Para Chris Paredes,
con el saludo
afectuoso de
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Thirty Years of Chicano and Chicana Studies

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MOST SCHOLARS WHO HAVE WRITTEN ON THIS SUBJECT generally agree that Chicano/a Studies, as a formal and academically sanctioned field of inquiry and pedagogy, came into existence as a direct result of the Chicano/a movement.[1] With institutionalized beginnings traceable to the late 1960s, the discipline's birth is clearly rooted in the competing "ideologies" that nurtured and energized the civil rights struggle that Mexican American people waged during those crucial years and continue to wage today.[2]

Yet, as with other Ethnic Studies fields, Chicano/a Studies existed before the term was coined. As ethnographer Susana L. Gallardo has pointed out in her eulogy discussion of the pre-*movimiento* activities of the late scholar Américo Paredes: "[he] was doing Chicano Studies before there ever was such a thing. He was doing cultural studies before there ever was such a thing. He insisted on respecting the basic dignity of Mexican peoples at a time when such dignity was a luxury for people of color."[3] Remarkably, Paredes accomplished these objectives within academia, during more than three decades at the University of Texas-Austin, "a campus that had never been particularly welcoming to Mexican-American students or scholars."[4] In addition to Paredes, the list of precursors usually included in this context are Arthur Campa, Carlos Castañeda, Aurelio M. Espinosa, Jovita González, George I.

Sánchez, and other academics who were active during the three decades preceding the Chicano/a movement proper.[5] One notable name that perhaps should be added is Ernesto Galarza, whose seminal work on agribusiness and the Bracero program in California was fundamental in raising the national consciousness about an important segment of the Mexican-Chicano population in the United States. His work also established a meaningful trend of inquiry in the field of a Chicano/a labor history.[6]

As historian Ignacio M. García has noted, this previous generation of Mexican American intellectuals laid the foundation for the various endeavors tackled more recently by Chicano/a Studies scholars. These scholars also inherited and were influenced by the labors of those who preceded them as trailblazers in U.S. folklore studies as well as those involved in the embryonic forms of the struggle for civil rights.[7] It could be further argued that individuals like José de la Luz Sáenz, who wrote earlier in the 1920s and 1930s about their experiences as Mexican Americans through autobiographical accounts and other narratives, also contributed to laying the groundwork for the future development of Chicano/a Studies, even if they did so unwittingly.[8]

A question that remains to be answered is where other, non-Chicano/a academics fit into the equation. Most histories and analyses tend to focus exclusively on Chicano/a scholars when discussing Chicano Studies. But where does Carey McWilliams's body of scholarship fit, for example, which, even before Galarza's work, was so influential in subsequent studies on the life of Mexicans in the United States?[9] This question begs still another one: Is the study of Chicanos/as the exclusive realm of Chicano/a scholars or are others welcome to take part in the academic dialogue? This is a particularly poignant issue because the first blueprint for Chicano/a Studies, as expressed in 1969 in the "Plan de Santa Bárbara" (details about this event are detailed later in this chapter) was in theory originally limited to meeting the Chicano/a community's needs, and was thus fashioned as a recruitment vehicle intended to correct the anomalous condition that prevailed at the time: namely, the conspicuous absence or very limited presence of Chicanos/as, both faculty and students, in most colleges and universities around the country. For whatever reason, parallel and alternative structural formations that have sometimes subsumed Chicano/a Studies (Ethnic Studies, border studies, cultural studies, and so on) seem to be more open and welcoming for other Latinos/as and nonminorities into the faculty ranks. In some measure this factor fans the flames of distrust among the more zealous advocates of "true," more militant *Chicanismo*, when proposals arise for subsuming Chicano/a Studies within other units such as Ethnic Studies.[10]

This is an important point because the insistence on preserving Chicano/a Studies as distinct, often separate units and specifically focused programs represents efforts by some Chicanos/as to defend the gains made over the previous three decades—gains that made it possible to define the particularities of Chicano/a history, culture, and current conditions in the midst of the larger and complex mosaic of racialized ethnic groups in the United States. Central to this thinking is the long-fought-for right to self-definition and the acquisition of an identity that would restore a sense of dignity and pride to a group of people that for many years have been victims of neglect, stereotyping, and institutional discrimination. From this perspective, for example, any attempt to dilute specific identity by amalgamating Chicanos/as under the officially fabricated and actively promoted label of "Hispanics" is thus perceived as an attack, as it threatens to undermine specific identity, history, culture, and any sense of autonomy or self-determination.[11] The question of naming is a crucial and hotly debated issue. For this reason I extensively quote the arguments presented by economists Refugio I. Rochín and Adela de la Torre:

> During the 1980s, "Chicanos" faded from federal records as "Mexican-origin" Americans and were subsumed into the "Hispanic" classification, a concept fabricated by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. . . . As a result of the collapsing of "Chicanos" into the catch-all category "Hispanics," Chicanos lost a particular avenue for requesting that government meet their specific needs. In the quest for complete ethnic solidarity across all Hispanic subpopulations, Chicanos gave up the richness of their own identity as well as the ability to target specific "Chicano" public-policy issues. . . . Culturally and ideologically, the label creates a misleading image of the historically evolved cultures of the different aggregates to which it is applied, giving a European veneer to a widespread "culture-of-poverty" interpretation of the social problems afflicting a large proportion of this population. . . . In response to criticism that "Hispanic" does not capture the indigenous roots or mestizaje of Chicanos, the term "Latino/a" is sometimes used as a substitute for "Hispanic," in order to lessen the implied European bias of the latter. Those who use the term "Chicano" do so for political reasons to illustrate the need for further differentiation of the Mexican-origin population.[12]

As political scientist John A. García has put it: "Multiple identities do exist and extend beyond Chicanismo, and 'Hispanicity.' Yet Chicanos/as still

think of themselves as Mexican-origin people with a long-standing quest for equity and empowerment in American society."[13]

El Movimiento, El Plan de Santa Bárbara, and the Birth of Chicano/a Studies

The social inequalities affecting Chicanos/as came to national attention in 1965, with the struggle to unionize the California farm laborers led by César Chávez. Another concern of the era was the disproportionate ratio of Chicanos/as and other Latinos/as who were dying in the Vietnam War (already close to nine thousand by 1970), which contrasted sharply with the minuscule number of Chicanos/as enrolled in colleges and universities and with the lack of Chicano/a faculty at these institutions. Such ingredients made for an explosive mix that resulted in numerous spontaneous actions that eventually were channeled into what is now known as the contemporary Chicano/a movement.

Educational reform in general, in higher education in particular, was a significant part of the dynamic. Students and other youths, an important force within the *movimiento,* demanded courses that were relevant to the recognition and understanding of the Mexican American experience in the United States. Naturally, the creation and offering of those courses necessitated the presence of Chicano/a faculty, both in the high schools and at university campuses, and the recruitment of a meaningful number of minority college students. The historian Guadalupe San Miguel has described the process in these terms: "Mexican American youth, especially high school students, voiced their opposition to discrimination and their support for significant changes in the schools by conducting school boycotts. College students protested the lack of minority recruitment by universities and supported the establishment of Chicano/a Studies programs. Militant strikes and protest actions at times were the primary means for bringing about change in higher education."[14] These at times militant activities resulted in changes within the educational system and brought in more Chicano/a students, which in turn led to larger organizing efforts.

The birth of Chicano/a Studies came about as an important aspect of the contemporary Chicano/a movement, and a painful birth it was. It is no accident that the first department of Mexican American Studies was established at California State College in Los Angeles in 1968.[15] The high school blowouts that took place in that city in 1967 and 1968 signaled the lighting of

a fire that spread rapidly throughout California. In 1969 the Chicano Coordinating Committee on Higher Education organized a conference at the University of California-Santa Barbara campus. Attended by more than a hundred students, faculty, staff, and administrators from all over California, collectively representing nearly thirty institutions, the central purpose of the conference was to develop a master plan for the full participation and activity of Chicanos/as in higher education. Based on the "ideology" of *Chicanismo,* "El Plan de Santa Bárbara," the historical document that came out of the gathering, set some general guidelines for the recruitment of Chicano/a students, for the hiring and retention of more Chicano/a faculty, and for the creation of programs specifically designated to help Chicano/a students.[16]

El Plan de Santa Bárbara spelled out in general terms curriculum issues as well as the roles of students and the community in the development and governance of Chicano/a Studies programs. Also central to the proposals in the plan was the creation of a Chicano/a student organization, the Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (better known today by the acronym MECHA), and of Chicano/a Studies as an academic field specifically focusing on the history, culture, political life, and general experiences of *la raza.* Beginning in 1969, El Plan de Santa Bárbara provided the impetus for the subsequent creation of Chicano/a Studies programs in a multiplicity of campuses throughout the country. The plan addressed accountability in the broadest terms, with only minimal effort given to the adoption of any one pedagogical model. In practice, each campus was left to create and evolve its own program, depending on the context and abilities of the locale to meet the Chicano/a community's needs. This freedom within the movement enabled it to spread throughout the Southwest and the North, to such areas as Washington and Oregon, which for some reason have rarely received due attention in the scholarship documenting the movement and Chicano/a history, as well as the Midwest. In the summer of 1970, for example, Chicanos/as in Minnesota organized a conference intended to delve into the plausibility of setting up a Chicano/a Studies program in the Midwest. Reportedly, 180 people from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin attended the meeting and, after a weeklong discussion, reached unanimous agreement that the new unit should be housed in the University of Minnesota, that it should have full departmental status, and that it should be dedicated "to study Mexicans in their struggle to settle in the Midwest." The Minnesota experiment paid regional dividends, and such neighboring institutions as Wayne State University in Detroit and Northwest Indiana State

University eventually followed suit, creating "programs uniquely suited to the Latino populations of their areas."[17]

Although the Chicano/a Studies mission was originally limited in theory to meeting the Chicano/a community's needs, it initially served as a specific vehicle for college and university recruitment. Only later did institutional pressure force the articulation of the scholarly mission of these programs. Today Chicano/a Studies has become a rigorous, legitimate field of academic inquiry and research on some campuses. However, painful as it is to admit, in most places Chicano/a Studies units generally remain hampered by the inherent conflict between traditional academic standards and expectations and the field's inherited sense of mission to the community. Among the schools with better Chicano/a Studies programs are several within the University of California system, some of the California state universities, some private universities in California, the University of Arizona, Arizona State University, the University of Texas-El Paso, the University of Texas-Austin, the University of New Mexico, and the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. Most programs are marginalized, and many are housed in units such as Ethnic Studies, cultural studies, Latino/a Studies, and so on.

Ideological Origins and the Positioning of Chicano/a Studies in the Academy

Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s the main dispute regarding the positioning of Chicano/a Studies within the academy was between the nationalistic views of various brands (with cultural nationalism being the predominant current) and several internationalist perspectives among which Marxism was the primary orientation. But even Marxist positions differed substantially in their multiple interpretations of "the Chicano/a question" and the solutions they advanced.[18] However diverse the various positions, most scholars agree that at its inception Chicano/a Studies was conceived as an oppositional and contesting undertaking intended to challenge the status quo of traditional academic structures as well as the generally disparaging and openly derogatory views of Mexican Americans that prevailed in this country at this time. Accordingly, the idea of Chicano/a Studies was initially cemented by the notion that it should help bring about social and political change, thereby advancing the collective interests of *la raza*. Chicano/a Studies, it was felt, should aid *la gente* (the people) to develop a new sense of identity and cultural value.

In other words, what later evolved as an essentially academic, scholarly endeavor of various sorts—often circumscribed to college campuses and increasingly removed from the extramural, nonacademic community and its real-life struggles—was first conceived precisely as an instrument or a force that would help to correct the anomalous situation of marginality and exclusion that the Chicano/a community suffered. Some Chicanos/as believed that this was a utopian project from the very beginning because it constituted an attempt to create an academic field out of an activist "utilitarian" purpose and perspective. This project by its very nature was thus inimical and in opposition to the privilege, individualistic competition, and elitist exclusivity that academia symbolized. Riddled as it was with these inherent and fundamental contradictions, the dream of a democratic, revolutionary Chicano/a Studies could not possibly survive and prosper.

In a punctually dialectical form, the contradictory, opposing, and often antagonistic ideologies that animated the debates that initially helped shape and propel forward the Chicano/a movement and Chicano/a Studies eventually became fetters to the process. Internal fragmentation along differing ideological lines—often only a mask for personal, dogmatic, and sectarian posturing—added to the movement's lack of a clear direction, and the failure to delineate a coherent and generally accepted paradigm in scholarly activities prevented any truly significant consolidation of the gains the student activists and their faculty supporters thought they had made.[19] Born out of strife, often permitted to be created only grudgingly by administrators and a largely conservative faculty, Chicano/a Studies has always thus carried a stigma that in the long run has become one of the serious challenges for achieving academic respect. The traces of this past are reflected in the discourse that some Chicano/a Studies centers use to define themselves. For example, in 1999 the University of Minnesota's Web site stated: "Crucial to the success of Minnesota's Chicano/a Studies department is that the unit was established not as a conciliatory gesture aimed at mending past racial grievances, but as a bona-fide department whose mission was to engage in research, teaching, and service to the community."[20]

In an attempt to place the department on a firm academic foundation, this statement tends to dilute, if not to negate, the activist origins that gave birth to the field as a whole. After thirty years of existence, and at the dawn of the new millennium, Chicano/a Studies is an interdisciplinary field at a crossroads.[21] More than three decades later most Chicano/a Studies programs in the United States remain precarious and marginalized and are perceived

by many as academia's illegitimate children. Neglected, underfunded, and intellectually suspicious, these programs still occupy a position peripheral to the central research and educational missions voiced by the institutions that house them. Plagued from the beginning by internal divisiveness on one side and institutional and external hostility on the other, any real chances for Chicano/a Studies units to prosper and attain a healthy development have thus been hampered from the outset. In the best cases Chicano/a Studies programs institutionally have been the victims of benign neglect, tolerated only insofar as the faculty associated with them are willing to play the elitist game of academia and behave as "true" and "serious" scholars rather than as social or political activists. Lacking resources, and living with the threat of attrition through budget reductions or worse—total disappearance—these programs have failed for the most part to attain any significant level of academic recognition, credibility, or respect. Consequently, many scholars, old and new, shy away from Chicano/a Studies and seek appointments in such traditional departments as history, sociology, English, anthropology, or Spanish. In the best cases these faculty accept joint appointments.[22]

A similar pattern of avoidance may be discerned regarding the students. The militancy and unabashedly confrontational action of their late 1960s and 1970s counterparts provided the main force behind the original creation of Chicano/a Studies, pushing administrators and other bureaucrats to yield and concede that times were changing and that the creation of these programs was inevitable, if not desirable. But in more recent decades students have maintained a certain degree of complacency and even apathy, as documented by Ignacio García:

> By the early 1980s, there also began a steady decline in the number of students taking Chicano Studies courses. The heightened activism of the late 1960s and 1970s had generated a great interest in these courses, but growing conservatism and a more narcissistic attitude on the part of students led to a steady decline in enrollment. Finding a job and getting a "useful" degree became of greater importance than becoming culturally aware for most students. In addition . . . many Chicano Studies programs began to move away from activist scholarship, which decreased their attractiveness. In these particular programs, it also meant the disfranchising of students: fewer and fewer students participated in decision making, in evaluating programs, or in the hiring process. The "militant" or "radical chic" faculty saw no need for student input as they felt they represented Chicano intellectualism, and conservative Chicano faculty and Anglo administrators saw the students as a threat to order and discipline in the academy.[23]

This lack of commitment in recent years, characterized by a dearth of activism or even moderate participation in campus politics, has had profound effects for Chicano/a Studies. Some scholars maintain that this lack of continued pressure from the students, among other factors, has resulted in a dwindling down of departments and programs.[24] On a larger scale, however, generational change and conflict plays an important part.

As historians have noted, the salient feature of the Chicano/a movement of the 1960s was its radical departure from the positions previously upheld by the so-called Mexican-American Generation, which (at times too quickly and simplistically) have been discarded as mere assimilationist and accommodationist postures of a middle-class group well-disposed to "selling out their heritage."[25] This view has been revised and rigorously corrected by historian Mario T. García, who has mapped out that period's full complexity in his study *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, and Identity, 1930–1960*.[26] This notwithstanding, however, the dramatic rupture between the two generations that Muñoz, San Miguel, and other scholars have highlighted is definite and historically accurate. Mario García himself admits that the "Chicano Generation moved to rectify the failures of the past and to break through the ideological handicaps of the Mexican-American Generation. For the Chicano Generation, reforms were not enough. National liberation—Chicano Power—or some form of it was now demanded. Similarities with other Americans were of no importance. Differences were now valued. Rather than just being a minority, Chicanos were now to be regarded as a conquered people suffering 'internal colonialism' but struggling to achieve their national independence."[27]

Therein lies an important piece of the rationale behind the initial push to create Chicano/a Studies as autonomous units within U.S. institutions of higher learning. The other fundamental aspects were to force recognition of the rights of Chicanos/as to have equal access to educational opportunities. After all, education had always been and continues to be a cornerstone of Mexican and Chicano/a cultures as one of the only viable means for individual improvement and upward social mobility, a goal that in itself was not fundamentally different from the aspirations that had also inspired the thinking and activities of the previous generation.[28] But now the goal was not to simply assimilate into pluralistic America. Rather, the aim was to reclaim an exclusive terrain that most Chicanos/as felt was somehow lost to aggressive U.S. imperialism. *Juntos, pero no revueltos* (together but not mingled), or as Mario García has said: "Similarities with other Americans were of no importance. Differences were now valued."[29]

The political and academic backlash that began with the Reagan and Bush administrations seems to be in full swing today, as corroborated by the continuous attacks on busing and bilingual education, the English-only movement, the anti-immigrant legislation in California and elsewhere, and the current campaign to dismantle affirmative action throughout the country. In this climate Chicano/a Studies, which did not adequately prosper under the more auspicious circumstances of the late 1960s and the 1970s, surely faces a more difficult experience today. New conservative forces have emerged that are out to quash anything that smells of liberalism, let alone what they perceive to be radicalism.

This is not to say that all is lost, however. Just as tactics have changed over the years to cope with new realities, adjustments will have to be made again to adequately confront the new challenges. After all, it is no longer the 1960s. Demographics have changed and the forces that attempt to turn back the clock do so at their own (or our collective) peril. A friend of mine, an old African American communist, used to say that it is easy to take candy away from a child that has never tasted candy. But try to take it away from one that has and that child is going to yell like hell. This is to say that once people have experienced a certain amount of success in gaining their civil or human rights, they will fight before relinquishing their gains.

If the Chicano Generation marked a divide with the previous so-called Mexican-American Generation and through its militancy and radical actions forced a change in the status quo, bringing about social and educational reforms that included the creation of Chicano/a Studies, the so-called Hispanic Generation that followed them in the 1980s responded to a different set of conditions. Many scholars believe this generation has adopted an accommodationist posture that undermines or at least ignores the spirit of Chicanismo that was the main philosophy during the previous decades. For example, San Miguel has written: "[The] new set of leaders [in the 1980s] replaced the Chicano/a ideology with an all-encompassing Hispanic model. More specifically, the identity of Chicanismo, or cultural identity was based not on *mestizaje*, or the indigenous past, but on the Hispanic or White-European heritage of Spain. The goal of radical social change, and its implicit call for a critical view of American institutions and ideals, was replaced by one of moderate social change based on the lack of a critical perspective toward governmental authority. Street politics was also frowned upon and replaced by the politics of persuasion and negotiation. The 'Hispanic generation' had arrived."[30]

Naturally, the decline in student activism that characterized the 1970s and 1980s was largely due, according to San Miguel, "to the increasing conservatism among the students and the dismantling of federal and state educational programs," a trend that accelerated during the 1990s and continues in the twenty-first century.[31] Yet, as previously discussed, San Miguel himself is quick to recognize that political activism and student involvement did not entirely die out in the 1980s. He therefore disagrees with scholars who have proposed otherwise: "The new political environment, as well as the emergence of the Hispanic generation, had a significant impact on the struggle against discrimination and assimilation in education. It either slowed, redirected, or diluted this struggle and its programs, but it did not halt the *movimiento*, as several scholars argue."[32]

Such developments as the protracted struggle at UCLA, beginning in 1989 and continuing through 1994–95, to attain departmental status for the Chicano/a Studies program—which ultimately resulted in a compromise and a partial victory that made possible the establishment of the César Chávez Research Center for Interdisciplinary Instruction in Chicana and Chicano Studies in the mid-1990s—as well as the 1999 fight "to save" Ethnic Studies at the University of California-Berkeley corroborate San Miguel's view about the false perception of the lack of activism in recent times. In both cases the events involved student hunger strikes. Interestingly, it appears that in the Berkeley case all of the students involved in the hunger strike were female, and a Chicana professor also took part in the fasting.

Chicano/a Studies was born during a period characterized by confrontation and controversy. With very few exceptions the various units established in universities and colleges throughout the United States have remained as programs and centers, never attaining departmental status. The ultimately successful struggle to create a department of Chicana and Chicano Studies lasted from 1989 until 1995. Even the aforementioned UCLA experience shows the degree of the university administration's resistance to altering the status quo. As small, underfunded, unwelcome but tolerated stepchildren of the academy, Chicano/a Studies programs remain precarious, stagnant units on most campuses today. Regardless of the structure or status, most of these programs do not offer graduate degrees, certainly not doctoral degrees, although the University of Arizona offers a master's program in Mexican American Studies not through a department but through the Mexican American Studies and Research Center. As Ignacio García has noted, however, the center "offers only three courses—two at the entry level—and has no real mechanism for

influencing the content of courses offered by other departments."[33] Pragmatic considerations have compelled some individuals toward accepting, and even pushing for, the amalgamation of Chicano/a Studies with other programs, in the hope of strengthening their chronically weak position within the academy and achieving departmental status. Such institutional maneuvering has met with resistance and criticism from the more nationalistic advocates of Chicano/a Studies and Chicanismo, as espoused in the original Plan de Santa Bárbara. The content, form, and placement of Chicano/a Studies thus remains problematic and contentious, even after more than thirty years.

A Case Study: The University of Washington

As it developed at many other institutions, Chicano/a Studies (and other Ethnic Studies programs) came into existence at the University of Washington chiefly as a result of students' demands and activism. With the assistance and collaboration of a few sympathetic faculty members, students applied pressure, and finally in 1971 a small Chicano/a Studies program was established within the College of Arts and Sciences.[34] In 1975, after students confronted the university administration and occupied the office of the dean of Arts and Sciences over a controversial matter involving the aborted hiring of a Chicano professor, the program was removed from Arts and Sciences, transformed into El Centro de Estudios Chicanos, and put "floating" under the jurisdiction of a Board of Deans. Chicano/a Studies continued to exist as a center with insufficient personnel and meager resources: three full-time equivalent positions (distributed into one full-time lecturer, who was later promoted to assistant professor and put on a tenure track, one half-time director, and several part-time instructors) and one secretary.

Confronted with the financial crisis that shook up the university in the early 1980s, the campus administration was compelled to adopt a three-pronged approach to solving the budgetary problem: total elimination, reduction, and reorganization of units. Among the programs initially identified for possible elimination were various traditional departments (children's drama, kinesiology, Near Eastern languages and literature, textile arts, and so on). Unspoken, I believe, was the need to do something with the units that many considered "less legitimate," such as the Center for Chicano Studies and the other programs (Afro-American Studies, Asian American Studies, and Indian Studies, which remained housed in the College of Arts and Sciences). Eradicating these units would not have saved much money; reducing them, even less. And the political repercussions that any of these actions would have brought about were many and were clearly very serious. The only viable alternative, then, was reorganization. First a Committee and then a Task Force for the Reorganization of Ethnic Studies at the university was put together, and in 1985, after two years of negotiations (not without the proverbial student and community opposition and protests), a Department of American Ethnic Studies was born.[35] The new department encompassed Afro-American Studies, Asian American Studies, and Chicano/a Studies. American Indian Studies chose to continue as a program and to be housed in the Department of Anthropology, where it remains today.[36]

Negotiations were protracted and intense. Naturally, the main concerns revolved around the specter of total disappearance versus the survival and, if possible, the strengthening of the three units. In light of the circumstances in which it emerged, reorganization was perceived with suspicion; it was clearly a tricky and dangerous venture that involved bargaining and granting concessions. In the end the trade-off was the compromising of the relative autonomy each unit had enjoyed until then in order to collectively attain firmer ground within the institution. Two primary concerns guided the discussions: first, how best to preserve each program's integrity and original identity, and second, how best to incorporate provisions into the new department's constitution that would diminish internal competition and preserve democracy precisely by respecting each group's individual identity.

It is fair to say that neither Chicano/a Studies nor any of the other programs would have achieved departmental status at the University of Washington on its own. With the creation of the new department, however, instead of housing only one assistant professor and several part-timers, Chicano/a Studies enjoyed four tenure-line positions: two historians, one political scientist, and one economist. The University of Washington case illustrates the situation that most Chicano/a Studies programs have faced over the years as well as the difficult and complex choices they are often compelled to make.

A Generative Foundation for the Future

Despite its precarious positioning and the vicissitudes it has continuously confronted within academia, Chicano/a Studies prospered as a field of study, particularly between 1973 and 1983, an era that is now dubbed the "golden age" of Chicano/a Studies. An important aspect of this growth was the creation of the National Association for Chicano Studies (NACS) on May 18, 1973, at

a conference organized and attended by scholars from around the country who were interested in establishing a common agenda to provide direction and help advance the field on a national basis.[37] Strongly influenced by and centered around the social sciences, NACS's program, according to Carlos Muñoz, called for a research model that was "problem-oriented, interdisciplinary, was critical of American institutions, and emphasized the relationship between class, race, and culture in determining the Chicano historical experience" in the United States.[38] By all measures the association thrived. It grew rapidly, holding annual meetings and publishing conference proceedings. At its peak, according to Ignacio García, "in the mid-1980s, the membership hovered around one thousand members."[39] In recent times, however, the NACS has confronted grave challenges, including a sharp internal dissension, which many see as undermining the organization's credibility and seriously threatening its very existence.[40]

Remaining challenges include the reconciliation of the academic and community missions of Chicano/a Studies, as well as the identification of exactly who comprises the Chicano/a community. For example, what is the relationship of Chicano/a Studies to other Latino/a Studies, to middle-class and upper-class Chicanos/as and Latinos/as? Can Chicano/a Studies embrace the self-reflexivity necessary to encompass the Chicana feminist analysis of what such scholars see as a "Chicana perspective fueled by the combined effects of class, race/ethnicity, and gender on Chicanas' life chances"?[41] Can Chicano/a Studies reconcile the conflicts inherent in the current academic context of emphasizing diversity; that is, can the field reconcile difference to the exclusion of power relationships? Can the field sustain itself with the ambivalences resulting from faculty in joint appointments, with conflicting demands from Chicano/a Studies and discipline-based departments? And finally, will students (Chicano/a and others) continue to demand the Chicano/a Studies scholarship and teaching as part of their education?

Such challenges are on the agenda of Chicano/a scholars. Stimulated by activities sponsored by the NACS and the Chicana feminist association Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social (MALCS), a significant amount of serious Chicano/a Studies scholarship has been produced during the past three decades. Chicano/a Studies scholars are also making incursions into traditional disciplines and into innovative interdisciplinary arenas. Undoubtedly, the most salient contributions have emerged in the fields of history, political science, Women's and Feminist Studies, border studies, and culture studies, including literature. The overall body of literature and the extensive

bibliographies related to individual areas and disciplines bespeak of the achievements that have been made to date. It can thus be stated with certainty that, regardless of the name the endeavor may bear in the future and despite the form it may assume, Chicano/a Studies is a fruitful field of intellectual inquiry that will continue to produce valuable scholarly contributions as the field reckons with its many challenges and possibilities.

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Notes

1. Among these scholars are Carlos Muñoz Jr., *Youth, Identity, Power: The Chicano Movement* (London: Verso, 1989); Juan Gómez-Quiñones, "To Leave to Hope or Chance: Propositions on Chicano Studies, 1974," in *Parameters of Institutional Change: Chicano Experiences in Education* (Hayward, Calif.: Southwest Network, 1975); *Mexican Students por la Raza: The Chicano Student Movement in Southern California* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Editorial La Causa, 1978), and *Chicano Politics: Realities and Promise* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1990); Alfredo Sánchez, "Chicano Student Movement at San José State," in *Parameters of Institutional Change*, 22–32; Eliezer Risco, "Before Universidad de Aztlán: Ethnic Studies at Fresno State College" in *Parameters of Institutional Change*, 41–47; Mario

Barrera, "The Struggle for Third College at UC San Diego" in *Parameters of Institutional Change*, 62–68; José Rivera and Luis Ramón Burrola, "Chicano Studies Programs in Higher Education: Scenarios for Further Research," *Aztlán* 15 (1985): 277–94; Refugio I. Rochín, "The Current Status and Future of Chicano Studies Programs: Are They Academically Sound?" Paper presented at the Fourteenth Annual Conference of NACS, El Paso, Texas, 10–12 April, 1986; Mario T. García, *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, and Identity, 1930–1960* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989); René Núñez and Raúl Contreras, "Principles and Foundations of Chicano Studies: Chicano Organization on University Campuses in California," in *Chicano Discourse*, Tatcho Mindiola Jr. and Emilio Zamora, eds. (Houston, Tex." Mexican American Studies Program, 1992), 32–39; Guadalupe San Miguel, "Actors Not Victims: Chicanas/os and the Struggle for Educational Equality," in David R. Maciel and Isidro D. Ortiz, eds., *Chicanas/Chicanos at the Crossroads: Social, Economic, and Political Change* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996), 159–80; and Ignacio M. García, "Juncture in the Road: Chicano Studies since 'El Plan de Santa Bárbara,'" Maciel and Ortiz, eds., *Chicanas/Chicanos at the Crossroads*, 181–203.

Because San Miguel's "Actors Not Victims" and Ignacio García's "Chicano Studies since 'El Plan de Santa Bárbara'" were recently published and thus enjoy the benefit of the added perspective that chronological distance tends to provide, these works are useful and of much interest to this discussion. Both pieces are cogently argued and extremely well documented. I am particularly indebted to San Miguel and García. I am also grateful to the historian Vincent C. de Baca, one of the participants in the 1969 Plan de Santa Bárbara Conference, for his generosity in sharing his personal insights regarding the origins and development of Chicano/a Studies.

2. The term *ideology* appears here in quotation marks because it is employed in a "vulgar" sense (i.e., as a loose set of ideas), not in the strict Lukacsian signification, which defines it as false consciousness.

3. Susana L. Gallardo, "Con su pluma en su mano . . . a few words about don Américo Paredes," available on Gallardo's Chicana feminist Web site at http://www.chicanas.com.

4. Joe Holley, "Américo Paredes, 83, Pioneer in Chicano Studies," *New York Times* on-line news service, May 6, 1999. Holley also remarks that Paredes "returned to Texas in 1950 and enrolled at the University of Texas at Austin. The first Mexican-American ever to receive a Ph.D. at the University of Texas, he taught at the University from 1958 until his retirement in 1984."

5. See Ignacio M. García, "Juncture in the Road," 182; and Mario García, *Mexican Americans*, 273–74.

6. See Ernesto Galarza, *Merchants of Labor: The Mexican American Bracero Story—An Account of Managed Migration of Mexican Farm Workers in California, 1942–1960* (Charlotte, Calif.: McNally and Loftin, 1964); as well as Galarza's report, *Strangers in Our Fields* (Washington, D.C., 1956). One could argue that these books, like Julián Samora's *Los Mojados: The Wetback Story* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1971), focus on Mexican immigrant labor, not specifically on Chicanos/as. But that is a more complex matter that does not allow such clear-cut distinctions, as discussed later in this chapter. Many scholars would agree that these phenomena in fact constituted an important basis for the establishment of Mexican American communities throughout the Southwest, the Midwest, and other regions, like the Pacific Northwest. For a lucid analysis of the latter, see Erasmo Gamboa, *Mexican Labor and World War II: Braceros in the Pacific Northwest, 1942–1947* (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1990). Although Samora wrote his thesis, *Minority Leadership in a Bicultural Community*, in 1953, most of his published research is from the late 1960s and 1970s.

7. Ignacio García, "Juncture in the Road."

8. A true example of a Gramscian organic intellectual, José de la Luz Sáenz was an educator in the Texas public school system most of his life. He participated actively in the politics and organizing of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) in the early 1930s. He left a published book *Los Mexicoamericanos en la gran guerra (y su contingente en pró de la humanidad, la democracia y la justicia)* (San Antonio, Tex: Artes Gráficas, 1933), and an unpublished autobiography provisionally titled "Yo: Omnia mea mecum porto" (1944).

9. Carey McWilliams, *North from Mexico: The Spanish-Speaking People of the United States* (Philadelphia, Pa.: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1949); McWilliams, *Ill Fares the Land: Migrants and Migratory Labor in the United States* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1942); and McWilliams, *Factories in the Field: The Story of Migratory Farm Labor in California* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1939).

10. This issue seems implicit in such arguments advanced by Ignacio García, in "Juncture in the Road," who identifies one of the current challenges for the survival of Chicano/a Studies as such in the influx of non-Chicano/a academics: "Many centers find themselves challenged by non-Chicano Latino scholars who want to promote their scholarly interests. They argue that all Latino groups have a common experience with racism and poverty in American society. Also, programs that emphasize the inclusive Hispanic approach are more likely to gain research and support funds more easily. Because immigration has been a major area of study for Chicano Studies and because the immigrant groups are now more diverse among numerous Latino groups, there is an intellectual challenge to Chicano Studies to become inclusive or else to be seen as shallow and exclusionary" (189).

And, as García himself observes in a footnote, when presented as a forced issue, this challenge creates a more accentuated and militant nationalism: "At the national MECHA [Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán] conference in spring 1993, the students voted to refer to themselves as Chicanos and not admit anyone to the national organization who did not use the term" (202).

11. As has occurred within other U.S. ethnic groups, the nomenclature involved is complex and problematic. Before the late 1960s and the emergence of the Chicano/a movement, the official label bestowed upon this group was *Mexican-Americans*. The term was unsatisfactory on various grounds, however. First, it was not a self-given or self-chosen name, but rather one imposed on the people by the powers that be. Second, the term was embraced by the previous generation, which many considered to be an "accommodationist" generation whose political and social views and strategies had been defined and later rejected as favoring assimilation into mainstream America and therefore reneging on the more authentic and original cultural values cherished by the newer generations. Finally, although the hyphenated name could be taken to imply that the group was both Mexican and American, it also meant that the people were neither and that what best defined the condition was not the words but rather the nothingness, the limbo embodied by the hyphen itself.

Under these conditions the term *Chicano* (at times spelled "Xicano" to better approximate the original pronunciation of "Mexicanos" or "Meshicanos") was adopted as a term of cultural and political self-definition. After all, we were the descendants of the Aztecs who left the legendary Aztlán and migrated south to found one of the greatest Mesoamerican civilizations. Thus we were out to reclaim the original lands of our ancestors. All of the above notwithstanding, the terms Chicano and Mexican American are frequently used interchangeably as synonyms, and the same was true institutionally in defining academic units: Mexican American Studies or Chicano/a Studies.

12. Refugio I. Rochín and Adela de la Torre, "Chicanas/os in the Economy since 1970," in Maciel and Ortiz, *Chicanas/Chicanos at the Crossroads*, 52–80, 62–63.

13. John A. García, "The Chicano Movement: Its Legacy for Politics and Policy," in Maciel and Ortiz, *Chicanas/Chicanos at the Crossroads*, 83–107, 93.

14. San Miguel, "Actors Not Victims," 162.

15. Muñoz, *Youth, Identity, Power*, 130.

16. Although Chicanismo was loosely defined and meant different things to different folks, the essence of the concept is expressed in the "Manifesto" of El Plan de Santa Bárbara. Succinctly, the term refers to a cultural-nationalist position that attempted to instill pride among Chicanos/as by emphasizing the indigenous heritage, often mythicized and glorified, or the concept of *mestizaje* in which the

indigenous ingredient was predominant. Working-class culture, the fundamental experience of the majority of Chicanos/as, was also seen as one of the central features of this Chicanismo. Based on the *hermandad* or *carnalismo* (brotherhood) of *la raza*, the mandate of Chicanismo was the attainment of Chicano/a liberation, or self-determination, through political action. From El Plan de Santa Bárbara: "Culturally, the word Chicano, in the past a pejorative and class-bound adjective, has now become the root idea of a new cultural identity for our people. It also reveals a growing solidarity and the development of a common social praxis. The widespread use of the term Chicano today signals a rebirth of pride and confidence. Chicanismo simply embodies an ancient truth: that a person is never closer to his/her true self as when he/she is close to his/her community."

17. See the Web site of the University of Minnesota's Chicano Studies program at http://cla.umn.edu/chicano.

18. Historian Antonio Ríos Bustamante presents a concise and helpful outline of the most salient assertions in his booklet *Mexicans in the United States and the National Question: Current Polemics and Organizational Positions* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Editorial La Causa, 1978). See also Richard Santillán, "The Dialectics of Chicano Political Development: A Political Economy Perspective," *Appeal to Reason* 5 (4, winter 1979–80): 51–63.

19. For an interesting discussion of this process in Southern California's Chicano/a student movement, see Gómez-Quiñones, *Mexican Students por la Raza* (1978).

20. From the University of Minnesota's Web site, http://cla.umn.edu/chicano; accessed on August 2, 1999.

21. This notion is conveyed by the wording of the themes of various conferences of such organizations as the National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies (NACCS) as well as in book and article titles in such anthologies as that edited by Maciel and Ortiz, *Chicanas/Chicanos at the Crossroads* (1996).

22. For a lucid discussion of the dilemmas Chicano/a scholars confront in this regard, see Ignacio García, "Juncture in the Road," especially 188.

23. Ibid., 186–87. García cites Refugio I. Rochín's paper cited in note 1 above to support these allegations.

24. Among other scholars, however, San Miguel holds a different opinion: "Student involvement at the college level, unlike that at the secondary grades . . . continued during the 1970s. It did not die, collapse, or fade away as most historians have argued. University students continued to struggle for equality and cultural recognition after 1973, but they abandoned their militant tactics. Their actions, sometimes supported by faculty, and sometimes opposed by them, led to efforts to increase Mexican American access to higher education, strengthen Chicano Studies

programs, expand Chicano Studies classes to include gender issues, and to develop a critical and conscientious Mexican American literary and intellectual tradition in higher education." See San Miguel, "Actors Not Victims," 164.

25. Referring to the central tenets of the Plan de Santa Bárbara as they reflected the student movement, historian Carlos Muñoz Jr. wrote: "Key to that movement were pride in Mexican identity and Mexican cultural traditions and in the working class legacy of Mexican Americans, and active involvement in struggles for social and political change. The student movement thus reflected an unequivocal break from the assimilationist, middle class ideology of the Mexican American Generation." See Muñoz, *Youth, Identity, Power*, 139.

26. Mario García, *Mexican Americans*, 17–22; Santillán, on the other hand, in "Dialectics of Chicano Political Development," offers a more complex and in my opinion more accurate analysis about the coexistence of diverse political postures at every stage of the Chicano/a social development.

27. Mario García, *Mexican Americans*, 300.

28. San Miguel, "Actors Not Victims," 160.

29. Mario García, *Mexican Americans*, 300.

30. San Miguel, "Actors Not Victims," 165.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. Ignacio García, "Juncture in the Road," 187.

34. Curiously, Joseph Sommers, one of the main faculty sponsors of these endeavors, was not Chicano/a. As at other campuses Chicano/a professors were rare commodities in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

35. Having been appointed as the half-time director of the Center for Chicano Studies in 1981, one year after my arrival at the University of Washington as assistant professor of Romance languages and literature, I was a member of both the Committee and the Task Force for the Reorganization of Ethnic Studies. When the Department of American Ethnic Studies was inaugurated, I returned to my full-time appointment in my original unit.

36. In addition to American Indian Studies, the position that each of the other programs adopted varied: Asian American Studies almost immediately accepted the notion of reorganization; Afro-American Studies was fundamentally opposed to it; and Chicano/a Studies stated that "while not opposed in principle" to the idea, the good faith and the earnest commitment of the administration to preserve and enhance the programs was a prerequisite for considering the move seriously. The term *amalgamation* was frequently thrown around, particularly by the harsher opponents to the measure, and the administration was always quick to clarify that the proposal on the table was for *reorganization*, not amalgamation.

37. According to Ignacio García, the conference was attended by "thirty-six individuals, of whom eight were women." See in García, "Juncture in the Road," 185.

38. Muñoz, *Youth, Identity, Power*, 150–51; quoted in Ignacio García, "Juncture in the Road," 185.

39. Ignacio García, "Juncture in the Road," 185.

40. For a frank and lucid discussion of these problems, see Ignacio García, "Juncture in the Road," especially 189–93.

41. Beatriz M. Pesquera and Denise A. Segura, "With Quill and Torch: A Chicana Perspective on the American Women's Movement," in *Chicanas/Chicanos at the Crossroads*, 231–47.