



VISION



Visión

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MUJER
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M. Flores y C. A. Jone

VISIÓN

Visión is a celebration of ourselves as Chicana Latina women. The celebration is also an assertion of the strength, humanity and unity of all *mujeres de la Raza*. As Chicanas, we have had to recognize the realities of who we are — women with a triple burden in the face of sexism, racism, and poverty; but by understanding these conditions of oppression we have also been able to realize that fear, weakness, and passivity are not our fate. Instead they are a result of a conditioning encouraged by those who would seek to divide us and to render us helpless. Understanding this reality has allowed us to overcome acceptance of such conditions, and to focus on the areas within ourselves that truly reveal our human potential, thus bringing us closer together in strength.

A vision is not a dream, nor is it just hope for the future. It is a reality that already exists, only waiting to be realized.

We draw our strength today from all these Raza women. We especially celebrate the homecoming of Olga Talamante and her courage to survive under the most unspeakable conditions, and all those, who through their actions, strength and unity, contributed to her release. We dedicate our words, poems, art, and work to these women who go unrecognized behind prison bars or to those who do the simplest tasks.

It is our hope that our readers will approach these writings with open hearts and open minds so that they can allow themselves to feel the full impact of the thinking and emotion that is emerging from these particular Chicanas today. We invite people to use these writings as stimulation to form, challenge, or reflect upon their own beliefs and feelings.

We do not hold these writings to be reflective of “the true” Chicana or “the most highly politicized” Chicana. Rather, they are glimpses of what is a dynamic and constantly re-emerging group of women of all ages that are continually seeking to re-define themselves and their experiences in the face of an ever-changing world.

Visión is comprised of expression from women of all ages and backgrounds — all *mujeres de la Raza*. These women are students, most of whom have only begun to express themselves in writing; others are community women, some workers, but all deeply involved in the essence of our culture living in the barrios; some are of high school age and younger and only beginning to formulate ideas, yet are deeply rooted in the reality of their history, language, and struggle.

The purpose of sharing these expressions is to maintain continuity among these Raza women. Although they are from varying experiences they have in common culture, history, language, and class affinity. They each move forward in growth at a separate pace, but all reach discovery through resistance and change. Out of this diversity of age and lifestyle we have chosen themes which we feel will best represent and emphasize our commonality.

Our Chicana world and movement is not yet fully formed or defined, nor will it ever be. Therefore, to shut it off from divergent philosophies and approaches would be to strangle it or to perhaps exclude some potentially fruitful or revolutionary directions.

This journal serves as a vehicle of expression for many Chicanas who have heretofore not had access to a People's medium of this kind. It is a vehicle for the free exchange of varied ideas, for we believe that each one of us must have enough determination and confidence in her own convictions to trust that the most fruitful and most liberating ideas will continually emerge to challenge our diligence.

“A vision is not a dream; it is a reality that already exists, only waiting to be realized.”

Writing as a Revolutionary Act

by Rita Sánchez

The Chicana writer, by the fact that she is even writing in today's society, is making a revolutionary act. Embodied in the act of writing is her voice against others' definitions of who she is and what she should be. There is, in her open expression and in the very nature of this act of opening up, a refusal to submit to a quality of silence that has been imposed upon her for centuries. In the act of writing, the Chicana is saying "No," and by doing so she becomes the revolutionary, a source of change, and a real force for humanization.

By becoming a writer, the Chicana has to have already rebelled against a socialization process that would have her remain merely the silent helpmate. Everything in her society, the schools, the church, the home, has sought this goal for her: she must be sheltered from the evils, noise, confusion, from the realities of the outside world, from sex to politics, even at times from intellectual dialogue, to be considered acceptable. In short, she should make no intrusion into adult or male conversation. Now, the Chicana, by voicing her own brand of expression has rejected the latter in favor of telling anyone who wishes to read her work, hear her voice, exactly what she is not, and who she, in fact, is.

Courageously, La Chicana writer, by understanding the condition of colonization under which she was born, the images of betrayal that surround her, and the forces of racism that still exist for her, has exhibited her strength by the very denial of these impositions. By her refusal to accept the myths, misinterpretations and the stereotypes of her as presented by another, she has transcended the bounds of tradition, made a choice to determine her own life, and finally, has become the revolutionary voice.

With the few choices that La

Chicana has traditionally been allowed in life — as well as in a literature which has presented her as a symbol of passivity, betrayal, or victim — her own voice is a *denial* of another's misguided or masculine projection of her, while at the same time it is an *affirmation* of the complexity of her own identity. By this denial and affirmation she has proven her strength and exhibited a courage in her refusal to accept these myths, misinterpretations and stereotypes presented by those who can only imagine or project who she may be.

She has been allowed these few images attributed to her in life and in literature, but the reality of her history reveals La Mujer Chicana as the central core and basis of Chicano struggle: The Cuban film, *Lucia*, depicts the epic struggle of an entire people, and at the center: La Mujer. The rape of a woman in this story symbolizes the colonization of the country. La Mujer has suffered the violation, but has emerged as the visionary who awakens her people. The Chicana is this same woman.

In her act of self-expression shared in writing with others like herself, by saying what *she* feels and who she is, every time she puts down on paper her words, and every time those words are read by another Chicana she has defined further who we Chicanas truly are. Her voice, in expressing a Chicana view, comes closer to expressing a collective Chicana voice. We, her readers, through reading what she has to say, through reading about her, are reading about ourselves and our own experiences. This phenomenon takes place simply because by writing she has put a name to what we have felt — a name to feelings of anger, pain, love, joy, sympathy, strength, celebration.

By naming these emotions, experiences and realities, and by her readers' confrontation with another Chicana like herself, we take on a new power and this power allows us to become a source for change. Every poem, essay, story becomes more than a work of art in this vital combination of writer and reader. Each work becomes an expression of life. The Chicana writer, like the revolutionary, is a creator and the result is twofold. She becomes the creator of a work of art and the creator of a destiny.

Although the Chicana voice is only recently emerging in writing, her presence, like the presence of the river in Anaya's *Bless Me, Ultima*, has always surrounded us; and when this presence reveals itself, finally, as it does to the protagonist, Antonio, it is an awesome revelation, one, like life itself, to be both revered and heeded. At first, what appears to be only a silence, in reality carries with it an underlying depth, strength, and volume, constantly moving, constantly alive; it is unable to be stopped and is not to be taken lightly.

In this sense the new Chicana poet, writer, the new voice you are hearing is not new at all. It has encompassed us since time immemorial only to have revealed itself in a more profound and real way. In Dorinda Moreno's *La Mujer en Pie de Lucha*, poet Viola Correa reveals the drama and fervor of this startling reality of the Chicana presence coming to life, in her poem, "La Nueva Chicana." This voice does not come from the elite, the woman with the college degrees or titles, nor is it clad like one may have expected Jesus to have been clad, with royal robes. Her grandeur is of a different kind. Her presence is clothed in the voice of *tu hermana, tu madre, tu tía*. And by coming to us in this way, the voice

is even more real to us; it comes from amidst ourselves and not from above, as poets often do. More significantly, it comes from out of our own very real struggles: the picket lines, the factories, the fields, the barrios, the streets, la casa.

As a result, when she speaks, Viola Correa is speaking not just for herself, but for and to all Chicanas of her own condition of pain and struggle and strength, and is giving a name to the pain and struggle and strength of all Chicanas:

Hey,
See that lady protesting against
injustice,
Es mi Mama.
That girl in the brown beret,
The one teaching the children,
She's my hermana.
Over there fasting with the
migrants,
Es mi tía.
These are the women who worry,
Pray, iron
And cook chile y tortillas.
The lady with the forgiving eyes
And the gentle smile,
Listen to her shout.
She knows what hardship is all
All about.
The establishment calls her
A radical militant.
The newspapers read she is
A dangerous subversive
They label her name to condemn
her.
By the F.B.I. she's called
A big problem.
In Aztlan we call her
La Nueva Chicana.

These words by the Chicana voice of today are reflective of Aztec poets long ago and, therefore, bind us to a beauty of the past that still exists in many ways for us in the present. Antonia Castañeda, Chicana editor of *Literatura Chicana*, and one of the first Chicanas to teach *La Mujer de la Raza* at the University of Washington, speaks of the depth of a Chicano collective voice as it comes to us from a long-ago voice of the Aztec poet Temilotzin. Temilotzin, in his poetry, speaks not only of himself, but to all the people. *Literatura Chicana* says that his mission is to create flower and song while seeking humanidad with the community:

Con plumajes de tzinitzcan doy
cimiento
con plumas de guacamaya rodeo
con trepidantes plumas de quetzal
enlazo
al conjunto de los amigos.
Con cantos circundo a la
comunidad
Asinos habremos dado en
préstamo los unos a los otros.

Antonia Castañeda translates the words, "en prestamo los unos a los otros," to mean, literally, that we are on loan to one another. The Chicana presence, the Chicana voice reaffirms this concept when she opens up to tell us what she feels. In so doing, she is reaching out to all Chicanas "with song to encircle the community." *Literatura Chicana* says, "The bonds of . . . love conceived in our comunidades reaffirm that we are 'en prestamo los unos a los otros.'" The poet's words, then, although they recognize hurt, death, and pain reflect, also, celebration. In Chicana writings, the celebration erupts from the affirmation of an incredible past, linked to the knowledge of the same kind of community still existent in the present, but realized only in the voice of open expression.

Still another poet, Barbara Hernandez expresses the significance of this collective voice in the singular vision of her struggle, when she says her "soul belongs to the people."

It belongs to the struggle!
It belongs to liberation!
But most important it belongs to
me!

In this seemingly subjective expression, she is really speaking to a myriad of others about themselves. By speaking of her own feelings as a Chicana she includes that overwhelming past, the struggle of the present, bound together with a hope for the future.

Writing, breaking the silence, subjective as it may appear, becomes a monumental and collective act because it signifies overcoming, freeing oneself from the confines and conditions of history. The collective act may not even be expressed

in the words themselves, but is manifest in the act of writing down these words. Writing is the tool which allows the Chicana to implement action, critical thought, change. It signifies a voice, a dimension beyond just a presence. It allows us a voice that reaches out to yet another, spurring critical questions while creating empathy. By this process involving writer and reader, both participants are breaking out of silence, no longer are they mere presences, but instruments for change, visionaries awakening the people.

When another Chicana reads the poetry of Chicana poet Veronica Cortez Cunningham, she becomes part of the cycle that begins with the writer word and is completed only as it is read by someone else. From here, the chain reaction continues as each one is affected by those words and is touched and transformed in some unique way. Veronica Cortez Cunningham's words, disheartening as they may sound at first, are not in themselves demoralizing. They are, in fact, indicting a sexist culture from which she grew. They are a denial of a dehumanizing element in her culture, and by their expression seek her right to full human existence, the right to make life fully human again.

In one's inability to comprehend the dimension of one's own oppression in a sexist society from within the confines of the house, reading these lines of Veronica Cortez Cunningham's poetry may become freeing:

It is a culture that
would lay me down . . .

and chain me in
tradition
to some man's kitchen
and bury my spirit
in house dust and holy water
and muddy the reason of my
soul . . .

While Veronica Cortez Cunningham's words read by another are freeing and may release what has

been held inside, they are at the same time a commitment to her own Raza, a voice crying out in understanding, in sympathy of the same pain, same anguish, same frustration another may be feeling. But they are even more than these things, for they seek to correct the injustice, humanize the inhuman.

All of Chicana literature cries out to re-make the world, to make relationships human again. Although living in our own communities has sheltered us in a sense from the atrocities of the outside world, we are still confronted with the technocratic society that surrounds us. And in many ways, this society is worse than the physical poverty we might have known in our communities. It is more destructive because it leaves us spiritually poor. It attempts to strip us of those elements with which we grew up within our communities that allowed us to hold on to our humanidad: our language, our culture, our family unity. Our responses of anger in writing are against such dehumanization; they are a reaction against a kind of violence that already exists.

Literatura Chicana refers to the barrios in which we grew up as centers of exploitation, but also as "spiritual zones" where we may have in some ways remained uncorrupted by technological society and class privilege and more able to develop and preserve more human qualities and so what has been created contains a special and unique kind of vitality. These barrios, are what have preserved in Chicana literature a humanizing quality. Each expression that comes out of the Chicana's writing is, then, toward humanization. This kind of expression speaks to us deeply when it speaks against those forces that would dehumanize us. Rita Mendoza, winner of the Chicano literary contest last May at The University of California, Irvine, appropriately calls her poem which speaks of the rip-off of her native tongue, "Rape Report."

I fought back, I clawed and screamed and for fighting for my honor, I was punished even more.

He received praise for what he did to me.

He took something that was sacred and beautiful to me and replaced it with four-letter words.

Chicana women are creating out of such wrongs in their history. They have taken on the power to name those wrongs, and by that power have made these wrongs subject to repair. These creations by Chicanas are in no way fictional, but implicitly real. They are no longer silent, but from those who some have called silent women have come the most articulate profundities.

"Love life enough to struggle."

Chicana writings have come out of the struggles the Chicana herself has felt, out of the realities of those who have faced not only colonization, racism, sexism, class poverty, but hidden anger and repression and literal rape. The literature which best expresses her struggle must come from the Chicana voice. No longer is literature only from the elitist perspective, but deals with realities, the inner depths and sensitivities and contains a collective message that can only come to life as it stems from realized struggle. It, therefore, reflects our strengths as these words expose our confrontations, the fights we have fought, the struggles we waged, the pain we have felt.

Chicanas are being called upon today to put their thoughts down in writing, to share their emotions with others, thus beginning the process, the chain reaction that might spur others to self-expression and creativity. Our depth as Chicana women must be shared, in fact, is urgently needed so that others might

hear the prophetic voice. This sharing is essential; it is the spirit of our people. This process creates a new awakening, a breaking out of silence, a revolutionary act.

More and more the Chicana woman is emerging out of a traditionally imposed silence. Her already awesome presence becomes more awesome when it speaks. It becomes the conscience of the people; one who is a participant in history. It is the writing process that will facilitate this goal: that in writing, our effects may be far-reaching and that it will bring each one of us to our fullest human potential.

As long as we remain silent, no voice exists. Our right to speak, to voice ourselves is stripped from us; if you do not hear us, no voice exists and no one will notice our absence.

Veronica Cortez Cunningham through poetry admonishes our silence. If we do not speak out, the indictment is of ourselves and we must harbor the guilt of our own rape. If, in our silence we make no rebellion our sentence, she says, will be our own silence; in itself, the worst possible punishment. Importantly, she begins this indictment with "I" and in so doing, her poem becomes all-encompassing. But she speaks to all women who would remain silent: "Chicana, Black, Asian, White, any woman, any age, child, sister, wife, aunt, or friend." As long as you are silent you are yourself guilty:

You women are guilty of
being victims, guilty of being
raped
And you are guilty of laying your-
self down
to your courts of justice
and your sentence has been
silence

But no more
Silence is your enemy

The burden is finally on us, on all Chicanas to break out of silence, to be present to all others who may themselves benefit from a voice, one that is both fearless and the penetrating conscience of the people.

Friendship

by Henrietta Páramo

This seemed like any other morning. But this day was going to be different for the people working in this little shop on Fifth Avenue. The store was inside a long, dark room with piles and piles of merchandise: beautiful towels, sheets, rugs and other items, leaving just enough room to walk. All of a sudden the lights went on. A man walked in, followed by six Mexican women of different ages that were laughing and talking. These people appeared to be happy and dynamic. A warm friendship appeared to be felt among them.

However, these women's appearance of happiness was really only temporary. The women had just not been happy working for a neurotic boss who could never understand their feelings. Many times he even made fun of their sentiments. True, they were of different worlds and beliefs, so naturally they understood happiness in different ways. The women felt happiness when there was peace and harmony around, while the man was happy only when he could hear the ringing of the cash register constantly. The women felt gay when they could go home to their loved ones; he was radiant when he could deposit thousands of dollars at the bank. Yet, regardless of these dissimilarities, they had to pretend to be happy. They had to set themselves goals to bring out a little happiness in their working lives because an unhappy salesperson does not attract customers. Their mission in that place was to sell.

The women had been taught that to succeed in the selling business they really must be dynamic because there is a lot of competition in business and everybody is striving to be on top. These women knew this well because they had had years of experience. They knew that you had to follow this pattern in order to fit into this small world. Their world

was a place manipulated by a man in his late forties who did not care how they felt, nor did he care if one of them had a sick child, or an elderly mother that needed one of them at home. He continually insisted on one thing only, that they produce, that they work hard on the customers, so that they would buy only the merchandise with good profit for the house.

This particular day the manager was very silent. He gave orders in a sharp tone of voice. The women seemed to sense that something was about to happen. The air was tense and everybody went around in silence. Little did they know that the friendship among them was soon to be tried.

Of course all of these women had been close. They thought of themselves as friends and promised each other that if anyone of them should ever need help, she would be sure to get it, because that is what friendship is for. But they had forgotten that there are two kinds of friendship: one felt deep in the heart, strong in all circumstances; and another, one that is not really felt, but pretended in order to socialize. This realization was to be proven in the afternoon of that hot day. Everybody, busy and tense, went around helping the customers, but with an awkward feeling that something was wrong. The manager stood by, just watching, with a deep look in his eyes.

Suddenly the silence was broken with a great commotion within the store. One of the women, a young Mejicana was staring wide-eyed at the angry manager. She was trying to reason with him over a complaint, but there was nothing that could calm the excited man. Whatever it was that he had held in his mind earlier in the day had finally come out. It came out with such force that there was no way of stopping it; maybe not even the friendship they had promised each other before would have helped.

Instead, all the women just stood there watching a friend who had worked hard for so many years leave

the place. No one did anything. They did not try to help. The women had not realized until that moment that although they liked their friend, they could not risk their own economic security. They knew that they would lose this security by becoming involved. Friendship would just have to wait for a better occasion where no risk would exist. The manager closed the door. The lights went off. The long tense day had finally ended.

La Vieja del Welfare

*La Vieja del welfare came
To check on me today.
She came with her paper
And rules to obey.
She asked about the kids
And how things had been.*

*I told her the checks
Had been delayed.
The kids needed clothing
And I had felt ill
For several days.*

*There was nothing different
About her visit today.
Same old routine
Of checking
And questioning things.*

*"You should find a job,"
She said, "And question:
Has your husband been by?"*

*There was a feeling of guilt
About my state.
I felt I had tried,
But things just hadn't
Gone my way.*

*I wanted to express this,
But she started to walk away.
Said she had another ap-
pointment
for today.*

*When she left, a heavy feeling
Remained in me.
You see, I did not tell La Vieja
That another little one
Was on the way.*

— Margarita Calderón

MUJER DE FUERZA

Interview with Olga Talamante

By Maria Elena Ávila

"It isn't painful for me to describe what has happened to me. It's painful for me to know that right now people are still going through this; people right now are dying; people I know, I care for are still in jail and going through a very terrible time."

In November, 1974, Olga Talamante, a Chicana from Gilroy, along with a group of companeros, was arrested and imprisoned in Azul, a small town south of Buenos Aires, Argentina. Here she was isolated, beaten and subjected to the most brutal types of torture.

Like many of us, Olga and her family came to California from Mexico due to economic conditions and searched for work in the agricultural fields. Once here they settled in Gilroy, California where she attended high school, graduated and continued her education by attending the University of California at Santa Cruz.

Being from a migrant background, Olga was actively involved in the farmworker struggle and their organizing efforts, working also in migrant education programs, the mini-corp, and in community service centers.

After graduating in Latin American Studies from the University of California at Santa Cruz, she traveled to Argentina where she had planned on attending the University. However, her plans were changed when the university administration

was ousted by the new incoming government. Olga then began working in community service centers and teaching English to the people of Azul. It is here that her political community involvement led to her arrest in 1974.

At the time that Olga had planned on returning home, Isabel Peron declared a State of Siege and placed the country under martial law. As a result, activists throughout the country were being arrested. Because of her political community activities, Olga was arrested, convicted and sentenced to three years in prison.

In the following interview, Olga relates to us the realities of political prisoners within the prisons of a Latin American country under a fascist regime. It is hoped to provide insight into the injustices and inhumane treatment to which political prisoners are victims because of their political beliefs.

"... I think it's important that people know what happened. People have vague ideas ... I can tell you it's

a very horrible, very, very terrifying experience."

Q: Prior to your trip to Argentina did you visit any other Latin American countries?

A: I traveled throughout Mexico for a while. And in fact did an anthropological field study for three months up in Chiapas which is a Mayan area where there are descendants of the Mayans. I've been interested most of the time in all cultures, the Indian cultures and at the same time the social implications of all of that, in a sense, history in itself and its direct causes of the things people go through. So I went down to Mexico and spent three months there and traveled throughout Mexico. Then I went to Central America and traveled about eight months around there.

Q: From Mexico you went to Central America. You didn't come back to the United States?

A: No. I came back and from here I went to Argentina. What happened is that I went to do an anthropological study when I went to Mexico and I couldn't detach myself from what was happening in Mexico outside of the anthropological aspects of it, because you go down to a village and you are trying to understand the social structure, the cultural structure, or the customs of the people, and for me it was hard



to just get involved in that way. You see all the things going around. You see that the Indians live up in the hills because they've been pushed up there, and why have they been pushed up there? Well, because the government wanted the best land to plant coffee to turn that over to the United Fruit Company that belongs to the United States. I'm saying simply that took a long time for me to get into all those aspects, all those stages of my life and of my awareness. It's not like I put down anthropological work, or that I'm saying that people can't do that. I'm trying to explain what happened to me. I was trying to do that and I couldn't. I saw too many branches of that and it wasn't just an anthropological study.

Where the U.S. spends its money, that's a connection people should make — in terms of the military, where U.S. money goes. Instead of building services for the people here, they send it for the military puppet governments.

The same thing in Central America. You try to understand the same things, the different cultures, and at the same time the same culture that is existing in all of Central America and southern Mexico. There are some common things to it and you understand that, but then you understand also that conditions are a result of something. Then you try and find out why. There's a lot of poverty, just a lot of suffering that people go through. People go through that here too. We also try to understand why that happens here.

Q: Why Argentina?

A: I read about Argentina and it sounded like they had a good history program in graduate study, so I was interested in attending the university. I was able to get some letters of recommendation for the University of Argentina. I had met some people from Argentina that had gone back; so it was something that draws you, the fact that there is someone you know and you'll be able to stay with, that you have a home. I was in-

terested in some of the things the country itself was going through. After eighteen years of military dictatorship they had voted in a populist government.

Q: You said you knew people there from Argentina; were they students that were studying over here?

A: Yes, they had passed through here. I had met them in Mexico.

Q: When you arrived there, you said your intentions were to go to the university to study history. Did you attend the university or did you work there?

A: I went to the university and went to talk to the people who were in charge of the programs and presented my letters. They said that more than likely I would be able to get in. It was all looking good. But then two weeks after, the university officials were ousted. In a way, that shows the type of political upheaval that was taking place in Argentina.

After that happened I thought I'd wait a while until I could get some letters for these new people. Actually the people who took their places were not going to follow the same trend. The way I presented myself was as a Chicana who was trying to study the history of Latin America not only Argentina. I had things to share in terms of the Chicano experience.

Q: How did people relate to you as a Chicana?

A: The people don't know that much about us. People who are active know. But people who aren't haven't heard that much about it. They know about Mexico and a lot of times they thought I was from Mexico. I would explain to them that I was a Chicana and everything that means. I could say they related really well to me. I never had any problems. People sometimes didn't understand what we are trying to do here because they relate to the United States as an imperialistic power and don't understand the social structure and all the internal things of the United States. So that was a task in itself to explain.

Q: Seeing the United States as an

imperialistic power, did they see you as a part of that?

A: No. Just through everyday living they could see that I did not have the mentality of an imperialistic country in that sense. Of course I didn't have the same attitudes that businessmen or military officers have. They could relate very well to me and in relating to me I think they were relating to whatever they could find out about Chicanos and our struggles here and people's every day efforts to change things here. They sort of tripped out on the fact that I was from here but I wasn't like what they thought people from here were like.

Q: When the administration from the university was ousted, did you continue going to the university or what did you do after that?

A: No. That's when I got a job teaching English at an English Institute in Azul (a small town about 170 miles south of Buenos Aires). I got a job there and I met some people who were doing community service; and since that had been my interest I thought that would be a very good experience to participate in. I was teaching as a regular job and I worked as a volunteer at the community service center.

Three days prior to my arrest the government had passed the State of Siege security laws which made our types of activities illegal overnight.

Q: What types of services were provided?

A: It went from everything: writing a letter for someone who didn't know how to write, explaining some type of legal aspect of some transaction, going with someone to the doctor, trying to get some medicine for the people, trying to get street lights in the barrios, and trying to build a health aid center so that people would have real basic things like aspirins, bandaids, and things like that. It was mainly that. I was working with the young Peronist

group which is the progressive Peronist. That was basically what I was doing.

Q: Were you teaching English in a private school?

A: Yes, that was a regular job. At the community center we were starting a tutoring program and were thinking it might include English. Some people were interested in learning it for a job and kids were interested in learning how to speak English. So I would teach them.

Q: Could you tell me about your daily activities two-three days prior to your arrest? What was the political situation?

A: Since the time I got there to the day of my arrest I had been there a year and three months. Throughout that time things in Argentina had been changing all along. Basically what happened was that, after Juan Peron died, the rightist elements of the Peronist movement took just tighter control of the whole political situation of the government, the government positions, the military and police forces too. So there was a lot of oppression going on that was building up gradually. Bodies were being found; people were being arrested. Those things were happening and they were really cracking down on the progressive side of the Peronist movement. We knew things were getting a little bit risky. And like three days prior to my arrest the government had passed the State of Siege Security Laws which made our types of activities illegal over night.

One day you're completely legal, you're a recognized group and the next day you're illegal and so they arrest you.

Q: Were these types of activities the involvement in the community service center and the young Peronist group?

A: Right. It was like one day you're completely legal, you're a recognized group and the next day

you're made illegal so they arrest you. That's the type of operation they go through. So three days before they passed the State of Siege. I don't remember exactly what I was doing before I was arrested. I think I had been to the community center to see some people and we were trying to decide exactly what we were going to do. On the day of the arrest I was at a barbeque party. In fact, I was getting ready to say good-bye to a lot of people and getting my things together because I was going to leave in two weeks' time.

Q: Did they approach you personally and arrest you or was it a group of people that were arrested?

A: A group of people.

Q: What were the reasons that they gave for the arrest?

A: First of all they didn't give us any reasons. We had been working there for about a year. All the people I was working with were from Azul: young people, working people, students who had been born there and had been brought up there, had gone to school there. And people knew them, what they were doing. People knew we were building free community centers at the time and doing a lot of things out in the open completely. We knew the police follow you and they're always trying to see what they can catch you on. We were all at this party. They found out we were all together and thought it was a good idea to round us up. When we were leaving the party that's when I got arrested. Some of the people had already started walking and they went after them too.

Q: Was there any force used in your arrest? Were the arresting officers armed?

A: Yes. They were armed. They pushed you into the car; they put the gun to your head and said "keep still," and they took you to the police station.

Q: What followed after that, once you were there?

A: We were at the police station. You have to put your hands up, the usual procedure; probably a little bit

rougher than you would expect. You couldn't even look the wrong way or they would give you a karate blow on the neck and ribs. They gave you a beating all the while you were standing there. Then just regular procedure, they take your name down, all the details. They tie your hands behind your back. We had our hands tied with silk rope. The kind if you try to get free it gets tighter.

It was four days of nightmare: getting beaten up all the time by four men at a time and going through the torture of high-voltage electric shocks that jolt your whole body.

You were like that for days. They put a dark hood type thing over your head so you can't see each other and that way you can't communicate with each other. You won't be able to recognize the people who are hitting you or beating you up. It's a way of covering themselves up, so you don't see their faces.

And then it was four days of nightmare: just getting beaten all the time by several men at a time; then going through the torture of electric shocks and that's really a terrible thing, really an evil method in which they undress you completely, your eyes are covered with adhesive tape so you can't see anything; they tie you to the bedpost spread eagle and start applying high voltage electric shocks that jolt your whole body.

Q: Were the shocks enough to make you unconscious?

A: Not enough to do this. It's hard to describe. It's not like you're in a normal state of mind. But I didn't become unconscious. I know people die of it. The voltage gets to be so high, especially if people have a weak heart.

Q: Were they asking you questions?

A: Yes. Lots of questions were just repeating to see if I would catch myself, to see if I had contradictions. They would ask me to admit to killing

a police officer, or bombing military bases. They wanted me to give them names. "Just give us your friends' names and we'll let you go." I knew whatever names I gave they would go to those people's houses and arrest them, too, and make them go through the same thing. It's a thing you go through inside of you that you know you can't do it. That's turning someone in and you're not going to do that.

Q: This must be painful relating these experiences.

A: It isn't painful. No. I don't take it lightly, I can assure you. I think it's important for people to know what happened. People have vague ideas and can't relate to that. I can tell you it's a very horrible, very terrifying experience. At the same time, there's just a lot of things revolving around. The fact that if you don't give in to them then you know you're stronger. They need to do this to you in order to break you. They know your ideas are stronger and they feel threatened.

In a way it shows where human strength can come from. We always think of examples like people in the revolution in Mexico, people here who have gone through the riots in L.A., the murder cases of Chicanos being killed and that are suffering. People in other parts of the world like Vietnam and throughout Latin America risk being tortured or being killed if they do political work, the type of political work we were doing, like community services. I think a lot of people understand everything that's behind that. Some people in a way don't even want to know about it because it's terrible to hear about these things, to know that someone who is talking to you has gone through that. I don't communicate all this in a sort of dramatic or a human interest type of story.

I want to share as well as I can with people, with Raza that all these things are happening because I know we understand them because we've been through a lot of suffering too; our experiences have a lot of suffering and a lot of sacrifice: our

parents, all the people that have worked for us. That's why it isn't painful in a way. It is painful to me that friends of mine, people I know, I care for, are still in jail, and going through a very terrible time. That's painful; that's why I do explain. I want people to know there are things going on.

Q: Were you ever warned of these torture sessions?

A: We knew these things happened. We read about it. Other people explain it, share it, bring it out in the open. You never really know what it is going to be like. I myself was aware. It's not like you know it's going to happen to you. Just inside you think, they won't do that to me. When it happens you're prepared in a way. It doesn't freak you out because there was that possibility. It's not out of this world. It's out of this world for you. In an objective, logical way you know, yes, that happens. It looks like it's going to happen to me this time.

You see that the Indians live up in the hills because they've been pushed up there. And why have they been pushed up there? Well, because the government wanted the best land to plant coffee to turn over to the United Fruit Co. that belongs to the U.S.

We were all spread around the police station. At one point I heard one of the companeros screaming, this terrifying scream. You know something really bad is happening to him, and you think "I wonder who is going to be next." Then they came and got me and took me to the same room. I knew it was going to be me. You also know that. A lot of things go through your head.

I knew a lot of people have gone through that and have been very brave, very courageous. You have to be, so that you don't give in, so that you don't fall into the trap of giving

them some information that you think is going to get you out of that. They won't stop anyway because if you say something they figure you know more. I thought about that; I thought about the fact that a lot of people have gone through it in a very courageous way. I was thinking about them — if other people have done it — and there come moments when you think, "I can't take this anymore. How can I get out of this," in a survival type of way. And you say, "Well, this may be a way." And you know

that's not going to stop them and at the same time you can't turn someone in and you know other people have gone through it, have survived; and you think, "If others have done it, I can do it too." Just all those things go through your head.

Q: When you were in prison, was it a jail or prison situation?

A: We had a collective cell with sixteen beds. There were sixteen of us.

Q: Were there women and men at the same cell?

A: No, just women. Men were in another section. We were in a smaller women's section of a larger men's section. There were like 280 men, non political men and then we were together with non political women. The number would change; some people left; others stayed. It was anything from twenty to twenty-five women all the time, just crowded all the time. It was very humid. The floors were wet all the time, damp. It was an old building, probably not like the jails here, where there may be more facilities — very poor lighting, no ventilation.

'Q: Were the torture sessions restricted to just political prisoners or were other non political prisoners also tortured?

A: Non-political people have been tortured also. They use that method in gang robberies where they want people to turn in people from their group. But it's mainly used on political prisoners — mainly, and on a regular basis.

Q: When you were arrested were you allowed to inform anyone of your

whereabouts?

A: No. For four days people did not know where we were. The relatives of the other people would come to the police station and ask for us. "No, they're not here." Of course you can't make any outside contact. You don't have your one call to your lawyer.

Q: Did the police notify the relatives? How did they find out?

A: It's a small town and people knew we had been arrested. People knew we were in the police station. They would bring us food and they would tell them, "Well they're not here, but you can leave the food if you want." They would give us some of it or eat it themselves. And people found out we were being taken to the local jail.

Q: Would you describe a day in prison? How did it begin?

A: Things change in jails regularly. We would get up at six in the morning. We did our exercises at 6:30; that was our own activity to do exercises. At the beginning we weren't allowed to do them. You found ways to do them even in the bathroom. After a while they did allow us to do them. Then we had breakfast, something hot to drink, coffee or tea. Then you clean up your cell, sweep, mop, clean everything, and then get involved in either reading the newspaper or books; we had some books. We'd read books together in groups — knitting, crocheting, embroidery. We made paper flowers, little centerpieces, crafts, the whole type of jail crafts. You find things to work with you never really thought you had.

Q: Was anything provided for these things?

A: They didn't provide anything. We had to get them ourselves. We'd get them from relatives. Some weekends they would not let anything in; other weekends they would, depending upon what mood they were in. We had to get them ourselves. We had to make them out of newspapers or old sweaters. We asked the relatives to bring things they did not use: pieces of material

to make dolls. We spent days doing that.

Then you do the cleaning, dishes and you're allowed a nap. In the afternoon you have recreation hours. You either do some exercises, get ready for dinner, or shower. You have to warm up the water because there is no hot water. During the winter it gets really cold. We had a little baby. One of the women was pregnant when we got arrested. The baby was born while she was in jail. She is ten months old now. She is still there. I got a letter, not from them directly, not from the woman, from a compañero in jail. He said they are having a hard time. They took the heater out, a kerosene heater which warms the cell. I don't know. Things get rough.

They know your ideas are stronger. They feel threatened. They feel like there is this person here who is stronger than they are and they know that. And you know that too.

Q: Did you do any writings?

A: I wrote a bit of poetry. I wasn't keeping a diary. I was keeping notes, writing things, reflections. They took these away; I would have liked to have had those. The other things I have are excerpts from letters I wrote to people here. We were always doing quite a bit of writing.

Q: Did you get letters from the outside? Were they screened out?

A: I got letters and they are given to you open. They read them. The thing that helped me was that I wrote in English. They asked me not to write in English. It was like a bureaucratic breakdown. They had no one to read them. I told them, "I have to write to my brother and he doesn't know Spanish." I convinced them.

Q: Did you have any idea of the support groups here?

A: I knew of a lot of the activities

going on. People would write me about them. I didn't get the full grasp until I came here. A lot of people knew, were interested, and concerned, good friends got involved; people wrote letters, went to Washington and got Congress to write letters, which had a lot to do with my release. When I was down there I read an article about the letters congressmen wrote about me. I got hassled for that. People in the

military were very upset. I thought, "I'm going to spend a lot more time here. They're not going to let me go." Apparently, pressure from the people here — not apparently, really, it was like that.

It happened that the military took over and they wanted to give an image of a nice coup. They didn't want someone like me who was getting all this attention from the U.S. that would bring bad publicity to their coup.

Q: They wanted to be recognized by the U.S.?

A: Yes. The thing about the military coup in Argentina is they don't want to appear as the Chile coup. It does not mean that they are different from them. They are the same kind. They could kill 20,000 people, but that would give them a bad image. They're killing people everyday, but it's not like it was in Chile right now. There's a strong possibility it may happen in Argentina. Even when I was down there you're hearing rumors. You find out about things in jail; there's a whole jail grapevine. You find out things really fast, even before the guards. We were hearing rumors of executions in jail. It's not far-fetched at all.

The military regime is getting help from the U.S. Where the United States spends its money, that's a connection people should make in terms of the military, where the U.S. money goes. Instead of building services for the people here they send it for the military puppet governments.

Q: Did you think you might be released?

A: Not at that time. Many times before it seemed like I was coming

home any minute now because the embassy people would say that. During those days, they were very difficult days in the jail because it was the day of the coup and the military came and stomped through the cell and took everything. They took pictures, little things that we made. They took the baby's diapers and toys. The military would come in at any moment, hassling you verbally. I didn't think I was going to get out, especially then.

The way they released me was really bad too, the way they went about it. Azul is 170 miles south of Buenos Aires, which is where the international airport is at. Here I was in a cell, in fact, I was taking a nap and they came in and said, "Get

*i fight
each forced
and thoughtless
step*

*i am
no longer
held
by
that sheltering
institution
that
held me
as long
as it
as i
held
the illusion
of powerful security*

*i am
not
a slave
of tracked paths
that
lead
sightless people
and
carry them
into the beast*

—Veronica Cunningham

dressed you're coming with us." And I asked them where they were taking me. "We don't know. We have to take you." I got scared. I mean just scared inside. They took me to a solitary confinement cell and I was left. They told my companeros to get my clothes ready but they hadn't told me that. The reason they did that was so we could not say good bye to each other just thinking we would give an address to each other. They would not tell me where they were taking me. At one point I thought, well, they're either going to kill me, transfer me to another jail or a military base to interrogate me or else I'm gonna go home. but there was no indication of that because here I was in a solitary confinement cell, not allowed say good bye to the people.

I was taken out, handcuffed with all the guards guarding me, taken to a landing field. So you go out into the country and you wonder what is going to happen now. They put me on this small plane to Buenos Aires. I was handcuffed to the plane which was weird. They took me to Buenos Aires. We were picked up by the guards still not telling me where they were taking me. So we were picked up by this car. They took me to a big jail in Buenos Aires. I spent the night there and all the following day and I was in solitary confinement there too. Finally that night after two days, they took me to the International Airport and that's when I knew I was coming home.

Q: What were the conditions upon your release?

A: There were no conditions. The only thing I had to do was to submit to a physical examination just to cover themselves up that nothing had happened to me. A doctor examined me. I signed that upon my release I had not been molested.

Q: How long were you in jail?

A: A year and four months. It's a while.

Q: What are your plans for the future?

A: Right now I'm doing interviews, trying to share with people what happened. If possible with the

committee, we'll get a campaign going to explain to people where military aid is going; now that we have a chance it's a good idea to let people know this is happening. The question comes in too: Why should one be involved in a struggle that's happening somewhere else as opposed to what's happening here? I think that's a way of being involved here because a lot of things that are happening down there come from here, and we're here so it's related to us. I think our Chicano struggle is very much related to our Latin American brothers and sisters.

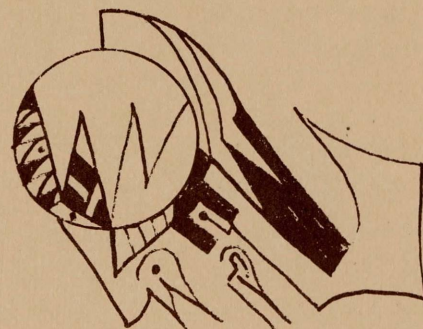
Q: What areas of the Chicano Movement do you see as priorities?

A: That's a hard question. Not that I hesitate to answer it as best as I can, but for one thing I haven't been back for a long time. My observations, my feelings come from three years ago. I don't put that as a justification, but as a way of explanation. I think education is very important. I'm not saying education for the sake of it, but for the purpose of teaching, of understanding. The farmworker struggle is also important.

Q: How do you see the Chicana movement?

A: Not raising women's issues as issues alone to me is important. We should try to educate rather than attack.

Olga concluded by saying that all areas of the Chicano struggle are important. It is necessary to be aware of the various aspects of our movement because everything is interrelated, from education to the farmworker struggle. Unity among our people is of utmost importance for in unity we have strength to achieve our objectives.



Mujer Chicana

Mujer,
The beginning of the clearing
within your thoughts—
your truth, in depth

The innermost part
of your being—
what is,
which lay
undiscovered then,
uncovered now

The truth which is you,
By the awareness of your heart
the openness of your mind,
whispering then
shouting now

The absence of fear—
What could be
what was
what is—

Through the almost endless
search
for your identity—
through frustration,
rejection
and blinding madness

The final acceptance
of the being
who is you

The strength
of a belief
in you

The belief
of that strength
within you
are

The invitation
and welcoming
of the truth
in your search
for your soul,

your heart
your being
Its totality—

The feeling of that strength
The strength of that feeling,
Transcending
Projecting



A labyrinth before—

The ultimate choice
to endure, to live—
the will to survive
la cultura
la fe

This is belief
This is strength
This is feeling
This is you
!Mujer Chicana!
— Mariana Herrera

Mujer de Fuerza

Mujer de fuerza legendaria
de esperanza noble y pura
has crecido con el viento
que te ha soplado a la lucha
Aprendiste a ser madre
desde niña en las trozales
se forjo tu estripe digna
sangre india y mestizaje
tu voz me llego vibrante
cuando levante mis puños
tu ejemplo estaba latente
cuando luche por mis sueños
Tu sonrisa siempre en alto
tu mirada adormecida
son el futuro de triunfo
en justicia siempre viva
Campesina de tristezas
de la espalda doblegada
con tus manos cansadas
vas sembrando la esperanza
Los muros no nos separan
la distancia nos acerca
llegaremos a encontrarnos
cuando rompamos las rejas

— Olga Talamante

Invitación

Noche triste, triste y fría
noche sin más que silencio
noche que encierras al cielo
complice del carcelero

Noche mártir de las rejas
sin colores sin encanto
Noche, ¿qué sabes de mí?
¿qué sabes tú de mi llanto?

Tú no sabes de fulgores
ni de mis tiernos amores
tú no sabes la injusticia
que se ampara en tus rincones.

Despierta noche tardía!
Alumbra esta noble espara
Senalame ya al verdugo
y serás mi companera.

— Olga Talamante
12-1-75 Azul

pity
the revolutionary
whose hand
never
warms
to love
and fear
their revolution
— Veronica Cunningham

Ya no es ayer

Ayer, Ayer

Estaba yo sentadita
en la salita de mi casita
y venía aquel al que yo miraba
y me alborotaba y me besaba
y me decía que me QUERÍA

Ayer, Ayer

Nacio mi primer hijito
y vi los ojos de mi viejito
llenos de ORGULLO y amante ternura
y en la hermosura de aquel cariño
yo no sentía que me dolía

Ayer, Ayer

Mis tres hijitos muy limpiezitos
con sus libritos iban a la escuela
y les enseñaban que jamas contaban
los MEJICANOS y no comprendía
porque mentían

Ayer, Ayer

Mi primer hijo dejó el colegio
y se fue a la GUERRA ques que a proteger
a los ciudadanos de esta nación
y de ay me escribía
que no sabía
porque lo hacía

Ayer, Ayer

A mi casita vino un general
Y me entregaba los tilichitos
pero no el cuerpecito de mi hijito
que había muerto aya en Vietnam
y ay que amargo dolor sentía



Ayer, Ayer

Mi otro hijo también se fue
ques que a vengarse de su muerte cruel
y me escribía un compañero
que no había MUERTO y que estaba bien
y que ese día ya se venia

Ayer, Ayer

Mi muchachito está sentadito
sin sus brazitos ni sus piecitos
y había unos nifros que se reñan
pero sin ojos no los veia
solo OIA

Ayer, Ayer

Mi ultimo hijo ya comprendía
y de ir a la guerra el se nego
vino un sargento y lo TIROTEO
y yo gentía que también moría

Ayer, Ayer

Yo y mi viejito en el moratorio
y les decia lo que yo sabía
y nos ahogabamos con el TEAR GAS
y me golpearon cuando yo corría

Ayer, Ayer

Yo sentadita en mi salita
vi los ENGAÑOS
y las MENTIRAS
y desde ese día
por todos los BARRIOS
con los CAMPESINOS
y los ESTUDIANTES
me voy GRITANDO
toda la
VERDAD

Ay que luchar

ay que LUCHAR
ay que LUCHAR
ya no es AYER
ya no es AYER
ya no es AYER
YA ES OTRO DÍA

Herminia Enriquez



Tiempos Duros de Mi Abuela

by Hilda Flores

I approached many ladies of the past generation to share their talents and experiences with us. All but one turned me down, mi Abuela Martina V. Lopez. She has a lot to share with us.

Martina: "The people were very ignorant, because the majority were uneducated. This was during the year of 1919. I was about seven years old and still remember the huge baskets with food my sisters and I used to carry for about two miles.

This food was for laborers that were clearing up the land of trees and bushes. Once the land was cleared the anglo rancher would settle it and put up a huge ranch.

"We were always moving from one ranch to another. Therefore, school was always hard to attend. The only time I attended school was when living at Guadalupe, Arizona. During the cotton season we would leave school for a while to go work. My father would earn about \$1.50 a day.

Sometimes the situation would be so bad, especially when one of the younger children got sick, that we would have to pick wild vegetables to eat. Pinole was made from wheat. When the train would kill a cow, was about the only time we ate meat. The dead cow would be distributed among the poor people. During this time women married young. I married at 16 at Guadalupe, Arizona. I stopped working and had my first child at seventeen. I had ten children in all, two died. All but one were born at home with the help of other women.

"During the year of 1931 the unemployment crises struck. Jobs would go to anglos. Hundreds of people migrated to Mexico. We moved to Sonora, Mexico, with one child and another one on the way. When we arrived at Sonora my husband fell sick in bed with rheumatism. For six months he could not move out of bed. I had to wash and iron to survive.

"At the time gold was being mined in Mexico, we traveled to "El Tiro" on foot. For four days we walked with two children of our own and a nephew. They would take turns riding a burro and each of us would carry a kid on our backs.

"One of the things that I'll never forget are the conditions the men were put to work in the mines. They weren't permitted to wear any clothes. This was done to avoid any amount of gold taken from the mines. For seven years we stayed close to the mines looking for gold and selling hot lunches to the miners. After the third child, we moved to Kerobabi for two and a half years farming vegetables. The government would give sections of land to the settlers to be farmed.

"In 1945 we arrived at Mexicali Valley. My husband was required to go to the United States once again to find work. The Mexicali Valley used to have great agriculture, but not any more. After washing the salty lands in the U.S. the water was dumped into the Colorado River which ran into the Mexicali Valley. The



agriculture was destroyed and the working people had no other choice but to seek work in the U.S.

"When the family was grown up we were all working at the fields. We would travel from Calxico to Indio at two a.m. and return at seven or eight p.m. There was only time to prepare next day's lunch and back to sleep. The most we would earn was five dollars a day. Sometimes two dollars for the whole day. Times were hard and usually there was just enough money for food and the bills.

a lot of suffering

"In 1960 I decided to move to U.S. with my family leaving my husband behind. Three kids were left; the others all married. I wanted them to have a better education. Life was, and still is too hard to be uneducated all your life. After the rest of my family married and took their separate roads, I returned to Mexico with my husband. Now at sixty-four, my husband seventy-nine years old, and still working, we settled down at a ranch at Rumorosa, Mexico."

Question: What do you think of the liberation of women?

Martina: "People have always been politically aware. Not till the 1960's did more Chicanas attend schools and colleges, which is very good. People are aware of how the money is being spent by the government. Since 1935 there has been more recognition for women. More women have been educated. Education has helped us get the rights we deserve. Compared to before, women were so passive that they couldn't even vote. The irony of man had women scared and humiliated. A woman used to depend too much on the husband. An educated woman does not need a man to depend on. She is able to fight for herself and family. I strongly believe women should be in politics because most women have more sense and better intentions.

Guajira

*guajira sells remedies.
she lights candles and believes in the saints,
and there are many who seek her for the things
that doctors, priests and lovers cannot give.
her face is wide like that of a drum
and drawn tight over strong cheeks
her skin settles like a desert ridge.
as she walks through the unplanted fields
vines curl like dark hair
below her once bright skirt
that breathes with each step
and the braids she weaves with ribbons
fly like blackbirds in her trail.
searching for roots on the dry plateau
she moves,
a gem set alone.*

*guajira,
my juanita is dead.
his crib stands like a coffin
unearthed.
i want it outside where the flies
can hum to its whiteness.
in the canyons the nopalitas are sweet and red
the desert flowers are filled with sucking bees
and i have milk.
in the mornings i see the other women
who dress their children
and what have i
but to place another stone upon his stubborn seed.
guajira,
my juanita is dead.*

*the wind swirls at her door
lifting the fire, sending it down again
dancing upon itself in the hearth
as it betrays the shapes of saints
in small shrines along the wall.
the outstretched arms are lined with cracks and age*

*and the cold marble eyes render a strange sanity
to their requiem.
a great statue of the virgin reigns highest,
surrounded by strung fists of garlic that web
a knotted and erotic veil,
and from the rafters hang herbs,
bundled and torch-like,
a drying refuge of remedies
who, through a small window,
catch the last glint of a brave moon
made fugitive
in the dawn.*

— Christina Nino

An Awareness of Violence

by Shilo Arámbula

My experiences with the United Farm Workers are very heavy for me to carry in my mind, for as a child of six years of age my mind was opened to the awareness of violence. Sometimes I wonder why I can't tell anybody everything I saw and I wonder when my mind will explode with all I've seen. Maybe writing these experiences down will help me to understand them better.

Maybe it was because God chose me to face reality at such an early age to make me aware that I would be needed in the future to help my own people. I saw it all and I hated it, while school was different for the many children my age who knew nothing of these things. They didn't seem to care, but played as if they had nothing in their minds.

One day when I was six — although I don't recall the date I know it was about time for school to start — I was going to begin noon kindergarten classes. I had been helping my father gather boxes for the grapes he was picking so he could finish faster and fill more boxes. The job was being run by a contractor. You were paid by the boxes you filled and there was a limited time to work. This took place at Zanninovich Farms. Here is where the first cry for unionization and representation for the field workers of Delano began.

They didn't provide anything

It was during harvest in late August and in the beginning of September that so much happened. The days were very hot, as usual in 1962. The foreman didn't give the workers a break, nor did he supply toilets or cool water for workers to drink. I remember very clearly because my father, mother, and three older sisters were there. My father reminded me to fill our jug with water and ice from our freezer and to get a roll

of toilet paper to take to work with us.

That one horrible day I would never forget. The sprayers were fertilizing with DDT and other chemicals on the grapevines. These sprayers were fertilizing while the fieldworkers were at work. While they fertilized, one worker fainted in the fields and later was found dead. She had breathed in the fertilizer and was poisoned. Some people who had their faces covered with rags were still affected by the poison. The fertilizer filtered through the rags, causing a rash on their faces. Later, when washed, the skin turned to patches of low pigment. Others got asthma later on. My oldest sister was one of the ones who got asthma, and patches on her face. My mother and two other sisters only got patches on their faces.

The foreman insisted on the workers staying or they would get fired. But some friends, my family and I were already leaving when one of the ladies that was working still, cried out very loudly while running toward the outside of the fields, covering her eyes. The fertilizer got into her eyes and she lost her sight. My family heard her cry, "No veo, Dios mio, socorro!" My sisters and father ran toward her. While they ran the foreman was laughing because he thought she was making an excuse to stop working. He went to her and slapped her face. While trying to stop the foreman from slapping her, my father was stabbed with a pair of clippers used to cut grapes. My father was wounded on the upper part of the arm. Still lying on the ground, friends helped wash his arm with water from the jug I was holding. I was crying at the same time getting stained with my father's blood. One of my sisters helped my

father to the car to be taken to the hospital; another man held the boss while one man called the police. Later they found the woman in the fields dead.

She had no family or relatives, so all the workers from Zanninovich cooperated for her funeral and burial. I was in a state of confusion and shock. My mother was being cared for by my two sisters.

My father was taken to Delano Hospital, and the boss was taken under custody and later tried.

After this incident at Zanninovich, we started hearing of others with almost the same problems, with sprayers fertilizing while people were working. People complained while others died. But growers said fertilizers didn't harm anybody; it was the heat.

One day fieldworkers got out of the fields in November to go to court. At Bakersfield Municipal Court, growers and sprayers were tried. Growers argued it was the heat, it was because we were weak, or because too much beans didn't give us the strength to stand the heat. On the Farmworkers side, a coroner spoke and said the deaths were caused by the poisonous DDT in the fertilizer. Growers were forced to omit DDT in the fertilizer and were fined thousands of dollars. From this



point, the Farmworkers of Delano grew. People then became aware and started unionizing. But fieldworkers weren't recognized as a union until 1964, September 18. The fieldworkers organized a pilgrimage all the way to Sacramento. By September 25th we arrived. Along the tiresome road that we walked people who were not in the march passed us by, throwing rocks and bottles at us. One man that thought of a stupid idea of scaring us off the road by trying to hit us with his car or pickup, ran over a little girl that was with me. She was seven years old. She had faced reality as early as I did; but God didn't let her help me in the future with our people. The man who killed her was arrested and later sued for four thousand dollars. Her parents gave the money to the union to continue our cause and to better our struggle.

When she was buried it was a beautiful burial. There were white doves on her white coffin symbolizing the purity and innocence of a child. Everyone was very impressed. Her parents gave thanks to God that He was going to guide her to heaven.

When we finally arrived in Sacramento, people looked at us as if we were invaders. Servicemen at the gas stations put up signs on restroom doors saying, "Out of order for Mexicans." At some places if you were Mexican you had to pay. Other residents who understood our struggle fed us and gave us a place to stay. A rich man who saw us gave my brothers and sisters a place to stay and food to eat. He was so kind that I still remember him and know him.

The next day a few representatives and organizers went into the capitol and had a meeting with the governor. The government gave the fieldworkers a word of recognition and the right to boycott to certain limits, plus money to help the Farmworkers fund. When the boycotting started, my sisters were sent to all parts of the United States. My sisters went through all kinds of harassments.

They suffered from cold weather and lack of food supplies. The union was supporting the families of the boycotters at home, so they had a tight budget. We were one of the families being supported. The union paid our bills — for example: home payments, utilities, gas, electricity, and money for food. It was enough to support ourselves for a month.

The AFL-CIO who then recognized our union gave food to boycotters and clothed them with good clothes to suit the weather; later money was given to them.

I had a chance to go when I was ten years old and I also had to help boycott right after I got out of school. I transferred from one school to another: I went to Chicago where I saw the Black Panthers burn Chicago. I saw New York and the fights between Protestants and Catholics. Here is where we got a lot of help from the Protestant ministers and their people. Ohio was so racist it was a miracle if they didn't turn away people from the liquor stores. Philadelphia I could never forget. In Philadelphia the boycotters' children were being sent to schools near the boycotters' office. The principal didn't mind that we were Mexicans, till she found out we were boycotters also.

One day a little girl my age came up to me and I smiled at her. In her other hand she had a can and she hit me on the forehead, and then she called me a dirty Mexican. As soon as she hit me I felt like fainting. My forehead was bleeding so much and I was crying because it was so painful. I ran to my teacher and she scolded me and pushed me out of the playground and told me to stay away from "our children." She said to go, but I didn't know how to get home, so I sat outside the gate trying to clean off the blood from my face. But it was useless; the blood kept running down. The other huelgista children saw me from inside their classroom. These were children of the organizers, all from Delano. When the teachers saw them go out of the classroom, they told them not

to come back. The oldest child threw a rock at the door, then pulled me up from the ground; I was too weak and could hardly run. We ran into the city and going the wrong way we encountered a huge black dog. All the others ran the other way and left me. I hadn't seen the dog till he got my leg with his teeth. His teeth caught on my skin as he ripped away chasing the others. I was so full of

Hermanita,

no vas estar sola

Little chicanita, over there in the corner, with so much life yet to live, with bright brown eyes of tenderness and curiosity, through my eyes of experience I hope to share with you, sometime, the corners of your life that you have no possible way of conceiving, the hard times that we never anticipate . . .

Yes, young lady, those pains and agonies of life that can't get repaired with bandaids and mercurochrome, the bruises of emotions that seem to go away only with time

If I could only spare you from that pain with some magic recipe, I would, but that isn't possible. . . unfortunately.

There will come a time when you will know what I am talking about. Maybe you'll wonder . . . "Is this what life is all about?"

Just remember for that one person that doesn't love you — there are ten more that do. You're a good woman and when you lose a love through another's error — you haven't lost a thing. Move on woman! There's a lot of life to live and enjoy! Don't stagnate; you know what happens to stagnant waters.

Pain and agonies will live with you for the rest of your life, if you allow them to do so.

Well hermanita, it's your decision. Hermanita, no vas estar sola, I'll be there when you want me to be.

*Con Cariño,
Tu Hermana*

Monica Delgadillo

pain from my forehead and then my leg. I cried so hard because I was so lost, and because my new dress was so dirty and ripped. I was afraid my sister Maria was going to scold and spank me. My sister had already warned me. People in the city who saw me pushed me aside until I fell into some bushes. I helped myself up crying. I had a quick thought that I was going to die. I sat on a bench crying myself out till I fainted.

Supposedly, the others got home and told them about me. Then some workers that were in the Boycotter's office went searching for me. They found me on the bench with a fever, unconscious, with lots of blood that I had lost all over the bench. Later I was told that the boycotters yelled at those around (thinking at the time I was dead), "Why didn't you save her!" They took me to the hospital where a female doctor attended me. She was a union supporter. She gave me more blood because I had lost so much, and searched for the dog that had bitten me. I was lucky that the dog had his rabies shot or I would have had ten through my stomach. When I saw my sister I started crying because I thought she was going to scold me. But she hugged me so tight I felt her trembling, and I saw her crying. She gave me a kiss and I told her I wanted to go home. She just laid me down on my head and told me to rest. Meanwhile, they sued the elementary school. It wasn't until later that I realized why it was so racist. The dog owner was also sued for having the dog on the loose in the city.

After I got out of the hospital my sister brought me home. Later, I went to Earlimart Elementary School. I loved my school better. Later in the year I picketed liquor stores in Delano. After school on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays I went to regular school, picket line, then to Huelga school. Here we had recreation, studies, refreshments. I loved it!

What I have told you here is only my beginning.



La Huelguista

*She was the oldest of many,
Strong and wise
Yet soft and warm,
As beautiful as the morning sun.
She toiled the soil from dawn to dusk,
Earning only pennies a day;
Every night she had aches and pains
Only taught by living day to day.*

*She saw many people
Who had a better life than she,
And wondered if she could have that life too.
She heard of how she could go to school,
Even earn a degree and make it big.*

*She read many books; they told lies, she said.
She met many people, many who were cruel and bad.
She also read a paper about the Farmworker's struggle.*

*It spoke of all the suffering
Of those hard-working people.
Getting a degree is important
But she knew reality did not
Lie just within herself.
She has left school with degree in hand.*

*Today she works from dawn to dusk,
She holds a paper in one hand and a flag in the other.
She carries the Farmworker's Initiative and
Waves a Huelga flag.
She has become part of the backbone of the
Fight against oppression of the Farmworkers.
She has joined the UFW to fight
For injustice in the fields
From where she once came.*

*She has become a Huelguista and prays
That she will not be the last one.*

— Connie Espinoza

A CHICANA FEMINIST'S PERSPECTIVE

by Anna Nieto Gómez

Both the Chicano and Chicana experience is affected by (racism and sexism). In fact both the Chicano and Chicana experience racist-sexism. Colonized men of color are considered as inferior as women since colonized men do not have the power or authority to rule, provide economically and protect the family. Thus racist-sexism considers Mexican males as either effeminate or "macho," over-compensating because of his powerless position in his society.

The colonized women of color are considered more passive, dependent, and childlike than women of the "superior" race. Therefore, the white women's relationship with women of color is paternalistic and stratified.

The sexual role of the colonized woman is intensified. Her skills and abilities are centered around her sexual prowess and procreation. It is the assumption of racist-sexism that the mental ability of women of color has atrophied. Thus it is justified that "those who know better" should make decisions for her.

Since the colonized women are totally placed in a dependent state, her primary source of support, hopefully, will come from her children and/or husband. But this support is sporadic, since all involved are in a social, economic, and political state of dependency.

Sexist historians omit the woman's question from research and analysis. Selecting only male leaders in depicting important events, reinforces the myth of women not affecting or participating in society. But more important, history minimizes the economic, social and political disabilities and assumes she was safely protected in the "stable family."

The Chicana/Mexicana is rarely depicted as participating in a struggle: during the conquest of

Mexico, during the fight for independence, the reforma during the industrial revolution in either Mexico or the United States. This omission reinforces the passive impression of women in history. Historians assume rights were "given" to her, in a paternalistic fashion. Sexual stereotypes in literature are left without criticism or analysis. The role and impact of the Chicana in the labor movements in the United States, and the civil rights movement are excluded without too much question.

Sexist values support that women be educated in the home, and formal education be given to men first since they will be the "bread-winners."

Sexism also confuses the issues of working people. The issue against unemployment and underemployment of men and the demand for affirmative action compete with each other. Workers compete for the same jobs as opposed to demanding jobs for all. Sexism reinforces the division among male and female workers when in reality it is within their interest to unite.

Racism is also used to divide workers in a like manner. White supremacy justifies a priority of employment and higher wages to white folks. Unemployment and poverty are considered to be the choice of people of color. This value system prevents workers from uniting and demanding jobs for all.

Male supremacy creates division among men and among women. Success to the strongest justifies why men compete with each other for a few jobs.

Chicana feminism is in various stages of development. However, in general, Chicana feminism is the recognition that women are oppressed as a group and are exploited as part of La Raza people. It is a direction to be responsible to identify and act upon the issues and needs of Chicana women. Chicana

feminists are involved in understanding the nature of women's oppression in respect to such issues as childcare, reproduction, economic stability, welfare rights, forced sterilization, and prostitution. The Chicana feminist is involved in research-analysis in order to understand how women's oppression is related to the oppression of other groups. Finally, Chicana feminism is involved in developing and initiating a means to end the oppression of women and all people.

Unfortunately, a Chicana feminist is discredited by associating her with "white" women. This sexist-racism implies: 1) only white women can initiate and create change, and 2) all women who speak out against sexism have the same analysis as to the cause and resolving of the issue. This is far from true. Feminist women's politics represent conservative, liberal, radical, and leftist politics. It is clear that this ignorant criticism encourages lack of support to Chicanas in their struggle for liberation. Thus, an effort to integrate the issues of Chicanas with the established "legitimate" people's issues are thwarted. Ironically, women are accused of dividing the movement when their goals are to fight the effects of sexism and unite with everyone.

Rather than relying on emotion in order to do the right thing, a continual process of investigation, research, discussion, and analysis should be a means of defining positions and action. Conflict should be seen as a struggle to develop.

In the last seven years women involved in discussing and applying the women's question have been ostracized, isolated, and ignored.

It is time to evaluate this historical trend. It is time for all to study the women's question and to develop an analysis which is applicable to the Chicana and Chicano.

A Todas Las Olgas

*Éste es un poema
de Olga Talamante
de todas las Olgas*

*Ella fue prisionera
de verdad*

*Ella fue prisionera
por verdad*

*Iba por los files
las calles
y ciudades*

*Diciéndole a la
gente*

*Las injusticias de
sus gobiernos*

*Ella dice
Ama la vida bastante para luchar
Ama la vida bastante para luchar*

*Prisioneras somos nosotros
Prisioneras de nuestra cultura
Chicana, Negra, Filipina o Latina
Somos prisioneras del sistema*

*Todas dicen
Ama la vida bastante para luchar
Ama la vida bastante para luchar
Ella, nosotros*

*Estamos aquí en
esta tierra*

*Libres a ir
qué lindo
a donde quiera
no sean mensas, sordas ni ciegas*

*Siempre somos prisioneras
del sistema*

*Ella dice
Ama la vida bastante para luchar
Ama la vida bastante para luchar*

*Qué lindo era
la gente se unió
a liberar a Olga Talamante
Chicana, Negra, Filipina o Latina*

Amen la vida bastante para liberarse.

— Connie Espinoza



*and raza
we wait
for each other*

*yeah raza
we only
wait
for each other
and
i do not
wait
within the shadows
of neutrality
i make
myself
strong
for the future
that
will contain us
i make
myself
strong
against
the past*

*and present
that
has us
divided
and multiplying
our differences
by our individual
oppression
that is not
individual
only lonely
from lack of unity
and
i make
myself
strong
to make
you
stronger
and
i make
myself
strong
to embrace
you
within this lifetime*

— Veronica C. Cunningham

LA MENTIRA DURA

HASTA QUE LA VERDAD LLEGA

by Elizabeth Alvarado
and Diana Borrego

Part of our jobs as counselors has involved working with Chicana women, young and old. In attempting to work with these women to bring about resolutions in their lives as Chicanas in this society it has been necessary for us to continually re-identify and build upon the many indigenous strengths and aspects that are particular to our culture. This process has involved reading, thinking, and discussing with other Chicanas and Chicanos such things as aspects of our heritage that still influence our lives, strengths that have propelled us through very difficult times, and ways to re-activate our inherent supports to meet our ever-changing lives as exploited and colonized people.

One way to begin to seek new and more effective ways of revising, maintaining and enriching our culture and individual lives, is to identify and build upon our assets. But before we do this however, it is necessary to remind ourselves that internalized oppression is extremely difficult to escape since it is built into the training and schooling we receive in this materialistic and racist society. We are continually being convinced to rely upon other people's judgments and so-called value systems rather than being encouraged to develop and rely on our own. It is a constant struggle for even the so-called "aware" and "politicized" Chicanas to keep from perpetuating self-destructive beliefs and to break away from past images about ourselves. The severity and the degree of our socially induced self-flagellation tends to make any attempts at self-liberation seem at best romanticized and at worst reactionary.

However, our experiences also tell us that whatever "negatives" we have learned in the past we can also unlearn. And some of our support for doing this can come from recognizing those things that have contributed to our tenacity in a destructive society.

More often than not there are walls we must climb in our quest for harmonious living. There is a great deal of mythology about Chicanas that, unfortunately, we ourselves sometimes believe. The mythology is perpetuated in the media, by social scientists as well as historians. Chicanas have been described as manipulative, child-like, animal-like when sexual needs are to be met, pathological, passive, fatalistic with a touch of sado-masochism, as well as passive-aggressive. We have been presented stereotypically which has reduced us into objects and has stripped us of our humanity. Worse yet these images limit our view of ourselves.

However, in actuality, our diversity defies stereotyping. One of the biggest assets that we have as Chicanas is the fact that we come from a background of multiplicity ... multiple genetic and cultural origins. Chicanas are a uniquely heterogeneous group; each of us is different from the other and yet there are threads of a universal experience that bind us all together. We all represent different levels of acculturation. Each of us was curiously marked and shaped by our geographical locations. Some of us are from rural, more traditional experiences, others of us are from urban, more intense, surroundings, and others still are "fronteristas." And we can never forget that the United States itself has left an immeasurable imprint on us that perhaps we are not able to fully understand.

Chicanas reflect a complex and quite traditional culture, traditional in specific ways. We have a highly evolved sense of group identity; we have a sacred sense of life; and we have a deep sense of ritual. All of these particulars tie us together and keep us alive ethnically.

Our traditions, as well as keeping us aware of our historical roots, give us a place in the world. Everything is connected; all parts of the world are equally important; everything is one. Much of this philosophy and thought has its roots in the ancient world of the India. We cannot forget that we are not a displaced people. We belong to this side of the earth. We know that we are an indigenous people from this continent. Realizing this gives us a source of great pride as well as a source of pain.

to recognize

Given that our roots are indigenous we must understand that this exerts great influences on us in more subtle forms. This influence is not always obvious, but it is responsible for characteristics about us that we can't always explain or put into clear perspective.

The conflict occurs in our lives when we try to explain and find reasons for why we are the way we are. The other side of us, the modern, so-called "realistic" side of us demands reason and logical explanations for our behaviors. This is the dilemma of the bi-cultural experience. It is difficult to live in two worlds, one or the other may inevitably suffer. Living in a bi-cultural experience is like having your feet in two different realities. It is being keenly aware of your personal lifestyle and those of your people. It is the conflict that the outside world intrudes upon you. Our values are constantly bombarded with external information that each of us has to process and make decisions upon. Living in two worlds is a potentially high stress situation.

For those of us who choose to keep close ties with our traditional cultures, we must constantly refresh ourselves by being with our families, which are the single most important units in our lives. Our families have been a source of nurturance and strength, and have provided a sense of security and belonging in our ever-changing and dynamic lives. Many of us do not want to see this tradition die but would rather take the life-sustaining and positive features of the family and work to maintain them.

Our abuelitas and mothers are deep and intuitive philosophers and almost instinctively recognize our own human limitations in the world which surrounds us. For them everything can be turned into a learning experience, which is what *cuentos* and *dichos* do for us.

There are little grains of truth in *dichos*. There is a lesson in there somewhere for us to take and make a part of our lives. This is a very practical way to look at life; everything is philosophical and all experiences are equally worthy to learn and grow from. *Cuentos* and *dichos* are a way we have to clarify our behavior.

Dichos are usually in Spanish and that also gives us an indication of how the Chicana sees the world: with two eyes instead of one. Each of us uses our language in individual and quite personal styles, some of us more influenced by Spanish and others more influenced by English. In either case we are given a further understanding of how language affects our attitudes and perceptions and of how it tempers our reality. By this method we can reach across to each other in alien situations and touch each other through our speech.

This strong oral tradition and the closeness of our families have served to keep alive other life orientations and beliefs, such as our orientation towards material goods. We have tended to view material goods as either necessities or luxuries rather than ends to strive for in and of themselves.

Our approach towards other human beings is also different, for we have been taught to use much diplomacy and tact when dealing with others. This comes out of a basic respect for others' feelings and a willingness to let each person preserve his or her dignity. Our reserve and our desire to oftentimes screen ourselves from outside forces were born out of certain historical and psychological experiences. These attitudes are also reflected in the privacy that we maintain in regards to our bodies. Often viewed by others as indicative of a sexual "hangup," this orientation comes out of the pride and awe that we have towards the beauty and power of our bodies and sexuality.



There is a revived interest among many people now in such phenomena as psychic experiences, para psychology and self-healing. These phenomena have always been a part of our experience but we have been trained to deny this part of our lives, which has added to our alienation. This is why one of the main functions of the movement has been to constantly reinforce the fact that our differences are our strengths. And these differences and cultural particulars are never static or unchanging. We must remain cognizant of a continuum, for it is not at all practical to look at isolated situations.

Chicanas, then, operate from a basically healthy posture. This strength is based in the spirituality of our heritage, which encompasses all of the unexplainable and the unknown. Chicanas have grown up with the experience of phenomenon that, heretofore, has no scientific proof or explanation. We have a vast heritage of faith and trust in that which can only be felt and understood in the heart. Some of what transpires between people is not explainable, and yet, in trying to explain this elusive quality, too many words can render it as superstitious and paganistic. It is for each of us to take our spiritual heritage, come to grips with it, and make it an integral part of our daily lives.

If we examine spirituality and begin to look at it through a historical viewpoint it gains a certain substantial perspective. It achieves its proper place in our culture. Spirituality is an ancient and honorable component of our culture. It is the other half of the dichotomy of our everyday lives and allows us to see life and death as inseparable. Men and women of vision, those who were blessed with dreams and predictions, have to us been seen as holy men and women ... a great contrast to those given authority postures in today's majority culture.

The way we have lived has given us a deep strength, which in turn has allowed us to live fully even in the face of what seems to be overwhelming adversity. We are not naive in the ways of the world, but we still strive to develop additional skills and vehicles which will allow us to enhance individual potentialities. This internal process and re-discovery cannot stand independent of our efforts to create and maintain social fields within which Chicanas can begin to have a chance to grow into their full potential.

The White Line

Pride

*I see the beauty of my people,
I hear our language being spoken,
I taste the heritage of our ancestors,
I'm so touched by this love
That I feel the blood in my body,
Bursting with pride,
The gathering of young and old,
The unity of LA RAZA.*

— Eva Sandoval



A Struggle

*As I grow older it's easy to see
How hard a struggle it is to be, just me.
The white man treats us bad because of our darker skin,
He puts us down trying to make us think our color's a sin.
If our Raza sticks together with a power bold and strong,
We can show the Gabacho, all his thoughts are wrong.
We've been laughed at and walked on long enough,
Now it's time to be brave and show them we are tough.
It'll take time, years of fights after fights,
But it's so important we go through this
To gain our respect, justice and our rights.*

— Terri Relucio age 16

*I lowered my head
As if to be ashamed,
Ashamed of my brown eyes,
My brown face and my brown hair.*

*It didn't matter though;
They laughed with the
loudest howl they had.*

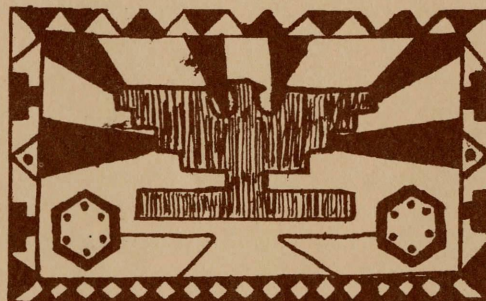
*I stood there ashamed,
Crying while a big
sound of laughter
Swayed with my crying*

*I raised my head
With my brown eyes
My brown face and
My brown hair as if
I were a goddess.
I stared at what transformed:*

*Many white people
standing on the right
side of a white line,
Crying.
With all the blacks,
The browns,
The reds and
The yellows, laughing
being sure that they
would not
touch the
White*

Line

- Katarina Zamora, 17



Bibon and the Snake *for outsiders*

by Lauri Sánchez age 12

In the corner of the trunk of an oak tree, a little green leaf chair holds little Sam, the little green frog. Sam loved to eat, and jump, and play with his friend Bibon the snake. Everyone, of the frog gang that is, thought that Sam the little green frog was slightly crazy for doing so.

Sam, on the other hand, of course thought much differently. His friend — whose name was George — who used to be his best one at that, was insulted to have his friend Sam run away from *him* for a snake. All his friends, to tell you the truth, were jealous because Sam the little green frog wasn't endangered by Bibon the snake.

As you know, there is nothing better than a great big, fat, juicy frog for dinner — for a snake of course. Sam, the little green frog, never really realized that the frog gang was turning against him because of Bibon. Sam thought he was friends

with everyone.

Sam liked everyone, but everyone didn't like Sam in return. The frog gang was building up a plan to make Sam and Bibon become enemies. Some of the frogs thought it was impossible, but George thought of a genius plan that could. He said that, "If all of us (frogs) disown our little friend Sam, he would probably come back to the gang. Bibon," he said, "would get mad and come and eat Sam," and then he said, "and then Sam will know who is a better friend."

Well, they did try to do this so-called great idea. Sam was playing "jump in the coil" (the coil was Bibon). Well, it so happened the gang walked by and said to Sam, "You either come with us or stay with Bibon and you can't have us both." Well, Bibon thought he knew what his little friend Sam was getting into, but of course Sam didn't have any idea.

Well, Sam obviously went with the gang because there were many more frogs than one snake. Bibon was very hurt, but he didn't try to stop Sam, to teach him a lesson. When Sam got to the frog gang's fort they beat him up and threw him out. But Sam knows, or more or less thinks Bibon is still his friend. But then again, Bibon pretended to disown Sam (but really he doesn't) and acted quite snobbish toward him. Really though, Bibon kind of enjoyed getting back at Sam.

Sam just sat there on the ground (Bibon put his little green chair away to make Sam be more depressed). Sam just sat there. Now he knew how it felt. Now he knew how Bibon felt too when *he* left Bibon. Well, why shouldn't Bibon leave him out now? Poor Sam felt like an outsider, just like Bibon did. So Sam went back to Bibon and they decided to be outsiders together.

Mike

— dedicated to Pam and Garry

*Mike, you came, you went.
The few times we spent,
You would listen to my woes.
But Mike, no one knows
what confronted you in life.*

*You left my presence so suddenly,
So unexpected I did not feel
The absence of your presence real.*

*I still look for you in the halls.
And still I can recall
you borrowing my pencil that last day.
Why didn't you tell me of your dismay?
If only you had let me know,
But you have never let your feelings show.*

*I cherish the moments I spent with you.
When last we saw Jaws,
And Timmy too.
Forever, now, Timmy reminds me of that night.
My only wish is that we might
do it again,
but I know we won't.*

*I know you are happy, now, where you are;
Perched high above the glittering stars,
Above the world without a care.
But what about us way down here?*

*We miss you, Mike.
And you must know
How it hurt Pam and Garry so.*

*But I want you, now, to rest in peace.
People are almost being at ease.
Now we will remember you.
Not in your coffin, but in jeans of blue.
And that old green jacket you used to wear,
Your happy face, your frizzy hair.*

*I'm happy for you now, Mike.
And I want it to show.
But I have one question:
Why did you go?*

— Lisa Sánchez,
at age 16

THE STING *A Satire*

by Lisa Sánchez, Age 17

"Oh, how sweet the flowers smell," were the words that came from her mouth, but inside her head she was thinking, "Carnations don't have a smell. Why couldn't you have brought roses."

She then invited him in and looked forward to another boring evening with her childhood sweetheart with whom she had been carrying on a relationship much too long for her own good. They passed boring clichés back and forth and then sat down to a well dressed table. They began to eat a sumptuous meal which she had prepared for him. She really didn't know why. The relationship, to her, lacked anything interesting. The only reason she had stayed with him so long was because she hadn't really known what else to do.

Every weekend he came up from El Centro to see her and every weekend she cooked dinner for him and he took her out somewhere. They stayed out not past 1:00 and then he stayed with some family of his in San Diego. Sunday, about noon, he would leave in time for his college classes on Monday.

That night, as usual, they ate dinner and he took her out. This night they went to the ballet, *Sleeping Beauty*. She enjoyed the ballet, but desired more interesting company.

Then Sunday came and brought relief to the young lady as her blase boyfriend came to utter his good-byes.

Tuesday, a masculine, tall, V-shaped man walked into the office. She gaped at him as his muscles rippled through his short shirt sleeves when he shook her boss's hand. The two began walking toward her. She wasn't quite sure what to do with herself. She pretended to be busy. She hoped the man had not seen her staring at him.

"Could you please show the new member of our staff around today? I have a luncheon meeting and will be very busy."

She was shocked. Her boss then left the new staff member at her desk. She got up in such a hurry that her chair fell backwards. She didn't bother to pick it up, but just held out her hand so she could get a feel of his. She was right; he had a strong grip, and she imagined herself in his arms.

Fortunately, he had arrived on her lunch break. "Come on," she said, "You can't start your day on an empty stomach." As he picked up his coat, it seemed that every ligament in his arm moved.

They had a fairy tale time and he even asked her out. She didn't have any guilty feelings about accepting, even though she knew what this man's intentions were.

The game had been played for three weeks now. On the weekend she went out with "Conceited Carl" who thought she loved him so much she would do anything for him and during the week she had been having an ecstatic affair with the new staff member who thought he had the girl fooled; and since he was getting tired he planned to dump her for another girl.

Her childhood sweetheart did not even know that his girlfriend had been having an affair the other five days he was not seeing her. He just expected her to stay home.

Friday night came after a month of her affair and her boring weekends.

The doorbell rang. She thought it would be a replay of every other weekend. Thoughts rushed through her head. She wondered how to get rid of these two she had willfully got involved with; but now they, each in their own way thought they had her in the palm of their hands.

Back to reality: "Conceited Carl" walked in carrying roses. She couldn't believe it. A Change at last. They ate dinner and went to the show. Afterward they came back to her apartment for coffee.

He took out a small box. She knew what it was. She was afraid to open it. She did. It was a beautiful, silver engagement ring, an arc studded with diamonds.

She couldn't get excited; she had no feeling for this man who thought that all there was to life was getting a wedding band, paying bills, and having kids. He obviously thought he didn't even have to ask. All he had to do was offer her a small box and she was committed to be his companion for the rest of her life. But she had a plan. She cried dutifully and thanked him as he had expected her to. They started planning the wedding the next day — after going together since ninth grade. They were both twenty-two years old now. He was in his second year of college. She worked.

Monday followed. That evening she was to dine with her love.

She invited him to her apartment. She wore the slinkiest dress she had. He walked in without knocking. When he saw her, right away he grabbed her, almost viciously. She knew he had something different in mind than she had planned. She didn't push him away. She thought that she would let him get a little higher before she let him down. He kissed her more passionately. Then she stopped him. "I'm Married." She showed him the engagement ring as a false proof. "I think this must end." His face went pale. His hands left her waist. He stood up and grabbed his coat. "How could you do this to me? I had no idea."

"You thought you were going to do it to me. I'm nobody's fool."

He left.

She planned to leave Friday morning, the regular boring Friday. Before she left her furnished apartment, she left an envelope on the table. In it was a silver engagement ring.

She sat and thought now, about the plans she had made during high school. She had wanted to go to college then, but her boyfriend had convinced her to stay where she had a good job while he went away to college. She remembered those days. But she had learned something now, something that she didn't know then — that she had a place, and she could choose where it would be.

El Niño, Los Gitanos and My Heart

Habia una vez un niño que los gitanos perseguían
 Porque tenía sangre de amor
 Por eso lo perseguían
 Y las rosas crecían
 Pero los días pasaban de muerte
 Pero él no lo sabía
 Los días no sabían que el mar escondía secretos como el amor
 ¿Que es lo que entendían?
 El agua azul ocultaba la belleza
 Los días tristes que decían ¿Qué le pasará al niño que buscan?
 Ellos no sabían que el niño estaba esperando la muerte.

El mar, los días
 Que los niños corren hacia el mar
 La luna, claveles y la sangre corre
 Corre niño que la luna viene
 Ya cree que se confunden los días
 Y ya sabemos que los días pasamos,
 ¡Sangre mía, limpia sus collares de sangre!
 ¿Y me preguntas que si yo te quiero?
 Las palmas, los días pasaban
 Luna, luna, luna mía
 Los claveles se limpiaban con la luna
 de los días que pasaban
 Pero ya los días estaban cortos
 Y los días pasaban tristes
 Porque la luna llegaba

I'm going to be someday broken hearted
 I'm going to take my heart where the sun doesn't shine
 And under the foamy, salty sea
 Under the waves that never stop
 I'm going to die.

— Alma Iris Rivera Santos age 12

Serenade

Through

piled

Rocks

Breezes of wind Rushes
 Through my grave and as
 I wait for something to
 Sweep away these

Piled

Rocks,

the music of the wind will
 continue to serenade my soul

— Rhonda Zamora,
 age 15

Para mi Hijita

Para mi hijita,
 Who was so small,
 But already knew rejection,
 Being hungry and poor.

Para mi hijita
 Con todo el carinoy respeto
 De una madre.

Who on April '76
 Would have been six years
 But only reached the age of two.
 Para mi hijita, Yvette.

— Margarita Macias
 4-3-76

What Do You Want to Be?

What do you want to be when you grow up?
 I know that kids know what they're gonna
 be when they grow up.
 Some little girls want to be a nurse.
 Some boys want to be a basketball player
 and be famous.
 Some say they want to box
 or play baseball.
 There's many things you could be
 When you grow up.

— Margarita Ortiz
 9 years old



Preserving La Raza A Survey

By Lisa Escobar and Rebecca Rendón

I wish to be acknowledged . . . as white — who but a white woman can do this for me? By loving me she proves that I am worthy of white love. I am loved like a white man. I marry white culture, white beauty, white whiteness.

— Frantz Fanon Black Face, White Masks

The subject of intermarriage between Chicanos and Anglos was first brought up as an area for discussion in our women's class. The class, *Mujer de la Raza*, consisted mainly of Chicanas and a few Chicanos. We thought that this topic, being as sensitive as it is, and as important as it is to the survival of our Raza, needed to be voiced more than ever.

Another reason we chose to discuss this topic is that during our years of growing up, we felt our parents always hoped that we would marry within our own race. Therefore, this article on intermarriage is also a personal outlook for us. Also, both of us have family members that are married to Anglos. We feel that one of the reasons their mixed marriages came about was because of their environment: the area in which they grew up and the friends with whom they associated were mainly Anglos; although, another factor may have been their own assimilated attitudes too. Did they really just lack the opportunity to associate with other Chicanos, or does the issue become more complex?

In order to attempt answers to many of our questions we decided to take a survey to give others a chance to articulate their views on intermarriage between Chicanos and Anglos. In the process of preparing the survey, we gave great thought to the questions that might best reach the gente, both rationally and emotionally. On the questionnaire survey we listed six questions. These are the ones that received the strongest reactions:

1. Do you feel there is a difference between the marriage of the Chicano male and the Anglo female and the marriage of the Chicana female and the Anglo

male? Why?

2. What major conflicts (if any) do you perceive in an intermarriage of Chicanos and Anglos? Explain.

3. Why would you (or would you not) marry an Anglo?

4. Why do you think Chicanos marry Anglos?

The reactions or responses were as different as the ages (fourteen to forty-four years) surveyed. The majority of the responses were from women. We were able to obtain approximately one hundred responses. This was a random sample; locality of the individuals differed from college students, to middle class, to barrio residents.

In so many of our findings most believed that there was no difference in a marriage between an Anglo female and the Chicano male and in a marriage between a Chicana and an Anglo male. But some Chicanos did feel that there is a difference. One Chicana pointed out that the Chicana, because she is a

woman, is forced to give up her culture for the Anglo man. On the other hand, she believed that the Anglo woman would be made to enter the Chicano culture because of the Chicano male's dominant role. If this were true, each of these Chicanos would be losing in some way in these marriages, unless their Raza beauty, and history, and dignity meant little to them.

The Chicana woman, unless she broke society's traditions, would be losing by giving up her cultural identity, while the Chicano male, although his wife may put on some of his cultural attitudes and adopt the language, still is not marrying a Chicana. A twenty-three year old Chicana summed it up: "Both Chicanos and Chicanas who marry or seek out Anglo mates, are turning to members of the dominant culture for one reason or another, either they have rejected their own culture or they see those of Anglo culture more desirable."

Several felt that the Chicana who married an Anglo did so to better her status, but that when the Anglo marries the Chicana, his family and friends feel that he is marrying beneath himself.

Even at times when the Chicano marries a Chicana the family may feel this way. This is because it is more socially profitable (in the United States) to be married to an Anglo. "He has somehow raised his status," said one thirty-six year old male. We believe this is also true because of the superficial measures

Hotel Plaza \$\$\$

As I walked into a large room I saw \$\$\$.

I smelled \$\$\$.

I touched \$\$\$.

People were wearing the most \$\$\$ clothes.

Conversations in the air were of \$\$\$.

Men were drinking and smoking the finest \$\$\$ could buy.

A man was staring at me, undressing me with his eyes

I wondered if he had any \$\$\$ on his mind?

Women were looking at me as if they were gods just because of their \$\$\$ appearance.

I floated around thinking if I wanted to play the \$\$\$ game I could be just like them.

I wondered how many people were \$\$\$ phonies?

— Lisa Roque

of success that are constantly being held in front of Chicanos: the shiny car, the T.V., middle class promises America bombards us with in a materialistic, technocratic, and class-oriented society. For those who are made to believe in these false promises, an Anglo marriage allows one the belief in his own acceptance by Anglo society.

More than half of those Chicanos surveyed felt that many Chicanos who marry Anglo women do so because they do not have much of a selection and because most of their contacts just happened to be with Anglo women. Many of these Chicanos had been educated and had come in constant contact with Anglos. When the time came for a marital decision the Chicano's likely choice, they said, was an Anglo because there simply were no Chicanas around.

Most Chicanas believed that these kinds of answers were just too pat, too simplistic. They felt that Chicanos who say that they just happened to fall in love with Anglo women, or that they just were not near any Chicanas at the time, are really revealing a more complex truth about themselves. For one thing, Chicanas say, the standard of beauty that is set in front of males today is not the Brown woman; she is the tall, skinny, blond, blue-eyed woman who looks nothing like a Chicana. The Chicano male seeks the kind of woman, if he is not politically conscious, that allows him to appear as if he has made a successful and right choice in the eyes of the whole society. The Chicana image of beauty cannot be found on the T.V., or in the *Playboy* magazines.

He must prove either to himself or to his family and friends that he is able to attract the ultimate in beauty and personality. These attitudes may be true even though the Chicano himself refuses to recognize that they are. He may cover up the *real* reasons for his choice by giving *good* reasons, such as, "I can't help who I fall in love with," or, "There just were not any Chicanas around."

With all these conflicts we live with and adjustments we must make, why do so many still live with and marry Anglos? For many the answer

is still that outstanding factor of love. This is of course true for most marriages, but it seemed like an overall, conclusive reason Chicanos gave for marrying Anglos. An all too common answer was, "Because they (we) love each other." But perhaps this answer is too simple and we are overlooking the complexities. To go one step further, what is it that makes you love the Anglo rather than the Chicana, who looks like your mother or sister? Many questions are evoked: Is the *guera* more of a status symbol? Do some Chicanos marry Anglos as an easier entry into the dominant Anglo world? A Chicano of twenty-seven said, "Chicanos may feel that in marrying Anglos, their children will be more accepted and less discriminated against. If their children are light-skinned, more than not, they will be accepted by Anglo society." Many simply do not understand the complexities behind this choice.

Frantz Fanon, in *Black Skin, White Masks*, talks about the effect that colonization and oppression have on the men and women in society. He points out the attitude of the oppressed toward the oppressor in a colonized society: Any anger, disgust, or discontent, Fanon says, is hardly ever vented against the enemy, the white oppressor, when the oppressed does not understand the conditions of colonization. Instead these emotions are turned inward against the self. Hatred of one's

self, of one's own dark skin, and one's own people is the result of not recognizing racism and colonization, or the real enemy, the colonizer. Instead, the oppressed lashes out at his own people, and struggles to be more like his own oppressor, who he sees is accepted and successful in society.

We felt that this survey had great importance in disclosing how many people feel about the marriages of Chicanos and Anglos. But also, we feel that this survey has no definite conclusions. We have just stated what was learned and revealed from the opinions of many. There are still many questions left to be asked and still so many people that were not asked to articulate on the subject.

As we, Chicanas become more aware of ourselves and take more pride in our Raza, we appreciate Chicanos more and more, but Chicanos who will accept us as women, not objects. As we see that many Chicanos still marry Anglos, we should remind ourselves that the more we intermarry the weaker that makes us culturally and politically. We say we marry for love, but the time we spend with our Raza and the continued proximity of La Raza would promote the possibility of more of us marrying Raza men. In other words, if La Raza is not able to come together and be proud of the beautiful race that we are, then we are only destined to die out culturally, and doomed to become part of the melting pot.

"Ay mi Nana, pobre, pero cuanto sabía."

Si la mujer de hoy, tan moderna, tan liberada, tan enredada en sus estudios y en su trabajo tan importante, se descuida va hacer una triste lástima lo que se va perder. La mujer de hoy no tiene tiempo de las experiencias como su abuelita, no tiene tiempo de platicar largamente con la nana, y aveces, ni él mismo idioma hablan. ¿Que va ser de sus hijas y sus nietas?

Ella no sabrá presentarse como una abuelita mejicana, ella ignorará esas deliciosas comidas como empanadas y capirotado que fueron el secreto de la Nana. Desconocerán las medicinas como la yerbabuena y las hojas de limón. ¿Cómo serán las abuelas de mañana? No podrán nuestros nietos acojerse a las verdades de su abuelita, a su lindo mundo de oraciones y cuentos y consejos.

Ay mi Nana, la pobre, pero cuánto sabía ... Vicki Rodriguez

BROTANDO DEL SILENCIO

Quiero Decirte

Suni Paz says about her work:

The greatest strength oppressed peoples have is their cultural identity — an identity that endows them with the will to struggle.

The work of poets and singers is like the wind. One may choose to blow sand in the eyes of the people, blinding them to reality — or one may scatter seeds of consciousness that help to nurture in the people's hearts a passion for justice. I promised myself to sow the knowledge of our true history through poems and songs, that history which is being written daily by our people — that history about which the textbooks and the media seem so ignorant or deceitful.

As individuals we are mere drops in the suffering sea of humanity. With the consciousness of our culture, working together, we can share the power and the relentless action of this sea. We can turn rocks into sand. To break the silence, to find strength and unity, we must see ourselves in a continental, an international context. This is how we will come to understand who are the real enemies of humanity, and how to defeat them.

*quiet
and so far away
i know
beyond assumption
that
the silence
of your response
is not
acceptance*

Mira este canta sera
Para el hombre y la mujer
Vamos a hacerlo sencillo
Pa que se pueda entender.

Mujeres y hombres estamos
Prisioneros sin buscarlo
De avarlos capitalistas
Que nos usan como esclavos.

Las frustraciones el hombre
Se las saca en la mujer,
Despues le toca a los hijos
Y al ultimo al jefe de el.

A la mujer me dirijo:
Tu tambien debes luchar
Para salir de una vez
De tu gran pasividad.

Al hombre le toca ahora:
Entiende que la mujer
Sabe pensar y sentir
Y tiene derecho a ser.

Si dialogan y si enfrentan
Diferencias y conflictos
Se el hombre ayuda en los platos
Con los pisos y los ninos.

Si los dos juntos se ayudan
A superar el machismo
Y como dos companeros
Luchan por el socialismo

La liberacion vendra
Para los dos y los hijos
Para la gente del pueblo
Y para tu Puerto Rico

La liberacion vendra
Para todas la Chicanas
Para la gente del pueblo
Y todas nuestras hermanas

Companera socialista
Vendra la liberacion
Si con el hombre y los hijos
Haces la revolucion!

Written collectively by Suni Paz, Juana Díaz, and other Puerto Rican sisters, 1972.

This song is written
For the man *and* the woman
I tried to make it simple,
So it will be understood.

Both men and women
Are unwilling prisoners
Of avaricious capitalists
Who use us as slaves.

The frustrations of the man
Are first taken out on his woman,
Later touch his children
And only at the end, his boss.

To the women I say:
You must struggle to abandon
Your conditioned passivity,
And to leave it behind.

To the men I say:
Try to understand
That a woman can think and feel,
And has a right to exist!

If you both can talk over
And confront your differences,
If the man takes his part
With the dishes, floors and kids,

If you work together
To overcome *machismo*
And, like two comrades,
Struggle for socialism,

Liberation will come
For both, and for the children
For the masses of the People,
And for your Puerto Rico

Liberation will come
For Chicanas too,
For the masses of the People
And for all the sisters.

Socialist comrade sisters,
Revolution will come
If, with the men and the children
You make the revolution!

Vivir

Otra vez me llama
la vida.

Otra vez anhelo gozar.
Por qué no?

¡Es tan triste vivir
sin ilusiones!

¡Es tan triste vivir
en perpetua soledad!

¡Es tan fácil
creer y sonar!

Ver brotar las hojas
y nacer las flores
es la esencia de la vida.

¡Sentir como palpita el alma
Y hundirse en las olas intensas!

De una nueva emoción . . .

Es vivir,

¡ Es vivir!

Margarita Ponce

it is a culture
that
would lay me down
to crown me
with motherhood
and chain me
in tradition
to some man's kitchen
and
bury
my spirit
in house dust
and holy water
and muddy
the reason
of my soul

for a child
and a future
of the empty sameness

— Veronica

Cunningham

Movimiento is like

..... a chain reaction
you got to have the
c o n n e c t i o n s
and you have salsa in action

What a trip the connections
they make happen actions that give
a fool his/her satisfaction

And that is all GOOD actions
says that formula in action
yea! justify the c o n n e c t i o n s

— Marialupe



Rape report

He pushed me down and tried to force me to give
in

When I told him he couldn't have what was mine,
he used strong-arm tactics on me.

I fought back, I clawed and screamed
and for fighting for my honor,
I was punished even more.

He said, "I am doing you a favor, if you
submit, it will be easier on you."

I knew I was losing ground and then knew
it would be less painful for me if I quit fighting.

He received praise for what he did to me.

He took something that was sacred and beautiful
to me and replaced it with four-letter words.

I am making this report in English, you see,
I've been raped of my native tongue.

Rita Mendoza

beautiful looking
women
are
the rule
you are
more
than a rule
why
do you
try
to cardboard
yourself
in imitation
of plastic beauty
there
are
paper limits
to cardboard beauty.

— Veronica

Cunningham

My father talked on about politics. He assured me that Marquez Arce would do a good job as the Municipal President of Tijuana. And as I drove into downtown Tijuana, he spoke Spanish louder and more rapidly. Mexico was a rich country, he exclaimed. Tijuana was advancing and its future was promising. "There's the PRI headquarters," he pointed to a small office building painted red, white, and green. A visit from "Don Luisito" would not only boost the people's morale, but draw more attention to Tijuana.

We drove past the outskirts of Tijuana towards Rosarito. I listened to my father without replying. I was tired of his pride, his traditional, Mexican, authoritarian manner. But I was also tired of arguing with him. So let him speak of Mexico. Let him have pride in his native country. It was silly jabbering to me. If he was so proud of Mexico, why had he emigrated to the United States?

We arrived at a small restaurant in Rosarito where my father had left his truck and ridden a bus home to San Diego. I waited for my father while he walked over to his parked truck. He quickly returned to my car, jumped in and shouted orders to drive to the police station. I glanced at his truck as we drove past it. The windshield was cracked and bashed in.

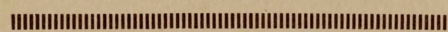
I waited in the car for my father to come out of the police station. Fifteen minutes later, he came out and waved me in. My father ceremoniously introduced me to each of the four policemen. One police stared off into space humming to himself. Another one seated at a desk was doodling indifferently. The tall, lean one, with black eyes and a thin moustache was leaning against the wall, coolly watching my father. Not more than five feet five inches tall, my father's small-boned frame made him appear thin. Sixty-six years of life did not show in his shining blue eyes. His long, white face was full of expression and life.

He paced the floor, demanding that something be done about the

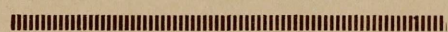
... es mi Papá



crime. But the policemen continued to stare out into space. The tall one removed the toothpick from his mouth and spoke to my father in a slow and careful drawl as if speaking to a child. He explained that they could tell him nothing about the accident until the chief of police arrived. No, the person who had witnessed the vandalism had not been officially interrogated yet. That would also have to wait.



by Patricia Santana



I stared indignantly from one policeman to the next. How dare they ignore my father's demands. They had no right to look condescendingly at my father. Where was your great Mexico now, papa?

My father stormed out of the office shouting, "Vamonos al infierno, Pati!" I ran behind him murmuring angrily, "Qué pendejos!" My father turned abruptly and shouted me to silence. He snatched the keys from my hand and ran to the car. I barely got into the passenger's seat before he sped down the road. He shouted at me, saying he was tired of my back-talk, my whole disrespectful nature. "Now you're going to see the man your father is!" he warned.

I screamed at him to let me out. But he shouted back, reminding me

that he was my father and I was going to obey him.

"You're not my father; you're a crazy man who cares only to prove his 'machismo'. You're a fool!"

He hit me across the face.

"You're a fool just like the rest of those 'pendejos'." He hit me again. I opened the door, warning him to stop the car or I'd jump. He jerked to the side of the road and stopped. While I fumbled for my purse, he grasped my arm, trying to twist it. "Dejame papa! Dejame en paz!" He grabbed my purse and, as he did, I ran from the car.

The few houses that dotted the roadway came alive with people. They saw me running towards them, crying. An old lady shouted to me, "Aquí niña . . ." I ran towards her. I jumped over a fence and ran through an alley while people crowded the streets. They questioned me, asking me who that man was who seemed to terrify me. Then I stopped running, "Es . . . es mi papá . . ."

Sitting in the back seat of the police car along with my father, I listened numbly to him tell the police that I thought all Mexicans were "pendejos." He explained to them that I had been disobedient and impertinent. The policeman was not listening to my father but, instead, looked me up and down and smiled approvingly. In the police station my father, again, tried to explain my show of disrespect. His eyes flashed a warning at me as he demanded that I repeat what I had said about Mexicans being "pendejos." "Sí, papá," I smiled tiredly, "starting with you."

The policeman smiled sympathetically at me. They asked me if I wanted to press charges against my father. I looked blankly up at them then turned to look at my father. He stood silent for the first time all day. His small-boned frame seemed bent; his head was lowered and his pale, blue eyes seemed tired. Sixty-six years of life showed on his weather-beaten face. I looked back at the policemen. I wanted to laugh at them but I was too tired, so I cried.

MUJER DE VISIÓN

— por Diana Borrego

The Chicana movement today is a strong and well-grounded movement. The fact that we are seriously examining and are open to many ideologies and world-wide movements attests to this strength and constant growth. From its inception the Chicana movement has concerned itself with more than just specific, regional issues. Our Chicana world has been touched by (and has also touched and left its mark on) other peoples and movements. Chicanas have engaged in dialogue with revolutionary women from, among other places, Cuba, Vietnam, and Latin America. More recently, a group of national minorities from the United States were invited by the Peoples Republic of China, to examine and experience first hand their treatment of national minorities and to witness the making of the revolutionary society the Chinese people are creating. One of the Chicanos who was a part of that exchange was a woman, Margaret Castro, the present Executive Director of the San Diego Chicano Federation.

One of the things that struck me most in talking to this woman was the fact that she seems to *really* enjoy her work. Although she is aware of and continually deals with the daily struggles and pain of Chicanos, she has been able to maintain a healthy sense of humor and an optimistic outlook. This approach to work and the Chicano movement is essential and vital to the overall marshalling of our energies.

Somberness and stark realism have at times only been redundant in the face of our oppression and have sometimes fallen victim to the danger of detracting our attention from the many strengths that sustain oppressed people all over the world, strengths that have always formed the bonds of a people's movement.

(I asked Margaret to comment on the importance or the significance that the trip to the Peoples Republic of China had for her.)

"Number one, I think it brought a total group together of closeness and honesty that I hadn't seen in a long time, of working together. There was no pulling or no resistance between either one of the people that were there nor between cultures. There was a 'radical liberal' Anlgo in the group and at first she found it very difficult to be with us. I personally didn't feel any strain but the rest of the group, the minorities, felt a strain having her there, and she felt it. But by the middle of the month-long trip she started changing a lot of her attitudes. She realized, I guess, at the beginning of the trip that she was a racist or had racist tendencies or feelings. So she pulled away from all of us.

"But as we got into the trip and she started seeing the kinds of things tha China was doing with their people, and in a pluralistic manner, she began to pull herself back in and there was no resistance from anyone. It was as if she had grown or blossomed.

"It was fantastic! We heard things! And we got to know each other deeply ... I don't believe that minorities like consciousness-raising. We don't get into each others minds or bodies but we did over there. We've never gotten into that sort of thing, but over there it happened automatically. Like one of the Black fellows talked about how he pimped for the white man, and he broke down and sobbed about the oppression we feel in the U.S. and things that we have to go through like selling ourselves. He had seen so much of what the Chinese were doing for their national minorities that it became really emotional for him and he just broke down. That happened to just about everybody in the group at one time or another."

(Margaret then went on to tell me about what the Chinese were doing for their minorities that made such an impression upon the group.)

"Well, first of all, all national minorities were slaves. All of them. They didn't own their own land. They didn't have their own homes. They were illiterate and some of them didn't even have a written language.

"So their government has given them land, has built them houses and has taught them in the past twenty five years to read and write. They have their own newspapers in their own language. If there isn't a written language for a particular cultural group they construct and write a language for them. They are encouraged to dress in their own national dress. When you walk around China outside of a minority area you know when you see a minority ... they're dressed in their national dress. The rest of the people dress alike, but they are giving the minorities dignity.

"All the best medical doctors are sent to the minority areas to uplift the health standards. Instead of sending them the interns or inexperienced doctors, like what happens here in the U.S., they are sending them their best. The other inexperienced doctors go to the other areas because they have had the best in the past.

"In the minority areas the sanitation conditions and health conditions are being uplifted. They are building brand new hospitals. The old people are just beginning to want to learn to read and write and are going to school too. They are learning other things, participating in discussion groups.

"Also the national minorities are entering colleges and universities all over China and when they don't know about a topic or when they have difficulty with an assignment the whole school helps them — the teachers, the dean, the principals. The students themselves help one another."

(I asked Margaret what it was that the Chinese were working towards and why they put so much energy into uplifting their minorities.)

"I think they are working towards real equal parity for everybody, equal opportunities and equal status for everybody, and non-competitiveness.

"In the U.S. you are supposed to dress a certain way and people try to outdress each other. I remember when I went to Point Loma High School, a school where wealthy students attended I used to feel embarrassed to go to school because I only had two skirts and two blouses and I had to take turns wearing them. But the girls that I went to school with dressed like fashion models.

"In China this sort of thing is not happening. They don't have to go through that. They are teaching people that it is O.K. to dress in the same clothes and I like the custom where they all dress in the same type of clothing. They are well kept and neat. But they don't go out and buy a lot of clothes. They are spending their money on the needs of the people."

We have to take the first steps

(We talked about how difficult it is for outsiders to understand what is happening in China and how it is hard for them to look at their society objectively.)

"One of the things we Americans try to do is to put everything in our bag, into our society and our concepts. I was one of the people that had a negative feeling towards socialism and I really didn't know what it meant. But I saw a lot of good things there.

"When you look at their country, or any other country, you can't look at it in our terms or in our concepts. It has to be looked at in terms of what they are, and not what we want them to be or what we think they should be. We need to look at it from their perspective and not try to force people into our molds.

"And if that country was infested with drugs and heroin and if it was infested with people dying of hunger and malnutrition and there was selling of women, now that has all been eliminated; then I think that we have to take a look at it. Whenever I make a presentation I tell people, 'Don't look at it through our concepts and through our government's perspective. You have to pull away from that.'

The curanderas, herbs we use, celebrations like Cinco de Mayo and Chicano Park Day—that is mental health.

"I'll tell you one thing, when I came back from China, for two months I had to pull away from everything because I went to the store after being back a week. I went to the shopping center in Chula Vista and I was so depressed because people walked around in there hitting you and passing by not even saying 'excuse me'. People were crowding right in front of each other.

"We don't have any respect for each other in this country. But I saw this respect in China. There, old people are brought to the front of the line and very rarely do I see that here. Although it is inherent in our culture, even we ourselves are starting to lose that, and our family closeness, that respect for one another. I don't think we should lose those kinds of values and I saw it there.

"And talk about clean! If somebody drops something on the street a passerby will pick it up. The place is spotless. All over it is clean, but in this country we don't have that cleanliness either. But then in turn, too, administrators over there are out cleaning the streets too. So everybody is cleaning, not just the janitors. Everybody participates.

(Margaret also talked about the changing status of women in China and related some ideas to our experience as Chicanas.)

"There used to be much prostitution and if there were too many female children they would be drowned or sold to get money for the family. So really if a girl was born into a family, unless that family had a lot of money and could feed her, she probably wouldn't survive.

"The differences now are visible. For instance, in the beginning of our trip we started out with six interpreters and we ended up with a bus load of women — women factory workers, women in administration, and in schools of foreign policy.

"I think the Chicanas in this country have also gone through a lot. Like

Chicanas are the backbone

the Adelitas — when their men went to war they were on horses fighting side by side. But then there came a point in this country, when the Chicano movement began, when woman was in the background, although she was learning and educating herself. And many times she was the backbone for the men. I think that here is where there is a difference between the Chicana movement and the Anglo women's movement. That is, we have never broken away from our men. We didn't step on our men. We might have expressed things through newsletters and writings but in actuality we didn't take our disagreement outside the household.

"I believe that because our men are oppressed, too, wherever a Chicana goes she will take the men and we will push them, too. Again, I think it is different with the Anglo women, but then that's because the dominant society has been run by Anglo males. It is different for the Caucasian woman. She has something else to deal with."

(I noted that there seems to be another parallel between the Chicanas' and the Chinese woman's movement in that in both situations even though Women's liberation is a high priority, the woman's struggle is not seen as an isolated movement

movement but rather as part of a larger struggle for human rights and the development of each individual's potential. Margaret commented on this.)

"This is true. You know, they use billboards as educational, visual training for people. For women they made all the billboards and all their plays with women heroines. All the billboards are pushing women, saying that they could be in the congress, which is the body that governs China, and that they could go to school and that they could do this or that. Now women are in the congress, not fully, but there are more and more women there. There are more and more women in the schools.

"I met a woman who was a factory worker and she had become an official. She was born in the slums and didn't know how to read before. Now she was reading and was serving an important function. It was impressive and, as I said, I had a negative impression about socialism, although I don't believe that his country should take on the Chinese form of socialism because we have our own structure to work with.

"But there are a lot of things that are neglected in this country and China has set a good example and has showed that if the government really wanted to serve the people they could do it. But in actuality they don't want to. Changes aren't easy but someone is going to have to make the first step and say, 'I'm going to eliminate this, and do this,' and then take the full responsibility for their actions. Eventually, someday, someone is going to have to get in government and be willing to take the chances.

"Another priority is our young people. We have to make sure that all our kids go to school and Chicanas must go to school. They must complete their schooling. High school is a number one priority. If they are not going to complete high school then they should go to vocational schools or they should specialize in

something. And whatever we do, we have to be better than others. We need to be positive and remove every weakness that we have.

"We have to build our families and make them strong. We were strong at one time, but we are losing this. Our kids are becoming acculturated in Anglo ways, with the family having a loose structure. In the past this has been one of our strengths.

strength

"I've seen that in China that is what they did and everywhere I've been talking in the community I've been telling the Blacks, Asians, and Chicanos this. There are billboards in our community that could be used for this purpose. Instead they are selling us trash.

"I think that the people ought to start writing letters to the city council, to the Board of Supervisors, saying we want you to purchase these billboards for our community and every month we ought to praise someone in our community, praise the value of education and what it can do for you. We ought to use them to encourage having our own institutions and our own economy. We should start using billboards for those kinds of things, for building a self-respect among our people.

"Another tradition we should keep alive is the under ground telephone because we can protect each other with it. For instance when something bad comes into town everybody learns about it. So a lot of those things that we have we should keep and in actuality it helps our mental health because as we become acculturated in the Anglo attitudes then we will become mental health victims and end up in mental institutions. But as long as we keep the family structure, keep a lot of the cultural things that give us pride, dignity and respect we will not end up in the mental institutions. The curanderos, the herbs we use, celebrations like Cinco de Mayo and Chicano Park Day, that is mental health."

(At this point we were again struck by the similarities of these two ancient cultures and the importance that the maintaining of positive traditions plays in the survival of a people. Margaret continued.)

"I came back with all of these ideas, but during the two months I pulled away; I just didn't want to talk about it, and now I'm beginning to piece it all together with other people. I think one of the things that we have to realize is that Chicanos alone can't do it. We have to work with other people too. We have to unite with the Blacks, with the Asians; we have to unite with the womens movement and then eventually with the total population, with a whole new change in openness and equality.

We have to build our families and make them strong. . . In the past this has been one of our strengths.

"We've already begun to form a coalition with the Black Federation and the Asian Federation and with the Indians. We have a verbal agreement and we're very supportive of each other. We are starting to cease challenging each other in public. It's a private discussion and if the Blacks are lacking somewhere I don't see why the Chicanos shouldn't say that there are not enough Blacks there, and vice versa. We have to begin to speak up for each other, in other words."

(I asked Margaret to comment on the relations between women of color.)

"I think that as women we have a lot more in common than even the men do because, first of all we all have our respective culture and secondly, we have in common that we have all been in the background, and

the most unique thing we have in common is the experience of being women. There are certain things internally that bring us all together. At the Minority Women's Coalition Conference here in San Diego we saw and experienced it, the emotions, the feelings, and the unity that let us talk together.

"I didn't even realize what had happened until it was all over. But the next day all of a sudden it hit me. You know, we got together. Nobody fought against each other. Nobody pitted one group against another. It was a normal-type thing that should have happened a long time ago. It was fantastic!"

(We then talked about the direction of the Chicana movement, and Margaret commented on some of the things she would like to see happen in the Chicana movement.)

"Number one, I think Chicanas should not fight each other, because we all have to realize that we have varied ideas. So we should never criticize each other outside of our family. That is number one.

"Secondly, we have to realize that there are a lot of Chicanas with resources in varied fields and I think that we have to start forming Chicana groups, professional groups. The professional group could be a resource to other Chicanas, not in competitiveness but in sharing. I think we also have to form groups for cannery workers, for hotel maids, and for waitresses. Up to now in the women's movement those individuals have been excluded and we should never forget or never exclude them because it causes a split. So we need to start forming the Chicana women that are doing that work, young and old.

"We need to start forming Chicana committees on health, employment and social work. We need to become specialists and ask how these areas relate to Chicanas.

"Also I think we have to start looking at running Chicanas for political office because we have a

different perspective. We must be united in word and deed, and specifically the Chicana must be very positive and should work to strengthen our families. In relation to this I think that inter-marrying should not take place at this time ... later maybe, but I truly feel that we have to stick together.

"In short, we have some fantastic techniques that we could use to make positive changes if we would only use them. Eventually I suppose that I'll be criticized for some of the things I'm talking about but I'm in a place now where I honestly believe that those weaknesses we must push aside and only look at our strengths so we can build an economic base. Chicanas have always been the backbone so it might mean that we will have to take the first steps. We may not be liked for what we are doing. We might even be called the machos, but I see Chicanas as leaders. I really do and I believe that minority women are going to lead this country. We have been strong and we have much to offer.

"I believe that because we are a super-sensitive race that we will never be exclusive or be reverse racists. I think that when we begin to run for offices and fill positions that we will not exclude people but will instead be concerned for human beings. At least that is how I see my people."

(I asked if the people in China are aware of our movement in the U.S.)

"Yes, they are very much aware of the problems and the oppressions of the Chicano. They have old newspapers but they would like to receive new kinds of materials about the Chicanos. They sent a message to the Chicanos and I am going to print it in one of the Federation Newsletters. It goes something like this:

We welcome the Chicanos, Spanish-speaking Hispanos to China. We are your friends and we throw roses to you and we salute you. We know that someday we will be united, and we are in unity with the Chicanos."

(Margaret then had this to say about where the Chicana fits in relation to other women of color around the world.)

"The thing we all have in common is struggle and culture, and I think that oppressed people tend to unite together. I think in this country the same thing follows. Oppression is not unique to the Chicanos. It is only more visible because of our numbers, for one thing. But we should not hesitate to work and form coalitions with others. Oppressed people seem to group together and I don't believe our cause or our struggle will ever be swept under the rug again unless we ourselves let it."

(And if we are successful in our struggle?)

"Well, I have a dream that someday when we go to congress we are going to see Black women and we'll see Black men. And we will see white women and Asians and Chicanas, and it is going to be the most pluralistic unity. I believe it is going to happen.

"It won't happen soon. It will come after fighting and struggling and revolution. But eventually it will happen and people will get together. We won't all think the same but there will be changes so that the poor and other disadvantaged people will not be as poor as they were before. They will all have a living wage and we will all be super-considerate towards the old and people in need. Eventually, but not in my lifetime. And it will only be brought about by people who continue to fight for the cause of all human beings."

I think that intermarriage should not take place at this time—later maybe, but I truly feel that we should stick together.

It started on a hot September day, when I went to the doctor and found out I was pregnant. I knew then my greatest problem would be facing my family, not so much my brothers and sister, but my mother. Then I would have to decide what to do. I was nineteen and had just begun junior college two weeks before going to the doctor.

When I finally got out of the doctor's office I was so nervous about going home that I took my time walking to the car. I was trying to think of a way to put it to my mother gently. I knew I would first have to explain to her why I was home so late from school. Even though I was nineteen and out of high school I still had to explain many things to my mother. There were so many thoughts running through my head that at that moment I felt like taking off as far as I could go, and forgetting about going home at all. It was then that I saw my mother and my older sister, who was also pregnant, coming out of another office in the same building where I had my doctor's appointment. I ran and hid in back of a nearby pickup truck, hoping they hadn't seen me. Thank God they hadn't. As they were getting into the car, I suddenly realized I had parked my own car close by. It was a relief to me when I saw them driving out the east exit instead of the west, where my car was parked. All I could say was, "Thank God," again. It was now nearing five o'clock and I knew I had to go home.

I got home a few minutes after my mother did. I knew I was going to get yelled at for being late and would have to explain why I was late, but this wasn't unusual. No one had yet suspected anything about my pregnancy, although I was almost four months along. As soon as I walked in the house, my older sister started in on me by asking, "Where have you been all this time?" At that moment I felt my heart drop about a foot. I had no choice but to tell the truth, because I would be showing soon, and I knew I should have been home by three o'clock. In a very low voice, I said, "I have been to the doctor." She asked if I were sick and to what doctor had I gone. Again, in a

My Decision

One Day in September

by Patricia Ruiz

low voice I said, "Dr. Werner." As soon as I mentioned the doctor's name I knew they would know right away what was wrong. It was Dr. Werner who had delivered my sister's first two boys. My mother came right out and said, "Don't tell me you're pregnant!" What could I say but, "Yes." In a few seconds my mother's face was full of tears, and she said to me, "I knew there was something funny, because you hadn't complained about your period." Yet, I didn't feel ashamed for what I had done.

I remembered how funny it was to me that my mother hadn't mentioned anything before this, because I was very sick during August, which was my third month of pregnancy. I was in bed for two weeks; I couldn't eat; I had had stomach pains and I even went down to eighty-two pounds during this time. What was even stranger was that my mom took me to two different doctors and each one diagnosed a different sickness for

me except the real one. She finally got tired of my illness and made an appointment for me with a doctor in San Diego. My aunt Maryann had recommended this doctor to my mother. We were on our way to Stockton when she took me to see the doctor. As soon as I walked in the examining room he told me I was pregnant. Naturally I already knew this by the changes in my breasts and because I missed three periods. So it was no shock to me when Dr. Werner gave me the news. It just made things more difficult for me.

Getting back to that day in September when I gave the news to my family: that night my mom hardly said a word to me. I really couldn't blame her. After all a mother doesn't think a thing like this could ever happen to her own daughter. Mom went to her room after making tortillas and wouldn't even look at me, much less talk to me the rest of the night. The last words she said to me were, "I don't want to talk to you or see you again." I got really hurt when she said this to me. This is when I really started to cry, because I had finally realized what I had done to my mother. Even though I wanted so much to sit down beside her and ask her for her help, I just couldn't. I never have been close to my mother, although at that moment I wished I had been close to her. This is when I needed a mother's love the most,

The Letter

I saw you, daughter, off to college for the second year in a row.

My heart cried for I would miss you terribly.

But, on a better look I could see your heart was full—
that you were excited and happy to go to this stimulating venture—
your eyes were bright and full of the future.

Go, my daughter, go to find your world—

and when you find it, share your discovery with me.

I have my own world here — your father, the kids and friends,

I am happy in my world.

God willing, you will choose a life that will include us.

But if you do not, choose wisely my daughter (Thank God you have a choice).

If it's a position you seek, search until you find it.

If it's travel you wish, travel slowly and enjoy every minute of it.

And if it's a home such as we have, be sure you love your young man (for only when you have total love will you have happiness).

Goodby, my daughter, if you return to my home I will accept you with open arms, if you choose not to return—

go with my blessings.

— Rita Mendoza

but couldn't get it. All I could do was to sit and watch T.V. and keep my thoughts and feelings to myself.

I felt sick that night and didn't know who to turn to. My older sister told me to go stay at her house. Knowing how my mother felt, they all thought it best that I stay there. Because I did not want to hurt anyone anymore with my presence, I went.

When we got to my sister's house we began to talk about what I should do. My brother Frank and his wife came along too, so that we could all talk together. I can still hear my brother-in-law saying, "Well, it's too late for an abortion, but you can give it up for adoption." I didn't like this group talk at all. Everyone just kept talking as if I wasn't even there, and making decisions for me. No one ever even thought to ask me how I felt. The night went on like this until my sister Dolores finally came up with a good idea.

She suggested that we call my older brother to give him the news and to ask for his advice. The following morning she called my brother Steven. They were talking for a long while. I was not able to hear what was being said, and was eager to know what he had to say. I then got the telephone. Steven suggested that I go and stay with him in Stockton until I could decide what I really wanted to do.

That same week I got my ticket to fly to Stockton. Before leaving, I asked my brother Frank to take me home so I could talk to Mom. I had tried talking to her before, but she would only turn away. I told her how sorry I was that I had hurt her so much, and that now I was leaving for Stockton. I knew she would ignore me, but I just kept on talking. Finally, I said goodbye, even though I knew she wouldn't answer.

When I arrived in Stockton, my brother and his wife were waiting for me. We talked when we arrived at their house. They were both very understanding about my situation. We talked mainly about what I was going to do. I already knew what I wanted to do, but I also knew that it was the one thing my mother did not want. I had decided long ago that I was going to keep my baby.

Seven Little Angels

*As I sit and ponder
At what might have been,
I wonder if given time
I'd do it all again.
I think I would — and then,
Remembering the pain
I think I wouldn't
For there would be no gain.
I recall the day we met.
He was so young and sweet.
I knew that he had come
To make my life complete.
He said that he loved me
And asked me to be his wife.
I said I wanted him near me
For the rest of my life.
We wanted a baby
To hold near and dear.
So we had two
The very first year.
Within the next few years
We were blessed with five more,
Seven little angels
We swore to adore.
We had such happiness
I thought it would always be*

*But little did I know
What was in store for me.
Then illness came into our lives
To burden him so dear,
To fill his very soul
With anger and with fear.
I remember well the day
He said he had to leave.
Seven little angels and I
Were left alone to grieve.
The illness lingered on and on
Throughout the lonely years.
But God gave me the strength
To raise my little dears.
Now, they're all grown
With angels of their own,
And I am left to sit
Here . . . all alone.
I know now that my time is near
It's been a privilege to live,
To give my seven little angels
All the love I have to give.
I leave a legacy of love,
Of hope, of things to be.
And yes, I'd do it all again . . .
If it were up to me.*

— Jeanne Arévalo

Working Mother's Song

*Mama's gone to work,
And that's o.k.,
'Cause Mama works
for her weekly pay.*

*Mama's got no man
To help carry her load,
Mama don't care,
She's brave and bold.*

*That's why Mama works everyday,
Mama works hard for her
Weekly pay.*

*She wakes up early at dawn,
Fixes her family
Then she gone,*

*Mama works hard every day,
'Cause her children
Gotta eat today.*

*Maybe on Sunday
They'll go downtown
Maybe the park,
Until dark.
Come on home, a bath,
Then bed.
Then on Monday she's at it again.*

*A little bit of school,
'Cause Mama's no fool
Study her classes
Till she passes.*

Coro:

*Mama works hard everyday,
Mama works hard for her
Weekly pay.
Mama's got kids and that's o.k.
That's why Mama works
Everyday.*

— Carlota Hernández

Images of Women in *Bless Me, Ultima*

By Regina Unpingco-Garrett

Minority women today exist in a double standard of oppression. One, we are, as minorities, being oppressed by the dominant culture; two, we are oppressed as women within our own culture. One of the basic forms of oppression minority women suffer is the conditioning process that defines masculine and feminine roles in society starting from the day we are born. In order to be acceptable women we are expected to accept these roles. It is difficult to break from a "feminine" personality habit for fear of rejection from the majority, no matter how depressing or oppressive it may be. I believe many women feel this way. Feeling this way truly presents an obstacle that we must seek to overcome if we wish to be in control of our own minds and our own selves.

Chicano literature, most of which has been written by males, only serves to further the conditioning process by presenting women as one of two types: the virginal woman who is acceptable to society, or the whore, who is not. In the novel *Bless Me, Ultima* by Rodolfo Anaya, I have divided the women into four categories for purposes of discussion: one, the images of the female children; two, the way religion ties in with the image of the "good" woman; three, distinctions of the "bad" women who are rejected by society; and four, Ultima, who stands apart as a unique woman in her own class, but who is rejected by most of society.

The protagonist of the novel Antonio is presented one way, while his sisters are presented another. Antonio's sisters are always playing with paper dolls, giggling, or doing household chores. Throughout the novel, Deborah and Theresa are kept sheltered from hearing or seeing evil and from activities that require

physical strength, while Antonio grows and profits from these kinds of exposures. At one point, Deborah and Theresa are not able to attend school because it is snowing heavily, although Antonio is encouraged to attend class:

"The girls will not go to school today."

"Stay in bed! The snow has covered the goat path."

I heard squeals and giggles from upstairs . . .

"Will Tony go?" Andrew asked . . .

"It's good for him. If he is to be a priest, he should learn early about sacrifice." (pp. 141-142)

Other female children are portrayed with a lot of femininity and daintiness. The girls in the catechism class are favorites of the Father because of their obedience. The boys are the exact opposite and often had to be punished for misconduct. The girls are always known to have the exact answers when the Father asks questions, and on Easter Sunday:

The girls' line was neat; they looked like angels in their starched white dresses, each pair of hands holding a white prayer book and a rosary. The boys' line was uneven, fidgeting nervously. (p. 207)

These examples stress the distinctions between masculine and feminine roles that Chicano literature so depicts.

The good woman in Chicano literature is often put on the same spiritual level as the Virgin Mary. Maria, Antonio's mother is, at times, equated with La Virgen de Guadalupe: the perfect woman, beautiful, kind, but most important, forgiving. After praying the rosary with his mother and reflecting on the

beauty of La Virgen, Antonio dreams of them both:

Virgen de Guadalupe, I heard my mother cry, return my sons to me.

. . . I saw the Virgen draped in the gown of night standing on the bright, horned moon of autumn, and she was in mourning for the fourth son. (p. 43)

Maria's life is confined to the home and the church. Her chores are distinctly labeled domestic. Her leisure time is spent knitting at home or visiting at home on a Sunday afternoon with friends. Antonio reflects on the heart of the home as "my mother's kitchen." Maria is the good woman: her role is childbearer, socializer, homemaker and servant.

Church is a place of solace for Maria. To be accepted in society you attended church regularly, never doubting the teachings of the church or the validity of the priest. Anaya shows women living in this way without freedom for creativity outside the home, thus trapping all women in a traditional role, unaware of their oppression. Most of his women show superficial characteristics: gracefulness, giggling, daintiness, but never really complex qualities of depth and strength.

Opposite of the "good woman" is la mala mujer. She has been depicted in Mexican history as La Malinche — the Mexican Eve, or the whore. Rosie and her girls are the other women in the novel, the town prostitutes, "diablas putas," bad women who are there to seduce the men. These women are completely alienated from the townspeople and ignored, except by the men who visit them. The townspeople label these women at Rosie's as whores, disgraceful women, but the men are not judged. Their visits to Rosie's are merely part of their expression of manhood.

Support Non-Violence or I'll Kill You

by Mary Sánchez

If a person in 20th Century America is serious about living a life of non-violent action, the person must learn to be sensitive to some of the built-in triggers of violence within the system. Otherwise, the whole concept of non-violence as taught by everyone from Jesus to Gandhi, from Chavez to King, must be considered nothing more than a crock.

Perhaps you have had a realization similar to what will be described here. Perhaps not yet. For me, it has taken some time to face the hard truth recalled a few years ago by Dorothy Day when she reflected on a line from Dostoevsky: "Love in practice is a harsh and dreadful thing, compared to love in dreams."

I have come to realize a subtle spirit of violence that has been built into the system, desensitizing its members to violence of words and even violence of our thought processes.

To blame the fact of violence in this case on the "system" would be a royal copout and another lie. The system is us. That a person can (and I believe, must) practice non-violence in 20th Century America is not a fraudulent hope or a mere pipe dream. Non-violence in 1976 is possible. I believe it and I know it. I have come to realize a subtle spirit of violence that has apparently been built into the system, desensitizing its members to violence of words, violence of non-verbal communication and violence of even our thought processes.

Recognizing the realities of contemporary living, the struggle to live a life of non-violence becomes acute. The deep rebellion that wells inside over the inhumanity of the system is akin to hatred — the opposite of love.

Coming to this point, I find it necessary to ask, "Shall I bear with those who create difficulties for me, or shall I destroy them?"

Here's where the system plays devil's advocate. Take the time I was sitting for three hours at the Welfare Office. Two people came in, one of them talking loudly and using language full of hate toward the caseworker, whose ancestry and whose mother were being put verbally through the mill. I sat behind these two people among the rows of straight-back chairs the County provides for its customers while they wait their turns like so many steers at a feedlot.

The language coming from the one who spoke became more and more foul as she worked herself into a frenzy, recalling the run-around her caseworker had given her. I knew I had to say something to her, to somehow bring peace to the moment. So I waited. And listened. She really hated her caseworker at the moment. She talked of killing her. She was already killing her with the speech she was making.

Finally, I did get a chance to approach her. We talked of love, of hate, of injustice, of tired backs, of frustration built on frustration brought on by waiting, by buck-passing, by insensitivity to problems experienced at the hands of Those People in Charge.

She was calmer now. But as I left her, I realized the calm was only tem-

porary. She hadn't seen her worker yet. What would happen when she finally did, I was never to know.

My confrontation with the frustrated woman left me with mixed feelings. Compassion? Yes. But there was a twinge of self-righteousness, too. How can anyone become that angry, I wondered. My time was yet to come.

It was three months later. I had been sent back to this office two days in a row and was left at the "feedlot" waiting room for three hours to merely hand some papers to the worker. (No one is allowed to leave papers for workers at the front desk. It's against the rules.) The rule-book mentality of those who hold the peace of mind of their clients in the palm of their hands, is impossible to describe here. And I haven't met all caseworkers. I have met only the insensitive ones, I think.

Let me just say that after feeling dehumanized, unpersoned and frustrated to the point of red-faced anger one day, I began to realize why the woman I had chanced to console a few months before reacted the way she did. When it happened to me, I didn't have anyone to share my immediate feelings with. I wanted to hurt, to strike back, to screech ugly words. To pull hair. To destroy. When I passed by a mail chute — one of those tubular, plexiglass things that extend from the top to the bottom floors of office buildings, so that if you watch one you can see people's mail whisshing through — I wished I had a bomb to send whisshing. My

People Hating

People all around crying in their beer

'cause the kids are messing up worse each year

hating welfare people who just sit back

hating Chicanos and each and every Black

hating large families who get in their way

hating farmworkers who ask for more pay

People hating everyone even themselves

People loving nic nacs displayed on the shelves

*"Thank God for love" i whisper, i don't dare speak
lest, hatingly, i'm labeled a Jesus freak.*

— Rita Mendoza

Nothing but evil comes from the house of Rosie. The women who are portrayed as seductresses are later indirectly blamed for the downfall of Antonio's brother Andrew, for Antonio's illness, and for the death of Narciso. When Narciso goes to Rosie's to ask Andrew for help, Andrew cannot leave:

Her face was painted red, and when she smiled at Narciso her teeth were shiny white. Her sweet perfume wafted through the open door, and mixed with the music from within . . . She was dressed in a flowing robe, a robe so loose it exposed her pink shoulders and the soft cleft of curving breasts. (pp. 155-156)

When Andrew refuses to leave Rosie's house because of the lure of the seductive women, the result is that Narciso is unable to warn Ultima of danger; Antonio, who is following Narciso becomes deathly ill from the exposure to the cold and snow storm; and Narciso himself is killed by the evil Tenorio. Although the bad women appear to be to blame, in reality Andrew made his own choice and must take the blame for his mistake.

In the days that follow these tragedies, Antonio, who is feverish and delirious, dreams of the night Narciso had asked Andrew to come away from Rosie's:

I saw Andrew and the young girl from Rosie's. They held each other and danced while Narciso pounded on the gold door. She was naked, and her long, flowing hair enveloped Andrew and kept him from helping Narciso. She pulled Andrew away, and he followed her into the frightful fires of hell.

Ultima is our last hope for womankind because she is of extreme intelligence, knowledge, and has respect for human life and the nature of the earth. Ultima, however, is portrayed as having learned all her wisdom from a man. She is also rejected by most of the people in the town. But her rejection points to the fear by the people. They are afraid of a woman whose power proves to be stronger than the power of the priest. Ultima uses her powers to take away bad and bring back good, but still it was morally wrong to believe in anything other than the church. Ultima's strengths are revealed in her work as a midwife and in the distances she would walk to give aid. With all this strength and knowledge of curing you would think she would have the status of priest or doctor, but instead, she was labeled as "witch lady" and ridiculed by many.

I believe Anaya's portrayals of Ultima show that women who step out of the norm of society are labeled negatively, no matter what good they achieve. The closer to equality

women come, the more threatened men become, and the more fearful some women become of losing their femininity. Literature can play a major part in exposing how we are socialized, but it continues to perpetuate this process of socialization.

Sex roles are culturally taught. Women are taught and conditioned to be passive, subservient, inferior, conforming, and willing to sacrifice their own satisfaction for their children and husband. Men are taught and conditioned to be aggressive, dominant, independent and competitive. All of these factors create the predominant values in a society, thus allowing the male the belief in his own superiority.

The minority woman is forced to accept a secondary status in society because she has not been allowed these prominent traits. When she marries she takes not only her husband's name, but her status in society is dependent upon the status of her husband, no matter what she herself has achieved.

Minority women have a long hard struggle ahead of them if they are to be recognized as persons and not as objects. The key element to equality is organization and awareness of their own oppression. Literature must begin to present the strengths and complexities of women that do exist, instead of only the stereotypes. From there the changes can be made.

<i>a woman was raped by her father yesterday and she was only thirteen and i never laugh at rape jokes another woman was raped on her first date and i kant laugh at rape</i>	<i>i just kant laugh at rape another was raped by a man of a different color political perhaps fucked for sure another woman by her husband but that's within the law of property</i>	<i>and another and another and another they have been violated by more than a penis they've suffered by the law with policemen in the courts in society</i>	<i>inside themselves with guilt and shame because people believe the victim should be blamed and i'll be raped with every woman yet i kant laugh i kant forget — Veronica Cunningham</i>
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Shall I bear with those who create difficulties for me, or shall I destroy them?

Non-violence is our strength.

Overcome evil with good.

The lack of depth of my own beliefs scared me. I had seen glimpses before of what I thought were weakened ideals. I recalled my temporary disillusionment at Cesar Chavez when I watched him speak at a staff meeting at La Paz. I saw him pound his fist into his other hand or onto a table top and I made an unspoken judgment about the quality of his non-violent commitment. I was working in Washington, D.C. during the Viet Nam and Cambodian War and heard a man I respected tell me he couldn't speak out against the war now "because people would think I'm getting woolly-headed."

And I want to toss a bomb into a mail chute and blow up a Welfare building full of people?

In the cool light of reason — paradoxical as that reason is — my violent thoughts, my outrage seemed to increase the strength of the Truth I believe in. I wasn't naive enough to think, like Mary Hartman, that "everything is going to be all right and then we can all go to the House of Pancakes."

But I'm able to take solace in Romans 7 and Paul's inward struggle that caused him to say "I fail to carry out the things I want to do, and I find myself doing the very things I hate"; and to reflect on Gandhi's confession that "I am but a weak aspirant, ever failing, ever trying."

To overcome the world's desensitization to violence, a new, free response must be made to the merciful Plan of the Creator. To deal with those who say the only way we can make a point is through violent means — fighting fire with fire — is to save them from pushing the self-destruct button. I hope someone is around to read me my words the next time I make fists at someone else's lack of sensitivity.

Notes from a Prison

You know, it's rather curious that as time has gone by between these light-green walls, as I grow accustomed to the clanking of keys and the guard's whistle, as I feel more a prisoner, I also feel freer . . .

Today is Sunday. It's a beautiful summer day (what I can see of it anyway!); ironically enough there is a bird's nest on the jail's roof. I ask myself why that free dove chose a jail's roof to build its home. It's as if it wants to remind us that freedom still exists, that it's possible to fly over these walls . . .

12-20-74

I have learned some beautiful artesan manual work which really shows the ingenuity of human beings. Prisoners throughout the years have passed on little secrets for making beautiful things.

At this moment I find myself surrounded by an acute sense of awareness. I see everything around me in its full dimension, these walls in relation to centuries of exploitation, this bed in relation to the thousands of unknown graves, myself in relation to my countless hungry brothers. And I learn once more that my imprisonment is but a small part of this historical yearning for freedom . . .

2-16-75

I know we both want the best for our parents and all the people like them who have worked so hard all their lives. I know they're proud to have children like us, and I'm not being arrogant in congratulating them for having us. I love life enough to struggle for it, and I'm happy to be living this historic moment, even if I'm imprisoned, because I know that in spite of it, my thoughts and others like you are free.

1-7-75

You should all be proud to know that I'm called "Chicana" by the companeros and by the police, too! The first ones do it with love and international solidarity, and the second ones with hate and international despair. 1-29-75

— Olga Talamante



*women together
growing
to find
themselves
in friendship
to love
themselves
and change
the world
that
denies
them, us
you and me
the right
to define
our
selves
our
lives
our
tomorrows*

*women together
to find
their strengths
and change
the world*

— Veronica Cunningham

