

PERSPECTIVES ON LATE-COLONIAL MEXICAN CULTURAL HISTORY

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- ILUSTRANDO LA NUEVA ESPAÑA: TEXTO E IMAGEN EN EL PERIQUILLO SARNIENTO DE FERNÁNDEZ DE LIZARDI.* By Beatriz Alba-Koch. (Cáceres, Spain: Universidad de Extremadura, 1999. Pp. 190. N.p.)
- ¡VIVA MEXICO! ¡VIVA LA INDEPENDENCIA!: CELEBRATIONS OF SEPTEMBER 15.* Edited by William H. Beezley and David E. Lorey. (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2001. Pp. 261. \$60.00 cloth, \$21.95 paper.)
- IMAGINING IDENTITY IN NEW SPAIN: RACE, LINEAGE, AND THE COLONIAL BODY IN PORTRAITURE AND CASTA PAINTINGS.* By Magali Carrera. (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2003. Pp. 188. \$34.95 cloth.)
- MAGISTRATES OF THE SACRED: PRIESTS AND PARISHIONERS IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY MEXICO.* By William B. Taylor. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996. Pp. 868. \$85 cloth, \$39.95 paper.)
- THE OTHER REBELLION: POPULAR VIOLENCE, IDEOLOGY, AND THE MEXICAN STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE, 1810–1821.* By Eric Van Young. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001. Pp. 702. \$75.00 cloth.)
- PROPRIETY AND PERMISSIVENESS IN BOURBON MEXICO.* By Juan Pedro Viqueira Albán. (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1999. Pp. 280. \$55.00 cloth, \$19.95 paper.)
- LIZARDI AND THE BIRTH OF THE NOVEL IN SPANISH AMERICA.* By Nancy Vogeley. (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2001. Pp. 342. \$59.95 cloth.)

Mexican historiography of the Bourbon era has been enriched with the publication of a number of recent studies showing the interplay of politics and culture at both the elite and popular levels. As might be expected, most build on an existing body of work, but there now is a

fruitful cross-fertilization of new ideas and approaches in history, art history, and literary studies. Interdisciplinary work in eighteenth-century studies in general has flourished, and these Mexican examples are noteworthy not only for area specialists but also for scholars with comparative interests. In these recent works, roles of the Mexican urban popular classes and rural *campesinos* in daily life, as well as the traditional emphasis on elites, come into focus. The Bourbon era was marked by significant shifts in crown policy in the political and economic spheres, but the impact on the cultural sphere has not received as much attention. These works by scholars in history, art history, and literature ask new questions and challenge old paradigms by examining the origins and processes of late colonial-era cultural change. These authors largely take independence as the endpoint of their study, but virtually all are cognizant that many fundamental aspects of colonial society and culture were not transformed with the political break from Spain.

A delightful volume is Juan Pedro Viqueira Albán's *Propriety and Permissiveness in Bourbon Mexico*, which explicitly deals with late colonial popular culture in Mexico City. He examines the shifting cultural mores and the crown's attempt to reverse what it saw as the decline of propriety and the rise of permissiveness. This work is a translation of the original work published in Mexico in 1987 that has had considerable influence on recent Latin American cultural historians.¹ His work can be read as a history of the crown's persecution of urban popular culture, since he draws on documentation of official crown attempts to control urban plebeians. However, Viqueira Albán's careful reading of some archival sources and his reinterpretation of published material illuminates intertwined processes that produced popular culture. He does not merely focus on the crown's increasingly aggressive actions to regulate or suppress it; rather he addresses a wide ranging subject matter, including attempts to rein in *donjuanismo* (womanizing) whose prize conquests were nuns to the decline of bullfights, to the use of theater as a tool of reform to the suppression of Carnival. Each chapter is a slice of popular culture giving insight into social hierarchies and differing social and cultural values of Mexico City elites and the plebe. These echo some themes seen in Irving Leonard's work (1959) on seventeenth-century Mexico published more than forty years ago, that is, popular diversions, spectacle, and crown control.²

1. Juan Pedro Viqueira Albán, *¿Relajados o reprimidos? Diversiones públicas y vida social en la ciudad de México durante el Siglo de las Luces* (Mexico, DF: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1987). The size and relatively modest cost of the English edition make it attractive as an undergraduate text.

2. These essays (Leonard 1959) include sketches of don Carlos Sigüenza y Góngora and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, but also several essays on the book trade and in particular a bookseller who ran afoul of the Inquisition. His opening essay on the celebrations

Bullfights, for example, had traditionally commemorated major events in the colony, including the entry of new viceroys in the capital but most particularly the feast of San Hipólito, the anniversary of the Spanish taking of Tenochtitlán on August 13, 1521. During the early centuries of the colony, attendance was *de rigueur* for elites, with seating arrangements consistent with groups and individuals' place in the hierarchy. The popular classes came to the spectacle of death in the afternoon to be entertained but also participated (willingly or not) in the event as the subordinated, witness to their betters' pride of place. For Mexico City Indians who might attend the San Hipólito bullfights, the spectacle was a reinforcement of their defeat and subordination in the colonial order. In essence, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century bullfights functioned as "political legitimization of the hierarchical order," but by the eighteenth century, it was a mere entertainment, not at all linked to political events. In particular, there were no bullfights on San Hipólito's day. In the eighteenth century, elite abandonment of bullfights spelled the end of that spectacle's major cultural role, leaving them to the plebe. Although the crown considered banning bullfights entirely during the late eighteenth century, they were moneymakers for the royal treasury. By the early nineteenth century, after a hiatus during which none were held, bullfights were briefly revived with the restoration of Ferdinand VII and the revenues were used to finance the royal army against the insurgency. That was the last hurrah of bullfighting sponsored by elites. In the national period it was a plebeian diversion devoid of weighty symbolic significance.

The crown attempted to use the theater to unite and uplift urban populations in the late colonial period. An evening's light diversion was transformed into a didactic experience. The crown's restriction of plays to a single government-controlled venue channeled elites and plebeians into a common public space with hierarchical seating by virtue of ticket prices. The crown considered the theater an eminently didactic medium (as had the sixteenth-century friars in evangelizing the Indians),³ capable of delivering uplifting moralistic messages through dialogue and action. The plebe certainly enjoyed the theater, but from the crown's perspective, their taste for vulgar comedy, indecent dance interludes, and tolerance for slipshod acting could no longer be ignored. The crown mandated that plays were to be morally upright and actors were to be professionalized, in essence

for the incoming viceroy is a model for historians analyzing public spectacles and commemorations. A recent dissertation in art history (Fee 2000) on Bishop Palafox draws directly on this tradition. It includes an entire chapter on the elaborate ritual entries of viceroys to Puebla in the seventeenth century.

3. Ricard (1966) and Burkhart (1996).

turning them into agents of social reform and not mere entertainers. Plebeian rowdy behavior inside the theater, such as whistling or talking during performances, was to cease, if not by the example of elite theatergoers' fine manners and deportment then by the force of soldiers stationed inside the theater to keep order and decorum. The content of plays became an issue in the late eighteenth century as well. The Inquisition's censorship of intellectual production was a given in the colonial era to prevent heretical or unorthodox texts from being circulated; however, in the Bourbon era, political topics came under scrutiny. In 1790, a play glorifying Cuauhtémoc and impugning Cortés was produced. Rowdiness took on political overtones, with peninsular Spaniards leaving the theater in protest to what they considered a denigration of Spanish accomplishments while the Mexican-born creole attendees remained. In the aftermath of this controversial performance, subsequent performances were canceled and the original permission reviewed. Clearly, a historically themed play dealing with the conquest had different interpretations, depending on one's origins. Viqueira Albán concludes that censorship had thus shifted from defense of religion "to defense of a new dogma: the security of the state" (81). At independence, governments ceased regulating the theater, which became not an institution of social uplift but mere entertainment staged by private businessmen. The audiences split along class lines, with elites attending dramatic productions of merit in theaters while the plebe attended plays that suited their tastes.

In the capital, the crown's taming and then virtual suppression of Carnival, with its social inversions, is an aspect of religious reform beginning in the seventeenth century. Because Carnival's topsy-turvy behaviors are ritualized and restricted to specific occasions, they can relieve social tension without significantly challenging the essential social order. Hapsburg monarchs tried to rein in what was considered out-of-control Carnival celebrations, particularly laymen who dressed in clerical garb and mocked priestly authority, but also the merrymakers' wearing of masks that allowed revelers to remain anonymous, while they danced, drank, and impersonated the opposite gender, social and religious elites, and elders. In the eighteenth century, the crown succeeded in eliminating Carnival disorders, in part by allowing some public diversions during Lent, which obviated the need for a big blow-out before forty days of penitence and privation. The suppression of Carnival can be interpreted as congruent with enlightened Catholicism's de-emphasis of excess in collective behavior. In the long run, it may have contributed to increasing social tensions which exploded during the wars of independence. Viqueira Albán contends that "the disappearance of rites of social inversion during this period represented a paralysis of the system of estates," (110–11), with the social system

losing the flexibility vital to the long-term maintenance of order. The crown scored a major and lasting success in suppressing Carnival, which did not re-emerge as a plebeian celebration in the national period. With much of the old order cast away, the ritual of social inversion within a fixed social system may have needed no revival. Although Viqueira Albán does not come to general conclusions about these discrete topics, the chapters are collectively a rich and thought-provoking study of the capital in the late colonial era.

The enlarged picture of popular culture explored in the recent historical literature, however, is not limited to the capital, in keeping with scholars' increasing emphasis on regional variation. Two prize-winning major studies published recently by University of California historians William B. Taylor and Eric Van Young both examine secular clerics and rural Indian villagers in the late colonial period. Latin Americanists and comparative scholars will feast on these works for a good time to come, but probably due to their length and comprehensiveness will not likely appeal to a more general audience. They are complementary studies in a number of ways, with Taylor's monograph concentrating on the late Bourbon period and Van Young's focusing on the independence insurgency itself.⁴ Both explore the tensions between clerics whose racial and cultural affiliations were quite different from the Indian communities where they served as parish priests.

Taylor's engagingly written study is a fully realized picture of the secular clergy in late eighteenth-century parishes, but it also explores in fascinating detail the world of Indian parishioners. In the late eighteenth century, Indian parishioners knew the fundamentals of Christian doctrine and as individuals generally adhered to the compulsory aspects of Catholicism, such as baptism, last rites, and attendance at mass. However, Catholic culture found its fullest expression with exuberant and frequent public expressions of piety in the form of *fiestas*, processions, and pilgrimages. "Public celebration was the heart of religious devotion in eighteenth-century central and western Mexico" (250), so that the crown's increasing efforts to curb baroque religious enthusiasms became a source of conflict. Communities spent enormous sums on *fiestas*, and although the number of days of religious obligation (usually celebrated with *fiestas*) was reduced to sixty-four in the late eighteenth century, villagers had frequent occasions to escape the monotony

4. Both historians draw on many years of deep archival research for their current monograph. Taylor's study of Oaxaca (1972) was a major challenge to the model of the hacienda proposed by Chevalier, showing that regional variation was significant. His brief but important study on drinking, violence, and rebellion in central Mexico is also firmly situated in particular regions. Van Young's study of eighteenth-century Guadalajara (1981) is another important regional study.

of daily work. The high mass, with its sumptuous decorations, music and incense, was the ritual center of the holy day, but a fiesta was a larger event of feasting, drinking, dancing and viewing fireworks displays. Fireworks were a Spanish introduction to ancient traditions of celebration. Whether they were the simulation of “the soul’s elevation to heaven and the dramatic illumination of faith” (257) that priests hoped their parishioners would associate with these displays of light and sound, the crown derived revenues from them via the gunpowder monopoly and encouraged fireworks even when forbidding other aspects of fiestas. Clerics were well aware that banning fiestas entirely would have serious consequences, and tried to moderate the disorderly celebrations. Taylor also discusses some non-religious celebrations (*fandangos*) where people gathered for a good time, drinking, listening to music, and dancing with no pretense of clerical supervision. Both religious fiestas and fandangos were occasions for violence between drunken partygoers, perhaps an attraction of these events.

The church promoted Indians’ attachment to the cult of the saints, but Indian Christianity infused the devotion with unusual (perhaps unorthodox) elements that Taylor examines. The saints were ubiquitous, with each town, *barrio*, and individual named for a saint. Thus individuals and communities were situated within an earthly existence with sacred connections.⁵ Taylor discusses in detail two of the many devotions in later colonial Mexico: Saint James, the Moorslayer (Santiago); and the Virgin Mary, particularly the Virgin of Guadalupe. In Spaniards’ eyes, Saint James was the embodiment of the warrior Christian who had expelled the Moors in Spain and in the New World enabled the conquest of the Indians. Nonetheless, many Indian towns and Indian men bore the name Santiago and images of the saint mounted on a white horse were commonly found in Indian communities. Taylor explores the potential ambiguity for Indians of Santiago’s symbolic association with Indian subjugation, the Spanish interpretation of the saint’s role. I would suggest that for many indigenous peoples, particularly in places that did not actively assist or resist conquest, Indians ignored or were unaware of the Spaniards’ heavy cultural weighting of Santiago.⁶ Taylor provides intriguing evidence that some Indians viewed Santiago’s horse as well as its rider as holders of spiritual and military power. Taylor’s examination of the Virgin of Guadalupe focuses on the

5. Lockhart (1992, 203–60) examines Nahua Christianity based on native language texts, discussing the importance of the saints to corporate identity. At the household level, most residences had altars with at least one saint. In testaments, the dying would call upon their heirs to “serve the saints,” in essence maintaining the residence.

6. A recent article by Camilla Townsend (2003) argues that for many Indians in central Mexico the conquest has been given undue importance.

growth of the cult, which by the turn of the nineteenth century was widespread and popular. As intercessor and comforter, the Virgin was in some sense the fourth person of the Trinity, more approachable than the distant Father and his suffering Son. The church actively promoted the Virgin's cult, beginning in the mid-seventeenth century. Her influence had spread beyond Mexico City to the Central Valley and then north to non-Indian areas. Taylor's archival research shows that the Virgin's feast day of December 12 was not generally celebrated in Indian villages in central and western Mexico prior to 1750. The Virgin played a significant role in the insurgency, with many captured combatants carrying her image.

Taylor also examines how confraternities (lay religious sodalities) functioned as burial societies for its members but celebrated the patron saint's cult. As lay organizations that were only nominally under the supervision of the clergy, Indians created a religious and cultural space with significant resources, including fields and herds of cattle. In the eighteenth century, the paradigm of church-state relations changed under the Bourbons and secular clerics found themselves increasingly pressed financially. There were significant conflicts between priests and their parishioners revolving around control of these resources. The chapter on priests' lay networks examines the role of Indians in the religious hierarchy that excluded them from empowerment as priests. As outsiders, priests could only function effectively with the assistance of these local notables.

In the recent historiography of the independence era explicitly addressing the independence struggles, Eric Van Young's monograph on the popular insurgency in Mexico is a major contribution. In recent years scholars have already had a taste of his findings in an important series of articles, but the monograph integrates and extends the arguments. He does not do things by halves; this hefty volume could well be split into two or three smaller monographs. The work is divided into three major sections, ("Rebels," "Leaders and Followers," and "Popular Violence and Ideology") which follow a useful introduction placing independence in a comparative framework. Van Young's heavy use of biographical and anecdotal evidence in the tradition of thick description generates highly detailed local information as a means toward more general analysis. In style, this work is quite different from Taylor's straightforward prose. Van Young interrogates his sources explicitly, inviting readers to understand how he weighs evidence, deals with ambiguity, and seeks comparisons.

The "other rebellion" to which the title refers is the extensive participation of rural Indians in the insurgency, which he compellingly argues is distinct from the well-chronicled official story of conspiracies of urban elites seeking autonomy along with a number of lower secular

clergymen with grievances against the crown. Although the participation of a significant number of the colony's rural population has formed part of the official history, Van Young's interpretation of their actions diverges significantly from what he calls "creole triumphalism" and "Whiggish teleology" that acknowledges rural people's participation but ignores their divergent ideology and culture. Many urban elites sought a break with the past, with proto-nationalistic *novohispanos* questioning the legitimacy of the monarchy to rule, but Van Young sees no convergence of those aspirations with the popular classes' conservative stance to assert local autonomy. In particular, Indians in the countryside had messianic expectations for the return of Fernando VII, *el deseado*, or "the desired one," not shared by elite insurgents.

"The Other" fought the other rebellion, which was deeply rooted in ethnic difference and local affiliations. As he puts it, his work is "an excavation of these buried forms of collective consciousness" (523). Van Young emphasizes the local nature of this struggle, which occurred simultaneously but was fragmented ideologically and failed militarily. His characterizations of the insurgency will challenge historians for a good while to come. He labels the insurgency as an anti-colonial war of national liberation, an assertion that departs from some other recent interpretations. He claims that

[t]he Mexican independence struggle . . . was the first mass rebellion of the nineteenth century to combine, within an incipient nationalist context, elements of ethnic confrontation among colonially dominated indigenous peoples, the descendants of settler colonists, and the colonial regime and its representatives (including recent immigrants from Spain). (7)

Van Young's analysis of rebels draws on data on over 1,200 insurgents, most of whom were captured in 1810–12, the first phases of the struggle, and another data set compiled from Central Mexican criminal records. From these Van Young can make some fascinating group generalizations (age, sex, marital status, place of origin, place of capture, particulars of the sentence), yet some of the most interesting aspects of these chapters are the recountings of individual life stories, some of which vary from the general patterns. In an opening biographical sketch of Antonio Francisco Alarcón, a married, thirtyish Indian farmer captured close to his village home, Van Young gives a vivid example of a typical insurgent. Establishing Alarcón's typicality creates a revisionist paradigm. He was an Indian (not a *mestizo*) and mature (aged thirty was in fact fairly old, given the life expectancy of the era). However, his married status, according to later discussion, was less typical. In Van Young's telling, Alarcón's participation in the insurgency was highly contingent and not ideologically motivated; rather he was swept up in unfolding events beyond his control. The distortions in the historical interpretations of independence that posit a mestizo popular insurgency and ignore the substantial indigenous

participation are in part due to the usual problems of social history of non-elite groups, that is, scattered sources and lacunae in the record. But Van Young notes that the state- and nation-building goals of post-independence historical writing also carried elements of elite anxiety about uncontrollable upheavals from below.

In another lengthy section, he examines patterns of leadership, recruitment of followers, as well as subtle patterns of passivity that masked insurgent (and loyalist) tendencies. He finds that Indian notables are underrepresented among insurgents, which should not come as a major surprise, given their position within the colonial system that placed them at the intersection between colonial policy and local implementation. Thus, Indian men in positions of power were apparently not only loyal to the king (as were many indigenous insurgents) but to the colonial regime itself, which reinforced their legitimacy as rulers. Visibly loyalist elites received rewards for their services, usually honorific, but sometimes in the form of augmented political or economic power. Van Young's analysis shows that Indian insurgent leaders, then, were not generally traditional local elites. More importantly, insurgent commoners directed their attacks against traditional leaders of their own villages. The general upheaval of the insurgency played out at the local level as internecine pay-back for grievances. Where Indian notables were involved in the insurgency, they were apparently drawn in by their communities.

Otherworldly elements were part of the other rebellion. The insurgents' utopian visions and messianic longings were elements of the popular insurgency. Van Young suggests that their attachment to Ferdinand VII may well have been Indian attempts to gain legitimacy for their actions from a non-local power. Popular insurgents' messianism thus becomes more explicable to modern readers. As is well known, the Virgin of Guadalupe played a major role in the popular insurgency. Taylor's discussion deals with the development and spread of her cult, while Van Young emphasizes the role she symbolically played in the popular insurgency. Hidalgo's *Grito de Dolores* claimed the Virgin for the insurrection, and a "seemingly visceral popular response" (204) likely helped swell insurgent ranks. They carried her image on their hats or clothing, banners, and flags of their military groups; her name became a password in response to challenges for identification. Van Young stresses that the popular response to the Virgin entailed a whole bundle of meanings, not just religious, but local and specifically ethnic, as he puts it "a proxy for other forces" (318).

Both Taylor and Van Young assess the extent to which priests and regular clergy led or even participated in the insurgency. Clearly high profile secular clerics played a decisive role in raising and leading the insurgents, most obviously Miguel Hidalgo and José María Morelos.

Historians have sought to find the roots and extent of clerical participation. A contribution is Nancy Farriss's institutional study (1968) of the effects of the Bourbon reforms that undermined the *fuero eclesiástico* (legal rights and privileges that included trial of clerics only before canonical courts). She concluded that regalist attacks on clerical privilege alienated the lower clergy from its previous unquestioned loyalty to the crown. Taylor's study of the eighteenth-century secular clergy is a fully realized picture of the rural parish priests in the late colonial period, giving complexity to the basic institutional history. His focus is on the education, career patterns, and social mobility of priests, as well as nuanced discussions of parish life. He analyzes secular clerics' participation in the insurgency only in the conclusion, with details found in an extensive appendix. In his assessment, secular clerics "[a]s agents of the colonial state . . . were considerably less royalist after 1810 than their lay counterparts, the *subdelegados* and lieutenants [crown administrators in local districts]" (451). However, this did not necessarily translate into the cadres of insurrectionist priests that so alarmed Lucas Alamán. Taylor's examination of an array of archival sources indicates that just 10 percent of the approximately 1,000 beneficed priests (*curas*, or priests supported by church funds) were insurgents or alleged insurgents between 1810 and 1815. Van Young also concludes that far fewer clerics were insurgents than the standard interpretations suggest. Going further, both Taylor and Van Young redress the previous lack of historical examination of loyalist clerics. According to Van Young's research, virtually no peninsular cleric advocated independence or sided with the insurgents, but of the Mexican-born group, only about 20 to 30 percent actively worked for independence while the rest ranged from fierce loyalty to the crown to neutrality in word and deed. In some cases, clerics were seemingly drawn into the insurgent cause against their wills, returning to the loyalist fold as circumstances allowed. In this sense they appear to be similar to the Indian notables he discusses, who likely became involved so that they could maintain a hold on leadership. Although Van Young's data point to clerical loyalty, some evidence suggests that a number of priests dissimulated in public as to their loyalties, but gave insurgents aid in private or quietly refrained from betraying insurgents, even if doing so caused the clerics no direct harm. This brief discussion of Taylor's and Van Young's monographs cannot do justice to the full extent of their findings, but points readers to some important themes.

In other works on cultural history a number of historians have examined collective rituals and celebrations, with particular emphasis on the cultural meanings of these historical commemorations through time. William Beezley has contributed significantly to the development of

this strain in Mexican historiography.⁷ The volume of collected essays edited by Beezley and David Lorey, *¡Viva Mexico! ¡Viva la Independencia!: Celebrations of September 15*, examines nineteenth- and twentieth-century celebrations of Mexico's independence. The focused nature of this volume is its strength, taking a single event and showing different historical aspects of it from independence through the modern era.

Mexico's independence was not a straightforward breaking of ties to Spain in a single, definitive step but two quite different movements in 1810 and 1821. The radical and chaotic 1810 Hidalgo revolt, instigated with the *Grito de Dolores* on the night of September 15, 1810, was suppressed and its leaders executed. In 1821 royalist military officer Agustín de Iturbide issued the Plan of Iguala, allied with independence leader Vicente Guerrero, and entered Mexico City on September 27 (Iturbide's birthday) as the head of the Army of the Three Guarantees. How these events have been commemorated or suppressed gives insight into elite and popular, conservative and liberal, revolutionary and counter-revolutionary understandings of events in Mexican history.

During the colonial era, few purely Mexican events were commemorated by official celebrations. The final surrender of Tenochtitlan to Cortés on August 13, 1521, was an exception, marked annually by bull-fights and other popular spectacles. Colonial celebrations were either religious (commemorating events in the Christian calendar, or the consecration of a new cathedral or other local church-related event) or civil. In the civil sphere events that were celebrated were connected to the ruling dynasty (royal births, marriages, coronations, and deaths), the arrival of a new viceroy, and Spanish military victories in Europe or in Mexico (such as the reconquest of New Mexico after the Pueblo Revolt). Most secular events were celebrations of the occasion, not part of a formal ritual calendar. Following independence, the creation of a Mexican calendar of ritual celebrations began with the commemoration of independence. Picking which event (*Grito de Dolores* on September 15–16) or Iturbide's entry into Mexico City (September 27) was also the beginning of the construction of a post-independence national identity.

In a superb, wide-ranging essay in Beezley and Lorey's volume, Isabel Fernández Tejedo and Carmen Nava Nava explore the historicity of the

7. See also his volume co-edited with Cheryl English Martin and William E. French (Beezley et al. 1994), and another co-edited volume, with Linda A. Curcio-Nagy (2000). Of particular interest in this second volume are essays by Pamela Voekel on the cemetery campaign in Veracruz, an issue she treats in her recent monograph (2002) and Jeffrey Pilcher's article on cooking and cuisine in national identity formation, summarizing a number of findings in his 1998 monograph.

Grito de Dolores and its reshaping from the earliest post-independence celebrations through the regime of Porfirio Díaz. Don Porfirio had a special relationship with the September commemorations; his birthday on September 15 was incorporated into independence celebrations for over thirty years. The authors' close reading of texts recounting the Grito indicate that key elements now enshrined in independence celebrations, such as the ringing of the bell, were as likely as much myth as reality, but bell-ringing became a standard element in independence celebrations commemorating the Grito.

Hidalgo's "uniform" at the beginning of the insurrection says a great deal about him. According to Inquisition trial records, he led Indians and castas wearing

ankle boots; purple trousers; a blue sash; scarlet waistcoat; a green coat; a black ruffle and collar; a straw-colored kerchief around his neck; a turban with plumes of every color except white; on his chest the emblem of the Eagle rampant ready to destroy the Lion; a Moorish scimitar at his waist; and in his right hand [he held] a pike four meters long. (Beezley and Lorey, 11)

The effect must have verged on the carnivalesque and potentially risible, but it also made Hidalgo a visually riveting figure as he led insurgents in turning the colonial world upside down. Claudio Linati's famous lithographs depicting the early independence era includes an image of Hidalgo in vivid attire and a more subdued one of Morelos.⁸ Analyzing the scene described in Hidalgo's inquisition trial, Fernández Tejedó and Nava Nava suggest that his insignia were markers that Hidalgo was embarked on a second conquest of the Americas, the eagle symbolizing Mexico defeating the Lion of Castile. Cultural historians might probe even deeper into colonial closets to see what other rich displays could be organized on short notice. The essays in this anthology further our understanding of reinterpretations of official history and popular practice, revealing shifts in elite and popular culture.

Another trend in the field of Mexican cultural history is interdisciplinary work in visual and literary studies, emphasizing the emergence of a more secular culture. Magali Carrera's *Imagining Identity in New Spain: Race, Lineage, and the Colonial Body in Portraiture and Casta*

8. Claudio Linati (1993) was an Italian who had learned the process of lithography in Europe and introduced it in Mexico in the 1820s. Returning to Europe, he produced a portfolio of images on early independence Mexico, ranging from picturesque images of everyday scenes in what became the *costumbrista* tradition. In addition, he produced images of major figures in Mexican history considered important in the post-independence era. There was no image of Cortés, but one of Moctezuma; several of Hidalgo and Morelos, but none of Iturbide. Linati's work is often used to illustrate monographs on late colonial and early nineteenth-century Mexico, including the cover of Lyman Johnson and Sonya Lipsett-Rivera's *The Faces of Honor: Sex, Shame, and Violence in Colonial Latin America* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1998).

Paintings; Nancy Vogeley's *Lizardi and the Birth of the Novel in Spanish America*; and Beatriz de Alba-Koch's *Ilustrando la Nueva España: Texto e imagen en el Periquillo Sarniento de Fernández de Lizardi* are all recent and noteworthy examples. Literary scholar Vogeley examines the work of a major figure in early nineteenth-century Mexican history, pamphleteer and novelist José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi, who wrote under the pen name "El Pensador Mexicano" (The Mexican Thinker). Lizardi's best-known work, *El Periquillo Sarniento* (The Itching Parrot), is the first Spanish-American novel, the literary form that became the quintessential genre for intellectual discourse in the nineteenth century. As with many recent contributions to literary studies, Vogeley's examination of Lizardi is as much cultural history as it is formal textual analysis. Although the novel was a standard literary form in Spain, it did not appear in Spanish America until the late eighteenth century. Why the novel appeared so late in Spanish America—on the verge of independence—and how the novel functioned in New Spain are central questions in this monograph. She posits that the novel as a powerful political vehicle and as a "decolonizing discourse." The parrot of the title of Lizardi's satiric novel gives a clue to the subversive nature of its content. The colonial subject or vassal of the Spanish crown might be labeled a creature with no capacity for independent thought but one that mindlessly generated language-like sounds. Yet the world of Lizardi's main character, Pedro Sarniento, is filled with distinctive Mexican discourse, colloquial language of a wide range of Mexican social types. New forms of print culture in colonial Mexico, including newspapers, pamphlets, and the novel, became venues for the articulation and reification of a Mexican identity in all of the late colony's ethnic, racial, and cultural complexity. When the Spanish liberal Constitution of 1812 briefly allowed freedom of the press, Lizardi took advantage of the opportunity to publish works that might not have passed inquisitorial censors. Vogeley examines the language of Lizardi's novel and shows how Mexican characters use the language of the colonizers to voice a reality far different than the peninsula's. Vogeley asserts that "the birth of the novel in Spanish America implies . . . the death of the catechism," (256) which she claims Lizardi viewed as an instrument of cultural imperialism. Religious thought as embodied in the formal language of the catechism was an impediment to new modes of thought (and, potentially, action). Scholars in a variety of fields are increasingly interested in Lizardi, whose cultural influence has not been fully appreciated.⁹ Beatriz de Alba-Koch's discussion of the illustrations in

9. Voekel (2002) and Carrera (2003) utilize Lizardi. A new English edition of *The Mangy Parrot*, translated by David Frye (Hackett Publications, 2004) replaced an abridged translation (Lizardi 1942) that has long been out of print.

Lizardi's *El Periquillo Sarniento* examines the social content of this visual record and concludes that these scenes from popular culture are similar to those found in eighteenth-century caste paintings.

Art historian Magali Carrera focuses on Mexican secular painting of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, with a major portion of her analysis focused on caste paintings. For much of the colonial era, art was almost exclusively religious, encouraged by the post-Tridentine Church that emphasized sacred material culture—statues and paintings of saints, sacred vestments, and furnishings—that stimulated local artists and artisans. For example, Cristóbal de Villalpando, one of the greats from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, painted numerous biblical scenes and depictions of saints, including Saint Rosa of Lima, one of the few New World saints canonized in the colonial era.¹⁰ In mid-eighteenth-century New Spain, a few known painters and a greater number of anonymous artists began producing a significant body of purely secular art, especially sets of caste paintings (*cuadros de castas*) explicitly depicting race mixture (*mestizaje*). These paintings have increasingly been the focus of art historians and frequently used as illustrations for books on the colonial era.¹¹ Carrera's succinct monograph examines the colonial body in visual and textual sources, arguing that race in eighteenth-century New Spain "was formulated and contextualized in the trope of the body" (8) and that it revolved around physiognomy and racial hierarchies. Reading faces or the outward appearance of the body for character, temperament, and quality of mind are not unique eighteenth-century trends in painting, but in late colonial New Spain, the depictions of different races (as they

10. For an analysis of ideas of the holy, identity, and the politics of canonization see Ronald J. Morgan (2002). Morgan discusses Santa Rosa of Lima, whose cult was promulgated throughout the Spanish world and whose image appears in the Mexico City cathedral. His examination of the life of Catarina de San Juan (d. 1688 in Puebla), the so-called *China Poblana*, delves into questions of foreigners and race and notions of holiness. Morgan's work is a contribution to the growing literatures on creole identity and New World holiness.

11. Irving Leonard (1959) included an essay on racial terminology as part of his examination of baroque culture. A major recent contribution to the field is María Concepción García Sáiz (1989), which includes reproductions of over forty sets of *casta* paintings, almost exclusively from Mexico. Also noteworthy is the exhibition catalogue edited by Ilona Katzew (1996), with scholarly essays by Katzew, Sáiz García, Elena Isabel Estrada de Gerlero, and J. Jorge Klor de Alva. Despite this recent attention, a general discussion of Mexican art in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries such as Jorge Alberto Manrique's chapter in *Historia General de Mexico* (2000) does not mention caste paintings. However, the new survey of Mexican colonial history for a general audience by Ida Altman, Sarah Cline, and Javier Pescador (2003, 277–78) discusses them. Douglas Cope's (1994) monograph on race relations in late eighteenth-century Mexico City is an important work for general context.

were then conceived by elites) elaborately codify elite ideas of racial hierarchy. The archetypal caste painting shows a couple of different racial categories with their offspring of a third category. The greater the percentage of *español* or white background, the higher the person's standing in this racialized (and racist) world. At the very least, all figures show differences in skin pigmentation, but the true value of these paintings for scholars interested in colonial culture are the depictions of the family's social standing.

Other aspects of the paintings give further cultural information. Differences in attire, clothing, and accessories give strong signals of social status. Furthermore, the spatial settings and interpersonal interactions of the grouped figures differ in each painting, giving indications of social standing.¹² Elites are usually shown in the domestic interior with an array of opulent furnishings and signs of wealth and leisure time, while artisans and salaried workers are often shown in their shops, and those even further down in the elite-conceived racial hierarchy are shown outdoors in the market. Thus, these paintings contain a whole array of visual information about eighteenth-century daily life.¹³ Many sets include depictions of befeathered and nearly naked "barbarous" Indians, placed entirely outside the realm of civilization of the lowest *castas*. Carrera's thick description of individual paintings draws the reader/viewer's attention to the telling details of social difference in the lengthy chapter entitled "Envisioning the Colonial Body."

In "Regulating and Narrating the Colonial Body," she analyzes bodies and space in the urban setting, particularly the crown's efforts to regulate both in Mexico City. She draws on Juan de Viera's 1777 description of Mexico City, who, like Balbuena before him (whom Carrera does not cite), exalted in the capital's beauty. She addresses the crown's attempts to bring order into what elites perceived as an increasingly disorderly environment, through the regulation of social space and of the physical environment through street paving, lighting, and improvements in drainage.¹⁴ She engages with the cultural milieu of the Mexico City plebe in her brief discussion of Lizardi's *El Periquillo Sarniento* and makes some headway in integrating Lizardi's vision of plebeian Mexico City with larger cultural history.

She concludes her work with a short discussion of late nineteenth-century painting, showing how aspects of colonial-era depictions

12. See Abby Sue Fisher's (1992) dissertation on dress in *casta* paintings.

13. *Pintura y vida cotidiana en México* (Curiel et al. 1999) has a number of essays utilizing the visual record and placing images in a larger context.

14. She discusses the eighteenth-century re-ordering of Mexico City under Viceroy Revillagigedo, drawing on the excellent excerpts in Kenneth Mills and William B. Taylor's (1998), 328–33.

continue in the early independence era as the vassals of the crown in the *sistema de castas* were supposedly transformed to citizens of Mexico after independence. *Casta* paintings ceased as an art form in the national period, but secular depictions of lower-class life endured in the everyday scenes in characterizing *costumbrista* art, such as a painting attributed to Manuel Serrano, *Indios de la Sierra* (ca. mid-nineteenth century). However, she also briefly discusses late nineteenth-century paintings dealing with Aztec themes, such as José Obregón's *Discovery of Pulque* (1869). This glorification of the indigenous past contrasts with the pejorative depictions of Indians in caste paintings. The re-ordering of Indians' place in the independence era, particularly by liberals' bent on extinguishing old colonial categories of status difference, is a topic of ongoing scholarship in a variety of fields.¹⁵

Cultural historians of Mexico can find in these volumes under review the seeds for future research, including explorations of Mexican identity at this crucial juncture between colony and nation-state. Furthermore, the transitional period between independence and the Liberal Reform remains largely unexplored, particularly studies that bridge these political periods. Some recent monographs do just that, showing the shift from baroque religious thought and practice to greater secularism.¹⁶

15. A valuable contribution to this question by an art historian is by Stacie G. Widdifield (1996). Widdifield also discusses another nineteenth-century painting with an Aztec-theme, Félix Parra's *Massacre of Cholula* (1877), showing an armored Spanish soldier with sword in hand standing over the bloody body of a fallen indigenous man, while two distraught Indian women huddle nearby. Benjamin Keen's foundational work *The Aztec Image in Western Thought* (1971) remains important.

16. Voekel (2002) and Arrom (2000) are two important examples for Mexico.

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