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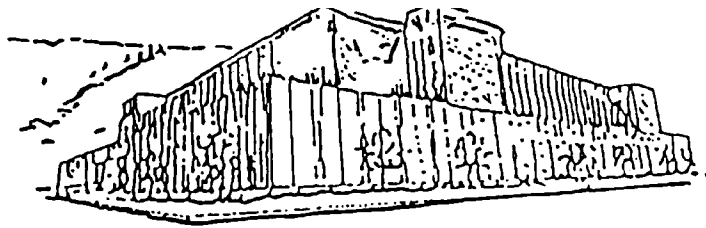
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NARRATION AND TIME IN
POCHO AND ...Y NO SE LO TRAGÓ LA TIERRA

by

Christopher W. Minster

B.A. The Pennsylvania State University, 1991
presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
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Narration and Time in Pocho and ...y no se lo tragó la tierra (130pp.)

Director: María Jose Bustos Fernández *MJB*

Pocho, by José Antonio Villareal, and ...y no se lo tragó la tierra, by Tomás Rivera, are two works of Chicano prose fiction that are ideally suited to narrative analysis. Both novels are set in mid-twentieth-century United States and describe the experience of growing up Mexican-American. Many of the themes they describe -- such as racism, religious crisis, and acculturation -- are similar.

The narratives, however, are fundamentally different, as Villareal explains the acculturation process of an individual and Rivera shows the experience of being part of a community of migrant workers. This difference, that of showing versus explaining, manifests itself in many forms in the narrative. An examination of the various narrators utilized by Rivera offers insight as to the different aspects of migrant culture that he wished to portray. An analysis of the temporal/chronological structure of the relationship between story and narrative of both works further shows the agenda and techniques of the authors.

While either novel is adequate for a sustained narrative analysis, it is in relation to each other that the differences can most clearly be seen. Their themes are so similar, yet their structure so different, that together they present the scholar with an opportunity to closely examine and compare the different ways that two authors can say similar things.

I. Introduction

In this study, I will undertake an analysis of the complex narration of Tomás Rivera's masterpiece ...y no se lo tragó la tierra. Rivera's innovative style paints an elegant portrait of his people, and the work won the first prestigious Quinto Sol award shortly after being written.

This analysis will also cover José Antonio Villareal's novel Pocho. Pocho is a fascinating novel in its own right, considered by many to be the first work of modern Chicano literature. It predates ...y no se lo tragó la tierra by more than ten years. In many ways, Pocho and ...y no se lo tragó la tierra are very similar works. The two authors had similar experiences during their formative years, and dealt with similar themes in their novels.

Villareal and Rivera were very aware of themselves as Mexican-Americans. They knew well the history of their people, from the arrival of the first Spaniards who colonized what is now the American Southwest, to the times of the Mexican-American war and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. They were aware of the Mexican revolution and the multiple connotations that it held, and continues to hold, for the American Chicano. In addition, Rivera was involved in, or at least very aware of, the *la causa* movements of the sixties while he was writing.

Rivera also knew a great deal about literature: classical, North American, and Mexican. He was well educated

and knew what turned bad writing into good writing, and good writing into literature. When he felt that his people needed a literature of their own, and sat down to create just that, he did so deliberately and consciously. Villareal, perhaps because he was the first writer to write fiction about the Chicano experience, was less calculating.

The works are similar in that they are firmly established in the canon of Chicano Literature, but as similar as they are, the narrative techniques employed by their authors are very different. Villareal writes in a chronological and linear style, and Rivera's writing, like that of the great Mexican writer Juan Rulfo, is temporally fragmented and choppy. This situation--that of two writers with very similar backgrounds writing in the same period of time about many of the same things--yet using vastly different narrative techniques--gives us the opportunity to take a close look at the narrative styles of both works and compare them.

The essential difference is this: Villareal **explains** the Chicano experience during the thirties and forties, and Rivera **shows** the Chicano experience of a few years later. Rivera merely describes memories; Villareal analyzes the situations in which his characters find themselves. Rivera asks more of the reader, insofar as the reader has to come to his own understanding of the consequences of the depicted actions, as few consequences are ever spelled out. Both works are

effective in different ways.

The first step in coming to an understanding of these works is to understand the culture from which they come. The Chicano culture of the United States is complex, rich, and fascinating, with a long history of which both writers are keenly aware. It comes of the marriage of two cultures -- an Anglo one, centered on the individual, and a Mexican one, centered on family and community. As incompatible as these cultures sound, they have merged into one in the American Southwest and elsewhere, and the literature this union has produced is at times confusing and contradictory, but at times stirring and beautiful. Therefore, before analyzing the narrative of the both works, it is necessary to understand the history of the Mexican-American, and how that history is seen by the Chicano.

The first two sections of this study will summarize and analyze the history and literature of this culture in the United States. Once the various influences working on these authors is understood, a narrative analysis of their works can be undertaken.

The essential difference between the works--that of showing vs. telling--can most clearly be seen in the narration of both novels. First, a thorough examination of the various voices that Tomás Rivera uses to narrate his anecdotes and tales will show that he uses broad brushstrokes of language to impart to the reader a sense of the rich community in which he

grew up. Second, an in-depth analysis of the time structure of the novel, analyzed through the methods suggested by Gerard Genette in his study Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method, will show that both Rivera and Villareal use the structuring of time to their advantage as they respectively show or tell the stories of their protagonists.

The results of this background study and comparison will show that although the writers have similar histories and work with similar themes, in the end it is the differences that define the works in comparison to each other. Pocho tells the story of a lonely young man trying to make it as an individual, and ...y no se lo tragó la tierra is the story of a community as seen through the eyes of a young man over the course of one year. These differences manifest themselves most clearly in the narration of the works.

II. Part One

Chicano Literature: What is it?

In 1959, the novel Pocho was published by José Antonio Villareal, a first generation Mexican-American. He did not know it, and he did not intend to do it, and it would be years before anyone realized what had happened with that publication, but Villareal had written the first Chicano novel and given birth to a whole new genre.

Chicano literature is the collected writings of those men and women who live or have lived in the border culture of the United States. Since 1848, when the first Chicanos came into being with a treaty that ceded their homelands from Mexico to the United States, to the immigrant workers of today, the Chicano border culture has been a rich part of the American Southwest. Many fine novels, poems, and plays have been written by these immigrants and their children, works that are not Mexican in nature but neither do they quite fit the American style of literature. Like the people who created them, these works are of mixed parentage. The writers feel free to take the good parts from each of their two cultures and literatures and mix them, creating in the process a new form of literature.

The Mexican-Americans, or Chicanos, have produced a rich body of literature, especially in the last forty years.

Still, there is debate and dissension among critics and students as to how exactly to define Chicano literature. Some of the definitions are very simple: "it is literature written by Chicanos."¹ Some of the definitions are very complex and entire scholarly articles have been dedicated to this question alone.

The question of how to define Chicano literature was only made more difficult while the genre was in its infant stages. The social movements of the sixties, in which Mexican-Americans participated enthusiastically with consciousness-raising activities like voter registration drives, took place and redefined many social aspects of life in the United States, for Chicanos and non-Chicanos alike. José Antonio Villareal, one of the two writers examined in this study, wrote: "As is so often necessary, before we can discuss Chicano Literature in any context, there is need to define the term...Certainly, the current definition is one that was not true in my day, in my father's day, in my grandfather's day."²

Rolando Hinojosa, widely regarded as a talented Chicano writer and literary critic, defines Chicano literature in part by saying that only one "prevalent theme" can be

¹ Luis Leal, "The Problem of Identifying Chicano Literature", The Identification and Analysis of Chicano Literature, Ed. Francisco Jiménez (New York: Bilingual Press, 1979) 2. This definition seems simple enough, but Leal goes on later to discuss difficulties in identifying Chicanos.

² José Antonio Villareal, "Chicano Literature: Art and Politics from the Perspective of the Artist," Jiménez, 161.

found:

There is no immediate nor--what is less likely-- definitive answer as to where this literature properly belongs; this difficulty brings to mind the uncertain status of the Chicano or Mexican-American writer himself. Chicano literature, as an externalization of the will, has its roots in Mexican literature, and Mexican-American writers have their roots in Mexico as well--some deep, others superficial, but all sharing this fundamental base. Roots, however, are not to be confused with the trunk of the tree or the branches that spring from it. For, despite the Mexican influence, the Mexican-American writer lives in and is directly influenced by his life in the United States. To date, the one prevalent theme in Mexican American writing is the Chicano's life in his native land, the United States.³

It is possible that a clear definition of Chicano literature may be elusive. Hinojosa has hit on one of the truths of works in Chicano literature; they may defy definition, but they do conform to a general set of guidelines. Marvin A. Lewis, in his discussion of The Road to Tamazunchale, by Ron Arias, makes clear his feeling that Chicano literature conforms more to a loose set of ideas and themes than any

³ Rolando Hinojosa, "Mexican-American Literature: Toward an Identification," Jiménez, 8-9.

hard, set definition:

Unlike most other Chicano novels, The Road to Tamazunchale is not basically concerned with Chicano social problems. At times allusions are made to the problems in the past in an effort to place the present in proper perspective. The work's primary concern is with a dying man who happens to be a Chicano. On the other hand, certain customs, modes of behavior, and attitudes toward life make us realize that we are dealing with a work which is distinctly Chicano.⁴

It is certain that many of the best works of Chicano literature contain strong elements of social protest. If The Road to Tamazunchale does not contain this element in abundance, is it therefore less a piece of Chicano literature? Marvin A. Lewis doesn't think so. A set of generalizations and guidelines is preferable to a definition, which might serve only to exclude some of the best Chicano works from the canon. From both the literature itself as well as from the abundant writings of Chicano literary scholars I have drawn up a set of seven generalizations about the genre. Any given Chicano work will have elements of perhaps three to six of these applicable to it. The guidelines are as follows:

⁴ Marvin A. Lewis, "The Urban Experience in Selected Chicano Fiction," Contemporary Chicano Fiction; A Critical Survey, ed. Vernon A. Lattin (Binghamton: Bilingual Press, 1986) 55.

1. The writer is at least second generation Mexican-American.

Another aspect for identification is the writers themselves. The writers of Chicano literature are usually of Mexican descent, and, for the most part, born in the United States. Notable exceptions to this would have to be made in the cases of Sergio Elizondo, Miguel Méndez, Herminio Ríos, Octavio Romano, Silvio Villavicencio, and others.⁵

This is the closest thing to a hard and fast rule among the generalizations. Amado Muro, whose real name was Richard Seltzer, was married to a Mexican and wrote what many considered to be true Chicano literature until it was discovered that he was an Anglo. Now his status is questionable.⁶ Another application of this generalization can be seen in the case of the great Mexican writer Mariano Azuela. He fled the revolution in the beginning of the century and wrote his masterpiece, Los de abajo, in El Paso, Texas, where it was published. Technically, he was one of the first Chicano writers but no one considers him to be one, because of his themes, which concern only Mexicans fighting in the revolution, and his Mexican heritage.

⁵ Rolando Hinojosa, "Chicano Literature: An American Literature in Transition," Jiménez, 38.

⁶ Leal, 2.

2. The piece deals with discrimination or exploitation on the part of the majority Anglo population of the United States.

A cursory examination of contemporary Chicano prose fiction, for example, reveals that the majority of the novels and short stories published by Chicano authors within the last fifteen years deals directly with some aspect of the social reality of the community of Spanish-speaking people who began to emigrate to the United States shortly after the Mexican Revolution of 1910. Most of the writers turn back to the bitter experiences of these Mexican refugees, their arrival in this country, and their adjustment to an alien Anglo culture. While much of the literature resembles the direct Steinbeck style of social realism, it also contains several bibliographical and autobiographical accounts of discrimination, isolation, and acculturation in a strange society.⁷

This theme is very common, and can be found in many of the best Chicano works. Many Chicanos felt, and continue to feel, victimized, particularly by the police or courts⁸, and this

⁷ Charles M. Tatum "Contemporary Chicano Prose Fiction: A Chronicle of Misery," Jiménez, 241.

⁸ See the section in this paper on Chicano History for accounts of discrimination by the police and courts.

attitude easily found its way into their writings. In a literature defined in part by the minority status of the writers, the attitude of the majority is bound to be a factor, and a theme that is clearly found in both Pocho and ...y no se lo tragó la tierra.

3. The narrative is fragmented, or out of order.

La técnica en todas estas obras es fragmentaria y experimental. Para poder abarcar al pueblo en su totalidad y en su diversidad, ha sido necesaria la experimentación y, como requisito, la fragmentación. Esta técnica fragmentaria va desde una sencillez expresiva (Hinojosa) hasta una complejidad comprometedora (Brito) en la que se requiere la inmersión y colaboración del lector.⁹

(The technique in all of these works is fragmentary and experimental. In order to contain the entire community in all of its diversity, it has been necessary to experiment and, as a requisite, to use fragmentation. This fragmentary technique goes from expressive simplicity (Hinojosa) to a compromising complexity (Brito) in which the immersion and collaboration of the

⁹ Salvador Rodríguez del Pino, La Novela Chicana Escrita en Español: Cinco Autores Comprometidos (Ysplantí, Michigan: Bilingual Press, 1982) 142.

reader is required.)¹⁰

Many Chicano works feature a chronological narrative, such as Pocho, which has a clear linear time frame and identifiable plot lines. Others, however, feature a fragmented time line, split up for emphasis or to encourage, through more effort on the part of the reader, a deeper reading of the text. The writings of Tomás Rivera and Rolando Hinojosa are some of the best examples of this fragmented narrative.

This fragmentation, however, must also in part be due to the influence of the great Mexican writers Juan Rulfo and Carlos Fuentes, famous for their fragmented narratives. Charles Tatum clearly sees the influence of Rulfo when he reads Hinojosa:

"The **estampas** display a broad range in tone, from humor to a terse, direct presentation of Rulfo's El llano en llamas...Hinojosa's repeated use of expressions which communicate a deeply felt resignation to the natural course of life is similar to the technique which the Mexican writer employs."¹¹

¹⁰ The article was originally written in Spanish and reproduced in its original form above. The English translation is mine.

¹¹ Charles Tatum "Contemporary Chicano Prose Fiction: Its ties to Mexican Literature," Jiménez, 55

In addition, Tomás Rivera specifically mentions Rulfo and Carlos Fuentes as important influences on himself and other Chicano writers.¹² It here, in this category or generalization, that the influence of Mexican, as opposed to American, literature can be seen most clearly.

4. The work is political, and related to "la causa", the Mexican-American's struggle to end discrimination that began in the sixties and continues today.

If we define the Chicano as this socially-oriented person, then only that literature written by him, but especially in support of the social movement called *la causa*, initiated during the early sixties, is Chicano literature. The best example of this would be the plays of Luis Valdez, performed by the Teatro Campesino.¹³

Chicano literature, since the very first, has been closely connected to the La Causa movement that began in the sixties. Various groups of people in the United States participated in these social movements, including Chicanos, who actively

¹² Bruce-Novoa, p. 152

¹³ Luis Leal "The Problem of Identifying Chicano Literature," Jiménez, 3.

organized voter registration drives, protests, etc. Many writers have felt pressure from the activists to produce protest literature, and many have attempted to do so. Neither Rivera nor Villareal, the two authors discussed in this study, wrote with the exclusive purpose of creating protest literature. Both, however, have enjoyed increased popularity as activists point to their works as fine examples of Chicano culture.

5. The work can be in English, Spanish, or both.

On the matter of language, aside from the fact that some Chicanos write strictly in English while others prefer Spanish and some write and publish in both languages, and the fact that some critics prefer one language over the other and may even plumb for the use of Spanish alone and nothing else, the differences will best be settled by fiction writers themselves, and by the product they turn out. The languages will most probably coexist for some time, but, and this is a personal observation, I fear that Spanish will lose out in the long run. English, most certainly, will win out in the nonfiction areas of literature.¹⁴

¹⁴ Rolando Hinojosa "Literatura Chicana: Background and present status of a Bicultural Expression," Jiménez, 44.

Obviously, this generalization excludes little from qualification as Chicano literature, but it is important to note anyway. Chicano novels are either written in Spanish (...y no se lo tragó la tierra) or English (The Road to Tamazunchale, Pocho), and there is generally little mixture other than a few words, phrases, or exclamations. The trend seems to be to write in English, perhaps in part because Spanish presses are still rare. In any event, the works are soon translated into Spanish or English, as necessary.

The poetry, on the other hand, is often mixed, written in a peculiar "Spanglish" that is incomprehensible to anyone who doesn't speak both languages. Consider this excerpt from José Montoya's *La jefita*:

When I remember the campos
 Y las noches and the sounds
 Of those nights en carpas o
 Vagones I remember my jefita's
 Palote
 Clik-clok; clik-clak-clok
 y su tocesita
 (I swear, she never slept!)

The poetry is very distinctive and easily identifiable when the English and Spanish are mixed together. In a sense, this reflects the use of local dialect; many Chicanos speak

"Spanglish" every day. Sometimes this dialect is itself included in the work; one of the characters in Rivera's ...y no se lo tragó la tierra refers to the truck in which he is riding as a "troca."¹⁵ This slight permutation of the English word "truck" is common in Texas Spanish:

Loanwords from English are numerous in Southwest Spanish. Many have been used and dropped as unnecessary, and undoubtedly this process will continue. Some loanwords, however, are firmly entrenched, such as the word *lonche*, for 'lunch,' which has spawned *lonchar*, *lonchería*, and *lonchera* (to lunch, lunchroom, lunch pail). A similar set is *troca*, *troquero*, *trocade*, *trocón* (truck, truck driver, dump truck, and semi).¹⁶

This inclusion of dialects and slang from a particular region often adds flavor or authenticity to the work.

6. The work refers to the Mexican revolution and/or the accompanying migration.

The novel of the Revolution has greatly affected

¹⁵ ...y no se lo tragó la tierra, 66.

¹⁶ Ernest Garcia, "Chicano Spanish Dialects and Education," El Lenguaje de los Chicanos: Regional and Social Characteristics of Language used by Mexican-Americans, ed. Eduardo Hernández-Chavez, Andrew D. Cohen, and Anthony F. Beltramo (Arlington, Virginia: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1975) 70.

contemporary Mexican writers, and, at the same time, we can observe its influence on a group of Chicano novelists and short story writers who were writing in the late fifties and sixties in this country. Bearing in mind the heightened awareness which existed in the Chicano community after World War II, it is not surprising that the journalistic accounts which characterized the late novel of the Mexican Revolution should find favor among Chicano writers.¹⁷

Some of the best examples of this are Pocho, one of the novels discussed in the study, Chicano by Richard Vasquez, and Barrio Boy by Ernesto Galarza. Consider the following excerpt from Pocho:

Thus Juan Rubio became part of the great exodus that came of the Mexican Revolution. By the hundreds they crossed the Río Grande, and then by the thousands. They came first to Juárez, where the price of the three minute tram ride would take them into El Paso del Norte-or a short walk through the open door would deposit them in Utopia. The ever-increasing army of people swarmed across while the border remained open, fleeing from squalor and oppression.¹⁸

¹⁷ Charles Tatum, "Contemporary Chicano Prose Fiction: Its ties to Mexican Literature", Jiménez, 51

¹⁸ Pocho, 25.

The Mexican revolution is important to the Chicano writer of today for many reasons. First, the tragic tale of a revolution that succeeded and failed at the same time provides a vivid backdrop for storytelling. Second, many contemporary American Chicanos can count one or more ancestors who came across to the United States during or following the revolution, as this period marked one of the largest Mexico-United States migrations in history. Many Chicano authors writing in the fifties and sixties knew fathers, grandfathers, etc. who had fought in the war. Such veterans could have been influential in the development of these young writers. Third, the revolution has influenced many of the best Mexican writers, including Azuela, Rulfo, and Fuentes, an influence that has carried over to the American Chicano.

7. The concepts or descriptions of cultural conflict or acculturation are very important to the work.

During the first years in the United States many of the young Chicano protagonists of the novels and short stories under consideration become more and more resentful of the values and traditions brought by their parents from Mexico. As they realize that the language and customs of their people are, by and large, unacceptable in an Anglo world, they reject what they are

culturally, a process that often ends in personal psychological tragedy. However, not all of the authors view acculturation in the same light. Some manifest a less militant, more integrationist attitude.¹⁹

In Pocho, for example, the young protagonist, Richard, spends a great deal of time searching for his identity. His father is Mexican in every way, and at home he eats beans and tortillas and speaks Spanish. At school, however, his friends are American, and they ridicule him for the beans he brings for lunch. His identity is that of a Mexican-American, somewhere in between the two, and it takes him a while to understand and accept that fact. The cultural conflict, however, need not be confined to a particular character. Many of the works describe Anglos and Chicanos dealing with each other in confusion, each not understanding the cultural perspective of the other. Perhaps this is why most Chicano literature is written not by direct immigrants, but by their sons and daughters. It may take growing up in two cultures to learn to appreciate both.

The preceding guidelines, taken together, form a working definition of Chicano literature. In a literary genre defined

¹⁹ Charles M. Tatum, "Contemporary Chicano Prose Fiction: A Chronicle of Misery," Jiménez, 245.

as much by the heritage of the writer as the content of his or her ideas, there is bound to be a great amount of variation in themes of the novels, plays, poems, etc. that are considered to be representative of that genre. Any single clear-cut definition of this literary form is only doomed to exclude some of the best writers if they fail to include one or more of the "characteristics" of their genre as defined by various critics and scholars. On the other hand, a set of general guidelines, any one of which should be true of most Chicano works, is a useful tool for coming to an understanding of the Chicano writer and his or her work.

III. Part Two

U.S. Chicano History, from the sixteenth century to 1848

The first Spanish colonists to enter what is now the southwest United States came north overland from Mexico in the 1500's. This colonization was the result of many causes; missionaries came north to evangelize the Indians that were there at the time, and soldiers who had fought against the Aztecs or other native foes were often given large tracts of land as ranches or estates, many with Indian villages on them which could be forced into labor. Additionally, colonization was encouraged and soldiers sent north into these territories as a response to expansion on the part of other countries. The French were moving into present-day Louisiana, so the Spaniards moved into Texas; English and Russian traders and trappers were moving into Oregon and northern California, so the Spaniards moved into southern California.¹

These colonists remained in their new homeland, and became citizens of Mexico upon independence from Spain in 1821. During the early years of the new republic, relatively few Mexicans moved north into the regions of California and Texas. The United States, however, was looking to expand, and settlers flocked from the cities of the East to the new frontier in the west. This Anglo migration

¹ Charles Gibson " The Borderlands," Introduction to Chicano Studies, ed. Livie Isauro Duran and H. Russell Bernard (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1973) 143.

alarmed the Mexicans, as they feared that these settlers would not stop until they had taken over the entire continent. They conceived a plan which allowed Anglo settlers into their state of Texas, intending it to be a bulwark against United States expansion. These early white settlers were given cheap land to encourage their settlement². Relations, however, soon turned sour between the Mexican government, which did not allow these settlers equal rights, and the settlers, who felt that they had more in common with the United States. By 1830, the Mexican government, fearing that it had made a mistake, cut off further settlement of Texas from the United States. In 1835 bickering turned into war, as one hundred and fifty Texans were killed at the Alamo, providing a war cry for the new republic that would last for decades. In 1836 Sam Houston soundly defeated Santa Anna at the battle of San Jacinto and the Republic of Texas was born. Mexico, however, did not recognize the secession of Texas, and would remain in a state of denial for years. As for Texas itself, it would remain a republic for some years, as quarreling in the United States Congress between slaveholders and abolitionists would keep slave-keeping Texas out of the Union.

Following the war with Texas, Mexico was in a financial crisis; it could not pay off loans, and lost a war with

² Wayne Moquin and Charles Van Doren, A Documentary History of the Mexican Americans (New York: Bantam, 1972) 182.

France over reparations in 1838³. Mexico also owed the United States a sum of money that it could not repay. Relations between the two countries deteriorated, and by 1846 war had broken out as the United States attacked Mexico to recover this debt and to seize the rich lands between Texas and California. The superior munitions and artillery of the United States eventually won the war, and in 1848 a new Mexican government signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ceded Texas, California, and everything in between to the United States for \$15 million and cancellation of previous debts⁴. Thus were the first chicanos born; not migrant workers or peasants fleeing a revolt, they were wealthy, respectable landowners in California and the rest of the ceded territory whose citizenship had changed overnight with the signing of a treaty.

1848 to the Mexican Revolution

In the years between 1848 and the Mexican Revolution, most of the immigration into the area ceded to the United States by Mexico consisted of eastern Anglo miners and settlers. The first major wave took place in 1848-1849 when gold was discovered in California. At first, the only ones

³ Henry B. Parkes "The Secession of Texas," Duran and Bernard, 172.

⁴ United States of America and United Mexican States, The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, reprinted in Moquin and Van Doren, 242.

there to take advantage of it were the Spanish Mexicans who had been living there since the sixteenth century, but when word of the discovery reached the populous east coast, thousands flocked to California in search of gold. "Miner '49er's" arrived in California in droves. There were other prospectors too: Europeans, South Americans, and many Mexicans as well, but the Americans greatly outnumbered them all⁵.

After establishing settlements in California, the Anglos began settling the rest of the west, including New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona. It wasn't long before descendants of the Spaniards in those areas began to be outnumbered and started to feel like strangers in their native land. The new settlers not only displaced Mexicans, but also Indian tribes that had been living in those regions for centuries. When the tribes had nowhere left into which to retreat, they were sent to reservations. The Mexicans were not driven off in the same way, but nevertheless saw their land holdings dwindle.

The Indians never held any deeds to their land, the concepts of real estate and ownership of land being alien to their culture. The Mexicans did, but the deeds, drawn up decades before in Madrid or Mexico City, often had large legal holes through which Anglo settlers could steal hundreds of acres from Mexicans who possessed large estates⁶. Some of the

⁵ Leonard Pitt, "'Greasers' in the Diggings: Californians and Sonorans Under Attack," Duran and Bernard, 186.

⁶ John S. Hittell, "Mexican Land Claims in California," Moquin and Van Doren, 264.

estates granted to conquistadors and governors under Spanish and Mexican rule were excessively huge, even consisting of grants of as many as 50,000 acres.⁷

Mexican-Americans had more to fear than the loss of their land, as discrimination and racial attacks began. The Texans had still not forgotten the Alamo, and in California, Mexicans were rivals for the new wealth that had been found there. Anglo miners found they could run off Mexican rivals with the help of the courts. Their situation had changed dramatically, as Moquin and Van Doren note:

During the second half of the nineteenth century, then, the Mexican Americans were transformed from masters in their own domain to minority status in a nation whose language and cultural orientation were different. One is forced to say that they became second class citizens in what was to them a foreign land. This is not too strong an assertion when one considers the discrimination and violence to which La Raza was subjected from the opening of the Mexican War until well into the twentieth century. The number of killings of Mexican Americans in the Southwest from 1850 to 1930 exceeds the number of lynchings of blacks for the same period. For the Texas Rangers, it was always open season on Mexicans on either side of the border.⁸

⁷ Moquin and Van Doren, 252.

⁸ Moquin and Van Doren, 253.

In this period of time, rich Mexicans suffered just as much as the poor. In a sense, the poor Mexicans experienced little change; they had merely traded one violent, oppressive regime for another. They had little of value, and therefore were left alone⁹. The wealthier Mexican landowners, however, saw their vast holdings, which were often ill-defined in terms of borders, cut up by land-hungry settlers taking them to sympathetic American courts.

The Mexicans didn't always passively accept their fate. One of the first examples of Mexican resistance against the new settlers and the Rangers was Juan Nepomuceno Cortina, a Mexican-American who, with his band of rebels/bandits managed to occupy Brownsville, Texas for a brief time in 1858 in order to protest the treatment that Mexicans were getting at the hands of the Anglo authorities¹⁰. It didn't help: he was chased off and became a famous bandit in Northern Mexico -- but not before he had taken his place in the folklore of the region.

III. a. The Mexican Revolution and its effect on immigration

In 1909, the Mexican poor, inspired by Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata, rose up and overthrew the crooked regime of Porfirio Díaz in a lengthy, bloody revolution. This

⁹ Moquin and Van Doren, 253

¹⁰ Moquin and Van Doren, 272.

occurrence became a landmark in the history, culture, and literature of not only Mexico, but the Chicanos living in the United States as well.

The impact of the revolution on Mexican culture is enormous. Although the revolution "succeeded," which is to say that Porfirio Díaz was overthrown, most of the promised reforms never came. It is safe to say that the leaders of post-revolutionary Mexico were (and are) every bit as corrupt as the leaders of pre-revolutionary Mexico. The revolution displaced thousands, and created a pattern of immigration into the United States Southwest. For once, the immigrants from the South were not uniformly illiterate peasants seeking a better job, gold, or seasonal work:

The Mexican revolutionary period beginning in 1909-1910 spurred the first substantial and permanent migration to the United States. The immigrants of this time had backgrounds probably more differentiated than the backgrounds of those who entered before and after this era. They included upper- and middle-class refugees who felt threatened by the Revolution, as well as many others who simply sought escape from a bloody and protracted conflict. The revolution also had a more important and durable indirect effect on the movement to the United States. By liberating masses of people from social as well as geographic immobility, it served to

activate a latent migration potential of vast dimensions.¹¹

Until the conflict stabilized in the early twenties, Mexicans crossed the border in droves. Many thought that their stay would be temporary, until things settled down back at home, but wound up staying permanently. In the period between 1900 and 1909, almost 24,000 Mexicans crossed the border into the United States. Between 1910 and 1919, however, that number jumped to almost 175,000. Between 1920 and 1929, almost 500,000 immigrants arrived, numbers that would not be approached again until the late fifties and sixties. By 1930 Mexico had calmed down, and between 1930 and 1939 only about 28,000 new immigrants arrived.¹²

Naturally, the Mexican Revolution was not the only cause of this mass migration. It did cause a great "push," however, and this combined with the "pull" of roaring twenties America to create the immigration statistics listed above. The booming U.S. economy needed workers in the fields, farms, and factories, and welcomed the Mexicans, who soon became a vital part of the economic base of California and the Southwest.

The Mexicans already present in the Southwest were

¹¹ Leo Grebler, Joan W. Moore, and Ralph C. Guzmán, "The Ebb and Flow of Immigration," Duran and Bernard, 211.

¹² Duran and Bernard, p.212

largely overwhelmed by the newcomers. Those immigrants, and the immigrants that would follow in years to come, brought with them constant reminders of the customs and culture of Mexico. The Mexican-Americans of the Southwest have enjoyed a cultural advantage that so many other major immigrant groups to the United States -- Norwegians, Italians, Irish, Polish, and more -- have not: reinforcements. Constant immigration and migration across the Mexican border serves to maintain a contact with the old country culture that other immigrant groups never had. The mass immigration that resulted from the revolution was the first example of this.

III. b. Chicanos and the period from 1920 to 1965

Immigration tapered off in the 1930's, as there were far fewer employment opportunities in the United States during those years of economic depression and "dust bowl" crop failures. The few opportunities that did exist were fought over by Mexicans already established in the States and migrating Okies looking for work. Indeed, there was a substantial out-migration during this time, due in part to forced repatriation of many Mexicans on the part of the United States government.¹³

The depression ended, however, and with the manpower shortage of World War Two, Mexicans were once again welcome.

¹³ Duran and Bernard, p. 214-215

Many Mexican-Americans, out of patriotism for their new country or hope for a better life, enlisted and fought with distinction. There were proportionately more Mexican-Americans to receive Congressional Medals of Honor and other awards for bravery than any other ethnic group.¹⁴

Mexican workers in the 1940's were thus in great demand. The supply was low as well, as improved conditions in Mexico kept many of them home, and when Mexico declared war on the Axis powers in 1942¹⁵, many of the young men enlisted to fight. Mexicans had already earned a reputation as hard workers who would accept considerably less money than white Americans for the same job. In 1940, a family of Mexican agricultural workers in Arizona would earn an average of \$250 annually, and a family working in the beet fields in Montana, Colorado, Wyoming, or Nebraska would earn only \$259 per year.¹⁶

In 1942 the **bracero** program was created in the United States.¹⁷ Essentially, it was a legal way for thousands of Mexicans to come over to the United States, work for a while, and then return to Mexico. Originally a wartime measure, this

¹⁴ Paul M. Sheldon, "Community Participation and the Emerging Middle Class," La Raza: Forgotten Americans ed. Julian Samora (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966) 134.

¹⁵ Grebler, Moore, and Guzmán, 215.

¹⁶ Isabel Gonzalez, "Stepchildren of a Nation," Moquin and Van Doren, p.417

¹⁷ Grebler, Moore, and Guzmán, 215.

program became so popular among farmers and ranchers of the Southwest that it would continue in various forms until finally being dismantled in 1964. As popular as the bracero program was, there were problems with it. There were still more illegal immigrants than legal ones, and sometimes the competition among Mexicans for work could be fierce. In addition, although bracero workers were not supposed to be used when there were sufficient American laborers to complete a job, there were allegations that they were being used in areas where local workers had threatened to strike.¹⁸

In the time of World War II, many Mexicans saw their lot improve for the first time. Good jobs were plentiful, and the fact that Mexican-Americans served in the armed forces led to a slight improvement of the tolerance enjoyed by the ones left at home. Discrimination still abounded, however. In 1943, a group of sailors on leave in Los Angeles got into a conflict with a young gang of Mexicans, or "Pachucos." In the following weeks, groups of sailors drove through the streets seeking out and beating up young Mexicans while the police and other authorities looked the other way. This incident became known as the "Zoot suit riots" because of the distinctive, baggy clothing that the young pachucos wore. A few months later, George I. Sanchez described the social conditions which prevailed at the time for the young gang members:

¹⁸ Ernesto Galarza, "The Mexican American as a National Concern," Moquin and Van Doren, 434-435.

The seed for the pachucos was sown a decade or more ago by unintelligent educational measures, by discriminatory social and economic practices, by provincial smugness and self-assigned "racial" superiority. Today we reap the whirlwind in youth whose greatest crime was to be born into an environment which, through various kinds and degrees of social ostracism and prejudicial economic subjugation, made them a caste apart, fair prey to the cancer of gangsterism.¹⁹

By the end of the war migrant populations made up a significant percentage of Mexicans in the United States. Although it was often thought at the time that these populations had no permanent home and simply lived wherever there happened to be agricultural work, they did have homes and communities, mostly in Texas, Arizona, Southern California, and New Mexico. In 1966, the Rev. William E. Scholes wrote:

The Texas-Mexicans leave the rural areas of Texas in overwhelming numbers to move north with the cultivating and harvesting seasons. Towns such as Asherton in Texas may have a population of 2000 people in January and a

¹⁹ George I. Sanchez, "Pachucos in the Making" Moquin and Van Doren, 410.

population of 10 or 20 in July, when everyone has moved north for the harvests. Nor do they move north from the rural areas alone; great numbers move out of San Antonio, as well as Laredo, Brownsville, Victoria, Eagle Pass, and Crystal City, Texas, to fan out into states as far north as Minnesota or Washington and Oregon, and as far east as Michigan and Ohio, stopping for seasonal work in almost all the states in between. These people are found working in appreciable numbers in at least 37 states, returning to Texas in the late fall...²⁰

Community was very important to these Mexican-Americans, migrant and permanent alike, as it had been all throughout their history. But it was only on a small scale, and as of yet they had no sense of being part of a larger community. For example, the Mexican-Americans of Los Angeles felt no connection to the Mexican-Americans of faraway Texas. This would change in the sixties, however, and with this growing sense of community would come a realization of their political and economic potential.

III. c. 1965-Present

²⁰ The Rev. William E. Scholes, "The Migrant Worker," La Raza: Forgotten Americans, ed. Julian Samora (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966) 67-68.

In the sixties, Mexican-Americans, referring to themselves no longer as Pachucos but as La Raza, began to organize, beginning what would eventually be a very vocal minority community with powerful voters and unions. One of the first activist groups to appear in the early sixties was New Mexico's Alianza, which had as its goal the return of some of the larger land grants to the descendants of the original proprietors. These huge land grants, which had been given to conquistadors and early Spanish settlers, had been broken up by nineteenth-century United States courts and parceled out to settlers and the U.S. forest service:²¹

The activities of the Alianza went far beyond supporting legal and political issues for Mexicans. In addition, it became a center for the training of cadres of young men and women in political organizing. It brought together striated class and age groups in common causes such as generating benefits for the needy, stumping for political votes; but more importantly it created a series of clubs directed toward specific age groups. These clubs, such as the Club Mavis, Twenty-Teens, Club Esmeralda, El Centro, Monte Carlo, and the Gaylords, all focused on the young, unmarried, high-school educated Mexicans. While ostensibly these seemed to be only social clubs sponsoring dances, benefits, and food booths, they in fact became politically important

²¹ Moquin and Van Doren, 452.

organizing tools for the Viva Kennedy campaigns of the 1960's. For thirty years these clubs produced important cadres for political, educational, business, government, and community organizing.²²

It is safe to say that the sixties ushered in the best era yet for Mexican-Americans. Organizers like Cesar Chavez organized voter registration drives. By finally organizing, they were able to elect officials sympathetic to their cause. The prosperity of the time allowed for the formation of a new middle class among La Raza. Their newfound political clout gave rise to an interest in the long-neglected Chicano culture, and Chicano literature began to appear, Chicano Studies programs appeared in the universities and student groups were formed. Some feel that these gains were only possible because of the new perspective that living in an Anglo culture had given the younger generations:

The Chicano ideology includes a broad definition of political activity. Ironically, such thinking was only possible for a new generation of urbanized and 'Anglicized' (that is, assimilated) young Mexican-Americans, who were much less burdened by social and

²² Carlos G. Vélez-Ibáñez, Border Visions: Mexican Cultures of the Southwest United States, (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1996) 127.

class restrictions than their elders and whose education had exposed them to new ideas.²³

Despite these gains, discrimination still existed in the sixties, and still exists today, because the educational system still fails many bright young Mexican-American students. In 1970 Helen Rowan wrote:

The inadequacy of ability tests when applied to many groups is also notorious; the question is how, when the fact is so well known, school officials can summon the arrogance to brand young children as mentally deficient when it is the tests and schools that are deficient. In California, Negro and Mexican-American children are overwhelmingly overrepresented proportionally in classes for the 'mentally retarded'. A former education official (an angry Anglo) told me of visiting a school in the San Joaquin Valley where he saw records listing one child as having an I.Q. of 46. Wanting to learn more about how such a mental basket case could function at all, he inquired around and found that the child, a boy of eleven, has a paper route, takes care of his four younger brothers and sisters after school, and prepares the

²³ Alfredo Cuellar, "Perspectives on Politics," Duran and Bernard, 569.

evening meal for the family. He also speaks no English.²⁴

As late as the sixties, the schools were not the only important place not to be free of prejudice and discrimination, as the United States legal system was still heavily biased against the Chicano. In 1969, court records show that a state judge in San Jose, California, called a young chicano defendant an "animal...a very vulgar, rotten human being." He also stated, "There is nothing we can do with you. You expect the County to take care of you. Maybe Hitler was right. The animals in our society probably ought to be destroyed because they have no right to live among human beings."²⁵

The courts tended to be more lenient toward Anglo offenders than Chicano ones. Arthur Esquibel, chief of police of Las Vegas, New Mexico once discovered that two rival gangs, one Anglo and one Hispanic, were competing to see who could vandalize more things and be more destructive. At a meeting of the gang members and parents, it was decided that the Chicano kids, as they had criminal records, should be arrested and that the Anglo kids should miss basketball in school for three weeks. Esquibel insisted on equal punishment for the same

²⁴ Helen Rowan, "A Minority Nobody Knows," Mexican-Americans in the United States, ed. John H. Burma (Cambridge, Mass. Schenkman Publishing Company, Inc. 1970) 304.

²⁵ From court records of the State of California and the County of Santa Clara, September 2, 1969, reprinted in Duran and Bernard, 483

offense, and consequently no charges were filed.²⁶

The police, ever notorious for prejudicial treatment of minorities, improved during the late sixties, but still showed a clear bias when dealing with Mexican-Americans. Between 1965 and 1969 the Department of Justice received 256 complaints of police abuse from people with Spanish surnames in the five Southwestern States.²⁷ Shameful as this may seem, it is at least encouraging that the complaints were made at all; for decades they would not have been taken seriously.

At present, the situation is still improving for the Mexican American. Segregation by law is gone, but there still exists in many communities an unofficial line which Chicanos are encouraged not to cross. In her extensive study, The Mexican Outsiders: A Community History of Marginalization and Discrimination in California, Martha Menchaca studies the town of Santa Paula, California from the Spanish colonial period to the present, noting in particular the laws and attitudes of Anglos in the city toward their Mexican American neighbors. She documents a number of actual incidents and cases, and concludes:

Based on my ethnographic field research, I found that past segregative practices in Santa Paula have been reformed and Mexican-origin people are not forced by

²⁶ U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, "The Administration of Justice in the Southwest," Duran and Bernard, p.466

²⁷ U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 465.

local laws, physical violence, or their employers to remain among their own kind involuntarily. Nonetheless, segregation in Santa Paula has evolved into a system of social apartness. Anglo Americans determine the places and times when interethnic mixing can take place. They also practice a cultural system of correct social comportment in order to accord themselves social privileges.

On the surface, this system of social apartness may not appear to be harmful because no one is physically injured and it is a peaceful way to maintain interethnic relations. The problem, however, is that it serves to debase Mexican-origin people and ascribe to them an inferior social position, while concurrently conferring special privileges upon Anglo Americans. As I have previously discussed, some of the outcomes of this system are that: the majority of Mexican-origin elementary students attend segregated schools, the city council continues to favor the West Side in funding city projects, the East Side has become a zone for industrial storage, Anglo Americans continue to humiliate people of Mexican descent, Mexican-origin people are not welcomed in the Protestant churches, and Mexican-origin people are discriminated against in the provisioning of public

services.²⁸

²⁸ Martha Menchaca, The Mexican Outsiders: A Community History of Marginalization and Discrimination in California, (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1995) 199.

IV. Part Three

Early Chicano Literature

The earliest forms of Chicano literature were the songs and ballads of border country. Although not technically literature due to their oral nature, they were nevertheless the most important means by which early Chicanos expressed themselves. Their impact on later Chicano literature makes them worth study. They were described by Américo Paredes in his influential and important work "With His Pistol in his Hand", first published in 1958. It describes these ballads and songs, and their subjects, focusing on the song and the myth of Gregorio Cortés, a man unjustly persecuted in the early 1900's.

The **corrido**, or ballad, has its roots in the **romances**, or traditional lyrical ballads of Spain, that the Spaniards brought with them as they colonized the region. The first settlers of what is now the U.S. Southwest were largely illiterate, and their descendants continued to be so for many years until the United States brought improved schools to the area ceded to them by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Therefore, the oral tradition was dominant, and "literature" consisted of songs and stories, told and re-told through the generations.

The earliest border corridos deal with romance or cattle drives, and are not particularly remarkable. It is not

until approximately 1910 that they began to acquire one of their most remarkable characteristics: the protest aspect. After 1909, Mexicans fleeing the revolution migrated north in droves. These Mexicans, many of them politically inclined due to their participation in the ideological revolution, reinvigorated their northern brethren, and changed many aspects of the corrido.

Conditions had always been bad for Mexican-Americans in the border regions. The authorities harassed them, their huge land grants were being split up by the U.S. courts, and the life of an agricultural worker in those days was very hard. The corridos which became most popular in this period were not about cattle drives, but about Mexican-American folk heroes like Juan Cortina and Gregorio Cortés. Paredes writes:

Whatever ballads and ballad-like songs were composed on the lower Rio Grande in the first two decades of border conflict have been lost, but that such songs were composed is fairly certain. One may safely assume that the border-conflict ballad tradition was several decades old before it began to produce songs that were memorable enough to survive. Keeping song books or commonplace books was not a widespread border custom; so it is unlikely that much of the older ballad production will

ever be recovered...¹ (Paredes, p.138)

Cortina was an early "activist" who occupied Brownsville, Texas with a band of rebels in 1858, in order to attract attention to his cause, which was just and fair treatment for Mexican-Americans in the border region. Cortés, on the other hand, was a simple farmer who was mistakenly accused of being a horse thief in 1901. He shot and killed a sheriff, and then killed another sheriff while running from posses. He managed to elude hundreds of men in Texas for a while, before being captured. He was tried and convicted, but eventually pardoned by the governor after Mexican-Americans, as well as a fair number of Anglos, rallied to his cause. These two men quickly became the focus of many of these protest-border ballads. In true folk hero form, their deeds were quickly exaggerated by the tellers: In one ballad, Cortés is said to have escaped "three hundred" men.² In reality, in that particular incident he faced less than a dozen.³

These border corridos would eventually fade and be replaced by other forms of expression. In fact, very few are recorded as having been created after 1930. But they left

¹ Américo Paredes, With His Pistol in His Hand (1958; Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1975) 138.

² Paredes, 171.

³ Paredes, p. 67-72

their mark, and Tomás Rivera, among other important writers, mentions having been influenced by them, and by Paredes' work.⁴

Even as the corridos were fading, Mexico continued to exert great influence on the border Chicanos. This was due in part to the fact that the two cultures shared common ancestry in the traditions of Spain, early writers like Bernal Díaz del Castillo, Ignacio Altamirano, etc. But mostly it was due to the almost constant interchange of people and ideas along the border. Charles M. Tatum contrasts this constant cultural interchange to the mutual distancing of Mexico and Spain:

However, it is important to note that while Latin American literary independence from the mother country, Spain, was accelerated by the independence movements of the early nineteenth century, Chicano literature received (and had continued to receive) a constant cultural infusion from Mexico dating from the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848. Although large portions of Northern Mexico were ceded to the United States, after 1848 Mexicans on both sides of the newly created border continued to flow freely back and forth in large numbers in open defiance of the artificial boundaries between the two countries. Therefore, due to these historical and

⁴ Ramón Saldívar, Chicano Narrative: The Dialectics of Difference (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1990) 26.

political circumstances, Chicano writers have always enjoyed a much closer relationship to Mexico than have Mexican writers to Spain, an ocean and a war of independence apart.⁵

This interchange is perhaps best illustrated by the example of Mariano Azuela, an acclaimed Mexican writer who wrote and published his masterpiece of the Mexican revolution, Los De Abajo (The Underdogs), in El Paso, Texas, in 1915. It was originally published in a newspaper there,⁶ and is considered to be one of the first novels of the Mexican revolution.⁷ Azuela lived in exile because his political views made it unsafe for him to live in Mexico, and many other writers of the period found themselves in similar situations.

The period between 1930 and 1959 was a quiet one for Chicano literature. Those who fled the revolution were either in the United States to stay or had gone home in the

⁵ Charles Tatum, "Contemporary Chicano Prose Fiction: Its ties to Mexican Literature," The Identification and Analysis of Chicano Literature, ed. Francisco Jimenez, (New York: Bilingual Press, 1979) 48-49.

⁶ Tatum, 51.

⁷ The novel of the revolution, pioneered by Azuela, would eventually become almost a genre unto itself, and be adopted by writers on both sides of the border. Carlos Fuentes and Juan Rulfo, two of Mexico's most prestigious writers of this century, wrote novels set against the revolution, and José Antonio Villareal, whose first novel Pocho is examined in this study, wrote his second novel The Fifth Horseman against the backdrop of the revolution as well.

relatively calm period that followed the revolution. Many wished to go home, but by then had put down roots and decided to stay. The sixties and Chicano awareness, and the literature that would be produced, were still in the future. Most notable about this period is that many of the best writers (Villareal, Hinojosa, Rivera, and others) were growing up and having the experiences about which they would later write. So although there was no significant literary output during the period, it would later be well documented by mature writers looking back on their formative years.

IV. a. 1959: The publication of Pocho

In 1959 José Antonio Villareal published Pocho, which would come to be considered the first Chicano novel. Villareal was born in Los Angeles, California, in 1924. Both of his parents were born in Mexico, but came to the United States in 1921 with three children. His father had fought in Pancho Villa's army for seven years. The family settled in Santa Clara in 1930 and young José started school there. There were seventeen children in the family, of whom twelve survived. After the family settled in Santa Clara, according to Villareal, he grew up in an area that had a good mixture of

Mexican and American culture.⁸ Later in life Villareal became a university professor, teaching English literature and creative writing at universities in the United States and Mexico.

Villareal's first novel, Pocho, deals with the Rubio family, Mexicans who flee the revolution and come to reside in the United States in the first half of the twentieth century. The narrative opens with Juan Rubio, the father of the protagonist, and a colonel in Villa's revolutionary army. The revolution has been successful, but the generals fight amongst themselves, and the country is reverting to many of its old ways. Villa is in seclusion, Zapata is dead. Rubio, however, still believes fervently in the ideals of the revolution, and considers himself to be merely waiting for Villa to reappear and lead the true followers to glory. While drinking in Ciudad Juarez, however, he shoots a **gachupín** (Spaniard) and has to flee Mexico with the aid of an old army pal. Later, he learns of the death of Villa and becomes quite disillusioned and saddened at the fate of his country. Nevertheless, throughout the novel, Rubio makes constant mention of the fact that he feels that his stay in the United States is only temporary, and that once things improve back home, and he earns enough money, he will return:

Now this man who had lived by the gun all his adult

⁸ José Antonio Villareal, interview, Chicano Authors: Inquiry by Interview, ed. Juan Bruce-Novoa (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980) 38.

life would sit on his haunches under the prune trees, rubbing his sore knees, and think, Next year we will have enough money and we will return to our country. But deep within him he knew he was one of the lost ones. And as the years passed him by and his children multiplied and grew, the chant increased in volume and rate until it became a staccato NEXT YEAR! NEXT YEAR!

And the chains were incrementally heavier on his heart.⁹

In the meantime, Juan finds work where he can, and before long sends for his wife and his family. Not long after they arrive, his wife gives birth to Richard Rubio, who will emerge as the true protagonist of the story and the **pocho** of the title. The remainder of the novel deals with Richard's struggles and ordeals while growing up as a Mexican-American in prewar California. Several incidents and conflicts are particularly noteworthy.

First, Richard experiences discrimination at the hands of the majority Anglos. One of the earliest episodes in the novel concerns a young friend of his who is not allowed to come to his house when her Anglo parents discover that he is Mexican. His pronunciation is poor, and one of his teachers makes fun of him for it. He makes friends in school, but

⁹ Pocho, 42.

sometimes has to choose between his **pachuco** or Mexican friends and Anglo friends. And although he is a good student, well known and liked in his own community, one day he goes elsewhere and is stopped and harassed by the police simply because he is Mexican-American.

Second, much like the unnamed protagonist of Tomás Rivera's ...y no se lo tragó la tierra, Richard has a religious crisis, and begins to doubt the existence of God. He takes this crisis out on his mother, who is not accustomed to seriously questioning her faith. Although this one episode centers on the mother, most of the rising tension in the family centers on Richard and his father. Although Juan still believes that some day he will return to Mexico, Richard stops believing that. In fact, having never been to Mexico, he cannot see the point in returning. Their points of view are thus fundamentally different; Juan is a Mexican, Richard is an American. To Richard, California, not Mexico, is "home."

The novel ends on a sad note, as Juan leaves the family, in particular his wife, who, influenced by the different Anglo culture, becomes more and more independent and less tolerant of his affairs. He remarries, this time to a beautiful young Mexican woman who has just recently moved to the United States. Richard, despite his mother's pleas to stay, joins the United States Navy and goes off to fight in World War II.

The novel addresses certain historical issues, including

the social and cultural impact of the great migration, the psychological effects of the revolution on the refugees who fled north to escape it, and how the first generation, or the children of these refugees, managed to adapt to their new home culture. It is this adjustment that lies at the heart of many Chicano novels, and one of the reasons that Pocho is considered to be the first Chicano novel.¹⁰

Juan Rubio is representative of the thousands of Mexicans who fled north during the harsh years of the revolution and the bitter fighting among the generals immediately afterwards. Villareal was born in California in 1924, just as the great migration north was ending. It is probable that he knew many old revolutionary soldiers in California in his formative years, and saw the impact that their experiences had on them. Villareal's own father, José Heladio Villareal, fought with Pancho Villa for several years.¹¹

There must have been a considerable generation gap between these adult Mexicans, having been forced out of their country after years of brutal fighting for a very idealistic cause, and their children, who grew up in an Anglo world of schools, books, and discrimination. Generational differences between the migrants and their United States-born children clearly manifest themselves in the relationship between

¹⁰ Saldívar, 60.

¹¹ Bruce-Novoa, p.38

Richard and Juan. Juan comes from the world of the *corrido*, and he has lived boldly, with his pistol in his hand, fighting for his beliefs. The world is very black-and-white for him; you are either a man or you're not, and either fight for justice or not. The ideological tone of the revolution, as well as the *corrido* culture, have produced this polarizing effect in him. Juan is a hero in the *corrido* mold, brave and uncompromising. This is what his culture has taught him to value. However, his life is not a *corrido*, and he must put down his pistol sometimes and go home. His rigid belief system is very hard on his family, and it eventually helps to break it up.

Richard is a very philosophical young man and quite different from his father. He sees the world in grays; that is to say, he realizes that his father is wrong when he talks and thinks only in terms of absolutes. His acceptance of these gray areas first manifests itself in Richard's musing about God and religion. He agonizes over the concepts of good and evil, and sin, having been led to believe that every thought or deed is good or evil, either a sin or not a sin. But he realizes that he does not always know the difference, and reasons that he has probably sinned without ever knowing how, when or why, and through no malicious fault of his own. Eventually, he seems to decide just to do his best and let God figure it all out later.

Richard's growing acceptance of ambiguity, of course,

eventually places him at odds with his father and family. One incident involves one of his sisters, who have assimilated a good deal of Anglo culture. One of them returns late from a date, and Juan yells at her, eventually hitting her. The sister looks to Richard for help, but he cannot provide it. In Mexican culture, the father is correct in disciplining his daughter as he sees fit for returning late from a date, and for apparently casting some doubt on her honor in the process. In American culture, however, it is acceptable for the girl, a relatively mature young woman, to do as she pleases and come home whenever she likes. Richard, realizing that his father and his sister are both right and wrong, eventually does nothing.

Other conflicts in the novel also come from the clash between cultures. Written long before either the equality movements of the sixties or the advent of political correctness in our own times, the novel is surprisingly multicultural. Richard is particularly open-minded and has many friends, including a young Japanese-American boy and a boy of Italian-American descent. He has both Anglo friends and Mexican-American friends, and divides his time between the two. Richard's first girlfriend is an Anglo girl he knows from the neighborhood. Consistently, the culture around Richard, both at home with his uncompromising father and outside with the discrimination of the majority Anglos, is shown to be harsh and unfair. Richard, however, never

displays any sort of hatred or prejudice, and the obstacles only make him work harder. He is not the only one with an open mind, for certain other characters also break away from the discrimination. His friends, for example, accept him as one of them, and kindly librarian (an Anglo woman) encourages him to read in the library. That these other characters can be open-minded, friendly, and accepting like Richard shows that the author believes that racism and discrimination are inherent to no ethnic group.

IV. b. Critical appraisals of Pocho and its importance

Pocho has inspired a body of analytical and critical work as formidable and deep as any other work of Chicano literature. A close examination of these critical studies can greatly benefit the student of literature who is interested in Pocho. That so many distinguished critics have taken the time to express their thoughts of Pocho shows that, even almost forty years later, it is still considered to be a work of vital importance to the emerging genre of Chicano literature. Its influence is unquestioned; Rolando Hinojosa, well-regarded author of Estampas Del Valle y Otras Obras, mentions once that it is the first Chicano novel he has ever read¹², and Tino Villanueva (Hay Otra Voz Poems)

¹² Bruce-Novoa, p. 64

describes it as "key"¹³ to Chicano Literature. Ramón Saldívar devotes an entire chapter to Villareal and Américo Paredes in his study Chicano Narrative; The Dialectics of Difference, where he states:

Given the strength of the model texts, it should not be surprising that subsequent Chicano novels and other narrative forms have looked, consciously or not, to Paredes' work on the corrido, to his short fiction, and to Villareal's novel Pocho for inspiration.¹⁴

Some critics, generally those involved in the La Raza movement, have declared that the novel is too assimilationist:

The novel Pocho has always been somewhat of an embarrassment to Chicanos. Even the preface to the Anchor paperback edition seems to show the need to apologize for the novel. Richard's rejection of his father's values, his statements that "codes of honor are stupid" (Pocho p. 108), his rejection of the Catholic faith, and, of course, his departure at the novel's end to join the United States armed forces in the months just prior to Pearl Harbor are seen as assimilationist

¹³ Bruce-Novoa, p.263

¹⁴ Saldívar, 72.

tendencies.¹⁵

Villareal has stated that he considers the first goal of any writer -- Chicano or otherwise -- to be the creation of good writing and literature. He feels that to sacrifice art for politics is wrong, and he has answered his critics on several occasions. In an article entitled "Chicano Literature: Art and Politics from the perspective of the Artist" he writes:

Another characteristic of this new literature was that it must perpetuate the idea that the Chicano was the most impoverished person in America, that our plight was the direct result of racism, and that we, like the demagogues in our political forefront, must expound our answers to this situation. We should fight racism with racism, hatred with hatred. Political rhetoric no different from harangue, appealing to emotion at the expense of reason, was expected from us. The fact that those of us with artistic temperament could not interpret the function of art in this manner was not considered.¹⁶

¹⁵ Saldívar, 65.

¹⁶ José Villareal, "Chicano Literature: Art and Politics From the Perspective of the Artist," The Identification and Analysis of Chicano Literature, ed. Francisco Jimenez, 164.

Villareal should not be thought of as being contrary to the goals of the political Raza activists. His opinion is simply that the best way to educate Anglos, and anyone else interested in the subject of Chicano life in the United States, is to produce realistic, representative literature about the experience. Above all, it should be good literature, otherwise no one would want to read it. He considers himself to be an artist, and his art rises above the level of dogma.

In addition to being good literature, Pocho is educational, insofar as it describes a way of life that had never been described in literature before, and can also be viewed in terms of its historical context. No novel can be totally removed from the context in which it appears; no writer writes in a vacuum. With Chicano literature, which has many protest aspects and often chooses to focus specifically on social issues, this statement may be even more true. In Pocho, Villareal has chosen to depict many of the social conditions prevalent for Chicanos in prewar America, and thus the novel includes certain scenes and events that indicate the prevailing atmosphere of the time.

Pocho covers the time period from the Mexican revolution to World War II. The only hispanic characters in the novel have fled the revolution; that is to say, no Chicano appears whose family has been in the United States since the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. This is historically possible, as huge

waves of immigrants overwhelmed the native Chicanos, forming in the process many new cities, towns, and regional cultures.

Other historical episodes lend further authenticity to the novel. In a poignant scene, Richard's Japanese friend is sent away to an internment camp, a historic black mark on the human rights record of the United States:

Thomas seemed unconcerned, but his voice broke as he spoke. "After this week, we ain't gonna have no more ranch. My old man says we can't pay off the mortgage if we can't harvest the crop, so the bank is gonna foreclose," he said. He was thoughtful for a moment. "You know," he continued, in command of his voice again, "my old man's been on that land since before the last war, too. And my mother's been helping him work the Goddamn ground since she was fourteen, when my old man and her was married. Alla us was born there, for Christ's sake..."¹⁷

Villareal, who grew up in California, may well have had a personal experience similar to this one. If he did, it is possible that he would have felt some alarm or shame at the racist actions of his country and government, just like his protagonist Richard; after all, the difference between Richard, a second generation son of immigrants, and his

¹⁷ Pocho, 230.

friend, also a second generation son of immigrants, is the difference between their respective nationalities.

The novel also depicts young Richard and his father attending a meeting arranged by communists and labor organizers. Workers are torn between their desire for higher wages and their fear of losing work in a strike. The growers, who have been paying low wages, hold their ground, and a bloody confrontation ensues. This episode, too, has its roots in the actual history of the region. In 1931, a worker's union called the Cannery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union (CAWIU) held a demonstration in the Santa Clara Valley which turned into a battle when the unionists clashed with police and anti-union workers.¹⁸ Villareal may or may not have been there, but in any event he has depicted the atmosphere of the era and the attitudes of some of the workers and the farmers who employed them. The end of the novel, when Richard joins the U.S. Navy to fight in the war, is also historically accurate. Thousands of Mexican-Americans enlisted, and, as has been noted before, served with distinction.

Even the publication history of the novel itself reflects the history of Chicanos in the United States. Barely noticed when it was first published, it was not considered an important milestone for over a decade, when it was seized by Chicano activists and scholars as the first Chicano novel in

¹⁸ Saldívar, p. 69

the sixties. In a mixed blessing for Villareal, many of these critics blasted the novel for some of its perceived attitudes, yet they nevertheless sparked a renewed interest in it which greatly increased its popularity and readership. By the time he published his second novel, The Fifth Horseman, in 1974, it was eagerly awaited by the Chicano community and is still in print today.

IV. c.

1971: Tomás Rivera and ...y no se lo tragó la tierra (...and the earth did not devour him)

Twelve years after Pocho, a novel was published by Tomás Rivera, an unknown Chicano author and university professor. This novel, ...y no se lo tragó la tierra (...and the earth did not devour him), was an immediate success, winning the first Quinto Sol award in 1971 for best literary work by a Chicano.

Rivera had a background not unlike Villareal's. He was born in 1935 in Crystal City, Texas, a town with an enormous population of Mexican-American migrant workers. His father was born in Mexico, and his grandfather fought in the revolution. Tomás worked for many years as a migrant worker, the condition of which he would later document in his novel. He went to college with the support of his family and eventually earned his doctorate. He held many prestigious

jobs in academia, including Chancellor of the University of California, Riverside, before passing away at the young age of 49 in 1984.

Written in the unmistakable Spanish of mid-century migrant Texas, ...y no se lo tragó la tierra is quite different structurally, if not entirely different thematically, from Pocho. It is a fragmentary narrative, borrowing structurally from the great Mexican writers Rulfo and Fuentes as much as from any American writer. It is so fragmentary, in fact, that it at first seems to be more a series of short stories than an actual novel.

The story is about a boy who attempts to recall a "lost" year of his childhood, and opens with the protagonist's being "called" to remember the year, though later he realizes that he himself did the calling. After the first brief introductory segment, the novel divides up into smaller sections: twelve main parts connected by thirteen brief transitional bits, some of which are no longer than one paragraph. All the sections are unrelated, which is to say that after one segment ends, the actions or characters are not referred to in subsequent sections until the last section, which summarizes all the other sections in a stream-of-consciousness flow of narrative. At first, the effect is confusing, as each segment may have a different narrator and subject matter. But the effect is cumulative; Rivera paints for the reader a picture of his Chicano community as a whole

by offering these brief glimpses into it.

The subject matter of the segments is quite diverse. In the first one, a young child is shot and killed by an Anglo farmer trying to scare his migrant workers into working harder. In the second, a distraught mother prays for the safe return of her son from the Korean war. The transitional bits, much shorter, are also meant to stand alone. One transcribes a conversation in which Texas workers doubt the existence of Utah, and another deals with discrimination on the part of a small town barber. They are not related in any apparent way to each other or to the larger sections which they are found between.

Like the heterogeneous subject matters of the various segments, the narrative as a whole also can be confusing until the reader adjusts to it. Rivera uses multiple narrators; the boy narrates some segments, an omniscient narrator narrates others, and the praying woman narrates her own segment. Another segment portrays young sweethearts, who must occasionally separate as the harvesting seasons dictate. This segment consists of a brief introduction and conclusion, and in between the story is told through direct quotes and dialogue from the boy, the girl, and their friends and family. Many of the short transitional anecdotes between the major segments are likewise composed entirely of dialogue and thus lack a third- or first-person narrator. Rivera interchanges narrators freely, using the boy, an omniscient narrator, and

the dialogue of community members to narrate segments of his tale.

Like the narration, characters are not consistent in their roles. The boy is sometimes the main character, sometimes a minor character, sometimes the narrator, but often entirely absent from a segment. The only other characters to exist in more than one segment are the boy's family, but their impact on the work as a whole is minimal. The characters themselves seem relatively unimportant because the novel is not about any of them; it is in reality a portrait of a community and a way of life. Themes and ideas travel more freely between segments than any characters do; if discrimination and hardship were considered to be characters, then they could be said to have greater parts than anyone, including the boy. Like narrators, characters are created and interchanged as Rivera needs them to paint the portrait of his community.

According to many scholars, the heart of the novel can be found in two of the middle segments, the one entitled "La noche estaba plateada" ("A silvery night") and the title piece, "...y no se lo tragó la tierra" ("...And the earth did not devour him").¹⁹ These two chapters come as close to being related segments as any in the novel, for both deal with the young man and the doubt that he begins to cast on the

¹⁹ One such critic is Ramón Saldívar, who refers to the two episodes as the "core episodes of the novel" in his work Chicano Narrative: The Dialectics of Difference, 79.

existence of God. In "la noche estaba plateada" the young boy decides to find out for himself if there is really a devil. For his whole life, he has been told that the devil is real and will come if called under certain circumstances. After debating for a while as to whether or not it is a good idea to try, he sneaks out one night and does everything he can think of to summon the devil to him:²⁰

He got to the center of the knoll and summoned him. At first no words came out, from pure fright, but then his name slipped out in a loud voice and nothing happened. He kept calling him by different names. And nothing. No one came out. Everything looked the same. Everything was the same. All peaceful. Then he thought it would be better to curse the devil instead. So he did. He swore at him using all the cuss words that he knew and in different tones of voice. He even cursed the devil's mother. But nothing. Nothing nor no one appeared, nor did anything change. Disillusioned and feeling at moments a little brave, he headed back to the house. The sound of the wind rustling the leaves of the trees seemed to accompany his every step. There was no

²⁰ As already noted, ...y no se lo tragó la tierra was originally published in Spanish. In this study, I have decided to use the excellent translation of Evangelina Vigil-Piñon, available from Arte Publico Press, at the University of Houston. The following and all other English translations are hers.

devil.

"But if there's no devil neither is there...No, I better not say it. I might get punished. But there's no devil. Maybe he'll appear before me later. No he would've appeared already. What better time than at night and me, alone? No, there's no devil. There isn't." ²¹

Having denied the existence of the devil in "A silvery night," the boy goes on to deny God in "...and the earth did not devour hi," one of the angriest segments of the work. The boy's aunt has died and his uncle is dying. On top of that, first his father and then his little brother come down with severe sunstroke from working hard in the fields. This rash of ill fortune causes a crisis of faith in the boy. His family is the nicest, most honest and hardworking people he knows, and yet it seems that God is punishing them. He rails out at his mother, who simply is the one with the bad luck to be around him when the crisis of faith strikes:

"I am certain that God has no concern for us. Now you tell me, is Dad evil or mean hearted?...

And my aunt and uncle? You explain. And the poor kids, now orphans, never having known their parents. Why

²¹ ...y no se lo tragó la tierra, 105-106.

did God have to take them away? I tell you, God could care less about the poor. Tell me, why must we live here like this? What have we done to deserve this? You're so good and yet you have to suffer so much."²²

The boy goes so far as to curse God verbally while carrying his sunstruck brother home, but he immediately regrets it, thinking that the earth would open up and swallow him for his action. Nothing happens, however, and he continues to curse God, venting his frustration at his situation. After a period of reflection in which he ponders the implications of getting away with cursing God, he finds that he feels peaceful and in control for the first time in his life: "There were clouds in the sky and for the first time he felt capable of doing and undoing anything that he pleased."²³ Richard Rubio could certainly relate to this sort of religious introspection and questioning of faith, one of many similarities between Pocho and ...y no se lo tragó la tierra.

IV. d. Criticism and Influence of Rivera

...y no se lo tragó la tierra won the first Quinto Sol award, a prize given annually for a while in the seventies for the most outstanding piece of Chicano literature. Rolando

²² ...y no se lo tragó la tierra, 109

²³ ...y no se lo tragó la tierra, 112

Hinojosa, for example, who won the award one year later for his work Estampas Del Valle y Otras Obras, termed the novel and the award the "number one" milestone in Chicano literature, "no question about it."²⁴ In his book, Chicano Authors: Inquiry by Interview, Juan Bruce-Novoa interviews all the major Chicano writers (at least those who were major in 1980), asking them such questions as "Does Chicano literature have a particular language or idiom?" and "Who are the leaders among Chicano writers, and why?" The responses from these authors indicate that the impact Rivera and ...y no se lo tragó la tierra have had is enormous. Ron Arias, author of The Road to Tamazunchale, a short novel which is also well-regarded in Chicano literary circles, says: "I would say that Tomás Rivera is a tremendously careful and perceptive writer with a wonderful touch for humor. His ...tierra is certainly a milestone for fine Chicano writing."²⁵

Unlike Villareal, who drew mixed criticism for both the writing style and political tone of Pocho, Rivera is almost universally hailed as brilliant by everyone from academics to activists. Consequently, ...y no se lo tragó la tierra has undergone six printings since 1987, and has even been made into a motion picture, a certain sign of popularity in these times. Perhaps Ramón Saldívar summarizes best the importance

²⁴ Bruce-Novoa, p. 61.

²⁵ Ron Arias, interview, Bruce-Novoa, 252.

of the work:

The magisterial work of Tomás Rivera (1935-1984), ...y no se lo tragó la tierra/...and the earth did not part (1971) takes to their limits the formal, thematic, and ideological issues raised by Paredes' and Villareal's works. *Tierra* represents the first milestone in Mexican American literary history after the turbulent events of the 1960s and sets itself explicitly within the political and social contexts of the post-World War II agricultural worker's life. Winner in 1970 of the first Quinto Sol Prize for literature, the most prestigious literary award in the early years of Mexican American literature, Rivera's novel immediately established itself as a major document of Chicano social and literary history.²⁶

In Tomás Rivera, we find a writer who was not hesitant to talk about his writing and his motives. He did not publish much, having a family and holding prestigious posts at several universities, and ...y no se lo tragó la tierra is the only novel he wrote before his untimely death in 1984, although he also wrote several poems and scholarly articles.

Perhaps the biggest difference between Rivera's motivation to write and Villareal's is that Rivera was very

²⁶ Saldívar, 74.

consciously trying to create Chicano literature, and Villareal wasn't. Like most good writers, Villareal wrote about what he knew, in this case growing up as a Mexican-American in prewar California. When he wrote Pocho, however, there was no body of writing by people with backgrounds similar to his. The genre was new, and there was no literary canon for him to consult. Rivera, on the other hand, had works by other writers to consider, and he had a clear concept of the direction in which he wanted to take the literature of his people, as he himself tells us in his interview with Bruce-Novoa:

"I enjoy writing about Chicano topics, themes, feelings and so forth, but I've only written about people who existed in the migrant stream between 1945 and 1955. Right away its a historical documentation that I want to deal with. [The events of which I have written, within what can be called Chicano literature, has to be what happened to the migrant worker between those years. So, my motivation, when I wrote it]²⁷ was different than the motivation of the people I write about...In ...tierra and those stories, I wrote about the migrant worker in that period of ten years. During that period I became very

²⁷ In his interview, Rivera switches freely between Spanish and English. Statements in parentheses were made in Spanish, and later translated into English, presumably by Juan Bruce-Novoa, before the article was printed.

conscious, in my own life, about the suffering and the strength and the beauty of these people...later, in 1967-68, I'm writing. The Chicano movement was [a complete power already] in the university and so forth. I wanted to document, somehow, the strength of those people that I had known. And I was only concerned about the migrant worker, the people I had known best. So I began to see that my role-if I want to call it that- would be to document that period of time, but giving it some kind of spiritual strength or spiritual history."²⁸

It should be noted that Rivera was very well educated in the classics of literature, not only Mexican writers, but American and European writers as well. His extensive education and knowledge of literature served him well when he finally sat down to write. For Rivera, as it was for Villareal, it was vital that he produce a work that was literature first, and Chicano second. He himself credited this education with making him a better writer:

"I think it [his education] has helped me in many ways...it allowed me to see better the context of what I write and of the literature emerging from the Chicano Movement within the whole idea of literature itself...I

²⁸ Bruce-Novoa, 148.

prefer to see Chicano literature within the context of all these other literatures." (Bruce-Novoa, p.145)

Later, in an article entitled "Chicano Literature: Fiesta of the Living," Rivera describes his feelings on seeing other people's cultures represented in literature but not his own:

Even in the worst writings I have found an exact, pure desire to transform what is isolated in the mind into an external form. To perceive what people have done through this process and to come to realize that one's own family group or clan is not represented in literature is a serious and saddening realization. At twelve, I looked for books by my people, by my immediate people, and found very few...When I met Bartolo²⁹, our town's itinerant poet, and when on a visit to the Mexican side of the border, I also heard of him--for he would wander on both sides of the border to sell his poetry - I was engulfed with *alegría*. It was an exultation brought on by the sudden sensation that my own life had relationships, that the people I lived with had connections beyond those at the conscious level...Bartolo's poetry was my first contact with

²⁹ Bartolo, the town poet, is mentioned by name in a small segment of ...y no se lo tragó la tierra, as well as this article.

literature by my own people. It was to be my only contact for a long time." (Rivera, in The Identification and Analysis of Chicano Literature, p.20)

To understand his complex work, it is important to understand Tomás Rivera and what he set out to do. He was an intellectual who had put himself through college and studied the classics of both Mexican and American literature. Yet he felt that neither literature was correct for his people, who had grown up between the two cultures. When he wrote, he wrote to express himself as well as to help pave the way for other Chicano writers to follow. But his classical training would not allow him to write anything that would not be considered literature. Rivera would have agreed with Villareal that the first duty of the Chicano writer is to produce good literature, and writing something that makes a political statement should be secondary. Therefore, when he wrote, he was very conscious of being present at the beginning of a genre, and he did certain things, for example, write in Spanish, include local slang, talk about remembering a fading past, etc. that he felt should be part of his people's literature. Rivera also made the important decision to document his people in a way different from Villareal; he chose to **show**, and not **explain**, his roots, impressions, and feelings.

IV. d. Pocho and ...y no se lo tragó la tierra

There are thus many similarities between the two works. First of all, the authors are similar. They were both born in the United States to parents who had immigrated from Mexico during or following the revolution. They both worked hard as children. Both became involved, in their own ways, with the Chicano movement of the sixties: Villareal was drawn into this movement who used his work as an example of Chicano art, and Rivera was more of an active participant.

Secondly, the novels deal with similar themes. Both describe a loss of religious faith, describe difficulties in school for kids who can't speak English well, and deal with discrimination against Chicanos on the part of Anglos and with Chicano participation in a war, be it World War II or Korea.

There are differences, too, however. The Rubio family in Pocho experiences a lot of strife that is absent from ...y no se lo tragó la tierra. Richard's friends are clearly described, but not those of the unnamed narrator of ...tierra. The biggest differences, however, are between the narrative structures of the two novels. It is these differences that I will concentrate on in the next section of this study. In order to do this, however, it is first necessary to recognize that the two writers are very similar. They grew up in similar environments, they wrote about similar things, yet their narrative methods are vastly different. Why? Did

something happen in those ten years between their novels? Is something different about what they are trying to preserve or tell us?

V. Part Four

The Narrators of Pocho and ...y no se lo tragó la tierra

Pocho and ...y no se lo tragó la tierra are works that are similar in many ways. The authors led similar lives: both were first generation sons of Mexican immigrants, had relatives who fought in the Mexican revolution, were born in states (California, Texas) that had been ceded by Mexico to the United States by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, and, having been born just ten years apart, they grew up at approximately the same time. Their works are similar, too, at least thematically. Both show protagonists who have a serious loss of religious faith, deal with anti-Mexican discrimination on the part of the white Anglo majority, and describe difficulties in school for the Mexican-Americans. However, when one considers the narrative structures of both works, they couldn't be more different. It is this unique set of circumstances that allows readers and scholars the opportunity to understand two writers from very similar backgrounds who say many of the same things in totally different ways.

Pocho features a narrative that is straightforward, chronological, and linear. Occasional mention is made of events from the past--notably the experiences of Juan Rubio in the revolution--but such mention is not atypical for chronological novels of this nature, as it serves mainly to clarify a particular action that is occurring in the present.

The omniscient narrator of Pocho often interrupts his linear time flow to interject an explanation, commentary, or to mention results and effects of an action that has just been described. The narrative pattern of the novel consists then of first recounting or describing an action, and then presenting a summary of the importance of that action to the story, protagonist, or other characters. Consider the following excerpt from Pocho, which follows a family discussion of Juan Rubio's experiences in the Revolution:

Richard looked at his father with a new respect. It was not like the innate respect he had for him because he was his father; rather; it was something real, for an abstract--an understanding, perhaps. He always thought, before this, that his father had first gone to join in the Revolution for a lark, to satisfy a need that his young hot blood had. Now he knew why his father had gone to fight and why, after he had married, he had left his mother to shift for herself, and had gone off again and again. Full of reverence, he looked down at the table, and the blood rose to his chest enough to stifle him, his emotion was so strong.¹

This segment of narrative **explains** the thoughts of the young boy, and how this talk with his family changes them. It analyzes the preceding action, in this case the discussion,

¹ Pocho, 127.

and the effects it has on the boy. In Pocho, much of the emotional action, that is to say the straightforward description of the inner emotions of the characters, takes place in this sort of descriptive paragraph.

The narrative of ...y no se lo tragó la tierra couldn't be more different. It relies heavily on dialogue to narrate events, and when there is non-dialogue narration, it is dry and straightforward, recounting only the events that occur, leaving out any explanation of the thoughts of characters and the effect the action is having on them. Also, multiple narrators are used; some of the segments are narrated by a boy who has participated in the actions ("Hand in his Pocket", "First Communion", and others), some are narrated by an omniscient narrator who describes actions in the third person ("...and the Earth did not Devour him", "it was a Silvery Night", and others) and others are made up entirely or almost entirely of dialogue ("A Prayer", "When we Arrive", and others).

The narrators of ...tierra seem content to let the reader evaluate and analyze all the described actions for him or herself; the narrative **shows**, rather than explains, the actions that occur. Both major narrators of the novel--the boy and the omniscient narrator--share the same laconic style, describing actions and feelings without including much analysis. For example, in "First Communion" the boy is walking to church to receive his first communion when he sees

two people having sex through a window:

I headed for church repeating my sins and reciting the holy sacraments. The morning was already bright and clear but there weren't many people out in the street yet. The morning was cool. When I got to the church I found that it was closed. I think the priest must have overslept or was very busy. That was why I walked around the church and passed by the cleaners that was next to the church. The sound of loud laughter and moans surprised me because I didn't expect anybody to be there. I thought it might be a dog but then it sounded like people again and that's why I peeked in through the little window in the door. They didn't see me but I saw them. They were naked and embracing each other, lying on some shirts and dresses on the floor...²

The narrative goes on to describe their lovemaking and the boy's reaction to what he has seen without any mention of how this event affects the boy in the future, whether he ever saw either of the two again, whether the impression it makes is lasting or fleeting, etc. This is not to downplay the importance of the passage, which is in fact the central passage of that particular segment.

² ...y no se lo tragó la tierra, 115-116.

The first segment, "The Lost Year," which, along with the last one, "Under the House," frame the other segments, explains in part why the narrative might not include such analysis as is found in Pocho. In a dreamlike state, the unnamed protagonist begins to recall a "lost year." And recall he does, giving detailed descriptions of twelve long events and thirteen shorter ones, all apparently unrelated to each other. The introductory segment does not mention any need to analyze the implications of these recollections, merely the need to recover this year. Nor does the rememberer dwell on any segment longer than the others; their relation to each other is negligible, and their importance only relative to the whole. The rememberer does not pass judgment on these recollections, positive and negative. He instead treasures them because it is his own past, and the past of his beloved community.

The essential difference between the two works is this: Pocho **explains** the experience of growing up as a Mexican American during the thirties, and ...y no se lo tragó la tierra **shows** the experience of growing up as a Mexican-American ten years later. Villareal wants the reader to watch his protagonist as he makes his way through cultural adaptation and historical events; Rivera wants the reader to step into his world and accompany the boy as he points out all the joy, sorrow, and hardship he experienced during the lost year. This essential difference also results in Pocho being

the story of an individual and ...y no se lo tragó la tierra being the story of a community, as Ralph Grijeda argues in an article about ...y no se lo tragó la tierra:

...direct and explicit identification between the characters in the stories and the central figure is of minor importance, for the overall impression created by the book is not of an individual but a communal experience. The various persons of the stories, the experiences and the landscape of these lives, belong unmistakably to the hero's past. The emphasis, however, remains on the general experience, communal and social rather than individual and personal.³

Tomás Rivera himself mentions his desire to record the communal spirit and strength of the migrant workers with whom he grew up. In an interview with Juan Bruce-Novoa, he says:

So I began to see that my role--if I want to call it that--would be to document that period of time, but giving it some kind of spiritual strength or spiritual history. [Not just this and this happened, but to give a

³ Ralph Grijeda, "Tomás Rivera's Appropriation of the Chicano Past," Contemporary Chicano Fiction: A Critical Survey, ed. Vernon E. Lattin (Binghamton: Bilingual Press, 1986) 114.

spiritual dimension to the people of that time.]⁴ I see my role more as a documenter of that period of time...they lived through the whole thing, perhaps because they had no choice. I saw a lot of heroic people and I wanted to capture their feelings.⁵

V. a. Narrative aspects of ...y no se lo tragó la tierra

Why does ...y no se lo tragó la tierra utilize multiple narrators and narrative techniques, and Pocho only one narrator and technique, a chronological retelling of the protagonist's life? Essentially, Villareal, in Pocho, doesn't need to vary his narrative structure: the nature of his story is such that is well suited to a traditional, linear narrative. Rivera, on the other hand, wants to get across something entirely different: a portrayal of his beloved migrant community. Thus the narrative bounces back and forth between the first- and third- person, and uses a healthy amount of narrative dialogue⁶ as well.

⁴ In the original interview, Rivera spoke both in English and Spanish. Bracketed sections were originally in Spanish, and later translated into English, presumably by Bruce-Novoa.

⁵ Bruce-Novoa, 148-149.

⁶ Narrative dialogue is a term of my own creating. It means that dialogue, directly represented in the text, which clearly describes action. For example, the sentence "I saw him walk to the store." is narrative dialogue, but "How are you today?" is not. For further explanation, see pages 90 -

As Pocho has only one narrative voice which describes all the action, it is irrelevant to a consideration of the value of multiple narrators in a single work. Therefore, we will set it aside until we compare the use of time in both novels.

There are three narrators in ...y no se lo tragó la tierra. The first one is the omniscient narrator of "A Silvery Night." The second is the boy narrator of "Hand in his Pocket." The third is the communal voice of "The Night the Lights Went Out." The third, the communal voice, often shares segments with the omniscient narrator: after a brief introduction by the omniscient narrator, the communal voice takes over, filling in the details. In such segments, it is the communal voice that seems more important, narrating events, and the omniscient narration is only there to introduce and/or conclude the segment. This community voice represents people gossiping about a particular action, often passing judgment as well. Rivera's use of narrative perspective is consistent only within segments; that is, in any given segment the boy, omniscient narrator, or communal voice/omniscient narrator might narrate, but they will not switch until the next segment.

The presence, or absence, of the boy is also very important to each segment. In the segments where he is present, whether he is narrating or not, he is usually the main character, and it is through his eyes that the scene

unfolds for the reader. In the segments where he is not present, much of the narration is done by the communal voice, representing Rivera's attempts to add the flavor of the oral tradition used by his people. By dividing the segments into two categories, with or without the boy, we also divide them into categories that show either a slice of the boy's life or the community's communication at work. Therefore, in each segment, it is important to consider two things:

- 1). Who narrates the action of the segment?
- 2). Is the boy present, and in what capacity?

Following is a brief summary of each segment how it addresses each of the two questions.

The Lost Year

In this introductory segment, we are introduced to the young man whose "lost year" comprises the middle segments and anecdotes of the novel. He is confused in the dark, in a "dream." He is called by a voice, which he later recognizes as his own, to recall the "lost year."

- 1). The omniscient narrator narrates this segment.
- 2). The boy is present, as he is the one called upon to recall the "lost year."

The Children Couldn't Wait

An Anglo farmer, annoyed at the water breaks his Mexican

workers are taking (he pays them by the hour), fires a shot to scare them away from the water tank, killing a young boy in the process.

1). The narration is third-person omniscient, with a brief dialogue at the end by two unnamed persons who function as a sort of chorus to fill in the end of the story and pass judgment on the farmer

2). The boy is not present in this segment.

A Prayer

This segment is entirely a monologue/prayer by a woman whose son is fighting in Korea. The prayer is directed to God and Jesus Christ, and she asks them not to let the Koreans kill her son, who is "humble" and "doesn't want to take away anybody's life." In return for his life, she offers "my very own heart" (p. 90).

1). This is the only major segment entirely presented in the voice of one of the characters other than the boy. There is no narration as such, which is to say that no actions are described, nor is there any indication as to whether the prayer is spoken aloud or internally.

2). The boy is not present in this segment.

It's That it Hurts

The boy has been expelled from school for fighting with an Anglo bully. The administrators of the school are shown to

be remarkably insensitive: "They [the boy's parents, presumably] could care less if I expel him...They need him in the fields" (p. 94).

On the way home, the boy is tormented by memories of what happened, sometimes even in denial that they really expelled him: "Maybe they didn't expel me from school. Maybe it ain't so, after all. Maybe it's not. **Sure it is!**" (p. 92) He is afraid that his parents and godfather (**padrino**) will be angry and ashamed.

- 1). The boy narrates this segment in the first person.
- 2). The boy is present in this segment, as both protagonist and narrator.

Hand in His Pocket

The boy's family leaves early to be somewhere for the harvest season, and he stays behind to finish school. He stays with a hispanic couple, Don Laíto and Doña Bone, a popular couple in the community, but they are actually thieves and murderers. The boy is forced to help them rob and murder an elderly man who comes by to see Doña Bone, and then they terrorize him into silence. They give him the dead man's ring, and for years afterwards the boy puts his hand in his pocket whenever he meets anyone new.

- 1). The boy narrates this segment in the first person.
- 2). The boy is again present as both narrator and protagonist.

A Silvery Night

The boy begins to question his faith, and sneaks out of his house in the middle of the night to try to summon the devil. He wants only to know if there really is a devil, and tries everything he can think of, even cursing the devil's mother. When the devil does not arrive, he concludes, "Those who summoned the devil went crazy, not because the devil appeared, but just the opposite, because he didn't appear" (p. 106).

- 1). The omniscient narrator narrates this segment.
- 2). The boy is present as the protagonist of the segment.

And the Earth did not Devour Him

This segment, together with the previous one, constitutes the closest thing to connection or continuity between segments that occurs in the novel. A series of misfortunes befall the family as the uncle and aunt perish, leaving behind their children, and then the boy's father and younger brother get bad cases of sunstroke.

These misfortunes cause the boy to question seriously his faith in God, and he angrily confronts his mother: "I tell you, God could care less about the poor" (p.109). Later, while carrying his brother back from the fields, he angrily curses God. He immediately regrets it, but after a moment discovers that the earth does not open up to swallow blasphemers as he had always thought. This revelation eventually causes him to

feel "at peace" (p.111) .

- 1). The omniscient narrator narrates this segment.
- 2). The boy is present, as the protagonist of the segment.

First Communion

The boy, headed for his first communion and concerned about the number of sins he may or may not have committed, takes a minor detour and, through the window of a tailor shop, sees two people having sex.

Some confusion results, as the boy begins to feel as if he were the one who has sinned. Eventually the feeling passes, and the boy is happy to have had a new experience: "I felt like knowing more about everything. And then it occurred to me that maybe everything was the same" (p. 117) .

- 1). The boy narrates this segment.
- 2). The boy is present as both narrator and protagonist.

The Little Burnt Victims

The father of three young children buys them boxing gloves and forces them to fight in the hope that they will become boxers and earn money. He even rubs alcohol on their bodies "just like they had seen done in the movie" (p. 120) . While the family is away, a fire starts, and only the eldest child survives the blaze.

- 1). The omniscient narrator narrates, with a fair amount of narration provided by dialogue from the community. The end of

the story is supplied by a conversation between two people, who, like the two in the second segment "The Children Couldn't Wait", reflect and pass judgement on the participants.

2). The boy is not present in this segment.

The Night the Lights Went Out

This segment tells the story of a young couple, Ramón and Juanita. Ramón finds out that Juanita had been unfaithful to him while she was up north working in Minnesota, and when she returns, he causes a scene at a dance. Later, he commits suicide by grasping an electrical transformer, his body "burnt to a crisp" (p. 127). This causes the lights to go out in town.

1). The omniscient narrator narrates, but only provides a brief introduction and conclusion to the story. Essentially, all the omniscient narrator says in the introduction is that one night the lights went out and people didn't know why until the next morning, and in the conclusion all that is said is that Ramón's body was found at the power station and that some others had heard that he was going to kill himself over her. The remaining, and most important, narration in the segment takes place in the form of dialogue. Ramón's and Juanita's words are given, as well as those of witnesses and gossips.

2). The boy is not present in this segment.

The Night Before Christmas

A woman, Doña María, decides to buy her children presents

for Christmas. She doesn't leave the house much, and quickly becomes very disoriented when she goes downtown. Confused by the masses of people and the new surroundings, she forgets to pay for something and is accused of stealing. Eventually, everything is cleared up and she can go home.

1). The omniscient narrator narrates, but there is a fair amount of important narrative dialogue, especially at the end where a conversation is held between the woman, her husband, and someone who helps get her out of trouble.

2). The boy is not present in this segment.

The Portrait

A travelling salesman comes to town selling portraits, just as the people are returning from harvest season up north (and presumably have more money). A family purchases a portrait, giving the salesman thirty dollars and the only photo they have of their son who went to war in Korea and never came back. A few weeks later, the portraits still haven't arrived, and some children playing find a bag full of all the pictures, now all ruined. Don Mateo, who has paid for the portrait, goes to San Antonio, where he finds the salesman and forces him to make a portrait of his missing son from memory.

1). The boy narrates, but takes no part in the action. Again, dialogue is important to the narration. Don Mateo finishes narrating the story, telling someone how he found the

salesman and forced him to make a portrait.

2). The boy is present as narrator, but not as protagonist.

When We Arrive

A truckload of migrants breaks down en route to Minnesota. The people inside quietly sit and think about a variety of things. Their thoughts range from hopeful ("If we do well with the onion crop, I'll buy me one [a car] that's at least half-way decent") (p. 143) to pensive ("What a great view of the stars from here!...I wonder how many other people are watching the same star?") (p. 145) to angry and bitter ("Fuckin' life, this goddamn fuckin' life!...We're nothing but a bunch of stupid, goddamn asses!...This is the last time I go through this, standing up all the time like a goddamn animal") (p. 144).

1). As in "The Night the Lights Went Out," the narration is omniscient but relatively unimportant, serving only as an introduction and conclusion, which frame the interior of the segment, which consists solely of the thoughts of people in the truck. The only action in the segment is the truck's breaking down and the people thinking to themselves while they wait for a ride to the nearest town.

2). The boy is not present in this segment unless he is one of the people in the truck whose thoughts are represented. There is nothing to indicate this, however.

Under the House

The companion to "The Lost Year," this segment finishes the novel. The boy has recovered his lost year, and it is revealed that he has been sitting quietly under a house this whole time. A stream-of-consciousness narrative adds one or two more sentences concerning each major segment and smaller anecdote that appear in the novel. He is discovered there, though, and flushed out by dogs and children. After he leaves, he climbs a tree and waves to someone he imagines he sees in a palm tree on the horizon.

- 1). The omniscient narrator narrates, with a very long stream-of-consciousness recollection of the various segments in the novel. At the end of this, the boy says "I would like to see all of the people together. And then, if I had great big arms, I could embrace them all." (p. 151)
- 2). The boy is present in this segment as protagonist.

The Anecdotes

Between each major segment is a minor anecdote. The themes of these vary greatly, and do not consistently have anything in common thematically with the segments before or after it. They are generally no longer than one paragraph or a few lines of dialogue.

- 1). The narration is almost always in the third-person omniscient or plain dialogue. Only in the last anecdote, the one about Bartolo the itinerant poet, does a personal "I"

appear, as the unnamed narrator recalls Bartolo and his poetry.

2). The boy is not present in any of the anecdotes, unless he is the unnamed narrator of the last one as mentioned above.

Overall, a pattern becomes evident: if the boy is present in the story as protagonist, that segment lacks narrative dialogue that comes from the townspeople or community. The lone exception is "The Portrait," which the boy narrates but which also contains considerable narrative dialogue. Of course, all the main segments and many of the smaller anecdotes contain dialogue of some sort. Narrative dialogue, however, is dialogue which is used to describe the events. Take, for example, the dialogue in the emotionally charged segment "...And the Earth Did Not Devour Him." This segment contains some very important dialogue, but it narrates nothing in terms of action. Consider the following emotional exchange between the boy and his mother:

"So there you have it. You see? And my aunt and uncle? You explain. And the poor kids, now orphans, never having known their parents. Why did God have to take them away? I tell you, God could care less about the poor. Tell me, why must we live here like this? What have we done to deserve this? You're so good and yet you have to suffer so much."

"Oh, please, m'ijo, don't talk that way. Don't speak against the will of God. Don't talk that way, please, m'ijo. You scare me. It's as if already the blood of Satan runs through your veins." (p. 109)

This dialogue is very important to the segment because it clearly shows the religious crisis that the boy is undergoing, but, in terms of physical action, it narrates nothing. On the other hand, the following dialogue from "The Little Burnt Victims" narrates part of the action that takes place:

"They say that the oldest child made little Juan and María put on the gloves. They were just playing. But I think he rubbed some alcohol on their chests and who knows what other stuff on their little bodies like they had seen done in the movie. That's how they were playing."

"But how did the fire get started?"

"Well, poor things, the oldest, Raulito, started to fry some eggs while they were playing and somehow or other their little bodies caught on fire, and you can imagine." (p. 121)

This conversation, unlike the one between the boy and his mother, actually narrates much of the action that has

occurred. Both types of dialogue, narrative and non-narrative, are present in the novel, but the narrative type only occurs when the boy is not present, whether he's narrating or not.

Given these facts, we can make the following chart:

NO BOY	
NARRATIVE DIALOGUE	
<u>Omniscient Narrator</u>	<u>Boy Narrates</u>
"The Children Couldn't Wait"	"The Portrait" ⁷
"A Prayer" ⁸	
"The Little Burnt Victims"	
"The Night the Lights Went Out"	
"The Night Before Christmas"	

⁷ Obviously, if the boy narrates this segment, he must be present. I include this segment in this place on the chart because, unlike all of the other episodes in which the boy is present, he does not participate in any depicted action. The second paragraph begins with "I remember once I was at the house of one of my father's friends when one of those salesmen arrived." (p. 136). This marks the extent of the boy's participation in the segment as the narration shifts from the boy to a conversation and then to the words of Don Mateo, the friend of his father.

⁸ "A Prayer," as already mentioned, contains no narration, only a monologue.

"When We Arrive"

BOY PRESENT

NO NARRATIVE DIALOGUE

Omniscient Narrator

Boy Narrates

"A Silvery Night"

"It's That it Hurts"

"And the Earth did Not
Devour Him"

"Hand in His Pocket"

"First Communion"

Narrative Dialogue--Why?

Why did Tomás Rivera choose members of the community to narrate actions in more than half of the last year segments of his novel? He could have only used the boy and the authorial voice, or omniscient narrator. In Pocho, Villareal only uses one narrator; why does Rivera choose to use three?

The answer, perhaps, lies in the history of Chicano culture. Rivera, as previously noted, was very aware of Chicano history, and the lack of a Chicano literature. When he sat down to write his masterpiece, he may have wished to include aspects of his culture that would be unique to the

history of his people. Nicolás Kanellos writes:

Tomás Rivera's ...y no se lo tragó la tierra is haunted by the nameless Chicano masses whose nocturnal voices reflect on the events narrated and record them into the collective memory of the Chicano. Rivera, in reproducing the Chicano social milieu, allows the reader to eavesdrop on the candid, all-knowing and unguarded conversations of the unidentified interlocutors who represent the collective subconscious of the Chicanos. We see through them how Chicanos interpret reality. For the most part, these night-time speakers are not even circumstantially related to the plot; rather, they review for each other what they themselves have heard. It seems that they are one step away from oral history and folklore, one step from immortalizing their subjects in a **corrido** or folktale.⁹

Tomás Rivera himself was not reluctant to address the issue of what he wrote and why, as he writes:

In my work, ...Earth, I made a stand on the processes of remembering, of discovery, and free will.

⁹ Nicolás Kanellos, "Language and Dialog in ...y no se lo tragó la tierra", International Studies in Honor of Tomás Rivera Ed. Julian Olivares (Houston: Arte Publico Press, 1986) 54.

Firstly, about remembering. I'm referring to the method of narration that the people used to use. That is, I remember what they remembered and the way they used to narrate. There always existed a way of compromising and expressing a feeling with minimal words. Also, there existed constantly the invention of new happenings. This, clearly, is what the oral tradition elaborates. Although many of the fathers that went around working were illiterate, the narrative system predominated....In this way, in the migrant camps, an oral literature developed.¹⁰

Rivera thus felt that converting this oral tradition into written Chicano literature was very important. The people of the migrant camps he remembered from his youth did not use the complete sentences and paragraphs of written literature; instead, they traded information verbally, told tall tales, exaggerated, gossiped. And it is this atmosphere, that of getting information second- or third-hand from friends and neighbors, that he wished to re-create in his work. True to his technique in the novel, Rivera does not tell the reader that he is trying to represent an oral tradition on paper; instead, he lets the words of the community speak for themselves. He has **shown**, without explaining, one of the rich

¹⁰ Tomás Rivera, from his paper "Recuerdo, descubrimiento, y voluntad," reprinted in Tomás Rivera, "Chicano Literature: Fiesta of the Living," Jiménez, 21. The original is in Spanish: the translation is mine.

customs of his people.

The segments that use narrative dialogue have certain things in common. First, and most importantly, the boy is not present. A member of an oral culture (like the boy) would get his information about interesting or tragic events by word of mouth, without necessarily participating in them. Second, the narrative dialogue within each segment almost always begins with the words "they say,"¹¹ as in "The Children Couldn't Wait," where the communal narrator says, "They say that the old man almost went crazy" (p. 87). This narrator has not actually seen the old man go crazy with his own eyes, but he is passing along information that he heard from someone else. That these common elements are found in certain segments reinforces the idea that Rivera was using them to continue his people's oral tradition.

There is one exception, however, to this pattern, and that is the segment entitled "The Portrait." The second paragraph starts out: "I remember once I was at the house of one of my father's friends..." (p. 136) In other words, the boy is present, although this time he is not the major character of the tale. The tale goes on to describe how this friend of his father was swindled by a traveling salesman. Later, the friend, Don Mateo, seeks out and finds the salesman and at this point Don Mateo himself takes over the narrative:

"...Of course, I recognized him right off. Because

¹¹ In the original Spanish, "Dicen."

when you're angry enough, you don't forget a face. I just grabbed him right then and there. Poor guy couldn't even talk. He was all scared. And I told him that I wanted that portrait of my son and I wanted it three dimensional and that he'd best get it for me or I'd let him have it." (p.138)

Why is this segment different? Why, for the first time, do we have a narrator other than the boy narrating something that he actually did or witnessed firsthand? One possible explanation involves the nature of the tale. Don Mateo would not necessarily want the town to know he had been swindled in the first place, so therefore he might only tell the tale to a few select people. As a result, if the narrator (boy) isn't close enough to Don Mateo, he'd have never heard it at all.

Tomás Rivera wishes to **show** us a point in history, as opposed to **telling** us about it, and he uses multiple narrators to do so. He does not present a smoothly flowing narrative in which every action is calmly narrated and its implications explained, but a fragmented set of recollections, anecdotes, and quotations. Individually they make good stories and interesting pieces of dialogue, but together, their effect being cumulative, they show a community of hardworking migrant workers. The effect of ...y no se lo tragó la tierra is thus

like a scrapbook or collage. The photos or clippings on any one page might be able to stand by themselves, but it is not until the whole is assembled that a clear overall picture emerges. Like any good scrapbook, ...y no se lo tragó la tierra contains photographs of the boy (third-person narratives in which the boy is the protagonist), photographs taken by the boy (first-person narratives in the boy's voice) and photographs and articles clipped from the newspaper (communal narratives of events where the boy was not present), representing the community's oral information network. Those items included in a scrapbook are completely subjective; they depend on the taste of the person creating it. A scrapbook never explains things in the way that a journal does, but it can nevertheless create an understanding that is just as vivid.

VI. Part Five

Narrative time in Pocho and ...y no se lo tragó la tierra

The question of how a narrative relates to time is an important one for any novel. A study of this relationship can be informative if patterns can be discerned. Many patterns are well established: for example, the traditional narrative style is chronological, with a beginning, middle, and end described in that order. Other structures exist as well: many novelists first describe the middle of their story, go back to the beginning, and then arrive finally at the end. The combinations are almost endless, and writers and authors have long experimented with different patterns and ways to depict the time flow of their narrative. Homer, for example, twisted time in The Odyssey¹. Essentially, the story of The Odyssey is this: Odysseus, through with the Trojan war, leaves for home. After various adventures, he arrives at the land of the Phiakians in his tenth year away from his home in Ithaka. At about the time that he is telling the Phiakians about his travels, his son Telemachos leaves Ithaka in search of his father. Telemachos does not find him, but the two arrive in Ithaka around the same time. Together they defeat the suitors who have plagued the house and wife of Odysseus in the years that he has been gone.

¹ Homer, The Odyssey, trans. Richmond Lattimore (New York: Harper Perennial, 1991)

In a straightforward chronological narrative, the narration would start in Troy and follow Odysseus around the globe. The Odyssey, however, is not straightforward in this sense. Instead, the epic poem begins with Telemachos' trip and a description of the suitors at the home of Odysseus. The narrative then switches to Odysseus, staying at the island of the Goddess Calypso. She is ordered to let him go, and he arrives at the land of the Phiakians. While there, he tells them his tales, starting in Troy and ending up in his "present", there with the Phiakians. After his tale is done, a chronological narrative resumes as Odysseus goes home and restores his household.

Genette, in his work Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method defines many terms that are useful in understanding questions of time and narrative. First of all, he defines **story** as the "signified or narrative content."² In other words, the story of The Odyssey is "Odysseus starts out in Troy and returns home after many adventures." The **narrative** (according to Genette) is the "signifier, statement, discourse or narrative text itself."³ Any deviation from a standard time line is an **anachrony**. An anachrony that goes backward in time is an **analepse**. When Odysseus narrates his travels, it

² Gerard Genette, Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method trans. Jane E. Levin. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980) 27.

³ Genette, 27.

is an analepse.⁴ The **reach** of an analepse is the amount of time that has passed from that time to the present. The reach of Odysseus' account is nine years, because that is how long ago he had left Troy. The **extent** of an analepse is the amount of time it covers, so the extent of Odysseus' tale is also nine years because he covers his travels up until the present. His tale can be broken down further. The portion of the tale that deals with the cyclops, for example, has a reach of about eight years (He hadn't been gone from Troy for very long) and an extent of just a few days.

According to Genette, there are two ways to look at time in the narrative. I will refer to them as micronarrative and macronarrative.⁵ Micronarrative is the time that is referred to in a paragraph, sentence, or page, and is determined mainly by the verb tenses that are used. It commonly deals with shorter periods of time such as days, hours, or minutes. Macronarrative involves larger time periods that make up an entire work.

Micronarrative in Pocho and ...y no se lo tragó la tierra.

⁴ An anachrony that goes forward in time is a **prolepse**. Prolepses are not as common as analepses. Any sort of foreshadowing is a prolepse. There are no real prolepses in either of the novels that are subjects of this study.

⁵ Genette refers to "micronarrative" on page 43 of his work, after using it to structurally examine his subject novel, Proust's A La Recherche du Temps Perdu. He then goes on to subject this novel to a "macronarrative" analysis without ever referring to it with that term.

Both Rivera and Villareal are adept at the use of time and verb tenses in their works, although they use their skills to achieve different effects. Consider the following paragraph from Pocho (the letters are mine and mark each temporal transition that occurs in the paragraph):

(A)The red ugly building that was his home was before him now. (B)It had been a store at one time, (C)and faded lettering was still legible on its high front. "CROCKERIES" and "SUNDRIES," it read. Below that, in smaller lettering, "Livery Stable". (D)The "Sundries" had bothered him for a long time, until, finally, (E)one day, he asked his teacher what "soondries" meant and she did not understand him. When he spelled the word out for her, she laughed and told him it meant "a great many things." She then taught him to pronounce the word. (F)Although he liked his teacher, he never forgave her for laughing at him, and from that day he was embarrassed whenever he was corrected by anyone. (G)And when he daydreamed in class and she asked, in exasperation, "Richard, of what are you thinking?" he answered "Sundries." (H)He waited patiently for the day he would run across the word when reading aloud in class, (I)and when that day came, it was before a different teacher, and instead of the elation he had anticipated, he was left with a curious dissatisfaction. (J)Now, as

he stood before his house, he pronounced the word almost soundlessly. He was afraid of being caught talking to himself.⁶

This seemingly simple paragraph contains a number of temporal transitions, as the narrative leaps back and forth between various actions in the past and the present while the boy is looking at the barn. Upon closer inspection, the actual time line of the events that take place in this paragraph is as follows, from most remote time to the present:

- 1). The time when the building was a store.
- 2). The indefinite period of time that the word "sundries" bothered Richard before he asked his teacher about it.
- 3). The day he asks his teacher what the word means (and, more importantly, her reaction to his question).
- 4). The period of time stretching from that moment to the present, in which he is embarrassed by anyone correcting him.
- 5). The shorter period of time after that same incident in which Richard would daydream in that particular

⁶ Pocho, 46-7

teacher's class

6). The period of time in which Richard waits for that word to appear in a class reading.

7). The moment when he correctly reads the word aloud for a different teacher.

8). The present, when Richard is standing outside the store.

Note that numbers four, five, and six overlap considerably yet still represent different segments of the time line because they end at different points, and indeed, number four never ends.

With this data we arrive at an actual time line of the events of the paragraph by crossing the temporal change indicators (letters) with the actual time fragments (numbers). The result is as follows:

A8, B1, C8, D2, E3, F4, G5, H6, I7, J8.

In this paragraph, the most important event is E3, the teacher laughing at young Richard's mispronunciation of the word "sundries." It is this event about which Richard thinks when he sees the barn in the present, and this event which causes

all of the future anticipation and embarrassment which is mentioned in the latter half of the paragraph. By grouping like causes and effects together, the structure of the paragraph might look something like this:

A8, (B1), C8, (D2) [E3, (F4, G5, (H6, I7))], J8.

As previously mentioned, it is Villareal's intention to explain, as opposed to Rivera, whose intention is to show, and in the very structure of this paragraph, we can see this explanation at work. The story makes a logical break from the present, explains a past incident that is painful for the protagonist, describes and explains the results of that incident in the intervening time, and returns neatly to the present.

Rivera, too, is adept at the use of time on the micro level. At the end of the segment "It's that it Hurts," the young boy (who narrates this segment) is also thinking about a difficulty he experienced at school. He has been expelled for fighting, even though he did not start the fight and no one was hurt. He is very upset about the situation and can't concentrate. Again, temporal changes are marked by letters:

(A) That movie was good. The operator was the most important one. (B) Ever since then I suppose that's why

Dad had wanted me to study for that after I finish school. (C)But...maybe they didn't throw me out. (D)What if it's not true? Maybe not. Sure it is. What do I tell them? What do I do? (E)Now they won't be able to ask me what I'm going to be when I grow up. (F)Maybe not. (G)No, yeah. What do I do? It's that it hurts and it's embarrassing at the same time. I better just stay here. (H)No, but then mother will get scared like she does when there's lightning and thunder. (I)I've gotta tell them. (J)And when my padrino comes to visit us I'll just hide. No need for him to find out. (K)Nor for me to read to him like Dad has me do every time he comes to visit us. (L)What I'll do is hide behind the chest or under the bed. That way Dad and Mother won't feel embarrassed. (M)And what if I wasn't really expelled? Maybe I wasn't? (N)No, yeah.⁷

Like the paragraph from Pocho, this paragraph makes many temporal transitions. The actual timeline in this story is as follows, from earliest event to the latest:

1. The boy saw a movie in which an operator was an important character.

2. The time since then, when his father dreams that the

⁷ ...y no se lo tragó la tierra, 95-6.

boy will finish his studies and become an operator. This time frame begins at some point in the past, and the boy presumes it will end when his father is told that he has been expelled. The end of the time is not known as the boy is debating whether or not to tell his father the bad news.

3. The actual expulsion of the boy, earlier that afternoon,

4. The present, or the boy walking home lost in thought, fear, and embarrassment.

5. The future in general, a sort of "from now on."

6. Conditional future, the mother being frightened if the boy does not return on time.

7. A future visit from the padrino (a sort of sponsor or patron in many latin american cultures), and conjecture as to what may occur.

8. This is an indeterminate amount of time covering both past and future, and how the future will be different because of the day's incident, as he will no longer read to his padrino like he does now.

Crossing the temporal transitions with the appropriate times results in the following:

A1, B2, C3, D4, E5, F3, G4, H6, I4, J7, K8, L7, M3, N4.

As with the paragraph from Pocho, the key element or most important event in this section of narrative is a humiliating incident that has happened at school, here expressed in #3. The boy has previously described the incident in detail,⁸ but he keeps coming back to it. This repetition underscores the importance of the event and the boy's incomplete understanding of what has occurred. Like the boy's train of thought, the narrative darts back and forth between the past (the event), the present (the walk home), and the future (the possible repercussions, as imagined by the boy). Although the boy worries a great deal about what might happen, and certainly there would be some sort of repercussion for the boy's being expelled, the rest of the segment never indicates what happened to the boy when he returned home. Indeed, there is no further mention of the incident in the rest of the novel until the final chapter, which unifies all the segments, but even this final mention does not clear up what happened to the boy when he returned home.

Again, by placing the appropriate emphasis on every action, causes and effects can be linked. With the events put

⁸ ... y no se lo tragó la tierra, p. 125-126

in correct relation to one another, a new diagram might look like this:

(A1, B2), C3, D4, (E5), F3, G4, (H6) I4 [J7 (K8) L7] M3,
N4

The structural characteristics of this paragraph, compared to those of the paragraph from Pocho, are quite different. The effect is choppy as the boy's mind wanders from movies, to the incident, to thunder and lightning, to the padrino, etc. This constant motion between the past, present, and future show us a troubled, insecure boy anxious about the implications that this incident might have on his future.

It is in part through their respective use of micronarrative that the authors develop their works. Villareal's intention, as previously noted, is to **explain**, which he accomplishes by framing a painful anecdote with the present tense, and presenting a paragraph that is complex structurally but relatively straightforward in a temporal sense. It starts in the present, goes back to the past, and then back once again to the present after the past incident has been described and explained. There is no question as to the cause and effect of the painful incident.

Rivera, however, does not want to explain, but instead to **show**. His paragraph does not start and end neatly in the present tense, nor proceed in a straightforward chronological

manner. The paragraph begins in the past, leaps to a more recent past, then to the present, then to a conditional future, etc. The cause has already been shown, the eventual effects are never discussed. His paragraph is thus opposite to that of Villareal: it is simple structurally, because the linkings of causes and effects are not painstakingly described, but very complex temporally as the boy's stream of consciousness passes into and out of the present, past, and future (as he imagines it).

Macronarrative in Pocho and ...y no se lo tragó la tierra.

The structural differences between the two works in terms of narrative time are as clear on the macro level as on the micro level. If micronarrative is that time that occurs in the course of a paragraph, and consists primarily of shifts in verb tenses, then macronarrative is the time line of an entire novel, and the indicators of temporal shifts do not occur in words and phrases but in paragraphs and chapters. IN the Odyssey, for example, we would say of its macronarrative that it is a narrative that takes place in approximately one year, with an analepse of considerable duration and importance.

The narrative in Pocho covers a time period of about twenty-five years, from Juan Rubio's problems in Mexico which require him to flee to the United States, to Richard Rubio's departure for the U.S. Navy at the beginning of World War II.

When all the analepses, which primarily consist of a few tales of Juan's days in the revolution and in officer school, are accounted for, the entire extent is thirty-five or forty years. Thus, the story, or summary of all the action contained in the narrative, begins some fifteen years before the narrative commences, and ends when the narrative does, with Richard's departure (see diagram).

VI. a. Time line for Pocho:

: _____ [1] [2] (3 4 _____ 5):

(Brackets = analepse)

- 1). Juan: revolution days (analepse)
- 2). Juan: officer school days (analepse)
- 3). Juan arrives in Juarez, narration of novel begins
- 4). Richard Rubio is born
- 5). Richard goes off to war, narration of novel ends

The analepses that are inserted by the author are very simple, serving mostly to inform the reader of those events in the past that have a bearing on actions and characters in the present. The focus in Pocho is always on the present, and any

intrusions from the past only serve to clarify the present. The chronological nature of this novel of explanation is therefore interrupted as little as possible.

In ...y no se lo tragó la tierra, macronarrative is a different matter entirely. Technically, the narrated duration of the entire novel could be as little as a few minutes, or however long it takes the man/child under the house to recall the lost year, crawl out from under the house, climb a tree, and wave to someone he thinks he sees off in the distance. However, reconstructing a time line for ...y no se lo tragó la tierra is much more difficult than it is for Pocho. Some of the stories mention the Korean war, so presumably the "lost year" occurs in the early nineteen fifties. Construction of a time line for this novel is made more difficult because the age of the character who tries to regain his history in "The Lost Year" and "Under the House" is unknown; he could either be a man or a child. In "Under the House" different sentences support either idea. The omniscient narrator tells us, "That morning on his way to school he felt the urge not to go. He thought of how the teacher would spank him for sure because he didn't know the words" (p. 148). This sentence would seem to indicate that the rememberer is a boy. Later, however, some children discover him, calling to their mother,

"Mami, mami, there's a man under the house!"⁹(p. 151). Once the man/child has crawled out from under the house, the mother of the little children says: "That poor family. First the mother and now him. He must be losing his mind. He's losing track of the years" (p. 152). These statements seem to imply that the person under the house is a man and not a boy.

Whatever the age of the person under the house, the temporal structure of the novel remains the same because he is looking back on the lost year from the present. The only question raised by this boy/man ambiguity is how much time has passed since the year itself and the period spent remembering it. It is safe to assume that at least a few years (and possibly many more) have gone by between the events of the "lost year" and the time spent remembering it under the house. So the total extent of the story is anywhere between five and forty years, depending on how old the rememberer is. Interestingly, no mention is made of the years in between, with the lone exception of the woman's tantalizing statement about the man/child's family and mother (see diagram).

VI. b. Time line for ...y no se lo tragó la tierra.

: [1 2 3] 4 (5 6 7) :

⁹ The word used in the original Spanish text is *viejo*, translated here as "man." *Viejo* is the adjective for "old," and *viejo* could also have been translated as "old man."

- 1). "Lost year" begins.
- 2). Twenty-four unrelated incidents make up the "lost year." Their order within that year is unclear.
- 3). "Lost year" ends.
- 4). Indeterminate period of time between "lost year" and narrative present, person thinking under the house.
- 5). Narrative begins in the segment "The Lost Year." Unnamed protagonist attempts to remember his lost past.
- 6). Segment entitled "Under the House" begins. Segments from the "lost year" are summarized in a stream-of consciousness monologue.
- 7). Man/child discovered under house by children. He crawls out, climbs a tree, and waves to someone on the horizon. Narrative ends.

The time line structure here is very different from the one in Pocho. In a sense, Rivera begins his tale at the end. The novel starts out in the present, and returns to the present after segments and anecdotes from the past have been remembered and depicted. Thus, the chronological order of the

story has been subverted by the author. Why did Rivera write his novel like this? Again, the answer has to do with the difference between showing and explaining. In a narrative of explaining, like Pocho, a chronological narrative is a good choice. Causes and effects, and later repercussions of any given action, can be clearly followed and explained. Once an incident occurs, it can be referred to repeatedly to accentuate its importance. In a narrative of showing, on the other hand, the chronological time line can almost become cumbersome, as readers try to follow a train of plot that may or may not even exist. For example, the plot of ...y no se lo tragó la tierra can be summarized as follows: "A boy/man spends some time under a house thinking. He leaves, and climbs a tree." Obviously, there is much more to ...y no se lo tragó la tierra than this. By situating his segments in such a simple (and dull) plot, Rivera draws the reader's attention to the segments and recollections themselves, and not the plot that surrounds them. This added emphasis makes each segment stand out more and increases the cumulative effect.

This can be further seen in the order of the segments themselves. Once the relation of the middle of the novel, the segments of the "lost year," to the beginning and end have been established, the next step is to try and determine the relation of the segments in the story to each other. Like a collection of distinct short stories, they do not refer to one

another, making this task difficult. Of the two types of segments in ...y no se lo tragó la tierra, only the longer, or titled ones provide any indication of when they might have occurred, and indeed, some of them have no such indication at all. Below is a segment--by--segment summary of each part, and any indication of where they might fit into a time line.

The Children Couldn't Wait

A child is shot and killed by a farmer trying to scare his workers into working harder. The story is set in "the beginning of April"¹⁰, the narrative clearly indicates.

A Prayer

A distraught woman asks God, Jesus, and the Virgin Mary to return her son home safely from Korea. There is no indication of the relative time of this segment.

It's That it Hurts

The boy walks home after being expelled from school for fighting (see micro-level time, above). There is no indication of when this might have taken place, although we can tentatively place it sometime between September and June, the traditional school year in the United States.

Hand in his Pocket

¹⁰ ...y no se lo tragó la tierra, 86.

The boy spends three weeks with an hispanic couple who abuse him and make him an accessory to murder. It is stated that he is staying with them to finish out the school year, so we can presume it occurs in June. But wasn't he expelled during the same year?

A Silvery Night

The boy sneaks out of the house late at night to attempt to call the devil, who does not appear. In persuading his father to leave the door open, he mentions the heat, so presumably this segment takes place between late spring and early fall.

And the Earth did not devour him

The boy gets angry at God when a series of misfortunes befalls his family. There are no clues in the story as to when this might have occurred.

First Communion

On the day of his first communion, the boy wanders past a tailor shop and sees two people having sex, and wonders about sin. "The priest always held first communion during mid-spring,"¹¹ the narrator clearly tells us.

The Little Burnt Victims

¹¹ ...y no se lo tragó la tierra, 114.

While fighting with boxing gloves, two small children catch fire and are burnt to death. There are no clues in this segment as to when it might have occurred relative to the other segments.

The Night the Lights Went Out

A young man commits suicide after being jilted by his girlfriend. The action overlaps with the end of the harvesting season in Minnesota and the migrants' return to Texas. Therefore, the segment takes place in late summer.

The Night Before Christmas

The mother of a family makes a shopping foray into town, where she becomes lost and confused because no Spanish is spoken there. The story takes place not long before Christmas, so presumably in December.

The Portrait

A traveling salesman swindles the migrant community. This segment begins as the migrants return from the northern states: "As soon as the people returned from up north the portrait salesmen began arriving from San Antonio."¹² The segment has an approximate extent of two months, perhaps from September to November.

¹² ...y no se lo tragó la tierra, p. 136

When We Arrive

Migrants are headed to Minnesota for seasonal work. Given the growing season in Minnesota, this could take place no earlier than late spring.

With an approximate time for most of the segments, a new time line is possible:

The Children Couldn't wait	A Prayer	It's that it Hurts	Hand in His Pocket
-------------------------------	----------	-----------------------	-----------------------

April	?	September- June	June
-------	---	--------------------	------

A Silvery Night	And the Earth did not Devour Him	First Communion
--------------------	--	--------------------

Summer	?	Mid-spring
--------	---	------------

The Little	The night the	The Night
Burnt Victims	lights went out	Before Christmas

?	Late summer	December
---	-------------	----------

The Portrait	When we
	Arrive

September-	Late Spring
November	

The segments are apparently out of order, presuming that they take place in a period of time that does not exceed one year. The reader probably doesn't notice this, however, because the relative time of the segments to each other is never stressed. They are merely presented as things that occurred in the past. Since they have no obvious relevance to each other, it is unnecessary that they be in order.

So why has Rivera done this? By making relative time unimportant, he has re-stressed that each segment and anecdote is meant to stand on its own. Each is important, and what

they contribute to the whole is vital. Making the segments independent of one another increases the sense of "showing" by taking away one more thing that could be used to "explain." In other words, Rivera has used his macronarrative structure and lack of any discernible relative time within the segments to completely isolate them from one another. Once they have been isolated, they can be appreciated as the broad brushstrokes that they are, contributing to the whole.

VII. Conclusion

In this study, I have shown how Tomás Rivera's sense of community and José Antonio Villareal's sense of the individual led them to create works that contain similar themes but completely different narrative structures. The conclusion that I have drawn is that this is because Rivera wished to **show** the experience of growing up in a migrant community, and Villareal wished to **tell** the story of a young American. Although the experiences described are often similar, the fundamental difference in the motives of the authors make the works very distinct. But the question arises: is this all? Is the only explanation for this difference to be found in the act of telling versus showing?

It would be a generalization to conclude that in America, more value is placed on the individual and in Mexico there is more value placed on the community, but there is a grain of truth in it. In a sense, the works represent both sides of the Chicano equation: Pocho represents the American side, and ...y no se lo tragó la tierra represents the Mexican side.

In Pocho, the emphasis is placed on Richard Rubio, as an individual. Although the narrative opens with Richard's father, Juan, that particular section only serves to set up the situation in which Richard later finds himself. If the

son is an extension of the father, and we need to understand the son, then mention of the father is relevant. As soon as Richard appears, in chapter two, the narrative begins to follow him around as he deals with his situation and historical events that happen all around him; although he doesn't narrate, the focus is always on him. Throughout, Richard makes decisions with the confidence of an individual. He doesn't care when his young classmates tease him about eating tortillas and beans. He dates first an Anglo girl, then a Mexican. Sometimes he makes decisions that would seem to be contrary to the Mexican culture of his family: he goes off to join the U.S. Navy despite his mother's pleas to stay at home and settle down. Without necessarily valuing American culture above Mexican culture, Richard becomes Americanized. Villareal takes pains to explain that the novel is not about immigrants or aliens but Americans: we feel the anguish of the young Japanese-American boy who is sent off to the internment camp during the Second World War. Furthermore, the use of time in the novel shows us clearly one individual and his path of eighteen or so years. It does not jump around in time or space: it simply presents and describes one person.

In ...y no se lo tragó la tierra, the emphasis is placed on community and therefore the Mexican side of the equation. The protagonist, unlike Richard Rubio, does not even have a

name, dimming his qualities as an individual.¹ Most (more than half) of the segments are narrated by the oral tradition voice of the community and do not concern the boy at all. The segments that do deal with the boy often describe situations that are indicative of the community as well. For example, in "Hand in his Pocket" the boy comes into contact with a couple that are considered to be pillars of the community. The segments seem to be unrelated until their picture is taken as a whole--much in the same way that individuals make up a community. All of these characteristics of the novel would indicate that it leans toward a more Mexican, or community-oriented, point of view. Is it a coincidence that Pocho is written in English and ...y no se lo tragó la tierra is written in Spanish? And is it a coincidence that while Pocho has occasionally been criticized by activists for being too assimilationist, ...y no se lo tragó la tierra has drawn universal praise?

I have established the following in my study: that the two authors, very similar in background, wrote two novels that are similar thematically yet different structurally. In addition, I have used contemporary narratology to point out that the use of time and different narrators make the works, and their points of view, distinct. A truly complete narrative analysis, however, is beyond the scope of this

¹ Interestingly, in the movie made of the book, the boy does have a name. The movie was made in The United States.

project. There are many aspects of narrative, and many critics have devised methods for the study of the narrative in different novels. These two novels, especially when contrasted with one another, provide an especially rich field for narrative study. In order to stay within the parameters of my study, I have left out many aspects of narrative study which would even further shed light on the differences between these two works. To mention just one of these many aspects, we can ask ourselves, "Why, if Rivera is painting a portrait of his community, does he use the "singulative voice"² as defined by Genette?" Wouldn't a portrait of a community be better created by describing what happened often? Why has Rivera left out of his portrait phrases like "Every Sunday we went to church in my community." or "All of the kids used to like to swim in the river in the summer?" These valid, interesting questions form just one of certain aspects of narrative analysis that I was forced not to consider due to constraints of time and space.

² Genette, 116. The singulative voice is defined as narrating once that which happens once, as opposed to narrating many times what happens once or narrating once what happened many times.

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