

seeking a common Latino agenda. Polls indicated that 44 per cent of Latinos voted for Bush in 2004. In the November 2006 election, however, only 29 per cent voted Republican, allaying some of these fears. What the figures reveal, however, is that the Latino vote is more variable than generally assumed, and in this respect García Bedolla's work is indeed instructive and can be useful for political organizers to mobilize this community or (as Garcia Bedolla's work suggests) *communities*.

To her credit, she takes her analysis a step further with a prescription, based on her research, for political mobilization. The keys to mobilization are positive identities and group attachments. "In other words," she writes, "for members of stigmatized groups, establishing a positive attachment to their social group may be a necessary first step toward their attachment to the political community as a whole" (190). Flowing from this, and consistent with the Saul Alinsky model, is the need to organize at the local level around local issues, and then move from there to the state and national levels. Finally, the United States is *racialized* and the lives of members of "stigmatized" groups are affected by that reality. An analysis of the political participation of Latinos and other racial and ethnic minority groups has to take this into account, which she does. Instead of closing with the requisite minor criticisms, and there are a few, I prefer to close with kudos for a nicely conceived, well executed, and timely piece of scholarship. This is a book for anyone interested in political participation in general, and that of Latinos, specifically. The book is an important contribution not only to the political science literature, but to sociology and Latino studies as well.

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RAMÓN SALDÍVAR: *The Borderlands of Culture: Américo Paredes and the Transnational Imaginary*. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2006.

Américo Paredes (1915-1999) remains a towering figure in Chicano and Borderlands history, and his significant contributions to cultural studies are increasingly recognized in other fields. His 1958 book *With His Pistol in His Hand: A Border Ballad and Its Hero* challenged historical narratives that had long marginalized ethnic Mexicans in the United States. This work opened the door for scholars to consider previously neglected sources, such as the *corrido*, in order to arrive at a fuller understanding of the history of the border region. Ramón Saldívar examines the origins of Paredes' intellectual engagement with transnationalism, with particular focus on Paredes' life before he entered academia in the 1950s.

The first part of the book, “History and Remembrance as Social Aesthetics” includes a historical overview of the Rio Grande Valley that Paredes called home. Much of this section consists of Paredes’ own words, as he relates the history of his family and describes his youth and personal journey from a self-described *pocho* to a “proto-Chicano” (65-142).

Saldívar highlights Paredes’ many accomplishments as a creative artist, as well as a scholar (149). Paredes’ contributions to literature have been relatively overlooked in favor of his writings on anthropology, history, and musicology. The larger part of this book, “Fictions of the Transnational Imaginary,” details Paredes’ early body of work as a novelist, poet, and author of short stories. As such, this book offers readers a new understanding of Paredes, not only as a historian and folklorist, but also as an important American literary voice.

Among the most remarkable works that Saldívar reviews is Paredes’ novel *George Washington Gómez*. Written between 1935 and 1940, the manuscript remained unpublished until 1990. Saldívar’s analysis suggests that, beyond being a mere glimpse into Paredes’ early potential as a scholar, this novel stands as “a sign before its time of the state of Chicana and Chicano literature at the end of the twentieth century.” Saldívar finds that Paredes’ complex interrogation of identity and memory among a people who are concurrently included and at the same time excluded from both “American” and “Mexican” domains foreshadowed later works that engaged these issues in a transnational context (188).

Saldívar argues that Paredes enhanced his recognition of the intricacies of transnationalism when he served as a soldier, correspondent, and aid worker in Japan, China, and Korea in the years after World War II. As part of an occupying force in post-war Asia, yet coming from a background with his own personal experience of the legacy of American conquest, Paredes gained new insight into the nuances of cross-cultural relationships within an imperialist framework (388-390). The cultural hybridity that emerged during the occupation of Japan, and the efforts of the Japanese people to come to terms with occupation on an everyday basis, greatly informed Paredes’ interpretations of the history of Tejanos, and their own transcultural experiences (391).

One regard in which Paredes transcended many of his contemporaries was his analysis of gender, particularly his insights into the highly gendered performance setting of *corridos* (272). Saldívar reveals that, as a young man, Paredes had an appreciation of the oppressive nature of patriarchy, an appreciation that was somewhat remarkable for its time (434). Saldívar implies that, to a great extent, this awareness of the limitations of gender roles stemmed from his observations of women in postwar Japan. In his work as a journalist, Paredes chronicled the abuses that accompanied prostitution in occupied Japan, as well as new political spheres that were more open to Japanese women after the war.

Paredes observed how these seemingly dissimilar movements represented equally powerful challenges to Japanese patriarchy (350-351). Paredes' years in Japan helped him to recognize the impact of modernity and cultural dislocation upon gender structures in other societies, including south Texas.

In the introduction, Saldívar fondly describes his professional and personal relationship with Américo Paredes, and relates the deep respect and widespread admiration that Tejanos of all ages have for the subject of this book (5). Saldívar presents Paredes' account of his own life and career largely through his own words, and he does not purport to evaluate his work in a detached or purely "objective" manner. This book is clearly a labor of love for its author.

Yet, to readers who may be less familiar with Américo Paredes' many contributions, Saldívar convincingly makes the case that Paredes was an author and cultural critic who not only anticipated postmodern, cross-disciplinary, and transnational discourse in academic writing, but also recognized the inherent existence of these approaches in vernacular forms such as storytelling, *corridos*, and other elements of popular historical memory (434). Saldívar describes how Paredes insightfully and boldly challenged the work of established scholars such as William Prescott Webb after his return to the United States in the early 1950s, during his years as a student at the University of Texas at Austin. By this time, Paredes had largely made the transition from writing fiction to writing historical and anthropological work, and in the process, the "anger" that Paredes had expressed in his creative writings, such as *George Washington Gómez*, began to inspire his revision of the triumphalist, Anglocentric narratives that have prevailed in Texas history (117).

Saldívar provides a comprehensive study of Paredes' early years and his work before completing his doctorate at University of Texas at Austin in the 1950s. For historians, this book offers splendid insights into the intellectual formation of one of the finest scholars and interpreters of the borderlands experience. Saldívar provides many sophisticated and thought-provoking critiques of Paredes' early work in fiction and journalism. This book is painstakingly detailed and exhaustive in scope, yet its clear organization and prose make this expansive work accessible and informative. However, it is the inclusion of Paredes' own narrative of his life and the many excerpts from his body of work that, above all, make this compelling and informative reading.

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