

MEXICAN LITERARY REACTIONS TO TLATELOLCO 1968*

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In Mexican colonial history, the night the Aztecs of Tenochtitlán massacred Cortés's troops, 30 June 1520, is known as *la noche triste*. In Mexican contemporary history, the night of 2 October 1968 is known as *la nueva noche triste*, a night that saw the deaths of numerous student protesters in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas (Tlatelolco) in Mexico City. It is also referred to as *la noche de Tlatelolco* or merely as Tlatelolco '68. Some writers contend that the events at Tlatelolco and the emergence of the student movement of 1968 leading to the confrontation are among the most important occurrences in Mexico since the revolution and that Mexico is profoundly different today because of them.¹ It is therefore not surprising that a significant portion of the Mexican literature written since 1968 reflects in various ways the impact of these events on the Mexican national consciousness. A variety of texts, both fictional and nonfictional, appeared immediately after the incident, and others have continued to appear in contemporary Mexican literature in the ensuing years. These texts either address or refer to the dramatic occurrences in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas and are collectively known as "Tlatelolco literature."

Although no major study has yet been made of Tlatelolco literature, some of Mexico's finest writers have acknowledged its status as a small, but significant, segment of Mexico's intellectual output in the last decade.² Jorge Ibargüengoitia, for instance, states that "la literatura Tlatelolco es el fenómeno más sorprendente, más vital y más satisfactorio que se ha producido en muchos años en nuestras letras" (Ibargüengoitia 1971, 38–40). Because the literature of Tlatelolco is diverse and growing larger every year, this essay does not attempt to be exhaustive. Its purpose is to present instead a sampling of Tlatelolco texts. Several of the more influential or controversial works will be described under appropriate categories in order to illustrate the various

*I wish to acknowledge gratefully the valuable suggestions and encouragement of Naomi Lindstrom, the support of my husband Bill, and the suggestions and comments of the anonymous *LARR* reviewers.

ways in which the theme, setting, and symbolism of Tlatelolco have found expression in these genres. First, however, an understanding of the event and its consequences for Mexican social, political, and intellectual life is needed to provide a proper context for this discussion.

THE EVENTS OF TLATELOLCO

The Mexican student protests of 1968 stemmed from a seemingly insignificant event, a brawl between two male students in July of that year. This fight mushroomed into a wider police-student confrontation when students objected to police intervention on the campus of the university, which according to the 1929 autonomy law, supposedly functioned as an autonomous entity. In a series of subsequent marches and demonstrations, the students pressed for the following demands: amnesty, compensation for wounded students and families of students killed, dismissal of the chief and deputy chief of police, abolition of the tactical police corps (the *granaderos*), freedom for all political prisoners, and repeal of the two articles of the Mexican constitution that define the crime of "social dissolution." The government, on the other hand, was anxious to avoid the embarrassment of visible social unrest when global attention was focusing on Mexico City as the city scheduled to host the 1968 Olympics. Mounting antagonism between student protesters and government authorities culminated 2 October in the bloody confrontation in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas. At least two thousand people were arrested. Estimates of the number killed vary widely: the count acknowledged by the government was forty-nine, but the *New York Times* correspondent estimated that two hundred dead was a more likely figure (Stevens 1974, 237).

The subsequent literature on these events manifested the feeling that the student discontent surfacing in this period was deeply rooted. Mexican leadership had been very effective in implanting revolutionary ideas in the minds of the youth of Mexico. The students, surrounded by slogans stressing revolution, social justice, and reform and indoctrinated in the historical ideals of the Mexican Revolution, became discontented when they perceived the wide gap between "the official professions of the revolutionary mystique and the performance of the national elite" (NACLA 1968, 5). Carlos Fuentes contends that the ideology of the Mexican Revolution had been institutionalized by the one-party government of Mexico to such an extent that it had lost the dynamism necessary to make it responsive to the needs of a changing Mexico. The students naturally felt alienated by the government's perception of itself as the institutionalization of the revolutionary ideology, the roots of which they had not directly experienced (Fuentes 1971, 147–48).

Following the 2 October massacre, the events of this period were recognized almost immediately as having potentially significant and long-lasting political, historical, and social implications, and hence they merited serious analysis in both literary and journalistic contexts. Widely diverging perceptions and interpretations of these implications are reflected in the diversity of the resulting documents. The vehemence and brutality perceived in the government's response to the student protests, particularly during the 2 October clash, shocked and dismayed many observers, who subsequently translated their reactions into poignant reflections on the events and scathing condemnations of the government's suppression of the protests. Others, however, viewed the government's actions as a legitimate response to a clear threat to the political integrity of Mexico. Among these conflicting impressions of Tlatelolco one finds texts written for a variety of purposes: to describe and chronicle the event; to denounce repressive government actions at Tlatelolco; to attempt to legitimize government action; to analyze and interpret the student movement in its historical, political, and social context; to denounce the movement as a communist-inspired plot to undermine the government; to sensationalize and capitalize on the bloody tragedy as a backdrop for fiction; and to perpetuate the memory of Tlatelolco. The authors come from a wide spectrum of social classes, political persuasions, and professional groups. In light of this diversity of motivation and disparity of perspective, it is not surprising that the writers sought expression through a variety of literary forms including essays, articles, documentary texts, chronicles, poems, short stories, and novels. The following sections will illustrate the extent to which the theme, setting, message, and symbolism of Tlatelolco have found expression in these different modes of literature.

ESSAYS

Two of the most influential Tlatelolco authors, Octavio Paz and Carlos Fuentes, chose the essay as the vehicle for expressing their strong criticisms of the Mexican government's approach to the student movement and the protests. Paz's best-known work in this area is his essay *Posdata* (1970, published in English as *The Other Mexico: Critique of the Pyramid*). In this essay, Paz sets out to interpret historically and culturally the events of 1968 and particularly to castigate the Mexican government for its role in these events. *Posdata*, comparable in popularity to Paz's *El laberinto de la soledad*, is one of the most insightful and controversial analyses of the events of 1968 and merits discussion.

Paz views student protest as a recurring universal phenomenon in which participants become speakers for "the collective conscience" of the people (Paz 1972, 13). According to Paz, the higher education com-

munity has a duty to prepare students for their role as thinking, analytical, and possibly critical participants in society. But the Mexican academic community prior to 1968 had maintained an uneasy truce with the government. As a result, the political authorities were unaccustomed to and uncomfortable with the prospect of criticism from external (academic) circles, a situation exacerbated by a total lack of governmental self-criticism. The government “showed that it was neither willing nor able to examine its own conscience; but without criticism, above all without criticism, there is no possibility of change” (p. 6). The strident antagonism of the Mexican government in confronting the student movement of 1969 may then be explained by this antipathy toward critical scrutiny of government policies and actions. Following the events of 1968, however, Mexican intellectuals can no longer adhere to their long-maintained truce with the government.

The events of 1968 also have a deeper mythic and historical significance for Paz, to whom the words *Olympics* and *Tlatelolco* symbolize the paradoxical development of modern Mexico. There exist two Mexicos—one modern, the other underdeveloped. “This duality is the result of the Revolution and of the development that followed it” (p. 45). The dilemma Paz perceives is that “either the developed Mexico will absorb and integrate the other or the underdeveloped . . . will end up by strangling the developed Mexico.” In addition to this paradoxical dichotomy in the character of modern Mexico, Paz sees an “other” Mexico, distinct both from the developed and the underdeveloped. This “other” Mexico, the nation’s subterranean and invisible history, is composed of vestiges of previous eras that impinge subtly, yet irresistibly, upon modern Mexico. History is more than a complex of events, dates, and individuals; rather, “what took place is indeed in the past, yet there is something that does not pass away, something that takes place but does not wholly recede into the past, a constantly returning present” (p. 76). The 1968 massacre is a manifestation of this “other” Mexico.

Paz explains his perception of the pervasive and insidious influence of the past on modern Mexican history and culture by examining the past and current meaning of the Aztec worldview in Mexico. Most Mexicans, Paz contends, “have made the Aztec point of view their own and have thus, without knowing it, strengthened the myth that is embodied in the pyramid and the sacrifice stone” (p. 87). This myth glorifies undeservingly the Aztec heritage of sacrifice and domination. Just as the Aztecs saw themselves as the guardians of cosmic order, the dominant Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) sees itself as the embodiment of political stability and order in modern Mexico. In the same way that the Aztecs usurped the heritage of their Toltec predecessors, the Mexican government has usurped the revolutionary heritage.

Paz perceives a relationship linking Tlatelolco (the sacrifice stone of modern Mexico), the Zócalo (the continuation of the Aztec heritage symbolized in the government), and the Museo Nacional de Antropología e Historia (the glorification of Aztec Mexico at the expense of other indigenous civilizations).

Posdata was strongly denounced by the political right, who characterized it as “nothing but an ‘anti-Mexican tract’.”³ The right and center were offended by Paz’s analysis because he spoke harshly of the nation’s treasured institutions and of teaching the national heritage in history classes. President Díaz Ordaz criticized *Posdata* on national television. The left was dissatisfied with the essay because it employed a mythic, poetic approach rather than hard political analysis. “Both the radical left and the liberals were scandalized by Paz’s psychological and anthropological analysis of the deep lying myths of the Mexican conscience” (Fuentes 1973, 19). Even the students were confused by Paz’s approach. They wanted him to cease being a poetic, imaginative writer and become an active political leader or at least a directly political writer, to stop speculating about myths and send out a clear call for social revolution.

Carlos Fuentes’s response to the events of 1968 is contained in his book of essays entitled *Tiempo mexicano* (1971). The role he chose to play is that of the intellectual viewing society with a critical eye.⁴ Several of the essays in this book deal with historical, social, and political events in Mexico, from Quetzacoatl to Tlatelolco 1968. In the essay “La disyuntiva mexicana,” Fuentes expresses his point of view in regard to the events of 1968. He contends that it is only natural and right that the youth of Mexico should rebel against the corrupt government because they, like millions of Mexicans, did not participate in the great transformation brought on by Emiliano Zapata and President Lázaro Cárdenas, with his radical rural reforms. Instead they have witnessed quantitative social progress but have not experienced political liberty, as had their fathers and grandfathers.

In addition to *Tiempo mexicano* and *Posdata*, numerous other essays have treated the events of 1968. Among them are Jorge Carrión, Sol Argueda, and Fernando Carmona’s *Tres culturas en agonía* (1969); Octavio Paz’s “A cinco años de Tlatelolco” in *El ogro filantrópico* (1979); Paz’s introduction to “Massacre in Mexico,” the English translation of Poniatowska’s *La noche de Tlatelolco* (1975); Abelardo Villegas’s “La ideología del movimiento estudiantil en México” (1978); and Carlos Monsiváis’s *Días de guardar* (1970).

DOCUMENTARY TEXTS

Another variety of works appearing in response to Tlatelolco might best be classified as *documentary texts*. Such works are based on documented events or documents and may be purely descriptive or may embody political, social, cultural, or historical analysis. Some documentary texts are more literary in character than others, and these novel-like documentary texts will be discussed under the general classification of new journalism.

Two important documentary works are *El movimiento estudiantil de México* (1969) by Ramón Ramírez and *El PRI y el movimiento estudiantil de 1968* (1971) by Salvador Hernández. Ramírez's account was one of the first published and is possibly the most widely consulted research source on this topic. The book carefully documents the events culminating in the Tlatelolco massacre and reproduces relevant documents. Hernández's book analyzes the organization of the Consejo Nacional de Huelga (CNH, the committee formed to organize the protests) and describes the political and historical structure of the PRI as background for understanding the government's repressive reaction to the student protests.

Two other distinctive works documenting Tlatelolco 1968 are Carlos Martínez's *Tres instantáneas* (1972) and Juan Miguel de Mora's *Tlatelolco 1968: por fin toda la verdad* (1973). Martínez describes three instances of violence at Tlatelolco that mark distinct periods of Mexican history: the violence of the Aztecs in 1473 when the Aztec community of Tenochtitlán conquered Tlatelolco, the violence at the inception of the colonial period when the Spanish conquerors confronted the Aztecs in 1521, and Tlatelolco 1968. De Mora touts his work as the "real truth" about Tlatelolco and supports his presentation of the events of 1968 by drawing on accounts by foreign journalists who were present. He tends to draw on the more emotional journalistic accounts of the massacre, such as that of Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci, who was wounded in the melee.

Other works illustrating distinct perspectives and perceptions on Tlatelolco 1968 in documentary form are too numerous to list, but a few other titles are Javier Barros Sierra's *1968/Conversaciones con Gastón García Cantú* (1972); Roberto Blanco Moheno's *Tlatelolco, historia de una infamia* (1969); Herberto Castillo's *Libertad bajo protesta* (1973); Gerardo Unqueta's *Nuevos problemas sobre el problema estudiantil popular* (1969); R. Wences Reza's *El movimiento estudiantil y los problemas nacionales* (1971); E. Jardín's *De la ciudadela a Tlatelolco* (1969); Horacio Espinosa Altamirano's *Toda la furia* (1973); Gilberto Baham's *Tlatelolco, reflexiones de un testigo* (1969); and Sergio Zermeño's *México: una democracia utópica—el movimiento estudiantil de '68* (1978).

THE NEW JOURNALISM

Several works deserve a special category within Tlatelolco literature. Elena Poniatowska's *La noche de Tlatelolco* (1971), Luis González de Alba's *Los días y los años* (1971), and María Luisa ("La China") Mendoza's *Con él, conmigo, con nosotros tres* (1971) cannot be classified as either documentary works or novels. They might best be considered as part of the "new journalism," as practiced in the United States by writers such as Truman Capote, Studs Terkel, Tom Wolfe, and Norman Mailer.⁵ New journalism is a highly expressive, participative style of reportage characterized by scene-by-scene reconstruction, realistic dialogue, third-person point of view, and the recording of scene detail (Wolfe 1973).

Poniatowska's *La noche de Tlatelolco* is probably the most widely read account of the massacre.⁶ Her text consists of a series of accounts by people who were directly or indirectly involved in the student movement or the events of Tlatelolco: students, CNH members, professors, university officials, mothers and fathers of students, dressmakers, beauticians, secretaries, tactical police, restaurant owners, and government representatives. Many of these individuals also wrote their own accounts of the events of 1968; for example, Octavio Paz and Carlos Fuentes are among those who contribute to Poniatowska's testimony of Tlatelolco. This work is more than a random set of testimonial accounts of a historical event, however. It is an artistically arranged documentary that is realistic in content but literary in expression. Individual testimonies are interspersed throughout the book in such a way that the reader becomes acquainted with the witnesses to the massacre as one would know the characters of a novel. Poniatowska succeeds in recreating the *lenguaje popular* so skillfully that her text weaves a colorful tapestry of Tlatelolco 1968, one that reveals much more than a mere chronicle of events. Consequently, even though Poniatowska's subject is historical reality, her account does not have the texture of everyday reality that one finds in a newspaper report. Her reality is infused with passion yet does not have the "fantastic self-consistency of an imaginary reality" that characterizes most works of fiction.⁷ Octavio Paz, in his introduction to the English edition, *Massacre in Mexico*, states that *la noche de Tlatelolco* "is something that far surpasses a theory or a hypothesis: an extra-ordinary piece of reporting, or, as she [Poniatowska] calls it, a 'collage' of voices bearing historical witness. A historical chronicle—but one that shows us history before it has congealed and before the spoken word has become the written text. . . . The passion that suffuses all her pages, from first to last, is a passion for justice, the same burning ideal that inspired the student's demonstration and protest" (Poniatowska 1971, vii–viii).

González de Alba's *Los días y los años* is his personal account, his

testimony on the events of the student movement and Tlatelolco 1968, written from the perspective of a member of the Consejo Nacional de Huelga. This text is somewhat comparable to Bernal Díaz del Castillo's personal account of the conquest in *Verdadera historia de la conquista de la Nueva España*, which mixes essay, novel, and testimony in a passionate account of historical events. González de Alba, narrating his story from his cell in Lecumberri Prison, employs flashbacks to relate his experience in the student movement of 1968. *Los días*, the days he describes, are those of the past—the CNH meetings, the military takeover of the campus of the National University, the student demonstrations, building friendly relations with other participants, the CNH negotiations with the Mexican government, and other such events. *Los años*, the years referred to in the title of his book, are: “el presente, el alatazamiento de la cárcel, el testimonio, la vista hacia atrás, la disolución de la lucha en discusiones de celda, el distanciamiento de los hechos” (Moreno Villarreal 1979, 60).

González de Alba's text begins after the events of Tlatelolco, with the December 1968 hunger strike by political prisoners at Lecumberri prison. The past is reconstructed through various conversations with fellow political prisoners—Gilberto Guevara, Roberto Escudero, Félix Garmundi, and Pablo Gómez. These conversations lead to retrospective discussions of the student movement of 1968. Referring to everything that happened after Tlatelolco 1968, González de Alba states: “ya todo es cicatriz que ha quedado” (Moreno Villarreal 1979, 60).

María Luisa Mendoza's *Con él, conmigo, con nosotros tres* focuses on the events that culminated in the tragedy of Tlatelolco 1968. She attempts to reconstruct and analyze the succession of events within the sociopolitical trajectory that Mexico was following in the years before the massacre. Her prose in this work is typical of the nonorthodox style of many of her other works, employing free association, repetition of words and phrases, creation of new words, use of slang, and vivid recreation of images. Although essentially fictional, this work follows the events of 1968 so closely and has so few novelistic characteristics that it is closer to the works of Poniatowska and the “new journalists” than to the novels that have been written about Tlatelolco. This style is particularly evident in Mendoza's graphic recreation of the bloody event.

NOVELS

Since 1968 Mexican authors have produced a variety of novels that incorporate the theme of Tlatelolco.⁸ There is a distinct difference between these fictional accounts of the 2 October massacre and the accounts conveyed in the essays or documentary texts. Today it would

be difficult for a Mexican author to write an essay or documentary text embodying the same intense passion and immediacy contained in many of the Tlatelolco works that were written shortly after 1968. The wounds have healed somewhat by now, and the terror and the emotion of that October evening have faded into memories. Fiction, however, can employ literary licence to recreate past events with immediacy and passion. Despite the fact that more than fifteen years have passed since Tlatelolco 1968 and that popular feeling over the event has “cooled,” many Mexicans still believe Tlatelolco to have been such a significant historical event that the Mexican people need to be continually reminded of it.

This desire to perpetuate the memory of Tlatelolco is evidenced in the extent to which Mexican authors have treated Tlatelolco in novels. Many of these novels were written for one or more of the following purposes: to offer social, political, or historical criticism on Mexico; to voice the author's perceptions of the consequences of Tlatelolco or of the failure of desired consequences of Tlatelolco; to recreate a fictional, yet plausible, picture of the participants and events of 1968; and to keep Tlatelolco within the Mexican consciousness.⁹ Examples of such novels are René Avilés Fabila's *El gran solitario de palacio* (1971); Gustavo Sainz's *Compadre Lobo* (1975); Gonzalo Martre's *Los símbolos transparentes* (1978); and Jorge Aguilar Mora's *Si muero lejos de ti* (1979).

Another novel, *La plaza* (1977) by well-known Mexican novelist Luis Spota, attempts to present the government's point of view regarding the events of 1968. Only in the final chapter does the unity inherent in its several plot strands become clear. A group of characters unite in their efforts to avenge the deaths of relatives killed at Tlatelolco. The organizer of the group kidnaps a high official of the preceding regime, and although Spota never identifies this official as former Mexican President Díaz Ordaz, the reader is led to this conclusion. The fictional Díaz Ordaz is subjected to mental torture and is tried by the members of the group. It is at this point that arguments defending the government's decisions on Tlatelolco are presented.

Gonzalo Martre's *Los símbolos transparentes* has more than one narrative strand, but it is primarily concerned with the 1968 student movement and the October massacre. Martre describes the political machinations of presidential hopeful Vicente Lombardo Toledano and the actions of two sinister, yet bumbling, CIA agents. *Los símbolos transparentes* was originally contracted for publication by Editorial Novaro in 1975, but when the novel turned out to deal primarily with Tlatelolco, the company refused to publish it. It was ultimately published in 1978 and in six months became a bestseller.¹⁰ This novel is strengthened by Martre's success in capturing the heterogeneity of the student movement, the effect of the massacre on parents whose chil-

dren were killed 2 October, and the loyal comradeship of the members of the student brigade. Even more significant is Martre's perception of the consequences of Tlatelolco on the lives of the students. He portrays the idealistic young students of 1968 ten years later as having become either self-indulgent hedonists or radical activists. Wolfgang Luchting notes that Martre's *Los símbolos transparentes* has been called "the final Tlatelolco novel" (Luchting 1979, 652).

But Tlatelolco has a way of turning up in novels when the reader least expects it, as it does in Gustavo Sainz's unusual presentation in *Compadre Lobo*. This novel recounts the lives of two men and one woman and the roles afforded them by society. Two of them, Compadre Lobo and the narrator, are artists in love with the same woman. Tlatelolco is not mentioned until the final pages of the book, when the narrator is attracted by the student demonstrators and is led into the streets. Sainz's commentary on Tlatelolco is a diffuse and indirect one that seems to address the entire mentality of Mexican society and Mexican youth.

One other novel dealing with Tlatelolco is Jorge Aguilar Mora's *Si muero lejos de ti*. Although in one sense this novel is not directly concerned with Tlatelolco, in another sense the entire novel is a subtle commentary on the events of 1968 and the student movement. Aguilar Mora develops and interweaves two distinct subplots in this novel. One plot pertains to three characters named Yoris, Tosca, and Rasqui and the ways their lives interact in love, jealousy, and hatred. The other plot concerns a group of men, including Yoris, who are in the service of a mysterious and corrupt public official. These men's roles resemble those of the granaderos, or tactical police, who played major parts in the tragedy at Tlatelolco.

Aguilar Mora's book is an insightful commentary on the lives of the men who were entrusted with enforcing the law during the student movement. He depicts these men as having peculiarly childlike qualities and as being loyal to *el amo* even when they are cruelly mistreated. For example, one of their number, after being captured by the students, is brutally tortured by the police in the belief that he may have divulged some information to the students. He nevertheless remains loyal to the repressive system in which he plays a minor role. With the exception of a few sketchy testimonies included in Poniatowska's book, *Si muero lejos de ti* presents the first portrait of the granaderos, an important group in the saga of Tlatelolco. Although it remains unclear just how accurate his portrayal is, Aguilar Mora's presentation of these men as dependent and socially deficient individuals offers a subtle criticism of the personality types instrumental in suppressing the student movement. Thus Tlatelolco plays an important role in the novel that is conveyed without disrupting the flow of the narrative.

SHORT STORIES

A few short stories fall into the general category of Tlatelolco literature. Vicente Leñero's "El juicio," like much of the fiction dealing with Tlatelolco, concerns the events of 1968 indirectly. It narrates a playwright's attempts to stage a play that he wrote about the assassination of Alvaro Obregón. When the Mexican government suppresses the play as politically unpalatable, the playwright reacts by writing an article. He argues that if plays and films dealing with historical assassinations are suppressed, what will be the response to a play or movie dealing with Tlatelolco or the Jueves de Corpus of 10 June 1971?

Gerardo de la Torres's "El vengador" details the anguish of a laborer who rapes a rich girl in a misguided attempt to avenge himself for the memories of Tlatelolco. "Unete pueblo agachón" by Elena Poniatowska recounts the conversations of a number of participants in the 1968 student movement who have been jailed. They reminisce about the marches and the part the *obreros* played in the movement.

POETRY

Tlatelolco poetry appears mainly in two compilations, Marco Antonio Campos's *Poemas sobre el movimiento estudiantil de 1968* (1980) and Miguel Aroche Parras's *53 Poemas del 68 mexicano* (1972). None of the poets included in Campos's collection were student leaders of the 1968 movement, although several were members of the *comité de intelectuales*, whose purpose was to publish articles and manifestoes and to urge solidarity in the marches and demonstrations (Campos 1980, 17). Most of the poems in the collection were written immediately after the tragic confrontation and include poems by Octavio Paz, Jaime Salinas, Rosario Castellanos, Thelma Nava, Isabel Fraire, José-Emilio Pacheco, Juan Carlos Becerra, Livio Ramírez, Juan José Oliver, Victor Manuel Toledo, Carlos Montemayor, Orlando Guillén, and Evodio Escalante.¹¹ Several poems were written years after the event and reflect a less immediate perspective, including David Huerta's "Nueve años después" and Hector Manjarrez's "Días de octubre."

Miguel Aroche Parra's book is another collection of poetic responses to Tlatelolco. Many of its poems were reprinted from journals and the popular press of 1968. Some are anonymous, others from student writers, and still others from such established writers as Paz, Pacheco, Becerra, Banuelos, Horacio Espinosa Altamirano, José Antonio, and Leopoldo Ayala.

CONCLUSION

While it would be a mistake to believe that Tlatelolco 1968 has produced substantive improvements in Mexico's social system, it would be equally wrong to conclude that no political or social improvements have resulted from those events. Immediately after Tlatelolco, talk of an *apertura democrática* was instigated by Díaz Ordaz's presidential successor, Luis Echeverría. He did not live up to his promise, however, and belief in imminent favorable change died away. Yet Mexico today is not precisely the same as it was in 1968. Because of the wave of criticism that followed the Tlatelolco massacre, the Mexican government is much more reluctant to engage in large-scale repressive activities.

In summary, Tlatelolco literature manifests a critical consciousness by intellectuals, professors, and writers of a significant social movement in Mexico and a breakdown of the long-kept truce between the intelligentsia and the government. Second, literature in this case became the immediate response to history, thus helping to eliminate the traditional barriers between these two disciplines. Third, the impact of Tlatelolco on the Mexican consciousness is evidenced by the readiness with which Mexican authors have adopted it as both theme and setting for much of their work. The "night of Tlatelolco" thus has been reexamined and relaborated in literature. Finally, Tlatelolco literature embodies an ongoing search on the part of Mexican youth and society for a new understanding, a new relationship, and perhaps a new ideology. The crisis of Tlatelolco 1968 can easily be seen as tradition versus the need for new alternatives. Tlatelolco literature has announced the inception of a new Mexican consciousness, a new political perception.

NOTES

1. See Monsiváis 1973, 16.
2. My master's thesis is the most complete study of Tlatelolco literature to date. See Young 1981.
3. See Fuentes 1973, a review of *The Other Mexico*.
4. This role is not a new one for Fuentes, as can be seen in his novels. In *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* (1964) and *La región más transparente* (1972, English translation *Where the Air is Clear*, 1974), the main characters fight for the ideology of the Mexican Revolution. As a result of the revolution, however, they achieve material success and political power and thus become part of all they fought against. Through these novels, Fuentes attempts to depict the betrayal of the revolutionary ideology. In a televised interview with Bill Moyers (Public Broadcasting System, June 1980), Fuentes explained that this ideology is no longer appropriate for contemporary Mexico, that people and times change, which requires ideologies to change. This point of view explains why his characters so easily betray the ideology of the Mexican Revolution. Fuentes's perception of the revolution and its ideology must be remembered when analyzing *Tiempo mexicano*.
5. See Young and Young 1983 for further discussion of the works of Poniatowska and Mendoza in this light.
6. Poniatowska's most recent work dealing with Tlatelolco, *Fuerte es el silencio* (1980), reviews and reinterprets the events of 1968.

7. See Octavio Paz's foreword to Poniatowska 1971, p. viii.
8. A more complete description of Tlatelolco novels may be found in Ruffinelli 1981. In this article, Ruffinelli defends the contention that the most important event of the decade for Mexican intellectuals was Tlatelolco 1968 (p. 48).
9. This statement does not mean to imply that all fictional accounts of Tlatelolco maintain even the pretense of being serious social commentary. Several novels about Tlatelolco, such as *La plaza* by Luis Spota, were written merely to sensationalize the events in order to sell books.
10. For one review, see Luchting 1979.
11. Also of interest is the poem "Memorial de Tlatelolco" in Castellanos 1972.

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