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# Editorial

Of the numerous achievements that the Chicanos have obtained in recent years, perhaps none is more potentially significant than the establishment of Chicano studies programs. Not only do such programs belie the historical misconception of Chicanos as being apathetic in the face of academic opportunity, but more importantly Mexican-American studies programs represent a unique experiment in the history of American ethnic groups. Perhaps for the first time, such programs represent a formalized and institutionalized effort of self-expression. Implicit in this self-expression is the promise of the generation of a more true image of the Mexican-American — a counter image to the existing one cut from Anglo molds. And because there is, thankfully, no set formula which must be followed methodically and mechanically, the end product of each Chicano studies program will be stamped by the indelible character of those Chicanos presently in their respective programs.

Like Janus, there is another side to this historic opportunity. And it, too, bears upon the end product. The responsibility upon the shoulders of those in Chicano programs is great, for should the end product be disfigured in any way whatsoever, this will have turned victory into defeat, self-expression into self-denial, a dream into a nightmare, and a promise into purposeless mouthings.

Chicano studies programs are a Chicano responsibility. It is here that past distortions should be eliminated once and for all. The future image of Chicanos is now in Chicano hands.

This paper is Part One of a major work that deals with Mexican-Americans. It was undertaken by Mr. Nick Vaca as a Fellow at *The Center for Advanced Mexican-American Social Research* in Berkeley, California. The complete study deals with THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES: 1912-1970, and it is divided into four parts. Part One: 1912-1935. Part Two: 1935-1970. Part Three: A criticism of the Major Sociological Studies on the Mexican-Americans. Part Four: The Development of a New Theory of Mexican-American Culture. *Editors.*

# The Mexican-American in the Social Sciences 1912-1970

PART I: 1912-1935

NICK C. VACA

## *Introduction*

Although the relationship that the United States has enjoyed with Mexico has been blemished by occasional large scale conflict, the prolonged periods of peaceful relations between these two countries has convinced most observers to accord the relationship a large measure of success. If, indeed, the success of a relationship between two countries is measured by the absence of open physical conflict, then the relationship between the United States and Mexico may be labeled successful. However, physical and violent conflict may be only the tangible manifestations of more profound and irreconcilable differences. Thus, even after the tumult of war has subsided it may result that these differences may *not* have been eliminated, but only subdued, destined to reappear again and again.

This has seemingly been the case with Mexico and the United States. Particularly so, because one of the distinguishing characteristics of the relations between Mexico and the United States has been the proximity of Mexico to the United States. It has been this geographic closeness that has helped produce the innumerable conflicts between these two countries. Whether in direct relations with

Mexico or in dealing with Mexico's organs of cultural transmission in the United States, the Mexican immigrants, conflict has arisen based primarily upon *cultural differences*.

The annexation of Texas by the United States stands out as one of the clearest examples of the most violent conflict in which Mexico and the United States have engaged, yet, significantly, underlying the physical conflict there existed important sources of conflict that resulted from the differences produced by the two cultural traditions. The early historian, Samuel Harman Lowrie, was highly sensitive to this source of friction when, in trying to explain the causes of the Texas conflict, he wrote, "Rather it seems to me that neither geography, the weakness of Mexico, nor the racial difference between Americans and Mexicans, not all three make an adequate explanation of the conflict in Texas; a fourth factor must be added, a factor which in importance far transcends all the others put together; namely the antagonisms referred to as arising from the differences between the folkways and mores of the two peoples, the difference between the ways and conceptions of life and the kinds of institutions and the operation of them in the attainment of desired objectives."<sup>1</sup>

The cultural differences that Lowrie spoke about were indeed on two levels. On the one hand the different folkways and mores of the Mexican produced notions about him that, though having their origins in the different life style of the Mexican, also sprung from the Texan's ". . . ethnocentric conception of the rightness and superiority of his ways and his institutions; all conflicting ways of life were necessarily bad or inferior."<sup>2</sup> Stimulated both by different life styles and Anglo chauvinism certain characterizations about the Mexican arose that paraded as undisguised racial stereotypes. Mexicans were seen as, ". . . care-free . . . enthusiastic dancers, fond of luxury, and the worst punishment that can be inflicted upon them is work."<sup>3</sup> In addition to these invidious characterizations, Mexicans were also viewed as ". . . suspicious of foreigners . . . ignorant, bigoted and superstitious . . . lacked faith in all transactions . . . villainous."<sup>4</sup>

These stereotypic characterizations of the Mexican, however depreciatory in nature could, after all, be viewed as a common phenomenon that marks the meeting of any two culturally distinct peoples. What was not so commonplace was the conflict that arose over what Lowrie termed, ". . . conceptions of life and the kinds of institutions and the operation of them in the attainment of de-

sired objectives." This was the second level of cultural conflict that occurred between Mexico and the United States.

Paramount among these differences were the respective views that Mexico and the United States held concerning the questions of slavery. The question was of crucial importance since the American immigrant in Texas was beckoned into the area by the advantages of what seemed to be ideal agricultural land. Lowrie writes on this subject that ". . . the suitability of soil and climate for the production of cotton and therefore for slave labor provided an incentive for migration from the Southern slave holding states. . . . At the same time slavery was becoming more and more unprofitable in the middle states along the Atlantic seaboard, as the consequence of wasteful exhaustion of the soil under slave labor: and *the center of slavery was moving rapidly Southward and Westward.*"<sup>5</sup> (italics mine) As testimony to the attractiveness that Texas held for slavery, the total slave population in Texas in 1834 numbered 5,000; 1500 more than the total Mexican population.<sup>6</sup>

Whatever the source of the notion, Mexican officials in Texas were strongly against slavery. Lowrie writes that ". . . During the period of considerable friction, a compromise was made. It was, however, superficial and in conformity with neither (cultural) pattern. The Mexicans held tenaciously to their own pattern, and merely accepted compromise for a time, expecting their pattern to dominate eventually. Whether the Americans were really willing to give up slavery and would have given up their pattern when subterfuge was no longer possible, if they had remained under Mexican control is problematical."<sup>7</sup>

The conflicts that arose between Mexico and the United States over political institutions was further proof of the difficulties created by cultural differences. One of the most basic sources of friction between the United States and Mexico was produced over the different conception of the rights of government, its power and its derivation. The American immigrants in Texas insisted upon constitutional self-government based upon local and individual initiative; two characteristics cultivated by the political tradition of the United States. The Mexican government, in contrast, looked upon governmental ruling as a process of centralized federal system with little local control and even less individual initiative. The result of these incompatible views of government and political institutions was a series of conflicts over the proper method of governing Texas that was resolved only with the eventual Texas revolt.

Though the Texas revolt occurred some seventy years before the first group of American social science studies were to appear on the Mexican,\* the friction produced in Texas by these two distinct cultures was to occupy a central role in social science studies. In this sense the Texas conflict was the precursor of the concern of the social sciences, but more importantly the recurring role of culture and cultural differences was testimony to the importance that culture has played in relations between Mexicans and Anglos.

Between 1912 and 1935 one segment of sociologists was to concern itself with an attempt at understanding those characteristics of the Mexican that distinguished him so markedly from the general American population and in turn helped produce the seemingly high crime rates, poor health standards and high degree of dependence on public relief agencies. Psychological studies on Mexicans were to be initially concerned with his racial characteristics and how they related to his poor performance on intelligence tests. Later, however, the notion of cultural milieu, and in particular the role that bilingualism played in performances on intelligence tests, was to occupy the concern of psychologists. In both disciplines, sociology and psychology, the distinct characteristics of Mexican culture played a major role, and in doing so paid tribute to one of the sources of conflict that produced the Texas revolt and numerous other recorded and unrecorded conflicts that have always specked relations between Mexico and the United States.

#### *1900-1912*

Between 1900 and 1912 apparently no social science studies on the Mexican appeared. Though it seems quite likely that the absence of studies was in part due to the embryonic status of the social sciences, it seems more certain that this absence was in large part produced by the American concern with the "new" European immigrant that began to arrive in 1882. Though upon first examination the controversy that surrounded the "new" immigrant seems to be outside the scope of this study and bears no direct relevance

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\*The question over whether it is proper to refer to the subjects of early social science studies as Mexican or Mexican-American presents problems in as much as the the concern of the first social science studies were indeed concerned with the "Mexican" immigrant, while it is not so clear that the Mexican was the subject in subsequent studies particularly in those studies beginning in the 1920's. For the sake of faithfulness to the writings of these early studies, the term Mexican will be used except in those cases where another term (Spanish-speaking, Spanish) is designated.



to the Mexican-American in the social sciences, closer examination will show that in many respects the controversy that arose concerning the "new" immigrants and the role that culture played in this controversy bears direct relevance to the Mexican-American in the social sciences. In many respects the arguments against the "new" immigrant that found expression during this period were later to be applied to the Mexican immigrant. Moreover, the period from 1882 when the first "new" immigrants began to arrive in America, and 1930 when the first immigration restriction was imposed on Mexican immigration, is of interest and importance because of the change in atmosphere toward immigration and the expression that this atmosphere found in congressional hearings and bills. Thus a brief discussion of the temperament of this period will aid in understanding the image of the Mexican-American in the social sciences up to 1935.

The difference between the "old" immigrant and the "new" immigrant was bound in what at first seemed a romantic tradition of early American pilgrims and pioneers, but upon closer examination seemed more clearly explicable in terms of differences based on distinct cultural characteristics. The "old" immigrant was derived chiefly from the countries of Great Britain, Ireland, Germany, Holland, and the Scandinavian countries, and were predominantly Anglo-Saxon-Germanic in blood and Protestant in religion. In addition to these characteristics, the "old" immigrant was seen by Americans as somehow being directly related to the early tradition of American settlers. All these characteristics made them more palatable for the ethnically queasy stomach of American society. More importantly the "old" immigrant stock proved to be a stock of people quite easily assimilable and as a consequence was prevented from being an eye sore in the American cultural milieu.

However, after 1882 the national origins of the immigrant to America began to change. From 1890 to 1924 when the quota legislation was enacted, the majority of immigrants to the United States were from the Mediterranean and Slavic nations; from Southern, Eastern, and Southeast Europe. Specifically, the immigrants originated from Russia, Poland, Austria, Hungary, Greece, Turkey, Italy, and the Balkan countries. The number of "new" immigrants increased at an incredible rate with the total number of "new" immigrants from 1882 to 1889 numbering 11,960,122 compared with 7,566,041 "old" immigrants for the same period of time.<sup>8</sup>

Though race prejudice had long been common in the United States, it was largely confined to the notion of color. Prejudice

existed for the Negro and the Indian, but it could not be applied to the European immigrants where no differences in color or physical characteristics existed. However, *the distinctive cultural and social patterns of the new immigrants* gave rise to a new feeling of nationalism that found its expression in ethnic intolerance. Not surprisingly, the concept of Anglo-Saxon superiority found great expression. As a result of this view, by the first decade of the 20th century there existed a large body of groups favoring immigration restriction.

Though numerous men were to write on the superiority of the Nordic race, two men were to make the idea of racial superiority popular in America. In 1916 Madison Grant published *The Passing of the Great Race*<sup>9</sup> in which he developed the theory of racial superiority. According to Grant, immigration had vitiated the superior American population with inferior races and by doing so threatened to overwhelm completely the decreasing Nordic element. Such racial miscegenation, concluded Grant, could lead only to inferior strains. The effect of Grant's book was latent, receiving little attention when it first appeared, but in later years enjoying a strong following particularly among certain groups of anthropologists who gave Grant's theory scientific legitimization. Grant's thesis was also favorably received by the then prominent Princeton psychologist, Carl Brigham, who conducted numerous tests from which results he concluded that the strains of Nordic race were superior to the Alpine, and Mediterranean races in native intelligence. Brigham further noted that, "American intelligence is declining, and will proceed with an accelerating rate as the racial mixture becomes more and more extensive."<sup>10</sup>

Ironically it was Gino Spernza, an American of Italian descent, who proved to be the second most influential man in spreading the doctrine of Nordic superiority. The basic thesis was present in the series of articles he published in 1923 and 1924 which stated that the United States had originally been created by a racially and culturally homogeneous group of Anglo-Saxon people, and that ". . . this colonial stock had flowered into an American race which was fully formed when the tide of new immigrants began to enter the country in the 1890's."<sup>11</sup> The heart of Spernza's argument was his belief that national unity depended upon racial and cultural homogeneity, in which the ethnic factor was vital. According to Spernza this homogeneity could not be achieved by a process of transformation such as the melting pot, since he contended that racial characteristics did not fade away.

The influence of these two works was strongly felt in the Congressional rulings concerning immigration laws. Grant and Spernza had succeeded in making the racial question the number one consideration when Congress formulated immigration restrictions. Divine in his work *American Immigration Policy: 1924-1952* writes that, "In 1921 congressmen had argued that restriction was necessary because the melting pot had failed, causing a condition of 'alien indigestion.' In 1924 the charge was that the melting pot concept was a fallacious and dangerous belief which had created 'racial indigestion' . . . trouble grows out of a country composed of intermingled and mongrelized people. The stability of a country depends upon the homogeneity of population.' Thus employing characteristic racist terminology, a member of Congress substituted the idea of racial purity for the melting pot."<sup>12</sup>

The climactic congressional debate over the historic 1924 Immigration Act was predetermined by this atmosphere of cultural and racial intolerance. In its final form the Immigration Act of 1924 established a yearly quota totaling 150,000 for the European countries based on the number of foreign born of each nationality residing in the United States in 1890.

Commenting on the passage of this law, Divine noted that ". . . far more significant than its administrative details was the philosophy underlying the quota law. The earlier temporary law had ended the un-restricted flow of immigration and thus discarded the asylum ideal replacing it with the concept of America for Americans. The 1924 law reaffirmed this earlier action and went further, for it substituted a belief in racial homogeneity for the other 19th-century idea, the melting pot."<sup>13</sup>

However, while the concern of the nation was focused on the "new" immigrants from Europe, a new problem arose. As a result of certain provisions in the Immigration Act of 1924, both the countries of the Western Hemisphere and the Philippine Islands were exempted from immigration restrictions. This exemption was of special significance since the limitations imposed upon European immigration greatly increased the demand for laborers from these areas, particularly in the Southwest.

The fears that prompted the Immigration Act of 1924 were also functioning in the efforts aimed at imposing immigration restrictions on Mexican immigration. Though a flood of Mexican immigrants of the magnitude that America witnessed with the "new" immigrants from Europe never materialized, the slow up of Euro-

pean immigration coupled with an increased immigration from Mexico beginning in 1910 stimulated restrictionists to action again.

The fight over restriction of Mexican immigrants was divided between two groups. On the one hand were the groups of eugenicist organizations and labor unions whose major concern was in the lowering of wages that would be created by a disproportionate flow of Mexican workers. On the other hand were strong economic interests which waged a well organized fight against Mexican immigration restrictions, with farmers, cattlemen, sugar manufacturers and railroad executives asserting that the curtailment of Mexican immigration would mean nothing less than economic disaster for the Southwest.

As was the case previously with European immigration, one of the main arguments used by immigration restrictionists was racial in nature. In 1925 the House Immigration Committee published a report by Robert Foerster, then a Princeton economist, in which he made the point that over 90 per cent of the Latin American population was racially inferior to Anglo American stock and asked for limitation of Latin American immigration.<sup>14</sup> At about the same time Harry Laughlin, the eugenicist who served as biological expert to the House Committee from 1921 to 1924, testified to the same effect on the qualities of the Mexican immigrants, "Stating that race should be the basic standard for judging immigrants, Laughlin urged that Western Hemisphere immigration be restricted to whites."<sup>15</sup> Representative Box of Texas, another strong supporter of restriction of Mexican immigration, reported that Mexican immigrants were ". . . illiterate, unclean, peonized masses who stemmed from a mixture of Mediterranean-blooded Spanish peasants with low-grade Indians who did not fight to extinction but submitted and multiplied as serfs."<sup>16</sup>

New immigration restrictions were eventually imposed on Mexican immigration, but not until the move for the type of immigration restrictions contained in the Immigrant Act of 1924 was defeated in Congress in 1930. Though the economic interests, particularly those in the Southwest, posed a strong opposition to the restrictionists it was the State Department that, in his analysis, proved to be the deciding factor in the defeat of the 1930 legislation. Divine notes that ". . . Appealing to the traditional ideal of Pan-Americanism . . . the officials of the State Department presented a powerful case against Western Hemisphere restriction. . . . Thus it was the consideration of foreign policy, based on a long-standing ideal, that prevailed over the previously dominant ideas of race and nationalism to halt the restrictionist surge."<sup>17</sup>

*Psychology and the Mexican-American: 1922-1935*

This then was the climate in which social science studies concerned with the Mexican were conducted. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that psychological studies conducted on the Mexican were heavily weighted by findings that conclusively proved him to be inherently inferior to Americans. This view was particularly popular in the early 20's. The counter view to this attitude was carried out by a relatively small group of men who sought to establish both the factors of environment and the bilingual characteristic of the Mexican student as contributing factors to poor intelligence test results.

K. Young's work, "Mental Differences in Certain Immigrant Groups,"<sup>18</sup> set the tone for many of the psychological studies to appear on the Mexican by strongly suggesting that inherent racial characteristics were responsible for the low test scores of Mexicans.

In 1923 Thomas R. Garth published a study entitled "A Comparison of the Intelligence of Mexican and Mixed and Full Blood Indian Children,"<sup>19</sup> in which he was concerned with the influence exerted by "racial germ cells" on the intelligence of immigrant groups. Garth's hypotheses were, "First, the principle that like begets like, so that its mental product — here intelligence — tends to be different from the product of other origins; second, the principle that isolation of groups brings about differences in intelligence; third, the principle that mixture of different lines brings about differences in intelligence measured; fourth, the principle, which is an anthropological one, that nomadic people, because of the rigorous play of the law of natural selection, are more intelligent than sedentary peoples."<sup>20</sup> Garth's experimental population contained a sampling of mixed-blood Indians, Mexicans, full-blood Plains and Southeastern Indians, full-blood Navajo and Apache tribes and full-blood Pueblo tribes.

The results of Garth's testing showed that, ". . . always the central tendencies of the mixed-blood scores are highest; that on the same base of determining, the Mexicans invariably come second; the Plains and Southeastern full-bloods come third; the Pueblo or Plateau full-bloods come fourth, except in the last, 18-19 years subgroups, when the Navajo and Apache scores are slightly superior."<sup>21</sup> Though Garth was clearly concerned with the role that race played in intelligence test scores, he also deliberately selected his sample from a population of school children in an attempt to ". . . control the factors of education and training as far as possible."<sup>22</sup> The correlation between years of schooling and high test scores was in

some instances positive. Thus, the group having the highest test score also had the most years of schooling; the group with the second highest test score, the Mexicans, also had the most years of schooling. The positive correlation, however, after the Mexican, falls off.

There were further considerations. Garth himself was not totally unaware of the role that environment and language played in test scores and he made an attempt at introducing these variables as explanatory factors for the test results of the respective groups. Garth's attempt to include these factors in his explanation of low test scores restricted itself to employing the observations of a C. M. Blair, a superintendent of the United States Indian School of Chilocco, Oklahoma, who noted that "(1) I think there is no question but that the presence of a child in the home where one parent is white will influence the child to behave more as a white man behaves. It is simply a question of the influence of environment. (2) The mixed-blood has more opportunities to learn English in the home because the English language is used to a greater extent than the Indian language. In the full-blood home, generally speaking, the Indian language is used to a considerable extent even though the parents may be well educated, just as in the home of the Swede or German the old mother-tongue is used to a considerable extent. (3) There is no question but that the Oklahoma Indian has been more closely associated with white civilization than the Pueblo Indian, and is more familiar with white ways and the English language."<sup>23</sup>

The fact that in spite of the relation between years of school and high scores and the acknowledged influence of language and environment, Garth still concluded his study by writing, "If these groups may be taken as representative of their racial stocks, the results indicate differences between their racial stock in intelligence as here measured,"<sup>24</sup> is testimony to the sway that popular ideas about racial inferiority had over scientific inquiry.

O. K. Garretson's study, "A Study of Causes of Retardation Among Mexican Children in a Small Public School System in Arizona,"<sup>25</sup> published in 1928 supported Garth's conclusion on the native intelligence of Mexicans. Garretson's study concerned itself with the attempt to find the causes of retardation among Mexican school children. Specifically, Garretson's study attempted to measure the effect that (1) family transientness, (2) irregular attendance and (3) language difference had upon school retardation among Mexican school children. Garretson discounted the effect of irregular attend-

ance of the Mexican school child on his progress in school by noting that "The difference is so slight that it is of questionable importance as a factor in the causes of retardation."<sup>26</sup> Garretson controlled for family transientness by selecting a sample Mexican population whose transientness was less than its Anglo counterpart and thus concluded that "This would seem to indicate that for the school under consideration the transientness of the family as an explanation of the greater retardation of the Mexican when compared with the American child is not tenable."<sup>27</sup> The language factor proved to be a more difficult matter to discount. Garretson notes that, "The factor of language difficulty operates to the disadvantage of the Mexican in Grades I and II, but is in this group apparently of less importance in Grades III to VIII."<sup>28</sup> Garretson's conclusions on the Mexican and the causes of his retardation in school were in line with the prevailing atmosphere of inherent Mexican inferiority. Thus he writes, "Probably the principal factor governing retardation of the Mexican child is his mental ability as measured by the group test."<sup>29</sup>

The question of the role of Spanish as a handicap for the Mexican and its manifestation in intelligence tests as a causal factor for poor performance was beginning to enjoy increased popularity in the early 1930's. So much so that in 1931 B. F. Haught conducted a study entitled, "The Language Difficulty of Spanish-American (sic) Children,"<sup>30</sup> in which he attempted to ". . . find some objective evidence that such a language difficulty does or does not exist."<sup>31</sup> Haught's method for determining whether a language difficulty existed or not was that "It seems reasonable to assume that a language handicap encountered in taking an intelligence test should decrease as the children become older, progress through the grades, and thus become better acquainted with the English language. This should be the case especially when the children are in schools where English is used altogether in the classes. If this handicap does decrease with age, the intelligence quotients should increase accordingly and approach that of the Anglo children."<sup>32</sup> The results of Haught's study were "(1) Intelligence quotients of Spanish (sic) children as revealed in this study do not increase with chronological age, but there is a slight tendency for them to decrease. This conclusion assumes that no selective factor is involved, and it is likely that selection would operate to increase rather than decrease the intelligence quotients. (2) There is a sudden drop in intelligence quotients at about ten years of age. (3) Since the older children are handicapped as much as the younger, there seems to be

no justification for assigning the difficulty to the inability to use or understand English. Until the existence of a language handicap on the part of Spanish (sic) children is demonstrated by properly controlled experiments, it seems safer to avoid using the concept as an explanatory principle in educational problems."<sup>33</sup>

The opposition to the belief in inherent Mexican inferiority began in 1930 with H. T. Manuel's work, *The Education of Mexican and Spanish-Speaking Children in Texas*,<sup>34</sup> in which he strongly suggested the role that both language and environment played in test scores of Mexican children.

Closely following Manuel's work, George I. Sanchez, then working with the State Department of Education in New Mexico, published a rebuttal to previous psychological studies that produced evidence of the inherent inferiority of Mexicans. His work, "Group Differences and Spanish-Speaking Children — A Critical Review,"<sup>35</sup> emphasized what Manuel had previously stated concerning the role of language in the performance of intelligence tests by Mexican school children. Sanchez stated, "Because of the extent to which non-hereditary influences are involved in differences in test result, it seems advisable to refer to them as group differences rather than racial differences. . . . Though the respective influences of heredity, environment, and language have not been definitely isolated or evaluated conclusively, the results of studies in this field reveal that each of the three factors must be reckoned with if a true and comprehensive presentation is sought."<sup>36</sup> And, "Of more significance as a factor to be considered is the undisputed fact that Spanish-speaking children have a vastly different environmental background (easily inferior in its socio-economic and educational aspects) from that of English-speaking Americans."<sup>37</sup> Though undoubtedly, Sanchez had in the back of his mind a much more complicated notion of culture, that found exposition in some of his later works, for the present he was contented with stating that the most obvious cultural differences between the Mexican and Anglo environment revolved around economic and educational characteristics.

Responding directly to Haught's experimental research, Sanchez writes, "Haught, finding no increase in IQ's with progress in the grades, does not believe in language difficulty. He assumes that if such a handicap existed it would be reduced, and the IQ's increased, as the children progress in the grades. This attitude fails to take into consideration that though the language difficulty may be reduced considerably by progress in the grades, the handicap



may still exist and might become even greater because of the progressively greater amount of language required in each succeeding grade or stage.”<sup>38</sup>

Sanchez’s subsequent article appearing in 1934<sup>39</sup> rung with greater assurance than his previous work, perhaps resulting from the results of his own research.<sup>40</sup> Sanchez’s work was of special importance for numerous reasons. First of all, whereas before Sanchez had suggested that different environmental background meant simply inferior socio-economic and educational standards for the Mexican, his 1934 study employed the term in a more over-arching manner which in turn would better explain the test scores of Mexican children. Sanchez writes, “The fact that tests have in a measure fulfilled their function of checking on the community of experience of children and on the extent to which children vary in profiting from common experiences has seemingly led many to assume that there is a universality in community of experiences. *However, a test is valid only to the extent that the items of the test are as common to each child tested as they were to the children upon whom the norms were based.*”<sup>41</sup> (italics mine)

Secondly, Sanchez was among the first writers to indict the school systems as, in part, causing the poor scholastic performance of Mexican school children. In referring to the previously mentioned Garth study, Sanchez writes, “A few years ago Dr. T. R. Garth of Colorado tested about 1,000 (‘Mexican’?) Spanish-speaking children from different communities in Texas, Colorado, and New Mexico. He found that the median IQ of these children was 78, slightly above the point of demarcation for morons. In fact, 50 per cent of the fourth-grade children tested were of 71.8 IQ or below! Uncritical evaluation might lead to the conclusion that at least 50 per cent of the Spanish-speaking children represented by this large sample was unfitted to participate in any but the simplest tasks of life. Such wholesale indictment of a people would be indefensible — yet such are the results of test applications. . . . The writer tested a second-grade group of bilingual children and found the median IQ to be 72. Working on the assumption that the tests reflected a function of the school, remedial instruction in language and language arts was given over a two-year period with the result that the median IQ was ‘raised’ to approximately 100, or normal. . . . If initial test results had been accepted at face value, a large percentage of the children would have been classified as belonging in special classes for the dull and some even as belonging in institutions for the feeble-minded!”<sup>42</sup>

Thirdly, Sanchez was among the first writers to suggest that something more than professional standards were guiding educators. Sanchez writes, "Too often professional and scientific use of measures of evaluation is circumvented by attitudes and emotions which have no place in the educational program. Though not necessarily attributable to questions of attitudes and prejudices, it is apparent to any one who takes the time to examine the records that the state educational system in New Mexico is not functioning efficiently with respect to the bilingual problem. . . . When the child fails in promotion is it his failure or has the school failed to use the proper whetstone in bringing out the true temper and quality of his steel?"<sup>43</sup>

H. T. Manuel brought to a close the first thirteen years of psychological concern with the Mexican on an optimistic note concerning the role of language in intelligence test scores. His work, "A Comparison of Spanish-speaking and English-speaking Children in Reading and Arithmetic,"<sup>44</sup> was a reaffirmation of both his and Sanchez's position. Thus Manuel writes in the summary of his work that "As a final summary, it may be said that this study has brought into sharp relief the average low achievement of Spanish-speaking children in American schools and has yielded important data on the language development of bilingual children. If our results are typical, there is no doubt that the average Spanish-speaking child suffers a serious and persistent language handicap at least as high as the eighth grade."<sup>45</sup>

#### *Sociology and the Mexican-American: 1912-1935*

The dispute over inherent racial capabilities that so occupied the attention of psychologists in the early psychological studies on Mexicans found little expression in the field of sociology. Rather the concerns that found expression in sociology centered around (1) the desirability of the Mexican immigrant, (2) the problems faced in attempting to assimilate the Mexican immigrant into the American way of life, (3) the causes of high crime rates in Mexican communities, poor health standards, high rates of dependency on public relief agencies, and erratic employment patterns. Of the three concerns it was the latter that was to provide a source of conflict. On the one hand there were those groups of sociologists who believed that the source of all ills that plagued the Mexican immigrant were produced by certain cultural characteristics that he had inherited from Mexico. Another group of sociologists sought to explain such phenomena as high crime rates, poor school achievement, poor employment records, and poor health standards with reference to the

conditions, particularly the economic conditions, that surrounded the Mexican immigrant.

Among the first sociological studies to appear on the Mexican immigrant was one that appeared in 1912 in a magazine entitled *Survey*.<sup>46</sup> It was an article written by Samuel Bryan and was titled "Mexican Immigrants in the United States." Bryan's major concern in this piece of work was in trying to assess the desirability of the Mexican immigrant. Not surprisingly, among the first things that struck Bryan about the Mexican immigrant were characteristics that he somehow found did not exist in Americans, and thus marked the Mexican as being different – culturally different. Thus Bryan writes, "The reports of the Immigration Commission show that they lack ambition, are to a very large extent illiterate in their native language, are slow to learn English, and in most cases show no political interest. . . . But their most unfavorable characteristic is their inclination to form colonies and live in a clannish manner."<sup>47</sup> Bryan's concern was also with the social characteristics of the Mexican immigrants as a whole that manifested themselves in certain undesirable forms. Bryan notes that, "As to be expected under the circumstances, the proportion of criminals and paupers among the Mexicans is noticeably greater than among the other foreign-born or among the natives. In Los Angeles County, California, the Mexicans comprised 11.4 per cent of the total number of persons bound over for felonies in 1907. In 1908 and 1909 the percentages were 12.6 and 13.4, respectively. . . . In Arizona, where the proportion of Mexicans to the total population is greater than in Los Angeles, a correspondingly large proportion of the inmates of the various penal institutions are of this race."<sup>48</sup> In regards to the Mexican immigrant's dependency on public relief agencies, Bryan writes, "In the matter of poor relief, Mexican families were concerned in 11.7 per cent of the cases dealt with by the Associated Charities of Los Angeles in 1908. The proportion has increased since that time and in 1910 it was estimated that Mexicans comprised fully one-third of those given relief from this source."<sup>49</sup> Bryan's verdict on the desirability of Mexican immigrants was, "In conclusion it would be recognized that although the Mexicans have proved to be efficient laborers in certain industries, and have afforded a cheap and elastic labor supply for the southwestern United States, the evils to the community at large with their presence in large numbers almost invariably brings many more than overbalance their desirable qualities."<sup>50</sup>

The second sociological article to appear on the Mexican immigrant also appeared in *Survey* in 1916.<sup>51</sup> The author, H. D. Mar-

ston, took a more positive view of the Mexican. Thus while Bryan wrote harshly of the need for Mexicans to rely on relief agencies, Marston noted the cause for such a need when he wrote, "There is not nearly enough work for all the Mexicans here and the question of relief for them, especially for the seemingly endless number of widows and children, has become a big problem for El Paso city and county."<sup>52</sup> And while Bryan spoke about Mexicans' "slowness" to learn English and "clannish manner" Marston wrote that, "They should be able to quickly accustom themselves to new conditions here and in many ways I believe they have done so."<sup>53</sup>

R. E. Dickerson's study "Some Suggestive Problems in the Americanization of Mexicans,"<sup>54</sup> which appeared in 1919 reflected a growing concern among sociologists of the time. The increasing numbers of Mexican immigrants, and the apparent lack of restrictions on the immigrant, brought to the fore the concern with the assimilation of the Mexican into American society. In this respect R. E. Dickerson's work was the first to concern itself with this aspect of the Mexican immigrant. Dickerson's observations were optimistic, believing that the Mexican immigrant contained all the necessary characteristics that made up a good American. Dickerson notes, "There is an unusual eagerness and desire for self-development, almost any opportunity that promises helpfulness is eagerly seized upon. There is a great deal of respect for authority and achievement which makes Mexican boys as a whole better disciplined and more readily controlled."<sup>55</sup>

Though the question of assimilation continued to be of concern, it was overshadowed by the controversy over the causes of social ills that seemed to particularly plague the Mexican immigrant. As mentioned previously, the controversy centered over the source of these social ills, whether it was something about the immigrant's culture or the conditions that surrounded him upon his arrival in America. In this regard, Edwin F. Bamford's article "The Mexican Casual Problem in the Southwest," appearing in 1924 is of major interest because of the numerous notions that it introduced concerning the conditions that the Mexican immigrant met upon arriving in America. Most certainly his perspective on the immigrant problem placed him in the camp of sociologists that considered problems external to the Mexican immigrant more important than those seemingly produced by his cultural heritage.

Thus when Bamford discussed the lack of significant numbers of Mexicans in skilled occupations in America he did not, as many

others were given to do, suggest that they were incapable of doing skilled work but rather that “. . . Mexicans receive but little welcome as apprentices in many communities, and as members of American workers organizations.”<sup>57</sup> And when speaking about the overwhelming agricultural nature of Mexican employment he states, “. . . the industrialization process in the Southwest is being promoted by men who are mainly interested in agriculture, commerce, manufacturing, and mining. To this process these men are giving highly intelligent direction. The Mexican workers under consideration here are involved in that process. But the presence of the Mexican worker involves not only the industrialization process, but the process of socialization as well. And the problem of the Mexican casual, as viewed in this article, is measured by the extent to which this socialization process has failed to ‘keep step’ with the process of industrialization. The latter has its intelligent promoters and directors. . . . the attitudes of those mainly interested in the process of industrialization in particular, and of the public generally, are such that the socialization process has been rather repressed, ignorantly and indifferently, than promoted and directed, understandingly with interest.”<sup>58</sup> Thus in a very circuitous manner Bamford was attributing insidious motives to the agricultural interests in the Southwest.

Bamford’s position was not without substantial justification. Numerous other sociological works pointed to the agricultural industry as a major causal factor of the poor condition in which the Mexican immigrant found himself. Thus Charles A. Thomson at the 1927 National Conference of Social Work,<sup>59</sup> stated that “. . . the problem of Mexican dependency and sickness is not so much a racial or national problem . . . as it is an industrial problem. It is the cheap labor group, whatever its nationality or race, which loads upon our agencies the greater part of the burden of our social ills. The unskilled laborer is poorly paid, often irregularly paid; he is ignorant; he suffers from wretched housing; he is ill fed. These conditions mold the Mexican, just as they do any other unskilled group. Their presence guarantees their consequences.”<sup>60</sup> Speaking more directly to the social side effects produced by agricultural employment, Thomson notes that “The factor of unstable or seasonal employment explains much. The railroads and the beets are the two agencies which more than others have served to draw the Mexican across the line and scatter him throughout the country. It is worth noting that the railroads want him, as a rule, from March to October, and the beet growers, roughly, for the same period.

What he does the rest of the year does not as a rule interest them. . . . Need we wonder that the social agencies have to supplement the wages paid by the employer?"<sup>61</sup>

Echoing both Bamford and Thomson on this subject, Robert McLean in an address to the 1928 National Conference of Social Work<sup>62</sup> stated that, "The Mexican is often criticized for being a rover. He is here today and somewhere else tomorrow; and one who couples a permanent residence with the idea of respectability is sure that the Mexican worker cannot be good for much, or he would not always be losing or throwing up one job and moving his family away in search of another. Now the Mexican's habits are not migratory, but the habits of the industries which furnish him a livelihood most certainly are."<sup>63</sup> The agricultural business in the Southwest was indeed resting on the shoulders of the Mexican laborer. Max Handman's article, "Economic Reasons for the Coming of the Mexican Immigrant,"<sup>64</sup> pointed this out clearly. Handman writes, ". . . The rise in agricultural prices following the war resulted in a great expansion of agricultural production, but what is more important, it resulted in a great increase in the price of farm lands and an inflation of farm values. Certain areas in Texas and California were opened up and sold at a price which could not possibly make them a paying proposition to the purchasers unless the purchasers could utilize cheap labor. It was because Mexican cheap labor was there to be utilized that the region could be made agriculturally acceptable at all."<sup>65</sup>

The second notion that Bamford's article introduced into sociology, that of prejudice toward the Mexican as a factor causing his social condition, found support in an article published by Emory S. Bogardus in 1930.<sup>66</sup> The article entitled "Second Generation Mexicans," notes that "Both the second generation and foreign-born Mexican pupils feel the effects of segregation. There is, of course, considerable natural segregation due to the fact that Mexicans live in colonies. . . . In many Southern California communities the question of definitely segregating Mexican children in schools of their own has been urged by Americans."<sup>67</sup>

The group of sociologists who conceived of the Mexican culture as being the source of all the social ills that plagued the Mexican immigrant also found expression.

Earl T. Sullenberg's work, "Mexican Population of Omaha," was in this tradition. He writes, "Their ambitions are not high. . . . The native talents of the Mexicans are painting, drawing, and music. Practically every home owns some kind of a musical instrument.

The women do a great deal of sewing and fancy work. Music is a natural art of these people. However, they do not respond very favorably to musical instruction. They state that it is too difficult for them,"<sup>68</sup> and, "As human beings these Mexicans are sociable, friendly, approachable, grateful, charitable, and simple-minded. They are timid, reserved, and of a rather sensitive nature. They are more or less vindictive. They lack confidence in the American, as they think that the average American thinks of them only as inferior."<sup>69</sup> All of these characteristics prevented the Mexican from properly functioning in American society.

Helen W. Walker's article, "Mexican Immigrants as Laborers,"<sup>70</sup> appearing in 1928, best represented the image of the Mexican that this group of sociologists held. She writes, "There are some Mexicans who simply will not work when they do not want to, no matter how much the employer is depending upon his labor to harvest a crop. A few dollars in the Mexican's pocket may be his signal for a vacation and he will not appear on the job. This attitude, perhaps, goes back to his heritage."<sup>71</sup> Quoting from an article in the *Nation*, Walker writes, "The desire to better one's economic position seems to lose its force in the upside-down world south of the Rio Grande. The Indian-Mexican enjoys savoring life (with rest and leisure), and the American enjoys crowding it. . . . But they (the Mexicans) look happy. They are reposeful and contented. Of course they are happy. That is the worst of it. Until the Mexican-Indian wants money to buy things that money can buy more than he wants mastery over time, he will not labor consistently like the Americans, except by force."<sup>72</sup>

Among the last sociological articles to appear on the Mexican was one that touched upon the growing political awareness of the Mexican immigrant.<sup>73</sup> Almost as if deliberately contradicting earlier notions about their docility, and apolitical nature, this study touched upon the growing disaffection that Mexican laborers were exhibiting towards their positions in the social and economic ladder of American society, and in showing this disaffection perhaps were signaling the arrival of a new age of the Mexican.

Thus ended the first 23 years of concern by the social sciences with the Mexican and Mexican-American. In psychology these first years of concern were centered around the question of the inherent inferiority of the Mexican immigrant versus the deleterious effects of the social conditions on the measurement of intelligence. Sociology concerned itself over the sources of the social ills that plagued the Mexican immigrant, with one segment claiming the source to

be the cultural heritage of the Mexican while another segment accused the social and economic conditions in which the Mexican found himself. The division that occurred in these early social science studies on the Mexican-American, particularly in sociology, were to be maintained and enlarged upon through the subsequent 35 years.

## NOTES

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<sup>7</sup>—, p. 9.

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<sup>9</sup>Madison Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race*, (New York: Scribner's, 1916).

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<sup>33</sup>——, p. 94-95.

<sup>34</sup>H. T. Manuel, *The Education of Mexican and Spanish-Speaking Children in Texas*, (University of Texas, 1930).

<sup>35</sup>George I. Sanchez, "Group Differences and Spanish-Speaking Children — A Critical Review," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 16:549-583.

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<sup>44</sup>H. T. Manuel, "A Comparison of Spanish-Speaking and English-Speaking Children in Reading and Arithmetic," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 19:189-202.

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<sup>54</sup>R. E. Dickerson, "Some Suggestive Problems in the Americanization of Mexicans," *Pedagogical Seminary*, Sept. 1919, p. 288-297.

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<sup>64</sup>Max Sylvius Handman, "Economic Reasons for the Coming of the Mexican Immigrant," *American Journal of Sociology*, 35:601-611.

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*Problems Related to the Availability, Use and  
Effects of Present American Testing Instruments  
and Methods with Mexican Americans*

# Problems Related to Present Testing Instruments

STEVE MORENO

## *The Problem*

Achievement, aptitude and intelligence tests have been developed for, and standardized on, an entirely English speaking population. The norms thus developed were designed to provide descriptive information and predictive validity about the various skills, aptitudes, and abilities measured. The tests clearly reflect middle-class American culture, values, and language.

The *major* problem facing most Mexican-Americans is that they represent a different culture, possess many different values, and speak a different language than that contained in the American tests. As a result of cultural differences, the Mexican American is obviously at a disadvantage when he is exposed to most tests. The Mexican American usually scores much lower than his English speaking American contemporary. As a result of his lower score, the Mexican American has been relegated to an image of stupid, lazy, dumb, slow, educable mentally retarded, etc. Many questions have been raised recently as a result of the lower scores for Mexican-Americans. Those questions most asked by concerned Mexican-American educators are:

1. How valid are English test scores on Spanish-speaking or bilingual children?
2. How reliable are English test scores on Spanish-speaking or bilingual children?
3. Are valid tests available for Mexican American children?

The following will address itself to these concerns.

### *Related Research*

First, the question of language handicap of Mexican Americans when measured on English *intelligence* tests will be reviewed.

Many investigators (Altus, 1953; Carlson and Henderson, 1950; Darcy, 1952; Garth, 1936; Havinghurst, 1944; Hill, 1936; Jamieson and Sandiford, 1920; Kittell, 1959; Kittell, 1963; Pintner, 1922; Pintner and Keller, 1922; Seidl, 1937) have attempted to determine the effects of bilingualism on the measure of intelligence of elementary school children. A method frequently used has been that of comparing the performance of bilingual children on verbal and non-verbal intelligence tests. *In general, the findings of the studies tend to support the conclusion that monolingual Spanish speakers and bilingual children suffer from a language handicap when intelligence is measured on verbal testing.* Kittell (1959) indicates that I.Q. scores may be misleading for bilingual children, and that I.Q. scores and socio-economics may be related in measuring I.Q.'s of bilingual children. Adler (1968) indicates that there seems to be a unanimity of opinion among psychologists that intelligence tests are not free from "cultural" bias. Many psychologists, as well as some anthropologists and sociologists, question the very fact that it is even possible to construct a test which is free from cultural loadings. As early as 1932, Sanchez (1932) showed that Spanish bilinguals increased their I.Q.'s on successive verbal intelligence tests when they received language experiences between test administrations. The predictive validity of I.Q. tests has been questioned (Carlson and Henderson, 1950) and the findings raise the question of the appropriateness of the common practice in schools of recording the predictive validity as an index of intellectual brightness for a child who is not a member of the cultural group upon which the test was standardized, and especially so when the predictive index is to be used at some time subsequent to the testing period.

Other research (Phillips and Bannon, 1968) has indicated that the Binet norms are not adequate for populations that are entirely *English* speaking. The validity and reliability of intelligence tests is further reduced by research (Masling, 1959) which indicates that examiners tend to be more lenient with more friendly subjects as opposed to a cold role-playing subject.

Mathis (1969) has clearly demonstrated that aptitude testing has profoundly bad effects on disadvantaged applicants. The tests tend to bar them from suitable employment and destroys their aspirations of success during the process. He further states that aptitude tests are based on faulty assumptions and that aptitude test scores

should be followed by training to prepare disadvantaged applicants for jobs rather than exclude them from consideration because of a low score on an aptitude test.

The predictive validity of achievement tests was summarized by Personke (1969) in his research which indicated that existing readiness tests do predict the ability of Mexican-American children to read based on our *present* teaching methods. The tests were valid descriptions of children's ability, but the *programs* were *not*.

### *Conclusions*

The above literature clearly indicates that:

1. Monolingual Spanish-speaking children and bilingual children are handicapped when taking English examinations of all types: intelligence, aptitude, and achievement.
2. The predictive validity of existing English tests; especially I.Q. and aptitude tests, is lost for Mexican-American children.
3. Existing readiness tests may predict achievement for Spanish-speaking children in our present programs, but the test scores *should* clearly indicate different programs for different populations.

### *Present Situation*

Because of organized Mexican-American concern, the California Department of Education has allocated funds to develop a Spanish version of an existing intelligence test. The basic premise in developing an I.Q. test in a specific language is that those *children who will be tested are monolingual in the language of the test. Since most Spanish surnamed children are bilingual, they will be penalized by a totally Spanish I.Q. test as much as they were penalized by the English I.Q. test*; unless, the norms of the test are designed to reflect a normal curve equal to that of the English-speaking Americans. The normal curve for bilingual children will not be totally accepted until unique curriculums are developed that insure academic success for bilingual children. Before the curriculums are developed, tests must be developed to measure the degree of bilingualism and the effect of such on various curriculums.

There are achievement tests available in Spanish which measure achievement in the Spanish language, but give little information concerning instruction in English for bilingual children. As a result of the above research, I feel that the following is needed:

1. A bicultural ability test in English and/or Spanish that measures ability equally in either language.

2. Tests to measure degrees of bilingualism.
  3. A list of *academic* priorities for bilingual children.
  4. Development of curriculums best suited for various degrees of bilingualism, and based on academic priorities and behavioral objectives.
  5. Longitudinal studies designed to measure long term effect of special curriculums.
  6. Establishment of language development classes for those bilingual Mexican-American children who are supposedly "functional" in English, but that lack language development necessary to improve their socio-economic status.
  7. Conduct reverse longitudinal studies on successful Mexican-Americans to determine the predictive validity of most commonly used "entrance" exams (ACT, GATB, GRE, etc.) and aptitude tests.
- Until these steps are properly taken, the testing of Mexican-American children will remain a scientific morass and a lucrative playground for misguided research.

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# Library Service to Mexican-Americans

ROBERT P. HARO

During the 1960's American librarians demonstrated a growing awareness of the problems of poverty and minority group estrangement. In response to this new awareness librarians developed programs that not only provide service to Negroes in urban slums, but also hire them as library workers and provide special programs aimed at aiding Negroes to learn the uses of the library. However, Mexican-Americans, whether in rural or urban settings, have been largely overlooked by librarians in their attempt to improve library services to the poor. This in spite of the fact that Mexican-Americans represent the second largest minority group in the United States. This lack of attention paid to the Mexican-American by librarians is doubly important when it is realized that Mexican-Americans are seriously behind the majority of Americans in education, employment, and income. Having abandoned the farming and manual labor occupations that were once their mainstays in the past, Mexican-Americans now form the hard-core unemployed in many urban areas. The incidence of poverty among Mexican-Americans is twice that of Anglos. In 1959, nearly thirty-five (35) per cent of the nation's Mexican-American families had annual incomes of less than \$3,000.<sup>1</sup>

To the extent that libraries and librarians have made a commitment to aid in alleviating poverty, Mexican-Americans represent an important challenge to their institutions. The concept of democratic library service is as important to the poor as it is to the affluent. And since the cultural and historical experiences of the various racial and ethnic minority groups vary, librarians, if they are to deal effectively with Mexican-Americans, must be prepared to make radical changes in their view of orthodox librarian functions. It would be a serious mistake to treat the poor in the United States as a homogeneous mass.

The metropolitan areas of Los Angeles and Sacramento, California, represent two distinct types of Mexican-American communities in the United States. The Mexican-American community in East Los Angeles contains the largest urban concentration of Mexican-Americans in America. The community in Sacramento, on the other



hand, is smaller and represents a less urban population. The barrio in Los Angeles is concentrated in East Los Angeles, two miles east of downtown and encompassing an area of about six square miles. In Sacramento, the colonia is scattered geographically. However, common to both of these areas are serious economic problems. For example, the unemployment rate in East Los Angeles in 1965 was 7.7 per cent,<sup>2</sup> while the Sacramento area has an unemployment rate that varies seasonally between 6.0 and 11.0 per cent.<sup>3</sup>

During 1968 and 1969 approximately 600 Mexican-Americans in East Los Angeles and Sacramento were interviewed in an effort to answer three questions about libraries and library service:

1. What are the library attitudes of Mexican-Americans from various age groups?
2. What are the attitudes and practices of libraries and librarians serving these people?
3. What challenges and opportunities face librarians and libraries in providing more effective service to the Mexican-American people?

The median years of education in these two communities averaged less than eight years. Twenty-one (21) per cent of the people interviewed were foreign born and forty-one (41) per cent had changed residence within the previous year.

Mexican-Americans evidence behavior that distinguishes them from other library users in the United States, even among other ethnic and racial groups. That which most distinguishes them from other segments of society is their need for ethnic identification in literature and library services. In spite of certain advantages to be gained from using larger centralized libraries, Mexican-Americans generally prefer to use libraries where Spanish is spoken, and may often travel great distances to use such libraries. Such action is certainly testimony to the feeling of comfort which libraries with Spanish-speaking staff afford to Mexican-Americans. The employment of Spanish-speaking staff in libraries cannot be overemphasized in view of the fact that in both Los Angeles and Sacramento fifty-nine (59) per cent of those interviewed had a sufficient command of the English language to be able to utilize English language library materials. However, sixty-five (65) per cent had never used anything but a school library. The reasons for the infrequent use of the library by those obviously capable of doing so becomes clear when it is noted that eighty-nine (89) per cent of those inter-

viewed stated they would utilize their neighborhood libraries if Spanish were spoken and Spanish language materials, especially those dealing with Mexican-American and Hispanic themes, were available.

Aside from the need for ethnic identification, perhaps the next most interesting characteristic of Mexican-Americans in relation to libraries is their view of the role of libraries. Though only seventeen (17) per cent of the respondents complained about the various libraries and their service, the most vocal complaints came from teen-agers and young adults. They criticized the lack of "Chicano" materials, "raza" literature, and information by and about the Brown Berets. On the whole, young Mexican-Americans wanted libraries to carry more activist literature about Mexican-American political movements and "Brown Power." Comments by older Mexican-Americans ranged from a desire to see more Spanish language materials available, including newspapers, periodicals, and various handbooks and manuals in Spanish (such as reference books, almanacs, car repair manuals, etc.), to a need for libraries to hire more Spanish-speaking clerks and librarians.

Examining the remarks of young Mexican-Americans first, one is impressed by the lack of understanding these youths have for the potentials of library service. To them, the public library is a complicated service agency. They are told, on the one hand, that it is there to serve them. However, when they demand certain services or materials they are frequently told that such services or materials cannot be provided by the library. An example of this was the demand for a meeting room in a branch library made by a group of Mexican-American teenagers. This group needed a place to meet after school for discussion of educational topics of political and social nature. The branch librarian was prepared to make available the appropriate area. When it was learned that a controversial Chicano speaker might be present at one of these meetings, the branch librarian was denied permission by her superiors to allow such a gathering. At another public library branch, Mexican-American teenagers had asked the library to carry certain newspapers and periodicals, mainly from activist Chicano organizations. After some investigations these publications were not secured under the pretext that they appeared irregularly, caused too many internal library problems in ordering and claiming missing issues, and because their format might cause handling and preservation problems. At a later date it was learned that a group of influential community leaders had become aware of the library's plans to order these

activist Mexican-American publications, and this group objected to the Chicano newspapers and periodicals because they contained "foul language, called for political separatism and condemned the behavior of the United States in a communistic and un-American manner." Rather than risk a confrontation with this group, the library decided not to order the materials in question.

Given this situation one might assume that people in barrios are victims of limited access to information, have no voice in the types of library materials secured, and receive poor service for their children in school libraries. Such is usually the case. While Mexican-American parents may "seem" indifferent about their neighborhood schools and their libraries, this image results not from a lack of interest but from their uneasiness and misunderstanding about how these institutions are administered and how they function. School librarians too often lapse into reliance upon marginal group programs and other limited methods of training Mexican-American children to use the library, and seldom attempt to reach the parents of these children.

Walking through the schools serving Mexican-American children in East Los Angeles and parts of Sacramento, one is struck by the age of the buildings and other facilities. Most school libraries are housed in older structures and show few signs of repair or renovation. There are few signs that distinguish these school libraries from other urban ghetto libraries. An occasional display of Mexican literature or Spanish-Mexican explorers and other heroes is occasionally offered up to these children as "Mexican" atmosphere. Furthermore, *conversation in Spanish, while not strictly forbidden, is discouraged in some school libraries*. On a comparative basis, newer high school libraries in predominantly white, middle-class suburbs of Los Angeles and Sacramento have highly flexible and innovative library use classes and assignments, while their counterparts in the Mexican-American areas suffer from outmoded facilities, strict supervision of library use and traditional approaches to the library as a study hall and place of silence.

The lack of adaptation by public libraries in affording service to all age groups of the Mexican-American communities in East Los Angeles and Sacramento was revealed in a number of other ways. There are, for example, numerous bibliographies on Mexican-Americans available to librarians who need purchasing guides. Seventy-nine (79) per cent of the respondents between the ages of 15 and 21 knew of the various bibliographies and had seen or

used one or more of them. Of the seven leading bibliographies of library materials dealing with Mexican-Americans, only two public library branches out of seven had more than two of them.<sup>4</sup> Another failure was the inability of public libraries to "sell" their services to the Mexican-American community. Part of this failure resulted from a lack of communication between librarians and Mexican-Americans. Various respondents gave a general sense of mistrust and misunderstanding about libraries and librarians. However, the failure of libraries to utilize Spanish speaking clerks, advertisements on Spanish language radio programs, the accumulation of audio tapes and records in Spanish dealing with topics of interest to this group, and the total lack of advertising in Spanish language newspapers is highly suspect. Librarians and libraries can provide basic and meaningful service to all age groups of the Mexican-American community. However, too many public librarians seem unwilling to leave the confines of their libraries to advertise and promote the services they can offer to this group. And at the same time, too many librarians have not spoken with leaders of age groups and organizations from the Mexican-American community about their desire to serve them and to request assistance, even if such entails strong criticism. Are librarians really so thin-skinned?

Perhaps no age group of Mexican-Americans was as willing to discuss libraries and library materials for Chicanos as college-age students. For the activist element of this group, instant change in colleges and schools seemed the only hope. College student respondents were adamant about the need for new methods and practices in college library collection and service policies as they affected Chicanos. *Seventy-seven (77) per cent of the college students interviewed believed that ordering more library materials was not the sole answers to their needs.* Students cited the need for courses on library use as an important first step. There was also unanimous agreement on the need for reading centers, with the accumulation or related Chicano materials from various disciplines in central locations and adjacent to conference rooms, duplicating facilities, and group study areas. More than one respondent complained about the lack of relevance between the service policy of libraries and Mexican-American studies programs. A few of the respondents suggested that residential colleges be established with working collections of Chicano library materials outside of the main library buildings. What was most impressive was the willingness of the Mexican-American students to talk about the situation and to offer suggestions. Many of them seemed overwhelmed

by the fact that anyone, especially a librarian, might be interested in their suggestions for library service.

This aspect of the survey is doubly important because it is at this juncture that library service is of the utmost importance. The most intelligent, dedicated and promising Chicano youths are or will shortly be found in the junior colleges, the four year colleges and the universities. Many of these Chicano students have labored under the burden of poor or completely inadequate libraries and library service. It is imperative that librarians cultivate these students, befriend and assist them in learning the potentials of effective library service. Failure to do so will surely reinforce prejudices and latent hostilities that these students harbor toward libraries and librarians.

It is apparent that poor Mexican-Americans are generally not well-served by the various types of libraries. This finding would suggest that excellent opportunities to fill this problem situation may exist. However, libraries with inflexible structures and strict orthodoxy will not succeed in alleviating the problem of poor library services. The inability of present library services to make any significant impact on the Mexican-American communities in East Los Angeles and Sacramento should bear this out. Such a failure should serve as an example to other libraries and should encourage librarians to apply innovative and experimental forms of library service tailored to the needs of the Mexican-Americans. It should be noted that the same situation may have variations in other minority group communities. There may exist important parallels with the large Cuban population in Florida or the Puerto Rican community in New York. It is quite likely that each Spanish-Speaking minority community will require careful individual attention before plans and efforts are formulated to improve library service for those areas.

It would be unfortunate if the stimulus-response process in library service improvement waited for confrontations and possible violence before being set in motion. The ability of libraries to provide successful service to Mexican-Americans will be greater if cynicism and mistrust are not permitted to develop in Mexican-American communities.

## TABLES

Number I

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	Children 10-15	Adults 16-25	Women 26-	Men 26-
Public Library (Main)	2%	9%	0	3%
Public Library (Branch)	41%	14%	6%	21%
College Libraries	0	26%	1%	3%
School Libraries	89%	61%	0%	0%

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Number II

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	Number	Percentage
Respondents who have:		
Never been in a library	209	35%
Only used school libraries	391	65%
Used college libraries	55	9%

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Number III

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	Number	Percentage
Respondents who were:		
Dissatisfied with library service	102	17%
Satisfied with library service	36	6%
Alienated from libraries	462	77%
Total number of persons interviewed was approximately 600.		

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In addition, there have been several brief but valuable bibliographies from the Library of Congress that Librarians should be aware of and encourage patrons to use:

U. S. Library of Congress. Legislative Reference Service.

"Miscellaneous bibliographies on Mexican-Americans," 1964, 1965, 1967 and 1968.

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*This article represents the nucleus of a larger work on the same topic by Philip D. Ortego. EDITORS.*

## Moctezuma's Children

PHILIP D. ORTEGO

Without doubt the single most significant manifestation of the educational problems of Mexican Americans focuses in large part on language. However, to "attack" only this aspect of the problems will result in the kinds of failures that have too frequently characterized many such attempts. Unfortunately, on the basis of "unsuccessful" attempts, far too many educators are prone to generalize that since they've tried and failed to solve the educational problems of Mexican Americans ergo either the students are unteachable or nothing will work. This "experiential fallacy" is at work in far too many school situations in the Southwest. The end result is frustration, stagnation, and alienation.

The education of Mexican Americans cannot be reduced to language only, for there is no one language problem but as many problems as there are Mexican American children with linguistic disadvantages. The truth is that the disadvantages are more the product of a thoroughly lexocentric (*linguistically chauvinistic*) society than they are real; they are the product of ignorance about language and its communicative and social function; they are the product of distortion of Mexican American culture and history.

It must be pointed out, however, that the problems of Mexican Americans relate specifically to American life and not to Mexican life, just as the problems of Anglo Americans relate to American life and not to English life in spite of the linguistic ties. That many Mexican Americans do not speak American English makes them no less Americans, for their interests, attitudes, and aspirations differ little from those of other Americans. But at the moment, what best characterizes Mexican Americans in the Southwest is that most of them have a limited and inadequate education.



### *High Dropout Rate*

The educational statistics on Mexican Americans are shocking. For example, their dropout rate is more than twice the rate of the national average, and estimates of the average number of school years completed by Mexican Americans (7.1 years) are significantly below figures of Anglo children (12.1 years) and Negro pupils (9.0 years). A 1964 survey revealed that in Texas 39% of its Mexican Americans had less than a fifth grade education; and Mexican Americans 25 years of age and older have as little as 4.8 years of schooling. Almost half of the Mexican Americans in Texas are essentially still functional illiterates. In California, 50% of Spanish-speaking students drop out of school by the time they reach the eighth grade.

The percentage of Mexican American children entering first grade knowing enough English to move forward with their Anglo peers is slight. More startling, though, is that many Mexican American youngsters never get to the first grade. Four out of five of those who do fall two grades behind their Anglo classmates by the time they reach fifth grade. Consequently, more than 50% of Mexican American high school students drop out between grades 10 and 11.

This situation can only be viewed as shamefully tragic, especially for a people whose ancestral roots on this continent — both Indo and Hispanic — go back to more than a century before the establishment of Jamestown. The odyssey of Mexican Americans has been long and arduous and, indeed, without public attention or apparent concern. They have truly been, as George I. Sanchez called them in 1940, “forgotten people,” or as the NEA Tucson meeting of 1966 identified them, “the invisible minority.”

### *Existing Programs for Mexican Americans*

For the most part, existing education programs (with the exception of pilot or experimental model programs) make no allowance for the fact that many Mexican American children come to school knowing little English or else knowing only Spanish. From the start, Mexican American children are onerously burdened with the disadvantage of being unable to deal with the national language, and therefore the language of instruction. Spanish-speaking children have been herded into schools where the proceedings are conducted in a language they don't understand, via which they are expected to learn all the standard subjects, including reading. Sad to say, Mexican American children have been seriously traumatized by what has all too often been a demoralizing and degrading learning experience. Even when the best intentions are present in the

teachers, the lack of Spanish language facility on their part has often created the most debilitating kinds of complexes in the children. What is needed, of course, is proper and adequate preparation of teachers in linguistic principles. The teacher, as the central figure in the learning context of Mexican Americans, needs to fully comprehend the nature of language and its psycho-social function in human beings, especially children.

Spanish-speaking Mexican American children have been relegated to classes for the retarded simply because many teachers equate linguistic disadvantage with intellectual ability. In California alone Mexican Americans account for more than 40% of the so-called "mentally retarded." As Harold Howe, former U. S. Commissioner of Education, pointed out in his address to the National Conference on Educational Opportunities for Mexican Americans, the notion of Anglo-cultural superiority is reflected in hundreds of ways in American society, and this notion of Anglo-cultural superiority — over which youngsters and their parents have no control — is a much larger factor in the lack of achievement among Mexican Americans than we are prone or willing to realize and admit.

In the last year, walkouts by Mexican American students have taken place in numerous communities of the Southwest. One of the issues in these walkouts has been the custodial manner that emphasizes attendance and discipline at the expense of learning. Many Mexican Americans are beginning to suspect that the only reason for wanting to keep them in school is to improve the average daily attendance, the basis for most Federal funding and support. However, most school districts receiving Federal funds can only point to showcase programs, some of them so abominably put together that one wonders how they continue to be funded. Moreover, a few Mexican American educators are to be found on the rosters of these programs. Of course, the "harvest of shame" in the Southwest includes the fact that in most of the schools of Education or Teachers Colleges few, if any, Mexican Americans are on the teaching faculties, let alone represented in the decision making activities dealing with the education of Mexican Americans.

Just as the "come and get it" approach to the common curriculum and the problems of Mexican Americans has failed to come to grips with one of the most fundamental and persistent of educational problems that underlies learning dysfunction, so too has the approach of readying the child for the common curriculum failed to resolve the problems of Mexican American education. Projects such as Head Start, Follow-Through, and other pre-school

compensatory educational programs have attempted to resolve the problems reasoning that pre-schoolers who are recipients of such programs — short and long term, well designed or inefficient — will now be fluent linguistically in English and ready enough experientially to begin formal instruction in English in a common and traditional education curriculum. Six months of pre-school alone is hardly enough time to overcome the disadvantages. The fact of the matter is as Herschel T. Manuel put it:

The special difficulties with which we are struggling are those of children who must learn a second language outside of the home; of children who in addition suffer the disadvantages of poverty; of children who have to adjust to patterns of living in the larger community different from those of the immediate environment; and of children whose migrant parents have no secure place in the community.

More recently, the technology of linguistics has led to what might be termed the "technorriculum," that is, the curriculum heavily invested in gadgetry like tape-recorders, slide projectors, et cetera, in the hope that somehow technology may help overcome what has been otherwise deemed impossible. Unfortunately, the gadgets are only as good as the teacher who uses them. Thus, thousands of schools which hurriedly acquired the technological hardware have still not improved the education of Mexican Americans significantly, nor does it appear that they are likely to.

At the moment there is much ado about English-as-second-language (ESL) programs both as compensatory education and as part of experimental bilingual programs. While these programs are perhaps the most meritorious thus far, they are nevertheless characterized by the erroneous insistence that to speak English with an accent is unacceptable. This is, as *El Grito* calls it, "insidious arrogance." After all, such people as Lyndon Baines Johnson, Werner Von Braun, Ted Kennedy, Otto Preminger, and others speak with colorful accents, all of which are perfectly acceptable. Perhaps *El Grito's* conclusion is correct: "In the United States today any accent is acceptable except that of a Mexican-American who speaks English with a Mexican accent."

### *Languages in Conflict*

It is indeed a striking contradiction, as Armando Rodriguez, Chief of the Mexican American Affairs Unit for the U. S. Office of Education, has pointed out, that "we spend millions of dollars to encourage school children to learn a foreign language and, at

the same time, frown upon Mexican American children speaking Spanish in school." In most schools of the Southwest, Mexican American students are still expressly forbidden from speaking Spanish except in Spanish classes, and even then their Spanish is considered tainted by Anglo teachers of Spanish. The rationale behind the "English only" rule is that by *speaking* English the students will *learn* English. As one school administrator remarked, "If these people want to be Americans, they should speak English." For many lexocentric Anglo Americans this settles the question, the logic being that once a Spanish-speaking child is forbidden the use of Spanish he will then speak fluent idiomatic English like all other Americans.

Unfortunately, this insistence on "English only" tends to produce hostility and resentment on the part of Spanish-speakers who are pressed into thinking of their language as "inferior." And the more Spanish-speaking students are reprimanded for the crime of speaking the only language they feel comfortable with, the more they are alienated from society, from their families, and even from themselves. Thus, the Spanish-speaking child who encounters stern and imposing prohibitions against using his language is not only traumatized by a conflict he does not readily understand but is forced into a position of repudiating his cultural identity or else perishing in the educational process.

The fact of the matter is that in many parts of the Southwest Mexican American students are still being punished for breaking the "English only" rules. In Brownsville, Texas, for example, Mexican American students have been fined for speaking Spanish in the schools. Some Southwest schools have resorted to corporal punishment of students who break the "English only" rules. Only until recently have such rules been challenged by Mexican Americans, but only after actual or threatened Mexican American student uprisings. Commenting on the elimination of the "English only" rules in San Antonio, one school official remarked recently that not only should Spanish be allowed in the schools but that Mexican American pupils should be "motivated to improve their fluency in standard Spanish in such conversation." The obvious inference is that even the *Spanish* of Mexican Americans is poor at best. It is precisely this attitude which has led to such remarks that Mexican Americans are "illiterate in two languages." While this may be true, the pejoration is intended to degrade the quality of the Spanish spoken by Mexican Americans. Thus, even the Mexican American border dialect of Spanish (as well as the Mexican American border dialect of

English) is reduced to an inferior position on some tenuous linguistic scale. Again, ignorance of the central role of language in the life of human beings continues to foster linguistic prejudices.

Not only have Mexican Americans been made to feel marginal in Anglo American society because of their lack of English, but they have been made to feel marginal in their Spanish-speaking environment as well. To avoid identity crises, teachers of Mexican Americans must not only become more aware of Mexican American heritage and culture, but they must rid themselves of outmoded concepts about language in order to help the more than 3 million Spanish-speaking children of the Southwest. For as Harold Howe put it: "It is time we stopped wasting [our linguistic resources] and instead enable youngsters to move back and forth from one language to another without any sense of difficulty or strangeness."

#### *Mexican Americans and the Illusory I.Q.*

About 5% of American school children score below 75 on I.Q. tests, and are therefore considered mentally retarded. However, 13% of Mexican American youngsters fall below 75 when tested. About 25% of all children score between 75 and 90 on I.Q. tests, but 50% of Mexican Americans fall in this range. 50% of all children score between 90 and 100, but only 25% of Mexican American children score this high. Again, only 12% of Mexican American children score above 100 compared to 20% of all others. The percentage of Mexican American children classified with inferior I.Q.'s is 2½ times the percentage of Mexican Americans in the population. Those who inveigh against bilingual education usually point to the results of these questionable tests to support their contention about the intellectual potential and capability of Spanish-speaking Americans. On the basis of I.Q. tests in the English language, Mexican American youngsters have been categorically considered intellectually inferior to their Anglo counterparts.

Only recently have educators become aware that the right instruments are lacking for measuring intelligence and achievement potential of Mexican Americans, despite the fact that as long ago as 1935 Herschel T. Manuel had pointed out the deficiencies of the Stanford-Binet in assessing the abilities of Spanish-speaking Mexican American children. As a consequence, many Mexican Americans have come to internalize the effects of low I.Q. scores. The subsequent effect on their children has been devastating, for they are facing in their homes the same negative valuation they encounter in the schools.

The illusory I.Q. has wreaked havoc on Mexican American youngsters, oftentimes responsible for their assignment to mentally retarded groups or remedial reading sections. Enlightened educators now see the distinct relationship between the amount of retardation and the extent to which intelligence tests require a knowledge of the language used in the testing. The implications of the Rosenthal and Jacobson experiment in a lower-class community of the South San Francisco Unified School District (*Pygmalion in the Classroom*) are far reaching, indeed, for it appears that a teacher's perception and expectation of her students *does* demonstrably affect pupil performance. (In fact, the findings of current studies indicate that the origins of teacher attitudes toward minority students may be influenced by the kind of professional training they get.) It now appears that I.Q. tests have been used to identify *presumed* differences in innate ability of students perhaps simply to make the administration of schools easier and more statistically efficient.

Thus, the concept of "equal educational opportunity" in America is tainted by an educational tradition and philosophy that caters not to the lower classes but to the more affluent. Americans have been too quick to endorse the Platonic concept of hierarchical superiority measured and manifested in statistical terms. The concept of intelligence has been refracted so peculiarly by American educators that the result has been the I.Q., the *point d'appui* which sustains their entire perspective.

The findings of the special advisory committee to the California State Board of Education, created at the insistence of the California Association of Mexican American Educators, are startling. Mexican American children, classified as mentally retarded after I.Q. tests in English, have done remarkably better with tests in Spanish. Some of the children tested had spent as long as three years in special classes for slow learners simply because of low I.Q. scores. The study by the special advisory committee found that the "special" classes themselves had a "retarding influence." After retesting, one Mexican American student showed an improvement of 28 points while the group's average rose 13 points from 70 to 83. The report of the committee asserts that Mexican American students are placed apparently in remedial or special classes "solely on their inability to function in what to them is a foreign language." Thus, with respect to the I.Q. performance of Mexican American children, the educational system focuses on their spurious weakness rather than on their capabilities.

Until more precise instruments than I.Q. tests are developed, all attempts to assess the intelligence of Spanish-speaking Mexican Americans must be considered invalid and questionable. The simple-minded assumptions about the nature of intelligence, like the simple-minded assumptions about the nature of language, must be eliminated. The academic rejection of Mexican American pupils simply because they don't demonstrate the requisite ability they are supposed to, as determined by Anglo American scales of value, must yield to more promising contentions about human beings.

### *The Drop-Out Problem of Mexican Americans*

Mexican Americans have a higher drop-out rate than any other comparable group in the nation. One of the principal reasons for the high drop-out rate of Mexican Americans has been simply that Mexican youngsters tend to be over-age in grade levels. By the time they get to the point where they are able to function in English and do the required first grade work, they should chronologically be in the second grade. Thus, many Mexican American youngsters are one or two grades behind right up to the time they get to high school — if they make it *that* far.

There is no doubt that the high drop-out rate of Mexican Americans is directly linked to tests and measurements. Of the many Mexican American children who were found to be over-age in grade levels, in a study at Arizona State University, their median performance on most tests was about one standard deviation below the Anglo groups. The study also pointed out that on achievement tests, the apparent retardation varied from subject to subject but with progressive retardation in reading with advancing grades.

Mexican American children enter school not only at a measurable disadvantage but the disadvantage becomes more pronounced as they move up through the grades. With such factors reinforcing the "failure-syndrome" and "negative self-concept" little wonder that Mexican American youngsters leave school in such great numbers. Unfortunately, the Mexican American who drops out has also been the poor reader, the under-achiever, and the low performer who has had trouble in school right from the beginning.

The lack of emphasis on education in the home cannot be considered a significant factor in the high drop-out rate of Mexican Americans. Studies have concluded that there is little difference between Mexican American families and other families with respect to the emphasis on education. The conclusion can only be that the academic failure of Mexican Americans is the result of inadequate

school programs rather than the consequence of low achievement or aspiration levels on their part or their families'.

Without laboring the point, the evidence clearly demonstrates the extremely low educational level of Mexican Americans. In most counties of Colorado, for instance, over 50% and as high as 82% of Mexican Americans have no more than an 8th grade education. If one simply looks at the enrollment figures of Texas alone, the evidence is most distressing. Though there was some slight gain in Mexican American educational levels in Texas during the decade 1950 to 1960, the prospects for keeping Mexican American youths in school beyond the 8th grade anywhere in the Southwest are slim indeed.

In the five southwestern states of Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas, Mexican Americans complete three to four grades less than Anglos, except for Texas where the gap is six grades less. If Mexican Americans are to attain significant places in American society, their levels of educational attainment must be increased at a far more rapid pace than at present. Therefore, to keep Mexican American students in school, Federal funds to states and school districts must be increased and the regulations concerning their expenditure must be explicit. Schools must be encouraged to cooperate in Federal programs for Mexican Americans, programs which should relate to the needs of the learners, taking into account their assets, attitudes, skills, personalities, and background. A new breed of teacher is needed, sensitive to the diverse educational problems of Mexican Americans. At educational ground zero, Mexican American youngsters are being wiped out. The drop-out cycle of Mexican Americans can be broken, but it will take a lot of doing.

#### *Mexican Americans and College Enrollment: 1967*

Considering the high drop-out rate of Mexican American students, little wonder that there are so few of them in colleges. Some recent studies point out that only 2% of the California State College population is Mexican American. For example, of the 12,000 students at San Jose State College, only 200 are Mexican Americans. Of these less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  of 1% go on to graduate. And although Mexican Americans make up more than 14% of the public school population of California, less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  of 1% of them are enrolled in the 9 campuses of the University of California. For example, at UCLA there were only 300 Mexican American students last year out of a student population of 29,000; there were only 70 three years ago out of a student population of 25,000. Out of approximately 25,000 students



at the University of California at Berkeley in 1966 only 78 were Mexican Americans. These are shocking statistics considering the fact that there are over two million Mexican Americans in California alone. And despite the fact that Mexican Americans comprise almost half the population of New Mexico less than 8% of them attend the state universities. At the University of New Mexico, for instance, only 10% of the student population is Mexican American, yet they account for 15% of the freshman drop-out rate. And only 6% of them graduate.

In his testimony before a Senate Subcommittee, Vicente T. Ximenes, a member of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and former Chairman of the Inter-agency for Mexican American Affairs (which has all of a sudden developed a hang-up in the semantics of its name), pointed out that Mexican Americans in the Southwest are "historically and deliberately" denied the benefits of higher education. Out of 83,053 students enrolled at UCLA, the University of Colorado at Boulder, the University of Texas at Austin, and the Universities of Arizona and New Mexico for 1968-1969 the total enrollment of Spanish surnamed students in these colleges was only 3,370, considerably less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  of 1% of the total enrollment. Of these, only 600 were graduated in the Spring of 1969.

To Mexican Americans it seems almost incongruous that the American dream is so firmly rooted in education — a process which has rejected them so traumatically that they have come to feel like strangers in their own land. An accident of history and geography has created an ethnic isolation where literacy has become the exception rather than the rule. If education is truly the answer to the blight of poverty, then indeed there must be a new coalition between the forces of government and the forces of poverty to bring about the long overdue transformation of the American Southwest in terms of the American dream.

The education of Mexican Americans must involve a coalition of *all* facets of society, but especially between the community and the school. The quaint and antiquated concept of the college as the guardian of some universal wisdom belongs to an era and tradition of elitism that doesn't square with the concepts of American democracy. In the final analysis, it may be the colleges themselves which are impeding the progress of amelioration for American minority groups. The university can no longer just talk about equality, it must become the bastion of equality. It must, at the very least, make a percipient thrust in that direction. In a democracy, the university should be the last place for elitist doctrines. Yet it

is Newman's elitist and inegalitarian idea of a university which pervades the thinking of most college professors and administrators. The groves of academe must not be allowed to become the Tuileries of blue-blooded intellectual aristocrats. The solution to the educational problems of Mexican Americans should be no febrile attempt, but one borne of recognition and deliberation of the problems confronting American Society as it approaches the 21st century.

Some organizations like the Latin American Educational Foundation of Colorado award grants and loans to Spanish-named students, but the effort is meager compared to the vast numbers of Spanish-speaking Americans who need financial assistance to get to college and to stay there. Mexican American students from predominantly *barrio* and *colonia* backgrounds enter the almost exclusively middle-class Anglo American environment of colleges to their own detriment and eventual alienation.

### *Mexican Americans and the Future*

Most Mexican Americans see the need for bilingual education as the most pressing issue in Mexican American education, and the most challenging. But the promise of bilingual education has been more palliative than corrective. Though a number of schools were quick to establish model programs, the first fruits of bilingual education have been about as palpable as the fruit of the desert. Unfortunately, the concept of bilingual education has run the gamut of confusion and misunderstanding. Thoroughly lexocentric Anglos insist that "segregating children from homes where 'Spanglish' is spoken into classes taught in any other language but English would only widen this barrier of language, not bridge it."

But the aim of bilingual education is to create functionally literate individuals in both Spanish and English by capitalizing on the linguistic skills the Spanish-speaker already has. It calls for new teaching techniques; language arts programs must be redesigned to satisfy the needs of the children. The English language is introduced in the curriculum in small regulated doses at first, then in increasingly larger time units until the target language becomes the medium of instruction and the child's first language becomes simply a coequal linguistic tool.

One must concede the fact that the old "English only" concept has not worked to alleviate the mounting problems of Mexican American education. As Armando Rodriguez has pointed out, "Bilingualism must come to be accepted as a blessing — not a problem. It must be cultivated — not neglected."

For the first time, bilingual education articulates a Mexican American alternative to Mexican American problems. Mexican Americans are beginning to see their roles in American society not in terms of Anglo equivalents or alternatives but in terms of their own cultural identity and linguistic heritage. Bilingual education satisfies this alternative by stressing the multistrands of American heritage. Indeed, the American Southwest owes more of its past to Cabeza de Vaca than it does to the Pilgrims. Bilingual education will illuminate the dark side of the American historical moon by showing the relationship between Spanish-speaking Americans and their Spanish-speaking brethren of Spanish America and Spain as well as stressing the relationship between English-speaking Americans and England. Thus, bilingual education involves acquainting the Mexican American not only with the Anglo-American part of his political identity but with the significance of his Spanish American past. No, not denigrating that past as has been the case thus far, but elevating it to its proper historical level. For brown faced Mexican American children to see only white faces in their textbooks is to perpetuate a kind of academic colonialism that has hitherto created problems and Mexican Americans who were made to feel like marginal people, creatures in a cultural and linguistic no-man's land.

Unfortunately, bilingual education exists at the moment only in 14 model programs throughout the country. Also, the ratio of Mexican American teachers tapped into EPDA (Educational Professions Development Act) has been minimal, and of the Anglo teachers in the programs few are conversant in Spanish despite the fact that current estimates for bilingual teachers by 1970 place the need at 100,000 fluent in both Spanish and English. Even on the staffs of many EPDA Institutes, one finds at best only a token Mexican American. Of course, the directors of these institutes are primarily Anglos. This is what irritates many Mexican Americans, and why they see in the current Federal programs for Mexican Americans only educational boondoggles. For example, it seems strange that the 28 Mexican American youngsters from a San Antonio elementary school who were selected for a bilingual demonstration program for the New York City Board of Education in its MNYE-TV studios were herded there by an Anglo teacher. Less palatable is the fact that the director of the Bilingual Education Program of the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory is not a bilingual Mexican American.

Mexican Americans wonder how these Anglos, who have been no more successful thus far with the old programs, are going to be any more successful with new programs. Interestingly enough, these Anglo educators account for the low performance norms of Mexican American children in the model bilingual programs by pointing to the child's poor "socio-economic background," which differs tremendously from that of middle-class Anglo-Saxon pupils for whom the norms are set.

The rejoinder to any criticism is that Mexican American pupils "who do *not* participate" in the program do considerably worse on standardized achievement tests than those who do take part."

Mexican Americans are not saying that *only* Mexican Americans can teach Mexican Americans. On the contrary, they are saying that *bilingual* Mexican American or Anglo American teachers represent a *better* approach to filling the teacher needs of bilingual education. However, since Mexican American children need Mexican American models in their classrooms, it makes good sense to utilize bilingual Mexican American teachers. It goes without saying, of course, that the success of bilingual education depends on the teacher, whether Mexican American or Anglo.

The time to look upon the Mexican American as the poor, uneducated, tortilla-eating peon who is a victim of some fate stemming from Quetzalcoat's disapproval is over. Mexican Americans are descendants of a proud race. As Americans they deserve their rightful place in the American sun.

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# El Mago

RONALD ARIAS

Luisa's father called him *el curandero*. Sally's mother called him an unfortunate. The girls simply called him El Mago.

There was no odor of age about him, though he was older than the girls could imagine, only the smell of papered hairless skin, it seemed. He was squat, fat and had nicotine stains on one hand. Luisa remembered he had a harsh brittle cough; years later she thought his chest was like an empty milk carton filled with tiny bone particles.

This Sunday, like many Sundays before, the two girls sat fidgeting in their blue corduroy jumpers and plain white blouses, just behind the nuns, listening to words about Christ and God and the Virgin and so many saints they would never keep count, sat watching a fly rub together what looked like its hands, watching the sleepy altar boy with his shoelaces untied, sat playing silent games with their fingers and feet, folding and unfolding catechism pamphlets, waiting, finally tiring, and waiting some more. They had gone to Mass by themselves. Their parents, who were at home asleep or making perfunctory love, would attend later in the day.

Luisa and Sally had been best friends since third grade, and often told strangers they were twins, even though Luisa was darker and smaller, Sally being rounder and the "huera." The first thing El Mago told them was that they weren't twins. He said it in a friendly way, not trying to hurt, and told them it was good to play sisters.

El Mago, whose clients called him Don Noriega, lived alone in a shabby-looking wooden house halfway up a steep hill overlooking the old streetcar line to Glendale. The community knew him since two generations back when he arrived from an obscure town in northern Durango. A hypnotist, a soothsayer and doctor of sorts, he rarely left his house, receiving payment usually in the form of food or small gifts. Around the sides of his house and in back he grew all the herbs, spices and exotic plants he needed for his cures. His living — or reception — room was lavishly decorated with thick Moroccan rugs, plaster sphinxes, pictures and figurines from pre-Colombian cultures, soft plushy chairs and odd-shaped lamps. On one side was a water-filled glass tank with tiny, slender

fish from the Amazon. On the other side were two cages of birds from New Guinea and the rainforests of Panama. An adjoining room was lined, and divided, with filled bookcases.

Luisa and Sally met him the time they accompanied Sally's grandmother on a visit about her migraines and pains in her vesículas. Don Noriega, instead of immediately attending to business, devoted a few minutes to the girls. He overcame their shyness by giving them each a piece of biznaga candy, and then in a raspy voice told them not to worry about breaking things in the house. He insisted they explore whatever attracted their curiosity. When Luisa, the more awkward of the two girls, tipped over a metal stand with zodiac charts on it, Don Noriega helped her replace the stand. Gently and with a wink, he said all things can be repaired. It's the damage here, and he pointed over his heart, that cannot be fixed. Then he sat down to chat with the old woman, and the girls were left to their own.

After standing fascinated before the tank of colored fish, the girls moved on to another room which was dimly lighted, cluttered with boxes and books, and saturated with a strange incense. Sally's grandmother could be heard laughing in the other room. The girls began poking around, running their fingers across dusty surfaces, looking into corners. With an innocent curiosity they held the tiny statues of half-men and animals which they had taken timidly from the shelves.

It wasn't long before Sally shrieked and came running out with a terrified look on her face.

"Mama! Un hombre muerto, muerto de a tiro!" she screamed.

Puzzled, the old woman looked to Don Noriega for an explanation. He sat back in his deep chair, and after an unhurried draw on his cigarette, told Sally and her grandmother that it was a fake mummy of a boy, not even a man. He gingerly explained what a mummy was and why people long ago used to preserve bodies. It was as a reminder, he said, for the dead must leave something behind to remind the living of those once known and loved.

But the old woman, with Sally still trembling in her arms, was set on leaving. Don Noriega went into the other room to tell Luisa she would have to go too, and that they were waiting for her. He found her standing beside a desk tinkering with the beads on the taut wires of a small box-like instrument. In a corner, on the other side of the room, was the opened mummy case propped up against the wall. Don Noriega told Luisa she would have to go, but that she could come another day. He promised to play music for her on the little instrument.

She raised her eyes. "Why do you have so many funny-looking things?" she asked.

Don Noriega looked down at her wonder-filled face. Luisa could see the thin lines deepen at the corners of his mouth, his eyes become friendlier. "If you like these things," he said, "why do you ask?"

At the door the old woman was still comforting Sally, who now eyed Don Noriega the way she might watch some unpredictable ogre. Luisa, biting her lips in thought, waved goodbye to him from the sidewalk.

When the story of the mummy was told, the girls' parents forbid them ever to visit Don Noriega again.

For months afterward Luisa was torn between wanting to see him and not wanting to disobey her parents. The girls had to pass by Don Noriega's street every Sunday after Mass, but Luisa never told Sally about her private wish. Walking along the weeded-over streetcar tracks, Sally would invariably poke fun at "that crazy old mago who slept with mummies and who was seen at night flying around with one of his birds." Luisa always kept silent, not knowing what to say about such things.

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As usual, this Sunday the girls left the church eager for daylight and make-believe games along the pass through the hills on their way home. But more than that, today Luisa had firmly made up her mind. She would visit Don Noriega. When they approached the street on which he lived she would simply say goodbye to Sally and leave. Unconsciously she somehow felt that seeing him was worth the risk of a strapping from her father's belt.

"Luisa! You'll get in trouble," Sally warned. "What d'you want to see that old guy for?"

"Nothing will happen if you don't tell," Luisa replied calmly.

"Aren't you scared?"

Luisa looked down at the gravel between the track ties, her mind pulsing with excitement. "No," she said, trying to sound casual. "He even asked me to come back."

"Oh, Luisa, I wouldn't do that," Sally said, clutching her hands together.

"Go ahead and tell," Luisa challenged. "I won't get mad." She started up the hill. "Go on, Sally. Don't wait for me."

Sally stood watching her friend climb the long sidewalk and turn at Don Noriega's house.

The place was cluttered with scattered and charred boards, cans, pieces of cloth, blackened books, metal, chairs and sofas exuding tufts of wool, bottles and jars with dried dead plants. The front door was boarded closed, as were the broken windows to each side. Luisa looked like a waif standing in front of a ruined dream. She felt limp and bewildered, not yet sensing the numbness of death within the paint-peeled walls.

She stepped around a marble lamp base and picked her way along the side of the house to the rear. There was no back door, only a blackened doorway. She knocked softly, almost unheard, on the frame. Into the quiet she called hello. The darkness in there was still. After a moment, a wheezing brittle voice, filled with entreaty, came from within. Luisa hesitated, then stepped in. She was careful not to trip, though she bumped into strange objects at every turn, going from room to room, cautiously looking into every corner and closet. A painting fell down, a plaster statue tipped over. She fought to control her fear. In the front room, behind the door to the street, she saw the waterfilled fish tank. The little creatures were still there, floating on the surface. Luisa pursed her lips. With her forefinger she pushed one of the slivers and it slipped past the others, bumping into the side of the tank.

In the silence she heard a cough. The floorboards creaked as she stepped through the room where the mummy was, now resting on the floor. She went into the hallway, which was pierced with soft light through holes between the skeletal roof timbers. There, in the first room to the left, sat Don Noriega. He was on the edge of a metal cot which had no mattress. Luisa stood in the doorway, unable to speak but trying to smile.

"Siéntate, niña," he said and patted the space next to him on the cot. He had been waiting for her, Luisa thought, and would play that strange instrument. Afterward she would kiss him just above his whiskery eyebrows, saying, or not saying, thank you. He would ask her how things had been with her, and she would say fine. She would be as friendly and bright as possible. Maybe she could cheer him and make him forget about the house.

Now she moved toward the cot and sat down. A quiet music came from the delicate box beside her on the cot. The sunlight filtered in, and the notes from the strings seemed to dance and slip and twine themselves around the pale white rays in short bursts of joy, in what Don Noriega, she thought, might have felt had he played. She sat for a long while listening to the music.



But there was another voice, a human one, calling her faintly. I have to go now, she whispered, sitting straight all of a sudden, her small amber eyes losing that vision of awe. For a moment she could not move. Something held her back, something weighed in her chest and throat, and Luisa began to cry. The blurred image before her placed the small box lightly in her open hands.

In the hallway Luisa groped toward the back porch. The smell of incense and spices was strong. The hot autumn wind blew through the house like a warm voice wiping dry her moist skin.

Sally was out front, hands on hips, calling Luisa. Luisa came from around back, stepping over the mess on the ground and holding a black piece of wood in her hands, two metal strings dangling.

"What's that?" Sally demanded impatiently.

Luisa seemed surprised. "What's what?"

"That thing, what you got in your hand."

"Oh this . . ." and she held it up for Sally to inspect. "A present."

"A what?"

"A present I picked up."

"Oh." Sally moved her eyes to the house. "Looks like his place burned down. What d'you find inside?"

"Just this," Luisa said, gazing blankly at the house.

"What d'you want that for?"

Luisa pulled a wire loose and after a pause seemed to speak to herself. "Nothing, I guess. It's no good anymore," and knelt down to place it on the ground, remembering that after all it was not her heart she was laying down, as Don Noriega might say. It was only a thing, a piece of charred wood.

"Come on!" Sally whined. "Place gives me the creeps."

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RONALD F. ARIAS was born in Los Angeles in 1941. He attended the University of California at Los Angeles, and graduated with a degree in Spanish and Journalism. Since then he has been engaged in newspaper work in Los Angeles, Buenos Aires, Argentina, and Caracas, Venezuela. Presently he is a writer/editor with the Inter-American Development Bank, and he lives in Washington, D.C.

# Frederick H. Candelaria

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## Poetry

### RODEO

Unused to lakes,  
unless mirages,  
the bronzed cowboy  
awkwardly saddled  
his speedboat,  
and mounted on more  
horsepower than ever,  
he threw a perfect loop  
to his water-skiing lady  
and lassoed her skillfully  
once and for all  
around her pretty neck.

### TOURING TEXAS TALL TALE FROM LBJ COUNTRY

There once was a little crooked man  
who lived very happily ever after  
in his absolutely crooked environment.

But in Texas everything's as straight  
as an arrow – Honest Injun! –  
and as fast as the gun that won the West.

Why, even the highway, remembering Euclid,  
runs forever as fast & as straight as it can  
out of Texas.

FREDERICK H. CANDELARIA was born in El Paso, Texas. Presently Mr. Candelaria is living in Vancouver, Canada. His works have appeared in other journals among which are included the NORTHWEST REVIEW, TRACE, and TRI-QUARTERLY.

In this ancient village  
 the teak and chromium bank  
 is an anachronism  
 calculating capital losses,  
 past expenditures, and uncertain future gains  
 in devalued pesetas.

While across the gypsy street,  
 behind a broken balcony  
 twisting out of wrought iron  
 a dark guitar and intricate Spanish lace  
 embracing in cadenzas of *cante jondo*  
 account for everything

## BORDER INCIDENT

“*¡Esas dos!* – Those two!”  
 said the sweating little *jefe*,  
 fat with graft and garlic,  
 his ivory white & perfect teeth  
 resplendent with lust  
 lighting his refried bean-brown face  
 as spirits of dispossessed Indians  
 possessed him and came out  
 in his corn-fed grin turned leer  
 when two half-spayed *gringas*  
 suntanned in tight shorts  
 half-strayed immodestly  
 into his red-light labyrinth.

After diplomatic rapes  
 in lieu of fines  
 and as pre-payment  
 for safe-conduct to the border,  
 the *caballeros*, now off duty,  
 help the curioed  
 but no longer curious ladies  
 politely & with dazzling smiles  
 across the dry bed  
 of the grand river boundary  
 that separates  
 the good neighbors.

# Summer of My Rose

FRANCISCO O. BURRUEL

## I

The Rubaiyat's a pool of ancient prose  
Which probes within a man's most inner soul  
When Omar flung his Eastern Star . . .  
It came as ointment to my earthly scars

## II

A coward's shadow dark with shame  
In Fate's Left Hand was justly chained  
Thus neither did I hear empathic tones  
Within my desolate cavern weep

## III

Before I read the Master's prose  
Existence was a curse of human mores  
And only, yes, I only saw —  
The silent movement of the poet's lips

## IV

To search . . . in longing I've returned  
Chastised an outcast into walls retired  
For woe, the Leper's Hand I never knew its meant  
In time, I've come to recognize its full intent

## V

My Garden's here today, tomorrow shall be gone  
And like the arrow, I must penetrate the rose  
While some may know where Jamshyd hid his cup  
Forgive me, I'm still looking for the Seventh spot

## VI

Divine and subtle Omar's rhymes . . .  
Reveal the myst'ries of our Omnipresent skies  
To know the meaning of this sacred lore  
Brings one out . . . of this perpetual human bore

## VII

"Come fill my guilt corroded heart  
Which knowing not the secret sounds  
May cause my sleeper's garment  
To this passing Winter fling . . .

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*This piece of work was written while sitting in a cell on the fifth tier, South Block at San Quentin Prison. I suppose this can be called an experimental piece of work since it was the one that really got me interested in writing. The year was 1967. Francisco O. Burruel*

VIII

Please . . . let the petals of my rose unfold  
And let my Ignorance to nothing flee  
MASTER! May I taste  
THE SUMMER OF MY ROSE?

IX

Thee were a Wizard old Khayyam  
Who told of kings and worldly princes  
And heroes . . . unknown warrior were thy works  
Supremely whispered to the literary winds

X

For lo, One Consciousness is life  
Though be from peasant Christians bred  
Somehow, I thought that I . . .  
In separateness was lost

XI

At peace at last, my long sought light  
So useless were those many lies  
To understand the Cosmic mystic road  
As I'm embraced in our Eternal Fold

XII

Adrift was I in turbulent seas  
Methinks that soon my ocean shall be calm  
Though still, the Philistines  
Insist to wave their idle cash in palm

XIII

I've longed to see the rose and how she blows  
As tickling, teasing, the world she sows  
And as her Royal tassle breaks —  
I see the treasures that the world rakes

XIV

I am my hope . . . this breath is mine  
The petals of a rose so soft and fine  
While sunshine radiates on this imperfect face  
Unseen . . . the rose extends its lovely grace

XV

For I have handled lovingly my thoughts  
And heaved them to the depths of intellectual pain  
A brilliant glow of light was mine  
For as I sow . . . so shall I reap again

XVI

Could I, a prisoner within —  
Who thought . . . barred must the doorways be  
Survive to see this very day  
While others still confuse them as two separate ways

## XVII

Dear Omar . . . still the Lion and the Lizard creep  
 Among the domes where modern rulers glory deep  
 While masses . . . hunger in disguise protest  
 They cry and plead . . . but still the rulers sleep

## XVIII

Yes, never flowed so red the rose  
 But once again a nation's Caesar has unjustly bled  
 Majestically he laid his brut'ly shattered crown  
 Upon his woman's soft, pink petaled gown

## XIX

And he, who struck the gentle rose  
 Will come to see the summer of his rose  
 And tho — I too must thread upon it light  
 Who knows from whose demented mind it bred

## XX

"Oh spare me cupfuls of thy Persian wine  
 Erase my doubts today . . .  
 Tomorrow I shall hope to be  
 With you dear master, in the seven thousand year

## XXI

My mate, an early love . . .  
 Remains a thorn  
 A tear that's caught within my eye  
 One faint melodious sobbing cry

## XXII

For him who took my marital vows  
 Receive a scoundrel's envy now  
 I'll meet you both beyond this cosmic screen  
 For now I know the secret of the nuptial ring

## XXIII

You say, make much of what is yet to be  
 For then . . . we too must meet the Potter's clay  
 As secretly he churns his mud —  
 And sings inaudibly, the end is not . . .

## XXIV

Prepare today, ye all who know  
 The sea of light in which tomorrow glows  
 Where voices from the deep reveal —  
 Our reward lays in this cosmic seal

## XXV

All temples of the priestly schools  
 Of God Supreme are but his tools  
 But frightened people full of hate  
 Pay no attention to their holy state

XXVI

So as I spin – this yarn unravels  
and leaves this ancient world on her travels  
My love must flow, while some may spite  
The soul, yes, of unholy thinking dies

XXVII

When as a yearling I did hear  
Man's challenge to a Nature much supreme  
And since – the battle roars forever more  
Contently, I assume my earthly role

XXVIII

Experience is my justly crown  
In the years of prison I have found  
From Omar's stone a harvest did I reap  
I read and smiled when I reached the end

XXIX

Unto my life and daring why  
For now my light is willy-nilly glowing  
My journey through this globe not waste  
The Rubiyat's a well – forever flowing

XXX

I swear, I'll always question where I stand  
For now I know the secret of the Universal plan  
I drinketh now my thirtieth cup of wine  
Quatrains from Omar's Persian vines

XXXI

Ah yes, most secretive Khayyam  
I too must need to seek the Seventh Gate  
Unravelling knots still line to Saturn's throne  
As your disciple, I must play this unavailing role

XXXII

The keys are covered with the flesh  
The veil – it still guards unhidden doors  
A voice within pled with my self divided me  
T'was my eleventh hour on the stormy sea

XXXIII

When to my presence I did cry  
How bright shines Omar's shrine  
His follower I, am but one pebble in the well  
But then, the coarsest pebble too can shine

XXXIV

Return have I, unto my chosen mold  
As Omar's poem has shared its precious gold  
Thus verse for verse, it questioned, "Do you live?"  
Then seek, for once re-born, immortal shall you be

## XXXV

The stone, though like an outlaw hides  
 Bold like a sage it speaks, its meaning clear  
 Oh joyous heart, the warm and ancient wine was bliss  
 Pray, I do wonder, which next lover it shall kiss

## XXXVI

T'was in San Quentin's prison one interval in time  
 I witnessed Omar's stone across the heavens fly  
 And with it came forgotten tips of esoteric slys  
 Inebriating and exotic Persian wines

## XXXVII

My cup is full, "Forgive me, have I mentioned this before?"  
 I hope this helps unfold the petals of your rose  
 You are the looking glass of yesterday –  
 Tomorrow patiently awaits, dare not to tarry anymore

## XXXVIII

How drab the moments of inferior thought  
 Then flows the nectar of the pebbled well  
 And we, the thoughts of someone's love  
 Will find tomorrow rings mysteriously of bells

## XXXIX

So listen, all thee who are old and weary  
 What matters this or that, a fob on earthly drearys  
 Come drink with me from Omar's fruitful vines  
 Drink, and your breath becomes eternally divine

## XL

Please, may I tell you of my useless flight?  
 In youth, I was a gunman edging for a fight  
 Eight years ago, the courts did deal a heavy blow  
 I lonely, took the rebels way in tow

## XLI

What was, was not, Justice did define  
 That which is up, is also down. Boy! Did I whine  
 And yet, for sure I knew the moral reason why  
 For deep within was something that was mine

## XLII

Dawn came within, my cavern glowed  
 And flung a shooting star in verseful flows  
 A message on its tail it bore . . .  
 And bid me meditate upon its vaped core

## XLIII

This poem concealed in light a truth  
 Who knows, WHAT – WHY the world is confused  
 Yes, blessed was the poet in his skill  
 He gave the world such delightful thrills



XLIV

The Omnipotent Lord still reigns  
Despite the heaving hoards of lust and vice  
And that which did invade my earthly form  
He slew with empathy and not with scorn

XLV

Oh heed me, those who gnash their teeth and grind  
There really is no mystery . . . it's all mind  
So in the corner of your chosen role  
Be natural, my dear friend . . . HIS WILL IS DONE!

XLVI

For here and there and everywhere  
Prepares the Great Magician stairs  
For animated dolls who dangle on his hand  
And we the souls must climb, only the body dies

XLVII

So if you think philosophy is zest  
T'will only lead you on a Quandor's quest  
Rejoice, this while of earthly breath  
You're but a cell of that which is the very best

XLVIII

His rose blows gently down the worldly shores  
For novices to drink full from his vineyard groves  
And if those mystic cups should touch your lips  
Drink deep, his aim is true and wise

XLIX

Our multitude of thoughts our chessmen be  
With men and places they can play with ease  
They come . . . they go, they live and then they fly  
But only flesh must rot . . . pure thought survives

L

The stage we set . . . we set alone  
A moral right . . . a wrong? Who knows?  
For like a maze he spun out thoughts  
He chose you well – you see he knows!

LI

Eternity is but one continual thought  
The secret which the SPHINX has sought  
Our hist'ry is our rents and guilty fies  
Until we've learned in whom we live and sigh

LII

Inconceivable is life, and being born  
We live . . . and all the rituals man divines  
Will never take us back to change the seal  
Nor promises erase a touch of it

## LIII

Before my life was nothing true  
 From nothing I will build my due  
 Thus, from this day . . . I know  
 When is the summer of my rose to bloom

## LIV

Why tell thee this, when ever since the start  
 Repeats the discontentment of the flocks  
 When globes of fire, he then flung to space  
 This earth became his Cosmic Stage —

## LV

Thus Omar's poem has struck a note  
 As wanderers we must find the scarlet rose  
 When from a baser man cast he a die —  
 Unlocking doors within — JUST TRY!

## LVI

How into this snakepit did I fall?  
 Unconscious was the wish that I should crawl  
 I hope upon my future round —  
 You will have found the way which I propound

## LVII

Oh peaceful skies and light so true  
 Love's fire burns . . . but evil may consume me still  
 A flash . . . a tiny spark —  
 And then your temple burns within the dark

## LVIII

And you who call yourselves the self-made lot  
 "You're but a part of this the GREATEST PLOT!  
 Is so-called sin truly part of man  
 The MASTER would have never thought the plan

## LIX

And here where yon night walls do hold me close  
 I sit in my cell where I never see a rose  
 Here in this prison house of flesh . . . I dwell  
 Along with a world housed in mortal shells

## LX

Though strange it seems to tell of them  
 These souls do speak of God while others curse  
 The seekers ask, "Pray, who devised this plot?  
 Why must I be a human, why a clod?"

## LXI

Then cries another, "Is it all a dream?  
 My freedom as a choice has never been?  
 Now he, who placed this carcass on my soul  
 Divined that as I reap — so must I sow?"

LXII

“Why surely you’re a foolish man,” another said  
Who’d soil the chalice whence his father drank?  
Shall he who is the sacred ghost –  
Let perverts in their rage destroy?”

LXIII

As silence ruled, another wanderer spoke  
He was an outcast, but a saintly soul  
“Sire, know they not they live within the perfect being?  
That he would not create imperfect fiends?”

LXIV

They say that man of higher school do tell  
Though credulity is a task –  
As masqueradors all, we must partake our tasks in hell  
In essence we are good, so the beginning tells

LXV

Then said another in one solid breath  
Our conscious minds must free themselves  
From these – Horrid human walls  
Ah . . . for a taste of that forbidden well

LXVI

The people all must have their say  
Until reflection points their chosen ways  
So while they cheat each other for a price  
I understood my knowledge would suffice

LXVII

Such is the fruit the Eastern Star provides  
Where weeds hung dry . . . now hangs a blooming rose  
Wish I . . . the world on its Hist’ries scroll  
Inscribe a stanza of this poem’s cry

LXVIII

So that a simple epitaph may cause  
The people to reflect upon a convict’s clause  
And that each person journeying past  
May know that peace, as yet, has not been lost

LXIX

Thus all the earthly Gods which I pursued  
A blemish in my mortal eye . . . I bid adieu  
For now man’s honor I desire most . . .  
It all belongs to him . . . THE HOLY HOST!

LXX

How often have we sworn before  
As walking shadows in the search of soul  
And then upon the twilight of our years, we find  
The Summer of the Rose was always near

## LXXI

Delusions are — ungracious thieves  
 And man desires to seek divine relief  
 So now I know what Omar meant to tell  
 So precious that, indeed, he hid so well

## LXXII

How peaceful is the summer of my rose  
 A drop of literary dew to drink in my repose  
 The meanings which need never might have been  
 At last, like Omar, I've become a human being

## LXXIII

If I, with magic pen could scribe  
 The fragrance of the rose you would suspire  
 All broken souls would mend . . . and then?  
 A scattered world would . . . to its own retire

## LXXIV

Dear Omar, your literary vines shall never dry  
 The moon your eyes perceived is here again  
 And often rising — it does seek thee out  
 "I wonder if that stranger could be thee?"

## LXXV

If you thirst for understanding  
 Seek the meaning of this prose  
 Taste the vintage of pure thought  
 Read the Summer of My Rose

✓   ✓   ✓

FRANCISCO O. BURRUEL, is presently a vocational counselor for Trabajadores Adelante in Salinas, California.

# Book Review

CHICANO. By Richard Vasquez. Doubleday & Company, Inc. Garden City, New York. (376 pages) \$6.95

Reviewed by HERMINIO RIOS

Current Mexican-American intellectual thought insists on self-definition, self-determination, and mental emancipation. Similarly, present Mexican-American artistic expression represents a decisive rupture from traditional Anglo-American and European artistic concepts. And, even in its incipient stages, the themes are apparent; its bold, new images are undeniable; its techniques are innovative and effective, and the "Chicaneness" of its themes and imagery are unquestionable.

In art, Esteban Villa embodies the creation of images and the interpretation of Chicano themes. For example, the Mexican-American Art Liberation Front is expressing the Mexican-American reality in the United States, and the expression of that reality demands the creation of new images and the discovery of new symbols. (See *El Grito*, Vol. II, No. 3, an issue dedicated to "the ever-present and abundant number of Mexican-American artists".)

In the literary field prose and poetry, form and content, have definite Mexican-American characteristics. Syntax is a manifestation of form, or how content is expressed. And it is the syntactical flexibility that our writers are forcing upon the language systems of Spanish and English, as evidenced by the fragmentation and linking of syntagmas of both languages and the subsequent result of a macaronic sentence gravid with dual images, that is an indelible Mexican-American stylistic innovation. This device, when practiced by a sensitive artist, has a definite aesthetic function. When Alurista writes: "Mis ojos hinchados/ flooded with lagrimas de bronce . . ./"<sup>1</sup> the tension and intensity that "flooded" acquires as it fills a linguistic slot within a foreign syntactical structure gives this image an expressive value that it would not have had without this syntactical intrusion. Instead of a mere "flood," Alurista creates a deluge, a deluge of "lágrimas de bronce." And they are "lágrimas de bronce" because Alurista writes about a bronze people; he feels the suffering of his bronze people. Further, the syntactical intrusion of "flooded" intensifies the metaphor "lágrimas de bronce" and makes us feel the immensity of the suffering infinitely more acutely.

It is in the light of contemporary Mexican-American thought and artistic expression, reflecting a demand for a Mexican-American perspective, that I comment on *Chicano*, a novel by Richard Vásquez.

*Chicano*, to a large extent, is the *literary reflection of past and present Anglo-American sociological and anthropological cultural-mystical misinterpretation of the Mexican-American*, coupled with an over-abundance of Mexican-American stereotypic characters as created by such Anglo-American writers as O. Henry, Jeremiah Clemens, Susan Magoffin, Bret Harte, John Steinbeck, ad infinitum.

Structurally, the novel is divided into two main parts, and basically we have two separate stories. The first part encompasses two generations of the Sandoval family and 18 years or so of the children of the third generation. The second part is really the story of David Stiver and Mariana Sandoval.

The basic story line is simple, and follows a straight chronology of events. The only technical recourse of note is the rapid cinematographic narrative shift, but this technique is not new.

The first part deals with the train wreck that brings Hector Sandoval to Agua Clara, a village in northern México. Hector decides to remain in Agua Clara where he marries Lita, a girl who does not love him, but simply follows the dictates of her father to marry Hector. Hector and Lita have three children: Neftali, Jilda, and Hortencia. At the age of 14 Neftali is conscripted by passing federal troops, but deserts immediately. This impels Hector to migrate to the United States. The family arrives in California where it is relegated to a life of poverty among California crop harvesters. All possible degradations befall the Sandoval family. Jilda and Hortencia are forced into prostitution. Hector dies of a ruptured ulcer brought about by excessive drinking. The final blow to the disintegrating family unit is the arrival of Eduardo, Lita's childhood sweetheart who, upon learning of Hector's death, comes to take Lita back to Agua Clara.

From this point on the life of Neftali comes into central focus. Neftali, now alone, settles in *Rabbit* Town where he marries Alicia. The couple is *prolific*. And Neftali is all that William Madsen, the anthropologist, would expect. He is a dominant patriarch who practices machismo to its maximum.

But as Neftali fades from the picture, his daughter Angelina and his son Pedro gain center stage. Angie (Angelina) breaks away from the "nuclear family," as William Madsen would put it, and seeks her fortune in Los Angeles. In Los Angeles Angie meets and marries Julio Salazar, with whom Celia Heller, the Hunter College sociologist, would have had a field day, for he is an opportunistic, pimping, dope-peddling, wife-beating, self-styled Don Juan.

Pedro returns from the war and settles in Los Angeles, with the help of Angie and Julio. Pedro marries Minerva. He becomes a highly skilled and highly paid cement finisher, thanks to Old Tony who teaches him

the tricks of the trade. Pedro and Minerva have two children: Sammy and Mariana. Pedro's financial success encourages him to undertake a frustrated attempt at living in an Anglo-American middle class neighborhood, but the rebuffs he receives from his neighbors send him back to East Los Angeles. In East Los Angeles Pedro's children undergo all the frustration and suffer all the humiliations that a hostile school system can inflict upon culturally *different* individuals.

The story line of the second part, like the first, is also simple. Mariana meets David Stiver, a university student, who has come to the Sandoval home under the pretext of conducting a sociological study of Sammy and Mariana. He is supposedly concerned with the problem of school dropouts. Gradually Stiver abandons all pretenses of conducting a study and concentrates on attracting Mariana. They fall in love. Mariana gives herself to him and becomes pregnant. Cultural and social class differences impede any consideration of marriage. Mariana consents to an abortion and dies as a result of it. *Her dying words clear John Stiver of any complicity.*

It is in the second part that the full impact of the two cultures in collision, as symbolized by David Stiver and Mariana Sandoval, is felt, and so forceful is the impact that it results in the death of Mariana. Symbolically, the death of Mariana is but a logical conclusion of the basic theme of this novel — *unidirectional social change with the ultimate annihilation of the non-conforming minority culture.*

The stereotypic sketching of characters employed by the author reinforces the basic underlying theme of unidirectional change, with no middle ground. In this novel the outstanding physical attributes of the men, who are otherwise faceless, is the mustache. The initial sketch of Hector Sandoval in the opening scene draws our attention because, with minor variations, the men in the novel share the same attributes. Hector Sandoval "was fat, wore greasy overalls, as did his companions, *had an enormous mustache* and hair almost covered his ears."<sup>2</sup> For Guzmán, the revolutionary, "a wide straw sombrero added heft to his short, stocky body, but did not hide his hair, which came just below his ears and *met his great mustache* and full beard."<sup>3</sup> And the mustache game continues. "At least a hundred and fifty men were gathered at the corner . . . Most wore hats, and there were many sombreros among them, *and all had large mustachios and talked Spanish.*"<sup>4</sup> (Emphasis mine.) There is only one Mexican-American in the entire novel who appears to be socially acceptable to the Anglo-Americans. He is Johnny Rojas. And wouldn't you know it. "His hair was short and businesslike, and *he wore no mustache.*"<sup>5</sup>

And, what does a man with a mustache eat? Chili, of course. As the author of *Chicano* writes ". . . his mother prepared chili and corn for breakfast . . . The younger children awoke hungry, and all ate outside, scooping chili with tortillas."<sup>6</sup> "The familiar smells that smote Julio's nostrils as he entered were sweat, drink and chili."<sup>7</sup> "A thin woman . . .

stirred chili, seasoned a huge pot of boiling beans. . . .”<sup>8</sup> “That night, after Minnie had read the letter to Pete as he sat soaking up the remaining chili on his plate with a piece of tortilla,”<sup>9</sup> etc.

In *Chicano*, the biased sociological observer gains predominance over the creator of fiction. In this respect, the concept of the “traditional culture” figures prominently. Thus, Julio’s behavior is explained, not in terms of interacting social forces, but in terms of his “traditional culture.”

“Julie’s concept of marriage was not a new one. He believed every attention should be showered on a potential mistress or fiancée. But once married, that was all over. The complete patriarchy had existed among his — and her — people for many generations, and Julie saw nothing wrong with it.”<sup>10</sup>

In the complete patriarchy that Neftali practices “The eldest son would be second in command in the family. He would be consulted (and only he) concerning any plans regarding building, moving or the acquisition of anything material. He would inherit, regardless of the needs of any of the other siblings. If the family could afford only one education, or only one of anything advantageous, it would be his. This was a custom, a way of life which the family accepted without question. . . .”<sup>11</sup>

It is little wonder that Mariana explains away her actions in terms of “traditional culture” — “. . . it’s kind of a custom to believe, that when a girl gets pregnant it is only her fault. Every man has the right to try to seduce every girl he can. Among us . . . my people, an illegitimate child is another kid to have around.”<sup>12</sup>

The “traditional culture” game is a soothing intellectual masturbation exercise that the Anglo American social scientists have indulged in excessively because it relieves them of any complicity in the actions and conditions of minority groups. Mariana’s pregnancy is symbolic of this. The fault lies with her traditional culture. David the Anglo is spared any complicity.

In conclusion, let it be said that undoubtedly Richard Vásquez feels intensely the problems of his people. But perhaps he tried to say too much in one book, and the result is an index of sociological observations that are incongruent with current Mexican-American thought. Consequently, his novel is composed from a number of *stock characters that have been borrowed from Anglo-American literature.*



NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Alurista. 1968. "The Poetry of Alurista" *El Grito*, Vol. II, No. 1, Quinto Sol Publications, Berkeley, California, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>Vasquez, Richard. 1970. *Chicano*, Doubleday and Company, Inc., Garden City, New York, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 217.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 123.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 312.

HERMINO RIOS was born in Mexico. He has resided and worked in Fresno, and other California cities. His experience has been very diverse, ranging from teaching in public schools to co-editor of CORAJE, the Tucson Chicano newspaper, to directing Chicano theater productions, to working in Huelga activities. During the summer of 1970 he will be teaching at La Raza Studies at the University of California at Berkeley. Presently he is attending the University of Arizona at Tucson for his doctorate in Spanish.

Edel Villagomez

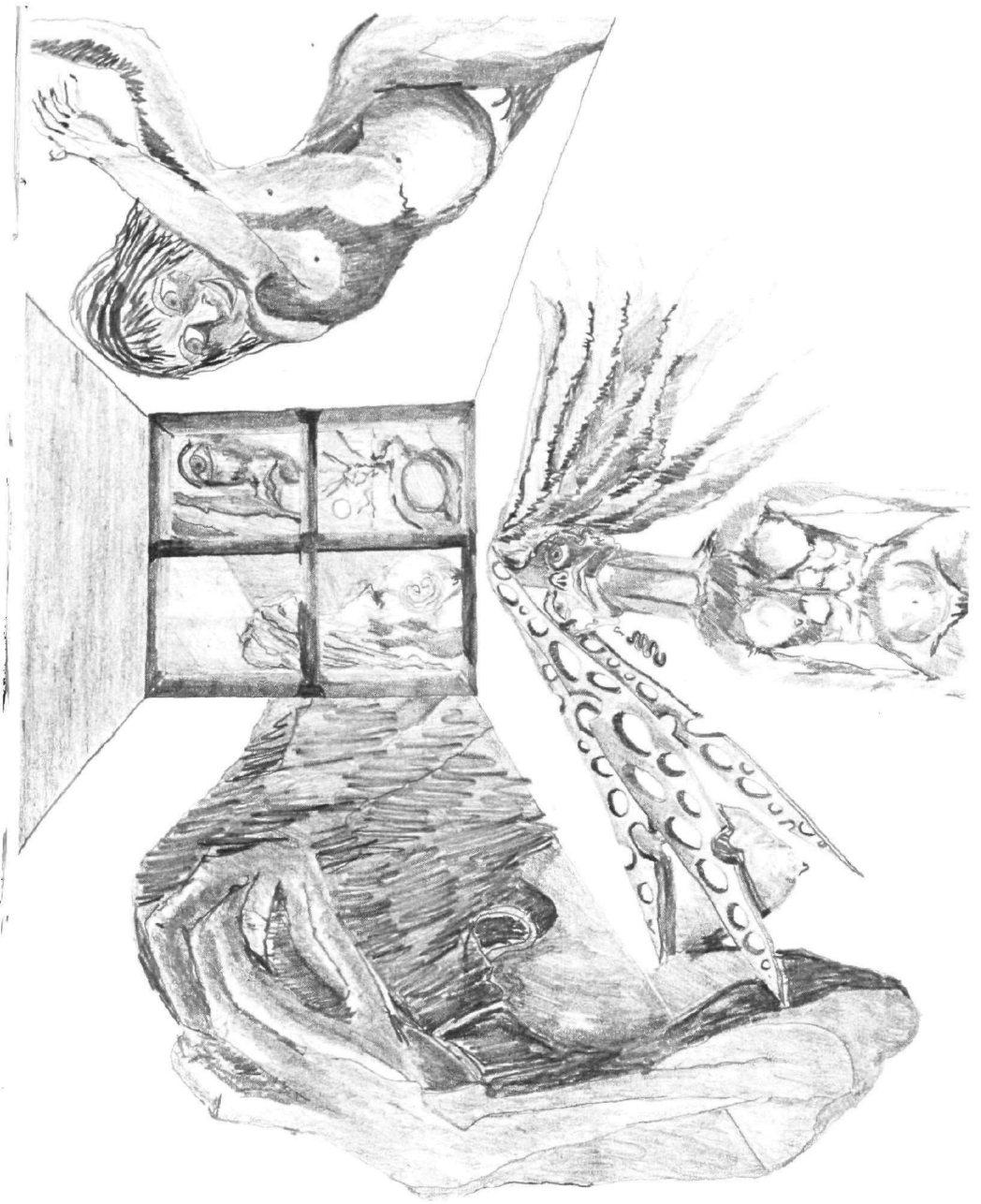
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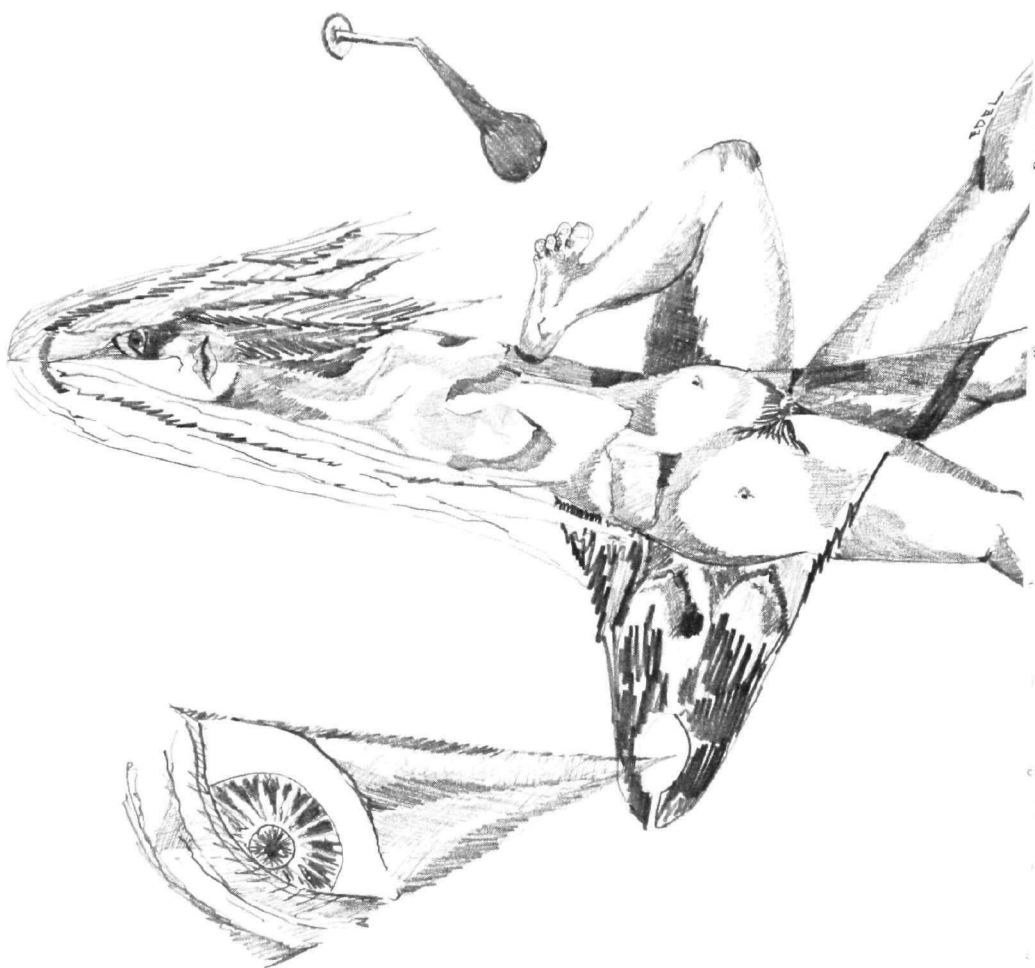
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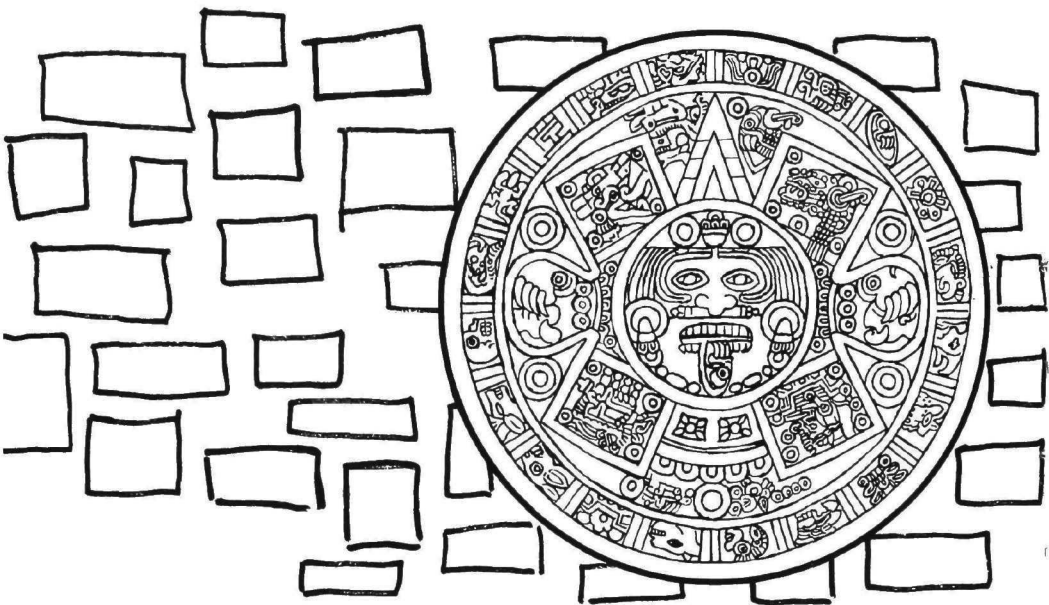
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