

NEW APPROACHES IN LATINO AMERICAN POETRY: CHICANO POETRY

Mekhriniso Musinovna Rakhmatova
Doctor of Philosophy in Philological sciences,
Bukhara State University
E-mail: 2000niso@gmail.com, Phone: +998903400005

Nilufar Furkatovna Botirova
Master of Bukhara State University
E-mail: nilufarbotirova777@gmail.com, Phone:+998974881197

ABSTRACT:

One of the most pressing challenges in modern linguistics is the necessity to research and develop the discipline of linguoculturology, which analyzes the relationship between language and culture, as well as the expression of language in culture and culture in language. This article analyzes the linguistic features of the Chicano poetry in American literature.

Keywords: chicano, postliterary, secondary orality, descent, poetry of protest.

INTRODUCTION:

"Chicano" is a word to describe an American subculture formed by Mexican Americans. It summarizes a cultural style and identity of the people who are dependent of the regions originally belonging to Mexico which are now Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Utah and California.

Chicano poetry is an important branch of the great poetic traditions flowing from across the country—along with African Americans, Native Americans, Asians, Irish Americans, Italian Americans, Jewish Americans, and more.

It is a genre of American literature that is mostly written by and about Mexican Americans and their way of living in society. "Chicano" is a political and cultural identity term that refers to people of Mexican heritage who were born in the United States. Chicano

poetry and literature are the offspring of Latinos who either emigrated to the United States or were involuntarily included in the country due to the Mexican–American War of 1848, just as American poetry is the writing of the offspring of English and other European colonists to North America. Since the late sixteenth century, Chicanos have been producing poetry in the lands that would become the United States. Many of their literary traditions survived despite their cultivation of all types of written and oral literature in order to preserve their cultural identity within an expanding and overwhelmingly aggressive "national" culture that did not recognize Spanish speakers as members of an ever-evolving "America."

Chicano poetry has existed since the U.S. government invaded Mexico in the 1840s, and grew tremendously during the Mexican Revolutionary period of 1910 to 1930 (those years included other upheavals in Mexico, like the Cristero Rebellion, resulting in more than a million people killed and a million refugees when Mexico only had 15 million people, about the size of Guatemala today).[3, 40]

The explosion of Chicano poetry first hit in the 1960s at the same time that better-known African American poets like Haki R. Madhubuti (then known as Don L. Lee), Nikki Giovanni, Amiri Baraka (Leroi Jones), Jayne Cortez, Sonia Sanchez, and others wrote and performed a new poetry of protest (as well as

Puerto Ricans such as Pedro Pietri, Miguel Algarin, and Miguel Pinero).

Chicano literature, then, develops from the intersection of two cultures (Mexican and Anglo-American) with well-established middle-class literary traditions. It has endured in a society in the United States that now has not just a long-established print culture but also a highly postliterary and technologically advanced tradition. This sort of communication has been dubbed "secondary orality" by Walter Ong, which refers to an oral form of communication generated by radio and television that is "by no means independent of writing and print but completely dependent on them."

The first major exponents of Chicano verse were male: Ricardo Sanchez, Raul Salinas, Tino Villanueva, Lalo Delgado, Alurista, and the "Godfather of Chicano Poetry," Jose Montoya.

The social and artistic exigencies to which both male and female Chicano authors responded concerned the dynamics of a culture in the process of defining itself with respect to two larger societies: the United States and Mexico. The struggle for civil rights and educational opportunities, the opposition to the war in Vietnam, and the development of ethnic pride in Chicano communities were among the most pressing objectives of this cultural group during the late 1960s and early 1970s. A generation of Chicanos was beginning to realize that its history and culture had been conditioned by social oppression. The Chicano movement set out to confront this oppression directly and to expose its effect on Mexican-Chicano communities in the United States. The struggle was reflected in the literary writings of the period.[1, 19]

Because of the oral and popular traditions of Mexican-Chicano culture, the incidents narrated and the strategies employed by these poets derive from oral as well as

written systems of thought, experience, and expression. In their own ways and in varying degrees of intensity, these poets capture the oral experience of their specific cultural environments. For example, Alma Villanueva expresses states of consciousness coming from the oral and Spanish-speaking world of a Mexican grandmother who raised her in the absence of a mother. Having lost her original Spanish language, Villanueva uses English to relate events that occurred in the Spanish-speaking bygone world of her grandmother.[1, 25]

Cervantes, on the other hand, sees herself as a bridge between the Chicano community and the rest of the English-speaking world. She refers to herself as "Scribe," a translator and interpreter of letters, in "Beneath the Shadow of the Freeway," her richest and most intricate poetry, to express her status in a family of three women. Her grandmother is referred to as a "Queen," while her mother is referred to as a "Knight" in medieval words. Cervantes, a poet who perceives her Chicano culture as closer to the oral than the written word, uses the image of scribe to describe it: "its gesture is an expression purer than speech," she says in "Visions of Mexico." She, on the other hand, categorizes the rest of society as a print culture. In her function as scribe, Cervantes is transferring the experiences of an oral culture to a civilization that is mostly based on the written word.

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