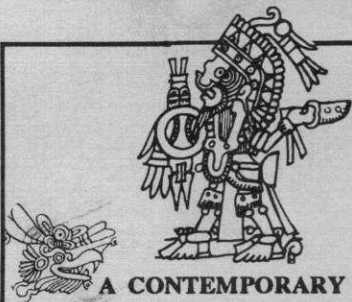




NEW VISIONS OF AZTLÁN

A CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL FOCUSING ON THE CHICANO/LATINO AND ARTISTIC COMMUNITY.

Volume Two

Issue 2 and 3

Fall/Winter 1993



**"The Columbus Controversy:
500 Years of Immutable History"**



**Rigoberta Menchú:
Nobel Prize Recipient of 1992**



**Dr. Eliud Martínez, Recipient of
the Ricardo Flores Magón Prize for 1992**



**Chicana Feminism and Frida Kahlo
"Speaking From the Margin, Hacelo con Ganas" by Alyce Quiñones**

AZTLÁN: The ancient lands of the Aztec civilization known as the homeland of the Mexica and Toltec Nation. It incorporates the greater part of our modern day borders of the Southwest. It includes California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas.

New Visions of Aztlán is dedicated to the Chicano/Latino artist, writer, poet and intellectual. We also provide an alternative vehicle of communication to any up and coming writer in our multicultural society of Aztlán and Turtle Island. Creative talent is the only prerequisite.

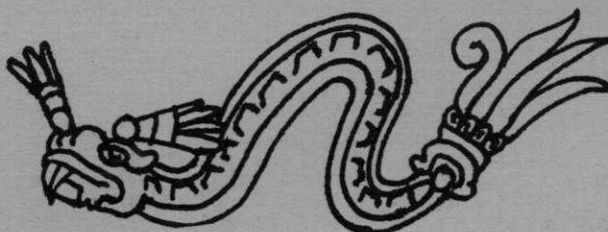
Eagles and Tigers

But even if it were so,
if it were true that suffering is our only lot,
if things are this way on earth,
must we always be afraid?
Will we always have to live with fear?
Must we always be weeping?

For we live on earth,
there are lords here,
there is authority, there is nobility,
there are eagles and tigers.

And who then goes about always saying
that this is the way it is on earth?
Who is it that forces death upon himself?
There is commitment, there is life,
there is struggle, there is work!

Aztec Poet
Codex Florentino Libro VI, cap. XVII
folder 74v., circa 1450 B.C.E.



Published by the Aztlán Cultural Arts Foundation, A Non-Profit Organization
and
the Chicano/Latino Community of California.

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Cosmic Eye by Armando Martínez



This new issue is dedicated to all the writers, artists and typesetters who assisted in putting this issue together. Without their help our journal would not be a reality.

As we settle into a new year, I would like to mention special note to Dr. Eliud Martínez who is the recipient of the First Ricardo Flores Magón Prize for 1992, given for the best historical and philosophical essay of the year. His essay, "The Columbus Controversy: 500 Years of Immutable History," has some very profound perspectives on Chicanos/Latinos in the Americas, Aztlán and Turtle Island.

As I reflected on this issues' poetry, art and essays of Alurista, Martínez, Montoya, Quiñones and Sánchez and many more, I began to understand that we all have a special part in this country, world and universe. I recall the words of the writer Mircea Eliade who said: "All cosmic life suffers and withers because the indifference of man towards the essential problems. By forgetting to ask the right questions, by wasting our time on futilities or frivolous questions, we not only kill ourselves, we also sterilize a portion of the cosmos and cause it to die a slow death."

As you take time to ponder the questions and issues expressed, we hope that you get an expanded vision of how you see yourself and others.

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New Visions of Aztlán: is a bilingual contemporary journal established to stimulate Chicano/Latino creativity and thought. It is also dedicated to provide local support for Chicano/Latino and African writers, poets and creative artists. The journal will include literary essays, poetry and some inter-disciplinary articles dealing with education, economics and politics. Send manuscripts, letters or inquiries to the Aztlán Cultural Arts Foundation, P.O. Box 36A33, Los Angeles, CA. C/O New Visions of Aztlán.

Acknowledgements: We would like to thank our many sponsors and community business persons who contributed to our voice and vision.

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Uribe Printing, Riverside, CA.

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The Columbus Controversy: 500 Years of Immutable History

by

Eliud Martínez, UC Riverside

Misión más grande será entonces la del historiador.
... Situado plenamente en su presente ...
encenderá ... el diálogo entre los viejos
documentos y la palabra de quienes en su present
se sienten inexorablemente vinculados con su pasado
y, a la luz de su pasado y su presente, quieren
atisbar su porvenir.

Miguel León-Portilla. "El encuentro de dos mundos."

Controversial topics raise important questions for which there may be no answers yet, or for which the answers must come from the human heart of each of us. Controversy gives voice to afflictions and troubling experiences. What, for example, does an event that took place five centuries ago have to do with our feelings today about the 500th anniversary of Columbus' arrival in the Americas on October 12, 1492? What wounds of the past on the spirit need to be healed? The occasion of the Columbus Quincentenary invites us to reflect on exactly what was being protested, why, and on the importance of studying history.

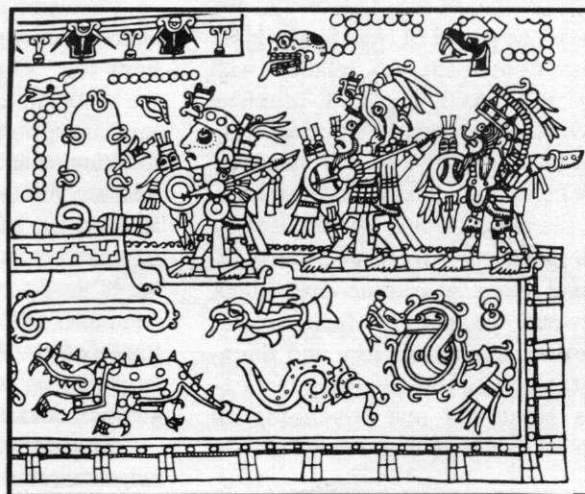
We know that history is immutable; we cannot change the past. There is a difference, too, between celebrating and observing. Certain historical events are not celebrated--the U.S. bombing of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the Nazi invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, the Watergate affair. We nevertheless observe their anniversaries.

The majority of Americans have historical amnesia. For those of us who teach therefore, our responsibility to students is of paramount value. This then is an occasion to remember the recent past.

Since the Civil Rights movement we Americans have lived through turbulent times that have changed the way we look at our collective history. African American people, who have suffered most dramatically the wounds of the past, must be credited with setting the pace in changing the climate of thought throughout the world, in many ways for the better. In our own hemisphere, for example,

they brought deserved attention to the culture of African Latin America.

One tragic characteristic of U.S. history however, is the separation between White America and Black America. And an unfortunate characteristic of our times is selective, fragmented knowledge. As we observed this momentous occasion whose celebration was being protested, in the United States, Latin America, France, and even in Spain-- we may yet ponder a valid question: was there anything about the past 500 years to celebrate?



The Encounter of Two Cultures. 500 Years of Interchange of wisdom, language and culture.

The past, the present, and the future are inseparable. The present always becomes the past. Consequently the past, to which we look for the origins of our present condition, is the beginning of the future. What present human condition, then, were reflected by demonstrations and protests? How did we perceive and interpret an event that took place 500 years ago? Why?

History, like a human life, is a dynamic process. History is immutable, yes. Not so is the interpretation of history. Personally, I do not believe that the writing of history can be objective or unbiased. Historians, being human, have biases and preferences, and being specialists they have gaps in knowledge.

Historians disagree among themselves and frequently revise their own and other historians' interpretations. Some books emphasize national ideals, patriotism, unity, optimism. Others indict evils of the past. Examples abound.

The most that one can hope for is history writing that is enlightened, insightful, and fair. Above all we desire that the interpretation and rewriting of history be illuminating.

Mexican cultural history about the past 500 years is extremely illuminating about the long-range repercussions on Mexican thought of the "Discovery," the Conquest, the period of New Spain, independence from Spain, U.S. relations with France and Spain, the U.S.-Mexican War, and the Mexican Revolution. United States cultural history also, has been enriched by a praiseworthy body of scholarship, literature, theatre, film and art--by and about African Americans, Chicanos, Asian and Native Americans--that did not exist twenty years ago. Much recent multi-ethnic cultural history and literature exhibit admirable rewriting that examines emotional and psychological wounds of the past that persist to this day.

Missing, however, are works of synthesis and integrating vision. We think mainly about our respective group experiences, while the agony of becoming American, our longing to belong, is shared by all. We need to venture beyond our groups.

One fascinating lesson to be learned from twentieth century American history is that there are ways to give intellectual credentials and scientific respectability to false and biased notions about human beings and cultural groups, to misconceptions and stereotypes, to expressions of contempt and envy, and to racism. Much past misrepresentation in books, films, and literature influences our present condition in the United States, which in turn focuses the tasks of the future. Our tasks can be accomplished best with a solid knowledge of our collective past in the Americas: Native, African, European, Hispanic, Asian. In the past we all longed to belong to one America, to be treated equally.



Indigenous Encounter and Aztlán.

Exclusion in the past taught us to cherish our respective ancestral cultures too. Our exclusion is part of the historical record. Unfortunately, a misconception attends our way of thinking, that to understand persons who are African American, Chicano, Korean or Vietnamese American, Irish, and so on, one must be a member of the group. What do we have in common? What shared experiences transcend our different origins? How much do we know about the other groups? And even about our own?

The past 500 years have had long-range consequences. In the Americas Mexico is an instructive example. Mexico recapitulates the entire history of the world--from prehistoric times to the meeting of the "races," different co-existing levels of cultural development, multiple languages, and a variety of social conditions. In or-

der to understand Mexico, it is necessary to know--in addition to our Pre-columbian past--about the history and peoples of Spain prior to 1492, about colonial New Spain, about Spain's relations with France and the United States before 1821, and about the latter's westward expansion after the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 and the war with Mexico.

Our present condition as Mexicans and Chicanos in the United States has been shaped by a complex past of which we know but a small part. Students in my Chicano and Ethnic Studies classes have given me many insights and a very large appreciation of African Americans, Asian and Native Americans, and of European immigrants--Irish, Italians, Poles, Jews, Germans, and others. Students want to know what they have in common. When they learn about other people and their emotional and psychological experiences many students express astonishment. "I thought I was the only one having these dilemmas." People tend to forget the human drama of adjusting to American life that young new immigrants today are going through, as in the past. Reminders are essential. The new immigrants are not alone. The African American experience is of course dramatically different.

I place the word "races" in quotation marks because race classifications are unreliable. When we subscribe to them we become accomplices in our own victimization. Many Americans of different cultural backgrounds have experienced a change in sensibility, not without identity dilemmas. People are preferring cultural to racial identities, African American and Hispanic, for example. What is the difference? In addition, why and how have old terms once used by racethinkers become banners of pride?

For example, what does being "people of color" mean? "Non-white?" During WW II a stigma was attached to marriage between young American soldiers and Japanese women, and be-

tween our young African American soldiers and women of France, Germany, and England. Does the stigma associated with being of mixed birth, Eur-Asian or Amer-Asian persist?

Our ancestors lived the same human drama after 1492, when the encounter between two worlds took place, when Jews and Moslems who were expelled from Spain chose to remain. After the expulsion the Spanish stigmatized Jewish and Moslem ancestry as racial impurity. In the Americas mixed ancestry and dark skin were also stigmatized. No wonder much of the response to the Columbus Quincentenary is emotional. We remain prisoners of our biological past.

Racial classifications are unreliable, I repeat. Recent scholarship also shows that even ethnic and national labels are misleading, particularly when people are perceived to be of mixed "racial" or "non-white" ancestry. This is true of Americans, Mexicans, Iranians, Egyptians, Jews, Italians, Spaniards, and Germans. In the case of African Americans Frederick Douglass, Alain Locke, Alex Haley, Toni Morrison, Spike Lee, and others teach us that many suffer the stigma, the dilemma of having European -- white -- ancestry. Examples abound.

The 500th anniversary of Columbus' arrival in the Americas invites much reflection. At the present time in American history, young women and men of different cultural but of similar educational backgrounds are dating, marrying, and having children. A veritable convergence is taking place in the United States today, especially in California--similar to convergences in the Mediterranean world since Egyptian and Greek times, and in sixteenth century Mexico-- of people of multiple ancestries. For today's progeny of multiple ancestries the "racial" and caste nomenclature of the past would be offensive. What will we call the American progeny of women and men of different cultures? I predict considerable attention will be given to this immensely

important human phenomenon in the near future.

In seeking to understand the past and the present one must ask why people were protesting the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the "Discovery of America" Is that in fact what people were protesting? No, I believe not.

Why, for example, have our minds moved away--only in the past ten years-- from the concept of Columbus' discovery to the concept of invasion? Why are we now to consider that momentous historic event not as discovery but as an encounter between two worlds? Why is the concept of discovery unpalatable, while we continue to rejoice in the concept of the Americas (also named after an Italian)? What in present history--U.S., Latin American, European--explains the



Aztlán and Turtle Island: Names used by the native people for their continent.

changes in our attitudes and feelings?

The 500th anniversary of Columbus' voyage invites us to ask other questions. Why and under what social conditions did Mexico celebrate the 400th anniversary of the Discovery of America a hundred years ago? Why did October 12 cease to be el día de la Raza for Mexicans and Chicanos three years ago? And why is October 12 promoted now by the government of Spain as el Día de la Hispanidad? Why does October 12 have a different meaning for Italian Americans? And 1492 for Jews? Why do some Americans of Mexican ancestry resent the term Hispanic, others prefer Latino,

and still others embrace Chicano? How have terms such as people of color and non-white become favorable? What do these terms tell us about the past, present, and the future?

For more than twenty years Mexican and Latin American cultural history, arts and letters have impressed on me the long-range repercussions of historical figures and past events on the people's psyche. Significant periods of our history have left lasting wounds. In a recent keynote address Miguel León-Portilla offered an illuminating explanation to account for the present denunciation of Columbus and for the protests in Latin America against the celebration of the "Discovery."

León-Portilla affirmed that as inheritors of the past we are living today the consequences of 500 years of history, and he offered a plan of action for the future, with which I concur whole-heartedly. Each person who feels inexorably connected with the past, he stated, has the responsibility to know and to come to terms with that past, in the present, and to use that past to determine the future.

Yes, we in the Americas are living dramatic 500-year consequences of a powerful clash. The clash was military, religious, spiritual, cultural, and biological, as I have been emphasizing. Columbus' arrival in the "New World" marks the beginning of consequences which have a living vitality in the human spirit today. The momentous historical event, compared insignificance to the landing on the moon in 1969, brought men and women from different parts of the world together. They are our ancestors who engendered us.

Our past is alive in our genes and chromosomes. We see it when we gaze in the mirror and at our faces. We see it in the resemblance between Mexicans and people from many parts of the world. José Vasconcelos called us la raza cósmica; we are the sum of peoples of the world, destined, he said, to form the bridge of understanding among peoples.

The encounter of people who engendered us was attended by violence, of

Continued on page: 40

Recipient of the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize Rigoberta Menchu: Woman of Action Interview

by Concepción González and translated by Armando Martínez

Will the Nobel Peace Prize change any of the situations in Guatamala?

"The Peace prize is a symbol and more so now than ever - I am convinced of that. Especially since in the last few months, I have had the opportunity of becoming more aware of the problems that exist in the Americas, and in a closer way, not only of our indigenous brothers but of the general community as a whole. The problems of the Americas are not just small but are resting on causes very profound, the prize is only a stimulus."

What compromises does this prize require which you will have to concede?

"This prize has been a year of much work, all because the conflicts have not only been in Guatemala - and in the personal dimension, I feel that this year, I've had to sacrifice many things. For example, I have been a member of the United Farmworkers (CDC), and I always involved myself in their activities as if I were there, and this year I've had to sacrifice this work, so that I could respond in a immense way to other demands. Here comes a year of very intense work, because it is the year of the indigenous community, and only if we build can it have a significant impact. There are a lot of expectations about my person, and many believe that my presence can mediate in various places."

Will there be a foundation in honor of your father?

"Regarding the foundation of Vicente Menchú, there will need to be plans once the money is delivered by the Nobel Peace Prize. My father is alive in the hearts of the people; he died being burned alive and lived with the indigenous, Ladinos, Christians and people of all faiths. My father's death symbolized the



Rigoberta Menchú: Nobel Prize Recipient.

first time that Guatamala put its name in the world to remember a moment of a lot of repression. Regardless, this foundation was destined to exist, because I have received 17 medals of honor this year and I'm going to accept them all in the name of my father."

Why is peace not found in your country? And what hampers the negotiations?

"I believe it is the product of various things. One of these aspects is that there is a lack of political will that is manifested from the government and by the army in order to advance this dialogue. First because the dialogue that was initiated by the opposing sectors and the State was done behind closed doors-- where the Guatamalan public nor the different sectors were aware of what was being discussed. And in the manner that it opened-- they began to have other difficulties, such as strategy and structure."

Is there hope in the future of the negotiations?

"I hope that in the next few years in Guatemala-- our stalemate in negotiations are unblocked and that a serious debate and study go into what is occurring in my homeland. There are many issues on the table and I hope that in the future we can discuss seriously various aspects that impact our people such as: human rights legislation, the demilitarization of the army, and the prevention of abuse and torture of Guatemaltecos by the military."

Will you also struggle to bring the indigenous community into the mainstream of your Guatemalan society?

"The total package of the indigenous theme is another element of the dialogue. The case of identification of rights of the indigenous people, does not just imply only the native people. If in Guatemala, we do not initiate a process of national unity, and if we don't include the various sectors of our total society then we will be creating new internal problems for our society. There needs to be a coalition of the various communities in which the problems of the total community can be discussed and debated in a humane manner. It will be through this inclusion of the various parts that a real true change and impact can occur in our society.

Rigoberta Menchú, is the first indigenous woman to receive the award, Menchú was selected for the prize "in recognition of her work for social justice and ethno-cultural reconciliation," the Nobel Prize committee said.

Menchú 33, declared the award a tribute to all indigenous peoples in the Americas and will use the \$1.2 million prize money to establish a foundation to defend their rights.

The Guatemalan government opposed the award to avoid international attention to the 120,000 deaths which have resulted from its brutal 30-year war against the indigenous population. Sixty percent of the Guatemalan pop-

ulation are indigenous. Most live in poverty, dominated by the Ladinos, descendants of European colonist.

Both Menchú's brother and father were burned during different anti-government demonstrations; her mother was captured, tortured, repeatedly raped and left to die under a tree. Menchú has neither backed nor denounced the indigenous rebels, though two of her sisters disappeared to the mountains and joined guerilla forces there. In 1981, she fled Guatemala and sought exile in Mexico.

Menchú's social consciousness stems from her childhood in Chimel, Guatemala, where she began tending crops and caring for her five siblings at the age of eight. She recalls the low wages, malnutrition and long hours without pay common to the Mayans of the Quiché group, one of 22 indigenous Guatemalan groups.

Menchú knows her efforts on behalf of her people have not ended. "I am an active part of a popular struggle," she said. "The greatest challenge now for the Mayans in Guatemala is that we not be exterminated and that we do not become a marginal minority with cultural models imposed upon us that are not our own."



Speaking From the Margin, Hacerlo con Ganas

by Alyce Quiñones

We know what it is like to be silenced. We know that the forces that silence us because they never want us to speak, differ from the forces they say speak, tell me your story. Only do not speak in the voice of resistance. Only speak from that space in the margin that is a space in the margin that is a sign of deprivation, a wound, and unfulfilled. Only speak your pain. (Bell Hooks)

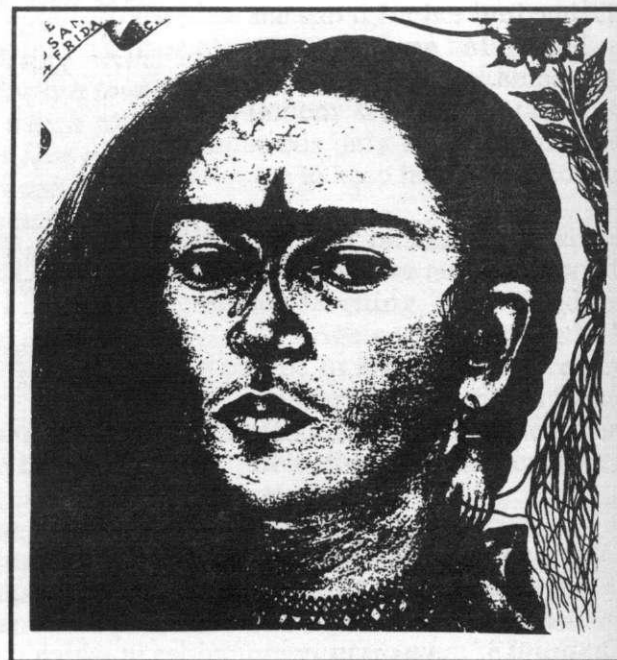
I began this project eager to review Gloria Anzaldua's anthology, *Making Faces, Making Soul: Hacienda Caras, Creative and Critical Perspectives By Women Of Color*. Earlier this year I had the opportunity to hear Anzaldua speak about how she had put the collection together. In the process of preparing to teach a Women's Studies university course she found there was no one book available to address the issues she wished to present to her students.

In her introduction to *Haciendo Caras*, Anzaldua goes on to explain that the anthology was based on articles and poems she collected for her class. I had been very moved by Anzaldua's own writing and felt confident that *Haciendo Caras* would introduce me to more powerful Chicana writers. But as I read *Haciendo Caras*, I began haciendo caras. What had promised to be a revolutionary experience proved instead to be more portraits of women as victims. This is not to say that the entire volume is weak, but I'm tired of the way many women of color address their audience. It's almost as if the sole purpose of their writings is to inform Anglo culture of their oppression. There is no need for this - the dominant culture knows who is in charge, who's got the power.

No need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself. No need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own. Re-writing you I write myself anew. I am still author, authority. I am still colonizer, the speaking subject and you are now at the center of my talk.

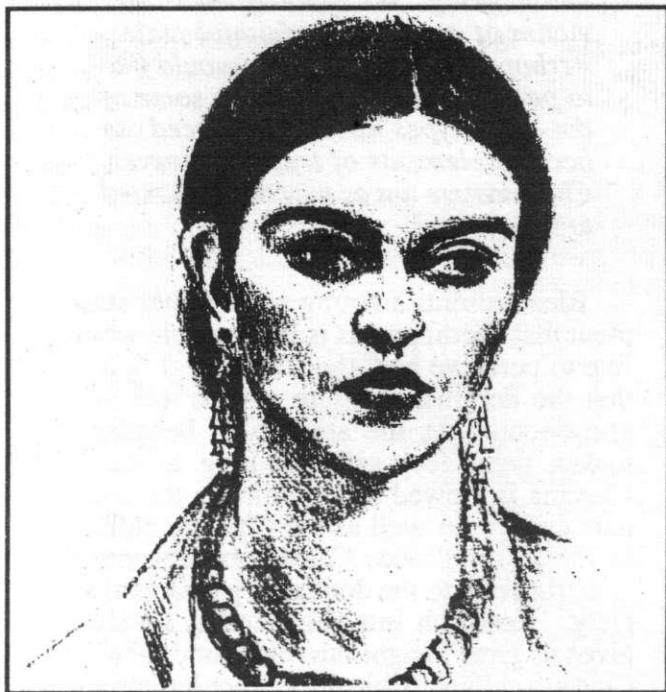
(Bell Hooks)

The piece that finally pushed me over the edge was a poem: "Periquita" (see page 46)



Another example of how patriarchy keeps even the most inquiring minds and voices down. Another illustration of the gag rule, but worst of all another example of accepting this unquestionable law of the land. I'm sorry compañeras but I won't buy it. If your tongues were snatched out of your mouths at an early age, then what are your writings doing in this book? Reading on my anger grew. I looked beyond this anthology to other poets and writers. I found a disproportionate amount of writing from Latinas who identified their voices solely as victims of a patriarchal society. None of these women expressed my experience, my concepts of womanhood.

The goal of this essay is to present an alternative to viewing the Chicana as a victim - a voiceless creature of circumstance. In her



introduction Anzaldúa states: "...It attempts to explore our realities and identities (since academic institutions omit, erase, distort and falsify them) and to unbuild and rebuild them." This is my objective, to rebuild the Chicana image. I assert that unlike the stereotype put forth by the predominant culture and images in literature, the Chicana is a woman of power, a force to be reckoned with. Through research into matriarchal societies and Chicano sociology (family structure), I contend that the dominant culture has impregnated Chicano culture with its stereotypes. Unfortunately, Chicano culture has invested in these traits and in many cases subscribes to the concept of "Machismo". I believe that in reality Chicano culture is more strongly rooted in matriarchy - a woman centered framework.

My own personal experience in one of observing and interacting with strong, powerful women, primarily my mother and grandmother. My grandmother bore and raised five children. When my mother was five or six her father returned to Mexico (due to health reasons) and never rejoined his family in the United States.

It was believed that he had died in Mexico. My grandmother and her five children left Los Angeles and moved to Bakersfield, where they worked as farm laborers. My mother Teresa Sesmas, was the only child in the family to graduate from high school. My mother and grandmother took a job in a sewing factory. I remember her telling me about how every Saturday she took the red car from Elysian Village to the Central Market to do the weekly shopping. My mother worked hard and was a devoted daughter to her mother. At the age of 28 she married and at 33 she bore her first child, a daughter.

I have strong vivid memories of my mother and grandmother. When I was 5 my family and I were living with my grandmother on Bridge Street in East Los Angeles. It was time for me to go to Kindergarten. We lived across the street from Bridge Street Elementary School and from my Kindergarten classroom I could watch my grandmother's house. Around Thanksgiving time I remember not wanting to go to school anymore. I began crying at school. Whenever I looked out the classroom window, I could see my grandmother sitting on the porch of her old frame house. I would have much rather been playing on that porch under her watchful eye. Finally my mother told Nana she couldn't sit on the porch anymore, I had to go to school. Nana died when I was 6 and sometimes I wish I hadn't gone to Kindergarten, for I believe I would have learned more about life from her. As I grew, my mother grew in my eyes. Nothing ever seemed to shock or derail Mom. True, she was always struggling with the bills, but she always managed to stretch my father's paycheck. Each year brought us closer together. I think our relationship even surpassed that of Mama and Nana's. Just when I thought I knew everything about my mother our relationship changed.

In 1984, I took a vacation to Jamaica, my mother eagerly encouraged this trip. I returned to L.A. to find my mother in a hospital bed, she had had a mastectomy. She had purposely planned her operation to coincide with my trip. I couldn't believe she had undergone such a serious operation without me by her side. Over the next few years I watched my mother battle cancer, work in a factory, raise grandchildren, intermediate

my brother's marital problems, encourage my father when he lost his job and support my return to higher education. My mother always instilled in me the importance of making myself happy, of pushing boundaries and of honesty even during adversity. Most of all she impressed upon me to respect myself, never to be anyone's victim. Our relationship grew and her strength empowered me.

When my mother's body and spirit could no longer tolerate it she quit taking chemotherapy. It was her body and her choice and no amount of talking, even from her older sister was going to change things. Her doctor, who knew my mother's strength always acknowledged my mother's wishes. She chose to live her last days at home, not in a hospital bed, just like her mother before her. The next few months deepened and intensified our relationship. As I watched her body deteriorate, her mind became acutely in touch with things that she needed to articulate to me. Each day brought a new insight, sometimes depression, often wonder at life itself. Things were becoming pared down.

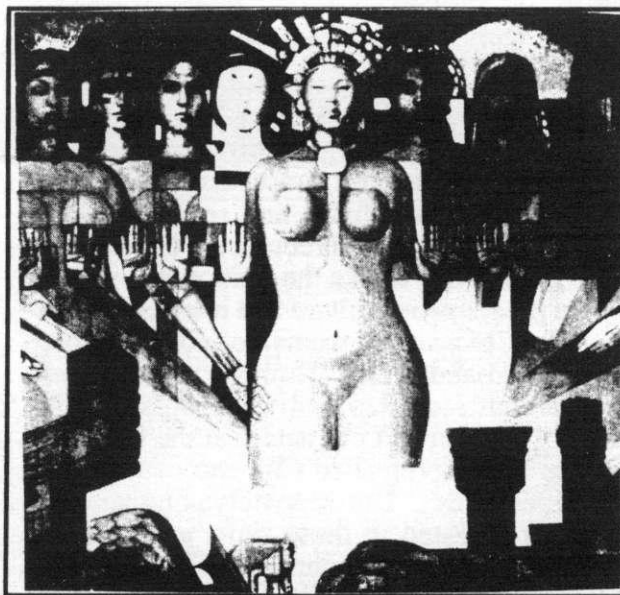
Even during my mother's last week her inner strength never faltered. Her eyes shone with love and light, not self-pity. Although our roles seemed to change, that she became the child and I the mother, it was her strength that kept me going. Her death brought me a new life, a strong sense of empowerment. For her strength and that of my Nana was breathed into me. I was born of these women and many before me. This personal experience, testimony if you like, leaves me with a strength I believe is common among Chicanas. In Irene I. Blea's, *Toward A Chicano Social Science* she states: "Women are strong in Chicano culture. They are strong as cultural and decision-making symbols, and they are strong physically."

However, contrary to this fact literature continues to portray Chicanas as victims and worse still is that much of this writing is done by women of color. Blea continues on this theme:

A review of the literature on Chicanas and the Chicano family will reveal a stereotyped picture of a wife and mother: docile, passive, uncomplaining, all-suffering, all-forgiving, and

hardworking. She is presented as the victim of a violent, unfaithful male. Perhaps this is how people would like to perceive her, and perhaps some of the stereotypes have been forced to become elements of truth. However, Chicanas are not as they are presented to me.

Blea presents a strong point in her statement that "perhaps this is how people would like to perceive her" the Chicana. I believe that the dominant culture chooses this view and encourages the stereotype because it makes them feel safe. As long as the Chicana is viewed as a victim by the dominant culture, as well as the Chicano culture, no threat is imposed. Chicana empowerment is detrimental to the dominant patriarchal society. Research into matriarchal societies gives us great insight into the foundations of Chicano culture. Chicano culture has strong



ties to that of the Native Americans. As in many other cultures throughout the world, Native Americans in North America maintained strong matriarchies. In Helen Diner's, *Mother and Amazons: The First Feminine History of Culture*, Continued on page 43

A PACHUCO PORTFOLIO

by José Montoya

...pa'l Tin Tan y La Toñya y su carnal
Marcelo y pa la memoria
del Che who boogied, de cincho,
and to the memories del Guti Woody Cardenas,
Augustin Lara y el Licho y La Ruca.

A PACHUCO PORTFOLIO

...a portfolio of ghosts for and
about la plebe del west side
east side south side norte---
for and about us of the cross
and the 4 directions and for María Felix,
Ramona Dolores La Googoo y La Tony
La Vicky y amores de las calles,
Los Trios/Jazz Chicano epoca
de los forties and fifties---

A PACHUCO PORTFOLIO

... en el Chuco, Alburque, San Quilmas
y Los---"Los what?" they would
always ask---and continue asking
to this day, los ask-a-mouse--while
Chicanos went boogie woogie and
hey, Ba-ba-li-ba los mambos y echale
cinco al piano que siga el babilon---

A PACHUCO PORTFOLIO

...y a teorizar aca d' este lado,
on this side in Spanish y en ingles
Tewa, Yaqui y en calo,
buti-tirili, de aquellas, no lie!



A PACHUCO PORTFOLIO
Continued:

A PACHUCO PORTFOLIO

... carnalas y carnales, chicaspatas
por vida y bien entacuchaus
adding style and class to being
half-breeds who took their Indianess
and Hispanishness and became
Chicanos---los Nuevos Mexicanos!

que curada!

...ser tirilongo era ser Chicano, ese!
Ciról! Alalba, trucha y agusau!
Ya estufas---no sean maje!
No monqueén con mis huesos!
Cortense sus pedos! ¡oigan!

A PACHUCO PORTFOLIO

...chucho-chuca ghosts in their voices
giving us a bit of story --his story,
her story in thierstoric fashion, camita,
Chicano history that can't be denied!
And when you make that kind of history
you resent being dehistorified!

A PACHUCO PORTFOLIO

...fuck the horrors--ultimadamente,
we are still here, --no nos echen
la bendición yet--Octavio Peace, brother
didn't get us in his labyrinth
and yet was made the nobeler for it!

.. como jodidos que no nos vamos a curar? ¡Orale!
¡La curada!

...heal yes, simón que sí!

A PACHUCO PORTFOLIO



AUN

by José Montoya

Ay, manito, aunque el dolor
Y el dolor continue to
Weigh us down
El peso pesa y a uno
Le duele

Y al dolerle a uno
Nos duele a todos

I am still Chicano
Habitante aun de
La Chicanación Casindia
Lidiando sin y con papeles
pero con pipa y papiros
A veces to survive
In this land of the
Frequent viscious bullies

Bullying that turns
God Bless America
My home sweet home
To God Damn America
My home sin home
Where golpes/blows
Are daily manufactured
Y el golpe that's
Calculated and aimed
At Mexico no le alcanza--
No le llega--falls short
And lands on my head
On my Chicano head
Time after time after time

Y aun the phony
Diplomatic ties
Are maintained, at
My bloody head's
Expense

Y mi gente de La
Nueva España and
Even my own parents
Haven't sensed the pain
Leave alone the
Magnitude of my blight
De casi ser--pos no se,
¿Sabe?

Pero seres somos
Se sabe
You savvy? Alquien
Sabe! Casi!

Cause we have indeed
Conferred Phd's and
Other physical disabilities
On our own ambitions few
So that scholars
Can define us
Scientifically and to
Further re-define us
Y nos definan y
Nos refinan diario
And daily nos siguen
Refinando sin/con salsita
In the schools
In the prisons
In the churches
En los files
In the barrios
In the reservations
Y en las sierras morenas
Cielito lindo

Y aun seguemos,
Casi-porque mientras
Haiga Sol we go
Like that-we chose
No spanish dream. That
Nightmare we carry
Como castigo bendito
On our shoulders

And thus, my Indian
Casi nacionchica existe,
Aun-mired in the
Tangled barbed telaranas
Con puas de la red de acero
Stretching and scanning
Itself on the horizon
Where my Casi presence
Also manifests itself

Aun, seguemos casi
¿Casi y que?
Casique no, Casindio si



AUN

continued:

Y'al Masindio Machine
 Masiso le pidemos
 Desculpas-asi semos-Chicanos
 Que no nos dejen caer
 Ah, si somos-Casi
 Pero ay ay ay que bonito son
 Que bonitos son los feos

Y aun que tanto
 U tantito nos duela, Raza,
 We shouldn't be
 So melancholonized--
 Ya estufas con estar
 Tan melancolonizados, Aun!



El Sol Y 'L RoVato Loco

by
 José Montoya

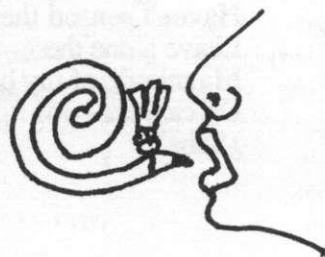
So There I was
 Soaring Like poets are wont
 To soar
 Above and beyond th' trees
 And the palms
 Going ZOOM
 Straight al Sol.

(Que suave ser poeta, jefita!)

When on impact
 El Sunjefe Solchief
 Exploded--Virtualmente,
 Aclarando todo, claro!
 Y en la revocada
 I caught glimpses down below
 And saw giant
 Erector-set-vatos-rovatos
 Walk dance energy
 Overhills and vales
 And mountains
 And then I felt
 An enormous sorrow
 For those children down there.

(Que joda ser poet, 'ama!)

But the palms
 And the pine trees
 And the children down below
 They just looked up
 Past th' metal warriors
 Only to see
 Battle-ready gunships
 Helicoptering south!
 South! right under
 Mine bruised
 And the Solchief's own
 Noses!



Crack

by
José Montoya

The myth begins to crack
With every crack amidst
Th' clamor of the Hispanic
Mandate--you can strive but you
Musn't struggle, it proclaims.

But Chicanos have been called
A people steeped in paradox!
Labeled that by an inconsistent
Sociedad--consider th' following
Contradiction--one of Ronnie's
'nother high court picks
Gets busted mariguandering
'round them hollowed halls of
Justice!

Justice!

Just us an 'em again!
Could be th' signal, folks!
Could be th' signal!

Cause th' parade of justice
Goes on for th' right judges
Ja jez!
Ya vez!

Y ay esta la pinchi Nancy
Teaching us to say no--
Como una jefita ese
While Ronnie an' Ollie
An' th' big chair cut deals
With th' traffickers
To seal th' Chicano pogrom
And the Barrio dies
In th' free-based fumes
Gesticulates and cracks
With crack as th' Contras smirk
And Shift th' spotlight away

And the country's main G-man
Eez'n big trouble his meeself, Bro
And a corrupt wall-street tail-spins
Y' el P.T.L. ya no pita
Hijo 'e puta!

Enough to make Chicanos panic!
And also wonder
If and how they had aided
And abetted-- and they begin to talk
And to think--and begin to return--
Some, at least-- because now,
Worse than ever before
Begins th' persecutions
Of just us

Of th' different--us
Of th' defiant--us
Of th' dying--us
Of th' Indian--us
Of th' poor-- us
Of th' dopers--us
Of th' gangs--us
Of th' Chicanos--us

--am I an us you ask? Just
Ask the media!

And for just us they have
Th' tanks and th' tac-squads
And th' camps are there
Ready to be filled by just us
And they will use th' usual
Facist tactics--and ratting
Children!

Pretty viscious stuff
While our best minds atrophy

Same madness as before of
Beatitude times-- but who
Hears this "Howl"?
Will the present Gingsburg
With a you
And Noriega an' th' Meeses
To pieces and Ron an' Ollie
And that gang finally
Embarrass us enough
To cry and not die? Yeah!

Could just be
Th' beginning--



Crack
continued:

Th' beginning of a new deal--
Real healing healthy attitudes
Towards those herbs that heal
An' nature will again see
Pine trees cone naturally
'round green blue lakes with
Real water not acid

Could just be a
Good time for a
Respite--a rest!

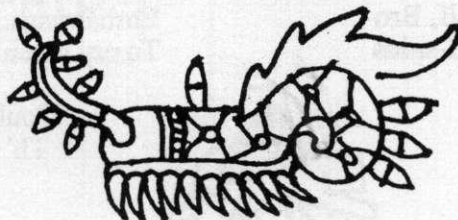
A rest and go then,
Instead, inspired! Go inspired
After th' real menace
Like th' madness of love
Being death-of smac
And cocaine

And Ronnie's regime
With its warped script
And its cast of dopey characters
Will go to wherever
People go to pay
For crimes against humanity

If we--just us--strive
and struggle and
Don't crack!

El Es Dios

José Montoya, a poet of Aztlán who led the Chicano literary renaissance in the early 1960's and 1970's and co-founder of the Chicano Royal Air Force. His poems celebrate the importance of a Chicano consciousness and his new book, *In Formation* will be out in February 1, 1993, published by Chusma House Publications, edited by Charlie Trujillo.



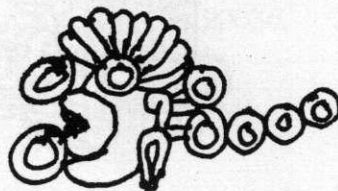
International Women's Day

by Naomi Quiñonez

Let the woman in you out today
let her run free
from the prison of your mind.
She may tell you tales
as old as river mouths
that whisper the words of creation.
She may teach you
the most human way
of survival.
Let the woman in you out today
follow her
she may show you the power of the moon!
Let her out
let her go
she can race-run
fast across the field
she can lift the weights
of struggle.
She can think the thoughts
a scholar speaks
and she can see.
If you let her
she'll show you the way.
This with her children around you.
Set her free.

The Feminine is no farce, you see.
Only a grave misconception
on the part of those
who cannot conceive.
An ignored and dismissed answer
to a question
no one dare to ask.
A feared reality
a distorted illusion
by those who cannot be
complete.

The woman inside you is waiting
The woman inside you is a spirit longing
for freedom.
The woman inside you
needs to be loved.
Let the woman inside you go today.



For Frida

by Naomi Quiñones

The bridge between us
lies fractured and futile
the long cracked back
of creation.
Waves black as crows
settle in concern
on your vast forehead.
You are woman madness
turned to brilliance
awaiting the blood images
of wanting wombs
of veins that puncture
soft, dark flesh.
Frida you ached
like a newborn baby.
Your womb wrestled
a restless jaguar
gnawing the brittle bones
of existence.
The man, turned god
turned lover turned
inside you
like a struggling fetus.
You gave birth
to may suns.
The bridge between us
is as wide as an eye
a stretch of broken back
a clump of hair
a shadow, a sin
and I finger the taut and
tender cord
that disintegrates
into the universe
and frees us.



Traeme Flores

by Naomi Quiñonez

Aires suaves,
flautas
ritmos antiguos.
Has venido.
Que dicen las lomas?
Que inspira el cielo?
Silencio . . . no mas
nada . . . siempre
Todo.
Eres la mar
morada y dulce
un ilusion de paz
levantada y
aventada
como lluvia.
La canción
tú alma
mariposa de
sufrimiento.
Los hombres también
lloran
y sangran
como la mujer.
Traeme tú sonrisa
tú grito
largo y claro
tus lágrimas y sangre
a compartir
a morirnos en amistad.
Traeme flores
y entra.

Naomi Quiñonez, a writer and poet who is planning to reprint her last poetry book entitled *Sueño de colibrí/Hummingbird Dream*, in the forthcoming Chicano Classic Series, Number One of the Naollin & Quetzalcoátl Press. P.O. Box 36A33, Los Angeles, CA 90036.



bartolo's Kuilmas"

by
Alurista

u remember, tomás?
smile, source
power, stalk
column, spinal?
...nó, pos sí!
u remember, tomás
wine, grape
thought, treasure
heart, dice?
...nó, pos sí!
u remember, tomás
rosarito lobster
awe, brilliance
impeccable self?
...nó, pos sí!
u remember, tomás?
the paper poet's dawn?
the sand dunes
the coast?
...nó, pos sí!
bent back sweat
shoulders, knees
calloused hands?
...nó. pos sí!
i remember u,
tomás rivera
te acuerdas
de tu flor, tu canto
de tu llanto, tu mesquite
de tu paz, de tu armadillo?
...nó, pos sí!
te acuerdas, rivera
de las cuerdas, de la lira
del bajo sexto, del acordeón
de las barras, de la chancla?
...nó, pos sí!
te acuerdas, rivera
de las olas, las veredas
de las estrellas, las rocas
de la espuma, del ocelote!
te acuerdas, rivera
del mar, del oceano
del río, del valle
de la lucha, de la raza
...nó, pos sí!
te acuerdas, rivera
...nó, pos sí, como nó?
remember tomás?
stark smile, yes
pleased with life

no complaints,
...sí, pos nó!
i remember tomás
telling him, even
that angry hearts throb
that "greens" treasure
...sí, pos nó! no bombs!
i remember tomás
he say to me "hail
...believe in no führer!
b yourself, suffer not!
... sí, pos nó!"
i remember tomás
he say "size b
a measure from the head
to the sky, lest it b
to the dust and dirt"
...sí, pos nó!
i remember tomás
yes
i remember your joy
tomás
me acuerdo, rivera
de tus ojos certeros
de tu palabra breve
de tu aura y obra
...sí, pos nó!
me decías cuando
cuestionaba yo, tanto
y con causa me rebelaba
...sí, pos nó!
me decías "lucha
no te dejes, ni apendejes
sigue tu vereda!"
me acuerdo, rivera
que tu te acordabas
que tu amabas
que tu laborabas
que tu luchabas
me acuerdo, rivera
me olvido...?
...sí, pos nó!
como sacarte de mi alma?
"sacate la daga!"
me dijiste alguna vez
contestándote yo dije
"ta bien,
dejemos que 'l tio sam
nos de posada..."



Continued:

bartolo's Kuilmas
by Alurista

"...sí, pos nó,
mejor a maría y a José
pos en este mundo
tiene uno que andar
con mula!" con sonrisa
replicaste, rivera
te pregunte entonces, tomás
que si la libertad valía,
que si la autodeterminación,
la nuestra, que si América era
un solo continente
que si lograríamos ser
nosotros mismos
que si nuestra palabra
cruzaría el tiempo,
el espacio, las fronteras
las galaxias, que si seríamos
al fin, uno, un solo pueblo
una sola tierra
y tu dijiste
"...sí, pos claro
...nó, pos desde luego
...sí, por supuesto
nó pos...sin lugar a dudas"
...claro, tomás rivera, claro
nó, no has desaparecido!
sí, si estas presente!
esta daga se queda...
esta espina no daña...
esta flor no perece...
este canto no calla...
este canto no calla...
...este canto no calla

Alurista, poet and professor of Aztlán who was one of the original catalyst of the Chicano movement in Southern California during the early 1970's. Also was the writer for the Plan de Aztlán of the early ¡Aztlán Libre! movement.



Que linda es nuestra gente

by Inés Hernández

*"Que casualidad que nos encontramos hoy en este día
Si vieras que venía pensando en tí
Y ahora aquí estamos, me da tanto gusto,
Sería el destino
"Que casualidad encontrarnos otra vez"*

from the song "Que casualidad" by Joe Bravo

Ah, que raza, linda raza
de las raíces bien sufridas
mothers and fathers who gave up their lives, their dreams
not in surrender, but as their most earnest offering
so we, their children, would see the sun of a new day

What have we done
that our children are still lost, perhaps more so --
Chicano/Chicana a thing of the past
Even la llorona cries no more for us
nor does the quetzal turn it gentle face to us
to teach us liberation
The condor lives only in captivity
Endangered like the eagle
Human beings, too, poisoned, like all the other sky, earth, water
Relations
Nesting periods destroyed by oil spills
The indios of Brazil hunted down/slaughtered by white squatters
given over in lust to bloody drippings of gold
South Africa, Israel, Britain, the U.S. practice like collusion
translated into ads that tell us,
"A diamond is forever,"
and young Chicanas tell me
"I only wear gold."

Connection, no connection
Relation, no relation

I hear young impertinent Chicanos and Chicanas mistaught and led by
stuck-in-the-muck, nose-in-their-navel smiling
false faces
who often ironically mislead hasta in caló
who say the right things
saben la perica, you know
tienen facilidad de palabra
and they teach it to the young ones who dogmatize
and proselytize
demand conformity to the who-would-guess-you're-so-right



continued:

Que linda es nuestra gente

by Inés Hernández

Patron Politics System

"Si, patrón"

"No, patrón"

"Si, patrona"

"No, patrona"

"Mi patrón dice"

"Mi patrona dice"

"No puedo porque dice mi patrón"

"No puedo porque dice mi patrona"

"Tengo que porque exige mi patrón"

"Debo de porque asi manda mi patrona"

Contra

Diction

Don't walk like you talk

Don't talk like you walk

Do you mean what you say

or say what you mean?

Y de ser hombre y mujer de palabra, enseñanza tradicional?

Ay, Diós, no menciones tradición!

That would mean we're backward, politically not with it!

Es más, no digas Diós

That's not cool, either

Especially if you want to name the Diós/Diosa

in any other language but the famous conquerer's

You know, Spanish, the unifying language?

The one that saved the continent, 'cause the indios were so dumb
todos Tontos, right

They couldn't speak to each other before the españoles came
to save them from oblivion

Just like Reagan, then Bush and the other Contras are saving Nicaragua
and the U.S.A. and C.I.A. saved Chile and Guatemala before

Just like Israel's saving the Palestinians

and Hitler saved the Jews

Saving us from ourselves

I tell a young Chicano I am sick at heart

at the suffering in the world

at the denial by almost everyone

of Palestinian rights to sovereignty

and he says, Huh?

He doesn't even see how the U.S. A. and the migra

are cutting his throat and imposing the borders of his mind and spirit

I had a dream about a migra raid



continued:

Que linda es nuestra gente

by Inés Hernández

Había chota y migra por dondequiera
I notice two compañeros mobilizados por el terror
corriendo a escapar
Salgo de la casa en donde estoy
y miro friégotes de gente
Camino hacia la calle donde veo un señor, un viejito
muerto asesinado tirado en la calle
su cara boca abajo
su sombrerito puesto aun
su chaqueta y pantalón de polyester blue
sobre su cuerpo delgado, cuerpo de indio del sur
me quedo grabada, helada
mirando este señor, este viejito
cuando una chicana viene y me grita
"He's just a Mexican, we hate Mexicans!"
y luego salta ella corriendo

Miro pa'bajo otra vez
y esta el señor ahora hecho pedazos, a cuchillazos
como si fuera un pedazo de carne de res
Solo queda la cabeza, su pescuezo, y sus hombros desnudos
Entonces todo el dolor que siento se me hincha y se me sale
con un grito enlagrimado
y despierto

veo que aquí estamos in this world
where women still spend billions on cosmetics and diversion
where all the ads teach everyone that a perfect body is what
you should seek, so you will be sought after

never mind your mind
we'll take care of that for you

Never mind Angola
Never mind Namibia
or South Africa
Never mind El Salvador
Never mind Honduras
Never mind the Phillipines
Never mind Guatemala
Never mind Big Mountain

and
the African National Congress?
The American Indian Movement?
The Palestinian Liberation Organization?
The Frente Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional?
The Frente Sandinista de Liberación?
Terrorists



continued:

Que linda es nuestra gente

by Inés Hernández

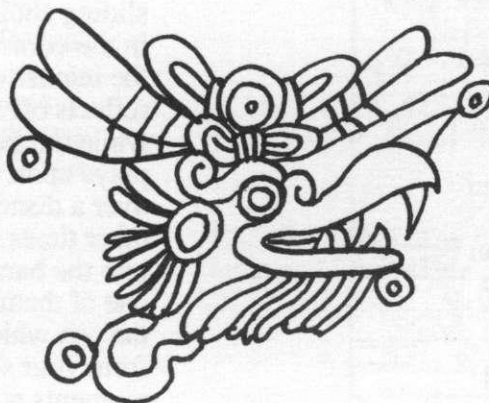


They're all terrorists
They think they can govern themselves
They think they know what they want
They think
They think
They think
You don't think
They think
You don't think
We think for you
Don't worry your pretty little heads
"Our youth must be protected, kept innocent
Must be brought up right
The American way
Right, not Left
Left is evil
Even the Bible says so, don't you know?"

Indian people say they don't need missionaries from the right
or the left
They need no one to save them
For they/we are original
Why can't Chicanos and Chicanas shed their fear to be original,
Too?

Ah, que raza, linda raza, de las raíces bien sufridas....

Inés Hernández is a professor of Literature and Languages at UC Davis. She has been active in the Chicano and Native American movement for the last twenty years. Her poem "Que linda es nuestra gente" was written in 1988.



-- you still throb--

by Ricardo Sánchez

*Cobre, la tierra brilla como cobre bruñido,
y la luz quemante del sol nos baña y ampara
por barriadas donde la esperanza reposa...*



I.
you still throb,
Rubén Salazar,
within hearts
which felt
your heated words,
and vigils
that saw
the canister
cannonading
toward your ideals
at the million dollar
"stop-n-die"
last gasp saloon...

II.
you had gumption, carnal,
in those years when it took
huevos de ranchero
to stand up and shout
that you were damn-tired
of swallowing spit
and other swill,
that you would no longer be
a "Stranger In Your Own Land,"
¡chale qué nó!

your words rode
the migrant stream,
pumping hope
in minds
which had gotten dustied-out,
urban centers
took notice
of a Chicano from E.P.T.
whose tanates exploded
on the pages of
The Los Angeles Times
with a caustic tempo,

all the while
your voice boomed out
from East L.A.
to Mara, Pacoima, San Fer
and down to Berdugo
even to Riverside,
la cholada
danced and celebrated

la chorizeada beaming out
from KMEX, daring
to tell truths long hidden
to a raza disemboweled,
strength seeped in
into barrios, colonias
and mercados
as the pueblo heard and read
noticias which made sense,

they had to butcher you, carnal,
to wipe you off the planet,
you were a bit too intrusive,
too inquisitive and demanding,
and "that be not right"
for a bato from El Chuco to be;
you knew that, yet you acted
in the finest and highest sense
of journalism - exposing
piggish lies and manipulations,
casting truths at the lying eyes

of brazen genociders and cabrones,
damn, but we loved your spunk,
your willingness to confront,
more than anything, we respected
an intellect searching through
the historic rubble left
by a people systematically being rubbed out
year after decade after century
from their own land...

III.
sometimes, Rubén, I hear your voice
or feel the words you wrote
sliding about
in the corners of our city,
the intensity of your stare
reflects off Mt. Franklin
while the sardonic smile
plays upon the clouds hovering
over a disneyfied borderland,
other times I look deep
into the barrios and see children romp,
one of them might just take up
the pen which tumbled out
from your shirt pocket
moments after the L.A. lawless cop
gunned you down;

continued:

-- your heart still throb --

by Ricardo Sánchez

that child
might see your name
embossed upon our cultural history,
take up the legacy you left behind
and decide to finally
lead our people home
into a future
where
all people can be humane...

IV.

not much has changed in this city
you once called home,
other than many more
patrolling cops, migra
and even sardos
who see criminals
in every economic victim's
unsteady hungry paces,

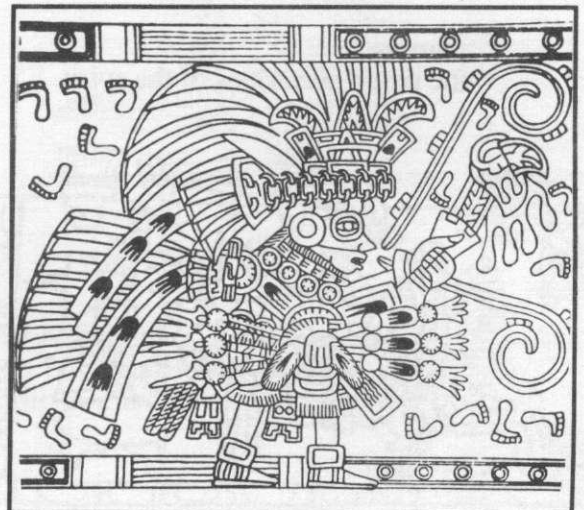
yes, there is more poverty
and many more wealthy
exploiters of human needs
mayors own the city
as well as the horrid
factories across the river,
arts and letters
lie scattered, smouldering
on the barrancas
of a river no longer grand,

soot visits everyone daily,
it rolls down the granite walls-
smudges minds and spirits-
while grotesqueries pose
as schools
where brown-eyed children
are systematically de-schooled
while being trained
to become stratified janitors
speaking a mundane-pedestrian
English fit only for yessir-people,

lower valley colonias are waterless
and local media pundits
scatologize la raza, creating
more furtive beings
who burrow through bigger barrios,
but you would recognize the place
for its racist ways
have been merely magnified
in a much more subtle manner
while Chicanos have taken on
the rancid mantle
of being strangers in el chuco,

you would denounce it all, Rubén.
your pen would flail
as eloquence would slice
through the murky pestilential crap,
but I doubt that the papers would
dare print your truths
or that the radio stations
would interview you
and air the anger
that would grandiloquently
spew from you...

Ricardo Sánchez, is a poet and professor in El Paso, Texas. "-you still throb" is taken from an unpublished manuscript, *Journey Through the Pass*. (This poem was written to the mem-ory of Rubén Salazar on 29 August 1989 in El Paso, Texas.



History of My Want by J.Nicole Hoelle

The history of my want
is spelled out there,
in nocturnes,
the fable of those
millioned now to dust,
all its latent business
that lives off the
peculiar vitamins of your voice
telling nite's true passage
away from aching rule of death
with corks popping
and the heat feeding our bodies,
full of presented stars
caught within some secret
that our small excited vehicles
are trying to explain
miming
the rising nectarines of the spirit.



A Near Miss of Vapor by J. Nicole Hoelle

I want to channel
that backyard
zoom A and E
through your soggy hand
your sickened morning
ready to leave
half naked among books

Want to ghoul towards that
taken apart in a series of leaves,
Jack claps and God
were what you knew
through plump R
supple E,

let's spend the stars
from there to here
we've been within each other
just enough to mount
the chin,
clap back and cut me that verge again
where the thing was constantly
about to happen
go ripe and get on with it
jotting every strand
that came near your window
among the clocks
tossing whatever
you were,
a blot of blonde
a near miss of vapor.

J. Nicole Hoelle, is a contemporary poet who is using language, symbols and sound to form new ways of writing poetry. Her work is especially noteworthy and we hope to see more of her work. She is from the mid-west in Iowa.



Sight and Smiles
by Juan S. Muñoz

We smile
laugh
share the other side
of our grief.
We smile
thinking of new and
interesting ways to be tolerant
to be patient
to resist tired disguises.
We smile
joining in the procession of
degradation, no longer at peace
with our own thoughts
staring sharply into ourselves
destroying some poignant part
of the past.



Once More
by Juan S. Muñoz

Otra vez
strangled by
one's private
thoughts
on Juniper trees
to hang from
how time
wrought
a boy
with a pistol in his hand
facing seven caves
but a single history.
Una voz
completes the dark
equation
burdened
once more
by being.



Juan S. Muñoz, is a young poet who lives in East Los Angeles, and is editor and publisher of *Alchemy*, a new Chicano Journal.



Leo Limón, Artista de Aztlán and Graphic Designer for *New Visions de Aztlán*.
Sueños y Realidades de Los Angeles.

Butterfly
by Rosa Lynda Limón

Butterfly, Butterfly---

I fly in the sky.

I pass a rainbow
through nature's eye.

I pass a dove
from up above.

I pass a spring shower
on top of a mayflower,
and there's not so many
houses where I pass along---

all I really hear is the
Hummingbird's song.

"I wrote this in December of 1991, it is my first poem. I had to do a report on insects or animals; I chose to do a report on insects. And since the butterfly is my favorite insect, I started on a report of a Monarch and then all of a sudden I got a crazy idea about being one. So I imagined of being a Monarch and that's how I got the idea of writing this poem."

Rosa Lynda is 10 years old and attends Loreto Street School in Cypress Park, Los Angeles, California.



Whittier Boulevard 90022
by Andrew M. Martínez

As I walk through East LA
People see me and move out of my way
What do they see in me
If they only knew I was an educated Chicano
Am I being stereotyped by my own gente
Or is it that I am a reality
I walk with my head up
Because I respect myself for who I am

If you cannot look at me face to face
Then what does that make you
Think of me as your hermano
For I will die for you some day

Many of us Chicanos search for happiness
Not rejection
One day
A homeboy, cholo, pachuco
As you people call us
Will stop
And help you in a time of need
But don't thank us
For it is known that you will
Double cross us in a later day ...
For I am a Chicano and damn proud of it.



Fashion Statement
by Andrew M. Martínez

They beat up our Zoot Suiters
They straight out stereotyped us
Till this day

These guēros
How do they think
Most of these Zoot Suiters
Were our fathers
It was no more than
A fashion statement

These demented sailors came
They beat up our fathers in public
Then they raped our mothers once again
Like history was repeating itself

Was it out of jealousy
Chicanos were
Burning their draft cards
Were we the smart one's
It wasn't our war
It was their war
If they only knew the 21st Century
Is around the corner



Andrew Matthew Martinez is currently attending Rio Hondo College majoring in Chicano Studies. He lives in East LA. In the far future he plans on writing a book.

Ancient Memories

by

Nezahualcóyotl de Aztlán

Even within the darkness of my mind,
I look for light inside the shadows of my soul.
If I could free myself from this cold and misty cloud,
maybe then, I could see clearly
In Cem Anáhuac Yollotl (The heart of the one world)

My silent memories stare at the Mayan moon and I
dream of a silvery pathway through this maze of life.
I sing the songs of my ancient ancestors, searching
for a land that once was ours... looking for the visions
of the Aztec, Maya and Toltec, and all the memories
they left behind.

We are the totality of our ancient dreams and of all those
who came before us... how can we find our way,
when our histories are so hidden from us, and with
our futures we are still trying to understand.

We seek inspiration from our ancient ancestors who
charted the stars from their pyramids of Tenochtitlán,
Chichén-Itzá and Teotihuacán. We are the sons and
daughters of a great civilization resisting the status quo
for five hundred years under the native skies of our
ancient Aztlán and Turtle Island.

But, we shall rise again as the morning star of Quetzalcóatl,
claiming the promised land which still produces our
amarantha bread, our native corn, and the sacred cacao
of the gods. We shall seek dignity and honor, and shall
hunger and thirst for justice and wisdom under the rule
of our ancient ancestors and with the fertility of Tonantzín.

Our poetry and visions shall constantly search for
the soul of humanity, and our children shall resurrect the
reality of ancient days.



Bang! Bang!

by Frank Bridges

The moon floats across the sky
breaks over my shoulders, and plays a slow song.
Matches snap
and a viceroy designs the thought of some ruby shoes
while the gravity of neglect
tick tock their tales down the circling sidewalk
piecing cigarettes together, and
pawning their smiles
for something stronger than a memory.
Tick tock drip drip
December makes itself known.
Papers flap and slap their way over shoes
and upon headlights of passing cars.

Bird calls
from the slippery personalities of the corner boys
whistle old news, over someones sleepy shoes
who staggered to the corner of another dead end
and can't answer, who, what or when.
But the corner boys wonder what's in the bag.
So they pick through his pockets
but find
only broken arrows.

Across the way
the juke box plays Patsy Cline's "Crazy".
And so it goes, the anthem of the red nose.
A chance to pan through textured personalities
with a bump and a grind
and compliments no one uses anymore.

The moon glows.
Bringing out those who sleep with their eyes open
to pick a star
and maybe watch it from the window.
The night is young, and here they come.
Snaking through the maze of alleyways
in a black and blue '62.
Carrying the goateed legacy of the town I live in.
Carrying those in the vase, of the steel blue thought.
Carrying the legacy to the face who is to earn his
by the peach-fuzz promise he gave
like a slave to the face in the vase of a steel blue thought.
The goateed legacy.
Bang!



Bang! Bang!
continued:



The driver delivers.
The shotgun riders figures.
The back seat triggers pull leaving the card.
Frankie boy wrestled with the giant question mark
in his private dark.
Still the answer is vague
But still the front seat licks the lips of a thirsty thought
for a life's payback.

But a friend to the end jumps the crime drops the dime
to speak in shadows to speak in triple face.
Speaking of Bang! Bang!
And how the telegram rang
through the breath of the one who got the secrets shot out of him
pouring him into a reality.
And the hair that strayed, is turning gray
on couches he can never call home.
One dime won't solve the crime
because the blood never dries
and the same bullet flies

Frankies boy's name
will never sound the same to those who want to play.
His teen queen will find out soon
but still proves her love by spreading under the moon.
It may seem strange
but it's right in the vein of peacock tatoos.
It's in the eyes that look but never see.
It's in the ears that hear but never listen.
It's in the body that feels but never knows what!
So
the banging of heads!
So the banging of the earth's womb with a fisted heart!
So the banging of ourselves.

Frankie boy dies, the way his family cries
over candles, when the church is empty.
Living in slow motion stories of hand signals
and valium type turns.
Sweating people in nightmares
and snailing through the city, looking for a dry spot.
Frankie lives in sly. His teen queen sighs. Another boy dies.
The same bullet flies... ...and a baby is on the way.
But after 12, it doesn't matter.

After 12 it just doesn't matter!
Bang! Bang!!

Frank Bridges is a new and up-coming poet of Aztlán who has a home-boy and philosophical style wrapped in a mystery. We will be publishing more of his work in the future.

Ending Something Good

by Yousef Sajjadi

By four P.M. the clouds had rolled in and a slight breeze blew the leaves off the trees. The summer was ending and somehow I felt a wonderful thing would soon be ending. I knew this was the day she would tell me good bye. Life has not been the same since that summer afternoon, and my sadness has stayed with me.

We drove to the restaurant through the small streets avoiding the rush hour traffic on the freeway. I was avoiding eye contact with her, but it seems she was trying to catch me looking at her. I tried to hold her hand as we had done many times before, but they were cold and I felt my own hands becoming numb as well. Reaching for the radio I removed my hand and found our station, it played a sad melody making a big knot in my throat. I had no idea why I was there. For my own hanging perhaps.

We arrived at our destination, a small restaurant. But we had been here before and this time it was a strange place. Walking in, I noticed we were walking apart. I didn't say anything. There was nothing to say. The low dim lights were as candles giving little light to the dark dining hall. We were seated in a booth, normally a cozy place for us, but not this time. I kept thinking "is this a bad dream?" Not really this is for real.

"How do you feel?" she asked. "*And she spoke*" I thought to myself. "OK" I answered. We stared at one another as though speaking without talking. That conversation had more meaning than most conversations I have had with most people to this day.

"May I bring you something to drink?" the waiter asked breaking the silence. "Water please" I replied. Looking at her again felt like a knife was probing deeper into my chest, as if she was opening my chest to see what was inside. It seemed like an eternity. We were quiet and again silence was broken with her sweet voice "You know..." I interrupted "I know". I played with the glass of water

on the table, it seemed to be the only thing there with life in it. Finally I knew I had to look at her and do the best I could do, not to become weak, but to remain strong for the both of us.

I remembered my homeland. I remembered how adults would sit around and sip hot tea discussing the problems they had and eventually come to a solution. So, I ordered us some tea. I stirred the tea slowly and watched the steam rise. It gave me a soothing feeling which was what I needed.

I took one sip, looked into her eyes and said "I care about you deeply, but I know you want to go. So do what is in your heart and go." Her eyes were motionless. "You understand don't you?" she asked. I nodded my head as in yes.

We got up and left. As we arrived at her home I found myself weakened as a child who lost his way home. I got out, opened the door for her and gave her a big hug, avoiding her eyes. I then got into my car without saying a word, for all that had to be said had been said.

Yousef Sajjadi is an Iranian writer. He is a naturalized U.S. citizen due to conflicts at home. Currently he is majoring as an X-Ray Technician at Loma Linda University in Riverside, California.



Urban Chola
by Alyce Quiñones

I've often driven through East L. A. wondering what was going on in the minds of these mysterious women. A culture within a culture that has survived since the pachucos. "La Mujer Fuerte" - these women exist in a sea of violence and anonymity.

Their make-up is a mask which serves as a two-way mirror for the urban chola. The mask forces the general public to give it attention. The stark eyeliner draws in the eye of anyone daring enough to look further. The mask requires maintenance for behind it lies another presence, a vulnerable soul under protection. A witness to crime, rape, shoot-outs, drug addiction, alcoholism and physical abuse. They can give testimony of an educational system that has sentenced them to failure. They can testify to beatings and abuse - to the strength of women supporting a family. They can make Anita Hill look like Little Red Riding Hood. They look the wolf in the face on a daily basis.

Women - in this society we are often viewed as commodity. A pair of breasts, legs and a reproductive system. A body which is viewed only for its shell, not its soul.

These prints were envisioned when I saw this waxen mold; a work in progress by another artist. Red wax, full round breasts, long legs, a slim waist, and full buttocks. All that is valued in Western culture. Red wax - headless and without feet. The concept of immobility came to mind. A female figure immobile in space and time. Faceless-anonymous like so many in our culture.

Society often uses our bodies to enslave us. Instruments of political debate and med-



ical research. Abortion, birth control, breast implants and breast cancer. We are at the heart of society, we are the means of production. Yet this society spends more money on bombs than on prenatal care and cancer research.

My photographs illustrate the movement forward, the spirit which gives flight to the faceless. True mobility is attained from within for it is self induced.

The New World Order
by Jerry Rodriguez

Mankind, human beings, brother of mine, open your eyes and don't be so blind.

Corporations, religions and governments too, don't you realize they make fools out of you?

They own your property, your money\$ and clothes, and in the near future they will own your souls.

Continue to follow then blindly you sheep, as wars fall upon you your corpses decay in heaps.

Save your souls while there is still time, revolt from their slavery and hideous crimes.

Because of them there is greed, hunger and affliction, they cause racism, disease and drug addiction.

For those reasons God will cleanse the earth with righteous vindication.

For humans were created to share and to love, to help one another and be gentle as doves.

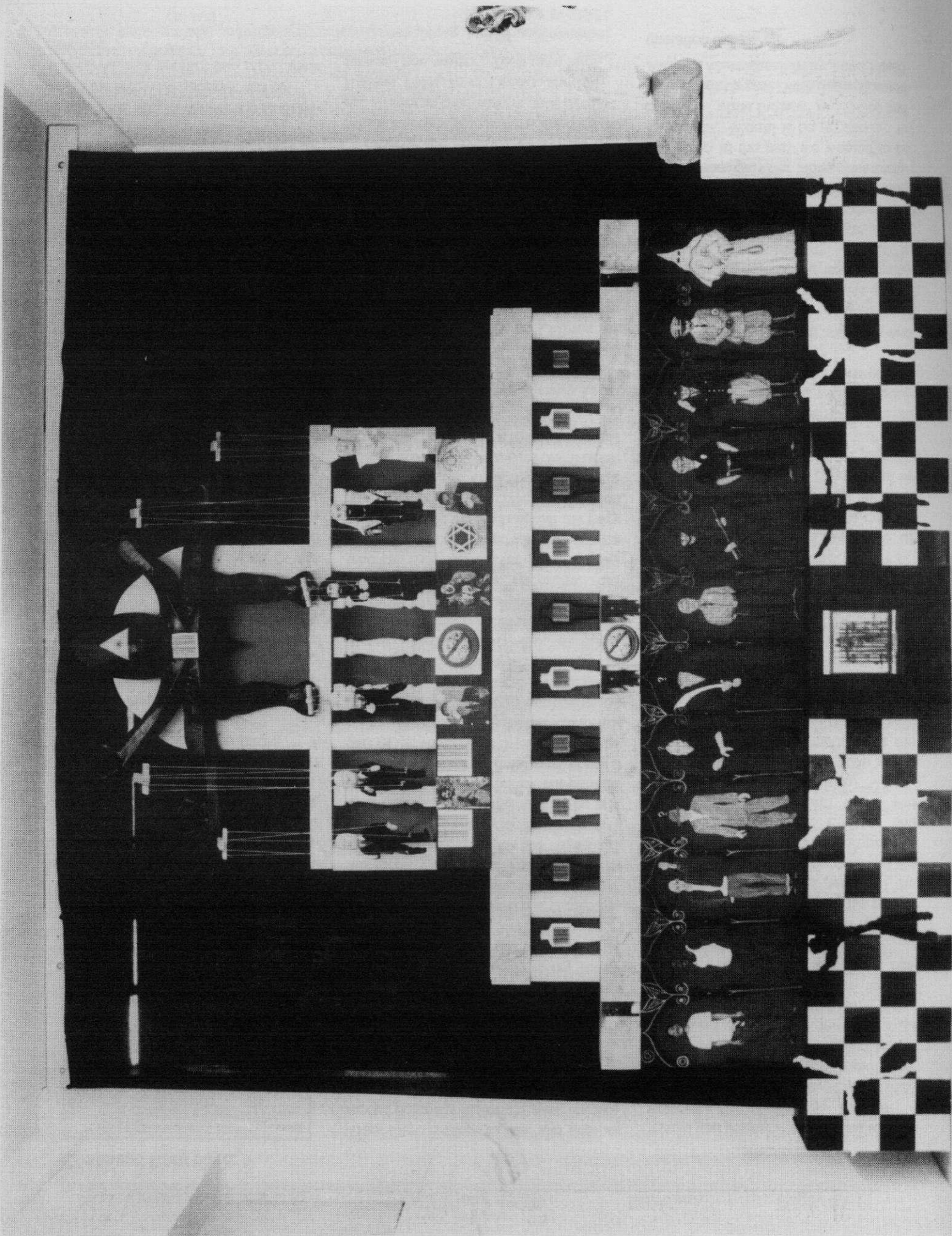
Corporations, governments and religions seek to enslave so have nothing to do with them, thou mortal knaves.

Jerry Rodriguez is a multifaceted artist living in Los Angeles, California.









Continued from page: 5



European and indigenous leaders.

course. On that account we cannot admit to ourselves that they who conquered us, they who fathered us, are our ancestors too. We call them white, Europeans; we deny them even when we resemble them and call ourselves non-white, Third World people.

In general, many tragic consequences of our past derive from the biological aspect of the encounter. The denial of our genes and chromosomes accounts for perceptions of the past. Enumerated in their stark nakedness, perceptions give voice to our wounded spirit:

First, the arrival of Columbus was an invasion of our people and lands. It marked the beginning of European conquest, rape, colonization, domination, and genocide.

Second, the "spiritual conquest," that is, the conversion of the Indians to Christianity, was a destruction of their religion, culture, and way of life.

Third, the mating of our male European and our female Indian ancestors was rape. They raped our women. It was so in many cases of slavemaster and slave, in Mexico as in the United States.

Fourth, they conquered, colonized, raped, plundered, enslaved, and oppressed us.

Fifth, they brought European diseases that decimated our population.

Sixth, the racist Spanish fathers rejected their mestizo offspring.

Seventh, Anglo-Americans exterminated the Native Americans, and enslaved African peoples and raped their women.

True, there is more to face and deplore in our complex historical past, including many parallels in the history of Americans whose ancestry is African, Chinese, Japanese, Jewish, Italian. Young Koreans and Vietnamese today are going through the anguish of becoming American. These indictments dwell on pain and tragedy in our selective memory. Are there other sides of the picture?

Our identities are fluid and changing. Consider how we Mexicans and Chicanos identify with our Hispanic-Mexican ancestors-- but not with our "Spanish" ancestors. We take pride in our names, in the Spanish language, and in the arts of Mexico; we love Mexico but pretend that our 300-year colonial past is not a part of us; we deplore the United States' westward expansion and Manifest Destiny; and we say that they robbed us of more than half of Mexican territory, our ranching and mining skills, our language. Paradoxically too, we have grafted Anglo American hispanophobia, centuries old, on to our antipathy to our "Spanish" or "Hispanic" ancestors. And who can truly fathom the great tragedy of African Americans who have been conditioned to deny European ancestry from slavery days? Does the notion still exist in the United States that a drop of African blood makes one Black? How do light-skinned African Americans feel?

In the United States Chicanos have been accomplices in hating our ancestors from Spain. Why do some of us say that we are Mexican, Latinos, or Chicanos, but not Hispanic? How were we conditioned to affirm ourselves as "non-white?" What is "white?" I see many Asian Americans who are not "yellow," and African Americans who are "white," not "black," not negros as the Spanish and Portuguese labelled African people in the 15th century.

Below the level of awareness our minds entertain race notions imposed on us. American racethinkers once labelled Italians, Poles, Jews, Greeks, and Italians as "non-white." They gave intel-

lectual and scientific credentials to notions of white supremacy. They invented differences between "white" people from northern Europe and "non-white" people from Eastern and Mediterranean Europe. Are Latin Americans whose parents came from Italy, England, Germany, France or Ireland "white," "non-white," "people of color," "Third World?"

Mexicans and Chicanos are also victims of extranjerismo. In the period of Mexican history that preceded the Revolution extranjerismo expressed the longing of Mexicans to be European, a veneration of French, English and North American cultural ways, and contempt for things Mexican. Why? What does extranjerismo have to do with the growing endorsement of the term Hispanic in the United States? Does it? Undeniably, racethinking, social exclusion, injustice and more from the past, continue to affect us today. And saddest of all, especially the vulnerable young.

One formulates a conception of identity based on perceptions and attitudes. Saying that Columbus was one of them may be interpreted as the cry of a wounded spirit. Our feelings and attitudes are motivated and conditioned by emotional and psychological anguish caused by rejection, perceived and real. Wounded in spirit, we sever ourselves from and deny our past, without understanding why. What have been our responses?

In calling our Iberian ancestors and all Europeans them we Mexicans and Chicanos deny them as a part of us, even when we celebrate our mestizo, our raza cósmica identity. A mestizo identity without European ancestry is a curiosity to me. Why do we deny our multiple ancestries from Spain today and embrace only our indigenous ancestry, when in the past we wanted to be "Spanish?" Would it be productive to compare "white Indians" in Mexico and "white Mexicans" with light-skinned African Americans? Why have I used quotation marks?

For a long time I have been maintaining that the Spaniards of the 16th century were already mestizos when they crossed the Atlantic. Does not mestizo Spain, then--Iberian, Greek, Roman, Arabic, Jewish, Visigothic, Mediterranean Spain-- live on in our genes and chromosomes? And is not Africa culturally and biologically significant in Mexico, Latin America and the United States, and in many parts of the Arabic world?

That initial dramatic, biological encounter of 500 years ago provokes these questions. Our old answers may no longer be acceptable. What is the consequence in the hearts and minds of any person today who denies our multiple ancestries, when our eyes, common sense, and history tell us otherwise? Do we have an adequate knowledge of the complex psychological and emotional consequences of that most fundamental human impulse, to mate, which connects us with the entire human race and with life itself? There is now an abundant literature and scholarship that illuminates human relationships in our past, from women's points of view. The emotional consequences of "inter-racial" love, "mixed marriages," and the sexual impulse that leads to procreation are finding dramatic expression in all the arts.

Many consequences of the past 500 years make us prisoners of the past. We judge the past with the eyes of the present instead of interpreting and under-

standing the forces behind human behavior in its own historical context. Because they denied us we teach Chicano youth in our classrooms to celebrate Aztlán and to take pride in our ancient indigeneous ancestry, and rightly we should. Yet, some of our history, scholarship, arts and letters instructs us to mutilate ourselves, to lop off parts of our multiple ancestries. Admirable as their achievement during the past twenty years has been, some of our writers and artists and scholars have adopted paradoxical Mexican attitudes and popular thought uncritically. And if their vision is large they are criticized adversely.

An inadequate knowledge of Mexican cultural history and historiography simplifies our past. Our Mexican and Chicano identity is not uniform and singular, distinct yes, because it is multiple, culturally plural. And Chicanos must be credited too, for bringing attention to other Hispanic groups. The knowledge of our population is growing.

In speaking about our biological realities we must begin to dispel racial myths, instead of giving them added authority and intellectual credentials. The observance of an event that took place 500 years ago is an occasion to celebrate all cultures, and for Mexicans and Chicanos to embrace Mexican culture, all of it, including that which spills from many cultures of the world into Mexico, and from Mexico into the United States, where it reciprocally enriches all other cultures. On the other hand I recognize that through the population of the United States there runs the blood and cultures of all the peoples of the world. Their cultures belong to the public domain, and this is an occasion to claim them as our own. Personally, my writer's spirit shares a kinship with people and the civilizations of the world. I cherish all my ancestries, and if I am missing any, my imagination will find a way to claim it anyway.

Earlier I stated that it is not the celebration of Columbus that people were protesting. Are we not in fact protesting racism, slavery, rape, cruelty, colonialism, inhumanities, killing, greed, corruption? I believe so.

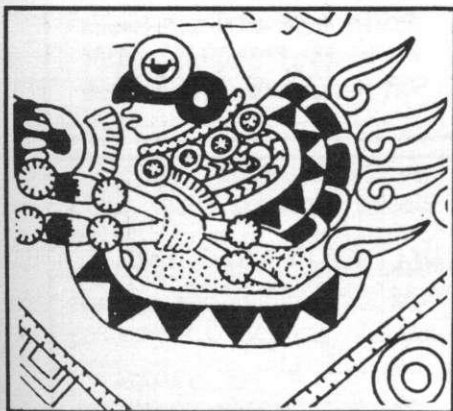
In our present way of thinking, however, judging past injustices, we give names to inhumanities everywhere; we call them European, American, Spanish, white America. Columbus has been turned into an icon of the evils and inhumanities which have existed in all places of the world, in all historical periods, and among factions within the same empire or nation. Our own American Civil War, the Mexican Revolution, the independence movements of our nations, the struggle for human and civil rights-- these all represent fratricidal struggles that the present anti-eurocentric trend of thought misrepresents.

It is idle to believe that we can isolate certain genes and chromosomes in our bodies, or Europe in our collective cultural and intellectual realities, and discard them.

In our classrooms, we must take great care when we deal with racism and other painful events of the past. We must not blame young students today for slavery, racism, and white supremacy. In fact we must give credit to all people who join in the struggles for human and civil rights.

In the future an integrated vision of United States multifaceted history will emerge. Once neglected areas of our collective cultural history will come together, and they will emphasize our distinct and shared experiences, tragic and otherwise. Our present mission, I believe, is to impart a knowledge of all cultures, to increase harmony among people. What happened in the past accounts for our present condition. And the aim of all learning and knowledge about the past must be to promote understanding now and in the future.

The observance of an event that expanded human knowledge and the known geographical and cultural limits of the entire world 500 years ago is an occasion to remember and understand the immutable past, to examine our ideas and beliefs and attitudes. This is a time to direct our minds and hearts toward enlightenment and understanding, a time to reaffirm our humanity, regardless of background. The treasures of East and



Current Age of La Raza in Aztlán and Turtle Island. In Cem Anahuac Yollotl.

West, of Western and non-Western civilizations, of all periods, belong to all of us. There are no uniformly wicked nations and no boundaries to our cultural world heritage and the achievements of civilizations, only those that we ourselves set up.

Were there any positive consequences of the encounter 500 years ago? Is there anything about the past 500 years to celebrate? I leave you with these questions, plus the many others that I have not answered.

Acknowledgments

This essay and others in progress were supported by a UC-MEXUS Research Opportunity Grant.

The epigraph is taken, with permission from UC-MEXUS, from Dr. Miguel León Portilla's essay, "El encuentro de dos mundos," presented on February 9, 1992, at the Rewriting History Symposium, co-sponsored by UC-MEXUS and the Mexican government's Programa para la Comunidades Mexicanas en el Extranjero, and hosted by el Colegio de la Frontera Norte at San Antonio del Mar, Baja California).

Eliud Martínez
UC Riverside

I close with the words of Miguel León-Portilla which serve as epigraph to this essay, loosely translated:

Greater will be the mission of the historian therefore. Standing firmly in the present the historian will spark dialogue between the documents of the past and the voices of those who feel themselves inexorably connected in the present with their past, and who wish, in the light of their past and present, to glimpse their future.

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she pays great attention to J.J. Bachofen and Robert Briffault's work on matriarchy.

This institution ignored the male's role in the child's procreation and traced descent solely from the maternal line. There was no difference between children born inside or outside of wedlock, for all children inherited their mother's class and bore her name or that of her clan. Property also was inherited solely in the feminine line: it passed from the mother to her daughters, and so on. The sons received nothing, though occasionally their sisters gave them a dowry when they got married. They could not inherit anything from their bodily father because he was not considered related to them. Whatever he captured or earned in his lifetime was logically bequeathed to his uterine clan through the common mother, or through her to the children of his sisters. These nephews and nieces were considered much more closely related to him than to their own father.

North American Indian clans were strongly based on this type of matriarchy, especially the Pueblo and Navajo Indians who are ancestors of Chicanos. Diner expresses Pueblo Indian matriarchy as evident in its architecture:

Previous opinions that these round halls were exclusively male clubs are refuted not only by the indubitable matriarchy prevalent among the Pueblos and the fact that they were built exclusively by women but also by their shape: round, burrowed into the earth, with only one, narrow entrance, opposite the fireplace. Could there be a "men's club" in this uterus?

It is evident that the emergence of patriarchal societies came with the Spaniards, Christianity and a need for recording lines of heredity (property rights). The continuation of strong patriarchy imposed a great threat to Christianity and its strict sexual mores. As noted by Diner sexuality was viewed quite differently in matriarchal societies.

The matriarchy is always generous in sexual matters; what does it care about virginity? The stern caliber of the race was preserved not by sexual hardships, but by ordeals that were part of the puberty rites customary....The necessary discipline here is centered on the different area, not on the erotic realm, which thus remains free of neuroses.

Robert Briffault (1927) also pays special attention to the sexual tolerance exhibited in matriarchies: "While we everywhere find chastity imposed by men upon women, it would be diffi-

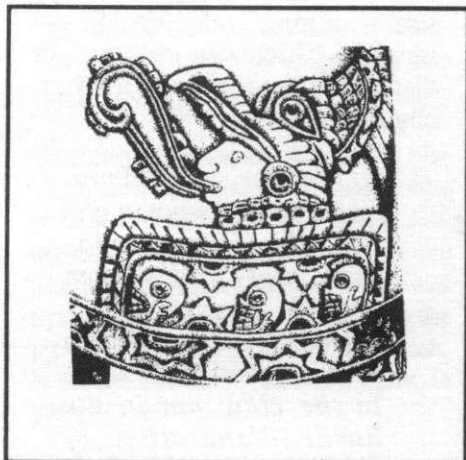


cult to find instances of any corresponding imposition of chastity by women upon men, apart from the observance of primitive tabus."

We can observe from these writings that by drawing from our foremothers into a patriarchal culture, dominant society attempted to negate the power they had over their bodies and community. Religion further drew clear boundaries for the separation of good versus bad women. The virgin/whore syndrome is one stressed in the Latino culture. However, strong strains of matriarchy are still evident in Chicano/a culture. In discussing the theory of matriarchy Diner writes:

....Matriarchy is dominated by old women and not by young ladies...these old women are clan elders, for matriarchies reaching back to prehistorical stages live in the clan, not in the horde...Veneration of mothers always depends upon the dependence of the sons.

It is this crucial fact that makes itself self-evident in the Chicano community. How many of us have been witness to our brothers, fathers and uncles revering the Mama or abuelita of the family. It is these women above all that hold power in the family, and most often it is the maternal abuelita. The males in a Chicano family are innately torn between their feelings of love and respect for their mothers and the imposed machismo ascribed by them by the dominant society. Most Chicanos I know would never claim to be macho. I believe that the idea of machismo is one that dominant society has manufactured in order to subvert Chicanos from attempting to exert themselves in realms outside of the family. Chicanos, especially those in the U.S. Southwest want to be viewed as a man in dominant society, where the man is king of his castle. If indeed he is king, then the Chicana is destined to be queen. Right? But instead dominant culture presents her as victim - slave to man. But in reality this machismo is often a façade of bravado put on for the audience, the greater audience.



For men like fathers, being "macho" meant being strong enough to protect and support my mother and us, yet being able to show love. Today's macho has doubts about his ability to feed and protect his family. His "machismo" is an adaptation to oppression and poverty and low self-esteem....Coexisting with his sexist behavior is a love for the mother which take precedence over that of all others.To wash down the shame of his acts, of his very being, and to handle the brute in the mirror, he takes to the bottle, the snort, the needle, and the fist. (Anzaldúa, 1987)

However, in many cases this plan is subverted by the Chicano culture's ancestral link with matriarchy. In these households power is held by a woman, but not in a domineering "macha" way. According to Blea:

The indigenous part of Chicano culture supports matriarchy, and women maintain strong cultural roles. In addition, there has been an attempt to treat the Chicano male as Black men have been treated. Discrimination works to emasculate them, to make them feel inferior. This tactic, however, has not taken a strong hold in Chicano society, and most Chicano males have strong female role models. (1988)

Coming from this place of strong women I call forth our foremothers to voice their power and strength through Chicana writers. We are not victims, in many cases we have been

strengthened by the presence of strong women and their diligent work. A close friend of mine recently expressed to me a reoccurring memory she has of her mother. She would get up at 4:00 am each morning to go to work in a sewing factory, only to return each evening and take in sewing at home. In addition she cared for her husband, children and home. My friend concluded that when she begins to lament woes of her life, she needs only to draw on this image to keep her going and growing.

As Chicanas it is these experiences we need to express in our writing, our solidarity, forthrightness and strength. We need to remove ourselves from the marginalized victim frame of mind, for we are much more. Bell Hooks articulates this concept well:

Understanding marginality as position and place of resistance is crucial for oppressed, exploited, colonized people. If we only view the margin as sign, marking the condition of pain and deprivation, then a certain hopelessness and despair, a deep nihilism penetrates in a destructive way the very ground of our being. It is there in that space of collective despair that one's creativity, one's imagination is at risk, there that one's mind is fully colonized, there that freedom one longs for is lost. Truly the mind that resists colonization struggles for freedom of expression. That struggle may not even begin with the colonizer; it may begin

within one's segregated colonized community and family...I want to say that these margins have been both sites of repression and sites of resistance. And since we are well able to name the nature of that repression, we know better the margins as site of deprivation. We are more silent when it comes to speaking of the margin as site of resistance. We are more often silenced when it comes to speaking of the margin as site of resistance.

An emerging realm which shows great promise is the Latina autobiography. A new mode of autobiography, these pieces do not remain static, in linear portrayals. Instead they incorporate personal experiences with history, myth dialogue, poetry and politics. All this is presented in a fragmented Spanish/English format. In *Third World Women and The Politics of Feminism*, Lourdes Torres cites the four women at the center of this writing phenomena: Gloria Anzaldua, Cherrie Moraga, Aurora L. Morales and Rosario Morales. *Getting Home Alive*, by Aurora L. Morales and Rosario Morales is of special importance because it is written by a mother and daughter. They write of experiences common to both from their own particular point of view. Torres (1991) writes of this new form of expression:

Through their subversion of the autobiography, the Latina authors are seizing the podium, telling their own stories, creating new

images, and contesting the often negative and degrading images which others have used to construct the Latina.

It is this sense of Chicana creativity and ingenuity which we must continue to foster. In the realm of poetry there are other strong voices addressing Chicana issues. In the writing of Naomi Quiñonez (1985) presents many strong images of the Chicana reality. In "The Platter" she writes of the strength we can draw and learn from if we are willing to accept the challenge.

It was all there for the asking,
the eyes, the lips, the nose
the ears of Frida Kahlo
upon a platter of intellect
but you refused.

The eyes are too deep
you said, I may fall in.
The lips are too sensuous
I may never get out.
The nose if flared
with pride and survival
I don't understand.
The ears are pierced
they can listen to my thoughts.

Morbid dream, you said
awakening,
of flesh and organ
upon a plate.

So you sat before a dish
of stale bread
and bitter coffee
and called it breakfast
refusing the artist's tools
given freely in a dream,
never realizing
you were dying slowly
of malnutrition.

Yolanda M. Lopez
Portrait of the Artist as the
Virgen of Guadalupe, 1978



"Chicanas it's time to speak from the margin of resistance with the voices of our foremothers. Hacelo con ganas."

It is through the writing of these Chicanas and others that we must break through and emerge born again, empowered. Historically our voices do not speak of submission, guilt, fatalism, passivity and authoritarianism. We learned these isms. Our voices speak of strength, power and determination. We actuate - we are capable. Enough of this imposed victimization, for not only has dominant culture imposed it, but many have accepted this voice as a means to be heard. As Gloria Anzaldua (1990) writes: "When we, the objects, become the subjects, and look at and analyze our own experience, a danger arises that we may look through the master's gaze, speak his tongue, use his methodology."

Chicanas it's time to speak from the margin of resistance with the voices of our foremothers. Hacelo con ganas.

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Periquita
by
Carmen Morones
In Silence, Giving Tongue



Yo me acuerdo I remember
a three year old girl
nicknamed Periquita
by her parents
because she liked to *hacer ruido*

I remember
esa kittenish girl
sitting on her Mama's lap
on the front doorstep
under the moonlight
en México

I remember
her papa and Juan, the neighbor
sitting on rush chairs nearby
taking in the summer breeze
Stars gleaming
Crickets chirping
Fireflies whizzing by...

The men would reminisce
about many things
Good harvests, summer droughts
and the townpeople's misfortunes
Like the time Flaco sold his cow
to Don Hernández

"¿Por qué?" Periquita asked

Her papa winked at her
sucked on his cigarette
blew the smoke in circles
Paused...said nothing
Juan elaborated
about Flaco's wife being *muy enferma*
the fever, the difficulty breathing

"¿Por qué?" Periquita asked

Juan shrugged
Patted her head
Continued talking about the wife,
taken on a horse to the hospital

Periquita asked
"¿Hospital? *Qué es hospital?*
Her mama whispered
"Donde llevan a los enfermos"

"¡Oh!" Periquita exclaimed
Puffed her cheeks like when she had the mumps
"¿Yo estaba enferma!" Puffed her cheeks
"¿Yo estaba enferma!" Puffed her cheeks
"¿Yo estaba muy enferma!"

Her papa nodded
Juan smiled patiently,
then continued
about how Flaco had to sell his cow
to Don Hernández
to pay the hospital bill

Periquita asked her papa,
"¿Por qué no le das una vaca?"
the cow with the black and white spots

Juan chuckled
till his laughter fell
like the cigarette from her papa's mouth
crushed beneath his big black boot
Sucked on another one
matchlight in his face
A puff, a jerk of his head
a sideways glance
that told her mama
to-shut-up-or-put-her-to-bed

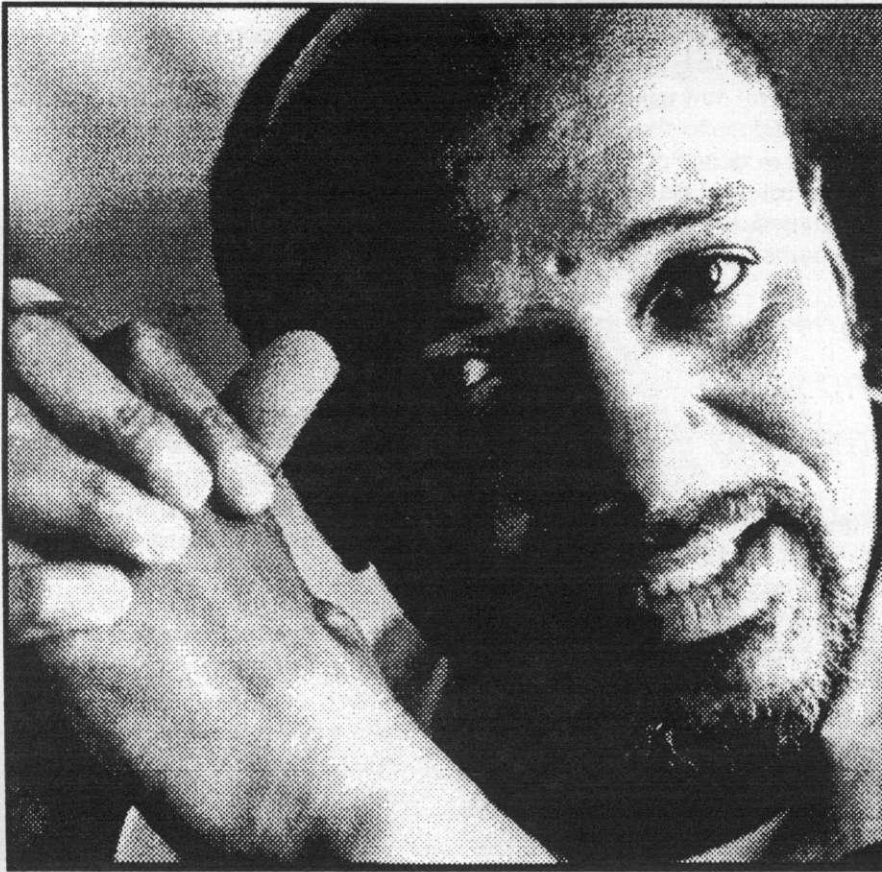
"Shhhhh..."
Her mama said
showed her daughter the palm of her hand
Periquita blinked and closed up
like the sleeping flowers
on the adobe wall

Her kitten eyes
watched the amber glow
of her papa's cigarette
as he sucked on it
Her kitten eyes
watched the flickering of the fireflies
as they passed by
in the night sky.

500 Years of Resistance to Genocide, Colonialism and Political Internment

GERONIMO JI JAGA

NEW AFRIKAN PRISONER OF WAR



Now in his 21st year behind the bars of California's prison system, geronimo ji Jaga (pratt) is one of the world's longest-held political prisoners. A former leader of the Black Panther Party, geronimo was targeted by the FBI's infamous COINTELPRO (Counter-Intelligence Program) and framed up for a murder the government knows he didn't commit. Despite growing support from Amnesty International, Congressional Black Caucus members, Rev. Jesse Jackson, Coretta Scott King, Danny Glover, and many grassroots organizations, the courts continue to deny him both a new trial and parole. After two decades of false imprisonment, of being a virtual hostage of the FBI's secret war against Black people, geronimo has

become a symbol of resistance in the struggle for Black liberation in America.

The government's own documents indicate that geronimo is innocent of the crime for which he was convicted: the senseless murder of a white school teacher on a Santa Monica tennis court in 1968. At the time of this killing, geronimo was attending a week-long Black Panther Central Committee meeting 400 miles away in Oakland, California. While the FBI had geronimo and the Panther leadership under constant surveillance the government claims to have mysteriously "lost" their records for this period. In his trial the fact that the main witness against him, Julio Butler, was a police agent was kept hidden from both the defense and the jury. The truth about Butler as well as the suppression of statements indicating

that others had done the killing, the planting of police spies in the defense camp, and many other abuses of justice were discovered only years later when geronimo won access to FBI files.

In the late 1960s the Black Panther Party was at the top of the government's list of organizations to be "neutralized" through a multi-levelled campaign of arrests, slander, and outright murder. The media depicted the Panthers and other revolutionary Black organizations as hate-driven extremists out to get "whitey." In reality the Black Panthers were organizing their community for self-determination and self-defense. Panther medical clinics, free breakfast for children programs, clothing give aways, and schools served as a model for organizers in this country and abroad.

The FBI also hoped to curtail growing white support by painting the Panthers as a gang of rhetoric spouting thugs. When geronimo was framed for the Santa Monica murder, he joined more than 300 Black Panther activists jailed or killed by the FBI. They included leaders like Fred Hampton and Mark Clark, killed by Chicago police, Sundiata Acoli, and many others who still remain behind bars.

In 1968, geronimo ji Jaga (pratt) returned to the U.S. after three years in Vietnam. Originally from Louisiana, he moved to Los Angeles, enrolled at UCLA, and joined the Black Panther Party. In 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was murdered. In the days that followed, Black communities exploded with outrage in 110 U.S. cities, North and South. Dr. King's assassination — believed by many to have been the result of a high level government conspiracy — climaxed ten years of sit-ins, boycotts, rebellion, marches, and voter registration drives that shook the foundations of U.S. society. Dr. King was gunned down three

years after the murder of Malcolm X. These two leaders had given voice to the pride and national identity of Black people in a militant and uncompromising movement. By 1968 the cities were in flames and the soul of the country was torn apart over the war in Vietnam.

Because of his effectiveness as a community leader, the FBI and police created a "Geronimo

began to learn the extent of the FBI conspiracy against him.

The decision to put geronimo in jail and keep him there didn't end when COINTELPRO was unmasked. He has been trying to obtain a new trial based on new evidence since 1978. But despite clear and widely accepted evidence of FBI and judicial misconduct all of his attempts have been turned down. In the Spring of 1991, armed with compelling new

Harvey Milk to death, he served less than 5 years in prison. KKK and Aryan Nations leaders Richard Butler and Robert Miles, charged in connection with bank robberies and racist murders, were freed by an all-white jury in 1988. In 1992, Los Angeles exploded when four white police were acquitted of the savage video-taped beating of Rodney King. As geronimo said on a CBS 60 Minutes interview, "If I had done the murder, I'd be out by now."

Geronimo refuses to apologize for a murder he did not commit. And he will not ever renounce his political belief. Like Nelson Mandela, geronimo is in prison for his principles. For the tens of thousands of people who know of geronimo, he stands out as a man who cares deeply for justice for Black people and all others. He is an inspiration to all who want to resist repression, to build a movement that will win self-determination and freedom for the colonized Black Nation, to free all political prisoners, and to fight for human rights everywhere.

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The decision to put geronimo in jail and keep him there didn't end when COINTELPRO was unmasked.

Pratt Squad" whose objective was to "get geronimo" by hook or by crook. When geronimo was jailed, thousands of people believed him innocent and understood that he and others from the Black Panther Party were being politically repressed. Their suspicions were confirmed in 1973 when anti-war protestors broke into an FBI office in Media, Pennsylvania, to pour blood on the files. They discovered documents detailing COINTELPRO: the secret government program whose stated purposes was to "discredit and

evidence of geronimo's innocence, which included sworn affidavits by former Panther leaders Bobby Seale, David Hilliard, Kathleen Cleaver, and Emory Douglas that they were with geronimo in Oakland at the time of the Santa Monica crime, attorneys filed a motion for a new trial. Within 24 hours of the delivery of hundreds of pages and evidence, the Los Angeles courts issued a one sentence ruling turning down the case. In December 1991, despite favorable recommendations from prison staff, the declaration of a "Geronimo ji Jaga Pratt Day" by the city of Oakland, and letters of support

As geronimo said on a CBS 60 Minutes interview, "If I had done the murder, I'd be out by now."

destroy the Black liberation movement." The activists made public what they found. Following on the heels of Watergate, the Media files caused an uproar as revelations of illegal government spying, misconduct, and murder grabbed headlines. Senate hearings were called. And using these exposures geronimo obtained some of his files and

from prominent individuals, the parole board once again denied him release.

Kept in prison solely because of his political history, geronimo has served more time than murderers and criminals whose guilt was never in question, but whose ideology was more in keeping with the government's. When Dan White shot San Francisco Mayor George Moscone and gay County Supervisor

Nezahualcóyotl de Texcoco
Toltec Poet, Philosopher and King
(1402-1472)



Seize the Moment

"Banish care; if there are bounds to pleasure, the saddest life must also have an end. Then weave the chaplet of flowers, and sing your songs in praise of the all powerful God; for the glory of this world soon fades away.

Rejoice in the green freshness of your spring; for the day will come when you will sigh for these joys in vain; when the scepter shall pass from your hands, your servants shall wander desolate in your courts, your sons and the sons of nobles shall drink the dregs of distress, and the pomp of your victories and triumphs shall live only in their recollections.

Yet the remembrance of the just, those who are just in their lives, shall not pass away from their nations, and the good you have done shall ever be held in your honor.

The goods of this life, its glories and its riches, are but lent to us, its substance is but an illusionary shadow, and the things of today shall change on the coming of the morrow. Then gather the fairest flowers from your garden, to bind around your brow, and seize the joys of the present before they perish."

Codex Florentino Libro, VI, cap. XVII fol. 74
Bernardino Sahagún



New Visions of Aztlán
A Chicano Literary Journal
The Aztlán Cultural Arts Foundation
P.O. Box 36A33
Los Angeles, CA 90036

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