HOJAS VOLANTES: JOSE GUADALUPE POSADA,
THE CORRIDO, AND THE
MEXICAN REVOLUTION

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

Melody Mock, B.F.A.
Denton, Texas
August, 1996
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This thesis examines the imagery of José Guadalupe Posada in the context of the Mexican Revolution with particular reference to the *corrido* as a major manifestation of Mexican culture. Particular emphasis is given to three *corridos*: "La Cucaracha," "La Valentina," and "La Adelita."

An investigation of Posada's background, style, and technique places him in the tradition of Mexican art. Using examples of works by Posada which illustrate Mexico's history, culture, and politics, this thesis puts Posada into the climate of the Porfiriato and Revolutionary Mexico. After a brief introduction to the *corrido*, a stylistic analysis of each image, research into the background of the song and subject matter, and comments on the music draw together the concepts of image, music, and text.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Mexican corrido, printed in the form of a broadside ballad, is a manifestation of Mexican culture which incorporates image, music, and text to form a language understood by Mexicans of all classes. The printmaker José Guadalupe Posada (1852-1913) illustrated numerous corridos representing Mexican life, as well as thousands of other broadsides and journals. Distributed as hojas volantes, or "flying leaves," Posada’s prints, which satirized and glorified people of all classes, accompanied the rhymed verse of the corrido.

Circulating throughout most of Mexico, Posada’s corrido prints were distributed by corridistas, musicians who traveled from one market to another. While singing the corridos, the corridistas sold cheaply printed broadsides with lyrics to their songs illustrated by Posada’s engravings. The corrido served as an audiovisual method of communication: as people heard the music, they looked at the art and lyrics of the broadside. Not only did text, image, and music rely upon each other in the corrido, but the artist, writer, printer, and musician were also intrinsically related.

Although Posada’s work is housed in museums today, during his lifetime those who acquired his broadsides were common people who were the semiliterate levels of urban and rural society. The original audience for Posada’s work on broadsides were those who listened to the
corridistas at the markets: the poor people of the pueblos who, for the most part, could not read and bought the corridos for a few centavos to look at the illustrations. In a concentrated and highly expressive form, Posada gave back to the pueblos what he gathered from the people and their environment.¹

During the Mexican Revolution (1910-1919), the corrido expanded to represent "the heartbeat of the Mexican community."² Posada's illustrations accompanied corridos which addressed subjects such as the entry of a presidential candidate into Mexico City, labor strikes, fuel shortages, soldiers and heroes such as Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata, and soldaderas, women who took part in the Revolution as soldiers and camp followers.

The corrido, which reached its high point during the Revolution, is still available and sung today. I remember seeing a man selling corridos outside of the supermarket in south Texas where I grew up. I also learned the lyrics to corridos such as "La Cucaracha," "La Valentina," "La Adelita," and "Rosita Alvirez," songs which are familiar to many in Latino culture on both sides of the border today. Corridos are also still sung at funerals to commemorate a person's life.

This thesis will look at Posada's graphic works within the context of the revolutionary corrido and thus reposition the artist's work into


²Elizabeth Salas, Soldaderas in the Mexican Military (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1990), 89.
its original place in Mexican society. Events leading up to the Mexican Revolution can be followed by looking at images by Posada which accompanied newspaper articles, broadsides, and corridos. Posada's position as chronicler of Mexican culture and politics emphasizes a need for social and political interpretations of his work. In addition, three Revolutionary corridos illustrated by Posada, "La Cucaracha," "La Adelita," and "La Valentina" (Figures 1, 2, and 3) will be analyzed, looking at the connection between the image, music, and text, and subsequent manner of distribution.

Posada's Background

Born in Aguascalientes, Mexico on February 2, 1852 to parents of Indian descent, José Guadalupe Ruiz Aguilar Posada learned to read and write at an elementary school run by his older brother José Cirilo (1839-1894). Basic design skills were developed at his uncle's pottery workshop and Posada learned to draw at the Municipal Academy of Drawing. At the age of fifteen, Posada was registered as a painter in a general census of the area of Aguascalientes. He was trained as an illustrator at the workshop of José Trinidad Pedroza in 1868 and there learned the technique of lithography.

Posada's first job as an artist had political overtones. Trinidad

3 Records such as birth, death, and baptism certificates and marriage licences of the Posada family as well as a family tree and photographs of the places in which Posada lived and worked were published in Alejandro Topete del Valle, José Guadalupe Posada: Prócer de la Gráfica Popular Mexicana (Mexico City: Edición del Seminario de Cultura Mexicana, 1957).
Pedroza campaigned for local government and was active in opposition to the influential Colonel Jesus Gómez Portugal. He helped write and print a periodical called *El Jicote* (*The Wasp*) which opposed the local *cacique*, or landowner. Lithographic caricatures in the paper were rendered by Posada. When the political campaign came to an end in 1872 and his party lost, Pedroza moved to León, Guanajuato. Joined by Posada, he set up a printing and lithograph workshop.4

When Pedroza returned to Aguascalientes in 1873, Posada was left in charge of the workshop. Several Posada illustrations signed "*Posada y Hno.*" ("Posada and Bro.") from this time indicates that one of his brothers was working with him.5 Posada married the 16-year-old María de Jesús Vela in 1875 and became sole owner of the workshop in 1876. He created images for local printing houses and numerous religious images as well as cigar and cigarette labels which were "delightful vignettes abounding in arabesques and vegetables."6 He was also appointed as "practical" lithography teacher at the León secondary school. Rafael Carrillo found in the school archives that "Posada was appointed from April 4, 1883 until May 15, 1884 and was paid 8 pesos 9 centavos for the first fortnight, with a monthly salary of

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15 pesos and no entitlement to holiday pay." Enrique Aranda, one of Posada's students, described him as "a modest man who dressed as was considered to be correct at that time." Aranda watched Posada working in his shop, "busily occupied with some item in a wide variety of commissions: vignettes, diplomas, advertisements, and religious images."  

In 1888, Posada moved to Mexico City. Speculation is that his move was due to the death of family members and the loss of his workshop in the 1887 flood of Leon. Jean Chariot related that the widow of Antonio Vanegas Arroyo had recalled Posada's story: "in the floods of León in 1887, many members of his family drowned, . . . carried past him by the churning waters [they cried] 'Save us, Don José,' until they sank."  

Before moving to Mexico City Posada had become acquainted with the writer and publisher Ireneo Paz (1836-1924), grandfather of the poet Octavio Paz. Some of the periodicals published by Ireneo Paz in Mexico City which were illustrated by Posada included La Patria Ilustrada (illustrated during the years 1886-1890), La Revista de Mexico (1889-91), the fashion magazine La Estación, and the weekly El Ahuizote

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7 Carrillo, Posada and Mexican Engraving, 23.

8 Enrique O. Aranda interviewed in 1962 by Rafael Carrillo, Posada and Mexican Engraving, 23.

9 Jean Charlot, "José Guadalupe Posada: Printmaker to the Mexican People," Magazine of Art 38 (January 1945), 19.

10 Octavio Paz, born in 1914, received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1990.
in addition to numerous books, calendars, and seasonal publications.\textsuperscript{11} The dates when Posada illustrated *La Patria Ilustrada* (1886-1890) indicate that he may have illustrated Paz's publications before actually moving to Mexico City.

Posada was soon able to open his own workshop, first on Cerrada de Santa Teresa Street, then at No. 5 Santa Inés Street (now called Moneda).\textsuperscript{12} Posada produced images for at least twenty-three different periodicals. He illustrated publications such as the dailies *Gil Blas*, *El Popular* (1897-1907), *El Amigo del Pueblo* (1897), and *El Argos* (1903-04); the weeklies *Gil Blas Cómico* (1893-96), *La Patria Ilustrada* (1886-90), *El Fandango* (1890-92; 1895), *La Risa del Popular* (1897-98), *Revista de México* (1889-91), *El Chisme* (1899-1910), *El Diablito Rojo* (1900-10), *El Paladin* (1901-10), *La Guacamaya* (1902-11), *El Padre Padilla* (1908), *San Lunes* (1909), and publications which appeared irregularly such as *La Gaceta Callejera* (*Street Gazette*) (1892-94).\textsuperscript{13}

Posada soon joined the team of writers and engravers at the publishing house of Antonio Vanegas Arroyo, located around the corner from Posada's workshop. Arroyo's publications were circulated around most of Mexico and other parts of North America. In addition to the *Gaceta Callejera*, Vanegas Arroyo produced thousands of commercial advertisements, children's stories, songbooks, history lessons written by

\textsuperscript{11}Carrillo, *Posada and Mexican Engraving*, 25-29; Tyler, *Posada's Mexico*, 303. The dates are from Tyler's appendix of newspapers illustrated by Posada.

\textsuperscript{12}Carrillo, *Posada and Mexican Engraving*, 29.

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., 30; Tyler, *Posada's Mexico*, 303.
Heriberto Frias, images of saints and heroes, card games, recipes, love letters and business letters, oraciones (prayer sheets), and religious pamphlets. Small pamphlets containing popular tales, songs, and verses were called chapbooks. Images were printed on broadsides illustrating current events, verses, songs, or corridos. Satirical skeleton images called calaveras were produced for the Día de los Muertos, or the Day of the Dead, celebrated in Mexico on November 2. The calaveras were accompanied by verses making fun of famous people, addressing them as though they were dead.\textsuperscript{14}

A self-portrait of Posada in Arroyo's pressroom accompanied an advertisement for the publisher (Figure 4). Wearing a visor and a printer's apron and standing in front of the printing press amid bundles of broadsheets and pamphlets, Posada hands a proof sheet to his employer. Chariot points out that wearing the green visor and the large apron of the printer identifies Posada as a craftsman, rather than an artist, who would have worn a smock.\textsuperscript{15} Listing a variety of subjects available from the print shop of A. Vanegas Arroyo, the advertisement indicates Posada's versatility as an illustrator:

(Founded in the year 1880 of the nineteenth century)
This long-established firm stocks a varied and select Assortment of Songs for the current year,

\textsuperscript{14}An excellent reference for Mexico's Day of the Dead is Elizabeth Carmichael and Chloe Sayer, \textit{The Skeleton at the Feast: The Day of the Dead in Mexico} (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991). An interview with Arsacio Vanegas Arroyo, grandson of Posada's publisher, is found on pp. 124-130.

Collections of Greetings, Tricks, Puzzles, Games, Cookbooks,
Recipes for Making Candies and Pastries,
Models of Speeches, Scripts for Clowns, Patriotic Speeches,
Plays for Children or Puppets, and Charming Stories.

The New Oracle,
or the Book of the Future,
Rules for Telling the Cards,
The New Mexican Fortune Teller,
Black and White Magic,
or the Book of Sorcerers.\textsuperscript{16}

Contemporaries of Posada were Manuel Alfonso Manilla (1830-1895?)
and his son Manuel, who initially held seniority as engravers in Arroyo's
shop.\textsuperscript{17} When he began working for Arroyo, Posada's printmaking
style changed from fine lithography to a coarser relief cut used by the
Manillas. Although Posada first copied Manilla's style, he soon exceeded
Manilla.\textsuperscript{18}

Due to a similarity in style and lack of signatures, it is possible
that some of the images attributed to Posada were created by the
Manillas. According to Ron Tyler, "it is now clear that Posada's
etchings and engravings probably numbered fewer than estimated and
that many of the best known images are the works of Manilla and other
artists."\textsuperscript{19} For example, the same image of the military leader Macario


\textsuperscript{17}Rafael Carrillo assigns dates for the senior Manilla as "1830-
1890?" and Joyce Waddell Bailey wrote that he died after June 14, 1897.
Jean Charlot stated that Manilla died of typhoid in 1895. Confusion may
also be due to the fact that there were two Manuel Manillas. Carrillo,
\textit{Posada and Mexican Engraving}, 68; Joyce Waddell Bailey, "The Penny
Press," in Ron Tyler, ed., \textit{Posada's Mexico}, 111; Jean Charlot, "Manuel

\textsuperscript{18}Tyler, \textit{Posada's Mexico}, 31, 297.

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., 297.
Romero reproduced on two different broadsides in Posada's Mexico is first attributed to Manuel Manilla and then to Posada. However, states that Manilla's "figures seem to represent coarser people; they are neither as delicately nor as facilely drawn as Posada's and the whole composition seems to have a stiffness about it that characterizes Manilla's work." There is also often confusion as to whether authors are referring to the senior Manilla or his son.

Scholars do not agree on the number of images created by Posada; estimates range from a conservative 1600 to 20,000. Thomas Gretton calculated only 1600 images "plausibly attributable to Posada," although "doubtless many more of these would be brought to light through a systematic survey of the periodical literature published in Mexico City between 1898 and 1913." Hannes Jahn estimated 10,000; Diego Rivera claimed 15,000; Roberto Berdecio and Stanley Appelbaum 20,000.

José Guadalupe Posada died at the age of 61 on January 20, 1913 at his home at No. 6 Calle de la Paz. Only one of the three neighbors who certified his death knew how to sign his name; the state paid for a

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20 See figures 8 and 9 in Tyler, Posada's Mexico, 149.

21 Ibid., 193.


sixth class burial.\textsuperscript{24} Although little was left behind which might suggest clues about Posada's personal life, he was remembered by Don Blas Vanegas Arroyo, the middle son of Posada's publisher. He spoke about Posada as "an amiable man, already bald, with a fringe of white hair around his smooth dark skull." Interviewed by Anita Brenner in 1929, Don Blas said that Posada:

was very industrious. He began to work at eight o'clock in the morning and worked until seven at night. My father would enter the shop (we set up a shop for him after he had worked a while with us) with whatever he wanted to print, and say, 'Señor Posada, let's illustrate this,' and Posada would read it and while he was reading would pick up his pen and say, 'What do you think about this little paragraph.' and he would dip his pen into the special ink he used and then give the plate an acid bath and it was finished. He got three pesos a day whatever he did, and in that time it was a lot because whoever had as much as seventy-five pesos a month was at least a general. Posada was very good-humored and peace-loving. He hated quarrels, and treated everybody well. He was no snob.\textsuperscript{25}

Another Posada anecdote is from 1929 in which Rubén M. Campos describes meeting Posada in his workshop:

He was a burly, thick-set man with the appearance of a pure-blood Indian, of such manual dexterity in his trade that, while conversing with the sketcher Nicolás Urquieta who had taken me to meet the engraver, the latter occasionally cast a rapid glance in my direction while he worked on a block of wood with a sharp knife. He suddenly stood up, went over to a small hand press, inked a roller and ran off a caricature of my emaciated, beardless person which was so true to life that the three of us roared with laughter.\textsuperscript{26}

Anecdotes such as these have been discounted by contemporary

\textsuperscript{24}Jean Charlot, "José Guadalupe Posada and his Successors," in Ron Tyler, ed., \textit{Posada's Mexico}, 29.


\textsuperscript{26}In Carrillo, \textit{Posada and Mexican Engraving}, 29.
Attempting to discover what Posada was like as a person is often frustrating because all that remains are the prints he left behind and vague memories of people who knew him, or of the children of people who knew him. Whether the anecdotes are factual would be impossible to determine at this point, but they bear repeating with the caution that Posada's now close to mythical status in Mexico may have had some effect on the accuracy of these stories. True or false, these stories helped build Posada's position in Mexican history and illustrate the way his art is perceived in Mexican culture. The previous anecdotes illustrated Posada's genius and work ethic. The following, a statement which has been often quoted, is one which shows a vice and makes him seem more human.

One thing about him only, I suppose could be considered a little out of the ordinary and this was that he liked to drink, but in a very special way. He saved all year, fifty cents a day, putting it in a little box. On the twentieth of December he broke the bank and sent the money to Leon, to his family, and they bought for him with it big barrels of tequila, high as your waist. Then on New Year's Eve he began to drink, alone, and drank and drank until he finished all the barrels, which took from a month to a month and a half. For a fortnight after he couldn't work, because his hands shook. He was slender as a young man but from drinking like that he grew very large in the stomach . . . And eight or a hundred litres of tequila a year finally killed him.

Quotes like these were published in articles after Posada was

\footnote{27For example, Thomas Gretton referred to one of Jean Chariot's descriptions as "a figment of Chariot's imagination," said that accounts given by the Vanegas Arroyo family "are riven with inconsistencies and absurdities," and said that "Orozco may not have correctly remembered what he may very well have seen" in "Posada's Prints as Photomechanical Artefacts" Print Quarterly IX (December 1992), 338.}

\footnote{28Don Blas Vanegas Arroyo interviewed in by Anita Brenner in Idols Behind Altars, 189.}
"discovered" in the 1920s by the Frenchman Jean Charlot, who worked with the Mexican muralists. Identifying Posada as "printmaker to the Mexican people" Chariot believed he had found an artistic link between Mexican history and the modern Mexican art movement. Chariot’s recognition of Posada placed him posthumously into the world of "high art" as the Mexican muralists adopted him as their forefather.

The Mexican muralist Diego Rivera (1886-1957) paid homage to Posada in his mural at the Hotel del Prado in Mexico City, painted in 1947-48. Called *Sueño de una tarde dominical en la Alameda Central* (A Sunday Afternoon’s Dream in Alameda Park), the mural depicts the Calavera Catrina, an image originated by Posada, holding the hand of the child Diego Rivera as she faces the viewer with a skeletal grin from the center of the piece. Rivera’s parents are in the forms of the finely clad lady figure of death and Posada, whose left hand protectively covers the hand of the skeleton who takes his arm. Anita Brenner referred to the Calavera Catrina when she wrote that Posada "had sketched in two inches monumental figures, national epics, that later grew to ten and fifteen feet high on frescoed walls." The Calavera Catrina, a skull adorned with flowers, feathers, and bows, is a criticism of vanity as well as a reminder that all eventually turns to dust (Figure 5).

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José Clemente Orozco (1883-1949), another of Mexico’s great muralists, credited Posada with artistic inspiration as he described Posada at work:

Posada used to work in full view, behind the shop windows, and on my way to school and back, four times a day, I would stop and spend a few enchanted minutes in watching him, and sometimes I even ventured to enter the shop and snatch up a bit of the metal shavings that fell from the minium-coated metal plate as the master’s graver passed over it.

This was the push that first set my imagination in motion and impelled me to cover paper with my earliest little figures; this was my awakening to the existence of the art of painting.

Posada’s prints have been compared to those of Francisco Goya and Honore Daumier; his calaveras have been compared to Hans Holbein’s "Dance of Death." Posada’s influence on Rivera and Orozco could be compared to the influence of the French "primitive" painter Henri Rousseau on Pablo Picasso. Jean Charlot compared Posada to a Mexican Rousseau: "Whereas the aging French master played . . . his own composition on a three-quarter violin, we can picture the aging Mexican slapping his thigh and belching a Rabelaisian laugh as Death, his favourite model, tip-toes in."

The French surrealist poet André Breton published a page of images by Posada in a 1939 edition of the magazine Minotaure. He

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33 Charlot, *Printmaker to the Mexican People*, 177.

also included works by Posada in his 1939 exhibition in Paris. Called *Mexique*, the exhibition also featured Frida Kahlo (1907-1954), Diego Rivera, and the photographer Manuel Alvarez Bravo (b. 1902).35

Collections of Posada’s work can be found in many locations. Most collections contain broadsides, many of which are *corridos*, with illustrations by Posada. The Library of Congress owns a large collection of type-metal and zinc plates and stereotype plates as well as many original broadsides. The Jean Charlot Collection is now housed at the University of Hawaii and contains many chapbooks, broadsides and restrikes by Posada and Manilla.

The Amon Carter owns one of the largest collections of Posada’s work in the United States, including some original type-metal engraving and zinc etching plates. The Amon Carter collection includes 170 broadsides, 32 original blocks, 110 chapbooks, and 9 restrikes. The Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection and the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin own a large collection of periodicals and broadsides containing illustrations by Posada. The MEXIC-ARTE Museum in Austin also owns some Posada works, and they held an exhibition of Posada’s work in September-November 1995. The Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado also owns several hundred broadsides by Posada.

Unidad Cultural J. Guadalupe Posada, Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes in Aguascalientes is a museum devoted to Posada and his work.

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Arsacio Vanegas Arroyo of Mexico City, grandson of the publisher Antonio Vanegas Arroyo owns a large collection of several hundred broadsides by Posada, including the book in which Antonio Vanegas Arroyo pasted each broadside as it was printed.\(^{36}\)

**Statement of the Problem**

This thesis will examine the imagery of José Guadalupe Posada in the context of the Mexican Revolution with particular reference to the *corrido* as a major manifestation of Mexican culture. Particular emphasis will be given to three *corridos*: "La Cucaracha," "La Valentina," and "La Adelita."

**Methodological Statement**

Since the intent of this thesis was to reposition Posada by investigating his relationship to the *corrido*, information from different fields was required. In this cross-disciplinary study, it was necessary to move outside the traditional documentation of Posada's art and life.

In the first part of this thesis, Posada is positioned into the tradition of Mexican art and the Mexican Revolution. In order to place Posada into art historical context, I examined his background, style, and technique. Using examples of works by Posada which illustrate Mexico's history, culture, and politics, this thesis puts Posada into the climate of the Porfiriato and Revolutionary Mexico.

\(^{36}\) A more complete list of Posada collections is listed in an appendix to Tyler, *Posada's Mexico*, 304-305.
A thorough study of the *corrido* involved researching its history, music, and text as well as the format in which it was distributed. Finally, three specific *corridos* were examined. After viewing a number of Posada's broadside images, the *corridos* "La Cucaracha," "La Valentina," and "La Adelita" were chosen for specific analysis. These three *corridos*, rich in content, were selected for their association with the Mexican Revolution and for their representation of aspects of Mexican culture through the depiction of different Mexican women. A stylistic analysis of each image, research into the background of the song and the subject matter, and comments on the music draw together the concepts of image, music, and text in each *corrido*.

Studying Posada brings up many problems. Because of the format of his prints and methods of publication and distribution, titles and dates are often impossible to determine. One image was often used to illustrate several different subjects at different times. His images were appropriated after his death to illustrate other themes. Therefore their meanings constantly change. Since Posada's images today are usually reproduced without their original broadside format, their context is often difficult to determine. Titles of the images are seldom given; sources and dates are rare. Conversely, studies of *corridos* tend to print only the transposed text without any image or mention of an image. Other books of *corridos* have randomly reproduced Posada's work scattered throughout the text without even crediting the artist.\(^\text{37}\)

\(^{37}\)For example, see Gilberto Vélez, *Corridos Mexicanos* (Mexico City: Editores Mexicanos Unidos, 1962).
Although the artist's signature appears on many of his illustrations, questions of authorship exist for a number of the prints attributed to Posada. It is therefore necessary to approach Posada with these issues in mind and realize that these problems are part of the context of the work.

Primary material studied was, above all, the Posada collection at the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth. Also visited were the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection and the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin, where a large collection of broadsides and periodicals containing illustrations by Posada can be found. The MEXIC-ARTE Museum in Austin was also visited during an exhibition of Posada's work held in September through November 1995.

Dr. Ron Tyler and Dr. Patrick Frank, two key Posada scholars, were contacted. Dr. Tyler, who edited Posada's Mexico while acting director of the Amon Carter Museum, is currently director of the Texas Historical Society and professor at the University of Texas in Austin. Dr. Patrick Frank is a professor of art history at the University of Colorado in Boulder. Sylvia Orozco, curator and organizer of the Posada exhibition at MEXIC-ARTE in Austin was also contacted. Steven Volmer, Museum of El Paso Curator, provided information and a contemporary link to Posada's broadsides in the form of Mexican Calacas published by the Taller de Gráfica Popular in the last two decades.

Secondary data was obtained from books, music collections, 

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38 For example, La Calavera hambrieta and a calavera of Emiliano Zapata, long considered Posada prints, were discovered by Ron Tyler to be the work of another artist. Tyler, Posada's Mexico, 293–94.
articles, dissertations, exhibition catalogues, newspapers, and museum files and archives pertaining to Posada's work, the Mexican *corrido* and the Mexican Revolution. These materials will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 2: "Review of Literature on the Subject."
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON THE SUBJECT

What little is known of Posada's life has been repeated by many authors. His images have been separated from their original format and studied individually; his contribution to a national movement in Mexican art has been well documented.

Jean Charlot (1898-1979) published the first historical article on Posada in August 1925 in the periodical Revista de Revistas entitled "Un Precursor del Movimiento de Arte Mexicano" ("A Precursor of the Mexican Art Movement"). Another article by Charlot published in 1945 gave Posada the title of "Printmaker to the Mexican people."\(^1\) Charlot was a French born artist who moved to Mexico in 1921, worked with Rivera, Orozco and Siqueiros and chronicled the Mexican Mural Movement.\(^2\) In 1929 Anita Brenner (1905-1974), who grew up in Mexico during the Revolution and was involved with Charlot, published Idols Behind Altars, a book which attempts to explain and reflect Mexican life and spirit through Mexican art. In a chapter called "Posada the Prophet," she placed Posada as a prophet of both the Mexican Revolution and of the ideology of the Mexican mind. She also mentioned *corridos*

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\(^1\) Jean Charlot, "Un Precursor del Movimiento de Arte Mexicano" Revistas de Revistas (August 1925), and "José Guadalupe Posada, Printmaker to the Mexican People" Magazine of Art 38 (January 1945), 16-21.

as "revolutionary songs that Posada illustrated." The first monograph on Posada was published in 1930 by Frances Toor, Pablo O'Higgins, and Blas Vanegas Arroyo (son of Posada's publisher Antonio Vanegas Arroyo) with an introduction by Diego Rivera. These first books and articles introduced Posada to the art world. Although many contain anecdotes whose truth is now questioned, they were responsible for giving Posada his appropriate place in Mexican art history.

Since then, numerous articles and books have been published on José Guadalupe Posada, many of which focus on his biographical background and influence on the Mexican muralists. In a preliminary bibliography, I counted approximately fifty books and at least as many articles written on Posada. Many of the books were published in Mexico commemorating an anniversary of Posada's birth or death or the anniversary of the Mexican Revolution; most just repeat information about Posada with familiar illustrations.

In 1957 Alejandro Topete del Valle researched archives of

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4Frances Toor, Pablo O'Higgins, and Blas Vanegas Arroyo, eds., *Monografía: Las obras de José Guadalupe Posada, grabador mexicano* (Mexico City: Talleres Graficos de la Nacion, 1930), with an introduction by Diego Rivera.

5See discussion of this in Chapter 1, pages 10-11 of this thesis.

Aguascalientes, León and Mexico City and published a book containing reproductions of Posada's birth certificate, death certificate, marriage license and other family documents. This helped clarify some discrepancies in earlier articles. Posada is mentioned in many exhibition catalogs of Mexican and Latin American art. He is usually placed as a bridge between traditional and modern Latin American and Mexican art, as a forerunner of the graphic tradition of the Taller de Gráfica Popular (People's Graphic Workshop) of Mexico City in the 1930s and 40s as well as to the muralists and the modern Mexican movement. *Dimensions of the Americas: Art and Social Change in Latin America and the United States*, a recent book by Shifra Goldman also mentions Posada throughout as an influence on the modern movement in Mexican art as well as on contemporary Latino and Chicano artists.


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Edited by Dr. Ron Tyler, *Posada’s Mexico* contains essays which attempt to place Posada’s work in context and evoke the social and political climate of Posada’s Mexico.\(^\text{10}\) The catalog of the exhibition was divided into four general areas: "The Porfiriato" (referring to President Porfirio Díaz, in power from 1876 until 1911), "1910: The Centennial and the Revolution," "Eternity: the Calaveras," and "Posada and Mexican Graphic Traditions." Although the *corrido* is mentioned briefly in several chapters, a thorough study of Posada’s work and the *corridos* of the Revolution was not conducted. The chapter by Jas Reuter, "The Popular Traditions," has several paragraphs on Posada and the *corrido*, "The Penny Press" by Joyce Waddel Bailey places Posada in perspective with the graphic tradition in Mexico during the turn of the century.\(^\text{11}\) A chapter by Jean Charlot reiterates many phrases from his previous articles but adds depth gleaned from years of studying Mexican art and living in Mexico.\(^\text{12}\)

A complete catalog of Posada’s work does not exist. Because his work has been widely scattered and unevenly documented and because his images were frequently recycled by his publisher, cataloging it will be difficult. In *The Works of José Guadalupe Posada*, which contains 1699 illustrations, Hannes Jahn claims to offer the most comprehensive

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collection of work by Posada. Like many other Posada publications, this book does not list titles, dates, or the source from which he obtained each image. Although some complete broadsides are reproduced, most of the images have been separated from their original format, which in some cases makes it difficult to ascertain the time frame or intended subject matter.

Patrick Frank (University of Colorado in Boulder) and Thomas Gretton (University College, London) both presented papers on Posada at the 1995 College Art Association conference in San Antonio, Texas. Frank discussed high art imagery in Posada's prints, and Gretton concentrated on Posada's execution imagery in comparison to Manet's *Execution of the Emperor Maximilian*. Frank and Gretton have also published recent articles on Posada. Based on the argument that scholars have misinterpreted Posada's printing technique, Gretton has attempted to revise Posada's status as a "folk" hero. Gretton, who

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writes from a Marxist perspective, poses that Posada adapted new technology while producing work which looked as if it rejected modernity. Gretton's are the most contemporary studies of Posada, and there have not yet appeared any responses which either agree with or object to his theories.

Although most writings on Posada briefly mention the *corrido*, there has been no specific study of the relationship between Posada's work and the Mexican *corrido*. Most discussions of the *corrido* address the lyrics in historical and social context without discussing the format or appearance of the broadsides by which they were circulated. They seldom mention any appearance of images, being mostly concerned with historical and textual analysis. Scholars of the Mexican *corrido* include Rubén M. Campos, Alvaro Custodio, Celestino Herrera Frimont, Vicente T. Mendoza and Merle E. Simmons. These and other thorough studies of the Mexican *corrido* mention Posada's work only briefly.

"The Mexican *Corrido* and the Revolution," a dissertation by Eldred Renk, discusses a number of *corridos* from that time period. Although Renk looked at hundreds of *hojas sueltas* for his study, he rarely mentions the format of the broadsides, focusing mainly on the

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lyrics and their meaning and placing the text into historical context.\textsuperscript{17} This dissertation was rather disappointing; although Renk reprints the texts of hundreds of \textit{corridos}, his analysis is minimal.

Several books concerning Mexican women during the revolution and in the \textit{corrido} proved helpful in the analysis of the individual \textit{corridos}. \textit{Soldaderas in the Mexican Military: Myth and History} by Elizabeth Salas contained a short section on \textit{corridos} and \textit{soldaderas}, followed by a section on the \textit{soldadera} in Mexican art.\textsuperscript{16} "The Mexican Woman: A Study of Her Participation in the Revolution, 1910-1940", a dissertation by Shilene Soto, is a thorough investigation of the roles of Mexican women during the Revolution.\textsuperscript{19} \textit{The Mexican Corrido: A Feminist Analysis} is a gender study which analyzes the stereotypical images of the \textit{Mexicana}, particularly in \textit{corridos}. From a feminist perspective, Herrera-Sobek refers to the influence of Western literary tradition, patriarchal ideology, social class structure, and historical context of the \textit{corridos}.\textsuperscript{20}

Musical notations of many of the revolutionary \textit{corridos} are available today, as are audio recordings of the music. The Mexican


Folkways Cancionero Mexicano lists "La Valentina," "La Cucaracha" and "Adelita" as canciones revolucionarias, or "revolutionary songs."\(^\text{21}\) Songs such as "La Valentina" and "La Adelita" were published in collections of corridos arranged by music teacher and composer Manuel M. Ponce in 1913–1914.\(^\text{22}\) An appendix to El Corrido Popular Mexicano lists at least ten recordings of Revolutionary corridos as well as a number of musicians who record corridos and similar music.\(^\text{23}\) A three-page discography is listed in María Herrera-Sobek’s The Mexican Corrido: A Feminist Analysis.\(^\text{24}\) The popular musician Linda Ronstadt recorded an album in 1987 called Canciones de mi Padre (Songs of my Father) which contains several traditional corridos.\(^\text{25}\) Other popular musical groups such as Los Tigres del Norte, Los Hermanos Banda, and Los Alegres de Terán have current releases which contain corridos.\(^\text{26}\)


\(^{24}\) Herrera-Sobek, Feminist Analysis, 143–146.

\(^{25}\) Linda Ronstadt, Canciones de mi Padre (Asylum Records 60765-2).

\(^{26}\) Los Tigres del Norte, La Banda del Carro Rojo (Fama 536); Los Hermanos Banda, Corridos de siempre (Audio-Mex 093); Los Alegres de Terán, Fogata Norteña (Caytronics CYS 1156).
CHAPTER 3

POSADA'S ART

Before looking at Posada's corridos, a discussion of Posada's relationship to the academic tradition in art is necessary to understand the complexity of his work. Arguments regarding his technique relate directly to constructs of Posada as popular artist, genius, and forefather of the muralists. The form of distribution of Posada's works, his audience and the authors of the texts explain the context in which he worked. In addition, examples of works by Posada associated with events both leading to and during the Mexican Revolution help establish his role in Mexico's cultural and political climate.

Style and Technique

The style of Posada's graphic works varied with the type of publication and the intended audience. The early lithographic works have careful attention to detail, proportion, value and texture. Examples of these are a coat of arms of the city of Guanajuato (1883) (Figure 6) and a view of the church and plaza of Guanajuato (1884). These prints had been commissioned for Efemérides guanajuatenses, a four-volume historical survey of Guanajuato produced in 1883 and 1884.¹ Devotional images of the Virgin Mary and of Christ by Posada were also crafted with more attention to detail and value than Posada's newspaper and

penny press illustrations (Figure 7).\footnote{Tyler, \textit{Posada's Mexico}, 122, 171.}

Since he was originally trained in lithography, Posada's early works have a resemblance to the "high art" imagery of the Mexican Academy. The tradition of engraving was brought to Mexico by the master engraver to the Spanish King, who was appointed to run the Royal Academy of San Carlos. Established in Mexico City by the King of Spain in 1785, it was the first academy of art in America and imported professors from Europe. A lithographic workshop was established at the Academy in 1830, although by 1839 lithographs were printed outside of the Academy.\footnote{Jean Charlot, \textit{Mexican Art and the Academy of San Carlos 1785-1915} (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1962), 75, 83.} Graphic versions of paintings by academic artists were often reproduced in magazines; Posada himself produced several graphic versions of Spanish paintings for the magazine \textit{La Patria Ilustrada} between 1888 and 1892.\footnote{Frank, "'High Art' Imagery in Posada's Prints."}

Not only did Posada's training in lithography relate to the academic tradition, Posada was also familiar with European "high art" images. Posada's workshop at No. 5 Santa Inés Street, now Calle Moneda, was only a few blocks away from the Fine Arts Academy. He would have been familiar with engravings such as Goya's \textit{Disasters of War} from copies which were circulated in Mexico.\footnote{Jacques Lafaye, "From Daily Life to Eternity," trans. Marigold Best and Jacques Lafaye, in Tyler, ed., \textit{Posada's Mexico}, 131.} In a paper presented at the College Art Association in 1995, Patrick Frank
discussed 'high art' imagery in Posada's prints. In addition to copying fashionable salon paintings as illustrations for magazines, Posada also appropriated figures from academic conventions in broadsides and cartoons. Frank showed how Posada had borrowed from Goya's *Disasters of War* as well as the Hellenistic *Laocoon* for political cartoons. The Goya appropriation was used to condemn banditry in Mexico; the *Laocoon* image (Figure 11) shows Mexican citizens strangled by snakes labeled "misery," "bosses" and "slave traders and rebels." Another group of images by Posada depicting execution scenes are derived from Manet's *The Execution of Emperor Maximilian*. Anita Brenner also mentions that a print of Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* was displayed in Posada's workshop window, and speculates that he may have used the Academy's library.

The students at the San Carlos Academy of Fine Arts were, in turn, familiar with Posada's work. In 1911, students rebelled against an anatomy professor who required them to buy mimeographed sheets. A petition presented to the director stated: "The students beg the director to ask that the anatomy teacher teach, instead of selling them translations in loose sheets, after the manner of the folk ballads of

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8 Gretton, "Commodities and Social Constructs," 43.

Vanegas Arroyo." Written from the academia, this statement consigns Posada's world to the "folk" tradition outside of the academic world.

A print of the interior of the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe signed by Posada and dated 1890 resembles a lithograph by the academically trained Juan Codero printed in 1857 (Figures 8 and 9). Although Posada's print is a zinc etching rather than a lithograph, he has paid close attention to detail, value, texture and form. In both pieces, the building's arches form the top frame of the work while kneeling worshipers give weight to the bottom and columns frame the sides of the picture. The figures are dwarfed by the architecture; the vertical structure itself draws the viewer's attention rather than the religious images. While the figures in the earlier piece are all dressed alike, Posada's print shows several classes of people worshipping together. One can distinguish the fashionable dress of high society, the covered heads of women in less stylish dress, and several campesinos (peasants) and Indians.

In the Mexican academic world, genre painting, influenced by costumbrismo (interest in costumes and customs), became popular during the nineteenth century. Dawn Ades writes in *Art in Latin America* that "the costumbrista works by European artists provided, in many respects, both models to be copied and an impetus to a new kind of social observation, and directness of response to the world around

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10Charlot, "Posada and his Successors," 42, and *Academy of San Carlos*, 155-56.

11Tyler, *Posada's Mexico*, 168; Charlot, *Academy of San Carlos*, 93, 121.
them." José Arrieta (1802-1874), trained in the academic tradition, was known as "the painter of the Mexican people" and painted costumbrista paintings, still lifes, religious subjects and retablos. It is interesting to compare this artist to Posada, who was called the "printmaker to the Mexican people." As illustrated in the print of the shrine, Posada's prints included characters dressed in a range of styles, from high fashion to the traditional Mexican clothing worn by the lower classes.

Although Posada's early work in lithography seemed to reach toward the "high art" stylistic tradition, it is the coarser wood and metal cuts and relief etchings which have placed his work in art history texts and in museum collections. Jean Charlot addressed the progression of Posada's style in his 1945 essay:

The blandness of lithographic crayon permeates his youthful provincial manner, marks its accurate drawing and delicate half-tones. ... A critic ignorant of the true sequence could point to Posada's first manner as an obvious refinement and elaboration of the cruder second manner. One expects a stylistic cycle to go from simple to complex, from archaic to baroque. Posada's lithographs are valued witness to the fact that he was one of the few who consciously order their lives from complexity to simplicity.

Once Posada began working in Mexico City as a graphic artist, he

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12Ades, Art in Latin America, 36, 84-85.

13Ibid., 87, 338.

14Jean Charlot's article on Posada was titled "José Guadalupe Posada: Printmaker to the Mexican People," in Magazine of Art 38 (January 1945); a book by Carlos Pellicer is called Jose Guadalupe Posada: Ilustrador de la vida Mexicana (Posada: Illustrator of Mexican Life) (Mexico City: Fondo Editorial de la Plastica Mexicana, 1963).

15Charlot, "Printmaker to the Mexican People," 19.
needed to develop a technique by which images could be rapidly created for publication. Lithography was a slow and arduous process, and the lithographic print required a different inking and was printed on a different kind of press than type or line-cuts. This made it impossible for publishers to use Posada's lithographs as text illustrations.\textsuperscript{16}

Tyler's appendix of newspapers known to have been illustrated by Posada lists fifty-one titles; this added to other periodicals and items illustrated by Posada points out the vast number of images he produced.\textsuperscript{17} It has been generally accepted that Posada's technique involved an etching process by which he either carved directly into a typemetal surface or drew an image with acid resist onto zinc, producing a relief surface that could be printed together with type.\textsuperscript{18}

The zinc process was similar to that used by William Blake in which he incorporated words and pictures into a total design which was etched on a copper plate.\textsuperscript{19} Charlot stated that Posada's discovery of relief etching was made "in an effort to compete cheaply with the increasingly popular process of photo-engraving."\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{16}Tyler, \textit{Posada's Mexico}, 9.

\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., 303.


\textsuperscript{19}Charlot, "Printmaker to the Mexican People," 20; Mary Lynn Johnson and John E. Grant, \textit{Blake's Poetry and Designs} (New York: Norton, 1979), xiii.

\textsuperscript{20}Charlot, "Printmaker to the Mexican People," 20.
Thomas Gretton, however, argues that Posada did use a photomechanical process to transfer images onto blocks.\textsuperscript{21} Using this process, Gretton said that Posada made drawings of various sorts, on white card or card covered with compressed china-clay coated with indian ink, from which white lines could be scraped out (i.e. scraperboard). These images were then photographed on to sheets of metal coated with a light-sensitive acid resist, and turned, by etching the resultant acid-resistant photographic plate, into relief-printing line-blocks.\textsuperscript{22}

If Posada used photography to transfer a design onto the printing surface, the image could be reproduced either in positive or negative. Scraperboard images could also be altered and re-photographed, as Gretton showed through examples of Posada's work.\textsuperscript{23}

Gretton's argument proposes that Posada's imagery should be reconsidered "not as a heroic anti-modernizing technique but as a style evolved as part of an innovative exploitation of new technologies."\textsuperscript{24}

The photomechanical process was a new technology which was used "to produce objects that looked as though they had been made using an old one; and the broadsheets that Vanegas Arroyo sold were also in many senses a new commodity disguising itself as an old one."\textsuperscript{25} As pointed out earlier, since the articles by Gretton are fairly recent, there have no been no published responses either supporting or negating his

\textsuperscript{21}Gretton, "Photomechanical Artifacts," 335, and "Commodities and Social Constructs," 32.

\textsuperscript{22}Gretton, "Commodities and Social Constructs," 32.

\textsuperscript{23}Gretton, "Photomechanical Artefacts," 347.

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., 354.

\textsuperscript{25}Ibid., 354-56.
arguments.

Posada's work as a commodity required a source of distribution. Throughout the Porfirio Diaz presidency (1876-1911), the press was tightly controlled. When a paper became too critical, the editor might be jailed and the presses shut down. Ireneo Paz, editor of *La Patria*, "was jailed so many times in the notorious Belen that he reportedly kept a cot there." Although no evidence exists that Posada spent time in prison for his caricatures, rumors suggest that he did.

In 1896, the liberal paper *El Monitor Republicano* was discontinued. Its editor wrote in farewell:

Since there is no longer a liberal party, but only a very few men of political faith, and many degenerates, we lack a point of reference ... Our paper, faithful observer of constitutional law, has managed to give some service defending it against the Power ... We look for some base on which to resist, and find a vacuum ... We furl, therefore, the remaining shred of constitutionalist flag ... and wrapping ourselves in it go down to the grave of oblivion.

According to the editors of *La Voz de Guanajuato* in 1891, there were three types of journalism prevalent in Mexico:

that of the libelous paper, which made fun of the government and the sacredness of the home; that of the newspaper of announcements and advertisements; and, finally, that of the newspaper that tried to enlighten the public. The first ... made lots of money, the second had no audience, and the third barely survived.

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27 Ibid.


Posada's illustrations were all three: he "made fun of the government and the sacredness of the home," he created images for "announcements and advertisements," and some of his images may have "tried to enlighten the public."

One way to circumvent traditional channels which might incur government censorship was the distribution of broadsides. Unsigned by author, artists, and sometimes with no reference to publishing house, the broadside was circulated alongside the newspapers, often telling the same stories. "In the matter of official entries, be they funerary or triumphal, a must for the publisher is that his paper should hit the street on the day of the event, to be sold to the gawking, milling crowd."  

Charlot also described newsboys selling broadsheets "at the very moment that the more reputable newspapers busied themselves at typesetting the same event."

Distribution, Audience and Authors

As Mexico City developed into a metropolitan center, Posada carried on a dialogue with its inhabitants about crime, sanitation, corrupt officials, the introduction of technology, and politics. In his lifetime, those who acquired Posada's work were the common people who purchased his broadsides, pamphlets, news sheets, and periodicals. Printed on cheap colorful paper and sold in markets and on street corners, Posada's broadsides appealed to the illiterate poor who moved

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30 Charlot, "Posada and His Successors," 40.
31 Ibid., 36.
to the city from the countryside. Thomas Gretton determined that Posada's "reliance on street vendors, the way he made his products, the sorts of product he made, all suggest that his wares sold primarily to men who were among the less wealthy and less well-educated of his potential metropolitan customers." In addition, "singing together, reading, and news were all gendered." Although Gretton suggested that Posada's audience consisted mainly of men, many of the broadsided consumers must have been women. Descriptions of people listening to corridos, describe women as part of the audience, especially during the Revolution; therefore they also had a part in purchasing the broadsides. The chap-books that Posada illustrated were stories which appealed to children and were probably purchased by women. Songbooks illustrated by Posada often depicted men and women singing together; if women sang the songs, they probably also purchased them. Also, if Posada's prints were distributed around Mexico, his audience

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32In 1911, 84 percent of Mexico was still illiterate and education was for the elite. James D. Cockcroft, Mexico: Class Formation, Capital Accumulation, and the State (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983), 88.

33Gretton, "Commodities and Social Constructs," 32.

34Ibid., 32, 45-6.

35Edward Larocque Tinker, Corridos & Calaveras (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961), 7; Simmons, Mexican Corrido, 7.
would have moved outside the metropolitan area of Mexico City.\textsuperscript{36}

A network of newsboys distributed the broadsides throughout Mexico City, shown in several Posada prints picking up their packaged sheets of printed matter.\textsuperscript{37} An allegorical Posada print entitled \textit{Calaveras en Monton} shows a number of skeletons which represent street vendors and newsboys selling broadsides (Figure 10). Jean Charlot recalled watching Don Blas, son of Posada’s publisher, dispensing broadsides to \textit{papeleros}, or newsboys, wearing straw hats:

Solferino, magenta, yellow, off-white, the frail sheets changed hands as heaps of small coins, most centavos, piled up on the counter. . . . Flocks of \textit{papeleros} would fan out of the Vanegas Arroyo shop and cover the city, hawking the red-hot extra at the very moment that the more reputable newspapers busied themselves at typesetting the same event.\textsuperscript{38}

Political cartoons were intended for a more elite audience; Posada’s more sophisticated etchings printed in dozens of political and satirical journals appealed to the middle class.\textsuperscript{39} Pilgrims who travelled to pray at a shrine or chapel would purchase pilgrimage sheets illustrated by Posada with images of saints together with \textit{medidas}, ribbons cut to the exact size, “so swore the seller, by actual contact with the miraculous

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\textsuperscript{36}In her discussion of "The Corrido and News," Helen Hughes suggests that although the \textit{corridos} were published in Mexico City, they were distributed outside of the city in pueblos. \textit{News and the Human Interest Story} (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), 108-110.

\textsuperscript{37}Rothenstein, \textit{Messenger of Mortality}, 145, 179.

\textsuperscript{38}Charlot, "Posada and his Successors," 35-36.

\textsuperscript{39}Tyler, \textit{Posada’s Mexico}, 22.
object." Pamphlets containing scripts were sold at mystery plays staged in front of cathedrals. Corrido broadsides were sold by the corridistas (musicians) who sang the songs in squares and marketplaces, at inns and at fairs.

It is seldom that the authors of any of the broadside verses are identified. The corrido, specifically, is similar to a folktale which is typically anonymous, originates out of communal life, and is common property. Those which exhibit a signature usually identify a male writer, although women have been known to author the songs. Many corridos and verses were written by professional ballad writers, hired by a publisher such as Arroyo. Constancio S. Suarez was one of many writers hired by Arroyo and commissioned to write about each day's notable event: "a monstrous crime, a natural cataclysm, or a civic or religious festival." According to Rafael Carrillo in Posada and

40Charlot, "Posada and His Successors," 34-35.
41Ibid., 35.
42An example of an exception is the broadside Moderno corrido de Rafael Tagle (Modern corrido of Rafael Tagle), which identifies the author as E. Burgoa. Tyler, Posada's Mexico, 145.
43Folktales, however, are seldom written, and exist in the form of rumor. Helen Hughes, News and the Human Interest Story (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), 107-8.
44For example, Graciela de Olmos wrote the corrido "Siete Leguas." Herrera-Sobek, Feminist Analysis, xviii.
45Hughes, Human Interest, 109.
*Mexican Engraving.* Suarez is possibly the third man in a photograph of Posada and his son in front of Posada's shop.\(^{47}\) If this is so, it suggests a collaboration between artist and poet that adds a new dimension to understanding Posada's work. Although Posada may have collaborated with writers in his lifetime, his images were appropriated for different themes in many works published after his death.

Communication between the artist and publisher is suggested in the passage from *Idols Behind Altars* previously quoted which described Vanegas Arroyo giving Posada the text of "whatever he wanted to print, and [saying], 'Señor Posada, let's illustrate this,' and Posada would read it and while he was reading would pick up his pen and say, 'What do you think about this little paragraph...?'"\(^{48}\) This suggests that Posada was not only given a subject matter, he also read the material before illustrating it. Jas Reuter also touched on the relationship between artist, publisher and writer when he wrote,

> It is rare to find such a perfect symbiosis between a publisher like Vanegas Arroyo, who directed and coordinated the work, a graphic artist like Posada, who with every drawing hit the bull's-eye both in his treatment of the theme and his appeal to the readers' interest, and a writer and popular versifier like Constancio S. Suárez. . . . The image and the word support and illustrate each other, doubling the psychological impact of the broadsheets on the reader.\(^{49}\)

The literature in the form of broadsides that Posada illustrated filled "the place which the photo-novel holds in Mexico today;" its aim


was to "arouse the emotions of the reader of the spectator."\textsuperscript{50} People in Mexico today read these \textit{novelas}, or illustrated novels which resemble comic books in format and soap operas in content. As Reuter stated, "Posada's popularity established itself among the 'lower orders' first and emerged among the 'top people' only in the 1920s and 1930s."\textsuperscript{51}

\textbf{Posada and the Revolution}

Through Posada's prints it is possible to lay out the history of Mexico leading to the Revolution. In Posada's \textit{Laocoon} image discussed earlier (Figure 11), snakes labelled \textit{miseria} (misery), \textit{cacicazgo} (probably \textit{casciquismo}, or "bossism"), and \textit{negreros y cabecillas} (slave traders and rebel leaders) are entwined around three representative figures: the \textit{indigencia}, the \textit{proletariado}, and the \textit{pueblo}. The \textit{indigencia} is a woman dressed in a Mayan costume; the \textit{pueblo} is a man wearing a white shirt, sandals, and a \textit{sombrero}; the \textit{proletariado} wears a cap, a tie, and an apron. This single image, boldly and publicly signed by Posada, bravely denounces the effect of capitalism on the rural economy.\textsuperscript{52}

Although Mexico's economy in 1910 seemed to be solid and flourishing, there was an extreme contrast between the rich and the poor. Less than five percent of Mexico's population owned almost all of the productive land, and real wages were lower than they had been a

\textsuperscript{50}\textit{Lafaye, "Daily Life to Eternity,"} 128.

\textsuperscript{51}\textit{Reuter, "Popular Traditions,"} 60.

\textsuperscript{52}See Gretton, \textit{"Commodities and Social Constructs,"} p. 42-43 for a more thorough discussion of this piece.
Porfirio Díaz, who seized power in 1876, was president of Mexico for thirty-four years, with one brief interim. Prior to Díaz's regime, Mexico had gone through an average of one president every year. The Porfiriato was a period of modernization, material growth and prosperity. Mexico's industrialization expanded with the development of railroads, mines and ports. Communication was modernized with the development of the telephone, telegraph and postal services. This expansion, however, benefitted the elite of Mexico while the lower classes became poorer.

An elite group of men called Científicos (literally, "scientists") were inspired by Positivism and Social Darwinism, and believed that science would solve all of Mexico's problems. A satirical print by Posada illustrates the Mitología Científica as a man with woven wings and a flowered shawl flying over a body of water and seems to indicate lack of confidence in the platform of the Científicos (Figure 12). The philosophy of the Científicos was influential with the Mexican government's policies regarding foreign investors. The "scientific" manipulation of the economy revived Mexico's foreign credit. At the same time, however, it lowered the standard of living for the poor.

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55 Tyler, Posada's Mexico, 161.
Although economic prosperity had apparently been restored, it was won at the expense of the Mexican pueblo. A print by Posada for the periodical _El Diablito Bromista_ in 1903 is titled _Un abrazo muy tierno y muy gringo_ ("A very affectionate and very Anglo embrace") (Figure 13). In it, a woman symbolizing the Mexican Republic is held in a tight embrace by Uncle Sam while a Mexican man with a sombrero looks on with displeasure.\(^{56}\)

By 1910, foreign investment controlled much of Mexico's resources. United States companies controlled oil, mining, and public utilities; the French owned most textile factories; the Spanish ran food-processing industries and many huge landed estates; and the Germans ran the coffee trade.\(^{57}\) _Rurales_, a well-armed, uniformed national police force, were hired by Díaz to establish order on roads and frontiers, often abusing the people of the _pueblos_. Mexico's leaders believed in the efficiency of large estates and set out to reduce the holdings of small landowners. Landholdings were confiscated from the lower classes and turned over to _haciendas_, and agricultural workers were often kidnapped in cities and forced to work in literal slavery. Posada addressed this issue in a print where _rurales_ are shown dragging barefoot peasants to the _Casa de enganches_, or the "Recruitment Office," where they are forced to sign _contratos voluntarios_, or "voluntary contracts" (Figure 14). Hands bound, both men and women are

\(^{56}\)Tyler, _Posada's Mexico_, 23.

\(^{57}\)Albert L. Michaels and James W. Wilkie, introduction to John Reed, _Insurgent Mexico_ (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1969), 17.
unwillingly imprisoned while an angry sun frowns down from the sky.

When Porfirio Díaz stated that he planned to end his thirty-four-year leadership and open elections in 1910, Francisco Madero, a wealthy landowner from Coahuila, organized a political movement against the Díaz government. Surprised by Madero’s success, Díaz imprisoned him, but he escaped to the United States and launched a rebellion.

Issues which Posada had been illustrating for some time came into play: political oppression, foreign domination, concentration of wealth in the hands of few, shortages of food and fuel, and the plight of the pueblos. In 1905, the Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM) had been organized. Their cry of "Tierra y Libertad" (Land and Liberty), which later became the slogan of Zapatistas, attracted increasing numbers of workers and peasants. The most significant forces in battles which were launched against the Porfiriato came from the PLM, armed groups led by Pascual Orozco and Francisco "Pancho" Villa of Chihuahua, and Emiliano Zapata in the southern state of Morelos. The Porfiriato regime toppled and Madero began a triumphant march into Mexico City. A broadside illustrated by Posada depicted the entry of Madero and his wife into Mexico City cheered by the citizens waving a banner which states "Viva Madero" (Figure 15). Another print of Madero which was less flattering depicted Madero as a timid calavera with a worried expression crouching in a graveyard (Figure 16). Although the calavera resembles Madero, he is dressed like a campesino in white trousers with a sombrero, sandals and a serape. As this one did, Posada’s caricatures

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often changed with public opinion, favoring a person one day and 
satirizing them the next.

Díaz went into exile but Madero soon alienated the rebels who had 
brought him to power by continuing to support the affluent and the old 
regime. He had promised the Zapatistas agrarian reform, but shot the 
peasants after they turned in their arms. Pancho Villa continued 
supporting Madero after the president kept General Huerta from 
executing Villa, but Zapata and Orozco were against Madero. Early in 
1913, shortly after Posada’s death, Madero was assasinated by General 
Victoriano Huerto, who attempted to take power. However, Venustiano 
Carranza, Governor of Coahuila and Abraham González, Governor of 
Chihuahua refused to recognize Huerta. Recruited by González, Pancho 
Villa won skirmishes with the federal army, captured arms, artillery, and 
trains. Eventually Villa and Carranza fought for control of Mexico, and 
Villa’s troops were smashed by General Obregón at the Battle of Celaya 
in 1915. Carranza assumed the Presidency of Mexico but was 
overthrown by Obregón in 1920; Zapata’s band had been wiped out in 
1919. Villa was offered an hacienda and an armed bodyguard but he 
was ambushed and shot in 1923.

Posada’s death in 1913 came before many of the main events of 
the Mexican Revolution. He was familiar with Pancho Villa, Emiliano 
Zapata, and Pascual Orozco. Images he had created of each of them 
were used by the publisher Vanegas Arroyo and his son Blas throughout 
and after the Revolution (Figures 17, 18 and 19). Corridos such as 
those illustrated by Posada’s images contributed to the immense
popularity of revolutionary leaders such as Villa and Zapata during the Revolution. Although many broadsides and corridos in Posada collections are dated after his death, this does not seem to lessen their value in museum collections or in published form today. Doubtless it was unimportant to the corridista or the revolutionary who purchased the hojas volantes, or to the publisher who printed and sold the broadsides.

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59 Ernest S. Hediger, "Mexico's Corrido Goes to War" Inter-American Monthly 1 (October 1942), 28.

60 A corrido about Zapata is dated 1914; another corrido about a revolutionary soldier is dated 1918; two different versions of "La Cucaracha" are dated 1915 and 1918. Tyler, Posada's Mexico, 254, 253, 256.
CHAPTER 4

IMAGE, MUSIC, TEXT: CORRIDOS OF THE REVOLUTION

The meaning of the word "to illustrate" is linked to the second part of the term "audiovisual." Posada's illustrations were attached to an audio element in the form of the corrido. Some of his works stand on their own; others assume a different significance when combined with the text that accompanies them. Likewise, many of the texts and verses in turn constantly change their meanings when joined with the engravings which illustrate them. After a brief introduction to the corrido, three specific examples will be analyzed. Connecting the image with the historical background, text, and music will help form an understanding of their intricate relationship and the role of the corrido as a major manifestation of Mexican culture.

The Mexican Corrido

Mexico's corrido incorporates text, music, and images in a multi-disciplinary art form. The corrido, written in the form of a narrative, is a folk ballad, a song, a story, a news item, a commemoration, and a form of communication as well as a picture with words printed on a piece of paper. The definition of the word corrido is similar to the definition of the word "music." Like the corrido, music is the abstract sound of voices and instruments, it is the words sung to the sound, it

1Reuter, "Popular Traditions," 64.
is the notes transcribing the sound, and it is the sheets of paper onto which notes are transcribed. The **corrido** is a "form of popular art which reflected [the Mexican Revolution] and which afforded . . . rich documentation through poetic response, revealing an intricate texture of human components as complex as they are interesting."²

Posada and the **corrido** were born close to the same time in Mexico's history. Its roots traced back to the sixteenth-century Spanish *romance*, the modern Mexican **corrido** appeared in the 1860s.³ During this time, according to Americo Paredes, "basic issues of religion and social betterment produced corrido-like songs."⁴ Under Porfirio Díaz, class lines became more distinct as his *rurales* abused people of the *pueblos* while sustaining order and progress. As Paredes stated, "it was the rebellious peon, the transported Indian, and the city *lépero* who swelled the ranks of the outlaw bands, and the Mexican **corrido** began not with a heroic period but with a proletarian one."⁵ In the 1870s, the first **corrido** heroes were "Robin Hood-like outlaws in rebellion against Porfirio Díaz" who robbed from the rich to give to the poor.⁶

The broadside press picked up the **corrido** toward the end of the century as it moved from rural areas into the city. Herecleo Bernal was

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²Renk, "*Corrido* and the Revolution," 482.


⁵Ibid., 100.

⁶Ibid., 94, 100.
a bandit-hero chased down and shot by the *rurales* in 1882 who became the subject of a *corrido* illustrated by Posada (Figure 20). In another *corrido* with an image by Posada, the author stated that he was glad that Bernal's sidekick Ignacio Parra had been killed in 1892. The *corrido*, however, recognizes the bandit's hero status both in text and in the proud image of the bandit brandishing a sword while mounted on a horse.

During the Revolution the *corrido* peaked both in creativity and in popularity. When the Mexican Revolution broke out, the subject matter of the *corrido* expanded to include battles and Revolutionary heroes. "El Entierro de Zapata" was a broadside with an image by Posada of Emiliano Zapata printed in 1914 (Figure 18). Probably taken from a photograph by Juan Casasola, Posada's image depicts Zapata with a rifle in one hand and his other hand on a sword. Titled "The Burial of Zapata," the *corrido* mistakenly laments his death, since Zapata lived until 1919.

In addition to the traditional *corridistas*, singers were often soldiers in the Revolutionary armies. The *corridos* not only kept them

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7 Tyler, *Posada's Mexico*, 146.
8 Ibid., 148.
10 Tyler, *Posada's Mexico*, 254.
11 Anita Brenner wrote that "Villa got himself killed and resuscitated in the American press daily." Doubtless this applied to Zapata as well. *Idols Behind Altars*, 212.
informed of current events (battles, assassinations, political conventions, proclamations), but it also served to sustain morale, both as a form of entertainment and by giving the soldiers something to fight for.\textsuperscript{12}

The \textit{corrido} was usually accompanied by one or more guitars, although \textit{mariachis} often performed \textit{corridos}. "People form a ring around the singer and listen with pleasure and shivers of horror to the sensational stories. They learn the tunes, and the singer not only receives rewards for his performance but increases his earnings by selling broadsheets to his listeners."\textsuperscript{13} Another description of the \textit{corrido}'s performance was written in 1942:

Sometimes a lone singer accompanies himself on his guitar, and after the performance either makes a collection among the listening crowd of Indians and \textit{mestizos}, or peddles the printed text of his songs to the audience for a few centavos. Sometimes couples, men or women, sell the leaflets while they sing. On other occasions the \textit{corridos} are sung as a part of a regular show, given on a wooden platform in the rural fiestas, the other part of the program consisting of typical dances, such as \textit{jarabes tapatios}.\textsuperscript{14}

Since the range is rarely more than an octave, the \textit{corrido} is easy to intone. Because of its simplicity, practically anyone can sing or compose a \textit{corrido}. This adapted the ballad "to the task of carrying long and detailed items of news across a country."\textsuperscript{15}

Edward Laroque Tinker described the first time he heard a

\textsuperscript{12}Simmons, \textit{Mexican Corrido}, 34-5.

\textsuperscript{13}Reuter, "Popular Traditions," 66.

\textsuperscript{14}Ernest S. Hediger, "Mexico's Corrido Goes to War" \textit{Inter-American Monthly} 1 (October 1942), 28.

\textsuperscript{15}Renk, "Corrido and the Revolution," 16.
corrido during the Mexican Revolution:

as I wandered along the boxcars on which the troops were quartered on the roofs, I heard singing and the strumming of stringed instruments. Following my ears I came into the light of a campfire around which a crowd of Villa's ragged soldiers were gathered with their soldaderas--those amazing Amazons who cooked for their men and, with pots and pans, and often a baby on their backs, kept up with the regiment on gruelling marches; or, when the need arose, snatched a rifle from a corpse and fought as fiercely as any male . . . .

As I listened to the assonances of their voices, I too was fascinated, and thought they sang some old folk tale. As verse after verse, however, took the same melodic pattern, I suddenly realized that this was no ancient epic, but a fresh-minted account of the battle of the day before. . . . It was a corrido--hot from the oven of their vivid memory of the struggle between Villa and Obregón.16

Three of Posada's Revolutionary Corridos

Three corridos with images by Posada were chosen for specific analysis in this thesis. Although hundreds of corridos with different themes from the Mexican Revolution exist, I have chosen to study in detail three which illustrate a specific facet of the Revolution: the soldadera. A soldadera (female soldier) is the name given to women who travelled with the armies. They were soldiers and camp followers, servants, wives, and girlfriends.17 Heroes like Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata were given recognition by name and in likeness in many books, songs, articles, and so forth. The soldadera of the corrido, however, is anonymous. The images chosen to illustrate the corridos are


17Salas, Soldaderas, xi-xii.
likewise anonymous: they represent a type rather than an individual. Although women fought alongside the men in the Revolution, they were rarely recognized. They have survived through myth and oral histories collected by scholars years after the Revolution.¹⁸

"La Cucaracha," "La Valentina," and "La Adelita" are three corridos which were popular during the Mexican Revolution. Each represents a different woman who took part in the Revolution, and each reflects a male-female love relationship. The images created by Posada which illustrate these corridos represent women of three different social classes. Although each of the three corridos is about a woman who was perceived as a soldadera, none mentions her participation in battle.

Corridos are traditionally about a specific person or event. However, unlike those about male revolutionaries like Villa and Zapata, "none of the well-known corridos about soldaderas give their real names or are biographical."¹⁹ Composed from the viewpoint of the man, these corridos depict women soldiers who are not given the same regard as their male counterparts. Perhaps because they are about women, "La Cucaracha," "La Valentina," and "La Adelita" are corridos which do not follow the traditional format of relating a particular incident. They are, however, classified as corridos in most corrido collections, recorded versions, anthologies, and by the people themselves.²⁰

¹⁸Ibid., xiii.
¹⁹Ibid., 89.
²⁰Herrera-Sobek, Mexican Corrido, 104.
"La Cucaracha"

La Cucaracha (Figure 1) is probably one of the most representative images of the soldadera during the Mexican Revolution. The Cucaracha, synonymous in Spanish with "camp follower," was found in the camps of all the different Revolutionary troops. Posada’s Cucaracha is a campesina (peasant) dressed in traditional clothing of women of the pueblo standing confidently with hands on her hips. Both Posada’s image and the song "La Cucaracha" present more realistic depictions of the soldadera than the idealized, romanticized corridos of "Adelita" and "La Valentina." And while the second two corridos were associated with particular women who took part in the Revolution, "La Cucaracha" represented an interpretation of the soldadera as a type.

The corrido of "La Cucaracha" (The Cockroach) originated in the nineteenth century. One of the first stanzas was written by the Spaniard Fernán Caballero, and it became Mexican during the French Intervention (1862-1867). During the Porfirian regime, soldiers sang about "La Cucaracha," a soldadera who complained about shortages imposed by the war. The "Cucaracha" of the Villistas wanted alcohol and marijuana.

As with any popular folk song, many different lyrics exist for "La Cucaracha." The main difference between other versions of the song researched and the broadside illustrated by Posada is that Posada’s

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21 Tyler, Posada’s Mexico, 256.

22 During this time, the French occupied Mexico and attempted to create a French empire. Salas, Soldaderas, 89.
focuses on the condition of the soldadera herself, while the others are more concerned with political satire. In Corridos Mexicanos by Gilberto Vélez, two versions are listed: "La Cucaracha Porfirista" and "La Cucaracha Villista." Although the two share the same first stanza (both complaining about not having any marijuana to smoke), the "Porfirista" version mentions the "valiant don Porfirio" and a "Cucaracha" who is tired of disasters; in the "Villista" version, a hatband adorned with Carranza's whiskers will be placed on Pancho Villa's head. Another version of "La Cucaracha" found in the Cancionero Mexicano mentions Pancho Villa without a shirt who has scared away the Carrancistas (Carranza's followers). Since versions of these other corridos were found only in text form, it is not known what images might have been used to illustrate them.

Americo Paredes called "La Cucaracha" a satirical war song; apparently different factions appropriated the words to suit their purpose. Although "La Cucaracha" applies to the soldadera, none of the different versions sees her in a favorable light. To begin with, labelling someone a cockroach is not very flattering. A cockroach is a pest, a scavenger that is unwanted. They are considered dirty and intrusive, and people try to get rid of them. However, cockroaches are

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23Vélez, Corridos Mexicanos, 15, 29.

24"Una cosa me da risa:/ Pancho villa sin camisa:/ ya se van los carrancistas/ porque vienen los villistas." Frances Toor, ed., Cancionero Mexicano (Mexico City: Mexican Folkways, 1931), 33.

defiant survivors who are impossible to eliminate.

In each version of the corrido, the "cockroach" is complaining that she does not want to go anywhere, for one reason or another. Posada’s image of La Cucaracha, however, does not appear ugly or particularly deprived; she seems healthy if not cheerful. This could have the effect of negating the lyrics. Posada’s Cucaracha is not one to be scorned, as she defiantly stands her ground. Instead, she seems to ask only for empathy.

Anita Brenner wrote of how "women danced to the Cucaracha, that mad chant, with their mouths open and their skirts pulled up on their legs, after a battle yelping" the words to the song. The "Cucaracha" was "carefree, a woman for all, who gave her liquor and love with open hands." A description of a group of soldaderas by Francisco Ramírez Plancarte on August 15, 1914 describes their living condition, which was far from pleasant:

At the rear, singly or in groups, walked the soldaderas, burdened with a profusion of shoddy cooking implements and large bundles of clothes, and most of them with two or three children.... Suffering had erased all graceful softness of line from their faces and all expressions of sweetness from their eyes, leaving in their place the august marks of grief and the sublimity of resignation. They were just starting the march and they had already showed a marked feeling of fatigue and tiredness. It was a sad caravan of suffering. The women were miserably dressed; some went barefoot, most wore sandals and very few had rough, worn-out shoes.

26Brenner, Idols Behind Altars, 209.

27Juan González A. Alpuche, quoted in Salas, Soldaderas, 82.

28Description of the Federal Army's withdrawal from Mexico City quoted in Soto, Mexican Woman, 79-80.
The version of "La Cucaracha" that Posada illustrated describes a soldadera who is suffering because of the Revolution. She cannot afford nice clothes, much less lamp oil or meat to eat. She used to be pretty and dance the boleros, but now is coughing and ugly. The broadside in the Amon Carter collection was printed in 1918, five years after Posada's death. Although the song refers specifically to a camp follower, the lyrics of Posada's "La Cucaracha" contain topics that much of Mexico's population could understand during the years of the Revolution. Basically the corrido is about poverty, shortages of items such as oil and coal, and the rising cost of living. The ninth verse reads:

The Cucaracha is lamenting
the price of soap
and can't find any fuel
in all the population.

The corrido then describes how she goes to the cinematógrafo because it's cheaper than the bullfights she used to love. Shortages of items such as coal and wood were common; for example, coal and supplies to Villa had been cut off by Carranza in 1914.29

References to the Revolution do not appear until the fifteenth verse, when Villa is mentioned. "Yo sé que a la Villa fué" (I know that she went to Villa) suggests that she followed the troops. In a following verse, "Pobre Cucaracha" (Poor Cucaracha) is in a "triste situación" (sad situation) because her Juan went to war. In the last two verses, the soldier bids his Cucaracha farewell, and promises to visit her soon.

The song ends with

\begin{align*}
\text{Adiós Cucaracha,} & \quad \text{Goodbye my Cucaracha,} \\
\text{te dejo mi corazón,} & \quad \text{I'm leaving you my heart,} \\
\text{tratálo con cariño} & \quad \text{handle it with care} \\
\text{hazlo por compasión.} & \quad \text{do this with compassion.}
\end{align*}

Although she had followed the troops, her soldier was now leaving the Cucaracha behind as they look forward to the time when "la miseria se acabó" (the misery is finished). Like other corridos about soldaderas, it mentions war only briefly, and does not mention her direct involvement in the Revolution.

Unlike more recent printings of the lyrics, Posada's version of "La Cucaracha" does not mention that she does not have any "marijuana to smoke." Typically, the present lyrics to "La Cucaracha Villista" are

\begin{align*}
\text{La cucaracha, la cucaracha,} \\
\text{I don't want to walk anymore,} \\
\text{because I don't have, because I don't have} \\
\text{marijuana to smoke.}^{30}
\end{align*}

The image which accompanies the "Corrido de la Cucaracha" is that of a Mexican woman standing with her hands on her hips. She looks over the viewer's left shoulder and one foot is placed slightly forward. Although her stance is defiant (hands on hips and feet spread), her expression is somewhat melancholy: she is not smiling and her eyes are lidded.

The image stands on a cross-hatched floor which begins at the end of her rebozo (shawl). Shadows are suggested with hatched lines repeated in her rebozo and in her skirt. Small circles representing a pattern on her skirt were quickly drawn. There is a good value

\footnote{Vélez, Corridos Mexicanos, 29.}
balance: her dark hair and heavy lidded eyes contrast with her white 
neck and blouse; highlights on her dress contrast with her dark shoes 
and the textured ground. The lines of the image have been etched 
quickly; one can see the lines of the ground curve as they are 
completed. The vertical lines of the figure’s skirt, her stance, and her 
gaze suggest a sense of balance, as well as the almost symmetrical 
quality of the image. There is little depth in the picture other than 
that suggested by the texture and value of the figure.

Posada’s cucaracha’s dress is similar to the china poblana, which 
is the national folk costume. The traditional costume consists of a full 
flannel skirt, a white embroidered shirt and a rebozo (shawl) folded 
over the shoulders and crossed in front. According to Frances Toor in 
Mexican Folkways (published in 1947), the costume was worn by girls 
and women of all social classes on special occasions. It is also worn by 
women dancing the Jarabe Tapatío, a national folkdance, and by charras, 
women horse riders.31 During the Revolution, it was the clothing worn 
by the soldadera, as seen in many photographs taken at that time.32

The image is placed in the upper right corner under the title of 
the corrido. Under the figure’s feet is a half-sun composition which is 
not part of the original plate. This corrido from the Amon Carter 
collection is identical to one from the Harry Ransom Humanities Center 
at the University of Texas in Austin. Another version of "Corrido de la

31Frances Toor, A Treasury of Mexican Folkways, (New York: 

32Examples appear in Brenner, Wind That Swept Mexico, images 
92, 93, 95, 103 and Tyler, Posada’s Mexico, 256.
Cucaracha" from the Library of Congress collection (Figure 21) includes an identical image and lyrics but in a different layout without the half-sun.\(^{33}\)

Printed on what was once brightly colored paper, it has since faded to a dull pink. A flowery border design typical of these broadsides lines the bottom and lower right corner. The price for the corrido was 5 centavos (cents); it is Número (number) 8, probably in a series of broadsides. These broadsides were printed after Posada’s death—the Amon Carter and the Harry Ransom Center broadsides are dated 1918; the Library of Congress broadside was printed in 1915. The title of "Corrido de la Gucaracha" contains a typographical error; it should be "Cucaracha." It was common for these broadsides to contain typographical as well as grammatical and spelling errors.

According to Arsacio Vanegas Arroyo, grandson of Posada’s publisher, the Calavera Catrina (Figure 5) "started out as la cucaracha, to illustrate the song of that name."\(^{34}\) Although this is probably a myth, the more satirical Calavera Catrina could correspond with the text of "La Cucaracha:" the laughing image of death a reminder that everyone turns to dust.

The music to "La Cucaracha" is familiar even today on both sides of the border. Although the lyrics were revised throughout the Revolution, the melody probably kept the same format. It is a simple

\(^{33}\)Tyler, Posada’s México, 256.

\(^{34}\)Interview with Arroyo in Carmichael and Sayer, Skeleton at the Feast, 126.
tune, which could explain its longevity; only two chords are required from the guitar to accompany "La Cucaracha." Like most corridos, the musical phrase is repeated as the narrative progresses through each verse.

Another corrido published in 1914 called "Carboneria" is subtitled "La nueva Cucaracha." The subject of Posada's print as well as the lyrics is the coal shortage. The old "Cucaracha" lyrics are placed between the verses about the coal shortage, perhaps as a familiar refrain, both musically and literally. This time, the "Cucaracha" is an old skinny woman who (still) does not want to go anywhere. Another broadside in the Amon Carter collection "El Pagare de la Charrita Mexicana" also contains the same image used for "La Cucaracha" (Figure 22).

Posada's "Cucaracha" image is also identical to one used earlier which illustrates the corrido of "Belen Galindo," the story of a bride of ten days who was killed by her husband in 1883 (Figure 23). The lyrics have been traced back to a well known Spanish romance, "La Mala Suegra," and are also similar to a later corrido about "Rosita Alvirez." In both "Belen Galindo" and "Rosita Alvirez," the female character is killed by a man named Hipolito. Another clue that the

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35 Tyler, Posada's Mexico, 257.

36 Simmons, Mexican Corrido, 40; Jahn, José Guadalupe Posada, 493, 528; Vicente T. Mendoza, El Corrido Mexicano (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1954), 330-31.

37 Although the lyrics of corridos often begin with a date, this is not always indicative of the time composed. Belen Galindo was said to have been killed October 19, 1883; the version of "Rosita Alvirez"
"Cucaracha" image originally illustrated "Belen Galindo" is the reverse of the broadsheet, which depicts the same female character lying on the ground with a man with a gun standing over her.38

The transformation of the song and the use of one illustration to depict different characters illustrate the correlation to the folk tradition. The multiple use of the illustration relates directly to the folk tradition of carrying a song from one area to another while it is embellished and changed by the different people and different times. While the image illustrating "La Cucaracha" might have originally been a character in a different corrido, the figure works equally well as a soldadera.

"La Valentina"

As with many other corridos, there are a number of sources from which "La Valentina" may have been derived. Herrera-Sobek wrote that "La Valentina" was composed in 1909 but did not achieve great popularity until it was applied to a woman named Valentina Gatica in 1914.39 A soldadera in the Obregón forces, she was "brave, daring, beautiful and attractive. She attracted attention with her military type clothing, her two cartridge belts slung across her chest, and her rifle

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38 This second image also contains Posada's signature, which did not appear on the first.

hanging on her shoulder."40 Left an orphan after her father died in combat, the description of her military clothing indicates that she was involved in warfare, but to what extent is uncertain.

"La Valentina" may also have been based upon the life of Valentina Ramírez, who, at the age of sixteen disguised herself as a man to fight in the Revolution with Zapata’s troops. She was rejected "on the basis of her sex, not her ability" when her disguise was discovered after several months of military duty.41 Soto also verifies that "La Valentina" was identified with Valentina Ramírez, who was photographed by Agustín Casasola in 1913.42 Salas wrote that Valentina Ramírez fought at the side of General Ramón F. Iturbide from 1917 to 1920. After the Revolution, Ramírez received a pension so small that she could barely buy food, and lived in the slums of Sinaloa.43 Brenner refers to "Valentina," who was called the "Zapata shriek, sung by Indians disappeared under great sombreros or in the cracks of the hills, on horseback."44

The lyrics of "La Valentina," however do not mention warfare or actions on the battlefield; therefore, according to Soto, "none of the

40Ricardo Romero Aceves, La Mujer en la historia de México (Mexico City: Costa-Amic Editores, 1982), 279-280, quoted in Herrera-Sobek, Feminist Analysis, 103.
41Soto, Mexican Woman, 81.
42Ibid., 91.
43Salas, Soldaderas, 50.
44Brenner, Idols Behind Altars, 198.
words has been altered." 45 "La Valentina," like many other corridos which deal with soldaderas, focuses on the woman as a girlfriend and lover. There are few corridos which mention women in battle. Although "La Chinita Maderista" and "La Soldadera" refer to women in the Revolution, both are about a soldier who hopes his woman will join him. 46

The image by Posada which accompanies "Valentina" is also one which emphasizes the woman's appearance (Figure 2). A long-haired girl in a performer's costume, her legs are bare and she appears to be either leaning against a bar or holding a cane behind her back. She wears some sort of a headpiece topped with what looks like a feather, adding to the appearance of a performer's costume. She gazes directly at the viewer, standing with one foot slightly forward. Her bodice is decorated with a butterfly-like shape; her shoulders are bare and her skirt is pulled back to reveal her legs. The image floats on the page with no ground implied, although she is stabilized by the horizontal cane behind her back. As in La Cucaracha, the image of Valentina has been created boldly with strong value difference. Her bodice and hair are dark; her skirt and boots a mid-tone, and her skin has been left white. Shading appears only slightly in the bodice, skirt, and hair. Hatching can be seen in the bodice, though some detail seems to have been lost through the printing process. Like La Cucaracha, she stands confidently, although her hands placed behind her make her more

45 Soto, Mexican Woman, 91.

46 Salas, Soldaderas, 89-90.
approachable.

Like the lyrics to the corrido, she seems to have little to do with the Revolution or any soldadera who might have fought in battle. Although the image is printed in many books of Posada's work, again, when reproduced, the print is separated from any broadside or periodical context. It is probable Valentina was created for another purpose--possibly an illustration of an actress of Posada's time. Other images published in the newspaper El Popular in 1897 of actresses surely flaunted conventional women's dress styles of the time. Like "Valentina," their legs and arms are exposed and they are dressed in what today would resemble a one-piece bathing suit (Figure 24). Similar photographs were published in newspapers, but Posada's striking engravings were much more dramatic than the washed-out impressions.47

On the broadside, Posada's Valentina is placed in the middle of the page, separating the two columns of text. It is entitled "Nuevo Corrido" (New Corrido). Since the corrido is dated 1915, this could refer to a new version of an old corrido, or could refer to a new type of music which should be performed with the lyrics.

Throughout the lyrics, the male lover is concerned mainly with his love for Valentina and with the prospect of dying on the battlefield.

The first verse introduces Valentina:

Una pasión me domina es la que me ha hecho venir
Valentina, Valentina, yo te quisiera decir

A passion dominates me That's what brought me here
Valentina, Valentina, I wish to tell you so

The second verse brings in the thought of death:

Que por esos tus amores la vida voy a perder;
si me han de matar mañana que me maten de una vez

Because of your love I'm going to lose my life;
If they're going to kill me tomorrow Let them kill me now

This version of "La Valentina" has verses both expressing love for "Valentina" and cautions against involvement with a woman. In a later verse, the lyrics again refer to death as a result of Valentina's love: "Dicen que por tus amores/ la vida voy a perder" (They say because of your love/ I'm going to lose my life).

Although this corrido is supposedly based on the life of a soldadera who fought in the Revolution, the lyrics never situate the woman on the battlefield. Rather, it seems to be warning soldiers of the dangers of women's love. Although the Zapatistas had in the ranks "women as well as men, coronelas as well as coroneles," Pancho Villa "believed that a modern army should be entirely composed of men filling all the line and staff positions."48 Although women were an important element in his forces, he did not like to see the soldaderas on the battlefield. Villa "perceived the soldaderas as a burden and as

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48 Salas, Soldaderas, 39, 45.
hampering rapid cavalry movements." He made an example of one officer who attempted to take his soldadera into battle by shooting the officer and sending the woman behind the lines. The lyrics of "La Valentina" seem to relate more to this incident than to the heroicism of a woman in battle. Lyrics to another version of "La Valentina" were:

Because of this love, they all tell me
I'll suffer, and pay, and pay,
Who cares, if it was the devil
I'll be killed in my own way.

The music to "La Valentina" is set to a waltz, easily accompanied by one guitar or an entire mariachi. It can be harmonized by two or three voices, and the refrain of "Valentina, Valentina" is repeated throughout. It is a slower song than "La Cucaracha," and one can imagine couples dancing to it around a campfire.

The image of "Valentina" as a theater performer places her out of reach on a stage in a make-believe world of entertainment. She is there for the purpose of amusement and diversion rather than sincere love and affection. Although the image in Posada's original format might not have trivialized the character, when attached to "Valentina" after his death the image had this effect. Rather than heroicizing brave deeds, the format for men like Zapata or Villa, both the image and the lyrics to the song trivialize the role of women in the Revolution.

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49 Ibid., 45.
50 Ibid., 46.
51 Soto, Mexican Woman, 81.
"La Adelita"

A mariachi bandleader in Tijuana once said:

The Adelita! Why, one will tell you that she was the beloved of Pancho Villa, and another that she was the true wife of Elias Justo. But I speak the whole truth, señor. She was the sister of insurgents, the bride of the revolution, the mother of Presidents, and the grandmother of bandits!52

There are many theories as to who the real "Adelita" was. She may have been inspired by a woman from Durango who was involved in the Maderista movement.53 She may have been a nurse and not a fighting soldier. One version of the song may have been written to honor Adela Velarde Pérez, who nursed Sergeant Antonio del Río Armenta of the Carrancista troops.54 Salas traces the verses of "La Adelita" to Villa's soldiers. She discusses one version of "La Adelita" which is about a twenty-one year old from Chihuahua "who told Villa he should be president of the Republic. Villa was attracted to her, much to the dismay of her boyfriend, Pancho Portillo, who consequently committed suicide."55 "La Adelita" could also refer to a woman who disguised herself as a "Dorado," an elite group of Villa's soldiers which barred women. Another "Adelita" could have been a soldadera from Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua. She "was said to have told soldiers that if they were afraid, they should stay in camp and cook beans." According to a real


53Soto, Mexican Woman, 80.

54Salas, Soldadera, 108.

55Ibid., 92.
soldadera, Tomasa Garcia, the real Adelita "also told soldiers that she would wound or kill cowards."  

Simmons called "La Adelita" a "northern soldier's lament to his sweetheart" which he sang in verses "some familiar to all, some newly improvised."  

Americo Paredes referred to "La Adelita" as sentimental, and connected it to Pancho Villa. Villa, who is usually seen as en epic hero, challenging the enemy champions to a single combat, as in the corrido "La Toma de Zacatecas," is depicted in this song as "weeping for his Adelita," a construct which "owes a great deal to literate sources."

The image is a contrast from the other two soldadera images of La Cucaracha and La Valentina. Posada's image of Adelita (Figure 3) looks like a figure out of a fashion magazine, a stylish figure with an elaborate hat. Her clothing resembles that of styles drawn by Charles Dana Gibson at the turn of the century (Figure 25). The "Gibson Girl" was handsome, youthful, competent, and assured. She smiled, but seldom laughed. "Courteous, secure and serene, [she] had an Anglo-Saxon attractiveness which seemed to conquer all possible problems."

The woman in the image seems to have little to do with the

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56 Ibid., 92-93.
57 Simmons, Mexican Corrido, 7.
60 Ibid., xi.
Mexican Revolution. Unlike the Cucaracha, she is far removed from battlefield; with her tight waist and lace collar, she does not resemble at all the rebozo-clad barefoot women who followed the soldiers. Although the lyrics of the song are about battle, this "Adelita" looks as if she is on her way to a stroll through Chapultepec Park in Mexico City.

Her hands have been drawn too small to be proportionate, although this seems to be common in fashion figures of the time. The style of her clothing is similar to that in American fashion magazines between 1900-1908; around 1910, looser, free-hanging clothing became to become popular.\(^1\) Photographs of Mexican women in 1910-1911, however, show similar styles: long sleeved long dress with a big hat over upswept hair.\(^2\) The clothing is also similar to garments available for sale in North American catalogs at the turn of the century.\(^3\) In fact, the image almost looks as if it could have been copied from a fashion catalog.

Mostly line-drawn with little attention to value, the image stands against an abstract background of square shapes which seem randomly drawn in a mosaic pattern. Obviously added after the figure was created, the blocks look as if they are tumbling down around her. Usually his backgrounds are shadows drawn by hatching and cross-

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\(^2\) Anita Brenner, *Wind that Swept Mexico*, images 34, 56, 79.

hatching. After examining the image of *Adelita* in detail, it seems possible that Posada did not create this. The stroke is light, as compared to the heavier, darker lines of his other pieces. Although the facial features and the hatched lines resemble Posada's work, the unusual background and lighter value is uncharacteristic of his style. As stated previously in this thesis, there are hundreds of images attributed to Posada whose authorship is questionable. This *corrido*, however, lies in the Posada collections both at the Amon Carter and at the Huntington at the University of Texas in Austin.

The title of the song is followed by the words *Cancion Tapatia.* *Cancion* means "song;" *Tapatia* applies to anything from the state of Jalisco. It is therefore possible that this version of "Adelita" originated in Jalisco, a state located on the west coast and central Mexico which includes the city of Guadalajara.

According to María Herrera-Sobek, "this *corrido* adheres to medieval love lyric conventions: a lovelorn suppliant entreating his lady to love him and be faithful while he marches to the distant battlefields."65 "La Adelita" was the "adorable sweetheart of the ranks."66 Soldiers chose to sing verses about her which depicted her as a loyal camp follower. The version illustrated by Posada begins with a verse stating the singer's intent to marry Adelita:

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64Toor, *Mexican Folkways*, 364.


66Juan González A. Alpuche, quoted in Salas, *Soldaderas*, 82.
Adelita is the name of the maiden
whom I love and cannot forget
whom I love and idolize
and whom I will marry.

In the second verse, the soldier wants to bring Adelita to dance in his barracks. It is unclear whether Adelita is a soldadera already living in the barracks, or if he will bring her there from somewhere else.

The fourth verse mentions war and reiterates the status of the soldier:

If my Adelita left with someone else
I would long for her eternally
By steamboat or military train
I would follow and find her

The fifth verse states:

Now the clarinet is sounding
to go fight in the war
where the mountains run with blood
but a tyrant will never rule.

The ninth verse is patriotic:

As a soldier my country calls me
to the battlefield to fight
Adelita, Adelita of my soul
Please in God’s name be true to me.

Again, the soldier, not Adelita is going to the battlefield.

Although Adelita was supposed to be someone who actually participated in battle, neither the image nor the text suggest that. Both depict idealized rather than realistic women. The image supports the text in its "example of the idealized, beautiful, and valiant soldadera type in its romanticized manifestation."\(^67\) Although "Adelita" became synonymous with soldadera and the song was one of the most popular

\(^67\)Herrera-Sobek, Feminist Analysis, 108.
musical compositions among revolutionary soldiers, the representation of
the soldadera in this corrido reflects Mexico's patriarchal society rather
than actuality.68

Like "La Cucaracha," the lyrics of "Adelita" were also
appropriated for satirical purposes. Lyrics quoted in The Mexican
Woman: A Study of Her Participation in the Revolution, 1910-1940 were
sung by Pancho Villa's soldiers:

If Carranza would only marry Villa,
And Zapata marry Obregón,
If Adelita would only marry me,
Revolution would be dead as stone.69

In Idols Behind Altars, Anita Brenner wrote that "Adelita" was always sung "with spatter of bullets and whoops at the end of each
stanza."70 Like the other two corridos discussed, the same stanza was repeated for each verse. Characteristic of a corrido, "Adelita" contains "folk-elements--strong accentual rhythms, melodies cast in sequence patterns, implied tonic-dominant harmony everywhere."71 With a faster beat than "Valentina," "Adelita" can be performed as a polka.

Two short novels written in the 1980s by Carlos Isla, La Valentina
and La Adelita, have appropriated popular myths about the two
soldaderas and portray them as women seeking equality. Instead of

68Ibid., 108, 103.

69Soto, Mexican Woman, 80.

70Brenner, Idols Behind Altars, 197.

being depicted as objects of love songs, "they have relations with soldiers who act as gentlemen and understand that women are men's equals in the fight for social justice." On the cover of La Valentina, a woman with a sombrero sits on a horse holding a rifle, while the cover of La Adelita depicts a woman with bandoliers and a dress much like that of the "Cucaracha" stepping off a train. These two images are more like those associated today with the soldadera, unlike Posada's Valentina and Adelita images which accompanied the corridos.

Other corridos have compiled different soldaderas. "Corrido del Norte" refers to Valentina as a colonel who nurses wounds; Adelita as a virtuous, pretty girl; and Marieta as the girlfriend of all the troop. Sung by Lola Beltrán, "Yo me muero donde quiera" ("I Die Anywhere") refers to Valentina, Jesusita, and Adelita as soldiers who never die. As Anita Brenner wrote, the women in Posada's Revolutionary corridos became "the rearguard of gunned pilgrims thereafter; and the madonnas, those sweethearts, whose wooings became marching songs." Perhaps an image by Posada which would better illustrate "La Adelita" or "La Valentina" had already been used for the corrido "Despedida de un Maderista y su triste amada" (Figure 26). With this image, Posada has captured a touching moment as a soldier bids farewell to his lover.

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72 Salas, Soldaderas, 88; Carlos Isla, La Valentina (Mexico City: Ediciones ELA, 1980) and La Adelita (Mexico City: Ediciones ELA, 1981).

73 References to "Corrido del Norte" by Pepe Guizar and "Yo me muero donde quiera" contain no dates; both were probably written after the Revolution. Salas, Soldaderas, 92-93.

74 Brenner, Idols Behind Altars, 197.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

As Shifra Goldman wrote, "the Mexican Revolution of 1910 . . . profoundly affected consciousness throughout Latin America . . . and had global repercussions among artists, intellectuals, and working people."\(^1\) The Mexican muralists, in full revolt against the Academy, embraced Posada as an alternative tradition. A discussion of Posada's influence on the Mexican modernist movement by Peter Wollen points out the similarities between Posada and the muralists: they were all trained artists who altered and adapted their styles to accommodate their public.\(^2\) Posada gave credibility to a Mexican artistic tradition, "crossing both the class gap and the historic divide of the Revolution itself." At the same time, the muralists used Posada to align themselves with the European avant-garde interest in popular imagery, solving the dilemma of "revolutionary nationalism—how to be popular, authentic, traditional and modernizing, all at the same time."\(^3\)

Diego Rivera incorporated the *corrido* into his murals on the third

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\(^3\)Ibid., 16-17.
floor of the Ministry of Education in Mexico City. A painted red ribbon which winds around the mural panels contains the words of two corridos. Introduced by an image of the well-known singer Concha Michel singing to a group of women, men, and children, the Corrido of the Agrarian Revolution was painted in 1926; the Corrido of the Proletarian Revolution was painted in 1927-28. Scenes such as the Night of the Rich and Bourgeois Reformers are followed by the corrido of Emiliano Zapata. Stanton Catlin called Rivera’s emulation of the corrido "a radical artistic innovation" which "aimed at translating the feeling of the corrido, a sentiment-laden and satirical art form, into visual terms." Formally, the combination of image and text challenged tradition. Unlike Posada’s work, the text becomes subordinate to the image. As it winds around the frescoes, the words become a caption to the murals. Rather than illustrating the corrido, Rivera allowed the corrido to illustrate his work.

The soldadera image often appears in works by the Mexican muralists. Rivera’s Dream of a Sunday Afternoon, in addition to Posada and his Calavera Catrina, portrays a soldadera with a sombrero and crossed bandoliers carrying a rifle. Murals by David Alfaro Siqueiros and Rufino Tamayo also contain soldaderas, and José Clemente Orozco

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created many etchings and pictures of soldaderas.⁶ In an etching by Orozco of La Cucaracha (1915-1917), "half-dressed, drunken soldaderas wearing bandoliers and pistols stand by soldiers neatly dressed in their uniforms."⁷

Others who followed Posada's tradition included those who published El Machete, a broadside irregularly issued from the 1920s until 1928. Muralists Siqueiros and Xavier Guerrero produced graphics for the publication, which contained political "corridos, doggerel poems and playlets on current topics."⁸ A 1910 image by Posada of Federales ambushed by Zapatistas was reused in the August 1924 issue of the publication. Text accompanying the image in El Machete read: "May the military men of today never renege on their revolutionary origins to become in their turn bodyguards to the present government, or they will suffer the same fate."⁹ Posada's graphic works were also a direct influence on the Taller de Grafica Popular (TGP), or the Workshop for Popular Graphic Art established in Mexico City in 1937 by Leopoldo Méndez (1902-1969), Pablo O'Higgins (1904-1983) and Luis Arenal (b. 1908).¹⁰ The TGP's representations of la lucha diaria, or the daily battle of the working class, drew on Posada's bold images and

⁶Salas, Soldaderas, 95; Shifra Goldman, Contemporary Mexican Painting in a Time of Change (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977), 22.

⁷Salas, Soldaderas, 96.

⁸Charlot, "Posada and his Successors," 49.

⁹Ibid., 50-51.

¹⁰Keller, Taller de Grafica Popular, 7.
technique. In addition, Posada's work influenced Frida Kahlo (1907-1954), the Mexican surrealist María Izquierdo (1902-1955) as well as José Luís Cuevas (b. 1934) and the Nueva Presencia artists of the 1960's.¹¹

Contemporary artists continue to draw upon Posada's imagery as well as that of the corridos. An engraving by Mariana Yampolksy, who joined the Taller de Gráfica Popular in 1944, contains both soldadera and corrido imagery. Titled Voy a Cantar un Corrido, the image depicts a revolutionary camp. Trains and guns in the background, a sombreroed Mexican plays his guitar and sings, accompanied by two other men and two soldaderas, one of whom has bandoliers crossing her chest.¹² Artists such as Alfredo Zalce (b. 1908), Elizabeth Catlett (b. 1919) and Francisco Mora (b. 1922) have also continued Posada's graphic tradition.

Rini Templeton (1935-1986) produced thousands of unsigned images in the forms of linoleum, wood, and metal engravings, silkscreen images, and india ink images. Intended for reproduction, she created these images in order to advance people's struggles to end exploitation and to win justice and peace. Influenced by the Mexican graphic tradition, Templeton created, in her own words, "art that comes from the people and returns to them. Art that is nourished by the traditions, the daily

¹¹Ibid., 112, 120, 124.

¹²Neither dates nor sizes for images are given in this catalogue. Mexican Soldaderas and Workers during the Revolution: An Exhibition Catalogue (Santa Barbara: University of California, Center for Chicano Studies, 1979), 17.
life, the struggles of the people, and returns to become theirs.\textsuperscript{13} Her work, estimated to include some 9,000 images, is located all over the United States and Mexico, as well as other countries.\textsuperscript{14} Like Posada’s images, Rini Templeton’s images are seen reproduced in many forms, anonymous yet recognizable. While Posada’s circulated in the form of broadsides, Templeton’s are reproduced on fliers and brochures for political organizations.

\textit{Calacas} published by a contemporary Taller de Gráfica Popular in Mexico City contain \textit{calaveras} and satirical verses on subjects ranging from McDonalds and Disney World to the economy of Cuba. Distributed on the streets like Posada’s work, they continue the tradition of printed images accompanying satirical verse. Another contemporary comparison to Posada’s broadsides is the presence of the Zapatistas on the World Wide Web. Censored by the Mexican as well as the international press, the contemporary Zapatistas send out messages, photographs, and declarations through the Internet, avoiding, like much of Posada’s work, the traditional channels of publication. A document which reproduced Zapatista press releases utilized Posada’s work. Printed in the form of a newspaper, this publication, which contained a number of Zapatista documents, stated the group’s political platforms. Images by Posada were reproduced throughout the paper. By appropriating Posada’s images to accompany their political statements, the group established a


\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., 264.
visual connection to the Mexican Revolution of 1910 and supported their ideological platform.

In *Mixed Blessings*, Lucy Lippard wrote:

Visual artists are conscious, and unconscious, agents of mass dreams, allowing forbidden or forgotten images to surface, reinforcing aspects of identity that provide pride and self-esteem. . . . As namers, artists participate in an ongoing process of call and response, acting in the space between the self- or individual portrait and the cluster of characteristics that supposedly define a community. In the expansion from one to many, from the mirror to the frame, visual images play an increasingly important role.\(^\text{15}\)

The image of "La Cucaracha," standing proudly with her hands on her hips, reinforces the identity of the *soldadera* as a Revolutionary who is willing to fight for her cause. Women during the Mexican Revolution had "followed armies, fought, fled from their homes, lost their men, survived, had nursed and fed troops.\(^\text{16}\) Although a feminist movement took place in Mexico during these times, both the lyrics and the images of "La Valentina" and "La Adelita" reinforced the position of women as lovers rather than soldiers.\(^\text{17}\) Posada's images played a part in "naming" the women and their place in the community. Other images by Posada such as those of the *calaveras* could be called "agents of mass dreams," while his political images responded to the condition of the Mexican economy and government.

A contemporary poem by Lorna Dee Cervantes reflects the *corrida*.

\(^\text{15}\) Lippard, *Mixed Blessings*, 40.


\(^\text{17}\) Although women campaigned for emancipation during the Revolution, they were not given the national vote in Mexico until 1953. Franco, *Plotting Women*, xix, 102.
My sense of this land can only ripple
through my veins
like the chant of an epic corrido.
I come from a long line of eloquent illiterates
whose history reveals what
words don't say.\textsuperscript{18}

The narrative tradition in Latin America is not sharply separated from
music, dance or art. In Mexican culture, the musicians, poets, and
artists who create the \textit{corridos} play the role of "social healers, keepers
of history, politics, stories, mysteries, and the arts, passing them on
from one generation to another."\textsuperscript{19} In \textit{Borderlands/La Frontera}, Gloria
Anzaldúa wrote that the \textit{corridos} and the \textit{corridistas} "are our chief
cultural mythmakers, and . . . they make our hard lives seem
bearable."\textsuperscript{20}

The \textit{hojas volantes} combined with the music of the \textit{corrido} give a
sense of Mexico during the Revolution. The tradition of folksongs
passed down through time has been enhanced by the imagery of Posada
used to illustrate \textit{corridos} during the Mexican Revolution, both before
and after his death. In audiovisual form, the \textit{hojas volantes} of the
\textit{corrido} provided a language understood by the people of Mexico which
reflected the Revolution as well as Mexican culture. More than just

\textsuperscript{18}Lorna Dee Cervantes, "Visions of Mexico While at a Writing
Ripening} (New York/London: Pandora, 1987), 23, reprinted in Lippard,
\textit{Mixed Blessings}, 99.

\textsuperscript{19}Lucy Lippard, \textit{Mixed Blessings} (New York: Pantheon Books,
1990), 101.

\textsuperscript{20}Gloria Anzaldúa, \textit{Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza}
(San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute, 1987), 61, quoted in Lippard,
\textit{Mixed Blessings}, 101.
words to songs, "La Cucaracha," "La Adelita," and "La Valentina" take on different meanings when viewed in context of the combination of image, music, and text. The images, more than just decorative devices, take on socio/political implications within the context of the corrido.

Posada’s illustrations, interwoven with the text and music of the corrido, told stories. His pictures interpreted the history, folklore, politics, economics, and society of Mexico. In a unique form, image, music, and text created a dialogue which became an experience in addition to a tangible object. In creating the imagery, Posada strengthened the musical and oral tradition of the corrido. As the melody of the corrido and the pages of the hojas volantes drift through history, José Guadalupe Posada’s mirror reflects facets of Mexican life.
ILLUSTRATIONS
CORRIDO DE LA GUCARACHA

que no ha salido a pasear,

porque no tiene, centavitos que gastar

La Cucaracha, la Cucaracha, ya no quiere caminar,
porque no tiene, porque no tiene dinero para gastar.

Pobre de la Cucaracha
se queja de corazón,
da no usar ropa planchada
por lo caro de la cera.

La ropa sin almidón
se pone todos los días
y sin ese babero
se me figuras malón.

La Cucaracha ya suprimió
el bistec y la remolina
por lo caro de la cera:
Pobre de la Cucaracha!

Ahora como se escandaliza
verdincita y quinquín,
porque no tiene dinero para comprar melipalpí.

También suprimió el candil de petróleo que tenía,
y todo se quejó por la horrible carestía.

Que se la vea Cucaracha
con su enaguas desnuda,
y antes tan solo Lucerna,
me parecías una hada.

La Cucaracha en cuestión
cargaba mucho dinero,
y así se ve más flaca.

Pobre de la Cucaracha,
en que triste situación
se encuentra esta muchacha,
pues su Jueves se fue el Panteón.

La Cucaracha ya no es
la cantora monotóna,
se queja el martes:
La Cucaracha ya no es
la cantora monotóna,
se queja el martes:

Y me voy a despedir
Cucaracha, Cucaracha,
y a mi querida muchacha
le dejo mi corazón,
tratándolo con cariño
hazlo por compasión.

Registado conforme a la Ley No. 110, en enero de 1918, por la Testamentaria de Antonio Vang. A. y va. — de Santa Teresa 40 — México

1. José Guadalupe Posada, Corrido de la Cucaracha, 1918
Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas
VALENTINA
NUEVO CORRIDO

Una joven una dama,
la que me ha hecho venir
Valentina, Valentina,
ye te quisiye decir.

Que por eso tus amores
la vida voy a perder;
yo he de estar muerta
que ve melena de una vez.

Si porque te quiso Julita,
alegre parejas vete,
si porque me das la mejor
información ya no me ves.

Valentina, Valentina,
me dan que me han de matar,
quedándose en la vida
que me importa lo menos.

Y si que te andas comiendo
de tu carne en el zaguan,
que tanto estoy en el estrado
y que en el vino a quedar.

Valentina, Valentina,
tan solo esta ves
que me dejas tirada,
me vas a recuperar.

Si te citas con mi mama,
si necesito ver tu amor
que me defiendan miasma,
tusancias y tu amor.

No hay quien se atreva conmigo,
pues saben que has de perder,
que no te molestes tan seguido
que me hablan de una vez.

Una Juana y otra Juana
des Juanes juegos a la vez,
una me tiende la cama
y otra me de de amor.

Digan que por tus amores
la vida voy a perder,
me hacen los traidores
tan sólo con la querer.

Una pasión me domina
en la que me has hecho morir,
Valentina, Valentina
ya la quiero hasta el morir.

Y el mismo Valentina,
ye muerto te de dorar
y una correa en mi muslo
la me tendran que poner.

Esta dor, mi Valentina,
si me ve
que simbolos al cariño
y al amor de una mujer.

Que el amor cuando he formado
sé quedo en el corazón
como un inmenso poder.

Medio-paso de moda.

Tiene esta mi cumbia
por vete de medio paso,
pues parece un paso
el salir de la función
y cierto destrucción
y podría ser un trabajo
que se te ven boca-abajo
que te de un tropiezo
y mi pobre corazón
la tornas como tan solo.

Yo te enseñaré acuñado
que la falda no es ancho-
que se ve tantos zapatos
y no muchos hacen blanco
entre dos tiempos
por las calles caminando
y la calle resbaldando
con danzar y con cantar
y hoy parece figura
de las que están amamantando.

Si se trata de sufrir
o se trata de besar,
la falda se trae de abràng
lo cual me hace mucho
por eso no haces daño
el vestido tan pegado,
por tanto de sufrir
a cualquiera hace tratar
y te debe condenar
que has de ver apropiado.

Si critico tu vestido
y digo que es un fracaso
es porque andando no das
siquiera el medio paso;
y si le pones la cadera
de media modación
le pones golpe otro
la falda a hacer
que siempre dan vueltas
en cualquiera reunión.

Acuérdate que en los toros
no te pongas ni querer,
pues que quieres que suele
se comienza a trepar
y aunque es corrida solo
la falda de adelante.

Yo te elijo a mi placer
que me dejas sin sufrir,
y tu ya estás jadeando
de tener tan solo.

Para la escultura humana
no llaman el medio paso
que belleza soberana
no de andar como patrón;
y si de un paso por otro
lo que dijo Camproamor,
existe que da dolor
hasta que una escultura
lo aprieta con más milicia
y perdiendo esta el poder.

2. José Guadalupe Posada, Valentina, 1915
Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas
ADELITA
CANCION TAPATIA

Adelita se llama la joven
a quien quiero y no puedo olvidar,
y con quien me voy a casar.

Sí, Adelita, has de ser mi esposa
a quien quiero y no puedo olvidar,
y con quien me voy a casar.

Adelita por Dios te lo ruego
a quien quiero y no puedo olvidar,
y con quien me voy a casar.

El frío es terrible
a quien quiero y no puedo olvidar,
y con quien me voy a casar.

Adelita se llama la joven
a quien quiero y no puedo olvidar,
y con quien me voy a casar.

FRIO
Canto Bohemio

La tarde era triste
la niña estaba
con un huésped.

El frío es terrible
a quien quiero y no puedo olvidar,
y con quien me voy a casar.

Responde el pequeño
que helada trilla:
—Más frío que la nieve
no hay otro mayor
más frío que la nieve
no hay otro mayor
A qué que de muerte
los penachos trillaron
aquél que no poco
impuso mi madre
al día que mi esposa
me unió sin amor.

3. José Guadalupe Posada, Adelita
Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas
4. José Guadalupe Posada, *Imprenta de A. Vanegas Arroyo*
5. José Guadalupe Posada, *Calavera Catrina*
6. José Guadalupe Posada, *Coat of Arms of the City of Guanajuato*, 1883
7. José Guadalupe Posada, *Primeros ensayos de la litografía*, 1873
8. José Guadalupe Posada, *Interior de la colegiata de Guadalupe*
9. Juan Codero, *Church of Santa Teresa*, 1857
Galavera en Monton
Al precio de un decimil
Como nunca se habrá visto
En toda esta capital

Es una verdad sincera
Lo que nos dice esa frase:
Que sólo el que no nace
No puede ser calavera.

Esto es una castañuela
Para todos los mortales,
Porque hasta los militares
Les ha de dar pesadilla.

Todos los comerciantes
Vendrán a ser calaveras
Porque ahora la calavera
Se acabó la Jaja de Arana.

Los comerciantes
Que en todo son presuntuosos,
Buenos roídos y perdidos
Les dan en la boca
Calavera del comercio.

La calavera del marinero
De canoche acerrísimo,
Se hace por la noche,
Que hasta se azuzan
El marinero inescrupuloso.

El marinero
Por acequia y por charco
El marinero y el barco,
Calavera del marinero.

A todos los que van de vacaciones,
Y los que se van a la cascada,
Sus horribles calaveras
Que ruedan por el recodo,
Ríen, se ríen del mismo,
Son los calavera de acero.

Los duendes y pastores,
Y también los campesinos,
Calavera del mundo.

10. José Guadalupe Posada, Calaveras en Monton


Como fue la entrada del Sr. Madero a México.

D. Francisco I. Madero.

17. José Guadalupe Posada, Pancho Villa.
18. José Guadalupe Posada, El Entierro de Zapata, 1914.
20. José Guadalupe Posada, El Corrido de Heracleo Bernal.
23. José Guadalupe Posada, *La Tragedia de Belen Galindo*. 


26. José Guadalupe Posada, *Despedida de un Maderista y su triste amada*. 
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