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THE INNER LIFE OF OAXACA

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## A Great Gift To The People Of Mexico From Francisco Toledo

Writer by Oaxaca Times

THE ARTIST IS SHARING MORE THAN 125,000 OBJETS THAT WILL REMAIN PROTECTED IN THEIR ORIGINAL STATE. "THANK YOU FRANCISCO TOLEDO FOR HAVING TRUST IN GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS.

A generous donation from the artist Francisco Toledo to the people of Mexico was made during a ceremony at the Institute of Graphic Arts of Oaxaca (IAGO).

The gift includes two buildings: IAGO

Alcala and IAGO Juarez. The donation includes art libraries, videos, audio files and the life's work of this important Mexican artist.

Rafael Tovar y de Teresa president of CONACULTA said, "This morning we witnessed one of the greatest acts

of generosity that our country has ever received.

I believe that the simplicity of this gesture by Francisco Toledo shouldn't diminish the importance of this extraordinary gift.

We take this gesture as exemplary from an artist of Toledo's caliber in a country like Mexico.

He hasn't only shared his art but also the product of his immense talent." Tovar expressed his heartfelt thoughts during the ceremony in which Toledo delivered IAGO to the National Insti-

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tute of Fine Arts (INBA).

In the presence of Toledo's family, Tovar celebrated that throughout the years the

Oaxacan artist has been able to create one of the most extraordinary collections in Mexico.

The artist is sharing more than 125,000 objects that will remain protected in their original state.

"I think that Toledo's generosity is as grand as his talent. He is an exemplary Mexican. Thank you Francisco Toledo for having trust in government institutions." Tovar remembered that there has been a long relationship between institutions and Toledo.

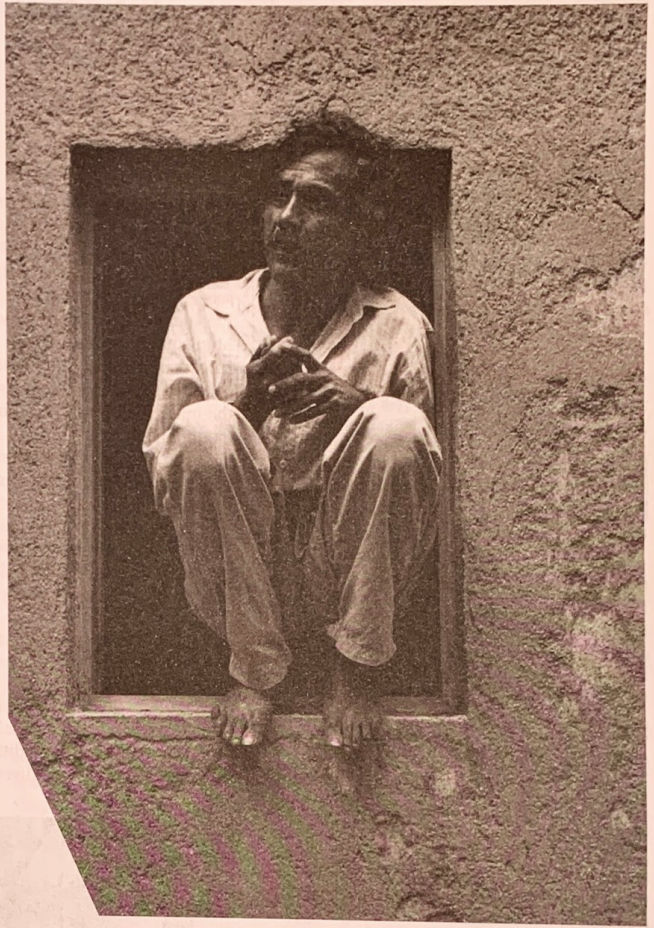
Rafael Tovar addresses Toledo, "Many years ago an agreement was signed with you and INBA.

With your fine gift there is a great moral and ethic commitment between you and INBA. It has to be concentrated in three words: Preservation, protection and a continuation of your artistic legacy. That is our firm commitment to you, Francisco."

Maria Cristina Garcia Cepeda, director of INBA, said that Francisco Toledo is a man that with his art and experience has given to his hometown Oaxaca a legacy that has converted art and creativity into food for the human spirit.

She indicated that his endless philanthropic work, his fruitful and unceasing work for culture and his great commitment to Oaxaca has made possible the realization of important artistic, educational and environmental initiatives.

Examples of Toledo's cultural undertakings are the Museo de Arte Contemporaneo de Oaxaca, El Centro de las Artes de San Agustín and organizations like Patronato Pro Defensa y Conservación del Patrimonio Cultural y Natural del Estado de Oaxaca.



"IAGO has distinguished itself to be an inclusive and diverse space for exhibition, education and knowledge of the arts with a reputation that extends its influence throughout the world.

Francisco Toledo, through his generous act, brings together the Oaxacan artistic family."

Toledo said that as long as he is in good health he will continue working

and donating art to enrich Oaxaca's heritage.

He expressed his satisfaction that this project will continue forward under the administration of INBA.

Natalia Toledo, Francisco's daughter, expressed her happiness concerning her father's donation and her trust in INBA to preserve and safeguard her father's legacy.



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Writer by Sam Lowry

Here's a question for readers: Which would you rather, that your child grew up learning about life on the street, or safe at home watching TV? Most Westerners wouldn't stop to think before answering this question. In the West, safety is primary, and danger, especially for children, is to be avoided at all cost.

An easy life is a good life, and a hard life is therefore a bad one. These days (for the last few decades in fact) even gory fairy tales are kept from children in order to protect them from imaginary brutalities, namely: from reality.

Every parent reassures its child at one time or another that there are no such thing as monsters.

Santa Claus, the tooth fairy, and Jesus Christ (even Satan), yes, but monsters, no. (Of course, by most adult westerner's standards Hitler was a "monster," but that's different: he's not going to be hiding in the bedroom closet, and monsters like Hitler aren't considered a necessary part of a child's "experience.")

Parents don't have to "lie" to their children to be seriously misinforming them; they just have to allow the child to believe mommy or daddy have all the answers, and that they can make blanket statements—such as "There are no monsters," "It was only a dream," or "God looks out for little children"—without backing them up with facts.

All of this is meant to reassure a child and keep its dreams sweet, but it ignores the possibility that nightmares may be necessary to a child's development, and it forgets that innocence can only be protected, finally, by avoiding the experience of reality.

Most adult westerners seem to have

# Los Olvidados y los Malcriados

deep "issues" with their parents, however, dead or alive, issues that belie their apparently trouble-free upbringings.

This leads one to wonder if perhaps trouble and hardship—like those trials and tribulations which fairy tale heroes and heroines must suffer—don't make for a healthier childhood than comfort and security?

In Mexico, things are a little different. In the West, having children, so far as it is a rational decision at all, is usually based on "romantic" factors, a "wouldn't it be nice" continuation of the love and commitment between two people.

Often, in today's ultra-competitive, success-orientated society, it even involves something of a "sacrifice." Many couples opt not to have kids for "practical" reasons, and are not looked upon strangely for such a decision.

In Latin America, where the population continues to soar at an alarming rate, this is only partly due to Catholic ban on contraception. In Mexico, having children for the majority of poor, indigenous people is a natural occurrence that just "happens" without any forethought at all.

On top of this, it is often a practical means to increase the work force of the family, since children are seen less as an additional responsibility or an extra mouth to feed than as a potential increase of industry.

An "underprivileged" child in Mexico grows up fast. He or she may be out on the street selling chiclets or begging from tourists at the age of five or less, or else be working the land, picking corn or carrying firewood, helping to feed the whole family.

An indigenous Mexican child might even be "working" on the street while still an infant, suckling at its mother's breast while horrified tourists tut and

"aah" and throw down a couple of pesos.

This is generally regarded as an abomination by westerners, and though it's clearly no way for a child to grow up, is it necessarily any worse than what westerners provide for their children?

In the West, a child whose mother works a day job may be left at home all day with a nanny, stuck in front of the TV set with a bunch of videos just to be kept quiet. Which fate is the more harmful? In both cases, a child's inner, creative life is denied the room to flourish.

The nanny/TV environment is secure and danger free, but it is also sterile and soul-destroying, and does less than nothing to prepare the child for a real world full of challenges, a world it will soon have to contend with.

No wonder if it grows into a neurotic, parent-hating adult ensconced in psychotherapy. As adults, we may desire a cushy, sheltered life, but deep down we know that real growth, wisdom and happiness come only through adversity, by confronting and overcoming the everyday problems of a natural, often hostile environment.

We may not go hunting and gathering, but modern living provides its share of obstacles, pitfalls, and conflicts, without which we would never have a chance to develop our skills or further our knowledge of ourselves. For some reason, this common sense logic isn't applied to children, however.

In the West, it is now more or less socially compulsory to spoil a child, to give it everything it wants and "protect" it from undesirable experiences.

Modern day parents often no longer discipline their children in any real sense; instead they negotiate, treating their children like little adults whose every whims is to be indulged and every demand met.

Nowadays, for example, in British schools it is forbidden to use the word "naughty" when chastising a child. The word "No" is almost equally verboten. Heaven forbid a grown-up resort to a disciplinary slap: a mother can now be held on charges for daring to lay a hand on her own child.

All of this is now considered potentially traumatic for the delicate little creatures.

It is not seen as a necessary means for them to understand that life is full of disappointments, and that there are boundaries that cannot be crossed

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without incurring consequences.

Western children "grow up" in their demands and expectations—develop egos—long before they develop emotionally, psychologically or physically.

Before they can even dress themselves properly, they are demanding autonomy and independence, the freedom to do whatever they please.

They are often given it, too. Seven-year-olds carry their own cell phones, have TVs in their bedrooms, video collections, computers, email accounts; everything that grown-ups have, children now consider their right and privilege.

Parents give it to them because they don't want to deny their children, but do they stop to consider whether it is actually enhancing their development to be granted all these perks of technology?

In Mexico, many children are happy if they can afford a pencil and a notepad, and consider it a privilege to go to school and learn something.

As for those who don't make it to school, those street urchins who must beg and steal to stay alive, even they tend to be better behaved than your average Western child.

Of course, they would have to be. Western kids aren't taught manners much more than they are taught basic survival skills, and they certainly don't learn them from TV.

The way of the street, on the other hand, is akin to the law of the jungle in its precision and ruthlessness.

Every misstep or foolish act will quickly be rebuffed, not by a punishment, but by an equal and opposite reaction from the world at large.

Perhaps we ought not to pity the underprivileged urchins growing up dirty and hungry on the streets, if they are being prepared for life to come?

Pity precludes respect, and there are much more practical and constructive approaches to the situation than simple regret, itself a form of complacency.

Maybe we would be better off looking at those privileged children, who are given all they need and enjoy the benefits of a smooth, easy, friction-free childhood? It is they who are in for the ruder awakening. A good life is invariably also a hard life.

# Good Samaritan day



Writer by Oaxaca Times

On the four Friday of the lent season there could be seen on M. Alcalá Street and all churches of the city at noon time, many people giving refreshments for free, also, schools, businesses, parks, homes for the elderly and street stands.

Huge clay and aluminum pots with flavored water are decorated like wells, with bricks, most cases wrapped with color paper and arches of palms added with bougainvillea of all color flowers.

The tradition of the Good Samaritan Day is based on the passage of the bible when a woman offers water to Jesus.

The passage, it is about the encounter of Jesus at Jacob's well with a woman in the city of Sicar or Siquem.

People who visit Oaxaca in Lent can

enjoy refreshing fruit drinks and also ice cream which are given out free.

The tradition began in the atriums of all Catholic churches but, it become more popular when schools and establishments joined to it. It is believed that the tradition began at the end of 19 century, probably at the churches of San Francisco and La Merced in Oaxaca city.

The most typical flavors are Horchata, made with rice and flavored with Cinnamon and Melon or fruit from a cactus called Tuna and nuts, Chilacayota (a fiber pumpinck) Jamaica made with dried hibiscus flowers.

Many women dress in their typical clothing in this tradition that represents the given spirit of people from Oaxaca.



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