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LECTURE



C. WALTER

& GERDA B.

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CULTURE AND  
DEVELOPMENT  
BETWEEN  
TRADITION AND  
MODERNITY

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The third C. Walter and Gerda B. Mortenson Distinguished Lecture was delivered on November 18, 1992, by Julieta Campos of Mexico City.

Dr. Campos was born in Havana, Cuba in 1932. After completing undergraduate studies at the University of Havana in 1952, she spent a year on scholarship at the Sorbonne in Paris and received a certificate in contemporary French literature. Ms. Campos returned to Cuba and received a Ph.D. from the University of Havana in 1955, and shortly thereafter emigrated to Mexico. In the next years she collaborated in magazines, including Octavio Paz's "Plural," edited the important literary journal "Revista de la Universidad de Mexico," and translated numerous works of fiction and nonfiction into Spanish. Dr. Campos has traveled extensively in Europe, Latin America, and North America. She was elected president of the P.E.N. Club of Mexico in 1978.

Julieta Campos has gained wide acclaim for both her fiction and her literary criticism. Her novels include *Death by Water, A Redhead Named Sabina* (for which she won the Xavier Villaurrutia Prize in 1976), *Celina or the Cats*, and *Fear of Losing Eurydice*. Collections of criticism have been published as *The Mirror's Eye*, *The Novel's Function*, and *The Persistent Legacy*.

In her lecture, Dr. Campos discusses the clash between the values of the industrial and traditional societies and the ensuing cultural and economic poverty for those who are losing the battle—namely, those living in traditional societies.

Marianna Tax Choldin  
Director, Mortenson Center for  
International Library Programs &  
Mortenson Distinguished Professor



The goal of the C. Walter and Gerda B. Mortenson Center for International Library Programs is to foster international tolerance and peace by strengthening ties among the world's research libraries and librarians in an effort to ensure access to knowledge throughout the world.



The diffusion of culture is closely linked to the recognition of plurality. No book and no culture offers a sole answer to the dreams and aspirations of man: in the diversity of cultures and of books, men find a fertile ground to question their condition and to perfect their life together. As James Billington observed in the opening lecture of this program: "Democracy has to be knowledge-based." Mr. Billington pointed out that the pluralistic tradition of the American experience may be of value to a world where ethnic and national identities are resurgent and where there is a growing zeal to reassert singularities. It is my belief that in the willingness to recognize the right of others to be different lies indeed the principle of civilized human coexistence. Never before has the need been so evident to promote an exchange of cultural experiences, in every sense and direction, in order to secure a better future for mankind.

We all know that among the many cultures that have appeared in turn throughout history, some of which persist in surviving and coexisting in the present, none has generated such a firm conviction that it is predisposed to universality or has succeeded so well in prevailing over all others as the Western culture. The veneration of progress has favored this disposition toward Western culture: it is a very contagious virus that the West has been inoculating into the rest of the world.

With the approach of a turn of century that is also the end of the second millennium of the Christian era, we think more than ever before in terms of "globalization." And we tend to believe that modernity and progress will efface the diversities and will standardize, through the homogeneity of technology, the



complex human heterogeneity. But, significantly, there is at the same time a revival of old nationalisms, particularisms, ethnic and religious disputes, and claims to respect one singularity or another. So, the past emerges throughout, not always showing the peaceful countenance of a more civilized coexistence among men.

While all this happens, the greater part of mankind moves between the tradition of ancestral cultures and modernity as proposed by the West, within the contradiction implied in a deep inequality that grows rather than diminishes. This is the point with which I will be dealing throughout this lecture. I am grateful to the Mortenson Center for International Library Programs for the opportunity to address you today.

Although I have not wished to limit my reflections to Mexico, I shall comment on the Mexican experience in order to illustrate the force, in such countries as my own, of the dilemma between tradition and modernity and to facilitate the understanding, by means of a concrete example, of how the choices that the future may hold in store depend on the conciliation of this polarity.

Three and a half billion people, who constitute three-fourths of mankind, live in poor countries on territories occupying two-thirds of the planet's surface. By the end of the present century, this proportion will have increased to four-fifths of the world population. The latest estimates of extreme poverty—that is, of life standards below survival level—vary slightly. The United Nations Development Program has estimated 1.2 billion people living in extreme poverty, a figure that may increase to 1.3 billion by the year 2000, and to 1.5 billion by the year 2025. The figures of the United Nations Children's Fund are even higher: 1.534 billion people living under conditions of absolute poverty, a number equal to 27 percent of the world population. Both of these estimates are greater than the one recently made by the World Bank, of 1 billion poor people.

You may wonder, why these figures? I shall try to answer: the dynamics of poverty, which have not been assuaged, but rather have increased in countries with ancient traditional cultures, is to some extent related to the imitation

of development models imported from highly industrialized countries, where they have arisen under totally different cultural and social conditions.

Broadly speaking, it may be said that as the vertical boundary line that divided West from East fades away, the horizontal boundary line between North and South grows even sharper. A development model based essentially on industrial economic growth is offered as the only valid one for achieving man's fulfillment and happiness. Increasing productivity, profits, and consumption characterize such a model.

The criticism of a lineal theory of progress has been formulated in the West by some of its most lucid minds. What force does this theory exert in countries that still bear the weight of a traditional culture?



After World War II, industrialized countries knew a sustained growth, with a general increment in wealth and consumption. The juices of plenty were spilled upon ever wider sectors, although, as a matter of fact, even in wealthy countries the gulf between the most thriving sectors and the least favored ones has deepened in recent years. Besides, the southern poor tend to emigrate northward in search of better life conditions—toward Europe from Africa, and toward the United States from Mexico and the rest of Latin America. Calling the condition of over one billion human beings who cannot even scrape together one dollar a day for their sustenance a “moral scandal,” Barber Conable, the outgoing president of the World Bank, observed last year that “people are and should be the purpose of development and also the main instrument for development.”

The gap between poor and wealthy countries has become enormously wide. Income per capita in the south is only 6 percent of income in the north: 77 percent of the world population receive scarcely 15 percent of the world income. In 1960, the wealthiest 20 percent of the world population registered

an income thirty times higher than the poorest 20 percent. In 1990, the wealthiest 20 percent were receiving sixty times more. This comparison is based on the distribution between wealthy and poor countries. However, considering the uneven distribution of income within the very wealthy and the very poor countries, the wealthiest 20 percent of the entire world population have an income 150 times higher than the poorest 20 percent.

Why are the poor so poor? Poverty-generating systems were established along with the colonial system, which exported raw materials and imported industrial goods. All poor countries in the southern hemisphere were once colonies belonging to European countries. Despite the fact that Latin Americans became independent at the beginning of the nineteenth century, they remained attached to those former systems until late in the twentieth century, when they first attempted to become industrialized, thus giving rise to a new sequence of complex problems.



In many colonial countries, cultures rich in spiritual values had evolved. In these cultures, the value of accumulating capital did not prevail, a notion that later flourished in the West after the Protestant work ethic was injected into the body of Western culture. Both this Protestant root and the heritage of the country that had spawned the Industrial Revolution bestowed a thriving destiny on the thirteen British colonies that eventually formed the United States. Not only were they spared the ill fortune of the other colonies, but they also were able to constitute themselves into one of the most influential modern nations.

Conversely, in South America the former Spanish colonies reached modernity with a double handicap: not only were they colonies, but also the cities had only transient participation in the Western race toward progress. Besides, the vast majority of the population who were engaged in cultivating the fields was indigenous and half-breed, and they continued to sow and spread, along with the traditional crops, the structures and values of a persistent tradi-

tional heritage. It is not possible to unravel here all the threads that were woven into the pattern of poverty in what until recently was called the Third World. Since this is an extremely heterogeneous world, Tanzania is not the same as Mexico, nor is India the same as Peru.

It would be worthwhile to try to define at this point the sense in which the term poverty is being used. Octavio Paz has very lucidly observed that poverty is a relative category. "Poverty in regard to what?" he has asked himself, and replies: "[Poverty] is a phenomenon that Europe first knew in the nineteenth century and which our America [I mean Latin America] experiences much more tragically in the twentieth century: the perversion and destruction of traditional culture... has nothing to do with poverty in a strict sense but with the coexistence of two societies—industrial societies and traditional societies."

This is the poverty to which I am referring, the one that appears when a traditional culture is impaired by the incrustation of modern culture upon it. Shameful poverty is unknown to traditional cultures, except when modern society encroaches upon them. Traditional ways of life observe a logic that guarantees life within very well-articulated cultural patterns, though there may be inequalities. It is a way of life that allots to each and every one a place in a social order linked to the religious order, wherein each person performs a function and receives in exchange the guarantee of survival. So it was, at least, in the Mexican pre-Hispanic society. It is very important to understand this in order to avoid falling into the trap of assuming that people are poor because of their habits of eating corn instead of wheat, building houses with traditional materials, or wearing huaraches instead of shoes.

When the Spaniards arrived in the lands of Mesoamerica, there was a frugal existence for 90 percent of the population: the macehualtin were devoted to the cultivation of corn, the essence of their culture, and to other subsistence crops in the calpulalli. Those were lands that the community received for usufruct and that could not be sold. Each family covered its needs and contributed a portion to a communal tribute. Mutual help was part of the custom. Education reached everyone. In the stratified order of that closed, self-sufficient

world, there was a religious attachment to the earth, and its fertility was the visible warrant of the cosmic order.

The sudden shift from the year 3-House to the year 1521 of the Christian era marked the defeated with a feeling of impairment and orphanhood. The Spanish Crown, however, exerted a degree of tutelary protection over the Indians, thus counterbalancing the power of the conquerors. It allotted communal lands to the various villages, gathering them around a patron saint and a church consecrated to his worship. The Spanish municipal tradition added to the indigenous tradition: a strong tie, both of kinship and of neighborhood, united the inhabitants of every small community, of every town or village, who acted always as collective subjects mobilized by a common identity bearing no resemblance to the modern notion of individual identity.

The community was a beneficial framework offering the Indians a legal protective support as the haciendas grew at the expense of the lands of the villages. Many of these villages witnessed the piecemeal reduction of their cultivatable fields, and sometimes the larger haciendas eventually engulfed them within their limits. Communities were self-sufficient and continued to practice their traditional technology and to raise their traditional crops. By the middle of the sixteenth century, however, a significant change took place: the Indians were forced to pay tribute in cash and not in kind, as they used to do in the years following the conquest and, of course, under the pre-Hispanic order. Their insertion into a monetary economy had begun.

The need to obtain cash to pay the tribute enforced the introduction of certain elements of the Spanish economy: the breeding of pigs and sheep and the cultivation of wheat. More had to be produced than was required for self-sufficiency in order to change the surplus into money. But in entering the market, the Indians were at a disadvantage: the Spaniards in the city were the ones who set the prices, and the self-sufficient economy was not enough for survival. Money was needed for the tribute, for purchasing metal instruments or woolen fabrics, and for renting a yoke of oxen or a dwelling.



The entry of the Indians into a monetary economy did not stop here. The new Spanish colony entered the world economy by means of the mining and trade of silver. The earlier closed, self-sufficient economy was inserted into the world economy through a city that was itself subsidiary to Spain and Portugal. These countries, in turn, controlled the trade routes to Asia and bought many products, but they were not manufacturers. Conversely, the northern European countries were becoming the great manufacturers and began to trade their own products for the Portuguese gold and Spanish silver that had been taken from Mexico and Peru. Thus, the entry into the world economy was marked in its beginning by the dependence of Mexico on Portugal and Spain, and by that of the people who were bound, since the conquest, to this new economy under conditions of servitude and marginalization—the Indians. The enormous inequality perceived by the Baron von Humboldt during his visit to Mexico at the beginning of the nineteenth century had arisen as a modern economy (if only partially so) fell upon another traditional economy.

Also, the threads of imagination were woven around symbols that preserved ancestral images together with others brought from Europe and gradually were assimilated as their own. Still effective is a symbol that, since 1531, bound the indigenous tradition and the Spanish religious conceptions into an image that was to embody the most strongly cohesive values of the Mexican nation. I am referring to the Virgin of Guadalupe, whose worship still attests to the persistence of Mexico's most ancient layers. Assimilated to the ancient Tonantzin, she became the receiver of the Mexicans' very old attachment to the earth and to corn. Holding up her image, the forerunners of the national independence, Hidalgo and Morelos, were able to summon the inhabitants of small towns and villages to insurrection. The only really strong tie was that of the peasants to the village where they had been born. Beyond its limits, they could only be brought together through the worship of the Mother of all Mexicans,



who had chosen that common land to make her appearance and shed protection and salvation upon them.

Mexico's aspiration to modernity began elsewhere. Its antecedent is to be found in Bourbon Spain, which at the end of the eighteenth century severed the church from the state and assigned the objectives of progress to the state. The majority of Mexicans were illiterate and therefore unfamiliar with the ideas of the Enlightenment. The idea that a strong, progress-promoting state should prevail over the small communities constituting the country asserted itself through the nineteenth century in the ideology of a cultured elite that dreamed of transplanting into Mexico—a rural country—the enterprising spirit that flourished so well in its prosperous northern neighbor.

The liberals sought, in the nineteenth century, to displace both the pre-Hispanic and the Spanish survivals and to found a new nation around the ideas of the Enlightenment. To give “light” to the Indians meant saving them both from their own cultures and from the “darkness” of the colony. They were convinced that the Indians were poor because the juridical forum of individual property was not fulfilled in the communal lands. Accordingly, Juarez and the men involved in the Reforma made laws to suppress communal ownership of village lands. But these new laws met with persistent opposition by the Indians, who were stubbornly attached to communal tenancy, which dated from the pre-Hispanic times and was confirmed by the colonial order.



The gap between a Mexico wrought as an ideological project in the fantasy of a small elite and a deeper Mexico, laden with memory and ill treatment, is enormous. The liberal elite who ruled the country, with Juarez at its head, bequeathed the positivistic elite of Porfirian científicos the conviction that Mexico was handicapped with a “crushing burden” that precluded its entry into the realm of progress. The majority of the people sought to preserve something very ancient, including religious feeling and attachment to the earth. The elite

intended to direct the people toward progress by impressing upon them the benefits of profit and productivity. The strife between the two groups became quite evident after the 1910 revolution.

Still, beneath the urban upper crust, which had abandoned itself to the lay worship of progress, continued to flow the stream of another Mexico, much more numerous and ubiquitous but compelled to remain submerged for four centuries. Traditional Mexico wanted to remain true to itself. John Womack observes this accurately in his major work on Zapata: because they did not want to change, the peasants revolted.

But Zapata was defeated, and the victors were caudillos who came down from the northern states on the American border, with their goal of modernization. Zapata's Utopia of the state as a “commonwealth of villages” remained Utopia. The 1910 revolution had been essentially agrarian, based on the determination of villages to regain certain very old rights. It was carried out by the traditionalists, but it benefited the modernists because the winners in the armed conflict made it the driving force of a development based on industrial growth. As Alan Knight has said, “The revolution swallowed up its fathers.” Since 1940, governments that emerged from this revolution made the industrial model their own, and the gap between the traditional and the modern country grew wider.

The modernization project has continued to widen this gap: of the 41 million people who constitute half of the population today, about 14 million live in the cities under precarious conditions, and some 27 million live in the countryside. Not yet a part of modern economic dynamics, they are no longer supported as before by the traditional structures: they have remained hanging between a past that was snatched away from them and a future that has not yet materialized.

In 1992, as we approach the end not only of this century but of the present millennium, the modernization project seeks the “new miracle” of growth based on openness to the market economy. Those who believe in a predestined, inevitable modernization think that this will eventually wipe out



what is left of memory-laden Mexico, attached to its traditions. But the dilemma between tradition and modernity cannot be regarded as solved, even five hundred years after the conquest.

A development model founded upon the protection of industrial growth speeded up the urbanization of the country since the fifth decade of the present century, at the expense of the growing impoverishment of the countryside. The urban country turned its back on the rural country. Millions of peasants emigrated to city slums or sought the uncertainty of adventure in crossing the border.

Even at the beginning of the last decade of the twentieth century, and in spite of everything, what some have called "archaic Mexico" is alive. Millions of poor Mexicans are very far from familiar with the consumer goods of the so-called First World. Perhaps many of them, besieged by the mass media and by the effect of imitation, desire them ardently. But to the present day, the promises of progress are yet to be fulfilled, and it appears that they will not be fulfilled in the near future. It is a proven fact that wealth "is not catching" and does not "trickle down," as enthusiastic partisans of developmentalism assume.

It is probable, on the other hand, that many of these poor Mexicans do not aspire to become avid consumers. Even nowadays, many are not interested in accumulating profits, except in order to attain "modest prosperity," or else for what Womack would call "a use consecrated by custom." They do save, yes, but only for the feast of the patron saint, related, as five hundred years ago, to the sowing and harvesting seasons; they still treasure, in essence, the memory of long-standing rural tradition.

In many small communities in Mexico, the ancient attachment to the earth is as much alive as is the Virgin of Guadalupe. Modernization is always precarious and partial because it does not sprout organically from within such communities; it comes from elsewhere in fragments and often wreaks much damage. Expectations are generated, which do not satisfy the needs; conversely, traditional forms that might work and be revitalized are left by the wayside.

It is still in the bond to the past that the root of identity lies. In small communities, the feeling of security and integration is intensified when the certainty of this bond is emphasized.

In Mexico, the difficult synthesis between tradition and modernity has not wholly materialized. The centralizing tendencies do not favor this, but yes, it would be favored by any attempt to take into account the people's will, that common will, that covenant, which dates not from Rousseau but from much further back, in every town and village—from the pre-Hispanic and the colonial past.



In today's world, not only the economy is becoming "globalized," but also culture. By means of mass media, the most widely disseminated message is the one spread from countries with a plentiful consumer economy. Conversely, there is an influx of other cultures through the migration of those trying to escape poverty. The dimension of this contagion should be explored; but despite the alarm caused by the emergence of "multicultural" tendencies in, for instance, certain educational spheres in the United States, these influences are usually localized within certain regions and marginal sectors of large cities and have little effect on the prevailing cultural patterns.

A very diverse world, yet one sharing the common denominator of poverty, is offered as an ideal model of growth drawn from the market society. In practice, however, the benefits of this model have reached, in the course of half a century, only 10, 20, or, at most, 30 percent of the population. On the other hand, all the resources on the planet could not satisfy, at the world level, consumption and demand like those of the United States: the reservoirs of nonrenewable resources would become exhausted in a few decades. Today, 80 percent of the wealth in the world is concentrated in one-fourth of the world population. Conversely, support for development does not surpass 0.5 percent of the gross national product in prosperous countries. For all these reasons,



southern countries must understand that solid development can only be founded upon their own resources.

Could the proposal of a “new humanism” emerge as a corollary of plenty in the consumer society? Each day the certainty grows that inordinate amounts of material goods do not satisfy the emptiness left by the loss of spiritual values that are on their way to extinction. Could it not be that the idea of limitless progress is perhaps the most deceitful metaphor of the Infinite ever contrived by the West? Barbara Ward speaks of the deterioration process that has “obliterated true civilization” in large cities. In 1973, E. F. Schumacher set the foundations for a search of alternatives toward a more humanitarian development on a small scale. In wealthy countries, new directions are proposed to avoid waste and to recover values previously belonging to the “most advanced” society. The younger generation, in the sixties, attempted to revive such values as solidarity and appreciation of nature, as well as a sense of sacredness in the midst of eminently profane societies.



About the same time, Levy Strauss validated the world view of the so-called “archaic” societies as absolutely coherent systems of thought. The assertion of diverse identities seems to advance steadily throughout, counterbalancing the tendencies toward uniformity promoted by the media.

The crisis of the myth of progress bespeaks the need of proving that imagination is not in crisis. As a counterbalance to the Western world’s developmentalism, other cultures may contribute conceptions of life capable of enriching the West spiritually. Production for ever higher profits need not be the goal. In countries with traditional cultures, such as India or Mexico, there is no tendency to accumulate surplus; rather, it is usually destined to other ends, namely, feasts and ritual celebrations. This is not necessarily unreasonable, it is only different. Traditional cultures retain customs and memories that may

contribute to the formation of a more gratifying human society, in more ways than just the material. A fluid exchange may promote a give and take. Modern knowledge and technique may complement the traditional forms of social organization, and modern countries may receive from traditional cultures the inspiration to reanimate more genuine community-based forms of coexistence.

As the twentieth century nears its end, enormous inequality precludes, in the greater part of the world, an authentic development of man. This development will become a reality only when everyone can profit creatively from the resources of the environment and when, by means of technology, intelligence and memory, everyone can unfold and realize the whole of human potentialities. Recovering the sense of “what’s enough” should be the point of departure for reversing the predatory attitude that has characterized the consumer society. Countries aspiring to development must understand more and more that they should keep more, not less, of their own identity, for only what already exists can be developed organically. Of course, this does not exclude the capacity to receive from elsewhere something that may enrich what is already alive, and keep that attribute alive.

Development and participation are related, then, to democracy. Participation is viable only within a democratic system operating in harmony with the traditions and values of each people. If modernization is understood as contributing to the well-being of the largest number, then cultural heritage must be considered, and the growth of privileged islets along with the marginalization of vast majorities must not be encouraged.

The sometimes tangled threads of global interplay—embracing enterprises, the environment, consumer goods, machines, the use of outer space, computers, and culture—are eaten through by the moth of poverty, which everywhere infests the world of safety and peace.

Attaining levels of plenty and waste equal to those of the twenty most highly industrialized countries is an unrealistic goal. Countries with vast majorities of poor people and traditional cultures must set themselves more modest



goals, coherent with their own cultures and with what would perhaps be the more harmonious, healthy, and elevated conception of man.

The imitation of consumer models from wealthy countries has introduced only a small minority of the population of poor countries into the market place and to modern services over the course of many decades. Persistence in the pursuit of this model would tend to increase the distance between those who enter the modern sector and those who stay behind, and these latter would not become fewer in number, but more and more. The dynamics of modern growth do not assuage inequality, they actually increase it. On the other hand, the values of productivity and profit of the Western culture still meet with resistance from other values deeply rooted in the more profound layers of religious thought, which have persistently supported traditional cultures. Preserved in underground sources or cropping out, untimely, among the crevices of modernity, many of these values are still effective.

Finding small local answers to large global problems would be perhaps the most sensible strategy. The search for intermediate technologies between tradition and modernity is a viable path in this direction. When growing interdependence leads to the assumption that all solutions may and must be multinational, it would appear that the only approach to real solutions lies indeed in mobilizing local resources, with the participation of the needy.

The pitfalls of development overtake us all, especially in poor countries, but also, increasingly, in wealthy countries. Poverty causes the global environment to deteriorate even further and is a negative factor in the world market and economy. Besides, the risk of social unease generated by poverty is not a local one: it is a shared risk. Poverty, in a word, moves and invades the developed world.

I now return to my example. Mexico is still many Mexicos. These many countries may be reduced to a traditional and a modern country, one rural and one urban, one laden with the weight of the past and one that wants to soar quickly toward the future. The so-called "archaic" country has endeavored to

survive autonomously in small communities capable of producing enough for their own sustenance and a certain surplus. It has chosen to destine this surplus generated by its communal goods to purposes of assistance and education, and, of course, to pay for the feasts, which mean so much to every traditional society. It has chosen to live without depending too much upon others, and thus, without the servitude that such dependence brings about. It has aspired to select from among its own members those who are to watch over its modest destiny.

When the accelerator was pressed on industrialization, with its deficiencies and detriments, Frank Tannenbaum asked whether it would not be better for Mexico to take, instead of the highway of industrial developmentalism, the multiple neighboring paths implied in a "philosophy of the small." This was around 1950. Twenty years later, Schumacher shaped an alternative for the world of traditional cultures, which embraces the greater part of mankind—the proposal that "small is beautiful." This proposal, based upon a Christian conception of life and upon the Gandhi experience, had been anticipated by Tannenbaum in 1950 as desirable for Mexico.



Evidently, if nothing in history is irreversible, it is also not easy to retrace one's steps. It would be naive to expect the modern sector to forgo the choices provided by the development model, which has been advanced as the sole possibility. But it is also a fact that the advantages of growth have benefited not more than 20, and eventually 25 or 30, percent of the population.

Wouldn't it seem reasonable to consider an alternative model to promote self-sufficiency in the thousands of small communities that form the country? And wouldn't it seem unreasonable, on the other hand, to persist in pushing an "unproductive progress" that offers, from a television screen, an improbable Cadillac that anyway will not reach those areas where hardly a bicycle is needed?

People search everywhere for small, local solutions to remedy everyday deficiencies that are manifestations of large, global problems. They seek their own forms of expression and organization as well as proper channels to effect these remedies. To favor these initiatives, which would open the way from the base of the "great pyramid," constitutes a realistic option to begin, finally, to escape from the pitfalls of development.

The conception of the state's role has changed, but not the zeal to adapt the country to the needs of modernization rather than adapting modernization to the needs of the country. The dilemma between tradition and modernity may give way to multiple options, but these must all of necessity run through democracy. It is obvious that civil society must be taken more and more into account. And it is evident that civil society is much wider than the limited sector within each poor country that has already gained access to First World privilege, that has already entered the speeded-up universe of modernity. For countries like Mexico, the sole desirable modernity shall be one that can find its support in the plural, demanding presence of their many millions of poor citizens.

By way of conclusion, I wish to say that I am here today because I absolutely agree with the opinion of Dr. C. Walter Mortenson that forms the basis for his patronage of the program that has brought me to this university. Dr. Mortenson has said, "With increased exchanges of ideas among the world's peoples will come increased tolerance... increased communication among peoples of the world through the world's libraries will catalyze tolerance and understanding in the world." I am sure that civilization is founded upon the recognition of plurality and that circulation of ideas is the greatest guarantee of democracy. It is indeed the only guarantee that eventually, as William Faulkner wished, man shall prevail.

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