Plate 2.17 John Heartfield, *Adolf, the Superman, Swallows Gold and Spouts Tin*, 1932, photomontage, 38 × 27 cm. Photo: akg-images. © John Heartfield/ DACS. © The Heartfield Community of Heirs/ VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn and DACS, London 2017.

4 Orozco and Rivera in Gringolandia

As I have already made clear, Rivera's artistic status in the early 1930s was unparalleled in Mexico, and rivalled only by Picasso and Matisse in Europe. This was apparent in the fact that he was fêted by leading figures within the corporate class of the United States, notably the Ford and Rockefeller dynasties, who commissioned him to travel north and paint murals for them. It is important to bear in mind that these commissions were for private institutions funded by major corporate donors, and not by a government, as in Mexico City. The different types of commissions carried different sets of pressures. If Rivera was allowed to project his political radicalism in murals funded by the Mexican state post-1920, then this was because these regimes benefited, to some degree, from the radical gloss that such works conferred by association. Working for Ford and Rockefeller had a similar dynamic, if with a different set of variables and parameters on what would constitute an acceptable iconography and corresponding political

ideology. While Rivera's later critique of United States capitalism in the south wall of his National Palace mural would have obviously have been an unacceptable subject in the context of a commission in Detroit, the pan-Americanism that was such a notable feature of the period would have seemed a perfect fit.

Rivera later made clear the attraction of painting a mural in the United States when he said it was 'the ideal place to make a modern mural painting', for, unlike Mexico, it 'was a true industrial country'.[37] But what potential benefits could the Ford Motor Company have accrued from commissioning him to come and paint a mural in the prestigious Detroit Institute of Arts? At this point, the United States was still reeling from the effects of the stock market crash of 1929 and was mired in the Great Depression. Cities like Detroit, which were largely dependent upon corporate giants like Ford as their main employer, were hit particularly hard. The period in which Rivera was in the city was bracketed by the Ford Hunger March in March 1932 and the Michigan bank collapse in February the following year. So the city was witnessing unprecedented levels of unemployment, financial chaos and class conflict. For many suffering from this economic and political turmoil, Ford's response was derisory. By the time Rivera arrived, the pre-crash workforce, and their wages, had been halved and, while it still funded a hospital, the company made no relief contributions and continued its opposition to industrial trade unionism. With its public reputation in the city in tatters, the company could only benefit by its association with Rivera, the pre-eminent muralist of the Mexican Revolution and a self-styled 'artist of the people'.[38] Given that the subject of the commission was the contemporary industrial environment of Detroit, then the question remained as to whether or not the economic and political strife that the city was undergoing outside the museum would be presented inside.

Rivera's *Detroit Industry* murals

In *Detroit Industry*, the 27-part mural spanning all four walls of the Garden Court of the Detroit Institute of Arts, the two principal sections focused upon the River Rouge Ford factory at Dearborn, just outside the city. The north and south walls were dominated by the massive *Production and Manufacture of Engine and Transmission* (Plate 2.18) and *Production of Automobile Exterior and Final Assembly* (Plate 2.19) frescoes respectively. Structured within grid-like compositions indebted to the artist's earlier Cubist work, they were painted in a social realist mode that foregrounded the fact that the Ford plant was the epitome of industrial modernity at the time.[39] Rivera, nevertheless, combined this realist emphasis upon the modernity of the factory plant with a focus upon what actually happened on the shop floor. Here Rivera was clear that, even in the most advanced technological plant in the Western world, the role of human labour continued to be central to the processes of industrial production. While there is an actual image of a finished automobile in the distance in the centre of the south wall it is so small as to be barely perceptible. Instead the central foreground is dominated by the image of heroicised automobile workers engaged in performing a multitude of different tasks in assembling the cars that were produced at the Rouge, and this is mirrored in the lower half of the north wall with monumental figures arranged in a frieze-like fashion across the whole wall from left to right while working on one of the many conveyor belts in the factory.

With this dual emphasis upon the industrial modernity of the plant and the heroic labour of the workers, Rivera pulled off something of a coup. The world's premier political artist had taken the Ford Company's money – nearly $21,000 – and produced an image of contemporary cutting-edge industrial production that not only pleased its corporate sponsors but also the multi-ethnic workforce that operated the machinery, at least those who had not been forced out of their jobs and deported back to Mexico.[40] There is, indeed, an image of an overseer in both of the main walls: the green-faced figure to the left of Rivera's self-portrait with a bowler hat looking out at the viewer in the top left of the north wall and the bespectacled figure with a white hat and suit in the left of the south one. Such details allude to the fact that the Ford Motor Company had a ruthless management culture that readily used a network of spies to intimidate and regulate the workforce.[41] Yet, other than this, there is little to suggest the capitalist relations of production that actually framed the production process at the plant. As art historian Anthony Lee puts it: 'The factory floor is laid out like

Plate 2.18 Diego Rivera, *Detroit Industry* (north wall): *Production and Manufacture of Engine and Transmission*, 1932–33, fresco, 540 × 1372 cm. Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Gift of Edsel B. Ford. Photo: Bridgeman Images.

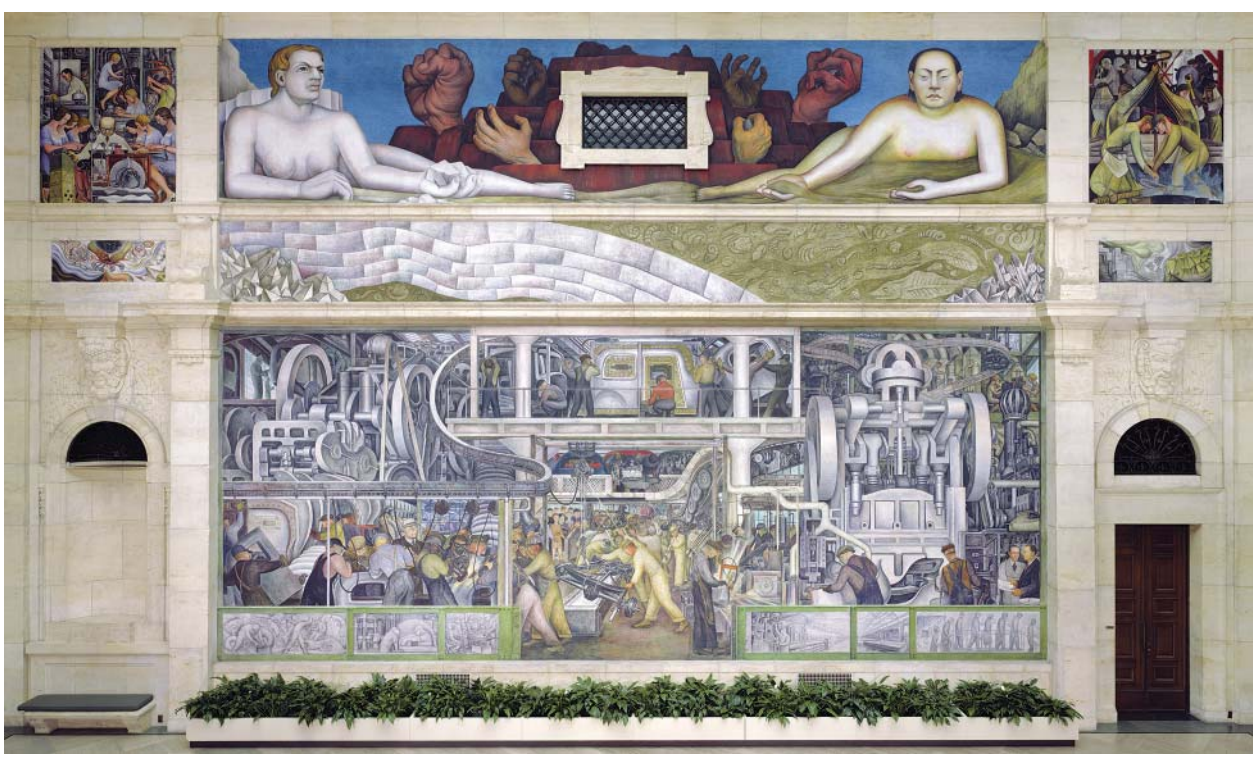

Plate 2.19 Diego Rivera, *Detroit Industry* (south wall): *Production of Automobile Exterior and Final Assembly*, 1932–33, fresco, 540 × 1372 cm. Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Gift of Edsel B. Ford. Photo: Bridgeman Images.

Plate 2.20 Diego Rivera, detail from *Detroit Industry* (west wall): *Interdependence of North and South*, 1932–33, fresco, 133 × 796 cm. Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit. Photo: CTK/Alamy.

a blueprint, a manual for alternately a capitalist or a socialist operation.'[42] For Rivera, as for other communist thinkers and intellectuals at the time, it was not the forces of production that were the problem – indeed they had the potential to speed up the manufacturing process while minimising the necessary human labour involved – just the model of private ownership under which the factory operated. With this in mind, I would argue that in the two central images of monumentalised purposeful human labour, with workers depicted in a perfectly symbiotic relationship with the machines that they operate, Rivera not only painted a realistic rendering of the workings of the Ford plant but also alluded to a communist vision of an industrial utopia in which the relations of production have been transcended, private property socialised, and the alienation of industrial labour rendered obsolete. This is hinted at by the cultural historian Terry Smith when he claims that here Rivera painted not only an image of modern industry, but 'its prehistory, its birth, its present structure, and its future', just as the artist had done in terms of the subject of Mexico itself in his National Palace mural.[43]

In line with this reading, and in terms of the broader themes of the chapter, what is really interesting here is how these two main walls fit within the larger iconographic scheme to say something about the present and the past, and the relationship between the United States and South America. If this is, as Paul Wood argues, 'the greatest of all socialist realist projects' this is because of 'the connections it draws between modern industry and more distant times and places, and the way it situates modernity in both a history and a geography'.[44] In the upper registers of the two main walls, Rivera depicted the four races that between them comprised the ethnic diversity of the Americas: white, yellow, brown and black, with each one holding a particular mineral essential to the production of iron, which is itself central to the development of industrial modernity. The tracing of this modern manufacturing regime in Detroit back to pre-Columbian times, and the relationship between the two continents, is made most explicit in a painted grisaille detail on the west wall, which represents the interdependence of North and South America (Plate 2.20). Here, Rivera painted the freight ships that moved between Detroit, symbolised by the skyline and industrial port on the left, and the Amazon, symbolised by the tropical landscape and rubber plantation workers on the right – what Linda Bank Downs, who has worked extensively on the mural cycle, has argued is a reference to Fordlandia, the Ford Company's failed attempt to produce its own rubber in the rainforest in Brazil.[45] Rivera was obsessed with the idea of pan-Americanism and what Wolfe described as 'a wedding of the industrial proletariat of the North with the peasantry of the South, of the factories of the United States with the raw materials of Latin America'.[46] When Rivera painted his mural scheme in Detroit, this relationship was obviously unequal on every level and, as such, Smith sees this pan-American fantasy as hopelessly naive and apolitical.[47] Yet if this panel is considered in terms of the utopian dynamic of the main murals on the north and south walls, it is possible that this confluence of the waters of Detroit and the Amazon could be encoded with a utopian dimension that points to a possible future when this relationship between the north and the south could be equal.

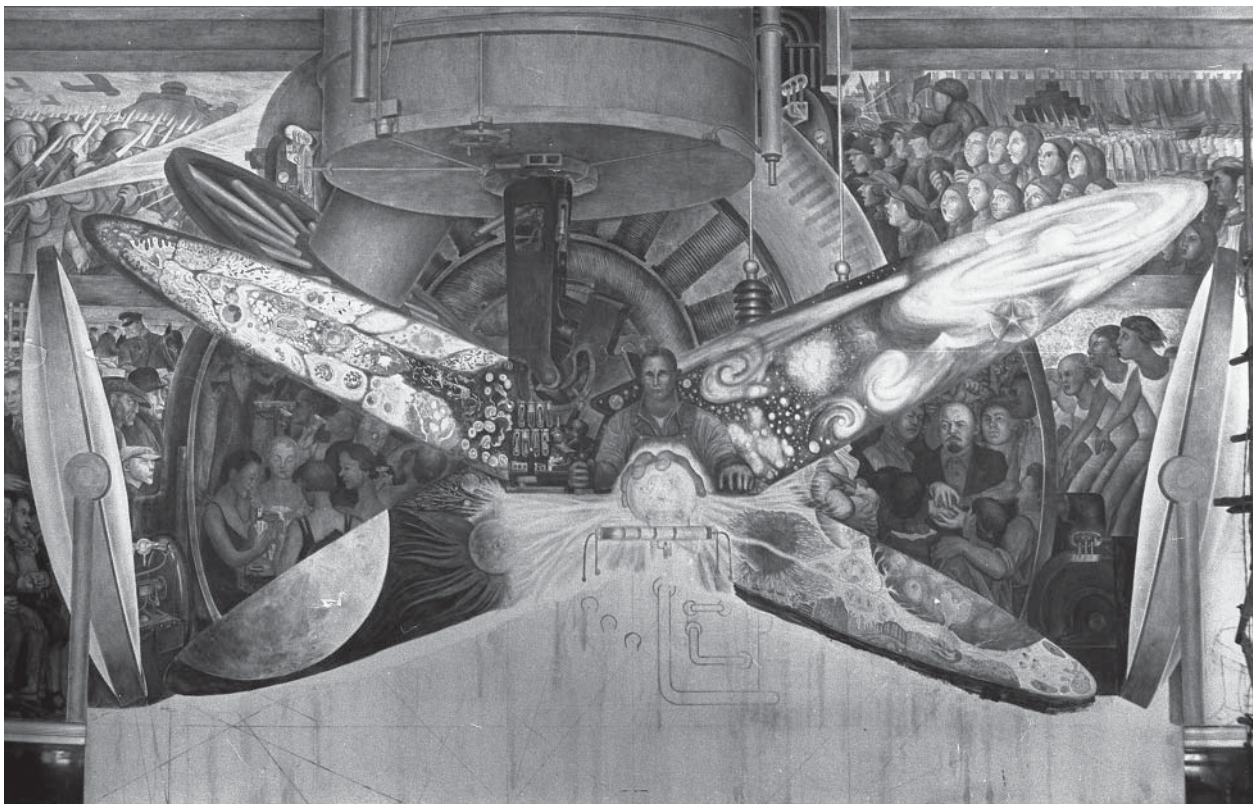

Plate 2.21 Diego Rivera, *Man at the Crossroads Looking with Hope and High Vision to the Choosing of a New and Better Future*, mural (photographed in 1933). Rockefeller Center, New York. Photo: Lucienne Bloch (1909–99). Courtesy of Old Stage Studios, www.LucienneBloch.com. © Banco de México Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico, D.F./DACS 2017.

The Rockefeller Center mural

This balancing act between producing a mural that could satisfy a corporate patron as well as communicate a radical iconography pointing to a utopian future was not an easy one to maintain. Emboldened by his success in Detroit, Rivera left to paint a commission for Rockefeller in New York. Unfortunately for him, his success in Detroit was not to be repeated. In February 1934, Rivera's mural *Man at the Crossroads Looking with Hope and High Vision to the Choosing of a New and Better Future* (Plate 2.21), which was over two-thirds complete on the ground floor of the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) building in the Rockefeller Center, was hammered off the wall. Rivera had diverted attention away from the actual conditions of capitalist crisis when he painted his *Detroit Industry*. Instead, he painted an image of harmony on the shop floor that pointed towards a transcendence of the class contradictions of modern industrial production. In his RCA mural, he went one stage further. Here, he attempted to show how those contradictions could actually be overcome by depicting the opposing forces of capitalism and communism, with a portrait of Lenin just right of centre denoting the future triumph of the latter. All this in the Great Hall of the most important building in the Rockefeller Center, an ambitious building project that cost hundreds of millions of dollars at the height of the Great Depression. It was this detail of the Russian revolutionary leader that brought work on the mural to a standstill and, after Rivera refused to remove it, ultimately ensured its destruction. According to Laurance Hurlburt, who produced the first major work on '*los tres grandes*' in the United States, Rockefeller's cultural philanthropy masked a hidden agenda in that his 'primary objective lay in seeing that Standard Oil succeeded in avoiding what happened in other Latin American countries – the nationalisation of foreign-owned oil properties'.[48] Hence Rivera's one-man

Plate 2.22 Diego Rivera, *Man, Controller of the Universe* or *Man in the Time Machine*, 1934, fresco, 485 × 1145 cm. Full composite view of the fresco, Palace of Fine Arts, Mexico City. Photo: Art Resource/Bob Schalkwijk/Scala, Florence. © Banco de México Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico, D.F./DACS 2018.

retrospective at the Rockefeller-dominated MoMA in 1931–32 and a further exhibition there in 1940 devoted to twenty centuries of Mexican art. Yet with the removal of the mural, this strategy backfired and both Rockefeller and Rivera suffered accordingly. Rockefeller's reputation as a friend of the Mexican people was seriously dented by what many considered an act of cultural vandalism against the continent's pre-eminent artist. And, as already mentioned, the Cárdenas regime nationalised the Mexican oil industry in 1938 anyway. Rivera may have got the opportunity to repaint the mural later that year on the third floor of the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City (Plate 2.22), but the controversy generated by the incident persuaded other rich patrons in the United States to withdraw from future sponsorship.

Orozco's *The Epic of American Civilization*

If the pan-Americanism in *Detroit Industry* had a utopian component, no matter how naive, then this contrasted directly with Orozco's interpretation of the relationship between the two continents. In his equally ambitious *The Epic of American Civilization*, painted in 1932–34 in the Baker Library at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, Orozco instead produced a withering critique of Anglo-American society. This mural cycle was divided into two parts: *The Coming and Departure of Quetzalcóatl* (Plate 2.23) in the west wing to the left of the central reserve book desk, and *Cortés and the Modern Era* (Plate 2.24) in the east wing to the right (see room plan in Plate 2.27). The murals in each wing were also subdivided into a series of distinct-looking panels. On the first wall of *The Coming and Departure of Quetzalcóatl* the scenes of *Migration* and *Ancient Human Sacrifice* depict the barbarism of the pre-conquest period. Then, on the next long wall, *Aztec Warriors* is followed by the *Coming of Quetzalcóatl*, which ushered in a period of peace and prosperity symbolised by *The Pre-Columbian Golden Age*. This all came to a close with the *Departure of Quetzalcóatl* on a bed of serpents before the last panel, *The Prophecy*, which, in its depiction of armoured conquistadores invading with a heavily militarised horse and cross, acts as the thematic link to the wall to the right of the central desk. This sequence, *Cortés and the Modern Era*, begins with *Cortés and the Cross* (Plate 2.25), the anti-hero

to the pre-conquest Quetzalcóatl.[49] To his left he is burning the ships that the Spanish arrived in and to his lower right are the huddled naked bodies of the conquered, seemingly being fed into the *The Machine*, which features in the next panel to the right. This is followed by the heavily contrasted *Anglo-America* and *Hispano-America*, with the somewhat dour school group and town meeting in the former, and the Mexican peasant leader surrounded by corrupt politicians and military leaders in the latter. There is also a critique of institutional education in *Gods of the Modern World*, in which a prostrate skeleton gives birth to a stillborn baby one, while other skeletons in academic garb preside over the scene. Then there are the last two murals on the next short wall that, in their subject matter of *Modern Human Sacrifice* and *Modern Migration of the Spirit*, directly reference the two works that they sit opposite to at the other end of the room. The first satirises contemporary nationalism with a prostrate skeleton in an army uniform covered with a flag; the second alludes to redemption, with the figure of a returning Christ having chopped down his own cross in front of a pile of military debris. Lastly, there are five further panels on the theme of *Modern Industrial Man* on the south wall, opposite the reserve book desk, which show workers and the construction of skyscrapers (Plate 2.26).

Just as Rivera anchored the industrial modernity of Detroit in a longer history, and in a wider pan-American geography, so Orozco started with the Aztec world in the first half of his mural scheme as a way of inverting the dominant contemporary reading of the relationship between Mexico and the United States. Yet the similarities between the two artists end here; the differences in the way they treat the theme of pan-Americanism in each of their most important works north of the Mexican border is telling, and indicative of the political distance that now separated the two. If Rivera muted his criticism of United States society in his Detroit frescoes to focus upon the utopian potential of modern industrial production in the United States, then Orozco instead launched a powerful critique of Anglo-American culture and its violent history, which was rooted in the conquest and simply could not match the heights of its ancient equivalent. If Rivera celebrated the technological sophistication of the plant at the River Rouge factory, then Orozco in his panel *The Machine*, which depicts a macabre-looking hunk of twisted metal seemingly feeding off the innocent victims of the conquest before spitting them out the other side as zombie-like New Englanders, presented an indictment of industrial society in the United States with its antecedents in the militarised conquest led by an armoured Cortés. If Rivera heroicised the collective endeavour of mass production in Detroit, then Orozco painted a historical cycle that is all about the importance of the individual over the collective. The emphasis is on Quetzalcóatl in the ancient world and on Christ the redeemer at the end, with the image of the single Mexican revolutionary in the *Hispano-America* panel contrasting markedly with the drone-like groups of figures in its *Anglo-American* counterpart.

The differences between Orozco and Rivera's conceptions of pan-Americanism were as much about their respective politics as they were about the patrons that commissioned them. Orozco was becoming ever more distrustful of political parties and demagoguery to the point that in a subsequent mural in Guadalajara he equated the forces of communism with those of fascism. However, after the destruction of his Rockefeller mural in New York, Rivera returned to Mexico City angry and even more politicised. In the final wall of his National Palace mural, he embarked on a radical critique of the limits of the Mexican Revolution, including an invocation of Marx to make it quite clear the direction that the future should take. The withering critique of contemporary Mexican politics in the south wall of Rivera's *History of Mexico*, and the similarly powerful critique of Anglo-American culture in Orozco's mural at Dartmouth, came together in the small-scale and more personalised oil paintings that Kahlo produced while accompanying her husband on his commission in Detroit. It is to one of these that I shall now turn as yet another powerful example of how the unequal relationship between the United States and its southern neighbour was mediated in Mexican art in the 1930s.

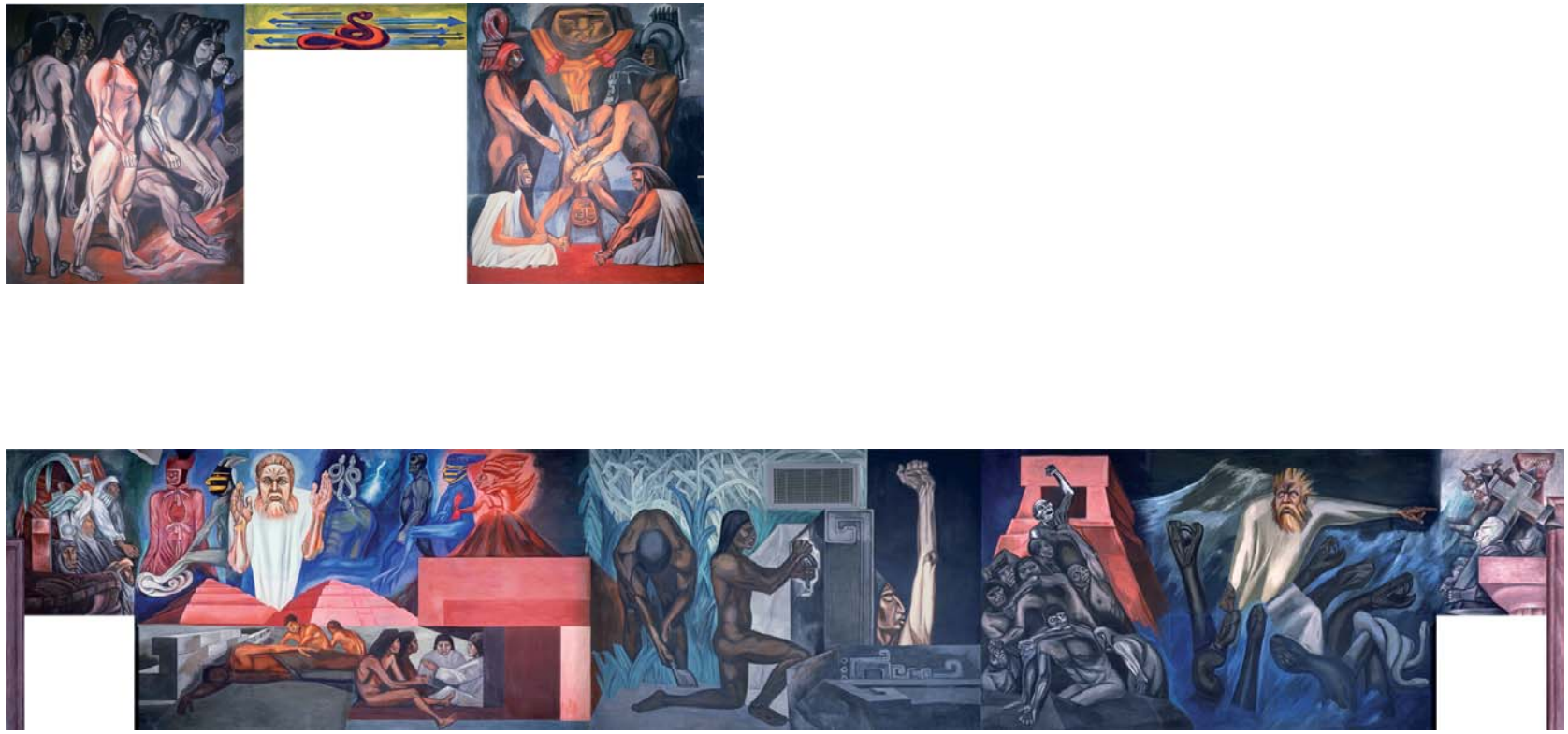

Plate 2.23 José Clemente Orozco, *The Epic of American Civilization* (west wing): *The Coming and Departure of Quetzalcóatl*, 1932–34, fresco. Above (from left to right): *Migration,* 305 × 267 cm; *Snakes and Spears,* 61 × 236 cm; *Ancient Human Sacrifice,* 305 × 267 cm. Below: *Aztec Warriors,* 182 × 142 cm; *Coming of Quetzalcóatl,* 305 × 521 cm; *The Pre-Columbian Golden Age,* 305 × 445 cm; *Departure of Quetzalcóatl,* 305 × 521 cm; *The Prophecy,* 182 × 142 cm. Baker Library, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH. Photo: Hood Museum of Art. Commissioned by the Trustees of Dartmouth College.

Plate 2.24 José Clemente Orozco, *The Epic of American Civilization* (east wing): *Cortés and the Modern Era*, 1932–34, fresco. Above (from left to right): *Cortés and the Cross,* 305 × 462 cm; *The Machine,* 305 × 300 cm; *Anglo-America,* 305 × 262 cm; *Hispano-America,* 305 × 302 cm; *Gods of the Modern World,* 305 × 302 cm. Below: *Modern Human Sacrifice,* 305 × 330 cm; *Modern Migration of the Spirit,* 305 × 320 cm. Baker Library, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH. Photo: Hood Museum of Art. Commissioned by the Trustees of Dartmouth College. © DACS 2018.

Plate 2.25 José Clemente Orozco, *Cortés and the Cross*, detail from *The Epic of American Civilization* (east wing): *Cortés and the Modern Era* (detail from Plate 2.24). © DACS 2018.

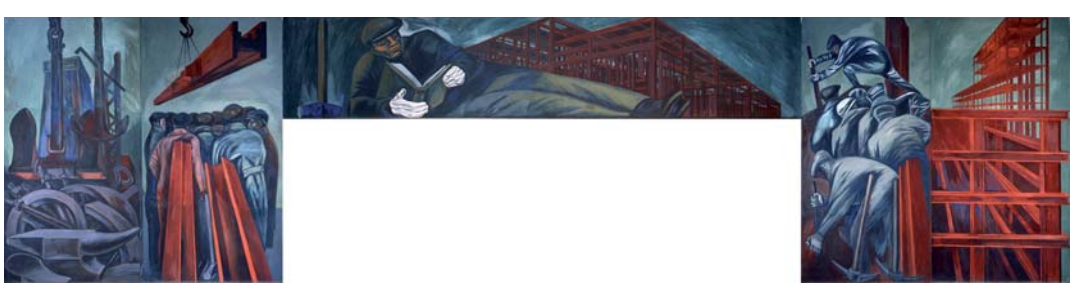

Plate 2.26 José Clemente Orozco, *The Epic of American Civilization* (south wall): *Modern Industrial Man*, 1932–34, fresco, side panels 290 × 150 cm (approx.), central panel 102 × 544 cm. Baker Library, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH. Photo: Hood Museum of Art. Commissioned by the Trustees of Dartmouth College. © DACS 2018.

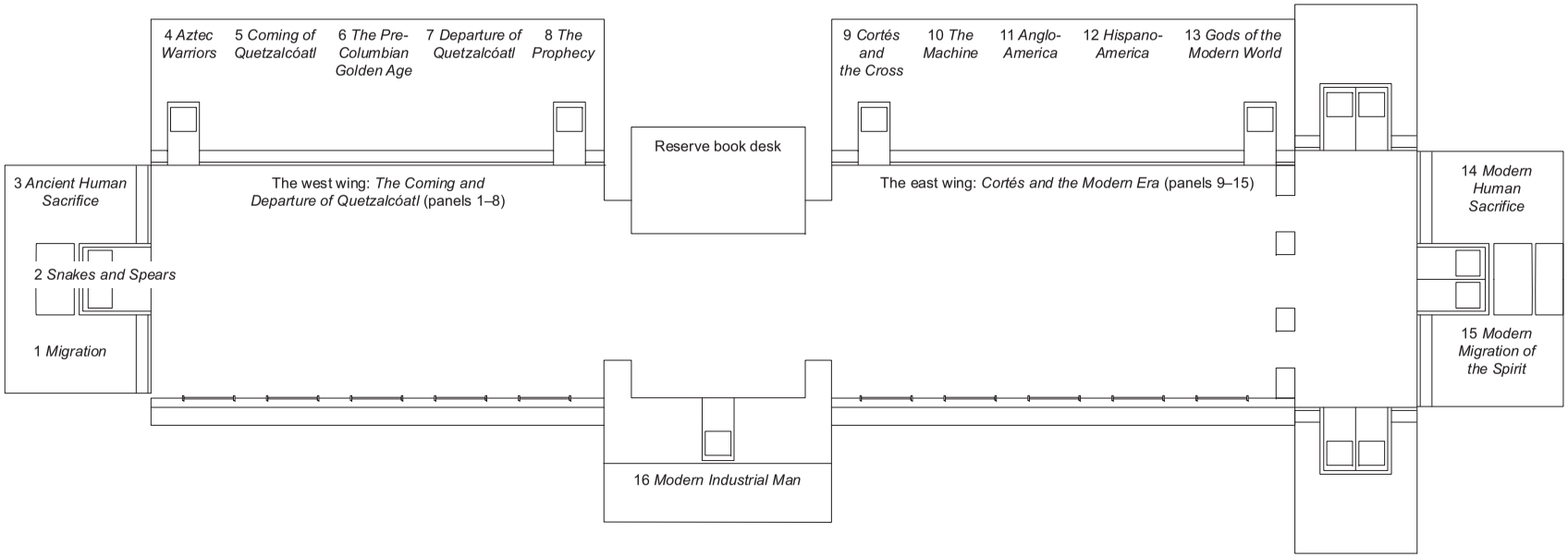

Plate 2.27 Room plan of the reserve corridor of Baker Library, Dartmouth College, indicating layout of José Clemente Orozco, *The Epic of American Civilization*.

5 Fridamania

No account of Mexican art in the interwar period would now seem complete without a discussion of Frida Kahlo. In this sense, the reputational arcs of her and her husband are instructive. In the early 1930s, Rivera was one of the most celebrated contemporary artists in the western hemisphere; however, after the debacle of the Rockefeller Center commission, his patrons in the United States abandoned him. After the Second World War and the onset of the Cold War, and the ratcheting up of anti-communism in the United States, Rivera's star waned, as did that of social realism in painting more generally, with the consolidation of Abstract Expressionism as the latest, and greatest, manifestation of modernism in painting, and home-grown to boot.[50] Kahlo had been championed by the Surrealist Breton in the 1930s and he wrote the catalogue essay for her first New York show, at the Julien Levy Gallery in 1939, as well as organising an exhibition for her in Paris later that year.[51] Yet it was not until the 1980s that her critical reputation really took off. Indeed the first major retrospective of Kahlo's work outside of Mexico was at the Whitechapel Gallery in London in 1982. Again, extra-artistic factors were key to her posthumous success, with feminism, postmodernism and post-colonialism being crucial in her rise to cult status.[52] Second-generation feminism had already had an impact upon the discipline of art history, and it was at this point that feminist art historians were constructing an alternative archaeology of women artists left out of the traditional male canon. Furthermore, Kahlo was a figurative painter, which ensured that her rediscovery in the West meshed perfectly with the return to easel painting that was part and parcel of the reaction against the anti-aestheticism of the neo-avant-garde of the 1970s. Lastly, she was part Mexican and therefore considered at the time to be a Third World artist, which was a crucial factor in the context of post-colonialism. All of these strands come together in her focus upon the self-portrait, which is intimate, personal and private. After the well-documented traffic accident of 1925, her body was a broken one, and the emphasis upon suffering in her works fitted with a particular current in feminism at that time, as well as a dominant trope in conventional art historical narratives – think Vincent van Gogh and the constantly recycled cliché of the mad, tormented genius. This is not to detract from the quality of Kahlo's art, which, despite its seeming naivety, is complex and highly sophisticated. Indeed, in the catalogue essay to the Whitechapel show, Wollen and Mulvey argue that the avant-gardism, popular historicism and mythic nationalism of the monumental wall paintings discussed so far are all embedded in Kahlo's self-portraiture.[53] It merely serves to underline that just as the formalist bias promoted by MoMA would consign the work of Rivera to the margins of Western art history in the post-war period, so the post-colonial turn within more recent scholarship would catapult the market value of Kahlo's paintings into the stratosphere, giving her a cult-like status in the process and thereby making her one of the most instantly recognisable artists in the world.[54]

Exercise

Look at Kahlo's *Self-Portrait on the Borderline between Mexico and the United States* (Plate 2.28), painted in 1932 when she was in Detroit accompanying Rivera. Think about the iconographic content of the work and what it says about the relationship between Mexico and the United States bisected by the figure of the artist. How does this juxtaposition between the two countries compare with Rivera's treatment of this theme in his *Detroit Industry* frescoes?

Discussion

Kahlo stands on a flagstone just right of centre in a pink colonial dress as opposed to the indigenous costume that she usually wore. She is wearing a pre-Columbian necklace and in her left hand she holds the Mexican national flag; in her right she holds a cigarette. To her left is Mexico with a pre-Columbian pyramid, perfectly preserved on the right and decrepit on the left. Below this there is a pile of rubble, two female sculptures made of clay, and a carved skull. The plants and flowers in the foreground have roots that are embedded in the earth and link the Mexican landscape to that of the United States, shown to the right of her self-portrait. In the process of moving from one to the other, the roots turn into electrical cables that power a generator, a loudspeaker and a searchlight in the foreground. Above these, there is a repeated

Plate 2.28 Frida Kalho, *Self-Portrait on the Borderline between Mexico and the United States*, 1932, oil on tin, 31 × 35 cm. Private collection. Photo: © Christie's Images/Bridgeman Images. © Banco de México Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico, D.F./DACS 2017.

series of industrial air-conditioning ducts that stand in front of a Ford factory on the left and skyscrapers on the right. Smoke billowing out of the four chimneys on the factory partially obscures the United States flag painted in the sky above.

It is easy to read the set of oppositions that fed into a primitivising mythology of Mexico in the minds of many North Americans in the period: nature versus manufacture, humanity versus mechanisation, magic versus science, life versus death, pleasure versus work, dream versus reality and so on. In this way, the painting taps into a range of stereotypical dichotomies between Mexico and the United States, such as the past and the present, or the 'primitive' and the modern. Kahlo thereby counters the utopian pan-Americanism of Rivera's *Detroit Industry*, in particular the detail of the interdependence of North and South America (Plate 2.20), with a far darker, and even dystopian, image of the unequal relationship between the two countries.

As Wollen and Mulvey make clear, Kahlo uses self-portraiture 'to explore herself and her colonised cultural roots'.[55] So while Rivera may have produced murals dramatising the effects of United States imperialism in Mexican politics, it is to Kahlo's credit that in her small-scale self-portrait on the border she showed us how imperialism looks once it has been internalised.[56]

Conclusion

While the triumph of Kahlo's reputation, both critically and commercially, may have been bolstered by the constellation of historical, political and intellectual forces sketched out above, the example set by the Mexican muralists had an afterlife, if largely outside of the rarefied world of high art. The mural programme launched by the post-revolutionary Mexican state provided a compelling model of how the arts in the United States might be both maintained and stimulated during the Depression era, when the Democratic government under Franklin D. Roosevelt launched the New Deal with a commitment to large-scale federal spending. An estimated $40 million was spent on producing art for public buildings, including murals in federal buildings from schools through to post offices (Plate 2.29).[57] As a medium frequently linked to revolutionary politics in the 1930s, it also became the cultural benchmark for Latin American anti-imperialist struggles thereafter. When Salvador Allende's socialist government took power on the back of a popular mandate against United States influence in the early 1970s, there was a wave of political murals put up in support of his radically democratic policies. Likewise, when the Sandinistas took power in Nicaragua in 1979, after the country had been a client state for economic interests in the United States for years, it was only a matter of time before public walls were covered with murals in support of a popular democratic government that represented the genuine interests of its people (Plate 2.30).[58] In the late 1960s when the civil rights movement mobilised African-Americans and Latinos in the ghettoes and barrios of cities in the United States, the country underwent a mural renaissance, from the bottom up rather than from the top down, organised within the communities themselves (Plate 2.31; see also Conclusion, Plate 5.2).[59]

Significantly, the example set by *los tres grandes* lives on in Mexico itself despite the gradual decline of muralism after 1968 when the government sought more neo-populist forms of propaganda to contain the political fallout from the Tlatelolco massacre in the build-up to the Olympic Games.[60] Rafael Cauduro's stairway murals in the Supreme Court of Justice next to the National Palace on the Zócalo are a case in point and a clear statement of the contemporary political resonance of the medium. Finished in time for the centenary of the beginning of the revolution, the murals dramatise the ways in which the Mexican state has systematically repressed civil liberties and has regularly deployed paramilitary forces against its civilian population since Tlatelolco, when hundreds of demonstrators were killed. Originally conducted under the 'dirty war' backed by the United States, this violence has more recently been enacted in the name of the 'war on drugs'. The burgeoning narcotics industry is itself a by-product of the levels of poverty in contemporary Mexico that are in part related to neo-liberal treaties such as the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which has opened up the country once again to the economic interests of the United States, this time under the guise of modernisation and the impact of globalisation. It is the effects of globalisation upon the contemporary art world and its institutions which will be examined in the next chapter, while the border between the United States and Mexico will be looked at again in relation to documentary art practices in Chapter 4.

Plate 2.29 Symeon Shimin, *Contemporary Justice and the Child*, 1940, tempera mural, 361 x 224 cm. Great Hall, Department of Justice, Washington, DC. Photo: From the Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

Plate 2.30 Chico Emery, *Sandinista Woman and Child*, *c.*1985, mural. Metrocenter near Managua.

Plate 2.31 Unknown artist, *Tribute to Allende*, 1973, mural. Chicano Park, San Diego. Photo: Alfred S. Quezada.