PERFORMING THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION IN NEOLIBERAL TIMES:
REINVENTING ICONOGRAPHIES, NATION, AND GENDER

DISSERTATION

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the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of
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By

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ABSTRACT

Since the time of the Mexican Revolution of 1910, images associated with this
nation-defining event have been presented in an array of media and cultural productions.
Within the past two decades these images have been re-imagined, re-coded and re/de-
constructed in reaction to social and cultural changes associated with a crisis of political
legitimation and the demise of hegemonic revolutionary ideology, as espoused by the
long-ruling Party of the Institutionalized Revolution (PRI), amid the generalized
implementation of neoliberal policies in the county. My dissertation argues that the
ascendance of neoliberalism, with the opening of Mexican economic and political
systems, has resulted in changes in the socio-cultural work performed by the Revolution-
Nation-Gender triad. This trinity, solidified in the post-Revolutionary national
imaginary, weaves the three notions together such that as hegemonic discourses of
Revolutionary nationalism enter in crisis, discourses of gender are also destabilized.

The dissertation consists of three main sub-arguments. First, I argue that the
discourse(s) surrounding Revolutionary heroes has been integral to the (re)definition of
the Mexican nation and that analyzing recodings of this discourse through the example of
Emiliano Zapata reveals a destabilization of hegemonic nationalism. These changes have
allowed alternatives to surface both in Mexico and across the border as part of a recoded

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transnational Revolutionary nationalism. As cracks opened in the Revolutionary edifice allowing alternatives to emerge, they have also opened space for alternative gender discourses. I next argue that a close analysis of representations of masculine gender roles as manifested in a variety of cultural texts, specifically through Revolutionary icons Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata, reveals a crisis of the macho archetype in the contemporary Mexican nation. Changes in male gender ideologies do not occur in isolation. Finally, I argue that the polysemous figure of the soldadera has been used both to support the status quo and to embody destabilized female gender roles.

As a multidisciplinary cultural study, this dissertation brings a new perspective to contemporary debates in several fields (including Mexican film, performance, theater, art) regarding the Mexican Revolution and its shifting portrayal. It further contributes to an analysis of culture at the intersections of discourses of gender and nation in the context of globalization. By studying the tension between traditional images and their recoding over time, I address how representational ruptures and continuities reflect changing political, societal and economic contexts on both sides of the border. Through an analysis of representations of the Mexican Revolution articulated in a variety of artistic and cultural expressions within and beyond Mexico, this dissertation explores the ways in which some of the main cultural, social, and gender ideologies linked to the post-Revolutionary doctrine are critically questioned in contemporary Mexican society allowing alternative discourses to emerge.
Dedicated to my family
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I suppose you could say that “it takes a village” to finish a doctoral degree. I would like to acknowledge the many people who played a part in my doctoral village.

This dissertation is truly a multidisciplinary culmination of my studies at the Ohio State University. I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Ignacio Corona for his patience with my many (extremely) rough drafts, his encouragement, and his insights on Mexican culture. His course on border studies from my first year at OSU provoked many of the considerations of border identities that have informed my subsequent work (and more importantly, was where I met my husband, the engineer with an interest in literature and culture). Committee member Dr. Laura Podalsky introduced me to the world of film studies and has been a role model as a professor and a researcher. Thank you for taking the time to read drafts and talk me through my moments of self-doubt. To committee member Dr. Ileana Rodríguez goes the credit for this dissertation topic. Upon finishing my final paper on Emiliano Zapata for her cultural studies class my first quarter at OSU, when I questioned my abilities as a doctoral student, she smiled, looked me straight in the eye and said, “This is your dissertation.” Thank you for being such a calming and encouraging force throughout my time at OSU.

Other professors who were not on the dissertation committee also deserve recognition. Were it not for Dr. Maureen Ahern, I would not have attended OSU to begin
with. She encouraged me from day one and attended (and applauded) almost all the conference papers I gave in Ohio. Dr. Jill Lane first introduced me to performance studies and the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics of NYU. Dr. Fernando Unzueta introduced me to theories of the nation and has been a source of support as a professor and department chair. The gender theory class with Dr. Rebecca Haidt led me to publish my first article and introduced me to the theory that has been the driving force of my research to date. Thank you all for your contributions to this cultural study.

My father once told me that the key to success in any school or university is to find the support staff members who really run the show. The Spanish department staff (Judy Manley, Melinda Robinson, Tammy Jones and Susan Farquhar) plays integral and often under-recognized roles in helping us reach our goals and truly runs things from behind the scenes. I would also like to recognize Dr. Jan Macián whose patience, understanding and support helped me to develop my teaching throughout the doctoral program. Thank you for all you do for us, and for all you have done for me personally.

People outside of academia often wonder why it takes so long to write a “big paper” and finish a doctoral degree. Writing the “paper” is really only the final phase of an educational and personal quest that for me at least, started years ago. Long before Ohio State, other key influences and mentors helped shape me. I would like to thank Dr. D’ette Devine, my high school French teacher and the mentor who most impacted my love of language and of teaching. Dr. George Shivers and Dr. Jeannette Sherbondy encouraged me not only throughout my undergraduate career at Washington College, but invited me back to my alma mater to give one of my first lectures on “Emiliano Zapata:
Man to Myth.” After the presentation, they turned to my parents and said, “Now just wait for the book.” It seems they, like Dr. Rodríguez, knew my dissertation topic before I did. During my four summers at Millersville University, Professor Edgar Roca challenged and encouraged me as we worked together to stage a Spanish-language play each summer in less than five weeks—from choosing the play to closing night. Thank you for indulging the drama queen in me.

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Economic support is only one of the ways my family has contributed to this project. I grew up in a home of dedicated educators that respected, treasured and promoted learning. They always pushed me to be my best as a student and a teacher, in and out of the classroom. I attended my mother’s graduation with her second Master’s degree while I was in the seventh grade and I cheered as my father finished his Doctorate in Education several years later—no small feats with full-time jobs and two adolescent children. Without a doubt, the strongest influences in my academic life and my biggest cheerleaders throughout 26 years of school (is that possible?), are my parents. I would like to thank Frank and Betty Slaughter for all their patience, support and confidence over
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VITA

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<http://www.hemisphericinstitute.org/journal/>

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FIELDS OF STUDY

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A serendipitous coincidence brought me to Emiliano Zapata’s home in the small town of Anenecuilco today. A few days ago I managed to convince a few of my Ohio State University study abroad students to accompany me on the search for traces of Zapata around Cuernavaca in his home state of Morelos. Our quest led us to Cuautla, Anenecuilco, and Chinameca. Throughout our adventure, I repeatedly asked if anyone knew of any plans for celebrating the upcoming Día de la Revolución without much luck. The waitress and the owner of the restaurant where we had lunch had not heard of anything. Nor had the workers at two newsstands along the plaza, nor the men shining shoes, nor any of our taxi drivers. Nothing appeared in the local paper either. Perhaps, I thought to myself, this is not a very celebrated holiday. I asked myself what this might mean about the current place of the Mexican Revolution in Mexican society.
The year before I had spent November 20th—the Day of the Mexican Revolution—in Cuernavaca and was surprised that the celebration that day seemed to me to have very little to do with the Revolution. I had experienced September 15th festivities that celebrated independence from Spain with re-enactments of the “grito,” in plazas across the country—including the televised performance of President Vicente Fox ringing the bell followed by a series of “viva’s” which included father Hidalgo and Mexico itself. Schools of all levels (including the language school in Cuernavaca where OSU sends students) performed events leading up to the call for independence, bringing to life Miguel Hidalgo, José María Morelos, and sometimes la Corregidora (her name, María Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez, often erased). It seemed to me that the Revolution was at least as popular if not more so in Cuernavaca (if the numerous statues, paintings, street names, schools, restaurants, and shops named after heroes of the Revolution—which far outnumbered those named after heroes of Independence—were any indication).

Consequently, I expected something similar to the fanfare of Independence Day on the day dedicated to celebrating the Mexican Revolution. However, I saw no re-enactments, no performances of popular heroes such as Emiliano Zapata or Francisco “Pancho” Villa (my personal favorites). I heard no corridos and saw no Adelitas. I did see a military parade followed by different school groups marching down Calle Morelos.

This year I was determined to find a celebration that had something to do with the Mexican Revolution—at least one that fit my perception of such a celebration. Somewhere someone would be dressed as Emiliano Zapata or Pancho Villa, and they would ride into town on horseback to fight against Porfirio Diaz accompanied by
soldaderas. Somewhere there would be people dressed as charros and Adelitas singing corridos like “La cucaracha.” Somewhere someone would yell “¡Viva Zapata! ¡Viva Villa! ¡Viva la Revolución!” Somewhere surely the Mexican Revolution was alive in the imaginations and memories of the people and would be remembered publicly.

My luck changed when we arrived at Zapata’s small hometown of Anenecuilco, and I spoke with the curator of the Museo/Casa Emiliano Zapata, who informed me that of course there were events planned to commemorate the Mexican Revolution. What better place than the childhood home of the Caudillo del sur?

My students were not as willing to make the trip a second time, so, accompanied by my video camera, I went alone. Here I am, seated on the concrete bleachers waiting for the celebration to begin, diligently scribbling observations in my ever-present notebook (generally found, when not in use, in my back pocket). As I look around I see people slowly filtering in: mothers carrying babies, fathers leading toddlers, townsfolk of all ages wandering through the gates, past the vendors selling elotes (corn on the cob), tamales, drinks (served in plastic bags with straws), popsicles, cotton candy, and other snacks. The mural behind the vendors catches my attention—especially the central image of Emiliano Zapata, bare-chested but for his munitions belt and neck kerchief, larger than life, as muscular as an action figure, breaking the chains of injustice. The image reminded me of rather the Siqueiros mural, “The New Democracy” (1944) in the Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City in which a bare-chested female breaks similar chains. None of the photos I’ve seen of Zapata suggest bulging biceps or the Rambo-esque pectorals of this particular rendition. The exaggerated masculinity of the image strikes me
and as I ponder the painting, I wonder what this muralist intended to say about the
gendered nature of power—or if he intended anything at all (See Figures 1.1 and 1.2).

Figure 1.1: “El caudillo del sur” (1991) by Roberto Rodríguez Novarro, Museo-Casa Emiliano Zapata, Anenecuilco, Morelos, Mexico. Photo by Stephany Slaughter.

Figure 1.2: Detail of mural “El caudillo del sur.” Photo by Stephany Slaughter.
The sounds of approaching drums, announcing the entrance of several school
groups from the area, interrupt my reflections on the mural (See Figure 1.3). Eufemio
Zapata Salazar Elementary School, named for Emiliano’s brother, enters first wearing
their blue and white uniforms. Some carry blue and white pom-poms and one young man
has the honor of carrying aloft the Mexican Flag. Next come the young children from the
Escuela Primaria Nezahualcoyotl all dressed in white—the girls in dresses and the boys
wearing dress pants, dress shirts and ties. All carry a green, red, or white balloon—the
colors of the Mexican flag. Then come the Adelitas—seven girls of varying ages each in
a long colorful skirt, white blouse, and wearing cananas (bandoliers)—who represent the
soldaderas, or female soldiers, who participated in the Mexican Revolution. The
youngest, a girl of five or six, nearly trips over her long green skirt as she takes her place
in the plaza. A few photographers stand off to the sidelines as the townspeople pour in
alongside the parade of children to find seats behind me.

Figure 1.3:  School group entering celebration. Photo by Stephany Slaughter
The crowd’s chatter nearly drowns out the master of ceremonies, who announces that the celebration is meant to “rescue” the commemoration of the Mexican Revolution. As he speaks, a woman passes through the crowd selling churros and the children stand and wave their balloons at their sides, trying unsuccessfully to hold them still. This particular celebration places the Mexican Revolution within a celebration of the nation itself as the children and the spectators are called to salute the Mexican flag, followed by a chorus of a multitude of voices, young and old, off and on key, singing the national anthem, “Mexicanos al grito de Guerra…” As the afternoon light wanes, the program progresses with a quick history lesson by one of the local teachers, poetry recitals by the children, a dance performance by the young Adelitas, corridos performed by the senior citizen group, all accompanied by shouts of encouragement and applause from the audience.

Figure 1.4: Las Adelitas. Photo by Stephany Slaughter
As the Zapata mural already brought gender considerations to mind, I can’t help but notice that the soldaderas dance to one of the most popular corridos from the Revolution, “Si Adelita se fuera con otro” (See Figure 1.4). This song synthesizes the many roles of the Revolutionary soldaderas into one: love object. As part of the show, two “men” (played by women) get drunk and fight over “Adelita,” resulting in the death of one of the men and the end of the performance. This is the first time I’ve seen a traditional dance like this where women played the roles of men. The most probable explanation is that no men belong to the dance troupe that participated in today’s celebration and likely the participants intended no gender subversion. Nevertheless, it starts me thinking of the many gender implications of the dance and the song . . .

As I left this performance dedicated to the Mexican Revolution, I asked myself what it said about the place of the Revolution in contemporary Mexican popular culture. In this small town there was an effort to commemorate the Revolution and its ideals through public celebration, regardless of current economic realities in the face of free trade and neoliberal economic policies in the homeland of Emiliano Zapata. How do cultural productions such as these participate in the current discourse(s) of the Revolution? What do they say about the place of Revolutionary discourse(s) within that of the contemporary Mexican nation? Like the Zapata mural and the Adelita performance, how are these discourses gendered? How do all three (Nation, Revolution, Gender) inform each other?
My quest to answer these questions throughout this multidisciplinary dissertation brings a new perspective to the contemporary debates in several fields including Mexican film, performance, theater, and art regarding the Mexican Revolution and its shifting portrayal. It further contributes to an analysis of culture at the intersections of discourses of gender and nation in the context of forces of globalization. By studying the tension between traditional images and the recoding of these images over time and across disciplines, I am addressing how representational ruptures and continuities reflect changing political, societal and economic contexts on both sides of the border.

My project sits between two axes: the solidification and institutionalization of gendered post-Revolutionary nation building projects following the armed conflict phase of the Revolution of 1910, and the crises of these foundational discourses with the advent of neoliberalism and the concurrent fall from power of the PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional). My dissertation argues that the ascendance of neoliberalism, with the opening of Mexican economic and political systems, has resulted in changes in the socio-cultural work performed by the Revolution-Nation-Gender triad. This trinity, solidified in the post-Revolutionary national imaginary, weaves the three notions together such that as hegemonic discourses\(^1\) of revolutionary nationalism enter in crisis, discourses of gender are also destabilized—as evidenced in recent cultural production.\(^2\)

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\(^1\) The following will help frame my use of hegemony throughout the dissertation. Ashcroft succinctly defines hegemony as “the power of the ruling class to convince other classes that their interests are the interests of all” where “domination is thus exerted not by force, nor even necessarily by active persuasion, but by a more subtle and inclusive power over the economy, and over state apparatuses such as education and the media, by which the ruling class’s interest is presented as the common interest and thus comes to be taken for granted” (116). Gramsci’s use of the term is particularly helpful in this dissertation. He emphasizes the ruling class’s use of culture as part of the naturalization of its agenda so that they maintain a dominant position through consent. As Peter Brooker points out, “Gramsci had suggested that a particular hegemonic regime was not a permanent order of things, but had to win consent to a negotiated ideological
Since the time of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917), images associated with this nation-defining event have been used, appropriated and recoded by multiple groups for a variety of reasons. From the *corridos* that circulated at the time of the Mexican Revolution to today, it has been re-enacted, re-imagined, re/de-constructed via diverse ‘performances’ in an array of media—cinema, theater, performance, documentary. Within the past two decades these images have been reinvented once again in reaction to changes in economic policies associated with the neoliberal reforms that began in the 1980s and took hold in the 1990s where arts were privatized and land reform was revoked. Economic and political changes occurred hand in hand. As the long-ruling Party of the Institutionalized Revolution loosened its grip on economic control through opening Mexico to privatization and foreign investment, it also inadvertently lost its stranglehold on political hegemony and its long-held monopoly over discourses of Revolutionary nationalism.³ In order to understand the context of this study, it is important to consider how the concepts of the nation and Revolutionary nationalism

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²I analyze discourses of nation and gender because, as Foucault theorizes, “it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together” (100). This dissertation proposes to expose the ways that, through cultural representations, “discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it” (101).

³Dag MacLeod argues “that the extension of political democracy in Mexico has been one of the unintended consequences of economic reform” (248). For in-depth studies of the effect of neoliberal economic reform on PRI political power, see Dag MacLeod’s *Downsizing the State: Privitization and the Limits of Neoliberal Reform in Mexico* (2004) and Daniel Levy, Kathleen Bruhn and Emilio Zabadia’s *Mexico: The Struggle for Democratic Development* (2001).
intertwine with the PRI and how the subsequent downfall of the PRI under neoliberalism has opened the stage for alternative discourses of the nation.

1.1 Concepts of Nation Formation I: The Revolution-PRI-Nation Triad

In order to create a sense of national community and belonging among its citizens, the ruling party creates a variety of traditions that include icons, symbols, heroes—some invented by the state and others emerging through cultural production. In the introduction to *The Invention of Tradition*, Eric Hobsbawm explains these invented traditions “are highly relevant to that comparatively recent historical innovation, the ‘nation,’ with its associated phenomena: nationalism, the nation-state, national symbols, histories and the rest” (13). Following the Mexican Revolution, multiple traditions were invented—from holidays, heroes and symbols to the Revolution itself. According to Thomas Benjamin, who seems to follow Hobsbawn, “*La Revolución* was a product of collective memory, mythmaking, and history writing” (19). An important aspect of this mythmaking considers the ways in which cultural production “invented” the Revolution as a part of the discourse of the post-Revolutionary nation:

Contemporaries told stories, drew comparisons, and made arguments about recent events in particular ways to justify their actions, to condemn

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4 Hobsbawm particularly looks at the formation of national heroes, holidays, anthems, etc. as vital to a sense of national unity: “It is also clear that entirely new symbols and devices came into existence as part of national movements and states, such as the national anthem […], the national flag […], or the personification of ‘the nation’ in symbol or image, either official, as with Marianne and Germania, or unofficial, as in the cartoon stereotypes of John Bull, the lean Yankee Uncle Sam and the ‘German Michel’” (7).
their enemies, to win converts, and to do much more. Their talking, singing, drawing, painting, and writing invented *la Revolución*: a name transformed into what appeared to be a natural and self-evident part of reality and history. This talking and writing was also part of an older, larger, and greater project of *forjando patria*, forging a nation, inventing a country, imagining a community across time and space called Mexico. *La Revolución* became part of the master narrative [...] that created, shaped, and is the nation of Mexico. (Benjamin 14)

Following Benjamin’s line of thought, the invented “Revolución” equals the Mexican nation. Other scholars of Mexican nationalism seem to agree. In his 1968 study, Frederic Turner also places the Mexican Revolution of 1910 at the epicenter of Mexican nationalism (viii). As both Benjamin and Turner point out, and as I will argue throughout this dissertation, cultural production played an integral role in establishing the Revolution = Nation equation.

As I argue in Chapter 2, following the armed phase of the Revolution, the state recognized the potential for influencing emergent post-Revolutionary nationalism and creating a sense of national unity through influencing, if not controlling, cultural production. Public art projects displayed an image of the state, and, more specifically, of the ruling party that would come to be know as the PRI, as the purveyor of Revolutionary nationalism. As such, the PRI came to be equated with Mexican nationalism itself, solidifying a Revolution-PRI-Nation triad that the party consciously strengthened throughout its seventy years in office. Writing in 1999, just a year before the PRI lost the presidential office to the PAN (Partido de Acción Nacional), Roger Bartra equates the PRI with nationalism:

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5 Although the PRI itself did not come into existence until 1946, the same party with different names ruled Mexico from 1920 to 2000. See the timeline in the Appendix for details.
Nationalism is the transfiguration of the supposed characteristics of national identity onto the terrain of ideology. Nationalism is a political tendency that establishes a structural relationship between the nature of culture and the peculiarities of the state. In our country the official expressions of nationalism tell us: If you are Mexican, you must vote for the institutionalized revolution. Those who do not either are traitors to their deepest essence or are not Mexican. Nationalism is, then, an ideology that disguises itself with culture to hide its intimate means of domination. (Bartra Blood 8)⁶

Bartra’s assertion that the PRI (and voting for the PRI) equals Mexican nationalism held true for most of the party’s reign. However, beginning in the 1980s, the introduction of neoliberal economic policy began to weaken the PRI’s political hold, and concomitantly its claim over discourses of nationalism.

The dawn of the neoliberal era with the sexenio (six-year term) of Miguel de la Madrid (1982-88) also marked the beginning of the symbolic “death” of the promises of socioeconomic equality of the Mexican Revolution. Although part of Miguel de la Madrid’s political platform for the 1982 elections was based on “revolutionary nationalism,” two years after his election, “there was not more revolutionary nationalism or simple nationalism, but less; the country, much more so than in any other previous period, had its eyes to the North and thought in terms of dollars” (Aguilar Camín and Meyer 221). In an attempt to assuage the economic crisis inherited from his predecessor, Miguel de la Madrid looked to privatizing industries and foreign investment—“The

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⁶ In the English translation, the name of the party is translated as “institutionalized revolution” and the reference to the PRI becomes ambiguous. However, in the original Spanish version, this reference is perfectly clear: “En México las expresiones oficiales del nacionalismo nos dicen:  si eres mexicano debes votar por el PRI. Quienes no lo hacen traicionan su naturaleza profunda, o bien no son mexicanos” (Sangre 20).
economy was being liberalized” (Krauze 769). This renegotiation of economic policy as a result of the economic crisis of 1982 included steps that moved Mexico towards participating in a more global economy through joining GATT (The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) in the mid 1980s, a proposal previously rejected in more protectionist contexts under López Portillo (Levy et al 169). As the PRI government relinquished control over the economy, it also began losing political power. Levy, Bruhn and Zebadúa explain, “The postwar political consensus was built around a set of expectations about the state’s role in economic affairs. When these expectations were violated, the political consensus began to fall apart” (166). The 1988 presidential elections exemplify the PRI’s loss of political consensus as former member of the PRI party, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (who a year later would form the leftist Partido de la Revolución Democrática, or PRD) broke with the party and ran against the official candidate. These highly contested elections declared Carlos Salinas de Gortari the winner over Cárdenas, maintaining the PRI’s hold on the presidential office, but revealing a significant weakness in its political power base.

De la Madrid’s economic policy changes set the stage for the negotiation of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement, known in Mexico as the TLC or

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7 Mexico saw an economic boom through oil in the 70s, and Mexico lived beyond its means, taking out loans based on expected oil revenues. The sudden international drop in oil prices in the early 80s brought about an end to the “Mexican miracle” and Mexico teetered on the verge of bankruptcy. In 1982 President López Portillo devalued the peso and nationalized the banks, which deepened the economic crisis inherited by Miguel de la Madrid. For more on Miguel de la Madrid’s administration as the beginning of neoliberalism in Mexico, see also Krauze 762, Corona 5, Agustín 17-18.

8 According to Dag MacLeod in Downsizing the State: Privatization and the Limits of Neoliberal Reform in Mexico, “The economic crisis of 1982 forced Mexico to renegotiate the terms on which it relates to the global economy. The new model of integration into the North American economy has involved the disintegration of many of the social ties that formerly linked actors within Mexico—not the least of which has been the erosion of loyalty to the PRI by workers and middle-class Mexicans” (237).
Tratado de Libre Comercio), which began in 1990 under the administration of Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-94). In setting the stage for NAFTA, the Salinas administration launched Mexico further into the neoliberal age and dealt the “death blow” (Corona 6) to Revolutionary land reform by overturning Article 27 of the Constitution, often hailed as one of the greatest achievements of the Revolution, in order to allow the private sale of communal ejido lands.9 According to Joseph and Nugent in their 1994 compilation *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negation of Rule in Modern Mexico*, “there is little dispute that ‘The Revolution’ is over. In recent years, the PRI government has encouraged the sale of nationalized industries and enterprises […] to private investors, and ‘reformed’ (read terminated) the agrarian reform enshrined in Article 27 of the 1917 Constitution” (5).10 Even if prior presidents did not enact the Article to the letter (with the notable exception of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940) who more than any other president championed and enacted land reform), administrations repeatedly returned to the Revolution and its promises at least discursively. Some scholars claim that Salinas and his successors have “effectively abandoned even

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9 According to Levy, et al, “One of the most important features of the postrevolutionary settlement, Article 27 committed the state to land reform. By reforming Article 27, Salinas declared an end to land redistribution […] Article 27 also prohibited the sale or rental of ejido land. Salinas changed this too, giving ejido members the right to convert ejido land into individual plots. With private titles small farmers could qualify for bank loans using their land as collateral; it would no longer be illegal for banks to seize land for default […] Commercial farmers and even some peasants welcomed these reforms […] However, the reforms to Article 27 essentially ended any hope for the poorest peasants to gain land rights. They also made it likely that landownership would become increasingly concentrated in a few hands—as ejidos disband, banks confiscate land on defaulted loans, and wealthy landowners buy up the surplus” (80-1). For more on the ejido system and the effects of NAFTA, see also Stephen’s *¡Zapata Lives! Histories and Cultural Politics in Southern Mexico* xxvi-xxxii.

10 There is some debate as to whether the Revolution really “lived” at all or whether the Revolution and its advances were more the product of myth making (See Benjamin and O’Malley for example). Others point to the “death” date of the Revolution in the 1940s when the Revolution paradoxically became “institutionalized” (Levy, et al. 52).
rhetorical commitment to many cherished ‘revolutionary’ principles, including land reform” (Levy et al 51). However others, such as Ignacio Corona, assert that this rhetoric was not so much abandoned, as “domesticated” and modernized in such a way as to support neoliberal policies (7). Lynn Stephen explains how both Salinas and Zedillo employed a double-voiced discourse of the Revolution. Both administrations “[used] Zapata and the Mexican Revolution as a framework for demonstrating their continued commitment to Mexico’s rural population, while simultaneously dismantling land reform and some of the services that supported the rural population (Zapata xxxiii).”

As traditional Revolutionary nationalism began to disappear from Los Pinos in favor of modernization through neoliberalism, it reappeared, transformed, out of the Lacandon Jungle. On January 1, 1994, in the early days of Ernesto Zedillo’s presidency (1994-2000) and coinciding with the enactment of NAFTA, the EZLN (Ejercito Zapatista de Liberación Nacional) rose in arms in direct protest of neoliberal reforms that further disenfranchised the indigenous poor through land reform and trade agreements. The neo-Zapatistas, an organization that appropriated the name of Revolutionary hero Emiliano Zapata, directly challenged the PRI stronghold on discourses of Revolutionary

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11 For an in depth study of how these administrations used Zapata and images of the Revolution to promote land reform as part of PROCEDE (Programa de Certificación de Derechos Ejidales), see Stephen’s chapter on “Government Construction and Reappropriation of Emiliano Zapata” in Zapata Lives where she compares the government’s use of Zapata in the 1990s with the 1930s (33-82).

12 Los Pinos is the Mexican equivalent of the White House in the US.

13 MacLeod describes the EZLN uprising as “directed specifically at land reforms that allowed the buying and selling of communal holdings known as ejidos […] In addition to opposing the constitutional land reform passed under President Salinas, the EZLN highlighted its concerns that foreign imports of grain under NAFTA would undermine farm communities” (246). See also Lynn Stephen’s ¡Zapata Lives! and Maya Lorena Pérez Ruiz’s ¡Todos somos Zapatistas! For analyses of EZLN formation in the context of neoliberal reforms along with their relationship to other indigenous groups. See Appendix A for a timeline of EZLN actions.
nationalism. Dag MacLeod sees the Zapatista movement as an important contributor to the fall of the PRI: “It was the Zapatista uprising, and the economic crisis of 1994-5 that led to the institutionalization of democratic reforms” (249). The first presidential elections following the EZLN uprising and the enactment of NAFTA (though certainly not the only factors) saw a different party take office for the first time in seven decades as the PRI lost in 2000 to PAN candidate Vicente Fox (2000-2006). That the PRI took third place against PRD candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador and PAN candidate and president elect Felipe Calderón in 2006 further confirms the party’s decline.¹⁴

As the PRI’s political power declined, the party simultaneously lost its monopoly over discourses of Revolutionary nationalism (as exemplified by the emergence of the EZLN), in part through its abandonment of Revolutionary rhetoric and in part through its slipping control over cultural production that accompanied privatization. The Mexican state has a long history of using cultural production to promote political hegemony.¹⁵ However, according to Stephen Morris, “In the cultural realm, recent governments have embraced policies that dilute the state’s ability to define and shape national identity, pushing back programmes and regulations relating to control of language, education, the media and consumption patterns” (384). If the PRI influenced cultural production to gain political hegemony, with the loss of political consensus that accompanied the opening of

¹⁴ At the time of this writing the 2006 elections are still being disputed. Since election day, July 2, 2006, PRD (Partido de la Revolución Democrática) Candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador has been claiming fraud and protesting Felipe Calderon’s narrow win, which was officially announced by the IFE tribunal on September 5, 2006. This landmark election came down to two non-PRI candidates, with Roberto Madrazo of the PRI publicly accepting defeat on election day. Additionally, the PRI lost the majority in both the senate and the house of deputies with the PRD gaining more seats than ever before. These election results clearly demonstrate the decline of the PRI and its influence over concepts of Mexican nationalism—no longer is it anti-Mexican to vote for other parties (as Bartra asserted before the 2000 election).

¹⁵ See Corona 14-15.
the market, it stands to reason that the party also lost influence over cultural production, thus allowing the opportunity for alternative cultural discourses to surface.

Certainly cultural change cannot be directly linked to one single factor such as the signing of a trade agreement; however, as we have seen, neoliberal policies also brought about political changes that influenced cultural transformations. Therefore, I focus my project around the NAFTA years, with comparisons to previous cultural production in order to analyze the cultural recodings of the intersections of discourses of the Revolution, nation and gender. I do not pretend to suggest a direct cause/effect relationship and am aware that a series of social mediations must be considered when analyzing cultural changes. I do suggest that economic policies in this time period have indirectly influenced interpretation of socio-cultural work performed by revolutionary icons, and that the neoliberal crisis has served as a catalyst for the reinvention of images of the Revolution in particular because these political and economic changes seemingly undermine the ideological goals of the Mexican Revolution.

In spite of the current context of neoliberalism in Mexico and the declared “death” of the Revolution, interest in and return to the iconography of the movement has not receded. The Mexican Revolution continues to be a source of inspiration and a point of reference, manifesting itself daily in contemporary Mexico in everything from popular culture and cultural artifacts, to government-funded appropriations, to various political actions. The proliferation of this visual imagery attests to the collective memory of the Revolution as part of the quotidian scenery of rural and urban Mexico.16

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16 Most of my time in Mexico over a four-year period was spent in Cuernavaca, Morelos and Mexico City, with several short trips to Cuautla, Anenecuilco and other smaller towns around the country (though...
examines the contemporary relevance of these images as manifested in cultural
production at the turn of the 21st century in order to analyze the way each example
recodes images/icons associated with the Revolution to expose current political and
cultural concerns regarding the intersection of discourses of nation and gender.

1.2 Concepts of Nation formation II: Visual Culture and the Imagined Community

Studies of visual culture are especially relevant in a country like Mexico where
from pre-conquest times visual and spoken ‘texts’ dominated in the dissemination of
ideology and social norms, and to the promotion of a sense of “imagined community.”
From the Christianization of the country by the Spanish missionaries, to the symbols of
struggle in the Mexican Independence movement, to the Mexican Revolution, visual
imagery, icons, and symbols have not only condensed and constructed social meaning,
but, most importantly, they have participated in the construction of a sense of community
at different historical moments that together have contributed to the invention of the
Mexican Nation.

In his seminal study of nation formation, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on
the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983), Benedict Anderson asserts that the concept
of the Nation arose in grand part due to print capitalism (46). For Anderson, “print
capitalism,” refers mainly to the novel and the newspaper, a distinction that limits the

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principally in the Valley of Mexico). Therefore, most of my observations are with reference to these areas
and do not necessarily include all of Mexico.
“imagined community” to a privileged literate class that shares a common print language. I would like to expand Anderson’s concept of print capitalism to include not only the printed text of the newspaper or the novel, but also mass produced images that were able to reach across classes and languages to a barely literate or illiterate public.

Specifically referring to Mexico, Anderson cites José de Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi’s *El Periquillo Sarniento* as the first Latin American novel (1816) and an example of the way print culture, through the novel, promoted the idea of the nation (29). However, even at the end of the 19th century in pre-Revolutionary Mexico, a mere 37.73% of the approximately 324,360 inhabitants of the Mexican capital were literate—including those who could read and write only poorly (López Casillas 86). Outside the capital not only was the literacy rate even lower, but also many people did not (and still do not) speak or read Spanish, but one of over seventy indigenous languages. Therefore, if the novel should be considered one of the key promoters of the nation as Anderson suggests, this particular imagined Mexican community excluded the great majority of the population.

Print capitalism in Mexico City, both preceding and during the Mexican Revolution in the late 1800s and early 1900s, also included the publication of inexpensive illustrated magazines, broadsheets and *corridos* where images accompanied the text. This style of graphic journalism, according to López Casillas appealed to the popular masses 17

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17 According to Natividad Gutiérrez, “In contemporary Mexico, apart from the dominant national mestizo majority, numbering 68,831,078 people according to the 1990 census, there are fifty-six ethnic Indian groups numbering 10 million people inhabiting twenty-seven of the thirty-two states of the federal republic” and that these ethnic group speak 78 languages (5). These numbers would have been even higher in the 1800s and early 1900s.
in ways that pure text could not: “Para la mayoría, una imagen narrativa y contundente tenía más significado que un cúmulo de palabras” (86). Publishing houses such as that of Antonio Vanegas Arroyo specifically marketed to this population, who did not necessarily identify with the more elitist newspaper culture (Gretton 36), with the help of “graphic reporter” José Guadalupe Posada (Tyler 60). Echoing Anderson, Thomas Gretton asserts that these publications helped to create a sense of connection, and even a sense of nation, among consumers. He asserts that it is “reasonable, perhaps even necessary to think of periodicals such as Montes de Oca’s *El Popular* or the occasional broadsheets which Vanegas Arroyo produced as having made the Mexican People, in that these commodities enabled an otherwise unconstituted group to share a culture, to share, and to display the sharing of, aspirations, values and hostilities” (Gretton 34).18

Posada’s images were central to forming a sense of community among the popular classes not only within Mexico City, but around the country. According to López Casillas, the most popular publications from the Vanegas Arroyo publishing house were Posada’s illustrated *corridos*, which found their way to public spaces such as plazas, parks and markets around Mexico by way of traveling singers that would sell printed copies of the lyrics following their public performances: “Como la mayoría no sabía leer las impresiones incluían el grabado, donde Posada congelaba el momento más conmovedor de la historia. Con el inicio de la Revolución mexicana el corrido se desarrolló plenamente y el grabador fue el primero en ilustrar las avatares de los caudillos” (88). Posada’s prints participated in creating a sense of imagined Mexican

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18 Gretton refers to the Vanegas Arroyo publications as “occasional” not in the sense of infrequent, but in the sense of without a regular schedule. See his footnote 26.
community, through illustrating these popular songs—the majority of which celebrated male contributions to the conflict and seldom depicted women in active roles. They also played a key role in the dissemination of (gendered) Revolutionary iconography that would be appropriated in the post-Revolution nation-building process.

Posada’s images reached beyond mass appeal among the popular classes in the early 1900s and found appeal among the upper classes in the 1920s and 30s (Tyler 60) when they became part of the nation re-building iconography drawn upon by the muralists in the public art campaigns of José Vasconcelos. As I examine in Chapter 2, the re-formation of the Mexican nation following the Revolution was highly dependant on images over print culture. Though certainly novels and newspapers participated in establishing the re-imagined community, the role of visual arts, corridos, traveling tent theater (carpa), and cinema must not be underestimated.

Anderson attributed the impact of “print knowledge” on the rise of nationalism to its “reproducibility and dissemination” over the “scarce and arcane lore” of “manuscript knowledge” (37). With the advent of cinema, television, and electronic media such as the internet, print knowledge now seems to have taken the place of manuscripts as ‘scarce and arcane lore.’ In this most recent phase of the re-formation of the Mexican nation, in

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19 I further explore women’s depiction in corridos in Chapter 4.

20 Posada’s other images that did not take the Revolution as their theme, such as his costumbrista images or his illustrations for sensational news stories, also contributed to the dissemination of gendered iconography. One of his most famous etchings depicts a caricature of the infamous scandal of “Los 41” where forty-one men were caught at a dance where some of the men were dressed as women. Posada’s illustration appeared under the headline “Los 41 Maricones encontrados en un baile de la Calle de la Paz el 20 de noviembre de 1901” (See the illustration in Tyler on p. 132). Another etching with the title “El feminismo se impone” from La Guacamaya, July 25, 1907, plays on the same event. Surrounding the large number “41” men with moustaches wearing women’s clothes perform “feminine” tasks of ironing, cooking, sewing, and child care (See illustration in Tyler p. 133).
spite of the rise in literacy rates throughout the 20th century,\textsuperscript{21} discourses of the nation are still highly dependant on images coupled with technology that appeal to large sectors of the population in a way that written texts cannot.\textsuperscript{22} For this reason, though it does include some analysis of print culture, my study prioritizes visual culture over print culture in the (re)formation of the Mexican nation. This is not to suggest that I will not examine language, rather that I prioritize genres that include images as part of the “text” over those that do not. My consideration of images does include an analysis of the language that accompanies them in the genres that combine image with words such as film, performance, and theater.

1.3 Concepts of Nation Formation III: Discourses of Nation and Gender

In the same study of nation formation, Anderson posits “the formal universality of nationality as a socio-cultural concept,” claiming that, “in the modern world everyone can, should, will ‘have’ a nationality, as he or she ‘has’ a gender” (5). A close analysis of this statement reveals a significant blind spot in Anderson’s theory, echoed by many

\textsuperscript{21} According to Levy, Bruhn and Zebadúa, in 2001 Mexico’s “illiteracy rate of about 13 percent more than doubles that of Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Cuba (and the United States)” (11). According to the official INEGI (Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geográfica e Informática) report published on their website (http://www.inegi.gob.mx/est/contenidos/espanol/rutinas/eptrutin.aspx?tipo=medu09&c=3277), Mexico’s literacy rate has increased from 66% in 1960 to 94.6% in 1990 and 96.7% in 2005. However, it is important to note that such statistics are misleading as the INEGI defines “alfabeto” (literate) as the “Población de 15 y más años que sabe leer y escribir un recado.” The ability to read and write a message is a minimum level of literacy and is not indicative of the percentage of the Mexican population who are more than barely literate.

\textsuperscript{22} Certainly this phenomenon is not specific to Mexico. Many countries prioritize image media over print media.
other theorists of the nation, which does not consider the gendered nature of the nation. This study proposes to contribute to the rectification of this oversight through applying gender theory to the analysis of cultural representations of the nation in order to reveal the interdependency of discourses of nation and gender.

I am not the first scholar to criticize Anderson’s statement that takes both nationality and gender as natural givens. Eve Kosofsky Sedwick problematizes Anderson’s words by focusing on his use of “gender:”

To suggest that everyone might ‘have’ a nationality as everyone ‘has’ a gender presupposes, what may well be true, and may well always have been true, that everyone does ‘have’ a gender. But it needn’t presuppose that everyone ‘has’ a gender as everyone else ‘has’ a gender—that everyone ‘has’ a gender in the same way, or that ‘having’ a gender is the same kind of act, process, or possession for every person or for every gender. (“Nationalisms” 239-240)²³

I would like to push Sedgwick’s observations further. As she affirms, Anderson’s naïve statement presupposes that everyone does indeed have a gender without questioning the implications of gender or perhaps more importantly, its place within the construction of the nation. Anderson’s statement asserts that people have a gender and a nationality, but does not go on to question the ways in which nations are inherently gendered, which is my concern throughout the dissertation.

To consider the role of gender in the construction of the nation, first we must understand that gender, as used by Sedgwick, is understood to refer to societally constructed roles based on “norms” of behavior associated with concepts of “masculine” and “feminine.” For example, caring for children is a gender role typically considered

²³ See also Parker, et al’s introduction to Nationalisms and Sexualities pages 4-5, and Sommer’s Foundational Fictions pages 40-1 for other references to the problematics of Anderson’s equation of nation and gender.

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“feminine” to be carried out by “women.” Though often these roles have been elided with biological sex categories, feminists such as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Judith Butler, Monique Wittig, Simone de Beauvoir, among others, have questioned the relationship between gender and biology. According to Butler, “Originally intended to dispute the biology-is-destiny formulation, the distinction between sex and gender serves the argument that whatever biological intractability sex appears to have, gender is culturally constructed: hence, gender is neither the causal result of sex nor as seemingly fixed as sex” (GT 9-10). Thus, for feminist theory, the distinction between sex and gender is crucial as it allows for a socio-cultural analysis of gender roles. In her article “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” Joan W. Scott synthesizes the feminist theorizations of “gender” as a term used:

to designate social relations between the sexes. Its use explicitly rejects biological explanations. […] Instead, gender becomes a way of denoting ‘cultural constructions’—the entirely social creation of ideas about appropriate roles for women and men. It is a way of referring to the exclusively social origins of the subjective identities of men and women. Gender is, in this definition, a social category imposed on a sexed body. Gender seems to have become a particularly useful word as studies of sex and sexuality have proliferated, for it offers a way of differentiating sexual practice from the social roles assigned to women and men […] The use of gender emphasizes an entire system of relationships that may include sex, but is not directly determined by sex or directly determining of sexuality (1056).

As Scott’s closing line suggests, many gender theorists separate sex, gender, and sexuality into three nearly distinct categories. The separation of biological sex and gender is useful in that it helps us to understand that gender is socially constructed and not natural. As such, it is important to consider that concepts of gender, like concepts of
nation, are societally and historically specific; therefore, these mutable concepts can and do change across time and culture. While the separation of gender and sexuality can also be useful (for example it destabilizes the assumption that a gender role automatically indicates sexual preference), I argue that an attempt at a complete separation can be counterproductive, especially in cultures where gender roles and sexuality are often elided and/or where gender roles based on sexuality become part of the discourse of nation. Therefore, reconsidering gender roles and their recoding within the national imaginary necessarily requires reconsidering sexuality.

Although under-considered in many theorizations of nations and nationalism, gender roles (and sexuality) have been, and continue to be, central to (re)defining concepts of the nation. For example, according to Carmen Ramos Escandón, Porfiran discourse established “the importance of the family as the basic cell of the social body” in pre-revolutionary Mexico as a means of societal control, particularly over women (88-9). The prioritizing of the family unit firmly establishes a relationship between gender and sexuality as part of national discourse by dictating gender roles for both men and women. These expectations simultaneously dictate sexuality as the roles of

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24 Several studies have both pointed out this oversight (including Anderson and Hobsbawm in the list of offenders) and attempted to correct it. See for example, Nira Yuval-Davis’s *Gender and Nation* (1997); Partha Chatterjee’s *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (1993); Parker et. al’s collection *Nationalisms and Sexualities* (1992), inspired by George L. Mosse’s study *Nationalism and Sexuality* (1985); Anne McClintock’s article “No Longer a Future in Heaven: Women and Nationalism in South Africa” (1991). Specifically concerning Latin America, see Doris Sommer’s pioneering contribution to considering the intersection of nation and gender through literature, *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (1991). For Mexico, see Jean Franco’s *Plotting Women: Gender and Representation in Mexico* (1989).

25 I will further analyze gender roles and the family following the Revolution in subsequent chapters.

26 See the introduction to Parker, et al’s collection *Nationalisms and Sexualities* (1992) for a consideration of the central role of the heterosexual family in the national imaginary and its impact on women. In such a
wife/mother, and of father/husband in the traditional concept of the family necessarily require heterosexuality.²⁷

Twentieth century feminist theorist Adrienne Rich terms this presumption and requirement of heterosexuality, “compulsory heterosexuality” (227). According to Rich, heterosexuality is taken as a natural given that is “compulsory” in that institutions require it of their participants either explicitly or implicitly. Gender theorists Adrienne Rich, Monique Wittig, and Judith Butler all include this concept in their writings (though Wittig does not use the words explicitly). Butler describes the relationship between gender and compulsory heterosexuality in *Gender Trouble*:

Gender can denote a unity of experience, or sex, gender, and desire, only when sex can be understood in some sense to necessitate gender—where gender is a psychic and/or cultural designation of the self—and desire—where desire is heterosexual and therefore differentiates itself through an oppositional relation to that other gender it desires. The internal coherence or unity of either gender, man or woman, thereby requires both a stable and oppositional heterosexuality. That *institutional heterosexuality* both requires and produces the univocity of each of the gendered terms that constitute the limit of gendered possibilities within an oppositional, binary gender system. This conception of gender presupposes not only a causal relation among sex, gender, and desire, but suggests as well that desire reflects or expresses gender and that gender

²⁷ Although attempts have been made in recent years in the US and Mexico to allow same-sex marriage, both countries have voted down legislation that would legally recognize such marriages and the US has introduced legislation to legally define marriage as between a man and a woman. Some countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium, Canada and Spain do recognize same-sex marriage as valid (all within the last five years). Other countries (including Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Iceland, France, Germany, Finland, Luxembourg, New Zealand and Great Britain) recognize same-sex partnerships or civil unions. As far as the gender roles of mother and father, there are many cases of same-sex couples parenting in the US, though they have often met legal resistance as not all states recognize same-sex adoptions. Mexico does not recognize same-sex adoptions at all and legally subscribes to a traditional (heterosexual) familial model of the nation.
reflects or expresses desire. […] The institution of a compulsory and naturalized heterosexuality requires and regulates gender as a binary relation in which the masculine term is differentiated from a feminine term, and this differentiation is accomplished through the practices of heterosexual desire (my emphasis, 30).

According to Butler, compulsory heterosexuality creates a necessity for a binary gender relationship where there are only two distinct gender options: male and female. Many of the texts analyzed in this dissertation, especially in Chapters 3 and 4, question this binary thinking and suggest that gender is not so black and white. They propose the possibility of ambiguity and a destabilization of the traditional gender binary. However, I argue that there are still limitations in the gains concerning sexuality as often the texts remain within the parameters of compulsory heterosexuality.

Monique Wittig, writing at the same time as Rich, poses similar questions without using the term “compulsory heterosexuality,” but rather points to the concept of the “Straight Mind” as a mindset that universalizes heterosexuality as the norm:

With its ineluctability as knowledge, as an obvious principle, as a given prior to any science, the straight mind develops a totalizing interpretation of history, social reality, culture, language, and all the subjective phenomena at the same time. I can only underline the oppressive character that the straight mind is clothed in its tendency to immediately universalize its production of concepts into general laws which claim to hold true for all societies, all epochs, all individuals […] The consequence of this tendency toward universality is that the straight mind cannot conceive of a culture, a society where heterosexuality would not order not only all human relationships but also its very production of concepts and all the processes which escape consciousness, as well. (my emphasis, 27-28)

In different terms, Wittig also critiques the institutions that perpetuate compulsive heterosexuality. According to Wittig, it is the straight mind that is in the position of power to regulate these institutions, trapped in its own ideology and unable to imagine
other cultural possibilities that are not heterosexual. By following Wittig’s gender theory through stressing the dangers of falling prey to the “straight mind” and asserting that society should allow an imagining of non-heterosexual possibilities, I do not suggest that the only solution is a radical one that abolishes heterosexuality nor that non-heterosexual options provide a utopian alternative. Neither do I suggest that heterosexuality is inherently evil. What I do suggest is that as long as the “straight mind,” as evidenced in Mexican cultural production, rejects the acceptance of possible alternative sexualities, changes in gender roles will also suffer resistance.

In the above quote, Wittig criticizes the straight mind for its universalizing tendency. Feminist and gender theory themselves have also been criticized for a tendency towards universalization. Certainly experiences regarding gender and sexuality in middle-class Europe or the United States (where much of this theory emerged) is not the same as in middle-class “mestizo” Mexico City, let alone poverty-stricken indigenous Chiapas. Theorists such as bell hooks and Gloria Anzaldúa have problematized gender theory’s lack of attention to race, ethnicity and class in their considerations of gender and sexuality. In this dissertation I focus specifically on analyses of gender and sexuality. Through this lens, I only begin to consider implications of class, race, and ethnicity as they are represented in the cultural productions I analyze here. Without wanting to repeat previous oversights with regards to these important issues, I concede that an in-depth analysis is outside the scope of this current study and merits further investigation.

28 See for example, Gloria Anzaldúa’s Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza and bell hooks’s Ain’t I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism, and her article, “Black Women: Shaping Feminist Theory” included in The Black Feminist Reader, edited by Joy James and T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting. Where Anzaldúa and hooks target feminism, race, ethnicity and class also bear further consideration in studies of male gender and sexuality, especially in terms of discourses of the Mexican nation.
Popular culture is a powerful tool through which traditional gender roles can be questioned, or the status quo maintained. Often, the dominant position reasserts itself with underlying messages of power relationships that are often not perceived through a superficial viewing by the general public. Examining popular culture through the lens of gender studies allows us to question inter-gender relations, especially along lines of power. Gender theorists such as Adrienne Rich, Judith Butler, and Monique Wittig have suggested that the hegemonic power structure that demands compulsory heterosexuality dictates the power relationships between the genders and that these messages manifest themselves in texts that pretend on the surface to resist these very structures. This dissertation applies these gender theories to analyses of cultural production such as film and theater in a moment of national re-definition brought about by changes in economic and political policies.

1.4 Outline Of Chapters

The dissertation consists of three main chapters following the introduction. In Chapter 2: “Discourses of Revolutionary Nationalism: The Case of Emiliano Zapata,” I argue that the discourse(s) surrounding Revolutionary heroes has been integral to the (re)definition of the Mexican nation. I further assert that analyzing recodings of this discourse through the example of Emiliano Zapata reveals a destabilization of hegemonic nationalism that has allowed alternative discourses to surface. The chapter primarily
focuses on two historical moments of national crisis and re-definition: the decades following the Revolution (especially the 1920s and 1930s) and the decades following the demise of hegemonic Revolutionary nationalism through the adoption of neo-liberal policies (especially the 1990s and 2000s).

I first analyze the ways in which hegemonic discourses of Revolutionary nationalism were institutionalized through state deployment of representations of Emiliano Zapata in the decades following the armed conflict (mainly the 1920s and 1930s) as part of a re-building project. I analyze the legitimizing role of public art projects (including murals by Diego Rivera painted in the National Palace in Mexico City, Cortes’s Palace in Cuernavaca, and the Autonomous University of Chapingo in Texcoco) through their graphic depiction of dominant discourses of nation, and within them, discourses of race and gender.

The second key moment analyzed in this chapter marks a reinvention of discourses of Revolutionary nationalism in the wake of the “death” of the Mexican Revolution and the fall of the PRI that accompany the “birth” of the neoliberal era at the turn of the twenty-first century (especially the 1990s and 2000s). In this context, hegemonic discourses of Revolutionary nationalism enter in crisis, allowing the more visible emergence of alternative discourses that challenge dominant ideologies of nationalism to differing degrees. Some, such as Alfonso Arau’s 2004 film Zapata: Sueño del héroe, actually reinforce the status quo in spite of an intention to destabilize it. I argue that Arau returns to indigenist discourses that harken back to discourses of race and nation that formed part of the post-Revolutionary nation-building project promoted by
Rivera’s murals—murals Arau engages with intertextually in the film. Other alternative discourses break more completely with hegemonic rhetoric and recode discourses of race and nation through their destabilizing estrangement of the figure of Emiliano Zapata. The next section examines the ways in which the neo-Zapatista movement has reinvented the Revolutionary hero to propose an alternative discourse of the Mexican nation. Technology, and mass media have projected the Zapatista discourse of Revolutionary nationalism beyond Mexico’s borders and into the global arena. The final section of the chapter analyzes the ways in which Zapata’s image has transcended borders to appear recoded once again as part of Chicano discourses of (trans)nationalism.

As cracks opened in the Revolutionary edifice allowing alternative discourses of Revolutionary nationalism, they have also opened space for alternative gender discourses. In Chapter 3: “Discourses Of Gender And Nation I: The Macho In Crisis,” I argue that a close analysis of representations of masculine gender roles as manifested in a variety of cultural texts, specifically through Revolutionary icons Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata, reveal a crisis of the macho archetype in the contemporary Mexican nation.

The chapter begins with an examination of studies of the concept of the macho (Gutmann, González, Paredes, Mirandé) in order to question its role in the intersection of post-Revolutionary discourses of nation and gender. Part of this background includes the role of popular culture in the dissemination of these discourses and therefore, a consideration of early representations of the Revolutionary macho figure (principally from the 1920s through the 1950s), especially in Mexican cinema, and their subsequent impact on more recent cultural productions.
The film *Entre Pancho Villa y una mujer desnuda* (Sabina Berman and Isabelle Tardán 1995, based on Berman’s 1993 play *Entre Villa y una mujer desnuda*) dialogues directly with previous cinematic renditions of Pancho Villa as it uses parody to expose the ways in which hyper-masculine machismo affects both men and women in the Mexican nation of the 1990s. The film destabilizes the gender binary through two contrasting versions of masculinity: the Revolutionary *macho* (Villa/Adrián) and the “differently masculine” metrosexual (Ismael). Moreover, the self-reflective film problematizes the role of representation itself (including film, television, and historical narrative) in perpetuating traditional gender roles. Jorge Riggen’s short film *Charros* (2004) also takes up the issue of gender representation in Mexican film and television through depicting caricatures of multiple models of *macho* masculinity perpetuated by these media, including the *charro*, the revolutionary, and the *narcotraficante*. I argue that through the film’s parodic framing of these models, *Charros* not only destabilizes traditional depictions of male gender roles, but sexuality as well.

Recent controversy suggests a continued resistance to debunking the myth of the *macho*, particularly if it is at the expense of national icon Emiliano Zapata. The final section of the chapter examines texts that question and/or contest the questioning of Zapata’s sexuality. Through newspaper/magazine articles, personal interview and the documentary *¿Dónde estás Emiliano?* (Dir. Raul González Nava, 2004), I explore the scandal surrounding Alfonso Arau’s 2004 film *Zapata, Sueño del héroe* prior to its release due to rumors of Arau defying the “straight mind” and representing Zapata as homosexual. Where the rumors produce a flurry of articles expressing heterosexual panic,
actor/playwright Carmen Ramos finds inspiration and the possibility for subversion in her representation of Zapata in *D.J. Rapidita González* where she steps beyond the gender binary and “queers” traditional gender archetypes. Through a cabaret-style performance, she destabilizes the association between Zapata and *machismo* through the representation of his journey through a continuum of sexualities from *macho* to transsexual.

An exploration of the cultural icons and archetypes that have been perpetuated as representative of particular gender models renders visible the institutionalization of compulsory heterosexuality and the extent to which discourses of gender and nation inform each other. Chapter 4, “Discourses of Gender and Nation I: The *Soldadera* as Site of Gender Resistance” examines how gender roles are enacted on/through/by the body and its movement between public and private spaces in order to express relationships of power. I argue that the *soldadera* is a particularly polysemous figure that has been used both to support the status quo and to embody the destabilized female gender role.

At the outset of the chapter I expose the manner in which post-Revolutionary discourses constructed a stereotyped *soldadera* that minimalized her agency in order to reestablish power over Mexican women as part of the nation re-formation project. I then examine the ways in which recent representations resemanticize the *soldadera* stereotype to destabilize traditional gendered power hierarchies. I assert that certain recent representations of the *soldadera* deploy her as a vehicle to both transgress and return to gender norms (including Ángela in Patricia Riggen’s 2002 short film *La Milpa* and Gertudis in Alfonso Arau’s 1991 feature film *Como Agua para chocolate*). Other representations of this complex figure, such as the character of La China in the film
Zapata: Amor en Rebeldía (Walter Doehner 2004), push traditional gender norms further, to propose the prospect of transgression without return. Some texts, like Jesusa Rodríguez’s performance of the “Monólogo de la soldadera autógena,” break away from traditional gender expectations and the limits of binary sex and gender constructs by questioning the materiality of the sexed body.

The final section of the chapter analyzes the example of the neo-Zapatista women and their struggle to change gender roles in rural indigenous communities in the Mexican highlands. In this section I argue that representations of the neo-Zapatistas in photos and documentaries (including Ramona: Mujer, Indígena, Rebelde (2006), La Realidad (1996), Storm from the Mountain: The Zapatistas Take Mexico City (2001), and Compañeras tienen grado / Women Zapatistas directed by Guadalupe Miranda and María Inés Roqué in 1995) reflect a recoding of the soldadera that attempts to break with previous stereotypes in order to re-construct indigenous women as active agents in the Mexican nation. However, a close reading of images of neo-soldadera women exposes ambiguities that reveal resistance to their transforming roles through attempts to reinscribe them in previous gender stereotypes (including the 2004 documentary La vida de la mujer en resistencia; the 1998 documentary Zapatista, directed by Benjamin Eichert, Rick Rowley, and Staale Sandberg; and the 1994 play Todos somos Marcos by Vicente Leñero).
In this introduction I have shown the entwined relationships between the Revolution-PRI-Nation triad and the Nation-Revolution-Gender triad. These discourses interweave in such a way that as the PRI enters in crisis, so does the concept of the nation and with it the hegemonic discourse of Revolutionary nationalism, both of which contain discourses of gender. Following Anne McClintock’s assertion that “Nationalism is constituted from the very beginning as a gendered discourse, and cannot be understood without a theory of gender power” (105), gender theory provides the basic underlying framework that informs the following chapters of the dissertation as they analyze the gendered notion of hero formation through the example of Emiliano Zapata, the crisis of the Revolutionary macho, and the soldadera as a site of gender resistance.
CHAPTER 2

DISCOURSES OF REVOLUTIONARY NATIONALISM:
THE CASE OF EMILIANO ZAPATA

Anyone who travels to Zapata’s home state of Morelos, Mexico would have no
doubt that Emiliano Zapata is a part of the collective consciousness. His ubiquitous image
can be found in statues, restaurant names, street names, school names, and even on the
license plates where his face appears in the “o” of “Morelos” rather than the face of José
María Morelos, for whom the state is named (See figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1 Photo of Morelos license plate, taken and altered to remove numbers by
In Mexico City, I pass his image on the metro every day traveling past the “Zapata” station where the icon is the familiar sombrero, moustache and munitions belts so often associated with the General (See Figure 2.2).

![Zapata Metro Station Icon](image)

Figure 2.2 Zapata Metro Station Icon. Photo by Stephany Slaughter taken in the Mexico City metro, 2006.

Both the license plates and the metro symbol suggest that Zapata is alive and well in the iconographic repertoire of the state, but local markets also attest to Zapata’s quotidian presence in the consciousness of the people. In my personal experience, the public spaces of markets in Cuernavaca, Mexico City, San Miguel de Allende, Cuautla, and Puebla, among others, offer a variety of Zapata images where consumers (both national and international) purchase reprints of photos from the Casasola archive taken during the Revolution, or a plethora of T-shirts with a variety of depictions of the “caudillo” himself where images of the 1910s and 1920s merge with the popular culture of the 1990s and the 2000s (See Figures 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5).
Figure 2.3 Reprints of Casasola photos for sale next to the Zócalo in Cuernavaca, Morelos. July 2006. Photo by Stephany Slaughter

Figure 2.4 Reprints of Casasola photo of Zapata taken after his death, for sale in a weekly antique market in Puebla, Mexico July 2006. Photo by Stephany Slaughter.
In contrast with traditional representations of General Zapata, some T-shirts and posters depart from the reverent depictions of the national hero, demonstrating a crack in the hegemonic discourse that opens a space for recoding. For example, a series of caricatures by Martín López empty Zapata of Revolutionary nationalism through parody. He combines iconography traditionally associated with Zapata such as his stance in the Casasola photo, his moustache, sombrero and bandoliers with US cartoons such as the Simpsons and several internationally recognized Looney Toons characters to create

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29 This T-shirt includes one of the most famous Casasola photos superimposed as the central image—a presidential Zapata holding his rifle in one hand and saber in the other. This particular image has been widely circulated, imitated and recoded, as we shall see later in this chapter. Photo by Stephany Slaughter (Cuernavaca, MX 2003)
images such as “General Homero Zapata” (See Figure 2.6), “Bartrix Revolutions” and untitled images of Speedy, Taz and Yosemite Zapata.  

This consumable, transcultural Zapata seems to have little in common with the idealized Zapata, Mexican national hero. However some recent images rely precisely on

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30 Recently in Mexico (at least in Mexico City), there has been an explosion of cartoon caricatures of Mexican icons by the artist Martín López, which have taken the form of T-shirts, posters, post cards, and more. From Looney Toon’s characters to Sponge Bob and the Simpsons, López creates transnational parodies of Mexican icons such as Homer as Pedro Infante mourning the loss of “Torito” in Ustedes los ricos (Ismael Rodriguez 1948) and Homer as Juan Diego at the feet of Olive Oil as the Virgin of Guadalupe. López’s caricatures also recode Revolutionary icons through the use of popular US cartoon images. These include the above-mentioned “General Homero Zapata,” where the sombrero, moustache and munitions belts transform the pot-bellied Homer Simpson into Emiliano Zapata. López also depicts Bart Simpson as Zapata in “Bartrix Revolutions,” the ever trouble-making rebellious child, dons the oversized sombrero, moustache and munitions belt along with Matrix style sunglasses and futuristic weapon. Other examples include Taz, speedy, and Yosemite Sam as Zapata—all with sombrero, moustache and bandoliers.
the relationship between Zapata and the nation for their recodings. In contrast to the hybrid Zapata/Homer that sits deterritorialized31 somewhere between US and Mexican cultures, Aca Jeans, a Mexican company that started in Acapulco, has used Zapata’s image in a marketing campaign that anchors him in discourses of the Mexican Nation. The placement of the slogan, “Real Mexican Jeans,” next to a representation of Zapata’s face with jeans in place of his famous moustache, implies that Zapata stands for what is truly Mexican—albeit in English rather than Spanish (See Figure 2.7).

![Figure 2.7 Photo of Aca Jeans shopping bag courtesy of Ignacio Corona.](image)

What is it about Zapata that allows for so many appropriations, from the state sponsored license plates and metro icons to the sometimes parodic, sometimes commercial recodings of this free-floating signifier? What do these recent representations

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31 With reference to the deterritorialization of culture, Inda and Rosaldo describe “deteritorialized” as a term “used to refer to this general weakening of the ties between culture and place, to the dislodging of cultural subjects and objects from particular or fixed locations of space and time. It points to how cultural processes readily transcend specific territorial boundaries. It designates a world of things fundamentally in motion” (11).
demonstrate about the place of Revolutionary iconography, and by extension the Revolution itself, in contemporary Mexico? In this chapter I argue that the discourses of Revolutionary nationalism have been integral to the (re)definition of the Mexican nation and have (re)formed (counter)hegemonies. Where the PRI held power over hegemonic discourses of Revolutionary nationalism for much of its seventy years in office, this dominance did not preclude the formation of competing discourses since, as Raymond Williams points out, “the reality of any hegemony, in the extended political and cultural sense, is that, while by definition it is always dominant, it is never either total or exclusive. At any time, forms of alternative or directly oppositional politics and culture exist as significant elements in the society” (“Marxism” 113).32 As the PRI lost political hegemony, alternative and counter-discourses gained visibility. Analyzing the recodings of discourses of Revolutionary nationalism through the case study of Emiliano Zapata reveals cracks in the hegemonic Revolutionary monolith, which open spaces for alternative discourses that depend on both hegemonic and alternative ideological systems for intelligibility.

Representations of Zapata change over time and perform socio-cultural work with regard to national identity. A consideration of all Revolutionary discourse and the role of representations of Zapata within it would provide material for an entire study in itself.33 Therefore, this chapter will concentrate on two specific moments of national identity crisis: the decades following the Revolution (especially the 1920s and 30s) when the

32 Also cited in Stephen, “Pro” 42-3; and Zapata xxxvi-xxvii.

33 Though not an exhaustive list, for examples of films, novels, plays, and artwork that take Zapata as their subject to different degrees, see Appendix B.
figure of Zapata was first mobilized as a key element by the state in the process of institutionalizing Revolutionary nationalism; and the decades following the “death” of the Revolution through the adoption of neoliberal policies (especially the 1990s and 2000s) when Zapata’s image broke loose from its nationalist moorings as the forces of globalization and neoliberalism put pressure on traditional discourses of Revolutionary nationalism. Since an understanding of the latter depends on the former, this chapter will first explore the hegemonic Revolutionary discourse established as part of the post-Revolutionary nation-building project in the decades following the Revolution in an attempt to unify the fragmented Mexico that followed ten years of civil unrest. Over time, these images have been recoded in response to evolving contexts of national identity. The new images rely on their antecedents, but estrange them. The crux of this chapter will demonstrate a crisis in hegemonic revolutionary discourse through an analysis of recent cultural productions that offer alternative discourses of Revolutionary nationalism in response to the crumbling of the hegemonic edifice.

Frederick Turner in *The Dynamic of Mexican Nationalism* describes the process of Post-Revolutionary hero-creation as a tactic to help peasants feel a sense of connection to the nation, since “many of the peasant participants who had no effective sense of identification with the ‘nation’ could identify themselves with a personalistic leader” (115). In the case of the Mexican Revolution, according to Turner, “individuals gradually developed a new sense of nationalism as their personalist leaders came to be invoked as national heroes” (116). This chapter concentrates on one such leader: Emiliano Zapata. Though other personalistic leaders certainly served in this process, and other
Revolutionary heroes have been eternalized as part of Revolutionary nationalism, none share the polyvalent qualities that have allowed Emiliano Zapata to be mobilized for so many purposes by so many groups across the decades following the Revolution through to the present. This chapter analyzes the role of representations of Emiliano Zapata in several aspects of discourses of Revolutionary Nationalism: hegemonic, indigenist, neo-indigenist and alternative. I will first scrutinize the hegemonic discourses of Revolutionary nationalism and the role of public art projects, specifically those that depict Emiliano Zapata, in legitimizing the post-Revolutionary nation. One aspect of this dominant discourse is the role of indigenous peoples in the Mexican Nation as exemplified by Diego Rivera’s indigenist murals in the 1920s and 30s.

Attempts to offer alternatives to hegemonic discourses of Revolutionary nationalism have appeared in recent years. Film director Alfonso Arau draws upon Diego Rivera’s artwork as part of his neo-indigenism where, although he claims to offer a counter discourse, he actually falls into perpetuating the indigenism of the post-Revolutionary nation-building project. By taking up a combination of Indigenist and Indigenous discourses as part of its strategy, the neo-Zapatista movement has offered a more compelling alternative discourse of Revolutionary nationalism in the context of neo-liberal globalization. With globalization comes a re-considering of the nation in

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34 Venustiano Carranza and Emiliano Zapata were named official national heroes at the same time in 1931, but Carranza never shared Zapata’s popular appeal. Villa was and is a popular hero, and his cultural representations in film and literature are more ubiquitous than Zapata’s, but he was not adopted by the state as an official national hero in the same way as Zapata, with not even an official statue erected to him until 1969 (O’Malley 144).

35 I am using the term “Indigenist discourse” and “Indigenism” (from the Spanish terms indigenista and indigenismo) to refer to discourses about indigenous peoples by non-indigenous peoples. I will use “Indigenous discourse” to refer to discourses about indigenous peoples by indigenous peoples.
transnational terms. The final section of the chapter examines another alternative discourse of Revolutionary nationalism that crosses borders through the appropriation of Zapata’s image by Chicano artists and activists in the United States. Gender is not the central focus of this chapter as it is in chapters 3 and 4. However, I begin to outline the ways in which the discourses of Revolutionary nationalism are strongly inflected with gendered overtones by exploring the way Zapata has been framed in masculinist terms.

2.1 Hegemonic Revolutionary Nationalism: Constructing the Official Zapata

Following the civil war years of the Revolution, the state needed to deploy a new discourse of nation in order to unite multiple dissenting factions after over ten years of civil strife. In the case of post-Revolutionary Mexico, this process aided in the project to present the new government as legitimate and as continuing Revolutionary ideals by projecting solidarity with the masses and an interest in land reform. Part of this nation-

36 Transnationalism is related to globalization, though not synonymous. In his 1995 article “The Local and the Global: The Anthropology of Globalization and Transnationalism,” Michael Kearny explains, “Transnationalism overlaps globalization but typically has a more limited purview. Whereas global processes are largely centered on specific national territories and take place in a global space, transnational processes are anchored in and transcend one or more nation-states. Thus transnationalism is the term of choice when referring, for example, to the migration of nationals across the borders of one or more nations” (548. Also cited in Inda and Rosaldo 28-9). This movement across borders, the “blurring of borders” emphasized by the term (I. Rodriguez, Globalization as Neo- 15), helps to frame the discussion of cultural border crossing in this section of my dissertation where the two nations of the “transnational” reference are Mexico and the United States.
building project included inventing new traditions and heroes to befit the new image, which over time have taken on new meanings to fit new national contexts.

Ironically the same man whom the state demonized during the Revolution as a bandit and enemy of the state became one of the central images of post-Revolutionary nationalism. This section will focus on visual cultural production in the decades immediately following the Revolution to argue that post-Revolutionary discourses appropriated the image of Emiliano Zapata, especially through public art projects, to legitimate the government and forge a hegemonic vision of the Mexican nation in a way that was accessible to the non-literate masses.

During the Revolution itself, the “official” version of Emiliano Zapata was that of an outlaw and bandit. Regardless of the truth of the man, his portrayal in publications of the time helped create the official myth of Zapata the villain. Both General Victoriano Huerta and interim president Francisco León de la Barra called Zapata and his followers “bandits” (Womack 121) and the press branded him “The Modern Attila.” According to historian John Womack in a footnote, this moniker published the 20th of June 1911 in the newspaper El Imparcial “began the legend of Zapata as Savage, the badman who careered through the South raping, boozing, and ransacking for eight straight years” (100). The “official” negative version of the “Attila of the South” was propagated to counteract popular versions of “El caudillo del sur” in the hopes of rousing public sentiment against Zapata and his followers and in favor of the government.


38 O’Malley also discusses the press’s characterization of Zapata as “barbaric” and a “bandit” (42).
However, following the Revolution, the government’s portrayal of Zapata changed dramatically. Álvaro Obregón used him to help claim legitimacy as the Revolutionary “heir” of Francisco Madero and Emiliano Zapata with the purpose of appealing to the masses. The early 1920s saw pro-Zapata propaganda replace the previous image of “Atila del sur” since “the need to convince the campesinos that the government was fighting for their cause soon led to the promotion of a new, positive public image of Zapata himself” (O’Malley 44). Plutarcho Elías Calles declared himself a Zapatista during the presidential campaign of 1924 when he claimed, “the revolutionary program of Zapata, that agrarian program is mine.” However, this campaign promise was not fulfilled once he took office (in O’Malley 51, 53).39

Public celebrations of Zapata reflected a decline in discourses of Revolutionary Nationalism from the presidential office of the Calles administration and for several years Zapata memorials retreated to small towns. In 1929, following Obregón’s second run for presidency in which he capitalized on his “agrarianist reputation,” obregonistas brought renewed interest to celebrations of Zapata not only in small towns but also in the capital (O’Malley 54). The following year the government organized “a full-scale memorial to Zapata in Mexico City—a symbolic advance in Zapata’s evolution as an official national hero” (58). These public performances helped to solidify the hegemonic discourse of Revolutionary nationalism, suggesting that the government supported the agrarian cause through their appropriation of its popular leader, Emiliano Zapata. In 1931, this once enemy of the state became its official national hero when congress declared him such and added his name to the wall of the congressional chamber. With this act, “Zapata was

39 For more on this event, see also Brunk’s article “Remembering Emiliano Zapata” p.465
officially incorporated into the hagiography of the Revolution. The incorporation, however, did not render Zapata’s image static; the government continued to remold him in its image, not itself in his” (O’Malley 60).

From statues to paintings, the arts, and especially public art projects, reflected the changing official image of Zapata. The first monument to Zapata, erected in Cuautla in 1932 to commemorate the anniversary of his death, exemplifies the way in which public art, such as statues, reflected official manipulation of Zapata’s image:

Zapata’s remains were transferred to a crypt in one of the main plazas. Atop the crypt stood a granite Zapata on horseback, looking down to and placing a hand on the shoulder of a simple campesino, who looked up to him in admiration […] Rather than the camaraderie and social equality that characterized the relationship between Zapata and his supporters, it showed a superior man who helps the humble people, who depend on him, not on themselves, for care and guidance. The statue, then, symbolized a patriarchal concept of a hero as well as the government’s concept of its relationship to the people. Through its pronouncements and conspicuous adulation of revolutionary leaders, the government strove to maintain a revolutionary image, yet its relationship to the people was authoritarian—at times benevolently so—but that did not alter the imbalance of power in any fundamental way. The government would lead, the people were to follow. (O’Malley 60)40

Historian Ilene O’Malley’s astute reading of the statue demonstrates the way in which public art reflected power relationships between the government and the people through the appropriation of Revolutionary icons. The suggestion of a “patriarchal concept of a

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40 See also p.125-6 of Benjamin’s chapter, “Monument: From the Ruins of the Old Regime” in La Revolución: Mexico’s Great Revolution as Memory, Myth and History. Brunk agrees with O’Malley’s reading of the statue as paternalistic and describes this monument as the location of the commemorative speech of Zapata’s death delivered by Miguel Aleman in 1950 as an example of state uses of Zapata to claim continued legitimacy (“Remembering” 470).
“hero” exposes the gendered hierarchy proposed by the post-revolutionary nation that, as I will show further in Chapter 3, combined discourses of gender and nation.

The Mexican mural movement in the 1920s and 30s led by José Vasconcellos, Minister of Education (1921-24) of Alvaro Obregón’s administration, played a key role in the perpetuation of hegemonic revolutionary nationalism through public art that included representations of Zapata and other images of Mexican history as part of the official nation-building process. The muralists painted their revolutionary visions of Mexico, a vision not shared by the government in action, but which it appropriated discursively in order to facilitate its legitimization. According to Mexican writer Octavio Paz, the government took advantage of the Marxist and revolutionary aspects of the murals to project a “progressive and revolutionary” image without really being one or the other:

Esas obras que se llaman a sí mismas revolucionarias y que, en los casos de Rivera y Siqueiros, exponen un marxismo simplista y maniqueo, fueron encomendadas, patrocinadas y pagadas por un gobierno que nunca fue marxista y que había dejado de ser revolucionario. El gobierno aceptó que los pintores pintasen en los muros oficiales una versión pseudo-marxista de la historia de México, en blanco y negro, porque esa pintura contribuía a darle una fisonomía progresista y revolucionaria. La máscara del Estado mexicano ha sido la del nacionalismo populista y progresista. (“Re/visiones” 247)

41 Lynn Stephen links the art movement with “conscious attempts to popularize the Mexican Revolution” through textbooks in her analysis of the 1933 textbook Fermin that included illustrations by Diego Rivera (Zapata 44-5). She exposes the ways the SEP (Secretaría de Educación Pública, proposed by Vasconcelos and formed in 1921), especially under Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-40), sanitized Zapata and contributed to his “re-creation as a national hero” (42). For in depth studies of how the government promoted its version of Revolutionary Nationalism through education, see Stephen p. 40-54, Dennis Gilbert’s 2003 article,”Emiliano Zapata: Textbook Hero” and Mary Kay Vaughn’s 1997 Cultural Politics in Revolution: Teachers, Peasants, and Schools in Mexico, 1930-1940. For education and indigenous concerns, see Natividad Gutiérrez.
The government opened a public space to the painters as part of a nation-building project while at the same time appropriating the images they created for its own agenda.

Perhaps the work that most contributes to the discourse of the Mexican nation is Diego Rivera’s monumental “History of Mexico” (1929-35) painted as part of the government mural program on the three adjoining walls along the main staircase of the National Palace in Mexico City. The right wall portrays the pre-Columbian era, the left the contemporary moment in which Rivera painted, and the central and largest mural (consisting of five panels, each under an arch) depicts approximately the period between the arrival of the Spanish at the end of the 15th century and the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution at the beginning of the 20th. The placement of this national narrative in the seat of the Mexican government “signaled the real beginnings of the institutionalization of the Mexican mural movement [. . . .] Nowhere was the dual process of cultural institutionalization and emergent national identity more keenly articulated than in Rivera’s mural ‘The History of Mexico’” (Rochfort 84). What discourse(s) of the Mexican nation does this mural represent?

Rivera’s vision of Mexican history depicts the advance of the nation through identifiable figures that are predominantly male. Even as the murals attempted to create a cohesive image of the Mexican nation, they also “contributed to a darker side of the new hegemony, a heterosexist, patriarchal machismo [. . . .] While the male heroes were turned into world famous icons, the women who filled the murals remained largely anonymous, noble, and quietly enduring mestizas or exotic Indian princesses”
Focusing specifically on Rivera’s “History of Mexico,” women are excluded from the Revolutionary narrative—no women are among the figures depicted as part of the Mexican Revolution. The women that do appear are faceless indigenous figures that face the men as if they are spectators to history rather than active agents of it (See, for example, the lower left and right quadrants of Figure 2.8, and below the left pillar of the center arch of Figure 2.9).

Figure 2.8. Detail of the arch left of center of the Diego Rivera mural in the National Palace, Mexico City. Zapata appears in the upper right corner holding the Plan de Ayala. Photo by Stephany Slaughter.

42 McCaughn’s observation is not limited to Rivera’s murals, but refers to “the muralists” in general.
Figure 2.9. Central arch of Diego Rivera’s “The History of Mexico” National Palace, Mexico City. Photo by Stephany Slaughter.
Among the identifiable masculine historical agents of this national narrative, Rivera portrays Zapata to the left of the central arch of the mural “The History of Mexico” in the National Palace, where Don Porfirio Díaz stands confronted by Revolutionary figures such as Zapata, Otilio Montaño, Carranza and Vasconcelos among others (See Figure 2.8). Rivera overtly links Zapata to the discourse of Revolutionary nationalism that embraces agrarian reform by painting him holding the “Plan de Ayala,” the manifesto that guided his fight to return land to the peasants.

Zapata appears again, even more prominently as the center top image of the central arch behind a red and white banner with his famous slogan, “Tierra y libertad.” He stands next to Felipe Carrillo Puerto, governor of Yucatan (1922-24) who Rivera identifies as an exemplum of Revolutionary leadership in action “who had proved himself a true man of the people” (Rivera, My Art 98). Facing these men, a worker points back towards the first arch, perhaps suggesting an unfinished end to Revolutionary goals (See Figure 2.9). Rivera also aligns Zapata with other national heroes from different points of armed conflict and subsequent national (re)definition, what art historian Desmond Rochfort refers to as “significant moments of resistance and heroism” (87). Looking top to bottom in the same line as Zapata, we can identify Father Miguel Hidalgo, national hero of Independence. Further down, below the eagle, is Cuauhtémoc, hero of the Conquest. All three, Zapata, Hidalgo and Cuauhtémoc, are fallen heroes who died resisting authority and who are now part of the official discourse of the Mexican nation.

43 Socialist governor Felipe Carillo Puerto is also associated with pioneering advances in the women’s movement in Yucatán. For further information see Soto’s chapter “The Women’s Movement in Yucatán 1915-1924” in Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman and Stephanie Smith’s Ph.D. dissertation, “Engendering the Revolution: Women and State Formation in Yucatan, Mexico 1872-1930.”
Rivera represented their connection with the nation visually through aligning them with the central image of the eagle eating the serpent on a nopal, the same symbol of the Mexican nation found on the Mexican flag.\textsuperscript{44}

Rivera concurrently painted a second mural that also participates in the discourse of Revolutionary nationalism, this time commissioned by US Ambassador to Mexico Dwight Morrow. As part of the cycle “History of Cuernavaca and Morelos” (1929-30) that he painted in the Palacio de Cortés (See Figure 2.12), Rivera imitates a popular Casasola photo of Zapata that circulated widely during Zapata’s lifetime (See Figure 2.10), in part thanks to artist reproductions. In fact, it is possible that another artist’s rendering of the photo inspired Rivera. Pre-dating Rivera’s work, José Guadalupe Posada made an etching based on the Casasola photo, a common practice for his work with Vanegas Arroyo illustrating broadsheets (See Figure 2.11).\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{44} Natividad Gutiérrez points out that this symbol comes from Aztec mythology and problematizes the adoption of “Aztec or Mexica culture [as] the main source of ancient historicity favored by Mexican nationalism” as part of an indigenist project of homogenizing indigenous cultures and as valorizing a distant mythic indigenous past (3). For further explanation see her study, \textit{Nationalist Myths and Ethnic Identities: Indigenous Intellectuals and the Mexican State}.

\textsuperscript{45} For studies of Posada see: Patrick Frank’s \textit{Posada’s Broadsheets: Mexican Popular Imagery, 1890-1910}; Rod Tyler’s \textit{Posada’s Mexico; Monografía: Las obras de José Guadalupe Posada, grabador mexicano con introducción de Diego Rivera}, edited by Frances Toor, Paul O’Higgins and Blas Vanegas Arroyo; \textit{Posada’s Popular Mexican Prints}, edited by Roberto Berdecio and Stanley Appelbaum; \textit{Posada: el grabador mexicano}, catalog for the 2005-6 exposition in Sevilla, Spain; Thomas Gretton’s article “Posada and the ‘Popular’: Commodities and Social Constructs in Mexico before the Revolution”; Ilan Stavan’s article, “José Guadalupe Posada, Lampooner.”
Figure 2.10 Reprint of the “Presidential” Casasola photo for sale in Cuernavaca, July 2006. Photo by Stephany Slaughter

Figure 2.11 Emiliano Zapata Etching by Posada (Berdecio and Appelbaum 78)
The etching circulated widely, attached to broadsheets that reported events related to Zapata (including his death, which occurred several years after Posada himself died) and as illustrations for corridos that found their way around the country. This dissemination would guarantee that Rivera’s image based on the same photo would be immediately recognizable. In this painting Zapata bears a presidential stature with his sashes of the colors of the Mexican flag, and his hand resting on a sword. Added to the presidential codes of this portrait, the rifle and the munitions belts situate him clearly within the Revolution. The rifle and saber contribute to the overdetermined masculinity of the pose where both weapons serve as phallic extensions of (masculine) power.

Figure 2.12. Diego Rivera portrait of “Presidential Zapata” in Palacio de Cortés, Cuernavaca, Mexico. Photo by Stephany Slaughter.

46 As mentioned in other sections of the dissertation, this particular image has been the basis for several recodings of Zapata, including the López Speedy González comic and David Salazar’s “Mandilón” (See Figure 2.24)
Rivera demonstrates Zapata’s polyvalence by depicting two very different representations of Zapata as part of the same overall mural. In contrast to the presidential rendering of Zapata discussed above, another part of the mural in the same room depicts a Zapata of a different socio-economic standing in the image that forms part of “The History of Cuernavaca and Morelos—The Conversion of the Indian” (1931). Here Rivera portrays Zapata as a *campesino*, a peasant, wearing clothing typical of this social class. Rivera places Zapata within a social class to which he did not belong to make him even more the image of the champion of the *pueblo* that comes from the *pueblo*. In contrast with the presidential Zapata that implies leadership from above, this peasant Zapata suggests a discourse of Revolutionary nationalism lead from below against the forces that oppress, which are represented in the rest of the mural through images of colonial abuses of the indigenous. According to Desmond Rochfort in *Mexican Muralists*: “the final imposing image of Zapata, accompanied by his white horse, symbolizes liberation from the colonial shackles of conquest, from landlordism and the restrictions of an imposed faith” (95). This Zapata, however, is not rebelling against the contemporary Mexican state, nor the state of the Revolution, but has been safely re-cast at the time of the conquest. From this safe distance Zapata standing on the sword of the fallen Spaniard (not federal soldier)

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47 Margarita Zapata, Emiliano’s granddaughter, suggested he may have worn this style of clothing when he worked in the fields. However, none of the popular Cassasola photos show him in anything but *charro* suits. As many of these photos are clearly posed, it is likely that Zapata and/or the photographer chose to portray Zapata as *charro* rather than Zapata as *campesino*. Margarita claims Zapata would have chosen the *charro* look to reflect dignity. Zapata’s clothing style appears in the documentary, “¿Dónde estás Emiliano?” where he is described as “un charro un tanto dandy.” In the documentary, Katz claims that “al vestirse en la manera que hacía, daba cierta nobleza a la lucha.” Some, however, saw this attention to appearance as an indication that he was “demasiado vanidoso.” In his biography of Zapata, Historian John Womack suggests that Zapata’s attention to clothing, while indicative of belonging to a different social class, did not keep him from being considered one of the people (7).
suggests the power of the people, of the subaltern, to rebel against the colonial oppressor, declaring a space within the national narrative, without overt threat to the hegemonic post-Revolutionary nation.

Figure 2.13. Diego Rivera painting in Palacio de Cortés, Cuernavaca, Mexico. Photo by Stephany Slaughter

48 Rivera’s legendary image, pictured here, helps create a myth of Revolutionary nationalism that is exported, as evidenced by the covers of US publications such as Enrique Krauze’s English translation of *Mexico: Biography of Power* and John Lash’s *The Hero: Manhood and Power*. In both, Zapata’s image is related to power: the in terms of the nation and the second in terms of gender. Hollywood also perpetuates this version of Zapata. John Steinbeck picks up the mythification process where Rivera left off in what Robert Morseberger claims is the first film that deals specifically with the life of Emiliano Zapata. In his script for the 1952 movie *¡Viva Zapata!*, directed by Elia Kazan and starring Marlon Brando and Anthony Quinn, Steinbeck describes Zapata on a white horse, an image that according to Robert Morseberger “comes from Diego Rivera’s mural of Zapata” (“Steinbeck’s” 218).
Other artists also took up the image of Zapata as one of the masses as part of their contribution to the discourses of Revolutionary nationalism. David Alfaro Siqueiros portrays Zapata as one of many in his “From the Dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz to the Revolution—the Revolutionaries” (1957-65), painted in Chapultepec Castle (See Figure 2.14). Painted over twenty years after the Rivera mural, Siqueiros’s mural depicts a continuation of many of the same discourses, attesting to the continued importance of Zapata in the national imaginary. Here, Zapata stands within the crowd rather than in the front line as in Rivera’s portrait. Like the Rivera painting, Zapata’s white clothing connects him with the other soldiers and identifies them all as from the same campesino class. However, Zapata’s red hat and scarf draw the viewer’s eye to the only red hat in a sea of yellow and white headwear. Siqueiros elevates Zapata beyond the anonymity of the crowd as his face is also more fully defined than the rest. Once again his polyvalence allows him to be both one of the masses and unique. Unlike the Rivera painting where Zapata stands at the head of the other campesinos, here he stands in the second line of people—leading from within the group rather than shown in a position of power in front of it.49

The same red color that draws attention to Zapata also draws the eye to a woman in red who clings to the soldier at her side. Unlike the Rivera portrait that does not include women at all, soldaderas are present on the periphery of this portrait tucked into the corner of the room, rather suggestive of their place in the periphery of the discourses.

49 Like the Rivera image, this one has been widely circulated in the United States as it was later used by Rage Against the Machine for “Battle of Mexico City” concert posters (and DVD cover) in the 1990s.
of Revolutionary nationalism as portrayed by the muralists. As scholar Edward McCaughn observes, “It would be impossible to guess from this image that thousands of women fought in the revolution, several serving as officers” (102).

Figure 2.14 Photo taken by Stephany Slaughter of Siqueiros mural in the Castillo de Chapultapec, Mexico City.

A gendered reading of the image reveals a representation of phallic masculine power through the repetition of the erect bayonets. The few women present are unarmed—they lack the phallus and by extension, they lack power. Further, as unarmed, they are not shown as equal contributors to the fight. Reading the mural as part of the narrative of the Mexican Nation, it joins historical narrative that, as I show in Chapter 4,

50 Many reprints of this painting focus on the men in the central image and crop the women out all together (see for example, the Rage Against the Machine DVD cover referenced previously).

51 See chapter 4 for further analysis of representations of the Soldadera.
negates women’s political agency and military contribution at the time of the Revolution and further suggests that women remain on the sidelines of political struggle even in the decades following the Revolution.

Where for the most part women were left out of the hegemonic post-Revolution nation-building discourses, some effort was made to include a discourse of the nation that would incorporate indigenous Mexico. An in-depth study of ethnic discourses with relation to the Mexican nation is outside the confines of this dissertation. However, I am particularly interested the way that indigenista discourses have intersected with discourses of Revolutionary nationalism—with the figure of Emiliano Zapata at the point of intersection.

Rivera, for example, included pre-Columbian Mexico prominently in his “History of Mexico” and in his “History of Cuernavaca and Morelos.” With reference to these murals, art historian Laura García Sánchez argues that Rivera’s use of pre-Columbian art styles, such as the “narrative form of the large bas-reliefs of pre-Columbian Mexico, i.e. the pictographs of the Toltecs, Mixtecs and Aztecs had represented their history and rituals” shows that he sought to create art “in really indigenous terms, and not only by reproducing images of their pre-Columbian past” (56). In this sense, Rivera enveloped his work in indigenous symbolism. While this may be true, Rivera did indeed incorporate an idealized indigenous Mexico into the discourse of the nation as represented by his murals.

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52 For a historical overview of policies of Indigenism from the Revolution to the 1990s, see Natividad Gutiérrez’s *Nationalist Myths and Ethnic Identities: Indigenous Intellectuals and the Mexican State*. See especially chapter 6, “Mexicanization or the Plurality of Mexico.” See also Analisa Taylor’s article, “The Ends of Indigenismo in Mexico.” There is also still much to be studied with regards to representations of race and ethnicity in discourses of the Mexican Revolution and their intersection with discourses of gender and sexuality.
Art scholar Desmond Rochfort claims that Rivera’s idealization of the indigenous past is deliberate:

Despite its references to the harshness of the pre-Columbian world, the murals of this period at Cuernavaca and the National Palace largely idealize that world and its culture. Rivera’s idealization is, of course, deliberate, contrasting starkly with the world he has portrayed of the European colonialists, in order to suggest a concept of Mexican national integrity. This is rooted in the idea of resistance, against the violation of the country both by outsiders, and by dictators from within. Rivera, therefore places emphasis on the Indian past and the Indian in general as being the true representative of that identity. For Rivera, the pre-Columbian past represents a time in Mexican history when the nation was able to determine its direction free from outside domination. In Rivera’s hands, the indigenous world thus becomes a powerful nationalist symbol. (99)

Rochfort fails to recognize that this idealization ignores the condition of living indigenous peoples and repeats the pattern of valorizing and co-opting a distant past as part of the nation that began, according to Enrique Florescano, in the Porfiriato.53 Although Rivera includes an indigenista discourse in his murals and attempts to include indigenous people in his vision of the Mexican nation, his representations are arguably problematic in that he most prominently depicts them in a distant past, at the time of the conquest or before. At other historical moments included in the mural, many indigenous figures are anonymous, faceless spectators rather than active participants in history. Rivera’s indigenous may be portrayed as at the heart of the Mexican nation, but at the same time they are romanticized, exoticized figures in a discourse meant to be consumable by a larger non-indigenous public.

53 See Chapter 5 of Enrique Florescano’s Imágenes de la patria (2005) for a description of the ways in which the Porfiriato, in contrast to previous moments in Mexican history, re-valorizes the prehispanic era.
The murals in both the National Palace and the Palacio de Cortés include discourses of Revolutionary nationalism and discourses of ethnic nationalism, but not necessarily in direct dialog with each other. Rivera brings the two discourses together in “Blood of the Revolutionary Martyrs Fertilizing the Earth” (1926, Autonomous University of Chapingo, Mexico). The mural juxtaposes the duality of death with the image of Zapata and life with the image of growing corn. 54 Corn as life is central to the Popol Vuh, the pre-Columbian creation myth of the Maya that explains that the Maya are made of corn, planted by the (male) hero twins. The phallic weaponry pictured with Zapata in other representations is replaced by phallic corn stalks. However, where the weaponry represents masculine power related to taking life, the corn represents a power related to giving life, a power often associated with women (literally through child birth, and figuratively through “la madre tierra” or “mother earth” for agriculture). In his death, Zapata gives life to the people through the corn that grows on top of him, fertilized by his body and symbolically his ideas. He gives metaphoric life to the people through his fight for “tierra y libertad,” that continues after his death.

54 Rochfort explains: “The juxtaposition within the second panel of Zapata and Montaño’s death with the abundant harvest of maize that grows above them introduces the dualities of life and death and of social revolution and natural evolution” (71, 75).
The discourses of Revolutionary nationalism that emerged following the Revolution, especially as represented by Diego Rivera and the public art projects, continue to impact concepts of the nation as expressed in another moment of national identity crisis: the neo-liberal era. Attesting to the longevity of Rivera’s work, the mural “Blood of the Martyrs” re-appears almost seventy years later as a part of Alfonso Arau’s film, *Zapata: Sueño del heroe*. As the camera begins the pan of the reenactment of the mural in the penultimate scene of the film, paralleling the opening scene, a voice-in-off speaks in Náhuatl. This circularity of narration frames the film in the indigenous

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55 These murals, though aimed at the post-Revolutionary public of the 1930s, have remained an active part of the discourse of nation through their inclusion in films such as *Río Escondido* (Dir. Emilio Fernández, 1948) that overtly take up a discourse of the Mexican nation. As a popular tourist attraction, they not only contribute to a vision of Mexico and Mexican history for Mexicans, but also to how Mexico depicts itself to the rest of the world.
language. The camera pans up through roots past the milpa to sky filled with stars, which fades to a bird’s eye view of the fallen Zapata in Chinameca. The dead Zapata awakens, now wearing white with a black bandana instead of his charro uniform—a spiritual Zapata who resembles a new-age practitioner visiting an energy site. The horse awakes and stands with Zapata on his back. An illuminated Zapata rides off and jumps through an arch to triumphant music as the credits begin to roll. How does Arau’s film recode Emiliano Zapata in an attempt to contribute to discourses of the Mexican nation? How does it contribute to an indigenist discourse? Is this film indicative of current trends in these discourses? The next section considers these questions through a close reading of the film.

2.2 Revisiting Indigenist Revolutionary Nationalism in the Neoliberal Era

In the previous section I argued that visual representations, especially public art projects, in the decades immediately following the Revolution appropriated the image of Emiliano Zapata as part of a legitimizing discourse of Revolutionary nationalism. The post-Revolutionary nation-building project strove to forge a hegemonic vision of the Mexican Nation, which implicitly or explicitly also included official discourses of gender (which will be dealt with further in chapters 3 and 4) and ethnicity (which will be dealt with here).
Using concepts of indigenist discourses of Revolutionary nationalism as a bridge, in the following sections I will jump from the post-Revolutionary nation-building project of the decades following the Revolution to the neoliberal era of the 1990s and 2000s where hegemonic discourses of the nation are challenged. I will show how representations of Emiliano Zapata are central to two very different indigenist discourses that have been used as part of alternative discourses of Revolutionary nationalism by film director Alfonso Arau and by the neo-Zapatistas. I will first argue that what Arau imagines to be an alternative discourse is actually a continuity of previous discourses through the example of the film Zapata: Sueño del héroe. I then argue that the neo-Zapatista movement provides an example of an alternative discourse to Revolutionary nationalism that breaks with traditional hegemonic discourses through inclusion of ethnicity as key to re-imagining the Mexican nation.

This section argues that although Arau claims to be providing a counter-discourse to that of the official Mexican nation, his adoption of an indigenist discourse of Revolutionary nationalism actually returns to an outdated discourse of an idealized mestizo nation popularized in the 1920s and 30s especially by Vasconelos and the muralists. In these indigenista discourses, often the distant, exoticized, pre-Columbian age is valued while ignoring current conditions of indigenous people. Although Arau  

56 Vasconcelos elaborated his concept of “mestizaje” (loosely translated as a “mixing of races”) in La raza cósmica (1925). This manifesto for homogenization (and acculturation) of races and ethnicities has been problematized for erasing cultural differences and rendering invisible the many indigenous groups in Mexico. Mestizaje has been integral to the hegemonic discourses of the Mexican nation.

57 An anecdote a tour guide told me in 2000 at the Plaza de tres culturas in Mexico City illustrates this difference. He told a story of a bride who was posing for wedding pictures in front of the remains of the pyramids in Tlateloco, but who yelled at a “filthy indian” to get out of the way because he was “destroying
seems to attempt to include a consideration of indigenous reality, the film still falls into
the trap of exoticizing the indigenous and valorizing the distant past.

Alfonso Arau attempts to participate in the discourse of (re)defining the Mexican
nation at the beginning of the new millennium as a nation that “is awakening to its pre-
Hispanic side and to its millenary culture” (my translation, Mascarúa Sánchez 6B).58
Through his highly criticized, Zapata: Sueño del héroe, Arau further claims to propose an
indigenous counter to official Mexican history:

Durante 500 años se perdió esa herencia prehispánica por una represión brutal, y ahora cada vez la gente habla más de eso, estamos recuperando nuestro lado indígena, la apuesta de mi película es decir: Zapata es un mestizo igual que todos: tiene sangre española y sangre india. Y la historia oficial ignora por completo la parte india, como ignoran toda nuestra cultura india en nuestro país. (Arau in Mascarúa Sánchez 6B)

Arau claims to want to recuperate Mexico’s indigenous as part of his discourse of the
nation, but by claiming that all of Mexico is mestizo, he repeats the same official history
of mestizaje that he claims to be countering. By erasing ethnic differences in his
statement and returning to a discourse of a monolithic mestizo nation, he continues the
cycle of ignoring the needs and concerns of the indigenous population. As part of Arau’s
attempt to destabilize official history and recuperate indigenous narrative, he emphasizes
the indigenous side of Zapata, claiming to be the voice of the subaltern indigenous
pueblo: “me contaron su historia y yo la vengo a contar” (Arau in Peñaloza 2), repeating

58The original text reads: “la apuesta es mostrar que México está despertando a su parte prehispánica y a su cultura milenaria”
the pattern of indigenist discourse where non-indigenous people claim to speak for
indigenous people. 59

Arau employs several techniques to create an “indigenous” narrative, including
the use of the Náhuatl language, an attempt to incorporate indigenous oral traditions, and
a questioning of Western concepts of reality. The opening of the film combines these
elements. The first image, which will repeat in the dénouement of the film, is that of
Zapata sitting in a chair in the ruins of Chinameca with his back to the spectator. Spanish
subtitles accompany the voice-over in Nahuátl that announces, “No es verdad, no es
verdad que venimos a vivir aquí en la tierra, de pronto salimos del sueño, solo venimos a
soñar.” Through language, these opening words suggest an attempt to frame the film
within an indigenous narration. They further question reality through a universal literary
motif that suggests life is a dream—in this case, the “dream of the hero” as the title,
_Zapata: Sueño del héroe_, implies. Though not immediately apparent, the oneiric oral
message is reinforced by the blue hue 60 to the image that suggests an alternate reality and

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59 Arau describes his sources for the film and emphasizes that he is telling the story on behalf of the
Náhuatl speaking people of Zapata’s town: “Veremos aspectos más íntimos y personales del caudillo, su
lucha espiritual según me la contó su gente, los de su pueblo, los chamanes, los viejos, que hablan en
náhuatl. Me contaron su historia y yo la vengo a contar. Ellos dicen que Zapata era un hombre
predestinado, un guerrero sagrado, que nació con una marca: un pequeño lunar en forma de manita sobre el
pecho, la marca de sus ancestros. Al crecer, y frente a las injusticias, los viejos del pueblo le pidieron que
los encabezara, pero él se negó: ¿por qué yo?, soy joven, quiero vivir la vida, a mí me gustan los caballos y
las mujeres', pero un chamán le dice que está predestinado y que no podrá escapar, y empieza a prepararse
para ser un líder. Voy a destacar el peso, la responsabilidad que sintió, pues la decisión implicaba también
la muerte de los que quería, la de él mismo. La prueba de que cumplió su destino es que murió para vivir
eternamente: la historia perpetua del héroe mítico. Eso contaré, respetando los datos históricos. Para ello
me documenté muchísimo; me está ayudando Arturo Beristáin, que no sólo actuará sino que, como trabajó
en una novela sobre la Revolución, y como es un actor muy estudioso, un intelectual serio, está muy
empapado y le pedí que vigilara fechas y sucesos. Claro que a veces me los brinco, porque la narración lo
pide, y porque ésta es una historia de ficción” (Arau in Peñaloza 2).

60 The use of a blue tint is repeated later in the film, as is the image of Zapata that opens the film. In the
later scene it is more readily apparent that the blue indicates an alternate oneiric reality where the dead and
introduces the spectator to Arau’s “narrative language” that is inspired by magical realism:

Entrará en la tradición del realismo mágico, que es más una etiqueta de los editores para nombrar el boom de la literatura latinoamericana, que se inicia con Juan Rulfo. Es éste quien comienza a evocar las distintas realidades de las que hablan nuestros chamanes: hay una realidad que tocamos y vemos, pero no es la única, pues aquí a un lado hay otras paralelas, igual de reales, que no vemos. Estamos en la tercera dimensión, pero de la cuarta para arriba no hay espacio ni tiempo. En Zapata tenemos personajes de la cuarta dimensión, que están muertos, pero desde ahí narran su historia. Por eso la hacemos en esta hacienda en ruinas, sin resanar: como si de ellas surgieran los personajes; una especie de fantasmas, pero no a la Disney, aquí son totalmente reales. Yo no le llamaría realismo mágico, sino realismo múltiple o superrealismo. (Arau in Peñaloza 3) 61

The first ten minutes of the film attempt to establish these multiple realities within the context of an indigenist discourse that emphasizes the supernatural through images such as the three “brujas” that appear and disappear throughout the course of the film.

Indigenous music announces the entrance of these three women who perform a dance at the Tepozteco. The camera focuses on the eldest of the three as she disappears only to reappear in the following scene that depicts Emiliano’s birth.

The figure of Juana Lucio, chamana/bruja, provides a point of connection between realities and time periods. From the beginning scenes of the film, she links discourses of Revolution, ethnicity and gender as she announces the newborn Zapata as a

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61 Production director Eugenio Zanetti also explains that the visuals of the film were inspired by Juan Rulfo and Pedro Páramo: “Poco a poco entenderemos que la historia que vemos fue contada por personajes que están muertos, y que habitan en un mundo en ruinas” (Franco Reyes, “La cinta” 2). If it was Arau’s intention, as Zanetti states here or as Arau himself states in Peñaloza, for the dead to narrate the story, he does not do so effectively. I would argue that the public in general (myself included) would not pick up on this narrative strategy through viewing the film.
messianic figure that unites indigenous ancestors, indigenous hero Cuauhtémoc and indigenous god Quetzalcóatl— all male icons who have been repeatedly appropriated as part of the discourse of the Mexican nation. A close up of the newborn child reveals a birthmark in the shape of a hand on his chest, which provokes a gasp from the priest as he declares it to be “la mano del diablo.” Juana Lucio quickly intervenes and announces that the mark indicates that the child has been chosen by the ancestors. According to Arau, it is this birthmark and the mystery that surrounds it that inspired him to go beyond the Zapata of official history and to emphasize a link with Quetzalcóatl:

En la biografía que escribió el historiador John Womack, se habla de que Zapata había nacido con un lunar extraño sobre el pecho, parecía una manita. Luego lei que cuando lo mataron y el gobierno expuso su cadáver para intimidar al pueblo, las mujeres buscaban el lunar y éste desapareció. Eso me llamó la atención y empecé a investigar. Comencé a tener contacto con la gente de Morelos y con todos los líderes espirituales de ese estado y me di cuenta que para ellos Zapata era una reencarnación de Quetzalcóatl, estaba tratando con un héroe mítico, no sólo con un héroe revolucionario o político. Ahora veo a Zapata como un líder espiritual. (Arau in Vértiz “Anuncia” 72)

_Arau is not the only contemporary artist to combine discourses of Revolutionary nationalism with discourses of indigenist nationalism through linking Zapata with the mythic Quetzalcóatl._ In 1991 muralist Roberto Rodríguez Navarro included an image of Zapata as Quetzalcóatl in his monumental “El caudillo del sur,” painted at the Museo-Casa Emiliano Zapata. Rather than representing a human birth, the artist depicts the light-skinned infant Zapata crawling from the mouth of the plumed serpent. He is symbolically Quetzalcóatl’s offspring. The documentary ¿Dónde estás Emiliano? Revisits this mural and interviews Lucio Luna, curator of the museum, who comments, “Se ve algo simbólico. De Quetzalcóatl surge la figura de un niño Zapata quien observa las injusticias contra los nuestros.” The injustices he observes are those of the conquest where the infant Zapata/Quetzalcóatl bears witness to the apocryphal Cortés/Quetzalcóatl. The documentary does not criticize this relationship, but rather seems to try to legitimize it. The image from the mural is juxtaposed with an interview with documentalist Francesco Toboada, who explains that Zapata follower Baudelio Vergara Sánchez claims Zapata is the reincarnation of Quetzalcóatl (This would support Arau’s assertion that the people of Morelos believe Zapata to be the reincarnation of Quetzalcóatl. See Vértiz “Anuncia” 72; Peñaloza 3). Toboada goes on to suggest that because of the codexes and oral tradition of the Anenicuilcs, Zapata “se convierte en el representante natural del pueblo para terminar una lucha de liberación que lleva 500 años.”

_Womack does deal with this birthmark and its rumored disappearance as integral to the myth that Zapata avoided death in Chinameca (330)._
Arau proposes a mythic Zapata that incarnates a much-needed spiritual leader for the world’s youth in the contemporary revolutionary struggle between “materialism and spiritualism.”

Although the spiritual aspects of the film and especially the association between Zapata and Quetzalcóatl were highly criticized in the press, for José Luis Cruz (actor and set director), it was the aspect that most attracted him to the project: “las realidades alternas, realidades paralelas o realismo mágico. Toda esta concepción que viene del mundo prehispánico me cautivó, el señalar que Emiliano Zapata fue una reencarnación de Quetzalcóatl es lo que más me atrajo” (Cruz in Segoviano, “Los críticos” 6). Cruz clearly aligns the narrative aspects of the film (alternative realities, parallel realities, and magical realism) with the pre-Hispanic world. Like Arau, he emphasizes the link between Zapata and Quetzalcoál as part of the way the film portrays the “revindication” of a national hero by the “pueblo”: “La película de Zapata encarna la inspiración de un pueblo por reivindicar a su héroe y la lucha contra el poder tiránico. La historia es narrada a través de íconos que vienen de nuestras culturas originarias, por esto Zapata se asocia a Quetzalcóatl, dios principal de todos los rumbos del mundo” (José Luis Cruz in Vértiz “El Zapata” 60-1). The Arau film places Zapata within a mythic indigenist narrative and

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64 Arau describes what he sees as a struggle between materialism and spiritualism: "El siglo XX se caracterizó por dos versiones del materialismo: el capitalismo y el comunismo; una vez vencido el comunismo, al siglo XXI le corresponde la lucha dialéctica entre materialismo y espiritualismo; en ese sentido, es una película progresista, que mira al espiritualismo, con un líder como Zapata, un joven valeroso, tenaz, que no se vende; un héroe que los jóvenes del mundo necesitan" (Arau in Peñaloza 2).

65 For example, Zapata’s granddaughter Margarita criticized the “misticismo irreal” of this “fábula mística” about her grandfather (Licona 36). In an article in the Diario Monitor, José Manuel Villalpando objects to the chamanistic qualities of Zapata, comparing him with leaders of other countries and asking what would happen if the French made a film where Napoleon was a druidic priest.
establishes him as a popular hero linked to “icons” from “originary cultures,” thus emphasizing a romanticized pre-Conquest past over a contemporary indigenous reality.

Although Arau repeatedly links Zapata and Quetzalcóatl in numerous newspaper articles—never mentioning Cuauhtémoc—the film prioritizes a link between Cuauhtémoc and Zapata over that between Quetzalcóatl and Zapata both visually and textually. In the film, the character of Juana Lucio, chamana/bruja, plays an important role in connecting Zapata to Arau’s indigenist discourse of Revolutionary nationalism by linking him with indigenous heroes. Not only does she declare him to be the chosen one at his birth, depicting him as destined for greatness, she connects him with indigenous leaders and traditions as she guides him towards his role as leader at different points along his life. Juana Lucio connects Zapata with Cuauhtémoc when she predicts that the young Emiliano will lead the people out of the 500-year darkness and into a time of “true justice:” “Los españoles lo torturaron. […] Le quemaron los pies pero no les dijo nada. Mientras agonizaba Cuauhtémoc predijo una noche, una oscuridad que duraría 500 años. Estamos esperando el sexto sol. Un tiempo de luz, de justicia y de verdad. Tú nos guiarás hacia ese tiempo.” Emiliano will fulfill a prophecy announced by Cuauhtémoc, the last Aztec “tlatoani.” In this way, the film aligns Zapata with the national symbol of indigenous resistance against the Spanish oppressor.66

The film later re-enacts the torture of Cuautémoc to which Juana Lucio referred with Huerta burning Zapata’s feet. We see Zapata tied to a cart filled with hay, cut to a close-up of a burning fire, then cut to the cart approaching the fire feet first. The image

66 In the glossary to Man-Gods, Gruzinski defines Tlatoani as a term from Nahua meaning “sovereign, king” (213).
itself recalls Siqueiros’s painting “The Torment of Cuauhtémoc” (1950, Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico City), recoded within a context of a discourse of Revolutionary nationalism where Huerta and the federal soldiers replace the armored Spaniards and Zapata replaces the stoic Cuauhtémoc. The dialog supports the visual narration:

Huerta: Dicen por ahí que el espíritu de Cuauhtémoc habita dentro de ti. Es cierto o no?

Zapata: No solo en mí. Cuauhtémoc vive en cada uno de los verdaderos mexicanos.

Huerta: Ah chingar… (Huerta chuckles, González laughs) pues dentro de mí no está.

Zapata: Tú no eres un verdadero mexicano. (Huerta smacks him)

Huerta: Vamos a ver si fuiste a la escuela pinche indio patarajada. Qué le quemaron los españoles a Cuauhtémoc? Eh? Las patas cabrón. Y dicen que no pegó ni un grito de dolor. (laughs). La mera verdad a mí me cuesta mucho trabajo creerlo. González! Quémele las patas hasta que grite o hasta que se muera.

What are the implications of this scene and the relationship between Cuauhtémoc and Zapata? First, it connects two symbols of resistance to authority, both of which have been appropriated as national heroes within the hegemonic discourses of the Mexican nation. Second, the text of film links Cuauhtémoc to “true Mexicans.” What does it mean that “true Mexicans” have the spirit of Cuauhtémoc in them? Does it mean that

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67 The painting depicts the famous story of Cuauhtémoc resisting the Spanish even when they tortured him by burning his feet. Some other examples of representations of Cuauhtémoc in the arts include: Siqueiros’s painting in Bellas Artes, “Resurrection of Cuauhtémoc”; “Death to the Invader” shows Cuauhtémoc as central with figures of Zapata, Hidalgo, Morelos (see Rochfort p. 186); “Cuauhtémoc Against the Myth” depicts Cuauhtémoc’s disbelief in myth that Quetzalcóatl returned as Cortes (Rochfort 189). Rivera depicted Cuauhtémoc both in the National Palace and in the Palacio de Cortes in Cuernavaca. Though not widely represented in film, two silent films include Cuauhtémoc as protagonist: Cuauhtémoc y Benito Juárez (Carlos Mongrand 1904) and Cuauhtémoc (Manuel de la Bandera 1918).
Cuauhtémoc (and Zapata) true Mexicans resist oppressive forces? Does Arau mean to suggest that true Mexicans are indigenous? Or at least that they embrace their indigenous pre-hispanic heritage? Arau did purport to reclaim the indigenous side of Zapata in this film (see previous section), despite the fact that he cast a non-indigenous actor for the role.68

How does this film fit into the current cultural context of Mexico? The answer is complicated. We must consider that Arau first proposed this project in 1993 in the Mexico of NAFTA negotiations, yet pre-Zapatista uprising.69 The original project would have been in English through Walt Disney studios with French actor Vincent Perez as Zapata—decisions that would have potentially increased marketability in the United States (through Disney) and in Europe (through the choice of Vincent Perez). When this version fell through, Arau later announced a very different non-Hollywood version in Náhuatl with indigenous actors from Morelos.70 The final version is somewhat of a combination of considerations. Following the international success of Como agua para chocolate (1991), Arau undoubtedly sought to produce another international blockbuster. In aiming for international as well as national appeal, he needed to frame his indigenist discourse for a largely non-indigenous audience. An all Náhuatl film with unknown actors would limit such appeal. Though there are several dialogs in Náhuatl, Arau chose

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68 In a later section of this chapter I examine how the EZLN speak of “Votán Zapata” in similar terms. The dialog in the film echoes the communiqué from April 10, 1995 that claims, “Votán Zapata es el uno que camina en el corazón de todos y cada uno de los hombres y mujeres verdaderos” (EZLN vol. 2, 308).


not to use indigenous actors, but rather pop singers Alejandro Fernández and Lucero in an attempt to provide recognizable names in lead roles that would also appeal to music fans—a decision highly criticized by the press, especially due to the lack of acting experience by both. These casting decisions repeat the pattern (especially popular in Hollywood) of representing a character of one race or ethnicity with an actor of another race or ethnicity. In spite of his claim to want to recuperate the indigenous side of Zapata, by casting a non-indigenous actor, he repeats the pattern of representing indigenousness through non-indigenousness and therefore instead of creating a counter to the official discourse of indigenous Revolutionary nationalism, he repeats it.

2.3 Alternative Discourses of Revolutionary Nationalism for the Neoliberal Era

Although Arau’s film does not stray far from official discourse in spite of his intentions, other groups have taken advantage of the cracks in the hegemonic discourses of nation to propose alternative discourses of Revolutionary nationalism. For example, the EZLN (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional or Zapatista National Liberation Army) appropriates Emiliano Zapata’s name and image as part of their alternative discourse. As Lynn Stephen argues, “the EZLN in the state of Chiapas has created a counterhegemonic discourse in Mexican national culture that draws on the past hegemonic culture of the revolution but radically reinvents it by invoking the mediating

71 Casting Lucero also repeats the pattern—the Mexican singer plays the role of Spanish Esperanza.
figure of Zapata as a bridge to current social issues that include indigenous rights, conflict over land, and democratization” (Stephen Pro 42-3). This section examines the ways in which the EZLN has recoded Zapata as a point of fusion between indigenist/indigenous discourse and official discourses to create an alternative Revolutionary nationalism that includes indigenous people as active agents within the Mexican nation.


I question whether the discourse of the EZLN should be considered “indigenist” or “indigenous.” I suggest that it is a combination of the two in that there is an attempt to create an “indigenous” discourse by and for indigenous peoples; however, the role of Subcomandante Marcos smacks of “indigenist” discourse created by non-indigenous peoples in the name of indigenous peoples. Natividad Gutiérrez in her chapter “Indian Intellectuals after the Chiapas Conflict” cites Nahua researcher Marcos Matías as calling for Marcos to “‘quit the negotiations’” because “‘Indian peoples cannot be restricted to [being represented by] a non-indigenous man’” (196-7). Gutiérrez seems to agree with this criticism when she suggests that the neo-Zapatista discourse is a form of neo-indigenist discourse due to the lack of indigenous voices, and specifically indigenous intellectuals: “It seems, then, that although the Chiapas conflict is rooted in genuine indigenous claims and demands arising from injustice, poverty, and marginality, no indigenous ideological and pragmatic participation in overcoming it is foreseen” (197). She further rejects the movement as “‘Indian,’ because it lacks any ideological ethnic input. It is led by non-Indians; claims that its principal spokesman subcomandante Marcos is only carrying out orders from a clandestine Indian committee cannot be taken seriously” (198). Analisa Taylor, on the other hand, sees the EZLN as instrumental in a movement away from official *indigenista* policy towards a possible “post-indigenismo.” See her article, “The Ends of *Indigenismo* in Mexico.”

The EZLN and neo-Zapatistas are not the only groups to have appropriated imagery from the Mexican Revolution as part of their cause. Vanden Berghe points out that “in Mexico all popular movements tend to self-interpret their struggle by referring to the 1910 Mexican Revolution and appropriating its heroes and symbols, thus portraying themselves as the continuers and true heirs of the Revolution. What renders the Zapatista effort unique is that it has succeeded; i.e., that it has deprived the Mexican elite of its discursive monopoly with regard to the Mexican Revolution in general and Zapata in particular” (Vanden Berghe
From the outset of the Zapatista uprising with the First Declaration from the Lacandon Jungle, the movement claimed space within a new imagining of the Mexican nation, declaring themselves to their Mexican brothers and sisters to be “the inheritors of the true builders of our nation” (Marcos 13). For years the PRI had claimed to be the heirs of the Mexican Revolution, but with this statement the Zapatistas “staked a loud and clear claim to a different vision of the Mexican nation than that imagined by the initiators of NAFTA” (Stephen xxvi). In fact, this first declaration sets the struggle against foreign invaders (Spain, the US, France) throughout 500 years of history and those who would “sell” Mexico to foreigners (Porfirio Díaz at the time of the Revolution and the PRI at the time of NAFTA). At the same time, it allies the neo-Zapatistas with the Mexican people (not the state) who have struggled together in defense of the nation: “We have the Mexican people on our side, we have the nation and our beloved tricolored flag, highly respected by our insurgent fighters” (Marcos 14). This first communiqué then, establishes the beginnings of the Zapatista discourse of the Mexican nation as both inclusive and exclusive. It includes the indigenous and those that would defend Mexico, 

For an anthropological analysis of movements in Oaxaca and their use of Zapata’s image, see Lynn Stephens, Zapata Vive! In his article, “Remembering Emiliano Zapata: Three Moments in the Posthumous Career of the Martyr of Chinameca,” Samuel Brunk also examines Zapata’s mobilization in Oaxaca (481-3) and mentions groups that used Zapata’s image as part of the guerilla movements of Lucio Cabañas and Genaro Vázquez in Guerrero, and in the student movements and urban protests of the 60s and 70s (477-8).

Vanden Berghe sees the opening passage as intimately linking the indigenous with the rest of Mexico through intertwining “various histories and identities—i.e., the Zapatista, the indigenous, and the Mexican—[…] in such a way that the shift from one to another is almost imperceptible and the distinctions between them become blurred” (133). After the first allusion to the conquest “the focus switches to the struggles of the Mexican nation at large against various external invaders. In an implicit manner, indigenous and other Mexicans are intimately linked to one another and it is suggested that the indigenous population has always been supportive of the country’s sovereignty, whenever it was under threat” (133).

She goes on to clarify that “it is not the nation at large with which the Zapatistas identify in the first place, but rather a particular category within the nation, i.e. ‘the people’” (133).
and excludes those who, like the PRI “dictatorship led by a clique of traitors who represent the most conservative and sellout groups” (Marcos 13), would betray the Mexican people in favor of the global market.

This and subsequent communiqués co-opt national symbols to create an alternative discourse of Revolutionary nationalism that claims a space for the indigenous groups left out of the PRI’s discourse of neoliberal Mexico. The neo-Zapatista response to long practiced exclusionary concepts of the nation proposes an inclusive multicultural Mexico. This version of the nation recognizes and respects indigenous cultures through breaking with the ways that indigenous peoples have been represented in the official historical and political narratives by claiming ownership of self-representation as exemplified by their appropriation of national symbols. Perhaps the strongest example of this can be found in the Zapatista communiqués that have rewritten official history of the Revolution from a perspective that merges it with indigenous mythology through the creation of Votán Zapata.

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76 Analisa Taylor analyzes this discourse in terms of breaking from official indigenista discourses of mestizaje: “The neo-Zapatista indigenous uprising which surfaced in Chiapas in 1994 has been most effective at calling attention to the disjunction between the post-revolutionary ‘mestizo nationalist’ ideal—of ethnic homogeneity, economic modernization and national belonging promoted by the post-revolutionary single party state government—and the reality of a multiethnic society struggling to overcome a neo-colonial system of discrimination and impoverishment. The EZLN and other indigenous groups propose a radical break with the ways in which Indian people have been represented, in a political as well as a cultural sense. Buoyed by the high-tech, evocative pageantry of its facetiously self-deprecatory aesthetic, this uprising has called the country’s (and the world’s) attention to the persistence of a caste-like structure that has made it all but impossible for indigenous peoples to represent themselves within the state and against capitalist exploitation in any way but the most pantomimic” (Taylor 81).

77 Corona asserts a similar argument when he states, “La vuelta de tuerca al discurso nacionalista oficial es la de su reescritura a partir de una mitología que lo liga profundamente con una perspectiva “indigenista” a través del mito de Votán-Zapata” (27).
This hybrid figure that fuses an indigenous mythological discourse (as represented by Votán) with that of Revolutionary nationalism (as represented by Zapata), first appeared in a communiqué commemorating Emiliano Zapata’s assassination on April 10, 1994. The documentary *Las compañeras tienen grado* (Dirs. Guadalupe Miranda and María Inés Roqué 1995), begins with footage of the ceremony held to commemorate Zapata’s “betrayal” and assassination that includes Marcos reading part of the communiqué. In his speech, Marcos asserts that the mythical Votán Zapata is behind the current movement as the guide “who walks in our shoes, who rules our heart, who rides our words, who lives in our deaths.” He goes on to describe the deity in messianic terms: “Votán Zapata, light that came from afar and was born here from our land. Votán Zapata, named again forever a man of our people. Votán Zapata, a timid fire who lived our death 501 years. Votán Zapata, the name that changes, the man without a face, the tender light that watches over us.” Like the First Declaration, this communiqué connects the neo-Zapatista’s claims with previous indigenous struggles against oppression that began with the conquest. The images that accompany the words support this connection as the documentary, rather than focusing on Marcos throughout the speech, instead creates a montage of images of indigenous men, women and children. A focus on Marcos might suggest that he is the “man without a face” that watches over the indigenous people. However, by instead displaying images of multiple indigenous people, this editing technique visually prioritizes the people over Marcos, supporting the

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78 References to the speech are from the documentary. The film’s version of the speech closely follows the communiqué, though differs slightly and does not include the full text. For the full published text see “Votán Zapata or Five Hundred Years of History” (Marcos 19-21)
claim that he is a spokesman and a “Sub” commander who answers to them. The images alternate long shots that depict indigenous people moving through the jungle, some in uniform and some with faces covered with ski-masks or bandanas, with close-ups of covered faces that look into the camera as if to suggest that by becoming “nameless” men and women “without a face” through donning the Zapatista mask, they gain the power of the gaze that is normally denied them.

The film highlights the way the speech continues to frame the neo-Zapatista cause within discourses Mexican nationalism through visually connecting these indigenous insurgents with other national heroes of resistance. Footage of masked neo-Zapatistas on horseback is matched with the words, “Votán Zapata looked in Miguel, walked in José María, was Vicente, was named in Benito, flew in a bird, rode in Emiliano, shouted in Francisco, visited Pedro.”\textsuperscript{79} Framed in this way, the film visually suggests that Votán Zapata also inhabits the insurgents, thus placing them within the national pantheon of insurgent heroes. The speech concludes with the assertion that, “In dying he lived renowned and nameless in our land. Nameless name, Votán Zapata came to our land. His words filled our mouths and he is with us. Votán Zapata, guardian and heart of the people,” accompanied by images of Zapatistas in uniform marching and training. Thus, the Zapatistas are discursively and visually constructed as bearers of Votán Zapata’s message.

\textsuperscript{79} In \textit{Our Word is Our Weapon}, Ponce de León identifies the references: “Miguel Hidalgo, José Maria Morelos, Vicente Guerrero, Benito Juárez, Emiliano Zapata, Francisco Villa, and Pedro Paramo are revolutionary heroes in Mexico, “inhabited” by the spirit of Votán Zapata”(Note 4 p.21). See also Olgún 156 and Brunk Remembering 488.
Subsequent communiqués released on Zapata’s deathday continue the link between Zapata and Votán. The Communiqué from April 10, 1995 further connects the EZLN with the continuation of Zapata’s fight through this hybrid figure:

Emiliano Zapata murió, pero no su lucha ni su pensamiento. Muchos Emilianos Zapata nacieron después y ahora su nombre no es para llamar una persona. Su nombre llama una lucha por la justicia, una causa por la democracia, un pensamiento por la libertad. En nosotros, en nuestras armas, en nuestro rostro cubierto, en nuestra palabra verdadera, Zapata se unió a la sabiduría y a la lucha de nuestros más antiguos antepasados. Unido a Votán, al Guardián y Corazón del pueblo, Zapata se levantó de nuevo para luchar por la democracia, la libertad y la justicia para todos los mexicanos. Aunque tiene sangre indígena, Votán Zapata no lucha sólo por los indígenas, lucha también por los que no son indígenas pero viven en la misma miseria, sin derechos, sin justicia para su trabajo, sin democracia para sus decisiones y sin libertad para sus pensamientos y palabras. El Votán Zapata es el todos que marcha con nuestra bandera. Votán Zapata es el uno que camina en el corazón de todos y cada uno de los hombres y mujeres verdaderos. Todos somos uno en Votán Zapata y él es uno en todos nosotros [....] Votán Zapata tiene todos los colores y todas las lenguas, su paso anda en todos los caminos y su palabra crece en todos los corazones[....] Hermanos, todos nosotros somos Votán Zapata, somos todos el Guardián y el Corazón del Pueblo. Pueden matarnos, aventarnos a las montañas para apagar nuestra voz, hacer mentiras grandes como cerros para ocultar nuestra verdad. Pero nosotros somos los muertos de siempre, los que mueren para vivir. (EZLN vol. 2, 306-308)

The Zapata created here through the figure of Votán Zapata proposes a discourse of Revolutionary nationalism that includes “all colors and all languages” to continue Zapata’s fight. This mythic vision of Zapata unites the people in the struggle for “democracy, liberty and justice” by asserting, “we are all one in Votán Zapata.” At the same time, this inclusive discourse sets limits in that Votán Zapata is in the hearts of “true men and women,” suggesting by exclusion that he is not in the hearts of “false” men and women. By mentioning that Votán Zapata fights for not only indigenous, but those “in the same misery, without rights, without justice for their work, without
democracy for their decisions, without freedom for their thoughts and words,” the implication is that these are the “true” Mexicans in opposition to the unnamed “false” Mexicans who cause these oppressions—“the powerful who, the EZLN asserted, wanted to ‘defeat and kill Votán Zapata for good,’ and had tried to do so in 1521 and 1919” (Brunk Remembering 488-9).

Several scholars have attempted to trace the origins of Votán and disagree as to whether this figure was a deity, a man, or if he existed at all. Olgún, Brunk and Ponce de León80 claim that according to the Tzeltal people, Votán was “the first man sent by God to distribute land among the indigenous” (Olgún 154-5). Such a role would logically connect him to Zapata, known for championing land distribution during the Revolution, and to the neo-Zapatista opposition to the Salinas administration’s reversal of land reform. Anthropologist Lynn Stephen cited the same information in her article “Pro Zapatista and Pro PRI” (60), but later omitted this reference in Zapata Vive! where she asserts that her interviews produced “no recognition of Votán as an existing figure among the Tzeltal currently living in contemporary Chiapas” (162) and that she could find only one academic, Antonio Garcia de León who “writes of Votán as a Tzeltal diety” (158) that is “associated with the third day of the Tzeltal calendar and represents the heart of the people” (162). She concludes that the figure “appears to have been fashioned by Marcos and some EZLN founders in Chiapas” (158). The communiqué that explains where Marcos first learned of Votán Zapata, entitled “The Story of the Questions” from December 1994, places the origin of Votán not with Marcos, but with a Mayan from the highlands named el viejo Antonio. In a conversation between the two, Antonio corrects

80 In Our Word is Our Weapon, page 21 note 3.
Marcos’s version of official history to recount the “real story of Zapata” as the mythic “Votán Zapata.” Through this story, regardless of the actual existence of such a mythical figure, Zapatista discourse re-writes history through an alternative indigenous narrative by valuing “the indigenous reconstruction of history more highly than the hegemonic national and mestizaje-centered historiography” (Vanden Berghe 128). According to Vanden Berghe, “It is clear that the purpose of this rewriting of the Zapatista myth and the transformation of Zapata into Votán-Zapata is to rehabilitate the indigenous peoples, and to grant them, at least on a symbolic level, their rightful place in Mexican historiography” (130). The fictional Votán Zapata becomes a vehicle through which the neo-Zapatistas claim a space for the indigenous peoples of Mexico in the national narrative and in the nation as part of their alternative discourse of Revolutionary nationalism.

Figure 2.16 Photo from Atenco on July 20, 2006 courtesy of chiapas.indymedia.org 81

81 © Independent Media Center, permission granted on the website for non-profit use.
Part of neo-Zapatista strategy deploys images of Zapata to represent and legitimize their cause. Upon the conclusion of Antonio’s story, he produces a picture, a copy of a Casasola photo of Zapata from 1910. Through the photo, the story that raised Zapata to a mythic level at the same time reconnects him with the historical revolutionary.\[^82\] Antonio then gives the photo to Marcos so that he can learn from Zapata as Antonio did, as if passing along a torch. Where the communiqué discursively connects Marcos and Zapata, both Zapatistas and supporters have visually constructed Marcos as continuing Zapata’s legacy. Marcos has purposefully positioned himself to be associated with Zapata. For example, he has imitated Zapata’s poses in Casasola photos (Corona 27), and he has chosen to speak in front of Zapata’s image (See Figure 2.16). Posters advertising Zapatista events often include images that associate Zapata and Marcos. For example, Brunk describes the neo-Zapatista adaptation of the famous Casasola photo of Villa and Zapata in the presidential palace taken in 1912 for use as promotional posters for the neo-Zapatista Convención de Aguascalientes where they inserted “in place of Zapata the EZLN’s most prominent spokesman, Subcomandante Marcos, wearing his signature ski mask, but also with the sombrero. Beside him, supplanting Villa, was social activist and professional wrestler Suberbarrio Gómez, in his customary wrestling garb” (Remembering 459).

\[^82\]See Vanden Berghe 129.
Internet artist Latuff also bridges the traditional with the contemporary with his 1998 “Zapata vive en Chiapas!” (See Figure 2.17) where he superimposes Zapata’s head on the body of a widely circulated photo of Subcomandante Marcos (See Figure 2.18), suggesting that un-masking Marcos reveals Zapata. Zapata’s face links the image with traditional Revolutionary iconography and lends authenticity and political legitimacy to the Zapatista uprising, calling to mind through the image the connotations of Zapata and the fight for “tierra y libertad” as it reappears in the neoliberal era with the neo-Zapatista uprising. The image also attests to the power of the internet to circulate Zapatista images.

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83 Copyright granted via email (image is “Copyleft”).

84 This photo, found on multiple sites on the internet, was also reprinted in the *Jornada/Canal seis de Julio* bilingual publication, “Zapatistas: Crónica de una rebellion” (2001), that credits Frida Hartz with having taken the photo in 1996.
and create support networks. The original photo Latuffe recodes can be found on multiple web-sites from the US, Italy, Brazil, Chile, Turkey, Spain, Great Britain, Mexico, Cuba, Scandanavia, among others, attesting to the possibilities of technology to advance and transform the Zapatista cause.

Technology and the internet provide a method for disseminating neo-Zapatista discourse and become part of its alternative message. Although the neo-Zapatistas stand in opposition to globalizations in terms of the market and neoliberal economic reforms, they have found ways to turn other globalizing forces to their advantage. In “The Zapatistas Online: Shifting the Discourse of Globalization,” Adrienne Russell argues that the neo-Zapatistas have made use of the technological advances of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) to “help to offset the traditional power structure, so globalization is not strictly a matter of transnational domination and uniformity but also a potential source of liberation of local cultures from conventional state and national controls” (401). Indeed, the internet has provided the insurgent group the means to circumvent other forms of media that often refused them coverage. At the same time, these technologies allow the movement to reach international audiences. As scholar José Rabasa points out, “The Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas makes full use of the new technologies that circulate local news in global contexts—their political survival depends on this flow of information” (401). This global space of communication has launched the local discourse of Revolutionary nationalism across borders and onto the world stage through a variety of national and international web-sites related to the Zapatista movement that provide access to their communiqués and other news available in Spanish, English, French, Portuguese,
and more. Technology has not only provided a forum for sympathizers worldwide to communicate but it has also inspired new forms of cyber-activism. Chicano activist Ricardo Dominguez has used “Electronic Civil Disobedience” and the “Electronic Disturbance Theater” to stage electronic sit-ins and protests supporting the Zapatistas.85

In this section I have explored the ways that the EZLN and neo-Zapatismo have taken up the image of Emiliano Zapata as part of an alternative discourse of Revolutionary Nationalism that stakes a claim for a re-considering of the nation in the context of exclusionary neoliberal policies. Although their rhetoric clearly places them within the Mexican nation, their use of global forces, such as mass media and communication technologies, to their advantage has allowed their discourses to reach beyond Mexico. In the next section I will consider how the neo-Zapatistas contribute to a re-imagining of Mexico in transnational terms.

2.4 Discourses of Revolutionary Trans-Nationalism

Globalization has been theorized as economic and cultural imperialism with the West (and especially the United States) at its epicenter. Although some form of globalization has long existed, recent advances in technology and communications, what

85 See Dominguez’s article, “Electronic Disturbance Theater” in Corpus Dilecti: Performace Art of the Americas, edited by Coco Fusco. See also his web site, http://www.thing.net/~rdom/
Arjun Appadurai terms technoscapes and mediascapes, have produced a growing fear of homogenization of culture. However, several scholars have argued the shortcomings of this conceptualization as it ignores the non-Western influences on the West and influences of non-Western countries on each other (Inda/Rosaldo 22 and Nederveen Pieterse 53). Theories of homogenized culture also overlook the development of “third cultures” (Nederveen Pieterse 53) and/or hybrid cultures (Bhabha “DissemiNation”; García Canclini Culturas Híbridas). In this section I am interested in the ways that globalization has created a context for increased cultural movement across the US/Mexico border, creating transnational discourses of Revolutionary nationalism.

Images and discourses associated with Revolutionary nationalism have crossed the border in multiple ways. As previously mentioned, neo-Zapatistas have made use of media technologies to disseminate their cause and to express solidarity with other groups in similar situations outside of Mexico. Through the communiqué entitled “The

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86 Arjun Appadurai describes globalization in terms of several “-scapes”: ethnoscapes (movement of people 297), finanscapes (movement of money 297), mediascapes (movement of information 298-9), ideascapes (movement of images 299), technoscapes (movement of technology 299). Several of these “-scapes” are interrelated. For example, technoscapes, “the global configuration, also ever fluid, of technology, and of the fact that technology, both high and low, both mechanical and informational, now moves at high speeds across various kinds of previously impervious boundaries” (297), through internet, have advanced the global possibilities of mediascapes, which “refer both to the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information (newspapers, magazines, television stations, film production studios, etc.) which are now available to a growing number of private and public interests throughout the world; and to the images of the world created by these media. These images of the world involve many complicated inflections, depending on their mode (documentary or entertainment), their hardware (electronic or pre-electronic), their audiences (local, national or transnational) and the interests of those who own and control them. What is most important about these mediascapes is that they provide (especially in their television, film and cassette forms) large and complex repertoires of images, narratives and ‘ethnoscapes’ to viewers throughout the world, in which the world of commodities and the world of ‘news’ and politics are profoundly mixed” (298-9).

87 As I explained earlier, transnationalism is part of globalization. Ulf Hedetoft explains that in his understanding ‘transnationality’ refers to events or processes that straddle or transgress nation-state boundaries. They are part of, but not per-se identical to ‘globalization’ which I take to mean events or processes (cultural, political, economic, technological or social) that are transnational and can be identified as significant in all (or almost all) corners of the globe” (90).
Undocumented Others” (Marcos 332-3) which tells the story of Don Durito the beetle that crosses into the US as a “mojado,” the EZLN reaches across the border to connect with Mexicans in the US. Vanden Berghe sees this story as creating a parallel “between two types of indocumentados, the indigenous people in the south and the undocumented immigrants on the other side of the northern border. In a sense, Marcos suggests that all Mexicans, wherever they live, are the victims of a degrading marginalization” (135).

Figure 2.19 Detail of photo by Gabriel Romo. April 10, 2006. Sacramento, CA.

This solidarity has aided in the creation of an alternative discourse of Revolutionary nationalism outside of Mexico’s borders. The Zapatista Solidarity Commission based in Sacramento California called people to participate in public protests in March and April of 2006 to support immigrant rights and to denounce the anti-immigrant bill HR 4437 which was passed by the House of Representatives in December 2005. Photographer Gabriel Romo captured images circulated by this group that include a small likeness of the masked Subcomandante Marcos (See Figure 2.19). While the
image invokes codes related to the neo-Zapatista struggle, at the same time the Zapatista spokesman re-territorialized and re-contextualized in this way disconnects him from the Zapatista cause in Mexico and re-connects him to a different transnational incarnation of Revolutionary nationalism. Through this alternative discourse Mexican immigrants (among other nationalities) declare their rights to participate in the national discourse of the United States, reminiscent of the Zapatista declaration of the right of the indigenous to participate in the national discourse of Mexico.

Figure 2.20 “Zapata Vive” Photo by Gabriel Romo. April 10, 2006. Sacramento, CA
Like the neo-Zapatistas, the immigrant protesters have also appropriated the image of Emiliano Zapata as part of their struggle. In April of 2006 among US flags, some flags from other countries (especially Mexico), images of Che Guevara, the Virgin of Guadalupe and Martin Luther King Jr., Emiliano Zapata also appeared, re-invented for this new context. Gabriel Romo photographed a banner that recodes a popular neo-Zapatista slogan, “Zapata vive, y la lucha sigue,” accompanied this time not by Marcos’s image, but by a painting of Zapata’s face. In this context, the “lucha” to which the banner refers is no longer that of Zapata’s agrarian reform, nor that of the neo-Zapatista cause, but that of Mexican immigrants (both legal and illegal) in the United States (See
Figure 2.20). Where this banner could easily have been photographed in a neo-Zapatista rally in Mexico, a de/territorialized\(^{88}\) transnational image of Zapata loomed above the crowd in Chicago that more clearly reinserted the image in its new context (See Figure 2.21). This hybrid image combines both Mexican and US icons through an easily recognizable portrait of Zapata (imitating the famous Casasola photo of a presidential Zapata shown in Figure 2.10) who has traded his weapons for a US flag. He wears the colors of the Mexican flag across his chest, but the US flag is a far more prominent image, indicative of the new context for these images as part of a discourse of nation within the United States. Across the top of the image the words “Trabajo y libertad” replace Zapata’s well-known slogan of “Tierra y libertad.” In this transnational reference, Zapata has been detached from both the physical land of Mexico and from his original agrarian discourse where “land” has been replaced with “work.” Though much work performed by illegal immigrants is agrarian in nature, without a tie to a specific land, Zapata more easily crosses borders.

\(^{88}\) I use this term following Inda and Rosaldo who explain that this neologism, “captures at once the lifting of cultural subjects and objects from fixed spatial locations and their relocalization in new cultural settings. It refers to processes that simultaneously transcend territorial boundaries and have territorial significance. They key to the meaning of this term is the slash. It allows us to separate the ‘de’ from ‘territorialization,’ thus calling attention to the fact that deterriorialization always contains territorialization within itself. For us, this means that the root of the word always to some extent undoes the action of the prefix, such that while the ‘de’ may pull culture apart from place, the ‘territorialization’ is always there to pull it back in one way or another. So there is no deterritorialization without some form of reterritorialization. There is no dislodging of everyday meanings from their moorings in particular localities without their simultaneous reinsertion in fresh environments” (12).
Other banners combine Zapata with other national icons from several nations as part of a discourse of Revolutionary transnationalism. A banner in Chicago places Zapata as the central image between Martin Luther King Jr. and John Lennon (See Figure 2.22). Well-known phrases associated with each accompany the depictions of these three diverse leaders. Although some of the text is difficult to read, Both MLK and John Lennon have references to easily recognizable lines that emphasize a united country without racism. Even if the smaller text is unreadable, “I have a Dream” and “Imagine” immediately bring the speech and the song to mind respectively, along with their messages of tolerance and inclusion where multiple races and cultures “live as one.” Zapata stands between the two, yet another representation of the Casasola photo, with the
words, “Es mejor morir de pie que vivir arrodillado; por la dignidad! Sí a la reforma migratoria” [It is better to die on your feet than to live on your knees; for dignity! Yes to immigration reform]. These words accompanied by an armed Zapata seem to contradict the pacifist images of Martin Luther King Jr. and John Lennon. However, the first line of this particular version of “Imagine” reads “Imagine there is nothing to kill or die for.” In this context, the Zapata image suggests that the people are ready to stand up for their dignity and fight, but the recoded Lennon line suggests they would rather not have to fight. The overall message of the banner imagines a united multicultural country without racism, as represented by three ethnically and nationally diverse icons.

This banner is not the first time that images of Emiliano Zapata and Martin Luther King Junior have been depicted together as part of a rights movement. One of the first murals of the Chicano mural movement89 painted in 1968 by Antonio Bernal in Del Rey, California portrays Black Power leaders standing alongside Chicano and Mexican leaders. This mural was part of a two-panel series (one of Bonampak, the other of Civil Rights leaders) painted on the headquarters of the Teatro Campesino, an organization begun by Luis Valdez in 1965 associated with the United Farm Worker’s movement in their fight for civil rights for Chicanos (See Figure 2.23).90

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89 For further information on Chicano art and the Chicano mural movement, see Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation, 1965-1985, edited by Griswold del Castillo, McKenna, Yarbro-Bejarano eds. See also T.V. Reed’s chapter, “Revolutionary Walls: Chicano/a Murals, Chicano/a Movements” in The Art of Protest.

90 For an extensive study of this movement see El Teatro Campesino: Theater in the Chicano Movement by Yolanda Broyles-González.
In her article, “The Iconography of Chicano Self-Determination: Race, Ethnicity, and Class” Shifra Goldman identifies the figures of the mural as follows:

On the second panel is a sequence of admired leaders from the period of the Mexican revolution to the present, headed by the figure of a soldadera (a woman soldier—perhaps the legendary La Adelita) wearing a bandolier and carrying a curved sword. She is followed by the revolutionaries Francisco “Pancho” Villa and Emiliano Zapata, the nineteenth-century outlaw hero Joaquin Murieta, César Chávez of the United Farm Workers, Reies López Tijerina of the New Mexico land-grant struggles, a Black Panther with the features of Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King, Jr. In what amounts to an affirmation of racial pride, the Spanish (presumably white) lineage is de-emphasized while the dark-skinned indigenous heritage is stressed. The mural is unique in two respects: (1) for the prominence given activist women, which is unusually sensitive for this male-dominated period of Chicano art, and (2) for the suggested alliance between Mexicans and the African-American civil-rights movement, which seldom again comes up so directly. (167-8)

This mural places Emiliano Zapata, Mexican agrarian leader, within the context of the US agrarian movement led by César Chávez as part of the Civil Rights movements of the
1960s and 70s. Interestingly, as Goldman observes, this mural takes up discourses of both ethnicity and gender. The Chicano mural places the soldadera at the head of the line of figures where she appears to be leading the march, granting her a place in the construction of (trans)national identity not granted to her in the Mexican murals examined previously (For example, the Siqueiros mural “From the Dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz to the Revolution—the Revolutionaries”(1957-65) from Figure 2.14)

Where the Bernal mural includes a discourse of gender within a broader discourse of activism, more recently Chicano artist Daniel Salazar directly challenged dominant gender discourses through recoding an icon used in the propagation of the discourse of the Mexican Nation and as an icon that also propagates discourses of gender. Salazar re-imagines Emiliano Zapata in terms of gender discourse in his 1995 piece “El Mandilón/The Househusband” (See Figure 2.24), in which he recodes the Casasola photo of Emiliano Zapata to call for a gender revolution for this macho icon:

Women find men who do housework more sexually appealing than those who don't. What an excellent indication that it's time to update our vision of macho. In this image, the classic portrait of the great Mexican revolutionary Emiliano Zapata, I have exchanged his sabre with a broom and his rifle with a box of Tide. He's also wearing an apron. Why would anyone, especially one of our own, so defile one of our most treasured icons? To dismantle the dominant patriarchal paradigm that so often divides and restricts us as well as perpetuates inequality between the sexes. What could be more revolutionary as we begin the new millennium?
As “revolutionary” as this piece may seem, it still reflects the prevailing attitudes espoused by hegemonic gender discourses that require compulsory heterosexuality. According to Salazar’s own description, men should learn to perform “feminine” tasks to be more “sexually attractive” to women. This also allows us to read the title “Househusband” in terms of heterosexual marriage. Described in this way, heterosexual sex is assumed and his use of drag is not as subversive as it first seems.

Through his description of the piece, it is clear that Salazar does not suggest that Zapata was homosexual (assuming that the public would associate a man wearing an

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91 This image can be found on several websites, including: <http://latinoartcommunity.org/community/ChicArt/ArtistDir/DanSal.html> and <http://www.enfoco.org/photographers/salazar/salazar01.htm>
apron and holding cleaning supplies with homosexuality or at least non-

macho masculinity). Through deconstructing this national icon, he does question the rigid gender roles associated with traditional concepts of masculinity and femininity, perpetuated by national icons such as Zapata (who, as we will see in the following chapter, is associated with the *macho* archetype).

This chapter has taken representations of Emiliano Zapata as a case study to analyze the ways in which recodings of this Revolutionary hero have demonstrated a crisis in hegemonic discourses of Revolutionary nationalism. As I have begun to establish in this chapter, the discourses of Revolutionary nationalism are gendered. As cracks have opened to allow for alternative discourses of Revolutionary nationalism, they have also allowed alternative discourses of gender roles, as seen in the Salazar example. Chapters 3 and 4 interrogate the intersection of the discourses of nation and gender through representations of Revolutionary iconography in different media (film, theater, performance). The following chapter focuses on discourses of gender and Revolutionary nationalism as manifested in the archetype of the *macho* figure.
CHAPTER 3

DISCOURSES OF GENDER AND NATION I:
THE REVOLUTIONARY MACHO IN CRISIS

Chapter 2 examined the ways in which the figure of (male) Revolutionary hero Emiliano Zapata has been appropriated to (re)define the concept of the post-Revolutionary and the post-NAFTA Mexican nation. Zapata exemplifies the gendered nature of Mexico’s Revolutionary heroes. Since nearly all of these heroes are male, a cult of masculinity (O’Malley) has been perpetuated that has glorified the macho archetype and resulted in the marginalization of the female and the non-masculine (homosexual or “differently masculine”). In this chapter I argue that an examination of representations of masculine gender roles as manifested in a variety of cultural texts, specifically through Revolutionary icons Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata, reveal a destabilization and crisis of the macho archetype in the contemporary Mexican nation. I further argue that many recent texts that question the role of the macho, and with it contemporary Mexican gender roles, remain within the confines of the “straight mind.”

In this chapter I will first outline the construction of the macho archetype as part of post-revolutionary discourses of nation and gender. I argue that these discourses have

92 See Magnarelli “Tea” for explanation of “differently masculine” (65).
been perpetuated through popular culture—especially through Mexican cinema—and that early representations have continued to impact more recent cultural production. The next section analyzes films that reflect on the role of media representation (film, television) as they destabilize macho models through parody. I then examine the limits of questioning established notions of masculinity through analyzing examples of public resistance to debunking the macho myth. Finally, I explore a performance text that pushes beyond such limits and recodes the macho beyond traditional binaries of both gender and sexuality.

3.1 Macho, Cinema and the Nation

Before an analysis of the crisis of the macho is possible, it is necessary to interrogate the ways in which this archetype has been culturally constructed and how it has contributed to post-Revolutionary discourses of nation and gender. This section explores studies of the concept of macho (Gutmann, González, Paredes, Mirandé) and its relationship to nation building through portrayals of Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata—both of whom have been repeatedly held up as exemplars of the revolutionary macho in popular culture. After tracing representations of the macho from the 1920s to the 1950s

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93 Though adapted and expanded for the specific needs of this study, much of this section is taken from part of my published article, “The Ambiguous Representation of Macho in Mexico’s Golden Age Cinema: Pedro Infante as Pepe el Toro.” *Tinta.* 7 (2003): 23-42.
(and Mexico’s Golden Age of cinema), I explore the impact that these early representations have had on more recent cultural productions.

What does macho mean? There is no concise definition, as macho varies according to point of view, which is affected by such factors as social class, time period, and cultural context. One of the definitions of macho according to Rafael Ramírez suggests that it “is invariably defined as a set of attitudes, behaviors, and practices that characterize men” (11). This definition assumes the existence of a category called “men.” To discuss macho assumes a discussion of maleness and masculinity, terms that in light of feminist deconstructions of the categories of “woman” (or womanliness) and “femininity” (Wittig, Butler, Wilchins) become increasingly problematic. If, as Wittig and Butler argue, we can no longer talk of “woman” as an essentialized category based on sex or even gender, can we talk about “man”? Rafael Ramírez, Mathew Gutmann, Alfredo Mirandé and Sergio de la Mora all problematize definitions of masculine/masculinities, emphasizing the impossibility of essentialist notions in favor of the constructivist posture that posits the mutability of these definitions over time and culture. Gutmann asserts that, “‘Manliness’ and ‘womanliness’ (to say nothing of ‘femininity’) are not original, natural, or embalmed states of being; they are gender categories whose precise meaning constantly shift, transform into each other, and ultimately make themselves into whole new entities” (21). Along the lines of Butler and Wittig, Gutmann questions the naturalness of the gender categories known as man and woman, further asserting that they are social or cultural inventions.
De la Mora agrees with Gutmann that masculinity is a social construct that articulates cultural and political constructs regarding what it means to be a man (de la Mora “Masculinidad” 54). This assertion leads to questioning the concept of “man” itself. Theorists and biologists such as Anne Fausto-Sterling point out that historically, male genitalia—specifically the size of the male genitalia—has been the most important factor in assigning gender to inter-sexed infants (“How to” 246). According to Suzanne Kessler in her chapter on “The Medical Construction of Gender,” “chromosomes are less relevant than penis size” (19). This tradition implies that a physical genitalia has been the most important factor in defining the category of biological maleness. However, Rafael Rodríguez looks at the anthropological study conducted by Gilmore of masculine ideologies in various cultures: “Except for the Sambia of Tahiti and the Semai, he finds a common element, a dominant tendency in the construction of masculinity: to be a man is more than the mere fact of having been born male. The man has to demonstrate his manhood and have his manhood recognized” (33). Being a man is therefore not solely a question of biology related solely to genitalia. In addition, psychoanalytic theory consistently refers to the phallus or lack thereof as integral to gender identity for both males and females, a concept still reflected in linguistic cultural references and displays of power. Moving beyond anatomy, we find that being recognized as male surpasses the physicality of the penis and is related to culturally formed concepts of gender roles.

94 See also Thomas Walter Laqueur’s Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud and Riki Wilchin’s Queer Theory, Gender Theory: An Instant Primer.

95 Consider the multiple references to male genitalia as indicative of one’s being considered “manly” such as having “huevos.” See Mirandé 37.
Rafael Rodríguez further develops the notion of the societal construction of gender roles as endemic to society itself:

Every society differentiates between genders, specifies the spheres of masculinity and femininity, and assigns to each gender specific attributes, characteristics, and expectations. People are recognized and evaluated based on the way they fulfill the demands assigned to them. Culture offers cues and instructions so that people may make their own gender identity, in order to evaluate and esteem themselves as the incarnation and representation of their gender. Therefore, masculinity and femininity are not a reality separate from the individual; they are a cultural construction whose basis is not biological—even though the cultural construction is based on biological differences—but constructed, designed, agreed to, and upheld by a system of beliefs, attributes, and expectations. (my emphasis 27-8)

Although his essentializing assertion that “every society differentiates between genders” contradicts his anti-essentialist notion of gender, Rafael Rodríguez’s association of the societal assignment of “gender specific attributes, characteristics and expectations” to the way in which people are read within their particular societal construct allows us to look specifically at the cultural construct of the macho and machismo as characteristics of maleness within a given society in a particular historical moment.96

Gutmann, Ramírez Berg, and Paredes emphasize the terminology macho and machismo as relatively recent linguistic inventions. Paredes explains that prior to the 1930s and 40s the terms did not appear in popular speech (“The United States” 22, also

96 Matthew Gutmann, Charles Ramírez Berg, Américo Paredes, Violeta Sara-Lafosse, Rafael Ramírez, Alfredo Mirandé and Stephen O. Murray all comment on the dangers of essentializing the meaning of macho (often citing Samuel Ramos and Octavio Paz as exemplary essentialists) and the predominant use of over-generalizations of the terms in various scholarly writing. Mirandé reminds the reader that, “Latino men do not constitute a homogeneous, monolithic, unvarying mass, as was depicted in the traditional model. This suggests that there is not one masculine mode but a variety of modalities and masculinities that are not only different, but often contradictory” (17). Among others, Mirandé (16) and Ramírez (4) further problematize essentialist models by asserting that macho concepts are not particular to Latin America. Similar concepts of masculinity, often related to “principles of power” appeared in various cultures under different linguistic signs.
referenced in Gutmann and Ramírez Berg, “Cracks”). Gutmann reminds us that though concepts of manliness connoted by words such as “hombría” (“manhood or manliness”), “ser hombre” (“being a man”), and “hombre de verdad” (“real man”), circulated during the Mexican Revolution to refer to concepts of the valor of masculinity, neither macho nor machismo appeared in social lexicon until the 1940s (224). The term performs socio-cultural functions, emerging at a time when increased industrialization influenced changing gender norms and destabilized expectations for what it meant to be a man in Mexican society.

Paredes examines the masculine traits espoused in corridos, referencing the studies of Vicente Mendoza (as do Gutmann, Ramírez Berg and Mirandé), and finds the words macho and machismo absent until the corridos that circulated during World War II during the administration of Manuel Ávila Camacho (1940-1946): “¡Viva el pueblo siempre macho! ¡Agustín el general! y ¡Viva Ávila Camacho y la vida sindical!”97 (Paredes, “The United States” 22). Paredes also links the coincidence of the word macho within the president’s name, a fact that was emphasized in a nationalistic song that included “Ca….MACHO,” to the circulation of the concept in popular culture (23, also referenced in Gutmann, Berg and Mirandé). Relating the term macho to the president is one of the ways that the concept became fused with national identity:

An equation of machismo with Mexican culture as a whole has occurred well beyond the confines of mere social science; it has also been common in the stories Mexicans tell about themselves, both in daily discussions among Mexicans and in the grand proclamation of the scholarly elite. Stereotypes about machismo are critical ingredients in the symbolic capital used by ordinary Mexicans. Even if verbally denigrated by many,

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97 “Long live the macho people! General Agustín! And long live Ávila Camacho and the union life!”
*machismo* is widely regarded in Mexico as constituting part of national patrimony in much the same way as the country’s oil deposits are considered a source of national if not necessarily individual self-identity. In this manner *machismo* has become part of the more general political economy of cultural values in Mexico (Gutmann 27).

Gutmann links the concept to the “national patrimony,” not only through political discourse, but also through popular discourse in the way Mexicans speak about themselves. He later states even more clearly, “Mexico came to mean *machismo* and *machismo* to mean Mexico” (224).

Historian Ilene O’Malley expands on the correlation between *mexicanidad* (“mexicanness”) and *machismo* in her study, *The Myth of the Revolution: Hero Cults and the Institutionalization of the Mexican State 1920-1940*. She sees this relationship as purposeful and self-consciously part of the official state rhetoric used in the nation-building project that followed the Revolution:

> Foremost among the constructs that facilitated the mystification of the revolution was patriarchy, one form of which is Mexico’s famous machismo. There is nothing unique about Mexican machismo if one is referring only to an attitude of male superiority and patriarchal social forms, for these are evident to some degree in every country in the world; what gives Mexican machismo its peculiar quality is its self-consciousness, its ‘officialness,’ its openly proclaimed status as part of the national identity. Even the casual observer of Mexican society will notice that nationalism and machismo are somehow related. (7)

She further relates this patriarchal nationalism to a mystification of the Revolution that created (masculinized) hero cults (139, 144) that contributed to developing the *macho* figure into the national stereotype in the 1940s (142). According to O’Malley, “The greater identification with the macho strengthened the hero cults of Villa and Zapata”
(142), which the government exploited in attempt to appeal to the masses in the face of deteriorating popularity of the Revolution.\(^9\)  

For O’Malley there is a direct correlation between the figure of the \textit{macho} and the Revolution, which is “neither accidental nor innocent” (3). She posits Villa (and Zapata) as the “prototypes of the ‘revolutionary/macho’” (3), that have been taken up and disseminated through popular culture such as music, theater, and film.\(^9\) Gutmann, Paredes, and Ramírez Berg all agree and relate the dissemination of the concept of \textit{macho} and its connection to national identity to the popularity of \textit{corridos} and of “popular singers like Pedro Infante and Jorge Negrete” (Paredes, “The United States” 24), both of whom gained fame as actors during Mexico’s Golden Age of cinema (approximately 1935-1955).\(^10\) For Ramírez Berg, the popularization of these concepts can be attributed to popular culture:

\(^{98}\) O’Malley links the \textit{macho} images of the two men to their popularity: “Also, the flagging popularity of the Revolution made it desirable for the regime to strengthen its claim to Zapata and to stake a claim to Villa, men whose class identity and \textit{macho} image made them more credible revolutionary symbols, more appealing to the popular classes, and therefore more useful propaganda tools” (O’Malley 143).\(^9\) Certainly \textit{corridos} helped spread the notion of the \textit{macho} and the connection between the \textit{macho} and the Revolution, as well as the definition of other gender roles (see Vicente T. Mendoza; María Herrera-Sobek for extensive studies of Mexican \textit{corridos}). Literature has also represented Villa since the time following the Revolution, beginning with works such as Martín Luis Guzmán’s \textit{Aguila y serpiente} (1928); Nellie Campobello’s \textit{Cartucho} (1931 and 1940) and Rafael Muñoz’s \textit{Vámanos con Pancho Villa} (1931), among others. Robert McKee Irwin discusses work by these authors in his chapter on “Virile Literature and Effeminate Literature: The 1920s and 1930s” as part of his 2003 study of representations of masculinities in Mexican literature, \textit{Mexican Masculinities}.\(^\)\(^{10}\) The “Golden Age,” or \textit{Cine de Oro}, of Mexican cinema refers to the “greatest era in the cinema of Mexico” in which Mexico produced a substantial number of films along with new genres (especially the \textit{comedia ranchera}, the \textit{cabaretera} and the melodrama) and an explosion of stars—including María Félix, Pedro Infante, Jorge Negrete, Dolores del Río, Mario Moreno (Cantinflas), Germán Valdés (Tin Tan), Pedro Armendáriz, among others (Hershfield and Maciel 33-36). There is some debate about the actual years that should be considered the “Golden Age.” The web site “Cien años de cine mexicano” identifies the “Golden Age” as beginning with the comedy-musical \textit{Allá en el rancho grande} (1936) and concluding with Pedro Infante’s death in 1957. Joanne Hershfield suggests similar dates, “from 1935 through the early 1950s” (\textit{Mexican Cinema 7}), as does Carlos Monsiváis who sets the dates at 1935-1955 (“Mythologies”
Macho was therefore a term popularized through mass media: songs such as the corridos Paredes mentions, and films, the comedias rancheras [Western comedy-musicals] which served as vehicles for some of the popular male singers of those very same corridos, such as Pedro Infante and Jorge Negrete. Whether or not machismo is as historically ingrained in the Mexican consciousness as Paz, Ramos, Reyes, Nevaeas, Ramírez, and others believe, or is a more modern construct, the fact remains that the term denotes a distinctive male way of being. In Mexican society machismo has both cultural currency and psychological potency, and is intimately connected with the Mexican subject’s self-image and with national identity. (“Cracks” 70)

Both Gutmann and Ramírez Berg assert that in spite of its ambiguous definitions and regardless of its origins, machismo is an integral component of Mexican individual and national identity.

Gutmann also relates the popularity of machismo with mass media. He cites Carlos Monsiváis, who links “the emergence of the ethos of machismo especially to the Golden Age of Mexican cinema in the 1940s and 50s” (Gutmann 222).101 Gutmann expands upon the interconnection between representations of masculinity on the cinematic screen and the creation of a Mexican concept of identity:

The consolidation of the Mexican nation, ideologically and materially, was fostered early on not only in the gun battles of the wild frontier, not only in the voting rituals of presidential politics, but also in the imagining and inventing of lo mexicano and mexicanidad in the national cinema […] Although there were female leads in the movies of the period, on

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101 In fact, during this time period, even in movies ostensibly about women, men move the action forward. See also Ana López’s “Tears and Desire: Women and Melodrama in the ‘Old’ Mexican Cinema” 513-14.
the silver screen it was the manly actors who most came to embody the restless and explosive potential of the emerging Mexican nation. (Gutmann 228)\textsuperscript{102}

Gutmann not only connects cinema with emerging concepts of *machismo*, he specifically refers to the “manly actors” as representative of the “emerging Mexican nation.” Although Gutmann especially considers Jorge Negrete as representative of these “manly actors,” films starring Pedro Infante\textsuperscript{103} and Pedro Armendáriz also exemplify the connection between masculinity and national identity. Though all three actors starred in films associated with the Mexican Revolution, Pedro Armendáriz is perhaps the actor who most embodies the Revolutionary *macho* figure through his repeated roles as revolutionary (*La Adelita* 1937; *Con los Dorados de Villa* 1939; *Flor Silvestre* 1943; *Las Abandonadas* 1944; *Enamorada* 1946; *La Escondida* 1956; *La Cucaracha* 1958). He has also starred and as the Revolutionary icon Pancho Villa, “considered to be the epitome of Mexican manliness” (Mirandé 41), in three films directed by Ismael Rodríguez that some have considered “the most important trilogy of films about the character of Pancho Villa” (*Así era Pancho Villa* 1957; *Cuando Viva Villa es la muerte* 1958; *Pancho Villa y la Valentina* 1958).\textsuperscript{104}

\textsuperscript{102}For an in-depth consideration of the way film has represented and influenced concepts of “mexicanidad”—especially along lines of gender—and how it has been re-imagined in the NAFTA era, see Sergio de la Mora’s 2006 *Cinemachismo: Masculinities and Sexuality in Mexican Film*.

\textsuperscript{103}See my article, “The Ambiguous Representation of *Macho* in Mexico’s Golden Age Cinema: Pedro Infante as Pepe el Toro.” See also Sergio de la Mora’s chapter “Pedro Infante Unveiled: Masculinities in the Mexican ‘Buddy Movie’” in *Cinemachismo*.

\textsuperscript{104}My translation (Pérez Medina 30). Although arguably Armendáriz is the actor most associated with their role (as stated above), Pancho Villa, has been interpreted by a variety of actors through the years (1930s: Domingo Soler; 1950s: Pedro Armendáriz; 1960s: Ricardo Palacios and José Elias Moreno; 1970s: Antonio Aguilar and Eracleio Zepe). Multiple films made in the US have also included representations of Villa. The first, *The Life of General Villa* (Dir. Christy Cabanne 1914) starred Pancho Villa himself, along with actor Raoul Walsh playing Villa as a young man. Some other US film Villas
According to actor Pedro Armendáriz, Jr., “‘Ante el mundo, mi padre (Pedro Armendáriz) es el único Villa de la cinematografía’” (in Ponce, “Villa” 1). Journalists echo this claim by the actor’s son, asserting that Armendáriz has played the best Villa over the years: “A lo largo de la historia actores mexicanos y extranjeros han dado vida a este caudillo, sin embargo para conocedores del cine el actor Pedro Armendáriz es el que mejor ha caracterizado a Villa” (Cárdenas 2); “sus representaciones [de Armendáriz] como Pancho Villa, El Centauro del Norte, le valieron para ser reconocido como el actor que más fidelidad le dio en su caracterización” (Pérez Medina 30).

Armendáriz’s popular representations of the mythic Pancho Villa, along with other representations of Villas over the decades, continue to appeal to Mexican audiences through their frequent television screenings. Access to these films via TV and cable include: Wallace Beery (Viva Villa! Dir. Jack Conway, 1934), Yul Bryner (Villa Rides: Dir. Buzz Kulik, 1968), Rodolfo Hoyos, Jr. (Villa! Dir. James B. Clark, 1958), Telly Savalas (Pancho Villa: Dir. Eugenio Martin, 1972) and Antonio Banderas (And Starring Pancho Villa as Himself: Dir. Bruce Beresford, 2003).
introduce these stars and their renditions of the national hero to younger generations, keeping them current in the national imaginary of Revolutionary nationalism. The characterization of Villa by actors such as Pedro Armendáriz has inspired subsequent interpretations of Villa that take up these previous filmic representations and dialogue with them. The next section will draw upon the concepts of the *macho* presented in this section to analyze a recent text that is not based on Pancho Villa the man, but on a pastiche of past representations of Villa in films over several decades.

3.2 Pancho Villa and the *Macho* Myth in Crisis

In her stage directions for the play, *Entre Villa y una mujer desnuda*, Sabina Berman writes: “Villa es el Villa mítico de las películas mexicanas de los años cincuentas, sesentas y setentas. Perfectamente viril, con una facilidad portentosa para la violencia o el sentimentalismo” (Berman 15). Through this “perfectly virile” depiction of Villa, Berman “cites” previous representations of Villa and at the same time offers him as the model of virility—the model of the *macho*.

However, Berman’s parodic portrayal

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105 Although much as been written on *Entre Villa y una mujer desnuda*, a study of representations of the Revolution in recent popular culture would not be complete without it. Many of the more scholarly texts have been written about the play. I will draw from these and concentrate my analysis on the film. Although several articles analyze the film, I attempt to fill in gaps and concentrate mainly on scenes that are overlooked or not analyzed with my same emphasis.

106 The idea that Berman’s Villa is offered as a model of the *macho* is not new and has been explored by several writers in different ways. Stuart A. Day in his article, “Berman’s Pancho Villa versus Neoliberal desire” explores Berman’s use of the Villa myth in the play, supporting his statements with O’Malley’s *The Myth of the Revolution* and Barthes’ *Mythologies* to examine how Berman’s Villa relates to neoliberal discourse: “Berman criticizes the way the myth of Pancho Villa is employed (and deployed) not for the
of this model of hypermasculinity and machismo as incarnated in the characters of Villa/Adrián, points to the crisis of the macho archetype.  

In the following section, I argue that both the play Entre Villa y una mujer desnuda (Sabina Berman, 1993) and the film Entre Pancho Villa y una mujer desnuda (Dirs. Sabina Berman and Isabelle Tardán, 1996) use images/icons from the Mexican Revolution to unsettle gender roles and their representation in order to expose their limits and suggest the possibility for change. First I reveal the ways in which the film destabilizes traditional masculine gender roles through repositioning the female spectator (Gina) and through offering two contrasting versions of masculinity: the “differently masculine” metrosexual (Ismael) and the macho (Villa/Adrian). The second section analyzes the ways in which the film frames Adrián and Villa as incarnations of the mythic macho. I argue that through parody, the film pokes fun at Adrián’s idealization of Villa, and by extension traditional masculinity. Following is an analysis of the way the film opens the possibility for gender change through the “death” of the macho and promotion of positive social change but rather as part of a hegemonic process which impedes such change and creates a vacuum in which neoliberal economic policies, as well as the status quo of relations between the macho and those he subjugates can continue unchecked” (6).

107 Set in contemporary Mexico City, both the film and the play explore the failing relationship between Adrián, a twice divorced middle-aged history professor who is writing a biography of Pancho Villa, and Gina, a divorced middle-aged entrepreneur who is in the process of establishing a maquiladora on the US/Mexico border with her partner Ismael. Gina becomes frustrated with Adrián’s refusal to commit to her and as her biological clock ticks louder, she breaks with Adrián and becomes involved with the younger “man of the 1990s,” Ismael. Adrián, with the help of Pancho Villa’s spirit, attempts to win her back. Although the play and the film are similar in plot line, they diverge at points, sometimes due to differences in what the different genres allow, with the biggest difference apparent in the ending. For example, where the play includes a failed physical relationship between Adrián and Andrea, the film omits this scene and minimizes Andrea’s character. This and other differences will be explored in the analysis included in this chapter.

108 For clarity, I will use “Entre” to refer to the film and “Berman” to refer to the play in parenthetical citations throughout the chapter.
Adrián’s “feminist” conversion, while at the same time pessimistically suggesting the change is too often only temporary. The final section problematizes the overall success of the proposed gender revolution through a comparison of the endings of the film and the play. 

The opening scene is paradigmatic of the way in which the film unsettles _machismo_, makes it visible, and shows how women are complicit. The opening of the film serves several purposes, all of which are inter-related. First, it immediately introduces Pancho Villa (and through him, the revolutionary _macho_) as the idealized model of masculinity and the perpetuation of this model through film representation, in contrast with the alternative masculinity of Ismael. Second, it suggests the woman’s role in the perpetuation of the myth of the _macho_, specifically through Gina’s reaction to the image of Pancho Villa. Third, it establishes Gina as desiring female spectator. As the film opens we hear sounds of female pleasure even before we can identify the image of a lone rider in a desert landscape. As he slowly rides towards the camera, the sounds of ecstasy increase as we hear the first dialogue of the film, “Perdona la respiración, es que este hombre me excita” (_Entre_). Gina, the female protagonist of the film, through her vocal reaction to the image of Pancho Villa on screen, demonstrates her complicity with the _macho_ myth. She is sexually aroused at the mere idea of Villa. As David William Foster notes, her excitement increases with the appearance of the gendered image of Villa—one that is phallically marked:

As Pancho Villa comes riding in out of the distance, we hear a woman’s growing sounds of ecstasy. These tones reach an orgasmic level as Pancho Villa rides into the camera in a clearly marked phallic way—phallic in his assertive masculinity, phallic in the symbol of his mighty
horse (long recognized as a conventional evocation of masculine sexuality), and phallic in his energetic entrance into the vision of the spectator, which in the first instance is Gina herself. (145)

The image focuses on the horse, a phallic image associated with “masculine sexuality,” as Foster points out. Gina’s dialogue reinforces this association. As the image of rider and horse grow larger, so does Gina’s reaction. She reaches an orgasmic intensity and exclaims “¡Dios! ¡dios! ¡dios!” her words equating Villa with a god—in this case of virility. In the same sequence, she directly associates Villa’s virility with that of her lover Adrián: “¡Cuánta virilidad!…Es la metáfora perfecta para Adrián. Llega a mi casa con toda su fuerza varonil brutal y salvaje. Llega a mi cuerpo, mis labios, me destroza por dentro y desaparece.” The dialogue reveals that Gina sees in Villa traits she also sees as attractive in her choice of lover: virile, brutal, savage, masculine force—all terms associated with the *macho* myth. These traits are played out upon the female body, both in her orgasmic reaction and in her description of the way he “arrives at [her] body” and “destroys her inside” through physically entering her during sex.

In spite of establishing Gina’s (and by extension female) complicity in the *macho* myth and traditional gender roles, the opening scene also introduces the film’s first attempt at destabilizing the gender binary through the introduction of a female spectator (Gina) as a desiring being and owner of the gaze, often theorized as male (Mulvey, Kaplan), as she objectifies the phallic image of Pancho Villa. Meanwhile, Gina herself

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109 According to Laura Mulvey, “Pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly” (39-40). Kaplan explains that, “our culture is deeply committed to clearly demarcated sex differences, called masculine and feminine, that revolve on, first, a complex gaze-apparatus; and, second, dominance-submission patterns. The positioning of the two sex genders clearly privileges the male through the mechanisms of voyeurism and fetishism, which are male operations” (129). She goes on to assert that
remains seated in the shadows—the film does not fetishize her female body and instead highlights her scopophilic (and physical) pleasure.\textsuperscript{110}

In addition to destabilizing traditional gender roles through its representation of Gina, the opening scene of the film destabilizes traditional masculinity by presenting alternatives through contrasting versions of masculinity that are at odds throughout the film (and the play): Villa/Adrián as the model of the \textit{macho} versus Ismael as a model of “different” masculinity. As Stuart Day observes, “If Villa and Adrián represent the virile and powerful men of the past, Ismael is the exact opposite. Complete with jeans and a ring in his right ear, he is the man of the nineties” (“Berman’s” 14). What does it mean to be a “man of the nineties”?\textsuperscript{111} Scholars seem to agree that it means departing from traditional male gender roles. As previously noted, Ismael has been described by different scholars as “differently masculine” (Magnarelli). He has also been described as a “gender bender” (Shedd)\textsuperscript{112} and as representing “a future in which the borders between

\textsuperscript{110} This first scene is the only one which privileges Gina’s gaze over that of other male characters. The fact that Berman chose not to emphasize a female gaze throughout the film as part of her destabilization of traditional gender roles reinforces my argument that Berman’s film is transgressive in many ways, but with certain limits.

\textsuperscript{111} Bixler also uses this phrase when describing Ismael: “Whereas Adrián adheres to standard male conduct, Ismael is a sensitive man of the nineties” (“Power” 86).

\textsuperscript{112} Shedd defines her term “gender bender” as used to “set apart individuals who mix feminine and masculine characteristics in a less overt way—in the middle ground […] Gender benders are less obvious transgressors of gender and sexuality norms than gender blenders, lesbians or transsexuals” (Shedd 140). In her dissertation she considers the ways in which Gina and Ismael are “gender benders,” but limits her discussion to the play.
the sexes (and between countries) become less severely defined” (Day, “Berman’s” 21). All of these explanations place him somewhere between traditional male and traditional female gender roles.

I would suggest that the neologism “metrosexual” is useful in approaching an analysis of Ismael as a model of masculinity outside of the traditional binary for the man of the nineties. Multiple definitions of the term metrosexual abound—especially on the Internet. Wordspy.com defines the term as “An urban male with a strong aesthetic sense who spends a great deal of time and money on his appearance and lifestyle” and credits Mark Simpson with the earliest use of the term in print in his 1994 article “Here Come the Mirror Men” in The Independent. Although a key component in Simpson’s definition of the metrosexual male is his vanity, later definitions, such as that from SexEditorials, emphasize the term as opening a space for negotiation in the gender binary: “One who appears to ignore gender and sexual preference stereotypes in order to present their style and/or to allow for himself to be more practical according to his environment.” The website offers the following definition of metrosexuality: “The general notion or philosophy that gender stereotypes can be ignored without compromising sexual orientation or sexual partner preference” (1). The film’s treatment of Ismael both fits and does not fit these definitions, though the latter seems most helpful in considering Ismael as a precursor to the metrosexual archetype. He is an urban male with financial stability who clearly takes

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113Simpson gives the following description of a metrosexual: “The typical metrosexual is a young man with money to spend, living in or within easy reach of a metropolis—because that’s where all the best shops, clubs, gyms and hairdressers are. He might be officially gay, straight or bisexual, but this is utterly immaterial because he has clearly taken himself as his own love object and pleasure as his sexual preference. Particular professions, such as modeling, waiting tables, media, pop music and, nowadays, sport, seem to attract them but, truth be told, like male vanity products and herpes, they’re pretty much everywhere” (Simpson, “Meet” 2).
pride in his appearance; however, he is not vain or narcissistic and prioritizes Gina’s sexual pleasure over his own.

According to Simpson, the prototype par excellence for the metrosexual is English soccer player David Beckham. For Simpson, some of the “feminine” characteristics that qualify Beckham as a metrosexual include his hairstyle and use of nail polish—traditionally only used by women. In the film, Ismael uses long hair and an earring, an adornment that for many cultures is also traditionally only used by women.¹¹⁴ Ismael’s appearance identifies him, for Adrián, as less than macho and therefore as a non-threat. In the first meeting between Adrián and Ismael, Adrián initially reacts with jealousy and surprise at Gina’s greeting Ismael with a hug. However, his hard facial expression quickly dissipates as soon as he notices Ismael’s earring. Adrián reaches out and touches Ismael’s ear, exclaiming, “Ay ¡Qué mono arete! Parece usted un buen muchacho,” as he laughs and patronizingly pats Ismael on the shoulder. Adrián uses language (mono/cute, muchacho/boy) to demonstrate his masculine superiority over the less-masculine Ismael. His gestures emphasize this divide:

Not only does he feel he has the right to touch Ismael in a nonfriendly way, which in a traditional macho society such as in Mexico—or virtually anywhere else for that matter—may be taken as a sign of the dominance of

¹¹⁴ Use of earrings by men differs in signification by culture and time period. For example, in the US in the 1980s it became popular for young men to wear one earring in their left ear. It was rumored (at least where I attended high school in Maryland) that men who wore an earring in their right ear were homosexual. Parents, of course, were outraged by this youth culture and older men, like my grandfather, saw use of any earring by a male as an indication of homosexuality. In the late 1990s more young men were wearing earrings in both ears without fear of classification as homosexual (I saw this first hand as a high school teacher from 1997-2000) as piercings in general became more popular. Anecdotal evidence acquired through casual conversation with Mexican friends supports a similar attitudes in Mexico City following a similar timeline. According to my sources, in Mexico City in the early 1990s, it is not surprising that an older man would read the use of an earring by a younger man as a sign of effeminacy, a reaction that still may occur today from older men.
one male over another, but as a gesture that serves to feminize the other: ‘real’ men do not get touched and take steps against those who attempt to touch them. (Foster 153)

Ismael does not react to Adrián’s aggression except to recoil slightly, which according to Foster, casts Ismael as a “feminized” man in contrast to a “real man.”

The film suggests that Ismael’s gender bending appearance blinds Adrián to conceiving of Ismael as a possible threat even after Gina announces that she is in love with someone else. He does not remember Ismael’s name, calling him Ezequiel and Isaac, but he does remember the earring, “El pendejito con el arete simpa? Ni sé por qué pregunto. El chamaco es turberculoso y medio maricón” (Entre). Adrián dismisses Ismael as a “boy” and further questions his manhood with the term “maricón.” This pejorative term translates as “sissy” or “faggot” and questions the “manliness” of the person to whom it is applied, as it is often derogatorily associated with homosexuals. This attack on his “manliness” is symptomatic of compulsory heterosexuality where heterosexuality is the norm and the macho—often conceived as the binary opposite of the maricón—is the ideal.

The previous section analyzed Ismael as a model of alternative masculinity and Adrián’s rejection of it. The following section shifts to an examination the film’s parodic characterization of the more traditional model that Adrián does follow—that of the

115 The film suggests that breaking free from certain expectations of macho performance proves difficult. A naked Ismael will later attempt to perform macho aggression when Adrián appears at Gina’s apartment in the middle of the night and demands to talk with her: “Dile que suba—yo lo arreglo. Le parto la madre” (Entre). Gina walks out, closes the door and Ismael impotently hits the walls—he does not successfully perform the macho, nor does he act out his macho performance in public.

116 Simpson points out that before the term “Metrosexual,” David Beckham too “would have just been called, in the Anglo world at least, 'a sissy'” (“Meet” 1).
hypermasculine Villa. We have seen Gina’s description of him as virile, brutal and savage. I have also previously established that Berman’s Villa is modeled after the Villas represented in Mexican films, which in turn are modeled on the rebellious macho\textsuperscript{117} that O’Malley describes as becoming popular in the 1940s:

\begin{quote}
The macho, the rebel against the father and a model of a kind of manhood within the reach of most men, became the favored image of Mexican men. This image, which had been around for some time, developed into the national stereotype in the 1940s when the Revolution abandoned its socialistic pretenses and took a distinctly conservative turn. The mythical macho revolutionary is in essence the same creature as the patriarch revolutionary of the 1920s and 1930s (who still has not completely disappeared), but the more rebellious version of masculinity represented by the macho makes him a more appropriate symbol of revolution. And because the macho represents sexual license and aggression, the macho revolutionary expresses sexual as well as political frustration. The greater identification with the macho strengthened the hero cults of Villa and Zapata and weakened those of Madero and Carranza. (142-3)
\end{quote}

This “rebellious” macho that represents “sexual license and aggression” is the model of masculinity that was institutionalized as a national hero, which in turn contributes to the institutionalization of compulsory heterosexuality. We must not confuse “sexual license” with the freedom to escape the norms of compulsory heterosexuality—neither at the time following the Revolution nor today is this non-heterosexual sexual license. This is demonstrated through Berman’s treatment of Villa, who is repeatedly allied with heterosexual sexual license in his descriptions of himself, his actions and his descriptions by others.

\textsuperscript{117} Regardless of the variety of models of macho or the origins of the concept that were previously presented and that are especially problematized by Mirandé and which I myself question in my article “The Ambiguous Representations of Macho,” what interests me here is the representation of masculinity through images associated with the Mexican Revolution. Therefore, for this purpose in this section I am most heavily drawing upon the macho model that Irene O’Malley associates with the Revolution.
In the film, Villa’s heterosexual license is described following a visual example of heterosexual sex. Though the spectator does not witness the act itself, the positioning of Gina and Adrián’s naked bodies make it clear to the audience what has just occurred. Adrián begins narrating a scene from his book. As the camera pans from a bowl of cherries on the night table, to Adrián’s face, to Gina’s body, the dialogue emphasizes the mythic nature of Villa’s virility:

Adrián: Villa se había escapado de la guerra para visitar a una de las tantas mujeres que tenía...

Gina: 300

Adrián: El número se pierde en lo mítico

This is the first time Adrián speaks of Pancho Villa in the film and his dialogue clearly emphasizes Villa’s characterization as womanizer. Gina participates; supplying the number of women Villa had been with, 300, in a nonchalant, non-critical manner. She appears to share in Adrián’s admiration for the virility of the macho model—reminding us of her orgasmic reaction to Villa’s virility as portrayed in the (re-made) archival footage at the opening of the film. Adrián, the historian, downplays the importance of the number itself and prizes the myth over reality.

The film playfully underscores how this virility directly relates to the formation of the Mexican nation in another scene. As Gina types Adrián’s book, the audience sees how she visualizes the scene framed as a film within the film. Villa visits his mother to ask for her “bendición” (blessing) repeatedly—which she repeatedly denies, clearly disapproving of his lifestyle as a “ladrón” (thief) and an “asesino” (murderer). After noting his prolonged absence (“Hace 18 años que no lo miro, hijo”), she asks the reason...
for his visit, then proceeds to inquire as to how many grandchildren she has. She doesn’t ask “if” she has grandchildren, but how many. The question indicates that it is expected that her son will produce grandchildren. Villa first avoids the question and when she asks again, he is unable to tell her and guesses, “Cien…ciento…Pos siento mucho no poder sacar las cuentas ‘ama. Bueno, le digo: andamos haciendo Patria, ¿qué no?” Villa literally claims a role in “making the Nation” through procreation (an act that requires heterosexuality), establishing himself as literal father of the nation. It is interesting to note that his model is that of father and son, but not of husband. Although monogamy is demanded of women, which we will see later in this section, no such commitment is demanded of men.

Adrián’s character perpetuates the view of Villa as non-committed womanizer when he describes the previously mentioned scene from his book where Villa visits one of his many women. In this scene, both male and female characters are based on prior models from literature and film. According to Rosales, “La representación del hombre como dominador, capaz de domesticar a la mujer, es, de nuevo, en esta actuación de Villa, la re-actuación de un modelo anterior” (165): in this case an episode from Don Juan Manuel’s *Conde Lucanor* (dated 1335) known as “Lo que sucedió a un mozo que casó con una mujer de muy mal character.” In Mexico, B. Traven rewrote this episode about how to “tame” a “mujer brava” as “La Tigresa” in his collection of short stories

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118 This is almost identical to the play (Berman 39). Note that Berman capitalizes “Patria.”

119 Later allusions to this scene will refer to it as the “Conde Lucanor scene” for the sake of clarity and simplicity.

120 David William Foster also references this connection with the “Medieval exemplum” in passing (151-2), as does Salvador Velazco 186-7.
Canasta de Cuentos Mexicanos. Director Julio Bracho made Traven’s version into a film in 1955, starring María Félix as the “tigresa” or “mujer brava” and Pedro Armendáriz, who as we saw earlier will also incarnate Pancho Villa, as the man who tames her.

The film picks up and comments on these antecedents. Having no name assigned to her, Woman in the “Conde Lucanor” scene is more than a specific person or character. She is universalized as a model for the archetype of the rebellious woman who must be (and is) “tamed” by a man. While intertextually connected to the “shrews” that came before her, the film also visually connects her to Gina. As we see her, she wears the same color (white) and sits in the same position as Gina in the opening of the film segment entitled, “Un té.” That she offers Villa a cup of tea echoes Gina’s offering tea

121 Ayala Blanco also makes this connection briefly (Fugacidad 327).

122 This type of role came to be associated with María Félix. See Susan Drake’s unpublished dissertation, “María Félix: The Last Great Mexican Film Diva: The Representation of Women in Mexican Film, 1940-1970.”

123 After this film, Pedro Armendáriz played Pancho Villa in several films from the 1950s directed by Ismael Rodríguez: Así era Pancho Villa (1957); Cuando Viva Villa es la muerte (1958); Pancho Villa y la Valentina (1958). For more on Armendáriz as Pancho Villa and as representative of the macho in film, see the section of this chapter, “Macho, Cinema and the Nation.”

124 The fact that this woman is anonymous can also be read as emphasizing her lack of individual importance and suggests her as model of essentialized/stereotyped female. This lack of importance related to lack of name is reinforced later when Adrián says of the woman in his apartment: “No importa. No tiene nombre” (She doesn’t matter. She has no name). For a discussion of Villa and Adrián’s inability to see women as individuals in the play, using interaction with Gina as an example, see Shedd 160-162.

125 Examples of previous “shrews” include Shakespeare’s Taming of the Shrew and other examples that take the “Shrew” story in one form or another such as Doña Bárbara (novel and film) and others. Susan Drake has a chapter on the “Taming of the Shrew” in her dissertation that focuses on María Félix in such roles. See also Joanne Hershfield’s chapter, “La Devoradora: The Mexican Femme Fatale” in Mexican Cinema Mexican Woman.

126 The film occasionally makes use of intertitles, to mark segment changes.
to Adrián upon his entrance. Since she and Villa are a product of Adrián’s imagination, where “woman” is equated with Gina and Villa is clearly equated with Adrián as the film develops, the scene can be read as Adrián’s male fantasy for dealing with his relationship with Gina: the desire to dominate and tame her. In fact, taming isn’t enough. Woman brings Villa the coffee he has been demanding and rather than accepting it, he shoots her. Voiceover reminds us that this story is framed by Adrián’s narration. When Gina asks why Villa (Adrián) shoots the woman, Adrián responds, “porque tengo que irme.” We are reminded that Adrián is directing the scene and that in order to end the story and to leave Gina, who attempts to draw him into a more traditional relationship beyond sex (she wants tea, to talk, to have dinner), he kills the woman, figuratively ‘killing’ Gina. Killing the woman that gives in to the demands of the macho suggests that: “Ser sumisa y dependiente equivale a una muerte simbólica” (Velazco 186). The images in this scene clearly illustrate the active male versus passive female gender binary. The literal death occurs in the fictional scene-within-a-scene set in the past with Villa as the protagonist. Berman “kills” the traditionally submissive woman to suggest that there are other options for the female gender role. However, Adrián’s clear connection with Villa (and therefore the “active” male role) suggests the destructive power of accepting this position and that history will repeat itself if Gina (and by extension modern women) does not reject the “passive” female role.

If Gina represents the contemporary version of Woman, Adrián represents the contemporary version of Villa. The relationship between Adrián and Villa is even clearer

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127 See Magnarelli “Masculine Acts” 42; “Tea” 63 where she analyzes the play, which includes woman and Villa, but not the Conde Lucanor reference.
in the play version where both characters move simultaneously on the stage. In her analysis of the play, Sally Shedd points out that the identification between the two men is intended to be made visually on the stage: “the stage directions state that their movements are ‘strangely synchronized’” (157). In his analysis of the play, Stuart Day refers to the staging of this scene where,

The synchronism between Villa and Adrián emphasizes the idea that the macho myth of Villa lives in contemporary men. Both men seek the same thing: to dominate their women without being conquered by emotions. When Gina requests that Adrián stay for dinner, Villa echoes Adrián’s refusal and explains to Gina that for the macho there are only two options: to attack or to flee. (“Berman’s” 13)

In the film, this behavioral explanation comes from Adrián, “Huyendo o atacando compañerita. Esto es el destino del macho. Villa dixit.” That Adrián quotes Villa to justify his behavior attests his use of Villa as his model of macho and to the point to which Adrián has internalized this model. The aforementioned scene contrasts sharply with Adrián’s later rejection of Villa’s masculine model, first in a confrontation with Gina and second (and somewhat ironically) when he presents his biography of Villa on television in the film version.

I have just shown how the film underscores Adrian’s over-dependence on Villa as a model for behavior. Through humor, the film unsettles Adrián’s idealization of Villa and ultimately, traditional masculinity. In the next section through an analysis of how the character of Adrián develops and seemingly transforms, I argue that the film suggests change is possible, though ephemeral.

Part of the film’s destabilization of the macho includes parody, framing the hypermasculine Villa (and Adrián) as ridiculous depictions of an outdated gender model
that Adrián first follows, then (at least temporarily) rejects. This is exemplified in the scene where Villa’s spirit appears to Adrián when Gina attempts to break with him. Villa’s ghost provides a sort of *macho* reinforcement that offers Adrián help to “tame” a rebellious woman who through her rejection of Adrián has stepped out of her gender role as the passive female. This gender transgression literally injures the *macho*—Villa is stabbed when Gina declares she is in love and he is shot when she reveals with whom.

The confrontation between Gina and Adrián/Villa becomes a confrontation between traditional gender norms and their destabilization:

The scene becomes a literal staging of the conflict between gender conformity and freedom. Villa’s heroic, romantic world requires strict adherence to traditional gender roles—roles which limit human behavior while demanding that an individual be a ‘real man’ or a ‘real woman.’ Whenever Gina steps out of the traditional, passive, female role (as when she reveals her love for someone else) or Adrián steps out of the traditional ‘macho man’ stereotypes (as when he offers to overlook the fact that Gina has another lover), Villa is subjected to physical violence symbolic of the blows to hegemonic gender roles. (Shedd 159)

Villa, the spirit of the *macho*, is killed by gendered comments—those of a woman who does not accept her traditional role and those of a man who no longer accepts his. Adrián appears to deal Villa a deathblow when he admits to crying—a “feminine” act that a *macho* should never perform. The image of Villa lying face down in a fountain as a result is followed by the image of Adrián at Villa’s tomb at the monument to the Revolution, lamenting the death of the Revolution. The juxtaposition of these images suggests that we can interpret Villa’s death as both the death of the Revolution and that of
the *macho*, a combination we will see again in the “Intellectual Scene” when Adrián not only rejects Villa the *macho*, but also exposes the Revolution as a male-centered narrative that no longer applies to the modern Mexican nation.

The “Intellectual Scene” 128 echoes the concerns of academics (Jean Franco, Ilene O’Malley, Elizabeth Salas, and others) who question the gains of the Revolution for women as it brings the role of revolutionary rhetoric in the marginalization of women to the forefront: “la Revolución de Villa no fue la revolución de las mujeres”(*Entre*). 129 This scene serves multiple purposes. First, it establishes a contemporary context of *machismo*, 130 revealing the “straight mindedness” of institutions represented by academics and historians, all of whom happen to be male, which reinforces the privileging of the masculine historic narrative. Second, it reflects on the role of television, historical narrative and academic/intellectual discourse in the perpetuation of gender stereotypes. Third, it points to Adrián’s rejection of Villa the *macho* model and his (possible) “feminist” conversion:

128 For clarification and simplicity this scene will be referred to as the “Intellectual Scene.”

129 Where I see this scene as important to the call for national gender revolution, and for Adrián’s development, other critics see this scene as overly exaggerated. Roman criticizes the scene, asserting that, “obviamente, en varios momentos se llega al abuso, como aquella escena en que se ridiculiza a los intelectuales en un programa de televisión” (Roman “Pancho Villa navega entre el teatro y el cine”). Ayala Blanco describes the scene as: “Desopilantes caracterizaciones incidentales de Enrique Singer, con gestual amaneradamente parsimonioso a lo Octavio Paz, y de Julián Pastor, con desertores arrebates divos a lo Adolfo Gilly (cuya *Revolución interrumpida* se mejora como *Revolución traicionada*), intervienen en la insidiosa caricatura de un TV debate en panel-show para lucimiento de superintelecutales mamarrachos”(*Fugacidad* 374). These reactions suggest that Berman’s film hit a chord when it included the supposedly “enlightened” public of intellectuals in her critique of contemporary *machismo*.

130 Berman herself points to this scene as evidence that the film version still includes a critique of *machismo*: “Hay una secuencia de un foro de televisión en donde un grupo de intelectuales habla sobre Pancho Villa y la democracia, de pronto el tema deriva en las mujeres y uno de estos personajes se pregunta: ‘¿qué tienen que ver las mujeres y la democracia?, ellas son sólo un 50 por ciento de la población, lo cual las hace una minoría muy respetable, pero deben dedicarse a las labores propias de su sexo” (Berman in Segoviano, “Sabina”).
Intelectual 1 (played by Julián Pastor):… ¿Se está usted desdiciendo de su fervor villista?

Adrián: Bueno, reniego de ciertas afirmaciones totalizadoras en efecto…

Intellectual 2 (played by Otto Minera): […] Usted afirma en su libro lo sostiene aquí en el capítulo concluyente página 283 abajo… Leo según usted dice, “¿Quién, si no Villa, quería llevar al pueblo al poder? Y ¿Cómo, sino con la violencia, era posible?”

Adrián: Cierto, cierto, pero ahora necesitamos métodos menos violentos, más suaves, más democráticos, más… digámoslo así… femeninos

Intelectual 1: (laughing) ¿Nos estás invitando a feminizarnos?

Intelectual 2: ¡Quieres que nos afeminemos todos!

Here we see the call for gender revolution on a larger scale—not just in terms of Adrián’s personal gender stance, where he is negating certain villista attributes, but in terms of the nation as a whole. Violence is seen as associated with that which is masculine and the antiquated system that must change; and the “softer,” “more democratic” methods are associated with the “feminine” possibility offered as an alternative. The other men reject this notion and laugh at the thought of “effeminizing” themselves, allying themselves with the “masculine” and “macho” attitude, suggesting the reluctance of dominant society to reject the status quo, along with its resistance to questioning the confines of the gender binary.

The scene goes further as the male intellectuals laugh at the thought of including women in the “dirty matter of politics” and places them squarely in a traditional gender role: “Las mujeres son una minoría muy respetable desde luego, pero, pero por qué entrometer a las damas en el sucio asunto de la política teniendo ellas por tradición, que sé yo, el bordado, la cocina, los hijos.” All of the men, including Adrián, laugh off the
moderator’s comment that women are, “Una minoría que es del 51% de la población” (Entre), minimizing the recognition that women are not actually a minority, but a majority (slight though it may be). The film pokes fun at the absurdity of the intellectuals’ blindness as they deny women’s possible existence as political entities, thereby refusing them access to the public sphere (even in terms of this televised debate where the “intellectuals” are all men) and returning them to the private sphere where they take care of the kitchen and children. To include women in a masculine space would be to question the gender binary that separates the masculine from the feminine and does not allow for gray areas of overlap.

As the rest of the group breaks into chaos, Adrián looks directly in the camera in a close-up to deliver his message that there can be no true revolution that does not consider the “feminine condition,” which he relates to personal domestic situations:

Lo que intento decir es que una revolución que no afecte la condición femenina y por tanto no llegue a nuestras historias personales, privadas nunca nos volverá realmente democráticos. Quiero ahora hablar directamente a sus corazones compatriotas (Adrián holds up sign with the word, “¡Gina!”), quiero que juntos comprendamos que la democracia es una práctica siempre perfectible (Here we see Adrián on TV and at the same time Adrián watching TV in a kitchen wearing an apron and mixing batter) y nos perdonemos por favor nos perdonemos nuestros errores [...] puede tomar un siglo para que nos volvamos verdaderamente democráticos para que entre el poder y la democracia elijamos desde lo más profundo de nuestros corazones la democracia....

Through this analogy we see the allegory Berman and Tardán present where the couple represents the microcosm of the nation regarding gender roles. To emphasize this, Adrián holds up a sign with Gina’s name so that there is no mistaking that he is talking to
her through political discourse and the lack of democracy in the country\textsuperscript{131} is also a lack of democracy between them.\textsuperscript{132} Further equating the nation with the microcosm of the (heterosexual) couple, part way through Adrián’s speech, the camera pulls back on a close up of Adrián to reveal him watching himself on TV. He has entered the same private sphere that Intellectual 1 suggested was reserved to women: “la cocina, los hijos.” Adrián stands in the “feminine” space of the kitchen performing the “feminine” role of taking care of the children wearing “feminine” garments (an apron).\textsuperscript{133}

Outside of the “feminine” space of the kitchen, in the “masculine” space of living room, Adrián’s former wives discuss how he has changed: “está rarísimo ... irreconocible.” They interpret his diversion from himself as a gender crisis that they call “la andropausia.” Considering him as androgynous, these women deny Adrián’s association with traditional male gender roles due to his non-\textit{macho} behavior. But, like menopause, the symptoms of “andropause” don’t last. Adrián’s newfound gender position outside the binary is not permanent. As we will see in the following section, the \textit{macho} spirit returns to haunt Adrián, though in different ways in the play than in the film.

What is the end result of the gender journeys of Adrián and Gina? This final section problematizes the differing levels of success where gender revolution is concerned through an analysis of the endings of the play and the film. Changes in the

\textsuperscript{131} Salvador Velazco in his review of this film writes a concise analysis of the film as an “allegory for Mexico in its transition to democracy” (185 my translation).

\textsuperscript{132} Later he will tell her, “between them there has never been democracy.”

\textsuperscript{133} The apron is a key image in Chicano artist Daniel Salazar’s re-imagined Emiliano Zapata, another revolutionary icon who like Villa is associated with the \textit{macho} archetype, in his piece “El Mandilón,” in which Salazar re-imagines Emiliano Zapata to call for a gender revolution for this \textit{macho} icon. See chapter 2 for analysis of the Salazar image.
ending affect the characterization of both Gina and Adrián through the omission of the character of Andrea. Several critics see this change as one of the problems with the film, for example:

Sadly, pic goes limp in its last 20 minutes and meanders aimlessly as Adrián attempts to turn over a new leaf and become a responsible parent, ex-husband and lover. Surprisingly, Berman has not been faithful to her own play, which had a stronger, farcical ending. Also largely missing in the screen adaptation is the character of Andrea [...], Gina’s friend and confidante, who served in the play as a cynical counterpoint to the latter’s hopeful romanticism. (Garcia Tsao)

Whereas Garcia Tsao sees Andrea’s deletion in the final scenes as an omission of Gina’s counterpart, I argue that this omission makes Gina a more complete character and portrays a different message. In the film, we do not see the “masculine” woman Andrea,134 but rather Gina, who speaks many of the lines attributed to Andrea in the play. What does this change imply? First, the focus remains on Gina and her possibility for change rather than contrasting her with a more cynical and more “manly” counterpart. This suggests that a woman does not have to be less “feminine” in appearance or general outlook to be able to change her power relationship with respect to a male. She does not have to question the gender binary in physical appearance in order to question its power relationships. In the film, Gina takes this “masculine role” (at least in terms of her relationship with Adrián) when she ends things on her terms instead of his. Manuel Medina sees Adrián’s subsequent fight to regain Gina’s romantic attention as simply fighting to “save his honor as a man […] as such he should control amorous relations and decide when they end. Gina has taken possession of this masculine role” (109, my

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134 For explorations of Andrea as “masculine” woman in the play, see A’ness 146; Magnarelli “Tea” 59, 68; Magnarelli “Masculine Acts” 44; Day “Berman’s” 15; Medina 110; Shedd 160, 162.
Therefore, by taking control of a situation, by being active instead of passive, Gina rejects the traditional female role, thereby questioning the gender binary.

However, it is important to note that she draws the power to change her relationship with Adrián from the fact that she has fallen in love with another man. At no point in the film (or play) is Gina portrayed as a complete person (financially yes, emotionally no) without a man in her life, thus reinforcing the underlying heteronormative hegemonic power structure of contemporary Mexican society as reflected within the text.135

Andrea’s deletion from the film also affects the way the audience reads Adrián. Unlike the ending in the play, in the film, the ‘masculine’ Andrea does not emasculate Adrián. In the play Villa enters the scene astride a cannon which fires “impotently”136 to echo Adrián’s inability to perform sexually when the “masculine” Andrea usurps his “macho” role as seducer. In the film, the cannon is replaced by another firearm—still equating the gun with a phallic extension of masculine strength. Adrián and Villa together fire their guns through the closed bathroom door. One bullet hits Gina in the

135 Shedd would seem to disagree when she speaks of Gina’s relationship with Ismael as allowing her gender independence: “She embraces ‘gender independence.’ After rigidly conforming as a female heterosexual straight woman, Gina gains freedom and new possibilities by identifying as a female heterosexual gender-bending woman. The establishment of Gina’s independence is aided by the lack of an obligatory love scene between Gina and Ismael after their affair has begun. This choice keeps the focus on Gina’s journey and helps the audience to resist the urge to explain her new-found strength and self-awareness as simply the thrill of finding another man (and a younger one at that)” (153). This is not true in the film where we see a more graphic heterosexual love encounter between Ismael and Gina than between Gina and Adrián. If it is the lack of a love scene between Adrián and Gina that allows her “gender independence,” then following that logic, the film denies her this independence through the inclusion of such a scene.

136 For analysis of this scene of the play see A’ness 147; Magnarelli “Tea” 63, 67; Medina 110; Day “Berman’s” 15-16.
head, which we see through a close up—her eyes open, a bullet hole in the center of her forehead, a blood trickle, but no other blood (our first indication this didn’t really happen). The spectator soon realizes that this occurs in Adrián’s imagination, where his hypermasculine alter ego Villa resides. He fantasizes about killing Gina—taking Villa’s advice that the only way to exert his power over a rebellious woman is to kill her.\textsuperscript{137}

This is not the first time we have seen fantasized violence towards women as a means of controlling them. This scene is reminiscent of Villa shooting Woman in the “Conde Lucanor scene” (and of Adrian as narrator controlling Villa’s action in this same scene so that he can leave Gina). The fiction Adrián previously directed in the Conde Lucanor scene, here he imagines acting out in his own life, but in the end is unable or unwilling to bring this \textit{macho} fantasy to fruition. Again we are reminded of Villa’s assertion of the “\textit{macho} destiny” that Adrián previously cited: “To attack or to flee.” This \textit{macho} battle cry applies to Adrián’s many exits and to shooting Woman on Villa’s part and to this scene where Adrián (or Villa) shoots Gina; however, the attack is imaginary and remains nothing more than a fantasy. Adrián does not attack; neither does he flee—he abandons his \textit{macho} rhetoric. His earlier fit of violence\textsuperscript{138} has subsided and he sits on the floor of the bathroom smoking a cigarette while Gina sits on the edge of the tub.

There is no interaction between them—not even a gaze. Gina’s only reaction is to cover

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{137} In the scene where Gina declares her love for Ismael to Adrián, Villa gives Adrián advice on how to gain control of the situation, including that he should hit her and later that he should kill her.

\textsuperscript{138} At the end of her article, Rosales brings up the theme of masculine violence and reads this scene as portraying Adrián as a “verdadero héroe moderno” as according to her, we realize that it was Villa, not Adrián that shot Gina and that Adrián represents the possibility of an option other than violence (168). As I see Villa as an extension of Adrián’s psyche, as a model of the virile and \textit{macho} man Adrián wants to be, I would argue that although I don’t see Adrián as a “modern hero,” we can interpret this scene as his victory over his \textit{macho} ego.
\end{footnotesize}
herself, creating a physical space/barrier between them. They remain in these positions as the camera slowly reverses and the credits begin to role. What does this final image say about the possibilities for successfully challenging hegemonic gender roles? The film suggests that Adrián has at least temporarily overcome his relapse into the *macho* by not giving in to his fantasy; and Gina has rejected the *macho*, first by shutting herself into the bathroom (physical barrier), then by subtly re-enforcing this physical separation through her posture. Unlike previous scenes where Adrián’s arrival soon resulted in Gina’s melting resolve and her giving in to Adrián’s physical advances, here she rejects him. Unlike the Woman in the Conde Lucanor scene, she is not the passive victim of the active *macho*. By not accepting the role of the passive female, Gina avoids being “killed” and the spectator is left to wonder what she will do with her new resolve.

We have seen that through both the play and the film, Berman performs a type of gender revolution by exposing the consequences of maintaining compliance with traditional concepts of gender roles that create a gender binary. In order to re-imagine the Mexican nation as more democratic, traditional concepts of masculinity, represented by the hypermasculine Villa parody and his protégé Adrián, need to change. We see this through Gina’s rejection of Adrián the *macho*; Gina’s choice of a “differently masculine,” metrosexual man; Adrián’s failure as *macho* and his attempted “feminist” conversion; and finally, the death of Villa the *macho*. But has Berman’s gender revolution been successful? She does succeed in forcing us to question our traditional concepts of gender roles, and shows the audience possibilities for change, especially in the film versions of Adrián and Gina. The end of the film shows the dissolution of an
“unhealthy” power relationship between the macho (Adrián) and the submissive female (Gina). Though Gina is with Ismael (and therefore the film remains within the confines of the “straight mind” and compulsory heterosexuality) the film also suggests that the newly empowered Gina will not automatically repeat previous gendered power structures in her relationship with the “differently masculine” Ismael. Change is possible, though limited. Even if the macho hasn’t completely transformed, Gina has—she rejects him and affirms possibilities for alternative masculinities through choosing Ismael.

Although Berman’s text is groundbreaking in many ways to the degree that it not only problematizes the icon of the macho but the way it demonstrates women’s complicity, it still imagines the Mexican nation, represented by the microcosm of Gina and Adrián’s relationship, in terms of the heterosexual couple, and therefore leaves certain underlying power structures in tact, in spite of questioning them throughout. The next section analyzes a film that also exposes a crisis of the macho and that puts pressure on traditional representations of both gender and sexuality.

3.3 From Charros to Narcos: Performing the Macho Myth through Parody

Where actor Jesús Ochoa incarnated the hypermasculine Pancho Villa in Berman and Tardán’s film, in the short film Charros he plays a questionably masculine charro. In this cortometraje (short film) made in 2004, director Jorge Riggen takes up the issue of gender representation in Mexican film and television through depicting caricatures of
multiple models of *macho* masculinity perpetuated by these media, including the *charro*, the revolutionary, and the *narcotraficante*. I argue that through the film’s parodic framing of these models, *Charros* comments on the crisis of masculinity and not only destabilizes traditional depictions of male gender roles, but sexuality as well. Where *Entre Villa* unmaskes and problematizes the traditional gender binary without overtly questioning representations of (hetero)sexuality, the second film comically exposes the thin line between homosocial relationships and perceived homosexual relationships that result in a heterosexual panic and a literal “policing” of sexuality.

The *cortometraje* is framed by films of the Golden Age: it begins and ends with the two male protagonists watching movies from that era. Like *Entre Villa*, this film opens with a focus on spectatorship, which draws attention to the role of cinema in perpetuating gender roles. In this opening scene, the “Charro” and his “peón” Melecio are in a movie theater watching a film. The peon sleeps with his head on the Charro’s shoulder, an image that indicates an intimacy between the two men, and at the same time suggests Melecio’s lack of interest in the film (and by extension his rejection of these models) since he has fallen asleep. In contrast, the Charro’s face shows his captivation by the images on screen. He clearly relates to these images (that are not shown to the spectator) and sees himself reflected in them as he says to his companion, “Así mero somos, Melecio.” The opening segment thus establishes the films of the Golden Age of Mexican cinema as providing a model for the Charro’s behavior.
According to Mexican film scholar Ricardo Pérez Monfort, films from the Golden Age contributed to the emergence of the *charro* as one of the most significant Mexican archetypes from this period and came to represent “mexicanidad” both within Mexico and internationally:

Los ‘charros’ y las ‘chinas poblanas’—bailando el ‘jarabe tapatío’ a la menor provocación—se asumieron como ‘representantes típicos de México’, tanto para nacionales como para visitantes. Gracias a la insistencia de las autoridades educativas, pero sobre todo al teatro popular, a la prensa, a la radio y al cine, una gran cantidad de mexicanos se fueron identificando cada vez más con estos estereotipos, hasta convertirse en las ‘figuras nacionales’ por excelencia, representativos de ‘lo mexicano.’ (96)

Pérez Monfort links the proliferation of the *charro* as representative of “mexicanness” to his depiction in various media, including film. In the time period Pérez delineates, Jorge Negrete, singing *charro* and star of multiple films from the *Cine de Oro*, provides a model of the *macho* archetype: “of all the movie stars of this era, one stood out as ‘a macho among machos.’ Ever the handsome and pistol-packing *charro* (singing cowboy), with his melodious and eminently male tenor, Jorge Negrete came to epitomize the swaggering Mexican nation” (Gutmann 288).139

Riggen’s film clearly parodies Negrete’s model. Upon leaving the movie theater the Charro attempts to employ some of the techniques he has presumably learned. When his *piropos* fail miserably, earning him a slap in the face, he then tries to gain the attention of his love interest, Chabela, with flowers, and sends his peon with a letter for her reply. Her response also ties his behavior to cinematic models: “¿Quién se cree,

139 Other film *charros* followed Negrete. Sergio de la Mora asserts that Pedro Infante participated “in elevating the *charro* as the quintessential symbol of masculine mexicanidad” (Cinemachismo 83). Ramírez Berg refers to Antonio Aguilar and Vicente Fernández as models of the *charro/macho* in the 60s and 70s (*Cinema* 133-5).
Jorge Negrete?” Chabela’s tone suggests that the Charro may be aspiring to the model presented by Negrete, but that his “cursi” efforts have failed to impress her. Through her reaction, the film pokes fun at outdated notions of masculinity based on the macho/Negrete/charro model. Her father immediately counters the reference to the macho with the comment that he thought the man was a “maricón.” Where Adrián demeans Ismael through the use of language in Entre Villa y una mujer desnuda for not looking and acting like a macho, the father attacks the Charro’s manliness through this pejorative term in spite of his attempting to follow the rules for proper (even if outdated) masculine behavior and appearance. In both cases, the “straight mind” exerts its hegemony linguistically. In a society open to homosexuality, or at the very least, different masculinities, “faggot” would not be considered an insult.

When the flowers fail to work, the Charro explains to his peon that he will try a different tactic, supplied by a different model of masculinity, that of Emiliano Zapata. While sitting in a field smoking marijuana with his peon (planted unbeknownst to him by Melecio), the Charro begins evoking the image of “mi general Emiliano Zapata” as a model of masculinity: “Cuando un charro quiere demostrar su hombría puede imitar a los famosos. Mi general Zapata, que en paz descanse, fue uno de los mejores charros que ha dado estas tierras. Era macho cumplidor” (Charros). These lines reveal first, the character’s belief in the need to demonstrate or prove “manliness;” second that for him, such demonstrations are imitations of previous models; and third that he views Zapata as the idealized version of “manliness” with words like “hombría,” “mejor charro” and “macho.”
The film continues to poke fun at the characters’ retention of these outdated notions of masculinity by framing him as unable to distinguish between fact and fiction—they confuse the Zapata from the history books with the Zapata of filmic legend. As the Charro begins to describe the “penitencia” of Zapata, upon which he will base his “wooing” of his beloved, the peon asks, “¿En cuál película vimos eso?” The Charro claims that the (filmic) incident he describes when Zapata “se volvió loco por la Josefa” and removed his clothes while serenading her to win her affections is “puritita historia,” but that few people have heard of it. Through the dialogue, the scene raises questions about history and the sources that provide the versions of history accepted as true by the general public. The scene suggests that Melecio relies on cinema for his historic information (reflecting the tendency of many people to rely on television and film today) and poses the questions of history versus representations of that history. History and its fictional representation become impossible to distinguish in the mind of the peon. The scene also criticizes the role of cinema in providing gender models as it reveals that all the models of masculinity these men rely on are filmic.

Regardless of the truth or fiction of Zapata’s actions, the Charro relies on this perceived model to prove his “hombria” to Chabela. The following scene depicts the Charro arranging a serenade with mariachi musicians that emerge from a van. As the music plays, the Charro begins removing his clothing, following Zapata’s alleged example. Although the Charro claims he is following Zapata’s model, the serenade also links the Charro to the models provided by legendary filmic charros who use serenades
to woo women. However, the Charro’s performance of masculinity does not impress Chabela. His attempts to conform to what he perceives to be the societally prescribed image of masculinity elicit a response of: “pinches charros—tan machos y tan arrastrados.” (fucking charros—so macho and so kiss-ass). She rejects this attempt to conform to models of masculinity represented by the model of the charro and the macho. By accusing them of “arrastrados,” she also rejects their assumption that she desires the performance.

The Charro’s efforts to prove his masculinity backfire completely as he is not only rejected by Chabela, he is also chased away at gunpoint. As in the case of Berman’s Villa, his gun, the phallic weapon of the macho, is turned against him. When the girl’s father Don Lorezo, who also happens to be the chief of police, calls for his peon Pérez to chase the men away with force, rather than defending themselves according to the macho code, the Charro and his peon run off. This action brings to mind Foster’s description of Ismael from Entre Villa y una mujer desnuda as less than masculine because he doesn’t defend himself against Adrián. We are also reminded of Adrián’s assertion that the macho’s destiny is to “attack or to flee.” Here, the men flee and are perceived as less than macho.

The girl’s father isn’t satisfied with simply running the men off his property. He later takes a team to the Charro’s hacienda and surprises the Charro and peon at work with their newfound marijuana business. In this scene, as part of its commentary on

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140 At the end of the cortometraje, the two protagonists are watching Dos tipos de cuidado (Ismael Rodríguez 1952), a film which stars Jorge Negrete and Pedro Infante, whose characters both dress as charros and serenade the women of their affections in an attempt to gain their attention.
models of masculinity, the film introduces the model of the narcotraficante as yet another version of the macho model that the Charro and Melecio fail to copy successfully. The arrival of the police is preceded by a quick succession of close-ups of scales, money changing hands, the Charro’s satisfied face, and sacks of marijuana—it seems that the business is thriving. When the Charro first discovered that Melecio had planted marijuana on his property without his knowledge or consent, he reacted with indignation, asserting that such illegal activities were not in keeping with his vision of what a charro should be: “Los charros somos honestos, leales, nobles.” Melecio quickly interrupts this list of positive attributes with, “¡borrachos, jugadores y mujeriegos!” The Charro’s vision of himself does not reflect the outsider’s vision of him and, like the macho figure discussed earlier, he offers a polysemous—and at times contradictory—model of masculinity. A similar phenomenon occurs with the depiction of the narcotraficante, also represented by the character of the Charro in this film.

The possibility of money eventually captures the Charro’s attention and begins his transformation from charro to narco. Melecio promises enough money not only for cockfights, but also for “el tequila, los mariachis y las mujeres.” At the mention of women, the music rises and the Charro slowly turns around to face the camera with a close-up on his facial expression that reveals he has been convinced to participate in the illegal activity if it will indeed produce enough money to “buy” women. This desire and conception of women as property to be bought is more explicitly expressed in the

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141 Once again connecting this Charro with “el charro cantante” (the singing charro) Jorge Negrete, the Charro’s choice of adjectives echoes the song, “El charro mexicano,” sung by Jorge Negrete: “Soy el charro mexicano / noble, valiente, leal.” (El Charro Inmortal). Interestingly, “valiente” is not included in the adaptation and as we will see, this particular Charro proves repeatedly he is not brave.
subsequent scene where he claims that if Chabela isn’t impressed by his efforts, “Que chinga su madre… al cabo que ya vamos a ser ricos y con centavos me consigo otra.” As far as he is concerned, this woman is an easily replaceable commodity. This attitude identifies him with the charro/mujeriego that Melecio previously described.

The film excuses the incursion into the world of narcotraficantes as economic necessity. As Melecio explains, “De lo que era el rancho no nos queda nada más que el puro casco y ya nos anda cayendo… La mariguana es lo único que nos compra.” Clearly the heyday of the charro/hacendado is declining. As a post-NAFTA production, it would seem that this cortometraje is suggesting that there is no market available to Mexican farmers outside of the demand for drug production. José Valenzuela, author of Jefe de Jefes: Corridos y narcocultura en México asserts that “el ingreso en el narcomundo, muchas veces deriva de la necesidad” (228). Carlos Monsiváis expands on this idea, suggesting that many campesinos do not have alternative options to save themselves from economic misery:

el fracaso de los cultivos alternativos [...] El desastre de la reforma agraria y el empobrecimiento y la lumpenización en el campo, obligan a comunidades a usar de los recursos a su alcance, al margen de las consecuencias, porque eso evita o pospone lo más atroz: la miseria extrema. Ante el auge relativo del narco en parte del campesinado, la pregunta inevitable es: ¿tienen opciones? (“El narcotráfico” 24-5)

The “disaster of land reform” to which Monsiváis refers call to mind both the Revolution and NAFTA. Neither seems to have produced long-tem viable options for the peasant class.

This scene intertextually parodies two models of masculinity: the charro and the narcotraficante (drug dealer/trafficker). Arguably today’s narcos are the continuation of
yesteryear’s charro. Both figures emerged in cultural discourse in the context of moments of economic transition: the charro coinciding with industrial modernization in the 1940s/50s and the narco coinciding with neoliberal globalization of the 80s/90s/00s. Like the charro figure, the narcos owe much to cinematic representation in both Mexico and the United States. The version of the narco represented in the cortomentraje continues the dialogue started by Hollywood from John Wayne to Traffic (Steven Soderbergh, 2000) and Kingpin (David Mills 2003); and the plethora of Mexican B movies, “thrillers baratísimas” (Monsiváis, “El narcotráfico” 35), that have formed a sub-genre of narco-cinema. ¹⁴² U.S. television series C.S.I. Miami has even taken up the image of the narco in its episode “Snakes” (originally aired on CBS on January 13, 2005) where the crime to be solved imitates the lyrics of a narcocorrido.

Perhaps the most influential media in the circulation of the narco archetype are the many narcocorridos performed by popular norteño groups such as Los Tigres del Norte and Los Tucanes de Tijuana. This style of music, modeled on the corrido style popular during and following the Mexican Revolution, re-emerged in the 1970s—this time disseminating the exploits and image of narcotraficantes rather than Revolutionaries.

¹⁴² Very few mainstream Mexican films deal with narcos. Most narco productions are often considered “B movies,” and several are recorded on video rather than film, so that some film scholars don’t consider them true cinema. Titles include: Contrabando y traición (Arturo Martínez 1976); Emilio Varela vs Camelia La Texana (Rafael Portillo, 1979); Lola la Trailera (Raúl Fernández, 1983); El Traficante (José Luis Urquieta, 1983); El Traficante II (José Luis Urquieta, 1984); Narcoterror (Rubén Galindo, 1985); El Narco (Alfonso Pérez de Alva, 1985); Operación marihuana (Ignacio Ortiz, 1985); Narcotráfico/ Sentencia de muerte (Raúl de Anda Jr., 1985); Traficantes de cocaína (Jorge Rodríguez Mas, 1987); Contrabando salvaje (Damián Acosta, 1988); Nacrosatánicos diabólicos (Juan José Mungía, 1989); La narcotraficante (Miguel Ángel Martínez, 1989); Narcovicíntas (Eduardo Martínez, 1991). See also Aviña 229-232.
such as Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata. Cultural glorification of Pancho Villa, one of Hobsbawm’s examples of the “social bandit,” helped pave the way for acceptance of other social bandits—now the narcotraficante—as hero of the people who contests hegemonic power: “Because the image of the social bandit, the Pancho Villa, is so powerfully embedded in the northern Mexican tradition, it becomes possible to construct narcotraffickers, in some fashion, in their image” (Edberg 127). The “bandit-hero,” has morphed from Revolutionary outlaw-hero to the narcotraficante as outlaw-hero.

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144 Both Astorga (91) and Edberg (109) relate the narcotraficante as bandit-hero to Hobsbawm’s description of the social bandit: “The point about social bandits is that they are peasant outlaws whom the lord and state regard as criminals, but who remain within peasant society, and are considered by their people as heroes, champions, avengers, fighters for justice, perhaps even leaders of liberation, and in any case as men to be admired, helped and supported” (Hobsbawm, Bandits 20).

145 Astorga also sees the narco-hero as an extension of the bandit-hero: “el bandido-héroe de otras épocas ha sido desplazado por el traficante-héroe, pero no completamente pues la vía de su presentación mítica, el corrido norteño y la tambora sinaloense, muestra aún huellas de convivencia de ambas categorías” (91-2).

146 As a reaction to the representation of the narco as hero, several movements to ban narcocorridos emerged since 2001, resulting in several voluntary bans from radio stations in Sinaloa, Chihuahua, Baja California and an official ban in Nuevo León (Summers 1). The publication of Los 100 corridos de México, which included narcocorridos, by the Secretary of Public Education (SEP) spurred debate about acceptable material for use in public schools that eventually led to the decision by the SEP not to distribute the books in Sinaloa. According to the article “La cultura del narcocorrido” from February 2005, parents in Sinaloa were concerned that children would be influenced by the corridos to imitate narcos and see them as heroes. Students also saw a relationship between the narcocorridos and an increased inclination in children to enter the drug trade (Gil Vargas 1). These same debates are reminiscent of concerns regarding the influence of other types of music on young people, such as gangsta rap—which is also accused of glorifying violence and the drug trade. Summers and Baily make this connection in “Mexico’s Forbidden songs” (2). Elijah Wald reports that Los Tucanes are “often treated as a Mexican equivalent of gangsta rap” (109). Popular TV shows such as the CSI episode “Snakes” (referenced above) have attempted to counter the hero image of the narco. Latino detective Sam Vega distances himself from “the scumbags who listen to that music—Sinaloa cowboys, big drug producers.” When the manager of the club that features bands who play narcocorridos assumes that as a latino Vega has heard “classics” of the genre, Vega counters, “I don’t
Both models of masculinity emerged as a result of gender crises, the first in the context of post-Revolutionary nation building, the second in the context of globalization.

To understand how the film treats the *narco* model of masculinity, first it is important to understand the attributes this model of masculinity represents. Both the revolutionary and the *narco* have characteristics in common with the *macho* archetype: “The Villa and narcotrafficker personas overlap with other popularized (and stereotypical) portrayals of the Latino ‘macho male’” (Edberg 111). The *narco* model of masculinity, or what I call narcomasculinity, parallels the polysemic descriptions of the *macho* and encompass a variety of often contradictory characteristics. According to *corridos*, preferred attributes include: “valentía, astucia, fiereza, valor, hombría, justicia, fama, bravura, sinceridad y respeto” (Astorga 93-4). These positive qualities of the *narco* parallel Mirandé’s positive traits related to the *macho*: “courage, valor, honor, respect,

 listen to crap about doing drugs and killing cops.” The victim, who believed “the songs were poisoning our young people,” was writing an undercover story on *narcocorridos*, which according to her editor “glamorize a criminal lifestyle” and represent a “vicious subculture”—an assertion proven visually through the murder of the reporter as a result of her research. Through voices related to the Latino community (rather than representatives of the dominant group passing judgment on the minority), the message of this episode clearly relates the music to violent and criminal activity. This and other representations of *narcos* in US cultural production such as *Traffic* and *Kingpin* bear further investigation, but are outside the scope of the current study.

147 Though not within the scope of this study, a future project will examine “*narco*-femininity.” Though most of the *corridos* emphasize the role of men in the drug trade, there are several that speak to the feats of women, such as “Camelia la texana,” also a film by the same name (Arturo Martínez 1976). Valenzuela includes a section on “Arquetipos femeninos en el corridor norteño” in his study of *narcocultura* in Mexico. Monica Lavín writes about “Las damas del narco” in her essay included in *Viento Rojo*. Other recent cultural productions of female *narcos* include the film *La Reyna del sur* (Luis Estrada 2003) and a cabaret performance by Las Reinas Chulas (the new generation of *cabareteras* that inherited El Hábito, now renamed El Vicio, from Jesusa Rodriguez and Liliana Felipe) entitled “La Banda de la Recodas” performed in Mexico City, September 2005.

148 See Edberg 112.
pride, humility, and responsibility” (72). Valenzuela draws a connection between the figure of the narco presented in the corridos and a “reproduction of machismo:”

Un elemento importante en la construcción de [narco]corridos es la profusa re-producción del machismo, la exaltación de la valentía como condición masculina y denostación femenina [...]. Pero el machismo también se evidencia en la ostentación del consumo, en la objetuación de la mujer, en la simbología de un poser con capacidad para definir la vida y la muerte. (225)

This description demonstrates the complexity of the narco as posessing both positively and negatively coded attributes. Just as Mirandé found contradictory perceptions of the macho figure in those he interviewed (66-79), the narco also encompasses negatively coded attributes associated with machismo such as tendencies towards violence and womanizing.

In describing the traits of the narco that repeatedly appear in narcocorridos, Astorga notes that the narco “se [burla] de la muerte y de la ley” (94), an aspect that can be read as positive or negative depending on the positioning of the interpreter (negative from the perspective of the dominant culture and positive from the perspective of resistance to that culture). Valenzuela asserts that the narco makes his own laws and is often afforded police protection due to his firearms and willingness to use violence (225). The ability to rely on violence to solve problems accompanies a fearlessness of death: “El macho no siente miedo o finge que no lo tiene” (229).

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149Valenzuela makes this assertion based on various corrido lyrics such as the following: “nunca sentían miedo” (Eran de Badiraguato; in Valenzuela 229); “un hombre muy decidido/ que no le teme al gobierno” (El Chancharro; in Valenzuela 230); “Era un gallito (individuo bueno para pelear) muy fino/ que nunca conoció el miedo/ con cuernos (cuerno de chivo = Arma larga calibre 7.62 x 39) y metralletas/ ponía de prueba a su cuero” (El Kiki Pellas; in Valenzuela 233; definitions from Valenzuela’s narco glossary).
The Charro/Narco and Peon/Narco of the cortometraje are the opposite of the legendary narcos that are immortalized in narcocorridos. They do not even attempt to defend themselves when the police arrive unexpectedly. They are clearly afraid of both the law and of death when at the sight of the armed men, the Charro and Peon jump up and into each other’s arms into an embrace that visually confirms the father’s idea that this Charro is a “maricón” when he finds them “juntitos y abrazados.” For the father’s “straight mind,” the physical positioning of the two men serves to justify the father’s claim that they are homosexual. Other visual elements also aid in the emasculation of narcomasculinity. In his study of narcocorridos and narcocultura in Mexico, José Valenzuela emphasizes the recurrent references to firearms in the corridos as emblems of narcomasculinity: “Las connotaciones fárlicas de la pistola son el recurso simbólico, no gratuito, donde se manifiesta el machismo de manera contundente” (227). Not only is this Charro/Narco unarmed (and without the symbolic phallus of the gun), his cigar (another phallic symbol) falls from his mouth. Both of these “lacks” suggest figurative castration and by extension emasculation.

Figure 3.2 “Juntitos y abrazados,” Publicity photo for Charros from the back cover of the DVD Cortometraje: Más que un instante, Vol. 7
If the Charro represents a parody of the *macho*, the father represents a parody of the “straight mind” that cannot conceive of non-heterosexual relationships as acceptable. The father’s view of the Charro as homosexual may go beyond his desires to belittle him by questioning his sexuality. It may be a homophobic reaction on the part of the “straight mind” to the fact that the (male) Charro is constantly in the company of his loyal (male) peon. What before may have been nothing more than what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick would term a “homosocial” relationship, in the “straight mind” of the father has crossed the line into homosexual. The “straight mind’s” homophobic paranoia generates a need to explain social activities that are “homo” social in structure; in other words, social activities that involve or are restricted to members of the same sex. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick explains that compulsory heterosexuality creates need for term “homosociality” in opposition to homosexuality:

‘Homosocial’ is a word occasionally used in history and the social sciences, where it describes social bonds between persons of the same sex; it is a neologism, obviously formed by analogy with ‘homosexual,’ and just as obviously meant to be distinguished from ‘homosexual.’ In fact, it is applied to such activities as ‘male bonding,’ which may, as in our society, be characterized by intense homophobia, fear and hatred of homosexuality. To draw the ‘homosocial’ back into the orbit of ‘desire,’ of the potentially erotic, then, is to hypothesize the potential unbrokenness of a continuum between homosocial and homosexual—a continuum whose visibility, for men, in our society, is radically disrupted. (*Between Men* 1-2)

Although speaking of anglo society, similar perspectives are demonstrated in Mexican society through cultural examples. ¹⁵⁰ This film pokes fun at the exaggerated reaction of the straight mind to a male embrace that seems to result in a literal policing of sexuality.

¹⁵⁰ I also show the reflection of this concept in Mexican films such as *Perfume de Violetas* (Maryse Sistach 2001), and *Y tú mamá también* (Alfonso Cuarón 2001) in my paper, “Cultural Manifestations of
The scene following the arrival of the police cuts to the Charro and Melecio sitting close together on a bench in a jail cell. Why were the two arrested? The juxtaposition of images suggest that marijuana production and distribution is the direct cause, since we see the two men caught in the act just before we see them in jail. However, images and language suggest that perceived homosexuality is a prisonable crime. They were also “caught in the act” of perceived homosexual embrace, which is the image that immediately precedes that of the two men in a jail cell. According to Judith Butler, “under conditions of normative heterosexuality, policing gender is sometimes used as a way of securing heterosexuality” (Butler, GT xii). The embrace of the two men, perceived as homosexual desire, results in disciplinary action due to the need of the institution of compulsory and naturalized heterosexuality to regulate gender.

The physical proximity of the two men in the jail cell mirrors that of the opening scene of the film when they are sitting next to each other in a movie theater, one man resting his head on the shoulder of the other—a positioning that may be read as intimacy between the two men. This same intimacy is repeated in the jail cell where they are once again watching a film from the Cine de Oro, this time on television—the vehicle through which films from the 40s and 50s are still enjoyed by the Mexican public today. The use of the television links the story with contemporary Mexican audiences and speaks to the continuity of representations of gender roles in contemporary popular culture through mass media.

Compulsory Heterosexuality: A Reading of Y tu mama también and Perfume de violetas...nadie te oye...” presented in May 2004 at the Twenty-Fourth Annual Cincinnati Conference of the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, University of Cincinnati.
Although the scene shown on the television is brief, it is identifiable as taken from *Dos tipos de cuidado* (Ismael Rodríguez, 1952) starring both Pedro Infante (as Pepe Malo) and Jorge Negrete (as Jorge Bueno) where each man represents differing aspects of masculinity and the *macho*. This film, “considered by Mexican film scholars as one of the most important *comedias rancheras*” (de la Mora *Cinemachismo* 98) not only includes two of the film stars often associated with both the *charro* and the *macho*, it also has been read as a film that inadvertently reveals the thin line between homosocial and homosexual male relationships. Film scholars Sergio de la Mora and Jorge Ayala Blanco comment on the homosocial relationship between the two men and suggest a “latent
homosexuality” in the film (Cinemachismo 99 and Aventura 86 respectively).151

However, the film neutralizes this threat in the end when Pedro and Jorge are united with the women they love in celebration of heterosexual union. In Charros, the film does not make any attempt to subscribe to this type of traditional ending. Instead, the Charro and Melecio are comically shown together, “sin trabajo y sin mujeres,” and, as Melecio points out, with the reputation of being homosexuals.152

The film pokes fun at the two men’s newly acquired homophobia. They seem comfortable with their physical proximity until Melecio voices that they are in jail with the reputation of “maricones.” At the mention of the word, the two try to separate, but there is no room in the cell. They attempt to reject the label through physical reaction, but the cell, here reflecting the confinement of such labels, comically limits their movement. Jailed and with the reputation of “maricón” is the exact opposite of the “macho” image the Charro was attempting to perform based on the macho models of Emiliano Zapata, the charros of Golden Age cinema, and narcomasculinity. The macho plan backfires and instead of being seen as manly, the Charro is demasculinized and interpreted as homosexual. Through their final reaction to and rejection of the possibility of being read as homosexual, they perform homophobia. Before they were labeled as non-macho, they did not reject the physical intimacy they shared in the movie theater.

However, as is shown repeatedly in the film, the two men (especially the Charro) are

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151 See Ayala Blanco’s La aventura del cine mexicano 84-89 for his analysis of the homosexual undertones in Dos tipos de cuidado. See also Sergio de la Mora’s Cinemachismo 98-103 where he expands on, and to some extent contests, some aspects of Ayala Blanco’s analysis.

152 See de la Mora’s Cinemachismo p. 102-3 for an analysis of the final scene of Dos tipos de cuidado where he problematizes “the film’s unambiguous heterosexual narrative closure” through an analysis of the positioning of the two men in comparison to their female partners--they are next to each other with their “female partners at the edges.”
driven by perceived societal expectations of masculinity perpetuated by film and television. The self-reflective film destabilizes these outdated models of both gender and sexuality through portraying them as caricatures.

3.4 Performing Homophobia: From Stage to Screen to the Local Newspaper

Where *Charros* parodies the representation of several models of masculine gender and sexuality, one based on Zapata as exemplary *macho*, the Mexican public (specifically those from Zapata’s home state of Morelos) are not laughing at rumors that director Alfonso Arau had planned to question the sexuality of the *Caudillo* himself in the film *Zapata, Sueño del héroe*. The mere suggestion of representing this national hero as anything less than *macho* (and we have seen that the “straight mind” certainly considers homosexuality as non-*macho* behavior) in what was intended to be a blockbuster superproduction resulted in a performance of homophobic paranoia in the press. This section demonstrates the limits of questioning established notions of masculinity through examining the public debates generated around the film and around subsequent discussions of the notion of the metrosexual.

A series of articles published in a variety of Mexican periodicals, most of which date from between July 30 and August 10 of 2003 (all before the release of the film),

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153 See Chapter 2 for analysis of this film.

154 I found no articles that continue the scandal after the release of the film.
attest to the outcry and homophobic panic that surrounded the rumors that Arau’s script included scenes that suggested a homosexual relationship between Emiliano Zapata and hacendado Ignacio de la Torre. Some of the articles perpetuate and even exacerbate the rumors, such as the article that appeared in Milenio on August 3, 2003 with the four inch headline asking, “Zapata gay?” Several articles speculate where the rumor may have started, considering that the film had not been completed and that no one outside the

155Miranda refers to the reactions of townspeople of Anencuilco to Arau’s inclusion of this supposed relationship: “Campesinos de Anenecuilco [...] encabezados por Mateo Zapata Pérez, hijo del revolucionario, amenazaron con detener el rodaje de la película Zapata porque presuntamente se incluyen escenas que aluden una relación sexual entre el ‘Caudillo del Sur’ y el hacendado Ignacio de la Torre?” (Miranda, “Amenazan” 1). Fierro also reports that Mateo “condenó que se pretenda incluir una especulación que se ha hecho con una supuesta relación homosexual de Emiliano Zapata con el hacendado Ignacio de la Torre” (Fierro 17E)

156Several articles consider possible origins of the rumor. For example, R. Franco writes, “Pues de la conferencia de prensa para presentar la película, una reportera citó una de las muchísimas biografías de Zapata, en la que se menciona esa relación, y seguramente el teléfono descompuesto llegó a oídos de su hijo Mateo convertido en: ‘que van a filmar a tu papá poniéndole con un hacendado,’ o algo así” (8). This may have been based on a book by Ricardo Orozco, director of the Centro de Estudios Históricos del Porfiriató, published in May of 2003, El Album de Amada Díaz, that suggests that, “el hacendado Ignacio de la Torre Mier, yerno de Porfirio Díaz, tuvo una relación cercana con Emiliano Zapata que incluso pudo haber sido de carácter homosexual.” The author claims that the book is based on 25 years of research supported by historical fact, “aunque con una interpretación personal.” He further claims that there is historical evidence of some sort of potentially homosexual encounter between Zapata and Nacho, “Es cierto que los hechos apuntan a que hubo una relación homosexual incluso forzada por el rico” (Cabrera, “Piden ver” 18). De la Torre’s sexuality has been questioned by other historians due to his participation in “Los 41,” a dance where men were found dressed as women, an event to which this and other articles refer. Other articles show the relationship between Zapata and de la Torre as preposterous. Orozco may be one of the “historiadores perversos” to which Fernando Rivera Calderón refers in his article, “Zapata Gay?”: “Del Emiliano Zapata de carne y hueso sabemos muy poco. Aunque su orientación sexual parece muy clara, algunos historiadores perversos cuchichean sobre una supuesta relación muy cercana entre Emiliano y Nachito de la Torre, yerno de Porfirio Díaz, para quien trabajaba el joven en Anenecuilco, pero no existen pruebas de tal aseveración” (47). The Canal Once “documentary” ¿Dónde estás Emiliano?: La historia real detrás del héroe that aired in April of 2004 (seemingly as a response to the Arau film) interviews historian Florencia Mallon who traces the supposed origin of the rumor to an “obra de historia no muy respetada” written by the son of General Pablo González to improve the image of his father in which the author accuses Emiliano Zapata of homosexuality. Interestingly, both the book and the author remain unnamed, which serve to reinforce the speaker’s lack of respect for the work and to undermine the work’s validity.

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production team had access to the script. According to several articles, these rumors seem to have started with Mateo Zapata and/or his representatives. Arau’s multiple responses to these rumors in several newspapers helped contribute to the controversy and continue the press coverage. In fact, some, such as reporter Adriana Jimena, suggested the entire controversy might have been a publicity stunt (“¿Truco pulicitario de Zapata?”). In view of the way in which scandals associated with other films ultimately helped them at the box office (consider recent examples such as *El crimen del Padre Amaro* directed by Carlos Carrera in 2002 in Mexico and *The Passion of the Christ* directed by Mel Gibson in the US in 2004), it is possible that these rumors were a result of an attempt to gain viewers through negative publicity. Only in a society governed by compulsory heterosexuality could such rumors create a scandal.

The scandal speaks to both prevailing attitudes toward homosexuality and towards representation of national heroes. Journalist René Franco reflected on this in his article, “¿Hay utilidad histórica en el asunto de ‘Zapata gay’?”:

> Todo esto me recuerda que en México somos brutalmente cautos con nuestros héroes nacionales. Esa actitud idólatra, perfecta para toda dictadura, se derrumba cuando los habitantes de una Nación dejan su infancia colectiva y se dan cuenta de que sus antecesores y sus padres (o

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157 Miguel Arce, spokesman for Arau denied such scenes in the script and called such rumors, “absurdas, ya que nadie, fuera de la producción, ha visto el guión completo” (Miranda, “Amenazan” 1). Another article claims Mateo Zapata had no access to the script: “El director agregó que Mateo Zapata, el hijo menor del caudillo, no ha tenido acceso al guión y lo que sucede es que parece estar asesorado por abogados que lo han convencido de que puede sacar dinero de este proyecto” (“Se le honra” 15). Fierro seems to verify this claim when he asserts that due to concerns with possible homosexual content, Mateo would request a copy of the script: “inquieto con los rumores que se hicieron por parte de un programa de espectáculos, en el sentido de que la cinta podría tener pasajes o escenas homosexuales, por lo que se solicitará de manera formal una copia del guión para conocer la historia que pretende llevarse al cine” (my emphasis, Fierro 17E). The same article includes a quote from Oscar Apáez Omaña, Mateo Zapata’s personal secretary, admitting, “No conocemos a fondo el guión” (Fierro 17E).

158 See Fierro’s “Pide mateo Zapata respeto para su padre en la pantalla.”
sus héroes) son solamente personas [...] Pero en la historia oficial (y en toda buena dictadura), humanizar a los personajes de los libros de texto es casi un pecado de lesa patria. (8)

Although in the article he makes it clear that he is not suggesting that Zapata was homosexual, Franco sees utility, and even necessity, in questioning the official version of national heroes and suggests the importance of seeing them as humans complete with faults. He claims that unquestioningly adhering to official versions of history trains us to blindly adhere to official versions of the present. Instead, Franco suggests humanizing them rather than idealizing them, perhaps rendering the public capable of recognizing faults in current national figures as a consequence.

What is the responsibility of a director (or any artist for that matter) to remain “true” to the official version of history, especially when representing national heroes?

According to Dr. Margarita Zapata, Arau is free to make a film about whatever he wants, “pero si eligió a Zapata, debió apegarse a la historia o sólo hacer una evocación de mi abuelo, porque cualquier ‘fábula mística’ sobre Zapata corre el riesgo de convertirse en una burla, como sucedió’” (Margarita Zapata in Licona 36). For her, the director has a responsibility and obligation to represent Zapata as history represents him.159

Arau himself emphasized that he was not a historian, but a creator of stories: “[Arau] afirmó que todo en la película es cierto e insistió, ‘no somos historiadores, somos contadores de historias’” (Macías 38).160 In multiple articles Arau makes it clear that he

159 In a personal interview she said that for her, John Womack’s biography of Zapata is the best, “…sobre Zapata se ha escrito mucho, no podría enumerar toda la biografía, pero para mí la mejor biografía es la de John Womack. Para mi es la más rigurosa, más apegada a la realidad.”

160 This phrase is also quoted in other articles. For example, Arau reiterates that his film centered around “la parte espiritual del general revolucionario: ‘Su pueblo lo consideraba un guerrero sagrado y eso
does not attempt to portray a historical Zapata and on several occasions he is quoted as recognizing his “violation” of history. According to reporter César Huerta, at a press conference Arau admitted, “lo sé, violamos la historia oficial, pero le he hecho un hijo muy bonito” (“Reconoce”). Margarita Zapata did not find this disclaimer adequate and responded, “Sí, cómo no, le quedó un hijo muy bonito, afeminado, que no tiene nada que ver con el personaje que dice interpretar” (Licona 36). Again, the principal objection seems not to be merely to the non-historical representation of Zapata, but to that of representing an “effeminate” Zapata.

Other family members also spoke out on the subject. Mateo, Zapata’s son, was the most vocal, threatening to stop production of the film\(^{161}\) and even to introduce legislation that would make commercial and political use of Zapata’s name and/or image illegal, which would further institutionalize the official (and heterosexual) image of this national icon.\(^{162}\) For many, including Mateo, it is specifically Zapata’s private life that is off limits: “Mateo Zapata afirmó que la vida privada de su padre es intocable” (Miranda 1). His personal secretary Oscar Apáez Omaña added that any speculation of a supposed

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\(^{161}\) Several articles refer to these threats. Miranda reports that, “Campesinos de Anenecuilco […] encabezados por Mateo Zapata Pérez, hijo del revolucionario, amenazaron con detener el rodaje de la película Zapata porque presuntamente se incluyen escenas que aluden una relación sexual entre el ‘Caudillo del Sur’ y el hacendado Ignacio de la Torre” (Miranda, “Amenazaron” 1). According to Fierro, Mateo Zapata “informó que podría promover una demanda en contra del cineasta Alfonso Arau y bloquear los trabajos de filmación sobre la película de la vida de su padre en caso de que se pretendan incluir escenas especulativas que atenten contra la imagen del caudillo” (17E).

\(^{162}\) According to the article, “Legislador electo” Juan Nolasco Suárez (de Anenecuilco) affirmed that campesinos from Morelos: “…solicitarán a los diputados de la próxima legislatura crear una ley para proteger la imagen de Emiliano Zapata, pues por décadas ha sido utilizada como propaganda política y publicidad” (Viayra Ramírez 38).
homosexual relationship, “‘sería tanto como atentar contra la vida privada de un héroe mexicano, lo que no se puede permitir por parte de nuestras autoridades, además de que sólo perjudicaría la imagen mundial que se tiene del revolucionario que ha sido sujeta a muchas especulaciones y mentiras a lo largo de la historia’” (Fierro 17E). Suggesting that authorities should not allow such an offense against the “private life of a Mexican hero” reminds us that the images of national heroes are crafted into an official version that becomes ingrained into the public imagination (as dictated by the “straight mind”) to the extent that the public rejects any counter versions.  

¿Dónde Estás Emiliano? La historia real detrás del héroe, A documentary made by Canal Once in a seeming direct response to the Arau film, echoes Margarita Zapata’s concerns. An interview with José Correa of the Museo Chinameca reveals popular opinion (in the Morelos area) regarding Arau’s film: “Esta película la vamos a quemar.” Correa goes on to explain that for them, Zapata is “un gran hombre” but that the filmmakers “lo están presentando como femenino.” Correa later reveals that he hasn’t seen the film and bases his reaction on rumors brought by visitors to the museum. Interviewer actor Eligio Meléndez reacts with surprise to this, “Emiliano? Feminine?” His voice inflection suggests the portrayal of Emiliano Zapata as effeminate is preposterous. This is reinforced by an interview with historian Florencia Mallon who describes the possible origin of a conception of Zapata as homosexual as coming from: “una obra de historia no muy respetada.” Her facial expressions, tone of voice, and word

163 Consider the case of the reception of the film Alexander (Oliver Stone 2004) in Greece and of Chilean artist Juan Domingo Dávila’s portrayal of Simón Bolivar with breasts—there is certain resistance to de-masculinizing masculine national heroes.
choice all undermine the authenticity of this historical work (which she also refers to as a “novela,” but never by title and never by specific author). The information is presented in such a way that anyone viewing the documentary must conclude that Zapata could not possibly have been homosexual and that any film, novel or history that would suggest otherwise is an affront to “real” history (which the title of the documentary, *La historia real detrás del héroe*, claims for itself).

Certainly for many people, such as Zapata’s son Mateo and granddaughter Dr. Margarita Zapata, any suggestion that Emiliano was homosexual is an affront to history and the national image of Zapata. Dr. Zapata approached the periodical *Crónica* to publically demonstrate her “discontent” with the portrayal of her grandfather in Arau’s film. According to the reporter, “Aunque dice no ser homofóbica y que respeta las preferencias sexuales, [Margarita] insistió en que uno de los aspectos más lamentables de la cinta ‘es que presenta a mi abuelo como un hombre afeminado, con una extraña relación entre algunos de sus secretarios’” (Licona 36). In the age of political correctness, the writer first codifies Dr. Zapata’s response with the disclaimer that she “says she is not homophobic and respects sexual preferences,” followed by a seemingly homophobic concern with the representation of Emiliano Zapata as an “effeminate man.” Institutionalized compulsory heterosexuality certainly could not allow a national hero—one associated with the cult of masculinity and the *macho* model—to be portrayed as non-heterosexual.

In a personal interview, when asked for her criticisms of the film, her response echoed the concerns she expressed in the *Crónica* article: “Mira, Zapata no era
monógamo, Zapata era un hombre muy mujeriego, en primer lugar. En segundo lugar Zapata nunca conoció a la mujer de Victoriano Huerta. En tercer lugar, y sin que yo lo tome como algo despectivo, Zapata nunca fue—no era homosexual.” Margarita Zapata’s first rejection to Arau’s film is the portrayal of Zapata’s sexuality. She emphasizes that he was not monogamous and was a womanizer—an image of her grandfather that echoes the macho archetype described by O’Malley as granted “sexual license” (142).164 Our interview took place after the release of the film, when the controversy surrounding Arau’s portrayal of Zapata as homosexual had died out in the press. However, even after seeing the film, she maintains the criticism. I would argue that the film’s treatment of Zapata does not support a claim that he is represented as homosexual. So why does Margarita maintain her criticism even after having seen the film?

The answer may lie outside the film itself. Ironically, the casting of singing star Alejandro Fernández (son of 70s music and film star Vicente Fernández) that was likely meant to capture a (masculinist) public drawn to mariachi/ranchera music,165 may be the root of the controversy. Although I found no evidence to either confirm or deny the rumor, Vox populi speculates that Alejandro Fernández may be homosexual. The tendency to elide the actor with the role may explain why Margarita Zapata still objected to the film on the grounds of Arau’s presenting a gay Zapata in spite of the lack of evidence from the film itself. This same public speculation explains why actor Alejandro

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164 See the “Villa and the Mythic Macho” section of this chapter.

165 Thanks to Laura Podalsky for the observation with relation to Arau’s casting choices and possible intention to draw this particular audience of music fans. See Ramírez Berg’s Cinema of Solitude 133-6 for his description of Vicente Fernández as the “new charro” of the early 1970s in contrast to Antonio Aguilar’s portrayals in the 1960s.
Fernandez defended his virility in an article entitled, “Alejandro Fernández ‘Ni como actor besaría a un hombre.’” Evidently concerned that the viewing public would be unable (or unwilling) to separate a performed sexuality with his personal sexual preference, Fernández publicly declared his heterosexuality in the press. Where other articles focus on the affront to Zapata’s image created by questioning his sexuality, this article shifts the focus from the Caudillo to the actor playing him, eliding actor and role. The article begins with a quote from Fernández defending his virility: “No me atrevería a besar a un hombre en escena. Ni metiéndome en el papel de actor, ni por un ofrecimiento en Hollywood, no lo haría. A mujeres sí, a todas y donde quiera” (Miranda, “Alejandro” 11). Through Fernández’s public proclamation that he would not perform homosexuality, “even for Hollywood,” he performs homophobia. He steps into the role of performing what he perceives to be the opposite of homosexual desire, macho desire, when he declares that he would kiss “all” women “anywhere”—implying on-screen or off. Where he was sure to differentiate performed homosexual desire from his off-screen self, he does not do so with heterosexual desire and seemingly intentionally blurs the line between acting and reality to affirm that he, Alejandro Fernández, is not homosexual.

However, he is not afraid to accept the label “metrosexual.” In the article, “¿Metrosexual?..¡PotríYo!: Alejandro Fernández” published in the on-line journal Es Más in February of 2005, Alejandro Fernández affirms that “it doesn’t bother him to be considered the ‘metrosexual charro’” (Carrera Saldaña 1, my translation). Other articles from Reforma from 2004 and 2005 including, “Alejandro Fernández: Charrosexual pink mexicano”; “Son charros metrosexuales”; “Es un charro ‘metrosexual,’” repeatedly
identify Alejandro Fernández, along with Pablo Montero and Pedro Fernández as metrosexuals. The charro of the twenty-first century is more cosmopolitan with a different image of masculinity than his predecessors:

> El charro de antes representaba una imagen como de un hombre fuerte, de bigote y con movimientos muy masculinos, ¿qué pasa ahora con el charro moderno?, pues es un hombre mucho más cosmopolita, es un hombre que se cuida, sus trajes son más entallados al cuerpo porque son más delgados y por lo tanto su vestimenta está más entallada, como más sexy hasta cierto punto. (Simón in Corpus)

Although the change in look seems to be widely accepted by the public, Antonio Aguilar, charro of the old regime, rejects these aberrations from the traditional charro. He criticizes Alejandro Fernández, saying “ya se ha vuelto muy sexual, no viste correcto.” This criticism combined with his comment that throughout his career he had worn “la vestimenta mexicana con mucho respeto” (Corpus) suggests that for him, these new tendencies show a lack of respect for Mexican traditions, and perhaps, by extension, traditional Mexican expressions of sexuality.

Regardless of resistance from older generations, the acceptance of the metrosexual as an alternative masculinity is growing, as evidenced by self-identification as such by stars such as Alejandro Fernández who previously felt the need to defend his “masculinity.” However, the concept does have its limitations. Does this new vision of masculinity truly question the gender binary?

The concept of metrosexuality certainly has cultural currency and in Mexico its association with cosmopolitan sensibilities fits in with neoliberal globalized society. The

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166Other men repeatedly mentioned as exemplary of metrosexuality include: David Beckham, George Clooney, Tom Cruise, Alejandro Sanz, Diego Luna, Ricky Martin, Fernando Redondo.
global market has capitalized on the vanity associated with the metrosexual. The cultural impact of this new man has had considerable implications in marketing that has impacted popular culture in the UK, the US and Mexico (especially in the area of fashion and beauty products). But has it changed basic societal concepts of male and female gender roles beyond the superficial?

The term metrosexual contributes positively to the field of gender studies as it opens a dialogue for alternative visions of masculinity (as I previously showed with reference to Ismael in *Entre Villa*). More importantly, this discourse is not limited to academic discussion but takes place in public forums such as sports magazines and popular newspapers such as *Reforma*, which reported the term as word of the year in 2004. However, I find it problematic that many of the same articles that on the surface resist the gender binary by blurring the roles of masculine and feminine through the claim that the metrosexual is in touch with his “feminine side” also declare him “narcissistic” and emphasize his vanity. It seems to me that this characterization of “feminine” attributes demeans both women and this model of masculinity.

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167 A search of Reforma’s articles from 1992- September 2005 resulted in 80 articles: 43 from 2005; 30 from 2004; only 5 from 2003; and none before 2003, suggesting that the term wasn’t widely circulated in Mexico until 2003. The majority of the articles came from sections concerning fashion (Moda), people (Gente), and entertainment (Primera Fila).

168 See for example, Simpson “Meet the Metrosexual”; and the following articles from *Reforma*: “Rompen con estereotipos” (Ávalos); “El metrosexual, el hombre del siglo XXI”; “Muestran su lado femenino”; “¿Qué significa ser metrosexual?” (Toledo).
3.5 Queering Binaries: From Macho to Transexual

While performed homophobia played out in the press in reaction to the mere suggestion that Zapata, archetype of the Mexican Macho, could have been homosexual, others are inspired by the same possibility. For actor and playwright Carmen Ramos in her monolog, “D.J. Rápida González,” rumors that Zapata may have been gay open the possibility for gender (and sexuality) subversion. In this section I argue that through her performance, Ramos steps outside binaries of both gender and sexuality as she destabilizes the association between Zapata and machismo through the representation of his journey through a continuum of sexualities from macho to transexual. The piece further estranges and “queers” the archetypal Zapata by invoking him through a female body on stage. Gender theorist Annamarie Jagose explains the usefulness of queer theory in deconstructing identity:

Queer is widely perceived as calling into question conventional understandings of sexual identity by deconstructing the categories, oppositions and equations that sustain them (Hennessy, 1994:94) [...].

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169 In a phone interview on May 11, 2006, Carmen reiterated that these are rumors without proof and that whether Zapata was gay or not is secondary to the ideals he stood for. However, she stated that, on a cultural level “es una imagen muy fuerte” and that the importance of the rumor emerges from the resistance on the part of Mexican men to even allow the possibility. During the media debates surrounding Arau’s film and his supposed representation of Zapata as gay, there were those who, like historian Manuel Ávila Camacho, claim that to be “true” to history Arau “has the obligation to investigate and include in his film [...] the homosexuality of the Caudillo del Sur” (my translation, Huerta and Cabrera). Ávila Camacho goes on to claim that Zapata’s homosexuality can be substantiated by “historic documents” and that the relationship between Zapata and hacendado (and son in law of Porfirio Díaz) Ignacio de la Torre y Mier “se aseguraba como verdad en un 99 por ciento” (Huerta and Cabrera).

170 Carmen Ramos both wrote and performed the piece, directed by Salvador Hurtado in the Teatro la Capilla in Mexico City, Mexico in October of 2005. I viewed and recorded the performance of October 15, 2005 and was able to interview both Carmen and Salvador following the performance. For clarification, references to the performance itself will be marked “DJ” and references from the unpublished manuscript will be marked “C. Ramos.”
other times, queer is deployed to indicate a critical distance from the identity politics that underpin traditional notions of lesbian and gay community. In this sense, queer marks a suspension of identity as something fixed, coherent and natural […] Or queer may be used to describe an open-ended constituency, whose shared characteristic is not identity itself but an anti-normative positioning with regard to sexuality. (96-98)

Following this explanation, I argue that Ramos’s performance can be considered “queer” on multiple levels.

D.J. Rapidita González (played by Carmen Ramos), daughter of Speedy and Rosa, narrates the sixty-minute monologue, giving voice and body to both male and female characters. This theatrical hermaphrodism queers the characters by bringing the question of the materiality of the ambiguously gendered body to center stage and problematizing fixed concepts of sex and sexuality. In spite of the swim cap she wears that somewhat androgynizes her, the costume, consisting of bra, shorts, high boots and bandoliers, reveals a clearly female body. Carmen makes very few wardrobe changes, relying instead on voice, body and the occasional prop (hat, glasses, baton) to indicate character changes. The performance prioritizes Carmen’s body as it plays with representation and scopophilia through a parody of the erotic in the many forms it takes on various stages. Her opening costume plays with drag performance; her bodily movements and gyrations play with striptease acts; her costume and ending sequence play with sadomasochistic performance.

171 In an interview on May 18, 2006, Carmen confirmed that the leather strips criss-crossing her bodice were indeed meant to replicate the bandoliers worn by soldaderas in the Revolution. Although not an overt homage, Carmen refers to these women as “agentes que transmiten, transforman, cambian.” She also expressed that she wanted her piece to be Mexican, “algo que reflejara nuestra cultura mexicana,” and for her, the reference to the Mexican Revolution helped create a truly Mexican performance.
Figure 3.4 Drag in *D.J. Rapidita*; Photo by Stephany Slaughter

Figure 3.5 Example of Striptease and Costume (Swim cap, bandoliers, boots); Photo by Stephany Slaughter

Figure 3.6 S and M pose; Photo by Stephany Slaughter
All of these references to erotic performance play out through the narrator Rapidita, who retells (and re-incarnates) the story of her parents, Speedy and Rosita (based on the Warner Brother’s cartoon couple), night after night attempting to catch a glimpse of the evasive concept of love. Speedy, “the fastest mouse in all Mexico,” has long been Hollywood’s cartoon representative of Mexican stereotypes. Carmen’s recoded hybrid Speedy both subverts the US cartoon and the Mexican archetype of the macho. According to Carmen, her version of Speedy represents the “figura clásica del macho y masculinidad en México. Yo quería darle la vuelta a la caricatura y cambiarla por completo. Es una crítica al macho mexicano—no es el macho que imaginamos porque la masculinidad va cambiando. El papel que le asigna—la figura fuerte de una familia—ya no lo es. La imagen se cansa y es una imagen desgastada.” The counterpart to the macho is the submissive woman, Rosita, who for Carmen “es la imagen de la mujer coqueta, pero sumisa.” Her only goal is “ser bonita y casarse. Ya es una imagen fracturada, aunque sigue en partes de México. También es una imagen muy desgastada que no funciona para muchas mujeres […] ya no sirve y causa mucho daño.”

172 In recent years there has been controversy in the US surrounding Speedy’s appropriateness as a stereotype and he was even pulled from the airwaves for several years. However, several Hispanic spokespeople and groups in the US (such as writers for Hispanic Online and representatives of the League of Latin American Citizens) rejected Speedy as culturally insulting and championed his return. Recently Mexican artists such as Carmen Ramos and Martín López have recoded Speedy in a Mexican context by creating a Speedy/Zapata hybrid image. Speedy has also been appropriated by the Zapatistas as a symbol of the Revolutionary power of the small, but clever Speedy (the oppressed subaltern) who is consistently victorious against the bigger, more powerful, but less intelligent cats (the hegemonic power). In the cartoon world, the subaltern not only speaks (though with an exaggerated Mexican accent), he also acts. We can read this relationship as the indigenous versus the Mexican state and also as Mexico (the Mexican mouse Speedy) versus the United States (the “gringo” cat Sylvester), a particularly apt comparison in the age of NAFTA.
Carmen illustrates the damage caused by both gender archetypes—the macho and the submissive woman—through denouncing violence associated with the macho that creates an uneven power relationship. Rosita begins as a submissive woman who prostitutes herself and suffers beatings by her husband until she frees herself by killing him in self-defense, an act that also frees her from the submissive woman archetype and begins her mental and physical journey in search of true love.

Figure 3.7 Speedy
Photos by Stephany Slaughter

Figure 3.8 Rosita

173 In his anthropological study, Gutmann interviews women regarding domestic violence. Responses seem to support Carmen’s assertion outlined above where women attribute these attacks to machismo (207). He further cites men who identify the macho nature of society as responsible for their violence: “It is this largely awkward straddling of both sides of the issue—men as victimizers and victims—that underpins arguments about male violence in Mexico being a product of a machista system maintained by both women and men” (Gutmann 201). Though problematized by scholars such as Mirandé (36-9), some writers, such as Samuel Ramos, posit violence as the external manifestation of an internal feeling of inferiority. Ramírez Berg expands on the idea of violence as a result of the need to prove power: “But the very need to continually assert his power, to prove it over and over, is an indication that he doubts his power. The Mexican is insecure about his control and needs to make continued shows of authority to prove his efficacy” (“Cracks” 68). Octavio Paz relates the macho with power: “The macho is the gran chignon. One word sums up the aggressiveness, insensitivity and other attributes of the macho: power” (Labyrinth 81). This power “almost always reveals itself as a capacity for wounding, humiliating, annihilating” (82).
Carmen’s Speedy represents the macho archetype and exemplifies the damage inflicted by this very archetype on the men who embody it. This Speedy is a “pollero” on the northern border and self proclaimed “macho mamífero en busca de depositar sus huevos” (DJ). Like Rosa, he travels the country in search of love, along the way experimenting with different concepts of sexuality, blurring the borders between male and female, homosexual and heterosexual. Upon arriving in Mexico City, they both transform into stereotypes of the opposite sex. Carmen Ramos explained that this transformation occurs in Mexico City because it is an “experimental space” and that like Speedy and Rosita, many people migrate to Mexico City because they cannot live their alternative sexualities in their home towns.

When the two finally meet each other, they do not meet as Speedy and Rosita, but as “Lola” (the prostitute/whore with extremely “feminine” characteristics) and “Zapata” (the macho with extremely “masculine” characteristics) respectively. The suggestion of Rosa in drag as Zapata (and Speedy in drag as Lola) exposes the falseness of appearance: “la imagen no define una tendencia sexual y a veces abriga” (Carmen Ramos 12 May 06). Through these transformations, Carmen exposes the disjuncture between a

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174 In an interview (18 May 2006), Carmen also described the “Lola” character as emerging from the gay community as a popular name used to refer to men who have embraced extremely “feminine” mannerisms as part of their coming out process. The same concept can be applied to a woman taking on extremely “butch” characteristics. Butler explains some of the feminist criticism of taking on such characteristics: “Within feminist theory, such parodic identities have been understood to be either degrading to women, in the case of drag and cross-dressing or an uncritical appropriation of sex-role stereotyping from within the practice of heterosexuality, especially in the case of butch/femme lesbian identities” (GT 174-5). She goes on to problematize this criticism of drag by feminist theorists and points out ways in which drag highlights the difference between anatomy, gender and sex, which I will examine in more detail later in this section.
public performance of gender and the private expression of sex, which have no natural or
evident connection, a concept that gender theorist Judith Butler describes in *Gender
Trouble*:

The performance of drag plays upon the distinction between the anatomy of the performer and the gender that is being performed. But we are actually in the presence of three contingent dimensions of significant corporeality: anatomical sex, gender identity, and gender performance. If the anatomy of the performer is already distinct from the gender of the performer, and both of those are distinct from the gender of the performance, then the performance suggests a dissonance not only between sex and performance, but sex and gender, and gender and performance. […] *In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself—as well as its contingency* […] In the place of the law of heterosexual coherence, we see sex and gender denaturalized by means of a performance which avows their distinctness and dramatizes the cultural mechanism of their fabricated unity. (175)

The public body, in this case “Zapata” is recognizable as male (gender) through societally constructed and accepted codes of dress and action; however, this costume masks a female body (sex), “Rosa,” who is a lesbian (sexuality).

The audience never sees Zapata and Lola, but learns of the duo’s transvestite transgressions through a literal policing of hetero-normative sexuality (Butler, GT xii), as two police officers, also played by Carmen, report “strange” and “suspicious” incidents to their superior officer. Officer 1428 reports seeing “el mismísimo Zapata” while completing rounds in the Alameda park. To his surprise this Zapata is “un caso de contra-natura” as he has a “hueco” instead of a penis. According to this representative of institutionalized heterosexuality, a “man” with a vagina goes against nature and therefore must be punished and/or corrected. The officer follows his “investigative instinct” and tests his suspicion by inserting his nightstick, an act that evokes power associated with
penetration and rape. The officer first beats Zapata/Rosa “por falso” and then beats him/her again for “faltas al código de identidad” (C. Ramos 19).

Figure 3.9, Policeman
Photos by Stephany Slaughter

Figure 3.10, Policeman “investigating”

Lola/Speedy’s sexual ambiguity provokes a similar punishment. Officer 1429 reports catching Lola performing fellatio in Garibaldi square and applies a “30-30” for “andar realizando actos tempranamente perjudicando a las demás trabajadoras sexuales, agallándose la chamba” (C. Ramos 20). When Lola falls to the ground as a result of the beating (the “30-30”), the officer notices a bulge (pointing to his crotch) and applies a second “30-30” for “andar faltándole la identidad sexual” (DJ). Where the discovery that

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175 In light of recent events in San Salvador Atenco during May 3-4, 2006, this image also brings to mind accusations that police raped and/or sexually abused 14 women who were arrested and held following a confrontation between police and residents of San Salvador Atenco.

176 In an interview, Carmen revealed that she chose to use “30-30” to refer to beatings as a reference to the rifles known as “30-30” in the Revolution.
“Zapata” is a woman averts a homosexual encounter, the discovery that “Lola” is a man creates one. This discovery of the phallic bulge moves this sex act into the realm of homosexuality and like Zapata/Rosa, Lola/Speedy pays the price for “offending sexual identity.” After yet another “30-30,” the officer brings the beaten Lola/Speedy to the station.

Like the Charro and peon of the film Charros discussed earlier in the chapter, Lola/Speedy and Zapata/Rosa are incarcerated for transgressing hetero-normativity and offending the “straight mind” as represented by the enforcers of “compulsory heterosexuality.” Further, they are physically punished through sexual violence for these transgressions. The superior officer declares that he will deal with Rosita/Zapata and remind her of her “verdadero género.” The words combined with gestures indicate that this reminder will take the form of rape. The officer will send Lola/Speedy to “los muchachos para que le den su calentadita, y le recuerden cuál es su verdadera naturaleza” (DJ).

Both forms of punishment use sexual violence to assert power as both Rosita/Zapata and Speedy/Lola suffer violent consequences for not conforming to expected norms, reflecting one example of what Adrienne Rich describes as “forms by which male power manifests itself […] as enforcing heterosexuality” (640). Through these examples, Carmen denounces violence that she has witnessed when people are revealed to project one sex while biologically belonging to the other (Interview May 12,

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177 Rich refers to enforcing heterosexuality on women. I am expanding her observations to include enforcing heterosexuality on men as well.
The representatives of the established (heteronormative) order take the role of the active penetrator and those who defy the established order are forced into the role of passive/penetrated. The active/passive (masculine); penetrator/penetrated (feminine) dichotomy runs throughout Mexican sexual discourse. Octavio Paz expands on these opposites in *The Labyrinth of Solitude*:179 “It is likewise significant that masculine homosexuality is regarded with certain indulgence insofar as the active agent is concerned. The passive agent is an abject, degraded being[…] Masculine homosexuality is tolerated, then, on condition that it consists in violating a passive agent” (39).180 Therefore, the “muchachos” that teach Lola/Speedy a lesson run no risk of being considered homosexual themselves since they take the active role of penetrator. Annick Prieur applies these concepts to “sexualized games: there are striking parallels between practiced homosexuality and the homosexuality that is staged in verbal badgering and mock fighting among men, where men attack other men’s masculinity by putting them in

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178 Carmen shared an anecdote of a friend whom she assumed to be a male when they met. This friend had been taking hormones and appeared to be a male. S/He began dating a woman in an apparently heterosexual relationship. When the father of the girl discovered his daughter’s partner’s biological sex identity, he threatened to find and kill her. As a result S/he fled the city and has not returned. This type of violent reaction is not unique to Mexico as evidenced by the Brandon Teena story portrayed in the film *Boys Don’t Cry* (Kimberly Peirce 1999). Like both Speedy and Rosita of *DJ Rapidita González*, the protagonist of this true story is raped when the males around her discover she is a woman and not the man she appears to be.

179 In the chapter “Hijos de la chingada,” Paz creates a series of dichotomies: “The person who suffers this action, [chingar], is passive, inert, open, in contrast to the aggressive and closed person who inflicts it. The chingón is the macho, the male; he rips open the chingada, the female, who is pure passivity, defenseless against the exterior world. The relationship between them is violent, and it is determined by the cynical power of the first and the impotence of the second” (77).

180 Gutmann’s anthropological research supports this stance (124-129).
a passive homosexual role. Value is given to the male who penetrates women or other males, and never lets himself be penetrated” (83).\textsuperscript{181}

The piece at first seems to fall prey to the straight mind as in the end Speedy and Rosita form a heterosexual union that gives birth to Rapidita; however, upon further examination the piece warns of the dangers of ignoring the possibility of alternative sexualities and succumbing to the heterosexual matrix. Their attraction to each other exposes a form of rejection of their true selves in favor of the same societal gender positions that they at first represented and later rejected. Zapata is attracted to Lola—drawn to the stereotyped “woman” s/he once was. Lola is attracted to Zapata—the “\textit{macho}” s/he previously rejected in her/himself.\textsuperscript{182} The couple dissolves, having never found true love (though they both came close in homosexual relationships that they denied).

In this chapter I have demonstrated the relationship between Revolutionary icons (Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata) and the \textit{macho} archetype. I have also explored re-inventions of these icons in recent popular culture and questioned the ways in which these national icons are used to imagine re-inventions of a gendered Mexican nation through questioning and/or reconfirming traditional gender values dictated by the hegemonic “straight mind.”

\textsuperscript{181} Stephen Murray also develops concepts of activos/pasivos; inserters/insertees in his article “Machismo, Male Homosexuality, and Latino Culture.” See also De la Mora’s \textit{Cinemachismo} 188-190.

\textsuperscript{182} Carmen Ramos shared this observation of her characters in an interview on May 18, 2006. She also explained that though in an earlier version (never performed) she had written a discovery scene, in the final version she purposefully chose not to reveal whether or not Zapata discovers that Lola is Speedy or that Lola discovers that Zapata is Rosita.
Several recent texts have questioned the gender binary in different ways, suggesting alternate forms of imagining what it is to be a woman or a man (and to be considered feminine and masculine), demonstrating a crisis of Mexican masculinity in Mexico at the turn of the 21st century. How does a crisis of masculinity affect female gender roles? The next chapter considers this question as it explores representations of the soldadera in recent cultural production.
CHAPTER 4

DISCOURSES OF GENDER AND NATION II:
THE SOLDADERA AS SITE OF GENDER RESISTANCE

An exploration of the cultural icons and archetypes that have been perpetuated as representative of particular gender models renders visible the institutionalization of compulsory heterosexuality and the extent to which discourses of gender and nation inform each other. In the case of Mexico, three gendered archetypes emerge consistently: the seemingly monolithic image of the macho (examined in the previous chapter); and the dual image of woman as the Virgin (la Guadalupe), and as the Whore (the Malinche).\(^{183}\) This chapter examines the ways in which representations of the soldadera both repeat and trouble these established archetypes. I argue that the figure of the soldadera is particularly polysemous and as such, has been used both to support the status quo and to embody the destabilized female gender role.

Following the methodology of Chapter 3, which takes gender theory as its framework, this chapter considers how gender roles are enacted on/through/by the body

\(^{183}\) For an introduction to the virgin/whore dichotomy in Mexico, see Leal’s “Female Archetypes in Mexican Literature”; Phillips’s “Marina/Malinche: Masks and Shadows”; Octavio Paz’s “Sons of la Malinche” from the *Labyrinth of Solitude*; Cypess’s *La Malinche in Mexican Literature: From History to Myth*; Castillo’s *Goddess of the Americas*; Charles Ramírez Berg’s chapter, “Women’s Images, Part II: The Feminine Revolt—From La Malinche to La Llorona to Frida” in *Cinema of Solitude*. De la Mora also looks at the Virgin/Whore in Mexican film in *Cinemachismo*, especially in Chapter 1, “Midnight Virgin.”
and its movement between public and private spaces in order to express relationships of power. In the first section of the chapter I will show the manner in which post-Revolutionary discourses constructed a stereotyped *soldadera*, based on previous gender archetypes, that minimalized her agency in order to re-exert patriarchal control over Mexican women as part of the re-formation of the Mexican nation. Recent iterations re-cast the *soldadera* stereotype to claim a position of power, some from within traditional gender expectations, and some escaping them.

I first analyze examples of recent representations of the *soldadera* that both question (transgress) and support (return to) gender norms. These representations resist gender expectations, however they remain within the confines of compulsory heterosexuality prescribed by the “straight mind.” The next section argues that other representations of this multifaceted figure offer the possibility of transgression without return. Some texts escape the “straight mind” by “queering” the Revolutionary discourse through questioning the materiality of the body associated with norms of sex, gender, and sexuality. The final section of the chapter moves from an idealized artistic rendering of gender change to the example of the neo-Zapatista women who on multiple levels do not fit a traditional male/female gender binary. I argue that the representational construction of the neo-Zapatista women both breaks with and continues that of the *soldadera*. Representations of these women soldiers reveal a similar struggle to carve out a new public niche in the face of attempts to reinscribe (and control) them in previous gender stereotypes.
4.1 Constructing the Soldadera

From the time of the Revolution through today, the soldadera and her role(s) in the conflict have been (re)constructed by historians, politicians, artists and scholars. Historically, women who joined the Revolution were “often ignored in the written history of Mexico” (Arrizón 49). In recent years historians and scholars such as Elizabeth Salas, Shirlene Soto, Stephanie Smith, Carmen Ramos Escandón, Ana Lau, Sarah Buck, J.H. Plenn, Sandra McGee Deutsch, Elena Poniatowska, Angeles Medieta Alatorre, Anna Macías, Andrés Reséndez Fuentes, Alicia Arrizón, and Diane Goetze have addressed this selective historic memory and have contributed to the reconstruction of these women and their participation in the Mexican Revolution. Although the exact number of soldaderas is difficult to estimate due to insufficient historical documentation, thousands of women actively participated in several capacities in an armed conflict for the first time in Mexican history (Salas 38-9). The uniqueness of the Revolution in this respect not only sets it apart from previous Mexican wars, but from other historical conflicts.

According to Sarah Buck, “Although camp followers have supported armies throughout

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184 For in depth studies of the soldadera, see Salas Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History; Elena Poniatowska Las soldaderas; the INEHRM’s Mujeres en la Revolución mexicana; Angeles Medieta Alatorre La mujer en la revolución mexicana; Anna Macías “Women and the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1920”; Reséndez Fuentes “Battleground Women: Soldaderas and Female Soldiers in the Mexican Revolution”; Diane Goetze “Revolutionary Women: From Soldaderas to Comandantas.” The soldadera also figures prominently in Anna Macias Against All Odds: The Feminist Movement in Mexico to 1940; Shirlene Soto Emergence of the Modern Mexican Woman: Her Participation in Revolution and Struggle for Equality 1910-1940; Stephanie Smith’s PhD dissertation, “Engendering the Revolution: Women and State Formation in Yucatan, Mexico 1872-1930”; Carmen Ramos and Ana Lau’s Mujeres y Revolución, 1900-1917; Sarah A. Buck’s “Rosa Torre González: Soldadera and Feminist”; J.H. Plenn’s “The Soldadera as Mexican Amazon.” See also Sandra McGee Deutsch’s “Gender and Sociopolitical Change in Twentieth-Century Latin America.”
history, the Mexican case is perhaps exceptional for the degree to which soldaderas blended the ‘masculine’ roles of soldier with the ‘female’ support services” (142). The Mexican Revolution allowed a unique destabilization of gender categories with the active participation of women no longer restricted to the role of wife and mother in the private “feminine” sphere of the home. Women (some wives and mothers) soldaderas gained agency through their participation in the public “male” world of military conflict.

Some scholars (Goetze, Reséndez Fuentes, Macias) are careful to distinguish between the larger number of camp followers (soldaderas) and the smaller number of women who fought in battle (woman soldiers).\(^{185}\) However, Sandra McGee Deutsch argues “the distinction between the soldaderas and female soldiers was not always clear-cut” (263), and several scholars, including Salas, Soto, Smith and myself, use the term soldadera as encompassing all women who actively participated in the Revolution, regardless of their role. Smith illustrates this broad definition when she describes the various roles attributed to the soldaderas who “worked in a number of different capacities during the Revolution. Some fought as soldiers alongside men, while most women continued with more traditional duties, such as cooking, cleaning and washing for soldiers. Whatever the role, women participated in large numbers during the Revolution” (“Soldaderas” 1). Other roles included nursing, spying, gathering (and smuggling) supplies, and sometimes prostitution. Often these many roles are overlooked and soldaderas are remembered primarily for sexual promiscuity:

\(^{185}\) According to Reséndez Fuentes, the number of female soldiers was rather small: “Female soldiers also thrived in the revolutionary campaigns of 1913-15 although in sheer numbers there were only a handful of them. According to one late-1913 estimate there were around 200 female soldiers scattered in all warring factions” (544).
Although they worked as cooks and nurses, and many carried and used weapons, the soldaderas earned praise for sacrificing their bodies to the Revolution—not for laying down their lives but for offering their sexual and procreative abilities to the male revolutionary heroes. In a conservative patriarchal society that placed a high price on a woman’s virginity, this was one way of justifying the loss of womanly purity. (my emphasis, Hershfield 26)

Whether due to in part to the fact that some soldaderas were indeed prostitutes or perhaps due to the flexibility and chaos of the time that allowed women to move from one partner to another without marrying, soldaderas often were portrayed as promiscuous,186 which contributed to their connection to the “whore” archetype.

As historian Stephanie Smith points out, representations of the soldadera tend to follow traditional gender archetypes:

In the years that followed the Revolution, especially during the period of consolidation during the 1920s and the 1930s, national memory and myth-making twisted the historically fluid identities of the soldadera into ultra-feminine or ultra-masculine women. And as the rhetoric that surrounded the soldaderas became even more gendered, it rigidly locked into place cultural constructions of the soldadera as either a saint, prostitute, or man-like. (“Soldaderas” 2)

According to Smith, the representations of the soldadera generally fit one (or sometimes a combination) of the three gendered archetypes previously mentioned: “saint” (Virgin), “prostitute” (Whore), or “man-like” (Macha). Reduction of the soldadera to these categories created stereotyped versions of her that aided in reinscribing her into the patriarchal fold following the Revolution.

In spite of the flexibility of gender roles during the Revolution itself, “the Revolution did not fundamentally alter the patriarchal structure of Mexican social life”

186 Salas, O’Malley and Arrizón also reference the portrayals of the soldaderas as sexually promiscuous.
(Hershfield 7). Smith emphasizes the gendered nature of nation re-building of the 1920s and 30s that placed women’s return to traditional gender roles within the discourse of the post-Revolutionary Mexican nation: “Nationalist state policy further described women’s roles as mothers, wives, and educators to be essential to the welfare of the nation. As a particular Mexican national identity emerged as hegemonic, governmental rhetoric increasingly limited women’s attributes to publicly defined areas of the feminine.” She further asserts that the more these discourses lauded women’s roles as mother within the family, the more women’s participation outside the home “was regarded as a threat to the stability of the nation” (“Soldaderas” 11).

In the decades following the armed phase of the Revolution, popular culture played a key role in nation building through messages about expectations of both men and women within the newly re-formed Mexican society. This production reinforced the patriarchal push for women to return to traditional gender roles: “Officially approved government literature and popular culture reflect this trend, as highly gendered caricatures of soldaderas in songs, films, books, and widely-read comic books belittled women’s actual involvement in the Revolution” (Smith, “Soldaderas” 11). In contrast to the corridos that took Zapata, Villa, and other male heroes of the Revolution as their subject, praising their feats in battle, few corridos about the soldadera even included a real name and seldom spoke of her active participation in the conflict, instead concentrating on her more passionate roles as love interest (Salas 89, 94). Historian Sandra McGee Deutsch links such widely disseminated corridos (For example, “La
Adelita”; “La Valentina”; “La Rielera,” “Juana Gallo”)\(^{187}\) with patriarchal needs to minimalize the participation of women in the Revolution: “The writers of corridos converted the nameless legions of courageous, tough female combatants and soldaderas into submissive, feminine, romantic figures like ‘La Adelita’” (Deutsch 263). These “caricatures” contributed to the construction of the soldadera as the hyper-feminine “Adelita” of the corridos in contrast to the “masculinized” Coronela (Smith, “Soldaderas” 13), setting up a repetition of the male/female binary as Coronela/Adelita where both extremes work together to minimalize female agency.

In the 1930s and beyond, these same corridos served as the inspiration for multiple films that helped solidify the romantic/feminine version of the soldadera (La Adelita directed by Guillermo Hernández Gómez and Mario de Lara in 1937; La Valentina directed by Martín de Lucenay in 1938; Si Adelita fuera con otro directed by Chano Urueta in 1948).\(^{188}\) Other cultural production also reinforced both the characterization(s) of the soldadera and her role in the post-war nation, exemplified by

\(^{187}\) See Herrera-Sobek’s The Mexican Corrido: A Feminist Analysis, and Salas 89-94.

\(^{188}\) Some examples of later films inspired by corridos include; La cucaracha (Ismael Rodríguez 1958); Pancho Villa y la Valentina (Ismael Rodríguez 1960); Juana Gallo (Miguel Zacarias 1960); a remake of La Valentina in 1966 with María Félix and directed by Rogelio González. Other films with the soldadera as protagonist include: La negra Angustias (Matilde Landeta 1949); La Soldadera (José Bolaños 1967) La Generala (Juan Ibáñez 1971). For analyses of these films, see Eli Bartra’s article “Faldas y pantalones: el género en el cine de la Revolución Mexicana” and Elizabeth Salas’s chapter “Adelita Defeats Juana Gallo.” For an analysis of María Félix in her roles as soldadera, see Susan Drake’s chapter “Sending Félix Off to War: The Soldadera and the Performance of Gender.” The soldadera has also inspired literary gender commentary through characters such as Nacha Ceniceros in Cartucho (original version 1931, revised 1940) by Nellie Campobello, La Pintada and Camila in Los de Abajo (1939) by Mariano Azuela, La Negra Angustias in the 1944 novel by Francisco Rojas González (and later in Matilde Landeta’s 1949 film adaptation), Jesusa Palancares in Hasta no verte Jesús mío (1969) by Elena Poniatowska, and Josephine Niggli’s 1938 play, Soldadera, among others. Though an in-depth analysis of each of the above examples is outside the scope of this dissertation, throughout this chapter I will make references to specific texts to help understand the way in which representations of the soldadera today exist in dialog with previous representations that have reflected gender concerns at different points in Mexican history.
the two versions of the short story “Nacha Ceniceros” (1931 and 1940) by Nellie Campobello. The first version undermines the soldadera’s accomplishments as “coronela” by portraying a crying heart-broken woman in love with a soldier who has cheated on her. In her grief, she accidentally kills him while cleaning her gun. This version punishes the soldadera for her inept possession of the phallus as Villa orders her execution for having killed a coronel (66).

The second version shifts the focus from punishment for a non-traditional gender role during the Revolution to the place of women in post-Revolutionary nation building. This version, that claims to be the “true” story, no longer portrays a “feminine” essentialized soldadera, but rather applauds Nacha’s “manly” abilities such as taming and riding horses “better than many men” and her “virile strength” that allowed her to “do anything a man can do.” She rejects the romantic role assigned the previous Nacha and while she “could have married one of the most prominent Villista leaders” and “could have become one of the most famous women of the revolution,” this Nacha decides to leave the fighting and return home to “rebuild the walls” and fill in bullet holes (my translations 67). The second version allows gender transgression, but also requires a return to traditional spaces. At the same time, through the allegory of rebuilding the home, the story suggests women’s role in reconstructing the foundational structure of the post-Revolutionary nation.

According to Hershfield, “after the Revolution, women were expected to take up their old roles of whore and virgin in the spaces assigned to them (the brothel, the church, or, most important, the home)” (29). Nacha Ceniceros provides an example of the “good
woman” who returned to the private sphere of the home. The only public space offered to women in the above assignment of roles is that of the whore, who is punished even from her title for her participation in this arena. Recent cultural production has recoded the soldadera/whore stereotype to claim a space in the public sphere.

4.2 Destabilizing the Soldadera: Transgression and Return

Stereotyping has long been used as a discursive strategy of colonization where the dominant group constructs an essentialized, simplified version of the subaltern, often along lines of sexual and/or racial difference, in order to exert power over the colonized other. According to Homi Bhabha in his article, “The Other Question,” the stereotype is “the primary point of subjectification in colonial discourse” (27). One of the significant contributions of Bhabha’s article is his analysis of the multiple possibilities offered by the stereotype as a “complex, ambivalent, contradictory mode of representation” (22) that can both support hegemonic power and contest it: “there is always the threatened return of the look” (33).

In recent years the soldadera stereotype has looked back. In this section I argue that representations of the soldadera have re-semanticized the constructed soldadera/whore stereotype to reclaim it as a position of power from within the virgin/whore patriarchal dichotomy. 189 If the virgin/whore binary remains, the soldadera

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189 Recent artists (generally women) have re-claimed classic representations of both the “whore” and the “virgin” dichotomy to empower women. Consider the way in which re-interpretations of La Malinche also
representations in the following examples have destabilized gender roles from within the patriarchal structure and put pressure on that binary in such a way that it can no longer be read through the traditional good/bad characterizations.

Like the Casasola photos that continue to circulate of Villa and Zapata, reproductions of soldadera photographs also abound in local Mexican markets (See Figure 4.1). One of the most famous photos of a soldadera leaning out from a train serves as the prominent image on a poster for “Día de la Independencia de la Trabajadora Sexual Independiente” (Independence Day of the Independent Sex Worker) photographed outside a Mexico City metro station in 2005, calling women to participate in an event to take place on September 15 (See Figure 4.2).

claim this classic “whore” as an empowered woman (See Sabina Berman’s play Aguila o Sol). Consider also the ways that Guadalupe, classic “virgin” in the virgin/whore dichotomy, has been “sexed” by artists such as Alma López (“Our Lady”) and Sandra Cisneros (“Guadalupe Sex Goddess”). Both re-interpretations claim a right for women to express themselves sexually.
This poster calls upon the codes that associate soldaderas with prostitution, thus perpetuating the stereotype. At the same time, the image is recoded as one of empowerment of women in the sex trade who call to be recognized as “women workers, not delinquents.” The image also depends on codes that associate the 15th of September with the Mexican Nation and independence from Spanish oppression. By holding the meeting on September 15th, they are calling to be part of the Mexican Nation and staking a claim in the discourse of the Nation that takes place as part of the “mes de la patria”
each year. They also declare their “Independence” from an un-named oppressor and their right to work, thus empowering themselves in a profession that is more often associated with a lack of power. In this sense, although the soldadera image remains tied to the classic Mexican dichotomy of virgin/whore, it ruptures with previous power structures associated with this binary that exert control over the female body. By re-casting the soldadera/whore stereotype, these women claim power over their own bodies as well as a space in the public sphere.

The soldadera’s body as site of resistance appears in differing degrees in recent film production. Patricia Riggen presents her as a model for agency to escape family expectations and to choose her own partner in the film La Milpa (2002), where the Revolution provides the context for a woman to exert control over her body to experience freedoms previously denied to her, though within limits.

In the film, flashbacks of the past alternate with the present as ninety-year-old Ángela, in and out of sleep, narrates the story of her experiences at the time of the Mexican Revolution to young Rocío, who has come to deliver food to her mother’s former nana (nanny). The first flashback sets up the priority of Ángela’s body and her desire to exert control over it in the face of others who would claim control through

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190 Due to the celebrations around September 15th for Independence Day, September is known in Mexico as the “month of the nation.”

191 The 30-minute film won several awards and participated in multiple film festivals. In Mexico it won the “Premio del Público”; “Premio de la crítica” in Guadalajara 2002 (Muestra de Cine Mexicano); “Mejor Ópera Prima” in Guanajuato (Festival Expresión en Corto) 2002; Ariel for Best fiction (Cortometraje de ficción) 2003. Awards abroad include honors in Brasil, Chile, Cuba, Italy, Spain and the US (Cine Directores Mayo/junio 2004) including Student Oscar for Best Student Film 2003. HBO bought the rights for international distribution (“Enseñan español con La Milpa en EU”; “Cosecha éxitos su ‘Milpa’”) and has been shown on HBO Latino in the US (where I first saw it). Additionally, it was included in Guanajuato in 2004 in a panel dedicated to women directors as well as in a Cineteca film festival dedicated to the same.
violence, rape, forced marriage and motherhood. As Villistas enter her town, Ángela, a twenty-three year old unwed orphan, afraid of being raped, hides in the barn to protect her body from such aggression. A Villista finds her and though at first it seems she will be raped after all, the spectator soon realizes that the two know each other. The chaos of the Revolution allows the young girl to express and act on her sexual desires—exerting control over her body. A month passes and Ángela realizes that Jacinto, who followed the Revolution shortly after their encounter, left her pregnant. Her family rejects her as a result of her pregnancy and her guardians (her aunt and uncle) attempt to marry her, against her will, to Señor Delegado, a sleazy older man of the village who is willing to take her as his wife in spite of her status as “fallen woman.” Ángela rejects this union and again asserts agency over her own body when she visits a curandero and considers taking an elixir that would abort the baby.

Meanwhile, the film also connects Ángela’s body with the fate of the town. Her town has been suffering from a drought, which has destroyed the milpa (cornfield). The film at first seems to condone and even reward Ángela’s sexual freedom as, juxtaposed with the scene of Ángela making love with Jacinto, the rains come and the town seems saved. However, as Ángela battles with further control of her body through considering abortion, the rains continue and flood brings a new threat to the endangered crops. Miraculously, at the exact moment Ángela decides to keep her child, the rains stop and the cornstalks, trampled to the ground by the pouring rain, return to standing—the milpa is saved. Through this sequence, in spite of granting Ángela certain freedoms from
tradition through controlling her own body, the film rewards Ángela’s choice to fulfill the traditional female gender role of becoming a mother, thus reinforcing the importance of this expectation.

While accepting this traditional gender role, Ángela resists the role of wife in an arranged, loveless marriage and simultaneously rejects patriarchal family authority when she defies her uncle’s wishes by following her soldier into the fray. The Revolution offers her alternatives: she can marry the man she loves or not marry at all, as seems to be her case. The flashback ends without revealing whether or not Ángela found Jacinto or how she participated in the Revolution, allowing the focus to remain on the Revolution as a means for freedom to leave an oppressive situation. Ángela’s story of agency to leave her family situation to be with the man she loves inspires Rocío to do the same. As the film opened, Rocío was driving and talking with her boyfriend Memo on her cell phone, declaring that she could not go with him because her family would disapprove. The open-ended film concludes with Rocío’s realization that it is “never too late” as she runs out of Ángela’s house, presumably to follow Memo.

The Revolution, in fact or in idea, inspires both women to reject traditions and family control that they consider to be oppressive. This agency can be read two ways, both firmly within the patriarchal construction of heterosexual union. First, a woman can only embrace the agency of movement in the context of following a man. Second, these women are active participants in their own lives, making choices against the grain of family expectations and declaring the right to choose their partners.
The Mexican Revolution also offers escape from family expectations for Gertrudis in *Like Water for Chocolate* (*Como agua para chocolate*, Arau 1991). I argue that through the vehicle of the *soldadera*, the film takes possibilities of female agency further than *La Milpa*, while still supporting a return to a patriarchal structure in the end as the character of Gertrudis both transgresses and returns to gender norms. This section analyzes how gender roles are enacted on/through/by Gertrudis’s racialized and sexualized body and its movement between public and private spheres in ways that destabilize several binaries (male/female; virgin/whore; Adelita/Coronela) without completely escaping them.

The development of the character of Gertrudis as departing from and later returning to traditional gender norms is revealed through a close reading of her departures from and returns to the private sphere of her home. Gertrudis’s first departure from the ranch into the public sphere, which parodies kidnappings that were common during the Revolution, prioritizes her body and emphasizes her sexual agency. Catalyzed by her sister Tita’s cooking, Gertrudis literally embodies the forbidden passion between Tita and Pedro. As the effects of the partridges in rose petal sauce take hold, a close up of

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192 Alfonso Arau directed the internationally successful 1991 film with the collaboration of Laura Esquivel, who wrote the screen adaptation from her acclaimed novel. My analysis concentrates on the film, referencing the book only as it helps my arguments of what the film does. References to the film will be marked “*Como agua***” in the in text citations and references to the book will be marked “*Esquivel***.” *Como agua para chocolate* tells the story of four women (Mamá Elena and her daughters Rosaura, Gertrudis, and Tita) who live on a ranch in northern Mexico in the early twentieth century. The story of Mamá Elena’s stifling domination of her daughters unfolds through the narration of Rosaura’s granddaughter in the context of the kitchen where she reads from Tita’s cookbook/diary. Raised in the kitchen by Nacha, the cook, Tita struggles against her mother’s decree that she will never marry because as the youngest daughter, she must care for her mother. When Pedro Muzquiz declares his intention to marry Tita, Mamá Elena offers him her eldest daughter (in the book she is the middle child) Rosaura instead. He accepts, claiming it is the only way to remain close to his true love. This arrangement causes a series of problems in the household and the impossible relationship between Pedro and Tita becomes the central plot.
Gertrudis’s body dominates the frame. She opens her dress and touches herself; her body language clearly indicating her desire. This image is juxtaposed with that of her naked body as she runs from the house to bathe herself in the outdoor bathhouse. Her internal sexual desire manifests itself externally in the vapor that her skin appears to emit and in the flames that burn the wood of the bathhouse. Intercut with these images are those of a battle between the revolutionaries and the *federales*. The smell of the roses, associated with Gertrudis’s sexual desire, attract the attention of the Villista general who feels the impulse to search for something unknown in an unknown place.

Startled by the flames, Gertrudis runs naked from the bathhouse across the open landscape. We see her in a wide shot running free in nature, a symbol of liberation. Shots of her running away from the house are juxtaposed with those of the Villista on horseback approaching. Gertrudis runs towards him and he lifts her onto his horse to straddle him without losing stride. The position of the two, their embrace, and the motion of the horse suggest a sexual encounter, a suggestion that is confirmed by the description of the same scene in the novel: “El movimiento del caballo se confundía con el de sus cuerpos mientras realizaban su primera copulación a todo galope y con alto grado de dificultad” (Esquivel 55). Through this scene, the film suggests that her need to escape from a sexually repressive environment and claim sexual agency serves as catalyst for her departure.

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193 This scene was reenacted as a publicity stunt for the film in New York: “A New York party celebrating the film’s success, with Mayor David Dinkins in attendance, had actress Claudette Maille (Gertrudis) re-create on the West Side Highway the scene where she is carried off naked by a *Villista* on horseback, with the festivities ending in a wedding feast identical to the banquet in the film. These promotions suggest that there is nothing but food to *Como agua para chocolate*, with the possible exception of the spectacle of nude women riding horseback” (Wu 187).
The next time we see Gertrudis, she returns to the ranch as a general in the Revolution. Visually, the film implies that Gertrudis enters the Revolution as a result of her (pseudo) kidnapping. This, combined with the manner in which she leaves, suggests that the Revolution offers sexual freedom. Harmony Wu’s analysis of the film supports this interpretation: “Gertrudis joins the Revolution not for social justice as did José Luis in *Flor Silvestre* but for sexual liberation. The Revolution becomes a sexual one, reinscribed as a discourse of erotics and gender, endowing these ostensibly feminist interests with historical and national importance” (180). The film thus perpetuates the depiction of the soldadera/whore through emphasizing the sexual nature of her “kidnapping” over Gertrudis’s transformation into the generala. Although in the novel her achievement of the rank of general is explained as a product of her prowess on the battlefield—“Este nombramiento se lo había ganado a pulso, luchando como nadie en el campo de batalla,” (Esquivel 179)—the film never shows Gertrudis on the battlefield. The audience has no indication that she earned the position, but rather is left to assume she achieved her rank through marriage.

The film’s representation of the soldadera/whore is, however, ambiguous. Through the editing techniques that visually suggest that Gertrudis went straight from her escape to generala, it glosses over her time at the brothel and never actually confirms her life as a prostitute. We hear a rumor from the priest that Gertrudis was last seen working at a brothel on the border—an announcement that prompts Mamá Elena to disown her. In this way, the film resists a characterization of Gertrudis as “whore” in favor of critiquing the overly repressive notions of sex and sexuality as represented by Mamá Elena.
At the same time, lack of attention to this portion of Gertrudis’s life undermines her agency. The book gives Gertrudis sexual agency through portraying her as an active and insatiable sexual being that exerts control over her own body. She chooses to enter the brothel because one man was unable to satisfy her. Once satisfied, she chooses to leave. Here, as film scholars Víctor Zamudio-Taylor and Inma Guiu point out, we may recognize an intertext with the *cabaretera* film genre. However, in contrast to other *cabaretera* films, she is not forced nor does she sacrifice herself for her family—she goes willingly and for sexual fulfillment. She is not the model of the “fallen woman,” nor is she punished as one through ostracism, illness, and/or death as occurs in a number of Mexican films, including: *Santa* (Luis Peredo 1918; Antonio Moreno 1931),

194 In her analysis of the novel, Ibsen places these events within the context of offering a counter to official history, suggesting that the emphasis on romantic and sexual aspects is due to the narrator’s female perspective: “Later, in a parodic inversion of roles, Gertrudis finds that no one man can satisfy her and must spend time in a brothel on the border to placate her prodigious sexual appetite (133); subsequently she distinguishes herself on the battlefield and becomes a revolutionary general (180). This incident marks a turning point in the novel because it inspires Tita to begin to write her version of events. From Tita’s perspective, the romantic encounter is more important than the events taking place on the battlefield, even though she is aware that official history will remember the incident differently (60). By recontextualizing such episodes from a female point of view, Esquivel effects a re-evaluation of official discourse, since the history that has been recorded does not always conform to the fantastic nature of perceived reality” (Ibsen 112).

195 According to Víctor Zamudio-Taylor and Inma Guiu, “Interestingly, Gertrudis’ transgression of tradition resonates not with ‘History’ but with a Mexican film genre of the 1940s, the ‘cabaretera’ or dance hall film […] these films offered symbolic narratives about the new role of Mexican women in the public sphere and workplace. As in many *cabaretera* films, Gertrudis’ compulsion to leave the domestic sphere causes her to wind up in a border bordello. In contrast to the usual outcome, Gertrudis is redeemed when she becomes a *soldadera* (female soldier) in the Mexican Revolution. As a number of scholars have already noted, the archetypal figures of the *cabaretera* and the *soldadera* are defined through their sacrifice of their bodies (as sexual objects) for, respectively, their family and the revolution. Gertrudis, however, exceeds the limitations of these roles. Her prostitution is both brief and suggested (off-screen), while she returns to the ranch as an officer in the revolution. Her combined ‘male’ bravado and ‘female’ sexuality provide a humorous upending of the masculinist and patriarchal ideal of the Mexican Revolution as it has been depicted in literature and cinema. In its parodic twist on the *cabaretera* and *soldadera* genres of female representation, the film is able to historicize gender relations around three periods of social transformation: Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), Golden Age (1940s), and the present. But it must do so through intertextual allusion to Mexican cinema itself, rather than to some notion of an ‘objective’ Mexican history” (48).
La mujer del Puerto (Arcady Boytler 1933), and Salón México (Emilio Fernández 1948; José Luis García Agraz 1995), among others.

The film’s minimalization of Gertrudis’s rumored prostitution seemingly forgives the possible transgression in favor of her conformity to patriarchal expectations through her marriage. Not only do we never see Gertrudis as a prostitute, we never see her with anyone besides Juan (the man with whom she ran away) so that visually, Gertrudis as monogamous wife is prized over Gertrudis the prostitute. The film does not portray her as a woman who enjoys the benefits of free love and free association. Rather, when she returns to the ranch, she introduces Juan as her husband. She is a model of power and agency but within the confines of compulsory heterosexuality as dictated by the patriarchal ideal of heterosexual marriage and family.

The same return to the ranch introduces the audience to Gertrudis as the generala. Her situation of power is visually evident as she rides slightly in front of the others while approaching the family home. Additionally, as the only woman on horseback, her positioning asserts her equality to the male soldiers, a distinction that becomes even more evident with her next departure as she mounts her horse and starts off with the male riders. This image is juxtaposed with that of the other women following behind the men on foot carrying cooking supplies. Their positioning shows them as inferior to both the men and Gertrudis, who is clearly set apart from these women both physically and linguistically. For example, Sargento Treviño condescendingly refers to them as “viejas” (old ladies), a term he would not dare use to address Gertrudis, who he reverentially addresses as “mi generala.” Gertrudis’s language also confirms her position of power.
Upon both arrival and departure, she alone gives orders to the troops, who follow her without question. Patricia Hart emphasizes this loyalty, especially in the character of Treviño, “not so much through fear of Gertrudis, but through devotion, respect, and love” (168). Though she clearly has power as she controls the troops and commands their respect, she is not “castrating” like generalas of films past such as Angustias and Mariana (from La negra Angustias and La Generala respectively).

Unlike the cases of her predecessors, the film does not accuse her of having lost her femininity, which is typical of the “coronela” portrayal of the soldadera:

‘La coronela’ evolved to represent the more masculinized version of a soldadera. She was the true soldier, the stronger woman who, in her male attire, could fight the war like a man. But as popular discourse increasingly positioned la coronela as actually more of a man than a woman, it also divested women of their ability to be portrayed as strong historical figures in their own right […] In the process of masculinizing the strong soldadera, women […] who rose to the rank of colonel […] were portrayed as isolated cases of women who were more like men than women in that they assumed a ‘masculine’ pose during the Revolution. (Smith, “Soldaderas” 14)

Through the examples of “coronelas” of the Cine de Oro, Angustias, Juana Gallo, and Mariana, we see that the price of “masculine” power is the loss of “femininity.” Because she rejects the traditional female role of wife, other women call Angustias “marimacha” (manly woman, or tomboy) even before becoming la coronela. Later, an effeminate man laments, “lastima que el más hombre sea mujer.” Patricia Hart observes a similar phenomenon in Juana Gallo where “throughout the film, both the visual aspects and the soundtrack combine to emphasize a judgment that by fighting bravely Juana Gallo loses
her ‘womanhood’” (166). In contrast, although Gertrudis is not entirely comfortable in traditionally feminine spaces such as the kitchen, she is never accused of being “masculine” or of being “un-feminine.”

Further, Gertrudis does not have to be “tamed” or “feminized” as with the soldaderas in La Negra Angustias, Juana Gallo and La Cucaracha. In previous representations the “masculinized woman” becomes “feminized” due to the influence of a man. In the case of Como agua para chocolate, Gertrudis does undergo a transformation, though the process is not emphasized and presumably her metamorphosis results from social changes that accompanied the end of the Revolution, which concurrently brought an end to the need for soldaderas and soldados. When she and Juan return to the ranch for Esperanza’s wedding, they have both transformed into “respectable” members of a modernized society. At the end of the film Gertrudis and her husband, both former revolutionaries, participate in the project of Mexican modernization when they arrive in 1934 in a new car. Their modernization is also written onto their bodies through

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196 A similar accusation occurs in the film La Cucaracha, when Coronel Zeta later declares that he is unsure if La Cucaracha (played by María Félix) is a woman, echoing her own declaration that she is not a woman, but a soldier. I explore this later in the section of the chapter on “La China.”

197 In a comic reversal of traditional gender roles, Gertrudis calls Sargento Treviño to help her in the kitchen. For more on the significance of the kitchen in relation to Gertrudis, see Hart 168 and Vincent Spina’s “‘Useless Spaces’ of the Feminine in Popular Culture: Like Water for Chocolate and The Silent War.” Treviño’s entrance into the feminine space of the kitchen brings to mind Adrián’s “feminist” transformation explored in Chapter 3.

198 It is important to note that Landeta’s film version portrays this taming as unsuccessful. Upon rejection from the teacher, Angustias reverts to her pre-tamed self and the film ends with her return to the revolution as la coronela.

199 John Sinnigen makes a similar observation related to the novel: “When [Gertrudis] reappears at Esperanza’s wedding, in the 30s, she is a dutiful wife and mother, on her way to modernity in a Ford (235). The ruptures promoted during revolutionary times seem to be mended afterwards” (122).
clothing. Just as their previous attire clearly identified them as revolutionaries, their
clothes now reveal them as part of the bourgeois. They have put down their arms and
taken their places in the patriarchal family—Juan as father, Gertrudis as mother. The
Revolution has ended, as has Gertrudis’s temporary gender revolution.

The scene includes a portrait of the post-Revolutionary family that also serves to
suggest a union of races. Although in the film version, Gertrudis never acknowledges
race and does not seem to even know she is mulatta, the film does acknowledge
Gertrudis’s race in passing. During this posed family portrait, a subtle comment that
Gertrudis’s daughter is “identical to her grandfather,” reminds the viewer of Gertrudis’s
racial heritage. Indeed, the girl resembles her mulatto grandfather, though her skin color
and features make her race ambiguous. As the children of interracial romance, Gertrudis
and her daughter can be read through Doris Sommer’s proposal that foundational fictions
used romance to bridge classes and races to erase differences and form a more unified
nation. Gertrudis’s family portrait occurs as part of a scene that celebrates another
foundational romance that bridges “classes, races and nations” through the marriage of
Esperanza (Mexico) and Alex (United States) in the pre-NAFTA context of the film’s
production (Wu 189).

We might be lulled into a false sense of bi-national ethnic harmony if it weren’t
for the film’s racist treatment of the indigenous women. Diana Niebylski problematizes
the use of the indigenous servant Chencha as stock comic relief. Although she is

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200 The book deals with race more overtly and it is clear that Gertrudis knows of her parentage. In the book
race is also more of an issue. When his mulatto child is born, Juan questions his paternity. It is at this
point that Tita reveals Gertrudis’s parentage to prove Gertrudis’s fidelity (Esquivel 181).

201 See also de la Mora, Cinemachismo p. 142-150.
“predictably funny to mass audiences because it panders to a long history of stock characters who fit just that type, Chencha’s character is nevertheless highly problematic to some viewers: it highlights (and delights in), without ever questioning, all the flaws and weaknesses associated with the Indian servant stereotype” (192-3). There is no consideration of Chencha, and by extension the indigenous cultures of Mexico, in the Esquivel/Arau version of the Mexican Nation for the neoliberal era.

The film also includes other problematic racial stereotypes that contradict its nod towards ethnic inclusion in the discourse of the nation through foundational romances. Gertrudis, the “one female character who performs actively and decisively in the public sphere” (Sinnigen 121) and the woman who most challenges norms of gender and sexuality, is set apart from the others racially as the only woman with African blood. As Miriam DeCosta-Willis points out, “sexuality is one of the most problematic areas in the literary representation of Black women because the image of the loose woman—exotic, uninhibited, and predatory—haunts the pages of African American, Caribbean, and Latin American literatures” (“Poetics” 18). The character of Gertrudis has fallen into the

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202 Miguel Segovia also asserts that the narrator of Like Water for Chocolate is racist towards both “Anglo Americans and Native women” (165).

203 Arau attempts to rectify this omission ten years after Like Water for Chocolate, with his controversial film Zapata: Sueño del héroe, in which he attempts to include a consideration of the indigenous in his conception of the Mexican Nation. See Chapter 2 for more on this.

204 Mamá Elena also gains agency after the death of her husband, but the film shows her as exercising this matriarchal power within the “private” sphere of the home.
stereotypical representation of women of color, “othered” and “exoticized,” representing “the eroticism stereotypically associated with blacks” (Sinnigen 121). 205

Perhaps her position as ‘other’ is precisely what allows her freedoms not granted to the rest of the women in the film, suggesting that her agency is the exception, rather than the rule. Janet Hampton argues this case with reference to Gertrudis’s predecessor the Negra Angustias. She asserts that Rojas González, author of the novel La negra Angustias upon which the film by the same name is based, “having portrayed a militant feminist in the society of his era, felt it necessary to disclaim feminism by portraying Angustias as ‘other’ and making her an exotic, anomalous—read black—transgressor who is punished severely” (31). The film version of La Negra Angustias, directed by Matilde Landeta, does not punish Angustias for resisting traditional gender roles, nor does it require her re-inscription in expected roles. Although she temporarily desires the role of wife, the open ending of the film has her return to battle as coronela. At least within the context of the film, she has resisted complying with the patriarchal demands of heterosexual union, making this film more revolutionary in gender terms than Como agua

205 Gertrudis’s representation also draws upon essentialist stereotypes by suggesting that her rhythm is in her African blood. Upon Gertrudis’s first return to the ranch, she dances with Juan as part of the celebration. Rosaura expresses her surprise, “No sé de dónde sacó este ritmo Gertrudis. A mamá no le gustaba bailar y sé que papá lo hacía muy mal” (Como Agua). Tita says nothing, but smiles—she is privy to Gertrudis’s parentage. The suggestion is that “Gertrudis’s rhythm is essentially attributed to her mulatto father as much as Tita’s cooking skills are credited to her birth on the kitchen table” (Segovia 170). Tenenbaum also refers to the racist suggestion inherent in Gertrudis’s inheriting her rhythm: “No one escapes his or her preordained fate, except the revolutionary Gertrudis, who, after all, has mulatto blood and rhythm, in a particularly unsubtle exemplar of racism that Esquivel chose to retain from her original text” (158).
**para chocolate.** Sixty years later in the context of a society more open to changing gender roles, Arau’s film still presents the woman who transgresses gender norms as racially “other.”

Gertrudis’s fate is not as open as that of Angustias. Where both women challenge patriarchal gender roles, Gertrudis ultimately reinforces the status quo. As Hart observes, “Gertrudis enjoys a passionate and happy marriage, crowned by maternity, and suffers no visible ill effects from either of her previous occupations—prostitute or *generalá*” (169).

Although Gertrudis has transgressed, resisting classification in several binaries (male/female; virgin/whore; Adelita/Coronela), the film does not punish these transgressions. Rather, it celebrates her final conformity to the traditional heterosexual matrix through accepting the traditional roles of wife and mother.

### 4.3 Resisting the Binary: Transgression Without Return

In the previous section I explored the ways in which the *soldadera* figure has both contested and supported traditional female gender norms within the same text. In this

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206 The fact that a non-mulatta actress was cast as mulatta (the case with both Gertrudis and her predecessor Angustias) further problematizes representation of race in these films. Where María Elena Marqués wore makeup to darken her skin as la Negra Angustias, this technique would have been considered overtly racist in the 1990s. Nonetheless, a non-mulatta actress, Claudette Maillé, was cast in the role of Gertrudis which for Dianna C. Niebylski introduces a different set of stereotypes: “The cliché of the whorish red-head is original to the film. As the daughter of a mulatto, Esquivel’s Gertrudis is more apt to have darker, more typically Latin looks” (Footnote 18 on p. 196). In both cases, the casting of white actresses is indicative of the tendency to “whiten” mulatto and afro-hispanic characters in cultural representation (For example, Ninón Sevilla as the mulatta protagonist of the Cuban-Mexican co-production of the film *Mulata*). Quince Duncan explores this cultural desire in the afro-hispanic community in Costa Rica in his novel *Los cuatro espejos*. For more on this, see Richard Jackson’s *Black Writers and the Hispanic Canon*.
section I analyze texts that, through the soldadera, have not only questioned gender norms, but have done so without requiring a return to patriarchal conventions as an end result. Ten years after Gertrudis in *Like Water for Chocolate*, La China, a soldadera in Argos’s made for TV film *Zapata: Amor en Rebeldía* (Walter Doehner 2004), escapes the same destiny to some extent within the confines of the film. This intriguing character in a position of power whose actions question the gender binary does not take on the role of wife or mother, nor does the film punish her for not doing so. La China arrives at the Zapatista encampment dressed as a man, contrasting sharply with the women following her garbed in lavish gowns. She offers Emiliano the services of her “men,” responding to the laughter her offer has elicited by explaining that their dresses are spoils of war. She then quiets one of the men who makes a sexual comment and offers proof of her prowess on the battlefield by shooting his hat from his head, to the visible shock of the men present. This is a woman who crosses gender boundaries through both dress and action.

La China’s clothing immediately calls to mind images of María Félix in her roles as soldadera –especially in *La Cucaracha* (Ismael Rodríguez 1958). However, the two representations seem to suggest different levels of acceptance of women taking on traditionally male gender roles. Félix’s Cucaracha stands apart from other women in the

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207 This film is a made for TV miniseries produced by Argos and shown by Telemundo in the US (and later on Channel 22 in Mexico). It was originally intended for Mexican audiences in the US to help forge/reinforce “Mexican identity” among the Mexican diaspora (See for example Olvera’s article, “Buscan con ‘Zapata’ llegarle a migrantes) in a film that combines fact and fiction. In fact, there is historical basis for the character of La China. Stephanie Smith describes newspaper accounts from 1913 (included in Womack p. 170) of a battalion of women Zapatistas “who answered to a ‘husky’ woman commander named La China, and were said to be terrors as they wildly plundered the region. Although they reportedly wore gun belts, some of the women also dressed in silk stockings and dresses. What is interesting to note is that the account stated that the rebel leaders treated the women with respect, indicating that roles for women could be fluid during wartime” (“Soldadera” 9). We will see that in the film Zapata and his men treat la China with such respect that they include her in their inner circle that commands Zapata’s troops.
Villista camp. She wears pants, wields a gun, and refers to herself as a “soldado.” She has also taken on “male” characteristics where sex drive is concerned and has the reputation of whore. The character Trinidad allies her with the stereotype of the soldadera as prostitute/whore when he explains to Colonel Zeta that she earned the name “cucaracha” because “las cucarachas no se conforman con un solo macho.” In spite of this reputation, or perhaps because of it, Colonel Zeta doubts that she is a woman (“no estoy seguro de que sea mujer”). La Trompeta, la Cucaracha’s assistant/servant assumes that clothing has caused this confusion and suggests she dress like a “vieja.” The film suggests that la Trompeta may be correct when Colonel Zeta orders her to undress: “¡desnúdese—a ahora va a ser mujer—desnúdese!” This line suggests that the power of gender identification lies in garments, such that removing male attire and revealing a female body will make her a woman. La Cucaracha complies with the order and stands to embrace him, signifying her complicity with what will happen between them. The camera pans the room to reveal broken bottles, discarded clothing, and a disheveled bed suggesting that the pair has engaged in sexual intercourse. This heterosexual coupling has transformed la Cucaracha from ambiguously gendered soldadera to feminine camp follower as marked by her clothing change. As Zeta and the Curaracha walk through town holding hands, she now wears a blouse and skirt rather than her bandoliers and pants. The following scene announces the “death of la Cucaracha” as the women sing

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208 He does consider Isabel (Dolores Del Río) to be a woman, and a lady, reinforcing the virgin (Isabel)/whore (Cucaracha) dichotomy where the virgin is clearly valued over the whore. Eli Bartra expands on this dichotomy: “En esta película se enfrentan y contrastan, pues, las dos imágenes femeninas archiconocidas: la rodadora-marimacha y la señora-viuda, respetable, pero rejeaga que no hace caso a los hombres; la puta y la santa” (177).

209 See Drake, “María Félix,” 110.
“ya murió la cucaracha” to announce the arrival of an even more “feminine” Cucaracha who joins the other women in the chore of washing clothes in the river (a task generally associated with female gender roles), clad in a low-cut blouse and skirt that serve to underline her female body. She declares, “al contrario—ahora es cuando nace y más soldadera que ustedes” (On the contrary—now is when she’s born and more soldadera than you all). One night with Colonel Zeta has catalyzed her “rebirth” as a woman. Eventually, in spite of taking on a more traditional female gender role and giving birth to his child, La Cucaracha loses Colonel Zeta to Isabel, the “good” woman. Eli Bartra offers the following moral: “Moraleja: no seas independiente, fuerte, bravia y ‘libertina’ o te abandonarán por una mujer ‘como Dios manda’” (176).

Figure 4.3 María Félix as La Cucaracha. Image courtesy of the Filmoteca, UNAM
Like Gertrudis, La Cucaracha, La Generala, La Negra Angustias and other cinematic soldaderas before her, La China undergoes a “feminine” transformation in Zapata: Amor y rebeldía; however, the film characterizes that transformation quite differently. One evening by the campfire, her masculine attire has been replaced by a camisole and long white slip and she stands brushing her long hair. She becomes the object of the diegetic masculine gaze as Eufemio arrives and admires her. She responds that she has dressed so long as a man that she has forgotten what it feels like to be looked at as a woman. Eufemio responds that she is “mucha mujer” (a lot of woman) and the two retire to her tent together. What are the implications of this scene? It may be a
gesture included to stave off homosexual panic within the “straight mind.” Without this scene the spectator may elide gender roles with sexuality and assume that La China, who has taken on male gender roles and dress, may also have taken on a “male” sexual interest in women. Or it may be read as a statement that, unlike in previous representations of the soldadera, women can participate in the “masculine” sphere without losing their “femininity” or being accused of being “a man” (as compared with La Cucaracha). She can reconcile a “male” public gender role with a “female” private one.

After this scene, unlike La Cucaracha, La China returns to her previous style of dress and continues in a position of leadership and power. Unlike La Cucaracha, she is not portrayed as promiscuous—we do not see her with anyone else nor does anyone refer to her as a slut, prostitute, or “rodadera” (a common reference to la Cucaracha). Additionally, there is no indication that she and Eufemio continue a relationship, or that she suffers because of it (as La Cucaracha does). Though the scene with Eufemio places her within the heterosexual matrix, she is a character who sits uncomfortably within traditional gender discourse. However, she is not presented as castrating like María Félix in her role as La Generala (or even la Negra Angustias), nor does she compete with the men in the film, rather they accept her, like Gertrudis, in a position of power. In fact, Emiliano includes her in the upper echelon of his most trusted advisors and treats her as equal to the men.

The soldadera in these examples has progressed from one who transgresses, but must return to expected gender norms, to one who transgresses without return. The
soldadera of the 1930s (Nacha Ceniceros) pays for her participation in the public sphere with her life, but recast in the 1940s avoids this punishment by returning home to help reconstruct the nation. The soldadera of the late 1950s (La Cucaracha) may enter the male sphere, but may not lead and is punished for non-conformity. The soldadera of the 1990s (Gertrudis) may enter, lead, and suffer no punishment, provided she eventually takes her place as wife and mother. The soldadera of the 2000s (La China) may enter and lead with no punishment and no expectation to return to a more traditional role while still within the confines of the heterosexual matrix. Each version of the soldadera occurs in particular socio-economic and cultural contexts that influence their readings. Drake situates the portrayal of the soldadera in films with María Félix (such as La Cucaracha and La Generala) as influenced by the increased industrialization of the 50s and 60s. According to her, La Cucaracha “certainly allows for the idea that women are needed in the workplace but only when they submit to patriarchal authority—it does showcase the soldadera after all, but she is wanted as a camp follower, not a leader” (“María Félix” 107). Arau’s Gertrudis emerges in the context of neoliberalism where economic needs have pushed more and more women into the workforce to compete with men for jobs outside of the home. Read in this context, the film suggests that exceptional women may achieve positions of power, but that they should not abandon their role in the family. La China, though certainly responding to Revolutionary chaos within the film, is also a product of the context of her creation where discourses of neoliberalism and globalization have practically replaced those of Revolutionary nationalism. At the time of the Revolution many small towns were left without men as they departed to join the fight
either voluntarily or by force, which impacted roles of women within these towns. With more and more men leaving agrarian towns in Mexico to look for work in cities or in the US, more and more women have taken leadership roles in communities either through choice or necessity. Following the idea proposed by Drake that the *soldadera* represents women entering the work force, La China, although still an exception in comparison to other women in the film, may represent a growing acceptance of women in positions previously only held by men in response to changing socioeconomic needs.\footnote{According to the Epigmenio Ibarra, producer of *Zapata: Amor en Rebeldía*, “La situación de los campesinos en 1910 es similar a la de los mexicanos en los Estados Unidos actualmente, ‘solo entonces se levantaron en armas, y hoy empacan sus chivas y se van. Lo que queremos es una historia que refuerce la identidad cultural de nuestros compatriotas en Estados Unidos y que se sientan orgullosos, firmes y seguros” (Aguirre).}

According to these examples, the *soldadera* has repeatedly appeared as a site of gender resistance and through the years has offered more and more agency and freedom for women to choose alternative gender roles while still reigned in by the “straight mind.” What of possibilities beyond the binary and outside compulsory heterosexuality? The following section explores examples of texts that further destabilize these boundaries and “queer” the Revolution through the vehicle of the *soldadera*.

### 4.4 Escaping Binaries: Reconstructing a “Queer” *Soldadera*

Previous examples have demonstrated ways in which the *soldadera* figure has both resisted patriarchal construction and reinforced it. The *soldadera* figure serves as a site of gender role ambiguity through representations of women who have transgressed...
from traditionally female spaces (especially in films with María Félix), and who, like Gertrudis and la China, may have dressed in “male” fashion and taken on “masculine” roles, but who were still recognized as women. What of women who transgressed further into male spaces dressing and “passing” as men?

Historically, some women did participate in the Revolution dressed as men. Some disguised themselves as male to gain more respect and avoid some of the hardships, such as rape, faced by women (Cano, “La íntima” 29). Although Encarnación Mares Cárdenas “began to dress in men’s clothing, cut her hair short, and lowered her voice,” she did not claim to be a man and nevertheless was eventually promoted to second lieutenant (Salas 42). María de la Luz Espinosa Barrera dressed as a man and served as a lieutenant colonel for Zapata (Macias, Against 43; Salas 75; Goetze 6-7). Petra Herrera also commanded 200 men, but not before proving herself in battle as a “man.” Petra “Pedro” Herrera, “wanted recognition of her considerable talents as a soldier and the right to remain in the army in active service. Like many other female soldiers, Herrera had to disguise herself as a man in order to be a line soldier and become eligible for battlefield promotions” (Salas 48).

A handful of women not only dressed as men, but also lived as men. Angela “Angel” Jimenez dressed, lived and fought as a man (Smith, “Soldaderas” 8; Buck 142; Salas 74; Reséndez Fuentes 529). Colonel Carmen Amelia Robles, was officially recognized by the Mexican government as “Amelio” Robles and lived seventy years as a man (Cano, “La íntima” 25). In her article, “La íntima felicidad del coronel Robles,” Gabriela Cano describes the military uniform as the vehicle for transexualization: “El
uniforme militar que Robles vistió al sumarse a la lucha armada simboliza su radical
masculinización síquica y social, un verdadero cambio de sexo, sin intervención
quirúrgica” (26). Through changes in the appearance of her body, Coronel Robles
claimed space in a sphere in ways not generally open to women.

“Transexualization” through drag appears both in history and cultural production.
Actor, director and entrepreneur Jesusa Rodriguez recalls these women who dressed as
men on stage as she employs both drag and comedy to question patriarchy in
contemporary Mexico. Jesusa Rodríguez211 and her partner Liliana Felipe work at the
edge of the limits of traditional theater and government censorship in their own space:
“El Hábito,” a bar/cabaret they opened together and ran in Mexico City from 1990 to
2005.212 In such a space they have been able to tackle controversial subjects such as
sexuality, gender roles, political commentary/satire that may otherwise be censored in
government-funded facilities. Many of their pieces openly question gender binaries as
they perform various gender identities on stage. In July of 2002, during the annual
conference of NYU’s Hemispheric Institute of Politics and Performance that took place
in Lima, Peru, Jesusa performed the “Monólogo de la soldadera autógena” (previously
published in Debate Feminista)213 as part of a larger performance entitled “New War,

211 For more information on Jesusa Rodriguez see Taylor and Costantino’s Holy Terrors; Costantino’s
“Visibility as Strategy”; Franco’s “A Touch of Evil”; Nigro’s “Un revuelto de la historia”; Diana Taylor’s
“High Aztec”; Day’s “Misa (neoliberal) en los Pinos.”

212 Jesusa and Liliana announced taking a “sabbatical” in May of 2005. “El Hábito” has been re-opened as
“El Vicio” under the management of a new generation of cabareteras, Las Reinas Chulas. See the
dejar un ‘mal hábito’” 27 May 2005; “Las herederas: Están reinas y son chulas” 27 May 2005; “Abren las
puertas a El Vicio” 22 August 2005.

New War.” In this section I argue that Jesusa Rodríguez breaks out of the gender binary and queers the Mexican Revolution in this performance through examples of linguistic and theatrical hermaphroditism.

The nature of political cabaret (as Rodríguez herself pointed out in her workshop on the subject at the Hemispheric Conference of July 2002) is very local and timely. As such it relies on an informed spectator to understand all of the cultural references to everything from TV commercials to classic songs or movies from the 1930s, from history to current events. The local is especially manifest in the language of this performance, where certain terms were changed from the original to fit the context of the Peruvian presentation (For example, “cabaret sureño” became “una discoteca limeña”). However, much of the language remained specific to Rodríguez’s original Mexico City version: mexicanisms (“que caray!”, “chingao”), speech patterns of both politicians (“hoy por hoy”) and rancheros (“mal que les güelva a pesar”), misuses/mispronunciations of words (“consumio” instead of consumo, “parafranela” instead of parafernalia), albures or sexual word-play (“el bigote” as both moustache and female pubic hair; “mofle” as both car muffler and female anatomy).

Language is also one of the ways that Rodríguez questions the traditional binary present in grammatical gender markers in the Spanish language, following in the tradition of Monique Wittig who claims that it is “very important to consider how gender works in language, how gender works upon language, before considering how it works from there upon its users” (78). Rodríguez calls attention to gender in language by ending nouns and adjectives with both the masculine gender marker ‘o’ and the feminine gender

In her performance, Rodríguez extends this linguistic play further to Mexican national heroes (all soldiers): “Y en revisionando la historia del pasado, notaremos que la gran mayoría de nuestros héroes fueron andróginos como nosotros, a saber: Morelos, José María, Miguel Hidalgo y… Costilla, Guadalupe…Victoria, Emiliano Zapata” (370). Rodríguez takes these examples of male national heroes from the Mexican cult of masculinity and queers them. In each case she emphasizes the combination of masculine and feminine names of these heroes through strategically placed pauses, leaving the audience to question the monolithic gender categorization of these examples of the intersection of discourses of gender and nation.

Jesús’s physical presence also asks the audience to question gender. She steps on stage dressed (in drag) as a soldado campesino (a peasant soldier)—a physical presence that immediately brings the Mexican Revolution of 1910 to mind. In Rodríguez’s case, instead of the familiar battle cry of “Tierra y libertad” so prevalently associated with the Zapatistas of the Mexican Revolution, she calls for a “Revolución genética” (a genetic revolution). Reminiscent of soldaderas such as “Amelio Robles” for whom the uniform of the soldado served as a vehicle for transexualization, Jesús physically recodes the masculine figure of the soldado onto a female body.
As both Jean Franco and Roselyn Costantino point out, Rodríguez’s body often serves as a site of controversy and ambiguity, and the point of departure for her performances. According to Costantino:

Rodríguez chooses theatrical forms which permit her to render corporeal and, thus, visible, the tensions among the ideological, religious, social, political, and economic discourses operating on and through the individual and collective human body[......] In her work, the body is never taken as value-free; on the contrary, it is a primary signifier, a site for meaning, a location and sign of itself. (“Visibility” 63-4)

In this particular performance, Rodríguez’s body is the site for re-thinking and questioning male/female gender norms, as well as norms of sex and sexuality, as her body becomes a site of ambiguity.

Part of this ambiguity comes from her use of drag. By emphasizing masculine gender markers, Jesusa relies on the audience’s knowledge and awareness of her female
body to be able to propose hermaphroditism. Costantino points out that one of the characteristics of Rodríguez’s performance is that she prioritizes herself and her body on stage:

One observation re-affirmed with each viewing of Rodríguez on stage is that no matter what her function or role, which character, myth or icon she brings to life, she never stops being herself. Rodríguez is never absent, as if she/her body were giving the ‘other’ an opportunity, the space, the material being to be present. (“Jesusa” 201)

The political message as well as the physical humor of Rodríguez’s performance depends on the audience’s recognition of Jesusa the woman dressed as a soldado—an act of theatrical hermaphroditism that physically embodies her call to genetic revolution.

The title of the piece not only calls for such a revolution, but also questions the restrictions of binary oppositions in the tradition of feminist/queer theorists such as Butler, Wittig, Jagose: “Ni frio ni caliente, ni negro ni blanco, ni hombres ni mujeres: la revolución genética” (Not hot nor cold, not black nor white, not men nor women: The genetic revolution). By rejecting this series of extremes, she opens the possibility of an ambiguous in-between, such as proposed by Rothblatt’s sexual continuum based on hues of colors or Fausto-Sterling’s 5-sex system. Instead of a scientific-based vehicle, such as that of Fausto-Sterling, Jesusa re-conceptualizes the world through humor:

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**214** In the case of the particular performance I am analyzing, Jesusa performed before an informed audience. Not only was the audience filled with other performers, directors, and academics, but we were also acutely aware of her female body as we had seen Jesusa, as Sor Juana, perform a striptease on stage in a prior performance. The Sor Juana performance had the opposite effect of the soldado/a. By revealing her female body, she emphasized the femaleness of a figure that is often androgynized. In both performances, Jesusa’s body is integral.

**215** Where Jesusa’s proposal is playful, in *The Apartheid of Sex: A Manifesto on the Freedom of Gender* Rothblatt very seriously denies the existence of two distinct gender categories and argues that, “there is a continuum of sex types, ranging from very male to very female, with countless variations in between” (1). Martine Rothblatt further suggests the need for a new vocabulary to identify sexual identities based on
The line I propose is a line full of humor, not as gratuitous or frivolous jokes, but humor as a manner in which to see the world from distinct angles, to stop and see the infiniteness of this world, to permit us to see it in all its ambiguity and its ridiculousness, from a distance. I propose: let’s be ambiguous [...] Against order, against precision, against the rigidity of putting on a play, against the solemnity of Mexican theater, I propose ambiguity in order to achieve, not ‘theater of the masses’ but in order to satisfy the vital necessity—like that of eating—of public expression. (Rodríguez in Costantino “Visibility” 67)

The ambiguity of the “Androgynous Soldier” is not merely drawn upon male/female lines. She not only calls for an end of gender, but to an end of gender and sexuality identity politics and in the postmodern fashion of “pomosexuals.” In the performance Rodríguez also questions the sexual binary of homosexual/heterosexual when she declares an end to “geyerías y las bugueses” (from “buga” or slang within the gay community of Mexico for straight people, also a play on “burgueses” or bourgeois) (369).

hues of colors: “For analytic purposes, shades of color may prove to be a useful vocabulary for dissecting sexual identity. First, color comes in an infinite number of hues, thus permitting representation of an infinite number of sexual identities. Second, the infinite hues of color can be grouped into similar chromatic categories. This permits a scientific grouping of similar sexual identities, without either denying the uniqueness of each person’s identity or reverting to the unreal ‘black or white’ dualism of sexual dimorphism. Third, colors can be combined together to create blended hues. This enables us to model basic elements of sexual identity with a few primary colors (red, yellow, blue) and then realistically represent the complexity of individual sexual identity with hybrid colors (green, purple, orange, and so on). For all of these reasons, colors offer a useful and objective lexicon for modeling the elements of sexual identity” (112-113).

Anne Fausto-Sterling in Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality describes her previously published model of a five-sex system: “In 1993 I published a modest proposal suggesting that we replace our two-sex system with a five-sex one. In addition to males and females, I argued, we should also accept the categories herms (named after ‘true’ hermaphrodites), merms (named after male ‘pseudo-hermaphrodites’), and ferms (named after female ‘pseudo-hermaphrodites’)” (78).

According to Queen and Schimel in Pomosexuals, the term refers to those who resist categorization and do not fit into the hetero/homosexual binary: “Pomosexual” references homosexuality even as it describes the community’s outsiders, the queer queers who can’t seem to stay within a nice simple identity” (20). Queen goes on to describe the way pomosexuals resist the binary: “Pomosexuality lives in the space in which all other non-binary forms of sexual and gender identity reside—a boundary-free zone in which fences are crossed for the fun of it, or simply because some of us can’t be fenced in. It challenges either/or categorizations in favor of largely unmapped possibility and the intense charge that comes with transgression” (23).
In her performance of the *corrido* “Rosita Alvírez,” Jesusa questions multiple binaries: (the male/female (sex); the masculine/feminine (gender) and the hetero/homosexual (sexuality). She recodes, queers, a *corrido* that in the original form gives the example of a girl who defies her mother’s warning not to go out, refuses to dance with a man, Hipólito, and because of this defiance, is killed. In Rosita’s dying moments, her mother blames her actions for her death and Rosita uses herself as an example as a lesson for other girls:

Su mamá se lo decía:
--Por andar de pizpireta,
se te ha de llegar el día
en que te toque tu fiesta.

Rosita le dice a Irene:
--No te olvides de mi nombre,
cuando vayas a los bailes
no desaires a los hombres (Mendoza 330-1)\textsuperscript{218}

--Figure 4.6 Jesusa Rodríguez; Photo by Stephany Slaughter--

\textsuperscript{218} For the rest of the song and alternative lyrics, see Appendix C.
The original Rosita is punished for stepping out of the traditional passive female gender role by, first, going to a dance (an activity that implies physical closeness to men and evokes a sexually encoded setting), and by, second, refusing to be the passive partner of the active male who has the power to ask. In short, for stepping out of her expected gender role, she pays with her life: an extreme price to pay for a seemingly negligible indiscretion, but a powerful lesson to young girls. This message is even more powerful since her mother is the one who voices that “her day had to come”—a woman transmits the message of the role of the female.

In Rodríguez’s version, instead of dying, Rosita is “transexed” (“Rosita se transexuó”). In fact, the use of ‘se’ suggests that this may be a reflexive action and that Rosita transexed herself—moving her from the passive role to an active one. This is further supported by the subtitle of her performance “Monólogo de la soldadera autógena.” Jesús presents the audience with a self-generating, self-pleasing soldadera. The text is rife with albures219 (For example, “más culina”), so that here, the “pistol” is not only the “pistola” from the original version, but also a clear reference to the male organ as a weapon. As a result of her altercation with this “weapon,”

Rosita ya tiene pito (Rosita now has a dick)
e Hipólito tiene chiches (And Hipólito has tits)
ora son hermafroditas (now they are hermaphrodites)
y viven rete felices (and they live very happily) (371)220

Rodríguez’s version has a happy ending, a queered happy ending: Neither Hipólito nor Rosa remains solely male or female—they both take on physical markers of the opposite

219 “Albur” is a word or expression that can be understood on multiple levels—one of which is generally sexual in nature.

220 For full lyrics see Appendix C.
sex, becoming “hermafroditas.” They are not the only hermaphrodites present as Rodríguez implicates us all in the conclusion of her utopian call to arms with the declaration “andróginos somos todos, ¡Viva la Revolución!” (We are all androgynous, Long live the Revolution!”) (“Ni frío” 371).

Through ambiguity and humor, Jesusa teases the audience into questioning gender/sex/sexuality and identity politics with her. Where the women of previous examples rattled the cage of the “straight mind” without being about to throw open the door and escape the status quo, Jesusa defies compulsory heterosexuality by recoding a figure of the Revolutionary soldier and blurring the lines between male/female; masculine/feminine; heterosexual/homosexual. Through queering symbols of the Mexican nation, she questions the interplay of the discourses of nation and gender.

As transgressive as her performance is, the cabaret setting in Mexico City’s Coyoacán or as part of the Hemispheric Institute reaches a limited middle to upper class urban audience who have different concerns regarding gender and sexuality than would a poorer rural audience. With this in mind, Jesusa has also stepped out of the cabaret and into indigenous communities over the past several years to use theater workshops and performances as tools to raise gender consciousness among indigenous women of Chiapas. In this area of upheaval, in recent years other theater groups such as FOMMA (Fortaleza de la Mujer Maya) have also used theater and representation to try to promote awareness of gender rights—especially over their own bodies—in areas where traditions teach women of their subservient place in the community hierarchy. 221

221 For more on the role of Mayan theater in raising gender consciousness, see Holy Terrors for the inclusion of Petrona de la Cruz Cruz and her play A Desperate Woman (292-310), followed by Teresa
The efforts of activists such as Jesusa Rodríguez and FOMMA’s Petrona de la Cruz Cruz are part of the movement to promote the rights of indigenous women that has advanced considerably since the early 1990s. Although many of the women’s groups are separate from the EZLN and even politically neutral, the neo-Zapatista uprising and concern for women’s rights within the movement has brought international attention to indigenous women’s rights in the Mayan highlands in a context of increased cooperation among varied regional, national and international women’s organizations. In the next section I analyze the emerging discourse of indigenous women through the representational construction of neo-Zapatista “neo-soldaderas” as they fight to carve a niche in the public sphere of the Mexican nation.

4.5 Constructing the Neo-Soldadera: Zapatista Women and The Public Sphere

Chapter 2 explored some of the ways the EZLN has associated itself with Emiliano Zapata and positioned itself as a continuation of the Revolution of 1910. By Marrero’s article, “Eso sí pasa aquí: Indigenous Women Performing Revolution in Mayan Chiapas” (311-330). See also Donald Frischmann’s “New Mayan Theatre in Chiapas: Anthropology, Literacy, and Social Drama” and Cynthia Steele’s “‘A Woman Fell into the River’: Negotiating Female Subjects in Contemporary Mayan Theatre,” both in Taylor and Villegas’s Negotiating Performance: Gender, Sexuality, and Theatricality in Latin/o America (213-256).

222 I would like to clarify that I do not suggest that the Zapatistas are responsible for women’s movements in Chiapas. As Eber and Kovic point out, there were women’s cooperatives in the area from the 1960s (1). Kampwirth also acknowledges the existence of women’s groups before the EZLN uprising: “While women’s organizations were not invented by the EZLN, and in fact some of those groups helped lay the organizational groundwork for the emergence of the guerillas, a qualitative change in women’s organizing occurred beginning in 1994” (118-19). For more on the interaction between Zapatista women and other women’s organizations, see Kampwirth’s Chapter 4, “Conquering the Space That is Ours: Women, Civil Society, and the Zapatista Rebellion.”
extension then, the women Zapatistas can be seen as a continuation of the soldadera figure. However, unlike the Revolution of 1910, from the beginning of the neo-Zapatista uprising, gender concerns figured into discourses of Revolutionary nationalism as the “revolution within the revolution” (Stephen, Zapata 177). These considerations have contributed to marked differences in portrayals of neo-Zapatista women. In this section I argue that representations of the neo-Zapatistas and indigenous women in Zapatista support communities reflect an endeavor to re-construct the soldadera, attempting to break with previous Adelita/Coronela stereotypes to position indigenous women as active and respected participants in the public sphere of the Mexican nation. At the same time, many of these images contain ambiguities that suggest resistance to these changing roles.

While much of the media focus has concentrated on Marcos as spokesperson of the EZLN, indigenous women have also taken visible roles in EZLN leadership. Comandante Ramona was “one of two women on the eleven-member ruling indigenous committee” and “it was she who presented the Mexican flag, captured on the first of January 1994, at the February peace talks in the cathedral of San Cristóbal. More than any other single Zapatista woman, it was Ramona who captured the imagination of

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223 Diane Goetze suggests parallels between the soldaderas and the neo-Zapatista women in her paper posted on the “Zapatista Women” web site entitled, “Revolutionary Women: From Soldaderas to Comandantas: The Roles of Women in the Mexican Revolution and in the Current Zapatista Movement.” I push the suggestion of such comparisons further, concentrating especially on representation.

millions” (Kampwirth 140). As bearer of the flag, Ramona symbolically possesses a space for indigenous women in the Mexican nation. Ramona once again bore the flag as the representative of the Zapatistas at the Congreso Nacional Indígena in 1996. Two documentaries, La Realidad (1996) and Ramona: Mujer, Indígena, Rebelde (2006) record Ramona’s journey to Mexico City. Throughout both documentaries, almost every shot of Ramona in public captures her carrying, holding or waving a Mexican flag. Ramona carried a flag from Chiapas as a gift from the Zapatistas to the conference. When it is her turn to speak, she explains,

Nuestra palabra es que vamos a apoyar a todo lo que ustedes acuerden en este Congreso Nacional Indígena… el regalo de nuestra Comandancia General del EZLN es esta bandera, que es la bandera de México, ésta es para que nunca olvidemos que nuestra patria es México y para que todos escuchen lo que hoy gritamos: Nunca más un México sin nosotros!

Ramona’s speech claims a place for indigenous peoples within the Mexican nation. The editing of this documentary supports Ramona’s statements visually and highlights patriotic elements of the event by including footage of the entire auditorium saluting the Mexican flag before singing the national anthem. It also frames the panel of guests of honor so that we see that they are seated in front of an enormous Mexican flag, with a banner to their right that proclaims, “Nunca más un México sin nosotros.” The next day Ramona speaks to a crowd in the Zócalo of Mexico City where she is greeted by chants of “Zapata Vive, la lucha sigue” followed by “Ramona! Ramona!”

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225 Ramona: Mujer, Indígena, Rebelde, originally made in 1996 and edited by the Colectivo Perfil Urbano, was re-edited and re-released by Ediciones Pentagrama in 2006 following Ramona’s death in January in commemoration of her accomplishments and contributions to the Zapatista movement. It highlights her participation in the 1994 peace accords and her 1996 trip to Mexico City to participate in the Congreso Nacional Indígena (CNI) where she spoke in the Zócalo only days before she underwent a kidney transplant.
For Dan Lewenstein in his introduction to *Women of Maize: Indigenous Women and the Zapatista Rebellion*, the image of Ramona in this context helped construct a discourse of the neo-Zapatista/neo-soldadera as distinct from that of the soldadera from 1910:

The EZLN Comandante arrived without troops or weapons, to speak to the people of Mexico City; moreover, she was a woman. The disconcerting image of Comandante Ramona, indigenous woman and revolutionary leader, who addressed the crowds through an interpreter due to her lack of Spanish, spoke volumes about the deeply radical nature of the Zapatista project. This new image of revolutionary woman contrasted sharply with the ‘Adelitas’ of the 1910 Revolution, camp-followers who prepared food for the male fighters and were generally stereotyped as submissive wives or wanton whores. (13-14)

In the beginning of the chapter I outlined the construction of the stereotyped soldadera to which Lewenstein refers. Indeed, none of the most circulated Casasola photos from 1910 depict women in positions of leadership. More often they appear in romantic postures, posing with or embracing men. Some posed images show women with weapons, but very few show them actively engaged. Generally, candid shots capture women preparing food or caring for children. In contrast, images of Ramona place her in leadership positions at head tables and physically leading the march, as in the case of the photo on the cover of the *Ramona* documentary (see Figure 4.7). Additionally, Ramona’s clothing visually brings her identity as an indigenous woman to the forefront—a discourse of ethnicity completely absent from representations of soldaderas of 1910. In all of her public appearances, Ramona wears an embroidered huipil that identifies her “as an indigenous woman from the highlands” (Kampwirth 140). While the ski mask she wears

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226 See Poniatowska’s *Soldadera* for reprints of many of these images.
clearly situates her within the EZLN, her choice of clothing both separates her from the military stance of insurgents pictured with her in their uniforms, and more importantly claims a position of leadership as an indigenous woman.

Figure 4.7 Comandanta Ramona (right) leads the way carrying a folded Mexican flag. From the cover of the documentary *Ramona: Mujer, Indígena, Rebelde*...

Ramona is not the only member of the Zapatista leadership committee that has impacted the public representation of indigenous women and their role in re-shaping the discourse of the Mexican nation. Another documentary, *Storm from the Mountain: The Zapatistas Take Mexico City* (2001) depicts another Zapatista caravan that traveled to Mexico City—this time to address congress where Comandanta Esther staked a claim for indigenous women as part of the Mexican nation by declaring, “Nunca más un México sin mujeres.”227 Both women chose the symbolic space of the nation’s capital to deliver

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227 This film does not show her speaking in front of congress, but does include footage of her making the previous statement to a crowd in the *zócalo.*
their messages. Where Ramona visually connected with national discourses through appropriation of the Mexican flag, Esther connects with the nation through speaking in the symbolic space of the congressional chamber. She explains,

This tribune is a symbol. That is why it caused so much controversy. That is why we wanted to speak in it, and that is why some did not want us to be here. And it is also a symbol that it is I, a poor, indigenous and Zapatista woman, who would be having the first word, and that the main message of our word as Zapatistas would be mine. (in Hayden 187)

In a space associated with the leadership of the Mexican nation, Esther speaks as a Zapatista, as indigenous, and as a woman, thereby claiming a space for all three as part of the national discourse.

Photos of this landmark event circulated both on the internet and in newspapers such as La Jornada. The special issue of La Jornada as part of the ten-year anniversary of the uprising includes a close-up of Comandanta Esther, “during her much-celebrated speech in the Chamber of Deputies” from March 28, 2001 (61). In fact, Esther is the only female Zapatista identified by name in the magazine. The commemorative issue includes other images of female leadership through including three photos of the Comité Clandestino Revolutionario Indígena from the peace talks of February 1994 where Ramona (unidentified in the captions) sits at the table next to Marcos (28-9).
The issue also includes non-Zapatista indigenous women in positions of strength that redefine the place of indigenous women in public spaces as agents rather than victims. Several photos show women standing up to the military and preventing them entry into their communities.229 The centerfold of the magazine shows a two-page reprint of a widely circulated photo by Pedro Valtierra of women resisting military in X’oyep that first appeared on the front page of the Jornada on Jan 3, 1998 (See figure 4.8). The central image portrays an indigenous woman physically asserting herself by

228 This copy was purchased in a Mexico City street market March 2006. The original photo ran on the front page of La Jornada Jan 3, 1998 and was reprinted in the Jornada’s “Zapatistas: Crónica de una rebelión” in 2003, p. 36-7.

229 See the Jornada’s “Zapatistas: Crónica de una rebellion,” “Tojolobal women reject military presence in the Yalchiptic refugee camp” January 3, 1998 p. 46 and “Tzeltal women and children block the dirt road leading to Yalchilpictic, in the municipality of Altamirano, to protest against military occupation” from January 2, 1998 p. 47.
pushing away a male soldier from the Mexican military—to his visible surprise (36-7).

Her inclined body position asserts an image of power, not victimization.

Reminiscent of the X’oyep photo, a still from a film by Carlos Martínez Suárez included in Proceso’s Edición Especial 13, “1994-2004: La gran illusion,” from January of 2004, shows indigenous women using their bodies to resist the military. A photo on the facing page captures another moment from the same confrontation where these women stare down soldiers as a form of peaceful civil disobedience (25). In her article “Eso sí pasa,” Teresa Marrero analyzes the implications of this possession of “the gaze” by indigenous women in the face of ladino men:

In an incident recorded by Mexican videographer Carlos Martínez Suárez, unarmed Tzotzil women and girls form a protective single file on the outskirts of the community of Oventic in order to prevent the encroaching tanks from entering. These striking images show indigenous women standing defiantly before the federal soldiers. For women who have been socialized never to raise their gaze to men, this staring at the face of institutionalized, governmental power bespeaks a new public social role. For ladino men, socialized to ignore indias as the unworthy bottom rung of society, having to contend nonviolently with defiant shoulder-to-shoulder women in red bandanas must indeed constitute a supreme act of self-restraint. The soldiers do not look at the faces of the women, perhaps in yet another act of collective unwillingness, of collective denial. In any case, the feminization of the conflict has fundamentally altered the ways in which civil disobedience is conceived. In the Mexican national consciousness, these acts of civil disobedience by indigenous women single-handedly revolutionize the collective casting of postcolonial indigenous women as subjects and historical agents. (325-6)

These multiple circulating images of civil disobedience on the part of these women represent them as claiming space in the public sphere as indigenous women, as marked on their bodies through traditional clothing.
Both commemorative issues include various photos of anonymous groups of uniformed masked Zapatistas. The uniforms and balaclavas erase markers of race, ethnicity, and gender from their bodies as the participants—men and women of multiple ethnicities—are visually portrayed as equals. The documentary *Compañeras tienen grado / Women Zapatistas* (Dirs. Guadalupe Miranda and María Inés Roqué 1995) includes footage of a training sequence where the sex of the uniformed soldiers is not readily apparent (See Figure 4.9). An occasional glimpse of a long braid from under the *pasamontañas* reveals these are women who are actively participating in the EZLN as combatants who have blurred gender roles to participate in a traditionally “male” space and enjoy multiple “male” freedoms and equality of social mobility not afforded to indigenous women who remain in their towns. Through a series of interviews with the Subteniente Amalia, Capitán Elisa, Capitán Irma, Capitán Isidra, Capitán Laura and the
Subcomandante Marcos, the documentary visually represents several of the Revolutionary Women’s Laws (though they are never specifically mentioned) and the contrast in their implementation within the military encampments versus in home communities.²³⁰

From the title, “Las compañeras tienen grado” (literally translated as, “the comrades have rank”), the film highlights two of the Revolutionary Women’s Laws: “Primero. Las mujeres, sin importar su raza, credo, color o filiación política, tienen derecho a participar en la lucha revolucionaria en el lugar y grado que su voluntad y capacidad determinen” and “Noveno. Las mujeres podrán ocupar cargos de dirección en la organización y tener grados militares en las fuerzas armadas revolucionarias” (EZLN Vol. 1, 45-6). Although she doesn’t mention the laws, Captain Irma evokes them as she testifies that joining the EZLN is “a tremendous change for the women” because where it is hard to gain positions of responsibility in the village, with the Zapatistas men and women are equal:

So I’m saying that there’s no difference between women and men. Almost all the women you see have rank and a post. They can lead people and do the same work that men do. They can have the same rank as the men. That is, just because they are women does not mean they can't have a rank. In the rest of the country, on the other hand, you don’t find this.

Although Irma testifies to the changes for women among the Zapatista insurgents, the opportunity to experience this gender freedom in the public sphere comes at a price for these women. Marcos testifies that for an indigenous woman to leave her pueblo, she

²³⁰ See Appendix D for the text of the Revolutionary Women’s Laws. Kampwirth cautions that in spite of the inclusion of these demands near the end of the booklet, “Women’s demands rarely were at the top of the Zapatista agenda during the first years of the public rebellion. Yet those demands never disappeared completely either, and they were to fuel a dramatic increase in the number of organized women, and the coherence of the women’s movement, in Chiapas and in Mexico as a whole” (113).
risks more than the men because she cannot simply return if things do not work out.

Since traditionally, women only leave their towns to get married or “de puta,” if they join the Zapatistas and return, the assumption is that they have slept around—returning to the soldadera/whore stereotype.

The film does not reinforce this stereotype, but rather focuses on the rights these women have over their bodies, echoing laws Seven (the right to choose their partner in marriage) and Three (the right to choose the number of children they will have). Captain Elisa giggles as she explains that some women get married, but only those who want to. Another woman standing behind her speaks of women using birth control pills to avoid getting pregnant and to be able to continue work—an unthinkable option outside of the encampment. In fact, in spite of the freedom to choose the number of children they will have, children are discouraged in the jungle so that women who choose the non-traditional role of combatant must also reject the traditional role of mother. Elisa giggles again when she says that “of course” she would have children if she were in her village, but with the EZLN, “en lugar de abrazar un niño, tienes que abrazar tu arma.”

While these interviews attest to greater equality between indigenous men and women, most of the comments are framed in terms of the freedoms the compañeras experience within the EZLN versus those denied in the villages. Thus, it restricts these changes to a specific population of female combatants in contrast to indigenous communities where gender changes have been slower to come.

Where Compañeras tienen grado shows images of women in army fatigues in EZLN combatant encampments, a recent documentary, La vida de la mujer en resistencia
(2004), depicts women of indigenous Zapatista support communities, but who are not soldiers. According to the synopsis of the film, it attempts to respond to questions of how the Revolutionary Women’s Laws have affected changing gender attitudes ten years after their inception. I argue that this film, in spite of its self-proclaimed intention as an educational film made by and for indigenous communities, undermines its message through its visual representation of indigenous women.

Throughout the documentary, the contrast between narration and images is striking. The narration repeatedly exerts that things have changed since 1994—that women can now leave their homes whereas before the men would not allow such a thing. However, the film shows little to no evidence of this change in agency. As the synopsis indicates, almost the entire film takes place in domestic spaces. Even when the women leave the home, it is for domestic chores, such as laundry, fetching firewood, fetching water, bathing their children, and feeding the town. Scenes of women working together cooperatively to prepare food show that some of the women have left their individual domestic spaces to participate in a collective domestic space. These spaces allow women to share work and empower each other. As one woman interviewed in the documentary explains, “After ‘94 life changed a little bit for Zapatista women because now there is not so much mistreatment of women. We understand that men and women are equal.

231 According to the publicity summary, the intent of the 18 minute documentary is to directly respond to these questions: “En 1994 se hizo pública la ‘Ley revolucionaria de las mujeres zapatistas’ y desde entonces la situación y la condición de este segmento de la población es una interrogante constante. Mucho se ha discutido sobre si estas mujeres están atravesando por un proceso de equidad y liberación también. ‘La vida de la mujer en resistencia’ responde a varias de las preguntas desde la voz de las mujeres zapatistas mismas. Enmarcado en la cotidianeidad, y principalmente en los espacios domésticos, este video nos permite conocer cómo se han ido forjando los cambios en la sociedad de estas comunidades. Son las mujeres de las comunidades bases de apoyo en resistencia quienes dan sus testimonios y plantean cuestiones que aún están por resolverse.”
Now there are many women who are helping other women, those women who still don’t know that they have rights, they help them to wake up and to seek out their rights.”

While collectives and women’s cooperatives have been a major step forward, changing male attitudes towards gender roles has been difficult. Several women observe how much work the women do daily, often from 3am to 10pm, and that the men do not help them with this work. A voice in Spanish from Radio Insurgente, “the voice of the EZLN,” tells men they should help women with children and cooking, though we see no images to support the possibility that this use of technology to publicize and educate regarding changes in gender roles has impacted male behavior. The woman’s voice announces, “As the Revolutionary Women’s Law of the EZLN states: instead of prohibiting her from going out, you should be helping her by taking care of the children and doing the work in the kitchen while she is away. If you still don’t know how to do this work, well, you can learn it little by little.” Meanwhile, we see a woman caring for and feeding a child without any help—the image contradicts the message of change.

Similar disparity between narration and image occurs throughout the broadcast. A man’s voice in Spanish addresses the men in the audience: “Brothers who are listening, you do not have the right to control your wife or to limit her in any way. If she wants to participate, speak in meetings or accept a public responsibility it is her right and she deserves your support.” In contrast to these words, the image portrays a woman inside a house cooking along side a baby girl in a diaper. The suggestion is that this is her child—her role is that of a mother; her place is in the kitchen. There are no images of women exercising the right to speak publicly or participating in the meetings to which the
broadcast refers at any point in the film. Several women repeat these rights as part of the narration, but as far as the film is concerned, they stay in the realm of discourse and not that of action.

A similar disjunction between rhetoric and image occurs in the documentary *Zapatista* (Dirs. Benjamin Eichert, Rick Rowley, Staale Sandberg with Edward James Olmos, Daryl Hannah, Noam Chomsky, Zack De La Rocha 1998), a film that pretends to take up and support the Zapatista cause. In her paper, “Representing Women in the Zapatista Movement: Mixed Messages,” Susan Drake astutely analyzes the gendered aspects of violence and their representation in the film through the portrayal of the indigenous female body. In an interview with indigenous refugees who were displaced by military and paramilitary groups, the camera focuses on the nude torso of a woman—even cutting off her head—in spite of the fact that she testifies to her shame at having been forced from her home without her clothes (Drake 5). Drake argues that this image “underscore[s] the vulnerability of the indigenous communities where her particular nakedness is taken to symbolize the vulnerability of the entire community” (5). By framing the sequence in such a way as to highlight the naked female indigenous body, the film contributes to its sexualization and exoticization at the expense of female agency—effectively casting her as the object of the gaze.

Throughout this section I have argued that representations of the neo-Zapatistas and indigenous women in Zapatista support communities have constructed images of indigenous women as active and respected agents. The actions of indigenous Zapatista women leaders and non-leaders alike place the female indigenous body in the public
sphere and within discourses of the nation. Other representations limit these claims of agency through an insistence on placing the female body in domestic spaces and/or as objects of the erotic male gaze. The following section examines a text that ambiguously represents the neo-Zapatista woman as political agent while further reinscribing her within the stereotype of the soldadera/whore.

4.6 Resisting Gender Change: The Neo-Zapatista as Patriarchal Nightmare

The open-ended play Todos somos Marcos (We Are All Marcos 1994), by Vicente Leñero moves from neo-Zapatista indigenous women in Chiapas to a representation of a middle-class urban woman who joins the Zapatista struggle. The play reveals the possibility for women (Laura) to escape patriarchal control (Raúl) through the neo-soldadera figure of the Zapatista. This version of the soldadera does not follow her man into the fray as in previously discussed examples such as Como agua para chocolate or La Milpa. Rather she leaves him to follow her political ideals. In doing so, she leaves the domestic “female” space of the home—where the play takes place and where Raúl remains—to join the public “male” space of political action. However, at the same time that the play suggests the possibility of gender change through the vehicle of the neo-Soldadera, it also attempts to reinscribe her as sexualized soldadera stereotype.

The play, set in Raúl’s apartment in Mexico City, opens with Raúl’s nightmare (the patriarchal nightmare) in which he is “killed” by the oniric anonymous “Mujer con
pasamontañas” (woman with ski-mask) who enters and leaves the domestic space at will. We later learn that this anonymous woman is Laura, Raúl’s ex-girlfriend; however, the ski-mask, which within the context of the play clearly identifies her as Zapatista, erases her individual identity, suggesting that she is a variety of “every-woman.” In a role-reversal, the woman—through the vehicle of Zapatismo—possesses the agency of movement and the man remains immobile in the domestic space of the bedroom, having been attacked by a woman with a knife. As we consider the phallic implications of such a weapon, the Freudian implications of the dream reveal themselves to the spectator—the woman who possesses the phallus—this “masculine” woman of action—is dangerous and a threat to patriarchal power hierarchies. She may “kill” the patriarch, thereby freeing herself from his control. She may “emasculate” him, either literally as the knife threatens, or figuratively. This castration threat wielded by the neo-soldadera brings to mind previous incarnations of the “castrating” soldadera—especially that of Mariana (María Félix) in La Generala (Juan Ibáñez 1970). Like Raúl in Leñero’s play, in the film Coronel Feliciano López brags of his sexual prowess, claiming that he is more “macho” than the rest and that “el verdadero Don Juan soy yo” (I am the real Don Juan). Mariana, dressed in an exaggeratedly female drag rather than her usual “masculine” attire, draws upon her feminine wiles and the Colonel’s desire to prove his masculinity through his sexual performance as the two retire from the bar to a private room. She orders him to undress. Her two male accomplices tie the naked Colonel to the bed and the site he has chosen to demonstrate masculine power is turned against him as Mariana uses a knife to castrate him.
In the case of *Todos somos Marcos*, no literal castration occurs and no blood spills (Leñero 48), though Laura figuratively emasculates Raúl by stealing “his political and sexual power” (Day, *Staging* 66-7). The dream that is staged in the first scene foreshadows this loss as the female Zapatista, who represents an affront to his political power, attacks him in his bed, an affront to his sexual power. The scene prioritizes the space of the bed with all of its sexual connotations and through it the struggle for sexual power in the relationship—at least in Raúl’s troubled psyche. In the nightmare Laura attacks him in the very space where he repeatedly attempts to express power over her. The dream disturbs his sleep to the point that he falls out of bed, symbolically dislodged from power by the phantom woman. Throughout the play, Raúl returns to this space as he attempts to reestablish his control over Laura, and by extension “reestablish the patriarchal order” (Day, *Staging* 58), through exerting his power of the phallus.

Throughout his conversation with Miguel, a mutual friend of both Raúl and Laura who has come to see the apartment that Raúl has decided to vacate, Raúl emphasizes his sexual prowess with Laura. He insists that sex had nothing to do with their break-up, which occurred three months prior, explaining that during their three years together, “Nos entendíamos en….en casi todo…En la cama…uta, a toda madre” (Leñero 53). Later in the play, he performs household (often considered “female”) tasks, including making the bed, but only with the intention of seducing her: “Quité los trastes de la mesa, barrí, tendí la cama para que tú y yo…” (Leñero 62). What he leaves out of the statement is clear. He has cleaned the house not out of any sense of sharing household responsibilities or gender

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232 Day refers to this same line as part of his summary of the play (*Staging* 59).
equality, but “in order to reach his short- and long-term goals (‘coger’ and reestablish patriarchal order)” (Day, Staging 68).233

While Raúl was home cleaning (in the “feminine” sphere), Laura was out participating in the (“masculine”) political sphere through attending a Zapatista rally in the zócalo. Laura returns home from the rally with renewed energy and passion for the Zapatista struggle. Threatened by her newfound political agency, Raúl attempts to re-claim power over her through sex: “Instead of engaging in a political discussion, Raúl tries to seduce her […] Mocking her politics, he calls her his precious Zapatista, delegitimizing her political power and emphasizing her womanly power of seduction” (Day, Staging 72).234 Throughout the play Raul is constantly concerned with sex, as is Miguel. For them, power is directly related to the phallus, which Raúl demonstrates when he leads her to the bed and covers her with his body (Leñero 57-8)—a physical exertion of sexual power. However, she rejects him, thereby figuratively emasculating him through denying him his expression of power of the phallus. Her rejection “[le] puso de malas” (put him in a bad mood) since he had been waiting for her all afternoon and really wanted to “fuck” (“tenía muchas ganas de coger”). Instead of fulfilling her role in his

233 The motivation behind this temporary inversion of gender roles recalls Salazar’s image of the “Mandilón” and his assertion that “Women find men who do housework more sexually appealing than those who don’t.” See the final section of Chapter 2 for further analysis of this piece.

234 Day provides further examples of Raúl’s use of language to delegitimize Laura and her political agency: “Starting with his first, ‘estás loca’ [you’re crazy], each of Laura’s passionate descriptions of the pro-Marcos demonstration or words of support for Marcos is followed by derogatory remarks by Raúl. The latter’s aim is to bring national, patriarchal ideals, the public (official) transcript home: ‘No seas payasa,’ ‘No seas ridicula,’ ‘Ya, ya cálmate’ [Don’t be a clown, Don’t be ridiculous, Calm down already].” (Day Staging 72).
patriarchal heteronormative fantasy, all she wanted to do was to talk about her experiences outside of his domain in the political sphere.

Although Laura refuses to participate in the heterosexual matrix when she refuses Raúl’s sexual advances, Raul attempts to reinscribe her within the same matrix when he asserts that she is joining the Zapatista movement because she, like all the other women in the movement, wants to have sex with Marcos. According to Raúl, once Marcos dons his mask, “todas quieren con él” (Leñero 61) (all the women want to have sex with him). Stuart Day asserts that part of Raúl’s strategy to undermine not just Laura, but all the women following Marcos relays on “emphasizing Marcos’s attractive persona in order to displace feelings of solidarity and focus instead on sexual desire as the reason for this attraction” (Day, Staging 70). Following Raúl’s logic, the only reason to follow Marcos is sexual attraction rather than political solidarity, thus creating the possibility for homosexual attraction for the men that follow the Zapatista movement.235 Though Raúl was a nominal supporter of Marcos previously, he mediates any homosexual threat presented by Marcos’s sexuality by distancing himself, and any other men, from participation in this particular political arena by asserting that the crowd was surely full

235 Marcos has been mobilized as a gay icon. In his article, “Gender, Sexuality, and Nation in the Art of Mexican Social Movements,” Ed McCaughan claims that Marcos departs from “the homophobia typical of leftist insurgencies: he won over the hearts of may gays and lesbians with this widely quoted statement: ‘Marcos is gay in San Francisco, black in South Africa, Asian in Europe, Chicano in San Isidro, Anarchist in Spain, Palestinian in Israel, Indigenous in the streets of San Cristóbal [the lists goes on]….In sum, Marcos is a human being, any human being, in this world. Marcos is all the minorities who are untolerated, oppressed, resisting, exploding, saying, ‘Enough.’ All the minorities at the moment they begin to speak and the majorities at the moment they fall silent and put up with it. All the untolerated people searching for a word, their word, which will return the majority to the eternally fragmented, us.” (Marcos 1995, 214-15)” (133-4).
of women—“Puras viejas, seguro,” “Las novias de Marcos” (Leñero 59). According to Raúl, the only reason the women attended the rally had nothing to do with political agency, which would have placed them in a “male” sphere, but because they are sexually interested in Marcos, returning them to a “female” sphere.

This same discourse mediates Marcos’s political threat: “Todo el éxito de Marcos es por eso, por su pegue con las chavas… ¿Por qué crees que Ofelia Medina anda en estas danzas? Uy, la vuelve loquita el enmascarado. No me digas que no” (Leñero 60). According to Raúl, Marcos only enjoys success due to his status as sex symbol, not because of his political discourse. Raúl and Miguel draw attention to the theatrical qualities of Marcos when both compare him to Hollywood film stars, such as Richard Gere, Harrison Ford and Robert De Niro (all of whom have played the role of soldiers at some point in their careers). Miguel cites a representative of the PAN who referred to

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236 See also Day, Staging 71.

237 Raúl reflects the media discourse that began in 1994 and continues in 2006. See articles such as Guadalupe Loaeza’s “El sub rompecorazones,” published in the Mexican newspaper, Reforma (February 8, 1994). In the same year Ed Bradley interviewed Marcos for the televisión show 60 Minutes on March 13 where he is framed as a sex symbol by Bradley, Guadalupe Loaeza and Frederico Estevez, Political Science Professor at the UNAM. Arguably casting Marcos in this light is part of the overall goal of the program to mediate the possible threat of the Zapatistas for the US (other techniques include emphasizing outdated technology and weapons; and appealing to the American sense of human rights and, in Ed Bradley’s words, the right to “Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”). Another US production, 13 Days/13 Días, a multi-media play performed by the San Francisco Mime Troupe in 1995 also emphasizes Marcos’s sex appeal (Holden et al). More recently several articles have appeared in Mexican newspapers and magazines either confirming his continued sex appeal (for example, see the September 16, 2005 edition of Quién with the cover title “El amor secreto del sub: Descubrimos a la mujer que dejó todo por el sex symbol de la selva” and the February 15, 2006 edition of Llave with the cover title, “Marcos, El Seductor: El héroe de los indígenas también fascina disidentes, y sobretodo, mujeres”), or asserting that he has lost it and that his resurgence on January 1, 2006 as Delegado Zero demonstrates that he suffers from a mid-life crisis (see for example the January 8, 2006 edition of Siempre! with the cover title, “Marcos, un seudorevolucionario en crisis” and the January 15-21 edition of Cambio with the cover title, “Sub Marcos: En plena crisis de los cincuenta”).
Marcos as a “Robin Hood hollywoodense.” Raúl further compares Marcos with movie stars, “Ustedes siempre lo vieron así como un mito cinematográfico” (Leñero 60). These references not only underline the performance that has often been associated with neo-Zapatismo and with Marcos (with his “costume” of ski-mask, uniform and pipe), but they also bring to mind film representations of evolutionaries before Marcos such as Villa and Zapata. Here, however, both men refer to Marcos as a Hollywood star and compare him with English bandit Robin Hood rather than with Villa or Zapata, distancing him from Mexican national symbols.

Even as Raúl attempts to discredit Marcos, he attributes sexual power to him. Marcos as sex symbol brings to mind the descriptions of revolutionary machos past such as Zapata and Villa who gained power and status from their rumored sexual potency and reputations as womanizers. Raúl attempts to appropriate Marcos’s sexual potency and appeal to women when he dons the ski mask and declares, “Ahora ya soy Marcos… Todos somos Marcos, Laurita. Ya puedes coger conmigo, ya no te doy asco […] Para que te hagas la ilusión de que estás cogiendo con Marcos, no con el pinche Raúl” (Leñero 61). Through these lines Raúl again asserts that Laura’s only interest in Marcos is to have sex with him, again minimalizing her political agency. Coupled with this discourse,

238 For Day’s analysis of these lines see page 71 (Staging).

239 The press has also referred to Marcos as seeking the media spotlight. See for example, Machado’s “De mito a mitote,” and Santa Cruz’s “Una estrella más” (both in the May 14-20, 2006 issue of Cambio) among other articles that followed his televised interview with Carlos Loret de Mola on the Televisa program “Primeras Noticias” on May 9, 2006.

240 Day refers to O’Malley’s explanation of the press’s treatment of Zapata as sex symbol at the time of his death (Staging 71-2). For my analysis of the macho archetype and the representation of Zapata and Villa, see Chapter 3.
Raúl once again attempts to exert power over Laura sexually, trying to lead the resisting Laura to bed violently.241

When force fails, Raúl attempts to win Laura over by offering her the patriarchal dream where he plays the patriarch and she would take her role as wife and mother:

Nos casamos, orále, como tú quieres y hacemos una boda grandotota, con todos los cuates, tu familia, las amigas, todos los que quieras invitar […] Y luego planeamos un hijo […] quiero que se te haga el gusto de tener un hijo. Me voy a dejar de miedos y de pendejadas. Me voy a comprometer en serio para que a ti y a mi hijo no les falte nada, te lo juro … Ya quiero tener un hijo, Laura, un hijo contigo, tuyo, de los dos… (Leñero 63).242

Raúl attempts to reinscribe Laura in the patriarchal power structure; however, she shows no interest in accepting this role. Instead, she declares that she is leaving him because he no longer interests her, “Ya no me interesa un tipo que piensa como tú” (Leñero 71). In rejecting “a type that thinks like” Raúl, she rejects the patriarchal order that limits women to the domestic sphere and does not allow for them to participate actively in the political sphere.

The play Todos somos Marcos demonstrates the possibility for women to achieve political agency through the neo-Zapatista movement. At the same time, it prioritizes patriarchal resistance to this changing gender role through male characters who attempt to regain control over the woman who transgresses through physicality of the body.243

241 See also Day, Staging 68-9.

242 With reference to the same lines, Stuart Day observes, “Raúl tries to offer everything Laura desires, or at least what he thinks she should desire. His appeal to patriarchal ideals also serves to remind Laura that she is violating dominant social norms by giving up (at least with Raúl) the trappings of society for women: marriage and motherhood” (Staging 69).

243 Men who attempt to regain power over women (and men) who transgress through the “power” of the phallus emerge as repetitive themes in several of the texts examined in this dissertation: Adrian in Entre Villa; police officers in DJ Rapidita Gonzalez; Col. Zeta in La Cucaracha.
Nevertheless, Laura transgresses without return, if only in Raúl’s imagination.\textsuperscript{244}

Through trivializing female political agency by sexualizing her, the play is not as much about Zapatista womanhood as it is about men’s fears.

Several of the texts examined in the previous section both promote gender change and resist it through their representations of Zapatista women. In spite of the ruptures with previous soldadera images, the representational construction of the neo-Zapatista women parallels that of the soldadera in that representations of these women soldiers reveal a similar struggle to carve out a new public niche in the face of attempts to reinscribe (and control) them in previous gender stereotypes. Similar to the ways in which the soldadera of 1910 was minimalized through casting her as a sexual object, several texts cast neo-Zapatista soldaderas as sexual objects rather than as active subjects. Throughout this chapter I have examined the ways in which representations of the soldadera both repeat and trouble established archetypes, having been used both to support the status quo and to embody the destabilized female gender role. Like the texts examined in Chapter 3, the texts examined here reveal possibilities for and resistance to changing roles of gender and sexuality.

\textsuperscript{244} Laura is only present on stage through Raúl’s flashbacks and dreams, thus, as a product of Raúl’s imagination, her agency is undermined—he controls the script.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION:
The Revolution-Nation-Gender Triad Revisited:
Towards Re-Nationalization?

In the context of neoliberalism and globalization, several scholars have postulated the erosion, and even the demise, of the nation and nationalism (Morris; Bartra, *Blood*; I. Rodríguez, “Globalización”; Meyer, “Foreward”). In her analysis of recent Central American novels, Ileana Rodríguez points to literary narrations of the processes of “desnacionalizacion” where under the influence of globalization, “a fin de siglo, la novela de la construcción nacional cede su lugar a la novela de la destrucción nacional” (10). I do not deny nor refute her arguments, but I do claim that the effects of globalization on the nation are complex and even contradictory so that while some experience “desnacionalizaciones,” others experience—and even help create—“renacionalizaciones.” Following scholars such as Carnoy, Corona, Hedetoft, Wiley, Inda and Rosaldo, I suggest that globalizing influences have brought about a re-thinking of the nation and nationalism/national symbols. Rather than completely dismantling the nation, neoliberal globalization has created a context for re-inventing the nation in both national and transnational terms.
In this dissertation I have focused on cultural production (film, theater, performance, art) as a space for re-thinking the Mexican nation through representations of the Mexican Revolution. I have argued that these representations have exposed changes in the socio-cultural work performed by the Revolution-Nation-Gender triad in the context of the opening of Mexican economic and political systems that accompanied the ascendance of neoliberalism. I began with an analysis of the ways discourse(s) surrounding Revolutionary heroes has been integral to the (re)definition of the Mexican nation. Through the example of Emiliano Zapata, I considered how recodings of this discourse have revealed a destabilization of hegemonic nationalism. These changes have allowed alternatives to surface both in Mexico, where Neo-Zapatism has staked a claim for indigenous peoples as part of the Mexican nation, and across the border in the United States, where Mexicans and Mexican-Americans have appropriated Mexican national symbols as part of recoded discourses of Revolutionary trans-nationalism.

“Renationalization” has also included a re-thinking of gender and sexuality as part of national discourses. Through an analysis of representations of Revolutionary icons Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata and their roles as male gender models, I have described a crisis of the macho archetype in the contemporary Mexican nation. This crisis in male gender roles necessarily indicates a change in female gender roles. With this in mind, I have argued that the polyvalent figure of the soldadera has been used both to support the status quo and to embody destabilized female gender roles. Representations of neo-Zapatista women have re-enacted and recoded some of the
contradictions inherent in the *soldadera* figure as they lay claim to a space in the Mexican nation.

Throughout the dissertation, I have argued that there have been strides in declaring changes in gender roles and even a claim to public representation of alternative sexualities—though the most radical are the least involved in the global market and take place in liminal performance spaces, suggesting that they have yet to be assimilated into the dominant discourse. At the same time, I have signaled the limits of gender change under the influence of the straight mind and the institutionalization of compulsory heterosexuality such that placing limits on freedoms of sexuality also hinder gender freedoms. My use of gender theory has allowed me to render visible the intersections of discourses of nation and gender through the close analysis of recoded images associated with the Mexican Revolution.

Clearly the Revolution is alive in the national imaginary, in spite of premature eulogies that have lamented its death in the wake of neoliberal policy reform. From the economic to the political, I have been inundated by representations of the Mexican Revolution throughout the writing of this project while in Mexico City over the past year and a half (2005-6). Just a few days ago I passed a poster outside a Sanborns in San Angel that advertised new books on Pancho Villa (by Paco Ignacio Taibo II) and Emiliano Zapata (by Pedro Ángel Palou) with the patriotic slogan “un país con heroes” next to Casasola photos of the two men. For several months the city lent public space to a celebration of Revolutionary heroes through sponsoring an exhibit of both Zapata and Villa in the Hidalgo metro station. This year I attended two exhibits of new paintings
that took Emiliano Zapata as their subject. The exhibitions, both in the Centro Cultural Juan Rulfo in Mexico City, coincided with Zapata’s birthday in April and deathday in August. In May 2006, the Cineteca ran two new documentaries, *Pancho Villa: La Revolución no ha terminado* by Francesco Taboada and *ACME and Co* by Gregorio Rocha that continue to explore themes related to the Revolution. A few weeks ago I saw an ad for a children’s play, *Pancho Villa y los niños de la bola* (by Antonio Zúñiga; Directed by Rodolfo Guerrero) about children who participated in the Revolution.

The airport giftshops suggest the comodification of Revolutionary images marketed to tourists through the Revolutionary kitsch for sale in the Duty Free shops—including tequila with the Casasola photo of “Adelita” on the bottle, Día de muertos shadow-boxes dedicated to Zapata, T-Shirts with reprints of images of Zapata, Villa, Adelita and occasionally Marcos above the word “Mexico” (or a number of Mexican city names). I have even run across a neo-Zapatista doll or key-chain next to the over-sized sombreros and shot glasses. I am struck by this commercialization of national icons in the service of the market—yet another dimension of neoliberalism to be considered in a future study.

A spray-painted stencil of Zapata stared out at me from the previously white wall of a coffee shop as I passed it on my way to buy groceries last week. Similar stencils appeared around the campus of the UNAM a few months ago when Marcos came to speak as part of the “other campaign.” After a surge of media coverage in May, the neo-Zapatistas continue “La otra campaña” with talks, cyber-*comunicados* and more documentaries. Although I focus on the neo-Zapatistas and their appropriations of
Revolutionary nationalism, they are not the only group to mobilize images of Zapata as part of their movement. Social movements in Oaxaca have a long tradition of such appropriations and just recently APPO (Asamblea Popular del Pueblo de Oaxaca) marched into Mexico City with banners bearing images of Emiliano Zapata among other national heroes. In September, on a walk through the “plantón” tents in the Zócalo and surrounding streets of AMLO (Andrés Manuel López Obrador) supporters who claim the July elections were fraudulent, I noticed several Casasola photos of Zapata, Villa and Adelita that placed López Obrador’s fight for the Mexican presidency within discourses of Revolutionary nationalism. Recent newspaper articles compare AMLO with Madero and Zapata and he has staked a claim to their Revolutionary tradition in several ways.

This year on November 20, 2006, AMLO took power as “the legitimate president” of Mexico in the zócalo following the kind of parade I went in search of three years ago. This year to commemorate the 96th anniversary of the Mexican Revolution, the government of Mexico City sponsored not only the traditional sports parade, but a second parade that re-enacted Madero’s 1911 entry into Mexico City, along with the arrival of Villa and Zapata in the national capital in 1914—complete with actors in costume to incarnate the heroes of the Revolution, and over 300 mounted Villistas and Zapatistas to accompany them on horseback (Sanders). Is it a mere coincidence that the PRD controlled city government planned such a re-enactment to coincide with another “revolutionary” entry into Mexico City, that of Andrés Manuel López Obrador?
All of these continued re-inventions remind me that this dissertation remains unfinished—there are more representations to analyze every day. This study is only one small facet of a multifaceted process of “renationalization” in the face of globalization through re-defining the Revolution-Nation-Gender triad. I complete this phase of the project in the midst of continuously evolving redefinitions. Whether or not imaginings of renationalization(s) of a multi-cultural, multi-gendered society that tolerates multi-sexuality reach beyond representational discourse remains to be seen. What will the next phase of the Revolution-Nation-Gender triad bring?

Figure 5.1 “1810, 1910, 2010?” Photo from the “Megaplantón” in Mexico City’s Zócalo, September 2006. By Stephany Slaughter.
APPENDIX A

ABBREVIATED MEXICAN HISTORY TIMELINE

1910 Celebration of 100 years of Independence from Spain. Porfirio Díaz is re-elected; however, Francisco Madero leads the revolt on November 20 that will become known as the Mexican Revolution with the slogan, “Sufragio efectivo, no-reelección.” The Revolution starts and stops until 1917 (some say until 1920). Francisco “Pancho” Villa (“El Centauro del Norte”) leads the revolt in the northern part of Mexico and Emilio Zapata Salazar (“El Caudillo del Sur”) leads the revolt in the southern part of the country.

1911 Díaz flees the country, ending his dictatorship (known as the “Porfiriato) that began in 1876. Madero becomes president, but does not replace many members of the previous regime (General Huerta, for example). He does not comply with promises regarding land reform, resulting in Zapata’s “Plan de Ayala,” a document that outlined Zapata’s call for land reform and highly criticized Madero. Villa continues to support Madero.

1912 Pascual Orozco rebels against Madero. (Benjamín 25)

1913 General Victoriano Huerta leads a rebellion against Madero and becomes president. Madero and vice president Pino Suárez are assassinated. Venustiano Carranza, with the Constitutionalist faction, leads rebellion against Huerta. The revolutionary factions fight against each other. (Krauze xxi; O’Malley xi; Benjamín 25-6)

1914 U.S. Marines in Veracruz. Convention of Aguascalientes. Zapata and Villa (allied against Carranza) take Mexico City in the name of the Conventionalists. (O’Malley xi; Benjamín 26; Krauze xxi)

1915 Álvaro Obregón, allied with Carranza, defeats Villa. (Benjamín 26-7)

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245 This time line is not meant to be an exhaustive source for Mexican history. I am aware that in attempting to provide background information to guide the reader in such a succinct manner, I am over simplifying certain events and especially the reasons behind them. The reader is encouraged to consult additional sources regarding the Mexican Revolution and the Zapatista uprising for a more rounded view of events. Sources for this timeline include: Krauze, O’Malley, Benjamín, McLynn, Hayden, Ortiz, Zapatistas: Crónica de una rebelión.
1916 Villa attacks the border town of Columbus, New Mexico, resulting in US General Pershing’s “punitive expedition.” (O’Malley xi)

1917 A new constitution is written. Carranza becomes president. (O’Malley xi-xii; Benjamín 27; Krauze xxi)

1919 Zapata is killed in ambush in Chinameca by Carranza’s men on April 10. (O’Malley xii; Benjamín 27).

1920 Obregón revolts against Carranza. Carranza is assassinated and Obregón is elected president. Villa retires. (O’Malley xi; Benjamín 27; Krauze xxi)

1923 Villa is assassinated. (O’Malley xi; Benjamín 28)

1924 Plutarco Elías Calles (“Jefe Máximo”) becomes president. In spite of changes in the presidency, Calles retains political power behind the scenes until 1934 (this time period is known as the “Maximato”). (Benjamín 28-9; O’Malley xii; Krauze xxi)

1926-29 Cristeros: conflict between the Catholic Church and the Mexican government results in pervasive armed conflict in parts of Mexico (mostly western and central). (O’Malley xii; Krauze xxi; Benjamín 28-9)

1928 Obregón is re-elected president and is assassinated within a few months. Emilio Portes Gil becomes interim president (said to be puppet of Calles). (O’Malley xii, Krauze xxi; Benjamín 29)

1929 Partido Nacional Revolucionario (PNR) formed by Calles. (Benjamín 79; Krauze xxi)

1929-1932 Pascual Ortiz Rubio becomes president (said to be puppet of Calles).

1932-1934 Abelardo Rodríguez is president (also said to be puppet of Calles).

1934 Lázaro Cárdenas becomes President.

1936 Calles is exiled to the United States.

1938 Cárdenas nationalizes oil, expropriating foreign companies. The PNR is renamed the Partido de la Revolución Mexicana (PRM). (Krauze xxi; O’Malley xii).

1939 Partido de Acción Nacional is formed by Manuel Gómez Morín in reaction to Cardenismo.
1940-46 Manuel Ávila Camacho is president.

1946-52 Miguel Alemán Valdés is president.

1946 PRM becomes Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI). The PRI remains in power until 2000.

1952-58 Adolfo Ruiz Cortines is president.

1953 Women gain national suffrage and the right to run for national office through constitutional amendment. (Ramos Escandón 101)

1958-64 Adolfo López Mateos is president.

1964-70 Gustavo Díaz Ordaz is president.

1968 Olympics hosted by Mexico; Student movement ends with the government massacre and mass arrest of students at Tlateloco on October 2. (Benjamín 82-3; Krauze xxi)

1970-76 Luis Echeverría is president.

1976-82 José López Portillo is president.

1982 Drop in oil prices results in economic crisis. (Krauze xxi; Benjamín 154)

1982-88 Miguel de la Madrid is president. Many point to his administration as the beginning of neo-liberal policies.

1983 EZLN (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional or Zapatista National Liberation Army) is formed in Chiapas.

1985 Earthquake devastates Mexico City.

1987 Cuauhtémoc Cardenas breaks with the PRI and runs against the official PRI candidate for president. (Benjamín 155)

1988-94 Carlos Salinas de Gortari is president (results of the election were widely contested).

1989 Cuauhtémoc Cardenas forms the leftist Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD).
1992 Salinas ends land reform by revoking Article 27 of the constitution. Ejidos (community lands) can now be privatized. (Hayden 11)

1993 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA; known in Spanish as the Tratado de Libre Comercio, TLC) approved by Mexico, the United States and Canada.

Zapatista Revolutionary Women’s Laws are passed by the EZLN.

1994 NAFTA takes effect on January 1. The same day, in protest of NAFTA and in support of indigenous rights, the EZLN (Ejército Zapatista del Liberación Nacional/Army of National Liberation) captures the world’s attention as they stage an armed take over of San Cristobal de las Casas in Chiapas. Subcomandante Marcos emerges as the movement’s spokesman. The First Declaration from the Lacandon Jungle is released, declaring “war on the Mexican government headed by Carlos Salinas de Gortari and demands freedom, democracy and justice for all Mexicans” (Zapatistas: Crónica 67). As a result of public demonstrations of solidarity with the movement, on Jan 12 the government declares a cease-fire with the Zapatistas. In March, PRI candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio is assassinated and Ernesto Zedillo takes over the nomination, becoming president later in the year. In July, the Chiapas State Women’s Convention is held including representatives from 24 organizations. Karen Kampwirth points to this conference as evidence of the change in women’s organizations that began working together rather than in isolation in 1994. Another Chiapas State Women’s Convention was held in October, drawing nearly 100 organizations (118-22). In December the peso drops drastically, sparking another financial crisis.

1994-2000 Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León is president.

1995 In February, the first National Women’s Convention takes place in Querétero, drawing over 300 women from around the country, attesting to increased interaction among women’s groups—both indigenous and mestiza (Kampwirth 120). A few days later, Zedillo ends the ceasefire and the Mexican army invades Zapatista territories and begins “low intensity warfare.” Negotiations resume in April. (Hayden 12; Ortiz 236-7).

1996 San Andrés Accords are signed by the Mexican government and the EZLN, “outlining a program of land reform, indigenous autonomy, and cultural rights.” Peace talks are suspended again later that year. Zedillo rejects the accords in December. The first Intercontinental Encuentro for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism takes place in July and August. (Hayden 13; See also Ortiz 238-9). On October 12 Comandanta Ramona addresses delegates of the National Indigenous Congress in Mexico City (Stephen, Zapata 228)

1997 In May and June, the State Women’s Gathering brings together the coalition of women’s groups. (Kampwirth). In September, FZLN (Frente Zapatista de Liberación Nacional), the civil and political branch of the EZLN is formed. To celebrate its
inauguration, “a delegation of 1,111 masked but unarmed civilian Zapatista representatives from hundreds of communities journeyed in buses from San Cristóbal de las Casas to Mexico City […], partially [retracing] the route of Emiliano Zapata when he took control of the capital in 1914 during the Mexican Revolution” (Stephen, Zapata 339; See also Kampwirth 142). Massacre of Acteal occurs in December. 45 civilians—the majority indigenous women and children—are killed in church by a government associated paramilitary group. (Hayden 13; Ortiz 239-40; Kampwirth 154).

1998 Further violence takes place in Chiapas involving paramilitary groups. Anti-foreigner crusade in Chiapas results in expulsions of human rights observers (Hayden 13; Ortiz 241).

1999 In March nearly 3 million Mexicans vote to pass the San Andrés accords in a national referendum (Hayden 14; Ortiz 243). Militarization of the Lacandon Forest continues.

2000 Vicente Fox, of the Partido de Acción Nacional (PAN), becomes the first non-PRI president in 70 years. He promises “to resolve the problems in Chiapas in 15 minutes” (Hayden 15).

2001 Zapatista comandantes lead a pilgrimage, the “Marcha del color de la tierra,” to Mexico City to speak before congress and demand compliance with the San Andrés Accords. They are met by wide public support. While Marcos speaks to the crowd, Comandanta Esther addresses congress.

2003 EZLN has been largely silent since 2001. Silence is broken Jan 1 to denounce all three political parties to protest new anti-indigenous laws that do not support the San Andrés Accords. The Zapatistas restructure internally in order to live more autonomously and move from the system of Aguascalientes to that of Caracoles and “Good Government” committees (Zapataistas: Crónica 70).

2004 Ten year anniversary of the Zapatista uprising is commemorated by la Jornada with a release of a video and magazine, Zapatistas: Crónica de una rebelión. Proceso publishes a special edition dedicated to the movement: 1994-2004: La gran ilusión…

2005 In June the Sixth Declaration from the Lacandon Jungle is released, declaring the commencement of “La otra compañía” (The other campaign), which coincides with presidential campaigns for the 2006 elections. In August Marcos speaks out against the PRD for not respecting the tenets of a leftist political party.

2006 On January 1 Marcos re-emerges as the “Delegado Zero” (Delegate Zero) and announces a motorcycle tour of the country known as “La otra campaña” that will take place through the July elections.
April-May: Zaptatour arrives in Mexico City. Events in San Salvador Atenco, (violent stand-offs between citizens and police) change tour schedule as Marcos goes to support the campesinos. Following this event Marcos returns to the media spotlight, giving several televised interviews. Some accuse him of using Atenco to gain attention when La otra campaña has not achieved the attention hoped.

July: Elections take place. PRI candidate Roberto Madrazo concedes defeat the same day, but the results for PAN candidate Felipe Calderon and PRD candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador make the election too close to call.

September: The IFE declares Felipe Calderon the official president-elect, but AMLO continued to claim election fraud.

November: AMLO declares himself the “legitimate president” in a rally on November 20, coinciding with celebrations to commemorate the 96th anniversary of the Mexican Revolution.
APPENDIX B

LIST OF SELECTED WORKS THAT INCLUDE EMILIANO ZAPATA

Films with references to Zapata include: El Compadre Mendoza (Zapata is evoked, but doesn’t appear; Fernando de Fuentes 1933), La Negra Angustias (Zapata is evoked, but doesn’t appear; Matilde Landeta 1949), Marlon Brando as Zapata in Viva Zapata! (the first film with Emiliano Zapata as protagonist, Elia Kazan 1952), Antonio Aguilar as Zapata in Emiliano Zapata (Felipe Casals 1970), Zapata en Chinameca (Mario Hernández 1988), Campanas Rojas (Sergei Bondarchuk, 1981—Zapata appears but is not a main character), Vuelo del Águila miniseries Televisa (Jorge Fons and Gonzalo Martínez 1996), Alejandro Fernández as Zapata in Zapata: Sueño del héro (Alfonso Arau 2003), Demian Bichir as Zapata in the Telemundo miniseries Zapata: Amor y rebelión (Walter Doehner 2004), Zapata is evoked in the short film Charros (Jorge Riggen 2004), Santos Peregrinos (Juan Carlos Carrasco 2004). Recent documentaries include: Zapatos de Zapata (Luciano Larobina 2000), The Last Zapatistas: Forgotten Heroes (Francesco Taboada Tabone 2003), Canal Once’s ¿Dónde estás Emiliano? (2004), and others including a 1998 and a 2001 documentary by Clío.

Novels and short stories include: Campamento (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1931) and Tierra (Mexico: Editorial Mexico 1933) both by Gregorio López y Fuentes (according to O’Malley in a note on page 164, the only two novels with Zapata or Zapatismo as a subject from 1915-1940, a time which saw many novels and films about maderismo and villismo); “Zapata’s Eyes” a short story by Sandra Cisneros (1992), Emiliano (Alejandro Íñigo 2000); Diario de Amada Díaz (Ricardo Orozco 2003), Zapata (Pedro Angel Palau, 2006).

Plays and scripts include: Emiliano Zapata (Mauricio Magdaleno 1932), José Revuelta’s movie script (film was never made), Tierra y libertad (1960); El jefe máximo (Ignacio Solares 1991); 13 Days/13 Día: The Zapatista Uprising in Chiapas (Joan Holden, Paula Loera, Daniel Nugent and Eva Tessler 1996); D.J. Rapidita Gonzalez (written and performed by Carmen Ramos 2005)

Some examples of art include: Series of Cassasola photos (1910-1919); José Guadalupe Posada’s engravings including a 1911 portrait of Zapata, Diego Rivera’s
“Paisaje Zapatista” (1915), “Blood of the Revolutionary Martyrs Fertilizing the Earth” (Automonomous University of Chapingo 1926); “History of Cuernavaca and Morelos” (Palacio de Cortés, Cuernavaca 1929-30), “The History of Mexico” (Palacio Nacional, Mexico City 1929-35), “A Popular History of Mexico” (Mosaic, Teatro de los Insurgentes, Mexico City 1953); José Clemente Orozco’s “American Civilization—Latin America” (Dartmouth Baker Library 1932); Luis Arenal’s “La muerte de Zapata” 1937; David Alfaro Siqueiros, “Death to the Invader” (Escuela Mexico, Chile 1941-2), “From the Dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz to the Revolution—the Revolutionaries” (National History Museum, Chapultepec Castle, Mexico City 1957-65); Fernando Leal’s “Emiliano Zapata” (1958); Arnold Belkin’s “La llegada de los generales” (1979), “Serie Zapata” (1978), “Traición y muerte de Zapata” (1982); Roberto Rodríguez Navarro’s “El Caudillo del Sur (Museo Casa Emiliano Zapata, Anenecuileo, 1991); Ortiz Torres’s 1994 “The Revolution will be Televised”; David Salazar’s 1995 “El Mandilón”; Hugo Martínez Ramírez’s “Zapata mito que vive (1995); Latuffe’s 1998 “Zapata vive en Chiapas!”; Mario López’s series of charicatures: “General Homero Simpson,” “Bartrix Revolutions,” “Speedy Gonzalez”; “La revolución pendiente” (controversial image of Zapata entitled chosen by SEP to celebrate anniversary of 125th birthday, Mónica Roibal 2002); paintings by Enrique Estrada (interviewed in ¿Dónde estás Emiliano?).
APPENDIX C

LYRICS OF “ROSITA ALVÍREZ”

“Rosita Álvarez”
Año de mil novecientos
Muy presente tengo yo
En un barrio del Saltillo
Rosita Álvirez murió, Rosita Álvirez murió.

Su mamá se lo decía
Rosita esta noche no sales.
Mamá no tengo la culpa
Que a mí me gusten los bailes.

Hipólito llegó al baile
Y a Rosa se dirigió
Como era la más bonita
Rosita lo desairó
Rosita no me desaires

246 Typical of the corrido genre, there are multiple versions of this corrido. This is a compilation of three versions, in order to best mirror Rodríguez’s version, found at the following web-sites: http://www.lamc.utexas.edu/jaime/cwp2/ddg/leslie_rosita_alvirez.html, http://www.puroparty.com/lyric, http://www.sp.utexas/jrn/cwp/rap/corrido.html. Vicente T. Mendoza also has a slightly different version in El corrido mexicano. In that version, the order is slightly different. Rosita’s mother speaks before Irene and instead of telling Rosita that her actions had to cost her lift, her mother says, “Por andar de pizpireta, se te ha de llegar el día en que te toque tu fiesta” (330).

247 This text is taken from the printed version from Debate Feminista 12: 23 (April 2001) 370-1. Typical of the improvisational nature of performance, several words changed in the live version performed in Lima on 7 July 2002 and are indicated next to the original.
Echó mano a la cintura
Una pistola sacó
Y a la pobre de Rosita
No más tres tiros le dio.
No más tres tiros le dio.

Rosita le dijo a Irene
No te olvides de mi nombre
y cuando vayas a un baile
no desprecies a los hombres.

Su mamá se lo decía
Ya viste, hijita querida,
Por andar de pizpireta
Te había de costar la vida.
Rosita ya está en el cielo
Dando la cuenta y creador
Hipólito está en la cárcel
Haciendo su declaración.

Echó mano a la bragueta
Y una pistola sacó
Y a la pobre de Rosita
De un tiro se la injertó
De un tiro se la injertó

Rosita ya tiene pito
E Hipólito tiene chiches
Ora son hermafroditas
Y viven rete felices

Ya con eso me despido
Dándole cuenta al criador
Andrógenos somos todos
¡Viva la revolución!
APPENDIX D

ZAPATISTA REVOLUTIONARY WOMEN’S LAWS

Ley Revolucionario de Mujeres248

En su justa lucha por la liberación de nuestro pueblo, el EZLN incorpora a las mujeres en la lucha revolucionaria sin importar su raza, credo, color o filiación política, con el único requisito de hacer suyas las demandas del pueblo explotado y su compromiso a cumplir y hacer cumplir las leyes y reglamentos de la revolución. Además, tomando en cuenta la situación de la mujer trabajadora en México, se incorporan sus justas demandas de igualdad y justicia en la siguiente LEY REVOLUCIONARIA DE MUJERES:

- **Primero.** Las mujeres, sin importar su raza, credo, color o filiación política, tienen derecho a participar en la lucha revolucionaria en el lugar y grado que su voluntad y capacidad determinen.
  - **Segundo.** Las mujeres tienen derecho a trabajar y recibir un salario justo.
  - **Tercero.** Las mujeres tienen derecho a decidir el número de hijos que pueden tener y cuidar.
  - **Cuarto.** Las mujeres tienen derecho a participar en los asuntos de la comunidad y tener cargo si son elegidas libre y democráticamente.
  - **Quinto.** Las mujeres y sus hijos tienen derecho a ATENCIÓN PRIMARIA en su salud y alimentación.
  - **Sexto.** Las mujeres tienen derecho a la educación.
  - **Séptimo.** Las mujeres tienen derecho a elegir su pareja y a no ser obligadas por fuerza a contraer matrimonio.
  - **Octavo.** Ninguna mujer podrá ser golpeada o maltratada físicamente ni por familiares ni por extraños. Los delitos de intento de violación o violación serán castigados severamente.
  - **Noveno.** Las mujeres podrán ocupar cargos de dirección en la organización y tener grados militares en las fuerzas armadas revolucionarias.
  - **Décimo.** Las mujeres tendrán todos los derechos y obligaciones que señalan las leyes y reglamentos revolucionarios.

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