

Latin America and the Inversion of United States Stereotypes in the 1920s and 1930s: The Case of Culture and Nature

Author(s): Fredrick B. Pike

Source: *The Americas*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (Oct., 1985), pp. 131-162

Published by: Cambridge University Press

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1007206>

Accessed: 27-06-2016 07:18 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at

<http://about.jstor.org/terms>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Cambridge University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Americas*

LATIN AMERICA AND THE INVERSION
OF UNITED STATES STEREOTYPES IN THE
1920s AND 1930s:
THE CASE OF CULTURE AND NATURE*

INTRODUCTION

IN this essay I describe some often ignored North American modes of perceiving Latin Americans; and I suggest that a change in these modes contributed to the Good Neighbor era (1933-1945). I do not presume to argue that shifting attitudes and perceptions should be seen as the principal factors in shaping the Good Neighbor policy. Anyone concerned with the primary determinants of that policy must turn to security and economic considerations. Still, an intellectual—and, really, a psychological—phenomenon of shifting perceptions and stereotypes among North Americans accounted for some of the enthusiasm with which they greeted what they took to be a new approach to Latin America.

In its central thrust this essay suggests that in hemispheric relations, seen from the north-of-the-Rio-Grande perspective, the United States stands generally for culture and Latin America for nature. Symbolizing the capitalist culture of the Yankees, shaped by their struggle to subdue wilderness and nature, has been the white male, often portrayed by Uncle Sam. In contrast, Latin America has been symbolized by Indians, blacks, women, children, and also the idle poor: people assumed to lack the capitalist urge constantly to tame, dominate, and uplift nature.

For the next several pages, Latin America almost disappears from the discussion. To prepare for its reappearance, it is necessary to consider in some detail the revision in attitudes toward nature and “natural persons”

* Portions of this essay were presented in a paper delivered at the 1984 American Historical Association Convention in Chicago. Comments and criticisms by Joyce Goldberg, Frederick M. Nunn, Michael Ogorzaly, Joseph S. Tulchin and an anonymous reader proved enormously helpful in the revision of early drafts.

within the United States that occurred during the 1920s and '30s. Only then will it be possible to consider how these revised attitudes were projected southward and how they resulted in new appraisals of the people of nature located below the Rio Grande.

THE INVERSION OF UNITED STATES STEREOTYPES OF NATURE AND THE NATURAL: THE 1920S AND '30S

If proponents of mainstream values in the United States have prevalingly associated culture with progress, growth and development, and nature with primitivism and arrested evolution, they have periodically confronted the challenge of countercultures whose generally predominantly youthful members set out to turn values upside down by elevating nature over culture. Eras in which countercultures peak are apt to witness improvement in United States relations with Latin America, one reason being that during such periods traditionally negative stereotypes of Latin Americans begin to turn positive. Never has the value reversal of stereotypes applied by North Americans to Latin Americans assumed such dramatic proportions as in the days of Franklin D. Roosevelt's Good Neighbor policy. However, developments of the 1920s helped significantly to prepare the way for counter-culture triumphs in the years between 1933 and 1945.

In the United States, dreams of revitalization, of profound transformation that entails standing the old order on its head by exalting the losers and humbling the winners, flourish best at opposite extremes of the old order's fortunes. The capitalist system is most vulnerable to challenge when it betrays the symptoms of collapse, as in the 1930s, and when it exhibits the most robust success, as in the 1920s—and again in the '60s.

When capitalism's success has seemed most dazzling and self-sustaining, many of those benefited by the system are apt to assume that its continuing production of abundance can safely be taken for granted. Even if put on automatic pilot, the system will continue its bountiful output. This being the case, people can relax, emulate the style of social sectors previously reviled—and secretly envied—as feckless and nonproductive; thereby they can enrich the quality of their lives by indulging in gratifications previously rejected in the single-minded pursuit of enhanced material wellbeing. Moreover, with capitalism's automatic success taken for granted, the social inequities that had accompanied its rise can, it is assumed, be painlessly excised. At the same time those compulsive seekers after constant growth who had once been useful to the development process could be discarded on the trash heaps of history. Given abundant indications of prosperity in the 1920s, it is scarcely surprising that the alienation of intellectuals from the bourgeois

ethic grew increasingly evident. Simultaneously, alienation was nourished by the pervasive Western disillusionment in traditional values and assumptions that followed upon the Great War. Throughout the decade that Carl Van Vechten has called “the splendid drunken twenties,” many artists and intellectuals manifested their alienation by flaunting the eighteenth amendment and sometimes the lock, stock and barrel of established conventions as well.¹

The 1920s, of course, were not years of unmitigated economic success for the United States. Beneath the veneer of a boozy, affluence-and-fun decade, the '20s seethed with unrest and tension. Half the population lived in poverty, and labor violence, as well as callous disregard of civil rights by the establishment, abounded. Above all, as Geoffrey Perret has concluded in a comprehensive study of this decade, the twenties were a time of profound transformation, of a break in continuity, accompanied by both the exaltation and anxiety that change inevitably occasions.² Still, the symptoms of malaise were no more than superficial blisters on the American body politic in the 1920s. In the ensuing decade the blisters became life-threatening tumors. Thus within just a few years, democratic capitalism stumbled from the assault occasioned by success to that posed by failure. Out of this crisis came an attempt to repudiate culture, inextricably bound up in the United States with capitalism and its values, and to begin the quest for the good life all over again by returning to the origins of life, or nature.

Beginning in the 1920s, a counterculture began to challenge established attitudes not only toward nature “out there” but also toward nature within—in other words, the psychic realm often termed the unconscious. Rather than separate spheres, the two realms of nature are intimately linked in our thought processes.³ Thus when the mood of the times encourages

¹ An enormous amount of writing has appeared on the alienation of United States intellectuals from the capitalist culture. Much of that literature that is pertinent to the 1920s and '30s is cited by Paul Hollander in his thoughtful book *Political Pilgrims: Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba* (New York, 1981). For Van Vechten on “the splendid drunken twenties,” see Bruce Kellner, *Carl Van Vechten and the Irreverent Decades* (Norman, 1968), esp. chaps. 6 and 9. For many Americans the United States was again becoming “the alcoholic republic,” with many of the implications that W. J. Rorabaugh attaches to such a phenomenon in his book *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition* (New York, 1979).

² See Geoffrey Perret, *America in the Twenties: A History* (New York, 1982).

³ Equating nature “out there” with inward nature is no new phenomenon with figures critical of mainstream culture. In *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 3rd ed. (New Haven, 1982), p. 89, Roderick Nash writes: “Much of [Henry David] Thoreau’s writing was only superficially about the natural world. Following [Ralph Waldo] Emerson’s dictum that ‘the whole of nature is a metaphor of the human mind,’ he turned to it repeatedly as a figurative tool. Wilderness symbolized the unexplored qualities and untapped capacities of every individual. The burden of his message was to penetrate the ‘wilderness . . . in our brains and bowels, the primitive vigor of Nature in us.’”

puritanical attitudes toward inward nature and emphasizes the need for superego constraints, these attitudes are likely to be projected into the outer world and to dictate the attempt to subject close-to-nature people to the curbs of culture. Conversely, when people incline to return to their nature within, to discard restraints and, in the terminology popularized by one counterculture, "let it all hang out," then they will generally incline to look more favorably upon natural persons and demand their liberation from the oppression of culture.

Time and again the would-be guardians of United States morality have registered grave misgivings about nature within, regarding it not so much as the abode of an imminent god as the lair of the devil. However, beginning roughly with the World War I era many a person in the United States took up the exploration of inwardness, restoring to fashion a current of American behavior that had surfaced periodically in the past. Many of the new explorers chose Freud as their guide. In the United States, though, something strange happened to the Freudian concepts of the unconscious, something that Freud himself had foreseen with misgivings. Americans, Freud had warned, with their optimistic insistence upon making the unconscious beneficent, would mar the application of his truth.⁴ One of the founders of parapsychological research in the United States, Frederick Myers, had observed that the unconscious, which he preferred to designate the "subliminal self," could be conceptualized both as a "rubbish heap" and as a "treasure house;" for it contained both the excreta of human life and the source of a higher development.⁵ Whereas the Freudian unconscious was in many ways a rubbish heap, comprised of "instinctual drives, forgotten experience, and repressed desire,"⁶ North Americans in their New World optimism seemed predisposed, as Myers had been, toward the concept of the unconscious as a treasure house. In their attitudes toward the unconscious, many Americans tended to be Jungians even when they thought themselves Freudians. Thus they showed the dauntlessness of their pioneer forebears in confronting the wilderness as they plunged into the depths of a psychic frontier in quest of renewal.

One sector of the new pioneers, caught up in the "introspective revolution"⁷ of the 1920s as they sought to become one with the cosmos

⁴ See Paul Roazen, *Freud and His Followers* (New York, 1971), p. 373. For a telling critique of the American school of Freudian analysis with its vacuous optimism and failure to take into account the sense of the tragic inherent in Freud's thought, see Bruno Bettelheim, *Freud and Man's Soul* (New York, 1982).

⁵ See R. Laurence Moore, *In Search of White Crows: Spiritualism, Parapsychology, and American Culture* (New York, 1977), p. 151.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

⁷ On the "introspective revolution," see Fred Weinstein and Gerald M. Platt, *The Wish To Be Free:*

within, found their temple of introspection in New York's Museum of Modern Art. Early in the 1930s the Guggenheim Museum opened its doors as a second temple where abstract art could lead viewers into the realms of inwardness. According to theories then in vogue, abstract art managed to free itself from the objects of the outer world. Thereby it gained access to the realm of noncorporeal nature, of the human spirit and the universal. Archibald MacLeish figured among those who hailed the ability of modern art to penetrate to the "deeper reality" of the "wilderness of the individual self." Thanks to modern art, people no longer needed to endure the limitations imposed by objective reason; for they could cross over, "not secretly and surreptitiously but openly now, into that inward country."⁸

The desire to join with inner worlds of beneficent nature projected outward as a wish for unity between man and the treasure house of a wilderness environment. In the 1920s Americans in increasing numbers resumed Henry David Thoreau's and Walt Whitman's quest to unite civilization and wilderness. Nature ceased to be a savage force to be curbed and dominated, in which light it has often been seen by Americans caught up in the capitalist ethic. Instead, nature became a source of regeneration to which humans had to surrender themselves in the understanding that "oneness with nature . . . is truly to find one's innermost being."⁹ Abetted now by the technology of motion pictures, the cowboy cult flourished anew. As perceived in the 1920s, the cowboy often became a metaphor for an intimate connection to the life-giving and life-sustaining out-of-doors. The spirit behind the cowboy metaphor as it flourished in the 1920s had been captured earlier

Society, Psyche, and Value Change (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969), esp. pp. 137-67. In addition to modern art, a cresting wave of spiritualism in the United States of the 1920s attested to the introspective revolution. On the new cult of spiritualism, see James Webb, *The Harmonious Circle: The Lives and Work of G. I. Gurdjieff, P. D. Ouspensky, and their Followers* (New York, 1980), and Louise Welch, *Orage with Gurdjieff in America* (Boston, 1982). See also Robert Ellwood, *Religious and Spiritual Groups in Modern America* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1973), and J. Stillson Judah, *The History and Philosophy of the Metaphysical Movement in America* (Philadelphia, 1967).

⁸ Archibald MacLeish, "The Alternative," an essay included in his *A Continuing Journey* (Boston, 1976), p. 159.

⁹ William B. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform: An Essay on Religion and Social Change in America, 1607-1977* (Chicago, 1978), p. 200. Cecelia Tichi in her *New World, New Earth: Environmental Reforms in American Literature from the Puritans through Whitman* (New Haven, 1979) focuses on the concept that the New World environment had to be reformed, mastered, dominated and—as it were—"uplifted" before millennialist expectations could be fulfilled. On the other hand art historian Barbara Novak in *Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting 1825-1875* (New York, 1980), reveals the strength of the pantheist, transcendentalist conviction that human nature could be redeemed through submission to the wilderness. Thus ambivalence toward the physical wilderness matches that toward the psychic "inward country:" both may be seen as threatening forces that require control and, alternatively, as beneficent sources of fulfillment to which the individual must periodically surrender.

in the century by Bulan Kirkland, who happened to be the daughter of a Texas cowboy:

I believe I could walk along the streets of any town or city and pick out the real cowboy, not by his clothes especially, but because one can nearly always notice that he has a very open countenance and almost innocent eyes and mouth. He is not innocent of course; but living in the open, next to nature, the cleaner life is stamped on his face. His vices leave no scars or few, because old mother nature has him with her most of the time.¹⁰

In the years after World War I, North Americans might well have worried lest in their mania for progress they had already pretty well obliterated pristine nature, with its miraculous restorative powers. Indeed, many in the nineteenth century had fretted over the spiritual and material implications of the conquest of the wilderness and its eventual disappearance.¹¹ Then, in 1893, Frederick Jackson Turner had sent forth his message about the end of the frontier. At about the same time Theodore Roosevelt and Frederic Remington joined in the widely-voiced lament that the West no longer existed. What they most lamented, I suspect, was that national consciousness could no longer be shaped by the myths of the ongoing conquest of an endless western frontier.

Nevertheless, frontier oases still existed, and Americans delighted in discovering them. New Mexico provided a favorite oasis, and to it in the World-War-I era came Mabel Dodge Sterne, following her husband of the moment, the artist Maurice Sterne.¹² Having helped make Freudian psychoanalysis chic among certain avant-garde easterners, Mabel, who in 1923 married the Taos Indian Tony Luhan, would now help to introduce a fashionable group of writers and artists to the beneficent wonders of exterior nature in uncontaminated estate. Actually, as early as the turn of the century, well before Mabel's arrival, artists had begun to discover the glories of the Taos and Santa Fe landscapes¹³—often encouraged, ironically, by one of the great subduers and plunderers of nature, the Santa Fe Railroad Company. Now, as World War I came to an end, these artists were joined by a retinue of back-to-nature wholeness seekers. Among them figured Mabel Dodge Sterne Luhan's friend, the artist Andrew Dasburg. Of his

¹⁰ Quoted in David Dary, *Cowboy Culture: A Saga of Five Centuries* (New York, 1981), p. 280.

¹¹ See Lee Clark Mitchell, *Witness to a Vanishing America: The Nineteenth-Century Response* (Princeton, 1981).

¹² See Emily Hahn, *Mabel: A Biography of Mabel Dodge Luhan* (Boston, 1977), chap. 9, and Lois Palken Rudnick, *Mabel Dodge Luhan* (Albuquerque, 1984), esp. chap. 5.

¹³ See Patricia Janis Broder, *Taos: A Painter's Dream* (New York, 1980), and Mary Carroll Nelson, *The Legendary Artists of Taos* (New York, 1980).

encounter with northern New Mexico, Dasburg wrote: "I felt as though I had come upon the Garden of Eden; everything was pristine."¹⁴

Americans who came to New Mexico—and to innumerable other preserves of the pristine—discovered that the frontier survived and that they did not have to abandon hope in the promises of its mythology. They discovered also that just as regenerative nature was still to be found in virginal purity, so also natural people, in harmony with the cosmos that lay both within and without, still walked the earth.¹⁵ Visiting the art community in Taos, painter Marsden Hartley experienced "total joy with the Indians and their dances, He felt renewed by proximity to the culture which he regarded as embodying purity and essential truth."¹⁶ In the 1920s, in fact, scorn and condescension gave way to romantic awe as scores of visitors to New Mexico and Arizona witnessed Pueblo Indian and Hopi ceremonial dances, developed appreciation for Indian arts and crafts, and—like Mabel Luhan—often sentimentalized native primitivism. Robert Henri and John Sloan who as members of the Ash Can group of artists had found inspiration in scenes of New York urban primitivism now responded to the land and native peoples of the Southwest; and Sloan's wife Dolly enlisted East Coast writers and artists in a successful effort to save the Pueblos' land from threats posed by pending congressional legislation.¹⁷ Sloan and his wife also arranged for the exhibition of Indian art in New York galleries. And the mounting respect accorded Native American art by serious collectors culminated in an exhibition, "Indian Art in the United States," mounted in 1941 by the Museum of Modern Art.¹⁸

¹⁴ Andrew Dasburg quoted by Erna Fergusson, *New Mexico: A Pageant of Three Peoples*, 2d ed. (Albuquerque, 1973), pp. 374-75.

¹⁵ For background on the promise and the glory that "civilized" people have found in "primitive" Indians, see Hoxie N. Fairchild, *The Noble Savage: A Study in Romantic Nationalism* (New York, 1928). Also useful are Leslie Fiedler, *The Return of the Vanishing American* (New York, 1968), and Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savages of America: A Study of the Indian and the Idea of Civilization* (Baltimore, 1953).

¹⁶ Quoted by Barbara Haskell, *Marsden Hartley* (New York, 1980), p. 58.

¹⁷ See Fergusson, *New Mexico*, pp. 370-71, and Graham D. Taylor, *The New Deal and American Indian Tribalism: The Administration of the Indian Reorganization Act, 1934-1945* (Lincoln, 1980), esp. pp. 11-13.

¹⁸ See Patricia Janis Broder, *American Indian Painting and Sculpture* (New York, 1981), p. 9. See also Frederic H. Douglas and René d'Harnoncourt, *Indian Art of the United States* (New York, 1941), the catalogue for the Museum of Modern Art exhibition, and John Sloan and Oliver La Farge, *Introduction to American Indian Art*, 2 vols. (New York, 1931), detailing the discovery of the importance of Indian art by "high art" circles. The critical success achieved by the Indian art exhibit at the 1939 San Francisco Exposition, staged by d'Harnoncourt, is stressed by Robert Fay Schrader, *The Indian Arts and Crafts Board: An Aspect of New Deal Indian Policy* (Albuquerque, 1983).

The connection between Indians and Latin Americans, perceived as together exemplifying the life-renewing wonders of primitivism, is a point central to the following section of this essay. Anticipating this point, I draw attention now to the fact that critics extolled both Indian art and the Mexican art, featured in a 1930 exhibition that toured several United States cities, for their spontaneity, vitality, and authenticity.¹⁹ Both schools of art earned plaudits for peeling back veneers of culture in order to lay bare what was most natural.

A principal cheerleader of the peeling back process was Mary Austin, the naturalist, philosopher, mystic, feminist, author, editor, and critic who settled in Santa Fe in 1924. She hoped that out of the American Southwest and Mexico might come "reinstatement of the handcraft culture and folk dramas" that would restore an authentic "American Rhythm," originated by Indians living in close proximity to nature, that had been obliterated by the artificial rhythms of a machine age.²⁰

Meantime, anthropologists joined artists and creative writers in reassessing native Americans. Franz Boas and many of his students pointed to the psychic and social strengths of tribal cultures. Often, a cult of the primitive attached to the school of cultural pluralism, headed by Boas, that began around the turn of the century to undermine the assumptions of social Darwinism and of a broad variety of racial determinists. Challenging the old scientific paradigm, Boas and his followers praised the results of race mixture and denied that cultures evolved through stages from savagery to barbarism to civilization, as Lewis Henry Morgan had posited. Each and every culture within the world's multiplicity of cultures was thought to be "an integrated way of life." Although nonmodern cultures "might be based on 'different traditions' and on a different 'equilibrium of emotion and reason,' they might still be of 'no less value than our own.'" Often implicit in the cultural pluralist's approach was disillusionment in the values of contemporary, individualistic, capitalist society.²¹ While proclaiming neutrality in assessing cultures, sometimes cultural pluralists threw objectivity to the winds in registering their preference for the ways of premoderns over

¹⁹ On North American response to the Mexican art exhibition, see Helen Delpar's excellent paper, "The Reception of Mexican Art in the United States, 1919-1930," presented at the November 1981 meeting of the Southern Historical Association in Louisville (unpublished).

²⁰ See Arrell Morgan Gibson, *The Santa Fe and Taos Colonies: Age of the Muses, 1900-1942* (Norman, 1983), pp. 202-03, 207-08. A less friendly treatment of Mary Austin appears in Richard Drinnon, *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire Building* (Minneapolis, 1980), pp. 223-31.

²¹ See George W. Stocking, Jr., *Race, Culture, and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology* (New York, 1968), pp. 172-73, 229, 88.

moderns. Thus Edward Sapir “openly avowed his preference for the ‘genuine culture of American Indians over the ‘spurious’ civilization of modern America.” Praising the “inherently harmonious, ‘balanced’ culture of the American Indians, Sapir contrasted it with the spiritual hybrid of contradictory patches” that passed for a culture among modern Americans.²²

In a similar mood, a frustrated social worker named John Collier turned in fascination toward the Indian. Collier, who would serve as Commissioner of Indian Affairs for nearly the entire span of the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration, made his way to New Mexico in 1920, responding to an invitation from Mabel Dodge about-to-be Luhan that caused him to put aside his initial plans to seek the natural and the authentic in Mexico. Among New Mexico’s Pueblo Indians Collier discovered the sense of community or “grouphood” (*Gemeinschaft*, to use Ferdinand Tönnies’ then fashionable term) and harmony that, he believed, had been snuffed out by materialism but that had to be reabsorbed into mainstream life if ever the United States was to transcend the limitations of bourgeois life.²³

Tending to judge all Indians by the unique Pueblo communities, Collier stereotyped the North American native as a collectivist being, vibrating in unison with the rhythms of nature, and inclined because of innate wholeness to eschew the atomistic approach to life. Collier hoped to strengthen the purportedly fundamental preference of the Indian for communalism and to buttress thereby a way of life that would serve as a germ that could eventually help to transform all of American life. Obviously, Collier had much in common with Latin America’s *indigenistas* of the 1920s and ’30s who tended to stereotype their Native Americans as inherently collectivist, in part because of remaining one with the cosmos, and who attributed the Indians’ occasional symptoms of aggressive competitiveness to the baneful effects of intruding capitalist culture.

Three years after Collier began his love affair with northern New Mexico and its Indians, Robert Herrick arrived briefly on the scene. Well-known

²² See Philip Gleason, “Americans All: World War II and the Shaping of American Identity,” *Review of Politics*, 43 (1981), pp. 491, 514.

²³ See Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man’s Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York, 1978), esp. pp. 178-86, and Hazel L. Hertzberg, *The Search for an American Indian Identity: Modern Pan-Indian Movements* (Syracuse, 1971), pp. 287-98. Extended, evenhanded treatment of Collier’s controversial administration of Indian affairs is provided by Kenneth R. Philp, *John Collier’s Crusade for Indian Reform, 1920-1945* (Tucson, 1977). On Collier’s life and activities up to 1928, see Lawrence C. Kelly’s masterful *The Assault on Assimilation: John Collier and the Origins of Indian Policy Reform* (Albuquerque, 1983). On the mystical visions that Collier brought to the formulation of Indian policy (resembling the attitudes that shaped Waldo Frank’s attitudes toward Latin Americans discussed below), see his *On the Gleaming Way*, 2d ed. (Chicago, 1962).

for his Chicago-scene novels in which he emphasized the crass materialism and greed that vitiated America's capitalist culture, Herrick found an antidote in the Indian communities of the Taos vicinity that he visited in 1923. One Indian settlement that he came to know particularly well he described as "the most civilized American community" in which he had ever lived. "In sacrificing all the comforts and prestige of life, the Indians had retained their civility and their inner selves." Leading lives that were "deeply unconscious," the Indians remained in touch with their traditions. Sensitive as well to the moods of nature surrounding them, they did not seek solace in the goods that "the white man had cumbered his life with." In all, they had a great lesson to teach their white conquerors. Moreover, Herrick found in the Hispanic hamlets of New Mexico much the same spirit that prevailed among the Indians. The Mexican occupants of these hamlets had "mixed their blood" in their mud houses clustered in unobtrusive settlements that "harmonized with nature." Even the few white ranchers "did little to discourage the harmony of it all. . . ."²⁴ Many of Herrick's compatriots exploring at the time the wonders of Mexico discovered in that country's rural hamlets the same sort of serenity and harmony that Herrick detected in New Mexico. To anticipate once more the connection between perceptions of Indians and Latin Americans, I want here to stress that North American expatriates in Mexico during the 1920s frequently applied to that country's Indian and mestizo populace the same stereotypes that fellow citizens back in the United States had begun to apply to Pueblo Indians.

Some North Americans disaffected by various aspects of modern civilization turned for deliverance not to New Mexico's Pueblo cultures but to the Plains Indians. With their vision quests, their sun dances, and their sweat-lodge ceremonies the Plains Indians served as exemplars of people who avoided alienation by periodical renewal in the transcendent. In fact, visions of regeneration lay at the heart of the Indian cult that flourished in the 1920s. Freemasonry provided an important stimulus to the cult, just as it contributed to the indigenista vogue in Latin America.²⁵ Masonic influence lay behind the founding of the Society of American Indians. In a 1925 edition of the Society's journal, the *American Indian Tepee*, Dr. Thomas M. Stewart ("Black Bear"), a non-Indian member of the Society, wrote:

Now occult philosophy teaches that even under our very eyes the new race and

²⁴ See the concluding chapter of Herrick's autobiographical novel *Waste* (New York, 1924), esp. pp. 405-06, 418-20. A central character in this novel, Cynthia Lane, is loosely modeled on Mabel Dodge Luhan.

²⁵ On the influence of Masonry on one indigenista movement in Peru, the APRA, see Fredrick B. Pike, "Visions of Rebirth: The Spiritualist Facet of Peru's Haya de la Torre," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 63 (1983), p. 501.

racess are preparing to be formed, and that it is in America that the transformation will take place, and it has already commenced. . . . By means of legends and traditions of the Red man, we can gently help to carry over the grand concepts of the ancient teaching, with which he had much to do in Atlantean and later times.²⁶

Other white Americans, disillusioned by modern culture, found in black rather than red lifestyles the model for renewal by a return to the natural. Traditionally, blacks had been regarded very much as a projection of the id-like unconscious that constituted a psychic rubbish heap.²⁷ In the 1920s, however, blacks garnered praise as mighty repositories of primal energy and irrepressible spirit, and also as a happy people adept in the ways of community, in consequence of which they remained whole. Toward the end of the decade, "the Negro was in vogue," according to Negro writer Langston Hughes;²⁸ the Harlem Renaissance flourished, and black culture offered a vision of community that was little short of an erotic utopia. George Gershwin and other composers sought to vitalize classical music by incorporating elements of Negro folk music, jazz, and blues. Curiously, though, it was a Rumanian, Constantin Brancusi, who in his 1928 sculpture "The White Negress" best captured the vision of a new humanity formed by a synthesis of white containment and black exuberance. For his counterculture in the 1960s, Norman Mailer dealt with the same symbolism in a celebrated essay on the White Negro.

For the Lost Generation of the 1920s, the writer Jean Toomer proved particularly effective in utilizing the imagery of civilization's return to a black substratum, which he associated with childhood innocence and exuberance, for psychological and social renewal: "I am satisfied," Toomer wrote, "that it is entirely possible to eradicate the false veneer of civilization, with its unnatural inhibitions, its selfishness, petty meanness and

²⁶ See *American Indian Tepee*, 7 (1925), pp. 6-7, quoted by Hertzberg, *Search for an American Indian Identity*, pp. 223-24.

²⁷ See Maurice Onwood, "Impulse and Honor: The Place of Slave and Master in the Ideology of Plantations," *Plantation Society in America*, 1 (1979), esp. pp. 33-37. On stereotypes extending back to the tenth century B.C. that depict slaves as people essentially dominated by their animalistic, instinctual nature, and slave owners as persons of consciousness and rational control, see William McKee Evans, "From the Land of Canaan to the Land of Guinea: The Strange Odyssey of the Sons of Ham," *American Historical Review*, 85 (1980), 14-53. As slavery came gradually to be reserved primarily for Africans, stereotypes once associated with the slave were imputed to blacks in general.

²⁸ See Langston Hughes's autobiography, *The Big Sea* (New York, 1940), and David Levering Lewis, *When Harlem Was in Vogue* (New York, 1981). See also Jervis Anderson, *This Was Harlem: A Cultural Portrait, 1900-1950* (New York, 1982), Nathan I. Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance* (New York, 1971), Bruce Kellner, ed., "Keep A-Inchin' Along": *Selected Writings of Carl Van Vechten about Black Art and Letters* (Westport, Conn., 1979), and Wilson J. Moses, *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism, 1850-1925* (Hamden, Conn., 1978).

unnatural behavior, under proper conditions. Adults can be reeducated to become as natural as little children before civilization stamps out their true subconscious instincts.’’²⁹ In the child-like, unalienated black, Toomer—who had African blood although he often chose to pass as white—found the vital emotionalism and cosmic rhythm that other wholeness-hungry Americans had found in Indians.³⁰

The notion of being reborn into an age of precapitalist innocence and becoming once more “as natural as little children” that had captivated Toomer contributed, in the 1920s, to the cult of the child. Romanticization of the child, even as sentimentalization of the Indian and the black, manifested the anticapitalist spirit that lay never far beneath the surface in that paradoxical decade when business was deified. Along with the reevaluation of children, Indians, and blacks came new attitudes toward women.

Although the matter is fraught with inconsistency (for the use of stereotypes is always disconcertingly inconsistent and at variance with the principle of contradiction), women are often lumped together, by males at any rate, with nature.³¹ They are described as inward and intuitive, as extra-rational—meaning that they operate both above and beneath reason, which is associated with masculine culture and with Logos as opposed to Eros. To use the terms about which Albert Hirschman has written so eloquently,³² women are seen as the “passions” in contrast to the calculating “interests” with which males, ostensibly, are more congenial. Moreover, and never mind the paradox of their passionate natures, women are depicted as pas-

²⁹ Jean Toomer, quoted in Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, p. 416. On the inspiration that “high art” began to find in children’s art, in part because of the way it was thought to lead one into the realm of the unconscious, see William Innes Homer, *Alfred Stieglitz and the American Avant-Garde* (Boston, 1977), pp. 144-46, 289, note 20, and 297-98. The interest that the Greenwich Village counterculture of World War I years accorded children’s art, about which Homer writes, reappeared in the counterculture of the 1920s and ’30s.

³⁰ Toomer stands in a long line of writers who have seen in black slaves, servants, and workers a source of regeneration. See Werner Sollors, “Literature and Ethnicity,” *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, ed. Stephen Thernstrom (Cambridge, Mass., 1980), p. 655. On the perception of blacks as uniquely endowed, by dint of long suffering, to lead the way toward the secular millennium, see Wilson J. Moses, *Black Messiahs and Uncle Toms: Social and Literary Manipulators of a Religious Myth* (College Station, Pa., 1982).

³¹ On the woman-and-nature theme, see Brian Easlea, *Witch Hunting, Magic and the New Philosophy* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J., 1980), Susan Griffin, *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her* (New York, 1978), Genevieve Lloyd, *The Man of Reason: ‘Male’ and ‘Female’ in Western Philosophy* (New York, 1984), Carol McMillan, *Woman, Reason and Nature* (Princeton, 1982), Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution* (New York, 1980), and Sherry B. Ortner, “Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?” in Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo, ed., *Woman, Culture and Society* (Stanford, 1974), pp. 67-87.

³² See Albert O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph* (Princeton, 1977).

sive, self-sacrificing, inclined toward abnegation and bonding rather than toward competition and individualism; they are rest, stasis, tranquility (one think's of Goethe's "Eternal Feminine") in contrast to action, dynamism, motion; they are Yin as opposed to Yang; they are the earth, awaiting penetration by the masculine sun.

While the passive, nonaggressive qualities imputed to them are sometimes honored as the basis of women's moral superiority, these are not the virtues that self-respecting males generally wish to emulate. In the 1920s, though, some men had begun to revise their thought on the aggressive, individualistic capitalist code and on the whole time-honored male ethic—a periodic occurrence among men, incidentally, even in precapitalist times. Distressed by a mounting sense of alienation, which Marxism's rising star helped make it fashionable to lament, men began to question the traditional incentives to conquer and to dominate; they were ready, in some instances at least, to approach nature and close-to-nature persons, women included, in quest of community rather than subjugation. They were even willing to take to heart the nineteenth-century admonition of Sarah Hale that civilization could not be redeemed until men became more like women.³³

Various signs, in addition to the flapper, suggested that in the 1920s the United States might be approaching a more androgynous culture. Alice Kessler-Harris in a 1982 study, for example, tells us that the 1920s constituted a turning point in women's history. More and more women found employment in business, social services, and the professions, and aspired to combine marriage and wage work.³⁴ The vision that James Oppenheim had proclaimed in his 1910 poetic drama *The Pioneers* seemed on the verge of fulfillment a decade or so later. According to Oppenheim, a new woman was arising, manly in her freedom and strength yet imbued with the grace and beauty of eternal womanhood. To be worthy of mating with the new woman, "a new manhood" would have to arise, "heroic as the old yet unafraid of tenderness and emotion."³⁵

As images of the proper role and destiny of women began to change, at least among persons put off by the business culture and anxiously peering ahead to detect the emergence of a new civilization, the poor came in also for reevaluation. Once dismissed as shiftless ne're-do-wells, the poor began

³³ Sarah Hale, quoted in Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York, 1977), p. 128.

³⁴ Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work: A History of Wage Earning Women in the United States* (New York, 1982), makes a major contribution in showing the extent to which the 1920s represented a turning point for women.

³⁵ See Leslie Fishbein, *Rebels in Bohemia: The Radicals of the "Masses," 1911-1917* (Chapel Hill, 1982), p. 137.

to emerge as innocent victims whose absence of selfishness and greed, whose concern with comradeship and sharing, had led to their exploitation by a ruthless system that glorified avarice and was therefore unnatural and, in fact, anti-nature. As the 1920s began, the message of the Social Gospel that Walter Rauschenbush had been sounding since the 1907 publication of his book *Christianity and the Social Crisis* gained a new vitality. Essentially in accord with Marx's adage, "the less you are, the more you have," Social Gospellers assailed the power wielders and the unjust institutions through which, purportedly, they victimized the virtuous poor. To them, it seemed logical to turn to those favored by Christ, the child-like, the passive, the materially indifferent, the "effeminate," the poor, and the suffering, as a collective savior, as nature incarnate, that could bestow redemption on errant society.³⁶ Understandably, Indians, blacks, women, children, and the poor were lumped together and viewed as destined for elevation in the new order; for, in the old order, they had been lumped together as unsuited to the life of culture because of their proximity to nature.

In his book *The Panda's Thumb* (New York, 1980), Stephen Jay Gould comments on the prevailing anthropological judgement at the turn of the twentieth century that, anatomically (because of their allegedly smaller brains) and emotionally, women and blacks were like white children. Perhaps he would be willing to add Indians as well as the poor to the list of those once presumed to be like white children. In any event, Gould informs us that the most reputable scientific theories of an age frighteningly close to our own assumed that white children represented an ancestral (primitive) adult stage of human evolution. Given the manner in which women were thrown in with all the human species allegedly farther down the scale in the evolution from nature toward culture, Gould asserts that he does not consider to be mere rhetoric the claim that women's battles are fought for all of us. Although few could have been actually aware of the fact, United States feminism in the 1920s symbolized a battle in behalf of all "natural persons," not just of North American women, Indians, blacks, children and the poor, but of Latin Americans as well; for by now United States critics of capitalist culture had perceived a connection between the causes and effects of internal and external colonization.

Counterculture intellectuals of the 1920s, their consciousness raised by feminism and a whole variety of reform movements, many of them spiced

³⁶ Similar notions of a millennialist future to be achieved through liberation of the dark-skinned victims of Western colonialism underlay the anti-imperialist urge that gripped many European intellectuals and artists around the turn of the century and found a reflection among United States avant-garde thinkers in the 1920s and '30s. For an indication of this thought, see Julius Lipp, *The Savage Strikes Back* (New Haven, 1937).

by Marxism, waxed increasingly hostile toward the internal colonization that they believed culture within the United States had imposed upon nature. Simultaneously, they felt increased national guilt over the purported external colonization through which a capitalist United States supposedly was destroying a potential Eden in Latin America, thereby alienating the two halves of a hemisphere that should be symbiotically joined. Accounting for the perceived link between internal and external colonization was the fact that stereotypes of long duration had cast both North America's underlings and the bulk of Latin America's population as creatures of nature.

THE BEARING OF UNITED STATES STEREOTYPE INVERSION ON LATIN AMERICA

Popular United States stereotypes traditionally associated Indians with Latin Americans, often to the despair of the latter. Typically, on the Centennial Stock Certificates issued by the United States government, two years early, in 1874, Latin America, depicted along with other regions of the world as bringing tribute in honor of the birthday celebration, was personified as two Indian maidens.³⁷

Not long after its discovery by Europeans, the territory subsequently to become the United States began to be symbolized by an Indian princess. But, when the United States attained its independence and then embarked on a remarkable saga of progress as it successfully dominated nature, thereby dooming Indians to the status of a vanishing race, a male and non-Indian symbol was called for; and Uncle Sam filled the need. Latin America, however, considered not yet to have evolved very far out of a state of nature, could still be symbolized by an Indian. Already by the early nineteenth century, in fact, stereotypes of Indians had become interchangeable with those attached to Latin Americans.

The Indian-Latin American association gained reenforcement when many North Americans encountered twin obstacles to their Manifest Destiny at about the same time: Hispanics in Texas and other borderlands regions and Indians in the Southeast as well as the Southwest and on the Great Plains. Thus it was a natural step from Cherokee to Mexican, or from Plains Indian to swarthy "Greasers."³⁸ Indians and Hispanics seemed linked in a dia-

³⁷ See Elwood Parry, *The Image of the Indian and the Black Man in American Art, 1590-1900* (New York, 1974), p. 130.

³⁸ See Albert K. Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny: A Study of Nationalist Expansion in American History* (Baltimore, 1935), pp. 72-99, and Arnoldo DeLeón, *They Called Them Greasers: Anglo Attitudes Toward Mexicans in Texas, 1821-1900* (Austin, 1983). See also Juan Ramón García, "The Mexican in Popular Literature, 1875 to 1925," in *Down Mexico Way*, ed. Teresa L. Turner (Tucson, 1984),

bolical alliance of barbarians to impede the course of culture and righteousness. Even before the floodtide of Manifest Destiny Andrew Jackson, who in his more charitable moments referred to the red men as "children,"³⁹ maintained that Indians lacked "intelligence, industry, and . . . moral habits," as well as the "desire of improvement" and the capacity for self-government.⁴⁰ Anyone familiar with Old Hickory's appraisals of Latin Americans must be struck by their interchangeability with his views on Indians.

At the turn of the twentieth century, an Indian and Iberian mestizo linkage remained intact in the minds of many United States leaders, one indication being that Theodore Roosevelt maintained that his country had the same civilizing duty toward Filipinos as toward Apaches. In a similar vein, General George W. Davis reported from Puerto Rico that the vast horde of mixed-blood "ignorant" islanders were "no more fit to take part in self-government than our reservation Indians."⁴¹

With the arrival of the twentieth century, the old uplifting urge among North Americans no longer focused just on Indians. A new generation of imperialists, among whom Woodrow Wilson would emerge as a conspicuous example, admonished citizens of Mexico and of various Central American and Caribbean republics to substitute individualistic, capitalist culture for the primitiveness in which they had traditionally lived. The terms in which the new imperialists couched their exhortations bear striking similarity to those employed for over a century by would-be apostles of civilization who labored to Americanize the American Indians by rescuing them from their precapitalist state of nature.⁴²

pp. 1-14, Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), esp. pp. 189-228, David J. Langum, "Californios and the Image of Indolence," *Western Historical Quarterly*, 9 (1978), 181-96, Leonard Pitt, *The Decline of the Californios* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1966), esp. chap. 3, David J. Weber, ed., *Foreigners in Their Native Land* (Albuquerque, 1973), and Weber, "'Scarce More than Apes': Historical Roots of Anglo American Stereotypes of Mexicans in the Border Region," in his edited book, *New Spain's Far Northern Frontier* (Albuquerque, 1979), pp. 295-307.

³⁹ See Michael Paul Rogin, *Fathers and Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian* (New York, 1975).

⁴⁰ Andrew Jackson, quoted in Ronald T. Takaki, *Iron Cages: Race and Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York, 1979), pp. 83-84.

⁴¹ On Roosevelt's lumping together of Filipinos and Apaches, see *ibid.*, p. 279. For the General Davis quotation, see Raymond Carr, *Puerto Rico: A Colonial Experiment* (New York, 1984), p. 333. In his provocative book *Facing West*, Richard Drinnon notes how attitudes originally applied to Indians were transferred to the inhabitants of Pacific islands and even of mainland China as the United States embarked upon imperialism. In imperialist expansion the United States faced not only to the west beyond its own west, but also to the south. The transfer of attitudes shaped by the frontier experience to people of nature occupying lands to the immediate south, rather than to inhabitants of the far-off west across the Pacific, has never received adequate attention.

⁴² On attempts to uplift Indians (attempts that will suggest to anyone knowledgeable on turn-of-the-

Until approximately the time of World War I, the perceived Indianness of the southern continent consistently counted against it in the minds of most North Americans. By the 1920s, though, the situation was changing.⁴³ Spokesmen for an emerging counterculture that challenged prevailing capitalist values did not view the south-of-the-border populace so much as requiring salvation by their cultural betters as able to provide redemption to the more materially developed Great Republic of the North. Thanks to Latin Americans, as perceived at least by some counterculture intellectuals, the United States might have a second chance for redemption in a New World frontier. Having wasted the original opportunity to find redemption through union with the people of nature occupying their own continental confines, North Americans could grasp anew after wholeness by uniting with, rather than seeking to repress or uplift, the Indianness that lay to the south.

If in the public fancy Latin Americans had long been associated with Indians, United States cartoonists from the late nineteenth century up to the 1920s had delighted in caricaturing the southern neighbors—especially of Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean—as unkempt blacks, as women, as children, and as idle, day-dreaming people unconcerned with material advancement and therefore justly rewarded by poverty.⁴⁴ Clearly, these caricatures intended to suggest Latin American inferiority. The psychological origins of these caricatures can be traced back at least as far as John Adams whose dislike of Latin Americans⁴⁵ surely is linked to his contempt for, as he put it, the “vicious” and “effeminate Appetites, Passions and Habits.”⁴⁶ With these words, Adams dismissed persons who had not gained mastery over nature.

century United States-Latin American relations the degree to which attitudes toward the area south of the border grew out of attitudes toward Native Americans), see Francis Paul Prucha, ed., *Americanizing the American Indians: Writings of the ‘Friends of the Indian’ 1880-1900* (Lincoln, 1973).

⁴³ By the 1920s, United States Indian policy began to reflect a general shift in racial attitudes. Increasingly, whites had come to abandon the vision of an integrated society, in which all alien elements somehow were to be elevated to the standards of the WASP. In place of integration, cultural pluralism had come to prevail; and culture pluralism assumed the survival of pockets of otherness within American society. (See Frederick A. Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920* [Lincoln, 1984], pp. 240-44.) The same transition in values and expectations occurred in the attitudes of many North Americans toward Latin Americans. The transition was especially evident in the 1930s.

⁴⁴ See John J. Johnson, *Latin America in Caricature* (Austin, 1980). This is one of the most revealing studies ever published on underlying United States attitudes toward Latin Americans. On the significance of the women and the child as symbols in United States thought, see Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York, 1964), esp. p. 47, and Richard King, *The Party of Eros: Radical Social Thought and the Realm of Freedom* (Chapel Hill, 1972), p. 23.

⁴⁵ See Arthur P. Whitaker, *The United States and the Independence of Latin America, 1800-1830* (Baltimore, 1941), p. 37.

⁴⁶ John Adams, quoted by Takaki, *Iron Cages*, p. 4.

Women have consistently been stereotyped as closer to the emotional, irrational realms than to the domains of reason and logic because of their biological destiny not only to give birth to but to spend much of their lives in close proximity to children. Similarly, Latin Americans, even of the upper classes, have been associated with the realm of nature because of being destined by historical and demographic circumstances to spend their lives in close proximity to such culturally underdeveloped beings as Indians, blacks, and retarded mixed bloods. Contributing enormously to North American pejorative views of Latin America's privileged sectors—even as it had to Puritan contempt for southern cavaliers—was the supposed fact that these gentlepersons scarcely bestirred themselves to uplift the surrounding masses but instead tolerated, even coddled, and hence perpetuated the animality of the masses, in the process becoming contaminated by it themselves.

By the 1920s and '30s, however, to return to my central thesis, the old order of values was turning topsy-turvy. The preferential option of the counterculture for the collectivist, natural, sharing life ascribed to Indians, blacks, women and the poor tended now to forge a favorable stereotype of Latin Americans. At the same time childhood, instead of being a nasty period through which all had to pass on their way to a higher state, came to be viewed as a way of life that could be perpetuated indefinitely.⁴⁷ Thus the childishness of Latin Americans, together with their "effeminate" ways and the uninhibited spontaneity and instinctual approach they ostensibly shared with Indians and blacks counted in their favor. Furthermore, Latin America's cultural and racial *mestizaje* instead of being taken as a badge of inferiority became now a symbol of hope to a generation intent upon synthesizing culture and nature, rather than obliterating nature so as to safeguard culture. The degree to which United States stereotypes of the mixed blood began to change in the 1920s is attested by the number of prominent Oklahomans, with Will Rogers at their head, who took pride in claiming Indian blood and who were often looked up to by the rest of society because of the promise they personified of the synthesis of the white and the dark.

VISIONS OF A HEMISPHERIC SYNTHESIS OF CULTURE AND NATURE

In 1892 an American professor of philosophy at Tokyo University speculated that Japan was on the way to becoming a unique blend of East and

⁴⁷ The desire to prolong childhood appears in many countercultures regardless of time and location. In Germany, for example, the Youth Movement that began in 1901 as a hiking society for boys, and soon spread throughout the country, revealed this characteristic. "One of its chief convictions was the idea that youth was not merely a transitional phase on the way to adulthood, but a value in and of itself." See Richard Wolin, *Walter Benjamin: An Aesthetic of Redemption* (New York, 1983), p. 4.

West, “the point of fusion for the two halves of humanity, two civilizations that had been severed in ancient times.”⁴⁸ The new type of person about to be created in Japan could, he believed, “prevail through the world for the next thousand years.”⁴⁹ In the isolationist mood of the 1920s and '30s (which always tolerated an opening toward Latin America), some American dreamers saw no need to look across the Pacific for a millennialist fusing of opposite ways of being. The fusion could take place in their own hemisphere. Among United States intellectuals and artists who envisaged monumental consequences from a North-South fusion, Waldo Frank stood conspicuously—even if not so conspicuously as his monumental ego led him to believe.

While decidedly a minor figure in the overall sweep of the history of American ideas, Frank nevertheless gained a certain ephemeral distinction because he managed to synthesize the regenerationist hopes of his generation and to focus them on Latin America. In this process, Frank, more than any other United States writer of his era, became known to Latin Americans.⁵⁰ In fact, many Latin American intellectuals saw in Frank the authentic spokesman of a new era of North-South rapport and mutual fulfillment and redemption. Mistaking Frank for a trustworthy prophet of a new era, they were prepared to see in the Good Neighbor policy the first stage in the fulfillment of his confident prediction of the convergence, in equality and mutual respect, of the United States and Latin America. Without the mysticism and mythological archetypes of an envisaged hemispheric rebirth through North-South convergence as articulated by Frank, Latin American pensadores would have been less inclined to believe that the Good Neighbor policy might presage the dawn of a genuinely new beginning in the New World's history.

Waldo Frank must be seen against the background of secular millennialism and messianism issuing from the Jewish intelligentsia in early twentieth-century North America. As such, he had much in common with Israel Zangwill whose celebrated play of 1908, “The Melting Pot,” is suffused

⁴⁸ See Robert A. Rosenstone, “Learning from those ‘Imitative’ Japanese: Another Side of the American Experience in the Mikado’s Empire,” *American Historical Review*, 85 (1980), p. 594, referring to Professor Ernest F. Fenollosa.

⁴⁹ Fenollosa, “Chinese and Japanese Traits,” *Atlantic Monthly*, 69 (1892), p. 775, quoted in Rosenstone, “Learning from those ‘Imitative’ Japanese,” p. 594.

⁵⁰ According to the *Literary History of the United States*, ed. Robert Spiller et al. (New York, 1948), II, 1387, Frank was the “only serious North American author who exercised a direct influence in Latin America during the 1930s.” Moreover, Frank’s reputation endured in Latin America, in marked contrast to the precipitous decline it suffered in the United States. See William S. Dudley, “Waldo Frank, North American Pensador,” in *Columbia Essays in International Affairs: The Dean’s Papers*, Vol. 3, ed. A. W. Cordier (New York, 1968).

with mystical meanings.⁵¹ Frank's contribution to melting-pot and cultural-pluralism symbolism was to expand it beyond national boundaries by placing it in a hemispheric context. In this he drew not only upon current strains of mysticism and spiritualism but harked back to the Cabala with its concept of the Shekhinah or feminine aspect of God. According to Cabalist myth, God had been separated at one point from the Shekhinah. Thus a part of God had been alienated from the godhead. Ultimately, through a *coniunctio* or sacred marriage, God would be reunited with the feminine principle, embodied in or at least symbolized by the chosen people in exile, the Israelites.⁵² In the secularized version of this myth that Frank developed, the masculine United States would come together with the feminine Hispanic and Indian peoples of the south so as to create an androgynous, and therefore whole, civilization.

Once while in Brazil Frank had had a sexual liaison with a dusky, earthy woman. As he described the event, it is obvious that for him the coupling with an archetypal Latin American female symbolized all that was involved in the ultimate cultural fusion of North and South America.⁵³ Prescinding from the sexual analogy, what Frank envisaged was the harmonious fusion of the rational, empirical, and mechanistic with the instinctive, introspective, and vitalistic world views.

Born in 1889 into a Jewish family with keen literary, artistic, and musical interests (his mother was a musician who helped oversee her son's training as a cellist), Waldo Frank graduated from Yale University in 1911 and began to work as a journalist and free-lance writer. In 1916 he helped found the review *The Seven Arts* and married Margaret Naumburg who, like Frank, was deeply interested in Thoreau and Whitman, in Oriental religion, and the new theories of psychoanalysis. Already by 1919 when he published the novel *Our America*,⁵⁴ Frank had turned to mysticism and a study of medieval cabalists. Intrigued by the possibility that his generation was on the threshold of attaining a "four-dimensional" consciousness that would free it from conventional space-time limitations, he contended that he and his contemporaries had embarked on the search for a new America, and that "in the seeking we create her."⁵⁵ A good number of counterculture

⁵¹ See Philip Gleason, "American Identity and Americanization," *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, p. 38.

⁵² See Gershom Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York, 1969), pp. 108, 130. For useful background material, see Stephen Sharot, *Messianism, Mysticism, and Magic: A Sociological Analysis of Jewish Religious Movements* (Chapel Hill, 1982).

⁵³ See Waldo Frank, *South American Journey* (New York, 1943), pp. 45-57.

⁵⁴ On Frank's fiction, see William Bittner, *The Novels of Waldo Frank* (Philadelphia, 1958).

⁵⁵ See Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, pp. 271-72. On Frank see also Michael Ogorzaly, "Waldo Frank: Prophet of Hispanic Regeneration," Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame (1982).

intellectuals, many of them fascinated by aspects of esoteric thought, shared in Waldo Frank's visionary optimism. Before the end of the 1920s "his name stood for the radical cultural and aesthetic aspirations of a whole generation of writers, including such figures as Sherwood Anderson, Hart Crane, Alfred Stieglitz, Van Wyck Brooks, Randolph Bourne, Jean Toomer, Paul Rosenfeld, and Lewis Mumford."⁵⁶

Repelled by the materialism of North Americans, their deification of the machine that had resulted from a peculiar amalgam of Protestantism and capitalism, and their propensity to approach the earth only in the spirit of possession and exploitation,⁵⁷ Frank had first intuited the importance of South to North America while a visitor to Taos. In northern New Mexico he found people who were not psychically alienated, because their conscious and subliminal selves fused into a whole; he found also—even as D. H. Lawrence thought he had found—a people who lived harmoniously rather than in an adversary relationship with the physical environment, a people who were one with the cosmos. New Mexico's spiritual modes of existence might be owing, he deduced, not only to its Indian but also to its Iberian heritage. To check this insight Frank went to Spain; and he fell in love with the mystical tradition that he convinced himself he found there. Returning home in a state of spiritual excitement, he published *Virgin Spain* in 1926. Shortly translated into Spanish, this book helped make Frank, for the next fifteen-to-twenty years, perhaps the best-known contemporary United States author, both in Spain and Spanish America. Anxious to verify the presence of a mystical, intuitive, inward sensitivity resulting from the Indian and Hispanic legacies (and not averse to reaping some economic gain from his new fame in the Spanish-speaking world), Frank undertook an Ibero-American lecture tour in 1929.

Speaking in Spanish before large and enthusiastic audiences in such centers as Mexico City, Buenos Aires, and Lima, Frank evoked an almost frenzied response from many Spanish American intellectuals. His success stemmed from his penchant for telling his audiences what they wanted to hear. Instead of chiding Spanish Americans for their economic backwardness and challenging them to uplift themselves by emulating their advanced northern neighbors, Frank praised the intellectuals of the southern continent for their mystical sensitivity and spoke of their destiny to redeem the spiritually starved United States and thereby initiate a great process of "re-

⁵⁶ Alan Trachtenberg, introduction to *Memoirs of Waldo Frank*, ed. Trachtenberg (Amherst, 1973), p. viii.

⁵⁷ For development of these themes, see Frank's *The Re-Discovery of America: An Introduction to a Philosophy of American Life* (New York, 1929).

creation.”⁵⁸ Realization of the American hemisphere’s potential for re-creation depended upon the two “half-worlds” of North and South America becoming “one mystical organic whole, existing in harmony and combining the best qualities of the materialistic North and the spiritual South.”⁵⁹

In Frank’s vision of hemispheric wholeness each of the two parts would become somewhat like its opposite. But this process would not proceed to the extent of total homogenization. It was the promise of a harmony between individual halves that would to some extent preserve their own identity that Peru’s Luis Alberto Sánchez, one of Frank’s most enthusiastic admirers, found especially to his liking. In the coming synthesis, as Sánchez interpreted Frank’s often murky message, “each part of America must conserve and allow to evolve its own individual traits.”⁶⁰ In the reborn hemisphere, then, a United States that had been stripped of hegemony would continue to perform prodigies of economic production, although paying more attention to its poets and prophets and recognizing the importance of the spiritual and the mystical; and Latin America, its wellbeing secure within a hemisphere predicated upon the free exchange of material goods and spiritual energies, would continue its cultivation of the riches that transcend creatureliness, although acquiring greater organizational and economic skills at the same time. Here was a projected future guaranteed to dazzle a broad array of Latin American intellectuals, many of them under the influence of Henri Bergson and of José Enrique Rodó’s Arielism and also of a millennialist occultism that has been common in their ranks. Understandably, intellectuals of this outlook lionized Waldo Frank. In their belief in miraculous deliverance from the need to develop overriding concern with the grubby realities of material development, they helped doom their countries to continuing underdevelopment.

D. H. Lawrence once observed it was “impossible for the White people to approach the Indian without either sentimentality or dislike.”⁶¹ The same

⁵⁸ Waldo Frank, *America Hispana: A Portrait and a Prospect* (New York, 1932), p. 370. In his *Memoirs*, p. 134, Frank wrote: “How could the Americas become a New World (rather than ‘the grave of Europe’) unless they produced new men?”

⁵⁹ This was Frank’s message to Argentines, as described by Doris Meyer in *Victoria Ocampo: Against the Wind and the Tide* (New York, 1979), p. 105. Frank’s belief that the two halves of the New World were destined to form an organic whole adds a new dimension to some of the viewpoints described by Arthur P. Whitaker in his masterful study *The Western Hemisphere Idea: Its Rise and Decline* (Ithaca, 1954). Whitaker ignored the mystical, esoteric element inherent in the vision of Western hemispheric unity. An important void in intellectual history might be filled by a study approaching inter-American movements from this perspective.

⁶⁰ Luis Alberto Sánchez, quoted in J. J. Bernardete, ed., *Waldo Frank in America Hispana* (New York, 1930), p. 119.

⁶¹ From D. H. Lawrence’s *Mornings in Mexico*, quoted by Wyndham Lewis, *Paleface: The Philos-*

may be said of the North American's approach to the Latin American. In the final analysis, sentimentality such as Frank's may be as mischievous as dislike.

In his sentimentalized Latin Americans Frank discovered allies who, he believed, would help strengthen a grand counter-tradition in the United States that has always given battle to the culture of pure materialism. Frank, as Van Wyck Brooks has written,

was drawn to Latin America because whatever were its defects, 'well-being' was not considered the highest good there. It seemed to him obvious that certain values survived in the Hispanic scene that our country had forgotten. . . . Feeling that the mystical values flourished still in the Hispanic world, he hoped for a cultural union between the North and the South. Believing that this would restore the traditional wholeness of man, he set out to integrate these worlds to one another.⁶²

In many ways, the attraction that Frank and other North Americans found in Latin Americans, during the time when stereotypes underwent inversion, paralleled the attitudes of Europeans toward the most "natural" and primitive land that lay close to their borders: Spain. In the 1930s, Franz Borkenau wrote of Spain:

There, life is not yet efficient; that means that it is not yet mechanized; that beauty is still more important . . . than practical use; sentiment more important than action; honour very often more important than success; love and friendship more important than one's job. In other words, it is the lure of a civilization near to ourselves, . . . but which has not yet participated in our later development toward mechanism, the adoration of quantity, and the utilitarian aspect of things. In this lure . . . is implied . . . the conclusion that after all something seems wrong with . . . our civilization.⁶³

Not only Europeans but North Americans as well discovered the lure of Spain in the 1930s—sometimes following the lead not so much of Waldo Frank as of Ernest Hemingway. Not only in the one-time colonies just across the border from them, but in these colonies' *madre patria* as well, North American intellectuals and artists discovered an area of nature not yet reduced to mechanistic culture. In the Spanish peasantry, which Spain's anarchists and socialists sought both to redeem and to be redeemed by, North Americans found a communalist and holistic ideal virtually identical

ophy of the 'Melting Pot' (New York, 1969, originally published in 1929), p. 174. In this caustic book, Lewis is alternately insightful and mean-spirited as he examines feminism and the cults of the Indian, the Negro, and the child that engulfed many United States intellectuals in the 1920s.

⁶² Van Wyck Brooks, *Days of the Phoenix: The Nineteen-Twenties I Remember* (New York, 1957), pp. 27-28.

⁶³ Franz Borkenau, *The Spanish Cockpit* (Ann Arbor, 1963, originally published in 1937), pp. 299-300.

to the one imputed to Native Americans. And, once the Spanish Civil War began, North American blacks together with their white allies found in Spanish Republicans indirect allies of nature's children in Ethiopia whom the legions of Mussolini's Italy, where capitalism had run amuck to produce fascism, were bent upon subjugating. In the charismatic Communist "La Pasionaria" (Dolores Ibarruri) North America's counterculture found a galvanizing symbol of the liberated woman turned androgynous. Moreover, United States intellectuals alienated from their own culture could join with Spain's José Antonio Primo de Rivera in proclaiming, "Spain, blessed be your backwardness."⁶⁴ Backwardness, after all, connoted what was child-like, what was not yet developed and therefore not yet corroded and twisted by capitalism's one-dimensional culture.

Because of the dramatic impact produced by its Civil War decade, Spain competed with her one-time colonies for the attention of a United States counterculture seeking redemptive wholeness.⁶⁵ And, even as with Waldo Frank so also with the counterculture in general, sympathy for "Virgin Spain"—cast as a great-mother archetype that promised rebirth—was part and parcel of the new empathy for Latin Americans that contributed to an intellectual milieu favorable to the forging of the Good Neighbor policy.

COUNTERCULTURE VALUES PENETRATE THE FOREIGN POLICY ESTABLISHMENT

Latin Americans might be accounted naive for assuming that Waldo Frank could be taken as a reliable herald of a new hemispheric policy—even though the State Department did offer him four thousand dollars in 1941 to undertake a Latin American lecture tour that Washington hoped would counter the effects of fascist propaganda.⁶⁶ However, could not Latin Americans find justification for believing that a truly new era had dawned when officials in policy-making positions also indicated that a thoroughgoing departure from tradition was at hand in the United States?

Speaking in Mexico City in 1940, John Collier rendered unstinting praise to retiring President Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940). Ignoring Cárdenas's nationalization of foreign oil and agricultural holdings, Collier found the

⁶⁴ See José Antonio Primo de Rivera, *Obras de . . . , edición cronológica*, comp. Agustín del Río Cisneros, 4th ed. (Madrid, 1966), p. 787.

⁶⁵ See Fredrick B. Pike, "The Spanish Background to the Civil War in Spain and the U.S. Response to the War," in Mark Falcoff and Pike, eds., *The Spanish Civil War: American Hemispheric Perspectives* (Lincoln, 1982), pp. 30-37.

⁶⁶ See Ogorzaly, "Waldo Frank," p. 189. As it turned out, Frank did not undertake his lecture tour until 1942. On it see his *South American Journey*, and *Ustedes y Nosotros: Nuevo mensaje a Ibero América*, trans. from an English manuscript by Frieda Weber (Buenos Aires, 1942).

proof of the president's greatness in his concern for the Indian.⁶⁷ The elevation of Mexico's natural man over the interests of foreign capitalists was not the customary basis on which a highly placed Washington official judged the virtues of a Latin American leader. Yet, precisely on this basis the United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs formed his appraisal of Lázaro Cárdenas. Similar considerations, I suspect, led the United States Ambassador to Mexico, Josephus Daniels (discussed below in some detail), to hail Cárdenas as "the best president Mexico has had since [Benito] Juárez."⁶⁸

Then there was Henry A. Wallace, the New Deal's Secretary of Agriculture until 1940 when he became Roosevelt's successful vicepresidential candidate. In 1942 Wallace phoned Waldo Frank on the eve of the latter's departure on a Latin American lecture tour. The phone conversation convinced the Jewish seer that Wallace was another true believer in the vision of creating a new American hemisphere.⁶⁹

Three years before the phone conversation Wallace had written: "We are challenged to build here on this hemisphere a new culture which is neither Latin American nor North American but genuinely inter-American. Undoubtedly it is possible to build an inter-American consciousness and an inter-American culture which will transcend both its Anglo-Saxon and its Iberian origins."⁷⁰ The words might almost have come from Waldo Frank, and to Latin American wishful thinkers they carried the imprimatur of official policy. So did the well-known Wallace thesis that once the struggle against fascism had been won the United States should commit its surplus capital not to rebuilding the old world but rather to building viable economies in the underdeveloped world. Here was a message calculated to win approval from Latin America's upper classes. However, it was the downtrodden, especially the peasantry, that most aroused Wallace's sympathy in Latin America. And this sympathy rendered him popular primarily not

⁶⁷ See Josephus Daniels, *Shirt-Sleeve Diplomat* (Chapel Hill, 1947), p. 309.

⁶⁸ See E. David Cronon, *Josephus Daniels in Mexico* (Madison, 1960), p. 113.

⁶⁹ See Frank, *Ustedes y Nosotros*, pp. 165-67.

⁷⁰ Henry A. Wallace, *Democracy Reborn. Selected from the Public Papers and edited with an introduction and notes by Russell Lord* (New York, 1944), p. 159. José Manuel Puig Casauranc, Mexican ambassador to the United States at the time, offered a 1931 toast in Washington that echoes the sentiments of Waldo Frank and Henry Wallace: "America! Our America, without distinction of race or language, must become more and more united. Without boasting and without the slightest offense to Europe, it must be recognized that the axis of the Western civilization is turning; that it has already turned from where it was only a quarter of a century ago. We believe that axis is now at the point of passing, from North to South, to the American Continent." Several years later Puig Casauranc, then Mexico's minister of foreign relations, repeated the same toast to United States Ambassador Josephus Daniels. See Daniels, *Shirt-Sleeve Diplomat*, p. 100.

among the privileged but rather among the reformist and even the revolutionary elements of Latin America.

Henry Wallace believed that “way of life” farmers had a religious bond with the earth and with natural processes, having “never lost their touch with the soil, the mother of us all.”⁷¹ Because of their contact with the earth, way of life farmers had remained “human beings, at a time when capitalism was having such a de-humanizing effect on increasing numbers in labor, agriculture and business.”⁷² The hope of Latin America lay, according to Wallace, in the development of its peasantry through creation of agricultural cooperatives, such as those established in Mexico under President Cárdenas and such as those the Incas had maintained prior to Spanish conquest.⁷³ Moreover, programs of decentralized industrialization could bring small-scale manufacturing into the midst of rural cooperatives, resulting in factories in the field that provided workers with an ongoing opportunity to be renewed through contact with nature.⁷⁴ Through development along these lines would ensue “the grandeur that comes when men wisely work with nature.”⁷⁵ Perhaps Wallace’s championing of equal rights for women⁷⁶ contributed to the mindset that made him a spokesman for awakening the potential of Latin America’s downtrodden. Whatever the source of his concern, reformist elements in Latin America saw Wallace as the herald of a new type of hemispheric unity. When Wallace visited Mexico in 1943, Ambassador Daniels reported enthusiastically that no other person could have been so effective in nullifying Nazi propaganda. “No man could have served so well as Henry Wallace as a symbol of democracy to Mexicans, whose whole revolutionary program centered around the efforts of Mexico to help the common man. Everywhere Mexicans—especially the *campesinos*—greeted him with spontaneous and ceremonial effection.”⁷⁷

Before assuming his ambassadorial duties in Mexico in 1933, Josephus Daniels had been briefed by Herschel Johnson, head of the Mexican desk in the State Department. Johnson, who had served in Mexico with Ambassador Dwight Morrow at the end of the 1920s, expressed to Daniels warm enthusiasm for Mexican efforts to aid the Indian peasantry: “Despite all

⁷¹ Wallace, *Democracy Reborn*, p. 138.

⁷² Henry A. Wallace, *The Price of Freedom* (Washington, D.C., 1940), p. 9.

⁷³ Wallace, *Democracy Reborn*, pp. 230-31.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁷⁵ Henry A. Wallace, *Soviet Asia Mission*, with the collaboration of Andrew J. Steiger (New York, 1946), p. 20.

⁷⁶ See *ibid.*, pp. 102, 124, and *Democracy Reborn*, p. 198.

⁷⁷ Daniels, *Shirt-Sleeve Diplomat*, p. 347.

the grossness and selfishness of the leaders of the revolution, there is a germ of sincerity that you trace all through the movement, even with the worst of the leaders. They desire to uplift the illiterate Indian peasant.’’⁷⁸ During his lengthy stay as ambassador (1933-1942) Daniels revealed a concern for Mexico’s Indians that matched, perhaps even exceeded, Johnson’s. Perhaps incidentally, and perhaps not so incidentally, he also showed a concern for the status of women. When presenting his credentials to President Abelardo Rodríguez, Daniels insisted on violating protocol by having his wife and the wives of the embassy staff present at the ceremony.⁷⁹

Enthusiastic about the Mexican Revolution, especially under the leadership of Indian-blooded and apparently incorruptible Lázaro Cárdenas, Daniels saw its primary purpose as the restoration of land to Indians. Noting that “today nearly all the population is pure Indian or mestizo,” Daniels praised the Indians for having remained “rooted in the soil.”⁸⁰ During the Porfirio Díaz dictatorship (1876-1911), however, many Indians had been despoiled of property, frequently, Daniels observed, at the hands of North Americans in connivance with the dictator. Applauding the land reform zeal of Cárdenas, and showing scant sympathy for the agrarian claims of some United States citizens, Daniels noted: “My residence in Mexico has made me more interested than ever in problems of putting the tenants on the land and giving them a stake in old mother earth.”⁸¹

“His Jeffersonian view of the importance of the small landholder in a democratic society naturally led Daniels to sympathize with the aims of the Mexican agrarian program,” writes E. David Cronon in a masterful account of Daniels’s diplomatic career in Mexico.⁸² However, both Thomas Jefferson and Woodrow Wilson, another of Daniels’s heroes whom he had served as secretary of the navy, would have been dismayed by the communalist philosophy that guided the Cárdenas approach to land reform. Not so Daniels. In a genuine spirit of cultural pluralism, Daniels accepted the applicability, in the light of Mexican traditions, of a semi-socialist approach to landownership. Familiar with, and favorably impressed by Eyer N. Simpson’s 1937 study *The Ejido, Mexico’s Way Out*,⁸³ Daniels embraced the concept of semi-collectivized agricultural communities that, in Simpson’s view, could become sites for factories in the field. By applying this

⁷⁸ Herschel Johnson, quoted in Cronon, *Josephus Daniels*, p. 85.

⁷⁹ Daniels, *Shirt-Sleeve Diplomat*, p. 25.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 308.

⁸¹ Daniels, quoted in Cronon, *Josephus Daniels*, p. 130.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 130. Cronon, p. 61, also detects an underlying Wilsonian influence on Daniels.

⁸³ See Daniels, *Shirt-Sleeve Diplomat*, p. 199.

formula, Daniels hoped Mexico could proceed toward an era of social justice in which human rights took precedence over private property rights.

As a mentor on Mexican history and destiny, Daniels had also Frank Tannenbaum of Columbia University, who had lived for an extended period in Mexico in the 1920s and had published in 1933 his influential *Peace by Revolution: An Interpretation of Mexico*. Tannenbaum hailed the Mexican Revolution as a death-and-regeneration process whereby Mexicans would undo the effects of Spanish conquest and liberate the energies of the true sons and daughters of the soil. "Mexico is returning to the children of the Indian mother, and will be colored largely by her blood and her cultural patterns,"⁸⁴ Tannenbaum averred. Regarded suspiciously by the State Department in the 1920s as a member of an alleged Jewish-Bolshevik clique of North Americans in Mexico who seemed to be plotting against United States national interests,⁸⁵ Tannenbaum less than a decade later was the close personal friend of Mexico's President Cárdenas and a trusted advisor of the United States ambassador.⁸⁶ Toward the end of the '30s, moreover, the United States Embassy in Lima was using Tannenbaum—as it would use Waldo Frank in 1942—to close its ties with Victor Raúl Haya de la Torre,⁸⁷ the Peruvian firebrand who preached Indian regeneration in Andean America and who in the 1920s had been under State Department surveillance as a dangerous radical.⁸⁸ In certain ways, then, official policy was keeping pace with and to some extent being guided by the reversal of stereotypes that had begun at the level of a counterculture. Meantime, counterculture values had spread from intellectual circles and certain fringes of the foreign policy establishment to Main Street, a fact that Wall Street failed to reckon with in 1938.

In response to the nationalization of foreign oil holdings, United States big business unleashed a vicious propaganda assault against Mexicans, using all the old stereotypes to depict them as less than fully human, as lazy Indians, as naughty children, and as people who had undergone "racial

⁸⁴ Frank Tannenbaum, *Peace by Revolution: An Interpretation of Mexico* (New York, 1933), p. 6.

⁸⁵ See John A. Britton, "In Defense of Revolution: American Journalists in Mexico, 1920-1929," *Journalism History*, 5 (1978-79), pp. 126-28.

⁸⁶ See Daniels, *Shirt-Sleeve Diplomat*, p. 300.

⁸⁷ On Tannenbaum's 1938 meeting with Haya de la Torre, see Thomas M. Davies, Jr., and Víctor Villanueva, eds., *Secretos electorales del APRA: Correspondencia y documentos de 1939* (Lima, 1982), pp. 17-19. On Frank's 1942 meeting with Haya, see Frank, *South American Journey*, p. 383. His political rights stripped by the Peruvian government, Haya de la Torre was officially in hiding in the Lima area at the time of the Tannenbaum and Frank visits. However, the Peruvian government and the United States Embassy knew where Haya was most of the time.

⁸⁸ See Richard V. Salisbury, "The Middle American Exile of Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre," *The Americas*, 40 (1983), pp. 1-16.

degeneration.” All of the old epithets and stereotypes appeared in abundance in a July 1938 edition of *Atlantic Monthly* aimed at whipping up popular indignation against Mexicans and forcing the State Department into a heavy-handed response to the expropriation.⁸⁹ Rather than mobilizing Americans, the July *Atlantic Monthly* seemed to embarrass them, and even to arouse their ire against the propagandists. At a time when concern over Nazi Germany was mounting, propaganda about “racial degeneration” proved decidedly counterproductive. Indeed, it was probably experience with Nazi Germany that gave total victory, for a few years at least, to the proponents of cultural pluralism.

In the final analysis, the 1938 propaganda onslaught against Mexicans may have failed because by that time North Americans in general had grown less inclined automatically to accept negative stereotypes of women, blacks, children and Indians, of Mexicans and Latin Americans as a whole. All of those ostensibly shaped by proximity to nature had emerged to the status of full humanity. Indeed, many North Americans had begun to accept the premises of the Nashville Agrarians, of Regionalist artists and also of those artists banded together in the American Scene, according to which human virtue was proportional to proximity to the earth.

Such an American was the Chicago-based novelist Robert Herrick, the already-mentioned critic of capitalist materialism who had discovered the life of virtue and harmony among the Hispanics and Indians of New Mexico. During Roosevelt’s first term Herrick, although he had voted the Socialist ticket in 1932, was appointed Government Secretary of the Virgin Islands. Up to his death on St. Thomas in 1938, Herrick, who had steadfastly been an advocate for the new, liberated woman, proved enormously successful in establishing a warm relationship with the Negro and mulatto natives of the islands. He provides another example, this time at a low level, of the entry of counterculture values into the foreign policy establishment.⁹⁰

At the top level, Sumner Welles may have been influenced by changing stereotypes of nature and of those who led the natural life. An important architect of the Good Neighbor policy until his 1943 resignation from the State Department (with whose hard-liners he had often clashed), Welles at the end of the Good Neighbor era in 1946 recommended that Washington

⁸⁹ See Daniels, *Shirt-Sleeve Diplomat*, p. 258.

⁹⁰ See Daniel Aaron’s introduction to Robert Herrick’s *Memoirs of an American Citizen*, a novel originally published in 1905 (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), p. xxviii. See also Louis J. Budd’s introduction to Herrick’s novel *The Web of Life* (New York, 1970, originally published in 1900), pp. v-xxi, and Blake Nevius, *Robert Herrick: The Development of a Novelist* (Los Angeles and Berkeley, 1970).

learn to live with Argentina's Juan Domingo Perón. With his promise to abolish the prevailing agricultural system and turn "laborers and tenants into proprietors," Perón, according to Welles, "had the inherent capacity and the chance to make of his promised 'social revolution' a New Deal for the Argentine people."⁹¹

The argument that policy makers responded to the same stereotype reversals that affected intellectuals and even the general public, and in consequence entered upon new approaches to Latin America, cannot be pushed too far. The ability to sympathize more with Latin American peasants than with United States capitalists never became an especially conspicuous trait in Secretary of State Cordell Hull, or in A. A. Berle, Jr., or in any number of other tough-minded planners of the Good Neighbor policy whose interests lay primarily in expanding south-of-the-border opportunities for North American capitalism.⁹² What is more, some policy planners accepted the Latin Americans-as-close-to-nature perspective in its old, pejorative implications as a basis for assuming that their southern neighbors would necessarily remain quaintly and picturesquely agrarian and dependent for their manufactured goods upon United States imports. (North Americans of the white, male, power-wielding enclaves often applied variations of the quaint and dependent stereotype to Indians, blacks, women, and the poor.) Still, matters of stereotyping and imaging affected some officials with policy-making input. Beyond this, when security considerations forced even Washington's toughest-minded policy makers to allow Latin Americans to get away with far more than had ever been permitted before in their treatment of foreign investors, the general public went along. By the 1930s, North Americans had come a long way in their ability to regard their southern neighbors as full-fledged human beings.

⁹¹ Sumner Welles, *Where Are We Heading?* (New York, 1946), p. 236. For a novel interpretation of Welles's confrontations with State Department hardliners, see Randall Bennett, *The Roosevelt Foreign-Policy Establishment and the "Good Neighbor": The United States and Argentina, 1941-1945* (Lawrence, Kan., 1979).

⁹² For classic statements of an economic interpretation of the Good Neighbor policy, see Lloyd Gardner, *Economic Aspects of New Deal Diplomacy* (Madison, 1964), and David Green, *The Containment of Latin America* (New York, 1971). On the security motivations of the policy see David G. Haglund, *Latin America and the Transformation of U.S. Strategic Thought, 1936-1940* (Albuquerque, 1984), Lester D. Langley, "The World Crisis and the Good Neighbor Policy," *The Americas*, 24 (1967), pp. 137-52, and Bryce Wood, *The Making of the Good Neighbor Policy* (New York, 1961). A judicious blending of economic and security factors distinguishes Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945* (New York, 1979), containing an excellent treatment of the Good Neighbor policy, and Irwin F. Gellman, *Good Neighbor Diplomacy: United States Policies in Latin America, 1933-1945* (Baltimore, 1979).

CONCLUSION

By 1945 a renewal of faith in capitalist culture had begun to sweep the United States. As normalcy returned and the country set itself to the task of rebuilding the capitalist structures of Europe, negative values attached once more to those deemed unsuited to or undertalented in living successfully by the bourgeois ethic. After 1945, John Collier's "New Deal for the Indians" gave way to a policy dubbed "Termination," aimed at hastening the disappearance of the Indian through assimilation; blacks most decidedly ceased to be in vogue and for J. Edgar Hoover, at least, interest by white in black causes smacked of communism, the assumption apparently being that persons "soft" on nature were also "soft" on communism; women flocked from their wartime jobs back to domesticity; permissiveness passed out of fashion, at least for a while, in child-rearing and, significantly, the Progressive Education Association shut down at Champaign-Urbana in 1955, the same year in which a leading journal for the cause went out of business;⁹³ the poor were dismissed as the victims of their own weakness; and Latin Americans were deemed acceptable only to the degree to which they profited from United States intervention, cultural and otherwise, and scrambled to assimilate to North American ways. Thus ended the hopes of those who had wished for the union in equality of such opposites as culture and nature. Moreover, when the United States in 1953 extended diplomatic recognition to Spain's Francisco Franco, who in the late 1930s had been villified by the powerful counterculture because of his purported attempt to crush what was natural beneath the weight of a capitalist-inspired culture, the new era's intellectuals, many of whom had happily taken up a Cold Warrior stance, raised scarcely a whimper of protest. Here was a striking manifestation of what Philip Rahv referred to at the time as the *embourgeoisement* of the intelligentsia.⁹⁴

These were not the developments Latin American intellectuals had expected. The birth of the new day they had been led to anticipate by North American intellectuals proved a false dawn. The ensuing disillusionment contributed to the souring in hemispheric relations that has persisted, with

⁹³ See Diane Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade: American Education 1945-1980* (New York, 1983), p. 78.

⁹⁴ See Irving Howe, *A Margin of Hope: An Intellectual Biography* (New York, 1982), p. 233. In this book, Howe faults the intelligentsia of the 1950s for being loath to do what he still felt in 1984 they must continually do: welcome into their ranks "the unruly, the uncouth, the barbaric," and heed Emerson's call to attend to "the literature of the poor, the feelings of the child, the philosophy of the street. . . ." See the report in the February 1, 1984 *New York Times* on the January 27 discussion at the New York Public Library on "Excellence: Theory and Practice in the Humanities."

a brief interruption in the 1960s when a new counterculture surfaced, since 1945.

As long as capitalist prosperity continues, a majority of North Americans will probably maintain a certain disdain for all those in their midst and beyond their borders who have given cause to be perceived as creatures of nature because of their communal or herd instincts and their lack of obsession with dominating nature so as to maximize private profit. Those not so obsessed will continue to be hailed as the equivalent of the noble savage by alienated United States intellectuals. But, regardless of issues of justice that may be involved, the clamoring of intellectuals will not produce substantial benefits for people appraised by mainstream North Americans as insufficiently dedicated to suppressing nature—at least not until capitalism stumbles into another crisis that facilitates a widespread renewal of respect for nature and the natural. By that time, however, developments below the Rio Grande may well have made it utterly impossible for even the most romantically inclined North Americans to perceive Latin America as a Lockean-Rousseauan rather than as a Hobbesian state of nature. Furthermore, since the 1930s people once stereotyped as happily resigned by their feminine and childlike traits to living upon the largesse of a paternalistic civilization have, with cold fury, challenged the stereotype. When it comes to stereotyping, the Good Neighbor era stands as a unique time of innocence in northern perceptions of the south, an era that can never be approximated again.

Notre Dame University
Notre Dame, Indiana

FREDRICK B. PIKE