

**Cultural Nationalism and Xicano Literature during the Decade of 1965-1975**



Alurista

*MELUS*, Vol. 8, No. 2, Ethnic Literature and Cultural Nationalism (Summer, 1981),  
22-34.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0163-755X%28198122%298%3A2%3C22%3ACNAXLD%3E2.0.CO%3B2-5>

*MELUS* is currently published by The Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States (MELUS).

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/about/terms.html>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/journals/melus.html>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

---

JSTOR is an independent not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating and preserving a digital archive of scholarly journals. For more information regarding JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

# Cultural Nationalism and Xicano Literature During the Decade of 1965–1975

**Alurista**

*San Diego State University/Calexico*

Xicano literature has been in existence since 1943. It is not, however, until the 1960s that one can speak of the emergence of its modern form and content. The production and accumulation of literary capital by the Xicano writers of the decade between 1965 and 1975 is ideologically rooted in cultural nationalism. That is to say that the literary products of the period sought to affirm a nationalist fervor founded on the most ancient and pre-colonial cultural origins available to the modern Xicano writer. It was a search for the primitive (sic: illiterate) communism of a society and a system of production which predated slavery—a slavery classically cast in the Roman definition of citizenry: a state of being which is a precursor to feudalism in its national and oligarchal form. A pre-mercantilism, which knew not gold as coin, was central to the neo-myth of the “newly born children of the sun.” Cesar Chavez and Luis Valdez are responsible for the new awakening to the “new colonialism” and its transnational monopoly capitalist infrastructure.

The movement and organization of farm workers, students, youth and union labor who identified with Aztlán as an anti-war, anti-racist, anti-ethnocentrist, anti-sexist and an anti-class dominance posture assumed national and cultural manifestations in the Xicano literary mode of production. As Frantz Fanon said in *The Wretched of the Earth*:

Because they realize they are in danger of losing their lives and thus becoming lost to their people, these men, hotheaded and with anger in their hearts, relentlessly determine to renew contact once more with the oldest and most pre-colonial springs of life in their people.

Fanon’s words are most appropriate in describing the precise stance and sentiment particular to the Xicano poets who surfaced during the mid-sixties. In the face of flagrant institutional and personal racism and ethnocentrism, Xicanos now sought to redefine themselves on their own terms—that is to say, in terms other than those ascribed by the white, Anglo-Saxon, male Protestant state to “keep Mexicans in their place.” Much of the literature that had flowed from the pens of Anglo-American novelists,

social commentators, journalists, and academicians since 1848 had rendered the Mexican in the United States as lazy, ignorant, criminally prone, and definitely not worthy of trust. After many years and many generations of Xicano subordination to Anglo world views and values, the socialization process had clearly begun to take its toll, instilling in many children the notion that for some "divine" reason, Xicanos were not quite as human as Anglo-Americans. Since they were considered not quite as human, the correlate notion that Xicanos did not merit the same treatment under the law, in employment, in education, in housing, and elsewhere was simply a logical extension of white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant male supremacy. The need for the redefinition of Xicano identity was clearly at the core of the search for the historical self which had predated the onslaught of the European colonizers in this continent. And it was a continental identity, to be sure, which Xicanos sought, as Luis Valdez, at a Xicano Movement symposium at UCLA in 1968, phrased it: "America was not a country, the United States was a country. America was a continent, a continent where mixed-blooded, Spanish-speaking people constituted the majority." Identity was a question that embraced at least two dimensions and a common thread. The common thread was clearly the historical dialectic which lent legitimacy to the other two:

(1) A cultural heritage which distinguished Xicano from U.S. culture and which clearly was a source of pride, a motivating catalyst, and a dynamic force of resistance; and

(2) A nationalist consciousness which differentiated Xicanos from other immigrants to the U.S. since it was, originally, the U.S. which came to Mexicans, occupying Mexican territory by the force of arms. This nationalist consciousness which could unify the heterogeneous Xicano population in the United States was clearly a necessary dimension in the self-determination of Xicano identity.

It is important, before we proceed with the analysis of some of the central literary workers of the period in question, to clarify the notion of cultural heritage, the notion of culture as differentiated from custom. Culture is relationship, which in the world view of this writer encompasses four levels: (1) Psychosexual, (2) Ethnopolitical, (3) Socioeconomic, and (4) Phenomeno-philosophical.

Each one of these levels of relationship yields a particular contradiction which is, itself, the dynamic core of a historical dialectic. The first relation accounts for the subordination of woman to the dictates of man. The ethnopolitical contradiction accounts for the subordination of all non-white races to the political will of the white state. The third level of relationship, and perhaps the determining and central contradiction, the socioeconomic

one, subordinates those who work to live and live to work to the structures of social stratification engineered by those who own to live and live to own. The fourth level of relationship, the phenomeno-philosophical, is the one which accounts for the subordination of all non-Western-Yankee-European world views to the ideological designs of a technocratic cosmivision particular to the United States principally and to Western Europe as its origin and extension. Culture, any culture, is then manifest with sexual, racial, class and ideological contradiction, the dialectic of which constitutes the core of its dynamic across history and geography. Culture is not to be equated with its artifacts or its customs ossified by time and ritual reproduction and repetition; culture is the dynamic adaptation of the human species to a set of ever-changing conditions; it makes for unity without casting out the inherent need for diversity. As Fanon said:

Culture has never the translucidity of custom; it abhors all simplification. In its essence it is opposed to custom, for custom is always the deterioration of culture.

It was only when culture was viewed in this contextual dynamic that Xicano culture became a force of resistance against the total assimilation and the consequent self-denigration of Xicanos in the U.S. Language was, and is, clearly, the vehicle par excellence for this cultural resistance and, upon occasion, the cultural offensive against the cultural imperialism of the U.S. Language, to be sure, is by its very nature dynamic, dialectical, subject to constant change over history and geography, but also competent to create change.

Let us now, briefly, look at the second dimension which shaped the question of identity for the Xicano writer of the late sixties and early seventies: national consciousness. National consciousness presupposes the existence of a nation which in the classic sense has a common culture, a language of its own, a territory which has been held in common over many generations, an economy of its own and, to be sure, a sociopolitical structure crowned by a state (the seat of self-governance) which in turn is legitimized by the constituency of the nation in question. Xicanos in the sixties were well aware of the fact that we had a common—even though heterogeneous—culture, a common language (Xicano urban colloquial Spanish and English) and a common territory traditionally inhabited by Xicanos (the U.S. Southwest). And, while Xicanos did not have an economy of their own, let alone their own state, Xicanos did share similar economic conditions set by a common oppressive Yankee state. All of these

criteria particularized Xicano people from mainstream U.S. society as well as from mainstream Mexican society.

It was in this spirit that the metaphor which gave rubric to the Xicano nation was born: Aztlán. Aztlán, an ancient Nahuatl myth which described the prehistoric motherland of the Indians in the American continent, now became a contemporary metaphor for a nation in the making. The "Spiritual Plan of Aztlán," edited by the conference delegates at the first National Xicano Youth Conference held in Denver, Colorado's Crusade for Justice, proclaimed the birth of the emerging Xicano nation: Aztlán. The Spiritual Plan of Aztlán, moreover, clearly stated that "Aztlán belonged to those who worked it" (not only to Xicano workers) and that no capricious frontiers would be recognized—an important point which, in the fervor of an exclusivist narrow nationalism, was quickly overlooked, and geographical borders were summarily delineated to the southwestern United States, otherwise known as the states north of Mexico. Clearly, without a state or a common economy, the notion of a nation with geographic boundaries was preposterous. Let it be noted that without capricious frontiers, neither the agriculture and industries worked by Xicanos in non-southwestern lands are excluded nor are the Latin-American republics' labor and resources left out of this continental metaphor. To quote Fanon again:

Colonialism did not dream of wasting its time in denying the existence of one national culture after another. Therefore, the reply of the colonized peoples will be straight away continental in its breadth.

We have now examined the notions of culture and of national consciousness in order to shed light on the stated object of this inquiry: cultural nationalism as the root and sustenance of Xicano literary production during the decade between 1965 and 1975. We are now prepared to examine some of its primary texts in dramatic, poetic, and narrative discourse. With the intent of proceeding from the popular on to the more complex literary manifestations of Xicano cultural nationalism, we shall start with the simplest and most public of Xicano literary modes of production: Xicano theatre. We shall then examine the genre most saturated with cultural nationalist subjacency: Xicano poetry. We shall then examine the Xicano novel, the literary product which climaxes the accumulation of Xicano literary and linguistic capital of the decade.

## I

In March of 1966 the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee

headed by Cesar Chavez drafted "El Plan de Delano." Luis Valdez, who was to become the leading force and personality in the development of the dramatic mode of literary production in national Xicano consciousness, contributed significantly in the drafting of this declaration. At one point, the plan states:

Our revolution shall not be an armed one, but we want the order which now exists to be undone, and that a new social order replace it.

Clearly, the horizons which the farm workers traced for themselves called for protracted national struggle, and even though the union which Chavez proposed was not for Xicanos exclusively, the majority membership was, and is, undoubtedly Xicano. Valdez brought his theatrical tools to the level of a cultural organizing guerrilla. The Teatro Campesino became a central force in the recruitment and organizing of scab workers right in the fields. This was not classical theatre nor were its actors professionals. The theatre performed its "actos" on flatbed trucks, in meeting halls, in streets, and pueblos, with no more props than cardboard signs to identify the characters and their social roles.

In the process of almost spontaneous dramatic production, Luis Valdez started shaping his "ars poetica." I quote from John Weisman's book, *Guerrilla Theatre*:

The characters and life situations emerging from our little teatros are too real, too full of *sudor*, *sangre* and body smells to be boxed in. Audience participation is no cute trick with us; it is a pre-established, pre-assumed privilege.

The nature of Xicanismo calls for a revolutionary turn in the arts as well as society. Xicano theatre must be revolutionary in technique as well as content. It must be popular, subject to no other critics except the pueblo itself; but it must also educate the pueblo toward an appreciation of social change, on and off the stage.

Luis Valdez's forceful contributions to the dramatic mode of Xicano literary production climaxed with the formation of *TENAZ* (*Teatro Nacional de Aztlán*). This also is described in *Guerrilla Theatre*:

If Aztlán is to become reality, then we as Xicanos must not be reluctant to act nationally—to think in national terms, politically, economically, spiritually. We must destroy the deadly regionalism that keeps us apart. The concept of a national theatre for *La Raza* is intimately related to our evolving nationalism in Aztlán. . . . Such a *teatro* could carry the message of *La Raza* into Latin America, Europe, Japan, Africa—in short, all over the world.

Xicano theatre, under the leadership and inspiration of Luis Valdez, rapidly became a weapon for the cultural guerrilla of the Xicano nationalist mobilization of the late sixties and early seventies. Its form was simple: the "acto" (a short skit based on action, irony, and simplicity); and its content was clear: self-discovery and definition, collective assertion of Xicano rights, unbending intent to nationalize Xicano life and consciousness.

## II

The next Xicano literary mode of production to be examined is poetry. For the purposes of brevity and in the best interest of critical discourse, textual quotations will be kept to a minimum. The discussion will focus on five Xicano poet/activists of the period: Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzalez, Jose Montoya, Abelardo Delgado, Sergio Elizondo, and Alurista.

Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzalez is the founder of the Crusade for Justice in Denver, Colorado. He was the host of the First Xicano National Youth Conference in March 1969, where Xicano culture and nationalism became central to the Xicano Movement. "Corky" Gonzalez is the author of the Xicano "epic" *I Am Joaquin*. In this, his only major work published to date, Gonzalez sets out on a historical journey that goes back to the indigenous origins of Xicano people then on to the contemporary social conditions which Xicanos face in the United States. The historical dialectic of the Xicano struggle for survival is narrated in a forward, simple declamatory style. While identity is one of its central concerns, *I Am Joaquin* leaves the question open in the sense that it includes all the terms used to describe the people:

La Raza!  
 Mejicano!  
 Español!  
 Latino!  
 Hispano!  
 Chicano!  
 or whatever I call myself,  
     I look the same,  
     I feel the same  
     I cry  
         and  
     sing the same.  
 I am the masses of my people and  
 I refuse to be absorbed.

This does give a sense of universal identity while retaining a singularity composed of a cultural syncretism that points to national self-affirmation within U.S. society. It is, as Gonzalez says, an affirmation of social struggle which "stirs the Revolution."

Jose Montoya's contribution to Chicano literary production has been immortalized with his two well-known poems: "La Jefita" and "El Louie," from his collection *El Sol y Los de Abajo and Other R. C. A. F. Poems* (Ediciones Pocho-Che, San Francisco, 1972). Nationalism in the works of Montoya glorifies certain traditionally valued figures such as the Mexican mother on the one hand and the *bato loco*, heir to the *pachuco* lifestyle of the late thirties and early forties, on the other. His style is narrative, colloquial, bilingual, and very personal, almost conversational. It could be said that Montoya's brand of cultural nationalism is a blend of modern existentialism and contemporary Xicano folklore. He resorts to imagery of the Chicano past in order to affirm the authenticity of the ever-present here and now which Xicanos must confront in order to build a future more suited to the humanitarianism which has, historically, characterized the Mexican. Montoya would quarrel with a cultural nationalism which would negate the right of other nations, cultures, and languages to be themselves. Unlike "Corky" Gonzalez's exclusivist nationalism, Montoya would be willing to include other, non-Xicanos within his nationalist consciousness—very similar in tone to that of the farm workers' unionizing movement.

Abelard Delgado's poetic production uses a traditional declamatory style which often does not rule out rhyme. His brand of cultural nationalism is inclusivist within a Christian superstructure which repeatedly asserts the equality of all men before God. His tone ranges from the humorously light to a mild angry indictment against the dehumanizing institutions which the Anglo-American state has formulated. The language of his literary production is unassuming, colloquial, and usually bilingual. The world view which Abelardo's nationalism espouses has more to do with cultural artifacts and customs than with the dialectic dynamic of culture itself. He is perhaps best known for his poem "Stupid America," from his collection *Chicano: 25 Pieces of a Chicano Mind* (Barrio Publications, El Paso, Texas, 1973). His poetic call for action appeals more to a sense of moral and religious humanitarianism than to a socioeconomically based political activism.

In the literary production pioneered by Sergio Elizondo, cultural nationalism assumes the most "Mexican" (in the tradition of the Mexican Republic and its culture) of its manifestations. *Perros y Antiperros* (Quinto Sol Publications, Berkeley, 1972) is perhaps one of the most dialectical—in a schooled sense—poetic literary products of the early seventies. It has been



labeled an "epic" by some critics. The recurring affirmation of a proud Mexican inner-self vehemently rejects acculturation and clearly points towards a rediscovery and redefinition of traditional Mexican culture. Lomeli and Urioste, in *Chicano Perspectives in Literature*, in 1976, said:

Elizondo masterfully captures a people's expressive traditions: playfully mocks death, devalues machismo, satirized macrosocieties' attitudes. In keeping with this epic tone, language becomes progressively less formal into a variant of Xicano speech.

Alurista, the fifth of the poets whom I have selected for examination in this essay, has been called, by Bruce-Novoa:

the originator and main exponent of the Amerindian ideology of Aztlán, which synthesizes a Xicano identity, drawing from the Mexican indigenous heritage and the actual realities of *barrio* living in the United States. With Aztlán, Alurista gives a mytho-spiritual dimension to Xicano nationalism.

His notion of culture is not, as some critics have asserted, monolithic, but, in fact and in literary form, is most dialectical and dynamic. The tone is often angry, yet tempered by a tender respect for all life. Valdez, Elizondo, and Alurista deliberately discourse on sexual and class dominance, considering these matters as central in the development of a national consciousness. The thread that seems to unify all these works is the notion of an unbending will to be that which one determines it is necessary to become:

our people to freedom  
when?  
now, *ahorita* define *tu mañana hoy*

Alurista's conclusion is that what is necessary to *be* is to *be free*; and the time is now.

Xicano literary production in the poetic mode, like Xicano theatre, brought its message to the people rather than wait for the people to pick up a manuscript and legitimize the birth of a new consciousness. Xicano poetry included its oral and public performance as an essential component of its literary product. It is not a closet poetry nor did its production occur in someone's attic but, much to the contrary, in the thick and thin of the mass mobilization and dedicated organizing efforts which characterized what we can today call "the cultural nationalist revolt" of the late sixties and early seventies, the decade between 1965 and 1975.

## III

Cultural nationalism manifest in theatrical and poetic modes of literary production is rooted in the present (the decade in question, 1965–1975), but the Xicano novel is set in different historical periods at different stages of economic production. The literary production manifest in the Xicano novel is parallel to the combined and uneven production of underdeveloped nations dependent on transnational monopoly capitalism. The Xicano novel combines preceding modes of literary production and incorporates them at uneven levels to finally constitute a literary unit which is incomplete, fragmented, and open. Alienation comprises the subjacent narrative object, and irony establishes itself as the literary mediation through which Xicano reality is transformed in its novelistic discourse. Language, as stated earlier in this essay, is *the* vehicle for cultural resistance and upon occasion, the cultural offensive against the cultural imperialism of the U.S.

The novels to be examined in this essay are those *not* written in English: *Y no se lo tragó la tierra . . .* by Tomás Rivera, *Estampas del Valle* by Rolando Hinojosa, *Peregrinos de Aztlán* by Miguel Méndez, and *Caras Viejas y Vino Nuevo* by Alejandro Morales. Sexual, racial, class, and ideological subordination embody a fourfold contradiction manifest, either by explicit discourse or by its absence (novelistic silence), at this level of private accumulation of linguistic and literary capital: the Xicano novel.

Rivera's novel, *Y no se lo tragó la tierra . . .*, is without a doubt the most incomplete, fragmented, and open literary unit of the four in question. In fact, for quite a while critics debated whether or not it should be considered a novel. Its unity emanates from its chronological focus on a "lost year," since neither characterization, setting, or structure lend any unifying elements to its novelistic claim. It is incomplete through its most deliberate novelistic silences. Fragmented structurally into narrative vignettes and symbolic epigraphs, Rivera's novel remains open from beginning to end. The narration itself is set in the forties and fifties Texas-midwestern migrant stream. The Texas of that period already displayed the combined and uneven economic development characteristic of transnational monopoly capitalism. In his masterpiece, Rivera incorporates different modes of literary production (narrative, epigraph, and dialogue) at clearly uneven levels. A lapidary narrative establishes itself as the predominant mode, followed by ephemeral dialogue and epigraphic discourse. Alienation, at the most material level (migrant farm labor), is flagrantly evident throughout the work, which depicts working conditions well below any acceptable

standards, as well as the various tragedies which accompany such a working man's odyssey. Irony, as literary mediation, surfaces in Rivera's novel openly, often negating that which the story appears to affirm or affirming that which the story appears to negate. Irony in Rivera's work can, perhaps, be best exemplified in his use of the classically Mexican negation which affirms: "*No pos sí*"; or its reverse, the affirmation which negates: "*Si pos no*."

The women in his narrative discourse are classically subordinated to the mandate of the Mexican male. Xicano society is, itself, subordinated in terms of class, race, and world views to the transnational corporate monopoly which agribusiness was already becoming in the Texas of the fifties. In Rivera's novel there appear to be no great complexities when it comes to depicting subordination; there are only two factors to each of the four equations: *Mejicanos* dominate *Mejicanas*, owners dominate workers, white Texans dominate Mexicans, and the Anglo world view dominates the Xicano world view through its socializing institutions school, church, and state (this is the level where "Xicano" consciousness is born, as differentiated from *Mejicano*).

The novelistic production of Rolando Hinojosa is exemplified for the decade in question with his prized work, *Estampas del Valle y Otras Obras*. Not unlike Rivera's literary production, Hinojosa's work was debated in terms of its genre. Again, the categorical question remained postured at the test of the unifying elements of the literary discourse. Again, the reader confronted a fragmented, incomplete, and open work. Hinojosa's work is also framed in the forties and fifties, but instead of focusing on the *Tejano* (Texas-Mexican) migrant odyssey, it centers its discourse on the great (Rio Grande) south Texas valley, which—for the most part—is a settled region, constituting the basis for the constant capital formation necessary in the developing agribusiness monopolies of *el valle de Tejas*. The different modes of literary production incorporated in his novel differ from those of Rivera's in quality as well as in quantity. Dialogue, familiar (in the sense of "*familia*") and extended discourse, is the predominant mode; though narrative, portraiture, and documentary follow closely in quantity, in that order. Irony as literary mediation in Hinojosa's novel is manifest as satirical wit put in the horse's mouth: the *raza* from the great *valle* of Texas, including *los bolillos* (white bread-eaters). Alienation, even though clearly depicted as material (*vis-a-vis* metaphysical or existential), is presented through more than two clearly distinguishable poles. The appearance in a "here-to-stay" fashion of a class between the *trabajador* (worker) in the south Texas valley and the rancher/farmer/oiler is concretely depicted: a managerial and professional class—best exemplified in the teaching, law enforcement, and

public health professions. The class aspect of the fourfold contradiction is more complex in *Estampas del Valle* than it is in *Y no se lo tragó la tierra*; and understandably so, since Rivera focused on the migrant stream: variable capital. *Estampas del Valle*, furthermore, exhibits a larger scope when it concerns the sexual aspect of south Texas reality. This time it is more generalized—it goes beyond *Mejicana* subordination to *Mejicano* rule—it pictures the subordination of all women by men. This quantitative variant is due to Hinojosa's compounding of the racial aspect of subordination with the inclusion of bourgeois *Mejicanos* and proletarian *bolillos*. The racial aspect loses ground in terms of importance to the class and ideological manifestation of social consciousness. Culturally and linguistically, moreover, the Xicanada determines the "social" (if not the economic and political) milieu of the valley, and it even maintains parallel socializing institutions (*la escuelita*, *la iglesia católica*, and the local *caciques*); all of these phenomena, of course, are concrete manifestations of the sedentary, emerging "professionals" amongst the Mexicans resettled in Texas after the Mexican Revolution of 1910, and the ever-growing accumulation of constant capital ("old and hard money") by the Anglo-Texas carpetbaggers. The Xicano "persona" emerges in Hinojosa as a concrete presence who is a witness to the common belief: "We told *them* that our house was their house, they moved in, and moved us out, now we watch through a window, and if we're lucky through the kitchen or from the garden. *They* now control what used to be our house and we wait on their mandate." The unifying elements which render Hinojosa's *Estampas del Valle* as a novel are a particular historical period, a geographical stage, and the collective characterization of a distinct brand of Texans: the *gente del Valle*.

As for the next novelist in this inquiry, Miguel Méndez takes the reader to the Mexico-Arizona-Southern California borderland through his *Peregrinos de Aztlán*. Méndez's novel is set in the forties and fifties (with the exception of its title which matches *his* present at the time of production). This time the narrative, dialogical, and poetic modes of literary production are predominant, in that order, throughout the discourse. Characterization, setting, and linear chronology play the role of spinal column in the body-narrative of Méndez's work. Alienation is, once more, material and complex—that is to say, the division of labor depicted goes even further than in Hinojosa's discourse; Méndez distinguishes the different classes characterized in his *obra* through variables in the *parole*. The classes depicted in his novel range from the Yaqui Indians—clearly marginal lumpen—to the in-house, aspiring, oligarchal, petty bourgeoisie of Mexican social borderland-strata (which in Arizona are qualitatively and quantitatively identifiable). Here again the racial aspect polarizes Anglo *vis-a-vis* non-Anglo; but

even within the non-Anglos the polarity remains constant even if subtle since the Yaqui name all those outside their group as "yori." The Anglo world view and superstructure, as in Rivera's discourse, maintains its pervasiveness over the Xicano, the *Yaqui*, and the Yori-Mexican world view, while the revelation of sexual subordination of women in general remains constant through the novelistic silences as well as the flagrant episodes of sexual exploitation. This novel, too, retains the characteristics of incompleteness, fragmentation, and openness despite all the setting, linear chronology, and characterization. In fact, it is the unsealable borderland, as a silent character, which reiterates the *obra's* open-endedness, incomplete and fragmentary discourse. The "border" is for Méndez what the Texas valley and the migrant odyssey are for Hinojosa and Rivera. Irony is manifest in his novel more through tragic humor than through Hinojosa's satire or Rivera's unadorned reversal of true posture (classical Socratic irony).

With Morales, the *barrio* is the border, the valley, and the migration. *Caras Viejas y Vino Nuevo* exhibits what perhaps can be called grotesque irony off the asphalt jungle as a literary mediation. Again—as in Méndez—Morales's novelistic enterprise consolidates the unity of his *obra* without completing, closing or filling all the literary silences of its literary discourse. The different modes of literary production which Morales's pen creates are dominated by scatological urban dialogue, followed by interior monologues, and cinema techniques (such as the absolute focus on a part of the body as if it were autonomous and independent from the whole). The timespace embodied in *Caras Viejas y Vino Nuevo* is comprised by the southern—not borderland—California of the fifties and sixties, particularly *el barrio de Montebello*. Californian transnational monopoly capitalism, in its agribusiness and technocratic modes of material production, is portrayed as rampant and pillaging the third world, and pressuring both the old world and the new Soviet state. The United Farm Workers unionizing committee, the "anti-Vietnam-War movement," and the *Movimiento Estudianti/Xicano por Aztlán* (MECHA) are present, or in the making. Violence as a response to pressure external to in-group relations qualifies the behavior of Morales's protagonists—and the protagonists, again, to be sure, are multiple or collective, even though there is a deliberate attempt on Morales's part to focus on a central, principal figure. Alienation, as a subjacent narrative object in Morales's private accumulation of modern, southern Californian linguistic and literary capital, reaches out to the existential-materialist level which Sartre identified in his theoretical classic, *On Being and Nothingness*. Morales centers on "being-in-itself" with his meta-

phorization of the race, the stirps (*la estirpe*), beaten to the core as a historical stigma.

Lacking the Mexican or Mexican-American schooling of the other writers Morales's first written discourses were in English, but his first novel was in Spanish at the time of its original publication. His world view cannot avoid the portrayal of anomie; that is, he pursues the ends prescribed by Anglo cultural and economic technocratic imperialism while totally aware of the inaccessibility of legitimized means (such as access to academic and scholarly excellence). Morales's novelistic production extends to the deepest level of Marxist-materialist alienation: the distantiation from himself (as an autobiographical poly-manifested protagonist in "*barrio persona*") as well as from his species (*homo-sapiens-urbanus-technocratus*). The sexual subordination in his narrative is rooted in violence to the self and to "the other." Racial textualization in his novel retains the *bolillo* versus *mezkin* (Mexican) quality of Rivera's and Mendez's polarization, but in his case the *bolillo* is discussed in the system and self-blame prevails with the notion of the stirp; the same polarization is true for class differentiation. Much like Rivera, Morales posits the antagonism between the haves and the have-nots with the particularity that, in Morales's narrative, the blame is pointed toward the originator of the discourse and not toward an external force or element alien and beyond the will of the generalized protagonist. These four novels, in their own right, combat the onslaught of Anglo-American acculturation.