

1803 by the enlightened Dr. Narciso Esparragosa y Gallardo. María Elena, inspired by her collaboration with Jesusa Rodríguez, reflects on the silences of the archives and on how the open-endedness of performance—namely, Rodríguez’s work in progress, a one-woman show workshopped at USC in 2013 in which she embodies Esparragosa—can open our historical imaginations.

What more would have come from the mind of a scholar described by one colleague as “righteously uncontainable”? It’s heartbreaking that we can only wonder. María Elena lived fully and well; she loved nothing better than a good meal with her friends, a hike up the mountains surrounding Tepoztlán, a game of tennis, or a hangout with Sarah Gualtieri, her partner of many years. We loved her sense of humor and her knack for combining intellectual projects with good fun. And we miss her terribly. We have lost an inspiring colleague and a cherished friend.

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Menno Vellinga (1939–2015)

On January 22, 2015, Menno Vellinga died after many years fighting Parkinson’s disease, which was aggravated by multiple cancers that slowly but steadily weakened his capacity for movement and damaged his speaking ability but never his sharp intelligence, indestructible optimism, and gallows humor.¹

Born in Alkmaar, North Holland, the Netherlands, he was the first of his family to attend secondary school and then university. He graduated in 1967 as a geographer from the University of Amsterdam’s School of Geography and Social Sciences. However, while nearly all his colleagues specialized in Asian studies, Menno preferred the Latin American region. The Dutch academic tradition at that time was strongly oriented to the study of the former Netherlands East Indies (Indonesia) and the country’s small Caribbean colonies (Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles).

1. In writing this obituary, I made ample use of the last (biographical) chapter of *State and Development: Essays in Honour of Menno Vellinga*, ed. Dirk Kruijt, Paul van Lindert, and Otto Verkoren (Amsterdam: Rozenberg, 2004), Menno’s *liber amicorum* on the occasion of his valedictory address at Utrecht University.

Again being an exception, rather than following the career paths of those who studied and researched the Caribbean, Menno decided to do his post-graduate studies in the United States and to immerse himself in the history and society of Latin America. In 1975, he received a PhD in sociology, with a certificate in Latin American studies, from the University of Florida. The year after, he defended his Dutch doctoral thesis, together with myself, at Utrecht University. His first dissertation was to be published as the modern classic about the entrepreneurial class in Monterrey, Mexico. His second dissertation was about the emergence of the working class between 1900 and 1975 in the central Peruvian mining area, which coincided with the history of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation, an archetypal example of Yankee imperialism in the Andean countries. A gifted and proficient writer, most of his published work is about core research themes in the overlapping fields of sociology, anthropology, history, and human geography.

Menno did scholarly research in the Netherlands and subsequently in Argentina, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Brazil, Cuba, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, and other countries. He was a visiting professor in Cuba, Mexico, Peru, and the United States. He liked intensive fieldwork, and nearly all his books and academic articles are the result of long periods of empirical research. During nearly 40 years of continuous research, he published an imposing list of 120 articles in professional journals and book collections and more than 25 books and edited volumes. After his professorship at Utrecht University, he was appointed as a professor at the University of Florida in Gainesville, his American alma mater. In the last years of his life he returned to Utrecht to live with his family, children, grandchildren, and many friends and former colleagues.

His first academic book, coauthored with his research friend and later colleague Willem Wolters, was *The Chinese of Amsterdam* (1971), published as monograph number 17 by the Center of Asian Studies at the University of Amsterdam. His last book, *The Political Economy of the Drug Industry: Latin America and the International System*, was published by the University Press of Florida in 2004. His many articles and book chapters are about themes such as development problems, political economy, labor relations, regional development, urban and industrial development, and development cooperation. Between his first and last books, he published on industrial elites, the (indigenous) laboring class, regional development and regional entrepreneurs, Latin American political history and structure, and the political economy of drugs and corruption—on five different themes, sometimes as a single author, sometimes as a coauthor or coeditor.

The first theme, industrial elites, had as a starting point the industrial city of Monterrey, Mexico's second entrepreneurial conglomerate. His PhD about the industrial entrepreneurs and the working class in this city was published in English and Spanish. The Spanish edition (published by Siglo XXI in Mexico) was reedited three times and became a textbook for an entire generation of Latin American students and scholars. The editorial house Siglo XXI published in total five of his Spanish books, the Westview Press three of his edited volumes in English. While writing about Monterrey he befriended Mario Cerutti, with whom he published two volumes about the origin and consolidation of industrial bourgeoisies in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Latin America and southern Europe. Menno was also Cerutti's PhD thesis adviser.

Menno and I wrote together a study of the emergence of the Peruvian mining proletariat. Menno did the writing; I worked on the mathematics and the quantitative analysis. During the process, I learned from Menno how to write long chapters instead of short articles. The study was published in various editions, and we milked the theme for ten articles. A couple years later, we published two studies about regional development and regional entrepreneurs in Peru and Colombia. We even designed similar studies for Mexico and Brazil, but the research grant for this second phase never materialized.

In the early 1990s, Menno shifted from the analysis of long-term economic and social development processes to the study of the political economy and the political structure. The result was a series of three books—*Social Democracy in Latin America: Prospects for Change* (1993), *The Changing Role of the State in Latin America* (1998), and *The Dialectics of Globalization: Regional Responses to World Economic Processes: Asia, Europe, and Latin America in Comparative Perspective* (2000). His influential book about the drug industry, *The Political Economy of the Drug Industry*, which was one of the first broadly oriented edited volumes published in this field of study, brought to a close his long period of continuous publishing as an eminent scholar. As teacher and writer, he will be remembered as a social scientist with a strong interest in long historical tendencies, one of the exemplary scholars of his generation.

In addition to his academic career, Menno also was frequently sought after as a mission leader or senior team member for consultancy and evaluation studies on behalf of the European Union in Brussels, the UNCPD in Vienna, both the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Economic Affairs in The Hague, the Dutch nongovernmental organization financiers Cordaid and ICCO, and the municipal government of Rotterdam. Between 1984 and 1998, he was a permanent adviser to the Port of Rotterdam Authority

and the municipal administration on matters concerning Latin America and the Caribbean.

He also had administrative capacities. He was a steering board member of the Netherlands Association for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (NALACS) from 1978 to 1988 and president of the board of the interuniversity Centre for Latin American Research and Documentation (CEDLA) in Amsterdam during a decisive period of reorganization and refocusing (1994–2002). He also acted as editor or member of the editorial staff for professional journals such as the *Netherlands Review of Development Studies* and the *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*.

Along with his academic career, he was a regular guest analyst on radio and TV programs. From 1997 to 2002, he was even invited as a weekly news reviewer for the public radio station AVRO. Without a doubt, his weekly broadcasting program on international events was his preferred adrenaline-intensive performance: he could entertain, without academic jargon, a national audience interested in international politics.

Many younger colleagues, former PhD candidates, and present university professors in Europe and the United States who benefited from his friendship and scholarship will remember him as a fair-minded and inspiring “old hand” who created a research tradition based on thorough and disinterested fieldwork and appropriate attention to the major social problems in Latin America.

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