

which led to his return to Mexico, omitted by many who write about Rivera, is well documented in this book. The source of the information is the author himself, who not only witnessed but shared in the adventure.

The same is true of the period Rivera spent painting in the United States. Here, however, Wolfe openly identifies himself as Rivera's friend and advisor. Subsequent periods of Rivera's life are documented with interviews. Wolfe's selection of quotes is excellent. The documentary material tells the parts of the story that Wolfe himself did not participate in.

Each phase of Rivera's life is accompanied by the intricacies of the political and historical context. Rivera's lifespan serves as a framework for the history of ideas before, during, and after the Mexican and Russian revolutions.

Wolfe, who came to Mexico in 1922 to work with the Communist Party, was in a perfect position to tell the story. His biography of Rivera is not limited to the artist's environment. His description of Rivera's work is detailed and clear, a first-rate source of information for the art historian, especially since the book includes 164 photographs.

The reader unfamiliar with Mexico is treated to a full description of the land, its people and its art by a man unable to disguise his love for the country. When Wolfe discusses José Guadalupe Posada's penny sheets or the leftist newspaper *El machete*, he not only mentions the price, but the fact that this was one third of a laborer's daily wage.

Major issues in Mexico, such as oil, land reform and the role of the church, are viewed through Diego Rivera's work from the perspective of a well-informed and sensitive historian. While Wolfe is not an objective observer, the honesty of his approach is exceptional. An example of this aspect of Wolfe's work is his refusal to identify the person "closest

to Frida" with whom Diego had an affair at one time. The author further clarifies for the reader Frida's appreciation of his discretion.

*The fabulous life of Diego Rivera* is not an analytical, academic book. Rivera's life is presented chronologically in the context of his times. Yet, in his last chapter, Wolfe provides an in-depth analysis of the artist's role in politics. His "Notes for future biographers" explore Rivera's relationship with the Communist Party and the major ideological figures of communism: Marx, Lenin, Stalin and Trotsky. The contextual framework which precedes this chapter gives the reader the background with which to evaluate the facts. We have the names, the dates, and the events at hand.

Bertram Wolfe documents his own life in *A life in two centuries*.<sup>1</sup> He lived in Mexico and became a scholar of Russian history by an experiential process. He worked for the Communist Party; then rejected the Party and worked for the U.S. State Department. He wrote extensively about Russian history and is best known for his *Three who made a revolution*.<sup>2</sup> Wolfe died in 1977 in Palo Alto, California, where he worked at Stanford University.

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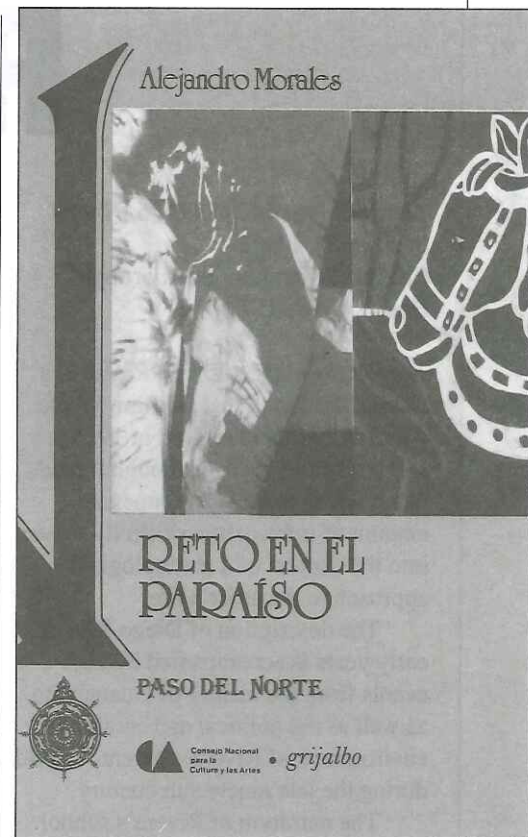
### **Reto en el paraíso (A challenge in paradise)**

*Alejandro Morales*  
Grijalbo, Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes  
Colección: Paso del Norte  
Mexico, 1991, 452 pp.

Alejandro Morales, the author of this novel, is a professor at the University

<sup>1</sup> Wolfe, Bertram, *A life in two centuries*. New York, Stein and Day, 1981.

<sup>2</sup> Wolfe, Bertram, *Three who made a revolution*. Boston, Beacon Press, 1948.



of California and, according to Gustavo Sáinz, "the most arrogant, complex and angriest of the Chicano narrative writers."

*Reto en el paraíso* (A challenge in paradise) combines real-life and fictional elements in describing the last 120 years of California history from a Chicano perspective. The author has created a character named Dennis Barreyesa Coronel, an outstanding Chicano architect of Mexican descent, who while outwardly appearing to be assimilated into the American Way of Life, suffers internal moral conflict since he knows he will never be completely accepted.

Dennis plays tennis in a high-society "Anglo" club, feeling enormous satisfaction every time he defeats one of his conceited opponents on the court. Moreover, he is admired for his professional ability as a building consultant, yet at the same time is the victim of discrimination on the part of the

bricklayers and his professional colleagues. He knows that as hard as he may try, he will never stop being viewed as a "greasy Mexican."

In the same vein as his tennis triumphs, he feels that he settles a long overdue debt each time he sleeps with one of his neighbors' or co-workers' wives, even though he is conscious of the fact that they simply see him as a brown-skinned lover.

When Dennis is on the verge of deceiving himself about his social status, Rosario Revueltas appears. She is a beautiful Chicana who, despite being bourgeois, is perfectly aware that upper-class U.S. culture will never be hers.

The encounter with Rosario changes Dennis profoundly. He remembers that he is the descendent of Mexican immigrants who came to California in search of gold. He will never again forget that his ancestors were persecuted and massacred by the "Anglo" inhabitants of the country; that their lands were taken from them; that they were humiliated over the course of an entire century and that he, Dennis Barreyesa Coronel, is a simple architect who builds houses on land that used to belong to his people.

This encounter with his past confronts him with the inescapable outcome of the incestuous loves of his parents and grandparents. Upon discovering the truth, Dennis may be able to dine at a luxurious restaurant, but when he arrives home, he drags himself along the floor like an animal as he searches for his roots and his historical commitment.

In the original edition of *A challenge in paradise*, the "Anglo" characters think and speak in English, while the Chicanos and the narrative voice speak Spanish. Grijalbo and the National Council for the Arts and Culture published this all-Spanish edition, in which italics are used to indicate passages which the author wrote in English.

### Compilation of University legislation (Volumes I and II)

Office of the General Council  
General Office of Studies on  
University Legislation  
National University of Mexico (UNAM)  
Mexico, 1992, 454 pp. (Vol.I) and  
169 pp. (Vol.II)

The Office of the General Council of the National University of Mexico has published the *Compilation of University legislation*, Volumes I and II, with the aim of disclosing the laws which regulate activities at UNAM.

The first volume includes a compilation of the various regulations, guidelines and statutes which make up the constitutional structure of the university. Among these are:

- The General Statute
- General Regulations for Registration and Examinations
- General Regulation on Payments
- Regulations covering the University Tribunal and Honor Commission
- Regulations covering the university shield and motto
- Statutes regarding academic personnel
- Regulations covering the university gown
- The institutional teaching framework
- National Preparatory School regulations and the founding covenant of the College of Sciences and Humanities
- General rules covering the use of spaces in the University Cultural Center
- General Regulations of the University Extension Centers.

The second volume of the *Compilation of University legislation* contains a reference guide and a thematic index of the first volume, facilitating access to the information contained there and reducing consulting time 