Introduction

The mythical Jewish town of Chelm has been the subject of innumerable jokes, anecdotes, and homilies for many generations. It seems the good citizens of Chelm had heard many rumors about the coming of the Messiah. Naturally they did not want to miss such an event, so they hired a poor but honest man of the town, Chaim, to keep watch. He was to sit in a wooden tower they had built just beyond the edge of the town and run in to inform the people when he should spy the Messiah approaching. Weeks passed, then months and years, during which Chaim kept his vigil faithfully, but with no sign of the Messiah's approach. The town's elders even lost hope, but out of habit kept Chaim at his post with food and pay. Finally one of the town's scoffers (for even Chelm had such people) came to the tower and expressed incredulity that the man should still be keeping watch.

"Chaim," he shouted, "don't you know the Messiah is never going to arrive?" Chaim answered, with a philosophical shrug of the shoulders, "Yes, but after all it's a living."

The story about Chelm illustrates that messianic expectation was for some not only a way of getting a living, but also a way of life and a habit of mind. In the years around 1810 country people all over central Mexico seem, like the citizens of Chelm, to have been awaiting some sort of a Messiah to lead them to a more perfect time and place, ill-defined or unconscious as these hopes were. Popular messianic longings had not arisen, of course, just with the eruption of Miguel Hidalgo's revolt in 1810, and in the very first years of the new century rumors of conspiracy, foreign invasion, Indian saviors and kings, and massive rural uprising ricocheted about the countryside of New Spain. One may even legitimately speak of a long tradition of such collective manifestations beginning immediately after the conquest and stretching through the eighteenth century, with something of a hiatus after about the early 1760s. In a particularly sharp irony, in many instances around 1810 these messianic hopes were focused on the ferociously reactionary figure of the Spanish King Ferdinand VII ('El Deseado' - 'The Longed-for One'), who would have found himself perfectly in sympathy with the ruthless military repression carried out in his own name by some royalist commanders in New Spain. And yet while much of the Mexican countryside was awash with the amalgam of rumor, hope, and messianic expectation centering on the King of Spain or surrogate figures, Indian peasants were brutally assassinating European-born Spaniards in village jacqueries and on back-country roads. Thus we are faced with an apparent sharp contradiction between two elements of collective belief and their associated forms of social action: the monarch, the archetypal figure of intrusive and oppressive colonial authority, was being venerated with messianic fervor while European-born colonists were being slaughtered with an almost ritualistic enthusiasm.

I will examine two central questions in this essay. First, how did Indian messianism function as an element of popular ideology in the Mexican struggles for independence from Spain? In answer to this question we will develop the following hypothesis: that messianic belief within the context of large-scale political upheaval functioned to focus popular—that is to say, largely Indian and peasant—energies on the struggle for a political break with Spain, but for reasons very different from those of the elite Creole ideologues of the movement, and even in substantial degree opposed to them. Indian messianic hopes, in fact, represented a primitive political irredentism: a basically conservative, even reactionary, ideology combining elements of naïve monarchical legitimism with those of a rigidly localocentric worldview, a kind of spontaneous peasant Fourierism.

This formulation leads us to the second question: in what respects did popular and elite rebel ideologies differ from each other, and at what points, if any, did they converge? It was largely the concept of
mystical kingship and its role in linking ideas about social structure, political constitution and legitimacy, and religion that provided the interface between elite and popular rebel ideologies, and allowed apparently concerted action against the Spanish colonial state at points. But behind this convergence lay very different goals and ideas about the structure of political and social relationships. At its heart, this ideological and social rift in the ranks of the rebels amounted to a fundamental contradiction of purpose in which the elite Creole directorate of the rebellion was launched in an effort of proto-liberal state- and nation-building, while Indian rebels and rioters were bent on preserving the autonomy of communities which survived outside the state or nation. The exploration of this contrast—a kind of binary opposition almost fortuitously Lévi-Straussian in its symmetry (and thus, with apologies, the title for the essay)—explains much about the nature of Mexican colonial society and the upheaval which sundered it from Spain. Other themes demonstrate a similar contradiction—attitudes towards the Church and its priests, towards political independence itself, towards the social constitution of New Spain and the distribution of its wealth, especially land—but none of these encapsulates so clearly the global vision of popular rebels, in particular. In the development of this argument more emphasis will be placed on the issue of popular messianic expectation than upon elite thinking because the former has hardly been studied at all and is of considerable interest, while many shelves in libraries sag under the weight of books devoted to the latter and attract the social historian rather less.

**CREOLE NATIONALISM**

The concept of nationhood occupied in the thinking of elite Creole ideologues the central place that mystical kingship, tinged or conflated as it was with messianism, occupied in the thinking of the country's popular masses. Certainly, monarchism was the rule within the ranks of the early autonomist thinkers, before the actual outbreak of the insurgency in 1810. The rebel leader Miguel Hidalgo himself espoused the candidacy of Ferdinand VII to be monarch of New Spain provided his legitimacy could be proved uncompromised; moreover, monarchical projects were frequently proposed by other Creole thinkers, though because of the situation in Spain the issue was murky until the restoration of Ferdinand in 1814. In this light, the continuing discussion of the possibility of inviting King Ferdinand to rule the colony, as the Brazilians did with the Portuguese King João VI, appears natural. Furthermore, a constitutional monarchy of some sort, linked indissolubly to religious sanction, seemed to many Mexican autonomists the logical solution to the problem of state-building. In this context, Iturbide's empire seems less cynical and idiosyncratic when it comes along in 1821. Royalist thinkers and propagandists also stressed the religious underpinning of the Bourbon monarchy and the
King's authority, of course, and attempted to hammer this home to "the humble portion of the people." Even within the Iberian tradition of mystical kingship, however, which included myths about el encubierto and Sebastianism, royalist propaganda appeals to principles of authority had about them a corporatist, secular, and peculiarly bloodless quality which may have represented the authors' thinking accurately, but which certainly was based on a fundamental misapprehension of what the popular classes believed.⁶ On the whole, however, it seems fair to say that, more than monarchy or republicanism or the instrumentalities of state-building, what most strongly engaged the attention of Creole thinkers was the concrete issue of political autonomy and, behind it, the larger question of Mexican nationhood.

Although there occurred a certain amount of Sturm und Drang about constitutional forms, the rebel Act of Independence of 1813, the constitution which took shape at Chilpancingo in the following year, and the loose program associated with them were anything but Jacobin. There is a good deal of controversy among modern scholars as to the liberal content of these documents, some emphasizing that they were essentially quite conservative and others that they followed closely the lines of the French revolutionary constitution of 1793. What one sees in the Constitution of Apatzingán is an insistence on political autonomy from Spain, popular sovereignty, representative forms, separation of powers, an established and exclusive Catholic Church, and so forth. Although the issue of state-building was of considerable importance to the directorate of the independence movement, little if any evidence indicates that it mattered a fig to their followers.⁷

More interesting from the perspective of comparing elite Creole with popular worldviews is the question of emerging Mexican nationhood and its place in the respective thinking of the two groups. As with constitutional forms, hardly anything can be found to suggest that Creole ideas about nationhood resonated in the least with popular concepts of personal and community identity. While it is true that popular and elite rebels were often able to draw together under the banner of the Virgin of Guadalupe and a fairly virulent anti-gachupin sentiment, it is also true that these symbols and their associated behaviors represented different things to the two groups. In the case of the Virgin of Guadalupe, Creole patriots tended to see in her advent and cult evidence of the providentialism associated with the historical formation of the Mexican nation, while popular groups probably saw in her, in particular, a protectress and in Marianism, in general, an echo of ancient mother-gods.⁸ The victimization of European-born Spaniards, on the other hand, had for the Creoles the flavor of a fraternal struggle over concrete political prizes and for the Indian masses of the colony a function of displacement from a frontal assault on dominant white society in general.

The Creole patriotism whose origins David Brading has traced so interestingly, and which began developing into a genuine nationalism
in the decades after independence, was a very different ideology from the localocentric Indian peasant worldview often linked to messianic expectation. In fact, Creole patriotism was undergirded by certain racist ideas regarding the Indians of New Spain and their 'degraded' condition at the close of the colonial period, ideas which originated in the attempt of Creole ideologues to distance themselves from the stain of mestizaje and the prevailing negative pseudo-scientific concepts about the nature of man in the New World popularized by such European figures as Buffon, Raynal, De Pauw, and Robertson. In any case, Creole thinking of the independence era was shot through with an attempt to create a Mexican nation, even if not yet with coherent nationalist imagery. The locus of community for most Creole autonomist thinkers was in the nation, and their struggle throughout the next century and a half was to realize a coherent ideology and a state structure congruent with their community of sentiment.

**POPULAR MESSIANISM**

While ideologues among the elite Creole directorate of the rebels were struggling with the knotty problems of nationhood, political legitimacy, and the constitution of the Mexican state -some resolving it in favor of an essentially conservative republicanism and others in favor of a constitutional monarchy with representative institutions- popular insurgent ideology was taking a rather different tack. Fragmentary but persuasive evidence points in the direction of a widespread, subterranean messianic or crypto-messianic expectation focussing, in large measure, on the figure of King Ferdinand VII. Although the documented cases of this are comparatively few, it is plausible that the recorded pronouncements represented a more generalized belief among the Indian rebels of the colony, and probably even among tens of thousands of Indian villagers who did not actively take up arms. Of the group of young Indian insurgents of both sexes from Celaya (Bajio region) captured in November of 1810, for example, all but two clearly believed that they were following the orders of the King of Spain, who was physically present in Mexico, riding about the countryside in a mysterious black coach, and who had himself commanded Father Hidalgo to take up arms against the Spanish colonial authorities. Furthermore, the King had enjoined them, through the headman (gobernador) of their village, to kill the Viceroy and all other European-born Spaniards and divide their property among the poor. Another captured rebel was reported to have said that "(...) a person is coming in a veiled coach, and when people come to see him, they kneel down and go away very happy." About the same time a woman from a village near Cuautla (Central Mexico) told her neighbors that the King was travelling in the company of Father Hidalgo and wearing a silver mask. In the late winter of 1810-1811 and spring
of 1811, King Ferdinand VII was variously reported to be approaching Cuauhtitlán on the central highlands, or with Ignacio Allende’s insurgent forces at Querétaro. Yet another captured rebel stated emphatically that King Ferdinand had appeared in New Spain by a particular and miraculous intercession of the Virgin of Guadalupe. The King was masked; he was invisible; he was travelling alone in a closed coach; he was with Hidalgo or Allende; he was working in concert with the Virgin of Guadalupe to destroy the Spanish armies. One of the most interesting of the ‘sightings’ of the King in Mexico was reported by two Indians in the area of Cuernavaca in early 1811, who sought to defraud a number of local village officials of a small quantity of cash by concocting a letter supposedly authored by the Indian governor of Tlaxcala. The letter stated that the King was about to enter the village of Cuauhtitlán, to the north of Mexico City, and that he commanded complete secrecy from the gachupines as well as financial support from Indian village officials, on pain of death. What is interesting about this incident, of course, is not the fraud itself, but the fact that its perpetrators thought is credible. Some rebel leaders even feared that news of King Ferdinand’s restoration to the throne in 1814 might undermine the loyalty of their Indian followers. This thinking apparently lay behind the effort of Father Marcos Castellanos, the insurgent commander of the besieged island of Mezcalca in Lake Chapala (Western Mexico) to suppress the information from his entirely Indian force as late as 1815. Leaders on both sides of the rebellion were aware of beliefs concerning messianic, mystical kingship among the Indian masses and considered the matter a delicate one which might compromise their political positions. In the summer of 1808, for example, the Creole lawyer Francisco Primo de Verdad, in addressing the assembled viceregal and municipal authorities in Mexico City, made an eloquent case for (colonial) popular sovereignty, employing the concepts of an ‘original people’ and despoiled monarch. But neither Primo de Verdad nor his European-born political opponents elaborated these ideas much in debate, presumably because the governors of the quasi-autonomous Indian districts of the city (Tenochtitlán and Tlatelolco) were attending the meeting and with them the shades of several despoiled and assassinated Aztec monarchs.

Occasionally Indian villagers or other country-dwellers made emphatic pronouncements against the gachupines in general, while exempting the King as the object of special veneration. In attempting to explain this process, which contrasts with the exaggerated violence frequently directed against European-born Spaniards particularly by village rebels and rioters, I have linked it to the psychological mechanism of ‘splitting’ seen in infants, whose dynamics resemble those of scapegoating. The model of ‘splitting’ describes a psychological defense mechanism frequently seen in young children, associated with separation from the mother and the establishment of individual identity. This psychic defense, while adaptive in the infant and appro-
priate to an early developmental stage, is inappropriate and even pathological at other stages, and is considered a regression later on. 12 An example of such behavior occurred in the village of Epazoyuca, just a few miles to the northeast of Mexico City, during a public procession in the Fall of 1808. The Indian official Pablo Hilario, bearing a standard with the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe, was standing next to the Indian governor of the village, bearing upon another standard the likeness of King Ferdinand VII. When the large ethnically mixed crowd began yelling "Viva Fernando Séptimo!" Pablo Hilario chimed in with "Viva Fernando Séptimo y mueran todos los gachupines!” ("Long live King Ferdinand VII and death to all Spaniards!"). One Spanish witness to the incident observed that Hilario's statements were "(...) very much like those indecorously repeated even in the public plazas." Translated into action, such naïve monarchism very often took the form of Indians being recruited to the insurgent cause by rebel leaders astute enough to invoke the name of the King in calling for adherence to the cause of Hidalgo and Allende. The statements of captured Indian rebels show no trace of any cognitive dissonance in this regard: apparently the yawning contradiction in terms was for them no contradiction at all.13

There were, interestingly enough, candidates alternative to 'El Deseado' to whom messianic expectation was attached. It is widely believed that the objects of messianic veneration by the Indian masses of the country were the priests who led the rebellion in its early phases, most especially Miguel Hidalgo and José Maria Morelos. Popular pronouncements to this effect, however, are in fact conspicuous by their absence from the historical sources. Apart from a very few scattered references to the imminent return of Hidalgo and Morelos at the head of avenging armies after their widely publicized deaths, there is very little evidence of the kind of apotheosis ('spontaneous canonization' in the words of Jacques Lafaye) of these popular leaders undergone in more recent times by such men as Emiliano Zapata, Pancho Villa, or Che Guevara. A more widely venerated, or at least more widely spoken of, figure in the messianic mold, oddly enough, was Ignacio Allende, the wealthy Creole militia officer from the Bajio town of San Miguel el Grande and co-conspirator with Hidalgo in the short-lived rebellion of 1810-1811. A less likely candidate for popular veneration would be hard to imagine, but Allende was apparently nonetheless more closely associated with messianic expectation himself, and also with the figure of King Ferdinand, than the priests. Among the ranks of the Creole insurgent leadership Allende was more socially conservative than many of the others, yet he was seen by many Indians as a great avenger and killer of gachupines, a social equalizer, an abolisher of tributes and a fixer of prices, and even an agrarian reformer. Allende was even conflated with 'El Deseado' and the Virgin of Guadalupe, and in the thinking of some was himself a candidate to be nuestro católico ('our Catholic King').14
This apparently bizarre spate of messianic, crypto-messianic and quasi-messianic popular expressions did not, however, spring out of a political or cultural vacuum, but had its own cultural antecedents - pre-conditions necessary but not sufficient for the rapid development and activation of such ideas at the end of the colonial period. At this point, then, let us step back from the rebellion itself and the concrete manifestations of these ideological elements to take a brief look at those antecedents.  

The connection in Western religious/eschatological thought of the millennium with a cyclical closure or recurrence in time is too well known to require extended comment here. Indeed, the idea of the Second Coming itself partakes of such a circularity, even though the outcome of this central event of Christian eschatology, in which messiah and millennium are inextricably associated, is traditionally thought to be an end of history, a kind of perfect stasis, and not the initiation of a new cycle. This is a particularly notable characteristic of the nativistic or revitalization movements which have frequently sprung up in the ex-colonial world, and which often assume the form of messianic/millenarian cults or uprisings. In such collective fantasies the perfect age to come may appear as a regeneration, the recovery by oppressed social groups of what has previously been lost — political autonomy, economic resources, cultural integrity, cosmological coherence, and so forth — so that, in Sylvia Thrupp’s words, “time is bent back (...) to recapture some state of harmony in which the world began.”  

How much more powerful must the appeal of such doctrines be, therefore, if they resonate strongly with an indigenous intellectual and religious tradition of cyclical cosmology, even if the latter has been systematically suppressed in the name of a hegemonic evangelical Christianity? 

Such a resonance was, in fact, one of the major antecedents of popular messianic belief in late colonial Mexico, and played an important role in the link between messianic expectation and collective violence. As with the cyclical aspect of millennial belief, the cyclical (or perhaps helical, Aztec thought allowing for some evolution) nature of Mesoamerican cosmological thought is familiar enough to require only brief comment here. Intertwined with this cyclical view of time there existed a strong mythico-historical tradition of man-gods and messianic prophecy, stretching back through the Mesoamerican Classic era and embodied most strikingly in the figure of Quetzalcóatl, a pan-Mesoamerican deity who was also regarded as having been a real historical figure. Exactly how explicitly or widely preserved by the eighteenth century were the Aztec traditions of cyclical cosmology and messianic expectation is impossible to determine given the conditions prevailing in the colony and the surviving documentation, but it seems likely that they existed side by side with other beliefs (shamanism, for example) as part of the substrate of Indian popular culture.
At the very least such beliefs would have predisposed large segments of the colony's rural masses, in times of stress, to form the highly cathected relationship with a single charismatic figure typical of messianism.  

The enduring matrix of popular messianic expectation, however, was only one of the ingredients in the singular alchemy of collective action. Another was the existence and wide recognition among the colonial rural masses of a protective, patriarchal tradition of monarchical government at whose center stood the virtually thaumaturgical figure of the Spanish King himself. Although the bubble of legal tutelage built around the Indians had its disadvantages and significantly interfered with the complete integration of the Indians into colonial society, it also had its positive aspects. It meant exemption from certain kind of taxes, generally more lenient criminal penalties than meted out to non-Indians, a high degree of municipal political autonomy (the interference mentioned above notwithstanding), access to a special system of courts, and so forth. Where legal remedies were applied in favor of the Indians of colonial New Spain, they were applied in the King's name. Furthermore, religious and civic ritual of all kinds constantly stressed the centrality of the Spanish King to the colonial commonweal, and his benevolence and fatherly concern with the welfare of his weakest subjects. Indeed, the king occupied an almost suprapolitical position in the Spanish political tradition, and often remained inviolate in the midst of popular rebellion, his authority being split off from the legitimacy of government, as in the traditional cry of rebels and rioters, "Long live the King! Death to bad government!" Such associations surely contributed powerfully to popular veneration of the Spanish King, especially among the Indians who often sheltered under his protective, patriarchal mantle, and made of his figure a preeminent candidate for messianic expectation.

A normal and quite expectable range of expression from Indians regarding the figure of the Spanish King in the late colonial period fell into the category we may call naïve monarchism, and was ideologically associated, certainly, with the patriarchal stance of the monarchy toward the Indians. The Indian commune of Juchipila, for example, in western Mexico (in an area which, like parts of the Huasteca and the eastern Sierra Madre on the other side of the country, was to be an endemic focus of rebellion for several years after 1810), annually celebrated a fiesta dedicated to the King of Spain, even when the local curate tried to discourage it. Within the context of the insurrection, it is in this naïve monarchical legitimism that one begins to see the 'splitting' of Spaniard into 'good King' and 'bad gachupines' suggested above.

In addition to considerations of politics, culture, and cosmology, we must take into account the particular social and intellectual circumstances under which the mass of rural Indians lived in Mexico at the close of the colonial period. While it is true that messianic and mil-
lenarian movements have been common enough in the West and in Western-dominated areas of the world since the medieval period, it is also true that in terms of mainstream religious belief these cults and movements must be regarded as heterodox, even (or most especially) if they adapt, distort, or invert ideological elements from orthodox religious thought. Many observers of such collective phenomena have noted that they tend to flourish in culturally 'backward' or isolated areas or among marginal or transitional populations, where heterodox beliefs or older cultural elements are likely to persist. Heterodox belief, a longstanding tradition of religious syncretism, lack of education, and geographical and cultural isolation were certainly typical of large parts of New Spain even at the end of the colonial period. The characterization of the rural Indians constantly repeated by many parish priests and local officials at the end of the colonial period—that they were ignorant, lazy, drunken, vicious sodomites, naturally prone to violence, barbarism, and rebellion—must certainly be taken with a large grain of salt. Nonetheless, there is plentiful evidence that heterodoxy and an often exceedingly imperfect understanding of approved religious teaching, combined with the resilience of ancient indigenous belief systems, were widespread, and it seems reasonable to assume that these conditions provided an environment nourishing to messianic beliefs. Furthermore, institutions of secular education—village schools—for Indians and other country-dwellers were common enough in New Spain at the close of the colonial period, but they seem to have achieved indifferent results at best. Aside from village financial constraints, Indian attitudes about non-Indians living in their villages (schoolmasters were often drawn from this group), resistance to acculturation, and the oft-mentioned need to have children working in the fields and other productive activities rather than attending school, made school attendance very low and progress in educating Indian children slow or non-existent.

Even more important than the lack of secular education among the Indian population in nourishing a tradition of messianic expectation, however, was religious heterodoxy of various sorts. Both the active practice of heterodox religious rites and the more passive resistance to traditional religious indoctrination at the parish level were explicitly acknowledged by colonial authorities as often being linked to an overall rejection of the Spanish colonizers and their culture. To cite but one example, the Franciscan curate of the Indian town of Poncitolán, in Western Mexico on the northern shore of Lake Chapala, reported in 1731 concerning the hostility of the local Indian villagers, particularly in the nearby pueblo of Mezcala. The problem of inducing the local villagers to attend mass and observe the other Christian sacraments had for decades past been a difficult puzzle (quebradero de cabeza) for all the priests who had dwelt there. The Franciscan stressed, however, as did other local Spanish witnesses, that the Indians also held an "enmity (...) to the Spaniards" and a "repugnance" to having any non-Indian living in their villages. Riots against their
curates and the occasional attack upon local secular authorities (on one occasion resulting in the murder of a royal deputy magistrate) were fairly regular occurrences. In one *pueblo* of the district in the 1720s, the Indians had attacked the priest in his church. One man among the rioters had broken into the sacristy and eaten all the sacramental wafers. To the horror of several onlookers, while running through the cemetery to his home, his body had burst open and he had died on the spot. 22

The complaints of parish clergy regarding the irreligion and ignorance of their Indian flocks were so generalized over New Spain right up to the end of the colonial era (and beyond) as to indicate that evangelization had indeed been shallow, at least insofar as formal religious observance was concerned. Indian parishioners in many villages regularly went for years without hearing mass, taking communion, or confessing, and they lived together out of wedlock, refused to baptize their newborn, and buried their dead outside church cemeteries. If ignorance of formal religious elements, resistance to indoctrination, and conflict with ecclesiastical authorities were endemic in the late colony, more active forms of heterodox behavior seem also to have been common enough, although by their very nature less well documented. The most extreme form of this, of course, was the advent of Indian messiahs. One such figure was Antonio Pérez, active in the area of Yautepec, in the Central Mexican Cuernavaca sugar zone, about 1760. He preached nothing less than a total inversion of the social order then prevailing in the colony, clothing his prophetic visions in a language compounded of traditional apocalyptic and pre-Columbian imagery (the soul of Christ was composed of kernels of maize, etc.). Similar though less well studied cases of Indian messianism were those of Mariano, in the Tepic area of Western Mexico in 1800-1801, and the mad messiah of Durango about the same time. 23

But these spectacular manifestations of Indian heterodoxy were certainly outnumbered by the day-to-day practices of shamanism, witchcraft, fertility cults, and so forth. In 1817, for instance, the vicar of the village of San Lorenzo Huichichilapan, near Toluca, just a few miles west of Mexico City, reported the arrest of a number of men of the *pueblo* for participating in what were apparently propitiatory rites dedicated to a traditional Indian god of the hills. The celebration of the cult included icons of Christ and the Virgin, but also certain ‘dolls’ (*muñecos*) presumably representing pagan deities; dancing and singing by both sexes; offerings of food (*tamales* most prominently); and other ritual elements. Furthermore, parallel with resistance to religious indoctrination, messianism, and active heterodoxy ran a strong tradition of what can most appropriately be called popular piety —religious celebrations, processions of various kinds associated with liturgical events or the veneration of local icons, spontaneous cults and chapels, and so forth. In the late eighteenth century, these forms of popular piety were increasingly sanitized, restricted, or suppressed outright by the enlightened Mexican Church, provoking considerable
resistance, even violent resistance, on the part of Indian villagers in particular. It seems possible that several of the village jacqueries that erupted in connection with the Hidalgo rebellion in late 1810 may have been linked to frustrations with clerical attempts to suppress popular religious celebrations, especially those of All Saints. Thus identified as noxious by the Church, these practices entered, ipso facto, the substratum of Indian ideology which nourished heterodoxy and an oppositional political stance readily associated with it. 24

STRUCTURAL FACTORS AND REBELLION
- A DETOUR -

Up to this point we have limited our discussion almost exclusively to the elements of culture and ideology as determining forms of mass political violence, but explored not at all the role of material factors. To redress that imbalance at least to some small degree it seems appropriate to analyze briefly and critically several possible interpretations of popular rebellion in Mexico as a response to structural conditions of an economic nature. These were less triggering mechanisms than secular changes of a fairly basic sort that evolved parallel to, and interrelated with, rural society and culture. By clearing away some of the underbrush of the conventional wisdom in this regard we may be able better to see material factors—not exclusively, but importantly—at the origin of popular collective action. What, then, was the etiology of the rural revolt which so dominated the Mexican independence struggle? Two of the conventional schemes regarding the causes of the rebellions beginning in 1810, at least insofar as mass participation by rural people in general and Indians in particular are concerned, do not take us very far in the direction of a plausible explanation. The first, the notion that New Spain and other parts of the empire were pushed into rebellion by the rupture of a colonial compact, has pride of place in much of the literature on Spanish American independence movements and their backgrounds in the Bourbon Reforms. The basic elements of this compact would have been the granting of political and economic autonomy to the American colonies by the Spanish crown in return for political loyalty and the payment of taxes, in brief.

Yet we must ask ourselves the question: is it credible that the abrogation of such a compact engaged the emotional energies of the Indian villagers and other rural people whose collective beliefs and actions we are exploring? The answer is no; at least there is no appreciable evidence from the trials and confessions of popular rebels or from contemporary observers to indicate that this construct of intellectual abstraction made its way down to the level of rural rebels and rioters. This is not to say that rural people in particular or members of the ‘lower orders’ in general historically have been incapable of understanding elements of formal political ideology, still less that
they have been impervious to such strains of thought or have no political *Weltanschauung* of their own. Eric Hobsbawm's Andalusian anarchists, Carlo Ginzburg's Friulian miller, Mennochio, and E.P. Thompson's eighteenth-century moral economists, among other examples, indicate that political ideology and programmatic elements can make their way into popular thinking and action in pre-industrial societies. In the case of late colonial Mexico, however, the lines of transmission were constricted by cultural and linguistic differences between the progenitors of such formal ideological elements and their potential adapters. If one adds to this important factor others such as distance, bad communications, high rates of illiteracy, low population densities, and—is there any other way to put it?—the comparatively backward state of New Spain with respect to contemporary Europe, it begins to seem unlikely that notions about the rupture of a colonial compact could have had much force in mobilizing large segments of the rural populace.

A derivative of the ruptured colonial compact interpretation of Spanish American rebellion is the steady loss of legitimacy by the Spanish ruling dynasty itself, which we know to have had a deeply disillusioning effect on the educated and civic-minded groups in the colonies. The mediocrity of Charles IV, the meddling of the Prince of Peace, the domestic scandals embroiling the royal family, and the ignominious collapse of the monarchy before Napoleon did much to compromise the loyalty and respect of informed American subjects. But here again, how much significance are such scandals and disillusionments likely to have had for Indian peasants and other rural dwellers? It is true that echoes of these distant events did occur in the countryside of New Spain, but on the whole, the issue of whether Minister Godoy was or was not the Queen's lover may have had some importance in the salons of Mexico City but little, one suspects, in the humble *chozas* of Cuauhtitlán. In fact, a sort of uncompromised naïve legitimism ran high among the rural people of Mexico, seemingly without reference to the benign incompetence of Charles IV or the reactionary savagery of his son, Fernando ‘El Deseado’.

A second possible model of political disruption—that the political crisis in New Spain and the *grito* (‘call to arms’) of Father Miguel Hidalgo simply provided the excuse for bored and resentful peasants and rural laborers to embark on an orgy of pillage, rape, and murder—does not appear to be very credible either. A modern variant of this interpretation—that peasant society is like a constantly boiling, tightly covered pot, and that when the hand of the state is weakened or removed the lid flies off, scattering the contents all over the kitchen—does little credit to rural people. The lived just as tightly within the grip of secular and short-term changes, and they loved the peaceful hearth just as much as educated, politically aware urbanites. Furthermore, this view accords the role of ideas in the peasant sector of the movements little or no importance at all, and sees Hidalgo and his Creole lieutenants as somehow having ‘whipped up’ popular senti-
ments and angers they could not subsequently control. To paraphrase one of the memorable parting quips of Porfirio Diaz: "Hidalgo has unleashed a tiger - now let us see if he can control it." Admittedly, a great deal of savagery was perpetrated by the insurgents upon their victims, especially by Indian rioters upon the scores of unlucky peninsular Spaniards who fell into their hands in villages and on back-country roads in the early months of the rebellion. But the scale and nature of this violence suggests not some inherent barbarism on the part of peasants and other rural dwellers, but a fundamental sense that something had gone wrong in the world, and that the external realities no longer conformed to the moral economy of country people. What I am suggesting here is that ideological considerations did, in fact, play a very important part in mobilizing peasants, in particular, but that they grew out of a moral substrate unlikely to have been touched directly or extensively by narrower, more discretely articulated ideas or slogans.

If neither elite ideology and Enlightened political ideas, nor collective ignorance and sociopathy can explain the widespread participation of rural people, and especially indigenous villagers, in the independence struggles in Mexico, what factors can have motivated popular rebels? Stepping over onto the ground of long- and short-term changes in material conditions may put us on a somewhat firmer footing here, though these factors are not necessarily incompatible with the discarded ideological ones just discussed and discarded. Two important trends were especially influential in the economic and social realms, and together they produced conditions necessary, but not sufficient, to induce large numbers of people to engage in protracted, collective violence. First, a slow but significant fall in popular standards of living occurred during the latter part of the eighteenth century and into the first decades of the nineteenth. Nominal wages for country people remained virtually stable between 1750 and 1810, while prices for maize and other consumer basics and luxuries rose substantially. The result was a fall in real wages amounting to about 25 percent. Although the role played by material deprivation of this sort in producing collective political violence is much debated, it surely had some effect as a significant background factor in setting off the Mexican independence struggles.

Second, and probably more important, there occurred during the last century of colonial rule an increasingly severe, Malthusian demographic and agrarian crisis which embraced much of New Spain. Here urban population growth, general demographic expansion, and regional market development appear to have played a more significant role than the boom in silver mining or external markets. Essentially, rural population increase undermined the position of labor and held costs down while the commercial agricultural sector expanded in terms of capital investment, production, and market share. The increasing frequency, tempo, and acrimony of litigation over land is one indicator of this situation, and compounding this trend as a source of rural so-
cial conflict was a growing social differentiation within Indian peasant communities which accorded ill with their basic cosmological assumptions and principles of internal cohesion.29

**CRIME AND CAMPANILISMO**

**- A SECOND DETOUR -**

In the heated political atmosphere of the years around 1810, political imagery and religious imagery were blended in both rhetoric and action. The communal identity of villages under attack, as suggested above, by internal and external pressures—a long-term process with significant political dimensions—had traditionally been linked to religious expression, a relationship most economically described by the concept of 'campanilismo'—the tendency of villagers to see the social (and political) horizon as extending only as far as the view from the church tower. Indian villagers were forever ringing their church bells as a symbol of community identity, even (or perhaps especially) over the strong objections of parish clergy. In one case, in the pueblo of Atlautla in the province of Chalco near Mexico City, villagers in an argument with the local curate were enjoined by another local priest to stop ringing the church bells to gather people in the plaza. Their reply, according to the priest's testimony, was "(...) that they would ring them as much as they wanted, since they, and not I, had paid for them."30 And of course, once the rebellion itself had broken out, formal and informal rhetoric along with collective action were suffused with religious imagery on both sides of the conflict, though this was perhaps most notable among the insurgents because of the popular nature of the revolt.

Campanilismo, however, had an important secular aspect, as well. Detouring here to a brief consideration of it serves to reinforce the assertions just made about religious outlook, and also bends back upon the discussion about the difference between popular and elite political worldviews, the 'raw' version and the 'cooked'. Very different ideas distinguished village-dwelling Indians from the superordinate, largely urban white groups regarding the appropriate level of reference in political and social action. The distinction here would correspond roughly to a popular Gemeinschaft model of society and an elite Gesellschaft mode, respectively. While the case for a stark polarity between the two worldviews would be impossible to make (a continuum with one ideal type at either end would certainly be the more accurate representation), it is nonetheless true that village rebels most often acted as though their horizon of reference stretched only to the boundaries of their communities, while the Creole directorate of the independence movements acted with a broader vision of Mexican society as a whole, characterized earlier as proto-liberal.

Oddly enough, this distinction becomes clearest at the nether end of the normative structure, in the case of crime within the context of
armed popular rebellion. While a full analysis of the complex relationship between criminality and rebellion is beyond the scope of this essay, we may nonetheless sketch in a few broad speculations. In the revolutionary period, the rather fluid boundary between crime and rebellion was continually crossed back and forth by thousands of Mexicans; this despite the royalist government's tendency to identify them as a single phenomenon. From the superordinate point of view, criminality included those acts of spontaneous collective appropriation, destruction of property, or violence directed at individuals typical of the action of rioters and mobs, or even of guerrilla bands or insurgent armies on the march. From the popular protesters' point of view, by contrast, such attacks were generally sustained by vague but discernible notions of social justice, retributive or redistributive in nature, based themselves in turn upon ideas of collective moral economy—English 'rough music' with a Mexican rhythm. But something of the same distinction may have existed with regard to the residue of putatively criminal behaviors that is left—murder, rape, assault, theft, robbery, fraud, and so on. It is difficult to determine if, from the point of view of the local Indian peasant community, there was a significant difference in the meaning of an individual's stealing a sheep during the collective sack of an hacienda by villagers, for example, as opposed to the same individual's theft of a horse from a lone traveler on the highway, or from his neighbor. One of the main distinctions would, of course, appear to be the collective context of the first act, though it is by no means the only one.

In terms of what constituted crime and what did not, one might suggest a kind of von Thünen's ring-like structure in the moral space of small communities, in which the definition of crime became at once progressively narrower and more flexible as one approached the outer rings, while within the innermost ring the definition of crime would be fairly broad and conventional, reinforced both by communal sanction and external authority. This is not to suggest that once beyond the boundary markers of their communities Mexican country-dwellers suddenly developed gaping super-ego lacunae, but simply that definitions of defiance and wrong-doing became progressively blurrier along the outward trajectory. The implication is that what might be crime to a member of the dominant, white, propertied social segment might not be so construed by a poor, Indian village dweller. Furthermore, what might be defined as crime when perpetrated by an individual in a community context would become less so, or perhaps no crime at all, when committed against external objects by people sharing a common communal reference point. The net effect of this would be for collective action to de-criminalize crime. The further the object of the behavior spatially and socially, the less criminal the act. A whole range of evidence suggests that the Creole directorate of the Mexican insurrections, together with the leadership stratum in general, shared in the views of the colonial elite as to property and propriety. Many, most notably Ignacio Allende, expressed their shock
at the popular savagery and pillage that habitually accompanied the capture of cities and towns in 1810 and after. Through the ensuing years, rebel governments attempted to regulate what they construed as crime and other non-military activity, at least partially, it must be admitted, so as not to antagonize non-combatants. At the most mundane level, rebel commanders were often known to leave receipts in village tax offices, stores, and estates that they sacked.

In the context of late colonial Mexico, however, there is a striking anomaly in the actual behaviors one sees in such situations—a disturbance, as it were, in the neat pattern of outward rippling hostility and aggression which found its center in the rural village. This anomaly lies precisely in the relationship of the local community in rebellion to the Spanish King, and in the frequent conversion of the latter into a figure of messianic veneration. The anomaly is more apparent than real, it turns out, and can be explained by an analysis of the ideological substrate beneath rebellion, as I have attempted in this essay. To be sure, the apparently anomalous behavior was not evenly distributed in New Spain, but tended to occur in the central parts of the colony more than in peripheral areas. New Spain was characterized by uneven patterns of economic activity, settlement, and zones of acculturation, and some evidence indicates that in the more northerly areas of the colony, most notably in the eastern and western sierras, popular messianic beliefs were focused on Indian savior-kings rather than on the Spanish monarch, and tended to be more ‘radical’ and programmatic in their millenarianism. This difference would presumably correspond to an acculturation gradient running from the Valley of Mexico outward in a roughly ring-like fashion, with indigenous lifeways stronger and more pristine as one reached the periphery. For many of the villagers of central Mexico, where the figure of the monarch dominated messianic beliefs, rebellion against the Spanish colonial regime was no crime because it was no rebellion, since the royal persona was thought to support it, urge it, and even join it.

Before moving on to some concluding remarks, we may follow out some of the implications of the discussion about campanilismo and popular worldview. A number of diagnostic hints regarding the independence struggle in Mexico can be used to reconstruct the outlines of popular ideology, and two such may be suggested here without going into any very detailed discussion. The first of these, to recap the immediately preceding discussion, would be the pervasiveness of criminality concurrent with more obviously political forms of rebellion. Furthermore, there is no substantial evidence of what one might call social banditry during the period of the independence struggle. This suggests that the distinction between the private and the public domains, at least among the mass of the population, was weak at best; that what one might call a civic ideology was concomitantly underdeveloped and frail; and that the essentially anomic, anti-social behaviors associated with criminality were often seen to be just as appro-
appropriate a form of civic action, in a sense, as explicitly political protest.33

The second explanatory hint deals with the organizational forms of rebellion itself, which betrayed an almost constitutional inability by rural rebels, especially among peasant villagers, to coalesce into large forces with a life-span of anything more than a few weeks at most. This characteristic produced a remarkable fragmentation and feudalization among the rebels that largely neutralized their military efforts, and only in limited fashion would it have been adaptive for protracted guerrilla warfare. Such atomization has often been noted of peasant rebellions, of course, and should not surprise us at all. Moreover, a typical and often-ignored form of rural violence, especially during the period up to around 1813, was the village riot or jacquerie, clearly related to rebel activity of a more formal sort and frequently conflated with it. This type of collective action—spasmodic, localized, often extremely violent, and short-lived—correlated perfectly with the campanilismo, the localocentrism, which lay at the heart of peasant worldview, and which carved the political world up into so many communes.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, then, our rather tortuous route has led us from Creole autonomist ideology to popular messianic expectation and the cultural matrix which nourished it, through a final detour into crime and communal identity. I would suggest that the paths of popular and elite ideology hardly converged at all. And where they did converge, they did so only apparently, in the person of a monarch (and 'a' monarch rather than 'the' monarch is used purposely). Here the 'raw' and 'cooked' versions of ideology touched different emotional chords and expressed different social aspirations. To mix the metaphor even more hopelessly, popular and elite rebel groups were engaged in a dialogue of the deaf in which there was considerable noise but little exchange of information. Furthermore, as I have tried to point out in my discussion of crime and rebellion, the Indians particularly among popular rebel groups, at least in the heartland of New Spain, tended to blur or chop out of their political cosmology the very middle-level structures represented in Creole thinking by the concept of the nation, while popular ideas of the 'state' seem largely to have been limited to monarchical legitimacy. The substantially unarticulated Indian insurgent programme was embedded in a not-untypically atavistic vision of a peasant village utopia historically and emotionally antecedent to the proto liberal vision of the Mexican state, and in some sense existing outside it. Popular ideology was absolutely saturated with religious symbolism and cosmology, constituting within the framework of mass political violence and protest not so much a subtext as a counter-text. Among the main contenders for state power,
the Creole and metropolitan elites, a common discourse at least was possible; they may increasingly have had antagonistic goals, but they shared the same lexicon. By contrast, a wide cultural gulf separated the superordinate groups from the popular, predominantly Indian masses of the country. What was apparently going on in the minds of popular rural insurgents, and what went on at the time that the constitution was written at Chilpancingo in 1814, represented a discontinuity in the cognitive map and worldview of Mexicans, and no political ideology, programme, or national mythology could easily bridge the rifts.

Messianic expectation among the Indian villagers of New Spain may even have served them as a kind of ideological lever against the local political structure, including local officials, merchants, landowners, and sometimes even their own priests. In a time of social crisis, it represented the invocation of a reciprocal relationship in which the distant royal government in Mexico city had done much the same thing in reverse – built the large, rambling, leaky edifice of royal protection of Indians as a counterweight to the centrifugal tendencies present in the New World in general and New Spain in particular. This disingenuous alliance had its limits. But there was about the situation a certain structural symmetry if one places the Creole elite with its allied social groups in the middle, its aims radically opposed to both Indian villagers and Peninsular monarchy since it sought to seize and, to a degree, spread political power on the one hand, and pulverize Indian communitarian values on the other. The tracks for this process were laid with the overthrow of colonial rule, and it gathered momentum throughout the nineteenth century, to reach a peak with Porfirio Díaz’ application of the laws of the mid-century Reforma at its end.34 The focus of Indian messianic expectation on the Spanish King or his surrogates embodies the kind of contradiction between popular and elite ideologies often found in mass insurrectionary movements, therefore, and undermines the traditional wisdom that all the rebels in New Spain had the same thing in mind when they took up arms against the Spanish regime.

If an historical observer allows that Mexico has long sustained a marked, if complex, authoritarian political tradition, one is called upon to trace some of this political culture back considerably in time. The problem here, of course, is one of identifying actual historical continuities. There are two ways of attacking this – by reference to ethos and by analogy to empirical cases. The first method, much the weaker, would depend essentially on a characterization of modern political styles with reference to traditional ones, as when the PRI regime in Mexico is sometimes referred to as ‘neo-Bourbon’ in nature. The empirical method would look into such examples as the Speaking Cross cult in nineteenth-century Yucatán, the millenarian uprising at Tomóchic in the 1890s, or to the Cristero rebellion of the 1920s as lineal descendants of popular millenarian belief and popular
religious devotion, and as reflective of a substantially similar *mentalidad*.\textsuperscript{35} Unfortunately, neither argument provides a very strong case for any direct continuity of popular political culture much beyond the end of the nineteenth century. There is some evidence, for example (though much scholarly debate as to its meaning), to indicate that the worldview of ordinary Mexican country people broadened considerably during the nineteenth century. Though the dynamics of that process are as yet to be thoroughly set out, it presumably resulted in a form of peasant nationalism or proto-nationalism very far from the localocentrism I have portrayed here for the beginning of the century.\textsuperscript{36} It is interesting to note in this connection that those local disturbances most closely approximating truly messianic/millenarian uprisings seem to have occurred in peripheral areas, such as Yucatán and the far north. In fact, with few historical exceptions, millenarianism, though it may be exclusive and xenophobic, is incompatible with nationalism because the locus of community and the eschatology are too different in both forms of movement. So, on the one hand, we may be witnessing a sea-change in popular *mentalidad* in the post-colonial period. On the other, modern populism—even when undergirded by a strong charismatic element— is not necessarily the same as messianism. The most that can be said of such a figure a president Lázaro Cárdenas, for example, even though he was venerated in the 1930s (and apparently still is) as ‘Tata Lázaro’ among his popular constituency, is that his political style and its reception were messianoid, rather than messianic.

Whatever else they may be, states are also mental constructs, and one’s perception of them is likely to change as one’s structural perspective changes. Our modern preoccupation with the state as the most important locus of political controversy and as the instrument of profound social change, and our reification of it, has led us to the practice of what historian Alan Knight has aptly termed ‘statolatry’.\textsuperscript{37} But for people even to conceive of a state, they are required to share a cognitive map which includes a view of a wider world beyond locality, and of the integuments which hold it together. For much of the population of late colonial Mexico such a vision did not exist, and to assume its presence is ahistorical. Furthermore, the objects of popular violence in 1810 and thereafter were not particularly representations of the Spanish colonial state—local officials and priests, for example—and even where they occasionally were, there is a difference between figures of authority and the body of the state itself. What seems to have mattered to most people was not state, but community. In the case of early nineteenth-century Mexico, therefore, I am in favor, to paraphrase a sociological motto which has recently gained some currency, of taking the state back out.
ENDNOTES

1. I have been unable to reference this anecdote, though anthologies of Jewish humor and folklore typically include large numbers of stories about Chelm. See, for example, A Treasury of Jewish Folklore: Stories, Traditions, Legends, Humor, Wisdom, and Folk Songs of the Jewish People, Nathan Ausubel, ed. (New York, 1948); and Encyclopedia of Jewish Humor, from Biblical Times to the Modern Age, Harry D. Spalding, ed. (New York, 1969).

2. For a detailed discussion of an Indian messiah in Durango in the years 1800-1801, see Eric Van Young, "Millennium on the Northern Marches: The Mad Messiah of Durango and Popular Rebellion in Mexico, 1800-1801," in Comparative Studies in Society and History, 28 (1986), 385-413. Conspiracies and village riots in the Tepic area of Western Mexico at about the same time, centering on the mysterious Indian messiah named Mariano, are dealt with by Christon I. Archer, El ejército en el México borbónico, 1760-1810 (Mexico City, 1983), 132-135. Important documentation on the Tepic episode is to be found in Biblioteca Pública del Estado, Guadalajara (hereafter BPE), Fondos Especiales, Criminal, paquete 34, exp. 9, ser. 763, 1801-1806. Other documentary references include Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City (hereafter AGN), Historia, vol. 428, fs. 37r-76r, 1801; Historia, vol. 413, exp. 5, fs. 248r-339r, 1801; Infidencias, vol. 13, exp. 6, fs. 125r-155r, 1816-1817; and Indiferente de Guerra, vol. 46a, no pagination, 1801. I am grateful to Christon Archer for bringing some of these sources to my attention. Lic. Juan López, official city historian (cronista) of Guadalajara, has done the community of historical scholars an invaluable service by publishing the massive documentation on the Mariano rebellion still to be found in the Archivo General de Indias, Seville, along with a useful introduction, in La rebelión del Indio Mariano. Un movimiento insurgente en la Nueva Galicia, en 1801; y documentos procesales, Juan López, ed. (3 vols., Guadalajara, 1985).

3. For an interesting and exceedingly suggestive treatment of four messianic figures and their followers, see Serge Gruzinski, Les Hommes-dieux de Mexique. Pouvoir indien et société, XVIIe-XVIIIe siècle (Paris, 1985); and for a discussion of messianic/millennial elements in the Tzeltal revolt in early eighteenth-century Chiapas, Robert Wasserstrom, Class and Society in Central Chiapas (Berkeley, 1983), 76-86, and passim. Numerous instances of what I have elsewhere described as almost ritualistic, preternaturally violent assassinations occurred; some of the more spectacular examples are to be found in AGN, Criminal, vol. 299, fs. 263r-413v, 1811, and vol. 231, exp. 1, fs. 1r-59r, 1811, both on the same case; Criminal, vol. 156, fs. 20r-167v, 175r-416v, 432r-450v, 521r-530v, 1810; Criminal, vol. 147, exp. 15, fs. 443r-574v, 1810; and, Criminal, vol. 26, exp. 9, 1818. These and other examples are discussed and analyzed in Eric Van Young, "Who Was that Masked Man, Anyway? Popular Symbols and Ideology in the Mexican Wars of Independence" in Proceedings of the Rocky Mountain Council on Latin American Studies, Annual Meeting (Las Cruces, NM, 1984), I, 18-35, and "Millennium on the Northern Marches."

4. The first part of the title of this essay is drawn from Claude Lévi-Strauss, The Raw and the Cooked (New York, 1979), and the epigraph from the same source, p. 5. I did not mean to draw any invidious comparison between popular and elite Creole ideological formulations by referring to them, respectively, as raw and cooked. Nonetheless, when one pieces together testimony, description of collective action, and the odd bits and pieces of (especially Indian) programmatic pronouncements on the part of the popular rebels, and compares them with the basically rationalist, Western thinking in formal manifestoes, pamphlets, newspapers, and so forth, produced by Creole insurgent thinkers, one is forced to recognize a striking contrast, analogous to the primary process thinking of individuals as opposed to their ego-censored everyday thought processes.

5. On Hidalgo’s political ideas, see Alfonso García Ruiz, Ideario de Hidalgo (Mexico City, 1965).

6. For a masterful treatment of one of the most prominent of such royalist pamphleteers, Agustín Pompocho Fernández de San Salvador, see Hugh M. Hamill, Jr., "The Rector to the Rescue: Royalist Pamphleteers in the Defense of Mexico, 1808-1821" (Paper, VI Con-
ference of Mexican and United States Historians, Chicago, 1981), and see also his article, "Royalist Propaganda and 'La porción humilde del pueblo' during Mexican Independence," in The Americas, 36 (1980), 423-444. For a discussion of Iberian traditions of messianic belief, both Spanish and Portuguese, focussing especially on Sebastianism, see Mary Elizabeth Brooks, A King for Portugal. The Madrigal Conspiracy, 1594-1595 (Madison, 1964).

7. For a brilliant analysis of the questions about constitutional forms, the Act of 1813 and the constitution of Chilpancingo, see David A. Brading, The Origins of Mexican Nationalism (Cambridge, 1985), 51-52. A position emphasizing that these documents were quite conservative would be occupied by Brading, but a position stating that they followed the French example of 1793 would be occupied by José Miranda, whose book, Las ideas y las instituciones políticas mexicanas, is glossed by Luis González, Once ensayos de tema insurgente (Zamora, 1985), 122. One reason for the difficulty of characterizing Creole political thought, of course, is that after the initial crisis of 1808, the intellectual community of New Spain was severely divided, and many Creole intellectuals switched sides back and forth; Hamill, "Rector to the Rescue," 2. Furthermore, María del Refugio González points out that distinct differences between Mexican conservatives and liberals were late in coalescing; see her "Ilustrados, regalistas y liberales," in The Independence of Mexico and the Creation of the New Nation, Jaime E. Rodríguez O., ed. (Los Angeles, 1989), 247-263. For a pithy discussion of the 1814 constitution, see González, Once ensayos, 109-128. See also Ernesto de la Torre Villar, La Constitución de Apatzingán y los creadores del estado mexicano (Mexico City, 1978), and La independencia mexicana (3 vols., Mexico City, 1982).


10. On Celaya, see AGN, Criminal, vol. 134, exp. 3, fs. 36r-50r, 1810. On the veiled coach, see AGN, Criminal, vol. 454, 1811. On Cuautla, AGN, Criminal, vol. 175, fs. 369r-392v, 1811. The figure of the messianic, disguised king ('el encubierto') is familiar also from Spanish history, as Angus MacKay points out in his interesting paper, "Ritual, Violence, and Authority in Castile" (Paper, Bronowski Renaissance Symposium on The Art of Empire: Culture and Authority in the Spanish Empire, 1500-1650, University of California, San Diego, 1986). Pamphlet literature published by elite writers for literate audiences both in Spain and Mexico in the years 1808-1810 shared this preoccupation, to some degree, with the person and quasi-mystical properties of the Spanish monarch; Hugh M. Hamill, Jr., personal communication. On Cuauhtitlán, see AGN, Criminal, vol. 204, exp. 10, fs. 191r-205v, 1811; Criminal, vol. 194, exp. 1, fs. 1r-13r, 1811. On King Ferdinand and the miraculous intercession of the Virgin, AGN, Infidencias, vol. 22, exp. 10, fs. 179r-183v, 1810. The miraculous intercession of the Virgin, by the way, goes some way toward meeting the criterion of supernatural intervention seen to be essential in the definition of messianic/millennial expectation developed by Norman Cohn, "Medieval Millenarism: Its Bearing on the Comparative Study of Millenarian Movements," in Millennial Dreams in Action. Studies in Revolutionary Movements, Sylvia L. Thrupp, ed. (New York, 1970), 31-43.

11. On the Indians who sought to defraud some local officials, see AGN, Criminal, vol. 204, exp. 10, fs. 191r-205v, 1811. On Father Castelanos, see University of Texas at Austin, Benson Latin American Collection, Hernández y Dávalos Collection (hereafter UT-HD), 1.212, 1815. On Primo de Verdad, Andrés Lira González, personal communication; and Luis Villoro, El proceso ideológico de la revolución de independencia (Mexico City, 1967), who discusses the same incident, 35-60.

12. For a discussion of 'splitting,' a concept drawn from the object-relations school of psychoanalytic theory, see Van Young, "Millennium on the Northern Marches" and "Who
Was That Masked Man, Anyway?" Explorations of this concept, and allusions to it, in the object-relations literature are many. See, among others, Margaret S. Mahler, "Rapprochement Subphase of the Separation-Individuation Process," in Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 41 (1972), 487-506; O. Giovacchini, Treatment of Primitive Mental States (New York, 1979), 20-39; and especially Louise J. Kaplan, Oneness and Separateness. From Infant to Individual (New York, 1978), 42-48, 252-253.

13. AGN, Criminal, vol. 226, exp. 5, fs. 267r-361r, 1808. It is worth noting that Pablo Hilario, after spending a year in jail while his case was investigated and tried, was released and deprived of his civil rights for ten years; after 1810 the sentence would surely have been much more severe. For another similar incident, see AGN, Operaciones de Guerra, vol. 9, f. 91, 1817, relating to an occurrence in Tula in 1810. Virginia Guedea (personal communication) has pointed out that the expression 'gachupin' may have been applied only to European-born Spaniards living in Mexico, and not to the same people living in Spain, so that statements like Pablo Hilario's would embody a perfectly consistent contrast rather than an irony or self-contradiction. While this may be correct from a strictly semantic point of view, the 'splitting' hypothesis, if true, suggests a level of meaning beyond the semantic, in which all whites were in fact the object of hostility, whether Creole or European-born, and the application of the 'gachupin' epithet was a way of creating an artificial distinction amongst them, the reasons for which I have discussed elsewhere (Van Young, "Millennium on the Northern Marches"). For some instances of statements of Indian rebels, see AGN, Infidencias, vol. 5, exp. 8, Yurirapündaro, 1810; Infidencias, vol. 5, exp. 10, Huichapan, 1810; Infidencias, vol. 14, exp. 1, fs. 1r-92v, Sichú, 1811; AGN, Criminal, vol. 241, exp. 4, fs. 106r-115r, Tula, 1811.

14. Jacques Lafaye, Mesías, cruzadas, utopías. El judeo-cristianismo en las sociedades ibéricas (Mexico City, 1984), 87-88 and passim, and Quetzalcoatl and Guadalupe, 28. Lafaye, it seems to me, fails to make a sufficiently sharp distinction between messianic and charismatic leadership, which are not necessarily the same thing. Michael Adas has some perceptive comments to make on this confusion, even in the original formulation of Max Weber; see Adas's Prophets of Rebellion. Millenarian Protest Movements against the European Colonial Order (Chapel Hill, 1979), xx-xxi. For an interesting, but not entirely convincing, broadly psychohistorical interpretation of Hidalgo and the rebellion he led, which casts the struggle in oedipal terms, see Victor Turner, "Hidalgo: History as Social Drama," in Turner's Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors. Symbolic Action in Human Society (New York, 1974), 98-155. AGN, Criminal, vol. 240, fs. 355r-364r, 1810; Criminal, vol. 241, exp. 7, fs. 233r-243v, 1811; Criminal, vol. 57, exp. 6, fs. 101r-116r, 1810; Criminal, vol. 204, exps. 11-12, fs. 206r-262r, 1810; Criminal, vol. 13, exp. 6, 1810; Criminal, vol. 53, exps. 16-17, fs. 307r-320r, 1811; Criminal, vol. 163, exp. 18, fs. 307r-320r, 1811.

15. It should be stressed that the conjunctural circumstances which gave rise to popular protest and rebellion in this relatively short period -long-term changes in demographic and agrarian structures, market conditions, short-term conditions of dearth in the countryside, the political crisis in Napoleonic Europe and the attendant loss of legitimacy by the Spanish colonial regime, and so forth- are not dealt with here, but only the associated messianic expressions, the reasons for messianic object-choice, and the contrasts and points of contact between popular and elite ideology. For background on the material antecedents of the rebellion, see Eric Van Young, "Moving Toward Revolt: Agrarian Origins of the Hidalgo Revolt in the Guadalajara Region, 1810," in Riot, Rebellion, and Revolution. Rural Social Conflict in Mexico, Friedrich Katz, ed. (Princeton, 1988), 176-204, "The Age of Paradox: Mexican Agriculture at the End of the Colonial Period, 1750-1810," in The Economies of Mexico and Peru in the Late Colonial Period, 1760-1820, Nils Jacobson and Hans-Jürgen Puhle, eds. (Berlin, 1986), 64-90, "The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Skewed: Real Wages and Popular Living Standards in Late Colonial Mexico" (Paper, All-UC Group in Economic History, Semi-Annual Meeting, California Institute of Technology/Huntington Library, Los Angeles, 1987), "A manera de conclusión: el siglo paradójico," in Empresarios, indios y estado. Perfil de la economía mexicana (Siglo XVIII), Arij Ouweneel and Cristina Torales Pacheco, eds. (Amsterdam, 1988), 206-231; William B.


18. For the nature of Mesoamerican cosmology, see, for example, Miguel León Portilla, *Aztec Thought and Culture. A Study of the Ancient Nahua Mind* (Norman, 1963); Laurette Sejourné, *Burning Water. Thought and Religion in Ancient Mexico* (London, 1957); Jacques Soustelle, *La Pensée cosmologique des anciens Mexicains* (Paris, 1940); and Burr Cartwright Brundage, *The Fifth Sun. Aztec Gods, Aztec World* (Austin, 1979). For the notion of cyclical cosmology, messianic expectations and shamanism as part of the substrate of popular culture in both colonial and modern times, see Victoria Reifler Bricker, *The Indian Christ, the Indian King. The Historical Substrate of Maya Myth and Ritual* (Austin, 1981). Gruzincki suggests that the mythico-historical lineage of the 'hommes-dieux' in fact ended among the Nahuaux about 1430, a century before the Spanish conquest, because of the need for political stabilization in central Mexico, thus divorcing political power and divinity to a certain degree. Of the Aztec imperial leadership tlatoani of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries he writes: "Tournant les dos aux héros culturels, aux Quetzalcoatl, ils esquissent la figure de despote et evoluent vers des formes que l'on pourrait qualifier d'absolutistes; (...)" in *Hommes-dieux de Mexique*, 18–19.


20. BPE, Civil, caja 140, exp. 5, ser. 1518, 1791. For an interesting recent work on this understudied area, called the region of *Los Cañones*, see Agueda Jiménez Pelayo, "Historia rural en México colonial: el sur de Zacatecas, 1600–1820" (Ph.D. diss., University of New Mexico, 1985). The idea of naïve monarchism is borrowed from MacKay, "Ritual, Violen-
ce, and Authority," though it has been dealt with by other authors, as well; see, for example, George Rudé, Ideology and Popular Protest (New York, 1981).

21. For example, in analysing millenarian movements in Modern Brazil, René Ribeiro stresses the necessary background conditions of "Social isolation (...) and lack of real religious help"—in addition to extreme poverty—in making apocalyptic preaching appealing; see his "Brazilian Messianic Movements," in Millennial Dreams in Action, 59. Similarly, Roger Bastide, Les religions africaines de Brésil (Paris, 1960), 49ff., emphasizes that modern millennial movements have found their origins in "(...) frustration and backwardness through participation in a kind of 'archaic culture' which persists because of geographical and cultural isolation." For more on the view of the rural Indians by priests and officials, reflecting as it does a subtle mixture of aggression, fear, and racist ideas, see Van Young, "Millennium on the Northern Marches," 400-401; and for some consideration of the views of Mexican provincial priests in particular, Eric Van Young, "Conclusion," in Indian-Spanish Relations in Colonial Spanish America (Syracuse, 1988), 87-102. A survey of Indian schools in various provinces, indicating almost uniformly negative findings particularly with regard to Spanish language acquisition, is to be found in AGN, Historia, vol. 494, exp. 4, fs. 18r-105v, 1774, and another of a decade later in AGN, Historia, vol. 495, exps. 6, 7, 8, 10, 14, 15, and 19, 1784. All of these reports discuss similar problems of finance and Indian resistance to the schooling of children, though in some districts the outcome was better. To be fair, it should be noted that local priests sometimes opposed the establishment or continuance of secular schools, presumably for fear that their control over their parishioners would be diluted. The parish priest of Tecali (to the southeast of Puebla), for example, had always opposed the teaching of Spanish to the Indians in his parish, and likewise openly preached from the pulpit against the establishment of a village school, though he encouraged attendance at the doctrinal lessons in the church, which were given in Nahuatl; AGN, Historia, vol. 494, exp. 1, fs. 3r-6v, 1770. See also the case of Misguatlán (in the south of Oaxaca), where schools became a political football between the local priest and royal officials in the 1780s; AGN, Historia, vol. 495, exp. 20, fs. 293r-303r, 1784, and vol. 493, exp. 12, fs. 114r-136r, 1811. The last royal decree of the colonial period on education noted the frequent lack of compliance and generally indifferent results of earlier decrees; AGN, Historia, vol. 493, exp. 15, fs. 212r-218r, 1816.

22. BPE, Civil, caja 49, exp. 4, ser. 637, 1731. It is interesting to note that the pueblo of Mezcala, with other surrounding Indian villages, became a center of prolonged armed rebellion after 1810, and the center of an insurgent garrison on the island of the same name in Lake Chapala; see Alvaro Ochoa, Los insurgentes de Mezcala (Morelia, 1985).

23. Regarding Indian ignorance of Catholic ritual, the priest of Calimaya, just a few miles west of Mexico City, for example, asserted in 1792 that of his 5,000 backsliding parishioners, mostly Indian, not a hundred knew the simplest prayers; AGN, Clero Regular y Secular, vol. 131, exp. 1, fs. 1r-110r, 1792. For a number of cases of a similar nature, see AGN, Clero Regular y Secular, vol. 126, exp. 2, fs. 286r-294r, 1809 (Apaxtla); AGN, Clero Regular y Secular, vol. 5, exp. 8, fs. 418r-453v, 1801 (Zacualpan); AGN, Historia, vol. 500, exp. 3, fs. 168r-187r, 1797 (Celaya); AGN, Clero Regular y Secular, vol. 179, exp. 13, fs. 398r-428v, 1763 (Actopan); AGN, Clero Regular y Secular, vol. 188, exp. 7, fs. 115r-137r, 1790 (Tlacotalpan); AGN, Clero Regular y Secular, vol. 213, exp. 15, fs. 245r-256r, 1794 (a report on all the secularised missions of New Spain); AGN, Clero Regular y Secular, vol. 126, exp. 11, fs. 281r-285v, 1809 (Huasteca and Sierra Gorda in general); AGN, Bienes Nacionales, leg. 472, 1819 (Metztitlán); AGN, Bienes Nacionales, leg. 716, 1819 (an extensive report of a pastoral inspection of the sierra of Metztitlán and the Huasteca). On Pérez, see Grusinski, Hommes-dieux de Mexique, 114ff. Some years later, memories of Pérez, his cult, and his followers were still fresh in the area, and by the late 1770s there was even some suggestion that traces of the cult survived in and around Tepoztlán; see, AGN, Criminal, vol. 203, exp. 4, fs. 109r-268r, 1778. On similar cases, Van Young, "Millennium on the Northern Marches"; Archer, Ejército en el México borbónico; Rebellión del Indio Mariano; and the documents cited in note 2 above. See also the interesting remarks

24. The case of Huichichilapan in AGN, Bienes Nacionales, leg. 663, 1817. Roughly similar cases were uncovered in Xochimilco and Tecualoya around the same time, for which see AGN, Bienes Nacionales, leg. 976, exp. 39, 1813, and, leg. 663, 1818, respectively. For viceregal attempts to suppress popular religious celebrations, see David A. Brading, "Tridentine Catholicism and Enlightened Despotism in Bourbon Mexico," in Journal of Latin American Studies, 15 (1983), 1-22, and, "Images and Prophets"; Gruzinski, Hommes-dieux de Mexique, 161-167. See the series of reports and viceregal decrees regarding 'abusos' (excess spending by Indians and others, gambling, drinking, commercial activity, etc.) during Holy Week in Mexico City, Pátzcuaro, and Silao in the 1790s, in AGN, Historia, vol. 437, exps. 3, 5-11, 1791-1798; and the refusal of viceregal authorities to grant licenses (to Indians) for the establishment of popular chapels in the villages of Huayacocotla and Atotonilco el Alto, in AGN, Clero Regular y Secular, vol. 22, exp. 14, fs. 240r-246v, 1791, and vol. 22, exp. 13, fs. 225r-258v, 1794, respectively. On the relationship of violent outbreaks in 1810 and after to local religious celebrations, see, for example, the case of the riot and murders of several European-born Spaniards by the Indian villagers of Atlacomulco in November, 1810, in AGN, Criminal, vol. 229, fs. 263r-413v, 1810, and vol. 231, exp. 1, fs. 1r-59r, 1811; and also the riot during carnaval, 1806, by the villagers of Ameacama, in AGN, Criminal, vol. 71, exp. 6, fs. 167r-241v, 1806-1810. Brading, in his essay in this volume, makes the same point on the substratum of Indian ideology as expressed in this paragraph. It should be noted in passing that a possible relationship exists between the occurrence of messianic/millenarian beliefs or movements among Indian populations and earlier missionary activity by the Franciscans, who, in the New World, harbored in their thoughts and teachings a definite strain of millennial expectation harking back to Joachim of Fiore in the twelfth century. Certainly, the two Indian pseudo-messiahs of Tepic and Durango originated in regions strongly influenced by Franciscan evangelization. At the same time, such beliefs among the Indians occurred elsewhere in New Spain, in areas missionized by the Dominicans and Augustinians, as Gruzinski demonstrates in his Hommes-dieux de Mexique. Brading suggests the Franciscan influence may have been important in encouraging millenarian belief among the Yucatec Maya, but leaves the question open for lack of data; see "Images and Prophets," p. 194. On early evangelization activity in New Spain, see Robert Ricard, The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico. An Essay on the Apostolate and the Evangelising Methods of the Mendicant Orders in New Spain, 1523-1572, translated by Lesley Byrd Simpson (Berkeley, 1966), especially the map on pp. 62-63. For millenarian thought among the Franciscans, see Lafayette, Quetzalcoatl and Guadalupe, 28-34, and passim; and John L. Phelan, The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World (2nd rev. ed., Berkeley, 1970).


26. Specifically on the literacy question, see the interesting research on Russia of the ancien régime by Jeffrey Brooks, When Russia Learned to Read. Literacy and Popular Literature, 1861-1917 (Princeton, 1985). Brooks cites a literacy rate among the rural population of 6 percent in the 1860s (p. 4), and it is difficult to imagine that literacy in Mexico a half-century earlier could have been more widespread.

27. For this basic view, which I have admittedly somewhat over-simplified here, see Theda Skocpol, States and Social Revolutions (Cambridge, 1979).


30. AGN, Criminal, vol. 157, exp. 3, fs. 93r-155v, 1799. Also on the relationship of church bell ringing to communal identity and solidarity, see the case of the village of Zapotlán el Grande, in the Lake Chapala area, in BPE, Civil, caja 143, exp. 5, ser. 1564, 1797.


33. Such an interpretation is supported by the work of James Scott, Weapons of the Weak, Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance (Princeton, 1985).

34. This process, which John Tutino refers to as 'agrarian compression', is traced in his book From Insurrection to Revolution in Mexico.


37. Knight, Mexican Revolution, I, 559, note 386.