

A LITERARY VISION OF HISTORY: Marxism and Positivism in *Terra nostra* by Fuentes

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Carlos Fuentes's preoccupation with history is best expressed in *Terra nostra* (1975). This novel constitutes a rewriting of Western history from the Roman Empire to the end of the twentieth century for the purpose of tracing the historical and ideological bases of contemporary Latin America. In this work, Fuentes proposes to identify the origin of Latin American structures within the historical and ideological configuration of Hapsburg Spain. To this end, his novel portrays an all-encompassing vision of the conquest and the founding of the New World that situates the reader at the crossroads of Hispanic history. Such a goal simultaneously requires an interpretation of the sociopolitical and conceptual history of the West and an evaluation of the premises that gave rise to the Modern Age.

Fuentes delineates two radically opposed interpretations of the significance of capitalism in the last two centuries: Marxism and positivism. Both approaches offer a philosophy of history that is based on the economic development of the bourgeoisie and its assumptions, but they present distinct evaluations of history and of modern Western societies. The Marxist perspective as employed by Fuentes in *Terra nostra* effectively criticizes the society and the policies that positivism has promoted in the West.

The Marxist conceptualization of history generally guides the organization of *Terra nostra*. By means of fictitious chronicles and manuscripts, Fuentes transcends the limits of the period of the conquest and founding of America in order to incorporate Western history from the Roman Empire on through the era of positivist Mexico. As Fuentes portrays it, the history of mankind follows an essentially economic development. His narrative structure is derived from the Marxist thesis of the sociopolitical evolution as represented by four forms of society: primitive communist, slave, feudal, and capitalist.¹

Of these stages, primitive communism is the only one that is not represented in a formal institutional sense within *Terra nostra*. Rather, it is perceived only by means of references to a primordial golden age or a possible future utopia. Fuentes situates it either within the sphere of

desire—lost or never attained—or within memory, as a nostalgia for a paradise on the threshold of creation. The character Pedro, one of the rebels who crosses the ocean in search of another world that is free, reflects this nostalgia for a pristine golden age in terms associated with primitive communism: “Pedro . . . imaginaba un mundo sin ricos ni pobres, sin poderes arbitrarios sobre la gente y sobre las cosas . . . una comunidad en la que cada cual sería libre para pedir y recibir lo que necesitase de los demás, sin otra obligación que la de dar a cada uno lo que a él le pidiese. Cada hombre sería libre de hacer lo que más le gustase, puesto que todas las ocupaciones serían, a la vez, naturales y útiles.”²

The concept of utopian and communist society reechoes within the vision of the New World revealed in *Terra nostra*. Fuentes recognizes that the recently discovered lands were considered by Europeans of the sixteenth century to be the seat of a possible, if not an already existing, utopia.³ The New World “fue la invención de los poetas, la charada de los geógrafos, la habladuría de los aventureros, la codicia de las empresas y en suma, un inexplicable apetito y un impulso por trascender los límites.”⁴ Julián, friar and prototype of the missionary in the New World, expresses the desire for social reform that is only feasible within a primitive communist society: “Quiero conocer . . . una comunidad mínima de pueblos que vivan con arreglo a la naturaleza, que no tengan propiedad alguna, sino que todas las cosas les sean comunes: mundo nuevo . . . porque es o será como fue aquel de la edad primera de oro” (p. 661). It is as if there existed a memory of another age in which the values of primitive communism were achieved. The values associated with this chimerical vision inspire the spiritual and revolutionary spirit that informs *Terra nostra*.

Fuentes does not detail the causes of the dissolution of that primordial communist era because it is only treated in retrospect in *Terra nostra*. The plot of the work instead takes note of the cultural, political, economic, and social consequences of the disintegration of that community founded upon equality. Fuentes’s investigation into the deviation from the egalitarian principles leads him to consider the subsequent forms of society to which this disintegration gave way: slave, feudal, and capitalist. The systems organized around slavery and feudalism find representation respectively in *Terra nostra* in the Roman Empire and the medieval world of Spain. Both civilizations share a similar view of the world, but the basis of their economy differs greatly.

In a fictitious chronicle that is intercalated in the novel, the “Manuscrito de un estoico,” Fuentes characterizes the Roman Empire as representing the stage of slavery. It is clear in the narrative that Tiberio the Caesar imagines himself to be the exclusive proprietor of the Roman territory, which comprised the known civilized world. For Caesar, the

empire does not exist as an entity separate from his own personal existence: “no debe haber nada sino la dispersión después de Roma que es Tiberio y de Tiberio que es Roma” (p. 688).

One of the differences between the slavery prevailing during the Roman Empire and the feudalism characterizing the Austrian monarchy in Spain lies in the absolute control that Tiberio has over all Roman property, including his subjects. According to Caesar, Felipe (an amalgam of the Austrian kings of Spain in *Terra nostra*) subscribes to a contrasting belief that the Christian king must coordinate and protect the citizens of the state. His mother, la Dama Loca, expresses succinctly the inherent paternalism of the monarchic system: “un monarca es un buen pastor, un presidente es un mercenario; una república es una madrastra” (p. 731). In short, Felipe is the ruling power who carries out divine destiny in the human sphere. Tiberio, on the contrary, does not represent God’s will on earth but is himself one of the Roman deities.

The transition from a primitive communist society to one of slavery correlates with the advent of the concept of property.⁵ Property comes to determine a rigid class system—from emperors to slaves. By examining the creation and expansion of the principle of ownership and the alterations in the modes of production, *Terra nostra* underscores the transformation of society into feudalism and eventually into capitalism. Under the feudal system, the economic ties among members of the state expanded and became complicated by relationships of power. Ownership of the land and the concomitant power included not only the king, but also the nobility in the form of a landed gentry. Especially in Spain during the reconquest, the nobles not only directed and organized the repopulation of the newly won territory but also controlled the cultivation carried out by serfs bound to the fiefs. Feudal economy was thus founded upon the acquisition and administration of the land.

Guzmán, Felipe’s right-hand man in the novel, illustrates the way in which this medieval system functioned in Spain. His family owned tracts of land on the frontier between Christian and Moorish Spain: “Mis padres y mis abuelos, Señor, cumplieron ante los tuyos la ceremonia de homenaje y así concluyeron un pacto: nuestro servicio a cambio de vuestra protección. De esta manera, manteníamos todos el principio fundamental de nuestra sociedad: ningún señor sin tierra y ninguna tierra sin señor . . . nuestro servicio de nobles vasallos otorgado a cambio de tu protección aseguraría que los nobles siempre seríamos nobles y los villanos siempre villanos” (p. 147).

With the rise of an urban and mercantile class and the centralization of power in the monarchy, the basis of a feudal economy was displaced by a monetary system that no longer depended exclusively upon the possession of land. Guzmán feels himself to be “incapaz de comprender o detener un movimiento invisible en el que la sólida tierra, base

de todo poder, se convertiría en inasible dinero." This situation resulted from the displacement of economic power to new classes, "los usureros, los comerciantes y los cagatintas de las ciudades leprosas" (p. 147).

The serfs abandoned the vast rural properties on the frontier and hastened to the urban nuclei. In this manner, Guzmán and his family lost their economic base. The destitute noble blames the servants who fled the fiefs: "soy hijo de aquel señor empobrecido de los reinos taifas que no tuvo dineros para retenerles cuando tú y los tuyos abandonaron nuestras tierras a la maleza y la sequía, nos condenaron a la miseria dejándonos sin brazos de labriego" (p. 644.)

In this exposition on the Spanish feudal system and its economic demise, Fuentes adheres to the Marxist dialectics of historical evolution. According to Marx, societies are divided into two categories—the base and the superstructure—whose interrelationships and conflicts promote and determine social evolution.⁶ The migration of laborers to the commercial centers constituted a radical change within the economic base of the Middle Ages. The subsequent metamorphosis from an agricultural and aristocratic economy to a mercantile economy reverberated in the superstructure, the culture and organization of Hapsburg Spain and, therefore, in the formation of the New World colonies. On the one hand, it also contributed to the aggrandizement of the bourgeoisie and to the resulting decadence of the power of the landed nobility. On the other hand, it prepared the environment of democracy and change in which the Comunero rebellions (1520–21) were to occur.

In *Terra nostra*, Fuentes indicates another factor in the new base that launched capitalism. The barter system was abandoned in favor of the creation of money, the foundation of wealth and value in capitalism. The inhabitants of the towns in the novel begin to work for their own benefit instead of fulfilling obligations to another. Guzmán announces the hegemony of "una divinidad mayor" that supersedes the divine right of kings—money. "El mundo afuera de los alcázares ha cambiado . . . [los ciudadanos] reciben dinero, utilizan mediadores; se especializan; hay nuevos poderes levantados, no sobre la sangre, sino sobre el comercio de la sal, el cuero, el vino, el trigo, la carne" (p. 319).

In the novel, Fuentes asserts that the Spanish capitalist economy of the Hapsburgs was supported by the imperialist endeavors of Spain in the New World. The discovery of the Americas offered distinct modes of production, making possible changes in the Spanish base of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. Nevertheless, the hierarchy that was established in the colonies perpetuated that of the feudal world of the Spanish reconquest: "la convicción ganaron de que el español gobierna mientras el árabe o el judío trabajan, pues trabajo de manos no es propio de castellanos, sino la riqueza adquirida por exacción y tributo militares" (p. 232). Because the Spanish colonists were

opposed to the dissolution of the medieval rights of the feudal lords, they held to an antiquated code of the nobility: “el nuevo mundo se ha poblado de españoles enervados por el inesperado lujo, el clima, el mestizaje, las tentaciones de una justicia impune” (p. 743).

Similarly, the Hapsburg monarchy is accused of having lacked foresight. Instead of promoting domestic industry in the Peninsula, the House of Austria exiled a vast sector of the new bourgeoisie, the Jews, and depended upon the limitless wealth of the colonies to obtain consumer goods produced in the other developing nations of Europe. The government converted the imported treasure of the New World into gold, a representative and capitalist form, while the new mercantile classes exiled from Spain utilized the funds that filtered through Spain to effect the development and industrialization of their principal houses in Flanders, England, Jutland, and the Germanic principalities. In this way, Fuentes argues, Spain fell into bankruptcy after the colonization of the Americas.

From the Marxist perspective, the adoption of gold as the basis of commercial value identified the future and the institutionalization of an ironic mode of existence. This capitalist system founded on a metal, like a fetish, concealed and dissembled its origin in the de facto slavery of the indigenous population in the Americas.⁷ Only thus can be explained the scene of the ironic transformation of gold into excrement that occurs in *Terra nostra* (p. 716). Fuentes combines the metaphor of excrement, human waste, with the mining industry in which the Indians exploit the figurative entrails of the earth, the primordial goddess: “El oro . . . es el excremento de los dioses” (p. 717). In criticizing the monetary system of the Modern Age, Fuentes expresses his doubts about the success of the principles of the capitalist societies and their ideological corollaries.

In *Terra nostra* the use of Marxism necessarily inspires a criticism of twentieth-century thought that unmasks political, social, and religious institutions in order to reveal the true functions and supports of those structures:

Marx pide primero la crítica de los cielos. Eso muy claramente: hay que empezar por hacer la crítica de los cielos. Entonces, hay que penetrar en esas realidades espirituales, míticas, religiosas, para hacer su crítica. Ellas son parte del fenómeno también. . . . Es un crítico de lo metafísico, un crítico de la religión, un crítico del mito. Es un crítico de las realidades espirituales del hombre, realidades que no niega, además, sino que quiere regresar a ellas, a través de una crítica de las falsas apariencias, de las falsas relaciones sociales, de las relaciones sociales de opresión.⁸

In defining the four stages of society according to Marx, *Terra nostra* emphasizes the progressive disintegration of a primordial mode of existence. Fuentes understands history as a transition between two poles—the metaphorical and the metonymic.⁹ As literary tropes, metaphor

and metonymy comprise two distinct approaches toward meaning. Metaphor is essentially representational. It asserts that a similarity exists between two objects in the face of manifest differences between them. It is based upon selection, substitution, and identification. In contrast, metonymy is reductionalist and operates according to other means—contiguity, combination, and contexture. In metonymy, two objects are compared, but they are explicitly conceived to bear a whole-part or a cause-effect relationship to each other. Fuentes considers the metaphoric mode to predominate within the primordial communist society because of its principles of equality and harmony. Each member of this community is integrated into a totality—nature. This sympathy and reciprocity among the members of the community and between mankind and nature is at the root of Fuentes's view of the Golden Age.

The creation of economic and sociopolitical structures in successive stages of evolutionary history destroyed the egalitarianism of a primitive society and alienated man from himself and from nature by fomenting a hierarchical or metonymic class structure. Man becomes identified not by similarity to other men but by contiguity and function. With the dissolution of a sense of identity and equality among all humans (a consequence of the division of labor and the designation of social classes), the metonymic mode, which is synonymous with alienation, comes to characterize the subsequent historical stages.¹⁰

The story of Celestina the shepherdess in *Terra nostra* alludes to the existence of both identity and rupture (alienation), that is to say, to the metaphorical and the metonymic as two extremes of life. On one level, Celestina recounts her childhood in the forest. The account then acquires the qualities of a fairy tale and the reader is transported to an imaginary primeval time and space. The child lives in the forest, where she is protected from the ferocity reigning in the social world beyond her limited scope in the kingdom of Felipe el Hermoso and in the cities: "Nuestra vida era muy simple. Habitábamos una sencilla choza. Yo pasaba casi todo el año dedicada al pastoreo. Recuerdo muy bien los tiempos de mis años jóvenes. Todo tenía un sentido y un lugar" (p. 138).

On another level, the tale of the shepherdess also describes the towns in the realm of Felipe el Hermoso as the embodiment of the metonymic mode. Urbanization foments critical and antagonistic divisions among the classes: among the Christians of long standing and the converts, businessmen of every range, the destitute aristocracy, the expanding clergy, and the displaced poor. Celestina points out the possible evils of any state and social organization, especially within feudalism and capitalism. Some of these evils are nothing more than the result of the immediate concentration of the new economic base of Spain toward the end of the Middle Ages: "el mundo era la peste, la pobreza, la temprana muerte, la guerra . . . la esclavitud y el hambre" (p. 138).

The Marxist analysis in *Terra nostra* emphasizes a continual process of sociopolitical and spiritual fragmentation throughout the history of Western nations. Fuentes uses Marxism to criticize the social organization of history as well as to indict the philosophy that best exemplifies the canons of capitalism—the philosophy of positivism. In *Terra nostra*, positivism and capitalism coincide and are mutually supportive. Positivist thought becomes the justification as well as the expression of the bourgeois order of the Modern Age. This philosophy issued from the eighteenth century, influencing and shaping not only such Western governments as the United States, France, and England, but also determining a large part of Mexican and Latin American history. Positivist precepts remain vital in Western countries, where they mold the conceptual foundation of modern culture. As Fuentes states in another context, “The United States rode the great wave of the Enlightenment. It became the success story of the philosophies of the 18th century. They became a success here. But now these philosophies, these ideologies, I think, have become present, they have come to an end. It is not that the promises of the Enlightenment were not realized. They were realized. They are here. They have been accomplished. And we don’t like them.”¹¹ *Terra nostra* not only illuminates the effects of positivism in Mexican history and in its commercial development to the present but goes on to expose that system, to declare it bankrupt, and to censure it bitterly.

Fuentes affirms that positivism demonstrates the apogee of the metonymic mode because the transfer of this ideology to Mexico undermined the true, independent destiny of that Latin American country. This alien and superimposed philosophy subordinated Mexican history and culture to the history of Europe and the United States:

La independencia se propuso recuperar el tiempo perdido, digerir en unos cuantos años la experiencia europea a partir del Renacimiento, asemejarnos cuanto antes a los modelos deslumbrantes del progreso: Francia, Inglaterra, los Estados Unidos. Pero—y éste es un inmenso pero—esta opción nos condujo a una nueva esquizofrenia. . . . El pragmatismo del mundo capitalista había triunfado sobre el utopismo del mundo renacentista; nosotros, al independizarnos de España, pretendimos disfrazar el progreso de utopía, crear la polis comunitaria, ideal, con cuanto la negaba.¹²

Fuentes explains thus the tragic vacillation between two extremes that manifest the schizophrenia of Mexican history: on the one hand, Juárez, Zapata, and Lázaro Cárdenas; on the other, Santa Anna, the Hapsburgs, and Porfirio Díaz. In the novel, the first three plead for political and cultural independence by searching for original forms that can sustain the separate existence of Mexico (p. 768). In contrast, the approaches of Santa Anna and Porfirio Díaz and the brief reign of the Austrian Maximilian all exhibit the tendency to identify Mexico with inappropriate models existing in the Old World (pp. 741, 767). Positivism

exemplifies the most recent and harmful of the ideological adaptations to which the Latin American people have been submitted.

In "La restauración," another intercalated fictitious manuscript in *Terra nostra*, Fuentes criticizes the positivist interpretation of Mexican history. The novel provides a summary of the Mexican past consistent with the three stages of the positivist view defined by August Comte as the theological, the metaphysical, and the positive or scientific.¹³ But Fuentes denies the progress that positivism claims to find among these stages; he instead underscores the culmination of each stage in the repetitive violence of a subjugated people, thus emphasizing the failure and tragedy of history rather than its progressive evolution.

In Fuentes's abbreviated account of Mexican history, the conquest delivers the Indian population to a European destiny and to "los dioses enmascarados, a caballo, con fuego entre las uñas y ceniza entre los dientes" who inaugurate the theological stage of New Spain (p. 736). During this era, the clergy and military dominate the society and the politics. Fuentes describes the situation as a "nueva tiranía en nombre de Cristo . . . pueblo herrado como las bestias, esclavo de la encomienda." This stage continues even during the first years of independence, with the founding of a "república de criollos rapaces, caudillos codiciosos, clérigos cebados, tricornios emplumados" (p. 736).

Fuentes's synopsis of Mexican history continues on to Comte's second stage, the metaphysical, whose function is to eradicate the former theological stage. The metaphysical age was comprised of the liberal insurrections and triumph of the Reform party in Mexico. Fuentes refers to this period as the transitory success of freedom under the reforms achieved by Juárez: "un indio oscuro, tenaz, temible porque es el dueño de todos los sueños y pesadillas de un pueblo" (p. 736). The Mexican people, besieged by European and U.S. imperialism, embarked upon the liberal reform of their politics and demanded self-determination. Nevertheless, the victory of Juárez and his supporters turned out to be deceptive.

Positivism, which was gradually leaving its mark upon Latin America near the end of the nineteenth century, held that the metaphysical stage and its accompanying philosophic liberalism constituted a critical, destructive, and necessarily transitory period. But as can be deduced from the image of this period in *Terra nostra*, Fuentes tends to confirm the value of these liberal insurrections and reforms as one of those historic moments when the authentic destiny and identity of Mexico are glimpsed. The symbols of authenticity for Fuentes are Benito Juárez and the liberal constitution. Positivism is characterized as demanding the repeal of the ideals of reform in order to assure the bourgeois order of the positive or scientific age: "el pueblo victorioso otra vez vencido, caídas todas las banderas, regresa el soldado descalzo al latifundio, el gue-

rrillero herido al trapiche, el indio fugitivo al despojo y al exterminio: los opresores de adentro ocupan el lugar de los opresores de afuera" (p. 737). After the struggles of the liberals, the bourgeoisie reassert even more strongly their "rights" to industrial and agricultural holdings.¹⁴

In *Terra nostra*, Porfirio Díaz represents the third phase, the positive, culminating stage according to Comte's interpretation of history. Fuentes, however, portrays his regime as a new slavery imposed upon Latin American civilization. The prototypical dictatorship of Díaz constitutes a false imitation of European culture, according to Fuentes. The privileged few of Porfirio Díaz's court lead a life of luxury, confident that their scientific knowledge has legitimized their power over an ignorant and backward people: "penacho, entorchado y vals, el eterno dictador sentado en trono de pólvora frente a un telón de teatro: el déspota ilustrado y su corte de ancianos científicos y ricos hacendados y empleados generales" (p. 737). At this point, the metonymic schism between the middle class and the other sectors of Mexican society becomes acute.

As Leopoldo Zea has shown, positivism in Mexico came to be the express doctrine of the bourgeoisie.¹⁵ Under the influence of Darwin's biological evolutionism, the positivists believed they had found in science an empirical paradigm that justified their privileges. Their party, the so-called Científicos "trató de demostrar positivamente el origen científico de sus privilegios."¹⁶ The party slogan is also significant: "Orden y Ciencia."

That slogan recapitulates the goals and the ideological basis of positivism. Fuentes deduces that capitalism is the foundation of modern Western society and that positivism in turn constitutes the philosophic development of that society's corollaries. *Terra nostra* thus examines the axioms that gave rise to a positivist interpretation of mankind and of human societies. He finds them in the beginnings of capitalism and in the culmination of the scientific, rationalist mind of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Unlike the Marxist condemnation of capitalism, positivism implies optimism toward the modern, industrial, capitalist age, an optimism that Fuentes considers not only false but destructive. *Terra nostra* attributes this faith in progress to the scientific methodology. Toribio, in the novel, illustrates the growing optimism of the scientific rationalists since the Renaissance: "el hombre podría fabricar los cielos, si sólo pudiese obtener los instrumentos y los materiales divinos" (p. 506).

Terra nostra asserts that the hegemony of scientific thought began during the Renaissance. Rationalism became the touchstone of Europe, and science replaced the chiliastic belief in the millenium. Serving as an example of this view, the Comendador de Calatrava voices the creed of the new bourgeoisie in which reason and mercantilism reinforce each other: "Razón llamo a mi deidad, sentidos despiertos, rechazo del mis-

terio, exilio de cuanto no quepa en el seguro arcón del sentido común donde lógica y ducados acumulo, conllevados en felices y provechosas nupcias" (p. 348). The same means and objectives characterize the beliefs of the Mexican positivists: "El hombre moderno o burgués puso en la ciencia la fe que tenía en la religión."¹⁷

The scientific obsession of Toribio and the mercantile rationalism of the Comendador de Calatrava become part of a system as truncated as any other uncompromising vision of existence. For the court astrologer in *Terra nostra*, the whole universe in its complexity is reduced to one law—that of cause and effect: "nada puede ser cambiado de lugar sin desordenar mortalmente a cada parte y al universo mismo" (pp. 306–7). Within the scientific thought of Toribio, there is no mystery but only the unknown, and there is no such concept as chance.¹⁸ But when Toribio tries to prove one of the laws of gravity, chance ironically makes it impossible. He drops two stones of different sizes from the tower of the Escorial, expecting them to fall at the same velocity; however, he never hears the stones strike the ground because the Peregrino intercedes and catches them fortuitously in his open hands (pp. 306–7, 315). Toribio's scientific knowledge turns out to be artificial and limited because it eliminates all unforeseen human acts. Fuentes thus scoffs at the scientific egotism of the positivists through the humorous caricature of Toribio.

To counter such egotism, Fuentes proposes the critique of reality that Erasmus of Rotterdam set forth. Fuentes believes that Erasmus's teachings would have modified the historical experience of Latin America by containing the unbridled rationalist enthusiasm of the positivists. Polo Febo, the character who opens and closes *Terra nostra*, recognizes the value of Erasmus for Spain and Spanish America. Erasmian thought "relativiza los pretendidos absolutos del mundo anterior y del mundo inmediato: al Medievo, le arrebató Erasmo la certeza de las verdades inmutables y de los dogmas impuestos; a la modernidad, le reduce a proporción irónica el absoluto de la razón y el imperio del yo" (p. 774). But the Spanish counterreformation succeeded in suppressing the development of an Erasmian perspective. What was lost to Spain, and consequently to Spanish America, was the indispensable root of the Erasmian philosophy—critical examination and the rejection of any absolute, unquestionable premise.

Fuentes further criticizes the scientific suppositions of positivism in an anecdote about Ludovico's utopian dream (p. 129). Felipe's analysis of this dream forewarns of some of the inherent problems of the scientific and political optimism of positivism, especially regarding its development in Western society. The dream points to the unbridled expansion of industry toward the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries: "los burgueses, que ven en tu invento una necesaria reconciliación de la fe y la utilidad, se imponen a la vigilancia clerical y

pronto se instala una provechosa fábrica cerca de la ciudad. . . . poco importa que los vapores de tu invento manchen el firmamento con una niebla amarilla y las cañadas con una pantanosa resina" (p. 129). As in the anecdote, it is the bourgeoisie who determine the politics in Mexican positivism with the object of assuring their economic prosperity: "Ahora es la época positiva, materialista, en la cual el mejor instrumento es el dinero."¹⁹

But the greatest dangers are not air pollution or the sordidness of congested urban life, evils imposed by positivism and capitalism, but the impact of the idea of progress on the mentality of modern man: "tú has establecido la norma objetiva de la verdad" (p. 130). The only criterion that the positivists accept in an explanation of reality is that of empirical demonstration. When encountering someone who does not appreciate such improvements, the positivist accuses the rebel of either ignorance or heresy. The adherence to an exclusively rationalist, empirical view of reality tends to freeze learning by rejecting the existence of another source of knowledge.

Celestina falls victim to the intransigence of this scientific rationalism: "—Tú sabes lo que sabes; yo sé lo que tú nunca sabrás" (p. 130). According to Fuentes, the positivistic world exiles and despises any cultural contribution that lesser developed, and therefore "eccentric," societies might offer, which is the attitude of the United States toward Third World cultures.²⁰ In the interpretation of Ludovico's dream, Celestina, who is outside the realm of scientific progress, is condemned to be burned. The positivist society that Ludovico proposes alienates all that is different or contradictory.

In this way, Fuentes points out a defect of positivism that simultaneously demonstrates the metonymic mode. The scientist or the positivist sacrifices the integrity of knowledge by trusting only in empiricism. Moreover, knowledge cannot be limited to serving the ends of power. The vision of the free community of mankind is therefore indispensable in order to perceive the authentic unity of knowledge: "Una vida no basta. Se necesitan múltiples existencias para integrar una personalidad" (p. 619).

The Mexican positivists "habían hecho de la ciencia una exclusiva para su propio beneficio. No estaban dispuestos a entregar sus secretos a quienes más tarde podían disputarles los pingües beneficios que recibían."²¹ To this charge are added contempt for the lower classes and the intensification of social segregation of the bourgeoisie from the other sectors of the population. According to this view, the individual deserves the circumstances in which he finds himself, which implies that the wealthy have attained their economic and social superiority through their own work. The positivists despised even those cultural characteristics that were associated with the Latin race, "considerándolo como una

desgracia racial." Among these characteristics were a belief in utopia, idealism, imagination, and faith.²² The Mexican positivists strove instead to mimic European and U.S. standards. In keeping with this goal, the Mexican bourgeoisie identified themselves by disassociating themselves from their Hispanic past and culture.

As has been shown, in *Terra nostra* Fuentes follows the premises of Marx in characterizing the configuration of four forms of society: primitive communist, slave, feudal, and capitalist. While analyzing the precepts of positivism, his Marxist interpretation sets forth the consequences of the metonymic mode and finds in them the inevitable apocalyptic demise of the capitalist world. In depicting the dissolution of this last stage, Fuentes succeeds in making a commentary also upon Mexican positivism and the bourgeois rule of the twentieth century. *Terra nostra* foresees the end of the consumer society: "todo lo que había significado progreso cien años antes, ahora dejaba de funcionar con eficacia y prontitud. Ni la clorina purificaba las aguas, ni el correo llegaba a tiempo. Y los microbios habían impuesto su reino triunfal sobre las vacunas: indefensos humanos, gusanos inmunes" (p. 17).

What has failed is the scientific ideology of progress because this view supports and justifies the licentious waste of the twentieth century. The squandering of the environment and of capitalist consumer goods form an integral part of the mercantile system that the bourgeoisie have instituted and that positivist policies defend. The image that Fuentes creates to represent middle-class decadence is the garbage dump of the cosmopolitan life style: "los cinco mil millones de habitantes de un planeta exhausto. . . . Montañas de papel, vidrio, caucho, plástico, carne podrida, flores marchitas . . . Los Angeles, Tokio, Londres, Hamburgo, Teherán, Nueva York, Zurich: museos de la basura" (p. 771). This metaphor of the human garbage heap underscores the lack of any transcendental basis in the system of values underlying the consumer society. These consumer products inherently lack permanent worth, and therefore, the culture of such societies is cemented in the transitory and that which is destined to fail.²³

Fuentes points to the growing worldwide disillusionment with the myths of progress, not only because their negative ramifications have become apparent, but because the basic premises of the Modern Age are perceived to be gradually crumbling away. Fuentes makes vivid this perception: "El desenmascaramiento de las justificaciones ideológicas que, a partir de Locke, Rousseau y Adam Smith, constituían la base de la eficacia pragmática y de la buena conciencia moral de Occidente. El genocidio y el fracaso militar en Vietnam y las revelaciones de los documentos del Pentágono sobre el *modus operandi* del poder han desnudado para siempre a la filosofía ético-positivista del industrialismo capitalista."²⁴

Terra nostra incorporates the same spirit of criticism that insists on

reclaiming Hispanic America's authenticity. Fuentes calls for the restoration of the principles of community that flourished during primitive communism in the metaphorical age. The novelist examines the capitalist system from within in order to reveal and condemn the loss of authenticity and harmony that gave rise to societies founded on a false value system, which produced the metonymic mode. At the same time, Fuentes projects through the dream of utopia and erotic love a vision of the integrity that mankind can achieve.

Utopia and the Golden Age embody the desire for integrity in *Terra nostra*. Both concepts represent the metaphoric mode in which man lives in harmony with himself, his fellow man, and nature. Within this organization, the value of a product is intimately related to its usefulness for the laborer, to the material involved in its manufacture, and to the effort that makes it possible; man's identity issues from his sense of belonging to the brotherhood of man. In *Terra nostra*, the recovery of fundamental authenticity, harmony, and autonomy imposes itself as an imperative necessity. For this reason, androgyny, a symbol central to Fuentes's theme, reiterates the metaphorical, simultaneous, and holistic state that the fragmented experience of society makes an unattainable ideal.

Mircea Eliade's study of religious myths defines the androgyne as a ritual model that symbolizes the union of the magico-religious powers belonging to both sexes. Like the magic of the Golden Age, the myth of the androgyne represents a time before history, "a nostalgia for a paradoxical state in which the contraries exist side by side without conflict and the multiplications form aspects of the mysterious Unity."²⁵ Fuentes utilizes several mythic-religious beliefs from diverse cultures to show the universality of the androgyne. Julián, the friar and court artist in the novel, makes use of the androgyne in order to represent "el paraíso original, cuando el maléfico Dios separó al hombre de la mujer, que antes eran uno solo, imagen del buen Dios, de la suprema divinidad andrógina" (p. 631). Fuentes also assimilates the gnostic texts that attributed the existence of sin to the division of the original hermaphrodite (androgyne) into the sexes and that prophesied the end of time and the reunification of man with the cosmos.²⁶ According to the novel, men, who were jealous of the powers of women, "mutilaron y enmendaron los antiguos textos que reconocían el carácter andrógino de la primera Divinidad . . . que unía ambos sexos" and "expulsaron a la mujer del Paraíso," making her responsible for the fall (pp. 531–32). Fuentes finds similar ideas within Jewish mysticism: "Pero antes de venir al mundo cada alma se compone de una mujer y un hombre reunidos en un solo ser" (p. 527). The concept of the androgyne is best understood, however, within the context of Nahuatl mythology and philosophy. As Alfonso Caso explains, Ometeotl represents "un solo principio dual, masculino y feme-

nino, que había engendrado a los dioses, al mundo y a los hombres."²⁷ The androgyne in *Terra nostra* unifies the diverse threads of the narrative, exemplifying the presence of a universal desire to transcend the human condition. The myth of the androgyne implies the *coincidentia oppositorum*, the ultimate reality, the reunion of opposites, the totalization of fragments, and reveals man's deep dissatisfaction with his actual situation. Man once felt mystically at one with the cosmos but now feels torn and separate.

The second part of *Terra nostra*, "El nuevo mundo," best illustrates the use of the androgyne in the novel. The Peregrino and the Señora de las Mariposas constitute the symbol of Ometeotl after the cosmic schism that separated the unity into a duality of male and female. In the New World, the Peregrino learns that his destiny is to strive to recover the primordial unity—the reintegration of male and female, appearance and substance, the transitory and the permanent: "Nos confundiremos con nuestro contrario, la madre, la mujer, la tierra, que también es una sola y sólo espera que nosotros volvamos a ser uno para volver a recibirnos entre sus brazos. Entonces habrá paz y felicidad, pues ni ella nos dominará ni nosotros la dominaremos. Seremos amantes" (pp. 395–96). The brief encounter between the goddess and the Peregrino foreshadows the denouement of the novel: "yo desaparecía dentro de la carne de la mujer y ella desaparecía dentro de la mía y éramos uno solo . . . soñado bien y mal presente, libertad encarcelada" (p. 413). The desired union is only temporary, however, because both lovers are existing on separate temporal planes. The Señora de las Mariposas, now an ancient goddess, tells the youth to search for her again "dentro de cien años, doscientos, mil, el tiempo que tardemos en ser otra vez, al mismo tiempo, jóvenes tú y yo, al mismo tiempo, al mismo instante" (p. 472).

In the last chapter of *Terra nostra*, the Peregrino (Polo Febo) and the Señora de las Mariposas (Celestina) find each other again. This time the lovers achieve their goal: "hay un solo cuerpo, lo miras, te miras . . . te amas, te fecundo, me fecundas, me fecundo a mí mismo, misma, tendremos un hijo" (p. 782). In a biblical style, Fuentes describes the androgyne, the hermaphrodite, who closes and initiates a cycle in which man's sense of separation, alienation, "sin," or metonymy has been transcended in order to recover the metaphorical mode. In this new metaphorical age, the progeny of the hermaphrodite live in a blessed land: "con la sonrisa en el rostro comerás el pan, hasta que vuelvas a la tierra, pues de ella has sido tomado, ya que polvo eras, y al polvo volverás, sin pecado, con placer" (p. 783). In this way, Fuentes arrives at the destruction of history that "is far beyond the classless society envisioned by Marx. Fuentes's is a biological radicalism, quite in tune with modern feminism of the far left. Only with androgyny, he says, is the ultimate

dichotomy—that of male-female—resolved and the tolling of history stopped.”²⁸

Fuentes avails himself of Marxism in order to censure the ethical and political systems of the Modern Age. The same criticism is present in his other novels, such as *Las buenas conciencias*, *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* and *La región más transparente*.²⁹ But in *Terra nostra*, his criticism not only questions the effects of positivism as a philosophy and the adverse character of the bourgeois world but the source and the assumptions of capitalism. Fuentes’s view in *Terra nostra* goes beyond condemnation to propose a metaphorical union that is in keeping with utopia, the Golden Age, and the symbol of the androgyne as a possible solution to despair and alienation. The novelist thus celebrates the hopes and the desires that may guide mankind in the creation of history.

NOTES

1. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*, edited by Lewis S. Feuer (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1959), pp. 7–20, 106.
2. Carlos Fuentes, *Terra nostra* (Barcelona: Editorial Seix Barral, 1975), p. 121. To avoid excess notes, page numbers will appear in parentheses following quoted material from this edition of the novel.
3. Eugenio Imaz has detailed the concept of utopia during the time of the discovery of the Americas in *Topía y utopía* (México: Tezontle, 1946). He explains that the idea of utopia was understood spatially, inspired by the discovery of the New World. Imaz traces the evolution of the idea, which was transformed into a temporal aspect of human aspirations only in the nineteenth century. In this way, utopia was freed from spatial limitations and is again plausible in time. Frank E. Manuel has examined utopianism through three modes, each of which reveals aspects of the epoch in which it appeared. See his chapter entitled “Towards a Psychological History of Utopias” in *Utopias and Utopian Thought* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966), pp. 68–98. Manuel notes that in the first manifestation, the goal of the sixteenth century was above all harmony. After the French revolution, liberty and individualism characterized the second manifestation of utopianism. The third mode emphasizes the development and fulfillment of the human spirit in which man metaphysically transcends mundane problems.
4. Alfonso Reyes, *Ultima Tule* (México: Imprenta Universitaria, 1942), p. 10. This work also figures as the title of a chapter in *Terra nostra*, p. 580. Ludovico and Julián are aware of the poetic existence of America and its influence on the conquest. Felipe II decrees the nonexistence of the New World, but Julián contradicts him: “—Ya es demasiado tarde para decir eso, Señor. Existe, porque lo deseamos. Existe, porque lo imaginamos. Existe, porque lo necesitamos. Decir es desear” (p. 617).
5. Feuer, *Basic Writings*, p. 253.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13, 26–27, 43–44. This analysis of historical evolution is also described in *The German Ideology*, published in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy*, trans. T. B. Bottomore (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956), pp. 53–56, 94.
7. Karl Marx, “The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof,” in *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling, edited by Frederick Engels (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1912), pp. 81–96.
8. Marcelo Coddou, “*Terra nostra* o la crítica de los cielos: entrevista a Carlos Fuentes,” *The American Hispanist* 3, no. 24 (1978): 9.
9. Roman Jakobson and Morris Halle, *Fundamentals of Language* (S-Gravenhage: Mouton, 1956), pp. 76–77. I have based my definition of metaphor and metonymy largely

- on Jakobson and Halle's chapter "The Metaphoric and Metonymic Poles," pp. 76–82. I have also taken into consideration Hayden White's use of these tropes in his formalist approach to nineteenth-century philosophies of history. Consult his work, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), pp. 31–38.
10. Hayden White, in his analysis of the great historians of the nineteenth century, has pointed out the correlation between the two literary tropes alluded to above (metaphor and metonymy) and the Marxist exposition of the concept of work: "With the division of labor, then, the *Metaphorical* relationship between man and man on the one hand and between man and nature on the other is dissolved, a *Metonymical* relationship is established, and, instead of existing with one another in the modality of *identity*, as was the case in primitive society, men come to exist in the modality of *contiguity*" (p. 301).
 11. WNET, "Bill Moyers' Journal," 19 June 1980, "The Many Worlds of Carlos Fuentes: Part 1," p. 13.
 12. Carlos Fuentes, *Tiempo mexicano* (México: Joaquín Mortiz, 1972), p. 31.
 13. Leopoldo Zea, *El positivismo en México* (México: El Colegio de México, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1943), pp. 48–49. Zea shows how positivism was adapted to Mexican history. Auguste Comte presents his theories on social and historical evolution in *System of Positive Polity*, vol. 3 (Paris: Carilian-Goeury and V^{or} Dalmont, 1853), pp. 23ff. Comte describes three intellectual stages that characterize social development in Europe. The first two of these stages are provisional and preparatory. The last, the positive or scientific, represents the culmination of history and is therefore the objective of progress.
 14. Zea, *El positivismo en México*, p. 124.
 15. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
 16. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
 17. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
 18. Jacob Bronowski examines the idea of cause and effect in the chapter "The Nineteenth Century and the Idea of Causes," in his *Common Sense of Science* (London: Heinemann, 1960), pp. 56–78. This concept dominated all the sciences from Newton to Galileo until the early decades of this century. In 1927, Werner Heisenberg formulated the "uncertainty principle." The system of cause and effect implied the ability to disintegrate reality into isolated phenomena in order to designate the cause or, after the cause, to foresee the consequences. It suggested that one can foretell events as if the future already existed. The eighteenth- and nineteenth-century scientist "believed that the future is fully determined. The future as it were already exists in the mathematical; and the world itself is precisely a machine which calculates it by strict mechanical processes" (p. 72). The theories of relativity and statistical probability that issued from theories on quantum physics proposed by Max Planck in 1900 call into question the hegemony of the concept of cause and effect upon which scientific positivism was founded.
 19. Zea, *Apogeo y decadencia del positivismo en México* (México: El Colegio de México, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1944), p. 77.
 20. For Fuentes, *eccentric* is a term that defines Third World cultures, including Spain and Latin America. The "eurocentrismo" of the Enlightenment "fundaba sus ideas en un concepto universal e intercambiable de la naturaleza humana" (*Tiempo mexicano*, p. 32). But this nature excluded the cultures of the underdeveloped world, according to the way countries like England, France, and the United States define "developed." Fuentes affirms that following the establishment of the socio-political and economic hegemony of the nations adhering to the philosophies of the Enlightenment, Spain and Mexico have found themselves on the margin of world history, which has been identified exclusively as that of the advanced positivist countries: "España y México: finis terrae, cabos del mundo. Tirad una piedra en el centro de un estanque y las ondas más lejanas, más anchas, las que se confunden con el légame de la ribera, tienen los nombres de España y México. Ser excéntrico es la manera final de ser céntrico; puede ser el principio de un nuevo fin" (*ibid.*, p. 54). Nevertheless, Fuentes argues that in the present, "eurocentrismo" is destined to

disappear. It is no longer valid to speak of a universal positivist ideology; it is necessary instead to recognize a multipolar world of diverse cultures. The rise of the Third World and the unmasking of the fundamental assumptions of the positivist countries have snatched the "center" forever from Western capitalist powers: "existe una pluralidad de culturas que suponen una pluralidad de valores: todos somos centrales porque todos somos excéntricos." *Ibid.*, p. 32.

21. Zea, *Apogeo y decadencia del positivismo*, p. 247.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 256–57.
23. Arnold Hauser, *Mannerism: The Crisis of the Renaissance and the Origin of Modern Art*, translated by Eric Mosbacher (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965). Hauser explains the relationship between consumer goods and Marxist alienation. Because everything is related by means of an arbitrary system of money, man, products, time, talent, everything has an interchangeable, assigned, and universal value; thus, man also becomes a function of money within the capitalist system. See the chapter on "Alienation as the Key to Mannerism," pp. 94–114.
24. Fuentes, *Tiempo mexicano*, p. 33.
25. Mircea Eliade, *Mephistopheles and the Androgyne: Studies in Religious Myth and Symbol*, translated by J. M. Cohen (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1965), pp. 101, 122.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
27. Alfonso Caso, *La religión de los aztecas* (México: Imprenta Mundial, 1936), p. 8.
28. Gloria Durán, *The Archetypes of Carlos Fuentes: From Witch to Androgyne* (Hamden, Conn.: Shoe String Press, 1980), p. 163. Durán inquires into the use of the hermaphrodite whose function is similar to that of the androgyne as Mircea Eliade has conceived it. The hermaphrodite is a "pornographic" version and results from the importance that Fuentes confers on sensual, corporeal existence. See pp. 171–72, 178–82.
29. *La región más transparente* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1958); *Las buenas conciencias* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1959); *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1962).