

Mexican Wrestling

Its Compensatory Function in Relation to Cultural Trauma

VÍCTOR MANUEL LÓPEZ G.

Mexican wrestling derives from the French *catch-as-catch-can* of the 1930s, which combines both Greco-Roman and United States wrestling styles. Originally related to the *pankration*,¹ this form has transcended borders. Wrestling has leaped from the ring into the pages of sports magazines, television, film, and photo-novellas. It has developed into a film subgenre whose wrestlers have become iconic heroes, as shown by the following excerpt, taken from a match broadcast by Mexican national television (XEQ-TV 9, September 14, 2008).

Announcer: The match will be two out of three *caídas* [falls], with no time limit. In the *técnicos* corner, we have Dr. Planet, and on the *rudos* corner, Mr. Skull. And the battle begins! Skull throws a flying kick to his opponent, who squirms in pain. Skull pins Planet to the ground and pokes his finger in his rival's eye. This is an illegal stratagem.

Audience: Ouch! You cheat! Punish him! Call the police! (Whistling and insults are directed at Mr. Skull.)

Announcer: Planet flees from the beating. He gets up and runs for the ropes. Skull goes after him and hurls another illegal punch against Planet, who dodges him. He frustrates Skull by holding him in a crab lock. Planet dominates Skull for a moment, but Skull resorts to a low blow, giving Planet a beating. The audience is ready to cut the referee to ribbons! It seems he's the only person who hasn't seen this illegal move!

Audience: Hey ref, you thief! You need glasses, you bastard!

This is high drama. During Mexico's golden age of wrestling films, which included the 1960s and 1970s, the quintessential wrestler-actor was *Santo* (*Saint*), the most famous wrestler in Latin America. A cult legend, Santo was frequently involved in an ultimate

battle between the forces of good and evil. The titles of his films reflect this: *Santo vs. the Evil Brain* (1958), *Santo vs. the Zombies* (1961), *Santo vs. the Vampire Women* (1962), *Santo vs. the Vice Mafia* (1970). Santo became a superhero. After appearing as the star of a comic book, he turned into a local popular hero. You could even say he's the Mexican Superman of comic books. Through Santo's films and comics, the viewer could relate to him as a champion of good deeds.



“Two fighters flying” (Courtesy of Consejo Mundial de Lucha Libre, www.cml.com.)

Mexican wrestling prospered and became unique when its iconography, which is both colorful and *kitsch-like*, began to give its followers, through its symbolic dimensions, a great cathartic drama. This drama is played out through the histrionics of the wrestlers in the ring. This sport—with a mix of the circus, acrobatics, and theater—has a large following, mostly from medium and low socioeconomic levels.² It has become a sport that is just one step below soccer (Morales, Fuentes, and Aurrecochea 2005).

Professional Mexican wrestling is renowned throughout the world, and it has a very definitive style. Mexican duels can be one-on-one, also called “*mano a mano*” or “*máscara vs. cabellera*.” Other contests are either two against two, called “simple relays,” or three against three, called “Australian relays.” Encounters are divided into three stages, or *caídas* (falls), defined as “each of the fighting periods in a wrestling match which has no time limit and ends when one wrestler gets his opponent to yield by any one of the sport’s allowed forms” (Vallejo and González 2008, 6). A contestant wins a *caída* when he throws his opponent onto the canvas and holds him flat on his back for three seconds, counted out loud by the referee.

Fighters have organized themselves into two competing factions, according to their wrestling styles and personalities: *rudos* (tough) and *técnicos* (technical). Contenders from the group known as *rudos* are villains who try to harm their opponents by feigning eye-gouging, finger-twisting, and other illegal techniques. *Técnicos*,

in contrast, stick to conventional and legal techniques, earning the sympathy of the audience.

Wrestling events involve detailed attention to wardrobes, scenery, colors, lighting, locks, counter-locks, challenges, sexy and scantily clad female announcers, and plenty of attitude and stagecraft from the protagonists. Euphoric spectators cheer, drum, display banners, and play rattles; they shout, boo, whistle, and utter insults. They cram the arena for amusement as well as entertainment that gives vent to their spirited feelings during the constant confrontation between the *rudos* and *técnicos* (Vallejo and González 2008).

The wrestlers' fanbase elevates them to the rank of fantastic flesh-and-blood beings with extraordinary strength and power. Heroes, villains, saints, demons, humanized animals, and mythical entities are some of the personifications that carry spectators to a wholly different universe. The wrestler's personality evokes magic and fantasy through his attire, demeanor, and charisma. Some famous fighters are well liked because of who they are and what they represent to their followers. Through their reputations, they transcend the wrestling world, turning into role models, and even icons, who transmit a social and sometimes educational message to the people.

The Role of the Mask in Wrestling: Evocation of the Cultural Unconscious

Like Mexican natives of ancient history, wrestlers have discovered the potentially magical aspect of masks. Use of this magic enables a wrestler to disguise his personality for a moment—or to take what he wishes by imitation, perhaps dominion, over his environment. The collective feeling established by these masks makes Mexican wrestling unique and different. The mask, at first simply part of a disguise, has evolved into a necessary component, similar to the *cabellera*, or abundant head of hair, of those not wearing masks. A mask suggests not only mystery and elusiveness, but also loneliness and sacrifice. Characters who wear the symbolic mask often have an exceptional importance in Mexico (Black 1999; in Vallejo and González 2008, 8). The mask's popularity has grown so much that it has become an object of challenge and bets. In championship matches, the defeated wrestler not only loses his mask or head of hair; he also loses much of his reputation and status as a celebrity. The mask and the *cabellera* define the hero's strength. If he loses either, his strength diminishes. In the case of masked wrestlers, the loss is greater because the mask symbolizes their actual face. Metaphorically speaking, losing the mask is losing face. The wrestler will be reviled; he could lose his reputation—and even his professional identity (Ferro 2001, 56).

Masks are deeply rooted in Mexico's pre-Hispanic history. When Hernán Cortés (the Spanish conqueror of the Aztec empire) arrived in Mexico, one of the most important gifts he received from Moctezuma (also known as *Huey Tlatoani*, the emperor of

the Mexicas 1502–1520) was a jade mask. The relationship that early inhabitants had with the world of masks began as early as 3000 BCE in the Olmeca civilization, which thrived along the Gulf of Mexico. These masks stand out because of their transfiguration, which shows a deformation of key features to suggest birds, lizards, and felines (Carrasco 2000, 212).



“Feathered mask.” (Courtesy of Consejo Mundial de Lucha Libre, www.cml.com.)

Masks had been important at Teotihuacan, the urban culture of Mexico’s high plains; it is speculated they were used in funeral offerings (González-Torres 1994, 8). These masks were, however, closer to the human realm, with expressions that conveyed a serene, sometimes unreadable, countenance (1994). Shamans also wore masks in order to invoke supernatural powers that were believed to come through the strengths of the animals they represented. In the Mayan civilization, masks were used to represent the authority of rulers and reminded the populace of this power through their use as “ornamental” elements in architecture (Carrasco 2000).

Of course, masks also remind us of the Jung’s use of the term *persona*, borrowed from the masks worn by actors in Greek and Roman theater to designate a specific role

in the performance. The persona refers to our external face, our social mask. Often, the persona adopted by an individual is a collective representation of the appropriate social role (Stein 1998). Jung writes in “The Persona as a Segment of the Collective Psyche”:

When we analyze the persona we strip off the mask, and discover that what seemed to be individual is at bottom collective; in other words, that the persona was only a mask of the collective psyche. Fundamentally the persona is nothing real: it is a compromise between individual and society as to what a man should appear to be. He takes a name, earns a title, exercises a function, he is this or that. In a certain sense all this is real, yet in relation to the essential individuality of the person concerned it is only a secondary reality, a compromise formation, in making which others often have a greater share than he. The persona is a semblance, a two-dimensional reality, to give it a nick-name. (1916/1928, CW 7, ¶246)

In contrast, we might think of the *shadow* in terms of a subpersonality that strives to gain what the persona will not allow. All that the ego’s consciousness rejects has the potential to become shadow.

The Tragic Wound in the Mexican Psyche

At first, contact between the Old and the New World caused bewilderment, fear, and suspicion. Were the “others” superior, only different, or worthy of contempt? Sustained by myths and omens, the Mexicas believed the newly arrived to be super-human entities, potential gods who would fulfill ancient prophecies (Warman 2003). For the ruling Aztecs, a mythologically tinged perception emerged: the return of Quetzalcoatl, the Feathered Serpent and a major deity in the Aztec pantheon. The invaders were at first thought to fulfill this prophecy. The Aztec ruler Moctezuma and his people were concerned and full of terror (León-Portilla 1959/1992, 14). Moctezuma sent the foreign visitors jewelry, food, and prisoners to be sacrificed in their presence. However, the Spaniards’ cruelty and greed soon cut short all such expectations, particularly after the killings at Cholula and at the Main Temple of Tenochtitlan,³ which showed that the conquerors were no more than *popolocas*, barbarians, who barely deserved to be considered human (Warman 2003, 36).

The Spanish Conquest led by Hernán Cortés was a cataclysm of proportions beyond the imagination of the New World’s inhabitants. Rupture and discontinuity reached virtually every aspect of daily life as they knew it. There were high numbers of human casualties, as a result of the ensuing wars and epidemics caused by non-native diseases brought by the invaders. The conditions imposed by the colonizers included slavery and forced labor, subjecting natives to ruthless exhaustion and wear. Violence in all its forms was used to subject the indigenous population to white dominion; this persistent, deeply rooted violence still permeates life in independent, contemporary Mexico (Bonfil 1987, 22). The indigenous population was reduced by as much as

90 percent during the first century after contact (Warman 2003, 35). Zoja has suggested that the historical fact of the Conquest may be the biggest cataclysm in all of human history (2001, 45). Although not a personal trauma, it was a collapse of the collective psyche. The native population had been abandoned by their king, their prophecies, and their gods, thus fragmenting their cosmological vision (Michán 2003, 34).

During the period of colonialization, conquerors were convinced of the inferiority of the indigenous population, thus rationalizing their servitude and segregation by caste and race. Racial segregation was a founding and ruling principle of colonial society. Prominent European natural historians from the eighteenth century, such as Buffon, De Pauw, Raynal, and Robertson, even went so far as to state that the New World was naturally inferior (Warman 2003). To make matters worse, these authors affirmed not only that people born in America were inferior in nature and humanity, but they also held that Europeans immigrants degenerated because of the harmful effects of the environment and its "humors" (2003, 36).

During the colonial era, guardianship was confused with dominion, thus making it hard to distinguish between measures taken to protect and those destined to subordinate and exploit. Separate villages were created for Mexica and European populations, establishing physical segregation to prevent reciprocal "contamination." Cohabitation of groups of different origins and positions soon bred new subgroups. As a result, society attempted to organize itself into a rigid system of castes with different rights for each position. At the top were the Spaniards and their "pure" descendants; at midlevel, mixed groups who clearly favored those closest to the Spaniards; and at the bottom, the indigenous population, under the alleged protective guardianship of the upper levels (Warman 2003).

With regard to religion, Meso-America had no religious authority over the lords of the altepeme⁴ and their confederations. The Conquest did not cause a confrontation between two competing churches; it caused one between the unified Spanish Catholic Church and the many varying Meso-American religious systems. Around the early sixteenth century, Meso-American temples were either abandoned or destroyed. Catholic churches were frequently and intentionally constructed from stones of the old, demolished temples. Meso-American cults were forbidden, and human sacrifices were no longer performed. The pre-Hispanic priesthood was dismembered and dispersed, along with its memory, wisdom, and the physical representation of its symbols and culture (images or idols, steles, manuscripts, astronomical observations, ritual attire, and ornaments). The dominion of Catholicism and its Church was firmly established: Mexican natives were forced to abandon their religious beliefs in exchange for the privilege of converting to Catholicism and serving the clergy. After exemplary acts of faith, they were exempt from scrutiny and punishment by the Holy Office of the Inquisition (Bonfil 1987, 21).

As the saying goes, history is written by the victors. Fortunately, the Mexica and other Nahuatl,⁵ using glyphic signs and the Spanish alphabet (learned from missionary friars), left us testimonies of this traumatic event from the point of view of the vanquished. It is no exaggeration to say that in the stories of the Nahuatl there are passages as dramatic as in the great classic epics. Native writers knew how to convey the most pivotal moments of the Conquest. For instance, a few lines about the terrible massacre perpetrated at the Main Temple by Pedro de Alvarado demonstrate this alternate view:

They immediately surrounded the dancers, launching themselves onto the place where the drums were; slashed the drummer, cutting both his arms. Then they beheaded him, his severed head fell far from there. They immediately stabbed everyone, lancing people and slashing them, hurting them with their spears. Some were attacked from behind; they fell right away to the ground, their entrails scattered. Others had their head split; their head was sliced, left entirely shattered. But others received slashes on their shoulders; they were split, their bodies torn apart. All their entrails fell to the ground. And there were some who still ran in vain; they ran dragging their guts and it seemed as if their feet were tripping over them. Eager to reach safety, they didn't know where to run. (León-Portilla 1959/1992⁶)

When Mexico achieved political independence from Spain at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the country was not created based on a culturally homogeneous nation with a common history. Rather, it was based on segregation and ethnic plurality instituted within the colonial system. Theoretically, equality granted people the right to vote, but the necessary conditions to exercise that right, including an ability to speak Spanish, being literate, owning property, and a good public standing, effectively disenfranchised many. The law granted an equality that was impossible to implement. In fact, discrimination against the indigenous population escalated. From the top echelons, people spoke shamelessly of the urgency of whitening the country to civilize it and make it viable as a nation. On the lower rungs of the social ladder, the insult of unmet promises, betrayed principles, and truncated expectations became stronger.

Racism persists in daily practice and customs, as a hidden, elusive element that pervades our relationships with one another (Warman 2003). In his sublime book *The Labyrinth of Solitude*, Octavio Paz, who won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1990, brilliantly undertakes a study of the nature of Mexican people (1950). His reasoning opens up a great quantity of actual cultural complexes that appear to have remained embedded within the Mexican psyche. Paz argues that in Mexico there are not only different races and languages, but also different historical levels.

Cultural Complexes and Their Relevance to Mexico

From colonial history, we now turn to consider the psychological effects of this era of cultural exploitation—that is, to the resulting cultural complexes. Here, it is important to note the clear distinction made by Jung between the personal unconscious and the

collective unconscious, an elaboration that distinguished him from the purely repressed Freudian unconscious. Jung writes in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*:

At first the concept of the unconscious was limited to denoting the state of repressed or forgotten contents . . .

A more or less superficial layer of the unconscious is undoubtedly personal. I call it the *personal unconscious*. But this personal unconscious rests upon a deeper layer, which does not derive from personal experience and is not a personal acquisition but is inborn. This deeper layer I call the *collective unconscious*. (1934/1954, CW 9i, ¶¶2, 3)

Kimbles (2004) proposes a contemporary Jungian theory of cultural complexes, located in the cultural level of the unconscious, a concept first developed by Joseph Henderson, who writes

The cultural unconscious, in the sense I use it, is an area of historical memory that lies between the collective unconscious and the manifest pattern of the culture. It may include both these modalities, conscious and unconscious, but it has some kind of identity arising from the archetypes of the collective unconscious, which assists in the formation of myth and ritual and also promotes the process of development in individuals (1990, 103)

The cultural unconscious becomes a way to understand the symbolic dimension of human experience, created through its interactions, narratives, and images that are preserved and transmitted through some kind of gravitational dynamic directed toward the nucleus (Singer and Kimbles 2004). This centripetal dynamic could be explained as follows: The cultural unconscious (as if it were one great nucleus of attraction) attracts contents from the personal and collective unconscious, which spins around the cultural core or nucleus. In some cases, these contents come close to the nucleus, and it vibrates. In other cases, these same contents just rotate without disturbing the nucleus.

Some authors have offered evidence of how cultural complexes appear to invade consciousness within the collective life, as expressed in a society's culture and history. Zoja, reflecting particularly on Mexico and the traumatic experience of the Conquest, points out that symptoms including the loss of self-confidence, loss of initiative, an introjection of suppressed conflict, a propensity to self-destructive behavior, and abuse reenactment—all have remained encysted for centuries and correspond to the already mentioned historical catastrophe (2001, 45).

Michán refers to the overlap of Spanish and Aztec cultural patterns, resulting in a fusion of historical layers of indigenous and Spanish elements, with both cultures having emphasized subjugation and domination. Mexican *machismo*, rooted in a tyrannical male authority, derived from natives as well as conquerors (Michán 2003, 30). Along the same line of thought, Gerson approaches the Mexican phenomenon of *malinchismo*,⁷ a disapproval of one's own things and a preference for what instead

belongs to others—in other words, desiring foreign things and abandoning or betraying what is domestic (2004, 35). This complex in the Mexican psyche functions not only personally but also collectively. The term *malinchismo* thus refers to the betrayal of one's own people or race. This word applies to individuals who turn their back on their own culture: Mexicans who do not like Mexican things or anything associated with Mexican culture. The trauma of self-betrayal and its consequences can be seen in the recurring pain of self-deprecating Mexican people. Mexicans, therefore, appear trapped by a narrow view of life (Gerson 2004).

As Singer and Kimbles point out, group complexes often have to do with trauma (2004, 178). My purpose here is not to simplify a complicated matter. Rather, I am proposing that a large portion of Mexico's people relive and purge their cultural traumas by being spectators of a sport-drama like wrestling. Through wrestling, Mexicans have been able to experience catharsis and to balance their collective consciousness from the particular constellation of their cultural complexes. This is essentially a compensatory act whose roots dig into archetypal contents. I am elaborating on Zoja's idea (2001) when he says that because Mexicans were traumatized during the Conquest, they suffered a penetrating wound since they were abused and betrayed by their own gods.

Mexican wrestling has an *agonistic* essence—meaning it refers to the Greek tradition of pugilistic competition—and this is represented in the challenge between rivals. Popular imagery, through its personifications, endows wrestlers with very marked dualities, for example, as agents either of good or evil. Wrestlers belong to the band of either the *técnicos* or the *rudos* and bear a battle name as well as a mask. The mask embodies an aspect of the hero in covering the human, mortal face of the fighter, who seeks to become a herald of a powerful archetypal image. Some classic Mexican wrestlers have even been baptized with a pseudonym that makes clear their heroic and divine aspects: *El Santo* (The Saint), *Blue Demon*, *Mil Máscaras* (Thousand Masks), *Timieblas* (Darkness), *Black Shadow*, *Cien Caras* (One Hundred Faces), *Rayo de Jalisco* (Jalisco Thunderbolt), and *Huracán Ramírez* (Hurricane Ramírez).

These identities represent archetypal rescuers or saviors. From my point of view, to be present at the *séance* of one of these “epic battles” is to relive the myth of the



“The cat mask.” (Courtesy of Consejo Mundial de Lucha Libre, www.cml.com.)

rescuing hero, the man who imparts justice and restores balance. No doubt the audience also reclaims and updates archetypal images that help to assuage the wounded cultural unconscious. As a spectator at a wrestling match, one experiences a substitute form of transformation, a compensatory movement that comes from the objective psyche. The arena turns into a battlefield on which spectators are able to savor their revenge, as they recall their primordial offenders and then let out an abreactive scream addressed at all those who brought upon them their fate as a member of the lower classes.

On the other hand, I also wonder if the wrestlers' bloody battles, which could result in the loss of the mask or *cabellera*, might be substitutes for the ancient sacrificial rites. The *cabellera* is usually lost on a wager. If the wrestler loses a fight, his head is shaved. In ancient times, the spilling of human blood fed the gods in the cosmic order, yet this has not been completely left in the past. In the same fashion, there is the concept of *guerra florida*,⁸ or "flowery war," with which the Aztecs promoted bellicose activities through different methods. One was the propagation of myths that emphasized the need to wage war in order to help the sun by feeding it blood spilled in battle and in sacrifices (González-Torres 1994, 56). Another was an eschatological belief, according to which men who died in war and in sacrifice enjoyed an afterlife in paradise. Historically speaking, in the times of Izcóatl, Mexicas imposed the idea that the sacrifice of warriors captured during battle was essential for the world to remain in existence (González-Torres 1994).

Moreover, a parallel can be made with the competitive aspect of the *juego de pelota*, or ballgame, played by Olmeca, Mayan, Toltec, and Aztec people, because of its religious significance (Wasserman 1983). It represented the strife between the gods of the underworld and those of the heavens, the struggle between day and night. Winners were honored and praised, while vanquished players were subjected to a more drastic fate; in some cases, they were sacrificed. It is important to point out that this ballgame is considered the first organized game in the history of sports since it goes back 3500 years. Given such a cultural background, it is not surprising that there is a confluence in the Mexican psyche for competition and a taste for fight. Symbolically, the blood that fighters are expected to shed in Aztec human sacrifices correlates with the loss of trophies (the mask, the *cabellera*, or the defeat in battle) in order to sate the voracious appetite of the gods. The audience, in close communion with the wrestler, demands the vital fluid, thus quenching the people's thirst, and avenging all the historical offenses of kidnapping, robbery, rape, and humiliation. Through this identification, the community simultaneously claims the gods' divine benefits.

The cathartic liberation experienced by people who take sides in identifying with their chosen conveyor of justice creates an optimal backdrop for the exorcism of complexes tinged by history, injustice, infirmity, poor fate, and plunder. Nowadays, people more commonly identify with the agents of the dark side of wrestling, the "bad guys,"

or *rudos*. In ancient times, evidence exists of frequent episodes in mythology and literature when the shadow held a certain fascination. Today, in current Mexican society, where impunity, violence, and corruption are sadly on the prowl, there is an unsavory consequence in that the dark side offers immediate, unbeatable, and perennial power.

Not mere spectators, the audience identifies with the pomp and drama of wrestling. The wrestling “heroes” attain a victory in the psychic field much more than any physical triumph. Active participation and observation of this sport of wrestling resembles the path of an internal journey, and one that strongly resonates deep inside Mexicans. This profound journey is contextualized and updated in wrestling when the hero becomes capable of facing supernatural forces and devastating, titanic challenges. The wrestler-hero fights to give his earthly siblings the gifts they deserve (Campbell 1949). Sharing in a cultural and collective unconscious that is defined by grief and loss, Mexicans identify and become accomplices of wrestling. In the arena, wrestling substitutes for the justice they never received.

Performing a role very similar to that of the wrestling hero, certain figures have emerged and become admired role models because they also fight to make amends for the damage inflicted on so many people. Interestingly, they have chosen to fight wearing a mask or ski mask (a *balacclava*), a resource that (besides the obvious anonymity it provides) evokes a kind of power or supernatural aspect. A fascinating example is Subcommander Marcos, who first appeared in 1994, proclaiming himself as ideologist and spokesperson for the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN). He has demanded democracy, freedom, land, and justice for the native people of Chiapas.

The impact of the cultural complex has undoubtedly generated in most Mexicans a tendency to interpret everyday events with an attitude of impotence with regard to the many real social and economic problems they face. This state sadly fulfills a prophecy that we are a subjugated nation, left to its own inexorable fate.

Zoja indicates that analysts in general tend to focus on personal traumas suffered during infancy or childhood, which is why few of us recognize the effects of collective trauma on the individual (2001, 46). A collective trauma becomes part of the cultural unconscious, a primal core around which a cultural complex can be built. It would be advisable for analysts to become more aware of and involved in the catastrophic events that underpin a nation’s history. Cultural forms also emerge to address the unconsciously held trauma: Mexican wrestling performs a compensatory job, as well as a primitively therapeutic one, via the direct catharsis that is in the best style of ancient Greek plays.

ENDNOTES

1. *Panration*: Meaning “all creation” in Greek, panration was a popular contest in the Olympic Games of ancient Greece. This term is now used for wrestling in general.
2. Ratings of 10.5 for a Mexican wrestling show on XEQ-TV (Source: Ratings TV IBOPE: AGB, December '07/January '08).

3. *Tenochtitlan*: The city of Mexico-Tenochtitlan (from the Nahuatl *Mēxihco-Tenōchtitlān*) was the capital city of the Mexicas, also known as the Aztecs, founded during the first decades of the fourteenth century. Very soon, after having subjected the surrounding *altepetl*, it became the most powerful city in Meso-America, and one of the largest cities in the known world, with around half a million inhabitants at the peak of its splendor in 1521, when Spanish conquerors under Hernán Cortés forced it to yield.
4. *Altepeme* or *altépetl*: The *āltepētīl* (from the Nahuatl *ā-tl* “water” and *tepē-tl* “hill or mountain”) is one of the most important concepts of Meso-America. The term seems to refer to a settlement on high land and also on the water’s edge. In modern times, it refers to the territory of an ethnic, territorial entity in which Meso-American indigenous people were socially and politically organized during the Post-Classic Era (1200–1521).
5. *Nahuatl*: Ethnic group whose language was some sort of lingua franca, spoken in vast areas of Meso-America between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries.
6. Taken from the General Introduction Chapter, Texts from Sahagún’s indigenous informers, Florentine Codex, book XII, chapter XX.
7. *Malinche*: The Aztec princess who lived during the time of the Conquest (Malitzin). She was captured and enslaved and became Cortés’ interpreter. Malinche accompanied Cortés to Tenochtitlan (the great Aztec nation). She bore him a son, which is the reason she is considered the mother of Mexican cross-breeding. She has also been identified as the person who betrayed her own people. Today the term *malinchismo* is applied to Mexicans who frown upon all things Mexican, as well as to the excessive and irrational taste for foreign things.
8. *Guerra Florida*: The Xochiyaótl, or Flowery War, was a ritual of Meso-American people during the centuries previous to the Conquest, for which several cities agreed to organize battles where prisoners could be taken on both sides to be ritually sacrificed, as a way of pacifying the gods at times of acute famine.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bonfil, Guillermo. 1987. *México profundo. Una civilización negada*. México: Random House Mondadori.
- Campbell, Joseph. 1949. *El héroe de las mil caras*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Carrasco, Pedro. 2000. Cultura y sociedad en el México antiguo en *Historia General de México*. Ed. Centro de Estudios Históricos de El Colegio de México, 153–233. México: El Colegio de México.
- Ferro, Luis. 2001. *La lucha libre: Entre lo real e imaginario*. *Revista México Desconocido* 293 (July): 52–58.
- Gerson, Jacqueline. 2004. *Malinchismo: Betraying one’s own*. In *The cultural complex. Contemporary Jungian perspectives on psyche and society*, eds. T. Singer and S. Kimbles, 35–45. London: Brunner-Routledge.
- González-Torres, Yolotl. 1994. *El sacrificio humano entre los mexicas*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Henderson, Joseph. 1990. The cultural unconscious. In *Shadow and self: Selected papers in analytical psychology*, ed. D Farrell, 103–113 Wilmette, Illinois: Chiron Publications.
- Jung, C. G. 1916/1928. *La persona como recorte de la psique colectiva (The Persona as a Segment of the Collective Psyche)*. OC (CW) 7. Madrid: Trotta.
- . 1934/1954. *Sobre los arquetipos de lo inconsciente colectivo (The archetypes and the collective unconscious)*. OC (CW) 9i. Madrid: Trotta.
- León-Portilla, Miguel. 1959/1992. *Visión de los vencidos. Relaciones indígenas de la Conquista*. México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

- Michán, Patrizia. 2003. Analysis and individuation in the Mexican psyche: Culture and context. *Journal of Jungian Theory and Practice* 5: 29–47.
- Morales, Alfonso, Gustavo Fuentes, and Juan Aurrecochea. 2005. *Espectacular de Lucha Libre: Fotografías de Lourdes Grobet*. México: Trilce.
- Paz, Octavio. 1950. *El laberinto de la soledad*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Singer, Thomas, and Samuel Kimbles. 2004. The emerging theory of cultural complexes. In *Analytical psychology: Contemporary perspectives in Jungian analysis*, eds. J. Cambay and L. Carter, 176–203. London, New York: Brunner-Routledge.
- Stein, Murray. 1998. *El mapa del alma según Jung*. Barcelona: Luciérnaga.
- Thomson, Jean. 2006. Book reviews: Singer & Kimbles. *The cultural complex. Contemporary perspectives on psyche and society*, eds. D. Hewison and M. Kuras. *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 51: 307–309.
- Vallejo, Silvia y González, Zaida. 2008. *Luchandera. Tesis Profesional*. Puebla, México: Universidad de Las Américas-Puebla.
- Warman, Arturo. 2003. *Los indios mexicanos en el umbral del milenio*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Wasserman, M. 1983. Transcending ethnocentrism in sport research: The case of Aztec player gambling. *Anthropos* 78: 874–878.
- Zoja, Luigi. 2001. Trauma and abuse: A psychological approach to a chapter of Latin American history. *Journal of Jungian Theory and Practice* 3: 39–50.

VÍCTOR MANUEL LÓPEZ G., is a Jungian analyst and professor in the Department of Psychology, Universidad Anáhuac Norte, in Mexico City, and a counselor in sports psychology. He is Senior Analyst of the Spanish Society of Analytic Psychology (SEPA), an associate member of Centro Mexicano C. G. Jung, and a member of the International Association of Analytic Psychology (IAAP) in Zürich, Switzerland. He has a bachelor's degree in psychology, a master's degree in couple's psychotherapy, and a master's degree in analytical psychology from Ramon Llull University in Barcelona, Spain. *Correspondence*: Ahuehuetes Norte 1146-6, Col. Bosques de las Lomas, 05120, Mexico City, Mexico. E-mail: viczepol@gmail.com.

ABSTRACT

The invocation of pre-Hispanic mythological deities contributes the necessary element for wrestlers to endow themselves with magical, supernatural powers with which they seek to mend injustice and defeat evil. The theory of cultural complexes described by Kimbles (Singer and Kimbles 2004) suggests a way of understanding how cultural traumas still reverberate in the cultural unconscious of Mexicans. Mexican wrestling fulfills one very special function going beyond sports; its theatrical performances symbolically compensate for decades of deep-rooted injustices.

KEY WORDS

archetypes, collective unconscious, compensation, complex theory, cultural complex, cultural unconscious, Mexican history, Mexican wrestling, social injustice, Spanish Conquest