



EL HIJO PRODIGO

**A Critical Index of
XX Century Mexican Thought**

Arnold C. Vento

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EL HIJO PRODIGO

A Critical Index of XX Century Mexican Thought

ARNOLD C. VENTO

PAJARITO PUBLICATIONS



A mis padres
Adela Sloss y Pedro Vento
por
sus sacrificios . . .

A Karen
por
sus esfuerzos
mecnógrafos y editoriales
y
a Jeanne
por
sus paciencia
y dedicación
en tolerar
mis necesidades

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Introduction

Intellectual history of Mexico has generally made its mark through generations of *literati* publishing via important literary reviews. Historically speaking, the Mexican literary and political renaissance does not begin until the demise of the rigid positivism of the Diaz dictatorship and the incipience of new twentieth century intellectual thought through the key generations of the *Ateneo de la Juventud*, *Contemporáneos*, and *El Hijo Pródigo*. Caught in the perennial struggle between *universalismo* and *nacionalismo*, the aforementioned generations attempt a balance between the two, seeking simultaneously, to keep up with current philosophical, artistic and literary movements of the world. It is a time when leading thinkers in Mexico are attempting to define *mexicanidad*. Alfonso Reyes very early discloses his attempt at defining the *mexicano* in all of his aspects. Unfortunately, he will only write one chapter which is to appear in his *Visión de Anahuac*. It is the younger generations who are to follow his goal. In 1937, Samuel Ramos is to present the first systematic work interpreting Mexican reality, by using Ortega y Gasset historicism and psychological theory in *El perfil del hombre y la cultura en México*. It is interesting to note, however, that his work entitled *Historia de la filosofía en México* did not receive favorable review by the editorial staff of *El Hijo Pródigo*. One decade later, Octavio Paz will continue the search for the definition of *mexicanidad* in his *Laberinto de la soledad* using many of the ideas of Leopoldo Zea and Samuel Ramos previously espoused in the thirties and forties in Mexico.

The generation of artists, writers, philosophers and poets of the generation of "El Hijo Pródigo," is to play an important role in launching Mexico into the contemporary intellectual, artistic and literary milieu of the world. Among the more prominent collaborators include Octavio Paz, Xavier Villaurrutia, Ermilo Abreu Gómez, José Luis Martínez, Alí Chumacero, Octavio G. Barrera, Francisco Monterde, Gilberto Owen, Antonio Castro Leal, Alfonso Reyes, Rodolfo Usigli and Leopoldo Zea. Among its notable contributions include the introduction of the contemporary theatre through Usigli, Gorostiza and Villaurrutia. The first publication, for example, of Usigli's *El gesticulador*, is to appear in *El Hijo Pródigo*. The early poetry of Octavio Paz is featured in addition to his early essays which include the important treatise of "Poesía de soledad y poesía de comunión" written a decade before his *Laberinto de la soledad*. Prior to the publication of Agustín Yáñez's *Al filo del*

agua, the first truly contemporary novel of Mexico, *El Hijo Pródigo* will publish a section of it entitled "El sueño del cura." Other significant essays by Rodolfo Usigli, Rafael Solana, Pedro Henríquez Ureña, José Luis Martínez and Leopoldo Zea are to play a key role in developing contemporary intellectual thought in Mexico.

Of particular interest was the concern to be informed of world philosophers, artists, and intellectuals. Among these include the intuitive philosophy of Henri Bergson, the mystical poetry of William Blake, the surrealism of André Breton, the metaphysical Art of Giorgio di Chirico, the contemporary thought of Jean Cocteau, the poetry of T.S. Eliot, the symbols and myths of Sir James Frazer, the theater of Jean Giradoux, the counterpoint structure of Aldous Huxley, the new approaches of I.A. Richards and Karen Horney and the magical realism of Massimo Bontempelli.

A Critical Index of XX Century Mexican Thought is divided into three parts: (1) early XX century history and the historical development of *El Hijo Pródigo*. (2) the analysis of the poetry, prose-fiction, article-essay and theater. and (3) critical annotations of all entries published in the forty-two numbers of *El Hijo Pródigo*. The critical annotations follow an alphabetical order by author. A list of key abbreviations will indicate the proper classification of all entries, i.e. article-essay, poetry, prose-fiction, theater, etc. Following the critical index is a selected bibliography of the major works consulted. Moreover, a cross-reference index at the end of the work is particularly useful for identifying significant authors and works in the three parts as well as authors reviewed by *El Hijo Pródigo*.

Finally, the generation of *El Hijo Pródigo* represents a more advanced and balanced flowering of intellectual development in Mexico. Its attempt to achieve a noble assimilation of *imaginación* and *realidad* in addition to achieving a balance between *nacionalismo* and *universalismo* is a reflection of the literary and political maturity of the generation of *El Hijo Pródigo*, which is to serve as a model for Fuentes, Rulfo, Leñero, Arreola, Sainz and other contemporaries of the sixties and seventies.

Arnold C. Vento, Ph.D.
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

PART I

A HISTORY OF EL HIJO PRODIGO

The flowering of Mexican intellectual life in the twentieth century did not begin until the incipience of the Revolution of 1910 and the assumption of power by Francisco Madero. Prior to the Revolution, intellectual freedom was suppressed by the rigid and positivistic system established by the dictatorship of Don Porfirio Díaz. With the exception of the formulation of a series of lectures by the "Sociedad de Conferencias" promoted by Jesús T. Acevedo and the subsequent creation of the "Ateneo de la Juventud," intellectual life in Mexico was generally restricted to European intellectual centers.¹

After the Revolution, the new generation of writers found in the literary journal an excellent vehicle for artistic expression. By 1916, the journal **Cultura** was already disseminating excellent translations of important foreign writers as well as presenting the latest writings of the Spaniards and Latin-Americans. The "Generation of 1915" (Alfonso Caso, Antonio Castro Leal, Xavier Icaza, Manuel Toussaint, *et al*) was joined by the notable literary figures of José Gorostiza, Salvador Novo, Samuel Ramos, Ermilo Abreu Gómez, and Francisco Monterde in **México Moderno** (1920-23), a journal founded by Enrique González Martínez. Already, the names of such young poets as Jaime Torres Bodet, Bernardo Ortiz de Montellano, and Carlos Pellicer were included in the pages of this review. This last group later headed one of Mexico's most important generations known as "Los Contemporáneos" because of their collaboration in the review of the same name, **Contemporáneos** (1928).

The younger Mexican poets of the twenties were made aware of emerging trends in European and North American poetry through the publications of **La Falange** (1922-23) and **La Antorcha** (1924-25). The first was directed by Jaime Torres Bodet and Bernardo Ortiz de Montellano and considered the manifestation of Latin-American culture as its primary aim. The second was headed by José Vasconcelos and became the literary voice of this writer. It was moralizing in tone and included articles in art, industry, letters, and science.

Three years later the vanguardist journal **Ulises** was published through the joint efforts of Xavier Villaurrutia, Salvador Novo, Jorge Cuesta, and Gilberto Owen. Unlike **La Falange**, **Ulises** was purely an artistic organ. Merlin H. Forster noted these differences: "A diferencia de en **La Falange**, el interés central de **Ulises** en las

PART II

EL HIJO PRÓDIGO: AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONTENTS

The intent of this chapter is to describe in detail the contents of **El Hijo Pródigo**, treated briefly in the preceding chapter, in respect to the following genres: poetry, article-essay, prose-fiction, and theater. Each genre will be discussed in terms of its relation to the antecedents leading to the publication of **El Hijo Pródigo**, its contribution to the journal, and its national and universal ramifications.

POETRY

The forty-three numbers of **El Hijo Pródigo** generally included contributions of prominent poets of the post-modernist period, ranging from Alfonso Reyes to Ali Chumacero. However, **El Hijo Pródigo** limited its poetry neither to an exclusive clique of poets nor to its national borders. Rather, it was receptive to poetry of universal and timeless values whether old or new, national or foreign. Thus, the poetry of **El Hijo Pródigo** represents France, Spain, and Latin America as well as Mexico.

The most prolific of the younger Mexican poets collaborating in **El Hijo Pródigo** is Octavio Paz whose thirteen poems are distributed in five numbers. Ali Chumacero, also contributing to five numbers, is represented by ten poems. Neftalí Beltrán and Xavier Villaurrutia, both appearing in three numbers, contributed seven and four poems respectively. Finally, three poems of Efraín Huerta were published in two numbers while Elías Nandino published only once. Other important Mexican poets contributing to **El Hijo Pródigo** are: Bernardo Ortiz de Montellano (XII, 141; XXV, 21; XXXIII, 143), Gilberto Owen (VII, 24), Carlos Pellicer (VII, 80), Alfonso Reyes (XXIX, 85), Jaime Torres Bodet (III, 145), José Juan Tablada (XXX, 138), Enrique González Martínez (XXI, 147; IV, 209), Rafael Solana (XXXII, 78), and Manuel Ponce (XXIX, 89; XXI, 153). The Spanish poets are headed by Jorge Guillén (VI, 341; XXI, 145; XV, 151; XXXII, 85), Luis Cernuda (IX, 152; XX, 78; XXXVII, 14), and Pedro Salinas (IV, 219). Poetry in translation is represented by Rimbaud (XVI, 49), Saint John Perse (XXXV, 90), and Count d’Lautréamont (VI, 365).

The poetry of **El Hijo Pródigo**, particularly that which helped to formulate and promulgate the new poetry of the forties, must be seen from a poetic, generational point of view. The seeds of the new poetry, planted by the group of vanguardist poets **El Hijo Pródigo/24**

PART III

A CRITICAL INDEX TO EL HIJO PRODIGO

1

Abreu Gómez, Ermilo. Rev. of *Antología Poética* (Buenos Aires: 1944) by Salvador Rueda. *HP*, VI (No. 19, October, 1944), 61. (B-R)

Favorable review of anthology of the poetry of Salvador Rueda, Spanish poet of transition. Selection and prologue by Rafael Alberti. Final commentary by Miguel de Unamuno.

2

_____ "Breve historia de mis libros."
HP, XI (No. 34, January, 1946), 9-16.
(A-E)

Autobiographical sketch treats works such as *Cuentos del Pirulero*, *Canek*, and *Popol Vuh*. Social uprising in Yucatan and subsequent emigration of Abreu Gómez to Mexico precedes many collaborations in *El Universal Ilustrado*, *Nosotros*, *México Moderno*, *Ulises*, *Contemporáneos*, and *Letras de México*. Concludes by naming various literary and artistic figures who have most influenced him.

3

_____ Rev. of *Capítulos de literatura española* (Mexico: 1945) by Alfonso Reyes. *HP*, X (No. 32, November, 1945), 120-21. (B-R)

El Hijo Pródigo/40

Favorable review of Reyes' diverse studies of Calderón, Galdós, Góngora, Ruiz de Alarcón, San Juan de la Cruz, and others.

4

_____ Rev. of *La casa de doña María* (Mexico: 1943) by Carlos Luquin. *HP*, III (No. 10, January, 1944), 55. (B-R)

Mildly favorable review describes this novel as written in a candid and natural style with a taste of the provincial. Reviewer credits it as a well-written short adventure story but criticizes its lack of energy and audacity.

5

_____ Rev. of *Las cien mejores poesías (líricas) mexicanos* (Mexico: 1945) by Antonio Castro Leal. *HP*, IX (No. 29, August, 1945), 120. (B-R)

Favorable review of Mexican critic's anthology composed of a selection of the one hundred best Mexican lyrical poems. Not all poems are lyrical but all authors are of Mexican birth. Reviewer praises the well-written prologue.

6

_____ Rev. of *Los clásicos redivivos. Los clásicos futuros* (Buenos Aires:

philosophy which has resolved the problems. Zea maintains that Villaseñor's religious prejudice mars his objectivity and that his work is replete with contradictions.

586

Zendejas, Francisco. "Las 'esencias' en la literatura." *HP*, XIII (No. 42, September, 1946), 131-35. (A-E)

Essay concerning odor and smell in literature. Zendejas' point of departure is the effect of perfume on people. He cites the significance of odor and smell in the poetry of Verlaine, García Lorca, and Apollinaire; the prose of Valle Inclán; the allusions of the character, Marquis de Sade; and Juliet's speech concerning a rose in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

587

_____ "El mundo reconquistado de

James Joyce." *HP*, XII (No. 38, May, 1946), 73-76. (A-E)

Essay on the first critical interpretations and the various publications of James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* and *Ulysses*. Zendejas' major points are the negation of Jung's interpretation and the establishment of Joyce's work as a key to the formation of the poet and his inner processes.

588

Zimmer, Enrique. "Viejos cuentos de la India," trans. Daisy Brody and Antonio Sánchez Barbudo. *HP*, VIII (No. 27, June, 1945), 150-56. (P-F)

A portion of Zimmer's *Wesheit Indiens* (Darmstadt, 1938) which presents short stories, legends, myths, and parables from India.

Abbreviations

A-E	=	Article-Essay
B-R	=	Book Review
HP	=	El Hijo Pródigo
n.d.	=	no date
P	=	Poetry
P-F	=	Prose-Fiction
rev.	=	review
T	=	Theater
trans.	=	translator
trans. anon.	=	anonymous translation

¹Pedro Henríquez Ureña, "La influencia de la Revolución en la vida intelectual de México," *The Romanic Review*, IX, No. 1 (1918), 315-17.

²Merlin H. Forster, *Los Contemporáneos 1920-1932, perfil de un experimento vanguardista mexicano* (Mexico: Ediciones Andrea, 1964), pp. 315-17.

³Boyd G. Carter, *Las revistas literarias de Hispanoamérica* (Mexico: Ediciones Andrea, 1959), p. 99.

⁴Frank Dauster, *Ensayos sobre la poesía mexicana* (Mexico: Ediciones Andrea, 1963), pp. 7-15.

⁵E.J. Mullen, "Contemporáneos in Mexican Intellectual History, 1928-1931," *Journal of Inter-American Studies and World Affairs*, XII, No. 1 (January 1971), 130. See also "Critical Reactions to the Review *Contemporáneos*," *Hispania*, LIV, No. 1 (March 1971), 145-49.

⁶Boyd G. Carter, *Historia de la literatura hispanoamericana a través de sus revistas* (Mexico: Ediciones Andrea, 1968), p. 151.

⁷Octavio G. Barreda, "Gladios, San-ev-ank, Letras de México, El Hijo Pródigo," *Las revistas literarias de México* (Mexico: I.N.B.A., 1963), p. 236.

⁸Merlin Forster in his *Index to Mexican Literary Periodicals* indicates that this section appears only five times. Although it constitutes a separate section in only five numbers, it is included as a sub-section of "Notas" in an additional twelve numbers.

⁹Barreda, *Revistas*, p. 233.

¹⁰Carter, *Revistas*, p. 101.

¹¹Barreda, *Revistas*, p. 232.

¹²Barreda, *Revistas*, p. 233.

¹³Barreda, *Revistas*, p. 234.

¹⁴Octavio G. Barreda, "Imaginación y Realidad," *El Hijo Pródigo*, I, No. 1 (April 1943), 7. Henceforth, references to *El Hijo Pródigo* will be enumerated in the text by volume and page number.

¹⁵José Luis Martínez, *Literatura mexicana: Siglo XX* (Mexico: Antigua Librería Robredo, 1949), p. 342.

¹⁶José Luis Martínez, "Guía para la feria del libro," *Excelsior* (April 15, 1943), p. 4.

¹⁷Martínez, "Guía," p. 11.

¹⁸*ibid.*

¹⁹See section entitled "Las Revistas" in *Sur*, XIII, No. 107 (September 1943), 85-86.

²⁰Berjamín declares: "Encontramos en la lectura de este nuevo *Hijo Pródigo*, más que consolación de lágrimas ni de suspiros, aliento y esperanza. Un aire salubre de entendimiento racional y un vivo ímpetu como de tensión del pensamiento, el ánimo de la partida. Y ésto, entiendo yo, que es ponerse a la altura de la circunstancias y no por encima ni por debajo de ellas. Porque ese nivel circunstancial es el que Goethe llamaba de ese modo—entre verdad y poesía (imaginación y realidad)—proponiéndolo como norma al pensamiento y la conducta humana del escritor, del poeta" (X, 59-60).

²¹First name not cited. Unlikely to be referring to José Joaquín Gamboa or Federico Gamboa since they died in 1931 and 1939 respectively.

²²Exemplary of the various printing errors are the omission of the dedication to the poems of Manuel Altolaguirre (VI, 384), the translation of Holderlin by Luis Cernuda containing many printing errors (XIII, 62), the omission of the place of publication of Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo's *Historia de las ideas estéticas en España* (XV, 187), and the spelling errors in César Moro's *La hija de Iorio* (XXXV, 116).

²³Barreda, *Revistas*, pp. 236-37.

²⁴Reference is made to Antonio Magaña Esquivel and Ruth S. Lamb, *Breve historia del teatro mexicano* (Mexico: Ediciones Andrea, 1958), Antonio Espina, *Teatro contemporáneo mexicano* (Madrid: Aguilar, 1959), and John B. Nomland, *Teatro mexicano contemporáneo: 1900-1950* (Mexico: I.N.B.A., 1967).

²⁵Antonio Magaña Esquivel, *Teatro mexicano del siglo XX* (Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1956), p. xxxiii.

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Synopsis/ Review:

***Martin Fierro* in Argentina, *Contemporaneos* in Mexico, *Amauta* in Peru, and *El Hijo Pródigo* in Mexico. Pays close attention to the contents of the 42 issues published from April 15, 1943-Sept. 15, 1946, with a note on the contents of each article. All studies of Mexican culture of the period should first consult this compendium and analysis"--Handbook of Latin American Studies, v. 58.**

FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS OUT OF PRINT REFERENCE WORK IN MEXICAN LETTERS WAS IN 1978. FOR AN ORIGINAL PRINTED COPY OF THIS 121 PAGE WORK GO TO BOOKS IN THIS SERIES OR CLICK TO BOOKSTORE. LIMITED COPIES ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE AUTHOR AT EAGLE FEATHER RESEARCH INSTITUTE.