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Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo. *Mexico at the World's Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996. xiv + 373 pp. $45.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-520-20267-2.

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World's fairs epitomized nineteenth-century modernity. They offered idealized visions of what scientific investigation and industrial technology could bring humanity. As historical evidence, world's fairs provide insights into the dreams shared by Western society and into how various countries' elite groups envisioned their nation as part of a modern and scientific world order. Nineteenth-century world's fairs played a significant role in constructing ideologies for state- and nation-building. Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo locates the emergence of Mexico's modern identity in this global context of inventing modernity and expanding nationalism. In demonstrating the importance of world's fairs, Tenorio uses an impressive range of sources: guides to the world's fairs, correspondence from Mexico's exhibit builders, reports on Mexico's exhibits in Mexican and international papers, Mexico's opposition press, travelers' accounts, foreign relations documents, and the monuments and artifacts that remain from the fairs. Many sources he found in a special section of the Ramo Fomento in the Archivo General de la Nacion. This resource must have provided a wonderful gold mine of information for Tenorio's dissertation (Stanford, 1993), upon which this monograph is based.

Tenorio focuses on the Paris exposition of 1889 that celebrated the centennial of the French Revolution. This was the largest World's Fair of the nineteenth century, and an event at which the Porfirian government expended a large amount of time and energy to communicate Mexico's greatness to the world. From the Paris exposition Mexico's "wizards of progress" emerged, a team of Porfirian elites, intellectuals, and technocrats who crafted a particular vision of Mexico. This group then formed an efficient team for producing Mexico's exhibits at subsequent expositions in Europe and the United States. The team emerged as a united force within the context of political and economic changes in Mexico. According to Tenorio, participating in the world's fair was part of the process of strengthening and reinforcing the Porfirian state and its program to "modernize" Mexico, with fairs and the overall modernizing process mutually reinforcing each other. Support for Porfirio Diaz united the rival individuals that comprised the "wizards" in Paris and the government in Mexico.

Their effort, which Tenorio calls an "essay," combined aspects of Mexican reality with their ideal vision of the nation, all couched in a universal, modernist language. This team created an image of Mexico that included many traits, which the Revolution eventually adopted. The desire to make Mexico more "modern," according to Western European standards, was one such trait, and it embodied others including *indigenismo*, cosmopolitanism, nationalism or Creole patriotism. Mexico's displays at the Rio de Janeiro fair of 1922 and the Seville fair of 1929 were remarkably similar to Porfirian ones. The Mexican Revolution did not mark a significant break in how elites envisioned the nation, according to Tenorio. The Revolution's innovation was in overseeing the emergence of a Mexican nation that actually reflected the visions crafted into the country's world fair exhibits.

Tenorio offers thought-provoking perspectives on both Mexican and world history. He uses an unconventional writing and organizational style that is both a strength and a weakness of the book. As the author himself explains, he uses what might be called a "post-modern" style–a "respect [of] the varied interactions and simultaneity of historical occurrence" (p. xi). He frequently switches between global and national ideas or images. The book's themes and arguments emerge through an organizational style reminiscent of concentric circles, in which we keep learning more but are always cycling back through certain ideas, seeing them in different ways. He does not use a linear argument structure. This style prevents each chapter from being understood outside the context of the rest of the book. Al-

though I will appendix a chapter breakdown below, in the body of my review, I will address themes and suggestive arguments carried throughout the monograph as well as discuss Tenorio's writing style and overall presentation. He offers an alternative way to write history, but the book also contains writing and organizational problems.

Tenorio seldom posits powerful assertions and statements of his arguments that would help the reader to understand his use of evidence and line of discussion. Instead, he often does not connect information and hopes that the reader will successfully negotiate his or her way through the evidence and grasp his point. Thus he misses an opportunity to state clearly his take on Mexican and world history. On the other hand, Tenorio presents many intriguing ideas intertwined in unconventional ways, suggestive of new ways to understand and write history. His ability to write Mexican and world history simultaneously is commendable and allows him to make contributions to both fields, particularly in understanding the ideological foundations of modern nationalism and national identity. Overall, Tenorio's book reflects a world that contains tensions and contradictions–the world itself is not always consistent, and Tenorio offers a way for historians to illustrate this in their writing.

Tenorio demonstrates nationalism emerging from a profound faith in Western science and industrialization in the late nineteenth century. The Porfirian wizards of progress cast the Mexican nation within a particular scientific and technical language shared with other participating nations at the French fair. Mexico's display at the Paris 1889 exposition was called "The Aztec Palace." The exhibit combined Aztec and gothic styles, as the wizards presented Aztec heroes in Greco-Roman garb, asserting Mexico's place within the Republican nations of Europe that proudly recalled their past as part of the Roman Empire. Tenorio explains how the building and its contents reflected (and therefore appealed to) the paradoxical interests of Western society. People envisioned homogeneous nations that contained one republican, scientific, and ethnic culture; but they also wanted to be cosmopolitan–aware of and interested in the exotic and the broader world.

Most nations' exhibits at the Paris and other expositions used a shared language to express how their country exhibited homogeneity, modernity, republicanism, cosmopolitanism, and even nationalism. For example, the best statisticians helped to demonstrate recent economic growth and progress, something European custom insisted was essential for modern nations. As Tenorio explains, statistics were "the technology of ruling and the foundation of ... Scientific politics" (p. 127). Numbers formed a universal language for describing countries that could be compared, and almost anything could be quantified, from hygiene figures to criminology, geography, agriculture, and industry. In another example of describing Mexico in global terms, cartographers illustrated the precise location of railroads, mines, cities, and mountains. Artists painted an idealized Mexico, with vast empty spaces, scenic vistas, new railroads, and endless potential for immigration and economic investment–important themes in Western Europe at this time. Mexican anthropologists and archaeologists insisted that Mexico's indigenous past included a republican tradition and advanced races that had left an important legacy for the hard-working mestizo population.

Tenorio's style of juxtaposing numerous ideas portrays the inherent tensions within cultures and individuals. World's fairs epitomized the tensions of a faith in modernity and progress. For example, they presented only the positive side of industrialization and science, ignoring the poverty and urban sprawl that accompanied such changes. In France, a strong undercurrent of anti-modern ideas flourished simultaneously with the 1889 and 1900 fairs that celebrated modernity. The Mexican exhibits, both before and after the Revolution, promoted the country's exoticism through exalting the Indian population; but they also presented the country as European. Moreover, both the Porfirian and revolutionary governments attempted to end this same Indian culture.

The tensions embodied in nationalism also become apparent through Tenorio's style. Without always asserting the connection, Tenorio presents the emergence of nationalism alongside a growing faith in industrialization, modernity, and science as well as their international language used at world's fairs. By 1910 and especially after World War I, much of the Western world, not just Mexico and Latin America, questioned industrialization and modernity. Yet, there was no questioning of nationalism as an organizing principle of the twentieth-century state. Tenorio also illustrates an irony of nationalism, in that countries learned nationalist discourse from each other–they needed each other to see what was different (cosmopolitan or advanced) to define their own nation. World's fairs then provided a space in which a country's elite groups and upper classes could formulate a nationalistic vision of their country.

Tenorio presents a much broader perspective on the

origins of nationalism than does Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities*. Yes, Tenorio presents *lo Mexicano* as having origins in the imagination of elites, but he moves beyond this to explain the terms people used to construct their nations. By showing the construction of Mexican nationalism as part of a world trend, the Mexican elites' characterization of the country seems a version of an international trend, rather than only the result of an internal battle in Mexico.

During the Porfiriato, the opposition press criticized Mexico's displays at these world's fairs, but not because they disagreed with the ideas presented there such as modernity, sanitation, homogeneity, indigenous pride, and industrialization; they protested the Porfirian vision because it did not reflect Mexican reality. They criticized the wizards for "being charlatans" who made vastly exaggerated claims about Mexico. The Mexican Revolution, in Tenorio's book, then appears as an attempt to try other means to achieve this ideal vision of Mexico.

In considering the Revolution, Tenorio continues to juxtapose it with world trends. He brings several important Latin American nationalist movements into the chapter on the 1922 Rio de Janeiro fair. The ideals of Jose Vasconcelos, who largely coordinated the Mexican display, of the cosmic race, appear next to a discussion of modern art week in Sao Paulo, which embraced anthropofagia (cannibalism) and the country's Tupi-Guarani heritage. Tenorio also includes the pan-Latin American nationalism of Rodo in this chapter, as well as a general undercurrent critiquing Western Europe's ideal of modernity.

By 1929 the critique of modernity had diminished. The 1929 Seville fair celebrated commercialism and commodification. Mexico's exhibit included displays of advertising from the Cerveceria Cuauhtemoc beer company, and El Buen Tono cigarette manufacturing demonstrated how Mexico belonged to the world of modern, capitalist nations. 1929 marked the beginning of a new style of fair, according to Tenorio.

The wonderment and experimental nature (what Tenorio calls the "essay" or attempt to depict an idealized world) of nineteenth-century fairs was gone forever. That they continue today, Tenorio assumes, reflects a continuity of faith in progress. Yet, their existence perhaps also represents a faith in tourism and mass consumption. Fairs also may offer fantasy spaces in which people can travel around the world to exotic places all within the safe confines of one city's exposition. But Tenorio does not discuss why people go to world's fairs or how the reasons for attendance may have changed over time.

Tenorio offers a thought-provoking book on nationalism, world history, and Mexico's past. The author's organizational style contributes to the provocative nature of the book. Because he introduces numerous ideas, and cycles back to these periodically, it forces the reader to engage with the material intellectually, more so than when reading a standard, narrative work of history. Yet, his non-linear organizational style will frustrate many readers who are more accustomed to having authors state their arguments more bluntly and strongly. Also, because the book requires that the reader follow numerous threads of ideas, those with limited or no background in Mexican or world history during the 1880s-1920s might have some trouble comprehending the work. And regardless of background, most readers will occasionally become distracted and frustrated by spelling errors, split infinitives, and cryptic sentences that permeate the otherwise intriguing book. For those planning to read this book, I recommend skimming rather than reading every sentence carefully in order to make these problems less noticeable and distracting.

Nevertheless, the book retains value and importance to Mexican and world historiography and should not be dismissed on account of these problems. Tenorio's arguments about the origins and context of nationalism, in the world and Mexico, makes this an important contribution to global and Mexican historiography. Viewing the Porfiriato and Revolution through the elite's idealized visions of what Mexico was at those times, as portrayed in world's fair exhibits, provides new insights into these eras of Mexican history.

Chapter Breakdowns

Preface: Introduces the postmodern writing and organizational style as well as the two parts of the book: Fairs in the nineteenth century and Porfirian participation, part one, and part two, containing a contrast of the 1889 Paris exhibition (particularly the Mexican display) with the expositions of 1922 and 1929.

Introduction, "On the Universe of Fairs." Outlines the meaning of late-nineteenth-century world's fairs and briefly contrasts them with subsequent fairs in the 1920s and throughout this century. World's fairs celebrated modernity and the promises of industrial and scientific civilization. Many saw the late nineteenth century as the end of history; mankind had finally triumphed. Any defects of this age were excluded from the fairs. Mex-

ico participated in the Paris Exposition as a means to learn from and to imitate the culture in that French city, considered the capital of modernity, but also to promote Mexico as belonging to the category of modern nations.

Chapter One, "France and Her Followers." This chapter contrasts the image France put forth of itself during the World's Fair of 1889 and the reality in France during the late nineteenth century. France, during the course of the century, had dropped from second place in the industrial world to fourteenth. Moreover, during this time intellectuals began expressing anti-modern, anti-science, and anti-industrialist ideas. The fair, however, continued to celebrate modernity, although it did incorporate issues of "social economy" that addressed issues involving workers and women, but the Mexican delegation either did not submit displays to these exhibits, or sent a glossy, conservative display in the case of the women's booth.

Chapter Two, "The Imperatives of Mexican Progress." Examines the internal Mexican political and economic context of the country's world's fair participation. It examines the philosophical, political, and economic changes under Diaz that made participation possible.

Chapter Three, "Mexico and the World at Large." A general overview of Mexican participation at world's fairs, the role of the Wizards of Progress, and the debate over whether Mexico should host its own world exposition (which the wizards advised against, since one could control the Mexican image portrayed at events abroad, but if the world came to Mexico, the carefully crafted image would be more difficult to maintain).

Chapter Four, "The Wizards of Progress: Paris 1889." This chapter explores the difficult emergence of a bureaucratic team known as the Wizards of Progress.

Chapter Five, "The Aztec Palace and the History of Mexico." The Aztec palace was an attempt to envision Mexico's past, present, and future. Its unveiling and construction for Paris were part of a moment in the writing of the history of the nation. Liberals needed to create their own heroes that were not religious. But the palace also included an older form of Creole patriotism based on the land and appreciation of the Indian past. *Mexico a traves de los siglos*, also completed in 1889, was the book form and the Aztec palace expressed the ideas in a building. To some extent, it was autoethnographic expression. "[I]t constituted an ad hoc complement for late-nineteenth century Western orientalism" (p. 66).

Chapter Six, "Mexican Anthropology and Ethnography at the Paris Exposition." This chapter examines the Mexican displays as autoethnographic expression–Mexican scientists using the anthropological jargon of the day to describe their country. The Porfirians displayed many contradictory ideas, but also seemed to believe all of them.

Chapter Seven, "Mexican Art and Architecture in Paris." There was an art to assembling a tangible representation of a modern nation. The task for the Wizards was to find art that was stylistically Mexican while following universal patterns of beauty. An example is the portrayal of Mexican indigenous heroes, such as Cuauhtemoc, in Greco-Roman clothing.

Chapter Eight, "Mexican Statistics, Maps, Patents, and Governance." Modern nations could be described numerically, or so the thought of the day insisted. Therefore any country such as Mexico wanting to display its modernity needed to have graphs, charts, figures, reports, maps, etc.

Chapter Nine, "Natural History and Sanitation in the Modern Nation." This chapter examines how Hygiene became part of nationalism. For Mexico, demonstrating the country as hygienic was seen as key to encourage two developmentalist goals: foreign investment and immigration.

Chapter Ten, "Irony." Examines the reporting of the opposition press in Mexico. The irony is that they did not disagree with the aspirations of the Wizards of Progress, just their claims that Mexico had achieved "modern" status.

Chapter Eleven, "Toward Revolutionary Mexico." The Porifirian "symbolic infrastructure," complete with its contradictions, continued to be displayed at world's fairs after 1910.

Chapter Twelve, "The 1922 Rio de Janeiro Fair." Connects happenings in Mexico with those in Brazil. The modernist movement in Sao Paulo had similar ideas to Mexico's "contemporaneos," who included Jose Vasconcelos. Mexico's display contained statues built by an American company at the 1922 fair. A new generation came to oversee Mexico's world's fair participation, a generation that had a technical but not a patriotic education.

Chapter Thirteen, "The 1929 Seville Fair." This fair crafted a meaning for the Mexican Revolution, portraying it not only as the culmination of Mexican history but

also as a patrimony to world history. Many contradictions expressed in Porfirian exhibits remained–such as exoticisizing Indians while trying to remove their culture.

Epilogue: Reflects on the meaning of world's fairs, as well as the ideas in the book, particularly the relationship between nationalism and modernity.

Appendix 1: "The Porfirian Wizards of Progress." Lists the members of Mexico's exhibition-designing teams.

Appendix 2: "The Economic Cost of World's Fairs." Approximates the Mexican Expenditures in 21 different expositions.

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