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THE GRUPO HIPERIÓN AND BEYOND: SOCIO-PSYCHOANALYTIC DYNAMICS OF *LO MEXICANO*

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ABSTRACT: Sentient and mobile, the discourse of *lo mexicano* met the drumbeat of the times with turns to the social sciences. Sociological and psychoanalytic analyses emerged within the compass of *el Hiperión* and then took on a distinctive life of their own. The present article, an exercise in the history of ideas, anatomizes the force field of lo mexicano in the 1950s-1960s. As it charts developments in lo mexicano and locates Hiperión in their circuitry, my essay outlines some ways in which a genealogical approach may enhance understanding of mid-twentieth century Mexican philosophy.

RESUMEN: Sensible y móvil, el discurso de lo mexicano se enfrentó al ritmo de la época con giros hacia las ciencias sociales. Los análisis sociológicos y psicoanalíticos surgieron en el ámbito del grupo Hiperión y luego adquirieron una vida propia y distintiva. El presente artículo traza la evolución de lo mexicano y ubica a el Hiperión en sus circuitos. El ensayo describe algunas formas en que un enfoque genealógico puede mejorar la comprensión de la filosofía mexicana de mediados del siglo XX.

Keywords: María Elvira Bermúdez, lo mexicano, Hiperíon, Samuel Ramos, existentialism

I

José Emilio Pacheco's novella *Las batallas en el desierto* (1981) showcases transformations that mid-twentieth century Mexico experienced. Set in 1951, towards the end of Miguel Alemán Valdés's administration (1946-1952), *Las batallas en el desierto* recreates a postwar Mexico in the throes of intense modernization and contending with everything from Americanization, an onslaught of new media, and industrialization, to fractured social mores, exacerbated disparity in income, and inflation. This era of profound change witnessed profound evolutions in the studies of Mexican identity—of *lo*

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mexicano—that the existentialist Grupo Hiperión (1948-1952) brilliantly advanced. Sentient and mobile, the discourse of lo mexicano met the drumbeat of the times with turns to the social sciences. Sociological and psychoanalytic analyses emerged within the compass of Hiperión and then took on a distinctive life of their own. The present article, an exercise in the history of ideas, anatomizes the force field of lo mexicano in the 1950s-1960s. As it charts developments in lo mexicano and locates Hiperión in their circuitry, my essay outlines some ways in which a genealogical approach may enhance understanding of mid-twentieth century Mexican philosophy.

An unusual enterprise, this article also has an unexpected guiding light: María Elvira Bermúdez (1916?-1988), still insufficiently studied despite all that she brings to the table. Bermúdez earned a law degree in Mexico City and rose to the position of an attorney for the Mexican Supreme Court. A polymath extraordinaire, Bermúdez not only compiled the first anthology of Mexican detective stories, *Los mejores cuentos policiacos mexicanos* (1955), she was also the first Mexican woman to publish her own detective fiction, both numerous stories and a novel. Moreover, Bermúdez authored Mexico's first socio-psychoanalytic study of gender relations, *Vida familiar de los mexicanos* (1955). Starting with her detective novel, *Diferentes razones tiene la muerte* (1953), Bermúdez's leading edge and ultimately paradigmatic works will serve us as an Ariadne's thread through the modulations of lo mexicano.

Though on many levels an utterly conventional whodunit, *Diferentes razones* does visit some lively twists on the genre. For one, it carries the detective novel into the Mexico of 1946, basically, the Mexico of *Las batallas en el desierto*. Bermúdez's five opening chapters are virtual case studies of its characters' backgrounds, replete with dysfunctional families, financial woes, thirst for upward mobility, and gender acrimony. As fraught backstories give way to murders at the luxurious estate in Coyoacán where the characters have gathered, *Diferentes* innovatively foregrounds psychoanalysis, the "why" of the crimes and not just the "who." Near the novel's center, a chapter titled "Resumen psicoanalítico" displays the bizarre efforts of the assassin, Dr. José Requena, to psychoanalyze the other figures in the drama. Requena draws on biotypology, a deterministic psychology associated with eugenics, as employed by the German Ernst Kretschmer in his 1925 *Physique and Character: An Investigation of the Nature of Constitution and of the Theory of Temperament*. Kretschmer's treatise shapes Requena's appraisals, and so the doctor decides that the flighty, young Celia exhibits "tendencias ciclotímicas" and suffers from "nictofobia (miedo a la oscuridad)." "Por sus formas redondeadas y su corta estatura," Requena surmises, Celia "pertenecía al tipo picnic de Kretschner [sic]" (95). The barrage of outlandish terminology

(including "picnic" for Kretschmer's "pycknic"!) leaves little doubt as to Bermúdez's parodic intentions towards the pre-Freudian Kretschmer.

Parody falls away when Bermúdez treats the investigations of hero-detective Armando Zozaya. An "aficionado a la psicología; hasta el psicoanálisis" (149), Zozaya considers depth psychology to be "útil y necesario en toda investigación criminal" (150). Not satisfied with having uncovered the criminal based on material evidence, Zozaya probes Requena's unconscious motivations. In the novel's coda, a surprise ending of sorts, Zozaya reveals his discoveries to the guest at the estate who had sent for him, attorney Miguel Prado. Zozaya advises his uninformed friend to study, among others, Freud, the neo-Freudian Jung, ecumenical popularizer of psychoanalysis Richard Müller-Freienfels, and Freudian rebel Sándor Ferenczi (152, 155). Wielding these psychoanalytic instruments, Zozaya arrives at a remarkably technical and tenable explanation of Requena's disturbed psyche.[1] An unrepentant Requena had confessed to the murders, attributing them to a high-minded desire for revenge on despicable individuals who did not deserve to live (145). Zozaya deconstructs the doctor's spurious confession. Rather than to some high-minded, if horrifically misguided "amor exagerado hacia la justicia" (151), Zozaya concludes, Requena's misdeeds owe to a repressed traumatic past of maternal abandonment, paternal abuse, and guilt over his father's death, all of which burgeoned into murderous madness. Requena, who kills a female guest, evinces an Orestes complex ("el odio inconsciente a la madre infiel" [153]), a departure from Freud's trademark, the Oedipal complex.

Bermúdez embeds a preeminent Mexican script in the largely neo-Freudian scenario of *Diferentes razones*. When Zozaya first unveils the criminal, Prado reckons that Requena simply manifests "un vulgar complejo de machismo," typical attitude of men who "¡*No se dejan*, porque son *muy machos*!" (146). Zozaya returns in the coda to Prado's hypothesis, stating that Requena's professed love of justice was a "máscara," product of a "complejo de inferioridad" in which an individual "se enmascara en una postura contraria a la que en el subconsciente domina" (151). Unsettled, Prado asks: "Entonces, ¿yo estaba equivocado con mi teoría del machismo de Requena?" Zozaya

[1] Interestingly enough, the elements of Requena's malady reappear in Bermúdez's non-fictional *Vida familiar de los mexicanos* two years later. On pp. 94-95, the chapter of *Vida* entitled "Machismo y hembrismo" lays out and explains the exact mechanisms at work in Requena's twisted psyche: the subconscious, repression, complexes, rationalization, and so on. *Vida* thus both glosses the coda to *Diferentes* and implicitly magnifies Requena into a textbook case of psychoanalytic operations. Page 96 of *Vida* treats machismo in a similar fashion.

replies: "Pues, *no del todo*. Su machismo pudo contribuir con los otros factores a convertirlo en un delincuente" (153; emphasis added), insofar as jealousy of rivals to a degree motivated Requena. The exchange resounds with trademarks—masks, inferiority complex, machismo—of mid-twentieth-century Mexican identity discourse. With this, in a canny act of brinkmanship, Bermúdez has validated *and* relativized a key strand of then-contemporary Mexican autognoses. *Diferentes razones tiene la muerte*, we see, lives up to its title. The novel has amplified the repertoire of lo mexicano, which now encloses the different factors, the multifarious array of factors, that bear on an individual's behavior.

Bermúdez's brinkmanship is all the more notable because it cuts against the dominant grain of lo mexicano that Samuel Ramos's *El perfil del hombre y de la cultura en México* had catapulted into prominence. *Perfil* was first published in 1934, revised and republished in 1938 and 1951, and reprinted scores of times; Ramos depicted the text as "un ensayo de caracterología y de filosofía de la cultura" that arose from his "deseo vehemente de encontrar una teoría que explicara las modalidades originales del hombre mexicano y su cultura" (10). Ramos's incendiary arguments on Mexicans' inferiority complex galvanized Mexican identity discourse. His provocations rallied disparate Mexican intellectuals for decades and became a nearly ineluctable matrix of their polemics.

Ramos self-statedly derives his influential constructs from German psychologist Alfred Adler's *The Neurotic Constitution* (1916; e.g., *Perfil* 51).[2] Ramos reads Adler selectively, through a Mexican lens. With an eye to the Mexican problematic, he seizes on the Adlerian nexus of neurosis, the inferiority complex, and masculine protest, a cluster that, for its part, marks Adler's distance from Freud. Adler's *Neurotic Constitution* disputes Freud's axiomatic belief in the libido and attendant Oedipal complex as the source of all neuroses, a fault line that generally separates neo- from orthodox Freudians. Abjuring the Oedipal complex as prime mover of neuroses, Adler sets forth his notion of masculinity: "'I wish to be a complete man' is the guiding fiction in every neurosis" (Adler vii and passim). The struggle to incarnate a "complete man"—to achieve maturity—begins with the boy who measures himself over against his father and finds himself lacking, *inferior*. Whence what Adler terms the masculine protest, that is, a man's compensatory, lifelong desire to assert his superiority. The masculine protest, a

[2] Gallo's second chapter attributes Ramos's choice of Adler over Freud to Ramos's distaste for Freud's emphasis on sexuality and preference for Adler as a socially-minded reformer.

will to power, entails the hatred, aggressiveness, hyper-masculinity, and belligerent anti-femininity that stem from insecurity. The Mexican Ramos readily translates Adler's notion into machismo, and *Perfil*'s chapter titled "Psicoanálisis del mexicano" epitomizes the whole web of the masculine protest in the *pelado*. A lower class urban "type," the pelado reroutes his feelings of inferiority into aggressive behavior and, mistrusting others, "vive en falso" (*Perfil* 53-57).

Ramos further adapts Adler's masculine protest to Mexico by historicizing it. He writes: "Me parece que el sentimiento de inferioridad en nuestra raza tiene un origin histórico que debe buscarse en la Conquista y Colonización" (5). Conquest and coloniality burdened Mexicans with a childlike sense of inferiority vis-à-vis more powerful nations that has persisted throughout the nation's history. Up to his very day, says Ramos, Mexicans have exalted and imitated foreign cultures. Ramos nevertheless hammers in that Mexicans are not inherently or truly inferior (10, 14, 52, 91); when they cease to devalue their culture and themselves, Mexicans will realize their abundant potential (91). *Perfil* hereby exculpates its harsh judgments of Mexicans as a therapeutic diagnostics intended to afford Ramos's compatriots the wherewithal to come into their own.

Hallmarks of *Perfil* beyond the inferiority complex will fuel subsequent Mexican apologetics. Exponents of lo mexicano could, and did, take heart from the decolonizing thrust of Ramos's diagnostics. On a less salutary level, they reaped from Ramos's ambition to diagnose the overall Mexican condition the essentializing modus operandi of collapsing all Mexicans into "the" Mexican—a hypothetical and notional, if philosophically enabling, entity.[3] Above all, to state the obvious, thinkers obtained from Ramos a mandate for their endeavors ("encontrar una teoría que explicara las modalidades originales del hombre mexicano y su cultura").

The Grupo Hiperión took up the gauntlet that *Perfil* had thrown down and rebuilt the tendencies that Ramos had pioneered. Both Hiperión's principal members—Ricardo Guerra, Jorge Portilla, Salvador Reyes Nevares, Joaquín Sánchez MacGrégor, Emilio Uranga, Luis Villoro, and Leopoldo Zea—and those who partially shared Hiperión's inclinations, such as Jorge Carrión and Bermúdez, famously recruited existentialism for lo mexicano. Zea, the group's de facto captain, explains that Sartrean existentialism "justifica las pretensiones

[3] By the same token, Ramos and many others who write about lo mexicano absorb women into the generic "man." I have left this problematic language, which should be apparent to the reader, in its original form.

de los filosófos mexicanos" because it has "ampliado el temario de los problemas propiamente filosóficos" to include authenticity, the freedom to forge one's own life that springs from the privileging of existence over essence, and *Dasein*, emphasis on a distinct situation (*Conciencia* 11). Under the sway of these advents, Hiperión propagated a situational existentialism and, at times, a phenomenological sociology, in which the inferiority complex was just one element among the many that comprise the Mexican Dasein. Hiperión circulated its Mexicanized existentialism in symposia, university courses, newspapers, scholarly journals, and the milestone book series that Zea directed from 1952-1955, "México y lo Mexicano."

Investment in the Mexican situation did not confine Hiperión to the ontic. True to Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* (1943), the Hyperions set their sights on ontology. Villoro proclaims their quest to leap from "lo particular y concreto" of the Mexican Dasein to "lo universal y abstracto" (18). Hiperión's philosophical quest, an outgrowth of Ramos's essentializing, wrests exemplary traits from Mexican being in toto. Zea extols an elastic, resilient Mexico as a standard for "otros pueblos en circunstancias parecidas a las nuestras" (*Conciencia* 68-69). For Uranga, a Mexican ontology should displace the rigid ideality of European paradigms. Boldly upending master narratives, Uranga posits the accidental (in the Aristotelian sense), supple Mexican ontology as more human and authentic than Western templates. Uranga writes: "No se trata de construir lo mexicano, lo que nos peculiariza, como humano, sino a la inversa, de construir lo humano como mexicano" (45). Uranga gives a name and face to this Mexican ontology in his conceit of *zozobra*, a vacillating identity, shifting between poles, always becoming, never absolute.

Hiperión's "concepción positiva, incluso reivindicatoria, de lo mexicano" (Hurtado, *Búho* 102) shines through its recalibrations of ontology and reaches definition in programmatic formulations. Zea, for one, promotes a decolonizing "inversion of values" (*Conciencia* 68) that will allow Mexicans to "sentirnos, como de hecho empezamos a notarlo, seguros, completos, firmes, abiertos, optimistas, y con las capacidades para las cuales, apenas ayer, nos considerábamos negados" (*La filosofía* 191). Uranga echoes Zea's sentiment, announcing that recent evaluations of lo mexicano "permiten hablar de una atmósfera de esperanza" (150). Hiperión, it is clear, has swerved from Ramos's heavily pathologizing *Perfil*.

However, the Hyperions do not blithely forgo therapeutic diagnostics. Instead, in an evolution of Ramos's modus operandi, they tender critiques geared to *existentialist* criteria. The phenomenological sociology of Portilla, Uranga, and Zea especially homes in on Mexican *desgana*: an indolence, apathy, and dissociation from reality that opposes the authenticity and

commitment that the Hyperions prescribe for Mexico.[4] In a different vein, Villoro's monumental *Los grandes momentos del indigenismo en México* (1950) exercises its spleen on the bad faith ("conciencia *falsa*" [9]) with which throughout Mexico's discursive history outsiders and Mexicans alike have objectified Indigenous peoples, to the exclusion of actual Indigenous voices.

Whether critical or uplifting, appraisals of their country reflect the Hyperions' aspiration to have a transformative effect on Mexican society (Hurtado, *Búho* 101). The philosophers' broad objective steered them into the territory of values—and away from Sartre. Because a fully realized Mexico needed a moral bedrock, the vague, subjectivist ethics of, for instance, Sartre's *Existentialism is a Humanism* (1946), would not suffice for Hiperión. To orient Mexican values, the Hyperions availed themselves of a Mexican precursor, Antonio Caso. Caso's masterwork, *La existencia como economía, como desinterés, y como caridad* (1919; 1943), champions a slate of values that ensue from the Christian Golden rule: altruism, solidarity, and love. In 1946 Zea dubbed Caso the "paladín" of the focus on lo mexicano ("Antonio Caso" 107) then gaining momentum, and several Hyperions followed Caso's value-rich lead.[5] Hybrid, even heterodox, Mexican existentialism transformed Sartreanism in the interest of transforming Mexico.

Hiperión's engagement with what Sartre would label the Mexican "situation" opened a gateway to multi-disciplinary examinations of that situation's dimensions, Dasein's organic concomitants. Zea's "México y lo Mexicano" book series solicited them, stating its desire to include "todas las formas de enfoque que se han dado a la captación de nuestro ser" ("Advertencia" 8). Bermúdez's *Vida familiar de los mexicanos*, the lone female-authored book published in Zea's collection, answers his call and strides into the vanguard.[6] While addressing the sine qua non of Mexicans' alleged inferiority (15 and passim), *Vida* articulates what will prove to be driving forces of lo mexicano for its next wave of practitioners. Bermúdez acknowledges that the essentializing rife in "investigaciones sobre el

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[4] On *desgana*, see Portilla 130-31; Uranga 114-17; Zea (*Conciencia*) 134.

[5] For insight into Caso's moral positions and Caso and Hiperión, see Hurtado's *Búho*, especially pp. 50-51, 79-83, 96. Chap. 2 of my book, *A Latin American Existentialist Ethos: Modern Mexican Literature and Philosophy*, and an article on Usigli have much to say about Caso as a model for Hiperión and Hiperión's ethical strain as versus Sartre.

[6] In 1955, Zea's "México y lo Mexicano" series announced as "en preparación" the following works by female authors: Clementina Díaz de Ovando's *La épica popular* and Angelica Mendoza's *México al pendiente*. As far as I can tell, neither work reached publication in Zea's series, or elsewhere.

mexicano" has incurred harsh criticism (13). A Mexican "psico-sociología," she argues, can allay the criticism: those who malign studies of lo mexicano and deny them any worth "parecen ignorar la existencia de la psico-sociología," "base magnífica e imprescindible" for a "filosofía de lo mexicano" (17). Her *Vida*, Bermúdez says, will instantiate the socio-psychoanalytic method (17; for obvious reasons, I do not render "psico-sociología" as "psycho-sociology").

The socio-psychoanalytic *Vida* pushes back at "the" Mexican, intently supplementing Ramos and Hiperión. Bermúdez anchors her text in two locales, Mexico City and Durango. She parses the locales into their racial and class components, additionally examining Mexico's folk and high cultures. Gender relations, egregiously absent from Ramos and Hiperión except in the guise of machismo, enter the picture, and Bermúdez vigorously attends to women. Indeed, unique among all kindred studies, Bermúdez takes an outright feminist stance. She insists, for example, that women can and should participate in public life (102). Shaping society is not a "don natural del que los hombres, únicamente por serlo, disfruten totalmente" (128). As backup for her militant feminism, curiously enough, every so often Bermúdez quotes Adler—not his *Neurotic Constitution* but his 1927 *Understanding Human Nature*, published in Spanish as *Conocimiento del hombre*. *Vida* tools Adler into a feminist and, although Bermúdez deploys fundamental psychoanalytic concepts, she does not directly quote the patriarchal Freud. Finally, in a move that will have tremendous purchase for later studies, Bermúdez makes the family—also absent from Ramos and Hiperión—the locus of her inquiries. Conscious and unconscious motivations assert themselves in the family (21), and, she importantly declares, the family conditions all other phenomena (23).

Under the capacious aegis of the family, *Vida* unleashes attacks on Mexican gender relations, attacks valuable in themselves and significant for emerging currents. An exposé of adversarial male-female relations, *Vida* perceives nothing but animosity in them, never love or solidarity. Bermúdez's treatment of the "erovisión" that afflicts the family (76 and passim) therefore reveals a desperate need for the altruistic ethics Hiperión advocated. The Mexican men whom the author has observed act out a machismo buried in their subconscious that pervades "todos los aspectos de la relación amorosa y atrofia en el mexicano el instinto de la paternidad" (88). Bermúdez then categorically attributes Mexican women's lamentable comportment to machismo. Her coinage, "hembrismo," designates the female counterpart of machismo in which women internalize the subordination that machismo demands, resulting in "la pasividad tradicional de la abnegada y sufrida mexicana" (46). Because women depend on men for financial stability and social status, hembrismo yields a shocking intra-female rivalry and enmity (61). A solution:

if the machismo that Catholicism opposes disappeared, the pathologies of hembrismo would also fall away (116).

Ramos's diagnostic therapeutics well in mind (*Vida* 15, 98), Bermúdez's socio-psychoanalytic offering has nonetheless dismantled *Perfil*. The directions that *Vida* takes compensate for shortcomings in the discourse of lo mexicano that not just Bermúdez but also a number of her contemporaries strenuously identify.[7] José Gómez Robleda, a sociologist and scientifically-oriented psychologist, and Michael Maccoby, co-author of *Social Character in a Mexican Village: A Sociopsychoanalytical Study* (also published in Spanish), debunk essentializing for, as Maccoby asks: "¿Cómo puede trazarse el carácter social de una nación o de sus diversas clases?" ("El carácter" 42). Santiago Ramírez and Aniceto Aramoni, clearly targeting Hiperión, enjoin lo mexicano to center on psychoanalysis (Ramírez 6; Aramoni 9). According to Ramírez, who but the psychoanalyst is best suited to "orientarnos acerca de las motivaciones profundas explicativas de la conducta y de la manera de ser de lo nuestro"? (6). The writers whose works I will now explore, among them the individuals just mentioned, bring the sociological and psychoanalytic dimensions of lo mexicano to fruition. They re-inflect various of Hiperión's key concepts and in so doing provide bases for comparative analyses of the group's existentialist thinking.

Gómez Robleda's sociological *Imagen del mexicano* (1948) literally diagnoses the Mexican Dasein of the present. Its author, a medical doctor and psychologist renowned for utilizing projective tests, submits to factual, statistical scrutiny the average Mexicans' character, physical features, and standards of living, as well as the particulars of their dwellings, food, salaries, and life expectancy.[8] Letting the facts speak for themselves with minimal interpetation (71), Gómez Robleda portrays a Mexico deficient in every area, a

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[7] North American historian John L. Phelan's 1956 review of the "México y lo Mexicano" book series critiques it in ways that dovetail with the Mexican views I list here. In Phelan's view, Zea's ontologically-inclined series would profit from a "sociological approach" that comes down to specifics and accounts for class issues (317). Phelan then writes: "There is one notable exception to this tendency and that is María Elvira Bermúdez' *La vida familiar del mexicano*"; "her sociological approach is one that could yield fruitful results if applied oftener by Mexican scholars" (318).

[8] Gómez Robleda was already famous for his and Alfonso Quiroz Cuarón's efforts to psychoanalyze the man who assassinated Leon Trotsky in Mexico, Ramón Mercader. In 1942, at the trial judge's behest, Gómez Robleda and Quiroz Cuarón subjected Mercader to diverse tests (physiological, dream analysis, word reaction exercises, and so on) intended to elicit as full a picture as possible of the assassin's mind. On this, see Gallo chap. 6, and Levine chap. 8.

Mexico whose ordinary citizens subsist under deplorable conditions that affect their physical and psychological well-being. These conditions propel Mexican men to flee reality and retreat into desgana ("la cómoda y misteriosa *filosofía de la gana*" [74]). Indigenous peoples and women, conversely, possess a tremendous "sentido práctico realista de la vida" that deserves emulation rather than marginalization (73). No wonder, then, that Bermúdez cites *Imagen* (*Vida* 88-89). And when, as do Bermúdez et alia, Gómez Robleda tackles Mexicans' inferiority complex, *Imagen*'s socio-psychoanalytic methodology begets the trenchant conclusion that "somos inferiores por pobres, no por mexicanos" (72). A scientific apologetics, *Imagen* divests Mexicans of responsibility for their deficiencies.

José E. Iturriaga describes his *La estructura social y cultural de México* (1951) as "un intento angustioso por resumir, en menos de 300 páginas, todo lo correspondiente a las estructuras social y cultural de México" from 1895-1950 (14). *La estructura social y cultural* fulfills its encyclopedic mission, an attempt to "sustituir un hueco notorio existente en la sociología mexicana" (13), by ranging over a welter of topics. Delving knowledgeably into the city and the countryside, family, race, social class, languages, religion, education, foreign influences, Mexican character, and more, Iturriaga lays the foundations for a Mexican sociology. While the book's daunting goals per se could easily breed trepidation in its author, a second matter troubles Iturriaga. Inasmuch as the Fonda de Cultura Económica (the FCE) under the direction of Estudios Financieros de la Nacional Financiera had published his work, Iturriaga worries that some will question its far from strictly economic subject matter. Iturriaga retorts that an undertaking designed to aid "la planificación de nuestro desarrollo" must take into account all elements related to it (15).

Iturriaga's reference to planning for Mexico's development signals the none too hidden raison d'être of his text. Published during Alemán's administration, *La estructura social y cultural* inscribes itself in and champions the party line of *Alemanismo*: the modernizing, capitalistic agenda it baptized as *Mexicanidad*. Now, debates have raged around the possible relationship between the propagandistic official story, Mexicanidad, and lo mexicano, both of which exhibit a hearty optimism for Mexico. Apparent affinities between the two movements have induced intellectuals, notably Roger Bartra and Ana Santos Ruiz, to accuse lo mexicano of complicity with Mexicanidad.[9] Iturriaga,

[9] Responding to leftist denunciations of Hiperión's collusion with Mexicanidad, Hurtado astutely concludes that while certain aspects of the "filosofía de lo mexicano" were "*sintonizados* con la ideología oficial," "sería falso afirmar que la filosofía de lo mexicano fue planeada desde una oficina del gobierno" and intended to "convertirse en programa político."

who went on to advise three Mexican presidents, sheds light on polemic. His *Estructura social y cultural*, with its flagrant boosterism for Alemanismo, shows us how unmitigated collusion with the official story would sound—and it would sound something like this:

Iturriaga hyperbolically celebrates Mexico, which has entered a "brilliant" period of cultural rebirth (201). Mexico's "adelanto industrial y evidente modernización" inspire foreigners' admiration (137), and Mexicans themselves are already losing their sense of inferiority vis-à-vis foreign nations (142). The middle class, fulcrum of Alemán's program to stimulate capitalism, now enjoys greater access to material goods and leisure activities (96). Iturriaga harps on mestizos and *mestizaje*, racial mixing that will ensure Indigenous peoples their "inevitable ascenso de su bajo nivel de vida material" (132) and make the nation a single fabric (129). In the spirit of José Vasconcelos's *La raza cósmica* (1925), Iturriaga looks forward to the sublimation of Indigenous identity into a consumerist, mestizo Mexico.

Stating that "el estudio del carácter del mexicano nos permite advertir qué es lo que legítima y viablemente puede esperarse de nosotros" with regard to Mexico's development (16), Iturriaga folds characterology into his text's repertoire. The book's last chapter, "El carácter del mexicano," scans the lower and middle class "types" of central Mexico, the site in which mestizaje has most thoroughly taken root (262). Iturriaga rolls out a long laundry list of Mexicans' traits that impact society. Some are negative, blockages to modernization, but auspicious positives always balance them out; contradictions in Mexicans reflect their mixed background, poised between Spanish and Indigenous cultures.[10] As he expounds on Mexican character, baldly intoning "the Mexican is . . .," Iturriaga enlists the staples of Mexican characterology, Ramos and Adler (although, as in *Vida,* Adler's *Understanding*

Instead, Hiperión's "objetivo era intentar dar una respuesta a algunas preocupaciones muy hondas—que merecen el calificativo de existenciales—de los mexicanos" ("Introducción" xxxii-xxxiii).

[10] For instance, that the Mexican is "improvisado" involves an "acusada inadaptabilidad" as well as a "reconocida habilidad manuel" and a "riqueza de imaginación" (275-76). In addition and in this order, Iturriaga's mixed bag of Mexicans' traits (262-278) sees them as harboring an inferiority complex and as timid, reserved, sentimental, sad, soft spoken, irritable, violent, tender, fearful, individualistic, unsociable, antagonistic to the government, macho, erotic, patriotic, unanalytical, imaginative, a lover of beauty, austere, apathetic, indecisive, improvident, inconstant, wasteful, imitative, fatalistic, superstitious, and favoring the small over the monumental.

Human Nature), plus newcomers Gómez Robleda, Hiperión affiliate Carrión, and prime Hiperión Uranga.

From Uranga Iturriaga gleans one set of the contradictions he is at pains to disclose. Iturriaga quotes Uranga's "[e]l mexicano, tan rico en contrastes posee uno notable: el que se advierte entre su acritud y violencia por un lado, y su fina delicadez y capacidad de ternura por el otro" (266, citing Uranga's 1949 article in *Cuadernos Americanos*). Here we find an example of Iturriaga's strategy vis-à-vis both Carrión and Uranga. Whereas Uranga elaborates an ontological zozobra, Iturriaga remodels zozobra into a social phenomenon, a function of the Mexican "circunstancia" (273). Iturriaga construes Uranga aslant, bracketing out the Hyperion's metaphysical disposition.[11]

Iturriaga had no call to finesse the latest advent in Mexican culture, Octavio Paz's luminous *El laberinto de la soledad* (1950). The passages from *Laberinto* inserted into *La estructura social y cultural de México* (264, 266) directly support Iturriaga's claims about Mexicans' character, specifically, their sense of inferiority and attendant proclivity for self-masking. From Iturriaga's text, published just a year after Paz's monograph made its appearance, onward, *Laberinto* to a significant degree powers 1950s-1960s socio-psychoanalytic enactments of lo mexicano, providing them with a *new, beyond-Hiperión lodestar*.[12] The exorbitant correspondences between *Laberinto* and *Perfil*—some even accused Paz of plagiarizing Ramos (Domínguez Michael 203)—enhanced *Laberinto*'s currency. Paz picks up and grows Ramos's arguments on the traumas of Conquest and colonization as well as their ramifications for the Mexican psyche. These two linchpins of *Laberinto* in fact transcend Ramos's Adlerian psychologizing. They also have *Freudian* drivers. Doing full justice to Paz vis-à-vis Freud lies beyond the scope of the present article (and its author's

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[11] Because Carrión, whom we meet below, had not yet published his *Mito y magia del mexicano* (1952), Iturriaga relies on two substantive articles that proved to be representative of Carrión's markedly psychoanalytic book. Nevertheless, Iturriaga's Carrión is a commentator on linguistic and social phenomena: Mexicans' use of diminutives (265), exaggerated patriotism (270), fondness for religious ceremony (276), and "predilección por lo pequeño" (277).

[12] Paz had a layered, uneasy relationship with Hiperión despite—or, probably *because* of—the facts that both *Laberinto* and the Hyperions' work share an existentialist perspective and deal with Mexican identity. When *Laberinto* briefly and obliquely considers Hiperión, it only praises Uranga, who had dedicated his *Análisis del ser del mexicano* to Paz (317). Later, in his 1975 conversation with Fell, Paz states: "yo no quise hacer ni ontología ni filosofía del mexicano. Mi libro [*Laberinto*] es un libro de crítica social, política, psicológica" ("Vuelta" 421).

abilities), so I will concentrate on the aspects of *Laberinto* that on my reading were the most generative for the Mexican identity discourse under study here.

The Freudian return of the repressed obviously and pivotally underwrites *Laberinto*. Summarizing the text, Paz states: "Intenté una descripción . . . del mundo de represiones, inhibiciones, recuerdos, apetitos y sueños que ha sido y es México ("Vuelta" 421). No less patently, *Laberinto* identifies coloniality as the wellspring of Mexicans' complexes, for Spanish domination left Mexicans grappling with "fantasmas," "vestigios del pasado" (*Laberinto* 210). In *Laberinto*'s chapter "Los hijos de la Malinche," Paz frames the originary configuration that freighted Mexicans with social and psychological burdens. I refer, of course, to the drama of La Malinche, in Paz's view the violated, treacherous *chingada* whose plight set in motion Mexicans' urge to live closed off from the world and the past (224). Unable to free themselves from imperious yet unconscious ghosts, the Mexican "hijos de la chingada" fall into what Freud delineates as mourning and melancholia, exacerbated grieving for an elusive lost object.

Paz has stated that Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), the "descripción de una realidad escondida," greatly impressed him ("Vuelta" 421).[13] Linked to the return of the repressed, *Moses and Monotheism* yields insight into the occluded feminine that *Laberinto* endows with enormous cultural significance. Freud discusses the fortunes of female deities who reign supreme and then, as patriarchies consolidate their hegemony, are replaced with male gods (*Moses* 134-35). Paz enlarges on Freud's insight, Mexicanizing it. That the Conquest deposed male Aztec gods motivated a "regreso hacia las antiguas divinidades femeninas," to the "entraña materna" (222), and the primordial, repressed feminine is soon reborn, transformed into the Virgin of Guadalupe. The Virgen of Guadalupe henceforth prevails as the mother of an orphaned, disenfranchised Mexican people (85).

It was, nevertheless, *Moses and Monotheism*'s overarching approach that had the greatest hold on Paz and his orbit. Simply put, Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* applies the criteria of individual psychology to collective entities like civilizations and religions. Freud writes: "in the history of the human species something happened similar to the events in the life of the individual" (129). Traumas in both cases create neuroses—neuroses that in Freud's text bristle with unspoken correspondences to the Mexican situation. Freud's pronouncements that "neurosis may be regarded as a 'fixation' to an early

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[13] I take my cue from Gallo's exposition of the connections between *Moses and Monotheism* and *Laberinto*, especially Gallo 94 and 96. He also relates *Laberinto* to Freud on mourning and melancholia (104).

period" in an individual's past, which contributes "considerably to the formation of character" and can "culminate in an inhibition or phobia" (122-24), for instance, gesture to Mexican neuroses as *Laberinto* paints them.

Paz's actualization of the Freudian cues, furthermore, implicates the family gestalt. Primordially, *Laberinto*'s 'Children of La Malinche' thesis revolves around a symbolic, mythified family, rather than a real one. La Malinche, writes Paz, is not "una Madre de carne y hueso, sino una figura mítica" (212). Given that *Laberinto*'s allegorical family arises from the violation of a mother (Malinche) who marries the father (Cortés, by extension the colonizers), one might see something of an Electra complex at work in the Mexican imaginary.[14] However one understands *Laberinto*'s mythified family, in real life it devolves into "la violenta, sarcástica humillación de la Madre y en la no menos violenta afirmación del Padre" (217). Paz vests these attitudes in his unqualifiedly negative macho, the *chingón*. *Laberinto*'s hyper-masculine chingón, prone to assaulting whoever threatens his hermetic sovereignty (165-66, 219-20 and passim), violently affirms the Father. Closed to the world and to the Mother, the macho disavows any association with femininity and humiliates women, putative "open" beings. He radically otherizes women and they, supposedly bereft of agency, acquiesce to the objectified, martyrly role he assigns them (171, 343). Altogether, the bleak humanscape of *Laberinto* forecloses on love, hence the solitude its title enshrines.

Bleak yet suasive, *Laberinto* quickly compelled fellow travelers of Hiperión, resulting in works that triangulate existentialism, Pazian concerns, and their own. Jorge Carrión's *Mito y magia del mexicano* (1952) conjugates the three. Published in Zea's book series, *Mito y magia*'s at times characterological and phenomenological optic (105) aligns with Hiperión. If, as we will see in a minute, Hiperión also penetrates *Mito y magia* subtly, Carrión's reliance on *Laberinto* is impossible to miss. He peppers *Mito y magia* with citations of Paz and a Pazian lexicon (masking, dissimulation, solitude, etc.). Overall, *Mito y magia* plays out the framework *Laberinto* had borrowed from *Moses and Monotheism*. In Carrión's words, *Mito y magia* enacts the credo that "las sociedades adoptan la estructura síquica tal como fuera ideada por Freud respecto a los individuos" (110-11). A medical doctor, psychologist, and activist who eventually embraced Marxism, Carrión later excoriated his book for forcing social issues into a psychoanalytic mold. Still, he allowed that

[14] Gallo interprets Paz's allegorical family as a variation on the Oedipal complex insofar as *Laberinto* "posits a rape at the foundation of Mexican identity" (96) instead of a murder.

psychoanalysis had the saving grace of leading him to study the Mexican as a "ser reprimido" (120).[15]

That said, what according to Carrión Mexicans have repressed strikes out in a whole new direction from *Laberinto*. Carrión, born in "pueblo de indígenas" (58), valorizes Mexico's Indigenous soul—i.e., "magia"—as an authentic, repressed maternal core that he believes should be restored. Freud here effectively cedes to Jung, to Jung's principle of a collective imaginary that dwells in the unconscious, above and beyond an individual's lived experiences (the "tesoro de las protoimágenes y arquetipos que más tarde han de manifestarse en la sicología del mexicano contemporáneo" [Carrión 14]). Carrión tracks the history, from the Conquest forward, of the submerged consciousness. Increasingly in tension with rationality and science, magic has lost ground. It has not, however, disappeared. Carrión devotes much of his book to the residues of magic, such as religious syncretism, that seep into modern Mexico.

Thanks to their dual heritage, mestizos become the central site of magic versus rationality in *Mito y magia*. Possessed as they are of a mixed, wavering identity, a zozobra, mestizos oscillate between "la interpretación afectiva, sentimental del mundo y el concepto lógico y científico recién adquirido" (14). Clashes between the two poles can engender neuroses, but not an inferiority complex (18). Resolving the two poles, on the other hand, benefits the nation. *Mito y magia* places faith in mestizos' growing awareness that they can constitute the bridge between magic and science and form "el ancho cauce de la nacionalidad mexicana" (21). Carrión, who denounces the middle class's betrayal of Mexico's Indigenous core and the bourgeois ideology of the reigning administration (60, 120), thus contravenes Iturriaga's pro-Alemán mestizophilia: Carrión's mestizophilia places an Indigenous Weltanschauung at its heart.

With this, Carrión covertly revisits Villoro's *Los grandes momentos del indigenismo en México*. In an existentialist register, Villoro portrays the contemporary "mestizo indigenista" as longing to recover the *Indígena* within, an achievement that will afford mestizos freedom and transcendence (294; for context, see the book's entire "Tercer momento"). In a psychoanalytic register,

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[15] See the whole chap. 8 of Carrión's *Mito*, "Y un ensayo de autocrítica," one of two essays added to the 1970 and 1971 editions. I quote throughout from the 1971 edition, which apart from these two additional articles appended to the end, is the same as the original 1952 edition.

Carrión has delivered a history of the Indígena within, of repressed but irrepressible magic. The imminent marriage of magic and science, as *Mito y magia* would have it, will heal not only the mestizos' psyche but also that of the nation.

In contrast to *Mito y magia*, Bermúdez's hybrid *Vida* lays bare its dealings with the existentialist Hiperión. A Bermúdez versed in the Hyperions' thinking—her personal library contained books by Uranga and Zea—weaves into *Vida*'s chapter "Machismo y hembrismo" the two philosophers' commentaries on the subject.[16] There and elsewhere, she highlights zozobra, utilizing Zea, among other ways, as an exegete of Uranga's concept. *Vida* casts zozobra as a differentia specifica of Mexicans' being and one that, with regard to male behavior, can trigger alternation between idealizing and denigrating women (99-100). Bermúdez's explicit references to Hiperión symptomatize the existentialist tenets that inform her text. At various points, *Vida* invokes the Sartrean mainstays of the "situation," freedom, and choice (e.g., 119-20). Yet *Vida*, substantially attuned to Mexican polemics, does not reference Sartre.

Wittingly or not a complement to Sartre's dark account of human interactions in his "Concrete Relations with Others" (*Being and Nothingness*, Part 3, chap. 3), Bermúdez's insistence on Mexicans' adversarial relationships invites the pathologizing *Laberinto* into *Vida*, where it often operates as a kind of Sartre stand-in. Bermúdez repeatedly leans on *Laberinto* to fortify her indictments of Mexican conduct, marshaling for her cause such Sartrean/Pazian blockages to true intersubjectivity as Mexicans' fear of the objectifying gaze and mistrust of the Other. *Vida*'s longest quote from *Laberinto* (75-76) reverberates with echoes of Sartre. It culminates in Paz's all too Sartrean words that Mexicans conceive of "amor como conquista y como lucha. No se trata tanto de penetrar la realidad, a través de un cuerpo, como de violarla" (76). Notwithstanding, *Vida* itself culminates in an impressive *departure* from Paz and Sartre. Blockages to intersubjectivity can, Bermúdez's last chapter maintains, be removed through harmonious collaboration of the sexes and through friendship (123, 130).[17] *Vida*'s road map for Mexico

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[16] In the section titled "María Elvira Bermúdez y su biblioteca" of the terrific website on the Toluca "Colección especial de María Elvira Bermúdez," Castañeda informs us that Bermúdez's library held "9,873 volúmenes y 1,532 revistas," including works on psychotherapy. We learn from the website's "Muestra bibliográfica de la Colección Especial" that Bermúdez's library contained Zea's *Conciencia y posibilidad del mexicano* (1952) and Uranga's *Análisis del ser del mexicano* (1952).

[17] A precursor to *Vida* and another work that merges Hiperión, existentialism, and Paz is *El amor y la amistad en el mexicano* (1952) by Bermúdez's son-in-law Salvador Reyes Nevares.

envisions a "true man," opposite of the macho, who will no longer suffer from an inferiority complex and who will neither idealize nor denigrate women (131). As Bermúdez projects a more humane Mexico, she makes common cause with Hiperión's transformative ambitions no less than with its ethos of love and intersubjectivity.

Vitiating love and intersubjectivity, *post*-Hiperión Mexican social psychoanalysis illuminates the conflictive family dynamics that *Vida* had brought to the fore. This second major wave in considerations of lo mexicano turns to the family and, with it, to gender relations. One of the writers I will discuss, Michael Maccoby, observes that in the 1950s Mexican psychoanalysis veered away from the "trauma psíquico" of the Conquest per se and probed its effects on "la relación entre hombres y mujeres," "el conflicto intenso entre los sexos" ("El carácter" 46-47). Although it stands to reason that psychoanalysts would zero in on the family-gender constellation and suss out its neuroses, Mexican intellectuals pay exceptional attention to the outsized, generally negative, role of the mother in the family.

The commonalities just listed are especially striking because they obtain for the two quite different Mexican schools of psychoanalysis.[18] In the second half of the 1950s, Mexican psychoanalysis bifurcated into Erich Fromm's Sociedad Mexicana de Psicoanálisis (the SMP) and the Asociación Psicoanalítica Mexicana (APM). The ways in which, more than mere separate institutions, the SMP and APM represented substantively distinct branches of psychoanalysis—the SMP Freudian, the APM eclectically neo-Freudian—will surface in the following expositions of Santiago Ramírez, Aniceto Aramoni, and Fromm/Maccoby's works.

El mexicano, psicología de sus motivaciones (1959) by Santiago Ramírez, a founding member of the Freudian APM and its eventual president, resorts to sweeping generalizations on "the" Mexican, accompanied by an equally sweeping survey of that hypothetical entity, from past to present. As suits his agenda and in Paz's footsteps, Ramírez capitalizes on *Moses and Monotheism*'s infrastructure (Ramírez affirms the congruence between a culture's "gestalt" and that of the individual [12]). *El mexicano* in fact makes *Laberinto* its principal conversation partner. When Ramírez interrogates Mexican history, he drills down on the wounds of coloniality. Quoting Paz, he underscores the

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Much more derivative of Hiperión, Sartre, and Paz than *Vida*, Reyes Nevares's short book mostly probes the dark sides of Mexicans' interpersonal relations, but it does end up praising their capacity for friendship.

[18] For a useful brief introduction to the two mid-twentieth century schools of psychoanalysis in Mexico, see Álvarez del Castillo.

"orfandad" that ensues from Mexicans having been "arrancados del todo" and left seeking their "filiación" (14). In *El mexicano*, the historical lacerations create a host of aftershocks familiar from *Laberinto*. The chingad@, machismo, and ambivalence towards the mother infiltrate Ramírez's treatments of contemporary Mexicans. Ramírez grounds his work in Paz but nuances Paz and Ramos on the inferiority complex. In Ramírez's view, a flailing identity ("el temor inminente de perder la identidad" [42]) plagues Mexicans.

Ramírez's version of zozobra as a flailing identity is a far cry from Uranga's. Indeed, Hiperión and its existentialism are conspicuous by their absence from *El mexicano*. The omission speaks volumes. When Ramírez states that the human being "*no es una entidad independiente en el tiempo sino anclada al pasado y determinada por el*" (10), the word "determinada" signals a fundamental, glaring disconnect between Sartrean existentialism and psychoanalysis. To wit, existentialism's axial contention that our lives run on freedom and free choice interdicts any sort of determinism. Much as Paz and Ramírez briefly try to soften the determinism/freedom binary (Paz 209; Ramírez 10), their works throw it into relief. In Ramírez, in particular, we encounter a second wave proponent of lo mexicano decoupling existentialism and psychoanalysis.[19]

Translated into psychoanalytic terms, families ripple through *El mexicano*. On Ramírez's reading, a sense of orphanhood has impelled Mexicans over the course of their history to search for the father. Colonial Natives soon discover that Spaniards simply replicate cruel Aztec fathers (17); as post-Independence mestizos and creoles hunt for a father, they seize on any "imagen fuerte," even the US, as a beacon (41); the State ultimately steps in as the father (33). Historically and up to Ramírez's time, mestizos have struggled with the "paternal abandonment" that originated in Spanish fathers who scorned their mixed-race children and their children's Indigenous mothers (21-22). Sadly, present-day mestizos appear to reproduce an unresolved past, deserting their

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[19] Pieces of a brilliant psychoanalytic expedition into lo mexicano that does not concern itself with family, *El mexicano: Su dinámica psicosocial* (1959) by Francisco González Pineda, do closely if unstatedly resemble the first chapter of Hiperión Zea's *Dos etapas del pensamiento en Hispanoamérica: Del romanticismo al positivismo* (1949). Akin to both *Dos etapas* itself and to Paz's many formulations in a Zea-esque vein, *El mexicano* at times (e.g., 22-24, 118) lines up with Zea's Hegelian argument that Mexico has repressed what is proper to it, adopted incommensurable foreign models, and must reckon with its stifled past in order to become whole. Then, writes González Pineda, Mexico will have accepted "su pasado total" and "su presente real" (57). The return of the repressed, we see, can be a meeting place for otherwise discrepant systems.

families (25) and rejecting the feminine (22). Ramírez matches Bermúdez's focus on dysfunctional families (and cites her *Vida* on p. 34) as he lays out implications for women of men's behavior. Though hardly aiming to make a case for gender equality, Ramírez does not fail to touch on Mexican women's masochistic self-abnegation (49). According to *El mexicano*, instead of fighting back at men, the *mujer sufrida* unhealthily enmesheses herself with her children, who compensate for the emotional bankruptcy of marriage.

Fromm/Maccoby and Aniceto Aramoni, a disciple of Fromm who succeeded his teacher as director of the Instituto Mexicano de Psicoanálisis, unravel the enmeshments to which Mexican families are prey. The theoretically inclined Mexican Frommians, interestingly enough, seldom deal with lo mexicano. For example, the book series Fromm edited, the Biblioteca de Psicología, largely features Spanish translations of foreign works and is in no way parallel to Zea's series. Aramoni's *Psicoanálisis de la dinámica de un pueblo* (1961) and Fromm/Maccoby's *Social Character in a Mexican Village: A Sociopsychoanalytical Study* (begun in the late 1950s but published in 1970 English and in 1973 in Spanish) constitute exceptions to the rule—and such rich evolutions of lo mexicano that they deserve to be unpacked in detail.[20]

Aramoni and Fromm/Maccoby's works, which interlock on several levels, share a neo-Freudian framework that inflects their rendition of family dynamics. Putting the two books, plus Fromm's classic *The Art of Loving* (1956), in dialogue, it can be said that first and foremost they all deviate from Freud's credence in the libido and the libidinous Oedipal complex. They replace the Freudian *sexual* connection between mothers and children with *affective* and *social* ties. Fromm/Maccoby (henceforth, F/M) state, "we do not consider that [sexual] instinct mediates human relationships" (14), and Fromm decries "Freud's error in seeing in love exclusively the expression—or a sublimation—of the sexual instinct, rather than recognizing that the sexual desire is one manifestation of the need for love and union" (*Art* 62). F/M clarify that the "fundamental basis of character is not seen in various types of *libido* organization but in specific forms of a person's *relatedness* to the world" (68). Aramoni encapsulates the differences between Freud and Fromm in the pithy phrase, "para Freud: Edipo incesto-sexual; para Fromm: conflicto existencial de autoridad, de amor" (260).

Aramoni and F/M do go to ground, decamping from Paz's allegorical family to concrete circumstances and family dynamics. The three authors adumbrate a specific "conflicto existential," one which revolves around fixations on a

[20] In 1973, the FCE published Fromm/Maccoby's book under the title of *Sociopsicoanálisis del campesino mexicano*.

parent; the syndrome that F/M call symbiotic relatedness (73) therefore entails cathexis, dependency, and codependency. Over-attachment to the mother's unconditional love or avidity to win the father's conditional love, contingent upon fulfilling his expectations, can ensnare their offspring in "a pattern of infantile relatedness" (Fromm, *Art* 143) that arrests full maturity. At heart, children and adults caught up in symbiotic relatedness abdicate autonomy and in so doing, as the title of Fromm's seminal 1941 work reads, escape from freedom. Plugging symbiotic relatedness into an actual Mexican situation, F/M find some degree of fixation on the mother or on the father in more than half of the male and female villagers they evaluated (90).

If the father fixation, fairly subdued and rare in the Mexican context, spawns fear of paternal displeasure (F/M 251-52), the mother fixation has had more dire consequences. An infantile feeling of helplessness may incur its obverse, sadism, together with paralysis of the adult child's will (F/M 107-08, 250). Yet, as Aramoni incisively queries, "¿Cómo pelear contra esa montaña de agradecimiento, deuda inacabable, de la figura santificada, abnegada, mártir? ¿Cómo sacudir una sociedad impregnada profunda y radicalmente de maternidad?" (261). Mexican fetishizing of the mother, Aramoni indicates, obstructs the ability to separate from her.

Launching from a shared neo-Freudian platform, Aramoni and F/M each carve out their own territory. Aramoni's, as the preceding quotation suggests, involves gender. The argument that occupies the majority of his book traces the fluctuations of male and female energies in Mexican society. Beneath Aramoni's rhapsodic, non-technical prose, a knowledgeable reader will discern the foundations of his argument in Freud's *Moses and Monotheism*, Paz's *Laberinto*, and Fromm's *The Art of Loving*. The first two, we know, map out the dialectics of matriarchies and patriarchies; Fromm does the same (*Art* 103-6). In their wake, Aramoni embraces the return of the repressed, to which he adds the leitmotif of resurging violence.[21] He tells an expansive story that roughly amounts to the following:

Patriarchal Aztec warrior culture squelched an originally matriarchal pantheon, later reembodied in the Virgin of Guadalupe.[22] Another unsavory

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[21] Aramoni's theme of the violence that runs through Mexican history can be seen as a forerunner of the chapter in Paz's *Posdata* (1970; included in Santí's edition of *Laberinto*, pp. 363-415) titled "Crítica de la pirámide," a reflection on the 1968 massacre in Tlatelolco.

[22] Aramoni, Paz, and Freud's notions of disenfranchised then resurfacing female deities also coincide fascinatingly with Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/ La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987). Anzaldúa's chap. 3 maintains that Indigenous goddesses Coatlicue and Tonantsi, displaced by male Aztec gods, later reemerged, split into a demonized Coatlicue and the Virgin

warrior culture enters the New World through the mentality of the Spanish *caballero andante*, but the wars of Independence and the Mexican Revolution channel it into the Mexican *charro*, an efficacious yet violent combatant like Pancho Villa. Mexican insurrections also give rise to the paradoxes of the *soldadera*. A re-empowered woman, the soldadera is also abused and self-abusive insofar as she caters to men who "desprecian profundamente la vida de su mujer" (238) and exploit her. Matriarchal authority, as we heard above, then crops up again in the vexed idealization of the mother.

The male "narcisissm" and female "masochism" that inhere in the soldadera (241) flow into the final chapter of *Psicoanálisis de un pueblo*, "El machismo," where they become its ruling parameters. Aramoni rails at the hatred, violence, and other antisocial maladies accruing from a narcissistic machismo that entrenched fear of the feminine has seeded. This "hombría" once again rebounds upon women, assuming the contours of what Bermúdez's *Vida* had termed hembrismo. Aramoni denounces the female counterpart of machismo as a composite of masochism and narcissism. He limns the Mexican woman totally bereft of agency who accepts "el papel secundario, como algo establecido e inmodificable" (301), has no outside interests, and vents her sorry situation (all the sorrier given the originally matriarchal cast of Mexican culture) on her children by aggrandizing her role in their lives. Men and women alike thus stand accused of a narcissism that derives from machismo. A root evil, says Aramoni in keeping with Bermúdez, machismo must be eradicated for Mexico to right itself (Aramoni 12, 318). Goading his compatriots into action, the author incriminates Mexico as an immature, aggressive, unfeeling, dependent adolescent (287-88).

Fromm/Maccoby arrive at a similarly dismal assessment of Morelos peasants. Explicitly drawing on *Laberinto*, F/M characterize the male peasants as hermetic, steeped in solitude, and foisting patriarchal standards on women (141-42). What sets F/M's study apart from Paz's (and Ramos, Ramírez, and

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of Guadalupe, a purified Tonantsi. Anzaldúa writes: "The male-dominated Azteca-Mexica culture drove the powerful female deities underground by giving them monstrous attributes and by substituting male deities in their place"; after the Conquest, "the Spaniards and their Church continued to split *Tonantsi*/*Guadalupe*. They desexed *Guadalupe*, taking *Coatlalopeuh*, the serpent/sexuality, out of her. They completed the split begun by the Nahuas by making *la Virgen de Guadalupe*/*Virgen María* into chaste virgins and *Tlazolteotl*/ *Coatlicue*/ *la Chingada* into *putas*; into the Beauties and the Beasts" (28-29). On Anzaldúa's work with Mexican identity discourse (though not Aramoni's), see Alessandri and Stehn. I thank Alan Mendoza Sosa for this reference.

Aramoni's) is its "method for the application of psychoanalysis to social science" (10). Like Bermúdez, F/M eschew historical overviews and "the" Mexican. They concentrate on "the social character of the Mexican peasant . . . the interrelations and interactions between his emotional attitudes rooted in his character and the socioeconomic conditions under which he lives" (6). By social character F/M mean "*a syndrome of character traits which has developed as an adaptation to the economic, social, and cultural conditions common to that group*" (16). The village of Chiconcuac, Morelos gave F/M a laboratory for the cutting-edge theories they are keen to showcase. An underdeveloped, purely mestizo (33) town of some eight hundred inhabitants, located about fifty miles south of Mexico City, Chiconcuac had a low rate of peasant landownership (37, 40, 52) and its residents a generally low level of education (46-48).

A methodology with the earmarks of scientific objectivity serves F/M as the engine of their inquiries. The two social psychologists, neither of them originally from Mexico, went to great lengths to classify and quantify the immaterial and unconscious—that is, the villagers' mindset. F/M devised three ostensibly scientific instruments for their purposes. An interpretative questionnaire, tested and modified as its implementation proceeded, asked such loaded questions as "Describe your idea of a good mother," and "What do you think of 'machismo'?" (227-28). Cleverly contrived Rorschach tests attempted to ferret out villagers' attitudes towards masochism, oppression, punishment, and so on. A highly ingenious (and highly unsuccessful) Thematic Apperception Test had informants invent stories for figures shown to them on cards. F/M painstakingly trained their interviewers to interpret and tabulate the data from the three endeavors, thereby carrying Gómez Robleda's statistical analyses to a logical, if perhaps untenable or even hubristic, terminus.

Be that as it may, F/M's research produces startling disruptions of established topics. Their *Social Character in a Mexican Village* at least partially unyokes patriarchy from machismo: "the patriarchal role is different from sadistic machismo, which is usually a compulsive compensation for feelings of weakness and dependence on women" (147). Then again, and most surprisingly, F/M challenge the dominance of patriarchy in Mexican society. They ask: "why are so many men dominated by women in a society with patriarchal values, where women are brought up to consider themselves inferior?" (148).[23] The answer for F/M lies precisely in the symbiotic

[23] Similarly, Oscar Lewis remarks in his anthropological *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty* (1959) that there have been "some striking changes in family life . . .

relatedness of boys to their mothers, a fixation on the maternal so potent that it can sabotage patriarchal authority and lead to a "broken patriarchal system" (148-49). One can imagine Bermúdez reacting with a mix of satisfaction and incredulity to F/M's declaration of the patriarchy's erosion.

Deep down, at stake in F/M and Aramoni is something more abstract than gender and family dynamics: freedom. The Frommians conceive of freedom as freedom from enmeshment, an independence vital to healthy maturity. Ramos's "complete man" now extends to any individual, regardless of gender. Aramoni writes: "Ser independiente y libre . . . es convertirse en persona madura" (251). Fromm seconds the position: "The mature person has become free from the outside mother and father figures, and has built them up inside" (*Art* 74). Towards that desired outcome, Aramoni and F/M supply prescriptions for an ideal mother, who encourages her children's autonomy (Aramoni 246), and an ideal father, who empowers his children to think for themselves (Fromm, *Art* 74). The whole family must join forces to ensure a freedom that in this stage of lo mexicano has *nothing to do* with Mexico's liberation from foreign models.

The importance that the neo-Freudian Frommians attach to freedom begs the question of whether they are subscribing to the existential psychoanalysis Sartre spells out in *Being and Nothingness* (Part 4, chap. 2, section I). In brief, Sartre weds psychology to choice and freedom. The nerve center of one's life, according to Sartre, is a freely chosen project, a transcendence. An all-engrossing, irreducible "*project of being*" (565), the "total relation to the world by which the subject constitutes himself as a self," underlies an individual's every action (563). Existential psychoanalysis strives to help patients unearth the "*original choice*" that drives their lives (570).

A perfectly anti-Freudian set of constructs, one might say. Yet, can it not also be said that Sartre has replaced one determinism, the Freudian libido, with another, the project (however freely chosen it might be)? While the fallacy may indirectly reinforce Ramírez's decoupling of existentialism and psychoanalysis, Sartre's rejection of the unconscious works against both currents. "Existential psychoanalysis," writes Sartre, "rejects the hypothesis of the unconscious; it makes the psychic act coextensive with consciousness"

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namely: the displacement of the father by the mother as a dominant figure in the family" (14). As did Bermúdez, whose *Vida* Lewis quotes in another connection (2), the anthropologist justifies his focus on family: "Whole family studies bridge the gap between the conceptual extremes of culture at one pole and the individual at the other; we see both culture and personality as they are interrelated in real life" (3).

(570). In barring the unconscious, Sartre's existential psychoanalysis has delegitimated Freud, Ramírez, the Frommians and, by logical extension, the many practitioners of lo mexicano who expose the abiding impact of coloniality on the Mexican psyche.

The inadequacy of Sartrean psychoanalysis for lo mexicano invites us to contemplate the fate of the existentialism that Hiperión had instrumentalized for Mexico. The Frommians' valorizing of "*relatedness* to the world" and of freedom have already demonstrated that existential precepts did not entirely fall off the socio-psychoanalytic, post-Hiperión map. As further proof, F/M proclaim that "maximal well-being is attained only if the person becomes what he potentially is, if he develops . . . an authentic sense of identity" (19), an assertion that their emphasis on maturity and freedom amply orchestrates.

A more full-throated existentialism yet graces the Mexican scene in the form of Fromm's humanistic *philosophical* works. Fromm himself saw a link between his thinking and Sartrean existentialism. In *Man for Himself: An Enquiry into the Psychology of Ethics* (1949), he describes as "existential" matters that lie within our control. Fromm reports that because he had not read Sartre before he penned the first draft of *Man for Himself*, he employed the word "existential" "without reference to the terminology of existentialism"—but greater familiarity with Sartre's writings reassured him that his usage of the word comported with French author's (41). Hence, in *Man for Himself* Fromm issues the unmistakably existentialist programmatic statement that "*there is no meaning to life except the meaning man gives his life by the unfolding of his powers*" (45). The only criterion for the "good," Fromm professes in stream with Sartre's *Existentialism Is a Humanism*, is what is good for humankind (13).

Moreover, Fromm's *The Art of Loving*, written *in* Mexico but not *about* Mexico, recuperates the ethical concerns that distinguish Hiperión's Mexican existentialism from Sartre's. Although Fromm by no means mentions Hiperión, throughout *The Art of Loving* he soulfully advocates altruism, true intersubjectivity, and the Golden Rule. The following emblematic lines confirm Fromm as a latter-day spokesperson for the ethical spirit that Hiperión had adapted from Antonio Caso. Fromm preaches:

> The most fundamental kind of love, which underlies all types of love, is *brotherly love*. By this I mean the sense of responsibility, care, respect, knowledge of any other human being, the wish to further his life. This is the kind of love the Bible speaks of when it says: love thy neighbor as thyself. (78)

Contrasting brotherly love with the impetus to exert control over an Other and transform "him into a thing" (54), Fromm repudiates the war of

subjectivities that, as *Being and Nothingness* argues, governs interpersonal transactions. Anathema to the Sartrean objectification of the Other, resonating with Hiperión's ethics, Fromm's endorsement of solidarity also offers an escape from the endemic solitude that Paz's *Laberinto* blazons. Hiperión's hallmark existentialist components, it emerges, have indirectly found a home in Fromm. And Fromm, as far as one can tell not attuned to Mexican identity discourse, has found in Mexico an unexpectedly propitious playing field for his agenda.

The magnitude of the neo-Freudians for the post-Hiperión Mexican intellectual climate loops us back to Bermúdez, whose *Diferentes razones tiene la muerte* presciently engages the unorthodox Ferenczi and Jung. Just two years later, Bermúdez adds Fromm to her roster of neo-Freudians. She incorporates his *Man for Himself* into her eclectic, socio-psychoanalytic *Vida familiar de los mexicanos*—and commingles Fromm and Zea.[24] Together, Bermúdez announces, the two authors lay out an existentialist escape *into* freedom for Mexicans:

> Partiendo de los principios de Fromm y de Zea, la solución empieza a delinearse: el mexicano, como todo hombre, está en posesión de un número infinito de posibilidades. En uso de su libertad, habrá de eligir aquellas que en forma idónea coadyuven a la realización de su humanidad en un sentido pleno. (121)

Ever the syncretist, Bermúdez begins the last paragraph of *Vida* with a quote from Paz on lo mexicano and one from Fromm on the Golden Rule.

Bermúdez follows the two quotations with her own concluding line, which exhorts readers to live "para los demás, para la familia, para la Patria, para la humanidad" (*Vida* 140). Her peroration gestures to Hiperión's existentialist ethos as well as to the keynotes of subsequent reflections on lo mexicano. Encapsulating the "diferentes razones" of the Mexican identity discourse that have entered our purview, Bermúdez's final words bring this article to an apt close.

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[24] Bermúdez quotes *Ética y psicoanálisis*, the Spanish translation of Fromm's *Man for Himself: An Enquiry into the Psychology of Ethics*.

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