

Materials for Teaching Research and Composition on *Pan American Unity* mural

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OVERVIEW- The materials here were developed over a decade of collaboration and teaching about the *Pan American Unity* (PAU) mural for an English composition course one level below English 1A. With the exception of the prompts (Part 2) by Dennehy, Mayers and Oest, I adopted or created these materials for a five week research assignment; however they can be extracted from this context and repurposed to fit your needs. The purposes that guided my work on these materials were two-fold: first, to organize materials and activities to support students who might lack skills and experience to analyze a sprawling, complex, monumental art work and write a research paper on it; and second, applying precepts of media literacy theory to interpret visuals as an alternative symbol system that can produce powerful meanings, which can and must be teased apart by the student's interpretation.

A generation of City College teachers have worked support student learning: if students were sometimes overwhelmed by the dense historical references, we encouraged them to talk about what they already identified and understood, and to use library and internet resources to learn about what was mysterious or unknown. If imagery could not be explained by historical reference, we taught them to articulate the question about symbolism and analyze that question in reading and writing. When students had emotional responses to the mural, whether it was pride in its Bay Area references, or its valorization on Mexico's indigenous heritage, or the white male dominance in the 5th panel, or the absence of people of color in the San Francisco scenes, we asked them to think about their responses, without immediately judging or rationalizing. If students were intimidated by library research, note-taking, or piecing together multiple texts and notes into a single essay, we sought to break down each task into its most basic parts, and provide opportunities to practice the task and discuss the results. This last issue has been basic to my purpose: the study of the mural always had to lead to a coherent, thesis-governed research essay in my classes.

Along with many City College educators, I wanted to teach the mural as visual communication, rather than a symbol that could be papered over with a conventional verbal explanation, ignoring its visual specificity, colors, and spatial design. I sought to teach, and allow students to discuss, the gap between symbol and meaning, and how often individuals decode a visual symbol with contradictory meanings. Assisted by Masha Zakheim's foundational work, I taught students not to cling to a familiar scene, or "read" the mural from left to right, and past to present, but to puzzle over the goddess / machine in the center as the key to its ultimate meaning.

Part 1: Introducing *Pan*
American Unity mural- Look,
Write, Plan, Talk

FIRST RESPONSE TO SEEING *PAN AMERICAN UNITY*

Write quickly, without stopping to correct, what seeing this mural makes you think about:

Now, stop and reflect. Please answer these questions:

What part of the mural first caught your attention, (positively or negatively). Describe it:

With all its variety, what big idea comes through the most clearly in the mural?

Regardless of numbers or panels, explain how you understand the parts. In other words, explain how left/ right, top/bottom, center/edge seems to fit together. No right or wrong.

Giving A Short Talk On a *Pan American Unity* mural panel

Pairs of students will lead short (5-7 minute) talks on each upper or lower half panel in Diego Rivera's *Pan American Unity*. Your goal is to share how you understand the mural panel in an insightful way. Preparation includes visual study, reading (begin with <riveramural.org> or Masha Zakheim's "Pan American Unity: A Fresco..."), and talking with people who know more, leading to speaker notes. The panel you present on may or may not be the topic of your upcoming essay. Always have a visual of the panel as a reference when you speak.

To Begin Your Talk: Briefly mention your first perception and response, and go on to emphasize your main point about the panel's visual and meaning. Phrase this as the on-going learning process that it is ("When I first saw this mural panel, I thought it was about _____ but as I look and learn more I am thinking that it is about _____..."). Briefly describe the panel's general design, the most prominent figures, and the meaning as it seems to you now.

In the Middle, Describe: Identify Figures, Shapes, Arrangement: On your *PAU* panel, identify the historical persons, places, landscapes and anonymous people shown, and stretch this into explanation of larger themes and ideas. On other panels, which may not be so historically specific, just make sure that you describe the figures and design in an organized way, and explain the referents (ideas) as you understand them, in a way that leads into the last part.

End With Interpretation: Interpret the meaning of the painting or panel, or at the very least ask some detailed questions about possible meanings, making sure to relate the part to the whole. Asking good questions can be sometimes be more effective than venturing interpretations that someone made which don't make any sense to you. By all means, make sense of the mural panel. Be ready to answer students' questions.

Use the Visual, Pointing and Speaking: It is best for the *PAU* talks to happen at the mural site itself. You can also use the riveramural.org visual, , which shows clear reproductions, either of the whole mural or by panel. Point at and verbally emphasize visuals to make description and ideas as clear as possible. Talk with your instructor if using visuals is a problem. The value of these talks is in students sharing their learning and interpretations, and is not dependent on the perfection of the interpretation.

Short Talk Points/ Scoring Criteria:

_____ Audibility- can students hear/ understand you.

_____ Enthusiasm and clarity of introduction.

_____ Clarity of description.

_____ Clarity of interpretation

_____ Responsiveness to questions.

_____ Originality of response, learning

Out of ____ possible points, this talk is rated as ____ points

Beginning To Collect Information on Chosen Panel of *PAU*

How To Start:

Reading: the rivermural.org web pages “Panel Key” is usually sufficient for early note-taking,
Or read Zakheim’s “Pan American Unity” (see pdf, scroll to “Legend” page at end of document).

Write one page of notes:

Identify and describe historical figures:

Name, describe unknowns:

Name, describe landscapes and objects:

Describe patterns, colors, shapes, ideas, words:

Questions or unresolved issues:

Beginning Notes on Patterns and Meanings on Chosen Panel

How To Start: Write double entry journal, at least one page, based on previous reading.

1) Take notes on arrangement of figures and shapes: center vs. margins, large vs. small, famous vs. unknown, contrasting colors. Which things and figures are most important?

2) Infer Themes or Ask questions about themes: relate to historical figures , buildings, objects, landscapes, colors.

3) See Patterns, Draw Correspondences: connect separated figures or things within panel or on other panels.

4) Take notes on questions or unresolved issues.

5) Look back on your developing understanding. “When I first saw the mural, I thought _____, but after I learned X, I decided that _____.

Planning Ahead For Your *PAU* Mural Essay

DUE DATE for topic proposal memo with informal writing attached: _____

Picking Essay Topic: I strongly recommend that you focus your reading and essay writing on one or one-half (top 2,3,4 or bottom 2,3,4) panel of the *PAU* mural. If you want to focus on a more abstract issue, it should be an important theme in the mural (for example relations between Anglo America and Latin America are important to the mural's meaning, but the biography of Abraham Lincoln is not).

Proposal Memo: it should state your choice of panel or theme, and explain reasons for that choice. It should also try to connect this choice to earlier responses and questions you have written about in visiting the mural, or looking at the riveramural.org web site. Attach that earlier writing to your memo.

How To Choose: If you have difficulty choosing a panel or theme, first review your earlier writing about the mural and write more, considering what interests you the most. Also, you can visit the mural again on your own and discuss your questions with the docent on duty. While you are there, get the mural brochure, or read the same text and visuals on the riveramural.org website.

Remember Next Steps To Come: After the topic proposal, a series of tasks must be completed before writing the essay drafts. Check them off here as you complete them:

- _____ Topic proposal memo
- _____ Panel reading excerpts list annotated
- _____ Thesis proposal memo
- _____ Reading Notes (10 pages)
- _____ Outline

Studying Diego Rivera's Life and Painting in Film

Several films on the life and work of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo are available possibly on line, or in the CCSF Library. You may be able to find the Frida or The Cradle Will Rock movie at Netflix but the documentaries are probably more rare.

Titles

Rivera in America

This film focuses mainly on his painting and politics in 30's in US visits.

Rivera: Portrait of an Artist

Biographical film.

Diego Rivera: I Paint What I See

This biography covers his entire life, painting, and his relations with others.

Frida

This mainly covers her life with Diego, but naturally focuses more on Frida's life, relationships (sexually explicit), and painting, than Diego's. It is a creative, subjective, literary-style story of Kahlo's life and times, which is why it should not be cited as a historical record.

The Cradle Will Rock

Released in 1999. Directed by Tim Robbins. Starring Emily Watson, Ruben Blades (as Diego Rivera, Joan Cusack, John Turturro, Susan Sarandon, etc. The film is only partly about Diego Rivera's episode in New York involving the creation and destruction of his Man At The Crossroads mural in the 1930's. It is a creative, subjective, literary-style commentary on art and power in the 1930's, which is why Diego Rivera fits into its story, but should not be cited as a historical record. Robbins also published a book on the larger issues related to the film, and it is in the Diego Rivera Archives at CCSF, among other places.

Part 2- Different Ways to Define
the Task- Four Prompts on *Pan
American Unity*

Goldthorpe

English 88

Source-Based Panel Analysis of Rivera's *Pan-American Unity* mural

Write a source-based essay describing, analyzing and interpreting two corresponding panels of Diego Rivera's Pan American Unity (PAU) mural. You should choose and your paper should focus on how the visual and meaning of one panel relate to the visual and meaning of an opposite panel (1 to 5, panel 3 to another of your choice, upper panel 2 to upper 4, or lower panel 2 to lower 4). It should focus on a controlling idea (thesis) about those corresponding panels, supported by quotation and paraphrasing of sources and your own analysis, and use the MLA system of documenting sources. The text should be seven pages long in total.

Process: Visual study, focused reading and note-taking need to precede essay writing. Our library has an excellent collection of print and on-line sources, a bibliography, a website, a mural archive, and many dedicated librarians to help you. **Three areas of work are (1)** Historical reading to make the mural more comprehensible. You can begin with the painting: historical references in a certain panel can direct your reading about events or people. Or your reading may also stimulate you to look more carefully at a part of the mural that you originally overlooked. **(2)** Studying images: visual art has its own symbolic meanings that can be inferred in language, and this will be a major focus of class discussion before essays are written. **(3)** Analysis, comparison and synthesis: The enormity of the mural, along with its balanced, parallel design, mean that many of its larger ideas come from patterns, assembling image groups and themes, not just studying one image alone.

Organization: Papers should introduce PAU, not Rivera, and why it came to CCSF, and offer a thesis on the meaning of your chosen panel and its opposite. Another paragraph should include a brief biography of Rivera, but the heart of the paper should be analysis and description of your chosen panel in relation to the opposing panel. Clear paragraph topics will help you to keep the many details you learn about in strict relation to your main point, so as to not get lost in the details

and sources. Describing visual images and their arrangement in a panel should generally precede meaning and interpretation. In your conclusion, suggest a synthesis of your corresponding panels' meaning to the overall meaning of PAU's "marriage of north and south."

Interpretation: Explaining meaning is negotiated between the artist and the viewer. You must go beyond Rivera's or another source's idea, and include your own ideas, inferences and connections. In the introduction, share your first impression of the mural. If you learn about John Brown in lower panel 2, infer what it means to place him beneath Lincoln; in panel 3 you might explain your response to an Aztec goddess, or the panel's theme of technology related to north/south unity. When you study, you should explain your understanding.

Required Quotations and In-Text Citations: Include three quotations (with four lines each) relevant to your paragraph topics, one from "Conversation with Diego Rivera" (a major source, the painter himself), one from a scholarly study of PAU, and one from City College's brochure, or the web site riveramural.org. Students always paraphrase from sources (biographies, histories, art interpretations) and the challenge is to cite them in-text rather than unwittingly plagiarizing them. Quotations and paraphrases should be cited in-text like this (Zakheim 12). Include a "Works Cited" page after the text, with sources listed in alphabetical order. Ask your instructor or tutor whenever use or citation of sources becomes a problem.

Sentence Level: Write and underline three appositive phrases in the essay.

Essay #3: Rivera's America

English 1A

City College

Steven Mayers



Diego Rivera once said in conversation with Dorothy Puccinelli, “I believe in order to make an American Art, a real American art, will be necessary this blending of the art of the Indian, the Mexican, the Eskimo with the kind of urge which makes the machine, the invention of the material side of life, which is also the artistic urge- the same urge primarily but in a different form of expression” (Casler, Elise, “Pan American Unity: Diego Rivera’s Dramatic Interlude With Trotsky”).

Guidelines: Illustration / Argument

Compose and argument essay of at least five pages utilizing at least three sources, cited correctly according to M.L.A. guidelines. The essay should provide a developed and explicitly stated argumentative thesis statement, and have clearly made arguments and counterarguments. Also an illustrative essay, you will rely on the illustrative techniques we have covered (definition, classification, process analysis, narration, description, cause and effect, etc.).

Describe Diego Rivera’s “Pan American Unity” mural and illustrate how he represents the concept of Pan American unity. First, pan-out and look at the mural as a whole, describing in a paragraph or two the general layout of the mural, its left, center, and right sections. Then, zoom in to two or three specific panels. As the description of the mural is serving as your main data, it should create a vivid image of the mural (exposition), and also give the reader a sense of how you feel about it aesthetically through your choice of words. The description must contain at least two figures of speech (metaphors, similes).

Your thesis and argument will focus on your perception of Rivera's conceived national consciousness in Mexico and the United States, how it relates to a continental American consciousness and finally, how it relates to human consciousness. What is Rivera's central argument in this mural, which he meant to be a visual essay on what he calls Pan-American Unity – is it a celebration of an existing unity, a warning to the south or to the north about potential or current dangers of unification, or both? Reflect on what you feel about his argument.

The argument should include the following elements:

- Claim the main point you are trying to prove
- Qualifier as most arguments rely on probability, the qualifier states how probable it is that the conclusion is true
- warrant primary assumption
- backing support, with an indication of the authority behind the warrant
- data or grounds facts and assertions of truth, evidence
- reservation counter argument or rebuttal, or the recognition of the possibility that someone might disagree with you or come to a different conclusion or claim

Resources on Diego Rivera's "Pan American Unity" mural
at City College of San Francisco

- <http://www.riveramural.org> The Diego Rivera Mural Project: This City College site is dedicated to this mural. It features:
 1. A photograph of the entire mural that allows you to zoom into each panel
 2. A key indicating each person, place, or object in the mural

3. An archive with Rivera's letters to Timothy Pfluger, photographs of the creation of the mural at the Golden Gate International Exhibition on Treasure Island in 1939 and 1940, photographs and information on Dudley Carter and the City College ram
 4. Memorabilia from the Golden Gate International Exhibition
 5. A bibliography of the extensive resources on Rivera and on the mural at the Rosenberg Library
 6. Lesson plans
- <http://www.ccsf.edu/Library/guides/diego.html> CCSF Rosenberg Library's Subject Guide allows you to search through the library's extensive collection on the mural and on Rivera. At the bottom of the Diego Rivera in General section is an annotated bibliography arranged by each panel of the mural or by research theme such as Golden Gate International Exposition or Pan American Unity. The bibliography is a work in progress created by Instructor Jeffrey Goldthorpe for his English 93 course. This is extremely helpful!
 - <http://www.diegorivera.com/murals/> The Virtual Diego Rivera Web Museum has an extensive collection of photographs of his works as well as film clips
 - <http://www.lisavelarde.com/CCSFArtGuide/murals.html> The CCSF Art Guide provides information on all the art on campus including the mural

Nicole Oest

Art History

Lesson on Mexican Muralism



In this lesson, you will learn about Mexican Muralism as an important part of a global social realist art current. You will turn in your comparative midterm paper.

This module will help you realize the relevance and connections of the topics in this course to the history of public art in the San Francisco community.

Goals

Upon your successful completion of this module, you'll be able to:

- Summarize the context of Mexican muralism within global social realist art currents
- Differentiate the political ideals, artistic style, and approaches to "indigenismo" of important muralists
- Explain the socio-cultural legacy of Mexican muralism in the United States

Your success in this module will help you towards partial achievement of the following SLOs:

A. Distinguish various Latin American art movements and their social contexts since colonization.

B. Employ historical methods in order to analyze Latin American art and architecture

Schedule

To reach the goals for this module, you'll need to complete the following activities:

Due dates	Activities	Estimated time to complete
	1. Complete 8.1 Mexican Muralism in Post-Revolution Mexico	1.5 hours
	2. Complete 8.2 Mexican Muralism in the United States	30 minutes
	3. Complete 8.3 Discussion: Mexican Muralism and Indigenismo	1 hour

This Module covers the following sections of the Course Outline

Mexican Muralism in Post-Revolution Mexico

1. The context of Mexican muralism within global social realist art current
2. Diego Rivera
3. José Clemente Orozco
4. David Alfaro Siqueiros
5. Their diverging political ideals, artistic style, and approaches to "indigenismo"

Mexican muralism and its socio-cultural legacy in the United States

1. Pan American mural at San Francisco City college
2. Rockefeller center mural in New York
3. Introduction
4. Diego Rivera
5. Further Reading

Lesson 1 of 2:

Introduction: Muralism and Indigenismo

Mexican Muralism is one of the most celebrated topics in the history of Latin American art. Its forms were compelling and popular. Its geographic sphere of influence was vast. But what was it? Who were the three men, also called "Los Tres Grandes" ("The Three Great Ones") often credited with its international popularity? And what was the concept of indigenismo that many of these artists adhered to? Read the following selections and watch the films to find out.

- [The Mexican Renaissance](#)
- Tarica, Estelle. 2016 "[Indigenismo.](#)" Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Latin American History. 6 Oct. 2018. NOTE: Read just the introduction and the section on "Mexico."
- Watch the 4-minute [introductory film on muralism](#). The film is captioned. Activate captions by clicking on the CC symbol in the lower right corner of the video frame.

Diego Rivera - Optional film (further reading)

Who was Diego Rivera? What were his contributions to the history of modern art in Mexico and muralism?

Watch the following film about Rivera's life and work. The film is captioned. Activate captions by clicking the "CC" in the lower right corner of the film frame.

Further Reading

- PBS Documentary: [History Detective, Thelma Streat Johnson, assisting Diego Rivera on Pan American Unity mural, 1940's](#)

Lesson 2 of 2

Introduction

Mexican Muralism had a profound impact on the United States. It influenced the art of the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s. Mexican muralists themselves also created several murals at locations across the United States. In this lesson, you will learn about this impact through a closer study of two murals by Diego Rivera, one of which is located on the CCSF Ocean campus.

Reading and Films

Read the article on [Diego Rivera, Man at the Crossroads](#).

Watch the film below on a similar work titled [Man, Controller of the Universe](#). The film's captions can be activated by clicking the "CC" in the lower right corner of the film frame.

As you read and watch the films, think about the strategies Rivera adopts. Does he apply indigenismo in this work? How was his work controversial in its time?

Film credits: Diego Rivera, Man Controller of the Universe (or Man in the Time Machine), 1934, fresco, 4.85 x 11.45 m in the Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico City Speakers: Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker. Created by Beth Harris and Steven Zucker.

The Pan American Unity Mural at CCSF: Research and Close-Looking

Now that you have briefly read about the background on Mexican muralism, you are ready to closely study and research a mural by Diego Rivera located on the CCSF campus. Take your learning further by

1. studying the books and other resources available at the [CCSFLibrary's Diego Rivera Mural resource page](#).
2. browsing the [mural's dedicated website](#). Tip: Choose one or two books in the bibliography under the tab "Pan American Unity Mural." Review these books and take notes on
 1. Rivera's Indigenismo and
 2. any passages directly related to the concepts and creation of the Pan American Unity Mural.
3. viewing the Pan American Unity Mural by Diego Rivera located in the Performing Arts Theater of the CCSF Ocean Campus.

When you visit the mural, think about your initial reactions to the work. Was it what you expected? Where did your eye travel first? What qualities of the work did you see that you did not notice in the photographs on the website?

Online classroom Discussion: Mexican Muralism and Indigenismo

Introduction

In this discussion, you will collaborate with your peers to analyze the diverging political ideals, artistic style, and approaches to "indigenismo" among the Mexican muralists studied in this module.

- original posts and peer responses due Wednesday, March 20, by 11:59 PM

Instructions

1. Choose one of the works of art presented in this week's lessons.
2. Compose an original discussion post (up to 10 points possible). In your post, you will
 - Name the artist and provide the name of the work of art (if known).
 - Is indigenismo, or the "return to indigenous sources"/the "wish to return to indigenous roots" (Lucie-Smith, 62, 69) evident in the work? If so, where?
 - Explain how the artist's cultural reality affected the artist's formal choices or influenced the theme of the work of art. Be sure to use the terminology you learned from the lesson on the elements and principles of art and design and refer back to lessons on themes for help.
3. Peer response (up to 10 points possible): After you post your original discussion post, you will be able to see your peers' posts and respond to them. Compose a responses to a peer's posts in which you
 - Compare your peer's analysis of their chosen work to another work studied in this section. This comparison can be to the work you wrote about so long as your comparison shows an engagement with your peer's ideas and not simply a reiteration of your original post. How did the two artists make similar or different formal decisions? Did the works communicate similar themes? If so, how? OR

- Compose a response to your peer's post in which you explain the relevance of this work of art to today. Does it address current problems or themes? How might the style be still useful to today's artists?
- Note that responses should be substantial (about 3-4 sentences) and show a close reading and consideration of your peer's post.

Grading

Aim for excellence! These are the criteria for what comprises an "Excellent" rating for a discussion post:

- Addresses each part of the discussion prompt(s).
- Postings demonstrate reflective and critical thinking, not just recitation of information from the assigned readings and videos.
- Makes connections to course content, or to real-life situations.
- Contains insightful and thoughtful ideas, connections, or applications.
- Makes reference to textbook or other sources when required.
- Well-written and free of spelling and grammatical errors.
- Includes well-written, thoughtful response(s) to classmates.
-

PAN-AMERICAN UNITY MURAL

ESL Lessons Prepared by Dayamudra Dennehy

NOTE TO EDUCATORS These are lessons that can be adapted to learners of all levels of language development. The focus may be on discussion, note-taking/infographics, paragraph writing, research, group collaboration, or public speaking/presentation.

Student work may also be compiled digitally, using platforms such as Adobe Spark pages, Adobe Spark video, on a Jamboard, or on Padlet.

THE PANELS

FOR EDUCATORS Start with the middle panel and move out, to panel 2 and 4, 1 and 5. In the middle panel, focus on Coatlicue and the ancient meeting the industrial. In the top of panels 2 and 4, notice San Francisco and the emphasis on work and leisure. On the bottom of panels 2 and 4, notice North American history in peace time and in war. In panels 1 and 5, look at the history of culture, innovation, and the arts.

More: [CCSF Mural Site](#)

FOR STUDENTS: Notice that there are 5 panels of this mural, and each of these 5 panels has a top and bottom section. For these activities you may:

- Write down in words what you see
- Sketch the images that interest you
- Discuss what you see with a classmate/small group.

THE MIDDLE PANEL: LOOK & REFLECT

Start in the middle and look at the top section.

1. There is a large image in this top panel. How is this image different on its left and right sides?
2. What do you think this image is?
3. Describe as many details as you see in this large image.
4. What questions do you have about this image?
5. What is interesting to you about this image? Explain why.
6. Sketch what you see, or how it makes you feel, in your notebook.

There are also two men in this top panel.

1. What are they doing?
2. Why do you think they are doing this?
3. What questions would you ask these men?

Now look at the bottom panel in the middle.

1. Describe all the characters (people or animals) that you see.
2. What are all these characters doing?

3. What do you think is the relationship between these characters?
4. Why do you think these characters are here, in the middle of this mural?
5. What is interesting to you about this image? Explain why.
6. Sketch what you see, how it makes you feel, in your notebook.

RESEARCH:

1. Investigate the name and meaning of this central image on this middle panel.
2. What questions do you have about this image now?
3. Why do you think this image is in the center of this mural?
4. Investigate the characters on this middle panel.
5. What questions do you have about these characters now?
6. Why do you think these characters are in the center of this mural?
7. What did you learn from your research about the relationship of this middle panel to the title of this mural, "Pan American Unity"?
8. What is most interesting to you now about this middle panel?

PRESENTATION: Describe the middle panel, in writing or speaking, and present questions you have about this panel. What is interesting to you about this middle section? Why?

PANELS 2 & 4: LOOK & REFLECT: Look at the top sections of these two panels.

1. **SETTING:** What is the location?
2. **CHARACTERS:** Who are the people/animals in these top sections?
3. **PLOT:** What are the characters doing in these panels?
4. What is interesting to you about this image? Explain why.
5. What questions do you have about these images in these two sections?
6. Sketch what you see in your notebook.

RESEARCH:

1. Investigate the characters and settings in these top sections of these panels.
2. Why do you think these images are in this section of this mural?
3. What is the relationship of these characters and settings to San Francisco? To Mexico?
4. What questions do you have about these images now?
5. What is the relationship of the top sections of panels 2 and 4 to the title of this mural, “Pan American Unity”?
6. What is most interesting to you now about this section?
7. Sketch what you see in your notebook.

PRESENTATION: Describe the top sections of panels 2 and 4, in writing or speaking, and present questions you have about this panel. What is interesting to you about this section? Why?

PANELS 1 & 5: LOOK & REFLECT

Look at the top sections of these two panels.

1. **SETTING:** What are the locations?
2. **CHARACTERS:** Who are the people/animals in these top sections?
3. **PLOT:** What are the characters doing in these panels?
4. What is interesting to you about this image? Explain why.
5. What questions do you have about these images in these 2 sections?
6. Sketch what you see, how it makes you feel, in your notebook.

RESEARCH:

1. Investigate the characters and settings in these top sections of these panels.
2. Why do you think these images are in the two ends of this mural?
3. What is the relationship of these characters and settings to San Francisco/California? To Mexico?
4. What questions do you have about these images now?
5. What is the relationship of the top sections of panels 1 and 5 to the title of this mural, “Pan American Unity”?

6. What is most interesting to you now about this section?
7. Sketch what you see., how it makes you feel, in your notebook.

PRESENTATION: Describe the top sections of panels 1 and 5 and present questions you have about this panel. What is interesting to you about this section? Why?

THE BOTTOM SECTIONS PANELS 1 & 5 AND 2 & 4: LOOK & REFLECT

1. Look at the bottom of panels 2 and 4 and describe the setting, characters, plots.
2. What is the relationship between these 2 bottom sections of these panels?
3. What questions do you have about these images in these sections?
4. What is most interesting to you about these two sections?
5. Look at the bottom sections of panels 1 and 5 and describe the setting characters and plots.
6. What is the relationship between these 2 bottom sections of these panels?
7. What questions do you have about these images in these two sections?
8. What is most interesting to you about these sections?
9. What is the relationship of these characters and settings to San Francisco/California? To Mexico?
10. Sketch what you see, how it makes you feel, in your notebook.

RESEARCH:

1. Investigate the characters and settings in these bottom sections of these panels.
2. Why do you think these images are in this position of this mural?
3. What questions do you have about these images now?
4. What is the relationship of these bottom sections of panels 1 and 5 and 2 and 4 to the title of this mural, "Pan American Unity"?
5. What is most interesting to you now about these sections? Why?

PRESENTATION:

1. Describe the top sections of panels 1 and 5, in writing or speaking, and present questions you have about this panel.
2. What is interesting to you about this section? Why?

YOUR FAVORITE PANEL Take a look at one of the panels that you like the most in the mural.

Describe:

1. The setting
2. The characters
3. The plot
4. The conflict: which characters, symbols, or concepts appear to oppose one another?

5. How this conflict might be resolved in this setting. Use your imagination!

For this activity you may:

- Write a paragraph
- Tell this story in a drawing or series of images
- Discuss this perspective with a classmate/small group.

ADD A PANEL Imagine that you have been commissioned to add a 6th panel to the mural.

Describe:

1. What would be the setting of this panel?
2. Which characters would you include?
3. What activities would they be doing?
4. How does your panel connect to the existing 5 panels?
5. How does your panel bring the mural up-to-date?
6. Add a sketch, drawing or image.

For this activity you may:

- Write a paragraph
- Tell this story in a drawing or series of images

- Discuss this perspective with a classmate/small group. Compare ideas.

THE CHARACTERS

FOR EDUCATORS In this section, students use their imagination to identify with the characters in the mural, after studying a bit of the history and people of the mural.

More: [CCSF Mural Site](#)

FOR STUDENTS: In this section, you will use your creativity to imagine connecting with the characters in this mural.

POINT OF VIEW

Take a look at one of the characters in the mural. Imagine that you are that character. From your point-of-view as that character and tell us:

1. Who are you?
2. Where are you?
3. What are you doing?
4. How do you feel? Why? (Use your imagination!)
5. What is on your mind? Why?

For this activity you may:

- Write a paragraph
- Tell this story in a drawing or series of images

- Discuss this perspective with a classmate/small group. Compare ideas.

LETTER TO DIEGO RIVERA

1. Write a one-page letter in which you introduce yourself and your background to Diego Rivera.
2. Describe your reaction to this mural. What do you like? What is most interesting to you?
3. Ask Diego Rivera questions about his mural, career, and life.

Format this like a proper letter that you would send someone. Be sure to sign it.

LETTER TO A CHARACTER

Find one of the characters in the mural and write that character a letter. In your letter:

1. Introduce yourself
2. Describe similarities you share. Use your imagination!
3. Ask them questions about what they are doing in the panel.

ADD YOURSELF

Imagine that Diego Rivera wants to paint you in the mural. Describe:

1. Which panel would you be in?
2. Which characters would you be next to?
3. What activities would you be doing?

4. Why did you choose this part of the mural?

For this activity you may:

- Write a paragraph
- Tell this story in a drawing or series of images
- Discuss this perspective with a classmate/small group.

WHO IS PRESENT AND WHO MISSING?

1. Who is included in each panel?
2. Who is left out?
3. Why did Rivera make these choices?
4. Who would you add? Explain why.

For this activity you may:

- Write a paragraph
- Tell this story in a drawing or series of images
- Discuss this perspective with a classmate/small group.

RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS

[Dayamudra's Intro Slide](#)

[Deck](#)



[CCSF Mural Site](#)

[Student Project Sample](#)





Part 3: Reading Basic Texts on
Pan American Unity Together

Note-Taking: an Acquired Skill for Researchers - Exercise

Note-Taking Problem #1: Distinguishing Source from Content

When you read a source to include in your paper, you will often find that your source refers to another source, and you have to decide when note-taking how much information to include.

Recently, students read a short biography of Diego Rivera from the Biography Resource Center, for a summary. Here is part of the original biography:

“However he had also been an avid artist since the time he could hold a pencil, drawing on doors, walls, and furniture. To prevent further destruction of the home, his father draped an entire room in black canvas, where Rivera recalled in his autobiography *My Art, My Life*, “I made my earliest ‘murals.’”

Some students, probably in a hurry, summarized the part this way: Rivera’s dad covered his walls with canvas, and Rivera painted his earliest mural, titled “My Art, My Life.”

What was the problem? First the students didn’t notice that the source was crediting another source. What are the signals of that source?

Second, the students misread, thinking that the title of Rivera’s autobiography was the title of his painting. What can you learn from this error as a note taker/ researcher?

Note-Taking Problem #2: Questioning Information If Not Fully Understood

From the Zakheim essay “Pan American Unity”, “At the very bottom of the frame, a mother grieves over a dead child, a victim of war—reminiscent of Picasso’s powerful work about the Spanish Civil War; *Guernica*.”

A good note-taker asks several questions here:

Is this a good interpretation of the scene in lower panel 4 of *Pan American Unity*? A glance at the panel may be necessary to recall it. Does this interpretation make sense?

Is Picasso important to mention? Who is Picasso? How is he related to Rivera?

What is Guernica? Why is it italicized or underlined? Can you see Guernica? What year was Guernica completed? Could Rivera have seen it before he worked on Pan American Unity?

What relation is Zakheim asserting Guernica has to the PAU mural? Why might it be important?

Note-Taking Problem #3: Thinking about Complex Ideas

From Rivera's comments in the "[Conversations With Diego Rivera](#)," what is important to take notes on in relation to the overall meaning of Panel 3? For example: "Here in the Fine Arts Building, there is a man carving wood. This man was an engineer, an educated and sophisticated man. He lived with the Indians and then he became an artist, and his art for a while was like Indian art—only not the same but a great deal of Indian feeling had passed into him and it came out in his art."

Who is the "...man carving wood," connected to Rivera's 1940 location ("...here in the Fine Arts Building..."), and connected to a figure in the mural itself? How does this comment connect with the main theme discussed in the "[Conversations With Diego Rivera](#),"?

Read Zakheim's "Pan American Unity" essay- Journal Writing

CCSF Humanities teacher Masha Zakheim wrote the best short introduction to Diego Rivera's "Pan American Unity," (see the pdf "Zakheim PAU essay) so that is where we begin. Please read it and annotate it carefully. Do a 2 page journal assignment in response to the questions below.

- 1) How does Zakheim describe Diego Rivera's education in the arts, his political commitments, and his social life? How did he learn about mural painting?
- 2) When did Rivera first visit San Francisco? What were the effects of his visit on locals?
- 3.) Why was Rivera invited to San Francisco again in 1940? Who invited him and for what reason? Where did he paint *Pan American Unity*?
- 4.) How did the mural arrive and when did it arrive at City College? When was it displayed?
- 5) In her introduction, Zakheim writes that most viewers would "read" a 72 foot wide historical mural from left to right (past to present). How does she suggest that viewers best "read" it?
- 6) Inference Questions: why, in the top of panels 2 and 4 (Zakheim labels them B and D) is modern San Francisco painted so lightly and beautifully, while lower panels 2 and 4 are painted in different colors with more serious historical and political references? How do the colors in the bottom panels connect to the ideas of the same?
- 7) Do panels 1 and 5 (A and E in Zakheim) emphasize the unity or the differences of Mexico and the U.S.?
- 8) Panel 3 (C) is heavy with allegory and symbolism. Pick out any figure in the panel and explain what ideas you think it might symbolize.

Open Book Quiz— on Zakheim’s “Pan American Unity”

After reviewing Zakheim’s “Pan American Unity,” see p. 7-9 “Descriptions of the Ten Panels....Introduction,” write about how she explains the relation of Rivera’s design to his message.

Viewers of the mural often look at the tribal peoples on the left side and think of the mural as showing chronological history, from past into present (left to right). **According to Zakheim, where in the mural location is the best place to begin “reading” the images?**

After the above starting point, **explain Zakheim’s advice about what direction (up/down, or right/left) should your eyes move?**

Also explain examples of specific major figures she thinks you should look at to best understand the main idea of the mural.

Research Assignment: Question a Docent

Another way of researching the *Pan American Unity* mural is to see it yourself, and talk to the mural docents. Prepare yourself before going. Review the questions that have come up in your reading and viewing so far. Think about the panel or theme your essay or presentation is about. Write them down. When you are at the mural, spend a few minutes looking at the part of the mural that interests or intrigues you the most. Think about the question that is most important to you. Then go to the docent and ask your good, specific, wide-open questions, and take notes. Be ready to ask more follow up questions. Keep the notes to help your later work. Turn the notes into your instructor.

Viewing Diego Rivera's Life and Painting in Film

Several films on the life and work of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo are available possibly on line, or in a Library. You may be able to find the *Frida* or *The Cradle Will Rock* movie at Netflix but the documentaries are probably more rare.

Titles

Rivera in America

This film focuses mainly on his painting and politics in 30's in US visits.

Rivera: Portrait of an Artist

Biographical film.

Diego Rivera: I Paint What I See

This biography covers his entire life, painting, and his relations with others.

Frida

This mainly covers her life with Diego, but naturally focuses more on Frida's life, relationships (sexually explicit), and painting, than Diego's. It is a creative, subjective, literary-style Kahlo's life and times, which is why it should not be cited as a historical record.

The Cradle Will Rock

Released in 1999. Directed by Tim Robbins. Starring Emily Watson, Ruben Blades (as Diego Rivera), Joan Cusack, John Turturro, Susan Sarandon, etc. The film is only partly about Diego Rivera's episode in New York involving the creation and destruction of his *Man At The Crossroads* mural in the 1930's. It is a creative, subjective, literary-style commentary on art and power in the 1930's, which is why Diego Rivera fits into its story, but should not be cited as a historical record. Robbins also published a book on the larger issues related to the film, and it is in the Diego Rivera Archives at CCSF, among other places.

More Note-Taking Practice : Understanding an Academic Art History Text- Desmond Rochford's *Mexican Muralists*

Let's say you are writing a paper about *Pan American Unity's* Panel 1 and are looking for background on Rivera's painting about native American civilizations prior to the Spanish conquest. You need to learn some about those civilizations and Rivera's view of them. Everyone should read for ideas related to your chosen panel or theme. Write a full page.

So you **read Rochford's *Mexican Muralists*** and encounter this commentary (reproduced on the page after these questions) on Rivera's *The History of Mexico* murals in the National Palace. This is an academic-style book that challenges the reader to take on historical events and theories.

In the second indented paragraph, Rochford writes that "Rivera's utopian social vision is evident on the right-hand wall, depicting the world of pre-Columbian Mexico."

To really integrate these ideas into your own understanding of Panel 1 of the *PAU* mural, you would want to be **exploring several questions:**

What does "Pre Columbian Mexico" mean, and how does it relate to the "Spanish Conquest" period referred to in the same paragraph? What do you need to learn of it to write about it in your essay?

What does utopian social vision refer to? If you don't know "utopia" look it up in the dictionary, write the definition here and connect this to the ideas in the paragraph:

Does this "utopian social vision" idea relate to what you see in Panel 1 of *PAU*? Why or why not?

Which details from the description of *The History of Mexico* also appear in Panel 1 PAU?

Similar details:

Different details:

Re-read the second column of the long paragraph, beginning with “In Rivera’s hands, pre-Columbian myth and superstition form a strange world...Unlike Orozco <another muralist>, Rivera chose to suspend all sense of judgment in the face of such reality...Rivera instead chose to present the components of a reality unhindered by the trappings of contemporary moral or political assertion. It is a golden age.”

What does “suspend all judgment in the face of such reality” mean? Is it a factual or opinionated statement?

How do you explain “The ethics of European culture...” sentence? You may not be sure. Readers are often unsure, and they guess the meaning. What’s your guess?

“It is a golden age.” Is that praise, or criticism, or something else? Here you need to use the whole paragraph to help you explain this meaning.

Do you find this writer’s ideas about Rivera’s murals interesting? Important? Can they play a part in analyzing *Pan American Unity*’s Panel 1 somehow?

Excerpt from Desmond Rochford's *Mexican Muralists* pp. 85-86

“The mural was monumental in scale and painted on three adjoining walls in the National Palace, overlooking the imposing colonial building's main staircase. Rivera subdivided the overall theme in relation to the architectural disposition of the walls. The largest of the three walls, the central one, displays the part of Mexican history that Rivera regarded as more widely and objectively known, namely the period from the Spanish conquest of Mexico in 1519 until up to and including the revolution. On the two adjoining walls, Rivera painted other periods of Mexican history. On the right, he depicted the pre-Columbian world, while on the left he painted a panorama of modern-day Mexico as he saw it. Physically, the two side walls act as thematic prologue and epilogue to the main historical drama of the dominating centre wall.

“Rivera's utopian social vision is evident on the right-hand wall, depicting the world of pre-Columbian Mexico. The legendary god-king of the pre-Hispanic world, Quetzalcoatl, creator of culture, civilization and learning, sits serenely amidst his subjects. Images of crop cultivation and the carving of stone sculptures surround him, symbolizing indigenous culture and civilization. Rivera also included another view of this indigenous world, one characterized by conflict and slavery: the human sacrifice to the gods. An Aztec priest is seen brandishing an obsidian dagger, while in another area Indians are locked into the combat of inter-tribal conflict. Yet Rivera's depiction of this unattractive face of the pre-Columbian world is strangely mute. Rivera expressed the legendary myth and superstition that permeated this civilization and which contributed to its downfall only in incarnations of Quetzalcoatl, in forms other than his human one. In the upper background he appears as a feathered serpent rising out of a volcano in tongues of flames, while to the right he appears riding the serpent boat in which he left the Indian world, expelled by the very Indians to whom he had brought civilization and learning. In Rivera's hands, pre-Columbian myth and superstition form a strange world in which culture and conflict, agriculture and slavery are treated with equal importance, assuming no rank or hierarchy. Unlike Orozco, Rivera chose to suspend all sense of judgment in the face of such reality. The ethics of a European culture, brutally imposed on this ancient world by the Spanish, cannot seemingly be applied to or be part of this existence, so unrelated was it to the make-up and social values of the European culture that usurped it. Rivera instead chose to present the components of a reality unhindered by the trappings of contemporary moral or political assertion. It is a golden age. Only a hint of its demise, resulting from overburdening superstition, internal dissension and disintegration, is expressed. When the disintegration and subjugation eventually arrives, conversely it is seen as being imposed, both

metaphorically and literally, from outside. For, against the evidence of history, the disintegration of the Indian world is shown, in the adjacent central wall, as being exclusively the result of the Spanish conquest” (85-86).

Rochfort, Desmond. *Mexican Muralists: Orozco, Rivera, Siqueiros*. Chronicle Books, 1998.

Studying [“Conversation With Diego Rivera”](#)

Read this text, number its paragraphs, and annotate it before writing about questions.

These are questions to stretch your reading comprehension, not just to retrieve a simple “fill in the blank” piece of information. Write about questions in full paragraphs, not short sentences.

EXPLORE your understanding of the text, and your own ideas (not the same things). Write 2 full pages.

Paragraph 1: Read a couple of times over and consider: What kind of thinker is this? It is a common idea to say that paintings can “release emotion.” It is less common to say “It is sex primarily, sex in many transformations.” What kind of artist/ thinker is this in your opinion?

Paragraph 3: “...I believe in order to make an American art, a real American art, this will be necessary, this blending of the art of the Indian, the Mexican, the Eskimo, with the kind of urge which makes the machine...” Is he speaking of fact or opinion here?

In 1940 in the United States, “America” meant the U.S.A. How is he redefining “American” if he is “...blending of the art of the Indian, the Mexican, the Eskimo...” ?

Paragraph 4: Translator’s error: “In the center of my mural there is a large figure, on the one side it has the neck of Quetzalcoatl...” The central figure is Coatlicue, not Quetzalcoatl.

Notice Use of Opposites: In the first sentence, he says “...on the one side...” and the next sentence, he says “On the other side...” How many different kinds of opposites are referred to in the mural?

Art and technology: People often think of art as being individualistic and emotional, and of technology as group-oriented and scientific. How does Rivera generalize about the relation of art to technology?

What are the northern and southern cultures? What is his point? Is one better than the other?

Paragraph 5: What does Rivera think about the prestige of modern European artists in the U.S.? What the problem with this prestige?

Paragraph 6: “Here in the Fine Arts Building there is a man carving wood” Understand: this fellow artist Rivera painted into the middle of Panel 3, was Dudley Carter. His figure is very important to the mural and to the creation of the CCSF mascot, the Ram. Study this paragraph very carefully, asking many questions. Then focus on the concepts of “assimilation” and “expression.” What is the difference between Carter assimilating Indian arts and culture and expressing art?

Paragraph 7: Rivera refers to ethnic and cultural differences in this text several times. What does he think is the relation of someone’s ethnicity to quality of art? In this paragraph, who or what does Rivera seem to criticize? Who or what does he seem to appreciate?

Open Book Quiz—[“Conversation With Diego Rivera”](#)

Background: In paragraph 4 of [“Conversation with Diego Rivera.”](#) Rivera speaks of the goddess/machine of panel 3, describing the Goddess side as representing “the southern art, the art of emotions,” presumably as opposed to the Machine on the northern side, representing technology. One interpretation is that Europeans make art that is mechanical, less human. However in paragraph 7, Rivera contradicts this interpretation; “I do not think that the capacity for artistic expression has anything to do with race or heredity. Opportunity, merely.” Rivera is careful about what he says about nation, race, and ethnicity.

1. Infer: in paragraph 7, Rivera speaks of “this civilization.” Is he talking about America (which America, North or South? Continental or national?). Or could he be speaking of Europe? Be geographically specific, and give reasons for your inference.
2. Summarize briefly but precisely about his general idea in paragraph 7 (don’t copy).
3. Does Rivera intend to praise, criticize, or neutrally describe “this civilization”? Explain.
4. What is your honest reaction to these ideas?

In-Class Summary of a short biography:—[“Diego Rivera: About the Artist”](#) from the American Masters PBS program

Background for Instructors: while there are many useful short biographies of Rivera available, this one is especially appropriate for students writing about the *Pan American Unity* mural because it focuses on his extended stays and murals in the United States. The goal of writing the sketch outline before the full summary is to shift the reader’s focus to his / her own understanding of the text, and to discourage copying directly from the text.

DIRECTIONS FOR WRITERS

After a brief first reading of “About the Artist,” write a sketch outline below, listing major points of each paragraph into your own words.

Next, focusing on your outline (not “About the Artist”), write a single paragraph summary of a page or less. Cover main ideas, not details, in independent paraphrased sentences, covering each of seven paragraphs in one to three sentences each.

SKETCH OUTLINE TEMPLATE

EXAMPLE- Outline of the quotation from Rivera at the beginning of “About the Artist”

- a- Rivera asserted that artist is just a human, feels what all people feel.
- b- Great artists love all humanity, more than their own lives.
- c- Great artists fight against oppression of humanity, above creating their own art

Paragraph 1: Explain why Rivera is a historical figure.

- a-
- b-
- c-

Paragraph 2: How Rivera as a young man became a mural painter.

- a-
- b-
- c-

Paragraph 3: What made his murals in the 1920s fresh and innovative?

- a-
- b-
- c-

Paragraph 4: What were the themes of his San Francisco murals of 1930?

a-

b-

c-

Paragraph 5: What was the importance of his Detroit mural of 1932?

a-

b-

c-

Paragraph 6: Describe the outcome of his 1933 work at the Rockefeller Center

a-

b-

c-

Paragraph 7: Explain the legacy of Rivera's work beyond his lifetime

a-

b-

c-

NEXT, USE THIS OUTLINE TO WRITE A ONE PARAGRAPH SUMMARY.

Reading [“I Am Not a Communist”](#) -- Understanding Diego Rivera’s Politics and Critically Analyzing his Political Changes

BACKGROUND: Rivera’s political life, like his personal life, was complicated, and it was certainly reflected in his painting. A typical view in the “Biographical Essay” from the Biography Resource Center describes his Mexican murals in the 1920s: “Though reaction was initially mixed, the works brought much attention to Rivera and established him as a storyteller through his pictures and thus a voice of the downtrodden and illiterate. Communist symbols began to appear in these works, giving blatant indication of political sympathies. Though he belonged to the communist party on and off, he was frequently absent at meetings and eventually asked to leave at least twice. However this did not temper his enthusiasm for the doctrine.” TASK: Read Rivera’s [“I Am Not A Communist”](#) thoroughly, first at your normal pace, and second with pen in hand, commenting, questioning, and using vocabulary guessing strategies. Considering these two readings, critically respond to these questions in two pages of journal writing.

1. Paragraphs 2-3 seem to state basic facts supporting his claim that he was not a communist, and his political beliefs in 1940. How do they match or not match either the biographical sources you have read?
2. First define or look up the definitions of the “ism” words in paragraph 3 , and second organize it graphically to show the relation of each “ism” to the others.
3. Paragraph 4 is complicated. “. . .the real Communist Party is dissolved.” What does Rivera imply by contrasting the real C.P. to the less real “C.P.” that he puts in quotation marks. What does this use of quotation marks usually mean?
4. The last sentence of paragraph 4 also requires interpretation: “The real Communists are already in jails or concentration camps, or are in exile.” Who and where are these “real Communists”? Does he imply they are good or bad? As unfairly persecuted or as criminals?

5. Paragraphs 5 and 6 are about Russia, then called “Soviet Russia.” How are events in Russia related to communism? How does he describe life in Russia? Does he mention his own visit to Russia in the 1920s and his prior views on Soviet Russia?

6. Paragraphs 7-8 are about international politics related to Russia. In para. 8, what “defeats in China, Italy, Hungary...” etc. is he referring to? How is this point related to communism? Has he become an anti-communist in the traditional American sense?

7. In your opinion, what is the relation of Diego Rivera’s murals to his political ideas in a general sense?

Quiz: Understanding Rivera's Politics While Painting Mural

BACKGROUND: Rivera's political life, like his personal life, was complicated, and it was certainly reflected in his painting. A typical view in the "Biographical Essay" describes his Mexican murals in the 1920s: "Though reaction was initially mixed, the works brought much attention to Rivera and established him as a storyteller through his pictures and thus a voice of the downtrodden and illiterate. Communist symbols began to appear in these works, giving blatant indication of political sympathies. Though he belonged to the communist party on and off, he was frequently absent at meetings and eventually asked to leave at least twice. However this did not temper his enthusiasm for the doctrine."

Writing Prompt: After reviewing his 1940 statement ["I Am Not a Communist,"](#) explain your understanding of the sincerity* and consistency** of Rivera's political position at the time.

*sincerity: "quality of really believing something or really meaning what you say."

**consistency: "quality of always being the same...or always behaving in the expected way."

Part 4: Doing Independent Reading Efficiently with a Bibliography

Annotated Bibliography of Print and Digital Sources
on Diego Rivera's *Pan American Unity* mural, December 2021

by Jeffrey Goldthorpe
City College of San Francisco

Dedicated to Julia Bergman

Alphabetized entries order items in this bibliography. Most entries begin with the author's last name, document title and so on, following the MLA style of "Works Cited," entries (8th edition). Source identification is followed by an annotation summarizing and commenting on the reading. At the end of some entries, are notations about writing style, either academic or popular/ journalistic style. Second is a comment about illustrations, quality, and color vs. black and white reproduction. Comments can be sent to <jgoldtho@ccsf.edu>.

Albrecht, Donald and Thomas Mellins, editors. *Mexico Modern: Art, Commerce, and Cultural Exchange 1920-1943*. Museum of the City of New York, 2017.

The art of post- revolutionary Mexico was shaped by American artists, curators, galleries, writers and publishers, influenced by a fashion in the United States for Latin American cultures. For Mexico, these twenty three years were less a period of nationalist purity than a time of intensive cultural dialogue between Mexico and the United States. Although essays help set context, the book is largely composed of graphics from a 2017-2018 exhibition, with brief passages describing a range of prominent Mexican and American participants in this cross border exchange, including Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo and many of their associates. Academic style, but not dense. Many color illustrations.

Albrecht, Donald and Thomas Mellins “Orchestrating the Mexican Moment in the United States: Chicago, Los Angeles and New York.” *Mexico Modern: Art, Commerce, and Cultural Exchange 1920-1943*, edited by Donald Albrecht and Thomas Mellins. Museum of the City of New York, 2017, 22-41.

The essay recounts for the emergence and recognition of Mexican art in mid twentieth century American, particularly among the upper classes, whose embrace

of modernism was balanced by a new appreciation of antiquity. Many color illustrations.

Azuela, Alicia. "Rivera and The Concept of Proletarian Art." *Diego Rivera: A*

Retrospective. edited by Cynthia Newman Helms. Lerner Publications, 1996, pp. 125-130.

This essay analyzes issues of Marxism, capitalism, and technology in Rivera's painting, especially in Detroit Industry. Academic style. Some color illustrations.

Barden, Merrill E. *Understanding the Evolution of Diego Rivera's Message to the*

United States: An Explication of the Pan American Unity Mural. 1993, Brown University,

Senior Thesis.

This scholarly paper covers Rivera's educational and artistic background in Mexico, the history of his encounters with the United States, and mainly focuses on a panel by panel description and interpretation of the mural (easily viewed in its Table of Contents). A thematic analysis compares panel 1 to panel 5 and panel 2 to panel 4, and generalizes on the overall meaning of panel 3. It includes a final interpretation of the mural as a whole. This unpublished senior thesis, given to City

College in 1993, was the first academic thesis to my knowledge, to solely focus on the *Pan American Unity* mural. Academic style. Illustrations are few, sometimes inferior, black/white.

Belnap, Jeffrey. "Diego Rivera's Greater America: Pan-American Patronage, Indigenism, and H.P." *Cultural Critique*. No. 63. Sp. 2006. pp. 61-98. JSTOR.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/4489247>. Accessed 8 Apr. 2021.

The author theorizes that Rivera utilized a U.S.-dominant "Pan Americanism" as a surface meaning in some of his works done for American audiences, while suggesting in less direct imagery alternative meanings of Pan Americanism, evoking a socialist, "indigenist" culture of a imagined future. The author quotes Rivera's statements where he speaks of infiltrating and subverting American imperialist concepts on inter-American relations. As a case study for this concept, the author analyzes some visual and costume design work Rivera contributed to "HP," a modernist ballet briefly debuted in Philadelphia in 1931, with music composed by Carlos Chavez. He also cites several murals and paintings with similar "occult" (subtle or secret) meanings of an indigenist Pan Americanism, including panel 3 of City's College's *Pan American Unity*. Students of *PAU* may find this

contrast of obvious versus occult meanings to be useful in analyzing the images and meanings of the PAU mural, which is conciliatory about U.S.-Mexican relations.

Academic style of writing. Illustrations are black and white, and not of high quality.

Birdwell, Michael. *Celluloid Soldiers: Warner Brothers' Campaign Against Nazism*. New York University Press, 1999.

This book covers both the anti-Nazi movie production of the Warner Brothers studios, the larger responses among Hollywood studios and people in the industry, and the larger political forces in the United States that were for or against U.S. military involvement in Europe, before U.S. entry into World War II. It is a reminder of how Nazism looked less threatening to Americans in the thirties than it seems today. It gives specific coverage to production and publicity related to *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*, one of the movies Rivera illustrated in Panel 4 of *PAU*.

Academic style. Some B/W illustrations.

Braun, Barbara. *Pre Columbian Art and the Post-Columbian World: Ancient American*

Sources. Harry Abrams, 1993.

This book investigates the influence of ancient indigenous American art and

architecture on modern artists. A long chapter (pp. 185-250) examines in detail the pre-Columbian aspects of Rivera's paintings and the artifacts that influenced him, making it relevant to Panels 1, 2 and 3, as well as a wide range of Rivera's art.

Academic style. Fine illustrations, many in color.

Brenner, Anita. *Idols Behind Altars*. Biblio and Tannen, 1967.

Written in the 1920s as anthropology showed new interest in Pre-Columbian cultures, the book portrays the rebirth of Mexican art through its Mestizo culture, where indigenous polytheism thrives under the imposition of Catholic monotheism, and sparking a renaissance that sounds similar to Rivera's 1940 statements about Pan American unity. Chapters on several Mexican muralists, including Rivera, bring her account into the author's present of the late twenties. Brenner's direct involvement in Mexican political and artistic circles as a long-time resident, working under the influence of both Mexican "indigenismo" and anthropologist Franz Boas' cultural relativism, makes her an important intellectual link between cultures. Photographs by Tina Modotti and Edward Weston, while poorly printed, add an impressive aesthetic dimension to the text. Academic, literary style.

Brown, Betty Ann. "The Past Idealized: Diego Rivera's Use of Pre-Columbian Imagery"

Diego Rivera: A Retrospective, edited by Cynthia Newman Helms, Lerner Publications

1996, pp. 139-155.

This is an analysis and evaluation on Rivera's general use of and ideas about representing Pre-Spanish Conquest imagery in his murals. It includes balanced criticism of Rivera's historical inaccuracies, while crediting him with popularizing representations of cultures previously destroyed and ignored. Academic style.

Illustrations, some in color.

"Coatlicue." Directed by Beth Harris and Steven Zucker. Khan Academy, Accessed 9 Jan. 2021

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-americas/early-cultures/aztec-mexica/v/coatlicue>

This 7:14 video features a 360 degree view of the famous Coatlicue sculpture in the Anthropology Museum, with an audio discussion by two academics (with transcript), giving an aesthetic and historical-mythological interpretation of Coatlicue. Relevant to Panel 3. Introductory academic language.

Craven, David. *Diego Rivera As Epic Modernist*. G. K. Hall & Co., 1997.

This is a book of criticism and interpretation of Rivera's painting, not a biography

though it includes biographical details. It covers his main works, and combines theories of both art and politics to present an interpretation: that at his best, Rivera combined modernist techniques to produce a narrative of the entire Mexican nation (and humanity, viewed metaphorically), focusing more on the people than individual heroes or gods. Dense academic style. Many B/W illustrations.

Craven, David. *Art and Revolution in Latin America 1910-1990*. Yale University Press, 2002.

This book begins by putting Latin American public art, from Mexico, Cuba, and Nicaragua, in a political and theoretical context. Its long chapter on the Mexican muralists, Rivera chief among them, is carefully written and insightful about art, politics and history. Dense academic style. Many illustrations, some in color.

“Diego Rivera: About the Artist.” *American Masters*, 26 Aug. 2006. pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters

[diego-rivera-about-the-artist/64/](https://pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/diego-rivera-about-the-artist/64/) .

This brief biography has a special emphasis on Rivera’s work and influence in the United States. B/w illustration.

Diego Rivera: The Pan-American Unity Mural at City College of San Francisco. City College

of San Francisco, 2021.

This brochure includes both rich visuals and detailed descriptive language. It has a high quality color reproduction of *Pan American Unity*, linked by numbers to annotations on the mural's many historical and metaphorical figures, and urban and geographical settings. On the opposite side is a historical account of the mural's production and eventual arrival at City College, the mural's symbolism, with accessible historical, political, and cultural references, (relevant to Lower Panel 4 especially) and documentary photographs. Academic style, excellent color and B/ W illustrations.

“Diego’s Assistants.” *Pan American Unity Mural At City College of San Francisco*. Diego Rivera

Mural Project, <https://riveramural.org/diegosassistants/> . Accessed 24 June 2020.

Listing of sixteen assistants on PAU, years of birth and death, sometimes with brief biographies or project duties.

“Diego Rivera: The Story of His Mural at the 1940 Golden Gate International Exposition.”

Dorothy Puccinelli. 1940. *California Revealed*, City College of San Francisco Library

Collection. <https://californiarevealed.org/islandora/object/cavpp%3A67848>

In this important source, Diego Rivera carefully describes the meaning and design of *Pan-American Unity* and the larger political and artistic context during the time of its creation. The brochure includes a photograph of Rivera painting the mural on a scaffold, and a “cartoon” of the mural design with annotations by Rivera or Puccinelli, and other explanatory notes on the mural. Academic style. Includes B/W illustrations.

Downs, Linda Bank. *Diego Rivera: The Detroit Industry Murals*. WW Norton, 1999.

This book offers a very detailed description and analysis of Rivera’s Detroit mural, with a lengthy description of his ideas about machinery, technology, and labor. The author’s analysis of the Detroit murals’s portrayal of a Ford stamping machine, foregrounding Rivera’s utopian feelings about American technological advance, coupled with icons referencing pre-Columbian concepts of human sacrifice and life/death imagery in the same mural (mixed with north/south references), all have relevance to analogous symbols in panel 3, upper panel 4 and panel 5 of *Pan American Unity*. See especially chapters three “The Cosmology of Technology,” and four “Interpreting Detroit Industry.” Illustrations are excellent, some in color, with

sketches, as well final mural paintings. Academic style.

Downs, Linda. "Rivera, *Detroit Industry* Murals." Khan Academy, Accessed 9 Jan. 2021. <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-1010/latin-america-modernism/mexican/a/rivera-detroit-industry-murals>

A brief but careful description of Rivera's *Detroit Industry* mural. A paragraph in the essay's middle covers the Ford Stamping Machine's resemblance to the Aztec goddess Coatlicue, similar to the figure in panel 3 of *Pan American Unity*. It is also relevant to Panel 5. Easy introductory style. Excellent color photographs.

"Famed Muralist Makes Known His True Stand In The International Drama." *Russian Hill Runt* [San Francisco, CA.] 6 December 1940. 1. California Revealed, City College of San Francisco Library Collection. <https://californiarevealed.org/islandora/object/cavpp%3A67850>

This brief article contextualizes Rivera's statement "I Am Not a Communist" (on the same page), relating it to his just finished mural, celebrated at the opening ceremony held at the Golden Gate International Exposition on Treasure Island. Relevant to upper panel 4 and lower panel 4. Written in a popular style. No

illustration.

Flaherty, George F. "All Eyes on Mexico: Revolution and Speculation." *Mexico Modern: Art, Commerce, and Cultural Exchange 1920-1943*, edited by Albrecht and Mellins, edited by Donald Albrecht and Thomas Mellins. Museum of the City of New York, 2017. 12-21.

The essay is focused on political and cultural context for muralism in Mexico, which was more "porous and cosmopolitan" than it once seemed. Domestic and foreign elites seized upon mural and other arts as symbols to invent a new national identity. It comments on the "Mexico Modern" exhibition as documenting the cross border modernist networks surrounding "pure" Mexican art, seeing this art as a speculative creation of cultural nationalism, looking at the overlaps between art, money and politics. This is relevant to Panel 1, upper panel 2 and lower panel 2. Many color illustrations.

Fuentes Rojas de Cadena, Elizabeth. *Three San Francisco Murals of Diego Rivera: A*

Documentary and Artistic History. 1980, University of California, Davis, M.A. Thesis.

This Master's thesis gives some historical background on the situation in San Francisco leading up to each mural, as well as describing and analyzing each mural,

the circumstances of its commission, and multiple opinions about each one. A long third chapter is about City College's *Pan American Unity* mural, including controversies and criticisms, and a very thorough visual analysis (her panel numbering differs from that in current use). Its bibliography cites many San Francisco publications. Academic style. B/W illustrations, poor quality.

“Golden Gate International Expo.” *Pan American Unity Mural At City College of San Francisco*.

Diego Rivera Mural Project, <https://riveramural.org/ggie/>. Accessed 18 December 2021.

The has description of the Exposition where Rivera painted his mural, including opening, closing dates, detailed photograph of “Art in Action” exhibit of the GGIE, decorative map, and an afterword explaining the prolonged storage of PAU, and its eventual installation at City College in 1961. This web page is relevant to lower panel 3, upper panel 4, or students writing about Timothy Pflueger. An additional link to a silent film footage of the “Art in Action Exhibit” is included (see Goldner entry in this bibliography with hyper-link).

Goldner, Orville. “Art in Action Exhibition.” DIVA . Accessed 24 June 2020. [https://diva.sfsu.edu/](https://diva.sfsu.edu/bundles/187038)

[bundles/187038](https://diva.sfsu.edu/bundles/187038).

This color silent film (11:25 long) transferred to video shows scenes of artists and assistants at work at the GGIE, including, early in the video, Rivera at work on the unfinished PAU, and Dudley Carter at the end.

Goldstein, Ernest. *The Journey of Diego Rivera*. Lerner Publications, 1996.

This book has a compact, but perceptive review of Diego Rivera's work by an arts educator writing for non-experts. The book is short. It maintains a balance of historical interpretation (for example, calling attention to the inclusion of John Brown beneath Abraham Lincoln, making it relevant to lower panel 2), biography, and thematic explanation. Its main focus is to explain the style of his painting and his motives as a painter. Popular style for younger readers. Illustrated in color.

Gonzalez, Robert Alexander. *Designing Pan-America: U. S. Architectural Visions for*

the Western Hemisphere. University of Texas Press, 2011.

This book analyzes the architecture in the expositions and world's fairs as ideological contributors to the ideal of "Pan Americanism." The author argues that these representations of peace, equality and cooperation exist in tension with

unequal relations in the real world. “Pan American Unity” has multiple meanings, which have always been contested, including by Latinos in the US. using the concept to assert their legitimate place in American (U.S.A.) society. The writer puts those expositions, buildings, events, and ideas into a historical and even anthropological perspective. Book is especially relevant to upper panel 4 and upper panel 3, or any student writing about the Golden Gate International exposition (GGIE). Academic style. Richly illustrated in color.

Hamill, Pete. *Diego Rivera*. Harry Abrams Inc., 1999.

This biography is detailed and lively, and includes criticism and interpretation of Rivera’s painting. The artist and his paintings are the main focus. The biographer has a definite viewpoint: that Rivera’s painting can be divided into a “Warm Diego,” which is poetic, humane, celebratory and “Cold Diego,” which is painting as propaganda, caricature, without pity and compassion (see pp. 114-116 for exposition). Popular journalistic style. Many color illustrations.

Helms, Cynthia Newman. *Diego Rivera: A Retrospective*. Founder's Society Detroit Institute of Art, 1986.

This is an exhibition catalog and has many excellent color illustrations of Rivera's work. It includes a detailed chronology of Rivera's life, and essays with scholarly evaluation of important topics related to his work: history, pre-Columbian imagery, political ideologies, self-portraits, and influence on American artists. Dense academic style, with fine illustrations.

Hemingway, Andrew. "The Mexican Revolution as an Aesthetic Event: Early Myths and Perceptions." *Vida Americana: Mexican Muralists Remake American Art, 1925-1945*.

Edited by Barbara Haskell. Whitney Museum of American Art, 2020. 232-237.

This essay covers how Mexican muralists influenced American artists and writers, especially Anita Brenner, the bi-cultural writer of the groundbreaking 1929 *Idols Behind Altars*, which brought the ideas of Mexican indigenismo into English, making it relevant to Panel 1 and upper panel 2. Andrew Hemingway contends that the Marxist-Leninist ideology of many muralists co-existed with different notions that Hemingway called "romantic anti-capitalism," and which Brenner called

“Mexicanism.”

Hicok, Bob. “Rivera’s Golden Gate Mural.” *The Legend in Light*. University of Wisconsin Press, 1995, pp. 15-17.

This poem presents an endearing dialogue between a narrator / father and his young daughter about the *Pan American Unity* mural, moving lightly but perceptively between surface appearances and in-depth meanings. Literary style.

Hurlburt, Laurence P. *The Mexican Muralists in the United States*. University of New Mexico Press, 1989.

The book has a careful review of the American works of Orozco, Rivera, and Siqueiros. Of particular relevance are pages 90-97, which recount subtle influences on Rivera’s painting such as the European positivism predominant in Mexico during his childhood, effecting his notions about the slow emergence of truth from scientific investigation, and the application of biological laws to human conduct. In addition the author cites the influence of cubism on his painting style, despite his rejection of cubism in general. Finally the influence of “ancient Mexican belief in a system of dualities that governed the existence of man and of the gods,” a fecund

concept to better understand the meaning of Coatlicue in panel 3 of *Pan American Unity*. Hurlburt briefly comments on pages 155-156 on the significance of Coatlicue in Rivera's Detroit Industry mural. Illustrated. Academic style with some density.

Karlstrom, Paul J. "Rivera, Mexico, and Modernism in California Art." *Diego Rivera: Art and Revolution*. Consejo Nacional Para La Cultura de Bellas Artes, Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio Arts Council, Landucci Editions, 1999, pp. 219-233.

The author argues that Rivera's California murals should be understood as an alternate type of modernist painting, in contrast to critics who point to American abstract expressionist painting of the 1940s and 1950s as the exemplar of modernism in painting. This alternative modernist painting has been carried forth by Chicano muralists in the U.S. who are continuing to work out themes from Rivera's *Pan American Unity* mural, centered on the potent symbolism in upper panel 3 and lower panel 3: the goddess/ machine and the Tree of Life and Love. Academic style. Color illustrations.

Kettenmen, Andrea. *Diego Rivera 1886-1957: A Revolutionary Spirit in Modern Art*. Taschen, 1997.

This is a short biography with introductory criticism and interpretation. It has good background on Mexican political and cultural contexts, as well as explanation of Rivera's politics in relation to American patrons of his art. It has an intermediate style between popular and academic. Many color illustrations.

Kilroy-Eubank, Lauren. "Coatlicue." Khan Academy, Accessed 9 Jan. 2021, <https://>

www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-americas/early-cultures/aztec-mexica/a/coatlicue

A brief, clear background article on the myths and meanings behind the Aztec goddess Coatlicue (the towering figure on upper panel 3), including the burial and reburial of a Coatlicue statue during the Spanish era. It is illustrated not only with photographs of the famous sculpture in the Mexican Anthropology Museum, but also with illustrations from an Aztec Codex (manuscript) and a 1792 Spanish history. Academic but introductory language.

Lee, Anthony. *Painting On The Left: Diego Rivera, Radical Politics and San*

Francisco's Public Murals. University of California Press, 1999.

The book includes background on the place of mural painting in San Francisco before Rivera's 1930 arrival, the specifics of Rivera's San Francisco murals, and

how they affected San Francisco's artists and civic life, and the place of visual art in San Francisco's and the United States' artistic and political life. It is very detailed about relevant local cultural details (for example the Chinese American artists affiliated with the American Communist Party). It includes a lengthy interpretation of the *PAU* mural, and gives extensive background on the circumstances surrounding the Golden Gate International Exposition (related to upper panel 4 and lower panel 3). Dense academic writing style. Some color and B/W illustrations.

“Letters.” *Pan American Unity Mural At City College of San Francisco*. Diego Rivera Mural Project, <https://riveramural.org/letters/>. Accessed 24 June 2020.

These four letters between GGIE official Timothy Pflueger and Rivera show the personal context of Rivera's second visit to San Francisco, and include an officially worded contract.

“Mural Timeline.” *Pan American Unity Mural At City College of San Francisco*. Diego Rivera Mural Project, <https://riveramural.org/muraltimeline/>. Accessed 24 June 2020.

Timeline extends from October 1939 to June 1941, covering biographical, historical, political and artistic details, providing a rich context for PAU's creation, and

including a range of visual artifacts, including editorial cartoons, documentary photographs, letters, menus, and even Rivera and Kahlo's San Francisco marriage certificate. Relevant to students writing about Golden Gate International Exposition, or upper panel 4. Popular writing style, with illustrations.

Marnham, Patrick. *Dreaming With His Eyes Wide Open: A Life of Diego Rivera*.

Bloomsbury Publishing, 1998.

This is a full length, in-depth biography. While it has much information on his art and politics, above all it is about the psychology and individual life of Diego Rivera. It is detailed and carefully researched. It is especially important in explaining Rivera's transformation into a political muralist, emphasizing the influence of art historian Elie Faure, and Mexican Education Minister Jose Vasconcelos. It also contains a sharp critique of *Pan American Unity* as an outcome of Rivera's personal and political disarray. Literary style. B/W and color pictures.

McDonald, Gerald, et al. *The Films of Charlie Chaplin*. Bonanza Books, 1965.

This book has detailed descriptions of all of Chaplin's films, including *The Great*

Dictator (included in Rivera's PAU lower panel 4), with several still photographs from the movie. Somewhat challenging reading. Many B/W illustrations.

“Mural Timeline.” *Pan American Unity Mural At City College of San Francisco*. Diego Rivera Mural Project, <https://riveramural.org/muraltimeline/>. Accessed 24 June 2020.

Timeline extends from October 1939 to June 1941, covering biographical, historical, political and artistic details, providing a rich context for *PAU*'s creation, and including a range of visual artifacts, including editorial cartoons, documentary photographs, letters, menus, and even Rivera and Kahlo's San Francisco marriage certificate. Popular writing style, with illustrations.

Olivar, Rodrigo. “Los Tres Grandes. Vida Americana: Mexican Muralists Remake American Art 1925-1945.” narrated by Cheech Marin, Whitney Museum of American Art, <https://whitney.org/exhibitions/vida-americana>. Accessed 24 June 2020.

This 6:14 video introduces the historical and artistic context of Mexican muralists, and their influence on American artists in the mid-twentieth century.

“Pan American Unity (Full Mural).” *Pan American Unity Mural At City College of San Francisco*. Diego Rivera Mural Project, <https://riveramural.org/fullmural/>. Accessed 24 June 2020.

This web page shows a richly colored horizontal reproduction of PAU as a whole, and links to more vertically oriented reproductions of all five panels of PAU. It includes thematic summaries of five panels, with at least 50 keys containing annotations on visual details of historical and artistic significance.

Park, Stephen M. *The Pan American Imagination: Contested Visions of the Hemisphere in Twentieth-Century Literature*. e-Book Collection (EBSCO Host).

The book's focus is on the larger idea of Pan Americanism, rather than on Rivera or mural painting. While the book ranges over multiple media and disciplines, including archeology, dance, and photography, it mainly explores writing, especially by the 1920s American literary avant-garde, and its effort to seek out what a genuine American culture might be, rather than being an inferior version of the European original. It also examines Pan Americanism's various national contexts, including Haiti, Mexico, Cuba, and mainly the United States, giving special attention to the vogue for archeological expeditions, exhibitions, and archives that valued and appropriated pre-conquest artifacts from indigenous cultures. A careful student of Pan Americanism (and those writing on Panel 3) will want to study Park's epilogue, where he uses Rivera's *Pan American Unity* as a favored metaphor to conclude his

exposition, presenting San Francisco as a utopian place, using symbols from both indigenous and modernizing sources, but concluding that the mural rejects a singular origin point or definition of Pan Americanism.

Paz, Octavio. *Essays on Mexican Art*. Translated by Helen Lane. Harcourt Brace and Co. 1993.

In “Re/Visions Mural Painting,” (pp. 113-168) Paz, a prominent Mexican intellectual, balances his aesthetic appreciation of Rivera’s sensual, eclectic, and vigorous painting style with a critique of Rivera’s co-optation by the Mexican government, which sought to legitimate itself through art, lacking its own revolutionary ideology. He rejects labeling Rivera’s work as social realist, suggesting that Rivera stylistically owed the most to the European “fauvists” whom he encountered during his lengthy apprenticeship in France. Academic style.

“Photos, Diego Rivera and Pan American Unity.” *Pan American Unity Mural At City College of San Francisco*. Diego Rivera Mural Project, <https://riveramural.org/photos/> . Accessed 24 June 2020.

Black and white photographs of Rivera at work on the mural at GGIE, and the unfinished mural itself, including Pfleuger, Frida Kahlo and assistants.

Platt, Susan Noyes. *Art and Politics In the 1930's: Modernism, Marxism, Americanism.*

A History of Cultural Activism During the Depression Years. Midmarch Arts Press, 1999.

This book covers American artists in relation to the political and the art worlds in the USA in the thirties. Author places Rivera's American murals in a domestic political and cultural context, stressing Rivera's connection with Anita Brenner, an American writer who had lived in Mexico during the 1920s and in New York City in the 1930's at the time of the Rockefeller Center controversy. Academic style. Some B/W illustrations.

Poletti, Therese. *Art Deco San Francisco: The Architecture of Timothy Pflueger.* Princeton Architectural Press, 2008.

This book is both a biography of the architect who brought Diego Rivera's *Pan American Unity* to City College of San Francisco, and a careful photographic documentation of Pflueger's architecture. Pflueger, who first worked as an architectural apprentice in the European Beaux-Arts tradition, experimented with Spanish Revival, thirties Moderne and International styles, and designed popular, commercially successful architecture in San Francisco's skyscrapers, movie theaters,

department stores, and public school buildings for over two decades. In addition he collaborated extensively with local artists and art organizations, including the arranging Diego Rivera's first commissioned mural in the United States in 1930.

The book has detailed accounts of Rivera's 1930 work with Pfleuger (whom Rivera painted in lower panel 3, as well as his 1940 work at the Golden Gate International Exposition, where *Pan American Unity* was painted (located on Treasure Island, shown on upper panel 4). Popular writing style, sometimes dense. Many B/W and some color photographs.

Reinhardt, Richard. *Treasure Island: San Francisco's Exposition Years*. Scrimshaw Press, 1973.

Historical background and the author's personal perspective about both San Francisco of 1940, and the specifics of the Golden Gate International Exposition and the construction of Treasure Island (an artificial island GGIE was built on, pictured on upper panel 4 of the mural). Popular writing style, with many quality B/W photographs and illustrations.

Rivera, Diego. "I Am Not A Communist." *Russian Hill Runt*. 6 December 1940. 1-2. California

Revealed, City College of San Francisco Library Collection. <https://californiarevealed.org/>

[islandora/object/cavpp%3A67850](https://californiarevealed.org/islandora/object/cavpp%3A67850)

This article by Rivera is also an important source about Rivera's political views when he was painting *Pan American Unity*. He states that he was expelled from the Mexican Communist Party in 1929, condemning "its repeated attacks upon the democratic principles of the workers' and peasant organizations." He emphasizes his opposition to Stalinism as an international political tendency and as an anti democratic and pro-bureaucratic regime in Russia. Reading requires some background on mid-twentieth century communism and fascism. It is relevant to both lower panel 2 and lower panel 4. One B/W illustration.

Rivera, Diego. *My Art, My Life: An Autobiography with Gladys March*. Dover Publications 1991.

This short book covers a wide range of events and topics in Rivera's life. Much of it is written with a light touch, covering odd topics, like "cannibalism" and glossing over major ones, for example his political changes during World War II. But it is a

very significant source that gives the artist's perspective about many topics and events, including a chapter on the *Pan American Unity* mural and his 1940 visit to San Francisco. However, it cannot be treated as a reliable factual source—this is widely acknowledged by Rivera writers and researchers. Popular style, sometimes dense. Some B/W illustrations.

Robinson, Breanne. *Forging a New World Nationalism: Ancient Mexico in United States Art and Visual Culture, 1933-1945*. E-book. Digital Repository at University of Maryland, College Park, Ph. D. Dissertation. 2012.

This dissertation analyzes the relation between the revived Pan Americanism of Franklin Roosevelt's "Good Neighbor Policy" toward Latin America and the production of visual art in the U.S. that enlarged American notions of heritage and identity to encompass pre-European Meso-American civilizations. While most of the chapters focus on case studies of American artists who conveyed these enlarged notions of national heritage, not focusing on Rivera or other Mexican muralists, the dissertation's emphasis on political and ideological context, especially in its introduction, can help students of Rivera's mural to understand why its message attracts both affectionate and hostile responses from Americans in the pre-World

War I period up to today. These contexts include traditional stereotypes that viewed pre-European American cultures as either barbaric or noble savages, and the modern American laws and ideologies of inferiority directed toward people of color. Dense academic style. No illustrations were visible in the on-line version.

Rochfort, Desmond. *Mexican Muralists: Orozco, Rivera, Siqueiros*. Chronicle Books, 1998.

This book is about the larger public mural movement in Mexico, looking at all three of “los tres grandes” (the three great ones— see names in title) in their artistic, historical and political contexts. It covers important details on the Mexican political and artistic context for Rivera’s work, such as the utopian aura around his representations of Pre-Columbian civilizations, *Pan American Unity* mural is not the topic, but the parallels to Panel 1 are evident. Academic style. Many color illustrations, high quality.

Rodriguez, Antonio. *A History of Mexican Mural Painting*. G.P. Putnam Sons, 1969.

This book begins with a section covering pre-Conquest civilizations of Mexico, and their earlier traditions of mural painting. It has a section about

Mexican painting after the Conquest, and a long section on modern revolutionary muralism, largely about Rivera's work. This is an important source for students interested in the historical dimension of Rivera's painting, especially related to panel 1. Academic style. Many illustrations, some color.

Rodriguez-Prampolini, Ida. "Rivera's Concept of History." *Diego Rivera: A Retrospective*. edited by Cynthia Newman Helms. Lerner Publications, 1996, pp. 125-130.

This essay relates Quetzalcoatl, an Aztec God painted in upper panel 2 and panel 1, and symbol of myth and magic, to the Marxist theory of class struggle, a major theme in Rivera's National Palace murals (and by extension to *Pan American Unity*). Academic style. Some color illustrations.

Ruiz, Fabiola. *Mexican and U.S. Identity in Siqueiros' Tropical America and Orozco's Epic of American Civilization*. California State University, Long Beach. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2020.

While this thesis focuses on murals by the other two Mexican muralists of "Los Tres Grandes" (three great ones) rather than on Rivera's murals, the styles and themes of these other two murals painted in the U.S. during the same period suggest

a wider range of thematic statements that were made about Mexican and American identities, in contrast to the more conciliatory and nuanced statement of Rivera's *Pan American Unity*, obliquely referred to in Panel 3. Academic writing style.

Scheide, Frank and Mehran, Hooman. *Chaplin: The Dictator And The Tramp*. British Film Institute, 2004.

This collection of essays and interviews focuses exclusively on Chaplin's 1940 film satire about Adolf Hitler, Nazi Germany, and pre-war Europe. Several scenes from *The Great Dictator* are included in lower Panel 4 of *PAU*, and Rivera was a fan of Chaplin's films and involved with Chaplin's then-wife, Paulette Goddard (painted in lower panel 3 and lower panel 4). This collection is closely linked to a BBC documentary DVD, which has the same name as the film, *The Great Dictator*.

Starr, Kevin. *The Dream Endures: California Enters the 1940s*. Oxford University Press, 1997.

The chapter from pp. 226-243 accounts for the emergence of social realist painting style in California during the Great Depression of the 1930s, including the enthusiastic reception of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo's first visit to the U.S. in

1930. The earlier predominance of Post-Impressionism, in which “landscape was a spiritual text” eroded, and painters’ opportunities in the private market evaporated in the 30s. Meanwhile, the human-focused concerns of social realism took center stage, especially with the New Deal’s funding of mural painting in public buildings through the Works Progress Administration. Widespread public interest in Mexican muralists in California, receptiveness on the part of the Roosevelt administration, and enthusiasm among Californian artists themselves, all contributed to the growth of this artistic style, especially in San Francisco. Academic writing style, with B/W photographs.

Starr, Kevin. *Endangered Dreams: The Great Depression in California*. Oxford University Press
1996.

In chapter 13, Starr covers the Golden Gate International Exposition, (where Rivera painted the *Pan American Unity* mural, including its island location in upper panel 4) began as a celebration of two great public works projects, the Golden Gate Bridge (painted in upper panel 3) and Oakland Bay Bridge (painted in upper panel 2 and upper panel 4). In chapter 13, Starr also emphasizes that Rivera associate and architect Timothy Pflueger (shown in lower panel 3), in planning GGIE, envisioned

San Francisco as the centerpiece of an international network of trade and economic development that unified many nations. Pflueger's eclectic modernist mix of architectural styles matched the GGIE's celebration of the Pacific Rim's many cultures, including those of Mexico, Central and South America. Academic writing style, with B/W photographs.

Tarica, Estelle. "Indigenismo." *The Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Latin American History*.

March 2016. Oxford University Press. <https://oxfordre.com/latinamericanhistory/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199366439.001.0001/acrefore-9780199366439-e-68>

"Indigenismo" ideology in Latin America originated as a defense of the Indian against colonialist policy, but it has been used for nationalist or globalist agendas.

Rivera's murals portraying a pre-Spanish indigenous Mexico were used to assimilate

Indian culture into a larger Mexican culture by a revolutionary nationalist

government. As the twentieth century closed, these nationalist versions of

indigenismo were criticized. The middle section of the essay on Mexico's specific

"indigenismo" is especially relevant to understand Rivera's vision of the indigenous

Mexico pictured in Panel 1 of *Pan American Unity*. Dense academic style.

Wolfe, Bertram D. *The Fabulous Life of Diego Rivera*. Scarborough House, 1992.

This biography is written in an entertaining manner, with close attention to both Rivera's art, individual psychology and his politics. Because Wolfe was friend of Rivera, and once a communist political associate, he had close personal knowledge, and access to Rivera's papers. Because this edition was written years after Rivera's death, it has some distance from the topic. Wolfe had become a staunch anti communist by the time he rewrote this second edition biography. Don't confuse it with an earlier 1st edition. Literary style, dense with multiple historical and political references. Many B/W illustrations, many by Rivera, some of poor quality.

Zakheim. Masha. "Diego Rivera In San Francisco." 2nd ed., 2001, City College of San Francisco.

This short but carefully written and researched introduction to Diego Rivera's San Francisco murals describes each mural briefly, as well as the immediate political and social contexts of each work. Also included is a description of related murals done by local San Francisco artists influenced by Rivera. Pages 23-26 have a very clear introductory analysis of the overall visual design of the *Pan American Unity* mural.

Academic Style. No illustrations.

Zakheim, Masha. "*Pan American Unity: A Fresco by the Mexican Artist Diego Rivera*

Painted for City College of San Francisco at the Golden Gate International

Exposition at Treasure Island, 1939-1940." 1991, City College of San Francisco.

This essay begins with a brief biography, account of Rivera's American murals, and short, very perceptive visual analysis, suggesting that instead of "reading" the mural from left to right, that viewers look from the central panel to outer panels, for key meanings, looking for symmetrical balances that lead back to the center. The paper is a panel by panel description and visual analysis of the *Pan American Unity* mural itself, beginning with its overall design, and then describing each panel one by one. It is a friendly, well-informed introduction. Academic style, but not dense. No illustrations.

Part 5: Compare / Analyze Symmetrical Panels

PREFACE:

The worksheets in this section were intended to allow for any variation in in student **choice** of *Pan American Unity* panels. If a student has studied panel 1, then she can do the first worksheet, comparing panel 1 to 5, its opposite. But if he is studying panel 5, the second worksheet comparing 5 to 1 is appropriate. In the cases of panels 2, 3, and 4, the lower and upper panels are so different that the worksheets ask the student to compare upper panel 2 to upper panel 4. And in the case of panel 3, there is no symmetrical match — the student has to choose a panel, or area, or image that can be a symmetrical counterpart. The worksheets are not intended to be assigned en masse with every student studying all panels.

Painting As Essay: Comparing Panel 1 to 5 in Rivera's Mural

Consider the Rivera mural as a VISUAL ESSAY, a unified statement. Rivera uses each panel like a paragraph, which adds its own meaning to the mural as a whole. Translate his visual statement into words. Begin with your chosen panel; then compare it to its opposite panel. Then finally compare those twin panels to Panel 3 in the center.

Look at Panel 1. Write your understanding of the main idea of Panel 1 picture in your own words.

In Rivera's mural design, he has balanced opposing panels to allow visual and thematic comparison. Compare Panel 1 to 5. Write your understanding of the comparative elements: visual similarities, thematic similarities, and contrasts between Panels 1 and 5.

Look at Panel 3. This central panel can be considered the thesis, or main idea of the mural. Rivera's title for Panel 3 was, "The Plastification of the Creative Power of the Northern Mechanism, by Union of the Plastic Tradition of the South." Write your understanding how this main idea of Panel 3 relates to the imagery in Panels 1 and 5 you described above:

Painting As Essay: Comparing Panel 5 to 1 in Rivera's Mural

Consider the Rivera mural as a VISUAL ESSAY, a unified statement. Rivera uses each panel like a paragraph, which adds its own meaning to the mural as a whole. Translate his visual statement into words. Begin with your chosen panel; then compare it to its opposite panel. Then finally compare those twin panels to Panel 3 in the center.

Look at Panel 5. Write your understanding of the main idea of Panel 5 picture in your own words.

In Rivera's mural design, he has balanced opposing panels to allow visual and thematic comparison.

Compare Panel 5 to 1. Write your understanding of the comparative elements: visual similarities, thematic similarities, and contrasts between Panels 5 and 1.

Look at Panel 3. This central panel can be considered the thesis, or main idea of the mural.

Rivera's title for Panel 3 was, "The Plastification of the Creative Power of the Northern Mechanism, by Union of the Plastic Tradition of the South." Write your understanding how this main idea of Panel 3 relates to the imagery in Panels 1 and 5 you described above:

Painting As Essay: Comparing Upper Panel 2 to Upper Panel 4

Consider the Rivera mural as a VISUAL ESSAY, a unified statement. Rivera uses each panel like a paragraph, which adds its own meaning to the mural as a whole. Translate his visual statement into words. Begin with your chosen panel; then compare it to its opposite panel. Then finally compare those twin panels to Panel 3 in the center.

Look at Panel 2. Write your understanding of the main idea of Upper Panel 2 picture in your own words.

In Rivera's mural design, he has balanced opposing panels to allow visual and thematic comparison. Compare upper Panel 2 to 4. Write your understanding of the comparative elements: visual similarities, thematic similarities, and contrasts between Upper Panels 2 and Upper 4.

Look at Panel 3. This central panel can be considered the thesis, or main idea of the mural. Rivera's title for Panel 3 was, "The Plastification of the Creative Power of the Northern Mechanism, by Union of the Plastic Tradition of the South." Write your understanding how this main idea of Panel 3 relates to the imagery in Upper Panels 2 and 4 you described above:

Painting As Essay: Comparing Upper Panel 4 to Upper Panel 2

Consider the Rivera mural as a VISUAL ESSAY, a unified statement. Rivera uses each panel like a paragraph, which adds its own meaning to the mural as a whole. Translate his visual statement into words. Begin with your chosen panel; then compare it to its opposite panel. Then finally compare those twin panels to Panel 3 in the center.

Look at Upper Panel 4. Write your understanding of the main idea of Upper Panel 4 picture in your own words.

In Rivera's mural design, he has balanced opposing panels to allow visual and thematic comparison. Compare Upper Panel 4 to 2. Write your understanding of the comparative elements: visual similarities, thematic similarities, and contrasts between Upper Panels 4 and 2.

Look at Panel 3. This central panel can be considered the thesis, or main idea of the mural. Rivera's title for Panel 3 was, "The Plastification of the Creative Power of the Northern Mechanism, by Union of the Plastic Tradition of the South." Write your understanding how this main idea of Panel 3 relates to the imagery in Upper Panels 4 and 2 you described above:

Painting As Essay: Comparing Lower Panel 2 to Lower Panel 4

Consider the Rivera mural as a VISUAL ESSAY, a unified statement. Rivera uses each panel like a paragraph, which adds its own meaning to the mural as a whole. Translate his visual statement into words. Begin with your chosen panel; then compare it to its opposite panel. Then finally compare those twin panels to Panel 3 in the center.

Look at Lower Panel 2. Write your understanding of the main idea of Lower Panel 2 picture in your own words.

In Rivera's mural design, he has balanced opposing panels to allow visual and thematic comparison.

Compare Lower Panel 2 to 4. Write your understanding of the comparative elements: visual similarities, thematic similarities, and contrasts between Lower Panels 2 and 4.

Look at Panel 3. This central panel can be considered the thesis, or main idea of the mural.

Rivera's title for Panel 3 was, "The Plastification of the Creative Power of the Northern Mechanism, by Union of the Plastic Tradition of the South." Write your understanding how this main idea of Panel 3 relates to the imagery in Lower Panels 2 and 4 you described above:

Painting As Essay: Comparing Lower Panel 4 to Lower Panel 2

Consider the Rivera mural as a VISUAL ESSAY, a unified statement. Rivera uses each panel like a paragraph, which adds its own meaning to the mural as a whole. Translate his visual statement into words. Begin with your chosen panel; then compare it to its opposite panel. Then finally compare those twin panels to Panel 3 in the center.

Look at Lower Panel 4. Write your understanding of the main idea of Lower Panel 4 picture in your own words.

In Rivera's mural design, he has balanced opposing panels to allow visual and thematic comparison.

Compare Lower Panel 4 to 2. Write your understanding of the comparative elements: visual similarities, thematic similarities, and contrasts between Lower Panels 4 and 2.

Look at Panel 3. This central panel can be considered the thesis, or main idea of the mural.

Rivera's title for Panel 3 was, "The Plastification of the Creative Power of the Northern Mechanism, by Union of the Plastic Tradition of the South." Write your understanding how this main idea of Panel 3 relates to the imagery in Lower Panels 4 and 2 you described above:

Painting As Essay: Comparing Lower Panel 3 to other Panels

Consider the Rivera mural as a VISUAL ESSAY, a unified statement. Rivera uses each panel like a paragraph, which supports the “thesis” in the center, Panel 3. Translate his visual statement into words. Begin with your chosen lower panel 3; then compare its images to similar images elsewhere in the mural. Panel 3, as the central panel has correspondences in many parts of the mural.

Look at Lower Panel 3. Write your understanding of the main idea of Lower Panel 3 picture in your own words.

In Rivera’s mural design, he has painted the lower central panel with fundamental concepts which are elaborated, echoed or exemplified in panels 1-2 and 4-5. Write your understanding of the comparative elements: visual similarities, thematic similarities, and contrasts between Lower Panel 3 and other parts of the mural.

Look at the title of Panel 3. Rivera’s title for Panel 3 was, “The Plastification of the Creative Power of the Northern Mechanism, by Union of the Plastic Tradition of the South.” Write your understanding how this title concept relates to the images in Lower Panel 3:

Painting As Essay: Comparing Upper Panel 3 to other Panels

Consider the Rivera mural as a VISUAL ESSAY, a unified statement. Rivera uses each panel like a paragraph, which supports the “thesis” in the center, Panel 3. Translate his visual statement into words. Begin with your chosen lower panel 3; then compare its images to similar images elsewhere in the mural. Panel 3, as the central panel has correspondences in many parts of the mural.

Look at Upper Panel 3. Write your understanding of the main idea of Upper Panel 3 picture in your own words.

In Rivera’s mural design, he has painted the Upper central panel with fundamental image-concepts which are elaborated, echoed or exemplified in panels 1-2 and 4-5.. Compare Upper Panel 3 to corresponding images in other panels. Write your understanding of the comparative elements: visual similarities, thematic similarities, and contrasts between Upper Panel 3 and images in other panels.

Look at the title of Panel 3. Rivera’s title for Panel 3 was, “The Plastification of the Creative Power of the Northern Mechanism, by Union of the Plastic Tradition of the South.” Write your understanding how this title concept relates to the images in Upper Panel 3:

Part 6: Writing- Developing and Organizing from Rough Draft to Revised Draft

Topic Sentences in Mural Essay: Key to Paragraph Focus

Evaluate the topic sentences of your peers, both strengths and weaknesses.

Lower Panel four represents the “bad” war, while Lower Panel two represents the “good” war.

Other than the obvious machine/ stone figure in the center, there are some familiar faces.

The main character that Rivera painted in panel five and one is labor, showing his belief in the power of labor.

Panels 2, 3, and 4 have a tree in it, I think to symbolize growth.

Having a great interest on machinery and fantastic skill in painting, Rivera received several job invitations from influential people in America, mostly capitalists.

Diego Rivera grew up very close to art.

Panel 5 and Panel 1 look really different but have a lot in common.

Directions for *Pan American Unity* Essay Outlines

1. Outlines should show precisely the relation of main point (your thesis) to supporting points and main examples. The outline is a short plan or “map” that shows how the essay will support your thesis by referring to the specifics of the mural. It is not a “list” of examples, but shows how a few major points and examples will point back to a main point.
2. Outlines should **minimally** show your plan for (a) an introduction of *PAU*, your evolving responses to the mural, and your main idea / thesis explaining the thematic statement of your chosen panel, (b) major points for a short one paragraph biography of Rivera, (c) Plan for central paragraphs with description and analysis of your chosen panel or theme, (d) Plan for paragraphs that compare and interpret the opposing panel to the chosen one, (e) Plans for concluding paragraphs that synthesize your panel’s meaning with the overall meaning of *PAU*, and conclude by restating or elaborating your thesis
3. Outlines should be skeletal (basic), leaving out elaboration, and full explanation. They should not elaborate the points themselves, but just represent the direction of elaboration. They don’t have to be written in complete sentences, or paragraphs. They should be one to two pages long.

These guidelines do not mean that good outlines must be identical. They can differ a great deal and still work as map or structure for a paper.

Outlines only represent your ideas in development. You can put aside or revised the outline when you move on to your first and second draft. Its purpose is to encourage you to conceptualize your paper organization before you write it, not to shackle your writing process.

Outlines must be TYPED, printed in two copies, and submitted on the due date _____ for full credit.

Peer Review on 1st Draft Research Essay

Peer Readers: _____ Writer _____

First impressions after reading. What's strong? _____

What's weak? _____

INTRODUCTION: What's the main point? _____

What's the personal angle? _____

Name a particular source that is most influential: _____

QUALITY OF IDEAS: Describe a part where writer gives a new insight, taking us beyond current knowledge of mural. Describe a predictable part

Be specific- New insight:

Predictable:

ORGANIZATION OF BODY: Major paragraph topics: _____

Which paragraph works well? Which paragraph has problems? Describe:

Describe where it distinguishes writer view from source view or merges the two:

Be specific- Distinguishes:

Merges:

MLA Citations: Are authors and page numbers cited consistently?

Is language very similar to sources used without quotation? Put a check + where it is done, and a circled "CS" (cite source) where it is missing.

First Step: Integrating Quotations into Your PAU Essay

Good sources and good integration of sources into your texts is key to college composition. Practice this task in this exercise. You can use this work in your upcoming essay.

EX. 1--From “Conversation With Diego Rivera”, there is a comment that at first seems to be only a comment on one man and his art, but anyone who has studied *Pan American Unity* can see that Rivera’s concept also understands that the comment is also about the theme of *PAU*.

“Here in the Fine Arts Building, there is a man carving wood. This man was an engineer, and educated and sophisticated man. He lived with the Indians and then he became an artist, and his art for a while was like Indian art—only not the same but a great deal of Indian feeling had passed into him and it came out in his art.” (Rivera 131).

This is not only of interest to students who want to write about Dudley Carter, or lower Panel 3. Write a synthesis paragraph that generalizes about the theme of the whole mural.

Write a rough paragraph right now, 1) decide on a clear topic sentence on the whole mural’s theme, 2) and then write a sentence that introduces the quote above, 3) copy the quotation into your text, and 4) explain the quotation, so as to relate it back to the larger theme of the mural.

EX. 2— a) Choose a panel or compare two panels in terms of the panel’s design or its theme (not the DR biography or the later paragraphs on the whole mural), b) jot down a rough outline of the paragraph’s points, including a rough topic sentence, 3) choose a reading that relates to this chosen panel, and pick a passage to quote from.

Write a rough paragraph right now, 1) decide on a clear topic sentence on the whole mural’s theme, 2) and then write an sentence that introduces the quote above, 3) copy the quotation into your text, and 4) explain the quotation, so as to relate it back to the larger theme of the mural.

Second Step: Using *They Say I Say* Chapter 4's "Three Ways To Respond" to Sharp Criticism of Rivera's *Pan American Unity*

Read the accompanying excerpt from Patrick Marnham's *Dreaming with Eyes Wide Open: A Life of Diego Rivera* (1998), **pick a quotation from it, and reply to the quotation** in one of three ways suggested in *They Say I Say* chapter 4. Check *They Say* to refresh your memory about what the numbered terms below mean, and read how these "templates" are used in examples.

Choose one these three tasks, naturally the one that agrees with your actual opinion, and write a paragraph of a half page at least, embedding the quote from Marnham's text into your own explanation, before and after the quotation.

1. DISAGREEING, WITH REASONS
2. AGREEING WITH A DIFFERENCE
3. AGREEING AND DISAGREEING SIMULTANEOUSLY

For “Second Step” exercise: Read excerpt from Patrick Marnham’s *Dreaming with Eyes Wide Open: A Life of Diego Rivera* (1998)

“In San Francisco in 1940, on returning to fresco after a break of four years, he had adopted a more light-hearted, almost apolitical approach to political art with *Pan American Unity*. The colors and many of the details are superb, and the Californian fresco reflects the artist’s delight in being once again in San Francisco; it lifts the spirits to be in the same room as those colors. Yet there is something unconvincing about the political ideas expressed. Rivera said at the time that he was hoping to create ‘a real American art...the blending of the art of the Indian, the Mexican, the Eskimo with the kind of urge that makes the machines...From the South comes the Plumed Serpent, from the North the conveyor belt.’ So in one panel the vast carved head of the plumed serpent rests on the edge of an outdoor swimming pool beneath the arched, flying shape of Helen Crilenkovich [sic] the American Athletic Association Union’s indoor diving champion of 1939. This is amusing, and *Pan American Unity* is outstanding illustration—it would have made a wonderful story-board for a Hollywood feature cartoon—but it does not move us. Looking at the plumed serpent in this northern rational setting, one has the feeling that the creature has no place in California, outside of the zoo. The fresco is good-humored to the point of flippancy. In one panel, Netzahualcoyotl, the Aztec poet-king, is inventing a flying machine with the assistance of a bald eagle and fruit bat. In another there is a study of the abstract artist Mona Hoffman’s cat. In the central position of the central panel one finds the personification of Pan-American unity, Rivera himself, seated in intimate conversation with Paulette Goddard, who is holding the ‘Tree of life and Love.’ Beside them, looking the other way, stands Frida Kahlo, in superb Tehuana battle dress, whose remarriage to Rivera ended the artist’s relationship with Goddard. The adjoining panel has been described as an ‘allusion to the world conflicts of the time.’ It shows scenes from *The Great Dictator*, with Charlie Chaplin and Jack Oakie as ‘Benzini Napaloni, Dictator of Bacteria.’ Behind Chaplin, in sinister grisaille, like stills from a black and white newsreel, stand Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin—the latter, brandishing a dagger and ice pick, is draped with the letters GPU...This certainly is political comment, and a deadly insult to Stalin...its proximity to the image of Paulette Goddard and the fact that Chaplin, whose portrait appears four times, was still married to her. It is typical of Rivera’s sly humor to show the international celebrity in one panel, addressing his worldwide audience, while in the adjoining panel Mrs. Chaplin, his beautiful young wife, gazes deeply into the eyes of Rivera. The *Great Dictator* caused deep offense to the pro-German lobby in the United States, and when the Golden Gate International Exposition closed *Pan American Unity* was not

displayed as intended at City College, or bought up by Walt Disney, but was put into storage, where it remained for the rest of Rivera's life.

“If it is difficult to be convinced by the high seriousness of Rivera's approach to the theme of “Pan American unity” one should remember that it was painted in public, as a part of an ‘Art in Action’ show, and that it was the work of an artist who enjoyed being an entertainer. One should also remember the number of times Rivera had by then been forced to modify his political stance. Starting as a revolutionary artist on his return from Paris in 1921, he became, under Vasconcelos's influence, a Mexican revolutionary and anti-reactionary liberal. Then he became a revolutionary communist and anti-fascist. Then, on his expulsion from the Communist Party, he was an ex-Communist, anti-fascist revolutionary muralist without a wall. Then he became a Trotskyist, anti-Communist anti-fascist, until he discovered that Trotsky had had an affair with his wife, whereupon he became an independent, semi-retired, revolutionary, anti-Communist anti-fascist. He then became a Pan-American, Internationalist, anti-Nazi-Soviet pact revolutionary artist who wished to pay homage to the ex-Ziegfeld girl Paulette Goddard. No doubt *Pan-American Unity* reflects some of this ideological complexity and confusion.” (Marnham 323-324)

Part 7- Final Revisions to
Essays on *Pan American Unity*
mural

Note to Instructors:

Because my prompt is focused on panel analysis based on research, it has an objective emphasis: studying visual images and relationships, historical references, where authoritative texts are highly valued. This proper use of sources often leads students to assume that only these sources or the mural itself exist as objective truths, and that once cited, problems of interpretation and value are resolved.

For that reason, I tried to assign homework, and conduct classroom activities that prompted critical thinking about Rivera's Pan American Unity (and his larger life and work), to clarify that essays include the researcher's analysis and judgments, and that art critics and researchers in fact carry on their own debates on these issues.

Late-in-the-Unit Discussion of the "Main Idea" of Panel 3 in Rivera's *Pan-American Unity* Mural

Rationale:

An advantage of my Panel Analysis prompt is that it limits the scope of visual analysis to two panels, the chosen one, and its symmetrical counterpart. A disadvantage is that this narrowed focus can lead students to treat the panel as a separate painting.

For example, since students frequently know from history classes much more about Adolf Hitler than King Nezahualcoyotl, they often choose to analyze Lower Panel 4. However once we stand back and consider the constructive and optimistic theme of whole mural, we have to put the dark and destructive cast of Lower Panel 4 into its larger context. Students who forget this context in their exclusive focus on Lower Panel 4, can misunderstand the relational character of its message. This is why the prompt requires students to write a later paragraph to relate the panel theme to the theme of the whole; however students feeling fatigued late in the revising process can

sometimes forget this crucial step. In my decade of teaching about the mural, I tried different activities and exercises to encourage the inclusion of this larger perspective. Some of these are given below.

Lesson Plan (45 minutes)

Teacher points out to students that Upper Panel 3, the central panel, is something of a riddle, featuring a timeless unsettling hybrid of a half-machine, half-human icon, presiding over the more familiar multiplicity of human activities in the rest of the mural.

The teacher invites students to ask questions about Upper 3: such as, why is a human hand and female breast shown on the left? Why is its skin dark brown? Does it have human facial features? Why does the upper right side show a machine? Does the machine have any human features? Has any student read about what real machine Rivera used as a model for this image? And so on.

Teacher reminds students of the prompt's requirement that students generalize near the end of the essay about the meaning of the whole mural. The student asks students to do a focused free write for at least 10 minutes about the meaning of the mural in any way they see fit. If students are unsure how to begin this writing, the teacher offers two alternatives:

1. To generalize from the visual of Panel 3, the Goddess / Machine about the mural's overall meaning, and how it relates to the rest of the mural, especially the panels that students have been analyzing.
2. To generalize from Rivera's long title for the mural (not Pan American Unity, a shorthand term used) and its metaphorical meanings: "Marriage of the Artistic Expression of the North and of the South on this Continent." Students can write about what kind of metaphorical "marriage" Rivera was showing in the mural.

After 10 minutes of writing, ask students to read to each other in small groups of five or more. Ask these groups to share one interesting free write. Extend these ideas with a whole class discussion.

Assign students to write a full paragraph on the mural's overall meaning for the next class meeting, time allowing.

Venturing Beyond the Conventional Wisdom of Sources in Writing

Analysis of Rivera's *Pan-American Unity* Mural

It is time to be brave, to take your own thinking seriously, and look for gaps in typical interpretations of the mural that allow you to begin your own original analysis. Let's begin with **Panel 1, which Rivera titled "The Creative Genius of the South Growing from Religious Fervor and the Native Talent for Plastic Expression."** One way to begin is to look at the panel and interpret its meaning by reading the title and writing in your own words, without reading any other source material.

Explain the panel title above by relating it to images in Panel 1:

Explain "Creative Genius of the South"

Explain "Religious Fervor" in "the South"

Explain "Native Talent for Plastic Expression"

Next write about the varying interpretations of Panel 1: some say the workers in the foreground of upper 1, and on the right side of lower panel 1 are slaves, whereas others say they are free, even creative and skilled workers. Consider the merits of each interpretation, and using visual evidence, write your understanding of the workers social status in Panel 1 in your own words.

Next, for homework, do the same work of individual interpretation, looking at your questions and the gaps in typical explanations of mural panels, and invent a discussion of panel's meaning, using visual interpretation, analysis and finally historical research to consider opposing interpretations.

If you are doing panels 3, 4, or 5 explain those panel titles

Panel 3, "The Plastification of the Creative Power of the Northern Mechanism, by Union of the Plastic Tradition of the South."

Panel 4: "Trends of Creative Effort in the United States. The Rise of Women in Various Fields of Creative Endeavor Through her Use of the Power of Manmade Machinery."

Panel 5: "The Creative Culture of the North Developing from the Necessity of Making Life Possible in a New and Empty Land."

Interpret the meaning of your chosen title, by relating them to their respective panels:

Consider a reasonable dispute in interpretations, and begin by explaining the two sides:

Write your understanding of your chosen panel in your own words:

OR if you are writing about Panel 1, add to the writing that you did in class, doubling its length:

Interpret the meaning of the titles, by relating them to their respective panels:

Consider a reasonable dispute in interpretations, and begin by explaining the two sides:

Write your understanding of your chosen panel in your own words:

OR, if you are writing about Panel 2, the mural panel is visually rich, but the title for Panel 2, “Elements of the Past and Present,” is not very revealing. Write a substitute title, three times the length of Rivera’s original, that presents the most prominent elements of Panel 2.

Interpret the meaning of the titles, by relating them to their respective panels:

Consider a reasonable dispute in interpretations, and begin by explaining the two sides:

Write your understanding of your chosen panel in your own words:

Putting Your View of Mural into Your Essay

Describe the panel you are writing about, and later the opposing panel you will compare it to, so that you include your views and feelings in your final essay. Some of this material is required to be in your final essay.

YOUR CHOSEN PANEL (# _____) SENTENCES

Begin with describing its design, its visually dominant figures and shapes:

ADD YOUR OWN OBSERVATIONS, FEELINGS AND IDEAS, AND QUESTIONS:

OPPOSITE PANEL (# _____) SENTENCES

Begin with describing its design, its visually dominant figures and shapes:

ADD YOUR OWN OBSERVATIONS, FEELINGS AND IDEAS, AND QUESTIONS:

Reading [“I Am Not A Communist”](#) -- Understanding and Writing on Diego Rivera’s Politics and His Political Changes

BACKGROUND: Rivera’s political life, like his personal life, was complicated, and it was certainly reflected in his painting. A typical view in the “Biographical Essay” in our Reader describes his Mexican murals in the 1920s: “Though reaction was initially mixed, the works brought much attention to Rivera and established him as a storyteller through his pictures and thus a voice of the downtrodden and illiterate. Communist symbols began to appear in these works, giving blatant indication of political sympathies. Though he belonged to the communist party on and off, he was frequently absent at meetings and eventually asked to leave at least twice. However this did not temper his enthusiasm for the doctrine.” TASK: Re-read the above quotation and read Rivera’s [“I Am Not A Communist”](#) thoroughly, first at your normal pace, and second with pen in hand, commenting, questioning, and using vocabulary guessing strategies. After those two readings, critically respond to these questions in two pages of journal writing. A quiz follows.

Paragraphs 2-3 seem to state basic facts supporting his claim that he was not a communist, and his political beliefs in 1940. How do they match or not match either the biographical sources you have read?

First define or look up the definitions of the “ism” words in paragraph 3 , and second organize it graphically to show the relation of each “ism” to the others.

Paragraph 4 is complicated. “...the real Communist Party is dissolved.” What does Rivera imply by contrasting the real C.P. to the less real “C.P.” that he puts in quotation marks. What does this use of quotation marks usually mean?

The last sentence of paragraph 4 also requires interpretation: “The real Communists are already in jails or concentration camps, or are in exile.” Who and where are these “real Communists”? Does he imply they are good or bad? As unfairly persecuted or as criminals?

Paragraphs 5 and 6 are about Russia, then called “Soviet Russia.” How are events in Russia related to communism? How does he describe life in Russia? Does he mention his own visit to Russia in the 1920s and his prior views on Soviet Russia?

Paragraphs 7-8 are about international politics related to Russia. In para. 8, what “defeats in China, Italy, Hungary...” etc. is he referring to? How is this point related to communism? Has he become an anti-communist in the traditional American sense?

In your opinion, what is the relation of Diego Rivera’s murals to his political ideas in a general sense?

Quiz: Understanding Diego Rivera's Politics

BACKGROUND: Rivera's political life, like his personal life, was complicated, and it was certainly reflected in his painting. A typical view in the "Biographical Essay" describes his Mexican murals in the 1920s: "Though reaction was initially mixed, the works brought much attention to Rivera and established him as a storyteller through his pictures and thus a voice of the downtrodden and illiterate. Communist symbols began to appear in these works, giving blatant indication of political sympathies. Though he belonged to the communist party on and off, he was frequently absent at meetings and eventually asked to leave at least twice. However this did not temper his enthusiasm for the doctrine."

Writing Prompt: After reviewing his 1940 statement ["I Am Not A Communist"](#) explain your understanding of the sincerity* and consistency** of Rivera's political position at the time.

*sincerity: "quality of really believing something or really meaning what you say."

**consistency: "quality of always being the same...or always behaving in the expected way."