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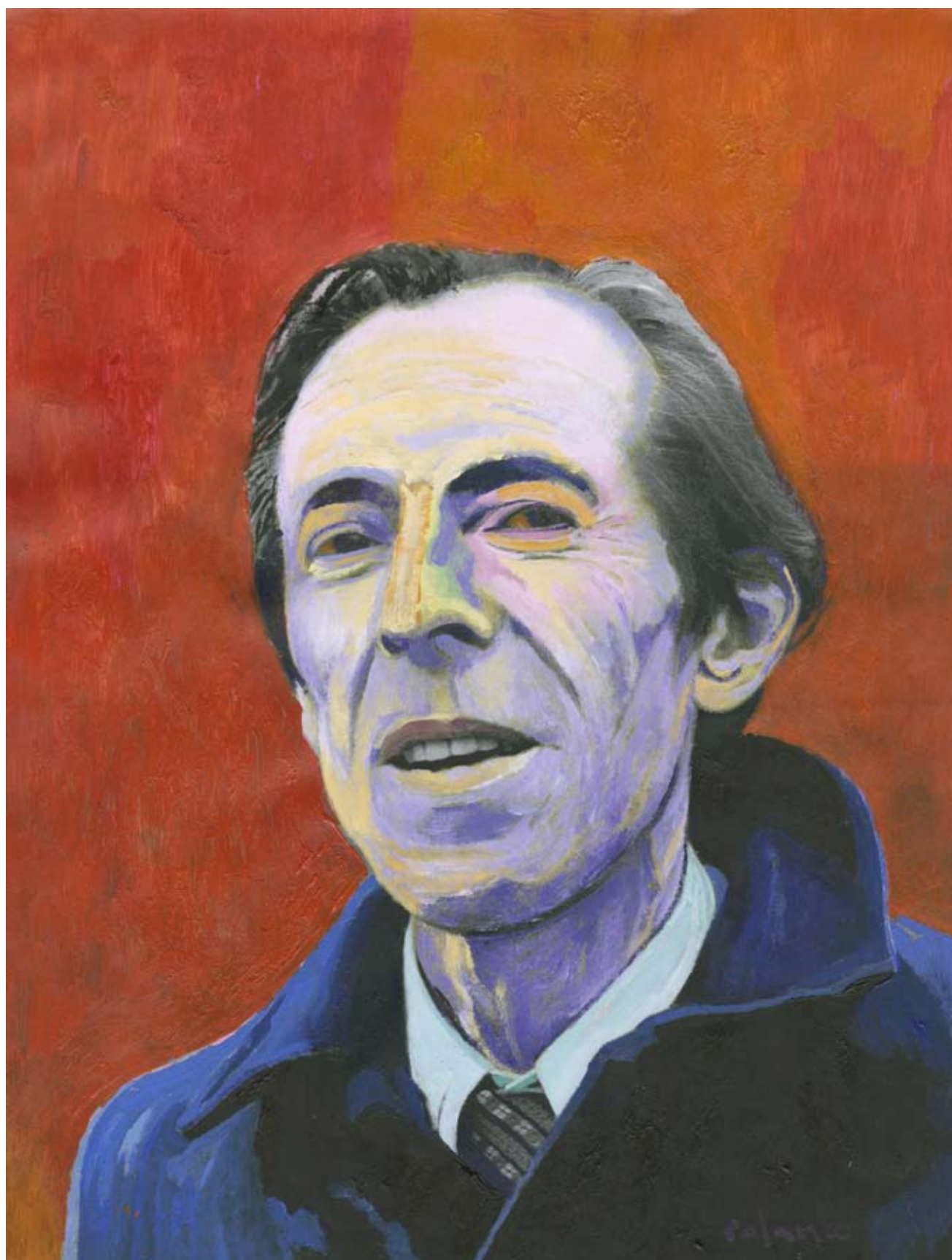


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Photograph of Julio Ramón Ribeyro reinterpreted by Enrique Polanco, 2009.

REMEMBERING J. R. RIBEYRO / THE ROUTE OF BIODIVERSITY
TRENCHES AND BORDERS OF PERUVIAN FOLK ART
THE CAHUACHI DIVINITIES / CUZCO, THE CULINARY EMPIRE

READING RIBEYRO

César Ferreira*

Julio Ramón Ribeyro would have turned eighty this year. Though his thin, discrete figure is no longer with us, anyone who has read his books knows that his words and characters are. Summarizing the vast richness of his *œuvre* is, indeed, a difficult task, but it is worth remembering that Ribeyro was one of the most versatile writers in the history of Peruvian literature.

Over the course of four decades, he made notable incursions into the novel, playwriting, the essay, the diary, and short prose. Nevertheless, it was through the short story that he left his most important legacy in Peruvian literature. Like all great artists, Ribeyro is a visionary because he illustrates our many paradoxes and contradictions as a society and as a nation through his characters, delving through our individual and collective mind with lucidity and intelligence.

Ribeyro's first texts, which sprung forth in the 1950's, appeared at a point in our literature at which many writers were struggling to write realistic and urban works, in an attempt to represent the new challenges faced by Peruvian society at the time. Lima was then a city engrossed in a difficult transition: that of a large village which is beginning to grow and which, by so doing, becomes a large city forced to enter a new era of difficult modernity. The first short stories published by Ribeyro, memorable tales such as «Los gallinazos sin plumas» [«Featherless Vultures»] or «Al pie del acantilado» [«At the Foot of the Cliff»], are true to this phenomenon and are still important testimonials of a changing and contradictory urban space, the product of constant migration from the provinces and a difficult process of cross-fertilization. Through this urban space, pre-capitalist and blocked off by contrasts, the classic Ribeyro character roams in ever greater numbers: that subject who, as best he can, carries the weight of frustration and mediocrity, and who fights for a place in a society which displaces and marginalizes him time after time. Figures such as Bobby López, the protagonist of «Alienación» [«Alienation»] and his fruitless struggle to shed his mulatto identity and become, at any cost, an American gringo, are indeed illustrative. His efforts, though, are so absurd, that one day death takes him by surprise as he fights to defend the American flag in the faraway Korean War. As such, his yearned-for American dream becomes a tragic nightmare. I am also thinking of Pablo Saldaña, the protagonist of «Explicaciones a un cabo de servicio» [«Explanations for a Corporal»], who, unemployed and sitting at a bar in Lima, dreams of becoming a prosperous businessman. The false illusions entertained by Saldaña are abruptly interrupted,



Julio Ramón Ribeyro (Lima, August 31st, 1929 - Lima, December 4th, 1994).

though, when the protagonist finds himself trapped in a police holding cell, drunk and unable to pay the tab that he ran up at the bar hours earlier. To these we must add Mr. Fernando Pasamanos, the central figure of «El banquete» [«The Banquet»]. Pasamanos is a once wealthy old provincial landowner who aspires to regain his lost social status, throwing the last of his savings out the window, on a huge party that the President of Peru himself will attend. Destiny seems to be generous, and his fortune regained, when, the next morning, an unexpected occurrence destroys the last of his ambitions: a sudden coup d'état forces the president to resign. Worse still, the coup happens during the banquet itself, and is executed by a government minister taking advantage of the President's absence from the Presidential Palace to declare himself President. These

adventures, many times charged with an irony that often flows into dark humor, are examples of the typical vicissitudes and frustrations of Peruvian life, and populate the pages of Julio Ramón's work. Ribeyro gives voice to many of these characters, marginalized by society and locked in a trivial and mediocre existence, conceding them a fleeting moment of hope, until institutional order, social prejudice, or just absurdity itself bring them back to cruel reality.

This view of the human condition in Ribeyro's work is not, however, limited to a Peruvian context. In Paris, where he arrived early in the 1950's and wrote much of his work, Ribeyro would himself live the dilemmas of exile and uprooting. The result of this experience is a handful of short stories, grouped together as «Los cautivos» [«The Captives»] in the second volume of *La palabra del*

mudo, in which Ribeyro explores the troubles of marginalization in Europe. In these texts, among which the title story, as well as «Agua ramera» [«Whore water»] and «Los españoles» [«Spaniards»], Europe is the setting for the adventures and mishaps of individuals who wander its cities with only loneliness and boredom to keep them company. They generally live in cheap hotels or modest pensions in which they establish a sparse friendship with other marginalized figures in European society, and in anonymity, identify themselves vaguely as «Peruvian», when more detail is required than just saying «South Americans». Another example of unhappiness in Europe is «La juventud en la otra ribera» [«His Youth on the other Bank»], which appears in the third volume of *La palabra del mudo*. It is a story in which Ribeyro expresses more sharply than ever his desire to demystify the splendor of Paris. The protagonist is another Ribeyro character par excellence: the bureaucrat Plácido Huamán, a «Doctor of Education», is sent from Lima to Europe to participate in a conference in Switzerland. Before arriving in Geneva, Huamán stops in Paris to realize a dream he has waited his whole life for: to spend time in Paris, and, along the way, to treat himself to an affair. In the beginning, Dr. Huamán's dreams appear to come true when he meets Solange, an attractive French girl, in a cafe, and proceeds to have a romance as false as it is short lasting with her, though Huamán, given the mediocrity of his existence, refers to it as, «one of the golden pages of my life». The protagonist's romantic success is short lived indeed, and, in a sort of bitter paradox, Paris soon becomes the city which provides the aged expert in Education with a cruel rite of passage. In fact, Solange and her group of accomplices want nothing more than to take the few dollars that Huamán has brought along with him, and, this achieved, they take his life as well. Paris becomes a scummy, sleazy city in this Ribeyro story. And, like so many other Ribeyro characters who reach some stage of life at the wrong time, Huamán realizes his Parisian dream too late, and, as the text repeats with tragic premonition, «his youth was left behind on the other bank».

A tone of bittersweet skepticism and a discreet element which hopes to maintain human dignity in the

Picture Courtesy of Claudio de la Puente Ribeyro.

face of humiliation and adversity are constant companions to Ribeyro's characters. As José Miguel Oviedo says, Ribeyro's world is made up of «humble characters, small actions, [and] great dreams: this group of elements..... leads almost inevitably to failure and to the conviction that regardless of what our ambition is—love, adventure, power, money, the imagination—we are always alone and defenseless, playing parts whose words we forget exactly when we need them. Life is a game of masks and deceit, a cruel contrast between tough realities and fragile dreams.

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to reduce Ribeyro's work to a few categories such as those mentioned above. His fiction is also a dialogue with great works of Literature. In stories like «La insignia» or «Silvio en el rosal» [Silvio in the Rose Garden] his writing reveals a meticulous knowledge of absurdist literature, establishing points of contact with the works of writers like Borges, Cortázar, and Kafka himself. On the other hand, one critic has said with sharp irony that Ribeyro is the best Peruvian writer of the nineteenth century. This comment is not too far from the truth, since his elegant, sober style sends us back to the best pages of great masters like Maupassant or Chekhov who, like Ribeyro, examine the individual caught up in solitary battles against a reality which wins

again and again, but who, taking refuge in his dreams of false grandeur, never gives up.

Ribeyro's was a body of work written in silent rebellion and somewhat against the grain. When, in the 70's, Latin American literature saw the birth of a writing rich in verbal and structural experimentation thanks to the generation known as the generation of Magic Realism, Ribeyro remained true to his own voice and his own art, often marginalized from the commercial and marketing banquet of the era. But in this faithfulness lies his second great lesson: the ethic of an artist who, far from the temptations of success, continues working with exemplary tenacity, until finally forging a body of work whose relevance and transcendence is found precisely in its apparent anachronism.

A more intimate and reflective Ribeyro emerges in the last volume of *La palabra del mudo*, published in 1992. This work contains a series of texts in which the author turns up for an appointment with his past, in which he revisits times in a lifespan ranging from the innocence of the world of childhood to the wise skepticism of old age. As such, it should not surprise us that a quiet nostalgia runs through the pages of «*Relatos santacrucinos*» [«Neighborhood Tales»], since, as one of his protagonists says, these stories look to bring back



With: Enrique Lihn, Waldo Rojas, Sergio Pitlor, Jorge Enrique Adoum, Juan Rulfo, Alfredo Bryce, Manuel Scorza, Augusto Monterroso and Bárbara Jakobs in Paris in the mid-1970's.

Photo: José Pons.

«happy or unhappy times, finding nothing more than the ashes of some or the still-burning flames of others». Perhaps for this very reason, this effort, like so many others undertaken by Ribeyro's characters, turns again into disappointment. Nevertheless, if, as the author proposes in the prologue, «writing is a way of conversing with the reader», all we have to do is thank the author for the privilege of this long and fascinating dialogue. Not only because through this literary friendship Ribeyro allowed us to discover the vicissitudes and troubles

of the difficult status being Peruvian entails, but also made us the privileged circle of friends of a solitary and chain-smoking man who, contemplating the sea off Barranco, could only be an authentic writer. ●

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BETWEEN FICTION AND LIFE

Jorge Coaguila*

It would be a mistake to think that literary works must be autobiographical, or that these are better than entirely made up stories. This examination was written to observe the way Julio Ramon Ribeyro's work was built.

Ribeyro once declared, in an interview with Gregorio Martínez and Roland Forgues (1983), that he was trying to write an autobiographical book, but couldn't find the right way to do so, since he wanted to avoid convention. Anyone who writes about his own life is forced to confront certain topics. «You start talking about your ancestors, your parents, your childhood, your school, your friends, the trips you took. All biographies, in the end, are alike», explained Ribeyro.

The writer had, at that point, spent three or four years of his life trying to find a way to approach a book on his life. He had a series of symbolic elements in mind, though they may have seemed trivial. For example, beaches. All the beaches he had ever been to, from childhood on. He also considered using an approach based on all the hotels he had ever stayed in. «I must have stayed in around one hundred hotels», he declared. Other subjects he considered: libraries, books, cats, restaurants, brands of wine, shoes.



Caricature: Dionisio Torres.

In a nutshell, he was searching for elements with which would allow him to gather a series of memories together in relation to a central theme. In the end, the cigarette was used as the excuse to talk about his life.

In 1983, Ribeyro refers to a chapter of his autobiography titled, «Terremotos y temblores» [«Earthquakes and Tremors»]: «I was there for the earthquake that hit Lima in 1940, and later lived through very strong earthquakes. Through these earthquakes, I wrote about what had ha-

ppened to me, to my family, or what was happening in the country. The thing is that I can write a series of chapters on these elements, but how do I then put them together? This is what I am trying to figure out. I have to put them together somehow».

In an interview in 1973, Reynaldo Trinidad asked: «It is said that most of your stories are autobiographical. Is this true?» To which Ribeyro responded, «Exactly. My stories, to employ statistical terms, are 80 percent realistic and 20 percent imagination. When I say realism, I am referring to experiences I myself have had, or those which were told to the author directly by their protagonists. As such, my next book will be a collection of stories told to me by friends, entitled «*Lo que tú me contaste*» [«What you told me»]. The memory is an inexhaustible archive of material to be turned into prose».

Besides the fact that this book was never published, how much of Ribeyro in the flesh appears in his writing? Let us examine his first two

novels. The first, *Crónica de San Gabriel* [Chronicles of San Gabriel] (1960), is in reality the transposition of a season he spent at a hacienda in Tulpo, in the mountains of La Libertad province, north of the capital city of Lima. The characters are real, all exist or existed at the time.

His second novel, *Los geniecillos dominicales* [Sunday Elves] (1965), is also autobiographical. The Lima-born narrator proclaims that all of the episodes contained in the book are taken from his own experiences. Real life friends and acquaintances of Ribeyro's who inspired characters in the book include Doctor Jorge Puccinelli (Rostalínez), Carlos Eduardo Zavaleta (Carlos), Francisco Bendeúz (Cucho), Eleodoro Vargas Vicuña (Eleodoro), Washington Delgado (Franklin), Hugo Bravo (Hugo), Pablo Macera (Pablo), Manuel Acosta Ojeda (The Wise One), Juan Gonzalo Rose (Gonzalo), Alberto Escobar (Manolo), and Víctor Li Carrillo (Victoriano). Other elements taken from real life include: «Letras

Peruanas» magazine (Prisma) and the Insula Cultural Center (Ateneo cultural center).

Allow us to review Ribeyro's short stories. The story which goes back furthest in his life is «Por las azoteas» [«On the Rooftops»], which is based on experiences he lived at his childhood home at 117 Jirón Montero Rosas in Santa Beatriz, on the southern edge of downtown Lima. Most people think that Ribeyro was from the Miraflores district, but in fact he was born in Santa Beatriz and only moved to the Santa Cruz section of Miraflores in 1937, at the age of 7. His childhood trips to the eastern mountain town of Tarma allowed him to write two stories set in the city: «Vaquita echada» [«Cow laying down»] and «Silvio en El Rosedal» [«Silvio in the Rose Garden»]. The latter is not particularly autobiographical, but there is a certain representation of Ribeyro in the protagonist: a somewhat solitary individual, who creates art for the few, and is a seeker of truth. Champagnat Elementary and High School in Miraflores, where Ribeyro was a student from 1935 to 1945, is the setting for several of his stories. From this period of his life, we have «El señor Campana y su hija Perlita» [Mr. Bell and his daughter Pearl], «Mariposas y cornetas» [«Butterflies and Bugles»], «Los otros» [«The Others»], «La música, el maestro Berenson y un servidor» [«Music, Berenson the Maestro, and a servant»] and «Sobre los modos de ganar la guerra» [«On the ways of winning a war»], which takes place at the nearby Juliana archeological site. «Página de un diario» [«Page from a diary»] on the other hand, is taken from one of his most painful experiences: the death of his father, who passed away in 1945.



Paris, 1978.

The stories set in the Old World are generally part of the *Los Cautivos* [The Captives] collection: Madrid, in «Los españoles» [Spaniards] a small Belgian town in «Ridder y el pisapa-pes» [Ridder and the Paperweight], Frankfurt in «Los cautivos» [«The Captives»], Warsaw: «Bárbara», which is based on his trip to the Polish capital in 1955 as one of the thirty thousand children attending the Fifth World Youth and Student Festival, in which 114 countries participated, the slogan of which was, «For peace and friendship!»

He said very little regarding his time at Agence France-Presse (1961-1972), as a newswriter and translator, which was the most productive period of his life as a writer. Only the story «Las cosas andan mal, Carmelo Rosa» [«Things are going pretty bad, Carmelo Rosa»], which is based on the Catalan novelist Xavier Domingo, the protagonist being a Spaniard who is in charge of quotes on the stock exchange, gives us a window into his

life as a newspaper employee. Not a single line of fiction deals with his time as a diplomat, either as the cultural attache of the Peruvian embassy or later as a permanent delegate to UNESCO.

What were Ribeyro's last years like? We can find something out from the protagonist of *Dichos de Luder* [Luder's Sayings] (1989), who returns to Peru after a long sojourn in Paris. «In his spacious library, where he would spend most of his time reading, writing, or listening to music—be it Verdi operas or boleros by Agustín Lara—he would very occasionally be visited in the afternoons by two or three friends and the few young authors or students who had read the couple of books he had published. These evenings were simple. They drank only wine (red wine, Bordeaux if possible, on this Luder was firm), and they would talk about anything and everything, without rhyme or reason. You could see that Luder drew a lively pleasure from these visits,

which allowed him to break through his isolation and escape, even if for only a few moments,'a reality that was increasingly strange, and, in many ways, unbearable».

«Surf» is the last story Ribeyro wrote. Bernardo, somewhere around 60, moves into an apartment in Barranco, right above the sea. He was planning to write the book that would make everyone hold him in high esteem. After a few weeks, he feels the project is shipwrecked and decides to hold parties. The country is living in a climate of violence, with never-ending guerilla attacks. «He began to receive visits from a small and happy group of young friends, mostly writers, and of young intelligent girls who loved literature as much as they loved to party and live the turbulences of nightlife. In his study, memorable parties, dinners, and dances went on until the early morning in an atmosphere of febrile euphoria, at times almost distressing, as if they were living the last days of a time which would soon be up» says the narrator. Ribeyro died soon after writing this story, which is dated Barranco, July 26th, 1994.

Ribeyro's characters are born of memories, the observation of reality, and complex creations. In an interview with Ernesto Hermoza, the writer confesses, «I don't think that there is a single character that I created from head to toe. All are either real life characters that I have observed and known, or compound characters created from pieces of real people. You take two or three people, put them together, and shape a character». •

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THE CITY AS A STATE OF MIND

Eva Valero*

Ribeyro, who used a very personal style in his narrative work, consistently penetrated the indecipherable message hidden behind urban chaos; the city was the essential point from which to launch the numerous quests of his characters.

Cities, just like people or things, have a particular smell, often a pestilance». With these words, Julio Ramón Ribeyro began his first novel, *Crónica de San Gabriel* [Chronicle of San Gabriel*] (1960), capturing, through a plot that takes place on a hacienda high in the Andes, the attraction of the city which rules over all of his work, and, as such, ratifying the urban gaze that he had already explored during the 1950's in his first collections of short stories. In the «Introduction» to this novel, Ribeyro confirms the essentially urban vision that runs through all of his work, «That *Chronicle of San Gabriel* takes place in the mountains

does not, nevertheless, make it an indigenous-oriented novel, which is what sets it apart from great Andean writers like Ciro Alegría and José María Arguedas. Its specificity comes from the fact that it is a vision of the mountains, but the vision of a resident of Lima.» Later, Ribeyro evokes the perception of his hometown: «Lima, the old ladies would say, smelled like old clothes. To me, it always smelled like baptismal fonts, kerchified self-sacrificing churchgoers, and pot-bellied, dusty vergers». These lines belie one of the keys to the urban construction in Ribeyro's work: the emotional apprehension of the spaces of childhood, that «old city» smell. Further, he evokes an

outdated, ephemeral odor in response to the overbearing imposition of a cloud of smoke in the rapidly modernizing city, where the young writer's time was actually spent. The author makes a conscious effort to reveal the representation of the Lima transformed by a distressing scenario of social and urban change in the 1940's and 1950's in which the failures of provincial migrants anticipates the title under which Ribeyro will later publish his collection of short stories: *La Palabra del Mudo* [The Words of a Mute]. Even after he had firmly established himself in Paris, in 1960, after wandering through other European cities such as Amsterdam, Antwerp, London,

and Munich, his hometown—Lima—would reappear as the main point of reference in his stories, as much in *Los Gallinazos Sin Plumas* [Featherless Vultures] as in later collections: *Cuentos de circunstancias* [Stories of Circumstances] (1958), *Tres historias sublevantes* [Three Infuriating Stories] (1964), *Las botellas y los hombres* [Bottles and Men] (1964), *El próximo mes me nivelo* [I'll Balance Myself Out Next Month] (1972), *Silvio en El Rosedal* [Silvio in the Rose Garden*] (1977), *Solo para fumadores* [For Smokers Only] (1987) and *Relatos Santacruceños* [Neighborhood Tales] (1992). Likewise, his book entitled *Los cautivos* [The Captives] (1972) is a collection of most of his stories

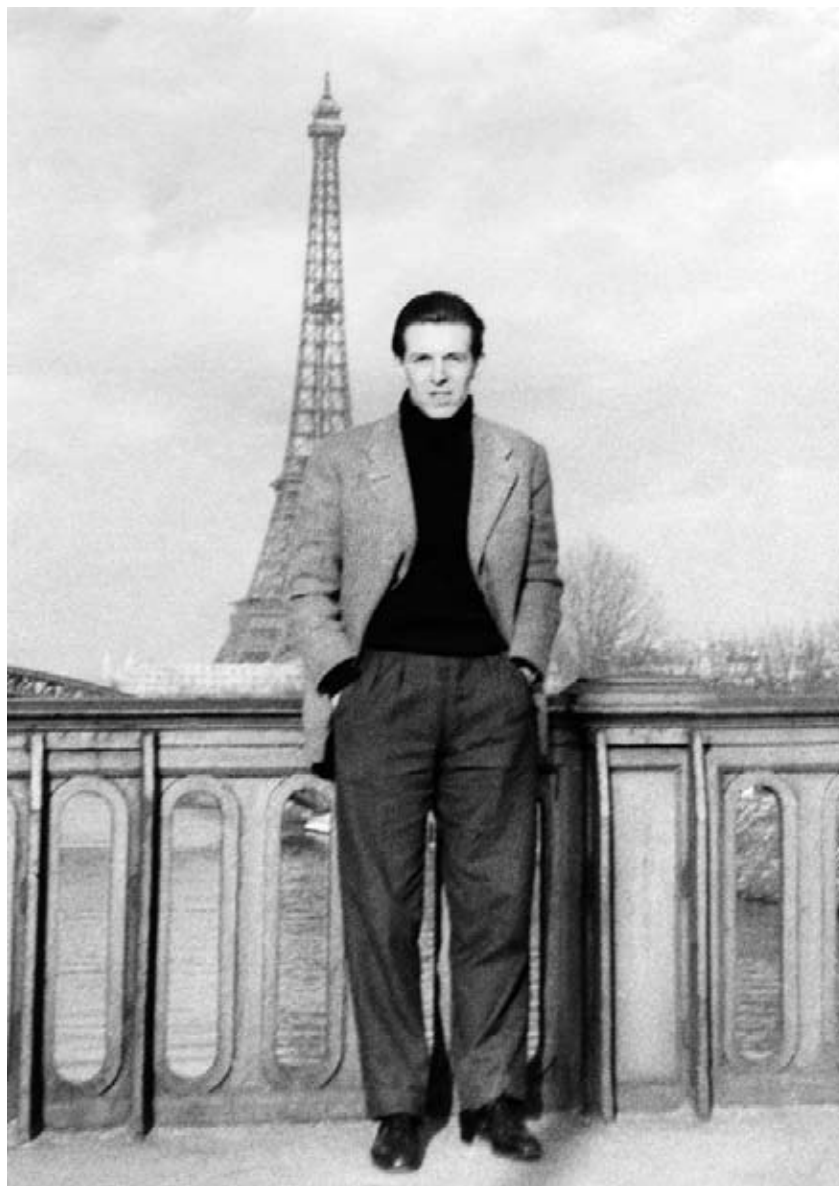
that take place in European cities, but even here Ribeyro projects his vision of Lima-centric narrative on «alien» cities.

Paris, the cultural capital of Latin America for all time, was the place in the world where the writer chose to live, but Lima was forever deep within his character and his writing. And the urban image that pulses through the background of his writing lies in the thinking, the philosophy of life, the vision of the world that the writer, from the watchtower of his tiny apartment on place Falguière tried to transmit to us throughout his work.

It would be accurate to recall that in 1953, Ribeyro had written an article called, «Lima, a city without a novel», in which he offered a sort of challenge in order for «someone to be the one to cast the first stone». That said, during that decade. He circumscribed his urban vision to the short story, and it would not be until the 1960's that he would publish his first novels. Five years after *Chronicle of San Gabriel*, the publication of *Sunday Elves* (1965) signified—just as Washington Delgado had predicted—the advent of the urban novel in Peru. In this work, Ribeyro further explores the emotional perception of social change in the city, its physical state, also undergoing drastic change, serving to transmit the alienation of its native-born inhabitants. Generally, in Ribeyro's writing—whether short fiction or novels—this process of accelerated mutation appears constantly as subject matter, recreated through different points of view that go all the way up and down the socio-economic ladder. But, in any case, the remaining aromas of an old city falling into decadence, and the able treatment to which the author subjects them, depend on the purpose of each story, flowing between the lines of this prose like an indispensable message which determines the literary construction of the city as a state of mind.

Criticism of Ribeyro's work has repeatedly mentioned the absence of descriptions of urban spaces in a prose that, nevertheless, gives its complete attention to the figures who wander through it almost unmentioned. As such, the concept of the city as a state of mind—that invisible city through which we accompany with the characters, and which we recognize as the vital space that conditions their interior conflicts and their vision of the world—is without a doubt one of the main themes of Ribeyro's work.

In order to represent the conflictive national transformation that took place in the middle of the twentieth century, the writer painted the portrait of a Lima in which the native-born inhabitants witnessed the arrival en masse of new settlers emigrating from the highlands. In a certain sense, setting their differences aside, Ribeyro's urban writing comes purposefully close to the goal pursued by the great poet of the city, Baudelaire, who, «bringing to light



Pont de Grenelle (Paris, 1954).

the part of the human soul hidden in landscapes [...] revealed the sad and often tragic heart of the modern city». In fact, in the human landscape represented in Ribeyro's stories and novels, the reader can discover beings as real as the wretched inhabitants of Lima's first shantytowns, the humble professionals and employees of a middle class hiding behind a facade of stale and alienating normalcy, or the old bourgeois aristocrats who are witnessing their own decline and the disintegration of their already-expired world. Each of these give life to this recurring problematic which generates, unfailingly, Ribeyro's atmosphere and tone; a problematic which translates into the relentless need to create reality in all its contradictions and miseries in his work. And to achieve this, Ribeyro aimed for the true cause, which was born with the city, and, unerringly linked to its continuous growth, reached its vast dimensions through the centuries.

As such, the writer analyzed the essential problematic of a changing and contradictory society in the heart of a completely transformed city. This problematic becomes real in conflicts over migration and the formation of suburbs, in the ideological dimension of social mobility and of social and ethnic differences, the precariousness of human relationships, etc. Loneliness, marginality, autobiography, uprootedness, timidity, antiheroicism, nostalgia, irony, and fantasy, which clash in the city as in any crisis

zone, are some of the key points of Ribeyro's, whose sound, in this original register, proposes a painful tonality from which imagined figures of anonymity and alienation emerge, figures of dehumanization and withdrawal. In his travels through, «the areas around *The Temptation of Failure*», Ribeyro directed his gaze towards the conflict between a disproportionately growing society and the moral values of declassed man in the space of the city. A close observer of the human condition, the writer described in his stories, whether they took place in Lima or in European cities, the faces of the dispossessed, the loners; a human landscape united in common marginality by their daily failures and wasted efforts; an «urban theater» of individuals who live in the multitude of the city and who, given the impossibility of breaking the spaces of aloneness, suffer, in the tediousness of their grayness, a loss of hope.

Through a deeply personal style, led by simplicity of form and the skilled use of ambiguity, Julio Ramón Ribeyro consistently penetrated, in his urban narratives, the indecipherable message hidden behind the chaos of the city, in its ancient facades, in the surprises of its streets, through the exploration of the undetermined possibilities of its urban spaces. In this exploration, Ribeyro traced what he himself called, «an inventory of enigmas». And, though on occasion the stories fictionalized in his work took place in mythical places of nature,

the essential image which is drawn in the background is always the city, the reference point from which a whole theory of life emanates.

Ribeyro, therefore, made the city the essential focal point from which he established his characters' quests, be it in urban spaces, in the mountains, or even in the Amazon jungle. Ribeyro's art, from this point of view, follows a series of enigmas through the imagination of individuals who are travelling or drifting, through the recreation of «ghost towns», or, quests for places of refuge, which in stories such as «La casa en la playa» [*The House at the Beach*] or «Silvio in the Rose Garden», achieve a metaphysical resonance.

Many of the stories in *The Words of a Mute* give off a sense of uneasiness with a world that refuses to be understood; a reality whose rapid transformation is characterized by the confusion of a pre-capitalist society unable to assimilate the process of modernization without democratization. Ribeyro gives a voice to the «mute», who is finally able to speak to this society, which in the end refuses to listen. From his conception of literature as a vehicle for a heretofore unknown perception of reality, this calm and swarming voice comes forth, spilling experiences in which every fantasy breaks down into painful reality onto the pages. Chaplinesque mutes in their sarcastic marginalization, or quixotic in their effort to re-humanize themselves though imagination, they suffer the head-on collision of their dreams with the cruel disenchantment imposed on them by daily life, and modulate a voice dripping with irony—as Alfredo Bryce would say, an irony as dry as a raincoat in Lima—which permeates each and every page and allows the writer to expose reality, transcend it so as to better suggest it, free it of its limitations, and come out on the other side.

The city in Ribeyro's work, in which life is debated between shadows and dreams, has its roots firmly planted in an attitude of an unchanging human quality: that of he who refuses to succumb, finally, to the «temptation of failure», and perseveres, almost out of breath, in the temptation of achievable dreams. As part of the celebration of the 80 years since the author's birth, may these lines serve as an homage and a stimulus to continue reading Ribeyro's work, and, above all, to continue enjoying what is without a doubt one of the sharpest, penetrating, and human bodies of work that contemporary Latin American literature has to offer. ●

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THE DESERT OF THE C

A century after Max Uhle's report came to light, creating the basis for current knowledge of the Nasca culture, the publication of



CAHUACHI, THE LARGEST ADOBE CEREMONIAL CENTER IN THE WORLD

Giuseppe Orefici

Out of the complex panorama of the Early Intermediate Period, the culture groups that emerged from the southern coast of Peru differ in a significant manner from those that developed in the north. Two main ceremonial centers can be identified in the territory under study. Both had a direct influence over a vast area and determined, over a long period of time, a stylistic pattern in a diverse array of iconographic expressions. On the central coast, Pachacámac played a predominant role since the Early Horizon Period and kept its power as a sacred place until the Colony. On the southern coast, the presence of the ceremonial center of Cahuachi generated an extensive zone of ideological influence, not only on the coastal areas but also in the upper valleys and in the Andean vicinity. On the northern coast, the situation was less homogeneous because there was more than one center that reached a noticeable importance in the cultural formation and in the subsequent development of the civilizations that dominated the historical scene of Peru. Cahuachi was not a true city and always kept its singularity as a ceremonial center. The concept of a big city does not correspond with the parameters that

characterize the structures of this ceremonial center. Back in 1957, W.D. Strong, in his report on the works conducted between 1952 and 1953, described some sectors of Cahuachi as being an early village occupation, but those areas have been completely destroyed by agriculture. Although we may have a different vision, there is no way to prove this fact, because Strong has credited the whole ceremonial center a housing function – although limited to some periods of its development. John H. Rowe also intuited a transition process of Cahuachi: from huaca, or sacred place, to city. More recent studies (Orefici 1993, 2003; Silverman, 1993) have contributed more data on the development of this sacred site, based on the excavations that were done down there since the Eighties. On its part, the Nasca Project has conducted systematic excavations on more than 150 sectors and has always ratified the characteristics of Cahuachi as a ceremonial center. Recent geophysical studies (Masini, Rizzo, Lasaponara, Orefici, 2008) have allowed finding out that the current cropping area, which W.D. Strong thought were inhabited villages in Cahuachi, is occupied by pyramidal structures whose base sides are more

than 100 meters in length, and which are completely submerged under the soil used by agriculture. The main core of the ceremonial center has an extension of 4 km², while the total dimension of the architectural complex reaches 24 km², including the sectors of the east and west side, as well as the portion that was built crossing the Nasca River. Taking these dimensions into consideration, it might be the largest adobe ceremonial center in the world, even though we still do not know how big was its ultimate extension given that there are many buildings buried by an alluvial layer which, in different moments, covered the area of the temples in its entirety. Thus, we can assert that during our research not a single finding evidencing the presence of housing areas in Cahuachi was made, except for a sector where remains of domestic use were found, but those belonged to a transitory period during which modifications in the then existing structures were made. Up to date, Cahuachi represents, in architectural terms, the most important site of the Nasca culture and its function was eminently ceremonial as it was corroborated all over the sectors where excavations have taken place. As in the majority

of religious centers, it passed through an evolving process from a sacred place – when it was not linked to a ceremonial architecture – to become, during its last phase, into a theocratic capital. Starting from that point, there exist evidence that it fulfilled a number of complex functions which were carried out inside its buildings such as the making of musical instruments as well as the manufacturing of pottery and textiles. The factors that led to choose Cahuachi as the place to build this ceremonial center are the following: the availability of water all over the year, its elevated position over the pampa where the geoglyphs were drawn and the nearness of the Ingenio River, where culturally related settlements were located. The nearness of the crop fields also played an important role. At present, we know that for the 800 years it was used, and in parallel to the development of the early phases of the Nasca culture, the site was never abandoned and kept on functioning all through the period corresponding to the flourishing of the Paracas and Nasca societies. ●

N.B. Due to domestic and international copyright regulations, C regret any inconvenience to our readers.

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Photo

CAHUACHI DIVINITIES

of this impeccable volume is a pleasant surprise, bringing together collected contributions in the framework of the Nasca project.

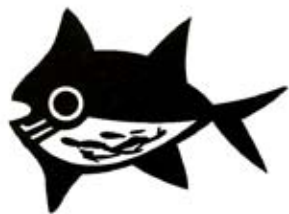


2



3

Overhead view of Cahuachi.
Side view of Cahuachi.
One of the observatories or «Chimneys» along the Cantalloc aqueduct.
Pottery heads.
Anthropomorphic orca figure with legs and loincloth.
Credits: Beatrice Velarde.



CHASQUI is unable to alter the existing version of this text, translated into english by Antonio Yonz Martínez. We



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Directed by Dr. Orefici, the Nasca Project is being executed without interruption since 1982 and is scheduled to continue until 2011. The action taken is permanent, as is demonstrated by the findings released this year, relating to the discovery of what could be the remains of a priestess who was buried along with a rich funerary offering, which includes no less than a «nose ring» in white gold. The development of the Nasca culture occurred during the first half of the first millennium of our Era. Standing out, exceptionally, is its monumental architecture—exponent of which is the construction of the ceremonial center of Cahuachi; its sophisticated system of aqueducts, which feed on the water table and carry the resource along to reservoirs known as cochas; its gigantic geoglyphs, which appear drawn on the desert plains of Nasca and Palpa; the exceptional brilliance

shown by its polychrome ceramics—in which various forms and shapes can be perceived, thus allowing to group them into different developing phases; and its mastery on varied textile techniques, which produced sumptuous fabrics containing a multitude of artistically drawn emblems and expressed with great display of colors. The newly found samples retrieved from the excavations of tombs by Dr. Orefici are testimony of all these achievements. To deepen the knowledge on the Nasca culture, Dr. Orefici convened a group of experienced scholars from a variety of specializations. Their contributions, several of which are contained in this book, allow the Nasca Project to illuminate the most diverse aspects of the Nasca past. ●

Federico Kauffmann Doig.



5

Taken from Nasca, the desert of the Cahuachi divinities. Research and texts: Giuseppe Orefici, Angel Sánchez Borjas, Adine Gavazzi, Katharina Schreiber, Josué Lancho, Andrea Drusini, Luigi Piacenza, Mary Frame, Anna Gruszczynska-Ziółkowska, Mariusz Ziolkowski, Nicola Masini, Enzo Rizzo, Rosa Lasaponara. Photographs by Beatrice Velarde. Graph Ediciones/La Positiva Insurance. Lima, 2009. 307 pp. Bilingual English/Spanish Edition. Web: www.graphediciones.com

THE CULINARY EMPIRE

Rosario Olivas Weston*

Cuzco's traditional cuisine, enriched through the centuries, has a varied repertoire of meals and beverages related to the year's seasons and festivities. It is a fusion of techniques, food and customs of Inca, Spanish, early independence, and contemporary societies.

TEMPTATIONS IN THE CITY

Cuzco was the Inca Empire's administrative and religious capital. It was built by Pachacutec, the Inca Emperor, and the royal Inca lineages and main lords of other ethnic groups lived there, with their respective servants. Ceremonies, rituals and celebrations held in Cuzco were the most splendid events in South America.

[..]. Nowadays, Cuzco is Peru's main tourist destination and it offers a series of culinary temptations throughout the day.

Both the streets surrounding the Main Square and the Central Market host the places that sell the typical Cuzqueño breakfast. On weekdays, most of the clients are office employees or the youth who were up all night. On weekends, it is Cuzqueño families that fill the stalls.

Based on personal taste, one can choose between a chicken broth, lamb's head broth, Cuzqueño adobo. All three dishes are delicious and comforting.

[..]. Street vendors offer stuffed rocoto hot peppers, tamales, stuffed potatoes, pork skin (tocto), toasted corn (cancha) and Oropesa bread [..].

Tourists have two options for lunch: restaurants with set menus, which, for a fixed price offer soup or an appetizer, a main course, dessert and a soft drink; and, luxury restaurants, which offer modern cuisine.

The Picanterias, or traditional restaurants, would open from 4 pm to 6 pm, until a few years ago, as this was the traditional time to eat, during both Inca and Colonial times. Today, it is possible to be served at 1 pm at any picanteria and savor the typical food they whip up, be it related to the rainy season, dry season, or any holiday.

Afternoons and evenings in Cuzco

To this day, a high percentage of Cuzco's population still make their way towards their neighborhood chicheria or the one closest to work every afternoon, to have one or two glasses of chicha with their friends. Chicherias are located in old



Preparation of a dinner, according to an engraving by Paul Marcoy, XIXth Century.

mansions and have a loyal public that gathers on a daily basis for a chat.

Around half past six, the streetlights come on. Cuzqueños return home and tourists hang around the Main Square buying souvenirs. On the corners, street vendors set up emoliente and hot punch stands; these typical beverages comfort anyone feeling the sting of cold mountain air.

The evenings' culinary offers are diverse. There are several restaurants with folk music and dancing shows for tourists included.

Other options on hand include small restaurants, which specialize in pizza or pasta, vegetarian food, roast

chicken, steaks, or Chinese food (chifa). Some of the main hotels and restaurants offer the trendy dishes and beverages of 'Andean Nouvelle Cuisine'.

FOOD FROM THE EARTH

The Sacred Valley of the Incas

The area known today as the Sacred Valley of the Incas was called Yucay in early Spanish chronicles. The valley became famous because foodstuffs that could not be grown around Cuzco (3400 m/11,200 ft above sea level) blossomed in the

Yucay Valley (2900 m/9,500 ft above sea level). The Sacred Valley includes districts of the provinces of Urubamba and Calca, which are covered by the Vilcanota or Urubamba River (it changes its name as it goes through the village of the same name).

This valley is Cuzco's breadbasket. Its most famous product is giant white corn. It grows only in the province of Urubamba and is the biggest and tastiest corn in the world.

All types of food items for local consumption are produced here. Its agricultural-livestock development-potential is basically composed of land for agricultural use and natural pasture. The most common items cultivated in the area are corn, barley, wheat, Lima beans, kiwicha, olluco, oca and several types of potato.

Beef, followed by pork, lamb and alpaca meat are the red meats most commonly consumed in Cuzco. Guinean pig meat is at the top of the value chain and is eaten at all celebrations.

A cuisine defined by the seasons

During the year, Cuzco's climate is divided into two very well defined seasons. One is the rainy season (from November to March) and the other one is the cold, dry winter (going from April to October), with each of them presenting their own culinary specialties.

During the season starting in November strawberries show up; these can be eaten on their own, or with some whipped cream. They are also used to prepare strawberry jam and a strawberry *chicha* (beverage) called *frutillada*.

Season between December and March, dishes based on fresh corn are very popular; e.g., corn topped with fresh, cheese, corn pie, corn *humitas* (similar to tamales) and corn cream soups (*lawas*).

This is also the mushroom season and a great variety can be found at the countryside. Cuzqueños are quite passionate about setas, a very small but extremely flavorful type of mushroom. These only pop up after a rainy day and countrywomen go out to pick them up very early in the morning in little baskets that they cover with leaves. Setas are used to

THE NEW CUSQUENA CUISINE

Cuzco is South America's main tourist destination. Every year, thousands of visitors from all over the world come to admire the Inca architecture, Colonial works of art, the popular traditions and the nature.

Modern culinary offerings are assorted. Traditional restaurants coexist with others offering French, international, Italian (pizzerias and trattorias), Chinese (chifa, as they are known in Peru), vegetarian, and Indian food, as well as ones offering steak, rotisserie chicken (pollerías) and kosher food, to name just a few.

In the year 2000, 'Andean Nouvelle Cuisine' began to assert itself on the Cuzco culinary scene; it is a blend of modern culinary techniques from around the world and the region's native products.

The term was conceived by the culinary chronicler, Mr. Bernardo Roca Rey, during the late 80's. His assistant, Chef «Cucho» La Rosa has created most of the dishes that they both spread out in books, culinary arts schools and other media channels.

This culinary trend has increased the demand on Andean products. Many chefs have joined this trend; based on their art and imagination they are developing their own recipes using ingredients Cuzqueños have eaten from time immemorial. ●

INCA CUISINE

The Inca nobility, along with their subjects, consumed two meals a day. The main meal was served in the morning, between eight and nine o'clock. The second meal, which was lighter, was eaten between four and five in the afternoon. At noon, a small snack was served, featuring grains like mote (boiled kernels of corn), cancha (toasted corn), boiled potatoes, cornmeal, quinoa, or wild quinoa [...].

Certain foods were reserved exclusively for the nobility, such as alpaca, white guinean pig, duck, fish caught in Lake Titicaca and the Pacific Ocean, quinoa grown in and around the town of Chucuito, and certain especially prized varieties of potato and corn [...]. The most common, and indeed, the only beverage, that nobles and commoners drank, was chicha (fermented corn wine) which was served at the end of a meal, or between meals. To stimulate the thirst, the Inca would eat either a hot pepper sauce or some other spicy food. [...].

Any significant event was a reason to spend days and nights dancing, singing, eating, and drinking. These could be joyous events such as victory in battle, the birth of a child, and weddings, or solemn, such as funerals and burials. These occasions were made even more festive through the use of clothes made of the finest materials, and a wide variety of colors [...].

All holidays were marked with banquets. In the dry season, public banquets were held on the main square, and in the rainy season, and under the cover of four large tents annexed to the Inca emperor's quarters. The men would sit on the floor in two long lines, and the main local authority would sit on a wooden bench at the head of the two lines. Curacas, the local gentry, were covered in blankets, extending beyond their feet, and the Inca emperor and his family were given reed mats to recline on. Women and children sat behind their men, stirring their earthen pots full of food and their pitchers of chicha. Once the men had been served, the rest of the family began to eat.

Not everyone ate the same delicacies, because each family prepared and brought its own. Inca banquets lasted a long time, as after serving themselves, each family would share with the others a little of what they had brought. This custom has not disappeared with time to this very day snacks in Cuzco involve seven or more different specialties being piled onto one plate. ●

cook several delicious dishes, stewed into it the capchi, soufflé, or simply scrambled.

One of the tastiest dishes of the rainy season is called the nabos haucha, a stew made of wild turnip and squeezed potatoes.

Cuzco's dry and night-frost season starts in April and lasts until October. During the cloudy and coldest days the comforting chuño cola, a beef or lamb broth cooked with chickpeas, potatoes, rice, onions, garlic, chuño (traditional freeze-dried potato) flour and mint leaves is prepared.

The dry season's most characteristic culinary specialty is the cachu chuño or frozen potato, a poorly-disseminated pre-Hispanic potato-storage technique, which surprises chefs. Home meals are planned in such way that it is always garnishes the main course (known as the second dish in Peru) which could be roast beef, a steak or a stew.

During May, June and July, after the potato harvest, the earth rests and religious and popular festivities intensify. During these months families and friend groups go out to the countryside to prepare the huatia, a technique involving cooking potatoes in adobe bricks and hot earth. Its origin can't be tracked back in time; it was a technique practiced by the Incas and mostly likely by other preceding cultures.



There is a specific date when all Cuzqueños eat huatia: June 24th, the day Inti Raymi (The Festival of the Sun) is celebrated. Today, the huatia technique is used to cook potatoes, ocas, Lima beans and cheese molds. It can be eaten with hot-pepper sauce, and as the garnish of a baker-oven broiled Guinean pig or piglet serving. ●



* Researcher and writer on gastronomy. A few of her most popular publications are: *Cultura, identidad y cocina del Perú*; [Peruvian Culture, Identity, and Cuisine] *La cocina cotidiana y festiva de los limeños en el siglo XIX* [Everyday and Holiday Cuisine in XIXth Century Lima]; and *La cocina en el virreinato del Perú* [Food in Colonial Peru].

RECIPES



TIMPU OR PUCHERO

Ingredients: 1 k (2.20 lb) of beef, 1 k (2.20 lb) of lamb, 300 g (10.5 oz) of chalonga (dried lamb), 500 g (1.1 lb) of lean salt pork (in strips), 6 big slices of cabbage, 6 pieces of yucca (manioc), 3 virracas (white carrots), 6 big morayas (dehydrated white potatoes) soaked in water, 6 mid-sized peeled potatoes, 3 carrots, 3 sweet potatoes, 6 peaches, 250 g (9 oz) of cooked chickpeas, 100 g (3.5 oz) of rice, salt and chopped scallions and parsley (as a garnish).
Seasoning: 2 spoonfuls of oil, ½ finely-chopped onion, 3 cloves of garlic and 10 grains of Jamaica pepper.

Preparation: Heat the oil up in a big pot and make a seasoning with the onion, garlic, salt and Jamaica pepper. Pour in 4 liters (135.25 fl oz) of water and bring to a boil. As soon as the water starts boiling, add both beef and lamb and lower the flame. Cook on a low flame and monitor the degree of doneness by puncturing with a knife. Once they are halfway cooked, add the cabbage slices, peeled pieces of yucca, the peeled virracas (whole or in halves), soaked morayas, peeled potatoes (whole) and the carrots (halved or quartered). Gradually take each of the ingredients out of the pot as they are done cooking, until only a clear broth is left. Strain this broth and set aside. Sweet potato, peaches, chickpeas, and rice are boiled separately. Serve on two plates: The strained clear soup previously topped with finely chopped green onion and parsley in a soup dish, and the beef and the lamb at the center of a dinner plate, surrounded by the potatoes and covered by the virraca, the manioc, the moraya, the carrots and the peaches. All of this is then topped off with cabbage and finally joined by the rice and chickpeas.

SETA (WILD MUSHROOM) CAPCHI

Ingredients: 500 g (17.63 oz) of fresh setas, 3 spoonfuls of oil, 50 g (1.76 oz) of chopped onion, 1 teaspoonful of minced garlic, 1 spoonful of minced red garlic, cumin, salt, pepper, 250 g (8.81 oz) of cooked green broad beans, 500 g (17.63 oz) of mid-sized boiled potatoes,

250 g (8.81 oz) of sour cream, 1 sprig of huacatay, 1 sprig of spearmint, 150 g (5.29 oz) of soft white cheese and 2 eggs.

Preparation: Gently brush the setas to eliminate any remaining dirt, then wash. Lightly fry the onion, garlic, red hot pepper, cumin, salt and pepper in the oil. Add the broad beans, potatoes (cut in half), sour cream, the huacatay and spearmint and bring to a boil. Then add the setas, diced soft white cheese and the eggs, slightly whipped. Let cook thoroughly and serve.

ROAST LAMB

Ingredients: 1 suckling lamb or 1 leg of lamb, 200 g (7 oz) of garlic, 200 g (7 oz) of yellow hot pepper, 1 handful of cumin and salt.

Preparación: Put the chunks of lamb in a deep container, fill with brine (saltwater) and let marinate for four hours. Grind the garlic, yellow hot pepper, cumin and salt and spread the seasoning mix all over the chunks of lamb. Put the container in the oven, first at an average temperature (200°C – 392°F) and then lower the heat until well browned. Serve with roasted potatoes.



PESKE OR STIRRED QUINOA

Ingredients: 250 g (8.81 oz) of well washed quinoa, 1 l (33.81 fl oz) of water, 150 ml (5.07 fl oz) of evaporated milk, ¼ teaspoonful of aniseed, 100 g (3.52 oz) of soft white cheese, 50 g (1.76 oz) of butter, and salt.

Preparation: Wash the quinoa off, changing the water several times, until no froth is produced; then let soak in clean water overnight. Next morning, wash it off again and cook it in clean water over a low flame, until the grains pop up and are well done. Then strain; in another pot, mix the cooked quinoa with the milk and the aniseeds and cook at medium heat and add the diced soft white cheese, salt and small pieces of butter; continue stirring until the cheese has melted. Check that the desired level seasoning has been reached and serve.

Excerpt from *Cusco, el Imperio de la Cocina* [Cuzco, the Culinary Empire]. Rosario Olivas Weston. Universidad de San Martín de Porres, 2008. 231 pp.
Web: www.usmp.edu.pe/fondoeditorial

THE BIODIVERSITY ROUTE

The Cordillera Escalera and the IIRSA Norte highway segment stretching from Tarapoto to Yurimaguas, together make up what for some symbolizes «the biodiversity route». The exuberant flora and fauna of lowland jungles converge with the unique woodlands and animals of the cloud forest, home to a large number of endemic species.

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The North Amazonian Tourist corridor is characterized by its natural and cultural attractions and by the presence of a dynamic living culture. Amongst its main attractions are the first class archaeological sites such as Tucume, Sipan, Chan Chan, and Kuelap. Nevertheless, the trend in tourism is changing and nature tourism, rural community – based tourism and other innovations, are proving viable as alternatives to develop sustainable tourism products in the northern Peru which allow the participation of local communities as well as companies and institutions. As an example of the extraordinary natural diversity of the North-Amazonian Tourism Corridor, one can highlight the approximately 1,400 species of birds, many of them endemic, that live here and can be seen in a great variety of ecosystems from the Pacific Ocean through the Andes to the Amazon river basin.

Ecosystem and geography

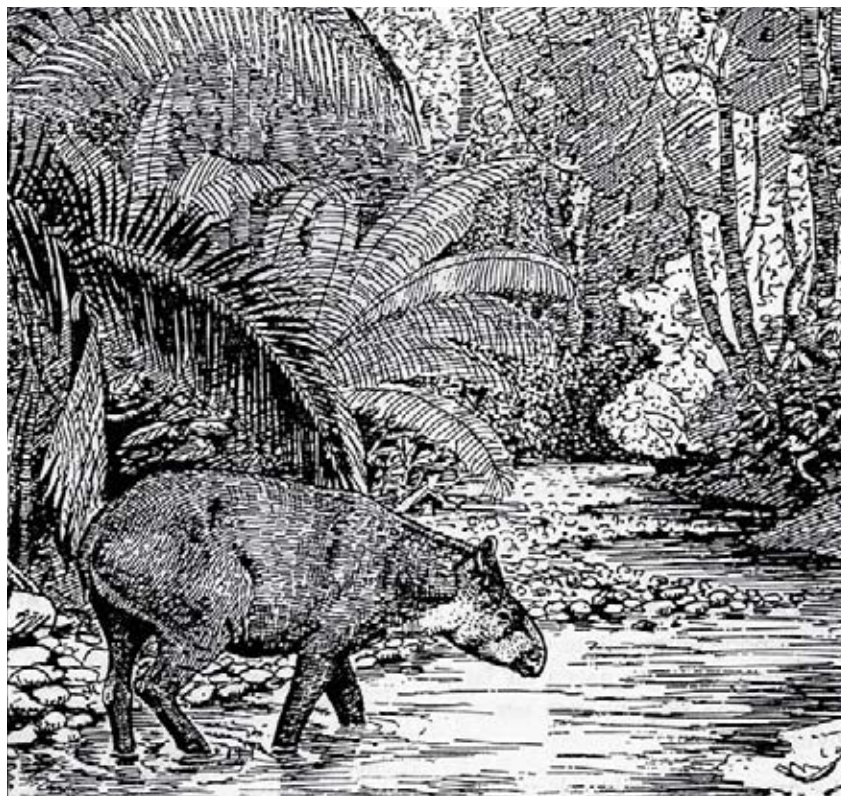
The area covered by this publication includes the Cordillera Escalera Regional Conservation Area with an extension of 149,870 hectares, the stretch of the IIRSA Northern Highway (Tarapoto-Yurimaguas), covering 125 km, and adjacent areas. The topography of the zone is mountainous and varies between 180 and 2000 m in altitude.

The Cordillera Escalera is a ridge of forested mountains that from the north-eastern limit of the Peruvian Andes bordering the lowlands of the Amazon basin. These forested mountains are very important as they are the headwaters of the basin and because they are the main area of production and accumulation of water, which is used for human and agricultural consumption in the region, including the city of Tarapoto.

Leaving Tarapoto and taking the road that goes to Yurimaguas, one passes through the tunnel located at Km 19, the highest part in this stretch (close to 1050 m), here the environmental humidity increases notably and the presence of the lowland rainforest. From here on, the area has more lagoons and marshy habitats which are typical of the lowland rainforest. Towards the south-east of the cordillera are the dry forests of Huallaga which due to their low humidity conditions have a unique flora and fauna.

Flora and fauna

The Cordillera Escalera and its neighboring areas have great diversity in flora many species of which are valued for their medicinal,



Tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*). Drawing by H.W. and M. Koepcke, 1960. *Gran Geografía del Perú*. Manfer-Mejía Baca (Mexico, 1988).

nutritional, industrial, ornamental, and artesian properties and uses.

The region is also characterized for hosting a fauna with a high proportion of endemic species, such as frogs of Centrolenidae and Dendrobatidae families, the Black-bellied Tanager, and the Black Tortoise. Likewise, many threatened species such as the Spectacled Bear, Yellow-tailed Woolly Monkey and Royal Sunangel have been recorded in the area.

With the exception of the long-term herpetofauna studies carried out by Rainer Schulte, there have not been major investigations or inventories of fauna or flora in the region, which makes further research urgent to generate knowledge required for the conservation of the immense biological wealth of the zone.

Recent entomological inventories have shown a great diversity of butterflies. It has been estimated that region supports 50% of the birds, 37% of the reptiles and 30% of the amphibians of Peru.

- The Cordillera Escalera and surrounding areas are one of the most diverse regions on earth for birds and species from the Andes, the humid Amazon lowlands and the dry forests of the Huallaga can all be found in the region. This incredible diversity makes the area a prime birding destination with huge potential for birding tourism as part of the Northern Peru Birding Route, which stretches from the coast to the Amazon. In addition to the large number of species, there are several specialities that are hard to

see elsewhere in Peru, such as Dotted Tanager and Planalto Hermit.

- Despite the fact that the mammalian fauna of South America was severely depleted by the arrival of humans just 12,000 years ago, when 80% of the genera of large mammals disappeared, the region continues to have a diverse variety of mammals, although now dominated by rodents and bats. The Cordillera Escalera and surrounding areas support both Andean and Amazonian species and are still home to some of the most spectacular species such as the Spectacled Bear and Jaguar. The larger mammals have tended to be hunted and are now generally confined to remoter areas and are very wary of humans.

- The Cordillera Escalera and adjacent lowland forests of San Martín and the upper Amazon (Yurimaguas) support 33% of the Peruvian herpetofauna, with 122 species of amphibians and 147 reptiles, many of which are newly described species. Of these, 30 species of amphibians and 10 reptiles are endemic to the region. Deforestation and habitat destruction are the principal threats to the amphibians and reptiles of the region.

Communities and sustainable development

As well as its natural richness the region has an important socio-cultural heritage. Despite the occupancy restrictions, almost 250 families live in this area, which means that there is a population of 1,000 people distributed

in 6 communities and population centers. Immigrants from other regions in the country, these populations have been established themselves in the Cordillera Escalera in the last 20 years. The native communities of the Lamas (in Lamas) and Cayahuillas (in Munichis and Charapillo) ethnic groups are particularly noteworthy. Communities formed of mestizos of Amazonian origin and immigrants of Andean origin are part of the peculiarity of the region, as is the case as the villages of Progreso, San José and Santa Rosa. The Lamas located near Tarapoto as well the Chayahuitas located near Yurimaguas are well known for their fantastic colorful traditional dress and they combine their ancestral customs with others acquired from their contact with the nearby settlers.

In recent years thanks to the initiatives companies (IIRSA Norte-PDISPA), the state and international cooperation agencies (GTZ, AECI, SNV), sustainable agricultural practices under community production for palm hearts, coffee and organic cacao cultivation have been introduced, as well as promoting native products and ecotourism.

Access and ecotourism

The road that connects the city of Tarapoto with the river of port of Yurimaguas, designed with the aim of minimizing the negative impact on the wildlife of the region, provides access to beautiful scenery such as the spectacular Ahuashiyacu falls.

This important route of communication will speed up the development of tourist infrastructure from both state and private investment, which should promote responsible tourism assuming social-environmental commitments and generating decent jobs that will improve the quality of life for the local population in the future. ●



Spectacled bear.

Excerpt from *Cordillera Escalera. La ruta de la biodiversidad* [Cordillera Escalera. The Biodiversity Route]. (Bilingual: English-Spanish edition) Heinz Plenge, Rob Williams y Rainer Schulte. Translation: Rob Williams, Rainer Schulte, Esther Oliveros y Heinz Plenge Pardo. IIRSA Norte, Odebrecht, Graña y Montero. GEOgráfica. Lima, 2009. 107 pp.

JUAN GONZALO ROSE/ POETRY

GASTRONOMÍA

Para comerse un hombre en el Perú
hay que sacarle antes las espinas
las vísceras heridas,
los residuos de tanto llanto y de tabaco.
Purificarlo a fuego lento.
Cortarlo en pedacitos
y servirlo a la mesa con los ojos cerrados,
mientras se va pensando
que nuestro buen gobierno nos protege.

Luego:
afirmar que los poetas exageran.

Y como buen final:
tomarse un trago.

GASTRONOMY

To eat a man up in Peru
you have to take out all the little bones beforehand
the wounded organs,
residue left behind from screams and from tobacco.
Purify over a low flame.
Cut him up into little pieces
and serve him up on the table with his eyes closed,
while thinking
that our good and great government protects us.

Then:
remark that poets exaggerate.

And to top it off:
have a drink.

EXACTA DIMENSIÓN

Me gustas por que tienes el color de los patios
de las casas tranquilas...

y más precisamente:
me gustas por que tienes el color de los patios
de las casas tranquilas
cuando llega el verano...

y más precisamente:
me gustas por que tienes el color de los patios
de las casas tranquilas
en las tardes de enero
cuando llega el verano...

y más precisamente:
me gustas por que te amo.

EXACT DIMENSIONS

I'm attracted to you because
you're the same color as the courtyards
of calm houses...

and to be more precise:
I'm attracted to you because you're the same color as the
courtyards
of calm houses
when summer has come...

and to be more precise:
I'm attracted to you because you're the same color as the
courtyards
of calm houses
on January afternoons
when summer has come...

and to be more precise:
I'm attracted to you because I love you.

Juan Gonzalo Rose (Tacna, 1928 - Lima, 1983). One of the most important poets of the generation of 1950. In 1958, he was awarded the [Peruvian] National Poetry Award. Author of, among other publications, *La luz armada* (1954), *Simple canción* (1960), and *Las nuevas comarcas* (2002). The National Institute for Culture (INC, as per its acronym in Spanish) published *Obra poética* as part of its «Poets of 1950» collection, a volume which includes the complete works of his poetry.



SOUNDS OF PERU



DE FAMILIA.

[FAMILY MATTERS: PURITY OF A
TRADITION]

VALDELOMAR Y DÁVILA
(SAYARIY, 2008)

Great duos such as that formed by Arturo «Zambo» Caverro and Óscar Avilés have helped Peruvian music grow in stature. *De Familia* is a duo to which the Valdelomar and Dávila families bring their talent and their love of traditional Peruvian coastal music, called *la canción criolla*. We have the Valdelomars on vocals, led by Amraham Valdelomar Prada, singer, songwriter, and guitarist. His sons, José Francisco and Félix Valdelomar Ganoza, stand out for their talents as singers and on the drums. The Dávila brothers, led by Máximo, Julio, and Carlos Dávila Farfán, take charge of the guitar section with inexhaustible creativity, bringing forth pure, traditional sounds.

De Familia. Pureza de una tradición boasts 15 jewels from the criolla songbook, including «La abeja» [«The bee»], one of the Old Guard's songs, which goes, «That which takes from the chalice of flowers, brings it to a tiny cell and later, without thinking of its labors, without stopping its uncertain wandering, brings honey for this bitter life and white wax for the poor dead man». Also, «Las limeñas» [«Women from Lima»], by the unmissable Felipe Pinglo, «Si tú me quisieras» [«If you loved me»], by the skilled Manuel Acosta Ojeda; and «Caridad» [«Charity»], by old Abraham himself. Worth picking up.

See: www.sayariyi.com



EN LA ORILLA.

[ON THE SHORE]

PAMELA RODRÍGUEZ
(IEMPSA, 2008)

Pamela Rodríguez appeared in mid-2003, as the protagonist of the Peruvian opera *Rosa de Lima*. In 2006, she was nominated for a Latin Grammy in the Best New Artist for her album *Perú blue*. One year later she began to compose the songs for what would become *En la orilla*.

All of the songs on the album exhude fusions of Afro-Peruvian rhythms mixed with either jazz, cumbia, pop, or chillout. Except for «Don't explain», by Billy Holiday and Arthur Herzog Jr., all were composed by Pamela herself, set to a landó beat. Pamela caresses and seduces us with her fresh voice, full of passion and melancholy, such as in «Me estás sintiendo» [«You're feeling me»],: «You're feeling me in your hidden parts, in your past, your past that has pulled off threads [...] that today I sew together, with even more desire to free your waters and drink you up in the rain». Produced by Greg Landau, who has worked with such artists as David Byrne and Susana Baca, *En la orilla* is an album with a vital, resonating sound. The album also features contributions from crowd-pleasing Peruvian musicians like Juan Medrano «Cotito» on the cajón and Fallo Muñoz on the guitar.

See: www.pamelaperu.com

Piero Montaldo.

CHASQUI

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ON PERUVIAN FOLK ART

An important compilation of texts on Peruvian art written by historian Pablo Macera over the course of thirty-five years (1971-2006) has been published. A lifetime of passion for shapes, colors, and meanings.

This anthology brings together long-term artistic studies, along with prologues, articles, and notes, published over the course of the last 30 years in a variety of hard-to-find periodicals. Readers will be even more delighted by the unparalleled diversity of topics included than by the wide time frame included. Murals from the Southern Andes, traditional handicrafts, and even the Amazonian conception of the universe are included, as are notebooks scribbled with drawings and sketches by a political prisoner held at Fronton prison in the 1930's, the atavistic vicissitudes of street performers, or urbanism in Independence-era Lima. All are dealt with by Macera in his usual heterodox style, making Pierre Francastel's observation that «works of our are not simply symbols, but rather real objects necessary to the lives of social groups» all his own. Throughout this book, the infinite and contrasting modulations adopted by the artistic image appear, understood neither always nor only as a vehicle meant to affirm power, but also as an instrument of resistance to it. The multiple iconographic repertoires, at times indecipherable for the contemporary spectator, give testimony of beliefs and ideals from different times and places, but have above all played an influential role in the construction of our collective identities.

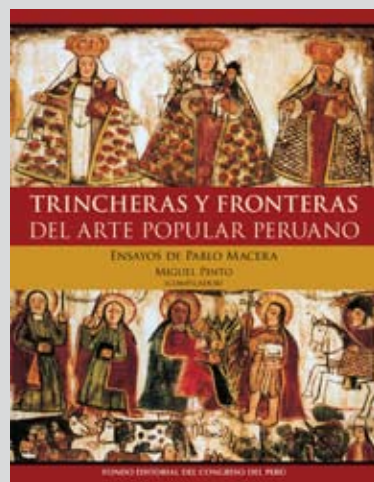
As such, even the title, *Trincheras y fronteras* [«Trenches and Borders»] announces, in and of itself, the combative, polemic nature of this book, like all of those published by Macera. Against the grain of an Art History traditionally centered on Lima and the main provincial cities of Peru, Macera opts to explore certain habitually neglected margins. He thus turns his interest towards the vast world of rural cultures—both those which are truly folk cultures as well as those of local elites—or to ignored actors, discovering that Peruvian art or handicrafts are not actually singular, linear categories, but rather that there are a multitude of simultaneous and parallel developments, often unknown to one another. As such, Macera's works do not often invoke famous names, except those, such as Guaman Poma or Pancho Fierro, that incarnate voices outside of the hierarchical discourse of «fine arts» of their respective eras. In this way a fascinating mosaic of contrasting visions and gazes surges forth, through which we can see the complex social and cultural web that makes up contemporary Peru. Through the use of an all-encompassing and inclusive point of view, the cultural historian can build bridges as unexpected as they are indispensable in order to allow us to leave behind the secular fragmentation of our country, this mutual ignorance of the «other» which has been a constant



Meémeha wanéjji, Festival of Pijuayo. Painting by J. Churay, natural dyes on palm fiber.



Zoomorphic decorative ceramic piece. Feline figure.



Macera's texts have created their own consciousness in each of the subjects the historian has studied. His independent thinking has always defined new concepts on the cultures of yesterday and today. [...] This grouping of articles, published in chronological order and offering bibliographical footnotes, could be divided into I) Ancient Peru; 2) Folk art, Nineteenth Century; 3) Folk painters and paintings, Nineteenth Century; and 4) Contemporary folk art. It could also be classified according to subject matter: ceramics, gourds, altarpieces, Sarhua pieces, nineteenth century folk

source of disagreement, marginalization, and underdevelopment. [...]

At the same time, Macera's work begins to reveal key pieces to us, which are presented as a sort of «missing link» in the evolution of folk art. For example, his fascinating discovery of a «harp-gourd» suggests the early incorporation of European iconography and musical resonance through the pre-Colombian technique of pyrography. The object is a pumpkin or gourd ingeniously transformed into the resonance chamber of a unique harp with ornamental motifs of European inspiration. This then serves as the beginning of a group of reflections on what would be art of the «Transition». This controversial term, proposed around 1930 by Manuel Valle, has generated a constant series of cases of «mistaken identity», as it has been applied indiscriminately to colonial pieces incorporating indigenous motifs or techniques, which would in fact be better characterized as part of the «Inca Renaissance» of the eighteenth century. Macera, in contrast, investigates the few objects created by indigenous artisans during the Spanish conquest, their peculiar configuration almost seeming to be an illustration of the violence of the clash between the two cultures. In truth, the subject is the traumatic puzzlement brought on by a colonial status that quickly razed away ancient indigenous traditions. Particularly illustrative of this phenomenon is another sixteenth-century gourd decorated with scenes from the Conquest which seems to describe, through the babbling of an incipient figurative language, the unequal battle between Indians and Spaniards, the latter equipped with iron weapons, in addition to horses and hunting dogs. ●

Luis Eduardo Wuffarden

Extract from *Trincheras y fronteras del arte popular peruano*. *Ensayos de Pablo Macera*. [Trenches and borders of Peruvian folk art. The Essays of Pablo Macera]. Miguel Pinto (editor). Editorial Fund of the Peruvian Congress. Lima, 2009. 564 pp. Web: www.congreso.gob.pe/fondoeditorial/

paintings, folk art, contemporary folk painters, and articles offering analysis.

Over 35 years of articles are offered in this book, which is divided into 4 parts, each spanning the course of a decade. These sections are divided as follows: I) 1971-1980, entitled «Art and Social Struggle»; II) 1981-1990 («Discoveries»); III) 1991-2000 («Folk Gods»); and IV) 2001-2006, designated as «Never-ending History». The first section includes 7 articles, the second 11, the third, 12, and the fourth 11. ●

Miguel Pinto