1 Introduction

We want to be taught to feel, not for the heroic artisan
or the sentimental peasant, but for the peasant in all
his coarse apathy, and the artisan in all his suspicious
selfishness.

—George Eliot
  "The Natural History of German Life"

The Realist and the Romantic: Visions
in Historical and Anthropological Writings

Literary realism—its critique of the quixotic epitomized by Eliot's spiny phrase—is associated with ideas not now in vogue. Contemporaries of Eliot saw it as a counterweight to a morally based idealism, in which the author would present "models of irreproachable excellence for readers to imitate."[1] The Realist author, by contrast, would often distance him- or herself from moral authority and omniscient control by feigning cognitive (though not material) ignorance of the scene created.[2] Yet this facade of a distanced and impersonal perspective was belied by a type of structural involution in which a complex series of narrative techniques would allow an offstage presence of authorial intentionality through which morality and commentary were reintroduced into the text by a backstage door. As the literary critic David Williams has noted, "one of the paradoxes of Realism is that the novelist's passion for the real results in a fuller exploitation of the expressive possibilities of the form and a more self-conscious craftsman-

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1. Stoneman (1978:104). Eliot's epigraph is cited both by Kearns (1996:4), who insightfully appraises Realism, and Stoneman (1978:105). Works by Devaney (1997:esp. chap. 6), Lukács (1972), Stern (1973), and Watt (1957:chap. 1) and the essays in Williams (1978c) were useful for this introduction.

2. Thus, Eliot could wonder about the final uniting of Dorothea and Will with the words "It was never known which lips were the first to move towards the other lips" (cited in Williams 1978b:261). Historians prone to the novelesque have been taken to task for their claims to envision the past. Note Gombrich's (2000:8) critical review of Schama's *Rembrandt's Eyes*, in which he nevertheless does credit the author with prefacing his departures and fancies "with such words as: 'We would not be far from the truth in imagining . . .'" Knight (1999:559) makes a similar, though more wryly expressed, point ("Maybe the sources tell us these things; it is not clear") about Vanderwood's *The Power of God against the Guns of Government*, in which one finds descriptions of morning coffees as "strong" and phrases such as "[the priest rides out of town] with a wary eye cast back over his shoulder."

ship. Once the novelist has bowed out of the novel, it is necessary for him to engineer 'an elaborate orchestral or suggestive structure whereby meaning *emerges*—as a function of the structure itself.'"[3] Realist authors were certainly aware of their commanding role—Flaubert was able to discover, and then state, that "Madame Bovary, c'est moi"—but they would insist on a discretionary voice that would (or should) disappear behind the text, at least in comparison with the intrusive narratives that had preceded their literary revolution.[4] In this way the Realist movement offers a counterpoint to much recent social science, for, while Realist authors receded from view, leaving behind a structural foundation of authorial intervention, (post)modern anthropologists and historians often take an almost contrary approach by directly intervening in the text, and indeed recognizing this intervention as the sine qua non of reflexive, discursive social science. Such intervention is both celebrated as a personalized vision and, somewhat paradoxically, presented as the means to achieve a heteroglossic narrative, allowing other perspectives to pierce through the rhetorical fabric—giving voice to people without voice and history to people without history.[5]

The question of the impact of authorship—of "subjectivity" on "objectivity," and therefore of both "factual accuracy in the art of the imaginary"[6] and its mirror image, the impact of the imagination in the proffering of facts[7]—is but one aspect of narrative that was brought to the forefront by the Realists (and "rediscovered," in the aforementioned mirror image, by those who assert that "the notion that literary procedures pervade any work

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3. Williams (1978b:264). The citation within is from Cecil Jenkins in the same anthology (Williams 1978c). In this regard, Jenkins is most clear:

> In a word, the irony is that the more impersonal he is, the deeper the writer himself is involved. The more he realizes his fiction in terms of the objective world the more also, paradoxically but logically, he is structuring and increasing his own subjective awareness; the more he distances his world artistically, the more he achieves himself in projection in relation to the world. So that in practice, whether we call realism the concretizing of a private vision in terms of the real or a rectification of reality in the service of a private vision, objectivity and subjectivity are from the point of view of the writer not in contradiction. On the contrary, they are necessarily interdependent and interfused. (1978:12–13)

4. The Flaubert citation is from Jenkins (1978:12).

5. This perspective predominates in the collection of essays presented by Clifford and Marcus (1986). There is, however, an element of illusion in flaunting authorial intervention while at the same time asserting that while "polyvocality was restrained and orchestrated in traditional ethnographies by giving one voice [that of the ethnographer] a pervasive authorial function . . . once dialogism and polyphony are recognized as modes of textual production, monophonic authority is questioned" (Clifford 1986:15). Yet as one critic has noted, "The heteroglossia so passionately advocated by many of the authors begins, in the aggregate, to look alarmingly like monoglossia" (Brown 1996:729).

6. Williams (1978a:78). See also Wellek (1963).

7. Postmodern anthropology often celebrates the connection of the real and the imaginary: "An ethnography is a fantasy. . . . It is not a reality fantasy like 'Dallas,' nor a fantasy reality like the *DSM III*; it is a reality fantasy of a fantasy reality. That is to say, it is realism, the evocation of a possible world of reality already known to us in fantasy" (Tyler 1986:139). The editor of the collection in which Tyler's essay appears claims, in fact, that literary styles have entered and improved ethnographic writing, for example, "All of the essays collected here point toward new, better modes of writing" (Clifford 1986:25).

of cultural representation is a recent idea in the discipline [of anthropology]").[8] A second question for the Realists was the nature and identity, as well as the most adequate representation, of the subject of any given text. Here the novel (along with the painting), increasingly sought the commonality of human existence. It found this in the mundane, shared experiences of everyday life, an initially shocking—at least for late nineteenth-century literary and artistic sensibilities—descent into the most quotidian of events: a rejection of both classical ideals and the Romantic "inner vision." In history a parallel movement turned away from the narratives of great men and their politics and wars and toward a new social "history without names," one of the early practitioners of which was Michelet, who aspired to write "the history of those who have suffered, worked, declined and died without being able to describe their sufferings."[9]

Yet the subjects of the "new history," particularly as it developed in the early twentieth century, were not simply those who had been unable to write of and reflect on their own experiences. Rather, this history, epitomized by the Annales school, had a strong materialist and analytic tendency that was paralleled by a functional, impersonal trend in anthropology. The Romantic tinge so conspicuous in Michelet (and so absent in Realism) faded further out of the picture.[10] Yet recently, in both the social sciences and the humanities, the pendulum has swung back to the Romantic image of struggles "against the current," toward a new exaltation of resistance and agency, and (contrary to Realism) toward the implicit belief in "a scale of dignity in subject matter."[11] The history of those who "died without being able to describe their sufferings" has become re-romanticized through a constant search, in the best Romantic tradition (though the modern Romantics deal with collectivities, while their nineteenth-century counterparts stressed the individual), for those who have broken free of the structural constraints on thought and action.[12] Flaubert had remarked, "Let's have no

8. Clifford (1986:4).

9. Michelet cited in Burke (1990:8). The phrase "history without names" is from Comte; see Burke (1990:9). Anderson (1991:197–203) notes that Michelet was the first to explicitly speak "for dead people" and states that this "reversed ventriloquism helped to open the way for a selfconscious indigenismo, especially in the southern Americas. At the edge: Mexicans speaking in Spanish 'for' pre-Columbian 'Indian' civilizations whose languages they do not understand" (pp. 198–99).

Crossley (1993) and Mitzman (1990) both emphasize the Romantic element in Michelet. Rearick (1974:chap. 3.2) stresses the counter-Enlightenment element in Michelet's folklore studies. For Michelet's championing of Vico, see Berlin (1976), who mentions (p. 93) that through Michelet, the Realist writers Balzac and Flaubert were familiar with Vico, whom they admired as a great thinker.

10. This applies to the Annales and British Marxist schools of social history as well as to the structural-functionalism of British anthropology.

11. Wellek (1963:253).

12. On Romanticism and the exceptional individual, see Wittkower and Wittkower (1963). Furst (1979:esp. chap. 3) deals with the Romantic protagonist in the framework of hero vs. antihero, with the Romantic notion a type midway between the more fully heroic personage of the Sturm und Drang movement and the "ironic self-detachment" of the modern antihero. Unlike the hero of subaltern and resistance studies, altruistic heroes dedicated to a

more heroes and no more monsters," [13] a sentiment that echoes the epigraph opening this chapter in its search for a middle ground of narrative that, in avoiding moralistic extremes, seeks to portray "the psychological ambivalence and social complexity of [being]." [14] Certainly a parallel can be drawn between the Realist writer satisfied with the "peasant in all his coarse apathy, and the artisan in all his suspicious selfishness" and the modern academic seeking to document the lives of popular and plebeian society. Both approaches seek to bring into closer focus society as it "really is." [15] Yet whereas in the Realist era this discussion derived from the question of whether a literary exposition or artistic expression should tend to some ideal of beauty and truth or whether it should seek elegance in the patterns of everyday life and veracity in the common experiences of social interaction, the recent proliferation of terms of opposition in the historical and anthropological literature—counter-culture, counter-hegemony, and counter-mapping, among other locutions—points to another direction in much contemporary research, a move toward studying those social groups that challenge dominant social formations. This literature is more prone to document action over apathy, selflessness over selfishness, heroes over monsters; it implies, therefore, "a scale of dignity in subject matter." From Michelet's concern with "those who have suffered, worked, declined and died without being able to describe their *sufferings*," the concern is now more on those who have died without being able to describe their *defiance*.

Finally, Realism, in exploring "the organic, indissoluble connection between man as a private individual and man as a social being, as a member of a community," [16] was the first literary movement to take this bond seriously, and in this sense it foreshadowed much of what is now considered the modern historians' and anthropologists' concerns with agency and structure. The link between individual and society was forged by situating fictional characters within historical contexts, the details of which were of primary concern to the novelist. Realist writers sought to anchor the truth and authenticity of their fiction by weaving the minutiae of the material world and the certitude of historical events into their texts. The detailed description of the printing process in Balzac's *Lost Illusions*, Melville's erudite

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social cause, the nineteenth-century Romantic counterpart was more introverted and isolated, related of course to the concept of genius. Nevertheless, a constant tension in Romantic literature and philosophy was that between the celebration of individuality and the consecration of the universal. Weidmann (1986:101) notes in this regard that "in general terms, what characterized Romanticism was precisely this now self-centered, now world-centered outlook. A heightened inner sense co-existed with a heightened outer sense. Each served as a point of departure."

13. Cited in Williams (1978a:76).

14. The quote is from Ortner (1995:175), who has "resistance" for "being."

15. For colonial Mexico, see, for example, the works of Boyer (1995), Cope (1994), and Kinsbruner (1987), all of which deal with the lower strata of society.

16. Lukács (1972:8). For a good discussion of this tension in the academic endeavor, see Tiryakian (1962).

exploration of whaling custom and law in *Moby Dick*, and Robbe-Grillet's repetition, in *Jealousy*, of a neurotically meticulous accounting of banana trees are all ways of centering privately imagined fictional characters in the midst of a historical and material world of public reality. This is truth by association (the opposite effect of that achieved by historians, who highlight the imagined element of historical narrative by mixing fiction, or reflexive contemplation, into their documented text).[17] Again it was Flaubert who took this effort to anchor the imagination in the material to an early extreme in *Sentimental Education*, for "despite the fictional nature of the main events, the novel is still regarded by historians as an invaluable source of information about the period extending from 1840 to 1851 and in particular about the year 1848."[18]

Realists, as Lukács noted, resolved the tension between individual and society, between fiction and fact, through the literary creation of the *type* and the definition of reality not as what *did* happen but as what *could* (and often did) happen.[19] The historian and anthropologist utilize a similar type-token approach, for their case studies are implicitly culled from more general patterns; and an implied "typicality" adheres to the particular events that they present. This raises a question of representativity, captured in turn by the tension between the general and the particular, between nomothetic "science" and idiographic "description."[20] Yet the problem of the relationship between the individual and society has multiple facets. Thus one can also focus on the possibilities of individual action in engaging, countering, or negating structural constraints. Whatever the terminology employed (be it, for example, the structuration theory of Giddens or the habitus concept of Bourdieu), the theoretical difficulty resides in presenting an analysis that intrinsically embraces both structure and process, both sociocultural con-

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17. The quintessential expression of this historical approach in Schama (1991) could be compared to its counterpart from a literary perspective, Graves (1934).

18. Williams (1978a:88). The author continues:

> Flaubert's documentation of the historical background involved a labour of heroic proportions. He read 132 historical works on the period; he took extensive notes from the papers and periodicals of the time; he went to the Bibliothèque Nationale and consulted the manuscripts which still form the basis of the historian's study of 1848; he was in correspondence with eye witnesses of the events of the February and June Revolutions; in short, he sought to know all that could possibly be known about the period, from the fashions in clothes of each year to the sort of menu that was available in 1847 in the Café de Paris. (pp. 88–89)

Fictional writers are now rarely as meticulous; for an entertaining letter from a historian to an aspirant to historical fiction, here in television, see Darnton (1990).

19. On the *type* in literature, see also Wellek (1963:242ff.). The question of representativity (of how representative of particular social classes are those who offer overt, or even covert, acts of defiance) is seldom dealt with in modern historical and social science literature. One effect of expanding the domain of resistance to many acts of everyday existence is to make the question of representativity moot. This is not to say that the subjects of study need to be representative (in fact, I would argue that this is not the case), but simply that the language of social scientific and historical texts is often disarmingly general.

20. See Entrikin and Brunn (1989) and the works therein, particularly Entrikin (1989), for the nomothetic vs. idiographic debate in geography in relation to Hartshorne's work.

straints and individual agency. Yet whereas the problem of the representativity of a "type" affects Realist literature as well as both anthropology and history, questions of structure and process, of social reproduction and agentivity, lie solely in the domain of the latter two academic disciplines. That is, while Realism was the first literary movement to problematize the relationship of social milieu to individual identity and action, the issue is of *theoretical* significance only in the social sciences and some endeavors in the humanities, such as history.

The Geography of Structure and Process

In the preceding section I have used Realist literary theory (its proscription of authorial intervention, its allegiance to quotidian experience, and its sensitivity to the weight of the social milieu on individual identity and action) and the sensibilities of Romanticism (its celebration of genius and the iconoclast, its exaltation of agency, and its belief in a scale of dignity of subject matter) to provide a literary analogy for contemporary trends and debates in the social sciences and humanities. These involve, particularly, the interplay between structure and agency, between society and the individual, and, in a very broad sense, between material and cultural history. It is to these issues that I now turn in exploring how the present study has been organized to highlight the constant tension between spatial structures and spatial practices, and between socioeconomic and discursive aspects of structure and agency in historical geography.

In this book I offer a spatial history of colonial society as a particularly effective way to explore the dynamics of structure and process. At the same time, the book's focus on land, labor, and capital as the basic parameters that influenced geographic patterns in colonial Mexico is the result of a calculated authorial intervention in the structure of presentation. The form of this book has been in a sense engineered in a "suggestive structure whereby meaning *emerges*—as a function of the structure itself"—and this meaning involves a commitment to the importance of both structure and agency and of political economy and ideology as key elements to understanding the development of social forms.[21] A spatial approach likewise has intended consequences for the identity of the object of study, for by focusing on spatial patterns, no single collective social group (indigenous or colonist, elite or subaltern, rural or urban) has been put forth as the dominant theme. The central concern is what may be called the geography of social interaction, the fields on which a wide range of groups and individuals act. Here again a spatial history is particularly pertinent, for perhaps more than any other social phenomenon, spatialization involves a constant interaction between society and the individual, between social structures that are imposed on in-

21. See n. 3 supra.

dividuals and groups (i.e., the economic, legal, political, and administrative frameworks or parameters of space) and individual action (processes) by which human agents affect the contours of space around them. At one end of a continuum, spatial formations are profoundly personal and responsive to or reflective of individual practice. At the other end, spatial formations constitute a central element of authoritarian state politico-administrative power.[22] An analysis of the spatial domain, therefore, involves an awareness both of the role of power in imposing a top-down definition and delimitation of space (the Realist perspective) and of the role of spatial practices of social groups and individuals in replicating or reconstructing the spatial arrangements of institutionalized systems (the Romantic perspective). From the vantage point of a geographic perspective on political economy, colonization develops and plays itself out in myriad conflicts over spatial patterns; some conflicts in New Spain have been quite well studied (the forced nucleation of indigenous peasants in "rationally" planned centers) while others are less understood (late colonial struggles between traditionalists and liberals over the right of provincial authorities to limit and control the spatial extension of grain and labor markets). Space thus becomes a highly contested arena of dispute, in which state efforts at politico-administrative and sociocultural control are pitted against social groups and individuals who struggle to change state-imposed rules, redraw administrative boundaries, transform the way in which the state links the individual to locality, and create dissident social and cultural spaces within a context of domination and control. These same individuals and collectivities forge their own spatial identities, patterns of movement, and definitions of community and place, often in overt or covert opposition to more institutionalized arrangements. Colonization, therefore, involves not simply the occupation of space, but its very definition.

The attempt to create meaning through form engineered in the text itself is most salient in part 2, a series of six chapters centered on the rural province of Iguala and two adjoining jurisdictions: that of Taxco to the north, with its urban mining center in the town of that name; and that of Tixtla to the south, a relatively poor area located along the trade corridor to the Pacific coast (all located in the modern-day state of Guerrero; see orientation maps). These chapters deal with questions of land, labor, and capital and their spatial concomitants: territoriality and the rural enterprise, migration and place making, and patterns of capitalization and commercial exchange. I have chosen this structure of presentation to underscore the importance of political economy in social analysis and to highlight the spatial component of the essential factors of production and distribution in the rural environment. The themes chosen emerged from a belief in the advan-

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22. For the former, see Tuan's work cited in the bibliography; for the latter, see Scott's (1998) recent work.

tages, and indeed the necessity, of "historically and theoretically deep immersion in specific regions and locales" for understanding the complex social fabric of rural society in colonial New Spain.[23] The socioeconomic processes explored in part 2 are intrinsically related and closely intertwined. Thus, for example, to arrive at a full understanding of the influx of commercial capital into the hinterland during the late colonial period, extensive work on other facets of the regional milieu, particularly demographics and shifting state policies on trade, need to be fully explored.

The first and third parts of this book, which frame the major arguments of part 2 (the first establishing the context and the third exploring an outcome), also examine oppositions and tensions in the definition of space. Part 1, "Terrain and Territoriality: The Natural and Social Context of Land and Property," offers a dichotomous interpretation of the geographical "stage" on which subsequent events took place. Here, in addition to an ecological perspective that focuses on climate and topography, I include a chapter on hispanic legal and customary rights to land. This dichotomized presentation reflects a belief that although "land-man" questions are fundamentally ecological, they are also very much a matter of rights to nature (for *land* is, in essence, *earth* that has been socially delimited and culturally defined).[24] The principal argument, that the early Spanish colonists were strongly influenced by a patristic and moral discourse on property (not a Roman one, as has frequently been alleged), is developed in chapter 3. This follows the preceding chapter's traditional ecological argument that stresses the productive potential of the land, a factor that, along with distance from urban markets, was to play a primary role in subsequent patterns of migration and land acquisition. The juxtaposition of these two chapters is meant to establish a dialectical structure—here of an opposition between natural resources and human discourses in shaping human geography—that is repeated throughout this study.

The third and final part of this book—"Absolute Property and Spatial Politics: Struggles for Control over Grain in the Late Colonial Period"— echoes the dichotomous nature of the text, though with a different set of oppositions. Chapters 10 and 11 examine the struggles over the delimitation of grain markets in colonial central Guerrero between rural entrepreneurs in the Iguala Valley intent on selling maize in the most lucrative markets and urban miners from nearby Taxco who sought to control distribution to ensure a steady supply of cheap maize for both food and fodder. In this case

23. The quote is from Mallon (1993:378) in her discussion of William Roseberry's essay in the same volume.

24. Or, from the Lockean perspective, landed property is *earth* to which "labor" has been added. For Lockean concepts of property in the English colonists' defense of their own land rights, as against those of the Indians and the crown, see Lebovics (1986), Tully (1980, 1993a, 1993b, 1994), and Williams (1990:esp. pt. 3). For Spanish justification of dispossession, see Pagden (1987a, 1995a:esp. chap. 3).

the urban authorities in Taxco sought to redefine their jurisdiction through the incorporation of the province of Iguala, the agrarian hinterland of the mining center. In the 1760s Taxco succeeded in gaining control over the Iguala Valley and began to argue that, according to the tradition of regional authority over grain distribution, it now had the right to limit maize exports from its newly expanded jurisdiction. The valley's agrarian interests countered by arguing not simply for the right to free markets. They also asserted that the new Taxco/Iguala jurisdiction was not a region in the traditional sense (or not a "traditional" region) and that therefore the customary rights of regional authorities were not pertinent. This struggle was not only between two different entrepreneurial classes, rural merchants and farmers versus urban miners and consumers, with often conflicting interests, but also between two distinct political economic theories, each with a clear spatial component. Urban miners argued for a medieval conception of markets, in which provincial authorities had the right to limit export from their region until local needs had been met; rural agrarian merchants argued for the validity of absolute property rights to grain, which would enable them to market provisions wherever they saw fit. The colonial judicial and executive apparatus was, therefore, required to mediate between two sectors of the economy (miners versus merchants/landowners) and two political economic discourses (a fading moral and regional paradigm versus a new liberal assertion of the free market). And although state political economy was shifting to a liberal paradigm that promoted national markets and integration as well as centralized, absolutist power, the fiscal interests of Spain remained heavily tied to mining, which could best be promoted by an increasingly arcane ideology: state intervention in prices and regional rights over provisioning.

There is another underlying dialectic to this book, one that goes beyond the oppositions and dichotomies already mentioned to explore a deep-rooted and endemic tension in rural-urban relations. This study demonstrates a steady progression of events (affecting land, labor, and capital) that seems to have led toward symbiotic rural-urban integration, particularly in terms of land ownership and regionalized grain markets. But this progression also contained the seeds of conflict that threatened the dissolution of any rural-urban symbiosis. The seventeenth century saw a rapid takeover of the Iguala Valley by central highland entrepreneurs and by the encomendero of the principal valley community: Tepecuacuilco. By the end of this period, the encomendero line, now married into a mining family from Taxco, had acquired virtually uncontested control of the valley (over 150,000 ha), as central highland landowners abandoned their initiatives in the region. During the first half of the eighteenth century, this land passed into the hands of a miner, don José de la Borda, who was actively involved in obtaining low-priced maize for the Taxco mines and urban populace. With the stated goal of helping indigenous tenant farmers, de la Borda had by mid-

century expelled the last major rancher from the Iguala Valley. This move triggered massive migration of Indian peasants into the valley, where they established residence in dozens of newly founded tenant settlements (cuadrillas). In part the result of the increased demand that accompanied this demographic shift to the valley, in part the result of a boom in Taxco mining, and in part the result of the liberal-period surge in inter- and intracolonial commerce, merchant capital flowed into the northern Iguala Valley. Viewed from the perspective of a *longue durée*, the progression of events in this urban-rural environment—land acquisition by Taxco miners, immigration of indigenous peasants to the rural hinterland, and the influx of commercial capital to the northern valley—suggests a well-known pattern whereby an agrarian hinterland emerges next to and is then integrated into a market centered on an adjacent, food-deficient urban area. Indeed, by the late colonial period the principal factors of rural production were in place: land was concentrated in urban hands, wage labor could potentially be contracted by landowners (from the vast numbers of indigenous peasant migrants), and capital (the commercial capital brought into the Iguala Valley by entrepreneurs and merchants) was available for investment in agrarian production. Yet not only did rural wage labor fail to develop, but the hinterland's commercial elite, which controlled the agrarian economy, also quickly acquired the economic and political resources to resist unfavorable terms for the hinterland's integration into a regional grain market.

The denouement of a process that seemed headed toward the development of a prototypical solar-system economy of regional integration was, instead, the exacerbation of conflict over market structure as new tensions surfaced between rural and urban elites, each with their own agendas of economic development and their own discursive resources, which they found in either the new liberal political economy or the old moral economy of regionally controlled systems of guaranteed subsistence. This result exemplifies the inherent conflict of interest between rural and urban societies and suggests that direct integration requires town-dwelling elites to exercise either economic (higher prices) or political (structured markets) power over a hinterland while at the same time drawing on a political economic theory of grain marketing to support their efforts. When their rural counterparts have the politico-economic means and theoretical arguments to resist this power, as they did in the Iguala Valley, they can hinder integration into a vertical, urban-centered structure of control.

Thus the basic sequence of events at the core of this study of central Guerrero is land tenure, population movements, and the capitalization of a rural economy. And the major topics of analysis are the conflicting socioeconomic processes and discursive practices, particularly those involving spatial considerations, that wove through rural-urban relations. Yet the conscious choice to explore these issues and to organize this study around the relationship between spatial structures and spatial practices (such as land

acquisition, migration, and commerce) does not simply represent a desire to contribute to the literature on the political economy of space in a colonial society. It also makes a methodological statement, reflecting a belief in the importance of combining a political economic approach, which is necessary to establish the structure of constraints that often impinge on the actions of social groups and individuals, with an exploration of what is essentially a history of ideas, necessary to reveal the conflicting discursive practices (such as a moral or liberal approach to grain markets, or European perspectives on indigenous rights to *dominium* and colonists' rights to land) that were being articulated at any given moment in history and that provided the material for the rhetorical practices of social groups and individuals as they engaged each other and the state. Thus spatial practices can involve either the reconstruction of space (and place) through the movement of people and objects across a landscape, or it can involve political and discursive practices, such as the redefinition of administrative boundaries, or arguments involving rights over space, as occurred when regional authorities sought to exercise control over property rights to "private" grain within their jurisdictions.

I have suggested that the structure of this study has been "engineered," in the Realist tradition of authorial intervention, to communicate a certain perspective—both theoretical and methodological—on the interpretation and analysis of the spatial aspects of socioeconomic processes as they develop in colonial societies. One ramification of the chosen structure is that the book is not about any particular social group or economic sector. Rather, each particular process that I consider had its own salient actors. Land acquisition featured struggles between indigenous communities and colonial agrarian entrepreneurs, though the former often comprised individuals or factions who allied with colonists, and the latter were themselves often bitterly factionalized. Tenure arrangements responded to changes at various levels, from community demography to the ideology of property relationships to patterns of overseas trade. Migration and place making in new locales was dominated by the actions of peasants who left their home communities, and much of the tension that resulted concerned the efforts—by hacendados, colonial authorities, and indigenous villages—to control the resources, particularly tribute and labor, represented by these mobile individuals. The struggles and alliances that developed around migrants varied according to the identity of the dominant groups most adversely affected by their movement. At times covenants of accommodation among contending parties established an uneasy balance between spatial mobility and spatial stability. But in a colonial state in which control depended heavily on the fixation of persons in space, such symbiotic arrangements were inherently unstable. Trade revolved more heavily around the actions of the colonial elite, but here, too, the actions of itinerant peddlers and mule skinners were important in creating commercial networks that were less formalized

than those focused on urban centers or that revolved around the actions of highly capitalized merchants. Finally, the struggle over grain markets had both a spatial (rural versus urban) and a class (poor peasants and urban workers versus rich miners and rural merchants) dimension, although by the end of the colonial period class considerations were apparently beginning to predominate over those based on caste (as had perhaps been the case in early times) or on locality.

Given that I eschew a primary focus on a particular social group, whether one based on caste identity, on gender, or on relative position in webs of productive or commercial relations, the question arises as to how this book fits in with the historical perspective that received its strongest earliest articulation with Michelet and has since become a dominant trend in recent historical and anthropological literature: the study of "those who have suffered, worked, declined and died without being able to describe their sufferings." A concern with these subaltern groups has not simply been about a new subject of research and analysis; it has also brought into focus a concern with social processes that had hitherto received scant attention but have since emerged as central questions in historical and anthropological writings: resistance, survival, and agency. As a "spatial history," the present work deals with a wide range of social groups—elites and non-elites, colonists and Indians, landowners and peasant migrants—that includes many not normally associated with the literature on resistance, survival, and agency. Yet to differing degrees (the question of resistance less so than that of survival and agency), this book is relevant to these issues and so contributes to an understanding of the historical development of various social groups and collectivities in colonial New Spain.

The epigraph that opens this chapter was selected to problematize one aspect of studies that stress resistance, for it suggests that as we are "taught to feel . . . for the heroic artisan or the sentimental peasant" we are often taught to disparage, or neglect, "the peasant in all his coarse apathy, and the artisan in all his suspicious selfishness." One result of studies of resistance has been a zealous pursuit of the most active and socially conscious sectors of subaltern groups, particularly as the domain of the political has been fittingly expanded, a move that began with the works of Eric Hobsbawm and E. P. Thompson but that has continued, perhaps to a point of danger. At times the literature does not clearly distinguish resistance from acquiescence (which might just be strategized delay) and suggests that the potential to become a hero is latent in all those who are dominated. To the extent that social scientists accept resistance as the subtle undercurrent to daily existence, false consciousness threatens to disappear as an analytic category and the major question of rebellion has become *when*, not *why*.[25]

25. Stern (1987:9–10) notes the shift in focus as follows: "In this perspective, the relevant question becomes not why a politically dormant and traditionalist peasant mass suddenly became insurrectionary, but rather why, at specific moments, ongoing peasant resistance and self-defense increasingly took the form of collective violence against established authority." See

Much critical discussion has surrounded these issues, focusing on questions of intentionality and reflexive action, on factionalism within subaltern groups and peasant communities, and on the ambiguous motivation and meaning of much thought and action.[26] For these reasons, particularly because of the problem of documenting intention, in looking at spatial practices I have tended to avoid the language of resistance, though at the same time I recognize that such geographic activism often runs counter to the interests of the dominant political and economic elite. This is particularly true in regard to indigenous defense of community land and migration (or flight), both of which are actions that challenge, if not resist, the colonial spatial regime and social order. Yet here a paradox emerges, for migration, though at some level a challenge to colonial controls over indigenous society, also implies abandonment of community.[27] Resistance in one frame of action might entail surrender in another.

A related issue that has not been critically treated is that of survival insofar as it pertains to indigenous groups. E. P. Thompson once remarked, in reference to the liberal perspective on provisioning and subsistence needs, that whereas the invisible hand may balance the market in the long term, people live, and their needs must be met, in the short term. This points to a major problem in the literature on survival, one best exemplified by the subtitle to Farriss's influential book on the Maya under colonial rule: "The Collective Enterprise of Survival."[28] Corporate groups, cultural patterns, and collectivities might well survive in the long term, but, paraphrasing Thompson, people live (and die) in the short term. A historical study of many indigenous villages that exist today (though the definition and delimitation of such units is no easy task) reveals occasional periods of total abandonment of particular places and other times when a population has dipped to fewer than a dozen inhabitants.

Linked to the question of survival is that of the continuity of the unit of analysis, be it village, cultural patterns, or ethnic group. The linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, in talking of identity, noted that "if a street is demolished, then rebuilt, we say that it is the same street even though in a material sense, perhaps nothing of the old one remains. Why can a street be completely rebuilt and still be the same? Because it does not constitute a purely material entity."[29] One may take a similar approach, and pose a similar question, to the persistence of collective identities and corporate entities: if a village is

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also Scott (1990:chap. 4) for his treatment of false consciousness, in which resistance becomes almost an a priori condition of the dominated. A forceful critique is found in Gal (1995). Ortner (1995) pointedly discusses the problem of ambivalence in political action.

26. On community cohesion as a major factor in riot and collective violence, see Bohstedt (1983) and Magagna (1991). On the ambiguous nature of much social action, see Adas (1980), Gal (1995), and Ortner (1995) and various essays in Scott and Kerkvliet (1986).

27. See Farriss's (1978) discussion of flight and settlement patterns.

28. Farriss (1984).

29. Saussure (1959:108).

destroyed, and then rebuilt, can one say that it is the same village? A classic affirmative response might be that given that the village is a collective and corporate unit, it survives as a social institution beyond the death of its individual members. If one takes a formalist, Barthian perspective on group identity, which stresses boundary maintenance over substantive continuity, survival becomes a question of the permanence of divisions, which in colonial societies in particular may be determined as much by external powers of exclusion as by internally focused collective endeavors of inclusion.[30] Moreover, by working within an institutional and structural context, and in a long-term framework, social scientists and historians avoid the rather unpleasant material details of "collective survival" in the short term of individual life spans. Yet even at an institutional level, survival is problematic.

The term *survival* itself implies an original state of existence and perseverance over time. Yet as the historical evidence presented in chapters 6 and 7 demonstrates, indigenous community identity was being continually restructured and reproduced during the colonial period, occasionally being re-created by migrants to new locations. The emergence and construction of indigenous community identity was part of the spatial practices of Indian migrants, who were often fleeing their home village. Moreover, as I suggest, place making involves place breaking. A constant tension exists between new and old communities, between points of origin and points of destination. The case history of Palula (chapter 6) is an example. Here the original inhabitants were first forcibly relocated to their cabecera (head village) of Tepecuacuilco before fleeing to an outlying sujeto (subject village). The abandoned site of Palula was then occupied by migrants from still another head village, Oapan, who at first placed themselves under the tutelage of the Tepecuacuilco authorities and later began to assert their own patrimonial rights to the land at Palula.

Such situations bring into focus the problem, for it is unclear in what terms one can speak of the "survival" of communities like Palula. A detailed diachronic study (rather than a consideration of only the two endpoints of a process of change over time) reveals complex spatial practices and an ebb and flow of spatial structures—a sort of developmental cycle of community that is explored in chapter 6. Among other problematic examples of "survival" is that of Tuxpan, in the northern Iguala Valley, which was also resettled by migrants who were not descendants of the original inhabitants. This ambiguous situation is reflected in the two names of this small village that appear in the documentary record: Pueblo Nuevo (New Village) and Tuxpan (the prehispanic name). The latter is the one that survived, giving an illusion of continuity from the prehispanic period that would have been lost had the name Pueblo Nuevo fortuitously endured. Another example of discontinuity in indigenous village identity occurs in the case of Maxela, a

30. See Barth (1969).

sujeto of Tepecuacuilco that was abandoned for most of the colonial period, only to be reestablished on rented land by eighteenth-century migrants from the indigenous community of Ameyaltepec. In the twentieth century, various circumstances allowed Maxela residents to register their land as communal property, a regime usually reserved for indigenous villages able to produce a primordial title from the early colonial period. Thus Maxela acquired one of the most marked characteristics of indigenous identity (communal property) only as a result of the agrarian reform brought about by the Mexican Revolution of 1910. Its indigenous identity was not a matter of survival (for it was essentially "dead," i.e., unoccupied, from about 1595 to 1750) but, rather, the combined result of the spatial practices of indigenous migrants and their descendants and the changing parameters of national agrarian law. In sum, though the question of survival is not directly dealt with in this study, the spatial structures and processes that are explored are pertinent to this problem and the issues it raises, particularly the problem of structural continuity in a collectivity studied over a *longue durée*.

Finally, there is the question of structure and agency. In *The Road to Botany Bay*, Paul Carter offers an alternative to what he calls "imperial history," a history that "reduces space to a stage." Instead, he calls for an exploration of "the *intentional* world of active, spatial choices . . . [on] the spatial forms and fantasies through which a culture declares its presence."[31] The spatial history of colonization offered in the following pages has been inspired by Carter's interest and his own description of his work as a "spatial history." But the treatment here is different, much more concerned, for instance, with political economy and with detailed descriptions of the movement of people and objects through colonial space. An effort has also been made to tie this analysis more closely to the geographical literature on space and place.

This literature provides an ideal framework to explore the interaction of structure and agency precisely because it covers such a range of perspectives. At one end one finds the quintessential expression of a humanist geography that stresses the subjectively experienced and human aspects of place in the work of Yi-Fu Tuan, for whom place, defined by individual experience, becomes as much an ego-centered psychology as a social scientific concept.[32] For Tuan, regions depend "on the individual's consciousness and sense of self within society, and on her or his sense of unity with other people."[33] At the other end is positivist geography, with its neoclassical foundations and stochastic methodologies, represented by central place the-

31. Carter (1988); the first two quotes are from p. xvi, the third from p. xxii.
32. See the phenomenological approaches of Tuan and Relph (works cited in the bibliography). For an early assertion of the importance of humanistic geography, see Ley and Samuels (1978).
33. This description of Tuan's work is by Gilbert (1988:218).

ory and related trends in regional science.[34] Likewise, the study of the spatial aspects of trade covers widely divergent levels of analysis, from the study of peddlers and itinerant merchants who operate in the interstices of more formally structured systems to world-systems theory. An analysis of trade may range from a formal analysis of the decisions underlying the spatial trajectories of individual marketing to the structural developments and implications of exchange on a global stage.[35] And even in cartographic practice, most often the domain of state bureaus of organization and control or of landowners and cadastral agencies keen on asserting and documenting property rights to land, counter-strategies can be developed at local levels that challenge imposed definitions of spatial boundaries and territorial rights.[36] Yet severe limitations exist at both ends of the positivist-humanist continuum. While the humanistic approach (particularly that of Tuan) neglects the elements of power in geography, focusing instead on the spatial extension of meaningful experience, the positivist approach neglects experience and the identities and meanings that are forged between individuals and the places they inhabit, preferring a region defined and delimited either by shared characteristics (Richard Hartshorne's definition) or by patterned networks of relations among differentiated groups (as in locational theory). In exploring multifaceted aspects of spatial transformations, this book mediates between positivist and humanist geography and between structure and process. It explores agency while retaining a strong focus on structural constraints, which include the power to define and delimit space. Yet it is not simply that action, considered as spatial practices, takes place within spatial structures. The structural framework itself frequently changes and is under constant pressure from above and below.

In sum, although this book has been structured to highlight the constant tension between spatial structures and spatial practices, and between socioeconomic and discursive aspects of structure and agency, these issues are not discussed simply as part of an effort to contribute to a geographically based social science literature but, rather, to assert the importance of spatial patterns and processes in shaping the colonizing experience. In this

34. See the works of W. Alonso, Haggett, and Isard cited in the bibliography. Within anthropology C. Smith has been influential in disseminating the ideas of central place theory; see her cited works, particularly her two edited volumes (1976b, 1976c). Hassig (1985), like Smith a student of William Skinner, a pioneer in anthropological geography, used the geographical systems analysis of central place theory in his historical examination of changing market structures in pre- and postconquest central Mexico.

35. For peddlers, see Fontaine (1998) and Vassberg (1996:esp. chap. 2); also Glave (1989). For a formal analysis of itinerancy, see Plattner (1975). The literature on world-systems theory is vast, stemming particularly from the work of Immanuel Wallerstein. For a critical review, see Stern (1988).

36. For estate maps, see Buisseret (1996) and P. D. A. Harvey (1993); on state mapping projects and property relations, see Kain and Baigent (1992). See Peluso (1995) for the concept of "counter-mapping"; on the relationship of different cartographic traditions to different perceptions of space in an early colonial context, see Mundy (1996).

manner the present study may be considered a move that partially remedies what Edward Soja has called

[a] historicism of theoretical consciousness that . . . has tended to occlude a comparable critical sensibility to the spatiality of social life, a practical theoretical consciousness that sees the lifeworld of being creatively located not only in the making of history but also in the construction of human geographies, the social production of space and the restless formation and reformation of geographical landscapes: social being actively emplaced in space *and* time in an explicitly historical *and* geographical contextualization."[37]

Colonization and Spatial History

The title of this book asserts that it is a "spatial history" of a colonial society. This statement raises two points, one by negation and the other by affirmation. The first point is that this is not a regional but a *spatial* study. The reason for this conceptual distinction will be explained in the first part of this section. The second point is that this is a historical study of a *colonial* society. Again, there is a reason why a colonial society is of particular interest for spatial analysis and why a diachronic exploration of spatial structures and processes is so important in a colonial situation.

In the previous section, two contrasting approaches to region were presented: an experiential, humanistic geography that emphasizes the experience of place by individual human actors, and a positivistic geography that focuses on region as a heuristic tool, "a mental category to be employed in classifying or organizing geographical data."[38] The first approach, which I have linked to a Romantic vision, explores regionalism as a form of identity felt by its inhabitants, or at least manifested in some sort of private or public expression of meaning, often symbolically mediated. This involves a definition of region "as a specific set of cultural relationships between a group and particular places. It is based on a certain awareness among its inhabitants of their common culture and of their differences from other groups."[39] The second definition of region, which I have associated with a Realist literary perspective, involves an analytical abstraction from social processes (be they political, economic, or social) to a spatial, social scientific idiom. This perspective covers the neoclassical models of locational theory, the mode of production models of locality studies, and the processual models of structuration theory, all of which have one major point in common. They are little concerned with the cognitive aspects of place. Rather, their focus is on how social events play out within and create spatial systems, and how

37. Soja (1989:10–11).
38. Paasi (1986:116).
39. Gilbert (1988:210). For an attempt to define regional culture in Mexico, see Lomnitz-Adler (1991, 1992). See also n. 50 below.

these patterns may be recognized and categorized by social science research. These two approaches—cognitive and structural—suggest how regional studies might be pertinent to a history of colonial New Spain.

The utility of the experiential model depends on the degree to which regional space was a valid cognitive category pertinent to how colonial subjects identified themselves or interpreted the colonial landscape. In other words, did these individuals feel or think in regional terms? However, models that might be appropriate to understanding the development of a regional consciousness, such as the *genres de vie* (styles of living) concept of Paul Vidal de la Blache and the "imagined community" framework of Benedict Anderson, seem particularly inapt for colonial New Spain. The model suggested by the French geographer is most appropriate to undercapitalized rural societies, that is, societies characterized by a lack of productive and commercial relations that extend beyond the *pays*, considered to have emerged as "the integrated result of physical, historical, and sociocultural influences surrounding the human relationship to milieu in particular places." [40] Many factors influenced the development of this approach, which rejected the environmental determinism that had preceded it and embraced the Romantic vision of the particularities of places and their cultures. [41] Yet Vidal's model, which was essentially concerned with human-land relations, acquires validity only in the context of long-term occupation of specific regions, *pays*, that forged an identity through the repeated interaction of society and milieu.

For colonial New Spain, the question is whether this type of inchoate and historically based regional identity did emerge, that is, whether there were recognized regionally differentiated lifestyles or, at least, cognitive models shared by spatially contiguous social groups that prioritized place as the principal element of sociocultural identity. It seems that this was not the case, though the absence of such differentiation does not preclude the possibility that culturally based isoglosses for the colonial period have some validity for ethnohistorical study. The foci of identification for colonists might well have included allegiance to points of origin on the Iberian peninsula or to networks of kin and social contacts that had a spatial component. But there is little evidence that such sentiments were ever translated into anything approaching regional consciousness or spatial sentiments in the colony. The regional focus of indigenous society is equally hard to document, although, as I suggest in my discussion of indigenous efforts to reestablish rights to Palula, some sort of regional structure based on prehispanic pat-

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40. Buttimer (1978:60); see also Buttimer (1971).
41. Michelet was one of the major influences on Vidal; see Buttimer (1971:16–17). For an excellent discussion of nineteenth-century geography, important for its exploration of the links between geography and anthropology, see Livingstone (1992). One result of Vidal's impact was the emergence of a scholarly tradition in France especially devoted to "small-scale regional monographs of particular French *pays*"; Livingstone (1992:271).

terns of political authority might have continued into the early colonial period. But again, such systems are both hard to document and little studied.[42]

The regionalized antecedents of Spanish society did, however, have one undeniable impact on colonial society: the fragmentation that had once characterized peninsular law, customs, and traditions continued to form the bedrock of colonial legal culture (see chapter 3). The timeless quality of the Spanish legal system, with laws remaining "on the books" long after they had been nominally superceded by other legislative, judicial, and administrative decrees, in New Spain led to a system of regional law without regional society, unlike the situation that had evolved in the Old World. In this study, the most illustrative case of this tension between regional law and regional society is that which developed when Taxco authorities sought to extend their jurisdiction over the agrarian hinterland of the urban mining center so as to be able to take advantage of traditional rights that enabled provincial jurisdictions to inhibit the exportation of grain until local provisioning needs had been met. In other words, the urban authorities sought to mold regional spatial extension (in terms of politico-administrative authority) to take advantage of spatially circumscribed rights that originated in Western Europe before first Colbertian mercantilism and then absolutism had begun to forge a national space at the expense of provincial autonomy. Regionalization in this colonial case was not a historical pattern that emerged out of long-term evolution of society and milieu. Instead, it was a pragmatic discourse of regionalism in a colonial situation in which the historical geography of provincial administrative units reflected the impact of a wide range of factors (from prehispanic patterns of indigenous authority to early colonial encomienda and corregimiento assignments) that did not include the evolution of self-sufficient provincial systems salient in the consciousness of the region's inhabitants.

The regional identities perceived by Vidal de la Blache in France had developed over time as the result of continuous interaction between society and milieu: they emerged from the bottom up as part of an almost natural, or genetic, process of sociospatial evolution. A quite different model is that of the "imagined community," eloquently expressed by Anderson.[43] The importance of such symbolic representations of spatially based identities is lucidly presented by Anssi Paasi in a theoretical discussion of "the emergence of regions and the constitution of regional identity," a discussion indebted to the structuration model pioneered by Anthony Giddens and Allan Pred.[44] According to Paasi, the "institutionalization of a region is a process during which some specific level of the spatial structure becomes an estab-

42. The continuance of indigenous forms of political and social organization generally was at the level of the *āltepētl*; see among others Gibson (1952, 1964), Lockhart (1992), Haskett (1987, 1991a), García Martínez (1987, 1990), and Licate (1981).
43. Anderson (1991).
44. The quote is from the subtitle of Paasi (1986). See also Pred (1983, 1984, 1990) and Giddens (1984).

lished entity which is identified in different spheres of social action and con-
sciousness and which is continually reproduced in individual and insti-
tutional practices (e.g., economic, political, legal, educational, cultural,
etc.)."[45] Key to this process of regional development is the parallel forma-
tion of institutional shape and conceptual (symbolic) shape, "as the emer-
gence of institutions is naturally linked with the increasing employment of
the name and other territorial symbols and signs of the region."[46] Thus
whatever pattern of territorial or politico-administrative segmentation of
space might exist (and it would be rare for state societies to lack these divi-
sions), institutionalization occurs only with the emergence of a series of
symbolic representations and cultural mechanisms oriented to the repro-
duction of a social consciousness of regional identities. In this sense a region
is clearly an "imagined community" for, "in fact, all communities larger
than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are
imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/
genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined."[47] Such symbolic
and sentimental representations of regions might emerge in many ways: in
regional names (such as Costa Chica, Costa Grande, Tierra Caliente, and
La Montaña, to name but a few that are documented for postindependence
Guerrero); in regional literatures such as novels and newspapers that pro-
moted a consciousness and feeling for the *patria chica*; and in educational
programs (including museums, maps, and public architecture) that focus on
and teach about patterns of regional differentiation, particularly in the cul-
tural realm.[48]

   In New Spain, however, many of these symbolic elements and cultural
patterns of representation seem to have been absent. Administrative units
certainly did exist, but it is hard to imagine any particular attachment to
these provincial units; they do not seem to be particularly salient for indi-
vidual or group identity. Although a few regional names do date to the co-
lonial period (such as the Bajío), names (and nicknames) for vernacular

   45. Paasi (1986:105).
   46. Ibid., 126.
   47. Anderson (1991:6).
   48. I have not encountered in colonial literature any of the regional names for what is now
the state of Guerrero. Likewise, regional mass media, such as newspapers, do not seem to have
existed in Guerrero before the late nineteenth century, and regional texts, such as those pro-
duced by Ignacio Altamirano (1834–93), were likewise a postindependence phenomenon. On
naming and vernacular regions in general, see Jordan (1978), Shortridge (1984, 1985), and
Zelinsky (1980). For the importance of the novel in regional identity, see Gilbert (1960). For
the regional novel in Latin America, see Alonso (1990); also Jordan (1994a, 1994b). Ander-
son (1991:29–32, 48) notes that the first Spanish-American (not *regional* Spanish-American)
novel was published in 1816. On the role of newspapers for creating "a feeling of together-
ness," transmitting "ideal criteria for regional identification," and maintaining "the elements
of the structures of expectations" in regions, see Paasi (1986; citations from p. 129). I have not
been able to document any colonial newspapers in what is now the state of Guerrero; Ander-
son (1991:61), who treats of nationalism, not regionalism, in the Spanish Americas, notes that
till the end of the seventeenth century, presses in New Spain existed only in Mexico City.

regions and their inhabitants are notably absent. For example, one can scarcely imagine late colonial citizens identifying themselves as hailing from the Costa Chica or La Montaña, as many individuals from Guerrero would do today. Likewise, social concern with regional differentiation and self-conscious regional identification seems not to have emerged in Spanish America until after independence, perhaps sometime in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. In part this occurred under the influence of European historical and literary concepts; but in part the postindependence political fragmentation of Mexico and the emergence of regional caudillos whose core power bases were often spatially circumscribed also played a role.

Thus in the sense of a *genre de vie* or of an imagined community, *region* seems to have had little relevance for the inhabitants of colonial New Spain, whose spatial history was truncated at both ends. Colonization began with an abrupt break of many patterns of prehispanic geography,[49] and colonizers in New Spain had neither the history nor the time to forge the regional systems and spatial bonds that would have created the peninsular *genres de vie* that they had experienced. And at the other extreme, the colonial period came to an end before many of the social and cultural mechanisms for imagining community at a regional level (between village and nation) were in place. But if region as an experiential element had little significance for New Spain, the question arises as to whether it has any heuristic or analytical value for historians studying this colonial society. The answer is undoubtedly yes in one sense. As a category for "classifying or organizing geographical data," regions are "good to think"; they are a useful analytical tool for exploring and understanding structures and processes that characterize or extend over areas within a nation.[50] The utility of the concept, however, is often challenged on two grounds: that regions cannot be unambiguously delimited and that they are difficult, if not impossible, to precisely define.

As the geographer Doreen Massey has noted, there are no simply spatial processes, but only "particular social processes operating over space."[51]

49. Gibson (1964) showed that many of the postconquest units (corregimientos and parishes, in particular) were built upon prehispanic sociospatial relations (cf. Licate 1981; Lockhart 1991b). Yet for the most part these were the *āltepētl* and not any larger units that might have existed.

50. See Van Young (1992a), who offers an excellent introduction and analysis of regional studies in general, and those of Mexico in particular. The collection of essays in Van Young (1992b) is an excellent introduction to the literature and the problem of the region in Mexican history, from the colonial period to the present. The work of Lomnitz-Adler (1991, 1992), like that of C. Smith and of Hassig (see their works cited in the bibliography), is an interesting attempt to fuse a more empirically based regional science with concerns over patterns of spatial variations in culture. The shared interest of Lomnitz-Adler, Smith, and Hassig in spatial studies is a legacy of their professor at Stanford, William Skinner, a pioneer in this field. For anthropological studies of region, the two edited volumes of Smith (1976b, 1976c) remain an excellent introduction. See also chap. 6, n. 6. However, perhaps the clearest antecedent and inspiration for this present study is Larson (1998).

51. Massey (1984:11). Here space is like time; paraphrasing Grotius (and substituting *space* for the original *time*): "for space, of its own nature, has no effective power; for nothing

The "problem" of clear-cut regional boundaries can, therefore, easily be considered a more circumscribed statement of a problem common to the geography of all social processes: the delimitation, both in terms of sociocultural attributes and spatial extension, of the unit of analysis. In certain cases, such as those relating to zones of politico-administrative authority, regions are easy to delimit, though even here questions of interstitial and extraterritorial relations make it difficult to defend the idea that power, in any meaningful social scientific sense, is coterminous with formal jurisdiction. In other cases boundaries are even more elusive. If space is considered a simple dimension of social structure and process, anthropological solutions to the "boundary problem," such as those developed in network theory, can be applied, though not without difficulty.[52] Delimitation in such studies emerges as the concomitant to a statistical analysis of such factors as the intensity of social ties and relations. For decades the issue of the geographical extensions and boundaries of social processes has been a thorn in the side of historical and anthropological theory and practice.

A more serious problem with region as a unit of analysis concerns its flexibility as a heuristic concept, its ability to be applied to a multitude of research domains. Regions can be climatological and topological, representative of modes of production or webs of distribution, coterminous with informal networks of political power or formal units of administrative authority. They can be cultural or cognitive, historical or imagined. Regions, in these senses, seem to reach their outer limits at points where the phenomena being studied become too thin to interest the researcher. Many scholars have pointed to this malleability as central to the heuristic value of the regional concept. Hartshorne, for example, states simply that "a 'region' is an area of specific location which is in some way distinctive from other areas and which extends as far as that distinction extends. The nature of the distinction is determined by the student using the term; if not explicitly stated, it must be judged from the context."[53] Bryan Roberts, a contemporary scholar of regionalization in Mexico, has made a similar observation:

The definition [of a region] depends on the aim of the study; whether, for instance, it be to understand the operation of a national economy, of a nation's political structure, or its degree of social heterogeneity. In historical analysis, including the analysis of contemporary trends, one of the most useful ways to use the concept of region is heuristic, in which the region does not have clear geographical boundaries. The areas included within a region may both alter over time or change depending on which aspect of the region is chosen for study.[54]

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is done by space, though everything is done in space"; cited in Johnson (1950:336; see chap. 3, n. 117).

52. Here I am thinking of the analysis suggested by Barnes (1969) and Mitchell (1969a); see also the other essays in Mitchell (1969b).

53. Hartshorne (1959:130), cited in Paasi (1986:116).

54. Roberts (1992:228).

Therefore, the problems of delimitation and definition go hand in hand, as does their solution: by establishing the definition of a region in accord with the "aim of the study," the problem of limits is made manageable, if not solved, for practical, research purposes. Yet as increasingly varied social processes become the object of study, the spatial plane appears more variegated, and regions proliferate along with the structures and processes that define them. Even within a specific domain such as that of markets and trade, classes, castes, and commodities might all play out differently in the spatial dimension. This variability does not mean that market systems do not exist, but that in certain contexts (and colonial New Spain might be one) the interweaving of spatial structures (which include the geographies of legal and customary rights) with spatial practices might be a more promising line of exploration than that of regional systems, even in the realm of markets and trade.

It is in regard to markets and trade, in fact, that the regional nature of colonial New Spain has been so strongly stated, though perhaps so weakly documented. Many previous studies of the economy of New Spain have pointed directly to this domain as quintessentially "regionalized," primarily the result of high transportation costs that hindered the formation of a national market. These issues are explored extensively in chapters 8 and 9, which suggest the necessity of studying the ways in which different commodities are moved through different spaces by different groups of people. This spatial study of material exchange is an implicit critique of what has been a dominant concern in the historical geography of commerce and trade: the question of national versus regional markets. In Europe, national market integration was achieved in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in part as regional barriers were attacked by an absolutist state convinced of the necessity of a centralized economic and fiscal policy and of the advantages of free trade and open markets (interpreted in accord with liberal eighteenth-century political economy). Yet as argued below, in colonial New Spain market regionalization was not simply a vestige of past systems to be overcome, but, as exemplified by Taxco, it emerged as a defensive reaction of provincial urban elites to the threat posed by national integration, particularly of grain markets. Another common perspective on colonial markets has focused on urban centers as the principal poles of attraction for solar-system markets. But other approaches might prove useful: an exploration of marketing patterns from the rural perspective of the Iguala Valley, for example, reveals a decided reluctance of rural elites to market produce in regional centers that were not competitive with more distant, and more lucrative, outlets. Particularly in regard to maize distribution, this tension over market structure between urban miners and rural agrarian entrepreneurs was exacerbated by two additional factors. For miners maize was both food for workers and fodder for animals. It was a cost of production, and thus market competitiveness (i.e., higher prices) had a direct and detri-

mental effect on the economic viability of the major urban industry. For the major hinterland merchant, moreover, maize was used to maintain a highly capitalized transport enterprise, which had developed in response to shifting patterns of intercolonial trade.

This section has explored several basic premises in historical geography as they pertain to the situation in New Spain. The first is that *region* as a conscious experience of place was absent from the colonial ontology: regional sentiments that might have existed were destroyed, sentiments that might have developed were inchoate, and sentiments that might have been fomented were in embryo. The second is that region as a heuristic device "to be employed in classifying or organizing geographical data" is useful only after a simplification of the range of the "social processes operating over space" that are the object of study. By exploring the spatial aspects of a wide range of social events (land takeover, migration, and exchange being the most fundamental in this study), it is difficult to maintain region as an analytical tool except in a most general sense. Thus, although *region* is used as a term of reference in this book, it should be understood not as a formal or functional spatial unit, but only in the most general terms as an area of focused interest.[55]

I have suggested that this study be considered a spatial and not a regional study and that spatial history is a particularly fruitful way to explore the social dynamics of a *colonial* society such as New Spain. This approach reflects the belief that colonization develops and plays itself out in myriad conflicts over spatial patterns and that a history and exploration of these struggles—their basis and justification, their development and partial resolution, and their continual resurgence and reformulation according to the changing structures of colonial society—provides a necessary complement to understanding the political economy of colonial societies.

For many reasons an exploration of the spatial dimension of New World colonization is a rich area of study. For example, many of the most contentious issues of the early contact period can be considered geographical in a comprehensive sense of the term. An initial debate within the Spanish state and church over the rights of infidels to *dominium*, which included the general issue of indigenous sovereignty and territorial rights, developed into more specific debates over property rights on a case-by-case basis in which space (particularly the distance between indigenous village and colonial agrarian enterprises) was a prime consideration. The sixteenth century also represented a period of tension between conflicting cultures of territoriality and property rights as well as among contending conceptions of space itself.[56] Another arena of struggle concerned settlement. In the second half of this same century, the crown undertook an extensive program of forced

55. For a concise, Durkheimian definition of formal and functional regions, see Van Young (1992a:7, n. 9). A formal region is defined by similarity of features within a given space; a functional region is defined by the interdependence of various elements within a given space.

56. For the former, see chap. 3; for the latter, see esp. Mundy (1996).

relocation of increasingly decimated indigenous villages, a restructuring of rural space that was partly motivated by a pragmatics of conquest (to facilitate the religious conversion and secular administration of the indigenous population) and partly by a belief that equated urban settlement with rational civilization.[57] Finally, the early colonial period was marked by a tributary system characterized not simply by state efforts to extract wealth from newly conquered lands but also by meticulous control over distribution and exchange. Old European laws against regrating and forestalling were transferred to the New World in an effort to promote direct marketing of agrarian produce, mostly grain. But other colonial forms of direct state intervention over the spatial dimensions of markets and trade also developed, including viceregal administration of crown and encomendero tribute, as the crown would order tribute maize to be taken and sold in the food-deficient mining towns of central New Spain (see chapter 10). These were only the earliest and most striking examples of what may be referred to as a conquest of space, not simply through physical occupation but also through policies affecting how space, place, territory, property, settlement, and exchange were defined and delimited.

Spatial considerations are also important for understanding the late colonial period. The final half-century before independence witnessed a resurgence in the administration and restructuring of colonial space, and policy shifts were paralleled by the increasingly complex spatial practices of the colonial population, both indigenous and non-indigenous. For example, the Bourbon state undertook a series of administrative reforms to centralize and rationalize the administration of the colonies; many of these can be explored and analyzed in their spatial dimension. Among these changes was the restructuring of the fiscal branch of colonial administration after the visita of José de Gálvez. This restructuring has often been viewed as an element of the rationalization and centralization of politico-administrative control: jurisdictional boundaries of tax districts (alcabalatorías) were redrawn, and the tax farms that had dominated collection were replaced, in 1777, with direct administration by crown officials who perceived a portion of the taxes collected (usually 14 percent) as salary. Yet if these measures are viewed in strictly fiscal terms, as an effort to increase crown revenues, the significant spatial implications of such restructuring would be slighted. Before centralization, provincial administration of the alcabala (sales tax) was an important weapon in molding the shape of interregional exchange; the relative strictness of localized taxation affected marketing patterns, as merchants were attracted to districts with favorable schedules or policies.[58] Therefore centralization, by affecting a certain level of provincial auton-

57. On the congregación program, see Gerhard (1975, 1977) and García Martínez (1987:passim). On the planning and design of the nucleated towns of forced resettlement, see Crouch, Garr, and Mundigo (1982); see also Rama (1996:chap. 1).

58. For this reason corporate groups within tax districts would often bid for the right to collect the alcabala. The assignment of a tax farm to entrepreneurial businessmen, who at

omy, had an impact beyond state revenue: it fomented new patterns of lo-cal political tensions and interregional exchange. Many other changes dur-ing the late colonial period had profound effects on the spatial dimension of New Spain. The abolition of a prohibition on intercolonial trade generated a sudden and dramatic surge in the importation of Guayaquil cacao (from Ecuador) through the Pacific coast port of Acapulco. And the destruction of sugar plantations in Santo Domingo in the 1790s not only created an inter-national demand that was met to a great degree by expanded production and commercialization of sugar in New Spain but also set in motion events within the colony that apparently led to shifts in patterns of regional pro-duction and interregional exchange.

Awareness of these events is certainly nothing novel. Most any study of Bourbon administrative reform, of sugar production in colonial America, or of cacao trade between the southern and northern hemispheres would cover these developments. Likewise, studies of the early colonial period inevitably mention the congregación, or forced resettlement, program; and more spe-cialized articles and books have dealt with grain marketing and legislation. What is novel in the present study is its primary focus on the interaction of spatial structures and spatial practices, and on the spatial conflicts engen-dered by colonization, as the common thread linking quite diverse events—from state dictates to indigenous identity—from the sixteenth to early nine-teenth centuries.

The Möbius Strip: Conclusion

The administrative apparatus of the European colonizing state was often concerned with questions of categorization and classification, of terri-torialization and geography, of administration and trade. It inevitably came into conflict with autochthonous society and culture, while forging patterns that were novel within the arena of Western "civilization." Moreover, given that so much of colonial development was new, the spatial patterns that emerged often reflected a high degree of agency—of colonists and colonial subjects—more so than would occur in a society with a long tradition of more formalized and institutionalized geographic units and a greater cog-nitive saliency of spatialized identities.

The colonization of New Spain occurred during a period flanked by two major debates with profound implications for the geography of conquest and colonization. The earlier debate concerned both the rights of infidels to dominium and the proper relationship between Catholic and non-Catholic groups. Each of these issues achieved unique expression in the New World. For example, the question of indigenous political and property rights (of

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times lived outside the jurisdiction of their tax farm, inevitably led to conflict between local business and outside speculative interests.

territorialization in its broadest manifestation) was embedded in contemporary political and religious struggles on the European continent, although the newly conquered domains and colonists' demands created a distinct context for Old World legal discourse. And unlike previous patterns of interaction between conqueror and conquered, in New Spain the two-republic system developed as a unique mechanism to erect political and geographic barriers between one group and the other. The later debate revolved around late eighteenth-century developments in liberal political economy and the emergence of the absolutist European nation-state, both of which had profound implications for spatial manifestations of society as it related to questions of trade, markets, administrative jurisdictions, and political authority. As Colbertian mercantilism, physiocracy, and liberalism grabbed hold of political economic discourse in Europe, new definitions of space, particularly economic space, emerged. The colonial experience was ending just as liberal political economy was asserting itself, along with absolutism, as the dominant trend in state formation and economic exchange. As a consequence, the principal protagonists of colonial society were able to articulate their demands in competing discourses, none of which had yet achieved unchallenged ascendancy in official policies. Thus from its incipient stages to its final decades, Spanish colonization of the New World was to a great extent a spatial enterprise.

It is these geographic concerns—and in the end a reluctance to recognize in this study any clear-cut separation between one spatial unit and another, between structure and process, between political and moral economy, and between institutional authority and individual agency—that gave rise to the metaphor of the title: the Möbius strip, a mathematical concept that creates the illusion of a dimensionality where it is in effect nonexistent. This trope suggests the futility of pursuing any particular path of analysis under the assumption that other contrary concerns will remain safely tucked away on a continually hidden and not particularly relevant underside. As with the Möbius strip, if one pursues any line of thought and investigation long enough, one will eventually wind up facing structures and issues that initially appeared to be located on the other side of seemingly impermeable boundaries.

The metaphor relates, as well, to other aspects of structure and process that have been mentioned in this introduction: the "psychological ambivalence and social complexity" of agentivity; the malleability of the region as an analytic and heuristic concept; and the complex interplay between factors of production (land, labor, and capital), political economic ideology, and the cognitive orientations of individuals and groups.

Yet while this book represents an effort to explore a variety of social structures and processes in their spatial dimensions, the multifaceted approach to political economy pulls against an effort to delimit the geographical scope of study. The approach I take embraces the sentiment that, as the

geographer Massey has noted, there are no simply spatial processes, but only "particular social processes operating over space."[59] And it asserts that the space that these processes occupy is in constant flux, a ubiquitous bone of contention between social groups and individual actors at times in conflict and at times simply differing—in histories and identities, in structures of feeling and patterns of residence, in specialized production and webs of exchange. This book, then, is a study of how space was experienced and constructed, how conflicts in this realm were created and resolved, and how, most basically, the colonial process can be approached as a spatial history.

59. See p. 21 at n. 51 supra.