



The Illusion of Ignorance: Constructing the American Encounter with Mexico, 1877-1920

Janice Lee Jayes

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The Illusion of Ignorance examines the cultural politics of the American encounter with Porfirian Mexico as a precursor and model for the twentieth-century American encounter with the world. Detailed discussions of the logistics of conducting diplomacy, doing business, or traveling abroad in the era give readers a vivid picture of how Americans experienced this age of international expansion, while contrasting Mexican and American visions of the changing relationship. In the end, Mexico's efforts to promote Mexico as a partner in progress with the U.S. was lost to an American illusion schizophrenically divided between fantasies of American leadership toward, and refuge from, modernity. The Illusion of Ignorance argues that American ignorance of the experience of other nations is not so much a barrier to better understanding of the world, but a strategy Americans have chosen to maintain their vision of the U.S. relationship with the world.

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