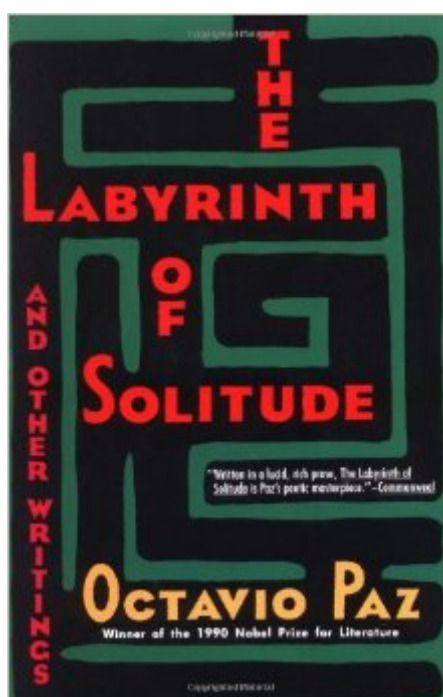


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The Labyrinth Of Solitude: The Other Mexico, Return To The Labyrinth Of Solitude, Mexico And The United States, The Philanthropic Ogre



Synopsis

Octavio Paz has long been acknowledged as Mexico's foremost writer and critic. In this international classic, Paz has written one of the most enduring and powerful works ever created on Mexico and its people, character, and culture. Compared to Ortega y Gasset's *The Revolt of the Masses* for its trenchant analysis, this collection contains his most famous work, "The Labyrinth of Solitude," a beautifully written and deeply felt discourse on Mexico's quest for identity that gives us an unequalled look at the country hidden behind "the mask." Also included are "The Other Mexico," "Return to the Labyrinth of Solitude," "Mexico and the United States," and "The Philanthropic Ogre," all of which develop the themes of the title essay and extend his penetrating commentary to the United States and Latin America.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I think previous reviewers Scott Henson (5 stars) and Jessica L. Krudwig (3 stars) pretty much nailed it with their reviews (though for the star count, I'm going with Jessica, giving 3 stars). My summation: 1) If you want to understand why Mexico or Mexicans do what they do (and don't do what they don't do), this book is part of the standard-issue reading list. I wouldn't consider it anywhere near the be-all-end-all, but with how often it is referenced, it needs to be part of the mix. 2) Mexico, America, and the rest of the world have changed a lot since this book was written. It seems to me that some of it is dated. Yet, in all fairness, some of it seems proven true (e.g. much of the criticism of USA capitalism and commercialism running amok &/or being soulless). I don't think cultures change overnight, or even in only one or two generations, but the worldview gazed through

for the writing of this book isn't as tenable, now days.3) The writing is what one would expect from a poet. Overstuffed with allusions and flowery prose, the core message/meaning of the author can get lost in the verbiage, at times. That shouldn't prevent you from reading it, and in itself it is something of an example of "Mexican thinking/speaking." I mention it to warn you that there are many words to digest to get down to a succinct chunk of useful information/opinion.4) I would suggest reading some Mexican history before reading this book. He covers many centuries when critiquing El Mexicano and if you have a better understanding of a more "objective" history of Mexico it is easier to grasp the opinions and conclusions he builds on top of Mexico's historical events.

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