

From Tomóchic to *Las Jornadas Villistas*:
Literary and Cultural Regionalism in Northern Mexico

by

Anne M. McGee

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Romance Languages and Literatures: Spanish)
in The University of Michigan
2008

Doctoral Committee:

Associate Professor Gareth Williams, Chair
Associate Professor Cristina Moreiras-Menor
Associate Professor Gustavo Verdesio
Assistant Professor Lawrence M. La Fountain-Stokes



© Anne M. McGee
All rights reserved
2008

Dedication

To my first friend, teacher, and confidant,
Patricia Ann McGee,
otherwise known as,
Mom.

Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank my advisor and mentor Gareth Williams who has guided me throughout my graduate career. Without his advice, understanding, and suggestions, I may have never realized this project to completion. It was he who introduced me to the work of Nellie Campobello, and who filled my first summer reading list with numerous texts on Pancho Villa and the Mexican Revolution. I appreciate Gareth for always being frank, and pushing me to improve my work. I have always counted on and appreciated his direct and honest critique. In addition, I would like to express my gratitude to the other members of my committee. Cristina Moreiras-Menor has been both my professor and friend from my very first year in graduate school. She has patiently listened to my ideas, and helped me immensely. I will also never forget my first course, “Rethinking Indigeneities” with Gustavo Verdesio. Whether in class or over a cup of coffee (or other beverage), Gustavo has always been ready and willing to participate in the type of lively discussions that have shaped my work at the University of Michigan. Although I met Lawrence (Larry) La Fountain-Stokes in my final years of candidacy, I appreciate his enthusiasm and willingness to contribute to my doctoral work.

I would also like to express my appreciation to everyone in the Department of Romance Languages & Literatures. Our wonderful staff keeps everything running smoothly. I have no idea how they do it. I have also been lucky to work with a number of dedicated and talented educators. Thank you to all the course coordinators, lecturers, and GSIs that make the department the place that it is. In addition, I would like to express my gratitude to my fellow graduate students, especially the members of my cohort, whose insights and opinions have greatly enhanced my understanding of the world. I owe a special debt to my classmate Iris Key for always listening and providing kind words of support.

I must also remember the Spanish language faculty at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo who initially inspired me to pursue my PhD. During my repeated visits to Mexico, I also benefited greatly from the wisdom and hospitality of the Nevárez Saucedo family in Durango. There will always be a place in my heart for Mica, Paty, Hector, and Lupita.

Finally, I would like to thank the Department of Romance Languages & Literatures and the Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies at the University of Michigan for providing me with the institutional and financial support that allowed me to complete this project. In 2006, I received a Humanities Research Fellowship from Rackham that allowed me to conduct research in both Ann Arbor and Mexico. The final chapter of my dissertation would not have been possible without the summer research funds administered by the department, and provided by the graduate school. Ultimately, I was able to finish the writing process thanks to a One-Term Dissertation Fellowship from Rackham.

Table of Contents

Dedication	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Introduction	1
Chapter One Tomóchic: Regional Rebellion, National Novel	13
Historical Context.....	13
Transitional Text or Meaningfully Ambivalent Work?	18
Fanatical Indians or Angry <i>Mestizos</i> ?.....	31
Foundational Fiction or Foundational Disarticulation?	47
The National Project: Support or Disillusionment?.....	58
Conclusions	71
Chapter Two Cartucho: A Regional Inversion of National Myth	73
Historical Context—From <i>Tomóchic</i> to <i>Cartucho</i>	73
Ignored text or suppressed threat?	84
<i>Una novela de la Revolución</i> or its regional inversion?	90
An Inverted View of Revolution or Civil War?.....	114
<i>Una niña de la Revolución</i> or A Regional Foundational Fiction?	135
Conclusiones.....	160
Chapter Three Pancho Villa & Las Jornadas Villistas: Body Politics, Performance, and Regional Identity	164
Historical Context—From <i>Cartucho</i> to <i>Las Jornadas Villistas</i>	164
Pancho Villa and Body Politics: Chihuahua, Parral, or Mexico City?	195
Conclusions	249
Appendix of Figures	252
Bibliography	275

Introduction

On the morning of January 1, 1994, just as the North American Free Trade Agreement took effect (NAFTA) and it appeared that the hegemonic Mexican state had finally realized its goal of national unification and stability, the *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* (EZLN) seized control of the city of San Cristobál de las Casas, violently drawing both national and international attention to the state of affairs in southern Mexico. By naming their movement after General Emiliano Zapata, and thus evoking the image, myth, and memory of this fallen revolutionary leader, the EZLN linked its supposedly national cause to a historically regional struggle that was fundamentally based on land reform and local autonomy. Although Zapata was eventually appropriated as a national hero, during his lifetime his followers predominantly came from rural southern communities where *Zapatismo* claimed its greatest victories.¹ In this respect, the modern *zapatista* movement is also inherently regional in nature. Yet, much like the 1968 student movement which resulted in the infamous Tlatelolco massacre, the 1994 *zapatista* uprising revealed many of the persistent inconsistencies and unresolved contradictions in the Mexican national project at a critical moment in the country's development. In this way, a geographically limited or regional occurrence greatly affected the nation and exposed the limitations of the

¹ It is important to note that although an equestrian statue was erected in his honor in Mexico City, Zapata's remains were never relocated to the national revolutionary monument in the nation's capital like those of his fellow revolutionary generals from other parts of the country. While I discuss this case in more detail in chapter three, ultimately neither Zapata's family nor his faithful followers in his home state of Morelos would consent to the removal of his bones from his home territory. Regardless of the central state's claims, he remained a highly regional figure.

central state's control. By appropriating Zapata's regional legacy for its own use, the EZLN seemed to respond to the claim that the promise of the Mexican Revolution had never been realized, both in the South, and the nation as a whole. Although it ultimately failed to spark a more widespread rebellion, the emergence of the EZLN demonstrated the revolutionary potential of relatively marginal and/or regional populations. Just as Mexico prepared to enter a new century characterized by increased globalization, regional memory and figures such as Zapata continued to constitute a real threat, both to national and global integration. These modern *zapatistas* recognized the potential power of regional memory and appropriated it for their own use. As I will prove over the course of this dissertation, the *Zapatistas* are not the only group or dissident faction to exploit regional difference in the Mexican context.²

While the EZLN and its leader Subcomandante Marcos heralded its cause as a national one, the central state and the (national) mass media attempted to limit its potential impact by marginalizing it as a purely regional problem, that is to say as pertaining to what Thomas Benjamin describes as one of many "other" Mexicos that "geographic, climatic, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity combined with a variety of economic patterns and forms of political administration" have produced throughout the Mexican national territory (4). In this manner, the state attempted to negate the importance of the EZLN outside of its regional context by ideologically placing it as "other," that is, as a purely local and thus isolated phenomenon to be dealt with

² In this work, I do not intend to argue that regional identity has primordial origins, as like the "nation" it is also a construction, an imagined community. Yet, also like the nation, history (or more accurately particular histories) serves as the raw material, that is, as the principal building block of regional identity. Just as it is possible to manipulate, appropriate, and challenge history, regionalism is also malleable.

accordingly.³ Such a strategy implicitly privileges the conceptual framework of “nation” and modern nationalism over the concept of “region,” which despite this subjugation, continues to constitute a “critical component in the study of Mexican history and culture” (Parra 6). Thus, while the center attempted to disarm the revolutionary potential of the EZLN through such marginalization, in this dissertation I argue that the peripheral location of the regional, or the *patria chica*, provides groups such as the *Zapatistas* with an alternative space of resistance from within, especially given the fact that regional and local identities have long been key unifying factors behind popular mobilizations in Mexico. After all, the Mexican Revolution was in large part a series of local reactions or rebellions against the concrete effects of increased centralization. For instance, both *Villismo* and *Zapatismo*, which eventually achieved national prominence during the Revolution, began (and similarly ended) as local manifestations of regionally defined disputes. Historically, local attachment, that is, regionalism and identification with a specific *patria chica* has been a stronger force than nationalism in Mexico and has uneasily coexisted alongside the central state, even during times of relative stability, such as the Porfiriato. In my discussion, I find Max Parra’s definition of regionalism as “a self-conscious, cultural, political, and emotional attachment to a specific territorial homeland within the space of the nation, sometimes called the ‘*patria chica*’” particularly useful (7). However, I expand upon Parra’s concept, as in my opinion regionalism also entails individual and/or collective identification with specific economic structures and historically-based “realities.” In fact, this space can function as much more than a simple homeland within the space of the nation, as the *patria chica* (regionalism) can constitute

³ This is not to say, however, that the central state did not take the EZLN seriously, as evidenced by the government’s (and hence the military’s) rapid physical response, but rather that it effected a concentrated effort to contain a potentially dangerous challenge to its national/international legitimacy.

an alternative space or vantage point from which one can resist, or in a limited manner, escape from the defining grasp of the nation (from within).⁴ Thus, regionalism can be a point of friction and conflict with the nation and nationalism. What is more, as the forces of globalization increasingly weaken nationalism by turning individual citizens into global consumers, regional identification or the space of the *patria chica* provides both the individual and the collective with a refuge, and potential point of resistance.

Despite its disputed status and limited success, the EZLN made it clear that Mexican national integration was far from complete and that the regionalism typical of the Revolution, or at the very least its memory, continue to be a source (or perhaps a resulting manifestation) of economic, political, and cultural friction between the center and the periphery, thus making the “region” a potentially revealing level of analysis. Thus, in the years following the 1994 uprising, southern Mexico (especially Chiapas) became the primary focus of countless academic studies from across a variety of disciplines, and the regional perspective in general received new found attention. Suddenly, a plethora of Western researchers, including economists, cultural anthropologists, historians, political scientists, and environmentalists, were drawn to the latest epicenter of indigenous rebellion and civil unrest in Latin America. International volunteers and human rights observers flocked to this long ignored part of the world, and the area even benefited economically as cultural and ecotourism to Chiapas and the Yucatan (which commodified regional difference) increased dramatically in the years following the 1994 rebellion. Overall, however, this renewed focus on southern Mexico

⁴ This economic aspect of regionalism particularly explains how NAFTA came to represent a threat to regional southern identity, by seeking refuge in the legacy of *Zapatismo* the members of the EZLN are able to resist the forces of the center (and hence globalization) during a moment of impending change and national redefinition.

and the figure of Emiliano Zapata left a noticeable gap in the modern study of regionalism in the Mexican context, especially in regards to the country's northern territory.⁵ After examining the situation in Chiapas, and reading numerous examples of *Villista* revolutionary literature, I found myself wondering about the state of regionalism in the north: Did local attachment continue to be a source of conflict between the region and the central state as in the south? Was there perhaps a new brand of self-proclaimed *villista*? Or, was the central state ultimately successful in its attempt to integrate northern rural masses into the post-revolutionary nation? Ultimately, I failed to find any clear answers in the published material on the matter. For this reason, my dissertation focuses on an area of Mexico that has not been sufficiently studied from this regional point of reference, at least not in the contemporary context. My discussion concentrates on the territory commonly referred to as the "*cuna de Villismo*" which is comprised of the northern states of Chihuahua and Durango. If Zapata continued to inspire (or be used by) opposition groups in his home territory, what about the case of his Northern ally and counterpart, Pancho Villa?⁶ After all, *Villismo* began as a grassroots movement and it is generally agreed that no other revolutionary mobilization in Mexico enjoyed the same level of popular support (Parra 1). Yet, *Villismo* owed a large part of its popular success to its association with a specific *patria chica*. In some ways, there was nothing novel

⁵ This is not to say that the North has been completely ignored by the academic community. In fact, border and transborder studies have become quite prevalent in recent years. However, I have found that such work predominantly focuses on cultural hybridity and the relationship between this geographical area and the U.S. My interest lies more in the changing regional/national dynamic.

⁶ Villa and Zapata are commonly accepted as parallel figures. Unlike other revolutionary generals such as Carranza or Obregón, they were uneducated, self-made men with large popular followings in their particular regions. In addition, both men were ambushed and assassinated by their enemies. Allies during much of the Revolution, the two were perhaps eternally joined in the national imaginary by a notable photo of the two men taken in Mexico City on December 6, 1914. In the image, Villa is seated in the presidential chair in the capital's national palace alongside Zapata. It was and is a testament and visual icon of the revolutionary potential of the Mexican people. Today, the image, which was widely reproduced in newspapers, can be purchased in souvenir shops, public markets, and continues to be readily available over the internet.

about Villa or *Villismo*, which developed in a territory with a long established tradition of militant regionalism that had resisted central control from colonial times. While his accomplishments were unprecedented, Villa was not the first local caudillo in this northern area to take up arms against the state. If *Villismo* is part of a larger history of provincial resistance, what are its origins and what happened to this regionalism during the post-revolutionary period? Has it taken on new forms, as in the case of *Zapatismo*? Or has it disappeared under the forces of nationalism and increased globalization? While a number of valuable (and relatively recent) historical texts, including Friedrich Katz's *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*, explore the development of *Villismo* and the Revolution in northern Mexico from a regional perspective, I have yet to find a definitive study of northern regionalism that looks beyond the temporal limits of the Revolution itself and the constraints of traditional historiography.⁷ The case is not notably different in the realm of literary studies, which has long privileged the nation over the periphery. Even more recent works, such as Max Parra's notable text, *Writing Pancho Villa's Revolution: Rebels in the Literary Imagination of Mexico* (2005), is limited in scope. While Parra successfully examines the relationship between literary production and historical context in his analysis of the cultural and political construction of *Villismo* in post-revolutionary discourse, his detailed discussion effectively ends in 1940 with the presidential administration of Lázaro Cárdenas. The four pages of his final chapter "Villismo's Legacy" do not sufficiently address the literary or historical implications of *Villismo*, and do not discuss more recent manifestations (literary or otherwise) of this legacy. This, however, does not represent a lacking or a deficiency in Parra's work, but

⁷ Given the nature of historiography, most historical studies of the region focus on a specific, rather limited time period such as the Revolution or the Porfiriato.

rather opens the door to further research to discover those works or discourses that “have been silenced or forgotten in the making of modern Mexico” (Parra 140). Thus, my analysis will build upon the work of previous historical and literary studies in order to more closely examine the resistant discourse of an oft-ignored *patria chica*.

One common theme that I have discovered in the historical studies dedicated to Chihuahua and Durango is the overwhelming amount of attention paid to the figure of Pancho Villa and the Revolution in direct isolation from other time periods. As the intent of this study is to more closely examine the historically complex relationship between northern regionalism and nationalism, and ultimately track the modern evolution of *Villismo*, I find it necessary to focus my discussion on three distinct moments in the region’s history when regionalism has been effectively utilized as a space of resistance. While there are numerous examples of such “moments of resistance,” I ultimately limited my selection to events which resulted in the production of discourse, either in the form of literary works or alternative “texts” and performances. This left me with three key events that allow for the analysis of northern regionalism from the time of the Porfiriato onward: the Tomóchic rebellion (1891-1892), the Mexican Revolution, and the emergence of *Las Jornadas Villistas* (1994). The goal of this dissertation is not only to reveal recent manifestations of regional identity, but also to explore the historical development of regionalism and its changing position during the post-revolutionary period. In order to understand how regional heroes and culture can continue to challenge the central state and counteract the effects of globalization, it is first necessary to explore earlier instances of such resistance.

The first chapter of this dissertation focuses on the Tomóchic rebellion (1891-1892), which prior to the Mexican Revolution represented the Porfiriato's greatest military defeat.⁸ Tomóchic was a relatively isolated community located in the western mountain district of Guerrero in the state of Chihuahua. Like other villagers in this region, the *tomochitecos* had historically enjoyed a large degree of autonomy and were skilled fighters who had defended their territory from outsider aggressors for generations. Thus, when increased centralization threatened their regional culture and way of life, the *tomochitecos* took up arms against the state. While such uprisings were not uncommon during the Porfiriato, the events of Tomóchic are distinct as ultimately the *tomochitecos* refused to recognize the authority of the central government and did not abandon their regional identity. As a result, the rebels (around 100 individuals) were brutally massacred by a federal contingent of over 1,200 men. The events of Tomóchic are particularly important to the study of regionalism, as the rebellion was the direct result of increased centralization and in many ways constituted a precursor to the Mexican Revolution and the development of *Villismo*. In addition, the uprising inspired the publication of a serialized novel, *Tomóchic*, in a newspaper of the opposition in Mexico City. This work, which was written by a participant in the massacre (Heriberto Frías), offers an alternative history of the event which clearly contradicts the regime's "official" version of the rebellion and its suppression. While the state heralded it as a spectacular triumph against a group of violent, fanatical Indians, *Tomóchic* portrayed it as a barbaric, state-sanctioned massacre of a brave, but perhaps naïve group of northern mestizos. For

⁸ Although the *tomochitecos* were eventually massacred by a punitive expedition of over twelve hundred soldiers, they defeated an entire battalion of the regular army and eluded capture for nearly a year before their final defeat. In addition, federal troops were never able to overtake the *tomochitecos* on the battlefield. They won by starving their enemies for nearly two weeks, and eventually setting fire to their community.

the novel's protagonist, the federal troops (including himself) and the rebels are both victims of a morally corrupt Mexican state that has enacted a campaign against its own people. The text, which anticipates the emergence of the *novela de la Revolución*, directly criticizes the regime and its "uncivilized" attack on northern regionalism. Although *Tomóchic* does advocate the incorporation of the *tomochitecos* into the nation, its alternative history reveals the violence and barbarism upon which the national project is based. The text also offers the *tomochitecos* a discursive space of resistance that official history denied them. By looking at this text in more detail, I will explore the relationship between regionalism and nationalism in northern Mexico at a time when the state was beginning to challenge the continued existence of regional identity for perhaps the first time.

While the Tomóchic rebellion resulted in the immediate production of a singular literary work, the Mexican Revolution inspired an entirely new genre commonly referred to as *la novela de la Revolución*. In many ways, this revolutionary literature became a discursive battlefield for competing views of the Revolution, and representations of Villa (and hence regionalism) were an integral part of this debate. In fact, so many authors wrote about the theme of Villa and *Villismo* during the period of national reconstruction that Max Parra found it necessary to divide these works into three distinct periods which reflect the changing status of *Villismo* and regionalism within the national project. For the purpose of my study, I chose to focus on a text produced during the second stage of *villista* literature (1929-1935) when works began to appropriate a more radical view of the Revolution and Villa which was based on "the popular myths of regional culture" (Parra 8). Thus, the second chapter of this dissertation examines Nellie Campobello's

text, *Cartucho: Relatos de la lucha en el Norte* which presents a uniquely regional view of the Revolution. Unlike typical *novelas de la revolución*, which were primarily produced by intellectuals, politicians, and former soldiers, *Cartucho* is the work of a woman who experienced the Revolution as an adolescent in the city of Parral in southern Chihuahua. Rather than focus on the glorious years of 1913-1914 when *Villismo* was at its height, the novel presents a series of *estampas* or individual verbal portraits that center on the most violent period of the Revolution (1916-1920) when both Villa and his *patria chica* were directly attacked by the central “revolutionary” state. Ultimately, the work’s child narrator (Nellie), who serves as a compiler of oral history and a repository of local memory and identity, gives a voice to the *vencidos* of the Revolution in the North. Through her memories, she attempts to recuperate her lost regional identity and resurrect her fallen *paisanos*. This discourse challenges the foundational myth upon which the modern “revolutionary” Mexican state is based. Rather than looking to the future and the central government for the realization of revolutionary ideals, Campobello turned her gaze to the past and told the story no one else wanted to tell in a work which represents a regional inversion of the *novela de la revolución*. Perhaps this explains why this particular work was long ignored by the literary community. Ultimately, a close reading of the text reveals a great deal about the national politics of the post-revolutionary era when *Villismo* and other aspects of regional cultural practice and identity were rejected by the state’s paternalistic cultural project, thus converting them into spaces of resistance.

As evidenced by the emergence of the EZLN, regional heroes and cultures continue to play an important role in the Mexican imaginary, and can even prove instrumental in transforming the system. For this reason, the third and final chapter of

this dissertation examines more recent manifestations of *Villismo* and northern regionalism. Of particular interest is the continuing battle over Villa's physical remains. Although officially his body was transferred to the national *Monumento a la Revolución* in 1976, today many claim that the general never left the municipal cemetery of Parral, Chihuahua. In fact, in 1994 local authorities initiated an annual ten-day celebration of *Villismo*, known as *Las Jornadas Villistas*, which clearly place Parral as the center of the general's death cult and the true location of his final resting place. *Las Jornadas* are organized around the anniversary of the *caudillo's* death, and includes numerous performances of *Villismo*, which culminate in the public reenactment of the general's assassination, wake, and burial in Parral. It is through these performances that the region is able to effectively reclaim the general's body and memory for its own use. While Villa's cadaver is notably absent in *Cartucho*, in recent years it has become an important symbol of regional authority and legitimacy. In fact, it has been transformed into a powerful regional relic that directly defies the central state. Yet, *Las Jornadas Villistas* are not an entirely "popular" expression of regionalism as the event is sponsored and organized by both state and local governments. In this way, regional authorities are able to utilize performance and public spectacle in order to recuperate and reaffirm a regional identity of their own creation. Rather than inspiring an armed struggle, Villa, and more specifically his murder, has been manipulated in order to promote "cultural" tourism in an event that includes carnival rides, rock concerts, and a motorcycle rally. Considering that *Las Jornadas* began in 1994, a mere six months after the Zapatista uprising, is this celebration merely reflective of the state's attempt to control the revolutionary potential of Villa's memory, and perhaps prevent another Chiapas? Or is it merely a coincidence

that this state-sanctioned event, which is not the first commemoration of Villa's death, was initiated in 1994? Is this merely the continuation of the struggle between regionalism and nationalism? Or has globalization taken the place of nationalization? After all, Villa is heralded as the only *caudillo* of the Revolution to simultaneously confront the forces of both the United States and Mexico. Thus, Villa defended the *patria chica* against the same outside aggressors that continue to threaten the cultural, economic, and political autonomy of the region. Through a detailed analysis, it will become clear that *Las Jornadas Villistas* and the battle over Villa's remains are not merely additional manifestations of regional resistance to national control, as evident in *Tomóchic* and *Cartucho*, but also represent the region's attempt to contend with the threat of globalization.

Chapter One

Tomóchic: Regional Rebellion, National Novel

Historical Context

The groundwork for the Mexican Revolution, and in many ways for the *novela de la Revolución*, was laid between 1880 and 1910.¹ It was during this period that regional power and identity in Northern Mexico fell under the direct attack of centralization as the region was irrevocably altered by the regime's program of "*Libertad, Orden y Progreso*." While frontier states such as Chihuahua had formerly enjoyed relative isolation, and thus independence, the expansion of the railroad and telegraph brought federal authority and troops to their doorstep. By 1885 the state capital was connected to both Mexico City and the markets of the United States by rail. Raw materials and products produced in the North could be easily exported, while military troops could arrive to quash any possible revolts and/or strikes in a matter of a few days. In addition, the central government began to appropriate and sell off extensive tracts of supposedly unclaimed, empty government land to the highest bidder, that is, to rich nationals or to foreign investors.² Finally, with the U.S. capture of the Apache leader Geronimo in 1885, the area became free of the incessant Indian raids that had previously made the economic

¹ While Ralph E. Warner, in his *Historia de la novela mexicana en el siglo XIX*, cites René Avilés as perhaps the first to place the novel *Tomóchic* as the predecessor to the *novela de la revolución* in a 1948 article, six years previously E.R. Moore published a piece in the *Modern Language Forum* entitled "Heriberto Frías and the Novel of the Mexican Revolution."

² Overnight the federal government was able to sell or even give away lands that had previously been open to everyone for hunting, grazing, and forestry. Surveying companies were given a third of the territory that they charted, and the other two-thirds were sold at ridiculously low prices. It was, thus, in the interest of the surveyors (and the government) to ignore the property rights of military colonies and Chihuahua's free villagers, many of which had been granted during the Colonial period.

exploitation of the North next to impossible. Together, these developments encouraged the influx of foreign investment in mining and commercial agriculture that characterized this period. As Mexico became more and more entrenched in the world of dependent capitalism, the state was willing to do anything to protect its interests and those of outside investors.

While the modernization and increased nationalization of Chihuahua benefited the central government and lined the wallets of local elites such as the members of the Terrazas clan, the lives of the area's military colonists and free villagers were irrevocably altered, as their very identity (regional identity) and way of life was threatened. Historically, Chihuahua was a part of the periphery and was relatively unaffected by the biopolitics of the state. During the colonial period, the Spanish showed little interest in the North, then known as *Nueva Vizcaya*, until large deposits of silver were discovered in the areas of current day Chihuahua City and Parral. The inhabitants of *Nueva Vizcaya*, as well as the local government and economy did not, however, play a subservient role to Mexico City as the region was geographically isolated from the rest of Mexico, making the economic, political, and social administration of the territory difficult. In addition, the presence of the Apaches, whose constant raids and overall military prowess as guerilla fighters proved too much for central forces, made the defense of large haciendas and mining operations next to impossible. Thus, the Spanish, and later the Mexican authorities depended upon military colonists and peasant landholders to fight the Apaches and defend the territory from foreign threats. These settlers were even granted certain benefits by the central state, and by the time of the Porfiriato the inhabitants of the region had a long established tradition of relative self-rule, and land rights that they or their

ancestors had earned by defending the national territory, and thus civilization, from the “barbarians.”³ In effect, they considered themselves to be national heroes.

The regional identity that resulted from this constant state of war was much different than that of central Mexico, as detailed by Friedrich Katz: “The society they developed was poor but largely egalitarian. Chihuahuans were self-reliant and self-confident, with a fierce sense of pride in being able to maintain themselves in the face of such adversity” (14). In this way, the political culture of Chihuahua was not compatible with the increased centralization and programs of modernization that the Porfiriato set in motion. Accustomed to the independence afforded by frontier life, that included a weak church and state, not all Chihuahuans were ready to give up control (of their land, government, economy, religion, and defense) to the national regime, which was often viewed with the same distrust attributed to foreigners. As a result, localized rebellions occurred throughout the state, mostly in isolated rural areas, as new governmental policies clashed with regionalism. Thus, the North was notably different from the rest of Mexico in that its inhabitants ascribed to a regionalism, a *patria chica* that left them well prepared to resist national integration.⁴

It is in this context that one such revolt occurred in the isolated community of Tomóchic (1891-1892) located in the western mountain district of Guerrero in the state of

³ According to Friedrich Katz, the Spanish encouraged migration to the area by offering extraordinary benefits to anyone (Spaniards, *criollos*, *mestizos*, and Indians) who was willing to inhabit the area’s military colonies. These peasant freeholders were given large tracts of land, were exempt from paying taxes for a period of ten years, and (in direct contrast to Indian and even mestizo peasants in central and southern Mexico) were given the full rights of Spanish citizenship (12).

⁴ This does not mean that rebellions against the government did not occur in the rest of Mexico, but rather that *norteños* were particularly prepared for armed resistance due to their long tradition of Indian fighting and defending the northern borders from foreign invasion. In addition, they had a history of individual independence and land ownership that was relatively unknown in other areas.

Chihuahua.⁵ Like other northern *serrano* settlements, “Tomóchic had a greater capacity for resistance than peasant communities down south, and officials offended them at their peril” (Knight, *Rethinking* 378). For this reason, what started as a number of minor local disputes in a small village of around two hundred inhabitants quickly became a full blown rebellion that resulted in the Porfirian army’s greatest defeat prior to the Mexican Revolution. This obscure settlement’s economic and social grievances were typical of this period when the government was tightening its grip on the North. Beginning in 1884 the state’s powers over villages were strengthened and district administrators were no longer elected by local citizens, but rather appointed to their posts. In addition, the mayors of district capitals were no longer elected, but appointed by the state governor starting in 1891. These changes directly affected the people of Tomóchic, as many of the causes of the revolt were related to their conflicts with the mayor, Juan Ignacio Chávez, an outsider named to the post by a local strongman. In addition, the *tomochitecos*, like other rebels in Western Chihuahua, may have been pawns in Luis Terraza’s campaign to remove Governor Carillo from power.⁶ Unlike other revolts, however, the rebels of Tomóchic were inspired by their faith in Teresa Urrea, the so-called Saint of Cabora (a young epileptic girl in Sonora who was said to perform miracles and have visions), and thus refused to surrender and recognize the legitimacy of the

⁵ In both English and Spanish language sources, the name of this community is spelled in a number of ways. Given that the final “c” of most words in the Tarahumara language are dropped, many scholars spell it as “Tomochi,” (both with and without a written accent) while others utilize the more common “Tomochic,” without the written accent. For my purposes I will use “Tomóchic,” though in direct citations I will be faithful to the original. Regardless of the spelling, however, they all refer to the same locale. In addition, I will refer to the inhabitants of this settlement as *tomochitecos*, though they are interchangeably referred to as *tomoches* in a number of works.

⁶ This theory is first suggested by historian Francisco Almada in his work *Rebelión de Tomochi* and is even cited by Friedrich Katz in his study of Pancho Villa. Many other historians, however, such as Vanderwood, claim that there is no evidence to support this claim. Regardless, Governor Corillo’s handling of Tomóchic, which Terrazas criticized him for, did lead to his removal from the post of governor. Thus, Terrazas did benefit from the events of Tomóchic despite what his level of involvement actually was in this particular rebellion.

authorities. After defeating an entire battalion of the regular army, and embarrassing another, President Díaz sent over twelve hundred men to massacre the men of Tomóchic (around a hundred individuals), who due to their superior weaponry and marksmanship were able to hold off defeat for nearly two weeks. Ultimately, the federal troops did not win on the battlefield, but rather by starving their enemies and setting fire to their church and homes. Thus, the government censored national print stories about the state-sanctioned massacre of Tomóchic, while officially heralding it as a triumph.

Despite this censorship, however, a second lieutenant in the 9th Battalion, Heriberto Frías, who witnessed and participated in the final campaign against the *tomochitecos*, anonymously published a serialized novel, today known simply as *Tomóchic*, that is based on his experiences in the pages of *El Demócrata*, a newspaper of the opposition in Mexico City, between March 14 and April 14, 1893.⁷ Although the original manuscript, printed under the title “*¡Tomochic!*” *Episodios de Campaña, Relación escrita por un testigo presencial*, is not as openly critical of the Porfiriato as in its later editions, President Díaz did close down *El Demócrata* after the novel’s publication and the author barely escaped with his life after being formally charged and tried for allegedly revealing military secrets.⁸ Disillusioned by war and the project of the nation, the novel represents the author’s melancholic attempt to deal with the horrors he

⁷ Though I will discuss various editions of this work, all citations from *Tomóchic* will come from the Mexico City: Conaculta, 2002 edition unless indicated otherwise.

⁸ The real life drama that followed the publication of the first edition of *Tomóchic* in *El demócrata*, as Díaz attempted to gain evidence against Frías, is quite complex and more closely examined in Antonio Saborit’s *Los doblados de Tomóchic*. While Saborit suggests that Frías is not the actual author of the work, most researchers see the author’s initial denial as just an attempt to protect himself from prosecution, though his friend at *El Demócrata* who claimed authorship to the military tribunal, Joaquín Clausell, may have helped edit the initial work. If Frías was not the actual author, why would he have reedited the work four times (total of five editions in his lifetime), including his name in the third edition printed in 1899 in Barcelona? In addition, Frías went on to publish a number of other novels that feature the same protagonist as *Tomóchic*.

witnessed and actually participated in during the ten days of the campaign against the population of Tomóchic. While he does not embrace the cause of the *tomochitecos*, the author does admire their bravery, as they honorably fight the allegedly more civilized federal troops who fail to respect even the basic rules of war, while ultimately resorting to barbaric and uncivilized tactics. This criticism of the military represents an attack on the regime itself. For the novel's protagonist, Miguel Mercado (also a second lieutenant in the 9th Battalion), the federal troops (including himself) and the rebels are both victims of the morally corrupt Mexican state. Ultimately, Mercado questions the authority of the nation and the state's process of nation-building as he futilely searches for his own redemption. Though fictionalized, Frías' work clearly contradicted the "official" version of the Tómoich rebellion, and thus represented a threat to the state. By looking at the text in more detail, I will be able to explore the complex relationship between regionalism and nationalism in northern Mexico at a time when the state was beginning to challenge the continued existence of regional identity. This marks the moment when allegiance to the *patria chica* becomes dangerously incompatible with the national project for perhaps the first time.

Transitional Text or Meaningfully Ambivalent Work?

Tomóchic presents a unique challenge when one attempts to place it within a particular genre. While most scholars merely consult the final version of the work, it did change quite a bit, especially in terms of length and content, from the original.⁹ While the first and second editions were composed of twenty episodic, untitled chapters with no

⁹ It is not within the scope of this work to give an adequate analysis of the original in comparison to the four reedited editions. Brown presents an interesting discussion in *Heriberto Frías* and I have read that a critical edition that accurately notes the editing of each version may be coming out (tentatively from Porrúa) soon. The 1968 Porrúa edition attempts this, but is far from complete.

illustrations or critical additions (introduction or prologue), the final version has forty-two titled chapters, which in some printings are accompanied by illustrations or photos and introductory/critical material. Interestingly, even the title of the text varies from one edition to another. These differences can affect the reader's perception of the novel. For example, the original printing in *El Demócrata* and the second edition (1894) do not include the name of the author, indicating that what one is about to read is a clandestine account, the journalistic testimony of an eyewitness who for his own safety cannot be identified. Though the second edition, printed in Rio Grande, Texas, actually appeared in book form, this text tries to escape being classified as a novel, that is, as a subjective work of fiction. On the cover of the 1894 edition, the text announces to the reader, immediately following the title, that it is a "recopilación de los artículos publicados en 'El Demócrata.'" At the time of its publication, *Tomóchic* was a popular success thanks in part to the dramatic trial against the "alleged" author. Thus, despite its fictional characteristics, readers were well aware that the text revealed supposed "military secrets" for which a man almost lost his life. According to Antonio Saborit, "both the powers that be and the average reader of the day would tend to interpret a narrative like this literally" despite the use of a fictional protagonist because "events of the bloody military campaign precluded any accusation of implausibility" (Introduction xvi). For the public, *Tomóchic* described the gruesome reality of war that was lacking in the state's "official" news stories. In this way, the novel allows the regional, or at least an alternative artistic representation of this culture, to escape state censorship. Thus, for perhaps the first time the national audience became aware of the true nature of the state's military confrontations with the North. Other rebellions that were much larger than *Tomóchic*,

such as that of the Yaqui or Cruzob Indians, did not make such a mark on Mexican consciousness, or national memory (Dabove 355). While the *tomochitecos* do not have an authentic voice in the work, this quasi-testimonial text does offer a dissident memory or record of the past, in that it intimately records (though fictionally) the final days and death of the rebels, thus momentarily robbing the state of its monopoly over death and violence. This alone is revolutionary. While Frías participated on the side of the military, he and his protagonist at least prevent the erasure of the *tomochitecos*, as *Tomóchic* embeds the bodies of these regional rebels in the national imaginary. Here we see proof of Walter Benjamin's assertion that "even the dead" of history are not safe when the enemy wins (255). By attempting to go beyond the bonds of the fictional, this text does question the official version of events, and perhaps even fans "the spark of hope in the past" (255). Thus, the early editions were considered to be testimonial, at least to average readers.

In later editions, the journalistic origin of the novel appears as a mere footnote, as the work fully embraces its fictional, and indeed historical, status. For example, the author changed the title of the fourth (1906) and fifth (1911) editions to *Tomóchic: Novela histórica mexicana* and even includes a portrait of himself, not as a young soldier that could have witnessed such atrocities, but as a distinguished, middle-aged, spectacle-wearing gentleman. It is easier to imagine this intellectual author drinking tea in the parlor of a home in Mexico City than trekking across the sierra of Chihuahua, while secretly writing an account of his mission. In this way, the work finds its long-lost father. To further legitimize the novel, an introductory study by José Ferrel, "La novela nacional," also appears in these texts, thus characterizing *Tomóchic* as a literary work that

merits analysis. This transformation from clandestine testimonial to novel comes full circle with the eventual inclusion of overly dramatic dime-novel illustrations and photos in the fifth and final edition of the work. Curiously, the first English translation of *Tomóchic*, which was published in 2006, did not take the modern title, but yet another variation, *The Battle of Tomochic: Memoirs of a Second Lieutenant*. This gives the false impression that the text is written as a work of memory by an officer years after the events occurred, and would thus include selective remembrances and reflections influenced by years of life experience in a type of semiautobiographical fiction. In addition, the modified title limits the rebellion to a single skirmish, thus reducing its historical importance as a larger, more comprehensive movement. Although an informational introduction by Antonio Saborit is included, there is no translator's note that might explain this modification of the title.

Overall, this transformation has remarkably robbed *Tomóchic* of its status as “testimonial,” while actually placing it within the scope of official history, as Ralph Warner explains: “la novela (*Tomóchic*) es el **documento social** más lleno de viveza de la época” (113, emphasis is my own). Thus, a work that had previously been considered scandalous by the state is now accepted as canonical, that is to say, as a document important to the nation and its history. The edition that I am using for this analysis was even published by the *Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes* (CONACULTA) as part of the “*Clásicos para Hoy*” series. To explain this abrupt turn around, one only needs to consider, as Benjamin argues, that history is written by the victor, who “participates to this day in the triumphal procession in which the present rulers step over those who are lying prostrate” (256). Thus, following the Mexican Revolution the

Porfiriato suddenly became the enemy in the newly reedited official history. *Tomóchic* is one of the spoils carried along in this procession; it is one of the “cultural treasures” that the new rulers, that is, the revolutionary state could appropriate and reinterpret for its own use (256). Given that regionalism was a major threat to the early revolutionary government, it is no surprise that the state embraced such a work for its own cause. Accepting and canonizing *Tomóchic* places militant regionalism and its memory in a safe place for the state; that is on a shelf in history. As all such “cultural treasures,” however, the work itself is tainted by acts of barbarism. The author was a part of the Porfiriato’s war machine, and *Tomóchic* would not exist if it were not for the military campaign and subsequent massacre that inspired it.

Critical studies of *Tomóchic* vary widely in how they classify the work within the Mexican literary tradition. For example, in his article “Heriberto Frías, a Mexican Zola,” James W. Brown argues that the text is a naturalist novel that “owes undeniable parentage to *La Débâcle*” (467). This argument, however, is not original to Brown, as during the trial against Frías the editor of *El Demócrata*, José Clausell, testified that he himself had appropriated the work of Zola and simply modified it to the Mexican context with information acquired from the official news coverage of the rebellion. There are, in fact, many similarities between the two books, as Frías’ writing concerns a historical event, notably a war, and contains several naturalist scenes and characters. The ending of the novel is particularly reminiscent of the French text. Despite displaying common characteristics, however, I would not classify *Tomóchic* as a clearly naturalist novel as it lacks certain necessary elements, as Raquel Thiercelin-Mejías argues: “Pero no encontramos en esta novela esas minuciosas descripciones capaces de reproducir la

realidad de manera objetiva, científica, al modo naturalista” (166). The author’s description of nature and the landscape of Chihuahua are more reminiscent of a romantic novel, and the constantly melancholic, frustrated, and sickly protagonist Miguel Mercado is the prototype of the romantic hero. Yet, it does not squarely fall into the limitations of this classification either, as its realistic battle scenes betray these romantic tendencies.

While acknowledging its naturalist and romantic characteristics, many critics focus on the modern or realist tendencies in *Tomóchic*. Saborit sees Frías’ use of an “immediate, contemporary reality” as “a tentative incursion into the modern novel itself” (Introduction xvii). Long before the appearance of works such as *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote, Frías took what for him was not a historical battle, but a recent occurrence and fictionalized it for publication in a newspaper. Unfortunately, readers of the time were not accustomed to this and it has since been mistakenly taken as a historical novel. This is especially evident in the 1911 edition where José Ferrel claims that the novel is an accurate representation of the experiences of the author where “la verdad no pasa por ningún tamiz; entra con su crudo y sano esplendor original; y, sin más restricción que la impuesta por el decoro y la cultura” (4). Clearly, Ferrel ignores that a novel is by nature a work of fiction, and by putting pen to paper the author creates his own subjective truth which passes through many *tamices*, the least of which are decorum and culture. Frías makes little effort, for instance, to hide his scorn of Díaz that has inevitably shaped the text, especially the later edition that Ferrel introduces. Perhaps this confusion stems from the realism of the work, as the narrator gives almost anthropological descriptions of day to day life among the troops and on the battlefield. According to Moore, this realism goes beyond the description of the revolution, and

actually delves into its meaning: “He described civil strife from the point of view of the man on the battle field, the man who sees men die around him, who feels the wounds made by their last words as keenly as those that mark the pathway of a bullet” (20). Yet, this realism does not go far beyond the battlefield, as the narrator often slips into romantic exaltations of nature or scenes of sentimental exaggeration, as Ralph Warner describes: “Cuando trata Frías de hacer literatura, emplea un estilo afectado que borra el efecto realista de su narración” (113). Clearly, *Tomóchic* is not typical of other texts published during the Porfiriato. It does not follow established models, and its narration is often characterized as unbalanced and unrefined. In *The Mexican Historical Novel: 1826-1910*, John Lloyd Read even says that the style is “inelastic and without sparkle” (280). Perhaps this is why it has been relatively ignored by scholars. Or, perhaps *Tomóchic* has simply been overshadowed by more canonical texts of the same genre, most notably by *Los de abajo*.

The most obvious difference between *Tomóchic* and other nineteenth century Mexican literature is that it goes beyond merely criticizing the government and is actually revolutionary. This does not mean that the novel actually condones regional rebellion, but that it does present two ideas that represented a real threat to the regime. First, the text demonstrates that there were common Mexicans, not elites, who were willing and, in fact, capable of opposing the government in order to defend their rights. In addition, the example of the *tomochitecos* demonstrates that revolution was a practical and real option for Mexicans (Brushwood, novela 387). The protagonist clearly believes in this possibility near the end of the novel, as he mentally attempts to justify the slaughter of the last remaining rebels: “El subteniente intentó imaginarse lo que hubiera sido en

Chihuahua, Sonora, en la república entera, el contagio de la locura de Tomóchic por toda la Sierra Madre, a norte y sur... ¡cuánta sangre inútil, entonces, qué catástrofe nacional” (233). Thus, Mercado acknowledges that the “locura de Tomóchic,” the regional desire to defend a way of life incompatible with centralization, presents a real danger to the project of the nation. If the force of this regionalism were let loose, especially “a norte y sur” of the country, it would not be a national catastrophe, but rather a catastrophe to the nation. Though the protagonist does accept the validity of the nation, merely presenting the possibility of revolution is revolutionary for the time in question. In fact, the concept of mass uprising is all but absent in pre-Revolutionary Mexican literature (Brown 100). Can one conclude, then, that *Tomóchic* is an example of *la novela de la Revolución* or at least a transitional text, a precursor to this especially Mexican genre?

While I have shown that the principal theme of *Tomóchic* is reminiscent of this genre, it also displays other characteristics that make it a vital work in the development of Mexican literature. According to James W. Brown a “direct line” can be drawn between the work of Fernández de Lizardi, Heriberto Frías, and Mariano Azuela (Heriberto 100). In this way, *Tomóchic* can be read as a transitional work, without which the *novela de la Revolución* would not have been possible. The previously discussed difficulty of classifying Frías’ first text is easily resolved when it is considered in this light. So, what exactly is a *novela de la Revolución*? While defining this genre can be a difficult task, Brown effectively describes the common characteristics of the vast array of works that fall into this group:

Primarily attempts to depict and interpret the revolution, these novels are usually memoirs or semimemoirs; thus they offer a subjective and necessarily partial viewpoint of then recent events. They are told in a variety of styles, but are

generally simple, episodic, realistic, and oriented to the journalistic approach.
(101)

Though this is a very basic definition, *Tomóchic* does, for the most part, correspond to it. Curiously, the novel has historically been criticized for the very things that place it in this group of literature. Early readers were not used to what were seen as defects in technique and style. The episodic nature of the short chapters, the use of the crude language of the soldiers and the reportorial brevity were not fully appreciated as key components of the text's effectiveness. Yet, this new "crude style, lack of transition between scenes, and mawkish day dreaming of Miguel are in keeping with a military tale" (Moore 20).

This, however, was a new type of "military tale" not seen before. It is not a novel of heroic battles where the federal troops come out victorious, but rather a dirty, blood-filled account of atrocities that seem to have little meaning. It is a war of Mexicans against Mexicans where in the end Miguel very symbolically cannot distinguish between the burning cadavers of officers and peasant rebels. Yet, before they even leave for Tomóchic, in a chapter fittingly entitled "Listo para matar o morir," Miguel reflects on the senselessness and absurdity of the impending campaign, as he contemplates the laughing soldiers that are happily bathing in the river below: "“Él, lo mismo que yo, lo mismo que todos estos pobres, aun así, desnudo, aterido, inerme, ridículo, está listo... para morir!”" (42). In this way, his life and that of those around him belong to the state. Bare life is thus controlled by the government, which bases/expresses its authority on its sole power to kill, as Giorgio Agamben explains in *Homo Sacer*: "There is no clearer way to say that the first foundation of political life is a life that may be killed, which is politicized through its very capacity to be killed" (89). Thus, the life of Miguel and those around him, that is a "life exposed to death" is, according to Agamben, "the originary

political element” (88). As a cog in the state’s war machine, Miguel has become an instrument, not a man, and so it is the government that has the power to ascribe meaning to his life or death. Interestingly, this quote could just as easily describe the *tomochitecos* who seem condemned to suffer the same fate, as the state uses their annihilation to demonstrate its dominance over regionalism.

This is where one sees why *Tomóchic* does not entirely conform to the model of the *novela de la Revolución*. Brown says that this genre primarily “attempts to depict and **interpret** the revolution” (101, emphasis is my own). Works such as *Los de abajo* want to give meaning to the violent phenomenon of the Revolution. In *Tomóchic*, even when the protagonist tries to justify his experiences, he quickly betrays his own argument. Miguel, like the text, is ambivalent. He is patriotic and exalts Chapultepec, yet constantly criticizes the military strategies taught there as they have little use in the Mexican Sierra. He admires the bravery and skills of the enemy, but then describes them as ignorant savages. Miguel claims to love and want to marry a girl from Tomóchic, Julia, but then rapes her just as the “*ogro*,” that is to say, her Uncle Bernardo. In one moment the massacre is justified as necessary for the good of the state, and in the next Miguel appears traumatized by the tragedy. Even the text itself is realist in one moment, and romantic in the next. Through this meaningful ambivalence *Tomóchic* reveals the true complexity of a war that to the author makes little sense. Perhaps ambivalence, and not reasoned interpretation, is the only natural reaction when the individual loses complete control of bare life.

Unfortunately, this ambivalence has long been misunderstood by critics of the text who fail to find order in the superficial chaos of the narrative. Thus, some researchers

label it as a “hybrid,” while others simply find that it lacks literary merit, as John Lloyd

Read comments:

It is clear at times the author was trying to follow several roads at once with no particular destination except the end of the book in mind. There is no unity, no plan, no balance, and **very little judgment** in the selection and rejection of material. (280, emphasis is my own)

According to Read, the author simply wrote a series of disconnected chapters that he haphazardly slapped together to create some semblance of a novel. What Read fails to consider is that perhaps following “several roads” without a final destination, an ambivalent journey, is exactly the intention of the work. The Porfiriato believed in only one path for Mexico, with a single destination in mind. As a supposedly backwards country, in terms of civilization and industrialization, it was the mission of the state to help the nation move along its “natural” path of development no matter what the cost. Though *Tomóchic* does not necessarily support an alternative model, it does question and cast doubt upon the particular road that the Porfiriato has chosen to reach its goal. Thus, the novel criticizes the positivism upon which the Porfiriato was based by having no specific discursive destination. This is accomplished by presenting alternative histories that are not authoritative, but rather duplicitous and, at times, vague. Rather than “interpreting” the rebellion, and thus telling the reader what to think, the novel demonstrates that history and truth are not absolutes. Thus, while not proposing alternatives, it does open up the possibility. Given the censorship of the era, it is understandable that this criticism is not overt.¹⁰

¹⁰ Though one finds direct criticism and even insults of the government and President Díaz in modern editions of *Tomóchic*, these were not included in the first edition. Frías reedited his work with each new edition, thus adding more blatant disapproval in each.

From the very beginning, *Tomóchic* calls on the reader to be skeptical of what they are reading, as there is rarely only one version of any story. In the first chapter, that is fittingly entitled “Calumnia y verdad,” Miguel speaks with a young officer, Gerardo, about what actually happened a month earlier during the September 2nd defeat. The second lieutenant has it on good authority that while General Rangel was hiding in a nearby shack, his young friend was disarmed and embarrassed by the *tomochitecos*: “Cuentan que te dieron de chanclos el día 2 de septiembre” (18). When Gerardo protests that these are lies, Miguel agrees that the truth is often manipulated, “Pues no es lo que nos contaron en Chihuahua; pero ya ves cuánto **se inventa**” and even considers that the comical story may be an “official” fabrication, “Comprendía que aquello que se contaba de él podría ser una calumnia, edificada, no obstante, sobre **la verdad** de la derrota” (18, emphasis is my own). In this way, the story of Gerardo’s embarrassment at the hands of the enemy may be a lie manufactured to hide the truth of General Rangel’s cowardliness and humiliating defeat. This leads one to also question the young officer’s description of the *tomochitecos* as almost supernatural beings: “Parecen venados, los ves aquí, y de repente ¡zas!, en la punta del cerro...y rau...¡caramba!, si ni apuntan...al descubrir, hermano... te recontramatan. Con decirte cada cartucho es un muerto; no yerran...” (17). Being disarmed, stripped, insulted, and spanked by such superhuman warriors is easier to deal with than facing humiliation at the hands of uneducated *serranos*. In much the same way, the fighting ability of the *tomochitecos* becomes myth, as the federal forces have to explain their loss. Thus, from the very first chapter the reader is shown to question the “official” version of events. The text, however, is ambivalent as to which tale is accurate. Later, we even see a case where the *soldaderas*

gossip that the enemy has received ammunition from foreigners in the United States, while Miguel relates that the bullets in question were stolen from the federal troops. Eternally ambivalent, however, the protagonist does not share this knowledge with the women, thus failing to challenge the state's authority.

The protagonist is similarly skeptical of the true nature and cause of the rebellion. This doubt is especially evident in the initial chapters when Mercado is in Guerrero, awaiting the division's departure to Tomóchic. After days of listening to his comrades' entertaining stories about the "ignorantes y altaneros" rebels that "conocen su carabina Winchester a las mil maravillas" (20), he can't help but suspect that something is amiss:

Sin embargo, no se daba cuenta aún de la cuestión, no podía penetrar la causa del alzamiento obstinado de ese pueblo ignorante, y el espíritu a veces malicioso y desconfiado de Miguel entreveía algo tenebroso y podrido... (21)

So while those around him scream, "¡Hay que acabar de una vez con ellos...! Será cruel pero necesario... ¡suprimirlos!," Mercado, at least internally, is doubtful of the cause. He seems to be the only officer that does not wholeheartedly accept the superficial story of the state. Later, he even speculates that perhaps the *tomochitecos* are merely pawns in some political game: "¿Habría algunos ambiciosos que explotasen la indómita bravura de los serranos, protegiéndolos, cebando los odios antiguos en sus almas fieras y sencillas, azuzándolos luego contra el triste heroísmo de las bayonetas federales?" (27). Though he does characterize the *tomochitecos* as inherently violent and simpleminded, he at least pauses to consider the possible source of their "locura."

Despite this, however, Miguel does not act upon his thoughts. He is once again disinterested as he melancholically accepts his role as a military officer and joins in when his comrades toast to the impending campaign and massacre. Through this contradiction,

the text reveals that one must not accept discourse at face value. While it seems that the entire troop believes in the project of the nation and is willingly going along, they could be internally conflicted like the protagonist and simply be additional ambivalent cogs in the war machine, completely stripped of their humanity. Perhaps the allegedly crazy *tomochitecos* who are willing to die defending their **own** beliefs are the most reasonable of all. Unlike soldiers like Miguel who, as a part of the political order, kill and are “exposed to an unconditioned capacity to be killed,” simply because it is their duty, the *tomochitecos* slay countless *pelones* (and die) in defense of their way of life, a *bios* that does not correspond to that of the nation (Agamben 85). Clearly, *Tomóchic* is much more complex than Read realized as the author very carefully inserts moments of doubt and questioning in a work that superficially supports much of the status quo.

Fanatical Indians or Angry *Mestizos*?

In his text *Cien años de novela mexicana*, Mariano Azuela claims that *Astucia* by Luis G. Inclán and *Tomóchic* are the most genuinely “Mexican” novels he has read: “Conforme a mi modo de ver son las más auténticamente nacionales” (211). Interestingly, this is only after Azuela read the relatively unknown work because an American journalist, Carleton Beals, accused him of plagiarizing it in *Los de abajo*. So what does Azuela find so “Mexican,” or more accurately “national” about *Tomóchic*? While he passionately complements the work’s supposedly organic simplicity, it comes to light that it is the story of a downtrodden “facción de tarahumaras insurrectos” that single-handedly take on the forces of *Díaz* that appeals to this critic. It is “authentically national” in that the storyline supports the current revolutionary state, as Azuela explains:

¿Quién no presiente en esa sorda hostilidad, en esa antipatía manifiesta del norteño a los *pelones* de Porfirio Díaz y sus elogios venenosos de la bravadura

indomable de los tomochitecos en abierta rebeldía, los preludios de una revolución que se está gestando en el pueblo mexicano? (218)

In this way, Azuela interprets the regionalism of the novel, that is, the expressed regional distrust and hostility towards the national forces, as symptomatic of a national sentiment that was brewing in the Mexican consciousness and that would eventually give life to the Revolution. This is especially ironic, as a rebellion against the national is used to justify an event (the Mexican Revolution) that only contributed to the further nationalization of the North. While this interpretation is not surprising, what does strike me is that Azuela so easily accepts the Porfiriato's claims that the *tomochitecos* were Indians, something which both history and the novel itself contradict.

Unlike many of the other revolts that occurred in Chihuahua in the 1890s, the community of Tomóchic was principally composed of *mestizos*. Thus, the rebellion demonstrated that this group could and did revolt to protect their rights. This was something that the rest of Mexican society might have identified with, so the government mounted a campaign to isolate and discredit this *mestizo* movement; suddenly the rebels became “‘Indians’ (which they weren’t) and ‘fanatics,’ which they may have been” (Knight, *Rethinking* 380).¹¹ By the 1890s the “*problema del indio*” was nothing new to the Mexican population, and in effect the Indian was generally accepted as an inferior being that represented the primary obstacle to the country's development. Thus, the death of a hundred Indian *tomochitecos* would be seen as a necessary sacrifice to progress, while that of a hundred *mestizos* would be unacceptable, as Alan Knight explains:

¹¹ For a very complete historical discussion of the state's official indianization of the *tomochitecos* see Paul J. Vanderwood's *The Power of God Against the Guns of Government*, though Vanderwood's insistence in labeling the *tomochitecos* as “fanatics,” and subsequently discounting the possible cultural, economic, and political causes of the rebellion in favor of a religious interpretation is suspect.

It was in the governments, and the Catholic Church's, interest to tar the tomochitecos with the "fanatic" brush. The more wild, exotic, and extreme they seemed, the harder it would be for them to garner broad support and the easier it would be for the government to isolate and crush them, and to crush them with a clear, "progressive" conscience. (385)

Thus, the *tomochitecos* were described as fanatical Indians by the government and the Church. As the state censured most newspapers and enacted a campaign of misinformation, this depiction was also repeated in the vast majority of newspapers and news sources.

Tomóchic is one of the few publications that did not paint the *tomochitecos* in this manner. While the narrator does, at times, describe the rebels as "ignorantes," "fanáticos," and even "bárbaros" (all adjectives traditionally attributed to Indians), he makes it clear that, much to his surprise, the *tomochitecos* are not Indians:

¿Qué querían, en concreto, aquellos serranos...? No conocían la patria, ni sus gobernantes, ni la religión, ni sus sacerdotes.

Y era lo más extraño que no constituían una tribu bárbara. No eran indígenas, sino criollos.

Sangre española, sangre árabe, de fanatismo cruel y de bravura caballeresca, circulaba en aquella raza maravillosa tarahumara y andaluza... (54)

In this way, the narrator reveals the limitations of the national project that does not leave room for regionalism. Coming from the center, he cannot understand how a group of *mestizos* can be so unaware of the major elements of national culture: "la patria, sus gobernantes, la religión" (54). Thus, he attributes their rebellion to a rare example of a community that has become infected "con locura peligrosa!" (55). This is the only explanation that he accepts, as surely it must be crazy for a group of *mestizos* to go against both the church and the state. What the text regards as "locura," however, is the *tomochitecos* defense of their *patria chica*. Isolated from the center, they no longer wish to live in a state of exception. Thus, the text does not view the rebels in the same light as

the government. They are not a group of Indians whose elimination is so easily justified. If anything, the text regards their death as a tragedy for the nation, as the *tomochitecos* are described as “una fuerte raza, digna de vivir y de ser tronco de mexicanos pueblos robustos” (224). In this way, the death of the *tomochitecos* comes to represent a loss for the nation, as these brave men will not become a part of the new Mexico.¹²

Despite the text’s own insistence, over the years a vast array of critics, like Azuela, has read the rebels in *Tomóchic* to be Indians. In his introduction of the 1911 edition, Ferrel claims that an anonymous informant at *El Demócrata* described the *tomochitecos* in the following manner: “Esos indios de Chihuahua son los más bravos del país! Al que cae en sus manos lo descuartizan...son feroces!” (2). This is particularly misleading as it appears in the introduction of the text. E.R. Moore is even more specific as he describes the community as a “group of primitive Yaqui Indians” (5). Here we see that even foreign academics accept the “official” version of *Tomóchic*, regardless of what the text actually says. This seems especially at odds with Moore’s assertion that *Tomóchic* has heavily influenced the writers of the *novela de la Revolución*, since this genre is more concerned with the *mestizo* rebel, than the Indian. For instance, we do not see a Zapatista (who were seen as more Indian than Villistas for example) *novela de la Revolución*. Later researchers are similarly guilty of this mistake, as John S. Brushwood describes *Tomóchic* as a “small Indian village in Chihuahua” whose rebellion was “sparked by injustice” but “sustained by the fanaticism of a religious cult” (253). Here the academic seems to imply that only fanatical Indians are capable of maintaining a revolt for any meaningful period of time, as if long term political resistance were beyond an Indian’s

¹² Though simultaneously, the ambivalent text does offer this counterargument, that is, that the massacre of *Tomóchic* was, in fact, necessary for the good of the nation. As he searches for his own redemption, Miguel’s viewpoint swings dramatically from one extreme to another.

capabilities. As I have shown, a number of critics have accepted the rebels of the novel as Indians, regardless of what the text actually says.

So how can so many experts continue to misread *Tomóchic* in this manner, while simultaneously ignoring all historical evidence? While relatively recent historical studies of the rebellion discuss in great detail the false indianization of Tomóchic, even the first book-length study of the event, *La rebelión de Tomochi*, published in 1938, acknowledges this common fallacy:

Esta rebelión se ha atribuido generalmente y así se propaló en una forma ampulosa, a un grupo de indígenas de la Sierra Madre Chihuahuense, fanatizados y seducidos por conversaciones místicas y enseñanzas subversivas...La gente de Tomochi en su mayoría absoluta era blanca y mestiza, existiendo allí una mínima parte de población indígena en la época en que sucedieron los acontecimientos que comprende la parte principal de este relato. (12)

While Ferrel's introduction was published well before this study, Azuela and the other researchers mentioned would have had access to it. Though, as it was published in Chihuahua and not in Mexico City, it is possible that it did not receive the critical attention that it deserved. Oddly, however, the 1911 edition of *Tomóchic* also displays some incongruities as to the ethnicity of the rebels in the added illustrations. While the included lithographs clearly show the *tomochitecos* as *mestizos* or *criollos* with beards and western facial features, there are several photos of Indians that appear throughout the text, without subtitles. These photos also do not correspond to the Pimas or Apaches that do appear in the text, as most are photos of Tarahumara Indians. Taken in combination with the statements of Ferrel (from the same edition) that contradict the text, it seems that the effects of the Porfiriato on popular opinion endured.

The indianization of the *tomochitecos*, however, cannot be completely attributed to the influence of the Porfiriato, as its roots go much deeper. Historically, the Indian has

been the enemy of the state, not the *mestizo* who actually constitutes the cornerstone of the modern revolutionary nation. For this reason, the reader automatically thinks of the rebels as Indians in the opening pages of the text. They are, after all, described as *serranos* who are “excesivamente ignorantes y altaneros” who can “correr vendados por la sierra sin dar un mal paso” for over fifty pages before the protagonist reflects on the true racial composition of the group (20). There is even a rumor that they have mystic abilities and that they are immune to bullets. It is more likely that the reader, like the troops, will attribute such supernatural abilities to the Mexican “other,” in this case the Indian, than to himself/herself. If it were not but for a few key phrases that appear in the text, one would assume that the *tomochitecos* were Indians. Yet, this still does not fully account for the misreading of literary experts who have published critiques of the novel. A particularly illuminative example is that of Joseph Sommers who incorrectly categorizes Frías’ first book as a *novela indigenista* in his article “Literatura e historia: Las contradicciones ideológicas de la ficción indigenista.” Sommers actually acknowledges that the *tomochitecos* of *Tomóchic* are *mestizos*, but argues that in reality they were Indians. According to his argument, the moment that the narrator discovers that the *tomochitecos* possess positive attributes, he denies that they are Indians (13), thus revealing the author’s true motive: “Sin embargo, Frías...deseando precisamente demostrar el heroísmo y el valor humano de los tomochitecos, los convierte en mestizos” (19). While historical studies show that this assertion is incorrect, the literary text also disproves it.¹³ First, if Frías wanted to prove the “valor humano” of the rebels, why

¹³ Vanderwood (Power), Osorio, and Almada have all found the population of Tomóchic to be predominately *mestizo* at the time in question. In addition, Vanderwood and Osorio explain how the indigenous residents of the community were not on good terms with the rebel leader, Cruz Chávez, and thus avoided joining the dissidents.

would he repeatedly portray them as inherently violent fanatics? In addition, there are several moments during the battle in which the narrator shows the Pima Indians of Sonora (who are with the federal forces) in a positive light. They, in fact, demonstrate more heroism than Miguel's comrades. In one scene, as the federal troops run away in fear, these Indians are the only individuals brave enough to face the enemy: "Sólo aquellos famosos indios de Sonora se adelantaban audazmente, ansiosos por combatir contra tan terrible enemigo" (130). Even the *tomochitecos* acknowledge the superior abilities of the Pimas, as they refer to them as "esos valientes de Sonora" and consider them "los más temibles de sus enemigos, dignos adversarios suyos" (129). Therefore, it makes no sense that the author would describe the rebels as *mestizos*, and not as Indians, simply to prove their heroism. There are, in fact, Indians in the novel with positive attributes.

Sommers' argument actually reveals many of the stereotypes that are commonly held about Indians in general. Rather than basing his conclusion on historical research, he uses his own incorrect assumptions:

¿Cómo de otra manera referirse a un pueblo en el cual los jesuitas habían fundado un convento en el siglo XVII, precisamente porque estaba en el centro de una población india considerable? ¿Cómo de otra manera referirse a un pueblo que debido a la política económica y religiosa tanto de españoles como de criollos...había alimentado por siglos un odio perdurable hacia los forasteros? ¿Cómo de otra manera referirse a un pueblo cuya conducta religiosa era igual a la de los indios mayos, al incorporar sincréticamente a la Santa de Cabora a sus prácticas religiosas? (19)

According to Sommers, there is only one possible answer to all of these questions.

Indigenous peoples, however, do not live in a timeless prehistoric vacuum. Just because there was a Tarahumara population in Tomóchic in the seventeenth century, does not mean that the descendants of this group continued to inhabit the same territory, in a

similar manner nearly three hundred years later. The Jesuits who founded the mission were, after all, expelled from the colonies long before Mexico became an independent nation. All too often native peoples are considered as timeless, as if they do not have their own history that evolves and changes just like that of Western culture. It is also a stereotype that only Indians would have cause to harbor feelings of hatred towards foreigners or outsiders. Northern Mexico has a long tradition of being economically and politically isolated from the center. Even in the twenty-first century there are communities that look at outsiders, especially *chilangos* from the capital, with distrust and even animosity. Finally, not all the followers of the Saint of Cabora were Indians and syncretism is typical in Mexican Catholicism, even today. It is a stereotype that only indigenous people confuse native religious beliefs with those of the Catholic Church. What is the Mexican Day of the Dead, if not an example of Mexico's own particular marriage of native and western beliefs? While Sommers accuses Frías of altering the ethnicity of the *tomochitecos* for racist and literary reasons, he does the same thing.

While the text shows the rebels to be *mestizos*, it is less clear if the *tomochitecos* are religious fanatics in the novel. As I have shown, the soldiers, and even the protagonist, repeatedly refer to the followers of Cruz Chávez as “fanáticos.” This, however, does not necessarily mean that they are represented in the novel as religious zealots, in the same way historian Paul Vanderwood (as well as most literary critics) portrays them: “The believers at Tomochic certainly expected the Second Coming; they were on the lookout for it, and they fought as if the apocalypse were upon them” (None 230). *Tomóchic*, however, does not give this impression. Miguel sees them as an easily impressionable community that is perhaps being manipulated by their charismatic leader,

or by the interests of ambitious outsiders. Their religious fervor is represented as a “locura” that has infected the population. In this way their supposed fanaticism is blamed on others:

Aquel pueblo perdido en la república, ignorado y oscuro, fue abandonado por su aparente insignificancia, por el gobierno del estado de Chihuahua y por el eclesiástico, sin que ni uno ni otro, sin ilustrarlo, dejase—eso sí—de cobrar los impuestos, agravados día a día. (49)

By leaving the people of Tomóchic to their own devices, it is the state and the church that have created an environment in which such a “locura” could take hold. Thus the text explains how, virtually abandoned by the protection of the state authorities, the *tomochitecos* turned to Cruz Chávez and the Saint of Cabora when threatened by famine and the abuse of their local caudillo. Even the “Saint” is described as a victim of circumstance:

En vano la misma tierna criatura cuyo histerismo ocasionaba verdaderas curaciones en mucha gente nerviosa, les aseguraba que no era santa y que sólo bendecía al Señor por aquella gracia...Pero cierto sordo espíritu de ambición política y de explotación mercantil en muchos iban haciendo de la pobre niña una bandera de reclamo y de combate. (50)

Thus, the text does not present Teresa Urrea (the Saint of Cabora) as a dissident or heretic that inspired a fanatical following, but rather as another victim that while suffering through her own “histerismo” is taken advantage of by more worldly individuals. While the criticism presented here is a veiled one, it is not difficult to imagine who the intended targets may be. Besides Teresa’s caregivers, at the time it was well known that Terrazas had actively mounted a campaign to discredit Governor Carillo (in the eyes of Díaz) who was up for reelection in 1892. For this reason, even the events in isolated places such as Tomóchic were of interest to the elites of Chihuahua, as Terrazas and his rivals jockeyed for position every time the governorship was up for grabs. The stakes for Terrazas were

particularly high as during this period he was not in the good graces of the country's president, who selected the "winners" of all elections. In this way, *Tomóchic* once again leaves the reader with doubts. In one moment the *tomochitecos* are religious fanatics, and in another they are the innocent victims of a complex, and in many ways, petty political struggle. More concerned with acquiring wealth and power, the state government and elites have failed to educate and "civilize" their citizens by incorporating them into the nation. In addition, these same groups have exploited these (according to the text) ignorant, backwards people for their own self-serving purposes. Though the author describes this "locura" as religious in origin, it seems lacking any religious content. What the author deems as crazy is not the rebels' faith, but rather their failure to acknowledge the authority of the state. The rebellion in the text does, after all, commence when Cruz Chávez confronts the visiting priest during Mass, proclaiming from the pulpit of the church: "¡En el nombre del gran poder de Dios, yo, que soy 'policía' de su divina majestad, te echo!" (51). Thus, it is not simply recognizing the Saint of Cabora, or any other deity that sets the state after the *tomochitecos*, but rather this usurpation of authority as Cruz assaults the priest and declares himself "policía." In this way, he symbolically attacks the Church, while violating the state's monopoly on authoritative violence. Even official history claims that Cruz shouted, in one variation or another, that he and his followers would recognize no authority, but that of God. As a result of this occurrence, without taking up arms, the *tomochitecos* are labeled as fanatics and rebels: "Y en la capital de Chihuahua estas noticias se recibieron exageradísimas, dando por hecha la rebelión armada del pueblo serrano" (52). Given this evidence, the novel invites the reader to question its own description of the rebels as fanatics.

The ambivalent discourse of the novel leads one to question official history that so easily declares the *tomochitecos* to be religious fanatics. After all, labeling the *tomochitecos* as heretics made it quite convenient for the Porfiriato to justify its handling of the rebellion in question. In addition, there seems to be little historical evidence outside of the state's official documents and communiqués. According to Alan Knight the supposed fanaticism of the rebellion has been exaggerated, and "in fact, the evidence for the tomochitecos' messianic/millenarian belief is quite thin" (384). After all, it was quite common during this period (and still is) for Mexican communities to identify with their patron saint(s), and local cults and churches (382). Thus, insulting or interfering with these symbols of collective (and regional) identity could easily be interpreted as a personal violation. This was especially true in small, isolated settlements such as Tomóchic, where the church was often the center of local life. By far the largest structure in town, the church itself becomes a meeting place, apart from being the primary source of entertainment and education in a locale. Thus, when the appointed (not elected) mayor prohibited the townspeople from holding a religious procession (for rain to save their crops), and the visiting priest openly condemned the Saint of Cabora and her many followers during Mass, it was interpreted as an attack on local autonomy and the local way of life, that is, on the *patria chica*. Under such circumstances, the *tomochitecos* were defending themselves, and in many ways, their survival as a community from a foreign invader.

Despite this, many continue to consider the Tomóchic revolt as distinctive among the many rebellions that occurred in Western Chihuahua during the 1890s, precisely because of its religious nature. The work of historian Paul Vanderwood is typical of this

group. As discussed earlier, Vanderwood views the *tomochitecos* as participants in a millenarian movement that “fought as if the apocalypse were upon them” (None 230). Yet, is there any inherent difference between how a revolutionary or a cult member facing the apocalypse would fight when his or her life is clearly in danger? And why did Cruz let the majority of the surviving women and children go over to the enemy if he believed he was fighting the Antichrist? While he seems confident in his conclusions, Vanderwood explains that it was not a clear cut decision: “It took considerable research and thought for me to conclude that this rebellion was indeed millenarian. Others have found it fundamentally political, only embellished with religious veneer” (None 231). Thus, Vanderwood rejects arguments that place the Tomóchic movement as political or cultural in origin, just as he also refutes the perspective of researchers that “see millennial movements as an effort to revitalize a society in cultural collapse” (None 236). In fact, he regards such cases as instances where the enlightened researcher/historian places meanings where there are none; it is the “academician” that tells the millenarian rebel why he did what he did. In this way, Vanderwood rejects the notion that Tomóchic was anything but a religious cult:

As much as I feel conceptually pressured to weigh the impact of modernization on the pueblo, to ponder the new landholdings of José Yves Limantour that surrounded the village, to consider Chihuahua’s new constitution of 1889, which curtailed municipal authority, I cannot but believe that I am imposing my findings on the thoughts of the townspeople. The faithful of Tomochic said nothing of these things. There is no evidence that they aimed to seize political power or hoped to bring down the state political system. They did not mean to reestablish community relations as known in any blissful past. (236-237)

Here Vanderwood presents a false dilemma, as if there are only two possible reasons for revolt. Either the *tomochitecos* wanted to overthrow the political system, or they were a cult awaiting the apocalypse. In this way, he does not even consider the possibility that

the *tomochitecos* were simply defending themselves from centralization and thus wished to retain their regional identity without becoming integrated into the nation (without trying to destroy it). In addition, the historian does not consider the influence of political and economic factors because he claims the “faithful of Tomochic said nothing of these things” and he does not want to impose his ideas “on the thoughts of the townspeople” (236-237). How could he possibly know what the *tomochitecos* said and thought? All of the sources, save one, that Vanderwood could possibly consult are products of the state and official history. The only survivors of Tomóchic (of the rebels) were mostly illiterate women and children who did not remain in the community. Also, whether or not the rebels were aware of the changes to the state constitution or the new land policies that threatened their way of life is irrelevant, as there is evidence that they experienced these changes at an intimate level. Furthermore, the only work that could be considered a survivor’s account of Tomóchic is a small testimonial text published in 1964 by a nephew of Cruz (an infant during the revolt), Placido Chávez Calderón, who bases his account on his dead mother’s memories. This Chávez says his people were only fanatical about defending their freedom:

Muchos atribuyeron a mi gente de Tomochi un refinado fanatismo. Cierto que en un punto sí parecían fanáticos, no porque lo fueran en el fondo sino por capricho, para demostrar que ellos eran libres para creer y adorar hasta a un barranco si así les convenía...Injustamente se ha querido atribuir a Tomochi el fanatismo como uno de los principales motivos de la rebelión. (12)

Thus, it appears as if the true degree or nature of the *tomochitecos* fanaticism is up to debate. What is clear, however, is that one should be suspect of this claim, especially as the rebels did not survive to tell their tale. This discussion, however, does lead me to even more interesting questions: Why is the ethnicity and religious fervor of the

tomochitecos so important (in the novel and historically)? What does it reveal about the relationship between the national and the regional?

As I have shown, for the majority of Mexico's history, Tomóchic was isolated from the Mexican state; *tomochitecos* were only citizens when it was time to vote or pay taxes. In all other matters, they were cast to the periphery. Thus, the role of the *tomochitecos* in the nation was based on their exclusion, much like the Indian. In *Homo Sacer*, Agamben describes this dynamic as a "relation of exception" where "what is outside is included...by means of the suspension of the juridical order's validity—by letting the juridical order, that is, withdraw from the exception and abandon it" (18). In this way, Tomóchic (the outside) was historically included in the state through this process of abandonment; the *tomochitecos* were only included in the state through their own exclusion. Yet, when a portion of Tomóchic's population no longer wanted to remain under the domain of the state, thus attempting to escape this place of inclusive exclusion, the equilibrium of the relation of exception was put in jeopardy. Thus, this small community of less than two hundred people came to constitute a real threat to the inside, that is, to the regime of Porfirio Díaz. This is because without the exception (Tomóchic), the authority of the rule (state) would not exist. As Joshua Lund explains, Tomóchic represents an "inner exteriority (or state of exception) whose simultaneous construction and destruction founds the articulation of nation and state" (172). Thus, the center establishes itself upon the simultaneous exclusion/inclusion of regional groups such as the *tomochitecos*. While no evidence exists that the *tomochitecos* actually sought to overthrow the government, and thus threaten order directly, the mere rejection of state authority was considered revolutionary and particularly dangerous.

The only way to deal with the rebellion, and thus redeem the state, was to kill the *tomochitecos*, thus returning them (or at least their cadavers) to their former state of exception. Thus the charred bodies of the fallen rebels come to represent sacred life, which is “life that cannot be sacrificed and yet may be killed” (82), as Agamben explains:

Once brought back to his proper place beyond both penal law and sacrifice, *homo sacer* presents the originary figure of life taken into the sovereign ban and preserves the memory of the originary exclusion through which the political dimension was first constituted. (83)

For this reason, the novel ends with a new day (for the nation) dawning over the burning cadavers of the last *tomochitecos*: “Abajo, las tinieblas maculadas por los fulgores fatídicos de los cadavers ardiendo en la soledad del valle... y arriba, hacia el oriente, sobre las crestas de los montes, el alba...” (244). As Agamben shows, this recalls the “memory of originary exclusion” which in the case of Mexico is the beginning of the official destruction of the Indian that began with the Conquest, and the consequent birth of the *mestizo*. For this reason, the rebels officially became Indians and religious fanatics in the eyes of the state. While the Porfiriato could not necessarily justify the massacre of a rural community of *mestizos*, the regime could easily explain away the annihilation of rebel Indians. The *mestizo* was (and is), after all, the cornerstone of the Mexican nation, or at least of the imagined one. The Indian, on the other hand, was considered an unfortunate obstacle to the nation and progress. Mexico and the *mestizo* were founded upon the destruction of the Indian and the events at Tomóchic only served to continue the long tradition that began with the Conquest.

Casting the *tomochitecos* as fanatical Indians allows the government to label them as enemies of the state. As Lund explains, merely being Indian reflects an inherent denial of the state’s authority:

The purity of non-*mestizaje* is in fact a kind of impurity, a deviation, a heresy: that is, a rejection of Mexican sovereignty which is at the same time the *same thing* as rejecting the *pure mestizaje* that ideologically underwrites projects of hegemonic, national identity formation. (175)

So by labeling the *tomochitecos* as Indians, the Porfiriato characterizes the rebels as heretics of the ideology of the Mexican nation. Being Indian signifies a rejection of the *mestizo*, which in turn is the “*same thing*” as denying the authority of the government. Thus, the *tomochitecos* come to represent everything that stands in the way of progress and order, and thus of the Porfiriato: ignorance, poverty, religious zeal, and rural backwardness. Yet, there is a deeper meaning in this process of official indianization. Although racially not indigenous, the *tomochitecos* were excluded by the state. In fact, like the Apaches that they helped defeat, they were representative of a larger group that constituted a potential threat to the nation and Porfirian plans of centralization. Due to their state of inclusive exclusion, they did not fully ascribe to nationalism, but rather more closely identified with their *patria chica*. In this way, regional identity was a threat to the regime.

In 1892, however, the central state could not openly attack regionalism, as the process of nationalization was far from complete and many areas were in fact controlled by local strongmen such as Terrazas in the state of Chihuahua. Díaz depended upon the support of these factions, so it was easier to place the Tomóchic rebellion as a purely indigenous affair; the killing of Indians was acceptable, while the murder of brave *Chihuahuenses* who were renowned for defending the country from the supposedly barbaric Apaches was not. Eventually, however, regional identity and the *patria chica* would come to inhabit the same space as the Indian, “an ancient space, a foundational space, even a sacred space...another way of saying...a space of erasure, abstractly

included, concretely excluded” (Lund 175). In the new Mexico, regional figures such as the *tomochitecos* come to represent mythic (but dead) components of national identity. Yet this shift would not become definitive until the post-revolutionary period. Thus, the *tomochitecos* are transformed into Indians to obscure the nation’s true target, regionalism. The destruction/reconstruction of the regional is thus seen as a necessary step towards nationalization, just as near the end of the novel the troops form a bridge over “un montón de cadáveres medio carbonizados,” (the *tomochitecos*) in order to cross over to a blocked door (212). The *tomochitecos* must be killed and their bodies reintegrated into the nation in order for the country to progress towards its nationalistic goals. By showing the *tomochitecos* as *mestizos*, and not as fanatical Indians, *Tomóchic* calls attention to this process and its inherently barbaric, violent nature.

Foundational Fiction or Foundational Disarticulation?

From the very first pages of *Tomóchic*, the conflictual relationship that exists between the national and regional is apparent. In the opening scene of the novel, as Miguel walks through the solitary plaza of the district capital for the first time, his opinion of the provincial community is clear: “Erecto el entrecejo de su rostro imberbe quemado por el sol, contempló con aire de aburrimiento y cólera la desolación de aquella plazoleta, única que existía en Ciudad Guerrero. ‘¡Y a ‘esto’ llaman ciudad!’, se dijo casi en voz alta” (15). For a second lieutenant educated at the national military academy, Guerrero City is a backwater that does not belong to his conception of the Mexican nation. Thus, Mercado initially views the region (and its inhabitants, culture etc.) more as a critical foreigner than as a fellow countryman. He even shows contempt for the area’s culinary offerings that he describes as “los más toscos o sencillos alimentos” (16).

A melancholic alcoholic, his only relief comes from “el alcohol del abominable tequila chihuahuense” (17). In this way, the text makes the center’s contemptuous opinion of the North abundantly clear.

Yet, in a similar manner, the locals are openly antagonistic towards the protagonist and his comrades: “Encontraba la misma hostilidad elocuente de que habían sido víctimas los oficiales desde su llegada a Chihuahua; las mismas caras hurañas y el mismo gesto de desprecio, idéntica fiereza altiva” (16). Although Miguel (the center) fails to acknowledge his open disdain for the northerners, he is surprised and in many ways offended by their seemingly unjustified hostility. He is unable to comprehend that the majority of the region’s population does not identify with the state that the military officials are there to defend, as they consider themselves to be *chihuahuenses* or *norteños* above all else. Though they do not openly voice their dissent, it is clear to the troops, as John Brushwood explains: “The soldiers face silent resentment on the part of the inhabitants of the general area. They are really considered an **invading force**.” (Mexico 156, emphasis is my own). Thus, from the locals’ perspective they are being occupied by a foreign enemy who has come to murder a group of their *paisanos*, the *tomochitecos*, who they openly admire and glorify as “unos semidioses; invencibles, denodados, audaces; unos tigres de la sierra, que derrotarían todas las fuerzas que se les enviaran” (26). The protagonist believes these descriptions, as he fails to understand the motivations of the area’s inhabitants. He is, however, increasingly upset and unsettled as the troops march into the sierra, only to discover an ever-increasing level of hostility directed towards them, as they are anything but welcome in this bastion of regionalism:

Y se enfurecía, en lo íntimo, el melancólico oficial, al observar que mientras más se acercaban a la sierra, más se reconcentraba aquel duro rencor, aquel desdén

siniestro de los campesinos chihuahuenses contra los soldados, exaltando al propio tiempo su admiración por los hijos de Tomóchic. (30)

This is the young official's first military experience beyond the parade grounds of the national plaza. For this reason, he is psychologically ill-prepared for this unfriendly reception that contradicts the ideals of his education at Chapultepec. Fully indoctrinated in national ideology, the fatherless protagonist had to abandon his studies at the national military academy and accept his lowly commission in order to support his destitute, ill-married mother.¹⁴ In many ways, the nation has taken the place of the lonely lieutenant's father and for this reason the animosity he encounters threatens his very identity, especially as he becomes aware of "su inferioridad como soldado" (23). Thus, throughout the novel, the "pálido y nerviosísimo" official who "inspiraba lástima, una gran piedad despectiva" in those around him teeters on the edge of an apparent identity crisis. Thus, the protagonist's identity is threatened by the rebellion at Tomóchic just as that of the nation itself.

Tomóchic does, however, present the second lieutenant (and the nation) with a means to salvation that holds the potential to reconcile the differences between nationalism and regionalism. This possibility comes in the form of a romance between Miguel and Julia, a young girl from Tomóchic. Surprisingly, many critics have ignored the importance of this love story, and actually find it as detracting from the overall quality of the text. For example, Brushwood claims that this subplot "doesn't have much effect on the novel one way or the other" (Mexico 156), while Moore contends that it

¹⁴ Early in the novel, Mercado's situation is outlined in detail as somewhat tragic and utterly pathetic. After the death of his father, his mother married an alcoholic who does not support his wife and has taken off to God knows where. She lives with one of her sisters and now depends upon Miguel who had to give up his studies to support her. This is why Miguel, who is ill-suited for the life of a military man, ends up in Tomóchic. Ultimately, his mother also abandons her son as she goes abroad with her good for nothing husband. Abandoned, the nation becomes a father figure, a basis of identity for the lost protagonist. This identity, however, also seems to fail him in the end.

represents “a vulgar imitation of one of Victor Hugo’s stories” (20). Such interpretations fail to consider the national significance of the union of Miguel, a white intellectual from the capital, and Julia, an uneducated, but robust and spirited *tomochiteca*. Such a relationship provides a possible deliverance for the melancholic protagonist that could also reconcile the dilemma of Mexico’s fragmentation. In this way, the romance resembles those described by Doris Sommer in her study of the nineteenth century Latin American novel, *Foundational Fictions*. In this work, Sommer outlines her “foundational fictions” as romantic novels in which the heterosexual consummation or marriage of two individuals from contrasting backgrounds serves to reconcile the racial and social differences of the couple, and thus society, in order to form, or more literally conceive, a new nation. In this manner, national ideals and heterosexual love are joined in pairings, or ideally, “marriages that provide a figure for apparently nonviolent consolidation during internecine conflicts” (Sommer 6). Thus, Julia not only represents a way for Miguel to escape his own sense of inferiority and persistent melancholy (by becoming the hero who saves her), but also provides a means for the peaceful integration of the *patria chica* into the nation as the potential mother of a new brand of Mexican.¹⁵

The transformative potential of the second lieutenant’s object of desire is evident from her first appearance in the novel. After noticing her from across the room of the *fonda*, without even seeing her face, Miguel is momentarily relieved of his constant anguish: “Y al pensar en el ritmo de su paso, en sus fugitivas gracias y en su feminil

¹⁵ Although it does not fit within the scope of this discussion of regionalism, Julia can also be interpreted as an inversion of the national figure of *La Malinche* (see Octavio Paz’s *El labarinto de la soledad*). While Julia and *la Malinche* seem to be parallel figures, Julia does not betray her people and ultimately does not realize her reproductive potential. Unlike *la Malinche*, who served as Cortés’s interpreter and lover during the Conquest, Julia does not assist Mercado in the destruction of the *tomochitecos*, and effectively resists integration into the nation. In addition, Julia is not an indigenous, but rather, a *mestiza* figure. This episode, however, does merit additional comparative analysis in reference to *malinchismo* and nationalism.

adolescencia, una ráfaga de frescura ensanchó el oprimido pecho de Miguel bajo la hornaza de la siesta” (24). The officer is so taken with the *tomochiteca* that he does not report her presence to his superiors. This is especially alarming as he overhears her plans to return to Tomóchic before the departure of the federal troops from Guerrero as she is the daughter of “*San José*,” an elderly gentleman whom the rebels have taken as the actual Saint Joseph. As the regional, Mexican daughter of the Savior’s own earthly stepfather, Julia clearly represents the potential virgin mother of a new nation. Whether Mercado purposely chooses to keep her plans a secret, or simply fails to realize that she is a spy (on behalf of her Uncle Bernardo) is not important, as for the first time in the novel the discourse (as well as the protagonist’s thoughts) momentarily pauses in its fatalistic obsession with death and the impending conflict. Thus, through the presentation of Julia the text offers a way out, that is to say a potential escape from the imminent tragedy. Thus, the peaceful integration of the regional and the national through intermarriage (acculturation) is proposed as an alternative path (or plot/discourse) for the nation/protagonist that would avoid the violent erasure of the regional by the state’s war machine.¹⁶

Following Sommer’s model of the national romance, Julia is an allegory for the isolated *tomochitecos* who live in a state of exception. As a representative of the national intellectual, it is Miguel’s responsibility to save her from this excluded status. Through marriage the second lieutenant could legitimize her place within the nation and thus she

¹⁶ In no way does this imply that this “alternative” path is not also an erasure. Obviously, by marrying Miguel, Julia would be giving up her own identity, which also constitutes (though not literally) an act of violence. Though the outcome is the same, that is, a loss of regional identity, the means are different. While sending 1,200 soldiers to kill an entire community and intermarriage/acculturation may lead to the same result, the instruments used by the state in each instance are distinct. While the author is not an anarchist, as he does support the authority of the Mexican nation, he does not accept the current regime or its practices.

would be included in the center. For Mercado, Julia is an innocent victim of her environment, as she has been forced to live in an incestuous relationship with her Uncle Bernardo, the “*ogro*,” who takes advantage of the girl’s religious faith. According to Lund, the young woman’s master represents the country’s dictator who is “a tyrant (Bernardo) who lords over and manipulates Julia the way that Díaz tightens his ‘iron grip’ around the nation’s peripheries” (177). Thus, the regime is blamed for placing Julia, the romantic idealization of the regional subject, in its current shameful state, which to the protagonist defies the limits of reason and decency:

¡Como!... ¿Aquella adolescencia vívida y airosa era la “ración” del ogro?
¡Aquella dulce y humilde criatura, aquella rosa en plena gracia, fresca aún, era su concubina! Y Miguel, consternado, palideció.

“¿Qué enredo repugnante es éste?”, se preguntó. ¿Esta víctima soportando su desgracia en silencio, la pobrecita entregándose pasiva y triste, sin goce alguno; sin resistencia, pero sin ardor, al amo que la maltrata con despotismo de pirata musulmán?... ¿Aquello podría ser cierto?... ¡La vieja momia es la esposa, y la fresca niña, la querida! (47)

Once again, the protagonist cannot comprehend the reality of the regional world around him that does not correspond to his intellectual conception of the nation. Julia, the regional, is thus the innocent victim of those more powerful than herself. She has merely accepted her secondary lot in life. For the educated officer, she is a savable *chingada*, who despite her circumstances remains virginal, “violada ya, pero sana y firme todavía” (47). Exposed early in life to the civilization of Chihuahua’s capital, Julia recognizes the “locura” of her community, and when she is raped by Bernardo she does not lose her “espíritu virgíneo” or the purity of her apparently untouched body: “Ni ensanchó sus caderas, ni aflojó sus senos redondos, pequeños y firmes” (58). The text describes this as a “divino milagro,” as thanks to her faith in the Virgen Mary, Julia spiritually and physically remains a virgin and retains “la gracia melancólica de aquel lirio de la sierra”

(59). Thus, unlike the impure and violated *chingada* who gave birth to the bastard *mestizo*, Julia represents a possible new beginning for the Mexican subject, as a saved and legitimized *virgen chingada* whose reproductive potential could reconcile the differences between the regional and the national.¹⁷ She represents a possible inversion of the national figure of *la Malinche*.

After their first encounter, Miguel begins to fantasize about saving Julia from her current situation. While this action, which he describes as “un acto soberbio, un heroísimo caballeresco,” would remove the *tomochiteca* from an abusive and incestuous relationship, it would also allow the protagonist to escape what he melancholically views as a fatalistic future (64). Throughout the novel he feels trapped and condemned to repeat his dead father’s destiny, who after failing to support Díaz lost his commission as a Commandant, only to pass the final days of his life making other men rich by working as a humble *escribano* (65). Like his father, Mercado has already been forced to leave a promising career, after the “escándalo horrible y la separación” of his mother’s second marriage (65). Thus, the protagonist (the national intellectual) finds himself in a desperate situation, similar to that of Julia, as “un oscuro subteniente que algunos días más tarde estaría en cualquier punto perdido en los desiertos de Chihuahua, a quinientas leguas de México (65). In this way, he feels doomed to repeat the history of his father who was also separated from a position of influence in the nation. Thus, when he contemplates the liberation of Julia, he is in fact thinking of his own. Even during the intensity of battle, when all logic says his love is in peril, he maintains this fantasy of the “victoriosas, las nupcias de la Virgen de Tomóchic con el héroe Miguel” (145). Therefore,

¹⁷ For a more complete discussion of the national figure of *la chingada* and *la Malinche* see Octavio Paz’s *El labarinto de la soledad*.

like the *tomochiteca*'s possible salvation, his too would entail an inclusion into the center and national ideology; he would become the hero of Tomóchic.

Yet, when Mercado proposes the idea to Julia, it comes across more as a fantastic dream or a children's bedtime story than a possible reality: "No llores, ¿quieres ser mi mujer?... Nos iremos de aquí, muy lejos, a Chihuahua, a México... ¡Serás mi esposa...! No, no le hace que hayas vivido con él..." (68-69). Here Miguel appears more as a father telling a child a story, than a romantic hero conspiring with his lover. In this way, the plan of redemption and possible romantic reconciliation, the very concept at the heart of Sommer's foundational fictions, is shown to be nothing more than a purely discursive reality. Earlier in the work, the second lieutenant himself recognizes the impossibility of his plan, as he regards it as nothing more than a literary illusion: "¿Salvarla? –volvía a preguntarse—. ¡Necio quijotismo!" Thus, Mercado does not try to "save" the *tomochiteca*. Despite his statements to the contrary, he sees it as a fantasy equivalent to Don Quixote's quest for Dulcinea. In this way, the novel actually questions the validity of the national romance and undermines the structure of Sommer's foundational fictions.

Ultimately, Miguel and Julia do consummate their relationship. This, however, does not lend itself to reconciliation as, like the Spanish conquistadors before him, the second lieutenant takes his object of desire by force. In this case, however, it is the white military official who is portrayed as barbaric, as he ignores Julia's pleas for him to leave her alone: "Miguel no escuchaba, ni atendía nada. En un arrebato **salvaje**, dominado por el vertigo de la lujuria exasperada, la buscaba a tientas, tropezando, más y más excitado y frenético cuanto menos la encontraba" (78, emphasis is my own). This represents an inversion of the traditional civilization versus barbarism dichotomy, as here it is the

educated national intellectual who takes on the role of the savage attacking the innocent. In fact, the inebriated Miguel is no different than the *tomochiteca*'s Uncle Bernardo (representative of Díaz) as he finally subdues Julia by taking advantage of her religious faith and invoking the authority of God. While the regional figure of Julia may not respect the authority of the nation (Miguel's rank, uniform, race), the officer knows that her obedience to the Lord is unshakable. If she has allowed the tyrant Bernardo to dominate her because of her father *San Jose*'s command, she will surely give in to Mercado's usurpation of divine authority:

—¡Te quiero, palabra de honor, te lo juro por el gran poder de Dios...! Tú eres mi mujer... ¡Dios lo manda! Al escuchar la invocación a la divinidad, Julia, sacudida desde la nuca, en todos sus nervios, suspiró y, abatiendo los brazos, no esquivó ya los de Miguel... Y se dejó tomar! ¡Se dejó tomar...! (79, points of ellipsis in original)

Whether she remains a concubine/servant or becomes the mother of the new nation, either result is the product of a violation. Thus, even the intellectual ultimately turns to violence in his supposedly peaceful efforts to integrate regional identity into the nation. Both Bernardo and Miguel are rapists who abuse Julia in order to fulfill their own selfish desires. In this way, both projects of nationalization (that of overt violence or that of acculturation as in Sommer's foundational fictions) resort to violence and the placement of the regional as sacred life, whose very destruction makes the sovereignty of the state possible. Only the regional subject, Julia, realizes this inevitability as she repeatedly spurns the officer's advances with a simple assertion, "Soy de Tomóchic" with her eyes filled with "cólera y orgullo...al pronunciar el nombre heroico" (69-70). In this way, she suggests the irreparable divide between the *patria chica* and the national project of consolidation in which Miguel participates.

While the love story between Miguel and Julia initially appears to follow the allegorical model described by Sommer in *Foundational Fictions*, it ultimately takes an alternative direction that actually violates this type of national romance, revealing it as purely discursive in nature. What Sommer regards as “foundational fictions” are based upon the erasure, or the forgetting, of the regional (or racial, social, economic etc.) differences that divide the nation, through the reconciliatory formation of a new nation as embodied by a pair of lovers. *Tomóchic*, however, does not follow this model as it calls upon the reader to remember the violence upon which the nation is founded, not to forget it. According to Lund, this represents “a different kind of foundational narrative, one that emphasizes national disarticulation over reconciliation” (176). Thus, *Tomóchic* is not a “foundational fiction,” but rather a “foundational disarticulation” that reveals the nation as severely divided (Lund 176). Unlike the former where the divisions within the nation are forgotten and resolved through the romantic coupling of individuals, in *Tomóchic* these differences are erased through the violent massacre of the *tomochitecos* whose continued existence threaten state sovereignty. They become the killable representatives of *homo sacer*. In this way, the national consolidation achieved by the Porfiriato is realized by violence, and in effect, is based upon a failure to peaceably integrate, or even to inclusively exclude the *patria chica*, here represented by the *tomochitecos*, into the nation. The novel thus forces the reader to remember the atrocities behind nation-building, while simultaneously somewhat supporting this violence as a necessity, or at the very least, as an inevitable part of nationalism.

Tomóchic does not merely deviate from the path set forth by “foundational fictions,” but actually demonstrates the impossibility of this type of reconciliation. This

is most clearly demonstrated during the final pages of the work when Miguel witnesses the death of his beloved Julia whom he barely recognizes. Believing her dead, the protagonist cannot see his idealized love in the “huesosa faz lívida” of the “vieja” who desperately pleads for water as she slowly dies from a bullet that has perforated her lung, causing her to cough up black bile: “--¡No, ésta no es Julia, ésta no es Julia!” (241). Despite all the death and brutality he has witnessed and participated in throughout the siege, it is the transformation of his *tomochiteca* that most affects the young second lieutenant, as he tries to remind her of their relationship: “¿No me conoces? ¿Te acuerdas, te acuerdas, alma mía?” (242). Yet this Julia is no longer under the control of Bernardo who is now dead, or Miguel who she fails to recognize, and actually tries to flee from: “Ella se había incorporado, y, casi desnuda, trató de ponerse en pie, como para huir de él” (242). Unable to escape, she begins what the text describes as a “monólogo sinestro”:

--Sí... contigo, sí... pero no más que contigo, con usted, mi vida... ¡oh!, pero que se vaya... don Bernardo... ¡Que se vaya a Tomóchic! ¿Oyen...?, cuánto balazo... ¿cuál es mi carabina...? ¡que mueran...! ¡Préstame tu canana, Pedro...! ¡Viva el poder de Dios...! ¡Mueran los pelones! (243)

This is the first time in the text that Julia speaks for herself, and not merely in response to a man’s request. While she does mention a *tú*, she is not referring to Miguel whose name never crosses her lips. The *tú* of the monologue is her home, Tomóchic, who even in death she attempts to defend, refusing to abandon her identity for a man who has raped and abused her amidst promises of escape and marriage. As she dies, she utters two final cries. The first could be seen as a call to Miguel (which it isn’t): “—Contigo...! ¡Siempre contigo...! —clamó ella.” (243). Her last dying declaration leaves little doubt as to the identity of the *tú*, however, as she takes up the battle cry of her *patria chica* with new vigor: “—Viva el gran poder de Dios!” (243). These are the same words that her fellow

tomochitecos yelled as they fought and died on the battlefield, and it is the final phrase that the last surviving male rebel defiantly screams as he is plowed down by the firing squad (238). For the first time Julia chooses to define her own identity and it is that of her birthplace. While both Bernardo and Miguel previously invoked the name of God to guarantee her submission, with this final declaration Julia takes this authority back and makes it her own. She may have been killed by the state, but in Miguel's memory (of the nation) she will not be erased. If she had succumbed to the desires of the protagonist, as the woman characters in traditional "foundational fictions" typically do, this would not be the case.

The National Project: Support or Disillusionment?

Many critics misread the final chapters of *Tomóchic* and find that the novel justifies the massacre of the rebels as a tragic, but necessary action for the good of the nation. At first glance, this interpretation appears legitimate, especially when one considers Miguel's thoughts near the end of chapter forty, entitled "¡Chapultepec, Chapultepec!": "Y Miguel reconocía otra vez que la suprema autoridad nacional había cumplido con su deber sofocando de golpe, a sangre y fuego, aquella rebelión, por la férrea mano del general Díaz" (233). If this statement is not considered in the context of the rest of the chapter, it appears that the novel concludes in a way that supports the actions of the state, despite the atrocities committed by "un mal que radicaba muy dentro entonces en lo íntimo del Ejército" (233). The following chapter (second to last) is even entitled "¡Tenía que ser!," indicating that the state had no other option; the destruction of the brave *tomochitecos* was inevitable, and in fact a natural part of the country's progress and development. It is here that the officials openly express admiration for their dead

adversaries and we finally hear the account of the execution of the last male rebels, which ends with a firmly conclusive statement: “¡Era preciso acabar con ellos...! ¡No podía ser de otro modo, no podía ser!” (238). When considered in conjunction with Miguel’s thoughts at the end of the previous chapter, it seems clear that the work supports this conclusion. *Tomóchic*, however, does not end with this apparently definitive statement and, in fact, has one last chapter that vastly alters such an interpretation.

Together the final three chapters of the novel actually portray the protagonist’s (the national subject’s) melancholic breakdown, as he deals with the traumatic loss of his own redemption. At the beginning of chapter forty, Miguel, who believes Julia is dead, receives a letter from his mother, Ángela, who has left the country with her estranged husband, thus abandoning her son: “¡También ella...! ¡Me deja, se va con un hombre que no es mi padre, con un mal hombre!” (235). Overwhelmed with the loneliness and bitterness of his seemingly hopeless life, Miguel loses faith in the basic tenets of his national identity: “¡Más me valiera no haber nacido! –y luego agregó en lúgubre monólogo—. ¡Nada es cierto... ni la poesía de la guerra, ni la poesía del heroísmo, ni la poesía de la maternidad...! ¡Solo...! ¡Solo! ¡Maldito, maldito sea yo!” (231-232). In this way, the very foundation of the protagonist’s identity is put in peril as the authority of his rank (as a part of the state’s war machine), his national heroes, and his race prove to be false, ultimately abandoning him to solitude and self-criticism. This is typical of the melancholic subject, who by identifying with his lost object of desire loses a bit of himself, as explained by Freud: “De este modo se transformó la pérdida del objeto en una pérdida del yo” (2095, emphasis in original). Furthermore, as the melancholic individual most often turns his hostility towards the lost object upon himself, the second

lieutenant attacks his own identity and loses his desire to live rather than hate his mother (Freud 2096). Thus, upon losing both of the women in his life, Miguel also loses his own identity and viewpoint, leaving him open to the influence of others.

It is in this “*furia de desesperación*” that the official is drawn into the *charla* of Reyes Domínguez, one of Tomóchic’s elites who did not support the rebels cause and who now explains the true “*locura*” of his fellow *tomochitecos*. Thus, Miguel’s conclusions at the end of the chapter (discussed above) are not his own. In reaction to the dual trauma of Julia’s and Ángela’s abandonment, the disillusioned second lieutenant latches on to the last means of redemption available to him, *la patria*. Apparently revived with patriotic vigor, he regains his will to live as he invokes the name of Chapultepec, Netzahualcóyotl, Moctezuma, and the *Niños heroes*, that like the *tomochitecos*, have left “*iluminando las tinieblas de México con una aurora de sangre!*” (234). It is upon their blood (like the nation itself) that he finds his new precarious self. Ultimately, however, it is the maximum symbol of the state’s power, Chapultepec, that momentarily allows the second lieutenant to escape from the violent reality of his traumatic loss:

Y ante la visión del Colegio Militar de Chapultepec, apoyándose en el alcázar presidencial del dominador, Miguel una vez más tuvo fe en la vida, en la redención, en la victoria... en el porvenir de su patria... ¡y hasta en el suyo propio, ya que él era también un hijo de Chapultepec! (234)

In this way, Chapultepec (the nation) momentarily replaces his mother, and even Julia, as his object of desire. It is *la patria* that will now deliver him from his melancholic life as he transports himself from the gory battlefield of Tomóchic to the palace of Chapultepec, from whose heights he can view the rebellion from a larger, nationalistic (and thus

detached) perspective. Thus, the second lieutenant's sudden justification of the massacre must be viewed with skepticism as it is merely the result of his reaction to extreme trauma. It is a type of defense mechanism in which, in order to survive, Miguel avoids dealing with his lost object(s) of desire by replacing it with the nation. Thus by placing himself at Chapultepec, and not the death-filled valley of Tomóchic, he is able to detach himself emotionally from the horrific reality that surrounds him. Therefore, the officer justifies the actions of the Porfiriato because he places himself, at least momentarily, in the same location as the supreme leader that he previously criticizes. From such an elitist position, the national project does in fact provide a means to a better life and future. For the protagonist, however, it allows him to justify his own participation in a military campaign that causes the loss of his true objects of desire. What Mercado temporarily forgets, however, is that he has not finished his studies; he is illegitimate and not a true "hijo de Chapultepec" (234). Thus, he (like the majority of Mexicans) will not benefit from the annihilation of regional identity from the country.

The protagonist, however, does not remain in this privileged and protected position, as in the final chapter (entitled "¡Solo!") he is confronted with a dramatically transformed Julia who dies in his arms. Faced with this trauma, his superficial faith in the nation quickly turns to disillusionment, as he runs out into the countryside away from the protection of his battalion. In the dark silence of night, the only light is that provided by the burning cadavers of the fallen rebels (244). It is here that Miguel's melancholy returns to the surface as he screams out in desperation: "¡Ah! Señor, ¡ah! Dios mío... ¡solo...!, ¿adónde voy?, ¿adónde iré...?" (244). This is not the declaration of a proud "hijo de Chapultepec" who firmly believes in the necessity of the rebels' destruction, but

the cry of an individual traumatized by the death and violence that are so inherently linked to nation-building. Finally realizing the futility of his life, that is fully inscribed in this process, Miguel is able to mourn the death of his own redemption: “Pudo llorar con franco llanto, por fin, después de tantos años violentos y amargos, de borrasca y de melancolia, llorar como nunca había llorado: con lágrimas continuas, consoladoras y dulces” (244). Resigned to continue in his hopeless existence, he ironically calls for the guard to play reveille, as a new day begins. In this way, the text does not support the project of the nation, but rather reveals the barbarism that makes its realization possible. The protagonist is not a national hero, but a lowly cog in the state’s war machine who eventually melancholically realizes the true nature of his place in society, as he becomes disillusioned with the national project.

The use of a secondary official, and not a general or a lowly foot soldier, allows the author to present us with a narrator that exists between the limits of two worlds. In this way, he is able to act as an observer (and in many ways a participant) of each. Miguel is part of the nation, an officer, but he has not finished his studies and does not enjoy the full benefits of an elite. He depends on his pay to survive, but his education, race, and background distinguish him from the common soldier. Thus, the choice of narrator is noteworthy, as it allows the reader to experience his particular view of the rebellion, and his eventual breakdown and disillusionment with the national project. Unfortunately, however, the majority of critics simply view Mercado as the author himself. After all, both the protagonist and the author were second lieutenants in the siege against Tomóchic, and the details of their lives are remarkably similar.¹⁸ Yet, this

¹⁸ For detailed autobiographical information on Frías see *Heriberto Frías* by James W. Brown. While it is not in the scope of this analysis to discuss all of the similarities between the character and his creator, the

analysis becomes disorienting, especially as investigators use Miguel's and Frías' names interchangeably. In *Heriberto Frías* by James W. Brown, there is one notable example of this in which the author seems to confuse or perhaps consciously substitute the supposed aspirations of the author with those of Miguel Mercado: "In the midst of battle, **Frías'** dreams of military glory and heroism vanish as around him **he sees** mostly horror, confusion, and cowardice" (38, emphasis is my own). Yet, in this paragraph Brown is talking about the events of the text itself, as in the sentences that follow he discusses how "Miguel secretly despairs for Julia" during the events in question (38). It is Mercado, and not Frías, who is present in the narration, and who thus "sees" his dreams "vanish around him," as is evident in the text itself: "Miguel ante aquel caos vibró en lo íntimo un arranque de suprema indignación y cólera... '¡No era ésa la guerra con que había soñado al leer la historia de las grandes campañas históricas!'" (112). Is this confusion accidental or intentional? While some critics directly state that Mercado is a thinly veiled Frías, here Brown subtly intertwines autobiographical and literary analysis. Why? Perhaps this is Brown's attempt to reveal the particular relationship that exists between the writer and his main character.

Though Brown does not fully uncover the true nature of this relationship, he does allude to it, especially in his discussion of the first edition of *Tomóchic* which he describes as "more of a personal confessional to rid its author of vivid shattering memories than an attempt to create art" (38). In this way, Brown suggests that the novel (or at least its first edition) is a melancholic work of horrific memories. Unable to deal with the reality of the invasion, Frías turns to writing as a means of emotional survival.

parallels are numerous. Though interesting, the literary importance of a detailed discussion of these similarities is debatable.

This clearly affects the relationship between Frías and Mercado. While as a journalist the melancholic author is unable to communicate and repeat what he has experienced, Miguel Mercado, the fictional protagonist/observer is able to discuss the siege in its entirety with a certain air of detachment. Remembering can be a way to mourn a loss, but melancholia is “a noncommunicable grief” that can lead one to “lose all interest in words, actions, and even life itself” (Kristeva 3). Thus, the melancholic Frías uses the act of writing a work of fiction, rather than his own diary or a more traditional newspaper article, to distance himself from the traumatic horror of his own memories by converting them into the memories of another, Miguel. Though Brown argues that the subsequent reediting of *Tomóchic* somehow alters the “confessional” value of the work as it becomes increasingly literary, this does not affect the basic relationship between author and character. Later in the same study, Brown refers to the protagonist as the author’s “literary surrogate” (44). While the researcher does not discuss this term, and in fact appears to merely suggest that Frías and Mercado are one in the same, I find it especially revealing. As a literary surrogate, the fictional second lieutenant is actually more than a mere voice piece for the writer, but rather his replacement or proxy. Just as a surrogate mother provides a service that an infertile woman is incapable of realizing (that is, the production and delivery of a child), Frías’ literary surrogate communicates to the reader what the melancholic author is unable to do, that is, to relate the graphic details of the events of *Tomóchic* and his subsequent disillusionment with the nation and its war machine. In the final pages of the novel, however, the protagonist suffers the same fate as the author. In this way, neither Miguel nor the nation can escape the barbarism upon

which national identity is founded. The sun may rise upon a new day, but the memories of the past will continue to haunt the officer far into the future.

Mercado's disillusionment with the national project is caused by two principal dilemmas that are present throughout the work. First, is the "flagrante discrepancia" that exists between the "el código moral de los militares y las practicas represivas del ejército de Díaz" (Sommers 16). Throughout the battle, Mercado is presented with a gruesome reality of war that does not correspond to his formal lessons at Chapultepec:

¡La guerra como la comprendía, como la había leído: grande, noble, heroica, épica!
¡No... no! Aquello que había pasado no era ni una sombra, ni una parodia, no ya de los combates clásicos de la antigüedad, ni de las batallas legendarias de Europa....reconocía toda la barbarie trágica de la catástrofe! ¡El horror de la matanza había sido tan atroz como la derrota...! (140)

Tomóchic does not present a clean, idealized military campaign like those found in official history, but rather describes a shocking spectacle of "muertos con las sienas atravesadas, cadáveres con las frentes hechas pedazos" (115). Thus, what the officer experiences bears little resemblance to his romantic impressions of battle, as in reality the federal forces violate the norms of warfare and in many instances reveal themselves as cowardly barbarians. In addition, the protagonist is forced to deal with "la contradicción entre su idea de la misión nacional y su experiencia vivida de la realidad nacional" (Sommers 16). While Miguel initially believes that they are defending the rights of the civilized nation against fanatic rebels, he soon realizes that this is a war of Mexicans against Mexicans. It is not part of a larger, noble national project, but rather a tragedy for both sides. The *tomochitecos* and the federal troops are merely pawns in and victims of a larger political battle that ultimately makes little sense to Miguel, and in this manner, the reader.

One of the key elements of this critique of the national project is the discourse's ability to disprove, and in fact, invert the traditional civilization versus barbarism dichotomy. While the Porfiriato officially framed the events of Tomóchic as the victory of the civilized and modern state over backward and savage rebels, *Tomóchic* actually reverses this and exposes the state and the national project as being fundamentally flawed and barbaric. Before even leaving for Tomóchic the protagonist and his comrades are confident that their moral and military superiority will result in a swift victory over the rebels. Though slightly tired from their long march through the sierra, this same enthusiasm remains evident at the beginning of the battle, as the troops put their faith in progress and the nation's technological advantage: "Una gritería de entusiasmo acogió en las filas el primer cañonazo asestado a Tomóchic. '¡Viva México, viva el general Díaz!', gritaron algunos, creyendo que aquel cañon era el triunfo suyo y la derrota del pueblo" (101). Though the canon bombards the community below every three minutes, this symbol of the nation's supremacy proves ineffective and only causes superficial damage to the *tomochitecos'* naturally resilient adobe houses. It does, however, cause the tragic death of several chickens (157). The constant booming of the canon's impotent discharges ironically suggests the same failure that national ideology has had among the regional peoples of Northern Mexico like the *tomochitecos*. In a similar manner, the formal military tactics of the *federales* are incompatible with the mountainous geography of Chihuahua's Sierra Madre, leaving the disoriented officers lost and confused: "Ni los capitanes sabían dónde están, ni qué iban a hacer. Todos se sentían a ciegas en el monte" (102). Here the reader is confronted with a clear metaphor of how the national project is ineffective and out of place in this regional setting. Ultimately, a handful of *tomochitecos*

are victorious in this first attack, as their guerilla tactics allow them to virtually terrorize the federal troops, who, unable to see their enemy, blindly fire upon themselves and eventually run for their lives, despite the reprimands of their officers: “¡No corran, no corran...! ¿Cobardes, a dónde van?” (107). While the vastly outnumbered and supposedly ignorant *tomochitecos* astutely utilize their localized knowledge and military prowess to successfully defend their homes, the national aggressor is sent running away in fear. Clearly, this portrayal does not conform to the state’s version of events.

The preeminence of the *tomochitecos* is not limited to the battlefield, as they also prove to be morally superior to the national troops in a number of ways. While the rebels treat all of their prisoners of war relatively well, even sharing their low food supplies with them and releasing them for medical treatment (157), the *federales* summarily execute everyone they capture, including Julia’s defenseless father who claims to be *San José* (152). They also ignore common practice and execute the few surviving rebels, all of whom are seriously injured at the time. After the fact, when someone calls this act barbaric, an official vehemently defends their actions as humane: “—¿Cómo qué barbaridad?...Si los habían de fusilar al fin y al cabo ¿para qué esperar a que se curaran...¿Si señores, fue un acto de humanidad nuestra haberlos rematado así!” (237). Ironically, the “savages” of Tomóchic prove to be more civilized than the supposedly professional, federal army. The *tomochitecos* respect the private property of others, as well as the rules of war as they allow the *soldaderas* safe access to their only water source: “¡Los caballerescos hijos de la sierra no mataban mujeres!” (150). This is notable, as by firing upon these women, the rebels could have easily outlasted the army which had no other way to obtain water in the dry climate of the sierra. In fact, without the

assistance of their women, *las soldaderas*, the troops would have been unable to survive for long in the difficult terrain.

In contrast to the *tomochitecos*, the *federales* constantly violate the normative rules of war. First, rather than defeat the rebels face to face on the battlefield, they choose to fire safely upon the community from the heights of the surrounding hills as they wait for hunger and illness to take its toll on the dissidents. Then, in order to speed this process along, General Rangel orders his men to loot and burn the vacant homes of the *tomochitecos* (155). This “espectáculo tristísimo” lasts for over twenty-four hours and serves to demonstrate to others (especially the reader) the authority of the state. Eventually, these same men set fire to the community’s church, killing virtually all the women and children inside. Unable to escape, one old woman jumps to her death from the bell tower as the flames of the blaze consume her body (194). Ultimately, this same tactic is used against the last rebels who take refuge in the home of their leader Cruz Chávez. This demonstration of the state’s authority is so gruesome that General Rangel cannot bear to watch it: “El general...se negó a presenciar tan espantoso espectáculo” (216). Interestingly, the author repeatedly uses the word “*espectáculo*” to describe the atrocious actions of the army, as if to suggest that they are performances of the state’s barbarity.

Clearly, these terrible acts of destruction stand as examples of what the government will do to those who resist its project. Though Mercado finds these actions shameful and does not participate in them, he does nothing to stop them as he observes these atrocities passively from above. He eventually becomes so desensitized to them, that they appear commonplace: “Ya contemplaba el espectáculo de los incendios y de los

cadáveres como se mira un panorama conocido” (214). In this manner, the second lieutenant is representative of the national intellectual who despite his passive criticism of the government, rarely does anything to end or prevent the violent, state-sanctioned acts of barbarism that underlie his very position. Despite his apparent melancholic detachment from the world around him, Miguel (and national intellectuals like him) is a participant in the nation’s campaign against regional cultures and tacitly accepts their destruction as normal. He speaks from the center, and thus, his position depends upon the inclusive exclusion of others.

Perhaps the most illustrative example of the key difference between the rebels and their national enemy revolves around how they deal with the death and destruction that surrounds them. Throughout the battle, even when they are running out of supplies, the rebels use the dark of night to bury their dead: “Cruz Chávez ordenaba en las noches que saliesen algunas mujeres a recoger sus muertos, enterrándolos con innumerables y minuciosas ceremonias dentro de las mismas casas” (157). Rather than using these few hours of darkness to look for food, the rebels continue to follow the basic tenets of their faith that demands the proper burial of their fallen community members. During the day, they spend the majority of their time in prayer. In contrast, the atmosphere of the federal army’s camp resembles that of a fair or decadent carnival after the initial looting of Tomóchic. While the rebels starve below, the soldiers gamble, play darts, and enjoy a “verdadero banquete” (180), while drinking the newly arrived shipment of *sotol* in “un vibrar, un alborozo de feria de algún pueblo del interior” (181). Once again, this is described as a performance, only this time it is a “espectáculo magnífico” (182). The use

of this adjective, however, does not make it any less barbaric than the previous demonstrations of the state's barbarism.

After the final defeat of the rebels, the federal troops do not bury the dead. Instead, they throw the bodies into grotesque heaps, cover them with gasoline, and set them ablaze. Interestingly, in death no distinction is made between the *tomochitecos* and the deceased *federales*; they all are incarnations of *homo sacer*, of "life that cannot be sacrificed and yet may be killed" (Agamben 82). In this way, the bodies are all Mexicans upon which the nation is established, and thus they all suffer the same fate:

Se les amontonaban unos sobre otros, se les arrojaban grandes leños y se prendía fuego. Y nada más repugnante y triste que el **espectáculo** aquel. Una densa fetidez irradiaba de tales hacinaientos, invadiendo toda la cuenca de Tomóchic. Agotada la leña, los fatídicos montones continuaban ardiendo lentamente, con la propia grasa de la carne humana, dispersando los miembros, transformando los calcinados cuerpos, ennegreciendo cráneos pelados, de espantosos ojos, arrancando de las bocas y de los vientres que escurrían, flamulillas violáceas... Olor de trapo y de cabellos quemados, de carnaza chamuscada, de nauseabunda podredumbre y de humano estiércol... Y en vez de buitres, cerdos. (220)

In the end, this is an act of erasure that reinforces the sovereignty of the state. The burning of the bodies erases every sign of their humanity, as they are reduced to burning, fragmented bodies whose remaining bits will be consumed by the pigs of Tomóchic. There will be no headstones for these dead men and women and no memorial dedicated to their loss because they were not "sacrificed," but merely killed. Unlike the Porfiriato's version of events, here the death of the soldiers and the *tomochitecos* is messy, disgusting, and unsettling to the reader. This is a moment incompatible with official history, that better resembles that described by Benjamin as a memory that "flashes up at a moment of danger" (255). Once these bodies are inscribed into the official history of the state, they

“become a tool of the ruling class” in a history where “*even the dead* will not be safe from the enemy” (Benjamin 255).

Conclusions

Clearly, *Tomóchic* is a complex work that reveals a great deal about the relationship between regionalism and nationalism during the years of the Porfiriato. As a work of literature, it is an ambivalent text that in many ways is a precursor to the *novela de la revolución*. As such, it has been unjustly overlooked by the literary community. More importantly, however, it gives us a clearer picture of the nation’s growing intolerance for regionalism as the liberal state increasingly called for greater centralization as Mexico entered into the world of dependent capitalism at the end of the nineteenth century. It is in this context that regional identity came to signify an obstacle to national development and thus began to occupy the discursive space of the Indian. The regional could either become integrated into the center or be eliminated all together. The novel shows how neither of these paths will lead to the complete destruction of the regional. While the Porfiriato officially attempted to suppress the details of the violence behind this campaign, *Tomóchic* reveals, in horrific detail, the contradictions of a nation that is founded upon the destruction of its own people. The *tomochitecos* (and other *norteños*) were not fanatical Indians, but rather *mestizos* who challenged the state’s authority by refusing to continue to conform to their state of exception. The novel thus contradicts the Porfiriato’s version of the events at Tomóchic, as it reveals the state and its troops as the true fanatical barbarians. While the state burns the bodies of its dead, allowing their flesh to be consumed by flames or by pigs in order to consecrate the “new” nation, the *tomochitecos* bury their loved ones in the dirt floors of their homes. While the nation

wants no monument to these deaths, who as *homo sacer* do not constitute a sacrifice, the novel conserves them and gives this regional rebellion a place in national discourse.

Tomóchic is also significant as it gives us a glance into the regional causes of the Mexican Revolution. Twenty years after this localized rebellion, communities and families in Chihuahua once again took up arms against the state for many of the same reasons. Ironically, the defeat of Tomóchic in 1891 actually resulted in an acceleration of the forces of political centralization in Chihuahua. In addition, the rebellion was fundamental in returning the Terrazas clan to power. This is significant as many of the initial uprisings of 1910-11 were directed towards this faction. Thus, the events at Tomóchic greatly affected the path of the nation. The novel itself played a large role in this as its popularity also contributed to unrest in the region. It would be a mistake, however, to ignore the fact that *Tomóchic* is the product of the center itself, and as such is tied to the legacy of the state, for “there is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism” (Benjamin 276). Thus, after the Revolution *Tomóchic* is embraced by the new administration because it continues to deal with the problem of regionalism. In this way, the novel itself becomes an instrument of state-sanctioned violence, although in this case it is culturally-based violence that attempts to use regional identity for its own purposes. Clearly, *Tomóchic* is a national novel based on a regional rebellion, complete with all the contradictions that this implies.

Chapter Two

Cartucho: A Regional Inversion of National Myth

Historical Context—From *Tomóchic* to *Cartucho*

While the massacre at Tomóchic and the novel it inspired revealed clear inconsistencies in the Porfirato's program of centralization, they failed to ignite the more widespread revolt that the state had feared. In fact, Díaz continued in power for nearly two additional decades before the more generalized revolution began in 1910. In the 1890s, Tomóchic appears to have only influenced a handful of subsequent rebellions that were quickly crushed by the government.¹ Clearly, the tangible impact of the movement was quite limited. The pace of national integration (both political and economic) did not slow down, and Northern Mexico in particular became a prime location for foreign investment, especially in mining and land speculation. More and more the regional economies of the North became enmeshed with the U.S. capitalist system.² On the surface, it appeared that the militant regionalism of Tomóchic had all but disappeared. If

¹ According to Katz, the 1893 uprising in Santo Tomás, which did call for the overthrow of Díaz, was influenced by Tomóchic. Survivors from this group eventually occupied the border town of Palomas with new recruits and issued a manifesto against the Porfiriato, "that called for an uprising and concluded, 'Long live Tomóchi!'"(26). Katz says the impact of Tomóchic is also evident in another 1893 movement that occupied the town of El Mulato (26). Despite this, it appears that the story of Tomóchic, especially of the bravery of the *tomochitecos*, had a deeper psychological impact on the population through its inscription in regional oral tradition, as seen in the *corridos* it inspired. According to Katz, these stories "would sustain them twenty years later" during the first months of popular revolution in 1910 (26).

² In no way do I mean to imply that the U.S. economy was completely capitalistic in nature, or that these regional economies were essentially precapitalist. The local economies in the Northern Mexican States did, however, become increasingly sensitive to changes in the U.S. market. This was especially the case as more Mexicans entered the cash economy as industrial workers in foreign-owned mining enterprises and railroads. This is also when a new Northern migrant population of workers developed. Historically the U.S. has welcomed such workers with open arms during times of prosperity, or expelled them during recessions.

regionalism continued to be a point of friction, then why did Tomóchic have such a restricted influence on the rest of the *patria chica*? More specifically, what factors impeded the realization of a larger movement inspired by such regional fervor?

The limited number (and impact) of rebellions in the period following Tomóchic can be partially explained by the geographic isolation of these largely rural, peasant movements. Though the major cities of Chihuahua and Durango were by now connected to the national center by railroad and telegraph, communication with military colonies and *serrano* communities continued to be unreliable and slow. Thus, it was fairly easy for state authorities to control the flow of information, and thus the possible influence of any such uprisings. As evidenced by *Tomóchic*, the Porfiriato was quite efficient at manipulating and censoring the media. Heriberto Frías had to publish his work anonymously, and was almost executed under charges of treason, all while he continually denied authorship. It is highly unlikely that anti-Porfirian manifestos, such as that issued by the Santo Tomás movement in the United States, would have reached a large audience. Despite this, however, the spread (or lack thereof) of armed revolt was more closely tied to state and national politics as caudillos routinely used regional discontent and the potential threat of violence (that might interfere with the Porfiriato's capitalist plans) as bargaining chips in disputes with the federal government. For rich, land-owning oligarchs like Luis Terrazas, regional rebels were nothing more than pawns in their efforts to seize power over state government, and resist national control. Military colonists and free villagers, like the *tomochitecos*, trusted Terrazas and unsuspectingly viewed him as "their patron and protector...the man under whose leadership they had fought the Apaches and for whom they had staged an uprising in 1879" (Katz 27). In the

case of the *tomochitecos*, Terrazas quickly removed his support once the Carillo administration was discredited. In this way, Terrazas actually benefited from the massacre of Tomóchic as it allowed him to consolidate his authority and influence. Despite the longstanding discord between Terrazas and Díaz, Tomóchic proved to the national dictator that he needed Terrazas and his influence over the free villagers in order to maintain federal control and local stability in the area. In 1903, the president allowed the local caudillo to once again assume the governorship of the state of Chihuahua. Thus, violent manifestations of regional identity were often manipulated by local leaders for their own benefit. For all practical terms, as long as the economic interests of each (mainly foreign investment in mining and land speculation) were protected, neither the Porfiriato nor the regional aristocracy had much interest in armed conflict. In order for revolution to occur, the regional discontent and dissatisfaction of the rural population needed to spread to other sectors of society. Thanks in part to its increased economic dependence on the U.S. market economy, Chihuahua was one of the first places where such an unforeseen phenomenon occurred.³

While it is not within the scope of this project to delve into the entire history of the Mexican Revolution, it is important to put the text to be discussed in context, as it deals with a particularly regional experience of Revolution. According to Katz, Chihuahua was the only “serious revolt” that answered the call of Francisco Madero in November and December of 1910, a fact that greatly surprised Madero who expected rebellion to come from his fellow aristocratic landholders (54). The revolution in

³ For a detailed history of the development of the Revolution in Chihuahua see Friedrich Katz, *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*. For a more global study of the Revolution (as a national movement) see Alan Knight’s two volumed *The Mexican Revolution*. Hector Aguilar Camín and Lorenzo Meyer treat the years of Revolution more concisely as a part of their study of twentieth century Mexican history, *In the Shadow of the Mexican Revolution: Contemporary Mexican History, 1910-1989*.

Chihuahua was distinct as it joined together disillusioned individuals from across various sectors of society.⁴ The central government's program of national economic and political consolidation had left the regional population primed for revolution. First, the Creel and Terrazas clans had destroyed the economic base of the already bellicose free villagers. Then, the economic crisis of 1908-1910 hit the middle sectors of society very hard. Thousands of industrial workers, mostly miners and railroad employees, were left unemployed just as a series of bad harvests caused the price of basic food stuffs to sky rocket. In addition, the U.S. banned immigration and 2,000 Mexicans working in the U.S. "were given railway tickets by their companies to El Paso" where they simultaneously entered Chihuahua and unemployment (Katz 49). Thus, by 1910 economic and political uncertainties joined free villagers, the urban middle class, and industrial/migrant workers around a common cause, making Chihuahua an unexpected center of support for Francisco Madero's revolution. In this way, the Revolution actually joined members of society together that had previously been divided. Yet, unlike other revolutions (such as the French and the Russian), what united these men was not national, but rather regional identity.⁵ Over the next decade the revolutionary potential of this identity would become

⁴ Héctor Aguilar Camín and Lorenzo Meyer note that unlike other armies, most notably the Zapatistas, whose mobilization was limited by their more agrarian background, the "free worker" of the North "furnished the northern revolutionary armies with people, allowing the availability of men for recruitment and military mobilization outside of the region" (10). The use of the word "free" is ironic, as although miners, migrants, and industrial workers were not tied to traditional land holdings like peasants, their dependence on capital reimbursement left them little alternative for employment once fighting had begun. Dissatisfaction with this new system perhaps paved the way for their inoculation in the popular movement of *villismo* during the second phase of the Revolution. Friedrich Katz, on the other hand, has found that new research indicates the Northern Revolutionary movements were more agrarian than previously thought.

⁵ It is not my intention to argue that revolutionaries from the area in question did not consider themselves to be Mexicans, as opposed to *norteños*, *chihuahuenses*, etc., but rather that the spirit that joined them, which eventually became *villismo* was not national. Their common enemy was not Porfirio Díaz, but the state authorities and oligarchs (principally the Terrazas and Creel clan).

abundantly clear as the popular movement of *Villismo* came to incarnate regional resistance. *Cartucho* attempts to use memory to recuperate this revolutionary potential.

The Mexican Revolution is a complex phenomenon that has been the subject of much debate and research since its very beginning.⁶ Despite this, however, the decade of 1910-1920 can be roughly divided into three distinct armed phases. From 1910-1911 revolutionary forces fought under Madero against the federal forces of the Porfiriato. Although fighting never completely ended everywhere, Díaz was exiled and Madero was elected President in 1911. His administration, however, was short-lived and in February of 1913 a coup organized by General Victoriano Huerta killed Madero. During the second phase of revolt (roughly 1913-1914) former *maderista* generals, the constitutionalists, tacitly joined together in order to defeat Huerta.

It is during these years that Pancho Villa emerged as the leader of the revolutionary forces of Chihuahua and Durango, the fabled *División del Norte*, that became the “undisputed masters of the country” in less than a year (Parra 1). At the height of its power, this grassroots popular rebellion, *Villismo*, united between 30,000 and 50,000 soldiers from across the social spectrum against a common enemy. Despite his widespread military success, however, Pancho Villa closely identified with his *patria chica* (northern Durango and Southern Chihuahua) and viewed defending his regional homeland as an expression of his patriotism.⁷ The overwhelming revolutionary potential

⁶ Some historians such as Knight focus on the national character of the Revolution, while others such as Katz emphasize the regional. In other studies it is characterized as a Marxist, largely agrarian revolution, while others describe it as a conflict ruled by ambitious *caciques* and manipulative oligarchs where the Marxist masses are mere pawns. Researchers even disagree as to the chronology of the Revolution, especially in reference as to when it really ended. Like all historical events, our understanding of the Revolution will continue to change as history is continually rewritten by the present.

⁷ Most historical studies and biographies about Villa recognize that he did not have national political aspirations. Whether or not *villismo* is or was recognized as a political ideology, it is federalist by nature, allowing individual states a great deal of autonomy.

of *Villismo* was reminiscent of the *tomochitecos*' regional identity, as highlighted by Max Parra: "The violent tradition of frontier culture was fully reactivated during the revolutionary war, and *Villismo* was to be the insurgent movement that best embodied the bellicose and territorial mentality of the military colonists" (59-60). *Villismo* thus allowed all *villistas*, regardless of social rank or place of origin, to place themselves (like the *tomochitecos*) as defenders of an intimate homeland, a *patria chica*, and particular way of life. While for some *villistas* this may have been more myth than reality, the *patria chica* did come under the direct attack of centralist policies following the Revolution. Thus, *Villismo* came to embody regional identity and a patriotism founded on local autonomy and resistance to central control. With the defeat of Huerta in 1915, the constitutionalist generals quickly fell into a civil war that left the *villistas* demoralized and on the verge of collapse. Villa subsequently disbanded his famous division and retreated back to his *patria chica* where he continued to wage war against the *carrancistas* (and at one point a U.S. punitive force) until 1920.

Though practically devoid of large battles, this period of civil war is characterized as the "most savage" and "one of the darkest periods" in the area's history (Katz 622). Highly skilled in guerilla warfare, the *villistas* sought refuge in the sierra, as civilians lived under military occupation.⁸ In many ways, this is reminiscent of Tomóchic as in each case the central government sent an overwhelming number of federal troops, which were perceived as an occupying force, to squash a comparatively small group of local dissidents.⁹ Interestingly, these chaotic, and in many ways controversial years of civil

⁸ Though many *villistas* abandoned the fight and Villa did lose many former supporters, this did not mean the federal *carrancistas* were welcomed, and not seen as an occupying force.

⁹ Here the adjective "local" is used in reference to the place of origin of said dissidents. While the *tomochitecos* had no aspirations of overthrowing the central government, the *villistas*, though now mostly

war are the focus of Nellie Campobello's work, *Cartucho: Relatos de la lucha en el Norte de México*.¹⁰ Rather than recounting the epic battles of 1913-1914 when *Villismo* was at its height, Campobello focuses on the Revolution at the regional level during its final and bloodiest years. This is a period that is virtually ignored by official history and other *novelas de la Revolución*. For example in his recent (2006) book length study, *La División del Norte: La tierra, los hombres y la historia de un ejército del pueblo*, historian Pedro Salmerón completely negates the importance of this time, as his concluding statement clearly reveals: "Pero esa es **otra historia**, la que queríamos **contar**, querido lector, termina el 24 de junio de 1914, con la División del Norte entrando triunfalmente en Zacatecas" (466, emphasis is my own). Despite his academic research, the author's final line (with the present tense "termina" and gerund, "entrando") casts the *División* as a victorious mythic group of *guerrilleros* that cease to exist after their most important triumph. The subsequent decline of this group is not a part of the "historia" or story that Salmerón wishes to tell.¹¹ Unfortunately, this is merely symptomatic of a long historical ignorance that leaves a highly significant gap in the Mexican imaginary. *Cartucho* attempts to fill this gap by telling this "otra historia" of civil war and violent fragmentation that does not conform to, and in fact questions the national myth of the Revolution. Therefore, the text challenges the very foundational myth upon which the modern "revolutionary" Mexican state is based.

limited to their original territory, did still engage in an active struggle with the federal troops, even if it was one of daring survival. The invasion of Columbus, New Mexico during this period was certainly daring. Though they may have been numerically insignificant like the *tomochitecos*, the remaining *villistas* possessed a degree of mobility, leadership, and military experience that far surpassed the latter.

¹⁰ For the rest of this study I will refer to this text simply as *Cartucho*. Unless otherwise noted, all textual citations come from the following printing: Campobello, Nellie. *Cartucho: Relatos de la lucha en el Norte de México*. Mexico City: Era, 2000.

¹¹ While the use of "historia" could be interpreted as history or story, Salmerón's use of the verb "contar" to describe this "otra historia" clearly indicates that he is referring to this as another "story," not an additional history that requires additional research.

This subversive intent is even apparent in the work's often ignored subtitle, "Relatos de la lucha en el Norte de México." Thus described, the work does not intend to present a monolithic discourse, but rather a collection of "relatos." The use of the plural indicates the possibility of various "truths" from a variety of perspectives, as reflected in the collective voice of the work whose stories often contradict official history. Finally, "la lucha" that is referred to in the subtitle is not the glorious Mexican Revolution of official history that gave birth to a new "revolutionary" government and nation, but rather the bloody and repressive civil war of 1916-1920 in the North. Specifically, it is "la lucha" of the *patria chica*, or regional identity incarnated by the *villistas* and other local heroes, against an overwhelming, corrosive national presence/force. As the cadavers that populate its pages reveal, this is a struggle merely to survive. Thus, *Cartucho*, reveals the barbarous acts upon which the modern "revolutionary" state was founded.

Yet, *Cartucho* is much more than a work that explores the struggle of *Villismo* during the decadent years of civil war. The text itself, as well as its evolution and secondary interpretation, reveals a great deal about the conflictual relationship between regionalism and nationalism in the decade before and after its first publication in 1931.¹² According to Jorge Aguilar Mora, "Campobello escribió la crónica de lo que casi nadie quería, ni ha querido, escribir: del periodo entre 1916 y 1920 en el estado de Chihuahua" (11). While this is certainly a true statement, as the historical and literary aversion to these particular years and location attests, Aguilar Mora fails to adequately explore one

¹²Public interest in the text also illustrates the changing regional/national dynamic. In the 1990s there was a renewed interest in the literary work of Campobello. While many attribute this to the publicity and controversy surrounding the author's disappearance, as well as an increased interest in women writers, it seems all too coincidental that Campobello's work was taken seriously by the literary community and the reading public, just as the government was becoming more democratic and attempting to redefine its revolutionary patrimony. As the state loosened its grip on the Revolution, alternative discourses (and regional identity) were given an ever-increasing expressive space.

important question: Why? Or, to be more specific, why did no one else want to write about this period? And perhaps even more importantly, why in particular did Campobello do so?

While Aguilar Mora implies that writers and historians avoid this time period because of its extraordinary gore and violence, this is an overly superficial analysis, as it completely ignores the political climate in which writers and researchers produce discourse. Following the Revolution (particularly during the Calles era) Villa, as a symbol of regional identity and anticentralist sentiment, was treated as a threat to national control and power by the state. Though the Revolution was supposedly concluded, the central state continued to face violent rebellions throughout its territory that threatened national unity. As a regional figure that could potentially inspire further uprisings (even posthumously), it was in the state's interest to reject the image of Villa as a heroic revolutionary general, and officially label him as a bandit.¹³ In addition, denigrating the memory of the dead general was the only way his former enemies, who now controlled the state, could finally defeat him. Thus, literature became a discursive battlefield in which general Villa and the revolutionary forces of the North were typically cast as ignorant, violent barbarians; they were a necessary evil of the armed phase of the struggle that had no place in the modern "revolutionary" nation.¹⁴ Although the intellectuals of

¹³ The state was also desperate to maintain a favorable (though somewhat precarious) relationship with the United States that, perhaps not so coincidentally, only officially recognized the new government after the assassination of Pancho Villa. Anti-American sentiment was a growing part of *villismo* in his final years of insurgency. *Cartucho* contains many scenes (in both editions) that reflect a clear anti-American component of Northern regionalism. The ending of the first edition is especially notable as the narrator reflects with disdain how her brother, who was forced into exile, lost his regional and national identity by living in the U.S. She would have preferred him to be a Mexican bandit, a word she seems to venerate. Given the current state of border relations, an analysis of this Anti-American component in the text could be particularly revealing and deserves further study.

¹⁴ Once again, as in Tomóchic, the peoples of Chihuahua and Durango are metaphorically placed in the marginalized role of the *indio* by the state. The military prowess of these men was lauded when they were

the day did use the *novelas de la Revolución* to present competing views of the Revolution that were not necessarily supportive of the current administration, the majority of these texts were essentially nationalistic works that supported the system. In such a climate it is understandable why the history of Chihuahua from 1916 to 1920, which does not conform to the official “glorious” image of the Revolution, and a positive portrayal of Villa would be avoided. According to Max Parra, however, the demonization of Villa had far reaching implications:

These views, in turn, were symptomatic of a larger cultural war taking place: a war fought over the dead, over how the Mexican people should remember their fallen revolutionaries at a time when the meaning of the war, and therefore its legacy for the present, was still unresolved. How should the dead be remembered? What was the meaning of popular violence? Whose memory would prevail? These were critical questions because the answers touched on issues of social restructuring (e.g., the place of the uneducated masses in the new order) and political legitimation (who has the right to speak for the nation). (5)

Cartucho attempts to answer these questions from a regional and anticentrist perspective. Rather than looking to the future and the central government for the realization of revolutionary ideals, as others did, Campobello turned her gaze to the past and told the story no one else wanted to tell. Thus, in many ways *Cartucho* represents a regional inversion of the *novela de la revolución*. For this reason, a close reading of the text reveals a great deal about the national politics of the post-revolutionary era when *Villismo* and other aspects of regional cultural practice and identity were rejected by the state’s paternalistic cultural project, thus converting them into spaces of resistance.

In many ways Campobello wrote about this time period precisely because of this hostile political climate that cast Villa as a villain. For the author, Villa and her mother

fighting for the installation of “civilization,” but once the armed conflict ended they were cast as the “barbarians.” Each case reveals the barbarous nature of nation building. *Cartucho*, like *Tomóchic*, inverts the civilization vs. barbarism dichotomy by representing the federal troops as brutal aggressors and the *villistas* as true patriots.

are symbols of and connections to a regional identity and location that she was forced to abandon in 1923 when she relocated to Mexico City. The death of her mother in 1922 and the 1923 assassination of Villa are key components of the severe trauma the author experienced as a young woman when she irreversibly lost a part of her own identity, a regional identity that intrinsically bound her to both her mother and her *patria chica*. Campobello, however, did not mourn the loss of this object of desire, but rather was entrapped in a state of melancholia where she continually returns to the moment of her loss, specifically the period of 1916-1920 in the territory surrounding Parral, Chihuahua, in both her artistic work and her daily life. Thus, *Cartucho* presents the reader with a female child protagonist/narrator who observes the harsh reality of death and conflict from the safety of her window. As the narrator is supposedly too young to understand the violence in which she lives, she speaks of death and mutilation in a matter-of-fact way that both shocks and confounds the reader. Though the author herself was a young woman during this time period, Nellie (as the child narrator) is the mouthpiece through which Campobello is able to speak in her attempt to recover the individual and collective memories which are all that remain of her lost identity.¹⁵ In this way, she is also able to recount certain “truths” that constitute alternatives to the official history of the Mexican Revolution. Through a detailed analysis of the text, it will become clear that *Cartucho* is a complex text that reveals a great deal about the post-revolutionary period when regionalism and the simple act of remembering could be dangerous.

¹⁵ Throughout this chapter I will use “Nellie” to refer to the narrator created by the author, who I refer to as simply Campobello. While Nellie represents the text’s author as a child, she is a fictional creation of the writer, especially considering that she only assumed the name, Nellie Campobello, as an adult. During the Revolution her name was Francisca Moya Luna.

Ignored text or suppressed threat?

Given the political climate at the time of its first publication in 1931, *Cartucho* was largely ignored by both the public and the academic community at large. After all, Campobello offered a relatively positive image of Pancho Villa at a time when he was “officially” regarded as a violent, brutal bandit by both the Mexican and American political systems. In addition, she was the sole woman to produce a supposed *novela de la Revolución*. The text, however, continued to be overlooked and misinterpreted even as opinions concerning Villa changed. For example, in *Mexico in its Novel: A Nation’s Search for Identity* (1966), John Brushwood explains that the use of a child’s perspective “brings up all kinds of questions about child psychology,” while later commenting that “the view of the Revolution is, of course, limited by this device” (207-208). The mid-sentence interjection “of course” indicates that a child, especially a female child, could not possibly relate anything significant about the Revolution, and that the use of such a narrator could not serve a more profound purpose. Then, Brushwood abruptly ends his brief discussion by concluding: “The book apparently says what the author wanted to say about the Revolution, since she made no further contributions to the theme” (208). This statement is especially odd as Campobello later published *Las manos de mamá* and *Apuntes sobre la vida militar de Francisco Villa*, both of which deal with the Revolution in some form.¹⁶ Additionally, Campobello’s work was not included in Emmanuel Carballo’s book length bibliography of twentieth century Mexican novels. While there is debate among critics as to whether *Cartucho* is a novel, Carballo does not discuss the

¹⁶ It is inconceivable that Brushwood was not aware of these works, as apart from their initial publications in 1937 and 1940 respectively, both were included in the 1960 publication of the complete works of Campobello, *Mis libros*. In addition, *Cartucho* and *Las manos* were included in Antonio Castro Leal’s (1960) canonical anthology *La novela de la Revolución*. Though these works are usually not considered to be novels, they are clearly “further contributions to the theme.”

reasoning behind his selections. According to Doris Meyer, this ignorance of Campobello's work is even true of later "feminist critical studies where she [Campobello] might well have figured" (Dialogics 46). Meyer explains how, despite its clear influence on the literary production of well-known Mexican women authors such as Elena Garro, Rosario Castellanos, and Elena Poniatowska, the work was ignored by important studies such as Jean Franco's *Plotting Women* (1989) and Sylvia Molloy's *At Face Value: Autobiographical Writing in Spanish America* (1991).¹⁷ It seems that until the late 1990s, when coincidentally the Mexican state was passing through a process of increased democratization, *Cartucho* was ignored, and even marginalized by the literary community.

The author was also the target of this marginalization, as she was openly belittled by critics who refused to recognize her as a writer. Like Villa, Campobello's image fell under direct attack as she became nothing more than a caricature of her child protagonist, Nellie. For example, although Emmanuel Carballo did not include her work in his bibliography of the modern Mexican novel, he did interview Campobello for his *Diecinueve protagonistas de la literatura mexicana del siglo XX*. Before the interview, however, Carballo includes a brief introductory note that presents Campobello more as a mentally challenged woman, who lives in a perpetual childlike state, than as a noted author and choreographer. Referring to Campobello, he remarks: "Vive en la región de la Gracia. Contempla el mundo con ojos recién nacidos. Conserva el candor y la

¹⁷ This "general lack of attention" by feminist critical studies has only been remedied in recent years as seen in the work of Hurley (2003) and Linhard (2005). In a field that usually seeks out the work of lesser known female writers this seems odd. Meyer hints that perhaps Campobello did not attract much attention by earlier critics, not because she was unknown, but because she was not an active feminist. Regardless of the reason, *Cartucho* is a text that presents feminist scholars with an interesting case that merits additional study from this perspective.

generosidad de los primeros años, la alegría expansiva de la juventud” (327). Like many critics, Carballo does not distinguish between the child that inhabits the space of Campobello’s literary production, and the author herself. By treating her as a colorful, eccentric figure, critics like Carballo belittled Campobello and limited the possible impact of her literary work. Similarly, Antonio Magaña Esquivel refers to Campobello as “la ‘Adelita’ de la leyenda, la mujer que trae al relato sus recuerdos, sus visiones personales, único caso en el género” (263). While Campobello is regarded as perhaps the only woman novelist of the Revolution, she is most definitely not the only author of this genre to incorporate personal memories and opinions into her work.¹⁸ Rather than recognize the literary merit of *Cartucho*, the critic shifts the focus to the author by casting her as another character. The “Adelita” is a female figure from Mexican popular culture who only transgressed gender roles as a *soldadera* during a time of conflict, when it was necessary to protect her man and her country.¹⁹ As an “Adelita” the importance of the author and her work is thus limited. Magaña Esquivel is also quick to point out that, though largely ignored by her contemporaries, Campobello’s work was luckily rescued “del olvido” by a man, Antonio Castro Leal. Thus, while authors like Martín Luís Guzmán and José Vasconcelos are considered to be intellectuals of the Revolution, Campobello is described as a child, a rescued woman, perhaps a mythic *soldadera*, but not as an author.

¹⁸ The incorporation of autobiographical elements is in fact characteristic of this genre, and many like Guzmán’s *El águila y la serpiente* or Vasconcelos’ *Ulises Criollo* are often not considered to be novels, but autobiographies.

¹⁹ If Campobello was an “Adelita” she would represent the regional inversion of this symbol. She is a woman defending Pacho Villa and her *patria chica* by taking up her pen as a weapon, not a poor uneducated woman following her man into battle with children and *comal* in tow.

While critics may have found it difficult to seriously accept Campobello's work, as it is partially narrated by a young child, there are other examples that utilize this device. In his article, "El niño de la Revolución Mexicana: Nellie Campobello, Andrés Iduarte y César Garizurieta," Gary Keller examines the use of a child narrator in three distinct works concerning the Revolution. Once again, however, Campobello is not respected as a literary writer as Keller differentiates *Cartucho* from the other narratives:

Nos ocuparemos de la manera en que cada autor presenta el mundo del niño dentro del contexto revolucionario. Sin embargo, por lo menos **en dos de estas obras** tenemos el hecho de un autor maduro y adulto recreando su propia visión juvenil de la revolución. (143, emphasis is my own)

Though here the critique is more subtle, Keller clearly explains that only the two male authors included in his study are mature adults capable of creating a literary representation of their childhood experiences. Even if Keller is perhaps referring to the lack of an adult authorial voice in the text, it is the voice of an adult Nellie, who narrates her childhood experiences (in the past tense) in *Cartucho*. This, however, is not the case as Keller goes on to explain that the author was ironically "afortunada" to experience the revolution as a child, thus making *Cartucho* "muy diferente a la obra del artista adulta" (143). Though he mistakenly believes that Campobello was merely twenty-two in 1931 (and subsequently thirty-one years old when the revised and expanded second edition was published), the author was clearly an adult, and not a child when she put pen to paper.²⁰

²⁰ For many years it was believed that, like her presumably autobiographical narrator, Campobello experienced the violent years of Revolution described in her text as a small child. Early critics give 1909 and even 1913 as her year of birth. Keller refers to Carballo's interview of Campobello in *Diecinueve protagonistas* where she claims her birthday as Nov. 7, 1909. Baptismal records, however, have revealed her true date of birth to be Nov. 7, 1901, meaning that she was not a child, but rather a teenager/young woman during the period in *Cartucho*, and a mature woman when it was published. Matthews has shown that Campobello also was pregnant during her time in Parral and gave birth to a child who died at the age of two.

According to Keller, however, the work presents an infantile “revivir puro” in *estampas*²¹ that are seemingly mythical in origin: “Los fragmentos de *Cartucho* parecen para el lector, joyas exóticas, traídas de un reino mítico” (143). First, Keller belittles the work by referring to its various *estampas* as “fragmentos,” as if they were disjointed pieces and not parts of a comprehensive whole. Then, he equates them to exotic jewels extracted from a mythical kingdom, as if they were somehow children’s play things or parts of a fairy tale told by an enchanted child; that somehow Campobello is a female Peter Pan that never grew up, keeping her “visión infantil” intact despite the passage of years and the onset of adulthood. Lastly, by describing *Cartucho* as a testimony, a “revivir puro,” Keller ignores the extensive revision process that occurred between the first and second editions.²² Campobello, the adult writer who researched and edited her work, does not correspond to Keller’s romantic notion of a young girl reliving her experiences through writing. Once again, a critic seems unable to separate Campobello from the figure of Nellie.

²¹ *Cartucho* consists of fifty-six short entries, ranging in extension from a few paragraphs to a few pages that are arranged into three sections. Lacking the structure of short stories these interdependent episodes have been described as fragments, vignettes, verbal photographs, entries, *relatos*, *estampas*, etc. I prefer the Spanish *estampa* to describe these entries, as it reflects the visual quality of each, while evoking the structure of the work where the *estampas* are placed on display as interrelated, yet separate components/images from the narrator’s memory as a type of scrap book of her *patria chica* during war.

²² The second (and definitive) edition of *Cartucho*, which was published in 1940, was nearly twice as long as the first. As a dancer/choreographer with the state’s “cultural missions,” Campobello traveled across the country. During her time in Northern Mexico she conducted research by consulting Villa’s personal papers (those held by his widow) and conducting oral interviews with surviving *villistas*. Though this research was supposedly for her text *Apuntes*, stories from her interviews are seen in the new *estampas* of the second edition in which the autobiographical/historical tone is downplayed and the ambiguous, collective voice takes over. Nellie is less present in the second edition, which focuses more on the *patria chica*. By eliminating dates and names in several preexisting *estampas*, the second edition becomes more historically ambiguous and subversive. In the 1960 reprinting in *Mis libros* the author makes a few changes, and although these have been included in more recent printings, most critics do not consider this as a third edition. Though it does not fit within the scope of this study to present a detailed analysis of the changes Campobello made in the second edition, this is an area that has not been adequately studied, especially from a regional/historical perspective. While the first edition was written during the extremely anti-villista Calles administration, the second followed the Cardenás era when the state’s negative opinion of Villa loosened up, and a great deal of Villista literature was produced. In many ways, the second edition is a reaction to, and is in a dialogic relationship with these changes.

Clearly, critics have found it difficult to accept *Cartucho* as a serious literary work, as it has consistently been either ignored or regarded as a child's "authentic" testimony, a type of social/historical document of a young girl's experience of war, as if Campobello were a Mexican Anne Frank. Perhaps this is because in many ways the text represented a threat to the existing power structure. First, it is the product of a woman writer whose primary focalizer is a female child who places her mother as a revolutionary hero. This differs greatly from the majority of the *novelas de la Revolución*, where women rarely play an active role, as Elvia Montes de Oca Navas details:

En la Novela de la Revolución Mexicana la mujer aparece como un ser sin nombre ni rostro, anónimo y secundario, aunque siempre presente...un 'artefacto masculino' que se toma y se abandona cuando ya no es útil ni necesario; un ser sin ubicación propia. (136)

In contrast, *Cartucho* is a text where the woman, not the man, provides stability and protection. While men quickly become cadavers, the women of Parral maintain the collective memory of the community, while simultaneously protecting both family and home in domestic and public spaces. In "Los heridos de Villa," Nellie's mother attempts to save the lives of Villa's wounded, as the *Carrancistas* take control of the town. Though the disabled and infirm *villistas* are eventually taken prisoner and left to die, the mother stands up to a *carrancista* commanding officer and protects her *paisanos* long after Villa himself has abandoned them. The women then are the only ones who preserve the memory of these lost men: "Ellos decían que aquellos hombre eran unos bandidos, nosotros sabíamos que eran hombres del Norte, valientes que no podían moverse porque sus heridas no los dejaban" (119). Here it is the women of the community who once again protect their fallen men from outside aggressors. Similarly, it is the figure of Nellie, ever-watching from her window or amidst her mother's skirts, who remains a constant

presence in the work as countless men, including Villa, come in and out of her amoral gaze. Thus, it is the man that becomes a “feminine artifact” that exists, thanks to either the stories and *corridos* of female oral history or the gaze of a small girl. This is especially notable as these women are *norteñas*, (specifically *chihuahuenses*) and members of a specific regional community. In this way, the work places authority in the collective voice of the periphery, not the center. Furthermore by writing from the perspective of a child, the author actually inverts the traditional female/male relationship as it appears in other *novelas de la Revolución*. This inversion is also a contributing factor to *Cartucho*’s relatively marginal status in the Mexican literary canon. Combined with its positive portrayal of Villa, *Cartucho* can be seen more as a suppressed regional threat than an ignored text. After all, it challenges not only traditional gender roles, but also “official” history (specifically the “myth” of the Revolution), and thus the very foundation of the “revolutionary” state. It also, however, represents an inversion of (and thus a threat to) the very genre into whose limits it is usually placed, *la novela de la Revolución*.

***Una novela de la Revolución* or its regional inversion?**

Apart from a few exceptions (most notably *Los de abajo*), the vast majority of works that are classified as *novelas de la Revolución* were produced after the Revolution had ended and the nation, or at least the upper sectors of society, had entered into what Max Parra describes as “cultural wars” where the meaning, and thus the legacy of the Revolution was up for debate (5). The *novela de la Revolución* played a role in this battle as a discursive space in which competing representations of the Revolution and political ideologies are presented under the guise of a supposedly direct, realistic narrative style.

These literary works would thus play an important role in how the dead of the Revolution were remembered; they recreated both the common soldier and the key players of the struggle in a simple style that was readily accessible to the literate population. Just as these popular works entered the market, historians and the state's propaganda machine were producing the "official" version of events.²³ In this way, the *novela de la Revolución* was unique in that it had the power to influence, or even reinforce the production of historical discourse at the very moment of its inscription, before the state's definition of the Revolution was consolidated. It also, however, had the power to contradict/resist official discourse by presenting an alternate account **before** the "official" had become popular belief. Thus, the location of *Cartucho* within, or perhaps more accurately in relation to this genre is potentially quite revealing: What was the location of regional discourse within these "cultural wars"? Was regionalism granted a space within national discourse, or was it marginalized? Why?

As was the case with the Porfiriato, the press was not free of state influence during the post-revolutionary period, so the fictionalized environment of the *novela* gave its writers (like *Tomóchic* gave Heriberto Frías), many of whom were reporters, a certain degree of expressive freedom and protection.²⁴ The result is a rather broad category that includes works, like *Cartucho*, that are not traditional novels at all, as Antonio Magaña Esquivel explains:

Bajo el nombre de Novela de la Revolución se comprende, pues, un conjunto bastante complejo de relatos, narraciones, historias. Hay en ellas...una especie de unidad de preocupación social o de conciencia; pero así como los ingredientes,

²³ This is not just evident in discourse. The Revolution and, in fact, a reinterpretation of the nation's entire history can be seen throughout the plastic arts as well, especially in the muralist movement. For a still largely illiterate population, public murals and the performing arts were effective ways of re-education.

²⁴ By using the term *novela* I am referring to *la novela de la Revolución*, and not "novel" in an effort to avoid unnecessary repetition.

causas e implicaciones de la Revolución son muy diversos y múltiples, la Novela de la Revolución ha dado los más, aparentemente, diferentes productos. De un lado, las anécdotas, los episodios, los recuerdos de los hechos de armas. De otro, el retrato de los caudillos y principales personajes. Luego, la compleja trama de relatos acerca de la rebeldía contra el orden establecido, las reformas sociales, las consecuencias políticas, las prevaricaciones de líderes o generales, las lacras y dramas aun no resueltos... (13)

As this description indicates, there is not a clear model of the *novela de la Revolución*.²⁵

Even in his study dedicated entirely to this genre, Magaña Esquivel fails to properly define the *novela*, perhaps due to the variety found among the works in this category. In this respect, it would seem that *Cartucho* does fit into this genre, except that Magaña Esquivel's description fails to mention an important point. Despite the diversity within the genre, *novelas* all share one common characteristic; they all competed in the national arena in an effort to define and explain the tragedy of the armed struggle, as it was interpreted into a national project.²⁶ Thus, a *novela* conceives of the Revolution as national in scope. To understand this, one merely needs to consider the name of the genre, *la novela de la Revolución*. It is not *la novela revolucionaria*, or even *la novela de revolución*, but rather *la novela de la Revolución*. The repeated use of the definite article "la" and the capital "r" in "*Revolución*" make it clear that it is a genre in which the Mexican Revolution is meant to be treated as a national phenomenon.

²⁵ Though *Los de abajo* is often lauded as the prototype of the genre, there is a great deal of diversity within the genre. While *Los de abajo* is considered as "literature," *El águila y la serpiente* is more autobiography than novel. Then there are many more obscure texts written by former soldiers that are ignored as works of "low quality."

²⁶ Most studies say that the one thing these works have in common is the Revolution. While this may be true, it is their effort to define and affect the future national project based on the Revolution, the institutionalized Revolution, that is important. I could write a novel about the Mexican Revolution today, but that would not make it a *novela de la Revolución*. Also, it is important to note that although I define the genre as a national genre, this does not mean that the works within this category did not differ a great deal ideologically, or that they did not present conflicting views and interpretations of the Revolution, only that they conceive of the Revolution as a national phenomenon, more often than not from the nation's center.

Though the focus may be on a particular group or individual hero, the scope of the *novela* is national as its project is nothing short of defining/inspiring a new “revolutionary” national project still in formation. It is this project that defines *la novela de la Revolución* as a genre, and not its structure, as Brushwood explains:

The important thing is that, if they are not novels, they took the place of novels, just as the chronicles took the place of novels in the Colonial Period. The novel plays a role in society...the role is more important than the form taken by the agent that fulfills it. (201)

As shown here, Brushwood sees the *novela de la Revolución* as serving a purpose in Mexican society comparable to that served by Hernán Cortés’s *Cartas de relación* which described and justified the conquest of the Aztec empire to the Spanish Monarchy. Though Brushwood’s chapter on the colonial period explains that his interest lies in those spaces in which “the life and spirit of the people” escape the chronicler’s control (as if that were possible), this comparison is especially revealing. Though they sometimes contradict one another, the chronicles that Brushwood mentions (including *Cartas*) all chart and define the Conquest, the violent foundational moment upon which the Spanish built their colonial empire in the New World. Therefore, these texts create the foundational myths that justify the peninsular domination of the new continent and the destruction of native cultures. Such chronicles represent the first moment in which the *indio*, or at least his literary representation, is placed as an inferior being that needs to be civilized, thus founding the literary *civilización vs. barbarie* dichotomy in the Latin American context. In a similar manner, the *novela de la Revolución* simultaneously represents and defines a violent historic reality upon which the “revolutionary” state was built. The *novela* justifies the increased centralization of the country, and thus the destruction (violent or otherwise) of regional identities that stand in the way of

“revolutionary” progress.²⁷ Groups like the *villistas* are thus represented as skilled fighters, but essentially barbarians who typically go out in a mythic blaze of glory, as they belong in the violent past, not the revolutionary present. Once again, as in *Tomóchic*, the center places a largely *mestizo* group as “other,” thus figuratively placing them in the marginal role of the Indian in order to justify their extermination (or their mythic self sacrifice defending the revolutionary cause) for the good of the nation. Thus, the *novela* also serves to establish the foundational “myth” of the Mexican Revolution. Not surprisingly the proclaimed exemplar of the genre, *Los de abajo*, became a foundational text of the new revolutionary state, as well as a canonical work of Mexican literature. It is even required reading in the Mexican public school system. Clearly, *la novela de la Revolución* is a national genre. Yet, could anything else be the case in Mexico where, for the better part of the twentieth century, the government was dominated by a single “revolutionary” political party that effectively incorporated practically every sector of civil society into its rank and file (as an umbrella organization)? In other words, how could *la novela de la Revolución* be anything **but** national, when the state was controlled by *el Partido **Revolutionario Institucional***?²⁸

²⁷ Though the *novela* may glorify the military triumphs of *villistas* or *indios* (or other “uncivilized” groups), these are often seen as the very obstacle to the state’s revolutionary project. Hence, education was a large part of this project. Campobello conducted much of her research as she traveled the country on state sponsored “cultural missions.” Just as the Spanish used religious missions to convert/civilize the supposedly uncivilized Indian, here the state wishes to use education to inoculate its citizenry with its brand of revolutionary, *mestizo mexicanidad*. Once again regional identity and other forms of attachment were cast in the role of the *indio*.

²⁸ Perhaps this explains why the genre is so loosely defined by critics. Just as the PRI incorporated all sectors of civil society, even antagonistic groups into one political party, any work about the Revolution seems to have been lumped into this strangely ill-defined genre. Was this perhaps meant to defuse the potential discursive threat posed by particular works? This is an interesting question, although perhaps unanswerable. While Porfirio Díaz closed down the newspaper that had published *Tomóchic* and attempted to have its author executed under charges of treason, the PRI preferred to incorporate and co-opt its potential enemies into the “fold” before taking drastic measures. Though public universities, and thus one hopefully assumes most academics, were autonomous of the government, I wonder whether any Mexican

Castro Leal included *Cartucho* in his anthology *La novela de la Revolución Mexicana* because it is a well-written work that meets his basic definition of the genre that includes all narrative works, longer than a short story, that are inspired by the “acciones militares y populares, así como los cambios políticos y sociales” that took place between November 20, 1910 and May 21, 1920 (6). Castro Leal, however, takes for granted that texts about this specific time period would attempt to define and give meaning to the violence contained within their pages. *Cartucho*, however, does not try to explicitly explain or historically justify the atrocities it narrates.²⁹ While a *novela de la Revolución* neatly encapsulates ten years of conflict and civil war within its pages in an effort to move on to a new and brighter future for the nation, Campobello’s text does not. In contrast, the adult narrator of *Cartucho* is obsessed with the revolutionary dead and is unable to focus on the future. In this way, she does not mourn the loss of her regional culture, but becomes melancholically trapped in a constant remembering of the past. While the typical *novela* evokes the fallen men of the Revolution as a necessary part of a past conflict, *Cartucho* obsesses over them, making them the playthings of a possessive young child. Unlike the *novela* that speaks from a position of masculine authority, the multivocal voice of *Cartucho* is that of a young woman, a girl, and a defeated community.

literary critic would have questioned the project of any so-called *novela de la Revolución*? In the case of *Cartucho* it seems the text was just marginalized, rather than dealt with in any detail.

²⁹ This does not mean that the silences of the text are not inherently political. The vast majority of critics claim that because the adult Nellie narrator makes very few overt comments in the work, trying to speak as if she were still a child, then the work reflects Campobello’s unfiltered memories, told by a child incapable of passing judgment over what she observes. First, Campobello is not the narrator, who is NOT a child as she uses the past tense and speaks of her childhood experiences from an undetermined location and time. By falsely presenting her text as completely autobiographical and using a child as the superficial protagonist of the text, perhaps Campobello makes her counterhegemonic discourse more palatable for an audience that would not have readily accepted a woman writer who openly discussed political issues and revolutionary violence. Letters and diaries were often the most acceptable form of “woman’s writing,” and this novel can be seen as a diary populated by the cadavers of dead *villistas*, which in and of itself is political.

According to Doris Meyer this voice is indicative of another type of chronicle that Brushwood does not address in his study, that of the subaltern:

Campobello's narrative has more in common with the testimony of the Nahuatl survivors of the Conquest, those 'voices of the vanquished' left out of accounts written by Hernán Cortés and the Eurocentric chroniclers who followed him. Lesser-known sixteenth-century documents record the eyewitness testimony of the Aztec people who preserved a rich oral culture despite defeat; their **spirit of resistance** identifies them as **contestatory narratives**, that once heard, call into question the **mythology** of Amerindian submission and acquiescence. (34, emphasis is my own)

Thus, if the *novela de la Revolución* is comparable to the Spanish chronicles of the Conquest, *Cartucho* is not a *novela*, but rather an inversion of this genre as it subverts the foundational mythology of the Revolution. *Cartucho* does not tell the victorious story of the Mexican Revolution, but rather offers a morbid view of the decadent years of "la lucha en el norte," that is of the violent years of civil war that followed the defeat of Huerta, told from the point of view of the "vanquished," specifically of the regional cultures of Northern Mexico (here embodied by *Villismo*) that originally entered the Revolution as a reaction to increased centralization. Thus, the text subverts the myth of the Revolution as a unified national movement in which the masses simultaneously rose up against tyranny, and reveals its true fragmentary nature. While other works avoid/ignore the years of civil war, *Cartucho* focuses exclusively on this period. Thus, the "barbaric" *villistas* do not mythically return to the sierra or go out in a blaze of glory. *Cartucho* offers glimpses of the prolonged and methodical state-sponsored decimation of the brave men of a threatened culture. Here, however, the survivor that tells his or her story is not an Aztec, but a young, woman narrator who recounts her childhood experiences in Parral, Chihuahua in an attempt to recuperate, at least through remembrance, the regional identity that she has lost. This is a perspective, like that of the

Aztec in Cortés' *Cartas*, which is not included in the *novela de la Revolución* in which the woman (and the regional) is treated as an object. Nellie, however, goes far beyond the function of a typical narrator as she not only retells her own experiences, but also recounts the stories and testimonies that she heard from the variety of regional female voices that populated her childhood. In this way, *Cartucho* reflects this subaltern "rich oral culture" that continues to exist despite defeat. Unlike the Aztec survivor, however, whose oral account was recorded by an outsider, most likely a Spanish missionary or scribe, here it is a member of the threatened community in question who inscribes her peoples' tales of resistance into a text.³⁰ In this light, *Cartucho* is a "contestatory narrative" that stands in direct contrast to the national *novela de la Revolución* and which "once **read** calls into question" the mythology, not of Amerindian submission, but of regional submission to the center's process of nationalization. As a regional discourse that challenges the myth of the Revolution, both *Cartucho* and Campobello were marginalized by the academic community in much the same way as the Nahuatl chronicles mentioned by Meyer. It is notable that in each case, these secondary accounts reemerged once they were no longer dangerous, and could be put to use by the state.

All too often the counterhegemonic discourse of *Cartucho* is discounted by critics as simply a product of the author's efforts to vindicate the national image of Pancho Villa. In an oft cited quotation from an interview with Emmanuel Carballo, Campobello explains that she wrote *Cartucho* to "vengar una injuria," as other novels about the

³⁰Here I am not referring to the adult/child Nellie who narrates the work, but rather to the author, Campobello. Not only did she experience these years of fighting as a teen-ager/young woman and thus would have had much to contribute to the text, but she also conducted research that enriched the second edition. Most notably, this included the compilation of regional *corridos* which are seen in the text and interviews with one of Villa's widows, Austreberta Rentería and former *villistas*. Several stories from these interviews became stories in the second edition. Thus, though she is a member of this regional culture, she does speak from a privileged position, which offers its own inherent contradictions.

Revolution were “repletas de mentiras contra los hombres de la Revolución, principalmente contra Francisco Villa.” (336). Most critics, however, ignore the fact that Campobello identifies Villa as one of the men of the Revolution, and not as the sole victim of the “injuria” for which she seeks vengeance. Furthermore, by identifying Villa’s men as “hombres de la Revolución” and not as *villistas*, Campobello reveals the true subversive intent of her work which goes far beyond vindicating Villa.³¹ According to Elena Grau-Lleveria, *Cartucho* can be characterized as a work of resistance literature because it was written in an effort to combat a national ideology, just as it was in the process of becoming a “verdad histórica” (48). As an example of resistance literature, *Cartucho* is clearly not a *novela de la Revolución*, but “una **arma** de denuncia y de concienciación” (Grau-Lleveria 48). It denounces the “myth” of the Revolution upon which the state based its authority, and makes the population aware of a lost narrative of the Revolution. As her dead *paisanos* cannot defend themselves against the historian’s pen, Campobello presents a regional inversion of the *novela de la Revolución* that places the *patria chica*, and thus regionalism, as a space of resistance against the center. This stands in complete defiance of the state’s post-revolutionary politics of inclusion/incorporation that attempted to integrate alternative, often antagonistic, identities into the nation.

While most studies describe the first edition of *Cartucho* as more autobiographical and personal in nature than the definitive second edition, the transgressive intention of this work of resistance literature is evident even from the

³¹Official history regarded the *villistas* that continued to follow Villa during his final years as bandits and not as the victors of the Revolution. The very men that had been instrumental in the victories of the *División del norte*, and had ridden with Villa into Mexico City, were officially no longer revolutionaries, but criminals. Campobello defiantly refers to these as the “hombres de la revolución” at a time when the term *villista* was more commonly associated with banditry and northern provincialism.

simple title page that introduces the initial printing, which was produced by Ediciones Integrales in 1931. Though it simply lists “MEXICO-1931” as the place and year of publication, Max Parra explains that this publishing house, which was founded by a group of leftist intellectuals, was actually based in Xalapa, Veracruz, which at the time was the location of a great deal of radical revolutionary activity (52). Thus, from its very first printing *Cartucho* resists the center’s dominance (represented by Mexico City and more mainstream publishing houses) over cultural production as it was the first publication of an enterprise dedicated to the dissemination of “antibourgeois, proletarian literature” (52). In a brief introductory note following the title page (in this edition), the editors clearly explain their frustration with literature about the Revolution, which up until that point had only offered “dos o tres discursos almibarados” that only told one side of the story, that of the victors who evoke images of the Revolution merely for personal gain: “Son de los arribistas que intentan adornar su nombre con balas” (7). In contrast, the editors consider Campobello’s text to be a realistic, truly authentic account that will be a rude awakening, a definitive “desafío” to the male authors of the *novela de la Revolución* who “con el membrete de ‘realidad’ fotografían los reportajes de segunda mano que escupen mercenarias” (8). Thus, Ediciones Integrales purposely inaugurates its existence with a text that will make the reader learn to “leer con los ojos de los muertos,” that is to read the Revolution, not from the perspective of the center, but from the point of view of the vanquished who did not live to tell their tale. Clearly, the editors regard this as resistance literature; it is a text that serves as a discursive weapon against a discourse, which in 1931 was quickly becoming hegemonic, hereby creating the foundational “myth” of the Revolution.

Unfortunately, this initial editorial note also introduces many of the misconceptions and misinterpretations concerning the text and its author, which have pervaded the critical literature on *Cartucho*. First, the work is defined by the author's sex, as the editors attempt to poetically conclude their opening commentary: "Por ser de mano de mujer, está limpio de desmesuradas ambiciones, pero seguro en su signo creador" (8). In this way, the reader is told from the outset that unlike other books about the Revolution that clearly reflect the political ambitions and leanings of the "arribistas," *Cartucho* is inherently not political. As the product of a woman's hands, it could not possibly say anything valid about the post-revolutionary state, or the condition of society. After all, how could a woman have ambitions? In this way, the political potential of the text is limited from the moment the reader opens its pages. Clearly, it is not placed (by the editors) as a work meant to inspire a new *villismo*, as it is defined/limited by Campobello's female biology, that is to say by her "signo creador," only here the author is the creator of a new type of revolutionary discourse, and not a new life.

In addition, this editorial note is the first time that the author is identified as the narrator of the text, leading the reader to view it as purely autobiographical from the very beginning. This, however, is a mistake that traces itself back to Campobello who in this first edition (after the editor's note) gives a brief four page introduction, simply labeled "Inicial," where she explains how she apparently started writing about the Revolution in Parral at the suggestion of José Antonio Fernández de Castro, while in Cuba with her sister in 1930. Though it takes an innocuously informal and autobiographical tone that most readers all too readily accept, "Inicial" is a carefully constructed statement in which the author, who was not a child during the events of *Cartucho*, becomes her own creation,

Nellie.³² In fact, for the first page and a half, she completely avoids the first person singular “yo” by defining herself merely as one half of a pair of sisters, a collective feminine “nosotras” that allows her to define herself as part of a group, not as an individual. The first person singular “yo” finally appears on page two, but only as Campobello becomes one of Fernández de Castro’s possessions, again eliminating her individuality:

Nos llamó muñecas, éramos sus muñecas, serias, formales, MIS MUÑECAS, ‘así él dijo’ a veces era mi hermana Gloriecita, la muñeca número uno, a veces era la número dos, yo siempre fui la muñeca I, éramos todas las horas del día y parte de la noche, sus muñecas serias, formales, SERIAS, FORMALES y MUÑECAS. (II)

In this quote, the author explains how in life, as in her work, she is required to play different roles in order to survive. On stage she was a dancer who represented various parts, and off stage she was treated as a doll, which is typically the possession of a female child. Here the use of repetition and capitalization makes this point clear to the reader, while indicating her frustration with a situation that places her as an object, a woman converted into a child’s possession by Fernández de Castro who incessantly refers to the sisters as “mis muñecas” throughout the statement. By the third page this process of self-effacement is nearly complete as she ironically identifies herself by name for the first time using the third person, as she becomes a doll, a character playing a constructed role in her own narrative: “No te preocupes, --dijeron las dos Campobello, Nellie y Gloria, hechas muñecas, serias, formales, sentadas” (III). Just as the author becomes a doll for Fernández de Castro, she agrees to write about the Revolution in order to entertain him in

³² *Cartucho* is a literary work in which the author liberally blurs the line between history, autobiography, and literature. It is my argument that this introductory statement should be considered an important part of the literary work, and not as a separate “author’s statement” or prologue. The “Yo” in this statement is the same voice the reader encounters in the first *estampa*. The critical literature on *Cartucho*, however, only cites it as autobiographical, ignoring its literary value. This is perhaps understandable considering that many do not review the first edition, and that up until the late 1990s it was assumed that Campobello was a child during the years narrated in her text.

the hospital. Once again, she places herself as a man's object, this time as the voiceless recorder of "las palabras de aquellos HOMBRES DEL NORTE" (IV). Yet, after this regional evocation,³³ the author is transformed into Nellie, who abruptly concludes in a childlike tone, that she is not a doll, but rather the owner of these *hombres del norte* that reside in Campobello's notebook: "Mis fusilados, dormidos en la libreta verde. Mis hombres muertos. Mis juguetes de la infancia." (IV). This childlike voice that narrates the rest of the work does not belong to one of the Campobello dolls in Cuba, as Nellie turns the dead into her playthings, **her muñecos** that exist for her pleasure. In this way, Campobello illustrates that Nellie is a literary device, and perhaps a persona that briefly allows her to escape (at least discursively) from the limits of society in an attempt to recuperate her lost regional identity, her lost autonomy. For most readers, however, this opening statement reinforced the idea that *Cartucho* was purely autobiographical, and not really a work of literature. Superficially, it was the product of a woman who accepted her role in society and did not mind being called a *muñeca*.³⁴ While a typical *novela* overtly looks to establish the authority of the narrator, here Campobello seems to willingly submit to masculine authority, thus accepting the limits placed on her sex. After all, it was not necessary for her to include this prologue. Her work, however, is subversive exactly because it plays on these limits in order to overcome them. By writing about the Revolution, Campobello simultaneously complies with Fernández de Castro's (a man's) request, while putting her transgressive pen to the service of the lost "HOMBRES DEL

³³ The complete "regional exclamation" rebelliously evokes her *patria chica*: "Allá en el Norte donde nosotras nacimos está la realidad florecida en la Segunda del Rayo. En el cerro de la Mesa, de la Cruz, de las Borregas, de la Iguana y el gigante Cerro del Espía, allí donde quedado frescas las pisadas y testereando entre las peñas la palabras de aquellos HOMBRES DEL NORTE" (IV).

³⁴ The central metaphor of the doll who by becoming a child in her narrative becomes the owner of herself, and the ex-doll making the men of the Revolution her playthings was not appreciated by critics, so I therefore conclude by the majority of the reading public.

NORTE.” In this way, the author cleverly satisfies her womanly obligations with a discursive act that allows her to escape dollhood for childhood. Only then does Nellie’s subversive voice emerge, thereby taking possession and thus control over the dead that now live in Campobello’s notebook.³⁵ Nellie can say what Campobello cannot.

In the second and final edition of *Cartucho*, it seems that perhaps Campobello realized that the complexity (and central metaphor) of her initial autobiographical prologue was lost on the reading public because she replaced it with an equally subversive, but deceptively simple dedication. In this instance, the author (like all good female writers) ironically seems to thank her mother for providing her with the “true” stories that form the basis of the text: “A Mamá, que me regaló cuentos verdaderos en un país donde se fabrican leyendas y donde la gente vive adormecida de dolor oyéndolas” (43). According to Irene Matthews the meaning of this sentence is clear, as it exposes “the political poetics of oral history and the maternal ethic of ‘truth’ that brought Nellie Campobello to **demythify** the negative stories about her regional warriors circulating in Mexico” (149, emphasis is my own). While there is little doubt that one of the text’s purposes is to challenge the negative portrayal of Villa and his followers or that oral history plays an important role in the text, it is incorrect to say that Campobello’s intention was to “demythify” or to move towards some “ethic of ‘truth.’” If this were the case, *Cartucho* would conform to the model of the *novela de la Revolución* in which the author or narrator typically offers his version of “what really happened” for a national audience. On the contrary, *Cartucho* serves to create new, often contradictory, myths about these very “regional warriors” that are not always positive. One notable case is the

³⁵ I identify the notebook as belonging to the author, and not the narrator, as the quote reads, “Mis fusilados, dormidos en **la** libreta verde. Mis hombres muertos. Mis juguetes de la infancia.” Just as an author is clearly aware of his or her narrator, the narrator can express an awareness of the author.

death of Tomás Urbina, a popular *villista* general that according to official history was executed for treason by Rodolfo Fierro under Villa's order. This incident, which historically casts a very negative light on Villa, seems to haunt the second section of the work "Fusilados." Unlike the majority of Nellie's *muertos*, Urbina's cadaver is uncharacteristically absent, while the myths surrounding his death are abundant. Though "tres personas" swear that a disguised Villa accompanied Fierro's troops on their way out of town, "Villa iba allí disfrazado" (104), others say that the general was quite surprised to hear of his friend's death who ambiguously "se perdió" on route to meet with Villa. Still others relate that Villa unsuccessfully tried to save his *compadre* from Fierro. Even the true nature of Urbina's desertion is unclear. In the *estampa* "Tomás Urbina" some say he was a traitor that had "ciertos tratados" with the *carrancistas* (105), while (in the same *estampa*) Nellie's great uncle claims that Urbina was only guilty of loving his wife who had been unfaithful to him: "Urbina general, fracasó ante Urbina hombre" (103).³⁶ Whatever the case, it remains clear that if *Cartucho* demythifies certain negative images, such as Villa's execution of Urbina for treason, it simultaneously contradicts itself with new myths. This is not an infallible testament of the positive attributes of the *villistas*. By turning the narration over to the multiple voices of her pueblo, Nellie reveals the impossibility of any one "truth," thus subverting the hegemonic official "myth" of the Revolution and the authority of historiography. Clearly, this represents an inversion of the *novela de la Revolución*, the goal of which is to establish its own authority, its own particular view of the Revolution. *Cartucho* presents one version of a story, only to contradict itself with another.

³⁶ In this version, Urbina is somewhat justified by machista social values, as his wife, after Urbina has her lover shot, goes into mourning and places the cadaver in the family home where she holds a wake and arranges his funeral. Outraged and overcome with emotion, Urbina abandons his post and returns home.

Unfortunately, Irene Matthews' inaccurate interpretation of the dedication is common as *Cartucho* is all too often accepted by both critics and readers as an autobiography that reflects the true testimony of Campobello, as Faverón-Patriau explains:

Un error de la crítica—error incluso con respecto a las ideas menos subversivas sobre el estatus de lo autobiográfico—ha sido confiar en exceso en las afirmaciones textuales, paratextuales y extratextuales que Campobello ha dispuesto aquí y allá sobre el carácter no sólo autobiográfico sino de veracidad testimonial de *Cartucho*. (57)

As Faverón-Patriau indicates, critics like Matthews often do not question the veracity of the text or the author's apparent intentions. This is especially the case because, as my discussion of the first edition indicates, many printings of *Cartucho* include prologues and introductory material that present the text to follow as a true account, thus reducing the possibility that the reader will interpret the text as a literary work.³⁷ Just as Faverón-Patriau mentions, Campobello herself is the source of these “afirmaciones textuales, paratextuales y extratextuales,” as she often played the part of Nellie, the girl who was a young child during the events of *Cartucho*, both in her literary work and her public life. In interviews Campobello constantly lied about her birth date, and spoke in poetic language as if she were one of her characters, always insisting on the authenticity of her account.³⁸ Apparently she was quite the actress as for the majority of her life (beginning in her early twenties) she successfully played the part of a much younger woman. In

³⁷ Though there is no type of prologue in the 1940 printing of the second edition, Antonio Castro Leal includes a brief introduction in his 1960 anthology in which he establishes the veracity of the autobiographical content as the author herself “vivió entre tropas que llegaban y que se iban, asaltos a la ciudad, fusilamientos...” (924). In her 1960 *Mis libros* the author includes a lengthy prologue that also reinforces the supposed authenticity of her work as if it was a type of social document. The recent 2000 printing includes a prologue by Jorge Aguilar Mora that is reflective of Faverón-Patriau's argument that critics continue to confuse the narrator and the author.

³⁸ See the previously cited 1958 interview with Emmanuel Carballo, printed in *Diecinueve protagonistas* (1965).

these affirmations, the author wants her reader to imagine her as Nellie, sitting at a desk or with a journal, putting her words to paper without pause for reflection, as if her life produced autobiography. With Campobello, however, quite the opposite is true as her life seems to perfectly demonstrate one of Paul de Man's observations concerning the status of autobiography:

Can we not suggest, with equal justice, that the autobiographical project may itself produce and determine the life and that whatever the writer *does* is in fact governed by the technical demands of self-portraiture and thus determined, in all aspects, by the resources of his medium? (920)

Thus, it is not always the life of a writer that gives way to her autobiography. The very process of writing, of "capturing" one's life on paper, can determine the path of or even limit the life of the author. The same can be said of reading. Is not what I read (or choose not to read) a product of my life's experience, but yet at the same time is not my life shaped by what I read? In the case of Nellie Campobello, this is especially meaningful as her two most known texts (*Cartucho* and *Las manos de Mamá*) in many ways dictated the path of her life.³⁹ In order for her literary works to be accepted as autobiographical, she had to accept Nellie's approximate date of birth and history as her own.⁴⁰ This, however, does not mean that Campobello's "afirmaciones textuales,

³⁹ Even her name is not her own as Nellie Campobello was baptized as María Francisca Moya Luna in 1900. As she watched the violence and massacre of her mother's *paisanos*, Campobello was not the "innocent" child of Cartucho, Nellie, but rather, Francisca, a young woman capable of understanding her mother's stories, while experiencing the true horror of the Revolution. For Francisca the Revolution was a great trauma in which her world, and thus her identity were destroyed. The final blow came shortly after the Revolution when her mother died in 1922 and she relocated to Mexico City in 1923. Unable to mourn this final loss, of both mother and motherland, she turned her melancholic view towards writing and dance where she was able to reinvent herself, first as Nellie Campbell and eventually, Campobello. Apparently Nellie was the name of the family dog in Parral and Campbell was her half-sister's biological father's name. By appropriating a new identity, she is able to speak of the past from a safe distance, as a child who is incapable of comprehending the horror in which she lives. Through writing *Cartucho* and *Las manos* Campobello creates her new identity through remembering.

⁴⁰ For the rest of her life, Campobello often consciously assumes the role of Nellie in her everyday life, living as the narrator of her works, that is to say as a small child obsessed with her origin, the past life that she continually explores/creates in her writing and dancing, as she indicates in her interview with Carballo:

paratextuales y extratextuales” are unimportant, or that they do not reveal a great deal about her work.

In fact, the dedication of the second and definitive edition of *Cartucho* declares the subversive intent of the text before the very first *estampa*. Before it can be analyzed, however, it is key to note that unlike the majority of critics I do not consider the dedicatory statement to reflect the words of the author, as if it were comparable to the list of acknowledgements at the beginning of a scholarly text.⁴¹ In this instance, the author Campobello is not taking advantage of the extra page in order to dedicate her text to her mother just as many writers may do to thank their husbands or children for their love and support. The “Mamá” of the dedication is the same mother that dominates the discourse of *Cartucho* and *Las manos de Mamá*, and therefore the voice that speaks in this instance is Nellie, her daughter who was born in 1909 and experienced the most violent years of revolution as a child. Although this is an invented identity that the melancholic author often evoked in life, here it is the narrator’s voice that the reader hears for the first time: “A Mamá, que me regaló cuentos verdaderos en un país donde se fabrican leyendas y donde la gente vive adormecida de dolor oyéndolas” (43).⁴² At first it seems that the narrator is attempting to claim a certain authority, as if she were comparable to her male counterpart in a *novela de la Revolución*; Nellie claims that her mother told her the “truth,” in a nation where legends, such as the hegemonic “myth” of the Revolution, are mass produced. In addition, the use of the word *cuentos*, from the verb *contar*, instead of

“Pronto me di cuenta que aquí todo es simulación, componenda, que lo único cierto era lo que nos decía Ella, Mamá. Por eso vivo en el pasado: en la infancia y la adolescencia” (330).

⁴¹ Even Jorge Aguilar Mora who appreciates the literary qualities of *Cartucho* does not distinguish between Campobello and her narrator when discussing the dedication (and in general). Despite the research in reference to the author’s true date of birth, he only tacitly and somewhat regretfully acknowledges the fact that the work is “como todo parece indicar” not Campobello’s “testimony,” (22), only to go on and continually treat the narrator and author as one in the same.

⁴² I cite the dedication again here only out of convenience for both the reader and my own analysis.

the alternative *historias*, seems to place a certain authority in regional oral tradition. While *historias* can be written, *cuentos* are spread by word of mouth from one individual to another. In this way, the dedication seems to accord a certain privilege to the spoken word and oral tradition as ultimately they constitute the source of her mother's "cuentos verdaderos" that reflect "las narraciones de la Revolución surgidas de sus protagonistas no oficiales...y no sesgadas por el partidatismo ni por las mecánicas opresoras del Estado y la clase política" (Faverón-Patriau 57-58). These are the *cuentos* of those voices not included in the *leyendas* of official history. While here the immediate source of the *cuentos* is Nellie's mother, the *leyendas* are manufactured without any apparent origin, as the use of the passive form of the verb *fabricar* indicates, "se fabrican leyendas." In a text obsessed with origins, this is especially important as it represents a clear subversion of the usually positive connotation of the word legend, as Faverón-Patriau indicates: "Leyenda, en este sentido, no es un término anudado a nociones positivas de basamento popular y tradición, sino encadenado a conceptos de dominación, opresión y alienación" (58). In addition, the use of "un país" places these corrosive legends as national in scope as they cause a type of anguish, that is to say a numbing, yet waking pain in the population that must painfully suppress its memories, its own *cuentos verdaderos* in order to accept the produced *leyendas* that it is forced to listen to (and read). Though traditionally a legend is the final positive product of oral tradition, here the legends of the Revolution are corrupted as they are artificially produced by the State and forced upon *el pueblo*. Accordingly, Nellie offers her mother's "cuentos verdaderos" in opposition to these "leyendas."

Cartucho, however, is not a hegemonic text that offers the “truth” of the Revolution. For example, just as it offers one story about the death of Tomás Urbina, it presents another which contradicts the first. In a similar manner, the dedicatory statement simultaneously establishes and deconstructs the authority of the narrative voice and her mother’s “cuentos verdaderos.” Although Faverón-Patriau’s reflections concerning the narrator’s juxtaposition of *cuentos* and *leyendas* are revealing, they fail to consider one important point concerning the relationship between these two products of oral discourse, as Jorge Mora Aguilar shows in his prologue of the 2000 printing of *Cartucho*: “Con los cuentos verdaderos se fabrican las leyendas” (34).⁴³ Although the dedication converts the term *leyenda* into something negative that stands in opposition to Mamá’s positive stories, the use of the verb *fabricar* draws attention to the fact that even these negative *leyendas* are fabricated out of *cuentos*; a legend begins as a story. By compiling her mother’s, and in fact her community’s, “cuentos verdaderos,” into her own narration, Nellie creates one of the *leyendas* mentioned in the dedication. Her mother’s stories are the raw materials she uses to produce her own *leyenda*/narration that will be repeatedly read and reinterpreted. Though the voice here is Nellie, the author is Campobello. Thus, in this dedication the author skillfully announces her intention to subvert the official legends or “myth” of the Revolution, while acknowledging the

⁴³ In his discussion of the dedication, Aguilar Mora is highly critical of the text’s English translation: “Sólo una lectura superficial y rápida de la dedicatoria (como la de Doris Meyer en su traducción al inglés) podría entender que los ‘cuentos verdaderos’ son distintos de las ‘leyendas’” (34). The problem here is threefold: First, Aguilar Mora cites Meyer as translating from the 1960 printing in Castro Leal’s anthology, when in the translator’s note she claims to have used the 1960 *Mis libros* printing which is slightly different than the first. Second, there is no reference in the translator’s note to the dedication at all, so Aguilar Mora is referring to Meyer’s translation, saying in a footnote that the use of “invented” instead of the literal “fabricated,” falsely differentiates between *cuentos* and *leyendas*. According to Aguilar Mora here “se fabrican” means “se hacen” (41). If that was the case, why did she use *fabricar* and not the simpler *hacer*? Thirdly, an interpretation of these two concepts as “distintos” is important as it reveals the text’s subversive intentions. The dedication purposely juxtaposes these two terms. Aguilar Mora focuses so much on criticizing the English translation that he misses this point. I, do, however agree that Meyer’s translation of the final segment of the dedication is lacking, and she does omit an entire section of the *estampa* “Mugre.”

limitations of her own discourse as a constructed product that can never fully be “authentic.” The written word can only approximate the spoken word. Unlike the official *novela de la Revolución*, here the narrator exposes the weak underpinnings of her freshly established authority in her first statement. In addition, by including this dedication the author announces her intention to subvert the national genre of the *novela* with Nellie’s mother’s “cuentos verdaderos,” as she realizes that her text runs the risk of becoming another of these *leyendas* (if interpreted as a *novela*) given the political climate of the time. Clearly, the text announces its intention to invert the *novela*, or at the very least to try to escape becoming yet another work included in this genre. Perhaps this is one of the author’s motivations to insist on the veracity of her work. If it were an autobiography told from a female child’s perspective, how could it be grouped with the other works about the Revolution?

There is, however, a hidden danger associated with placing *Cartucho* as resistance literature, or as an inversion of the *novela de la Revolución*. Such a classification seems to place the text on the outside, reinforcing the state’s efforts to place the regional subject as the “other” whose very existence represents a threat to the nation.⁴⁴ In chapter one, I outlined how the *tomochitecos* were falsely characterized as Indians by the national government in order to justify their extermination, and obscure the state’s true target, regionalism. Just as the Porfiriato portrayed the *tomochitecos* as Indians, the Calles administration characterized Villa and his followers as uncivilized bandits. Thus, during the post-revolutionary years in which *Cartucho* was written, the propaganda of the

⁴⁴ I in no way mean to imply that the work does not speak from the “outside,” but rather that the state falsely characterizes regional identity as a threat to the nation. It may be a threat to the state, and especially its politics, but not to the idea of Mexico as a sovereign nation. Regional figures such as Villa and Zapata did not intend to separate from the nation, and even the modern Zapatistas who took up arms in 1994 in Chiapas only wanted to change the government, not the national boundaries. All claimed to be Mexicans.

Revolution increasingly justified centralization and nationalization at the expense of regional identity. This is where the process revealed by *Tomóchic* is openly realized, as the *patria chica* is firmly placed in the same space as the Indian, “an ancient space, a foundational space, even a sacred space...another way of saying...a space of erasure, abstractly included, concretely excluded” (Lund 175). The state’s attempt to place regionalism in the annals of history (alongside the Indian) does not mean that the Revolution ended regional identification with the *patria chica*, but rather that regionalism continued to represent a real threat, or at least a potential threat to the state, and as such it needed to be defiled and erased by the state. *Cartucho*, like *Tomóchic*, reveals the violence and death behind this erasure. Unlike the ambivalence of *Tomóchic*, however, the narration of *Cartucho* exalts the virtues of the *patria chica* and its inhabitants, especially the *villistas*. Yet, these *norteños* are not heroes, but flawed men whose deaths reinforce their own humanity. While *carrancistas* die rather impersonally, *Mamá* deeply mourns the death of her *paisanos* whether or not they are *villistas*, such as when Tomás Urbina’s men are executed: “Todos eran mis paisanos –decía Mamá con su voz triste y sus ojos llenos de pena.” (89). Unlike the state that attempts to relegate the regional subject to the confines of history, Campobello discursively removes the rebellious, regional *norteño* from this “sacred space” through Nellie’s act of remembrance that portrays the federal troops as the real savages that persecute her “HOMBRES DEL NORTE.”

Campobello was also marginalized by her adherence to her regional identity, as critics commonly describe her as provincial. As both a woman and a *norteña* she is doubly cast as “other.” She is oddly aware of her marginal placement, however, as in the

opening statement of the prologue of *Mis Libros* Campobello ironically embraces and takes advantage of the center's barbarous characterization of her northern identity:

Si fuera posible escribir estas verdades con puntas de flechas pulidas por las manos cobrizas de comanches en guerra, lo haría, y lo haría sólo por el gusto de sentirme en el paisaje donde aun se respira la libertad heredada de nuestros ancestros. (9)

According to Tabea Linhard this introduction clearly “alludes to a trace of violence” as the author wishes that her words could be weapons, specifically arrowheads. While I agree with this interpretation, Linhard does not adequately appreciate the author's choice of weapon, which she merely attributes to Campobello's “nostalgic vision of an indigenous ancestry” (164). What Linhard fails to grasp is that Campobello, like her text, is obsessed with origins. In *Cartucho* the narrator almost always mentions the cadaver's place of birth as if the reader were well versed in the geography of her *patria chica*. In this same manner, the author is confident that the people of her community will appreciate the irony of her desire to use arrowheads sharpened by the copper hands of the Comanche. Like her own biological father who died fighting the *federales* in 1914, Campobello's grandfather also fought a “foreign” invader, the Comanche (Meyer, Nellie 748). Thus, by choosing to write with their arrowheads, Campobello is not evoking a nostalgic “indigenous ancestry,” but rather her own particular *norteño* inheritance in which nomadic indigenous groups were the principal enemy for over two centuries. Fighting these groups helped form the bellicose regional identity of the area. Thus, the author declares that through writing with Comanche arrowheads, she is using her enemy's weapon of choice, specifically the written word. During the 1920s and 1930s, the national press (for the most part) treated Villa as a violent bandit, and the *novela de la Revolución* portrayed northerners as largely indigenous and uncivilized. By placing the

regional subject as the *indio* the state could justify his eradication. In this way, the printed word became an enemy of the author's *patria chica* as it placed the *norteco* (notably *villistas*) in the same discursive space as the *indio*. Campobello takes up this weapon, ironically accepting her indigenous placement, and attempts to use writing for her own purpose, that is to return/recuperate (at least discursively) to her lost homeland to a moment when her *paisanos* were "free." This is a desire to return to the time before Tomóchic, when her grandfather and the men of her *patria chica* were national heroes fighting the Comanche. Yet, the use of the subjunctive indicates that even the author realizes that this is not possible. She cannot use her enemy's weapon to successfully return to her place of origin, as the very process of writing corrupts oral tradition.

Cartucho may invert the *novela de la Revolución*, but this is merely a discursive victory of one representation over another. What the author's statement does reveal, however, is that regional identification continued to be a divisive factor, even after the post-revolutionary period when national policy promoted the idea of Mexico as a *mestizo* nation with a single identity. In 1960, Pancho Villa continued to be a controversial figure as the government still refused to officially recognize his military accomplishments.

Campobello's work also continued to be ignored and isolated, as the author felt the need to include a sampling of positive reviews of her work in the prologue of *Mis libros*. Yet, the author still openly admits a desire to write with Comanche "puntas de flecha," seemingly knowing that her *paisanos* will understand the irony of this image even in 1960. Perhaps it is not surprising that the author reprinted her works with a lengthy prologue which is openly critical of the government in the same year that *Cartucho* and *Las manos de mama* were "rescued" through their inclusion in Castro Leal's anthology

La novela de la Revolución Mexicana. Just as they were finally canonized into this national genre, Campobello inverts this placement and republished her works in a text whose very title is reminiscent of Nellie's possessive voice who (in the first edition) defiantly claims ownership over the dead of *Cartucho*: "Mis fusilados...Mis hombres muertos. Mis juguetes de la infancia" (IV). Here the author rescues her works from this national classification by including them in her own anthology, *Mis libros*.⁴⁵

An Inverted View of Revolution or Civil War?

In her work, Campobello challenges the notion that the Revolution was a purely nationalist movement discreetly contained within the years of 1910-1920. For this reason, *Cartucho* is not a grand novel of Revolution, but rather a collection, a type of scrapbook composed of both individual and collective memories of how a specific *patria chica* experienced, and survived a period largely ignored by both history and literature. Rather than offering a novel glorifying Villa's major victories on the battlefield (like many of her contemporaries), the author purposely gives the reader a sampling of what she refers to as "relatos" in the text's subtitle that obsessively focus on the death and carnage of the bleakest years of struggle when *Villismo* divided into warring factions, and the federal *carrancistas* occupied the state. Accordingly, these fifty-six *estampas* are carefully arranged into three sections, "Hombres del Norte," "Fusilados," and "En el fuego," where the unifying presence of Nellie progressively grows weaker, finally giving way to the collective multivocal voice of regional oral tradition. Just as *Villismo* itself was divided during the years in question, the multiple voices of the text offer conflicting and contradictory images of specific historical realities in concise, rapid narrations. For

⁴⁵ Also included in *Mis libros* are *Apuntes sobre la vida militar de Francisco Villa* and two collections of poetry *Yo, por Francisca* and *Abra en la roca*.

example, the death of Tomás Urbina, which is one of the pivotal/unifying elements of the second section, is never clearly explained despite its frequent mention in the text. This is less a tale of national and historical unification, than of civil war and fragmentation.

Even the presentation of the *estampas* subversively violates chronological history as the narration freely jumps back and forth in time. For example, El Kirilí who apparently dies in the first section is Nellie's source for a number of later accounts. This organization, offers a unique northern view of the Revolution that more closely resembles civil war.

Unfortunately, the true complexity of the text's structure has not been adequately studied, and for the most part it has been unappreciated and misinterpreted.⁴⁶ For example, Gabriella De Beer considers *Cartucho* to be a collection of short stories as in her opinion the *estampas* taken as a whole lack important unifying characteristics, most notably character development and plot (213). Given this classification, De Beer views the novel and the short story as her only choices; if *Cartucho* does not fit the traditional mold of the novel, the *estampas* must be disconnected short stories. Though this limited classification may be understandable in earlier studies, De Beer published her article (1979) well after Mexican narrative had produced texts such as Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo* and Elena Poniatowska's *Hasta no verte, Jesús mío* that challenge traditional genre divisions.⁴⁷ In addition, many of the characteristics present in *Cartucho*, including the use of a collective protagonist, the incorporation of personal testimony, and the

⁴⁶ As it does not fit within the scope of this discussion to present an extensive detailed structural analysis of *Cartucho*, this is an area still open for further research, especially in relation to the many references to real events which occur throughout the text. In the appendices of the 2000 edition, Jorge Aguilar Mora includes a chronology that mixes the events of the author's life with important historical moments included in the text. This chronology identifies the *estampa(s)* in which the event appears. This, however, is just a type of timeline and lacks interpretation.

⁴⁷In fact, both Linhard and Aguilar Mora view *Cartucho* as a precursor to *Pedro Páramo* due to its fragmentary nature, counterhegemonic discourse, and the haunting presence of the dead that populate Nellie's past and present.

montage of graphically verbal images, were typical of the literature of the *generación de '68* in Mexico. It is thus surprising that De Beer contends that even the order of the *estampas* is insignificant: “Es más, los relatos pueden leerse en cualquier orden pues cada estampa, por breve que sea, es completa” (213). Taken separately, each episode does offer a snapshot of one death or one event that the narrator or someone from her community witnesses/narrates. For example, the first section “Hombres del Norte” is made up of seven separately entitled *estampas* (each title is a man’s name) that present the verbal portrait of a single individual and his death. Yet, this does not negate the importance of the overall composition as De Beer contends, because each *estampa* is merely a small part of a more complex whole. In fact, these initial seven episodes effectively introduce the reader to the diversity of men that populate Nellie’s *patria chica* in a rapid, but significant succession of regional archetypes; as a whole, they are a representative cross section of the “Hombres del Norte.”⁴⁸ In her analysis, De Beer fails to step back to view the larger picture. As the first section illustrates, it is necessary to view the work (and consequently the Revolution) from both the micro and macro-level. While each individual *estampa* appears to be independent, they are actually interdependent. In “Hombres del Norte,” Campobello humanizes the officially demonized *villistas* (without idealizing them) by presenting them as distinct individuals who were both flawed and admired. By revealing the divisions and fissures within *Villismo*, *Cartucho* does not present an idealized view of Revolution, but a fragmented world of civil war populated by a variety of characters. In “Hombres del Norte” the

⁴⁸ This first section is practically a typology of masculine subjects: Cartucho, the nameless villista; Elías Acosta the brave villista general and lady’s man; El Kirilí, the loveable, cowardly braggart; El Coronel Bustillos, the annoyingly wealthy *ex-villista* turncoat (who survives); Agustín García, the dangerous womanizing/rapist villista, etc. It is notable that all the men are *villistas*, thus providing a far from idealized characterization of the men from the author’s *patria chica*.

reader is introduced to a few of these men, making it abundantly clear that the focus of the text is on the particular stories of a specific regional struggle, and not the Revolution of official history.

Even more surprising than De Beer's limited analysis, are Dennis Parle's conclusions regarding the text's organization in his article, "Narrative Style and Technique in Nellie Campobello's *Cartucho*":

The vignettes are presented **randomly** so that from episode to episode there are abrupt changes of tone and mood. Consequently, the reader perceives a composite view of life under extreme circumstances in which humor, sadness and, most predominately, death are all intermixed. (201, emphasis is my own)

Oddly, Parle effectively explains how the ordering of the *estampas* affects the reader in a meaningful manner, while deeming it as some type of literary accident. He actually contends that the carefully written entries were placed "randomly," and that rather than producing a disjointed collection of stories, the result is an artistic approximation of life during war. Thus, the sequencing of episodes within each section places the reader in Nellie's position, that is, of a child who experiences war as a part of everyday existence where living and dying coexist. While I agree with the second part of Parle's conclusions, the organization of the *estampas* is far from random, a fact that he slightly concedes by his use of the verb "presented," which refers to the author's role in deliberately placing the episodes in a particular order.⁴⁹ In *Cartucho*, however, the ordering of the *estampas* is deliberately meant to appear random, as if the adult narrator were offering the reader her memories as they spring up organically from the recesses of her mind. In this way, the author attempts to hide the purposeful structure that underlies the text.

⁴⁹ In reality, nothing in a literary text can be described as "random." As the artistic production of an individual, every component of the text is affected by the writer who may or may not be conscious of the reasons/influences behind his/her decisions.

While the first section introduces the reader to the variety of men who called themselves *villistas*, the second section “Fusilados” is where the true gore of death and dying, in the form of execution, takes center stage. As each man quickly becomes a cadaver, the reader seems to be flipping through a scrapbook of Nellie’s traumatic childhood. According to Ana María Sánchez Catena this reflects a photographic technique typical of the *novela de la revolución*: “La autora ha utilizado una técnica fotográfica (o cinematográfica)...Nellie Campobello ha tomado las fotografías y las ha ordenado a su parecer” (98-99). While the author does use this photographic technique, Sánchez Catena goes on to conclude that *Cartucho* is a nationalist work and that this literary photo album documents not only Nellie’s childhood, “sino también la vida de todo el pueblo mexicano en esta Revolución” as the *pueblo mexicano*, and not a specific *patria chica*, is the real protagonist of the work (102). On the contrary, Campobello uses the photographic technique typical of the *novela de la Revolución* and subverts it by presenting the reader with a little girl’s album, or scrapbook, instead of a national epic played out on the battlefield. Furthermore, Nellie is not a little girl sitting in Mexico City, or Querétaro, but rather the illegitimate daughter of a dead *villista* in Parral, Chihuahua. This is not the Revolución Mexicana, but rather a regional experience of civil war and rebellion played out in separate, but significantly connected *estampas*. For example, in “Fusilados,” it is often unclear who the true enemy (or the executioner) actually is as disenchanted *villistas* form rival factions, and others are forced to join the ranks of the *carrancistas*. Though Nellie’s mother supports the *villistas*, her allegiance is with her *paisanos* as she is deeply filled with emotion, even when Villa is (indirectly) the executioner: “Sus gentes queridas fueron cayendo, ella las vio y las lloró” (91). She

eventually has to save her own son (recently turned *carrancista*) from Villa's men. Most critics, such as Kate Peters, claim that this means there are "no winners, no good guys" in *Cartucho* as it is impossible to divide the revolutionaries into two discreet camps, that is, good against bad (338). What this interpretation overlooks, however, is that this is not a novel of the years of Revolution, as here the "good guys" (aka *los hombres del Norte*) are divided by civil war, and ultimately are the losers (338). Usually the vanquished do not speak, hence the confusion.

"Los fusilados" is also the section in which the author directly contradicts and problematizes several notable historic events, especially controversial executions such as that of Nacha Cenicerros or Tomás Urbina, which serves as the pivotal/unifying element of this section. In the case of Nacha Cenicerros the author provides one account in which Villa has the *soldadera* killed after she "accidentally" murders her fellow *villista* and lover, Coronel Gallardo with a shot straight through the head as he innocently "platicaba con una mujer" in a neighboring tent (66). Nacha had apparently been crying after receiving advice from "una soldadera vieja," and subsequently began cleaning her pistol when "se le salió un tiro" (66). Then, in an addition first included in the 1960 *Mis libros* printing, the adult narrator claims that this story is part of the "red de mentiras" propagated to denigrate the image of Villa, as Nacha was never executed, and simply retired from military life.⁵⁰ Finally, in her effort to "destejer una mentira," the narrator emphatically concludes "¡Viva Nacha Cenicerros, coronela de la revolución!" (67). In

⁵⁰ Prior to this printing, "Nacha Cenicerros" simply concluded: "Hoy existe un hormiguero en donde dicen que está enterrada." This addition is absent from the first edition, the 1940 second edition, and even Castro Leal's 1960 printing. Did Campobello receive new historical information as the text implies or with the passage of time does her desire to defend Villa, as a symbol of her *patria chica*, now force the author to cast additional doubt on this negative portrayal of Villa? For an interesting, feminist interpretation of this alteration see Linhard, Tabea Alexa. *Fearless Women in the Mexican Revolution and the Spanish Civil War* Columbia & London: University of Missouri Press, 2005.

this way, the text actually leaves the reader with more doubts than answers: What did the *soldadera vieja* tell Nacha? Was she a jealous woman who murdered a cheating lover or was it an accident? Was Nacha executed? If not, was she pardoned by Villa or did she escape somehow? If she is alive, can we trust anything from the first account? Thus, “Nacha Ceniceros” does not represent a clear snapshot of Revolution, as these lingering questions and contradictions create fissures and inconsistencies in an image that is, at best, incomplete. According to Linhard, this represents more than a mere questioning of the hegemonic discourse of the Revolution, as these informational gaps, that is to say, those details and silences that the melancholic Nellie cannot reveal, question “whether an event like the revolution in northern Mexico can be fully represented” (177). In other words, the text casts doubt on its own representational project by constantly referring to what will always be unknown. How can this traumatic event be represented, even in literature, if there will always be things that cannot or will not be said? Rather than simply documenting the death of her “Fusilados,” the narrator thus actively engages the reader to question any type of discourse concerning the Revolution, including her own.

In the final section “En el fuego,” this questioning of representation is especially noteworthy as here stories from regional oral tradition and images from popular *corridos* take over the narration, as they are all that remain of the fallen “Hombres del Norte.” The tales of these men continue to live on in regional memory and oral tradition as they were largely excluded from the history books of *la Revolución*.⁵¹ Thus, after a few initial personal *estampas* the adult Nellie becomes a compiler for her community, as she simply introduces the narrative voice of each *relato*, as she quickly fades out of focus: “Severo

⁵¹Here I do not mean to imply that all history books have excluded regional interpretations of the Revolution, as regional studies have increased dramatically. This, however, is a relatively recent phenomenon.

me relata, entre risas, la tragedia” (132), “Pepita Chacón, entre risas amables recordó” (137), “Isaías Álvarez dice:” (140). Yet, the adult Nellie never truly disappears as she selects which images from her childhood to present; she is the filter through which all others speak. In this way, the reader never truly knows what was left unsaid, thus casting doubt on the narrator’s ability to represent her traumatic childhood alongside this narration of civil war.

The majority of the *estampas* in this final section were new additions to the second edition. In this way, the first and second editions of *Cartucho* are quite different from one another, especially in relation to the content of “En el fuego.” Several of these new episodes can be directly attributed to the author’s interviews with *villista* war veterans and her efforts to gather *corridos*, ballads, and folk legends during her trips north to research *Apuntes*, or to perform with the state’s cultural missions (Parra 53, 151). Therefore, at a time when Villa was vilified by the state, Campobello made herself an expert in regional forms of remembering (oral traditions, music, and dance), as memory became the new revolutionary battlefield. As the final section’s title indicates, “En el fuego,” it is not the actual *villistas* that came under fire during the post-revolutionary period, but rather their memory and the *patria chica* that they represented which were systematically excluded (and contradicted) by official forms of remembrance. Campobello’s text offers an alternative space for this excluded regional discourse. According to Max Parra, *Cartucho* “effectively connects the act of remembering the past and the dead to the preservation of community in *Villista* territory” (48). Though the text does question the possibility of representing the violence of war, it is the simple act of remembering, that is, of representation that facilitates the survival of regional identity in

the present. By retelling the stories that she heard as a child, the narrator places herself as a link in the chain of female oral history that allows her to momentarily recuperate her lost regional identity. Ultimately, however, *Cartucho* attempts a recuperation and revision of memory that is not possible, as written narrative never quite brings memory to the immediate present, as Roberto González Echevarría outlines in his analysis of *Biografía de un cimarrón*,⁵² in his text *The Voice of the Masters*:

As a writer, the protagonist has as his only recourse the inscription of the memory and its gradual fading—writing hovers on that point where memory slips away from the present to become literature, a code that is both memory and the gesture of its recovery. Once it becomes literature, memory may return to the present, but (already) only and always belatedly, having relinquished immediacy in the process. (113)

As a writer puts memory to paper, it “slips away” and becomes literature, something purely discursive, that is, a literary theme that no longer belongs to the present. Just as in the case of texts such as *Facundo*, that attempt to become the foundational works of a nation, textualized memory, whether collective or individual cannot serve as the basis of identity. The lone writer, who inscribes her memory into a work of literature, does not recreate the identity building experience of oral tradition in which generations share a common oral history through storytelling. This problem of representation reflects the same problem that occurs when writing about the “other.” That is to say, How do I write about the other, without turning him into literature? Just as this question has yet to be answered, Nellie does not recuperate her lost identity in *Cartucho*. Yet, the impossibility of representation/recuperation, which the text itself acknowledges, does not keep the traumatized Nellie from engaging in her melancholic act of remembrance that reflects a

⁵² This is also a work that deals with the theme of revolution, as it is a Novel of the Cuban Revolution written by Miguel Barnet. Although González Echevarría analyzes it as a documentary novel, its classification is problematic as it has also been referred to as an autobiography, a biography, and a novel.

constant (and obsessive) return to the moment of loss. This is not a story of glorious revolution.

Clearly, *Cartucho* is a complex text and not simply a collection of loosely related short stories. The three sections lead the reader (at least discursively) through the traumatic experience of civil war in Parral, Chihuahua from a particularly regional perspective. First, the reader is introduced to the men of the narrator's *patria chica*. Then, the narration focuses on how years of civil war and occupation decimated this masculine population, whose very memory is attacked in the third section "En el fuego." Given the innovative nature of this structure, it is not surprising that it was not appreciated by critics. It does, however, approximate an important form of national artistic expression that flourished during the post-revolutionary period, as Grau-Llevería seems to indicate:

Si no se lee este texto como una novela, si se fragmenta, se pierde el **sentido mural** (estructura y forma en el sentido de idea) que surge del texto. Campobello genera en su texto un espacio creador, y en él propone una interpretación histórica distinta a la hegemónica. Este espacio es una novela, no un conjunto de relatos independientes uno de otros. (18, emphasis is my own)

Like De Beer, however, Grau-Llevería's analysis creates a false dichotomy concerning genre, as if the novel and short story are the only forms that narrative can take. What Grau-Llevería hints at, but does not fully realize, is that this "espacio creador" is not simply a novel, but rather a regional subversion of the national mural. Just as the Mexican muralists (during the post-revolutionary period) plastered the walls of public spaces with frescos whose images glorify the foundational moments of the nation's history, Campobello offers a narrative mural composed of individual *estampas* that together narrate the apparent conquest of her *patria chica* from a survivor's perspective. In this way, the three sections are three individually entitled panels of a larger artistic

work. Dividing a composition into distinct panels that together tell a story is common in Mexican muralism. There are many possible reasons that may explain Campobello's use of this muralist technique in the organization of *Cartucho*. First, a traditionally structured *novela de la Revolución* that overtly glorified regional identity may not have been acceptable during the post-revolutionary period when regional divisions still represented a realistic threat to the state's authority. For example, there is no *novela* that tracks the regional struggle of Emiliano Zapata. Therefore, a supposedly "authentic" work that claimed to be a collection of a small girl's memories was more in keeping with the acceptable forms of woman's writing during the period in question. More importantly, however, this form allows Campobello to transgress the limits placed on literature concerning the revolution. Just as muralists easily hid counterhegemonic images and symbols within the confines of a larger work, this structure allows the author to incorporate *estampas* into her text that overturn official history and question the very possibility of representation, including historiography.⁵³ In Mexico City, Campobello lived a relatively privileged existence and was close friends with several important Mexican muralists, including Diego Rivera and José Clemente Orozco who illustrated a second edition of *Las manos*, in addition to painting the backdrops for many of her choreographic works.⁵⁴ Thus, the author would have been quite familiar with Mexican muralism and the potential it held as an appropriate form for resistance literature. By appropriating this technique, however, Campobello also subverts it. Usually large public

⁵³ This practice of resistance, that is, of hiding counterhegemonic symbols within larger works dates back to the time of colonization. Indigenous craftsmen who were forced to carve the baroque altars and façades of Spanish Catholic Churches commonly hid images representing indigenous deities within their detailed work. Examples of this are present throughout Mexico. Although not always counterhegemonic—Diego Rivera constantly hid images of himself and his family/friends in his frescos—these images do represent a form of resistance.

⁵⁴ A great friend of the Campobello sisters, Orozco was a devoted admirer (and lover) of the much younger Gloria Campobello for a number of years.

murals were commissioned by the state, and thus were “official” forms of remembrance that offered a fairly unified version of the Revolution that did not include the violent civil war outlined in *Cartucho*. Also, these murals are the work of great male artists, and not anonymous young women. Thus, once again the author appropriates her enemy’s weapon and puts it to her own use, as Nellie’s scrapbook takes the form of a subversive regional mural of civil war.

Apart from its organization, the intimate perspective of *Cartucho* sets it apart from literature that deals with the Revolution as a national foundational myth. In fact, from the very first *estampa*, entitled “Él,” it is clear that the text is not a national epic, as clearly indicated by the significant initial location of the narrator/protagonist Nellie: “Cartucho fue a dar las gracias. ‘El dinero hace a veces que las gentes no sepan reír’, dije yo jugando **debajo** de una mesa” (47, emphasis is my own). Thus, in the first physical encounter with the narrator, the reader is faced with a clear contradiction as a very mature and revealing observation comes from the lips of a small female child who is playing under a table. Though she is speaking as a young woman (as statements in later *estampas* seem to indicate), the adult narrator is quick to place herself in perhaps the most marginal position possible in an effort to appear innocent and genuine. As the narration is in the past tense, however, it is doubtful that this revealing statement came from the lips of Nellie as a child. In fact, it seems that it is the adult Nellie who is playing with the reader from her marginal position under the table that conceals her from view. Throughout the text, she keeps her “adult” reflections to a minimum, in order to maintain the thinly veiled illusion (that most critics buy into) that the true narrator is a child. Her location under the table is also significant, as it indicates that the text to follow will not present the

Revolution as a large national movement as the narrator is not an intellectual sitting in Mexico City recalling her revolutionary adventures from the upper sectors of society. While perhaps playing or “jugando” with the title of the prototypical *novela de la Revolución, Los de abajo*, whose narrator is not from the lower rungs of society, here the narrative voice places herself “debajo una mesa.” Rather than looking down on the Revolution from above as a historical happening, the narrator places herself and her discourse in a quasi-sheltered, subterranean regional space that deals with the intimate struggle of civil war. This is a location that permits her to “play” at challenging official history, and the foundational myth of the Revolution. As the author herself could not realistically sit at the table of the major players in the “cultural wars” of the post-revolutionary period, she seems content to place Nellie under this table to reveal the barbaric violence lying underneath.

As with other aspects of *Cartucho*, the more profound significance of this intimate view of the underside of civil war has been misunderstood and unappreciated by critics that often continue to define *Cartucho* as predominantly autobiographical. Even Jorge Aguilar Mora, who rightly recognizes the importance of the work within the evolution of Latin American Literature, negates the larger political implications of *Cartucho* in his prologue of the 2000 printing, as he describes Campobello’s portrayal of the time period in question: “Ella no describió las batallas, ni las posiciones políticas; no rescató testimonios extensos de los guerreros. Ella fue a su memoria para perpetuar los instantes más olvidables...” (11). First, it is important to note that the author did not simply go to her memory in order to produce her text. In fact, Max Parra points out that stories the author specifically gathered from *villista* veteran, Ismael Máynez, and Villa’s

widow, Austreberta Rentería in the 1930s are included in the *estampas* “Ismael Máynez y Martín López” and “El cigarro de Samuel,” while regional *corridos* are featured in “Los oficiales de Segunda del Rayo,” “Abelardo Prieto,” and “Tragedia de Martín.” (151). While these may not constitute “extensive” testimonies in terms of sheer length, their presence is notable within the intimate scope of *Cartucho*, which attempts to compile the voices of an entire *patria chica*. What is more, (in the final section) the author presents several *estampas* as compiled testimonies. For example, in “Ismael Máynez y Martín López” observational notes appear in parentheses, so as not to interrupt Máynez’s testimony, that give the witness’ location, “(Ismael Máynez vive en el Valle de Allende, allá en el estado de Chihuahua)” and which place the chronicler at his side, “(Los ojos azules de Ismael Máynez se entrecierran como para recoger la visión exacta de sus compañeros, tirados boca abajo.)” (159). This is not a young Ismael Máynez that sits across the table swapping stories with *Mamá*, but rather an old *ex-villista* trying to recall a moment from his past for the interviewer. The author takes moments such as these from her work of collecting testimonies for *Apuntes* and incorporates them into the second edition of *Cartucho*.

Yet, what is more surprising is Aguilar Mora’s claim that the text does not describe battles and political positions. Perhaps by his use of the definite article “las” he is merely saying that Campobello does not delve into the principal battles and politics of the larger Revolution. By ignoring the years of larger military altercations, and focusing on the divisions of civil war, the author is in fact saying a great deal about official history and *novelas de la Revolución* that focus primarily on these two items, while ignoring the regional perspective. As the title of his prologue indicates, “El silencio de Nellie

Campobello,” Aguilar Mora does focus on the text’s revealing silences. Despite this possibility, similar claims are made by others that interpret this as the text’s ambivalence to these aspects of the Revolución, such as Teresa Hurley: “*Cartucho*, unlike other novels of the Revolution...does not go into detail about its battles or heroism” (33). While her research interest lies in the mother/daughter relationship in the text, Hurley does not question the placement of *Cartucho* within this genre, as if it were only natural that the only *novela* written by a woman would not deal with these issues. What Hurley overlooks is that there are in fact a multitude of intense battles and graphic displays of heroism located throughout *Cartucho*, only that they occur in spaces, and with actors, that differ greatly from the large battlefields of the typical *novela de la Revolución*. Also, these are skirmishes and heroic moments that fly by in an instant, not unlike individual *cartuchos* which pass by far too quickly for official history to take notice. For example, in the *estampa* “El general Rueda” the rape of Mamá at the hands of a *carrancista* general passes so swiftly that it is lost to the majority of critics who discuss this scene as a simple act of wartime looting. After being violently separated from her mother, Nellie simply relates: “Mamá no lloraba, dijo que no le tocaran a sus hijos, que hicieran lo que quisieran. Ella ni con una ametralladora hubiera podido pelear contra ellos” (83).⁵⁵ Although no more detail is given, the heroism of a mother who offers herself in order to protect her children is what remains clear for both Nellie and the reader. The comparison of their force to that of a machine gun places this domestic occurrence squarely on the battlefield of civil war. Mamá’s silent inaction is an act of regional heroism, that is, of the heroic self-sacrifice of civil war that characterizes *Cartucho*, where the true heroes do not

⁵⁵ Due to the vagueness of the scene, especially with the use of the masculine plural, it is possible to read this scene not only as a mother protecting her children, but of Mamá offering herself to the general in order to save her female children that he has separated from the group.

survive. The narrator even relates her mother's death in this episode, though it occurs years later. Thus, the enemy (center) wins the physical battle by violating the domestic space (both home and mother), but here the hero is the mother who succeeds in protecting her children, the next generation. By placing a raped woman as a revolutionary hero, the text clearly inverts official discourse. The barbarian is the federal general who threatens to burn down the family's home if Mamá complains to the authorities: "Si se queja vengo y le quemo la casa." As in *Tomóchic* fire is associated with empire's violent erasure of history. Like the *tomochitecas* Mamá bravely remains silent and her children live to tell her tale.

Clearly, there are moments of conflict and heroism in *Cartucho*. In addition, there are specific, intensely political battles over memory. Hence the author includes a controversial regional perspective on historical events such as the military tribunal of *villista* general Felipe Ángeles who defiantly declares: "QUIEREN MATARME; éste no es un Consejo de Guerra," (95). Such moments not only question the "official" version of such events, but also effectively place the federal "revolutionary" authorities (the center) as blood-thirsty barbarians who maintain a superficial façade of civilization. These battles and heroic moments do not resemble those presented in a *novela de la Revolución* because the work differs from this genre in a number of important ways. The focus here is not on battles of national importance, but rather on those of regional significance, such as the more intimate daily struggles of civil war, as Irene Matthews indicates in her discussion of the text's use of perspective:

The **battle frame** is correspondingly child sized: not the slope of a distant hilltop but the square of a window, the canyon of a small town street, the angle of vision around the ample, discreet slope of a mother's skirts. From this 'safe' spatial

perspective, war and play are dangerously meshed with childish insouciance. (149, emphasis is my own)

In this way, domestic events such as the invasion of the narrator's home and the rape of her mother by General Rueda constitute tragic "battles" that the family is lucky to survive. After all, in a child's world, the home is the physical symbol of familial protection and security. Hence the work reveals that these traumatic, micro level experiences of war are comparable, in terms of importance, to the grand battles and acts of heroism that fill the history books of the "Revolution." Such personal and intimate battles, over the memory of a local hero or the rape of one's mother, perhaps had even a greater impact on society (than traditional battles) as they were directly experienced by the population. Soldiers and *soldaderas* were not the only Mexicans who experienced the violence of war. By inverting the *novela*, the author cuts the battlefield down in size, revealing the plethora of violent moments and acts of heroism that remain untold by official history, existing only as memory among the populace.

Although Matthews' observation is revealing, it is important to note that Nellie's position as a child during the violent years of civil war in Parral does not place her in a secure location, as Matthews' use of quotation marks seems to indicate. In addition, the melancholic adult Nellie who recounts her experiences, and those of her lost regional community, is not "safe" from the emotional impact of remembering, and thus reliving her traumatic past and returning to a moment of loss.⁵⁶ Interestingly, the narrator seems to constantly call attention to this precarious position. First, she displaces the physical danger of being a child during war unto her younger sister Gloriecita whose life seems to

⁵⁶ In no way do I mean to imply that the Revolution resulted in a complete loss of regional identity in the area in question, but rather that the adult narrator who eventually loses her mother and moves to Mexico City loses her connection to this identity, which is based on a constant loss (the death of her *paisanos*.)

be in constant danger, as seen in the very first *estampa*: “De pronto se oyeron balazos. Cartucho con Gloriecita en brazos hacía fuego al Cerro de la Cruz desde la esquina de don Manuel. Había hecho varias descargas, cuando se la quitaron” (47). Although Gloriecita escapes unscathed, Cartucho does not survive. In this manner, the very first page of the text violates the traditional boundaries that separate the public and the private, as the simple domestic act of holding a young child is “dangerously meshed,” or more appropriately, violated by the firing of a gun. Unlike the *novela de la Revolución* or the national “myth” of Revolution, here violence pervades the domestic realm as the division between friend and foe disappears, leaving the family trapped in the middle. This is the chaos of civil war. Nothing makes this clearer than placing a child in the arms of a fighting revolutionary as he discharges a weapon. Despite her mother’s heroic presence, the young Nellie is not physically safe from civil war and her life is constantly threatened from all sides. The author, who was a young woman during this time, seems, in part, to place Nellie as a child in order to focus on the immediacy of this incessant physical threat, which seems to place Nellie’s memories into Walter Benjamin’s conception of historiography. As Benjamin has noted, to speak of the “past historically” does not mean that one needs to relate the events as they actually were, but rather “it means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger” (255). By returning, through her narrative, to years of civil strife in which war constantly violates the protective domestic space, the adult Nellie voluntarily puts herself in this “moment of danger” in which she clings to moments that were burned into her memory as a child.

Yet, the text itself recognizes that Nellie is a persona created by the melancholic author in order to speak of the past from a safe distance, that is, as a child who unlike

herself is incapable of comprehending the horror of civil war that tore apart her regional world and identity. This is most evident in the *estampa* “El milagro de Julio,” in which a young man, Julio, wishes he could be a child like Nellie in order to avoid the horror of fighting his own *paisanos*: “Ahí donde ven yo no quiero pelear. No por miedo. Miedo no tengo. La **guerra entre nosotros** es lo que me da tristeza. ¡Por vida de Dios, mejor quisiera ser chiquito!” (129, emphasis is my own). Julio is not afraid of war, but he is troubled by the prospect of killing men that come from his *patria chica*. The “guerra entre nosotros” is not the nationalist Mexican Revolution in which revolutionary factions took up arms against Díaz or Huerta, but rather the years of civil war and infighting that ensued once Villa was forced back to his native territory. Julio does not want to engage his new enemy that is symbolically located just up the hill, “donde ven,” as they are all members of the same regional community: “Los enemigos eran los primos, los hermanos y amigos. Unos gritaban que viviera un general, y otros decían que viviera el contrario, por eso eran enemigos y se mataban” (129). Thus, Mamá even warns Julio when the *villistas* are around because they are all her *paisanos*. Like Campobello, Julio is a teenager during this violent period. Though his uncombed blonde curls “le darían el aspecto de un niño” he fully comprehends (and fears) the nature of civil war (129). Ironically, his wish to “ser chiquito” is granted as during a skirmish his wounded body is burned to such a degree that it shrivels up, making him “otra vez un niño” (129). The reference to a youth who escapes his reality by becoming an innocent child is further reinforced when the men carry his diminutive coffin to the cemetery, rocking it as if it were a cradle: “Lo iban **meciendo** al ritmo de sus pasos” (130). In this way, the author recognizes, at least on some level, the impossibility of escaping her traumatic loss by

living/speaking through an invented, discursive persona. Only through his death is Julio able to accomplish his desired transformation and escape the world of civil war. He, like Nellie, was not scarred by the violence of Revolution, but rather by the “guerra entre nosotros,” that is by the trauma of civil war which forever changed their common *patria chica*.

If this time period was so violent and personally traumatic, one wonders why Campobello makes it the focus of her text. After all, during the height of the Revolution *Villismo* was a unified force and Villa led victorious assaults on a number of important cities across the North. If her desire, as she expresses in interviews, was to rescue the figure of Villa it would make more sense to focus on this much less controversial time period when Villa more closely resembled a general than a bandit. Such a text, however, would place Pancho Villa as a national hero of the Revolution and his men as members of the larger Constitutionalist Army. Any work that focused on the “glorious” years of the Mexican Revolution would consequently mitigate the importance of regional difference. In fact, according to Irene Matthews one of the goals of formal military training and organization is to “break the **regional bonds of attachment** to parish and privilege and instead encourage a sort of defensive and aggressive attachment to a *patria*” (158). Thus, by joining men from different areas together in order to fight a common enemy the Revolution actually furthered the Porfiriato’s program of increased nationalization and centralization, as war often breeds/reinforces patriotism and nationalism. Ironically, the independent, bellicose regional identity of the area in question developed as the territory’s inhabitants had to deal with the Apache and Comanche in order to survive.

Therefore, Campobello's text focuses on the years of civil war which serve to intensify these "regional bonds of attachment," as Matthews outlines:

In civil war, however, the battlefield may also be the home front of either or both armies simultaneously: brother confronts brother, and guerilla incursions surge and rupture around alliances of familiarity and friendship as often as common social goals or projects of political gain. All of these factors complicate the issue of military bonding and the idea of "home" and, above all, the place of the "noncombatant" in the strategies of the leaders and the mind of the soldier. (158)

This is the war presented in *Cartucho* where "home" is not Mexico, but rather the *patria chica*, and a single mother becomes immersed in a conflict where place of origin, despite political orientation, divides friend from foe. Campobello focuses on this divisive period precisely because it undoes the hegemonic myth of the Revolution and reveals the violent erasure of regional identity by the state. Once Huerta was defeated (1913), individuals (leaders and soldiers) were no longer bound by a common enemy. Thus, allegiances (if they ever really changed) shortly reverted back to the identifications that characterized the early years of fighting when loyalty was attributed to individual leaders and/or common, usually local, identity and social goals. Thus, Villa returned to his home territory (1915-1916), as well as his guerilla/bandit roots. As the text illustrates, the final years of struggle did not reinforce national identity, but rather perpetuated regional divisions that the state's war machine violently attempted to eliminate. As one of the few regional leaders who successfully eluded capture, by both the United States and Mexico, Villa (and his memory) represents a potentiality of rebellion, of an enactment of regional identity that the state never completely pinned down. Only by focusing on civil war could Campobello evoke regional identity and place Villa as a symbol of a bellicose, intimate culture that populates Nellie's memory.

***Una niña de la Revolución* or A Regional Foundational Fiction?**

In the last chapter, I outlined how in *Tomóchic* the relationship between the protagonist, Miguel, and a young *tomochiteca*, Julia, initially presents a means to potentially reconcile the differences between nationalism and regionalism. In fact, the romantic union of Miguel, a white intellectual from Mexico City, and Julia, an uneducated but beautiful northerner superficially resembles the national romances described by Doris Sommer in her study *Foundational Fictions*. In these tales of national allegory the heterosexual romantic coupling of individuals from diverse backgrounds serves to reconcile the racial and social differences of the couple, and thus society, in order to form, or more literally conceive, a new nation. Thus, such texts propose romance rather than physical violence as a means to resolve differences within the population. The ultimate goal of this “nonviolent consolidation during internecine conflicts” is not necessarily a successful marriage, but a pregnancy, that is, the production of a child who will found a new nation (Sommer 6). In *Tomóchic*, Julia rejects Miguel and eventually dies, taking with her any possibility of reproductive/national salvation. While at first it seems that Sommer’s model of national romance could not possibly be relevant in a discussion of *Cartucho*, here the narrator is a child, the ultimate goal of all national romances. In an oft-cited passage, John Brushwood labels Nellie as holding a particularly noteworthy position: “Indeed, the child understands the noise and brutality of the Revolution to be the way things are, and in that sense she is very much **the child of the Revolution**” (5, emphasis is my own). Although not the intention of his brief review, Brushwood’s language interestingly places Nellie as the offspring of a violent (and political) movement that, according to official history, resolved many of the

contradictions within Mexican society, in order to give way to a new revolutionary nation. In this way, she appears to fulfill the role of Julia and Miguel's potential child, only that she is an orphan produced through a violent, not a nonviolent, "consolidation."

Following this argument, Nellie would represent the physical incarnation of reconciliation between the regional and the national. After all, it is clear that the adult narrator eventually relocates to Mexico City after the death of her mother in Chihuahua, who despite her young age, was "cansada de oír los 30-30" (84). Thus, Nellie is effectively an orphan of the Revolution who moves from a marginal to a central, albeit geographical, location upon the death of her mother (84). In addition, the identity of her father is never mentioned, and she only refers to her mother using the universal "Mamá."

What is more, the narrator never directly identifies herself by name, as only in a later *estampa* "Las rayadas," where she appears to be gathering the testimony of a *villista* veteran after the war, is her name even mentioned in passing: "—Pues verás, **Nellie**, cómo por causa del general Villa me convertí en panadero" (132, emphasis is my own). Apart from this moment, the narrator remains unnamed. This absence is unusual in a work that claims to be autobiographical as it casts Nellie as a subject whose origins are ambiguous at best. In a text in which practically every cadaver is named and labeled with a place of birth, Nellie's identity and parentage are notably absent, as if the Revolution erased her regional origins. In this manner, Nellie would represent a new brand of Mexican national subject, conceived and delivered by the Revolution itself.

Yet, the adult Nellie who narrates the work does not view the Revolution as the moment of her birth, that is, as a new liberating beginning for herself, and thus the nation. Similarly, she does not provide the reader with any information about her present

situation or her plans for the future. This young woman who is haunted by the loss of her regional identity and *patria chica* does not represent a bright and hopeful future for the Mexican nation. In contrast, for most of the work she seems poised in a position reminiscent of Walter Benjamin's angel of history, as she continually moves towards the future with her gaze (and narration) fixed firmly on the past, which spreads out before her and the reader as an unending, continuous catastrophe of death and civil war (257). What is more, Nellie's memories superficially appear to have no order and violate chronological time, as like the angel, she does not conceive of the past as a chain of events. Clearly, her past is not a glorious one, but rather a tragic one. Although she attempts to keep her "adult" reflections to a minimum, leading most critics to consider the child as the narrator, the adult Nellie's overwhelming melancholic pain bursts forth in key moments in the text. For example, in the *estampa* "El general Rueda" the narrator relates how she is deeply disturbed when, two years after her mother's sexual assault, she sees the general in Chihuahua, significantly going up the steps of the Federal Palace: "Ese día todo me salió mal, no pude estudiar, me pasé pensando en ser hombre, tener mi pistola y pegarle cien tiros" (83-84). Despite her intentions to start a new life in the state's capital, she cannot escape her memories and remains fixated on revenge as a potential escape from the trauma that she is unable to name. Years later in Mexico City she discovers that the same general is to be executed by the state, and she is similarly overcome with obsessive emotion, as she repeatedly remembers/relives the moment of her mother's violation, wishing to turn her inherited memories, her *ojos endurecidos*, into a discursive weapon:

Los soldados que dispararon sobre él aprisionaban mi pistola de cien tiros.
Toda la noche me estuve diciendo:

“Lo mataron porque ultrajó a Mamá, porque fue malo con ella.” Los ojos endurecidos de Mamá los tenía yo y le repetía a la noche:
“Él fue malo con Mamá. Él fue malo con Máma. Por eso lo fusilaron.” (84)

Though general Rueda has already been executed, Nellie cannot move on and effectively grieve her loss, as she is unable to sleep and constantly repeats, in a childlike way, “Él fue malo con Mamá.” Even as an adult, her melancholia makes her unable to recognize the true nature of her mother’s assault. Unless she can name, and thus accept this moment of trauma, Nellie will never mourn her loss. Thus, despite the fact that both mother and rapist are dead, the narrator finds no comfort. If Nellie is a child of the Revolution, then she exposes her birth (the Revolution) not as a glorious beginning, but rather as a violent trauma that she, and thus the nation, may never overcome. The winds of progress may propel her forward, but like Benjamin’s angel, the adult narrator “would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed,” namely her regional world (257). The violence of the past, that placed her as a supposed child of the Revolution, makes it impossible for her to face the future head on. While in Sommer’s model of foundational fictions heterosexual desire is meant to nonviolently resolve important differences between disparate groups, *Cartucho* reveals the inherent violence that hides behind any project that requires the erasure of difference. If in *Tomóchic*, Julia had lived to bare Miguel a son, both mother and child would have had to violently deny (and lose) part of their identity in order to “reconcile” their shared northern difference. On a certain level Nellie is unable to become a true child of the Mexican Revolution because she cannot mourn/deny the loss of her identity and her *patria chica*. Thus, her narration sheds light on both a time period and a violent erasure, which like *Tomóchic*,

was strategically ignored by the state.⁵⁷ To be a *niña de la Revolución*, Nellie would need to bury her regional roots and accept, effectively forgetting her mother's stories, the official myth of the Mexican Revolution. Thus, she is more accurately an inversion of this model. Perhaps she more closely resembles the generation that actually grew up during the Revolution and was left to pick up the pieces.

As I have shown, *Cartucho* does not conceive of the Revolution as a unifying historical reality. In fact, the text deals with the most violent years of conflict in Parral, Chihuahua when the Revolution had disintegrated into civil war. Although it may be characterized as a *novela de la Revolución*, *Cartucho* actually represents a regional inversion of this genre. Thus, if Nellie is a child of armed conflict, she is not the offspring of the hegemonic myth of the Revolution, but rather of Julio's "guerra entre nosotros," as she bears witness to the break down of *Villismo* as it is attacked from all sides, ultimately pitting friends and neighbors against one another. Thus, in a regional subversion of Sommer's model of national romance, Nellie places herself not as a child whose existence reconciles the regional and the national, but rather who brings together (reunifies) the divisions within her *patria chica* through her narrative, which constitutes a discursive re-remembering or rewriting of the past. Once again, Campobello uses a discursive weapon of the center (national romance) and puts it to use for regional ends. Thus, the text does not pass judgment over members of the community who join the

⁵⁷ The state's treatment of each event (*Tomóchic* and the last years of *Villismo*) seems to mirror that of *Tomóchic* and *Cartucho*, which have been strategically ignored or exalted by the state. During the Porfiriato, the author of *Tomóchic* was persecuted and the work was banned as resistance literature. Then, it was embraced by the "revolutionary" government as a precursor of the *novela de la Revolución*. Similarly, *Cartucho* was ignored/criticized (more accurately infantilized) by the literary community for decades until the state began to officially recognize/appropriate Villa as a national revolutionary hero. The damage done by its initial poor reception, however, continues to place it as a lesser known text. Many critics note that Campobello's work continues to receive significantly more attention from academics in the U.S. than in Mexico.

ranks of the *carrancistas* or the villagers who form *defensas sociales* to defend themselves.⁵⁸ Mamá, the universal, regional mother figure mourns the loss of all of her *paisanos*, even those executed by the *villistas*. Her exact name is never given because she is an idealized figure of regional motherhood whose heroic actions repeatedly save the lives of her children and those around her.⁵⁹ In addition, she saves the memories of her fallen *paisanos* by passing their stories on to her daughter. This oral tradition, which joins all the dead together in one place, reunifies the *patria chica* through the act of remembrance.

Mamá is much more than a maternal figure, as the work's dedication clearly names her as the primary source of the "cuentos verdaderos" that make up the discourse (43). In fact, she is a repository of regional oral history and identity, as her memory records the untold histories of her *patria chica*. For example, in "Los hombres de Urbina," Mamá becomes the auditory compiler of her community's conflicting stories concerning this controversial occurrence: "Le contaron a Mamá todo lo que había pasado. Ella no lo olvidaba. Aquellos hombres habían sido sus paisanos" (89). Thus, the mother's memory serves as a collective history, that is, as a counterhegemonic discourse that exists outside the scope of written history. While the historian focuses on finding the "truth" of the past, Mamá remembers everything; she embraces and, at least superficially,

⁵⁸ The one notable exception that deserves further study is the case of the Herrera family, centered in Parral, who according to Katz were "the only significant Chihuahuan revolutionaries who sided with Carranza at the time of the split with Villa in 1914" (547). In numerous *estampas*, the specific members of this family are treated as *carrancista* traitors, usually as they commit some unsavory, inhumane act. Unless the reader was familiar with the specific history of the community, however, this would be missed. The negative portrayal of the Herreras, however, can also be read as a reaction to Celia Herrera's 1939 (also a young woman from Parral) text, *Francisco Villa ante la historia*, which deals with the same time period, and openly condemns Villa and his followers (who killed most of the male members of the Herrera clan). Printed two years before the second edition of *Cartucho* further study is needed to determine their possible dialogic relationship.

⁵⁹ Campobello also probably avoided naming Mamá as neither of her last names, Moya Luna, correspond to her invented identity (Campobello). Such an inconsistency would have simultaneously drawn attention to her autobiographical claims and the origin of her own name.

does not question the diversity of accounts offered to her. Thus, her all-encompassing, presumably nonpartisan memory reconciles the superficial differences that currently divide her *paisanos*.⁶⁰ As her *patria chica* is fragmented and threatened by the violence of civil war, Mamá's role as a link in oral history becomes an integral component of both her personal and her community's survival: "Narrar el fin de todas sus gentes era todo lo que le quedaba. Yo la oía sin mover los ojos ni las manos. Muchas veces me acercaba a sus conversaciones sin que ella me sintiera." (91). Mamá cannot physically defend or protect the people of her community, so she holds on to their dead by accumulating and retelling the stories of how they died: Where were they from? Who killed them? Why? Where? These are the details that capture Nellie's (and the reader's) attention, as her mother continuously recreates/relives the most violent moments of her community's demise. She is often so taken up with the task of remembering, that she does not realize that her small daughter is listening, and thus witnessing these gory tales. In the narrator's eyes, Mamá becomes a physical representation of the *patria chica*, as memories of mother and motherland become indistinguishable from one another.

Unlike written history, however, oral tradition is shared and experienced in groups where teller and listener often change roles. Thus, Mamá eventually recognizes (especially given her own mortality) the importance of Nellie as the daughter that will take her place as a link in the chain of regional oral history. When she dies, her community's stories will live on in her daughter. For this reason, one day, as the two are

⁶⁰ I do not mean to imply that Mamá's memory is objective, as throughout the entire work there is a notably pro-Villa, anticentrist regional perspective. Within her regional group, however, Mamá does not take sides as she remembers the life, and especially the death, of all the members of her *patria chica* regardless of their status as *villista* or *ex-villista*. The only exceptions are traitors, that is, *paisanos* who do not live by regional social values and ultimately betray the *patria chica*. Such turncoats, such as the members of the Herrera family, are treated quite severely, but are not forgotten or excluded by Mamá, the supposed source of all discourse within the text.

walking to the home of the child's *madrina*, Mamá unexpectedly veers off course, taking Nellie by the hand, as she suddenly needs to explain the significance of a particular rock to her little girl:⁶¹

“Aquí fue –dijo ella deteniéndose en un lugar donde estaba una piedra azul--. Mire –me dijo--, aquí en este lugar murió un hombre, era **nuestro** paisano, José Beltrán; les hizo fuego hasta el último momento; lo cosieron a balazos. Aquí fue; todavía arrodillado, como Dios le dio a entender, les tiraba y cargaba el rifle...Tenía dieciocho años.” No pudo seguir, nos retiramos de la piedra y Mamá ya no dijo ni una sola palabra. (91-92, emphasis is my own).

In this instance, Mamá literally “reads” the geography of her regional homeland, as she simultaneously recounts and re-inscribes the story of José Beltrán that she finds on the face of an anonymous blue rock. While throughout the text, Nellie explains how her mother narrated the tales of “sus gentes” and “sus paisanos,” here Mamá significantly includes her daughter in this oral tradition by referring to Beltrán as “nuestro paisano.” Through this story, the mother passes key regional social values onto her daughter as Beltrán, much like the *tomochitecos* in *Tomóchic*, is outnumbered but still fights his enemy as God has taught him, that is, until his last breath. This is not a culture that seeks redemption in the afterlife through passive repentance in this one. By dying well, Beltrán is redeemed through the stories his passing inspires; each time Mamá or Nellie retells/relives the *relato* of his bravery, Beltrán finds life in death. Mamá makes a point to include her daughter in this rebellious oral tradition, upon which her *paisanos* salvation is so dependent. While official history may discredit him as a bandit, Beltrán ultimately

⁶¹ Throughout the text Mamá is characterized as a mother who is not especially physically affectionate, or playful with her children. The *villista* (and in one scene the *carrancistas*) soldiers spend more time playing and doting on her family than she does. Thus, it is significant whenever Mamá takes Nellie by the hand, especially as her daughter is constantly reaching out to her in vain. As Mamá is in many ways a physical representation of the *patria chica*, holding hands gives Nellie a direct connection to her lost community and places her as the next link in the chain of oral history that passes from her mother to her. Notably, Campobello's next work was entitled *Las manos de mama*. In her text, Teresa Hurley discusses the significance of eyes, hands, and voices in both works.

controls how he dies. Hence, in a regional inversion of Christian salvation, the narrator inherits the power to redeem (remember) or condemn (forget) her *paisanos*.⁶² Through her inclusion/participation in oral tradition, Mamá's eldest daughter would hold the key to reconciling the differences that fragmented her *patria chica*. As the adult Nellie concludes the *estampa*, it is clear that Mamá's efforts are successful: "Conocí el lugar donde había muerto José Beltrán, no supe por qué, ni cuándo, pero ya nunca se me olvidó" (92). The gaps in the narrator's information, the "por qué" and the "cuándo," call to mind Linhard's argument regarding the impossibility of representing the Revolution, but also reflect the relative insignificance of these details to regional oral tradition, as opposed to Western historiography. Beltrán died well, that is all that is important. In oral tradition each teller adds and subtracts details, as the social function of the tale is more important than the accuracy of the information. In his essay "The Storyteller," Walter

⁶² I define this as a regional inversion because in the Roman Catholic tradition an individual must confess and repent one's sins to a priest in order to gain salvation and eternal life in heaven. Worldly goods, including reputation, are unimportant and play no role in Christian salvation. In this regional inversion, eternal life is granted by the storyteller, not the priest, who immortalizes or "saves" those individuals who live, but more importantly die, in accordance to the ideals of regional identity. Through oral tradition, the living have the power to resurrect the dead. Unlike official history, however, these stories are not monolithic and exist only as memory. In *Cartucho* the focus is on death, because this is precisely where official history and the center lose control. The center can execute Mama's *paisanos*, but they can face this death (and thus resist it) according to regional values. According to Aguilar Mora the dead of *Cartucho* are acutely aware of this: "La niña percibió cómo estos personajes, que tal vez no poseían su vida por completa, sí asumían íntegramente su muerte como el recinto inexpugnable de su redención, como el último recurso de afirmar su humanidad ante todos los testigos de la opresión, la indiferencia, la arbitrariedad, el poder, el menosprecio. Eran desposeídos, eran las escoria, eran bandidos, pero nadie podía arrancarles **el dominio sobre su modo de morir**" (24, emphasis is my own). Though he does not take into account the role of the storyteller or the revolutionary potential of this memory, Aguilar Mora shows how Villa and the men who served under him seek redemption in this life through how they face death. The three López brothers are regional heroes, practically saints, because they face death according to regional standards. Felipe Ángeles eats a hearty meal and jokes with Mamá's friend as he departs to face execution. These regional heroes turn death into a form of resistance that reveals the violence behind the state's national project. They are redeemed, in that they (re)gain a voice of their own in death, or more specifically in how their death is remembered/recounted by the next generation. This is very similar to how the *tomochitecos* face death in *Tomóchic*, only that here the narrator is a survivor from the margins, and not a member of the central army. For a social, cultural, and political history of death in Mexico see *Death and the Idea of Mexico* by Claudio Lomnitz. Although this study does not deal with the regional inversion of Christian redemption, he discusses several specific cases in Mexican history where marginal groups have used death and its celebration as way to resist national (or foreign) domination.

Benjamin explains how the storyteller, like Mamá, gathers his experiences and those of others, and “in turn makes it the experience of those who are listening to the tale” (87). Although she did not witness his death personally, through storytelling Mamá is able to pass the memory (and thus the experience of regional identity) of Beltrán’s death to her daughter, and subsequently the reader. By recreating oral tradition within the text, *Cartucho* thus attempts to recuperate regional identity by placing the reader as a listener who relives/re-experiences the tale (in the present) along with the discursive teller. As the primary narrator, the adult Nellie thus attempts to place herself in her mother’s role as the keeper of regional “truth.” Unfortunately, this is a purely discursive placement as the text, which gives Nellie life, also separates the emisor from the listener/reader. Thus, the reader cannot ask Mamá why, apart from the missing “por qué” and “cuándo,” she does not reveal the identity of the “ellos” who killed Beltrán. This is an important question as during this time period, it is likely that Beltrán (a *villista* and also a bandit) was killed by members of the same regional group. By strategically silencing this possibility, Mamá serves her function as the regional mother whose child will reunify a fragmented intimate culture. By not mentioning the details of his life, and omitting key information surrounding his death, Beltrán assumes the role of a brave young *villista* who was hunted down by an outside aggressor, that is, the federal troops of Carranza.

As discussed earlier, Mamá also appears as a strong, heroic individual who repeatedly puts her own safety in jeopardy in order to protect others. She tries to save wounded *villistas* in one *estampa*, only to rescue her own son from their grasp a moment later. In this light, it would be a mistake to limit the potential transformative power of her memory. This is especially evident in the *estampa* “El general Rueda.” Though I

have already discussed how Mamá is raped in this scene, it is interesting that most studies continue to miss, or perhaps ignore, the possibility of such an assault. In his 2005 text, Max Parra explains how the general simply “insults the mother and orders his soldiers to destroy all the furniture” (66). Considering the plethora of violent incidents that Nellie witnessed as a child, it is unlikely that a few choice comments and ripped upholstery would cause the extreme melancholic reaction (as discussed earlier) that the narrator experiences years later. In a 2003 article, Faverón-Patriau affirms the possibility of a rape, while he oddly avoids the use of the word *violación*, as if the assault were just a natural consequence of Mamá’s self-sacrificing nature, and does not merit discussion: “La madre decide entregarlo todo, incluso a sí misma, transformando el incidente en un sacrificio en nombre de la familia” (64). Here Faverón-Patriau seems to place Nellie’s mother in the stereotypical role of the submissive and docile woman who dedicates herself completely to hearth and home, that is, the *madre abnegada*. Ironically, he describes this scene as an example of an “evasión elíptica” where the narrator does not tell the whole truth and evades important details. As a traumatized child/adult who witnessed her mother’s rape, the narrator’s defensive evasion is understandable. Faverón-Patriau, however, analyzes this episode in minute detail, down to the alteration between narrative times and spaces, without ever really discussing the sexual assault, which he merely alludes to in passing. In an otherwise detailed discussion, this is surprising. While earlier misreadings of this scene may be understandable given past social norms, Parra’s and Faverón-Patriau’s treatment (or lack thereof) of the possibility of rape gives rise to a number of perhaps unanswerable questions: Is the discussion of rape still taboo, as these two contemporary examples seem to illustrate? Does the

autobiographical nature of the text, written by the daughter who could have witnessed such an assault, make it too much for literary critics, who are used to discussing fictional victims of violence? Perhaps most critics/readers simply find it difficult to accept this inverted regional discourse, where the hero is also a rape victim?

While it is not possible to definitively answer these questions, I believe that the real reason behind this continuous misreading is (at least in the cases discussed above) revealed by the last question. After all, feminist research has made the open discussion of rape, especially in war literature, quite common. What is more, sexual assault is often featured on the evening news as an everyday occurrence. Furthermore, thanks to testimonial literature, literary criticism has a long tradition of treating real people as characters in a literary text. In Mexican literature, one only need consider Elena Poniatowska's *Hasta no verte Jesús mio*. Thus, Mamá's rape (or at last its possibility) is overlooked simply because she does not conform to the traditional, stereotypical image of a weak rape "victim." Strength and motherhood are not characteristics typically associated with the violated woman, who is usually solely defined by her (violated) sexuality. To the reader it seems inconceivable that this idealized, heroic mother figure could be violated in this manner, and that such a significant event would not be described in more detail, given the violence and gore of the rest of the text. Mamá, however, is not defined by a sexual assault, as the narration focuses on the violence that threaten both her immediate family and her regional culture. This silence, however, only reveals the traumatic nature (and importance) of this violation of both the maternal figure and the domestic space. Nellie speaks frankly of everyday executions, but silences those events whose wounds are too deep to heal.

The true significance of this episode, however, is that it reveals the revolutionary potential of regional memory. In her discussion of this *estampa*, Teresa Hurley explains that Mamá's reaction to this invasion is integral in "debunking the myth of the *mujer sumisa y débil*" (66). Although Hurley misreads this episode as a home invasion where the general and ten of his men simply treat the family "roughly," Mamá's silence does "debunk" and, in fact, invert the traditional conception of the *mujer sumisa* by revealing the true bravery of the raped woman. Here the *chingada* is the heroine.⁶³ By remaining quiet, and not crying out in pain, she attempts to protect her children from the true magnitude of her violation, while simultaneously resisting the domination of her *carrancista* rapist(s). Thus, as in *Tomóchic*, the rape of a regional woman by a federal military officer represents the central state's violent invasion of the regional space, and reveals the violence behind the process of centralization/nationalization. In this instance, Mamá turns to the only weapon available to her, that is, her memory: "Los ojos de Mamá, hechos grandes de la revolución, no lloraban, se habían endurecido recargados en el cañón de un rifle de su recuerdo" (83). Although Linhard argues that this statement indicates that Rueda's "men were holding a gun close to her eyes," Nellie clearly indicates that the weapon belongs to Mamá who takes her memories, those that harden her eyes, and turns them into *cartuchos* that could explode forth at any moment (173). Thus, regional memories of civil war (of the center's violation of the regional domestic space) could inspire revolutionary action in the future.⁶⁴ Here the reader is reminded of

⁶³ As with Julia in *Tomóchic*, Mamá could be interpreted as a regional inversion of the national figure of *la Malinche*. Like Julia, she does not betray her regional *paisanos*, and she dies without ever producing a child, that is, a product of her rape by a federal military officer.

⁶⁴ One only need consider the case of the modern day Zapatista movement which appropriated the memory and image of revolutionary leader Emiliano Zapata. As NAFTA took affect on Jan. 1st of 1994 they took control of San Cristobal de las Casas in Chiapas, Mexico. Today they continue to exist as both a political

the initial *estampa* where José Ruíz explains that everyone is a *cartucho*, a potential weapon: “—El amor lo hizo un cartucho. ¿Nosotros?...Cartuchos. Dijo en oración filosófica, fajándose una cartuchera.” While José’s *cartuchera* seems to indicate that every man is simply a nameless bullet, a part of the state’s war machine waiting for his turn to die, the *cartuchera* is also emblematic of the *villistas* and the bellicose frontier culture of the region in question. In this manner, like a *cartucho* each person, whether through memory or direct action, contains revolutionary potential. Although in “El general Rueda,” the national (Rueda) defeats the regional (Mamá), Nellie’s mother demonstrates how memory can transform a moment of loss and disgrace, into a weapon of resistance. Thus, regional memory represents a potential threat to the dominance of the state. Mama’s case reveals that the collective memory of shared loss and violation (by the center) could reunify the *patria chica* and prove especially powerful. Thus, she passes the “rifle de su recuerdo,” that is, her revolutionary memories onto her daughter who figuratively dreams “con una pistola” and sees the world through her mother’s hardened eyes: “Los ojos edurecidos de Mamá los tenía yo” (84). Clearly, Mamá is not the submissive female figure of Sommer’s model of national romance. Her encounter with General Rueda does not seem to produce a child, and in fact inspires resistance. She is a regional, not a national figure of motherhood who attempts to reconcile regional, not national divisions.

Mamá, however, only constitutes one half of Campobello’s regional inversion of the national romance which, like Sommer’s model, also depends upon a masculine presence. Here, the focus is not on the actual “romance,” that is, the heterosexual desire

and guerilla group. Emiliano Zapata was never accepted as a national revolutionary hero, so his memory was open for appropriation.

that produced Nellie, but rather on Mamá's male counterpart who assumes the role of the regional father in the text, namely, Pancho Villa. Though *Cartucho* does not place him as Nellie's biological father, it does cast Villa and Mamá as parallel figures, as De Beer outlines:

Simbólicos de la Revolución y de sus héroes militares y civiles, son los retratos dibujados por Nellie Campobello de Francisco Villa y de su madre. Para esta escritora de la Revolución mexicana ellos representan esos años de lucha interna que dejó una huella indeleble en México y en su literatura. (219)

Though I agree with De Beer that both Villa and Mamá are heroes within the work, they are not national figures (symbolic of "la Revolución"), but rather symbols of a distinctively regional heroism that transgresses the traditional border between civil and military life. During the war, Mamá defends the wounded *villistas*, just as Villa (like a father) saves Nellie's older brother after the battle of Celaya. Also, while De Beer argues that the two represent the "lucha interna" that left a profound mark on the Mexican landscape, as if to imply that the couple reminded the writer of the fragmentation of regionalism, Mamá and Villa are parental figures that offer Nellie stability within this period of struggle and regional division. They are the regional mother and father who remain constant in the narrator's memories, lending a degree of cohesion to the text. While many critics, such as De Beer, seem to recognize the existence of some type of relationship between Mamá and Villa, I have found that only Faverón-Patriau clearly recognizes the intimate nature of their relationship as parental figures within the work: "Si la madre es una madre universal, en el **mundo de Campobello**, Villa no es menos que el padre y caudillo, árbitro y redentor de todo cuanto lo rodea" (65, emphasis is my own) What this analysis fails to consider, however, is that *Cartucho* is a work that constantly questions and subverts the myth of the Revolution from a regional perspective.

In this way, the “mundo de Campobello” that Mamá inhabits is a purely regional one whose epicenter is Parral, Chihuahua. Within this context, she is not the universal mother of the nation, but rather the regional mother of a specific *patria chica*. Similarly, the text does not place Villa as the father of the revolutionary nation, as during the period in question his territory, “todo cuanto lo rodea,” was limited to Northern Durango and Southern Chihuahua. Thus, while Faverón-Patriau correctly describes Mamá and Villa as a symbolic couple that violates the traditional division between the private and the public, he mistakenly discusses this as a breakdown of the family and a possible analogy of national decomposition, as if the work were concerned with the decadent state of the nation, and not of the *patria chica*, during civil war. Mamá and Villa are not symbolic of some type of national foundational couple torn apart by war. On the contrary, Nellie’s memory places them as regional heroes/parents brought together, not torn apart, by armed conflict. Together, they are the regional parents whose offspring will resolve the divisions of their *patria chica*.

Even Nellie’s brother, known as *El Siete*, clearly identifies Villa as a protective father figure in the *estampa* “El sueño de *El Siete*” that begins the third section of the text. After the significant battle of Celaya, which Katz describes as Villa’s “Waterloo” (490), Nellie’s brother is lost and alone in unknown territory, when Villa wakes him from a dream: “Oyó un grito que era la voz de Villa, que decía: ‘**Hijo**, levántate’. Dice que lo oyó tan bien, que abrió los ojos en el preciso momento que Villa le volvió a decir: ‘Despierta, **hijo**, ¿dónde está tu caballo?’” (115, emphasis is my own). Thus, even after a crushing defeat that decimated the ranks of Villa’s *División del Norte*, the general does not fail to fulfill his fatherly role, as he miraculously appears out of nowhere to save

Nellie's brother, who is alone and near death, by waking him as a father would a son.⁶⁵ He addresses him using the familiar *tú* and repeatedly calls him "hijo." Though the title of the *estampa* illustrates the doubtful nature of *El Siete's* version of events, it is clearly placed within the family's oral history (as it is passed from brother to sister and so on) and thus Villa is immortalized as a paternal figure. Then, in the conclusion of the episode Villa is elevated above the role of biological father, and becomes more akin to a spiritual one, as the adult Nellie relates: "Esto no lo olvida él. Fue el único momento feliz de su vida, porque oyó la voz del general Villa. 'Me recompensó Dios –decía cerrando los ojos-, oí a **Tata** Pancho.'" (116, emphasis is my own). Thus, by becoming the father of *El Siete* (and his siblings) Villa is transformed into the paternal savior of the family, and thus, the *patria chica*. The use of the colloquial and familiar "Tata," meaning father or in some cases grandfather, also reinforces Villa's place as a regional, not a national, father figure. Though the adult narrator is judgmental of her brother that she describes as "muy malo y demasiado consentido," she significantly accepts, and retells, her brother's account as it places her as the daughter of Villa. This paternal placement is particularly meaningful because "El sueño de *El Siete*" was a part of the original 1931 edition which was printed at a time, specifically the decade following the general's death, when

⁶⁵ Interestingly, Faverón-Patriau, inaccurately attributes this story not to *El Siete*, but to his companion, *El Peet* that was injured in the battle of Celaya: "Villa despierta al Peet" (65). Though the scene is a bit confusing and ambiguous, as it discusses both characters, usually using the pronoun *él*, the title of the *estampa* is "El sueño de *El Siete*" not *El Peet*. Also, in the first edition, the narrator is not as ambiguous and repeatedly refers to her brother as both the source, and the protagonist of this story, as it concludes: "Esto no lo olvida 'El Siete': yo sé que fué el único momento feliz de su vida" (121). Unlike the second edition, here the narrator's role is more apparent as she, not her brother, places it as the happiest moment of his life. Also in this edition, the narrator directly identifies *El Siete* as her brother, which she does not do in the second edition. Faverón-Patriau's misreading of this important *estampa* is notable as this clearly places Villa as the metaphorical father of the narrator's brother, and creates an even more intimate link between Mamá and the general. The historical placement of this *estampa* has also been overlooked by critics. Although it is mentioned as if in passing, Campobello purposely makes Villa a fatherly figure following the disastrous turning point in his military career, the battle of Celaya, when according to most historians, he became increasingly brutal and demoralized. With this *estampa* the author rewrites official history, and defends Villa, all from the discursive protection of her brother's dream.

“portrayals of Villa were particularly derogatory” (Esplin 83). By representing Villa as a regional paternal figure, at a time when he was officially labeled as a violent criminal, *Cartucho* directly challenged the project of the state that, in many ways, depended upon his negative characterization.⁶⁶

Villa’s role as father extends well beyond the narrator’s immediate family, as like Mamá he is an idealized regional hero and parental figure. Although he does not participate as a storyteller, he does openly mourn the loss of his men. For example, in “Las hojas verdes de Martín López” the general is greatly affected by the death of Martín, who is described as his “hijo guerrero”: “El general Villa lo lloró más que a nadie. Lo quería como un hijo. Desde la edad de doce años, en 1911, Martín López, era sus asistente” (152). In a text that gives few exact dates or years, the inclusion of 1911 is significant as it illustrates that Martín fought alongside Villa from almost the very beginning of the Revolution. Through the shared experience of war, Martín even grew to look like Villa, “sí se parecía a Villa,” and was so feared by the enemy that, in a scene similar to that of Jesus and the doubtful Saint Thomas, the *carrancistas* dug up his body, dislodging the “hojas verdes” that covered his wound, just to verify his death (152).⁶⁷ In this manner, armed conflict forms a familial bond between Villa and Martín. This

⁶⁶ This clearly places the text as a work of resistance literature. Following his death, the state demonized Villa for a number of reasons. First, Villa was a mythical figure long before his death. He actually played a large role in perpetuating news coverage of his exploits. Thus, the government needed to condemn Villa and counteract his own myth before he became a celebrated martyr and inspired additional revolutionary groups. Next, the Mexican government desperately needed the continued recognition and support of the United States that had condemned Villa following his 1916 raid of Columbus, New Mexico. In addition, by depicting Villa, and by extension his *paisanos*, as uncivilized barbarians, the state could justify its paternalistic policies of ever-increasing nationalization and central control. *Cartucho* resists this project, and all this entails, with the simple act of humanizing Villa by placing him both as a regional hero and father. Campobello most likely added the new pro-villa *estampas* of the 1940 edition partially because the Cardenas administration loosened the state’s negative portrayal of the general. Thus, this *estampa*, this dream, is important.

⁶⁷ This scene that compares both Martín and Villa to Christ is typical of *Cartucho* where the regional dead are treated as potential saviors of the *patria chica*. Through memory, the fallen *villistas* return to life and their memory could inspire future regional resistance to the center.

intimate relationship humanizes the general and places him as the father of all the men who fought alongside him during the early years of the Revolution, regardless of later divisions. What is more, Martín is not a singular case, as he is the youngest of three brothers, all of whom who lived and died (in the text) as *villistas*. While the narrator attributes this *estampa* to “un poeta de pueblo” that spontaneously recounted the story of Martín’s death, it is actually a carefully crafted episode where the author addresses a controversial historical event, that is, the 1926 desecration of Pancho Villa’s grave that resulted in the general’s decapitation. Like the remains of his “hijo guerrero,” Villa’s head was never recovered, as he, like Martín “estaba borrado por la tierra con que le habían tapado los compañeros” (152). Thus, even in death, father and son resemble one another, as the *estampa* concludes: “Podían quedar contentos los enemigos, podían llorarlo sus compañeros, otro Martín López no volvería a verse por esos rumbos” (153). This could just as easily refer to Villa.⁶⁸

Like Mamá, however, the general is shown to be deeply connected to all of his *paisanos* regardless of their political allegiance or past military service. In “Las lágrimas del general Villa,” the general personally confronts a group of villagers from Pilar de Conchos who, having taken up arms against the *villistas*, have fled to Parral. Although the text does not label them as a *defensa social*, this episode directly attacks this *carrancista* policy that severely fragmented the *patria chica*. In 1917, after the U.S. punitive expedition left Mexico, general Murguía granted amnesty to *ex-villistas*, while

⁶⁸ The desecration of Martín’s body is described in detail, as the *carrancistas* wanted to seek revenge and verify the death of this general that, like Villa, “les había hecho tantas derrotas” and “no los dejaba ni dormir” (152). Here *Cartucho* takes Benjamin’s claim that “*even the dead*” are not safe from the enemy quite literally, as the federal state violates the body of Martín, and thus Villa. This scene also places the federal troops as the true barbarians, as they are the enemy that are “contentos” only after killing and desecrating the cadaver of a fallen enemy. This is reminiscent of the federal army’s treatment of the cadavers of the fallen *tomochitecos* in *Tomóchic*.

simultaneously encouraging them (and all free villagers) to form local militias that the government outfitted with arms and ammunition. Disenchanted by years of fighting, and afraid of *carrancista* troops, these *defensas sociales* divided former *villistas* even more.⁶⁹ Suddenly, Villa had to fight both the *carrancistas* and the *defensas sociales*. This *estampa*, however, is not violent as Villa assumes the role of the forgiving father and simply asks the *concheños* why they have abandoned their lands and taken up arms against him. Terrified of the general, they hesitantly reveal that the countryside is filled with *carrancista* rumors: “Uno de ellos dijo que le habían dicho que el general venía muy diferente ahora. Que ya no era como antes. Que estaba cambiado con ellos” (136).⁷⁰ Expecting a violent reprisal, the villagers are shocked by the saddened Villa’s conciliatory response:

Conchos, no tienen por qué temerle a Villa, allí nunca me han hecho nada, por eso les doy esta oportunidad; vuélvase a sus tierras, trabajen tranquilos. Ustedes son hombres que labren la tierra y son respetados por mí. Jamás le he hecho nada a Conchos, porque sé que allí se trabaja. Váyanse, no vuelvan a echarle balazos a Villa ni le tengan miedo, **aunque les digan lo que sea**. Pancho Villa respeta a los concheños porque son hombres y porque son labradores de la tierra. (136, emphasis is my own)

Referring to himself in the third person, in a rather formal tone, Villa sounds more like a priest, that is, a holy father telling his congregation to “go in peace,” than a revolutionary general. Perhaps in this instance Campobello is copying the tone of Murguía’s 1917 proclamation that insulted the general in a similar manner. Whether or not this is the case, this speech is clearly directed at anti-villista propaganda of some form, and the *defensas*

⁶⁹ According to Katz, the *defensas sociales* “were a nightmare” for Villa, as he was no longer welcomed into the villages of his home territory, that had previously protected him and provided him with provisions (646). Now, he had to fight not only the federal troops, but the plethora of *defensas sociales* that sprang up across the countryside.

⁷⁰ This is most likely a reference to Murguía’s 1917 proclamation that granted amnesty to the *villistas* who would lay down their arms. In this proclamation the *carrancista* general calls Villa a bandit who invaded the United States in order to draw support for his thoroughly criminal cause.

sociales in particular, as the general instructs the villagers to return to their peaceful lives, “aunque les digan lo que sea” (136). Here the general demonstrates that he considers himself to be the protector of, and in many ways, a father figure for the people of his *patria chica*. In fact, he is quite affected by the behavior of the fearful *concheños* who seem to have lost faith in him: “A Villa se le salieron las lágrimas y salió bajándose la forja hasta los ojos” (136). While it is unclear what the villagers chose to do, this *estampa* places Villa as a fair and forgiving paternal figure that deeply regrets how the *defensas sociales* have fractured his *patria chica*. What is more, this portrayal of Villa is a fixture in Mamá’s repertoire of regional *relatos*, as the opening lines reveal: “Fue allí, en el cuartel de Jesús, en la primera calle del Rayo. Lo vio mi tío; él se lo contó a Mamá y lo cuenta cada vez que quiere” (136). Thus, regional oral tradition casts Villa as a mythic paternal figure that is capable of forgiving and reunifying the fragmented regional community.

Rather than dealing with the general’s military exploits, *Cartucho* focuses on redeeming Villa’s character. Therefore, the text’s melancholic narrator remembers him as the heroic father who, at least through memory, is capable of inspiring and uniting the people of his regional community. In this space, where he is an idealized regional father, the general does not need to use his gun or even physical force to instill authority. Like Mamá, he is the physical embodiment of regional values, and in essence, the *patria chica* itself. His tears leave the villagers of Pilar de Conchos speechless, and simply hearing his voice represents the happiest moment in the life of “El Siete.” Like a daughter who exaggerates the virtues of her father, the adult Nellie places Villa as a type of regional

saint.⁷¹ In stark contrast to the center's image of Villa as a violent bandit, here the general's voice is his only weapon, as Severo relates to Nellie in "La voz del general: "Los villistas eran un solo hombre. La voz de Villa sabía unir a los pueblos. Un solo grito era bastante para formar su caballería.' Así dijo Severo, reteniendo en sus oídos la voz del general Villa" (135). In this moment, that is, at the moment of remembering, Severo is able to once again hear the voice of the general in his ears; it echoes in his memory. This instant recalls the moment at the conclusion of "El sueño de *El Siete*," where Nellie's brother closes his eyes and evokes the voice of the general: "Me recompensó Dios—decía cerrando los ojos--, oi a Tata Pancho" (116). In this manner, the general's voice represents the regional identity, embodied by *Villismo*, that once unified the people of the *patria chica* against foreign, that is, central aggression. Through memory, they are able, at least briefly, to evoke this regionalist spirit which is embodied by the general's voice. Once again, memories are *cartuchos* that hold revolutionary potential.

In a text populated by cadavers, the death of Villa is markedly absent. At first, this is surprising, considering that his 1923 assassination continues to be the subject of historical debate. Three years after he peacefully surrendered and retired from military

⁷¹ In his article "The Profane Saint vs. The Revolutionary Child: Portrayals of Pancho Villa in the Writings of Nellie Campobello and Jack Conway's *Viva Villa!*," Emron Esplin presents an interesting, but flawed, analysis of *Cartucho* and *Apuntes* as together representing a type of profane hagiography. Basing his argument on the author's interview with Carballo and her prologue of *Mis libros*, Esplin explains that in *Cartucho*, Campobello wants to turn Villa into a national hero: "She wants to shift the folk veneration of Villa from the periphery of rural Mexico to Mexico's metropolitan center. In other words, she wants to canonize Villa as a secular saint that will be accepted and respected by all Mexicans, not just the rural *villistas* who have already started the cult following" (91). The main fault with this is that Esplin considers *Apuntes* and *Cartucho* as complementary works, where *Apuntes* glorifies the military side of Villa and *Cartucho* deals with his character. The two works should not be read together in this manner, especially as *Cartucho* evades the battlefield, as the focus of the work is NOT Villa, but rather the *patria chica*. A careful reading of *Cartucho* reveals that Villa was not accepted by all of his own people and that *Cartucho* wishes to place him as a regional, not a national figure, whose memory can reconcile regional division. Also, why would she want Villa to be venerated as a national hero, when Villa's positive inclusion into the center would only serve to further incorporate the periphery into the center? The work resists the center.

life, the general and a few of his men were ambushed as they drove through the streets of Parral. Although many assume that Calles, most likely with President Obregón's approval, ordered the assassination, the details of the conspiracy are still unknown. Despite its historical importance, however, this event did not inspire an *estampa* in Campobello's work, and is only mentioned or alluded to in a few instances, usually at the end of some other tale of death and violence. For example at the end of "El coronel Bustillos" Villa himself seems to anticipate his murder and asks the very question that inspires controversy to this day: "Mamá contó que cierta vez en Parral, en la casa de los Franco, estando ya pacífico, el General le preguntó: ¿Quién mataría **su** Pancho Villa?" (51). This question, which appears in the first section, haunts the rest of the work (and thus Nellie's memories) that strategically avoids the death of the general. What is more, the use of the possessive pronoun "su," seems to place Villa and Mamá as a couple; he is **her** Pancho Villa. While this could also simultaneously refer to his status as a regional figure (he is her general or leader), the text is once again ambiguous and plays with the reader, as earlier in the story coronel Bustillos killed a dove that Mamá had named "Pancho Villa."⁷² In a later *estampa*, "El cigarro de Samuel," Villa himself is actually talking about the bravery of Samuel Tamayo, when suddenly the narrator takes over, silencing both men: "Un día Samuel, aquel muchacho tímido, se quedó dormido dentro de un automóvil; Villa y Trillo también se quedaron allí, dormidos para siempre. Cosidos a balazos" (127). In the next sentence, Nellie returns to her description of Samuel's dead body, as if Villa is nothing more than an afterthought or an unnecessary detail. What

⁷² In the first edition the General's question is followed by a sentence that reduces the ambiguousness of his question: "Esta pregunta se la hizo en Hidalgo del Parral, en el mes de diciembre de 1921" (27). This concluding sentence, foreshadows the assassination as it specifically locates the question (and Villa) in the very location of his death, a mere eighteen months before the event.

stands out in each of these scenes is that the general never actually dies, and in fact speaks in each episode. In the first example Villa uses the conditional form and asks, “Who **would kill** Pancho Villa?” Thus, the general could be alluding to the inevitability of his assassination, or, as the use of the third person indicates, this could be an act of masculine bravado, literally asking “Who would dare kill Pancho Villa?” Neither question is answered by the next example, as Villa is talking in one paragraph, and before the reader can take a breath, Nellie relates how the general and two of his men simply went to sleep, sewn up by bullets. Here the narrator’s wording is strikingly familiar to her only reference to Mamá’s death in “El general Rueda”: “Mamá ya no estaba con nosotros, sin estar enferma cerró los ojos y se **quedó dormida** allá en Chihuahua –yo sé que Mamá estaba **cansada** de oír los 30-30” (84).⁷³ This idea, that Villa and Mamá simply went to sleep, as if in a fairy tale, reinforces the adult narrator’s attempt to appear as an objective child, relating the actions from beneath her mother’s table. It also, however, reflects the melancholic nature of a narrator who is unable to directly talk about the loss of her parents. By focusing on *El Siete*’s relationship with Mamá and Villa, or displacing the general’s death (and decapitation) onto Martín López, Nellie is able to speak of her traumatic loss from a relatively safe distance. Martín actually appears in all four of the final *estampas*, three of which are named after him. Finally, however, the image of Mamá and Villa as simply resting somewhere, waiting to be awakened, leaves room for hope that the *patria chica*, and regionalism will survive. After all, they are the idealized parental figures whose offspring will heal the fragmented community. Villa, or at least the regionalist spirit he represents, has the power to unify the *pueblo*, while Mamá

⁷³ In this citation “los 30-30” can refer both to the rifles and the Winchester .30-30 caliber cartridges (*cartuchos*) that were commonly used during the Mexican Revolution.

is a repository of regional oral tradition. Thus, Villa and Mamá could prove to be valuable symbols of regional identity in the future.

Clearly, *Cartucho* places both Villa and Mamá as parallel paternal figures. Unlike the couples of Sommer's national romances, however, they do not come from different sectors of national society. In fact, Villa and Mamá were each born in Northern Durango and are members of a distinctive Northern, frontier culture. Thus, their romantic union represents a regional inversion of Sommer's model which is meant to reunify the divided *patria chica*, not the nation. As a couple, Mamá and Villa represent a coming together, or a reconciliation/reaffirmation of a regional cultural identity that resists central domination. Although the couple never physically consummates their relationship, the adult Nellie (now an orphan) rejects her classification as a *niña de la Revolución*, and through her narrative, or in other words her memory, places Villa and Mamá as the idealized parents and revolutionary heroes that gave her life. Thus, the work tries to establish itself, not as one of Sommer's foundational fictions, but rather as a regional foundational fiction. Hence, the final *estampa* ends with the messianic description of a great *villista* victory over the *carrancista* forces of general Murguía at Rosario. As the dirty *carrancistas* flee Parral, they are described as inhuman, "bultos envueltos en mugre, tierra, pólvora; verdaderos fantasmas" by Mamá and the narrator's aunt who imagine that they are running from the *villistas* in Rosario who will soon return. In this manner, Mamá will be transformed into the loving mother that Nellie lost, as she takes her daughter by the hand at the work's conclusion:

Los ojos de Mamá tenían una luz muy bonita, yo creo que estaba contenta. Las gentes de nuestros pueblos les habían ganado a los salvajes. Volverían a oírse las pezuñas de los caballos. Se alegraría otra vez nuestra calle, Mamá me agarraría de la mano hasta llegar al templo, donde la Virgen la recibía. (161)

This hopeful ending seems to indicate that soon the *villistas* will return and the regional community will be restored. Just as their ancestors had defeated the Apaches, the *villistas* have defeated the “salvajes” or, in other words, the *carrancistas*. In this way, the ending inverts the dominant national ideology that placed the regional cultures of the North as the “other” in order to justify increased nationalization. Yet, in the final two sentences Nellie stops speaking in the past tense, and suddenly switches to the conditional, indicating that these events have yet to occur. Historically, the 1917 battle at Rosario was the last great *villista* victory over the federal troops. According to Katz, Villa was “like a phoenix rising from the ashes” as his men killed over 2,500 *carrancistas* (633) Thus, Nellie ends her narration by evoking this great victory that inspired hope for the future. This, however, was also the beginning of Villa’s final decline in power. The use of the conditional indicates that Nellie is aware of this historic reality, even as she takes her mother’s hand, placing herself as a link in the chain of oral tradition. Thus, like the national romances, this regional foundational fiction proves to be purely discursive in nature. It does, however, reveal the revolutionary potential of memory.

Conclusiones

Clearly, *Cartucho* is a complex work that until recently was ignored and/or unappreciated by the literary community and the reading public. Critics often fail to see it as anything more than an autobiographical work or a type of social document of a young girl’s experience of war. This, however, is unfortunate as it is a text that openly challenges the hegemonic myth of the Mexican Revolution, and thus the very foundation of the Mexican state, from a particularly regional perspective. First, it deals with a historical period, 1916-1920, in Chihuahua when the Revolution had disintegrated into a

chaotic civil war where *carrancistas*, *villistas*, and a virtual multitude of local *defensas sociales* fought against one another. For the first time in the region's history, regionalism openly engaged with nationalism on the battlefield. Previously, outbreaks were limited in size and isolated villages did not form larger movements. Revolutionary literature, however, did not acknowledge the fragmented nature of the Revolution, which in the North was partially a response to the state's increased nationalization. By directly engaging with this reality, where the regional and the national were in direct conflict, *Cartucho* exposes the violent erasure of regional identity upon which the *novela de la Revolución*, and thus the state's national project, is based. Thus, *Cartucho* does not represent "la Revolución" but focuses on the years of civil war from the perspective of a young woman, Nellie, who arranges her childhood memories and those of her community into a literary collage or mural of civil war, which is mostly populated by images of cadavers. Thus, Campobello effectively captures the chaos of these years in a text that inverts the traditional *novela de la Revolución*, and which, in many cases attempts to rewrite history in a regional, literary mural of civil war. The individual *estampas* form the images of this mural that tells an often contradictory story, which constantly questions and undoes its own discourse.

It is important, however, to consider that Campobello herself inhabited a relatively privileged position in Mexico City. She was a close personal friend of Martín Luís Guzmán, who helped edit the second edition of the work, and was a founding member of the national school of dance. With this in mind, one cannot blindly accept *Cartucho* as some type of authentic subaltern discourse, despite the author's claims. This, however, is the case with much of the critical literature dedicated to Campobello's

literary work. The mere fact that she published *Cartucho* in 1931, in a genre dominated by men, reveals that Campobello had access to a wealth of resources. Thus, this is a text that not only incorporates the author's personal experiences and memories, but which also engages with the center's historical and cultural production. For example, the first edition ends on a rather pessimistic note when *El Siete* goes off to the United States and loses all trace of his regional identity. When he briefly visits Mexico City in 1924, the adult narrator laments her brother's departure from the *patria chica*: "Si él hubiera seguido al cuidado de Villa, habría sido también bandido. Pero un bandido mexicano" (143). This stands in direct contrast to the optimistic, almost messianistic manner in which the second edition ends. Also, the majority of the *estampas* that discuss Martín López and the power of Villa's voice as a unifying force did not appear in the first edition. While in 1931 Villa was a national pariah, by 1940 the Cárdenas administration had accepted a more liberal view of the general. Thus, the second edition includes a more complete portrayal of Villa and even casts him as an idealized regional father and revolutionary hero, who together with Mamá represents a regional inversion of the national romance. Given her place in society, it is not unlikely that Campobello herself had read this type of text. In addition, the second edition actively engages with, and problematizes a number of historical events. It is important to understand that the production of the text itself is affected by the author's central placement in society.

Finally, *Cartucho* illustrates the increasingly problematic relationship that exists between regional and national identity in post-revolutionary Mexico. While the Revolution in many aspects was a reaction against increased nationalization, the post-revolutionary state implemented many of the Porfiriato's plans. The new "revolutionary"

state inherited the Porfiriato's cultural artifacts of barbarism. Thus, during the years of civil war (as represented in *Cartucho*) the *carrancista* administration implemented policies such as the creation of the *defensas sociales* to further fragment the regional community, and increase dependence on the state. The dead of *Cartucho*, Mamá's fallen *paisanos* represent the regional sacrifice that made the nation possible. Yet, these dead continue to haunt Nellie and even as an adult she cannot overcome the trauma and the loss that she experienced at the hands of the state's war machine. The post-revolutionary state may have executed general Rueda, but it cannot erase the trauma he caused. Thus, the Mexican regional subject does not look to the future, but rather to the past, and to his/her memory. Through memory, this subject could realize his revolutionary potential, as a *Cartucho*.

Chapter Three

Pancho Villa & *Las Jornadas Villistas*: Body Politics, Performance, and Regional Identity

Historical Context—From *Cartucho* to *Las Jornadas Villistas*

Despite the optimistic conclusion of the second edition of *Cartucho*, *Villismo*, and the militant regionalism it represented, did not experiment a significant resurgence in the decades following the text's publication. While the Cárdenas presidency (1934-1940) had promoted a more positive image of Pancho Villa by focusing on his decisive role in the early years of the Revolution, many continued to blame him (and *villistas* in general) for the bloody years of civil war following the defeat of Huerta.¹ Thus, the state's efforts to rewrite Villa's place in the national revolutionary discourse were only partially successful.² According to Max Parra, the official rehabilitation of Villa was not fully realized by the Cárdenas administration for two key reasons (136). First, many of the general's military and political enemies continued to work within the government during

¹ It would be a mistake to assume that president Lázaro Cárdenas himself was a supporter of Villa. Like Calles and Obregón (who are generally linked to the assassination of Villa), he had fought against the *Villistas* during the Revolution. Friedrich Katz further explains that the administration's policy shift may have been purely political in that Cárdenas needed the support of the population in the Laguna area of Durango and Coahuila, who were largely *villista*, in order to realize agrarian reform in the area of La Laguna (790). According to Héctor Aguilar Camín and Lorenzo Meyer, this was the first important *ejido* (1936) established by Cárdenas (3.4 million acres), and its founding was largely a reaction to agricultural labor strikes in the region (143). Thus, the state was willing to appropriate regional identity, or at least its symbols, in order to further nationalistic goals and resolve threats to national unity. In order to integrate regional populations into the nation, the state either needed to discredit or assimilate regional heroes into its project.

² This change in policy, which attempted to make an official space for Villa among the heroes of the revolution, was also reflected in the literature that was produced during the Cárdenas administration, especially in Martín Luís Guzmán's *Memorias de Pancho Villa*. For a more complete discussion, see chapter six, "The Battle for Pancho Villa During Cardenismo, 1935-1940," of Max Parra's *Writing Pancho Villa's Revolution: Rebels in the Literary Imagination of Mexico*.

this time period. While Cárdenas may have appreciated the postmortem, political utility of Pancho Villa in promoting national reconciliation, not all of the general's former enemies were ready to simply forgive and forget. Additionally, a significant sector of the population had suffered greatly at the hands of the *villistas* and continued to be haunted by the violence of the Revolution. Parra explains that for certain sectors of the population the scars (both physical and mental) of the revolution "were still open" (136). For these individuals it was simply too soon for such a turnaround in official policy, as the brutalities of war were still fresh in their minds.³ Thus, while other revolutionary leaders (Madero, Carranza, Obregón, and Zapata) were specifically co-opted by the state, and officially recognized as heroes in order to reconcile the differences between revolutionary factions, Villa and *Villismo* continued to be largely excluded from the national pantheon of heroes and official revolutionary discourse.

While the reasons outlined by Parra are valid in explaining the limited success of Cárdenas's change in policy during his years in office, they do not fully account for the general's continued official exclusion which lasted well into the 1960s.⁴ Although the reasons are varied, it is important to note that the (re)evaluation of Villa was (and is) closely related to both economic and political realities. During his administration, Cárdenas utilized widespread agrarian reform, economic nationalism, and revolutionary discourse to consolidate state power and unify the country. Regionalism, and thus its

³ Max Parra places Celia Herrera's text *Villa ante la historia* as evidence of this. He views this work as a "bitter reaction" to Cárdenas's conciliatory policy, in that it is "a work symptomatic of the difficulty of creating a national memory that wished to overlook the painful memories of grief-stricken survivors" (136).

⁴ In 1966 the PRI, under the administration of Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, finally proposed adding Villa's name to the list of revolutionary leaders inscribed in gold on the walls of the Chamber of Deputies in the nation's capital. Although the proposal was eventually approved, it met with a formidable opposition as Villa continued to be a controversial figure. For a more complete discussion/summary of this debate see Katz (790-792). The official minutes of the debate in the Chamber of Deputies can also be found in the Mexico City newspaper *El Día*, Nov. 11, 1966.

symbols (Villa), were thus valued by the state only insofar as they facilitated national integration.⁵ However, once the primary goals of this process of national reconciliation/reconstruction were achieved, Villa and *Villismo* were no longer needed by the central state to legitimize its project. In this way, a practical reason behind the initial failure of Villa's historical rehabilitation is that it was relatively short-lived; it did not extend much past the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas, and six years was simply not enough time to undo the negative impact of previous governments. Yet, this explanation leads to even more interesting questions: Why was this change in policy abandoned so quickly? Why was Villa singled out and excluded, while other revolutionary leaders were effectively co-opted by the state?⁶ Why was Villa's status revised in 1966, over four decades after his death? And, more importantly, why did he continue to inspire controversy? The answers to these questions reveal a great deal about the changing relationship between (and manipulation of) national and regional identity following the post-revolutionary period.⁷ While it is not within the scope of this project to analyze the complete evolution of regional identity (as embodied by Villa and *Villismo*) from 1940 onward, it is necessary to put more recent manifestations and performances of regional identity, such as *Las Jornadas Villistas*, in context.

⁵ It is important to remember that the region in question has historically been plagued by highly localized rebellions and uprisings that often put the state's authority in jeopardy. While in the past the central government was dependent upon local caudillos such as Luis Terrazas who could manipulate/appropriate regional identity, now the state promoted the incorporation of these alternate identifications.

⁶ According to Friedrich Katz, former enemies such as Madero, Carranza, Obregón, and even Zapata were accepted as national heroes, while Villa was noticeably absent from the official Mexican ideology: "His name was scarcely mentioned during commemorations of the Mexican Revolution, no monument to him was set up for many years, and neither the date of his birth nor the date of his death was ever commemorated by official Mexico" (790).

⁷ It is important to note that although here the focus of discussion is the figure of Villa, it is my argument that he is a symbol of regional identity and difference that has been similarly appropriated (or excluded) by both the state and popular sectors of society for various reasons. The changing interpretations and uses of Villa as symbol reflect alterations in the regional/national dynamic.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Pancho Villa became a useful symbol of regional resistance following his assassination in 1923. In many ways the revolutionary potential of his memory was perceived as a threat to national integration by the central government. While Obregón and Calles dealt with this prospective danger by marginalizing Villa, Cárdenas attempted to integrate the regional leader (and thus regional identity) into the national project in an effort to unify the country, thus defusing any possible challenges to state sovereignty.⁸ Ultimately, however, the inclusion of *Villismo* and its leader into official revolutionary discourse was left unfinished due to a radical turnaround in the state's political and economic project which was not compatible with Villa's revolutionary legacy. After 1940, the *Cardenista* plan of development was significantly scaled back and a new, less socially progressive era began, as outlined by Héctor Aguilar Camín and Lorenzo Meyer:

When General Avila Camacho assumed the presidency, it was clear to many people that the construction of a "Mexican socialism" had ended. The idea that with the end of the Cárdenas administration the Revolution had ended gained acceptance with the passing of years (158).

This marks the beginning of a period known as the "Mexican Miracle" in which the central government adopted conservative policies on issues of social justice and focused on industrializing the country through a policy of import-substitution.⁹ While under *Cardenismo* the main goal was to establish a more just society consistent with the Revolution, the state's new obsession was the accumulation of capital. As the

⁸ This is typical of the conciliatory and corporatist politics established by Cárdenas.

⁹ The "Mexican Miracle" roughly corresponds to the 1940s and 1950s, as there is not a clear agreement as to when this "miracle" ended. While Aguilar Camín and Meyer define this period as beginning in 1940 with the administration of Avila Camacho, and ending with the Tlatelolco massacre of 1968, in *Breve historia de Chihuahua* Luis Aboites places 1960 as the end of the "miracle." Rather than focusing on the events in the nation's capital, Aboites outlines several popular manifestations and disputes within the state of Chihuahua (prior to 1968) that marked the end of the "miracle." In either case, the social unrest of the 1960s exposed the inconsistencies and failures of this economic/political project.

“Revolution had ended,” there was suddenly little room in the national project for the incorporation of a yet to be domesticated *Villismo*.¹⁰

In Chihuahua (as in the rest of Mexico) this was a period of sustained economic development and political stability coupled with substantial population growth and increased urbanization. It also meant, however, that the region was once again heavily dependent upon American investment and capital as there was a clear shift from the countryside to the urban environment. By 1950, the principal border city, Ciudad Juárez, actually surpassed the state capital of Chihuahua in both size and economic importance. Suddenly, the political, economic, and cultural autonomy of the region was under direct attack on two fronts, by the United States from the north and Mexico City from the south. In many ways, this “Mexican Miracle” finally achieved the nationalistic goals of the Porfiriato’s plan of centralization, as state and local governments became entirely dependent upon federal resources, and the corporative official party gained complete control over all governorships and senatorial positions.¹¹ Considering the decentralizing, Anti-American ideology behind popular *Villismo*, it is not surprising that the regional hero was once again cast to the periphery as “an unspoken subject in official revolutionary memory and politics” during these so-called miraculous years (Parra 137). Villa was excluded precisely because he represented a bellicose, regional frontier culture that had historically (since colonial times) defended its autonomy and violently resisted

¹⁰ When Aguilar Camín and Meyer state that the “Revolution had ended,” they do not intend to imply that the state separated itself from this defining historical reality, but rather that it was no longer an effective force in determining policy and was transformed into just another part of the nation’s historical legacy, which began with the wars of Independence. Thus, the Revolution was domesticated and defused, as “its historical prestige and the aura of the profound transformations it produced continued to lend legitimacy to Mexican governments in the second half of the twentieth century” (159).

¹¹ It is important to remember that the Tomóchic rebellion was in many ways a reaction to changes to Chihuahua’s state constitution which did away with the community’s right to self-governance, and to foreign encroachment on local lands (specifically by José Yves Limantour).

centralization.¹² This regionalism was incompatible with the policies of the “Mexican Miracle” that ideologically placed the Revolution as merely the culmination of the great nineteenth-century movements that defined the nation, namely the Independence and *la Reforma*. Thus, for over twenty years the central state distanced itself from Villa’s regional legacy, and failed to fully acknowledge his importance within the Revolution, which still continued to lend legitimacy to the Mexican government.¹³ *Villismo* did not conform to the state’s new vision of the Revolution as legacy, and like previous manifestations of northern regionalism, it was officially silenced.¹⁴

It would be a grave mistake, however, to assume that Villa (or regional identity for that matter) simply disappeared or became lost during this period of national economic expansion. Just as *Villismo* returned to its popular roots following its major defeats against Obregón in 1915, Villa lived on (outside of official Mexico) in both popular myth and in the mass media. Stories about the general proliferated in newspapers and other monthly publications, and he was the subject of almost a hundred texts, including works ranging from biographies to *novelas de la Revolución* (Katz 792).¹⁵ Additionally, both the general and stories that reinforce regional identity were

¹² In this way, *Villismo* can be seen as the manifestation of a long established tradition of militant regionalism and not as an entirely new phenomenon. Thus, Villa was unique among the revolutionary generals. Just as the story/identity of the *tomochitecos* has been silenced, suppressed, altered, and subsequently appropriated and exaggerated by the state for national purposes, so too has the memory of *Villismo*.

¹³ Although the economic policies of this time period do not seem to comply with revolutionary principles, the state claimed that it was first necessary to create wealth in order to then redistribute it in the future.

¹⁴ This is reminiscent of the Porfiriato’s efforts to silence/exclude the *tomochitecos*, first through violence, and later through censorship and misinformation.

¹⁵ This popular fascination with Villa was not limited to the time period in question, and is quite evident to this day, as evidenced by the celebration of *Las Jornadas Villistas* in Northern Mexico, and the continued presence of the general as the subject of both academic studies and artistic endeavors, including new literary productions such as *Pancho Villa: Una biografía narrativa* (2006) by Paco Ignacio Taibo II. This is also, however, illustrative of renewed interest (whether or not it is “popular”) in Mexican regional histories and cultures. In Chihuahua, the *Instituto Chihuahuense de la Cultura* has published numerous titles dealing with local histories, including a 2003 reprinting of *Muerte de Villa* (1966) by Antonio

immortalized in ballads known as *corridos* which continue to be popular to this day.¹⁶ Thus, unlike “official” revolutionary leaders who were largely defined and controlled by the state, Villa (and *Villismo*) was a highly malleable figure who was open to popular debate, and thus, constant reinterpretation.¹⁷ As long as he was absent (or at least silent) from the center’s project, Villa’s memory (and thus regionalism) could be appropriated and redefined by virtually any sector of society. *Villismo* thus remained divisive precisely because it came to represent an alternative, popular revolutionary discourse that resisted definition by the state. Unlike other revolutionaries, Villa remained an outsider for decades after his death, and thus his memory continued to be perceived as dangerous and controversial by “official” Mexico simply because it did not disappear into oblivion. According to Friedrich Katz, the state’s efforts to marginalize the memory of Villa may have actually backfired, as they seem to have only contributed to further his persistence in the popular imaginary: “The fact that official Mexico repudiated Villa for such a long time may paradoxically have helped to keep him very much alive among popular sectors wary of the government” (793). Therefore, Villa was embraced, and in many ways resurrected, by popular culture just as he was cast aside by the state that had authored his assassination. In many ways, this was a vicious circle as the general’s popularity only

Vilanova Fuentes and several studies dealing with the Tomóchic rebellion were published following its centennial in the early 1990s, such as Ruben Osorio’s *Tomóchic en llamas* (1995) which was issued by the *Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes*.

¹⁶ The expression of regional identity in popular *corridos de la revolución* is an area that merits additional research, especially as new ballads about past events continue to be produced and distributed not only in Mexico, but around the world. For example, I purchased a copy of the album *Antonio Aguilar canta corridos de la Revolución con mariachi* from Amazon.com in the Fall of 2007. Many of the songs on this single album are reminiscent of the *estampas* of Nellie Campobello’s *Cartucho*, and reflect modern regional reactions to national politics.

¹⁷ According to Katz, there was a proliferation of different, often contradictory images of Villa, especially in the *corridos* of the Mexican Revolution: “There was the self-made man...the image of Villa the avenger: the avenger of personal wrongs...of social wrongs...of Mexico’s humiliated honor...There was the image of Villa as the friend of the poor, helping widows and orphans. And then there was the image of Villa the macho” (793)

contributed to the state's fear of the revolutionary potential of *Villismo*.¹⁸ In this way, by failing to deal with the *villista* "threat" directly, that is, by somehow assimilating Villa and traditional regional culture into the modernizing discourse of the "Mexican Miracle," regionalism only became all the more threatening to the state. After all, identification with one's *patria chica* did not disappear, despite the practical successes of the state's comprehensive program of centralization, and Villa's myth was firmly entrenched in regional culture.¹⁹ This persistence may partially explain the federal government's official 1966 recognition of Villa's role in the Revolution. After decades of excluding the general, perhaps the nation's policy makers finally realized that they were contributing to his popularity, and thus unnecessarily fueling a potential threat to national unity. By inscribing the general's name in gold on the walls of the Chamber of Deputies, the administration of president Gustavo Díaz Ordaz may have simply wished to change tactics, that is, to appropriate (rather than marginalize) Villa and discursively place the revolutionary potential of regionalism directly under the control of the state. In this light,

¹⁸Katz argues that the controversies surrounding Villa are similarly "fueled by the fact that Villa left no archive, fitted no convenient slot, and is claimed as their own by extremely heterogeneous factions" (793). Thus, it is also a lack of definition, either by an archive or by the state, which makes Villa/*Villismo* so controversial and difficult to pin down. Both in life, and in death he was (and is) a prolific figure. Even academic studies of the general, such as Katz's exhaustive *The Life and Time of Pancho Villa*, continue to inspire popular debate. Ironically, this missing "archive" or lack of a defining "slot" has also facilitated the state's more recent attempts to appropriate Villa as a national hero and tourist commodity. Just as with the case of the *tomochitecos*, it is not difficult for the state to redefine or "rediscover" a subject that it has long relegated to the periphery and treated as "other," as there is no official canon that must be deconstructed. For example, only the definitive defeat of the Spanish in the Wars of Independence allowed the newly formed Mexican state to redefine the cultural canon, and thus rescue the officially ex-communicated Father Hidalgo from eternal damnation, while converting the "hero" of the Conquest, Hernán Cortés, into its villain.

¹⁹This does not mean, however, that regionalism and its principal symbol (Villa) were left unaltered by the policies of the "Mexican Miracle." As discussed earlier, traditional ways of life were greatly affected by the rapid industrialization and urbanization that defined the 1950s and 1960s. In many ways regional identity (and its symbols) persisted **because of** and not in spite of national consolidation, as the *patria chica* continued to represent a space of regional resistance to outside domination. One key change is the addition of the United States as yet another outside aggressor. Villa was (and continues to be) a particularly attractive figure of regional resistance (as opposed to other possibilities like the *tomochitecos*) because he successfully fought both the United States and the central Mexican State.

such a revision was nothing new, but rather, signified a return to Cardenas's conciliatory attempt to integrate *Villismo* into official revolutionary discourse. The physical inclusion of Villa's name alongside those of Madero, Carranza, and Zapata would thus be comparable to the *Cardenista* support of nationalistic pro-Villa literature, such as Martín Luis Guzmán's *Memorias de Pancho Villa*.

While the state clearly altered its tactics by officially recognizing Villa, the varied reasons behind this shift are complex and reveal a great deal about the regional/national dynamic. First, it is important to note that Díaz Ordaz (1964-1970) was one of Mexico's most repressive presidents, and as such his official revision of Villa's image was more than a simple return to Cárdenas's conciliatory policies.²⁰ By the time he took office in 1964, the inconsistencies of the "Mexican Miracle" were clear to many sectors of society. According to Emmanuel Carballo, this was especially true in literary circles, as writers rejected the state's revolutionary claims: "Los prosistas ya han descubierto que la vida mexicana no es revolucionaria y ni siquiera propensa a los cambios profundos, que nuestro país está ligado al destino de las grandes potencias capitalistas, sobre todo al de los Estados Unidos" (14). In this way, it was becoming more and more difficult for the central state to base its legitimacy on its revolutionary legacy. This was compounded by the fact that the new generation of political leaders had not actually participated in the Revolution. Therefore, the principal objective of the Díaz Ordaz administration was not to rescue Villa from historical obscurity, but rather to appropriate the popularity and prestige of this marginalized regional hero in order to bolster the authority and legitimacy

²⁰ This administration is responsible for the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre. Unlike Cárdenas who strived to reconcile differences among the revolutionary factions in order to promote unity, Díaz Ordaz violently suppressed the opposition.

of the regime (Katz 790).²¹ By claiming to be the heir of *Villismo*, and permanently inscribing the name “Francisco Villa” on the walls of the federal legislature, the administration could directly confront claims that it was no longer “revolutionary” and highly dependent upon the United States. After all, Villa was the only foreign military leader to invade the continental United States in the twentieth century, and he had even outpaced the punitive expedition that the U.S. sent after him. While the institutionalized Revolution had lost much of its credibility by the 1960s, Villa continued to represent an alternative revolutionary discourse that the state had yet to fully exploit.²² According to Max Parra, the official recognition of General Villa’s importance to the revolutionary struggle also allowed the government to draw attention away “from its growing authoritarianism and repression of grassroots movements,” as the regime emphasized its popular, revolutionary origins (164). Ironically, by officially honoring *Villismo*, which at its heart was a grassroots revolutionary movement, the state wished to neutralize criticism concerning its hard-handed treatment of such dissidents. The memory of a past regional threat was thus officially recognized in order to handle more pressing matters. Clearly, the *patria chica* is much more than a simple space of resistance, as it can also be manipulated by the center to serve national goals. Regional history, identity, and memory are thus powerful weapons that are not the exclusive property of the periphery.²³ This is something which has become abundantly clear in recent years.

²¹ This strategy, that is, the national appropriation of regional figures of resistance is nothing new. In fact, it is reminiscent of the case of the *tomochitecos* who were first characterized as fanatical Indians, and then as the *mestizo* forefathers of the Mexican Revolution. In either case the central state uses such figures to reaffirm its authority over the region in question.

²² In this way, *Villismo* has allowed the state to revive revolutionary rhetoric. While men such as Carranza and Obregón are popularly associated with the failures of the revolutionary state, *Villismo* (like Zapatismo) is idealized. Villa is the modern martyr for the true, yet to be realized, Revolution.

²³ In fact, one of the key components of the state’s cultural project (especially in the post-revolutionary period) has been the appropriation, or more accurately, fetishization of provincial and indigenous ways of

While most scholars, including Max Parra and Friedrich Katz, agree that the Díaz Ordaz administration recognized the importance of Villa in an effort to reinforce the legitimacy of a state that had lost touch with its revolutionary roots, most ignore the possible role that regional actors and popular sentiment may have played in the official recognition of Villa in 1966.²⁴ This is a significant oversight, as the controversial leader was highly popular in the Northern states of Chihuahua and Durango. In these areas the leader had already been recognized through the installation of sculptures and monuments in his honor.²⁵ It is only logical that certain regional groups (or individuals) would have pushed for the historical rehabilitation of Villa at the national level, just as they struggled for it in their local communities. This is evidently the case in the work *Muerte de Villa* by writer, and amateur historian, Antonio Vilanova Fuentes.²⁶ Although originally published in 1966 (and reprinted in 2003), the text was clearly written shortly before Villa's official recognition as the author openly criticizes the central state's failure to

life and cultural practices in an effort to “preserve” or “rescue” them before they are eventually replaced by the state's modernizing national project. It is often unclear whether the true intention is to simply put the “other” and his way of life safely away, either up on stage or in a museum, where he cannot speak for himself.

²⁴ While neither Katz nor Parra discuss in any detail whether individuals or movements from the North may have pushed for the state's 1966 recognition of Villa, they do consider the role of particular literary texts. Katz explains that the rediscovery of John Reed's book *Insurgent Mexico* (1914) may have influenced the national rehabilitation of the general in Mexico (792). Parra, on the other hand, points out that the 1964 reprinting of Cecilia Herrera's *Villa ante la historia* is indicative of a move to block the possible national reevaluation of Villa's historical role in the Revolution (164).

²⁵ This, however, was a relatively recent phenomenon. Even in Parral, Chihuahua (the main site of the *Jornadas Villistas*), the controversial *Comité pro-monumento a Villa*, which established the annual commemoration of the general's death and erected other monuments in his honor, was founded in 1959. According to one of its founding members, José Socorro Salcido Gómez, this was a time when it was still a “delito” to be a *villista* (202). The central state had to be aware of the formation of such local groups that fought for the public recognition of their local hero.

²⁶ It is important to note that Vilanova Fuentes was actually a Spanish political exile who immigrated to Chihuahua in 1939. While he published several texts concerning both Spanish and Mexican history, this particular work does not pretend to be a rigorous historical study of Villa's death, but rather hopes to offer “una serie de datos, documentos y fotografías” that will help future researchers. According to the author, it was simply too soon for history to judge Villa “sin apasionamiento ni rencores personales” (13). While there are serious issues with the author's methods and the reliability of his sources, *Muerte de Villa* is an interesting social document (published from the periphery) that engages with an untold/unstudied history virtually months before its official rehabilitation/re-appropriation.

honor one of the Revolution's most important and well-known generals. According to Vilanova Fuentes, while the rest of the world, including the United States, remembers the general, he has been grossly neglected by his country of origin, specifically by the central state:

John Reed, el famoso escritor estadounidense en su libro *Mexico Insurgente* relató las campañas de Villa. Eisenstein, el gran cineasta soviético, hizo del villismo el episodio central de su monumental película "Viva México." Y en Columbus, Nuevo México, donde se guardan dolorosos recuerdos de él, se le ha dedicado una plaza con una placa conmemorativa.

Sin embargo México, que en la glorieta de Huipulco de la calzada de Tlalpan en la capital de la Nación ha levantado una estatua a Emiliano Zapata, no se atreve a erigir una sola piedra en honor del hombre que, por muchos años, fue el único exponente de México en el mundo. (51-52)

Here the author seems to invite the reader to question the possible reasons and motivations behind the center's marginalization of Villa (and *Villismo*) by pointing out that even the general's enemies in the United States and supporters as far removed as the Soviet Union have erected monuments or produced artistic works dedicated to his memory. It seems that only the heart of the nation, Mexico City, has been too afraid to memorialize one of the country's most famous military leaders. In this way, the author uses irony almost in an effort to provoke the nation to make up for what he sees as a profound historical oversight. What he fails to recognize, however, is that it may be this popularity, that is, the fame and myth of *Villismo* (both regionally and around the world) that is to blame (at least partially) for the state's inaction. At a time when Mexico was seeking international political and economic legitimacy, Pancho Villa was already world famous.²⁷ Perhaps the state felt challenged by this reputation, and its ability to inspire

²⁷ Villa was very effective at promoting and marketing himself during his year's of military success (1913-15), especially with the foreign press, as evidenced by John Reed's *Insurgent Mexico*. After his death, literature and film kept his image alive abroad. In the conclusion of *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*,

regional unrest.²⁸ After all, the official proposal to honor Villa only made reference to his valuable role in defeating the dictatorships of Porfirio Díaz and Huerta. Thus, he was defined in purely national terms, that is, his value was determined/limited by his usefulness to the central state.²⁹ Whatever the case, it is evident that certain sectors in the North wanted the center to include their hero (and thus their identity) into national discourse. If a statue of Zapata occupied a roundabout in the capital, surely they could make a space in the national pantheon of revolutionary heroes for Pancho Villa.³⁰ Unfortunately, the incorporation of Villa, and hence the regional, into national discourse also represents an erasure, or a silencing of those aspects of the *patria chica* that do not conform to the center's project.

The appearance of *Muerte de Villa* is notable as it actually anticipates the 1966 change in policy.³¹ In fact, in the concluding lines of the work's epilogue Vilanova Fuentes questions the reasoning behind Villa's murder and suggests an alternative way for the center to handle the revolutionary potential of *Villismo*: "¿Era necesaria su

Katz explains how, thanks to Jack Conway's film *Viva Villa!*, the general became a hero to political dissidents in Austria in 1935 (818).

²⁸ It is also possible that the Cold War may have contributed to the state's aversion to Villa, as internationally he was adopted as a symbol for socialist groups as a peasant revolutionary. For example, a Mexican unit who fought against Franco in the Spanish Civil War named itself after Villa.

²⁹ This continues to be evident to this day, as Villa is only recognized for his contribution to the larger revolutionary cause. Even the name of a station in Mexico City's subway system refuses to recognize the general's individual importance, as it bears the name of his military division "División del Norte." In contrast, there is a station named "Zapata."

³⁰ In the previous quote Vilanova Fuentes is making direct reference to the November 1958 unveiling of a equestrian statue of Emiliano Zapata in the nation's capital. Mexico City is populated by multitudes of monuments dedicated to historically important leaders and movements, especially along the city's principal avenues such as *Paseo de la Reforma*. The placement of Zapata's memorial is thus significant. For a discussion of the Zapata memorial see Samuel Brunk's "The Mortal Remains of Emiliano Zapata" in *Body Politics: Death, Dismemberment, and Memory in Latin America*. The potential meaning and the politics surrounding the placement of such memorials, especially following the Mexican Revolution, is an area that merits additional research.

³¹ It is unclear, and perhaps doubtful, that the publication of this minor work exerted any influence over the center, especially as it was produced in Chihuahua, and not in Mexico City. It is my argument, however, that it is indicative of a larger regional desire to rewrite/rehabilitate the role of Villa (and regionalism) within the nation. It is this popular sentiment, more than a single publication, which may have influenced the policies of the state.

supresión?, ¿no había otro medio de neutralizar su potente peligro? Y aun ahora, ¿no se puede todavía cubrir con su figura el hueco que permanece vacío entre los auténticos héroes de la Revolución” (144). While the author recognizes that Villa may have been a threat, or a “potente peligro,” to the state, he does not approve of the center’s choice to use violence to deal with this potential danger. In this series of rhetorical questions he wonders if it was really necessary to assassinate Villa and if perhaps the state could now safely recuperate his memory and put it to good use. Thus, he suggests that the nation utilize Villa, or more accurately his “figura,” to reinforce the nation’s (by now weakened) revolutionary discourse. Villa as symbol would therefore fill in the ideological gaps, or “el hueco,” in the national project, which despite its corporative nature still did not account for northern regional identity. Consequently, this is exactly the course of action adopted by the Díaz Ordaz administration, as the name of the general (*su figura*) joined those of other revolutionary heroes on the walls of the Chamber of Deputies.

In some ways, this marks the end of a long regional struggle for recognition. In fact, like all great battles it has inspired a number of *corridos*.³² In “Justicia a Villa” by Juan Sandoval Ortuño, a proud *norteño* voice exuberantly explains that justice has finally been served, and the nation is at last satisfied because Francisco Villa has been officially recognized by the state:³³

³² Unfortunately, I have been unable to verify the date of production for any of the *corridos* to be discussed. Thus, while the content of the *corrido* may discuss specific historical reality, it may be a more recent interpretation. This, however, does not minimize the importance or relevance of these compositions, especially considering that many new arrangements simply repeat older *corridos* with slightly different wording.

³³ The Antonio Aguilar recording of this largely upbeat *corrido* eerily begins with a lone trumpet playing taps, as if to mark the end of Villa’s long exclusion (the burial of injustice) and his final placement into the *camposanto* of official history. Suddenly, the song’s jubilant guitars interrupt the sole trumpet, and the lyrical voice announces a new day: “Ya le hicieron justicia merecida / la que México pedía con razón / al famoso general Francisco Villa” (1-3). This transition from the death/burial of regionalism to a bright new, optimistic day for the *patria* is strangely reminiscent of the concluding scene of *Tomóchic*. Thus, the

Ahora si el valiente general
Ya se cuenta un gran héroe mexicano
Y está escrito en la historia nacional
Con letras de oro en un recinto oficial
Ya a su patria está satisfecha
Porque el gobierno lo reconoció. (5-10)

Although the specifics of the situation, such as the controversial debate in the Chamber of Deputies or the role of the President, are not mentioned, there is enough detail (i.e. “letras de oro,” “el gobierno lo reconoció”) to indicate to the listener that this is a direct response to Villa’s 1966 inclusion in the list of revolutionary heroes. In this composition a great deal of importance is placed upon the “official” recognition of the general (as opposed to the popular) as the singer indicates that Villa is finally a great Mexican hero, “Ya se cuenta un gran héroe mexicano,” as if this were entirely dependent upon the state’s approval. Interestingly, in this particular *corrido* the eventual acceptance of the general is described as a victory for all *villistas*, as if all of his followers had fought long and hard for the central government’s approval:

Toda su gente, la viva y la muerta
Ya descansaron al verlo triunfar
Como triunfó frente al general Huerta
En mil batallas que no puedo enumerar. (13-16)

In this way, the battle for official recognition is equated to the general’s numerous struggles against dictators such as Huerta. By directly connecting the *villista* defeat of Huerta (1913) to this 1966 “victory,” the *corrido* effectively silences the violent years of civil war described in Nellie Campobello’s *Cartucho*. This is interesting because it reflects the actual content of the official proposal to honor Villa, just as it indicates that

playing of taps makes it clear that the center’s authority depends upon the burial/incorporation of Villa’s memory into national discourse. It (the conquest of Villa’s memory) constitutes a repetition of a foundational act which allows the state to demonstrate its sovereignty, while safely neutralizing the revolutionary potential of *Villismo*.

the North, “Toda su gente,” did play some role in the 1966 change in policy; this is a triumph for all *villistas*. Yet, at the same time, the *corrido* explains that this particular moment marks the death of *Villismo*, as all *villistas* (dead or alive) have been laid to rest, now that their leader has been immortalized “con letras de oro.” Thus, “Justicia a Villa” converts these gold letters into a funerary inscription for both *Villa* and the militant regionalism embodied by *Villismo*. With this simple gesture, regionalism is no longer a threat. This is reinforced by the Antonio Aguilar recording of this *corrido* which actually begins with a lone trumpeter playing taps. Clearly, “Justicia a Villa” supports the state’s authority just as it simultaneously praises the general. It appears that at this point in time the relationship between regionalism and nationalism was going through a period of complex renegotiation. By finally recognizing the principal symbol of 20th century northern regional identity, the administration was attempting to appropriate *Villa*’s continued popularity for its own purposes, and at the same time appease certain sectors of regional society who desired this recognition for their hero, and perhaps themselves.³⁴

It would be a grave mistake, however, to assume that the entire population of Chihuahua and Durango appreciated the government’s new found admiration for the leader of the *División del Norte*. First of all, *Villa* continued to be a highly controversial figure with his fair share of enemies within his *patria chica*.³⁵ For these individuals, the actions of the Díaz Ordaz administration were incomprehensible. Additionally, many

³⁴ According to Katz, the Chamber of Deputies erupted in applause and “shouts of ‘Viva Villa!’” when the resolution was adopted by a vote of 168 to 16 (792).

³⁵ While I discuss the importance and persistence of regional identity within this particular *patria chica*, it is by no means a unified, homogeneous population. This is evident in Nellie Campobello’s *Cartucho*, where *Mamá* welcomes a wide variety of her *paisanos*, both *villista* and otherwise, into her home as members of the same regional community and culture. It is my argument that while in 1966 *Villa* continued to divide the population in question, this has changed greatly in the last four decades. Controversy remains, but today the performance of *Villismo* through popular spectacle reconciles these interior divisions/differences, especially as the *Jornadas Villistas* allows the population to sacrifice and redefine *Villa*’s regional legacy, which in many ways is characterized by its controversial nature.

supporters of the general rightfully viewed the central government's change in policy with distrust. This is evident in "Corrido de Francisco Villa" by Jorge Saldaña in which the lyrical voice ironically recalls how the government, which now wishes to inscribe Villa's name on its walls, used to become frightened at the mere mention of the his name: "Nomás de ver el gobierno se espantaba / si nombraba al Gral. Francisco Villa" (9-10). In this way, the singer questions the motivations behind the state's drastic change in perspective.³⁶ What is more, he views the official recognition of the long dead Villa as entirely unnecessary and meaningless, as he is already a hero for the people of his *patria chica*:

Ni falta que hace que ahora los diputados
pongan su nombre con letras amarillas
su corazón el pueblo le ha entregado
desde que andaba combatiendo en la guerrilla
allá en Chihuahua, Parral y la Boquilla (12-16)

This represents a biting regional criticism of the central state, which after forty-three years suddenly wants to use simple yellow letters to honor a man who won the heart of his people through his actions, well before his death.³⁷ In addition, this passage squarely locates this "pueblo" not in Mexico City, but in the communities of the general's *patria chica*, "Chihuahua, Parral y la Boquilla," where his memory still lingers.

Obviously, the intent of "Corrido de Francisco Villa," which privileges regional authority over Villa's memory, differs immensely from the national sentiment expressed in "Justicia a Villa." While in "Justicia" Villa's people are finally able to rest, satisfied

³⁶ This also leads the listener to question whether the state's *figura* of Villa (and its interpretation of *Villismo*) actually corresponds to the "real" general, that is, to the man/movement that formerly inspired such fear in the central state. The official proposal to honor the general effectively eliminated those aspects of the revolutionary figure that the state found threatening.

³⁷ This stands in direct contrast to "Justicia a Villa." The *letras de oro* of "Justicia a Villa" are converted into mere *letras amarillas* in "Corrido de Francisco Villa." Similarly, in the former it is the central state that uses its authority to recognize the general, while in "Corrido" it is the pueblo who hands its heart over to Villa.

with the government's recognition of their general, in "Corrido" the *villistas* are unmoved, as they are still waiting for the realization of the promises of the Revolution, as evident in the closing verses:

Al ver el campo tan triste y solitario
donde se muere sin agua la semilla
los campesinos le rezan novenarios
cuando les falta el frijol y la tortilla
que falta que hace que reviva Pancho Villa
que falta que hace que reviva Pancho Villa (13-18)

Thus, the government's offering of *letras amarillas* is little comfort for a people who are lacking the basic necessities of life. What is more, this regional population does not subscribe to the tenets of the "Mexican Miracle" or of the institutionalized revolution, as they do not put their hope in the government's dream of a revolutionary future, but rather pray novenas for the resurrection of Villa, just as they might for the coming of rain.³⁸ In these particular lines, the repetition of the term "falta" is particularly meaningful as it draws attention to what is really lacking in the lives of this regional population, that is, the return of Villa and his revolutionary spirit to the *patria chica*. It is thus the resurgence of regionalism which will secure "el frijol y la tortilla," or the socioeconomic and cultural sustenance that the community desires.³⁹ The wording here is vital as in the previous stanza the lyrical voice uses this same expression (*falta*), but with the inclusion of "Ni" to indicate that the recognition of Villa at the national level is unnecessary, and in

³⁸ As in *Cartucho*, here Villa takes on the role of a potential regional savior, as reinforced by the use of the verb *revivir*. Thus, the people pray for his resurrection, as he takes on a messianic, Christ-like role. Yet, at the same time, Villa is also compared to the rain which the *campesinos* pray for upon seeing the desolate condition of their *patria chica*. He is the "agua" without which the "semilla" of regional identity will perish.

³⁹ It is important to note the historic connection between instances of regional rebellion and economic necessity. In both the Tomóchic rebellion and the Mexican Revolution it seems periods of militant regionalism are, at least in part, influenced by economic factors. Even this *corrido* explains that the people pray to Villa only when in need: "Los campesinos le rezan novenarios / **cuando les falta** el frijol y la tortilla" (15-16, emphasis is my own) It is thus not surprising that the state government officially started *Las Jornadas Villistas* in 1994, the year NAFTA took effect.

many ways unwanted. While the center intends to figuratively bury *Villismo* under a golden inscription, the regional subject prays for its resurrection. The voice of “Corrido de Francisco Villa” thus expresses a clear disdain for the “official” recognition of the general. In addition, it criticizes the state’s project which has failed to meet the basic needs of its people (symbolized by “el frijol y la tortilla”) and left the countryside “triste y solitario” despite over two decades of intense national industrialization and overall economic growth. The *corridos* “Justicia a Villa” and “Corrido de Francisco Villa” thus represent two distinct reactions to the 1966 change in policy. This discord reveals that the center’s effort to appropriate the name and memory of Villa for its own purposes was not entirely successful, and that regionalism continued to be a space of resistance to national domination. In many ways, the 1966 debate over Villa in the Chamber of Deputies marked the beginning of a new battle over regional identity and memory as suddenly both the periphery and the center claimed ownership of the dead *caudillo*.

The role that regional politics and civil society may have played in igniting this new struggle over the figure of Villa has been largely ignored. This is unfortunate as ultimately the national appropriation of Villa was (and is) inherently political, and thus indicative of the state’s efforts to control society by preempting and/or co-opting any potential threats to national unity. For example, the criticism expressed in “Corrido de Francisco Villa” is more than a simple reaction to a change in governmental policy. In fact, the 1966 recognition of Villa may actually reflect the center’s efforts to manage an already evident resurgence of regional, social unrest which predated the Tlatelolco massacre by several years in both Chihuahua and Durango.⁴⁰ For example, in the state of

⁴⁰ This is one contributing factor to the 1966 recognition of Villa which has been underappreciated. Both Katz and Parra fail to specifically mention the influence that social unrest or protest in Chihuahua and

Chihuahua rural sectors of the population did not benefit greatly from the policies of the “Mexican Miracle,” as the redistribution of land was virtually suspended after the Cárdenas administration and the government primarily supported large private agriculture and ranching operations. Thus, despite increased economic development and urbanization at the national level, the 1950s and 1960s was an era marked by protests and violence at the regional level, especially in Chihuahua’s rural areas.⁴¹ In 1954, Emiliano Laing led an armed raid on the federal military barracks located along the recently opened Pan-American Highway.⁴² Then, in 1960 some 30,000 *campesinos* invaded several cattle ranches, calling for an end of the *inafectabilidades* decreed by Cárdenas in 1937.⁴³ Additionally, Mennonite camps established in the 1920s were threatened by *campesino* groups who argued that their federal land concessions expired in the early 1960s. Teachers and students from the normal schools of Saucillo and Salaices also realized various protests. Although notable, these manifestations were merely precursors for the armed assault of Madera, Chihuahua on September 23, 1965. Headed by Dr. Arturo Gámiz, students and instructors from the region’s normal schools attacked the military barracks of Madera that had been built with funds from foreign investors during

Durango may have had on the legitimacy of the Díaz Ordaz administration and its decision to seek Villa’s historical rehabilitation.

⁴¹ According to Luis Aboites this situation was exacerbated by a number of factors including a severe fall in the price of meat/cattle exports and a crisis in the production of cotton in 1964. Additionally, he argues that local politicians and social leaders (old and young alike) were greatly influenced by the Cuban Revolution (165). This is significant as it marks a shift in the national/regional dynamic, as the *patria chica* is increasing becoming a space of resistance against globalization, and not simply nationalization.

⁴² Luis Aboites speculates that Laing and his followers may have been the victims of traitors, as the resulting massacre indicates that the federal troops were waiting for the rebels (163).

⁴³ While the Cárdenas administration did do a great deal in terms of land redistribution, it made certain concessions for industries such as cattle ranching that required large tracts of privately owned territory. For this reason, several ranches were exempt from redistribution. These unaffected areas were *las inafectabilidades*.

the Porfiriato.⁴⁴ Although they were ultimately defeated by federal forces, the rebels who attacked Madera reached a national audience as the government of Díaz Ordaz sent Lázaro Cárdenas to the area in question to address the fallen dissidents' demand for the breakup and redistribution of *latifundios* among the landless peasantry.⁴⁵ While the majority of these rebels and *campesinos* did not claim to be *villista*, in many ways their movement reflected a continuation of *Villismo* (or at least its ideology) as an armed revolt whose ultimate goal was local autonomy and land redistribution. They were not motivated by national political aspirations, but rather by their regional bellicose culture that fostered self-sufficiency and local autonomy based on land rights. Undoubtedly, the proliferation of regional protest and armed rebellion in Chihuahua which culminated in the 1965 attack on Madera contributed to the central state's decision in November of 1966 to memorialize, and thus control Villa (and *Villismo*).

In the state of Durango, the federal government faced even more widespread regional discontent as evidenced by the 1966 Student Movement, in which students from both the *Instituto Tecnológico de Durango* and the *Universidad Juárez del Estado de Durango* occupied the mining installations of the *Compañía Fundidora de Fierro y Acero de Monterrey* for a total of fifty-seven days beginning on June 2, 1966.⁴⁶ In this case, all

⁴⁴ The choice of target is particularly symbolic, as it represents not only an attack on the central state's war machine, but also on the process of increased nationalization/centralization initiated by the Porfiriato and the negative impact of foreign investment.

⁴⁵ Despite the participation of Cárdenas, ultimately local authorities were left to finalize the deal between *campesino* organizations and cattle ranchers. As a result, the accords contained numerous loopholes that allowed large landholders to maintain their dominance, while limiting the holdings of *ejidos*.

⁴⁶ Although it does not fit within the scope of this study to present a detailed discussion of the major differences in the economic development of the states of Durango and Chihuahua, it is important to note that unlike Chihuahua, Durango (except for perhaps Gómez Palacio in the Laguna area) was largely excluded from the nation's public works projects and its overall plans for national economic development. Between 1950 and 1970 a quarter of the state's population, some 230,000 people, actually left the area in order to find work in the United States or in the country's more industrialized areas. During the 1960s when the GDP of Mexico increased by an average of 7% annually, that of Durango never rose by more than 1.4%. As it does not share a border with the U.S., Durango also did not experience the same level of

sectors of *durangüense* society (both elites and peasants) resented the extreme authority of the central government that, in their eyes, had turned Durango into an “isla de tierra adentro” by denying local rights to exploit the state’s timberlands, and turning the large iron ore deposits of *el Cerro de Mercado* over to the *empresarios* of Monterrey (Avitia 43).⁴⁷ The governor of the state even passively supported the protesters, and did little to remove them from *el Cerro*. Ultimately, federal authorities intervened and, as in the case of Tomóchic, replaced both state and local officials who were deemed as ineffective. It is in this context that the central administration finally decided that it was appropriate to officially recognize the importance of Villa to the revolutionary cause. Thus, over forty-years after his death, and a few months after a major student protest in his home state, shouts of “Viva Villa!” echoed in the halls of the Chamber of Deputies. Although it is impossible to draw a direct line of causation between these two events, the timing of the two definitely indicates such a relationship.⁴⁸ At the very least, the student movement contributed to the resurrection of Villa in official discourse.

Faced with such regional divisions, it is not surprising that the central government sought to appropriate the popular figure of Pancho Villa by rewriting his place in national history. This, in fact, is quite typical of the tactics implemented by the modern Mexican

foreign investment as Chihuahua. Thus, while in Chihuahua social protest was strongest among students and more rural or marginal sectors of society, in Durango anti-centrist regional sentiment/discontent was widespread among all sectors of the population which felt untouched by the “Mexican Miracle.”

⁴⁷ As the most industrialized urban center in Northern Mexico, the city of Monterrey, Nuevo León (and its residents) has long been criticized as being extremely capitalistic, and perhaps too “American.” Thus, the Monterrey based company that stripped iron ore from *El Cerro de Mercado* and shipped it back to Nuevo León for processing was viewed as a “foreign” company exploiting local natural resources. The student movement called for the construction of an ore processing plant in Durango, in addition to other factories across the state.

⁴⁸ President Ordaz Díaz actually sent his *secretaría de gobernación* and future successor, Luís Echeverría to negotiate with the student groups in Durango in 1966. Thus, the president would have been acutely aware of the precarious situation in Durango.

state in order to safeguard the strength and constancy of its institutions, as outlined by Héctor Aguilar Camín and Lorenzo Meyer:

As can be seen, the stability of the political system was not based exclusively, or even principally, on the use of force, but mainly on the ability of its leaders to avoid the mobilization of social forces with independent leaders. To this end it negotiated, co-opted, and partially satisfied demands and even acted before problems became potential crises. (184)

Thus, while the central government did violently suppress some regional movements such as the Madera uprising in 1965, it tried to avoid such open displays of force in favor of more subtle forms of silencing through negotiation and concessions. This explains why Díaz Ordaz sent Lázaro Cárdenas to Madera a few months after federal troops had already quashed the rebellion. The powerful Cárdenas legacy simply diffused any potential threat posed by the memory of Dr. Arturo Gámiz or the other fallen rebels, while giving the impression that meaningful change (typical of the Cárdenas presidency) would result from state-sponsored, peaceful negotiations. However, despite the superficial success of such efforts, events such as the Madera uprising and the Student Movement of 1966 made it abundantly clear that regional discontent continued to constitute a revolutionary potentiality in the North. Thus, in order to guarantee the overall stability of the system, it was necessary to prevent additional outbreaks, or “mobilizations of social forces,” before they occurred.

While leaders such as Gámiz were easily dealt with (or neutralized), Pancho Villa presented the nation with a unique case. Although the state had murdered the *caudillo* in 1923 and interred his body in the relatively isolated community of Parral, Chihuahua, he remained very much alive through myth and legend in regional popular culture.⁴⁹ State

⁴⁹ In his extensive biography and study of Pancho Villa, *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*, Friedrich Katz only briefly discusses the complex survival of Villa in popular myth due to the enormity and pervasiveness

sanctioned violence and even death were unable to weaken the persistence and strength of Villa and *Villismo*. Thus, he represented the very type of “independent leader” that could potentially inspire (or be used to inspire) social unrest and threaten the viability of the political system. While for decades the center dealt with this incipient danger by excluding Villa and regionalism from national discourse, the manifestations of 1965-1966 revealed that this region or *patria chica*, that is, the very birthplace of *Villismo*, was not fully integrated into the national project and continued to represent a potential space of resistance. In order to neutralize this would-be menace, the state needed to undermine Villa’s independence in popular culture, and convert him into a regional symbol whose memory/legacy was wholly dependent upon the center’s authority. As it is not possible to negotiate or make concessions to a long-dead regional leader, the state co-opted his legacy in order to avoid a prospective national crisis.⁵⁰ In this way, regional social unrest in the 1960s directly impacted the state’s 1966 decision to officially recognize Villa. Although it was not listed among their demands, in many ways the historical rehabilitation of Villa (at least in part) represented a national concession to the protesters of both Chihuahua and Durango. However, this acknowledgement was purely discursive and did little to settle the enduring divisions between the nation and this specific *patria chica*. In fact, it may have actually exacerbated expressions of regional difference. After all, the official recognition of the general resulted in his resurrection as a highly controversial and polemic figure, as the central state, regional groups, and even local

of the subject matter: “It would require a book at least as long as this one to analyze, describe, and assess the enormous development of the Villa legend” (793). To appreciate the significance of this statement, one only needs to consider that the index of Katz’s exhaustive study ends on page 985.

⁵⁰ It was much more difficult for the state to avoid a crisis in 1968 when popular dissent could not be cast as a “regional” or isolated problem, as it came directly from largely middle class college students and professors in the nation’s center of power, Mexico City. As negotiations with student groups ultimately failed, the state resorted to a by now familiar pattern of extreme, but short-lived suppressive violence and state-sanctioned terror, followed by a complex process of reconciliation and co-option.

authorities began a new battle for ownership of this powerful revolutionary symbol.⁵¹ To this day, Pancho Villa continues to persist as a malleable character, and useful icon, in the ongoing clash between regional and national interests.⁵² Therefore, by more closely examining this contest over Villa's memory, I will be able to explore a number of questions concerning the evolution of Northern regionalism and its changing relationship with nationalism in the Mexican context: What has happened to the intimate culture of revolution portrayed in *Cartucho*? How has it changed? Is the *patria chica* still utilized as a space of resistance or has it been fully appropriated by the state and incorporated into the nation? How? What impact, if any, has globalization had on regionalism?

In order to investigate these questions further, I will first focus on the politics surrounding the burial, treatment, and precarious location(s) of Villa's physical remains. While in *Cartucho* the general's cadaver is significantly missing, his body (and its representations) has taken on new importance over the last few decades, especially as its

⁵¹ This reflects a continuation, or perhaps a second stage, of what Max Parra describes as the "larger cultural war" that took place during the post-revolutionary period, that is, "a war fought over the dead, over how the Mexican people should remember their fallen revolutionaries at a time when the meaning of war, and therefore its legacy for the present was still unresolved" (5). As the limitations of the "Mexican Miracle" and the "revolutionary" government became apparent, the meaning of the revolution (and its dead) was reexamined and reassessed by both the center and the periphery. Thus, crisis (whether economic and/or political) results in a re-writing of revolutionary legacy. I would argue that this legacy has never been completely resolved, as moments of national crisis (including the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre and the 1994 Zapatista movement) inevitably lead to historical revision. Questions regarding how the dead should be remembered and whose memory will prevail are never completely nor definitively answered.

⁵² While my previous chapters have focused on more traditional literary works, it is my argument that the differing regional and national manners of remembering Villa and *Villismo* (in images, posters, public performances, memorials, music, museum displays, etc.) all constitute different texts that, like *Tomóchic* and *Cartucho*, reveal a great deal about the relationship between regionalism and nationalism. In his introductory chapter of *Body Politics: Death, Dismemberment, and Memory in Latin America* Lyman L. Johnson explains that representations of heroes are often used as effective forms of discourse: "In Latin America, as in Europe and the United States, the names and images of dead heroes have been long-used as **texts** to instruct living citizens in the behaviors and values (bravery, sacrifice, and honor among others) that are useful to the nation" (1, emphasis is my own). I would argue, however, that these alternative "texts," which can be rewritten and reinterpreted over time, are also used to reinforce regional behaviors and values that resist the national. Thus, the names and images of dead heroes, especially those portrayed as martyrs, are often "texts" that are used to challenge the nation. For example, the regional performance of Villa's death, wake, and burial in Parral during the *Jornadas Villistas* directly contradicts his placement in the *Monumento a la Revolución* in Mexico City, and actually places the Mexican central state (and the United States for that matter) as the enemy of the region.

exact location is up to debate and has inspired countless myths, rumors, and theories.⁵³ According to Friedrich Katz, the corpse of the so-called centaur of the North “seems to have found as little rest in death as it had found in life” (788). This is reflected both literally in the number of times that the remains have been exhumed or displaced (and even mutilated) and in the symbolic proliferation of this body (both officially and unofficially) through popular myth, public monuments, and performances. Furthermore, as Villa represents the physical incarnation of the *patria chica*, his bones (like his memory) have been transformed into powerful regional relics. Therefore, their treatment and location reflect the shifting placement of the *patria chica* and regionalism both within, and in defiance of, the national project. In fact, the general’s cadaver has become an object and subject of the ever-changing struggle between regional and national identities. For example, although the federal government officially transferred the general’s remains to the national *Monumento a la Revolución* with virtually no local objection in 1976, the people of Parral currently claim that his body, like his spirit, never actually left their soil.⁵⁴ This marks a significant change as local authorities have appropriated the body of Villa (and thus regionalism) for their own use, in direct

⁵³ Although not within the scope of this discussion, an interesting aspect of this focus on Villa’s body is how it has become the object and subject of religious cults. Katz explains that manifestations of this death cult are also prevalent outside of Chihuahua (793). While I have not witnessed anything of this type, an article in Parral’s local newspaper *El Sol de Parral*, “General Villa, visitó su tumba,” (July 21, 2006) explains how various visitors to Villa’s grave, including the man who plays his role in the *Cabalgata Villista*, make the trip in order to receive “las energías” of the general. In this way, even supernatural forces seem to recognize Parral as the general’s authentic resting place. The spontaneous development of religious cults would not be surprising, however, given the quasi-religious content of the *Jornadas* themselves. For example, the *Cabalgata* is reminiscent of a religious pilgrimage to the burial place of a martyred regional saint and the spectacle/celebration of the *Jornadas* resembles the popular commemoration usually associated with the feast day of a community’s patron saint. As the newspaper indicates, Villa (not unlike Jesus) is resurrected as he visits his own tomb.

⁵⁴ For more information on the ceremonious removal of Villa’s remains from Parral in 1976, and their subsequent transport to Mexico City see Oscar Ching Vega’s (1977) *La última cabalgata de Pancho Villa*. Conversely, José Socorro Salcido Gómez outlines and defends the theory that the general’s remains never left Parral in his book *Luz y sombras en la muerte del general Francisco Villa: Un crimen de Estado*.

opposition of federal authority.⁵⁵ Supposedly in 1976 the government of Luís Echeverría mistakenly disinterred and memorialized the remains of an anonymous woman that had been placed in the general's crypt years earlier for his own protection. This is significant as federal authorities (outsiders) were unable to recognize the body of a regional hero, or simply did not care.⁵⁶ Interestingly, this theory, which was first proposed by attorney José Socorro Salcido Gómez in 1995, lay dormant for almost twenty years and only came to light after the state of Chihuahua officially established an elaborate celebration of *Villismo*, that is, *Las Jornadas Villistas* in 1994. As *Las Jornadas* are organized around the anniversary of the general's death, and actually culminate in the public reenactment/performance of his assassination, and subsequent wake and burial in Parral, the sudden "rediscovery" of his true resting place seems a bit convenient.⁵⁷ In actuality, little has been done to establish the whereabouts of Villa's remains in Parral or to test the authenticity of those housed in the *Monumento a la Revolución* in Mexico City.

Presently, it seems that not knowing the truth, which allows for the proliferation of

⁵⁵ I am not implying that state and local government have directly or physically opposed federal authority, but rather that by claiming ownership of Villa and celebrating his burial in Parral during the *Jornadas Villistas*, the region is rejecting the center's claims on Villa and his revolutionary legacy. In this way, the region is directly questioning the foundational ideology of the state which built its authority upon the dead of the Revolution. Rather than taking up arms against the center (as in Tomóchic or Madera) this instance of regional resistance is a battle over the dead and the legacy of the Revolution (as in *Cartucho*).

⁵⁶ Either way this constitutes a criticism of the central government. Following this theory, the state either mistook an obviously female cadaver for the remains of Villa when it added them to the *Monumento a la Revolución* amid national pomp and circumstance or simply decided to ignore this inconsistency as long as the available bones served the needs of the nation. This later possibility is especially critical as it reveals the superficial nature of the center's systematic appropriation of revolutionary symbols; the very monument and mausoleum that it established to commemorate the Revolution and its heroes is at best incomplete or hollow.

⁵⁷ In addition to the timing, it has been insinuated by various news outlets that Salcido Gómez has used Villa and *Las Jornadas Villistas* for his own benefit, especially as he owns the aptly named *Hotel Turista* in Parral and the event has been largely developed in order to promote tourism to the area. Regardless of his motivations, as a lawyer and politician Salcido Gómez has a long history of promoting *Villismo* in the region. He was a founding member of the *Comité Pro-Monumento del C.Gral. de División Francisco Villa* (1959) which actually started the earliest commemorations of Villa's death. He also represented the state association of veterans of the Revolution in Chihuahua 1996 when he founded the *Frente Nacional Villista* which organizes *la Gran Cabalgata Villista*. He also helped negotiate the return of Villa's death mask from Redford College in Texas (1987) when he was a national senator.

Villa's corporal presence, serves the immediate interests/needs of all involved. However, this uncertainty only contributes further to the general's continued popularity and the significance of possessing his bones. For example, in 2006-2007 the municipal government of Chihuahua (the state capital) solicited the federal government for the return of the "official" remains located in the *Monumento a la Revolución*. This is striking as the general was purposely never buried in the mausoleum he had constructed in the city of Chihuahua, and as it directly negates Parral's claims of ownership. In actuality, the precise location of Villa's cadaver is of little consequence, as it is the conflict associated with this particular dead body that is especially revealing. Why does Villa's corpse still inspire such controversy? And, more importantly, why do regional communities such as Parral and Chihuahua suddenly want to take possession of his remains? What function(s) could they possibly serve after all these years? Clearly, the battle over Villa's corpse is a complex one involving both regional and national actors.⁵⁸ Therefore, by more closely examining the politics surrounding the placement of the general's body, I will uncover a great deal about the changing status and position of the *patria chica* both within and in opposition to a nation involved in its own particular process of transformation.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Although the United States has not been directly involved in this battle over Villa's body, it would be a mistake to assume that international/outside forces have not impacted its development, especially as Americans are cast as enemies of *Villismo*. For example, one of the popular myths surrounding the location of Villa's missing decapitated head involve mysterious Americans who wanted to buy, and scientifically study it. Another rumor suggests that Skull and Bones, a secret society at Yale University, has the skull. Oddly, Redford College in Texas did own the general's original plaster death mask, and actually refused to turn it over to Mexican authorities until the 1980s. In either case, it seems that regional popular culture regards Villa's body as a powerful threat that even the United States would like to control/possess.

⁵⁹ Beginning in the 1980s Mexico began an intense, but at times tediously slow, process of neoliberal economic and political restructuring. This meant increased democratization in the political system, economic privatization, and overall decentralization. In many ways this transition is still not complete. For a more detailed analysis of this shift, see Héctor Aguilar Camín and Lorenzo Meyer's *In the Shadow of the Mexican Revolution*, especially the last chapter "The Beginning of a Painful Transition."

One of the most visible manifestations of the complex resurgence of regionalism, and of *Villismo*, is the annual ten day state-sponsored celebration of *Las Jornadas Villistas* which is organized around the anniversary of Villa's assassination on July 20th. Since 1994, various divisions of both state and local government, including the *Instituto Chihuahuense de la Cultura* (ICHICULT), the state's *Secretaria de Educación y Cultura* and *Secretaria del Desarrollo Comercial y Turístico*, and the *Presidencia Municipal de Parral*, have coordinated festivities across Southern Chihuahua which are meant to promote tourism around the so-called "*Ruta de Villa*," while celebrating the region's revolutionary legacy.⁶⁰ Over the span of ten days, ICHICULT travels to various communities where it presents a diverse program of artistic and cultural activities, including performances of regional dance, music, theatre, and children's workshops, which are meant to reinforce regional identity (see figure 3.1).⁶¹ In some ways, this is reminiscent of the central state's cultural missions, only that here the point is to promote regional, not national interests. However, as with the federal missions, this represents a purposeful appropriation (or even fetishization) of popular regional culture by the state (albeit by local, not federal authorities) in order to achieve a particular set of goals.

Besides the economic benefit of increased tourism, why would the state government of Chihuahua wish to conserve and promote *Villismo* in its southern peripheral communities?

⁶⁰ While the majority of the events associated with *Las Jornadas* take place over the span of ten days in nine specific communities in Southern Chihuahua, related events/exhibitions are also held each year in Durango and Torreón. For example, during the 2006 *Jornadas Villistas* Durango hosted a series of academic panels on Villa and officially honored historian Friedrich Katz. Several academics who made presentations at the 2006 *Jornadas Villistas* in Parral also participated in the events in Durango. Performers from Durango also are invited to participate in *Las Jornadas*. Professor Esbardo Carreño Díaz, *cronista* of San Juan del Río, Durango and *investigador villista*, presents a monologue (as Villa) each year which sets the stage for the performance of Villa's infamous ambush.

⁶¹ Each day *Las Jornadas* travel to a different community where a virtually identical program of dance, music, and theatre is performed. On July 20th they end in Parral. In 2007 the groups traveled to the communities of Matamoros, Villa López, Satevó, Valle de Allende, Zaragoza, Coronado, San Francisco del Oro, Santa Bárbara, and Parral.

Perhaps local authorities are attempting to control, or even tap into the revolutionary potential of *Villismo* just as the region (thanks in part to globalization and increased decentralization in Mexico) is experiencing an uncertain period of economic and political transition.⁶² In this manner, *Las Jornadas Villistas* would represent much more than a simple reaffirmation of regional identity, as the *patria chica* once again becomes a space from which to resist an outside threat.

Additionally, the city of Parral also hosts a wide variety of events over the course of *Las Jornadas* which include everything from academic panels and presentations to motorcycle rallies, rock concerts, and the annual *feria*.⁶³ However, the primary focus of *Las Jornadas Villistas* are the three days of public performances in Parral (July 19-21) that allow for the temporary resurrection, and subsequent death and burial of Villa and *Villismo*.⁶⁴ In fact, thousands (both tourists and locals) flock to the exact place of Villa's assassination every year in order to witness the reenactment of his violent end (See figures 3.2 and 3.3). It is through these performances that the region is able to effectively reclaim the general's body and memory for its own use. Thus, performance allows the

⁶² It is important to remember that despite the success of national integration following the Mexican Revolution, the North has a long tradition of relative autonomy where elites and politicians manipulated regional difference for their own benefit. As local oligarch Luís Terrazas directly benefited from the Tomóchic rebellion, historians have suggested that perhaps he supported the rebels (as he did in other cases). While I am not implying that the state of Chihuahua would encourage armed rebellion, perhaps local government has appropriated the memory of militant regionalism in order to boost its own legitimacy in a center dominated system.

⁶³ In Parral the celebration of *Las Jornadas* is distinct as they are celebrated in conjunction with the anniversary of the founding of the city (July 13th). Thus, the "*Jornadas Villistas 2007*" historically linked the assassination of Villa to the 376th anniversary of the city of Parral. In this way, the general is purposely, and profoundly inscribed into the "official" history of the area as a foundational figure.

⁶⁴ Although *Las Jornadas* have not always followed the same structure, for the purposes of this discussion I will use materials and information from both 2006 and 2007 when I attended *Las Jornadas*. On July 19th the *Gran Cabalgata Villista*, which reenacts Villa's legendary rides across Northern Mexico, descends upon the streets of Parral with over 3,000 riders. Later that day, and twice on July 20th, members of the community reenact Villa's assassination in front of thousands of spectators, who attend his wake later that evening. On the third day a diverse parade leads Villa's coffin to his final resting place in the municipal cemetery. According to my research, the *Cabalgata* (which began in 1996) did not always arrive on the 19th of July.

region to non-violently resist the nation. The central government may possess his bones, but in Parral, Chihuahua, Pancho Villa escapes the confines of his grave (at least once a year) and speaks to his people. In this way, regional authorities are able to utilize performance and public spectacle in order to recuperate and reaffirm a regional identity of their own creation. By participating in the spectacle, either as a spectator or actor, the individual is transformed into a new brand of *villista*.

Yet, this new form of state-sponsored *Villismo* is wholly dependent upon the general's assassination and burial. By evoking Villa, and then neatly returning him to the earthly confines of his grave, the state attempts to reconcile the enduring fissures and inconsistencies of this divided *patria chica*. It is important to remember (as outlined in *Cartucho*) that this region was deeply divided by the final, brutal years of Revolution. Thus, by simultaneously resurrecting **and** murdering Villa, *Las Jornadas Villistas* attempt to respectfully remember the general just as he is placed safely in the past. This makes the reconciliation of regional difference possible and allows for the brief, controllable commemoration of revolutionary regionalism. Yet, as public performances are unpredictable, there are often moments that escape the control of the state. By closely examining *Las Jornadas Villistas*, I will explore this complex, state-sponsored resurgence of regionalism. Are *Las Jornadas* merely reflective of the state's attempt to control the revolutionary potential of Villa's memory, and perhaps prevent another Chiapas? Or is it merely a coincidence that this state-sanctioned event, which is not the first commemoration of Villa's death, was initiated in 1994? Is this merely the continuation of the struggle between regionalism and nationalism? Or has globalization taken the place of nationalization? After all, Villa is heralded as the only *caudillo* of the Revolution to

simultaneously confront the forces of both the United States and Mexico. In many ways, he defended the *patria chica* against the same outside aggressors that continue to threaten the cultural, economic, and political autonomy of the region. Through a detailed analysis, it will become clear that *Las Jornadas Villistas* are not simply another manifestation of regional resistance to national control (like *Cartucho*), but also represents the region's attempt to contend with the threat of globalization.

Pancho Villa and Body Politics: Chihuahua, Parral, or Mexico City?

From the moment of his assassination, the treatment of Villa's body was inherently linked to the state's efforts to minimize the potential threat of militant regionalism.⁶⁵ In fact, in 1923 the governor of the state of Chihuahua, General Ignacio C. Enríquez, did not allow Villa's corpse to be buried in the capital, despite the fact that the *caudillo* had previously constructed an elaborate mausoleum in the city's *Panteón de la Regla* (1914-1915).⁶⁶ Later, the government even blocked his widow's (Luz Corral) attempt to have his remains relocated to this crypt.⁶⁷ By failing to recognize the basic

⁶⁵ Although this discussion focuses on Villa's remains, the manner of his death is also inherently political and linked to the regional/national dynamic. In *Death and the Idea of Mexico*, Claudio Lomnitz explains that the political assassination was prevalent during the Mexican Revolution as it allowed the state to eliminate potential threats (and rivals), while avoiding the retaliation and/or political fallout typically associated with formal executions (385). Thus, Villa's murder (like most of these political assassinations) was a carefully choreographed affair, as Lomnitz outlines: "The assassination was staged in such a way that [President] Obregón could claim to have had no part in it, feign outrage, stage a mock investigation, and imprison the paid assassin (for eight months)" (389). The state's efforts to distance itself from such assassinations also permitted the later "official" appropriation of the dead.

⁶⁶ According to Friedrich Katz, Governor Enríquez justified his actions to president Obregón by explaining that the *Panteón de la Regla* had been closed for years and that Villa's plot was actually owned by someone else (768). Considering that upon Villa's assassination, president Obregón immediately dispatched federal forces to "occupy" the general's hacienda, Canutillo, it is not surprising that he supported, or at least accepted this effort to control Villa's body and contain *Villismo*. As a *caudillo*, Villa's land and his body were parallel symbols/sources of his authority. Therefore, the state needed to control or possess both.

⁶⁷ Villa left several official and unofficial "widows" at the time of his death. While they all battled over the deceased general's assets, it seems that Doña Luz Corral was the most active in promoting Villa's memory (Katz 788). She published a text entitled *Pancho Villa en la intimidad* and even converted her home in Ciudad Chihuahua, the *Quinta Luz*, into a museum dedicated to Villa where visitors could see many of his possessions and the car in which he was assassinated. Interestingly, the state later took possession (and thus control) of this museum and its contents. It is now the *Museo de la Revolución*. Luz Corral's efforts to

wishes of Villa, Governor Enríquez was in keeping with the federal government's official demonization of this regional hero.⁶⁸ After all, a murderous bandit did not deserve to be enshrined in such a manner. According to José Socorro Salcido Gómez, the governor also reacted out of fear: "Ignacio C. Enríquez (enemigo de Villa) tuvo temor de traer el cadaver de Villa en procesión de Parral a Chihuahua, por las represalias de los villistas y suscitar más aclaraciones y comentarios a la prensa" (173).⁶⁹ Clearly, the administration did not want the general's remains, or the manner of his death, to receive any unnecessary, and potentially dangerous attention from either the media or the region's population. In Mexico, funerary practice and the remembrance of the dead have a long tradition of being utilized as political tools by both the state and the opposition.⁷⁰

Transporting Villa's bullet-ridden corpse across the Chihuahuan countryside, and then through the streets of the state capital on route to burial in an elegant mausoleum, and perhaps even a mass in Ciudad Chihuahua's central cathedral, would have legitimized *Villismo* (and regionalism) at a time when the state was still attempting to consolidate national identity. The performance of such highly meaningful mortuary rituals would

relocate Villa's remains to Ciudad Chihuahua can thus be interpreted as reflective of her desire to preserve his memory. Yet, at the same time, it can also be seen as an extension of Corral's bitter struggle with a rival widow, Austreberta Rentería, whose family owned the general's cemetery plot in Parral.

⁶⁸ It would be a mistake, however, not to acknowledge that Enríquez was also motivated by a long-standing personal grudge against Villa. The conservative governor had fought against Villa for years under Carranza, organized the *defensas sociales* against the *villistas*, and even tried to ambush the general during peace negotiations. Friedrich Katz describes Enríquez's hatred of Villa as "almost pathological" (736).

⁶⁹ Interestingly, today the *Gran Cabalgata Villista* annually recreates this exact route, only in reverse (Chihuahua to Parral), in conjunction with *Las Jornadas Villistas*. Therefore, the *villistas* of the *cabalgata* make a meaningful pilgrimage from the center (of the state) to the periphery, symbolically reversing both Villa's initial exclusion from the state capital (now they come to him) and the 1976 transfer of Villa's remains from the periphery to the center (Parral to Mexico City).

⁷⁰ In *Death and the Idea of Mexico*, Claudio Lomnitz explains how Mexico inherited the Spanish tradition of politicizing death cults and utilizing funerary orations to promote nationalistic goals, especially during times of crisis. Ironic funerary orations were also utilized by the opposition in Mexico from colonial times. It is my argument that if, as Lomnitz argues, "funerals during the revolutionary age [French Revolution] were often transformed into occasions to dwell on public morality and national interests," then in the context of the modern Mexican Revolution, funerary practice (and its performance) can also be utilized by the opposition to reflect upon not national, but rather, regional interests (346).

have also opened up a space for possible opposition/resistance to the national project in Chihuahua's state capital. Thus, Governor Enríquez's concern was well-founded, especially when one considers the region's sympathetic reaction to the official "handling" of Villa's trusted advisor, general Felipe Angeles who was executed in Ciudad Chihuahua after a public court martial in 1919.⁷¹ When Angeles was transported by rail to Ciudad Chihuahua (through Parral) supporters crowded the stations along the route, and a few days later over 5,000 Chihuahuans participated in his funeral procession in the state capital. Clearly, Enríquez (and the state) did not want a repeat performance of this outpouring of regional support for Villa himself, especially as such a demonstration could also inspire violent reprisals.⁷² Only four years earlier, *villista* troops had massacred federal troops garrisoned at Santa Rosalia in direct retaliation of Angeles's execution. In this respect, governor Enríquez simply reacted to an established precedent, as death and funerary practice could (and did) reinforce regional identification, and even give rise to violent rebellion.⁷³ Thus, by murdering and burying Villa in a relatively isolated community in Southern Chihuahua, the government wished to (literally and symbolically) marginalize both Villa and *Villismo* from the center, while minimizing the potential

⁷¹Regional support and sympathy for Angeles is also evident in *Cartucho* as an entire *estampa* deals with the general's trial. According to Katz, president Carranza actually hoped to discredit Angeles by staging his court martial in Ciudad Chihuahua where the middle classes did not support Villa (710). The effect, however, was quite the opposite. For a more detailed description of Angeles's capture, trial, and execution see Katz, pp. 709-715.

⁷² Even before his assassination, authorities already feared that Villa and his followers may take up arms in support of Adolfo de la Huerta in the upcoming presidential contest. Eventually, Villa's brother Hipólito did join the de la Huerta uprising. Thus, controlling Villa's remains was also linked to eliminating regional divisions that could question and even threaten central political control.

⁷³ The impending arrival of federal troops at Canutillo significantly prevented Villa's closest family members and loyal followers from participating in, or even attending his funeral services. Whether or not this was intentional, in this instance the state's war machine effectively limited the revolutionary potential of funerary practice by limiting the potential actors/participants.

impact of his death and burial.⁷⁴ Furthermore, the state was able to reaffirm its authority and sovereignty over the *patria chica* through the violent acts (the assassination and subsequent marginalization) enacted against Villa's body, as ultimately "the management of death, and indeed the ability to kill, are cornerstones of state sovereignty" (Lomnitz, *Death* 58). In this way, controlling the "management" of Villa's death, that is, the funeral, remembrance, and location of his remains was/is key to national sovereignty. Although in this case the state focused its energies on a particular individual, this is reminiscent of the Porfiriato's attempt to deal with the threat of regionalism following the Tomóchic rebellion. Just as the bodies of the *tomochitecos* were burned by federal troops, and then marginalized in national discourse as fanatical Indians, the government made quick work of Villa's bones (and memory) by banishing them to the periphery.⁷⁵ In each case, the state attempted to place the deceased regional figure in the position of the indigenous other, that is, in the nation's foundational past. Ultimately, however, the center's ability to "manage" the death of regionalism (like its sovereignty) has been incomplete.

First, Villa's body was not simply buried and forgotten. In fact, it continued to inspire conflict for years to come.⁷⁶ The remains themselves actually became the target of anti-*Villista* aggression, as on the morning of February 6, 1926 the caretaker of Parral's

⁷⁴ It is important to note that Parral is by no means a small, or unimportant, community. In fact, it is the commercial center of Southern Chihuahua and the largest settlement between the city of Chihuahua and Durango, Dgo. It is, however, fairly isolated and small in comparison with Ciudad Juárez or the state capital.

⁷⁵ There are in fact many parallels in the center's handling of Villa and the *tomochitecos*. The *tomochitecos* were portrayed as barbaric, fanatical Indians, while Villa was cast as a violent, uncivilized and murderous bandit. In both cases, the center utilized overwhelming force to annihilate the regional "other" and then attempted to "spin" the story in a positive manner that reinforced the national project. Finally, both Villa and the *tomochitecos* were eventually embraced/appropriated by the state (like the Aztecs) as foundational figures of Modern Mexico.

⁷⁶ This does not necessarily mean that Villa's body has been the precise cause of conflict, but rather that as the physical representation of regionalism, the *caudillo*'s remains have become a significant object in divisive political, cultural, and economic conflicts.

municipal cemetery found that the *caudillo's* grave had been desecrated by unknown perpetrators.⁷⁷ What is more, Villa's head had been decapitated and stolen. This type of post-mortem vandalism is not without precedent in the Mexican context, especially during times of political fragmentation and/or national crisis when the state's control of the dead and of historical memory is far from absolute.⁷⁸ According to Claudio Lomnitz, this was quite common during the nineteenth century (prior to the Porfiriato) when the remains of the martyred *caudillo* first took the place of the person of the king as the basis/image of state sovereignty (*Death* 369). In this manner, the role of the *caudillo* changed dramatically following independence from Spain, as suddenly national unity and popular sovereignty were built upon the remains of leaders who were once merely subjects of a monarch (351).⁷⁹ It is through this nationalization of the dead that death cults became politicized and dead *caudillos* (and hence their remains) acquired powers formerly reserved for saints. However, when the nation passed through moments of transition and/or crisis, it could also lose control over its dead. Thus, a cadaver could

⁷⁷ Interestingly, none of the works dealing with the decapitation of the general's remains have discussed the significance of the date on which it occurred. As the body was discovered early on the morning of the sixth, the actual desecration occurred the night of February 5, 1926. This is potentially meaningful as, in Mexico, February 5th is a national holiday, *el día de la Constitución*, which commemorates the signing of the Constitution of 1917. It was well known that Villa did not support many aspects of the Constitution of 1917, which was enacted during the presidency of his principle rival, Carranza. Therefore, Villa's corporal remains were physically attacked on a date that celebrates a centralized national project which he did not fully support. Ultimately, this date is inherently linked to national body politics following the Revolution. On February 5, 1942 the first body (that of Carranza) of a revolutionary "hero" was placed into the *Monumento a la Revolución* in Mexico City.

⁷⁸ This, however, does not mean that the state or its war machine does not also participate in (and manipulate) the desecration of grave sites or the symbolic violation/profanation of the dead, as evidenced in Tomóchic. For example, Spanish colonial authorities decapitated the leaders of the 1810 independence movement (including Father Hidalgo) and publicly displayed their heads in Guanajuato for ten years. Then following Independence (1923) Hernán Cortés's remains were secretly moved out of fear that the state or popular sectors of society would desecrate them. It is notable that such actions seem to coincide with moments of crisis and/or transition.

⁷⁹ The *caudillo*, however, did not simply take the place of the king, as for perhaps the first time open competition was introduced into the system. While the king already was "the center," *caudillos*, who usually represent a particular party or group, had to compete with one another to occupy the political center of the nation. It is this competition which drives the body politics surrounding Villa's remains.

become the object of political disputes, as “friends, allies, and detractors moved skeletons or picked them apart in order to control or destroy their [the caudillo’s] charisma” (Lomnitz, *Death* 368).⁸⁰ The 1926 attack on Villa’s remains is reminiscent of this nineteenth-century tradition, but with one key difference. At the time of his death, Villa was not officially accepted as a symbol of national sovereignty, and was regarded by many as a bandit and enemy of the state. Villa and his death cult were thus noticeably excluded from the “nation’s” dead, and his “charisma” represented a potentially subversive, or anti-national, force. Despite his national marginalization, within his specific *patria chica* the deceased centaur of the North was elevated to the status of a popular regional hero or saint; he **was** counted among the region’s dead. In this way, Villa’s body (and memory) reinforced regional identity and the survival of the *patria chica*, just as it was treated as a threat to the national project. Thus, the central state does not hold a monopoly over the dead, as the authority of the region or *patria chica* is also built upon the memory and re-remembering of its deceased heroes. Nowhere is it written that the periphery cannot appropriate the methods (or the symbols) of the center for its own use. In this instance, the body of the *caudillo* does not replace that of the king, but rather challenges the very authority of the center. Through this “regionalization” of the dead, Villa’s body (and burial place) was transformed into a regional relic. The desecration of the general’s grave and his decapitation thus represent a clear effort to combat regionalism, and reaffirm national sovereignty over both the dead and the *patria chica*. At this time, the general’s “charisma,” (which others wish to control or destroy) is defined within the context of the *patria chica*, not the nation. The profanation and

⁸⁰ It was not until the liberal’s victory in 1867, and the eventual consolidation of national power under Porfirio Díaz (1876-1911) that the state regained control over the dead and funerary practice.

fragmentation of this body attempts to place the bones (and the region) back under the defining/naming power of the central state.

Villa's decapitation, however, did not diminish the regional importance of his remains, and in fact only contributed to the significant proliferation of his body in Northern popular culture. First, the event itself received a great deal of attention from both national and international media outlets. Photos were taken of the unearthed bones and it seems that tourists even began traveling to Parral to visit the scene of the crime (Braddy 25).⁸¹ As the general's severed skull was never recovered, and the responsible parties never identified, over the years a plethora of theories and myths have also developed in relation to this macabre event.⁸² Such stories have been the subject of various print articles, and even survive in regional oral tradition. Thus, just as the state lost control of the *caudillo's* body, his missing head became particularly important and was turned (primarily through oral tradition) into a significant regional relic, representative of a haunting or misplaced regionalism (*Villismo*) waiting to be rediscovered by the area's population, that is, the body.⁸³ In "The Head of Pancho Villa," Haldeen Braddy explains that among the region's agricultural peons, it was commonly believed that Villa's ghost or "headless *bulto* continued to guard and protect

⁸¹ Photos of the decomposed, decapitated cadaver are reprinted in Vilanova Fuente's *Muerte de Villa* (206). It is not indicated who produced these images, and if perhaps they appeared in press coverage of the event. This would explain the sudden development of *villista* tourism at such an early date. Haldeen Braddy explains that sightseers began visiting Parral to see "the open grave and hear what happened" in 1926, and even references a 1957 travel brochure, *Paisajes*, that encourages travelers to vacation in the town of Villa's death, burial, and decapitation. Thus, it seems that the commercialization of Villa's death began quite early.

⁸² For more on the various stories and explanations surrounding Villa's decapitation see Vilanova Fuentes Braddy (1960), Vilanova Fuentes (1966), Singer (1989), and Salcido Gómez (1999).

⁸³ In Mexico, attributing meaning (usually national) to particular body parts is not without precedent. The most notable examples are General Antonio López de Santa Anna's amputated leg (and his prosthetic limb which was embarrassingly lost to the U.S.) and Alvaro Obregón's arm that was severed by a hand grenade during the Revolution. Jürgen Buchenau discusses both cases in "The Arm and Body of a Revolution: Remembering Mexico's Last Caudillo, Alvaro Obregón."

them” (33). In this way, only the general’s closest followers (members of a specific regional community) could still easily identify their headless *paisano* despite his lack of identifying features. It seems that the deceased general’s decapitation only contributed to the persistence of his spectral presence in regional society, as traditionally a headless corpse does not quietly retire to his grave, but rather wanders the countryside in search of his lost appendage.⁸⁴ The haunting nature of the general’s head has even made its way into national popular culture, as evidenced by the 1956 cinematographic release of a low-budget suspenseful thriller entitled *La Cabeza de Pancho Villa*. In this national context, however, the headless corpse inspires terror and fear, rather than a feeling of well-being and protection. As in life, it appears that Villa’s body was both revered (by the region) and feared (by the nation). Regardless, it appears that his head persists as a useful regional symbol despite, and in many ways due to, its uncertain location.⁸⁵ Even today tour guides in Parral explain that Villa’s head is buried nearby, somewhere along the path of the main state highway. It is almost as if, having never reached its final destination, it is on its way home. It appears that not unlike *Villismo* itself, the head has not disappeared but is still out there waiting to be found.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ It is notable that the head or face is what distinguishes one cadaver from another, that is, it is the most identifying feature of the body. By removing Villa’s head, the vandal symbolically attempts to erase regional identity, thereby converting the area’s population into an unidentifiable, generic body or polity.

⁸⁵ According to Jürgen Buchenau the particular body parts of a leader can take on special meaning, like the bones of saints, if they are lost in battle, and thus separated from the rest of the body (184). Thus, Villa’s decapitated head has become a regional relic precisely because its location is unknown; it was lost in the postmortem “battle” over the *caudillo*’s remains. If his grave had never been disturbed, the general’s head would never have achieved such singular significance. Buchenau further explains that such an appendage, “can become a sacred commodity for the leader’s supporters, and even the fetishistic embodiment of national sovereignty” (184). While the general’s head is such a “sacred commodity,” I would argue that it has become a “fetishistic embodiment” of regional, not national, sovereignty.

⁸⁶ In 1987 the region did recover a representation of Villa’s lost skull, that is, his death mask which had been in the possession of Redford College just across the border in Texas. Today the original plaster mold is in the collection of the *Museo de la Revolución* in Ciudad Chihuahua and the *Museo Pancho Villa* in Parral houses the first artist’s casting (from which copies are made). Bronze copies are on display in both institutions and other regional museums (see figure 3.1). Interestingly, the first copy was presented to then

Significantly, however, the central Mexican state is not the only enemy of the *patria chica* that is usually associated with Villa's decapitation.⁸⁷ Popular myth often identifies the United States (and American capital) as the source of this attack on regionalism. At the time of the incident, one of the main suspects was an American adventurer and soldier of fortune, Emil Holmdahl, who was questioned, but never arrested. Despite the lack of evidence, for a time it was generally accepted that an unnamed American scientific institute had paid Holmdahl (and a Mexican accomplice) to steal Villa's head. Mexican customs agents even mounted a campaign to prevent it from being smuggled out of the country (Braddy 30). In later years, it was further rumored that Mexican military officials who were enemies of Villa had also participated in the plot, and may have tried to sell the head to Americans.⁸⁸ It is notable that despite Villa's many local enemies, the primary focus of both historical investigations and popular myth has been on the role outsiders (Americans and federal military officers) may have played

Mexican president Miguel de la Madrid. This initial presentation is significant as ultimately the mask (and the ability to make/distribute copies) was placed in regional, not national hands. According to former senator José Socorro Salcido Gómez the primary goal was to recover the death mask for Villa's home territory: "Oponiéndonos al centralismo, logramos que el original en yeso se quedara...en la ciudad de Chihuahua" (180). The general's official remains may be housed in the *Monumento a la Revolución* in Mexico City, but Ciudad Chihuahua and Parral have gained control of his final image and impression, as represented by the death mask. However, the gift to Miguel de la Madrid, and the recording of the event in the official records of the *Cámara de Senadores* indicate that this was a national concession to regional interests. Perhaps this was influenced by the 1983 victories of opposition parties in Chihuahua's municipal elections in 1983 and the highly contested gubernatorial election of 1986. Was the center trying to control this so-called "emergencia electoral" in Chihuahua (Aboites 170)? After all, Chihuahua was the first state to elect a governor from the opposition in 1992. Clearly, Villa's image, like his body, has played an important role in the renegotiation of the national/regional dynamic.

⁸⁷ In his work, *Deep Mexico Silent Mexico*, Claudio Lomnitz explains that the politics surrounding the remains of Villa (like those of Santa Anna and Guadalupe Victoria) "reveal the degree to which the nation's inalienable possessions have been vulnerable to foreign appropriation, as well as to internal desecration" (94). I would argue that at the time of the 1926 violation of his grave, Villa's remains (unlike those of Santa Anna and Guadalupe Victoria) were not considered part of the "nation's inalienable possessions" but rather of the region's. Thus, the theft of the general's skull is symbolic of the region's vulnerability to outside exploitation, from both the U.S. and the central Mexican state.

⁸⁸ It is interesting that in many of the myths surrounding Villa's decapitation, the head never actually reaches the United States. Even in death, the general eludes capture. In such accounts, the skull becomes a spectral presence, a regionalism haunting the present.

in an international conspiracy to obtain Villa's head. For example, in *Muerte de Villa* Antonio Vilanova Fuentes accepts this theory as the most "fidedigna" despite the presence of many home-grown *Villista* opponents in the region:

No cabe duda que en la zona de Parral eran muchas las personas que deseaban su muerte, la mayor parte por vengar ofensas recibidas y no pocos por asegurar una paz siempre amenazada por la presencia del general. (99)

If the murdered general had such local enemies in 1923, it stands to reason that this would still be the case in 1926. The incident itself more closely resembles an act of spontaneous (or even drunken) political vandalism committed on a national holiday than a carefully planned and executed conspiracy. Yet, according to Haldeen Braddy, the idea that the United States participated in Villa's decapitation only grew in popularity over the years, and even persisted as a particularly attractive theory among Mexican writers: "The supposed complicity of the American Government in the beheading of Pancho Villa continues to be a favorite theme of powerful, influential Mexican authors" (32). It is not hard to imagine why the Mexican literary community would place the United States as the villain in this historical case, as it clearly contributes to the overwhelming drama of the event. Unable to defeat Villa in life, the powerful northern Goliath sought revenge on the cadaver of the fallen regional saint.⁸⁹ This also allows the decapitation to be framed in the context of the Revolution itself, that is, as an event fueled by a preexisting, unresolved animosity far removed from the post-revolutionary Mexican state. As Villa's principal domestic enemy, Venustiano Carranza, was assassinated in 1920 (during his

⁸⁹ The drama of this situation was not limited to literary works, and in fact dominates regional oral history as well. One only need consider amateur historian Antonio Vilanova Fuentes's "colorful" conclusions concerning the "true" plot behind Villa's decapitation: "Esta es la versión que puede aceptarse como fidedigna. El capricho y la pseudo ciencia de un millonario norteamericano, la colaboración de un aventurero conecedor del medio mexicano, la venalidad de un hombre-clave, la obediencia de un grupo de soldados, hicieron posible la profanación de la tumba del hombre que aún después de muerto, como el Cid, sigue estando presente" (139). Even in death Villa is an exemplar of regional resistance, as he remains present in memory despite the myriad of both domestic and international elements lined up against him.

presidency) it was quite convenient to cast blame on a foreign adversary. Yet, the simultaneous persistence of this idea in popular culture and oral history cannot be wholly attributed to its dramatic appeal. Why, despite the lack of evidence, did (does) a significant portion of the region's population blame Chihuahua's northern neighbor for beheading Villa? Why would Americans want to profane Villa's remains and take possession of his head?

While anti-American sentiment is nothing new in Mexico (especially along the border), it is unusual for the U.S. to be implicated in such a personal, intimate attack on a dead individual. As Lomnitz explains, the corporal remains of a deceased *caudillo* are traditionally manipulated by his "friends, allies, and detractors" who wish to appropriate and/or control the power of his memory or "charisma" (*Death* 368). Typically, American intervention in Mexican affairs is more closely related to larger economic and political issues. Villa, however, was much more than a singular leader as he was the physical incarnation of a specific militant regionalism based in a fixed *patria chica* geographically located along the U.S-Mexico border. An assault on this particular corpse would thus be interpreted as a violation of the region itself as the body of the *caudillo* represented the regional body politic. Therefore, the supposed American involvement in the desecration of Villa's body represents much more than a simple act of revenge or retribution for the general's invasion of Columbus, New Mexico, but rather, is indicative of the sustained struggle between regional interests and U.S. imperialism, which did not end with Villa's death.⁹⁰ In fact, this violation is symbolic of American exploitation of the region's

⁹⁰ It is not my intention to determine whether or not the U.S. (or Americans) participated in the actual decapitation of Villa's remains. In fact, the identity of the actual perpetrators is of little consequence to my discussion. It is, however, notable that the U.S. is so often identified as the enemy and principal suspect in

natural resources and its continued intervention in local affairs. The United States may not have wanted Villa's head, but it did wish to reestablish its economic hold on the area, something which Villa (even posthumously) would have opposed. The rumored participation of federal officers is also reflective of the central government's support of such outside interference.⁹¹

By implicating the U.S. in the violation of the dead *caudillo's* grave, the region is criticizing increased American investment and involvement in the local affairs. Although the 1917 constitution revoked the land and mining rights of many U.S. companies, in 1923 the government of Alvaro Obregón made drastic concessions in exchange for the official recognition and support of the United States.⁹² These changes came only a few months after the murder of Pancho Villa, who would not have supported such alterations.⁹³ In Chihuahua, this meant that most American-owned mining companies and cattle ranching operations throughout the state remained in the hands of their owners. In this way, the U.S. did economically violate and exploit the *patria chica* (and thus the body of its deceased *caudillo*) with the compliance of the central Mexican state. What is more, the vast majority of exports from the region (principally from the beef and mining

the defilement of a regional martyr. It thus reflects an important shift, as the center or the "nation" is no longer the *patria chica's* only adversary.

⁹¹ This does not mean that the post-revolutionary Mexican state did not make great strides in limiting or curtailing foreign investment, but rather that in certain situations the central government was willing to make concessions to the U.S., especially if it benefited the center.

⁹² As a part of the famous "Bucareli Conferences" Mexico agreed to pay (in cash) for all expropriations of large landholdings greater than 4,335 acres which affected U.S. citizens. Smaller expropriations would also be paid for, but with agrarian bonds. According to Aguilar Camín and Meyer, this meant that the expropriation of large American landholdings was not common (82). Additionally, the government renegotiated its limits on American mining and oil interests, and agreed to begin paying down its foreign debt.

⁹³ Many historians argue that U.S. recognition was contingent upon the elimination of Pancho Villa as a threat to national economic and political stability. His death actually occurred during the Bucareli Conferences which were held between May and August, 1923. In September of that same year the U.S. formally recognized the "revolutionary" government of Alvaro Obregón. Thus, Villa's murder (not unlike his decapitation) is often blamed on both the U.S. and the Mexican state which gave into foreign demands.

industries) were/are consumed by the U.S. market.⁹⁴ Thus, even locally owned ranches and mines were highly reliant on the American economy, often to their detriment. Thus, it seems that American imperialism, and the spread of dependent capitalism may explain (at least partially) the persistent theory of American involvement in Villa's decapitation. This is particularly evident in the opening verses of the *corrido* "La decapitación de Villa" which indicate that Emil Holmdahl beheaded General Villa out of greed, in keeping with the tenets of ruthless capitalism:

No respetan ya los gringos
ni hasta la paz sepulcral,
pues profanaron la tumba
de Pancho Villa en Parral.

Se le puso en el magín
a un marcachifle sajón
que ganaría muchos pesos
explotando un buen filón. (1-8)

Interestingly, the *corrido* initially sets the scene by directly identifying the party, not the individual, which is principally responsible for disrespecting the eternal rest of Pancho Villa. Through the use of the third person plural, the lyrical voice of the work thus opens the ballad by blaming the U.S. population as a whole, "los gringos," for a supremely immoral act, which simultaneously violates the corporal integrity of Villa, and the territorial sovereignty of the *patria chica*. In this instance, the "tumba," which is clearly placed in Parral, represents the regional territory that "los gringos" have invaded. In addition, by failing to honor Villa's "paz sepulcral," the U.S. does not recognize the basic

⁹⁴ Trade relations with the United States were established almost concurrently with Mexican Independence, as in 1821 a trade route was established (Saint Louis-Santa Fe-Chihuahua) between the two nations. Mexican gold, silver, and cattle were exchanged for American alcohol, fire arms, and other manufactured products. According to Luis Aboites this relationship would negatively affected the area in question for years to come: "Esta nueva frontera acarrearía, como es bien sabido, grades problemas y pérdidas a los mexicanos en general y a los chihuauenses en particular" (86). Thus, while the entire nation has been vulnerable to American imperialism, the border has been particularly affected, due in part to its geographical proximity to the U.S.

rights of the region and its population. This leaves little hope for future relations (or regional reconciliation) with the *patria chica*'s northern neighbor who does not even allow the dead to rest in peace. The use of the word "ya" in the first line further implies that this event is simply the most recent manifestation of a long-standing antagonistic relationship; by disrespecting a dead regional martyr buried deep in the heart of the area's territory (both literally and metaphorically) *los gringos* seem to have reached an all-time low. In this way, the opening lines of "La decapitación de Villa" invoke previous invasions of the *patria chica* by the U.S., most notably that of the 1916 Punitive Expedition, that inspired regional resistance to outside domination.⁹⁵ Thus, the *corrido* draws clear parallels between the 1916 Punitive Expedition and the 1926 decapitation of general Villa, perhaps in an effort to once again stir up regional sentiment and sympathy for the victim of an event it describes as "esta infame y vil acción" (56). In this context, the *corrido* presents the actual perpetrator of the crime, Emil Homdahl or "un marcachifle sajón" as an instrument of American imperialism who is willing to do just about anything in exchange for monetary reimbursement. For this particular *gringo* the body of Villa is no different than the deposits of silver and gold that similarly attracted U.S. mining companies to the region in the first place; his body is described as a "buen filón" that is waiting to be exploited.⁹⁶ Clearly, the deceased *caudillo* is the physical incarnation of the

⁹⁵ On March 16, 1916 the U.S. sent a punitive expedition of 5,000 men across the border into the state of Chihuahua in order to apprehend Villa. The expedition traveled some 350 miles into Mexican territory, even arriving in Parral where a woman named Elisa Griensen led a group of school children that cast stones at the occupying forces amid shouts of "¡Viva Villa!" and "¡Viva México!" Ultimately, the punitive expedition did not capture Villa and only contributed to a renewed resurgence of *Villismo* in response to foreign occupation (which the central government accepted).

⁹⁶ Here the *corrido* also compares the American exploitation of the region to that of Spain during the colonial period, as each viewed the area as "un buen filón." Spain similarly killed and decapitated Father Hidalgo (1810) and three of his men in Chihuahua before displaying them for a decade in Guanajuato. The third stanza of "La decapitación de Villa" actually anticipates that Villa will suffer a similar fate, only across the border: "En cada pueblo de primos / les haría una exhibición / donde vieran la cabeza / de

patria chica. In this way, the desecration of his crypt and the theft of his head are directly compared to the economic exploitation of the region's natural resources. Even the *corrido*'s description of the crime is reminiscent of the process of extracting the land's mineral wealth:

El cemento lo rompió
con un barretón de hierro
y quitando tierra suelta
sacó el cuerpo de su encierro.

Luego cortó la cabeza,
mísero despojo humano,
y dejando abierta la fosa
huyó aquel americano. (17-24)

Here the ballad actually explains in detail the violent process employed by Holmdahl to remove the general from his earthly resting place. Like a miner, he significantly uses an iron pickaxe to break through the cement covering the grave and to remove the loose dirt below. From this point on, the brutality of the scene only escalates as it reveals the depravity and cowardice of Holmdahl (the U.S), while portraying Villa (the *patria chica*) as an innocent victim. This is significant as it places Americans, and not the central Mexican state, as the barbaric enemy that wishes to “triunfar sobre un difunto” (50).⁹⁷ First, Holmdahl or “aquel americano” summarily removes the general's head, which is described as a “mísero despojo humano,” just as one would separate precious metal from its ore (22). In these lines, the use of language is especially important. While Villa is often described as a mythic villain or hero in popular *corridos*, in this instance his cadaver is intensely real, and human. This is a powerful inversion of the typical

Pancho Villa, a tostón” (9-12). Through this historical comparison, the U.S. is placed as the barbaric colonial power just as Villa is elevated to the status of hero and martyr.

⁹⁷ This is a notable shift, as in the two previous chapters the central Mexican state assumed this role. In both *Tomóchic* and *Cartucho* the state is portrayed as the party who ultimately violently dominates the dead and memory.

characterization of Villa as an outlaw and bandit; suddenly the violator becomes the violated. What is more, the term “despojo” has two potential connotations, as it can refer both to the physical remains of a deceased individual and to the plunder or booty of a robbery. Villa’s head simultaneously represents each of these possibilities as Holmdahl is portrayed as a thief who makes off with this valuable *despojo humano*, leaving an open grave behind him. The symbolism of this image would not have been lost on the regional listener, especially as foreign mining companies routinely strip the earth of its precious ore and leave the community with nothing more than a “fosa abierta.” Clearly, as “La decapitación de Villa” demonstrates, the myths and theories surrounding the general’s 1926 decapitation reflect the changing role of regionalism in the years following the Revolution. While the *patria chica* (and Villa’s body) continued to be threatened by increased centralization, the Mexican state was no longer the only challenger to regionalism. It seems that the U.S. government and American business interests represented a new, or more accurately, increasingly important enemy of the *patria chica*. Given Villa’s antagonistic past with the U.S., it is not surprising that *Villismo* would become a space of regional resistance to American imperialism. While most revolutionary leaders ultimately made political and/or economic concessions to the U.S., Villa is remembered for boldly assaulting American territory, and more importantly, “getting away with it” (Buchenau 182).⁹⁸

⁹⁸ It would be incorrect, however, to assume that Villa did not cooperate with American business interests or seek the recognition of the U.S. government. Although today he is remembered for his Anti-American sentiment and 1916 raid of Columbus, New Mexico, this shift only came after the U.S. sided with his rival, general Carranza. It seems that over the years, as Mexico (particularly the border regions) has become increasingly dependent upon the U.S., the Anti-American aspect of *Villismo* has become increasingly attractive. For a discussion of the possible reasons behind the Columbus attack, see chapter fourteen “Villa’s Two-Front War with Carranza and the United States” in Katz’s *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*.

Despite this significant shift, Villa's body continued to be a key object in the struggle between regionalism and nationalism, especially during times of economic and/or political crisis. As discussed previously, the general was largely absent from national discourse during the years of the so-called "Mexican Miracle," and was not even officially recognized by the federal government until 1966 when the economic and political inconsistencies of the national project became increasingly apparent. Consequently, Villa's body was also relatively "silent" throughout this time period, at least officially.⁹⁹ Following the 1926 desecration of his grave, the general's cadaver (minus the missing head) was returned to its original resting place and remained there, undisturbed for decades.¹⁰⁰ In fact, the first local commemoration of his death did not occur until July 20, 1959 when the newly organized comité pro-monumento al C. General de División Francisco Villa initiated this tradition. According to José Socorro Salcido Gómez, who sponsored the annual "ceremonias luctuosas," (precursors to the *Jornadas Villistas*) at this point in time it was still unacceptable to be a *villista* (202).¹⁰¹ Thus, these early performances/commemorations of funerary ritual, and the regional proliferation of the general's body through the creation of public monuments opened up a space for regional resistance and expression. Unlike most celebrations concerning

⁹⁹ Just as Villa's memory was kept alive in literature and regional popular culture, so to was his body. While officially his remains laid in rest in Parral, his figure (or his decapitated head) continued to speak through *corridos*, myths, oral tradition, and even in film.

¹⁰⁰ This is according to "official" Mexican history, as today it is generally accepted in Chihuahua that the general's bones were not returned to the exact same gravesite, and were in fact hidden and replaced with the bones of an anonymous woman. This is a theory that will be discussed in detail later on in this chapter.

¹⁰¹ Salcido Gómez organized and financially supported the *ceremonias luctuosas* from 1959 to 1976, when the date (July 20th) was finally placed on the civic calendar and the *Presidencia municipal* of Parral assumed the responsibility of commemorating the new holiday. Consequently, the organized, popular remembrance of Villa's death and the first revolutionary monuments dedicated to the figure of Villa (mostly equestrian statues) coincided with the breakdown of the "Mexican Miracle" in the early 1960s. Significantly, it appears that just as the general's body was resurrected in public monuments (in the North) the center decided to place this body back under the control of the state by officially recognizing the general (1966) and transferring his remains to the *Monumento a la Revolución* (1976).

revolutionary figures, these ceremonies were not organized and/or controlled by the federal government.¹⁰² The simple act of possessing (and remembering) Villa's body reaffirmed local authority in defiance of the national project.¹⁰³ Yet, in 1976 President Luís Echeverría suddenly decided that Villa's remains should be relocated to the national *Monumento a la Revolución* in Mexico City, where they would join those of other notable revolutionary figures.¹⁰⁴ In addition, the date of the *caudillo's* assassination was officially added to the local civic calendar. Hence, some fifty-three years after his assassination, this regional martyr finally joined the ranks of the "nationalized" dead, as the central state took possession of his bones, and attempted to appropriate the popular events associated with the anniversary of his death. On November 18, 1976, the remains of the centaur of the North were once again disinterred, and eventually reburied in the nation's capital. The pomp and circumstance of this new (or repeat) performance of funerary ritual seems to have rivaled the original, as Villa was finally given the official

¹⁰² Following the Revolution, the Mexican state utilized hero cults to both reinforce its interpretation of the Revolution and to gain political support. For example, in "The Arm and Body of a Revolution: Remembering Mexico's Last Caudillo, Alvaro Obregón," Jürgen Buchenau explains that both the death of Emiliano Zapata and Alvaro Obregón lead to "commemorative celebrations that served as a ritual of rule, a significant discursive framework in which members of the ruling party debated the nature of the revolution" (182). The *ceremonias luctuosas* in Parral similarly provided the *patria chica* with the opportunity to interpret the revolution. Such celebrations continue to be important to both the state and the opposition. For a detailed discussion of the various, competing celebrations of Zapata's death, see Samuel Brunk's "The Mortal Remains of Emiliano Zapata."

¹⁰³ It is also likely that regional actors utilized Villa and the commemoration of his death to negotiate with the center. For example, although José Socorro Salcido Gómez indicates that his principal goal has always been to promote the regional ideals of *Villismo*, he also served as legal council (gratis) to the *Federación Estatal de Veteranos de la Revolución* and was elected to public office, first as a *diputado* in 1968 and then as a senator in 1982. It is not hard to imagine how the "popular" commemoration of Villa at the regional level could have benefited the veterans association, and possibly Salcido Gómez's political career.

¹⁰⁴ Finished in 1938, this monument was built upon the iron frame of a Porfirian building which was under construction when the Revolution broke out. Originally, it was supposed to be the new home of the federal legislature under Porfirio Díaz. In 1942, a presidential decree officially recognized it as the pantheon of Mexico's revolutionary heroes. The first body placed within its four columns was that of Venustiano Carranza which was transferred to its new crypt on February 5, 1942, exactly sixteen years (to the day) after Villa's decapitation. Over the years the remains of a number of revolutionary figures (many of whom were enemies in life) would join those of Carranza: Francisco Madero (1960), Plutarco Elias Calles (1969), Lázaro Cárdenas (1970), and Francisco "Pancho" Villa (1976). The centaur of the North was noticeably the last to gain entry into this important national monument.

recognition and burial which he did not receive in 1923 (Katz 789). In fact, elaborate ceremonies were conducted in both Parral and Mexico City.¹⁰⁵ The region was thus finally able to “officially” recognize the general, but only in time to bid farewell to his body, as it was welcomed into the pantheon of national heroes in the capital. This is significant as the region lost control of Villa’s body, just as the state appropriated it for its own use. In many ways, the transfer of the general’s remains seemed to be the next logical step following the 1966 recognition of Villa’s importance to the revolutionary cause. As the general’s name had already joined those of others on the walls of the Chamber of Deputies, it makes sense that his body would soon follow suit. Yet, even this change was not automatic and occurred a decade after the *caudillo*’s official recognition. Perhaps the discursive presence of Villa in the capital (on the walls of the Chamber of Deputies) was less threatening than his corporal repositioning in the *Monumento a la Revolución*. Whatever the case, this change in policy leads to several interesting questions: Why, in 1976, did President Echeverría suddenly decide to interrupt the restful slumber of Villa’s remains, thus ending his long exile in Parral? Was this simply an extension of the 1966 recognition of Villa, or was it motivated by other events such as

¹⁰⁵ Unlike the 1923 funeral, this time the general’s family, including his widow Austreberta Rentería and his children and grandchildren, witnessed the ceremony in Parral. According to Friedrich Katz, the only important person who refused to participate in the festivities in Parral was Luz Corral, who felt that Villa should be interred in his mausoleum in Ciudad Chihuahua (789). Additionally, a number of government officials or their representatives attended the ceremony and garrisons from across the North also participated. During this solemn event, Villa’s body seems to have (symbolically and literally) reversed or inverted its original path, as the casket was disinterred and paraded through the streets of Parral in a highly choreographed display of both regional identity and national patriotism. For example, while the casket (and a lone rider-less black horse) was preceded by official military detachments, it was followed by a group dressed up as Villa’s personal guard, known as his *Dorados*. This spectacle, especially the almost theatrical representation of the general’s *Dorados*, anticipates the *Jornadas Villistas* where both participants and even spectators dress up in *Villista* regalia. After this 1976 regional farewell, the general’s body was re-interred alongside the remains of other Revolutionary figures in a more national ceremony lead by President Echeverría in Mexico City.

the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre? What possible function(s) did this move serve, and why was Villa buried alongside his principal enemies?

First, it is important to note that the national appropriation of Villa's remains and the transformation of his reputation are not without historical precedent in the Mexican case, and in many ways form part of a long-established tradition. Following Independence from Spain, the bones of Padre Miguel Hidalgo and the other *caudillos* of 1810 were moved to the Metropolitan Cathedral amid much pomp and circumstance.¹⁰⁶ In time (1925) they were placed in the impressive *Monumento de la Independencia* which occupies a key location along the *Paseo de la Reforma* in Mexico City.¹⁰⁷ Eventually, even controversial and previously marginalized figures from the independence movement, such as former president Guerrero and once Emperor Agustín Iturbide, were also reburied in meaningful political spectacles in Oaxaca and Mexico City respectively (Lomnitz, *Death* 366).¹⁰⁸ Thus, from the very beginning of Mexico's history as a sovereign nation, the bodies of the dead have been constantly repositioned and re-memorialized in order to meet the needs of the state. What is more, this nationalization of the dead has historically allowed for the reconciliation of differences within the national project and the

¹⁰⁶ Interestingly, Lomnitz explains that while their remains were placed in the cathedral, the names of these men were inscribed in gold on the walls of the *cortes* (*Death* 365). Thus, the commemoration of revolutionary leaders (by inscribing their names in the Chamber of Deputies and placing their bodies in the *Monumento a la Revolución*) simply repeats earlier methods for "nationalizing" the dead.

¹⁰⁷ This monument, and the angel which sits atop it, is a key national symbol and the location of significant political protests and popular manifestations. It actually towers over the traffic circle where Mexico City's two main avenues, *Reforma* and *Insurgentes*, intersect. Buried within this massive monument/mausoleum are the remains of a number of figures from the Independence: Padre Miguel Hidalgo, Padre José María Morelos, Vicente Guerrero, Guadalupe Victoria, Leona Vicario, Andrés Quintana Roo, Ignacio María Allende y Unzaga, Juan Aldama, José Mariano Jiménez, Mariano Matamoros y Orive, and Nicolás Bravo.

¹⁰⁸ Like Villa, both Guerrero and Iturbide were killed by, and later appropriated by, the state. In addition, all three men were executed by the state in relatively isolated locations. Interestingly, Iturbide's remains, which were eventually transferred to a place of honor in the national Cathedral, never made the trip to the *Monumento de la Independencia* in 1925. For a detailed discussion of Iturbide's complex post-mortem career see Christon I. Archer's "Death's Patriots—Celebration, Denunciation, and Memories of Mexico's Independence Heroes: Miguel Hidalgo, José María Morelos, and Agustín de Iturbide."

elimination of inconsistencies and/or divisions in “official” history. This is why Mexico has an extensive pantheon of national heroes that were once mortal enemies. In his text, *Death and the Idea of Mexico*, Claudio Lomnitz explains that following the expulsion of the French in 1867 the necessary conciliation between liberal and conservative factions was partially accomplished through elaborate state-sponsored mortuary rituals that memorialized individuals (heroes, martyrs, and victims) from both sides of the conflict (375). Thus, differences that once divided the nation and its history were resolved through how the state chose to remember its dead, as Lomnitz outlines:

The careful consecration of a stabilized version of national history was reflected. . . in a blossoming patriotic death cult, characterized by lavish state funerals; in honors paid to dead heroes of opposed political factions; and especially in the successful concentration of the illustrious dead in the Rotonda de los Hombres Ilustres at Mexico City’s newly established municipal cemetery at Dolores. (375)

Thus, men who fought on opposite sides of the battlefield were united (by the state) in death, as they were laid to rest in a single monument generically dedicated to the nation’s “illustrious” men.¹⁰⁹ In this manner, it was much easier for the government to first reconcile the dead “under the national banner,” before moving on to the living populace that had survived years of military conflict and foreign rule (376). Ultimately, political stability and increased centralization depended upon the success of this process. This explains why Porfirio Díaz honored the memory of a variety of historical figures, including former supporters of Emperor Maximilian and even his principal rival, Benito Juárez. Given this historical tradition, the 1976 transfer of Villa’s remains to the *Monumento a la Revolución* in Mexico City takes on new significance. In many ways, it

¹⁰⁹ The abstract name of this monument is particularly important as it is purposely politically neutral. If it had been established as the *Monumento de la Reforma*, or something similar, it would have reinforced national division, rather than promoting a unified national history and death cult.

is simply a continuation of the state's use of mortuary ritual to eliminate difference and internal divisions within both the nation and official history. Appropriating the legacy and even the physical remains of one's dead enemies was a common political strategy. In this instance, however, it was regional identity, rather than liberal or conservative political beliefs, that the state wished to control.

In practice, the *Monumento a la Revolución* (and Villa's inclusion in it), served the same practical and symbolic functions as previous public mortuary monuments such as the *Monumento de la Independencia* or the *Rotonda de los Hombres Ilustres*. By permanently gathering important revolutionary figures together in one place, the state attempted to consolidate its control over their individual legacies and death cults. What is more, the location of the memorial in the nation's capital reinforced the legitimacy and authority of the central government, which following the Revolution pushed for increased political and economic centralization. In many ways, this monument reflects the post-revolutionary state's efforts to define the Mexican Revolution as a unified historical project or reality, and not as a heterogeneous rebellion composed of conflicting factions. This explains why former enemies and rivals were concentrated within the columns of a singular edifice long after the resolution of the armed phase of the struggle. Even the architecture of this monolithic monument reproduces a unitary vision of the revolutionary project, as four massive columns which contain the remains of deceased revolutionary heroes (and former rivals) support a substantial, towering dome. The memorialized dead form the foundation of the overarching national project. Thus, both the monument and the bodies it contains were utilized as political tools, as outlined by Samuel Brunk:

A single monument devoted to the abstract notion of the revolution would, its creators apparently hoped, help break down persistent regional and ideological

differences and contribute to making the revolution understood as a coherent, national movement—a movement that was, of course, to be directed and controlled by the revolutionary elite that had emerged at the national level. (162)

As Brunk explains, the main objective of the monument was not to honor the individual dead, but rather to sacrifice their particular identities and uniqueness in the name of national unity. Once again, regionalism is placed as an obstacle to national development. In this instance, however, the center did not physically attack the periphery, but rather appropriated the bodies of its dead (and hence its history) in order to “break down” differences which could potentially threaten the center. Thus, controlling the remains of key regional figures was an important step in consolidating national power. By incorporating Villa into the *Monumento a la Revolución*, and burying him alongside his mortal enemies, the state attempts to neutralize the revolutionary potential of *villismo* and promote a unified, “official” version of the Revolution. Yet, the remains of Pancho Villa were not relocated to the *Monumento a la Revolución* until 1976, long after the central government had consolidated its power and defined the national project. In fact, Villa was the last revolutionary general to be included in the monument. It appears that prior to his inclusion, the “revolutionary elite” dealt with Villa by simply excluding him from its unified conception of the Revolution. Thus, his corporal exile in Parral was not arbitrary. Like the *indio* in the Porfiriato’s plan of *Libertad, Orden y Progreso*, there was no clear place for Villa and his brand of militant regionalism in the new, post-revolutionary national project. Prior to 1976, exclusion, not incorporation, seemed to be the state’s strategy for dealing with the deceased *caudillo*’s body. However, suddenly the

general's remains (and an important symbol of regional identity) were appropriated by the state in the name of national unity.¹¹⁰ Why?

While President Echeverría's decision is undoubtedly linked to the general's 1966 recognition by the national legislature (as discussed earlier), it is also part of the political and economic fallout of the 1968 student movement and the Tlatelolco massacre. In many ways, October 2, 1968 marked the beginning of a new crisis in Mexican history, as the country lost confidence in the authority of the state and the economic stability of the so-called "Mexican Miracle." In an effort to regain legitimacy, the Echeverría administration cloaked itself in populist rhetoric and opened up the system to increased self-criticism and dialogue. Yet, this presidential *sexenio* (1970-1976) was a particularly difficult time period (both economically and politically speaking), characterized by high inflation, external debt, agricultural downturns, industrial monopolies, labor strikes, and land invasions.¹¹¹ In fact, by 1976 the Mexican economy had reached a new low, and in September of that year the government devalued the national currency for the first time in twenty-two years. As a result of this crisis, the regime desperately attempted to create a new national consensus by updating the revolutionary project through a revision of "its ideological baggage" and a revitalization of "the institutions and the discourse of the Mexican Revolution" (Aguilar Camín & Meyer 202).¹¹² This explains why suddenly

¹¹⁰ This goal was not hidden, and was actually emphasized by authorities. In his description of the 1976 ceremony in Parral, Friedrich Katz quotes a federal deputy who (during the ceremony), after praising Villa's contribution to the Revolution, declared that the general's transfer to the *Monumento a la Revolución* would help "bring about 'the unity of all Mexicans'" (789).

¹¹¹ For a more detailed discussion of this transition, see chapter six "The Fading of the Miracle: 1968-1984" of Héctor Aguilar Camín and Lorenzo Meyer's *In the Shadow of the Mexican Revolution*.

¹¹² It is important to note that the Echeverría administration did not question the legitimacy of the Mexican Revolution or its legacy, but simply reexamined and updated the revolutionary project in order to regain the support of a population left disillusioned by the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre and the economic/political crisis that followed. Villa was particularly attractive because he was not a part of the original "revolutionary" project. In this way, he embodied the unfulfilled and unrealized promise and potential of the Revolution,

Villa's body was included, rather than excluded, from the national pantheon. The transfer of his remains to the *Monumento a la Revolución* was part of the state's renewed effort to rewrite official revolutionary discourse. As the administration ultimately hoped to regain the support of a divided populace, excluding regional martyrs was no longer advisable.¹¹³ In fact, during the 1970s the central government also tried to relocate the remains of Villa's southern ally, Emiliano Zapata, to the *Monumento a la Revolución*.

The case of Zapata is interesting because it resembles that of Villa, but with one key difference, as ultimately the state's protracted effort to acquire his bones was unsuccessful. In his article, "The Mortal Remains of Emiliano Zapata," Samuel Brunk tracks the complex and controversial history of Zapata's death and burial, which is very similar to that of Villa.¹¹⁴ According to Brunk, the central state's attempt to appropriate Zapata's body during the 1970s was also closely related to the 1968 student movement and the Tlatelolco massacre. During this time period, student protesters and even guerrilla groups operating throughout Mexico began using Zapata's name and image.¹¹⁵

rather than its failure. The state hoped to distance itself from the events of 1968 by tapping into the legacies of revolutionary martyrs such as Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata.

¹¹³ During the presidency of Díaz Ordaz, Luís Echeverría had actually been sent to Durango to deal with the 1966 student movement. Thus, in addition to his "handling" of the 1968 student movement in Mexico City, President Echeverría was well acquainted with the revolutionary potential of the growing regional unrest in Villa's *patria chica*.

¹¹⁴ Although not within the scope of this discussion, a detailed contrast and comparison of the two cases is an area open to further research. Like Villa, Zapata was assassinated by the state and quickly buried without much pomp and circumstance. He was similarly excluded from a mausoleum he had constructed during his lifetime, and has subsequently been exhumed and reburied various times. Unlike his controversial Northern counterpart, however, Zapata was not officially excluded by the state from revolutionary discourse and he was an important symbol of agrarian reform. As a result, efforts to erect official monuments in his honor and to organize state-sponsored festivities to commemorate the anniversary of his death actually began in the 1920s, decades before anything similar happened in Durango or Chihuahua. Over the years, various communities in his home state of Morelos have competed for Zapata's remains, and the economic and political benefits of possessing them. However, as Brunk demonstrates, Zapata's legacy (like Villa's) was never fully appropriated by the center and he remained very much alive in popular culture.

¹¹⁵ As evidenced by the 1994 emergence of the *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* in the southern state of Chiapas, Zapata continues to be a powerful figure. Although less pronounced, the figure of Pancho Villa has also been appropriated by opposition groups. For example, *corridos* from the 1966 student

Thus, the renewed push to move the *caudillo*'s body to the nation's center reflects the state's attempt to defend itself from a very real threat during a time of political and economic instability, as Brunk explains: "Under such circumstances, the national government apparently hoped to tighten its grasp on Zapata and send a message of revolutionary unity by getting his body into the Monument of the Revolution" (166-167). Thus, even decades after his death, Zapata's corpse, like that of Villa, continued to be a significant symbol that the state wished to wrest from the hands of the opposition. Yet, unlike the centaur of the North, this important icon of agrarian reform never made his way into the national revolutionary monument.

Although initially most regional actors, including the *Frente Zapatista* and the general's family, supported the transfer of Zapata's remains, the plan eventually sparked protest, especially amongst peasant organizations which were not incorporated into the state-affiliated National Peasant's League (Brunk 165). Interestingly, the most aggressive outcry against the national appropriation of the *caudillo*'s remains came in October of 1979, only after the state had already cemented its plans to complete the transfer on the *Día de la Revolución*, that is, November 20th of that same year.¹¹⁶ Ultimately, however, the state relented, as even the general's surviving son (Mateo) changed his mind and

movement in Durango evoke Villa's memory and in June of 1968 activists from the Communist Party organized a significant land invasion in Ciudad Chihuahua that established a new community/movement, "La colonia Francisco Villa."

¹¹⁶ Brunk outlines how in October of 1979, at the first national meeting of Independent Agrarian Organizations in Milpa Alta in the Federal District, peasant organizations condemned the plan to nationalize Zapata's body by placing him alongside Carranza in the national monument. Given the central location of this meeting, this stance gave way to a great deal of commentary. Even author Javier Blanco Sánchez criticized the plan in an editorial in the *Excelsior*, a prominent Mexico City newspaper. Despite his detailed discussion, one point that Brunk does not discuss is the particular political motivations of the opposition, especially the Independent Agrarian Organization which, as its name suggests, was not a part of the state-affiliated agrarian and peasant confederations. In all likelihood, the organization came out against the transfer, especially at such a late date, in order to attract attention and support for their cause. In this way, this opposition group also appropriated the body of Villa for its own use.

withdrew his approval of the project.¹¹⁷ Despite the apparent success of this last minute rally around the southern *caudillo*'s remains, Brunk argues that the campaign to nationalize his body was actually “thwarted by Zapata’s resurrection” by opposition groups who had already turned the anniversary of his death (April 10th) into a “day of predictable ritual protest” long before the 1979 debate (168). For example, on April 10, 1972 hundreds of *campesinos* from Tlaxcala and Puebla organized a protest march in Mexico City to commemorate Zapata’s death. While the state wished to exhume and rebury the notable southern general, its opponents brought him back from the dead and utilized him as an agent of change. Just as Christian resurrection involves the Savior emerging from the confines of his holy tomb, Zapata was not contained by the monuments dedicated to his memory, as “he was no longer the straight man for government policy that he had become during the [Mexican] Miracle” (168).¹¹⁸ Yet, how was this rebirth possible when the state continued to control the *caudillo*'s body, despite its continued presence in the state of Morelos? After all, resurrection in the Western tradition depends upon the restoration of the body, not just the spirit. Brunk explains how secondary groups have overcome this limitation by imitating and actually recreating these significant remains in statues and artistic works. By staging a protest or making political claims in close proximity to such memorials (even official monuments) a group can

¹¹⁷ Despite the Mexican state’s dominance over the dead, it appears that the approval of the individual’s family is still important, at least superficially. For example, the family of Alvaro Obregón insisted that his remains be buried in his home state of Sonora. Unable to possess his entire body, the central state made do with his severed right arm, which had been amputated and preserved during the Revolution. Despite the protest of some family members, it was put on display in the *Monumento Obregón* in Mexico City from 1943-1989, alongside a life-size statue of a one-armed Obregón. Similarly, the majority of Villa’s family was present at the 1976 ceremony in Parral. Even today, Villa’s grandchildren and great-grandchildren often validate *Las Jornadas Villistas* through their participation in the festivities. Others, however, have spoken out against the commercial exploitation of their important ancestor’s death.

¹¹⁸ One important point that Brunk does not consider is that in many ways Zapata continued to be a “straight man.” He was simply appropriated by opposition groups which had their own particular political, social, and economic agendas. Thus, in some ways his “resurrection” was not much different than his proposed nationalization.

evoke the memory, and even symbolically gain the approval of the deceased hero. Zapata's body was even simulated in regional commemorations of his death in the 1950s in the state of Guerrero, and more recently representations of a "crucified Zapata" have appeared during the political manifestations organized around April 10th (169).¹¹⁹ These imitations of the general's body were more than mere substitutions, however, as they were imbued with the same sacredness attributed to the actual bones of the deceased *caudillo* (170). In this aspect, reproductions of Zapata's figure were powerful and meaningful representations, just as a crucifix symbolizes the sacrifice of Christ. It appears that out of necessity, a copy of a relic is just as valid as the original. In fact, Brunk argues that such reproductions actually strengthened the *zapatista* death cult and "gave it new avenues of expression" (169). As the *Zapatista* case illustrates, groups that do not have access to the actual bones of a national hero can recreate them, thereby violating the state's monopoly over the dead, and thus its sovereignty. This aspect of Zapata's "resurrection" is particularly important to Villa's case, as it establishes a precedent for *Las Jornadas Villistas* which similarly re-appropriate and recreate the remains of an important revolutionary figure without actually possessing the body in question. In fact, Brunk's descriptions of staged funerary vigils in Guerrero are strikingly similar to one of the key performances of *Las Jornadas Villistas*, in which an actor portraying the deceased general silently lies in state at the original Hotel Hidalgo as hundreds of mourners, that is, tourists wait in line to pay their last respects and snap an occasional photo (see figure 3.1). In both cases, the date of the *caudillo's* murder (as opposed to his

¹¹⁹ This proliferation of the body of Zapata has even attracted national attention, as Brunk cites one instance (10 April 1997) where the *Excelsior*, an important Mexico City daily, labeled just such a figure as "'a 'Zapata' crucified by NAFTA'" (170). The 1994 emergence of the *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* has undoubtedly contributed to the resurgence of the *caudillo's* body in popular protests.

birth) has become the focus of regional commemorations. However, while the population of Zapata's *patria chica* was able to prevent the relocation of their leader's cadaver in the 1970s, the people of Chihuahua would not stage a similar "resurrection" until the 1990s.¹²⁰

Officially, the remains of Pancho Villa continue to reside within the significant pillars of the *Monumento a la Revolución* in Mexico City. Yet, within the confines of his *patria chica*, it is commonly accepted that the general's body never left the municipal cemetery (el *pateón Dolores*) of Parral, Chihuahua in 1976 as the state claims. For example, as a part of its coverage of the 2007 *Jornadas Villistas*, the *Heraldo de Chihuahua* printed an article by Jorge Macias Rodriguez in which a grandson of Villa, Carlos Froylán Villa de la Cruz, indicates that due to their ignorance of local history, the federal authorities mistakenly disinterred the wrong body. What is more, he identifies the "true" location of his ancestor's remains:

Señala [Villa de la Cruz] que los restos que se llevaron al monumento a la Revolución en la Ciudad de México no son los de Francisco Villa, hay que recordar que su cuerpo, después de asesinado y enterrado, fue profanado para cercenarle la cabeza, y de ahí se tomó la decisión de cambiar sus restos a la tumba del padre de Austreberta Rentería en 1929. (17B)

According to this theory, in 1976 the government did not take into consideration the 1926 desecration of the *caudillo's* grave, and the subsequent efforts to protect the cadaver from

¹²⁰ According to José Socorro Salcido Gómez he opposed the 1976 transfer and even tried to organize public demonstrations "como se estaban haciendo en Morelos con los restos de Zapata" (169). He claims that the "gente de lucha de Parral" did not respond to his call to arms, and eventually Villa's surviving son, Hipólito Villa, (under government pressure) requested that he step aside. After the fact, he laments giving into the pressure: "Todavía lamento, haber hecho caso de Hipólito y de la Secretaría de Gobernación, del Presidente de la República y del Gobernador del Estado de Chihuahua. Debí haberme lanzado a una cruzada nacional" (169). This description seems a bit suspect and self-serving as Salcido Gómez portrays himself as the lone voice of reason caught up in a dramatic event. It is interesting, however, that the local population did not put up much resistance to the move. It seems Villa was perhaps still a controversial figure. In addition, (unlike Zapata's *patria chica*) during this time period the one part of the region's economy which was expanding was the development of *maquiladoras* near the U.S.-Mexico border. Thus, resisting the center and invoking the Anti-American legacy commonly associated with Villa was not economically beneficial during this precarious time period.

further violations. Villa de la Cruz goes on to explain that the memorialized bones in the nation's capital are those of a woman, and that (unnamed) historians and scientists are presently looking for the missing corpse in order to verify its authenticity using DNA.¹²¹ Interestingly, the author of the article does not directly quote Villa de la Cruz, but does indicate that the notable grandson is the actual source of the information, as almost every paragraph begins with a verb in the third person singular, as Villa de la Cruz “indicó,” “señala,” “explicó,” and “informó” the writer of the truth regarding his grandfather's bones (17B). The repeated use of the third person in these signal phrases allows the voice of the journalist to fade into the background, as he places himself as a mere compiler, recording the thoughts of an important figure, and supposed authority. For the reading public of this predominantly regional newspaper, the fact that such information comes from a male descendant of the deceased general actually contributes to its credibility. After all, who would know more about the general and his final resting place, his own family or the central state which denigrated and/or ignored him for decades? Thus, while the author of the piece, Jorge Macías Rodríguez, fosters an illusion of objectivity, he actually promotes Villa de la Cruz's claims. In fact, the predominantly one-sided article does not question these controversial statements, but rather uncritically accepts them at face value, despite clear inconsistencies in the story.¹²² Yet, Macías

¹²¹ While various historians (predominantly amateur investigators in Parral such as José Socorro Salcido Gómez and Adolfo Carrasco Vargas) have speculated and produced theories identifying the true location of Villa's grave in the Parral cemetery (based largely on testimonial evidence), I have yet to find any evidence of academics that are actively searching for the supposedly missing bones. What is more, it seems that the national government has not found it necessary to test the remains housed in the *Monumento a la Revolución* which would be the first logical step in any such search.

¹²² For example, the article does not identify any of the supposed “historiadores y científicos” who are searching for Villa's cadaver, and vaguely explains that “muchos” agree that the remains in the national revolutionary monument were those of a woman. Who are these supposed historians and scientists, and who actually concurs with the alternative sexual identification of the nationalized remains? One would

Rodríguez stops just short of actually confirming the content of the article, and even attempts to disguise his tacit support. Thus, he does not definitively declare that the remains in the *Monumento a la Revolución* are not Villa's, but rather reports that the deceased *caudillo's* grandson thinks so. In this way, the journalist supports this popular theory without openly rejecting the state's version of history. What this article reveals, however, is the prevalence of this alternative theory within the *patria chica* itself.

In actuality, the claims of Villa's grandson reflect the regional pervasiveness of a popular theory first proposed (at least officially) by José Socorro Salcido Gómez in March of 1995. While the former senator and founder of the *Frente Nacional Villista* argues that his assertions are based on careful historical research, it is significant that a great deal of his evidence also comes from his personal experiences and relationships, as evidenced in his text *Luz y sombras en la muerte del general Francisco Villa*. In a chapter entitled "Génesis de mi ideal Villista" he even explains how as a small boy he grew up listening to the stories of former revolutionaries in his father's place of business:

Recargado en las piernas de aquellos hombres que sentados atacaban unos mientras otros defendían al celebrísimo guerrillero Francisco Villa, escuché a los peores detractores y apasionados defensores del Centauro del Norte. (198-199)

According to the adult writer, his admiration for Villa, his "ideal villista," grew organically out of these early *tertulias* in the 1920s. He thus places himself as a living link between the revolutionary past and the present; through his memories he validates current expressions of *villismo*, and even reclaims the body of the regional hero for his *patria chica*. This image of the author as a repository of local oral history is highly

expect a thorough and objective reporter to critically investigate the grandson's ideas, and to specifically name those involved. Macías Rodríguez does nothing to resolve these ambiguities.

reminiscent of the child narrator in the work of Nellie Campobello.¹²³ His father's store is also reflective of *Mamá's* home in *Cartucho*, as each represents an intimate space that welcomes "los hombres. . .de la región" regardless of their opinion of Villa (198). Both locations allow for the reconciliation of divisions within regional identity. As in *Cartucho*, regional oral history seems to serve as the raw material for the writer's work.

The amateur historian explains that following the 1926 decapitation it was feared that Villa's adversaries, or perhaps another economically ambitious vandal, would once again desecrate the general's final resting place. Curiously, it seems that in addition to the threat posed by his known enemies, it was commonly believed that outsiders would try to economically benefit from the sale of Villa's remaining body parts (171).¹²⁴

Salcido Gómez contends that the actual remains were not returned to their original site, but rather, were strategically reburied elsewhere in the same cemetery. Interestingly, however, he fails to identify the actual location of the corpse within the panteón Dolores, and actually offers a number of conflicting possibilities which are largely based on various verbal accounts. Just as in the case of the general's decapitated head, his body has been misplaced and is waiting to be found somewhere within the boundaries of the *patria chica*. First, he explains that a former Municipal President of Parral, Enrique A. Domínguez, personally told him that in 1926 the headless remains were simply

¹²³ Salcido Gómez is most likely familiar with the work of local author Nellie Campobello. Since the late 1970s when the state took over the *ceremonias luctuosas*, he began placing historical markers, or *placas*, throughout the city of Parral. In his text, he explains how on the anniversary of Villa's death (July 20th) in 1993 they placed just such a marker on the house where Campobello, the "primera panegirista villista," once lived (204). Significantly, the anniversary of Villa's death has evolved into a much larger commemoration of regional identity, in which other important regional figures such as Campobello are remembered.

¹²⁴ Clearly, the body of the general came to represent a regional relic, as it was commonly feared that his corpse would be dissected and the parts would be sold to the highest bidder like the body parts of medieval saints. While there is no evidence that Villa's corpse was profaned further, today critics (including Carlos Froylán Villa de la Cruz) similarly accuse the city of Parral (both civil and business leaders) of exploiting the figure of the deceased general for economic benefit.

repositioned in the area around the original crypt, and that additional bones were added in order to confuse potential grave robbers. The author even quotes Domínguez, who explains that due to the width of the burial plot it was somehow possible to adequately hide the *caudillo's* remains in its general vicinity:

Fíjese usted licenciado Salcido como la lápida es muy ancha, lo que quiere decir es que hay márgenes para que se haya puesto el cadáver del general Villa enseguida o a un lado o más profundo, para camuflajear sus restos y evitar volvieran a ser profanados. (167)

Considering that Salcido Gómez does not cite any particular past interview with the deceased municipal official, in all likelihood this quotation (like others throughout the text) does not faithfully represent the actual words of the supposed source, but rather, reflects the spirit and the content of his conversations and verbal exchanges with the author. From the informal, intimate tone of the exchange, one gets the impression that over the years this story was often repeated within the regional community. In fact, it appears that Salcido Gómez nostalgically recreates Domínguez's voice for his readers. The author even reconstructs his "original" encounter with this witness, as he positions himself as a participant in the transfer of vital regional history; he is the entrusted listener, "Fíjese usted licenciado Salcido," who is meant to pass this information on to the next generation (167). In this way, the writer places himself in a position similar to that of Nellie in *Cartucho*, that is, as a compiler of regional oral history. For this reason, he not only repeats the story of Enrique A. Domínguez, but uses a "direct" quotation in order to give a voice to his dead *paisano*. This recreated orality also (superficially) reinforces the author's position and authority within the *patria chica*.¹²⁵

¹²⁵Just as in the case of Campobello, it is important to keep in mind that Salcido Gómez occupies a relatively privileged position in regional (and even national) society, and therefore does not represent some type of subaltern regional voice, despite his clear intent to place himself in a regional position of authority.

Yet, Domínguez's account only reflects one of several alternate *historias* which Salcido Gómez offers in support of his significant claim. For example, he similarly explains that according to a pair of elderly brothers, Carlos Silva Torres and Octavio Silva Torres, who once worked at the municipal cemetery, Austreberta Rentería (one of Villa's widows) had her husband's remains moved in 1929.¹²⁶ In this version of the story, Rentería confidentially had the cadaver relocated to a specific plot owned by her family, "lote número 2, fosa 10, 9a sección," which continues to contain the significant body (169). Once again, the principal source of this information is an unsubstantiated verbal account. Similarly, Salcido Gómez claims that various, unnamed members of his local community actually support these stories, as former *villistas* told him that the remains transferred to the national revolutionary monument in 1976 were not genuine: "Al parecer no fueron los auténticos en virtud de que los sobrevivientes del villismo que han platicado conmigo me dijeron que no eran los restos mortales del general Villa" (170). Although he later identifies a specific notary public, Vicente Jaramillo García, who evidently saw the bones and identified them as female, Salcido Gómez's use of an ambiguous plural subject, "los sobrevivientes del villismo," implies that the local population, or at least all of the surviving members of this specific *patria chica*, is the ultimate source of his theory.¹²⁷ Villa's body never left Parral precisely because his

In fact, he explains how he was sent to Mexico City to attend an exclusive prep school where he became friends with the young men who eventually became the leaders of the country, such as future president Miguel de la Madrid (199). He also graduated with a degree in law from the national university (UNAM) before returning home (200).

¹²⁶ Although this version contradicts the story of Domínguez, once again Salcido Gómez explains that the motivation behind the relocation of Villa's remains was fear, as Rentería supposedly wanted to protect Villa's remains from further desecration. Rentería, however, was also involved in a long-standing struggle over Villa's legacy with Luz Corral (another widow) who wanted his body to be moved to his mausoleum in Ciudad Chihuahua.

¹²⁷ In this instance, Salcido Gómez's word choice is also significant. While "sobreviviente" is literally referring to those *villistas* who were still alive in 1976, this particular adjective also places the *villistas* and

people say so. The authority of local (oral) sources is thus privileged over that of official national history. Apparently only real *villistas*, as opposed to the federal officials who “nationalized” the general in 1976, were able to correctly identify the bones of their hero.¹²⁸ Clearly, Salcido Gómez’s conclusions are largely based on regional oral tradition and his personal experiences. As in *Cartucho*, regional story-telling and oral history offer alternate *historias* which openly challenge the authority of the central state. The continued persistence of such conflicting accounts in Northern popular culture calls into question the national “myth” of Mexican centralization. Although nationally Salcido Gomez’s supposition is treated as a curious novelty, regionally it is largely accepted as fact. At the 2007 *Jornadas Villistas*, tourists could even purchase T-shirts featuring a picture of Villa, bilingually underscored with a particularly revealing question: “Where are you? / ¿Dónde estás?”¹²⁹ Thus, even English-speaking visitors to the area are asked to doubt the authenticity of the contents of the *Monumento a la Revolución*, upon which the national project is based. This stands in direct contrast to the formal ceremonies

their narrative in a marginal position, similar to that of the *tomochitecos* in *Tomóchic*. They are the surviving *vencidos*, and as such, their version of history challenges that of the victors, that is, official history.

¹²⁸ While Salcido Gómez explains that the scant remains were clearly female, and that authorities did not find any trace of the general’s military uniform (even the brass buttons), he does not explore the possible motivations or causes of the state’s apparent blindness, as if the center was simply incompetent and/or incapable of recognizing/appreciating a true revolutionary hero. In this way, he ignores the possibility that the state knowingly appropriated inauthentic remains, and simply covered over the inconsistencies which Salcido Gómez examines in his discussion. Given the myths surrounding Villa (and his lost head) the last thing the government needed was a misplaced body. The goal was to gain control (nationalize) over Villa, not to further perpetuate his haunting presence in popular culture.

¹²⁹ I personally observed several Mexican-American spectators at the reenactment of Villa’s murder (July 20, 2007) who were sporting this particular T-shirt. While garments and souvenirs bearing the general’s image are readily available at shops throughout Parral, this particular shirt, and its bilingual message, is interesting as it is clearly marketed towards tourists (mostly of Mexican descent) from the United States. The English question, “Where are you?,” is even printed above the Spanish, “¿Dónde estás?,” in a much larger font. In this manner, even *norteños* (and their descendants) who have migrated to the U.S. participate in this regional questioning of the center’s authority. However, wearing this shirt or posing this question north of the border (after returning from vacation) has further significance, and even reinforces regional identity within this particular population. After all, the U.S. punitive expedition never found Villa who successfully eluded capture for over a year. Thus, even after his death the *caudillo* left his former enemies, on both sides of the border, asking the same question: Where are you?

surrounding the official exhumation of Villa's remains in 1976. If, after all these years, the center is unable to control its dead, how can it claim to represent the living? It appears that regional difference, and hence regional resistance did not wholly disappear during the prosperity of the "Mexican Miracle," but rather, has resurfaced (and manifests itself) in this struggle to reclaim/resurrect the figure of Pancho Villa.

Currently, however, it is the location of Villa's body (and not his reputation) which is up for debate. In contrast to the post-revolutionary period, both the nation and the region have largely accepted a generally positive characterization of Villa, only now they are fighting over ownership of this important historical figure. Thus, Salcido Gómez utilizes popular oral tradition to challenge the center's monopoly over both Villa's body, and his revolutionary legacy. In this alternate regional *historia*, local efforts to protect the general's corpse from further profanation in the 1920s ironically thwarted the center's plan to memorialize and honor him in 1976. This is significant as it places the central state as the enemy of the regional hero (and hence the *patria chica*) and compares the relocation of his remains to the *Monumento a la Revolución* to his 1923 decapitation. In this instance, the nationalization of the body represents yet another desecration or invasion of the *patria chica* by outsiders. Salcido Gómez explains that even in death the local *caudillo* was able to embarrass his adversaries and elude capture: "El general Villa, guerrillero y estratega mundial, aún después del muerto se les escabulle, pues no quiere irse de Parral" (170).¹³⁰ This is notable as a local, amateur historian attributes the inanimate remains of Villa with human desires and abilities. Apparently, even the bones

¹³⁰ Although not stated explicitly, here the Mexican state is equated with the United States; both constitute enemies or threats to the *patria chica*. The use of the verb "escabullirse" indicates that the bones of the dead general escaped the defining grasp of the central state, just as in life Villa successfully avoided the U.S. punitive expedition.

of the dead want to stay in Parral. Similarly, the promoters of the *Jornadas Villistas* have transformed Villa into the official spokesperson of this regional celebration (See figures 3.2 and 3.3). While one would expect the general's image to appear in the propaganda of an event bearing his name, this resurrected, modern Villa speaks from beyond the grave, as countless posters, printed programs, and even the official *Jornadas Villistas* website present a Warhol-inspired image of the general alongside an especially significant quote: "Parral me gusta hasta pa' morirme" (See figures 3.3-3.8)¹³¹ In this way, Villa himself seems to proclaim his approval for an event that clearly places him in Parral, as opposed to Mexico City. Regardless of the statement's supposed historical accuracy, local authorities are clearly placing words in the mouth of a dead individual in order to serve their particular interests.¹³² What is more, this psychedelic representation of the general stands in direct opposition to the more detailed black and white photographs of Villa that dominate official history.¹³³ In fact, this artistic reprint of a historical image seems to eliminate any particularly defining physical characteristics, as it reduces the important

¹³¹ This quote which is popularly attributed to Villa not only dominates the official propaganda of the event, but is constantly repeated in the local newspaper *El Sol de Parral* and during the various performances associated with the *Jornadas*. I have even heard an actor portraying the general make this claim. Generally, it is accepted as a historically accurate citation that Villa made only a few days before his murder. While I have not been able to verify its historical authenticity, the July 21, 2006 *El Sol de Parral* simply states that it is a fact, "según narran los entendidos de la historia." The earliest reference that I have found thus far appears in Antonio Vilanova Fuentes's (1966) regional text *Muerte de Villa*: "Villa nunca hizo secreto su deseo de irse a vivir a Parral e incluso el día en que salió, para no volver, de Canutillo, cuando el professor Coello le advirtió lo peligroso de ir a la ciudad en aquellos días, le respondió: '**Parral me gusta hasta para morir**'" (99, emphasis is my own). While *Muerte de Villa* could be the primary source of this attribution, it is more likely that it was first prevalent in regional oral history as Villa supposedly made this prodigious statement to "el professor Coello." Once again, oral tradition seems to challenge the authority of the central Mexican state that clearly places Villa in the capital, and not in Parral.

¹³² Johnson explains that this is quite common in Latin America, especially as the development of the modern mass media in the twentieth century allowed for the dissemination of movies, television programs, radio broadcasts, and theatrical presentations in which the "long dead" were finally able to speak. This form of body politics allowed the living to "appropriate the past to serve the needs of the present" (Why 3).

¹³³ This was literally the case during the 2007 *Jornadas Villistas* as a series of ten banner and billboard-sized reprints of historical photographs were publicly displayed throughout Parral as a part of an open air exposition entitled "El fotógrafo de Pancho Villa" (July 9-22). These images appeared alongside more modern posters and banners associated with the annual event (See figures 3.7 and 3.8).

caudillo to a mere symbol of the Revolution, defined by his famous moustache, wide-brimmed *sombrero*, and crisscrossed *cartucheras*.¹³⁴ Thus, while the state government supports the re-appropriation of Villa, it is a more modern, generic, and “safe” Pancho Villa than one finds within the pages of *Cartucho*. The notable figure of the beloved general is transformed into a mere outline, re-colored or redefined by local authorities. Yet, even this resurrected Villa challenges the center as he defiantly places himself in Parral. What is more, by declaring his attachment to the local community and boldly laughing at the possibility of his own death, this Villa reaffirms his authority over that of his enemies. He is no longer the defenseless victim of a brutal ambush, but a *caudillo* who lived and died as he saw fit, a true regional role model. While *Cartucho* strategically avoids dealing with Villa’s body, the *Jornadas Villistas* celebrate and elevate it to new heights.

Interestingly, the development of *Las Jornadas Villistas* has also sparked a great deal of controversy within the region itself. In fact, Parral is not the only community that wants to control the remains of Villa. In the previously cited 2007 article from *El Heraldo de Chihuahua*, “Convierten en borrachera evento luctuoso de Villa,” the general’s grandson, Carlos Froylán Villa de la Cruz, is extremely critical of *Las Jornadas Villistas* which, starting in 1994, joined Parral’s annual *feria* with the anniversary of Villa’s death:

¹³⁴ Although they are slightly different, both the 2006 and 2007 *Jornadas Villistas* utilized the same original image for the event’s printed propaganda. While in the original photograph Villa is standing amongst a group of similarly dressed revolutionaries, these modern reprints separate and isolate the figure of the general. While the original group shot is completely absent in the 2007 version, in 2006 it served as a faint backdrop, or wallpaper, for the modern interpretation. The original *villistas* are thus staring out upon this new Villa from behind (see figures 3.3-3.5).

Lo que vemos es que los que se han encargado de hacer una feria de la muerte de mi abuelo se burlan de su asesinato y lo repiten como si fuera una obra de teatro en que se cobra hasta por los permisos de venta de semillas. (17B)

According to Villa de la Cruz, his grandfather is being exploited and treated as both a literary character and an economic commodity by the organizers and businesses involved with the *Jornadas*. He explains that this significant anniversary should be treated as a solemn, dignified affair, considering that his ancestor was once the governor of Chihuahua. Yet, he goes beyond mere criticism and even outlines how Villa's remains will be moved to his empty mausoleum in the state capital, that is, once they are located and authenticated utilizing DNA testing. While Villa de la Cruz recognizes Parral, and not Mexico City, as the true location of his grandfather's remains, he rejects the community's claim and authority over this significant body. It is not surprising that this article appeared in the capital city's *El Heraldo de Chihuahua*, and was not reprinted in Parral's local daily, which is operated by the same news organization.¹³⁵ Yet, a few days after its publication, it appears that Parral, or at least the organizers of the *Las Jornadas Villistas* responded to Villa de la Cruz's allegations, as expressed in a headline of the 22 July 2007 edition of *El Sol de Parral*: "Jornadas Villistas 'no son un carnaval...'" (Martínez 1). During the performance/reenactment (July 21) of Villa's burial, noted anthropologist and director of the *Instituto Chihuahuense de la Cultura*, Jorge Carrera Robles delivered a speech which he defended the historical and cultural importance of the *Jornadas*:

¹³⁵ This, however, does not mean that this article was not available in Parral. I purchased both the Parral and Chihuahua papers from the same vendor in Parral on July 19, 2007 as I awaited the arrival of the *Gran Cabalgata Villista*. What is more, the *El Heraldo* was particularly attention-grabbing as the headline "Ya dejen en paz a mi abuelo: nieto de Villa" appeared on the front page, even above the name of the paper itself.

‘Las Jornadas Villistas’ no son un carnaval y no las debemos desvirtuar. El villismo obliga a respetar nuestra actitud ciudadana y patriótica, para poner en práctica los valores, el civismo y la responsabilidad de Gobierno, el villismo somos todos. (Martínez 1).

In this way, Carrera Robles calls on the region to respect the celebration of *Las Jornadas Villistas*, which he describes as a particularly patriotic and perhaps even sacred event.¹³⁶ Furthermore, his speech, which takes the place of a eulogy in the context of the burial performance, clearly defines this state-sponsored form of *villismo* as a unifying, not a divisive, force within the region.¹³⁷ The local newspaper coverage even includes two photos of Villa’s daughter, María Guadalupe Villa, solemnly bowing her head during the mock funeral and later shaking the hand of Parral’s mayor (8A). These images, and their sober formality, directly contradict Villa de la Cruz’s claims that the family does approve of this “feria de la muerte” which allegedly dishonors and exploits his grandfather. While it is impossible to determine if Villa de la Cruz’s criticism directly affected the content of Carrera Robles’s speech, the sequence of events and the particular wording (of both the speech and the newspaper headline) “‘Las Jornadas Villistas no son un carnaval’” do seem to indicate such a relationship. Regardless, it is evident that even within the border of the *patria chica*, the *Jornadas Villistas* and the location/control of Villa’s remains are controversial.

In fact, Villa de la Cruz’s opinion is merely reflective of a larger regional dispute over Villa’s body. On November 16, 2006, the municipal government of Chihuahua

¹³⁶ Although he does not use the word “sacred,” the use of the verb “desvirtuar” indicates that there is something inherently virtuous about the *Jornadas* that should be honored. What is more, he describes this state-sponsored *villismo* as an ideology and/or religion that requires the population to live as civil, virtuous citizens. He thus equates participating in *Las Jornadas* with partaking in a type of religious practice or ritual that allows one to put “los valores, el civismo y la responsabilidad de Gobierno” in practice.

¹³⁷ This performance also allows for historical revision. While in 1923 the state governor did not allow Villa to be buried in the capital, and federal troops prevented most of his family (and followers) from attending, now the mayor of Parral and authorities from Chihuahua eulogize and bury him.

decided to officially petition both the President of the Republic and the national legislature for the transfer of Villa's remains from the *Monumento a la Revolución* to his empty mausoleum in their city. In an official press release, the administrative head of the *cabildo de Chihuahua*, Orlando Barraza, explained that once approved, representatives from each of the state's sixty-seven municipalities would accompany the general's remains from Mexico City to their new resting place in the state capital (Ayuntamiento). This is notable as it openly challenges Parral's authority over both Villa's body and his memory.¹³⁸ If successful, Ciudad Chihuahua could easily become the new center of today's modern *villista* death cult, as Parral would merely represent one of the sixty-seven municipalities included in the general's official escort. Why would the *Gran Cabalgata Villista*, or for that matter tourists, continue to make the yearly Chihuahua-Parral pilgrimage if the general's body was located in the state capital? The reenactments of Villa's wake and burial would also lose significance as the presence of Villa's bones in Chihuahua would undermine the symbolic power of these performances.¹³⁹ How could Villa invade Parral with over three-thousand mounted *villistas*, and later be buried in the local cemetery if he is officially confined within the walls of a mausoleum only a few hours away? Ultimately, this petition represents a clear attack on *Las Jornadas Villistas*. By directly petitioning the federal government for the bones contained within the national

¹³⁸ Additionally, the city government of Ciudad Chihuahua is effectively confronting the authority of the governor and other state organizations that, along with Parral and eight additional Southern municipalities, sponsor/coordinate *Las Jornadas Villistas*. The event truly is a unique collaboration between state and local governments. In fact, virtually all the printed material associated with *Las Jornadas* (posters, banners, advertisements) is plastered with the official seals of over a dozen municipalities, state agencies, and related organizations (see figures 3.3 and 3.7).

¹³⁹ In this case, physical distance is especially important. As long as Villa's "official" remains are housed in the *Monumento a la Revolución* in Mexico City, they do not pose a real threat to Parral's re-appropriation of the general's body. The iconic national revolutionary monument does not challenge the dubious content of Villa's gravesite in Parral. If Villa's empty mausoleum in Chihuahua was suddenly occupied, competition between the two sites would swiftly ensue.

revolutionary monument, the *Ayuntamiento de Chihuahua* also negates the popular belief/theory that Villa's body never left Parral. Apparently the government of the state capital does not ascribe to the accepted motto or catch phrase of *Las Jornadas Villistas*: "Parral me gusta hasta pa'morirme." While Parral would clearly object to the possible transfer of the general's "official" remains to any place besides its own *panteón Dolores*, staunch opposition to Ciudad Chihuahua's petition has mostly come from a number of groups in the neighboring state of Durango. In 2007, the permanent commission of Durango's congress unanimously voted to "respectfully" ask the president to deny Chihuahua's proposal (Congreso 1). Representative Héctor Vela Valenzuela argued that the federal government should not honor a request motivated by "caprichos personales," simply because Villa maintained "una relación muy estrecha" with their neighboring state (Congreso 1). What is more, he explained that the *Monumento a la Revolución* was the appropriate resting place for a truly national hero:

La figura de Francisco Villa pertenece a la generación que construyó con lucha y sacrificio el México contemporáneo, por lo que **pertenece a todos los mexicanos sin centrarse en regionalismos** o patrimonialismo alguno con lo pretende hacer el ayuntamiento de Chihuahua. (Congreso 1, emphasis is my own)

In this way, the Congress of Durango officially interpreted Chihuahua's petition as a selfish request based on antiquated regional divisions. Villa belongs to all Mexicans, and thus should remain in Mexico City. However, the tone of the press release gives the impression that this is merely another battle in a long-standing war over Villa's legacy, as both states have long claimed the deceased *caudillo* as their own. If the general's official

remains were relocated to the capital of Chihuahua, Durango's revolutionary legacy as the birthplace of Villa and *Villismo* would be compromised.¹⁴⁰

Clearly, the location of Villa's body has become the subject of much debate in recent years, especially as different cities have claimed authority over these significant remains. Surprisingly, Mexico City, Parral, and Ciudad Chihuahua continue to fight over the bones of a man who has been dead for over eighty-five years.¹⁴¹ Why? Specifically, why do regional communities, such as Parral and Ciudad Chihuahua, suddenly want to take possession of his remains? What function(s) could they possibly serve after all these years? In his discussion, "The Mortal Remains of Emiliano Zapata," Samuel Brunk explains that one of the most basic motivations is local pride, as possessing the body of a fallen hero can help put a settlement and its revolutionary experiences on the map of national Mexican history (161). This in turn can also garner more widespread (national) respect and recognition for the men (in this case *Villistas*) who fought alongside the honored individual. Thus, the *patria chica* lost a potentially important source of regional pride and identity when the general's body was transferred to Mexico City in 1976. By "resurrecting" Villa (and his body) in the performances of *Las Jornadas Villistas*, the state of Chihuahua is attempting to recuperate this displaced symbol of regional pride.

¹⁴⁰ However, I have found no evidence to suggest that the state of Durango opposes *Las Jornadas Villistas*. In fact, the state is well represented in the *Gran Cabalgata Villista* and parallel events are held in various communities in Durango. For example, in 2006 the state honored preeminent Villa scholar Friedrich Katz during the time period of *Las Jornadas*. Such events appear to complement, rather than compete with one another. It appears that Parral (as opposed to Ciudad Chihuahua) is an acceptable center for *Las Jornadas* given its close proximity (both geographically and culturally) to Durango. After all, the border area of northern Durango and southern Chihuahua is considered to be the cradle of *Villismo*. Also, although Parral's claims are reinforced through the performance(s) of Villa's death and burial, they are ultimately cast as a popular theory, and even myth. They are not interested in the general's "official" remains.

¹⁴¹ While federal authorities have not actively participated in this dispute, their inaction is also significant. It appears that the central government has no intention of testing the authenticity of the remains housed in the *Monumento a la Revolución*. In addition, the significant bones are increasingly available to the public. While in the past the crypts located in the monument were only opened on particular holidays or during special ceremonies, today the Government of Mexico City keeps it open to the public year round.

Yet, as this re-appropriation ultimately contradicts official national history, in this instance local authorities are not seeking national recognition or support. As in the case of *Tomóchic* and *Cartucho*, regional difference and the *patria chica* represent a space of potential resistance. By defiantly reclaiming Villa's body in order to promote regional pride, the *patria chica* is once again (nonviolently) resisting outside threats by reconnecting to its revolutionary and bellicose traditions. Today, however, the principal source of regional conflict is not increased centralization. While the *tomochitecos* and Campobello's northern paisanos confronted invading federal troops and a loss of political autonomy to the central government, today the *patria chica* must deal with a different type of foreign invasion. In this respect, regional pride (derived from Villa's body) allows the *patria chica* to confront the political and economic repercussions of increased globalization. Unlike the Tomóchic rebellion and the Mexican Revolution, this is a struggle without a defined battleground in which memory is a principal weapon.

Additionally, there are also more tangible benefits associated with the ownership/control of the dead. According to Samuel Brunk, the sacred body of a fallen hero or martyr such as Villa can somehow transfer its "sacredness on to the place where it is buried or exhibited" (171). In the case of Emiliano Zapata, this "sacredness" has included both economic and political benefits for the community in question.¹⁴² As with a church that houses a notable religious relic, a town that controls the remains of a national hero can directly profit from this association, regardless of the authenticity of the

¹⁴² Brunk even explains how various towns in Morelos have competed for Zapata's remains in light of the economic benefits that come from possessing his remains. Apart from the obvious arrival of tourists and pilgrims, the state has to improve the infrastructure (such as roads) required to support visitors. Therefore, public works projects have been associated with possessing Zapata's remains. In addition, the body of the fallen revolutionary gives the local community political authority.

remains.¹⁴³ For example, throughout the 2006 and 2007 *Jornadas Villistas*, Parral's local newspaper *El Sol de Parral* printed numerous stories outlining how the influx of tourists and the numerous cultural activities associated with the event positively affected local businesses, and the community at large.¹⁴⁴ Considering that *Las Jornadas* are celebrated in nine municipalities across southern Chihuahua, this appropriation of the figure of Pancho Villa has been a boon to the entire region. In addition, controlling the body of a notable figure can also serve as a useful political tool, especially as individual communities or groups compete for state resources. This is particularly important to Parral and the surrounding area which has been overshadowed by Ciudad Chihuahua and Ciudad Juárez for several decades.¹⁴⁵ Although Parral calls itself the "Capital del mundo," this title comes from colonial times when the town produced a large percentage of the world's silver. Today, another subterranean resource, that is, Villa's bones, puts the city on the map. Thus, it is not surprising that the state capital wishes to compete for this valuable resource. Clearly, there are many advantages associated with the possession of these notable remains that account for their continued importance. Yet, this does not explain the particular timing of this renewed interest in the figure of Pancho Villa. After

¹⁴³ Although it does not fall within the scope of this discussion, a particularly illustrative case is that of Ixcateopan, Guerrero (Mexico) which falsely claimed to possess the remains of the last surviving Aztec ruler, Cuauhtémoc. Although it was ultimately revealed as a hoax, the community and the people involved benefited greatly from their invented relationship with Cuauhtémoc. See Lyman L. Johnson's "Digging up Cuauhtémoc" and chapter eight of Lomnitz's *Death and the Idea of Mexico* (particularly pages 370-373) for detailed discussions/analysis of this case.

¹⁴⁴ In addition to the stories regarding hotel occupancy and increased sales, the local newspaper presents idealized accounts of how the *Jornadas* perpetuate the ideals of *Villismo* and the preservation of local culture through the education of the "next generation." One story picked up by both the

¹⁴⁵ *Las Jornadas Villistas* allows this area of Southern Chihuahua to command the attention of the rest of the state. Notably, the *Gran Cabalgata Villista* travels from the center of the state to the periphery as it begins in the state capital of Ciudad Chihuahua, and makes the long pilgrimage to Parral. Additional "branches" from other areas join the *Cabalgata* on route. Organizers hope to eventually extend the *Cabalgata* to Ciudad Juárez. In 2006, the state governor even led the *Cabalgata* into Parral (on horseback) and symbolically turned over the Mexican Flag to the local founder of the *Frente Nacional Villista*, Salcido Gómez. Although he kicked off the 2007 *cabalgata* in Ciudad Chihuahua, and was expected in Parral, the governor was noticeably absent when the 3,000 riders descended upon Parral in 2007.

all, *Las Jornadas Villistas* began in 1994, the very year that NAFTA took effect, and some eighteen years after the general's body had been officially removed from the *panteón Dolores*.

In many ways, this sudden resurgence of *Villismo* is reflective of a common trend in the Latin American context. In the introduction of *Body Politics: Death Dismemberment, and Memory in Latin American*, Lyman L. Johnson outlines how the bodies of the dead become particularly important during periods of transition and/or instability: "The nations of Latin America typically turn to dead heroes in times of crisis, the very endurance of the hero serving as a model for peoples tested by political and economic threats" (18). Thus, it is not uncommon for the state or a particular population to evoke or revisit/revise the memory of a specific political and/or military leader in order to deal with a more recent dilemma or threat. Martyrs and leaders who were able to endure defeat and humiliation are particularly useful in this type of problematic situation (Johnson 18). For example, in 1989 Argentine president Carlos Saúl Menem wanted to help "heal the wounds of his country, reconcile civilians and the military, and unify the nation" through the repatriation of the remains of Juan Manuel de Rosas (Shumway 106). Although this nineteenth-century leader had died in exile and was buried in Great Britain, his body was ceremoniously returned to his native Argentina a hundred and twelve years after his death. In fact, Rosas's return to Buenos Aires and his eventual placement in La Recoleta cemetery was a highly choreographed, political spectacle witnessed by over a million spectators.¹⁴⁶ As Jeffrey M. Shumway argues, this repositioning was directly

¹⁴⁶ It is questionable if Rosas would have inspired such a large funerary production at the time of his natural death, that is, if he had not lived in exile. Participants wore period costumes, and the funeral procession was followed by five thousand gauchos (on horseback) from Argentina and Uruguay. For a detailed account of Rosa's repatriation see Manuel de Anchorena, *La repatriación de Rosas*.

related to the country's economic and political turmoil following years of bloody rule under a military regime.¹⁴⁷ In this way, the return of Rosas's body and its national reevaluation were manipulated in order to help the country through an important moment of transition. A more recent example of this phenomenon is the 1997 return of Che Guevara's remains to Cuba. Once again, crisis and the resurrection/return of the dead seem to be related as Che's long-awaited arrival coincided with a particularly difficult period in Cuba's development in the decade following the fall of the Soviet Union, as Paul J. Dosal explains:

Coming during revolutionary Cuba's most difficult political and economic crisis, Fidel received Che's body as a badly needed reinforcement, an invincible combatant who had returned to Cuba to fight alongside his comrades. (336)

Apparently, even the bones of a long absent, dead rebel can help resolve the political and economic problems of a nation, if utilized appropriately. Thus, after lying in state at the José Martí Monument in the *Plaza de la Revolución* in Havana, Che's remains were the center of an official caravan to Santa Clara, some two hundred miles east of the capital (337). In death, the revolutionary's body effectively recreated the 1958 march across Cuba that culminated in his victorious campaign against Santa Clara.¹⁴⁸ In this manner, Castro utilized Che's cadaver as a particularly meaningful political tool. As each of these cases demonstrates, the bodies of the dead can be particularly important and even useful during moments of economic and political uncertainty.

¹⁴⁷ Although it is not fit within the scope of this discussion, a comparison of this particular case and that of Villa is open to further analysis, especially in relation to the performative nature of Rosas's repatriation. Like Villa, Rosas is a particularly polemic figure in his country's national history. For a detailed discussion of this case, see Shumway's "'Sometimes Knowing How to Forget is Also Having a Memory': The Repatriation of Juan Manuel de Rosas and the Healing of Argentina."

¹⁴⁸ One point that Dosal does not discuss is that by burying Che in Santa Clara, as opposed to Havana, Castro also ensures the perpetual repetition of Guevara's significant 1958 march across the country, as countless tourists and "mourners" will undoubtedly make the Havana-Santa Clara pilgrimage for years to come, especially as the community also has a museum dedicated to Che. This will undoubtedly continue to reinforce the revolutionary project.

This is clearly the case with Pancho Villa and the creation of *Las Jornadas Villistas*. In the decade leading up to the official recognition of *Las Jornadas*, Chihuahua experienced a great deal of political turmoil and transition. In fact, it was the first state in modern Mexico where political parties of the opposition made notable gains against the hegemony of the PRI. In 1983, the PAN (*Partido de Acción Nacional*) won a number of key municipal elections, including Chihuahua and Ciudad Juárez. Additionally, the *Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores* and the *Partido Socialista Unificado de México* scored important victories in Cuauhtémoc and Zaragoza respectively. As a result of these losses, and additional conflicts in the state's universities, the *priista* governor actually resigned his post on September 19, 1985, the same day as the disastrous Mexico City earthquake. Although largely overshadowed by the catastrophe in the nation's capital, Chihuahua was experiencing a notable shift which would eventually spread to the rest of the country. Unfortunately, this regional political transition suffered a significant setback in the 1986 gubernatorial election when the PRI's candidate, Fernando Baeza, won amid rumors of widespread electoral fraud.¹⁴⁹ This, in turn, inspired a wave of protests in the state's major urban centers, as described by historian Luis Aboites:

El resultado oficial. . .desató una intensa movilización en las principales ciudades en contra de lo que se consideraba un enorme fraude electoral. Marchas, mítines, bloqueos de calles, paros de empresas, huelgas de hambre de connotados personajes y cierres de puentes fronterizos llenaron los encabezados de los periódicos locales, nacionales y hasta del extranjero. (170)

In this manner, civil unrest unified the people of this *patria chica* against a common enemy, that is, electoral fraud. Even the Catholic Church became involved as the archbishop of Chihuahua officially called for the suspension of all religious services on

¹⁴⁹ In many ways this anticipated the 1988 presidential election where the PRI candidate Carlos Salinas de Gotari, won by the smallest margin ever (for an official candidate) in an election generally regarded as fraudulent. This also led to protests similar to those in the Chihuahua case.

Sunday, July 20, 1983, which consequently marked the sixty-third anniversary of Villa's assassination in Parral.¹⁵⁰ Although this may simply be a coincidence, it appears that the date of Villa's death (like that of Zapata) was proposed as an occasion for protest and regional resistance.¹⁵¹ While Baeza was able to serve a complete term in office, the official party was easily defeated in 1992 by the PAN's gubernatorial candidate, Francisco Barrio. Thus, on October 4, 1992 Chihuahua became the first state to have a governor from a political party of the opposition.¹⁵² In many ways, it appears that the regional population utilized the ballot box to express its discontent with the center, while reaffirming its autonomy. However, given the centralized nature of the modern Mexican political system, this transition greatly affected relations between the federal capital and Chihuahua. For the first time the central revolutionary government had to negotiate with a state governor whose political future did not wholly depend upon the continued support of the official party. Thus, *Las Jornadas Villistas* were established during a particularly tumultuous period of political transition. Given the anti-centralist nature of *Villismo*, perhaps the new government instituted this annual celebration in order to demonstrate its autonomy. After all, by resurrecting Villa through performance, *Las Jornadas* directly challenge the general's 1976 placement in the *Monumento a la Revolución* by priista president Luís Echeverría. In fact, the use of performance allows the state government to "forget" Villa's inclusion in the national revolutionary monument, as according to Joseph

¹⁵⁰ Although the Vatican intervened in this matter, it is reminiscent of the *guerras cristeras* (1926-1929) when the government enforced the suspension of religious services (in certain areas) in order to combat further revolutionary uprisings.

¹⁵¹ This tradition even continues in the context of *Las Jornadas Villistas*. For example, a number of protesters lined the route of Villa's funeral procession through the streets of Parral a few weeks after a highly debated presidential election in 2006 (see figure 3.9). As in 1986, the target of this demonstration was electoral fraud.

¹⁵² For a more detailed look at this political shift consult Alberto Aziz Nassif's *Chihuahua: Historia de una alternancia* and *Territorios de alternancia: El primer gobierno de oposición en Chihuahua*.

Roach, performance is as much about forgetting as about remembering. Thus, *Las Jornadas Villistas* do not recreate a violent, murderous Villa who terrorized the community of Parral, but a sacred martyr who was violently gunned down in a town he loved. The performances ignore, or more accurately, erase the “unpleasant” aspects of Villa’s legacy, and instead focus on his victories (*La Gran Cabalgata*) and his local veneration and death cult. The state’s use of funerary ritual is especially important in this process as it allows the regional community to remember one Villa by forgetting the others (the bandit, the thief, traitor, and vengeful murderer) in an act that effectively reconciles divisions within the *patria chica*.¹⁵³ Additionally, the *Jornadas* allow the new government to align itself with Villa’s revolutionary legacy. In many ways, local authorities employed the same tactics as the central state, as once again a government (albeit a regional one) appropriated the popularity and prestige of this regional hero in order to bolster its authority and legitimacy.

Yet, as in the case of Rosas in Argentina or Che Guevara in Cuba, *Las Jornadas Villistas* represent much more than a simple reaction to a change in government. In actuality, 1994 was a difficult year of political and economic crisis/transition in Mexico. On the very day that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) took effect (January 1, 1994), the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) took up arms against the government and violently drew both national and international attention to the state of affairs in the southern state of Chiapas. Clearly, the dream of the Mexican

¹⁵³ Here I am borrowing the language of Diana Taylor, who in a discussion of the funeral of Princess Diana explains how the performance of funerary ritual can effectively erase the past: “So the funeral was an act of national conflict and resolution, an act of **remembering one** Diana **by forgetting the others**, of celebrating a life and transcending (obscuring) it with claims to a higher purpose and a sanctity it never had. The transgressive, casual Diana was now thoroughly snuffed out, in part, by the very people who claimed to love her.” *Las Jornadas Villistas* similarly “snuffs out” those aspects of the general’s legacy that do not conform with its objectives.

Revolution had never been realized as NAFTA represented the formal culmination of neoliberal economic policies that unabashedly rejected the social and economic tenets of the Revolution. The emergence of the EZLN made it evident that this transition would not be an easy one. In fact, by the end of the year interest rates had increased dramatically, and in December the government once again devalued the national currency.¹⁵⁴ Given its proximity to the United States, northern Mexico was particularly sensitive to the changes enacted through NAFTA. In fact, increased globalization had already significantly altered both the region's economy and social structure as *maquiladoras* sprang up across the north beginning in the 1960s.¹⁵⁵ In this way, the region was threatened (economically, politically, and culturally) by both the central Mexican state and increased dependence on the international economy. In such a climate, it is easy to see why Villa once again became a "model" for the people of his *patria chica* who were being "tested by political and economic threats" (Johnson 18). After all, Villa was renowned for his endurance and survival abilities. He invaded Columbus, New Mexico and then outmaneuvered the numerically superior U.S. Punitive Expedition for over a year. He also eluded his many enemies within Mexico, and only surrendered after he was granted amnesty and awarded a sizeable hacienda in Durango. Villa, not unlike Zapata, stood up for regional ideals and defended his *patria chica* from outsiders. Thus, it is not surprising that figures such as

¹⁵⁴ The value of the Mexican *peso* in relation to the American dollar fell dramatically. It is important to note that the national government also devalued the *peso* in 1976 shortly before Villa's remains were relocated to Mexico City. Thus, there seems to be a direct connection between economic instability and the reevaluation of Villa.

¹⁵⁵ The growth of *maquiladoras* and modern industrial parks throughout Chihuahua was truly impressive, as globalization greatly altered the traditional chain of production in manufacturing. Suddenly, multinational corporations became key economic and political actors. In 1970 there were 22 factories employing 3,165 workers in the state of Chihuahua, and by 1987 there were 252 production plants with over 95,500 employees (Aboites 168). This greatly enhanced the urbanization of the population, and challenged traditional gender roles or family structures as many of these plants hire predominantly female laborers.

Villa and Zapata reemerged in 1994 just as the country (and regional communities) underwent an intensive period of economic and political transition.¹⁵⁶

Unlike the situation in Chiapas, however, the figure of Villa did not inspire an armed revolt in the North, as local authorities channeled the revolutionary potential of *Villismo* into a state-sponsored celebration of regional memory and identity. For ten days in July Villa walks the streets of communities throughout southern Chihuahua and rides his trusted mare “Siete Leguas” in a pilgrimage across the state (see figures 3.13-3.17). In addition, the population can dress-up in *villista* regalia, ride in the *Gran Cabalgata Villista*, and even pay last respects to the great centaur of the north by participating in a series of public spectacles centered around his death (see figures 3.15-3.26).¹⁵⁷ While at first the performance of death and the reenactment of funerary rituals may seem out of place in an event intended to promote regionalism, funerals traditionally represent a point of contact between the living and the dead. This is one of the few spaces where the past and the present briefly coexist, and can be reconciled. What is more, performance allows the past to be “transmitted live,” that is, recreated and experienced in the present (Taylor 24). Thus, these performances serve as what Diana Taylor describes as “vital acts of

¹⁵⁶ This does not mean that globalization did not affect Mexico or the region in question prior to 1994. In fact, quite the opposite is true. Previously, however, the central state followed a more paternalistic, corporatist model of development that attempted to protect peripheral areas. However, increased decentralization, privatization, and the eventual enactment of NAFTA left such regional areas more vulnerable to the influence of multinational corporations and the world market.

¹⁵⁷ During such events, even the spectators fill particular predetermined roles and are effectively transformed into actors, as Diana Taylor explains in her discussion of the Princess Diana’s death and funeral: “In this particular staging, ‘the people’ are not only consumers but also the constructed of this death. The spectacle of the specter makes the spectator. Instead of mourning, the undifferentiated multitudes consume the grief—the recipients, not the agents, of an emotion that is not their own. (157). Although the two events may seem unrelated, the spectators of Diana’s funeral and the attendees of the *Jornadas Villistas* are consumer-participants constructed and defined by their relationship to the dead individual (or its representative). Hence, even an American tourist can become one of “the people,” that is, a *villista*. In this way, authorities are able to exercise a certain level of control over the expression or “popular manifestations of *Villismo* through the use of carefully orchestrated public performances and spectacles.

transfer,” that is, performances that allow for the transmission of “social knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity” from one group or one time to another (2). In this case, the staging of the *Cabalgata*, Villa’s murder, and his subsequent burial permit the “transfer” of *Villismo*, and the regional identity it represents, from the past to the present. Effectively, *Las Jornadas Villistas* deny the general’s 1976 exhumation, and reconnect to an earlier (although created) time when Villa was a venerated and respected regional hero who was buried in Parral, not Mexico City. In addition, funerals serve an important ritual function as they represent “the formal handling of painful or dangerous transitions” and “help regulate the expenditure of emotion,” whether it be anger or grief (Taylor 140). If a funeral is meant to control and channel the emotions of the living, the state-sponsored performance or recreation of this ritual in the context of *Las Jornadas Villistas* can achieve a similar goal. Undoubtedly, 1994 represented this type of “painful or dangerous transition” for both the nation and the region. While in Chiapas the death of the national revolutionary project resulted in an uncontrolled, extreme “expenditure of emotion,” that is, armed revolt, this was avoided in the north. Perhaps this is due in part to the creation of *Las Jornadas Villistas* that provide an outlet for the “grief” associated with this significant loss. Just as a funeral evokes memories of the deceased love one in a safe and supportive environment, the *Jornadas* ask participants to briefly revive and celebrate *Villismo* in carefully choreographed annual displays. Thus, outrage or grief is transformed into nostalgia. While this may have served a specific purpose in 1994, the event continues to be a politically charged commemoration of regional identity. In this way, Villa’s body, much like that of Rosas or Che Guevara, is resurrected and reburied annually in order to serve the changing needs of local authorities. This, however, does not

mean that Villa is entirely controlled or defined by the state. After all, his body is still missing, and every year spontaneous performances break free of the state-sponsored *fiesta villista*.

While the majority of Mexico's revolutionary leaders have been successfully appropriated and controlled by the state, only a few notable exceptions such as Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa still inspire dissent and controversy. Thus, just as the corpses of historically important men such as Francisco Madero peacefully decay within national monuments, the bodies of relatively less notable individuals are able to escape (at least partially) the repressive, defining grasp of the central state. So why exactly do some bodies (like Villa's) continue to speak to the masses, while others slowly fade into obscurity? The answer has little to do with the significance of the deceased person's life, and is more closely related to his or her symbolic association with persistent historical, cultural, or political tensions and contradictions. In "Why Dead Bodies Talk: An Introduction," Lyman L. Johnson explains that historically polemic figures with active postmortem careers such as Che Guevara and Juan Manuel de Rosas all share this particular characteristic:

It is the attachment of these historical figures to **enduring and unresolved conflicts over identity, social justice, and cultural constructions** that give their bodies such potency as vehicles for political discourse. (11, emphasis is my own)

Therefore, the persistent struggle over Villa's remains, and subsequently his memory, reflects the "enduring and unresolved" conflicts that constitute Mexico's revolutionary legacy. Specifically, the general is intrinsically associated with the precarious position of the *patria chica* within the national project. Additionally, *Villismo* represents the social justice which the Revolution promised, but which the revolutionary government never

realized. Thus, the continued battle over Villa's remains is representative of the long-standing (and largely unresolved) struggle between regionalism and nationalism. As globalization complicates this relationship, and the region itself becomes part of a larger, trans-border community, these unresolved conflicts will persist and grow. In fact, Villa (and hence regionalism) continues to be an important figure for the region, precisely because he simultaneously challenged both the United States and the central Mexican state during his lifetime. Unwelcome in both countries, he retreated to his *patria chica*. Thus, just as the region represents a space of resistance to the national, it also holds the potential to challenge foreign, outside threats as well.

Conclusions

Clearly, the battle over Villa's body and memory is a complex phenomenon that reveals a great deal about the changing status of northern regionalism in modern Mexico. In fact, the treatment of his bones provides a useful measure of the development of the Mexican political system as a whole. Immediately following the Revolution, Villa and the revolutionary potential of *Villismo*, came to represent a threat to national consolidation. As a result, he was excluded from the national pantheon of heroes, and his body remained in the periphery for over fifty years. Even in Parral, the general's body was the target of vandalism. Ultimately, the location and treatment of his remains only changed as economic and political realities, namely the failure of the "Mexican Miracle" and the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre, forced the center to reevaluate the focus of its national project. Villa was "nationalized" in order to serve the immediate needs of a state on the verge of a national crisis. However, this placement was temporary, as in 1994 another emergency, centered around the emergence of NAFTA and the Zapatista uprising, would

lead the general's *patria chica* to re-appropriate his body through the creation of *Las Jornadas Villistas*. Although officially the general's cadaver never left the confines of the *Monumento a la Revolución*, the *Jornadas* resurrect Villa through the use of performances that directly challenge the authority of the central state. This marks a significant shift in the Mexican system as local authorities utilize regional identity in order to undermine the center, and survive a particularly difficult moment of political, economic, and cultural transition.

It is important to remember, however, that *Las Jornadas Villistas* are still a state-sponsored celebration of *Villismo*. Although ICHICULT and other state agencies try to recreate a "popular" regional identity, this is a carefully planned and orchestrated event that is meant to channel and control the potentially transformative, and revolutionary nature of regionalism. By evoking Villa, and then neatly returning him to the confines of an earthly grave, the state attempts to reconcile the enduring fissures and inconsistencies of this divided *patria chica*. Thus, by simultaneously resurrecting and murdering Villa, *Las Jornadas Villistas* attempt to confine *Villismo* to a ten day, superficial celebration that erases or "forgets" many of the more controversial or potentially "dangerous" aspects of regionalism. What is more, these performances serve the same function as written works such as *Tomóchic* and *Cartucho*, especially in today's world. In her work *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, Diana Taylor explains that embodied performances have long played an important role "in conserving memory and consolidating identities in literate, semiliterate, and digital societies" (27). Thus, performance serves as an alternative or a supplement to literature as a way of preserving, rewriting, and managing regional identity. Given the development of the

internet and mass media, performance has the potential to reach a large audience. In addition, it provides a regional alternative to the novel, a more “national” genre. Yet, unlike the printed word, public spectacles and performances are unpredictable and cannot be completely controlled by the “author.” Thus, there are often moments during the *Jornadas Villistas* that escape the control of the state. In this way, regionalism or *Villismo* cannot be completely discounted as a constructed identity. As in the case of literature, one only need “read” between the lines of such public spectacles.

Appendix of Figures



Figure 3.1. Members of a local dance troupe, Compañía de Danza Folklórica Awinali, dress in revolutionary costumes as they perform popular regional dances and corridos. In 2006 and 2007 this group traveled with *Las Jornadas Villistas*, performing in nine municipalities across Southern Chihuahua (Photo: Anne McGee)



Figure 3.2. Image of the 2006 performance of Villa's assassination. As in official photos of the original murder scene, general Villa is slumped over the steering wheel of his Ford Dodge and his comrade-in-arms, Colonel Trillo (man in black suit) has fallen out of the passenger side door (Photo: Anne McGee).



Figure 3.3. Image of the 2007 reenactment of Villa's assassination. Apart from the color of the general's Ford Dodge, this is virtually identical to the 2006 performance (Photo: Anne McGee).



Figure 3.4. Copy of Villa's death mask in the Museo Francisco Villa in Parral, Chihuahua.



Figure 3.5. Reenactment of Villa's wake at the 2005 *Jornadas Villistas*.

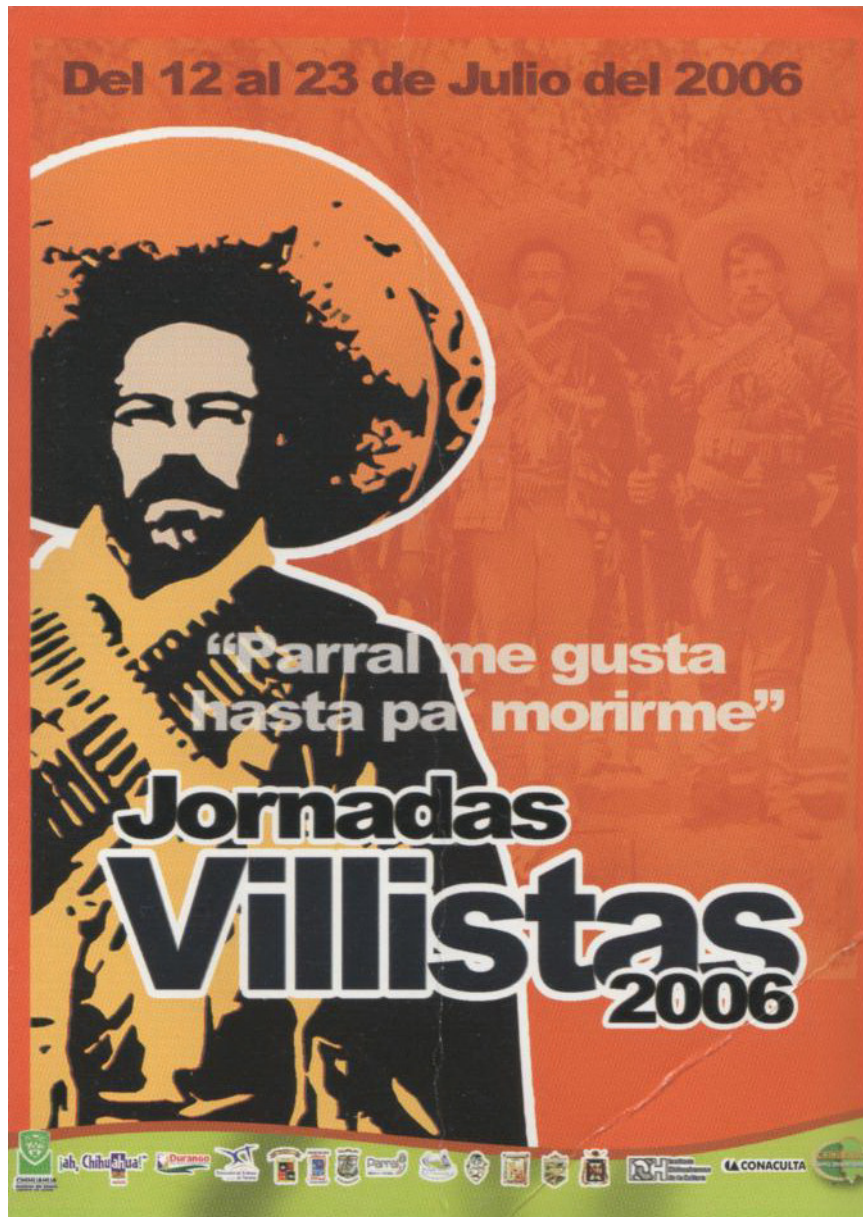


Figure 3.6. Postcard advertising the 2006 Jornadas Villistas.

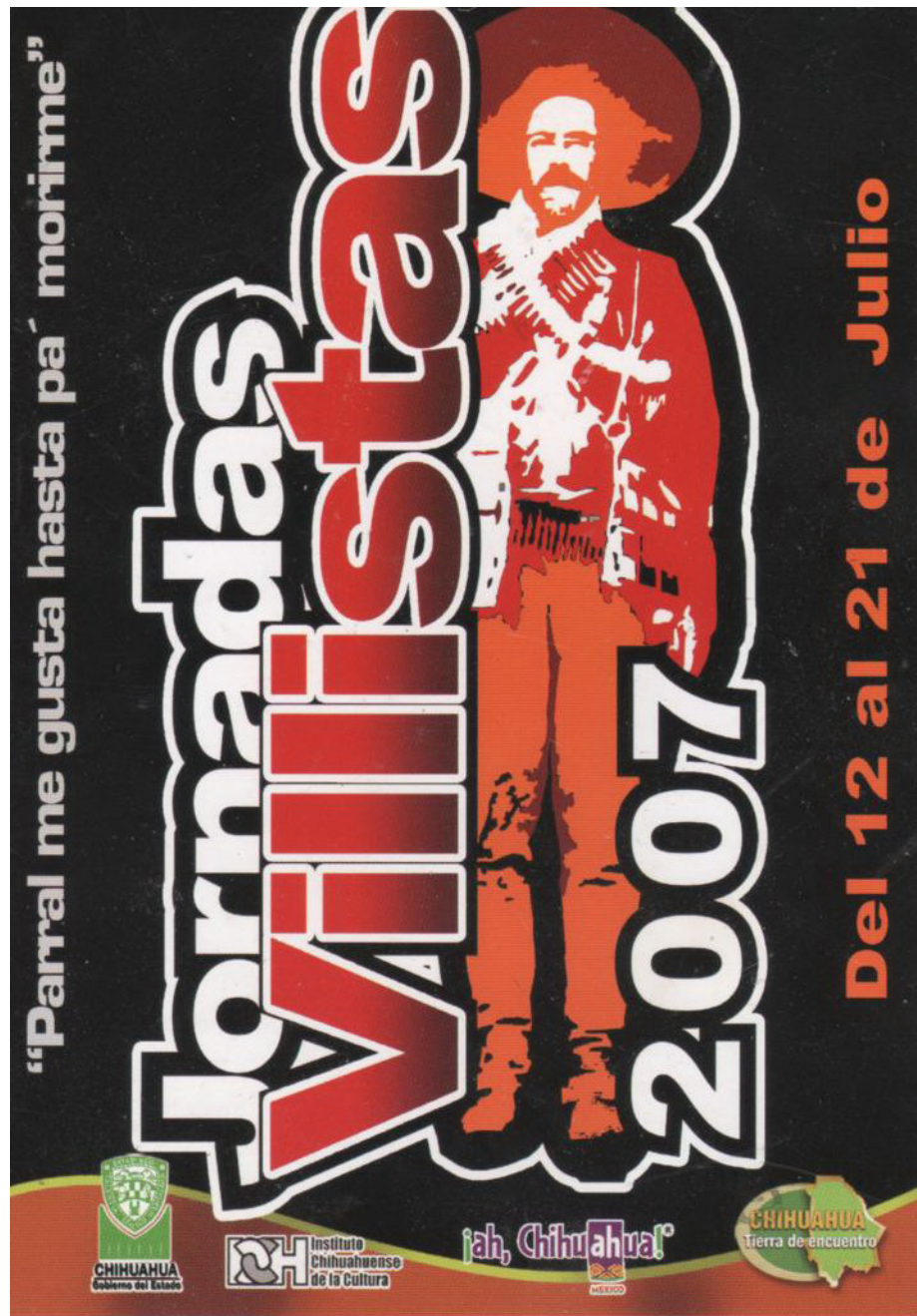


Figure 3.7. Postcard advertising the 2007 Jornadas Villistas.



Figure 3.8. Image from the official website of the 2006 Jornadas Villistas.



Figure 3.9. One of many posters displayed on telephone poles across the region during the 2007 Jornadas Villistas (Photo: Anne McGee).



Figure 3.10. Banner displayed on a governmental building in Parral, Chihuahua advertising the 2007 Jornadas Villistas (Photo: Anne McGee).



Figure 3.11. Banner from figure 3.6 (far left) displayed alongside large banner-size reprints of historical photographs during the 2007 Jornadas Villistas. The black and white images were part of a public exhibition entitled “El fotógrafo de Pancho Villa” (Photo: Anne McGee).



Figure 3.12. Protesters along the route of Villa's burial procession during the 2006 Jornadas Villistas hold signs reading "LIMPIEZA Y TRANSPARENCIA ELECTORAL" and "NO AL FRAUDE ELECTORAL." In the background, and partially obscured from view, are posters promoting Las Jornadas Villistas. Only a few weeks earlier the country had witnessed one of the closest, and most highly contested presidential elections in national history (Photo: Anne McGee).



Figure 3.13. Professor Esbarido Carreño Díaz, cronista of San Juan del Río, Durango, plays the part of Villa as he presents a monologue that dramatically summarizes the life of the fallen hero. Each year Professor Carreño delivers this monologue immediately before the reenactment of the general's assassination. A different actor assumes the role of Villa during the ambush (Photo: Anne McGee).



Figure 3.14. In 2006, Villa (Professor Esbarido Carreño Díaz) posed for pictures immediately following the reenactment of his murder (Photo: Anne McGee).



Figure 3.15. At the 2006 Jornadas Villistas tourists have their picture taken with the actors who participated in the simulacro. Here [left to right] Pancho Villa (Martín Sáenz Zapién) and Coronel Trillo (Héctor Aguirre Gómez) pose with two girls and other anonymous villistas killed during the ambush. (Photo: Anne McGee)



Figure 3.16. Pancho Villa (Narciso Martínez Alvarado) even sits among the spectators as he witnesses his own murder during the 2007 simulacro. While Martínez Alvarado represents Villa during the Gran Cabalgata Villista, he often makes spontaneous, “unofficial” appearances as Villa (Photo: Anne McGee).



Figure 3.17. Narciso Martínez Alvarado plays the part of Villa during the 2006 Gran Cabalgata Villista. He is accompanied by a number of government officials, including Chihuahua's governor and Parral's mayor. Martín Sáñez Zapién, who portrays Villa during the simulacro of his murder, is carrying the Mexican flag (Photo: Anne McGee).



Figure 3.18. Men dressed as villistas during the 2006 Jornadas Villistas (Photo: Anne McGee).



Figure 3.19. Even children who are dressed as villistas and soldaderas participate in Villa's 2006 funeral procession (Photo: Anne McGee).



Figure 3.20. Many women in the Gran Cabalgata Villista dress as Adelitas, that is, soldaderas. As their sashes indicate, these young ladies are the official Adelitas of their respective communities. The revolutionary Adelita has replaced the beauty queen.



Figure 3.21. Entire families participate in the Gran Cabalgata Villista (Photo: Anne McGee).



Figure 3.22. During the 2006 Gran Cabalgata Villista participants were organized according to place of origin. Each contingent carried a sign bearing the name and official coat of arms of their particular regional community.



Figure 3.23. People line the streets of Parral to pay their last respects as Villa's burial procession makes its way to the panteón Dolores (Photo: Anne McGee).



Figure 3.24. Representatives from motorcycle clubs from across the region await the arrival of Villa's funerary procession (2006). These modern villistas were a part of the general's escort (Photo: Anne McGee).



Figure 3.25. Many motorcycle clubs, such as the “Centaurus” of Ciudad Juárez identify themselves as modern villistas and appropriate revolutionary and national iconography on their “colors.” This photo was taken in the panteón Dolores during the 2006 reenactment of Villa’s burial (Photo: Anne McGee).



Figure 3.26. Villa's burial during the 2006 Jornadas Villistas. Video camera wielding spectators scale the fence in order get a better shot (Photo: Anne McGee).

Bibliography

- Aboites, Luis. *Breve historia de Chihuahua*. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1994.
- Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1998.
- Aguilar Camín, Héctor and Lorenzo Meyer. *In the Shadow of the Mexican Revolution: Contemporary Mexican History, 1910-1989*. Trans. Luis Alberto Fierro. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993.
- Aguilar Mora, Jorge. "El silencio de Nellie Campobello." Prologue. *Cartucho: Relatos de la lucha en el Norte de México*. Mexico City: Era, 2000. 9-42.
- Almada, Francisco R. *La Rebelión de Tomochi*. Chihuahua: Sociedad Chihuahuense de Estudios Históricos, 1938.
- Anchorena, Manuel de. *La repatriación de Rosas*. Buenos Aires: Distribuidora y Editora Theoria, 1990.
- Archer, Christon I. "Death's Patriots—Celebration, Denunciation, and Memories of Mexico's Independence Heroes: Miguel Hidalgo, José María Morelos, and Agustín de Iturbide." Johnson *Body Politics* 63-104.
- Avitia Hernández, Antonio. *La montaña de las ilusiones: Historia del Cerro del Mercado*. Mexico: A. Avitia Hernández, 2003.
- Ayuntamiento de Chihuahua. Press release. "Solicitarán al presidente de la república regresar los restos de Francisco Villa." 11 Nov. 2006. Ayuntamiento de Chihuahua. 20 June 2008.
- Aziz Nassif, Alberto. *Chihuahua: Historia de una alternancia*. Mexico City: La Jornada & Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, 1994.
- . *Territorios de alternancia: El primer gobierno de oposición en Chihuahua*. Mexico City: Triana, 1996.
- Azuela, Mariano. *Cien años de novela mexicana*. Mexico City: Ediciones Botas, 1947.

- Benjamin, Thomas. Introduction. *Other Mexicos: Essays on Regional Mexican History, 1876-1911*. Eds. Thomas Benjamin and William McNellie. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1984. 3-26.
- Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*. Trans. Harry Zohn. New York: Schocken, 1969.
- Braddy, Haldeen. "The Head of Pancho Villa." *Western Folklore* 19.1 (1960): 25-33.
- Brown, James W. *Heriberto Frías*. Boston: Twayne, 1978.
- . "Heriberto Frías, a Mexican Zola." *Hispania* 50 (1967): 467-471.
- Brunk, Samuel. "The Mortal Remains of Emiliano Zapata." *Johnson Body Politics* 141-178.
- Brushwood, John S. "Heriberto Frías on Social Behavior and Redemptive Woman." *Hispania* 45 (1962): 249-253.
- . *Mexico in its Novel: A Nation's Search for Identity*. Austin & London: University of Texas Press, 1966.
- . "La novela mexicana frente al Porfirismo." *Historia Mexicana* 7 (1978): 368-405.
- Buchenau, Jürgen. "The Arm and Body of a Revolution: Remembering Mexico's Last Caudillo, Alvaro Obregón." *Johnson Body Politics* 179-206.
- Campobello, Nellie. *Cartucho: Relatos de la lucha en el norte de México*. Mexico City: Ediciones Integrales, 1931.
- . *Cartucho: Relatos de la lucha en el norte de México*. 2nd ed. Mexico City: Era, 2000.
- . *Interview. Diecinueve protagonistas de la literatura mexicana del siglo XX*. Mexico City: Empresas, 1965.
- . *Mis libros*. Mexico City: Compañía general, 1960.
- Carballo, Emmanuel. *Bibliografía de la novela mexicana del siglo XX*. Mexico City: UNAM, 1988.
- . *Diecinueve protagonistas de la literatura mexicana del siglo XX*. Mexico City: Empresas, 1965.
- Ching Vega, Oscar W. *La última cabalgata de Pancho Villa*. Ciudad Chihuahua: Centro Librero La Prensa, 1976.

- Congreso de Durango. Press release. "Piden al presidente de la república mantener los restos de Francisco Villa en el Monumento a la Revolución." 20 June 2008 <http://www.congresodedurango.gob.mx/b300107.html>.
- Dabove, Juan Pablo. "Tomochic de Heriberto Frías: Violencia campesina, melancholia y genealogía fratricida de las naciones." *Revista de crítica latinoamericana* 30 (2004): 351-373.
- De Beer, Gabriella. "Nellie Campobello, escritora de la Revolución Mexicana." *Cuadernos Americanos* 223 (1979): 221-219.
- "La decapitación de Villa." María y Campos, Armando. *La Revolución Mexicana a través de los corridos populares*. Vol 1. Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Estudios Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana, 1962. 368-369.
- De Man, Paul. "Autobiography as De-facement." *MLN* 94 (1979): 919-930.
- Dosal, Paul J. "San Ernesto de la Higuera: The Resurrection of Che Guevara." *Johnson* 317-341.
- Esplin, Emron. "The Profane Saint vs. The Revolutionary Child: Portrayals of Pancho Villa in the Writings of Nellie Campobello and Jack Conway's *Viva Villa!*" *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* 24 (2005): 83-100.
- Faverón-Patriau, Gustavo. "La rebelión de la memoria: Testimonio y reescritura de la realidad en *Cartucho* de Nellie Campobello." *Mester* 32 (2003): 53-71.
- Ferrel, José. "La novela nacional." *Tomochic: novela histórica mexicana*. By Heriberto Frías. Paris: Vda de C. Bouret, 1911. 1-8.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Obras completas vol. II*. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1973. 2092-2100.
- Frías, Heriberto. *The Battle of Tomochic: Memoirs of a Second Lieutenant*. Trans. Barbara Jamison. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006.
- . *Tomóchic*. Mexico City: CONACULTA, 2002.
- . *Tomóchic: novela histórica mexicana*. Paris: Vda de C. Bouret, 1911.
- . *¡Tomochic!: Episodios de la campaña de Chihuahua, 1892: Relación escrita por un testigo presencial*. Rio Grande City: Jesús T. Recio, 1894.
- Grau-Llevería, Elena. "El problema del género en *Cartucho* de Nellie Campobello." *SECOLAS Annals* 33 (2001): 45-52.

- Herrera, Celia. *Francisco Villa ante la historia a propósito del monumento que pretenden levantarle*. Mexico City: SPI, 1939.
- Hurley, Teresa. *Mothers and Daughters in Post-Revolutionary Mexican Literature*. Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2003.
- Johnson, Lyman L., ed. *Body Politics: Death Dismemberment, and Memory in Latin America*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004.
- . "Digging Up Cuauhtémoc." Johnson 207-244.
- . "Why Dead Bodies Talk: An Introduction." Johnson 1-26.
- Katz, Friedrich. *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1998.
- Keller, Gary D. "El niño de la revolución mexicana: Nellie Campobello, Andrés Iduarte y César Garizurieta." *Cuadernos Americanos* 170 (1970): 142-151.
- Knight, Alan. *The Mexican Revolution*. 2 vols. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1986.
- . "Rethinking the Tomóchic Rebellion." *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 15 (1999): 373-393.
- Kristeva, Julia. *Black Sun*. New York: Columbia UP, 1989.
- Linhard, Tabea Alexa. *Fearless Women in the Mexican Revolution and the Spanish Civil War*. Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2005.
- Lomnitz, Claudio. *Death and the Idea of Mexico*. New York: Zone Books, 2005.
- . *Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico: An Anthropology of Mexican Nationalism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.
- Lund, Joshua. "They Were Not a Barbarous Tribe." *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 12 (2003): 171-189.
- Macias Rodriguez, Jorge. "Convierten en borrachera evento luctuoso de Villa." *El heraldo de Chihuahua* 19 July 2007: 1+.
- Magaña Esquivel, Antonio. *La novela de la revolución*. 2nd ed. Mexico City: Porrúa, 1974.
- Martínez, Marina. "Jornadas Villistas 'no son un carnaval...'" *El Sol de Parral* 22 July 2007: 1+.

- Matthews, Irene. "Daughtering in War: Two 'Case Studies' From Mexico and Guatemala." *Gendering War Talk*. Eds. Miriam Cooke and Angela Woollacott. Princeton UP, 1993. 148-173.
- Meyer, Doris. "The Dialogics of Testimony: Autobiography as Shared Experience in Nellie Campobello's *Cartucho*." *Latin American Women's Writing: Feminist Reading in Theory and Crisis*. Eds. Anny Brooksbank Jones and Catherine Davies. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996. 46-65.
- . "Nellie Campobello's *Las manos de mamá*: A Rereading." *Hispania* 68 (1985): 747-752.
- Moore, E.R. "Heriberto Frías and the Novel of the Mexican Revolution." *The Modern Language Forum* 27 (1942): 12-27.
- Montes de Oca Navas, Elvia. *Protagonistas de las novelas de la Revolución Mexicana*. Toluca: Instituto Mexiquense de Cultura, 1996.
- Osorio, Rubén. *Tomóchic en llamas*. Mexico City: CONACULTA, 1995.
- Parle, Dennis J. "Narrative Style and Technique in Nellie Campobello's *Cartucho*." *Kentucky Romance Quarterly* 32 (1985): 201-211.
- Parra, Max. *Writing Pancho Villa's Revolution: Rebels in the Literary Imagination of Mexico*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005.
- Peters, Kate. "The 'Arrested' Message of War in *Cartucho* by Nellie Campobello." *Genre* 32 (1999): 329-338.
- Read, John Lloyd. *The Mexican Historical Novel: 1826-1910*. New York: Instituto de las Españas, 1939.
- Roach, Joseph. *Cities of the Dead: Circum Atlantic Performance*. New York: Columbia UP, 1996.
- Saborit, Antonio. *Los doblados de Tomóchic*. Mexico City: Cal y Arena, 1994.
- Salcido Gómez, José Socorro. *Luz y sombras en la muerte del general Francisco Villa: Un crimen de Estado*. 2nd ed. Chihuahua: CEDIC, 1999.
- Saldaña, Jorge L. y M. "Corrido de Francisco Villa." *Corridos de la Revolución Mexicana*. 30 March 2008 <<http://www.geocities.com/athens/styx/9466/Corridos.html?200830>>.
- Salmerón, Pedro. *La División del Norte: La tierra, los hombres y la historia de un ejército del pueblo*. Mexico City: Planeta, 2006.

- Sánchez Catena, Ana María. "La narración en *Cartucho. Relatos de la lucha en el norte* (Nellie Campobello)." *MACLAS Latin American Essays* (1998): 97-103.
- Sandoval Ortuño, Juan. "Justicia a Villa." Perf. Antonio Aguilar. *Antonio Aguilar canta corridos de la Revolución con mariachi*. Musart, 2002.
- Shumway, Jeffrey M. "'Sometime Knowing How to Forget is Also Having Memory': The Repatriation of Juan Manuel de Rosas and the Healing of Argentina." Johnson 105-140.
- Singer, Mark. "La Cabeza de Villa." *The New Yorker* 27 Nov. 1989: 108.
- Sommer, Doris. *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991.
- Sommers, Joseph. "Literatura e historia: Las contradicciones ideológicas de la ficción indigenista." *Revista de crítica literaria latinoamericana* 5.10 (1979): 9-39.
- . Introduction. *The Battle of Tomochi: Memoirs of a Second Lieutenant*. By Heriberto Frías. Trans. Barbara Jamison. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006. xiii-xlii.
- Taylor, Diana. *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2003.
- Thiercelin-Mejias, Raquel. "Tomóchic, novela naturalista?" *Romantisme, réalisme, naturalisme, en Espagne et en Amérique Latine*. Lille: Université de Lille, 1978.
- Vanderwood, Paul J. "'None but the Justice of God': Tomochic, 1891-1892." *Patterns of Contention in Mexican History*. Ed. Jaime E. Rodríguez O. Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1992. 227-241.
- . *The Power of God against the Guns of Government: Religious Upheaval in Mexico at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1998.
- Vilanova Fuentes, Antonio. *Muerte de Villa*. 1966. Chihuahua: Instituto Chihuahuense de la Cultura, 2003.
- Warner, Ralph E. *Historia de la novela mexicana en el siglo XIX*. Mexico City: Porrúa, 1953.