

Report on the WPA-TPS co-sponsored GLADET conference
Guadalajara, Mexico
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Ronald Wintroob MD

GLADET, the Latin American Group for Transcultural Studies, was founded about fifty years ago, but only continued to be active as an organization for a few years. During the past two years, GLADET was revived, with the coordination of scholars from all over Latin America. The conference in Guadalajara was the auspicious occasion for the re-launching of GLADET, under the leadership of Sergio Villasenor Bayardo, Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Guadalajara, who also served as the Executive Chairman of the Guadalajara conference. The conference was co-sponsored by WPA-TPS and WACP, so Ron Wintroob (Chair, WPA-TPS) and Wen-Shing Tseng (President, WACP) served as conference co-chairmen.

Guadalajara is the capital of the western Mexican state of Jalisco. It is Mexico's second largest city, with a rapidly growing population, now nearing ten million. Its colonial center has been well preserved, including many distinguished buildings from the 17th century onward, as illustrated by the photos accompanying this report. One of those architectural heritage buildings is the Instituto Cultural Cabanas, an enormous and very imposing early 19th century structure, in the courtyard of which a reception, dinner, and performance of the celebrated Ballet Folklorico of the University of Guadalajara was offered for conference participants on the first evening of the conference, under a sky lit by the full moon. The performers included a large number of Mariachi musicians and dancers, who put on a rousing and altogether spectacular performance. The songs and dances wonderfully represented the pride of the people of Jalisco in their country and its folk traditions. The performance left the performers breathless...and the audience enthralled and exhilarated.

The conference attracted participants from all over Latin America, and from all over the world; from countries as far away as Japan, Sweden, Spain, France and Britain, to those bordering Mexico on the north and south.

The conference venue was the Crowne Plaza resort hotel complex, which was very well equipped to provide an atmosphere appropriate for both the scientific program and the comfort of all conference participants.

The theme of the scientific program was; "Psychiatry, Nature and Culture; from singular to universal". Within this overall theme, the conference consisted of twenty symposia, comprising nearly eighty individual presentations, as well thirteen plenary presentations. Simultaneous translation was provided for all plenary presentations.

The first of the plenary presentations was given by Sergio Villasenor, who reviewed the history of GLADET and then gave a detailed overview of the trends and developments in cultural psychiatry throughout the countries of Latin America during the past twenty years..

In other plenary presentations, Ron Wintrob addressed cultural case formulation for clinicians in psychiatry and medicine, and Renato Alarcon spoke about the vicissitudes of contemporary cultural psychiatry, including the perspectives of both Cervantes' Don Quixote and Shakespeare's Hamlet. Carlos Rojas Malpica took on the highly symbolic subject of "air and asphyxia". Wen-Shing Tseng focused on 'susto' and 'ataques de nervios' as culture-related syndromes. Jean Garrabe de Lara's topic was the psychiatry of the person, from a historical perspective. In other fascinating and wide-ranging plenary presentations, Martha Ontiveros took up the theme of 'how women fall in love' and Enrique Chavez described 'serial killers in real life and in the movies'. Several presentations reviewed and analyzed the mutual cultural influences of Mexico, Japan and France over the past four centuries.

The themes of the twenty symposia covered a great breadth of topics. Among them were the following: clinical languages in psychopathology; psychopathological aspects of migration; traditional Mexican medicine; disasters and culture; depression, adolescence and culture; chronic diseases, culture and psychiatry; mental health and cultural aspects of natural disasters; psychotherapy and culture; toward de-stigmatization of psychiatric illness; somatization and culture around the world; cultural aspects of mood disorders; culture and mental health politics; clinical and cultural aspects of Latin American psychiatry.

While the three conference days were fully filled with an extraordinarily broad selection of scientific presentations, the evenings were designed by the conference Organizing Committee to exemplify the cultural and gastronomic highlights of Guadalajara and Jalisco. In addition to the inaugural dinner and performance at the Instituto

Cultural Cabanas, other receptions and dinners were offered at the Jalisco state government buildings and at the Puerto de Hierro Club.

The final conference event was a train visit to one of the estates famous in the region for its beautiful location...and for the unique quality of its tequila production. Jalisco is the home of high quality Mexican tequila.

As this brief description suggests, the Guadalajara conference was a very memorable event; one that all participants will feel fulfilled their hopes and expectations when they set out for Guadalajara.

We are very grateful to Sergio Villasenor and all the members of the Guadalajara Organizing Committee for their numerous contributions to the success of the conference.

Planning is already underway to convene the 2nd GLADET conference in 2010; once again with the co-sponsorship of WPA-TPS.