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COVER: MANUEL HERNÁNDEZ TRUJILLO

Editorial

In early April, we believe it was April 1st, Congressman Henri B. Gonzales of Texas took to the Congressional floor and began ranting and raving about Mexican-American hate, hate sheets, hate groups, hate organizations, racism, reverse racism, double reverse racism, and, it is rumored, on one occasion found it necessary to mention triple reverse racism with body english. This last rave, it is rumored, so touched the congressional members located to the south and right of the speaker's podium that they let loose with the traditional congressional sign of approval which is traditionally composed of loud applause, cat-calls, coughing, sneezing, and a sprinkling of asthmatic wheezing. This response, it is rumored, pleased the already delighted Congressman Henri B. Gonzales; particularly the wheezing because he knew that he had made some new and important friends. It is widely rumored that Congressman Henri B. Gonzales made his comments in English, though there are those who were present who hotly dispute this point. There was, however, uniform agreement that it was Congressman Henri B. Gonzales' inscrutable mind that formulated the floor speeches in which he described at length and with great vividness and patriotic delight the vicious and ubiquitous nature of the "longhorns" of evil, and in which he asked what lurked behind every *mesquite* (Mex-queet) in Texas. In addition to displaying his little-known baroque grandiloquence which, it is rumored, included liberal doses of Texan similes and metaphors about snakes, and rattling, and killing, Congressman Henri B. Gonzales also displayed his well-known neo-muddled intellect. Included in his speeches, for example, were large doses of illogical theoretical constructs, categorical accusations of groups without regard to their palpable differences, non-sequiturs, simplistic theories of causality, theories of grand conspiracies – in short the type of thinking that has made Congressman Henri B. Gonzales such an internationally famous legislator.

We believe that Congressman Henri B. Gonzales would be wise to restrict his congressional activities to writing letters to *Playboy*, where he occasionally appears, and where it is rumored that the Bunnies pay little attention to what he has to say. In this instance we suggest that everyone would do well to do as the Bunnies do. We ask Congressman Henri B. Gonzales not to be too hard on Mexicans. After all, one of his ancestors might have been one.

This paper has been adopted as the position paper of the Washington, D.C. based Mexican-American Anti-Defamation Committee.

—Editor

Advertising and Racism: The Case of The Mexican-American

THOMAS M. MARTÍNEZ

Introduction

Emerging from a cloud of dust appears a band of horse-riding, ferocious-looking Mexican banditos. They are called to a halt by their sombrero-covered, thick-mustached, fat-bellied leader, who, upon stopping, reaches with the utmost care for a small object from his saddle bags. He picks up the object, lifts up his underarm, and smiles slyly — to spray Arrid deodorant. An American Midwestern voice is then heard over the television, “If it works for him, it will work for you.” Message — Mexicans stink the most.

Flipping through the pages of a recent issue of LIFE Magazine, one will encounter a picture of a man painting a house, who appears to be of Mexican descent. He is covered with spilled paint except for his face, and the caption next to him reads, “You may get the shade you asked for.” Underneath this is a description of Lark cigarettes ending with, “Tell someone about Lark’s EASY TASTE and hard-working GAS TRAP FILTERS. Who knows? He may do something nice for you.” Message — Mexicans are sloppy workers, and do not always do what is requested of them on the job.

The Functions of Advertising in American Society

Seldom a day goes by in the United States without at least one young Mexican-American being called, “Frito Bandito.” Indeed, this cartoon caricature of a short, mustached two-gunned thief is a very effective prejudicial form of anti-locution¹ — effective in terms of making the out-group appear inferior, and the in-group superior. The Mexican-American children are paying the price in loss of self-esteem for the Frito-Lay Corporation’s successful advertising attempt at product association. To understand how advertising can

create such racial stereotypes and inflame racism, we need to examine the functions of advertising in American society.

Advertising, like legal statutes and decisions, serves at least two functions: instrumental and symbolic. Instrumentally, an advertisement is meant to sell a product; its instrumental worth is measured in terms of how well the product sells due to the advertisement. Similarly, the instrumental function of law is to maintain order; how well these laws are obeyed, helped through enforcement, is a measure of their instrumental value.

The symbolic function of law, according to Joseph Gusfield, refers to, "... a dimension of meaning in symbolic behavior which is not given in its immediate and manifest significance but in what the action connotes for the audience that views it."² For example, the burning of a draft card is less noteworthy for its instrumental abuse than for its symbolic significance. Gusfield maintains, "A courtroom decision or legislative act is a gesture which often glorifies the values of one group and demeans those of another."³ Thus, laws maintain the pecking order of society.

Likewise, TV commercials and magazine advertisements, of the type referred to above, symbolically reaffirm the inferior social status of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in the eyes of the audience. Exaggerated Mexican racial and cultural characteristics, together with some outright misconceptions concerning their way of life, symbolically suggest to the audience that such people are comical, lazy, and thieving, who want what the Anglos can have by virtue of their superior taste and culture. The advertisements suggest to the audience that one ought to buy the product because it is the duty of a member of a superior culture and race.

Racist Messages and the Mass Media

The symbolic function of advertising is one level of understanding the racist implications of the mass media, especially regarding the Mexicans and Mexican-Americans. For another way of understanding, we turn to Marshall McLuhan. In his attempt to explain the influence of technological changes in communication, he told us, "The medium is the message." Later, of course, he termed it, "The medium is the message,"⁴ but the meaning is essentially similar; that is, *what* is said is less important than *how* it is said. As we move from the spoken to the written and to the televised, the media somehow, somehow transforms our thoughts about ourselves,

other persons, places, and things, as well as our relationship to them. The written world and the televised world (together with movies) have brought us closer to one another than the spoken world. Consequently, we are supposedly becoming involved in a "global village."

However, if McLuhan had been more sensitive to prejudicial racial and cultural stereotyping he might have felt less inclined to shift attention away from what is both said and pictured, especially in commercials and ads, regardless of media. Simply because different cultural and racial groups are brought into close proximity in our minds does not automatically lessen the influence of *cultural relativism* — we see different cultural and racial traits through eyes that are conditioned to see goodness and beauty as they are defined by our own cherished culture. We see beauty in things that we have come to accept as beautiful. That which is especially different from our own standards of beauty is often deemed distasteful. Television travelers and magazine mobiles take with them sacred values and beliefs that influence them to selectively perceive and interpret in a consistently self-fulfilling manner. A Peace Corps worker sometimes labels a foreigner as "primitive," an impression likely to be shared by television and popular reading audiences who judge from similar value standpoints.

Advertising media that utilize Mexicans and Mexican-Americans have selectively presented and exaggerated racial and cultural characteristics. The consequence is logical: an ethnic group is portrayed in a manner that renders esteem to the values and beliefs of the audience and, conversely, the ethnic group is perceived as "naturally inferior." To find nothing objectionable or distasteful about advertising's image of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans suggests tacit agreement with that image.

No matter what medium sends the message, the content and context of the message still have important ramifications, which in some cases supersede the importance of difference in media. Whether or not the "Frito Bandito" is pictured in a magazine or seen on TV (although the impact may be more widespread over the latter media), he still reaffirms the inferior social status of the people he is supposed to represent, which, to judge from advertising, encompasses everyone of Mexican descent. When Camel cigarettes presents a "typical Mexican village" in one of their commercials, it may, in McLuhan's sense, serve to involve the viewers in their village life. But what kind of village life is shown? All of

the residents are either sleeping on the boardwalk, or walking around seemingly bored. The involvement, in this case, is one of the Anglo-American sensing superiority over the lazy Mexican villagers.

If we assume that the content and context of a message, as well as the medium, are extensions of man's thought system, then the conclusion is logically inescapable: almost all advertisers presently utilizing Mexicans or Mexican-Americans to sell their products are exhibiting racist thinking.

Not only are advertisers exhibiting racist thinking at the expense of everyone of Mexican descent, but they are also creating, in many cases, unfavorable racial and cultural stereotypes in minds that previously did not harbor them. When the image of an ethnic group is consistently similar over the mass media, there is the strong suggestion to the viewer that there is some validity to the image. Add to this power of suggestion the feeling of superiority that is aroused when another group is portrayed as inferior. Then, the result of such an insidious combination of forces might be the expectation, sprinkled with some desire, of perceiving the ethnic group as having many inferior traits, the worst one being that they are what they are — a mass of inferior traits. Individual members of such a group should not be expected to be exempt from these inferior traits (except perhaps in a very few cases), because this is how prejudiced minds think.

Whether or not this prejudice was learned through advertising or parents, the effect is similar. Even unprejudiced parents (of which there are few) are not equipped to counter the steady and subtle bombardment of prejudicial suggestions that advertisers conveniently communicate to their children. To many children, the "Frito Bandito" is highly representative of Mexicans. Besides, they can always have some fun calling the Mexican kid at school, "Frito Bandito."

Advertising is a significant part of what C. Wright Mills called the *cultural apparatus*, which involves all mass media.⁵ The control of the cultural apparatus has important implications, as pointed out by Harold Cruse: "Only the blind cannot see that whoever controls the cultural apparatus — whatever class, power group, faction or political combine — also controls the destiny of the United States and everyone in it."⁶ That is to say, advertising, at least in the treatment of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, is an exercise in reaffirming the superior social status of one group (guess which one) and

the inferior status of another. Advertising, then, functions as a tool of racist elites.

Where Lies the Blame?

Since advertisement is commonly conceived as a product of the advertising agency, there might be the tendency to attribute the bulk of the blame for creating and supporting racist notions to the agencies, rather than the advertiser. I say "blame" instead of "responsibility" because neither group could be considered socially responsible when they collaborate on racism.

It would be a simple explanation, not warranted by the complexity of the situation, to suggest that advertising agencies are amoral, image-exploiters, freely damning the image of anyone they damn please, or at least those who cannot damn them back. This is rejected out of hand, because advertising men and women are very much concerned with making a beautiful moral image of not only the product, but also themselves. Indeed, the advertising men and women see themselves as the most beautiful kind of people. It is not out of lack of insight, for instance, that Joseph Bensman (in his book, *Dollars and Sense*) conceptualizes the psychological state of advertising men in terms of narcissism, which is an intensified sense of self-love.⁷ In his job, the advertising man must convince the public of the product's superiority. All the while, he must keep his cool. To "crack" is to admit weakness and invite failure, admitting that one is human. Under such working conditions, it is useful to develop the self-image of a "superman," in order to be really successful. The superman hangup, as we learned from Nazi Germany, is racist in nature, and scapegoating is taken for granted. The advertising supermen and women probably feel at ease in making an ad in which the advertiser, their client, finds no objectionable features, but which nevertheless casts someone of Mexican descent in an unflattering and stereotypical role.

An important point, however, is that ads are sold to clients, clients buy ads. The question then becomes why are so *many different kinds* of corporations [see chart] willing to be sold ads which support racial and cultural prejudice against people of Mexican descent? Searching for the most logical answer, the logic of illogical prejudice on the part of the corporations and advertising agencies is glaring.

Their prejudice was probed by students in my racial and cultural minorities course who wrote critical letters to firms who paid for commercials and ads that communicate racism. Not unexpectedly, the Frito-Lay Corporation was high in the racist standings. Their written reply took the following form:

In response to your letter dated February 25, we did not and never have had any racist intentions in presenting the Frito Bandito cartoon character. It was meant to be a simple character which is intended to make you laugh, in turn we hope that this laughter will leave our trademark implanted in your memory.

Again, our apologies if we have offended you.

Very truly yours (sic)
 Director of Advertising
 Frito-Lay Corporation

Tell this to the Mexican-American kids. They have the Frito-Lay Corporation to thank for adding another racial stereotype to our language.

Why would a business firm care so much about implanting their trademark "in your memory," when the implantation is fertilized with the seed of prejudice against Mexicans and Mexican-Americans? Again, is it really necessary to spell out the most logical answer?

Returning to the symbol of their racism, simply because the Frito Bandito is supposed to be a comical character, "to make you laugh," we might ask, is humor less harmful or more insidious than outright verbal statements expressing deeply held racial prejudice? Why are there so few, if any, jokes about rich Anglo-Saxons? And does it make any difference if some of the members of the victimized group itself freely laugh at the jokes about themselves?

A reasonably sound answer to these questions came in the form of B'nai B'rith's denunciation of all racial and cultural jokes, noting the rise in "Polish" and "Italian" jokes a few years ago, on the ground that jokes which ridicule exaggerated ethnic group characteristics promote ethnocentric thinking. Inasmuch as Polish and Italian jokes are usually similar, and often exactly the same except for the name, there is good reason to deem all ethnic jokes as ethnocentric.

Jokes in the form of comical characters seem to mislead the audience, as all ideal-types do when they are based upon biased data. The audience is deluded into thinking there is enough likeness between the comical character and his ethnic affiliations to render the character believable.

Freud believed that humor was a reflection of unconscious, repressed feeling.⁸ Our true feelings are those which, due to social pressures to conform, are seldom made known or put forth as seriously-held beliefs. Many of the same people who claim not to be prejudiced easily laugh at ethnocentric jokes, and are amused by stereotyped characters. Consider, for example, the typical audience reaction to Jose Jimenez. Does such laughter reveal hidden prejudice? It most likely does.

A commonplace contention is that it is healthy and harmless to laugh at oneself. However, it depends upon what aspect of self is being laughed at. For instance, if a person such as Jimmy Durante makes fun of his big nose because it is uniquely structured and "smiles" at people, then this is not psychically damaging to him. If, on the other hand, a person makes fun of his nose because he believes it to be an easily recognizable sign that he is a member of an ethnic group, of which he is somewhat ashamed, then this person is temporarily identifying with the superior group which looks down at such obvious traits. Self-ridicule in this latter sense is a form of self-hatred.

Shakespeare might differ with me: "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet." Yet, why do we call loved ones, "Honey?" Does not "Honey" suggest an image of something? Call her "vinegar," and watch her reaction. Apparently the Bard did not appreciate the influence of labels upon our perception and thinking. Ponder the thoughts of Erdman Palmore: "It may well be that if a rose were labeled 'stinkweed,' it would be perceived as smelling less sweet."⁹ This idea tends to cast doubt on Shakespeare's insight into and sensitivity toward racial stereotyping, not to mention the forces that keep racial prejudice alive. But, then, he contributed his share through his creation of "Shylock."

The Brown Shadow

Today, no major advertiser would attempt to display a black man or woman over the mass media in a prejudiced, stereotyped fashion. Complaints would be forthcoming from black associations,

and perhaps the FCC. Yet, these same advertisers who dare not show "step'n fetch it" characters, uninhibitedly depict a Mexican counterpart, with additional traits of stinking and stealing. Perhaps the white hatred for blacks, which cannot find adequate expression in today's ads, is being transferred to their brown brothers.

Much of the plight of Mexican-Americans is reflected in their collective powerlessness to combat the advertisers' image of them. Hanging onto the lowest economic rungs in American society, Mexican-Americans have been unable to cast a collective shadow in the minds of everyday Anglo-Americans, much less the power structure. We are invisible, and an invisible man has no shadow. The only racial shadow that advertisers have recognized and reacted to, in addition to their own, is the black shadow, not unusual since all shadows are black; that is, any group which develops enough political power to influence their image-exploiters is visible. Mexican-Americans do not cast a shadow in this political sense.

Where, then, is the Mexican-American with his brown shadow? He has been, and still is, at the bottom of the white race ever since white Europeans invaded the New World. Until recently, the main races were distinguished by only four colors — black, red, yellow, and white. Brown people were considered to be members of the white race, on paper at least. There seemed to be little desire on the part of the whites to call Mexican-Americans any color other than white. It was too comfortable standing on top of the brown people, as opposed to recognizing them as officially a distinct group, although they were treated as disdainfully distinctive. Thus, it became easy to conceive of Mexican-Americans as embodying all that is worst in the white man. This analysis is supported by another response to a student letter complaining of racism in a specific advertisement:

This acknowledges your letter of February 25 about an L&M TV commercial.

We sincerely regret your reaction to this commercial because we did not intend to be derogatory to any ethnic group.

'Paco' is a warm, sympathetic and lovable character with whom most of us can identify because he has a little of all of us in him; that is, our tendency to procrastinate at times. He seeks to escape the violence of war and to enjoy the

pleasure of the moment, in this case the good flavor of an L&M cigarette.

This commercial is the first in a new series for L&M, and it was tested carefully with many audiences, including Mexican-Americans, before it went on the air with no negative indications of any kind.

'Paco' is one of several commercials in the present L&M series, all with the same flavor, spirit and good humor, including the 'office secretary,' the Maine fisherman, 'the musical composer,' and the 'gypsies.'

We appreciate your taking the time to write and express your opinion. We are bringing your viewpoint to the attention of the advertising agency which produces our L&M commercials, and we will continue to examine all of our advertising carefully in our effort to avoid offending any individual or any minority group.

Sincerely,

Director of Public Relations
Liggett Meyers

According to this letter, "Paco" is an escapist who embodies the undesirable trait of procrastination. Yet, advertising men detest procrastination (they made the ad), and so do capitalists (L&M bought it). L&M, whether or not their public relations director realizes it, is actually revealing their prejudice against Mexican people by allowing such a commercial to be shown in their name.

It is noteworthy that L&M sent an almost exact replica of the above letter to another student of mine, who complained about the commercial that presented gypsies in a stereotyped fashion. To L&M, the only difference between the gypsies and "Paco" is the name: "The gypsies," replied L&M, "are warm, sympathetic and lovable characters with whom most of us can identify because he has a little of all of us in him; that is, our tendency to procrastinate at times." This easy exchange between ethnic groups strikingly resembles the phenomenon of ethnocentrism in Polish and/or Italian jokes.

L&M's justification for their ads, "a little of all of us in them," is a good example of *projection*, one of the dynamics of prejudice.

Gordon W. Allport's words on projection (from his famous book, *The Nature of Prejudice*) are still instructive:

Suppose there are unwanted traits in oneself — perhaps greed, lust, laziness, and untidiness. What the sufferer needs is a caricature of these attributes — a simon-pure incarnation of these evils. He needs something so extreme that he need not even suspect himself of being guilty. The Jew is therefore seen as wholly concupiscent; the Negro as completely lazy; the Mexican as filthy. One who holds such extreme stereotypes need not suspect himself of having these hated tendencies.¹⁰

“Paco” represents L&M's caricature of undesirable traits within Anglo-Americans. And again, L&M, among others, takes it for granted that Mexicans are very amenable to caricaturization. We can also assume that the Mexican-Americans who supposedly were shown the commercial prior to its public release may not have had the insight into stereotyping and projection to offer more viable opinions on its offensiveness. Perhaps they have become accustomed or conditioned to accept “Paco,” and others like him, as a reality rather than what he really is — an advertising fabrication.

NOTES

¹Allport considers anti-locution the least energetic negative action: “Most people who have prejudices talk about them. With like-minded friends, occasionally with strangers, they may express their antagonism freely. But many people never go beyond this mild degree of antipathetic action.” Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1954), p. 14.

²Joseph R. Gusfield, “Moral Passage: The Symbolic Process in Public Designation of Deviance,” *Social Problems* 15:2 (Fall, 1967), p. 176.

³*Ibid.*

⁴Herbert Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, coordinated by Jerom Agel, *The Medium is the Massage*, (New York: Random House, 1967).

⁵C. Wright Mills, *Power Elite*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959).

⁶Harold Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, (New York: Wm. Morrow, 1967), p. 65.

⁷Joseph Bensman, *Dollars and Sense: The Meaning of Work in Profit and Non-Profit Organizations*, (New York: MacMillan, 1967).

⁸See S. Freud, *Wit and its Relation to the Unconscious*, (New York: Moffat Yard, 1916).

⁹Erdman B. Palmore, “Ethnophaulisms and Ethnocentrism,” *The American Journal of Sociology* LXVII:4 (January, 1962), p. 445.

¹⁰Allport, *op. cit.*, p. 365.

CHART 1.
ADVERTISERS PROMOTING RACISM: A PARTIAL LISTING

Name of Advertiser	Context and/or Content of Ad	Racist Message
Granny Goose	* Fat Mexican toting guns, ammunition	Mexicans=overweight, carry deadly weapons
Frito-Lay	†* "Frito-Bandito"	Mexicans=sneaky, thieves
Liggett & Meyers	* "Paco" never "feenishes" anything, not even revolution	Mexicans=too lazy to improve selves
A. J. Reynolds	* Mexican bandito	Mexicans=bandits
Camel Cigarettes	* "Typical" Mexican village, all sleeping or bored	Mexicans=do-nothings, irresponsible
General Motors	†* White, rustic man holding three Mexicans at gunpoint	Mexicans=should be and can be arrested by superior white man
Lark (Liggett & Meyers)	† Mexican house painter covered with paint	Mexicans=sloppy workers, undependable
Philco-Ford	†* Mexican sleeping next to TV set	Mexicans=always sleeping
Frigidaire	* Mexican banditos interested in freezer	Mexicans=thieves, seeking Anglo artifacts
Arrid	* Mexican bandito sprays underarm, voice says, "If it works for him, it will work for you."	Mexicans=stink the most

†=newspaper or magazine ad

*=TV commercial

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The Mexican in Fact, Fiction, and Folklore

FRANCISCO ARMANDO RÍOS

There are between five and six million people in the southwestern United States about whom little is known and who only now are attracting national attention. They are Americans, but many of them speak no English at all or speak it indifferently; they are members of the Caucasian race, but their skin coloring is brown; they have been on this continent more than four centuries, but have yet to be recognized as full-fledged Americans. Discussion of them is hampered by the lack of a proper name to describe them, a name that would distinguish them without segregating them. They are most often called "Mexicans." But the term "Mexican" is geographically accurate only when applied to Mexican citizens, whether in their own country or elsewhere; it does not properly describe those whose residence north of the Río Grande predates the existence of both Mexico and the United States as nations.

Foreign immigrants to the United States, particularly immigrants from northern European countries, came to be referred to as Americans within one or two generations. In the American Southwest, however, a different situation exists. When Texas became part of the United States, for example, Texans became citizens of the U. S. and were thereafter, with one exception, called Americans. Mexican Texans remained, and still are, in the everyday language of Texans, Mexicans rather than Americans. But it is less the geographical inaccuracy of the term "Mexican" that invites comment than the meaning with which the term is invested. As used and understood in the literature and language of the Southwest, "Mexican" is a descriptive term and carries with it an entire complex of moral and

physical attributes. It *excludes* such commonplace notions of Americanism as godliness, cleanliness, a sense of justice and fair play, Yankee know-how, "gumption," get-up-and-go, and picking-yourself-up-by-the-bootstraps. This may be denied, but proof that "Mexican" is used as a disparaging term lies in the fact of its careful avoidance on the part of those who do not at the moment wish to offend. When offense is intended, little more than the proper tone of voice need be added, as in the phrase, "We don't serve Mexicans."

The usual alternative is "Mexican-American," a term that ostensibly bestows a measure of Americanism on the recipient, yet balks at acknowledging unqualified American citizenship. Another alternative, prompted sometimes by misled notions of tact or kindness, sometimes by irony, is "Spanish." If "Mexican" is geographically inaccurate, "Spanish" is even more inaccurate: there are relatively few Spaniards in the U. S., and those that are here, by virtue of education or by virtue of being European, generally move in higher circles than so-called Mexicans. We do not call Canadians "English," nor Brazilians "Portuguese." Yet we use "Spanish" in spite of its obvious inaccuracy and in tribute to the evocative power of "Mexican." The tragedy is that many "Mexicans" resort to the same hypocrisy: bona fide Americans by birth, they assent to the stigma of "Mexican" by their disavowal of it. Tacitly, they concur with their detractors; not of their own choice, of course, but generations of conditioning has convinced them that they are indeed as the dominant society has portrayed them: different and inferior, unworthy of sharing the name American.

Popular American usage does not expressly distinguish between the Mexican national and the American-born citizen of more or less remote Mexican ancestry. The popular imagination mixes them both into a stereotype that is at once quaint and threatening. Across the length of the United States, the symbol of the Mexican is the *peón*, asleep against the wall of his adobe hut or at the foot of the saguaro cactus. At best he wears only sandals. He is lazy and given to putting things off until *mañana*. This picturesque fellow and his inevitable burro adorn the menus and neon signs of restaurants and motels all across the U.S. At some point in his life, the *peón* wakes up, takes a drink of tequila, puts on his wide-brimmed sombrero, and emigrates to the United States — by swimming across the Río Grande, of course. Once here, he loses his picturesque and harmless ways and becomes sinister: he is now proud and hot-blooded, easily

offended, intensely jealous, a drinker, a brawler, a knifer, cruel, promiscuous, a flashy dresser, a good dancer, and, depending on the judge, a "Latin lover" or a "lousy lover."

The Mexican is traditionally pictured as an enemy of work; but, if properly fed on a high-protein diet of beans, he is capable of overcoming his indolence and performing prodigious feats of labor. According to Frank J. Mangan's *Bordertown* (El Paso, 1964),

[the Mexicans] have a physical endurance that few races in the world can match. Southwestern cotton farmers who use Mexican bracero labor will attest to the fact that a Mexican can stoop over and pick 300 pounds of cotton a day in sun-seared desert temperatures that reach 130 degrees or more in the fields — then go out and dance and drink tequila until midnight. Farmers say there aren't many other people left who are capable of — and who will — work like this. (p. 64)

Although the bracero appears to be peculiarly suited physically to field work, it may be that he is drawn to it by the working conditions. Indeed, if one can believe Erskine Caldwell on the subject, the working conditions of the bracero are to be envied, and an American laborer in search of easy money would do well to consider becoming a bracero. Says Caldwell (*Around About America*, New York, 1963):

A bracero commuter who lives in Mexicali, which is only a step across the border at Calexico, earns a dollar an hour. His job also provides free transportation to and from work, and free meals during his ten-hour day. And that is not all. He goes home to Mexicali at night with ten tax-free American dollars, cash in hand, and with no deductions for union dues, social security, or income tax withholding.

At the same prevailing wage, an American would be lucky to have take-home pay amounting to half that much after tax deductions, buying his meals, and paying travel costs. The only way an American stoop-laborer can earn as much take-home pay as a bracero is to move to Mexico, become a Mexican citizen, and commute to the United States as a bracero. (pp. 178-179)

Another commentator on the Mexican is John Steinbeck. His subject in *Tortilla Flat* (New York, 1935) is the "good people of

laughter and kindness, of honest lusts and direct eyes, of courtesy beyond politeness" who live on a hill above Monterey, California:

. . . on the hill where the forest and the town intermingle, where the streets are innocent of asphalt and the corners free of street lights, the old inhabitants of Monterey are embattled as the Ancient Britons are embattled in Wales. These are the paisanos.

They live in old wooden houses set in weedy yards, and the pine trees from the forest are about the houses. The paisanos are clean of commercialism, free of the complicated systems of American business, and, having nothing that can be stolen, exploited or mortgaged, that system has not attacked them very vigorously.

What is a paisano? He is a mixture of Spanish, Indian, Mexican and assorted Caucasian bloods. His ancestors have lived in California for a hundred or two years. He speaks English with a paisano accent and Spanish with a paisano accent. When questioned concerning his race, he indignantly claims pure Spanish blood and rolls up his sleeve to show that the soft inside of his arm is nearly white. His color, like that of a well-browned meerschaum pipe, he ascribes to sunburn. He is a paisano, and he lives in that uphill district above the town of Monterey called Tortilla Flat. . . . (pp. 10-11)

In his preface to the Modern Library edition, Steinbeck laments the success of his book: he had not foreseen that "literary slummers" would take up the cause of the paisanos. It did not occur to him, he says, that the paisanos were "curious or quaint, dispossessed or underdogish;" to him they were merely people who merged successfully with their habitat. "In men this is called philosophy, and it is a fine thing." The habitat with which Steinbeck's paisanos merge so successfully — and by "successfully" one assumes he means "resignedly" — is a settlement of unpaved streets, unlighted corners, old wooden houses, and weedy yards. If in fact paisanos do merge with such a habitat, it is not because of philosophy but out of economic necessity, and it is not a fine thing. Further, it is doubtful that to the paisanos their unpaved streets are "innocent of asphalt" or that their dark street corners are "free of street lights," or that they themselves, being economically impotent, are "clean of commercialism." Steinbeck apologized for any harm he may have done

to the paisanos in writing this book and assures the reader that "It will not happen again." He apparently felt that he had done well by his paisanos. But, to sentimentalize about people in poverty, to give them exaggerated speech and manners, is not to praise them; especially when these same people are also portrayed as a drunken lot, inundated in cheap wine, sleeping in ditches, fighting for the enjoyment of it, stealing at every turn, and living in rampant promiscuity.

Other traits customarily ascribed to the Mexican are an expert use of the knife and an indifference to pain and death. Embodying these traits is a Mexican that appears in Walter Van Tilburg Clark's *Ox-Bow Incident* (New York, 1962). He is one of three suspected rustlers who are to be hanged at dawn. He is referred to as the "Mex" and is spoken to as "greaser." Shot in an attempt to escape from the lynching party, he himself wants to remove the bullet from his thigh:

"If somebody will lend me the knife, I will take it out myself."

"Don't give him no knife," Bartlett said. "He can throw a knife better than most men can shoot."

"Better than these men, it is true," said the Mex. (p. 175)

After removing the bullet and cauterizing his own wound, the "Mex"

picked up the knife he'd used and tossed it over in front of the man who had lent it. He tossed it so it spun in the air and struck the ground point first with a chuck sound and dug in halfway to the hilt. It struck within an inch of where the man's boot had been. . . . (p. 177)

In this instance, the Mexican's expertness with a knife is probably exaggerated: it is difficult to imagine a "tossed" knife digging in "halfway to the hilt," and precisely on target at that. In any case, the author betrays here a certain admiration for such skill and matter-of-factly ascribes it to his "Mex."

Generally, though, the knife was considered a lowly weapon throughout the Southwest, and its use was a sign of cowardice. What is not taken into account today is that the widespread use of personal firearms in the early Southwest did not extend to Mexicans. During colonial days most Mexicans were peasants and lived in feudal bondage to the landed aristocracy. Firearms were almost

unknown among the poor. Of them Harvey Fergusson, the western novelist, writes, in his documentary work, *Rio Grande* (New York, 1933),

Denied protection and even arms he learned to fight the Indian with his own weapons. He was often called a coward but [Josiah] Gregg testifies that he was a good fighter when given anything like an even chance. After the American occupation, when the governor called for volunteers to fight the Navajos, more came forward than could be used and they made a splendid holiday of beating their ancient foes with good guns and under able leaders. (p. 113)

An unusually candid assessment of the situation of Mexicans in Texas is made by Fergusson in his chapter on the western expansion of rangelands, entitled "Longhorns and Six Shooters:"

These early Texans were hard men, fighting men, and they hated Mexicans. A few brave words about the Alamo and Davy Crockett would work any Texan into a Mexican-killing mood . . . Texas was then perhaps the most heavily armed community in the United States and very likely it still is. The habit of bearing and using arms dies slowly and it also grows slowly.

The Mexicans as a whole had never learned much about the use of firearms. The vast majority of them were peasants, too poor to buy guns, who had fought always with the primitive weapons of their savage enemies. They had a certain skill with knives but they were helpless before these men with six shooters on their hips. It was part of the Texan tradition that all Mexicans were cowards but in fact the westering Texans were an armed invasion of an unarmed community. It was one of those gradual and unrecorded movements that work more change than formal wars and often spill more blood.

The Texans were not empowered to take occupied lands but Mexicans did not count with them as occupants. They took lands that had been supporting families in undisputed possession for a century. Murder and bluff were their methods and the short and deadly six shooter was their only attorney. (pp. 253-254)

Dispossessed of the land that might have given him economic independence, and without the means and leadership necessary for con-

certed defense, the Mexican drifted into serfdom. He became an object of scorn and ridicule and occupied the lowest rung on the Southwestern social ladder.

This is where we see him in Francis Parkman's *The Oregon Trail* (Garden City, N. Y., 1948), still a popular classic among the many books on Western exploration. In the following passages, Parkman describes Mexicans that he saw at "the Pueblo," in the area between Pike's Peak and the Arkansas River, the general location of the present city of Pueblo, Colorado.

Two or three squalid Mexicans, with their broad hats, and their vile faces overgrown with hair, were lounging about the bank of the river in front of [the gate of the Pueblo]. They disappeared as they saw us approach. . . .

A few squaws and Spanish women, and a few Mexicans, as mean and miserable as the place itself, were lazily sauntering about. (p. 260)

There was another room beyond, less sumptuously decorated, and here three or four Spanish girls, one of them very pretty, were baking cakes at a mud fireplace in the corner. (p. 261)

The human race in this part of the world is separated into three divisions, arranged in the order of their merits: white men, Indians, and Mexicans; to the latter of whom the honorable title of "whites" is by no means conceded. (p. 263)

The westward movement of colonization from the East uprooted the Mexicans; those that remained in the area of their birth came ultimately to live at the very periphery of all social and economic activity. They developed the mistrust and furtiveness that Parkman's Mexicans display at the approach of strangers. Parkman's matter-of-fact tone indicates the opinion generally held of the Mexican, at least of the Mexican male. The female is treated differently. It is doubtful that the women that Parkman saw were actually Spanish, but his gallantry toward women apparently prevents him from calling them Mexican, especially when one of them is "very pretty." Given the meaning that "Mexican" has for him, he cannot apply it to anyone of comely appearance. "Mexican" is reserved for the males, who are seldom, if ever, referred to as men; they are called simply Mexicans, or, as already noted, "Mex" or "greaser." Those that Parkman saw impressed him only by their vileness; otherwise, they left little impression on him.

This attitude of disdainful indifference toward the Mexican increases as one moves southward. Near the Texas-Mexico border, hatred toward Mexicans has been studiously nourished by fiction and folklore. In *The Voice of the Coyote* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1961), J. Frank Dobie tells about one Texan, Bill Gardner, who used to boast about his meanness:

"The farther up the creek you go, the worse they get, and I come from the head of it." While he was living up in the Llano River breaks, he killed a Mexican. He was one of those frontier killers "who didn't count Mexicans," and he had several non-Mexicans to his credit. He attached so little importance to this particular killing that he left the Mexican's body lying where his bullet had dropped it. (p. 126)

Now Texas folklore tells us that coyotes and carrion crows will not touch a Mexican's body. Just as a sailor's body is said to be so impregnated with salt as to make it unpalatable to scavengers of the sea, a Mexican's body is supposed to be so impregnated with chile that it is unpalatable to the scavengers of the Southwest. Dobie surmises that this idea "seems to have developed after English-speakers began fighting Mexicans in Texas, about 1830; it held on long after border-fighting died down, and still survives." Dobie quotes one Noah Smithwick, who writes that after a certain battle,

The dead Mexicans lay in piles, the survivors not even asking permission to bury them . . . The buzzards and coyotes were gathering to the feast, but it is a singular fact that they singled out the dead horses, refusing to touch the Mexicans. They lay there unmolested until they dried up. (p. 124)

Dobie also quotes one "steel-eyed, steel-nerved, steel-true Jim Gillett of the Texas Rangers," who wrote,

It is a strange fact, but one without question, that no wild animal or bird of prey will touch the body of a Mexican. These corpses had lain on the ground nearly two weeks and were untouched. If they had been the bodies of Indians, Negroes or Americans, the coyotes, buzzards and crows would have attacked them the first day and night. (pp. 124-125)

Early Texas fiction fed on the animosities present at the border and exacerbated them by its portrayal of Mexicans. Two 19th century writers of Texas romances and dime novels were Charles W. Weber and Jeremiah Clemens (quoted by Cecil Robinson in *With the Ears of Strangers; The Mexican in U. S. Literature*, Tucson, 1963). Of the Mexican flag, Weber has this to say:

The Mexican eagle is a dirty, cowardly creature that feeds upon carcasses, and will hardly attack a live rabbit — a perfect buzzard! And there is such close affinity between their habits and the Mexican character, that I don't wonder at their hoisting a carrion-bird upon their national standard. (p. 48)

And Clemens has his explanation of the origin of the word "greaser:"

An American whose ill fortune has made him for any number of days, a sojourner in the city of Metamoras [sic] can have no difficulty in tracing the origin of the term "greaser," originally applied by the old Texans to the Mexican Rancheros, and subsequently extended to the whole nation . . . The people look greasy, their clothes are greasy, their dogs are greasy, their houses are greasy — everywhere grease and filth hold divided dominion, and the singular appropriateness of the name bestowed by the western settlers, soon caused it to be universally adopted by the American army. (pp. 36-37)

Clemens' etymology is still widely accepted and is kept current by the art of Hollywood make-up men. A more reasonable explanation is that given by Duncan Emrich in his book entitled *It's an Old Wild West Custom* (New York, 1949):

. . . *greaser* seems not to have come from any greasy appearance of the Mexicans — although that etymology is popular — but from the early days when a *greaser* actually ran beside the ox carts and great wagons with a bucket of tallow to oil the creaking, dry wheels. The procedure was something new to the first Americans, who remarked on the greaser at his work and, in time, adopted the now dubious term for all Mexicans. (pp. 168-169)

In *A Treasury of American Folklore*, edited by B. A. Botkin (New York, 1944) there is the following celebrated peroration, attributed to Judge Roy Bean, "the Law West of the Pecos:"

Carlos Robles, you have been tried by twelve true and good men, not men of yore peers, but as high above you as heaven is of hell, and they've said you're guilty of rustlin' cattle.

Time will pass and seasons will come and go; Spring with its wavin' green grass and heaps of sweet-smellin' flowers on every hill and in every dale. Then will come sultry Summer, with her shimmerin' heat-waves on the baked horizon; and Fall, with her yellor harvest-moon and the hills growin' brown and golden under a sinkin' sun; and finally Winter, with its bitin', whinin' wind, and all the land will be mantled with snow. But you won't be here to see any of 'em, Carlos Robles; not by a dam' sight, because it's the order of this court that you be took to the nearest tree and hanged by the neck till you're dead, dead, dead, you olive-colored son-of-a-billy-goat! (p. 136)

The prisoner, it is said, did not know a word of English and missed the flavor of Roy Bean's oratory – if indeed the Judge ever uttered it: the passage is so eloquent that others lay claim to it. Just such an address to a condemned prisoner is also attributed to Hanging Judge Parker, with the following embellishments:

And then, José Manuel Xavier Gonzales, I command further that such officer or officers retire quietly from your swinging, dangling corpse, that the vultures may descend from the heavens upon your filthy body and pick the putrid flesh therefrom till nothing remain but the bare, bleached bones of a cold-blooded, copper-colored, blood-thirsty, chili-eating, guilty, sheep-herding, Mexican son-of-a-bitch. (p. 148)

Only rarely in American literature of the Southwest does one encounter a portrayal of Mexicans that is both sympathetic and unsentimental. One sympathizer was Bret Harte. In a short story entitled "The Devotion of Enriquez" (*Best Short Stories*, New York, 1947), he is even facetious at the expense of a newcomer from the East. The Reverend Mannersley, a Congregational minister, reacts in the following manner to his first meeting with western Mexicans:

I have just said that I was unacquainted with the characteristics of the Spanish-American race. I presume, however, that they have the impulsiveness of their Latin origin. They

gesticulate — eh? They express their gratitude, their joy, their affections, their emotions generally, by spasmodic movements? They naturally dance — sing — eh? (p. 204)

Harte's sympathetic treatment of Mexicans is probably due, at least in part, to the fact that he sets his story in California at a time when Mexicans still held large tracts of land and mixed socially with the newer Californians. The hero of the story, Enríquiz, while exaggerated perhaps in his impulsiveness and hedonism, is a thoroughly likable character who appears in other stories as well. He is the author's romantic evocation of the vanished *Californio*. Harte's literary attitude toward Mexicans is also colored by a certain familiarity with Spanish culture and literature: he makes passing references to Don Quijote, Dulcinea, and Rocinante; and one of his characters, the erudite young daughter of the Congregational minister, relates a Mexican dance to its Arabic origin, by way of Audalusia and the *cancionero*.

Mark Twain, too, had a brief word to say about Mexicans and he shared with Bret Harte an open admiration for their horsemanship. Among his impressions of Carson City, Nevada Territory, is the following, from *Roughing It* (New York, 1962):

I had never seen such wild, free, magnificent horsemanship outside of a circus as these picturesquely-clad Mexicans, Californians and Mexicanized Americans displayed in Carson streets every day. How they rode! (p. 141)

Despite the fact that it is in this area of horsemanship and horse-raising that the Mexican contributed so much to the American West, Mark Twain's admiration has few echoes in later literature. Nevertheless, the Mexican *vaquero* left his mark on the everyday language of the West; his presence is attested to linguistically by the many words that came into English from Spanish — words that deal with horses, horsemen and their equipment, and with the physical characteristics of the Southwest. Furthermore, thousands of Spanish place-names dot the Southwest: rivers, mountains, plains, cities, villages, whole states.

Yet, in spite of "broncos" and "buckaroos," in spite of place-names, in spite of architectural and musical influences, in spite of the millions of people who are a living reminder of the part that Spain and Mexico played in forming the character of the Southwest — in spite of all this, the American Mexican is an alien, un-

known in his own land. His history and culture are either ignored or romanticized. He is pictured on the one hand as the *peón* who, hat in hand, holds the reins for the rich rancher in the movies. On the other hand, he is the glamorous *hidalgo*, the ambassador of good will for the city of San Diego and a participant in the Rose Bowl Parade, the *hidalgo* who is emulated by prosperous Anglos in New Mexico, as they affect Spanish manners and dress during the annual fiestas. But between the fanciful extremes of the *peón* and the *hidalgo* is the ordinary American Mexican. Probably the most telling observation ever to be printed about him came from the pages of *Newsweek* (May 23, 1966): "We're the best kept secret in America."

The secret is kept against considerable odds. There is, for example, the visibility of the Mexican, which, paradoxically, works against him: He is easily identified and, once identified, easily categorized and ignored. It is a complaint of Mexicans that they are seen only when they do wrong; otherwise, they do not exist — they are a secret. In the words of a recent television special report (PBL, April 20, 1969), they are the "Invisible Minority." It is this non-existence within American society that gives the Mexican the "furtive and uneasy look" that Octavio Paz wrote about in his study of Mexican psychology, *El laberinto de la soledad* (Mexico, 1959; available in English as *The Labyrinth of Solitude*). Paz observed this furtiveness in the *pachucos* of Los Angeles (pp 12-13). Like the *pachuco* of the forties, the American Mexican is neither truly American nor truly Mexican; he is suspended between the two cultures, neither of which claims him. As a result, he withdraws into himself and away from the larger society. An observation similar to that of Octavio Paz is made by Jack London in a short story entitled "The Mexican" (*Best Short Stories*, Garden City, N. Y., 1945). The hero of the story is a young Mexican boy in the United States as an alien; the reactions that he provokes in those about him have a significance beyond the limits of the story itself: "And still they could not bring themselves to like him. They did not know him. His ways were not theirs. He gave no confidences. He repelled all probing." (pp. 228-229)

This furtive, secretive air is adopted early in life. Shortly after entering the primary grades, the Mexican child begins to realize that he is different and that this difference is taken by society at large as a sign of inferiority. And it is not only his schoolmates that teach him: frequently the teachers themselves betray an ill-dis-

guised contempt for the schools and neighborhoods in which they work. The opinions of the teacher are seconded by history books, wherein the youngsters read of the cruelty of the Spaniard toward the Indians, of the Spaniards' greed for gold, of the infamous Spanish, always Spanish, Inquisition, of Mexican bandits, and of the massacre at the Alamo. On the other hand, the children never learn that alongside the famous men at the Alamo there were other men, unknown and unsung heroes of American history, killed in the same battle and fighting on the Texas side; men like Juan Abamillo, Juan Badillo, Carlos Espalier, Gregorio Esparza, Antonio Fuentes, Jose Maria Guerrero, Toribio Losoya, Andres Nava, and a man called simply John, Negro.

The result of this teaching, or lack of teaching, by school and society is that Mexican youngsters are kept ignorant of the contribution that their forebears made to the so-called "Winning of the West." At a time when they should be learning pride in their origin, history, and their own peculiar kind of Americanism, these children are made to feel that they do not rightly participate in the American enterprise, that they are intruders in their own land.

Illustrative of a Mexican child's experience in an American school is the following biographical passage:

My first experience at the school in Eagle Pass was bitter. I saw North American and Mexican children seated in front of a teacher whose language I did not understand. In speaking of Mexicans I include many who, though they lived in Texas and though their parents were naturalized citizens, would make common cause with me for reasons of race. And even if they hadn't wanted it that way, it would have been the same, because the yankees so classify them.

. . . when it was said in class that a hundred yankees would put a thousand Mexicans to rout, I would get up to say, "That isn't true." And it irritated me more if, when speaking of Mexican customs along with those of the Eskimos, some student would say, "Mexicans are a semi-civilized people." At my house it was said, on the contrary, that it was the *yankees* who were newcomers to culture. I would get up to repeat: "We had a printing-press before you did." The teacher would intervene, placating us and

saying: "But look at Joe, he is a Mexican, isn't he civilized? Isn't he a gentleman?"

Another account relates that:

The school teachers, all Anglo and for the most part indigenous to the area, appeared unanimous in sharing the stereotype of Mexican-Americans being inferior in capacity as well as performance . . . So firmly is the pattern in mind, a teacher, in full view of a group of well-dressed, quietly behaved Mexican children, could describe Mexican children as noisy and dirty . . . even the Mexican children come to share the view constantly held up to them that the Anglos are "smarter" and their good opinions of special value. Repeatedly told that they are "dumb," the children begin to behave in that pattern. "In general, Anglo informants characterized the Mexican villagers as being immoral, violent, and given to fighting, dirty, unintelligent, improvident, irresponsible and lazy . . ."

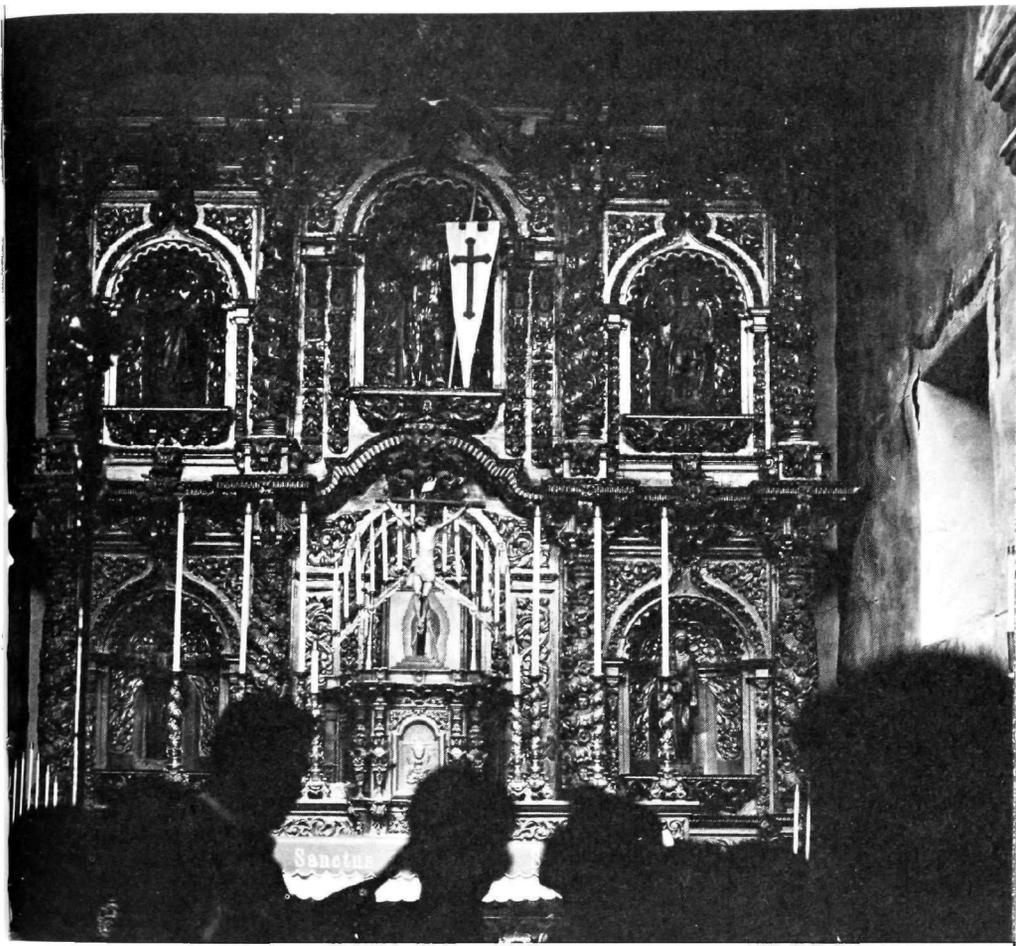
There is a disturbing similarity between the two passages, especially when one considers that in time they are almost three quarters of a century apart. The first selection is from the autobiography of Jose Vasconcelos, *Ulises criollo* (Mexico, 1937, pp. 29, 36; translation mine) and relates events of the year 1894. The second is from *School and Society* (Nov. 12, 1966) and is a discussion of discrimination against Mexican-Americans in a Southwestern community and its school system. Passages such as these, and those already quoted, indicate that a conscious and determined effort has been made by Anglo society to misrepresent the Mexican. Society has forged its own myth regarding Mexicans, sanctified that myth in its literature, then, confounding effects and causes, has relegated the Mexicans in its midst to inferior status.

What has been said in our literature and folklore about Mexicans cannot now be unsaid; but much of it can be discounted as having its source in ancient rancor and prejudice. Injustices perpetrated by prejudice on past generations cannot now be undone; we can only grieve that untold numbers of Americans have been denied their natural birthright — and resolve that those injustices will stop with us.

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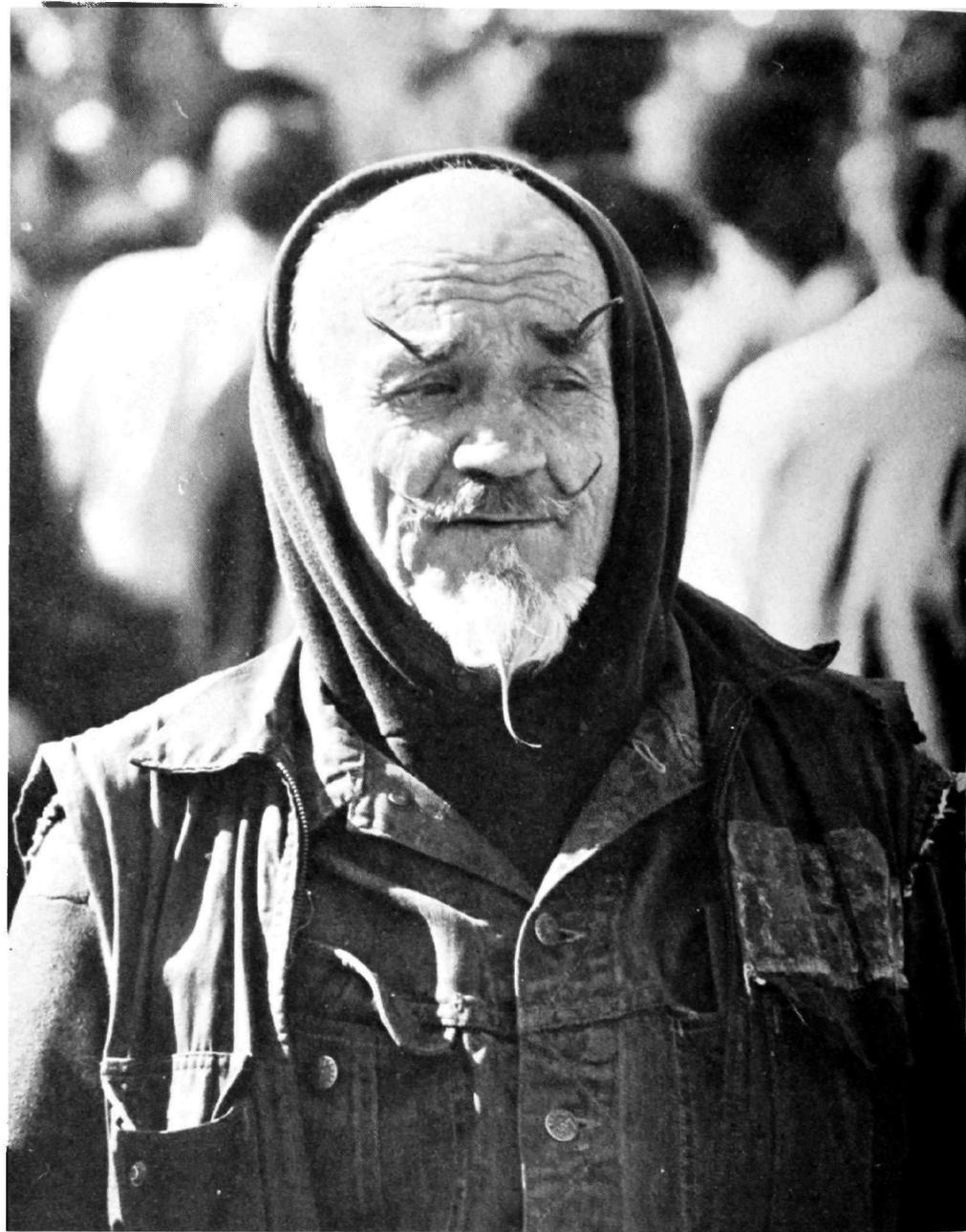


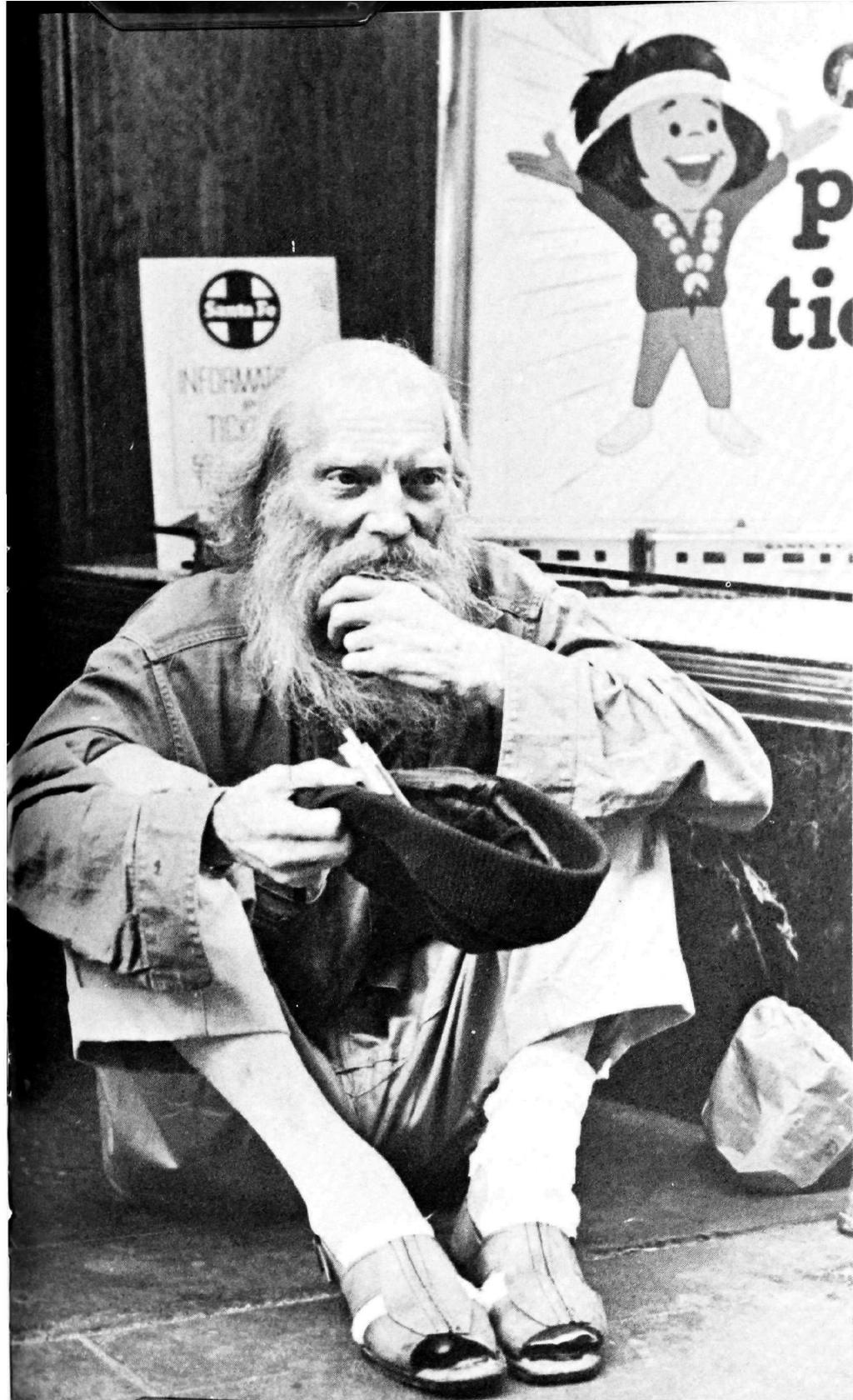
Felix Rivera, Berkeley, Calif.

Photography











Georgia M. Cobos

Poetry

MOTHER NOW

We salute and eulogize you.
We even venerate you.
For all that these words mean to you.
For you, Mother Now, communicate not.

SO BLESSINGS ON THEE

Oh, color without warmth,
Oh, security without love,
Oh, spirit without cognizance.

It is valueless truth
That you suckle at your breast,
And sexless love that you seek.

And yet, and yet
We need you,
For we are the beings within you,
And life and its significance, of necessity,
Exist in you.

So, did we too
Drink the milk of no value?
Were we too
Born of no warmth?

NO! NO! NO!
Twas another day,
Another time
When love meant warmth and cognizance.

Why do we seek?
 MAN MUST!
 Does not now suffice?
 NO! NO! n
 o
 o
 o!

What *is* wrong?
 THE GREEN BUTTON PUSHES THE RED ONE;
 THE RED BUTTON PUSHES THE BLACK ONE;
 THE BLACK BUTTON PUSHES THE GREEN ONE . . .

Oh, Tommy,
 Oh, Tommy, you are right
 A shade without color soon blinds.
 And today is a jumble
 Twixt blacks and whites;
 Twixt somes and nones;
 Twixt *is* and *but*;
 Twixt *true* and *false* and *is* or *are*.

And blindness sets the pace
 And doth sound her horn
 At a charge into nothingness.

SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN

Pride runs cold down my street
 As passion gasps for its need upon an empty belly.
 Love here is oft' relegated to a place
 Where time continually denies it.

Pride runs cold as *they* run down the streets at night;
 Wild!
 Wild but free? — NEVER!
 Wild and chained to grunts and curses,
 To hate, superstition,
 To cold and hunger.

Wild and chained to an evil sort of barter: You're so pretty,
 Give me . . .

And love is oft' relegated to distant hills and prettiness
 When
 Manuel smells;
 Victor wisecracks,
 And Sofia purses her lips and smiles
 At the little boys she knows will be around
 In a couple of years.

Pride and love are lost within the yellow cumulative folder —
 That one which limits and relegates my boys to hoods and slaves,
 And my girls to early ugliness and pain.

Pride is gone forever from a well equipped science lab —
 When the young scientist can not read;
 From a geography shelf, from a globe, a map, a bowl of flowers
 When their only purpose is destruction
 And the consequence — a silent and unexplained punishment.

Pride runs cold as Andres scribbles their names
 Upon a wall with a broken window.

THEY BROKE IT! ONCE IN THEY WROTE THE CRY:
 "KNOW ME. I AM SOMEONE!"

Pride runs cold as Armida utters obscenities perfectly at
 Those who love her with her poor cleft-palate.
 She cannot stand being loved.

Pride is pilfered from a teacher told:
 "Make haste.
 Keep 'em busy." or asked
 "Will they be ready? No? Push 'em up!
 New books for them?"

Pride runs cold when Julia screams to me each welcome Monday,
 "My mother says to whip me." and then bemoans the fact
 that I don't.

Pride runs cold when

EACH VERDICT GIVEN BY *THEM*,
 EACH JUDGEMENT SOLICITED FROM *THEM*,
 EACH IDEA OF JUSTICE AND LOVE AND
 AFFECTION TO *THEM*

is a swat

a slap

a denial of love;

and horror takes its place when a teacher knows that —
 it's really all they know.

Pride is denied and love is lost

As children stumble through a maze of English
 To hate and deny it.

Pride is lost

As the glories of the Spanish
 And the brilliance of Cristobal Colon's Indians
 Are lost to their children.

Pride becomes shame

As the tones of a mother tongue
 Learned from a lullaby or a *consejo*
 Are wrested and snatched
 From babes who would use them.

Pride *does* run cold at the sight of

Generations of injustice,
 A slough of meaningless lives
 And unused and unwanted abilities.

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 Schools.

The following paper was presented as the commencement address at the June 1969 graduation at East Los Angeles College.—Editor

Reasoned Radicalism: An Alternative to Fear and Institutional Oppression

RALPH GUZMAN

Fear is the antithesis of reason. But if there is any characteristic of the present American establishment that far outweighs any other at the moment it is the quality of fear.

From its pre-eminent place as the hope and the repository of the American dream the American educational establishment has become the battleground for the revolution of our future. No ill in our present society is too trivial or too significant that it cannot be analyzed within the American educational system. Consequently, as the moral authority of the system has diminished, its responsibilities and burdens have augmented. As the system has been stretched, beyond its capacities to educate, it has been given more to do. The old tradition of instilling the three R's into the minds of non-receptive children has given way to the modern educational plant which is supposed to accommodate the demands of a complex, urban society; that is supposed to teach not only subject matter, but is also expected to substitute for parental instruction in almost every conceivable area of learning and still provide moral and intellectual leadership to a frightened society.

An elementary application of reason would tell us to expect that this overwhelming expansion of educational functions would result in an asymmetric pattern of development; that many individuals could not cope with the expansion of knowledge characteristic of the last two decades, and that rapid transition is always dis-

ruptive. Nonetheless, both the American public and the American educator are equally unprepared for the natural consequences of previous actions.

The asymmetric pattern of development in American education has meant that American education functions best and most efficiently in those communities where it is least necessary. To put it another way, a child in an upper middle class neighborhood can legitimately expect that his school will be of the highest caliber; that its philosophical cradle will be geared to aiding the individual in his quest for prestige colleges and renumeration scholarships. Conversely, a child in a poor neighborhood can expect that the physical plant will be deteriorating; that the faculty will be demoralized, and that the system will respond to itself and not to the individual. This paradox is not due to any conspiracy theory of education. It is simply illustrative of the respective skills of the community in which each educational system exists. By and large, parents and community groups in the more affluent areas command sufficient respect so as to enforce their desire for nothing less than the best. Parents and PTA's in wealthy neighborhoods possess articulate skills that enable them to deal with school personnel on an equal or superior basis. In these areas the manipulation of symbols, the relapse into mumbo-jumbo-jargon is not a monopoly on the part of the administrators. In short, in these areas the school system is responsive to the community *because it has to*, and because it can. In the less affluent areas, this condition of parity does not exist.

In the confrontation between parents and school personnel most of the manipulative symbols are at the disposal of the educational system. All of the symbols of authority, of rectitude, of enlightenment, of respect, of status, are on the side of the professional educator. Indeed, the weapons in the hands of the poor are traditionally associated with the poor: violence and profanity. As long as the argument, as long as the confrontation, as long as the negotiation continues, there is no way that the educational system can lose. However, once the conflict escalates beyond symbol manipulation into the realm of violence and profanity there is no way the educational system can win. Tragically, there is also no way in which the poor can win. This is so because when the confrontation remains on the symbolic level it is conducted in the arena in which the educator is a past master. It is his business to manipulate and transmit symbols. He would be a poor specimen indeed who could

not suborn, subvert, and subvent the arguments of the inarticulate . . . even if he understood them. The question as to whether the demands of the poor are understood, of course, explains why so many confrontations between educators in East Los Angeles High Schools and community groups become a series of non-parallel counter charges. The educator's verbal response to violence and profanity, however, is nonexistent. While it is easy for a bored citizenry to call for police protection and restoration of *law and order*, in effect the only alternative left for the educational system, with or without police protection, is capitulation and collapse. For the simple fact is this: the police and the custodians cannot run the schools.

When violence and profanity determine the outcome of conflict between educators and community the result is a school system that performs no vital function except to pray for survival from day to day. If the conflict is contained in an argument between educators and the community, the outcome is business as usual. Thus, the only way in which educational systems in less affluent areas can become as responsive to the community as those in the affluent areas is for the educator to learn the language of the poor. This notion runs directly against every tradition of American society. For it has always been the assigned task of educators to eradicate, obliterate, all vestiges of lower class life. There has been no positive value attached to a knowledge of the poor or to the language of the poor. As an ahistorical people we have always been more interested in where we are going and never where we have been. Too many are quick to forget the *barrios* of despair.

Parenthetically, if educators attempt to learn the language of the poor as an arid classroom experiment, they must fail; and they will fail. Learning the language of the poor requires no less than the traditional method of learning languages — go and live with the people. In this noble venture, students may have to lead the way. They must prove that the politically powerless are not without humanity — that they *can* and *will* teach us what traditional educators fear to learn.

Among those individuals unable to cope with the rapid expansion of knowledge are those administrators and faculty whose ideas solidified in the halcyon days of the fifties when the main problem was how to deal with the influx of state and federal money. Indeed, if one looks at the not so gentle revolutionaries currently besieging American secondary and higher education, one must be amazed at

their success. Too many have taken clear and cogent issues and muddied them with high flown rhetoric and pure balderdash. Many students have been singularly inexpert in controlling the consequences of their own actions; they have developed no large segment of public support and thus their finances are almost nonexistent. No social revolution can succeed without mass approval. No student movement can claim to represent a community it has failed to cultivate and to serve. Given all of these liabilities one can only trace the success of the revolutionaries to the character of their opposition. In a sense it has been a conflict between the incompetent and the ignorant. Unfortunately, the ignorant have been those in a position of responsibility and trust; the administrators and their faculty advisors.

It is easy to have pity for those administrators in American higher education who sit behind their imaginary Maginot line, arrayed in full battle gear. There they sit with their opening ploy of "Look what I have done for you," or, "Here are my liberal credentials," or a chuckled: "I was a radical too, once." And from opening ploy they resort to the traditional academic hoopla or fandango involving committees, reports, studies, consultations, referral upstairs, referral downstairs, lateral referral and bi-lateral referral. After that, they resort to their strategic retreat of co-optation; vulgarly known as bribery of students. Knowing fully that if all else fails the city police, the sheriffs and the National Guard are situated on the heights above the college grimly anticipating battle plan "A" or "B." As the helicopter warms up, administrators issue special parking privileges to student activists.

It would be easy to excoriate these men as evil or stupid, but this is not entirely true. These are, unfortunately, men and women whose attitudes and concepts have been rendered irrelevant by rapid changes in American education. Values and practices that were meaningful when a college education was a class privilege, when a high school diploma was a meaningful achievement, and when colleges operated in a casual, informal setting of resource allocation, are simply outmoded. A society in which a college education is a necessity, in which a Bachelor of Arts degree is stipulated for pedestrian tasks, demands constant and careful re-evaluation. The structures and functions of the American university system have escaped intensive and honest scrutiny. The Black people know this and so do the Mexicans — and so do the disillusioned sons and daughters of our white middle class.

The leisurely consideration of change, associated with a twenty-two step committee process, is reminiscent of lavender and old lace. Toynbee tells us that history is strewn with the relics of civilizations unable to adapt to new challenge. If college administrators cannot cast off the academic razz-ma-tazz of the past and respond positively and enthusiastically to the needs of the present and the future, the victim will be our entire educational system. Our schools, colleges, and universities are in a crisis that transcends the superficial question of law and order or who governs what.

Public response to the disruption of values, inherent in rapid social change, has been transferred to the entire educational system. Recent school elections give ample proof of public feelings. Nouns like student and professor are equated with anarchist. Unhappily, vote hungry politicians have not been slow to pander public frustrations and hostility. And in this unchecked negativism rest potent seeds of American Fascism. This is the real danger of our time.

Among the more popular approaches to the problem of American education I would include the following, the misapplication of the Puritan Ethic. For years the American educational system has operated on the assumption that all would be well in the world if it produced better students. Now, many educators are succumbing to the myth that all that is needed is better teachers. Basically, a teacher comes to a classroom with a few bits of lore and a small bag of tricks that might appeal to the *slower middle class student*. However, in poorer neighborhoods, students have survivability skills that far transcend that of the teacher. Thus the demands of Black and Mexican students are more intense than those of white middle class students. Moreover, teaching is no longer a high prestige position in American society. The teaching position swings little moral, financial or intellectual authority. Deference to an uninspiring professor is a thing of the past. Still it is tempting to think that a large dose of goodwill will solve the problems of American education, but it is not true. The problems of the educational system are systemic; not personal. There is nothing genetically or culturally wrong with the Mexicans or Blacks. There is a great deal wrong with American society. Another popular approach is the combination of law and order and patriotism. To follow this approach means converting the teacher into a police officer or an underpaid propagandist. Most teachers decide early in their career whether they wish to become wardens or teachers. Others recognize that symbolic patriotism provides no solution for racial in-

justice and class economic exploitation. Since the police cannot run the schools, to choose law and order as the prime value is essentially a holding operation until the next election. Law and order has become the opiate of the middle class and the first refuge of political scoundrels. Still another approach is the bread and circus routine. This means providing sufficient diversionary activities; a kind of magician's legerdemain in which motion presumes direction. The hope is that students will graduate before they have time to think about their education, or lack of it. One need only to refer to the Roman experience with bread and circus in order to predict the outcome. The only change is confusion and more apprehension with each new cycle of demands. Again, the real needs of a school could be met with minimum psychic and financial investment if administrators only knew — but they don't always know and that is the major tragedy of our time. And finally, some say, if only the federal treasury were open, or, enough money will solve all ills. This approach is doubly popular because almost everyone agrees that there is not enough to go around. College presidents lament that the public is so parsimonious; university bureaucrats protest that funds have been budgeted and earmarked long in advance and that fine programs must be scuttled to meet budgetary deficiencies. But the "enough money approach" is like the holy grail: it seldom appears. Moreover, since there never is enough money, the proposition that enough money will cure all ills can never be tested. People who use this approach do not necessarily do so fraudulently or deceptively, but they do manage to avoid any confrontation with the real problems.

One possible approach is reasoned radicalism, that is, going to the roots of current educational standards and practices. This means recognizing that the classroom is only one learning arena in competition with other more glamorous ones. It means recognition of the superior training capacities of the peer group and the media. It means asking whether or not a college degree is always essential or relevant to teach in the college classroom. It means to value pragmatism over pre-coded standards. It means flaunting tradition in preference for effectiveness. It means regarding deference with the same indifference as the rest of the American public. It means learning as a mutual or shared experience. It means recognition of the fact that the poor, particularly the ethnic poor who come to our

schools, are not substandard human beings, but are rather people with different survival skills.

It means facing the real issues of our time — squarely and honestly. What, for example, is the morality of the Johnson-Nixon war? What are the ethics of human starvation in Tierra Amarilla, New Mexico? What is the constitutionality of the conspiracy theory that jails and silences social protesters in East Los Angeles? And what about Delano?

These are moral, ethical and intellectual considerations. Together they represent part of the value system of our society. You, the young, must expose and ridicule the comfortable hypocrisy of the past — you must do this with courage and intelligence even as you weigh the consequences of your deeds. But you *must not lose your grip on reason* — as have many administrators. And you must learn zealously and even religiously from the experience of the poor — those who do not share your new-won academic prestige. Return to the *barrios* and drag those that dictate educational policies into Maravilla, El Hoyo, Watts, and other “exotic places.”

The antithesis of fear is reason. And reasoned radicalism is the only alternative to what promises to be intellectual anarchy in schools like East Los Angeles College. We who are students and professors must save higher education for the future in spite of current public negativism, the intransigence of Ronald Reagan and the terror in the minds of some of our school administrators.

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Clara B. Lefler

Poetry

RHAPSODY IN BLACK

Itzpapalotl
obsidian butterfly
of silky black thighs
and soft claws that terrify
black beauty who hides
from the darts of light
in the blackness
of the still night.

Itzpapalotl
lady of jewels
in the House of Ce Calli
where she rules
broken and bleeding
the Tree of Life crying
lies at her feet pleading!

Y en el camposanto
sobre un pino solitario
un buhe de lo alto
entona la rapsodia
del sudario
negra y tersa como la
bella Itzpapalotl

Beautiful
destructive
unfortunate
black, black
spirit
Itzpapalotl!

SABOR DE FAMILIA

Una casita de adobes
 con una cocina tiznada
 donde los niños juegan
 donde hay solo frijoles
 pero con sabor de familia

ALTIVOS

En el huerto
 de olivos
 dejame beber
 mi copa
 de sangre
 por aquellos
 que mueren
 de hambre
 pero continuan
 altivos. . . .

NANUTZÍN

Lowliest of the Gods
 afflicted with scabs
 silent Nanutzín
 was ordered
 to light the world.

Four days in penance
 he spent. . . .
 out of rocks Nanutzín
 built a hearth
 and the flame
 of Paricutín
shattered the earth!

DUERMETE NIÑO

Cold winds
 empty nests
 a child cries
 duermete niño
 duermete ya,
 a dog howls
 a red moon
 eyes of green
 in a lagoon
 duermete niño
 ¡duermete ya!

LA COMUNIÓN
DE MIS ABUELOS

El angelus suena
la hora
de la sagrada
comuni6n
de mis
abuelos
time to partake
the holy
Chilaquile
Mayahuel, Tlaloc and I
en la sagrada
comuni6n
de mis abuelos

THE GRAPES
OF FUTILITY

They pick
in silence
with intense
concentration
taking
no time
for rest
or relaxation
some of them
mere children,
if thirsty
they drink
the tears
of the
brown soil
while futility
rapes
their soul
but. . . .
they continue
to pick

CLARA B. LEFLER was born in Durango, Mexico, and spent most of her childhood in Chihuahua, Mexico. Presently she is a Navy housewife and part time college student at San Diego State College. The poetry contributed was written in San Diego State College's "Chicano Poetry" course which is taught by the poet Alurista.

José Vasconcelos and La Raza

MARIO T. GARCÍA

“Raza, Raza
Raza, Raza”¹

So begins a poem written by a Chicano who represents the growing militant element within the Mexican-American community in the Southwest. The term *La Raza* is used constantly by Chicanos; yet this is nothing new, for the term has always been used by Mexicans in the United States. *La Raza* is an expression which is used to praise and exalt the Mexican race. For too long the Anglo has spat upon the word Mexican, and used it in a derogatory sense. Chicanos have had enough of this, and now realize that if Anglo society will not allow them to forget they are Mexicans, then Chicanos should accept this, and instead of trying to imitate Anglos, they should see themselves for what they are — Mexicans. Hence, young Chicanos are proud to call themselves Mexicans, and see *La Raza* as superior to the Anglo race. This acceptance of *La Raza* and all that it stands for — in terms of a rich cultural and racial heritage — is praiseworthy.

This view of *La Raza*, however, differs from another which was promulgated some years ago by the famous Mexican philosopher and educator, José Vasconcelos (1882-1959). Vasconcelos saw the Mexican race not as a special and distinct entity, but as part of a larger one which he called the “cosmic race.” The “cosmic race” is an interesting concept, but it has sharp contrasts with the Chicano vision of *La Raza*. Nevertheless, it furnishes goals which Chicanos should ponder about, especially in terms of the future.

Vasconcelos believed no race was superior to another. He believed that different races develop their own peculiar strengths, and that each possess special qualities which can be of benefit to mankind. Quite clearly, Vasconcelos’ “cosmic race” is not a racist idea. Indeed, he saw it as a mixture, or synthesis as Professor Had-dox refers to it, of white, brown, black, and yellow, all blended

together to form what Vasconcelos termed "the final inclusive race."² The "cosmic race" would become the "fifth" race — one built upon Christian love.³

It should be noted that Vasconcelos believed that Latin America was destined to become the home of the first "synthesized" race simply because the racial mixture there made it more susceptible to such an ideal. Yet, he admitted that Latin Americans would never be the superior race of the world, in the sense of the most illustrious or most powerful. The role of the Latin American "cosmic race" would be to serve as an example of noble humanity to all nations and people. It would be a race standing for the integration of mankind.⁴

Vasconcelos' "cosmic race" is at odds with the Chicano conception of La Raza. The latter's exhalation of La Raza is noble, for it gives pride to a people long trampled upon by a racist society. One cannot help but feel, however, that this view in itself contains elements of racism, but this is unavoidable, for the crisis of the moment demands that Mexican-Americans be instilled with racial pride; without it, they would be left defenseless against the encroachment of the Anglo "melting pot," one of the most racist hoaxes ever perpetrated upon the world. To offset this, La Raza holds to the superiority of the Mexican way of life over the Anglo. This stands in contrast to Vasconcelos, who held that no race or culture — not even the Mexican — is superior to another.

Vasconcelos and Chicanos also differ in their beliefs about the compatibility or incompatibility of Anglo and Chicano cultures. In 1925 Vasconcelos admitted that Latin American — which includes the culture of Chicanos — and Anglo-Saxon cultures do not represent irreconcilable sides. Quite the contrary, he believed both are products of complementary traditions.⁵ In a statement made in a lecture at the University of Chicago, also in 1925, Vasconcelos further expressed the belief that it is a blessing that the American continent is divided among Latin Americans and Anglos, for the interaction of their two cultures "may eventually lead to a mutually desired, higher, richer, spirited world . . . a true all-comprehending type of civilization."⁶

This harmonious view is not held by militant Chicanos, judging by beliefs expressed in such publications as *El Gallo*, *Bronze*, and *La Raza*.⁷ These Chicanos believe that until there is a radical shift in the racist opinions of the Anglo world, there can be no peaceful co-existence between Anglo and Chicano cultures. Hence, they no longer hold to the assimilationist ideas of some of their

predecessors. For to assimilate would mean to give up their Mexican culture and heritage, and accept the Anglo one. Not only is this unrealistic, but it is, of course, completely unacceptable.

In effect, Vasconcelos' "cosmic race" has little meaning and relevance to Chicanos today, given the conditions they are faced with. While it may be all right to dream of a "synthesized" race, the fact is that no such race can ever develop, at least not in the United States, until the Anglo "gets off his high horse," and accepts others as equal. The same is true of Vasconcelos' belief about the compatibility of Latin American and Anglo cultures. Both *could* be complementary, but they will never be so until the Anglos accept Chicanos as equals. Vasconcelos' view, moreover, of a "cosmic race" based on Christian love is also irrelevant at this time, for Anglos hide behind their "Christian love," and commit atrocities against Chicanos, blacks, Vietnamese, and other people of color.

All this is not to say that Vasconcelos' concept of a "cosmic race" could not be meaningful and relevant in the future, but many changes will have to take place, and many battles fought, before this is so. Yet, Chicanos should keep in mind the idealistic views of José Vasconcelos, for if the day ever dawns when racial and cultural harmony comes to this nation, the Chicano will have to think beyond La Raza, and it may be at that time that the hopes of Vasconcelos can be fulfilled. La Raza could then, indeed, become part of the "cosmic race."

El Paso, Tejas

NOTES

¹*El Gallo*, April, 1969, 7.

²John H. Haddox, *Vasconcelos of Mexico: Philosopher and Prophet* (Austin, 1967), 54.

³*Ibid.*, 58.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵*Ibid.*, 62.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷These are Chicano newspapers in Denver, Oakland, and Los Angeles respectively.

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Book Review

NORTH FROM MEXICO: The Spanish-Speaking People of the United States. By Carey McWilliams. Greenwood Press, New York. (324 pages, indexed) Paperback, \$2.95

Reviewed by OCTAVIO I. ROMANO-V.

Originally published some twenty years ago, this volume is an unrevised reprinting. A very brief six-page introduction outlining some more recent events in the Mexican-American community has been the only addition.

North From Mexico is a history of Mexicans in Mexico (now called the Southwest by some), and it is a history also of people of Mexican descent in the United States' southwestern region (now called Aztlán by some). More important, this book is a history of attitudes, issues, action, and counteraction. This book is not for those people who want to see Mexicans as meek, docile, nonrational beings who are passively awaiting the miraculous emergence of a third or fourth generation before they can participate in the historical process. For those who insist on this picture of Mexicans, let them turn to social science "studies" of Mexican-Americans for their mythology.

Virtually anyone who has talked with los viejos in the barrios knows that Mexican-Americans have not only been participants in history, but they have been generators of the historical process as well. And this is what this book is all about. Glance, for example, at some of the Table of Contents: THE FANTASY HERITAGE; *The Birth of a Legend* which deals with the discovery of "Spain in America," the glorification of the "Spanish Heritage" to the exclusion of things Mexican. This exclusion reached such ridiculous proportions that "On the sixteenth of September, 1947, a Miss Frances Anderson was selected as the reigning señorita in one Southern California town; while, in another, a Miss Virginia Thomas was selected," as queen of the 16th of September. This book is replete with such examples.

Read further to Chapter VI, NOT COUNTING MEXICANS and the sub-headings *Los Diablos Tejanos*; *Alas! The Alamo*; *The Mexican-American War* (the San Patricio Battalion composed of American soldiers who deserted and joined the Mexican Army in protest to the behavior of American troops) p. 103; *Slaves and Peons* (Mexico sought to insert a provision in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo barring slavery forever

from the territory ceded to the United States. "The possession of slaves in Western Texas," wrote Colonel Ford, "was rendered insecure owing to . . . th efforts of the Mexicans to induce them to run away. They assisted them in every way they could.") p. 105; *Red Robber of the Rio Grande*; *The Salt War*; and *Open Season on Mexicans*. "Over two thousand postcards a day were sold in El Paso depicting 'Mexican atrocities' while American troops marched through the streets singing:

It's a long, long way to capture Villa;
 It's a long way to go;
 It's a long way across the border
 Where the dirty greasers grow." (p. 112)

There is more: *Disturbance in Socorro, The Lynching of Juanita*. For example, "Mexican miners from Sonora were among the first emigrants to arrive in California after the discovery of gold. Staking out important claims in . . . Calaveras, Tuolumne, Mariposa, and Stanislaus counties . . . they had made remarkable progress before the stream of Anglo-American migration had reached California." However, "One of the first acts of the California legislature was the adoption of a foreign-miners' license tax which was aimed specifically at eliminating the competition of Mexican miners. Shortly after this act was passed, a mob of two thousand American miners descended on Sonora (a mining camp) 'firing at every Mexican in sight.' The camp was burned to the ground. . . . During the week that the rioting lasted, scores of Mexicans were lynched and murdered. In the wake of the riots, most of the Mexicans abandoned their claims and fled to . . . the southern part of the state." (p. 127-28.) One of these former miners was named Joaquín Murieta. Then, "throughout the 1860's the lynching of Mexicans was such a common occurrence in Los Angeles that the newspapers scarcely bothered to report the details." (p. 130) "A homicide a day was reported in Los Angeles in 1854, with most of the victims being Mexican and Indians." (p. 131)

An historic panorama follows: *Mr. Marshall's Chispa*; *Anglo-Saxon Law and Order*; *Life in a Boxcar*; *The Myth of Docility*; *The Honeymoon is Over*; *La Nina de Cabora*; *The Battle of Cananea*. Chapter XII is titled THE PATTERN OF VIOLENCE, with sections headed *The Case of Sleepy Lagoon*; *Captain Ayres: Anthropologist*; *Plotting a Riot*; and *The Origin of Pachuquismo*. Chapter XIII, BLOOD ON THE PAVEMENTS deals with the attacks on Pachuco in Los Angeles during World War II.

A glance at the Index of the book reveals many names of men and women who participated in, and made, history (there is much more to be written about these people)—Pablo Abeyta, Dan G. Acosta, José Aguilar, Manuel Aguilar, Sostenes l'Archevêque, José Arias, Esther Armenta, Manuel Armijo, Don José Arnaz, Lucas Vásquez de Ayllón, Bartolome Baca, Elfego Baca, Ezequiel de Baca, Casimiro Barela, Capt. Refugio Benavides, Enrique Bermudez, Father Borajo, David Braco,

Louis Bulvia, Teresa de Cabora, J. T. Canales, Alejandro Carrillo, José Carrasco, C. J. Carreon, José M. Carvajal, "El Güero" Chavez, Anton Chico, Barnabe Cobo, Leonardo Cordoba, J. Y. Cota, José Davilla, Manuel Delgado, Ernesto Felix Díaz, José Díaz, Daniel Elizalde, Dr. Aurelio M. Espinosa, Juan Flores, Manuel Fraijo, Ernesto Galarza, Father Gallegos, Macario García, Manuel García, Albert Garza, Juan Gómez, Lauriano Gómez, Adolfo G. Gominguez (Dominguez?), Isabel Gonzales, Jovita Gonzales, Manuel Pedro Gonzales, Anita de la Guerra, Sylvestre Herrera, Francisco de P. Jimenez, José de Lara, José de Leon, Henry Leyvas, Clement Lopez, Francisco Lopez, Ignacio Lopez, Olibama Lopez, Enrique and Ricardo Flores Magon, Telesforo Mandujano, Alfred Ramos Martínez, Joe Martínez, Father José Antonio Martínez, Roberto Medellin, Edward Melendez, Jack Melendez, Gonzalo Méndez, Sylvestre Mirabal, Pablo Montoya, Antonio Moreno, José Moreno, Joaquín Murieta, Felipe de Neve, Eugenio Nogueros, Ricardo Noyola, Rev. R. N. Nuñez, Estevan Ochoa, Trueba Olivares, Manuel Otero, Romauldo Pacheco, Angel Padilla, Jesús Pallares, Ignacio Paredes, Frank M. Paz, Tiofilo Pelagio, Francisco Perea, Manuel Perez, Catarino Ramirez, Manuel Reyes, Pablo Rodríguez, Casimiro Romero, José Romero, Chepe Ruiz, Jesús Sagaripa, José Taffola (Tafolla?), Mariano Tisnado, Tirza de la Toba, Francisco Torres, Teofilo Trujillo, Manuel Ugarte, José Antonio Urquiza, Daniel Valdez, Tiburcio Vásquez, Domiciano Vigil, Francisco Villa, Gregorio de Villalobos, Pedro Villaseñor, Elias Zarate, and many others.

Add these names to the long list of Mexican-Americans presently making and participating in history, and the list becomes truly impressive. With such a list readily available, one can now envision that in the not too distant future a truly comprehensive multi-volume history of the Mexican-Americans will appear. Let us hope that the writer of such a history will not have forgotten the legacy left him by these historical figures, for without the individuals who appear in the pages of *North From Mexico* there would be no history to write about. Let us hope that future historians of the Mexican-Americans will stick to the issues of importance, as Carey McWilliams has done.

I first read *North From Mexico* some twenty years ago. Like so many others of that time, I, too, had been systematically brainwashed in public school (it's still going on) into believing that people of Mexican descent in the United States had done nothing of any significance whatsoever, and that somehow their true role in history had ended with the last dying gasp of some asthmatic Spaniard sometime around 1848. In public school, half of my teachers seemed to have been carrying on a continuing love affair with the ghosts of dead Spaniards, especially if they were reputed to have been "noble" men (*xeno-Iberic-necrolatry*). The rest of my teachers, I still suspect, fearfully checked under their beds each night before retiring, for fear that the Spanish Armada might still be lurking there (*xeno-Iberic-necrophobia*).

Then, upon reading *North From Mexico*, I found out that most of what these teachers had told me was not true. Using the book as a source of questions, I then went to los viejos in the barrio and checked out some of the history. The results of these dialogues with the viejitos was quite an education. I don't know how many viejitos I've talked with in the intervening years—a wino in National City, California; a labor organizer in San Jose, California; curanderos and curanderos in Califa, New Mexico, and Texas; a poet in Los Angeles; a printer-typesetter-writer-philosopher in Albuquerque; a miner in Santa Fe; a man in Tierra Amarilla; a Mason in South Texas; a lawyer in Brownsville, and many, many more. The picture that emerged from the dialogue with the vietjitos was one of constant struggle. And I discovered that there was no shame in what they had done or tried to do as a group—for they had simply tried to make a better life for their families and their children, and to protect themselves from adversity and injustice.

This, basically, is what *North From Mexico* is all about.

For years, *North From Mexico* was a relatively lone, *published*, dissenting voice. It was matched against the creative (creative??) literature that dehumanized people of Mexican descent (See Francisco Armando Rios, *The Mexican in Fact, Fiction, and Folklore*, this issue of EL GRITO, for examples). It was at odds with the base, lewd, obscene, prurient ideology (greed??) of the advertising industry (See Thomas Martinez, *Advertising and Racism: The Case of the Mexican-American*, also in this issue of EL GRITO). And beyond question, *North From Mexico* is still another example which exposes how “social” “science” “studies” have prostituted and distorted the history of Mexican-Americans (See O. I. Romano—V., *The Anthropology and Sociology of Mexican-Americans*, EL GRITO, Fall, 1968).

When one takes into consideration the vast scope and propagandising power of literature, advertising, and social science, then one has no choice but to pity the pitiful panhandling of an individual like Bill Dana. One can only hope that Bill Dana, following the superb example set by Al Jolson and Eddie Cantor before him, at the very least has the sensitivity to paint his navel brown in order to lend a note of “realism” to his periodic television portrayals of Joe Jim N. Ezz. A “brown navel” would be a perfect sequel to a “black face.”

Enough of these asides. We are reviewing a book. But what is the reading of a good book if not a long series of asides.

A note of caution when reading *North From Mexico*.

In 1948, when McWilliams wrote *North From Mexico*, he inserted a note of optimism regarding the future when he said, “Part of the change that is taking place in Anglo-Hispano relations in the Southwest can be traced to the new interest and leadership that has developed at the colleges and universities. . . .” (p. 284) This obviously was written during the optimistic days following World War II. The subsequent years have shown very clearly that what McWilliams believed was a new interest

in leadership was merely the formative stages of what ultimately became an industry of studying Mexicans which in turn has become big business. It is well known today that this "leadership" was not forthcoming from colleges and universities. Prime examples which challenge McWilliams' optimism exist today. For example, at the University of Arizona in Tucson library there is no card for Mexican-Americans. There is a section, however, labeled "Mexicans in the United States" which has a paltry 93 entries as compared to eight complete boxes on Spain. Obviously in Arizona they are still obsessed with the Spaniard while ignoring the Mexican people around them. Similarly, KUAT-TV, the University of Arizona educational television outlet, continues to play the game, "What's a Mexican Worth," or "For the Duration Only." This game, common in such universities, means that people of Mexican descent are hired for the duration of funded projects, at the end of which they are dismissed. Properly interpreted, this means that people of Mexican descent are of importance to KUAT-TV only insofar as they are negotiable coin for obtaining grants. Even today KUAT-TV totally ignores the explicit directives from the FCC and explicit criticisms from the HEW Western Regional Office, and continues to function without a single Spanish surname person on its permanent staff. Their programming, as a reflection of their discriminatory hiring practices, is irrelevant to the extremely high percentage of people of Mexican descent in their viewing area. Even more ridiculous, the University has instituted what they euphemistically call a "Mexican-American Studies Program." Students who enter this program are required to take many courses in physical education and, wouldn't you guess, Spanish literature. This so-called Mexican-American Studies Program is merely the lumping of preexistent courses which are then arbitrarily called Mexican-American Studies. By no stretch of the imagination can this be even remotely called an adjustment to the contemporary realities and needs of the Mexican-American community.

Is this an isolated case? The answer is "no." At New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, there is a center which disseminates virtually all pertinent literature of relevance to Mexican-Americans. This is the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC). In a burst of humanistic, academic enlightenment and moral courage, the staff of ERIC at New Mexico State University recently hired their *first* person of Spanish surname (to help with collating materials). As everyone knows, a collator is crucial to the understanding of the educational needs of the Mexican-American.

Finally, the recent resignation of a Mexican-American from the President's staff at the University of California clearly indicates that this problem is widespread. For these reasons, McWilliams' optimism regarding higher education has had very little basis either in history or in fact. Nevertheless, *North From Mexco* remains to date one of the better panoramas of Mexican-American history and it awaits only the writing of a comprehensive work by a Mexican-American himself.

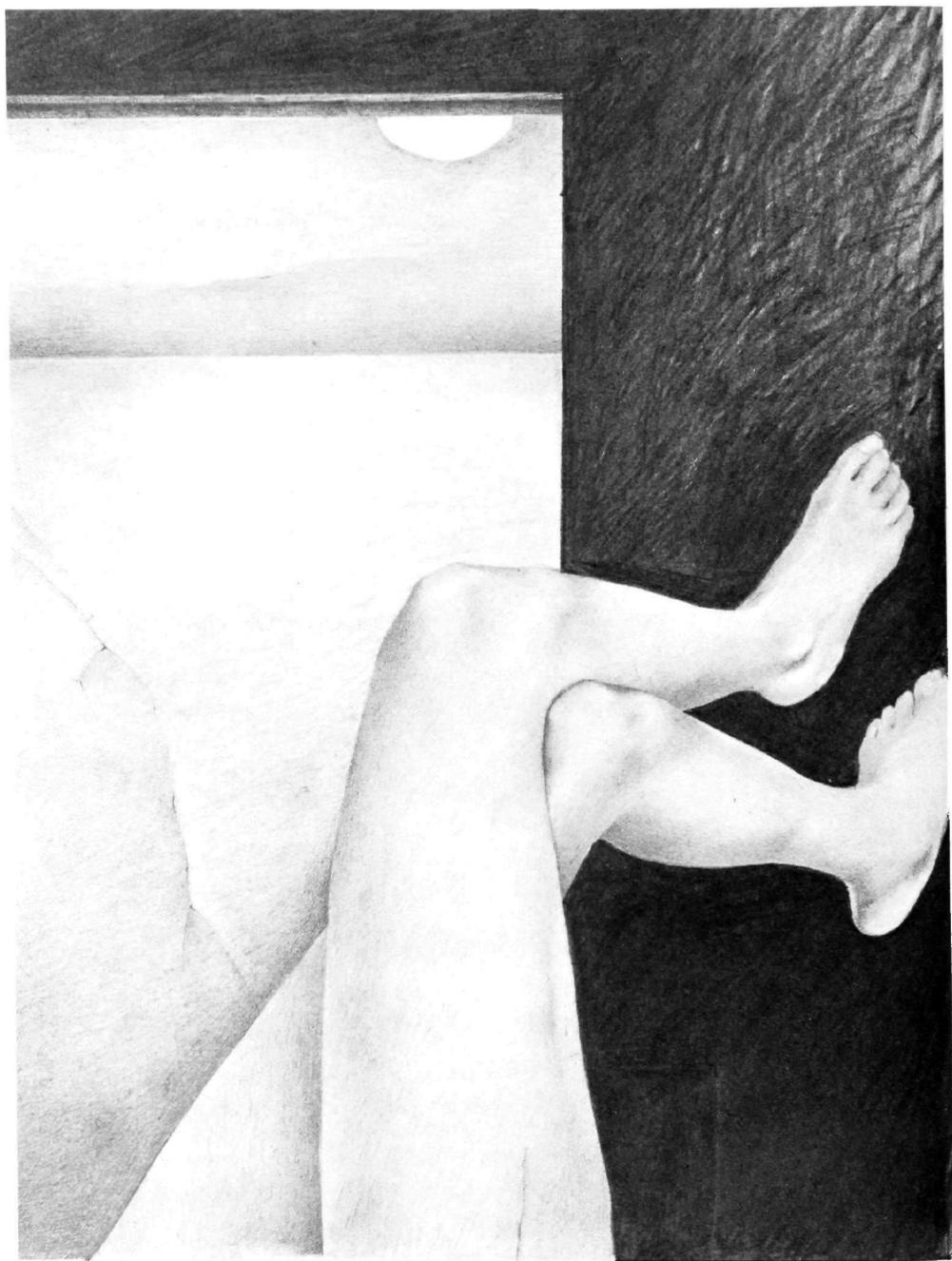


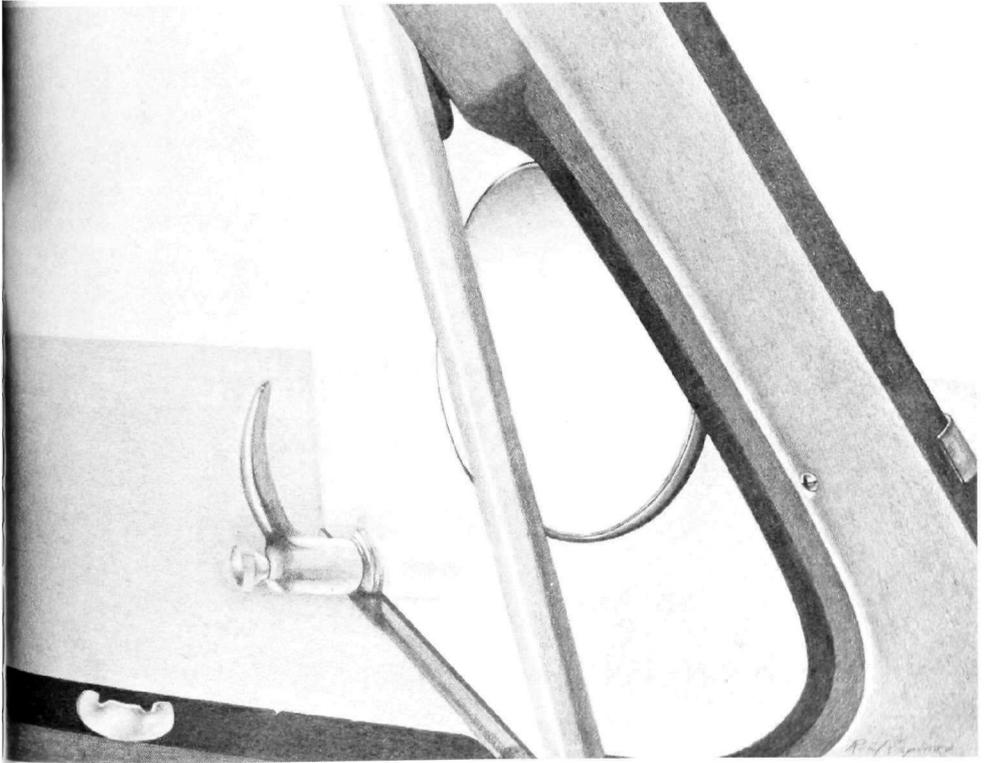
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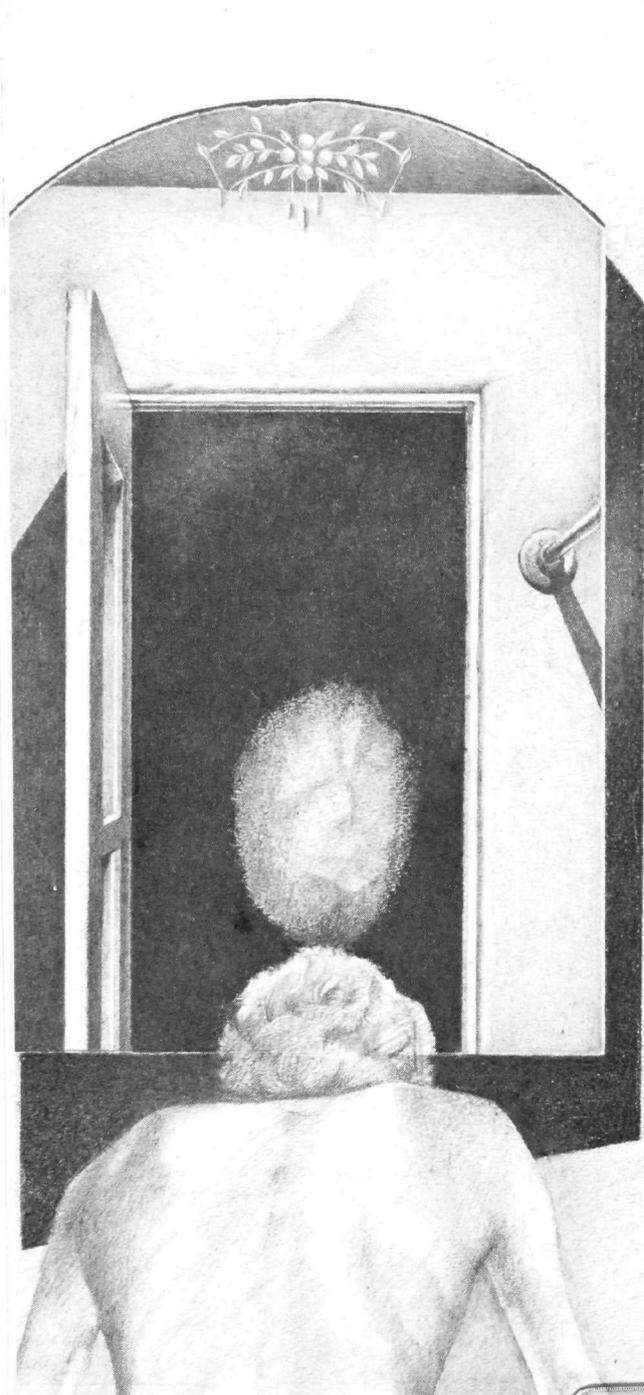
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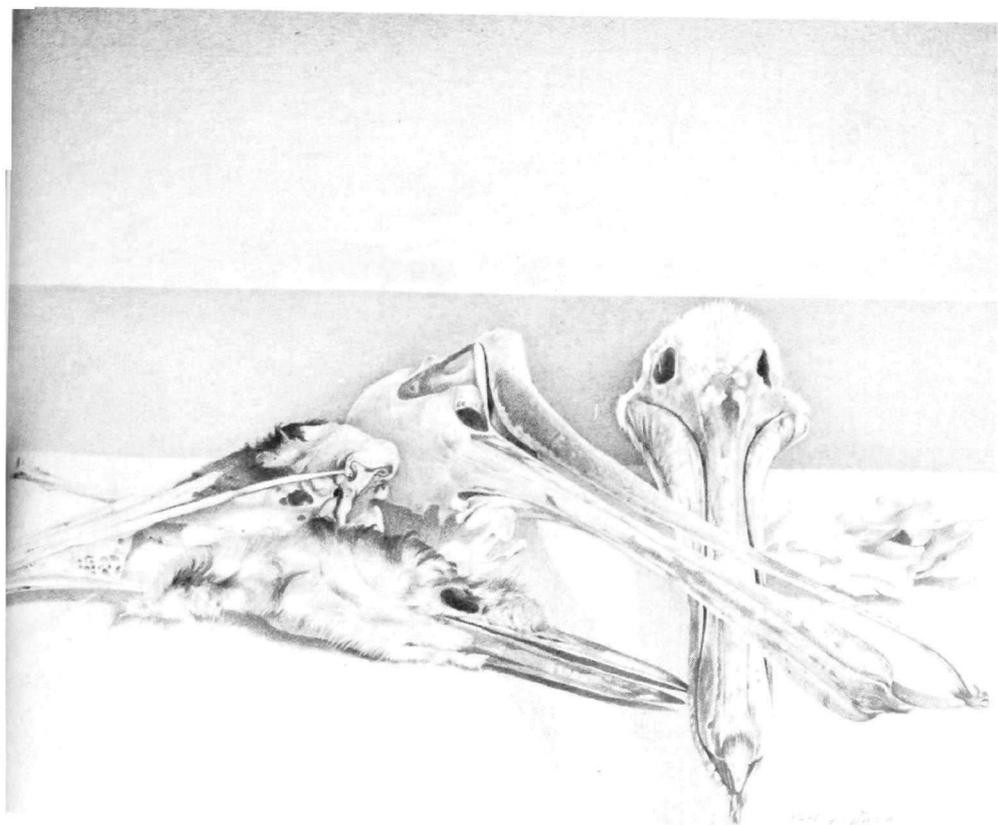
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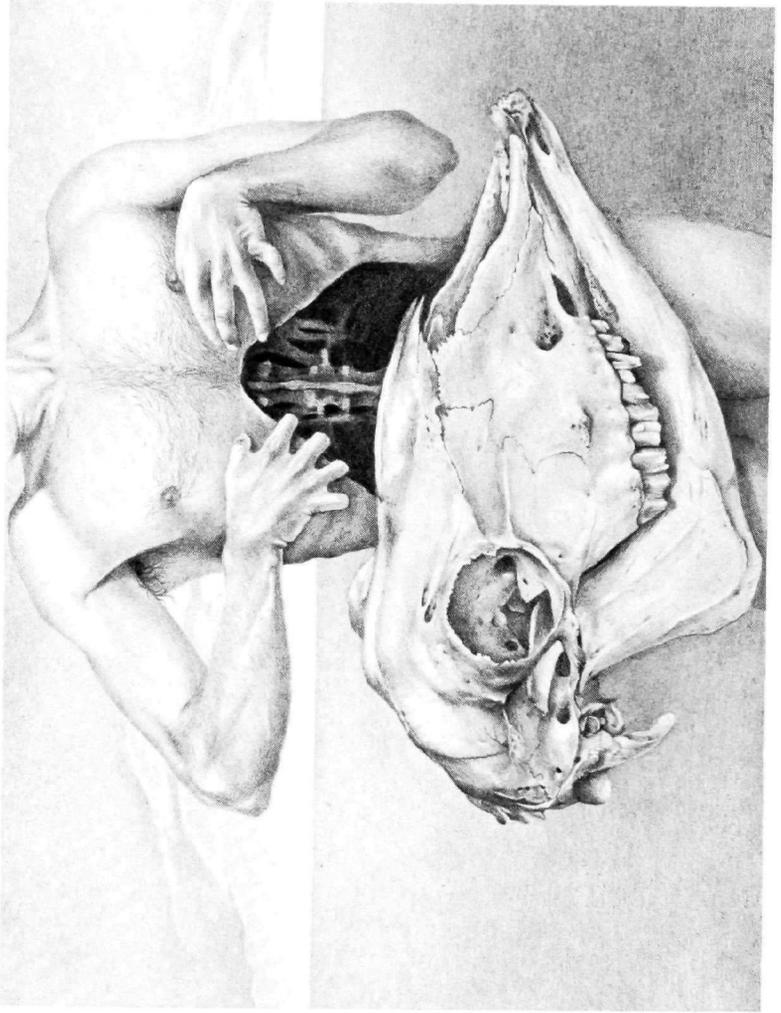




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