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La conciencia de la mestiza

Towards a New Consciousness

Por la mujer de mi raza bablara el ,espiritu.

jos, Vascocelos, Mexican philosopher, envisaged una; raza mestiza, una mezca de razas afines, una raza de color-Ia primera raza sintesis del globo. He called it a cosmic race, la raza cosmica fifth race embracing the four major races or the world. Opposite to the theory of the pure Aryan, and to the policy of racial purity that white America practices, his theory is one of inclusivity. At the confluence of two or more genetic streams, With chromosomes constantly "crossing over," this mixture of races, rather than resulting in an inferior being, provides hybrid progeny, a mutable, more malleable species with a rich gene pool. From this racial, ideological, cultural and biological cross pollinization, an "alien" consciousness is presently in the making-a new mestiza consciousness" una conciencia de mujer. It is a consciousness of the Borderlands.

Una lucba de fronteras / A Struggle of Borders

Because I, a mestiza,

 Continually walk out of one culture

 and into another,

because I am in all cultures at the same time,

 alma entre dos mundos, tres, cuatro,

 me zumba la cabeza con lo contradictorio.

 Estoy norteada por todas las voces que me hablan

 Simultáneamente.

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The ambivalence from the dash of voices results in mental and emotional states of perplexity. Internal strife results in insecurity and indecisiveness. The mestiza's dual or multiple personality is plagued by psychic restlessness.

 In a constant state of mental nepantilism, an Aztec word meaning torn between ways, la mestiza is a product of the transfer of .the cultural and spiritual values of one group to another. Being tricultural, monolingual, bilingual, or muItilin-gual, peaking a patois, and in a state of perpetual transition, the mestiza faces the dilemma of the mixed breed: which collectivity does the daughter of a darkskinned mother listen to?

 El choque de un alma atrapado entre el mundo del espiritu y el mundo de fa tecnica a veces la deja entullada. Cradled in one culture, sandwiched between two cultures, straddling all three cultures and their value systems, la mestiza undergoes a struggle of flesh, a struggle of borders, an inner war. Like all people, we perceive the version of reality that our culture communicates. Like .others having or living in more than one culture, we get multiple, often opposing messages. The coming together of two self-consistent but habitually incompatible frames of reference causes un choque, a cultural collision.

Within us and within . la cultura chicana, commonly held beliefs of the white culture attack commonly held beliefs of the Mexican culture, and both attack commonly held beliefs of the indigenous culture. Subconsciously, we see an attack: on ourselves and our beliefs as a threat and we attempt to block with a counterstance

But it is not enough to stand on the opposite river bank, shouting questions, challenging patriarchal, white conventions. A counterstance locks one into a duel of oppressor and oppressed; locked in mortal , combat, like the cop and the criminal, both are reduced to a common denominator of violence. The counterstance refutes the dominant culture's views and beliefs and, for this, it is proudly defiant. All reaction is limited by, and dependent on, what it is reacting against. Because the counterstance stems from a problem with authority-outer as well as inner-it's a step towards liberation from cultural domination. But it is not a way of life. At some point, on our way to a new consciusness, we will have to leave the opposite bank, the split between the two mortal combatants somehow healed so that we are on both shores at once and, at once, see through serpent and

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eagle eyes. Or perhaps we will decide to disengage from the dominant culture, write it off altogether as a lost cause, and cross the border into a wholly new and separate territory. Or we might go another route . The possibilities are numerous once we decide to act and not react.

A Tolerance For Ambiguity

These numerous possibilities leave La mestiza floundering in uncharted seas. In perceiving conflicting information .and points of view, she is subjected to a swam ping of her psychological borders. She has discovered that she can't hold concepts or ideas in rigid boundaries . The borders and walls that are supposed to keep the undesirable ideas out are entrenched habits and patterns of behavior; these habits and patterns are the ,enemy within. Rigidity means death. Only by remaining flexible is she able to stretch the psyche horizontally and vertically. La mestiza .constantly has to shift out of habitual formations; from .convergent thinking, analytical reasoning that tends to use rationality to move toward a single goal (a Western mode), to divergent thinking, characterized by movement away from set patterns and goals and toward a more whole perspective, one that includes rather than excludes.

The new mestiza copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity . She learns to be an Indian in Mexican culture, to be Mexican from an Anglo point of view. She learns to juggle cultures. She has a plural personality, she operates in a pluralistic mode-nothing is thrust out, the good the bad and the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned. Not only does she sustain contradictions, she turns the ambivalence into something else.

 She can be jarred out of ambivalence by an intense, and often painful, emotional event which inverts or resolves the ambivalence. I'm not sure exactly how. The work takes place underground-subconsciously. It is work that the soul performs. That focal point or fulcrum, that junctl.lre where the mestiza stands, is where phenomena tend to collide. It is where the possibility of uniting all that is separate occurs. This assembly is not one where severed or separated pieces merely come together. Nor is it a balancing of opposing powers. In attempting to work out a synthesis, the self has added a third element which is

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greater than the sum of its severed parts. That third element is a new consciousness-a mestiza consciousness-and though it is a source of intense pain, its ,energy comes from continual creative motion that keeps breaking down the unitary as peer of each new paradigm.

 En unas pocas centurias, the future will belong to the mestiza. Because the future depends on the breaking down of paradigms, it depends on the straddling of two or more, cultures. By creating a new mythos-that is, a change in the way we perceive reality" the way we see ourselves, and the ways we behave-Ia mestiza creates a new consciousness.

The work of mestiza consciousness is to break down the subject-object duality that keeps her a prisoner and to show in the flesh and through the images in her work how duality is transcended. The answer to the problem between the white race and the colored, between males and females, lies in healing the split that originates in the very foundation of our lives" our culture, our languages, our thoughts. A massive uprooting of dualistic thinking in the individual and collective consciousness is the beginning of a long struggle, but one that could, in our best hopes., bring us to the end of rape, of violence, of war .

La encrucijada / The Crossroads

A chicken is being sacrificed

 at a crossroads, a simple mound of earth

 a mud shrine for Esbu,

 Yoruba god of indeterminacy,

 who blesses her choice of path.

 She begins her journey .

Su cuerpo es una bocacalle. La mestiza has gone from being the sacrificial goat to becoming the officiating priestess at the crossroads.

As a mesitiza I have no country, my homeland cast me out; yet all countries are mine because I am every woman's sister or potential lover. (As a lesbian I have no race, my own people disclaim me; but l am all races because there is the queer of me in all races .) I am cultureless because, as a feminist, I challenge the collective cultural/religious male-derived beliefs of Indo-His

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panics and Anglos; yet I am cultured because I am participating in the creation of yet another culture, a new story to explain the world and our participation in it, a new value system with images and symbols that connect us to each other and to the planet. Soy un amasamiento, I am an act of kneading, of uniting and joining that not only has produced both a creature of darkness and a creature of light, but also a creature that questions the definitions of light and dark and gives them new meanings.

 We are the people who leap in the dark, we are the people on the knees of the gods. In our very flesh, (r} evolution works out the dash of cultures. It makes us crazy constantly, but if the center holds, we've made some kind of evolutionary step forward. Nuestra alma el trabajo, the opus, the great alchemical work; spiritual mestizaje, a "morphogenesis an inevitable unfolding. We have become the quickening serpent movement.

Indigenous like corn, like corn,. the mestiza is a product of crossbreeding, designed for preservation under a variety of conditions. Like an ear of corn-a female seed-bearing organ-the mestiza is tenacious, tightly wrapped in the husks of her culture. Like kernels she dings to the cob; with thick stalks and strong brace roots, she holds tight to the earth-she will survive the .crossroads.

Lavando y remojando el maiz en agua de cal, despojando el pelleja. Moliendo, mixteando, .amasando,. haciendo tortillas de masa. She steeps the corn in line, it swells softens. With stone roller on metate she grinds the corn, then grinds again. She kneads and moulds the dough, pats the round balls into tortillas.

We are the porous rock in the stone metate

 squatting on the ground .

We are the rolling pin, el maiz y agua,

la masa harina. Somos ,el amasijo.

 Somos lo molido en el metate.

 We are the comal sizzling hot,

 the hot tortilla, the hungry mouth.

We are the coarse rock.

 We are the grinding motion,

 the mixed potion, somos el molcajete.

 We are the pestle, the comino, ajo, pimienta.

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We are the chile colorado,

 The green shoot that cracks the rock.

 We win abide.

EI camino de la mestiza / The Mestiza Way

Caught between the sudden contraction the breath sucked in and the, endless space, the brown woman stands still, looks at the sky. She decides to go down, digging her way along the roots of trees . Sifting through the bones, she shakes them to see if there is any marrow in them. Then, touching the dirt to her forehead, to her tongue, she takes a few bones, leaves the rest in their burial place.

 She goes through her backpack, keeps her journal and address book, throws away the muni-bart metromaps. The coins are heavy and they go next, then the greenbacks flutter through the air. She keeps her knife, can opener and eyebrow pencil. She puts bones, pieces of bark, bierbas, eagle feather, snakeskin, tape recorder, the rattle and drum in her pack and she sets out to become the complete tolteca .

Her first step is to take inventory. Despojando, desgranando,. quitando paja. Just what did she inherit from her ancestors? This weight on her back-which is the baggage from the Indian mother, which the baggage from the Spanish father which the baggage from the Anglo?

Pero es dificil differentiating between lo heredado,. lo adquirido, lo impuesto. She puts history through a sieve, winnows out the lies, looks at the forces that we as a race, as women, have been a part of. Luego bota lo que no vale, los desmientos, los desencuentos, el embrutecimiento . Aguarda el juicio, hondo y enraizado, de la gente antigua . This step is a conscious rupture with all oppressive traditions of all cultures and religions. She communicates that rupture, documents the struggle. She reinterprets history and, using new symbols, she shapes new myths . She adopts new perspectives toward the darkskinned, women and queers. She strengthens her tolerance (and intolerance) for ambiguity. She is willing to share, to make herself vulnerable to foreign ways of seeing and thinking . She surrenders all notions of safety, of the familiar. Deconstruct, construct. She becomes a

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 Nabual , able to transform herself into a tree, a coyote, into another person . She learns to transform the small ''1'' into the total Self. Se hace moldeadora de su alma. Segun la concepcion que tiene de si misma, asi sera.

Que no se nos olvide los bombres

"Tu no sirves pa' nada-

you're good for nothing .

 Eres pura vieja."

"You're nothing but a woman" means you are defective. Its opposite is to be un macho. The modern meaning of the word "machismo," as well as the concept, is actually an Anglo invention. For men like my father, being "macho" meant being strong enough to protect and support my mother and us, yet being able to show love. Today's macho has doubts about his ability to feed and protect his family. His “machismo” is an adaptation to oppression and poverty and low self-esteem. It is the result of hierarchical male dominance. The Anglo, feeling inadequate and inferior and powerless , displaces or transfers these feelings to the Chicano by shaming him. In the Gringo world, the Chicano suffers from exessive humility and self-effacement, shame of self and self-deprecation. Around Latinos he suffers from a sense of language inadequacy and its accompanying discomfort; with Native Americans he suffers from a racial amnesia which ignores our common blood, and from guilt because the Spanish part of him took their land and oppressed them. He has an excessive compensatory hubris when around Mexicans from the other side. It overlays a deep sense of racial shame. The loss of a sense of dignity and respect in the macho breeds a false machismo which leads him to put down women and even to brutalize them. Coexisting with his sexist behavior is a love for the mother which takes precedence over that of all others. Devoted son, macho pig. To wash down the shame of his acts of his very being, and to handle the brute in the mirror, he takes to the bottle, the snort the needle, and the fist.

Though we "understand" the root causes of maIe hatred and fear, and the subsequent wounding of women, we do not excuse, we do not condone, and we will no longer put up with it. From

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the men of our race, we demand the admission/acknowledgment/disclosure/testimony that they wound us, violate us, are afraid of our power. We need them to say they will begin to eliminate their hurtful putt-down ways. But more than the words, we demand acts. We will develop equal power with you and those who have shamed us.

It is imperative that mestizas support each other in changing the sexist elements in the Mexican-Indian culture. As long as woman is put down, the Indian and the Black in all of us is put down. The

Struggle of the mestiza is above all a feminist one. As long as los hombres think they have to chingar mujeres and each other to be men,. as long as men are taught that they are superior and therefore culturally favored over la mujer, as long as to be a vieja is a thing of derision, there can be no real healing of our psyches. We're halfway there-we have such love of the Mother, the good mother . The first step is to unlearn the puta/virgen dichotomy and to see Coatlapopeuh-Coatlicue in the Mother, Guadalupe .

 Tenderness, a sign of vulnerability, is so feared that it is showered on women with verbal abuse and blows. Men, even more than women, are fettered to gender roles. Women at least have had the guts to break out of bondage. Only gay men have had the courage to expose themselves to the woman inside them and to challenge the current masculinity. I've encountered a few scattered and isolated gentle straight men, the beginnings of a new breed, but they are .confused, and entangled with sexist behaviors that they have not been able to eradicate. We need a new masculinity and the new man needs a movement.

Lumping the males who deviate from the general norm with man, the oppressor, is a gross injustice. Asombra pensar que nos hemos quedado en ese pozo oscuro donde el mundo encierra a lar lesbianas. Asombra pensar que hemos, como femenistas y lesbianas, cerrado nuestros corazones a los hombres, a nuestros hermanos los jotos, desberedados y marginales como nosotros. Being the supreme crossers of cultures, homosexuals have strong bonds with the queer white, Black, Asian, Native American, Latino, and with the queer in Italy, Australia and the rest of the planet. We come from all colors, all classes, all races, all time periods. Our role is to link people with each other-the Blacks with Jews with Indians with Asians with whites with extraterrestrials.

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It is to transfer ideas and information from one culture to another . Colored homosexuals have more knowledge of other cultures; have always been at the forefront (although sometimes in the (closet) of all liberation struggles in this country; have suffered more injustices and have survived them despite all odds. Chicanos need to acknowledge the political and artistic contributions of their queer. People, listen to what your joteria is saying. The mestizo and the queer exist at this time and point on the evolutionary continuum for a purpose. We are a blending that proves that all blood is intricately woven together, and that we are spawned out of similar souls.

Somos una gente

Hay tantisimas fronteras

 Que dividen a la gente,

 Pero por cada frontera

 Existe tambien un puente.

-Gina Valdes

Divided Loyalties. Many women and men of color do not want to have any dealings with white people. It takes too much time and ,energy to explain to the downwardly mobile, white middle-class women that it's okay for us to want to own "possessions,'" never having had any nice furniture on our dirt floors or "luxuries" like washing machines. Many feel that whites should help their own people rid themselves of race hatred and fear first. I, for one, choose to use some of my energy to serve as mediator. I think we need to allow whites to be our allies . Through our literature, art, corridos, and folktales we must share our history with them so when they set up committees to help Big Mountain Navajos or the Chicano farmworkers or los Nicaraguenses they won't turn people away because of their racial fears and ignorances. They will come to see that they are not helping us but following our lead.

 Individually, but also as a racial, entity, we need to voice our needs. We need to say to white society: We need you to accept the fact that Chicanos are different, to acknowledge your rejection and negation of us. We need you to own the fact that you looked upon us as less than human, that you stole our lands, our personhood, our self-respect. We need you to make public restitution: to

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say that, to compensate for your own sense of defectiveness, you strive for power over us, you erase our history and our experience because it makes you feel guilty-you'd rather forget your brutish acts. To say you've split yourself from minority groups, that you disown us, that your dual consciousness splits off parts of yourself, transferring the "negative" parts onto us. (Where there is persecution of minorities, there is shadow projection. Where there is violence and war., there is repression of shadow.) To say that you are afraid of us, that to put distance between us, you wear the mask of contempt. Admit that Mexico is your double,that she exists in the shadow of this country, that we are irrevocably tied to her. Gringo, accept the doppelganger in your psyche. By taking back your collective shadow the intracultural split will heal. And finally, tell us what you need from us.

By Your True Faces We Will Know You

I am visible-see this Indian face-yet I am invisible. I both blind them with my beak nose and am their blind spot. But I exist, we exist . They'd like to think I have melted in the pot. But I haven’t, we haven't.

The dominant white culture is killing us slowly with its ignorance. By taking away our self-determination, it has made us weak and empty. As a people we have resisted and we have taken expedient positions, but we have never been allowed to develop unencumbered-we have never been allowed to be fully ourselves. The whites in power want us people of color to barrikade ourselves behind our separate tribal walls so they can pick us off one at a time with their hidden weapons; so they can whitewash and distort history. Ignorance splits people, .creates prejudices. A misinformed people is a subjugated people.

Before the Chicano and the undocumented worker and the Mexikan from the other side can, come together, before the Chicano can have unity with Native Americans and other groups, we need to know the history of their struggle and they need to know ours. Our mothers, our sisters and brothers, the guys who hang out on street corners, the children in the playgrounds, each of us must know our Indian lineage, our afro-mestisaje, our history of resistance.

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To the immigrant mexicano and the recent arrivals we must teach our history. The 80 million mexicanos and the Latinos from Central and South America must know of our struggles. Each one of us must know basic facts about Nicaragua, Chile and the rest of Latin America. The Latinoist movement (Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Cubans and other Spanish -speaking people working together to combat racial discrimination in the market place) is good but it is not enough. Other than a common culture we will have nothing to hold us together. We need to meet on a broader communal ground.

The struggle is inner: Chicano, indio, American Indian, mojado, mexicano, immigrand Latino, Anglo in power, working class Anglo, Black, Asian-our psyches resembIe the border-towns and are populated by the same people. The struggle has always been inner, and is pIayed out in the outer terrains. Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn come before changes in society. Nothing happens in the "real" world unless it first happens in the images in our heads.

El dia de la Chicana

I will not be shamed again

Nor will shame myself.

I am possessed by a vision: that we Chicanas and Chicanos have taken back or uncovered our true faces, our dignity and self-respect. It's a validation vision.

Seeing the Chicana anew in light of her history. I seek an exoneration, a seeing through the fictions of white supremacy, a seeing of ourselves in our true guises and not as the false racial personality that has been given to us and that we have given to ourselves. I seek our woman's face, our true features, the positive and the negative seen dearly, free of the tainted biases of male dominance. I seek new images of identity, new beliefs about ourselves, our humanity and worth no longer in question.

Estamos viviendo en la noche de la Raza, un tiempo cuando el trabajo se bace a lo quieto, en el oscuro. El dia cuando aceptamos tal y como somos y para en donde vamos y porque-ese dia sera el dia de fa Raza. Yo tengo el conpromiso de expresar mi

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vision , mi rensibilidad, mi percepcion de la revalidacion .de la gente mexicana, su merito, estimacion, bonra, aprecio, y validez.

On December 2nd when my sun goes into my first house, I celebrate el dia de la Chicana y el Chicano. On that day I clean my altars, light my Coatlalopeuh candle, burn sage and copal, take el bano para erpantar basura, sweep my house. On that day I bare my soul, make myself vulnerable to friends and family by expressing my feelings. On that day I affirm who we are. On that day I look inside our conflicts and our basic introverted racial temperament. I identify our needs, voice them . I acknowledge that the self and the race have been wounded. I recognize the need to take care of our personhood, of our racial self. On that day I gather the splintered and disowned parts of la gente mexicana and hold them in my arms. Todas las partes de nosotros valen.

 On that day I say" "Yes, all you people wound us when you reject us. Rejection strips us of self-worth; our vulnerability exposes us to shame. It is our innate identity you find wanting. We are ashamed that we need your good opinion, that we need your acceptance. We can no longer camouflage our needs, can no longer let defenses and fences sprout around us. We can no longer withdraw. To rage and look upon you with contempt is to rage and be contemptuous of ourselves. We can no longer blame you, nor disown the white parts, the male parts, the pathological parts, the queer parts, the vulnerable parts. Here we are weaponless with open arms, with only our magic. Let's try it our way, the mestiza way, the Chicana way, the woman way.

On that day, I search for our essential dignity as a people, a peopIe with a sense of purpose-to belong and contribute to something greater than our pueblo. On that day I seek to recover and reshape my spiritual identity Animate! Raza, a celebrar el dia de ta Chicana .

EI retorno

All movements are accomplished in six stages,

 and the seventh brings return. -I Ching

Tanto tiempo sin verte casa mia,

mi cuna, mi bondo nido de fa huerta .-"'Soledad"

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I stand at the river, watch the, curving, twisting serpent, a serpent nailed to the fence where the mouth of the Rio Grande empties into the Gulf.

 I have come back. Tanto dolor me costo el alejamiento. I shade my eyes and look up. The bone beak of a hawk slowly circling over me, checking me out as potential carrion. In its wake a little bird flickering its wings, swimming sporadically like a fish. In the distance the, expressway and the slough of traffic like an irritated sow. The sudden pull in my gut, la tierra, los aguaceros. My land, el viento soplando la arena, el lagartijo debajo de un nopalito. Me acuerdo como era antes. Una region desertica de vasta llanuras, costeras de baja altura, de escasa lluvia, de chaparrales formados por mesquites y huizaches. If I look real hard I can almost see the Spanish fathers who were called "the cavalry of Christ" enter this valley riding their burros, see the clash of cultures commence ..

Tierra natal. This is home, the small towns in the Valley, los pueblitos with chicken pens and goats picketed to mesquite shrubs. En lar colonias on the other side of the tracks, junk cars line the front yards of hot pink and lavender-trimmed houses Chicano architecture we call it, self-consciously. I have missed the TV shows where hosts speak in half and half, and where awards are given in the category of Tex-Mex music. I have missed the Mexican cemeteries blooming with artificial flowers, the fields of aloe vera and red pepper, rows of sugar cane, of corn hanging on the stalks, the cloud of polvareda in the dirt roads behind a speeding pickup truck, el sabor de tamales de rez y venado . I have missed la yegua colorada gnawing the wooden gate of her stall, the smell of horse flesh from Carito's corrals. He becho menos las noches calientes sin aire, nocher de linternas y lechuzas making holes in the nighc.

I still feel the old despair when I look at the unpainted, dilapidated,. scrap lumber houses consisting mostly of corrugated aluminum. Some of the poorest people in the U.S. live in the Lower Rio

Grande Valley, an arid and semi -arid land of irrigated farming, intense sunlight and heat, citrus groves next to chaparral and cactus. I walk through the elementary school I attended so rang ago, that remained segregated until recently. I remember how the white teachers used to punish us for being Mexican.

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How I love this tragic valley of South Texas, as Ricardo Sanchez calls it; this borderland between the Nueces and the Rio Grande . This land has survived possession and ill-use by five countries: Spain, Mexico, the Republic of Texas, the U.s., the Confederacy, and the U.S. again. It has survived Anglo-Mexican blood feuds, lynchings, burnings, rapes, pillage.

Today I see the Valley still struggling to survive. Whether it does or not, it will never be as I remember it. The borderlands depression that was set off by the 1982 peso devaluation in Mexico resulted in the closure of hundreds of Valley businesses. Many people lost their homes, cars, land. Prim to 1982, U.S. store owners thrived on retail sales to Mexicans who came across the border for groceries and clothes and appliances. While goods on the U.S. side have become 10, 100, 1000 times more expensive for Mexican buyers, goods on the Mexican side have become 10, 100, 1000 times cheaper for Americans. Because the Valley is heavily dependent on agriculture and Mexican retail trade, it has the highest unemployment rates along the entire border region; it is the Valley that has been hardest hit.

"It's been a bad year for corn," my brother, Nune, says. As he talks, I remember my father scanning the sky for a rain that would end the drought, looking up into the sky, day after day, while the corn withered on its stalk My father has been dead for 29 years, having worked himself to death. The life span of a Mexican farm laborer is 56-he lived to be 38. It shocks me that I am older than he. I, too, search the sky for rain. Like the ancients, I worship the rain god and the maize goddess, but unlike my father I have recovered their names. Now for rain (irrigation) one offers not a sacrifice of blood, but of money.

"Farming is in a bad way. " my brother says. "Two to three thousand small and big farmers went bankrupt in this country last year. Six years ago the price of corn was $8.00 per hundred pounds," he goes on. "This year it is $3.90 per hundred pounds." And, I think to myself, after taking inflation into account, not planting anything puts you ahead.

I walk out to the back yard, stare at los rosales de mama . She wants me to help her prune the rose bushes, dig out the carpet grass that is choking them. Mamagrande Ramona tambien tenia rosales. Here every Mexican grows flowers. If they don't have a

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piece of dirt, they use car tires, jars, cans, shoe boxes . Roses are the Mexican's favorite flower. I think, how symbolic-thorns and all. Yes, the Chicano and Chicana have always taken care of growing things and the land. Again I see the four of us kids getting off the school bus, changing into our work clothes, walking into the field with Papi and Mami, all six of us bending to the ground. Below our feet, under the earth lie the watermelon seeds . We cover them with paper plates, putting terremotes on top of the plates to keep them from being blown away by the wind. The paper plates keep the freeze away. Next day or the next, we remove the plates, bare the tiny green shoots to the elements. They survive and grow, give fruit hundreds of times the size of the seed. We water them and hoe them. We harvest them. The vines dry, rot, are plowed under. Growth, death, decay, birth. The soil prepared again and again, impregnated, worked on. A constant changing of forms, renacimientos de la tierra madre.

This land was Mexican once was Indian always and is. And will be again.

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NOTES

The Homeland, Aztlan I Elolm Mexico

L Los Tigres del None is a ,conjunto band.

2. Jack D. Forbes,. Azte,cas del Norte: The Chicanos of Auhin. (Greenwich, CT: Fawcett Publications, Premier Books, 1973), 13, 183; Eric R. Wolf, Sons of Shaking Earth (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, Phoenix Books, 1959), 32.

3. John R. Chavez" The Lost Land: Th,e Chicano Images of the Southwest (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1984),9.

4. Chavez" 9. Besides the Aztecs, the Ute, Gabrillino of California, Pima of Arizona, some Pueblo of New Mexico, Comanche of Texas, Opata of Sonora, Tarahumara of Sinaloa and Durango, and the Huichol of Jalis<:o speak UtoAztecan languages and a~e descended from the Cochise people.

5. Reay Tannahill" Sex In History (Briarcliff Manor, NY:. Stein and Day/Publishers/Scarborough House, 1980),308.

6. Chavez., 21.

7. Isabel Pana, El Libf'o Maiofde Violeta Parra (Madrid, Espana: Ediciones Michay, SA, 1985), 156-7.

S. From the Mexican corndo, "Del petigro de la lntervenci6n." Vicente T. Mendoza, Et Corrido Mexicano (Mexico. D.F.: Fondo De Cultura Economica, 1954),42.

9. Arnoldo De Leon" They Called Them Greasers: Anglo Attitudes Toward Mexicans in Texas" 1821-1900 (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press" 1983 )., 2-3.

10. The Plan of San Diego, Texas,. drawn up on§anuary 6,1915, called for the independence and segregation of the s.tates bordering Mexico: Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and California. Indians would get their land back, Blacks would get six states from the south and form theil own independent republic. Chav.ez, 79.

11. Jesus Mena, "Violence in the Rio Grande Valley.," Nuestro (jan/Feb. 1983},41-42.

12 .. Nosotros IOJ poores was the first Mexican film that was truly Mexican and not an imitation European film. It stressed the devotion and love that children should have for their mother and how its lack would lead to the dissipation of their charact,er. This film spawned a generation of motherdevotion/ungrateful-sons films.

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B. From the Navajo "Protection Song" (to be sung upon going into battle). George W. Gronyn, ed., American Indian Poetry: The Scandard Anthology of Songs and Chants (New York, NY: Liveright, 1934).,97.

14. Grace Halsell, Los ilegales, nans. Mayo Antonio Sanchez (Editorial Diana Mexica, 1979) ..

15. M.argarit31 B. MelviUe, "Mexican Women Adapt to Migration," Inte'fnational Migration Review, 1978.

Movimientos de rehtddia y las cN/tufas que' traicionan

1. Francis,CQ Guerra" The Pre-Columbian Mind: A study into the aberrant nature of sexual drives, drugs affecting behaviour, and the attitude towards life and death, with ;31 survey of psychotherapy in pre-Columbian America (New York, NY: Seminar Press,. 1971).

Eote.ring [oto the Serpent

1. From the song "Sueno Con Serpien.tes" by Silvio Rodrigues, from tbe album n{as l' (10 res . Translated by Barbara Dane with the collaboration of Rifla Benmauor and Juan Flores.

2. Nalgas: vagina, buttocks.

3. Dicen qite tar cmebras like to suck cbiebes: they 5:ay snakes like to suck women's teats.

4. Ella tiene Sit .tono: she has supernatural power from her animal soul, the tono.

5. .Qitetite: weed.

6.. Azadon: hoe.

7. Veneno: venom, poison.

S. Citteora ,de ,cascal)'et:. ratdesnake.

9. In some Nahuatl dialects Tonatsi is called Tonatzin, literally ''Our Holy Mother." "Tonan was a name given in Nahuatl to several mountains, these being the (ongelations of the Earth Mother at spotS convenient for her worship." The Me'xica considered the mountain mass southwest of Cha pultepec to be their mother. Burr Cartwright Brundage, The Fifth Sun: Azt,ec Gods, Aztec World (Austin, TX: Univ,ersity of 'lex as Pr,ess,. 1979), 154,.242.

10. Ena Campbell, "The Virgin of Guadalupe and the Female Self-Image: A Mexican Case History,'" Mother Worship: Themes and Variations,James]. Preston, ed. (Chapel Hill" NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1982),22.

11. Alan R. Sandstrom, "The TOflantsi Cult of the Eastern Nahuas,"

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Mother Worship: Themes and Variations, James J. Preston, ed.

12. Una tela t.ejida con luperas fibras de agave .. It is an oblong doth that hangs ov,er the back and ties together ;across the shoulders.

13. Andres Gonzales Guerrero,Jr., The Significance of Nue.ftra Senora ,de Gualdatupe and La Raza Cosmica in the Development of a Chicano Theology of liberation (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms Intemarional, 1984), 122.

14. Algunos die.en que Guadalupe es un.a palab:ra derivida dellenguaje arabe que signi/l'ea "RIo Oeulto." Tomie de Paola, The Lady of Guadalupe (New York, NY: Holiday House, 1980),44 ..

15. "Desde et .cie/a una be:rmosa m,anana," from P:ropias de ta mira de Nu.estra Senora de Guadalupe, Guerrero, 124.

16. From "La Virgen Ranehera", Guerrero, 127.

17. La Virgen Maria is often ,equated with the Aztec Teleoinam, the Maya lxcbe'/, the Inca Mamacoch.a a1nd the Yuroba Yemaya.

18. Geoffrey Patrrinder, ed.,. World Religions: From Anci•ent History to the Present (New York, NY: Facts on File Publications, 1971),.72.

19. levi-Strauss' paradigm which opposes nature to ,cultur•e and female to male has no such validity in the early history of our Indian forebears.June Nash, "The Azte•csand the Ideology of Male Dominance," Signs (Winter, 1978), 349.

20. Parrinder,.72.

21. Parrinder,. 77.

22. Nash, 352.

23. Nash, 350, 35,5.

24. Paninder,.355.

25. Jacques Sousrelle, The Daily life of the Aztecs on the Eve of the Spanish Conguest (New York" NY: Macmillan PuMishing Company, ~962). Soustelle and most other historians got their information from the Franciscan father, Bernardino de SahagUn, chid chronider of Indian religious life.

26. Nash, 252-253.

27. N.ash, 35,8.

28. Nash, 361-362.

29. Karl W. luckert, Dlmec R•eligion: A Key to Middle America and Beyond (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press,. 1976),.68,69,87, 109.

30\_ B•ernardino de Sahagun, General History of the Things of New Spain (Florentine Codex), VoU R.evised, trans. Arthur Anderson and Charles Dibble (Sante F,e, NM: School of American Research, 1950)., 11.

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31. The Aztecs mmed Snake Woman's patronage of childbirth and v,egetation by placing a s.acrifida! knife in the empt)' cradle she carried on her back (signifying a child who died in childbirrh), cher,eby making her a devourer of sacrificial victims. Snake Woman had the abili ty to change herself into a s.erpem or into a lovely young woman to emi,ce young men who withered a way and died ;after intercourse with her. She was known as a witch ;anda shape-shift,er. Bundage,168-171.

32. Anthropologist lucien levy-Bruhl coined the word participation mystiq.ue. According to Jung,"It denotes a peculiar kind of psychologinl connection .. (in whi.ch) the subject cannot dearly distinguish himself from the object but is bound to it by .a direct relationship which amounts to partial id.entity." CariJung, "Definitions," in .Psychological Types, The Collected Works of CG. .l!!!!g, Vol.6 (Princeton,. NJ: Princeton University IPr.ess, 1953), par. 781.

33. I hav•e lost the souroe of this quote .. If ;anyone knows what it is, please let the publisher know.

34. Some mexieanos and Chicanos distinguish between aire,. air, and mat aigre,. the evil spirits which reside in the air.

La herencia .de Coatiicue / The Coatlicue State

1. Marius Schneider, Elorig,en m.it!;"al de los an;males-simbolos en fa mitologia :!' la es.cultitra antiguas (Barcelona, 1946).

2. CA. Burland and Werner Forman, Feathered Serpent and Smoking Mirror: The Gods ;and Cultures of Ancient Mexiw (New York, NY: G.P. lPutnam & Sons, 1975),55.

3. Gershen Kaufman, Shame: the Power of Caring (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Books, Inc. 1980), viii. This book was instrumemal in my understanding of shame.

4. Alfonsina Storni, Anto!ogia P'oetica, Septima Edicion (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Editorial losada, SA, 1956),42.

5. The suffix "cue" means skirt and is a word to describe.a lady. "'Coatl" not only means serpent, it also means twin.

6. According toJung and James Hillman, "archetypes." are the presences of gods and goddesses in the psyche. Hillman's book, Re-Visioning Psy"hology (New York,. NY: Harper Colophon Books, 1975), has been instrumental in the de\'elopment of my tho~ght.

7. Yemaya is also known as the wind, Oya as the whirlwind. According to luisah Teish, I am the daughter of Yemaya., with 0')1.1 be•ing the mother who raised me.

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8. Another form of the goddess Coa.tticue is Cbima/ma, Shield Hand,. a naked cave goddess of the Huitznahua who was present ,at Az,thln wh,en the Aztecs left from that point of origin. Burland, 166-167.

9. A sculpture, described as the most horrifying and monstrous in the world" was excavated from beneath the Zocalo, the cathedral square in Mexico City, in 1824, where it had lain since the destruction of the Aztec capital of Tenochtidan. Every y,ear since the Conquest, people had come during an autumn festival with gifts of fruit and flowers which they Laid on the pavement of the central squar,e. The Indians maim,ained that there was somebody very holy and powerful underneath .. Burland, 39-40.

10 .. Juan Eduardo Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols, translated from the Spanish by Jack S:age (New York, NY: Philosophical Library, 1962),,76.

How to Tame a Wild Tongue

1. Ray Gwyn Smith, Moorland is Cold Country, unpublished book.

2. [rena Klepfisz, "Di raJze aheJm/The journey Home ," in The Tribe of Dina: A Jewish Women's Anthology., Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz and Irena Klepfisz, eds. (Montpelier, VT: Sinister Wisdom Books, 1986), 49.

3,. R.C. Onega, Dial'ectologla Del Barrio, trans. Hortencia S. Alwan (los Angdes, CA: R.C. .ortega Publisher & Bookseller, 1977), 132.

4. Eduardo Hernandez-Chavez, Andrew D. Cohen, and Anthony F. Beltramo,. lit Lenguaie de los Chl'canos: Regional and Social Characteristics of Language Used By Mexican Americans (Arlington, VA: Center for Appli,ed Linguistics, 1975), 39.

5. Hernandez-Chavez, xvii.

6. Irena Klepfisz, "Secular jewish Identity: Yidishkayt in America," in The Trihe of Dina, Kaye/Kantrowitz and Klepfisz, eds., 43.

7. Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz, "Sign," in We Speak In Code: Poems and Other Writings (Pittshurgh., P A: Motheroot Publications, Inc., 1980),85"

8. Rodolfo Gonzales, I Am Joaquin/Yo Soy Joaquin (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1972). It was first published in 1967.

9. Kaufman, 68.

10. Chavez,. 88-90.

11. "Hispanic" is derived from Hispanis (lisp.ana, a name given to the [herian Peninsula in ancient times when it was a part of the Roman Empire) and is at term designat,ed by the U.S. government to make it easier to handle us on paper.

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12. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo neated the' Mexican-American in 1848.

13. Anglos, in order to alleviate their guilt for dispossessing the Chicano, stressed the Spanish part of us and perpetrated the myth of the Spanish Southwest. We have ,accepted the fiction that we are Hispanic, that is Spanish, in order to accommodar,e ourselves to the dominant ,culture and its abhorrance of Indians. Chavez, 88-'91.

Tlilli; TkzpalJi: The Path of the Red alld Bialek IlIk

1. R. Gordon Wasson, The Wondrous Mushroom: MycoLatry in Mesoamerica (New York, NY: McGraw-Hili Book Company, 1'980), 5'9, !O3.

2. Robert Plant Armstrong, The Powers of Presence: Consciousness, Myth, and Affecting Presence (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, I9'Sl), 11,20.

3. Armstrong, 10.

4. Armstrong, 4.

5. Mi,guel Leon-Portilla, Los AntiguO'! Mexicano!: A travh, de sus ,c1'6nicaS;II cantares (Mexico, D.F.: F'ondo d,e Cultura Economica, 1961), 19',.22.

6. leon-PortiUa, 125,.

7. In X6,cbitl in Cuic,att is Nahuatl for flower and song,/lor J cantO'.

S. Nietzsche,. in The Will to Power, says that the artist lives under a ,curse of being vampirized by his talent.

La ,c;rmd:encia de la .m,estiza I Towllrds a New Consciol.lsness

1. This is my own "take off' onJose V,asconcelos' idea.Jose Vasconcdos, La Raza C,6smica: Misi6n de ta Raza IberO'-A merican.a (Mexico: Aguilar S.A. de Ediciones, 1961).

2. Vasconcelos.

3. Arthur Koestler termed this "bisociation." Albert Rothenberg, The Creative Process in Art, S:cience, and .other Fields {Chicago, IL: Univ'ersiry of Chicago Press,. 1979'), 12.

4. In pan, I deriv,e my definitions for "convergent" and "divergent" thinking from Rothenberg, 12-13.

5. To borrow chemist I1ya Prigogine's theory of "d.issipative structures." Prigogine discovered that subst,ances imeran not in predictable ways as it was taught in science, but in different and f1ucmating ways to produce new and more .complex structures, a kind of birth he caned "morphogenesis,." which neated

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unpredictable innovations. Harold Gilliam, "Seardling tor a New World View,." This World (January, 1981), 23.

6. Tort.illar de mara harina: com tortillas are of two types., the smooth uniform ones made in a tortilla press and usually bought at a tortilla factory or supermarket, and gordit.ar, made by mixing masa with lard or shortening or butter (my mother sometimes puts in bits of bacon or chicharrones). 7. Gina Valdes, Puentes r Fronteras: Coptas Chican,as (los Angeles, CA: Castle Lithograph, 1982), 2.

8. Richard Wilhelm, The I Ching or Book of Changes, trans. Cary F. Baynes (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950),,98.

9. "Sole,dati" is sung by tbe group, Hadendo Punto ,en Otro Son.

10. Out of the twenty-two border (Oumi,es in rhe four border states, Hidalgo County (named for Father Hidalgo who w:as shot in 1810 a1fter instigating Mexico's revolt against Spanish rule under the banner of la Virgen de Guadalupe) is the most poveny-strick,en county in the nation as well as the largest home base (along with Imperial in California) for migrant farmworkers. It was here that I was born and raised. I am amazed that b