

FOLKLORE AND ETHNO-NATIONALISM IN MEXICAN AMERICAN LITERARY PRODUCTION ADAPTATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF INDIGENOUS FOLK ICONS IN THE CHICANO MOVEMENT

MARIA HERRERA-SOBEK

In this study I examine the adaptation and transformation of indigenous myths and legends, particularly the La Llorona, La Malinche and the Virgin of Guadalupe myths, within the explosive Mexican American ethno-nationalist movement from the turbulent 1960s and thereafter. I posit that ethno-nationalist movements as well as nationalist movements arising from marginalized groups in a nation find folk traditions indispensable for political resistance and affirmation purposes as well as for literary production which I argue is an integral part of nationalist movements.

Keywords: *ethno-nationalism, Chicanos, la Llorona, la Malinche, Virgin of Guadalupe.*

V tej razpravi obravnavam prilagajanje in spreminjanje domačinskih mitov in legend, zlasti mitov o Lloroni (Jokajoči ženi), Malinche (ženi Marini) in Devici guadelupski, v vznesenem mehiško-ameriškem etnonacionalističnem gibanju od razburkanih 60. let prejšnjega stoletja naprej. Ugotavljam, da etnonacionalistična kakor tudi nacionalistična gibanja zapostavljenih skupin v naciji najdejo v ljudskem izročilu močno oporo za politični odpor in samouveljavitev, pa tudi za literarno produkcijo, ki jo razumem kot sestavino nacionalističnih gibanj.

Ključne besede: *etnonacionalizem, Čikani, Llorona (Žalujočal/Jokajoča žena/Marija), Malinche (žena Marina), Devica guadelupska.*

[T]he recent poststructuralist and postmodernist developments in the human sciences have opened the possibilities of interpreting folklore as a discourse that is acutely dialectical, both enclosing and opening, terminal and interterminal, stabilizing and resistive, a being and non-being, ātma and ānattā. This self-contradictory and assertive energy of folklore can help not only in its re-discovery but also in the re-construction of the disciplines and cultures that [Herbert] Marcuse thought were becoming 'one dimensional.'
(Singh 1991: 128)

Although there are some studies extant on nationalist revolutionary movements focusing on the various uses of folklore within them, this important area of folklore theory generally has been ignored by Latin American and Anglo American folklore scholars writing on this type of political movements. In fact, universities in the United States are witnessing a decline in folklore studies as a whole as evidenced by the relatively few universities that offer doctoral programs in the field and the meager number of courses available for students. This decline in folklore studies at universities is in contrast to the popularity of folk related traditions as demonstrated by the large number of folklore oriented activities such as festivals taking place in American towns, cities, and huge metropolitan areas.

Nevertheless, for Mexican Americans or Chicanos, as more politicized Americans of Mexican descent like to call themselves, folklore was and still is an integral part of the Civil Rights Movement which began in the 1960s. The Chicano Civil Rights Movement in the United States rose in conjunction with the African American one. This Movement was a quest for social justice, for equal rights, for the right of self determination, and the right to one's own cultural and ethnic identity. The question of who Chicanos were as a people, as a group of marginalized citizens in the United States, was in part answered by looking deep into their cultural specificity, their everyday cultural practices such as language, play, food, oral traditions, theater, music, religious belief systems, traditional customs related to birth, marriage, death, speech play, folk speech, clothing, art, architecture, folk instruments, folk medicine and all aspects of living in a society. Folklore, therefore, became an integral part of the ethno-nationalist or ethnic oriented nationalist political movement of the Mexican American people in the United States.

In this study my central thesis focuses on how folklore has been indispensable in the construction of contemporary Mexican American ethno-nationalism via literary texts. I center my attention on indigenous myths and legends and in particular the folk figures from the Mexican and Chicano cultural tradition: La Llorona, La Malinche and the Virgin of Guadalupe as examples of how folklore is adapted and transformed in the Chicano ethno-nationalist movement of the 1960s.

I define ethno-nationalism as that nationalism that emerges from ethnic groups or minority groups living within a nation that perceive themselves or are perceived by others as different due to racial and/or cultural characteristics. Thus while Canadian Americans are a minority group living in the United States, they are not generally perceived as an "ethnic" group because they do not see themselves or are seen by the majority group as culturally or racially different. Mexican Americans, on the other hand, are perceived as an "ethnic" group due to their cultural and racial characteristics perceived as different from the majority Anglo population. These ethnic groups may have coalesced as "ethnics" due to colonization or immigration or both.

I use the term ethno-nationalism to differentiate the two types of "nationalisms" practiced by the Mexican American population; these two types are ethno-nationalism and USA nationalism, that is loyalty, love, and patriotic feelings toward the United States. Ethno-nationalism for Chicanos means pride and insistence on retaining their cultural identification, in this case a Mexican cultural identity. This is patently evident when the Mexican flag is used in local, state, and national Chicano demonstrations even though Mexican Americans are citizens of the USA. Other extremely visible signs of ethno-nationalism are rooting for Mexican teams in soccer competitions in the USA instead of rooting for the American teams. This is very disturbing and difficult to understand for the USA population. A third example is keeping the Spanish language very much alive in the USA which again is opposed by conservative sectors in Anglo American society such as the English-Only Movement.

I highlight in my study how the Chicano intelligentsia, especially authors and visual artists, incorporate, adapt, and transform Mexican folk traditions and folk icons when used in their literary and artistic creations. The ethno-nationalist movement of the 1960s and 1970s motivated them to look elsewhere beside Europe for inspiration. I posit that it is within an ethno-nationalist framework that oftentimes authors from minority populations within larger political nation-states are compelled to delve into their own cultural traditions in an effort to construct an identity that is autochthonous and not imposed from the outside. It is with a desire to know themselves as a people, as Mexican Americans, and a desire to represent themselves and self-fashion themselves within their own cultural traditions that folklore becomes a significant self-empowering tool in this journey of self discovery, identity formation, cultural and political resistance, and self affirmation.

NATIONALISM AND ETHNO-NATIONALISM

In Patrick Colm Hogan's excellent study of nationalism aptly titled *Understanding Nationalism* (2009) he declares that: "Nationalism is the most powerful ideology in the history of modernity" (Hogan 2009: 2), and to support his statement he cites Benedict Anderson's assertion that "in three-quarters of all wars worldwide between 1985 and 1995 ethno-nationalist factors predominate" (ibid.). Nationalism and nationalist emotions are a powerful force that can lead to wars in defense of the "nation." Mexican Americans are not a homogenous group with respect to political thinking. Some sectors of this group can and do exhibit the pernicious nationalism of the super patriot American nationalist, while others restrict their nationalism to being proud of their American citizenship and heritage. There are sub-groups within a nation that can exhibit what I call dual cultural nationalisms. That is to say, some citizens of a nation can encompass cultural identification towards two different countries such as celebrating with equal gusto the Fourth of July and Mexican Independence Day. This can happen when one group of people are conquered, annexed, incorporated, absorbed, merged, and so forth into another country. While the newly incorporated or conquered citizens may feel loyal to the new country, emotional and cultural ties to the old country can persist for generations. Another example is that of immigrants making their home in a new country either due to political, economic or familial circumstances. The immigrant while acquiring a new love and respect for his/her newly adopted country may still harbor emotional feelings for the old one. If the group is small in a conquered territory, the population may eventually lose its ties to the old motherland. Conversely, if it is a fairly large group and an infusion of new immigrants is constantly transpiring, forgetting can be difficult and memories will persist for generations particularly as these pertain to cultural traditions.

Hogan provides a definition for his use of the word “nationalism” stating that he uses the term to refer to “*any form of in-group identification for a group defined in part by reference to a geographical area along with some form of sovereign government over that area*” (p. 4 italics in the original). He points out that his definition is in keeping with “general principals of international law” provided by Werner Levi in his book *Contemporary International Law: A Concise Introduction* (1979) and summarized as (1) agreement by groups on conditions for a state, (2) territory needed, (3) existence of a population, (4) and a government in control of the territory and population (cited in Hogan 2009: 4). Hogan further notes that within his definition is a “sense of identification rather than political structure” (ibid.).

For most of the Mexican American population in the United States there is a strong sense of nationalism toward the US as a nation while there is a strong ethno-nationalist emotional feeling for Mexican/Mexican American culture and way of being and not necessarily for the Mexican nation. Therefore, while political nationalism and loyalty to the state are not in question within the Mexican American community, cultural nationalism is. For example, Mexican Americans have died in national wars such as World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War and the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan in significantly large numbers in relation to the general population. Mexican American soldiers are some of the most highly decorated soldiers in these wars winning numerous medals for heroic deeds. However, by dying in US wars, that is giving one’s life for one’s country, there is a strong feeling that this ultimate sacrifice should grant the Mexican American community the right to cultural selfhood and cultural identification. The G.I. Forum composed of returning Mexican American war veterans from World War II and the Korean War were the first to advocate for this position. Later, building on the positions taken by the G.I. Forum, the Chicano Movement from the 1960s clearly advocated for this right (see Acuña 2010). For example, liking and eating Mexican food instead of Anglo food is not an act of being disloyal or unpatriotic but merely a personal preference and tied to a strong belief of the uniqueness of Mexican food. This in fact has been confirmed internationally by UNESCO which recently (November 2010) placed Mexican food in their list of “Intangible World Heritage.” This designation means that Mexican cuisine is “important for world heritage and in need of preservation” (McLachlan 2010: 1).

MEXICAN AMERICAN LITERARY PRODUCTION

Mexican American literature and other areas of cultural production, find their inspiration and creativity in Mexican and Mexican American folklore. Authors make use of their cultural heritage and transform the numerous folklore genres into literary gems that have won them world acclaim. Popular and renowned authors such as Rudolfo

Anaya, Sandra Cisneros, Ana Castillo, Lucha Corpi, Cherríe Moraga, Alurista, and Luis Valdez, as well as numerous other poets, playwrights, novelists and short story writers, all dip their pens into their rich heritage of oral traditions for inspiration and creativity. They are handsomely paid off in their efforts and the results can be enjoyed in such works of great literary merit as *Woman Hollering Creek* (1991), *Black Widow's Wardrobe* (1999), *The Hungry Woman*, (2001), *Bless Me, Ultima* (1972), *So Far from God* (1994), *Zoot Suit* (1992) and many other literary works whose authors base their texts on oral tradition. It is thus that we encounter in Mexican American literature the folk healer, the La Llorona, or Wailing Woman figure, the Virgin of Guadalupe, the La Malinche, and many other folk characters and folklore genres embedded within literary texts. For example, the description of two of Cherríe Moraga's plays at the Amazon.com web cite highlights their folk roots in myth and legend:

In The Hungry Woman, an apocalyptic play written at the end of the millennium, Moraga uses mythology and an intimate realism to describe the embattled position of Chicanos and Chicanas, not only in the United States but in relation to each other. Drawing from the Greek Medea and the myth of La Llorona, she portrays a woman gone mad between her longing for another woman and for the Indian nation which is denied her.

In Heart of the Earth, a feminist revisioning of the Quiché Maya Popul Vuh story, Moraga creates an allegory for contemporary Chicanoismo in which the enemy is white, patriarchal, and greedy for hearts, both female and fecund. Through humor and inventive tale twisting, Moraga brings her vatos locos home from the deadly underworld to reveal that the real power of creation is found in the masa Grandma is grinding up in her metate. The script, a collaboration with master puppet maker Ralph Lee, was created for the premiere production of the play at The Public Theater in New York in 1994. (<http://www.amazon.com/Hungry-Woman-Mexican-Medea-Heart/dp/097053440X>; January 29, 2010)

In a similar manner to Greek and Roman classical mythology which has served European and Euroamerican authors as founts of inspiration Mexican Indigenous myths and legends have been two of the most popular folklore genres from which Chicano/a authors adapt and transform subject matter for their creative works. During the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s political and philosophical thought and artistic optic focused on the Indigenous cultures of Mexico. The Mexican American people are of mix blood, that is, their genealogy is derived from both the European population mainly coming from Spain and the Native American indigenous groups. The main indigenous groups were the Mayas and the Aztecs or Mexica--thus the root word for Mexico and Mexican. Both the Maya and the Aztec peoples had highly developed

civilizations and their mythology and religious pantheon of gods and goddesses were inscribed both in sculptures, architecture, and religious books since they possessed a writing system. One of the major sources of political thought was the powerful concept of Aztlán (meaning “land of the herons” and the origin of the term “Aztec”). According to the history of the Aztecs, Aztlán was the land in the American Southwest where they originally lived and later migrated south to what is today Mexico City following the instructions of their Sun God Huitzilopochtli to build an empire. For Chicanos, Aztlán provided the political legitimacy to claim their right to be in the United States as the descendents of the Aztecs who have now returned to their mythic Homeland in the North.

In Chicano/a literary and artistic production, major indigenous gods and goddesses from Mesoamerica greatly inspired visual artists and authors. Some of these gods and goddesses include: Quetzalcoatl, the kindly and wise Toltec-Aztec God represented as a plumed or feathered serpent, Coatlicue, the Earth Mother Goddess symbolic of life and death, and Coyolxauhqui, the Moon Goddess, represented in a dismembered form symbolizing the defeat of a former matriarchal system now displaced by patriarchy represented by the Sun God, Huitzilopochtli.

Quetzalcoatl was important within Chicano/a political and philosophical writings as well as art and poetry. He was symbolic of what a wise and brilliant leader could do for his people since he had abolished human sacrifice and introduced agriculture, metallurgy, and religious and philosophical thought to the Toltec and Aztec peoples. Quetzalcoatl was representative of what an idealized leader could be; a type of leader the Chicano people yearned for. According to tradition, he was a peaceful leader who did not oppress peoples, was not a war god (the Vietnam war was raging in the 1960s and 1970s and Chicanos were opposed to this war since a large number of casualties were Chicanos). Secondly, Chicanos identified with the Vietnamese people since they were perceived to be peaceful farmers in their own land and minding their own business while the United States was seen as an imperial power bent on conquering and occupying other nations. Quetzalcoatl, or the “Plumed Serpent” Toltec-Aztec god, is frequently featured in murals such as the famous one displayed in Chicano Park, San Diego, California and painted in 1971 by Guillermo Aranda, Mario Acevedo, Victor Ochoa, Salvador Torres, and others. He appears in the literary works by playwright Luis Valdez (*Dark Root of a Scream*, 1971) and poet Alurista (*Nationchild Plumaraja*, 1973).

Coatlicue, the Earth Goddess as well as Coyolxauhqui on the other hand, appealed to Chicana women artists and to feminists. Gloria Anzaldúa features a chapter in her book *Borderlands: La Frontera—the New Mestiza* (1987) on Coatlicue. She discusses the “Coatlicue State” as an important stage in developing and expanding peoples’ creative energies. The indigenous goddess within Chicanos/as can lie dormant and it is up to them to get in touch, so to speak, with those creative energies long denied to this ethnic group by Eurocentric impositions from US hegemonic society.

Equally important for many Chicana feminist visual artists and creative writers is Coyolxauhqui, the Moon Goddess, since she represents the defeat and subsequent oppression of women in patriarchal societies such as the Aztec one as well as most present-day societies including the Mexican American one. Coyolxauhqui was defeated and dismembered by her brother the Sun God/War God Huitzilopochtli. According to Chicana poets/novelists/visual artists in order for Chicano/a society to heal Coyolxauhqui must be made whole again. Men and women must come together in love and not in war. The battle between the sexes must stop.

During the Spanish colonial period, three women of mythological proportions appeared in the early 1500s that are very important in the artistic and literary production of Chicana and Chicano writers and visual artists. These are: La Llorona or Wailing Woman (circa 1519), La Malinche (appearance circa 1519), and the Virgin of Guadalupe (1531).

The La Llorona (Wailing Woman) legend has been traced to two cultural strands: European and Aztec. From the Aztec tradition appears the mythological goddess Cihuacoatl who was the goddess related to giving birth. However, she is also associated with stealing children from their cradles. The Llorona figure is also said to have appeared in the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan right before the conquest crying in the middle of the night "Aaayyyy mis hijos!" Her desperate and painful howling was heard as a warning of the impending destruction of the Aztec Empire by the arrival of the Spaniards in 1521 (see Pérez 2008).

In the European tradition La Llorona is linked to water nymphs and spirits, the sirens and other female deities that lure men into lakes and rivers to their death. From Germany there is also a fifteenth century legend very much related to the La Llorona legend of Mexico in that it narrates the story of a woman in love with a man and who kills her children. Due to the man's desire not to deal with her children the German lady murders them.¹

The Mexican legend of La Llorona has its origins in the Colonial period, right after the conquest in the sixteenth century. La Llorona legend narrates how a young woman, either Indian or of mixed heritage, fell in love with a Spaniard. He abandoned her after having several children with her in order to marry a Spanish woman of his own class. When the Spaniard is celebrating his wedding, the spurned woman returns home and kills her children. She is doomed by God to search for her children forever. The La Llorona legend was a popular tale during the colonial period and she is thought to have appeared in Mexico City frightening the city dwellers out of their wits every night. Today it is a very popular legend in both Mexican and Chicano culture. Almost

¹ The English folklorist, Tom Cheesman, has done some scholarly work on the various German ballads related to infanticide and German maidens killing their babies. The study was published in an article titled "Murderous Mothers in Popular Culture: Narrative Representations of Infanticidal Women in German Bänkelsang and Oral Balladry" (Cheesman 1986).

every Mexican or Chicano who is asked regarding the legend of La Llorona will most likely narrate his/her own version.

La Llorona appears early in Chicano literature, the poet Alurista has a poem entitled “Must be the Season of the Witch” where he has the Llorona crying over her orphaned children (Alurista 1971). Later, in the 1990s, Chicana feminists become interested in La Llorona and she appears in various novels and short stories. Sandra Cisneros features La Llorona in her short story “Woman Hollering Creek.”

In Cisneros’ short story, the protagonist is at first oppressed and beaten by her husband. She eventually liberates herself with the help of other women and escapes from the clutches of her spouse. When she crosses a creek on her way back to her home in Mexico she hears a cry—and the cry is her own since she has found her voice and her freedom.

Lucha Corpi, another Chicana writer also features La Llorona figure in her detective novel *Black Widow’s Wardrobe*. Both, the La Llorona figure as well as La Malinche, appear as subtexts in this work of fiction. Similarly to Cisneros’ work, Corpi’s mystery novel features a woman who has been brutalized by her husband. She identifies with the Malinche figure and eventually recuperates her lost children. Again, a feminist ideology permeates this literary work.

Likewise, the novel *So Far from God*, La Llorona appears to one of the protagonists of the story, La Loca. La Llorona frequently communicates with “La Loca” a character who is thought to be deranged but is far from being so. La Llorona has been highly commercialized appearing in television commercials. There is even a mobile phone ring with the cries of La Llorona.

In a similar fashion to the La Llorona folk legend, the Virgin of Guadalupe was featured in Chicano literary works very early in the Chicano Civil Rights Movement. The Virgin of Guadalupe is the Patron Saint of the Mexican nation and is associated with the construction of racial identity, nationhood, and nationalist sentiments in both the Mexican and Chicano peoples. It should be pointed out that the Virgin Mary’s manifestations with dark or even black skin are quite common in Europe as for example in Chartres (France), Monserrat (Spain), Censtohova (Poland), and Koprivna (Slovenia) as well as other countries (see Oleszkiewicz-Perable 2009).

In Mexico, the Virgin of Guadalupe, a manifestation of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, according to legend, appeared to a poor Indian, Juan Diego in the Hill of Tepeyac in Mexico City right after the conquest in 1531. She is therefore deemed to have Mexico and the Mexican people under her special protection. In addition, since she appeared as an Indian woman (her skin was brown) and to an Indian man this linked the Mother of God to the Indigenous population in Mexico and privileged them with her love and protection. She is therefore perceived to be an advocate for social justice; on the side of the poor, the downtrodden and the oppressed.

The Chicano people embraced the Virgin of Guadalupe and in their quest for social justice have invoked her during civil rights movements and workers' rights. She early on appeared in the theater of Luis Valdez, the Teatro Campesino, or the farm workers theater. Every other year, Valdez presents the colonial theatrical play titled: *Las Cuatro Apariciones de la Virgen de Guadalupe* (Valdez and El Teatro Campesino 1971). The play enacts the four apparitions of the Virgin of Guadalupe to Juan Diego.



The painting by Chicana visual artist from Texas, Santa Barraza, titled "The Malincheras", from 2006; it depicts the Virgin of Guadalupe, Mexico's patron saint (left of viewer-larger female figure), and La Malinche (right of viewer-smaller female image). It is an excellent example of how Chicano and Chicana artists have delved into Mexican folklore for inspiration and political purposes. Copyright permission by Santa Barraza.

Chicana feminist visual artists especially have appropriated the Guadalupe image transforming it and depicting her in contemporary forms: as a skater, as jogger, as seamstress, as street vendor, in short dress, and many other forms.

The commercialization of the Virgin has not been far behind. The web site "Trend de la Crème" features several commercial objects with her image. The web site states:

Last year, the divine Virgin de Guadalupe was alive and well on Jean Paul Gaultier's Spring '07 runway. (Who could forget?) More recently, she's been spotted on the side of a tree in Tegucigalpa, the side of a rock in Brooksville, Florida, and inside the fleshy wound of a Monterey, California man (which formed after wrecking his motorcycle). Now, Wednesday the 23rd of July 2008, the Virgin has been officially spotted on Trend de la Creme ;). (www.trenddelacreme.com/2008/07/another-virgin)

La Malinche is the third colonial period mythic and legendary figure analyzed in this study as examples of folklore adaptations and transformations in the Chicano Movement of the 1960 - present. She is indeed a historical figure having been given to Hernán Cortés, the Spanish conqueror in 1519 as a gift from an Indian chief in the area of Veracruz, Mexico together with twenty other Indian maidens. Sandra Messinger Cypess has published an excellent study of La Malinche figure in her book, *La Malinche in Mexican Literature: From History to Myth*, (1991). Malinche actually lived a fairy tale life including having a wicked mother. She belonged to the Aztec ruling class but when she was about six years old her father died and her mother remarried. Wishing for the family estate to pass on to her son born from her new marriage the mother sold Malinche to some passing merchants who in turn sold her to a Mayan group near Veracruz. That is where she grew up and where she was living when the Spaniards arrived at the Gulf of Mexico in 1519 and where she became part of the Spanish expedition into the Aztec Empire. Malinche was between fifteen and nineteen years old at this time. After Malinche was given to Cortés, she quickly distinguished herself since she spoke Mayan, Nahuatl (the Aztec language and her maternal tongue), and soon learned to speak Spanish fluently as well. She thereafter became Cortés' mistress and interpreter and was instrumental in helping him conquer Mexico. For this deed, i.e. siding with the Spanish invaders, she has been vilified and condemned as a traitor and as a second Eve in Mexican culture. Chicana intellectuals and artists have rescued and reconstructed her image given that she had no say so in being given to Cortés. She was a brilliant woman who did the best she could under the circumstances and should not be blamed for the loss of Mexico to the Spaniards (see Romero and Harris 2005).

Chicana intellectuals, that is Mexican American women scholars, were the first to begin to undertake a revisionist view of the Malinche historical figure. Whereas Octavio Paz, the Mexican Nobel Prize winner, presented in his writings a negative conceptualization of La Malinche as a traitor to her race (see "Sons of La Malinche," 1983),

Chicanas such as Adelaida del Castillo in her essay, “Malintzin Tenépal: A Preliminary Look into a New Perspective” (1977) and later Norma Alarcón in her extensively quoted study, “Traddutora, Traditora: A Paradigmatic Figure of Chicana Feminism” (1988) challenged this view. La Malinche figure has been extensively depicted in art and fiction such as in the literary writings of Lucha Corpi (*Black Widow's Wardrobe*, 1999), Alicia Gaspar de Alba's poetry, and many others (see *Infinite Divisions*, edited by Tey Diana Rebolledo and Eliana Rivero, 1993). As well she appears in the artwork of Santa Barraza, Alfredo Arreguín, and numerous other visual artists. In all these works she is rendered as a positive figure; often painted as a beautiful young woman.

Chicano/a intellectuals and artists studied indigenous and Mexican historical records in search of their personal history. It was a movement of a people in search of their identity, their ancestors, their myths and legends. When they found them in their own oral traditions, creativity exploded both in the visual and written arts as demonstrated in the works of novelists such as Cisneros, Corpi, Castillo, and Luis Valdez among many others as well as visual artists such as Yolanda López, Alma López, and others.

Folklore is an integral part of revolutionary movements for oftentimes those groups seeking redress are concerned not only with economic social justice but with cultural social justice as well. Folklore is recycled, so to speak, and adapted and transformed in new identity formation processes. Folklore is a system encompassing cultural specificities that have the power to reacquaint a people with themselves, who they are, where they came from. To know a people's folklore is to know a people, their characteristics, their history, their dreams and their desires for themselves and their children. The study presented here regarding the adaptation and transformations of iconic figures in Mexican and Mexican American culture for ethno-nationalist purposes provides powerful insights into the revolutionary nature of folklore and its power to transform a people. Joy Elizabeth Hayes, clearly demonstrates in her book *Radio Nation: Communication, Popular Culture, and Nationalism in Mexico, 1920-1950* (2000) the important part that folklore played in nationalist identity constructions in Mexico. Furthermore, the muralist movement of Mexican painters Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros promoted, through the visual arts, folk images of the Indians and *mestizos* in their efforts to create a new national identity.

Chicanos and the Chicano Movement were strongly influenced by the muralists and nationalist project in Mexico (see Guisela Latorre's *Walls of Empowerment*, 2008). As I have demonstrated above, many Indigenous gods and goddesses as well as mythic and legendary figures as La Llorona, La Malinche, and the Virgin of Guadalupe have been adapted and transformed within the ethno-nationalist project. In turn, these important folk icons have aided in the political and social transformation of the Chicano people.

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FOLKLORA IN ETNO-NACIONALIZEM V MEHIŠKOAMERIŠKI LITERARNI PRODUKCIJI: PRILAGODITEV IN PREOBLIKOVANJE DOMAČINSKIH IKON V ČIKANSKEM GIBANJU

Raziskava se osredinja na nacionalistična in etnonacionalistična gibanja in obravnava folkloro kot sestavni in neogibni del političnih gibanj in sprememb. Analiza in hermenevtika zadevata posebej domačinske mite in legende, ki so jih uporabili in preoblikovali mehiškoameriški aktivisti in etnonacionalisti. V ljudskih mitih in legendah so namreč našli imenitno sredstvo za oživitve svojega ponosa in samouveljavitve. V državi, kjer so bili ljudje depri-vilegirani ali pa so veljali za "druge" zaradi rasnih značilnosti, barve kože ali kulturnih razločkov, se je ljudsko izročilo samo po sebi ponujalo za projekt oblikovanja identitete in za politično združevanje prebivalstva brez državljanskih pravic. To velja posebno v primerih, ko je bilo to prebivalstvo premagano z vojaško močjo, njihovo ozemlje pa je bilo vključeno v meje osvajalčeve države. Pomembna primera sta izkušnja ameriških staroselcev v Združenih državah, ko so evropski priseljenci z ozemeljskimi zahtevami vdiral na njihovo ozemlje in jim postopoma jemali zemljo – in primer Mehike, ki je po ameriško-mehiški vojni 1846-1848 zgubila skoraj polovico svojega ozemlja v korist Združenih držav. Za mehiške

Američane se je opiranje na ljudsko izročilo stare domovine, tj. Mehike, dobro vključevalo v novo samozavest, pridobljeno v čikanskem gibanju za državljanske pravice v 60. in 70. letih prejšnjega stoletja.

Pred gibanjem za državljanske pravice so bili mehiški Američani vzgojeni tako, da so se sramovali svojega mehiškega ali ameriškega staroselskega rasnega in kulturnega nasledstva. V ameriških šolah se Čikani niso učili o svoji zgodovini in kulturi. O majeovski ali azteški dediščini niso bili poučeni v pozitivni luči, temveč so jih zasipali z rasističnimi in negativnimi konceptualizacijami in skrivljenimi pogledi na ameriško staroselsko prebivalstvo. Indijanci so bili pogosto predstavljeni kot "necivilizirani" in "divjaki". Čikani niso poznali resničnih čudes in dosežkov majevske in azteške civilizacije.

Ob izbruhu čikanskega gibanja za državljanske pravice je ta etnična skupina usmerila svojo pozornost na starodavne civilizacije, zlasti na Azteke. Politična in umetniška čikanska inteligenca se je odprla bogati kulturni dediščini ljudskega izročila, predvsem svetu mitov in legend.

Analični pogled osredinjam na čikansko literarno produkcijo, ki je vzniknila v 60. letih prejšnjega stoletja, in poudarjam, kako so srednjeameriški bogovi in boginje s starejšimi legendami postali vir navdiha za družbene, politične in umetniške dejavnosti v prizadevanju za socialno pravičnost. Zamisel o Aztlanu je npr. postala geslo politične misli: po zapisani zgodovini Aztekov je bil Aztlán mitična dežela njihovega izvira pred selitvijo proti jugu. Domnevno Aztlán leži na današnjem ameriškem jugozahodu okrog Kolorada, Nove Mehike in Arizone. Azteške legende trdijo, da jim je njihov bog Huitzilopochtli zaukazal, da se preselijo na jug, kjer bodo našli veliko cesarstvo na ozemlju današnjega Mexico Cityja. Azteki so ubogali svojega boga in se odpravili proti jugu, kjer so ustanovili svoje cesarstvo. Aztlán imajo še vedno za izvirno domovino mehiškoameriškega ljudstva, dom, kamor se imajo pravico vrniti, kakor je napovedala legenda.

Drugi domači bogovi in boginje – Quetzalcoatl, Coatlicue in Coyolxauhqui – se kot nov navdih pojavljajo v literarnih izpovedih čikanskih avtoric in avtorjev Luisa Valdeza (*Suit Zoot*, 1992), Glorie Anzaldúa (*Borderlands: La Frontera—the New Mestiza*, 1987), Ane Castillo (*So Far From God*, 1994), Cherrie Moraga (*The Hungry Woman*, 2001) in številnih drugih. Tudi legende o Lloroni ali Žalujoči/Jokajoči ženi in Devici guadelupski so se vrnile v poezijo, gledališče, romane, na freske in v politične spise mehiških Američanov.

Teoretični spisi Patricia Colma Hogana v knjigi *Understanding Nationalism* (2009) podpirajo glavne teze moje analize, kolikor se nanašajo na nacionalizem in etnonacionalizem. Moj prispevek k razpravljanju in teoriji nacionalističnih in etnonacionalističnih gibanjih s predstavitvijo mehiškoameriškega etnonacionalističnega gibanja kot študije primera za razumevanje pomena folklorne v takšnih revolucionarnih gibanjih osvetljuje in poudarja, kako v njih funkcionira folklor.

Prof. María Herrera-Sobek, Associate Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity and Academic Policy, Professor of Chicana and Chicano Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara, maria.sobek@evc.ucsb.edu
