

"BASTA!" said a man one day. He said it to no one. He said it to everyone. For him, and for so many others like him, the pot had not melted, the twenties had not reared, and the Great Depression that followed was merely a continuation of the dismal life that had begun decades before. For the refugees, this is for them the second step in the process known as acculturation.

BASTA!! to the slippery celery fields, to the nose-numbing fish canneries, to the back-breaking railroads of California. BASTA! to the suffocating copper mines of Arizona, the loss of lands to unscrupulous lawyers and legislators in New Mexico. BASTA!! to cotton-picking Texas. BASTA!! to potato Idaho and sugar-beet Michigan. Strikes which began years before now grow in number. Mexicans and Mexican-Americans join in strike after strike during the roaring twenties and into the turbulent thirties. Thousands and thousands are protesting from California to Texas to Michigan. The historians of the land stay away from these upheavals by the tens. They stay away by the twenties. They stay away by the hundreds. After all, such a "picturesque" and "docile" people simply does not say such things as BASTA!!!

BASTA!! BASTA!!
SAID A MAN

one day as he quit picking grapes in sunny California. He said it to no one. He said it to everyone.

This was not the first time the word had been said. But now it came from Delano. HUELGA!! Just as the hundreds of historians had stayed away from the widespread waves of Mexican-American strikes of the twenties and thirties, now it is the social scientists who stay away. They stay away from Delano by the tens. They stay away by the twenties. They stay away by the hundreds. They stay away because people who are "fatalistic," "underachievers," and "non-goal-oriented," simply are not supposed to say such things as BASTA! AND HUELEGA!!

Someday, when all the rangers are totally disbanded and prostituted history no longer emits from the priesthood of the social scientists, the Mexican-American will be free.

EDUCATION, CULTURE AND OTHER IDEAS:

For far too long many teachers have looked upon culturally different children as being "culturally deprived." Such pedagogues have conceived of their duty as being one of filling this "cultural vacuum" with Anglo-American traits. Unfortunately, this negative and narrow attitude has led to the ignoring of the rich legacy which non-Anglo pupils either bring to school or acquire outside of school through the educational processes of the folk community.

Mexican-American youth bring to the school a varried background of experiences and skills which can be utilized as mediums for both the development of the Mexican-American pupil's potential and for the enrichment of the school experiences of non-Chicano scholastics. The ability to speak more than one language has, in most societies, been regarded as an essential characteristic of the fully educated man. Mexican-American children also bring to the school a variety of bi-cultural experiences which can enrich almost every facet of the school's program. Those Mexican-American pupil's who come from folk-level or low-income homes also possess valuable experiences denied to many affluent children, such as a direct knowledge of domestic arts. Such children often have had to assume important responsibilities at an early age and their relatively more mature outlook should prove of immense value to affluent children who have never had contact with life at its more fundamental level.

The educational institution transmits culture, but it also legitimates certain frames of reference.

Mrs. Lewis is a dedicated teacher (Anglo) who had a deep affection for the Mexican-Americans. "They are good people," she said. "Their only handicap is the bag full of superstitions and silly notions they inherited from Mexico. When they get rid of these superstitions they will be good Americans. The schools help more than anything else. In time, the Latins will think and act like Americans.

"A lot depends on whether we can get them to switch from Spanish to English. When they speak Spanish, they think Mexican. When the day comes that they speak English at home like the rest of us they will be part of the American way of life."

Mrs. Lewis's stereotyped view of all Mexicans is valid because it legitimates what she had been taught about "the American way of life." She knows that Mexicans are not now part of that way and she knows that in order for the Mexicans to be included in the American way, they must no longer cultivate the "Mexican way of life."

Since Anglo, and Mexican-Americans both share feelings of ethnocentricity, it follows that unless some validity is given to the value of the Mexican culture in the American society, there will be value conflicts between the two groups. There would undoubtedly be a decrease in the level of conflict between Mexicans and Anglos in American society if the Mexicans were willing to stop "thinking Mexican" to become part of the "American way of life."

Because of the proximity of his parent culture and because of the relevance of the Mexican culture in what is now the American southwest, the Mexican who has now identified himself as "Chicano" is now committed to becoming part of the so-called mainstream of American society as an American who not only looks different, but speaks a different language, and who has a right to maintain his cultural identity.

When the day comes that the Chicano is recognized as being a native of the southwest, and that his language is a part of the southwest and when the Anglo accepts the fact that the Chicano did not immigrate and is therefore not going to forget his cultural ties, then and only then can the educational institution function in such a way as to not perpetuate the gross distortions that in turn cause two groups of people in the same society to view each other through simplistic stereotypes.

Frank Casteneda Godina

ME.

To begin with, I am a Mexican. That sentence has a scent of bitterness as it is written. I feel that if it weren't for my nationality I would accomplish more. My being a Mexican has brought about my lack of initiative. No matter what I attempt to do, my dark skin always makes me feel that I will fail. Another thing that "gripes" me is that I am such a coward. I absolutely will not fight for something even if I know I'm right. I do not have the vocabulary that it would take to express myself strongly enough.

Many people, including most of my teachers, have tried to tell me I'm a leader. Well, I know better!! Just because I may get better grades than most of my fellow Mexicans doesn't mean a thing. I could no more get an original idea in my head than be President of the United States. I don't know how to think for myself.

I want to go to college, sure, but what do I want to be? Even worse, where do I want to go? These questions are only a few that trouble me. I'd like to prove to my parents that I can do something. Just because I don't have the gumptions to go out and get a job doesn't mean that I can't become something they'll be proud of. But if I find that I can't bring myself to go to college, I'll get married and they'll still get rid of me.

After reading this, you'll probably be surprised. This is the way I feel about myself, and nobody can change me. Believe me, many have tried and have failed. If God wants me to reach all my goals, I will. No parents, teachers, or priests will change the course that my life is to follow --- don't try.

The preceding was a paper turned in by a 13-year old girl for an English assignment in the eighth grade of a school in one of the Southwestern states. The assignment was to write about "Me." The melancholy tone of the essay would suggest that the youngster was a "loner" ---obscure, unattractive, not very popular. But no. She was attractive, articulate, an honor student, member of the band, outstanding in girl's athletics, popular among her fellow students, admired by her teachers. "She never seemed to be a child with a problem," remarked one of the teachers, in some puzzlement, after reading "Me."

The problem can be stated plainly and simply: The young girl who wrote that essay was Mexican-American. If she, with all her advantages, felt that her lot inevitably would be failure, how must thousands of other Mexican-American children--many of them less endowed ~~XXX~~ physically and intellectually -- view their own prospects?

Many studies document the struggle for survival in the schools of Chicanos. The damage done to Chicanos is not only linguistic and cultural but also felt in personal terms. In telling a Chicano pupil that he must not speak his native language, we are saying to him by implication that Spanish and the culture which it represents are of no worth. Therefore the people who speak Spanish are of no worth. Therefore this particular child is of no worth. It should come as no surprise then that the student develops a negative self concept-- an inferiority complex. If he is no good, how can he succeed? And if he can't succeed, why ttry? Suddenly the full import of the essay about "ME"-- becomes crystal clear.

Mutual Images and Expectations of Anglo-Americans and Mexican-Americans"
Daedulus, Ozzie G. Simmons, Spring 1961.

Anglo-American assumptions, expectations and images of the Mexican -American

- assume Mexican-American is assimilable and that it is only a matter of time.
- Mexican-Americans are seen as inferior to justify their situation. More importantly, their inferiority is innate.
- all stereotyped alike: menial and unskilled laborers, undependable, unclean
- irresponsible, childlike.
- low morality as evidenced by drunkenness, criminality, deceitfulness, hostility.
- all are mysterious, unpredictable, clannish, exclusive in groups and discriminate.
- Only hope is American creed of dignity of the individual and rights such as freedom, justice (Just us) and equal opportunity.
- Some good images: musical, fiesta loving, romantic, love and grow flowers well. Jolly.

A stereotype is an exaggerated belief associated with a category, and its function is to justify conduct in relation to that category. Few if any of the popular generalizations about the Chicanos are valid, and none are demonstrably true at all.

Some images of the Chicanos are specific to a particular area of intergroup relations, such as the image of the Chicano's attributes as a worker. Some are specific to politics.

Stereotyped beliefs are used to justify Anglo practices of exclusion and subordination. One belief accused the Chicano of being unclean. The belief that Chicanos are unclean is useful in rationalizing the Anglo practice of excluding Chicanos from any situation that involves close contact with Anglo Americans, such as in residence or common use of recreational facilities.

The images Chicanos have of Anglo Americans are not as elaborate or emotional as the anglo images, but they are stereotypes. Mainly, Chicano images reflect the Anglo's exclusion and assumption of superiority that the Chicanos must live with. Both sets of images are negative; the basic difference is that the Anglo's are used to justify the relegation of inferior status to the Chicano while the Chicano's are used as defense.