

An Interview with Silvio Zavala

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SILVIO Zavala was one of the first Latin American scholars, if not *the* first, whose work I encountered as an undergraduate tiro in Mexican history. Within a week or two of the beginning of term, the encomienda was duly wheeled out on to the stage, and its modern guardians introduced: Leslie B. Simpson to the north of the border, and Silvio Zavala to the south. I recall finishing *The Encomienda in New Spain*; but I am not so sure about *La encomienda indiana*. Even at this remove of time, however, I do recall gaining from the two works a distinct sense of the difference of historical approach between the Latin American and North American traditions. Simpson's book, though full of laws, was ultimately a pragmatic study; Zavala's, the reverse.

Silvio Zavala was born in Mérida, in Yucatán, in 1909. His early education took place there, and more advanced studies at the Universidad del Sureste and the Universidad Nacional de México. In 1931 he went with a scholarship to the Universidad Central de Madrid, where, under the direction of Rafael Altamira, he wrote a thesis, completed in 1933, entitled *Los intereses particulares en la conquista de la Nueva España*. This work gained him the degree of Doctor en Derecho; and, in 1935, became his first major publication as *Las instituciones jurídicas en la conquista de América*. In that same year, *La encomienda indiana* also appeared. At 26, Zavala had already demonstrated remarkable energy and tenacity, not to mention originality, in research and writing.

The conviction of the need for a firm legal point of departure that these two early works displayed has remained visible throughout Professor Zavala's subsequent and voluminous writings. Though concentrated within the general period of foundation of the Spanish American empire, his research interests have been broad—from legal and ideological subjects on the one side, to highly practical matters (labor history, for ex-

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ample) on the other. He is unusual in not having restricted his attention to Mexico. Not only has he written general works on colonial Latin America, but he has also done detailed research on aspects of Andean and Argentine history.

Professor Zavala has frequently represented Mexico abroad, as both a teacher and a diplomat. Having been cultural attaché at the Mexican embassy in Paris from 1956 to 1958, he later became Mexican ambassador to France (1966–75)—a responsibility that, if anything, seems to have accelerated the flow of his publications. He has taught in several foreign universities—Puerto Rico, Havana, Harvard, Paris, Ghent, and Seattle. In Mexico he has, besides teaching and writing, had many administrative tasks—as founder and editor of the *Revista de Historia de América*, founder and director of the Centro de Estudios Históricos of El Colegio de México, director of the Museo Nacional de Historia at Chapultepec Castle, president of the Historical Commission of the Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia, and president of El Colegio de México, to mention only a few. His awards and distinctions are many, and include corresponding membership of eight national academies of history in Latin America, honorary doctorates from Columbia University and from the universities of Ghent, Toulouse, and Montpellier, and the Legion d'Honneur (Grand Officier) and the Ordre National du Mérite (Grand-Croix) from France. His distinctions in Mexico are too numerous to mention, and begin, naturally, with memberships of the Academia Nacional de Historia y Geografía de México and the Academia Mexicana de la Historia.

The following interview with Professor Zavala took place at his home in Mexico City on June 3, 1981.

PETER BAKEWELL: *Would you like to select one specific work of yours on which to comment?*

SILVIO ZAVALA: When I first began my work on topics of historical interest, my principal concerns were in two areas: the Spanish conquest and the social order that developed as a result of that conquest. These two themes or topics of interest have been carried over into my later work. You will recall that the title of my first book, published in 1933, was *Los intereses particulares en la conquista de la Nueva España*; that is, I was attempting to look at this phenomenon in a manner that would be a little different from the way in which it had been studied previously. I believe it is worth mentioning this. Later I developed these ideas concerning the conquest, as, for example, in my book entitled *Las instituciones jurídicas en la conquista de América*, first published in 1935 and,

with revisions, republished in 1971. I still have an article that will be published in a volume in memory of Jorge Gurría Lacroix, here at the University, in which I again study Hernán Cortés with respect to his justification of the conquest of Mexico. That topic has never ceased to interest me, and this explains several of my publications: for example, *Filosofía de la conquista*, which dates from 1947. A revised third edition of this work was published in 1977.

The second theme is even broader in scope since it does not make reference to a specific moment of confrontation, but rather to a period spanning three centuries. I believe that most of my works could be grouped here. Among these might be included *La encomienda indiana*, published in 1935 and extensively revised and reissued in 1973, and the synthetic presentation entitled *Ensayos sobre la colonización española en América*, published in 1944. The third edition of this work appeared in 1978. English editions were published by the University of Pennsylvania Press in 1943 and by Russell and Russell of New York in 1968. I need not elaborate on these works, but those who ponder the two directions my studies have taken will understand much about what I have sought to accomplish.

PB: *And your present projects . . . ?*

SZ: Well, especially in the early years of my career as a researcher, I accumulated extensive materials that I later had no time to develop because of other obligations—trips, meetings, and all those things that occur in a life so varied as mine. Since retiring from public service, from trips, from teaching, and from the other activities that are so time-consuming, I have been able to devote the past few years to the study of this information. The first task I set for myself was to extract what was pertinent to South America; this explains my recent lengthy book *Orígenes de la colonización en el Río de la Plata* (1978), and the three volumes concerning *El servicio personal de los indios en el Perú* (1978–80). I worked initially on South America because the material I have on Mexico is more extensive and I wished to be quite free to give my whole attention to it. Now I am working on the subject of Indian servitude and its various manifestations in sixteenth-century New Spain. I hope to have this work ready for publication in a year or two. It often happens that the documentation on a single theme is so abundant that it does not fit easily into the study I am preparing at the moment, either as an appendix or as part of the text or notes. When this occurs I separate the material into additional volumes. You will note, for example, that I copied and studied several ledgers relating to the construction of the cathedral of Mexico. These are extensive, and for this reason I preferred to do for the Colegio

de México a pamphlet entitled “Una etapa en la construcción de la Catedral de México, alrededor de 1585” as a sort of short cut—a separate piece of work. I am having the same problem with the subject of Indian servitude for the Marquesado del Valle, on which there is as much documentation, if not more. That was to have been one of the chapters in the general study I am preparing—and it will indeed be one of the chapters—but the documentation is so extensive that I will publish a separate volume made up solely of extracts from documents.

PB: *Will these documents be different from those you published in Fuentes para la historia del trabajo en Nueva España, between 1939 and 1946?*

SZ: Yes, completely. The *Fuentes* have run their course. There is in fact a facsimile edition, published by the Centro de Estudios Históricos del Movimiento Obrero Mexicano in nine volumes, that appeared in 1980.

Concerning the interest that you have demonstrated in my impressions of historians who might be considered my contemporaries (although they were a bit older than myself), I would like to mention two who caught my attention. Professor Arthur S. Aiton, who was at the University of Michigan, began a serious documentary study that resulted in a monograph on Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza. I still consider this book the standard work on the subject. Some time later the work of Professor France V. Scholes, who began with the Carnegie Institution in Washington and went on to the University of New Mexico, caught my attention. When Professor Scholes died, I did a study of his work that was published in the *Revista de la Universidad de Yucatán*. Much of Professor Scholes’s work made reference to the history of that region of which I am a native, so there were several reasons to justify an analysis of his studies. These two writers attracted my attention and I wish to mention them for the following reason: the United States, in the late nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth, benefited from the influence of the work carried out in German seminars, as everyone knows. And there were in the United States good teachers—Bolton, Haring, Robertson, and others—who trained younger historians with a great capacity for work and for understanding the past. In the two cases that I refer to, the historians received important documentary support from the Archivo General de Indias. This was especially true in the case of Scholes, who spent a large part of his life working in that archive. It must be understood that for those of us who live in Spanish American countries, well-oriented research that opened documentary sources that were not easily within our reach was valuable: not only because of the manner in

which things were viewed by these historians, but also because of the richness of the sources used. At that time historians, especially those from the United States who devoted themselves to such tasks and shared their findings with us, helped to improve and expand our own studies. This is one of the reasons why I wished to mention Professors Aiton and Scholes. It is also related to your concern about the direction in which historiography has moved since that time. Of course, in the contemporary historiography of the second half of the twentieth century there are worthwhile elements and attitudes that do indeed contribute to a broadening of our knowledge of the topics that we study; but there are what I consider certain errors or deviations in contemporary historiography. For example, earlier historiography was modest. It viewed the past as a very broad and very difficult field, one from which only a few basic truths could be gleaned. This was the fundamental attitude of that historiography. Contemporary historiography seems to me to be presumptuous. It knows and dictates everything. It is extremely abundant. It superimposes upon the past its own models, its ideas, its jargon; and I believe this to be obtrusive. I prefer the earlier attitude of historiography.

PB: *Rather more humility*

SZ: What will probably happen eventually is that some of the historiography of the twentieth century will say more about the twentieth century than about the early centuries that it sets out to study. And that to me seems historically unproductive.

PB: *Are you saying that there is a tendency to impose current ideologies on the past?*

SZ: Precisely.

PB: *And often they do not fit properly. Or one must bend and misshape the past in order to make them fit, and this is always dangerous?*

SZ: That is one view. Allow me to point out another. Previously it was accepted, and this was a legacy of the distant past, that history should be viewed in terms of political history, be it of the states, of the people involved in government, or of the legal system, and so on. Even in the nineteenth century this began to change and the movement that was referred to as the history of civilization arose, principally in Europe. I studied under a distinguished professor, Rafael Altamira, who was a leading figure in that movement. He wrote what is perhaps the first history of Spanish civilization using this new approach. After this broader view of history, which included not only political phenomena, but also eco-

conomic, social, cultural, and other aspects, there developed a strong economic and social trend that with the passing of time evolved into quantitative history—price indexes, the production and circulation of metals, population figures, exports, and so on—considered in isolation, which is not right. Later there came an attempt—and I see this tendency particularly in the United States—to narrow the focus in search of the common man, the man who left some slight trace in a small notarial archive, and to profess that this is the true history. If we reflect upon how or why this has come about, we will become conscious of the distance we have traversed in stages. We need not, however, accept all of the conclusions of these historians, for if, on the one hand, they extend historical study to strata of the population that were previously forgotten—and this is a positive contribution—on the other, they seem intent upon ignoring the usefulness of making the effort to understand the general ideas of an era, the role that important men played in it, and the functioning of institutions. In short, they fail to touch upon the complex historical reality that affects those same modest strata of society that are supposedly redeemed in the name of retrospective analysis. At a recent convention I cautioned that deliberate ignorance should not be mistaken for methodological virtue. I recall that some years ago, during the height of the slaughter of the Second World War, some of our colleagues taught and repeated that traditional historiography had erred in placing its emphasis on states and wars. And they proclaimed this at that very juncture when it was not at all clear who would emerge victorious, and this question was of supreme importance to those who were to survive. It is for this reason that I say that while I recognize the equity and competence of certain present-day viewpoints concerning history, I am far from believing that as a whole they will survive the test of time.

PB: *Do you feel that modern Mexican historiography has been greatly influenced by the French school in the sense of emphasizing economic history and, above all, the common man?*

SZ: Perhaps there is such a trend. I myself have studies that encompass economic data and the common man. I admire the work of Marc Bloch. I was acquainted with and greatly esteemed Lucien Febvre and his then pupil and collaborator Fernand Braudel. I promoted the exchange of professors and students between France and Mexico, but I never ignored the fact that in the French school, as well as in the Mexican school, other tendencies exist, and that in Mexico the tendency to which you refer is far from being dominant, with the exceptions I have already pointed out. I find this trend more prevalent in the contemporary historiography of the United States. It is my firm belief that a multiple focus is desirable

in historiography since it provides a more thorough knowledge and comprehension of history. I do not think there is a single key that unlocks the door of historical truth, and I mistrust the fads that we all know are ephemeral. In reference to your question dealing with international influences, as to how we should view the relationship between the historiography of the United States and that of Latin America, what I want to say is this. During my career I have become very much involved in international matters. This has come about because I spent many years in Europe—formative years—in addition to which I subsequently had frequent contact with historians from other countries in the Americas, both North and South (since I was also studying the historical aspects of colonization in Central and South America). Hence, I established close ties with historians throughout the world. These ties finally extended even to the Orient, because in my time the Colegio de México had a Center for Oriental Studies that continues to operate to this day, perhaps with more contemporary emphasis. The Center was instrumental in opening the way to new cultural exchanges that came to include historians. In this same internationalist vein, I recall that the Historical Commission of the Panamerican Institute of Geography and History was created in Mexico in 1947. Its objective was to study the history of the continent by broadening the scope beyond the purely national or local perspective of each individual historian. And some traces remain of this, especially with the *Revista de Historia de América*, the “Programa de Historia de América,” and some series of works that produced some measure of rapprochement among historians of the Americas. For my own part, I began to write *El mundo americano en la época colonial*, a lengthy work that appeared in two volumes in 1967. It should be recognized that these ever-widening contacts among Latin- or Iberoamerican countries were especially important. For example, contacts between historians from Mexico and Brazil had been almost nonexistent until these cultural exchanges fomented closer ties. I have recently completed an article on Gilberto Freyre that perhaps would never have been written had I not had the opportunity to travel and to read extensively because otherwise I would never have become acquainted with this eminent Brazilian scholar nor read his works. This is a positive outcome of this international initiative. Later I collaborated in the writing of the *Historia del desarrollo científico y cultural de la humanidad*, directed by Paulo Carneiro and sponsored by UNESCO, a project to which I devoted considerable time. The work is now being revised. I also collaborated with—and for several years served as president of—the International Council of Philosophy and Social Sciences. This, too, was a worldwide endeavor supported by UNESCO. With regard to Mexico and the United States specifically, I

worked with Professor Lewis Hanke in 1949 in laying the foundation for the first Congress of Historians from these two countries. The meeting was held in Monterrey and the contact has been continued ever since. Several important works have been published, such as the one to come out of the Convention of Pátzcuaro on the history of labor. Thus, the results have been positive in this case as well.

PB: *In some countries there is a certain resentment against foreign historians, don't you agree? Might this be an aspect of the nationalism of some countries? It is my belief that we as foreigners studying the history of other countries have certain responsibilities and duties toward the historians of countries we study and toward the countries themselves. Do you have any opinion concerning what might be called, and occasionally has been called, cultural imperialism?*

SZ: I will explain to you how I feel on the subject. The history of Mexico, precisely because of the conquest, and later the richness of the mines, and—in the national period—the enormous problems that developed as a result of the attempt to forge an orderly state, has always fascinated foreigners. This is good, for it would be truly unfortunate if we alone studied these phenomena and if they held an interest only for us. Thus, in my own particular case, I have always openly welcomed initiatives from abroad, though in some cases I have not been in agreement with the hypotheses proposed or with the conclusions reached. During my tenure as professor and researcher at the Colegio de México I endeavored to strengthen these ties, as I indicated earlier. We invited professors from abroad to teach here and also to see what we were doing. Hence, I always told my students that it was necessary to have an open mind and not to work in isolation. Another positive result of this period at the Colegio was that not only did we train Mexican historians who came to us from the capital and from the provinces—this in itself was an important contribution—but we also provided scholarships for students from Cuba, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Peru, and several from Central America. Thus, we had the pleasure of training, through what we had to offer, people from other countries, especially Spanish-speaking areas. And as you are well aware, in the Colegio we have a continuous flow of students and professors from abroad, beginning with the select group of Spanish professors who immigrated to Mexico because of the Civil War when it began in 1936. So this open policy had an impact that can truly be considered beneficial. The problem you mention does indeed exist, however, for among the trends of contemporary historiography one cannot ignore a force that operates openly in universities throughout the world, and that is political ideology. When we adopt a criterion of exclu-

sion based on certain political ideologies, we are faced with a different situation altogether; we cannot speak then of historical study per se. Note also that this position does not pretend to exclude all foreign influences, but only those that are unacceptable for political motives, while others that are considered acceptable are admitted.

PB: *What has been your experience in the teaching of history?*

SZ: Concerning the teaching of history, this is what stands out in my mind. I was involved with both national and international history teaching programs, in the former case in the Secretariat of Public Education in Mexico, and in the latter with the "Programa de Historia de América." I also participated in a meeting organized by UNESCO in Sèvres on the teaching of universal history with a view to promoting international understanding. I was directly involved in popular education when I was in charge of the National Museum of History in Chapultepec Castle. This was education through objects and images. The noted teacher Ida Appendini and I wrote a manual entitled *Ancient and Modern Universal History*, which is still used as a high school text. With some frequency I lectured in and outside of universities: for example, in the classes offered by the Colegio Nacional, which were open to anyone who wished to sit in on them with no prerequisites whatsoever. On the other hand, in the Colegio de México I did not teach large groups, but rather small seminars made up of students who were there to specialize in research, to learn methodology, and to produce in time their own studies. One of the first impressions I recall has to do with the selection of study topics. My field was colonial Spanish American history, extending at times to the entire New World. I would speak to my students on the subject; I would point out aspects that were not at all clear and that merited further investigation. Once this was done the students were completely at liberty to select the topic that most appealed to them and that they felt would allow maximum development of their interests and capabilities. This element of the initial freedom for the researcher to me is important. In short, I aspired to find some kind of accord between the temperament and aptitude of the young scholar and his field of study. In analyzing research results, the only opinion that is valid is that of the person who has spent more time studying the subject and who, for this reason, can recognize the difficulties and the confusion. Obviously if a seminar starts out with a dozen students who consider themselves capable by virtue of their previous studies and tests, their knowledge of foreign languages, and their supposed vocation and their desire to devote themselves completely to this type of work, it soon becomes evident that some of these students either do not persevere or do not produce any significant results. This

being the case, it is advisable for them to devote themselves to other activities, for if historical study is not firmly rooted in an authentic vocation, in proper training, and in a total devotion to the selected topic—at least for significant periods in the life of the researcher—the results are negligible. At times people who are already well prepared in the field and who have begun to make significant contributions are attracted by other pursuits and finally abandon the study of history. Or destiny, which at times is unrelenting, carries out its dictates and cuts down a young life that already had acquired the necessary intellectual training, causing considerable grief in the teacher who worked with him, as would be expected. But what satisfaction the professor experiences when his teachings have fallen upon fertile ground and he discovers that little by little a new historian is born, one who becomes established and who proves himself through his merit and his works. This is akin to a multiplication of the teacher's individual effort and it is a compensation for the restraints imposed by his own capacity for work. For as life goes on, the historian becomes aware of the fact that although he applies himself to, and reaps some positive results from, his work, the past continues to be a boundless and mysterious territory and the knowledge that he acquired and bequeaths to his followers seems minimal and inadequate.

Now, as is sometimes asked, what is the purpose of all this effort, that of the historian as well as that of the pupils molded by him, who in turn produce their own studies?

We do this work only because we know that this generation does not constitute all of mankind. Humanity has existed for centuries. (Ethnologists, historians, and even the common man have been attracted by their primitive ancestors and all that they can learn from them about the human species.) Furthermore, humanity will probably continue to exist in the future if the land and men allow it. And so we realize that if through historical analysis (in this case archaeology and ethnology, along with other sciences that are generally considered supplementary but that have their own intrinsic merit, such as human geography) we can expand our view of the immediate present to other experiences and fields of knowledge of the human species, then it is our duty to apply ourselves to that task, at least that small fraction of us who are historians. Not everyone will study history; let us do it for them so that we may transmit to them the fragments of knowledge that we acquire, the remnants of sensibility that we are able to perceive in past generations, the evidence that we have of past existence: in short, the comprehension of humankind and of society that only a study of history will enable us to acquire.

PB: *What can you tell us about the historical sources? We previously*

mentioned the series on the history of labor in New Spain that you published.

SZ: Let us say a few words about the historian confronted with the broad outlines of the past, that is, about the sources of historical study: monuments, archives, documents, bibliographies, and so on. I recall vividly how deeply I was impressed when I made the transition from books that describe history to the direct consultation of the documents of a past era. It seemed to me that these documents spoke, that they related to us in their own voices the events, passions, qualities, achievements, defects, and vices of humanity long buried in the course of time, that implacable god that our ancestors called *Cronus*, which inexorably links the life and death of successive generations. I almost felt that the historian was a passive being who received that message and that his task consisted in receiving it clearly and transmitting it so that it might not be lost in the depths of that oblivion of which humanity is capable. This youthful impression evolved somewhat as I advanced in my study of the past and of departed generations. I came to recognize that each generation has its ideas, its sentiments, its convictions, its interests, and that it projects or reflects them continuously on that remote past of which historical sources speak to us. No longer did the historian seem to me to be a passive being whose sole function was to serve as a receiver of messages from the past. Instead, I saw the historian as one who contemplates the past, establishing a dialogue between generations, taking as well as giving in that confrontation with the passage of time that is the inevitable result in the successive evolution of life over life. I never gave up the notion that in spite of the essential unity of men through time, however, generations are distinguished one from another by the conditions in which they live, and that diversity offers a rationale and an attraction for the historical study of generations and societies of the past. Only when the historian erects a solid bridge between his own life and those lives consumed by time is he really accomplishing his mission. In so doing, he naturally depends on his special gifts, on the affinities between his present and the past he is studying, on the findings of his historical research, and on the role that he must play in that immense and changing panorama of historiography. He is, in fact, dependent on the series of glances that succeeding generations have cast on those that have preceded them on the world's stage. In conclusion, I should say that in the last few years my appreciation for the documents of the past and for their intrinsic value has again gained utmost importance for me. My latest works reflect this and I would wish that all of my effort as a historian would be seen in the following terms: he studied the documents of the colonization of the New

World and he left signs of having appreciated them and of having learned something of the life they hid in their pages. That is to say, a posthumous justification of the historian based on the sources he used and the way in which he handled them.

PB: *What recollections do you have of Mexican historians? Historiography in this country is as rich as is its history.*

SZ: Under the heading of sources I would like to acknowledge several Mexican historians who were important in the collection and publication of documentary sources from the end of the nineteenth century onwards. I am thinking especially of Joaquín García Icazbalceta, renowned publisher of historical documents and of the invaluable *Bibliografía mexicana del siglo xvi*. I would also like to mention Francisco del Paso y Troncoso, whose contributions are immeasurable, although his work was never completed. It was to him that I dedicated the volume entitled *Francisco del Paso y Troncoso. Su misión en Europa, 1892–1916*, published by the National Museum of Mexico in 1938 and republished by the Instituto de Estudios y Documentos Históricos del Claustro de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz in 1980. I would like to acknowledge Mariano Cuevas, S.J., whose *Documentos del siglo xvi* I still consult with as much frequency as I did in earlier years. I want to mention Luis González Obregón, whose knowledge and wise counsel helped me immensely in my early explorations of the Archivo General de la Nación de México, making accessible to me the section on General de Parte. It is well known that Mexico, in addition to this succession of great compilers of documentary sources, has at different times also been endowed with men who have achieved distinction as historians and whom we still read with profit: Alamán, Zavala, Mora, Orozco y Berra, Riva Palacio, Justo Sierra, whom I honored when I was received into the Mexican Academy of History, without forgetting those who wrote in the colonial era.

PB: *May we finally return to a previous question? What has brought you the greatest satisfaction as a historian as opposed to other professions you have practiced?*

SZ: I have received the greatest satisfaction from my vocation for research. Yes. When it is authentic and when it exists in the individual—why it exists is another matter—when one is caught by this desire to learn something of the past, even if the results are modest, I believe then that historical research becomes a kind of fulfillment of that need for knowledge that exists in every researcher. This is especially so when that vocation is born in a young person who has time to prepare himself

and to find answers to some of the questions he formulates. I recall, for example, how greatly I was impressed when in the National Library of Madrid I discovered the connection between the Utopian thought of Thomas More and the ideas and works of Vasco de Quiroga in New Spain. I first published this discovery in 1937. Later, I presented it in a more complete form in my *Recuerdo de Vasco de Quiroga* in 1965, and I still work on this theme, adding new findings, though knowing also how much is left to research. I am going to explain to you, a person born in the Old World, something that is not always understood by people that inhabit the New World where the historical horizon is relatively closer at hand. I observed, for example, in England, in the papers, in the books, in the manuals, and so on that I received, that children are taken to see the Roman walls that are but a step away from where they live. The child learns the past of the old European countries quite early. I believe that the historical vocation is thus engendered naturally. Someone wants to learn something about this, someone else is interested in that, another takes a trip to Greece or to Rome and becomes interested in the classical past. We in Mexico have the good fortune of having had important ancient Indian civilizations and this, in my case for example, is a reality. I was born in the land of the Mayas. If people from throughout the world come to see and to admire their works, why should a native not have the same interest? Nevertheless, the Mayan past has not been the focus of my study. In my case it has only been one element that awoke a latent vocation in me. I was born in a land that has a cathedral, arches, and crumbling walls, convents, old streets, remains of haciendas, people of different languages, elements inherited from the Spanish colonization that little by little all awakened in me that attraction for the past that for you might have been so obvious.

PB: *Perhaps England and the other European countries, and in the New World the case of Mexico, are distinguished in this aspect from the United States where in many parts there are not these remains*

SZ: Life is more recent in the United States, and, because it is more recent, historical vision is shorter. But there are regional differences: I remember my first visits to Massachusetts and Virginia; my impressions of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico, of the Hispanics and Anglos, of the adobe construction in old Sante Fe. The conservation of historical sites is prodigious. Museums, archives, and libraries fulfill their missions. On the other hand, let us not forget that it is the academic realm that produces vocations and works that cover all eras and regions of the earth, as the *Hispanic American Historical Review* has well shown.

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