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Freud's Mexico is a completely unexpected contribution to Freud studies. Here, Rubén Gallo reveals Freud's previously undisclosed connections to a culture and a psychoanalytic tradition not often associated with him. Freud found a receptive audience among Mexican intellectuals, read Mexican books, collected Mexican antiquities, and dreamed Mexican dreams; his writings bear the traces of a longstanding fascination with the country.

In the Mexico of the 1920s and 1930s, Freud made an impact not only among psychiatrists but also in literary, artistic, and political circles. Gallo writes about a "motley crew" of Freud's readers who devised some of the most original, elaborate, and influential applications of psychoanalytic theory anywhere in the world: the poet Salvador Novo, a gay dandy who used Freud to vindicate marginal sexual identities; the conservative philosopher Samuel Ramos, who diagnosed the collective neuroses afflicting his country; the cosmopolitan poet Octavio Paz, who launched a psychoanalytic inquiry into the origins of Mexican history; and Gregorio Lemerrier, a Benedictine monk who put his entire monastery into psychoanalysis.

After describing Mexico's Freud, Gallo offers an imaginative reconstruction of Freud's Mexico. Although Freud himself never visited Mexico, he owned a treatise on criminal law by a Mexican judge who put defendants including Trotsky's assassin on the psychoanalyst's couch; he acquired Mexican pieces as part of his celebrated collection of antiquities; and he recorded dreams of a Mexico that was fraught with danger. Freud's Mexico features a varied cast of characters that includes Maximilian von Hapsburg, Leon Trotsky and his assassin Ramón Mercader, Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera and even David Rockefeller. Gallo offers bold and vivid rereadings of both Freudian texts and Mexican cultural history.