SPECIAL ISSUE ON LATIN AMERICA

Youth Subcultures:
- Silvia Delfino, Susana Quiraz, Pilar Ruzo

Cultural Theory:
- Jesús Martin-Barranco, Néstor García Canclini

Rock & Roll: Rubén Martínez
And More....
PAZ ERRAZURIZ

is a Chilean photographer whose work has been described as a social document of the realities of Chilean life. Errazuriz's photographs look at groups in Chilean society which are outside of the mainstream. Barranqueros, townsmen, workers, peasants, do not represent traditions out of which Chilean society grew, unlike the Indians and village people often photographed.

But in the view of the artist they are parts of a whole of which she is also a part, and co-exist in determining the unique character of Chilean society. They are also among the first to be persecuted under governments obsessed with cleaning up the loose ends of society as a prerequisite to economic stability - as they were recently by the Pinochet regime. Errazuriz is interested in the peculiar combination of revival and insurrection with which marginal people are viewed in relation to issues of class and gender and to questions concerning how social superiority and sexual politics are established.

EDITORIAL

On the quincentenary of Columbus' first American footprint, cultural theorists from the North are "rediscovering" Latin American cultural theory. The publication of this issue of Border/Lines follows closely on the heels of other releases (see BL list) which constitute a small "boom." As the controversial "moment" of 1982 recedes into popular memory, this engagement with the texts of Latin American cultural theorists comes at an opportune time for publishers and academics - who are always happy to colonize new terrains to bolster sales or bolster careers - but, more significantly, for the possibility of a meaningful dialogue between intellectual constituencies North and South.

Our intention on this issue has been to clear a space for some members of the Latin American diaspora to engage a sampling of cultural issues on their own terms, to open the pages of Border/Lines to new ideas, new realities and new constituencies. In anticipation of response, we have included in the book review section non-Latinos whose engagement with several texts of Latin American Cultural Studies provides an example of the listening and learning that these texts demand, while speaking emphatically of the impending appropriation and placement of these same texts into the problem of cultural studies.

But, just what is Latin American Cultural Studies? Whose invention - or discovery - is it? Does it speak to a real appropriation or is it an appropriate co-opt, apropos to the voices, texts and realities that it may claim?

While adapting the term cultural studies to these Latin American writings carries immediate tactical benefits ranging from more recognition to increased legitimation on the horizon of the fledgling cultural studies enterprise in the North - namely the university curriculum - the long term strategic interests in this moment are much more problematic. For those who worry of the social and aesthetic struggles of a cultural studies made up of audiences, TV sets and marginal forms of resistance, the Latin American writings provide a refreshing return to the grittier realities of everyday life on urban streets familiar to the British beginnings of cultural studies. However, and here's the rub, such recognition - or self-mirroring - obscures the vital differences between works which may share many common circuits and theoretical frameworks, but which emerge from radically different social and historical matrices. To put it into other terms, it may be the same game, but the round peg won't fit into the square hole - categorization is not what these writings demand.

Coordinating an issue of Border/Lines depends on a lot of people, some of whom are not necessarily on the editorial collective. In preparing this issue, we would like to acknowledge the help of the intermediaries, those who put us in contact with others and those who translated pieces. Thus, we would like to thank Silvia Delfino, Pilar Bizto, Sonia Higuer, Deon Brown and Cyndi Mitten, all of whom have helped us to traverse cultural, geographical and linguistic borders.

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Editorial Address:
- The Great Bear Building, 1059 Ontario Street, Toronto, Canada M7K 1B7
- Tel: (416) 925-0930
- Fax: (416) 531-0097

Business Address:
- Border/Lines
- Ryerson College
- T一种 University
- 470 Lakeshore Street East
- Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5B 2K3
- Tel: (416) 978-2439

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In 1992, Benedita do Silva, a mayoral candidate in Rio de Janeiro and a federal delegate of the Worker's Party, narrowly missed becoming the first black woman elected as mayor to an important Brazilian city. Were it not for the colour of her skin, the situation would be considered normal: an analysis of the reality for black people in this Latin American country shows that the candidacy of Benedita do Silva is distinct.

According to the data of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, Brazil is the second largest black nation in the world with 44.5% of the population of African descent. Nonetheless, these numbers do not symbolize full participation in society, and, 104 years after the abolition of slavery, changes with respect to the identity and valorization of black people are still very slow. Abolition did not facilitate the entrance of black people into the labour market or the political arena, nor did it even guarantee the rights and responsibilities of citizenship itself. Illiteracy and lack of professional training are still a reality for black people today. In the case of women, those who were chosen to work in the house of their masters as "acarretas" under slavery have now been freed up to do the same job as domestic help.

In the mirror of the wall... To look in the mirror and to see the skin colour of one’s skin, the thick lips and the early lacks of hair is an eternal distillation for many black women. This is because Brazilian divers have white skin, long and straight hair, black, at least thin lips. This European model of beauty, dictated by the elites many years ago, weighs heavily upon the self-image of black people. The ideology of "whitening" (symbolizing oneself by adopting the attitudes of white people) affects man, women and children. A black woman journalist comments: 'The first doll I was given by my mother was large and white, with blonde hair and blue eyes. At that time, I didn’t understand anything about the difference in skin colour. I was just a girl who loved her doll and...’
called it my daughter." Black dolls have only recently appeared.

At the 10th Conference of Black Women in Brazil which took place in São Paulo in August 1984, Benedita de Silva spoke of her own anguish as a black girl: "I would like to tell you something very difficult. I once bathed myself in detergent because I wanted to whiten my skin. I did this because I thought that if detergent could whiten clothes, that it would do the same to my skin." Declarations such as this one reflect the reality of black women in Brazil. There are millions of people who do not see themselves reflected in society. They are not visible on television because to become models of beauty they must look similar to Xuxa, the queen of kids in Brazil - and now of all of Latin America. Very few Brazilian black women are photographed for either masculine or feminine magazines. Almost none are executive secretaries, lawyers or doctors.

because they need their own personality, they live a total contradiction. To be black in Brazil is one of the most cruel things on earth, in which one means living in permanent conflict within the family and in social, cultural and professional contexts. It is very difficult to come to an adequate resolution of this problem of a personal, social and professional level.

The media in general, but television in particular, reinforces the ideology of "whitening." Black women, who are almost never present in advertisements or TV programs, play a part only when the objective is to signify sexuality and to awaken the desires of the (male) viewer. To barcal the opening of this year's Carnival programs on the Rede Globo, sculpted marble and black beaurons were chosen. They appeared totally naked on the screen with their bodies painted in bright colours. Thus, on a national network it was once again reaffirmed that this is what black women are good for: to drive men crazy with their bodies; they are inaccessible and they dominate the arts of pleasure. They are not human, but objects. The black militant Vanderlei Jose Maria, who also participated in the 10th Conference of Black Women in Brazil, states that: "the entire European representation of romance, of romanticism, of passion and of love was always concealed with the white woman as muse... How do we look at black women? We look at them as erotic fruit waiting to be eaten."

Resistance

The barriers to active participation in society, independent of skin colour, do not mean that black men and women are not struggling against discrimination in Brazil. With Benedita de Silva and Gloria Maria (reporter at Rede Globo), singers such as Sônia de Souza, Leydy Bradano and Elsa Soares, as well as many others, women have representatives who will help them sing, chant and reindicate their right to appear and to be - to be who they are in all their colours. Resisting and organizing have enabled the black population to develop mechanisms of participation to construct their own history. Among the accomplishments of the Brazilian Black Movement it is important to emphasize the changes to the Constitution. It is now against the law in Brazil to discriminate against either ethnic or racial groups or individuals who are part of these groups. Also, changes to the educational system have addressed the inequality of the sexes, the struggle against racism and all forms of discrimination. The history of black people must now be included in school curriculas.

Knowing that the Constitution has laws guaranteeing the citizenship of black people does not mean that the struggle is over. Benedita de Silva argues that it is necessary to develop the consciousness of the black community. Says de Silva: "Our work continues, and moves on to the growth of black consciousness and the recovery of Afro-Brazilian cultural memory."

Marcos Cruz is a black Brazilian journalist who is currently freelancing.

White Communication

The impossibility of flowing from colour through the mirror leads many people to disguise their black identity. In an article for Retratos de Brasil (Portraits of Brazil), the sociologist Glória Moore stated that non-white Brazilians responded to the 1986 census using 166 different colours to avoid being labelled as black. According to Moore, the use of terms such as "cheetah, dark brown, sunburned, mulatto, brown," among others, shows how "Brazilians lie from ethical truth, seeking through symbolism to put themselves as close as possible to the model established as superior." Heloísa Theodoro Lopes writes in Cadernos de Pesquisa [Workbook of Investigations] 50 (1987) that "to affirm oneself as a person, the black person has to negate their identity, but

how to read and who listened while doing domestic or manual work. The first alternative radio programme for women in Mexico was produced in 1972 by Alíce Foppes. She is a very important woman for all of us, but especially for us in Latin America, who acknowledge her as one of the symbols of the Latin American feminist movement. She was a pioneer in communications and created FEM, the first feminist magazine in Mexico. She created the first feminist radio programme and taught the first feminist courses at the National University. She was an art historian and a poet. She was a Guatemalan woman who was assassinated in 1980 by her government when she returned to her country.

Because of all this, the Alíce Foppes Centre for Alternative Communication was named after her. The centre has existed for three years but the work of the women who construct it has been going on for ten years. We work for a government-funded educational radio station. The first series of programmes was made called "The Women's Course." The series originally ran for six months. The interest of women listeners was so great that they put pressure on the station and the series lasted for six and a half years. We also produced a weekly news report for women, and we have extended our work into cinema, video and audiovisual. I am very interested in discussing ideas about how we could extend our work on a low budget in alternative communication. Because alternative media exists in a marginal space, what we would like to achieve is autonomy and to have our own centre funded by our work.

Recently, with women in Germany, we organized an exhibition which gives an overview of women's organizations in Mexico City. Approximately sixteen organizations were represented, among them indigenous women, domestic workers, artists, communicators, lesbians and punk girls. This exhibition was shown in Mexico and is now in Europe. We believe that alternative communication may help us to live in harmony, in a more democratic way.
Remembering Aliade Foppa by Bertha Hiriant

When at last I was fortunate to meet Aliade Foppa, I felt a little as if I were her daughter. Not only because I was the same age as her children, but because I was indebted, like many other women, for the spaces that she opened up for debate and to spread feminist ideas. My image of her had changed over time.

When FEM first appeared in 1978, my friends in the movement considered the women who produced it to be modestly comfortable people. Aliade and the other women who wrote in the magazine appeared to us to be bourgeois women and the publication seemed academic and elitist. We twenty-two-year-olds felt that only a cheaply produced magazine, distributed by hand, had any value. For some years we did not read FEM very carefully, nor did we discuss its contents. Like most young people, we were not interested in the works of our elders. We had to say our own thing, with the fantasy that our group was absolutely different from the other groups.

But one day in 1978 we met Aliade. We were invited to a feminist round-table discussion in which she participated. You at once had to notice her intelligence and other qualities. She left early but I met her the next day while taking a walk and we talked. A year and a half later when she was assassinated, I regretted all the conversations that I didn’t have with her, the meetings I didn’t participate in with her, the classes I didn’t take from her.

When I left behind the spirit of adolescence and became a member of the FEM group, I came to appreciate the value of the early issues of FEM. They were a storehouse of information, reports and investigations. The first contribution by Aliade should be included in highschool textbooks. It is a discussion of the origins of sexual discrimination which everyone should read. You could say the same about all her other contributions: on the family, women writers and many other themes. But the most important thing about Aliade is that she opened up spaces which we today occupy.

In spite of the tragedy of her death most of the spaces she opened remain alive. This is the case for FEM and for university courses on women. Here we are in university radio where there is space for all of our struggles. Her radio work continues in Michoacán and Oaxaca and in eight years of feminist programmes at Educational Radio in Mexico City. This particular work, now suspended because of the economic crisis and lack of interest by the authorities, is being continued by the Aliade Foppa Centre for Alternative Communication. In this way we remember her.

*From a radio program produced by the Aliade Foppa Centre for Alternative Communication and Radio UNAM to remember the 10th anniversary of the assassination of Aliade Foppa.*
People consume in different social spheres in different ways, from the corner store to the neighborhood market and from huge shopping centers to television. Nevertheless since activities on a massive and anonymous scale are intertwined with interactions that are intimate and personal, it becomes necessary to think about them in relationship to one another.

Upper-level students, rock listeners tend to be young people and adolescents. People tend to locate themselves in certain musical tastes and different styles in accordance with generation gaps and economic and educational differences.

Does so-called cultural consumption have a specific set of problems? If the appropan of any good is an act that symbolically differentiates, integrates and communicates, objectives desires and ritualizes satisfactions and if we say that to consume, in fact, serves as thinking, then all acts of consumption-and not just those related to art or playing—are cultural acts. Why then separate out what happens in connection with certain goods or activities and call them "cultural consumption"?

This distinction is theoretically and methodologically justified because of the partial independence gained in modern times in the areas of art and communications. Art, literature and science have been freed from the religious and political controls which previously imposed a variety of standards on them. Independence was achieved, in part, by a global secularization of society, but also by radical transformations of distribution and consumption. The growth of the bourgeoisie and the middle classes, as well as the general increase in education seemed to form specific publics for art and literature in which works are differentiated and selected according to aesthetic criteria. A set of specialized institutions—art galleries and museums, publishing houses and magazines—offer independent circuits for the production and circulation of these goods. Products that are deemed to be cultural have use and exchange values. They contribute to the reproduction of society and at times to the expansion of capital. But in them the symbolic values prevail over utilitarian and mercantile values. A car that is used for transportation includes cultural aspects, but it is inscribed in a different register from the car that the same person—an artist, let's suppose—places in an exhibit or uses in a performance. In this second case, the cultural, symbolic and aesthetic aspects predominate over the utilitarian and mercantile ones.

What happens with radio, television, film? In spite of the economic pressures that strongly influence them in their style and the rules of communication, these mediums possess a certain autonomy from other types of production. A television editor or producer who only takes into account the commodity values and forgets about the symbolic merits of what she or he produces (although this
As such it is possible to define the particularity of cultural consumption on the combination of processes of appropriation and use of products in which the symbolic values prevail over the use and exchange values. This takes the particular character of cultural consumption into account. Not only does it take into account those goods that have greater autonomy, such as the type of art found in museums, concert halls, and theaters. It also includes those products that are conditioned by their commercial aspect (television programs), or by their dependence on a religious system (active crafts and dances), the development and the consumption of which requires a prolonged training in relatively independent symbolic structures.

It is not surprising to find that, within the tastes of consumers of all classes, there co-exist goods from different times and groups. Between some collectors of records and tapes we often find acolytes of the styles of rock and text music. Among them, Colonial and home-made furniture make up sets that nobody finds incon- sistent with modern pieces of furniture and electric appliances and posters mannounced as a new musical fad and posters for bullfights. The inhabitants of the dwelling are equally attached to all. These elements (which appear odd if we look at them from a perspective of historical evolution, in which we see a substitution of new aesthetic tendencies for old function as cultural and social reproduction, and as a means of integration and communication for the ordered ritualization of practices. Certainly, these elements are not eliminated in the symbolic distinction that separates cultural products (for example, those for consumption in museums and concerts and those who don't; those who watch cultural television programs and those who watch only entertainment programs).

How is it possible that a notion can exist—one with an integrated, analyzable system of cultural consumption—in a seg- mented, multicultural society, with vari- ous time frames and levels of tradition and modernity? The answer to this question can be obtained in the fact that this cultural diversity persists over different cultural integrations and independent modernizations and the homogenization of regional and political life. It is conventional to ask the two questions together, because the answer is the same. The history of con- sumption development signifies the incorpora- tion and creative interaction between (variable) projects of social modeling and (variable) styles of appropriation and use of products.

We have seen in the studies of "live

audiences" that theories of vertical and unilat- eral domination by the centers of mes- sages over their receivers, a concept of explaining the complex processes of interde- pendance between these two entities, contrary to the notion of cultural consumption still holds for many people, actions of assimilation, rejection, negotiation, and re-working of what the beneficiaries are proposing do take place. Among the television programs, political speeches, and the things that consumers read and use there involves the family, barrio or group culture, and other microsocial events. Each object destined for consumption is an open text that demands the co-operation of the reader, the spectator, or the user, in order to be completed and have mean- ing. Each good is a stimulus to thought and, at the same time, an un-thought in which con- sumers, when they insert it into their daily work, generate unexpected meaning. It is known that cultural goods are produced with more or less hidden instructions, practical and rhetorical devices that encourage certain read- ings and restrict the activity of the user. The consumer is never a more creative, but neither is the transmitter omnipotent. We can come to various conclusions from this. The first is that communications studies cannot be only studies about the process of commu- nication, if we understand this to be pro- duction, circulation and reception of mes- sages. The need also to include the structures, scenes and social groups that appropriate and re-elaborate the messages calls for the collabo- ration of communication theorists with sociol- ogists and anthropologists—scientists in social mediation that cannot be reduced to communication processes.

At the same time, the plurality of codes and mediations in which messages are processed can help us to understand how so-called national cultures are currently constituted. How do we explain the fact that societies of nations exist in spite of the collective diversity of consumers and consumption? Only because each nation is, among other things, the result of what specialists in the aesthetics of reception call "reading parts," agreements between producers, institutions and receivers about what is communicable, able to be shared and credible in a given era. A notion is, in part, a hegemonic community of shared understanding, which can only by all be meaningful to the majority. The differ- ences in the reception value that the notion of consumption still holds for many people, actions of assimilation, rejection, negotiation, and re-working of what the beneficiaries are proposing do take place. Among the television programs, political speeches, and the things that consumers read and use there involves the family, barrio or group culture, and other microsocial events. Each object destined for consumption is an open text that demands the co-operation of the reader, the spectator, or the user, in order to be completed and have mean- ing. Each good is a stimulus to thought and, at the same time, an un-thought in which con- sumers, when they insert it into their daily work, generate unexpected meaning. It is known that cultural goods are produced with more or less hidden instructions, practical and rhetorical devices that encourage certain read- ings and restrict the activity of the user. The consumer is never a more creative, but neither is the transmitter omnipotent. We can come to various conclusions from this. The first is that communications studies cannot be only studies about the process of commu- nication, if we understand this to be pro- duction, circulation and reception of mes- sages. The need also to include the structures, scenes and social groups that appropriate and re-elaborate the messages calls for the collabo- ration of communication theorists with sociol- ogists and anthropologists—scientists in social mediation that cannot be reduced to communication processes.

In order to understand current consumption processes in Latin America it seems important to understand the tension that exists between the national structure, historically consolidated in our societies, and the transnationalization generated by modernizing policies. The differences between classes and ethnic groups, that seems to be resolved by the institutionaliza- tion of the notion, are shown to be in crisis in the face of the multiplicity of internal and international processes that challenge this institutionalization. The national becomes diluted, first, by being invaded on a daily basis by foreign messages, and second, by the presence of regional movements of differentiation that question the centrality distribution of cultural goods to which this gives rise.

A new conception of the role of the state can be seen in most government policies which, under the pressure of a large part of the national integra- tion function to multinationals communication and the political and social needs of the popular sectors, the privatization of those areas that have been considered to be of public interest aug- ments the idea of new areas that are not just eco- nomic agreements, but cultural agreements as well. New rules about the reproduction of the work-force and the expansion of organic, new models of competition among groups that wish to appropriate the social product, new norms
of symbolic differentiation; these generate a restructuring of consumption. Will these changes bring new forms of integration and communication, or will they accentuate inequality and differences in the access to goods?

The answer to this question lies in an analysis of how priorities about necessities are established in the stage which is governed by the supposed self-regulation of the market. Hegemonic neoliberalism, acting within the old concept whereby the "objective" laws of supply and demand are the healthiest mechanism for ordering the economy, is promoting the concentration of production—and consumption—within continually more restricted sectors. The privatizing and selective valorization that is taking place is, at times, so severe that demand is descending to the level of biological survival. For large sectors of the extremely poor, the needs around which people are organizing are those of food and work.

Some groups are organizing their response to this hegemonic policy by seeking the restoration of the previous social contract and the type of state it represents. Other see possibilities for resistance in the strengthening of traditional, craft-based, small-group forms of life that may still have validity for the reproduction of some sectors of society, but which have shown themselves to be ineffective at providing global alternatives. It is possible that these options still have considerable capacity for organizing and promoting significant mobilizations, but any such project should consider the state as a key objective. If it ever is to intervene in the modernizing and reorganizing that is taking place, it says this, not because the state is a good administrator or because it might be possible again to expect populist largesse, but because it is a space which might have value in terms of gaining public interest to counteract the reduction of consumers to the level simply of consuming senseless objects.

In this sense the interdisciplinary study of communication and consumption could be a resource for understanding the meaning of modernization and for promoting the participation of broad sectors of society. For one thing, the collaboration of communication theoreists who have specialized in learning about the structures of industry and cultural markets with sociologists and anthropologists dedicated to understanding the social conditions and processes of daily resignification can help the analysis of consumption to transcend the simple consideration of the commercial aspects of products. But it would also be useful if we could manage to come together to discuss the new mechanisms of incluision and exclusion with regard to goods and strategic messages in the current modernizing stage.

As far as cultural consumption is concerned, since it continues to be necessary to seek the democratization of art and cultural knowledge, modernization is confronting us with new demands. The global vision that we had proposed for the role of the consumer as the site of social reproduction, the growth of the national product and of competition and differentiation between groups leads us to ask what restrictive policies around the consumption of new technologies mean for the future. How does one contain a process of modernization that requires a more highly trained labor force while the drop-out rate from school is growing and access to specialized information is limited? We must assess what the growing unequal segmentation of consumption means for political democratization and the participation of the majority. On the one hand, there is an information model that permits one to act; if one has a personal subscription to exclusive television networks and data banks. Privatization has converted these networks into resources for a minority. On the other hand there is a communication model for the masses, organized according to the commercial laws of entertainment, which manages to reduce even political decisions to the level of the spectacle.

Confronting this dualistic organization of Latin American society is a major challenge which requires the collaboration of social scientists. By situating the growth of communication studies in the context of growing consumption and information for the majority, we will be making visible the contradictions of this regressive end of the century.

Héctor García Canclini is a researcher and theorist of Latin American cultural studies. His most recent book is Culturas híbridas: Estrategias para entender de dónde proviene la modernidad (Mexico City: Grijalbo, 1980).

Cydís Meléndez is a Chicana writer, translator and communications student. She is currently editing a Spanish language critique of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).
HERE COME THE PUNK CHAVAS

by Susana Quilroz

trans. Dean Brown

Here in the streets of the Insurgentes district the shop windows gleam with beautiful prostitutes. People at the stand are shocked by the sight of a homosexual, who first stopped to buy a condom from the pharmacy in front of Sears, walking along after being fucked. Every Saturday, the drivers on the "100" bus put up with gangs of youth scrambling aboard at the plaza without paying. "I'll make myself respected, I give a shit about the society that watches me. I'll be a delinquent, a killer, and the worst that people want to add to that. I'm only a PUNK!!"

In the Metro, chavas and chavos mingle, passing on addresses, telling of the latest fuck-up or clearing the air of bullshit. Rebellion in Tionguí de los Chapeis (El Chopo Marketplace): exchanges of friendships, betrayals, love, suffering, ideas. They live lives full of repression, yet nobody gives in. Not one is willing to put up with the depressions of an agachado (trans: a person prostrated by the system). Here in the city one breathes more loudly than anything else. I love Mexico City, where there are more dogs than in other cities; here one still dreams and drinks poison in nightmares.
When humanism became conscious of the violent growth of the world’s population in this century? This human con-}

centration is focused, above all, in Mexico City. The crisis goes far beyond any historical balance: it is impossible to find equilibrium, and who knows if measures taken will leave anything for future generations. It’s idiotic to duplicate campaigns that nobody pays any attention to anymore, those which pretend government to do all it, and who like nothing more than sitting ON THE SYSTEM.

In the punk movement, Mexican punk chorvas find a place to express and share their ideas against the system, urban oppression and apathy. These women with beautifully coloured hair or shaved heads, overcoats, striped collars, are often found in groups. They hold on to jobs because they have to survive, and they persist in studying not as a social obligation but because they need to defend their voices. They hold on to truth, justice and to the movemen-}

t. They value simplicity and authenticity, request the sensation, the biography, the true stories. They are often homeless, they belong to this... They are not saints. Only a few allow them-}

selves to be swallowed by the system or to be seduced by their own sadism.

In the chaos of the city, the chorvas are in the street. They are the only ones who see the reality, judges of the iniquity, who upon seeing themselves in a mirror are witches sentenced to the evil of their ascendant power.

The chorvas love to shout, to adorn their teeth with bright red lipstick, to put blue, or green or rainbow coloured tights. Their eyes fill with love for men, eyes lined in blue and black paint.

These women resist domination and now have more fear: “We are against violence against women, against rape, the violation of HUMAN RIGHTS...”

Nostalgic artists create a cardboard of a phantasmatic world with music, dresses and movement, between the line and the symbol for THEMSELVES THEIR OWN DESTINY.

The care companions and friends of chorvas are always around them. They extend their hands to the suffering, to the poor, to the sick, to the hungry, to those who need for REALITY and companion: they do not keep quiet. They invent poetry and theatre, and they shape their realities to the rhythm of music. It is a rude noise full of energy: in their heads they hold the Zen of creativiy, revealing daily their courage in the streets, avenues, dead-ends and alleyways. With their heads up they flout their valour and nonconformity, and defend their dignity. They discover the attraction of struggle, continuing to seek liberty, not tiring in the search.

In the well-off suburbs, nobody can explain any-}

thing to the chorvas. Nobody cares to know why injustice is always committed with brutality - who seek to empty mation to shake the stench of their corruption. These mutations conform to what the system gives them: they are the powerful who have burnt their conscience and put no (rapa, whose. On the outskirts of the city, the chorvas debate and discuss the next gathering of punks, where they can enjoy organization and disorganization while unbecoming their energy in the slum.

That the spats on prejudices and false taboos around sexuality; they were very attentive in sex educa-}

tion classes. Now they know of infectious diseases, AIDS, abortions, pregnancies. In the theatres, parties and in the streets, they understand that the world is phallocentric. They have elected to reject the condition of sexual object, to take the reins of their own sexuality, and to let the imagination run free with their nude bodies, free from skimpy, tear and lacrimes. They keep their distance with their lovers: their faces which express hostility against everything unjust and estab-}

lished are the shields which protect them.

"In the collective we never said ‘no men.’ It was simply a necessity for us. It was they who said ‘why only women?’ and then took on this idea that we were anti-men. Some chorvas even left because of that, but we only separated in order to organise ourselves.

Radical or little, good or bad, everybody takes it up the same way. Actually, alcohol is like the devil; drugs are like mother. They suck her, they don’t leave her, they can’t leave her. Their Ceiling destruction in the midst of the high Sympathy for them from abandoning mother drug. In the barrios of San Felipe and the north there are always parties, rockets, confrontations and death.

The chorvas can dance, dance, laugh, get drunk, work, study, and fight. The city plays with them among buildings, streets, houses, avenues, cars, people, dogs, rats, hares, drunk, drug addicts, peasants and savages. The chorvas know that death is everywhere, and, when the circus goes, the good and white spirits take you with them. Death is in our house, hidden only by our feed which waits for the col-}

fin to shed itself like a suit and be eaten by worms. Then the rear collects in our skeletons to leave our souls in peace.

In the end, no matter who you are, death is always with you.

Why is there death when there is no war? There is death because there is AIDS There is death because evil exists There is death because somebody chose to give life away There is death because of course you have to struggle for liberty There is death because you refuse to be manipulated There is death because you acted wrong There is death because you didn’t notice the crack coming There is death because you were carrying a lot of money There is death because you wouldn’t have to be raped There is death because you are in a chorva-chorva gang

What can you do if some are born in silk dispensers? Privilege, money, power, knowledge, travel, en-}

cence, ambition, ovaries, egoism, machismo, misery, hunger, malnutrition, vagrancy, part-time studies, the work of labour-}

ers. Drug addiction, alcoholism, rebellion, talent, victory and corruption. The chorva fly like vampires that, upon turning into women, catch a miniature parasite in their black gloves. You will see them in the city, but, whether you walk alone or accompanied, nobody will bother you. In the night the chorvas can go anywhere, women, or even the street dogs: batted, perfumed, wearing a sweater, police dogs, naco-dogs, killer dogs, nouveau riche dogs, political dogs that pose the blackest bosoms amongst themselves.

Popular songs in the garments and in rotten fruit markets. How delicious the shellfish and hecd cheese curds are in Maracoo, close to the funeral homes that sell caskets at modest prices and elegant boxes that will cost you a handful. The perils of Tucumayas. Love between servants and labour-}

ers. So simple. Everyone is so different. This riot of colour, people who never before questioned their roots, corrupted by the city and bothered by the same “India.” Being an Indian is not a shame; on the contrary, it is a pride - not. Who do these people, ashamed of being dark, think they are? Spontaneous? Foreigners?

San Angel, Polanco, Lomas de Chapultepec, San Cosme, Santa Maria la Ribera, Insurgentes Norte, the south of Mexico City - these are the most touted-flags neighbourhoods, without destroying the genre of garbage and sewage and where shadows go way to mud sludge. In Paris, the rich boy, while the middle class lock the poor feel uncomfortable. In Tepoztlan you can trust the
black market goods. Theaters, bars, cantinas and discotheques where the rich think they are the most hot shit. The poor beg a few coins, and in the brew- ers' past the Triunfo del Chopo they sometimes pay for a few, sometimes scort a few. They rip off those with healthier hobbies, guilty or innocent, for walking the straight line and following the system.

There are those who write the cultural lies, who present truths that are not so, because the vanity of their fame blocks out the talents and desire of the rest. They see them- selves as perfect artists, as the only ones with any culture. Yet wait a minute! In those classes there is hypocrisy and a lot of shit is disguise. Indifference towards those thought to have no culture: urban, indigenous and subaltern cultures, street cul- tures.

The punk cultures are always searching for freedom, and while they live they will continue to protest. They are not bashing punks, nor pretenders. They drink their beer and move to their own rhythm, and those that doubt will fall behind. The choras dance for animal liberation. My friend, if you were born fucked up, you'll remain so all your life. Amigos, you have to fight against marginality in order to survive and protest against your environment and your society. If you resign yourself to it, nothing awaits you but frustration, vice, drugs, me- dicity and hopelessness.

Everyday the chavor spit, vomit, shit, bleed, sweat, cry with rage; they wear scars or tattoos of murder on their bodies so as not to forget that sensibility or that consciousness. The Day of the Dead fills them with peace, not fear. They lament the loss of human beings - animals, children, women, chavos, chavas - a monumen- tal and archeological heritage left unprotected in the filthy air and mutil- ated by the homeless who loot ancient cultures and sell them to the highest bidder. Destruction on all sides. Lost people who cry for the gods and goddesses in Paradise, for the rub- bery of ancient headbands, jewels in gold and silver, plumes, such mon- strous things. And we let it go on, so we condemn ourselves for caring so lit- tle for our city. The history of pre-histo- ry chills the future. We must escape.

In Sambos, VIPs, Denny's, Burger Boys and McDonalds, presumptuous, mon- eyed people allow each other in a rash of waste and filthiness, wallowing down rot meat, third grade chicken and beef bones. But these are exclusive plazas, so nobody questions what they eat and they pay good money for their Jill. With their scarps of foreign and sophisticated- ed meals, everyone is so contented to be in a monumental place.

Taco stands on the street, single ears of corn - squeeze on a little lemon to kill the amobes and you still have something left over for a cup of hibiscus tea. You don't have to show off to anyone, and nobody does the same to you because they know where you are coming from. If you're on the same wavelength, give the fellow a tip!

The city lives, lulls, dies, revives, reincarnates, survives. The girls, humans, women, punk-chavos keep on going. They understand that they are slowly losing the hours of the watch. Punished with their future and bleeding their post, they succumb to the current like an apple. While they con- tradict themselves in terror, they are stopping to cry and on the streets they sing a seasonal schizophrenia. The chavos don't accept wars or repression because they've stopped living the last

It is not WHAT you do, but HOW you do it:
Cultural risks and HIV/AIDS in Chile
by Francisco Ibáñez

When five of us from La Corporación Chilena de Prevención del SIDA (Chilean Corporation for AIDS Prevention) CCLPS - unloaded that huge condom made of clear plastic with big red letters that said "Use me" and held it for dear life marching along el Paseo Ahumada, the main boulevard of Santiago, shouting "El ministro cartuchón no se sostiene a usted (‘the prudish Minister of Health does not dare to use a condom’) with a hundred others, I knew we were making history, the real one. Like small chat and gossip, this was one of those moments in which the stuff of life - the collectively shared codes and cul- tural themes - is transferred, transformed, re-interpreted and re-imagined. This is how we celebrated the World AIDS Day's motto "Sharing the Challenge" on December 1, 1991.

Moments before starting the march, a Gringo who had been a teacher of mine at the Universidad de Santiago came up to me and told me that this demonstration was colonization at its worst, that the World AIDS Day was nothing but a North American orchestrating. I told him to fuck off, deep inside I had to recognize the ambiguities in what we were doing. But isn't that what cultures are all about, hybridization of themes and forms? Later, when I was visiting Antofagasta in the North of Chile, I read in a local newspaper that the archbishop of Santiago was scandalized and had said that "multitudinous demon- strations" in downtown Santiago weren't leading to anything good. I was surprised, this was the greatest favor that the Catholic church could do to us. It was better than having a bunch of apolénditos (moth-eaten leftists) trying to perk up their discourse to include gurus and other spectacles that they had been ignoring (or attacking) a year before. Archbishop Carlos Osorio's sustained stream of attacks and the media-quaking that it provoked was more effective than the disempowered voices of many "politicians" (poor urban dwellers) who have organized themselves, but have not been heard seriously since 1973.

Suszana Quiroz Martínez lives in Mexico City and writes plays and film scripts.
Dean Brown is a Vancouver translator currently planning a trip to Chile.
AIDS is recognized immediately as an "American" disease and a product of poor "American" moral standards, sexual revolution, and decadence. The image "the Gringo" embodies both what is loathed and what is desired.

In October 1981, when I arrived in Chile the number of reported AIDS cases in the world was only 60, with HIV-positive individuals. HIV infection and AIDS were not known. It was a time of uncertainty and fear. The disease, which had been identified in the early 1980s, was spreading rapidly. The fear of AIDS was so great that the government of Somoza was forced to ban the import of film, clothing, and other products from the United States.

The image "the Gringo" embodies both what is loathed and what is desired. The Gringo represents a culture that is seen as corrupt and decadent, while the people of Chile are seen as moral and virtuous.

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of their disadvantaged position, and refusing public stigmatization and discrimination by forceful defense of the posture that states that (regarding HIV transmission) it does not matter what one does, with whom, where or when, but how one does it.

HIV/AIDS prevention education are multiple, but in general the existence of double standards and collectively held CCEP myths about men and women makes most educational efforts extremely difficult. For example, women are loosely conscripted either as "servant" or "decent" Americanized maids of their husbands (whether single or married) depending on the relationship they have to male individuals. A brother would never allow anyone to doubt the chastity of his sister, even quoting as his token assistance efforts. Organizations such as CCEP's way of doing the government's work without dissuming taxpayers' money.

The favor as interpersonal approach to social relations also influences the way people understand social mobilization around HIV/AIDS. Thus, the concept of volunterism (as we know it in North America) cannot be applied to Chilean reality. Although people do offer their time and energy, when they belong to upper and upper-middle classes, they are likely to see it as a form of charity, and when they belong to lower classes, they are likely to see it as a political database or a way to partrue themselves, to be a stimulus to move and to adjust rapidly to the hierarchial roles played in the cultural concept of the favor. Boards of directors are formed only by professionals and middle class male volunteers. Straight women and homosexual men usually have no other way to perform this role, only to arbitrate, when the top-down circulation of information and decision-making. This situation might be compared to the dynamics of power in North American organizations, where lip service is paid to empowerment of minorities and women, but decision-making is still retained by a small, usually white, male group. One's social class largely determines to what end the favor is used.

The state has traditionally occupied an important, but patricular side of this relationship, although within the current neo-liberal market strategies the state is no longer responsible for social welfare, but must ensure the social relationships is el favor (the favor). This can be compared to the North American tradition of commerce and social work, but in this case the capital has been created to exchange. The "favor" is the service in that there is a greater or lesser pressure in the relation of power between individuals. A "favor" determines a certain degree of influence and authoritarianism that lies at the heart of social relationships in modern Chile. As Néstor García Canclini explains, "European modernization" was based on the autonomy of the individual, the universality of the law, the disrespectful culture, the objective remuneration and its work ethics. The practice of the favor (in modern Latin America) allows for the dependence of the individual, the exception to the rules, the interested culture (elitista), and the remuneration to personal services.

This traditional form of social relationship shapes the character of HIV/AIDS prevention education. The favor is a cultural tradition that has laid the foundations for social relations of dependence at the interpersonal level between individuals and at the collective level between individuals and government institutions. In Chile there is a strong tradition of relying on government services and organizations to provide material care, education and legal services. The state is both labored by its own bureaucratic policies and reduced to the source of practitioners (social workers, teachers, judges, nurses, doctors) who can alleviate almost every ills. The favor influences social actors who seem to play their roles as employees, benefactors, clients or recipients on call, not just in need of seemingly degrading, intimate and authority in Latin American organizations is the explicitness of the power relations. The chain of the recognition of "who is who" in the hierarchy, which might present a more acceptable -- because more visible -- situation for those involved in such relationships. The resistance of government officials is explicit: the disgust of many people is also quite evident. By contrast, the North American landlord's relationship is ambiguous, and the motive operandi social relationships is el favor (the favor).
with respect to political issues around HIV/AIDS education.

More media, in particular television, have played a cultural role that is similar to that of North American and British media. They collect and re-tematize collective fears and cultural narratives long existing in the Chilean cultural matrices. Similar to the North American experience, AIDS has been constructed as a "gay disease," a "stigma disease," or as God's punishment. The cultural connections between same-sex sexuality, non-straight sex (S/S, non-penetrative sex). "public" exposure (stigmatization, lack of decorum, contamination) and consequences such as evil, punishment, and sickness (read AIDS) are deeply rooted in the collective mind and are constantly reinforced by the media. Words such as illness, contamination, degeneration, homoeroticism, homosexuality, bisexuality, lesbianism, and invertism form a cluster, a constellation of concepts excluding most educational possibilities.

The elements described above come together along the axes of sexuality to configure a culturally specific situation where CChPS has had to develop its HIV/AIDS prevention education program. Class, age, gender, sexual orientation, and ethnicity configure specific forms of behavior that permeate the Latin American ethos. The North American stereotype of the oversexualised black slave is also held for its part in Latin America and it is translated mainly as a morose figure with strong homoerotic connotations. Male sexuality is perceived both as a form of domination over submissive women and as a violence over men without sexual potency or masculinity. The morose is, however, a troubled identity: he is connected to the absent-present of the father of the meatloaf (the Spaniard who 판단s and retreats), he is externally dependent on the mother (which makes him struggle with femininity), and he is in constant competition and must "show off" before his peers. In this context, women are obliged to consolidate a secure identity early in life that compensates for the instability of their counterparts. Although machismo does not fully explain the unspoken bisexuality of many Latin American males, it explains one important characteristic: its focus on "sexual aim" - as opposed to a focus on "sexual object-choice." That is, a focus on the act of fucking for pleasure rather than a focus on fucking the "right" person of the opposite sex.

The male population becomes a "hard to reach" population because within their troubled identity, men do not see themselves as at risk of contracting a virus that attacks women. Women, again, are left out of the sexual tension. Male homosexuals who until recently called each other "arrocado" (the one who is in on the secret, who understands) and focus (crazy females), on signs of secretive- and weakless, are now calling themselves "guys" which marks a departure from their assigned position as "morose," but also marks a dangerous invitation of a partially understood North American figure established during the 70s. The risk of acquiring HIV mainly resides in the misleading attitude that only "passive" (passive sexual partners, men or women) are prone to acquiring HIV from skeltered active (active sexual partner). Parvus takes on the hormonal role and the active role is the one regardless of the damage. This "same-oriented" focus makes sexuality a more fluid affair and re-distributes homophobia (which in North America is at the centre of HIV/AIDS education). In a North American context homosexuality means fear of same gender sexuality and emotionality: in a Latin American context it needs to be re-conceptualized as a fear of being seen as weak and passive.

In practice CChPS has opened its activities to people with many interests and to all social classes. Its positive message of HIV/AIDS prevention has been particularly heard by those who needed to work in a safe space that did not discriminate because it represented their interest and social class. However, while CChPS is a safe and open space for "lower" socio-economic peoples of the gay population of Santiago, gay middle class professionals are reluctant to be seen or associated with it. Heterosexual professionals (women and men) actively participate in the activities of CChPS, mainly as contributors. This fragmentation may seem odd, but it can be explained by the rigid class distinctions that are imposed (and self-imposed) on people in Chilean society. Gay men respond to stereotypes that describe them as fashionable and chaste, but these stereotypes break down in such a diverse group of people. Most of the volunteers, counselors, monitors and directors of CChPS are people who come from a political background, who actively participated in political parties and are well educated and sensitive about the following class and politics. This gradual development of political sensitivity is observable in the current difficulty of political parties in Chile that are including previous unheard topics that include violence against women, abortion, divorce and sexual freedom.

North American HIV/AIDS prevention education, in its pretense of neutrality, refused to judge and objectivity, has been successful in the task-oriented step of delivering information, but not in educating for change because it does not offer people visible solutions or strong motivation to mobilize their behaviour in an environment that is hostile. It is imperative that AIDS educators restitute the unsaid experiences provided by the dependence and imitation theories that were so popular throughout the 70s and 80s. These uni-directional, cause-and-effect theories do not satisfactorily explain the cultural and social processes that so-called "developed" or "underdeveloped" countries are experiencing. In other words, such cultural processes allow us to understand the social actors who perform them. To understand why HIV/AIDS prevention education programs for Latinas/os in North America have failed, we must understand the power in Kenneth Baroff's "theatre of the ordinary" because there is a profound indifference (and sometimes open resistance) to introducing aspects that are thought to be ethno-cultural community relevant to ethno-cultural communities. The experiences and understandings of both Girona and Latinas/os who have crossed the border between educators leave us with a sense of the "low" on the skin (at the surface of the skin) the conflict between official discourse and street discourse, between an ethno-cultural representation of culture and the hybrid identity of Latinas/os.

When borders cross into North Americas countries these cultural specific tensions are increased, as a new identity is thrust upon Latinas/os: the immigrant. Being an immigrant is an experience fraught with danger and many pitfalls. Long standing stereotypes and misconceptions figure the image of the Latinate that is received with an immense form of indifference in North America. Places Latinas/os at a greater risk for welfare dependence, drug and alcohol dependence, unwanted pregnancies, crime, STDs, HIV acquisition and AIDS development. Just as Latinas/os are not "naturally" a problem, their lives are not fateful and naturally determined. What we know about HIV/AIDS prevention education is that it has little or nothing to do with what is spoken/unspoken and practiced/unpracticed on the street level.

There is a gap between the formal discourse of "what we ought to do" and their street talk packed with jokes, anecdotes, stories, whispers, and sarcasm that bluntly spits out "we do what we do," "I am what I am" and "One has to die of something anyway." This statement because there is a profound indifference (and sometimes open resistance) to introducing aspects that are thought to be ethno-cultural community relevant to ethno-cultural communities. The experiences and understandings of both Girona and Latinas/os who have crossed the border between educators leave us with a sense of the "low" on the skin (at the surface of the skin) the conflict between official discourse and street discourse, between an ethno-cultural representation of culture and the hybrid identity of Latinas/os.

Francisco de la Fuente is a first-year student in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University.

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Corazón del Rocanrol

Mexico City, December 1990

Under a haze-colored sky, a block away from the railroad tracks and next to a buzzing electrical substation, a young man with hair inappropriately slicked back, wearing an oversized gray jacket, a tattered white shirt, a fat 1940s tie and black baggies with lopsided capris, walks along the trench running toward the crowd ahead. "Now, you're going to see the true history of Mexican roc roc," he calls back over his shoulder, flipping along through the warm, smoggy breeze. I scramble after him as we dive into the marketplace. Throng of Mexico City youth in all manner of rockers' garb surrounds us: chavas in leather miniskirts or torn jeans, chicos wearing Metallica T-shirts, Jamiroquai leathers jackets or Gaucho-style indigo overalls. We walk past stalls after rickety stall, stacks of splintered wood and twins hanging up faded blue tarpaulins, where the vendors - young pankeros or trasheros (trash fairs), leatherhead metalheads, Peace and Love jipitos and the working-class followers of Mexican punk-rock heroes El Tri known as chavos bands - sell cassette, CDs, LPs and singles, bootlegs and imports, as well as posters, steel-toed boots, skull earrings, fan mags, spiked bracelets and collars. In contrast, the atmosphere is lively and filled with energy.

"Don't you play with La Maldita?" kids inquire, before asking for autographs. Rocío, the lead singer of Maldita Vecindad y los Hijos del Quinto Patio (roughly, The Damned Next Door and Sons of the Tenth) goes all comers effusively. "And don't forget to make the gig tonight at UGCC, about midnight!" "Alzas, hijos!"

We've already hopelessly late for a meeting with Rocío's manager on the other side of the city (a trip that takes about an hour and a half by subway and bus), but Rocío is intent on getting me freebies. Already I'm loaded with copies of La Pas Mediana, one of the city's underground magazines, along with more than a dozen LPs and cassettes by groups with names like Axtaxico, Sedición, Patricio. "It's the craziest city, Año. " Rocío says, standing in place for a rare moment behind a stall featuring a lithograph of Marilyn Monroe, hanging next to another of Che Guevara. "Anything can happen here."

"We've received influences from all over, he adds, the words spilling out rapidly and vowel-twisted, in classic Mexican City, or chingon slang. "From the North, from the South, from Europe. It might be true that rock began in the North, but now it's all ours."

"We make an effort," reads the publicity slogan, "Music for a New Generation." Since the mid-1980s, in Mexico, Argentina and Spain, rococor has been billed as the most important hip hop. Record labels, mostly the Spanish and Latin American subsidiaries of majors like BMG, Sony or WEA, signed dozens of bands. Stadium gigs draw huge crowds at most of the big capitals in Latin America.

One group topped the advance publicity: Mexico's Cultura, a dark-pop band reminiscent of The Cure, sold a respectable 100,000 copies of their first album; a subsequent cumulus rock single, "Le negra Tomasa," moved half a million. Other acts, such as Radio Futura and Let Union from Spain, Los Prisioneros from Chile, and Miguel Mateos and Soda Stereo from Argentina, sold well and garnered airplay throughout Latin America.

Impresarios also looked toward the USA and its relatively untapped Latin youth market: there have been money who are interested." Marama Reyes, a transplanted chingona producer living in Los Angeles who handles both Cultura and Maldita Vecindad, succeeded in convincing Jane's Addiction to book a few shows with a special added attraction: none other than Maldita Vecindad y los Hijos del Quinto Patio. Rocío and the Chicos crowd want to shake Mexico culture down to its very roots. But these bigger rockers are still in the margins and not because they necessarily like it there. It's the pop rockers like Menuito that have become megastars. As one veteran of the Mexico City rock wars put it, "The joke here has always been that this is the year real rococor is going to make it and we've

Reprinted from the Other Side, courtesy of Vesa Books.

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been saying it for thirty years."
In the summer of 1995, a group of Cholitas from different Mexican states gathered in the streets of Mexico City to demand their rights: as a people, a vegetarian and six pacifists (water bottles, pots and pans), but nothing experimental about it. "Either we wait
until they arrive and buy equipment, or we played with what we had," recalled Raúl, his leg bouncing nervously up and down on the bar stool.

The city around them was its own caos, again, enduring
the worst economic crisis since the revolution of 1910.
A profound malaise contaminated all areas of life. Then, on the morning of September 19th, a large earthquake shook over its liquid foundation, the ancient volcanic lake it was built upon.

It was total devastation, carbón," Raúl says, leaning into me and yelling over UH2's "Red Red Wine." "Whole bar-
rios darkened, without electricity, water running everywhere, people carrying coffins, looking for their loved ones. The
people of the barrios had to organize themselves to survive. All of a sudden, people I'd seen my entire life but didn't know, I knew.

Citizens' committees organized relief efforts much better than the government, which has suspended emergency aid for the first two days after the quake, claiming it had "everything under control," until a second devastating ter-
mainly afraid that nobody controlled anything.
The city was transformed by the experience. Out of the rubble there grew an avalanche of new populist political
personalities, including Super Barrio, a masked wrestler, whom the earthquake turned into an activiste/performer artist who to this day shows up in yellow capes and red jacket whenever standards do their foul deed. Guadalupe Cárdenas nearly tombed the ruling PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional) dynasty out of the country (something that may happen). In the midst of this upheaval, Mustang Yeciantó, y los Hijos del Quinto Peto were born. Their music was a mixture of country and rock and myself at our table, weaving through a crowd who all agreed it would fit in well in New York's East Village or on LA's Melrose Avenue. Those nights made me want to be a rock star (about $17 for Mustang's tickets; their game. In the Zone Roca, the Pink Zone, at Rocketeria, a club whose logo bears a suspicion of the skull.

In comes Peto, early clocks peeking out from under his trademark gray fedora, a veteran of several vanguard Mexhcan bands. Boy, at the forefront of the group, in leaning toward a U2 look with long, straight hair and loose gray-white shirt. He's Mustang's purest musical
talent, and an acolyte with Marxist bands in the famous Gerardo Ortiz. Loab, a dark, left-wing, carpeto, the quiet one who batters the congas. Eulogia-moaning and creak-cut
Atlo, both with Astilleres Santa María City boy, is on bass. And Paco, the oldest at twenty-nine, with
shaved closed on one side and exploding early on the
other, is the drummer, an intellectual who studied anthropology at Mexico's finest university, UNAM. (Raúl, too, is fi-
ishing his degree in journalism.)

La Mustang huddles close together, slipping Coronas
and smoking Marlboros in Rocketeria's smoke-free no-smoking section. Their looking-resemblances of James Dean, The Tem (a Mexican comedic great of the 1940s and 1950s, who popular-
ized Chichem-Pachuco swing style), U2 and the Mexico City barrio kids of Batutte's Los Olvidados—chassas wildly with that of the surrounding squatters. Rocco's wearing a pair of mammoth black work boots. He notices me eyeing them.

“They're just like my brother's, cabron,” he says, lifting his foot up and inviting me to try the steel toe. “They com-
tinued to sixty thousand. They're just like those Europeans ones that all the niños bien wear, that sell for three hundred
thousand in the states.”

Madlitas and other young bands, like Café Tacuba, Santa Bahía and Teco Tex, lash out at the Americanization of the Mexican middle class, a tendency led by media giant Televisa. This corporation prides itself on nationalism, a tune that's made it millions and that the PRI government has also used to help keep itself in power for the last seventy years. It's a bastion of national pride, but Televisa is also accused of promoting "multiculturalism," a term that goes back five hundred years to La Manuscrita de Carlos Cortés, the most famous treatise of Mexico's history.

Television's a no-loose strategy, by beckoning both national and gringos, motorists, it's cornered all the money. But somehow the network managed to always have a star; the famous story of the time Mustang played for the Chulas Cubanas at Club Yurrita. Seems nobody thought to apply the same thinking to the PRI. In the last ten years, the barrio
led lines have made it to the top of the lists. As a result, a
decade ago to a new generation of stars, the main
rodeo riders and the new few weakus of the stocky chicano
wanted a chance.

When Mustang, Ustedes y Yo and Dance in the Street, they caused a sensation in English-speaking countries.

While American music enjoyed a bunch of long-term Chicans, the future of rock was just happening. Mustang and La Manuscrita have their share of fans, but they're still a long way off realizing their dreams.

Yo no soy un rebeldes sin causa n a tiempo un desconocido yo no unico que pierde el pelo en el bar o ex barlar recaudado...* Los Locos del Rito, circa 1980

*I don't have a thing to say or how I got to tonight. I feel lost. the end of my my bearings. The bottle is empty, the look is like a man who's never been there. It's a cold, empty night, a great night to spend here in the streets. I really want to scare it away. I want to drink."

A few kids sing along, some skittles perfunctorily about the dare. It's rare that Mustang's ex barbaric book don't want to risk tearing a thread. But Raúl doesn't care; he's hanging up and down, strumming his legs like Elvis being chased by a maver, driving down the road trying to keep the floor with the milkstand. The song finishes a grim, a mean; now he jocks his head back repeatedly, so though he's being stopped by interlocutors, while mugging for "Apocalipsis," a song about police abuse of barrio youth:

En un mundo colonias, desplazados sin recordar de ra de que paso, te das hambre los pies no traves dinero no traves zapatos y no te traves no pied los de esa colonia. *LOCO***

*If you're dirty after you wake without remembering anything about what happened, even your feet hurt, don't have a pout, you don't have money you don't have a smile and you don't have holidays here that matter, KABIB!

Jesus. I'm thinking. Mustang knew he was in the wind of trees,
now past decades of building folk tales, you put the lie to the World Beaters by car, D.F., Bob Dylan, and R&B
rap with each passing lost time was stung with stages of rage and a couple of moving sonatas, the street demons, and the burlas of the stocky chicano community, aman.

When the Cushions, the Jeep, and the Dance in the
Street, they caused a sensation in English-speaking countries.

While Mustang, Ustedes y Yo and Dance in the Street, they caused a sensation in English-speaking countries.

While American music enjoyed a bunch of long-term Chicans, the future of rock was just happening. Mustang and La Manuscrita have their share of fans, but they're still a long way off realizing their dreams.

Lea el Old World version of multiculturalism be for-
ted, the oficialistas made one final attempt to crush the rebels. Elvis Presley, king of rock and roll, was in town. In what was probably an uncharacteristic story, he was quoted in a border newspaper as saying, "I'd rather play in Los Angeles than in the steets."

Headlines across the country. "INDIGNACION POR LAS MEXICANAS," "VIVIR Y FUEGO BOICOT CONTRA EL ARTISTA," Radio stations sponsored massive public record shout-ins. "Love Me Tender," elegantly praised from playlists. But, an Federico Arceo, Mexico's" psychic for anger, passion, politics and hit his Grocchato de ante and his Siette Gaushcoch," the conspiracy was bound to fall.

The best that you can do for a person or group to reinforce their ideas is to persecute them and surround their lives with prohibitions," writes Arceo. "It's a story of the three kisses actually helped Mexico recoil."

Alfaro ya te resuelve, es sensual los pueblos vivien en paz nunca habias sabido mundo igual... **
Los Pinos (Spaan), circa 1970

*Yesterday, I heard a dream, it was the smallest, lived in comfort, I never dreamed anything like it."

In the late sixties and early seventies, rock reached into every corner of Mexico, Central and South America as more bands hyped on the music. It was a new and different idealism of the time, with original songs in Spanish. In Mexico, rock had become a solid underground锉otd in order, or "the wave" (a term that survives today in all asinas of coloysal)
speech). "Quoi conat?" ("What business is it?")

In 1911 at Aragaida, on the outskirts of Mexico City, anywhere between one hundred thousand (projected) to two million (off-the-cuff estimate) military bands such as Three Souls in My Mind, Love Army and El Ritual. The spectacle was choreographed such that people danced down to one of the organizers stepping up to the mike and warning the kids to stay away from the band unless they had authorization badges for a predicted riot, but the rockers came out peacefully under the watch of little food or warm clothes and, yes, plenty of pot and acid.

The fact that so many kids got together in one place really scared the government, noted Santiago Arno, who later formed Batalá de Jerez, one of the few alternative musical groups. The government had every reason to be nervous. It was the first large gathering of young people since 1968, the year the army massacred several hundred protesting students in the Tlatelolco district of Mexico City. Since Avantimex, the Mexican government has sorely granted permits for large outdoor rock concerts.

For Carlos Montisinos, one of the Mexican Left’s best-known essayists, in order to understand the generation that rebelled against institutionalized concepts of culture, he writes in Amor perjudicial, a collection of essays on the sixties in Mexico, "And it eloquently revealed the extinction of cultural hegemony..."

Throughout the early seventies, jíbaro pop music began to emerge, with auto-tune roles, hitchhiked across Mexico on balladistic hip hop pilgrimages, to the accompaniment of the Mexican avant-garde band Los Días. Victor Jara, who read all the shows in the city, said, "They're the beat poets in the world!"

After Batallón Babilón's musical ensemble: hardcore punk (Astoaxica Mózaco, Víctor), industrial dance (Bandido Schubert, Pecado de la Tarde), the musical (jóvenes puritanos, the perenial El Tiras y jovenes like Te无关, Días y César, straight pop (Nein, Fabio, Los Amantes de Lola), and bands like Malcolm and Roca Calexico, the styles of all the young bands from north and south end-rolling out Spanish-only products.

"The only way to party," said Luis Gerardo Salas, executive director of Nuevo Rocko Mill, a network of seven radio stations in Mexico City, on the scene which is dedicated full-time to rock. "Everyone in Mexico seemed to want to be a rock band in the mid-seventies; there were a lot of everyday situations and a lot of bands that were so Spanish with the same quality as in English. The sound of their small recording clubs that spontaneously appeared in poor neighborhoods, was the heart of the new scene. Bands would set up in the middle of the street running electricity straight from somebody’s living room. All of a sudden, you’d see smoke rising around the stage," says Luis Salas, lead singer of Tejas Tepic, "It was like the bands were on the radio. People would listen on their machines; it was the dust being kicked up by the kids dancing on the asphalt."

A childlike crew overwhelmed us as we pulled up to the block-long monolith that was the biggest media conglomerates in Latin America. We walked past the so-called "sections" of the city, the living unreality of a metropolis. I glanced at a pair of masonado on the wall; one says you’ll be fired if you’re fifteen minutes late, the other urges employees to attend a seminar entitled "How to Enhance Your Images." Tonight Maldito enters Televisa’s domain, for a live appearance on Golovina, a cabaret institution named not for its music.

"Be inside the monster. Finally! After nearly three decades of wrenching it in my Mexican grandmother’s bedroom in Los Angeles: All those letters that never got back. The blues could have begun only when with the city’s deep ties to Afro-American culture and its long-standing love affair with death. And rock itself? Where else could it have exploded without being other than itself and the blues could have begun only when with the city’s deep ties to Afro-American culture and its long-standing love affair with death. And rock itself? Where else could it have exploded without being other than itself and the blues could have begun only when with the city’s deep ties to Afro-American culture and its long-standing love affair with death. And rock itself? Where else could it have exploded without being other than itself and the blues could have begun only when with the city’s deep ties to Afro-American culture and its long-standing love affair with death. And rock itself? Where else could it have exploded without being other than itself and the blues could have begun only when with the city’s deep ties to Afro-American culture and its long-standing love affair with death. And rock itself? Where else could it have exploded without being other than itself and the blues could have begun only when with the city’s deep ties to Afro-American culture and its long-standing love affair with death. And rock itself? Where else could it have exploded without being other than itself and the city’s deep ties to Afro-American culture and its long-standing love affair with death.

Immediately afterwards, performers climbed into the studio, preparing for the next recording, the next song to be released. The audience, which was already large by Mexican standards, grew to fill the studio to capacity and corporate executives the world over.

Though it is often considered synonymous with El Pelo, Televisa may beMexico's leading television network and one of the country's most powerful business cartel, the Monterrey Group. It has an annual bill over $100 million dollars in televisions, and scientists say that, even though you may be watching TV, you’re actually watching TV, and that is what they believe the audience is watching. It is, however, a fact that the viewers of Televisa are the only ones who really get to see the broadcast. The show is seen by millions of people worldwide, and the network’s reach is global. In 1988, the hit that promotes, label execs, radio program directors and rockers return to the stage with a sold-out show called "La Noche Tromba" by Cazaluna. The song was a greatly elevated socially and politically charged single about the 1988 election in Mexico. Cazaluna (the band) is a complex entity, with members from different backgrounds and with a mixture of styles, and it is a true reflection of the country's rich diversity.

But the band close to matching the sales of "La Noche Tromba" are the reggae band called "Los Amantes de Lola" and thus far have sold over 7 million copies more than any other Mexican single in the thirty year history of rock 'n' roll. It seemed as if rock's Latin heart had finally come to Mexico.
And Saul comes back, rocking back and forth on his haunches. “Not everything here to be so obvious like in your songs. There’s an interior landscape, too, caballito.”

By this time Maldivia stumbles onto the stage, the walls of the club are sweating. Everyone’s hair is plastered onto their foreheads in the dripping wet air. I inch my way through the crowd, slipping on sweaty bottles on the uneven floor below. The balconies seen on the verge of collapse, dozens of kids hanging over the railings.

The sound coming from the stage convulses, lurches. Bozo, Szax, Pato, Ailco and Lobo are floating away on tequila-inspired riffs (they’ve been partying since early afternoon), steamrolling crazily toward a great abyss, drunk boys during each other as they look down into the darkness and laugh. The anonymity doesn’t perturb the crowd in the least. On the dance floor a thousand bodies match Maldivia’s wild energy loop for loop.

Rocco loses his breath during the melodic, half-written, half-played “Mexican.” Szax stumbles through solos, barely keeping up with the rushed rhythm. Ropping across the stage in his loose shirt, waving his arms, grabbing. Ailco is oblivious to everything but his own private topaz, slamming away on bloodied cymbals (he ripped his head open during the second song).

Punkish youths leap on stage and tumble back into the crowd. Now Rocco himself takes a diving leap of faith into the mosh of streaming bodies. Now Szax. Now Rocco is pushing Pato, grinning and all, into the pit. The band launches into “Quintera,” a hardcore cover of pop superstar funnel Gabriela’s hit. Rocco leaps away so high that he brags his head on the red spotlight overhead. Small lanterns suddenly climb on the stage in all his tall, dark eflagen. His phone becomes part of his legs, hua! Rocco like a long-lost brother, throws his head back, closes his eyes, and then without warning he too dives out onto the dance floor, where the slamming youths edge ever closer to absolute madness.

As the crowd filled out afterwards—a lone kid from the barrio—Lobo is nursing his head, bleary-eyed in the arms of his girlfriend. Ailco is downsing more beer at the bar. Pacho, the only one who played the gig straight, is talking with a small group of fans. Rocco is nowhere to be found. Szax is back behind the percussion section, weaving into a friend’s arm— in a few minutes he’ll make a bizarre attempt at tears off his pants and pass out.

Tonight, Maldivia have fallen apart. Tomorrow they’ll wake up, hung-over as hell, in the city where roco never quite dies.

Rubén Martínez is a journalist, peer and staff writer at L.A. Weekly.
April 16, 1988. It was 8 p.m. when we reached the bus parking lot at the barrio “Monis Espana.” From there, an unlighted and unpaved space, we could hear the lively noises of a clear and warm Saturday night. The smell of dust was in the air. Dust spread everywhere: on walls, doors and windows, covering streets, sidewalks and buses. However, below layers of dust, a colorful scenery could be perceived. Houses in bright colors, doors and windows in combinations of colors. As we started walking, a cloud of dust circled our feet. Surrounded by three rows of houses, the parking lot is located at the south-west side of the barrio. On the south-east side of the parking lot, two young couples enjoyed the privileged darkness of the corner. In a straight line to the bus stop, three young members of a gang hold guarded by the outside stall of the frutaria (fried food vendor) drinking beer. The fresh smell of their still-wet hair was followed by the smell of the pork sausages, morcillas (blood pudding) and fried potatoes on display in the stall.

Miguel, a barrio resident and a member of one of the galladas, was walking with me. Looking at the three young men, he commented: “You see, they’re getting ready for the night. They look very picturesque. ‘Brazilians’ are never ready to move on to their favourite hangout, [small corner store]. By this time, if they’re not invited to a party, they’ll go find one.” The three and some other guys from the same block have hung out together since their childhood. Their friendship is based on a strong bond, a fellowship, a relationship of common likes and mutual help.

The gallada, an informal group, constitutes the basic cultural unit and most meaningful institution for young people of Bogota’s barrios. As the literature on youth culture has emphasized, the informal group represents the space where youth find a collective response to their search of identity.

The group constitutes the culture’s material base that is tied by friendship relations and by an implicit body of group norms. In the galladas studied, the group norms are basically defined in terms of: 1. loyalties to the group; when and how specific actions or attitudes are considered double-crossing; 2. a group’s ways of ‘managing guilt’ (kidding), as in relating with women; 3. a group’s weekly routine (what to do, when and how). Group membership is highly recognized and valued. The sense of group is closely tied to the sense of belonging to the barrio.

The three young men standing in the frutaria belong to a gallada known as pitufitos (plastic people). Although this name is only used by other galladas when they refer to those young people, Miguel explained, “pitufitos” are guys (men) who always want to have the latest fashion, either in clothes or in hair style. They just want to know the latest dance movements and to listen to Disco music. They dress like Mafiosos (the current teenage group), tight t-shirts, slip-on shoes and cool fitting pants. They are very pinto (sharp, beautiful)!” For young people, to be a pitufito means belonging to a kind of gallada with a distinctive set of activities and likes (good clothes in light colours, Disco music, rivalry with other galladas).

We walked towards the barrio’s main road. The barrio “Monis Espana” was the first settlement in this area 35 years ago, when it began as charity mission of a rich Colombian man who built 540 houses to be given to large, destitute Catholic families. He did not, however, provide public services. It was the community which did this through a system of self-help. The community built the access road to the barrio, opened the trenches to install the sewage system and demanded public electricity, water fountains, telephones, public school, public transportation and community centres. The barrio was numbered on an illegal settlement until six years ago when it acquired legal status.

Each one of the twenty-five blocks of the barrio faces the main road. Taking this road we walked down to the barrio’s final blocks. In the very first corner [nook] of the barrio there was a group of five youths. The dark clothes they had on seemed to me an echo of the mysterious darkness of the bushes next to this block. It is a place leased for its countless stories of hold-ups, murder and rape. Dark clothes, long jackets of imitation leather and boots signal a gallada of metals or, as they call themselves, viras (thieves). By their esquinas, they stood making a circle, three of them leaning on the wall and the others facing it. The esquina is known and respected as belonging to the gallada of Rumbo (nickname of its leader). They kept a very small distance between themselves. Their hands were in the pockets of their jackets and their eyes were watchful.

Popular identities - who we are - are insecurely rooted in a sense of place which popular groups build up throughout the appropriation of specific spaces as a stage for social relations and communicative exchanges. In the gallada’s use of space one can observe evidence of this process. The esquina is probably the best representation of this. It has been marked as youth territory and the space has acquired a meaning related to the individuals, their group and their social practices.

In the corner, what probably was a very good story told by one of the members of the gallada produced a collective burst of laughter followed by playful kicks and hostion punchs. As Estrada, a very well-known leader of a gallada of viras in this barrio, once told me:

“When you’re not working, you meet your friends to have a joint, to drink, to chat. We went out last night to jump someone and look for what is left; I’m sure it was a big full of bread. It was a man that we were going to hold up. Yes, it happens any time you see a gallada: ‘So what, what do you have your uncle, your godfather, for relations among parents and godparents, are we going to get high and go start to call “babbler mixed” (chido encerrado).”

As I walked to the west alongside the main road, the barrio appeared as if it were breathing. Hundreds of people flowed around corners, streets, houses, tiendas and restaurants to the main road and its corners. A communicative exchange expanded from the barrio’s beginning to its end. From sidewalk to sidewalk, the road had been occupied. There were kids playing, groups of people, men and women, either chatting in a circle or rocking back and forth. On the road, cars, motor bikes and bicycles moved their way through the frenetic movement. Human voices and the noise of car motors, horns and several stereo blaring created a constant din.

Public electricity is scarce in the barrio. The main road has a few lamp-posts positioned far from each other. Somewhere, this darkness was counterweighted from below. Each house - and these are at least four in each block facing the main road - held its bright balloons, its doors and windows open. To my left was the panadería (bakery) of Don Velasco. In the corner, the gallada of Milton (its leader) was waiting for a rumbo or something to do.
It is this Friday's waiting-for-something-to-do which reveals a group's sense of exigency coupled with a cyclical organization. The weekend is the cycle's point of departure and arrival. A cycle begins with the Friday-and-Saturday-rumba-night and continues through the day on Sundays (the sporty-day) and the evenings at the "esquinas" during the week. The expectations for the return of the weekend's ritual pull out group dynamics and temporalities. The sense of time presents a significant continuity with a popular temporality that evolves around the community's "festas" and its return. This experience of time contradicts a linear organization of time intrinsic to production routines and hegemonic logic.

The well that members of Milton's galladas are learning to display in big, noisy letters the names and nicknames of some of the members of the group. Members of this gallada are between 22 and 25 years old. Those that are unemployed play the most important roles. The present and permanent members of the group. Depending on the job situation, galladas members will continuously enter and re-enter the group. The gallada is for them a place to be when they do not have a full-time job. That night one of them was trying, as his tipico, a new Salsa dance movement to a song from the Colombina Boloo group "Riches." Meanwhile they waited, Miguel commented. You always try to feel alright when you feel bored, then you say 'well brother, what are we doing?' You're there in your corner speaking,-mezclando guas (to joke, to poke fun at, goozling around, dancing but waiting for something, looking for what you are going to end up doing. You are always waiting for something.

Free time is highly prized by the gallada's members. It is a group time and therefore low to pass this time represents one of the group's biggest concerns. The leisure time of Latin American popular youth is exhibited both within European or North American working-class youth. The "Barrio Popular" is not just a unit of habitation. The barrio has a multifunctional character (leisure, reproduction, work, education). This barrio is involved in social and cultural processes occurring there. The distinction between time for work and time for leisure is not clear in this place. Popular youth's leisure time, it seen as "free time," cannot be characterized plainly as "non-work." As with other popular social relations, it is characterized by its multifunctional use, the coexistence of productive and consumptive acts. The activities of work and leisure are integrated to reconstruct the most basic needs of social security and basic survival. Galladas are part of a network of services and self-help that functions within the barrio. Within these groups, the popularity of the "esquina" exchange favours and services as part of their group's take-for-granted duties.

In the tinelos of Don Jose, the 'social club' of the barrio, the other members of Milton's gallada have started a second round of drinks. Going for a drink to their favorite tinelos is part of a gallada's ritual activities. The ritual activities are of social exchange as well as the social rule that evolves around the community's "festas" and its return. This experience of time contradicts a linear organization of time intrinsic to production routines and hegemonic logic.

On the other side of this street, a woman had a stall to sell arepas (corn breads) and pork sausages. The strong smell of the pork filled around her. The same time as we perceived the smell of a roasted chicken stand and the smoke of a barbecue (parrilla) cigarettes recently lit at the corner. The street is well-known for its drug dealers, ollas of arepas (corn breads) and marihuana. People come from all over the area to buy drugs here. Poor people were looking against the wall, cigarettes held in their mouths, while their heads were slightly bent. One of them wore a black raincoat and another, a soccer cap. Their hands were in the pockets of their shirts. Standing at the corner that has been witness to their life-games, they watched people of the barrio pass back and forth.

These postures reminded me of Carlos Gardel, an Argentine tango singer who left to poetry the gestures and looks from the mundo popular (low urban world) of Buenos Aires. They are a gallada of tough people. Real or virtual, young people seemed to belong to the were a world of which life is a matter of sharpnesses. The members of the gallada of vives greeted us and asked Miguel, the 'what-happening-toughest' question. The loyalties they maintain with the neighbors are very strong. Miguel commented.

When the police come to the barrio for a reason (to ask for the ID and a military service card) or when the taxas (security agents) are around, the barrio's people have the door open and call you. Como, como.
A group's way of talking constitutes an important distinc tion for popular youth. Popular language appropriates the expressions of a popular language that is rooted in the richness of description and on the consciousness of discourse. It is a language full of metaphors, rudimentary expressions, and ambiguities. The language of gauchoes offers a way of isolation from the 'outside'. Codes and signs define them as a group.

One block further, we see the side wall of Señor Castillo's house completely filled with graffiti. Pablo, his son, is 16. His gaucho hounds among this scenery. This group was carefully listening to one of its members. Its story was told by noisy laughter. Miguel commented, "Usually, there's a group of young people in the group who's a good storyteller. Everybody likes him because he can laugh at anything. You can stand out in a gaucho for different things: for the way of gazing, for your toughness, for your street smarts, for the way you tease, but very importantly for the way you joke (al poco lust everyday down)."

When the police get there, you just get into any house that has the door open: if not, anyway, somebody's going to open the door for you. Because you are in the right side, they're nice to you. Here, the vivaz protect you even more, they'll go and defend you and then they'll walk you home. So, sometimes happened to me - it was a New Year's day - "I'm hungry" put their resolve to my heart and he said, "Put that all that you have - and I said, "But, man, that's wrong with you, don't you know me?" "Oh, sorry man," he is a large type, he hugged me, offering to walk me home but I told him I wasn't going there. That was on the downs of the New Year's party Happy New Year!" then, he kissed me. Fifteen days later he got killed.

As much as the kind of clothes worn, vivo language differentiates them from other gauchoes. As Etatku, the leader of a gaucho band, said, "The language is born from your own soul; from us, it is born with the vivaz. It is not written down or anything."

Creating new words and expressions almost every day, vivo language is full of metaphors and words of altered meaning. When the members of Etatku's gauchoes talk, they use a drawl, stretching the vowels and words, and always putting the accent on the final syllable.

A consciousness of body movement and its endless rhythmic possibilities has been discovered by Colombian youth through dance. In their walking on the streets where risk and chances of dangerous situations are always present, popular youth have reinvented this consciousness of the body. On the street their bodies need to be always alert. Their bodies express the rhythmic sensuality organized with the dance but with the co-ordinated measured and watchful movement learned on the streets. In the daily life on the street, in the gauchoes' most rutinised activities, music is a means to define identity and to remember.

The billboard, the billboard room, owner, is 32 years old. He has been a member of the gauchoes of Deportistas since he was sixteen. As a member of this gaucho he used to play on behalf of the barrio in mini-soccer tournaments. He started working when he was 13. When he was 16 he got a steady job in a factory. As many other people he done in these bars, he asked for an advance of his retirement payment to fulfill a dream he had in mind for a long time: that of a small business in the barrio that could provide an additional income for his family. During the week, the billboard room is kept open by his parents, who own a fandango in the front block. During the nights and weekends both the halls are open and charged with the help of his brothers. As we were leaving we met Bolita. His black curly hair was very long, he was wearing the dresses of the ripped生命周期, jean jacket, handcrafted leather brogues and a head necklace. Bolita belongs to a gaucho of roqueiros (rockers). While he was waiting for his friends, Bolita wandered around the barrio. His friends were coming back from downtown Kennedy. On Saturday nights people they meet with other roqueiros in the ministroes of Kennedy. A "ministro" is the afternoon opening of a discotheque where young people can get in. To enter, there is a cover charge, and inside they can buy any kind of liquor at lower prices than at night. Gauchoes of Roqueiros maintain close relationships with the other gauchoes of Kennedy. More frequently than the other gauchoes, however, Roqueiros hang out in downtown Kennedy and in Kennedy Roqueiros. Roqueiros from all over the region meet in downtown Kennedy.

Music is a part of almost any activity of roqueiro gauchoes. Rock is the street encounter as well as the music they look for in ministroes and at parties. Roqueiros often rent a big stereo, earphones and music, decorating a house for a dance that goes on without stopping for as long as two days at a time. Anybody can go if they pay the cost of admission. Bolita told us about the parties:

A gaucho's plurality of musical likes exhibits elements intrinsic to its cultural expression. It was with rhythms such as rock in the 60s, salsa in the 70s and disco and merengue in the 80s when a symbolic musical world, building up youth differences, was created. In the appropriation of those musical rhythms, popular youth have expressed their stylistic differences in a style created out of ways to bear these sounds, to walk in the streets, to dress according to them, and to dance with them. First of all, in the act of dancing, young people brought together the etnomic of body gestures inherited from Afro-Cuban music and the total experience of rhythmic movement. However, the new rhythms could not provide popular youth with the words needed to communicate their experiences and passions. This role was filled by musical genres such as Tango, Rancheros (Mexican music), Cumbias and boleros that constitute the old musical rhythms. Old music is liked by everyone, and the new rhythms, plastics, viscos, deportistics and parents.

In old musical rhythms, youth found a space and time to express their nostalgia. While their parents' city experience was limited to discovering the ways and means to survive in the city, popular youth experience grew out of hanging out in streets and of the constructive disposition of groups tied to these spaces. And it was in old musical lyrics where youth cultures recognized those stories of violence, terror, mystery and intensity and feelings (love, enthusiasm, pity,
laughter) many times "lived" or seen in the streets of their barrio. Whether looking at new or old rhythms the same central element can be seen, the musical sound is an empor- ning element. Music identifies their differences, and provides a way of classifying their spaces.

Four different groups were at the tables. After having spent some time gorging away (weaving down the side walk) they come for a drink. At one table was Adonael, a black male leader of the gang of deportists of his friends. The passion for soccer held by Adonael's gang is expanded by its passion for Salser music. When Adonael and his friends stand in a corner with a tape recorder, the music starts right there.

Salser rhythms are the best company for intense rumba nights and evening evenings. It is amazing that a masterpiece of first passed beat (tonne and forward) with the slow swaying of the hips. Shoulders mark the beat while arms go up and down, and the dance begins. A glance is taken to swing around. Salser is combined with clapping and singing and non-stop dancing journeys through songs that all of them know, songs about love, friendship, the barrio, the street, mother, friends, and priests.

One block ahead was the communal room and the mini-soccer and basketball court. The court is surrounded by the communal room, by a wall of the public school and by the main road. On the side-brick wall fronts of the communal room we could read graffiti written in English: "Push Rock not because like a song such place has a special site in your life, in my barrio's heart that love so many things and in this surprising fact that amuses us every day. (From "Celia, Celia Rumba")

From the corner of the final block we looked towards a large dark area on our right: the swamp, better known as "la motera" (black hole). We could not see what was happening in the darkness: but out there around swamps, dink trolls, corners, or empty land plots there exists a noiseless street world ruled by violence. Illicit culture, fights, gun shots, revenge and drugs are rife to violence that is known by every inhabitant of these barrios. It is the other half of the barrio night that for me, as an outsider, was veiled. In the words of Palomo, "out there you are fast, your sharp on you die. There is not something like a quiet night. The street, as the salser singer Willie Collin put it, is a "desert of surprises," a mysterious and dangerous world.

A few names, words and drawings on the walls cannot define a youth culture. However, when calls my attention is the exploratory and different character of 80's graffiti shows from what was the graffiti pattern of a few years ago. During the 80's a depoliticalization of graffiti occurred. New social writers have taken over. There are informal groups of just individuals painting a spontaneous and intimate world on the walls.

"WE HAVEN'T HAD TIME TO BE GUILTY." - SECUSTRO (KIDNAP)

Three years after the recuperation of democracy in Argentina, this graffiti slogan was painted on the walls of Buenos Aires by the rock group Secuestro. In synthetic and eloquent prose, graffiti conveys various key elements of 1980's youth culture in Argentina, which - despite its demilitarization by age groups - is lived as a site of languages, images and modes of participation which cut across all social practices. In the Latin American context, graffiti not only permits an analysis of youth culture in its use and appropriation of the media and of urban consumption practices, but also as a strategic site of survival and political action during the dictatorships. Thus, for example, the signature SECUSTRO is the demarcation of repression in the public space of a Buenos Aires street by superimposing upon it the rock concert, a recognized site of youth culture during the periods of greatest police vigilance.

Latin American Youth: From Modernization to Revolt

Latin American youth were protagonists in two major historical 'moments': the attempted socio modernization implicating in the development model of the 1950s, and the economic crisis of the 1970s and 80s which showed the deficiencies of this project.
[Falklands War] of 1982 where youth were the principal protagonists.

The dictatorial model not only concentrates power and economic wealth, but it also imposes the mechanisms of violence upon youth through a culture of fear to ensure the closure of instances of popular mobilization and solidarity cooperation. This, in turn, fulfills the dictates of international finance capital by restricting public expenditure, especially in health, education and cultural programs, and by eliminating all research that does not have immediate uses for the multinationals.

The dysfunctional educational system not only fails to train the majority of youth, but further adds to the justification of youth vigilance by creating an image of youth as suspicious and violent which then supports repressive and authoritarian politics.

In this context, it is interesting to analyze the way in which the production of meaning in practices of everyday life "survives" to create alternative moments of participation and recognition. This process is condemned in two moments: the forms of acting and accessing information during the dictatorship, and the recuperation of political discourse in the transition to democracy. In both moments, youth culture offers a fruitful site—especially in rock music, graffiti, and places of gathering—for the analysis of the uses of new technologies which began to play a role in Argentinian culture from the 1970s on (VCN, color TV, access to satellite communication, extension of FM radio, etc.). Rather than simply symbolizing the subversion of a set of multinationals strategies, media culture can be considered as a challenge to the constraints which organize modes of knowledge and conceptions of authority, order and common sense. It is especially important in youth culture where visual codes are reorganized with a concrete focus for the division between genres or artistic materials, and where links are made through cultures which problematize definitions of the national and the local.

For mother’s day, give her a white handkerchief (Secuestro)

Painted by Secuestro in 1986, this graffiti slogan acknowledges and pays homage to the movement which played an indispensable role during the dictatorship, by occupying the public spaces in defense of human rights. Having gone in vain from offices, to homes, to communities in search of information on their kidnapped offspring, a group of mothers began to march around the Plaza de Mayo wearing handkerchiefs on their heads, embroiled with the names of their missing loved ones. Visible every Thursday at the historic site which has been the center of collective demonstrations since the Argentinian independence of 1810, this practice transformed the relationship between information and resistance in a way which was impossible for the largely clandestine political analysis. Jointly known by the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo, they demonstrate for the kidnapped children, whose lives have been kept secret, the language of the human rights organizations thus acquired a visible consistency. The visual element is strengthened by the images, drawings and silhouettes of the disappeared, which were painted in the plaza and on the walls of all the cities in the country. This representation of an absence puts the visual on the primary plane over the simple refrain "Alive they were taken, alive we want them back" or "Appearance alive!". It is also a visual symbol of the limitations for possible political action the mothers and grandmothers walk alone in the plaza, rather than with their partners, because they hope that alone the police do not dare to deprive them.

This "visual turn" signals the design of a language of resistance which indicates the ways of acting and accessing information in the determinate public spaces where the practices of everyday life can acquire their political potential. In this context, several cultural practices of youth—especially rock—is the performing of the city and the reconfiguration of languages by addressing questions which have been expelled from public discourse.

Since the mid-1960s, the so-called "RockMovement" has designated a movement of convergence and participation which has joined new forms of sociality (the creation of recognizable spaces such as the show or concert) with a cultural interchange based on certain publications and magazines. While the publications on the commercial circuit enjoy high circulation rates, an artistic genre or "nuevos" culture also emerges in this period with homegrown magazines featuring poems, stories, and novellas of rock groups. These "nuevos"—often printed by mimeograph or photocopiers—circulate through the entire country in parts and are a special feature. Through their reports, information and "fan mail," these publications—both commercial and artesanalis cliko—create a site for the acknowledgment and contestation of the dictatorial model.
I want to see you naked
the day they paralyze the bodies
which have been saved, broke,
on some highway,
which happens because barbecues
won't kill a thing.
And I really want you to laugh
and to tell me that it is only a game
or else kill me this afternoon baby.

This winter was bad,
and I think that I forgot my window
in a basement.
And your legs that keep getting longer
know that they cannot turn back,
the city pines on us with brighter, briefer.

The trajectory from the neighbourhood to the downtown theater or club involves a journey whereby the rock band - and the band of friends - enters into a critique of media culture by taking emblems and gestures and transforming them. On the basis of selective consumption, youth gather to listen to music in one house in the neighborhood, the privileged site for the development of youth culture. It is the everyday practice of the neighborhood - the source of group recognition and integration through ties of family, friendship and love - that have been used to construct the image of the dangerous youth since the time of the white fathers. In this regard, it is important to understand that the category of youth culture is more than just a base-level identification of consumption and leisure practices. Rather, it is a complex, fundamental, and convergent social relations constructed in terms of race, class and gender, located in various sites such as the home, school, work and the area of control and security.

In these sites, it is possible to read of the tension between the design of images or forms of 'identity' attributed to youth and the other modes of subjectivity in an historical moment. This distinction is made to incorporate the image of youth as protagonists during the Malvinian war of 1982, the public space which was opened in the nuclear could not count on the support of rock bands. Instead, a Festival of Latin American Solidarity was organized by the rock bands in the stadium where they held many of their concerts. The anti-military discourse of the rock bands was bolstered by an explicitly patriotic, militant message which, because of its relation to other youth cultural practices, represented the principal victims of the war and completed the image of the survivor. Poycodo-Kuppo

I'm checking what's left after the big noise
in a world with very few sounds
I stop to look at silent machines and an image stands out on a blue Air.
Ah, Ah! what I see now is happening in a near future
these images are emotions
and I don't know who is giving me their hand.
Today I am just another survivor
and I run with an advantage over the present.

Today I am just another survivor
and I run with an advantage over the present.
Oh, Oh, Oh! this sounds better to me.
I see a bold girl who survived
is there room for a new emotion?
And be born from the earth with imagination.
Today I am just another survivor
I am just another survivor.

But the dinosaurs will disappear
With these words Charly Garcia finished a concert near the end of 1982, after a massive demonstration from the dying military dictatorship which was still reeling from the Malvinas disaster.
This is what the song says:

It is Saturday night and a friend is in jail (don't make
imagery for the dinosaurs
who are in bed (dreams)...
Our friends in the neighborhood
might disappear
Those who are on the radio
might disappear.

As a site for practical deliberation, the concert reproduces the multiplicity of voices and languages in the streets
and the desire for democracy.

Yesterday I dreamt of the hungry, the mad, those who are gone, those who are in prison. Pio Pie, rock star, responds:
"Who said that all was lost. I come to offer my heart, so much blood was wasted away in the river, I come to offer my heart."
To this, the stadium chants: "Se va un acobac, se va un acobac, la dictadura militar..." (It will end, it will, and the military dictatorship...).

The demand for democracy involved a revision of the modes of articulation, of the access to information and of the discrimination by sex of the link between knowledge and action. Thus, youth do not look upon themselves as a local subculture or as a group subordinated to the boundaries of the neighborhood, but as protagonists in a broad public scale; youth transcode familiar institutions (home and school) to address national cases. The "return to politics" of youth coincides with the modes of interpretation of the concert with the mobilization on the street. In 1982, Charly Garcia sang the song "Superbombeado":

I am looking for directions in cookbooks
you are mixing sugar with salt
you are getting information from books
you are buying the world at a boxcar.
Looking at superhuman, superstars,
people are crazy, crazy, crazy...

They are cleaning up the arbor
from our brief carnival
we're slowly on our way to another city.
You see, we're neither tourists
nor artists wearing tuxedos and smiles
we are part of your reality.
That is why we are here.
trying to get these feet moving,
under the lights, play until down.

That's why I slowed home because the danse is about to start.
I want to see you, see you again, see you again.

The occupation of the streets transformed practices of the everyday. Public words and scenes are rewritten on the walls where graffiti produces a space of recognition and subjectification. At first, graffiti appears on monuments and public buildings, painted over the cover of the dead or the institutions of life in the city. Later, graffiti appears on a counterpoint on the walls of the neighborhood, simultaneously cryptic and exhibitionistic.

In the culture of Bueno Aires, the climax of this practice has reached its limits, the transition to democracy. The recently recovered street is enterized into a privileged zone to seed a heterogeneity of voices, in which are outside the structures of political parties. A struggle ensues for the control of this space to ensure the best placement of the signature (THE NOBODY BAND, POLITICAL PUNK, KADNESS NH, or picture, even in means modifying the writing of others.

While a fugitive practice, graffiti modifies and denaturalizes the neighborhood or the block with signs that, while only understood by some, occupy a rightful maximal visibility in the same sense in which it is controlled by the police. In an interview, Secuestro link graffiti with the rock concert and the occupation of the city: "We would go to see a band. As they always played in different neighborhoods, we would bring our aerosol cans so we could paint. At a later date, we were more organized. We would diagram the streets (which was when the police do, but we do it for painting), we would choose a neighborhood, a street, an avenue, then we would go to a show with aerosol cans and hit it on the way."

In graffiti, it is possible to read the reinscription of the values and places attributed to youth. This is the site where the environment is played out for youth between, on the one hand, increased urbanization, hopes of modernizations and social dynamic, and, on the other hand, the image of danger portrayed by clothes and rock - this ambivalence is confused in the myth of the "laid out" youth caused by unemployment. The coexistence of distinct modes of socialization between parents and youth - particularly in the case of urban migrants - further exacerbates the generation gap.

The use of the school and the neighborhood for the practice of graffiti superimposes the ideal of visibility for the negative actions of the gang. Like all mechanisms of recognition and integration, this function both inwardly and outwardly. The school teaches youth what society thinks of them, to look at themselves, their families and their very existence as problematic. Nonetheless, the use of the school as a meeting place marks the boundaries of territorialization and deintegration of the neighborhood, specifying the limits of the group and investing the space with the values of a local culture.

While graffiti marks territory, it also marks an appropriation of meaning which6 bone word and image in a style which links simultaneity and fragment, a combination which parables the style of the videoclip. In the final years of the dictatorship, on Argentina was being incorporated into a global media culture, graffiti reveals the appropriation of multidisciplinary and urban consumption practices into the modes of survival and action of youth culture. Rock groups are even named in English (WASTED YOUTH OR PUNK NOT DEAD), and jokes and political satire is invented: "Watch out fascists, Maradona is a little" or "In my apartment I have pets of all of you. (Che) Stevios."

On walls of the streets, hospital stations and schools, this brutal effect of language is at once personalized (the ego assumes singularitarian and public) - the church is such a good busin.
the school is an institution of Setecinor. During the debate over the creation of the "Irea of Due Obediences," which in 1897 exempted from guilt all human rights violators who had supposedly followed orders, graffiti covered the walls of Buenos Aires: "Rob, kill, torture and find someone who will order you to do it." And military terrorism, police torture. There were no changes. Setecinor.

Yes voted: wait two years and do it again

In conclusion, these final three graffiti signals mark another aspect of modes of symbolic production in youth culture. The symbolic strategies of youth design spaces which acknowledge heterogeneity within education, social class, gender and age, and which can name forms of control under democracy. Thus, the politics of the everyday enter into the microcosm of the neighborhood wall. These three graffiti signals mark the difficulties experienced by the democracy in allowing for the full participation of those sectors which were mobilized to secure its recuperation. The initial demand for institutional transparency is set back by the inability to encounter mechanisms which will enable the courts to bring those responsible for crimes of human rights abuses to justice. At the same time, the new democracies in Latin America are stuck with the economic conditions fostered by the dictatorships.

In the context of political settlement, the incorporation of youth into education and employment has not been facilitated, and youth have rejected social mobilization as an avenue to new forms of social and political organization. Thus, the tensions of everyday life between work, school and the neighborhood are translated into a rejection by youth of the authoritarianism of institutions, while nonetheless accepting the role of education in altering the social standing. Aspirations of recognition and social mobility are not reduced to individual history in relation to exerting productive or revolutionary origins, but routines are invested in those spaces where the everyday practices of the production and interchange of meaning take place. To analyze youth culture of the 1990s it is necessary to look at rock videos, video games and their sites of interaction in order to see how youth have organized themselves to transcend both the images of the new defined by the crisis and the authoritarian barriers to association. Perhaps the answer was instated in 1997 by the rock group "Los redondos de ricote" ("The little crooks of ricote"), who would perform in the costume of the creole crones and encourage the audience to dress up and to come on stage. The "redonditos" came to be the most broadly disseminated counter-symbol in the cities of Argentina. The following is "Come on, bandas" by Skoy Robinson and Radio Solar.

And what's the use of sleeping under guard living cynically and wearing golden buttons and what's the use of being the new band and going around climbing military radar Come on, bandas let's boot it

Silvio Dellino teaches Theories of Culture at theUniversities of Buenos Aires and Olivos in Argentina. She is currently completing her Ph.D. thesis on literacy and mass media in Argentine culture.

Further Reading


Although the crisis in Latin America is linked more to the debt - and thus to the contradictions of the modernization designed by business people and politicians - than to the doubt over modernity suffered by intellectuals, philosophers and social scientists in Europe and the United States, the crises are intertwined and their discourses are mutually complementary. In some form the reemergence of the modernizing project to our countries is the other face of their crisis, and our "external debt" to part of their "internal debt," just as their development is part of our dependence. Taking change of the crisis of modernity to be an indispensable condition in order to conceive of a project in our countries where economic and technological modernization does not disable or supplant cultural modernity.

Located in the center of the philosophical, aesthetic and sociological reflections on the crisis of reason and modern society, the project of communication now transcends the boundaries and paradigms of our studies and research. The field of communication can no longer be neatly delimited by academic demarcations. Whether we like it or not, others - from other disciplines and with other concerns - now take part in it. We must accept this explosion and redesign the map of questions and the lines of engagement.

How should we confront this new and redoubled reduction? How can we recognize the social and perspectival depths of new communication technologies, their cross-cutting modes of presence in the everyday, from work to play and from science to politics? How can we accept them not as facts that confirm the deceptive neutrality of technological development in which social inequality and power is resolved and dis-
solved, but as challenges to theoretical issues and to schematic and automatic practices in pedagogy and research?

Along the lines marked out by these questions, I would like to "translate" from a Latin American perspective - the debate on modernity to several issues which articulate with avenues of reconfiguration in the field of communication. I propose to examine three issues: national histories, urban sensibilities and cultural markets.

National histories: the long term.

The notion, one of the most contradictory sites in Latin American modernity, has now become one of the "spaces" most affected by the modalities of communication. This new state of affluence results from both the "universal interconnection" of circuits via satellites and information, and from the "liberation of distances" which accompanies the growing fragmentation of the cultural habitat. The notion finds its communication with the past, and with its own traditions, both devalued and defomed by the demands of the imposing contemporaneity of modernity. Trapped between provincialism and transnationalization and unable to communicate with its own internal diversity, the notion in turbulence - or in the words of R. Schwartz "the turbulence of the notion" - signals a zone of strategic convergence between the study of communication and the new history.

In his splendid essay on Latin American historiography of the 19th century, German Colomese sees dismantling the reasons and mechanisms of incommunicability with the past in national histories. "For intellectuals situated in a revolutionary tradition, not only the colonial past seemed strange but so did the population which emerged from this past, so they grasped at straws to come up with a cultural synthesis which had been operative." This attitude was concretized in the absence of an acknowledgment of the reality which was "an absence of the vocabulary to name it", and a quiet hostility towards the dark space of the illiterate subalterns. In contrast to the experience of 19th century historians, Colomese draws a key insight of postmodern criticism to problematize the "linear" sense of history which made even the most critical historians incapable of seeing the pluralism of the temporalities. This plurality becomes apparent when - as G. Montanaro says, "the long duration of profound strains of collective memory is raised to the surface by the struggles of the social fabric ceased by the acceleration of modernization itself." To remake history implies above all to establish new ways of relating to the past, that which was thought to have been abolished by independence and modernization, but "the features of which began to multiply as soon as attention moved from luminous expiats to everyday life."
Over the past twenty years or so, the population weight in Latin America has swung from country to city to the point where the proportion of urban dwellers in many countries is near 70%.

Urban sensibilities: the hybridizations.

Over the past twenty years or so, the population weight in Latin America has swung from country to city to the point where the proportion of urban dwellers in many countries is near 70%. Obviously, it is not only the number of people which signals the change, but the appearance of new sensibilities which challenge the frames of reference and comprehension forged upon a base of neat identities, deep roots and clear boundaries. While an urban identity is not quite realized, there is an inroads pursuit of European and North American models, and while there is a distancing from rural identities, these remain a secret link to ancestral, indigenous authenticities and solidarities.

Second, research is required into the changes in images and metaphors of the national, the devolution, secularization and reinvention of myths and rituals through which this contradiction but still powerful identity is unsaid and masked both from a local and transnational perspective.

To the extent that the incorporation into modernity of the national minorities in Latin America occurs through the mediations established by the technologies of communications - its grammar and imaginary and the new historical perspective opens the field to two important lines of work. First, the investigation must continue into how the discourses of communications enable or hinder the memory in which the long term is woven, in order to discover the traces which can enable the recognition of "pokiblak" [loc. both people and country], and the dialogue between generations and traditions.

Second, research is required into the changes in images and metaphors of the national, the devolution, secularization and reinvention of myths and rituals through which this contradiction but still powerful identity is unsaid and masked both from a local and transnational perspective.

The modernity lived by these youth is, first of all, a massive consumption reality of time. This is what is expressed in the short life of the majority of objects - disposable - that are produced now, and in the value of the instant when neither the past nor the future matters much, and when the feeling of death becomes the most powerful experience of life. These youth also incorporate the modern sensus of consumption, which is simultaneously a matter of making and exhibiting oneself as powerful and of assimilating the economic transactions in all spheres of life. Finally, these youth incorporate a powerful visual language which is fragmented and rich with images. Running iron styles of dress to ways of making music and even talking, these youth are inspired by visual mythologies of war crossed with the most superficial dimensions and gestures of punk. One final ingredient to these cultural matrices of these youth: the Andean music of rumba and suka-convoy "pojoes" with a pleasure of the body which transforms the old Christian acculturation of death into its acceptance as part of life and even as part of the party!

Cultural hybridization corresponds to the heterogeneity caused by the disintegration and de-urbanization of the city, the form of identity with which one survives. The anarchic growth of cities is expanding the periphery, thus dispersing and isolating youth groups to the point where the different cities which make up the city are almost without connection. The dissolution of the traditional spaces of collective encounters and the sub-urbanization of everyday life - as Garcia-Caselini et al. point out about Mexico City - and the city becomes of less use.

It is precisely this sociocultural disaggregation of the city which will be compensated by the technocratic intervention, a strong diminution of the sense of necessity, a vicious but efficient compensation. The audiovisual media, and television in particular, will be responsible for returning the city to us, of reinserting us into urban life.

Introduced as a dense mediation which can enable the recreation of the social fabric and of the modes of collectivity, the media responds less to the topographies of urban planners than to the topologies of imaginary territories. It is here where the game of the mass media encounters both its sustenance and its limit: this is where social processes take place and form their re-localization and thereby mark the city, selecting and putting into play symbols of pertinence which provide them forms of identity.

Cultural marketplaces: integration and difference.

According to J.J. Brunn, modernity in Latin America is linked more to the development of communication media and the formation of a cultural marketplace, than to philosophical doctrines or political ideologies. Rather than being an intellectual experience, modernity becomes a collective reality and a social experience in which the cultural and cultural intermediation of the processes of cultural consumption, the globalization of symbolic universes, and the segmentation of communities into audiences for the marketplace. All of these processes can be traced back to the turn of the century in some aspects, but they do not achieve their true social viability until the 1950s and 60s. At this time, mass education was introduced - thus bringing schooling to the majority of the population - and the professionalization of workers and the segmentation of consumers enable the culture to infect different humanization and autonomy from other social orders. For Brunn, our modernity emerges in an "experience" divided by difference but within a common matrix caused by the new forms of schooling, televisual communication, the consumption of information and the necessity to live connected to the signs of the city.

This modernity is taken into consideration neither in the spheres of cultural politics, where the primary objective is to better the resources, nor in the education systems which are dedicated to denouncing cultural confusion.
Post-Marxist Post-Modern Cultural Populism From Birmingham to Bogotá

By Nick Witherden


The translation of this work by one of Latin America’s leading communication theorists has a twofold importance, for not only does it open a richly informed perspective on the relation of media and social movements in the South, but it also makes a provocative contribution to our understanding of the mass media in Latin America.

According to Martín-Barrado, Latin America’s crises of the 70s and 80s—including its internal and external struggles, its post-war transformations, its post-colonial experiences—have been characterized by a peculiar interplay of media and social movements. For him, the mass media have been a key element in the political and social transformation of the region.

However—and this is Martin-Barrado’s crucial point—massification cannot wholly succeed in the destruction of popular cultures, for “There is no imposition from above which does not imply, in some form, an incorporation of what comes from below.” Mass culture aims to win consent for development by “covering over differences and reconciling tastes.” But this is possible historically only to the extent that it simultaneously “deforms and activates” the content of pre-existing knowledges and traditions. The mass media is caught up in an intricate interplay of submission and resistance, opposition and complicity, because “Contrary to the predictions of social implication and depoliticization, the masses still contain—in the double sense of control and conservation within—the people.” There is thus a sense in which “subversion is imbedded in integration.”

Martin-Barrado stresses that in affirming the resilience of the popular he is not seeking a nostalgic rescue of “authentic” archaism, but rather tracking a living process in which popular memory and cultural creativity interact with communicative innovation to generate “new combinations and syntheses…that reveal not just the racial mixture as it coalesces around the mass media, but the interweaving of modernity and the residues of various cultural periods, the mixtures of social structures and sentiments.” With examples ranging from Brazilian cinema, Argentinean radio, black music in Brazil and Chilean journalism he shows how the subordinate classes ‘take’ the products of the culture industry and re-examine themselves to recognize their own neighborhoods and struggles. The media is in turn obliged to acknowledge the demands issuing from below, creating “a popular that appeals to us from the mass.” Thus, for example, Martin-Barrado insists that Latin America’s famous form of soap opera, the telesoap, is no mere instrument of capitalist ideological domination but rather articulates an idiom of passion and moralism which lies outside the bounds of modernization, thereby “allowing the people a means to recognize themselves as the authors of their own history” and providing a language for the formation of new popular forms of politics.

By this point, readers familiar with British and North American cultural studies may themselves experience a certain sense of recognition. For Martin-Barrado’s work, issuing from the University of California at Los Angeles, Colombia, has surprising affinities with the line of thought that has been developed in the works of Stuart Hall and the Birmingham Centre for Cultural Studies. This is no accident. Luminously international, Martin-Barrado parallels many of the theoretical moves which have shaped the revised Marxist approaches in the North. Thus the Frankfurt school’s preoccupation with the productive role of intellectuals is paralleled in his turn to the role of media workers, Benjamins’ ‘grammatikoi’ are invoked in his familiar guise as central figures of a rich and diverse intellectual scene. From the post-colonial encounter, rather than coercion; there is an acknowledged debt to the work of William and
Hoggart. The net result of this global theo-
retical wistfulness is firmly to siteuate Martin-
Barbero's work within a larger school of writ-
er that foregrounds the constitutive—rather than
merely meta—"suprastructural" role of culture in
reproduction. This preference for semiotics over economics, an emphasis on
audiences' "resistant" readings of media, and a preference for a non-prescriptive
approach to institutional critique suggest that Martin-
Barbero's project is less about accounting for the
influence of ideology on consciousness than it is about
understanding the constitutive role of culture in
reproduction.

Elsewhere, however, Martin-
Barbero displays a blindingly common
throughout the discourse of "cultural stud-
ies." Justly determined to shake free of
monolithic, Eurocentric visions of the
industrial working class, he is a sometime
critic of social change, he adopts a highly
pluralistic concept of "the people" as a source of
influence that is part of the "cultural struggle." His
work is rooted in a rejection of the armed,
anti-
parliamentary, class-based struggles of the
1960s in favor of an approach rooted in
the democratization and cultivation of
civil society. It is thus part of a move away
from the "politics of total war" toward a more
dignified life.

Now, the assessment of strategies for
the Latin American left is a matter for
activists enduring the dangers of Bogota,
Rio and Montevideo, not for aspiring academicians in
Vancouver. But insofar as Martin-
Barbero's work may be enlisted to corrob-
orate political resignations in the very dif-
ficult context of the North, comment is
in order. This is especially so because of its
affinity with that of another Latin American
American theorist, Ernesto Laclau, whose
conceptual achievements in popular dem-
socracy have been an influential base in shaping
post-Maoist politics. A necessary challenge
called for by these circumstances is that
Marxism has also often simply rational-
ized a watering-down of radical commit-
tments, and it is in this sense that we
within popular cultural traditions that the
thread of desire for total transformative
social change—change which would "turn
the world upside down"—have often
been driven by the bourgeoisie. But, during
the most reactionary years, cultural
studies' critical edge may depend on
retaining its distance from these disputa-
tions, unapologetically, apocalyptic, frankly revo-
lutionary energies. With so many leftist
voices denouncing the whole shebang, we are poorly
engaged in making what Martin-Barbero, in
case of this most telling metaphor, terms a "cultural trial." But must be
true, that as we are, we can perhaps ap-
crate the many distinctions his work
often, while not agreeing with every
aspect of his cartography.

Resources for Memory
By Michael Hochman and
William Rowe & Vivian Schelling,
Memory and Modernity: Popular Culture in Latin America.

A new generation of Latin American
scholars is finding a power-
ful "optimism of the will" amongst the
people of Latin America. Memory and
Modernity: Popular Culture in Latin America by
William Rowe & Vivian Schelling marks the first major attempt to outline
this emerging body of research and schol-
arity to an Anglophone audience. The
title of the book alludes to the two primary
paths of this research: first, the explorations of the "collective memory" as it is embedded
in popular cultural prac-
tices, the roots of which in some cases extend far back as pre-independence times
and, second, the exploration of how
modernity in a Latin American context is lived and adapted through popular cultural
practices, the "migrations"—to borrow a
term from Josu Martin-Barbero—by which
people "חורף" their worlds with mass media and commodity pro-
ducts.

Memory and Modernity not
only frames the terms of reference for this
new arena of debate, but it also offers
a comprehensive journey through the
terrains of Latin American popular culture,
both historically and geographically. Running across a wide variety of popular cultural practices, Rowe and Schelling dis-
cuss soccer, salsa, salsera, rock music, popular
books, soap operas, oral poetry and poetic
duels, and religious syncretism, to men-
non only a sampling of topics covered. This
entertaining, yet sometimes daunting,
collection of anecdotes provides the back-
drop for the important theoretical insights
developed by Rowe and Schelling from their
own analyses and that of others, most notably
Josu Martin-Barbero and Gari
Canclini and Carlos Monzíval.

A wide variety of cultural
environments "seems to offer an unbroken horizon." They
are, essentially, the cultural en-
vironments in which the processes of
restructuring capitalism in the late-twentieth century are played out. The question
of how memory is embedded in
these processes is the focus of this work.

Rowe and Schelling contra-
tee their analyses in the global processes of
Latin America's transition to a new millennium
under threat from industrialization and
the modern culture industry. Second, is

WILLIAM ROWE AND VIVIAN SCHELLING

Memory and Modernity
Popular Culture in Latin America

Rowe and Schelling maintain
the tension between these opposing tendencies, warning that with the grow-
ing concern in the 1990s about the role of the mass media and "the defense of
cultural modernity, it is important to resist "apoca-
lypse pessimism" about the former and "attempts to pre-
vent "cultural identity" in regard to the latter.

For an Anglophone audience, the context of Latin America offers an
opportunity to reconsider popular culture from another historical and
linguistic vantage point. Rowe and Schelling point out that the history of the relationship between modernity and mass media in the USA is often "taken as a model" for similar experiences elsewhere. To the contrary, Latin America is "the different historical moments at which the culture industry becomes established give rise to crucial differences." Thus, for
example, in the case of Brazil, "modernity arrived with the television rather than with the Enlightenment." The historiographic
difference that marks Latin America "is the force of popular culture," where
modernity becomes embedded with a recom-
stitution of pre-modern traditions and memo-
ries but has arisen through them, trans-
forming the processes in their wake.

Rowe and Schelling distin-
guish between three principal interpretive
narratives which have been used to cir-
cumscribe the role of popular culture. First, is the Romantic view of popular culture as "the culture of the underclass under threat from industrialization and the modern culture industry." Second, is
Beyond Boundaries
BY W.F. Santiago Valles

It cultural studies addresses the relation between cultural institutions and the cultural practices through which meaning is negotiated, the historical understanding of the popular sectors and their cultural practices with an integrated overview of the social processes of communication, then it would be safe to say that C.L.R. James is a pioneer in the field within a Latin American perspective that is critical of European and North American intellectual history. In Beyond a Boundary (1963), James writes that if you begin from what people do in their daily life, it is possible to understand their goals and values, their consciousness of obstacles and their strategies to overcome them. In the last few years, social debate in Latin America has turned on the character of our social formations, on the problems of popular politics, on the applicability of the concept of hegemony, on the possibilities that limited economic growth can provide for a post-colonial, anti-capitalist revolution, and on the possible expansion of democracy beyond the limitations of the existing order. For James, as for others, not only Agustín Cueva (author of La Tierra Marchita) (1987) and Martín Almeyda (author of Ana Nauzca) (1989), the separation of economic and cultural dominance denies the problematic of imperialism and how the daily lives of people in the periphery are organized by state terror. The advice from progresivo intellectuals in the North for gradual reforms in the South is based on this denial, as it is the notion that social relations of dominations can be undercut by economic means. These intellectuals want to support cultural projects which are evolving and which can provide a resource for collective memory, both as a way of keeping cultural traditions alive and as a site for political mobilization.

Michael Hochman is a student at The Toronto Institute For Studies in Education

This process began in the 1930s with the research for Black Jacobins, James' best known book. The history of Latin America's first war of national liberation in Haiti (1791-1803) is that of a Black people making revolution without an organization. An earlier study, not published, focused on the role of the revolutionary European intellectual leadership in the pursuit of self-government in the colonies, and in this study I have attempted to vanguard the evidence of a tri-dimensional sphere within the Brazilian society. After later James began writing American Civilization he moved from the concern to the daily life of the working people, the emerging social protagonist - source material with which to integrate social history, dominant arts and popular culture. James' interpretation of the Haitian revolution and the emerging political culture of popular arts and culture was confirmed by the independence struggles after 1945. As Grimschiz states in her preface, James also believed that the West Indians were in a privileged position to contribute to the liberation of the colonial world. The next twenty years the region has experienced the spontaneous opposition of working people to the domination of the colonial interest. But, the symbols of those struggles had been adopted by European and North American intellectuals and, more recently, the creative integration of social experience by working people in the new world constitutes a potential for revolutionary change that—or did I ever think that the knowledge and insight of the American intellectual that had lost the cultural initiative? For the student of cultural studies the work of C.L.R. James and of James M. McPherson, and the first (in a theoretical script version of Black Jacobins, the section from American Civilisation in which the work of Whittman and McPherson is compared, and the section from Beyond a Boundary on the definition of art should be more than enough, but this anthology includes many other pieces that recommend it as worthwhile reading.

Grimschiz refers to C.L.R. James' life work as the study of democracy in world history, as the search for an integrated experience of the relation between the parts of human existence made possible through an understanding of culture. In order to achieve this he had to make a clean break with metropolean conceptions and look for clues in the daily practices of the popular sectors in the colonies. In James' own words, "to establish his own identity, Callison, after three centuries, must himself pioneer into regions Caesar never knew" to discover the ways in which the working people in the West Indies made their own road as they traveled it.
between the formal support of democratic freedoms and state repression (both under Stalinism and McCarthyism). In a letter to Constantia Webbe (included in this collection), James insists that by giving the working people access to great art the cultural industries are making the contrast with their exploitation in production only more dramatic. The experience of reaching out for dominant knowledge could encourage a social movement that would reach out for everything in defense of the general interest.

This protagonist of the social subject in the now world was characteristic of industrial capitalism according to James. In another of the essays included in this anthology - "Preface to Criticism" - the author outlines a method of analysis whose 'tools' were available in Beyond a Boundary. In both cases, the role of the audience, working people with a central role in history, is underscored. As the performance is symbolic of a larger social conflict, it gives the audience a better understanding of reality by increasing its awareness of the relations between the parts of the whole. The event is the interaction between production and representation - whether it is a film, drama, dance or sport competition. In Beyond a Boundary James distinguishes the role of the newspaper in connecting world issues with daily life, in forging the natural popular that Jesús Martín-Barbero wrote about the fifty-five years later. Another ingredient in the process of nation building is the continuity of its revolution, its ability to transcend the distances between the people through slavery, which James discusses in relation to the writing of Toni Morrison, Alice Walker and Ntozake Shange.

Like Julio Antonio Mella and José Carlos Martínez before him, James insisted that an economic crisis was also a period of cultural reorientation. Unlike Manuel Gómez, James thought that the popular sectors could find their own way in such a situation. Long before Antonio Gramsci, James recognized that the need to reappropriate the national popular in Latin America without falling prey to populism. This is the tradition to which Mella, Maráteca and James contributed with their understanding of culture and the popular. In popular movements, aural Quijano, Francisco Walford, Octavio Ianni, and Walter Rodney have taken up the task.

In articles such as "Popular Art and the Cultural Tradition" included in this selection, James identifies the mass audience as an urban characteristic of capitalist industrialism, whose logic also organizes the cultural industries (particularly film). Since mass culture conditions society, James thought that cultural criticism also had to connect with mass culture and the divide been film and its critiques. James's work, however, was not to deny that the ostensible power of the media has been critical of the media's ability to control the audience, that the mass media is more than mere information sources. It is a social power whose media industries should not impose their products on Third World and traditional societies. John Tomlison's main argument about the subject is that the protest against cultural imperialism is usually made by intellectual elites, who, in turn, claim to speak for the ordinary person. The epigraph for his book is a reminder of Gil Dileone to Michel Foucault: "You were the first to teach us something absolutely fundamental: the dignity of the spoken word." This shows that a film like Beyond a Boundary is an attempt to give voice to the speaking people. It is a clear example of the "myth" of the media. The film evokes the case of the "Perestroika" movement which is also in this volume. Without the context, a film like Beyond a Boundary could also be applied to its audience. James's work about the cricketeer Constantine in Beyond a Boundary is among the first of its kind, and the film's context is significant in the context of the cultural struggle. The film demonstrates that James did well in the North, in spite of breaking the rules, and making the film that could make the media uncomfortable. The introduction begins his book by reminding that many readers will interpret the film as a political statement about the imposition of Western culture on a non-European society. The text on this Christmas card suggests this, but also notes that the community has set up its own broadcasting association, the Westco Media Association, "to try to defend its unique culture from western influence. Tomlinson writes about the film with this image because he wants to argue that something rather different is happening here, and that the film's context is significant in the context of the cultural struggle.

Santiago Valls is a graduate student in the Department of Communication at Simon Fraser University.

The Salt of Social Tradition
BY Alan O'Connor


Everyone (or, at least, all readers of this magazine) would maintain that cultural imperialism is a bad thing: intellectuals and media audiences (not exclusive categories) generally agree that countries with powerful media industries should not impose their products on Third World and traditional societies. John Tomlinson's main argument about the subject is that the protest against cultural imperialism is usually made by intellectual elites, who, in turn, claim to speak for the ordinary person. The epigraph for his book is a reminder of Gil Dileone to Michel Foucault: "You were the first to teach us something absolutely fundamental: the dignity of the spoken word." This shows that a film like Beyond a Boundary is an attempt to give voice to the speaking people. It is a clear example of the "myth" of the media. The film evokes the case of the "Perestroika" movement which is also in this volume. Without the context, a film like Beyond a Boundary could also be applied to its audience. James's work about the cricketeer Constantine in Beyond a Boundary could also be applied to his work. He writes about the cricketeer Constantine in Beyond a Boundary. The film demonstrates that James did well in the North, in spite of breaking the rules, and making the film that could make the media uncomfortable. The introduction begins his book by reminding that many readers will interpret the film as a political statement about the imposition of Western culture on a non-European society. The text on this Christmas card suggests this, but also notes that the community has set up its own broadcasting association, the Westco Media Association, "to try to defend its unique culture from western influence. Tomlinson writes about the film with this image because he wants to argue that something rather different is happening here, and that the film's context is significant in the context of the cultural struggle.


Tomlinson says nothing about the resources, the legal situation and the program of the Waltpiri Media Association. He does not compare his resources with those of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. The reason for this is perhaps that he is not aware of the easy access to the film which was distributed in England by Cultural Television. He did not have access to Eric Michael's monograph on the Waltpiri Media Association. For a Cultural Future must be published by Art & Text in Melbourne and is not widely distributed.

In his introduction, Tomlinson acknowledges the irony of writing a book on media imperialism from England and publishing it in one of the world's hegemonic languages. He deals with this Christmas card by invoking Elaine Pascal's advice to a young nobleman on his position of privilege. The advice was to remember that in his dealings with others that he was a nobleman only by accident of birth. Thisunningly is the reader's attention to a serious practical limitation of this book. Tomlinson has written a book on cultural imperialism which draws only on materials published in English language. The book is based on a very selective range of published sources.

Tomlinson turns his attention to writers on media ventures such as Herbert Schiller and Armand Mattelart. He makes two moves against their generalizing tendencies that U.S. media dominate the world. The first argument is to separate the realm of the economic from that of the cultural. Tomlinson draws on evidence before the public of economic research, Transnational corporations, especially those based in the USA, and the large role the world in the production and distribution of mass media. However, he insists that this economic domination will not change anything about the cultural domination. It is somewhat astonishing to find such an insistence on culture as being autonomously from economics. Such a claim was made in Altussner's "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus" essay. It has been widely criticized, by Raymond Williams among others, as hopelessly inadequate to the multiple ways in which culture and economy are intertwined in consumer societies in design, fashion, advertising, marketing, and the operation of the media industries themselves. As a result of the limitations in Altussner's essays, cultural studies turned its attention to Gramsci and to studies of the institution of meaning, value and power.

Tomlinson's second argument against Schiller and Mattelart is the now-familiar one that the audience is active in interpretation. The audience, however, is embedded in the media product. Here Tomlinson draws on research into the "active audience" by Morley, Ang, Katz and Liebes. The widespread circulation among liberal intellectuals of a very small number of studies of audience reception of mass media deserves some serious scrutiny. What is it about these studies that has convinced them of their conclusion? Pierre Bourdieu has researched the use of art and culture in
France since the 1960s. Why is his work not given
the attention it deserves? There are many
reasons for this. One is that the political
climate, and the intellectual climate, that
surrounded his work was one of intellectual
isolation and political repression. Another is that
the reception of his work has been uneven across
countries and cultures. Le Viêt-namien and
Le Viêt-namienne have been translated into a
number of languages, but they have not been widely
published.

One of the most important works of
postcolonial literature to emerge from Vietnam is
Nguyen Van Tran’s Vietnam: A Memory of
War. Tran’s work is a powerful testament to the
terror of war and its aftermath. He writes about
the Vietnam War in a way that is both
personal and political, and his work has been widely
acclaimed.

One of the many reasons why
Tran’s work has not been widely
published is that it is written in a language that
is not widely spoken. Another is that it is
written in a style that is difficult to
understand. And finally, it is
written in a context that is unfamiliar to
most readers.

The reception of Tran’s work has also been
influenced by the political climate of the
1960s and 1970s. During this time,
the Vietnam War was a highly
controversial issue, and many people
were opposed to it. This opposition
may have made it difficult for Tran’s
critics to publish his work.

In conclusion, Tran’s work is an
important contribution to the
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terror of war and its aftermath. It
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La traducción de este texto es un trabajo del equipo de traducción de la empresa Linguatec. El texto se ha traducido al español y se ha revisado por un equipo de expertos lingüísticos para garantizar la precisión y la coherencia. Si tiene alguna duda o necesita más información, no dude en ponérselo en contacto con nosotros.
George Vidalin, Jean Franco, Juan Flores (eds) On Edge: The Crise of Contemporary Latin American Culture (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1992). A wide-ranging collection of essays which includes much of the introduction from Garcia Canclini’s Hybrid Cultures, a pulsing essay on Vargas Llosa by William Rowe, Jean Franco on women writers who break the distinction between writers and those who get written about, Howard Wimsatt on sexual formation in contemporary Brazil, and much else.


Roberto Schwarcz, Marginalidad: Essays on Brazilian Culture. Translated by John Glashan. (London, New York: Verso, 1992). This well-illustrated book deals with visual images of the land, confrontation with a colonial past, artists’ politics, the important acronymist movement in Latin America and popular modern art.


Centro de Comunicación Alternativa Asísdale Poppe (eds.), Otro Modo de Ser: Mujeres Mexicanas en Movimiento (Mexico City, 1989). Published to accompany an exhibition in Germany and Mexico, this book explores the diversity of women’s experiences and cultures in Mexico City. It extends the pioneering work of last novaequin by bringing feminist arguments together with women’s experiences.

Jean Franco, Plotting Women: Gender and Representation in Mexico (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985). Like several other books, this one challenges the idea that the emphasis on the contemporary of cultural studies makes sense for Latin America. In researching ways in which women subvert gender narratives, Franco starts with the writings of mystical nuns in the 16th and 17th centuries. Other chapters examine women’s counter-narratives in the national and modern periods.


Jorge A. Gonzalez, Cultural (Universidad de Colima, 1986). Includes an important study of creoles and popular religion. The author attempts to develop a concept of “trenes culturales”—lines and sites of cultural agreement and also struggles over meanings.


David William Foster, From Magazine to Megacorporation: Latin American graphic humor on popular culture (Boulder, Colo: Westview, 1988). An important study of the uses and interpretations of television among different sectors in Chile.

Guillermina Sunkel, Experiencia y Postrza en la Prosa Popular: Un estudio sobre cultura popular, cultura de masas y cultura política (Santiago, Chile: IEET, 1985). Shows what the leftists can learn from the success of popular newspapers in order to reach a popular readership during the Allende years. An important study, frequently cited but summarized somewhat differently by Martin-Barbero.

Néstor García Canclini and Rafael Rengel (eds.), Cultura transnacional y cultura de masas (San Diego: 1986). A thick book of studies by García Canclini, José Joaquín Ballesta, Robert A. White and many others.

Jesús Martín-Barbero (ed.), Comunidades y culturas populares en Latinamérica (Mexico City: GIE, 1989). Includes contributions from most well-known Latin American cultural researchers.

Néstor García Canclini (ed.), Política Cultural en América Latina (Mexico: ONUP, 1987). With contributions from García Canclini, Jean Franco, José Joaquín Ballesta, Oscar Rosell, Sergio Micali and an important essay on the political culture of indigenous peoples by Guillermo Reit.

Diálogos de la Comunicación. Apartado Aéreo 18-0827, Lima 18, Peru. An important theoretical journal of communication and cultural studies.


Travesía, Journal de Latin American Cultural Studies, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1989—). From the Centro de Latin American Cultural Studies, King’s College, London WC1E 6LU. A newsletter between Latin and Latin American cultural studies. The theme of the first issue is political violence and culture and also includes an important essay by Martin-Barbero on communication and democracy.