

National Identity in Brazil and Mexico in the Twentieth Century

ABSTRACT: In the first decades of the twentieth century, Latin American intellectuals and artists articulated new forms of national identity that responded to the peculiar modernization of the region. These new articulations offered possibilities but also imposed limits that reached a crisis in 1968 in Brazil and in Mexico, when the process of modernization in the two countries reached a point of inflection. In the contrasting images of the *Homem Cordial* as the symbol of the Brazilian insistence on smooth transitions and of the revolution as the awakening of Mexico from the long slumber of the formalistic liberalism of the nineteenth century lie two faces of this national identity, and this paper examines their potentials and their weaknesses.

KEYWORDS: Latin America, national identity, modernization, Alfonso Reyes, Ribeiro Couto, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda.

Most people recognize the great importance, at least on a symbolic level, of the generation of writers, painters, architects, and philosophers who participated in the *Ateneo de la Juventud*,¹ a society for study and lectures founded after a famous series of conferences in 1907 and 1908 and active until 1914, after which its most prominent members continued to participate in the cultural, artistic, and political life of Mexico.² Their questioning of positivist tenets in the *Escuela Nacional Preparatoria* against the *científicos* (a group instituted as a government faction) and their defense of lay education against the interference of conservative Catholics gained symbolic momentum as actions preceding the revolution that ended Porfirio Díaz's rule, which lasted from 1884 to 1911. The *Ateneo de la Juventud* thus came to symbolize (to a great extent by its members' own account) the new country that emerged after the Mexican Revolution, despite the actual ambiguity of the group's relationship with both the old regime and the new.³

The two most influential members of the Ateneo, José Vasconcelos and Alfonso Reyes, also left their marks on the urban fabric of Rio de Janeiro—and it is reasonable to say that Brazil left a mark on their intellectual life as well. Vasconcelos visited Brazil in 1922 for the international celebration marking Brazil's centenary as an independent state. As the head of the largest international delegation, Vasconcelos brought with him as a gift an imposing statue of the Aztec emperor Cuauhtémoc, a version of which stands in Mexico City's Paseo de la Reforma to this day. Ironically, this statue was a relic from Porfirio Díaz's longtime relationship with the U.S. firm Tiffany & Co. and an example of indigenista art with which the anti-American and ardent Hispanist Vasconcelos was not at all comfortable.⁴ The second Cuauhtémoc still cuts an imposing figure in a square of the same name in Aterro do Flamengo, surrounded by a cactus garden donated by none other than Alfonso Reyes, when he was ambassador in Rio de Janeiro in the 1930s. In "Las estatuas y el pueblo," Alfonso Reyes approvingly cites the Brazilian poet Murilo Mendes to note that Cariocas (inhabitants of Rio de Janeiro) had by then adopted Cuauhtémoc as theirs, turning the emperor into "un inmenso amuleto, una 'mascota,' una imagen propiciatoria de la Buena suerte" (an enormous amulet, a "mascot," a propitious image of good luck) (64).

Besides attending the centennial festivities in the capital, Vasconcelos visited Salvador, São Paulo, Campinas, Santos, Belo Horizonte, Ouro Preto, Barbacena, and Juiz de Fora, and insisted on traveling from Rio de Janeiro to Uruguay by train instead of ship to "ver el país, no las olas, que son iguales en su multiplicidad innumerable" (see the country, not the waves, with their identical, innumerable multiplicity) (*La raza cósmica*, 1925, 131–32). Vasconcelos's enthusiasm for Brazil's achievements and cultural vibrancy resembles at times what Brazilians humorously call *ufanismo*,⁵ but the account of this trip to Brazil is of no small importance in the works of the great *oaxaqueño*. The trip (and its continuation down to Uruguay and Argentina) makes up the bulk of Vasconcelos's still influential *La raza cósmica*—*Misión de la raza iberoamericana*, whose prologue prophesies the coming of the "fifth race" (a mingling of the existing white, black, yellow, and red) destined to found a "New Rome" in Latin America.⁶

Almost a decade after Vasconcelos's trip, Alfonso Reyes arrived in Rio de Janeiro as the Mexican ambassador. In contrast with Vasconcelos's brief stay, Reyes lived in Rio until 1936 and participated intensely in the city's intellectual life. The diplomat cultivated the friendship of all kinds of intellectuals, from

Alceu Amoroso Lima and Gilberto Freyre to Carlos Lacerda and Graça Aranha; Cândido Portinari illustrated for him, and Cecília Meireles counted on Reyes for material on the Mexican education policies during the debates around the Escola Nova. Reyes was so integrated into the city's cultural life that he was the only foreigner at the celebration of Manuel Bandeira's fiftieth birthday,⁷ and one of Bandeira's best-known poems, "Rondó dos Cavalinhos,"⁸ describes Reyes's farewell banquet at the Jockey Club: "Alfonso Reyes partindo, / E tanta gente ficando . . ." (Alfonso Reyes leaving, / And so many people staying . . .) (*Libertinagem*, 85).

While in Rio de Janeiro, Reyes was also quite prolific: he wrote thirteen of the fourteen issues of his *Monterrey*—*Correo literario*, a one-man literary journal;⁹ some of his best short stories; an exquisite book of poems entirely dedicated to Rio de Janeiro (*Romances de Río de Enero*); a collection of short essays, *Historia natural das Laranjeiras* (illustrated by Reyes himself); and several pieces for newspapers and magazines, such as Augusto Frederico Schmidt's *Literatura*, that were later incorporated into his *Obras completas*.¹⁰ And whereas Vasconcelos handed the Cuauhtémoc statue to the city, Reyes left his mark through a more modest, personal gift to his beloved Jardim Botânico: a small statue of Xochipilli, the Aztec spring god of flowers.¹¹

Beyond the many interesting anecdotes and their monumental traces in Rio de Janeiro,¹² there remains the challenge of reading with contemporary eyes what these Mexican intellectuals wrote about or in Brazil and what these texts reveal about the particular gaze of a foreigner who is also a fellow Latin American. I want to focus on two short essays written by Reyes: "México en una nuez," a well-known text written in Brazil in 1930, and "Brasil en una castaña," a less known piece published twelve years later. The titles point to an obvious relationship between the two essays, which first appeared together in Reyes's *Obras completas* in 1959. But "México en una nuez" and "Brasil en una castaña" also share something less obvious. These two essays were conceived as bridges between different nationalities within Latin America: Reyes read "México en una nuez" in the Teatro Rivadavia in Buenos Aires during a festival for the Amigos de la República Española in 1937,¹³ and "Brasil en una castaña" was first published in *El Nacional*, the Mexican government's quasiofficial newspaper, in 1942.¹⁴

"México en una nuez" and "Brasil en una castaña" are part of what Reyes elsewhere called the creation of a "Gramática comparada entre las naciones" ("Palabras sobre la nación argentina," 28), a project with two articulated aims:

"hemos comenzado apenas a compararnos unos con otros y . . . de semejante comparación ha de nacer un conocimiento más exacto del propio ser nacional" (we have just started to compare ourselves, one with the other, and . . . from a similar comparison will be born a more precise knowledge of our own national being) (28). To propose that people get to know each other in order to better know themselves was Reyes's way of defending cultural cosmopolitanism as a form of nationalism. Comparative texts with the national character in view, "México en una nuez" and "Brasil en una castaña" are thus also an interesting part of a greater corpus of texts written by Latin American intellectuals mainly in the first half of the twentieth century, with their defining trait a consistent exploration of the nation as a theme.

In *El ensayo mexicano moderno*, José Luis Martínez defines modern Mexican essayists by their focus on "su historia, su cultura, sus problemas económicos y sociales, sus creaciones literarias y artísticas, su pasado y su presente" (their history, their culture, their economic and social problems, their literary and artistic creations, their past and their present) (Martínez 2001, 17), which is a common trait of Brazilian essayists in the period as well. These texts are intellectual exercises in national reinvention through self-examination that helped forge renewed identities for these Latin American countries as they grew into more modern, industrialized nations. This redefinition of national identity generally tries to distance itself from the ethnocentric pessimism of the previous generation, for whom "todo lo que valía la pena venía de fuera y a todo lo autóctono, fuera nativo o crioulo, se le tenía por atrasado" (all that was worthwhile came from abroad and all the autochthonous, be it native or crioulo, was supposed to be backward) (Brading 9), but it otherwise varies greatly in terms of style, approach, and ideology.

Several writers, many somehow connected to the *modernistas* of 1922, published essays on Brazil in the first half of the twentieth century. Among these are some who, as with their Mexican counterparts, are still influential because, even though their approaches or ideas might have been partially contested or at least contextualized, much of the current national imaginary and identity are still indebted to their books. Gilberto Freyre's *Casa-Grande e Senzala* (1933), Sérgio Buarque de Holanda's *Raízes do Brasil* (1936), and Caio Prado Jr.'s *Formação do Brasil Contemporâneo* (1942) are, in this sense, classics but also hallmarks of national historiography with solid foundations in scholarly research. In México

the same could be said about books such as Reyes's *Visión de Anáhuac* (1920), Vasconcelos's preface to *La raza cósmica* (1925), Samuel Ramos's *El perfil del hombre y de la cultura en México* (1934), and Octavio Paz's *El laberinto de la soledad* (1949).

Alfonso Reyes's exquisite style always couples verbal ingenuity with uncompromising clarity of expression. A relaxed, conversational tone infuses Reyes's erudition and formal inventiveness with unpretentious readability. This constant effort toward clarity has been described as Reyes's ideal of social commitment: a writer's unfailing disposition for dialogue with the reader as a foundation for literary democracy, a sort of "antiautoritarismo en la forma" (Monsiváis 49). Another important aspect of the modern humanist Reyes's epistemology is that, while drawing from different fields of knowledge (history, geography, philosophy, anthropology, and so on), his approach is, in his own words, ultimately literary: "Cada uno mira el mundo desde su ventana. La mía es la literatura" (Each of us has our own window onto the world. Mine is literature) (IX, 29). Accordingly, Reyes's arguments almost invariably center on images at once didactic and aesthetic,¹⁵ from which the main ideas spring by parallel analogy as the images are at once interpreted and evoked. As Reyes himself explains:

La síntesis histórica es el mayor desafío a la técnica literaria. La palabra única sustituye al párrafo digresivo; el matiz de certidumbre . . . establece la probidad científica; el hallazgo artístico comunica por la intuición lo que el entendimiento solo abarcaría con largos rodeos. (Historical synthesis is the greatest challenge to literary technique. One word alone substitutes for a digressive paragraph; the tinges of certitude . . . establish scientific probity; the artistic solution communicates by intuition what knowledge could only encompass through long circumlocutions.) (*México*, 184)¹⁶

Since Reyes was a self-proclaimed classicist dedicated to a modern reinterpretation of classical culture, these images are often derived from the Greeks or Romans.¹⁷ This reliance on evocative/illuminating images is especially prominent in short pieces such as "México en una nuez" and "Brasil en una castaña," which, as their names indicate, try to encapsulate in a few pages the essential features of national character.

Another of Reyes's important traits as an essayist is his determination not to take sides in the major ideological debates of his time. This has been interpreted as a sign of Reyes's omission or simply a general lack of interest in politics. In

a recent article, "Un hombre de letras," Mario Vargas Llosa writes with evident impatience about Reyes, given his status as a public intellectual who seemed always to be in tune with the powers that be in Mexico, a man very much unlike Vargas Llosa himself, known for his combative style and vocal defense of his liberal beliefs. It should be said that in this alignment with the government, the founder of El Colegio de México is far from being an exception in Mexico or in Latin America. Furthermore, Reyes did get engaged, albeit perhaps against his will, in an argument with nationalists such as Héctor Pérez Martínez, who questioned Reyes's "evidente desvinculación de México" in the 1930s. Nevertheless, like others involved in this polemic, Reyes does not question nationalism as an ideology but prefers instead to claim that his cosmopolitanism is the best way to serve México as a nation—an argument that resurfaces, as we have seen, in his justification of inter-American studies.¹⁸

The fact is that Alfonso Reyes was a classic liberal whose emphasis was never placed on the explicitly political. Reyes has been described as the last *modernista*,¹⁹ and his beliefs include an idealist notion of true knowledge, which, free from flattering insincerity or rigid dogma as well as from strict subjection to political ends, could dismantle all stereotypes and demagogical, melodramatic mystification. In practice this idealist view of knowledge as inherently neutral led Reyes to a sort of intellectual equanimity, attempting what sometimes became a strained synthesis between two opposing lines of thought—for example, between cosmopolitanism and nationalism or between political engagement and the supremacy of the aesthetic.

The opening of "México en una nuez" exemplifies Reyes's reliance on the illuminating image: the encounter of American peoples and the Spaniards that marks the birth of Mexico is described as "el choque del jarro contra el caldero. El jarro podía ser muy fino y muy hermoso, pero era el más quebradizo" (the clash of the jug against the cauldron. The jug could be very fine and very beautiful, but it was also more brittle) (42). Ever the classicist and the diplomat, Reyes evokes the *Iliad* to interpret the Conquest simultaneously as a tragedy (for the indigenous population) and an epic (for Spain and the church). The American peoples, endowed with an astonishing artistic sensibility, are doomed to defeat by their military frailty; the Spaniards, with an endless capacity for intrigue and deceit, are able to accomplish the extraordinary end of conquering populations and territories several times larger than theirs. This tragic/epic simultaneity enables Reyes to refrain from openly embracing either of the two opposing views

of the conquest. Reyes tries to side neither with the Hispanistas, who defended the Spanish colonial heritage as central to modern Mexico, nor with the Nativistas, who defended the centrality of indigenous cultures in the establishment of a free, independent culture. Reyes repeats in "México en una nuez" a key maneuver from his most famous essay, *Visión de Anáhuac*, when he evokes the shared experience of living in the high planes of Anáhuac, "base bruta de la historia" (crude basis of history), as that which unites indigenous and Spaniard descendants in present-day Mexico, affirming that "no soy de los que sueñan en perpetuaciones absurdas de la tradición indígena, y ni siquiera fío demasiado en perpetuaciones de la española" (I am not one of those who dream of absurd perpetuations of indigenous traditions and do not expect too much of the perpetuation of the Spanish ones) (*Visión de Anáhuac*, 101). Instead, Reyes subtly defends the need to establish meaningful contemporary interpretations of national history that transcend such stark oppositions in an effort to build a national identity that does not deny either of its major strains.

Another evocative image, this time a humorous one, opens "Brasil en una castaña": Reyes accounts for the magnitude of the country's natural landscape as the result of the work of a "demiurgo o agente mediador encargado de gobernar la obra," a young artist who "usaba demasiado materiales y tenía la fuerza de la inexperiencia" (187). The effect centered on the image derived from the classics (this time from Hesiod) is again dramatic, but neither tragic nor epic. The underlying assumption in this case is the centrality of nature for the construction of an idealistic view of Brazil. This assumption becomes clearer as Reyes claims that when such creative exuberance was applied to the inhabitants of this country of superlatives, it originated "el diplomático nato, y el mejor negociador que ha conocido la historia humana" (188), enabling Brazilians to "desahacer, sin cortarlo, el Nudo Gordiano." Without explicitly quoting *La raza cósmica*, Reyes implies that Brazilians are indeed some kind of "cosmic race," albeit less grandiose and certainly less bellicose than Vasconcelos's messianic "new Romans."

A similar contrast between Mexico and Brazil appears when Reyes writes about the indigenous populations in the two countries. Whereas the pre-Columbian Aztecs are fierce oppressors of the other proud peoples of the central valley, the Brazilian Indians live in a perfect symbiosis with the luxuriant environment, inspiring Rousseau's "buenos salvajes," their poetry translated by Montaigne and then Goethe.²⁰ Reyes implies that in Brazil the colonization

shifts the land and its inhabitants from the realm of geography to that of history: the Portuguese disrupt this symbiosis between Indians and their environment and, by accelerating changes in the ecology, turn Brazil into subject matter for historians.

Contrasts between geography and history appear in both “México en una nuez” and “Brasil en una castaña” and center explicitly on the idea that “la historia es mucho más veloz que la geografía” (51) and, implicitly, on the traditional view that culture is inherently Western and that the American peoples belong to the realm of the natural. But even after the arrival of the Portuguese and independence, history in Brazil still moves with the “robustez y lentitud de las erosiones geológicas” (188), in a stately natural rhythm that contrasts sharply with the “vaivenes coléricos y algo improvisados con que se suceden las etapas en las demás naciones americanas” (188). For Reyes, the explanation for this comparatively much greater instability in Spanish Latin America is that the liberal republics implanted after independence were artificial, that is, not natural regimes, which demanded political maturity from nations yet in their first infancy. For Reyes the gigantic dimensions of Brazil, its primary characteristic as established dramatically in the opening of “Brasil en una castaña,” naturally demand slow, smooth historical transitions from its people. For Reyes the establishment of a monarchy after independence exemplifies one of the smooth transitions that supposedly have given Portuguese America time for political maturity before the arrival of the republic.

Again a vivid image clarifies Reyes’s interpretation of Brazilian historical changes: “la historia es la piedra que cae en el lago dormido” (189). The contrast with Reyes’s Mexico is even clearer. In Mexico the cauldron and the fragile jar collide; in Brazil the stone plunges into the sleeping lake: two striking images describe two types of encounters of Europeans and American peoples in the New World. The first is an encounter between man-made artifacts, whereas the second involves natural elements. Both evoke the collision between something hard and something soft and inexorable outcomes, but the indigenous element in Mexico resists and therefore breaks whereas its Brazilian counterpart accepts and thus incorporates the arriving Europeans. In Brazil “esta intrusión [of the stone into the water, of the Portuguese into the continent] no es necesariamente violenta” (189): the water ultimately engulfs the stone and the scenery reacquires a stately calmness.

As Reyes moves into the colonial period, geography and history seem to con-

tinue to guide the parallels between Mexico and Brazil: the history of Brazil is understood primarily as the history of man's struggle against a bountiful but indomitable nature, whereas in Mexico colonization takes place between "cruel realities" ("la repartición de la tierra") and "bloody euphemisms" ("la encomienda de almas") (44). Whereas Brazilian history is a succession of economic cycles related to the exploitation of natural resources (the Pau-Brasil tree, sugarcane, gold, coffee, rubber, cotton), Mexican history is politics as a great tragedy of blood, from the conflicts among the crown, the colonizers, the church, and indigenous people during colonial times to the bloody wars fought by Caudillos, Liberals, and Conservatives to the long slumber of the Porfiriato peace until the painful reawakening of the revolution. Commenting on the vicissitudes of Mexican history, Reyes solemnly declares that "a la majestad de la Historia no siempre conviene el que los grandes conflictos encuentren soluciones fáciles" (History's majesty does not always accommodate easy solutions for great conflicts) (45) and that this history of violent conflict gives Mexico its identity: "la cara del nuevo pueblo se va dibujando a cuchilladas" (the face of the new people is carved by knife strokes) (49).

An eloquent defense of the Mexican Revolution closes "México en una nuez"—an oratorical piece directed at an Argentinian public suspicious of the radical changes and the instability of the first years of the revolution. The revolution has put an end to years of self-denial in which Mexico's Hispanic and indigenous heritages and cultures were a source of embarrassment to the fantasy of a peaceful francophone, liberal republic under Porfirio Díaz's iron fist. The revolution is thus a moment of precious self-discovery, a chance to realize the country's true potential and recover the treasures of the past, Spanish and indigenous alike. Reyes's last words in "México en una nuez" are a proud and reassuring declaration in defense of the revolution, in a context in which the so-called excesses of the revolution, especially in terms of land reform and laicization, were seen with great suspicion by other governments in Latin America:

Algunos nos han compadecido con cierta conmiseración. Ha llegado la hora de compadecerlos a nuestro turno. ¡Ay de los que no ha osado descubrirse a sí mismos, porque aún ignoran los dolores de este alumbramiento! Pero sepan—dice la Escritura—que sólo se han de salvar los que están dispuestos a arriesgarlo todo." (Some have pitied us with certain commiseration. The time has come for us to pity them. Woe to those who have yet to dare to dis-

cover themselves, for they still ignore the pains of this enlightenment! But know this—the Scripture says—that only those willing to risk it all will save themselves.) (56)

Oratorical eloquence also closes “Brazil en una castaña,” but in this case Reyes produces an enthusiastic panegyric to a nation of dazzling beauty and never-ending generosity and happiness:

Y de todo ello resulta una hermosa y grande nación que nunca perdió la sonrisa ni la generosidad en medio del sufrimiento, ejemplar a un tiempo en el coraje y en la prudencia, orgullo de la raza humana, promesa de felicidad en los días aciagos que vivimos, fantástico espectáculo de humanidad y naturaleza, cuya contemplación obliga a repetir con Aquiles Tacio: “¡Ojos míos, estamos vencidos!” (And of all that results a beautiful and great nation that has never lost its smile nor its generosity amid suffering, exemplary at once of courage and prudence, pride of the human race, promise of happiness in the sour days in which we live, fantastic spectacle of humanity and nature, whose contemplation obliges one to repeat after Aquiles Tacio: “We are beaten, my eyes!”) (195)

Achilles Tatius is known as the author of the Greek “novel” *Leucippe and Clitophon* of AD 2. In this passage Clitophon expresses his wonder at the sight of Alexandria, a remarkable spectacle of Hellenistic civilization in both human and natural terms.²¹

In sum, there are two European nuts in American soil: the walnut (Mexico) is dry, wrinkled, hard, and bitter; the sweet chestnut (Brazil) is moist, smooth, soft, and mild. In between the two essays, in a poem written in 1932 called “El ruido y el eco,” a third nut—or, actually, a pair—appears in Reyes’s imagination, the coconut:

Si aquí el coco de Alagoas
labrado en encaje, allá
la nuez de San Juan de Ulúa,
calada con el puñal.

In one small stanza Reyes makes masterly use of a succinct and many-layered symbol, takes advantage of the multiple meanings of *labrar* (“to carve” but also “to embroider”) and *calar* (“to pierce” but also “to hemstitch”). Here we

have a direct contrast between Brazil and México around two different forms of craft with material from the same source, the coconut. From Brazil comes the delicate embroidery made with coconut fiber from the northeastern state of Alagoas—traditionally the domestic work of women. From Mexico come the elaborate carvings on the coconut shell to make cups or coin banks—work that demands great physical strength due to the hardness of the shell and that was associated with the inmates in the notoriously brutal “Mexican Alcatraz” of San Juan de Ulúa, a fort with a long, painful history, built by the Spaniards in 1528 in Veracruz.²² For Reyes Brazil and Mexico are exemplars of the Latin American capacity to articulate aesthetically European and non-European cultures, but Brazil would always be the country of the “en encaje,” the gentle face of a tropical, lush Latin America, contrasted with Mexico, the country “con el puñal,” the somber face of a troubled, bloody history.

One could explain Reyes’s enthusiasm for Brazil by looking into his biography. When he arrived in Rio de Janeiro, Reyes had already been living abroad for seventeen years. In 1913 his father, Bernardo Reyes—one of the most prominent generals of the Porfiriato—was gunned down in front of the Palacio Nacional as he took part in a failed attempt to overthrow the revolutionary government. Soon afterward another general of the Porfiriato, Victoriano Huerta, succeeded in a counterrevolutionary coup d’état. But after Reyes refused an invitation to be secretary for the new president, the son of the eminent Gen. Bernardo Reyes was advised not to stay in the country. Alfonso Reyes thus left Mexico, later entering diplomatic service, to escape the country’s turmoil. But those were not to be tranquil years: Reyes left Paris during World War I, experienced financial hardship in Spain, and then encountered a belligerent mind-set in Argentina’s intellectual circles and more political instability with Hipólito Yrigoyen’s second term as president.

Reyes arrived in Brazil a mere six months before the 1930 revolution, but the Mexican ambassador was subsequently deeply impressed by Getúlio Vargas’s capacity for building broad coalitions out of left- and right-wing *tenentes*, the military, dissenting oligarchs, conservative Catholics, unions placed under the wing of the state bureaucracy, and so on. Vargas’s deft maneuvers from left to right, seducing former enemies and ostracizing old allies with a great sense of timing, were followed closely by the ambassador and contrasted sharply in his mind with years of violent instability of a revolution that, in Reyes’s words, “lle- evaba diez años de buscarse a sí propia” (55).

However, beyond Reyes's personal traumas and his personal admiration for Vargas and the apparently affable Brazilian intellectuals and politicians, we should not underestimate how much "Brasil en una castaña" reflects views that had wider acceptance in the day's Brazilian intellectual circles. Unlike José Vasconcelos, who, after a brief visit, fantasized about the Brazil of Epitácio Pessoa as a benevolent dynamo on its way to challenge Anglo-Saxon supremacy in the continent, Reyes cultivated relationships with important Brazilian intellectuals, was an avid reader and a thorough researcher, and had great curiosity toward all things Brazilian. A very eloquent demonstration of Reyes's deep knowledge of Brazilian affairs can be found in the six-hundred-plus pages of the second volume of *Misión Diplomática*, a recent compilation of diplomatic briefs from 1930 to 1936.

In fact, Reyes's Monterrey—*Correo Literario* contains the first public appearance of a much-discussed term in Brazil to this day. The *Homem Cordial* makes this first public appearance in a letter from the modernist Rui Ribeiro Couto entitled "El Hombre Cordial, producto americano" and published in the eighth issue of Reyes's journal. At the center of Ribeiro Couto's argument is the idealization of a gentle colonization, an adventure in a welcoming, fertile land, an adventure "alimentada pelas redes nupciais de índias bravias e pela sensualidade dócil de negras fáceis": He continues: "O egoísmo europeu, batido de perseguições religiosas e de catástrofes econômicas, tocado pela intolerância e pela fome, atravessou os mares e fundou ali, no leito das mulheres primitivas e em toda a vastidão generosa daquela terra, a Família dos Homens Cordiais, esses que se distinguem do resto da humanidade por duas características: o espírito hospitaleiro e a tendência à credulidade. Numa palavra, o Homem Cordial" (3).

Ribeiro Couto claims the *Homem Cordial* as the symbolic middle ground in the battles between what he calls the primitivism of *indianismo* and the classicism of *hispanismo* in Latin America, a synthesis not unlike the one favored by Reyes himself in "México en una nuez." But it is important to note that at the core of what is framed as a magnanimous synthesis between Western and non-Western aspects of Latin American culture lies an idealization of colonization as a romance (a presence in the imagination of the Brazilian elites beginning with José de Alencar's historical novels) with markedly patriarchal roles assigned to the colonizer (male) and his indigenous/slave counterpart (female), who functions as a double for the fertile native land.²³ Furthermore, it should be noted that whereas Reyes assigns this narrative specifically to Brazil, for Ribeiro Couto this "Civilização Cordial" was the greatest contribution of Latin

America to the civilized world, then enveloped in the turmoil that would result in World War II. After all, this contribution is presented as the result of a process that turned European selfishness and the skepticism of the colonizer into Latin American hospitality and the credulity of the *Homem Cordial*.

In accordance with Ribeiro Couto but restricted to Brazil, Alfonso Reyes uses the term *cordialidade* in “Brasil en una castaña” as a benign trace of Brazilian identity. But the concept has had myriad uses in Brazil and is known nowadays primarily as a prominent term in Sérgio Buarque de Holanda’s 1936 classic *Raízes do Brasil*. Buarque de Holanda, who dutifully points to Ribeiro Couto’s letter to Reyes as the source for the “expressão feliz” (146), offers a much less enthusiastic view of the colonization and, consequently, of the *Homem Cordial*. The negative aspects of the concept might not be so evident at first, and the author strives to be more explicit in a second edition of *Raízes do Brasil* in 1947: “Se eliminam aqui, deliberadamente, os juízos éticos e as intenções apologéticas.”²⁴ A third edition in 1956 includes an essay by one of the main intellectual forces behind the dictatorship of the *Estado Novo*, the right-wing modernist Cassiano Ricardo,²⁵ a source of some of the “juízos éticos e as intenções apologéticas” to which Buarque de Holanda had referred in the book’s second edition. Cassiano Ricardo exemplifies the discomfort of the right with Buarque de Holanda’s use of *cordialidade* with such dissonant views of the history and character of Brazil: “Sérgio alterou, descaracterizou nosso homem cordial” (293).²⁶ Buarque de Holanda’s curt reply restates his different view of the matter and proclaims: “Creio que nunca chegaríamos a entendimento perfeito acerca de alguns aspectos tratados e vejo que será inútil esmiuçar todos os pontos de sua réplica” (311).

Here we have progressives and conservatives battling for a definition of *cordialidade*.²⁷ The status of *Raízes do Brasil* as an indisputable classic and the removal of Cassiano Ricardo’s letter in its following editions seem to attest to the victory of the progressives in this matter.²⁸ Nevertheless, conservatives continued to use the term *cordialidade* to define Brazil’s national character—drawing on the original appearance of the term in *Monterrey* in order to complain against “foreign” ideologies that “offended” Brazilians’ inherent desire for a peaceful social order. Ricardo’s letter became an extended essay, “O homem cordial” (Ricardo 1959, 7–46), and the centerpiece of a 1959 collection of articles. Telling evidence of Alfonso Reyes’s influence in seeing Brazil as a benign culture of conciliation was that Reyes—together with Sérgio Buarque de Holanda—gets cited in an

influential newspaper column in support of a concurring argument about the country's "social and political traditions" at an important historical crossroads for the country:

Essa cordialidade, que Alfonso Reyes atribuía a toda a América Latina e Sérgio Buarque de Holanda considera tipicamente brasileira, não me parece sinal de mau caráter. Ou de falta de caráter. É a marca de um caráter eminentemente humano, lírico, compreensível, racional, que faz da composição e não da oposição a lei de nossa psicologia nativa e da nossa conseqüente história política. Temos tido também as nossas lutas cruentas e guerras civis que duraram mais de decênio, como a dos Farrapos, campanhas sangrentas como a de Canudos, repressões violentas como as coloniais, para mostrar que o sangue da nossa gente também corre. Mas é a exceção que confirma a regra. Se alguma coisa devemos cultivar em nosso caráter nacional, e preservar em nossa história, como típica de nosso Humanismo brasileiro, é precisamente essa tendência inata às soluções pacíficas das nossas mais graves crises políticas. Mesmo com os tanques nas ruas . . . É a marca da nossa gente, da nossa História da nossa civilização. Cultivamo-la com carinho. E o 30 de março a confirmou uma vez mais. (222)²⁹

The newspaper was the *Jornal do Brasil* at its apex,³⁰ the author was Alceu Amoroso Lima a.k.a. Tristão de Athayde, "o grande crítico do modernismo" (Barbosa 1964, 9), and the text was written a few days after President João Goulart was overthrown. The military coup d'état, referred to in the previous passage as "o 30 de Março" (March 30), is, for Amoroso Lima, a confirmation "com os tanques nas ruas" (with tanks on the streets) of Brazil's inherent tendency to seek peaceful conciliatory solutions.

The conservative credentials of Alceu Amoroso Lima were then indisputable.³¹ However, by 1964 he was amid a transition from the rabid anticommunist conservatism of the 1930s³² to becoming one of the mainstream denouncers of the authoritarianism and brutality of the military regime that would remain in power for twenty years. This gradual change did not mean any loss of identity as a Catholic intellectual: the fundamental point of inflection in Amoroso Lima's transition was not 1964 but rather the changes Pope John XXIII brought to Catholicism in 1962 with the Second Vatican Council. The civil opposition to the dictatorship prized Amoroso Lima's support precisely because of his impeccable conservative credentials, which placed him above suspicion and practi-

cally immune to the accusation of spreading communist propaganda. In 1964, however, Amoroso Lima seemed to express agreement with Cassiano Ricardo, who claimed that “toda a revolução brasileira termina em acordo, e a pena mais rigorosa para os nossos crimes políticos nunca passou do exílio” (Ricardo 1959, 41).³³

A few years earlier, in 1960, Amoroso Lima wrote an affectionate portrait of Alfonso Reyes, “Homem de Proa,” recalling their friendship in Rio de Janeiro since their first meeting amid Vargas’s ascent to power. Reyes captivated the young Catholic leader with diplomatic tact and gentleness. The Mexican ambassador had offered asylum to figures of the First Republic and showed a vivid interest in Amoroso Lima’s recent conversion to Catholicism.³⁴ For Amoroso Lima, Reyes was Latin America’s greatest humanist, who “sabia analisar, agudamente, o espírito latino-americano quando por exemplo afirmava que éramos a expressão típica do *homo cordialis*” (147). In the early 1930s the Mexican diplomat portrayed Amoroso Lima as “el maestro definidor de las derechas juveniles” (*Mission Diplomática*, 122). The compliments to Amoroso Lima’s intelligence and articulateness were tempered, however, by the knowledge that the right-wing youth in Brazil “tienden invariablemente a una estrecha doctrina de nacionalismo católico y autoritario”: “De trato insinuante y algo sinuoso, tiene el valor de quien se siente apoyado por las clases pudientes, por la Iglesia y por cierta sorda inercia nacional.”

As the twentieth century moved along, a growing number of Brazilian and Mexican intellectuals and artists felt uneasy with the limitations imposed not only by the tenets of positivism and naturalism but also (and perhaps most decisively) by classical liberalism in its particular Latin American mold. The epistemological, aesthetic, and political challenges to this status quo by Mexican and Brazilian intellectuals and artists gained decisive symbolic leverage with the acute political crises that occurred in the two countries.

But these decisive crises were set apart by more than ten years, and they differed in their trajectory: in Mexico the crisis happened at full speed with the fall of Porfirio Díaz in 1911 and only resolved to a certain stability in the 1930s. In Brazil the crisis flared up during the election campaign of Arthur Bernardes in, of all years, 1922, but the cultural and political establishments managed somehow to contain the confrontation, which slowly built to the end of the so-called First Republic and the turbulent 1930s. The Porfiriato and the First Republic were identified at least symbolically with positivism’s cultural hegemony,³⁵ and

these regimes' failings would spark changes in the ideas and careers of intellectuals and artists who, in the following decades, would play a prominent role in Mexican and Brazilian culture.

The twelve-year gap between the two "centennial generations"—1910 in Mexico and 1922 in Brazil—explains, to a certain extent, the more visible role of the avant-gardes on the Brazilian scene.³⁶ The *ateneístas* Alfonso Reyes and José Vasconcelos—men of Manuel Bandeira's generation—played in Mexican letters the galvanizing role of younger *modernistas* such as Mário de Andrade, Lucio Costa, and Gustavo Capanema in Brazil. Vasconcelos founded the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM)—the university's motto, "por mi raza hablará el espíritu," is his—and Reyes founded in 1940 and presided over El Colegio de México, a research institution sponsored by the federal government, Banco de México, UNAM, and the Fondo de Cultura Económica.³⁷ These are arguably still the two main academic institutions in modern Mexico.

It should be no surprise, then, that Mexican historians claim the refutation of late nineteenth-century aesthetics in Mexican poetry occurred with Enrique González Martínez's "Tuércele el cuello al cisne"—a fairly conventional sonnet—whereas the same refutation in Brazil is identified with the scandals of the *Semana de Arte Moderna*. Were Brazilians ironically compensating for "slow, gradual, and cautious" political change with fiery radical literary rhetoric? Was Mexico's legendary classicism, its attachment to the introspective "épica en surdina," a form of self-preservation during years of violent revolutionary turmoil, thus the relative unimportance attached to its avant-garde?

Instead of viewing this pair as mutually exclusive exceptionalisms, I believe we should take with a grain of salt these historical accounts and their emphases either on continuities or ruptures. We should think in broader terms, differentiating between *Modernismo*, in Portuguese, with a capital M (a specific set of avant-garde movements from the 1920s), and *modernism*, in English, with a lowercase m (something that includes but reaches beyond all the avant-gardes). The literary and cultural histories of Brazil and Mexico in the first half of the twentieth century can be seen, then, as two slightly diverging paths against the spread and development of modernism in Latin America.

The uneasy feeling about positivism and naturalism and about Brazilian liberalism predated 1922, and writers such as Lima Barreto and Monteiro Lobato should not dwell in the limbo called "pré-Modernismo," nor should writers such as Graciliano Ramos and Guimarães Rosa, who felt a deep aversion to the

aesthetics of the Modernismo of the 1920s, be thought of as “second and third generation Modernistas.” In Mexico the “Generación del Centenario” did not represent such a radical rupture with prerevolutionary positivism or *modernismo* (with the term used here in its Hispanic meaning), and likewise the following generations in Mexican literary circles did not simply accept the guidance and continue the work of the *ateneístas*. Somewhere in between the excessive emphasis on the continuities between generations in México and the myth of 1922 as a complete rupture with an utterly obsolete past lies a more accurate view of the period, one that sees the respective histories of early twentieth-century Mexico and Brazil in their variety and complexity. Beyond the undeniable differences and specificities, Mexico and Brazil also have a lot in common.

For that matter, I do not want to give the impression that Alfonso Reyes could simply be placed in the long line of conservative thinkers of Brazil or Latin America. This is not just because Reyes was of the old Latin American school but also because he was mostly uninvolved with politics and never expressed faith in authoritarian solutions such as those repeatedly proposed by Alceu Amoroso Lima and Cassiano Ricardo starting in the 1930s. Reyes’s views of Brazil, like Stefan Zweig’s more famous impressions recorded in his *Brasil: País do Futuro*, are overly optimistic but not completely unrealistic. “México en una nuez” and “Brasil en una castaña,” remarkable exercises in Latin American comparativism, are stylistic gems in which Reyes captures two different aspects of the region. One Latin America is acutely aware of, though not necessarily pessimistic about, the continent’s violent history and difficult relationship with its European models. The other Latin America is proud and confident, perhaps too much so at times, in the future of a new, exciting culture, imagined as a felicitous synthesis of several racial or cultural strains in a fertile, tropical melting pot.

In Brazil, the process started with the coup d’état in April 1964 and culminated with the AI-5 decrees, which essentially annulled Brazilians’ constitutional rights in December 1968, doing away with any illusions about the possibility of peacefully resolving the contradictions exacerbated by Latin America’s modernization, rapid industrialization, urbanization, and the Cold War. In Mexico the October 1968 massacre of civilians in Tlatelolco marked the end of illusions about the perpetual continuation of the Mexican revolution embodied by the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) as a progressive and constructive force guiding the modernization of Mexico with its nationalist rhetoric. In Brazil the years that followed, “Os Anos de Chumbo,” would see the creation

of a powerful, repressive modern apparatus that included systematic torture and murder and bore no trace whatsoever of the *cordialidade* that Amoroso Lima hoped the military regime would embody. In Mexico the nationalist and progressive official rhetoric contrasted more and more with the encroachment of U.S. capitalism and the repressive paramilitary apparatus of the Halcones, and the title of a famous essay, "Atento aviso: El que haya encontrado la Revolución mexicana, favor de devolverla" (Aguilar Camín 1984, 5), captures the spirit of the time. In *La jaula de la melancolía*, Roger Bartra signals Tlatelolco (and, we could add, AI-5 in Brazil) as the end of an era, "por la obvia imposibilidad para explicar la circunstancia trágica de 1968 por medio del mito de 'lo mexicano'" (Bartra, 21). There and then, both the myth of the gentle, natural-born diplomat in "Brasil en una castaña" and that of the redeeming revolution that finally brought a country to confront and recognize itself in "Mexico en una nuez" suddenly looked ancient and insufficient.³⁸

NOTES

1. The group was renamed the more nationalistic Ateneo de México in 1912. That influential generation has also been called "la generación del centenario" because of the festivities of the centennial of Mexican independence in 1910.

2. In addition to José Vasconcelos (1882–1959) and Alfonso Reyes (1889–1959), it is worth mentioning Pedro Henríquez Ureña (1884–1946), Antonio Caso (1883–1946), Julio Torri (1889–1970), Martín Luis Guzmán (1887–1977), Enrique González Martínez (1871–1952), Jesús T. Acevedo (1882–1918), Manuel M. Ponce (1882–1948), and Diego Rivera (1886–1957).

3. Justo Sierra, Porfirio Díaz's minister of education, was a strong influence on some of the *ateneístas* and supported their efforts to curb the influence of positivists and fight attempts to undermine laical education by Catholic groups. The mere fact that Don Porfirio himself was invited to one of their activities should not be underestimated as a sign of the group's insider status in the Porfiriato. In this sense it is interesting to contrast Carlos Monsiváis's prologue (32–42) and Alfonso Reyes's own account of that time in "Pasado inmediato (fragmento)" (133–74), both found in the anthology *México—Alfonso Reyes*. In "Notas sobre la cultura mexicana en el siglo XX," Monsiváis moves further to question the actual relevance, novelty, and depth of the famed conferences in which Antonio Caso refuted positivism (*Historia general de México*, 968–76).

4. For a very interesting account of this trip and a study of its particular significance for Vasconcelos, see Mauricio Tenorio's "A Tropical Cuauhtemoc—Celebrating the Cosmic Race at the Guanabara Bay."

5. The noun *ufanismo* is a common ironic reference derived from the title of Afonso Celso's *Por que me ufano de meu país*, a nationalistic primary school textbook written in 1902, in which the author enumerates countless reasons for patriotic pride.

6. Proof of the extraordinary endurance of the terminology created by Vasconcelos can be seen in unlikely places such as the work of Darcy Ribeiro, a left-wing nationalist and an anthropologist famous for his passionate defense of indigenous cultures. In Ribeiro's *O povo brasileiro*, a late addition to the tradition of essays about national identity in Latin America intended to be his intellectual testament, and an instant best seller in Brazil in 1995, Vasconcelos's term *New Rome* appears prominently in the last chapter, "O destino nacional" (441–49), again related to the mingling of the races and the glorious future of the Brazilian nation.

7. The book *Homenagem a Manuel Bandeira* contains Reyes's "Acto de presencia," which also appears in *Genio y figura de Alfonso Reyes* (203). Fred Ellison's article "Alfonso Reyes y Manuel Bandeira: Una amistad mexico-brasileña" offers a thorough account of the friendship between the two intellectuals.

8. Bandeira also refers indirectly to Reyes in "Rondó do Palace Hotel" and briefly cites the Mexican several times in his *crônicas*, particularly in "Tempo de reis," in which Reyes is featured as a patron in a small popular restaurant in Rio de Janeiro (*Poesia e prosa*, 377–78).

9. Monterrey—*Correo literario de Alfonso Reyes* lasted from 1930 to 1937. Considered by José Emilio Pacheco as a sort of precursor to the modern-day blog (Pacheco, 23), the literary journal was, in spite of its modest scope, one of the most important initiatives in the '30s in terms of inter-American dialogue.

10. *História Natural das Laranjeiras* was first published in book form in 1955 in the ninth volume of Reyes's *Obras completas*. Most of Reyes's writing done in or about Brazil is concentrated in the ninth and tenth volumes of his *Obras completas*.

11. "Ofrenda al Jardín Botánico de Río Janeiro" (*Obras completas*, vol. IX, 89–92) refers to the speech given during the ceremony inaugurating the statue in 1935. The speech is featured on the first page of the thirteenth issue of *Monterrey—Correo Literario de Alfonso Reyes* together with photographs of the Cuauhtémoc in Flamengo and the cactus garden and the Xochipilli in the Jardim Botânico. The speech is dedicated to Paulo Campos Porto, director of the Jardim Botânico from 1931 to 1938, with whom Reyes cooperated on the cactus garden around the Cuauhtémoc in Flamengo. Reyes compliments the Jardim Botânico for its remarkable collection of Mexican cacti and reveals that he himself delivered *peyotl* seeds from México to Campos Porto.

12. Fred P. Ellison's *Alfonso Reyes e o Brasil* is a thorough account of Reyes's years in Rio de Janeiro.

13. A sign of the essay's prominent position in Reyes's oeuvre is that in 1996, when

the Fondo de Cultura Económica published Reyes's volume for the collection "Cultura para todos" (low-cost paperback editions of Mexican classics), the book was called *México en una nuez y otras nueces*.

14. Initially called *El nacional revolucionario*, the newspaper was created in 1929 at the national convention of the PRN (the newly founded revolutionary party that would become the PRM in 1938 and the PRI in 1945) and would move away from the revolutionary rhetoric of Lázaro Cárdenas to become the government's mouthpiece in the 1940s.

15. Luis Leal once aptly described Reyes's prose as "poesía y saber unificados a través de un acercamiento basado en la reminiscencia y la evocación" (poetry and knowledge unified through an approach based on reminiscence and evocation) (Leal, 15).

16. The essay "Justo Sierra y la historia patria" (175–98), from which this passage comes, is particularly illustrative, since in it Reyes lays out what are for him the essential qualities of a great historic essay.

17. The *ateneístas*—the group's name is particularly meaningful—were fundamentally classicists who wished to rescue ancient Greek and Roman culture from the oblivion to which it had been banished by positivist materialism and the stale rhetoric of academicism. At the core of Vasconcelos's ambitious literacy plans for Mexican education was the creation of school libraries with a collection of carefully translated classics (e.g., Homer, Aeschylus, Euripides, and Plato, as well as Dante, Goethe, and Cervantes), published in editions of twenty to fifty thousand volumes.

18. In his account of the 1932 argument with the nationalists, Guillermo Sheridan confesses without much subtlety that "A mí también me irrita la ambigüedad de Reyes, enfermo de diplomacia, y que solo en su correspondencia (ni siquiera en su diario) externase su verdadera opinión sobre 'las ruindades del nacionalismo' y sobre la forma en que se había lacerado con esas acusaciones" (I see Reyes's ambiguity as irritating as well. It is infected by diplomacy and it is only in his private letters that he expressed his true opinion about 'the evils of nationalism' and about how he had gotten hurt with those accusations) (Sheridan, 52). The discrepancies found in Reyes's opinions are not contradictions but instead reflect natural differences between public and private realms. Anyway, it is difficult to define precisely which of the two supposedly conflicting opinions is the "true" one. The truth of the matter is that Sheridan, in his determination to combat nationalism, wishes to define too sharp a contrast between the two fields as they played out in the 1930s. By comparison, in "A vuelta de correo" (vol. VIII, 427–49), for example, Reyes prefaces his reply to Héctor Pérez Martínez with language that is much less marked by clearly opposed divisions.

19. Julio Ortega affirms that "Alfonso Reyes debe haber sido el último modernista: entre Rubén Darío (que era capaz de sumar Góngora a Verlaine) y Jorge Luis Borges (que era capaz de añadirle compadritos a Shakespeare)" (*Teoría literaria*, 12–13).

20. In 1933 Reyes published in *El libro y el pueblo* his translations of fragments of pre-

colonial indigenous poetry that had previously been translated into French and Portuguese. See "Poesía Indígena Brasileña," in Alfonso Reyes, *Obras completas*, vol. IX, 86–88.

21. In Spanish: "Miraba esto, iba a ver lo otro, corría a contemplar lo del más allá y me atraía lo que aún me quedaba por ver. Y así recorriendo todas las calles, cautivo de un anhelo insaciado ante tanto espectáculo, exclamé extenuado: '¡Ojos míos, estamos vencidos!'" In English: "There were sights I saw, sights I aimed to see, sight I ached to see, sights I could not bear to miss . . . my gaze was overpowered by what I could see before me, but dragged away by what I anticipated. As I was guiding my own tour around all these streets, lovesick with the sight of it, I said to myself wearily: 'We are beaten, my eyes!'" (77).

22. The fort on the island of San Juan Ulúa was ironically one of the last bastions of colonial Mexico; surrendered by the Spaniards only in 1825, it functioned as a prison from the late eighteenth until the twentieth century, with famous inmates such as Fray Servando Teresa de Mier and Benito Juárez (*San Juan de Ulúa—Biografía de un presidio*, 112–26). The exquisitely carved coin banks made in San Juan Ulúa are now much sought-after antiques. See Sandra Krairideja's "Carved Coconuts Highlight Mexico's History," *North County Times*, August 3, 2005.

23. In *As raízes e o labirinto da América Latina*, Silviano Santiago points back to Pero Vaz de Caminha's letter to the king of Portugal, which announced the "discovery" of Brazil, as the foundational text holding the first linguistic sign of such imaginary in relation to the colonization (84, 89–94).

24. Perhaps, in his attempt to negate the apologetic reading of the *cordialidade*, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda might have exaggerated its negative aspects. Pedro Meira Monteiro rightly observes that, for Buarque de Holanda, at least in *Raízes do Brasil*, "os valores liberais . . . se colocavam como uma opção individual, que parecia excluir os valores cordiais. Se nos mantivermos no plano da reflexão do historiador, dificilmente vislumbraremos, no próprio ensaio, uma saída clara para o impasse" (*A queda do aventureiro*, 291).

25. Cassiano Ricardo was one of the founders of the nationalistic Verdeamarelo, together with Menotti del Picchia and Plínio Salgado. Without adhering to Integralismo, the Brazilian version of fascism, Ricardo became an intellectual leader of nationalist right-wing modernistas and one of the most powerful figures in Getúlio Vargas's dictatorial Estado Novo (1937–1945). As with other conservative or authoritarian figures of Brazilian Modernismo, Ricardo was either neglected or else mentioned briefly and with embarrassment until Luizá Moreira's *Meninos, poetas e heróis*, a pioneering reading of Ricardo's main works.

26. In this lengthy text, Cassiano Ricardo complains that in the second edition of *Raízes do Brasil* "pretendendo explicar a palavra, Sérgio alterou, descaracterizou nosso homem cordial" (293) and, furthermore, Cassiano Ricardo contests the adequacy of the term *cordialidade*—he prefers the openly apologetic *bondade*, "primeiro fundamento da nossa democracia social" (294).

27. Another important point of view on the discussion of the *Homem Cordial*

comes from the modernista Oswald de Andrade, in a short piece called “Um aspecto antropofágico da cultura brasileira: O homem cordial,” presented at the first Congresso Brasileiro de Filosofia in 1950. In this text, Oswald, returning to the *antropofagia* of the 1920s after a long period of communist militancy, claims to agree with Sérgio Buarque de Holanda’s definition (he includes a long quote from *Raízes do Brasil*) but offers a completely different genealogy to the Homem Cordial, closer to that of Ribeiro Couto. For Oswald, the Homem Cordial is a remnant of the culture of Brazil’s precolonial indigenous matriarchal society. This *matriarcado* was, furthermore, ready for a comeback of sorts (with Oswald seeing traces of it in the thought of Kierkegaard, Mallarmé, Karl Jaspers, and Sartre) as humanity faces fear without any help from heaven.

28. Cassiano Ricardo’s “Variações sobre o homem cordial” and “Carta a Cassiano Ricardo” were originally published in 1948, in the second and third issues of the magazine *Colégio—Revista de cultura e arte*, edited by Roland Corbisier (1914–2005), former integralista and founder in 1955 of the government-sponsored research institution ISEB (Instituto Superior de Estudos Brasileiros). The model for this institution, which was co-conceptualized by Hélio Jaguaribe and Gilberto Amado, was the Collège de France and Reyes’s Colegio de México (its original name was to be Colégio do Brasil). After the 1964 coup d’état, ISEB was closed down, its library incorporated into the Escola Superior de Guerra, and its members investigated by the military.

29. I thank my colleague Alexandre Nodari for pointing to this quote in a different context.

30. For a brief assessment of *Jornal do Brasil*’s positions during the military dictatorship, see Beatriz Kushnir’s *Cães de Guarda: Jornalistas e censores do AI-5 à constituição de 1988*.

31. Converted to Catholicism in the late 1920s by his mentor Jackson de Figueiredo, the modernist Alceu Amoroso Lima became the great intellectual leader of the conservative Catholic layman movement in the 1930s, with remarkable influence in Getúlio Vargas’s Conselho Nacional de Educação, where he battled in the name of the church and private interests against the reformers of the Escola Nova. For an account of the debates in the council and the roles played by Amoroso Lima and the other members, see Sergio Miceli, “O Conselho Nacional de Educação: Esboço de Análise de um Aparelho de Estado (1931–7),” in *Intelectuais à Brasileira* (2001), 293–341.

32. Anticommunism was an essential part of the Catholic right wing. In 1935, for example, in a chapter not very subtly called “666” in his book *Pela Ação Católica*, Alceu Amoroso Lima warns that “do outro lado do Vístula, espreitam os novos bárbaros, velam os que levantam estátuas a Judas, velam os que ergueram sobre o trono soviético aquele mesmo Animal do Apocalipse” (49).

33. Among other things in his essay, Cassiano claims that “o problema das minorias raciais e culturais é quase inexistente entre nós” (39) and that “não temos problemas de desocupados, da falta de terra, da violenta diferença de classes, do ódio de raças e

religiões, da excessiva diferença de cultura ou riqueza" (40). I believe these statements stand alone without commentary.

34. It is a sign of Alfonso Reyes's diplomatic acumen that he cultivated at the same time the friendship of Alceu Amoroso Lima and Graça Aranha. As implied earlier, Reyes also quietly supplied Cecília Meireles with material about Mexican education policies as she battled on the other side of the political spectrum for the reformers of the Escola Nova (Soares 258–79).

35. The most visible traces of positivist influence are the political power of the científicos in Mexico and the motto "Ordem e Progresso" still displayed on the Brazilian flag. In one of his last books, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda would question the prominent role of positivism in the ending of the monarchy and the establishment of the republic. Nevertheless, the perceived influence of the tenets of positivism went well beyond those who professed to follow strictly Auguste Comte's doctrines. Positivism's ideological hegemony extended its reach, even in diluted or distorted forms, to practically all the elites in Latin America and was taken into account by those who wished to challenge them.

36. Nevertheless, the relative importance of the avant-gardes in Brazilian culture and their trajectory since the 1920s has been a topic for discussion. As the relationship between the Ateneo and both the Porfiriato and the revolution have been distorted to make the *ateneístas* seem in tune with the new regime, the role of the *modernistas* and their cultural clout have been exaggerated by post hoc accounts that try, for example, to enhance the connection between the Modernismo of the '20s and later developments in Brazilian culture such as *concretismo* and *tropicalismo*. This has distorted our views of the culture in the period, especially with the providential erasure of the many influential right-wing *modernistas* such as Tristão de Atayde, Cassiano Ricardo, Plínio Salgado, and Menotti del Picchia. For a brief exposition of the theme, see Randal Johnson's "Rereading Brazilian Modernism."

37. Vasconcelos was a very important presence for the muralistas and writers such as the poet Carlos Pellicer, whereas Reyes also helped and guided several young poets, from Villaurrutia and other *contemporáneos* in the 1920s to the young Octavio Paz, in a role not unlike Mário de Andrade's in Brazil.

38. A paradigmatic example of this insufficiency is Octavio Paz's "postdata," adding to his *Labyrinth of Solitude* an anachronistic attempt to build a parallel between the brutal repression and the student massacre planned and executed by the administration of Gustavo Díaz Ordaz and pre-Columbian sacrifices. See Bartra (160–61).

WORKS CITED

- Aguilar Camín, Hector. *Saldo de la revolución*. Mexico: Ediciones Oceano, 1984.
 Andrade, Oswald de. "Um aspecto antropológico da cultura brasileira: O homem cordial." *A utopia antropológica*. São Paulo: Editora Globo, 1990. 157–59.

- Bandeira, Manuel. *Homenagem a Manuel Bandeira*. Rio de Janeiro: Oficinas Typographicas do "Jornal do Commercio," 1936.
- . "Tempo de reis." *Poesia e prosa*. 2 vols. Rio de Janeiro: Aguilar, 1958. 377–78.
- . "Rondó do Palace Hotel." In *Libertinagem—Estrela da manhã*, edited by Giulia Lanciani. Madrid et al.: ALLCA XX, 1998. 85.
- . "Rondó dos Cavalinhos." In *Libertinagem—Estrela da manhã*, edited by Giulia Lanciani. Madrid et al.: ALLCA XX, 1998. 83.
- Bartra, Roger. *La jaula de la melancolía—Identidad y metamorfosis del mexicano*. Barcelona et al.: Grijalbo, 1987.
- Brading, David A. "Prólogo—Alfonso Reyes y América." *América*. México: FCE, 2005. 7–27.
- Buarque de Holanda, Sérgio. *Raízes do Brasil*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1999.
- Ellison, Fred P. "Alfonso Reyes y Manuel Bandeira: Una amistad mexico-brasileña." *Hispania* 70, no. 3 (September 1987): 487–93.
- . *Alfonso Reyes e o Brasil*. Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 2002.
- Freyre, Gilberto. *Casa Grande & Senzala*. Rio de Janeiro: Record, 1992.
- Johnson, Randal. "Rereading Brazilian Modernism." *Texas Papers on Latin América*, no. 89–04. Austin: Institute of Latin American Studies, University of Texas at Austin, 1989. <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/tpla/8904.pdf>.
- Kraisrideja, Sandra. "Carved Coconuts Highlight Mexico's History." *North County Times*, August 3, 2005.
- Kushnir, Beatriz. *Cães de Guarda: jornalistas e censores do AI-5 à constituição de 1988*. São Paulo: Boitempo, 2004.
- Leal, Luis. "Presentación." In *Visión de Anáhuac*, by Alfonso Reyes. México: UNAM, 2004.
- Lima, Alceu Amoroso. *Cultura Inter-Americana*. Rio de Janeiro: Agir, 1962.
- . "30 de março." *Revolução, reação ou reforma?* Rio de Janeiro: Tempo Brasileiro, 1964. 221–22.
- . "Homem de proa." *Companheiros de viagem*. Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1971. 145–49.
- Martínez, José Luis. *El ensayo mexicano moderno I*. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2001.
- Micelli, Sérgio. "O Conselho Nacional de Educação: Esboço de Análise de um Aparelho de Estado (1931–7)." In *Intelectuais à Brasileira*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2001. 293–341.
- Monsiváis, Carlos. "Notas sobre la cultura mexicana en el siglo XX." *História general de México*. México: El Colégio de México, 2000.
- . "Prólogo." *México—Alfonso Reyes*. México: FCE, 2005. 32–42.
- Monteiro, Pedro Meira. *A queda do aventureiro: Aventura, cordialidade e os novos tempos em Raízes do Brasil*. Campinas: Editora da UNICAMP, 1999.

- Moreira, Luiza. *Meninos, poetas e heróis: Aspectos de Cassiano Ricardo do modernismo ao Estado Novo*. São Paulo: EDUSP, 2001.
- Nodari, Alexandre. "45 anos do Golpe: Terrorismo e cordialidade." *Consenso, só no paredão*, May 19, 2009. <http://www.culturaebarbarie.org/blog/2009/05/45-anos-do-golpe-terrorismo-e.html>.
- Ortega, Julio. "Prólogo." *Teoría literaria—Alfonso Reyes*. México: FCE, 2007. 7–13.
- Pacheco, José Emilio. "Monterrey de Alfonso Reyes." Edición facsimilar de los quince fascículos de "Monterrey—Correo Literário" de Alfonso Reyes. Monterrey: Fondo Editorial de Nuevo León, 2008. 23–31.
- Paz, Octavio. *El laberinto de la soledad*. México: FCE, 1959.
- Prado, Paulo. *Retrato do Brasil—Ensaio sobre a tristeza brasileira*. Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1962.
- Prado Jr., Caio. *Formação do Brasil Contemporâneo*. São Paulo: Livraria Martins Editora, 1942.
- Ramos, Samuel. *Perfil del hombre y la cultura de México*. México: UNAM, 1963.
- Reyes, Alfonso. "A vuela de correo." *Obras completas*. Vol. VIII. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1958.
- . "Brasil en una castaña." *Obras completas*. Vol. IX. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1959.
- . "México en una nuez." *Obras completas*. Vol. IX. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1959.
- . "Poesía Indígena Brasileña." *Obras completas*. Vol. IX, 86–88. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1959.
- . "Romances del Río de Enero." *Obras completas*. Vol. X. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1960.
- . "Visión de Anahuac." In *Prosa y Poesía*, edited by James Willis Robb. Madrid: Cátedra, 1975. 69–127.
- . *Misión Diplomática—Tomo II*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2001.
- . "Justo Sierra y la historia patria." *México—Alfonso Reyes*. México: FCE, 2005. 175–98.
- . Edición facsimilar de los quince fascículos de "Monterrey—Correo Literário" de Alfonso Reyes. Monterrey: Fondo Editorial de Nuevo León, 2008.
- Reyes, Alicia. *Genio y figura de Alfonso Reyes*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1997.
- Ribeiro, Darcy. *O povo brasileiro*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2006.
- Ribeiro Couto, Rui. "El Hombre Cordial, producto americano." *Monterrey*, no. 8 (March 1932): 3.
- Ricardo, Cassiano. *O homem cordial e outros pequenos estudos brasileiros*. Rio de Janeiro: Ministério da Cultura/Instituto Nacional do Livro, 1959.
- Santiago, Silviano. *As raízes e o labirinto da América Latina*. Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 2006.

- Santiago Cruz, Francisco. *San Juan de Ulúa—Biografía de un presidio*. Mexico: Editorial Jus, 1966.
- Sheridan, Guillermo. *México en 1932: La polémica nacionalista*. México: FCE, 1999.
- Soares, Gabriela Pellegrino. *Semear Horizontes: Uma história da formação de leitores na Argentina e no Brasil, 1915–1954*. Belo Horizonte: UFMG, 2007.
- Tatius, Achilles. *Leucipe and Clitophon*, translated by Tim Whitmarsh. London: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Tenorio, Mauricio. "A Tropical Cuauhtemoc—Celebrating the Cosmic Race at the Guanabara Bay." *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* XVI, no. 65 (1994): 93–137.
- Vargas Llosa, Mario. "Un hombre de letras." *El País*, Sunday, February 20, 2005.
- Vasconcelos, José. *La raza cósmica—Misión de la raza iberoamericana—Notas de viajes a la América del Sur*. Paris: Agencia Mundial de Librería, 1925.
- Zweig, Stefan. *Brasil: País do futuro*. Porto Alegre: LP&M, 2006.

PAULO MOREIRA is an assistant professor at Yale University, and he has a PhD in comparative literature. His main areas of interest are American, Brazilian, and Mexican twentieth-century literature, cinema, and modernism. He has a forthcoming book about Faulkner, Guimarães Rosa, and Rulfo from Editora UFMG and received the Morse Fellowship to write a book about Mexican and Brazilian artists and intellectuals. His second book, *Literary Relations between Mexico and Brazil: Deep Undercurrents*, is forthcoming with Palgrave Macmillan. He may be reached at paulo.moreira@yale.edu.