Emeritus Professor, University of Cambridge, tried to cover the 300 years of the colonial city in about a dozen pages. He approached the subject from an intellectual history perspective, so you won't find out much about the *castas* here, or about architecture. That is a shame in a book like this which could easily have walked us through a block or two of the *centro histórico*. A taste of that can be experienced in the essay by Diane Davis, from MIT. She convincingly sketched the struggles beginning in the 1940s between the modernizers, advocating progress and economic development, and the traditionalists, backed by both the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH) and the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes (INBA) trying to save historic buildings.

The final three essays take on the cultural side of the story. Vicente Quirarte of the National University of Mexico looks at the literary depiction of the capital throughout the centuries with mentions of poets, chroniclers, and song writers. It is a lovely depiction, a high-minded companion to Monsiváis's Metro rider. Hugo Lara Chávez, a film critic and researcher in Mexico City, examined the city in movies, combining the location of theaters with films that dwell on urban problems such as chaos, corruption, and crime. Although he tries hard to link movies to the city, his essay becomes a recitation of the plots of various films, and dramas at that. However, it is the comedies that really capture the capital, and it is hard to imagine this essay with no mention of Cantinflas. Magali Tercero, a noted *cronista*, rounds out the collection with a study of the work of Maya Goded, a noted photo-journalist, covering prostitution, child abuse, wrestling, a city morgue, and drug abuse among other topics. The pictures are sad, but there is little in them to proclaim the uniqueness of this big Mexican city as opposed to any other. On the whole, though, while Mexico City may not yet get the cultural attention and respect it so richly deserves, this collection moves in the right direction.

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Looking for Mexico: Modern Visual Culture and National Identity. By John Mraz. Durham: Duke University Press, 2009. Pp. xiv, 344. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. $84.95 cloth; $23.95 paper.

John Mraz began studying the modern visual culture of Latin America back when few historians took the field seriously. The fruits of his own labor and the growth of new scholarship are evident in this broad and ambitious narrative that views modern visual culture as "the site where Mexican identities have been constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed" (p. 250). The book focuses specifically on photography and cinema and spans the period from the first photographic documentation of any war (the United States invasion of Mexico in 1846) to recent cinematic portrayals of Frida Kahlo.

At the heart of the book are dialogues between photography and film, foreign and national image makers, and image makers and those who participated in the making of their own image. But the central dialectic revolves around what Mraz calls picturesque and anti-picturesque visions of Mexico. The first depicts Mexicans as timeless products of nature,

linked to indigenous cultures and marked by colonialism and underdevelopment. If the elitist and orientalist visual culture of the Porfiriato was profoundly challenged by the revolution, postrevolutionary image makers soon recreated a similar master narrative in which "the Mexican Revolution is a mythic form given once and for all—of volcanoes and clouds, of ancient structures, of picturesque clothing, of superficial beauty, of the party dictatorship that ruled the country for seventy years" (p. 118). Mraz directly connects the postcards of German photographer Hugo Brehme, with their passive if idealized peasantry, to the Golden Age, celebrity-centered movies of Gabriel Figueroa and Emilio Fernández, whose ahistorical allegories of nation obscured differences of class and ideology and largely reinforced gender roles and the patriarchy of the "revolutionary family." Similarly, the pioneering photojournalism and subsequent *Historias Gráficas* of Agustín Víctor Casasola and his family were fundamental to the construction of a conservative vision of a unified Revolution produced by Great Men and protected by the PRI.

By contrast, the anti-picturesque vision of other image makers posits *lo mexicano* as a product of ongoing struggle and historical experience. Mraz traces this vision through the photographers Tina Modotti and Manuel Alvarez Bravo, independent photojournalists such as the Hermanos Mayo and Héctor García, and a cinematic tradition that begins with the revolutionary trilogy of Fernando de Fuentes in the 1930s and continues with more recent depictions of the repression of the 1968 student movement and peasant guerrillas. He also elaborates on the mechanisms of censorship, bribes, and outright repression that limited the production and postponed the circulation of many critical images, the counterpart of the intimate relation between photojournalism and power that was fundamental to the picturesque. Some of the most insightful analysis comes from contrasting specific images within these competing visions, such as two very different photographs of a woman carrying a water jug by Brehme and Modotti, or the similar plots and different meanings given the revolution in de Fuentes's *El Compadre Mendoza* and Fernandez's *Flor Silvestre.*

Of course, the categories of the picturesque and its converse do not in themselves do justice to Mraz's argument. Both visions often rely on essentialist vocabularies, if only to challenge them; over their careers, many image makers first challenged and then perpetuated official myths; and individual images lend themselves to multiple meanings, depending on the publisher or the specific reading of the viewer, academic or otherwise. Indeed, Mraz subtly and convincingly constructs his narrative around the interactions of these contrary visions, in the process showing how fundamental modern visual culture was to both the creation of and resistance to the postrevolutionary hegemonic order. His book reminds us that at different moments, image makers, their subjects, officials, publishers, scholars, and viewers all participate in the ongoing debate over Mexican identity.

Readers interested in a narrower focus or a more overarching theoretical framework might prefer Leonard Folgarait's *Seeing Mexico Photographed* (2008), with its very different argument. Others might question Mraz's exclusion of other forms of visual culture that reached more influential or popular audiences (murals, prints, B movies, etc.); yet Mraz does note the frequent interactions between painters, photographers, and film-

makers, and suggests ways that the essential paradigms of Mexican identity formed by these talented image makers were imitated, reproduced, and transformed by others. In short, the scope, accessibility, and argument of this important book make it a great choice for use in a course on visual culture, or a more general course on modern Mexico.

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ETHNOHISTORY & INDIGENOUS POLITICS

Here in This Year: Seventeenth-Century Nahuatl Annals of the Tlaxcala-Puebla Valley. Edited and translated by Camilla Townsend, with an essay by James Lockhart. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010. Pp. x, 212. Maps. Tables. Glossary. Bibliography. Index. $55.00 cloth.

The study of colonial Nahuatl documentation continues to grow as scholars shift their focus to new types of materials. In this volume, Camilla Townsend has focused her attention on the genre of annals, the chronological listing of events. We know from existing documentation that this type of historical record was common prior to the arrival of the Spanish. In the sixteenth century many areas continued their tradition of annals and made the shift from glyphic writing to European script. Although Chimalpahin continued the tradition in the Valley of Mexico in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, by the seventeenth century only a very few places continued the annals tradition, one of the prime locations being the Puebla-Tlaxcala region. In this work Townsend translates, edits, and analyzes two annals: one from Tlaxcala, produced by Don Manuel de los Santos y Salazar, his family and circle; the other from Puebla, produced by Don Miguel de los Santos and his circle. The attributions are necessarily vague since no single individual claims authorship. The hand, grammar, perspective, and other patterns of communication shift across the years, indicating that several scribes participated, but in general all pertained to a closely knit social group affiliated with these principal characters.

The book consists of an introduction by Townsend, which analyzes the history of the region, the development of the annals genre, and how these two examples fit into it, also looking at other annals from the region. The Nahua called annals like these *xiuhpoalli*, or year counts. Normally in the glyphic writing each year would be indicated by its calendrical sign, and then the events of that year represented as a single glyph. The interpreter of the documents would use this as a mnemonic device to recall the fuller account. With the transition to European writing, the year sign gave way to Christian years, and the glyph gave way to a brief narrative on the events. The earliest dates in these annals were clearly copied from some prior source, possibly a glyphic account. In interpreting the older tradition sometimes the actual years would be written in error, confusing one date in the pre-Columbian system with an incorrect year in the Christian calendar. Townsend then goes on to look at the world in which the annals were written, studies the clues which point to their authorship, and discusses the technical issues related to the transcription of the orig-