

## PRESENTATION

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Issue 123 of *Relaciones* opens its Thematic Section with analyses of several situations that illustrate the complex relations between history and literature, two domains that, while made up of different subjects, structures and horizons, have many elements in common. In and of itself, literature is never history for it exists only through the act of writing and that of reading. The literary text is a structured set of sentences fixed by symbols that has the capacity to evoke its own reality within a unity of system or style. The literary word enjoys significant autonomy because it need not be determined by real referents; rather, the literary text creates a fictional universe that depends exclusively upon the literary context itself. Indeed, literary discourse possesses the property to create its own reality through its message.<sup>1</sup> Hayden White deals with just this kind of problem in both his *Metahistory. The Historical Imagination in the Nineteenth-Century Europe*,<sup>2</sup> and, even moreso, in *The Historical Text as Literary Artifact*, where he examines the categories of “object”, “objective” and “reality” upon which neo-positivist historians base their scientism, thus reminding us that what historians do when writing is to employ the hermeneutical categories that exist in their milieu in order to codify the events that are the object of their attention.

In his essay *Relato, historia y ficción*, which expresses his point of view concerning the narrativity that combines the discourse of both historian and writer, Paul Ricoeur notes that “narrative phrases [even before rela-

<sup>1</sup> Roland Barthes, “El discurso de la historia, in *El susurro del lenguaje. Más allá de la palabra y la escritura*, Barcelona: Piados, 1994, p. 163.

<sup>2</sup> Mexico: FCE, first reimpression of the first Spanish edition, 2001.

ting to narrative discourse] are types of phrases that can be found in narratives of any kind, captured in ordinary language; they refer to two events that, though separated in time, describe only the first one".<sup>3</sup> The conclusion at which Ricoeur arrives is that a narrative phrase is only one of several possible descriptions of an action that we can describe; for example, as a function of its motives, intentions or goals. This leads to our thesis, which sustains the following idea: that all texts, whatever their nature may be, are influenced by the subjectivity of language. The posture adopted by a historian or writer is to be found in the terms she/he uses. Further on in the same work, Ricoeur posits that the functions of the narrative that Propp studied just comprise another set of categories on the basis of which an event can be interpreted and described: absence, prohibition, violation, recognition, liberation, fraud and complicity, to name only the first seven of the thirty-one functions that are, in fact, compound categories spanning complete notional fields.

On the other hand, literature must be considered in terms of its inseparable relation to the life of a society, founded as it is upon the historical and social factors that exercise their influence on writers. In reality, literature is a social phenomenon that consists of perceptions of reality achieved through the creation of images. With greater or lesser fidelity, literary works reflect reality in all of its complexity. It is true that a literary text functions on a synchronic plane that confers its formal, conceptual and creative richness, whether acquired or formed in its own context, through readings from the here and now. However, the literary text also has the quality of surviving on the diachronic and historical plane of the word rendered culture, thus bestowing upon it additional meaning, which accumulates over time through a succession of cultural interpretations. The reception of a literary text requires appreciation as a semiotic sign.

The intersection of a literary text with one of a historical nature is completely natural. The horizon of expectations of the former is constituted, truth be told, not only by the information that the reader has with respect to literature, but also by her/his experience in the many things that make up everyday life. The distance that exists between that which a reader

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<sup>3</sup>*Op. Cit.* 27f.

expects and that which the new aesthetic sign that is actually proposed to her/him constitutes what Jauss has called “aesthetic distance”.

The literary sign does not function mechanically. Thus, its first meaning –equivalent to Peirce’s dynamic interpretant– depends on the conditions of the interpreter. Indeed, every literary work encounters a kind of constituted hermeneutic capacity that determines the nature of its reception. Hence, in the context of the theory and aesthetics of reception this term does not refer simply to a neutral action of reception but, rather, to an act of receiving that is conditioned by the “horizon of expectations” that functions as recipient in accordance with the old maxim of scholastic philosophy: *quidquid recipitur ad modum recipientis recipitur*. Literary texts are products of the human spirit, written at unique, numinous moments, magical instants that occasionally break through the grayness and routine of daily life: moments that can only be grasped through processes of symbolization very much like those that give rise to myth. It is with this complex and fascinating world of trails that issue 123 of *Relaciones* is concerned.

The Thematic section includes three articles: “In Search of a Method: The Writing of History in Mexico, 1853-1889” by Edgar Iván Espinosa Martínez, “*Pensativa* by Jesús Goytortúa Santos: Image and Representation of the Mexican Woman in Novels on the *Cristero* Rebellion”, and Ana Cristina Ramírez Barreto’s “Eréndiras of Legend and Flesh-and-Blood”. The first of these explores the question of the writing of history in which literary values, resources and perspectives come into play. The author of this essay not only bases his reflections on German philosophical and literary romanticism, but also shows that in the milieu of contemporary Mexican historiography proposals were presented with an eye to resolving such problems as ‘reinventing’ the nation as a means of sustaining the project of a strong state through an ideological perspective, the need to ‘convert’ Mexicans into citizens of the epoch on the basis of understanding certain events and personages, and the decision to ‘distinguish’ history from literary fiction and philosophical speculation. All these kinds of techniques for writing history are discursive and cut across the discourse between historians and literature.

The reason provided by Espinosa Martínez is that when the romantic literary movement or school spread into latitudes like that of Mexico

it usually took a form of expression that sought to exalt values and sentiments. One of the most oft emphasized of those exaltations concerned the means of representing national experiences. With respect to the world of romanticism, it could be said that there prevailed basic characteristics such as optimism (a conviction for rationality and perfection), providentialism (conserving and perpetuating certain experiences from the past) and traditionalism (appealing to and exalting the fundamental institutions according to traditional elements). In summary, what interested the romantics was rescuing essence and spirit, those unique elements that distinguish a people, a nation, or a state.

In effect, Espinosa Martínez' essay, "*En busca de un método...*", details how a new form of appropriating and representing the past emerged in Mexico in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. To this end, he describes the cultural and political milieu that existed in that epoch, emphasizing the tendencies and currents of thought (especially romanticism and scientism) that influenced the writing of history proposed by the most outstanding public figures of the time. This set the stage for the study of the past from a national perspective (representing Mexicans), with a liberal spirit (the State as guide) and scientific aspirations (a linear, documentary style of history).

According to this author, with the birth of the independence movement in Mexico and the [fervor of] the decades that followed, the romantic canon and the atmosphere associated with it would be complemented by the political aspirations, ideological posturing and customs of the time. The poetry of José María Heredia (1903-1839) is held up as the starting point of that tendency which came to displace neo-classicism. Thus, it was in the decades of 1830 to 1850, that that influence arrived and made itself felt so strongly in the country, especially through the Spanish legacy, on the basis of which the field of literature developed postulates designed to represent a 'Mexicanness'. That generation of liberal professionals, the author writes, favored a romanticism that attempted to rescue and exalt the national; reason for which it turned to the postulates of romanticism. With respect to methodology, meanwhile, this was rather more implicit and inspired in the scientism of the time, and included aspects like the 'validity' of historical knowledge, which could be assured by using written records, especially those of an

official nature. Thanks to the use of such sources as its principal and indisputable foundation, together with a romantic style of writing, there emerged a view of historical processes that could be described in general terms as evolutionary and linear.

The second article, "*Pensativa* by Jesús Goytortúa Santos...", penned by Omayda Naranjo Tamayo, explores the representation of women in the late 1920s; *i.e.*, in the context of the Mexican Revolution. The essay, based on the novel *Pensativa* by Jesús Goytortúa Santos, presents a study that highlights the presence of women in history by examining one particular genre of literature from an epoch in which the conception of the role of women in the family and society was that they should be constrained exclusively to the domestic sphere. In contrast, this essay emphasizes the significant, indeed hugely important, contribution of women by examining the image that emerges from their participation in the first *Cristero* rebellion (1926-1929).

This contribution takes as its starting point the common assumption that a literary text is a structured set of sentences fixed in symbols that has the ability to create and evoke its own reality through its systematic or stylistic unity. The author sustains the generalized conviction that when used accurately language can deal with even the most unpleasant topics and also lead us to admire conclusions that are diametrically opposed to our personal conception of the world. The language forms we call scientific and literary are the two endpoints of a continuum that contains many intermediate expressions: scientific language is monosemic and seeks, primarily, intellectual clarity and logic, while literary language is polysemic (connotative) and goes beyond the mere intellectual content it expresses to encapsulate an informative nucleus impregnated with elements of emotion and volition. What characterizes literary language is *intensification*: the addition of a special expressive, affective or aesthetic emphasis to the information transmitted by the linguistic structure, but without altering it. Literature emerges from the writer's deepest yearning to communicate and search: literature is born of a profound impulse towards communion that writers express through literary rhythm and the other mechanisms of expression that literature provides. We believe, with Alfonso Reyes, that literature is the most complete expression of humankind. While all other forms of expression deal with

man as a specialist in some particular activity, it is only literature that reveals man as man, with no distinctions or judgments.

The third article of the Thematic Section, entitled "Eréndiras of Legend and Flesh-and-Blood", by Ana Cristina Ramírez Barreto, introduces the figure of Eréndira, a woman from P'urhépecha legend who fought the Spanish conquest by learning to ride on horseback. But she also explains that it is a common name for women in the state of Michoacán. In addition to describing the legend and its constitutive elements, the essay discusses the significance of the name Eréndira due to its links to the apogee of *Cardenismo*, and presents the results of Ramírez Barreto's search for real Eréndiras, the "flesh-and-blood" women she refers to in the title. The article puts the reader in contact with another type of writing, one that involves the exceptional, fantasy world of myth and legend, two of the oldest forms of literature associated with a time when the world was still symbolized by gods and heroes. While myth is a spontaneous product of the cultural formalization of the human world, as are art, science and social uses, legend maintains strong links to the beliefs of a people. It does not concern only their religiosity, but includes that marvelous system of communication we call culture.

In transcription and with a presentation by Zulema Trejo, the document we offer on this occasion deals with the topic of "The Liberal Party of Sonora and Ignacio Pesqueira's Candidature for Governor". After outlining the political circumstances, relationships, and masks donned by liberals and conservatives, this contribution to the Documents Section presents a series of texts that shed light on the existence of a liberal club in the state of Sonora that appeared around 1861, the year in which General Pesqueira was reelected for the first time as the governor of that state. Why are these documents important? Because they prove the existence of an organization that provided support for the governor, that explicitly identified itself as liberal, and that assumed the liberal ideas that were in vogue at that time.

The General Section begins with an article by Agustín Jacinto Zavala entitled "The Idea of 'Japanese Science' and the Late Philosophy of Nishida Kitarô", which shows that as a result of what Nishida characterized as the awakening of self-awareness among the Japanese people in the decade of the 1930s—that is, the perception that they constituted a histo-

rically differentiated unit– served to exacerbate that nation’s cultural nationalism and emphasize the peculiarity of Japanese culture. Among the elements highlighted in that period was the idea of the existence of a “Japanese science”. This article seeks to elucidate how the Japanese philosopher Nishida Kitarô (1870-1945) dealt with the issue of a Japanese science from the perspective of his philosophical thought. To this end, the author presents a brief exposition of the principal aspects of Nishida’s critique of that idea, one that was somewhat exaggerated, even for the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This also provides a first approach to how Nishida conceived of science.

The second article in this section is by Luis Granados Campos and carries the title “Cultural Ecology: Metamorphosis of a Holometabolous Concept”. Adopting a critical view of the central postulates of cultural ecology, the author points out that the way in which a people stretches out its hand towards nature so as to come into contact with her is determined by social relations, an element that is both constitutive and cohesive of human sociality: society and its culture. In this way, Granados Campos outlines and proposes a category of socio-ecological analysis that makes it possible to understand the operation of the society-nature complex.

This issue of *Relaciones* closes with the essay “Tourism, Capitalism and the Production of the Exotic: A Critical Perspective on the Study of the Commoditization of Space and Culture”, by Ángeles A. López Santillán and Gustavo Marín Guardado. The authors present a critical review of the main topics and discussions in tourism studies, based on a confluence of disciplines like anthropology, sociology and geography, in order to elucidate the evolution of nodal theoretical concepts and focuses in the contemporary discussion. In so doing, they suggest lines of analysis that may significantly enrich debates in the context of modern societies in relation to global dynamics. More than a ‘state of the question’, López Santillán and Marín Guardado discuss orientations that approach tourism as a process of commodity production intended for consumption by tourists.