

of the influence of Ortega y Gasset on the philosophical orientation of most of these essays.

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Mexico in Its Novel. A Nation's Search for Identity. By JOHN S. BRUSHWOOD. Austin, 1966. University of Texas Press. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xii, 292. \$6.00.

John Brushwood is one of the relatively few North Americans who have dedicated their main scholastic efforts to the study of Mexican literature, particularly Mexican fiction. He is the author of a work on the romantic novel in Mexico, and is co-author (with José Rojas Garcidueñas) of a brief history of the Mexican novel. With this background he approaches the present study prepared in depth for what he wishes to examine and for what he wishes to say.

He begins and ends this study with references to *Al filo del agua*, by Agustín Yáñez, which he calls "the best Mexican novel" (p. 10). Certainly this reviewer agrees with his judgment. Brushwood's first chapter, "The Novel of Time and Being," treats the period from 1947, date of publication of the above novel, through 1963, date of Elena Garro's *Los recuerdos del porvenir*. His second chapter deals with the novel during the years 1521-1831. In his tenth and final chapter he returns to the present and reconstructs the threads of his main conclusions.

As the title indicates, Brushwood has tried to analyze the Mexican novel from the point of view of a nation in search of its identity. Novelists seek to discover that identify, to clarify it, to symbolize it, to poeticize it, to ramify it, and to clothe the historic Mexican particular in the raiment of the universal poetic. Reading Brushwood's lively and stimulating pages is a most enjoyable and edifying experience. His manner of presentation is to treat the novels examined on a strictly chronological basis, giving a year by year account of them. This method achieves the author's intent—that is, a progressive interpretation of the novelistic view of Mexico. However, some readers will undoubtedly be disturbed to find each author's work segmented and combined with that of other novelists who happened to publish a book in the same year.

The main part of Brushwood's work, of course, deals with the novel of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It begins with a frame in which "stability was based on an absence of initiative." Nineteenth-century writers considered this condition moral and good, because it represented the way in which people were supposed to act.

The account moves to a frame in which time and stability are no longer the crucial dimensions of the novelistic universe. The Mexican Revolution marked the transition, and the Ateneo de la Juventud, a group of young writers who then emerged, effected a rebirth of Mexican letters and thinking. This group of young men attended "the burial of *porfirismo* and the advent of the new regime" (p. 185). Brushwood goes on to agree with Jiménez Rueda that the members of the Ateneo did not understand the political and social changes, although they revolutionized the cultural life of the country. Here he overlooks the role of Pedro Henríquez-Ureña in influencing the young generation of Mexicans, and he does not mention Gabriela Mistral's work with Vasconcelos. Neither of these persons, however, belongs in the mainstream of the author's interpretation, so that the omissions are understandable.

Typical of Brushwood's approach to literary criticism are these words in regard to *Pedro Páramo*, by Juan Rulfo, one of the most complex and difficult of Mexican novels: "Quite naturally, some readers object to the difficult access to the novel, and some prefer to reject it rather than work for what it says. I can sympathize with the reluctance to participate so actively, but it seems to me that the result is worth the effort. Even more disturbing to me is the occasional assumption that a simple, descriptive novel of protest is a more patriotic undertaking than an artistically important novel. Such an attitude seems to me to be equal to saying that an observation is worth more than a reason" (p. 33).

Brushwood concludes his work with a chronological fourteen-page list of the principal Mexican novels from 1832 to 1963. Overall he has done an outstanding job of literary criticism and has given astute perspective to a field which hitherto was utterly out of focus. Other students and critics will wish to expand and build on what he has so cogently written about Mexico's best writers and their search for identity.

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México y el Vaticano. Vol. I: *La Santa Sede y la Emancipación Mexicana*. 2nd ed. By LUÍS MEDINA ASCENSIO, S. J. México, 1965. Editorial Jus. Illustrations. Notes. Appendix. Index. Bibliography. Pp. xxvii, 264. Paper.

This work, published now for the third time, appeared first in serial form in *Estudios Históricos* between 1943 and 1945 and then came out in book form in 1946. The present edition, with only minor