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1910 Mexico City: Space and Nation in the City of the *Centenario**

MAURICIO TENORIO TRILLO

Abstract. The article focuses on the 1910 centennial celebration of Mexico's war of independence in Mexico City in order to examine the notions of modernity, cosmopolitanism and nationalism that were held by the Porfirian elite. The article first maps the celebration and thus identifies an ideal city – of comfort, modernity, style, and patriotism – that the Porfirian elite created from the 1880s to the 1910s within Mexico City. Second, it takes tours around the ideal city in order to examine how ideal views of social order, material and cultural progress, nation-building and cosmopolitanism acquired spatial and graphic expressions in the city.

1910 is a year of weighty historical connotations. It is the year, according to Virginia Woolf's well-known comment, in which 'human character changed',¹ and it is also the year of the Mexican revolution. This article seeks to understand the nature – and the particular Mexican version – of the culture that in 1910 was disappearing but still feeding new cultural forms. To do so, I consider Mexico's 1910 less as the year of the Revolution than as the year of the *Centenario*.

Specifically, I deal with the centennial celebration of Mexico's independence in 1910 and its materialisation in Mexico City. But what I aim to examine are the ideal views with which the *Centenario* was conceived. These views, though they never had a concrete realisation, furnished the parameters within which social, political, cultural and economic realities were discussed. I map this celebration not in order simply to confront false and true cultural geographies of Mexico City. Rather, my purpose is to demarcate how some cultural axioms – i.e. nation, state, cosmopolitanism, national culture and national history – were envisaged at a specific historical moment.

* A conversation with Peter Stansky provided the original inspiration for this article. I am also very grateful for the insightful comments and help of Pat McNamara, Richard Warren, Jean Meyer, Barbara Tenenbaum, Jesús Velasco, Víctor Arriaga and an anonymous referee. Thomas F. Reese and Carol McMichael Reese kindly shared with me their unpublished paper 'Revolutionary Urban Legacies: Porfirio Díaz's Celebration of the Centennial of Mexican Independence in 1910'.

¹ Virginia Woolf, 'Mr. Bennet and Mrs Brown' (1924), reprinted in *Collected Essays*, vol. 1 (London, 1966), p. 320.

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El Centenario: a postcard

1910 saw the centennial anniversary of the beginning of Mexico's independence war. As such, the year was consciously planned to be the apotheosis of a nationalist consciousness; it was meant to be the climax of an era.² In many ways, it was. On the one hand, it constituted a testimony to the political and economic success of a regime. On the other, the *Centenario* documented Mexico's achievement of two supreme ideals: progress and modernity.

As early as 1907, the Porfirian government established the *Comisión Nacional del Centenario*, which was in charge of staging the luxurious and extravagant commemoration of the centennial year. From 1907 to 1910, this commission received thousands of proposals for different ways to honour the national past. A plethora of projects was proposed: changes in the names of streets, mountains, avenues; airplane shows, monuments, parks, changes in the national flag, anthem and symbols; freedom for political prisoners and a scheme for young daughters of the elite to educate their *criadas*.³ The *Comisión Nacional* appointed subcommissions to evaluate such proposals, and those made by distinguished members of the elite were often accepted. Accordingly, September (the month in which Mexico's war of independence began in 1810) witnessed thirty days of inaugurations of monuments, official buildings, institutions and streets;

² See the 'Programa definitivo de las ceremonias y fiestas oficiales para la celebración del Primer Centenario de la Independencia en la Ciudad de México (acordado el 28 de Julio de 1910)'; see also the same document but annotated at the margins by the Ministry of Foreign Relations, explaining special diplomatic events and type of formalities to follow (Archivo Histórico Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Tlatelolco, Mexico City – hence SRE, Le. 101). Genaro García, Nemesio García Naranjo, Alfonso Teja Zabre, Rubén Valenti, Manuel H. San Juan, Ignacio B. del Castillo were appointed official historians of the celebration, see García's *Crónica Oficial de las Fiestas del Centenario de la Independencia de México* (Mexico, 1911); see also E. Barros, *Album gráfico de la república mexicana* (Mexico, 1910). Regarding this book and the propaganda efforts of the Porfirian regime during the centennial celebration, see Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City: Secretaría de Gobernación, Porfiriato, Centenario – hence AGN GOB 909-3-1. American and French newspapers offered their pages for Mexican propaganda (AGN GOB 920-3-1). My main sources of data are the AGN, Ramo Gobernación, SCOP Obras Públicas and the Archivo del Ayuntamiento. However, the Genaro García collection at the Benson Library, UT–Austin, includes an impressive collection of pamphlets, paraphernalia and photographs of the centenary. About this collection, see Thomas F. Reese and Carol McMichael Reese, 'Revolutionary Urban Legacies'. The Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Relation includes rich information on the invitation and correspondence with invited foreign missions. For the general cost of the many events of the commemorations, see approvals by Limantour in AGN GOB 910-2-5. The estimated total budget was 317,000 pesos.

³ The last proposal was submitted by the little girl María de la Luz Islas, to whom Casarín, director of the centennial commission, responded. June 1910, AGN GOB 910-3-1.

days filled with countless speeches, parties, cocktails, receptions and dancing fiestas.⁴ A national fund was created to collect the contributions of businessmen, financiers, professional organisations and mutualist societies.⁵ By September of 1910 Mexico City had acquired visible and lasting symbols of nation, progress and modernity, notions that the *Centenario* had actualised and intermingled.

From 1 to 13 September Mexico City saw the inaugurations of a new modern Mental Hospital; a popular Hygiene Exhibition; an exhibition of Spanish art and industry, of Japanese products, and of avant garde Mexican art; a monument to Alexander von Humboldt at the National Library; an *Estación sismológica*; a new Theatre in the *Escuela Nacional Preparatoria*; two primary schools in the Plaza de Villamil; a new building for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; a new school for women teachers (*Escuela Normal de Maestras*); a new school for men teachers (*Escuela Normal de Maestros*); and a new building for the Ministry of Defence. This in addition to such events as laying the foundation stones of the planned National Penitentiary in San Jerónimo Atlixco (Calzada de la Coyuya). In addition, there were opening sessions of such congresses as the 17th International Congress of Americanists, the 4th National Medical Congress, and the *Congreso Pedagógico de Instrucción Primaria*. Yet these were only the first 13 days of September.

On 16 September 1810 Father Miguel Hidalgo had begun the rebellion that led to independence. Consequently, days 14, 15 and 16 became the apotheosis of the entire celebration. On the 14th, the *Gran Procesión Cívica formada por todos los elementos de la sociedad mexicana* paraded from the Alameda to the Cathedral, depositing flowers at the graves of the national heroes, and then marching to the National Palace. On the 15th, as in a good dramatic play, the theatrical tension rose with the *Gran Desfile Histórico*: the entire history of the nation on foot, episode after episode; this was a march of representations of the stages of Mexico's patriotic history as understood by the official ideologues of the Porfiriato. In effect, these were walking chapters of an official history that marched over the chapters of yet another history recorded in the city itself. Accordingly, the parade traversed the chapters of the city as a history textbook – it went from the Plaza de la Reforma, along the Avenida Juárez and finally to the Plaza de la Constitución. That evening, a number of parties and receptions took place; fireworks illuminated the skies of the city and at eleven o'clock at night, Porfirio Díaz rang the bell of independence at the Zócalo, in the midst of a popular gathering. For aristocratic observers, 'la noche del grito' was a quasi-tourist portrait of Mexico's popular fiestas and joy.

⁴ Many of these *Iniciativas* can be found in AGN GOB Centenario.

⁵ For examples, see AGN GOB 910-3-1 (for architects and merchants).

This was the exotic Mexico that intrigued the world – an exoticism that did not compromise Mexico's cosmopolitanism but rather made it distinctive: guitars, enchiladas, *pulque*... But that night also saw undesired and unplanned popular discontent.⁶

16 September, in turn, was the official day of commemoration of Independence and the long-planned monument *El Ángel de la Independencia* was inaugurated in the Paseo de la Reforma. A military parade went from the Paseo de la Reforma to the National Palace, and at night, luxurious dancing parties took place in various official buildings.

The celebrations continued until the end of the month. During this time, a public park was inaugurated, in a workers' neighbourhood (Balbuena) as well as a grand monument to Juárez in the Alameda; a statue of San Jorge (donated by the Italian government), in addition to a gunpowder factory in Santa Fe; the hydraulic works of Mexico City; the National University; a livestock exhibition at Coyoacán; the *Gran Canal del Desagüe*; and an extension of the national penitentiary. Furthermore, there were ceremonies to honour the beginning of construction of the planned enormous new Palacio Legislativo, and of a monument to Pasteur. Extravagant celebrations commemorated Spain's and France's diplomatic courtesies: the former returned the personal belongings of the national hero, José María Morelos; in turn, France returned the Keys to Mexico City – keys that had, presumably, been stolen by the French invaders (1862) (although, as Federico Gamboa pointed out, Mexico City never had an entrance let alone a key). Finally, there was the great Apotheosis of the Caudillos and Soldiers of the War of Independence: a giant altar constructed at the main patio of the National Palace to honour these heroes, to which the entire government, foreign missions and the elite as a whole paid their respects. Never before had the city been so radically and profusely embellished and transformed in such a short span of time. The centenary was a fleeting show, but it made a lasting mark on the city and thus it can be seen as a segment of long-lasting world views.

Mapping the celebration

In 1910 various ideal views of the city overlapped in a limited space and time: the capital city of a hundred-year-old nation that had struggled arduously for political stability, economic development and overall modernisation. First, the ideal view of modernity, understood as harmonious and peaceful economic development, progress and science.

⁶ Federico Gamboa, for instance, described the popular celebrations but also the Maderista protests that took place that night, and how he himself concealed those expressions of opposition from the attention of foreign observers. Federico Gamboa, *Mi diario. Mucho de mi vida y algo de la de otros*, segunda serie, vol. II (Mexico, 1938), pp. 181–93.

The best embodiment of this ideal was the modern city – which contained the proofs of the nation's pedigree: economic progress and cultural greatness, but which was also sanitary, comfortable and beautiful. Second, the ideal of a long-sought coherent and unified nationality; that is, the consolidation of a modern nation-state. The particular epitome of such an ideal view was the capital city understood as a textbook of a civic religion; a city of monuments and well-defined public and private spaces. Finally, the modern ideal view, inseparable from the other two, of a cosmopolitan style. The quintessential incarnation of this ideal of cosmopolitanism was Paris itself.

To examine these ideals, I undertake tours around the city of the *Centenario*. In doing so, I seek to reconstruct how ideally it was viewed and planned for the future. The first tour surveys the streets, avenues and neighbourhoods of celebration. A second journey involves walking the streets and visiting the monuments which were part of the national history textbook. This last tour also takes us to examine the history that supported the Porfirian ideal city.

Tour 1

Since the 1880s, Mexico City's urban planning and sanitary reforms had been linked to plans for the eventual centennial celebration. The economic, symbolic and political interests that supported urban transformation were associated with the centennial celebration in two respects: on the one hand, through the long-standing idea of staging a world's fair in Mexico City to celebrate the centennial; on the other hand, by using the organisation of the *Centenario* to achieve a fundamental acceleration in the development of an ideal city within the actual city.

As when the USA celebrated the centennial of American Independence, or as Paris did to commemorate the centenary of the French Revolution, in Mexico the idea took root of celebrating the *Centenario* with a world's fair staged in Mexico City.⁷ This was but a natural conclusion for all good modern nations and cities; the project was debated throughout the Porfirian period, though it never materialised. World's fairs were expensive, and it was one thing to create an image picture of Mexico to be exhibited at fairs attended by all the world, and another to make the world come to an old city full of problems. Nonetheless, these unmaterialised projects expressed ideas about how the city ought to be transformed to favour modern urban planning, sanitation reforms, nationalist symbolism and, of course, the elite's economic interests.

As early as 1889 Antonio A. De Medina y Ormaechea, founder of the

⁷ Part of this analysis is developed in Mauricio Tenorio, *Mexico at World's Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation* (Berkeley, CA, forthcoming 1996).

Sociedad Mexicana de Consumo, conceived the idea of a universal exhibition in Mexico for the year 1910. Inspired by the 1889 Paris exhibition, he claimed that, like France, Mexico ought to celebrate the centennial anniversary of its major historical event, i.e. its independence, with the first Mexican universal exhibition.⁸ Medina y Ormaechea argued that a Mexican world's fair would help to educate and modernise Indians, who 'se conforman con una camisa y un calzón de manta para cubrir sus carnes, con unos guaraches para calzar sus pies ... con una cazuela de chile, frijoles y tortillas y una medida de pulque'. A Mexico City world's fair would also serve to show that Mexico had achieved international standards of comfort, sanitation and general progress. Armed with these arguments, Medina y Ormaechea persisted in advocating his project for the rest of the century, but it was never realised.⁹

From the 1890s to the 1910s, the idea of a universal exposition in Mexico City to celebrate Mexico's centennial independence re-emerged with various sponsorships. The first such occasion was in the 1890s. By this date, companies – often funded by North American capital – that specialised in the management and organisation of world's fairs, came together with Mexican and foreign private interests involved in Mexico City's profitable urban development, to envision a Mexican fair. For instance, a specialist at organising European exhibitions, René de Cornely, interested a group of Mexican politicians and industrialists in staging an international exhibition from September 1895 to April 1896 in Mexico City. This exhibition was publicised and indeed arranged almost to the last detail.¹⁰ The former hacienda of Anzures, near the Paseo de la Reforma and Chapultepec Park, owned by the wealthy speculator Salvador Malo, was the proposed location for the fair.¹¹ Indeed, a Mexican, Ignacio Bejarano, served as front for an international concern involved with

⁸ *El Faro*, 19 March 1889. Reprinted by the author in *Iniciativa para celebrar el Primer Centenario de la Independencia de México con una Exposición Universal* (Mexico, 1893), pp. 15–19, 25–51. Medina y Ormaechea continued pushing for the celebration of such a world's fair in Mexico City, and printed the pamphlet *La Exposición Universal del Primer Centenario Mexicano* (Mexico, 1894).

⁹ By 1900, *El Diario del Hogar* was advocating Medina's idea, but on 5 May it announced the death of Antonio Medina y Ormaechea.

¹⁰ *Gran Exposición Internacional de México que se abrirá el día 15 de septiembre de 1895 y que se clausurará el día 3 de abril de 1896* (Mexico, 1894), pp. 3–10.

¹¹ Salvador Malo was in fact one of the most important urban developers of the time. He developed the Hacienda de la Teja, the Hacienda de Anzures, and the Hacienda de la Castañeda. He was a member of The Mexico City Improvement Company, and an admirer of, and participant in, world's fairs and modern urban planning. In fact, he proposed a Barcelona-like *Ensache* for Mexico City, to gentrify the grounds surrounding the Paseo de la Reforma. In this regard, the most complete study of the subject is Jorge H. Jiménez Muñoz, *La traza del poder. Historia de la política y los negocios urbanos en el Distrito Federal* (Mexico, 1993); a reproduction of Malo's *Ensache* for Mexico City can be found in Fernando Benítez, *La Ciudad de México* (Mexico, 1984), vol. 6 (there is no reference on the original location of the map).

Mexico City real estate. In 1896, Bejarano informed Porfirio Díaz that the Land Company of New York had become the Mexican National Exposition and Land Company.¹² As such, it had bought all the Anzures lands. Subsequently, friction developed between the company and the Mexican government.¹³ There the matter rested – yet another project for a Mexican world's fair that never materialised. The same occurred with the proposal by Fernando Pimentel y Fagoaga of the Banco Central Mexicano in 1908. In *The Mexican Financier*, Pimentel y Fagoaga offered to collect two to three million pesos among the Mexican financiers by coining 500 commemorative coins. With this he proposed to organise a major world's fair around El Castillo de Chapultepec and on the grounds on both sides of El Paseo de la Reforma. The commission for the centenary responded negatively, arguing lack of time to organise such a fair.¹⁴

Another attempt to organise an exhibition led to the construction of the Mexican Crystal Palace. In 1895, the Compañía Mexicana de Exposiciones constructed a steel and crystal structure in Germany to serve as the Mexican Palace for permanent exhibitions in Mexico City. However, by 1903 the company was dissolved, and one of its wealthiest investors, José Landero y Cos, became the owner of the building. In 1910, the government decided to acquire the building and assembled it at the site known as El Chopo at Santa María la Ribera. The Mexican Crystal Palace was then used to house the Japanese Exhibition during the centennial celebration, and afterwards became the National Museum of Natural History.¹⁵ In this way, after the many attempts to celebrate the centennial anniversary of independence with a world's fair, at last a Crystal Palace à la *Mexicain* became part of the celebration.

Nevertheless, what these planned fairs included was the notion of developing the ideal city along the spinal column of the Paseo de la Reforma. Every plan involved the grounds surrounding the Paseo de la Reforma (whether at Chapultepec or at Anzures). This was but an echo of the process of urbanisation that Mexico City underwent beginning in 1890. The old colonial city was abandoned by the elite who moved to the

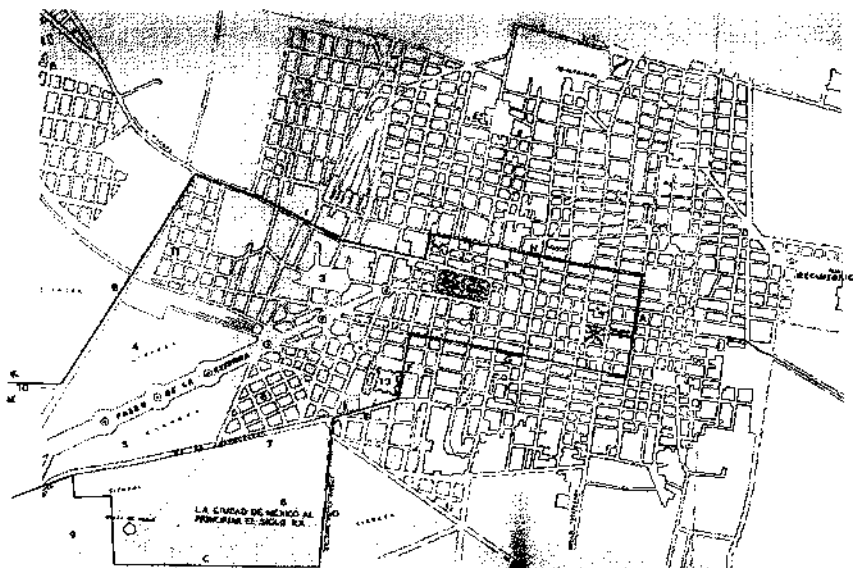
¹² *Agreement made between Mr. John R. Dos Passos, as legal representative of the Mexican National Exposition and Land Company, and Vicomte R. de Cornely, in San Francisco, México*, 22 April 1896. See AGN, Ramo Fomento, Exposiciones Internacionales – hence EXP. Box 99, Exp. 22.

¹³ Mexico. Secretaría de Fomento, *Memoria de la Secretaría de Fomento, 1897–1900* (Mexico, 1908).
¹⁴ AGN GOB. 909-3-1.

¹⁵ The data regarding the building known today as El Museo del Chopo were furnished to me by the Department of Architecture at the Museo Nacional de la Arquitectura, at El Palacio de Bellas Artes. They possess data and pictures of the building until the 1960s, when it was abandoned after the museum of Natural History was moved to Chapultepec. Later, it was remodelled by the National University, and still stands as one of the university's exhibition sites.

new suburbs growing to the west of the city. In fact, the entire *Centenario* was an episode in the development of this ideal city.

One can clearly distinguish the borders of the ideal city – from the inside out – by mapping the celebration. Or, one could delimit the ideal city from the outside in: for instance, by following the geographical limits established by the Consejo Superior de Salubridad for the distribution and consumption of pulque in Mexico City.¹⁶ The ideal city was a hybrid



Colonias and major sites

- 1 Zócalo
- 2 Alameda
- 3 Palacio Legislativo
- 4 Colonia Cuauhtémoc
- 5 Colonia Juárez
- 6 and 7 Colonia Roma (one section completed, one under construction in 1910)
- 8 Colonia Condesa (largely under construction in 1910)
- 9 Colonia Escandón (workers *Barrio*)
- 10 Haciendas de los Morales y Anzures
- 11 Colonia San Rafael
- 12 Ciudadela

Approximate Edges

- A Correo Mayor-Indio Triste
- B Calzada Verónica
- C Río de la Piedad
- D Calzada de la Piedad
- E Arcos de Belén
- F Avenida Balderas
- G Various blocks with different street names.
A parallel line to Avenida Juárez, approximately four blocks south of La Alameda
- H Various blocks with different street names.
A parallel line to Avenida Juárez, approximately three blocks north from La Alameda
- I Rivera de San Cosme

Map 1. The ideal city of the *Centenario*.

¹⁶ In this regard, see Luis G. Ortiz, *Prontuario ... de acuerdos, bandos, circulares, decretos, leyes, reglamentos y demás disposiciones vigentes de la Secretaría de Gobernación y sus despachos* (Mexico, 1980-10). This document can be found in Archivo Histórico, Secretaría de Salubridad y Asistencia, Mexico City – hence SSA, Salud Pública, Impresos, and it includes those aspects related to sanitation. Another interesting contrast for the map of the ideal city is the mapping of prostitution in Porfirian Mexico City. In this regard see the insightful, though preliminary, maps and argument of I. Delgado Jordá,

model derived from the ancient colonial Spanish urban tradition,¹⁷ combined with the influence of nineteenth-century European urban planning.¹⁸ Hence, the ancient (political, cultural and geographical) centre was extended through main avenues that linked the new comfortable modern suburbs with the old city. During the centennial celebration, all the monuments, events and parades appeared within (and were part of the making of) this ideal city.

Beginning in the 1880s, Mexico City experienced a selective and pragmatic urban transformation in part inspired by that made in Paris by Georges-Eugène Haussmann, as well as in the British and American versions of garden cities. Thus, avenues were developed on the model of the Champs Elysées, and suburbs that combined urban comfort with the beauty and health of gardens grew to the west of the city.¹⁹ There, residences at the edges of Reforma were required to keep eight metres of garden on the front façade.²⁰

Buenos Aires, which also experienced a centennial celebration in 1910, is a good parallel. It underwent a major Haussmann-like transformation, and, like Mexico City, experienced its first radical re-shaping from the 1880s to 1910s. In both cities the elites moved out from their traditional setting to the *Casa Quinta* (Buenos Aires) or to new elegant *Colonias* (Mexico City).²¹ Public space was reshaped and re-segregated in order to accommodate the growing population of foreign immigrants, in Buenos Aires, and of workers and internal immigrants in Mexico City. In addition, public space was reshaped according to new cosmopolitan

'Prostitución, sífilis y moralidad sexual en la ciudad de México a fines del siglo XIX', unpubl. Tesis de Licenciatura, Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Antropología Social, México 1993.

¹⁷ For the cultural and urbanist analysis of this tradition, see Santiago Quesada, *La ciudad en la cultura hispana de la Edad Moderna* (Barcelona, 1992).

¹⁸ See Jorge Hardoy, 'Theory and Practice of Urban Planning in Europe, 1850-1930: Its Transfer to Latin America', in J. Hardoy and R. Morse (editors), *Rethinking the Latin American City* (Baltimore, 1992), pp. 20-49. For Mexico, see Jérôme Monnet, *La ville et son double. Images et usages du centre: La parabole de Mexico* (Paris, 1993), pp. 19-36.

¹⁹ Regarding the development of the *Paseo* following the style of the Champs Elysées, see Salavador Novo, *Los Paseos de la Ciudad de México* (Mexico, 1980). See also Barbara Tenenbaum, 'Streetwise History - The Paseo de la Reforma and the Porfirian State', unpubl. manuscript, p. 5.

²⁰ See *Archivo Histórico del Ayuntamiento*, 3583, Exp. 17, 1889-1993.

²¹ In this regard, see what John Lear calls 'segregation of wealth', Ch. 3, 'Space and Class in the Centennial Capital', in John Lear, 'Workers, Vecinos, and Citizens: The Revolution in Mexico City, 1909-1917', unpubl. PhD Diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1993, especially pp. 106 and ff. For a summary of this phenomenon in European cities, see Michael Wagenaar, 'Conquest of the Center or Flight to the Suburbs? Divergent Metropolitan Strategies in Europe, 1850-1914', *Journal of Urban History*, vol. 19, no. 1 (November 1992), pp. 60-83.

fashions – required format for all modern capital cities.²² Therefore, in Buenos Aires ‘se abandona la vieja ciudad y se recrea París’,²³ in Mexico ‘la ciudad multiplica prodigiosamente el número de sus barrios modernos... las clases acomodadas han construido una verdadera ciudad de atractivos chalets y residencias suntuosas al poniente de la población’.²⁴

In Mexico, most of the planned workers’ *barrios* and wealthy neighbourhoods were developed in the 1900s.²⁵ To the north-east such *barrios* as Santa María and Guerrero housed middle-class workers and artisans and the newly developed *colonias* Morelos, La Bolsa, Díaz de León, Rastro, Maza and Valle Gómez were Mexican versions of proletarian quarters.²⁶ For their part, Indian communities remained on neglected and impoverished sites at the edges of the city.²⁷ In contrast, the west was developed with two huge projects for the growing urban middle class, the *colonias* San Rafael and Limantour. Finally, during the 1900s the south-west became the city of wealth, style and power with such *colonias* as Juárez, Cuauhtémoc, Roma and Condesa. These last *colonias* were connected to the traditional city through the Paseo de la Reforma, Avenida Juárez, and such fashionable streets as San Francisco. In turn, Cinco de Mayo linked the old city to the not so new but still elegant San Cosme. Electrification and modern street planning accompanied these new urban developments.²⁸ These transformations followed the pace of

²² For Buenos Aires, see the various essays included in José Luis Romero and Luis Alberto Romero, *Buenos Aires, historia de cuatro siglos*, vol. I (Buenos Aires, 1983), especially James R. Scobie and Aurora Ravina de Luzzi, ‘El centro, los barrios y los suburbios’, and Francisco J. Bullrich, ‘La arquitectura: el eclecticismo’; for the transformation of Buenos Aires during the 1910 centenary of Argentina’s independence, see Jorge Hardoy and Margarita Gutman, *Buenos Aires* (Madrid, 1992), pp. 113–62. For Mexico, see Hira de Gortari and Regina Hernández, *La ciudad de México y el Distrito Federal. Una historia compartida* (Mexico, 1988); María Dolores Morales, ‘La expansión de la Ciudad de México en el siglo XIX. El caso de los fraccionamientos’, *Investigaciones sobre la historia de la Ciudad de México*, vol. I (Mexico, 1974); the various essays and maps included in Gustavo de la Garza (ed.), *Atlas de la Ciudad de México* (Mexico, 1987); Jorge H. Jiménez Muñoz, *La traza del poder*; Hira de Gortari, ‘¿Un modelo de urbanización? La ciudad de México de finales del Siglo XIX’, *Secuencia*, no. 8 (1987); Erika Barra Stoppa, *La expansión de la ciudad de México y los conflictos urbanos (1900–1930)* (Mexico, 1982).

²³ Francisco J. Bullrich, ‘La arquitectura: el eclecticismo’, in Romero and Romero, *Buenos Aires*, vol. 1, pp. 173–200. ²⁴ Barros, *Album gráfico*, p. 11.

²⁵ Jiménez Muñoz presents the most complete panorama of *colonias*: Jiménez Muñoz, *La traza del poder*.

²⁶ See *Ibid.*; and María Dolores Morales, ‘La Expansión de la Ciudad de México’; for the workers’ *barrios* see John Lear, ‘Workers, Vecinos and Citizens’, pp. 91–143.

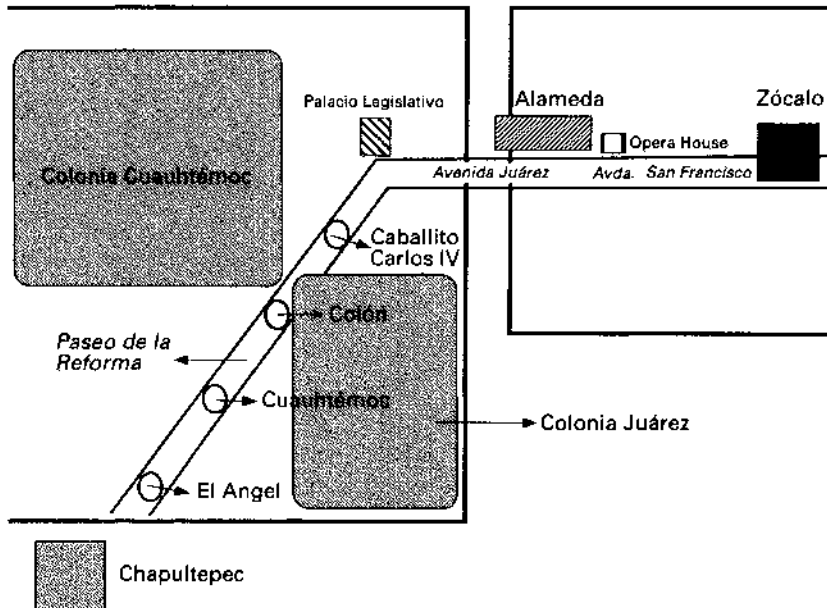
²⁷ See Andrés Lira, *Comunidades indígenas frente a la ciudad de México* (Mexico, 1983).

²⁸ See Carlos Sierra, *Historia de los transportes eléctricos de México* (Mexico, 1976); Manuel Vidrio, ‘Sistemas de transporte y expansión urbana: los tranvías’, in A. Moreno Toscano (ed.), *Ciudad de México. Ensayo de construcción de una historia* (Mexico, 1978), pp. 201–17.

consolidation of a relatively authoritarian and centralist national administration, which has proved to be a necessary component of this type of urban changes in Latin American and European cities as well.²⁹

The *Centenario* could be seen as the final touch in the demarcation of the ideal city conceived by the Porfirian élite. This ideal encompassed the Zócalo and its surroundings, ran west to the Alameda and then along the Paseo de la Reforma as far as Chapultepec. On the south side of Reforma, the ideal city ended at the Rfo de la Piedad, and that border went from there to Niño Perdido and back to downtown. On the north side, the limit blurred into haciendas and countryside (especially Anzures and Los Morales)³⁰ (see Map 1).

During the *Centenario*, the streets and avenues around the Paseo de la Reforma were embellished with commemorative posters, electric lights, flowers, medallions and the national colours – white, red and green.³¹ The



Map 1. From the new city to the old city.

²⁹ For the relation between authoritarian and centralist government and inner-city interventions in Paris, Brussels, and Rome, see Michael Wagenaar, 'Conquest of the Center', pp. 63–71.

³⁰ For the clear mapping of this area, see the various maps of *colonias* and *nomenclatura* included in *Archivo Histórico del Ayuntamiento*, 4763. Especially, see the map titled 'Comisión permanente de nomenclatura de la ciudad de México, cuarteles V, VI, VII, VIII', 1908.

³¹ See AGN GOB 909-10-4-3. The document included expenses reported by Manuel Escalante in the decoration of avenues and streets such as Cinco de Mayo, San Francisco, Juárez, 16 de Septiembre. It includes descriptions of those decorations and their cost. For colour sketches of this decoration see *Archivo Histórico del Ayuntamiento*,

decoration constantly reiterated the Latin word *Pax*. The ideal city combined Haussmann-like rebuilding with garden city elements and this combination acquired an accelerated pace during the *Centenario*. In addition, the ideal city, as Lear has argued, included the project of 'ridding the centre of the poor [...] the Government wished to eliminate the presence of the poor so close to the corridors of power and wealth and feared the problems of health and morality'.³² In truth, the ideal city was developed apart from the rest of the city. By 1906 an architect clearly distinguished the existence of two cities within the city:

Entre el México oriental y occidental hay una diferencia marcadísima; aquel vetusto, triste, angosto, a menudo tortuoso y siempre sucio, con callejas insignificantes, plazuelas desiertas y anticuadas, puentes ruinosos, depósitos de agua pantosa y casas insignificantes de adobe, donde se albergan gentes miserables; éste por su parte, moderno, alegre, amplio, trazado a cordel, limpio, con calles cuidadosamente pavimentadas, parques frondosos, jardines y alamedas, pasajes en condiciones satisfactorias, y residencias confortables, elegantes, algunas del peor gusto pero ciertamente costosas, aseadas, importantes, y que llevan el sello indiscutible de influencia moderna.³³

Mexico's Haussmanns laid out avenues and boulevards, but, unlike their European counterparts, they did not have to destroy urban sectors or to relocate large inhabited zones. Instead, they displaced *campesinos* and Indian communities from the nearby haciendas. Indeed, compared to Europe, where urban reform was considered a matter of social reform and internal security, or the product of 'catastrophic change',³⁴ in Mexico it was a manner of frontier expansion. The ideal city, therefore, was conceived as a conquest not only over tradition, chaos and backwardness but also over nature. What the Porfirian elite did was to blend, on the one hand, ancient urban planning, architecture and old symbols and forms of domination, with, on the other, a new planned urban landscape and new social stratification. Therefore, the Zócalo remained the central point of departure, but the Paseo de la Reforma became the path of power, the representation of the course of the nation towards supreme order and progress: from la Plaza de la Reforma (with the statue of Carlos IV, *El Caballito*) to Columbus's monument, past Cuauhtémoc and the monument

4753, 'Postes para Avenida Juárez', 'Postes que van de la estatua de Carlos IV al Portal de Mercaderes y San Fernando'.³² J. Lear, 'Workers, Vecinos', p. 130.

³³ Architect Manuel Torres Torrija, in Francisco Trentini, *Patria. El florecimiento de México (The Prosperity of Mexico)* (Mexico, 1906), p. 64. Torres Torrija made the first report of the status of colonies in Mexico City. For that report, see Jiménez Muñoz, *La traza del poder*, pp. 24-44.

³⁴ In this regard, see the summary of M. R. G. Conzen's contributions to the study of urban change in Western Europe (as product of gradual change or catastrophic change) in Peter Larkham, 'Constraints of Urban History and Form Upon Redevelopment', *Geography*, vol. 80, no. 2 (April 1995), pp. 111-24.

of independence, arriving, finally, at the Castillo de Chapultepec (the Presidential residence)³⁵ (see Map 2). According to an organic conception of the city, other parts of the city were developed to serve as providers, storage or working complement for the ideal city.

As in Paris, parks were developed within the ideal city. Since the time of Maximilian Chapultepec had become the prime example of Mexico's modern urban gardens. The new luxurious suburbs were demonstrations of the modern combination of urban comfort and green beauty. The development of parks in zones outside the limits of the ideal city was a matter of debate concerning the sanitary, moral and regenerating aspects of nature, especially in regard to their effects on Indians and the lower classes. Throughout the 1890s and 1900s, defenders of the ecological conservation of the city spoke out, but their opinions were ignored. In fact, the workers' park at Balbuena, constructed for the *Centenario*, was one of the very few parks developed outside the ideal city.³⁶

As part of the events of the *Centenario*, Miguel Angel de Quevedo delivered a report, 'Espacios libres en el interior de las ciudades, su adaptación en plazas monumentales, en jardines, plazas con árboles o squares y terrenos de juego'.³⁷ Quevedo explained how, as director of Mexico City's public works, he sought to shift the official preference for luxurious French style gardens in favour of simple 'squares' that could accommodate trees and provide healthy recreation for the lower classes. He therefore presented a project for a garden in the populous Calzada de la Viga. No grounds were available at La Viga, but an alternative location was the 96 hectares at Balbuena, and as a result the workers' park of Balbuena was created in order to make 'nuestra querida capital como el París de América'.³⁸

Although for the current victims of Mexico City, the late twentieth-century *ville-monstre*,³⁹ a bucolic Mexico City would seem a part of a mythical past, there were in fact many forests near Mexico City, as Quevedo explained. However, deforestation meant that ample deserts

³⁵ Most of the elite resided within the limits of the new ideal city. However, since the 1870s Porfirio Díaz had owned a house in Cadena street (at the old part of the city, today Venustiano Carranza). For a detailed description of the origins and characteristics of this house, see Carlos Tello, *El exilio. Un retrato de familia* (México, 1993).

³⁶ Regarding this park, see *Archivo Histórico del Ayuntamiento, Legajo 603, Exp. 6*.

³⁷ Presented to Porfirio Díaz and Eduardo Liceaga, SSA Box 6, Exp. 33.

³⁸ *Loc. cit.* Quevedo argued that the total cost of the Balbuena park was 100,000 pesos. The park was also harmonious with the profits of high authorities. John Lear has shown that, according to workers' publications, in 1912 José Y. Limantour came into congressional investigation for having profited from construction of the park. See Lear, 'Workers, Vecinos and Citizens', p. 145.

³⁹ See Jérôme Monnet's analysis of Mexico City as the prototype postmodern metropolis; Monnet, *La ville et son double*.

extended between, for example, Mexico City and Tacubaya, Santa Fe and Santa Lucía. These broad tracts caused terrible dust-storms and pollution. Despite these problems, it seems that the ideal city epitomised by the *Centenario* had no strong 'bucolic' content. Historically the Mexican elites had had an urban attachment, though their fortunes often had rural origins. Since colonial times prestige and status were urban or nothing. But by the early twentieth century the model of the garden city and the planning of parks and gardens were cosmopolitan ideals that the Porfirian elite aimed to pursue. In Mexico, however, there were neither strong bourgeois 'populist-rural' traditions, nor the contradictions commonly associated with 'the machine in the garden'. Unlike American Jeffersonians or those American urbanisers who sought a balance between city and countryside, Mexican elites (like most Latin American elites) regarded the city as the only form of true civilisation.⁴⁰

In this sense, the ideal city consolidated by the Porfirians should be seen as a civilising process, as a frontier expansion. The civilising conquest began the slow physical blurring of the firm distinction between city and countryside. In an 1870s José María Velasco landscape canvas of the Valley of Mexico, we can clearly point out where the city ended and where the countryside began. By the 1910s, the Porfirian ideal city had reshaped the old city, but had also colonised (through *colonias*) what was believed the uncivilised 'emptiness' of the countryside. Thereafter, the city gradually lost its firm physical borders. Nonetheless, socially and massively, as Alan Knight has observed, it was the revolution – which brought Indians and provincial elites to the capital – that began the merging of city and countryside.⁴¹ By the 1940s, with rapid industrialisation, the uncivilised countryside could be found in Mexico City less in reality than in many popular nostalgic films of *charros* and haciendas.

The Mexican elite shared with their European and North American counterparts a belief in the evil and degenerating characteristics of cities. Agglomeration, pollution, lack of nature, and industrialisation led to corruption, laziness and degeneration of races, as crystallised in Federico Gamboa's myth of *Santa*.⁴² But the Mexicans had an almost blind confidence that upon achieving a modern city – and not a bucolic return

⁴⁰ See the classic works on American cities, Thomas Bender, *Toward an Urban Vision. Ideas and Institutions in Nineteenth-Century America* (Lexington, Ky, 1978), and Leo Marx, *The Machine and the Garden* (New York, 1964). For an interesting view of the different cultural considerations of urbanisation, see Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York, 1985), especially pp. 287ff.

⁴¹ Alan Knight, 'Revolutionary Project, Recalcitrant People: Mexico, 1910–1940', in Jaime Rodríguez (ed.), *The Revolutionary Process in Mexico. Essays on Political and Social Change, 1880–1940* (Los Angeles, 1990), pp. 233–5.

⁴² See Federico Gamboa's novel, *Santa*: the story of a country girl who migrates to the city and is corrupted by the city's evil, becoming a prostitute.

to nature – those evil byproducts of urban development would be overcome. In this sense, the achieved ideal city of the *Centenario* was both the climax of the city of wealth, and the main therapeutic measure for the poor.

In addition, the *Centenario* furnished and re-arranged the main *lieux de mémoire* of the nation.⁴³ The monument to Independence was placed along the Paseo de la Reforma. The old project of having monuments of distinguished citizens from every single state of the nation along the Paseo de la Reforma re-emerged.⁴⁴ In the Alameda, on Benito Juárez avenue, the elaborate monument to Juárez was constructed.⁴⁵

The monument to Independence, designed by the architect Antonio Rivas Mercado, echoed the theme epitomised by the entire Paseo. Rivas Mercado feared that the column would be overshadowed by the size of nearby trees and houses, so he built a 35 metre column from which the entire city could be viewed: on one side, the Castillo de Chapultepec; on the other, the Alameda and the Zócalo. Between these two points along the Paseo, there were luxurious modern urban developments. The ancient and aristocratic old Mexico and the new ideal city were thus united in a single panorama from the standpoint of a towering monument, from a great historical moment (independence).⁴⁶ I will return to this monument later.

Other monuments were inaugurated, several of them gifts from foreign missions. For instance, in the sumptuous Colonia Roma, a statue of Garibaldi was erected, donated by Italy. In general, the avalanche of monuments fitted within the parameters of the ideal city. The same was true of all centennial parades which traversed the planned geography of

⁴³ See Pierre Nora's introduction to the collection he edited, *Les lieux de mémoire*, vol. I (Paris, 1989), English version as 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire', *Representations*, no. 26 (Spring, 1989), pp. 7–25.

⁴⁴ See letter by Secretary of the Centennial Commission, J. Casarín, to Juan Bibriesca, secretary of the *Ayuntamiento* of Mexico City, in which he accepted the proposal by the influential sanitary doctor Luis E. Ruiz (Feb. 1910). Ruiz proposed to revive the old project in which each state would send statues of *hijos distinguidos*; according to Ruiz, by 1910 very few states had sent their statues. Throughout 1910, many states responded to the request arguing financial difficulties. See AGN GOB 910-3-1; see also *Archivo Histórico del Ayuntamiento*, Legajo 2276, Exp. 36–38, and 61. In this regard, see Joe Nash, *El Paseo de la Reforma* (Mexico, 1959); the re-publishing of Francisco Sosa, *Las estatuas de la reforma* (Mexico, 1974). For the origins and early development of El Paseo, see Tenenbaum, 'Streetwise History – The Paseo de la Reforma and the Porfirian State'.

⁴⁵ Regarding this monument, see *Archivo Histórico del Ayuntamiento*, Legajo 60, Exp. 1; Legajo 2276, Exp. 38; and regarding the origins of a national fund for the construction of the monument, see Legajo 2276, Exp. 35.

⁴⁶ See AGN GOB 909-10-4-3. About the monument, see the Legajos 1166 and 1667 of the *Archivo Histórico del Ayuntamiento*. See also José de Jesús Núñez Domínguez, *El monumento a la independencia. Bosquejo Histórico* (Mexico, 1930); and Samuel Ruiz García, *Monografía de la columna de la independencia, 1910–1958* (Mexico, 1958).

the ideal city, whose avenues synthesised Mexican modernism and cosmopolitanism as well as national history. A parade of allegorical chariots rolled from the Plaza de la Reforma to the Plaza de la Constitución (Zócalo). A *Gran Procesión Cívica* went from the Glorieta de Colón to the Alameda. In turn, the military parade went from the monument of independence to Avenida Juárez and then along Calle San Francisco to the Palacio Nacional. The Paseo de Antorchas followed the same path, as did the acclaimed *Desfile Histórico*. By traversing these streets and avenues, the parades occupied public space that was at the same time an urban utopia and a conceptualisation of the nation's history.

In addition the *Centenario*, as part of the world's cycle of centennial celebrations, included a number of diplomatic missions.⁴⁷ The city that hosted these envoys of the world was the city of *Centenario*, the ideal city. That could be easily observed in the way most of the diplomats were accommodated. Although there were comfortable and luxurious hotels in Mexico City, as well as many large diplomatic residences, the Ministry of Foreign Relations had since 1909 compiled a list of 'casas que pudieran utilizarse para dar hospitalidad a las delegaciones que vengan del extranjero al Centenario'.⁴⁸ Thus the ideal city welcomed the world, literally, at home, in the various houses of the small and tightly interrelated Porfirian elite. Most of the houses that were identified as potential accommodations were located along the Paseo de la Reforma and Avenida Juárez, and the environs of these avenues. The families that acted as hosts were wealthy and distinguished members of the Porfirian elite: Landero y Cos, Braniff, Landa y Escandón, Limantour, Scherer, Pasquel and Pearson, among others.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ There were 28 'civilised' countries that attended: six as special diplomatic missions (Italy, Japan, the USA, Germany, Spain and France); 18 with special envoys (Honduras, Bolivia, Austria, Cuba, Costa Rica, Russia, Portugal, Holland, Guatemala, El Salvador, Peru, Panama, Brazil, Belgium, Chile, Argentina, Norway and Uruguay); and three countries commissioned residents in Mexico to represent them (Switzerland, Colombia and Venezuela). Great Britain could not attend due to the death of King Edward VII and Nicaragua due to a coup d'état, though the Nicaraguan poet, Rubén Darío, who was appointed envoy of Nicaragua before the political turmoil, was treated as a national 'Guest of Honour' by Mexico's intelligentsia and government. See Genaro García, *Crónica*, and SRE LE 101. ⁴⁸ SRE LE 101, 117.

⁴⁹ The actual distribution was as follows: Japón, Viuda de Braniff's house (Reforma 27); Germany, Hugo Scherer's house (Reforma 3); Spain at Guillermo de Anda y Escandón (Artes 31); the USA at the Palacio Cobián in Bucareli which was acquired by the Ministry of the Interior to house its new offices; part of France's delegation was accommodated at Tomás Braniff's house (Ribera de San Cosme 15); Italy at de la Torre y Mier's house (Plaza Reforma). Other houses mentioned were: Landero y Cos, Sebastián Mier, Santiago Méndez, Viuda de Martínez del Río, J. Y. Limantour, Coronel Pablo Escandón, W. Pearson, Romualdo Pasquel, Manuel Buch, Viuda de Romero Rubio and Lorenzo Elizaga. See *loc. cit.* and Genaro García, *Crónica*, pp. 25ff.

The inaugurated and the planned new buildings were located either within or outside the ideal city of the centenary, depending on their function. There were buildings to house undesirables, and these were of course located outside the limits of the ideal city, as was the national mental hospital (at the Hacienda de la Castañeda), and the penitentiaries (San Lázaro and San Jacinto). In contrast, it was projected that the great new Palacio Legislativo would be an inherent part of the ideal city, a prolongation of Avenida Juárez. The same was true of the planned new Mexican Opera House, which was to be placed between the Alameda and the new luxurious Edificio de Correos, facing the replanned Avenida Cinco de Mayo. When the old National Theatre at the end of Cinco de Mayo was demolished, the avenues of the new ideal city were embellished. Therefore, when Cinco de Mayo became the direct link between the Zócalo, the Alameda and the new Opera House, a contest was held to select the most beautiful of the many new buildings that lined the street.⁵⁰

These buildings and streets formed the desired core of the ideal city: instead of antiquated colonial buildings, the National Palace would form a straight line with the huge neoclassic republican parliamentary palace designed by a distinguished French engineer. This straight path included the luxurious San Francisco street and the Avenida Juárez, and along them the modern monument of Juárez, the Alameda park, and the new art-nouveau marble white Opera House. This was indeed a cosmopolitan urban mirage (see Map 2).

The ideal city was also demarcated by a sort of *cordon sanitaire*. A city free of miasma and illness was a difficult achievement in the valley of Mexico, with its long history of floods and epidemics. Nonetheless, the city of the *Centenario* saw the conclusion of the *Desagüe* works. It also hosted the first large popular hygienic exhibition, built a national penitentiary, opened a new modern mental hospital and forced Indians to shower and dress in trousers.

The organisers of the *Centenario* considered that the city needed to be whitened racially and culturally. During the centennial, pursuit of this goal reached extreme levels. As John Lear shows, there were various efforts to eradicate the presence of Indians and lower classes from the ideal city. But the very functional needs of the ideal city required the presence of Indians and all kinds of servants and workers. To solve this dilemma during the *Centenario* a solution was found: if we cannot get rid of them, at least let us camouflage them.

Indians habitually wandered throughout the city in *calzón de manta* and *guaraches*. Therefore, during the *Centenario* influential Mexican diplomats

⁵⁰ See *Archivo Histórico del Ayuntamiento, Legajo 594, Exp. 4.*

proposed either prohibiting Indians from circulating in the city during the celebration, or dressing them properly: 'Vistámosla [a la población indígena] y obligémosla a que use pantalones y blusa y calzado'.⁵¹ Not only because '¿qué dirán los extranjeros?', but because it was important to make the Indian population 'tener necesidades', so that 'para vivir tenga que trabajar'. For Indians, it was argued in this kind of proposal, 'para conseguir un cariño es casi fisiológico el procurar agradar. Nuestro pelado enamora y lo hace con la cabellera hirsuta y los pies descalzos. Aun entre salvajes cuando uno de ellos pretende a la hembra, se ponen sus collares más vistosos...'⁵²

These proposals were part of the hygienic needs of the ideal city. Since the 1880s, Mexican hygienists had been dealing with urban-planning theories and practices of the hygienic city. By the 1900s this manoeuvring was linked both to urban developers' interests and to the growing influence of positivist ideas. Consequently, to a certain extent the sanitary city was made possible at least within the limits of the ideal city. The team of doctors and engineers that since the 1880s had been in charge of Mexico's sanitation were all actively involved in the centennial celebration.⁵³

In accordance with the hygienic focus, the national penitentiary was rebuilt for the centennial celebration, and the foundation stone of the new structure was laid in the grounds of San Jacinto Atlixco in the south east of the city. Since the 1880s, a commission had been studying the possibility of establishing a modern national penitentiary.⁵⁴ Once it was established, the engineering problems proved to be many and the space was inadequate for the needs of the city. At this point, a Mexican criminologist observed that a large penitentiary was especially needed because of Mexico's racial heterogeneity which, he believed, increased crime.⁵⁵ Therefore, a horizontal extension of the penitentiary was planned in 1908 and finished in time for the centennial.⁵⁶

The same could be argued of the mental hospital of La Castañeda, one

⁵¹ This proposal was made by E. Lozano, R. Nervo, Carlos Lazo de la Vega and R. Riveroll del Prado AGN GOB 910-6-1. ⁵² AGN GOB 907-3-1.

⁵³ See also 'Resumen de la historia de los trabajos de la penitenciaría de San Lázaro leído por Angel Zimbrón secretario del gobierno del Distrito Federal', 1900 SSA Impresos Box 2 Exp. 2/61.

⁵⁴ See José María Romero, *La penitenciaría* (Mexico, 1886).

⁵⁵ See 'Resumen de la historia de los trabajos de la penitenciaría de San Lázaro, leído por Angel Zimbrón secretario del gobierno del Distrito Federal', 1900 inauguration of the penitentiary, SSA Impresos Box 2 Exp. 2/61. See also Miguel Macedo, *La criminalidad en México* (Mexico, 1897).

⁵⁶ 'Informe leído por el señor Licenciado don Agustín M. Lazo, miembro del Consejo de Dirección de la penitenciaría del Distrito Federal, en el acto de la inauguración de las obras de ampliación de aquella, el 29 de septiembre de 1910', reproduced in G. García, *Crónica*, pp. 114-16.

of the many public construction contracts granted to Porfirio Díaz Jr.⁵⁷ A special commission to plan a new mental hospital had been appointed in the 1890s. Distinguished hygienists and sanitary engineers were members of the commission. In 1906, at the Pan-American Medical Congress, the results were presented. The design for the new hospital was an immense complex of 24 buildings located in 141,600 square metres in the former Hacienda of La Castañeda, which was previously owned by Salvador Malo, the prominent urban real estate speculator. The hospital was, it was argued, 'a la vanguardia del alienismo mundial'.⁵⁸ Although outside the ideal city, the hospital assisted the needs of a city of modern times in which *fin-de-siècle surmenages* could drive anybody crazy.

An Hygienic Exhibition and a National Congress of Medicine completed the picture of a hygienic city. The Hygienic Exhibition was organised by the Consejo Superior de Salubridad, that is, by Eduardo Liceaga who for decades had been in charge of Mexico's hygiene, as permanent director of the Consejo Superior de Salubridad.⁵⁹ In fact, the exhibition was a copy of many of the kind that had been organised at European world's fairs during the late nineteenth century. The goal of these exhibitions was not only to display advances in hygiene, but, more importantly, to popularise basic notions of hygiene. The greatest advance of hygienic theory was to make hygiene a concern of the state, beyond the common distinction between the public and private realms. The Hygiene Exhibition was placed at a special site constructed on the avenue of Los Hombres Ilustres. It was a free show of hygiene that, like the famous exhibition at the 1889 Paris world's fair, included models of *la maison salubre* and of *la maison insalubre*, as well as models of water supply systems, pumps and a number of publications and statistics of the Consejo Superior de Salubridad. The paraphernalia of Mexican hygienists, which had been exhibited around the world to produce Mexico's modern image, were now displayed in Mexico City for the benefit of Mexicans.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Porfirio Díaz Jr. was often favoured with contracts. He published a handsome book of pictures of the works of the *manicomio*. See Echegaray's 1906 inform to the Ministry of the Interior regarding the design for the mental hospital, SSA Benéfica Pública, Manicomio general, *Legajo 1* Exp. 10. This document includes a detailed account of the amendments made in the project by the special commission of public works. See also Congreso Médico Pan-Americano, 'Exposición y proyecto para construir un manicomio en el Distrito Federal que presenta a la junta nombrada por el C. Ministro de Gobernación la comisión especial encargada de formarla'.

⁵⁸ G. García, *Crónica*, p. 109; and also Ramón Ramírez, *El manicomio* (Mexico, 1884).

⁵⁹ On the Hygienic Exhibit see *La salubridad e higiene pública en los Estados Unidos Mexicanos. Brevisima reseña de los progresos alcanzados desde 1850 hasta 1910* (Mexico, 1910); and SSA, Salubridad Pública, Congresos y Convenciones, Box 10, Exp. 1-19.

⁶⁰ Among other things, the famous study by Dr Orvañanos, *Geografía médica y climatología* (1889); studies on the eradication of yellow fever in Mexico by Dr Liceaga. See 'Obras que remita la secretaría del Consejo a la sección de exposición de higiene y Conferencias Relativas...' in SSA, Box 10, Exp. 11.

Tour 2

The city of the *centenario* was the city of written and re-written history, erected in monuments and piled over and over again on the same sites. In order to examine this history, let us limit our tour to four main vistas. That is, let us examine first the two principal monuments that were inaugurated in 1910 and the exercise of historical reconstruction represented by the *Desfile Histórico*. Second, the tour reviews the historiographical rewriting of the *Centenario*.

Since the Paseo de la Reforma was the spine of the ideal city, it was natural that the city as a textbook of national history should be written along this avenue and its surroundings. In the 1880s the Porfirian government pondered the plan to make the Paseo de la Reforma an exact chronological reconstruction of the nation's history, from its origins to its modern peace and progress. The Emperor Maximilian, a heterodox Haussmannian, and his architect Louis Bolland, originally designed the Paseo as a modern way to link the Castillo de Chapultepec with the Zócalo (1865).⁶¹ Since 1852, the monument of Carlos IV (known as *El Caballito*) had been placed at the Plaza de la Reforma, marking the beginning of the Paseo. This was also the case of the monument of Columbus, designed by the French sculptor Carlos Cordier, which was erected in the 1860s by Atonio Escandón, and placed at the next circle in the Paseo on the way from Juárez to Chapultepec.⁶² Next came Cuauhtémoc, one of the most important products of Porfirian *indigenismo*, whose statue was inaugurated in 1886; it was the glorification of Mexico's great Indian past.⁶³ Following this sequence, it was thought that the Paseo could present a precise narration of Mexico's history: Spanish past (*El Caballito*), discovery (Columbus), Indian past (Cuauhtémoc), and the logical conclusion, the

⁶¹ Mauricio Gómez Mayorga, 'La influencia francesa en la arquitectura y el urbanismo en Mexico', in Arturo Arnaiz y Freg (ed.), *La intervención francesa y el imperio de Maximiliano cien años después, 1862-1962* (Mexico, 1962).

⁶² On the Columbus monument, see Luis García Pimentel, *El monumento elevado en la ciudad de México a Cristóbal Colón* (Mexico, 1889).

⁶³ See Tenorio, *Mexico at World's Fairs*, chs. VI and VII; Nash, *El Paseo de la Reforma*; José de Jesús Nuñez Domínguez, *El monumento a la independencia. Bosquejo histórico* (Mexico, 1930); Samuel Ruiz García, *Monografía de la columna de la independencia, 1910-1958* (Mexico, 1958); Francisco Sosa, *Las estatuas de la Reforma* (Mexico, 1974); and Alan Knight, 'Racism, Revolution, and *Indigenismo*: 1910-1940', in R. Graham (ed.), *Race in Latin America* (Austin, 1990), pp. 71-114. Barbara Tenenbaum has also dealt with the subject, especially in regard to the first stages of the planning of the Paseo de la Reforma and the inauguration of the Cuauhtémoc monument. See 'Murals in Stone - The Paseo de la Reforma and Porfirian Mexico, 1873-1910', in *La ciudad y el campo en la historia de México. Papers presented at the VII Conference of Mexican and the United States Historians, Oaxaca, Mexico, October 1985* (Mexico, 1992), pp. 369-81.

great monument of Independence. Hence, in 1910 the *Angel of Independence* was placed in the next circle after Cuauhtémoc. Plans existed to construct another monument at the last circle before Chapultepec: an Arch of Triumph that would celebrate the achievement of peace and its main hero, Porfirio Díaz.⁶⁴ The debate was intense, and financial problems limited the plans. Besides, it seems that Díaz hesitated to accept a monument to himself. Therefore, the *Centenario* limited the 'monumental fever' to two important pieces of history set in stone: the monument to independence, and that to Juárez.

The monument of independence has endured as Mexico City's symbol, and indeed was conceived as the universal symbol of Mexico's modernity and sovereignty. The designer, Antonio Rivas Mercado, was one of the few Mexican architects favoured with contracts for major national constructions. But Rivas Mercado was a French-trained architect, a follower of the Paris Beaux Arts style, who had lived in London and Paris for many years.⁶⁵ After winning the contract for the monument of independence in 1906, he was sent to Europe to study sculptural works in France and Italy.⁶⁶ Rivas Mercado decided to place a Winged Victory standing on a column rooted on a vast base that encompassed more symbols and made the column taller.⁶⁷ The Winged Victory, a half-naked Greek-like woman carrying laurels, was the quintessential representation of republican liberty throughout the nineteenth century.⁶⁸ In 1910, for the first time, Mexico obtained its own version of this classical symbol.

At the centre of the base, a bronze composition represented an enormous lion guided by a little boy, and in each corner of the lower base there were representations of Law, Justice, War and Peace. The lion and the boy, according to Rivas Mercado, depicted 'al pueblo, fuerte en la guerra y dócil en la paz'. The statue of Hidalgo was placed on the upper

⁶⁴ For examples of this type of arch, see sketches found in *Archivo Histórico del Ayuntamiento*, 4753, arches for the Paseo del la Reforma, Juárez avenue, and Independencia street.

⁶⁵ For data on Rivas Mercado, see the biography of his daughter, F. Bradu, *Antonieta* (Mexico, 1991). That Rivas Mercado's daughter became José Vasconcelos's mistress, and that she was a patron of bohemian artists, and that she killed herself in Notre Dame in Paris, gave don Antonio some historical visibility.

⁶⁶ See *Archivo Histórico del Ayuntamiento*, Legajo 116, Exp. 9, 13, and Legajo 1167, Exp. 24.

⁶⁷ 'Informe leído por el señor Ingeniero don Antonio Rivas Mercado, Director de la Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes, en el acto de inauguración de la Columna de la Independencia, el 16 de septiembre de 1910', reproduced in G. García, *Crónica*, p. 74.

⁶⁸ For an insightful analysis of the history and meaning of this symbol, see, for France, the collection of essays in P. Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire* (Paris, 1984) first two vols.; for Brazil, José Murilho de Carvalho made an important analysis of the symbols of the republic in *A formação das Almas. O imaginário da República no Brasil* (São Paulo, 1990).

base, facing the city, 'recibiendo el homenaje de la Patria y de la Historia'. Also on the upper base, either side of Hidalgo, were statues of Morelos, Guerrero Mina and Bravo. All the marble statues were designed by the sculptor Enrique Alciati and were made in Carrara; the bronze statues were made in Florence, and the decorations of the monument in Paris. The entire composition formed another *mélange* of republican neoclassic symbolism. There was nothing particularly Mexican about it, nor should there have been: republicanism and nationalism were regarded as universal values.⁶⁹

The Juárez monument was located in the Alameda, along the avenue which carried his name. The monument was a fundamental icon of the Porfirian pantheon: Benito Juárez was the epitome of nineteenth-century liberalism which Porfirio Díaz constantly invoked, regardless of his own ideological transformations. Juárez was considered the provider of justice for the nation, in what was then called the second independence (*La Reforma*). He was the architect of modernising liberal reforms and the commander against the French invasion. What Juárez represented was the political and military background of Díaz's generation, which by 1910 was almost obsolete. But the monument was so important for the regime's symbolic purposes that originally it was intended to locate it just in front of the National Palace, in the Zócalo. The influential and 'modern' urban-planning view of Finance Minister José Y. Limantour encouraged a change of plans, and thus the monument was located on Avenida Juárez on one side of the Alameda, even though this meant dismantling and relocating the Mexican Alhambra – Mexico's pavilion at the 1884 New Orleans world's fair.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ For the understanding of republicanism as a universal value, see C. Nicolet, *L'idée républicaine en France (1789–1924). Essai d'histoire critique* (Paris, 1982).

⁷⁰ Regarding this relocation, see *Archivo Histórico del Ayuntamiento, Legajo 3603*. As in many other aspects during the 1890s and 1900s, Limantour was extremely influential in the entire organisation of the centennial celebration. All expenditures had to be approved by him, and often he returned the approvals with many commentaries that he directly expressed to the president. Thus, often his suggestions were law. See, for instance, AGN GOB 910-2-5, in which Limantour acknowledges having received the final version of the programme for the *centenario* and he returned it with the budget approved but with many comments: For instance: 'la exposición de flora y fauna nacionales del día 1 de septiembre, ¿no estaría mejor el día 2 que tiene libre la mañana?' 'Me parece conveniente que el presidente de la república sea quien presida la inauguración del anfiteatro de la escuela preparatoria, por tratarse de una obra que habrá costado más de un millón de pesos...' Small wonder, when Ministers proposed projects for the celebration they often said, as Justo Sierra did, '¿qué le parece a nuestro amigo Limantour? Al Sr. Presidente le gusta la idea'. See Sierra's letter to Corral, 25 Feb. 1910, making some amendments to the original plan of the Ministry of Public Education, AGN GOB. 910-2-5. In this regard see also Marta Baranda, 'José Yves Limantour juzgado por figuras claves del porfiriato', *Estudios de Historia Moderna y Contemporánea de México* no. 9 (1983), pp. 97–136.

In the 1890s, a national commission for the construction of the monument of Juárez was created.⁷¹ A contest for the model was organised, and the winner was Guillermo Heredia's design. His was a grand project for a marble monument weighing 1,625 tons and occupying 510 square metres. The monument represented Juárez seated on a regal throne with two allegoric women surrounding him and a gardenia on his head. As de la Barra described it, the monument had a 'puro estilo helénico, divina mezcla de dulzura y fuerza, majestad y de gracia, evoca su contemplación el hermoso pensamiento de Hegel: "la belleza es la identidad del pensamiento y de la forma"'.⁷² Such style suited Juárez as hero, because, it was argued during the inauguration, he was 'firme ante el huracán desbordante de las pasiones'. Two bronze lions, designed by the Mexican sculptor Guillermo Cárdenas, concluded the monument. All the marble and bronze works were contracted in Paris.⁷³

Unlike the monument of Cuauhtémoc that was meant to honour a mythical Indian past, the monument of Juárez was dedicated to an Indian and sought to honour the present. Here was an Indian who responded to contemporary universal values: republicanism, liberty and justice – although Juárez's jacobinism was not mentioned in this selective Porfirian reappropriation of the *Benemérito de las Américas*. Juárez carried a message, as Carlos Robles eloquently argued during the inauguration of the monument, for Mexicans and foreigners alike: '¡He aquí la carne de mi carne, la sangre de mi sangre! Juárez es mío, pero también vuestro; pertenece a la Humanidad.'⁷⁴ An Indian who belonged to humanity had to be represented with an Hellenic fashion and in white marble. There was a design for a Juárez monument in Zapotec style, but the Juárez centennial commission judged it a 'brave' but improper project.⁷⁵

With both the Juárez and the Independence monuments, the ideal city acquired a coherent set of icons that made the idea of nation discursively, ideologically and physically real. This was a national history and a specific conception of a liberal and republican consensus that made the nation possible and durable. Whether read from the Zócalo to Chapultepec or from Chapultepec to the Zócalo, the Paseo de la Reforma told the same

⁷¹ Formed by distinguished and wealthy members of the Porfirian elite, José Landero y Cos, Gabriel Mancera, Carlos Rivas, Carlos Herrera, Genaro García (the only historian of the team), and Ignacio de la Barra. See 'Informe al presidente de la república respecto al monumento a Juárez', by de la Barra, June 1910, AGN GOB. 906-4-2.

⁷² *Loc. cit.* ⁷³ Total cost: 299,438 pesos.

⁷⁴ 'Discurso pronunciado por el señor Licenciado don Carlos Robles en el acto de inauguración del monumento a Benito Juárez, el 18 de septiembre de 1910', reproduced in G. García, *Crónica*, p. 80.

⁷⁵ See results of the 1906 contest for a Juárez monument; especially, see the project in Zapotec style (including illustration). See Antonio Rivas Mercado, Nicolás Mariscal, Velázquez de León, in *El Arte y la Ciencia*, vol. 7, no. 11 (May, 1906), pp. 281-9.

story, fulfilling the ideal of a patriotic history: to make history a perfect unmistakable palindrome, with no conflicts or contradictions.

In turn, the *Desfile Histórico* was the momentary reshaping of the public space to make it into a perfect simulacrum of the official past. Like the Paseo de la Reforma itself, the *Desfile* was divided into three great eras: Conquest, Spanish rule and Independence. Conquest was allegorised by a specific historical event that belonged to the chapter 'Conquest'. The selected event was acted out and turned into history-in-motion. This historical event was Moctezuma's meeting with Cortés outside Mexico City. The parade was composed of one thousand persons, mostly Indians, divided into warriors, priests, captains, virgins and kings. The Spanish group of the scene was constituted by a troop of men on horseback, by Cortés and Doña Marina, as well as by a company of Tlaxcatecan Indians. The procession marched from La Plaza de la Reforma towards the Zócalo.

The scene selected to represent Spanish domination was *El Paseo del Pendón* – the colonial ceremony organised in Mexico City to commemorate the anniversary of Conquest (every 13 August). The scene was formed by 800 persons⁷⁶ dressed in colonial style and aligned according to colonial hierarchy (headed by the Viceroy and the members of the Ayuntamiento). The parade went from San Hipólito towards calle San Diego, and from San Francisco towards the Zócalo.

Finally, the era of independence was originally planned to include more than ten different scenes.⁷⁷ But in the end the independence was represented only by the entrance in Mexico City of the *Ejército Trigarante*, headed by Iturbide. This was an inclusive depiction of the insurgent army including its commanders, Agustín de Iturbide, Vicente Guerrero, Manuel Mier y Terán, Guadalupe Victoria and Anatasio Bustamante. The procession was followed by many allegorical carriages, equipped by the various states, representing scenes of the War of Independence that took place in their particular territories.⁷⁸ It went from La Plaza de la Reforma (in *El Caballito*) towards the National Palace at the Zócalo.

It was estimated that more than fifty thousand people witnessed the entire *Desfile Histórico*. This was the first time that such a public lesson had taken place in Mexico City.⁷⁹ Indeed, the *Desfile Histórico* was from the outset thought to be a conscious pedagogic and visual nationalistic lecture, specifically meant to target the special needs of illiterate Mexicans, but in allegorical language understandable to the world at large. Such

⁷⁶ This is the figure given by the original plan, though García mentioned that only 280 persons participated.

⁷⁷ See original AGN GOB 909-3-1.

⁷⁸ See approval of this proposal in AGN GOB 910-3-1, proposed by J. Schafer.

⁷⁹ Genaro García, *Crónica*, pp. 148–152.

influential personalities as Guillermo de Landa y Escandón and José Casarín were the original choreographers of the *Desfile*.⁸⁰ And they aimed to make it a nationalistic lesson, but one that could be pedagogic (magnificent), historically accurate (scientific), multicomprehensive (to include all groups in the depiction of the nation); a lesson that was supported by, and paraphrased, the story told by the city.

The designers of the project emphasised the importance of authenticity and historical accuracy. All clothing 'estará ajustada rigurosamente a la verdad histórica'. Casarín sent envoys to such states as Oaxaca, San Luis Potosí, Tlaxcala, Morelos and Chiapas, as well as to the National Penitentiary in search of Indians. For instance, he wrote to the governor of Tlaxcala, Próspero Cahuantzi, an Indian himself, requesting 110 Tlaxcalan Indians to join the representation of Cortés meeting Moctezuma. From the governor of San Luis Potosí, Manuel Sánchez Rivero, he requested 250 Indians, and, 'si fuera posible', 20 Indian women 'de las más hermosas'.⁸¹ In the same way, Spanish organisations were asked for 'native' or native-looking Spaniards to represent *gachupines* in the various scenes of the *Desfile Histórico*.⁸² The emphasis on historical accuracy was but one of the echoes of a scientific era.

This emphasis was expressed not only in the historical accuracy of the *Desfile*, but more importantly in the many scientific events which had to do with Mexico's past. In these congresses, the themes of science, nation and race were discussed. The relationship between science and nation had as its pivotal topic the intricate interrelation between the conceptualisation of modern nation, cosmopolitan city and race. In the last analysis, what this interrelation showed (at least in its materialisation in the ideal city) was the insurmountable ambivalence of Porfirian scientists and thinkers in regard to race: while fostering the universal acceptance of a mestizo nation, they had to manipulate international and national sciences, and prejudices that were applied against Indians, in order to produce both modern science and a cosmopolitan nation.

As part of the *Centenario*, and for the second time in Mexico, the prestigious scientific Congress of Americanists was organised in Mexico City (it was simultaneously hosted in Buenos Aires which was also celebrating Argentina's centennial).⁸³ The 17th Congress of Americanists

⁸⁰ See original plan in AGN GOB 909-3-1.

⁸¹ The state of Morelos was asked for 250 Indians. The governor decided to send them, but then he wrote to Casarín explaining that Indians decided not to travel to Mexico City, because 'ha corrido el rumor que de México los mandarían a San Luis Potosí donde hay Guerra, por lo que se niegan a ir'. AGN GOB 909-3-1.

⁸² There are letters to the Centro Vasco, Asturiano and Castellano. *Loc. cit.*

⁸³ For an analysis of scientific politics, see Charles Hale, *The Transformation of Liberalism* (Princeton, 1989).

was indeed of great significance for the history of Mexican anthropology and archaeology. The reconstruction of Teotihuacán was concluded and the celebration was a good excuse to publicise Mexico as the Egypt of America. In addition, as a result of the 17th Congress of Americanists, the International School of Anthropology was created in Mexico City, headed by Franz Boas, and sponsored by the Porfirian regime.⁸⁴ Simultaneously, the first *Indianista* congress took place, as well as the Pedagogical Congress.

Together, these congresses in Mexico City displayed the several ambivalent approaches to Mexico's Indian reality. An ancient Las Casas type of paternalism combined with late nineteenth-century scientific racism and with innovative forms of culturalist anthropology and romantic *Ateneismo*. By and large, there existed a consensus on the perfectibility of Indians through education. Moreover, by 1910 the celebration of a mestizo nation had already acquired importance, producing a scientific and ideological infrastructure that would survive for the rest of the century. In both, the *Indianista* and the Americanists' congresses, the glorification of *mestizaje* – often considered a post-revolutionary accomplishment – was a fundamental ingredient.⁸⁵ No one better embodied the particularly ambivalent *indigenismo* and pro-*mestizaje* of the Porfiriato than Justo Sierra. He stated at the inauguration of the 17th Congress of Americanists: 'Todo ese mundo pre-cortesiano... es nuestro, es nuestro pasado, nos lo hemos incorporado... [a] nuestra verdadera historia nacional, la que data de la unión de conquistados y conquistadores para fundar un pueblo mestizo que (permitidme esta muestra de patriótico orgullo) está adquiriendo el derecho de ser grande.'⁸⁶

However, the consensus on *mestizaje* contrasted with the many scientific evaluations of Indians as inferior, degenerative, and – for the national development – an obstructive race. The Congress of Americanists generated many papers dealing with the racial inferiority of Indians studied through bone measuring and the anthropometry of Indians' skulls.

⁸⁴ See *Actas del XVII Congreso Internacional de Americanistas*, Sección México (Mexico, 1910). The president of the Mexican section of the Congress was Justo Sierra, and it was attended by mainstream scholars on anthropology and archaeology (among them, Edward Seler, Franz Boas). For the history of these congresses see Juan Comas, *Cien años de congresos internacionales de americanistas* (Mexico, 1974); and for the history of the international school of anthropology see Ricardo Godoy, 'Franz Boas and his Plans for an International School of American Archaeology and Ethnology in Mexico', *Journal of the History of Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 13 (1977), pp. 228–42.

⁸⁵ In this regard, see Alan Knight, 'Racism, Revolution, and *Indigenismo*'.

⁸⁶ *XVII Congreso Internacional de Americanistas*, p. 8.

Another view of Indians was expressed by the Congress of *Indianistas*.⁸⁷ Following both a Catholic and quasi-Lascasian approach and nineteenth-century biological thought, this Congress promoted the education and welfare of Indians in order to foster the achievement of a real and homogenous nation. Jesús Díaz de León, a member of the *Sociedad Indianista Mexicana*, observed that Mexico was constituted by some surviving indigenous kingdoms. One of these kingdoms dominated the rest, 'los convirtió en elementos de nutrición para su desarrollo'. In this sense, for Díaz de León, Mexico's war of independence was a sort of 'incomplete' physiological revolution. *Indianismo* was not a utopian movement, but a biological trend that would select the best Indian attributes and project them towards a progressive future.⁸⁸

Indianismo and pro-*mestizaje* contrasted with the revival of a deep-rooted pro-Hispanism on the part of the Porfirian elite. This renewed pro-Hispanism was particularly noticeable in the number of homages and speeches dedicated to Spain, *la madre patria*. Unlike previous decades, the official position was profoundly favourable to Spain, and Porfirio Díaz himself stated: 'Si España ufánase de habernos dado vida, México se enorgullece de reconocerlo y proclamarlo.'⁸⁹

This official switch in the national history was made through a variety of diplomatic formalities as well as the natural tools of patriotic history: books, monuments, cities. As part of its homage to Mexico during the *Centenario*, Spain returned Morelos's possessions to Mexico, and granted the honorific Order of Carlos III to Porfirio Díaz. In return, Mexico inaugurated a monument for Isabel la Católica and splendidly honoured the Spanish envoy, the Marqués de Polavieja.

This pro-Hispanic switch was a result both of a generational change of the political elite (the old jacobin anti-Spanish liberals had been supplanted by the *científicos*), and of a deliberate attempt to display reconciliation in the context of the 100th anniversary of the nation's birth. The new generation was strongly marked by a new modernist language, as Darío and Rodó had articulated it. In such a language, a quasi-racist Hispanism – mostly directed against the North American 'lion' – was a fundamental component. In addition, within an organicist scheme, reconciliation was

⁸⁷ In this regard, see Jesús Díaz de León, 'Concepto del indianismo en México', in *Concurso científico y artístico del Centenario* (Mexico, 1911), p. 23.

⁸⁸ Jesús Díaz de León, 'Concepto del indianismo', p. 23. Along these lines, see also 'Propuesta de una exposición etnográfica durante las fiestas del centenario de la independencia nacional'. AGN GOB 909-3-1.

⁸⁹ 'Discurso pronunciado por el señor General Don Porfirio Díaz, presidente de la república, al recibir del Excelentísimo señor Embajador de España las reliquias de José María Morelos, el 17 de septiembre de 1910', reproduced by G. García, *Crónica*, p. 23.

considered a sign of physical and cultural maturity. As Pimentel y Fagoaga, president of the *Ayuntamiento* of Mexico City, stated at the dedication of calle Isabel la Católica: 'Bien podemos decirlo hoy que la creciente cultura del pueblo mexicano ha borrado, con el agua lustral de un cosmopolitismo bien entendido y mejor practicado, los prejuicios, los odios, y los rencores que impedían en no muy lejanos días el reconocer merecimientos como los que motivan la presente ceremonia.'⁹⁰

However strong this renewed Hispanism was, it had to be constantly adapted and accommodated to *indigenismo*, *indianismo* and *pro-mestizaje*. Nonetheless, the fact that in 1910 this sort of pro-Hispanism became so apparent helps to explain why the generation that was coming of age at this precise moment pushed these tendencies further: consider, for instance, the case of José Vasconcelos and the *Ateneo de la Juventud*. But it also helps to explain why the 1930s Indigenist reaction was so powerful.

These tendencies were part of the continual rewriting of the national history. Monuments, parades, streets and even modern movie pictures⁹¹ were the pens with which the *Centenario* wrote the national history. New heroes were revindicated, or new virtues were found in the eternal heroes, all according to the context of the 1900s. With one last revealing example of implicit historical revisionism we conclude our visits to the centennial city. In 1910, Porfirio Parra accepted a proposal to alter stanzas of the national anthem. Accordingly, the fourth stanza was totally expunged, and the seventh was modified significantly. The fourth, a glorification of Santa Ana, had remained unnoticed by official historians. The seventh stanza alluded to the problematic figure of the conservative Emperor, Agustín de Iturbide. The historiographical ambivalence towards the role of Iturbide in the war of independence was one thing, but it was a quite different matter to glorify him in the national anthem. Parra did not hesitate to change a verse so that instead of saying 'de Iturbide la sacra bandera', it said 'de la patria la sacra bandera'.⁹²

⁹⁰ Discurso pronunciado por el señor don Fernando Pimentel y Fagoaga, presidente del Ayuntamiento Constitucional de la ciudad de México, en el acto de dedicación de la Av. Isabel la Católica, el 31 de agosto de 1910', reproduced by G. García, *Crónica*, p. 45.

⁹¹ For example, Eduardo Fernández Guerra proposed to make a film that would be exhibited at municipal palaces to make the history of Mexico's independence enjoyable and communicable to all people. AGN GOB 909-3-1. There is no direct response to this initiative, but popular performances of movies took place on 15 and 16 September in all the city theatres. See AGN GOB 910-3-1. Out of the many films that were made during the *Centenario*, very few survived. For a detailed explanation of these films, see Juan Felipe Leal, Eduardo Barraza and Alejandro Jablonska, *Vistas que no se ven. Filmografía mexicana, 1896-1910* (Mexico, 1993).

⁹² The proposal was sent from Veracruz by Huerta Vargaz. Parra completely agreed with the amends. The fourth stanza was as follows: 'Del guerrero inmortal de Zempoala/te defiende la espada terrible/tu sagrado pendón tricolor/y será del feliz mexicano/en

Conclusion

As I have shown, Mexico City was not only the scenario, but itself the main target of the Porfirian elites' ideals, which receives resplendent expression in 1910. But this was a city that already had stacked various cities in itself. There were many sanitary, social, urban and even cultural anti-ideals. After all, the ideal views epitomised by the *Centenario* were only a simulacrum; 'reality' did not match with these ideals, yet that fact neither hindered the celebration nor terminated the ideals. If anything, it made them more alluring for the elite. Nonetheless, only a month after the great celebration, the cultural fabric I have here surveyed seemed to be radically contested. The democratic revolution headed by the wealthy and cosmopolitan landowner Francisco I. Madero unlocked a Pandora's box of injustice and violence. By 1914 the Porfirian city was taken over by Indians and *campesinos*, and by the 1940s, the ideal city seemed to be uncovered, almost in an archaeological fashion, by Carlos Obregón Santacilia, the official post-revolutionary architect who transformed the ruins of the Porfirian Palacio Legislativo into a enormous fascist-like monument of revolution. Then, the foundation stone that Porfirio Díaz had laid during the 1910 celebration was uncovered, and its cargo of newspapers, coins and documents of the time, was stolen. These objects, Obregón Santacilia observed, disappeared and with them 'desapareció hasta el último vestigio del edificio porfiriano, como debía desaparecer para dejar paso a otra época, la que sobre sus despojos, estábamos levantando'.⁹³ In truth, the post-revolutionary city eventually appropriated and redirected the essential ideals of the Porfirian ideal city, though radically departing from the Porfirian style. For, in fact, the culture that the centennial city epitomised was superseded not only because of Mexico's revolution; the revolution was a part of a wider demise: the nineteenth century itself had come to an end. Mexico City began to pile a new 'modern' city over the remains of the Porfirian ideal city. And yet, this article does not try to suggest that the 'real' Mexico City has been, as Italo Calvino's imaginary Berenice, 'a temporal succession of different cities, alternatively just and unjust', in fact, it may very well be that 1910 Mexico City already included, as Calvino's imaginary city, all the future Mexicos; 'all the future Berenices are already present in this

la paz y en la guerra el caudillo/porque el supo sus armas de brillo/cincundar en los campos de honor.' The seventh went as follows: 'Si a la lid contra huestes enemiga/los convoca la tropa guerrera/de Iturbide la sacra bandera/Mexicanos valientes seguid.' AGN GOB 907-3-1.

⁹³ Carlos Obregón Santacilia, *El Monumento a la Revolución* (Mexico, 1940).

instant, wrapped one within the other, confined, crammed, inextricable'.⁹⁴ The essential ideals – conclusive nationalism, cosmopolitanism, urban speculation and modernisation – that inspired the centennial city are still today's goals. Whatever a late twentieth-century *ville-monstre* does with those ideals, will be a lesson, alas devastating and heartless, for the world that for so long has asserted them.

⁹⁴ Italo Calvino, *Imvisible Cities*, translated by William Weaver (New York, 1972), p. 163.