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THE
DAY
OF
THE
SWALLOWS

by
ESTELA PORTILLO

THE CHARACTERS

in order of appearance

Alysea
Clemencia
Josefa
Tomás
Eduardo
Clara
Don Esquinas
Father Prado

THE DAY OF THE SWALLOWS

A drama in Three Acts

The tierra of Lago de San Lorenzo is within memory of Mountain sweet pine. Then the maguey thickens with the ferocity of chaotic existence; here the desert yawns. Here it drinks the sun in madness.

The village of Lago de San Lorenzo is a stepchild; it is a stepchild to the Esquinas hacienda, for the hacienda has been a frugal mother and a demanding father. Its name comes from the yearly ritual of the saint-day of San Lorenzo when all the young women gather around the lake to wash their hair and bathe in promise of a future husband. The tempo of life, unbroken, conditioned, flavors its heartbeat with dreams and myths. The hacienda is the fiber upon which existence hangs. The church, the fluid rose, assures the future promise of Elysium fields. No one dares ask for life.

What is this footfall beyond ritual, beyond livelihood? What is this faint unknown ache in the heart? It's more than just the rasp of hope. . . . The young know this; and they go to the spring with lyrical intimacy. By the lake, eyes burn and feet dig the mud of the spring; someone traces mountain against sky and gulf expands drowning, drowning. The obligation is remembered back in the village; the toll of the church bell offering sanctuary is a relief; the lake becomes too much for them.

At daybreak the fiesta day is sanctified with a misa at sunrise; the choir rejoices the promise of day. A holy procession is led by the priest and an "honored member" of the church. Offerings to the patron saint are generous amidst frugality. The animals are blessed; the people are blessed; all is washed clean.

Perhaps secretly each villager senses the werewolf moon inside him; the bite into passions will be hard and fierce after sunset.

On the day of San Lorenzo, in the heat of July, everybody goes to the lake; this day the lake is invaded by village life. When the church bells toll eleven in the sun, the late morning is the sole witness to the bathing of the virgins. The lake becomes a sacred temple. The high priestesses talk of hopes, lovers, and promises. In earnest belief, they wash their hair in spring water to insure future marriages in heaven. It is true, no one has seen a marriage made in heaven, but each girl hugs the private truth that hers will be the one.

Two hundred years before the Esquinas family had settled in Lago de San Lorenzo on a Spanish grant of fifty thousand acres, the Indians were pushed out further into the desert. This was the way of the bearded gachupín, with his hot grasp and his hot looks. Their greedy vitality was a wonder to the Indian. It was also death.

But now the barrio clustered itself around the hacienda. The conquered conquered the conquerors.

There is a house, the only house close to the edge of the lake. Here our story begins. . . .

ACT I Scene 1

Josefa's sitting room; it is an unusually beautiful room, thoroughly feminine and in good taste; the profusion of lace everywhere gives the room a safe, homey look. The lace pieces are lovely, needlepoint, hairpin, limerick, the work of patience and love. Upstage left is a large French window; from it one can view a large tree. On the tree is a freshly painted tree house of unusual size and shape. It is an orb that accommodates a great number of birds. The room faces south, so it is flooded with light; the light, the lace, the open window all add to the beauty of the room, a storybook beauty of serenity. To the right is a door leading to the kitchen; there is another door leading to a bedroom; downstage left there is a door leading to the outside.

Alysea is sitting on the floor when the curtain rises. It is before dawn; but a few minutes after the curtain rises, light begins to fill the room. Alysea is cleaning the sitting room carpet, an unusual task for this hour. Next to her is a pail; she uses a piece of cloth with quick frantic movements, rinses, and continues the scrubbing. After a while she looks at the cloth in her hand intently, as in realization of what she is doing. Suddenly she drops it seemingly in horror. She looks helpless and lost. Still sitting on the floor she leans her head against a chair and cries silently staring up into the now streaming light from the window. There is the sound of the milk bell. It is Clemencia delivering. When she hears it, Alysea jumps up, wipes away traces of tears with her apron, then opens the French window and looks out.

Alysea: She'll come right in if I'm not at the door to pay her.

She looks around the room. Her eyes fall on a small side table next to the couch. She goes to the table and stares at a long kitchen knife with traces of blood on it. Hurriedly, she picks up the cleaning cloth, and uses it to pick up the knife gingerly. She wraps the cloth around the knife and places it in a side table drawer. During this interval, Clemencia's noisy arrival is heard. The kitchen door is opened; there is a tug of milk can, then a pouring of milk. Several sighs and ejaculations about hard work are heard. Alysea looks around the room one last time as Clemencia walks in.

Clemencia: Josefa! Alysea! My centavos for the week are not on the kitchen table. Hombre . . . do I have to beg for my money? Oye . . . ¿dónde están?

Alysea: Buenos días, Clemencia . . . early?

Clemencia: (staring at Alysea) Que horror! What is the matter? You look terrible. Have you been up all night?

Alysea: (smooths her hair; looks at her hands guiltily) Yes . . . I stayed up late. A new pattern in lace.

Clemencia: You work hard to please Josefa, don't you? (she notices Alysea looking at her hands.) What's the matter with your hands? Not rheumatism . . . you're just a girl . . . Look at mine! Life has eaten them up . . . I feel pain . . . ay! . . . it is my destiny to suffer . . . You owe me seven pesos.

Alysea: Yes, of course. (she goes to the household money box, takes a set of keys from her apron pocket and opens it. She counts out the money.) Cinco . . . seis . . . siete.

Clemencia: Gracias . . . (Looks at Alysea again and shakes her head.) Rest in the afternoon . . . you look all in. You can in this house. There is beautiful peace here.

Alysea: Yes . . . here it stretches itself out to breathe. . . .

Clemencia: You begin to talk like Josefa now . . . you like her . . . eh? She doesn't want you to work yourself to death . . . she is too kind.

Alysea: The most considerate of persons . . . but there is so much to do.

Clemencia: Of course, San Lorenzo . . . mañana . . . Josefa will be so grand leading the procession with the Father to the

church . . . a happy day for the barrio . . . we all share Josefa's honor like we have shared her goodness . . . a great lady.

Alysea: I had forgotten . . . the procession tomorrow.

Clemencia: What's the matter with you? Forgotten?

Alysea: Don't mind me . . . I'm not myself today . . . Clemencia.

Clemencia: Doña Josefa is an angel. All her life, she goes around . . . with that walking stick of hers . . . always she goes . . . like an avenging angel . . . helping . . . what a sight she must be . . . pounding with her stick on those evil people . . . One, two . . . that's for wickedness! (*she makes motions of one pounding away.*) She takes care of the devil alright . . . eh? Yes . . . she saved you from the sickness. . . .

Alysea: Saved me . . . from the sickness . . . what is shadow? What is sickness?

Clemencia: Talk sense, child! . . . you need rest. (*She looks at lace work on table.*) My . . . you are making lace as beautiful as Josefa's! You are lucky.

Alysea: Lucky? (*she goes to the window*) This room is beautiful . . . isn't it? I'm lucky to be here . . . aren't I? (*pause*) Appearances . . . they are very funny! Tomorrow the church will honor Josefa . . . how very funny! (*She begins to laugh; then, the laugh is eventually lost in sobbing.*) Oh, God!

Clemencia: What is the matter? (*she looks around*) Where is Josefa . . . Josefa! (*She goes to Alysea and feels her forehead.*) Are you feverish?

At this point, Josefa enters. She is a tall regal woman about thirty-five. Her bones are Indian's; her coloring is Aryan. She wears her hair back severely. Her movements are graceful and quiet. The cuffs and collar of her dress are of exquisite lace. She walks up to Alysea and puts her arm around her.

Josefa: Alysea, quiet! (*She turns to Clemencia*) She's not feeling well, I suppose.

Clemencia: She worked all night.

Josefa: Oh?

Clemencia: You must make her rest.

Josefa: You're right, of course

Clemencia: Well . . . I must be going . . . I'm late on my rounds . . . *(she sighs)* I wish I could stay here. *(she looks around)* What heavenly peace . . .

Josefa: (smiling) You are welcome . . . this is your home . . .

Clemencia: Dona Josefa . . . you are an angel!

Josefa: No . . . just happy! . . . Did you get your money?

Josefa escorts Clemencia to the door. Clemencia gives a last anxious look at Alysea.

Clemencia: She'll be all right in your hands, Josefa.

Josefa: I'll see that she rests.

Clemencia leaves through the kitchen door. Josefa remains silent as the sounds of departure from the kitchen are heard.

Josefa: You should rest . . . Clemencia's right.

Alysea shakes her head.

Josefa: Do you think it's wise. . . .

Alysea: Wise! the way you word it . . . wise!

Josefa: Very well, I'll put it another way . . . is this the time to break down? Beautiful days demand our strength . . . We must be faithful to loveliness.

Alysea: (incredulously) You believe that? *(She walks up to Josefa almost menacingly)* How can you justify in that way? You!

Josefa: (softly) There are things we must do . . . to keep a sanity . . . to make the moment clear. *(Pause)* Any signs of the swallows? Isn't the tree lovely?

Alysea: Have you forgotten? . . . how can you! . . . Josefa, last night. . . .

Alysea is overwhelmed with the memory; she runs out of the room. Josefa looks for a moment after her; then she touches the lace curtains on the window.

Josefa: We pattern our lives for one beautiful moment . . . like this lace . . . little bits and pieces come together . . . to make all this . . . my world . . . a crystal thing of light; Alysea must understand . . . she must!

There is a knock to the door leading outside. Josefa goes to the door; she opens it; it is Tomás, her shiftless uncle.

Tomás: Oh . . . it is you, Josefa! You're not at the hacienda this morning.

Josefa: What are you doing here?

Tomás: The pump. . . .

Josefa: You fixed that already . . . I've told you not to come around here at this time of day. . . .

Tomás: You do not appreciate always suspicious. . . .

Josefa: I don't want you bothering Alysea . . . ever. . . .

Tomás: It is like you . . . to think the worse of me.

Josefa: (with resignation) How are the children? Your wife Anita?

Tomás: They manage better than me . . . thanks to you there is little steady work I need a few centavos . . . Josefa you're rich!

Josefa: What for . . . Tequila?

Tomás: Just a little money . . . look, my hands . . . they shake I need it, Josefa . . . please!

Josefa: Don't beg!

Tomás: You let Clara have all she wants. . . .

Josefa: That is none of your business.

Tomás: (noticing the pail) Eh . . . what's this? Looks like blood!

Josefa: Go to the kitchen . . . help yourself to meal and beans . . . for the family.

Tomás is still staring at the pail.

Josefa: Did you hear me?

Tomás: Yes . . . yes, Doña Perfecta . . . doña Perfecta . . . so charitable . . . ha! ha!

Josefa: I'm not in the mood for your sarcasm.

Tomás: You will lead the procession tomorrow like the queen of the world . . . eh? You can spare a few centavos? a bottle? Do you keep some in the house when you get it for Clara?

Josefa: You're not getting any money.

Tomás: (starting to leave) What's in that pail?

Josefa: (indignant) I don't have to satisfy your curiosity.

Tomás: Cálmate . . . I was just asking. . . .

Josefa turns her back to him; he leaves through the kitchen door; his grumbling is heard as he helps himself to the food offered by Josefa. Josefa stares at the contents of the pail; she looks away and touches her temples with her fingertips. She sits in a rocking chair; leans back, closes her eyes, and grips the arms of the chair; She rocks back and forth.

Josefa: There is no desert here . . . only light . . . to live each day with nothing . . . to sink . . . (she closes her eyes and rocks.) The lonely, lonely struggle . . . then to emerge . . . to find the light . . . I have so much now . . . I want to give so much now . . . Alysea must understand! We must keep this world of light at all costs. . . .

She rises and walks to the window and stands absorbing the light; one can sense an obvious union between the light and Josefa.

Josefa: (softly) How moist your lips, my light . . . Through me . . . through me . . . you live. (she comes back from her intimate world and looks at the bird house with pleasure.) The long flight . . . how tired they will be; how thirsty after the desert . . . here my swallows will find peace . . . home. (As she looks at the tree; Tomás comes through the patio outside the window. He has a sack over his shoulder. Josefa does not seem to be mindful of him. Tomás calls.)

Tomás: Hey, Josefa! Are you casting a spell . . . so early? You don't scare me . . . I know you, querida . . . I know many things . . . you burn inside. . . .

Josefa stares at him unbelievably, as if he has destroyed a beauty; then she turns away from the window.

Tomás: Hey, Josefa . . . don't run away . . . the great Doña Perfecta runs away from her good-for-nothing uncle . . . that's funny . . . ha, ha!

Josefa: (firmly, but in an ominous tone) Go home, Tomás, go home.

She closes the window and walks to an unfinished damask close to the window. She sits down, unhooks the needle, and begins to work on it. Her concentration is a fiery intensity; this is obvious in her finger movements. Alysea comes back into the room; she is now composed and refreshed; she has put on a

pretty dress. She sees the pail and removes it; taking it into the kitchen; all this time Josefa remains absorbed in the damask. Alysea comes back. Josefa looks up.

Josefa: You look so nice! Every morning now . . . you look like the garden. . . .

Alysea: Nothing is as beautiful as your garden . . . paradise must look like that.

Josefa: A garden of light . . . perhaps it has a sense of paradise. . . .

Alysea: Tomás was here?

Josefa: Sneaking around as usual (*pause*) the pretty dress . . . for Eduardo again?

Alysea: Yes . . . I'll bring in the morning coffee . . . scones?

Josefa: Fine . . . and honey . . . suddenly I'm hungry . . . (*she leaves the damask, and begins to clear the coffee table.*) By the way . . . ask Eduardo to have some morning coffee with us today . . . don't run off for your usual morning walk.

Alysea: May I? Thank you . . . he's been coaxing me . . . he's absolutely fascinated by you.

Josefa: Do invite him.

Alysea seems to be holding back tears, although she has pretended calm through the conversation.

Josefa: What's the matter?

Alysea is not able to answer; she just shakes her head. Josefa walks up to her. Alysea stands still and helpless. Josefa takes Alysea's face in her hands.

Josefa: You are so dear to me . . . I don't like to see you like this . . . Alysea, don't delve on what happened . . . things will be alright. Haven't I always made things alright?

Alysea still doesn't answer.

Josefa: The tragic things in my life taught me one thing . . . calm. The waiting . . . that is harder than struggle . . . Alysea, learn how . . . to find a strength . . . this loveliness here . . . our world . . . isn't it worth it?

Alysea begins to cry gently. Josefa comforts her. Alysea becomes limp; she places her head on Josefa's shoulder like a child. Josefa strokes her hair.

Josefa: Your hair . . . your beautiful hair . . . here, let me comb it. . . .

Suddenly Alysea breaks away. She seems at a loss, then remembers the coffee.

Alysea: I'll get things started in the kitchen . . . Eduardo will be here any moment now.

Josefa: About last night, Alysea . . . we must have a story.

Alysea: (*She seems to shiver*) Story?

Josefa: When I took David to the hospital . . . the doctors . . . everyone was sympathetic . . . I told them someone had broken in . . .

Alysea: And David?

Josefa: He will be alright.

Alysea: I can never believe that. . . .

Josefa: I will take care of him always. . . .

Alysea: You killed him!

Josefa: Don't! He'll be back with us in a few weeks . . . I will make a fine life for him always. . . .

Alysea: He'll never . . . he'll never. . . .

She is overcome by emotion; she walks out of the room into the kitchen. Josefa looks after her. She remains standing for a moment; then she picks up a book of poetry from the lamp table.

Josefa: Santa Teresita . . . "El hombre toma . . . toma y hiera,
La flor desnuda . . . temblorosa . . ."

In her world of God . . . she saw what I see . . . she knew the light . . . beauty . . . truth . . . yes . . . in a cloister.

She looks around the room. Then she walks up to a workbasket and picks up a piece of lace. She holds it to the light and intently traces the pattern.

Josefa: The web . . . the beautiful web we weave! Anything . . . anything is worth this!

end of scene 1

ACT I
Scene 2

A few minutes later; Alysea comes from the kitchen with a morning tray; coffee, scones, juice. She places the tray on the coffee table. There is a knock. Alysea goes to the door. It is Eduardo.

Eduardo: (a young man of mixed heritage) I came through the path. . . .

Alysea: (drawing him in) I'm glad. Josefa wants you to have morning coffee . . . in here . . . with her; You always come for me in such a hurry . . . you hadn't seen this room . . . had you?

Eduardo: No . . . never! *(looking around)* Well . . . you were right . . . what a room! . . . for women.

Alysea: What do you mean?

Eduardo: It is a dream of gentleness . . . peace; it is not a man's room . . . but it is beautiful.

Alysea: You're right . . . Josefa made this haven . . . away from the world of men.

Eduardo: (looking at her quizzically) You like that?

Alysea: After what I've lived through . . . yes; this was heaven . . . when she brought me here. Sit down . . . she'll be here any moment.

Eduardo watches Alysea as she arranges napkins, spoons.

Eduardo: Have you told her . . . about our plans?

Alysea: No . . . she suspects something between us.

Eduardo: And?

Alysea: It is hard to understand her feelings . . . there is a stillness in her.

Eduardo: She dotes on you . . . I don't think she will be pleased . . . after all, I'm taking you away to a wilderness . . . mountain, pines. My squaw . . . living and loving in the open.

He goes to her, gathers her in his arms; they kiss; Alysea clings to him.

Eduardo: It won't be like this . . . you know!

Alysea: I'll be with you . . . isn't that everything?

Eduardo: And the gentle life you love?

Alysea: What you will share with me . . . will be so much more.
They embrace again.

Eduardo: Say! Have you seen the morning? It is a conspiracy . . . sun, clouds, green fields . . . and the pines from the distance . . . I can hardly wait. Let's leave right now . . . pack the horses . . . take the mountain trail past the lake . . . the way of my people.

Alysea: Not now . . . you crazy Indian!

Eduardo: We'll find a clearing . . . plow . . . build a cabin . . . have babies. . . .

Alysea: Sometimes I think you have to be out in the open . . . no matter what . . .

Eduardo: That's where my God is.

Eduardo sits down; Alysea stands behind his chair and gently traces his cheek.

Alysea: Your world! A beautiful God exists . . . in your world . . . when you talk . . . He is free . . . green . . . open. You know something?

Eduardo: (catching her hand and kissing it) What?

Alysea: Father Prado understands your God too. At confession . . . I told him about not attending Mass because we go exploring . . . to find the tallest pines . . . I told him about your God . . . he smiled and told me I had found a holier temple.

Eduardo: Let's take him with us.

Alysea: (laughing) You know better . . . his life is the barrio . . . the people.

Eduardo: He will marry us . . . before we leave. . . .

Alysea: (pulling away) No . . . we must wait . . .

Eduardo: Why? Listen, woman . . . no one in her right mind turns down a marriage proposal. . . .

Alysea: I want you to be sure . . . after a while . . . after we have shared. . . .

Eduardo: (in jest) You shameless hussy . . . you wish to live in sin, eh?

Alysea: Don't jest . . . there was so much ugliness . . . before Josefa brought me here . . . I remember . . . they brought a

bunch of us from the country . . . they promised jobs as seamstresses; my barrio was poor . . . we went hungry . . . so I came . . . the city was a nightmare . . . they locked us up in an old house . . . they gave us disgusting soiled dresses to wear . . . then we found out.

Eduardo: Stop torturing yourself.

Alysea: No . . . let me finish . . . I've never told you . . . I hid in the closet of the room; an ugly man with fat hands asked the girls where I was . . . they didn't know . . . he cursed; I was trembling underneath a pile of dirty dresses suffering with the sweat of lust . . . I closed my eyes. Then, I decided to run . . . I simply got up . . . and ran . . . down the stairs . . . into an open hall . . . where men . . . men with hard dead looks stared . . . no one expected me to try and escape through the front door . . . but I did . . . I got as far as the street . . . then he caught up with me; his hands were at my throat. . . .

Eduardo: That's enough. . . .

Alysea: All of a sudden . . . Josefa appeared . . . with her walking stick. She raised it over her head and beat the man . . . he cried out in pain . . . she never faltered . . . then, she brought me to this world of light . . .

Eduardo: We shall marry tomorrow night . . . that's it!

Alysea: No . . . no . . . there's something else . . . (*she becomes very agitated*) Eduardo . . . last night . . .

Josefa enters.

Josefa: Good morning . . . am I late? Is the coffee cold?

Alysea: No . . . no . . . you are just in time.

Eduardo: (*drawing out a chair for her*) Our great lady!

Alysea becomes busy with the food.

Alysea: (*to Josefa*) Juice?

Josefa: Yes . . . thank you. Eduardo, what are you up to . . . charming the women so early in the morning?

Eduardo: What better time?

Josefa: You are different! Alysea . . . give Eduardo . . . some of this orange . . . it's delicious . . .

Eduardo: No! No! just coffee . . . and what's this? (*he picks up a scone, tastes it*) Wonderful! I had heard about all your wonders . . . but . . . cooking too!

Josefa: Alysea baked them . . . from an old recipe of mine

Alysea hands Eduardo some coffee.

Eduardo: Thank you, Linda

Alysea serves herself. Josefa looks intently from one to the other.

Josefa: All these walks you two take . . . into forbidden country . . .

Eduardo: How can beauty be forbidden

Josefa: I feel the same way . . . but the desert mind forbids it . . . many times.

Alysea: It won't be forbidden tomorrow . . . all the young girls will bathe in the lake at noontime . . . the promise of a perfect love

Eduardo: I hear it is your year. Josefa . . . you will lead the church procession . . .

Josefa: My people enjoy planning for it . . .

Alysea: Josefa is as bad as Father Prado about the barrio people . . . all is to please them

Eduardo: And what pleases you, Josefa?

Josefa: To make them happy!

Eduardo: I can see why they talk of you with awe

Josefa: I am Indian you know . . . yet not of desert, not of them, in a way. Yet totally theirs.

Alysea: (rising) Well . . . I shall leave you for a few moments; Josefa . . . the lace for the capitol . . . must make the morning express . . . excuse me.

Alysea leaves. Eduardo finishes his coffee.

Josefa: She's falling in love with you . . .

Eduardo: It's mutual

Josefa: For how long, Eduardo?

Eduardo: (stands, hands in pocket, somewhat ill at ease.) Love is not timed.

Josefa: Isn't it?

Eduardo: What do you mean?

Josefa: Clara.

Eduardo: You know?

Josefa: She has described to me . . . your every mood . . . your every gesture . . . in love

Eduardo: I don't know what to say!

Josefa: Guilt?

Eduardo: Ridiculous . . . there's no guilt in love!

Josefa: (*laughing as if to herself*) The way you men justify . . . the word "love" doesn't it really mean . . . take? . . . destroy?

Eduardo: It isn't that

Josefa: Of course not! Disguised in a man's words . . . in a man's promises oh, I know, you make a dream of your deadly game.

Eduardo: Alysea's happy.

Josefa: Is she? For how long . . . until you find another fancy?

Eduardo: What I feel for her is different

Josefa: I remember Clara telling me the same things about you and her . . . how easily you put her out of your life.

Eduardo: Clara understands.

Josefa: No, Eduardo . . . she just accepts . . . she knows nothing else.

Eduardo: You make me feel guilty . . . why?

Josefa: I'll tell you why . . . Alysea has love here; she is happy . . . she has found her place in the world . . . safe with me . . . there is a constancy here . . .

Eduardo: Alright! I don't think one should have Conditions . . . I know I love her now . . . I want to love her forever . . . but it is not for me to know

Josefa: She belongs here . . . with me . . . You men explain away all your indiscretions, so easily . . . after all, you make the rules and enjoy the abuses!

Eduardo: That's not fair . . .

Josefa: That's funny . . . When has a man been fair to . . . women?

Eduardo: You are distorting

Josefa: What I offer her is not a violence . . . Man's love is always a violence.

Eduardo: I'm sorry.

Josefa: For what . . . the evil in the world?

Eduardo: I love Alysea.

Josefa: Oh, yes . . . you love, he loves, they love . . . how convenient the word "love!"

Eduardo remains silent. Josefa suddenly realizes he is a guest.

Josefa: (in an even pleasant voice) Come, Eduardo, you must forgive me for such an outburst . . . What a terrible hostess I am! Don't mind me, when there is concern for the people you love . . . Here let me refill your cup! *(She pours him some coffee and hands it to him.)* There is a special happiness in this house you know. . . .

Eduardo: (reassured) I know . . . it is the soaring sea in you.

Josefa: What?

Eduardo: You carry things, people with you . . . when your strength is washed away . . . you leave beauty behind.

Josefa: How lovely . . . you are easy to fall in love with. . . .

Eduardo: So are you . . . if a man is brave enough.

Josefa: Brave?

Eduardo: You are a whirlwind. . . .

Josefa: I have always sought the calm. . . .

Eduardo: Ah . . . but your depths! Josefa, I sense them you are not the barrio.

Josefa: (amused) Such discernment! . . . but then, you are right I am of the lake.

Eduardo: I've heard . . . I hear you dare the lake alone . . . in solitude. . . .

Josefa: The barrio stories are myth . . . primitive fears . . . what most of the people fear is instinctive. . . .

Eduardo: In what way?

Josefa: Out in the lake . . . out in the pines . . . they see themselves too well . . . they have become the desert . . . it is too much to accept . . . so monsters are created . . . but for me . . . ah . . . for me!

Eduardo: Tell me. . . .

Josefa: When I was young . . . when I refused to go bathe on San Lorenzo's day when I chose the moonlight in any season . . . it was defiance . . .

Eduardo: What did you defy?

Josefa: What defied me . . . the world! Yes, I would go . . . to defy . . . then . . . but it became something else.

Eduardo: (*looking at her intently*) Why didn't you ever marry? No one good enough?

Josefa: (*shrugs it off*) I never saw the dream . . . I never felt the hope . . . there was always too much clarity for me . . . (*pause*) . . . Do you think me beautiful?

Eduardo: Yes . . . very . . . mixed in with a dangerous excitement. . . .

Josefa: You are making love to me . . .

Eduardo: I make love to all things beautiful . . . don't you?

Josefa: (*in a whisper*) Yes . . . oh, yes. . . .

Alysea comes in breathless.

Alysea: Well . . . you two . . . that wasn't long was it? (*Looks at both of them*) You two must have found marvelous things to talk about . . . it shows!

Josefa: I tell you Eduardo . . . this girl has possibilities. . . .

Eduardo: I know. . . .

Alysea: Did she tell you about her magicians?

Eduardo: She was about to . . . when you came.

Josefa: (*looking at him intently*) How did you know . . . I was about to?

Eduardo: The light in your eyes . . . the sudden magic in you. . . .

Alysea: I know what you mean Eduardo . . . such a mystical thing. . . .

Josefa: You have laid the setting . . . so kindly. (*She walks to the window and looks out with her eyes closed as she speaks.*)

Josefa: The magicians are real, you know! I found them . . . long ago . . . the night of the Festival of San Lorenzo. The virgins had bathed by the noon day sun . . . I . . . I went after the Rosary bell . . . I went when they were all celebrating; the silence was perfumed . . . desire was heavy . . . painful. Does it surprise you that I speak of desire? Oh, yes . . . I felt it . . . to my fingertips . . . it was so real, the beautiful need . . . the lights of the barrio were far off in another world . . . this always affected me . . . I became another being far from my kind . . . even my desire was a special suffering. . . .

Eduardo: You still did not marry.

Josefa: What does that have to do with desire? My desire . . . like my being . . . became a purer grain. It was more than someone to see or touch . . . or embrace . . . it was a need for a pouring of self . . . a gentleness . . . a faith. I did not want the callous Indian youth . . . with hot breath and awkward hands . . . a taking without feeling . . . no, not that! I wanted so much more. . . .

Josefa turns to look at Alysea and Eduardo caught in her spell.

Josefa: Look at you . . . children . . . listening to fairy tales. . . .

Eduardo: Children believe. . . .

Josefa: So do I! . . . isn't it funny?

Eduardo: No . . . it is like that with some people.

Josefa: For me . . . it came true! . . . the wonder was my magicians. That night at the lake there was a different music . . . the stillness sung inside me . . . the moonlight grew in me . . . it became my lover . . . There by the lake, I felt the light finding its way among the pines . . . to me . . . It took me . . . then . . . perhaps it was my imagination . . . it said to me . . . "We are one . . . make your beauty . . . make your truth." Deep, I felt a burning spiral . . . it roared in my ears . . . my heart . . . (*pause*) It was too much to bear . . . so I ran, and ran and ran until I fell . . . not knowing where; I lay there in utter quiet . . . then I opened my eyes and found myself calmly looking up at the stars . . . sisters of my love! The moon had followed me; it lay a lake around me, on the grass. . . .

Eduardo: Were you afraid?

Josefa: Afraid? There was no room . . . the joy was too great. I had the secret of the magicians . . . the wine of love . . . the light was me; I knew that I would bear the children of light . . . the moon . . . the burning lake.

Alysea: (in a whisper) I believe her . . . look around you, the children of light . . . her garden . . . the lace . . . her love for the barrio people . . . her bright, bright calm. . . .

Eduardo: (taking up the pace) Her person. . . .

Josefa: Hush . . . you two . . . don't go on so!

The voice of Tomás from the outside window breaks the spell.

Tomás: Josefa! . . . David's horse! . . . I found it out in the pasture . . . without a bridle . . . Josefa!

Josefa: (goes to the window) David's horse?

Eduardo: (going to the window) Need any help?

Josefa: He didn't hear you . . . he's coming in. . . .

Alysea all of a sudden loses all her brightness; she seems frightened and lost. She looks at Josefa's every move; Josefa shows no reaction; she calmly begins to pick up cups, napkins.

Josefa: It is getting late . . . my! The morning has flown . . . such wonderful time . . . I hope it isn't too late for you two to go for your walk.

Eduardo: No . . . no . . . there's plenty of time.

Tomás comes in through the kitchen door.

Tomás: He must have broken out from the stable . . . I thought I would tell you before I took him back to the hacienda. . . .

Josefa: Yes . . . take him back . . . horses will do that.

Eduardo taking Alysea by the hands. He looks at her intently.

Eduardo: What on earth is the matter? You need some morning air . . . I'll tell you what . . . I'll take you to a place where I can trace the path of the swallows any day now. . . .

Alysea doesn't seem to be listening to him; Josefa notices this and promptly suggests.

Josefa: Yes . . . I insist on it . . . take her; right now . . . enjoy this lovely day. . . .

Eduardo takes Alysea by the shoulder.

Eduardo: Come on. . . .

He stirs her to the door; Alysea does not resist. They exit.

Tomás: (shyly) I guess she feels bad about David . . . what happened last night. . . .

Josefa: What?

Tomás: I heard the talk in the barrio . . . someone broke into the house . . . that is . . . that is what you claim.

Josefa: What do you mean?

Tomás: You didn't tell me earlier. . . .

Josefa: Tell you? Why should I tell you anything.

Tomás: The blood in the pail . . . you didn't tell me anything about that either . . .

Josefa: So?

Tomás: Well . . . I remember . . . all those times . . . you save the poor; innocent, helpless ones . . . you never say anything . . . it's always the barrio who puts the story together . . . you are clever. . . .

Josefa: Don't be ridiculous. . . .

Tomás: Yes . . . people have no idea how clever you really are . . . la doña Perfecta! You saved Alysea from the evil man . . . you saved David from a drunken father, the barrio tells the story of an angel . . . but it's funny . . . somehow . . . they never remember to tell that you crippled one man and the other died on the road where you left him. . . .

Josefa: You are pitiful . . . like those two men . . . destructive and pitiful. . . .

Tomás: Perhaps you'll get your hands on me too.

Josefa: (calmly, with disdain) Hadn't you better see about that horse?

Tomás: Now the town is busy making you out a heroine . . . an intruder? That's hard to believe . . . the girl looked too guilty a while ago . . . *(he studies Josefa who is straightening up)* But you . . . it's amazing! . . . such grace . . . such pious silence . . . yes . . . you are a dangerous one, alright!

Josefa: All this . . . this foolishness, I know, is leading up to some sort of blackmail . . . you want money . . . don't you?

Tomás: You know me so well! . . . after all, I'm on your side . . . we are of the same blood. . . .

Josefa: Get out of here . . . and be careful about what you say . . . you clown! . . . who's going to believe anything you say? Be careful . . . or I may let you starve.

Tomás: Didn't work . . . eh? No money?

Josefa: You've tried my patience long enough . . . I have better things to do with my time . . . go and see about that horse. . . .

Josefa picks up the tray and starts toward the kitchen.

Tomás: Not even a few pesos?

Josefa looks at him contemptuously and walks out into the kitchen without a word.

Tomás: She'll break! She'll break . . . once I lay all my cards on the table . . . stupid women! . . . *(he looks around the room)* I know they keep the household money somewhere around here . . . yes.

He begins to look in the drawers.

End of scene 2.

ACT I Scene 3

Later the same morning. The room is empty, full of light, when Clara enters. She is the wife of Don Esquinas, owner of the hacienda. She has the grace and elegance of good living. But, at closer scrutiny, one can see that this once beautiful woman is dissipated. Her blond beauty, although meticulously enhanced by great care, has the flavor of fading youth. She carries a knitting bag. Although she has been in this room many times, she is each time overwhelmed by the unusual light. She walks up to the table, lays her bag on it, opens it, searches for a cigarette; she finds one, lights it, and draws its flavor leisurely. She catches sight of Josefa's workbasket; she also sees the damask; she traces the design; then she picks up a piece of lace from the workbasket and examines it admiringly.

Clara: Angel filigree . . . how lovely . . . it's unearthly. . . .

As she examines the lace, Alysea walks into the room breathlessly. Her arms are full of freshly cut flowers. She glances at doña clara apologetically.

Alysea: Doña Clara . . . am I late?

Clara: No, no . . . I just got here.

Alysea: (*going to the vase and setting the flowers next to it*) I always linger too long in the garden. . . .

Clara: What a garden . . . what incantations does Josefa use?

Alysea: It's marvelous, the way she does it . . .

Clara: She talks to the flowers. . . .

Alysea: She talks to all living things. . .

Clara: (*looking at Alysea as she arranges the flowers on the vase.*) You too how you have blossomed in this house.

Alysea: Me?

Clara: (*in a deliberately contained voice*) Of course, this time it could be Eduardo . . . I hear he loves you.

Alysea: Love does that . . . doesn't it?

Clara: It's true then! . . . and you love him too?

Alysea: Yes.

Clara: Well . . . (*she puts out her cigarette*) That's that! . . . where is my dress?

Alysea: (*coming out of her reverie*) Oh, I'm sorry . . . of course, your fitting.

Alysea goes to a wardrobe and takes out a simple gown. She hands it to Clara. Clara goes behind the screen.

Clara: I suppose you'll go away with him?

Alysea: He wants me to . . . I haven't quite decided. . . .

Clara: About love?

Alysea: Am I good enough for him? I have to use reason. . . .

Clara: (*almost impatiently*) You don't have to reason love . . . my God!

Alysea: Will it be fair to him!

Clara: What love there is . . . you take . . . don't reason it away . . . take it!

She comes from around the screen and gives her back to Alysea so Alysea will fasten the dress. Both are facing the mirror. Clara looks Alysea directly in the eyes.

Clara: Love is always fair just because it is. (*she can't look in the mirror any longer.*) What's the matter with me . . . look at me . . . an expert on love . . . ha! (*she bites her lip.*)

Alysea: You are beautiful and wise. (*Clara doesn't answer; she deliberately becomes absorbed with the gown. She surveys herself in the mirror.*)

Clara: It seems to lack something . . . Alysea . . . what do you think?

Alysea: Of course . . . Josefa made something very special for it . . . (*she looks around.*) Where is it? Oh, yes . . . I'll be back in a minute.

Alysea goes through the bedroom door. Clara goes to the mirror and traces the lines on her face. She then walks up to her knitting bag; takes a flask, opens it.

Clara: (*bitterly*) Here's to youth! (*She drinks long droughts. She does it three times; then, she puts the flask away. She walks up to the mirror again.*)

Clara: Well, my girl . . . what's in store for you? He's left you . . . you always knew he would leave you . . . what is there now, my girl . . . except time? . . . (*She covers her face with her hands.*)

Alysea comes in from the bedroom with a beautiful lace shawl. Clara quickly recovers and looks at the shawl.

Alysea: Look . . . isn't it beautiful . . . a duende design.

Clara: Andalucian?

Alysea: Yes . . . Josefa copied it!

Clara: Superb!

Alysea drapes it over one shoulder and claps it on Clara's waist.

Clara: Oh, thank you . . . but . . . these days I need the right lights . . . not all things are kind to me anymore . . . Yes, it is beautiful. . . .

She turns and contemplates Alysea.

Clara: Look at you . . . you are so young . . . your beauty so sharp . . . only yesterday, my dear, only yesterday, I was young like you . . . mark that well!

Josefa comes in through the outside door. Clara sees her. She goes to Josefa and kisses her cheek.

Clara: I missed you this morning . . . you didn't come.

Josefa: Didn't I tell you? . . . there's a million things to do before tomorrow.

Clara: The shawl . . . it's beautiful . . . only Josefa!

Josefa: (*surveying her handiwork*) The design . . . the delicacy against the dark dress . . . it is impressive . . . you wear it well.

Josefa notices that Clara is somewhat too gay; a little bit unsteady.

Alysea: Shall I get the combs?

Clara: Combs?

Josefa: Mantilla combs . . . made by the gypsies. . . .

Clara: To go with the gown.

Alysea: I'll get them.

She walks back to the bedroom. Josefa looks at Clara realizing what the matter is.

Josefa: You must have started early . . .

Clara: What? (*she busies herself at the mirror*) You worry too much . . . just a little courage . . . I needed a little courage . . .

Josefa: Eduardo?

Clara: (*turns and faces Josefa; pain in her eyes.*) He loves her.

Josefa: I know. . . .

Clara: You see . . . I needed a little courage this morning.

Josefa: If you start again promise me you won't!

Clara: (*with false gaiety*) I promise! (*She closes her eyes*) I wish . . . I wish I were young for one day . . . just one day . . . so he would love me the way I love him.

Josefa: Men don't love . . . they take . . . haven't you learned that by now?

Clara: Oh, Josefa . . . you are wrong . . . you are wrong . . . a woman was made to love a man . . . to love is enough for a woman . . . if only they would let us love them without negating, without negating. . . .

Josefa: Why, Clara? Why must you give . . . so easily? Not to them . . . Clara . . . not to men!

Clara: (*shrugs*) My downfall? (*in a whisper*) My life?

Josefa: Here . . . enough of that . . . there are beautiful things to love . . .

Alysea returns with the combs. She hands them to Josefa who goes to Clara and expertly places them in her hair.

Clara: Without mantilla?

Josefa: It would be too much with the shawl

Clara: Yes . . . of course . . . you're right . . . a gypsy with majesty!

Alysea: Yes . . . That's what you look like . . . a gypsy queen.

Josefa: El espíritu duende. .

Clara: Like your magicians?

Josefa: Perhaps. . . .

The church bell rings midday; suddenly two swallows are seen outside the window.

Alysea: Look!

Josefa: They're coming . . . the advance guard . . . every year.

Clara: You love them . . . don't you? . . . your magicians let you find so many things to love . . . lucky . . . lucky Josefa.

Josefa: The swallows are safe here . . . after the long, long, lonely flight. . . .

Clara: Lonely? . . . they come in droves. . . .

The three look outside the window for a minute. Choir practice begins.

Josefa: Look at the lake . . . it shimmers with love . . . (*turns to Clara*) I said lonely, Clara, because finding direction . . . is lonely . . . it is too personal a thing. . . .

Clara: I see what you mean . . . Josefa (*looks out the window pensively*) why don't I see the love shimmering in your lake?

Josefa smiles.

Alysea: Her magicians . . . isn't it, Josefa?

Josefa: Yes . . . my magicians.

end of act one.

Act II

It is early afternoon of the same day. Josefa comes through the outside door. There is a small injured bird in her hands. She cradles it gently and examines it.

Josefa: You poor little thing . . . a broken wing . . . don't worry you'll be fine in a little while . . . *(she puts the soft piece of life against her cheek.)* There will be no second pain . . . Alysea!

Alysea: (comes in through the kitchen door.) Yes?

Josefa: Look . . . I found it in the garden . . . it lay there . . . small, helpless . . . look, he's thirsty . . . quick get some water and an eye-dropper.

Alysea goes into the bedroom. Josefa sits in her rocking chair and places the bird gently on her lap . . . Alysea comes back with a cup and an eye-dropper. Josefa picks up the bird, fills the eye-dropper and patiently feeds the bird water. The bird drinks.

Josefa: See . . . oh, he has life . . . this one!

Alysea: Just a baby . . . let us set the wing . . . I'll get some small twigs and a bandage. . . .

She leaves again; Josefa continues feeding the bird.

Josefa: How did you find the bird-house . . . eh? My magicians must have led you here . . . before the others . . . every year . . . the sky is black with their wings . . . here they rest . . . and eat . . . you will be safe . . . until you join your brothers and sisters . . . yes. . . .

Alysea comes back; together they carefully set the small wing.

Josefa: There!

Alysea: Let's put him in the birdhouse . . . he's tired . . .

Josefa kisses the bird; then both of them go to the window, lean out to the tree, and place the bird in the tree house. Satisfied Josefa and Alysea look at each other. Josefa reaches out and begins to stroke Alysea's hair.

Josefa: (softly) We share so much . . . just wait . . . the magicians will come to you . . . I know. . . .

Alysea: What?

Josefa: Remember how much you wished for the magicians?

Alysea: No . . . no . . . I don't want them anymore. . . .

Josefa: But. . . .

Alysea: When you brought me here . . . all that's happened . . . it is so unreal . . . a year of mists and deep sinking dreams . . . but not any more!

Josefa: Hush . . . you're just upset . . . that's all

Alysea: No . . . last night . . . no . . . never again. . . .

Josefa: Poor little girl . . . you've tired yourself out all morning . . . I forgot . . . I don't know why . . . but I just forgot about . . . about last night.

Alysea: (*looking at her with horror*) Josefa . . . no! Forgot? How could you.

Josefa: (*becoming slightly agitated.*) Habit . . . to keep strong . . . since I was little . . . to keep strong . . . I put ugliness away.

Alysea: Where? Where?

Josefa: What do you mean?

Alysea: If you have a conscience . . . where could you put it away?

Josefa: There will be atonement. . . .

Alysea: No that's impossible . . . you think . . . it will . . . disappear? The blood . . . the knife . . . (*she runs to the table where she had placed the knife.*) Look . . . I'll show you . . . you make it disappear! (*She opens the drawer and stares unbelievably*)

Alysea: The knife . . . it's gone!

She begins to look frantically everywhere.

Alysea: Did you hear me?

Josefa seems almost unaware of Alysea's frenzy.

Josefa: Yes . . . of course. . . .

Alysea begins to look again and this time finds the money box gone.

Alysea: The money box . . . it's gone too.

Josefa: Tomás . . . of course . . . he took the money and the knife.

Alysea collapses into a chair and covers her face with her hands. Tomás's voice is heard singing a barrio love song; Alysea looks up in fright. Josefa goes to the door of the kitchen and calls out into the patio behind the kitchen.

Josefa: Tomás! Come in here. . . .

Tomás comes into the kitchen still singing. He walks into the room. Josefa watches him warily. Alysea in terror.

Tomás: Well . . . well . . . Did you call me, querida? (*He strokes Josefa's arm intimately. She breaks away.*)

Josefa: Don't you ever put your hands on me!

Tomás: Ha! ha! ha! . . . doña Perfecta . . . (*he looks around the room*) You know . . . I think I'll move over here . . . I like this house . . . ah! . . . it is time I had a little elegance in my life . . . yes. (*He sprawls out in a chair.*)

Josefa: You've been drinking. . . .

Tomás: Yes . . . I have been drinking . . . and I shall drink some more . . . you can afford it. . . .

Alysea begins to cry.

Tomás: What's the matter with her?

Josefa: She is tired . . . and I . . . have had enough of your insolence. . . .

Tomás: Que maravilla . . . How long . . . Josefa . . . how long . . . can you keep it up? (*he paces in front of her; she remains calm.*)

Tomás: (*practically shouting in her face*) I took the knife! Do you understand . . . I took the knife! . . . aren't you afraid, Josefa?

Alysea begins to cry desperately. Josefa goes to her. She tries to comfort her.

Josefa: Don't, Alysea . . . remember . . . it's late . . . we have to pack for David . . . he'll need his things in the hospital . . . compose yourself . . . Why don't you go and start packing . . . I'll talk to Tomás.

Alysea nods her head in agreement; she rises and leaves as if she wanted escape.

Josefa: (*turns and faces Tomás*) Have you ever . . . have you ever . . . done anything kind for anybody?

Tomás: (*sarcastically*) No . . . just you . . . querida . . . you are the angel . . .

Josefa: Alright . . . what do you intend to do?

Tomás: Nothing . . . you see . . . we . . . you and I . . . must have a clearer understanding . . . I know much more than you think . . . about you and (*nods towards bedroom*) her!

Josefa stiffens;

Josefa: Alright . . . you win . . . I'll give you money. . . .

Tomás: No more crumbs . . . dear niece . . . I call the play . . . from now on.

Josefa: You're bluffing . . . lying . . . as usual.

Tomás: Am I?

There is a knock at the door; with alacrity Tomás springs up and goes to the door and opens it. It is don Esquinas, Clara's husband.

Tomás: Ah . . . Don Esquinas, won't you come in?

Don Esquinas brushes past Tomás totally ignoring him. Tomás makes a mock gesture of humility.

Don Esquinas: Josefa . . . the worse has happened I warned you!

Josefa: (placing her hands on her heart), Clara . . . let me go to her. (She starts to go; don Esquinas stops her.)

Don Esquinas: It's too late. . . .

Josefa: (savagely) It isn't . . . I can take care of her.

Don Esquinas: How? By giving her more drink . . . you've done enough harm. . . .

Josefa: Harm? I have been her sole companion for years . . . I have suffered with her . . . nursed her . . . Harm?

Don Esquinas: Do you know how I found my wife this afternoon when I got home? She was lying in bed . . . stark naked . . . screaming about crawling . . . crawling, dark . . . she slashed everything in sight . . . broke the mirror . . . there were bottles . . . everywhere. . . .

Josefa: My poor, poor darling. . . .

Don Esquinas: I . . . the servants . . . we were helpless it was dreadful . . . she kept screaming and sobbing that your magicians had . . . had no faces. . . .

Josefa: She's so alone. . . .

Don Esquinas: Your lies . . . the liquor and your lies . . . both supplied by you! I'm taking her to the sanitorium . . . this time for good.

Josefa: She is so alone. . . .

Don Esquinas: Stop saying that! You . . . you supplied her with liquor. . . .

Josefa: All that unhappiness . . . she is so lost . . . there was nothing else . . . She promised me this afternoon.

Don Esquinas: Promised? You stupid woman . . . you know she wouldn't keep the promise. . . .

Josefa: (suddenly in anger) I tell you . . . you won't listen . . . you men never listen . . . all she had was hopelessness. . . .

Don Esquinas: You don't know what you are talking about . . . she always had everything . . . since the day she was born . . . never, never, did she have to lift a finger . . . anything she desires. . . .

Josefa: Except her husband!

Don Esquinas: What in damnation?

Josefa: She wanted you to love her. . . .

Don Esquinas: Love her? You women are insane! I married her . . . didn't I?

Josefa: She knew all about your . . . your women. . . .

Don Esquinas: That is a man's way! You have no right to question . . . Tell me, how much liquor did you give her? When did you give it to her?

Josefa remains silent.

Don Esquinas: Well?

Josefa: She wanted a baby

Don Esquinas: Nonsense! We settled that long ago . . . that was past and forgotten. . . .

Josefa: No . . . it was never forgotten . . . she cried every night. . . .

Don Esquinas: Silly tears of a drunken woman . . . adopt a baby . . . a baby not of the Esquinas blood? For my heir? absurd!

Josefa: (bitterly) Which of your bastards are you going to choose as your heir?

Don Esquinas: You ungrateful peasant . . . let me tell you . . . you influenced her too much . . . this is probably all your fault . . . I don't want you around the hacienda now that she is gone . . . do you hear?

Josefa turns her back on him; don Esquinas is somewhat at a loss. Her calm towards his anger is disconcerting. He stands for a moment, then, he walks out of the room. On his way out, Tomás follows him, still assuming a pose of mock humility.

Tomás: It is terrible, don Esquinas, what my niece has done . . . if I can make up for it in any way . . . please call on me. . . .

Don Esquinas ignores him and leaves. Tomás turns to Josefa.

Tomás: See what you have done to your friend . . . the wife of our Don?

Josefa too ignores him. Tomás' attitude of humility is now gone. His attitude is again cunning and sly. He walks up to Josefa.

Tomás: Tch, tch, tch, . . . Doña Perfecta is not perfecta . . . eh?

Josefa: (not listening to him) She's gone . . . the light of my magicians never came to her . . . poor, poor lost child.

Tomás: You are insane about those magicians. (*Josefa walks away from him; Tomás grabs her arm angrily.*) I'm sick and tired of you ignoring me! You think I'm scum? I don't matter . . . do I? Well, you listen, Doña Perfecta, you listen to me!

Josefa waits silently for him to let go of her arm. When he does, she touches her temples with her fingertips.

Josefa: I have a headache. . . .

Tomás: None of your tricks . . . listen to me! I saw you . . . do you hear . . . I saw you. Last San Lorenzo's day, I remember. I left the fiesta . . . I was too drunk; I walked toward the lake . . . I remember, it was a clear, clear night; the moon lighted everything . . . as I came near the lake past the back of this house . . . I saw two figures come from the water's edge . . . they ran . . . one caught up with the other!

Tomás watches her maliciously and intently wishing to get a reaction; Her surface is still calm as he scrutinizes her face.

Josefa: What are you trying to do?

Tomás: (laughing slyly and triumphantly) It was you and the girl . . . you and the girl . . . wasn't it? Now . . . I begin to put things together . . . it all fits!

Josefa: Your drunken hallucinations. . . .

Tomás: I know better, reina del barrio . . . you are a . . .

Josefa: If you have nothing else to threaten me with. . . . *(She walks away from him with disdain.)*

Tomás: *(practically screaming with exasperation)* You think you can always win, with your calm; you're not made of stone . . . you'll break, milady . . . I'll be back. Inside you're trembling with fear. . . .

She turns abruptly and faces him haughtily. Tomás falters first; he turns and leaves. As Josefa looks after him, Alysea comes from the bedroom wearing street clothes.

Josefa: *(turns and sees her.)* Finished?

Alysea: Yes, I'm ready.

Josefa walks up to her and puts her arm around her.

Josefa: The ride will do you good; after you come back from the hospital . . . after you see my little David, we'll have supper here . . . then, we can have one of our little chats.

Alysea: *(gently breaks away from Josefa)* I'm not coming back.

Josefa: Not coming back?

Alysea: I meant to tell you earlier . . . I'm going away with Eduardo.

Josefa: Because of what happened last night?

Alysea: Many reasons, but mostly because I want to be with him.

Josefa: You are like all the rest . . . you insist on being a useless, empty sacrifice!

Alysea: I love him.

Josefa: Love him? Tell me, how long will your precious Eduardo love you? *(pause)* You know who was here? Don Esquinas! Clara drank herself insane because your Eduardo left her. What do you think he'll do to you?

Alysea: I can't believe that . . . there's more to love.

Josefa: *(ironically and bitterly)* Love! remember the brothel? No different you choose darkness . . . all your pains are still to come! Haven't I taught you anything?

Alysea: It all fell apart . . . last night. All I can remember are David's eyes. (*she breaks down sobbing*)

Josefa: He'll be alright . . . I'll take care of my little love . . . as long as he lives . . .

Alysea: His eyes told me. You and I were all the terror in the world.

Josefa: No . . . the terror is in the world out there . . . don't say that!

Alysea: The violence . . . the useless violence. . . .

Josefa: I forbid you to go on like this.

She walks to the window and reaches into the bird house until she finds the crippled bird. She picks it up; fondles him and holds him against her cheek.

Josefa: (*with eyes closed*) Remember how he came . . . crippled, starved, half dead?

Alysea: The way I came?

Josefa: It will be safe here and happy; You have always been safe and happy! We have so much, Alysea.

Alysea remains silent.

Josefa: You know why I built the bird house?

She seems to be remembering something painful; She goes to the rocking chair; places the bird on her lap and strokes it gently.

Josefa: When I was seven . . . the swallows came . . . they came one hot dry dawn . . . and continued all day . . . on the edge of the desert that still hotter afternoon . . . I saw noisy boys with desert time on their hands . . . playing . . . I watched the playing become a violence . . . they were catching birds . . . now it became a killing . . . they stoned them . . . plucked them . . . laughing with a fearful joy . . . the sand was a sea of dead birds . . . I . . . I . . . couldn't stand it . . . I ran . . . I hit them . . . I said, "Stop! Stop!" (*pause*) they laughed; then for a joke . . . for a joke they said . . . they held me down, the burning sand against my back . . . In spite of all my terror, I opened my eyes . . . a boy . . . a big boy . . . held a swallow over me; he took a knife . . . cut the bird . . . Oh, God! so much blood . . . all that blood. (*Josefa strokes the bird gently and shakes her*

head, closes her eyes) It spilled . . . spilled into my face . . . ran into my mouth . . . warm . . . warm . . . salt warm . . . was it my tears? the blood?

She stands and goes to the window still with the bird; she caresses the bird with her cheek and places it gently in the birdhouse. The rosary bell begins to toll. It is sunset. Josefa looks out in silence.

Josefa: Alysea, . . . look, the lake is screaming with life . . . look . . . the colors of love . . . then, . . . the day went . . . *(she turns to Alysea)* Out there . . . the beauty is lost in fears . . . what do you expect out there? Stay with the radiance . . . Alysea, stay with me!

Alysea: I won't be coming back.

Alysea turns and leaves going into the bedroom; Josefa looks after her for a moment; seems to start after Alysea, then, changes her mind. She turns to the unfinished damask; She unhooks the needle and begins to work on it in deep concentration. Alysea returns with a suitcase. Josefa does not look up although she is aware of Alysea. Alysea comes close to Josefa rather hesitantly. Josefa looks up and smiles.

Josefa: (in a casual tone) Look . . . do you think I ought to give the design a name? I saw it in a dream the other night . . . so vivid! perhaps I should call it "Swallow Song." What do you think?

Alysea: (Looking intently at the design over Josefa's shoulder) It looks like flowing grain . . . with . . . with a streak of lightning . . . so well intermingled . . . how strange! . . . beauty and terror as one . . . see? *(she traces the pattern with her finger.)*

Josefa: How foolish of you . . . that is not lightning . . . it is . . . it is sweet rain.

Alysea looks intently at the pattern, then at Josefa.

Alysea: (softly) Lovely Josefa . . . no, no . . . you could never see the lightning . . . only your gentle lights. *(She picks up her suitcase and starts to leave)* Goodbye, sweet lady of light!

Josefa looks up but does not answer. Alysea moves towards the outside door.

Josefa: (as if in afterthought) Alysea?

Alysea: Yes?

Josefa: On the way . . . please stop by the rectory . . . will you? Tell Father Prado I cannot make rosary tonight. Tell him . . . if he would be so kind . . . to come later this evening. . . .

Alysea: Of course. *(She hesitates for a moment, as if at a loss for words. Then with one last look of love for Josefa and the room, she departs. After Alysea leaves, Josefa continues putting the final stitches on the damask.)*

Josefa: There! finished . . . another birth of light!

She stands and stretches as if very tired. She rubs the back of her neck and breathes deep. She goes to the window again. It is now dark.

Josefa: My lover! You look morning crystal in the water . . . so still . . . so deep I ache for you so! you beckon me shamelessly . . .

She stands at the window as the curtain drops for Act Two.

end of act two

ACT III

Late the same evening. The church bells are announcing the end of rosary. Josefa is sitting in her rocking chair saying her prayer beads. Every so often she pauses in thought. There is a knock at the door. Josefa rises and goes to the door. Father Prado enters.

Father Prado: *(kissing her on the cheek)* My dear . . . how are you this evening? We missed you at rosary . . . you always lead prayer with the confidence of an angel . . . a hundred things to do before tomorrow . . . eh?

Josefa: It's good to see you! *(She leads him by the arm to a settee.)*

Father Prado: Tell me . . . can I help with anything?

Josefa: You are here . . . that is more than enough.

Father Prado: You must give me a chance . . . you do so much for the church, for me . . . now let me do something for you.

Josefa: Father . . . you are my kindred spirit . . . the oasis in the middle of the desert.

Father Prado: You spoil me. . . .

Josefa: I finished the boys' surplices for tomorrow. . . .

Father Prado: See what I mean? Your lovely little hands (*kisses them*) produce such lovely wondrous things for us . . . (*looks around.*) And this place! A sanctuary . . . who would think? To find such a place as this in our desert barrio? Ah . . . all things and all people here are too mindful of the desert . . . except you.

Josefa: My magicians, Father!

Father Prado: (*in jest*) Of course, your magicians!

Josefa: I wonder if you take me seriously? Come . . . would you like some coffee? tea?

Father Prado: No . . . no, it is late; I ate too much at supper . . . I tell myself every night it seems . . . but I go on eating just the same.

Josefa: The way you work for the barrio people! Every church festival is such a chore for you . . . you work yourself to death. . . .

Father Prado: So do you!

Josefa: We can't help it . . . can we, Father? You love the people as much as I do.

Father Prado: It means so much to them . . . these festivals . . . they are just ritual to you . . . aren't they?

Josefa: Maybe . . . but what blossoms from the barrio people because of the festival . . . that is not ritual . . . there is a rebirth . . . they come to life for a little while.

Father Prado: Tomorrow will be very special for them . . . a day to honor their Josefa. Such a legend you are!

Josefa: If it makes them happy.

Father Prado looks at her intently.

Father Prado: Are you feeling alright? You look a little pale . . . of course! How stupid of me . . . so many things have been happening today . . . even in the rectory life seeps in

Josefa: You know about Clara?

Father Prado: Unfortunate . . . pobrecita . . . such a beautiful child.

Josefa: She won't be coming back this time.

Josefa begins to cry softly. She brushes a tear from her cheek.

Father Prado: There . . . there, don't cry! (*comforts her*) I know how you feel . . . you two were so close . . . she depended on you so!

Josefa: When life is a farce

Father Prado: In her own way . . . there was so much meaning . . . Alysea has found something special too . . . she and Eduardo stopped by the rectory.

Josefa: One by one . . . like leaves from a tree . . .

Father Prado: I know! Then . . . the terrible thing . . . I heard in the village . . . the terrible thing that happened to David . . . I hope they catch. . . .

Josefa interrupts violently.

Josefa: Father!

Father Prado: What is it, child?

Josefa: May I have confession now?

Father Prado: (*puzzled*) Here?

Josefa: Please, Father!

Father Prado: Of course, if that's what you want. . . .

He comes near her; as he does, she falls to her knees and leans her head against his body.

Father Prado: What is wrong?

Josefa: Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned (*Father remains silent.*) I have sinned . . . I have sinned. . . .

Father Prado: God forgives. . . .

Josefa: Oh, Father . . . I'm lost! I'm lost. . . .

Father Prado: All of us . . . at one time. . . .

Josefa: I am guilty of grievous sins . . . they are beyond forgiveness . . . people will judge them so! Father . . . before I tell you . . . you must know . . . I do not feel sorry . . . I want . . . I need . . . the calm . . . to keep things as they are.

Father simply nods his head.

Josefa: David was hurt last night . . . I lied about the intruder. There was no intruder . . . I was the one.

Father Prado: (*incredulously*) You . . . did that to David?

Josefa: Yes . . . (*she braces herself as if to accept the fact*) I did that to David.

Father Prado: I can't believe it . . . you! Not you!

Josefa: Me, Father, Me!

Father Prado: It was inhuman. . . .

Josefa: Oh, Father! I . . . I don't know . . . why? why?

Father Prado: Tell me, my child, there must have been a reason . . .

Josefa: Last night . . . last night . . . after supper . . . David helped Alysea and me put the last touches on the bird house. David was so excited . . . (*pause*) The moon . . . the reflection of diamonds in the lake . . . life . . . all were too much for me . . . I was overflowing . . . I felt the sweetness of the night with every fiber . . . every fiber . . . (*lost in memory; then she resumes her story.*) David didn't want to go to bed . . . he insisted on staying up all night to wait for the swallows . . . Of course I said, "no!" He left for bed reluctantly . . . (*pause*) Father?

Father Prado: Yes?

Josefa: Have you ever felt as if you were one total yearning . . . it roars and spills. . . .

Father Prado remains silent.

Josefa: Alysea and I are lovers.

Father Prado: What?

Josefa: A year ago tonight we became lovers . . . if you remember she had been with me for some months before San Lorenzo's day . . . she was something new in my life . . . she felt and responded to my every mood . . . my every act . . . Oh! To have someone in your life! I had repulsed all the men in the barrio . . . the coarseness! The taking! No . . . no . . . I could never surrender to that . . . but when she came, she filled my life in so many ways . . . so many ways . . . it was natural that the yearning grow for more . . . the body too is master. . . .

Father Prado: Yes, my child, of course it is!

Josefa: A year ago I took Alysea to the lake on the eve of San Lorenzo . . . She had heard about the Bathing of the Virgins at noon the next day . . . Could she go . . . she asked! I was angry

... I knew all the hope ... all the dreams of those girls would turn to jagged violence ... it was a lie ... The whole ritual is a lie!

Father Prado: No ... no, Josefa ... to those girls the dream of a perfect love is true as long as it gives meaning to their lives. ...

Josefa: I know what men are!

Father Prado remains silent.

Josefa: I told her ... go with me when the moon comes out ... when the lake waits for just me ... it is my lover! (*pause*) She believed me ... It is true, Father ... the lake is my lover. ...

Father Prado: Oh, my child!

Josefa: We bathed ... and then ... it happened ... (*pause*) Last night, after David went to bed ... I felt the nymph magic ... I took Alysea ... Suddenly ... there was David ... in the middle of the room. The horror in his eyes ... Why? why? There was horror in his eyes. ...

Father Prado: He did not understand. ...

Josefa: Oh, Father! Now ... I can see why ... now! But ... last night ... it was not the Josefa he loved that David saw ... I could not stand what he saw! I could not!

Father Prado: God forgive you!

Josefa: Something happened in me ... I don't know what it was ... I ran ... I ran into the kitchen and found a kitchen knife ... Somehow ... somehow I knew David would tell ... the barrio people would look at me that way too. ...

Father Prado: I never thought you would care about what people. ...

Josefa: Oh, Father ... until last night I never knew my fears ... I went back to where Alysea was holding the frightened child ... then ... then I made Alysea hold him tight ... Father, it was not her fault! there have been so many furies in her life ... she drowned in my agony ... she trusted me ... what else could she do? (*she goes to the window, looks out at the lake for a moment.*) Father ... look ... come look at the lake ... maybe you can understand the power it has over me ... Look ...

Father Prado goes somewhat reluctantly to the window. He also looks out, but remains silent.

Josefa: I took the knife and cut David's tongue. . . .

Father Prado: Jesucristo, perdona a tu hija. . . .

Josefa: I was silencing the world from reprimand . . . I knew I had to silence the world from reprimand . . . I felt no guilt . . . all I knew . . . the life I had . . . the faith of the barrio people . . . this house of light . . . must be preserved . . . I silenced all reprimand with my terrible deed . . . *(She covers her face for a moment. Then, she gathers strength and continues talking.)* With the light of day . . . I knew better . . . others had not my eyes . . . others had not my eyes . . . others had not my reasons . . . or my magicians . . . *(She looks at Father Prado intently)* Can you ever understand?

Father Prado: (As if talking to himself) I don't understand I don't understand why I didn't see . . . detect what was happening to you

Josefa: (puzzled) Happening to me?

Father Prado: All your beauty . . . your calm . . . your giving was . . . your talent . . . what a splended canopy for the twisted fears of so many years . . . so many years . . . I'm an old fool . . . forgive me, my daughter, I have never really seen you . . . I pride myself in knowing you so well . . . I claimed I loved you . . . how blind . . . how blind . . .

Josefa: Don't blame yourself, Father . . . I am what you see . . . that is really what I am . . . Not what you discovered this moment. . . .

Father Prado: My poor, poor child. . . .

Josefa: No . . . father . . . don't pity me . . . anything but that! That is one thing I shall never suffer. . . .

Father Prado: I have never seen you cry . . . Josefa . . . until tonight . . .

Josefa: The past . . . the dark gnawing . . . such hungers! I must not be a desert . . . now they are harmless ghosts. . . .

Father Prado: Are they?

Josefa: You don't understand . . . do you?

Father Prado: I want to. . . .

Josefa: The magicians created “me!” . . . the blight of meniality never touched me . . . The magicians gave me the purity of light . . . and the wisp of beauties at my fingertips . . . so . . . I really am . . . what you always thought I was. . . .

Father Prado: There is so much God in you!

Josefa: God in me? . . . no, Father . . . no . . . I failed goodness . . . I wanted, I prayed . . . to save my soul as the church instructed . . . as your faith believed. . . .

Father Prado: (*somewhat taken aback*) But . . . you are the most pious . . . the most constant . . . in the barrio . . . Faith shines in you . . . all the beauty you create. . . .

Josefa: Faith? Oh, no, Father . . . no . . . It was not faith, it was the light of my magicians . . . I bear the children of light! I am its high priestess. . . .

Father Prado: I . . . I . . .

He can't go on; he sits down and places his head in his hands. Josefa looks at him and is full of concern. She goes to comfort him.

Josefa: (*She says this as if she does not believe it herself*) Don't grieve for me, Father . . . for what I have done, I am willing to atone . . . David will be my whole life . . . I will create beauty for him . . . for you . . . for the barrio people . . . longings will fade away with commitment Father . . . father (*she kneels in front of him.*) Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned . . . I have grievously sinned.

Father Prado: (*With tears in his eyes . . . He strokes her hair in silence.*)

Curtain drops for Act III

Final Scene

Dawn the next morning; the sitting room is a pastel paradise; there is life in the bird house, a roar of bird sounds; Josefa comes from the bedroom with a white gown over her arm. It is the gown to be worn at the procession. She goes to the window and looks at the tree with great happiness.

Josefa: I waited for you . . . before dawn I heard the flurry of the sea . . . oh, what a sight you were over my burning lake . . .

straight . . . straight . . . you came to me . . . to this temple of peace . . . no more songs of pain for you. . . .

Church bells sound morning vigil. The procession will follow in the freshness of the early morning. Josefa remembers the barrio world.

Josefa: My day . . . my day . . . but, oh my people! . . . it was not meant to be shared with you . . . my day was planned by my magicians . . . long before you planned this one for me . . . I must get ready. . . .

She goes behind the screen; put on her gown, comes back and looks in the mirror. Her dress is white. She looks unusually young and beautiful. All of a sudden she touches her rather severe hair-do. Then she lets down her hair.

Josefa: (looking at herself intently in the mirror) Yes . . . yes . . . this way . . . there is a wildness in me . . . *(she laughs in joyous delirium.)*

Then, she becomes the usual Josefa for a moment. She remembers the boys' surplices. She goes to the wardrobe and takes them out. She lays them carefully over a chair.

Josefa: There . . . something of me will be at the procession . . . yes, even that . . . the boys will find them here. . . .

She takes a final look in the mirror, then she goes to the window and looks out to the lake.

Josefa: So still your water . . . but I know your passions underneath . . . deep . . . deep . . . for all time . . . Hush! I'm coming. . . .

As she turns to leave, she touches the lace, the damask now finished, the fresh flowers on the table . . . with love . . . with a tender regret . . . but a secret within her . . .

Josefa: My magicians will let me come back as light . . . yes, yes!

She goes to the door and gives the room one final glance.

Josefa: (in a whisper) Wait for me. . . .

Church bells begin to toll for the gathering of the procession. Voices are heard outside the window.

Voices: "Here! the starting will be here . . . in front of Josefa's garden." "Has anyone seen Josefa this morning?"

The sitting room seems alive even without people; then, two boys enter. They have come for the surplices.

1st Boy: Hey . . . look . . . they're over there. (*Each of the boys takes one. . . .*)

2nd Boy: Aren't they something . . . grand . . . like at the cathedral . . .

1st Boy: That's what he said. . . .

2nd Boy: Who said?

1st Boy: Father Prado . . . he said Josefa was like a Cathedral . . .

2nd Boy: 'Cause she makes all this grand stuff?

1st Boy: I guess so . . . 'cause she's different . . . don't you think?

2nd Boy: Ah . . . ha! She made all the altar linen. . . .

1st Boy: Yeah . . . Father Prado said she was like the silence of the cathedral . . . and you know those glass-stained windows?

2nd Boy: Yeah. . . .

1st Boy: That's her soul. . . .

2nd Boy: You think something is wrong with Father Prado?

They laugh in jest; shove each other around in horse play, then stop when the church bells ring again.

1st Boy: Hey, come on . . . the procession is going to start. . . .

The room is empty again; this time the voices of the choir beginning the procession hymns are heard . . . They are as ethereal as the room. Combined, the room and the voices have a cathedral-like awesomeness. Clemencia breaks the atmosphere. She is in her Sunday best.

Clemencia: Josefa! . . . Where are you? (*She looks in the bedroom; then, she peeks through the kitchen door.*) Mnnnn . . . where could she be? Everybody's waiting. Josefa! Oh, dear, oh, dear! They've started without her (*She goes to the window.*) Look at those birds! Every year! . . . they come straight to this tree. Ah . . . God's morning . . . the lake . . . the green pines . . . (*suddenly something out in the lake catches her eye.*) What is that . . . floating in the lake? Mmmmmmm . . . looks like a girl dressed in white . . . That's foolish! It is too early for the Bathing of the Virgins, yet . . . yes . . . wearing clothes?

As she hears the choir, she loses interest and goes to the mirror and straightens her hat.

Clemencia: (with a sigh) Why do we all end up looking like scarecrows? (She turns to leave and catches sight of the open window.) I better close the window . . . the room will be covered with birds!

She goes to the window again; as she starts to close it, she gazes out into the lake again fascinated by what she saw before.

Clemencia: Yes . . . it is a body! A body floating in the lake . . . I'm sure of it!

She gasps, but at this moment the church bells ring again. Out of habit, she starts to hurry off, shrugging off what she has seen.

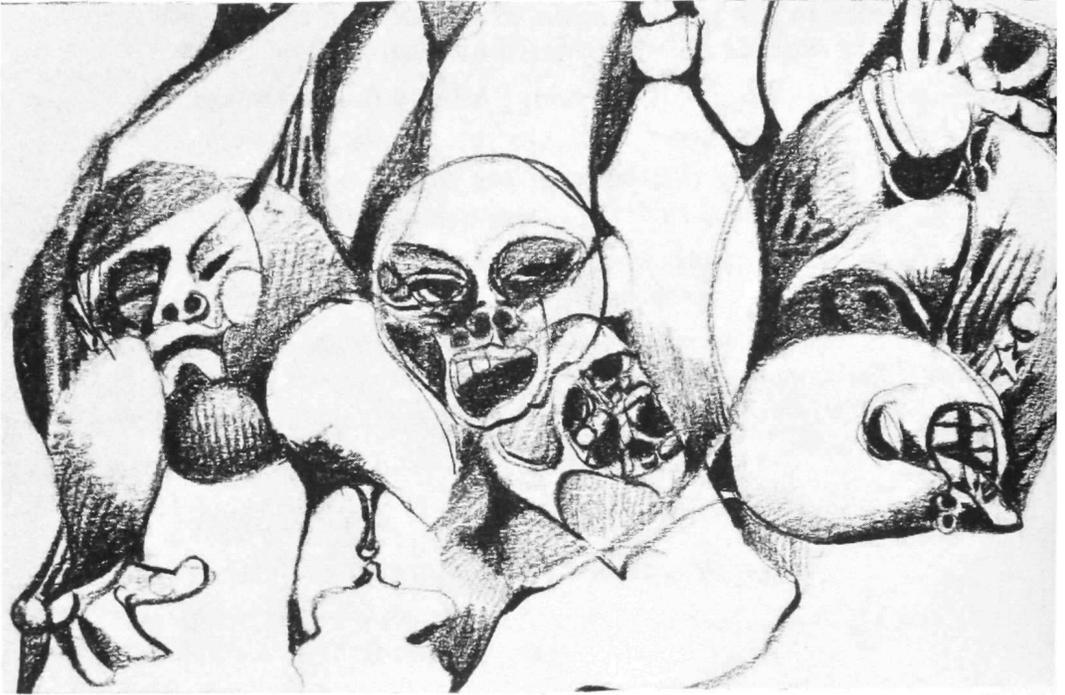
Clemencia: The sun is too bright . . . it is my imagination! I better hurry . . . what a day this will be. . . .

She leaves the room. The voices of the choir, the church bell, the birds on the tree in full life, and the almost unearthly light streaming through the windows gives the essence of a presence in the room . . . of something beautiful.

END

THE LAST DAY OF CLASS

by MAURO CHAVEZ



THE CAST

in order of appearance

Shirleen
Jan
Instructor
John
Bernard
Mark
David
Jenkins
Marsha
Gary
Sue
Barbara

Starlene
A Voice
Karen
Greg
Sara
Sharon
Tom
Clyde
Douglass
Jan
A Student

THE LAST DAY OF CLASS

Everyone is in class today, January 20, 1970, 8:02 AM., all, that is, except the writer of this story. The setting is a typical scene at a typical California State College. The course is Semantics 160. A girl speaks:

Shirleen: How long will this class period last?

Jan: Same as any other class period we've had, I guess, the usual hour.

Shirleen: I hope not. I've got to go to Stanford.

Jan: What are you going to do there? Apply?

Shirleen: No, study in the library.

Jan: What time does the library close?

Shirleen: It's open all day.

Jan: Really?

Shirleen: Well, I think it's open til three or four in the morning.

Jan: You mind if I come along? I need a quiet place to study.

Shirleen: I don't know. My boyfriend and I were thinking of going up there alone. And, well, you know, he irritates easily.

Jan: Yeah, I understand.

The instructor walks into the classroom, dressed in a Hawaiian sportshirt and a floral around his neck.

Instructor: I'm late for the last time.

Jan: Watch that your wits don't fail you.

Instructor: You're projecting. I haven't painted myself into a corner yet.

Jan: (laughs)

John: I'd like to make an announcement.

Instructor: Wonderful! Go to it, man.

John: (pauses for a long time, closes his eyes) I would strongly suggest that we evaluate our progress reports individually and use this same criteria to base our grading scale upon.

Bernard: Oh, that's absurd.

Mark: What's so absurd about it? (he's astonished)

Bernard: Because it's more than enough. It's redundant, extremely excessive, and monotonously superfluous. Any reduplication of each individual's work content is absolutely ridiculous. You don't really believe that such a final evaluative procedure will endure any "Extensional Devices," do you?

Mark: I think it can work.

John: (has become somewhat ferocious) Hey, hey *(the class begins to laugh)*

Bernard coolly crosses his legs and puffs on his cigarette. Then he flashes a big smile to those around him. Sara returns the grin with a long look of admiration for a job intellectually well done.

David: It doesn't make any difference. You either did the work or you didn't. It's as simple as that.

John: Well, why can't we evaluate our reports on our own *(he is interrupted by Jenkins)*

Jenkins: John, John. . . . *(John keeps talking, still trying to explain)* John?

John: Yes?

Jenkins: Can I say something?

John (annoyed) Yes. . . .

Jenkins: Concerning your idea of individual progress report evaluation?

John: OK, go ahead.

Jenkins: Drop it. *(the class laughs)*

John: (turns his head abruptly) Now that's an elephant oriented semantic response if I ever heard one.

Instructor: I think that John's insinuations are very important for future class considerations in semantics. After all, we have to look for the most meaningful way to evaluate ourselves since this cause is very personal in applying principles.

Marsha: Then it's a must that we take responsibility for what we feel and say.

Instructor: Yes, that's an interesting approach. Very interesting. *(pauses)* Before we go further, I have a very important announcement to make.

Jenkins: Is that a conscious projection?

Instructor: No. Actually, it's a matter of life and death.

Bernard: (smiling) He's right. A wonderous display of an academic type of defense mechanism. Death is too ultimate a price to pay for an announcement; and life is no price at all.

Instructor: (smooths his Hawaiian shirt) Listen, everybody. It's something that I have to do. There is no other way.

John: What do you mean?

Instructor: Why are you here?

Bernard: Why are we here? Units, grades, applause. It's so repugnant. But there is no other way, is there?

Instructor: No.

David: Well, go on. Don't make us wait. Let us know now. What is it?

Instructor: You have been condemned to death. All of you. Each and everyone of you will be dead by the end of the class hour.

Gary: That's one free beer that doesn't seem too tempting. (the class laughs nervously)

Instructor: It's true. The time has arrived at last!

David: What the hell does that mean?

Bernard: I'd strongly recommend you explain yourself to these unfortunate creatures of fate. Does it serve the purpose if we swallow all of our plogglies? Because I don't believe you're on the level right now.

Instructor: (moves backward and toward the door) I have said what has to be said. (He walks out the door, closes it, and then there can be heard the clamping of locks and the attaching of chains. A large green light is exposed from behind the chalk board. The light begins to blink, on and off, on and off.)

Sue: My God! What is that?

David: Hey, what's going on here?

Bernard: Relax. You don't have to make a show of it all.

Mark: (fearfully) Maybe it's no show. Maybe it's on the level.

John stares at *Mark* lazily. Then, slowly, he slumps down on his seat while shaking his head. The class laughs again.

Jenkins: Supposing it was going to happen, what then?

David: (excitedly) Look! Look out the window. *(people begin to finger the venetian blinds, each trying to get a better look)* What are all those bodies doing lying on the ground?

Bernard: What is this?

David: What do you think it is, damn it. They're dead bodies. How do you think they got there?

Bernard: David, learn to depend more on yourself and less on the Magician.

Mark: (in a shaken tone) We've got to get out of here.

Jenkins: Do you really believe it? Do you?

Mark: I don't know, but I'm leaving anyway.

Jenkins: How are you going to do it if the door is locked?

Barbara: Let's check the door.

Bernard: No, No! It's a hoax. Just sit down.

David: The hell with it, let's try the door.

Gary: (tries to turn the knob, but it won't turn) Nope, it doesn't work.

David: What do you mean it doesn't work? *(he tries it, too, but the knob will not move)*

Sue: My God, what is this all about? Open that door!

By now David is jerking and kicking the door.

David: This is ridiculous. What the hell is he trying to do? Hey! Hey, out there!! Let us out! Come on, class is over, Greenleaf. Do you hear me? A new batch of students for you next semester. You have a lot of time to play your tricks on them.

Starlene: What's that green light doing? It frightens me.

A Voice (from the green light): SIT DOWN. Sit down, All Of You. *(everyone stares at the green light)*

David: (angered) What are you trying to do, Greenleaf?

Bernard: Surely you're not going to keep us here the whole hour, Greenleaf. It's insane.

Jenkins: (laughing) Mr. Greenleaf, I think it's a good idea. *(pause)* If you let us out. Poor Mark is dying. *(He laughs again)*

Mark: That's not so. I have to go. I'm in a hurry, that's all.

Voice: Sit down and I will explain.

Slowly they all return to their seats. All this time John has been lazily sitting in his seat. Still, it is clear that he is as frightened as the others.

Karen: Mr. Greenleaf, I won't have time to carry out this assignment. I haven't been absent all semester, so could I ask to leave now? I have to study for finals.

Shirleen: Me, too! I'm headed for Stanford and I'm late already.

Greg: Let us out, Mr. Greenleaf. You can't keep us in here.

Voice: Shut Up, You Morons. Do You Really Think I Was Going To Let You All Leave? Do You?

David: Tired of your games, Greenleaf. Let us out now. We can slam that door down, you know. I don't care if it's school property.

Bernard: No. This is absolutely flabbergasting, Mr. Greenleaf. Very good! But I'm sorry, I won't be able to stay for the remainder of this assignment.

Voice: Quiet! All Silent, Please. Listen To Me. Don't Ask Me Why I Am Doing It. That Isn't Important. What Is Important Is What You Do, What You Say. In Other Words, How You React Before You Are Going To Die.

David: Fuck you! Let us out right now or I'll slam this God-damn door down.

John: I can't believe it. I just can't believe it! Mr. Greenleaf, have you gone mad?

Voice: When The Green Light Stops Blinking, It Will Be Followed By a Yellow Blinking Light. Then By a Red Blinking Light. When The Red Blinking Light Has Stopped, The Light Will Turn Brown.

Mark: Then what?

Voice: Then The Gas.

Marsha: Oh, no. What are you saying?

Bernard: Greenleaf, it's a joke. Tell them it's a joke, will you?

Greg gets up sadly from his seat and runs toward the door. He grabs the door knob and sparks of electricity fly from his efforts. His entire body lights up as he twists, turns, and screams. He falls to the ground in a cloud of smoke. He's dead. Girls

scream. Then Gary runs toward the smoking body. All other people stand in horror at the sight that is stretched out before them.

Voice: Sit Down. Sit Down Or I'll Finish This Off Right Now!

Jenkins: What's the purpose of all this?

Voice: You.

Jenkins: Us?

David: Us? What do you mean us?

Sara: You got to let us out right now, or we'll make sure you'll never teach in another institute again, ever.

David: The hell with that, he killed a man. And we'll make sure he'll never function among students or anybody else again. You'll pay for this, Greenleaf.

Bernard: Mr. Greenleaf, really!

Voice: Good-Bye.

John: Now just a minute. I've taken all I can stand from you, Greenleaf. I'm ordering you to open this door and let us out, now.

Voice: Bye.

Bernard: Greenleaf? (there is no answer) Greenleaf, come on!

David: Let's find a way out of here.

Mark: (shouting) Yeah, we got to get out. I've got to go.

Sharon: I'm scared. Oh my God, it's crazy.

Bernard: (beginning to laugh) I'm telling you—ha, ha—this is something that's got to be a joke. Actually—ha, ha—when you look into the whole thing it's rather humorous.

David: Will you shut up, you big phony?

Bernard: You have no right to call me that, you ape.

Jenkins: Now, now. Let's not start among ourselves. There has to be an explanation for all this. He'll let us out. It's only an experiment.

Mark: (hopefully) Right, that's what it is, an experiment. Maybe he's writing a paper on the semantics of fear, or something.

Jenkins: You know, it's rather interesting. But it's been puzzling me for some time now.

Bernard: What is it? Maybe I can offer an extra puzzle to the whole schism.

Jenkins: The Mexican. Where is the Mexican?

David: Yeah, I was just thinking about that. Everybody else is here except him.

Mark: (*curious*) What does he have to do with it?

Marsha: He probably has a lot to do with it.

David: But what?

Jenkins: Who was the last to be with Greenleaf last class meeting?

Tom: Him. It was him.

John: So? What good is it going to do us?

David: I thought he seemed suspicious.

Karen: He didn't come across as being very personable with the rest of the people in the classroom. He hardly ever talked, and when he did he was always on the defensive. All he would do was just sit there and stare at the rest of us. He was also quite hurt when some of us spoke negatively about Mexicans.

David: Fuck him!

Gary: Yeah, him and his Frito Bandito Anti-defamation Committee.

Mark: And those glasses. Remember those sunglasses?

David: Yeah, I know.

Mark: He didn't sleep behind those glasses at all.

David: He plotted, the bitch!

Bernard: Gentlemen, a lot of good it's going to do us now. We've only an hour left and it's only a matter of time before the yellow light starts to blink.

David: And we're not going to wait around and see if it was a joke or not, are we Bernard?

Bernard: The whole thing is so vile, so despicable it's vomitable.

John: We have to remain calm. Relax and keep control of any emotion that can arise in such a desperate situation.

Bernard: I agree.

David: Since when do you agree with anybody?

Jenkins: Come on, you guys, we're not going to accomplish anything if we're constantly hassling with one another. Unity, that's what is needed here, unity. That's the only way we're going to get out of this mess.

David: Let's break the door down.

Karen: It's bolted.

David: Four of us, that's all it will take.

Bernard: And the electricity?

John: I forgot all about Greg.

David: He's dead. Leave him.

Sharon: I can't stand it anymore, somebody do something.

David: Will you shut up!

John: How about the window?

David: OK, Tarzan, you're the main attraction.

John: No, nothing doing.

David: P.E. major, eh?

John: What do you mean by that? I know my limitations, and like I said before, I'm not going to do it.

Sara: Well, somebody do anything, anything to get us out of this horrible room.

Gary: I'll try the window.

Jenkins: Great! (*motions to the others*) Let's help him out. (*they try to open the windows, but they're tightly shut*)

Mark: Can't open it.

David: Let me try.

David grabs a chair and strikes it against the window. The chair hits the window and splinters without any damage to the glass. A chip of wood hits Mark on the ear.

Gary: Not a scratch. They're unbreakable. They're like another wall!

Mark: (*his hand on his wound*) I'm bleeding.

David: Here, give me that other chair.

David grabs the other chair and throws it with all his might against the window. Again the chair just splits into pieces without leaving a crack on the glass.

David: What's wrong here?

Mark: (angry) Goddamnit, I'm bleeding.

David: I don't give a shit, we got to get out of here.

Sharon: (now near tears) We're going to die, aren't we, AREN'T WE?

David: Cut that out, will you!

Jenkins: Let's try the door.

David: Come on.

Bernard: Wait!

David: What's the matter now, you got cold feet, glamour boy?

Bernard: I'm only weighing the consequences, that's all. Remember what happened to Greg. I don't believe we should rush so harshly into suicidal circumstances.

John: (pointing quickly) Look! There's the yellow light.

David: Let's move.

Mark: (in self-pity) My cheek.

John: So-kay, nurse it.

David, Gary, John, Jenkins, and Bernard (reluctantly) form a human battering ram fifteen feet from the door.

David: OK, at the count of three: One—Two—Three—

They rush toward the door. Once they hit electric sparks flash in front of them. Gary dies immediately. There is an explosion. Jenkins' left arm is torn off. Both David and John are knocked unconscious. Bernard, who had not moved with the rest and withdrawing before they hit the door, stands coughing over the smoke.

Jenkins: (screaming loudly) My arm! Where is my arm? *(he faints).*

Starlene: (horrified) OH, NO!

Sharon: (praying) Father, please help us, get us out of here, please!

Sara: Get them out of there! Bernard, pull them out.

Bernard: Wha-wha-what?

Sara: Mark, help Bernard pull them out.

John: (regaining consciousness) That yellow light, I can hardly see it. Is it still blinking?

Bernard: Yeah, it's still blinking. *(bows his head)* Oh, God! Why this?

Jenkins is lying on the floor in silent torment over his left limb. The pain and tragedy can be seen in the rapid blinking of his eyes. David is sitting down against the wall, looking up at the ceiling. Bernard stands at the corner of the room, looking at everyone else.

Starlene: I'm going to get out. I'm not going to die. I won't let him do it.

David: Sit down and shut up.

Starlene: (yelling, hoping someone will hear) HELP! HELP!

John: Nobody can hear you, so stop it, will you?

Starlene: Help, please help us.

Mark: (begins to yell along with her) Help, help somebody!

David: Stop yelling, it's no use.

They continue to yell, almost in chorus. David gets up, grabs Starlene by the hair and swings her to the ground. Mark jumps him.

Bernard: (reprimanding everyone) That's enough, cut it out. We got to put our heads together and think about a way to get out of here. Now quit it. Come on, fellows.

David now throws Mark against the wall, knocking him out. Then he grabs John by the throat and begins to choke him.

Sara: No, no, somebody help!

John: (choking) Listen, listen David, no, no—no, listen

Sara: (screaming) Help! Don't! Leave him!

Clyde, Douglas, and Ted try to apprehend David. There is a struggle as they try to subdue the former Marine.

Jan: (shouting) The red light is on!

Bernard: Red light! Red light!

Sharon: (screaming, running around the room almost on the verge of madness) Get me out of here, get me out!

She runs into the wall next to the chalkboard and is knocked to the ground. Suddenly a fizzing sound is heard, smoke shoots

out from the roof light. There is coughing and the violent, desperate sounds of people gasping for air. Three persons have slipped over their own blood which has gushed from their nose and mouth. Another individual purposefully rams his head against the wall in order to escape the painful consciousness of suffocation. Two other people, in desperation, run toward the door and are electrocuted, a spark hitting the third on the side of the head and knocking him to the floor. Within ten minutes only eight people are still alive. Four of them remain conscious: John, David, Marsha and Bernard.

John stands, lazily staring out of the window. David sits on the table next to the door, looking at the dead bodies. Marsha stands almost in the center of the room with her hands clamped in front of her as in a sign of prayer. Bernard is sitting in his classroom chair, legs crossed and palm on cheek.

Marsha: Do you believe in magic?

David: No.

Bernard: (laughing) Ha, ha, ma—ma. . . . *(unable to pronounce the word because he is laughing)* Ma—magic. No. Ha, ha. Marsha, I don't either.

Marsha: We should, we should believe in magic. With magic everything would be alright, honest. It's true, what I'm telling you people. We have to learn to take other people's word instead of investigating for ourselves. They don't see the malignancy of investigation.

David: I don't want to play semantics; there is no need for it.

Marsha: One of the basic problems of semantics is . . .

David: (loudly) Cut it out, will you!

Marsha: (ignoring him) . . . is that the individual becomes more aware of his language in relation to knowledge.

David: Shut UP!

Marsha: Magic, you watch. Watch and see. Everything is going to be alright. It's only an experiment, a very important one. I bet we will all be getting A's for our part today.

David: What good are A's when you're dead?

Marsha: Oh, but they are still very helpful.

David: You're not normal.

John: We're all not very normal, right now.

David: Speak for yourself.

Bernard: So you're a fully functioning individual, eh?

David: You said it, buster.

John: How do you know?

David: I know. I know what I am, and one thing I am not, and that's abnormal.

Marsha: Expectations.

John: Huh?

Marsha: Hitler had knowledge, and people followed him.

David: You know what you're doing, little lady? Your nerve is so slight at a time like this that you're repeating your oral presentation on "Belief in Magic" by Professor Johnson. Not by you. By Johnson.

Marsha: But I do, I do believe in magic.

David: OK. Let's see. Get us out of here.

John: Yeah, and let's see you replace everyone else in this room.

Bernard: And, oh yes, Greenleaf, be sure to explain Greenleaf for me, will you?

David: (*cutting in sharply*) And the Mexican.

Marsha: Come close, all of you.

Bernard: You've got to be kidding!

David: Oh, come on, I could stand a little entertainment right now anyway.

John looks wearily to where Marsha is standing, summoning them to get close.

Bernard: Well, what is it?

Marsha: I have something, something powerful, very powerful.

David: What?

Marsha: Here, unwrap this. (*she takes a neatly wrapped handkerchief from her handbag and holds it in front of John*)

John unwraps it. In it they see a dark, purplish gold little object that looks like some sort of olive or berry.

Bernard: What is it?

Marsha: It's a grape. Isn't it beautiful?

David: Now what in hell are we going to do with a grape?

Marsha: It's a magic grape.

Bernard: Now I've seen everything. Greenleaf shuts us into a room, kills practically everybody in the class, and now we're going to be saved supposedly by a grape.

Marsha: Have faith, don't we all want an instant cure?

David: Get to the point.

Marsha: Only one.

David: Only one what?

Marsha: Only one survivor, only one of you will leave the room alive.

John: What? I don't understand.

Bernard: And what does the grape have to do with it?

David: Are you for real? We don't have too much time. The red light is going to stop blinking and when that happens every one in this room will be dead, grape or no grape.

Marsha: The one who eats this grape will live, forever. That is the condition. Then you will never, ever experience death.

Bernard: Hmmmmm

John: Perpetuity. That's the price one of us will have to pay, eh?

David: Alright, who is going to get the grape? *(to Marsha, coldly)* You?

Marsha: I've been saved. I have already been condemned to death by Mr. Greenleaf.

John: But haven't all of us been condemned to death?

Marsha: No. I saw the list. Three of the class members were left out temporarily. But eventually, from what I know of it, only one of these would be omitted from the list entirely.

John: Only one?

David: What list are you talking about?

Marsha: The list of names Greenleaf gave to the Mexican.

David: I knew it!

John: The Mexican? What's his stake in it?

Marsha: One of you crossed a grape boycott picket line that he and other Chicanos were conducting outside a store near here. They were asking the public not to shop there until the grapes were taken off the shelves.

Bernard: And the person who crossed the picket line is the winner of eternity. I see now.

Marsha: Right. Now you got it.

John: But why? I would think he'd have him die instead.

David: Doesn't matter anyway. All this bullshitting is useless. You see, actually I passed that picket line, I crossed it. Now give me the grape.

John: Wait! Wait just a minute. I clearly remember crossing a picket line not too long ago. So I deserve that grape just as much as you do.

Bernard: No! No, gentlemen. It is I who crossed that picket line. I believe this whole boycott grape situation is wrong, morally wrong. It is against my principles. Call me scum, if you want, call me filthy, unmerciful, a strikebreaker, but I crossed that picket line. So you see, I deserve that golden grape.

David: No, I did it because I like grapes. I eat them all the time. Furthermore, I just love to cross picket lines just to get some grapes. That's my bag.

John: So do I. Besides, I've always said they're very nourishing and they are a very important health food for growing youth. I've always recommended grapes to the guys in the gym.

While they argue over who deserves the grape they do not notice that Marsha has collapsed. John glanced toward her and was first to notice and he made the others aware of the incident. She was sprawled on the ground, with the grape tightly encased in her fist.

David: The grape! She has the grape!

He tries to grab her, but John hits him from behind with a chair and knocks him unconscious. Bernard then jumps John, grabbing him by the waist so as to pull him away from Marsha's fallen body. John, though, loosens the hold and lands a kick to his opponent's groin. He reaches for another chair and crashes it on Bernard's face, knocking him clear across the room. John

then kneels beside Marsha's body, but then he notices that her palm is open. The grape is gone!

John: (to Marsha) You bitch, you ate it. You ate my Grape!

Unidentified Student: No, not true. I ate it. It rolled out of her hand. It rolled directly to me. I crossed that picket line. I deserve the golden grape, not you nor anybody else in this class.

John: You ate it?

Student: Yes, I ate it. It's been great knowing you, John. Goodbye.

John: Wait, wait! I don't understand.

Student: Goodbye, John.

John now sees that the red light has stopped blinking, and that it is losing its coloration. The light is turning brown. He collapses.

Student: Greenleaf, open the door! (in a firm voice) I bring you the grape.

The door opens and he walks out.

END

El Milagrucho

Raquel Moreno

Piruchas: Orale, mi buen Tuercas. ¿Cómo te bailotea . . . ?

Tuercas: ¿Quiuvas, mi buen Piruchas, ontablas que no te había vidrios? Ya ni me acordión, yo creía que ya te habías muebles.

Piruchas: No, mi Tuercas, todavía no tiro la vuelta; aquí me tienes pisotiando el buen suelo, ¿nooooo? Y dime, mi buen Tuercas, ¿qué pasó con la rucaila aquella, todavía anda con tiliches o ya te dio boleto . . . ?

Tuercas: Nel, mi loro, esa güisa ya hace mucho que me la sopilotié. . . .

Piruchas: Pos . . . ¿qué ya se petatió, mi loco?

Tuercas: Nelson, dijo Wilson, es que se me fue con otro barco, ¿sabes . . . ?

Piruchas: Ujule, mi cuais, tendría patas de hule, ¿nooooo . . . ?

Tuercas: Nelson, dijo Wilson, préstame tu llave estilson pa sonarme este sujeto, ¿sabes que me cachó con Juanita, noooo?

Piruchas: Uy, mi cuais, pos que rula tan agüitada, ni aguanta nada, ¿nooo? Y ora, mi loco, pos pa onde ti orientas, ¿noooo ... ?

Tuercas: Pos es que voy a la buena iglesia a darme unos manasos en la de pensar, y a ver un santucho que orita está pegando con tubo. . . .

Piruchas: ¿No será San Martín de Porres?

Tuercas: Simón y nel; voy a pedirle un milagrucho . . . pero antes voy a pasar por la casa de partes a ver si me aliviano unos tramos, unos cacles y unas limas porque ya ando haciendo tierra, ese. . . .

Piruchas: Ya vas Barrabás porque con esas lágrimas de San Pedro puedes hacer corto, ¿noooo?

Tuercas: Bueno, pos ay nos estamos vimos viendo, ¿noooo?

Piruchas: Sirol, ay nos vidrios. . . .

Tuercas: Esele, mi buen santucho, sabes . . . que te vengo a . . . que me hagas un milagrucho, sabes que mi güisita se fue con otro barco y pos francamente ando por la calle de la amargura dende que me dejó, ¿noooo? Y quiero que me hagas el milagrucho de que me la retaches pal cotarro; y ya sábanas paquetedilo; ay te paso una corta feria, pero ya sabes . . . si no me la retachas . . . ¿ves esta fila . . .? Pos vengo y te filereo paque se te quite, ¿noooo?

Sacristan: ¡Padrecito! ¡Padrecito!

Padre: ¿Qué, hijito? ¿Qué pasa?

Sacristan: Fíjese que llegó uno de esos . . . de esos mechudos que se dicen chucos, y le estaba diciendo a San Martín de Porres que le hiciera un milagro de traile a quién sabe quién que se le fué con quién sabe que . . . y que si no, mire, traía un chuchillote así de grandote y que se lo iba a clavar toditito.

Padre: ¡Válgame dios, hijito! Eso sí está malo . . . vamos a quitar a San Martín grande, porque es muy caro . . . y en su lugar ponemos a un San Martín más chico, así si viene y lo despedaza, no nos sale tan caro; así que, mira, haz eso que te

digo, vas y quitas a San Martín grande y pones a un San Martín chiquito y mañana cuando venga ese hombre tú te estás detrás del altar y a ver que sucede.

Sacristan: Orita mismo lo voy a hacer, padrecito.

Tuercas: ¡Ese, chavo! ¿Pos onta su deri? Sabe . . . ayer le pedí un milagrucho, y es rete cuerda, pos me luiso . . . y ora pos vengo asolarla la marmaja, ¿noooo? Pero, ¿sabe qué . . . ? Si se los dejo, usté se los clavetea, ¿noooo? A lo mejor se va a jugar cuicas, y pos los gasta, y luego a su deri no le entrega nada y luego voy a tener que asolarle más marmaja . . . sabe que . . . mejor a usté le dejo ay un grande pa sus dulces y ay nos vidrios, ese . . . la dice a su deri que lo vine a vicentear, pero que no lo hallé, ¿eeeee . . . ? Ay nos vidrios. . .

Sacristan: ¡Híjole, padrecito! qué falladota le dimos, fíjese que vino y traía una pacota de puros billetes día cien y día mil, y a San Martín chiquito nomás le dio un peso.

Padre: Pero, hombre, hijito . . . que fallaða le dimos de veras. Pero es que quién sabía, hijito. Qué tal si no ha venido su milagro . . . ay nos había hecho pedazos a San Martín, y pos tan caro que está . . . Bueno, hijito, pues ni modo, a ver si en otra ocasión, pues le arresgamos . . . a lo mejor ganamos, por hoy, pues, ya se perdió. Bueno, ve a acabar de hacer tu que-hacer y idéjame! . . . idéjame a mi seguir con mis cosas, que bastante atrasado estoy, ¿eh. . . ? ¡Vete! ¡Vete!

Mexican-American Community Organizations

SALVADOR ALVAREZ

The cause of the low socio-economic conditions among Mexican-Americans has been systematically subjected to a multitude of "explanations." There are two major sources for these explanations: (1) social science studies of Mexican-Americans, or journalistic quasi-literary efforts, and (2) Mexican-Americans themselves.

Social Science Explanations

The major assumption set forth by social science studies of Mexican-Americans is that they themselves, their culture and its values, are the ultimate or final cause of their low socio-economic status, i.e., internal cause of social conditions among Mexican-Americans and its counterpart, external cause of solutions. The most common solutions are, of course, acculturation, integration, and assimilation.

The "explanatory" orientations of internal cause and external solutions have consistently led to the assumption that Chicano culture socializes individuals to become lazy, resigned, passive, fatalistic, non-goal oriented, docile, shy, infantile, criminally prone, irrational, emotional, authoritarian, unreliable, limited in cognitive ability, untrustworthy, lax, priest-ridden, and above all, unorganized.

Variants of these stereotypes can be found in the works of social scientists, among whom one can list Bryan,¹ a sociologist (1912); Young,² a psychologist (1922); Garth,³ a psychologist (1923); Sullenberg,⁴ a sociologist (1924); Garretson,⁵ a psychologist (1928); Walker,⁶ a sociologist (1928); Haight,⁷ a psychologist (1931); Humphrey,⁸ a sociologist (1944); Tuck,⁹ a sociologist (1946); Griffith,¹⁰ a psychologist (1948); Saunders,¹¹ a sociologist (1954); Edmunson,¹² an anthropologist (1957); Clark,¹³ an anthropologist (1959); Kluckhohn,¹⁴ an anthropologist (1961); Landes,¹⁵ a sociologist (1965); Samora,¹⁶ a sociologist (1965); Rubel,¹⁷ an anthropologist (1966); and Heller,¹⁸ a sociologist (1968). Journalistic, quasi-literary efforts that reach toward the same explanatory frame-

works can also be included, such as Novokov¹⁹ (1969), Matthiessen²⁰ (1969), and Steiner²¹ (1969).

As such, social science studies with their heavy reliance on culture, or the notion of culture, have presented a particular conception of Mexican-Americans which, in its total effect, has rendered this large group to an historical limbo out of which it must first emerge (and awaken) in order to engage in the currents of the American "mainstream." However, Vaca,²² Romano,²³ Montiel,²⁴ Alvidrez,²⁵ Moreno,²⁶ have pointed out that the bulk of social science studies of Mexican-Americans have systematically stereotyped Mexican-American communities to the extent that differential cultural patterns among the population have been reduced to singular, monolithic concepts such as "The Mexican-American," "The Mexican-American Family," "The Mexican-American Community," "The Mexican-American Culture," and "The Mexican-American Value System," leaving the impression that all Mexican-Americans are virtually alike, have been a part of the same family structure and ethos, and have lived in exactly identical communities.

Chicano writers are presently refuting the view that the final cause of social conditions among Mexican-Americans lies within their communities or their cultural patterns. Romano, for example, has pointed out that the bulk of theory, or lack of it, for social science studies of Mexican-Americans has been based on the over-used concept of "traditional culture," as a result of which "... Mexican-Americans are never seen as participants in history, much less as generators of the historical process."²⁷ He concludes that "Thus, Samora and Lamana, like Heller, Madsen and others before them, place the final cause of social conditions upon the Mexican-Americans themselves. In doing so, they also commit the fallacy of equating economic determinism with cultural determinism."²⁸

Another ramification of social science studies of Mexican-Americans lies in their insistent assertion that Mexican-Americans presently are, and have been, divided and unorganized. Therefore, major studies have concluded that there are no significant formal organizations among Mexican-Americans that can deal with social conditions, or, when formal organizations have appeared they tend to be rapidly broken down from within. This "lack of ability to organize" large formal structures is often said to result from family patterns which do not allow formal ties beyond the extended family. For example, in *Across*

the Tracks: Mexican-Americans in a Texas City, Arthur Rubel states that,

Mexican-Americans in Mexiquito, *and elsewhere*, tend not to organize corporate instrumental groups, although a few are found scattered in the history of the neighborhood. Moreover, when chicanos do join such voluntary associations this participation is short lived and discomfoting. Unlike their Anglo-American counterparts, chicanos participate in secondary associations as if they were of a primary nature (familial). (Emphasis mine)²⁹

To assist him in his "explanation," Rubel cites Paul Lin's material from Kansas City, and Macklin's discussion of Chicano participation in formal associations in Toledo, Ohio, i.e., Chicanos are the same all over. Rubel concludes by stating the following with regard to two mutual aid societies.

Anglo society across the tracks from Mexiquito, to which upwardly mobile chicanos aspire, organizes its membership in secondary associations of a formal character. Until chicanos learn to organize their social behavior in this way also, they cannot expect to participate in the segment which effectively controls the social, economic, and political system of the total society, in which Mexiquito is enmeshed. So long as chicanos continue to act as if the larger society was organized on the basis of small family units and as if Anglos engaged one another in personal dyadic relations, they will continue to be frustrated in their attempts to secure some medium of predictable control over the social environment beyond the bound of their family.³⁰

In this manner, like so many before him, Rubel reveals no improvement over the studies of Mexican-Americans of the 1920's, for he too places the *final cause of social conditions* within the Mexican-American individuals and their families.

Another study, by Paul M. Sheldon, insistently echos this same conclusion. The study appears in *La Raza: Forgotten Americans*. Sheldon begins his work by stating that,

Heterogeniety is a major factor in their ability to get together, to develop strong leadership, and to form

organizations through which this large group may express its needs and desires and make itself felt in the political, economic, and social life of the broader community.³¹

Sheldon then adds to this view with a discussion of the "Mexican Tradition of Individualism." In his words,

Individualism is a major characteristic of Mexican culture. . . . Where individual worth is held to be almost sacred . . . and admitted conformity to the group, any group outside the family, a cardinal sin . . . it is not surprising that Mexican-Americans have been unable to put to effective use the tool of the mass voice to promote the common good of their group. They are in fact not a group; they do not speak with a common voice; they do not have mutual agreement; they are fragmented first by their heterogeneity and second by the tradition of individualism.³²

Thus Sheldon, like Rubel before him, also places final cause within the "tradition" and the "cultural values" that he believes are characteristic of Mexican-Americans. In the same volume, this same view is perpetuated by John Martinez when he says that,

The political potential of the Spanish-speaking is *only in its initial stages* . . . for the Spanish-speaking this is particularly difficult because of the individualistic nature of Hispanic peoples which vitiates against group action. . . . This, of course, is a manifestation of the underlying sense of inferiority imposed by a color and culture conscious society in the United States. . . . *The remarkable aspect of this situation is that the will to overcome this status has taken so long to assert itself.*³³ (emphases mine)

Martinez goes on to suggest that this sense of inferiority has to some extent been overcome, and he points out that there have been several factors leading up to an *awakening* which has, in turn, led to recent interest in political activities by Mexican-Americans. The "awakening" is then attributed to the Negro Movement in the United States.³⁴ These views, of course, are quite repetitive and quite familiar, for they represent no signi-

ficant departure from the writings of Zamora, Lyle Saunders, William Madsen, and a host of other writers, virtually all of whom have repeatedly asserted that (1) Mexican-Americans have no history of organizing, (2) have virtually no knowledge of formal organizations, (3) and that this is ostensibly true because of their “traditional culture,” their values, and their families, which, however, is now changing because Mexican-Americans are now “emerging,” “awakening,” or just simply now “asserting” themselves for the first time. The impetus for all this, of course, is said to come from forces external to the Chicanos themselves, such as the Negro Movement, (as John Martinez would have us believe), acculturation, or Fred Ross. Such distorted views, clearly, come from the essentially ahistorical methodology and ideology of the social sciences in the United States today.

But even the most cursory glance at history reveals otherwise, as witness the following sampling of Mexican-American formal organizations which have existed in the past and which continue to exist in a variety of forms in the present.

<u>Date</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Formal Organizations</u>
1880's	New Mexico	Penitente Order
1890's	New Mexico	Mano Negra
1914	California	International Institute of Los Angeles
1915	California	Agricultural Workers Organization
1922	Colorado	Sociedad Mutualista Ignacio Zaragoza
1927	California	La Confederación de Uniones Obreras Mexicanas
1928	California	Sociedad Guadalupana
1929	Texas	League of United Latin American Citizens
1933	Indiana	Sociedad Mutualista Mexico
1933	Texas	Asociacion de Jornaleros
1933	California	Club Latino Americano de Long Beach y Signal Hall
1933	California	Cannery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union
1935	New Mexico	Liga Obrera de Habla Espanola
1936	Ohio	Sociedad Mutualista Mexicana
1937	California	Sinarquista Movement
1939	Colorado	Spanish Speaking Congress
1940	California	Unity Leagues
1946	Texas	San Antonio Council for the Spanish-Speaking
1947	California	National Farm Workers Union

1943	Texas	Pan American Student Forum of Texas
1951	Illinois	Club Latino Americano
1956	Washington	National Latin American Federación (Seattle)
1959	Illinois	Association Pro-Derechos Obreros
1959	California	Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee
1947	California	Community Service Organization
1948	Texas	American G.I. Forum
1960	California	Mexican American Political Association
1963	Colorado	Crusade for Justice
1963	New Mexico	Alianza Federal de las Mercedes
1961	California	National Farm Workers Association
1966	California	United Farm Workers Organizing Committee
1967	Texas	Mexican American Youth Organization
1968	California	Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Atzlán

This partial list is representative of a significant history of organizing efforts by Mexican-Americans in the Southwest. In essence, it reflects the process of organizing that continues even to today in eastern states where the Chicano population is presently growing. In June, 1970, the *Directory of Spanish-Speaking Community Organizations*, published by the Cabinet Committee on Opportunity for the Spanish-Speaking, listed some 800 organizations (principally Mexican-American), with information on about 207 such organizations. That this number represents a minimal estimate is indisputable, as acknowledged by the Committee itself.

It has been stated above that formal organizations among Mexican-Americans have never been considered seriously in social science studies of this population, but rather they have been summarily dismissed as having no social significance whatsoever. This preconceived and subjective predilection has even been reflected by some Mexican-American social scientists in recent years. Therefore, for relevant information concerning such organizations one must look elsewhere. At present, two major sources for such information are studies of Mexican-American labor union organizations. The first was compiled in 1930 by Governor Young's Mexican Fact Finding Committee in California, and it constitutes an investigation concerning labor unions among Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, principally La Confederación de Uniones Obreras Mexicanas. The second study was written by Ernesto Galarza, and it concerns the National Farm Workers Union. This was published under the title *Spiders in the House and Workers in the Field*, in 1970. Both of

these sources reveal considerable organizing efforts and abilities among Mexican-Americans. For example, in 1928 the Confederation held its first general convention in May of that year. Delegates were sent from the following unions:³⁵

Union number 1, Los Angeles	Union number 11, Anaheim
Union number 2, El Modena	Union number 12, Gloryetta
Union number 3, Garden Grove	Union number 13, Santa Monica
Union number 4, Palo Verde	Union number 14, Placentia
Union number 5, Orange	Union number 15, Buena Park
Union number 6, Attwood	Union number 16, Moor Park
Union number 7, Stanton	Union number 17, La Jolla, Anaheim
Union number 8, Santa Ana	Union number 18, Corona
Union number 9, Talbert, Santa Ana	Union number 19, Fullerton
Union number 10, San Fernando	Union number 20, San Bernardino
	Union number 21, Colton

In addition to the delegations from these unions, representatives from the Mutual Aid Societies also attended.

In the second study, Galarza has the following to say,

“ . . . farm labor locals set up a resistance the length and breadth of California. They struck in the tomato, the peach, the melon, the cotton and the potato harvests. In a decade of lost engagements of this type, the Union forced the great ranches to the picket lines. The results were always the same—small wage gains for the harvesters, the adamant refusal of growers to recognize the Union. . . .”³⁶

The major organizing effort by the Confederation took place during the 1920's and 1930's. The major organizing effort by the National Farm Workers Union took place during the 1940's and 1950's. They can be compared to the organizing effort of the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee during the 1960's and 1970's, thus revealing organizing activities among Mexican-Americans for a period of more than fifty years in one area alone, farm labor.

The question as to whether or not these organizing efforts have been successful or have resulted in failures has received much informal attention. It seems clear that, in view of the fact that there is a continuous history of organized activities culminating in today's hundreds of organizations, the social science views of Mexican-American organizing abilities is vastly dis-

torted. For the significance of these efforts, therefore, one must look elsewhere again in order to achieve an understanding of the processes involved in Mexican-American organizations. In the first place, formal organizations invariably have two facets. First, they are organized to achieve certain projected goals. Second, *they provide a vehicle for the expression of the broader boundaries of the communities in which they exist.* For the present, it is hypothesized that the formal organizations among Mexican-Americans have performed certain functions that have been central for the on-going survival and existence of their communities. Primarily, they have functioned for the preservation of the general Mexican-American way of life in that quite often they have constituted the central hub of Mexican-American activities over and above the projected goals. Such activities involved celebrations, social events, and the provision of facilities for these events. In addition, they provided a series of alternatives for the population in that a variety of organizations have existed. The formal organizations also provided informational and communication networks. And finally, they have sustained, by and large, the core of the philosophy that encompasses bicultural and bilingual existence.

In the final analysis one thing is clear. Had these organizations been the failures that so many have claimed, then why do they persist to this day, and how is it that we are here today. What I am suggesting, of course, is that the significance of the formal organizations has all too often been studied from the standpoint of external criteria, and there has yet to be compiled a study that focuses upon the criteria as viewed by the memberships. To simply say, as Rubel has done, that Mexican-American organizations fail because they are not like us white folks is not to analyze the social forces involved, but it is merely a round-about way of patting himself on the back. Rubel, like so many other social scientists before him, it seems, was so busy patting himself on the back that he failed to see what was before him. It is to be fervently hoped that Chicano social scientists themselves do not succumb to this malady.

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Notes on the Modern State

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Since the end of World War II there has unfolded before us a second major period of western expansion in the United States, again spearheaded by a great influx of people from throughout the midwest, the northeast, and the southeast. The results of this second westward expansion are well known in terms of western population growth, the development of highways, burgeoning cities and suburbs, and a host of other readily observable developments that have taken place and continue to take place in what seems to be an ever-accelerating tempo. In fact, such has been the nature of these changes, and the elements of routine everyday life that they impinge upon, that relatively few people have been able to stop and ponder the totality of what is developing in a state such as California. True, many individuals have focused upon a partial view of current developments limited to, say, mental health, or education, or social welfare, and the like. Most commonly, such partial views tend to be circumscribed because of a particular writer's frame of reference that is directly related to his particular field of professional specialization, be it social work, penology, medicine, or other similar activities. There is no professional field that one might call "totalology," that is, a discipline that specializes in the analysis and description of totalities such as institutions in an urban-industrial state such as California, unless, of course, one chooses to view some forms of systems analysis in this light. Even then, however, few indeed are knowledgeable about the totality of what current developments in California may augur for the future not only of this state, but for the future of urban-industrial society no matter when and where its manifestation and subsequent growth.

Nationally, some thirty years ago the State of California had the reputation of being a haven for retired people, navy bases, as a sunny locale for summer vacations, as an agricultural region abounding with broad expanses of colorful orange groves, and, of course, it was known for Hollywood and the products of Hollywood, both human and celluloid. Few people were aware of the Chicano population of the state, the history of labor

movement in California and the role of the Mexican-American in this effort, the ultimate disposition of the lands that belonged to the relocated Japanese, or of the industrial potential of the state. In 1940 the population of the state was estimated at 6,907,387.¹

Scarcely twenty-nine years later, in 1969 California was about to become the nation's most populous state, and its population was estimated at 19,834,000. In 1969 California ranked second in overall percentage of urbanization (86.4%), second only to the state of New Jersey (99.6%). There had developed also within the boundaries of the state the nation's second largest manufacturing complex,² second only to the State of New York.

The historical and interrelated processes of population growth, urbanization, and industrialization have wrought many changes for the population and the state, including those institutions that deal with education, social welfare, mental and physical health, and incarceration. Like other states, California has evolved sub-systems through which the state is involved in the training of youth for adulthood, in the field of unemployment, the care of dependents in families, care for the blind and the disabled, care for the ill, and in the care of the incarcerated. Involved in these efforts are manifest activities oriented to achieve certain ends that have been designated as either desirable or necessary as authorized through legislative and legal channels. These functions, generally, are claimed to be governed largely toward a philosophy, if not the practice, of rehabilitation in the broadest sense of the term. Thus they work toward the training and the re-training of individuals so that the process of entry and re-entry of citizens into the "productive sector" of society is hopefully propagated.

In an urbanized-industrialized state such as California, how extensive are the efforts toward and by the institutions of education, health, welfare, and penology? At any given time, what is the total number of the population that is under institutional care or control in one form or another? And, given such a picture, what are the implications for the future of society?

The Institutionalized

Whenever individuals come under the care of an institution, such as education, social welfare, health, or penology, a change in civil status takes place. For example, children who attend

public schools do so under mandate of law, behave in a prescribed manner, and legal action can be brought to bear to enforce such behavior. Much in the same manner, recipients of social welfare undergo a change in civil status which results in the regulation and circumscription of permissible behavior. In hospitals, ingress and egress is controlled by formal regulations that affect the civil status of individuals and these regulations prescribe what a patient can and cannot do. Clearly the same applies to those individuals who are incarcerated, on probation, and on parole.

Once a citizen comes under the care of one of the aforementioned institutions, informal as well as legal sanctions come into play and a citizen then must exist under a set of taboos and restrictions which normally are not a part of his everyday "free" civil status. These restrictions go beyond simple behavioral rites of passage, since they are legitimized by legal means that define institutionalized status and they are brought into play the moment that the student, the indigent, the sick, and the criminal transgress the proscriptions that accrue to their status as institutional beings.

Toward an Assessment

For the institutions in question, the average daily census and the one-day census constitute the best sources of information. To extend the assessment beyond a one-day figure introduces many other factors such as recidivism and overlap for which there is virtually no reliable data available. The one-day figures, however, are available for public schools (K-12), private schools licensed by the state (K-12), adult and children's programs in social welfare, the mentally ill under institutional care, youth authority wards, camps, ranches, homes, correctional schools, as well as juvenile halls, county and city jails, hospitals and their related facilities. Information is similarly available regarding the number of employees engaged in institutional activities for any given day during the year of 1969.

Two broad categories divide the people who are involved in the institutions outlined above. First, there are those who are in charge of, administer, and service the various programs and departments. In the aggregate, these I call the *caretaker* population. Second, there are those who are under institutional care and control in one form or another, and to one degree or another. These I call the *subject* population.

Bearing this dichotomy in mind, an assessment of the total number of people under some form of institutional care during a relatively average day in 1969 in California exceeded seven-million. (See Table I) This figure is based on one day census figures and the average daily census for the hospital population. Clearly there is some overlap, as when a child, for example, is simultaneously a charge of a school and also on welfare rolls. However, since this is a one day figure, and not the total for the year, this overlap is kept at a minimum.

Of course staff is required in order that institutional care can take place. Thus, for the categories listed in Table I, there is a corresponding group of caretakers. Table II is an assessment of the caretaker population required to fill this need. When totaled, the caretaker and the subject populations together approach the 8,000,000 mark (See Table III).

Table II

THE CARETAKER POPULATION	
1969	
Corrections ¹⁹	22,242
Public Welfare ²⁰	29,842
Police Protection ²¹	51,114
Local Schools ²²	315,165
Hospitals ²³	212,125
Private Schools ²⁴	<u>17,500</u>
Grand Total	647,988

Table III

THE INSTITUTIONAL POPULATION	
Caretakers and Subjects 1969	
The Subject Population.....	7,278,041
The Caretaker Population	<u>647,988</u>
Grand Total	7,926,029

The significance of the institutional population for any given day in 1969 is highlighted when it is viewed in comparison to the civilian labor force as itemized for the state for the month of June, 1969 (See Table IV).

Table IV

THE CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT²⁵
June 1969

Civilian Labor Force	8,440,000
Civilian Employment	8,052,000
Agriculture, Forestries, Fisheries.....	359,000
Mineral Extraction	33,000
Construction	380,000
Manufacturing.....	1,678,000
Transportation, Utilities.....	484,000
Trade	1,687,000
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	406,000
Services.....	1,612,000
Government	<u>1,413,000</u>
Grand Total	8,052,000

For the present, some problem areas that seem most salient with respect to urban-industrial life, caretakers and subjects, are questions that concern social control and social institutions, social mobility, organizational behavior, minority peoples, and the extension of previously geographically limited institutions into the community.

Social Control and Institutions

Social control of the subject population is a function of the rules and legal regulations that govern the admission to, release from, and status as a subject. However, social control does not end at the boundaries of legal sanctions, for extra-legal standards and norms of behavior often come into play as means by which control may be exerted informally both among the care-

takers and the subjects as well as between these two groups. Examples of extra-legal social control are many, some of which include standards of dress (it must reflect status to a high degree), personal grooming rules (control of dresswear in public schools), punishment or ridicule of children for speaking Spanish on a schoolground (or to speak English with a Spanish accent rather than a variant of an English accent), a taboo on sex practices while a patient in a hospital, a contrite demeanor before officers or judges, and a host of other similarly informal means by which behavior may be regulated.

Social Mobility and the Caretakers

Traditionally in the United States, the concept of social mobility has been closely associated with the belief that individual people will strive toward a higher rung in the economic and class structure. Upon achieving this goal, certain changes are said to follow, changes in personal, familial, and intergenerational life-styles. Thus, in general, the emergence of the American middle class is said to have taken place. However, such does not precisely apply to the ever-increasing number of people who have entered or presently are entering or moving toward entry into society as members of the caretaker population. Judging from the present enrollments in colleges and universities, the majority of students who are working toward entry into the caretaker population are already members of the middle class. Given the relatively low economic potential of caretaking status and employment, becoming a caretaker thus does not automatically constitute an elevation in class status in the traditional sense of social mobility. It is a possibility, therefore, that the personal and the societal forces that influence those who strive to become caretakers differ somewhat from the forces that guide others to become socially mobile.

Although, in this manner, caretakers may differ from other sectors of society, nevertheless they tend to share a general philosophy of training and rehabilitation regardless of their particular institutional affiliation. Overall, the common caretaking concern focuses upon the entry or the return of the subject population into the non-subject or the "productive sector" of society. From this perspective, caretakers can be seen as not only responsible for general institutional welfare, but also as gatekeepers of society at large. Thus, the control of deviation,

however that deviation may be defined, becomes their prime programmatic, operational, and bureaucratic concern.

Caretaker and Subject Organizations

Over time there have developed many formal organizations whose membership is comprised of caretakers. There are, for example, educators' organizations, organizations for administrators, associations for counselors and psychologists in education, organizations for nurses, medical associations, police and law enforcement groups, organizations for technicians, etc. Usually such organizations are made up of people who band together because of mutual professional interests, or mutual agreement on general goals and purposes. On the other hand, the subject population has been most notable for its general lack of formal organization.

In recent years, however, changes in this traditional difference between caretakers and subjects are becoming more and more noticeable, and more and more efforts are being made toward organized behavior. Even secondary school students are grouping in order to address themselves to the status of student *per se*, and to voice interest in establishing input into areas previously reserved for caretakers. The largest such effort has been the Chicano school walkouts that took place in Los Angeles which spread far beyond the borders of California and which brought about considerable change in procedures that deal with school testing and bilingual education.

Still other groups of the subject population have made efforts directed to health, education, and welfare. Local groups the length and breadth of California have banded together on numerous occasions in order to address themselves to the administration of welfare programs. Local poverty groups, as well as others, are working toward community determined health centers and even toward a community based definition of mental health. The incarcerated and the recent incarcerated are participating in organized activity, such as in certain aspects of Synanon, the Seven Step Foundation, EMPLEO, and others.

Minorities in California

According to the figures of the 1960 census, there were 1,426,538 persons of Spanish surname in California, 883,861

Negro, 157,317 Japanese, 95,600 Chinese, 65,459 Filipino, and 39,014 American Indians. This comprised 16.9 of the total population. Although the latest census figures are not available at present, there is no question but that the ratio between "minority" and "majority" peoples has changed in the intervening years. For example, since 1960 the Spanish surname population in California has increased from 1,426,538 to 3,140,000. Some 2,980,000 of these are Mexican Americans. Thus one such ethnic group now constitutes 15.7% of the total population.²⁶ When considering the other minority peoples in the state, one can surmise that the overall percentage of the total now exceeds 20% and probably approaches 25% of the population.

As is well known, individuals from the minority groups make up but a fraction of the caretaker population, while their representation in the subject population is relatively high. This condition has been a source of friction in the past. To a high degree, the subject oriented organizations tend to cleave along ethnic lines.

Institutions in the Community

Current trends toward "outpatient" philosophy have tended to diminish the relative prominence of the traditional, *geographically based* institution. Thus it is becoming more and more common to find individuals within the community setting who are under institutional status and subject to institutional regulations. There are many examples of this condition, among which are adults and juveniles who are on parole or probation, hospital patients on leave but still under pre-release regulations, mental patients released to the community but not medically released, some forms of welfare, and students home on vacation from schools. In addition, overcrowded conditions in hospitals, jails, camps, juvenile halls, and the like often result in further release to the community.

Under the traditional and geographically localized institution there seemed to be a built-in limit to the construction of more and more buildings to house the institutionalized of the state. Such limitations were limited by both social and economic factors. However, under the "outpatient" approach no such limitation appears to exist. Thus, potentially, institutional care and status can become a more integral part of everyday community life, and institutional influences and controls no longer are limited by geographic boundaries and facilities.

Concluding Remarks

The nature and scope of institutional care in a modern state such as California promises to be among the most salient problems to be faced by the citizens whose lives will all be affected by these developments. To date, there is considerable shifting of individuals from one care status to another. However, the mere shifting of caseloads as reflected by the moving of individuals from nursing and convalescent homes to hospitals and then back again does not constitute a fundamental change either from the standpoint of the subjects or from the standpoint of altering the overall caseload. What most commonly is happening is that caseload shifts are merely jurisdictional. Much the same can be said of transfers from a police agency to welfare, or *vice versa*. In much the same manner, a change from inpatient status to outpatient does not significantly constitute a change. Briefly, such transfers may reflect a reduction in caseload for one agency, but simultaneously there is a corresponding increase in caseload for another. This being the case, there has been no significant change in the subject population as such.

Jurisdictional transfers are only caretaking actions that reflect bureaucratic decisions which, equally often, do not address themselves to the basic priorities that guide the functions of the institutions. Explicitly articulated priorities must supercede jurisdictional transfers if the concept of caretaking is to change toward better opportunities for human development, and if the subject population is to move toward a participating population.

The developments in recent years in the state of California clearly portend similar developments in other industrializing and urban areas and states throughout the world. Is it not proper at this juncture in history to ask what voice will the subject (consumer) population have in helping to guide the urban-industrialized state into the future? And given these developments, can a return to past history, and past solutions, be a feasible alternative? And what tax revenues shall be destined to better meet the problems of this future society which, it seems, is already upon us.

Insofar as the Chicano population is concerned, many answers to these questions are explicitly articulated or tentatively suggested within the pages of this book. Perhaps the title itself is indicative of the role Chicanos will play in this state of the future, for, after all, it is the prime purpose of this volume to let their VOICES be heard.

NOTES

1. *California Statistical Abstract – 1969*. California Department of Finance, Budget Division, State of California. Table B-1, page 9.
2. *Ibid.*, page VII.
3. *Crime and Delinquency in California, 1969*. Bureau of Criminal Statistics, Department of Justice, Division of Law Enforcement, State of California. Table I-11, page 37.
4. *Ibid.*, page 124.
5. *Ibid.*, Table I-13, page 41.
6. *Ibid.*, Table XI-1, page 182 and Table XI-2, page 183.
7. *Ibid.*, Table X-3, page 156.
8. *Ibid.*, Table X-13, page 174. This figure does not include certain categories in Los Angeles, San Diego, Santa Clara and Sutter Counties, thus the actual total may be higher than that provided here.
9. *1970 California County Factbook*, County Supervisors Association, Sacramento, California. "Public Assistance Caseloads and Expenditures," page 86.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*
12. Division of Biostatistics, State Department of Mental Hygiene, Sacramento, California. Personal Communication.
13. *Ibid.*
14. "Guide Issue: Hospitals," *Journal of the American Hospital Association*. Vol. 44, No. 15. August 1, 1970. Table 3, page 49.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. Renetzky, Alvin and Greene, Jon S., et al., *Standard Education Almanac-1970*. Academic Media, Los Angeles, Table 37, page 64.
18. *Ibid.*, Table 46, page 71.
19. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Public Employment in 1969*, Series GE 69-No. 1. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington D.C., 1970. Table 8. Full-Time Equivalent Employment of State and Local Governments, by Function and by State: October 1969, page 22.
20. *Ibid.*, Table 8, page 21.
21. *Ibid.*, Table 8, page 21.
22. *Ibid.*, Table 8, page 19. (sic)
23. "Guide Issue: Hospitals," *Journal of the American Hospital Association*. Vol. 44, No. 15. August 1, 1970. Table 3, page 490.
24. Renetzky, Alvin and Greene, Jon S., et al., *Standard Education Almanac-1970*. Academic Media, Los Angeles. Table 54, page 77.
25. *California Statistical Abstract – 1969*. California Department of Finance, Budget Division, State of California. Table C-1, page 19.
26. "Mexican-American Population in California," *An Official Census Report By the Mexican-American Population Commission of California*, San Francisco, California. April, 1971. Page 7.

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