

“A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS:”

JOSÉ GUADALUPE POSADA AND POPULAR PERSPECTIVES OF THE PORFIRIATO

(1876-1910)

by

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Introduction: José Guadalupe Posada and the Porfiriato

Broadsides fascinated Mexico City's popular classes at the turn of the twentieth century. The broadsheet was a long vertical page sold on the street that posted proclamations and official notices. People used broadsheets as a source for political activism and were composed of human-interest stories, prose, and verses. These leaflets described bullfights, bandits, murders, natural disasters, and folk heroes during the Porfiriato. Antonio Vanegas Arroyo's publishing house dominated the broadside culture with the distribution of hundreds of cheap leaflets. These papers also included sensational illustrations to capture the attention of the public. Most of the illustrations sold by Vanegas Arroyo include the works of the popular artist José Guadalupe Posada (Figure 1).¹ Diego Rivera and José Clemente Orozco contended that Posada's broadside illustrations were the most Mexican of all the nation's visual artists, as his art combined traditional Mexican culture with modern global ideas.²

Posada's work has inspired many of Mexico's greatest artists, such as Rivera, Leopoldo Méndez, and Clemente Orozco. Posada's images reveal his observations of society. His visual record provides us an account of a time in Mexico filled with change, the Porfiriato. An analysis of Posada's works enhances our understanding of the working-class realities under Porfirio Díaz's reign. I will study Posada's portrayal of Porfirian popular culture. I will show that Posada understood the masses and demonstrated that they participated in notions of Porfirian order and progress.

¹ Leopoldo Méndez, "Homenaje a Posada," linoleum engraving, 1947, *Museo del Estanquillo José Guadalupe Posada: Crónica de un Cronista*, Mexico City, Mexico.

² Jacques Lafaye, "From Daily Life to Eternity," translated by Marigold Best and Jacques Lafaye, in *Posada's Mexico*, edited by Ron Tyler (Washington D.C.: Library of Congress, 1979), 123-139.

Brief History of Mexico

In order to better comprehend Posada's perspective, we must first place ourselves within historical context. In order to do so, I will be retrieving information from the essays in William H. Beezley and Michael C. Meyer's anthology *The Oxford History of Mexico*.³ This book provides the latest historical research on the country.

After achieving independence from Spain in 1821, Mexico struggled to gain its freedom. The war devastated and impoverished the country. Over the next thirty years, Mexico had close to fifty governments as a result of instability and military coups. Mexico's volatility continued as two political groups divided the country: the Liberals and Conservatives. Disagreeing over education, economics, the role of religion, and the army, Liberals and Conservatives also differed on what type of government to establish. While the Conservatives hoped to setup a centralized republic and to maintain clerical and military privileges, the Liberals wanted a federal republic similar to the United States.⁴

Juan Álvarez Hurtado de Luna took power and established a liberal coalition in Mexico City in 1855. Liberals emphasized land reform to make property ownership more accessible to peasants and aimed to reduce the power of the Catholic Church. These lawmakers made the ideal of equality under the law the promise of the new reform movement. Reformers, such as Benito Juárez and Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, issued laws that deprived the army and the church of privileges, and declared that corporate entities could no longer hold land. These laws were a liberal attempt to diminish the power of the church and

³ William H. Beezley and Michael C. Meyer, *The Oxford History of Mexico* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁴ Christon I. Archer, "Fashioning a New Nation," in *The Oxford History of Mexico*, 285-318.

to use ecclesiastical holdings to benefit the national treasury. Liberals hoped to create a political constituency by dividing out native communal holdings to individuals. This law was meant to incorporate Mexico's indigenous people into the larger body politic.⁵

In 1856, some 155 delegates (mostly professional middle-class men) convened for a constitutional convention. Mexico's liberal constitution guaranteed basic human rights, protection of private property, and a federal system with power located in the legislature. The new constitution attacked special privileges, as well. At the same time, it rejected notions of religious freedom and trial by jury, so as to keep the people living within the confines of elite ideals. The constitution limited the national government's power to enact and enforce social change. It outlined what it could not do and revealed a fear of autocratic centralism. Three years later, radical liberals established more stringent measures against the church. The new laws guaranteed religious freedom, closed monasteries, prohibited recruiting for nunneries, and opened a new civil registry.⁶

Mexico's refusal to pay its foreign debt led to France taking possession of Mexico. In 1864, Napoleon III sent Austrian Archduke Maximilian of Habsburg to be Emperor of Mexico, establishing French authority. With the end of the American Civil War, the U.S. government used diplomatic pressure to persuade Napoleon III to withdraw French troops from Mexico. A growing Prussian military incursion in France and the prospect of a U.S. invasion in Mexico compelled Napoleon III to withdraw his troops. Without military

⁵ Paul Vanderwood, "Betterment for Whom? The Reform Period: 1855-75," in *The Oxford History of Mexico*, 349-355.

⁶ Ibid.

support, Mexico's opposition forces executed Maximilian, and Benito Juárez (Mexico's first indigenous president) restored the Republic and governed until 1872.⁷

Porfirio Díaz was elected president in 1876; because of the popularity he gained fighting the war against France. Dedicated to order and progress, the time period from 1876-1910 is known as the *Porfiriato*—named after the dictator Porfirio Díaz (full name José de la Cruz Porfirio Díaz Mori). Don Porfirio and his supporters aspired to increase central control, because they believed Mexico needed stronger leadership if it was to modernize. Inspired by Darwinian evolution theories, the Porfirian regime utilized Western European science and ideals in planning the future of Mexican society. The *científicos* believed that political stability was crucial to Mexico's development and would aid in the growth of its economy.⁸

Necessary to achieve this stability and advancement was economic development. Therefore, the administration built roads, telegraph lines, and railroads to encourage foreign investment. In doing so, Mexican and foreign entrepreneurs invested in export agriculture, the mining industry, and large-scale manufacturing.⁹ These investments led to an increased literacy rate, technological innovations, and improvements in distribution, allowing goods of mass consumption to become abundant and cheaper. Just as Mexico opened itself to foreign investors, the Federal District also welcomed imported recreations and commodities. New transportation and communication infrastructure facilitated new forms of media, and imported sports gave way to a variety of recreations, which shaped Porfirian popular culture. However, the modernization efforts boded ill for the majority of the nation's population who

⁷ Ibid, 359-372.

⁸ *Científicos* were technocratic advisors to President Porfirio Díaz and believed in the new European philosophies of positivism “scientific politics.” For more see Leopoldo Zea, *Positivism in Mexico*, trans. Josephine H. Schulte (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974).

⁹ Edward Beatty, *Institutions and Investment: The Political Basis of Industrialization in Mexico Before 1911* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 3-22.

were unable to enjoy the fruits of development. The gross national product did increase; however, only some middle class members benefitted from the creation of government jobs. The financial growth of Mexico seemed to amplify the country's economic and social inequalities.¹⁰

Particularly in Mexico City, these divisions left the country separated into an economic hierarchy of five levels. The first group was the elite/upper class, also known as the Mexican aristocrats. These wealthy and well-educated individuals served in the Porfirian administration, owned large *haciendas* [ranches], and/or worked as entrepreneurs. Most elites were men and women of European descent who lived in mansions along the Reforma, relaxed at the Jockey Club, and surrounded themselves in the fashions and luxuries of Paris, London, and New York. The middle class contained well-off workers, bureaucrats, and professionals. A majority of the middle class were of a *mestizo* ethnicity—meaning that these individuals had both European and indigenous heritage. Following in the footsteps of the elites, the middle class also worked to present itself as modern by wearing European fashions and owning imported luxuries. Lastly, the popular classes were divided into three groups.¹¹ The first tier, comprised of indigenous and mestizos, had lived in the city for sometime, and tended to have more money than the other lower classes, but was illiterate and financially unstable. The men and women sewed, labored in workshops, and sold goods in the markets. The next tier contained indigenous individuals who had migrated to the city from small villages, and managed to retain their traditional customs. Men wore wool coats, cotton pants, and leather sandals, while the women wrapped shawls around blouses and

¹⁰ Robert M. Buffington and William E. French, "The Culture of Modernity," in *The Oxford History of Mexico*, 373-406.

¹¹ For the purpose of this study, the term *popular classes* refer to the members of *lower-* and *working-class* social stratum.

braided their hair with string. As laborers, the men laid bricks, dug sewers and canals, and swept the streets. The lowest level in the Porfirian hierarchy included both mestizos and indigenous people who were recent migrants from villages and fields in the countryside. However, their abrupt transition to urban life provided few economic opportunities and most slept in plazas or on doorways and earned money as beggars, paperboys, and scullery maids.¹²

This uneven economic hierarchy incited tensions within society and threatened the process of national unity. Though modernity was pitched as the key to security, in practice it resulted in revolution and the exile of Díaz. Even today, historians and Mexicans alike still are unable to identify with the legacy of the Porfiriato, whether it was modern and stable or malicious and repressive. The ironic commentaries published in Mexico City's penny press and broadsides reflect the ambivalent consequences of modernity and convey how the Díaz administration was perceived at the time. Denouncing the Porfirian cult of modernity, broadsides with engravings by José Guadalupe Posada alerted the working-class readers to the contradictions created by the administration. Therefore, his work helps us understand the social tensions of the Porfiriato and the lifestyles of the masses.

José Guadalupe Posada

On February 2, 1852, Posada was born in Aguascalientes to a baker and his wife—Germán Posada and Petra Aguilar. Following in the footsteps of his brother José Cirilo, a primary school teacher, Posada showed a predisposition for art by making illustrations for pedagogical purposes. Posada had a fondness for drawing that led him to pursue an education at the Municipal Academy for Arts and Crafts and to apprentice for the printer José

¹² Michael Johns, *The City in the Age of Díaz* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997).

Trinidad Pedroza. Here Posada began creating satirical cartoons about local politics and was instructed in the art of lithography and etching for the publication *El Jicote* (The Wasp). Due to the mocking of local officials, Posada and Pedroza fled in 1872 from Aguascalientes to escape political harassment. In the state of Guanajuato, the two opened a new print shop in León de las Aldamas. Three years later, Posada married María de Jesús Vela, and he had a child (possibly with another woman) who died young. In 1876, Pedroza returned to Aguascalientes leaving Posada as the sole owner of the León print shop.¹³

Posada produced commercial works such as diplomas, party invitations, and magazine and book illustrations until 1884. At this time, Posada began teaching lithography at *Escuela de Instrucción Secundaria* (a vocational high school).¹⁴ A few years later, Posada left his provincial life and relocated to the capital. Exactly when and why Posada moved to Mexico City is uncertain, but he set up his own shop behind the National Palace not far from several of the publishers who would purchase his etchings and engravings. Within a few months, he was publishing illustrations for *La Juventud Literaria* [*The Literary Youth*] and *La Patria Ilustrada* [*The Illustrated Homeland*] edited by the politician Ireneo Paz. For reasons unknown, Posada's illustrations for these publications did not last long, so in 1889 he began working for broadsheet publisher Antonio Vanegas Arroyo.¹⁵

With the aid of Vanegas Arroyo, Posada became a chronicler of the people. He documented the life around him in his woodcuttings, engravings, and relief etchings on zinc.

¹³ For a chronology/biography of Posada's life see Julian Rothenstein, ed., *Posada, Messenger of Mortality* (Mt. Kisco, NY: Moyer Bell Limited, 1989), 26-29. See also *Posada: Mexican Engraver* (México: Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo, 2008), 45-60.

¹⁴ For more information on Posada's life in León, see Mariano González Leal, *La producción leonesa de José Guadalupe Posada* (León: Lito Offset Lumen, 1971).

¹⁵ Montserrat Galí Boadella, "José Guadalupe Posada: Tradition and Modernity in Images," in *Posada: Mexican Engraver*, 45-60.

Posada's engravings portrayed national characters from the grotesque and loveable drunkards, to politicians, bandits, circus performers, *soldaderas*, and street vendors. Posada would turn any social type into a *calavera*.¹⁶ His work attracted the popular classes' attention due to his knowledge of the Mexican people. Posada's ability to communicate with the masses through satiric weeklies or penny broadside illustrations established a graphic heritage for Mexico.

Even though Posada's work represents the Mexican people, we still know little about his own thoughts and perceptions. Where he lived and other aspects of his life remain uncertain; however, some of it can be reassembled. Today, only a few photographs of Posada survive. These photos show Posada as a well-fed stout man in a business suit.¹⁷ Similar to other artisans, Posada received three pesos a day for his work. This was a good living wage, compared to the much lower salary of one peso per day earned by factory and day laborers. Posada also was able to stay at home with a barrel of tequila for his annual vacations. Around the corner from his publisher Vanegas Arroyo's print shop, Posada's Mexico City office was located a few blocks from the National Palace and the zócalo. Decorated with a mixture of the traditional and modern, Posada's shop displayed prints of Michelangelo's *The Last Judgment*, lithographs of women performing the can-can, and portraits of the musical theater's female stars, providing an atmosphere of inspiration.¹⁸

¹⁶ *Soldaderas* are women soldiers of the Revolution. *Calaveras* are representations of skulls/skeletons that are associated with the Day of the Dead.

¹⁷ Tyler, *Posada's Mexico*, 2; Rothenstein, *Posada, Messenger of Mortality*, 10.

¹⁸ Anita Brenner and Jean Charlot, *Idols Behind Altars* (New York: Payson and Clarke, 1929), cited in Patrick Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets: Mexican Popular Imagery, 1890-1910* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998), 7. More information can be found in Héctor Olea, *Supervivencia del litógrafo José Guadalupe Posada* (México, D.F.: Editorial Araña, 1963), 38.

In learning about Posada's process, we can understand how he achieved certain effects, specifically his originality and characterization. His publishers recall that Posada created images by mounting them on a bed and printing them with raised type. He composed broadsheets of metal relief plates, combining handset type with relief illustrations, and he printed them on coarse black paper colored with vegetable dyes. Posada used black and white-line techniques for his broadsheets. When utilizing a black-line technique, Posada drew with acid resistant ink on zinc plates. He would then bathe the engraving in a nitric acid solution to create the negative spaces. If Posada wished to use the white-line technique, he would leave the subject in relief. This technique included a process of chiseling out the negative spaces from a soft metal plate. His relief illustrations were hastily produced and made on old equipment. Posada's illustrations probably took only a couple of hours to complete, because each broadsheet was relatively small, ranging from 15 x 10 cm to about 60 x 40 cm.¹⁹

As the regime censored the press, journalists faced imprisonment for opposing the government. The police repeatedly raided publishing offices; and so, these workplaces hung black funeral cloths to represent the death of the press's freedom. Whether the Porfirian forces ever imprisoned José Guadalupe Posada and his publisher Antonio Vanegas Arroyo is uncertain. However, the business connection between Vanegas Arroyo and the Díaz regime demonstrates that the dictator looked approvingly on the publisher, and the relationship allowed Posada to continue distributing his illustrations.²⁰

¹⁹ Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 6-7. For more information see Thomas Gretton, "Posada's Prints as Photomechanical Artifacts," *Print Quarterly* 9 (December 1992): 335-356.

²⁰ Patrick Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 9-10.

Posada Historiography

José Guadalupe Posada's unique style, influence, and copious production are areas of academic interest. The majority of Posada scholars are art historians who have focused on his methodology—his approach, attitude, audience, and material. However, studies on Posada's work have yet to utilize his art as a historical record. By using his broadsheets, chapbook covers, and other illustrations as a source, I intend to link Posada with the broader historiography of the Porfiriato and to use his work to reveal that the popular classes engaged in modern reforms.

As the most accessible and widely exhibited material of his repertoire, Posada's broadsheet images have received the most attention from scholars. In particular, the Vanegas Arroyo leaflets have been the subjects of major and minor exhibitions in North America. Most scholarly works published on Posada are catalogues and books based on these exhibitions. These books are written for art historians, theorists, and critics, and provide brief introductions. The works let the images speak for themselves and only present basic facts and succinct backgrounds. Such books include: *Posada's Popular Mexican Prints: 273 Cuts by José Guadalupe Posada* edited by Roberto Berdecio and Stanley Applebaum and *José Guadalupe Posada: Mexican Popular Prints* edited by Julian Rothenstein.²¹ The books *Corridos and Calaveras*, *José Guadalupe Posada: My Mexico* and *Las Calaveras Vivientes de Posada* provide a concise analysis of Posada's illustrations, and are more narrowly focused.²² While *Corridos and Calaveras* gives a brief exploration of *corridos* [ballads],

²¹ Roberto Berdecio and Stanley Applebaum, eds., *Posada's Popular Mexican Prints: 273 Cuts by José Guadalupe Posada* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1972); Julian Rothenstein, ed., *José Guadalupe Posada: Mexican Popular Prints* (London: Redstone Press, 1988).

²² José Guadalupe Posada, *José Guadalupe Posada: My Mexico* (Honolulu: The Gallery, 2001); Edward Laroque Tinker, *Corridos and Calaveras*, trans. Americo Paredes (Austin: University of Texas Press,

José Guadalupe Posada: My Mexico has a contributing essay that compares Posada's career to that of the artist Jean Charlot. On the other hand, *Las Calaveras Vivientes de Posada*, edited by Carlos Macazaga Ramírez de Arellano and César Macazaga Ordoño, traces the development of *calaveras*. Ramírez de Arellano and Macazaga Ordoño present solely those *calavera* images published by Arroyo, because they believe these to be the most popular and “*genial*” [brilliant].²³

One of the most influential Posada exhibitions was at the Library of Congress and the Fort Worth Amon Carter Museum of Western Art in 1979. Using these exhibitions, editor Ron Tyler combined essay contributions from various scholars to publish *Posada's Mexico*.²⁴ The Director for Special Collections at the Library of Congress, Alan Fern, writes that *Posada's Mexico* arose from a need to place Posada's work within its social and political environment, to explain the prints and their influences, and to suggest the sources that inspired his imagery. However, most of the contributing essays generally act as informative pieces and do not aid in achieving Fern's goal.²⁵

The essay by Ron Tyler places Posada into a historical context by giving a traditional account of Díaz's presidency. Tyler's concentration on Don Porfirio's modernization efforts and economic improvements neglects to explain the Federal District's corruption and difficult conditions of the lower class.²⁶ Jean Charlot's chapter provides a biography and

1961); Carlos Macazaga Ramírez de Arellano and César Macazaga Ordoño, *Las Calaveras vivientes de Posada* (México: Editorial Cosmos, 1977).

²³ Ramírez de Arellano and Macazaga-Ordoño, *Las calaveras vivientes de Posada*, 18.

²⁴ Tyler, *Posada's Mexico*.

²⁵ Alan Fern, foreword to *Posada's Mexico*, ix-x.

²⁶ Ron Tyler, “Posada's Mexico,” in *Posada's Mexico*, 3-27.

examines Posada's influence on Charlot and other Mexican modern artists.²⁷ Other essays such as Joyce Waddell Bailey's "The Penny Press" and Jacques Lafaye's "From Daily Life to Eternity" analyze Posada's artistic presentation. Along with a history of the penny newspapers, Bailey's essay focuses on the stylistic qualities of Posada. She determines that Posada's use of scale (to put focus on the subject) and composition (to indicate time change) set a standard for Mexico's future graphic artists.²⁸ Looking also at Posada's style, Lafaye's essay argues that Posada's detail and expressionistic stylization provide Mexico with an illustrated national history. Using photographic evidence and popular literature, Lafaye demonstrates that Posada's caricatures explain the events of his time.²⁹

From a historian's perspective, Jas Reuter's "The Popular Traditions" stands out within the collection as his interest lies in discovering why the lower class used their meager funds to buy the print matter illustrated by Posada.³⁰ Reuter argues that Posada's popularity came from his ability to "depict the people as they [were]."³¹ To explain Posada's appeal, Reuter examines the aspects of everyday life in the nineteenth century that Posada incorporated into his work. Reuter explains how Posada's popularity came from his plight as a graphic reporter, his sympathies for the peasantry, his adaptability, and his integration of popular traditions. Reuter claims that Posada's depictions of human-interest stories aroused the public's curiosity. Posada also engaged the lower classes through his portrayal of the poor's exploitation by the powerful. Posada's occasional depictions of Don Porfirio as a

²⁷ Jean Charlot, "Posada and His Successor," in *Posada's Mexico*, 29-57.

²⁸ Joyce Waddell Bailey, "The Penny Press," in *Posada's Mexico*, 85-121.

²⁹ Jacques Lafaye, "From Daily Life to Eternity," in *Posada's Mexico*, 123-139.

³⁰ Jas Reuter, "The Popular Traditions," in *Posada's Mexico*, 59-83.

³¹ *Ibid*, 76.

villain and his true-to-life representations of Díaz demonstrate his versatility. Posada depended on his audience to guide his work. He would engage them by creating art with which the people identified. Reuter shows that Posada's incorporation of popular traditions—such as Judas burnings and *pulque*—cultivated affection among his admirers. Whether it was Posada's use of popular traditions, his versatility, his depiction of the peasantry, or his graphic reporting, the public revered Posada.

Following in the footsteps of *Posada's Mexico*, Julian Rothenstein edited a catalogue of Posada's work in a book entitled *Posada: Messenger of Mortality*.³² The introduction, written by journalist and film theorist Peter Wollen, explains that Posada's art linked folk traditions with muralism.³³ Wollen, like Jean Charlot and Diego Rivera, believes that Posada's engravings provided the foundation for muralism in early twentieth-century Mexico. Wollen concludes that Posada's compositions reflect attitudes similar to those of the muralist painters from the 1900s such as Diego Rivera and José Clemente Orozco. References to muralism, the Mexican renaissance, cubism, and Russian surrealism indicate that Wollen writes for an audience with art theory backgrounds. This work is useful from an artistic perspective, but we still need to understand his work in its historical context.

Most recently, the Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo in Seville exhibited Posada's art and then published the book *Posada: Mexican Engraver*.³⁴ The goal of this exhibition was to acquaint the Spanish public with the works of Posada. The book contributors felt that Posada's vision reflected the majority of Porfirian society's attitudes

³² Rothenstein, *Posada, Messenger of Mortality*.

³³ Peter Wollen, Introduction to *Posada, Messenger of Mortality*, 14-23.

³⁴ Posada, *Posada Mexican Engraver*.

and opinions. A catalogue of Posada's illustrations, *Posada Mexican Engraver* contains two essays by Montserrat Galí Boadella and Mercurio López Casillas.

Galí Boadella's essay "José Guadalupe Posada: Tradition and Modernity in Images" explores the cultural contradictions of the Porfiriato.³⁵ Galí Boadella argues that Posada's illustrations are a reflection of this ambiguous time, because his work incorporated a combination of the traditional themes of Western graphic art with modern critical journalism. The author posits that a similarity exists in the styles of Posada's corrido illustrations and Spain's traditional prose drawings, while his techniques incorporate the new capitalist methods of print engraving. López Casilla's essay "Posada: Professional of the Image" looks at Posada's career.³⁶ He argues that Posada was not what we consider an artist today. Instead, he lived as an independent and specialized artisan, one who worked for a client and had little choice in the manner his art was produced and distributed. In analyzing broadsides, chapbooks, and other published images, López Casillas states that Posada delivered original plates to a client (not a patron), and the client would then modify the plates as he saw fit. The owner of the plate could change or add lettering, and could determine how many prints would be drawn, reused, and titled.

Posada's *calavera* images—skeletal portrayals of various social types (see Figure 2)—are the main area studied by academics.³⁷ Focusing solely on calavera art, Jean Charlot and Fritz Eichenberg's short essay, *Posada's Dance of Death*, examines four of Posada's relief

³⁵ Montserrat Galí Boadella, "José Guadalupe Posada: Tradition and Modernity in Images," in *Posada Mexican Engraver*, 45-62.

³⁶ Mercurio López Casillas, "Posada: Professional Image," in *Posada Mexican Engraver*, 85-97.

³⁷ Posada, "La calavera Oaxaqueña," broadside, 1903, *Museo del Estanquillo José Guadalupe Posada: Cronica de un Cronista*, Mexico City, Mexico.

engravings (see Figure 3).³⁸ Charlot explores the calavera illustrations and reveals the symbolism imbedded in the skeletal imagery. He claims that the satire indicates that true equality only comes with death.

One of the most profound studies on Posada imagery comes from art historian Patrick Frank. His monograph *Posada's Broadsheets: Mexican Popular Imagery, 1890-1910* provides a close examination of Posada's extensive broadside work.³⁹ Assessing the many stories that served as sources for Posada's imagery, Frank pinpoints the French, Spanish, and Mexican influences on Posada's style. French inspiration came to Posada through the sensational crimes depicted in Parisian *canards*.⁴⁰ Posada's incorporation of lurid illustrations and dramatic tension in his crime prints indicate stylistic similarities with the *canards*. Similar to the argument made by Galí Boadella, Frank suggests that Posada's corrido drawings descended from Spain's romance song illustrations. Frank also demonstrates that the rise of magazine technology and the increased traffic between Spain and Mexico enabled Posada to borrow the Spanish iconography. Posada's black line work owes a great deal to his Mexican contemporaries. Frank posits that the similarities in the linear style and emphatic characterizations of Posada, José María Villasana, and Daniel Cabrera—artists also employed by the magazine *La Patria Ilustrada*—cannot be considered a mere coincidence.

By tracing his sources, Frank argues that Posada's artwork reflected the viewpoint of the urban popular classes. He argues that Posada's illustrations voiced the concerns of

³⁸ Posada, "Unknown Title," relief etching, not dated, image in Jean Charlot and Fritz Eichenberg, *Posada's Dance of Death* (New York: Pratt Graphic Art Center, 1964) 1-4.

³⁹ Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*.

⁴⁰ A *canard* is a broadside hawked by young Parisian street criers. Similar to Mexican broadsheets, the *canard* took themes from current events and focused on crime. *Ibid*, 10.

broadsheet buyers, a “subculture, with their own concerns, outlooks and ways of thinking.”⁴¹ By amplifying and embellishing the figures’ visual characterization—facial expression, posture, etc.—Posada endowed his actors with strength at intense moments of their lives and sympathetically portrayed the common Mexican. The author also demonstrates the class antagonisms within Porfirian society. The cartoonist’s depiction of self-absorbed, fashion-driven bourgeoisie social types shows Posada’s bafflement with the upper- and middle-classes and indicates that he did not sympathize with their lifestyles.

Overview

These scholars provide an understanding of Posada’s methodologies through their examination of the material with which he worked. However, historians have yet to generate monographs utilizing Posada’s artwork as a historical record to understand the lives of ordinary people. In my thesis, I intend to link Posada’s illustrations and the broader Mexican historiography to demonstrate that the popular classes enjoyed elements of modernization.

A majority of Posada’s drawings pinpoint particular events in the lives of everyday people. His depiction of these specific occasions provides a source of information for historians. They portray occurrences that Posada and his publisher thought to be important, and they narrate the lives for those who could not (or did not) leave written records. By utilizing the images of everyday activities, I will show how his portrayal reflects the popular classes’ feelings toward the regime’s efforts at order and progress. I will argue that the popular classes not only participated in the development of Mexico, but also enjoyed and benefitted from elements of modernization.

⁴¹ Ibid.

The images I analyze for this study come from a visit to the 2013 José Guadalupe Posada exhibition held at the Museo del Estanquillo in Mexico City.⁴² All other Posada imagery comes from the digitized Amon Carter Museum Collection in Fort Worth, Texas.⁴³ Posada's broadsheet illustrations connect closely to the accompanying text added by the publishing houses. Therefore, the majority of scholarship written on Posada does not separate his images from the text; instead, academics give equal attention to both. For our purposes, this method presents a problem. By placing equal emphasis on the text and the image, we lose Posada's perspective in the words added by his publishers and clients. As López Casillas argued in his article for *Posada: Mexican Engraver*, publishers could modify, reuse, and title Posada's work (Posada never titled his own images).⁴⁴ Therefore, the text that appears with his images reflects the publishers' attitudes and opinions, not those of Posada. I am diverging from the typical research method, because I want to focus exclusively on Posada and his representation of the peoples' views. I will solely examine Posada's engravings and use the accompanying text for context only.

The plethora of academic research on the Porfirian era will provide a foundation to assist in recreating a historical context. As the study of Mexican popular culture continues to grow, more secondary resources have become available. Using work from popular culture historians such as William Beezley, Steven Bunker, and William French, I will identify mass cultural trends at the turn of the twentieth century. To enhance this foundation, I will survey various newspapers, magazines, advertisements, and other related lithographs.

⁴² José Guadalupe Posada, *Museo del Estanquillo José Guadalupe Posada: Crónica de un Cronista*, Mexico City, Mexico.

⁴³ José Guadalupe Posada, *Amon Carter Museum of American Art: Collections*, Fort Worth, Texas, http://www.cartermuseum.org/custom/acm_results.php (accessed November 12, 2013).

⁴⁴ López Casillas, "Posada: Professional Image," in *Posada Mexican Engraver*, 85-97.

My thesis has two parts. The first chapter, “*Sombreros and Salsa: The Historiography of Popular Culture in Porfirian Mexico, 1876-1910*,” provides an overview of the scholarship on Porfirian popular culture. As monographs on the culture of Porfirian Mexico increase, the literature demonstrates how the popular classes influenced Mexican society. I situate the studies into three general trends of research. First are historical monographs and articles arguing that the Mexican elite manipulated the popular classes into participating in the newly modernized society. The next trend I examine is work by scholars who contend that the popular classes rebelled against the modernization of Mexico. Finally, I present research showing that the popular classes participated in the modernization of the country. Focusing on the culture of Mexico’s popular classes, scholars have illuminated people’s everyday lives and provided us with a better understanding of Porfirian Mexico. While these scholars have offered crucial interpretations, I explain how their works neglect iconography as a method of approach.

In the following chapter, “*Popular Perspectives: Posada’s Perception of Lower Class Participation in Porfirian Modernization*,” I examine Porfirian popular culture in the images of José Guadalupe Posada. Initially, I will discuss how scholars have concurred that Posada created art that faithfully portrayed the lives of the popular classes. Because his work reveals the relationships, activities, and perspectives of the masses, I will utilize Posada’s art to explore the popular classes’ view of the elite. When analyzing the tension in his images, I find that they reveal the working class’s animosity toward elites and the middle class. However, this antagonism did not stop the people from participating in modernization. Posada’s prints depicting imported recreations and Porfirian reforms show that the populace participated in aspects of modernization from which they benefitted.

Historians ask questions regarding the Porfiriato: How did the Mexican populace view the Porfirian regime? What were popular attitudes and feelings towards the growing class divisions? Did the working masses act as willing participants in government efforts towards modernization? In the following chapters, I will use Posada's illustrations to answer these questions, and argue that Posada depiction of the popular classes as willing participants in the new progressive culture of Mexico.

I

The Historiography of Popular Culture in Porfirian Mexico

Fascinating both Mexican and foreign scholars, Porfirian Mexico has inspired research and generated works for over one hundred years. The majority of academic literature highlights Díaz's personal monopolization of power, Mexico's economic development, and the administration's efforts to establish national unity. Most of these texts analyze political or economic history and solely emphasize elite affairs. But what was life like for those people who found hardship among Díaz's order and progress? For many Mexicans, modernization meant a cost of living increase and declining wages. Up until the mid-twentieth century, scholars neglected the lives of ordinary Mexicans during the Porfiriato. To fill this gap, researchers set out to explore the culture of Mexico from 1876-1910.¹ Their research demonstrates two major thematic shifts: 1) from ideological analyses to understanding government efforts at modernization and 2) from elite and state perspectives to that of the popular classes. The historiography of Porfirian popular culture reveals the complexities and tensions involved in the process of modernizing Mexican society.

Traditional studies of Porfirian Mexico emphasize the dissemination of leading political and economic philosophies—positivism and social Darwinism—and reveal how elite ideals influenced society (known as a “top-down” approach). Scholars such as Leopoldo Zea and Charles A. Hale provided a foundation for cultural examinations and continue to influence Porfirian historians. Zea, a leading scholar of the Porfiriato, examined the spread of positivist philosophy from its birth in France to its incorporation into the politics of Porfirian Mexico. His 1943 book *El positivismo en México* argues that elite

¹ For purposes of this study, *culture* refers to the set of shared values, attitudes, and practices associated with a particular society.

positivist ideals thrived in Mexico as the Porfirian administration sought to establish political and economic order.² Zea found in positivism a justification for *científico* interests. Almost fifty years later, Hale's *The Transformation of Liberalism in Late Nineteenth Century Mexico* (1990) analyzes the change in Mexican political ideology after 1867.³ Hale initially aimed to find a relationship between the government's economic policies and political platforms. However, in tracing the ideas of Mexico's intellectual and governmental elite, he discovered that the official liberal tradition contended with (and was transformed by) positivist concepts. Hale argues that Mexican liberalism is defined by this transformation of social thought.⁴ Additionally, he emphasizes the role positivism played in refashioning Mexican higher education. Even though these scholars greatly influenced studies of the Porfiriato, their "top-down" approaches to history limited the understanding of the period, because they only provide insight on a small group of people.

As "new social history" emerged in the 1970s, scholars took notice of the limitations of traditional studies. "New social history" scholars purported that traditional research neglected the everyday life of the popular classes by concentrating its interpretations exclusively on the elite. Therefore, these new historians began applying a "bottom-up" approach by centering their focus on the popular classes' roles in politics, the economy, and cultural affairs. As research into the culture of Porfirian Mexico continues to grow, the historiography shows how the popular classes influenced Mexican society. The purpose of this chapter is to categorize and illuminate research that utilizes popular culture as a tool in

² Leopoldo Zea, *Positivism in Mexico*, trans. Josephine H. Schulte (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974).

³ Charles A. Hale, *The Transformation of Liberalism in Later Nineteenth Century Mexico* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

⁴ Classic liberalism supported ideas such as freedom and the power of a secular authority. It also maintained a vision for social progress. For more see Hale's *The Transformation of Liberalism*, 4.

examining the lives of the masses. In order to trace the development of historical literature on Porfirian popular culture, I will situate the studies thematically into three general research trends: how the elite manipulated popular classes into participating in the new modernized society, how the popular classes rebelled against the modernization of Mexico, and how the popular classes willingly participated in the development of the country. Continuing to challenge traditional research, my analysis builds on the “new social” historians’ conclusions. By utilizing illustrations of popular culture by the artist José Guadalupe Posada, my thesis will reveal that Posada saw the masses participating in elements of modernization. Because his engravings recorded the peasantry’s lifestyle and opinions, an analysis of Posada’s work will show that the Mexican people not only benefitted from elements of modernization but also enjoyed imported entertainment.

Elite Manipulation

Mid nineteenth-century Mexico was a time of reform as the country’s leaders aimed to calm the turbulence of the early independence period and the nineteenth century. Rallying under Benito Juárez, liberal supporters triumphed in a mid-century civil war against conservatives. Upon Juárez’s victory, Mexican elites pressured the government into fulfilling its promises of reform.⁵ The political imposition of liberal ideologies required popular participation in order to sustain the modernization efforts. The masses’ acceptance of liberalism has led some academics to conclude that the Mexican political and intellectual elite manipulated the lower class into reforming society. Upper-class control over popular involvement in modernization is one of the first positions taken by Porfirian popular culture

⁵ Paul Vanderwood, “Betterment for Whom? The Reform Period: 1855-75,” in *The Oxford History of Mexico*, 349-372.

historians. Scholars approach this theme in two ways: 1) how elites used popular culture to define the Porfiriato and impose their beliefs on society, and 2) how elites used popular culture in a symbolic dramatization of state power to legitimize their own authority.

Utilizing popular culture to define and create a modern Mexico, elites imposed their beliefs and values on the pueblo. Henry C. Schmidt's *The Roots of Lo Mexicano: Self and Society in Mexican Thought, 1900-1934*, published in 1978, explores the intellectual and cultural origins of *lo mexicano*.⁶ With the country having been splintered by foreign intervention and civil war, Mexican liberal reformers aimed to unify Mexico once again. Schmidt examines how both intellectuals and politicians tried to appeal to the masses by utilizing literature, art, *orquesta típica* [typical orchestra], and puppet shows to incite interest in a national culture, or a Mexican identity—*Lo Mexicano*. Schmidt argues that the Porfirian regime's steadily growing relationship with Western Europe caused creative tensions between a cosmopolitan and native national identity, resulting in the further polarization of the Mexican nation. However, he discovers that elites embraced French positivist philosophies and U.S. political policies and incorporated them into their definition of Mexicanism. In doing so, Mexican intellectuals encouraged the production of historical literature that used liberal and positivist ideologies to educate Mexican citizens about their past. This literature created an intellectual foundation of nationalism that enabled the Mexican populace to become self-aware.

Similar to *The Roots of Lo Mexicano*, works by William E. French and James A. Garza examine how the imposition of elite moral values forced the popular classes to participate in the modernization of Mexico. French's 1992 article, "Prostitutes and Guardian

⁶ Henry C. Schmidt, *The Roots of Lo Mexicano: Self and Society in Mexican Thought, 1900-1934* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1978).

Angels: Women, Work, and the Family in Porfirian Mexico,” explores the reasons for class differentiation in Porfirian Mexico.⁷ Analyzing moral reforms, the social construction of gender, and the introduction of the capitalist work ethic, French reveals that the upper class took efforts to “civilize” all social groups in the image of the new middle class. He argues that middle-class Mexicans incorporated components from nineteenth-century British and U.S. values, known as the “cult of domesticity.”⁸ These middle-class reformers believed and promoted virtue, education, work, and moralization as necessary elements in achieving a civilized lifestyle. Order and progress meant more than economic development. To the middle class, morality and civilization were at stake for the future of Mexico. French suggests that the elites founded schools, advocated the mothers’ role in the home, and pushed for moral legislation. They believed only through moral education could working-class vice dissipate and become civilized.

Analyzing infamous crimes, Garza’s *The Imagined Underworld: Sex, Crime, and Vice in Porfirian Mexico City* demonstrates how elites sought to impose a national culture through morality.⁹ Garza illustrates how elites used criminal culture to construct what they thought society should be. When exploring stories of crimes such as “El Chalequero” (Mexico’s Jack the Ripper), Garza finds that elites forged an official narrative, which differed from the original stories. One of the most important case studies involved the serial killer Francisco Guerrero. The state used Guerrero’s crimes to construct a vision of a degenerate world. The press linked Guerrero’s underclass background and crimes to depict

⁷ William E. French, “Prostitutes and Guardian Angels: Women, Work, and the Family in Porfirian Mexico,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 72, no. 4 (November 1992): 529-552.

⁸ For more on the “cult of domesticity” see Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860,” *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1966): 151-174.

⁹ James A. Garza, *The Imagined Underworld: Sex, Crime, and Vice in Porfirian Mexico City* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007).

the urban poor as vicious, degenerate, sexually promiscuous, and dangerous. Garza concludes that the mythicized messages of underclass criminality reinforced an ‘ideal’ that drew both social and physical boundaries between social classes.

Elites also used ceremonies, rituals, memorials, and illustrated magazines to establish a national identity and to construct their own culture. Scholars have found that by using popular customs, Mexican political leaders were able to establish a symbolic dramatization and justification of state power. Matthew D. Esposito’s *Funerals, Festivals, and Cultural Politics in Porfirian Mexico* explores over one hundred state funerals and approximately twenty national celebrations in the thirty-five year Porfiriato.¹⁰ Esposito posits that Díaz used every means possible—religious, spiritual, scientific, and others—to construct a cultural identity that legitimized his control. When examining how and why nation-builders combined death and progress, Esposito shows how the Porfirian state constructed heroes and a national memory. By controlling those who were being celebrated, the state was able to simultaneously appeal to the sentiments of the popular classes and promote the regime’s hegemony. Esposito reveals that the state hosted and financed funerals and civic rituals that united Mexican citizens by reconciling their feelings toward the nation’s troubled past. Similarly, the Porfirian control of civic festivals presented an opportunity for the state to offer a genealogical view of itself. Esposito writes, “Political legitimacy and authority were won not through democratic processes, well-developed political institutions, and free elections but through organized civic parades, popular processions, and mass gatherings that passed as informal plebiscites for the state.”¹¹

¹⁰ Matthew D. Esposito, *Funerals, Festivals, and Cultural Politics, in Porfirian Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 86.

A collection of fifteen essays, *Rituals of Rule, Rituals of Resistance* presents assessments on public festivals throughout Mexican history.¹² Three of the fifteen essays consider how public rituals and celebrations manipulated popular classes into accepting Porfirian terms of modernization. The first is Barbra A. Tenenbaum's essay "Streetwise History: The Paseo de la Reforma and the Porfirian State, 1876-1910." Her essay analyzes the public art, architecture, and monuments on the wide avenue that runs through Mexico City. Tenenbaum argues that the Mexican elite implemented programs to create murals that educated the poor. Satisfying both "Francophile progressives" and "nationalist mythologizers," the Paseo de la Reforma molded a national identity by exhibiting monuments honoring both Mexico's indigenous roots and European future.¹³

"Proletarians, Políticos, and Patriarchs: The Use and Abuse of Cultural Customs in the Early Industrialization of Mexico City, 1880-1910," by Tony Morgan, examines the links between government, industry, and labor.¹⁴ He focuses on the way in which cultural devices bound industries and workers together. In the 1870s, mill owners dominated working class lifestyles, similar to traditional life on the hacienda. By the late 1890s, however, modifications to the city provided the popular classes with freedom away from the control of their restrictive bosses. Better electricity, new machinery, and mobility by trams changed the nature of work and social relations in the city center. Mexico City's economic advancement increased hope among workers to find change for the better in this modern society. Morgan contends that authorities instilled a paternalistic ethos and relied on political co-optation in

¹² William Beezley, Cheryl English Martin, and William E. French, eds., *Rituals of Rule, Rituals of Resistance: Public Celebrations and Popular Culture in Mexico* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1994).

¹³ Barbra A. Tenenbaum, "Streetwise History: The Paseo de la Reforma and the Porfirian State, 1876-1910," in *Rituals of Rule, Rituals of Resistance*, 127-150.

¹⁴ Tony Morgan, "Proletarians, Políticos, and Patriarchs: The Use and Abuse of Cultural Customs in the Early Industrialization of Mexico City, 1880-1910," in *Rituals of Rule, Rituals of Resistance*, 151-171.

order to maintain social control of the working class. He demonstrates how industries modified workers' estates, celebrations, and provided education to gain their employees' support and affection. Morgan describes how the tobacco company El Buen Tono built model workers' estates complete with electric lighting and running hot water because the company recognized the need to meet their employees' modernist aspirations. Morgan also shows that factory owners provided benefits for their workers by hosting banquets and providing schools. Occasionally, companies would promote religious traditions as a means to bind the workers to the mill. In 1891, political authorities began to make efforts to link the city's work force with support for the regime. Using superficial displays of enthusiasm and allegiance, the political elite pandered to the workers' taste for celebrations. The Junta Central Porfirista held festivals in honor of Díaz's birthday, which cemented the relationship between the administration and business elite. The *ayuntamiento* (city council) members also bounded the capital's workers to the regime by organizing a procession of three thousand laborers who paraded before Díaz's palace.¹⁵

The last essay published in *Rituals of Rule, Rituals of Resistance* contains an analysis by the leading scholar of Mexican popular culture history, William H. Beezley. His essay "The Porfirian Smart Set Anticipates Thorstein Veblen in Guadalajara" focuses on the government's dismissal of public festivals and invention of new traditions to convey the regime's authority.¹⁶ According to Beezley, the modern bureaucrats regarded traditional public celebrations as primitive, disorderly, and licentious. Therefore, they instituted bicycle parades and military displays that had a didactic purpose, demonstrating the regime's order,

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ William H. Beezley, "The Porfirian Smart Set Anticipates Thorstein Veblen in Guadalajara," in *Rituals of Rule, Rituals of Resistance*, 173-190.

authority, and beliefs. Beezley suggests that the government invented new traditions that transformed celebrations from presentation (general participation) to representation (majority of people being reduced to an audience). These new rituals emphasized a division between the participants (political leaders) and audiences and encouraged private/individual celebrations.

The government not only utilized control over cultural customs to legitimize the administration's authority, but the regime used images displayed in newspapers and magazines as well. The monograph *Puros cuentos: La historia de la historieta en México*, by Juan Manuel Aurrecoechea and Armando Bartra, analyzes newspaper cartoons in Mexico City.¹⁷ When tracing the development and popularity of political cartoons, Aurrecoechea and Bartra suggest that late nineteenth-century newspapers became more commercialized to promote the modern consumerism established by the regime. They argue that newspaper publishers turned to cartoons and caricatures to increase readership and sell more newspapers, following the goals set forth by the Porfirian administration. By doing so, papers began selling to a wider audience and included a large variety of images.

New technological advances also aided the Porfirian government in legitimizing Díaz's regime. Nationalist messages in photos transformed into representations of a modern country with the rise of Porfirio Díaz. The development of the daguerreotype aided Don Porfirio in legitimizing his administration and encouraged the regime's efforts in establishing progress and order. Judith de la Torre Rendón's article, "Las imágenes fotográficas de la sociedad mexicana en la prensa gráfica del Porfiriato" explores the photographic images of

¹⁷ Juan Manuel Aurrecoechea and Armando Bartra, *Puros cuentos: la historia de la historieta en México, 1874-1934* (Mexico: Consejo Nacional de Fomento Educativo, 1988).

the Porfirian press.¹⁸ De la Torre Rendón contends that this period's photographic prints did not depict a reality; instead, the administration and the elites utilized the medium to legitimize Don Porfirio's dictatorship. She identifies the publications *El Tiempo Ilustrado* (1891-1914), *El Mundo Ilustrado* (1894-1914), and *El Álbum de Damas* (1907-1908) as the best representations of journalism at the time and utilizes their printed images as her primary sources. She demonstrates that the quality of photos printed in these publications provided a tangible example of the prosperity that Porfirian modernization hoped to provide. De la Torre Rendón also suggests that the photographs were constructed as an image of an ideal society in order to legitimize the Porfirian regime and to justify the elite's existence. These photos depicted individuals in an atmosphere of relaxation and well being. The people photographed represented themselves as bourgeois individuals in leisurely positions with European clothing. Capturing moments of harmony, these images reflected a progressive lifestyle that Díaz hoped to bring with modernization.

Also utilizing the medium of photography, John Mraz authored *Looking for Mexico: Modern Visual Culture and National Identity* to trace the formation of a national identity.¹⁹ Analyzing photography and cinema, Mraz demonstrates how Mexicans used ocular media to establish a national identity from 1847-2007. His chapter "War, Portraits, Mexican Types, and Porfirian Progress (1847-1910)" focuses on the administration's efforts to establish a national identity and promote modernization through photography.²⁰ He argues that photography and *tarjetas de visita* [visiting cards, similar to trading cards] mark the rise of

¹⁸ Judith de la Torre Rendón, "Las imágenes fotográficas de la sociedad mexicana en la prensa gráfica del porfiriato," *Historia Mexicana* 48, no. 2 (October-December 1998): 343-373.

¹⁹ John Mraz, *Looking for Mexico: Modern Visual Culture and National Identity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

²⁰ *Ibid*, 13-58.

modern visual culture in Mexico. Mraz suggests that the country's new technical capabilities popularized specific individuals and originated the celebrity. Wealthy urban areas represented the modern mentality of progress encouraged by Díaz's regime. Therefore, the luminous photographs depicted in *Cronica oficial* (a journal marking the 100-year anniversary celebrations of Mexican Independence) testified to the country's technical capabilities for the magazine's use of the daguerreotype and mass publication.

Mraz's analysis of Porfirian photography also led Mraz to research one of the first visual mass mediums, *tarjetas de visita*. *Tarjetas* descended from a French import known as *carte de visite*. In both France and Mexico, these cards consisted of thin paper photographs mounted on a thicker paper, making a small card-like portrait. Similar to today's business cards, *tarjetas* would be exchanged between visitors and friends in the nineteenth century.²¹ The early practitioners of photography were mainly foreigners who travelled across the country taking photographs. The expense of these portraits excluded the majority of the population from having their portraits done. The clients who appear in these "personal calling cards" represented themselves as bourgeois individuals through their leisurely poses, European style clothing, and standardized settings.²²

Mraz also demonstrates how some *tarjetas*, from the studio Cruces y Campa, incorporated various "Mexican types."²³ Cruces y Campa depicted Positivist theories by picking the particular aspects of society they wanted to promote. Cruces y Campa ignored urban workers and indigenous peoples. Instead, they focused on preserving specific aspects of Mexico's culture such as traditional *charro* outfits and *pulqueros*. Cruces y Campa

²¹ Mick Gidley, *Photography and the USA* (London: Reaktion, 2011) 31-98.

²² Mraz, *Looking for Mexico*, 20.

²³ A "Mexican type" refers to popular classes subjects doing "everyday" activities.

represented charros as Mexican horsemen wearing clothing pieces such as a sombrero, metallic trimmed bolero, and tight pants. Pulqueros prepared and sold the traditional milk-colored alcoholic drink made from the fermented sap of an agave plant. By exposing these colorful street vendors and trades, Cruces y Campa used the country's exoticism to play to foreign voyeuristic interest. Mraz suggests that this image of Mexico produced an "honorable poor" who were independent, industrious, and well groomed. The regime believed that these *tarjetas* would provoke interest from foreign investors and appease the classes that bought them.²⁴

In order to legitimate Díaz's regime and its reforms, the administration not only had to gain the confidence of the upper class, but that of the masses as well. Putting to use the new daguerreotype, the elite captured moments of an ideal modern society on film to legitimate the regime's reforms and to justify the social hierarchy. Meanwhile, the transformation of traditional customs into state displays of power aided the Porfirian administration in instilling a paternalistic ethos onto the populace. The above historians believed that the masses' acceptance of liberalism resulted from elite manipulation of popular culture. Even though De la Torre Rendón and Mraz's analyses of visual culture are innovative, their work—as well as the other scholarly literature—comes from a bourgeoisie perspective. The majority of these scholars' sources derive from records left by heads of companies, architects, and publishing houses.

Popular Rebellion

As secularization and commercialization increased, liberal leaders faced growing opposition from conservative institutions and past social arrangements. The next section

²⁴ Mraz, *Looking for Mexico*, 21-58.

provides an analysis of scholars who have examined the ways in which the popular classes rebelled against modernization. Historians such as William E. French, John Lear, Michael Johns, and Pablo Piccato focus on urban areas to demonstrate working-class resistance to modernization. French's essay "*Progreso Forzado: Workers and the Inculcation of the Capitalist Work Ethic in the Parral Mining District*" examines workers' opposition to middle-class values.²⁵ Differing from his article in the previous section, "Prostitutes and Guardian Angels," French moves his focus from the domestic sphere to the public sphere. He demonstrates that industrial workers, from northern Coahuila to the copper mines of Sonora, shared aspects of popular culture such as drinking, gambling, and prostitution. He shows that wage earners asserted their individual worth by imposing their own schedules, rules of behavior, and access to streets and public places. French maintains that skilled workers asserted their equality with the middle class and developed a process of negotiation that advanced their notions of fair wages and work times. He states, "Rather than spurn popular culture, [the workers] drew from it to contest and refashion middle-class discourse."²⁶

Lear's article "Mexico City: Space and Class in the Porfirian Capital, 1884-1910" analyzes the spatial effects of development and technological changes within Mexico City.²⁷ He argues that the practice of forced "civilization" (removal of indigenous from the urban center) benefited the needs and desires of Mexico's economic and governing elites but ultimately undermined their authority by inciting social upheavals. Lear finds that the transformations of urban space, emanating from a small group of Mexico City industrialists,

²⁵ William E. French, "*Progreso Forzado: Workers and the Inculcation of the Capitalist Work Ethic in the Parral Mining District*," in *Rituals of Rule, Rituals of Resistance*, 191-212.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 207.

²⁷ John Lear, "Mexico City: Space and Class in the Porfirian Capital, 1884-1910," *Journal of Urban History* 22, no. 4 (May 1996): 454-492.

led to the creation of working-class neighborhoods. These neighborhoods constructed a working-class assertiveness that overcame previous respect for political authority and the wealthy. As this working-class consciousness grew, these new communities began asserting themselves in public areas, demanding affordable housing and food. The collective demands were difficult to ignore and threatened the larger order, especially among streetcar and electrical workers as their action could bring the city to a halt.

Published a year later, Michael Johns' short monograph *The City of Mexico in the Age of Díaz* echoes Lear's article.²⁸ Johns focus on the capital's role in establishing a national identity, instead of looking specifically at spatial organization and working-class experiences. In discussing the central features of Mexican popular culture, Johns shows how popular classes resisted elite domination, particularly with bullfights. To soften Mexico's notorious image of violence among Europeans and North Americans, the city outlawed the fights several times between 1867 and 1886. Liberal papers, the Catholic Church, and even President Díaz's wife, Carmen, had fulminated against the spectacles. However, the country's fascination with bullfighting would not cease. For the popular classes, bullfights exemplified the key notions of Mexican masculinity and established a ritual that exemplified violence. So, by 1886 Díaz reestablished the legality of bullfights.

Piccato's *City of Suspects: Crime in Mexico City, 1900-1931* explores the multiple dimensions of crime in the Porfirian era.²⁹ Instead of examining criminal narratives like Garza, Piccato analyzes the perceptions of segments of society toward crime. He demonstrates how the upper and lower class saw each other as suspects. While the

²⁸ Johns, *The City of Mexico in the Age of Díaz*.

²⁹ Pablo Piccato, *City of Suspects: Crime in Mexico City, 1900-1931* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001).

authorities and elites suspected the lower class of criminal tendencies, the popular classes accused the wealthy and powerful of corruption and injustice. He argues that the state's actions and institutions manipulated the public's view of the offenders. However, Piccato shows how the urban lower class resisted and negotiated crime and punishment. As in Lear's article, modernizing elites forced the urban poor into distinct neighborhoods. Piccato demonstrates that Porfirian city planners were unable to keep the poor classes confined to their designated areas within the city. Seeking wages and water, the urban poor weakened the social borders constructed by elite urban planners, which led to a rise of crimes against property. Even though lower-class urban communities condemned crime, they did not support state views on punishment. Piccato shows how these communities steadily built rehabilitation programs in spite of state authority. These programs would educate criminals and aid delinquents in social adaptation upon their release from prison.

Incorporating examples of resistance in rural areas, William Beezley and his former student Jeffery Pilcher expand on the narrative of popular resistance. Both works by Beezley and Pilcher analyze the various ways in which *cientificos*' implementations of new technologies (like refrigerated meat packing) or eradication of popular traditional ceremonies (such as the burning of Judas effigies) increased popular discord as the division between the elite and working class continued to expand. One of Beezley's most significant works *Judas at the Jockey Club and Other Episodes of Porfirian Mexico* explores sporting activities and other aspects of social-cultural life.³⁰ Beezley demonstrates society's conflicted nature, traditionalists versus progressives, and specifically examines the conflict at the 1884 Jockey Club celebration for Díaz's inauguration. Beezley proposes that Mexican elites desired

³⁰ William H. Beezley, *Judas at the Jockey Club and Other Episodes of Porfirian Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987).

political centralization and economic expansion and used negative foreign opinions of Mexican customs to marginalize and eradicate these traditional celebrations. They adopted and implemented foreign (European and North American) forms of leisure and recreation. However, popular classes continued the practice of Judas burnings to demonstrate their aversion to the established hegemony.³¹

Jeffery Pilcher emphasizes the participation of individuals whose stories tend to be neglected by historians. Through an examination of food, Pilcher reveals how women participated in fashioning a national identity in his book *¡Que vivan los tamales! Food and the Making of Mexican Identity*.³² Pilcher primarily analyzes the relationship between gender, modernization, and the growing middle class as Mexican society began to accept a mestizo cuisine. He shows how positivist intellectuals supported a science of nutrition, alleging that corn was inferior to wheat and claiming that the progress depended on the elimination of corn from the Indians' diet. While economic and governing elites were working to establish a new European diet, Pilcher contends that female cooks held on to their roots by preparing indigenous foods. He also indicates that women simultaneously began publishing community cookbooks that collected recipes containing distinctly Mexican elements. He argues that upper- and middle-class nostalgia for popular Mexican flavors eventually overpowered elite desires for European dishes, which contributed to creating mestizo nationalism.³³

³¹ Beginning in colonial times, the burnings and explosions of Judas of Iscariot effigies represented a celebration of Easter mass. Over time, these effigies transformed into a parody of local bureaucrats and political figures, as they rarely represented Judas of Iscariot. For more see Beezley, *Judas at the Jockey Club*, 3-4.

³² Jeffery M. Pilcher, *¡Que vivan los tamales! Food and the Making of Mexican Identity* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998).

³³ A *mestizo* is a person of European and indigenous descent.

Another Pilcher article, “*Fajitas* and the Failure of Refrigerated Meatpacking in Mexico: Consumer Culture and Porfirian Capitalism,” shows how Mexican popular classes resisted modernization through an examination of meat culture.³⁴ Analyzing the meat packing industry, Pilcher demonstrates the significance of the consumer culture in shaping Mexican capitalism. He argues that domestic attempts to modernize the country’s meatpacking failed due to traditional Mexican taste preferences and working class opposition. Pilcher shows that cooks continued to prepare meat in a traditional way even after consumption patterns among the elite changed to the French fashion for eating beef. Nineteenth century annual statistics confirm that elites transitioned from eating Hispanic mutton to French beef, but cookbooks show that mutton and beef consumption remained about equal. Pilcher explains next that Porfirian *cientificos* placed faith in imported technology, but they were uncertain of the appropriate technology needed for Mexico. As a municipal abattoir, the 1897 Peralvillo slaughterhouse failed. The city incorrectly outfitted the abattoir with equipment causing the packinghouse to function without the necessary refrigerated storage and market facilities. The city also failed to create an efficient workday schedule. Butchers did not receive meat shipments from the Peralvillo slaughterhouse until 9 o’clock at night; long after the consumers had finished shopping. (The first merchants to get their meat to the market received consistently higher profits as Mexican women preferred to finish their shopping by 10 o’clock in the morning.) These failures and an unfortunate series of industrial accidents would drive Peralvillo out of business. Lastly, Pilcher notes that foreign capitalists attempted to create a fully refrigerated industry. To gain domestic support for refrigeration, these entrepreneurs initiated ambitious ad campaigns. However, the masses

³⁴ Jeffery M. Pilcher, “*Fajitas* and the Failure of Refrigerated Meatpacking in Mexico: Consumer Culture and Porfirian Capitalism,” *The Americas* 60, no. 3 (January 2004): 411-429.

still did not purchase the meat because of the consistently high prices. Foreign efforts at mechanization also angered slaughterhouse workers. Butcher trades began unionizing. Workers set out to sabotage the industry, and some even attempted to murder foreign managers.

In contrast, Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo looks at the representation of Mexico's modernization efforts in the global sphere. Tenorio-Trillo's *Mexico at the World's Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation* examines how Mexico joined the world fair circuit to publicize its progress, science, and industry.³⁵ For the elites, it was necessary to show components of a modern nation—a cosmopolitan culture, good sanitation conditions, and a racial homogeneity that fit with Western beliefs of white supremacy. However, Tenorio-Trillo asserts that the popular classes openly criticized the national image staged at the World Fairs. Utilizing examples from the newspaper *El Hijo del Ahuizote*, he demonstrates that the popular classes used satire to expose social inequalities. An example of this satire was a cartoon criticizing the United States threat to Mexico's businesses and the government's failure to enact protective legislation. Using the ambivalent meaning of “*exponer*” (to expose/to risk), the cartoon implies that the lack of protective legislations allowed for Mexican industry to be at the “*exposición permanente*” (constant risk) of a tiger attack—a personification of American industry.³⁶

³⁵ Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, *Mexico at the World's Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996).

³⁶ *Ibid*, 164.

Popular Participation

In contrast to the first two trends of research, the most recent shift of Porfirian popular culture historiography demonstrates the agency of Mexican popular classes. Scholars have found that the popular classes were not just pawns of the elite or rebellious subordinates, but willing participants who supported liberal reforms such as free suffrage and education. These scholars have offered a variety of case studies on the press, consumerism, love letters, and credit culture, and have discovered that laborers and other lower class workers played a significant role in Mexico's process of modernization.

María Elena Díaz and Susie S. Porter's works challenge traditional Mexican labor historiography. Siding with revisionist labor historians such as Alan Knight and Rodney Anderson, both Díaz and Porter contend that the penny press and female labor organizers formed a less revolutionary political tradition, and, instead, disseminated the 'people's' causes in adherence to liberalism.³⁷ Díaz's article "The Satiric Penny Press for Workers in Mexico" examines the significance of a popular press tradition in the working class.³⁸ She shows that the penny press' ideologies represent the workers' embrace of democratic liberal philosophies. Díaz argues that the political tradition of the penny press played a major role in shaping the Mexican working class consciousness. She explains that working class consciousness was molded by the penny press' defense of the peasantry. Through satiric cartoons the weeklies adamantly denounced attitudes and practices antagonistic to the

³⁷ For traditional labor studies see Jorge Basurto, *El proletariado industrial en México* (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1975); James D. Cockcroft, *Intellectual Precursors of the Mexican Revolution, 1900-1913* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968); Moisés Navarro, "La vida social," in *Historia moderna de México: el Porfiriato*, ed. Daniel Cosío Villegas (Mexico: Editorial Hermes, 1957): 344-376. For revisionist studies see Rodney D. Anderson, *Outcasts in Their Own Land: Mexican Industrial Workers, 1906-1911* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976); Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

³⁸ María Elena Díaz, "The Satiric Penny Press for Workers in Mexico, 1900-1910: A Case Study in the Politicisation of Popular Culture," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 22, no. 3 (October 1990): 497-526.

masses—such as upper class greed and immorality. Even though these papers made strong class distinctions, they also portrayed workers as participants in modernization. Díaz utilizes an editorial piece in the paper *Don Cucufate* that describes the worker as a positive creative social being and a historical agent: “The worker is the indefatigable fighter who makes a society great, he is the thermometer of the great machine of progress.”³⁹

Díaz explains that the central issue of the penny press was liberalism, particularly republican notions of sovereignty. With power residing in the people, working-class liberal protests transformed into political causes such as the right to strike and unionize, which would not come to fruition until after the Revolution. Papers such as *El Diablito Rojo* emphasized the need to recognize labor contributions to the nation and promoted the accessibility of democratic liberalism to the worker and the artisan. Díaz also highlights the anti-clerical discourse in these papers. The press depicted the clergy as corrupt extorters of the people and expressed resentment against the laxity in the implementation of the Reform laws against the Church. The Mexican working class’ politicization indicates that the penny weeklies supported democratic liberalism, and hoped to work within Porfirian modernization.

Porter’s *Working Women in Mexico City: Public Discourses and Material Conditions* looks at female factory labor and traces how morality shaped the lives of working women.⁴⁰ For the purposes of her book, Porter states that morality is defined by working women’s social relationships—respectability, honor, and female protection of rights and virtue. Porter argues that working women created a language of morality and honor to legitimize their entrance into the public sphere and to benefit from the growth of Mexican production. By

³⁹ “Who is the Worker?,” editorial, *Don Cucufate* (Mexico), September 17, 1906, 3, quoted in Díaz, “The Satiric Penny Press,” 508.

⁴⁰ Susie S. Porter, *Working Women in Mexico City: Public Discourses and Material Conditions, 1879-1931* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2003).

illuminating the experiences of *cigarreras*, *costuereras*, *obreras*, and female vendors, Porter demonstrates how working women joined forces with upper and middle-class women to eliminate the political and economic subjugation that undercut their position as laborers.⁴¹

Expanding on the female experience, the book *Cuatro estudios de genero en el México urbano del siglo XIX* shows how women constructed and re-constructed what it meant to be a “modern” woman. Discussing experiences from etiquette to divorce proceedings, the chapters in *Cuatro* demonstrate the agency of women in nineteenth-century urban Mexico. One particular chapter, “El depósito de las esposas: aproximaciones a una historia jurídico-social,” by Ana Lidia García Peña, argues that by appropriating the deposit institution women were able to assert their independence.⁴² The deposit institution was a judicial loophole that enabled women to separate from an aggressive husband through socially acceptable means. These women would remain married (unlike a divorce), but were legally able to live separate lives away from abusive husbands. Garcia Peña claims that wives began 77% of all cases and that in 70% of those cases the women were allowed to choose their new home. They would usually live with relatives.

Providing insight into provincial life, Mark Overmyer-Velázquez’s book *Visions of the Emerald City: Modernity, Tradition, and the Formation of Porfirian Oaxaca, Mexico* analyzes how Mexicans experienced the process of modernity at the turn of the century.⁴³ Overmyer-Velázquez argues that elites and commoners alike created a society constructed by both “traditional” and “modern” means. In demonstrating popular participation, Overmyer-

⁴¹ *Cigarrera* is a cigarette worker, 9. *Costuerera* is a seamstress, 5. *Obrera* is a female laborer.

⁴² Ana Lidia García Peña, “El depósito de las esposas: aproximaciones a una historia jurídico-social,” *Cuatro estudios de género en el México urbano del siglo XIX*, eds. Gabriela Cano and Georgette José Valenzuela (Mexico: PUEG Programa Universitario de Estudios de Género, 2001): 27-70.

⁴³ Mark Overmyer-Velázquez, *Visions of the Emerald City: Modernity, Tradition, and the Formation of Porfirian Oaxaca, Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

Velázquez examines Oaxacan prostitutes and madams. He discovers that sex workers' utilization of the expanding municipal regulatory apparatus and the language used in the Constitution of 1857 transformed the way the populace experienced life in the provincial capital. By appropriating the new technological and juridical innovations, the popular classes were able to lay claim to respectability and certain elements of a "modern" lifestyle, which originally had only pertained to the elites.

The Porfirian regime increased public services, particularly the education of the popular classes, to promote modernization. Focusing on this increase of literacy, William French analyzes Porfirian love letters in a chapter "'Cartas y cartas, compadre...': Love and Other Letters from Río Frio" included in the anthology *Latin American Popular Culture Since Independence: An Introduction*.⁴⁴ Here, French discusses how the novel *Los bandidos de Río Frio*, written by Manuel Payno, manifested the myriad ways that Mexicans of all classes participated in the modernization of literacy.⁴⁵ Payno's fictional account, based on real events in Mexican history, contains imaginative threads bringing together the public through their common customs, speech, and habits. In pointing to the centrality of literacy in *Los bandidos*, French contends that nineteenth-century Mexicans of all classes practiced various methods of reading and writing. He discovers that Payno's writing reflects the everyday activities of nineteenth century Mexicans. Payno takes great care to describe his observations of literacy in numerous scenes that portray the popular classes' processes of

⁴⁴ William E. French, "'Cartas y cartas, compadre...': Love and Other Letters from Río Frio," in William H. Beezley and Linda A. Curcio-Nagy eds., *Latin American Popular Culture Since Independence: An Introduction*, 2nd Edition (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2012), 68-84. For a preliminary study of Porfirian love letters, see William E. French, "'Te amo mucho': The Love Letters of Pedro and Enriqueta," in Jeffrey M. Pilcher ed., *The Human Tradition in Mexico* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2003), 123-135. Upcoming research in this topic can be found in William E. French, *The Lettered Countryside: Love Letters, the Anatomy of Sentiment, and the Law in Porfirian and Revolutionary Chihuahua* (forthcoming).

⁴⁵ Manuel Payno, *Los bandidos del Río Frio* (Mexico, D.F.: Impr. M.L. Sanchez, 1928).

learning to read and write. Payno describes a boy living at a poor house learning to read in the marketplace. After being abandoned in a garbage dump, the boy (now a servant) is seen diligently reading and writing Spanish grammar in the library under his employer's supervision. Two *curanderas*—cast as the epitome of female rural ignorance—exchange curative lessons with a schoolteacher in return for instructions on spelling.⁴⁶ Another woman, the cook at a house of a criminal mastermind, seals his fate by including incriminating evidence into her cookbook recipes. French also points out that Payno shows how barbers and other tradesmen know of the city's crimes because of their ability to read newspapers or the broadsheets. Lastly, French emphasizes the penultimate chapter that reveals how Payno believes the lives and literacy of these social types established the trajectory for Mexico's future.

Marie Eileen Francois and Steven Bunker's books explore popular participation in the economy. Francois' *A Culture of Everyday Credit: Housekeeping, Pawnbroking, and Governance in Mexico City, 1750-1920* pairs a study of household consumption with an examination of private and public pawning in order to reveal the role that credit and small business played in everyday lives of nineteenth-century Mexico.⁴⁷ Francois argues that pawn broking demonstrates the practice of liberalism in Mexico City. Through means of petitions and lobbying, middle-class pawnbrokers fought the state for their right to share in the fruits of modernization. She posits that political and economic powers wielded the negotiation process of pawning and culture as well. With a largely female clientele from lower- and middle-class households, pawnbrokers secured small loans of credit for their clients by

⁴⁶ A *curandera* is a female healer.

⁴⁷ Marie Eileen Francois, *A Culture of Everyday Credit: Housekeeping, Pawnbroking, and Governance in Mexico City, 1750-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006).

hocking household goods. Francois argues that pawning was crucial to economic life as it enabled the lower and middle classes to cash in on material investments and maintain their status during hard times. As interest rates during the Porfiriato began to skyrocket to forty percent a month, women from the popular classes incorporated the language of political liberalism to defend their livelihoods. They challenged pawnbrokers by rejecting the radical increases in interest rates and were able to limit them to only five percent a month. Francois' case study of pawning shows the role women played in modernizing Mexico. Francois concludes that pawning verifies popular participation in the market economy.

One of the most significant recent works is Bunker's *Creating Mexican Consumer Culture in the Age of Porfirio Díaz*.⁴⁸ His exploration of consumption shows how modernization was a complex process that was significantly influenced by the popular classes. Bunker argues that widespread marketing toward urban working-class consumers demonstrates the popular embrace of progress and material culture. Bunker illustrates popular participation within consumption through case studies of advertising and marketing strategies, the department store, and crime. In examination of El Buen Tono (tobacco industry) and the penny press advertisements, Bunker emphasizes that these new industries advertised and marketed specifically to working-class populations. Bunker proves that the department store's democratization of luxury made an abundance of material goods affordable and available to all levels of society. Connecting criminals to modernization efforts, Bunker finds that illegalities in Mexico shifted from violent to property offenses. He argues that this shift in crime reveals lower-class desires to be a part of the new culture of consumption. Concluding *Creating Mexican Consumer Culture*, Bunker posits that urban

⁴⁸ Steven B. Bunker, *Creating Mexican Consumer Culture in the Age of Porfirio Díaz, 1876-1911* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2012).

workers embraced notions of progress and modern material culture but did not share the elite belief that political and social inequalities were inevitable in a modern society.

Conclusions

Since the collapse of the Porfiriato, scholars have analyzed the significance of political and economic culture in creating modern Mexico. As shown above, beginning with the studies in 1943, studies on culture reflected elitist perspectives. Zea's work set the foundation for cultural studies with his use of positivism in examining Mexican political ethos. After Zea legitimized cultural scholarship, Hale and his contemporaries shifted their attention towards analyzing the dissemination of liberal ideologies. While Zea and Hale dedicated themselves to political and elite culture, the late twentieth century saw an increase in academic works challenging traditional perspectives. Focusing on the culture of Mexico's popular classes, scholars have revealed the everyday lives of the common people. The authors analyzing Mexican popular culture have differing opinions on the role popular culture played in Porfirian modernization efforts.

Over the past four decades, these scholars have provided three different arguments. The most prevalent argument asserts that elite class and state authorities manipulated popular classes into partaking in modernization. These scholars have considered this thesis in two different ways. The original methodology examines how governing elites manipulated the popular classes' culture to formulate a national identity, whereas, other scholars examine how the Porfirian regime instituted symbolic celebrations to legitimize its authority. Developing simultaneously with this argument, other scholarly contentions claim that the popular classes rebelled against modernization. They demonstrate that the populace clung to

traditional customs and opposed the administration's efforts to secularize and commercialize. The most recent trend on Porfirian popular culture, however, follows in the footsteps of historian María Elena Díaz's article "The Satiric Penny Press."⁴⁹ Her research on the workers' perspective influenced scholars to evaluate the Porfiriato through the lens of women, laborers, and consumers. This literature argues that the popular classes willingly participated in the modernization of the country. They find that even though the lower class felt an animosity toward the social/class divisions in Mexico, the public embraced aspects of modernization from which it benefitted.

While these scholars have captured crucial interpretations, their works neglect popular iconography as a method of approach. The majority of scholars have researched food, consumerism, crime, labor, and festivals. However, only a couple of historians have considered visual culture in depth like John Mraz and De la Torre Rendón. Their use of photography is enlightening, but Porfirian daguerreotype expenses kept the majority of Mexicans from participating and only offer elite perspectives of the time. However, an examination of popular visual culture allows us to better comprehend the lives and perspectives of the lower class. The following chapter will examine Porfirian the popular images of José Guadalupe Posada. In doing so, I will contend that Posada's engravings not only reveal his own perspective, but show that the popular classes viewed themselves engaging in the modernization of Mexico.

⁴⁹ Díaz, "The Satiric Penny Press."

II

Posada's Perception of Lower Class Participation in Porfirian Modernization

For centuries, flight eluded scientists. Western scholars like Aristotle, Archimedes, Roger Bacon, and Galileo experimented with philosophies of flying and falling. However, it was the Chinese and Mongols, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, who found success with the ascension of paper lanterns. These achievements laid the foundation for the invention of the hot air balloon by the French Montgolfier brothers, Joseph-Michael and Jacques-Étienne, in 1783.¹ Soon after, other balloonists demonstrated their flying skills throughout Europe and across the Atlantic. Launching the world into the Air Age, hot-air balloons took flight at festivals and carnivals. At the turn of the twentieth century, such machines became a symbol of modernization in Mexico.

Mexico's first *aereonata* [balloonist] was Guanajuato captain and engineer Don Benito León Acosta whose flight lifted off in 1843.² The most significant Mexican *aereonata*, however, was Joaquín de la Cantolla y Rico. Cantolla y Rico became a balloon aficionado with his first flying basket experience in 1863. At this time, the Wilson brothers (U.S. balloonists) came to Mexico with several hot-air balloons constructed by the Montgolfier brothers. Upon completion of their tour, the Wilsons sold these balloons to the public. Cantolla y Rico bought one, and began learning about the materials and operating techniques. Soon after, Cantolla y Rico became a faculty advisor at the School of Mining Engineers Association. Both he and his students designed and built their own balloons. Don

¹ Bayla Singer, *Like Sex with Gods: An Unorthodox History of Flying* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2003), 146-173.

² Raúl Macías Muñoz, "La hazaña de don Benito León Acosta" [The Feat of Don Benito León Acosta], *El sol del bajío* (México), last modified July 15, 2011, <http://www.oem.com.mx/elsoldelbajio/notas/n2147350.htm> (accessed November 23, 2013).

Cantolla y Rico built three balloons, different in size. His dirigible *Vulcano* flew each holiday before enthusiastic Mexican crowds.³

By the time hot air balloons became common in the city, Mexicans saw their country modernizing. In 1888, Díaz's administration was in place and had established political stability. Díaz also had asserted his control over the church, blocked the invasion of foreign powers, and forced bandits to flee for the countryside. South of the Rio Grande, railroads closed the vast distance of the country, and the telegraph connected Mexico's borders. As their country continued to modernize, Mexicans rushed to adopt the fashions, pastimes, and attitudes of the dominant Western nations—including a fascination with dirigibles. Companies such as El Buen Tono incorporated balloon technology into their advertising strategies and sent dirigibles flying over cities to entertain citizens of Guadalajara and Puebla.⁴ One viewer noted that the popular classes expressed admiration for these new machines and the pilots flying the dirigibles.⁵ The bystanders' amazement shows that the popular classes were excited by this imported technology.

Several middle- and working-class newspapers also reported on the popularity of flying air balloons.⁶ Even broadsides, published by Vanegas Arroyo, depict the public's fascination with Porfirian progress, such as Posada's *¡La gran ascención!* (Figure 2.1).⁷ *¡La gran ascención!* is a unique engraving that portrays the multitude of Mexico's social classes gathering to watch men fly. Posada's engraving depicts a *corrido* praising the ascension of

³ María del Pilar Montes de Oca Sicilia, "Globos de cantolla" [Cantolla Balloon], *algarabia.com: léeme y sabrás*, <http://algarabia.com/ideas/globos-de-cantolla/> (accessed November 25, 2013).

⁴ Bunker, *Creating Mexican Consumer Culture*, 30-47.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁷ Posada, "¡La gran ascención!," broadside, 1902, image in *Posada: My Mexico*, 21.

the aereonata Don Joaquín de la Cantolla y Rico. One plate presents the fictional character Don Chepito Mariguano holding an umbrella and spyglass, admiring the flight. A second plate illustrates the balloon rising while hundreds of spectators stand in wonder. Drawn in perspective, this plate depicts the observers in the foreground at a larger scale while the balloon ascends in the background.

Posada differentiates the classes by drawing the masses in traditional dress and the elites in European style clothing. Even though Posada displays the elites in bowlers, top hats, and sack coats, he does not show them in much detail. Instead, he pulls the viewers' attention to his figures representing the lower class by placing them in the forefront of the picture and providing the characters with more identifying features. Posada identifies the lower class by illustrating the men in traditional *charro* clothing. Charro dress is an embroidered suit with high-heeled boots, the typical costume of mariachi singers.⁸ However, Posada depicts his figures in casual charro wear with durable and functional clothes such as wide brimmed sombreros, denim pants, and cotton shirts. Posada then sketches the charro's female counterparts in *china poblana* clothing. The word "china" applied here is an indigenous term, deriving from colonial times, used to describe a domestic servant. "Poblana," interpreted as "from the pueblo," denotes that women wearing this garb are among the folk. Therefore, those who wear *china poblana* clothing tend to be women of modest means. The traditional costume associated with a china poblana includes silk shoes, a shawl, a full skirt, and a white off-the-shoulder embroidered blouse.⁹ One can tell that Posada depicted the woman at the bottom right-hand corner to represent the china poblana social type as he dressed her in a full skirt and the traditional shawl. Posada also points out

⁸ Peter Standish, *Culture and Customs of Mexico* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2004), 62-63.

⁹ Ibid, 68-69.

her indigenous heritage by drawing her with long braided hair, a customary hairstyle among the native populations.¹⁰

The first plate depicts Don Chepito Mariguano observing the spectacle. Mocking the rising urban middle class, Posada draws Don Chepito to represent the ridiculousness of the newly Europeanized bourgeois. Even his name satirizes his social type Don Chepito Mariguano Charrasca y Rascarrabias (translated as “Joey Pothead Knife and Grouch”). In regard to his lineage, “Don” is a mild honorific indicating that the character is an *arriviste* (a person who formerly occupied a lower social class). When attached to the name “Chepito” the formality of “Don” becomes absurd as “Chepito” is a typical child’s nickname. The name “Mariguano” suggests that Don Chepito was a habitual smoker and that the viewers could associate him with someone at a low point in his life. The lengthy surname “Charrasca y Rascarrabias” suggests aristocratic origins, but also connotes a man easy to anger and given to knife fights. Thus, Don Chepito’s full name represents a person who does not deserve respect from any social class.¹¹

Posada’s illustrations of Don Chepito in Vanegas Arroyo’s broadsheet publications suggest that the urban proletariat scorned the new middle class. The series of engravings that depict Don Chepito present his ways and fashions in a ridiculous manner, and are never aesthetically pleasing or efficient. The illustration *¡La gran ascención!* is no exception to this representation. Posada portrays Don Chepito with bulging eyes (a classic stereotype of madness), an overly large head, a slight frame, and wrinkled clothing. In the illustration, Don Chepito’s behavior is bizarre as he needs a spyglass to view the massive balloon. This

¹⁰ Paz Pérez, interview by the author, Oaxaca, Mexico, July 10, 2013.

¹¹ Frank, *Posada’s Broadsheets*, 192-194.

type of behavior provides an ironic contrast with Don Chepito's own pompous self-perception and makes the urban middle class the butt of the joke.¹²

Don Chepito's over-excitement for the imported hot-air balloon mocked the middle class' fascination with all things foreign. However, Posada's second engraving shows that the middle class was not the only social stratum enamored with the French dirigible. Two men, dressed in lower-class clothing, show their admiration for the balloon's ascension by raising their arms. Ancient pagan iconography utilizes the act of raising one's arms above the head to symbolize prayer, devotion, and blessing. Since then, Christian icons adopted the gesture to indicate an act of worship. Raised hands, however, also reflect a natural human behavior. The gesture can signify elation or indicate enthusiasm following the attainment of a long-awaited goal.¹³ Therefore, the expressive pose incorporated by Posada could only mean that these men revered the new technology. The veneration shown for the modern hot-air balloon suggests that these lower class men welcomed the progress that Mexico was making.

This work of José Guadalupe Posada demonstrates that he understood the interests and opinions of the Porfirian popular classes. In his portrayal of these class perspectives, Posada became a voice for the masses. In this chapter, I will answer the following questions about Posada: What do Posada's illustrations represent? For whom did he create art? Why does his art speak to ordinary Mexicans? I then will place Posada into a historical context by asking questions about lower-class sentiment toward Porfirian modernization. How did the Mexican populace view the Porfirian regime? What were popular attitudes and feelings

¹² Frank, *Posada's Broadsheds*, 201. See also Isaac Campos, *Home Grown: Marijuana and the Origins of Mexico's War on Drugs* (Durham: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 156-161.

¹³ Dimitri Hazzikostas, "Arms Raised," *Encyclopedia of Comparative Iconography: Themes Depicted in Works of Art*, edited by Helene E. Roberts (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1998), 55-56.

towards the growing class divisions? Were the working masses involved in efforts of national advancement? While answering these questions, I will prove that the lower classes not only welcomed Mexico's modernization, but also that Posada's work indicates that the urban public willingly partook in the administration's projects for progress.

Divided into three parts, this chapter explores Porfirian popular culture in the images of José Guadalupe Posada. The first section, "Posada's Understanding of the Lower Class," examines Posada's appropriation of popular traditions. Just as Reuter's essay, "Popular Traditions," demonstrates Posada's profound understanding of folk customs, I will show that Posada's depiction of popular interests resulted in the lower and working classes identifying with his art.¹⁴ Posada's popularity solidified among the popular classes when he created illustrations that expressed the public's views of the upper class in Mexico City. "Posada and Popular Resentment" analyzes Posada's use of tension in his engravings. We find that his incorporation of satire demonstrates working-class animosity toward elites and the middle class. We find that this conflict did not come from an unwillingness of the people to modernize, as historians such as William Beezley and Patrick Frank contend.¹⁵ Instead, Posada's art reveals that the masses detested the social divisions caused by upper-class greed. The last section of this chapter, "The Masses' Role in Modernization," examines Posada's art. Concurring with the most recent scholarship on Porfirian popular culture, I will show that Posada's engravings reveal that the working class resented the growing class divisions but enjoyed the effects of modernization. Similar to Bunker and Overmyer-Velázquez, I find

¹⁴ Reuter, "Popular Traditions," in *Posada's Mexico*, 59-83.

¹⁵ Beezley, *Judas at the Jockey Club*, 98; Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 167-201.

that the lower and working class people displayed an interest in modernization on their own terms, away from elite and middle class economic ambition.¹⁶

Posada's Understanding of the Lower Class

The end of a paternalistic Spanish rule and the beginning of popular government led journalists of nineteenth-century Mexico to use the press as a medium for expression. The printed word was one form of communication, but sophisticated political caricatures became instrumental in conversing with the public, as seventy-seven percent of Mexicans were illiterate during Díaz's reign.¹⁷ Therefore, a large body of graphic work filled pages of books, magazines, and newspapers with each artist developing his/her own independent style. Satirical lithographs produced by artists such as Ignacio Cumplido, Constantino Escalante, and Santiago Hernández contain a particularly Mexican style with their use of popular-religious characterizations (see figures 2.2-2.4).¹⁸ The greatest of these Mexican artists, though, was Posada.

His engravings reveal an artist integrating both indigenous and colonial elements, by promoting his audience's beliefs and lifestyles. While the other artists' caricatures rely on religious symbolism, Posada incorporates realistic qualities that root his work in the popular

¹⁶ Bunker, *Creating Mexican Consumer Culture*; Overmyer-Velázquez, *Visions of the Emerald City*.

¹⁷ United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, *Number and percentage of illiterates in the population of Mexico, 10 years old and over, 1900-40*, table, in "Progress of Literacy in Various Countries: A preliminary statistical study of available census data since 1900," <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0000/000028/002898eb.pdf> (accessed January 14, 2014).

¹⁸ Ignacio Cumplido, "The Orchestra," Lithograph, *El gallo pittagórico*, 1845, image in Laurence E. Schmeckebier, *Modern Mexican Art* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1939), 22; Constantino Escalante "Time and the Church," Lithograph, *La orquesta*, not dated, image in Schmeckebier, *Modern Mexican Art*, 23; and Santiago Hernández "Last Day of the Fiscal Year," Lithograph, *La orquesta*, not dated Schmeckebier, *Modern Mexican Art*, 23.

mind and art.¹⁹ Posada's oeuvre depicts traditional recreation, values, and religious convictions. Instead of focusing on aesthetics, Posada's folk art contains references to everyday Mexican life. The majority of art historians concur that these pieces represent various characteristics of Mexican folk customs. Scholars such as Peter Wollen, Jaques Lafaye, and Montserrat Galí Boadella posit that Posada's art reflected the lives of the people.²⁰ Even though my analysis agrees with these researchers, this section is comparable to the essay of art historian Jas Reuter, "Popular Traditions."²¹ Both Reuter and I show that Posada's genuine depiction of lower class daily lives drove the viewers to connect and identify with his work. Therefore, an analysis of Posada's depictions reveals that he had profound knowledge of the Mexican people.

In the sixteenth century, Spanish colonization had brought Roman Catholicism to Mexico. By independence, the Catholic religion had become the country's core faith. Since then, Mexico's religious ethos has become a spiritual existence. Even today, Mexican beliefs are realities that infiltrate the everyday lives of Mexicans. Admiration of religious images spread with the sale of spiritual broadsheets, as these papers recounted the occurrence of miracles and told of human transgressions. Benefitting from the illustrations of Posada, Vanegas Arroyo produced hundreds of these *hojas religiosas* (religious sheets).²² Posada's images portrayed Catholicism in a favorable light and often had overt moral messages that paralleled the church's traditional teachings. The majority of his devotional prints depict

¹⁹ Schmeckebier, *Modern Mexican Art*, 20-25.

²⁰ Wollen, Introduction to *Posada, Messenger of Mortality*, 14-23; Lafaye, "From Daily Life to Eternity," in *Posada's Mexico*, 123-139; Galí Boadella, "José Guadalupe Posada: Tradition and Modernity in Images," in *Posada Mexican Engraver*, 45-62.

²¹ Reuter, "Popular Traditions," in *Posada's Mexico*, 59-83.

²² Posada, *José Guadalupe Posada: My Mexico*, 63-68.

saints, holy places, and the crucifixion. These religious images reflected the values of popular consumers and enabled Posada to gain the lower class's confidence.

One such *hoja* is an illustration and poem paying homage to the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, *A Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* (Figure 2.5).²³ According to Catholic teaching, the Virgin Mary appeared to a Native American convert, Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin, on the hill of Tepeyac in 1531. The Virgin Guadalupe requested the construction of a church on the hill in her honor, and told Juan Diego to fill his cloak with roses. When he revealed the cloak to the bishop the flowers fell out, and a painted image of Our Lady of Guadalupe emerged. As a result, thousands of indigenous people and Spaniards recognized her image as God's plan for the salvation of Mexico. Over the years, the Virgin Mary has come to symbolize Catholicism in the Americas, as her association with the struggle to overcome the negative effects of the Spanish conquest gave hope to a future of reconciliation and harmony. Our Lady of Guadalupe's purported ability to bridge the indigenous and colonial worlds continues to inspire the devotion of millions.

Posada's broadside etching, *A Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe*, shows this devotion by illustrating Mexico's patron saint. The central illustration depicts the original painting on the cloak. The Virgin Guadalupe stands on a crescent moon supported by an angel below with wings stretched out and only the upper part of the spirit's body shown. She has her hands joined in front of her chest while her head is slightly inclined forward. Our Lady of Guadalupe wears a robe with a flower pattern and a flowing outer cloak filled with stars as two angels hold a crown above her head. The light rays and clouds surrounding the patroness imply that she stands before the sun. Posada's graphic style becomes evident when

²³ Posada, "A Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe," broadside, not dated, image in Posada, *José Guadalupe Posada: My Mexico*, 63.

he strays from the original icon with his pictorial narration of the Virgin Mary's manifestation to Juan Diego. In the corners of the illustration, Posada draws four scenes that narrate the events of her manifestation. The first, located in the top left-hand corner, depicts the appearance of Lady Guadalupe to Juan Diego as angels look on in the background. In the top right corner, Juan Diego leaves to find the roses. Meanwhile, the bottom corners show Juan Diego gathering the roses and depict him showing the cloak to the bishop. The photographic qualities Posada gives these scenes promote the genuineness of the miracle. Because the elite's modernization reforms focused on secularizing Mexico, Posada's illustration of a popular religious devotion demonstrates his support for the values of the masses.

The majority of broadsides produced by Vanegas Arroyo were of unusual and brutal crimes. Atrocities committed by women, escapades of rural bandits, and upper/middle class transgressions held an irresistible attraction among the urban population. Posada's most popular images were the engravings depicting Mexico City's sensational crimes. The goal of these sheets was to entertain the public and to convey moral messages that follow Catholic precepts. The broadside illustration *¡¡Horrible y espantosísimo acontecimiento!! [Horrible and Most Frightening Event!]* tells of the multiple murders committed by Ramón Hernández in 1900 in Mexico City (Figure 2.7).²⁴ A spoiled and only child of an upper-class family, Ramón had grown up subject to all the vices of the world, including stealing money from his parents. His father, trying to correct his behavior, threatened to throw him out of the house. When Ramón reached the age of twenty-five, he demanded his inheritance, and his father refused. Ramón resolved to poison both his parents and the servant, and hid their bodies in

²⁴ Posada, "¡¡Horrible y espantosísimo acontecimiento!!," broadside, not dated, image in Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 33.

the basement. After stealing his parents' money and running away, Ramón had a nightmare that revealed his parents had put a curse on him. The broadside states that the same day the police discovered the murders, Ramón and an unnamed friend travelled toward the city of Colima when a storm blew in. Lightning struck Ramón while his friend fell to his knees in prayer and was safely delivered.

Posada chose to depict the moment in the story that would emphasize the evil character of the criminal. In the center of the print, Posada portrays Ramón as he pours the poison into the food cooking on a stove. Around Ramón, Posada sketches three demon figures—noticeable by the horns on their heads and their wings and tails—who act as the puppeteers of this crime. Depicting the action moving from left to right, Posada shows the result of the poison: a woman lying dead on the floor. He continues the narrative, by placing a devil on the far right side awaiting his new soul. Posada compresses both space and time, as the woman (whether his mother or the servant) would not have died until after she had cooked the poison into the food.

Even though the capital city's leading newspapers would have printed coverage of such murders, their tone would have been more sedate and would have lacked Posada's moral values. The teachings of the Roman Catholic Church lurk behind this illustration and text. The broadside concludes with a request for parents to read the paper to their children so that, "they fear God, obey their parents, and always take the path of good."²⁵ To Posada's semiliterate readers the engraving implies that the elites are more subject to the temptation of greed. The image also stresses the importance of continual parental discipline, and highlights the advantages of large families. By disseminating these traditional values, Posada criticizes

²⁵ Posada, "¡¡Horrible y espantosísimo acontecimiento!!," broadside, not dated, sheet in Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 33.

upper and middle-class values, and gains veneration from the like-minded masses.

Illustrations such as *¡¡Horrible y espantosísimo acontecimiento!!* helped Posada gain the populace's confidence, as these images showed respect and support for its beliefs.

In addition to Posada's religious engravings, his work also reflects society's gender ideals. Recent scholarship reveals that the newly formed male social networks—such as bathhouses, clubhouses, and movie theaters—facilitated by the Porfiriato's economic and cultural change, encouraged the value of hyper-masculinity. The men who identified themselves as macho asserted their power through aggressive means over both women and other men. The popular classes embraced this ideology in order to compensate for feelings of inferiority and insecurity. In exaggerating their virility, the Mexican lower class males found a way to assert their authority and control over women and “less” masculine men. By the middle of the twentieth century, the ideal of Mexican male virility became so ubiquitous that authors such as Octavio Paz later identified machismo as a part of the national character.²⁶

Many of Posada's images encourage the hyper-masculine identity that is associated with Mexican males. The print *Tiernas súplicas con que invocan las jóvenes de cuarenta años al milagroso San Antonio de Padua—pidiéndole su consuelo* [*Tender Supplications Invoked by Forty-Year-Old Young Ladies to the Miraculous St. Anthony of Padua—Asking for His Consolation*] bolsters *machismo* through its depiction of subservient women (Figure 2.6).²⁷ Posada illustrates six women of varying sizes and social classes, distinguishable by

²⁶ Víctor M. Macías-González and Anne Rubenstein, “Introduction: Masculinity and History in Modern Mexico,” in *Masculinity and Sexuality in Modern Mexico*, edited by Víctor M. Macías-González and Anne Rubenstein (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2012), 1-21; and Octavio Paz, “The Sons of La Malinche,” in *The Labyrinth of Solitude* (New York: Grove Press, 1985), 29-46.

²⁷ Posada, “Tiernas súplicas con que invocan las jóvenes de cuarenta años al milagroso San Antonio de Padua—pidiéndole su consuelo,” broadside, 1911, image in Posada, *José Guadalupe Posada: My Mexico*, 116.

their clothing with the upper-class women wearing columnar silhouettes, tall stiff collars, and wide brimmed hats, while the lower class indigenous women wear *china poblana* style outfits.²⁸ He depicts the women praying to the heavens and crying into their hands. The unidentified broadside poet suggests that the women's biological clocks are ticking; therefore, they plead to Saint Anthony of Padua for a husband. The women have become so desperate that they are willing to accept the devil as a mate to avert the shame of being an old maid. Posada's print, along with the poem, shows that a woman's purpose is for childbearing and her position is in the home raising the family. This reinforces the Mexican gender hierarchy.

Posada's image on the broadsheet entitled *El valiente de Guadalajara [The Brave of Guadalajara]* also addresses the people's respect for male virility. In this print, Posada praises the macho behavior shown by a rural male subject (Figure 2.10).²⁹ Posada places the man in the foreground of the print, and depicts him in colorful traditional attire—wide brimmed sombrero, bell bottomed pants, and waistcoat. The broadsheet's text reinforces that the character is rural, and claims that this man has travelled across the country and has run out of challenges. Therefore, the *valiente* (translated as brave) now faces a vicious tiger to prove his supremacy over all. The valiente's body language suggests that the man is confident with his chest puffed and open. Posada also draws the valiente ready to fight the predator, as he lunges towards it with his hands raised in fists. The shocked faces on the men

²⁸ John Peacock, *The Chronicle of Western Fashion: From Ancient Times to Present Day* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1991), 167-176; and Standish, *Culture and Customs of Mexico*, 68-69.

²⁹ Posada, "El valiente de Guadalajara," broadside, not dated, *Amon Carter Museum of American Art: Collections*, 1978.167, http://www.cartermuseum.org/custom/acm_results.php (accessed November 12, 2013).

and women in the background of the image indicate their worry for the valiente's safety, as he has the courage and virility the others lack in order to defeat the tiger.

Posada's engravings of Mexico's traditional ideals were not the only prints that facilitated his growing popularity. His depiction of popular diversions and amusements provoked interest in his work and created moments of humor in the lives of the lower classes. Posada knew either by intuition or by experience what interested the ordinary person. Posada portrays people in their own lives and participating in popular traditions. The principal traditions he represents are celebrations and holidays, games and toys, food and drink, music, and love. These prints have an expressionistic quality that reminds the viewers of the fun and hilarity experienced in the festivities.

An important element within these festivities was *la bebida* (the drink), the most popular being pulque. In the late nineteenth century, Mexico City alone consumed eleven million gallons of pulque.³⁰ Pulque's popularity extends back to pre-Hispanic Mexico. Spanish administrators encouraged agave agriculture and commercialized pulque in order to create revenue for Spain through a taxable cash crop.³¹ Because of the surge in pulque production, the beverage's price was low enough that the working classes could afford the drink.³² Posada also depicts this typical pastime on a song sheet entitled *El cancionero popular, canción del pulquero* (Figure 2.11).³³ Here the key subject is a lower-class male,

³⁰ "The Pulque of Mexico," *Littell's Living Age (1844-1896)* 19, no. 236 (November 25, 1848): 370.

³¹ Amie Wright, "'La bebida nacional': Pulque and Mexicanidad, 1920-46," *Canadian Journal of History* 44, no. 1 Spring (2009): 1-24.

³² Beezley, *Judas at the Jockey Club*, 80-82.

³³ Posada, "El cancionero popular, canción del pulquero," songsheet, not dated, *Amon Carter Museum of American Art: Collections*, 1978.56, http://www.cartermuseum.org/custom/acm_results.php (accessed November 12, 2013).

distinguishable by the casual charro clothing. Posada depicts the man with heavy eyelids suggesting that he is inebriated. In order to make the actions of the man more clear, Posada sketches a mug in the character's right hand and a bottle with a funnel in the left. In the background, Posada places two large wooden barrels. According to the text, the character drunkenly sings to his love María, asking her if she will always care for him. Corridos, such *Canción del pulquero*, commemorated the life of ordinary men and women. Posada's prints illustrating the corridos promoted and encouraged the customs and traditions of the pueblo.

One of Posada's most well-known prints is *El jarabe en ultratumba* [*The Dance Beyond the Grave*] from 1910 (Figure 2.8).³⁴ This print depicts an unknown celebration. Posada pulls the viewers' attention to the center of the image. He depicts a lower-class male and female, identified by their clothing, dancing the jarabe tapatío, better known as the "Mexican hat dance." The jarabe tapatío is a popular folk dance that represents courtship, with the woman first rejecting the man's advances and eventually accepting them.³⁵ As the male dancer approaches, the female takes fast shuffling steps retreating from her partner. Located on the left-hand side of the print, Posada's harpist expresses his enjoyment of the festivities. In the background Posada sketches fellow party members preparing tortillas and drinking pulque. Posada utilizes his calavera figures to imitate the gaiety of festivals.

Similarly, Posada's engraving *Re[b]umbio de calaveras* [*A Hubbub of Skeletons*] represents the vitality of the popular classes' culture (Figure 2.9).³⁶ Posada's illustration accompanies a poem. The poem suggests that the afterlife is an exciting, fun-filled place

³⁴ Posada, "El jarabe en ultratumba," broadside, not dated, *Amon Carter Museum of American Art: Collections*, 1978.53, http://www.cartermuseum.org/custom/acm_results.php (accessed November 12, 2013).

³⁵ Edith Johnston, *Regional Dances of Mexico* (Dallas: Banks Upshaw and Company, 1935), 48.

³⁶ Posada, "Re[b]umbio de calaveras," broadside, not dated, image in Posada, *José Guadalupe Posada: My Mexico*, 81.

with dancing, parties, and drinking. In order to show the vivacity and excitement, Posada filled the majority of the image with action. Most of the movement lies in the center of the space. Here, Posada draws three newsboy calaveras hawking hojas in the cemetery, while he places three larger calaveras above the boys also selling broadsides. Furthermore, two religious calaveras—distinguished by a cross-embroidered tablecloth—on either side of the print, express an enjoyment of the bustle surrounding them. The liveliness depicted by Posada in this illustration reflected what plebeians saw in the streets of Mexico City on a daily basis.

Prints such as *El jarabe en ultratumba* and *Re[b]umbio de calaveras* convert transient human emotions into art. Posada's appropriation of the popular tradition of comedic skeletons (puppets, sugar skulls, and bread of the dead) gave the illustrations a new vitality and amused the public by using a medium with which they were comfortable. Posada's creativity in illustrating these dynamic moments suggests that he had a profound understanding of folk customs and popular interests. Publishers printed and sold a vast amount of these engravings in penny weeklies or broadsides. If they had not sold well, Vanegas Arroyo and other patrons of Posada would not have requested engravings portraying popular tradition. However, these images did sell well, demonstrating that the people connected to and identified with Posada's depictions of their daily lives. Therefore, Posada's artworks reveal that he understood the Mexican people.

Posada and Popular Resentment

Posada not only captivated his audiences through engravings that demonstrated support for their beliefs and lifestyle, but his work also conveyed the masses' resentment of

Porfirian class inequalities. Porfirio Díaz's regime believed that a stable economic foundation would bring social benefits. Driven by foreign investment, Mexico's strengthening economy would increase upward mobility, which would then expand internal markets and accelerate the nation's economic development, thus furthering social progress. Instead, as foreigners invested, Mexico's rich got richer and spent their newly acquired wealth on imported luxuries. The country's economic advancement trickled down to the middle class through opportunities in the export business and government jobs, but the upward mobility the government had hoped for stopped there. Because the popular classes were unable to benefit from the economic growth, it was rare for a member of that social stratum to cross the economic confines.³⁷ Therefore, Mexico's economic rifts intensified the growing class divisions.

Posada's advocacy for the popular classes grew as he saw the growing societal inequalities. Posada not only created art that showed current events from the viewpoint of the masses; he also used satire and irony to critique society's economic differences. Posada expressed the popular classes' resentment with the wealthy. Posada's upper and middle class characters lacked leadership ability and moral virtue. Most of his wealthy characters end up caving into temptations, such as greed. Posada's brazen satire expressed more opposition than the period's typical artist. Posada's oeuvre contains a multitude of images that critique Mexico's economic divisions. The prolific number of plates Posada produced in this genre suggests that the popular classes felt relief in seeing their enemies lampooned. These prints demonstrate that Posada saw the world from the populace's perspective.

The majority of scholars agree that Posada viewed Mexico through the lens of the masses. They ascertain that his use of irony conveyed a popular aversion to modernization—

³⁷ Buffington and French, "The Culture of Modernity," in *The Oxford History of Mexico*, 373-377.

such as elite greed and envy. Following the lead of Frank, scholars such as Buffington and French contend that Posada opposed aspects of Porfirian modernization, because he lampoons social types living an opulent European lifestyle.³⁸ However, these researchers have misplaced the direction of that resentment. This section posits that Posada's abhorrence of social divisions arose from his disgust of upper class economic ambition, self-acclaimed authority, and desire for foreign intercession—not from modernization.

These images show that the popular classes felt bewildered about middle and upper class lifestyles. Posada saw these classes as lazy, self-absorbed, dishonest, socially inept, and childish. Posada's most consistent ridicule came in the character Don Chepito Mariguano Charrasca y Rascarrabias. Appearing in about a dozen prints, Don Chepito's character attacked several features of middle class urban culture (for a sample of Don Chepito, prints see Figures 2.12-2.16).³⁹ Posada draws Don Chepito without a clear ethnicity. However, art historians such as Frank identify Chepito as a Europeanized mestizo.⁴⁰ Posada rarely portrays Don Chepito in upper-class apparel, such as a frock coat and top hat. Instead, Chepito dresses in a jacket, vest, and high collar.⁴¹ By dressing him in this style, Posada made clear Chepito's middle class status.

³⁸ Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 167-201; Buffington and French, "The Culture of Modernity," in *The Oxford History of Mexico*, 376.

³⁹ Posada, "Gran chasco que se pegó Don Chepito Mariguana," broadside, not dated, image in Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 194; Posada, Back of sheet "Gran Chasco que se pegó Don Chepito Mariguana," broadside, not dated, image in Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 195; Posada, "Don Chepito the Bullfighter," restrike of a white-line plate, not dated, image in Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 197; Posada, "Don Chepito Marihuano," restrike of a white-line plate, not dated, image in Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 198; and Posada, "Corrido 'Don Chepito Marihuano,'" restrike of a white-line plate, not dated, image in Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 198.

⁴⁰ Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 192.

⁴¹ Peacock, *The Chronicle of Western Fashion*, 167-176.

Even though Don Chepito's name—Don Chepito Mariguano Charrasca y Rascarrabias [“Sir Joey Pothead Knife and Grouch”]—satirizes the custom of long names to show family pedigree, it also suggests that Chepito is less than admirable.⁴² Posada shows Don Chepito's contemptible behavior in three engravings that accompany a poem printed on the broadsheet *El gran chasco que se pegó Don Chepito Mariguana* [*The Great Disappointment that Hit Don Chepito Mariguana*].⁴³ The broadside's poem tells of a man's failed attempt at an affair with a married woman, who leads him on and invites him to her home for dinner. When the husband interrupts the rendezvous, he calls the police, but not before beating the jilted lover. Rather than refer to characters by name, the anonymous poet uses pronouns or character descriptions such as “the wife,” “the husband,” and “the lover,” and does not mention their economic standing. In doing this, the poet leaves the role of the failed lover open, refusing to assign him a class status. In his accompanying illustrations, Posada uses this opening in attempt to lampoon the middle class, depicting Don Chepito as the foiled lover.

The broadsheet's second plate (Figure 2.13) represents one of the poem's earliest moments, the man courting of the married woman.⁴⁴ In this text, the anonymous poet suggests that the woman led the man on by saying that her husband would not be at home. Posada freely edits the poet's story in order to belittle the middle class. Posada portrays Chepito as pursuing a woman who spurned his advances. He draws Chepito bowing with hat in hand and presenting flowers to his love, as she coquettishly looks away. For those

⁴² Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 192-194.

⁴³ Posada, “El gran chasco que se pegó Don Chepito Mariguana,” broadside, not dated, image in Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 194.

⁴⁴ Posada, Back of sheet “El gran chasco que se pegó Don Chepito Mariguana,” broadside, not dated, image in Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 195.

illiterate readers, Chepito's pursuit of a married woman suggests that the middle class behaves in depraved and immoral ways. The first plate (Figure 2.12), second in the sequence, depicts Chepito weak and lying spread out on the floor signifying that he failed in a tussle.⁴⁵ Off to the left side of the print, Posada drew the woman embracing her husband, implying that Chepito had made unwanted advances, and she was happy to be rid of him. Posada portrays the husband in traditional charro dress—jacket, vest, and sombrero—and as someone who defends his rights. Distinguishing the husband in such a way, Posada indicates that the lower class has more honor and respectability than the middle class. The final plate in the sequence represents the police leading Don Chepito off to prison.⁴⁶ Off to the right of the frame, boats float in the background, which allude to Chepito's transfer to San Juan de Ulúa in Veracruz. This prison would be an improbable destination for such a trivial crime. Here Posada, most likely uses it to emphasize the dejection of Don Chepito.⁴⁷ Together these three plates express both Posada's and the popular classes' impatience with arrivistes.

Used in several different broadsheets, Posada's print *Los 41 maricones encontrados en un baile de la Calle de la Paz el 20 de Noviembre de 1901* or *The 41 homosexuals meet at a dance on Peace Street the 20th of November 1901* reflected an upper class scandal that shocked early twentieth-century Mexico (Figure 2.17).⁴⁸ On November 17, 1901, the police

⁴⁵ Posada, "El gran chasco que se pegó Don Chepito Mariguana," broadside, not dated, image in Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 194.

⁴⁶ Posada, Back of sheet "El gran chasco que se pegó Don Chepito Mariguana," broadside, not dated, image in Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 195.

⁴⁷ Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 196.

⁴⁸ The word *maricon* in Spanish is an offensive term used for gay. Posada, "Los 41 maricones encontrados en un baile de la Calle de la Paz el 20 de Noviembre de 1901," broadside, 1901, image in Robert McKee Irwin, Edward J. McCaughan, and Michelle Nasser, "Introduction: Sexuality and Social Control in Mexico, 1901," in *The Famous 41: Sexuality and Social Control in Mexico, c. 1901*, edited by McKee Irwin, McCaughan, and Nasser (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 7.

raided a private ball on Calle de la Paz in Mexico City. At this ball, police arrested forty-one men, half of whom wore female clothing. The Porfirian authorities arrested the 41 for having a party without permission and assaulting the masses' customs. The court order forced the partygoers to endure public humiliation. They were made to sweep the streets in drag, and were forcibly conscripted to serve in the Yucatán Caste War as trench diggers and mess hall staff. The most famous of the forty-one, though was the forty-second participant. Original news reports claimed that police arrested forty-two men, and within a few days the number became forty-one. The transvestite deleted from the record was eventually discovered to be President Díaz's son-in-law.⁴⁹

With the turn of the twentieth century, sexuality had become a hot topic in Mexico, and the scandal-hungry public craved information about the "forty-one."⁵⁰ Posada's engraving published alongside the news mimicked the private ball. Posada depicts elite men as dandies and transvestites dancing across the floor. Posada draws the dandies in upper class evening attire with dark tailcoats and trousers, and white waistcoats and bowties. Meanwhile, he characterizes the transvestite types by drawing them with mustaches, short hair, and narrow silhouetted, puffed-sleeved formal dresses.⁵¹ In conjuring up these visions of male homosexuality, Posada chastises the upper class of being effeminate, ridiculous, and immoral. In bestowing these features onto the elite, Posada and his broadsheets disparage the upper class' virility and ultimately question the elite's social status. Even today, Mexican society equates the number "41" with homosexuality, shame, and debauchery.⁵²

⁴⁹ McKee Irwin, "The Centenary of the Famous 41," in *The Famous 41*, 169-170.

⁵⁰ McKee Irwin, *Mexican Masculinity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), x-xxxvi.

⁵¹ Peacock, *The Chronicle of Western Fashion*, 167-176.

Los 41 maricones was only one of many prints that critiqued the corruption of the upper and middle classes. As we have seen, when Posada portrays the rich in his images they often lack moral virtue and leadership. These characters often cave into greed, envy, and other various temptations. And the prints often use the most current sensational crimes in order to provide moral lessons to the public. The moral teachings in these pictures parallel the Catholic traditions.

In Mexican society, religious traditions were more than theoretical teachings. To the Porfirian popular classes, Catholicism was a spiritual reality. Therefore, Posada's prints scolding the sinful nature of the wealthy indicate that the lower class saw itself as the more righteous people. Posada's illustration *Ejemplar y ciertísimo suceso* or *Exemplary and Indisputable Event* demonstrates this way of thinking (Figure 2.18).⁵³ The broadside's text tells of an unnamed hacienda owner, who was an enemy of the Catholic religion. The priest sent a messenger to gather the year's tithes and offerings, but the hacendado refused to give money. Instead, the hacienda patron offered the envoy a bull's horns. Proud of his insult, the owner let out a booming laugh. The author writes that the workers who heard about their hacendado's snub did not approve. However, the men feared they would anger the patron if they exposed their true feelings. The following Sunday, the priest placed the horns on the altar and said that the church accepts all offerings, even defamations. After this display, the owner had continuous troubles with his property while all of the other hacienda patrons had a profitable year. Because the owner was suffering the judgment of God, he repented.

⁵² McKee Irwin, "The Centenary of the Famous 41," in *The Famous 41*, edited by McKee Irwin, McCaughan, and Nasser, 178.

⁵³ Posada, "Ejemplar y ciertísimo suceso," broadside, not dated, image in Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 173.

Posada, as with other broadsheet and corrido images, takes a few liberties with the author's story line. To emphasize the protagonist's evil character, Posada depicts the wealthy landowner in the nadir of the scenario. Seated at the table, the owner wears an ostentatious charro outfit with his stomach protruding outward. In order to emphasize the owner's class status, Posada sketches bags of money under the table. Posada draws the rich man with a mocking gesture, as he taunts the church messengers leaving the premises. According to the text, the priest did not ask for the offering firsthand. However, Posada illustrates the cleric in the middle of the three men, with a hat, staff, and a long coat. Posada shows the three men walking away, discouraged with downcast heads and shrugged shoulders. Together the bags of money, the priest, and the derisive landowner emphasize the confrontation between the church and the wealthy. The attitude in this sheet is positive and supportive of the popular faith. In his criticism of the elite's scorn for the church, Posada belittled the upper class as dishonorable men.

Posada approaches the broadsheet *Espantosísimo y terrible acontecimiento* [*Most Frightening and Terrible Event*] from a similar religious point of view (Figure 2.19).⁵⁴ This broadsheet deals with the suicide of a rich man in the Guanajuato province—Bardomiano Urrizalde. The broadsheet text describes Urrizalde as a man without morals and subject to all seven deadly sins. Using his inherited wealth, Urrizalde exploited people and extorted money. He spent most of his time gambling and taking advantage of women. For reasons unknown, financial misfortune befell Urrizalde. People stopped borrowing money from him. Urrizalde's bank failed. A servant stole a large amount of money from him, and women began to shun Urrizalde. Lacking the ability to overcome impoverishment, he gave up his

⁵⁴ Posada, "Espantosísimo y terrible acontecimiento," broadside, 1900, image in Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 175.

home and rented a shack from an indigenous group (an insult to any upper class member). After falling so low, Urrizalde resolved to commit suicide. However, he had difficulty carrying out this action. A store refused to sell him poison. No one trusted Urrizalde enough to sell him a gun, and so he drank a brew of boiled match heads. The broadsheet's text then asserts that at the time of his death, Urrizalde's hut filled with demons—each one a vice that led him to commit suicide.

Posada takes several liberties with the illustration, due to the lack of action involved in a death by poisoning. In favor of a moment that would show Urrizalde's wealth and destruction, Posada chose to depict a temptation scene. Unlike the spiritual serenity portrayed in the iconography of saints enduring demonic temptations, Posada's image represents a man who fears facing his sins. In this print, Posada draws the figure of Urrizalde surrounded and shrieking at seven demons. Posada arranges each demon in profile. Posada illustrates the demons as closely resembling one another, suggesting that they are from the same family, varying only slightly in the foreheads. The demons appear as snapping and barking winged dogs with horns, pointed ears, or clumps of hair. In order to make up for the lack of variety, Posada labels each demon with his own sin. Posada's lack of symbolism and philosophical speculation implies that he did not want to use the print as a vehicle of reflection on ethical dilemmas. Instead, Posada shows a desire to reverse the classes by withholding morality and spirituality from a rich man.

Posada extends his social critiques to denunciations of foreign interference in Mexico. The broadside *El mosquito americano* depicts people of various ages and social classes escaping the torment of large mosquitos flying above their heads (Figure 2.20).⁵⁵ Posada's illustration shows each figure running from the center of the engraving. If everyone

⁵⁵ Posada, "El mosquito americano," broadside, not dated, image in Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 184.

continued to move out of the composition, the scene would only contain the mosquitos. This symbolism suggests that the American mosquitos are about to take over the country. In this broadsheet the term “*americano*” does not refer to the Americas. Instead, it is a reference to the United States as the author writes that the pests entered the country from Laredo, Texas. Both the text and the illustration imply that U.S. “pests” are inflicting damage on Mexican society. Possibly the American mosquitos allude to the U.S. capital, customs, and expertise that the Porfirian regime and upper class invited into the country. At this time in Mexican history, United States citizens invested in and established railroad, mining, and utility companies. The swarm of U.S. entrepreneurs penetrated most avenues for Mexican economic opportunity. The mosquito bite, symbolized the U.S. extracting Mexico’s money and natural wealth.⁵⁶ The print makes clear that Posada and his audience felt that the administration welcomed foreigners too indiscriminately.

The administration’s foreign policies were not the only Porfirian reforms criticized in Posada’s engravings. By 1880, Díaz and his regime poured money and personnel into the *rurales*, and professionalized the Mexico City police.⁵⁷ These reforms gave an illusion of stability, as the administration positioned gendarmes in upper class neighborhoods. However, there was still plenty of violence.⁵⁸ Several of Posada’s prints critiqued this semblance of authority by presenting criminals as heroes and police as crooked. In Mexico, as in other cultures, the lower classes celebrated those who defied authorities and exhibited a rebellious attitude. Finding virtue in criminals undercut the belief that integrity resided in the

⁵⁶ Frank, *Posada’s Broadsheets*, 183.

⁵⁷ The *rurales* is the national police force created by Benito Juárez in 1861, and transformed by Manuel González in 1880. See Buffington and French, “The Culture of Modernity,” in *The Oxford History of Mexico*, 381.

⁵⁸ Buffington and French, “The Culture of Modernity,” in *The Oxford History of Mexico*, 381-382.

elite. Even though the celebration of criminal deeds could have led to imprisonment, Posada's illustrations met the public's interest without disseminating an anti-establishment perspective.⁵⁹

One of his most popular bandits turned "valiente" was Jesús Bruno Martínez. On February 20, 1891, he and four other men brutally killed and robbed the jeweler Don Tomás Hernández Aguirre. This burglary and murder is known as the La Profesa jewelry store robbery. At six o'clock Gerard Nevraumont, Nicolas Treffel, Anton Sousa, Jesús Bruno Martínez, and Aurelio Caballero walked to La Profesa. Hernández invited Nevraumont into his store, as he had already arranged an after-hours appointment. When Martínez and Treffel entered the shop at the same time as Nevraumont, Hernández knew something was wrong. He drew a revolver from his belt and tried to shoot Nevraumont. However, the gun failed, allowing Nevraumont to wrestle Hernández to the floor and drag him to the rear of the shop.⁶⁰

While Sousa and Caballero kept watch outside La Profesa, Martínez and Treffel guarded Hernández, and Nevraumont stole a diamond bracelet. Nevraumont then called out to Martínez and Treffel to help him pilfer the showroom, but when Martínez reached for gold-plated watches, Nevraumont sent him back to guard Hernández. Returning to the back room, Nevraumont saw Martínez plunging a knife into the storeowner. Nevraumont and Treffel asked Martínez why he did it, and he allegedly replied, "Dead men tell no tales."⁶¹

⁵⁹ Ibid., 87-88.

⁶⁰ Bunker, *Creating Mexican Consumer Culture*, 205-209.

⁶¹ Jesús Bruno Martínez, *La Voz de México*, April 3, 1891, 2, quoted in Bunker, *Creating Mexican Consumer Culture*, 209.

Before fleeing the scene, the men stripped Hernández's body. They then headed to Sousa's house to divide the plunder—about 4,000 to 8,000 pesos in cash and goods.⁶²

The robbery of La Profesa was not an ordinary burglary. President Díaz took an active interest in this case, as stealing elite luxuries threatened the security of his platform “order and progress.” He not only broke his noninvolvement role in police duties, but Díaz also gave more power to the Secret Police. Police arrested Caballero, Sousa, and Treffel by March 3, and on March 6, authorities lured Martínez into a sombrero shop where they seized him. On March 14, Nevraumont escaped, but the police later picked him up when his steamship to Havana was delayed.⁶³ Fascinated by the thieves' boldness, the common people craved information about the case and trials. Vanegas Arroyo and Posada released about ten broadsheets about the crime. Throughout these publications, the papers become more sympathetic to the offenders and focused their attention on Martínez.⁶⁴

Awaiting his execution in Belén—Mexico City's prison—Jesús Bruno Martínez continued committing rebellious acts against authorities in his cell. He wrote an angry inscription on his cell wall threatening detective Miguel Cabrera's life. Soon, authorities discovered a knife blade in his cell. However, Martínez still strove to have his sentence commuted, as a group of women requested clemency for him. After his appeals were denied, Martínez escaped from Belén on the afternoon of July 7. Martínez climbed up to the roof of the prison and rappelled down a rope onto railroad tracks (Figure 2.22). A railroad security guard captured Martínez and escorted him to the nearest police station. Martínez denied everything and claimed to be Antonio Díaz. Not long afterwards, authorities told the guard

⁶² Bunker, *Creating Mexican Consumer Culture*, 205-209.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 210.

⁶⁴ Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 107-109.

that Martínez had escaped. Thwarted, Martínez returned to custody. Finally, on his execution date, Martínez tried to make good on his promise to Cabrera. Having smuggled in another knife blade, Martínez lunged at Cabrera and wounded him in the neck.⁶⁵

Aware of the problems that Martínez gave Belén authorities, Posada illustrated the defiant nature of the criminal in Vanegas Arroyo's broadsides. In two of these papers, Posada's engravings depict Martínez's rebellion as a virtue (Figures 2.21 and 2.23).⁶⁶ The poem in the broadsheet *Jesús Bruno Martínez en las bartolinas de Belén [Jesús Bruno Martínez in the Cells of Belén]* is allegedly Martínez's lament for his actions and his abandonment of hope.⁶⁷ Posada's image that accompanies the poem, however, implies that Martínez is facing a more complex set of emotions (Figure 2.21).⁶⁸ Posada depicts Martínez leaning against a table in his cell with his head in hand and his back straight. Posada's Martínez gives us a daring look through his furrowed eyebrows. Posada sketches Martínez with his mouth parted as if in speech, while his hand gestures suggest that he is making an emphatic point. There is worry in Martínez's eyes, but Posada does not show him as a man beaten down. Instead, Posada's drawing implies that Martínez is impatient and quarreling with his fate.

⁶⁵ Posada, "La fuga de Jesús Bruno Martínez de la cárcel de Belén," broadside, 1891, image in Franks, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 113; Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 115.

⁶⁶ Posada, "Jesús Bruno Martínez en las bartolinas de Belén," restrike of a white-line illustration, 1891, image in Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 112; Posada, "Ejecución de Jesús Bruno Martínez," restrike of a white-line illustration, 1892, image in Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 114.

⁶⁷ Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 114-115.

⁶⁸ Posada, "Jesús Bruno Martínez en las bartolinas de Belén," restrike of a white-line illustration, 1891, image in Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 112.

Posada also illustrated the attack on Cabrera before Martínez's execution (Figure 2.23).⁶⁹ Posada sketches Martínez with a defiant attitude. Martínez stands with his head high and his hand on his hip. The print suggests that the figure closest to Martínez is Cabrera, as an 1897 picture of him shows the same high forehead and mustache.⁷⁰ The clothes Cabrera wears imply that he held a higher rank than that of the other soldiers. Martínez's lunging action indicates that he held the knife, hidden by Cabrera's body, in his left hand. Posada's illustration also reflects the confusion and chaos surrounding the incident, as he draws two soldiers rushing to subdue the prisoner. Without text, this engraving shows that Martínez never stopped his fight against the law enforcement. Both Martínez prints show that Posada celebrated the bandit's rebellious attitude towards authority.

In valuing criminal defiance, exploiting upper-class misdeeds, and mocking the middle class, Posada's art did not challenge modernization like scholars such as Frank have argued.⁷¹ Instead, Posada contested the belief that integrity solely belongs to those who have economic means. The numerous images indicate that the broadsides of print sold well and were popular among the public. By targeting upper and middle class lifestyles, Posada not only amused his audience, but also showed his support for the working class.

The Masses' Role in Modernization

⁶⁹ Posada, "Ejecución de Jesús Bruno Martínez," restrike of a white-line illustration, 1892, image in Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 114.

⁷⁰ Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 115.

⁷¹ Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*; see Beezley, *Judas and the Jockey Club*; Buffington and French, "The Culture of Modernity," in *The Oxford History of Mexico*, 382-383.

Posada's work provides us with a representation of Mexican popular customs, values, and criticisms. Posada's engravings also indicate the masses' position on modernization. The modernization efforts brought about by the Porfirian rule produced a new popular culture in which technologies and foreign involvement affected traditional customs. This exchange established forms of popular consumption, entertainment, and transportation. The Mexican economic progress transformed urban space. Public education, railroads, streetcars, department stores, theaters, bicycles, and circuses impacted the daily lives of the Mexican people. Posada's illustrations show that the lower and working classes' objected to elements of modernization celebrating ambition, greed, and immorality, but welcomed aspects they perceived to have more practical benefits to themselves.

Focusing on the culture of Mexico's popular classes, scholars have revealed the everyday lives of the common people. However, researchers analyzing Mexican popular culture have differing opinions on the role the lower and working classes played in modernization. Studies from scholars like Beezley and Esposito argue that the masses clung to traditional customs and resisted the administration's efforts to secularize and industrialize.⁷² These scholars believe that Posada and his audience resisted modernization because the majority of his oeuvre illustrates traditional customs and regime opposition. However, an analysis of Posada's advertising leaflets, chapbook covers, and corridos demonstrate that the popular classes embraced elements of Mexican development. Just as Bunker established in *Creating a Mexican Consumer Culture* and Díaz determined in her article "The Satiric Penny Press," this section will demonstrate that the working class

⁷² Beezley, *Judas at the Jockey Club*; Esposito, *Funerals, Festivals, and Cultural Politics in Porfirian Mexico*.

accepted elements of modernization from which they benefited.⁷³ Posada's images document that the popular classes utilized modern technologies in order to obtain information and news, while they also enjoyed imported activities such as boxing, bicycles, the circus, and chapbooks.

With the election of Porfirio Díaz in 1876, the government dedicated itself to the modernization of Mexico. Necessary to achieve this advancement was economic development. Therefore, Mexican and foreign entrepreneurs invested in export agriculture, the mining industry, and large-scale manufacturing.⁷⁴ These investments gave way to improvements in distribution, technological innovations, and increased literacy, which shaped Porfirian popular culture. Goods of mass consumption became abundant and cheaper, and modern transportation and communication infrastructure facilitated new forms of media and recreation.

According to Mexican social reformers, the Porfirian regime launched a secular public education program to create a more virtuous citizenry.⁷⁵ With the education reforms in place, adult literacy rates in Mexico rose from seventeen percent in 1895 to twenty-nine percent in 1910. At the same time, Mexico City's literacy increased from forty-five percent to sixty-five percent. The innovations in machinery combined with the improvement in the Federal District's literacy rates made the mass circulation of news and literature possible. The numerous dailies, weeklies, chapbooks, and penny press advertisements for cheap novels

⁷³ Bunker, *Creating a Mexican Consumer Culture*; Díaz, "The Satiric Penny Press."

⁷⁴ Edward Beatty, *Institutions and Investment: The Political Basis of Industrialization in Mexico Before 1911* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 3-22.

⁷⁵ Buffington and French, "The Culture of Modernity," in *The Oxford History of Mexico*, 382-383.

show that Porfirian Mexicans consumed literature.⁷⁶ Posada's chapbook and songbook covers, in particular, reveal that the popular classes devoured the written word.

The chromolithographic engravings Posada created for the children's series *Biblioteca del niño mexicano [Library of Mexican Boy]* (Figures 2.24-2.26), published by the Spanish Maucci Brothers, demonstrate that Posada used modern technology in his own work and show that children also participated in Mexico's development.⁷⁷ Composed of 110 pamphlets, this collection features the history of Mexico by historian Heriberto Frías. Each pamphlet consists of sixteen pages, with one or two more monochromatic illustrations inside. The stories in *Biblioteca* combine history with legend and promote patriotism through dramatic storytelling.⁷⁸ In utilizing the colored lithograph technology, Posada showed his willingness to incorporate the modern innovations into his work. The multitude of booklets and chromolithographs indicate that the circulation of these stories was widespread, revealing that the popular classes' children also participated in the modernization of education and enjoyment of foreign technology.

Several of Posada's other chapbook and songbook covers depicted modern entertainment, like the circus. Many circus acts seen today have roots in ancient Egypt and China. The modern day circus, though, began in 1768 with Englishman Philip Astley's

⁷⁶ Bunker, *Creating Mexican Consumer Culture*, 84-85.

⁷⁷ Posada, "La leyenda del monje blanco," *Biblioteca del niño mexicano*, 1900, José Guadalupe Posada: The Jean Charlot Collection, University of Hawaii Library, JCC.JGP:M1, <http://libweb.hawaii.edu/libdept/charlotcoll/posada/posadabiblio1.html> (accessed February 10, 2014); Posada, "El combate de Ocelotzin y Prado Alto," *Biblioteca del niño mexicano*, 1900, José Guadalupe Posada: The Jean Charlot Collection, University of Hawaii Library, JCC.JGP:M2, <http://libweb.hawaii.edu/libdept/charlotcoll/posada/posadabiblio1.html> (accessed February 10, 2014); Posada, "La matanza de chutula o sangre y fuego, fuego y sangre," *Biblioteca del niño mexicano*, 1900, José Guadalupe Posada: The Jean Charlot Collection, University of Hawaii Library, JCC.JGP:M3, <http://libweb.hawaii.edu/libdept/charlotcoll/posada/posadabiblio1.html> (accessed February 10, 2014); see Posada, *José Guadalupe Posada: My Mexico*, 130-138.

⁷⁸ "México Siglo XX," Museo de Historia Mexicana, http://www.3museos.com/themes/coleccion/msxx_07.html (accessed February 10, 2014).

decision to perform trick riding in an amphitheater. By the mid-nineteenth century, technological advancements in transportation made it possible for Astley to expand his circus to England, France, the United States, and Mexico.⁷⁹ Mexico had an influx of European circus performers from illusionists and trick riders to pantomimes and exotic animals.⁸⁰ One of the most popular circuses was *Teatro Circo Orrin* [Orrin Circus-Theater].⁸¹ By the early twentieth century, the circus placed advertisements in the daily newspapers and offered price reductions to gain a larger audience. Seeing the show's popularity, businesses such as La Tabacalera Mexicana rented out circus groups to advertise their products. Offering cheap admission—an empty packet of cigarettes—these performances allowed the lower class to enjoy the foreign entertainment.⁸²

Noticing the circus's acclaim, Posada created several chapbook and songbook covers that reflected the modern recreations (Figures 2.27-2.28).⁸³ In particular, the chapbook cover of *El clown mexicano cuaderno, no. 6* depicts a man dressed in a white clown costume with red diamonds (Figure 2.29).⁸⁴ Posada portrays the clown holding his pants out wide. The clown's baggy pants represent the big-top Mexican circus's incorporation of elements from

⁷⁹ Rupert Croft-Cooke and Peter Cotes, *Circus: A World History* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1976), 7-84.

⁸⁰ Julio Revolledo Cárdenas, "La historia mínima del Circo en México" [The Brief History of the Circus in Mexico], Circonteúdo, [http://www.circonteudo.com.br/stories/documentos/article/2719/Julio%20Revolledo%20Cárdenas%20-%20La%20historia%20m%C3%ADnima%20del%20Circo%20en%20M%C3%A9xico%20\(Bicentenario%20del%20circo%20moderno\).pdf](http://www.circonteudo.com.br/stories/documentos/article/2719/Julio%20Revolledo%20Cárdenas%20-%20La%20historia%20m%C3%ADnima%20del%20Circo%20en%20M%C3%A9xico%20(Bicentenario%20del%20circo%20moderno).pdf), 1-5 (accessed February 10, 2014).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁸² Bunker, *Creating Mexican Consumer Culture*, 45-46, 92.

⁸³ Posada, "El moderno payaso 2a parte," chapbook cover, not dated, *Museo del Estanquillo José Guadalupe Posada: Cronica de un Cronista*, Mexico City, Mexico; Posada, "El niño magico," chapbook cover, not dated, *Museo del Estanquillo José Guadalupe Posada: Cronica de un Cronista*, Mexico City, Mexico.

⁸⁴ Posada, "El clown mexicano cuaderno, no. 6.," chapbook cover, not dated, *Museo del Estanquillo José Guadalupe Posada: Cronica de un Cronista*, Mexico City, Mexico.

shows held in contemporary England and the United States. Posada also draws the clown's hair sticking straight out from underneath his cap. By representing the performer in such a manner, Posada identifies the man as Mexico's most famous clown, the Englishman Ricardo Bell (Figure 2.30).⁸⁵ Traveling around the country and giving up to four performances a day, Bell had become one of Mexico's first celebrities.⁸⁶ Understanding the popular classes, Posada knew that portraying such a famous figure and celebrating the popular entertainment would grab the public's attention and drive consumers to purchase the chapbook.

Posada's illustrations also reveal that the popular classes enjoyed riding bicycles as a pastime. At the turn of the twentieth century, the Parisian cycling mania came to Mexico. Initially, the bicycling was more of an upper-class recreation; however, technological improvements—making the bicycles safer—increased the sport's popularity among the masses.⁸⁷ Newspapers embraced this new trend and began publishing illustrations and articles that advocated cycling. Reporting in the *Mexican Herald*, an anonymous Boston journalist supported the bicycle as he wrote that cycling provided a means for youth to vent surplus energy and paved a way to a healthier lifestyle.⁸⁸ Broadsheets also made references to the new sport. Utilizing Posada's illustration *La bicicleta [The Bicycle]* (Figure 2.31), art historian Frank asserts that the lower classes were apprehensive about cycling.⁸⁹ This

⁸⁵ "Richard Bell c. 1900," photograph, 1900, *The Bell Family Papers*, Texas Christian University: Mary Coats Burnett Library, Special Collections, <http://library.tcu.edu/spcoll/web-exhibits/bell%20family%20exhibit/web%20site/RichardBell1.htm> (accessed February 10, 2014).

⁸⁶ José Carlos de la Puente, "Richard Bell," *The Bell Family Papers*, Texas Christian University: Mary Coats Burnett Library, Special Collections, <http://library.tcu.edu/spcoll/webexhibits/bell%20family%20exhibit/web%20site/index.htm> (accessed February 10, 2014).

⁸⁷ Beezley, *Judas at the Jockey Club*, 41-52

⁸⁸ "Mexico on the Wheel," *Mexican Herald*, September 29, 1895.

⁸⁹ Posada, "La bicicleta," broadside, not dated, image in Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 188.

illustration depicts a lower class person riding a bike and causing havoc in the streets. Men run from the turmoil and trample a few unlucky pedestrians (both men and children alike). Emphasizing the fourth stanza of the leaflet, Frank claims that the lower classes had qualms about society's changes.⁹⁰ However, Frank fails to emphasize that the verses speak of newsboys making their rounds on cycles and describe the bike's recreational uses. Therefore, the image and text suggest that the lower classes did not resist the new machine, but that they simultaneously accepted and doubted the metal mount. Also, Frank neglects to examine the criminality surrounding the cycling mania, which this illustration depicts. The number of stolen bicycles led to a need for a licensing policy. The licenses helped the police identify missing wheels; however, thieves continued to steal the machines.⁹¹ This type of criminal activity reveals that the popular classes made efforts to participate in modernization, even though they could not always afford the new commodities.

Posada's illustration, *Calavera las bicicletas [Skeleton Bicycles]*, shows the lower class cycling with confidence (Figure 2.32).⁹² In this image, Posada portrays the elites wearing western style hats and riding the infamous Parisian bicycle with members of the popular classes. He identifies the working class figures by dressing the male calavera in a traditional sombrero and the female in a china poblana skirt. Posada purposefully draws the lower class social types at a smaller scale than the elites and military personnel. The difference in scale emphasizes the division between the elite and the popular classes. Even

⁹⁰ Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 187-188.

⁹¹ Beezley, *Judas at the Jockey Club*, 47-48.

⁹² Posada, "Calavera las bicicletas," relief etching, 1900, *The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 30.82.112, <http://www.metmuseum.org/collections/search-the-collections/372097> (accessed February 10, 2014).

with that in mind, Posada still reveals that members of the popular classes rode their modern bicycles side by side with the upper classes.

Another imported sport soaked up by the Porfirian popular classes was an activity based on endurance, strength, masculinity, and speed—boxing. Recorded activities resembling pugilism date all the way back to 3000 BCE in ancient Egypt. However, boxing did not gain popularity as a sport until the late eighteenth century in England. As immigrants moved to the Americas in the mid-nineteenth century, so did prize fighting.⁹³ Native American cultures had a form of wrestling and mock combat with weapons, but not with fisticuffs. In Mexico, impromptu fights led to the use of weapons in duels. As an alternative to dueling, Colonel Thomas Hoyer Monstery from the United States opened a school of combative arts in 1868. To advertise his classes, Monstery boxed with his pupil, Señor Valdez. Reports of that morning's events showed that the spectators much admired Valdez's courage and form. By the 1890s, boxing had a small following. Pugilists held exhibitions in theaters and attracted crowds by presenting other performances. On November 24, 1895, the Englishman Billy Smith—the middle-weight champion of Texas—and the black Central American champion Billy Clarke boxed in front of a crowd of eight hundred.⁹⁴

Aware of such events, Posada incorporated pugilism into his repertoire. The engraving *Corrido "Don Chepito Mariguano"* (Figure 2.16) portrays the famous exhibition between Smith and Clarke.⁹⁵ Because the sport was an importation, Posada depicts Don Chepito reacting strangely to the boxing match—with his leg draped over the ring and wildly

⁹³ Kasia Boddy, *Boxing: A Cultural History* (London: Reaktion Books Limited, 2008), 6-109.

⁹⁴ Beezley, *Judas at the Jockey Club*, 31-35.

⁹⁵ Posada, "Corrido 'Don Chepito Marihuano,'" restrike of a white line plate, not dated, image in Frank, *Posada's Broadsheets*, 198.

applauding—in order to mock middle class obsession with foreign lifestyles. To set Chepito even further apart, Posada draws him in all white differing him from the other spectators who wear typical charro attire. Even though Chepito’s response captures most of the attention, our interest is Posada’s depiction of the match and the reaction of the other spectators.

Posada draws the other spectators responding in shock to the scene unfolding in front of them. The foremost art historian on Posada, Frank, proposes that the Mexican people felt appalled because of the barbarism of such activities.⁹⁶ However, this assumption is unreliable, as by 1895, the year the match took place, boxing demonstrations had become ubiquitous in Mexican theaters. Also, the crowd at the fight had just seen a series of fierce exhibitions similar to the main event, such as wrestling.⁹⁷

Posada depicts the white boxer, Smith, lunging and landing a left punch to the black fighter’s nose, Clarke. This point of the fight was the critical instant where Smith began his victory over Clarke. Winning the first round, Clarke landed blow after blow. Then in the second round, Smith took a left jab to Clarke’s nose, which caused him to stumble. Recovering his confidence, Smith turned Clarke into a punching bag and won the fight after four rounds.⁹⁸ Because there is no text associated with this print, we do not know exactly how the crowd reacted to this sudden turn of events. However, the open mouths, wide eyes, and emotive hands suggest that the sudden switch in victors stunned the crowd. Not only did reporters covering the fight reflect the match’s excitement by expressing their hope for more prizefights, they also praised the promoter, Professor James “Jimmy” Carroll, owner of the Mexican National Athletic Club. After the fight, interest in boxing grew exponentially.

⁹⁶ Frank, *Posada’s Broadsheets*, 199.

⁹⁷ Beezley, *Judas at the Jockey Club*, 34.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

Newspapers carried information on boxing from the United States, and Mexican pugilists fought in matches held in the southwestern United States and Mexico.⁹⁹

Posada's chapbook covers and broadsheets depicting the circus, cycling, and boxing reveal that the popular classes participated in a variety of modern recreations. Unlike Mexico's elite and middle classes, the masses did not benefit from economic modernization and did not desire a fashionable European lifestyle. Instead, the popular classes used the new technology and enjoyed the entertainment of foreign imports. Even though the masses may have not desired the elite's progress, Posada's engravings reveal that the masses accepted portions of modernization on their own terms.

Conclusion

The Mexico City of 1910 contained few similarities to the one that Posada arrived in thirty years earlier. The reforms of "order and progress" that President Porfirio Díaz and his regime administered altered Mexican urban space. Posada saw the political and economic changes taking place and documented the people's response in his engravings.

Posada captivated his lower and working class audiences with his truthful depictions of folk customs. In engraving popular religious icons and gender ideals, Posada showed that he understood and supported the lower class' values and beliefs. Meanwhile, Posada gained his audience's admiration by faithfully portraying plebian amusements and lifestyles. Posada's use of satire and irony revealed that he sympathized with the masses. Numerous Posada images criticize the middle class obsession with all things foreign and focus attention on elite immorality and greed. By critiquing the social inequalities plaguing Mexico, Posada demonstrated sympathy for the populace.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 34-35.

Posada's oeuvre provides us with a representation of prevalent Mexican perspectives, as his folk art and social critiques align with popular lifestyles and opinions. Therefore, an analysis of Posada's illustrations of Porfirian popular culture can reveal whether the masses engaged in the various forms of modernization. By examining these prints, we can identify the behavioral practices of the common urban dweller during Díaz's modernization reforms. Posada's production of numerous covers demonstrates that the lower class participated in the educational programs launched by Díaz's administration. They also show that the modern circus was a popular recreation for working class families. However, the circus was not the only foreign import entertaining the masses. Posada created engravings that depicted the popular classes' participation in European sports, such as cycling and boxing. Unlike Mexico's elite and middle classes, the masses did not engage in Porfirian modernization for economic benefits or even to enjoy the most fashionable European lifestyles. Instead, popular classes benefitted from the new technologies and enjoyed modern recreations. Posada's engravings reveal that the masses did not desire the elite's development, but accepted aspects of modernization on their own terms.

This study shows a society fully aware of and captivated by the ascent of modernization. The research in this paper departs from the scholarly consensus that the popular classes either rebelled against Porfirian modernization efforts, or that the elites manipulated the masses into participating in the advancement of society. Scholarship such as Pilcher's "*Fajitas and the Failure of Refrigerated Meat Packing in Mexico*" and Beezley's *Judas at the Jockey Club* reflect the narrative of popular resistance.¹⁰⁰ Their research analyzes the various ways in which the científicos' implementation of new technologies (like

¹⁰⁰ Beezley, *Judas at the Jockey Club*; and Pilcher, "*Fajitas and the Failure of Refrigerated Meatpacking in Mexico.*"

refrigerated meat packing) or eradication of popular traditional ceremonies (such as the burning of Judas effigies) increased popular discord, adding to the social division between the elite and working class.¹⁰¹ Other research, such as Mraz's *Looking for Mexico* and Esposito's *Funerals, Festivals, and Cultural Politics*, contends that Porfirian regime manipulated the public into engaging in Mexican development.¹⁰² Their examination of state funerals, civic rituals, and photography demonstrate that the government combined specific aspects of Mexico's traditional folk customs with modernization programs in order to stabilize the regime's control over the country. My thesis, along with Overmyer-Velázquez's *Visions of the Emerald City*, Bunker's *Creating Mexican Consumer Culture*, and Díaz's article "The Satiric Penny Press," departs from these schools of thought.¹⁰³ Instead, we have found that Mexico's popular classes supported liberal reforms—juridical innovations, free suffrage, and education—and enjoyed new consumer lifestyles and imported recreations. Even though our research reveals that urban workers embraced notions of progress and modern culture, we agree that the masses did not accept all of the reforms put in place by Díaz's administration.

While this new direction is promising, the scope of my thesis is limited in three ways. First, the research here is narrow in a spatial manner, as the capital, Mexico City, is not representative of the entire country. We must examine iconography in regions outside of the Federal District. In studying cartoons from other Mexican provinces, we may alter our understanding of Díaz's modernization reforms. Posada himself presents a limitation in two

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Mraz, *Looking for Mexico*; Esposito, *Funerals, Festivals, and Cultural Politics in Porfirian Mexico*.

¹⁰³ Overmyer-Velázquez, *Visions of the Emerald City*; Bunker, *Creating Mexican Consumer Culture*; Díaz, "The Satiric Penny Press."

ways. By focusing solely on Posada, our perception of the time may be clouded, as other engravers may have a differing perspective of the time. Further work on a variety of Porfirian cartoonists can give us a better understanding of the public's daily lives. Also, much of Posada's life still remains a mystery; however, by tracking his artwork through publication dates, we could find how his and his audience's perspectives of Mexican society changed over his career as an engraver. Thus, this work is the beginning of a research project to examine changing popular cultural trends through iconography.

Figures

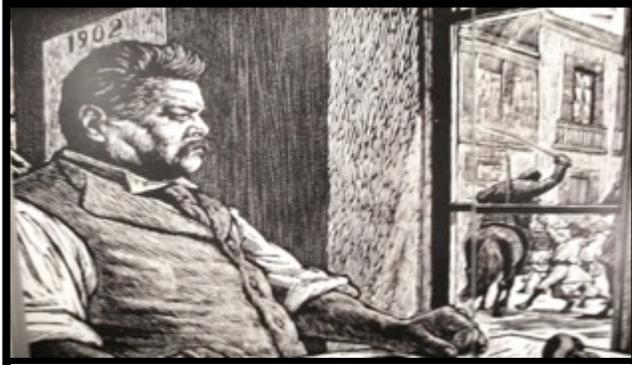


Figure 1: *Homenaje a Posada*. Leopoldo Méndez.

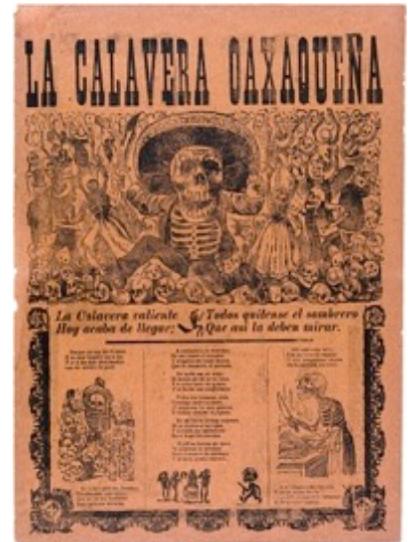


Figure 1: *La calavera Oaxaqueña*. José Guadalupe Posada.



Figure 3: *Unknown Title*. Posada.



Figure 2.1. *¡La gran ascension de D. Joaquín Cantolla y Rico. Corrido cantado por Don Chepito Mariguano en la capital de Mexico.* Posada.

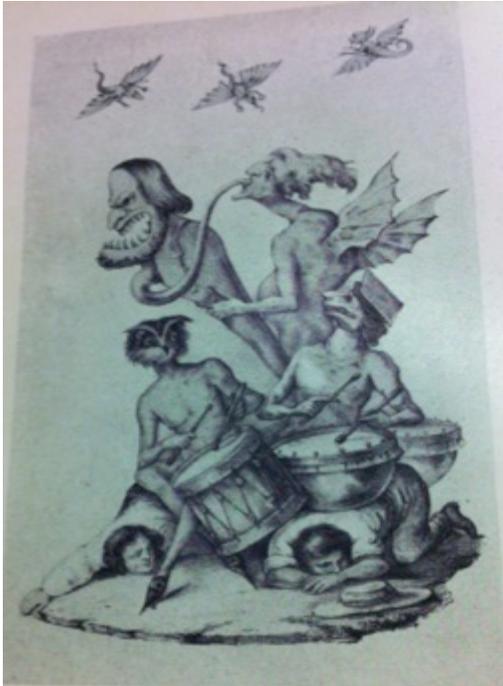


Figure 2.2. *The Orchestra*. Ignacio Cumplido.



Figure 2.3. *Time and the Church*. Constantino Escalante.



Figure 2.4. *Last Day of the Fiscal Year*. Santiago Hernández. Lithograph from "La Orquesta."

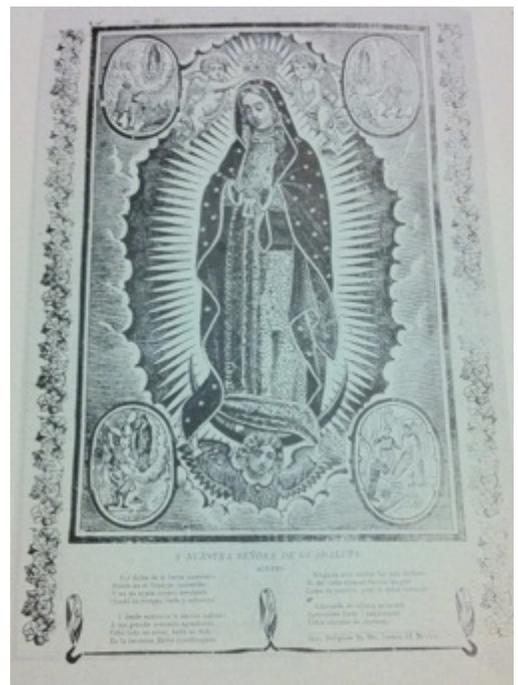


Figure 2.5. *A Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe*. Posada.



Figure 2.6. *Tiernas súplicas con que invocan las jóvenes de cuarenta años al milagroso San Antonio de Padua—pidiéndole su consuelo.* Posada.



Figure 2.7. *¡Horrible y espantosísimo acontecimiento!!* Posada.



Figure 2.8. *El jarabe en ultratumba or Calaveras zalameras de las coquetas meseras.* Posada.

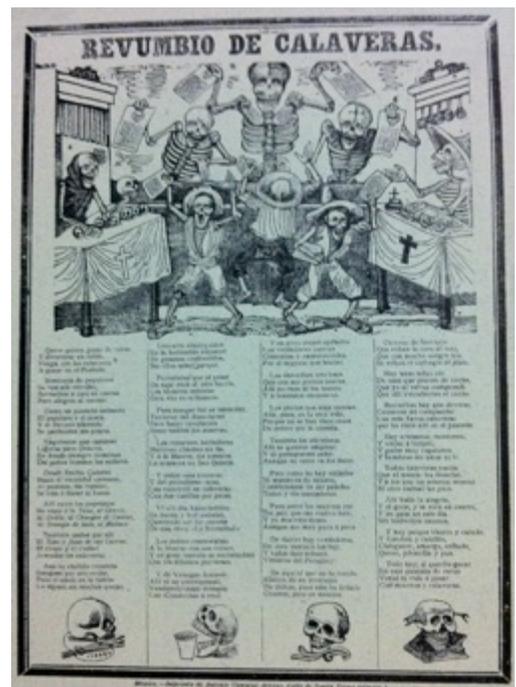


Figure 2.9. *Refjumbio de calaveras.* Posada.



Figure 2.10. *El valiente de Guadalajara*. Posada



Figure 2.11. *El cancionero popular, canción del pulquero*. Posada



Figure 2.12. *El gran chasco que se pegó Don Chepito Mariguana*. Posada.



Figure 2.13. Back of sheet illustrated in Figure 2.11. Posada.



Figure 2.14. *Don Chepito el torero*. Posada.



Figure 2.17. *Los 41 maricones encontrados en un baile de la Calle de la Paz el 20 de noviembre de 1901*. Posada.



Figure 2.15. *Don Chepito Marihuano*. Posada.

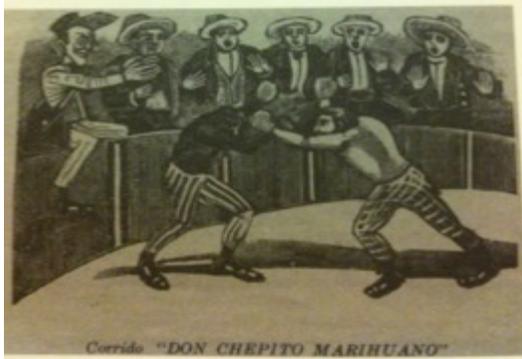


Figure 2.16. *Corrido "Don Chepito Marihuano"*. Posada.



Figure 2.18. *Ejemplar y ciertísimo suceso*. Posada.



Figure 2.19. *Espantosísimo y Terrible acontecimiento*. Posada.



Figure 2.20. *El mosquito americano*. Posada.



Figure 2.21. *Jesús Bruno Martínez en las bartolinas de Belén*. Posada.



Figure 2.22. *La fuga de Jesús Bruno Martínez de la cárcel de Belén*. Posada.



Figure 2.23. *Ejecución of Jesús Bruno Martínez.* Posada.



Figure 2.24. *La leyenda del monje blanco.* Posada.



Figure 2.25. *El combate de ocelotzin y prado alto.* Posada.



Figure 2.26. *La matanza de cholula o sangre y fuego, fuego y sangre.* Posada.



Figure 2.27. *El moderno payaso 2a parte.* Posada.

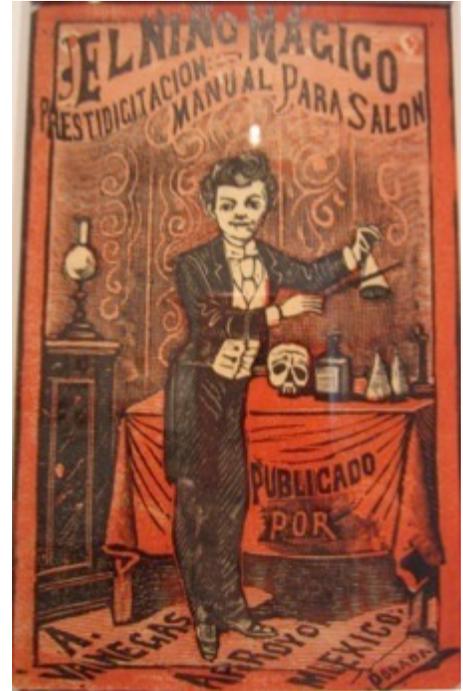


Figure 2.28. *El niño magico.* Posada.



Figure 2.29. *El clown mexicano cuaderno no. 6.* Posada.



Figure 2.30. Richard Bell. Mexico, 1900.



Figure 2.31. *La bicicleta.* Posada.



Figure 2.32. *Calavera las bicicletas.* Posada.

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ABSTRACT

“A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS:” JOSÉ GUADALUPE POSADA AND POPULAR PERSPECTIVES OF THE PORFIRIATO (1876-1910)

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More than one hundred years after his death, José Guadalupe Posada's work continues to gain popularity and inspire artists today. Posada's prints of skulls and skeletons left their mark on Mexican popular culture. However, Posada's depictions of sensational stories, social criticism, and daily life facilitated the production of thousands of chapbook covers, *corridos*, board games, and broadsides. These images reveal the lives, relationships, and activities of the masses during the Porfiriato, and provide an account of a time in Mexico filled with change. An examination of Posada's works enhances our understanding of the popular classes' realities under an oppressive regime. Therefore, this thesis focuses on Posada's popular culture images to demonstrate that the popular classes participated in Porfirian efforts at modernization.