more as a rhetorical strategy of empire. A strategy similar to that of "Manifest Destiny," which worked to disguise the ethnic cleansing of Native Americans with high-minded nationalism, was employed to justify the often brutal early twentieth century activities of the U.S. government and the fruit companies in Latin America.

Conquest of the Tropics and *The Banana Empire* mark the beginning of the historiography of the banana industry. Since their publication, much banana scholarship has been written in these two traditions: business histories celebrating “American” ingenuity, on the one hand, and denunciations of banana imperialism, on the other. However, over the past ten years, this historiographical trend has shifted toward social and cultural histories that provide a more contingent and contested picture of Fruit Company operations and a full range of state and worker responses.

One strand of recent scholarly work seeks neither to validate self-interested claims of progress through U.S. business, nor to denounce imperialist machinations, but to understand historically unequal encounters with attention to local cultural forms and conditions. Catherine LeGrand, for example, discusses the United Fruit Company’s modernizing project in terms of how that project was erased, deformed, and reconstituted in local memory.³⁰ LeGrand also shows that the enclave model that has depicted United Fruit as a world apart from Central America proper—the view of both Adams and Kepner/Soothill—is overstated. Instead of modernization or imperial domination, LeGrand emphasizes local agency. In a separate volume, entitled *Banana Wars: Power, Production, and History in the Americas*, critical histories of the global banana industry are brought together with local and regional histories of Latin America and the Caribbean to study site-specific processes of capitalist transformation.

The most substantial regional study of the impact of the banana companies is Darío A. Euraque’s pioneering work, *Reinterpreting the Banana Republic: Region and State in Honduras, 1870-1972*. Euraque directly challenges the traces of imperialist and anti-imperialist thought that pervade histories of Honduras and of U.S.-Honduran relations. Written against the backdrop of the Central American crisis, *Reinterpreting* attempts to explain Honduras as an “exception” to the systematic violence that engulfed Central America in the 1980s. Traditional interpretations locate Honduran exceptionality in the disproportionate influence that U.S.-based banana companies wielded in the internal affairs of Honduras and in the supposed lack of a Honduran oligarchy.³¹ Euraque, on the other hand, argues that both “the overwhelming economic power of the banana companies and the absence of an oligarchy” are only part of the social and political story of Honduras (XIX). The other part, he claims, is the powerful role of Honduras’s North Coast banana-producing region in spurring the gradual liberal reforms that made Honduras an exception to the 1980s violence. Euraque supports his thesis by first describing national developments (1870s-1957) and then focusing, often in excruciating detail, on the

economic and political dynamism of the North Coast (1950s-1972), particularly in the country's industrial capital of San Pedro Sula.³²



A 2004 *WSJ* icon similar to the 1914 map in Conquest

Despite the fact that professional historians seek to distance themselves from the narratives of *Conquest* and *Empire*, the mentalities that these two texts represent are alive and well in contemporary political discourse. Recent examples include the *Wall Street Journal* series entitled "Power and Peril: America's Supremacy and its Limits," in which the conservative historian Bernard Lewis ruefully advocates imperialism: "Iraqis are heirs to a great civilization, one fully capable, "with some guidance," of democratic rule." A review of Max Boot's (2002) *The Savage Wars of Peace* (the title of which is taken from Kipling's "The White Man's Burden") could have been written in 1914 by Frederick Upham Adams. Nevertheless, it was not. In *Foreign Affairs*, a liberal journal of U.S. foreign policy, the reviewer recently wrote:

For whether or not the United States intended to acquire an empire, it has somehow done so and cannot easily escape the consequences. Even if it were desired, retreating from the imperial frontier now would be difficult. In the end, therefore, the United

States may find itself with little alternative to waging "the savage wars of peace."³³

On the other side, Howard Dean's anti-war candidacy demonstrated that there was a sizable portion of the population against the U.S.-initiated war in Iraq. Internationally, the opposition to the war was even greater, with France, Germany, Brazil, Mexico, and India unwilling to give the U.S. the green light for its chosen war. In the end, what led Mark Twain to scorn Kipling's old "Blessings of Civilization" fraud in 1899, and Kepner and Soothill to expose the real costs of banana imperialism in 1935, now inspires writers like Noam Chomsky and Eduardo Galeano to attack the latest reincarnations of imperial argument.

Thank you

John Stolle-McAllister and Jack Sinnigen, at the University of Maryland Baltimore County, inspired and criticized earlier drafts of this essay. And thanks to Hema, my wife, for offering valuable feedback on this paper.

Notes

¹ Darío A. Euraque, *Reinterpreting the Banana Republic: Region and State in Honduras, 1870-1972* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996). XVIII.

² Euraque, XVIII

³ Early drafts of this paper employed the conceptual tools of Immanuel Wallerstein, developed in his essay "Culture as the Ideological Battleground of the Modern World-System." *Global Culture*. Ed. Mike Featherstone. London: Sage, 1990. 31-55. Where Wallerstein's theories illuminate the arguments of *Conquest of the Tropics* and *The Banana Empire*, I make explicit reference to his work.

⁴ Frederick Upham Adams, *Conquest of the Tropics: the story of the Creative Enterprises conducted by the United Fruit Company* (New York: Doubleday, 1914), 3.

⁵ Adams, 38.

⁶ Adams, 131.

⁷ Adams, 36.

⁸ Euraque, 2-3. Charles D., Kepner, Jr. and Jay H. Soothill. *The Banana Empire: A Case Study of Economic Imperialism* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1967), 95-100.

⁹ Adams, (my emphasis) 4.

¹⁰ Adams, 5.

¹¹ Adams, 9.

¹² Today, a similar argument is used. The U.S. government denounces Cuba's human rights record, focusing on the repression of political dissidents. Yet, this official position discounts the achievements of Cuba in the area of the so-called Third Generation of human rights, those rights concerning social justice and the reduction of socio-economic inequalities—an area of vast failure in U.S. society and in other democratic countries of this hemisphere, like Honduras and Guatemala.

¹³ Adams, 9.

¹⁴ Adams, 13.

¹⁵ Wallerstein, 36.

¹⁶ Kepner and Soothill, 22.

¹⁷ Kepner and Soothill, 22.

¹⁸ Kepner and Soothill, 22.

¹⁹ Kepner and Soothill, 336.

²⁰ Kepner and Soothill, 341.

²¹ Kepner and Soothill, 338.

²² Kepner and Soothill, 102-6.

²³ Kent Norsworthy with Tom Barry, *Inside Honduras* (Albuquerque: Interhemispheric Resource Center, 1994), 67.

²⁴ One shortcoming of *The Banana Empire* is that the book does not link late nineteenth and early twentieth century developments with the colonial and neocolonial histories of Latin America. Without the benefit of additional historical context the social, economic, and political functions of the Honduran bourgeoisie may have been misunderstood. Whereas Kepner and Soothill interpreted the grand dream of a Honduran National Railroad as essentially nationalistic, Andre Gunder Frank may have interpreted that dream as a political ploy. That is, Honduran elites may have hidden behind a nationalist goal of a Honduran railroad in order to increase their own wealth (by exploiting the Honduran masses) while they simultaneously secured links to a core capitalist economy. By considering this alternative motivation within a stratified neocolonial Honduras, Kepner and Soothill would have signaled how U.S. imperialism required a local Honduran counterpart. Instead, they more charitably assumed that Honduran elites were duped by (rather than complicit with) U.S. companies.

²⁵ Steve J. Stern, *Confronting Historical Paradigms: Peasants, Labor, and the Capitalist World System in Africa and Latin America*, ed. Frederick Cooper, Allan F. Isaacman, Florencia E. Mallon, William Roseberry, Steve J. Stern (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 35.

²⁶ Kepner and Soothill, 137.

²⁷ Wallerstein, 51.

²⁸ Kepner and Soothill, 99.

²⁹ Stern, 23.

³⁰ Catherine C. LeGrand, p. 354.

³¹ The "Banana Republic" and "absent oligarchy" interpretations of Honduras are epitomized by *Honduras: State for Sale*, published in 1985 by the Latin American Bureau of Britain. The cover has a U.S. soldier emerging from a banana peel with a machine gun. The U.S. flag is on his helmet and a sign saying "SOLD" is on the bottom of the banana. These symbols were carefully chosen to reflect the roles of the U.S. military, the U.S.-owned banana companies, and their dual control over the Honduran state.

The text of *Honduras: State for Sale* further reflects adherence to the absent oligarchy and Banana Republic theories:

In contrast to Guatemala, a strong national elite linked to profitable coffee exports did not emerge in Honduras in the nineteenth century. The state remained weak as competing elites, none of them strong enough to impose complete authority, fought a series of internal battles for power. [...] When major political change did come to Honduras, once again it did not evolve from any internal dynamic. (19) [...] Thus, while the modest reforms of the Liberals gave the government only minimal control over its own economic

affairs, they allowed foreign capital to gain control of the modernized sector of the economy. Honduras was independent in name only, and was extraordinarily vulnerable to the dynamic expansion of US capitalism that took place at the beginning of the twentieth century. No other Central American state was as weak. The conditions were firmly established for the country's historical subservience to North American interests. (20-21)

Euraque, by contrast, does not disregard the oppressive nature of U.S. imperialism that the authors of *Honduras: State for Sale* emphasize. He does, however, look "very closely at the capitalists and workers of the [North Coast] region as subjects of their own history rather than as mere appendages of the banana companies" (Euraque XIX).

³² Peter Waldman, *Wall Street Journal*, "A Historian's Take on Islam Steers U.S. in Terrorism Fight." Feb. 3, 2004. A1.

³³ Thomas Donnelly, "The Past as Prologue: An Imperial Manual." *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 81, No. 4, p. 170.

References Cited

- Adams, Frederick Upham. *Conquest of the Tropics: the story of the Creative Enterprises conducted by the United Fruit Company*. New York: Doubleday, 1914.
- Aldo, Lauria-Santiago and Aviva Chomsky. "Introduction: Identity and Struggle in the History of the Hispanic Caribbean and Central America, 1850-1950." *Identity and Struggle at the Margins of the Nation-State: The Laboring Peoples of Central America and the Hispanic Caribbean*. Ed. Aviva Chomsky and Aldo Lauria-Santiago. Durham: Duke UP, 1998. 1-21.
- Dosal, Paul J. *Doing Business with the Dictators: A Political History of United Fruit in Guatemala, 1899-1944*. Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1993.
- Euraque, Dario A. *Reinterpreting the Banana Republic: Region and State in Honduras, 1870-1972*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.
- . "The Banana Enclave, Nationalism, and Mestizaje in Honduras, 1910s-1930s." *Identity and Struggle at the Margins of the Nation-State: The Laboring Peoples of Central America and the Hispanic Caribbean*. Ed. Aviva Chomsky and Aldo Lauria-Santiago. Durham: Duke UP, 1998. 151-68.
- Frank, Andre Gunder. *Lumpenbourgeoisie: Lumpendevelopment: Dependence, Class, and Politics in Latin America*. Trans. Marion Davis Berdecio. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972.

- Joseph, Gilbert M., Catherine C. LeGrand, and Ricardo D. Salvatore, Eds. *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.-Latin American Relations*. Durham: Duke UP, 1998.
- Karnes, Thomas L. *Tropical Enterprise: The Standard Fruit and Steamship Company in Latin America*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press: 1978.
- Kepner, Charles D., Jr., and Jay H. Soothill. *The Banana Empire: A Case Study of Economic Imperialism*. New York: Russell and Russell, 1967.
- Kipling, Rudyard. "The White Man's Burden." 1899.
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/Kipling.html>
- Latin America Bureau. *Honduras: State for Sale*. Great Britain: Latin America Bureau: 1985.
- Norsworthy, Kent with Tom Barry. *Inside Honduras*. Albuquerque: Interhemispheric Resource Center, 1994.
- Stern, Steve J. "Feudalism, Capitalism, and the World-System in the Perspective of Latin America and the Caribbean." *Confronting Historical Paradigms: Peasants, Labor, and the Capitalist World System in Africa and Latin America*. Ed. Frederick Cooper, Allan F. Isaacman, Florencia E. Mallon, William Roseberry, Steve J. Stern. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993.
- Striffler, Steve, and Mark Moberg, Eds. *Banana Wars: Power, Production, and History in the Americas*. Durham: Duke UP, 2003.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel. "Culture as the Ideological Battleground of the Modern World-System." *Global Culture*. Ed. Mike Featherstone. London: Sage, 1990. 31-55.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel. "The Bourgeois as Concept and Reality." *New Left Review*, no. 162 (January-February 1988): 91-106.

HISTORY ON ITS HEAD WITH AN HISTORIAN AT THE HELM BOLIVIA'S GAS WAR—PRECEDENT AND AFTERMATH

Ken Lehman
Hampden-Sydney College

Carlos Urqueita—an Aymaran painter, struggling for words; “I feel . . . I feel . . .” Suddenly he straightens up, abandons his search for words, raises the sleeves of his faded sweatshirt, and flexes his biceps like a body builder in peak form. “That’s what I feel like,” he says. “I feel that the Aymara nation has exerted itself finally and stood up for its rights. I feel that we are strong now and can never go back to being pushed around and ignored and neglected. We are willing to give our new president a chance, but he needs to understand that if he fails us, we will do the same to him.”¹

Newspaper publisher Jorge Carrasco Guzman; “I believe that we are perilously close to a revolution of some kind.”²

Carlos Mesa Gisbert, President of Bolivia; “I’m taking office at a crucial time in Bolivia’s history. My first obligation is to listen to what the thousands of people have said during the last few weeks. . . . I understand that I am presiding over a government of historical transition.”³

In mid-September 2003, protests broke out in Bolivia over plans to allow a consortium of private oil companies to pipe gas from fields in southeastern Bolivia to the Chilean port of Patillos. At Patillos, the gas would be liquefied and shipped to consumers in California and Mexico. Officials in the government of President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada stated that the plan would generate \$500 million annually in royalties, which it promised to use for social investments and job creation. Nonetheless, uproar ensued. Polls revealed that 52% of Bolivians opposed any plan to allow foreign oil companies to exploit the nation’s gas reserves (second in South America only to Venezuela) and opposition jumped to 70% when the plan included a Chilean rather than a more expensive Peruvian route and terminus.⁴ Indigenous peasant organizations blocked highways and the national labor confederation *Central Obrero Boliviano* (COB) called a general strike.

Protests turned violent when Sánchez de Lozada sent troops to rescue a group of tourists trapped by peasant roadblocks. Protestors clashed with troops in the town of Warisata, and four demonstrators and one police

officer were killed. By early October, the violence had spread to El Alto, the dormitory city on the lip of the canyon above La Paz. In less than forty years, El Alto had mushroomed from a small squatter community near the airport into a city of 700,000 recent migrants from the rural altiplano. For *alteños*, anger at gas sales through Chile blended with old indigenous resentments and frustration at the limited economic opportunities provided by their new urban setting.⁵ Protestors controlled key access roads into the capital, calling to mind the late 18th century siege of the colonial city of La Paz by Aymara chieftain Tupac Katari. When Sánchez de Lozada sent troops to bring needed supplies into the city, the death toll rose to 75. Human Rights advocates in Bolivia called the October killings the bloodiest repression of civilians by a Latin American government since the end of the Cold War. In fact, nearly as many civilians (134) were killed during Sánchez de Lozada's 14 months in power, as during the military dictatorships of the 1970s. Repudiation of the government spread. On October 17, Sánchez de Lozada resigned and his vice-president Carlos Mesa Gisbert became president.⁶

Tupac Katari's siege of La Paz was not the only historical precedent evoked by the unfolding events. Peasant union leader Felipe Quispe understood the symbolic significance of Indian deaths in an armed effort to rescue western tourists at Warisata, site of Bolivia's first indigenous school, and fanned the flames of that confrontation into a larger protest. It was significant to Bolivian sociologist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui that the greatest bloodshed occurred on 12 October, Columbus Day, "as if to illustrate that colonial oppression has not ended; that the history inaugurated in 1492 continues to produce genocides."⁷ A historian at the national university, Carlos Mamani Condori, charged that Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada was "none other than the resurrected ghost of Pizarro invading our country and bringing with him the culture of death and all the miseries of duplicity and permanent treachery that sustain any colonial regime."⁸ The gas scheme reminded too many Bolivians of earlier bonanzas—silver, nitrates, and tin—that created great wealth for foreigners and a small national elite while leaving the country's nonrenewable resources depleted and most Bolivians as impoverished as before. Plans to pipe the gas through Chile were a bitter reminder of the war 124 years earlier when Chile occupied Bolivia's coastal provinces. The October events occurred on the eve of the one-hundredth anniversary of the humiliating treaty that forced Bolivians to accept permanent loss of their sovereign access to the sea. Often since political elites had roused nationalist sentiments at politically difficult moments by reminding Bolivians of that loss; now popular and indigenous forces turned those same sentiments and resentments back against the political elite that

had dared to sell Bolivia's precious gas through a Chilean port. Rivera Cusicanqui, observes that hatred of Chile, "inculcated through years of schooling and military service," had been transformed by the October events "into a broader indictment of systematic exploitation by rapacious corporations in the service of wealthy nations." Bolivian patience with eighteen years of neoliberal economic reforms had finally run out.⁹

Without a sense of history, the Bolivian events seem deluded and self-defeating. No less authoritative a voice than the *New York Times* called them, "an unfortunate manifestation of nationalism and economic ignorance." The more flamboyant *New York Post* called it a case of Bolivians "fighting to be poor."¹⁰ Nevertheless, a sense of history helps explain what otherwise seems senseless and a sense of history will be necessary to any solutions to Bolivia's current dilemmas. This paper examines four significant participants in those events from three distinct historical angles. The first attention is to Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, the ousted former president, head of the party that led Bolivia's 1952 revolution and the man most responsible for Bolivia's neoliberal path since 1985. A second focus is upon indigenous activists Evo Morales and Felipe Quispe who tapped deeper historical currents and the public exhaustion with neoliberal reforms to bring about the fall of Sánchez de Lozada and the apparent rise of Bolivia's indigenous majorities. Finally, there is Carlos Mesa Gisbert, media commentator, and historian, who, as of this writing, continues in tenuous control of Bolivia. He is the historian who is at the helm when history is on its head.

Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada—"fuera 'el gringo' Goni"

Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada ("Goni" as he is commonly known to Bolivians) is in many ways an extraordinary man. His policies over 18 years have been bold. In 1985, with Bolivia's inflation standing at 24,000% and prices for Bolivia's leading exports, tin and oil, in free fall, Víctor Paz Estenssoro tapped Goni to find a solution to the country's economic disaster. Paz Estenssoro, the octogenarian president, led the revolution thirty-three years earlier that had nationalized tin mines, distributed land to Indian peasants, gave workers a "co-governing" role, and enfranchised all Bolivians over the age of twenty-one. Now, guided by Sánchez de Lozada, Paz boldly adopted a market-oriented austerity plan that reversed nearly all of his previous policies. Inflation fell to single digits, the budget was balanced, tariffs were slashed to a uniform 10%, exchange rate controls ended, the tax code was simplified, and tax revenues increased fourteen-fold. Sánchez de Lozada recalls that, with the notable exception of the advice it received from

Harvard University economist Jeffrey Sachs, Bolivia was on its own. After the previous president defaulted on Bolivia's international debt, "the World Bank closed its office, the IMF pulled out its representative, and the American government and other friendly nations wouldn't answer the phone. We were considered a basket case. We were considered hopeless."¹¹ With only neighboring Chile providing a regional precedent, Bolivia became a Latin American pioneer in adopting what were later called neoliberal or "Washington Consensus" policies. Unlike Chile under Pinochet, Bolivia's policies were inaugurated by an elected civilian government at a time of severe economic crisis.¹²

By the mid-1990's Bolivia had become a showcase of Washington Consensus orthodoxy under an increasingly technocratic government. In 1993, Sánchez de Lozada was himself elected president and inaugurated a plan to privatize Bolivia's state run enterprises, introduce market efficiencies, and use the savings to fund and improve the state pension plan. His 1994 Popular Participation Law created municipalities and gave the new entities an unprecedented degree of autonomy and control over local expenditures. He followed with education reforms that acknowledged Bolivia's multicultural and multilingual heritage and gave local communities greater control over education.¹³ These plans were innovative and bold and even in their incomplete and flawed application brought a revolution to the relationship between Bolivian citizens and the state. Both Popular Participation and Education Reform gave indigenous communities new powers and ironically encouraged the *indigenista* pride that would eventually help to bring Goni down.

However, payoffs from all these reforms were slow in coming and Bolivians' faith was running out. When Sánchez de Lozada was again eligible to run for the presidency in 2002, his key opponents were no longer members of the Europeanized elite that had dominated Bolivian politics since the beginning. Nor were they any longer committed to the basic tenants of neoliberalism that had guided all leading candidates for president since 1985. Rather, Goni's chief challenger was the leader of the coca-producer's union, Evo Morales. Morales party, *Movimiento al Socialismo* (MAS) and the even more radically anti-neoliberal and anti-western *Movimiento Indigenista Pachicuti* (MIP) finished with almost one-third of the seats in the lower house. In the lead-up to the elections, both parties developed strong grass-roots organization and responsiveness, making them—for all their anti-system rhetoric—the political movements best able to take advantage of recent reforms to the system.¹⁴ Political realities had changed since the mid-nineties, a fact that escaped the U.S. Ambassador Manuel Rocha who warned that electing Morales would lead to a cut off of U.S. aid. Morales

immediately surged in the polls and finished only a percentage point behind Sánchez de Lozada in the election.¹⁵

After the election, Ambassador Rocha lobbied feverishly to put together a coalition committed to Washington Consensus policies that would keep Morales from office. The result was that Sánchez de Lozada again took power but by the narrowest of margins, at a time when patience with the model was clearly running thin, and with Morales leading a strong and not-so-loyal opposition.¹⁶ It was perhaps ironic that Sánchez de Lozada took office on the fiftieth anniversary of the revolution his party; the *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario* (MNR) had led in 1952. Celebration of the April 9th revolution came in the midst of the presidential campaign. Designated party historian, vice-presidential candidate Carlos Mesa Gisbert, spoke of the lingering significance of the revolution but Sánchez de Lozada moved quickly to current issues and a standard stump speech.¹⁷ To Goni that history had been transcended, but—as events of the next fourteen months were to prove—the fulfilled and unfulfilled promises of the revolution were much more alive in the collective popular memory than in that of the man now leading the party of nationalist revolution. It would be Mesa Gisbert, the historian, who would have to pick up the pieces.

Not that Sánchez de Lozada was unaware of the challenges ahead. In an address at Georgetown University in November 2002, he outlined his tasks. Goni reconfirmed his commitment to the Washington Consensus model but said he would work to broaden the benefits, reach out to indigenous communities, and maintain a dialogue with Morales. He reaffirmed his commitment to free trade, market reform, and industrial development and stated his hope that gas exports would provide both the funds to complete his government's project and the dynamism the Bolivian economy so desperately needed.¹⁸

Goni's main purpose in Washington that November was to request \$150 million to help his government financially until the gas deal could be finalized. Jeffrey Sachs who played such an important role in inaugurating Bolivia's neoliberal experiment watched in mounting dismay as it came apart and he later gave his own interpretation of what happened in Washington that November.

Sánchez de Lozada . . . warned President Bush last year that extreme poverty and widening ethnic divisions could lead to an insurrection. Bush literally laughed in his face, saying that he too faced political pressures. Sánchez de Lozada pressed for help—\$150 million—but Bush quickly ushered him from the Oval Office with a pat on the back. Sánchez de Lozada returned to Bolivia empty-handed—except for instructions from the International Monetary Fund to implement austerity measures in accordance

with U.S. dictates. . . Now U.S. policy in Bolivia lies in shambles.¹⁹

Both the United States and the IMF were concerned by mounting deficits caused by a recession that now entered its fourth year. Sánchez de Lozada begged for enough assistance to make the gas deal palatable to his countrymen and for patience in the highly divisive war on coca production until the economy could find a firmer footing. Washington instead hammered incessantly on the need for Sánchez de Lozada to complete the campaign against illegal coca begun by his predecessor and the IMF pushed a series of unpopular cost-cutting and revenue-raising proposals.²⁰ In February 2003, protests against the income tax pushed by the IMF escalated into the worst rioting since the return to democracy. Looting and rioting spread to other cities and when it was over the death toll stood at thirty-three.²¹ The riots and the resulting run on the banks by nervous Bolivians with dollar accounts forced Sánchez de Lozada to remove the controversial income tax and the IMF to accept a more gradual deficit reduction plan. In April the IMF authorized a \$118 million stand-by loan and, in early October announced that “Bolivia’s economic program is broadly on track despite a difficult political and social environment.” Ten days later Sánchez de Lozada fell.²²

Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada became the villain of the October events but his legacy is more complicated than that. Son of political émigrés, Goni grew up in the United States, was product of some of this country’s best schools, and owner of several of Bolivia’s most profitable mining operations. Sachs who worked closely with Goni called him “a genius; a very brilliant political figure and a man who understood, better than anybody in Bolivia at the time, how much would be needed to turn Bolivia on a stabilizing democratic and economic reform course.” Journalist Alma Guillermoprieto found Goni self-critical and reflective, “unusual in a politician,” she notes.²³ In the flush of their October anger Bolivians perhaps forgot that they had once found the man attractive as well. They gave him more votes than any other candidate in each of the three elections in which he participated—in 1994 the largest plurality received by any candidate since the return to democracy.

Yet their repudiation of Sánchez de Lozada in October 2003 was complete and deeply personal: He was “*el gringo* Goni,” the “*yanqui* puppet,” the “*k’ara* (literally non-person) murderer of Bolivian Indians!” Goni’s “*gringo*” persona was something he initially cultivated as a political asset. Growing up in the United States, educated at a private Quaker school, and with a degree in the classics from the University of Chicago, Goni never lost his slight English accent. During his first run for president in 1989 he told a

reporter, "Many people, I think, believe (the accent) gives me the image of a technocrat; of someone distant from reality. They don't consider me offensive, but the accent doesn't help with them. The other side of the coin is that it produces confidence in my ability and my honesty."²⁴

By 2003 the accent had become a distinct political liability as had Goni's other *gringo* attributes. His "*gringo* honesty" was increasingly seen as a peculiarly *gringo* style of white-collar corruption, particularly when set against headlines featuring Enron and closed, no-bid contracts in Iraq to Halliburton and Bechtel—all companies with which Bolivia had experience. Charges continue to swirl that Goni gave Enron the inside track in a no-bid "beauty contest" contract for a gas pipeline to Brazil. The contract allowed Enron to register as an international offshore company free of Bolivian laws and taxes and critics claim they have evidence that the company greased negotiations with \$2.5 million in bribes though there is no credible evidence that any of the money ended up in Goni's pockets.²⁵

In addition, by 2004, most Bolivians, instead of seeing Goni's "*gringo* ability," saw instead a distinct subservience to Washington. Previous president Hugo Banzer Suárez pledged to take Bolivia out of the cocaine circuit before the end of his term in 2002. Because of cancer, Banzer was forced to leave the presidency a year early. Even so his accomplishments were impressive: the destruction of 40,000 hectares of illegal coca and the substitution of 115,000 hectares of alternative crops in less than four years. Since 1995 Bolivia's potential cocaine production had declined from 240 metric tons to 43.²⁶ Bolivia became Washington's most compelling success story in the perennially frustrating war on drugs. Nevertheless, in 2001 the campaign stalled, victim of Bolivia's sluggish economy, the failure to find or to fund adequate alternatives for the coca producers, and the resulting escalation of resistance in the coca producing zones. During the campaign Sánchez de Lozada promised to remove troops from the coca zones and open negotiations with the coca producers union and its leader Evo Morales. However, when Sánchez de Lozada visited Washington in November 2002, Bush officials made it clear that progress in coca eradication remained the top U.S. priority and that they would accept no "back-sliding" in the drug war.²⁷ In short, U.S. pressure left Goni nothing to negotiate. The troops remained in the Chapare, the war on coca resumed, talks broke down with Morales, Morales went into active opposition, and public distaste for Goni mounted. In October Sánchez de Lozada was gone and U.S. officials belatedly realized they would have to place coca eradication on hold.

Nevertheless, if the October events were a repudiation of Sánchez de Lozada and his close ties to the United States, they were also a

repudiation of the neoliberal Washington Consensus policies with which he was so closely associated. The results of those reforms are in fact mixed. Certain social indicators have improved substantially. Life expectancy has risen from 46.7 years in the early 1970s to 61.4; infant mortality rates are less than half and mortality rates for children under five are one-third their rates in the early 1970s. Expenditures for public education have risen from 2.1% of GDP to 4.9% and health spending has nearly doubled as a percent of GDP since the early 1990s.²⁸ On the other hand, despite drastic structural adjustments, Bolivia's economic performance remains sluggish. Poverty persists and the absolute number of Bolivians beneath the poverty line has increased. Economic growth rates declined in the immediate aftermath of the 1985 austerity plan, increased steadily—if slowly—until 1998, and have stagnated since. Measured in current dollars, Bolivia's GDP has fallen steadily from \$8.5 billion in 1998 to \$7.8 billion in 2002. Per capita Gross National Income has gone from \$990 to \$900 over the same period and the gap between Bolivia's wealthiest and poorest citizens has widened. Despite its 1952 revolution, Bolivia's GINI index ranking reveals greater income disparity than any country in South America except Brazil and places it in the same category worldwide as South Africa.²⁹ In other words, the statistical result of 18 years of neoliberal reforms is a larger and generally healthier and better educated population, seeking opportunity in a stubbornly stagnant economy and confronted daily with ever-more-glaring disparities in wealth. This is a formula for social unrest and it should come as no surprise that many in Bolivia are questioning the basic tenants of the neoliberal model itself.

Evo Morales and Felipe Quispe: "We the indigenous people, after 500 years, are taking power!"

The theme of indigenous empowerment in the October 2003 uprising received heavy coverage in the U.S. press. The *Richmond Times-Dispatch* headlined its article on Bolivian events, "A World Turned Upside Down." The *Washington Post* quoted Aymaran market woman Denise Ortega:

Today Bolivia feels like my country. After 500 years of being invisible and hated, now we are starting to reclaim it from the Europeans who wanted to sell the very land out from under us; who want to give our country away to foreigners.³⁰

El Alto construction worker Justo Guillen was quoted as follows:

Twenty years ago, I was a teenager and I went to visit my mother where she worked as a maid for an older white couple. They had a gate to their house and I must have forgotten to close it, so he just kicked me in my pants in front of my mother and called me a stupid Indian. I could not do anything. He would have fired my mother and we needed the money, so all I could do was stand there and be humiliated. But last week, when we heard that Goni had quit and was running off to Miami, for the first time in my life I felt like I was the one doing the kicking.³¹

The empowerment of Bolivia's long-suffering indigenous majority is both gratifying and long-overdue. Until the 1950s Indians in the most indigenous of any Latin American country existed as a colonial caste, still subject to feudal obligations. The 1952 revolution gave them land, full status as citizens, and new political organizations, but discrimination persisted and the official policy was assimilation. The word *indio* virtually disappeared from the Bolivian lexicon except as an epithet and a smear. *Campesino* became the euphemism, as if the key distinguishing characteristic of Bolivia's indigenous majority was its lingering rusticity. During the 1960s and 1970s the urban indigenous population mushroomed creating new blends and forms of indigenous cultural expression. Indigenous intellectuals began to self-consciously claim their culture and this new self-identity came to focus in the events and conferences surrounding the quincentennial of Columbus's voyage to America. A 1994 revision to the preamble of Bolivia's constitution for the first time officially recognized the "multiethnic and pluricultural" nature of the Bolivian nation. Education and Popular Participation reforms passed during Sánchez de Lozada's first term allowed bilingual education and gave indigenous communities more control over local affairs. Political reforms also rewarded grassroots organizers and for the first time in 2002 a sizeable minority in Bolivia's House of Delegates dressed in nonwestern garb and insisted upon addressing the congress in Aymara or Quechua.³²

The most prominent, if not necessarily the most representative voice of this indigenous insurgency might be Felipe Quispe. It was he who organized the roadblocks that began the sequence of events leading to the fall of Sánchez de Lozada. After the November events, the *Washington Post* quoted him:

The indigenous people have known nothing but poverty, racism, and degradation at the hands of the whites who have done nothing but rob this country of its natural

resources. If nothing else is clear to Indians, we have come to understand just how indifferent the white political class is to our suffering. We have to take control of our country again if anything is going to change.³³

Quispe, known as “El Mallku,” (literally “condor,” figuratively “chieftain”) had participated in an armed uprising of the Tupac Katari Guerrilla Army during the year of the 500th anniversary of Columbus. He was freed after spending five years in prison and was subsequently elected head of the *Confederación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos* (CSUTCB). He brought his radical indigenous views to CSUTCB, Bolivia’s leading peasant union.³⁴ To Quispe, Bolivia is an indigenous nation and it must and will return to its roots. He does not respect or use the tri-colored flag of Bolivia but rather the *wipala* (a flag of seven colors in quilted squares.) He repudiates not only neoliberal economic theory but also liberal democracy and republicanism as western concepts and envisions instead a return to an idealized communitarian society rooted in romanticized indigenous values. His goals are autonomy, self-determination, and self-sufficiency for Bolivia’s indigenous people—presumably of all Bolivia’s indigenous people, though often when Quispe speaks he refers to the “Aymara nation.” His rhetoric is openly defiant and exclusionary and he enjoys confrontation. He regularly refers to non-Indians as *K’aras* (literally non-persons), threatened Mesa that if he did not comply with Quispe’s agenda he would be ousted in ninety days, and pointedly walked out of a scheduled meeting with former president Jimmy Carter when the former president arrived two-minutes late to their meeting.³⁵

Already local CSUTCB organizations, loyal to Quispe, have taken over significant portions of the rural, northern altiplano, cutting roads to the outside and imposing their own local government. “What we’ve been doing,” he recently told a *New York Times* reporter, “is taking out the government representatives, the police, the transit force, the judges, the subprefects, even the mayors. Like a drop of oil that expands, if this movement keeps growing we will reach all of Bolivia.”³⁶ Rumors abound that Quispe is arming his native state. Nevertheless, when asked in an interview if there was a place for non-Indians in this system, his response was that: “we cannot confront white racism with Indian racism. That would be a social aberration and political suicide. What we are going to do is to embrace everyone. This movement has a very big poncho and everybody can fit beneath it.”³⁷

If Quispe’s views were to prevail with a significant portion of Bolivia’s indigenous majority, they would pose a clear threat to Bolivia’s government and a direct challenge to the identity and entity of Bolivia itself. Bolivian

Indians are a majority with a relatively contiguous territorial base. Indigenous nationalism has the potential to become more than a romantic dream, though not without bloodshed and suffering. To the degree Quispe is thwarted by the state, his movement may take a *Senderista* turn. To the degree the weakness of the state allows his views to prevail among a significant portion of Bolivian Indians, Bolivia risks ethnic conflict or, at the very least, the strengthening of always latent secessionist currents in Bolivia's eastern departments. The residents of this gas-rich region already resent the perceived "bureaucratic parasitism" of governments in La Paz and the "ignorant obstructionism" of highlands Bolivians whose economic nationalism and opposition to the gas deal are much stronger. Rumors that Quispe's CSUTCB has made inroads into the large Quechua and Aymara migrant community in Santa Cruz threatens to unleash the latent racism many *cambas* (native lowlanders) feel toward the highlanders in their midst.³⁸ If it does, or if Quispe's followers turn to guerrilla activities to protect or expand their autonomous zone, Bolivia could become the "failed state" that some already foresee.³⁹

Quispe is product of significant improvements in the status of Bolivia's indigenous majority since 1952 as well as of the lingering prejudices and injustices they continue to face. He is a spokesman for long-repressed indigenous resentments and an effective representative of legitimate indigenous pride, but does he accurately reflect the aspirations of Bolivian Indians? Bolivian sociologist Roberto Laserna believes that most of Bolivia's indigenous people demand not separation, but inclusion. They come from the countryside to places like El Alto, partly out of desperation, but like migrants everywhere, out of hope as well. The informal sector, for all its desperation, provides autonomy and more opportunity to advance than the rural areas they abandoned. He thinks that the fact that so many of them give their children English names is an indicator of their desire to participate in the global system, not flee from it. And their anger, Laserna thinks, results as much from rising aspirations as it does from reduced possibilities.⁴⁰ On the other hand, U.S. anthropologist Lesley Gill describes the loss of power, the rising alienation, and the new forms of exploitation facing recent indigenous immigrants to the city from Bolivia's rural areas. Her assessment is that "after more than a decade of neoliberal economic restructuring in Bolivia, more people have become irrelevant to global and national processes of capital accumulation, while they have been losing other means of supporting themselves." In their changed environment, they struggle within and against the new disorder, searching for new collusions and accommodations that will "continue their lives from one day to the next."

"Hope is often their greatest resource, and it is supremely exploitable," writes Gill.⁴¹

If one looks closely at the quotes that opened this section, it is clear that indigenous revanchism combines with nationalist pride and a desire for individual empowerment with consciousness of their exploited condition as a class in ways that are still quite fluid. How these elements are finally resolved, or even if they can, will depend a great deal on the degree Bolivia's Indians can become participants in power, the channels to power they develop, the creativity of their leaders, the openness of national leaders, and the amount of space Bolivia is granted internationally.

Evo Morales may more closely represent these competing aspirations than Quispe does. Son of an impoverished Aymara farmer, Morales' political views were shaped by his indigenous cultural background as well as by the syndicalist socialism of the mineworkers union, so influential after the revolution. Morales organized several marches on La Paz by coca farmers in the early 1990s and was made head of the coca growers' confederation. In 1997 he was elected to the lower house of Bolivia's congress but was ousted in 2001 on charges that he was "intellectual author" of the deaths of several policemen in the Chapare. The spurious nature of the charges contributed to his success in the 2002 elections as did Ambassador Rocha's unfortunate foray into Bolivian politics. In that year's election, Morales finished a close second and MAS candidates won seats from every Bolivian department but the Beni.⁴²

By then Morales and his party had become advocates and representatives, not only of coca growers, but also of a swelling number of Bolivians dissatisfied with the results of neoliberal policies and politics as usual. His assessment after the October events was that "the cause of all these acts of bloodshed has a name—'neoliberalism.'" In a late October speech to the General Assembly of the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO) in Mexico City, Morales asserted that Latin American opponents to free trade could deal the United States a political blow as serious as the Vietnam War and called for a summit of anti-globalist regional leaders.⁴³ Morales has become the spokesman for what Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano calls "the Bolivia that wants to exist." For too long, Galeano writes, the fabulous wealth of Bolivia has been a curse to its people. Silver, saltpeter, tin, and gas: "This Bolivia, tired of living to fuel foreign progress, is the true Bolivia."⁴⁴ Several quick facts underscore Galeano's point. Between 1545 and 1825, 46,000 tons of silver worth \$10-15 billion dollars were taken from one mountain in Bolivia. Yet at the end of the colonial period Bolivia was the poorest and most backward of all Spain's colonial holdings. Between 1895 and 1952 countless millions of dollars

worth of tin were extracted from Bolivia. In 1952 Bolivia was still the most impoverished and backward country in South America and today the mining areas are the poorest and most backward parts of Bolivia. Now with its silver and tin largely depleted, Bolivia's per capita GDP has fallen from 15% of U.S. per capita GDP in 1900 to 7% in 1998 and continues to fall.⁴⁵

Gas requires less labor and more sophisticated foreign inputs than either silver or tin. Gas would be piped from deep in Bolivia's soil to a Chilean port where it would be liquefied in a highly sophisticated, automated liquefaction facility, loaded on foreign ships and sold to foreign consumers. By the terms of the contract Sánchez de Lozada was negotiating with the gas consortium, 18% of profits would revert to Bolivia as royalties. The rest would accrue to mostly foreign investors.⁴⁶ The discomfort many Bolivians feel with such a deal is not irrational. Their demand that the benefits of Bolivia's gas accrue first to Bolivians, even if that is not the most profitable or efficient use of the gas by neoliberal economic logic, has a logic of its own that should not be lightly dismissed.

In fact Bolivians are just adding their voices to a growing chorus of critics of neoliberal orthodoxy that includes Jeff Sachs, Nobel laureate economist Joseph Stiglitz, and World Bank officials. Officials of the World Bank recently acknowledged that their 1990s mantra that "even privatization badly done was better than the inefficiencies of state run enterprises" had forced poor nations to pay a heavy price.⁴⁷ Stiglitz uses Bolivia as an example of a country that became vulnerable to external forces beyond its control because it followed IMF prescriptions. Bolivia lowered its trade barriers only to face the continuing trade restrictions of countries that were less subject to IMF pressures. Liberalization of capital markets also made Bolivia susceptible to volatile capital flows that had little or nothing to do with the internal investment climate.⁴⁸ The IMF itself admitted that decelerated growth of Bolivia's economy after 2000 was caused in part by several "successes" pushed heavily by U.S. and multilateral agencies—reduction in coca production and cocaine exports and reduced smuggling due to customs reform. Those "successes" had not been accompanied by sufficient economic stimuli to provide alternative sources of income.⁴⁹

But neither would it be wise for Bolivia to return to the economic nationalism and heavy state role in the economy that preceded neoliberal reforms. Roberto Laserna believes the political appeal of resurging populism is leading Bolivia back down a blind ally. "The populists," he says, "can rouse the masses, but fail to offer alternatives." He continues:

A realistic view would certainly recognize that the level of poverty—more visible with Bolivia's urbanization—is enormous, but was

worse in the past. In fact, almost all indicators point to substantial progress made in our democracy's 21 year existence. . . . These advances are the result of audacious institutional reforms and the government's sustained and increased investment in social programs. They are part of the modern democracy.⁵⁰

Laserna goes on to argue that the most impoverished sectors in Bolivia are those least connected to the market economy. The solution, therefore, is not to abandon globalization and market reforms but to find ways to broaden the benefits. However, it will take a great deal of wisdom and political savvy to salvage what is useful from eighteen years of neoliberal reform. Despite his rhetoric, Morales might provide the key to such a process.

Unlike Quispe, Morales is neither opposed to everything western, nor does he want to remove Bolivia from international markets. Evo's message is more inclusive than Quispe's and he is willing to compromise. Certainly no figure, except President Mesa himself, has been more responsible for the survival of Bolivia's fragile democracy since October. As opposition to President Mesa's handling of the gas referendum and other connected issues threatened to topple his government in May and June of 2004, only Morales' continuing support kept Mesa in power. And if Morales served as a counter to other popular radical leaders, Eduardo Gamarra observes that he also has disciplined the political parties by pushing them towards a more supportive position toward Mesa as well.⁵¹

Over the months following the October uprising Morales met with Fidel Castro, Hugo Chávez, Brazilian President Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva, Argentine president Nestor Kirchner, Jimmy Carter, Kofi Annan, and a number of European dignitaries. Kirchner called Morales "a calm and intelligent man," Carter found him "impressive" and Morales told Lula "he felt like his younger brother, not only because of the ideas they shared but also because their fathers were illiterate."⁵² Clearly Morales has further political aspirations and, like Lula, may be particularly able to moderate his position because of authentic credentials as indigenous, rising from poverty, and rooted in popular organization. Any solutions to the problems facing Bolivia today must necessarily involve Evo.

The nature of that solution is not yet clear, but many Bolivians are ready to take off the "golden strait jacket" of market discipline that *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman feels is essential to development.⁵³ Bolivians have worn the strait jacket for 18 years—often straining against it, to be sure—but for the most part, wearing it with patience and hope. Now some are ready to discard it for the bowler and *pollera* of a romanticized indigenous past, others for a 1970s leisure suit of populist state paternalism.

Finally even the IMF and the U.S. embassy seem ready to acknowledge that it is no longer useful to merely recommend cinching the strait jacket a little tighter. Somehow Bolivia's leaders must find a way to produce a metaphorical garment that is suitably constraining, at least comfortable enough to keep on, and with some authentically Bolivian colors beside gold.

Carlos Mesa Gisbert: "Searching for the *Justo Medio*"

The man currently charged with finding such a solution is a strange politician. Film buff, historian, radio commentator; Carlos Mesa was invited to join Goni's ticket in 2002 precisely because he was a fresh face and not a political insider. As the toll of human lives rose in October of 2003, Mesa was the first in the administration to break with the president. As he put it later, "they asked me if I was willing to accept some deaths in order to protect the government in power and I said no." On October 16 he met with U.S. Ambassador David Greenlee and the next day he was declared the constitutional president when Sánchez de Lozada left the country.⁵⁴

Mesa clearly understood the gravity of the situation that confronted him; "we risk total shipwreck if we lose this last chance," he stated at his first press conference. Mesa asked only that he and his cabinet of independents be given "a little time and a little space," though few initially seemed ready to give him either. Peasants continued their land invasions, presenting his government its first crisis. Quispe gave him only three months to repudiate the policies of Sánchez de Lozada or promised that, like Goni, he would fall. Morales was meeting foreign dignitaries as if he was in charge—and in some ways he was. Many in prosperous, entrepreneurial Santa Cruz and gas-rich Tarija were angry at the collapse of the gas deal and the message it sent to foreign investors while others in La Paz and El Alto were clamoring for Goni and the perpetrators to be punished. Meanwhile military officials issued veiled warnings that they would not tolerate trials in non-military courts for soldiers charged with human rights violations. The United States continued to stress that coca eradication must not falter and the IMF fretted about the still worsening deficits. In short, no one was making Mesa's job any easier.

Nor was anyone, inside Bolivia or out, quite sure that this somewhat aloof, artistically inclined intellectual had the economic acumen to handle Bolivia's crisis, no matter how much time and space he was given. The gas war only exacerbated Bolivia's severe economic straits. According to the National Chamber of Industries, 100 big businesses permanently closed their doors during 2003 and those still functioning were working at 50% of capacity. GDP growth was lower than projected because of the crises and

continued to lag behind population growth. Official unemployment stood at 11.5% and was probably closer to 50% if the informal sector was included. Bolivia's debt rating was lowered from B to B-, six grades below investment level and one diplomat commented: "Who in their right mind is going to invest in a country that is so unstable and hostile to foreign capital?" A final piece of bad news for Mesa was that Sempra, the California-based energy consortium, took its offer off the table and the key issue that had animated the October gas war was now moot.⁵⁵

Mesa brings varied experience to the task. Son of well-known historians, Jose Mesa and Teresa Gisbert, Carlos Mesa Gisbert studied in La Paz and Madrid, receiving his degree in literature at the *Universidad Mayor de San Andres* in 1978. A film aficionado, Mesa began his career in radio as a film critic. He also wrote film criticism, political commentary, and sports columns for several newspapers, then founded and served as first director of the film association *Cinemateca Boliviana*. In 1982 he ventured into television and has served as director of several television stations in La Paz. His most visible position prior to becoming vice president was as the host of the political talk show *De Cerca* where he took an independent and moderately critical position that he can no longer afford now that he is making the decisions. Through it all, he has been a steady supporter and associate of La Paz's "Always Ready" football club.⁵⁶

Mesa's creative work has been just as eclectic. His first books dealt with the history of Bolivian cinema but with his parents he also co-authored Bolivia's most popular history survey which has now gone through seven editions.⁵⁷ He has produced a host of videos on historical themes for television. His film titled, "*Victor Paz Estenssoro, la política, el arte de lo posible,*" may provide some preparation for his new job. Certainly his most serious work of history *Los Presidentes de Bolivia: entre urnas y fusiles*, provides both context and a warning for his presidency. *Los Presidentes de Bolivia* is a massive work filled with tables and charts that combines traditional historical methods with quantitative history. His purpose in writing the book was to dispel the myths surrounding the Bolivian presidency such as the one, oft-repeated, that until the 1980s Bolivia suffered more revolutions than years of existence. Through careful statistical analysis and detailed accounts of each president and cabinet, Mesa found that Bolivia was no more unstable than its neighbors.⁵⁸ That discovery may somewhat reassure Mesa now that he finds himself facing the rifles without even the covering legitimacy of the ballot box.

Mesa's political weaknesses are obvious. He is a man without a party and until his candidacy for vice president, without political ties or experience. He has always leaned toward the MNR, but was never active

and now had alienated party members by abandoning Sánchez de Lozada. But many of Mesa's initial pronouncements indicate that he sees his task through the eyes of a historian rather than those of a politician. He has stressed that his is a government of historical transition, not politics as usual, and that he brings objectivity, historical perspective, and willingness to dialogue rather than political connections and clout. Friends and associates describe him as honest, analytical, and sincere. One called him "an intellectual in the deepest sense of the word, meaning that ideas not passions orient his life." "He has a thorough understanding of our history, and the intelligence, insight, and sensitivity to be a great leader," says another.⁵⁹

"The task before me is gigantic," Mesa told a Spanish journalist, "but my goal is to search for a rational relationship between state and society that will resolve our historical dilemmas."⁶⁰ Bolivian political commentator Jorge Lazarte calls this the search for the *justo medio* (happy medium) between the extremes that are at play in this moment of crisis. Mesa believes that a working synthesis can be found through dialogue to the contradictions inherent within and among the historical forces of democracy, market capitalism, globalization, and nationalism. Lazarte, who analyzed Mesa's leadership several months into his term, adds that this commitment to dialogue, coupled with the president's empathy, probably explains the unprecedented approval ratings the president has received. Beginning in October with an approval rating of 66% Mesa's support rose to 82% in December and has hovered in the 70-80% range since. Lazarte adds that as a student of quantitative history, Mesa must surely appreciate the significance of these ratings.⁶¹

But Mesa's rational and objective approach to the often Machiavellian intricacies and passions of Bolivian politics certainly has its limitations as well. Mesa is not a populist. Analyses in the press call him "aloof" and note that rather than "press the flesh," "wheel and deal," or engage in charismatic interaction with the public he has always preferred the more indirect and intellectualized approach of the columnist and commentator. A friend calls Mesa "too ingenuous and sincere, too quick to put his cards on the table when in politics one must be more calculating." Mesa also perhaps possesses too much Ranckian faith in reason and the objectivity of history as a guide. When he became president his mother told him that he must never try to write that chapter of Bolivia's history. "I challenged her," Mesa told a reporter, "to write what she considered correct or to find someone completely objective who could do it and that I would write my own account. Then we would compare the two to see which was more faithful to the truth." It is difficult to be objective when one writes

about oneself, he admitted, but by his own reckoning, not impossible. This faith that there is some objective standard by which to determine truth seems oddly at conflict with a political method based on dialogue and compromise.⁶²

In his speech to the nation on 4 January 2004, Mesa laid out the tasks before him in stark terms. It was the end of politics as usual and Mesa promised no less than a revolution in governance. Bolivia's future course would be determined through dialogue and direct citizen participation. The first task was to get the economy on track and fundamental to doing so was to reach a national agreement on the exploitation of gas. To find such an agreement, Mesa promised a national referendum, followed by another on constitutional change that would remove "the political monopoly of the parties" and provide mechanisms for direct citizen participation. Visceral issues about which Bolivians cared deeply—gas exploitation, an opening to the Pacific, drug policies—were all issues requiring a solution, but the solution would come through dialogue, negotiation, and the maximum feasible participation of all Bolivians.⁶³

Since that speech, Mesa has managed to remain in power, to maintain the support of most Bolivians, and to continue the dialogue. The most crucial issue of his first ten months in office has been gas and the connected issue of whether Bolivia will continue the neoliberal economic policies of the last 18 years. Several IMF reports since October emphasize that gas sales are crucial to Bolivia's future economic health—a point that Mesa does not dispute.⁶⁴ The issue is on what terms. Mesa's personal views of neoliberal policies are perhaps revealed in the welcoming speech he made to an international seminar sponsored by the World Bank a year before he came to power. Acknowledging the superior economic logic of the prevailing model, Mesa questioned whether neoliberalism could meet the ethical challenges that accompanied the rapid changes it so efficiently spawns.⁶⁵ His view that human intervention and ethical judgment are as essential to the formulation of economic policy as self-interest and efficiency is behind his observation after the election that he is "with Lula and Kirchner."⁶⁶

The gas referendum serves as a case study to evaluate Mesa's strengths and weaknesses as a president. Mesa went through four Ministers of Hydrocarbons before his team could even formulate a set of acceptable referendum questions, so sensitive were the issues involved. The questions finally chosen were clumsily contrived or artfully deceptive, depending upon the perspective of the critic. They certainly set off an immediate flurry of protests and criticism.⁶⁷ The questions (loosely translated) were as follows: 1) Are you in favor of abrogating Hydrocarbon Law 1689 promulgated by Sánchez de Lozada? (That law gave concessions to foreign companies to

exploit Bolivia's natural gas in exchange for a royalty of 18%, paid to the government.); 2) Are you in favor of restoring state ownership of all hydrocarbons at the well-head?; 3) Are you in favor of restoring a role for YPFB (*Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales Bolivianos*—the old national oil company) in the future exploitation of hydrocarbons?; 4) Do you favor using gas as a bargaining chip in negotiations with Chile for a sovereign port on the Pacific?; and 5) Do you favor raising royalties on currently privatized hydrocarbon production as high as 50% in order to fund social investments (schools, health, roads, job training etc.)?⁶⁸

The questions skirted the issue of fully renationalizing natural gas that polls suggested a majority of Bolivians favored. Question 2 is particularly deceptive because it does not clearly state that no state ownership would actually be “restored” because it refers only to future discoveries. The government could not risk the international approbation that would accompany a vote supporting restoration of state ownership over concessions already granted. In light of this ambivalence, it was less than candid for the president to proclaim after the voting that “the state has recovered its property,” when the referendum had actually reaffirmed existing private holdings. In fact, as one critic noted, the questions were framed to give voters the option either to support Mesa or to accept the status quo against which the country had rebelled in October. The vote on July 15 showed that the vast majority of Bolivians continued to support Mesa. Favorable votes ranged from 92% for the ambiguous question two to 55% for question four, but every measure passed was open to conflicting interpretations.⁶⁹

The referendum falls far short of proving the efficacy of Mesa's methods. In fact, it might be easier to use the referendum to argue that governing through dialogue and direct popular decision-making does not work. Certainly the referendum left many issues pending and the crucial tests are ahead. Mesa will have to translate a personal affirmation into sound economic policy when national consensus on that policy is still far from clear. An editorial in *La Razón* predicted that “the mother of all battles” looms as Congress works out the details of a new hydrocarbons law. Forces calling for the autonomy of eastern Bolivia and mobilized popular groups in the highlands able to exercise their veto through blockades and marches will continue to try to influence the final interpretations of the referendum. Lazarte now suspects that Mesa is merely looking to survive. “This is a government always looking for the way out of conflicts,” he said. “They're not trying to resolve them.”⁷⁰

But from the admittedly imperfect perspective provided by the internet, the jubilation on the president's face and in his words leads one to

suspect that more than his own political survival was at stake. Despite the ambivalences of the gas referendum, it is clear that Mesa continues to seek the *justo medio*. He told the Bolivian people, that, even if desirable, full renationalization was impossible. The country lacked the resources to pay compensation to the private companies and could not afford the international ostracism that would accompany uncompensated seizure of private assets. He gambled that by taking the issue directly to the Bolivian people he would find a “silent majority” that, like him, was seeking a *justo medio* between elitist neoliberal technocracy and the visceral, grass-roots, democratic populism of mobilized sectors with little power except to negate; some median position between the supposed efficiencies of the “golden strait jacket” and the temptations of economic nationalism or romanticized reaction. And since he bargains constantly from weakness, Mesa’s only tools to find the *justo medio* are dialogue, participatory democracy, and continued engagement. It is not yet clear whether a “happy medium” exists nor if Mesa’s methods can find it, but perhaps his methods and his style come closer to reflecting the ambivalent hope and caution most Bolivians continue to feel about entering the modern world on their own terms, rather than either technocratic neoliberalism or militant populism.

Because Mesa bargains from weakness as the leader of a country that must always bargain from that position, the response of outside actors, particularly the United States, is crucial. Either, they will provide him generous assistance and a bit of political space and time or will work to constrain his weak government and emphasize its dependency. The Bush administration supported Sánchez de Lozada to the bitter end—even after the level of killings became unsupportable. Its reasons—respect for constitutional order and defense of democracy—struck some observers as hypocritical in light of the very different standards the administration applied to Venezuela and later to Haiti.⁷¹ Because they supported Sánchez de Lozada, U.S. officials initially kept Mesa at arms-length—probably working to the president’s favor in light of the anti-American tone of the October uprising. Washington was initially skeptical about the ability of this non-politician to handle the political intricacies of ruling a country in the midst of a crisis, but as Mesa revealed his strengths, the United States has increasingly come to his support.

In January, with Mexico, the U.S. hosted an international conference of 18 nations and six international organizations to form a Bolivia Support Group. By May that group had raised \$74 million for direct budgetary support, tied to “sound fiscal policy.” In addition, Bolivia has received debt relief from the United States as well as from Germany, Brazil, and others. The IMF, in crisis mode, has increased its tolerance and flexibility in Bolivia’s

case.⁷² The 2002 extension of the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act to include textiles has increased textile exports to the United States by 80% and could add up to 40,000 new jobs according the U.S. Embassy and Bolivian trade officials. But hanging over these gains like the sword of Damocles is the threat that they could all be cancelled if Bolivia fails to make progress in coca eradication or drifts too far from Washington Consensus policy.⁷³

Coca eradication clearly has faltered in the past year. The Mesa government retreated from eradication because of the political tensions it created and will instead attempt to persuade farmers to voluntarily abandon coca for alternative crops. Mesa is asking the United States and Europe for \$969 million to fund a five-year program: \$557 million to develop markets for alternative crops; \$355 million for interdiction, \$17 million for rehabilitation and treatment; and only \$40 million for eradication. U.S. officials are not comfortable with Mesa's shift in priorities and are skeptical about the alternative cropping plans. U.S. assistance remains steady at a little over \$150 million a year, with the largest single portion still devoted to the drug war (\$91 million) and particularly coca eradication (\$49 million).⁷⁴ It is yet to be seen if the United States will use its immense leverage to reorder Mesa's priorities or will instead finally use its immense resources to address the market issues that continue to drive demand for coca. To use leverage instead of resources and to force Mesa to reinstate eradication without viable alternatives for the coca producers would probably break the tactical alliance between Morales and Mesa and bring down the government.

Any of several concessions by the international community would greatly improve Mesa's chances and turn his lingering popularity into true legitimacy and enough authority to govern and not merely to put out fires. A bit of U.S. patience on coca eradication would be one such concession. A second would be debt relief and/or truly generous assistance. Bolivia is one of three Latin American countries and sixteen countries worldwide that were selected as finalists in the 2004 Millennium Challenge sweepstakes. Congress authorized President Bush to allocate \$1 billion dollars to countries considered sufficiently poor but sufficiently successful in their fight against corruption and their promotion of social welfare and economic reform to merit the assistance. Bolivia barely made the cut due to low scores from the World Bank on corruption. As of this writing, it is unclear what share of the pot, if any, Bolivia will receive and recent turmoil may not have improved its chances. But *Washington Post* columnist Marcela Sánchez comments that Bolivia should move up the list if President Bush was sincere when he said, while announcing the finalists, that "persistent poverty can turn nations of great potential into the recruiting ground for terrorists."⁷⁵

It is in Chile's power to make the concession that would have the most immediate and symbolic impact. On the 100th anniversary of the treaty that forced Bolivia to formally surrender its seacoast, for Chile to seriously negotiate restoring to Bolivia some form of sovereign access would carry enough symbolic weight and sufficient economic benefits to enhance Mesa's legitimacy and give him a fighting chance to find the *justo medio*. It might even help Bolivia resolve its internal gas war. Mesa's recent campaign for access to the sea is not as diversionary or demagogic as some have portrayed it.⁷⁶ Jeffrey Sachs, comparing Bolivia and Vietnam, explains why:

Bolivia is very much a country of its geography. This is such an obvious point that perhaps it took me 15 years – and I'm still learning – to understand what that really means. But I came to understand very directly when I worked a few years later with Viet Nam for a short period of time. Viet Nam was growing at 6 percent a year. It had a miserable government; corrupt, terrible regulations. It was so much worse in governance than Bolivia ever was, much less democratic – of course there was much less participation of civil society. There was a pretty authoritarian old guard, a lot of corruption and mismanagement around the state enterprise. And yet it was growing at several percentage points per year faster. And it was absolutely obvious why: they had a beautiful long coast that was excellent for bringing in Taiwanese firms and Korean firms and many other firms that wanted to make television sets and sandals and footwear and T-shirts and other things which created jobs and created income.

So you begin to understand, in much too slow a way, that globalization actually doesn't treat all parts of the world equally; that it's not all this mantra of governance which has become so fashionable which holds that when things go wrong it's clearly that poor people don't govern themselves properly; that the world is really a more complex structure and development is really a much more complex process than some of the simple visions we have of everyone running the same race or everyone participating in the same globalization process.⁷⁷

By Sach's calculations, lack of direct access to the sea costs a country 0.7% of its potential annual growth—in Bolivia's case between \$300 million and \$500 million annually. A recent article in the La Paz newspaper *El Diario* claims that IMF, World Bank, and UNCTAD studies reinforce Sach's

calculations and that the total losses since 1998 are more than \$4 billion.⁷⁸

Allowing for the fact that counterfactuals are impossible to measure, these figures and Sach's observations illustrate that successful development is about more than following the correct formula and adopting the proper governance. Location matters, history matters, people matter, culture matters, and ethics matter. Solutions to Bolivia's current crisis require attention to all these elements and that is why dialogue might work better than formulas have worked these last eighteen years; but only if there is enough time and enough space.

This is the most valuable thing the United States and Bolivia's neighbors could contribute right now. Historically, powerful nations must project their power strategically and economically and they are not inclined to be patient. Historically, successful nations do not surrender territory except under duress. But perhaps history can be stood on its head. Perhaps a nation as wealthy as the United States could provide enough assistance to a country like Bolivia to truly make a difference. Perhaps it could believe its own messages about markets and democracy and individual rights enough to realize that it is unfair to expect Bolivian peasants to pay the highest costs in the drug war. Perhaps a country with as much seacoast as Chile could return a small piece of it to a country like Bolivia because it would secure a stable neighbor. Then perhaps a country in the midst of a crisis might also be able to transcend its own history—and with a historian at the helm.

Notes

¹ Jon Jeter, "President's Ouster Brings Pride to Bolivia's Indians," *Washington Post*, 21 October 2003.

² Jon Jeter, "Bolivians Fume over Gas," *Washington Post*, 27 October 2003.

³ Carlos Diego Mesa Gisbert, "Discurso del Presidente," 17 October 2003, http://www.comunica.gov.bo/documentos_oficiales/discursos/20031017-mesa.html.

⁴ Jon Jeter, "Bolivians Fume over Gas Plans," *Washington Post*, 28 September 2003.

⁵ A very interesting anthropological study of El Alto written well before the October events, provides valuable information for interpreting these events. See Lesley Gill, *Teetering on the Rim*, (New York, 2000).

⁶ Information in this paragraph comes from many news sources covering that period. Among the most important: Kathryn Ledebur, "Popular Protest Brings Down the Government," *Special Update: Bolivia*, Washington Office on Latin America, November 2003; *El Diario* (La Paz), 31 December 2003; *Latin American Weekly Report*, 21 October 2003; and Raquel Gutierrez Aguilar, "Recuperating Natural Resources, Rebuilding a Nation," Interhemispheric Resource Center, www.americaspolicy.org.

⁷ Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, "Matáforos y Retóricas en el Levantamiento de Octubre," *Bolivian Studies Journal* Vol. 4, Issue 1 (February) 2004.

⁸ Carlos Mamani Condori, "Desde el Qullasuyu bajo el signo de la violencia y la muerte," *Bolivian Studies Journal* Vol. 4, Issue 1 (February) 2004.

- ⁹ Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, "Matáforos y Retóricas en el Levantamiento de Octubre," *Bolivian Studies Journal* Vol. 4, Issue 1 (February) 2004.
- ¹⁰ Laura Carlsen, "Resources War: Lessons from Bolivia, Americas Program, Interhemispheric Resource Center, www.americaspolicy.org; Jim Schultz, "Behind Bolivia's Gas War," Pacific News Service, 17 October 2003, www.pacificanews.org.
- ¹¹ Interview conducted by PBS with Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, 20 March 2001, found at PBS, "Commanding Heights" website: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/commandingheights/lo/people/pe_country.html.
- ¹² *Ibid.* There is no consensus on what is meant by the "Washington Consensus." For a brief discussion see Global Trade Negotiations Home Page, Center for International Development at Harvard University, <http://www.cid.harvard.edu/cidtrade/issues/washington.html>
- ¹³ Kenneth D. Lehman, *Bolivia and the United States: A Limited Partnership*, (Athens, 1999), 220-21; Herbert S. Klein, *A Concise History of Bolivia*, (Cambridge University Press, 2003) pp. 261-62 and Merilee Grindle, "Shadowing the Past? Policy Reform in Bolivia, 1985-2002," *Proclaiming Revolution (London and Cambridge, 2003)*, 334. Chapters in *Proclaiming Revolution* by Manuel Contreras on education reforms and George Gray Molina on popular participation also provide good discussions of the issues covered here.
- ¹⁴ Eduardo Gamarra, "The Construction of Bolivia's Multi-Party System," *Proclaiming Revolution*, 304.
- ¹⁵ "EEUU amenaza con suspender ayuda si Evo llega al poder," *El Diario*, 26 June 2002. The State Department denied any connection between the Ambassador's statement and the late surge by Morales' which confounded the pollsters: "Feds Defend Ambassador to Bolivia," *New York Times*, 10 July 2002.
- ¹⁶ Gamarra, "Construction of Bolivia's Multiparty System," *Proclaiming Revolution*, 291.
- ¹⁷ Merilee Grindle, "1952 and All That: The Bolivian Revolution in Comparative Perspective," *Proclaiming Revolution*, 1-2.
- ¹⁸ Alexis Zepeda, "Sanchez de Lozada Addresses Packed Auditorium," *Reflections/Reflejos*, Center for Latin American Studies, Georgetown University, Fall 2002.
- ¹⁹ Jeff Sachs, "Another Foreign Policy Failure," *Miami Herald*, 30 October 2003.
- ²⁰ It is estimated that nearly \$600 million left Bolivia's banking system as a result of the uncertainties surrounding the elections. Gamarra, "The Construction of Bolivia's Multiparty System," *Proclaiming Revolution*, 315, footnote 5.
- ²¹ "Rioting, Clashes in Bolivian Capital Kill 16," *Washington Post*, 14 February 2003 and "Economic Crisis and Vocal Opposition Test Bolivia's President," *New York Times*, 16 February 2003.
- ²² International Monetary Fund, "IMF Approves One-Year \$118 Million Stand-by Arrangement for Bolivia," 2 April 2003; IMF, "Bolivia: Request for Stand-By Arrangement—Staff Report" June 2003; and IMF, "IMF Completes Second Review of Bolivia's Stand-By Arrangement," 6 October 2003 all found at <http://www.imf.org/external/country/BOL/>
- ²³ Interview conducted by PBS with Jeffrey Sachs, 15 June 2000, found at PBS, "Commanding Heights" website: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/commandingheights/lo/people/pe_country.html and Alma Guillermoprieto, *The Heart That Bleeds*, (New York, 1995), 198.
- ²⁴ Shirley Christian, "Election Talking Point: Does *Gringo* Accent Hurt?" *New York Times*, 24 March 1989.

- ²⁵ "Enron Keeps Role in Bolivian Pipeline Project," *Alexander's Gas and Oil Connection*, Vol 7 #14, 12 July 2002, <http://www.gasandoil.com/goc/company/cnl22892.htm>. The original contract between Enron and the government is missing, and only one photocopy exists. The government of Bolivia is currently in line behind other claimants against Enron. Bolivia's claim is for \$130 million for breach of contract. *El Diario*, 20 April 2004.
- ²⁶ Andean Group Report, 27 February 2001 and U.S. Department of State, "International Narcotics Control Strategy Report: South America—2000", found at <http://www.state.gov/g/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2000/883.htm>.
- ²⁷ Gamarra, "Construction of Bolivia's Multiparty System," *Proclaiming Revolution*, 293.
- ²⁸ See, PNUD, "Informe Nacional de Desarrollo Humano, 2004" p. 275; United Nations Development Program, *Human Development Indicators*, <http://hdr.undp.org/>; and World Bank Group, "Bolivia Data Profile," at <http://devdata.worldbank.org/external/CPProfile.asp?SelectedCountry=BOL&CCODE=BO L&CNAME=Bolivia&PTYPE=CP>. Herbert Klein also gives a good summary of recent statistical data on Bolivian social indicators in Herbert Klein, "Social Change in Bolivia since 1952," *Proclaiming Revolution* and in Klein, *A Concise History of Bolivia*, pp.250-52.
- ²⁹ See United Nations Development Program, *Human Development Indicators*, <http://hdr.undp.org/>; World Bank Group, "Bolivia Data Profile," and *World Factbook*, Field Listing—Distribution of Family Income—Gini Index, <http://www.cia/publications/factbook/fields/2172.html>.
- ³⁰ Jon Jeter, "Bolivia's New Leader Pledges Early Vote," *Washington Post*, 19 October 2003.
- ³¹ Jon Jeter, "President's Ouster Brings Pride to Bolivia's Indians," *Washington Post*, 21 October 2003.
- ³² "Despues de 20 años de democracia, originarios ingresan al parlamento," *El Diario*, 25 July 2002.
- ³³ Jon Jeter, "Bolivians Fume over Gas Plans," *Washington Post* 27 October 2003.
- ³⁴ *El Diario*, 23 September 2003, *Latin American Weekly Report*, 23 September 2003 and 21 October 2003; and Isaac Bigio, "Felipe Quispe: de "terrorista" a lider parlamentario" *El Jugueta Rabioso*, found at <http://www.eljugeterabioso.org/article454.html>.
- ³⁵ Interview, Felipe Quispe with Luis Gomez and Al Giordano, "El Mallku Speaks" <http://www.narconews.com/felipe1eng.html> and Jimmy Carter, "Bolivia Trip Report," December 16-21, 2003.
- ³⁶ Juan Forero, "Where the Incas Ruled, Indians are Hoping for Power," *New York Times*, 17 July 2004. In a recent story, covered in sensationalist terms in the United States, the local mayor of one such town was lynched for supposed corruption. See "Bolivians Burn Alive Mayor Accused of Corruption," *Washington Post*, 15 June 2004.
- ³⁷ "Existe una organización armada que opera en el altiplano, confirma el gobierno," Published in Bolpress 1 July 2004. Found at www.americas.org/item_15479 and Interview, Felipe Quispe with Luis Gomez and Al Giordano, "El Mallku Speaks."
- ³⁸ "Comite Pro-Santa Cruz exige autonomia regional," *El Diario*, 24 June 2004 and "Referendum on Gas Takes Place Sunday," *Christian Science Monitor*, 16 July 2004. Comments made by "Miss Bolivia" (a cambia) at the "Miss Universe" reveal the underlying racial and ethnic tensions. She reportedly told the press that "Unfortunately, people don't know much about Bolivia. They think of La Paz and believe all Bolivians are poor, short, and Indian." The comments drew vehement reaction from La Paz. "Boliviana deja pésima impresión de la patria," *El Diario* 27 May 2004. A recent article in the *New York Times* covers autonomous sentiments in Santa Cruz in some depth:

Juan Forero, "Bolivia's Elitist Corner, There's Talk of Cutting Loose," *New York Times*, 27 August 2004.

- ³⁹ In a column soon after the October uprising, Andres Oppenheimer of the *Miami Herald* noted that indigenous radicalism is of increasing concern in Washington. "The Bush administration does not take [the issue] lightly. They say radical leftist groups have effectively infiltrated Latin American indigenous groups and in some cases have taken over their leadership." This illustrates still another danger of the path Quispe has chosen—international oversimplification and intolerance. Andres Oppenheimer, "What would Latin America be without Western Influence?" *Miami Herald*, 6 November 2004.
- ⁴⁰ Roberto Laserna, "La Crisis de Octubre y el Fracaso del *Ch'enko*," and "Bolivia entre populismo y democracia," found at http://www.geocities.com/laserna_r/. Laserna notes that it is not a meaningless statistic that many campesinos and rural migrants to the city give their children English names "denoting their desire to be included in the globalization process." A key point of both articles is that the romantic *indigenismo* of Quispe fails to represent the true interests or aspirations of the indigenous majority and reflects instead a self-defeating populist demagoguery. My own experience working for five years with Quechua and Aymara migrants to Santa Cruz suggests to me that most want to live IN the modern world AS Quechuas and Aymaras.
- ⁴¹ Gill, *Teetering on the Rim*, .3-4 and 19.
- ⁴² Juan Forero, "From Llama Trails to the Corridors of Power," *New York Times*, 6 July 2002; Victor Orduña, "De Abril a Evo," *Revista Pulso*, 7 November 2002, <http://bolivia.indymedia.org/es/2002/07/168.shtml>; and Benjamin Dangl, "Evo Morales: 'After 500 Years of Resistance, We are Taking Power,'" <http://www.greenleft.org.au/back/2003/564/564p16.htm>
- ⁴³ Andrea Rodriguez, "Castro Urges Leaders to Forge Own Paths," *Washington Post* 31 October 2003.
- ⁴⁴ Eduardo Galeano, "Bolivia: The Country that Wants to Exist," *The Progressive*, December 2003.
- ⁴⁵ Andre Hofman, "Long-run Economic Development in Latin America in a Comparative Perspective: Proximate and Ultimate Causes," *Serie Macroeconomía del Desarrollo* #8 CEPAL/ECLAC, Economic Development Division, Santiago, Chile December 2001.
- ⁴⁶ Jimmy Langman, "Bolivia's Protests of Hope," *The Nation*, 22 October 2003, <http://www.thenation.com/doc/pring.mhtml?i=20031103&s=langman>
- ⁴⁷ "BM reconoce como 'errado' la privatización de empresas," *El Diario*, 17 June 2004.
- ⁴⁸ Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Globalization and its Discontents* (New York, 2003) 61 and 70.
- ⁴⁹ *Andean Group Report*, 3 October 2000
- ⁵⁰ Roberto Laserna, "Bolivia , The Beleaguered Democracy" and "Bolivia entre populismo y democracia," found at http://www.geocities.com/laserna_r/.
- ⁵¹ Eduardo Gamarra, speaking at CSIS South American Project breakfast, 7 May 2004, http://www.csis.org/americas/sa/040507_bolivia.pdf
- ⁵² Jimmy Carter, "Bolivia Trip Report," 16-21 December 2003; "Evo Morales se roba la Cumbre de presidentes", 20 November 2003 www.redvoltaire.net; United Nations Press Release SG/T/2388, Activities of Secretary-General in Bolivia, 12-15 November 2003, www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2003/sgt2388.doc.htm.
- ⁵³ See Friedman's definition of the golden strait jacket. Thomas Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, (New York, 2000), 105.
- ⁵⁴ "Mesa destacó por dar paso a la sucesión constitucional," *El Diario* 31 diciembre 2003 and "De la pantalla a la presidencia, en una carrera fugaz," *La Razon* (La Paz) 18 Oct 2003. The visit with Greenlee was obligatory in light of Bolivia's ongoing dependency on

U.S. support and approval. Jimmy Carter expressed surprise when he visited Bolivia in December 2003 at the matter-of-fact way that Bolivian leaders referred to deep U.S. involvement in the internal affairs of their country. Jimmy Carter, "Trip Report," 16-21 December 2003.

- ⁵⁵ Sources include Carlos Mesa, "Discurso de posesión del Presidente Carlos Diego Mesa Gisbert," 17 October 2003, http://www.comunica.gov.bo/documentos_oficiales/discursos/20031017-mesa.html; Ximena Ortúzar, "Adviertan sindicatos al nuevo presidente: 'si nos valla tambien lo vamos a tumbar'" *La Jornada de Mexico*, 19 Octubre 2003; "Bolivia Debt Rating Lowered after President Resigns," Bloomberg.com 20 October 2003; and *Latin American Weekly Report*, 23 December 2003.
- ⁵⁶ "Carlos Mesa Gisbert," CIDOB, Biografías de Líderes Políticos, www.cidob.org/bios/castellano/lideres/m-019.htm; "Página Web de la Vicepresidente, Carlos D. Mesa Gisbert, <http://www.vicepres.gov.bo/Vicepresidente/CVCMG.htm>; and "De la pantalla a la presidencia, en una carrera fugaz," *La Razón* (La Paz) 18 October 2003.
- ⁵⁷ José de Mesa, Teresa Gisbert, and Carlos D. Mesa Gisbert, *Historia de Bolivia*, (La Paz, Editorial Gisbert).
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, and Mesa Gisbert, Carlos D., *Los Presidentes de Bolivia, entre urnas y fusiles*, (La Paz, 1990). Mesa's blend of history and statistics apparently has had mixed success. Twenty-seven readers ranked the book on the Amigos del Libro website with a composite ranking of 2 out of 5 stars—"deficiente."
- ⁵⁹ Ximena Ortúzar, : "Adviertan sindicatos al Nuevo presidente: 'si nos valla tambien lo vamos a tumbar,'" *La Jornada de Mexico*, 19 Octubre 2003.
- ⁶⁰ Francesc Relea, "Me Identifico con Lula y Kirchner," *El País de Madrid*, <http://www.comunidadboliviana.com>.
- ⁶¹ "El Estilo de Carlos Mesa," *La Prensa* (La Paz) 11 January 2004 and "La Popularidad del Presidente Carlos Mesa" *Los Tiempos* (Cochabamba), 19 December 2003.
- ⁶² Ximena Ortúzar, : "Adviertan sindicatos al Nuevo presidente: 'si nos valla tambien lo vamos a tumbar,'" *La Jornada de Mexico*, 19 Octubre 2003 and "Historiador y periodista es Nuevo presidente de Bolivia," UnionRadio.net Venezuela 18 October 2003.
- ⁶³ Carlos Mesa, "Mensaje de Carlos Mesa Gisbert, Presidente Constitucional de la República de Bolivia," www.comunica.gov.bo/documentos_oficiales/discursos/20040104-mesa.html.
- ⁶⁴ IMF, Press Release No. 04/40 27 February 2004 and IMF, "Bolivia: Third Review Under the Stand-By," IMF Country Report No. 04/193, July 2004, <http://www.imf.org/external/country/BOL/>
- ⁶⁵ Carlos Mesa, "Discurso de Apertura," Seminario Internacional "Capital Social Etica y Desarrollo: Los Nuevos Desafíos," La Paz, 25 and 26 November 2002, <http://www.iadb.org/etica/sp4321/DocHit.cfm?DocIndex=524>
- ⁶⁶ Francesco Relea, "Me identifico con Lula y Kirchner," *El País* (Madrid) 19 October 2003, <http://www.perspectivaciudadana.com/031122/americalatina03.html>
- ⁶⁷ "Protests explode over Gas2 Deal," Resource Center of the Americas.Org, 23 April 2004 and "La Administración Mesa está perdiendo el control," Bolpress,, Resource Center of the Americas.Org 14 May 2004..
- ⁶⁸ "Un análisis crítico del referéndum vinculante sobre los hidrocarburos." CEDIB, 27 May 2004, www.cedib.org/pcedib/?module=displaystory&story_id=7907&format=html
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, and *El Diario*, 23 July 2004.

- ⁷⁰ Alistair Scrutton, "Now Comes the Hard Part for Bolivia's Leaders," Reuters News-Wire, 19 July 2004.
- ⁷¹ See Dannah Baynton, "A Study in Opposites," Resource Center of the Americas, 24 October 2003, www.americas.org/item65; Kathryn Ledebur, "Popular Protest Brings Down the Government," *Special Update: Bolivia*, Washington Office on Latin America, November 2003, p. 2; and Reed Lindsey, "Bolivia's Bloody October," *Toronto Star*, 3 November 2003.
- ⁷² Department of state, Daily Press Briefing, Richard Boucher spokesman, "Donors Group Meeting," 15 January 2004, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2004/28194.htm>; Secretary Colin L. Powell, "Remarks to the Bolivia Support Group," 16 January 2004; <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/28250.htm>; David Gollust, State Department, "Bolivia Receives Promises of Support at Washington Conference, 17 January 2004, <http://quickstart.clari.net/voa/20040116.html>; IMF, "Bolivia: Third Review Under the Stand-By," IMF Country Report No. 04/193, July 2004, <http://www.imf.org/external/country/BOL/>; and *El Diario*, 27 April 2004; 13 May 2004; 9 July 2004.
- ⁷³ U.S. Embassy, La Paz. "Bolivia and the Andean Trade Program," <http://lapaz.U.S.embassy.gov/atpdea/atpaeng.htm>; "TLC: Bolivia quiere seguir con la ATEPA" *El Deber* (Santa Cruz) 2 June 2004; and Pablo Solon, "ATPDEA: El Dulce encanto de la muerte," <http://www.redvoltage.net/article350.html>. The current political situation in Bolivia requires the government to sit out the first round of talks on an Andean Free Trade Agreement with the United States.
- ⁷⁴ Kevin G. Hall, "Bolivia Challenges Washington wisdom in the Andean Drug War" Knight Rider Newspapers, 27 July 2004, www.realcities.com and Statements by John Creamer, Deputy Director for Andean Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "U.S. Supports Democracy, Development, Counternarcotics Efforts in Bolivia", 7 May 2004.
- ⁷⁵ Marcela Sanchez, "Bolivia Seeks Underdog Victory in Contest for U.S. Aid," [washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com), 13 May 2004 and The White House, "Remarks by the President at Ceremony Celebrating Countries Selected for the Millennium Challenge Account," 10 May 2004, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/05/20040510.html>. The UN-sponsored initiative set a development assistance target for wealthy nations of 0.7% of GDP. The United States currently contributes only a little over 0.1% of GDP and comes in firmly in last place among the 22 donor countries. Jeffrey Sachs, "What's Good for the Poor is Good for America," *The Economist*, 12 July 2001
- ⁷⁶ Mesa's efforts have drawn supportive statements from Kofi Annan, Jimmy Carter, Cesar Gaviria, Hugo Chávez, Fidel Castro, and others. They also led to a blustery exchange with Chile's Ricardo Lagos at the Special Summit of the Americas at Monterrey in January. So far the Bush administration has been mute. See "Palabras de Carlos Diego Mesa Gisbert" and "Palabras de Ricardo Lagos Escobar," Organización de los Estados Americanos, <http://www.oas.org>.
- ⁷⁷ "Jeffrey Sachs on the Challenges of Development," address to the International Development Research Centre, 19 June 2001, http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-25642-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html.
- ⁷⁸ "Bolivia pierde más de \$us 4.000 millones por enclaustramiento," *El Diario*, 4 July 2004.

EL NATURALISMO CON SABOR ARGENTINO DE EUGENIO CAMBACERES: TRANSCULTURACIONES LINGÜÍSTICO-CULTURALES, XENOFOBIA ILUSTRADA E IMAGINARIO PARA LOS “RECIEN LLEGADOS”

Carlos Rodríguez McGill, Ph.D.
University of Michigan-Dearborn

Desde nuestra época, ya en pleno siglo XXI, nos resulta difícil trasladarnos imaginariamente hacia el 1880 rioplatense, y vislumbrar la importancia que las obras de Eugenio Cambaceres tuvieron para aquellos lectores de la Argentina del “salto modernizador”, de finales del siglo XIX (Ludmer, 229). Desde su aparición, las obras de Cambaceres fueron ávidamente leídas, e inmediata y sucesivamente reeditadas (Santacatalina, 14). Martín García Mérou, influyente crítico literario y miembro de la famosa generación del 80¹, nos dice en *Libros y autores* (1886) que *Pot-pourri*, su primera novela publicada aparecida en 1881 “corría de mano en mano” pues “el estilo de aquellas páginas acres e interesantes, produjo, ante todo, un movimiento de asombro” (García Mérou, 71). Por su parte, Ricardo Rojas, sostiene todavía en su *Historia de la literatura argentina* (1917) que:

Llevó a la novela ese mismo espíritu de independencia y osadía: penetró en aquella zona de las costumbres que la hipocresía social manda tener velada: pintó lo instintivo y lo grotesco tal como lo veía en el mundo real. Por todo ello, la publicación de cada uno de sus libros resultó un escándalo en nuestro medio todavía aldeano. (*Los Modernos*, 391-2)

El escándalo, el asombro y la ávida lectura que el corpus novelístico de Cambaceres produjo, se explica en parte, porque es uno mismo de los ilustres miembros de la generación quien saca a relucir los trapos sucios de la oligarquía comercial terrateniente a la que aquella representa, aun cuando escribe para este mismo grupo el que “se verá aludido en los personajes y en los hechos descritos en las obras” (Cymerman 16). Eugenio Cambaceres publica un total de cuatro novelas, la ya mencionada *Pot-pourri* (1881), *Música sentimental* (1884); y las dos obras de las que nos ocuparemos en este estudio, *Sin Rumbo* (1885) y *En la sangre* (1887), estas últimas producidas bajo el signo del naturalismo francés (Giusti XIV). Vale la pena mencionar que quizás debido a su popularidad entre los círculos intelectuales de la época, su novela *Sin rumbo* (1885) tendría asignado una posición

fundacional en el canon de la literatura Argentina, posición que la crítica literaria se ha limitado a reproducir hasta nuestros días.

Como punto de partida para poder definir el naturalismo de Cambaceres como una adaptación (o aculturación) típicamente argentina, nos proponemos, en primer lugar, un análisis de los múltiples registros lingüísticos y de sus rasgos dialógicos, valiéndonos de los postulados de Mijaíl Bajtín. En este sentido, creemos que la heteroglosia social presente en los textos cambacerianos, puede ser análogamente leída como un dinámico proceso de transculturación cultural, que es entendido por Ángel Rama como:

[...] echar mano a las aportaciones de la modernidad, revisar a la luz de ellas los contenidos culturales regionales y con unas y otras fuentes componer un híbrido que sea capaz de seguir transmitiendo la herencia recibida. Será una herencia renovada, pero que todavía pueda identificarse con su pasado.
(*Transculturación narrativa en América latina* 29)

Asimismo, intentaremos comprobar que estos procesos textuales de transculturación cultural, denotan un proceso de mediación cultural mucho más profundo, que va elaborando textualmente un imaginario nacional argentino. Finalmente el estudio se propone demostrar que la innegable xenofobia que se infiltra en el imaginario ochentista, de la mano del naturalismo cambaceriano, paradójicamente se convierte en el registro textual de una realidad cultural: la incuestionable presencia y la incorporación definitiva del inmigrante al imaginario nacional de la Argentina moderna.

Transculturaciones Lingüístico-Culturales en Cambaceres: Entre Mijaíl Bajtín y Ángel Rama

Mijaíl Bajtín fue quien puso en relieve la importancia que tiene en una novela o en un texto narrativo, el montaje de diferentes voces que ayudan a su construcción, denominándolas dialogismo:

Dialogism is the characteristic epistemological mode of a world dominated by heteroglossia. Everything means, is understood as a part of a greater whole –there is a constant interaction between meanings, all of which have the potential of conditioning others. Which will affect the other, how it will do so and in what degree is what is actually settled at the moment of the utterance. (426)

Este dialogismo es la incorporación de la heteroglosia ² del mundo real al texto literario, o sea, la estratificación de la lengua, con sus diferentes niveles o capas lingüísticas. Esto es precisamente lo que busca Cambaceres mediante la heteroglosia en sus novelas, donde nos ha legado un perdurable registro de la complejidad social del siglo XIX de la Argentina. La mirada panorámica de Cambaceres también pinta los distintos espacios físicos desde los cuales surgen estas voces, proceso que se lleva a cabo a través de la mediación de los protagonistas, Andrés de *Sin rumbo*, y Genaro de *En la sangre*. Estos protagonistas son claros ejemplos de "héroes degradados" diría Lukacs, cuando en realidad son los vehículos que nos permiten acceder a los diferentes registros lingüísticos y culturales de la época (113).

En *Sin rumbo*, Andrés es un representante de las clases más pudientes del Buenos Aires finisecular, quien precisamente por ello puede trasladarse lingüística y socialmente del campo a la ciudad con total naturalidad. Andrés utiliza "el che" y "el voseo", que en la literatura en la época se reservaban exclusivamente para las voces "americanas", y para los estratos más bajos de la sociedad. Indudablemente, estas expresiones se utilizaban generalmente con las famosas "comillas estigmatizadoras", pero en *Sin rumbo*, Cambaceres se desentiende de ellas, al tiempo que éstas expresiones son atribuidas a personajes que representan a las clases más pudientes, como es el caso de Andrés (*Transculturación narrativa en América Latina*, 40). Advertimos un procedimiento similar su última novela, *En la sangre*, donde el protagonista Genaro, hijo de inmigrantes pobres, es capaz de territorializar ³ lingüísticamente los espacios hegemónicos e incorporarse a ellos.

Por lo mismo Andrés funciona como mediador y agente transculturador, que recupera e instala en la textura nacional de la novela las voces populares del campo (*Transculturación narrativa en América Latina*, 34-5). Abundan las huellas orales del quechua, en palabras como "*chiripá*" (49), "*huasca*" (61) y "*chuchó*" (143); se incorporan dichos y refranes camperos como "*iba a armarse la gorda*" (96.), "*vozón*" (90) y "*mamaos*" (70); todos estos registros lingüísticos forman parte de lo que Bajtin denomina como fuerzas centrífugas⁴ que se van incorporando a la lengua nacional, proceso que de acuerdo a Rama equivaldría a una transculturación regional (*Transculturación narrativa en América Latina*, 36-7). Estos componentes endógenos, subalternos y rurales provenientes de la oralidad se filtran (desde abajo hacia arriba), hasta llegar al punto de ser asimilados por sujetos hegemónicos como Andrés.

Esto significa que algunos rasgos de lo popular rural o lo indígena son incorporados por los sectores hegemónicos, y las huellas de la oralidad popular se enquistan en el habla de las clases "cultas", mediante lo cual se

incrementa la base lingüística nacional y, como resultado se produce una neocultura regional. A esto se podría añadir que Andrés, como buen estanciero, se mueve con soltura en el ambiente del campo y domina el lenguaje que utilizan los "reseros" y los "peones" de estancia con total familiaridad. Esta versatilidad lingüística del personaje revela, repito, un proceso de transculturación regional que absorbe las huellas centrífugas de la oralidad y las instala en un mismo plano junto a la lengua "canónica", generando una neocultura regional.

La novela *Sin rumbo*, se construye a partir del cronotopo⁵ –o sea, en el tiempo y el espacio-, de la ciudad de Buenos Aires, incorporando otros registros lingüísticos que articulan más complejas variantes de lo nacional argentino. Este sería el caso de anglicismos "*Self government*" (73), galicismos "*tete-a-tete*" (93), y un sinnúmero de italianismos que revelan la influencia más marcada dentro de la novela. Algunos ejemplos de estos vocablos italianos son "*¡sangue della madonna!*" (92), "*¡Brava, brava!*" (104), y "*corpo della madonna*" (116), entre muchos otros. En términos Bajtinianos, estos vocablos europeos formarían parte de las fuerzas centrípetas de la lengua, que a su vez también forjan lo nacional. Análogamente, aplicando los postulados de Rama este fenómeno evidenciaría un proceso de transculturación cosmopolita, caracterizado por la incorporación de vocablos extranjeros, a las hablas capitalinas. Buenos Aires, capital del país, debido a su situación geográfica, política y cultural, como ciudad puerto, era donde se incorporaban estas influencias lingüístico-culturales primero y con más fuerzas (*Transculturación narrativa en América Latina*, 34-5).

Este proceso se forja como resultado de las fuerzas centrífugas, que se instalan en el mismo discurso junto al lenguaje local, entablando un diálogo con éste y produciendo como resultado una neocultura cosmopolita. Visto de otro modo, esta transculturación cosmopolita correspondería a un mestizaje y aculturación de las lenguas y culturas de los inmigrantes europeos; de los cuales, una mitad permanecería definitivamente en Buenos Aires (Onega 7). El aluvión europeo que comenzara en 1853⁶, y cambiaría substancialmente la fisonomía cultural y étnica de la Argentina moderna. Valga como dato: hacia 1890 la ciudad de Buenos Aires tenía 500.000 habitantes, de los cuales 300.000 eran extranjeros (Jitrik 56) En el caso particular de los inmigrantes italianos, "por su idioma, y su origen preferentemente rural, eran un grupo más fácilmente visible, cuyos factores diferenciales crearon un estereotipo que se rotuló 'el gringo' y que se cargó de sentido peyorativo en la figura del 'cocoliche' " (Onega 15). En realidad el cocoliche fue un personaje teatral que aparece por primera vez en 1888, en el circo criollo de los hermanos Podestá-Scotti. En esa oportunidad se estaba llevando a cabo una adaptación teatral de *Juan Moreira* (1879) de Eduardo

Gutiérrez, y el personaje del napolitano don Franchisco, o don Franchisco el verdulero, es improvisado por vez primera por Celestino Petray. Debido al mal uso de la lengua castellana, este personaje causa risas en el público espectador, y desde ese entonces se lo incorpora definitivamente a la puesta en escena (Podestá 63, García Velloso 125, Rama 142-6). Asimismo, es importante recordar que el vocablo "cocoliche" se extendió para referirse al modo de hablar del inmigrante italiano de aquella época, que Cambaceres incorpora textualmente a *Sin rumbo* desde la primera página:

De vez en cuando, lentamente, paseaba la mirada en torno suyo, daba un golpe –uno solo- al llamador de alguna puerta, y, encorvado bajo el peso de la carga que soportaban sus hombros: "tachero"... gritaba: "¿componi calderi, tachi, signora?" (51)

En su comentario de la cita anterior Noemí García y Jorge Panesi observan que: "Cambaceres hace hablar al personaje en cocoliche, código literario que representa convencionalmente el habla de los inmigrantes italianos; estos mezclaban la lengua materna con el español"(51).

Ahora bien, este binarismo de transculturación regional (que se localiza fundamentalmente en el interior del país), y de transculturación cosmopolita (con un énfasis instalado en la urbe porteña), se problematiza aún más en la novela *En la sangre*. El protagonista Genaro es hijo de inmigrantes italianos pero se ha aculturado completamente, y al vivir en los barrios del sur de Buenos Aires "los arrabales" maneja con toda soltura los diferentes registros del habla popular. Al fallecer su padre Genaro exclama: "¡Quién sabía si se iría a morir como los otros él, si Dios, si tata Dios, no lo guardaba para semilla!..."(59). Con respecto al uso del vocablo "tata" García y Panesi explican lo siguiente:

Nótese que Cambaceres, en el estilo indirecto libre con el que caracteriza

a Genaro, utiliza diversos niveles de la lengua popular, en este caso, un giro gauchesco, "Tata" viene del quechua y es una contracción de "Táyta".

En la época de la publicación de nuestra novela desapareció en la gente de la ciudad la costumbre de llamar tata al padre, de acuerdo con una reacción que estimó de vulgar y campesina en esa voz, prefiriéndose la europea de papá. (59)

Este comentario de García y Panesi denota un proceso cultural y lingüístico más enmarañado que una simple transculturación cosmopolita o regional, registrando lo que podríamos denominar una doble transculturación. El vocablo "tata" proviene del quechua "táyta" y es permutado en una transculturación regional que García y Panesi denominan como un "giro gauchesco"; en segundo lugar, "tata" reemplaza al vocablo europeo "papá" que Genaro debería haber utilizado en esta instancia. Esta doble substitución lingüística, se localiza en Buenos Aires, o sea, donde correspondería haber encontrado una transculturación cosmopolita. En cambio, encontramos que las huellas de la oralidad campera o de lo regional, se filtran hasta llegar a ser incorporadas en el vocabulario de la nueva argentina urbana, moderna y cosmopolita.

Esta doble transculturación lingüístico-cultural "tata Dios", articulada por un hijo de inmigrantes italianos (Genaro), desde el cronotopo de los arrabales porteños, tiene una explicación histórica y sociológica que anota Ángel Rama, al referirse a los espectadores del circo criollo:

Cabe consignar que los pobladores de los suburbios no eran hermanastros del gaucho, sino los mismos gauchos, desplazados del campo, que comenzaban a afluir a las ciudades, golpeados, resentidos, perdidos; pronto Viana los representaría con agudeza, pero ahora quien les permitiría revivir el ciclo entero de sus vidas era el espectáculo pobretón de la carpa Podestá-Scoti. (*Los gauchipolíticos rioplatenses*, 142)

De este modo es precisamente en los suburbios de las ciudades rioplatenses que este triste pero hermoso caldo de cultivo cultural pone en contacto al ex gaucho desplazado con el inmigrante italiano, gallego, judío, es decir con todo recién llegado. La heterogeneidad lingüística y cultural que caracteriza a la novelística cambaceriana es resultado de este nutrido proceso de transculturación, en el cual tanto las fuerzas centrípetas como las centrifugas están en constante pugna y diálogo. La formación de un habla y de una cultura verdaderamente "nacional" no se encontraría exclusivamente en lo rural (lo que equivaldría a una transculturación regional), ni en lo capitalino (que sería una transculturación cosmopolita), sino en el constante e interminable flujo, siempre en conflicto, entre ambos polos.

Xenofobia Ilustrada, Apropiación y Exclusión del Inmigrante en el Imaginario Nacional

En el siglo XIX latinoamericano, “el imaginario nacional del período fue básicamente un constructo elitista alejado de lo popular y de las masas; el proyecto liberal forjó este modelo nacional y lo impuso como el (único) destino posible de la patria” (Unzueta 19). Nicolas Shumway ha señalado con agudeza de que en el caso particular de la Argentina decimonónica, dos partidos políticos Federales y Unitarios se disputaron la hegemonía nacional e hilvanaron dos ficciones forjadoras⁷, que se construyen sobre un andamiaje ideológico de una mitología excluyente (XI).

A partir de esto sostenemos que Eugenio Cambaceres también participa activamente de este proceso de textualización de la nación. Sus obras pueden leerse como ficciones forjadoras de la joven nación, que contribuyen a construir una nueva comunidad imaginada.⁸ Estas ficciones que se caracterizan por una deliberada y premeditada exclusión de ciertos segmentos de la población del proyecto de construcción del imaginario nacional (Shumway, XI). De este modo lo “argentino” se define mediante un proceso de negación y desterritorialización. Con respecto a este propósito último de sus obras, Cambaceres nos lo dice con sus propias palabras: “la exhibición sencilla de las lacras que corrompen al organismo social es el reactivo más enérgico que contra ellas pueda emplearse” (*Obras Completas*, 185). Esto implica la necesaria exclusión de los inmigrantes, y la correlativa invisibilidad de la población rural del nuevo imaginario nacional; privilegiándose de hecho a los personajes que representan a la oligarquía criolla. Este doble proceso de inclusión y exclusión puede interpretarse, en primer lugar, por el valor metafórico que podemos adjudicarle a los nombres de los personajes cambacerianos. Recuérdese que el naturalismo se caracterizaba por un fuerte uso de símbolos, otorgándole a los personajes nombres altamente significantes. En ambas novelas, los nombres de los personajes están cargados de una función simbólica, de atributos sociales, psicológicos y morales (García Mérou, 39).⁹

En este muestrario panorámico de “tipos sociales”, se destacan particularmente el *dandy* porteño Andrés y la aristócrata Máxima, así como los inmigrantes tipificados por la soprano Amorini, el hijo de italianos Genaro, y el “gallego bruto” Tainete (Bazán-Figuera, 59). A esta colección de personajes ciudadanos le debemos adicionar a la “china” Donata como la representante de los sectores rurales de la nación.

Andrés es un *dandy*, un *clubman*, un estanciero; y su nombre proviene del griego *Andros*, “hombre”, o sea el hombre por antonomasia (Cymerman 42). Las dos “conquistas” amorosas de este insatisfecho Don

Juan, son ejemplares de la territorialización de lo exótico y de lo diferente: de una apropiación del otro (Zina, 14).

El nombre de Donata, la campesina violada por Andrés, alude simbólicamente a una donación, con "el tono de su tez china, lustrosa y suave como bronce de *Barbedienne*" (64). En una de sus visitas al rancho de la gauchita, el protagonista siente una atracción animal por ella, pierde todo el control sobre sí mismo y la viola. Detengámonos en esta escena:

Después, fuera de sí, sin poder dominarse ya, en el brutal arrebato de la bestia, que está en él, corrió y se arrojó sobre Donata.

-¡Don Andrés, qué hace por Dios! –dijo ésta asustada, fula, pudiendo apenas incorporarse.

A brazo partido la había agarrado de la cintura. Luego, alzándola en peso como quien alza una paja, largo a largo la dejó caer sobre la cama.

La tocaba, la apretaba, a estrujaba, la llenaba de besos locos la boca, el seno, las piernas.

Ella, pasmada, absorta, sin atinar ni siquiera a defenderse, acaso obedeciendo a la voz misteriosa del instinto, subyugada a pesar suyo por el ciego ascendiente de la carne en el contacto de ese otro cuerpo de hombre, como una masa inerte se entregaba. (64-5)

Este acto sexual es la apropiación del cuerpo del otro, ejerciendo control sobre él; implica en una palabra, su territorialización, pero no es una metáfora de la incorporación de este grupo rural al proyecto nacional, sino todo lo contrario. La exclusión de esta agonizante cultura gaucha en el imaginario nacional ochentista, también se confirma metafóricamente con la muerte de Donata (al dar luz a su hija) y con la trágica muerte de Andrea, hija de Andrés y de Donata.

Retomando la descripción de Donata y de su violación, es posible observar que Cambaceres se vale del famoso binarismo sarmientino (de civilización o barbarie). Donata es lo asiático, la china, lo más alejado de la "civilización" porteña: la barbarie. Donata es el exótico (lo otro) conquistado y territorializado por la cultura cosmopolita porteña, o como diría Alejandra Zina "Chinita y pampa son trofeos de una exitosa conquista" (15). La misma pampa argentina es feminizada por Cambaceres como sitio de otra conquista "... se divisaba desde lo alto la tabla infinita de la pampa, reflejo verde del cielo azul, desamparada, sola, desnuda, espléndida, sacando su belleza, como la mujer, de su misma desnudez" (53).

La segunda "conquista" del *dandy* Andrés, es la señora Amorini, una cantante de ópera, que personifica el "decadentismo europeo" finisecular, y cuyo nombre sugiere una historia de "amoríos", "los que en efecto Andrés mantiene con ella" (García y Panesi, 30). Esta segunda territorialización se llevará a cabo en el cronotopo de la ciudad de Buenos Aires, donde se privilegian los clubes sociales, el teatro Colón y la casa de la calle Caseros, escenario de los encuentros amorosos con la Amorini. Este ambiente se caracteriza por su pompa, su recargamiento de objetos provenientes de todas partes del mundo, lo que da como resultado un efecto "empalagoso" (Zina, 14). Esta casa (museo) de decorado ecléctico tan característico de la *belle époque* era donde "Andrés recibía a sus amigas" (106). Así es descrito el bulín:

Alrededor de las paredes, cubiertas de arriba abajo por viejas tapicerías de la china, varios divanes se veían de un antiguo tejido turco..... Acá y allá, sobre los pies de onix, otros mármoles, reproducciones de bronce obscenos de Pompeya, almohadones orientales arrojados al azar, sin orden por el suelo, ... tapizado de negro para que resaltara más la blancura de la piel. (106-7)

A este exceso se contraponen a la pobreza y austeridad retratada en el rancho de Donata; y las mujeres que visitaban este espacio, se convertían en un objeto más en la colección de Andrés, en otra joya preciosa agregada a su colección privada. Por consiguiente, la relación del hombre y a mujer es la de un coleccionista con su presa (Zina, 15). Los cuerpos femeninos, seducidos y territorializados, pasan a integrar las vitrinas del museo, a medida que pasa el tiempo Andrés se cansa de su relación y piensa " -¡Cuánto más fácil es hacerse de una mujer que deshacerse de ella!-" (109). El problema, en el caso particular de la Amorini (como lo sugiere su nombre) es su sexualidad sobre acentuada, decadente, demasiado excesiva y absorbente para los parámetros "aceptables" de la masculinidad del ochenta "Era todos los días, durante horas enteras, siempre, sin descanso, una fiebre, un arrebato, una delirante orgía, una eterna bacanal" (109). Para la moralidad católica y el machismo victoriano y eurocéntrico, la sexualidad de la Amorini -italiana y cantante- era una manifestación de desenfreno y de barbarie (Zina, 13). La exclusión de la inmigrante del imaginario nacional, se articula sobre el libertinaje sexual que la otrifica y la encuadra en la barbarie, barbarie que la década de 1880 parece haberse instalado en la *civitas* virtuosa de Buenos Aires.

La atracción y el horror que se siente por lo extranjero se señala

nítidamente desde el mismo apellido que el autor le atribuye al marido de la Amorini, también él inmigrante italiano, y su apellido era Gorini “es el nombre del marido engañado que vive a costa de su mujer, la Amorini. Este nombre está formado por el verbo ‘gorrear’, que significa ‘ponerle cuernos la mujer a su esposo’ ” (García y Panesi, 30). Alegóricamente Cambaceres excluye al inmigrante del imaginario nacional, aunque “En masa, como las aguas negras de un canal, iba a derramarse a la plaza de la Victoria” (p.113). De todos modos, el ejemplo más claro de xenofobia cambaceriana se encuentra en *Pot-pourri*, donde se describe al gallego don Juan José Taniete de la siguiente manera:

No necesito más, la incógnita queda despejada, el problema resuelto, contestas *a priori* las tres sacramentales preguntas:
-¿Quién eres?
-Una bestia.
-¿De dónde vienes?
-De Galicia, la tierra de bendición donde esos frutos se cosechan por millones. (Obras completas 32-3)

La mitología de exclusión del inmigrante tiene un tratamiento central en su última novela, *En la sangre*, y puede leerse como una advertencia para el lector de esa época sobre los “peligros” que traían consigo los recién llegados. Una vez más, Cambaceres es muy cuidadoso al escoger el nombre para el protagonista, Genaro, que “sugiere ‘género’, ‘lo genérico’, para alguien que proviene del oscuro montón de inmigrantes, de la muchedumbre” (García y Panesi 30).

En este triste relato, Genaro va ascendiendo socialmente y su ascenso coincide con las muertes de distintos personajes, comenzando con la muerte de su padre, el viaje forzado de su madre, la muerte del padre de Máxima y la amenaza de muerte de su esposa. En un principio, Genaro logra engañar a su novia Máxima aparentando pertenecer a una clase social pudiente, y cuando éste se da cuenta que no será aceptado como esposo de Máxima, utiliza otros medios para conseguir su objetivo. Metafóricamente se le cierra la puerta del casamiento pero el protagonista “usa la ventana”(122). En otras palabras, dejando embarazada a Máxima obliga a la familia al casamiento. Genaro se apropia de la ideología dominante para, desde su posición subalterna, para conseguir sus metas de arrivismo social.

Simbólicamente el inmigrante italiano se apodera de lo mejor de la Argentina, “la Máxima” o lo máximo que el país ofrecía, con lo cual la novela constituye una advertencia para el lector. El casamiento de Máxima (emblema del imaginario burgués del ochenta) con el Genaro (lo genérico y

la muchedumbre) es un llamado de alerta para las clases dominantes de la argentina decimonónica.

Una prueba de que la elite porteña de aquella época era consiente "del riesgo" que acarreaban estos matrimonios "advenedizos", la encontramos en los escritos de otro miembro de la generación, Miguel Cané:

Pero honor y respeto a los restos puros de nuestro grupo patrio; cada día, Los argentinos disminuidos. Salvemos nuestro predominio legítimo, no sólo desarrollando y nutriendo nuestro espíritu cuanto es posible, sino colocando a nuestras mujeres, por la veneración a una altura a que o llegan las bajas aspiraciones de la turba. Entre ellas encontraremos nuestras compañeras, entre ellas las encontrarán nuestros hijos. Cerremos el círculo y velemos sobre él. (García y Panesi 43-4)

Para concluir la doble mitología de exclusión de Cambaceres se extiende desde el campo hacia la ciudad de Buenos Aires. Mientras en *Sin Rumbo*, el imaginario nacional está representado por el sujeto Andrés; y Máxima, como objeto de deseo, lo materializa en *En la sangre*. No obstante, Donata "la china", la señora Amorini y Genaro "los inmigrantes", se cuelan en la nación imaginada. Cada uno de estos personajes representa sectores desterritorializados y marginados de la comunidad imaginada, pero no pueden ser borrados totalmente del imaginario nacional. En otras palabras, una lectura a contra pelo de estas novelas, nos demuestra a los inmigrantes ya definitivamente instalados en lo nacional, porque "These are also figures that render a society visible to itself" (Castoriadis, 130) El corpus cambaceriano pone en relieve una innegable realidad: que los recién llegados ya son parte inocultable de la nueva realidad nacional.

NOTAS

¹ La generación del 80, estaba integrada ante todo por: "... , abogados, legisladores, periodistas, diplomáticos o militares –generalmente acumulaban varias de estas profesiones-, como lo fueron Mansilla, Wilde, Cané, López, García Mérou y el mismo Cambaceres. Aquellos hombres, tan brillantes en el foro como en la tribuna, eran también literatos. [...] En el fondo son todos ellos unos aristócratas y unos *gentlemen*, o sea, unos privilegiados de la sociedad y del espíritu, unos príncipes de la elegancia y del esteticismo, situándose a igual distancia del hombre de bien del siglo XVII y del mundano del XVIII." (Claude Cymerman, 14-5)

² Mijail Bajtín, nos aproxima al concepto de Heteroglossia de la siguiente manera: "The base condition governing operation of meaning in any utterance. It is that which insures the primacy of context over text. At any given time, in any given place, there will be a set of conditions –social, historical, meteorological, physiological- that will ensure that the

word uttered in that time will have a meaning different than it would have under any other conditions. [...] Heteroglossia is a close conceptualization as is possible of the locus where centripetal and centrifugal forces collide; as such, it is that which a systematic linguistics must always suppress." (428)

³ En, *A Thousand Plateaus*(1987), el concepto de territorio podría definirse como, "The territory is first of all the critical distance between two beings of the same species,[...] and a territorialization of functions is the condition for their emergence as "occupations" or "trades".[...] The territorial assemblage is a milieu consolidation, a space-time consolidation, of coexistence and succession."(319-29) Y, este proceso de territorialización también se asocia con los dispositivos utilizados por el Estado.

4 Mijaíl Bajtín, define a las fuerzas centripetas y centrifugas de la lengua del siguiente modo: "These are respectively the centralizing and decentralizing (or decentering) forces in any language or culture. The rulers and high poetic genres of any era exercise a centripetal –a homogenizing and hierarchicizing- influence; the centripetal (decrowning, dispersing) forces of the clown, mimic and rogue create alternative "degraded" genres down below." (425)

⁵ El concepto de cronotopo, de acuerdo a Mijaíl Bajtín, se delimita de la siguiente manera: "Literally, 'time-space' A unit for analysis for studying texts according to the ratio and nature of the temporal and spatial categories represented. The distinctiveness of this concept as opposed to most other uses of time and space in literary analysis lies in the fact that neither category is privileged; they are utterly interdependent. The chronotope I an optic for reading texts as x-rays of the forces at work in the culture systems from which they spring." (425-6)

⁶ La inmigración europea aumenta exponencialmente desde 1853, cuando la legislatura de la Confederación autorizó la entrada de inmigrantes, y ese fue el comienzo del proceso de ingreso masivo de extranjeros. [...] Una rápida ojeada a las cifras nos permite apreciar la rapidez y la sorprendente eficacia con que se cumplió el supuesto básico de toda la política liberal: de 1.300.000 en 1859, a 1.737.076 en 1869, a 3.954.911 en 1895, y 7.885.237 en 1914. Combinemos estos datos netos con otros comparativos: de 1859 a 1869 con un aumento de 400.000 personas (en cifras redondas), a razón de 43.076 por año. Asimismo, de 1869 a 1895, con un aumento de más de dos millones, a razón de 81.500 personas por año; y en el tercer período con un aumento de casi cuatro millones, a razón de 207.000 personas por año; el porcentaje de extranjeros se ha elevado a al 42,7 por ciento sobre los argentinos nativos. (Onega 6).

⁷ De acuerdo a Shumway, las ficciones forjadoras de la Argentina decimonónica pueden definirse de la siguiente manera: "By 1820 the fault line underlying Argentine society was clearly visible. [...] On the one side of the fault were the liberals, mostly the Unitarians of Buenos Aires, who lived facing Europe, and were anxious to import the latest, most modern ideas from abroad, to wrench their embryonic nation into modernity whatever the cost [...] On the other side of the fault were Federalists, provincial caudillos, and populists of several stripes. Although their dream for Argentina was less clear and less articulate than that of their liberal enemies, they sought a more inclusive polity where there was a place for the campesino, the Indian, the mixed-bloods, and the gauchos"(79).

⁸ Me refiero al clásico estudio de Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* de 1983, en el cual, el autor propone que la nación se construye a través de la imprenta capitalista, y se puede estudiar como una formación discursiva o escriturada. Según Anderson, la narración construye a la nación como un este imaginado desde tiempos inmemoriales, y entre otras cosas: "Finally, it is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the

actual inequalities and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (7).

⁹ Al respecto véase: Cymerman (42), García y Panesi (30), (Bazán-Figueras 161-2).

OBRAS CITADAS:

- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and spread of Nationalism*. 1983. Ed. revisada London: Verso, 1991.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail M. *The Dialogical Imagination. Four Essays. Trans. Carly Emerson and Michael Holquist*. Austin: U of Texas P, 1981.
- Bazán-Figueras, Patricia. *Eugenio Cambaceres: precursor de la novela argentina contemporánea*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1994.
- Blasi, Alberio Oscar. *Los fundadores: Cambaceres, Martel, Sicardi*. Buenos Aires: Ediciones culturales argentinas, 1962.
- Cambaceres, Eugenio. *Obras completas*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Plus Ultra, 1980.
- Castoriadis, Cornelius. *The Imaginary Institution of Society*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987.
- Cymerman, Claude. "Introducción." *Cambaceres, Eugenio: Sin rumbo*. Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 1999.
- Deleuze, Giles and Félix Guattari. *A thousand Plateaus; Capitalism and Schizophrenia. Trad. Brian Massumi*. Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1987.
- García, Noemí S. y Jorge Panesi. "Introducción, notas y propuestas de trabajo." *Cambaceres, Eugenio: En la sangre*. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Colihue, 1996.
- García Mérou, Martín. *Libros y autores. Las novelas de Cambaceres*. Buenos Aires: Félix Lajouane, 1886.
- García Velloso, Enrique. *Memorias de un hombre de teatro*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Guillermo Kraft, 1942.
- Giusti, Roberto F. "Prólogo" *Cambaceres, Eugenio: Sin rumbo*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Jackson, 1944.
- Kiddie, Thomas J. *Eros and Ataraxy: a study of love and pleasure in the fiction of Zola, Cambaceres, and Fontane*. Diss. Rutgers University, 1987.
- Ludmer, Josefina. *El cuerpo del delito. Un manual*. Buenos Aires: Libros Perfil, 1999.
- Lukács, Georg. *The historical Novel*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1971.
- Nitrik, Noé. *El ochenta y su mundo*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Jorge Alvarez S.A., 1968.
- Onega, Gladis S. *La inmigración en la literatura argentina (1880-1910)*. Buenos Aires: Cuadernos del Instituto de Letras, 1965.

- Podestá, José. *Medio siglo de Farándula*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Río de la Plata, 1930.
- Rama, Ángel. *Transculturación narrativa en América Latina*. México: Siglo veintiuno, 1982.
- . *Los gauchipolíticos rioplatenses*. Buenos Aires: Centro editor de América Latina, 1982.
- Rojas, Ricardo. *Los modernos. Historia de la literatura argentina*. Buenos Aires: Kraft, 1964.
- Santacatalina, Isabel. "Introducción, notas y vocabulario." *Cambaceres, Eugenio: Sin rumbo*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Huemul S.A., 1966.
- Sarmiento, Domingo F. *Facundo o civilización y barbarie en las Pampas argentinas*. México: UNAM, 1957.
- Shumway, Nicolas. *The Invention of Argentina*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.
- Unzueta, Fernando. *La imaginación histórica y el romance nacional en Hispanoamérica*. Berkeley: Latinoamericana Editores, 1996.

BORGES AND HIS LEGACY IN HYPERFICTION: A STUDY THROUGH THE LENSES OF DELEUZE AND GUATTARI'S RHIZOME THEORY

**Perla Sassón-Henry
United States Naval Academy**

"The world has become chaos, but the book remains the image of the world: radicle-chaosmos rather than root-cosmos. A strange mystification: a book all the more total for being fragmented. At any rate, what a vapid idea, the book as the image of the world."

-Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* (6)

Jorge Luis Borges' fiction has been an inspiration for hypertext fiction writers since the inception of this relatively new genre in the mid-eighties. Hyperfiction invokes a new kind of reading. Created on the computer to be read on the computer, this new type of literature challenges the reader to traverse a series of "lexias" -- chapters, blocks, or electronic spaces -- that give way to an intricate and complex narrative. According to Robert Coover, "by the mid-1980's hyperspace was drawing fiction writers into its intricate and infinitely expandable, infinite alluring webs, its green-limned gardens of multiple forking paths, to allude to another author popular with hypertext buffs, Jorge Luis Borges."¹ In 1987, Stuart Moulthrop developed "forking paths" for an undergraduate writing class held at New York University. Although this hypertext experiment based on Borges' "The Garden of Forking Paths" has remained unpublished "a schematic listing of the 'forking paths' hypertext created in StorySpace" (Moulthrop, "Concerning 'forking paths'") can be found on the CD accompanying *The New Media Reader*.² By 1991, Moulthrop had also published *Victory Garden*, which is in the words of its author, "in some respects a Borgesian pastiche with roots planted all too obviously in that great detective story" (Moulthrop, "Concerning 'forking paths'").

By looking at Borges' "The Garden of Forking Paths" and Stuart Moulthrop's seminal hyperfiction *Victory Garden* through the lenses of Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome theory as developed in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, this study presents how hyperfiction has been influenced by some of the premises upheld by Jorge Luis Borges as well as by some of the tenets present in Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome theory. As

one of the most referenced literary texts among the digerati, "The Garden of Forking Paths" presents the plot of a detective story during World War I as well as the metaphysical concept of multiple times as expressed by the characters in the story. The four concepts that stem from Deleuze and Guattari's theory that are going to be used in this study are: decentering, striated and smooth spaces, and nomadic thought.

In *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari elaborate a theory that could be applied to many disciplines, including sociology, politics, and literature. What Deleuze and Guattari propose is a new stand. They invite us to create a space where hierarchies are challenged and decentralization occurs. Within this framework and within the literary realm, the reader/writer relationship is blurred to allow the emergence of a reader who is able to recreate the literary text. A book, in Deleuze and Guattari's view is not an unchangeable artifact, but rather an assemblage where words and lines open up spaces for thought. For Deleuze and Guattari, "In a book, as in all things, there are lines of articulation or segmentarity, strata and territories; but also lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization and destratification. Comparative rates of flow on these lines produce phenomena of relative slowness and viscosity, or on the contrary, of acceleration and rupture. All this, lines of this kind, speeds, constitutes an assemblage" (3-4).

As a consequence, Deleuze and Guattari affirm that literature is "an assemblage" (4). It functions as a root with infinite extensions and connections. Even though Deleuze and Guattari's metaphor is arboreal, the structure they have in mind differs from that of a tree. According to their rhizomatic view of literature, "A book exists only through the outside and on the outside" (4). They see the book as a literary machine and as an organism whose value resides not so much in its inside but in the connections it makes with other organisms and the extent to which it is able to be metamorphosed into other multiplicities. Within this framework, literature becomes a complex system and resembles an assemblage as well as an intricate net of connections in a constant state of formation and re-creation. Hence, the value and meaning of a book resides in the way it affects its readers as well as its environment.

Deleuze and Guattari's idea of literature as an assembling or interconnecting web resembles Ted Nelson's visionary statement that everything is "intertwined."³ This idea, in turn, reinforces Borges' claim, in his essay "For Bernard Shaw," that "A book is not an isolated entity: it is a relationship, an axis of innumerable narrations" (Borges, *Other Inquisitions* 164).

Rhizomatic Organisms

Deleuze and Guattari developed a theory based on the organic idea of a rhizome, which embodies the principles of connection, heterogeneity, multiplicity, and the assigning of rupture. The rhizome extends itself by establishing connections with everything else. It does not necessarily link similar traits; on the contrary, the rhizome is able to make connections with diverse modes of coding. As a consequence, a rhizomatic structure does away with vertical hierarchies, so that no supreme force rules or imposes its traits upon subservient subjects. A system of this kind does not accept dichotomy and/or dualism; it opens up to establish a polyvocal net that constantly welcomes and links elements that might be similar or very different in nature. It follows that a rhizome system is never static; there is no subject or object due to the constant state of deterritorialization and motion. As the rhizome segments break up and produce ruptures,⁴ they create new lines of flight that are part of the rhizome. Thus, the ever-growing extensions of the system do not represent it, but are part of it. From this perspective, "the book is not an image of the world. It forms a rhizome with the world " (Deleuze and Guattari 11). Since it presents literary works as one more extension of the rhizome, Deleuze and Guattari's contention breaks with the concept of the book as a model of the world or the world as a model for the book. The book does not imitate the world or vice versa. There is no binary logic or direct correspondence between different elements. In reference to this issue, Deleuze and Guattari state the following: "There is no longer a tripartite division between a field of reality (the world) and a field of representation (the book) and a field of subjectivity (the author). Rather, an assemblage establishes connections between certain multiplicities drawn from each of these orders, so that a book has no sequel nor the world as its object nor one or several authors as its subject. [...] The book as assemblage with the outside, against the book as image of the world. A rhizome-book, not a dichotomous, pivotal, or fascicular book (Deleuze and Guattari 23).

Two of the most relevant principles of the rhizome theory to this study are the principle of cartography and nomadic thought. Deleuze and Guattari distinguish a map from a tracing, seeing the latter as "something that comes ready-made" (Deleuze and Guattari 12). Whereas maps construct and are always in a state of becoming, tracings describe something that is already there from the start. The nomadic quality of maps indicates that there is always a space for change and movement to be charted. In Borges' "The Garden of Forking Paths," tracings are represented by the detective story as well as by the cues that the author presents in reference to the

existence of multiple times. The map emerges as the reader proceeds through the different layers of the story to discover that "The Garden of Forking Paths" was the chaotic novel itself. The phrase 'to various future times, but not to all' suggested the image of bifurcating time, not in space (Borges 98). At this point in the story the reader is challenged to move beyond the historical narrative plot to ponder on metaphysical issues concerning the existence of multiple times.

According to this principle, it is possible to relate the program behind each hyperfiction as a trace since it is present from its creation. The multiple entries of the map relate to the multiple entries of a hyperfiction in which the reader is able to select one of the several starting points programmed by the author. Each entry in hyperfiction sets a unique reading of the narrative because each entry leads to a path and ignores many others. The idea of a map is also associated with action since its own lines of flight promote deterritorialization and destratification to modify constantly the rhizome. By these constant movements, the rhizome becomes an element in a constant state of becoming, an idea that is also embodied in hyperfiction, since the reader's action, together with the program created by the author, cause deterritorialization and destratification within the electronic text. This phenomenon is illustrated in Stuart Moulthrop's *Victory Garden*, which was programmed to abide by the reader's decisions, which in turn determine a series of cascading binaries and thus lead the reader to one of the multiple paths of the story.⁵

Nomadic thought implies a continuous movement into an open space. This continuous movement takes place between a striated space and a smooth space. Whereas the smooth space refers to a close local vision, the striated space relates to a more distant vision and global approach. This is evident in Borges' "The Garden of Forking Paths," where the detective plot of the story refers to the smooth space as defined by Deleuze and Guattari. In the introductory paragraph of "The Garden of Forking Paths," the narrator states the following: "The following deposition, dictated by, read over, and then signed by Dr. Yu Tsun, former teacher of English at the Tsingtao Hochschule, casts unsuspected light upon this event" (Borges 89). From this moment onward, the reader encounters a detective story that leads her to discover the metaphysical implications suggested in the narrative. The metaphysical concept of existence of multiple worlds as expressed in "The Garden of Forking Paths" represents the striated spaces defined by Deleuze and Guattari. A subtle introduction to the topic by Dr. Yu Tsun's words sets the stage to development of this metaphysical concept: "Then I reflected that all things happen, happen to one, precisely now. Century follows century, and things happen only in the present" (Borges 90). It is necessary

to move beyond the plot in order to perceive the metaphysical implications embedded in the story. For this reason, neither the striated space nor the smooth space exists in its own pure form, but rather as an interwoven fabric; they contaminate each other. Hence, nomadic thought implies a constant movement from smooth spaces into striated spaces and/or vice versa. "Nothing is ever done with: smooth space allows itself to be striated, and striated space reinstates a smooth space, with potentially very different values, scope, and signs. Perhaps, we must say that all progress is made by and in a striated space, but all becomings occur in smooth space" (Deleuze and Guattari 486). It is this constant movement between the detective plot and the metaphysical ideas portrayed in "The Garden of Forking Paths" that illustrates nomadic thought as defined above. The detective story in "The Garden of Forking Paths" stands for a smooth space where all the hints are provided to disclose the metaphysical plot. The two narratives do not exist in isolation; they enrich each others' role in the story as a whole.

The notion of multiple entries, which is so common in hyperfiction, harmonizes with the structure of a rhizome system. A rhizome is made up of plateaus that are always in the middle; there is never a marked beginning or end. Deleuze and Guattari call a plateau "any multiplicity connected to other multiplicities by superficial underground stems in such a way as to form or extend a rhizome" (Deleuze and Guattari. 22). Their own book is an example; it has no determined way to be read. It has a rhizome structure since each chapter is thematically linked to all the other chapters of the book. Like the ever-moving faults of the earth, plateaus create a fascinating space for exploration. They pose an invitation to be meticulously explored in order to excavate and elucidate whatever lies somewhat hidden between them. Thus, the nomad subject who attempts to deal with these plateaus will have to excavate their territory thoughtfully in order to traverse the different strata.

Rhizomatic Features in "The Garden of Forking Paths" and in Hyperfiction

The concepts of decentering, nomadic thought, and striated and smooth spaces are present in "The Garden of Forking Paths" as they are in hyperfiction; this is mainly because the ideas proposed in Borges' "The Garden of Forking Paths" are intimately related to the writing and reading possibilities presented by hypertext.⁶ Even though the author plays a relevant role in Borges' text, it is up to the reader to gather together all the narrative threads and subtle hints to recreate and give meaning to the narrative.⁷ By the same token, "The Garden of Forking Paths" contains the

possibility of envisioning multiple stories within the same narrative, trait that was later on developed by hyperfiction writers since the inception of this new genre.

Like most hyperfiction writers, Jorge Luis Borges strives to overcome the technological limitations of print in order to construct spaces that give way to the idea of multiple times. Borges achieves this through language. In reference to this, Borges' character Stephen Albert explains: "In Ts'ui Pen's work, all the possible solutions occur, each one being the point of departure for other bifurcation. Sometimes the pathways of this labyrinth converge. For example, you come to this house; but in other possible pasts you are my enemy; in others my friend" (Borges 98). As stated before, the metaphysical concepts do not appear overtly in the "The Garden of Forking Paths." While reading Borges' "The Garden of Forking Paths" and hyperfiction, readers are seduced into engaging themselves in the intellectual challenges of nomadic thought. In doing so, readers traverse and create multiple trajectories. What really matters in this kind of reading are the passages and the new trajectories discovered as well as the processes involved in these kinds of reading.

Within this framework the plateaus defined by Deleuze and Guattari resemble the possibility of multiple plots in "The Garden of Forking Paths" as well as the lexias of hyperfiction. In hyperfiction, not all the lexias follow a natural logic of association. More often than not hyperfiction authors play with the unexpected. They attempt to create literary texts that deal with two or more realities going on at the same time. A clear example of this is *Victory Garden* by Stuart Moulthrop. This story takes up the topic and metaphysical ideas presented by Jorge Luis Borges in "The Garden of Forking Paths." Whereas the "The Garden of Forking Paths" deals with the events of World War I, *Victory Garden* takes us back to the mass media era of the Gulf War. In both stories, the reader is encouraged to transcend the text, to read beyond that which is visible to the naked eye to envision the possibility of multiple times. These stories present a metaphysical stand that alludes to the existence of multiple/and or alternate worlds. When discussing "The Garden of Forking Paths," Borges' character Stephen Albert states: "Philosophical conjectures take up greater part of his novel. I know that of all problems, none disquieted him more, and none concerned him more than the profound one of time. Now this is the only problem that does not figure in the pages of The Garden. He does not even use the word, which means time. How can these voluntary omissions be explained?" (Borges 99). Similarly, in the lexia Images,¹⁰ the narrator in *Victory Garden* tells us: "It's a familiar feast, all fragments and repetition stuck together with a paste of groundless spec. And of course it's what we don't see that counts."⁹ This

statement can be applied to Borges' "The Garden of Forking Paths" in which the metaphysical ideas of alternate worlds presented in the text are as important as the detective plot it conveys. The main difference between the two "plots" is that in "The Garden of Forking Paths" the detective plot is more straightforward than the subtle metaphysical ideas that Borges alludes to in his story.

To sum up, in the theory developed by Deleuze and Guattari, the smooth space stands for the space where the literary machine develops as it develops its connections with the outside, whereas the striated space represents the space occupied by a more stable system. The struggle between these two spaces allows the nomadic reader to create new smooth spaces and to reverse striated spaces to a smooth environment that keeps the literary machine in motion.

By elaborating and theorizing about all the principles mentioned above, Deleuze and Guattari lay out the basis for the creation of smooth spaces to promote the advancement of humanity. The acknowledgment of these spaces is essential to understand the postmodern features present in Borges' writings and in hyperfiction. By allowing the reader to take a more relevant role in the creation of the literary text, Borges succeeded in creating a literary work, which highlights the role of the reader as creator of the literary text. By the same token, Borges' text breaks away from the canonical role of the author as sole creator of the text. This illustrates the process of decentering which is developed by Deleuze and Guattari in their rhizome theory. Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome theory challenges the reader to establish connections between filaments and stems as well as to put them to "strange new uses" (Deleuze and Guattari 15). This statement reaffirms the need to view the innovative writings of Jorge Luis Borges and the first generation of hyperfiction from a new perspective. By the same token, it challenges readers to find new ways to understand and interpret the new media. Borges' "The Garden of Forking Paths" embodies the idea of an open work since it allows the reader to see the plot from different perspectives that depart from the traditional analysis of its plot. "The Garden of Forking Paths" displays not only the plot of a detective story, but also the issues of indeterminacy and discontinuity present in the Einsteinian physics.

Whereas the printed version of "The Garden of Forking Paths" can only present the reader physically with two plots, Borges has laid out his story in such a fashion as to allow the reader to devise intellectually more than two imaginary worlds. In order to accomplish this type of reading, the reader is impelled to take one of the many forking paths that make up the rhizomatic structure of the text. From the literary point of view, a piece of writing which portrays such a labyrinthine structure challenges the reader to

make her way through a text which contains more than one plateau. Hence, reading implies something more than reading for the plot. It also implies a search for a structure which in turn gives way to a metaphysical idea as in Borges "The Garden of Forking Paths," where the author leads the reader to face the possibility that alternate and/or multiple times exist.

This convergence of ideas and themes between Deleuze and Guattari's theory, and Borges' work provide a fruitful terrain to think critically about the possibilities for interpreting this new emerging type of electronic fiction. Similarly, Deleuze and Guattari's theory allows readers to explore Borges' work from a new perspective, a perspective that takes into account and acknowledges Borges' groundbreaking ideas and legacy in the still evolving genre known as hyperfiction.

Notes

¹Coover, Robert, "The End of Books," *New York Times* 21 June 1992: S7+.

²*The New Media Reader* is an anthology of the developments of the new media field. It encompasses articles and works from writers, programmers, designers, and artists. The book is supplemented by a multimedia CD that provides a compilation of articles, videos, videogames, and hypertexts.

³Term used by Theodor Holm Nelson to refer to the interconnectivity of texts. For a detailed explanation of Nelson's phrase "Everything is intertangled," see his *Computer Lib: Dream Machines* p.31

⁴According to Deleuze and Guattari, there is a rupture in the rhizome whenever segmentary lines explode into a line of flight, but the line of flight is part of the rhizome. For further explanation, see *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* p. 9

⁵In a personal email communication, Stuart Moulthrop explains: "The readings do change according to a set of binary constraints (often multiple, cascading binaries), and this effect makes it unlikely that a second reading will resemble the first reading."

⁶In reference to hypertext and decentering George Landow states that "(...) hypertext has much in common with some major points of contemporary literary and semiological theory; particularly with Derrida's emphasis on de-centering and with Barthes's conception of the readerly versus the writerly text. In fact, hypertext creates an almost embarrassingly literal embodiment of both concepts." See Landow's *Hypertext 2.0: The convergence of contemporary critical theory and technology*. p.33-34.) By same token, Douglas Davis states that Borges "de-centered us at least 30 years before Derrida. He began playing tricks and games about authorhood in the 1930s. He pretended he was somebody else in his stories. He wrote reviews that are fiction, fiction that is real, poems that are prose."

⁷For a detailed analysis of the relationship between reader, writer and narrative in Borges' texts see Timothy McGraw's essay *Fact or Fiction? Historical Narratives in Borges*.

⁸I will give references to *Victory Garden* by stating the title of the node to which I refer to.

⁹The main difference between pure randomness and the structure in *Victory Garden* lies in the way the author has created the program. "... there are mechanisms meant to seduce the reader into establishing a different set of initial conditions and thus discovering new

paths through the text. All these tricks are intended to produce a high degree of variation among readings ..." Personal email communication with Stuart Moulthrop.

References Cited

- Borges, Jorge Luis. "The Garden of Forking Paths". Trans. Anthony Kerrigan. *Ficciones*. New York: Grove Press, 1962. 89-101.
- . "For Bernard Shaw." *Other Inquisitions*. Trans. Ruth L.C. Simms. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964. 163-166.
- Coover, Robert. "The End of Books." *New York Times* 21 June. 1992: S7+.
- Davis, Douglas. *Borges is God (Or, God is Borgesian)*. 16 July 2004. http://sfd.com/terriblebeauty/HYPERLIT/borges/borges_text.cfm
- Deleuze G. and Guattari Felix. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis, Univ of Minnesota Press, 1987.
- George P. Landow. *Hypertext 2.0: The convergence of contemporary critical theory and technology*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.
- McGraw, Timothy. *Fact or Fiction? Historical Narratives in Borges*. 16 July 2004. http://www.themodernword.com/borges/borges_papers_mcgrath.html
- Monfort, Nick and Noah Wardrip -Fruin. Eds. *The New Media Reader*. Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2003.
- Moulthrop, Stuart. *Victory Garden*. Diskette. Watertown: East gate Systems, 1991.
- . *Towards the Future*. E-mail to Perla Sassón-Henry. 6 Jan. 2000.
- . *Concerning Forking Paths*. 12 Mar. 2003. 16 July 2004. <http://iat.ubalt.edu/moulthrop/hypertexts/forkingpaths.html>
- Nelson, Theodor Holm. *Computer Lib: Dream Machines*. Redmont: Tempus Books Microsoft Press, 1987. 31

CONVERSACIÓN AL SUR: RESCATE DE LA MEMORIA

**Dawn Slack
Kutztown University**

La crítica Celia Correas de Zapata nota hábilmente que los temas más comunes del trabajo de Marta Traba (Argentina, 1930-1983), autora y crítica literaria y artística, son "journey, oppression, exile, loss and internalization of that which is lost, and poverty" y apunta que los sentimientos fundamentales de sus obras se basan en "love, love of life, love of humanity, lack of communication, and human rights" (516). Por cierto, estos temas son abarcados en *Conversación al sur* (1981), una novela que describe un día en que dos mujeres, de clases, edades, y opiniones diferentes, reviven, por una conversación, un encuentro que ocurrió hace cinco años. Este encuentro, tanto como sus experiencias antes y después, son corrompidos por los abusos físicos y mentales de los regimenes militares.

En este trabajo se enfoca principalmente en el primer tema mencionado, el del viaje, pero a partir de la investigación de la trayectoria de los espacios externos e internos enfatizados en la novela. El movimiento entre lugares y/o espacios es entrecruzado en este texto, semejante a la técnica usada por Traba en *Homérica latina*, que María Sola describe como "[una] progresión interrumpida y multidireccional" (110). Este estilo narrativo, y el uso de la memoria, mandan un ir y venir entre el presente y el pasado. No obstante, este trabajo es organizado por un enfoque que comienza afuera y viaja adentro, o sea, que sale de los sitios más públicos y externos para entrar en los que son más íntimos e internos: esto es el proceso de rescatar la memoria y reconstruir la vida.

Estos espacios son examinados por las experiencias de dos mujeres que son fuertes y débiles a la vez. Irene, una mujer de unos cuarenta años, anda por los espacios exteriores e interiores de su vida, desconociéndolos hasta que su propio arresto y la desaparición de su hijo mandan un abrir de los ojos. Dolores, más joven, de unos veintiocho años, ha escogido confrontar a estos espacios directamente y, en torno, ha sido atacada violentamente por ellos.

El lector comienza este viaje al notar la ubicación física y temporal de la narración: todo está situado geográfica, cultural, y políticamente dentro del contexto hispanoamericano de los años setenta y ochenta cuando varios gobiernos militares controlaron sus países con una mezcla de poder y terror. Aunque hay naciones específicas en el texto, esta misma situación no es

limitada únicamente a Hispanoamérica y las descripciones son aplicables a cualquier situación opresiva en que los poderosos se abusan de su posición.

En este caso, el lector se encuentra en las ciudades de Buenos Aires, Argentina; Montevideo, Uruguay; y, Santiago, Chile, pero, son centros urbanos transformados. En el texto, Irene recuerda una vez cuando ella, con el grupo de actores jóvenes, tenía que huir por las calles:

¡Malditos zapatos! Pero en este momento te juro que ni los sentía. La idea fija era correr en sentido contrario a la nube de gas que crecía y crecía. Menos mal que tengo bastante práctica de carreras en la calle y en Buenos Aires siempre era peor, con los caballos encima. Lo que no calculé fue la estrategia de los milicos y por eso cuando llegué a la esquina sin aliento y me los vi de los dos lados me dio tal terror. (31)

Dolores responde con un comentario bastante irónico: “Te olvidabas que caíste en un país sumamente racional y civilizado” (31). Es racional y civilizado solamente en cuanto a su plan para aplastar a los que han sido “nombrado” subversivos, sin pensar en la racionalidad o el proceso civil y moral del mismo acto. Estas observaciones contradictorias en cuanto a estos países continúan por toda la novela. Dolores comenta irónicamente:

Lo que yo sigo tratando desesperadamente de averiguar es en qué momento un pueblo consagrado a la sociedad protectora de animales considera perfectamente bien, ni siquiera inevitable que un tipo... Iba a decir “le meta un palo por la vagina a una muchacha hasta que le rompa todos los órganos”, porque esa historia real la torturaba... (167)

Al analizar otra vez más el espacio externo, o sea estas tres ciudades, se puede notar que reflejan un ambiente desnaturalizado, aún mutante. Al escoger solamente una parte urbana, por ejemplo La Plaza de Mayo en Buenos Aires, la tensión de esta mutación es notable:

Fue comprobando que había algunos grupitos, no muchos, por el centro de la plaza. Pero, ¿qué tenía de raro la plaza? Miró y miró buscando qué había de raro en una plaza provinciana que se conocía de memoria. Fue pasando del Cabildo a la Catedral, volvió atrás. La inefable casa rosada le cerraba la posibilidad de ver el río. ¿Cuándo echarían abajo ese adefesio? Todo estaba igual que siempre, feo, chato, pelado. Y de golpe se dio cuenta; en la plaza

no había nadie, aparte de los grupos de mujeres que llegaban para la manifestación. Absolutamente un alma. No había gente parada curioseando, no pasaban chicos ni hombres preocupados en sus asuntos, no sesteaban los viejos en los bancos. Ni un solo vendedor ambulante. (85)

El juego entre la memoria (todo estaba igual de siempre), el humor (el deseo de derrumbar el edificio feo), y la realidad nueva (la plaza "muerta") resulta ser un proceso chocante de entendimiento. La memoria de sus experiencias anteriores en el mismo lugar no conforma con este nuevo aspecto de la plaza, tanto que Irene dice, "Me estoy volviendo loca yo también" (85).

La plaza, normalmente un gran centro de vida urbana, quedó borrada. El "golpe" que Irene se sintió no era solamente el choque de la fuerza, el control, y el miedo con que la junta militar aplastaba a la gente, sino también el espanto de darse cuenta del proceso de ignorar a las Madres de la Plaza. Si es posible no reconocer la existencia de las Madres, es posible negar a todos los desaparecidos. Dora de Basse, una de las verdaderas Madres de la Plaza, afirma a Jo Fisher en su estudio *Mothers of the Disappeared*: "

There was nothing in the newspapers; if a journalist reported us, he disappeared; the television and radio were completely under military control, so people weren't conscious" (53). Fisher añade que "the military dismissed as laughable the suggestion that a group of women could pose any threat to their position" (60).

Ahora, la trayectoria de este estudio sale de la plaza para entrar en un espacio público más pequeño, la calle. Allí también se nota la misma insistencia en el vacío y la falta de conexión o comunicación. Irene describe las calles de Montevideo: "Me dio cuenta que pasaba algo malo cuando comenzaron a bajarse violentamente las cortinas metálicas...En un segundo la calle se volvió una trampa" (30). Bajo circunstancias típicas, el sonido de las cortinas no es nada anormal: como son de metal, hacen un ruido. Pero, en el contexto político y social de opresión recreado en esta novela, el proceso de cerrar la tienda ya tiene una conotación de soledad, miedo, y, sobretodo, finalidad. Los de adentro tienen que huir adentro y separarse de los de afuera para protegerse. Cerrar la cortina de la tienda en la calle es igual a cerrar los ojos en la plaza.

Este silencio sigue igual aún cinco años después: "¡Qué extraños y aterradores ese silencio y soledad en una ciudad tomada!" (150). Es tanto el miedo que Dolores se siente que quiere correr por la plaza y las calles

vacías, o sea, que quiere obedecer el instinto humano de huir de los peligros desconocidos; pero, ella sabe que no debe hacerlo porque sería un signo de culpabilidad en una sociedad en que "tirar primero y averiguar después era la consigna" (150).

Además de analizar la mutación de las calles, se puede enfocar más limitadamente en los árboles. Normalmente una expresión de belleza, estabilidad, y fuerza natural, los árboles descritos en el texto han sido cortados y son unos palos grotescos. Su naturaleza verdadera ha sido transformada: "La calle en otra época fuera una entrada de estancia con inmensos árboles formando cúpula, se veía miserable con los troncos cortados [...] ¿Pasarían cuántos años antes de que volvieran a ser árboles frondosos?" (93). Se puede decir la misma cosa en cuanto a las plazas, las calles, y las personas.

De las calles con sus árboles patéticos, la trayectoria narrativa va entrando en unos lugares que son más internos y personales: el teatro quemado, la casa de los padres de Dolores, y la casa de Luisa. Estos sitios también han sido alterados, o sea, lo que representan ha sido cambiado.

El teatro, un espacio interior público, se convierte en un lugar doblemente ficticio. Todavía es literalmente un espacio ficticio debido a su función artística de representar obras de teatro, de ficcionalizar la vida. Pero, ahora también es figurativamente ficticio debido a su condición quemada. El gobierno lo quemó a propósito para convertirlo en un lugar inútil. Pero, al contrario, resulta ser un lugar de actividad clandestina y un refugio seguro para Irene y los jóvenes que quieren protestar contra el control militar. Algo visto por fuera "muerta o inactiva" de verdad es un centro de vida. Además, lo que hacen adentro, planear protestas, es más realista y creíble que lo que ocurre afuera, el silencio "ficticio" impuesto por el gobierno. Así, el teatro público se convierte en una realidad privada, y la realidad privada se convierte en una ficción pública.

Otro espacio interior es la casa, un lugar privado que normalmente simboliza la familia y su seguridad. Pero, bajo este régimen abusador, la casa de los padres de Dolores es todo el opuesto. Dolores no se siente cómoda en la casa y la nombra "la tierra de nadie" (151). Sus padres, como otros ciudadanos, viven aterrorizados y así no quieren demostrar que alguien vive adentro: las puertas, las ventanas, y las cortinas: cerradas; las lámparas: usadas con el mínimo de voltios posibles y aún así, cubiertas con pañuelos. Es una penumbra perpetua: "Le angustió la idea de que todos tomaban precauciones para pasar desapercibidos, como si con esas infantiles estrategias consiguieran despistar a la pandilla salvaje" (163).

La casa de Irene es otro espacio interno privado que ha sido alterado. Su casa y lo que representa son redefinidos constantemente por

las influencias políticas. Un típico hogar lujoso de terciopelo y gatos siameses pasa por una serie de transformaciones: una sala para encuentros relajados, una casa de fiesta cuando “la mismísima Norma Shearer” aparece y baila con los jóvenes (39), un teatro donde Irene puede citar sus líneas de pie encima de la mesa del comedor, un sitio para clandestinas reuniones subversivas, y por fin, un lugar de terror cuando la policía entra y detiene a todos.

Y, unos cinco años después, esta misma casa es el sitio donde la trayectoria narrativa viaja aún más adentro para entrar en el refugio de la sala donde Irene y Dolores conversan sobre sus experiencias. Esta conversación es fundamental para las dos porque la sala es redefinida como un espacio para conectarse, o mejor dicho, para recuperar la habilidad humana de entenderse. Por ejemplo, durante el primer encuentro, Irene está descrita así: “En ese momento parecía más joven que la joven, porque la conversación la encendía. Días enteros se había cubierto de cenizas, hundida en la desesperación. Ahora se las sacudía con entusiasmo” (30). En este espacio, las mujeres se dieron cuenta de que “una palabra podía tener vida y existir en otro mundo distinto” (113) y “descubrimos a lo largo de la conversación que estábamos más ligadas una a la otra de lo que pensábamos” (165).

Por fin, las dos expresaron lo que no podían expresar antes (la tortura y el miedo) porque tal vez otros no les entenderían o no les creerían. Irene dice a Dolores: “...Te conté una cantidad de cosas que no había comentado con nadie [...] ¿Por qué no se lo conté a nadie? Creo tener la respuesta; porque nadie estaba dispuesto a creerme, o, peor todavía, en caso de que me creyeran, nadie estaba dispuesto a compartir esa furia y ese dolor” (165-6). Su conversación implica que por fin hay alguien que no solamente escucha sino que también entiende. Discutir y compartir dan una dimensión verdadera a sus experiencias: implica que habían vivido sus pasados, que eran testigos, y que sobrevivieron. La conversación les afirmaba a las dos como existentes e indicaba que todo lo que les ocurrió no pasaría al olvido, a la inexistencia.

De esta conversación intangible en la sala, se viaja más íntimamente al contacto físico humano. Al comienzo de la tarde, el proceso de tocarse es muy tentativo y apenas cortés para las dos. Cuando Irene abre la puerta la primera vez y ve a Dolores, “ella la empujaba hacia adentro de la casa y la llevaba hasta un sillón” (8). Después de casi empujarle a Dolores a sentarse, Irene recuerda invitarle a quitarse la chaqueta; son acciones al revés según el etiqueta normal. Entonces, usa la excusa de preparar café para escapar de la sala. No es un bienvenido necesariamente cariñoso. Las dos se sientan inseguras e incómodas: las manos de Irene temblan al servir el café

y Dolores "se hunde en el sillón [...] sin sacar las manos de los bolsillos" (10). Su comportamiento es una manera de aislarse, de separarse, y de protegerse. Esto es muy lógico al pensar en el daño físico, la tortura, y "todos los horrores conocidos" (9). Debido al miedo, el abuso, y la tortura, el contacto físico ya es algo temido, muy lejos de su naturaleza cariñosa. Y, aunque las dos pueden discutir la tortura y pueden teorizar sobre el tipo de persona que usaría la picana, ninguna puede 'abrir' el cuerpo en este momento.

Pero, después de haber conversado toda la tarde, el contacto representa un verdadero cariño, un contacto íntimo de amor y conexión. Dolores se duerme e Irene "alargó los dedos hasta tocarle la cabeza. Necesitaba disimular su agresividad latente, suavizar el tacto que se replegaba ante ese pelo descuidado y engrasado y el olfato que husmeaba el olor a sudores y a orines de la cárcel" (168). Y, después, "mientras la acomodaba, Dolores le tomó una mano y la metió entre las suyas debajo de la almohada. La mujer la dejó hacer y se sentó en el suelo con las piernas cruzadas" (169). Dolores necesita la seguridad del tacto tanto como Irene: "Mientras fumaba despacio, recuperó cierta confianza en sí misma y en el porvenir" (170).

Del contacto cariñoso entre Dolores e Irene, la trayectoria va a un sitio interior aún más íntimo: el útero de Dolores donde su feto fue matado por la tortura. Éste es un espacio negado por los oficiales y es el espacio del desaparecido. Fisher comenta:

By refusing to acknowledge the existence of what was later established to be at least 340 illegal detention centers throughout the country they [the government] also denied the existence of their occupants, some 15,000, who are estimated to have passed through the camps in the first year of military rule. Since these people officially did not exist they could be held without limit of time and with nothing to constrain the methods used against them. (62)

El feto de Dolores y el hijo de Irene representan todos los desaparecidos verdaderos: todos están en este limbo. Pero, al conversar y al permitir el contacto íntimo, Dolores retomó este espacio y lo reconoció en vez de caer en la trampa de borrarlo, de olvidarlo, de mandarlo al espacio desconocido:

No le había dicho frases concretas, pero le fue traspasando la idea, que ahora veía inocultable, de que todo ese amasijo sangriento de horror y pelos y uñas humanas era el espacio de su vida, un

espacio propio; y que la ciega y sorda salvación posterior a la que se agarraba con todas sus fuerzas, carecería de dimensiones si pretendía ignorar aquellos sufrimientos inenarrables. (96)

Esta reclamación del espacio del terror sigue la línea teórica de Debra Castillo en la cual ella discute el proceso de "appropriating the master's weapons" y dice que "they [women] take up both tools and language and, in so doing, forge new instrumentalities" (99). En este caso, la memoria y la conversación son las herramientas usadas contra los abusadores y el silencio del olvido.

Irene, de igual manera, y debido al encuentro con Dolores, por fin puede admitir a sí misma su propio miedo en cuanto a la situación de su hijo:

En ese momento comprendió que su hijo, si volvía a verlo, sería otra persona, ¿agresiva, patética, rencorosa? En todo caso un hombre desconocido [...] Le entró de nuevo la ansiedad terrible de confirmar que no había tregua y que ocurrían hechos reales y no imaginarios que empujaban y distorsionaban el tiempo. (169)

Estos lugares tan íntimos son un espacio que es muy individual y mundial a la vez: el espacio de los desaparecidos. Es individual debido a la relación familiar: cada víctima es/fue la madre, el padre, el hijo, la hija de otra persona. Pero, es mundial también por las protestas, las reclamaciones, y las marchas de las Madres y otros que siguen pidiendo la justicia.

Y, ahora, ¿qué conecta esta trayectoria narrativa del exterior al interior? En *Conversación al sur* es el timbre de la casa de Irene. La novela comienza con el primer timbre, o mejor dicho, la narración empieza con las reacciones de Irene al timbre anteriormente tocado. El timbre y el supuestamente inócuo abrir de la puerta crean en ella una cadena de sensaciones: indecisión, pánico, acción fingida o automática, y por fin, memoria. La indecisión y el pánico vinieron primero porque ella no sabe quién es: amigo o enemigo; hijo o policía; buenas noticias o malas. Después hay acción automática, porque ella, como buena actriz, "se abría paso la larga práctica de seducir mediante sonrisas" y "se dio cuenta de que sus adiestradas armas ya funcionaban mecánicamente" para abrir la puerta e invitar paso como buena anfitriona (7). Esto sigue la norma: el timbre suena, se abre la puerta, se invita; pero ahora, hay una énfasis robótica. Y, finalmente, la memoria viene: "la reconoció de golpe" (7).

El pánico y el temor están relacionados en este caso porque son una reacción a la necesidad de confrontar el pasado y el presente, especialmente

como éstos se manifiestan en la figura de Dolores. Irene ya tiene una historia trágica con Dolores (el pasado) y a la vez, Dolores representa un paralelo con el hijo ausente de Irene (el presente). Ver a Dolores, una sobreviviente de tortura, implica que Irene tiene que admitir la posibilidad de que su hijo está siendo abusado, o peor. No obstante, el pasado y el presente se convierten en una fuente de fuerza porque al hablar, al recordar, y al compartir, las dos mujeres pueden reconocer la verdad del pasado y el presente (en vez de olvidarlo o borrarlo). Fisher incluye los testimonios de otra Madre de la Plaza, Hebe de Bonafini, en su estudio: “[You] piece together the full extent of the horror. All this changes you” (66). Así, reconocer el cambio interno y privado se lleva a la posibilidad de cambiar el compartido futuro externo.

Pero, en medio de este descubrimiento, “el timbre volvió a sonar brutalmente” (72). Como las dos todavía estaban en el proceso de recordar, entender, y fortalecerse, este timbre, junto con las memorias y las realidades que iban contando, sirve solamente para transportarles a las escenas miedosas de la tortura, y Dolores “quedó estupefacta” (72). Aunque Irene va para abrir, Dolores le agarra y las dos “quedaron inmóviles” (72). Después de varios toques, la puerta se queda incontestada; es un eco de las preguntas ignoradas e incontestadas que son lanzadas en cuanto a los desaparecidos: “La vida se vuelve una mierda cuando no hay manera de contestar nada” (74). Aunque las dos reaccionaron con miedo, después de un rato siguen conversando otra vez porque el diálogo es lo que les motiva y les da energía para continuar. Además, Irene añade, casi proféticamente, “No caigamos en la psicosis. Vos también sabés que hace tiempo que no pasa nada” (73).

Con el próximo toque del timbre se nota un cambio sutil. Aunque Irene está sola en casa de noche y no espera a visitas, ella abre la puerta sin vacilar. Ella no se comportó con miedo y parálisis como había reaccionado con Dolores durante la tarde. Ahora está lista para confrontar su pasado y su presente. No obstante, todavía se nota una sugerencia de cuidado: al abrir la puerta, manda que Dolores entre rápidamente: “¿Qué hacés ahí parada? ¡Entrá! ¡No te quedés ni un segundo ahí fuera!” (162).

Este abrir de la puerta lleva al contacto tan importante entre Dolores e Irene. Esta trayectoria, de lo más externo y público a lo más interno e íntima, sirve doblemente: para ilustrar la corrupción que afectó todos niveles de la sociedad y para indicar la fe y la fuerza que quedaron intactas a pesar de tal corrupción. Es de este mismo lugar que el rescate sale; la memoria, el mensaje, y la recuperación pueden seguir. De lo más externo, se viaja a lo más interno, y de allí, hay una trayectoria hacia afuera, hacia el espacio más externo otra vez: la reclamación.

Pero, en el caso de esta novela, la última escala del vuelo, el regreso al espacio externo, no ocurre. Es asesinada tanto como el feto de Dolores. En el momento más íntimo, cuando estas dos mujeres pueden por fin dormir sin pesadillas y sin insomnios y cuando Irene le permite a sí misma pensar en el futuro, no hay ni siquiera el timbre: hay una cacofonía de golpes contra la puerta, gritos sin control, pasos estruendos, y el espacio interior es invadido brutalmente. Todo vuelve a un "silencio absoluto," a un silencio maternal, a un silencio que los opresores no entran ni oyen, a una fuerza que no comprenden (170).

En este espacio tomado, Irene abraza y trata de proteger a Dolores, y por metonimia, a su hijo en Santiago y a todos los desaparecidos. Ahora es la Desaparecida, es la Madre de Desaparecidos, es la Madre de la Plaza. Es la Madre y así "gives life and liberty...and defends life as many times as necessary"; ella es "an assertion of the right to life which challenged the very basis of the military's system of repression"; es un desafío y una esperanza (Fisher 60, 70). Esto es el espacio, externo e interno a la vez, donde se puede colocar las piezas que sobran: "...en ese rompecabezas perfecto, me sobran piezas; ¿dónde colocar a los torturadores, los delatores, los asesinos?" (62). Los abusadores no caben, pero sí hay espacio para la fuerza interior y "el impulso generoso hacia los otros" que salva (Sola 109). Este impulso salva no solamente dentro de sí mismo, sino también a otros en salas, en casas, en teatros, en calles, en plazas, en ciudades, en países, en Hispanoamérica, en el mundo.

Por fin, hay una conexión entre lo mundial y lo individual con lo externo y lo interno de la trayectoria de esta investigación; hay también una conexión entre la ficción y la realidad. Los eventos históricos afectan al mundo, pero comienzan y afectan más al individuo. Tanto en su vida como en la novela, Traba describe y critica como los abusos de poder se manifiestan en y corrompen no solamente el país, la ciudad, la plaza, la calle, y los edificios públicos, sino también las casas privadas, las salas personales, y los habitantes. No obstante, estos mismos individuos son los que tienen la fuerza para resistir. La fuerza es la memoria, el pensamiento, el contacto con otros: la lucha contra el olvido. Después de haber seguido la trayectoria de reconocer, entender, y confrontar lo de afuera y lo de adentro, hay que cambiar dirección e ir hacia afuera otra vez: del evento histórico a su manifestación física a su marco intangible al individuo; y, después, del individuo y su memoria personal a la memoria colectiva al entendimiento y acción mundiales.

Todavía ahora hay sobrevivientes y testigos; todavía ahora hay parientes que recuerdan y lamentan a sus desaparecidos; todavía hay Madres y otros que marchan y protestan. Pero, también hay torturadores

que usan las enfermedades de la vejez para escapar la justicia; también hay abusadores que se mueren tranquilamente en sus camas. Además, hay generaciones que nacieron y crecieron ignorantes de estos eventos; hay generaciones que se ahogan con la información instantánea sin tener entendimiento histórico; hay generaciones que se aíslan porque es más fácil usar el teclado que el timbre. Ahora, más que en cualquier otro tiempo, la experiencia individual, el contacto colectivo, y el entendimiento mundial son cruciales.

Victoria Verlichak comenta que “la producción ensayística y literaria [de Traba] dio cuenta de ese deseo de vivir: generador de un pensamiento crítico, multiplicador de nuevas miradas. Lejos de arrogancia y del lenguaje altisonante, con su palabra ardiente inició a muchos en la aventura del saber y del mirar” (15-6). Por sus obras, Marta Traba reitera que este proceso de saber y mirar, de entender y hacer contacto, tangible o intangiblemente, literal o figurativamente, es la única manera en que se puede entender situaciones del terror institucional, demandar la justicia por ellas, y evitarlas. El timbre simboliza este proceso, este rescate de la memoria, porque el timbre conecta lo exterior con lo interior. Ahora, ¿quién toca la puerta y quién la abre?

OBRAS CITADAS

- Agosin, Marjorie. “Marta Traba.” *Sin Nombre* 14:3 (April -June 1984): 97-100.
- Andersen, Martin Edwin. *Dossier Secreto: Argentina's Desaparecidos and the Myth of the “Dirty War.”* Boulder: Westview P, 1993.
- Castillo, Debra. *Talking Back: Toward a Latin American Feminist Literary Criticism.* Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1992.
- Correas de Zapata, Celia. “Marta Traba.” Trans. John Benson. *Spanish American Women Writers: A Biobibliographical Source Book.* Ed. Diane E. Marting. New York: Green Wood P, 1990. 513-521.
- Fisher, Jo. *Mothers of the Disappeared.* Boston: South End P, 1989.
- Heller, Agnes and Pablo Rosendo. “Lo pasado, olvidado.” *Página/12* (May 1997): 23.
- Sola, María. “Escribo como mujer: trayectoria de la narrativa de Marta Traba.” *Sin Nombre* 14:3 (April -June 1984): 101-114.
- Traba, Marta. *Conversación al sur.* 4th edition. Mexico City: Siglo XXI Editores, 1990.
- Verlichak, Victoria. *Marta Traba: una terquedad furibunda.* Buenos Aires: UNTREF-Fundación Proa, 2001.

MACLAS PRIZE WINNERS - 2004

Arthur P. Whitaker Prize for the best book published 2002-2003:
Gladys Ilarregui and **Judy McInnis** (trans.) - *Poemas a medianoche/Poems at Midnight*

Harold Eugene Davis Prize for best article published by a MACLAS member, 2002-2003:
Rebecca Bill Chavez - "The Construction of the Rule of Law in Argentina, A tale of Two Provinces," *Comparative Politics*, July 2003

Street Prize for best article published in *Latin American Essays*:
Ivani Vassoler - "Urban Visions: Lessons in Governance from Two Brazilian Cities"

John D. Martz III Prize for best graduate paper presented at 2004 MACLAS XXV:
Kevin Coleman - "Historical Narratives on the Banana Industry: US-Honduran Encounters, 1870s-1930s"

Juan Espadas Prize for best undergraduate paper presented at 2004 MACLAS XXV:
Adriana Beatriz Rojas - "La musa vence a su escultor: el papel surrealista de Susana San Juan en Pedro Paramo"

MACLAS OFFICERS – 2003-2004		
President	Barbara Tenenbaum	bten@loc.gov
VP/President Elect	Brian Turner	bturner@rmc.edu
Secretary	Anna Adams	aadams@muhberg.edu
Treasurer	Judy McInnis	jmcinnis@udel.edu
Council	Carolyn Bell	bell@kutztown.edu
Council	Elizabeth Espadas	espadaslos@aol.com
Council	Joan Marx	jmarx@muhlberg.edu
Council	John Stolle-McAllister	stollem@umbc.edu
Past President	John Incledon	johni@alb.edu

MACLAS PRESIDENTS 1979/1980 to 2004/2005

1979-1980	Charles Ameringer (acting)	Penn State University
1980-1981	Charles Ameringer	Penn State University
1981-1982	Ivo Domínguez	University of Delaware
1982-1983	G. Pope Atkins	U.S. Naval Academy
1983-1984	John D. Martz	Penn State University
1984-1985	Michael Burke	Villanova University
1985-1986	Judith Ewell	College of William & Mary
1986-1987	Jack Child	American University
1987-1988	Robert Alexander	Rutgers University
1988-1989	Vera Blinn Reber	Shippensburg University
1989-1990	Vincent Peloso	Howard University
1990-1991	Harold Sims	University of Pittsburgh
1991-1992	Winthrop R. Wright	University of Maryland
1992-1993	Mark Wasserman	Rutgers University
1993-1994	Harold Greer	Virginia Commonwealth U.
1994-1995	Elizabeth Espadas	Wesley College
1995-1996	Alvin Cohen	Lehigh University
1996-1997	Arvilla Payne-Jackson	Howard University
1997-1998	Dan Masterson	U.S. Naval Academy
1998-1999	Clarence Zuvekas, Jr.	Consulting Economist
1999-2000	James A. Baer	Northern Virginia C. C.
2000-2001	Hannah Stewart-Gambino	Lehigh University
2001-2001	Judy B. McInnis	University of Delaware
2001-2002	David Sheinin	Trent University
2002-2001	John Incledon	Albright College
2002-2003	Barbara Tenenbaum	Library of Congress

MACLAS SECRETARY-TREASURERS: 1979-2005

1980-1983	Michael Burke	Villanova University
1985-1987	Winthorp R Wright	University of Maryland
1988-1994	Alvin Cohen	Lehigh University
1994	Danusia Mesón S.	American University
1995-2001	Frank Gunter	Lehigh University
2002-	Judy McInnis (treas.)	University of Delaware
2000-	Anna Adams (sec.)	Muhlenberg College

MACLAS Latin American Essays

Editors: Volume (1987) to Volume XVIII (2005)

Robert J. Alexander, Rutgers University: Volumes I, II, III, IV.
Maria Mercedes Andrade, CUNY, Baruch College, Vol. XVI-XVII.
Alvin Cohen, Lehigh University (Managing Editor): Vols. V, VI, VII.
Edith Couturier, NEH Administrator: Volumes I, II, III.
Juan Espadas, Ursinas College: Vols. I-X.
Joan Marx, Muhlenberg College: Vol. XVII.
Judy B. McInnis, University of Delaware: Vols. XI-XV.
Vincent Poloso, Howard University: Vols. IV, V, VI.
Vera B. Reber, Shippensburg University: Vols. VII-XVII.
Harold D. Sims, University of Pittsburgh: Vols. VIII-, XIV, XV.
Christina Turner, Virginia Commonwealth U: Vols. XIII- XVIII.

Visit the MACLAS web page:

www.maclas.vcu.edu