

THE COSMOPOLITAN MEXICAN SUMMER, 1920–1949

Mauricio Tenorio Trillo
University of Texas at Austin

- MEXICO MESTIZO: ANALISIS DEL NACIONALISMO MEXICANO EN TORNO A LA MESTIZOFILIA DE ANDRES MOLINA ENRIQUEZ.* By Agustín Basave Benítez. (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1992. Pp. 167.)
- REVOLUTION AND IDEOLOGY: IMAGES OF THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION IN THE UNITED STATES.* By John A. Britton. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995. Pp. 271. \$35.00 cloth.)
- POLITICS, LOGIC, AND LOVE: THE LIFE OF JEAN VAN HEIJENOORT.* By Anita Burdman Feferman. (Boston, Mass.: Jones and Bartlett, 1993. Pp. 415. \$29.95 cloth.)
- IN THE SPIRIT OF RESISTANCE / EN EL ESPIRITU DE LA RESISTENCIA.* By Lizzetta LeFalle-Collins. (New York: American Federation of Arts, 1996. Pp. 191. \$30.00 paper.)
- SOUTH OF THE BORDER: MEXICO IN THE AMERICAN IMAGINATION, 1914–1947 / MEXICO EN LA IMAGINACION NORTEAMERICANA, 1914–1947.* By James Oles, with an essay by Karen Cordero Reiman. (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993. Pp. 295. \$75.00 cloth, \$29.95 paper.)
- ANDRES MOLINA ENRIQUEZ, MEXICAN LAND REFORMER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY ERA.* By Stanley F. Shadle. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1994. Pp. 159. \$29.95 cloth.)
- COVARRUBIAS.* By Adriana Williams, edited by Doris Ober. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994. Pp. 318. \$29.95 cloth.)

Mexico, now the United States' summer playground, once represented a season of revolutionary fascination, primitivism, and social hope to modernist and radical activists, artists, and writers. From the 1920s to the late 1940s, Mexico constituted for many foreigners a season of the kind evoked by modernist poet Wallace Stevens when he spoke of an essence of summer that could rejuvenate the self and recover peace, permanence, and intellectual concord: a summer to "fill the foliage with arrested peace, / Joy of such permanence, right ignorance / Of change still possible. Exile desire / for what is not. This is the barrenness / Of the fertile

thing that can attain no more."¹ Mexico provided just such a modernist summer for a generation of world intellectuals, activists, and artists.

This Mexico captured the radical hopes of such classic characters as John Reed and sundry international and U.S.-born mavericks: Carleton Beals, Joseph Freeman, Frank Tannenbaum, Frances Toor, Nelson Rockefeller, Anita Brenner, Langston Hughes, Waldo Frank, Edward Weston, D. H. Lawrence, Roberto Habermas, Ernest Gruening, Tina Modotti, Bertram Wolfe, Ella Wolfe, Jean van Heijenoort, André Breton, Aaron Copland, Leopold Stokowski, John Dewey, Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre, Eyller Simpson, Robert Redfield, Stuart Chase, and still others. The issues discussed in Mexico in those days paralleled the ones debated in New York or the radical Parisian cafés: social revolution, cultural exhaustion of the West, the problems of industrialization, rural peoples and revolution, and the rediscovery of natives and non-Westerners in arts and politics. Mexican intellectuals and activists were already concerned with versions of these preoccupations, interpreted according to their national domestic struggle. This trend was visible in Mexico's literary modernism of the 1900s, in Porfirian *indigenismo*, in the early social radicalism of Wistano Luis Orozco and Andrés Molina Enríquez, in the discovery in the 1920s of popular arts, in Manuel Gamio's revolutionary indigenism, and in Diego Rivera's masterful manipulation of aesthetics and politics to become the undisputed "*rey gordo*" of the Mexican summer.

This season of examination and experimentation bequeathed an array of views and understandings. In *Anglia*, a pioneer Mexican journal of U.S. studies, John Brown launched the study of Yankee infatuation with Mexico in the 1920s and 1930s (Brown 1968). In the fields of U.S. intellectual history and American studies, scholars like Richard Pells (1973), Warren Susman (1984), and Thomas Bender (1992) began to offer clues about these outsider views of Mexico within the larger context of U.S. cultural history.² Then the boom in the 1980s and 1990s in the study of the "New York Intellectuals" contributed additional information and analysis on the Mexican season of many of these New Yorkers. See as examples Alan Wald's passionate account of some of these radicals (1987); the analysis of *Partisan Review* by Terry Cooney (1986); Richard Pells's liberal reconsideration of the radicalization and deradicalization of these intellectuals (1985); Harvey Teres's (1996) reevaluation of the New York intellectuals in terms of today's radicalism; and the insightful revisionist view of some of these intellectuals by Russell Jacoby (1987). Historians of the United States, however, have often considered this Mexican summer with disregard for the Mexican side of the equation.

1. Wallace Stevens, "Credence of Summer," *The Collected Poems* (New York: Vintage, 1990), 373.

2. The same could be said to a certain extent of Daniel Aaron's study of the literary Left, reissued in 1992.

This phenomenon has recently acquired relevance as a chapter in Mexican history. Works on specific personages of the Mexican summer, including novels like Elena Poniatowska's reconstruction of Tina Modotti's life (1993), have contributed new insights. And the outbreak of "Fridamania" has provided further information on the period when Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera held court. But the first general study of the Mexican cosmopolitan season was Helen Delpar's important study, *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican* (1992).³ By and large, these studies have emphasized the Mexican side, viewing the U.S. context with a certain indifference. Consequently, scholars still lack a comprehensive perspective that addresses not only politics, art, and social ideas but also the international dimension of the phenomenon, including its equally important U.S. and Mexican components.

The books reviewed here represent part of this growing interest in the Mexican cosmopolitan summer. They epitomize the different methodological angles being employed on the topic. Biography is one important genre (two examples are reviewed here). Another significant one is exemplified by John Britton's focus on ideological and political aspects. Art is yet another meaningful focus of analysis. James Oles's *South of the Border* is in fact the catalogue of an art exhibition. The remaining two studies examine prominent Mexican social thinker Andrés Molina Enríquez, indisputably part of the Mexican cosmopolitan summer. Although these books may at first appear unrelated, they deal with common personages, events, and ideas and can thus be viewed as chapters of a larger work still in the making.

A Revolutionary Season

David Brading's (1980) explanation of the intellectual foundations of varying interpretations of the Mexican Revolution alluded to the influence of American populism on U.S. interpreters and the input of two Mexican thinkers: Wistano Luis Orozco and Andrés Molina Enríquez. Frank Tannenbaum was the prime example of this combination of influences. His opinions condensed European radical traditions, U.S. populism, and (as Brading has shown) the strong influence of Mexican intellectuals like Molina Enríquez. Charles Hale recently detailed Tannenbaum's political and intellectual journey in the difficult New York of the 1910s and 1920s (Hale 1995; see also Tenorio Trillo 1991; and especially Alan Knight's 1994 reconsideration of Tannenbaum).

Brading's suggestions have found no appropriate echo thus far. The figure of Wistano Luis Orozco still awaits a thorough analysis. Molina Enríquez, because of his influential book *Los grandes problemas nacionales*

3. Delpar's (1992) book was reviewed by Stan Shadle in "The First Century of Mexican Independence," *LARR* 31, no. 1 (1996):244–58.

(1909) and its reverberations in postrevolutionary Mexican official history, has attracted more attention (see Brading 1984; Córdova 1981, Roman 1985). Two new studies now expand this analysis: Stanley Shadle's *Andrés Molina Enríquez, Mexican Land Reformer of the Revolutionary Era* and Agustín Basave Benítez's *México mestizo: Análisis del nacionalismo mexicano en torno a la mestizofilia de Andrés Molina Enríquez*.

Shadle focuses on Molina Enríquez's impact on postrevolutionary land policies, tracing this theme in Molina's ideas before and after *Los grandes problemas*. Shadle seeks to "assess how the land-reform ideology of Andrés Molina Enríquez helped guide the process of land reform in twentieth-century Mexico" (p. 1). He argues that Molina essentially followed an evolutionary theory that envisioned specific repercussions on land tenure and the forms it would assume. Molina Enríquez presented a three-stage development from the Indian past (equivalent to communal land tenure) to a criollo era (dominated by the haciendas) to a mestizo period (characterized by mid-sized ranchos). For Shadle, Molina Enríquez was a positivist and racist thinker who promoted the idea of land reform and opposed the large haciendas that implied criollo rule of the countryside. Shadle believes nonetheless that Molina Enríquez was not so radical as to champion communal possession of land (*ejidos*). Rather, he advocated incorporating Indians into a homogeneously mestizo and Spanish-speaking Mexico and creating a country of small proprietors. One could argue that Molina Enríquez was more consistently racist than mainstream Científicos like José Yves Limantour, Leopoldo Batres, and Justo Sierra, who believed in the educability of Indians despite their consensus on the racial inferiority of indigenous peoples. Molina argued that only racial miscegenation would solve "the Indian problem."

Basave's *México mestizo* focuses precisely on Molina Enríquez's racial solution. He distinguishes in Molina Enríquez's thought a *mestizofilia*, a racial and social ideology that became an essential component of Mexico's postrevolutionary nationalism. Both Shadle and Basave undertake conventional intellectual histories to trace the origins of Molina Enríquez's ideas. For Shadle, the key influences on Molina Enríquez were Lorenzo de Zavala, Jaspar de Jovellanos, Riva Palacio, and Charles Darwin as interpreted by German Darwinists Max Nordau and Ernst Haeckel. Basave adds to this list of influences Italian lawyer Pasquale Stanislao Mancini, who coined the term "*etnoarquías*," and Polish biologist Ludwig Gumplowicz.

Shadle analyzes land reform and Basave pursues the theme of nationalism, both covering the periods before and after the revolution. Shadle examines the political career of Molina Enríquez through his various stages—from a thoroughgoing Reyista to a disenchanted anti-Maderista to an ambivalent Huertista—ending with his complex relationship with the regime of Lázaro Cárdenas. Shadle insightfully explains Molina

Enríquez's differences with what seemed to be the final materialization of his programs—the Cardenista land reform: "For Molina Enríquez the members of collective ejidos, with no individual rights to their lands, were no better than serfs of medieval Europe" (p. 97). Basave traces Molina Enríquez's importance to the nationalist art of the 1930s, linking him to the ruminations about "*lo mexicano*" that were fashionable in the 1940s and 1950s. Basave concludes with his own interpretation of the significance of mestizofilia in Mexico today and tomorrow.

Shadle and Basave consider only partially one key point made by Brading: Molina Enríquez as a prophet of postrevolutionary statism and authoritarianism. In delineating the nuances of Molina Enríquez's thought, Shadle absolves him of any potential role as significant ideologue of postrevolutionary statism, as if that were necessary. In Shadle's opinion, Molina Enríquez wanted the state to "level the playing field" and then "retire from the game" (p. 111). Basave believes that by focusing on Molina Enríquez's ideas on nationalism, the debate over Molina Enríquez's advocacy of an authoritarian state is avoidable—as if his "mestizofilia," once embraced as part of the official postrevolutionary doctrine, were not a matter of the postrevolutionary state's celebrations, political speeches, textbooks, and all sorts of cultural promotion.

Both studies provide new information, particularly about Molina Enríquez's prerevolutionary work. Both use the papers of Carlos Basave to illuminate Molina Enríquez's thinking. Yet both biographies would have benefited from a more innovative interpretive framework and careful editing. Shadle's conclusion, while accurate and well-supported, appears a bit thin: Molina Enríquez was influential in the land reform ideology of postrevolutionary governments. In contrast, Basave's style and conclusions make his book a different type of enterprise: rather than being a monographic study, it seems to continue the Mexican project of "*forjar patria*." Basave's *México mestizo* is full of interesting insights about Molina Enríquez's intellectual journey and racial theories and thus deserves to be considered seriously by historians interested in Mexican nationalism. Unfortunately, Basave's many insights are lost in his exhausting verbosity and peculiar style. In the end, Basave concludes that Mexico must rescue its Indian heritage, "*el México profundo*," but should also recognize its profound racism—a welcome recognition in a country where the existence of racism is still not fully acknowledged.

Readers should also bear in mind that Molina Enríquez, like Wislano Luis Orozco and Manuel Gamio, was important in the pantheon of U.S. and European fascination with Mexico. Basave recalls Brading in arguing that Molina's ideas filtered into contemporary studies of Mexico via the studies of Frank Tannenbaum. Basave asserts flamboyantly, "*Gracias a la incubadora tannenbaumiana, la tesis del mexicano [Molina Enríquez] prolonga por algún tiempo su vida teórica*" (p. 115). One could

argue that Molina Enríquez's thinking also influenced U.S. scholars' understandings of their own country. In this sense, Tannenbaum's influence on radical historian Eugene Genovese parallels Diego Rivera's influence on the 1930s American muralist school that used and was used by the New Deal. Both cases exemplify the two-way street that should lead scholars of Mexico to consider U.S. history more carefully and U.S. historians to perceive the Mexican role in U.S. social ideas and artistic trends of the 1920s and 1930s.

Another facet of this two-way relationship has been the search for domestic political or intellectual authority through mutual formal recognition of the other country. As Shadle shows, when Molina Enríquez asked President Cárdenas for a retirement pension, he argued his intellectual service to the nation by pointing out that U.S. historian Herbert Priestly had praised one of his books as "the best book written about Mexico by a Mexican" (Shadle, p. 99). Ironically, that aspect of Molina Enríquez's claim to fame survives in Basave's book as well, in which Priestly's comment is presented not as part of Molina Enríquez's strategy to obtain a pension but as unquestionable proof of the value of Molina Enríquez's ideas. Conversely, observers on the U.S. side found a way to gain recognition at home by claiming approbation in Mexico. For many U.S. artists, Diego Rivera's approval was the *raison d'être* of their careers. The egocentric Waldo Frank, when his popularity was decreasing in the United States, cited his recognition in Mexico and Latin America as further proof of the stupidity of those back home who failed to appreciate him.

Molina Enríquez embodied the revolutionary essence of that Mexican summer of the 1920s and 1930s. Small wonder that Mexico City became the rendezvous for radical U.S. expatriates. Just as Paris became the home of "the lost generation," Mexico became a testing site for all sorts of convictions held by disenchanted Yankees. This Mexico has even been awarded a place in reconsiderations of U.S. radicalism written since the 1970s. In addition, the recent discovery of "the Other" has helped to historicize U.S. views of Mexico and Latin America. Several recent studies have dealt with these views from various perspectives: Mark Berger from a kind of poststructuralist international-relations approach (1995); James William Park through the historical understanding of underdevelopment (1995); Arturo Escobar via a Foucaultian deconstruction of the concept of development (1994); and Fredrick Pike from an eclectic approach that embraces cultural studies, international relations, politics, and history (1992).

One such book focused specifically on Mexico is John Britton's *Revolution and Ideology: Images of the Mexican Revolution in the United States*. Britton contributed previously to the study of U.S. views of Mexico with his biography of Carleton Beals (1987). The new study nicely complements his

previous work as well as the artistic and cultural approaches of others (like Oles in *South of the Border* and Delpar 1992). In examining U.S. perspectives on the Mexican Revolution, Britton seeks to contribute to the study of the revolution and also to theoretical consideration of revolutions in general. His goal is to investigate “a body of information and opinion concerning a revolutionary movement that although peculiar to Mexico in these years has relevance to an understanding of other non-communist revolutionary movements” (p. 10). What *Revolution and Ideology* advances is an ideological map of U.S. citizens who found material for rumination in Mexico between the 1910s and the 1940s. Britton deals with well-known figures (such as Frank Tannenbaum, Waldo Frank, Bertram Wolfe, John Reed, Stuart Chase, Katherine Anne Porter, and Carleton Beals) but also provides valuable information on others who are seldom covered (sociologist Eyer Simpson and historian Herbert Priestly, among others). Moreover, Britton proposes some daring continuities between old ideological positions and more contemporary academic views. For example, he thinks that Albert Hirschman, Tannenbaum, and Reed all thought along similar lines, and that Walt Rostow and Seymour Martin Lipset could dance to the rhythm created by John Dewey and Ernest Gruening. In all this discussion, Britton blends conventional intellectual history, political science theories, diplomatic history, and anthropological theories. The result is a well-researched and thought-provoking book, albeit one that at times categorizes to excess and overemphasizes the Mexican part of the story.

Revolution and Ideology is propelled by three overlapping intentions: an assertive will to categorize; a passionate criticism of the perspectives that Britton calls “liberal statism” and “third-world liberalism”; and the customary attempt to unmask the representations of the Other (that is, Mexico) as biased and selective versions of a complex reality (a theme also found in Oles’s book under review here). Above all, Britton’s study is an ideological typology, the kind of classification that Anglo-Saxon political science finds meaningful or joyful. Britton’s typology includes three continuums: leftists, liberals, and rightists. He locates different positions along these three lines according to individual opinions on Mexico. Britton’s approach and findings are summarized in a succinct chart. On the Left are placed the “independent leftists” (Tannenbaum, Beals), the communists (Wolfe, Freeman), what he calls “fellow travelers” (Waldo Frank), and the socialists (Eyer Simpson, Nathaniel Sylvia Weyl). On the liberal continuum, he identifies the “liberal statist” (Ernest Gruening, John Dewey, Herbert Croly) and the “liberal capitalists” (Woodrow Wilson, Dwight Morrow, Herbert Priestly). On the Right, Britton names the “business conservatives” (Edward Doheney, William Buckley) and the racists (Jack London, Richard Davis). To this basic typology, Britton adds another category to characterize postwar U.S. views of Mexico: “third-world liber-

alism," which is presented as a redefined version of liberal statism. In this category, Britton includes contemporary scholars as disparate as Robert Packenham, Michael Hunt, and Walter LaFeber. *Revolution and Ideology* painstakingly spells out this typology, a risky endeavor in any historical narrative. Britton saves himself only by going beyond his own typology to provide interesting insights into various U.S. intellectuals and activists.

For instance, this reader was delighted to learn about the fascinating way that Tannenbaum was perceived by Anita Brenner (Britton had access to her unpublished diaries). Brenner believed that Tannenbaum displayed the "humility of *apologia pro mea vida*. The fact of his being a Jew might have something to do with it" (cited on p. 56). Britton somehow forces the unwilling reader to return from this engaging milieu to the typology, in which he pigeonholes Tannenbaum as an independent leftist with anarchist inspirations. Brenner's opinions reveal much more about the life and ideas of these intellectuals as radicals, Jews, U.S. citizens, and participants in an international cause than as mere members of any ironclad category.

Britton also furnishes insights about Waldo Frank but then insists on categorizing him as a "fellow traveler" close to the communists. In fact, Frank's cycle of success and oblivion in the United States and his great fame in Spanish America reveal the intricate net of personal, local, national, and international aesthetics and politics that these "*viejos gringos*" wove. Jean van Heijenoort, Leon Trotsky's secretary in Coyoacán, recalled that Frank told him in Mexico: "You understand, I'm the André Gide of the Americas" (van Heijenoort 1978, 108). This comment implied that Frank was not only a "fellow traveler" close to U.S. communists but a longtime visitor in Mexico (as Gide had planned to be) and that he was aware of Gide's significance in international politics and aesthetics and what it meant in New York to write about revolutionary Mexico.⁴

Britton also criticizes the predominance of what he calls "liberal statists and third-world liberalism." He describes these types as exemplifying a mixture of 1920s and 1930s "Gruening-Croly-Herring notions of large-scale government action with liberal capitalists' preference for private-sector expansion" (pp. 192–93). Britton correctly points out how this ideological current became the mainstream and how other more radical perspectives were marginalized. His critique is weakened, however, by his overemphasis on Mexico and his implicit belief in a form of

4. In fact, Alan Trachtenberg's (1973) insightful introduction to Frank's memoirs contributed to the "thick analysis" of this enigmatic character. Two more recent works advance the analysis of Frank: Michael Ogorzaly's brief (1994) study of Frank as a "prophet of Hispanic regeneration," who told Latin Americans and Spaniards what they wanted to hear; and the more insightful (1992) study by Daniel Stern Terris of Frank as a key political and aesthetic figure in U.S. modernism. In this respect, Frank's infatuation with Latin America not only satisfied Latin Americans but also undertook the political and cultural experimentation sought by U.S. intellectuals (see also Cowie 1992; Rostagno 1989).

“traditional American values” (centrist and liberal). According to this unquestioned assumption, the 1920s and 1930s represented an aberration, an island of radicalism that disappeared by the 1950s, when the United States returned to its natural “American values” (whatever they may be). In explaining this deradicalization, Britton mentions the role played by McCarthyism and the shift to the Right in Mexican politics. But his focus remains on ideology, and he assumes this ideological shift was quasi-inevitable once the United States got over the depression years. This scheme leaves no room for considering the impact of radical ideas on post-war academic and political views of the third world. Rather, all “American radicalism” appears to be a mere exception to “American exceptionalism.”

Finally, *Revolution and Ideology* strives to contrast fake, biased, and selective images with real complexity—much like James Oles’s evaluations of U.S. artists. Britton reveals the ideological biases of all the U.S. participants in the Mexican summer and shows how they failed to see the real revolution, the real Mexicans. In doing so, Britton seeks to reclaim the value of the Mexican Revolution for analyzing revolutions as a whole. He therefore points out, on one hand, the racist and ethnocentric biases in much of what was written in English about Mexico in those years. Britton thus assumes the existence of a true reality about Mexicans and their revolution. His belief in an unquestionable reality is particularly evident in his brief analysis of films revealing U.S. perceptions of Mexico. Films are indeed an important arena of this two-way relationship, one full of misrepresentation and bias on both sides, as Seth Fein has lucidly shown (Fein 1996). On the other hand, Britton magnifies the importance of the Mexican Revolution as a yardstick for measuring ideological conceptualizations of revolutions (*vis-à-vis* the Russian and Cuban revolutions). But the idea that the Mexican Revolution provides a category for analyzing “non-communist revolutions” in the years since 1989 is a dubious proposition since the Mexican Revolution has been revisited historiographically and politically. Little remains in the form of an identifiable and definitive category.

For all his unmasking of U.S. radicals, Britton finds two who were capable of “sympathy and admiration” for rural people facing modernization but who nevertheless “avoided romanticism”: D. H. Lawrence and Robert Redfield. Yet Redfield’s highly romanticized views still permeate Mexican and U.S. perceptions of Mexico. This Redfieldian perspective is based on the profound belief in the existence of a knowable, clear, real Mexico “over there,” one that seems unaffected by time and space or by so much perceiving and being perceived. U.S. observers never understood the Other, but real understanding was unattainable for the Other as well. One could argue that U.S. misperceptions were part of a larger misunderstanding that Mexicans and their friends from the North were deciphering. The history of crystalline “selves” and “others” holds few surprises. The point is not that the Redfield-like images of Mexico were more objective and less roman-

tic. They simply appealed far more to the intellectual, political, and social needs of Mexican and U.S. intellectuals—so much so, that Britton still finds it morally and intellectually adequate to maintain them.

Another view of the politics of the Mexican summer is provided in Anita Feferman's biography, *Politics, Logic, and Love: The Life of Jean van Heijenoort*. Born in 1912 in Creil, France, the son of a Dutch émigré, van Heijenoort became acquainted with radical ideas in Paris in the 1930s, even though his vocation was mathematics and logic. He frequented the *Ligue Communiste*, and rather than pursuing his vocation in the *Ecole Normale*, he took the job of serving as Leon Trotsky's secretary and translator in Turkey, thus gaining a place in Trotsky's international entourage. From 1932 to 1939, van Heijenoort was an indispensable part of Trotsky's life in Turkey, France, Norway, and Mexico. In 1939 he moved to New York, where he learned of Trotsky's assassination the following year. Van Heijenoort undertook a difficult path to restart his career as a mathematician in the United States and reevaluate his political convictions. He finally earned a Ph.D. and became a prominent editor of the *Journal of Symbolic Logic* and one of the editors of *From Frege to Gödel: A Sourcebook in Mathematical Logic*. He taught mathematics and logic at Brandeis University and at Stanford University in the last years of his life. But the Mexican season hunted its own sons: Jean van Heijenoort died in 1986 at the hands of his last wife, Ana-Marie Zamora, daughter of Adolfo Zamora, a socialist lawyer active in that Mexican summer as the defender of Diego Rivera and his followers.

Jean van Heijenoort published his account of his life with Trotsky in 1978,⁵ and other works have dealt with Trotsky's life in Mexico (such as Dugrand et al. 1988 and Gall 1991). Feferman's study, however, is the first complete biography of van Heijenoort, and it includes an interesting appendix by Salomon Feferman explaining van Heijenoort's scholarly contributions to the lay audience. Although not a historian by profession, Feferman has written a book that is balanced and by and large convincing. She excels in showing how Mexico enchanted van Heijenoort politically and spiritually. He was as fascinated with Mexico's colors and charm as any of his radical friends from the United States. Feferman's account of that period provides an inside view of the Mexican summer, pictures of the Dewey Commission, of the domestic side of the political struggles among different communist factions, and of life in the Coyoacán of Frida and Diego.⁶ Feferman's bibliography is especially sensitive to the role of women. Her account of van Heijenoort's first wife Gabrielle Brausch, a devoted militant of the *Ligue Communiste*, shows the kind of role assigned to women in this cosmopolitan radical culture. It was revolutionary in politics and

5. Compare this autobiography with that of another radical character who became a businessman in the 1950s, Charles Shipman (1993).

6. The influence of Trotsky's circle in Mexican politics has been meticulously detailed by Olivia Gall, who communicated with Jean van Heijenoort before his death (Gall 1991).

aesthetics but hardly so in the domestic realm. Feferman establishes that Brausch was Jean van Heijenoort's intellectual guide to radicalism. As good communists, both put their relationship and lives at the service of the cause. They had a son, whom she cared for while Jean van Heijenoort followed Trotsky faithfully. The couple eventually separated, and she participated in the French Resistance. Before their final separation, Brausch visited Jean in Coyoacán, where their ideological differences and the stuffy human atmosphere of the house in Coyoacán motivated her to leave, and Jean did nothing to stop her. Brausch was especially upset by Natalia Trotsky's authoritarian treatment of the Mexican maids and her servile behavior toward the king of the house, Leon.

This domestic arrangement included a strong hierarchical structure and division of labor as well as a sort of unspoken pact to avoid expressing feelings other than the commonplaces of the revolutionary rhetoric. In that house in Coyoacán, jealousy, dishonesty, and passion prevailed. Feferman's account reveals Frida's love of love affairs, one of them with van Heijenoort, and the womanizing side of Trotsky, who would simulate evacuations to escape through the walls and harass a woman neighbor. In this hierarchical environment, Frida would speak English with Trotsky so that Natalia could not understand. Jean van Heijenoort met his second wife in this circle, former U.S. Trotskyite Loretta Guyer. These snapshots display a part of the story of the Mexican summer not found in "professional studies" (see also T. Walsh's 1992 study of Katherine Anne Porter in Mexico).

Anita Feferman's bibliography makes a fine contribution to the history of the Mexican summer. Her perspective is generally insightful, even though she overestimates the psychological trauma of Jean's early years, the loss of his father. Feferman cites this trauma to explain many parts of van Heijenoort's life, including his devotion to Trotsky. The point is doubtless significant, but Feferman overrelies on it in attempting to find a cause for the basically unpredictable nature of human behavior.

A Summer of Arts

The Mexican summer was a milieu of various origins and purposes, but as I have argued, it functioned as a two-way street. A particularly suitable focus for analyzing this type of cultural interaction is the arts, as globally contested cultural constructions. This is the theme of *South of the Border: Mexico in the American Imagination, 1914–1947*, a handsome catalogue of an art exhibition that took place in New Haven, Connecticut. The book includes an introductory essay by Karen Cordero Reiman and a detailed explanation by the general editor, James Oles. This volume presents an important collection of images, and Oles and the

Smithsonian Institution Press deserve to be applauded for the excellent reproductions.

A 1930s song popularized by Patsy Cline provided the title for *South of the Border*. As Oles explains, Mexico functions in the song as a kind of feminine “extended metaphor of the political, economic, and cultural relations between the two countries” (p. 49). Helen Delpar’s (1992) study detailed the identities of these U.S. artists and their relationships with diplomats, politicians, and intellectuals.

In the succinct but fine introductory essay, Karen Cordero Reiman summarizes the complex Mexican search after 1910 for an art that was both cosmopolitan and uniquely Mexican, a search undertaken by every new nation (see for instance the close parallel with India’s search for a national art detailed in Partha Mitter’s superb 1994 study). She pays particular attention to the interactions between Mexican and U.S. artists. Two personalities are especially revealing in her analysis of these interactions. The first is Adolfo Best Maugard, Mexican director of art education in the early 1920s, who played a key role in the discovery of Mexican primitivism via internationalization of Mexican arts and crafts.⁷ The other illuminating character is Anita Brenner, the bridge between the booming Mexican art market and U.S. cultural preoccupations.⁸ Brenner invites further research on cultural interaction between the United States and Mexico in the arts, politics, the history of anthropology and archaeology in Mexico, and the search for national identity in Mexico and the United States.⁹

In *South of the Border*, James Oles employs a competent art-history approach to provide an indispensable description for understanding the artistic dimensions of this cultural romance. Representations of Mexico by foreigners seem to be a perfect metaphor for the idea of the West looking at “the Other.” The natural tendency is to look for distortions, misinterpretations, and overall false views of the Other, as demonstrated in Britton’s *Revolution and Ideology*. Oles shows readers all of this in different artists, diverse forms, and various moments of Mexican history. Yet the finding of so many “fake images” confirms the presumption of the existence of a real image of Mexico that was never adequately captured by U.S. aficionados. Oles consistently refers to a historical Mexican reality as a criteria for interpreting the views from *South of the Border*.

The Mexican summer attracted many U.S.-born artists, collectors,

7. Reiman dealt with Best Maugard in an intriguing article with a telling title, “Para devolver su inocencia a la nación” (1985).

8. This connection has been clearly shown by Delpar (1992), Woods (1990), and Glusker (1995) to a certain extent, and especially by Azuela (n.d.).

9. Brenner’s daughter Susannah Glusker has documented the nuances of Brenner’s self-construction of her identity as a Mexican, a U.S. citizen, and a Jewish woman (Glusker 1995).

and politicians. One current led to the Rousseau-like paintings of Indian women in Chapala by Everett Gee Jackson, Edward Weston's well-known photos (which rarely included Indians, as Oles points out), and the murals by U.S. students of Mexican muralists (such as Paul O'Higgins and Marion and Grace Greenwood). Another tendency produced Nelson Rockefeller's interest in Mexican things and art (well-documented and -explained in Delpar 1992) and the commercialization of art by Frederick Davis and opportunist René d'Harnoncourt, as well as the important role played by Dwight Morrow as promoter of Mexican arts. Oles argues that U.S. artists were drawn by exoticism and motivated by revolutionary hope, which led them to idealize Mexico as a pristine and revolutionary land.

A little-known dimension of this cultural exchange is the relationship that existed between Mexican and African-American artists. This other Mexican summer is beautifully illustrated in an exhibition scheduled to be shown in Harlem, Dallas, Grosse Pointe Shores, Michigan, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Dayton, Ohio, and San Francisco between 1996 and 1998. In the excellent catalogue with the same title, *In the Spirit of Resistance / En el espíritu de la resistencia*, Lizzetta LeFalle-Collins explains how the New Negro Movement in the United States in the 1920s found in Mexico a suitable complement for its aesthetic and political concerns. Mexican muralism became an essential part of the works of such artists as Charles Alston, John Biggers Sargent, Claude Johnson, Jacob Lawrence, John Wilson, Hale Woodruff, Charles White, and Elizabeth Catlett (the last two are also represented in *South of the Border*). As an exhibit or a historical study, *In the Spirit of Resistance* makes an insightful and innovative contribution to understanding the Mexican summer as a cultural season for both countries.

For Oles, U.S. artists created images "that reinforced stereotypes, revealed undercurrents of racism, oversimplified and romanticized a foreign culture" (p. 213). But artists were also caught up in Mexico's official self-discovery. The traces of this interaction mark the murals and sculpture of Paul O'Higgins, Marion and Grace Greenwood, and Isamu Noguchi for the Mercado Abelardo L. Rodríguez (all underwritten by the Mexican government). Another aspect of this mutually convenient infatuation was the array of large exhibitions of Mexican art organized by U.S. citizens by agreement with Mexican authorities and artists: the 1922 exhibition in Los Angeles for which Katherine Anne Porter wrote the catalogue, the 1930 traveling exhibition of Mexican art, and the huge Mexican art exhibit in New York in 1940. Aside from the important aesthetic role played by these exhibitions at this moment of avant-garde experimentation, they also exemplified "a marriage of convenience" between Mexican artists and officials and U.S. artists and entrepreneurs. These exhibits gave the new "revolutionary family" wonderful opportunities to consolidate the international image of the nation. For Mexican artists, they were

invaluable sources of fame and financial support. For U.S. entrepreneurs, these types of cultural interactions reflected long-lasting interest in Mexico. For U.S. artists, this Mexican season was part of a larger intellectual and social phenomenon marked by their presence throughout the "primitive world," the growth of culturalist anthropology, and the discovery of the U.S. Southwest. Thus U.S. "misrepresentations" arose not only from national biases but from the fact that the image of Mexico was being refashioned daily, with U.S. and Mexican artists alike playing indispensable parts.

Once again, Oles overemphasizes the Mexican side of the story. This reader would have liked to learn more about the history of these artists and the impact of their work on U.S. art and society. What sort of audience did these images acquire in the United States? In what artistic and cultural context were these images inscribed? Were other U.S. and Mexican artists looking to Russia, Japan, and France? How important were these artists in mainstream artistic mafias in the United States? Oles deals, often imprecisely, with political and social changes in Mexico in order to explain the changes in U.S. views of Mexico. In fact, the main explanation of these changes can be found in the Mexican summer as a metaphor for a unique international combination of culture and politics as well as in the United States itself.

South of the Border creates an excellent window for observing Mexican and U.S. mutual representations. But Oles's explanation would have been even better if it had been crafted with the same care used in making the reproductions. Various inaccuracies and bold overstatements mar Oles's account: from many minor but noticeable historical errors (Porfirio Díaz is listed as president of Mexico from 1873 to 1910) to outright historical misinterpretations. Indeed, the song echoed in the book's title, "South of the Border," epitomized U.S. stereotyping of Mexico as a primitive, feminine, and sensual country. But one could counterbalance those lyrics with many Mexican ballads that reinforced the same stereotypes. As popular Mexican performer Lucha Reyes used to sing, "pa' cer dolar de a montones, no hay como el americano; y pa' conquistar corazones, no hay mejor que un mexicano." The history of stereotyping is one of ignorance and misunderstandings, but it involves much more profound connotations than what is suggested in *South of the Border*.

The Mexican summer thus represented a dialogue that we are just beginning to understand. This point can be seen in Molina Enríquez's influence on Tannenbaum, in the U.S. New Deal muralist school linked to Diego Rivera, in José Clemente Orozco's influential role in art in the United States, as well as in the strong influence of Mexican indigenism on the thought and policies of John Collier, head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs during the New Deal. Another emblematic example is also provided by a Mexican artist living in New York City.

Miguel Covarrubias (1904–1957) was the prodigy cartoonist during the 1920s in New York City. He was recognized in Mexico as a cartoonist, painter, cartographer, collector of pre-Hispanic art, and anthropologist. Covarrubias participated in the late modernist revolution of the 1910s and later belonged to the early postrevolutionary intelligentsia. He worked with Alberto Best Maugard on internationalizing Mexican arts and crafts. In 1923 Covarrubias traveled to New York and rapidly became a renowned cartoonist published in such mainstream magazines as *Vanity Fair*, *Vogue*, and *The New Yorker*. He also illustrated numerous books, among them Frank Tannenbaum's *Peace by Revolution* (1933) and Langston Hughes's *The Weary Blues* (1926); fancy editions of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Lawrence Prescott's *A History of the Conquest of Mexico*; and Antonio Caso's *Puerta del Sol*. Covarrubias also published books of paintings and studies on Black America, Bali, and indigenous Mexico.

While such artistic personalities as Diego Rivera, Tina Modotti, and Frida Kahlo have been examined to some degree, Covarrubias has not gained the attention he deserves. In 1957 Elena Poniatowska published in the Mexico City newspaper *Novedades* a series of interviews with key personalities in an attempt to reconstruct his life. In 1984 the National Portrait Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution organized an exhibition of Covarrubias caricatures. Finally, in 1987 Covarrubias was acclaimed by the *Centro Cultural de Arte Contemporáneo* in Mexico City. For the first time, his works were collected and exhibited in Mexico. Mexicans could see the beautifully exoticist and sensual images of the Harlem renaissance and Bali along with penetrating cartoons of important persons from diverse backgrounds: Amado Nervo, Nelson Rockefeller, Cantinflas, William Faulkner. The handsome catalogue of this exhibition includes various essays on Covarrubias as an individual, painter, cartoonist, cartographer, and anthropologist (see *Centro Cultural de Arte Contemporáneo* 1987). But Adriana Williams's *Covarrubias*, edited by Doris Ober, is the first full-length attempt at a complete biography of Miguel Covarrubias and his wife Rosa, a dancer and painter from the United States.

Williams's study is an attractive art book produced by the University of Texas Press. It includes excellent color reproductions of Covarrubias's works, and many black-and-white memorabilia belonging to Miguel and Rosa Covarrubias. Williams introduces herself as "the granddaughter of former Mexican President Plutarco Elías Calles" and a native of New York. Although the book conveys the importance of Miguel and Rosa for one another, the end result is an uneven and rather superficial portrait of both. Miguel appears as the great nationalist and hospitable artist. Rosa is presented up to the last chapters as a cordial companion, an exceptionally creative dancer and painter, and a great cultural entrepreneur who suddenly became madly jealous and tried to kill Miguel's new wife, Rocío López, and herself.

Many of the characters and circumstances that can be found in the Britton and Oles accounts are present in this narrative of the lives of the Covarrubias. But Williams's book reverberates with ironic echoes of the Mexican summer: the granddaughter of Calles, writing in English about Covarrubias, an artist who associated with such dissimilar modernists as José Juan Tablada and Langston Hughes in Mexico or in New York. Miguel was the son of José Covarrubias, a distinguished Porfirian engineer who was president of the Lotería Nacional during the administrations of Presidents Obregón and Calles, and a direct interlocutor of Molina Enríquez's land reform. José Covarrubias and F. González Roa's *Los problemas rurales de México* (1917) constituted a semi-official echo of Molina Enríquez's ideas. Frida, Rivera, Beals, and Best Maugard of Coyocacán can also be found at the gathering organized by Rosa Covarrubias in their house in Tizapán. New characters are also added to the picture: actor Orson Welles, actress Dolores del Río, writer B. Traven, film directors John Huston and Luis Buñuel, architect Luis Barragán, and dancer José Limón.

Covarrubias's depictions of the Harlem Renaissance were no less exoticist and ethnocentrist than U.S. views of Mexico. He furnished politically, aesthetically, and racially acceptable black images that gained extensive recognition in the U.S. press. In Mexico, Covarrubias's renown in the United States became valuable cultural capital. His role as collector of Mexican art and his relationship with such intriguing friends as Langston Hughes have yet to be studied.

Williams shows that Rosa Covarrubias's life also holds great interest. One cannot help but see the standards that characters like Frida Kahlo must have set for these women of talent. Some of the reproductions of Rosa's paintings in Williams's book strongly resemble Frida's self-portraits. Rosa's manner of dress also recalls the style best embodied by Frida. Overall, the role of women in the Mexican summer has yet to be thoroughly studied.¹⁰

For all its virtues, Williams's *Covarrubias* includes several exaggerations and errors. For instance, her description of the Porfirio Díaz regime seems to have been taken from a 1950s official Mexican textbook: "Díaz was committed to ingratiating himself to foreign, especially European power brokers . . . , and [he] tried his best to replace what was Mexican with what was European. . . . The Díaz regime was so corrupt that whatever strength it once possessed had finally rotted away" (p. 2). This summary view could have been argued by Williams's grandfather

10. On this subject, see T. Walsh's insightful (1992) study of Katherine Anne Porter's time in Mexico. Desley Deacon's study of anthropologist Elsie Clews Parsons (who published *Mitla, Town of the Souls* in 1936) will be setting a higher standard for the analysis of these women. This forthcoming biography is an outstanding case study of the significance of these women for understanding the modernist Mexican-U.S. moment (see Deacon n.d.).

Calles, but it can hardly be supported in view of contemporary historiography and the levels of corruption reached by the post-revolutionary regimes that Williams considers truly nationalist.

Conclusion

In sum, the Mexican summer was a reciprocal *veni, vidi, vici* for Mexicans and U.S. participants alike, a cosmopolitan season of mutual experimentation, examination, and stereotyping. But it is only beginning to be studied as such. Today this season looks especially promising for its political and intellectual implications. It could offer important political lessons for current U.S. scholars in search of a new radical paradigm—not a lesson of dogmas to repeat but of relationships and nuances to comprehend. The Mexican summer could reveal complex angles of understandings and misunderstandings in a context of common causes and shared doubts. It could also provide a modernist lesson of cognitive pessimism that would refresh our postmodern academic resurgence of uncertainty, a return that is all too optimistic about the brilliance and importance of our own relative knowledge secured and tamed in academic centers. But the lesson could also be an important intellectual one in its potential to broaden our appreciation of histories that are postnational. The Mexican summer comprises historical material that could allow scholars to produce comprehensive cultural histories—interdisciplinary, to be sure but above all multinational or even transnational. Herein lies the essential lesson of the “Exile desire/of what is no more” in our current search for a renewed intellectual perspective.

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