

OUR VOICE

In today's world, borders are entities in which time and space coexist with an intense simultaneity of flows. As a cultural category and as a political and social reality, they are entities that in and of themselves transcend national sovereignties, ethnic groups, macroeconomic variables, political traditions, etc. Their complex and at the same time fascinating cosmogony make them confront day by day an endless movement whose temporality does not accept a mathematics of their traditional timing. Additionally, they are spaces that change rapidly due to the fact that social, political and economic circulation is both vertical and horizontal; that is to say, they trace an elastic and dynamic regional geometry and produce local phenomena which are unique, to a great extent because they are a-national, a-binational or a-trinational, and even if this becomes cultural "foreignness" in which the universal and the particular dialogue but also confront each other, naturally it also means events that have diverse similarities with the sociopolitical and economic realities that are close to them. Thus, borders dialogue but also confine themselves to themselves and make use of a language that is unique to them and that they inevitably extend to their closest synods, even more when emergencies demand it of them. This is even more common in a transnationalized world like ours in which the construction of bridges toward development and survival are both rational and emotional needs. It is here where the "symbolic reality" of borders paves the way to the "real" and coldly objective reality of nations.

With globalization, the boundaries between the global and the regional blur. The national becomes part of the international; the particular is somehow incorporated into the universal; homogeneity threatens to substitute itself for—and sometimes annihilate—the universal; and sovereignties reoccupy a different conceptual space. This is how borders are submerged in times marked by national discourses and needs and become the integrating—and often disruptive—space for the inevitable interaction between two or more societies and states that design their own strategies and define their own discourses.

In the context of the period after the Cold War and 9/11, border dialogue and relations have acquired a new tone and the CISAN as an academic institution is obliged to study this new dimension. The community of borders of North America and its increasing move toward a community of North America faces the challenge of achieving optimum management of our border relationship, which, because of the crisis of the attacks in the United States, has demanded new emergency measures that we did not expect to have to implement and which Canada, for example, has already begun. While it is true that in the emergency that began then, the issues of security have subsumed our countries' permanent priorities, it is nevertheless necessary to recognize the urgent need to institutionalize arrangements in the border relationship, give it an institutionality that it does not have today (including both trade and cultural exchange as well as migration and the circulation of commodities and goods, among many other factors) with the aim of creating both a climate of prevention and of sustainability of the variables of exchange, without this meaning—though this would be impossible in any case—the elimination of the borders as spaces rich in diversity and lines of communication for the essential contents of life and human and material wealth of our three nations.

In the relationship with Canada and the United States, Mexico today has the greatest challenge. It must seek roads forward as original as they are effective for dealing with an extraordinary situation. At the same time, it is necessary to improve the forms of exchange within the environment of alternative normality and in which multi-lateralism is the guideline for establishing the priorities in bilateral relations. None of the member countries of this North American community will be able to stay on the sidelines of this situation or on the margins of the needs that demand answers and arise very swiftly. Face to face with a world that is opening more and more—although the 9/11 attacks have provoked the most aberrant and simplistic temptations of the most diverse forms of fundamentalism—the need to broaden out the options in the relationship and the negotiation is a natural result, as well as a vehicle toward a more plural and inclusive understanding among our countries. If integration is a fact, it is also a fact that it has changed significantly since both 1986 and 1994. For that reason, we consider it of great importance that foreign policies begin to be a coherent reflection both of the socio-political and economic realities of the three countries and of the objectives that we share. Since July 2, 2000, Canada and the United States witnessed the opening up of Mexican political life, which not only created new opportunities for development for Mexico but also made it possible to envision new opportunities in relations with Canada and the United States. To mention only some of the steps forward in this regard, Mexico has been the winner with the exchange of agricultural workers that we have with Canada, a program which is becoming increasingly dynamic.

This is how things are and we see that Canada increasingly understands it in the same way; multilateralism will have to be the driving force that gives institutional form to our exchange with the world and particularly with our two partners to the north. For that, it is also necessary to strengthen our commitment as a nation to offer ourselves the endogenous conditions to be able to respond to this great challenge, which implies the healing of our own judicial, political and economic institutions. We think that through valuing the as disparate as common interests and through a both consistent and responsible policy to answer to these interests, the increasing signs of opening and growing plurality will be clearly reflected. This is the only way integration among partners can be understood. And this is the only way our borders will be bridges for fertile exchange and common spaces from diversity where secure areas will be created to guarantee a reciprocity that, while it cannot be symmetrical, can go beyond geopolitical determinism and messianic voluntarism, both of which are spaces of intolerance —whether state or terrorist— that have no place in the new international and regional order that we want to build with Canada and the United States.

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The July 2000 change in Mexico's administration that brought alternating in office undoubtedly inaugurated a new way of conceiving of and acting in politics. In this context, *Voices of Mexico* dedicates its "Politics" and "Society" sections to two important topics: the relationship between political actors and the media, and human rights. Roberto Gutiérrez describes what is undoubtedly a conflictive relationship between Fox and the media during the first year of his administration; Jacqueline Peschard goes into the profound transformations caused by the transition to democracy in Mexico's main communications consortia; and Tanius Karam brings us a panorama of the conflictive relationship that existed during the 71 years of Institutional Revolutionary Party hegemony.

Two prestigious jurists and fighters for human rights have contributed to this issue: Francisco Javier Acuña presents an overview of what has happened in recent years, when there have been both advances and still-unclarified violations. Former Mexico City ombudsman Luis de la Barreda emphasizes the importance of consolidating the human rights commissions and ensuring their absolute autonomy.

Our "Economy" section consists of an article by Berenice Ramírez about the parallels between Argentina's troubled economy and Mexico's apparently solid one. Are we safe from a similar catastrophe?

"Science, Art and Culture" presents the work of Oaxaca-born painter and artisan Rubén Leyva, another example of the surprising fecundity of that state for producing extraordinary visual artists. Leonardo García Tsao has written about the most outstanding movies of the last five years, a body of work whose quality may well announce a resurgence of the industry in Mexico. Lastly, we include an article about The Lighthouse Factory of Arts and Trades in Iztapalapa, a center that shows how art is also a tool for improving the quality of life.

September 11's consequences will produce a large part of the literature and thinking in international relations in the next few years. In this issue, we have included two articles about the adjustments in the international system. In an article by myself, I look at some of the paradigms of global relations theory in light of recent phenomena like "post-bipolarity," United States' unilateralism and, of course, September 11. María Eugenia Mesta and Simone Lucatello reflect about the course of European Union and United States foreign policies since the attacks, and look at the fact that only six months later differences are beginning to emerge.

In "Canadian Issues", Mayra Eleonora Inzunza Sánchez examines the extremely varied body of work among writers of visible minorities in Canada, impossible to classify as a homogeneous whole.

"The Splendor of Mexico," dedicated once again to Querétaro, includes a contribution from Jaime Ortiz Lajous about baroque colonial architecture in its capital city. Jaime Abundis reveals the dreams and passions of Scotsman Edward James that led to the construction of a surrealist space amidst the exuberant mountain vegetation of Las Pozas, Xilitla. The Sierra Gorda Ecological Group tells us about its different productive and eco-tourism projects. Lastly, we present the Querétaro Regional Museum, of interest both for its Franciscan architecture and its collections.

We have dedicated the "In Memoriam" and "Literature" sections to joining the national and international homages to one of the greatest men of letters not only of Mexico but of the Spanish language in the last century. A lucid and generous man, master of the short story, erudite cultural promoter and versatile conversationalist, Juan José Arreola died at the end of last year. Christopher Domínguez and Homero Aridjis write about the loss that this has meant for Hispanic-American letters.

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