



El Grito

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Contents

	EDITORIAL	2
MIGUEL MENDEZ—M.	“TRAGEDIAS DEL NOROESTE” TATA CASEHUA	3
	“TRAGEDIES OF THE NORTHWEST” TATA CASEHUA	17
OCTAVIO I. ROMANO—V.	THE HISTORICAL AND INTELLECTUAL PRESENCE OF MEXICAN-AMERICANS	32
SILVIO VILLAVICENCIO	EL ESPEJO	47
	THE MIRROR	54
NICK C. VACA	THE NEGRO MOVEMENT AS AN ANTI-REVOLUTION	61
MIGUEL PONCE	POETRY	71
RUDY ESPINOSA	LITTLE EAGLE AND THE RAINBOW	78
MALAQUIAS MONTOYA	PORTFOLIO	following 80

COVER DESIGN BY RENE YANEZ

Editorial

Role models for young people are important. Sociologists say so. Psychologists say so. Educators say so. Poverty programs to help minorities say so. Virtually everyone says so, for how else can immigrant minorities select an ideal, a model person after which to pattern their lives? So, to help Mexican-Americans become acculturated, assimilated, integrated, educated, oriented, and moving efficiently toward progress, the mainstream, and the space age, *El Grito*, as a public service, presents the following role models which Mexican-American youth can emulate, and thereby stop being “at the crossroads,” “in transition,” “emerging,” etc., etc.

Role Models for Mexican-American Youth to Emulate

Joe Namath	Joan Rivers
Captain America	Spiro Agnew
Bo Belinsky	Sally Stanford
Batman	Doris Day
Spiro Agnew	Bare Facts
Everett Dirksen	Lucille Ball
Superman	George Jessel
Strom Thurmond	Spiro Agnew
Lassie	Dick Tracy
George Romney	Dagwood
Allen Ginsberg	Spiro Agnew
Spiro Agnew	Festus
Hugh Hefner	Herb Alpert
Bugs Bunny	Tiny Tim
Daffy Duck	Lawrence Welk
Mayor Daley	Spiro Agnew
Elmer Fudd	Captain Marvel
Phyllis Diller	The Boston Strangler
Candy Barr	

DE LA COLECCION DE RELATOS (INEDITOS)

“TRAGEDIAS DEL NOROESTE”

Tata Casehua

MIGUEL MÉNDEZ—M.

“A mis abuelos indios, clavados en el signo omega de su trágico sino”.

Epitafio

Caminante: hoy tus pasos y el desierto de Sonora se topan, descúbrete. Sábeta que estás ante la tumba, inmensa tumba del Emperador Casehua. No reces, que no hay voz que no se beba su silencio. Si quieres saber de su historia, húndete, busca sus huellas al fondo de las dunas y de los arenales. Acuérdate caminante, acuérdate siempre, que sobre esta muerte del Rey Casehua, otra viene llegando más horrible y más cruel: el olvido. Y no importa cuan grande haya sido su fama o cuánta su gloria; un siglo, cien siglos, ¡mil siglos! consumirán hasta el último vestigio de sus recuerdos, y nadie en el más negro de los absolutos, nunca más sabrá que en este suelo yace Juan Manuel Casehua. No llores, sería inútil. Aquí al llanto lo seca el aliento del fuego y a las lágrimas las sorbe la gula del polvo y de los arenales. Sigue tu camino, caminante, no te aflijas tampoco del indio Casehua; duélete de ti ¡ay! que cualesquiera que sean tus rumbos llegarás a su mismo destino.

Al desprecio le contestaba con la soberbia. El no bajó el rostro como los demás. Nació sabiéndose príncipe, se tragó la ira de ver sus huestes humilladas, apuntando la frente al suelo, su sangre volcándose en otro río. Vió a los ladinos escudriñar a los recién nacidos, gozosos cuando la palidez o los ojos borrados denunciaban la huella del odioso *yorí*, ocultando el desdén con una sonrisa fingida cuando un sol remoto reaparecía en la semilla terca a desalojar la historia, ceñido a las caras prietas.

Al conjuro de sus atavismos irguió sus pasos; caminó ciego, urgido de sus instintos y el llamado de sus antepasados, alimentado con raudales de odio y caudas de frustración. Caminó sobre las losas derruidas del espacio muerto, ahí donde no fluye el tiempo; al eco de sus pasos lo fue ahogando lejanísimo, la profunda sima del cosmos. A su paso las mujeres y los niños se encogían abrazándose presos de un extraño miedo, dolidos de un entrañable respeto. Los perros enmudecidos marginaron su paso sin agredirlo intuyendo su realeza. Los hombres vieron su misterio sin entenderlo. Nadie supo leer nunca en las líneas de su rostro. ¡Ya estaban borradas!

Caminaba por los arenales. Buscaba rodeando las dunas. Se hundía contemplativo buscando en la mente lo que no hallaba en la tierra. Se llenaba las manos escurriéndola entre los dedos. Alguna vez los fósiles que fueron vida del mar colados entre la arena animaban sus cuencas oscurecidas. Proseguía recorriendo sus dominios. Una avanzada en círculos se ceñía en el rastro de su huella cansada. De pronto hacía alto, y así parado, absorto, fijo, fuera de su condición, se alojaba en una eternidad. Aparecía en su cara una expresión virgen de palabras, esperando una sola, una palabra clave, el nombre perdido de un continente, que nadie sabía, que no se había pronunciado nunca, o que quizá se había olvidado hacía ya mucho tiempo. . . .

/ / /

El páramo aparece recubierto de espejos como atmósfera impregnada de cuchillos; no tardan en herirse las retinas, la fiebre se hinca en el cerebro. Entonces la mente empieza a poblar de sombras y de fantasmas que salen a huir de lo más recóndito, esta tierra sin ternura ni pan, pródiga en retacar la panza de la muerte que lo mismo saborea la miel que se place de la mierda.

Las chicharras lloran, lloran, lloran la misma oración terca insolente, chillan la desesperanza hasta secarse.

La vieja lo miró con dureza embravecida. Hubiera querido volverlo al vientre otra vez, matarle en los ojos los rumbos y las distancias, porque al que quiera alcanzar la ilusión lo burlará el espacio, a cada paso le pondrá distancia. . . .

Horas y horas ennichado en la ventana, el muchacho estático parecía de barro muerto. La mujer lo había parido, ya ciertamente, pero al espacio rodeante la ambientó en otra placenta. La autoridad de la vieja se ciñó como ombligo tutelar a la voluntad del chamaco que luchaba con denuedo por renacer a la libertad de marchar hacia la muerte con su fluidez de vida excenta de trabas. Los ojos

de la mujer, húmedos y tristes como de perro flaco que atempera fobias de amo cruel, abrían y parpadeaban luchando contra su bruma. Los apretaba queriendo exprimir la nebulosidad. Inútil, la tierra sádica, avarienta se cobraba el pasaje de sus rotaciones pudriendo su carne con dolor. Opaca, a trastazos con los borrones, resbaló la suya sobre la mirada del chamaco. Medrosa, rugió iracunda, revelando en el timbre una voz lastimada.

— ¿Es eso lo que miras? Está maldito, no lo contemples, su locura es la ruina, te he dicho hasta enroquecerme que no lo veas ni hables con él, que le huyas, que te escondas de su presencia, que no lo tropiecen tus ojos, ni el germen de su desvarío loco te brote a ti también. ¿No ves que está loco, enfermo, que nos volverá a todos igual, que nos está volviendo poco a poco?

El chamaco no se alteró, como si el tono subido fuera el diálogo corriente de la vieja, siguió soportando su mirar en el mismo objeto.

— Madre, Juan Manuel Casehua hoy parece de piedra, es una piedra.

— Es la peste, contagia su delirio.

— No madre, habla con las cosas, se comunica con las cosas, yo lo he oído y lo comprendo, conoce el alma de las cosas . . . dice que las cabelleras de los indios sacrificados brotarán de esta tierra moribunda como pastizales y todo volverá a ser verde ¡verde! y otra vez habrá indios, muchos indios, que partirán de aquí a cobrar sangre: ¡venganza!

La autoridad de la vieja se desgranó a los pies del chamaco. Enclenque y llorona, le suplicó oprimiéndole los brazos con sus manos huesudas. Lo dejó en silencio. La vieja caminaba ligeramente enroscada, hurtando el cuerpo, tímida de robarle al espacio lo que ya estaba reclamando la tierra. Sentada sobre el camastro quiso revelarse cabaceando, pero el calor que rechazaba la tierra y la llamarada que envolvía la casucha haciéndola hornilla vencieron, un ronco ronroneo y el sueño lastimándola a rastras por el monte espinoso del subconsciente.

Tomó el niño la puerta, su figurilla oscura caminó hundiendo la hiriente luminosidad. Subía, subiría escasamente, de lejos aparecía suspendido.

Se sentó a su lado. Cuatro ojos fueron una sola contemplación. Atrás el pedrerío en abandono, absurdos objetos, sin más fin aparente que dar razón de los seres de rojo y de verde, savia y sangre. Enclavados los cactus, existencia verde, triunfante monotonía, blandos de corazón, vulnerables, más emplumados de puñales desenvainados, amigos de la punzonada y del escarmiento.

Fijos estaban ante la prominencia, impávidos, reducidos los ojos, con sólo la sombra de las pestañas contra el fognazo de la inmensa lumbrera. Tenían al frente la desolación y las huellas sepultas. ¡El desierto! ¡maldito desierto, irreconciliable enemigo de todas las raíces, insaciable consumidor de toda savia! Muchos kilómetros atrás se filtró furtivo bajo la tierra achaparrando los árboles. Éstos le resistieron en avanzadas que el asesino reducía aislándolos, pero la naturaleza, cruel espectadora en todo afán de sobrevivencia, dió a los vegetales defensas que les darían subsistencia en heroica batalla, los armó de espinas hirientes. Los cactus se adentraron a contenerlo ciñéndose hasta contra los bordes del insaciable, muchos de ellos velando noche y día sin exigir ni pedir relevo. ¡El sahuaral! comunidad de gigantes vigías, soberanos del verde, que dominando desde las alturas o agrupados a discreción en las planicies, airosos, elevados rectos, se cumunicaban en clave, con poses caprichosas actitudes las de algunos, otros en ruego con los brazos implorantes, quienes decaídos por una espera luenga, sin dolor y sin angustia con sólo el tiempo que corroe y vence. Parejas que amándose en abrazo perenne, sencillos en su desnuda naturaleza, indiferentes a la moral de charca nauseabunda, ignorando el repudio acusativo, encono amargo de los frustrados. Cuántos haciendo aberración del valor y de la audacia, alargaban pícaros en ademán obsceno sus brazos horizontales cual sexos erectos, ofrendando irónicos toda su carga de desprecio al valle inmisericorde que solo consiente los esqueletos en su regazo.

— Juan Manuel Casehua, ¿has hablado hoy con el desierto? ¿Qué es el desierto, Juan Manuel Casehua?

Juan Manuel Casehua enmudece, su rostro de barro viejo semeja la piedra mal labrada, tosco, deforme, modelo indestructo tantas veces vaciado, obra primera de un aprendiz bisoño, hecha sobre yunque a marrazos.

— ¿Qué es el desierto, Juan Manuel Casehua? Lo mira Juan Manuel Casehua con sus ojos de ciénega seca, tumba de reptiles anfibios. Con una tristeza ignota y lágrimas de ceniza habla sin que se muevan sus labios.

— Entierra tu mirada en esa arena, vela hundiendo hasta donde te pare la lejanía. ¡Miral! mira esas dunas, míralas bien. El viento las ha formado hoy, mañana serán otras; éstas las habrá arrastrado destruyéndolas. . . . ¿Ves esos montículos que se levantan simulando un contenido? Tienen el vientre repleto de arena, ahogan y recuecen, matan el polen y las semillas que les lleva el viento traicionero.

Miraban sin mirar, ni entre sí, paralizados los músculos; el hombre hablaba despacio, a intervalos, como si las palabras en llamas se enfriaran a pausas, el niño oía sin manifestarlo con un solo movimiento mínimo.

—¿Cómo es el desierto, Juan Manuel Casehua? ¿Está muerto?

Juan Manuel Casehua. ¡Hombre de América! De allá se libró del exterminio ¡ay! que matanza tan horrible. Acá le ofrecieron los confines hasta donde lo condujeran sus pasos; pero pusieron sobre sus espaldas exhaustas, una losa pesada, más que el plomo: hambre y sed. ¡Ay! Que muerte más cruel. Juan Manuel Casehua, rebelde, quiso tener potestad, se proclamó a si mismo Emperador, tomó el desierto y fincó ahí su majestad: ancho páramo para llenarse los ojos de vastedades.

—¿Cómo es el desierto, Juan Manuel Casehua?

—¡Como una naturaleza preñada, condenada a no parir nunca!

La piel engrosada de los pies del buqui burlaba la saña de las piedras y la tierra, que acometían con lumbre cada uno de sus pasos.

Se quedaba Juan Manuel Casehua, que medio día había sido de piedra, que marchaba la tarde volviéndose de arena, trocando la saliva por tierra, inhalando y exhalando polvo; secándose. Luego desaparecía confundido entre furiosa tolvanera, cielo y tierra sólo elementos azotando la muerte contra la muerte, caos, desconcierto, de la nada la promesa vaga de un advenimiento. . . . Volvía la calma. El cosmos frustrado cerraba su boca. Un violeta subido se tornaba morado en los estertores. Silencio. La noche devorando otra vez los últimos despojos sanguinolientos de otro día. Contorno de dunas, cementerio sin cruces, médanos, lejanía de cerros pelones. Entre esa naturaleza fallida una estatua de arena de incierto aspecto humanoide anima su fuelle pesadamente, nublando con dos nubesillas su derredor con rítmica regularidad.

¡Ay Desierto de Altar! Morada de quietud, prisión de todas las soledades, la ilusión cristaliza en tus lejanías, ese lago de magia y de poesía, viva quimera: el mar hermoso, agua y cielo, suave azul, plegado siempre a tus horizontes.

¡A cuántos engañó tu falsía! Marcharon decididos a confundirse en tu imagen con aves de caprichosa maravilla, sonrieron su porfía de hermanarse con la fauna fantástica. Ellos los de la sonrisa perenne, creyendo que a la vera de las límpidas aguas, la belleza, la paz y la abundancia se conjuntaban dando fruto sublime al amor sin mácula; allá fueron enardecidos, seguros de su triunfo. Un día atardecido ya se supieron terriblemente solos en medio de las arenas, se

sentaron a contemplar un mundo que se acababa, vacíos de un postrer abrazo, sin madre, sin una amante. . . . Amargamente descubrieron en tu espejismo su misma esperanza, sin un reproche trocaron su sonrisa por una plena de melancolía y nostalgia; un mundo destruído, un sol de amanecer vedado, un mañana incrustado en un futuro inviolable. . . . Y los que perdieron el rumbo con sólo el paisaje de tu yermo grávido de muerte; émulos de tu gula querían beberse tu lago inexistente uncidos a sus ubres noche y día; ciegos de su empeño estúpido corrían hasta caer, para seguir a gatas, tercos. A gritos y sollozos se rendían víctimas de tu juego infame, fuera la lengua de esponja reseca, los ojos enverdecidos, verdes de primavera vana. . . .

¡Ay desierto de Sonora! Si has de mostrar un lago en tus horizontes, bórrale el azul purísimo que nadie alcanza, tíñelo de púrpura con el rojo que exprimiste a los soñadores que lo buscaron y sólo encontraron el cruel señuelo de tus arenas disfrazadas.

— El sol a medio morir los describre.

— ¿A quiénes?

— A ellos, a los abuelos.

— Son siluetas del crepúsculo.

— ¡No! Son ellos.

— Son cerros pelones solamente.

— Ven. ¡Mira, mira!

Corría el chamaco de uno a otro lado, arrancando una imagen a cada perspectiva.

— ¡Mira madre! Mira los rostros de los abuelos.

— No hijito de mi alma, es tu imaginación.

— Son los perfiles de los abuelos.

— Hace mucho que están muertos.

— Esos rostros eran antes que los abuelos, cuando ellos fueron, de allí tomaron su rostro, ellos murieron, pero sus rostros perfilados siguen allí, más vivos que los que vivieron, míralos madre, son ellos ¡Qué soberbia dignidad!

— Ya te contagió su locura, maldito sea Juan Manuel Casehua, no lo vuelvas a oír, no quiero que te ahogues en el río, no quiero que te ahogues en el río, como el hijo de Juan . . . que quiso . . . cruzar.

Lloraba la vieja, su pequeño, ridículo dolor humano frente al inmenso páramo que no se commueve porque parece estar muerto.

— ¡Oye tú! no cruces ese río.

— ¿No ves que mis manos son de tierra? Y mis pies que son de tierra vienen pisando sobre la tierra.

— Mejor no vayas. ¿Qué buscas allá?

— Busco proteínas, porque la tierra que soy sin proteínas se desangra, se muere y se pudre.

— Los océanos rebosan proteínas para que los hombres animen su barro.

— Los océanos no son de los hombres, son de los navíos cargados de muerte.

— Al estómago de los hombres va el fruto de los plantíos, genera vida.

— A los frutos de los plantíos no se los tragan los hombres, los engullen insaciables enormes cajas de hierro.

— ¡No cruces, por tu vida, no cruces!

— ¡Mira! Mira mis cabellos, se me caen a puñados, los dientes se me están volviendo de maíz podrido.

No halló su sombra en el páramo, corrió hacia los cactus.

Vibraba el timbre temblorino de las cigarras, que la tierra pare para lloriquear.

Lo alcanzó a ver acurrucado bajo un choyal. Bebía de la humedad de los cactus mascándolos. De una mejilla pendía una penca asida a sendas espinotas a medio penetrar; tres estrías rojas corrían sobre la penca, se juntaban abajo en la espina más grande que las iba desprendiendo en gotas gruesas; espumeaba la comisura de los labios, a través de sus ojos el campo estaba pintado de rojo intenso, extraño ser tenía al frente: un niño rojo, no oía la demanda, Juan Manuel Casehua tenía un gesto nuevo; los párpados se le iban cerrando con lentitud dejando apenas un resquicio, quedaba así largo, abriéndolos después con la misma paciencia.

— ¿Dónde está el río que asesinó a tu hijo?

Violento se enderezó medio cuerpo de la nopalera.

— ¡Mi hijo vive! No ha muerto, vive.

Se sacudía y hablaba frenético, el cacto le penduleaba en la mejilla.

— ¿Por qué lo mandaste allá?

— Quise que fuera donde lo verde, porque sin lo verde intenso no hay rojo vívido. Está en las garras de un río, tú que ya hablas con las cosas, habla con él, reclama a mi hijo y tráemelo, vuelve con mi hijo. Luego le secreteó en susurro:

— Yo hubiera ido ya, pero . . . mírame bien, yo soy de arena, el agua me diluye, me desmoronaría.

El muchacho se clavó en la tierra, inmutable; el hombre se fue envolviéndose en sí mismo, volviéndose un feto que se niega a ser parido.

Una paz sugestiva atraía sobre el río, bajo el fondo desizábase el arrullo en una canción de cuna; le animó una ternura sublime brotada de un principio ignorado; lo acarició devoto tocando su cuerpo líquido. Quedó tenso; resbaló en el fondo oscuro de los siglos muertos, subía sabiéndose víctima y verdugo; emergió moteado de envidia, de rencor, sacudido hasta la rabia de un ansia de venganza. Retrocedió flameando de odio, curveándose en ese, vibrante, vuelto todo él en índice acusativo, rompió hiriendo su silencio pétreo en un grito terrible, desarticulado.

— ¡Río asesino! Hipócrita, te conozco, yo acuso de criminal tu naturaleza y te demando me devuelvas al hijo de Juan Manuel Casehua.

Se infló hasta su cauce, fustigó su marcha, luego se detuvo de golpe, remolineando.

— ¡Ho! ¿Conque buscas a José? Tú escucha ahora, yo decirte de José Manuel Casehua; él se paró donde tú estás, yo no lo engañé, yo le mostré sobre mi otra margen mis huadañas amarillas; el estúpido las confundió, murmuró excitado que era el brillo de cabellos blondas; abrió más sus ojitos asiáticos y los hirió con el resplandor del oro. ¡Ho! ¡Qué gracioso! vieras, se apretó el estómago poniendo cara de simio, el bastardo creyó que era queso. ¡Ho! Cómo me reí. Realmente gracioso. Yo nunca vi eso antes; intentó cruzarme desesperado y lo tomé de las greñas, di su rostro contra las peñas de mi fondo, porque yo odio esa maldita raza híbrida, negoide y fea; lo subí a la superficie con una trompa todavía más grande chorreando tomate, sus ojitos pequeños y juntos torcidos en blanco. Mira que chulo estás, le dije, puesto para que conquistes a tus rubias. Anda, cruza, busca tu escoba y a juntar oro. Lo volví a llevar abajo, lo subí hasta que se puso gordo, rozagante, como no lo hubiera conocido ni la madre que lo parió. Tenías hambre desgraciado; ya estás hartos.

Ira y sentimiento le punzaron las entrañas.

— En nombre de la madre de tus venerados. ¿Dónde quedaron los restos de Juan Manuel Casehua?

— Mira, tuve que dejarlo sobre un remanso mío porque se acercaban unos mexicanos, cuando acordé ya no los sentí. Yo creo que se los comieron los zopilotes, pero la verdad, rascan en mi fondo algunos de los huesos de Juan Manuel Casehua.

Borbotó dolido; ¡Río maldito!

— Ven al fondo mío y junta sus huesos, yo sé quién eres. ¡Indian! jo jo jo ven a mí ¡Jesús Manuel Casehua!

Jesús Manuel Casehua no había llorado nunca, sintió un desgarrón muy dentro que le brotó corriente, luego bifurcaba en delta; manaban, manaban, pero los chorritos eran débiles, los chupaba consumiéndolos el barro milenario de su rostro tostado.

Rugiendo estridente y metálica siguió la corriente potentísima y orgullosa, se carcajeaba; risa de vidrios rotos, arrastre de huesos de vacas, de perros, de hombres, piedras que roman sus picos redondeándose, sangre acuosa que se vierte, caballos hambrientos denteleando cabelleras.

Jesús Manuel Casehua oteó los horizontes, palpó la imagen de los arenales y se volvió a trote. Ya sabría cómo entenderse con el desierto: sobre el silencio y la indiferencia opondría su propio mutismo aunque fuese eterno . . . corría y corría dejando tras de sí un rastro húmedo, a cada trance dejaba un holluelo lleno de agua, que la tierra se chupaba de un sorbo.

En el centro de la barriga hinchada del cielo está hundido el sol como ombligo de fuego, abajo está el indio Casehua tatemándose la carne y el alma.

Juan Manuel Casehua ha montado una duna, remedo de elefante decapitado, vigila, atisba, plancha con los ojos el inmenso yermo arrugado y busca; cierra los ojos sacudiéndose: una pequeña, minúscula gotita de agua se aloja en su imaginación ardiente. ¡Milagro! los ojos se le vuelven caleidoscopios, agua, agua, agua brotando por doquier a borbotones ¡Qué dulce! ¡Qué fresca! Ese oleaje de ramas tan verdes que ríen como doncellas impúdicas dejándose hurgar del viento. Surge una laguna, un enorme animal acosado la adentra, va hundiéndose con un bramido terrible de muerte e impotencia; dos, tres, muchos hombres le arrancan tirajes de carne, hasta que la ciénega se traga el bramido y deja libres los gritos de triunfo de los hombres que se hartan a dos manos.

Juan Manuel Casehua tiene la boca abierta, el labio inferior caído, torcida la boca, no sabe sonreír, respira agitado con un fuerte aceceo perruno. Siente el ropaje de fuego de una flameada de viento. Despierta escudriñando. Algo ve. Se quiere parar y correr, pero Juan Manuel Casehua hace tres días que se sentó en esta duna y está preso de arena hasta el pecho. Juan Manuel Casehua ha divisado allá lejos un hilillo de vapor cruzando los arenales, un grito que le salía de la entraña se le muere en la garganta seca, ¡Ven hijo!

Ya no lo ve avanzar, se ha detenido, ve con pavor que de allí mismo se levanta una nubecilla espesa, sube clareándose hasta disiparse.

Algo sube . . . sube . . . no, cae . . . cae. Los pensamientos que se apagan suman la oscuridad del espacio. Juan Manuel Casehua, los siglos y una mente encendida, un instante, pensamiento sin freno, cosmos en ebullición, brillo póstumo de estrella que se apaga; palabras que tropiezan, se pierden y reaparecen, recuerdo de todas las épocas en danza loca sin fronteras de tiempo, ayer y mañana juntos sin día ni noche, el hoy de la mano de la muerte como niño triste en día de fiesta. Un viejo y un niño contemplan la horrenda colisión de dos galaxias sin percibir estruendo. Su lengua y sus labios golpeados por las palabras que están huyendo en desbandada, con su fiebre se quema la arena y se calienta el sol, se liberan las voces lastimándolo, arroja las palabras hiriéndose como si vomitara cardos, abandonan la mente de Juan Manuel Casehua como bolas de fuego rasgando el espacio, caerán en este silencio, se volverán arena, los despertará el viento cuando pase o las pisadas del intruso que no entiende de la muerte. . . .

Aquí no hay nada, nada . . . ni verdes que enciendan las esperanzas de nadie, ni raíces para sustentar fervor de profetas; aquí solamente hay voces: las que se perdieron en el tiempo, las que arrastra el viento y las voces que se levantan de las tumbas dialogando eternamente con el silencio.

— Tengo sed, tata, mucha sed.

— Sube a mascar sahuaros, bisnagas, pitayas; bébeles el jugo de la pulpa, con el sol mañanero, cuando aroman las vinoramas, ¡Qué buenas son! húmedas, fresquecitas.

— Papá, este imperio no me heredes. Otro quiero yo, verde, donde borbotea y corre suave la vida. Aquí no crece el maíz, tatita, ni nace siquiera.

— Allá está el *yorí*, el que vuela como *zipi* y se arrastra como *zetahuí*. Con su maldita magia hicieron aparatos para fabricar voces crecidas, voces que quiebran los tímpanos escondiendo su engaño bajo las conciencias. El último hijo de "Coyote Iguana" se muere de hambre. Los hombres coyotes-perros hablan de justicia, de raza. ¡Hipócritas! Mientras de la tierra de "Coyote Iguana" hacen coto de caza y en sus solares fincan sus mansiones, los hombres de la palabra mecanizada escupen a las multitudes cuando glorifican la raza y la justicia.

— Madre: esos seres repulsivos que esconden humillados su pequeñez en los orificios de los medanales, son los repugnantes

monstruos del Gila; de noche cuentan a sus hijuelos que en la creación no había seres más enormes y dominantes, hace tanto . . . tanto. Los bichuelos no lo creen, salen a reírse a pleno medio día, acuestan sus lomos humeantes sobre las minúsculas brasas de arena, con la panza al sol, manotean a risa y risa hasta que se mueren. ¿Oyes madre? Son los monstruos del Gila; pobrecitos, están gimiendo.

— No buquito mío, no lloran los monstruos del Gila. Es el viento que tiembla, su silbar herido por las choyas y los sibirales.

— Tata, tatita, tengo mucho miedo.

Duérmete ya mijito, duérmete, que a los niños que no se duermen temprano se los come el *yori sáncura*.

Por esta tierra maldecida que se liberó del agua para secarse hasta la consumación, por estos arenales a veces rojos, blancos a veces, por aquí cruzó Plumas Negras guiando a sus tatarabuelos. Repintaban rojo un viejo camino del odio plantando muertos como troncos sin savia; cargaban muchos heridos desperdiciando la sangre a chisquetos; los hombres iban chillando como viejas avergonzadas de haber quedado vivas, las mujeres con las manos en las verijas cuidaban la semilla preciosa de sus barrigas de guajes, donde ya palpitaba la pasión de la revancha, los niños caminaban enhiestos, tenían ponzoña y piedras en los ojos y se arrancaban los labios a mordidas; iban en derrota, los hijos de tigre *porohui* acababan de cobrarse rabiosa venganza.

— Tata, cuando yo sea grande, voy a matar muchos *yoris*.

— Arráncales primero el forro de los pies, el cabello a tirones, que caminen ¡Perros *yoribichis*!

— Madrecita, los asquerosos monstruos del Gila están llorando la muerte de sus bichuelos, lloran en rueda entrelazados ¡Ay! Madre mía ¡Están sepultándose en la historia!

— No son los monstruos del Gila mi chamaquito, es el viento que va llorando, los cactus afilan las puntas de sus dagas para que el viento sufra al pasar.

El indio muribundo intentó cubrirse el rostro ante el terrible chispazo del recuerdo desgarradoramente nítido.

18 de enero de 1900. Rojo de aurora sobre el amanecer del Mazocoba. Alumbraba el nuevo siglo, nuevas iniquidades. Las peñas del fondo del Mazocoba de siglos pardos y blanquecinos se tiñeron el día aciago con un rojo tibio y aceitoso; carne de células vivas adornó los riscos como florido jardín de rosetones.

El General Torres con soldados bien armados sitió el cerro del Mazocoba de la sierra del Bacatete. En la cúspide se guarecían más de tres mil indios, mujeres y ancianos en su mayoría guiados por el jefe Opodepe. El pundonoroso General Torres ordenó el exterminio alegando que en cada indio había un guerrillero terrible, hasta en los niños de pecho; destinó el batallón cuarto y onceavo a tapar cañadas y toda salida, guiados por *torocoyoris*, los restantes a escalar la altura del Mazocoba. Los soldados cumplen con su deber, reciben órdenes. Marchaban con marcialidad, modelos de disciplina; intuían otra jornada de gloria.

En la cumbre del Mazocoba los indios acosados oyen los pasos tamborileantes de los militares que avanzan rodando pedruzcos, quebrando ramas. Los niños arañan los pechos de las madres. En los rostros de los indios hierven el pavor, el odio y ese hondo dolor que nunca cuentan. Avanzan los soldados indolentes como piedras, señores del pánico y de la muerte ¡Autómatas del crimen y de la barbarie!

— Opodepe, ¡Jefe Opodepe! ¡Estamos copados por los yoris! Sin escape y sin defensa.

— Sólo las razas degeneradas conviven con el verdugo. Esta nación para los indios o para nadie. ¡No seremos ni raza de esclavos ni de prisioneros!

Los indios empezaron a correr disputándose en el precipicio donde desaparecían en docenas en trágica procesión de centenares. Dolores Buitimea encaminó a sus tres hijos hasta no verlos en la hondonada y apretando con ternura sublime al que tenía en brazos. Los siguió Pablo Omocol. Ayudó a caminar a su padre anciano que estaba herido en una pierna; se lanzaron juntos al voladero. Allí fue también el joven Juan Cuchi, espigado y atlético. Avanzaba cuidadoso, abrazando a su hermosa mujer de preñez avanzada. Fueron cientos; miles habrían cabido entre los peñascos, pero ya en la cumbre no quedaba uno solo ¡Mazocoba! ¡Ay, Mazocoba! Sólo dos *yoris* pudieron asomarse al fondo y contemplar la tragedia; uno rezaba hincado estrujando entre sus manos un cristo torturado; el otro lloraba la amargura de siglos uncido al tronco del origen del hombre.

La indiferencia y el olvido cubrieron la gesta del Mazocoba como herida que se solapa dejando el puñal hundido. La historia en su versión escrita es una puta vulgar. Desdeña a los pueblos que no otorgan la lisonja del oro y del poder.

El indio Casehua se está muriendo, agita la cabeza, ya la arena le llega el cuello.

¿Quién es? Quién es ese indio tan bravo, déjame reconocerlo ¡Diablo de Tetabiate! mira nomás como vienes, corriendo a matacaballo, te dejaste ir bichi entre breñales, te hicieron pedazos el cuero los espolones de los mezquites tiernos, te atravesaron las patas las agujas de las barchatas, traes la panza chinita de *huachaporis* ¡Ah temible Tetabiate! pero traes el greñero enrojecido chorreando sangre de *yoris* ¡Así Tetabiate! ¡Mátalos! Que se colmen de la muerte que ellos siembran, ¡Mata a los *yoris*, Tetabiate! ¡Mátalos!

—Ven, madre, ven, ve hacia el desierto, madrecita ¡Está cubriéndose de árboles! Ayayayay *yoris* malignos, ¡Sanguinarios! Sombra madre . . . Cuántas hojas cuelgan de esos árboles . . . raros . . .

—¡Son pajarillos muertos! martirizados por el hambre unos, asesinados los otros.

¡Ah, Cajeme fiero! Señor de la muerte y de la venganza. ¡Aquí! Ven, Cajeme; pisa este polvo hecho de sangre seca, tu tierra vencida, no te tragues la rabia porque te envenenas ¡Grita! grita y enséñales el puño cerrado ¡Aquí, *yoris*, aquí está su maldita gloria, abonando la tierra con podredumbre para que nazcan reptiles!

—Yo soy de arena, el agua me desmorona, váyanse, váyanse, váyanse . . . allá hay agua . . . a vid. . . .

La luna, musa de los imbéciles, va cruzando empelota por los cielos, indiferente y fría como piruja aristocrática.

Juan Manuel Casehua quiso ponerle pies a una duna para correr por el desierto, No pudo; pero la duna sí luce una ridícula cabeza humana que está bañándose de luna. No volverá a tener sed. Nunca. Quedó bebiéndose la luna, raudales de luna. Por los ojos saltones y fijos bebe luna, por los portillos de la dentadura sorbe la luna con un silbido, por las orejas se le mete la luna chillando: que la desfloraron y está grávida. Malicioso va torciendo una sonrisa de soslayo. Juan Manuel Casehua ya no tiene el rostro terragoso y prieto; es platinado, transparente como el de los angelitos. Siente que la luna se le cuela por entre los laberintos nasales, que se le quiere escapar por el culo, pero está obstruido con arena; Juan Manuel Casehua no está triste, empieza a reventar en carcajada. Goloso, bebe y bebe. El estómago, las piernas, todo él se vuelve entraña, le cosquilla un gozo ondulante, travieso, mordiscón, ávido, le hierve como olla de arroz a vapor. Oye que la luna vuelve a susurrarle impudorosa y sensual: que se la han cojido los gringos y los rusos, que siente pataditas en la entraña ¡lindo nene! carcajea de oreja a oreja, muestra la dentadura como enormes peinetas españolas, todo el rostro revienta en carcajadas, como granada madura. Ya no tiene sed, ni dolor, ni miedo,

ni hambre, ni angustia, ni frustraciones, ni nostalgia, eso queda prendido en el futuro; de allí en retroceso a cada día hundirá un paso en las arenas del pasado que se enguye continentes, razas, memorias, nombres, palabras, conforma los desiertos de la muerte y de la nada. Arena, arena, oleadas de arena, remolinos de arena, huracanes de arena, pavorosa arena del olvido que todo lo sepulta.

No hay caballería ni cañones que lo detengan, aúlla el viento con furia, arrastrando impune el cadáver seco de los arenales. Amaneciendo resurgirá la fogata calentando sus machetes al rojo vivo, para hundirlos sin lástima en la entraña de esta tierra que quiere bramar y sólo llora tímidamente en la voz de las chicharras.

Mañana, cuando vaya saliendo el sol, de confin irán brotando las dunas como lomos de camellos cansados . . . y en la tarde cuando vaya ocultando su muerte, las dunas multiplicarán su tumba.

diciembre de 1968

Tucson, Arizona

VOCABULARIO DE PALABRAS YAQUI

- yorí* — hombre blanco
- zipi* — gavilán
- zetahui* — serpiente
- sáncura* — maligno
- porohui* — reptil parecido a la iguana
- yoribichi* — despectivo por "blanco desnudo"
- torocoyoris* — traidores a su raza
- Opodepe* — nombre de un caudillo yaqui
- Tetabiate* — nombre de un caudillo yaqui
- Huachapori* — toboso
- Cajeme* — nombre de un caudillo yaqui

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FROM THE COLLECTED NARRATIVES (Unpublished)

“TRAGEDIES OF THE NORTHWEST”

Tata Casehua

MIGUEL MÉNDEZ—M.

Translated by Octavio I. Romano—V.

“To my Indian Ancestors, nailed to the sign of Omega,
and to their tragic fate.”

Epitaph

Traveler, today your footsteps and the Sonora desert converge: discover yourself. Know that you are standing before the immense tomb of the Emperor Casehua. No. Do not pray. All voices are swallowed by the desert's silence. If you want to know his story, sink, and look for his tracks at the bottom of the dunes and sands. Remember, traveler, that after the death of King Casehua a more cruel death awaits: oblivion. It does not matter how famous he was. One century, one hundred centuries, a thousand centuries may be consumed until the last vestiges of his memory remain. Then, no one in the darkest corners of the Absolute will know that in this ground lie the remains of Juan Manuel Casehua.

Do not cry, for your cries would only be dried up by the breath of the desert's fire, and your tears absorbed by the voracious dust. Continue your travels and do not grieve for the Indian Casehua. Grieve instead for yourself, for no matter where you go, you will ultimately come to the same end.

To those who scorned him he was arrogant. He did not bow his head as the others had done. He was born knowing that he was a prince. He swallowed his fury at seeing his armies humiliated, his blood churning in another river. He saw the ladinos¹ study their newborn, glad when light skin or blank eyes announced the stamp of the odious *yorí*, hiding their disdain behind a fixed grin when a

remote sun would appear in a stubborn seed, in little dark faces that dislodged history.

At the appearance of such atavisms he walked more erectly, blindly; urged along by instinct and the call of his ancestors. At such moments he was nourished by an abundance of hate and endless frustrations. He traveled over the destroyed burnt ground of dead space where time does not flow, drowning in the echos of his own footsteps and the darkness of the cosmos. At his footsteps women and children would shrink back; prisoners of a strange fear, yet feeling an affectionate respect. The voiceless dogs would not attack, but walk around him. Men saw his mystery without understanding it. And no one could read the lines on his face for they had been erased.

He travelled the sandy ground, searching around the dunes, sinking into thought — searching in his mind for what he could not find in the land. He filled his hands with sand and let it trickle through his fingers. Sometimes the fossils that had lived in the ocean would bring a sort of excitement to his darkened eye sockets. Then he would continue across his dominion, advancing in the circles that had been made by his tired tracks. Abruptly stopping, absorbed, immobile, virtually outside himself, he would dwell on eternity. A silent expression would appear on his face as he waited for one word, a key word, the lost name of a continent. It was a name nobody knew had ever been pronounced, a name perhaps forgotten long ago.

The flat plain seems covered with mirrors, like space that is criss-crossed with knives. Quickly, the eyes become tired, and a fever enters the brain. It is then that the mind is populated with shadows and phantoms that seek to escape from the most hidden corners. This is a land that has neither tenderness nor bread. It is a land that is more than generous when feeding the stomach of death; a land that accepts honey as readily as it does dung.

The cicadas cry their obstinate and insolent prayer, living only to cry out their hopelessness and then dry up.

The old woman, fury in her eyes, looked at the boy and wanted to return him to the womb. She wanted to kill that look of roads and distance in his eyes. She knew that space mocks all who follow an illusion, that it simply puts more distance before their every step.

The boy, entranced, would spend hours and hours in a niche by the window, looking like dead clay. True, the woman had given birth to him, but the world into which he had been born turned out

to be another placenta. Like a tutelary navel, the old woman's authority attached itself to the will of the boy who struggled boldly to be reborn free to pursue death without shackles. The woman's eyes were damp and sad, like some dog that tries to mollify the foibles of a cruel master. Fighting against an on-coming haziness, she squeezed her eyes tightly in an effort to shut out the foginess. It was futile. The desert, by painfully rotting the flesh, was collecting its price. Fighting her failing eyesight and melancholy, her eyes met the boy's. She shouted angrily, revealing in her tone the voice of a wounded being.

"Is that what you are looking at?" she asked. "He is wicked. Don't even think of him. His madness is our ruin. I have told you that until I am hoarse. Don't even look at him. Don't let the germ of his madness grow in you. Can't you see that he's crazy? He's sick. He wants to make us all alike."

The boy did not budge, as if the loud voice of the old woman was her normal manner of speech. He continued to gaze outside.

"Mother, today Juan Manuel Casehua looks like a rock. He is a rock."

"He is the plague. His delirium is contagious."

"No, mother. He talks to things. He communicates with things. I have heard him and I understand him. He knows the soul of things. He has said that the long hair of the sacrificed Indians will grow, like pastures in this dying land, and then everything will turn green. Green! There will be Indians again, many Indians, and they will go from here to seek their revenge."

The old woman's authority was melting weakly at the boy's feet. She begged him, squeezed him with her bony hands. Then, silently, she left him and walked away, too timid to steal from space that which the land was already reclaiming. Sitting on her rickety bed she tried to shake her head in disapproval, but the reflecting heat from the ground enveloped the hut and overcame her. A hoarse snore, and then sleep dragged her through the spiney forest of her subconscious.

The boy walked out the door, his little dark figure breaking a passage in the wounding luminosity. Up he went, slowly, and from a distance he seemed suspended in air.

The boy sat at his side. There, four eyes saw the same thing. Behind the abandoned quarry there were absurd objects that existed apparently for no other reason than to give an explanation of green and red souls, of wisdom and blood – thorny cactus, green existence

in triumphant monotony, tender inside, vulnerable, adorned with unsheathed daggers that are friends of a thrust and a warning.

They sat before the high ground, eyes squinting, undaunted even though only the shadow of their eyelashes defended them from the glare of the immense desert brilliance. Damned desert, unappeasable enemy of all roots, insatiable destroyer of all wisdom. The sand had furtively filtered underground, stunting trees that had been growing kilometers away. But they had fought back, leaving isolated outposts of trees that were surrounded by the sandy assassin. Nature, cruel spectator of all struggles for survival, gave the plants a defense in their battle-wounding thorns. The cactus engaged in the battle, advancing to the edges of the insatiable sand, there to guard day and night.

The cactus asked nothing for itself, not even help. The Saguaros! Community of gigantic guardians, sovereigns of all that is green, dominant on high ground and wisely clannish in the flatlands, graceful with their erect hooks. Some took a capricious stance; while others implored with outstretched arms until they fell from waiting too long. They lived without pain and without anguish, with only time that runs on and finally conquers. Some were coupled in a perennial embrace, indifferent to nauseous morality, ignoring accusing repudiations. Many displayed the aberration of valor and audacity, extending their arms in sly gestures like erections. They had nothing but contempt for the merciless valley which had shelter on its lap only for skeletons.

"Juan Manuel Casehua. Have you talked with the desert today, Juan Manuel Casehua?"

Juan Manuel Casehua is silent. His face of clay looks like poorly worked stone; coarse, deformed, an indestructible pattern like a first work of an unlearned apprentice, hammered out on an anvil.

"What is the desert, Juan Manuel Casehua?"

Juan Manuel Casehua looks at the boy with eyes that are like a dried marsh, like tombs for amphibious reptiles, through tears of ash and a profound sadness. He speaks, but his lips do not move.

"Lose your sight in that sand. Look at that sand until your vision stops on the distance. Look! Look at those dunes. Look at them well. The wind made them today. But tomorrow the wind will destroy them, drag them away, and then make others in their place. Do you see those hilly dunes that look solid underneath? Their wombs are full of sand. They burn things, drown them, and they kill the pollen and seeds that the traitorous wind has brought to them."

They looked without seeing, not even between themselves, sitting there, still, as if paralyzed. The man spoke in slow intervals, as if the numerous pauses might cool his enflaming words. The boy listened without moving a muscle.

"How is the desert, Juan Manuel Casehua? Is it dead?"

Juan Manuel Casehua. Man of America! Over there, in the green land, he freed himself from extermination. God, what a horrible massacre. Here in the desert they offered him all of the open space to which his feet could carry him. But they placed a heavy burden on his exhausted back: hunger and thirst. Cruel death. Juan Manuel Casehua, rebel, wanted power so he proclaimed himself Emperor. He took the desert, that broad plain, with which to fill his eyes with vastness. There he declared his kingdom.

"What is the desert like, Juan Manuel Casehua?"

"Like a normal pregnancy, condemned never to give birth."

The calloused feet of the *buqui* mocked the rage of the rocks and ground, a rage that made a fiery attack on each footstep.

Juan Manuel remained. For half a day he was stone, becoming sand in the afternoon, spitting on the ground, inhaling and exhaling dust, drying up. Then, in a furious whirlwind he disappeared, with the sky and earth nothing but elements of death that beat on each other, death and death, chaos and disorder. From nothing comes a vagrant promise of some arrival. The calm returns. The frustrated cosmos closes its mouth. A bright violet turns purple in the far distance. Agonized gurgles. Silence. Night again devours the last bloody remains of another day. Contours of sand dunes, cemetery without crosses, sand banks, barren mountains in the distance. In that deficient natural setting a statue made of sand and of uncertain humanoid features pumps its bellows heavily, billowing out, in two clouds, its surroundings in rhythmic regularity.

Desierto de Altar!² Quiet home, prison for all solitude, crystallized illusions in the distance, a lake of magic and poetry, of living fancies, water and sky, smooth blue tied always to your horizons.

You have deceived so many! They went forth like marvellously capricious birds only to lose themselves in your mirage, and they even smiled at their own resolve to join and become one with your surrealistic fauna. They smiled constantly, believing that at the edge of the limpid waters peace and abundance would join to give sublime birth to a love without blemish. They went with a passion, certain of their triumph. Late one day they found themselves terribly isolated in the midst of the sands. There they sat, without a

mother or a loved one, contemplating a world that was ending. Bitterly they saw their own hopes in your mirage. Then, without reproach, they exchanged their smiles for a melancholy and nostalgic expression. A world destroyed, a forbidding rising sun, a dawn encrusted in an inviolable future. Some lost their way in the wasteland that was pregnant with death. Emulators of your gluttony, they wanted to drink from your non-existent lake, to be tied to your udder day and night. Blinded by their stupid desires they ran until they fell only to continue forward in a stubborn crawl. With shouts and sobs they became willing victims of your infamous game, victims with sponge-dry tongues hanging, eyes turned green, the green of a useless spring.

Desert of Sonora! If you must show a lake on your horizon, then remove that pure blue that no one ever reaches. Stain the lake purple with that red that you have squeezed out of the dreamers who searched for the lake and found instead the cruel enticement of your deceiving sands.

"The sun, when it is half dead, finds them."

"Finds whom?"

"Finds them, the ancestors."

"Those are only silhouettes that you see in the twilight."

"No! It is they!"

"Those are only barren hills."

"Come. Look! Look!"

The boy ran from side to side, seeing the images from all directions.

"Look, mother! Look at the faces of the ancestors."

"No, beloved son, it is only your imagination."

"Those are the profiles of the ancestors."

"The ancestors have been dead for a long time."

"Those faces existed before the ancestors. That's when they got their faces, when *they* lived. They died, but their profiles are still there, more alive now than then. Look, mother, it is they. What proud dignity!"

"That madness has infected you. That damned Juan Manuel Casehua. Don't listen to him anymore. I don't want you to drown in the river, like his son did — his son who tried to . . . get across."

The old woman was crying, her tiny and ridiculous anguish pitted against the immense flatland that feels nothing because it appears to be dead.

"You, listen! Don't cross that river!"

"Don't you see that my hands are made of earth, and that my feet of earth step on earth?"

"Don't go. What are you looking for on the other side?"

"I look for proteins, for without them the soil that I am loses its proteins, it rots and dies."

"The oceans overflow with proteins so that men may give life to their clay."

"The oceans are not for men, they are for boats laden with death."

"Into the stomachs of men goes the fruit of the young trees; they generate life."

"Men do not swallow the fruit of young trees, it is enormous iron boxes that gobble it up."

"Don't cross. For your life's sake, don't cross the river!"

"Look! Look at my hair. It falls out by the fistfulls. And my teeth are turning into rotted corn."

The boy didn't find his shadow in the plains, so he ran to the cactus. The cicadas screeched, trying to stop the earth so that they could cry forever.

He found him under a choyal,³ sipping the fluid from a chewed cactus, and a piece of cactus dangling from his cheek, hanging by the sharp spines which had penetrated the flesh. Three trickles of blood dripped down on the cactus leaf, joining at the base of the largest thorn. The opening of his mouth was foamy and across his eyes the countryside was painted in intense red. A strange person was standing before him, a red child who did not hear the command. Juan Manuel Casehua had a new appearance. Slowly his eyelids were closing, leaving only a slit open. He remained so for a long time, finally, with the same patience, he opened them.

"Where is the river that assassinated your son?"

"My son lives! He is not dead. He lives!"

He was shaking and talking frantically, the cactus leaf dangling on his cheek.

"Why did you send him there?"

"I wanted him to be where it is green, because without intense green there is no vivid red. Now he is in the grip of a river. You, you who talk with things, talk to him, reclaim my son and bring him to me. Come back with my son." Then he whispered, "I would have gone myself, but — look at me — I am made of sand. The water will dilute me and destroy me little by little."

The boy, unchanging, fell to the ground. The man was withdrawing into himself, becoming a fetus resisting birth.

A suggestive peace drew one toward the river while a lullaby unfolded from the bottom. He was animated by a sublime tenderness born of an unknown principle. Devotedly he carressed the river, touching its liquid body. He was tense as he slid along the dark bottom of dead centuries. Surfacing, he realized that he was simultaneously young victim and executioner. Spotted with envy he emerged, with rancor, moved to a rage and a desire for vengeance. He regressed to a flaming hate, wrapped himself in it, vibrant, totally accusing, he shattered the stony silence with a terrible and disarticulated yell.

"Assassin! Murderous river! Hypocrite! I know you. I accuse you of harboring a criminal nature. I demand that you return the son of Juan Manuel Casehua."

The river swelled to its very bottom, slowed down, then stopped abruptly in a whirling motion.

"Aha! So you are looking for José? You listen now. Me telling you about José Manuel Casehua? He stood where you are standing now, and I did not deceive him. I showed him my yellow curved machetes⁴ at the other edge. Stupidly he confused them with something else and murmured excitedly that it was really the brilliance of blond hair. He opened his Asiatic eyes a little wider and he hurt them with the splendor of gold. How witty! You should have seen him. He pulled in his stomach and his face looked simian. The bastard thought that it was cheese. Ho! Did I laugh? Very witty. I had never see that before. Desperately he tried to cross me and I grabbed him by the hairs and hit his face against the rocks at the bottom because I hate that damned, ugly, hybrid race. I raised him to the surface and he had a bigger mouth than before, now dripping with tomato juice. His little eyes were twisted. I told him; look how pretty you are. Now you are ready to conquer your blonds. Go ahead, cross. Look for your broom and sweep up the gold. Then I pulled him back down and raised him until he got fat and so pompous that even his mother would not have recognized him. Miserable one, you were hungry. Now, you have had enough."

Deep inside he felt grief and anger.

"In the name of the mother of your ancestors, where are the remains of Juan Manuel Casehua?"

"Look, I had to leave him on top of one of my stagnant pools because some Mexicans were approaching. Then suddenly I couldn't

hear them anymore. I think the buzzards ate them. But to tell you the truth, my river bed is still scratched by the bones of Juan Manuel Casehua.”

In anguish he blurted out, “Damned river!”

“Come. Come down to my river bottom and gather up his bones. I know who you are. Indian! Ho, ho, ho, come to me. Jesús Manuel Casehua!”

Jesús Manuel Casehua had never cried before, but now the tears flowed profusely. However, his tears were weak, the clay of his burnt face sucked them up.

Stridently roaring with metallic sound, the potent and proud current continued to flow, laughing a laughter of broken glass, of dragging bones, of cows, dogs, men, and rocks that erode their sharpness as they tumble along, spilling watery blood that thickens, and starving horses that nip at each other.

Jesús Manuel Casehua scans the horizon, feels the image of the sands, and returns, running to them. Now he knows how to come to terms with the desert — above the silence and indifference he would counterpoint his own silence even though it was for eternity. He ran and ran, leaving behind him a wet track. At each long step he left a small cavity full of water that the soil sucked up in a gulp.

The sun, like a fiery navel, is embedded in the center of the swollen stomach of the sky. Below, the Indian Casehua’s flesh and soul are roasting.

Juan Manuel Casehua climbs atop a dune that seems like a decapitated elephant. He looks, scrutinizing the immense wasteland, searching. He shuts his eyes and shakes his head. A small, miniscule drop of water lodges in his burning imagination. A Miracle! His eyes became kaleidoscopic. Water, water, water gushing everywhere. How sweet! How fresh! Green grasses ripple laughingly like impudent girls who allow themselves to get excited by the wind. A lake appears. An enormous and fugitive animal walks into it and sinks while emitting a terrible bellow of death and impotence. Two, three, many men rip off strips of flesh until the marsh swallows the wild beast while triumphant shouts of victory come from them as they eat their fill with both hands.

Juan Manuel Casehua’s mouth is open, the lower lip droops, and the mouth is twisted. He doesn’t know how to smile, and he breathes heavily like a panting dog. He feels the envelopment of a hot wind and awakes, scanning diligently. He sees something. He wants to

rise and run. But it has been three days since he sat on this dune and now he is imprisoned by the sand up to his chest. Juan Manuel Casehua has seen in the distance a string of vapor crossing the sands. A shout stemming from his guts dies in his dry throat. *Come, son!* But the son no longer advances. He has stopped. In terror, he sees a thick cloud rising and fading until it disappears.

Something is rising . . . rising . . . no, falling . . . falling. Dying thoughts recapitulate the darkness of space. Juan Manuel Casehua, an inflamed mind — centuries, an instant, thoughts without end, ebullient cosmos, posthumous light of a dying star, words that trip over each other and get lost, only to reappear, memory of all the ages in a mad dance with no frontiers in time, yesterday and tomorrow together without day or night, today like a young boy who is sad during a fiesta. An old man and a boy contemplate the horrendous collision without hearing a sound. His tongue and lips are lashed by the words that blurt out in total abandon. His fever burns the sand and warms the sun. The liberating voices hurt him, spewing words that wound him as if he is vomiting thistles. The words abandon the mind of Juan Manuel Casehua like balls of fire that scrape the sky and fall upon this desert silence, there to become sand. When the wind blows they shall awaken again, or perhaps they will be awakened by some intruder's footsteps who knows nothing of death.

Here there is nothing, nothing — not even some green to give hope to someone, nor roots to sustain the fervor of prophets. Here there are only voices lost in time, voices that the wind drags along, that rise from tombs to dialogue eternally with the silence.

"I am thirsty, father, very thirsty."

"Go up there and chew on the saguaro, the bisnagas,⁵ pitayas,⁶ and drink the juice from the pulp in the morning sun when the vinoramas⁷ give forth their aroma. How good they are! How damp and fresh!"

"Father, do not bequeath this empire to me. I want another. I want a green one where life is peaceful. Corn will not grow here, father. It won't even bud."

"That's where the *yorí* are, the ones that fly like a *zipi* and crawl like a *zetahui*. With their evil magic they make machines that emit loud noises that break the eardrums and hide their deceit. The last son of Coyote Iguana they made into a hunted animal, and on his lands they built their mansions. These men with their mechanized words spit on the masses when they glorify race and justice."

"Mother, those repulsive beings that hide their smallness in the holes of the sandbanks, they are the repugnant Gila Monsters. At night they tell their children that in all creation there has never been bigger and more dominant beings. The little ones don't believe it and they go outside to laugh in plain daylight. On top of the burning sand they lay on their backs, their stomachs facing the sun, and they practically die laughing. Listen mother, listen. Do you hear? Listen! It is the Gila Monsters, poor creatures. They are moaning."

"No, my little boat, it is not the Gila Monsters that cry. It is the wind that is trembling. His whistle has been wounded by the *choyas*⁸ and *sibiris*."⁹

"Father, my father, I am very much afraid."

"Go to sleep my son; go to sleep, for the malignant *yoris* will eat the children who do not go to sleep early."

Through this accursed land that forever liberated itself from water, through these dunes that are sometimes red, sometimes white; through here Black Feathers passed. He led the great ancestors. Their path of hate they covered with the dead who remained behind like tree trunks without sap. They carried many of their wounded who were losing blood in spurts. The men were crying like old women as if ashamed for coming out of it alive. The women had their hands on their abdomens, protecting the precious seed in their gourd bellies where the passion of revenge lay palpitating. The children walked, undernourished, with poison and stones in their eyes; tearing at their lips with their teeth. They had been routed, and the children of the tiger *porhui* had just exacted a raging vengeance.

"Father, when I'm a man I'm going to kill many *yoris*."

"First, tear off the skin from the soles of their feet; then pull out their hair and let them loose to walk. *Yoribichi* dogs!"

"Mother, the filthy Gila Monsters cry over the death of their little ones. They are interwoven in a circle and cry. Oh, mother! They are burying themselves in history."

"Those are not the Gila Monsters who cry, my little boy. It is the wind. The cacti have sharpened the points of their daggers so that the wind will suffer as it passes by."

The dying Indian tried to cover his face in order to hide the shameless clarity of his memory.

18th of January, 1900. A red dawn over the Mazocoba. The new dawn gave light to the new century, and to new inequities. The

rocks at the foot of the Mazocoba, grey and whitish for centuries, were stained by a warm and oily red on that day of misery. Flesh and living cells, like large open roses, adorned the sharp rock.

General Torres, with well-armed soldiers, laid seige to the mountain known as Mazocoba in the mountains of Bacatete. At the summit, more than 3,000 Indians took refuge. Most of them were old people and women, led by Chief *Opodepe*. The punctilious General Torres ordered their extermination, claiming that within every single Indian was a ferocious guerrilla, even within the tiniest of infants. He commanded the fourth and eleventh battalions to cover the glens between the mountains, as well as other escape routes. Their guides were *torocoyoris*. The remaining troops were to advance up the mountain. The soldiers went about their duty; after all, they were only following orders. It seemed like a martial procession, and sensing another day of glory they were models of discipline.

At the summit of the Mazocoba the pursued Indians could hear the drum-like footsteps of the military men who advanced as they kicked stones loose and broke twigs. The children scratched at their mother's breasts. In the Indians' faces was the fear, the hate, and the deep anguish that they never talked about. The indolent soldiers advanced like stones, masters of panic and death, automatons who deal in crime and brutality.

"*Opodepe! Chief Opodepe! We are cut off by the yoris. We have no escape and no defense.*"

"Only degenerate peoples coexist with green. This nation, however, is for the Indians or it is for no one. We will not be a race of slaves nor a race of prisoners."

The Indians began moving toward the precipice, fighting each other, disappearing by the dozens in the tragic procession. Dolores Buitimea guided her three sons until they disappeared at the bottom of the precipice. She went while tenderly holding her infant in her arms. After them went Pablo Omocol. He helped his elderly father who was crippled in one leg. Together they jumped into the abyss. Young Juan Cuchi also went over. He was tall and athletic. He moved toward the edge with his arms around his pregnant wife. Hundreds went over. Thousands more could have fitted at the rocky bottom. And now not a single Indian remained at the top. Mazocoba! Oh, Mazocoba! Mazocoba, only two *yoris* could bring themselves to look at the bottom and see the grotesque tragedy. One of them was squeezing a tortured Christ in his hands, and praying. The other cried out the bitterness of the centuries which has existed since the dawn of man.

Indifference and forgotten memories have obscured what happened at Mazocoba, like a wound that heals over and leaves the dagger imbedded within. History, in its written version, is a vulgar whore that disdains those people who do not agree to adulate gold and power.

The Indian Casehua is dying. He shakes his head, for now the sand is up to his neck.

Who is that brave Indian? Who is he? Let us see him. Devil *Tetabiate!* Look how you run at breakneck speed. Let yourself run naked over the craggy ground. The spines of the young mesquites tear your skin to pieces. The pins of the barchatas¹⁰ puncture your feet and your stomach is full of aspic needles. Ah, terrible *Tetabiate!* Your hair is crimson with the blood of the *yoris*. That's the way, *Tetabiate!* Kill them! Kill them so that they tire of the death that they bring. Kill the *yoris*, *Tetabiate!* Kill them!

"Come, mother, come here. Look at the desert, mother. It is budding with trees! Malignant *yoris*. Bloody rivers. There is the shade, mother. Look at all the leaves hanging from those trees . . ."

"Those are not leaves, my son. They are dead birds. Some were martyred by hunger; others assassinated."

"Ah, ferocious *Cajeme*. Man of death and vengeance. Here! Come, *Cajeme*. Walk on this dust made of dried blood. Your conquered land. Do not swallow your rage, for that will poison you. Yell, instead. Yell and show them your clenched fist. Here, *yoris*, here is your damned glory that is fertilizing the land with putrid matter in order to give birth to reptiles.

"I am made of sand, and the water destroys me. Go! Go over there . . . where there's water . . . life. . ."

Juan Manuel Casehua tried to put feet on a dune in order to run through the desert. He couldn't. But the dune revealed a ridiculous human head sticking out of the sand and bathing in the moonlight. It will never be thirsty again. Never. It is drinking the glow-worms of the moon. Through goggle eyes it drinks the moon. Between its teeth it sucks up the moon with a whistle. Through its ears the moon enters, shrieking that she was violated and that she is pregnant. Obliquely he twists out a malicious smile. Juan Manuel Casehua no longer has a dark and earth-colored face. It is platinous, transparent, like the faces of angels. The moon filters through the labyrinths of its nasal passages and tries to escape through the rectum; but it is obstructed by the sand. Juan Manuel Casehua is not

sad. He breaks out in loud laughter. Greedily, he drinks and drinks. His stomach, legs, all of him, becomes a single organ; while an undulating gleefulness tickles him. It is mischievous, nibbling, and greedy, boiling like a steaming pot of rice. The impudent and sensual moon whispers to him again that she's been had by gringos and Russians, and that she feels kicks inside. Lovely child! He laughs from ear to ear, showing his teeth that now look like enormous Spanish combs. The entire face breaks into laughter, like a ripe pomegranate. He is no longer thirsty; feels no more pain; neither fear, nor hunger, anguish, frustration, or nostalgia. All that now belongs to the future. From there, in retrocession day by day, a footstep will sink into the sands of the past that engulfs continents, races, memories, names, and words that conform to the deserts of death and nothingness. Sand, sand, waves of sand, whirlwinds of sand, hurricanes of sand, formidable sand of oblivion that buries everything.

There are no cavalry or cannons to stop it, and the wind howls with fury, dragging with total impunity the dry cadaver of the dunes. At dawn the bonfire will resurge, warming its machetes until they're red hot, in order to sink them without pity into the entrails of this land that wants to roar but only cries timidly through the voices of the cicadas.

Tomorrow, when the sun rises, from horizon to horizon the dunes will appear like the backs of tired camels, and when the evening is hiding his death, the dunes will only multiply it.

diciembre de 1968

Tucson, Arizona

GLOSSARY OF YAQUI TERMS

Yaqui — an Indian tribe of Mexico and S. W. United States; their language

buqui — an infant

yorí — a white man

zipi — a hawk

zetahui — a snake

sáncura — malignant

porohui — a reptile like the iguana

yoribichi — derogatory term for a naked, white man

torocoyori — a traitor to his tribe or race

Opodepe — name of a famous Yaqui chieftain

Tetabiate — name of a famous Yaqui warrior

Cajeme — name of a Yaqui leader

SPANISH VOCABULARY

¹ladino — a Spanish-speaking, fair-skinned (as opposed to an Indian-speaker) person

²Desierto de Altar — Desert of the Altar, an extension of the Yuma Desert

³choyal — a grove of choyas, a species of cacti

⁴curved machetes — *Guadañas*, in the original; used as a symbol of death

⁵biznaga — type of cactus

⁶pitayas — fruit of the pitaya cactus

⁷vinorama — desert shrub that emits an aromatic fragrance

⁸choya — type of cactus

⁹sibiri — type of cactus

¹⁰barchata — a desert shrub

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In the last issue of EL GRITO (Vol. II, No. 1, pp. 13-26) Professor Romano presented a review essay dealing with social science studies of Mexican-Americans and how such studies have grossly distorted their history. He ended by recommending that the concept of the Traditional Culture be abolished, and the concept of the Historical Culture be adopted in its place. He added that the intellectual currents of Mexican-American life must be known in order to know something about their historical presence. This article, a condensation of a forthcoming book by Professor Romano, addresses itself to that topic.— Editor.

The Historical and Intellectual Presence of Mexican-Americans

OCTAVIO IGNACIO ROMANO—V.

— Muchos murieron, otros se fueron —

During and following the Mexican Revolution of 1910, it is estimated that one of every ten people left the country. Some went to Spain, some to France, some went to Cuba, to Guatemala, but most went north to the United States. Among those who went to the north were printers, poets, civil servants, merchants, farmers, school teachers, campesinos, musicians, bartenders, blacksmiths, jewelers, carpenters, cowboys, mestizos, village Indians, religious people, atheists, infants, mothers, Masons, counter-revolutionaries, philosophers.

Among those who went north was José Vasconcelos who later became Secretary of Education in Mexico. So did Martín Luis Guzmán, author of the classic novel of the Revolution, *El Aguila y la Serpiente*. Adolfo de la Huerta started the rebellion in northwest Mexico, was Provisional President (1920), and persuaded Pancho Villa to settle on the Canutillo Ranch. Huerta finally fled to Los Angeles, California, worked there as a singing instructor, and later returned to Mexico. Another northern migrant was José María Maytorena, governor of Sonora, supporter of Madero, follower of Villa,

who finally ended up in California. Ramón Puente was a doctor, teacher, journalist and writer in the Villa army. Following Villa's defeat, Puente left for the United States. Along with the others, these men were among the great number of people who became the "immigrants" and "refugees" from the Mexican Revolution. In the words of Ernesto Galarza:

As civil war spread over the republic after 1911 a major exodus from the countryside began. Landowners fled to the large cities, principally the capital, followed by hundreds of thousands of refugees who could find no work. This was one of the two great shifts that were to change radically the population patterns, until then overwhelmingly rural. The other current was in the direction of the United States, now accessible by rail. It moved in the dilapidated coaches with which the Mexican lines had been equipped by their foreign builders, in cabooses fitted with scant privacy, on engine tenders and on flat cars for the steerage trade. "A la capital o al norte" (to Mexico City or to the border) became the alternatives for the refugees from the cross-fires of revolution.¹

In the north they worked on the railroad, in the clearing of mesquite, in fish canneries, tomato fields, irrigation, and all other such work that became so drearily familiar to the people living in the colonias. At the same time, for many, the Revolution continued to be fought in the barrios in the United States, as described by José Antonio Villareal in his novel, *Pocho*.

The man who died under the bridge that night had no name. Who he was, where he came from, how he lived — these things did not matter, for there were thousands like him at this time. This particular man had fought in the army of General Carrillo, who, in turn, was one of the many generals in the Revolution. And, like thousands of unknown soldiers before and after him, this man did not reason, did not know, had but a vague idea of his battle. Eventually there was peace, or a lull in the fighting, and he escaped with his wife and children and crossed the border to the north.²

Not only did an attenuated version of the Revolution continue in the north, with plot and counterplot, avoidance and memories of hate, but there also continued the ideas, the intellectualizations, and

the philosophies of the day. In the northern colonias, as was happening in Mexico, people still discussed and argued over the relative merits of Indianist philosophies, of Historical Experience and Confrontations, and about the philosophical and historical significance of the Mestizo. These relevant philosophies became a part of the common poetry readings of those days in the barrios. They also appeared in the colonia newspapers of the day, in stage and other dramatic presentations, in the music of the trumpet and guitars, in schools of Mexican culture, in the rationales and goals of the autonomous labor unions as well as in the constitutions and by-laws of the sociedades mutualistas. In some cases, the ideas had been transplanted from Mexico. In others, they were merged with pre-existent philosophies among the Mexican descended people already in the United States. And through it all, there continued the human quest and the conflict between Nationalistic Man and Universal Man, between Activist Man and Existential Man, Cleric and Anti-Cleric, Mutualist, Classical Anarchist,⁸ Nihilist Man, Agrarian and Urban Man, Indian Man and Mestizo.

These are the principal historical *currents of thought* that have gone into the making of the mind of el Mexicano, the "refugee," el cholo, the Pocho, the Chicano, Pachuco, the Mexican-American. They have their roots in history and currently appear in three main-streams of thought — Indianist Philosophy, Historical Confrontation, and the philosophically transcendent idea of the Mestizo in the form of Cultural Nationalism. These are philosophies, styles of thought, ideas as they persist over time. At times they coincide with actual historical occurrences. Other times they lie relatively dormant, or appear in a poetic metaphor, a song, a short story told to children, or in a marriage pattern. These philosophies were articulated in the post-Diaz days in Mexico and in the days of the Revolution.

— En aquéllos días —

The ideologies and philosophies that gave air to the smoldering fires of the Mexican Revolution of 1910 were pluralistic, reflecting the composition of Mexico at that time. Many world views, numerous projected plans, desires for power, and historical precedents all contributed to this fiery outburst that led to untold human agonies, an attempted reconstruction, and a massive exodus. In the *Labyrinth of Solitude*, the philosopher-poet Octavio Paz attempted bravely to deal with these criss-cross currents in their historical relation to the

present. His published effort resulted in a somewhat Quixotic quest for *THE Mexican* — *El Puro Mexicano* — a quest that fluttered between the two extremes of National Man and Universal Man. What emerged from his search were NOT many masks, as Octavio Paz insisted in the Freudianesque overtones of his work. Instead, what emerged from his search were but different life styles which represented different historical trends, a variety of individual experiences, and multiple intellectual currents — in short, Many Mexicans, just as today there are Many Mexican-Americans. Quite often, this seemingly endless multiplicity represents many men. Equally often, it represents every man.

— Cada loco con su tema — dicho

In 1926, José Vasconcelos, former Secretary of Education in Mexico, wrote, "The struggle of the Latin-American revolutionist is the struggle of democratic European ideas to impose themselves upon the Oriental indigenous type of despotism."⁴ Vasconcelos condensed his notions into the "philosophy of the Ibero-american race," having its origins in an ethnically pluralistic Spain, transplanted to an equally pluralistic Mexico, reinforced by the universalistic components of the Catholic faith, and ultimately manifested in the Mestizo — genetic assimilation with European ideology integrated into the contemporary Mexico of his day.⁵ The heart of his argument, of course, was that ideas invariably supercede the biological imperatives of miscegenation. Therefore, if miscegenation was the best vehicle for advancing pre-existent ideas, then such a course was desirable for Mexico. In all this process he envisioned ". . . the hope that the mestizo will produce a civilization more universal in its tendency than any other race of the past."⁶

This was not the only view that depicted the thought currents of the time. For example, Octavio Paz has written, "The Revolution had antecedents, causes and motives, but in a profound sense it lacked precursors. . . . The Revolution began as a demand for truth and honesty in the government, as can be seen from the Plan of San Luis (Oct. 5, 1910). Gradually the movement found and defined itself, in the midst of battle and later when in power. Its lack of a set program gave it popular authenticity and originality. This fact accounts for both its greatness and its weaknesses."⁷ Then, "The Revolution, without any doctrines (whether imported or its own) to guide it, was an explosion of reality and a groping search for the universal doctrine that would justify it and give it a place in

the history of America and the world.”⁸ Finally, “Our movement was distinguished by a lack of any previous ideological system and by a hunger for land.”⁹

The views of Joé Vasconcelos and those of Octavio Paz reflect two major trends of thought at the time of the Revolution. First, there was the articulation of the desire to emulate pre-existent ideologies, i.e., *el Mestisaje*. Second, there was the desire to do autonomously, to confront, and then to articulate. Both ultimately envisioned something uniquely Mexican in its final outcome, a new synthesis. There was a third trend, the Zapata movement. This movement was a form of Indianism as intellectualized largely by the school teacher Montaño, a pure Indian. According to Vasconcelos, “There was a time when the European dress was not allowed in the Zapata territory; and those Mexicans of white Spanish skin that happened to join the Zapata armies had to adopt the dress and the manner of the Indian, in a certain way had to become indianized before they could be accepted.”¹⁰ As Paz describes it, “The Zapatistas did not conceive of Mexico as a future to be realized but as a return to origins.”¹¹ It seemed almost as if a star had exploded long before, and only now could they see its light.

The Zapatista-Indianist philosophy, the Historical Confrontation, and the philosophy of the Mestizo were the three dominant philosophies of Revolutionary Mexico. Sometimes elements of one trend of thought would blend with another, as did the Indianist with Historical Confrontation. But when this took place it was in a complementary fashion, and not at the expense of the ideological premises that were guiding each chain of thought. In the same manner, any given individual could ally himself with any of the three philosophies in the course of his life, or shift from one to the other depending on surrounding circumstances, just as was the case with the “whites” who joined the Zapatista Indian forces. In short, the three ideological currents actually gave individuals alternatives from which to choose. These alternatives, in turn, represented relatively new historical manifestations at the turn of the century — cumulative changes that had been taking place in Mexico. They represented, therefore, the historical development of thought and not the rigid, unbending, and unchanging Traditional Culture so commonly and uncritically accepted in current sociological treatises that deal with people of Mexican descent. At the same time, *these three alternatives also made it possible for individual people, even families, to be living three histories at once*, a fact that escaped Octavio Paz when he accepted the notion of the Freudianesque masks.

In any event, when the time came for people to change locale and move to the United States, this was but another in a long series of changes that had been taking place.

— Cada cabeza un mundo — dicho

It is this complexity of thought and its many individual manifestations that made so popular the saying, "Each head a world in itself." For multiple histories could hardly have done other than breed complex people and equally complex families. It is this complexity, actually pluralism, that was transferred with the "refugees" and the "immigrants" to the north and which appeared in the colonias and barrios. This complexity was condensed in the recent poem by Rodolfo Gonzales of Denver, Colorado, titled "*I am Joaquin.*" Just who is this Joaquin? Joaquin is Cuahtemoc, Cortez, Nezahualcoyotl of the Chichimecas. Joaquin is Spaniard, Indian, Mestizo, the village priest Hidalgo, Morelos, Guerrero, Don Benito Juarez, Zapata, Yaqui, Chamula, Tarahumara, Diaz, Huerta, Francisco Madero, Juan Diego, Alfego Baca, the Espinoza brothers, Murietta. Joaquin is slave. Joaquin is master. Joaquin is exploiter, and he is the exploited. Joaquin is corridos, Latino, Hispano, Chicano. Joaquin is in the fields, suburbs, mines, and prisons. Joaquin's body lies under the ground in Mexico. His body lies under the ground in the United States, and in the "hills of the Alaskan Isles, on the corpse-strewn beach of Normandy, the foreign land of Korea, and now, Viet Nam."¹³ Joaquin is many men. Joaquin is every man.

The ideas that were, and are, present wherever people of Mexican descent live involve the Indianist philosophy, Historical Confrontation, and Cultural Nationalism. Now, to the three currents of thought manifested historically there was added a fourth, The Immigrant Experience.

— Indianism —

Indianism has never been a focus or a rallying cry for action among Mexican-Americans as was Indigenismo during the War for Independence and the Revolution in Mexico. Yet, symbolically, the Indian penetrates throughout, and permeates, major aspects of Mexican-American life, and hardly a barrio exists that does not have someone who is nicknamed "El Indio," or "Los Indios." For decades, Mexican-American youth have felt a particularly keen resentment at the depiction of Indians in American movies, while Indian themes consistently have been common subject matter for

the neighborhoods' amateur artists, a fact that may be called an anachronism by some or the dislodging of history by others. On occasion, los Matachines still make their Indian appearance in churches, and Aztec legends still pictorially tell and retell their stories in barrio living rooms, in kitchens, in bars, restaurants, tortillerias, and Chicano newspapers. The stern face of Don Benito Juarez still peers out of books, still surveys living rooms, and still takes a place of prominence in many Sociedad Mutualista halls and in the minds of men throughout the Southwest. Small wonder, then, that several hundred years after the totally indigenous existence of Mexico reference is still made to these roots and origins in the Mexican-American community. Small wonder, also, that thousands of miles away from the Valley of Mexico, in contemporary Denver, Colorado, Señor Rodolfo Gonzales utilizes recurrent Indian themes in his poetic work. At the same time, such is found in the wall paintings at the Teatro Campesino center in Del Rey, California, and Indian art and life are common subject matter in such newspapers as *Bronze*, *La Raza*, *El Gallo*, as well as others. One should not be surprised, therefore, that the poet Alurista wrote in 1968:

Unexpectedly
 my night gloom came
 injusta capa fúnebre

 y corrí hacia el sol
 el de mis padres
 the one that printed
 on my sarape
 fantastic colors
 through the prism
 — la pirámide del sol
 at the sacrificial Teocatl
 my fathers wore their plumage
 to listen
 and soplaron vida con sus solares rayos
 en mi raza¹⁴

Chichimeca, Azteca, Indio, Don Bento Juarez, Emiliano Zapata y Montaña; in art, prose, poetry, religion, and in Mexican-American study programs initiated by Mexican-Americans themselves in colleges, universities, and high schools, the presence of the Indian is manifested. It hardly need be added that the Indian is also manifested in the faces of so many Mexican-Americans. The Indian is

root and origin, past and present, virtually timeless in his barrio manifestations — a timeless symbol of opposition to cultural imperialism.

— Historical Confrontation —

The philosophy of confrontations has had thousands of manifestations, from the retelling in an isolated corrido to protest demonstrations by thousands of people of Mexican descent in the United States. It, too, has an old history which in the north began with personages such as Joaquin Murietta, Alfego Baca, the Espinoza brothers, and Pancho Villa. Memories of these manifestations spread widely, as attested to by Enrique Hank Lopez when he wrote about his childhood in the United States:

. . . Pancho Villa's exploits were a constant topic of conversation in our household. My entire childhood seems to be shadowed by his presence. At our dinner table, almost every night, we would listen to endlessly repeated accounts of this battle, that strategem, or some great act of Robin Hood kindness by *el centenario del norte*. I remember how angry my parents were when they saw Wallace Beery in *Viva Villa!* 'Garbage by stupid Gringos' they called it. They were particularly offended by the sweaty, unshaven sloppiness of Beery's portrayal.¹⁵

Confrontationist philosophy continued with the labor protest movement among people of Mexican descent in the United States, which at one time became manifest in eight different states and which now has lasted for over eighty-five years. It also has taken other forms, such as the Pachuco who extended the notion of confrontation to a perpetual and daily activity with his own uniform and his own language. *The Pachuco movement was one of the few truly separatist movements in American History*. Even then, it was singularly unique among separatist movements in that it did not seek or even attempt a return to roots and origins. The Pachuco indulged in a *self-separation from history*, created his own reality as he went along even to the extent of creating his own language. This is the main reason why Octavio Paz, digging as he did into history in search for the "true Mexican," felt it necessary to "put down" the Pachuco. By digging into history for answers, Octavio Paz was forced to exclude people who had separated themselves from history, especially Mexican history. Thus, in denying the Mexicaness of the Pachuco, Octavio Paz denied the Mexican aspect of the

processes that went into his creation. That is why Paz ended up by making the Pachuco into a caricature akin to a societal clown, for it was only by doing so that he could enhance the notion of *el puro Mexicano* in his own mind.

It is unfortunate that Octavio Paz chose to ignore the trend of thought represented by the famous, disillusioned, existential poet of Mexico, Antonio Plaza, who wrote in typical fashion, "Es la vida un *enjambre de ilusiones / a cuyo extremo están los desengaños.*"¹⁶ Had Paz chosen to acknowledge Antonio Plaza, and the philosophical trend he represented in his Mexican, existential, self-separation from history, then perhaps he would have understood a little about the Pachuco. For the Pachuco, too, separated himself from history, and in doing so became transformed into Existential Man. And, like existential man everywhere, he too was brutally beaten down.

The language of the confrontationist philosophy has been Spanish, English, Pocho, or Pachuco. Almost always, it has addressed itself to an immediate situation spanning the social environment from rural to urban. Normally, it has been regional or local in its manifestations. On different occasions, the confrontationist philosophy has been self-deterministic, protectionist, nationalistic, reacting to surrounding circumstances, and existentialist. The present Chicano movement has incorporated all of these alternatives in its various contemporary manifestations, making it one of the most complex movements in the history of Mexican-Americans.

Having been a recurrent theme in Mexican-American history, like that of Indianism, the confrontationist philosophy also makes up a part of study programs initiated by Mexican-Americans in colleges, universities, and high schools. Like Indianism, it is a history that has yet to be written in its entirety.

— Cultural Nationalism —

Vine a Comala porque me dijeron que acá
vivía mi padre, un tal Pedro Páramo.¹⁷

In Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Nevada, Utah, Oklahoma, Kansas, Arkansas, Ohio, Missouri, Illinois, Michigan, New York, and other states, symbols of Mexican and Mexican-American culture can be seen. Invariably, in one way or another, these symbols are associated with the Mestizos — present descendants of untold Mexican antecedents and reduplicated in an ever-expanding northern arc. Different people have known them as Mexicanos, Cholos, Pochos, México-Norteamer-

canos, Chicanos, Mexican-Americans. Viewed as a group, they comprise a pluralistic minority within a pluralistically divided nation. They speak Spanish, or English, or both in a great variety of combinations.

The Mestizo-based notion of Cultural Nationalism is prominent among them. But this cultural nationalism is of a very particular kind, unamerican in a sense, and considerably unlike the rampant ethnocentrism with its traditional xenophobia (commonly called self-interest) that has been so characteristic of ethnic groups in the United States.

The fiestas patrias, the characteristic foods, the music, the sociedades mutualistas, and all of the other by-products of culture that people write about, are simply appurtenances to more profound conceptualizations regarding the nature and the existence of man. Generally, as a group, Mexican-Americans have been virtually the only ethnic group in the United States that still systematically proclaims its Mestizaje — multiple genetic and cultural origins exhibiting multiplicity rather than seeking purity. Philosophically and historically this has manifested itself in a trend toward Humanistic Universalism, Behavioral Relativism, and a recurrent form of Existentialism, this last of which is often naïvely and erroneously interpreted as fatalism.

The Indianist views, the Confrontationist Philosophy, and Cultural Nationalism with its Mestizaje-based Humanist Universalism, Behavioral Relativism, and Existentialism, when related to the types of people who have immigrated from Mexico, those born in the United States, as well as people of Mexican descent who were residents in conquered western lands, all give some glimmer of the complexity of this population, especially when one views it internally from the perspectives of multiple philosophies regarding the existence and nature of Mexican-American man. For, in truth, just as “el puro Mexicano” does not exist, neither does “the pure Mexican-American,” despite the massive efforts by social scientists to fabricate such a mythical being under the monolithic label of the “Traditional Culture,” rather than the more realistic concept of multiple histories and philosophies.

This multiplicity of historical philosophies, to a considerable degree, represents a continuation of the pluralism that existed in Mexico during the Revolution, undergoing modifications and shifts in emphasis. At the same time, it can be said that the philosophies of Indianism, Historical Confrontation, and Cultural Nationalism to this day represent the most salient views of human existence

within the Mexican-American population. To these there has been added the immigrant dimension.

— The Immigrant Experience —

I'm sitting in my history class,
The instructor commences rapping,
I'm in my U. S. History class,
And I'm on the verge of napping.

The Mayflower landed on Plymouth Rock.
Tell me more! Tell me more!
Thirteen colonies were settled.
I've heard it all before.

What did he say?
Dare I ask him to reiterate?
Oh why bother
It sounded like he said,
George Washington's my father.

I'm reluctant to believe it,
I suddenly raise my mano.
If George Washington's my father,
Why wasn't he Chicano?

— Richard Olivas¹⁸

Just as could be expected from a pluralistic population exhibiting multiple histories, people of Mexican descent have adjusted to life in the United States in many different ways, including the Pachuco's self-separation from history, the organizers of labor unions, the publishing of bi-lingual newspapers, and the increasingly militant student population. By and large, these adjustments mostly fall into four broad categories: Anglo-Saxon Conformity, Stabilized Differences, Realigned Pluralism, and Bi-Culturalism.

Anglo-Saxon Conformity. A number of people of Mexican descent have eschewed virtually all identity with their cultural past, no longer speak Spanish, and possibly they have changed their name and anglicized it. Most, if not all, of these people can be said to have been acculturated, which, generally, is the process by which people exchange one set of problems for another.

Stabilized Differences. Since 1921 there have been well over 1,000,000 immigrants from Mexico. In various communities they

have found pockets of people who have sustained the basic Mexican way of life, along with its multiple histories and philosophies. These pockets vary somewhat as one travels from Brownsville, Texas, to El Paso, to Albuquerque, New Mexico to Tucson, Arizona and through California and over to Colorado. Throughout this area one still hears the respect titles of Don and Doña, the formal Usted, as well as a variety of dialects of the Spanish language. This population comprises the heart of the sociedades mutualistas, the fiestas patrias, the music, food, and the other by-products of culture mentioned elsewhere in this paper.

Realigned Pluralism. It has been the experience of many immigrant groups to take on the general ways of the surrounding society, only to discover that despite their efforts they are still excluded from the main currents for one reason or another. Such has also happened to Mexican-Americans. As a result, those who have participated in such behavior often tend to establish ethnically oriented and parallel activities and institutions, principally organizational, such as ball clubs, gangs, etc. In addition, other organizational activities include scholarship oriented organizations, those that are charity oriented, community service oriented, as well as political organizations. Within this sphere one also finds the common phenomenon of the "third generation return." That is, quite often members of the third generation return to identify themselves with their own ethnic group after having undergone the process of "assimilation."

Bi-Culturalism. Despite the merciless educational pressures to stamp out bi-culturalism and bi-lingualism among Mexican-Americans in schools and colleges, it still persists in many varied and developing forms. It exists, for example, all along the border areas among those entrepreneurs who operate equally well on both sides of the international border. It also exists among the untold number of Mexican-Americans who are interpreters, either on a professional or voluntary basis. There are many others who can deal with a bi-cultural universe, such as owners of Mexican restaurants, bookstores, gift shops, musicians and the like.

More recently a new phenomenon has begun to appear in increasing numbers. Specifically, more and more Mexican-American students are going to college. Many of them come from impoverished homes where reading resources were unnecessarily limited. Some of these students, attending college, gravitate toward Spanish or Latin-American majors. As a consequence, they begin to read Juan Rulfo, Martín Luis Guzmán, Gabriela Mistral, Pablo Neruda,

Gabriel García Márquez, and they hear the classical music of Chavez, Villalobos, Revueltas; or they see the art of Tamayo, Cuevas, Esteban Villa, Salvador Roberto Torres, Rene Yañez. As a consequence, such students eschew not their cultural past but rather reintegrate into it at the professional and intellectual level and they are well on their way toward bi-culturalism at another dimension.

The recent Mexican-American study programs in colleges and universities are certain to enhance and accelerate this process, especially if they adhere to the bi-lingual base. Therefore, in the near future it will become more and more possible for Mexican-American students to avoid the assimilative fallacies and pitfalls of the past and join in the truly exciting and challenging universe of bi-culturalism. In this way, not only will they participate in significant innovations in higher education, but they will also take a big step toward realizing one of the promises contained in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

— Many Mexican-Americans —

Yo, señor, no soy malo, aunque no me faltarían motivos para serlo. Los mismos cueros tenemos todos los mortales al nacer y sin embargo, cuando vamos creciendo, el destino se complace en variarnos como si fuésemos de cera y destinarnos por sendas diferentes al mismo fin: la muerte. Hay hombres a quienes se les ordena marchar por el camino de las flores, y hombres a quienes se les manda tirar por el camino de los cardos y de las chumberas. Aquéllos gozan de un mirar sereno y al aroma de su felicidad sonríen con la cara inocente; estos otros sufren del sol violento de la llanura y arrugan el ceño como las alimañas por defenderse. Hay mucha diferencia entre adornarse las carnes con arrebol y colonia, y hacerlo con tatuajes que después nadie ha de borrar ya . . .¹⁹

Indianist philosophy, Confrontationist, Cultural Nationalism based on Mestizaje with trends toward Humanistic Universalism, Behavioral Relativism, and Existentialism. Assimilation, Mexicanism, Realigned Pluralism, and Bi-Culturalism. Cholos, Pochos, Pachucos, Chicanos, Mexicanos, Hispanos, Spanish-surnamed people, Mexican-Americans. Many labels. Because this is such a complex population, it is difficult to give one label to them all. And probably the first to resist such an effort would be these people themselves, for such a

monolithic treatment would violate the very pluralistic foundations upon which their historical philosophies have been based.

There is another dimension to this complexity, one involving the family. Traditionally, in the United States, the Mexican family has been dealt with as if it were monolithic, authoritarian, and uni-dimensional. This is a gross oversimplification based on sheer ignorance. The truth of the matter is that virtually every Mexican-American family takes several forms and includes many types of people, from assimilationist to Chicano, to cultural nationalist, and through all varieties including "un Español" thrown in every now and then for good measure. Mexican-American families have individuals who no longer speak Spanish, who speak only Spanish, or who speak a combination of both. In short, the same complexity that is found in the general Mexican-American population is also found in the family of virtually every Mexican-American.

If the day should ever come when all of these people are willingly subsumed under one label or banner, when they align themselves only under one philosophy, on that day, finally, they will have become totally and irrevocably Americanized. On that day, their historical alternatives and freedoms in personal choice of life-styles, and their diversity, will have been permanently entombed in the histories of the past.

Berkeley, Califa

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El Espejo

SILVIO VILLAVICENCIO

Soy un fue y un será y un es cansado

— Quevedo

AYER, cuando Elena vino a buscarme, me hice el desentendido: tenía prisa porque se fuera.

— Te veré más tarde . . . Luego . . . cuando pueda — le dije.

Y se le fue subiendo la furia hasta la boca, hasta los ojos. Y oí su voz:

— ¡Estúpido! — dijo Elena.

Luego vino el silencio.

Rabos de pintura, ojos de gata. Elena miró las paredes azules; yo me tumbé en la cama, viendo hacia arriba. . . . Pero en realidad yo no miraba nada: pensaba. Y Elena estaba allí: inmóvil, vacía, con sus ojos alargados, alargados, profundos. . . .

No tiene caso revolver recuerdos: tal vez yo lo he inventado todo y nada sucedió realmente. Pero sucede que los hechos me atrapan, me penetran. Cada cosa, aislada, no significa realmente nada; pero todo junto es como una gran masa de niebla. Por otra parte, yo bien quisiera estar muy por encima de mis recuerdos; mas, tal como soy, resulta inútil, imposible: solamente siendo de otra manera podría evadirme. No, no estoy de voluntario: mi obligado papel es vacío y siniestro. Y no hay ninguna forma de escapar: todos los caminos son absurdos. ¿Pero estoy realmente vivo? ¿Es de tarde o amanece?

Ya no recuerdo cuándo conocí a Elena: ¿Hace dos años? ¿Tres? ¿O no la conocí nunca? Bueno, hace dos o tres años yo le dije:

— ¿Te vienes conmigo?

Y no me contestó nada, pero me apretó fuertemente por el estómago. El hotel estaba inmundo; hasta en la mañana me dí cuenta de eso. Entonces era cuando Elena se miraba las piernas: porque a Elena le gustaba mirarse, le gusta mirarse. . . . ¿Era mejor la calle al crepúsculo? (De noche, casi de noche: cuando aún no se pierden las fronteras del último sol.) De cerca, mirándola bien, ¿era bonita Elena? Elena trabajaba en un bar y me mordía los labios. Entonces yo sentía ganas de patearla; pero yo no decía nada, y la furia se me agolpaba de pronto como una perra rabiosa, como una aguja en la lengua, como una nube en el ojo. Sentía miedo.

Venas azules en las muñecas. Ayer Elena miró sus brazos, luego miró sus manos otra vez. Paredes azules, casi negras. Me levanté despacio, abrí la ventana y pensé: *Los ciegos no tienen cuerpos, no tienen sombras en la tarde; pero su noche es antigua, más antigua que este querido sol que flota en el cielo.* Y luego miré los libros, los miré largo rato, sin decir nada. . . . Y leí despacio, para mí sólo:

*Calla mi lengua; por mis miembros, tenue
llama se esparce; con sonido suyo
zumba mi oído; cúbrese mis ojos
con doble sombra.*

Y, otra vez, como de golpe, llegó el silencio.

Yo me creí ciego; de modo que cuando Elena se puso a mirarme fue tarde, porque ya estaba ciego.

“Soy el hombre sin ojos”, pensé. Pero luego me dije: “azul”. Y vi azul, por adentro de mi cabeza.

En estos instantes es cuando la lucidez de mis actos siempre me invade y me posee. ¿Por eso soy un hombre así? Es evidente, pero esta impresión me parece triste y obscena, o casi angustiosa.

— Estoy ciego — dije.

Y estuve ciego largo rato, largo rato, hasta que — afuera — oí el ruido de un hombre.

— Es el señor Sánchez — me dijo Elena.

Le había descendido la ira, y sólo quedaba allí un rostro inmóvil, persistente, frío: la nariz, la boca y los ojos, terriblemente fijos.

— Es verdad — le dije.

Elena era un sombra. Vértigo. Elena era una piedra en la espalda: el desamparo. *Los ciegos no conocen el miedo, porque cuando a mitad de la noche . . .* Y en ese instante Elena abrió los dientes, movió los labios:

— ¿En qué piensas?

— No pienso en nada, Elena — le dije.

Nuevos ruidos sonaron: El señor Sánchez debió largarse: oí sus pasos bajando la escalera, andando el pasillo. Oí su tos, ¡cof, cof, cof! Oí el ruido de la puerta al cerrarse: ¡click! Luego pensé en su cuerpo pesado, caminando calle abajo, arrastrando también su sombra, hasta perderse. . . . Y entonces habló Elena:

— Quiero vomitar. . . .

Parpadearon las luces en la calle y se oyeron rumores ahogados y lejanos. En momentos así, sucede que el aire se carga de tensión, los minutos se vuelven lentos y viscosos, crece el silencio como un al amenazante; pero, de pronto suena un grito como un tajo. Y eso mismo fue lo que sucedió ayer.

— Quiero vomitar — dijo de nuevo.

— Eso te aliviará — le dije.

Pero eso era una idea, algo que le congestionaba el rostro y le hacía hinchar las venas. Sólo una idea, porque no, nunca vomitaba nada: era una trampa.

Así que cuando Elena salió embarazada, yo le dije:

— Eso sería de lo peor: es preciso evitarlo. Algún doctor podrá sacarlo, antes de que nazca. . . .

Pero no pude convencerla: estaba decidida. Y ayer traté de ayudarla de nuevo.

— ¡Nunca! ¡Nunca! — gritó.

Brotó de nuevo la ira en su rostro. Y entonces fue cuando Elena debió golpearse con algo; o tal vez fueron mis puños los que golpearon su rostro. En todo caso, un hilillo de sangre le brotó de los labios. Elena era una sombra, pero le sentaba bien ese pequeño hilo de sangre en la boca.

Pensándolo bien, nunca me importó realmente que tuviera un hijo: sé que no deben importarme esas cosas tan pequeñas. . . . Pero, por otra parte, ¿que significa tener un hijo? ¡Nada! Absolutamente nada. Eso está bien claro. Y, además, como no tengo donde elegir, debo dejar que las cosas sigan su marcha. Se supone que así debe de ser. . . . No, no debo dejarme vencer por mis temores: olvidar, olvidar.

Es absurdo, pero esta explicación me tranquiliza siempre. Entonces ya no siento nada: ni tristeza ni angustia. Mas la sensación sólo me dura un rato: después vuelvo a ser yo mismo, y toda mi existencia se puebla de temores y de ruidos: suben mis recuerdos desde el fondo.

A Elena tal vez la quise alguna vez, porque yo soy como las demás gentes: voy a los cafés y a los cines, ando por las calles y miro las vidrieras. . . . En suma: estoy atado. Aunque también creo que fueron los deseos los que me hicieron buscarla. Sí, eso debió de ser. Pero todo eso ha terminado: ni la deseo ni la amo. Es una sombra, como la demás gente.

Y ayer, después del ruido, cuando le volvió su calma, dijo la sombra:

— El señor Sánchez es un perfecto imbécil. Lo que se dice un puerco: hoy ha tratado de abrazarme, al subir. Y yo voy a tener un hijo tuyo. . . . ¿Te das cuenta? ¡Un hijo!

Algunas veces Elena miraba sin ver, como si estuviera muerta, como si estuviera sola. Y ayer estaba sola — o muerta — pero trataba

de salvarse, de salvarme. Vértigo. *Las muchachas que trabajan en los bares no deberían de morder los labios. . . .* Y entonces le dije:

— Pero Elena, a mí me gusta saludarle. Fíjate: por las mañanas yo le digo: “Buenos días, señor Sánchez”, y sonrío. Por las tardes también le saludo. Y así ha sido desde que le conozco. Mas una vez tuve un hermoso sueño: le destripaba los ojos a patadas. . . .

— No hay que pensar en eso: es una burla. Si es varón le pondré tu mismo nombre — dijo Elena.

— . . . Y por las tardes también le sonrío. . . .

Miré su rostro, me hundí en sus ojos. *No hay que pensar en nada. ¡No hay que pensar en nada! Huir, huir, evadirse finalmente. ¿En qué piensas? ¿En qué pensamos todos?*

Elena siguió hablando. Y entonces me dijo:

— ¿Sabes? Un día de estos fuí con el doctor.

Pero yo no quería saber nada del asunto: de modo que también estaba sordo. Y por eso le dije:

— Hoy lo he visto de nuevo, Elena. . . .

— Si es mujer se llamará como yo: Elena. ¡Debemos de pensar en nuestra hija!

— . . . Y hay que tomar en cuenta que el señor Sánchez siempre finge. Todo rostro es una máscara. Lo sé, lo he leído en algún libro. . . .

— No quiero saber nada de eso. He venido a hablarte de otra cosa — me dijo.

Vamos suponiendo que Elena se hubiera olvidado del asunto. ¿Seguiría haciendo las mismas cosas? ¿Repetiría los mismos actos y diría las mismas palabras? Sentí cansancio: ya no podía mirar ni cerrar los ojos. Elena era un espectro irritante. Se miró los brazos, se miró toda en el espejo. . . . Y debió cansarse de tanto mirar su cuerpo, de tanto mirar su rostro. . . . Pero esto resultó lo peor: Elena dijo que debíamos estar juntos, que no era bueno eso de estar solos, y habló otra vez de nuestro niño-niña.

— Un día te volverás loco. . . . ¿En qué piensas? Quiero que nazca con tus ojos. . . . ¡Mi hija!

Las venas le subían por los brazos delgados, hasta el cuello. *Un día te volverás loco, un día te volverás loco: estarás siglos y siglos afuera del mundo. . . .* Elena se puso las manos en las sienes. Estar con Elena no hubiera servido. Estaba allí pasando el desamparo, aguantando la angustia, buscando su pequeña esperanza. Sentí tristeza, vértigo. Y seguí pensando: *Estamos podridos, tú y yo, Elena, estamos podridos. ¿Te das cuenta? ¡Podridos! No tiene caso . . . Fíjate: basta abrir bien estos dos ojos, somos la especie del subsuelo.*

Nada tiene mucha importancia, ya lo sé, pero tú y yo estamos muy por abajo de eso. ¡Mierda!, eso es lo que somos. Estaba solo, y Elena también lo estaba, pero buscaba en mí una agarradera hacia la vida.

¿Pero qué significaban las palabras de Elena? ¿Porqué tiene tanta importancia todo lo que se mueve alrededor de un hombre? Es estúpida esta historia, como un dolor barato, como un llanto de señora en el cinematógrafo, como tantas cosas que se mueven en el mundo.

La vida nos envuelve, nos va arrastrando. . . . ¡Ah!, pero a mí me gusta, de vez en vez, romper este siniestro orden de pequeñas futilidades. Por ejemplo: el otro día, en la oficina de correos, se me ocurrió que la señorita del mostrador era una vieja puta. Llegó la idea: se lo dije. Y ella me estrelló la ventanilla en las narices. Gritaba. Yo me largué en el acto. No supe más, pero aún me regodeo pensando en su estúpido rostro tras el vidrio redondo. No, no es posible destruir nada: siempre estamos atados. . . . ¿Y qué tal si intentara destruir de nuevo el orden de las cosas? ¿Y si intentara destruir de nuevo el orden de las cosas? ¿Y si intentara? Nada. Siempre nada.

Pero seguimos hablando. Y Elena dijo entonces:

— Compraré su ropa desde ahora: no quiero estar desprevénida.

—El señor Sánchez algunas veces habla solo, ¡deberías de verlo, Elena!

— . . . Le compraré sábanas de colores. . . .

— . . . Sin embargo las vecinas dicen que es un degenerado, aunque, personalmente, yo no creo. . . .

— . . . o sábanas blancas, si prefieres. . . .

— . . . porque, con seguridad, nadie sabe nada: todos son rumores. Eso sí: en las tardes les dice cosas obscenas a. . . .

— . . . y, además de sábanas, pañales y vestidos. . . .

Era inútil, inevitable: ya estaban trazados los caminos. Pero, por otra parte, eso ya lo sabía: Elena también quería estarse sorda. Y lo estaba; era su asunto. De modo que seguí mirando el techo. Vértigo. Seguí mirando hacia ninguna parte. Y pensé: *Elena, tú también me mientes, me pones trampas. . . . ¿Qué quiso abrasarte? ¡Falso! Te destripo la cara, te rompo los dientes, te sangro los ojos, te orino en la boca; pero mientes, desgraciada puta. . . . Porque todo el mundo sabe que ese viejo gordo es un marica. Pero tú no sabes nada, Elena. ¡Son niños los que abraza! Eso: ¡niños! Pero Elena estaba hablando de otra cosa:*

— El doctor dice que debo cuidarme, por el niño. . . . ¿Sabes? Debo estar tranquila, necesito descanso.

Mariposas oscuras y viscosas en la luz de la calle. Elena fijó sus ojos en el vidrio. *Mírate a los ojos, mírate en un espejo esas cosas oscuras y viscosas, esa lengua roja: entonces sentirás asco, Elena.* Estaba tranquila: como esperando. Yo no esperaba nada: me abandonaba. Pero aquello tenía que suceder, tenía que suceder, era fatal, inevitable. . . .

Cuando Elena se dirigió de nuevo a la ventana, recordé las últimas palabras del libro: “. . . con sonido suyo zumba mi oído; cúbrense mis ojos con doble sombra.” Apretó los dientes, apretó las palabras. Sus ojos eran como ventanas abiertas donde la soledad subía: tragué saliva y empecé a sudar: yo también estaba solo, solo frente a todas las cosas. . . .

— Usaré la ropa más holgada: el vientre me está creciendo cada día.

Eso lo recuerdo. Después sentí un pequeño dolor en la espalda. Un malestar. ¿Qué pudo suceder en ese instante? ¿Qué pudo sucederme? La luz se reflejaba en las charcas oscuras. Se reflejaba. Era una cosa turbia, embotadora, fascinante. . . . Un *algo* circular, horriblemente fijo, inmovil. Y luego un torbellino y un eco: “. . . con sonido suyo zumba mi oído ; cúbrense mis ojos con doble sombra.” Basta un sólo instante, un sólo instante. ¿Ese era el instante mío? Sudaba. Y allí, tras el vidrio: las luces turbias en las charcas. El instante se detuvo. Oleadas de niebla lo fueron cubriendo todo, los rumores fueron creciendo, la fiebre fue subiendo y la sangre empezó a golpear mis sienes. . . . Giraban las cosas: primero lentamente, después mil veces ví el rostro de Elena pasar frente a mi rostro. Volvió la niebla. . . . Y entonces algo se me rompió por adentro: porque una gente es un reloj al que manos siniestras han echado a andar. Un sólo engranaje que se rompe, un pequeño tornillo, y la cosa estalla. Oí un golpe seco, y un grito. Seguí sudando. Luego el eco golpeó mi cabeza repitiéndose. . . .

La impotencia puede alguna vez romper barreras, saltar los callejones, destruir las cosas, o los símbolos de las cosas: es un camino, o una salida hacia ninguna parte. . . . Sentí angustia. Y la angustia estaba en todo: en mí, en las paredes, en el rostro contraído de Elena, en sus ojos pelados y blancos, en las charcas, en la calle. . . . Y luego sentí lástima: lástima de *algo* sin pensar en nada. Lástima de nada. Pero después vino la angustia otra vez.

Hileras de libros apilados, un cuerpo tendido en el suelo, con un rostro inmovil, libre o afuera del mundo: Elena. Me quité la camisa y me sequé el sudor, pero seguí sudando. Miré otra vez hacia abajo:

tenía un aspecto sucio. Pensé en las calles solitarias: a esa hora de la noche se apagan las voces, los ruidos se adormecen poco a poco, las puertas se cierran y todo es siniestro y dulce bajo la luz pálida de la noche. Bajé despacio: nadie pudo haber oído el grito. Nadie. ¿O pudieron oírlo acaso? En mi cabeza seguía sonando, repitiéndose, desdoblándose, como un eco que no fuera a detenerse nunca.

El Señor Sánchez abrió la puerta de afuera: lo vi venir en el pasillo, arrastrando sus pasos lentos, vacilantes. Le sonreí, y le dije:
— Buenas noches, señor Sánchez.

Pasó junto a mí y contestó mi saludo. *Qué feos que son los muertos. Uno se acuesta: buenas noches, estoy muerto. Amanece, se levanta: soy un hombre. Pero tú ya no podrás despertarte nunca. No podrás mover tu cuerpo. Y el señor Sánchez también está muerto... . . . Estamos muertos todos, Elena.* Abrí la puerta y la cerré de un golpe. Caminé tranquilo, pensando casi en nada, sin oír el grito. Arriba, un cuadrado de luz se recortaba entre la noche. Y entonces tomé calle abajo y me perdí en la sombra.

Guadalajara, Jalisco

The Mirror

SILVIO VILLAVICENCIO

Translated by Octavio I. Romano—V.

I am a was and will be and a is tired

— Quevedo

YESTERDAY, when Elena came looking for me, I tried to ignore her. I wanted her to leave quickly.

“I’ll see you later — soon — when I can,” I told her.

Fury rose to her mouth, then to her eyes. I heard her voice.

“Stupid!”

Then the silence came.

The corners of her eyes were painted, cat’s eyes. Elena looked at the blue walls. I threw myself on the bed, looking up. Actually I saw nothing. I was thinking. There she was, immobile, empty, her eyes very distant and deep.

There is no point in bringing memories back. Perhaps I have invented everything, and nothing really happened. But it so happens that deeds trap me, and affect me. Each isolated thing, of course, signifies nothing. And all together, it is a great confusing mass. From another viewpoint, I would very much like to have done away with my memories. Such as I am, however, makes this futile, impossible. I can only escape myself by being different.

No, I am not here voluntarily. My destined role is empty and sinister. There is no escape. Every alternative is an absurdity. Am I really alive? Is it afternoon, or morning?

I do not remember when I met Elena. Two years ago? Three? Or is it that I have never known her? Anyway, two or three years ago I told her,

“Come with me?”

She did not say anything. Instead, she hugged me around the waist. The hotel was filthy, but I didn’t notice that until the morning after. That was when I noticed Elena looking at her legs. She was doing this because Elena liked to look at herself. Seeing her close up, looking her over — was she pretty? Elena worked in a bar

and she would bite my lips. At such times I felt like kicking her. But I would say nothing and fury would rush over me like a rabid bitch — like a needle in the tongue — like a cloud in the eye. I was afraid.

Blue veins on her wrists. Yesterday Elena looked at her arms, and then she looked at her hands again. Blue walls, almost black. I got up slowly, opened the window, and thought: "*The blind have no bodies, they have no shadows in the afternoon; but their night is ancient, more ancient than this beloved sun that floats in the sky.*" Then I saw the books. I looked at them for a long time, saying nothing. I read slowly, only for myself:

*"My tongue is still; throughout my limbs
a tenuous flame spreads; with sounds of you
my ears hum; cover my eyes
with double darkness."*

Again, like being hit, the silence again.

I believed myself blind, so, when Elena decided to look at me it was too late. I was already blind.

"I am the man without eyes," I thought. But then I said to myself: "blue." And I saw *blue*, inside of my head.

It is in moments like this that the clarity of my deeds always invades and possesses me. Is this why I am such a man? Evidently. But to me this seems sad and obscene, or, almost anguished.

"I am blind," I said.

And I was blind for a long time until, outside, I heard a man making noise.

"It is Mr. Sánchez," said Elena.

Her anger had diminished, and all that remained was an immobile face, persistent and cold. The nose, the mouth, and the eyes horribly fixed.

"That's right," I answered.

Elena was a shadow. Vertigo. Elena was a stone on one's back, the loss of hope. *The blind are not aware of the night, because at midnight. . . .*

"What are you thinking?" she asked.

"Nothing," I replied.

More noises. Mr Sánchez had to leave. I heard his footsteps going down the stairs and through the hall. I heard his coughing. Cough! Cough! Cough! I heard the noise of the closing door. Click! Then I imagined his heavy body walking along the street below, dragging its shadow along, until it disappears. It was then that Elena said,

"I want to vomit."

The lights in the street flickered and muffled noises could be heard in the distance. At such moments the air is charged with tension. The minutes become viscous and they drag. The silence grows and becomes menacing. Quickly then—like a gash—a scream. And that is exactly what happened yesterday.

"I want to vomit," she said again.

"It will cure you of what ails you," I answered.

But that was only an idea of hers, an idea that congested her face and made her veins swell. It was just an idea because, no, she never vomited anything. She was a tramp.

That is why, when she became pregnant, I said to her,

"That's the worst thing than can happen. It must be avoided. Some doctor can remove it, before it is born. . . ."

I could not convince her. Her mind was made up. Yesterday I tried to help her again.

"Never! Never!" she screamed.

The anger rose to her face again. And it was then that Elena tried to beat herself with something—or perhaps it was my fists that beat on her face. In any event, a small thread of blood broke out on her lips. Elena was a shadow, and that small thread of blood on her mouth was very becoming.

Thinking it over, actually I never wanted a son. I know that such small things are supposed to be important to me. But, what does it mean to have a son? Nothing. Absolutely nothing. That's quite clear. And furthermore, since I have no choice anyway, I must let things follow their own due course. I guess that's the way things should be. . . . No. No! I must not let my doubts get the better of me. Forget! Forget!

It may be absurd, but this explanation always calms me down. Then I feel nothing—neither sadness nor anguish. This sensation lasts only for a while, then I am myself again—my total existence again crowded with noises and fears. Memories rise from deep inside me.

Once, perhaps, I loved Elena. After all, I'm like other people. I go to the cafes and movies. I walk in the streets and look in store windows. In short, I am imprisoned. However, thinking it over, perhaps it was also desire that made me seek her out. Yes, that must have been it. But now all that has ended: I neither want her nor love her. She is a shadow, like everyone else.

Yesterday, after the noises, when she calmed down the shadow said,

"Mr. Sánchez is an imbecile. He is a pig. Today, when I was coming up, he tried to put his arms around me. And here I am, going to have your son. You hear? A son."

Sometimes Elena would look without seeing a thing, as if she was alone, as if she was dead. And yesterday she was alone — or dead — and she was trying to save herself, to save me. Vertigo. *Women who work in bars should not bite lips.* . . . Then I told her,

"But Elena, I like to greet him. Look. In the mornings I say to him, 'Good morning, Mr. Sánchez,' and I smile. I also greet him in the afternoons. It's been that way since I've known him. But more than that, once I had a beautiful dream: I kicked his eyes into a bloody pulp."

"Don't think of that. You are sneering. If I have a boy, I will give him your name," Elena said.

". . . and in the afternoons I also smile at him."

I looked at her face and sunk into her eyes. *I must not think. I must not think of anything! I must flee! A final escape. What are you thinking? What does anybody think?*

Elena was still talking.

"Did you know that I had gone to a doctor recently?"

I did not want to hear anything of that. Therefore, I was also deaf. That is why I said to her,

"Today I saw him again, Elena. . . ."

"And if it is a girl, I'll give her my name. Elena. We must think of our daughter!"

". . . and you must take into account that Mr. Sánchez is always faking. All faces are masks. I know that. I read it in some book."

"I don't want to know anything about that," she said. "I have come here to talk about something else."

Suppose that Elena would forget the whole affair. Would she still do the same things? Would she repeat the same acts and say the same words? I felt tired. I could neither see her nor close my eyes. Elena was an irritating ghost. She looked at her arms. She looked herself all over, in the mirror. She finally tired of looking at her own body, of looking at her own face so much. But then the result was worse. Elena said that we should live together, that it was not good to be alone. And she spoke again about our baby boy or girl.

"Someday you are going to go crazy. What are you thinking about? I want her to have your eyes. . . . My daughter!"

Her veins went up along her thin arms, to her neck. *Someday you will go crazy, you will go crazy, and you will be century upon*

century away from this world. Elena raised her hands to her temples. To be with Elena would not have been any good. There she was, feeling hopeless, enduring her anguish, and seeking the tiniest bit of hope. I felt sad. Dizzy. I continued to think: *We are rotten, you and I, Elena. We are rotten. Do you know that? Rotten! No matter. Look. It is enough just to open these two eyes. We are like the creatures that live underground. Nothing is of much importance. I know that. And you and I are even less than that. Shit! That's what we are.* I was alone. Elena too. And in me she was looking for a hold on life.

What do all her words mean? Why are all the things that happen around a man so important. This is a stupid story, like a cheap pain, like a woman crying in a movie, like so many things that move in this world.

Life traps us and then drags us along. Aha! But, every now and then, I like to shatter this sinister order of tiny futilities. For example, the other day in the post office it occurred to me that the young lady at the window was an old whore. It occurred to me. So I told her. And she hit me on the nose with the little window. She screamed, and I left right away. That's all I know, except that even now I get a kick when I think of her stupid face behind that round glass.

No. It is not possible to destroy anything. We are always imprisoned. What if again you felt like destroying the order of things? What if you wanted to? Nothing. Always nothing.

We continued to talk, and Elena was saying,

"I'll buy the baby clothes right away. I don't want to be caught unprepared. . . ."

"Mr. Sánchez sometimes talks to himself. You ought to see him!"

". . . I'll buy some colored sheets. . . ."

". . . Nevertheless, the women around here say he is a degenerate, although personally I don't believe it. . . ."

". . . or, if you prefer, white sheets. . . ."

". . . because no one knows anything for certain. It's all gossip. Yes, in the afternoons he says obscene things to. . . ."

". . . and in addition to sheets, diapers and clothes. . . ."

It was futile. Inevitable. Our paths were already carved out. I knew it. Elena also wanted to remain deaf. And she was. Well, that was her business, so I continued to look up at the ceiling. Vertigo. I continued looking at nothing. I thought to myself: *Elena, you lie to me. You try to trap me. So he tried to hug you, eh? That's a lie! I rip your face, knock out your teeth, bloody your eyes, urinate in*

your mouth. You lie, you wretched whore. Everyone knows that that fat man is a queer. You don't know anything, Elena. He hugs little boys! Yes, little boys! But Elena was talking about something else.

"The doctor says I must take care of myself, for the baby's sake. I must be quiet. I need rest."

Dark and viscous butterflies are in the light of the street. Elena fixed her eyes on the window. *Look at your eyes. Look at yourself in the mirror and see those dark and viscous things in yourself, that red tongue. Then you will feel sick to your stomach Elena.* She was quiet, as if waiting. I expected nothing, so I relaxed. But it had to happen. It had to happen. It was inevitable.

When Elena looked again at the window I remembered the final words in the book: ". . . *with sounds of you my ears hum; cover my eyes with double darkness.*" She began to grit her teeth and bite out her words. Her eyes were like open windows through which emerged her loneliness. I swallowed saliva and began to sweat. I, too, was alone; alone to face everything. . . .

"I'll wear the loosest clothes. My womb grows each day."

That much I remember. Afterward, I felt a small pain in my back. A slight indisposition. What could have happened at that instant? What could have happened to me? In the puddles outside, the light was reflected. It was reflected. It was something muddled, debilitating, fascinating. . . . It was something circular, horribly fixed, immobile. Then a whirlwind and an echo: ". . . *with sounds of you my ears hum; cover my eyes with double darkness.*" A single instant was enough. Just an instant. Was that my one moment?

I was in a sweat. And there, beyond the glass, the muddled lights in the puddles. The moment froze. Foggy waves began to obscure everything. The noises grew louder. The fever increased and blood began to pound in my temples. Things began to rotate, first slowly, and then I saw Elena's face pass before mine. The fog returned. Then something inside of me broke. A person is a clock made to run by sinister hands. A single gear breaks, or a tiny screw, and then the whole thing explodes. I heard a dry thud, and a scream. I continued to sweat. Then the echo began to pound repeatedly in my head.

Sometimes impotence can tumble obstacles, leap over alleys, destroy things or the symbols of things. It is a road, a way out to nowhere. I felt anguished. And the anguish was in everything; in the walls, in Elena's contracted face, in her open white eyes, in the puddles, in the street. . . . Then I felt pity, pity for something with-

out thinking of anything in particular. Pity for nothing. Then the anguish returned.

Rows of stacked books, a body lying stretched out on the floor with a still face, unmoving, free, or out of this world: Elena. I removed my shirt and wiped the sweat. But I continued to perspire. I looked down again. She looked dirty. I thought of the solitary streets. At that hour the voices cease, and noises recede little by little. Doors close, and everything is sinister and sweet under the pale light of the night.

I went downstairs slowly. No one could have heard the scream. No one. Or could they? It continued to echo in my head, over and over, amplifying, as if it would never stop.

Mr. Sánchez opened the outside door. I saw him drag his feet along mincingly. I smiled at him and said,

“Good evening, Mr. Sánchez.”

He passed close to me, returning the greeting. *How ugly are the dead. You go to bed – goodnight – I am dead. Morning comes and you get up: I am a man. But you will never be able to wake up. You will never be able to move your body. And Mr. Sánchez is also dead. We are all dead, Elena.*

I opened and slammed the door closed. I walked along quietly, thinking almost of nothing, without hearing the scream. Up above, a small square of light interfered with the night. Then I took to the street below and disappeared into the shadows.

Guadalajara, Jalisco

Translation by Octavio I. Romano—V. The poem cited in this story is from the Roman poet Valerius Catullus (B.C. 87-54), *Cármenes LI*.

SILVIO VILLAVICENCIO is an operator of a small used book store in Guadalajara, Jalisco, where he is known as one of the most articulate spokesmen for contemporary Latin American literature.

“The Negro Movement as an Anti-Revolution” is the second in a series of articles to be presented by Nick C. Vaca, dealing with the philosophical, intellectual and ideological character of Mexican-Americans. In the next issue of EL GRITO, Mr. Vaca will present an article titled “Culture and Core Values” in which he analyzes the concept of Mexican-American culture as usually defined by anthropologists, sociologists and other experts on Mexican-Americans.

The Negro Movement as an Anti-revolution

NICK C. VACA

From the moment when a subordinate class becomes really independent and dominant calling into being a new type of State, the need arises concretely of building a new intellectual and moral order, i.e., a new type of society, and hence the need to elaborate the most universal concepts, the most refined and decisive ideological weapons.

— *From the Prison Notebook of the Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci*

By freedom for Negroes, I meant and still mean, full economic, political and social equality with American citizens, in thought, expression and action, with no discrimination based on race or color.

— *W. E. Burghardt Du Bois*

The relationship that has arisen between the Negro movement and the Mexican-American movement has become patently clear even to the most casual observer. A cursory review of many past and recent Mexican-American public civil rights manifestations amply serves to substantiate the thesis that it is impossible to properly understand the origins and content of certain forms of Mexican-American militancy without first understanding certain elements of

the Negro movement. This statement finds support in the fact that such aspects of Mexican-American militancy as the "Brown Berets," the slogans "Brown Power," "Brown is Beautiful," and "Tío Tomás" are a few examples of many that can be cited as substantiating evidence for the remarkable influence that the Negro movement has exercised upon certain elements of the Mexican-American movement. However, it is not difficult to understand and appreciate such similarities because not to do so would be to negate the universal and historical validity of one group's ability to influence another. But, equally, it appears that certain forms of Mexican-American militancy have not only allowed themselves to be influenced by "black militancy," but they have taken "black militancy" as their venerated model of social change and have emulated it to its fullest extent without regard to its content, significance, fallacies or goals.

That certain elements of Mexican-American militancy have taken "black militancy" as their model is not really difficult to understand. Ever since the division between the self-proclaimed militant leaders and the black moderates of the Negro movement occurred, the militants have succeeded in issuing a rhetoric that has succeeded in convincing themselves and a large percentage of the American population that what they desire is a rapid, dramatic and tumultuous change in American society that would eventually result in the complete emancipation of the American Negro. There is a bit of the romantic and millenarian in every man, and such a natural predisposition oftentimes allows us to accept a belief in a millennial movement without examining either its original premise or its content. Such has been the case with the "black revolutionary" rhetoric that so many self-proclaimed militants have repeated and which the news media has been so quick to embrace, repeat, and oftentimes, enlarge upon. Many Mexican-Americans have also proven to be less than impervious to the sirenous call of the "black revolution" (sic), and as such, they have given a painful and dubious birth to a "brown revolution." Like their black mentors the Mexican-American "militant-revolutionary" delights in an attire that he feels reflects the revolutionary image and enjoys discussing the revolutionary spirit as manifested in himself and his compatriots. The lamentable aspect of such self-indulgence by these Mexican-American revolutionaries (sic) and their black mentors is that between the chasm of their revolutionary rhetoric and the effects and goals of their actions there lies a conservative bridge which they invariably and unconsciously cross; all the while singing and dancing the praises of revolution.

The confusion over what constitutes a revolution is not new. For example, in 1925 Dale Yoder wrote in the *American Journal of Sociology*:

The term 'revolution' is one of the most used and, one suspects, one of the most misused of words. Both within and without the literature of the social sciences it has acquired a variety of meanings which make it as adaptable to personal purposes as is the Chameleon's skin.¹

Since Yoder's initial attempt at dealing with the term revolution, numerous attempts have followed, mostly issuing from the disciplines of history, political science and sociology. The main dilemma encountered in these attempts to define revolution was that all too often what was termed a revolution also seemed remarkably similar to a revolt or a coup d'état. Such considerations created perplexing problems. For example, did a violent overthrow of a civil regime by a military junta constitute a revolution? One could only answer in the affirmative if the criteria established for a revolution revolved solely around the concepts of violence and governmental usurpation. However, if indeed this was the criteria by which a revolution was judged as such, then a rebellion, if successful, could also be considered a revolution. If such was the case that both a coup d'état and a rebellion constituted a revolution then the term itself, unless it contained greater ramifications than violence and power, could be cast into the dictionary of anachronistic terms. There are those who would prefer to do just this and end the debate. However, there is a more inclusive definition that conceives of a revolution in much broader terms than simple violence and governmental usurpation. It is a definition that includes within a revolution the political, economic, religious, and social aspects of society. According to this theory, the changes that differentiate true revolutions such as the French Revolution of 1789, the Russian Revolution of 1914, and the Industrial Revolution of Europe from a coup d'état or a rebellion is that they involve basic changes in the elementary aspects of the social structure and its institutions and that these changes are so inclusive that the whole social fabric is disorganized.

It is because certain "black militants" insist upon using the term "revolution" when speaking of their aims and tactics that they are even considered in the same category as classical revolutionaries. Were it not for their penchant in using the term "revolution" it could be seen that at best the "Negro Revolution" (sic) constitutes a very loud cry to be let in on the spoils of American society without

any desire to change its social structure and its institutions and whose fabric is only slightly disturbed but hardly disorganized.

It would perhaps be most beneficial, in trying to understand the basis of "black revolutionary" rhetoric, to examine the origins of the break between the "direct-action-militant-revolutionary-nationalists" and their antithesis, the "Uncle Tom-moderate-civil-righters." Harold Cruse, a long time chronicler of the Negro movement, writes on the origins of this schism:

Never mind the fact that Roy Wilkins and his 'class-brothers' are frightened by Black Power — that proves nothing. . . . What these gentlemen want most avidly are a number of civil rights, legal, economic, and educational reforms in America. But the radical direct-action civil righters (plus the nationalists) vociferously claim that this is inadequate. They say: "Those bourgeois NAACP Uncle Toms can't reform this white man's society. Man, you got to resort to revolutionary tactics if you want to shake up these white folks!" But what were these so-called revolutionary tactics? The Black Revolution included everything in the pot: sit-ins, freedom rides, demonstrations and marches of all kinds, ghetto uprising, stall-ins, voter registration, self-defense, boycotts, black (third) party attempts, etc. . . . This is not to say that the achievements of the direct actionists are not valuable bases upon which other things can be structured, but they are still reformist and gradualistic ideas with which not a single NAACP-er nor King passive resister could argue.²

With this succinct statement, Cruse summons up not only the origins of the "black revolutionary" rhetoric but he also discloses its spurious nature. Whereas the "moderates," such as the late Martin Luther King, Jr. and Whitney Young, sought to achieve *equality* in America by "peaceful," and "non-violent" means, the "black revolutionaries" (sic) seek to gain *equality* by direct action which may or may not involve acts of violence. What is at debate between these two groups is not the ends — those are agreed upon — but rather how best these ends are to be achieved. What these self-proclaimed "revolutionaries" have presented, both to Negroes and to whites, is essentially a lamb in wolf's clothing. In presenting this enigmatic creature, termed a "black revolution," a rhetoric has been created for its legitimization whose main features consist of ambiguous revolu-

tionary terms, amorphous goals, and the constant chanting of the word "revolution." So convincing has this rhetoric proved to be that it influenced William Brink and Louis Harris to write in their book entitled *The Negro Revolution in America*:

Suddenly it began to dawn on America that this was a full-fledged *social revolution*. It was now perfectly clear that the Negroes did not want just a place in a white school or a seat at a white lunch counter. What they wanted was nothing less than the full equality which is supposedly the birth-right of every American, white or black. What they proposed was the *greatest change* in the *social fabric* of the United States since its very beginning and a new way of life that few American whites had ever before known.³ (Emphasis mine)

A few pages later they add:

There were ugly and ominous trouble spots, such as Little Rock. But as yet the real proportions of the Negro's *revolt* was not clearly visible.⁴ (Emphasis mine)

Brink and Harris typify the rhetoric of the "black revolutionaries" who often use the terms "revolt" and "revolution" interchangeably but who refuse to specify how the "revolt-revolution" they speak about differs from the regular type "Uncle Tom" civil rights movement. Brink and Harris' statement, "What they wanted was nothing less than the full equality which is supposedly the birthright of every American, white or black," is ironically enough very similar to what the "non-revolutionaries," such as the NAACP, the Urban League and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference desire for the American Negro.

Lewis M. Killian in his book *The Impossible Revolution* serves to illustrate the "black revolutionary's" (sic) use of the term "revolution" to create the image that there is actually a revolution — in short he utilizes tautological logic. Killian writes:

But some of the angry men of the movement have not shrunk from the more drastic implications of the word 'revolution.' James Farmer was hardly speaking of revolution figuratively when he analyzed the fusion of the pacifistic ideals of CORE with the indigenous anger of the Negro masses to produce a 'revolutionary mass movement . . .'⁵

Killian's simplistic and naïve concept of revolution is displayed when he believes that simply because James Farmer (an "angry man" who recently accepted a post with the establishment, i.e., the new Nixon administration) states that there is a "revolutionary mass movement" there is, in fact, a revolutionary movement.

Moving closer to the thoughts of the hard core "militant-revolutionary" (sic) Nathan Hare, past director of the black-studies program at embattled San Francisco State College, in an interview with *Newsweek*, stated:

In the search for educational relevance, black today is revolutionary and nationalist. A black-studies program which is not revolutionary and nationalist is, accordingly quite profoundly irrelevant. The black revolutionary nationalist, aware and proud of his blackness, demands the right to exist as a distinct category, to be elevated as such by any means necessary At the same time, we must *resist the white perspective* which seeks to restrict black studies to the stereotyped study of art and religion predominantly. Black studies should comprise a comprehensive, integrated body of interdisciplinary courses just as in the case of long-established departments of social sciences and American studies.⁸ (Emphasis mine)

Hare's statement is another example of the frequent inconsistency in "black revolutionaries'" (sic) logic and their penchant for the word "revolution." According to Hare a "black revolutionary" is a black who is proud of being black and who wants to remain as a distinct category. By extension of such reasoning then, Hare would have to grant a white Irishman who wants to remain a distinct category in Nigeria a revolutionary status. By establishing color and separatism as the main components of a revolution, Hare displays his complete lack of understanding of even the most fundamental aspects of a true revolution. Hare also displays a common malady among "black revolutionaries" (sic) best known as the "I-hate-you-Whitey-but-I-need-you" syndrome. Hare states that black studies programs are relevant when they seek a black perspective. However, later in the interview he states that "Black studies should comprise a comprehensive, integrated body of interdisciplinary courses just as in the case of long-established departments of social sciences and American studies," which ironically enough were developed by whites with a white perspective. So much for Hare's "revolution."

Jerry Varnado, who is a Negro graduate student at San Francisco State College, probably represents what may be termed the ideal "militant-revolutionary." He states on the topic of revolution and San Francisco State College:

I am now a graduate student and a lecturer in the black-studies department. What we are involved in here at State is not a reform movement. That is what the civil rights movement was. This is a revolution. Reformists work within existing rules and regulations: revolutionists make their own rules and regulations.⁷

Varnado's statement displays the love-hate relationship existent between the "old has-been" civil rights movement and the new "black revolution" (sic) that Cruse spoke about. In a desperate attempt to destroy the last vestiges of the civil rights movement, Varnado states that "reformists work within existing rules and regulations: revolutionists make their own rules and regulations." Like so many "militant revolutionaries," (sic) Varnado insists on either being ahistorical or greatly distorting history, since to admit that the civil rights movement also "made their own rules and regulations" when they broke the existent ones in Southern and Northern towns by engaging in sit-ins, bus-ins, etc., would be an admission that the civil rights movement is also a revolution. Moreover, had Varnado really understood the basis of a true revolution, he would be forced to acknowledge that his views are really quite conservative. Revolutions, such as the French and the Russian, did not seek to modify or reform certain institutions from within (as Varnado seeks to do demanding the admission of more blacks and the establishment of a black studies department); rather they sought to destroy such societal institutions or so radically alter their *structure* that they no longer resembled the original institutions. From the statements made by Killian, Hare, and Varnado one could easily imagine that, had they existed in 18th century France, they would have concerned themselves not with destroying the guilds and societies that were the acknowledged oppressors of the peasants, but rather they would have fought to include more blacks in such institutions!

Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, perhaps more than the previously mentioned individuals, represent the personification of the black revolutionary rhetoric. Though the basic structure of Black Power was first posited by Booker T. Washington⁸ and the term first coined by Adam Clayton Powell⁹ (a congressman working within the existing rules and regulations and institutions of Ameri-

can society) it served as the springboard for the rise in fame of Stokely Carmichael. If ever there existed a truly revolutionary term, people thought, "Black Power" was it. Harold Cruse notes on the subject:

But a closer examination of every analysis by each Black Power exponent from SNCC and CORE reveals that while the slogan cast a revolutionary sounding theme and a threat of more intense revolt across the land, the substance was, in fact, a methodical retreat to black social reforms. In pragmatic America the slogans catch the imagination while the implicit substances are glossed over and ignored. The Negro thinks and acts like the American he is; thus the leaders of the Black Revolution who seized so readily upon Black Power had never made the distinction.¹⁰

Cruse's comment must certainly disclose the futile end which all "black revolutionary" rhetoric meets. For all its pretense it is still a civil rights movement whose sole aim is admission to White America through the front door.

However, I feel compelled to note two anomalies in the otherwise vacuous black "revolutionary" (sic) leadership. Malcolm X and Eldridge Cleaver managed to transcend race as the basis of their world views. Eldridge Cleaver's concern with the symbolism of American life could still provide the basis for the first new and "revolutionary" social philosophy in America. Equally, Malcolm X succeeded in viewing human relations outside the pale of the simple black and white dichotomy. Harold Cruse clearly notes this when he states:

The Black Power exponents who uphold Malcolm X, yet cannot come to terms with either Washington or DuBois as historical leaders, understand neither the break between DuBois and Washington, nor the break between Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammed. These two breaches are historically related and stem from the same root in Afro-American history, albeit under different circumstances. Malcolm X broke with the Nation of Islam because of Muhammed's refusal to participate in the *broad struggle for human rights*, as Malcolm X explained it.¹¹ (Emphasis mine)

With the exception of Malcolm X and Eldridge Cleaver the Negro movement has allowed itself to become the handiwork of

either the integrationists or the national separatists, both of which seek to gain the same goal of Negro equality in America. Such a goal is, of course, a desirable one when one views the Negro condition in America; but equally by desiring simply to participate in the American mainstream of life the Negro has abandoned his capacity for adding any philosophical creativity to the American perspective.

Perhaps the philosophical and ideological limitations on the part of the American Negro can be attributed to contemporary leaders' desire to reject anything that is white as being irrelevant to the Negro, and thereby forces the Negro to turn within himself to seek and establish his identity. Such a perspective negates anything outside of the "black experience" as being relevant, and as such establishes the Negro in a position of total uniqueness that isolates him not only from white America but from the totality of humanity. True, it is essential that a sense of the contributions of Negroes to American history and progress be acknowledged. But then, must the Negro consider Hobbesian philosophy irrelevant? Is Soren Kierkegaard to be considered irrelevant to Negroes because he deals with the concept of existentialism without once speaking of Negroes? To believe that these two historical figures do not have relevance to the Negro is to believe that the Negro does not constitute part of the totality of man, but rather that he is a select and isolated people whose experience totally eludes the grasps of all other men.

It is this concern with the continuing limitations in black ideology and philosophy that has prompted me to write this cursory rebuttal to the totally vacuous concept of a Negro Revolution" (sic) now enjoying great acceptance in America. Blind emulation by Mexican-Americans, therefore increases the danger that they too may become intellectually and philosophically provincial and limited. It cannot be denied, as indeed it cannot also be denied of the Negro, that the Mexican-American experience in the United States constitutes a unique experience and that it is a difficult experience to fathom by those who have not undergone such an experience. But, equally, Mexican-Americans are also part and parcel of the continuing process of man's history and as such we must search for our identity in the history of man, in the writings of Jean Jacques Rousseau, Octavio Paz, and Gustave Flaubert as well as in the writings of the local newspapers like *Bronze*, *La Raza* and *El Grito del Norte*. Not to do so is to pretend that Mexican-Americans have never before participated in the history of man, and that the ideas of history have no relevance for us.

NOTES

¹Dale Yoder, "Current Definitions of Revolutions," *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 32 (1926), p. 441.

²Harold Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, (New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1967), p. 546.

³William Brink and Louis Harris, *The Negro Revolution in America*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964), p. 20.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵Lewis M. Killian, *The Impossible Revolution*, (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 5

⁶Nathan Hare, "The Case for Separatism: 'Black Perspective,'" *Newsweek*, February 10, 1969, p. 56.

⁷Peter Barnes and Philip Hager, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

⁸Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery*, (New York: Avon Books, 1965), pp. 108-123.

⁹Cruse, *op. cit.*, p. 545.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 545.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 563.

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Poetry

Tenochtitlán

i am the walking stream
of that generation that thrust me out
passed me out like wasted water
splitting the rocks of time
in ineluctable tones of doom

*breaching the cruel sierras
in brown strides
he traversed the reptilian earth
pressed the rived ridges
of some red and black mother
sought to cleave the virgin mantle
of any willing slope
north of no line
speaking in syllables of seed
to the yielding earth
hoping to raise
not men for Thebes from stones
but generations of savants and lovers
for Her, the only definable*

i have come out of some semen river
for some project from this land
where moving streams
straddle mountain folds
filling their bodies with the stuff
of fruit and wind
with the secret sighs
of gushing origins
but i cared for more
sought more, wanted more to strike me
i wanted to gaze at the hypnotic wonder
of oblivion's mirror
and ingest the solid-state dynamic
so i rose and fled
to that land of crusted mounds
across the concrete desert
where the rinds of men

rot in the demon winds
wrenching in the throes of sacrifice and sacrilege
offered to the gods of waste and death,
of mercenary enterprise
of proto-creation in plasticity
except those gushes' torments
slithered through the rear
corridors of the mind
through me in ripples of slicing pain
oh, imbalanced i
perfect citizen of that putrid prairie
how my hidden finger craves
to sink into those living waters

yes, i have peered through
the corner of my backward eye
watching her progress, snaking down
down the dunes of memory
while crookedly walking i crawl
from the sterile city of glass
to the temple of mud and blood
ready to be struck
by the obsidian knife of recollection
at the feast of tomorrow
and as i hunger and ache
trembling in shimmering pools
of fear like some mirage
the ruptured circle falls
the thoughts of reversion
scream out like maggots disturbed
rising from a rotting pile
but i'll never return again
on their wings
for my empty thighs hunger
as for no other lover's pull
how can i condemn my passion
to the blank exile of stone islands
whose weight from my spirit
the knife will dislodge
in the plunge to bright shores —
dispelling, in pain
the sophistry of time
spent on illimitable stretches of shale

Assim Ontologicus

- I. Assim is the period of his nasalization.
 Thus *entonces* announces dawn or dusk
 And cosmopolitan happenings for the rest of others.
 In this therefore there are *only* others
 And Assim.
 For him, in the manner of his glance
 There is no but but but.
- II. It is the motion that the measure will enclose.
 In this manner permeability is throated by'm;
 For kite flyers and financiers.
 Thus it stands that they only
 What is exteriorly to them perform
 What is asserted by Assim.
 They can only wonder
 At the magic of the chance.
- III. So such potency prevails
 Despite the constant curbs
 Menacing those who falter, slopping
 The vicarious juices of joy.
 For those who have no central eye
 Assim is a prevarication, a nonsensus.
 The fringe-few who view
 Discern the adroitness of his dash.

Liliana By The Sea

Songless, the sea,
adagio anticipant,
 tuned in sense.

A mandolin, a lyre,
 upbraiding the distended pier,
 strummed in sense.

Mute wonder, silent sea?
 Liliana!
 Quick and free.

one unaware always catching
 like those bones in the corner
 so aloof, so amused

The buffoonery of flatulent sounds
 scrapes across the edge
 of auricular fraud
 and the cuckoldry of stinks
 attacks the greasy brain
 bloody in its sheet
 as dawn, the child, is gulped
 by day, its afterbirth

Then: FLUORESCENCE

Least acquainted with
 the trek of Daru
 the entrepreneur of lies
 slumps in his tracks
 his senses like nightmares
 floating in space
 and love, his moth
 smeared across his sight
 the eyes in his face wasted
 by Mnemosyne, in some myopic mirage

Progression:

Riotous liquid fills the crevices
 of yesterday's night
 somewhere in the distance
 the moon howls
 to her hound below
 her tears, all the while
 drowning other opposites
 congealing comprehension
 even in sight and sound
 but in midflight and midstep
 who looks or listens?

Tasks mount, as cigarette ashes
 conversation, coffee grounds, conmix
 only nauseous tension surpasses
 the infirm boredom of fun
 hands and minds manipulate

the oily wheels of trade
 an infection that spreads
 catching the universe enterprised
 compromising itself, weeping, greyfaced
 or snuggling around
 in jaundiced familiarity
 out of all eventlessness
 across the mucilaginous sky
 casting its dripping shadow

Finally:

EXPIRATION

Breathed out, exhausted
 time-passed like moving ice
 dawn to dusk, equinox to solstice
 the ruptured circle falls
 in timetable invariable
 of luxuriant passion thru the ages
 evolved to give forth this
 a more meted, determinable function
 a ritual regression dance
 tuned to rhythms of burning rain

All fades into repose
 hidden, the world breathes out again
 not wanting to notice
 bed involved-in games and gains
 lifting its gaze it ascends
 filtering out
 the protestations of the day
 it transcends the weary epic
 as attention and detention implode
 Silence, at last, dark reigns

But the reoccurring questions clamor
 like a nettle to the breast
 like a frightened child
 struggling for attention
 it wraps around the soul
 to pick and gibe . . .

but they, proud and defiant
entertain the eunuch night
certain, in their pose
that they are,
that they are
the few and fortunate ones

MIGUEL PONCE dropped out (through no fault of his own) 22 years ago. This happened in El Paso, Texas, which is a subsidiary of Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico. He has since then lived in various states of anxiety. His education has been interrupted since 1952 by his schooling. He is presently attenuating in Berkeley, in what is alternately called, the University and The Property of the Regents.

Little Eagle and The Rainbow

RUDY ESPINOSA

"Within each grape there is a little eagle"

— Cesar Chavez

There was the tiny pueblo of Little Eagle. It was made of cabins, which were of wood and tin roofs. The cabin of Little Eagle's family was a mile from the mountain lake. The earth was cool from the night winds, and moonbeams poured on the leafy branches over tin-roofed cabin, and within the cabin, naked, body to body, brothers and sisters, father and mother rested, while Little Eagle's small dark brown hand drew his blanket up to his ear. The pine trees slept.

In the summer, boys and girls gathered around the mountain lake and splashed in the clear water. Along the shore one day, gliding ducks came out of the reeds and over the highly polished gravel beds as Little Eagle and Uncle Chindo sat together on the side of a weathered rock. Uncle Chindo was humpbacked, had wrinkled hands, and had grey matted hair that hung over his face. He would talk of the sun, moon, earth, and animals. Uncle Chindo had a love for nature.

From childhood, little boys and little girls learned to obey their elders. The older folk believed if you were kind when you were a child, then you would grow to love your fellow man. They both sat in silence. The morning earth surrounded their feet and the trees as the sun spread its wings around the skies above. Magpies and wind swooshed around Uncle Chindo's nose and stirred the twigs and leaves of the hazel nut, while a deer mouse stopped on a narrow sand bar where wild rice grew.

"Uncle, tell me a story about the sky God," said Little Eagle.

A cloud wandered across the broad blue skies. The clouds shone like opals, and far below were the green world and the mountain lake folk.

Uncle Chindo spoke, "Many years ago the great spirit chose an angel spirit to bring the season of love. Her job is to spread the good word to all men and women."

"Then the angel spirit is woman?" asked Little Eagle.

"Yes."

"How does she look? Is she big or small?"

"She is about knee high and she has wings and a beautiful robe like the wild butterfly. She is called Rainbow and travels with the speed of wind; and at times she can be seen dancing with 'Alma.'"

"What's Alma, Uncle?"

"When rain falls, she comes down to bathe. Just as you see the top of the highest mountain, she makes the mountain beautiful so that you can see through it while she dances," Uncle Chindo continued. "It was Alma, Rainbow, that the Chicano believes causes the soft raindrops to fall upon all her earth children equally."

"Uncle, how do you get to see her?"

"You pray with all your might."

The story really impressed Little Eagle. He decided he would seek out rainbow. One day it poured rain and lo and behold, Little Eagle prayed with all his might to the heavens to take him to the sky, and as he continued to pray, his eyelids slowly closed and he felt himself wandering alone in the forest. He soon saw paths of many colors reaching to the sky. A rainbow stretched across the shining sky like a bridge over the little cabin. All was dim as Little Eagle lay resting with arms outstretched. Mama and Papa went out and he was alone. Little Eagle lay there for what seemed to him a long time. The cabin was very still and warm, and a sliver of sun shone through the moist twigs in golden lines and flecks.

Presently he heard humming; not loud, but cheerful. He felt sure it was in the cabin. Sure enough, rainbow appeared atop his knee with a pleasant smile. Her bright shiny wings and bright-colored robe lit up the cabin. She was a beautiful angel with a soft glowing halo about her head and she held a wand in her hand.

"Oh, rainbow, I knew it was you. Oh, rainbow, please take me to skyland," cried Little Eagle.

She knelt down and kissed him while he leaned his little head back. He felt a push at his feet and floated away.

The rainbow shone, glittered and smiled on Little Eagle's heart. As he walked on the rainbow's arc, he could see the mountain lake folk and White Eye's camp below. He remembered a story of Uncle Chindo and how Carlitos was warned to stay away from the potato patch and never to return to White Eyes' camp. He stopped at the mountain lake and watched the fish jump along the rocky shore. He continued his journey downward on the rainbow's arc. He suddenly felt a lump in his throat; he was scared. When he stepped off the rainbow's arc he found himself in front of Captain White Eyes. They stared at each other.

"Hey, there, Mexican, are you lost or something?"

"No, Captain Whites Eyes. I just walked with Rainbow," Little Eagles said reverently.

"You what . . . ?" asked Captain White Eyes.

"Yes, Rainbow is over there," Little Eagle said, pointing.

"Where?"

"There."

"I don't see a thing." He thought to himself, "The boy has been eating loco weed or something." He scratched his head. "There haven't been any Mexicans here for months, since we caught one snatching our potatoes," Captain White Eyes said. He continued, "Hey, here comes somebody, better hide."

Little Eagle seized Captain White Eyes by the hand and said, "Oh, don't worry, White Eyes, no one can see me."

"Hold on there, do I have a fever or something?"

"No, you are safe. Just follow Little Eagle."

Little Eagle, after telling Captain White Eyes of his journey from the mountain lake folk to the White Eyes' camp on the rainbow's arc, led him by the hand to the wooden fish racks.

"You see, Captain White Eyes, my people have two racks, and the White Eyes are welcome to our side of mountain lake. You see, one rack belongs to your people."

"You mean to tell me this rack has been here and we didn't know it?" asked Captain White Eyes.

"Yes."

"Well, I'll be a monkey's uncle. You know, son, sometimes I think we're all plumb loco; and sometimes I don't even believe what I see. But what's all this hoodoo about nobody seeing you?"

"If you recognize rainbow, she will pick you too."

Suddenly, rainbow appeared and softly spoke. "Both of you go and spread the good word to all, and you, Little Eagle, take this paint brush and color the mountainsides, the trees, the leaves, the wings of birds and butterflies, and the petals of all the wild flowers that your eye can see. Open the eyes of all to feel and see and live. You must always remember and keep in your heart that mother earth belongs to the spirit of man."

She smiled and handed Little Eagle her paint brush. He stared at it. She turned to Captain White Eyes, "You will return to your camp and lead your people to the fish racks and leave a sack of potatoes!"

When Captain White Eyes left the gunny sack of brown potatoes, the sun was setting over the mountain lake in a blaze of colors as Little Eagle wielded the paint brush on Mother Earth and the gentle souls of the mountain lake folk.

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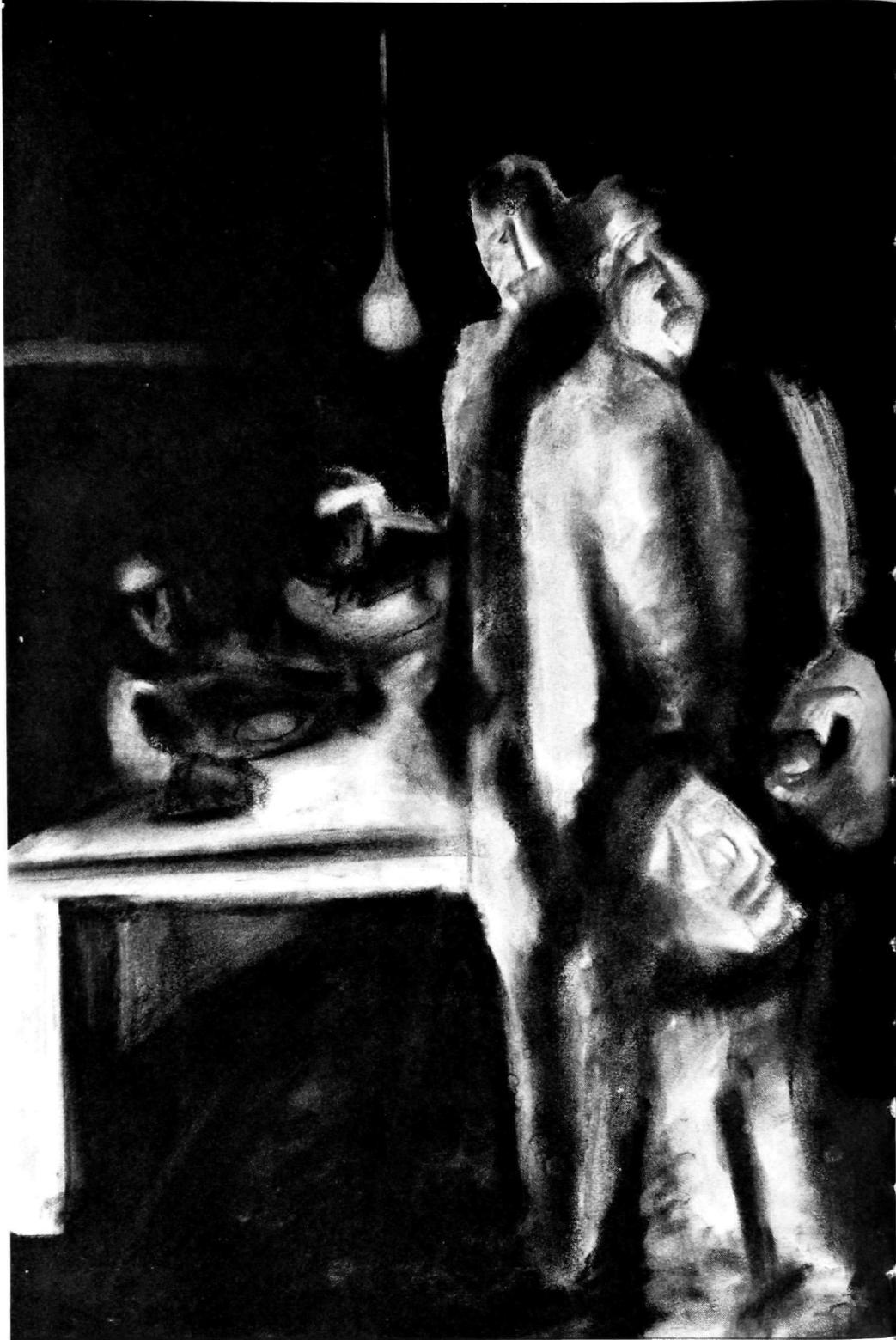
RUDY ESPINOSA is a native San Franciscan. He has worked as a ranch hand and marinero. Presently he is a retread student at the University of California at Berkeley.



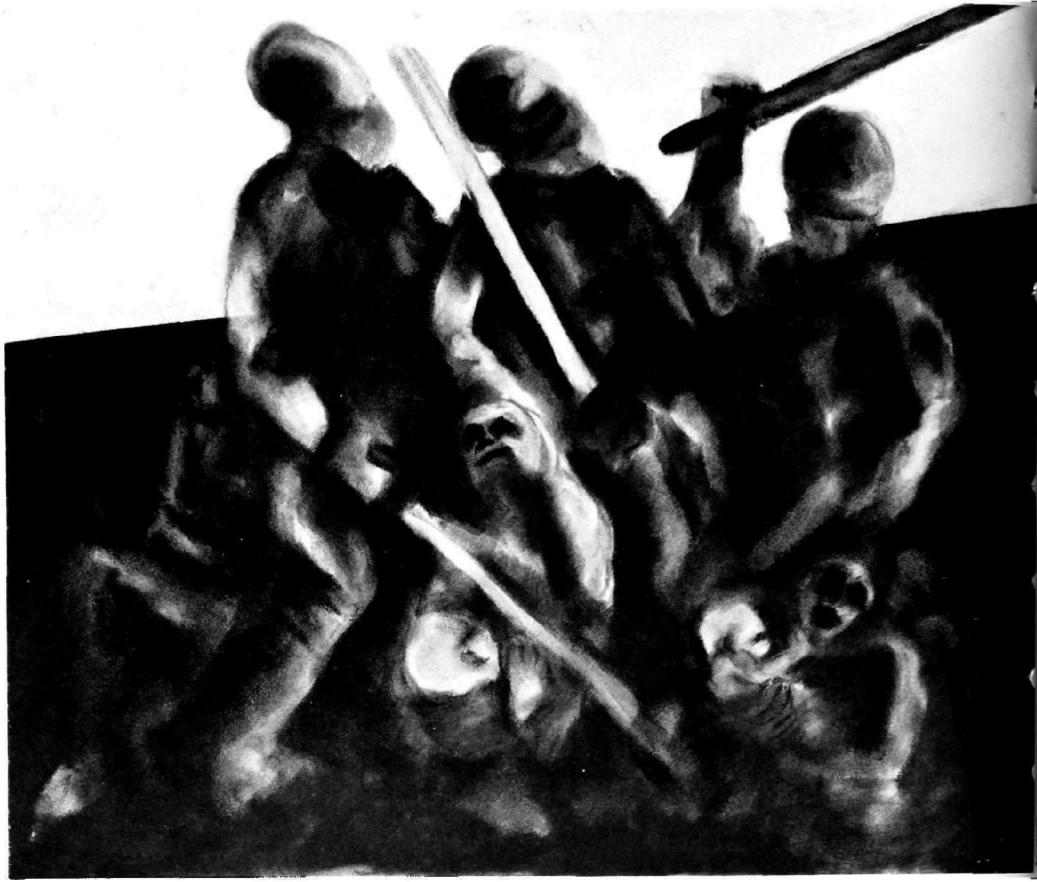
Portfolio

Malaquias Montoya

MALAQUIAS MONTOYA was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He attended Reedely College, San Jose State City College and is presently a student at the University of California at Berkeley.







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