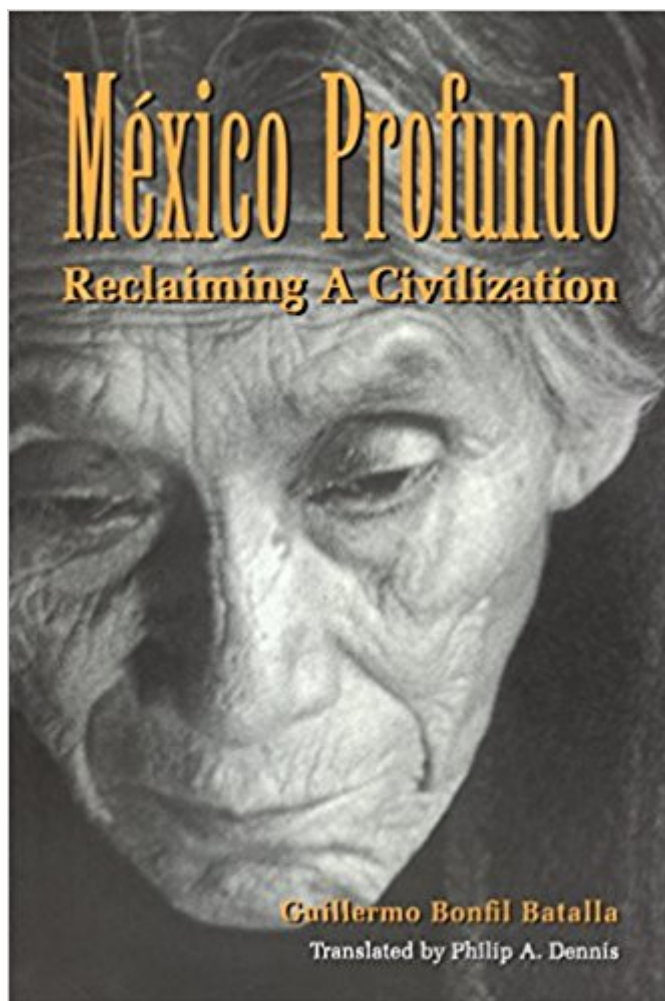


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Mexico Profundo: Reclaiming A Civilization



Synopsis

This translation of a major work in Mexican anthropology argues that Mesoamerican civilization is an ongoing and undeniable force in contemporary Mexican life. For Guillermo Bonfil Batalla, the remaining Indian communities, the "de-Indianized" rural mestizo communities, and vast sectors of the poor urban population constitute the *México profundo*. Their lives and ways of understanding the world continue to be rooted in Mesoamerican civilization. An ancient agricultural complex provides their food supply, and work is understood as a way of maintaining a harmonious relationship with the natural world. Health is related to human conduct, and community service is often part of each individual's life obligation. Time is circular, and humans fulfill their own cycle in relation to other cycles of the universe. Since the Conquest, Bonfil argues, the peoples of the *México profundo* have been dominated by an "imaginary México" imposed by the West. It is imaginary not because it does not exist, but because it denies the cultural reality lived daily by most Mexicans. Within the *México profundo* there exists an enormous body of accumulated knowledge, as well as successful patterns for living together and adapting to the natural world. To face the future successfully, argues Bonfil, Mexico must build on these strengths of Mesoamerican civilization, "one of the few original civilizations that humanity has created throughout all its history."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

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This translation of a major work in Mexican anthropology argues that Mesoamerican civilization is an ongoing and undeniable force in contemporary Mexican life. Within the Mexico profundo there exists an enormous body of accumulated knowledge, as well as successful patterns for living together and adapting to the natural world.

This book takes on the myth of a homogeneous Mexican culture in which the Spanish and Indigenous cultures have properly mixed. Instead it tells the story of two separate cultures: one, the dominant culture which rules Mexico socially, politically, and economically, and of the second culture, the Indigenous culture which lives and thrives underneath the dominant one. Often times the dominant culture will share pride in its Indigenous past, praising the Aztecs, using their imagery and glory, while at the same time ignoring, suppressing, and often marginalizing its indigenous present. It is this hypocrisy or duality (depending on your point of view) that this book takes on.

This is a powerful analysis of Mexico and the continuing existence of the civilization encountered by the Spanish. This insight delivered by Bonfil Batalla is a must for understanding Mexico with application to the larger question of indigenous peoples in all the Americas, including strands of thought for some understanding of its application to Mexican-American and Chicano culture. A must read for those pursuing greater understanding of this powerful encounter and history.

Wow! What an eye-opener! Who knew there were more Indians in Mexico City than anywhere else? I always knew in a vague way that the Indians in Mexico never went away. And I knew they loved cities and had a huge and very ancient civilization. I just did not know that it had survived as well as the author describes. I cannot recommend this book more highly. The author is a major anthropologist, but the book is written for the well educated lay public.

Great book about the construction of the Mexican identity and nationhood.

Great information on the evolution of cultures

Great book for understanding the nature of a culture and the manipulations of colonialism the land is the ultimate ruler.

Great to read and know your history.

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