

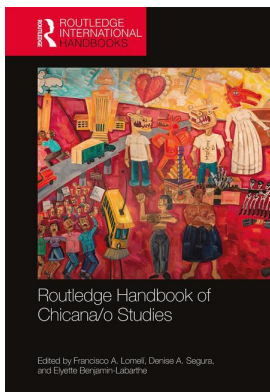
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Chicana/o literature's multi-spatiotemporal projections and impacts; or back to the future

Frederick Luis Aldama

To understand our vitally alive and ever-morphing contemporary field of Chicana/o letters, we must first take a look at origins. The history of Chicana/o literature is characterized by a constant flow of projection and impact. By this I mean that its series of transformative impacts within American letters (and world literature generally) results from its authors recreating content from the building blocks of reality that make up the past *and* present – all while writing for ideal readers who come to exist materially in the future. We see this already in the early narratives of the conquest by European Spaniards who sought to chronicle a proximate and distant past that projects forward the making of a dynamic, contemporary Chicana/o letters in a future yet unknown to them – a future we live today. As Francisco A. Lomelí succinctly sums up of the early periods of literary production, “the texts created their own context – one in the process of becoming a genuinely syncretic fusion of the New World and the Old” (Lomelí 2012b, p. 295). For Lomelí, the formation of Chicano/a letters results from the authoring of texts searching for future contexts and contexts in search of texts. This is to say, the wide variety of Chicana/o literary phenomena that impact us today is a consequence of a long history of authorial creations that result from multiple projections in and across space and time.

Before moving into our contemporary period, let me highlight important clusters (nodes or aggregates) when we see the crystalizing of this multilayered spatiotemporal in the early history of Chicana/o letters. Indeed, scholars such as Luis Leal, Nicolás Kanellos, Francisco Lomelí, and Ilan Stavans, among others, consider that the first clustering of this kind of literary production took place in the early historical periods of the conquest and colonization of the Américas. In Luis Leal's (1973) published essay, “Mexican American Literature: A Historical Perspective” (originally appearing in the first volume of *Revista Chicano-Riqueña* in 1973, republished in Stavans 2007), he chose to identify the first of five periods that mark the evolution of Chicana/o letters, beginning with “The Hispanic Period (to 1821)”: the long epoch “when the Southwest was settled by the inhabitants of Mexico during colonial times [and that have continued] uninterrupted to the present” (Leal 2007, p. 18). In the letters, crónicas, diaries, poetry, created by such EuroSpaniards as Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, Fray Marcos de Niza, Gaspar de Portolá, and Fray Junípero Serra, along with those considered already to be cultural hybrids, like Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, we see this move as providing a record of the past for coeval and future audiences. As Leal writes, it is the “prose writings of a historical or

semi-historical nature, including many descriptions left behind by explorers of the region where the majority of Chicanos now live” (Leal 2007, p. 18). For Leal, these writers do not belong to the “history of Spanish literature” (2007, p. 19). They launch a new tradition of authorship born out of a *mestizo* América. Indeed, it’s this repository of narrative creation that would feed the minds of many Chicana/o intellectuals and cultural creators to come. This is why Francisco A. Lomelí emphatically asserts that, “contemporary writers have not come onto the scene out of a vacuum” (Lomelí 2012b, p. 19). Indeed, these early post-conquest texts powered the poetry and scholarship of many of our groundbreaking and founding Chicana literary scholars (e.g., Tey Diana Rebolledo, María Herrera-Sobek, Norma Cantú, Marta Sánchez, Chela Sandoval, and Norma Alarcón, among many others). It also provides the springboard for many Chicana/o scholars, including Rafael Pérez-Torres, who identified a Chicana/o poetics informed centrally by the concept of cyclical time, as well as Alfred Arteaga (1997), who identified a shaping device in contemporary Chicana/o poetry (*dfisismo*) that celebrates the border-line and the liminal, resisting binary oppositions in ways that are already present in pre-conquest Náhuatl poetry.

Chicana/o letters did not arise *ex nihilo*. Even if its ideal readers were still to be born, pre-conquest and the literature produced during Leal’s so-called Hispanic Period (to 1821) become a trace marker of a deep and long literary tradition. As time unfolds and a Chicana/o readership grows, this literary tradition thickens and becomes more visible. For instance, during what Leal called “The Mexican Period (1821–1848),” the work of Lorenzo de Zavala (*Viaje a los Estados Unidos de Norte América*, 1834, reprinted 2005) and the poetry of Don Joaquín Buelna were aimed at a Spanish readership that existed increasingly in a liminal space between being Mexican and American. This hybrid sensibility increasingly informs the identity of creators like Miguel A. Otero and his Mexican/American readers. During what Leal called a “Transition Period (1848–1910),” he identifies how this was an era when

Mexicans living on the land taken over by the United States had to make up their minds if they wished to return to Mexico or stay and become American citizens with all the accompanying requirements of learning a new language and going to new schools.

(Leal 2007, p. 21)

Indeed, with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, that ceded 51% of Mexico’s territories to the United States, the border crossed Mexicans. And with this, there began the increased production of fiction and nonfiction that moved between *and* across languages and identities. We see the rich variety of this literary output in the *recovery* work by scholars like Jesse Alemán, José Aranda, Genaro Padilla, Kirstin Silva Gruesz, Rodrigo Lazo, Francisco A. Lomelí, Amelia María de la Luz Montes, John Michael Rivera, John Morán González, María Herrera-Sobek, Tey Diana Rebolledo, and many others. In *My History, Not Yours*, for instance, Genaro Padilla recovers the rich tradition of storytelling via *corridos* (or ballads), poetry, Spanish-language editorials, and essays by figures such as José Antonio Menchaca, Santiago Tafolla, Catarina E. Garza, and Juan Seguí, who reconstructed Southwestern identities and experiences from a hybrid Mexican *and* American perspective. In his scholarly work Américo Paredes coined the term “Greater Mexico” (a concept later used by José Limón and Héctor Calderón) to identify a spatiotemporal era characterized increasingly by globalization and the “intensified flow of ideas, goods, images, services, and persons” (Saldívar 2016, p. 174). During this period authors distilled and reconstructed events and subjectivities in creating “complex imaginary location[s] for the emergence of new citizen subjects” (Saldívar 2016, p. 174). They created complex characters who defied singular notions of being either Mexican or American and that pushed against Anglo racism towards Brown subjects, “expressed in symbolic language and

imagery that involved the eroticization of self, society, and culture” (Limón 1998, p. 18). Indeed, Lomelí states that these early works of literature “become key links to our cultural legacy” (Lomelí 2012b, p. 279). Moreover, according to Orchard and Padilla (2016), authors of these early works (along with María Amparo Ruiz de Burton and Josefina Niggli) were creating Mexican *and* American characters who one way or another responded to “two rapidly changing national political spheres that were threatening to diminish their social, political, and economic privilege” (Orchard & Padilla 2016, p. 12).

The 20th century witnessed the increased presence of Mexican American multi-spatiotemporal literature created with an increasingly varied readership in mind. For instance, from 1913 to 1916 María Cristina Mena published her short stories in *The Century Magazine* and *American Magazine*. And in the late 1940s, Mario Suárez wrote short stories for the *Arizona Quarterly* (see Lomelí, Suárez & Casillas-Núñez 2004). And we see in *Dew on the Thorn* (written between the 1920s and 1940s) that Jovita González de Mireles was writing for Tejano (Texas-Mexican) “border families” (González 1997, p. 3), who shared a greater affinity with Mexican than with American culture. These families lost their lands to Anglos post-1848, when “Texas-Mexican landowners were forced to abandon their land” (González 1997, p. 7). Also, as we move forward in time to the late 1960s and early 1970s, we see that Chicano/a literature and its Chicana/o readers begin to coexist and align more in time and space. This is an epoch when Chicano/a authors wrote literature for an increasingly varied Chicana/o audience: rural and urban, young and old, factory and farmworker, activist and scholar. Oscar “Zeta” Acosta embodies the kind of layered works that were created during this period – and for complexly layered Chicana/o reading audiences. Following Acosta’s publishing of a 12-page excerpt in the December 1971 issue of *Con Safos* (a journal founded by Los Angeles-based activist Arturo Flores), he published *The Autobiography of a Brown Buffalo* (1972). The complex layers of this narrative embody this making of Chicana/o letters that increasingly appealed simultaneously to several ideal audiences: politically radicalized Chicana/o readers, those aware of reductiveness of identity categories like Chicana/o, and those who would appreciate its parody of all things high brow, including especially EuroSpanish art: “I ponder the fluid patterns of my rejections and consider the potential for art. Dalí could do something with this, I’m sure. Perhaps I should write to him” (Acosta 1972, p. 25). That is, Acosta was writing for complex Chicana/o subjects who were politicized but who also self-identified in complex ways. Hence, his declaration: “I am neither a Mexican nor an American. I am neither a Catholic nor a Protestant. I am a Chicano by ancestry and a Brown Buffalo by choice” (Acosta 1972, p. 198).

While there are important differences between the separate threads that comprise Chicana/o literature, many Chicana/o authors of the 1960s and 1970s shared common ground: to affirm and reclaim a multiform heritage in ways that would reflect complex identities and that would be sociopolitically transformative. This was a time when César Chávez and Dolores Huerta, in response to poor working conditions for Mexican farm workers, formed the United Farm Workers Union in Delano, California in 1965. As a unified front of farm workers (Chicanos, migrants, Filipinos, among others), they successfully mobilized against exploitive and oppressive working conditions. This was an epoch of protest and resistance that included young and old, women and men, field and factory workers, scholars and creators, who mobilized to demand equal rights in education (and the implementation of bilingual education), political life, and social freedom.

In this moment of renaissance for Chicana/o literature as a whole, we see an explosion of forms and themes in novels, short stories, poetry, and drama. It was a period characterized generally by an impulse to make visible the many present and past cultural and historical heritages that comprise different Chicana/o traditions. This could be in any type of literary expression

and in the form of many kinds of ancestral reclamation and celebration of language and culture. Rudolfo A. Anaya's trilogy, *Bless Me, Ultima* (1972), *Heart of Aztlán* (1976), and *Tortuga* (1979) includes pre-Columbian symbols and mystical figures like *curanderas* (healers). In each novel, the protagonists experience spiritual journeys that involve reclaiming ancestral roots to empower Chicanos in their present. They include the symbolic reclamation of the lost spiritual lands of Aztlán. *Bless Me, Ultima* was also winner of the Quinto Sol prize, an important literary award established precisely to make visible Chicana/o achievement in the literary arts. Ron Arias created a story where the octogenarian, Don Fausto, is taken care of by his niece, Carmela, in the *Road to Tamazunchale* (1975). And in the work of Luis Valdez, Alurista, Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales, José Montoya, Luis Rodríguez, Ricardo Sánchez, Jimmy Santiago Baca, and Juan Felipe Herrera we see not only various reclamations of pre-Columbian culture, but also the interplay of multiple languages aimed at readers like themselves – and that "seemed inscrutable" to monolingual English readers (Kanellos 2002, 6). In *Movements in Chicano Poetry*, Rafael Pérez-Torres sums up the aesthetic and worldview of Chicana/o poetry of this epoch as dealing

overtly with issues of repression, discrimination, exploitation undertaken by the dominant society against Chicanos; poetry that critiques the effect of racist and ethnocentric ideologies; piety whose mode of expression often assumes the hitherto silenced voice of Chicano communities.

(Pérez-Torres 1995, p. 6)

During the 1970s, Chicana/o literature became more varied in its projections and impacts; it pushed against attempts at its categorization. In 1979, Luis Leal identified this in his essay, "The Problem of Identifying Chicano Literature." After analyzing the work of Rudolfo Anaya, Estella Portillo Trambley, Floyd Salas, and Miguel Méndez, who give "expression to the universal through the regional" (Leal 2007, p. 30), he concluded:

the identification of Chicano literature has progressed from the narrow, sociological definition to the broad, humanistic, and universal approach. Chicano literature, by lifting the regional to a universal level, has emerged from the barrio to take its place alongside the literatures of the world.

(Leal 2007, p. 32)

In the 1980s, we observe the creation of feminist and queer Chicana/o literature that moves across history, culture, and language in ways that engage with Chicano/a LGBTQ readers – all those whose experiences and identities are ignored by straight, male Chicana/o authors. In *Emplumada* (1981) Lorna Dee Cervantes penned poetry that struck a resonant chord with Chicanas who faced oppression as women of color moving between cultures and languages. The last stanza of the poem "Barco de refugiados/Refugee Ship" reads: "I feel I am a captive/ aboard the refugee ship./ The ship that will never dock./ El barco que nunca atraca" (Cervantes 1981, p. 1). In *Loving in the War Years: Lo Que Nunca Pasó por sus Labios* (1983), Cherríe Moraga's poem, "For the Color of My Mother," she celebrated those Chicanas like herself who identified as mixed race:

I am a white girl gone brown to the blood color of my mother/ speaking for her/ as it should be/ dark women come to me/ sitting in circles/ I pass through their hands/ the hand of my mother/ painted in clay colors.

(Moraga 1983, p. 60)

In *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987) Gloria Anzaldúa used linguistic and cultural code-switching (English, Castilian Spanish, northern Mexican, Tex-Mexican, *caló* or border slang, and Náhuatl) to create *mestizo* lesbian subjectivities that spoke to her gender, race, and sexually intersectional self-identifying readers. Anzaldúa sought to connect with Chicana readers who had suffered from the violence of patriarchal (Chicano and Anglo) exploitation and oppression. She sought to clear a space for healing within a fluid borderland identity that unfixed all variety of restrictive ways of existing in the world. In Anzaldúa's bilingual, hybrid poem/essay "*El otro México*," she writes: "1,950 mile-long open wound/ dividing a *pueblo*, a culture,/ running down the length of my body,/ staking fence rods in my flesh,/ splits me splits me/*me raja me raja/ This is my home/ this thin edge of barbwire*" (Anzaldúa 1987, p. 2). As Marta E. Sánchez sums up this period, Chicanas "faced a double set of restrictions. Primarily related to ethnicity and gender, these restrictions operated inside and outside their Chicano communities" (Sánchez 1985, p. 5). Chicanas identified with their Chicano counterparts in the struggle for equality and with white women for gender equality. However, they also saw Chicanos as "their sexual oppressors" (Sánchez 1985, p. 5) and the Anglo feminist struggle as color blind to issues of race and racism.

During this period we also begin to see authors like Francisco X. Alarcón, Richard Rodríguez, and Arturo Islas publishing work with gay Chicano readers in mind. In 1982, gay Chicano journalist and essayist Richard Rodríguez published his controversial *Hunger for Memory*. Rodríguez hid his gay sexual identity behind conservative posturing (anti-affirmative action and bilingual education) and ended up appealing to white conservative readers. This is to say, his ideal readers would arrive only later – those who could see *Hunger for Memory* for what it was: the fear to make visible a non-heteronormative Chicano identity with the performing of conservative whiteness. The work of Arturo Islas stands in sharp contrast to that of Rodríguez. In creating and publishing *The Rain God* (1984) we see Islas embracing fully both his Chicano and gay identity. His protagonist, Miguel Chico, comes to terms with paradoxes and hypocrisies that characterize Chicana/o home life: his father's adultery, an abuelita who has internalized a racist *casta* colonial mentality, and the exiling of family members who do not prescribe to a traditional gender and to sexuality norms. In 1985, Francisco Alarcón published the first collection of gay Latino poetry, *Ya vas, Carnal*. These poems became a site of healing for the gay Chicano creator and reader. They expressed what it meant to be a gay Chicano in a world filled with racism and homophobia. In this and other of Alarcón's work we see, too, the reclamation of a pre-Columbian mythology in ways that empowered gay Latino readers.

As we move into the 1990s and early 2000s, Chicana/o letters becomes resplendently varied in ways that connect with an equally varied Chicana/o readership. Michael Nava began creating his gay Chicano "gumshoe" series of books, known collectively as the "Henry Ríos Novels." With respect to *Spilling the Beans*, Henry Ríos

encounters a world filled with bigotry that rears its ugly head when it comes to queers and Chicanos/as: a world that outlaws those who are darker of hue, the working class, and people with a different sexuality, often paralyzing them with fear to the point of tragic consequence.

(Aldama 2006, pp. 187–188)

Ana Castillo blew up Latin American magical realist literary conventions with her parodic, Chicana-focused *So Far From God* (1993). In 2005, Salvador Plascencia published the precious and experimental *People of Paper*, where ontological planes of existence interpenetrate in mind-boggling ways. The reader meets Federico de la Fe, a widowed bed-wetter, and his daughter,

Little Merced, a lime-sucker like her mother, and the *cholo*, Smiley. As the leader of a resistant organization fighting for self-determination and free will, Smiley decides to seek out and destroy omnipresent Saturn. Instructed by the *curandero* (folk healer) Apolonio, he follows a map made of tracing paper that guides him to a “rough spot” in the sky where he begins to peel “at the deteriorating glaze of blue, collapsing part of the sky and exposing a layer of papermache” (Plascencia 2005, p. 103). Here he proceeds to saw through the layers of newspaper and glue, where he finds a “manhole in the California sky” (Plascencia 2005, p. 103). He grabs at the “edges of the hole” and pulls himself “into the house of Saturn” (Plascencia 2005, p. 103). Also in 2005, Sesshu Foster published *Atomix Aztec*, which reimagines the *mestizo* as victor in history, and not that of the Europeans, who

figured they'd wipe us out [and] enslave our peoples down at the corner liquor store, crush all resistance thru germ warfare and lawyers, lie, cheat, kidnap, ransom, burn our sakred [sic] libraries [. . .] install Christian theokratik [sic] dixtatorships [sic].

(Foster 2005, p. 2)

During our contemporary period we are witnessing the creation of many other Chicana/o narrative formats that are finding all variety of Chicana/o readers. These include, importantly, the narrative told through visual and verbal means, namely comic books or graphic fiction and nonfiction. These appeal to a wide range of reader tastes, from those engaged by sci-fi to those more interested in autobiography. For instance, Frank Espinosa's *Rocketo* (2006–2007) and Gilbert and Mario Hernandez's *Citizen Rex* (2011) appeal to Chicano/a readers who want to travel into the future via their creation of sci-fi epic-dimensioned storyworlds. And those like Rafael Navarro, with his *Sonámbulo* (1988–), and Gilbert Hernández, with his stand-alone graphic novels like *The Troublemakers* (2009), appeal to readers excited by the noir genre. There are those who write youth-oriented, coming-of-age (and coming out) stories, such as Iván Vélez, Jr., with his *Tales of the Closet* (2005), and Grasiela Rodríguez, with her *Lunatic Fringe* (2010). Others choose the life-education journey story, such as Rhode Montijo (1973–) with his *Pablo's Inferno* (2004), and Wilfred Santiago with his *In My Darkest Hour* (2004). Then there are those who choose the superheroic mode, such as Fernando Rodríguez with his *Aztec of the City* (1995), Richard Domínguez with his *El Gato Negro* (1993), Laura Molina (1957–) with her *Cihualyaomiquiz, the Jaguar* (1996), Carlos Saldaña with his *Burrito* (1990), and Joe Quesada (1962–) with his *Santerians* (2005), among many others (see Aldama, *Your Brain on Latino Comics* 2009 and Aldama & González 2016).

During our contemporary period there is also an abundance of Chicana/o-authored fiction that aims to reach children and young adult readers. While in the 1980s some were writing literature for younger readers (e.g., Sandra Cisneros, Pat Mora, Alma Flor Ada, Pat Mora, Carmen Tafolla, Lulu Delacre, Pam Muñoz-Ryan, and Gary Soto), it is really not till the late 1990s and 2000s that we begin to see huge growth in this area. Authors of adult poetry and fiction began writing in this mode, including Francisco X. Alarcón, Gloria Anzaldúa, Juan Felipe Herrera, Francisco Jiménez, Pat Mora, Daniel Olivas, and Benjamín Sáenz, among others. And there are those who write and illustrate only children's and young adult fiction, including Antonio Martorell, Joe Cepeda, Felipe Dávalos, Carmen Lomas Garza, René Colato Laínez, Stephanie Garcia, Jorge Argueta, Angela Domínguez, Consuelo Méndez, Yuyi Morales, Monica Brown, Maya Christina González, George Ancona, Raúl Colón, David Díaz, Duncan Tonatiuh, and Xavier Garza. As Maya Christina González discusses in an interview with me, she decided to create her own Brown figures, Chicana-inspired color illustration, and bilingualisms so that Chicana girls could see themselves in her stories (see Aldama 2017). Also, numerous Chicana/o authors, like

Matt de La Peña, Francisco X. Stork, Jenny Torres Sánchez, Manuel Martínez, Adam Silver, and Daniel José Older create works for middle grade and teen Chicana/os. To different degrees of presence, these authors choose to produce themes, events, and characters who gravitate around issues and occurrences to which young Chicana/o readers can relate. In Jackie White's words,

children develop as skilled readers the more that they read, and they are more likely to keep reading if they find relevance and pleasure in the content, language, and style of what they read. That relevance and pleasure come from seeing one's self and one's experiences reflected in the text and from making connections with others. Therefore, from picture books and YA series to crossover works from the Latino/a literary canon, Latino/a YA and children's material have the potential to create lifelong readers from all microcultures and, thus, a more empathic, informed, and critically thinking citizenry.

(White 2015, p. 193)

In wrapping up this veritable thumbnail sketch of the history of the evolution of Chicana/o literature as a constant flow of projection and impact, let us mention, too, how this has fueled a rich and varied Chicana/o scholarly field. In the early scholarly work evident is the impulse to get to grips with and categorize Chicana/o literature – one that's constantly morphing and expanding. In his early work, Juan Bruce-Novoa tuned in to this fact, writing about Chicana/o literature as inhabiting a “dynamic intercultural space of Mexican and American identities” (Bruce-Novoa 1975, p. 98). Bruce-Novoa astutely identifies Chicana/o literature as a constantly expanding intercultural space as Chicana/o authors “push” influences “out and apart” to clear a new space that expresses the complexity of the Chicano/a reality (Bruce-Novoa 1975, p. 98). In *Barrio Logos* (2000) Raúl Homero Villa also uses the metaphor of spatiality, characterizing Chicana/o literature as “socially deforming (barrioizing) and culturally affirming (barriological) spatial practices – which together produce the form and meaning of the barrio” (Villa 2000, p. 8). In *Extinct Lands, Temporal Geographies* Mary Pat Brady considers how Chicana literature

contests the terms of capitalist spatial formation, including the attempts to regularize the meanings and uses of spaces, especially the use of space to naturalize violent racial, gender, sexual and class ideologies [by offering] not just alternative cartographies (or countercartographies) [. . .] but entirely different conceptualizations of spatiality altogether.

(Brady 2002, p. 6)

Moreover, in *Of Space & Mind* (2011) Patrick Hamilton uses a cognitive mapping model to formulate a way to expand our readings and interpretations of Chicano/a literary texts to include an understanding of how each “text ‘maps’ and communicates particular ethical positioning in regard to cultural difference” (Hamilton 2011, p. 14). Finally, Marissa K. López uses the concept of space to enlarge the terrain of texts included in a Latino/a literary scholarly purview. In *Chicano Nations* (2011) she argues that it is a history of “spatial thinking in the Americas” (López 2011, p. 2) – the result of colonial and postcolonial divisions and controlling of geographical spaces – that informs largely the thinking of Latinos “collectivity in the United States” (López 2011, p. 2) and that, therefore, informs the writing of its authors. The future scholarship on Latino/a literature, for López, should chart an “expanding arena for Chicana/o racial and ethnic identity” (López 2011, p. 21).

There have been a number of recent scholarly moves to expand and complicate Chicana/o literary studies by *reclaiming* and complicating seminal Chicana/o narratives. In *Accessible Citizenships* Julie Minich (2013) rewrites Chicano/a literary history by returning to a corpus of

canonical Chicana/o texts that feature differently abled subjects, but that she contends scholars have overlooked. For Minich, this move not only richly expands our understanding of Islas's *The Rain God*, but also critiques able-bodied ideologies that go hand-in-hand with homophobic and racist practices. In *End of Assimilation* John Alba Cutler (2015) returns to the Chicana/o archives (Santa Clara University, Stanford University, University of California, Berkeley, and University of Texas at Austin) to articulate a post-WWII history of Chicana/o *not* formed as a passive response nor a simplistic resistance to pressures of assimilation – a category that ultimately fails to grasp the experience and identity of the Chicano/a subject. For instance, Cutler demonstrates how an otherwise pro-assimilationist identified novel, such as José Antonio Villarreal's *Pocho* (1959), is only visible today because of the building of a Chicano/a critical apparatus with an explicit anti-assimilationist worldview. Cutler aims to reframe the history of Chicano/a letters as one *not* built out of resistance versus assimilationist positions, but rather as one that has been actively transforming mainstream culture – just as this Chicana/o-transformed mainstream culture has, in turn, transformed it. And in *Autobiography in Black and Brown* Michael Nieto García (2014) reclaims the work of Richard Rodríguez as well as *troubles* the ethnic autobiographic format. For García, Rodríguez reconstructs “a self that not only is narrated – the self on the page – but also reflects the reality of bodies inscribed with the markers of ethnicity in society” (García 2014, p. xvii). Rather than perceive Rodríguez as a sell-out, as has often been the case in Chicana/o scholarship, his work should be seen as challenging and transforming ideologies of race, class, sexuality, and gender.

As of late, there is been a transnational turn in Chicana/o literary studies. Building on his earlier work, such as *The Dialectics of Our America* (1991) and *Border Matters* (1997), in *Trans-Americanity* (2011) José D. Saldívar articulates a hemispheric epistemology as expressed in the way Chicana/o literature interfaces with other cultural hiatus north and south of the U.S.-Mexico border – and beyond. He connects the insights of border theory with Latin America's theories of coloniality of power, linking Chicana/o texts like Víctor Martínez's *Parrot in the Oven* (1996) and Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987), Esteban Montejo's *Biografía de un cimarrón* (1968), and the work of José Martí with global narratives (including Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, 1997). For Saldívar, the Chicana/o migratory subject links to global migratory experiences and epistemologies. We also observe this same global move in the work of Jayson González Sae-Saue (see *Southwest Asia: The Transpacific Geographies of Chicana/o Literature*, 2016). González Sae-Saue returns to canonical Chicana/o authors like José Antonio Villarreal, Luis Valdez, Américo Paredes, and Rolando Hinojosa to show how their narratives evidence a history of “cross-racial links” between traumatized and exploited Chicanos and Asian Americans: from Japanese internment camps of WWII to Asian dislocations during the Korean War. He aims to demonstrate how material reality (WWII, Korean War, internment camps, migratory field work, for instance) leads to Chicano/a identity formations that are never “strictly local,” but rather Chicana/o-Pacific Rim expansive. That is, he seeks to expand our conceptions of a Chicana/o “borderland” consciousness to include Asia and Asian Americans. In his analyses of Oscar Acosta, Miguel Méndez, Virginia Grise, Daniel Cano, Alfredo Véa, and Rudolfo A. Anaya, scholar González Sau-Saue makes visible how “the mutually constitutive histories” (Sae-Saue 2016) of exploitation and forced migration of Chinese and Chicanos can provide a new, expansive critical frame for understanding the formation of borderland identities as at once *local* and pan-Pacific *global*.

As this brief history demonstrates, Chicana/o literature and its scholarly pursuit are the result of a rich and varied history of multiple spatiotemporal projections and impacts; the result of creators writing for their ideal audiences that coincide and *don't* coincide in time and place.

However, this does not mean that Chicana/o subjects (authors, readers, and scholars) have arrived. Yes, this diversified body of literature satisfies the appetite of a huge variety of Chicana/o readers (and authors and scholars as readers) today. In *Gritos*, Dagoberto Gilb (2003, p. x) puts it succinctly:

It seems impossible that so many of the writers I have known – and yes, me, too – with a decent record of publications by usual standards, still fight a battle for acceptance, that we are a product of an ongoing American story that is not foreign, not only about a dark exotic people, not only fascinating as so much is “south of the border,” not just about the poor and dangerous other side of the tracks.

(2003, p. x)

Chicana/o authors are still relatively few in a sea of white authors. So, while Chicana/o authors are certainly more present in libraries and bookstores, they also continue to be ignored. Indeed, if we consider Chicana/o authors and their products within the larger marketplace of Latina/a letters (Dominican, Cuban, Puerto Rican of origin), the literature represents only a small part of a small percentage (2%) of literature published. Yet Latina/os make up over 18% of the U.S. population.

In closing this exploration of various vectors of transformations built from work that recreates at once the past *and* present, all the while projecting forward to ideal readers who come to exist in the future, it is important to keep in mind that this exists within a larger tapestry: Chicana/o letters as formed by authors with Mexican *and* Dominican, Puerto Rican, Central American, and Cuban ancestry. In *The Norton Anthology* (2010), editor Ilan Stavans (2010) identifies our shared language and sociopolitical and cultural history of struggle as our *Latinidad*, the glue that conjoins Chicanos with all our Latina/o compadres. As Chicana/o literature – and Latina/o literature more largely – moves into its next phases of projection and impact, it will also reflect a *Latinidad* that is actively transforming the mainstream just as this transformed mainstream actively transforms Chicana/os making this literature. Readers as well as critics are eager to see how our literature will continue to speak to *and* challenge new generations of Latina/o readers.

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