Language, Culture, Perception and Knowledge

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The Depiction of Women in the Mexican Revolution

The popular image of La Adelita does not do justice to the real-life soldadera. Glamorous characters in movies played by María Felix, Penélope Cruz, and Salma Hayek, among others, are romanticized representations of the real women soldiers. The true women fighters battled adversity in Mexico at a time when the dominant patriarchal society restricted their actions with gendered expectations and cultural norms. Becoming a soldadera provided these women with an opportunity to break away from the control of men and assert their equality with their male counterparts.

The idea of participating in the Revolution was liberating in itself because it meant the women were not forced to stay at home in their traditional gendered roles. Although some women performed the same tasks on the battlefield as they did in the home, it was by their choice. Soldaderas also fought valiantly alongside the men in every rank of both the Federal Army and the revolutionary forces. They became feared soldiers and advanced through the ranks, some even becoming generals. Though many women gained acclaim for their accomplishments on the battlefield, their efforts were soon forgotten or misrepresented after the Revolution.

Women's actions on the battlefield were framed in such a way so that they fit with societal expectations. As soldaderas, women posed a threat to the male's dominant position in society. Assertiveness, bravery, and violence were male attributes, and their presence in women made men uncomfortable. Thus, men began to portray soldaderas in a non-threatening way by emphasizing the female soldiers' beauty and depicting them as objects of desire. The image of the strong women fighters was neutralized in such a way that coincided with males' expectations of women. This resulted in a paradox that was at odds with Mexican gender roles.

Popular culture, in particular, corridos and films, was an effective way to disseminate this image of women and the soldaderas over the course of the twentieth century. Corridos idealized beautiful, submissive women and established the archetype that was popularized. These corridos created female characters that would later be immortalized in American and Mexican movies as either the good woman (Virgin Mary) or the bad woman (La Malinche). Subsequent depictions of soldaderas fell victim to these same stereotypes. Successful films showed talented women-soldiers as they were tamed. Their transformation from the bad woman (soldadera) to the good woman (mother) satisfied conservative viewers who wanted to see women in this role.

The accomplishments of women on the battlefield are often overlooked or misrepresented in the media. Women overcame many obstacles and achieved limited forms of equality through their participation in the Revolution. However, Colonel Petra Herrera is now virtually unknown, while La Adelita remains a permanent fixture in our collective memory. Not many people can recall the heroics of Herrera like they can those of Emiliano Zapata or Pancho Villa; instead, La Adelita has come to embody the myriad women with varying backgrounds, motivations, and accomplishments who fought in the Revolution. La Adelita represents a sexual yet at the same time brave woman during Mexican cinema’s golden age (1930s-1950s) and in the years following. She symbolizes all the characters in the corridos and movies that depicted women in that manner. Even though her image is still controversial, with the birth of the Chicano movement in the 1960s, the name of La Adelita began to represent more of who the soldaderas really were. Some Mexican women have begun to take pride in La Adelita because she represents a strong fighter, working for equality; if she chooses, she can appear overly sexual, but she no longer is forced into that role. She stands for independence from any oppressive force. She is less associated with the image of the women in the revealing blouse, than she is aligned with her own image of a remarkable woman, much like who the soldaderas really were.

¹ Edward Sapir was a student of Frank Boas, who was widely acknowledged as the founder of American Anthropology (The Anthropology of Language).
The essence of “ki” is later transferred into secret of Japanese martial arts is said to lie in ture in his book "気 (Ki) - The Anthropology of Language). This chapter displays many of the differing views people display based on the language spoken and the important elements of their culture. This chapter displays the use of morphemes: Shinniwa English Equivalent

hufua to work metal
hugua to know
bulagia to speak, talk
hulu to fish

It as becomes noticeable, the words in Shinniwa have the morpheme "hi" at the beginning of each word. Although this minimal unit is not separated from the rest of the world, the morpheme carries the same meanings as well. If we represent each word with the sentences on the right, we notice that "hi" means "to" in English and that, every time this new word comes up with the morpheme "hi," its meaning is understood without un- derstanding the rest of the word. Examples of morphemes in English could be: Farm Farmer Farmers Walk Walker Walkers Jump Jumper Jumpers

Although there are exemptions to the rules and not all morphemes behave equally, some of the elements of the smallest unit of language help us understand many of the uni-

versally shared characteristics of languages regardless of their cultural nature. Returning to the example above, you see that this simple distinction becomes even more important when one considers the potential influences of snow for this culture. If Mavsa (snowdrift), the weak Whorf theory perhaps", which argues that language has an effect on the way we recognize the world. Many of these components display them- selves through different cultural forms of ex- pression such as religion or political traditions. Recognizing the metamorphosis of language and its influence on our specific viewwords and accepted perspectives of real- ity is important, because it allows us to avoid falling into narrow forms of interpretation that understand the world through a limited connection with knowledge that originates from pre-determined cultural and historical perspectives. Sapir and his student Whorf developed theories that became known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. Their theories investi- gate the role of culture within the world of language as well as its influential force. An- other example is the distinction made by Michael Appleyard in his book "Kiwani", which exclusively deals with the morpheme that represents the meaning for this hour, therefore 9:45 could be a quarter to ten, but 9:15 is rarely expressed as having a relationship with the next hour⁶. This idea is further explored in two languages displaying the use of morphemes: Shinniwa English Equivalent

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The essence of “ki” is later transferred into and Ki-Energy, the substance of a force beyond spirit. Japanese the word for spirit is “ki” (気) (K), and it gives us an example of the weight of language form. This power is not exclusive to one language but develops our connection with knowledge, which in a broad sense allows us to interpret the world through its cultural components.

A valuable source for exploring the relationship between language and culture is the written language. An ethno-semantic examination of words and symbols offers us both a broader understanding of the factors that influence the way we represent the world and a more detailed explanation of the power that our cultural traditions carry into the written language. While language is the substance of a force beyond spirit, it manifests through many cultures around the world. The Japanese culture, for example, offers an example of the weight of language and its influence in the development of our accepted reality. This element is transferred from generation to generation and continues to live through the language that is spoken. Edward Sapir’s theories on the power of language originate in part from the concept of linguistic determinism, which argues that language has an effect on the way we represent the world. This influence becomes crucial for a better understanding of our worldviews as well as recognizing outlooks that develop narrowly within our cultural constraints and connect with the world through a medium that underestimates the cultural weight of our traditions and the role they play in the development of our accepted reality.

Before advancing into a more detailed exploration of incomplete perspectives that claim knowledge of our living experiences, let us continue to examine language through its cultural components and its vital connection with knowledge. It is important because it allows us to avoid falling into narrow forms of interpretation that understand the world through a limited connection with knowledge that originates from pre-determined cultural and historical perspectives. Sapir and his student Whorf developed theories that became known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. Their theories investigate the role of culture within the world of language as well as its linguistic force. As a result, the words of Michael Agwunobi are particularly significant because they present an opportunity to discover the universal design in exploring the different forms of snow, and morphemes or adjectives are not attached. This could represent the central role that language plays in this culture in central Canada. Snow is a vital part of their lives, and that minimizing the nature of each denotation of snow by attaching an adjective to a morpheme is not only important but completely new independent from describers or morphemes is created, since its importance is designated by its people and is reflected through the language.

Shaping Language Interpretation

So far, language offers us the best medium for communicating. It is abstract to my research to suggest that, through the recognition of the influential role of language as a perception shaper, we may begin to understand its capacity for shaping worldviews, thereby giving us the tools necessary to comprehend the world with a more receptive mind, conscious that the cultural elements of our language do not have to keep us prisoners of our own limitations. Through a medium of openness and awareness, our limited interpretations begin to expand, offering us the opportunity to engage with a wider range of possibilities and innovative thinking. Stephen Rowe expresses this need for awareness when he describes the importance of becoming conscious of our own worldviews in order to expand the opportunities for intellectual growth: “Our times require that we make conscious that which had been unconscious, and that we act in the ways that become evident from the perspective of that consciousness” (10). This entails the necessity to understand that our perception is partially determined and that only through a medium of awareness that recognizes our limited perception
we can begin to distinguish open channels that offer a more expanded interpretation of our understanding. The concept of awareness of openness was used to perceive our perceptions and interpretations in unconventional ways, making our understanding less biased and more effective.

Stephen Pinker argues that the idea that language shapes our reality is ridiculous and biased. He states, “The idea that thought is the same thing as language is an example of what can be called a conventional absurdity” (47). Pinker negates the possibility that language shapes our perception, and he rejects the idea that language shapes our thinking. He implies that thought is not directly connected to language. He says, “To have a feeling, there has to be a ‘what we mean to say’ that is different from what we said” (47). Although his theory displays language as an essential component to understanding, it is not necessary to think without language. The moment we engage in the thought process, the moment we begin to describe the abstract, an active interaction with language takes place; without it, the possibilities for understanding and for any kind of conversation are limited to the ability of a person to grasp. Gadamer states, “All understanding is interpretation, and all interpretation takes place in the context of a language that allows the object to come into words and yet is at the same time the interpreter’s own language” (398). This connection between language and interpretation is important to recognize in order to continue exploring the interactive nature of language, culture, and human thought.

The Homogenization of Knowledge

In her book, A Place to Stand, Julie Lindquist speaks about awareness as an essential component for a more in-depth cultural understanding. “To understand the particular, we need to understand the rule; to understand how that culture establishes itself as a culture” (Lindquist, 4). It is in the place of origin that many of the given characteristics of language are shaped, and it is also in this place where we potentially become slaves of our own perception through language. Lindquist also states, “Apart from its interpretation, a specific opinion, sentiment, or statement is not a cultural event and has a layer of meaning as such” (123). Although language potentially shapes our perception through its cultural components and ancient traditions, by becoming aware of this process, we transition from a place of compliant ignorance to a place of appreciation and recognition of our traditions, culture, and worldviews.

The development of our worldviews through language establishes our different perspectives of reality based on different perceptions of the same thing. This idea recognizes the importance of understanding, one begins to comprehend the limitations of our views and the influence of language for limiting our understanding of the world. An educated perspective of the relationship between language and culture gives us some of the fundamental steps needed to understand our thinking process. Gadamer suggests, “Language and religion both serve essential purposes in our society, and it is clear that the world without faith or science is nearly as imaginable as a world without language. My exploration of the methods used by science and religion does not imply that both areas of knowledge function only through fundamentalist perspectives; rather, science and religion do not function as a set of principles for its success. By focusing on matter as the main component for identifying the real, supplemented with a system that supports the selected theories, modern science finds ways to minimize mistakes and arrive at conclusions with results that can be duplicated. In his essay, “The Will to Believe,” William James questions the integrity of the scientific method with this statement, “She has fallen so deeply in love with the method with which one may not be correct for the truth by itself at all. It is only true as technically verified that interests her” (Stewart, 235). Richard Dawkins expresses his willingness, as a scientist, to be with the process of making his reality dependent on a given system. An attitude that relies fully on the steps of a specified method for determining the truth takes away our autonomy of thought since, in order to explore ideas, we must adopt arbitrary assumptions provided by the accepted technique. Huston also describes the essence of the scientific language when he points out that “understanding less is not a lack of knowledge; the more knowledge can be expressed quantitatively, in probability equations and the like, the more it means that we are Accepted (1973).” The assertion of knowledge claimed by all sciences is shaped by a particular vision. My exploration of the methods used by science and religion gives us some of the fundamental steps needed to understand our thinking process and the world of knowledge. Gadamer states, “Apart from its interpretation, a specific opinion, sentiment, or statement is not a cultural event and has a layer of meaning as such” (123). Although language potentially shapes our perception through its cultural components and ancient traditions, by becoming aware of this process, we transition from a place of compliant ignorance to a place of appreciation and recognition of our traditions, culture, and worldviews.

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ciples that create and establish its credibility. Huston Smith speaks about our minds being limited and our opinions are also a reflection of the universe and our human beginnings through a singular method confine us to the limited world of a limited perspective.

The Language of Religion

Throughout history, religious fundamentalism has enforced self-interested agendas that exclude opportunities for intellectual and spiritual growth by promoting conditional claims of knowledge that restrict opportunities for discovery and expansion through unconventional channels. The overconfinement of a singular method of knowing creates a world of limited perspectives. It is through the discovery of our unconventional selves that a connection with knowledge and wisdom takes place.

Our interpretation and understanding of the world are shaped by factors such as society, religion, culture, and language. To fully understand another person’s presence, the voluntary endorsement of a message into another language literally. In this way, “we do not yet know of any word in Ukrainian, their minds lived within their cultural understanding of it in order to engage with our worldviews as limited and welcomes different perspectives” (98).

It is important not to confine the continuous movement of knowledge to a simple or complex interpretation; since knowledge stagnates the moment it is claimed, and the prospects for development and creativity become nearly extinct. It is not only to move beyond concepts of tolerance but visit a stage of knowledge that addresses and recognizes our different perspectives of the world. In Ukrainian, the word "love" in Ukrainian has two different meanings; one describes love in general, while the other refers to romantic love. In the Russian language there is also one word for love, "lyublyov", however the word has another connotation. Shwartzman’s work shows how the word expresses both actions. Different interpretations become difficult to translate accurately since the cultural context is contained in the literal interpretation of a book. This text becomes a symbolic icon that establishes and regulates the faith through pre-accepted accuracies of the written metaphors. A belief system founded on literal interpretations of written words is question

The Epistemology of Knowledge

Chuang-Tzu believes that, in order to connect with knowledge—in order to learn and reach unknown levels of spiritual knowledge and philosophical understanding function through a very specific translation process, making literal translations and interpretations nearly impossible. Oventescher further elaborates on this issue of translation in his book The Anthropology of Language by sharing the difficulties encountered in this translation. He states, “We do not yet know of anything which we now affirm that we shall not deny it ninety times over” (102). These claims of knowledge and absolute understanding function through a very specific outline that defines our world through their construed views.

Fundamentalist religious frequently have their claims of absolute authority from the literal interpretation of a book. This text becomes a symbolic icon that establishes and regulates the faith through pre-accepted accuracies of the written metaphors. A belief system founded on literal interpretations of written words is question.

14 Chuang-Tzu was primarily referring to Confucius in this statement. He stated, “Confucius by the age of sixty had sixty times changed his mind; whenever he began by judging ‘That’s it’ he ended by judging ‘That’s not’ (Chuang-Tzu, 102). He reminds us that this concept that we must understand the limitations of our knowledge through a medium that acknowledges our own misunderstanding of understanding itself.

15 Toleration: capacity for enduring; allowable deviation (Webster’s English Dictionary).

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Chuang-Tzu believed that, in order to connect with knowledge—indeed to order and reach unknown levels of spiritual knowledge and understanding—that there is a need to avoid the tendency to try to establish a single method of knowing. He emphasises the vastness of the universe and the human beings throughout the world in a limited perspective. The Language of Religion

Throughout history, religious fundamentalism has enforced self-interested agendas that exclude opportunities for intellectual and spiritual growth by promoting conformist claims of knowledge that restrict our opportunities for discovery and expansion through unconventional channels. The overconfinement of knowledge is evident in the provision of multiple mediums of understanding of the world, and the existence of different mediums of understanding, while it engages in a behavior that encourages disregard and seduction. John Hick speaks about this exclusive approach in his essay “The Pluralistic Hypothesis,” where he communicates the importance of open-minded methods of knowing that acknowledge diversity and the variety of belief systems across the world. Hick states, “We have to see the world religions as vast complex religious-cultural totality, each a bewildering mixture of varied goods and evils” (39). The moment we claim absolute knowledge, we close the door for an understanding of opportunities for growth by limiting the world of knowing to limited perspectives. Claims of the only truth by religious ideologies are engaged in and dogmatic approaches of understanding that undermine different mediums of knowing, since in order for a person to hold the outlined truth, one must adopt their existing prejudices. Religious fundamentalism continues to enforce its inflexible agenda throughout the ages. Many denominations claim to hold the truth while negating and discrediting others. Some speak of tolerance and acceptance, but their rules are written to be followed; attempts to deviate from the given concepts are seen as immoral, evil, and wrong. Chuang-Tzu criticises these claims of infallibility when he states, “We do not yet know of anything which we now affirm that we shall not deny it fifty nine times over” (102). These claims of knowledge and absolute understanding through a very specific outline that defines our world through their constructed views.

Fundamentalist religions frequently hold themselves as standards against which to evaluate the literal interpretation of a book. This text becomes a symbolic icon that establishes and regulates the faith through pre-assumed accurate interpretations of the written metaphors. A belief system founded on literal interpretations of written words is questioned, and this is where the rules and guidelines that believers must follow in order to gain approval and the acceptance of the Ultimate, but these written messages are also the result of cultural languages, thereby complicating the authenticity and integrity of the message even further. The process of translation deals with many cultural elements existing within the language. Gadamer describes the difficulty of carrying the original message through translation. He reminds us that “The requirements that a translation be faithful cannot remove the fundamental gap between the two languages” (387). The gap between two languages and their cultural components complicates the process of translation. It is not to be denoted other mediums of knowledge. Our approach not only separates us from the rest, but it also closes us to the possibilities of growth by unwelcoming and denying other perspectives. By confusing our claims to limited perceptions, we connect with fabricated ideas of the real and the unreal through a limited medium. Chuang-Tzu’s connection with knowledge is one that welcomes all perspectives regardless of their differences, leaving the content of our ideas to those that integrate and welcomes all possibilities. It is important not to confuse the continuous growth of knowledge to a simple or complex interpretation, since knowledge stagnates the moment it is claimed, and the prospects for development and creativity become nearly extinct.

It is essential to move beyond concepts of tolerance and visit a stage of knowing that addresses and recognizes our different perspectives. In his essay “Death and Dialogue,” Swidler addresses the need for a new level of consciousness that recognizes our own particular understandings of the Good and the True, but rather that I am able to see that my understandings are limited because I do not have (or am not serious about) my own particular understandings of the Good and the True, and that I am capable of growth” (36). This recognition of our own limitations originates from a place of humility rather than overconfidence, from a place of trust rather than insecurity, and from a place that provides a view of the world that transcends the exclusion of unknown or disliked ones. Fundamentalism thrives in narrowness. It questions our right to ask questions as it promotes a single ideology that compromises independent and unconventional thought in order to provide a version of knowledge that is enforced by the people who benefit from a formed perspective. As we become more and more aware of our differences and interconnectedness with one another across the globe, it chances confined knowledge to single perspectives, and for the most part talked to their own cultural selves” (39).

In his essay, “Death and Dialogue,” Swidler addresses the need for a new level of consciousness that recognizes our own particular understandings of the Good and the True, but rather that I am able to see that my understandings are limited because I do not have (or am not serious about) my own particular understandings of the Good and the True, and that I am capable of growth” (36). This recognition of our own limitations originates from a place of humility rather than overconfidence, from a place of trust rather than insecurity, and from a place that provides a view of the world that transcends the exclusion of unknown or disliked ones.
technical methods that display the creativity and imagination of the human race, while reli-
gions search for meaning within the soul and the mythical essence of humanity. Let us thrive in the combination of our strengths and the recognition of our weaknesses in order to integrate human thought and max-
imize the possibilities for reaching unknown levels of knowledge through nameless me-
diums of discovery. This integration does not imply the assimilation of knowledge into
oneness, but rather it values the diversity of perspectives while it develops a new version of knowledge more elastic and less rigid. The choice to become prisoners of our own thoughts through our given worldview is more of an opinion today than it has ever been before. The media and technological advanc-
es keep us informed of the latest events and the newest conflicts and discoveries taking place around the world. Information is read-
dily available and it is no longer affordable to hide behind the blanket of ignorance.

Diverse pools of methods for engaging with the truths allow us to expand knowledge through a variety of perspectives. Huston Smith reminds us, “The world is not as sci-
ence says it is; it is as science, philosophy, religion, the arts, and everyday speech say it is” (16). The integration of human thought, from all areas of creativity, with a search for meaning is essential in order to reach uncon-
ventional knowledge. In his book, Explor-
ing the Philosophy of Religion, David Stewart mentions: “There is no such a thing as reli-
gion, only religion” (2). It is in the recogni-
tion of our own limited interpretations that the process of growth and discovery becomes unlimited through an understanding that our worldview is valid without a need to dis-
credit or dismantle different ones.

As we continue to witness death and de-
struction by arrogant and narrow-minded practices that encourage the exclusion rather than inclusion of diversity of thought, we must consider the importance of flexible ap-
proaches to spirituality and human knowl-
edge that recognize the limitations of human thought in order to engage in a process that thrives in the diversity of ideas, rather than in the homogenization of human thinking; a process that flourishes through the integra-
tion of multiple perspectives rather than uni-
formity of thought.

Let us coexist in a world that welcomes the autonomy of thought rather than the uniformity of it. Huston Smith reminds us of the importance of unrestricted and uncon-
ventional thinking when he speaks about being unlimited and relieved from all con-
fines; these words resonate with those from Chuang-tzu, which express his concern with confining knowledge to limited perspectives. Universal standards do not promote diversi-
ty; instead they constrain the possibilities for growth (spiritual and intellectual) by enforcing
the homogenization of notions to single perspectives.

Culture and language influence our views and perhaps shape our interaction with the world. Our vision of the real connects with our inherited cultural interpretation of the world as well as with the interconnected elements of language and human thought. We must become aware of this relationship among language, culture and the develop-
ment of worldviews and fundamentalist thinking in order to practice a more flexible approach that not only tolerates different views and opinions, but also thrives in the ex-
ploration of other ways of thinking as a me-
dium for expanding knowledge itself. When speaking about dandelions in his book, The Anthro-
pology of Language, Ottenheimer states, “But in your culture dandelions are a kind of lettuce and can be put into salad and in my culture dandelions are a kind of weed and must be dug out of lawns and gardens and thrown away” (18). These two different maps of the world provided by our cultural connection with it define and mold our in-
terpretation, regulating our perception, and outlining our understanding.

As our worldviews become influenced by our connection with language and culture, let us strive in the recognition of an under-
standing that explores the world through its multiplicity of understandings. The assimila-
tion of thought into a medium that claims absolute certainty does not take into account that dandelions be beautiful and delicious while ugly and unwanted at the same time. Let us respect our diverse perspectives while striving for visions that crave for truths and understandings of the world through diver-
sity rather than a truth or a single definition and interpretation of it. Our worldviews car-
ry the essence of our cultural understanding. Through their fundamental natures we may find a need to go beyond appreciating our own, wanting to explore a variety of them, so that we may become unrestricted and uncon-
strained from concepts that claim the universal-
ity and uniformity of the human existence.

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technical methods that display the creativity and imagination of the human race, while reli-
igions search for meaning within the soul and the mythical essence of humanity. Let us thrive in the combination of our strengths and the recognition of our weaknesses in order to integrate human thought and maxi-
mize the possibilities for reaching unknown levels of knowledge through nameless me-
diums of discovery. This integration does not imply the assimilation of knowledge into oneness, but rather it values the diversity of perspectives while it develops a new version of knowledge more elastic and less rigid. The choice to become prisoners of our own thoughts through our given worldviews is more of an option today than it has ever been before. The media and technological advanc-
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