4-30-1987

Eusebio Chacon: A Literary Portrait of 19th Century New Mexico

Francisco A. Lomeli

UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO 87131

Working Paper #113 Spring 1987

EUSEBIO CHACON: A LITERARY PORTRAIT OF 19TH CENTURY NEW MEXICO

By
Francisco A. Lomelí
University of California
Santa Barbara

Southwest Hispanic Research Institute

Working Paper # 113 Spring 1987

EUSEBIO CHACON: A LITERARY PORTRAIT OF 19TH CENTURY NEW MEXICO

By

Francisco A. Lomelí
University of California at Santa Barbara

WORKING PAPER SERIES

José A. Rivera, Editor
Southwest Hispanic Research Institute
University of New Mexico
1829 Sigma Chi, N.E.
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131

(505) 277-2965

Published and disseminated by the Southwest Hispanic Research Institute as part of an ongoing project to stimulate research focused on Southwest Hispanic Studies. Copies of this working paper or any other titles in the series may be ordered at cost by writing to the address indicated above.

EUSEBIO CHACON:

A LITERARY PORTRAIT OF 19TH CENTURY NEW MEXICO

Nuevo México insolente
Entre los cíbolos criado;
¿Dime, quién te ha hecho letrado
para hablar entre la gente?
--Taveras

I. A Literary History, According to Whom?

The complete restoration of the literary history of Hispanic literature in the Southwest is indeed a challenge. A thorough examination of a myriad of sources from and about the nineteenth century provide a confused and fractured history at best. It does not, as one would hope, furnish the necessary evidence with which to retrace the literary legacy as it developed. Investigations often lead the researcher into a series of labyrinthine paths with infinite dead ends. Any inquiry involves a procedure that resembles the meticulous work of the archaeologist who collects potsherds which will some day contribute to a significant discovery. Reflections on the subject tend to lead to one central question: What data permit the reassessment of literary tradition as it unfolded in nineteenth century New Mexico? And, like the archaeologist, we must ask which remains are significant. This is the case because as archaeologists understand, significance must be determined by the society in which the remains are found.

One of the ultimate challenges that has hampered the study of literary history of nineteenth century New Mexico is the difficulty in locating published works by Hispanic writers of the past century. Established Southwest historians have taken publication as indication of significance. As we shall see later, that may well prove to be ill-fitting criterion. A careful perusal of the principal works dedicated to Southwestern letters allows us to concur with Gerald W. Haslam's premise in a seminal work titled Forgotten Pages of American Literature (1970), where he suggests that literature by minority groups has been--intentionally or unintentionally--excluded from mainstream consideration: "The potential symbolic and intellectual flexibility inherent in a multi-cultural nation is unwittingly obscured in countless classrooms where a course in European-American literature is substituted for one reflecting more accurately the cultural amalgam that is in the United States."[1] It is in this spirit that we can examine the work of Eusebio Chacón. His works, judged in their own context, focus on a volatile but dynamic period of New Mexico history between 1848 and 1900. Chacón's contributions--a true archaeological find--help us appreciate Hispanic creativity by giving us a window previously overlooked and which further attests to a rich reservoir of expression rooted in the Southwest.

It is no coincidence that the notion of a "forgotten people"[2] emerges frequently among critics in the twentieth century to describe the positions Hispanics occupy in the annals of "official" literary history. An in-depth review of critical works that claim to represent literary history from the Southwest

unveils the obliviousness exercised to exclude writers of Mexican descent. The act of forgetting is designed in this case to dismiss, to relegate significance or simply to ignore. The overriding intent can perhaps be summarized by the circumstances described in the title of David J. Weber's work Foreigners in Their Native Land (1973). If the act of forgetting is not at issue, then omission becomes the next concern. A general blackout is prevalent in virtually all bibliographies, literary histories, anthologies, and critical collections. The only exceptions to this trend are what might be termed as the unquestionable Aztlán classics, such as Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's Relaciones (1542), Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá's Historia de la Nueva México (1610), certain colonial plays like Los Comanches (1780?) and Los Texanos (1850?), and numerous pastorelas. Secondary sources would have us believe that Mexicanos somehow quit writing with the advent of Anglo-Americans and that the desire to creatively express the human condition became less important for them. J. Frank Dobie, considered the first Texas man of letters, appears more categorical in his judgment about the entire Southwest with his special flair for provocation: "No informed person would hold that the Southwest can claim any considerable body of pure literature as its own."[3]

Since proponents of "pure literature" have traditionally had an Eastern U.S. perspective, particular Hispanic strains would automatically fall outside of this canon. The rich body of oral literature would be the first to be denied any serious consideration. If it is written in any language other than English, there would be a high likelihood of being discarded or

at least ignored. The literary modes from England of continental Europe are given strong preference over literature by racial minorities, which are often criticized and stigmatized as not being sufficiently universal and lacking breadth. The arguments usually encompass a wide range of reasons, but their logical backdrop essentially returns to an issue of perspective and bias.

These trends and biases manifest themselves in the following instances: out of the 600 titles listed by Mabel Major and T.M. Pearce[4] in the selected bibliography from 1938, only 7 works by Hispanic writers are mentioned; in their revised edition of 1972 they include 21 works out of approximately 850 titles for the entire 400 year history of New Mexico. While relying on questionable criteria with which to evaluate the Mexicano's role and contributions between 1800 and 1900, Major and Pearce do not even make reference to a single writer of Hispanic origin. As some of the most respected authorities on Southwest literary heritage, they corroborate what others posit throughout the region. For example, Florence E. Barns includes only one author of Hispanic origin out of approximately 1,000 names in Texas Writers of Today (1935).[5] Lester Raines, in Writers and Writings of New Mexico (1934) also fails to point out any specific examples of Hispanic writers from the nineteenth century, although he does include numerous works pertaining to folklore which are anonymous.[6]

Already in 1917, a critic from Spain, Miguel Romera-Navarro, made the pungent observation about this apparent neglect: "La historia y exposición del hispanismo literario en Norte-América están por escribir[se]. Ni un solo estudio, comprensivo o super-

ficial, popular o erudito, se le ha dedicado."[7] More recently in 1961, Edwin W. Gaston examines 40 novels in The Early Novel of the Southwest in which he analyzes 31 by Anglos and 9 by European immigrants. Generally unimpressed by the literary production of the region, he downplays the "amateur belletristic efforts" of the writers and offers his explanation indirectly about the fate of Hispanic writings and authors: "The emphasis upon the Spaniards and Mexicans in novels coincides with Spanish dominance in the region; and the neglect of this character type in Southwestern fiction accompanies their decline."[8] Even though Stanley T. Williams, in the The Spanish Background of American Literature (1955), recognizes some noticeable Spanish strand in American letters, he alludes to vague points of contact that apply for the sake of specious coloring, and not much else. By background he understands to include linguistic borrowings, toponymy and social types, but not literary forms; besides, the cultural inheritance from folklore seems to him relatively ill developed, and he labels them "subliterary patterns."[9] Another useful guide to measure impact or receptability is Lawrence Clark Powell's Southwest Classics: The Creative Literature of the Arid Land: Essays on the Books and Their Writers (1974) in which the author presents 26 classics and none are Hispanic with the exception of the lesser known eighteenth century Franciscan monk, Francisco Garcés, who is credited with a diary.[10] If the accomplishments are in fact as limited as those diverse sources suggest, then Philip D. Ortego is correct in proposing that the second half of the nineteenth century parallels the "Dark Ages" of American historiography, as was originally argued by Clarence E. Carter.[11]

Our first task, therefore, in unravelling the literary history of the Southwest, is to examine the self-propagating notion that the nineteenth century was in fact a Dark Ages for native literature. If it is true, as we have seen, that there is repeated evidence of neglect and exclusion, it behooves us to ask: Why? Historically speaking, many examples can be unearthed to document prejudice and discrimination in the admonishment of the Mexicano. Numerous colorful characters might be resurrected, such as Judge Roy Bean or Hanging Judge Parker, whose derotagory embellishments mark unforgettable pages from popular lore.[12] The real tragedy lies in the concerted efforts to subconsciously exercise censorship in the name of serious scholarship. Perhaps the most disheartening case involves the authors of Southwest Heritage, who in the introduction to the first edition in 1938 plainly reveal their true sentiments. The rhetoric of exclusion is sophisticated enough in its cautious presentation, but the perspective is one of justifying their own narrowness on the basis of pragmatism and expediency:

> Most Americans ... have read only books made in the traditions of Europe and written in the English language. It would be desirable and profitable to include in this guide to the literature and life of the Southwest all the works, oral and recorded, in Indian, Spanish, English, and other tongues, that have sprung from the section. Some day we shall attain that breadth of vision (p. 2).

The open admission is of particular interest here because their next argument makes the assumption that discussion is closed; for these authors, Anglo-American creativity must be considered the legitimate voice of New Mexico due to the forces of historical inevitability:

> Moreover, we shall frankly relate all other cultures in the Southwestern scene to our con-temporary American life. There are good reasons besides expediency for our doing this. While civilization here is greatly enriched by contacts with other cultures and languages, today the dominant strain seems clearly to be Anglo-American, with its ever increasing tendency to spread its influence and to absorb its competitors (p. 2).

This not so camouflaged ethnocentrism has therefore become the measuring stick to judge a people's literature, creating a precarious situation for Hispanic expression. Although glaring, its omission from mainstream criticism gives credence to the displacement factor Erna Fergusson alluded to in 1951: "Much as New Mexico has been written about, its writers are few compared with its painters, and its best books have been the work of outsiders."[13] The creative abilities of Mexicanos as writers still elicit so little recognition that even sympathizers, such as Edward Simmen, as recently as 1971 have reverted back to commonly held views from the nineteenth century that "...neither the upper-class Mexican-American nor the lower-class laborers has produced literature: The former is not inclined; the latter is not equipped."[14]

II. The Conquest: Takeover or Move Over

A process of disenfranchisement and relegation has been in effect for the New Mexican since the nineteenth century when the Southwest was annexed to the United States. Although Hispanics greatly outnumbered the Anglo until the middle of the twentieth century, the invader mentality of the newcomers compelled them to carry out the charter of conquest in a sometimes subtle but usually tendentious manner. A trend was established to supplant a relatively pastoral society with one whose enterprising ventures waged a carefully orchestrated image warfare with new images. They enhanced their own encroachment by giving the idea that it was prudent and slow; others would claim it to be necessary as if destined.

Effective tactics were created to minimize the achievements and importance of Hispanics in order to alter the region's character into new Anglo molds in the areas of social supra-structures, such as law. Soon the infra-structures were effected, as attitudes, religion, world view and customs. The social, political, economic and cultural conquest of New Mexico gained full force in the second half of the nineteenth century. The conqueror's view of history was appropriately put in motion and submitted in writing as empirical data as if extracted from scientific compilations and documents. Although their perceptions toward Mexicanos varied in degrees of negativism, historians such as Ralph E. Twitchell, Josiah Gregg, Lebaron Bradford Prince and Hubert Howie Bancroft proceeded to put Manifest Destiny into practice.[15] When jingoism did not suffice

and outright prejudice seemed too obvious, other innovative methods of displacement were devised. One way was to promote biographies of outstanding civilians--almost exclusively Anglo-American--to highlight one social sector at the expense of the other. Thus, the conquest on a daily basis took on the qualities of a moral crusade against barbarism and backwardness within a socially self-righteous framework.

The process of disenfranchisement crept into the domain of literature. First was the usurpation of typically Southwestern social types, characters, and motifs. Integration of native features by Anglo-Americans generated a discriminating selection in order to make them palatable to the newcomers' tastes. As a case in point, the vaquero's valor and dexterity were transferred to the cowboy as Anglo-American writers elevated the cowboy to the stature of an appealing symbol of frontier freedom, while they chose to ignore his real source of origin. Borrowing has meant transformation with the idea of blunting, or obscuring, the Mexicanness of the original model. Whereas the vaquero for the Mexicano typified hard labor and survival, the cowboy acquired a value of individualistic perseverance in terms of a relentless urge to reach new horizons. While the Mexican vaquero was inclined to colonize and conquer nature, the American cowboy was engaged in rebelling against society, thus seeking refuge in nature for and by himself. A symbol of permanence and tradition became radically changed to one who pursues his own ends through any means.

This system of substituting one Southwestern type for another became a device with which to put to rest previous heroic figures from the Colonial period: Indian leaders were frowned upon as dangerous ruffians and certain Hispanic personages (i.e., conquerors, adventurers, pícaros, chroniclers and even priests) were carefully deflated to acquire secondary status. In their place emerged an onslaught of trail blazers, trappers, military men, sharpshooters, hunters, and homesteaders. The Indo-Hispanic elements, while safe in a distant time frame, passed into a mytho-legendary place beyond the realm of the flesh-and-blood. Symbolically, this act marks an honorable death to the native legacy, while at the same time announcing the advent and foundation of a new cultural force. By depicting a colonial past in a Romantic mode, the assumption is that Anglo-American inconography represents a regenerative component that injects vigor and vitality into a static pastoral society. The dichotomy is consequently established to contrast between what Hispanic peoples were and what they might have been. Rarely is the question posed to address what they might become. Thus, things of Hispanic origin now leave the foreground to become a part of the background, usually as decorative pieces to be appreciated from afar. This distancing allows for a less intimate relationship of unidimensional implications. The tendency then is to observe Hispanic elements as quaint, simpáticos or overcharged with simplicity. As a result, a full scale situation emerges, or what Franklin Walker terms "cultural hydroponics",[16] in which the original culture is enveloped to the point of obscurity.

By reading only Anglo-American recorded sources, we are led to believe that New Mexico could just as well have become Anglicized overnight in 1848. History clearly challenges this interpretation. A more accurate version entails the Territorial period from 1848 until 1912 (when New Mexico achieved statehood) that exhibits different stages of transition and interaction between the two peoples struggling simultaneously for social adjustment. As new settlers arrived from the East, the divergence in literary history became more pronounced: Anglo-Americans imported a northern European-based focus in their pursuit of a regional literature; Hispanics continued to cultivate their distinctively long legacy from Spain which was expressed in a language that had grown to incorporate the Mexican and indigenous experiences.[17] Contact between the two cultures also meant being at odds with each other. In some cases, for example, Edwin S. Fussell in Frontier: American Literature and the West (1965), it is implied that Southwestern literature had its beginnings with the arrival of the Anglo-American.[18] This view has been amply refuted with concrete evidence to the contrary by such critics as Luis Leal, who in his two seminal studies "Cuatro siglos de prosa aztlanense" and "Hispanic-Mexican Literature in the Southwest, 1521-1848"[19] lays the foundation of a literary heritage that precedes any other in the region by 300 years with the exception of the Native American voice. The year 1848 does not mark an interruption when it concerns the well entrenched oral tradition of Hispanics.

III. A Parallel Literary Tradition: Autonomy Versus Isolation

The crux of the matter, then, is this: If we are to successfully examine the literary history of the Southwest, we must resume our work as archaeologists. The remains must be placed in the context of a society strikingly different from the Anglo-American society which was growing up beside it, and which misrepresented it in their own records and literature. The crucial difference is as follows: The Hispanic community is one in which the dichotomy between oral and written literature has never existed. Too often historians have overlooked this keystone of Hispanic culture in order to interpret Hispanic literary tradition in terms of their own choosing. Now, it seems imperative to set aside those fabricated values and thus examine Hispanic literature in its native context. To them, literature is more the mode of expression rather than the form used to present it. Limited publishing outlets have simply comprised a part of the social reality, but folk expression does not see that as an indispensable vehicle to manifest itself. For this reason a wide range of popular forms have endured the tests of time since the Colonial period. Certain specific forms, like the corrido, have even flourished in the second half of the ninteenth century as a continuum of past generations. Other forms include the décima, inditas, versos, pastorelas, advinanzas, alabados, romances, canciones, autos, cuentos and cuandos.[20] Contact with Anglo-American lore created two divergent trends: some of the forms diminished in usage, or underwent modifications, while others gained popularity because of Hispanic tenacity and indul-

gence.

Hispanic literature in the latter half of the nineteenth century was not, we must conclude, the literary desert that conventional historians and literary critics would have us believe. When seen in its proper context, the perception that the Hispanic voice was dormant simply does not hold up. What then prevailed was the existence of two literary foci segregated from each other; and, the situation was aggravated by the fact that the Anglo-American literary circles failed to acknowledge literature written in Spanish. The Hispanic community found itself in internal literary exile and that burden became harder and harder to bear. Thus, the price of culture survival gradually increased, leaving the Hispanic community with only two media available to it: newspapers and oral tradition.[21] Sporadic attempts to maintain the newspapers as vehicles of information and mirrors of the territory's daily life drew on hard times. Newspapers in New Mexico, like El Crepúsculo de la Libertad, founded in 1834 by Father José Antonio Martínez, did not fare as business ventures.

These circumstances forced the Mexicano to juggle the creative spirit between the performance (or live oral literature) and the opportunity to present it in written form. In light of the scarcity of stable newspapers between 1850 and 1878, much of Hispanic expression from this period is oral. As folklore, it becomes the object of inquiry by later collectors and scholars, such as Aurelio M. Espinosa, Juan B. Rael, Aurora Lucero White-Lea, and Arturo L. Campa.[22] What they salvaged is the literary background that must be recognized as authentically Southwestern.

The collected stories and verses have become to the actual folklore expression of the nineteenth century what the *romance* was to the epics.

IV. The Newspaper: Vehicle of Cross-Cultural Dialogue

Perhaps the most obvious exception to the dismal picture of the newspaper industry between 1848 and 1878 is *The New Mexican*, which lasted from 1849 to 1950.[23] Most newspapers utilized an English language format and many included translations into Spanish. The literary samples found during this period indicate a direct transference of the Colonial and Mexican periods with a strong emphasis on forms from oral tradition, such as *décimas*, but segments of memoirs and diaries were also included. The literary pieces published in *The New Mexican* record the impact of the Anglo-American's abrupt entrance into the region, as is vividly evident in the following historical-narrative *décima*:

"Jarirú, Jari, camón
dis' el vulgu americano;
comprende pero no quiere
el imperio mejicano.
...

Todos los indios de pueblo
se han hechu a la banda d'eos.
Disen qu'es nueva conquista
la ley d'estos fariseos.

Varios no semos con eos
peru hemos jurau em bano;
no "más no digan", fulano
nu ha prestado su atensión
porqu'en cualesquier rasón
dise'el pueblu americano,
"Jarirú, Jari, camón."[24]

Echoing this sense of loss, is another décima believed to have been composed in 1866 by what Arturo L. Campa would call a "folk poet," in which the writer summarizes the sentiment of disillusion as a newly conquered people:

Nuevo Méjico mentado,
has perdido ya tu fama,
adonde yo jui por lana
y me vine tresquilado.[25]

Aside from these signs of contact, influence or reaction to the Anglo-American, much of the other writings, principally poetry and short stories, reflected the country-within-a-country syndrome by dealing with events of daily living mainly in Spanish. A whole gamut of experiential episodes filled certain sections of newspapers, for example, by commemorating deaths, special events such as heroic deeds, birthdays, military skirmishes, outbursts of love and topics of conflict that dealt with the transitional phases of coexisting with Anglo-American settlers. Other writings were borrowed from Spain, Latin America or figured in the literary sections thanks to translations. According to Porter A. Stratton, by 1879 only 15 newspapers were in operation, 7 of which were stable,[26] suggesting that much of the

popular expression was transmitted and diffused by word of mouth.

The year 1879 marks a clear landmark in the resurgence of newspapers that coincided with the economic boom of the 1880s because of the railroad. This period of relative prosperity had an impact of such proportions that the proliferation of newspapers extended onto 1900. In this 21-year period, 283 newspapers were launched,[27] a direct result of the availability of educational facilities which produced a burgeoning readership. In the decade of the 1880s, 16 bilingual and 13 Spanish-language newspapers were published; and in the 1890s, 35 Spanish-language and 11 bilingual journals appeared. Of essential significance to Hispanic publishing interests is the fact that the city of Las Vegas functioned as a central force in this modest renaissance with a total of 44 newspapers between 1879 and 1900.[28] Consequently, the literary resurgence spawned increased space dedicated to creative writings. As this vehicle became available, Hispanic writers spoke through newspapers to provide testimony to a variegated reservoir of literary voices. On the one hand, their writings gave proof to their participation as witnesses of their time; and, on the other hand, they acted as contributors to a long-standing literary tradition. Despite and quantity and quality of Hispanic literature produced at the time, two parallel versions of literary history developed. One version, perhaps called "official," embarked on acknowledging only Anglo-American writings; the other, a Hispanic version, made the effort to emphasize literature written in Spanish. A definite split occurred and reconciliation became impossible as social tensions arose which heightened the rift between the two

peoples. When these social factors came into question, their impact was such that lyrical poetry and sentimental prose showed a dramatic decrease. More ardent issues were now at stake, although much frivolous writing, whose sole purpose was to entertain or exhibit clever dexterity with the language, still appeared regularly. Much of the literature produced by Hispanics during this period, it must be said, contains a direct or indirect allusion to current events through which we can observe the history unfolding. The wider issues incorporated include the concerns with land grants, the acceptance of the Spanish language as equal to English, cultural conflict, religion, outlawry and problems pertaining to self-determination. Two parallel trends became apparent: Anglo-Americans rediscovered the Southwest, according to Cecil Robinson,[29] and they responded by romanticizing it with works such as Ramona (1884) by Helen Hunt Jackson; the Mexicano rediscovered the region as he assessed the prospects of losing his cultural identity.

While it is true that much of writing between 1879 and 1900 deals with immediate occurrences pertaining to emotive outbursts of patriotism, love, death, acts of bravery, remembrances, personal dedications, and so on,[30] a sizeable portion is dedicated to expounding on issues that were viewed as political in nature. The literary movement of the 1880s, largely inspired by the proliferation of Hispanic journalism, created the following situation, as described by Anselmo F. Arellano: "La gente ya tenía una tradición antigua de componer versos en forma de romances y corridos, pero el periodismo ayudó [a] ampliar este ramo de la literatura nativa, junto con el desarrollo de la

poesía."[31] Consequently, the renewed written tradition often became a sort of forum to vent feelings of anguish, powerlessness or social indigestion. In 1889 Jesús María H. Alarid offers his version of the language conflict as part of a highly charged issue that forced Hispanics to reconsider the price of peaceful assimilation or perhaps the cost of a futile arrogant pride:

Hermoso idioma español
¿Qué te quieren proscribir?
Yo creo que no hay razón
Que tú dejes de existir

Afirmo yo que el inglés
Como idioma nacional
No es de sumo interés
Que lo aprendamos [a] hablar
Pues se debe de enseñar
Como patriotas amantes
Y no quedar ignorantes
Mas, no por eso dejar
Que el idioma de Cervantes
Se deje de practicar.[32]

A copious list of the different poetic forms could be provided to demonstrate the variety and imaginative expose of feelings and concerns of the period. For the time being, we consider it even more significant to present some of the persons whose writings appear with certain regularity in newspapers: Higinio V. Gonzales, José Manuel Arellano, Jesús María H. Alarid, Manuel M. Salazar, Eleuterio Baca, Urbano Chacón, Florencio

Trujillo, Ezequiel Cabeza de Baca, Jesús Gonzales, Antonio Lucero, Enrique Salazar, Severino Trujillo, Antonio B. Trujillo, and many more.[33]

The area of literature less mentioned in the second half of the nineteenth century is prose, specifically cuentos and novels. Their rate of frequency is considerably secondary to poetry, but the actual newspaper space they occupy is not much less. In a study that parallels the situation in New Mexico, Armando Miguélez hints at this possibility with respect to Hispanic literature from Arizona in his dissertation "Antología histórica del cuento literario chicano (1877-1950)."[34] In another dissertation, "Del siglo XIX al XX: La novela aztlanense escrita en español," Cosme Zaragoza[35] focuses on the novel, its origins and development; he insists on the literary sophistication and maturity of a people commonly described as illiterate and underdeveloped. Both critics allude to narrative forms as a basis for a well entrenched literary tradition that deserves recognition as a viable vehicle to appreciate the Southwest experience and history.

V. A Boom: Reassessing Relations of Co-Existence

A modest movement in Hispanic letters between 1880 and 1900 showed signs of diversity, breadth and experimentation. Part of the reason for the upsurge was directly attributed to the creation of organizations called sociedades that led a regional vanguard in fusing intellectual pursuits with social action. In the first thorough analysis of these societies, Anselmo F.

Arellano points out their multifold objectives: "to investigate and debate questions and subjects of social, literary and moral character."[36] Also, part of their charter contained a philanthropic purpose, fostering education and the facilities to achieve it. They often served as mutual aid labor unions or protective bodies for community members. They in fact offered other alternatives to Anglo-American institutions within a cultural context and so assumed responsibility for the social well-being of Hispanics. Some of these societies were: La Sociedad Social, Literaria y de Devates de Agua Negra, Nuevo Mexico (established in 1898); Sociedad Literaria y de Ayuda Mutua de Las Vegas (1892); Sociedad Protectora (1895); Sociedad Dramática Hispano-Americana (1891); Casino Hispano-Americano (1891); and Sociedad Filantrópica Latino-Americana (1892).[37] It is safe to assert that the varied functions of these organizations reflect a conquered people in the process of regrouping, while gaining historical consciousness and intellectual maturity.[38]

Without the activity and fervor that was generated by these sociedades, interests in literature and in their respective place in overall society would probably have lagged. To ascertain the impact on Hispanics of the region, we cite one of the founders of Sociedad Hispano-Americana, who on March 12, 1892 stated:

> Societies are like the seedling of the most progressive ideas. They are like the sun whose luminous rays of faith reach all minds and give strength, vigor and a new life to people so that they may confront the overflow of privileged classes and the preponderance of corrupt

governments. All ideas of philanthropic benefit to poor people have emerged from societies, and they have served to educate him through the schools which have been established throughout--from the prairies to the most remote mountains. The most difficult questions of public interest have developed in the bosom of societies, and the best laws have been projected which today are the guarantee of all and the pride of modern civilization. All institutions in general have provided great services to the world's progress. What would humanity be without the existence of these societies? Without them we would be living in the middle ages.[39]

This scenario of unbound activity made it conducive to cultivate prose and the narrative, particularly the novel. A readership was almost instantaneously created and the vehicle for publication was greatly facilitated by newspapers which published the novel in serial form. It is probably during the period of 1880 and 1900 when New Mexicans dramatically sought to increase personal library collections,[40] thereby establishing, from their perspective, a more international selection in their readings. They were determined to bring their reading, as well as their writing, up to standards beyond the literary tradition of their milieu. In their mind, they were simply becoming a part of the fashion dictated by the times. In actuality, they linked themselves with a belated Romantic movement that prevailed in Mexico, Spain and Latin America at the time that a hybrid Realism and Naturalism were in vogue. A degree of eclecticism was in

evidence as they combined these newer influences with already traditional models, such as the picaresque novel. It soon became obvious that their quest of a literary establishment embraced an attitude of blending known forms into local expression.

VI. Eusebio Chacón: Pleiad or Exception

In the area of the novel, numerous examples have been recently discovered, thus giving credence to the notion that the Hispanic novel in the region did enjoy a measure of respectability. At least four known authors mark different approaches within this 20-year period: Manuel M. Salazar is recognized as one of the first novelists, although his manuscript "La historia de un caminante, o sea, Gervacio y Aurora" from 1881 remains unpublished; Eusebio Chacón claims to be the first novelist in 1892 with his two short novels El hijo de la tempestad and Tras la tormenta la calma; Manuel C. de Baca developed a chronicle or historical novel in 1896 titled Historia de Vicente Silva y sus cuarenta bandidos, sus crímenes y retribuciones; and an anonymous author wrote Historia de un cautivo in 1898.[41]

With the objective of focusing on one novelist as representative of the latter part of the nineteenth century, Eusebio Chacón serves well to unveil that period in New Mexico literary history. Although acknowledged--and somewhat vindicated--almost 100 years after the publication of his two novels, it is perhaps more accurate to portray him as one writer among a cluster, instead of being an exception by himself. Part

of a dynamic period, he best exemplifies his times as a writer, spokesman, participant in his community, and promoter of literature, particularly the novel. Born on September 16, 1869, in Peñasco, New Mexico, he lived his early formative years in the territory of Colorado, a region still viewed as an extension, culturally speaking, of Hispanic New Mexico. A highly educated man, having received his undergraduate degree at a Jesuit College in Las Vegas, New Mexico, and his law degree from Notre Dame in 1889, he gained a rapid reputation from his multiple talents.[42] He achieved early acclaim as an orator, a public defender, an interpreter-translator for the U.S. courts in relation to land grants, and his prominence grew as a direct result of his civic and literary activities. Less known as a poet, an incisive flair in the essay became his trademark in numerous newspaper columns and in meetings of sociedades at the moment his Hispanic pride was the object of attacks made by an influx of contemptuous Anglo-American settlers. He was generally regarded as mild-mannered and judicious. A sign of feistiness, however, is evident in his essays whenever he is witness to distortion or unfair treatment.

For example, when a Protestant missionary, Nellie Snider, launched an inflammatory campaign against Hispanos from Las Vegas, specifically Catholics, he rose to the occasion to refute her arguments as if he were a public defender of his people and their cultural background. In a famous speech, he demonstrates a breadth of knowledge, an assertive determination and a keen appreciation of the historical significance of the situation. His words in a meeting known as "La Junta de Indignación 1901"

ring with vigor and purpose a la Clarence Darrow:

> El sentido de dicho artículo es que los Hispano-Americanos somos una gente sucia, ignorante y degradada ... a quienes la falta de luz evangélica tiene siempre en retroceso, y a quienes la fiebre sectaria reclama para espiritualizar con sus dogmas. (...) En fin, la primera parte de dicho escrito es un extravagante derroche de fantasía, es como diría Carlyle, una diarrea de palabras. Pero como de gustos no hay nada escrito, pasemos por alto estas extravagancias y entremos en materia. (...) Pero volviendo a los disparates de nuestra escritora, después de medir puertas y ventanas con su vara pasa a nuestras cocinas, y allí penetra con evangélica institución hasta en los misterios del chile y de las tortillas. A las tortillas las encuentra indigestas, como quien dice, la señora ha atacado una proposición teológica más abstracta que las que robaban el sueño al apóstol San Pablo. Y que hay que sospechar que a la señora se le olvidaba que ella misma muchas mañanas, ha comido tortillas americanas, es decir, esas gamuzas terribles de la zarten (sic) que llaman <u>pan cakes</u>. (...) Como queda ya indicado, no es ésta la primera vez que el pueblo de Nuevo México se hace blanco de ataques tan gratuitos como injustificados... Las pocas instituciones de educación que hay entre nosotros, son obra de nuestro propio trabajo.... Allí no hay ni un solo centavo de nuestro gobierno nacional... y aunque todavía el nombre de ningún Neo-Mexicano haya llenado el

> orbe con su fama, no estamos tan dejados de Dios por acá como nos pintan algunos escritores que pasan por entre nosotros como caballeros apocalípticos, con la copa de hiel en una mano y la guadana del odio en la otra. ¿Será esto con la esperanza de que nuestra petición no sea oída, y que sigamos en el precario estado de parias nacionales? Pueblo de Nuevo México, si tu destino es sólo ser bestia de carga; si has de permanecer en el triste tutelaje de gobierno que hasta ahora has tenido; si no has de tomar parte en los asuntos públicos de esta nación, que es la tuya... tiempo es ya que levantes tus penates, y los lleves, con los restos de tus antepasados, a otra patria más hospitalaria. No te falta talento, no te falta energía. (...) Si la patria en donde duerme tu Diego de Vargas no tiene ya esperanzas para tus hijos, mira que el mundo es grande, el mundo es bueno, el mundo es generoso. Busca un país donde puedas ser dueño de tu destino.[43]

From the excerpts we observe Chacón with a combative spirit who finds himself engulfed in some of the politically sensitive issues of his region. There can be no doubt about his convictions and the ideological stance that thrust him into public prominence as a spokesman.

VII. Texts and Context

Along with relative prosperity, a political and economic division developed between rich and poor and between Anglo-Americans and Hispanic inhabitants. The year 1889 was character-

ized by the polarized elements of an incipient civil war. The atmosphere of boosterism attracted waves of new Anglo settlers. Racial tension was on a definite upswing as cultural differences defined interests. The Hispanic sector began to sense a creeping threat and a possible change in the balance of power. A secret organization, Gorras Blancas, was created to intimidate and resist Anglo-American encroachment. They cut fences and destroyed edifications, intending to instill fear. There prevailed a situation of cross-firings and confused alliances that contributed to a greater volatility. According to Robert J. Rosenbaum in Mexicano Resistance in the Southwest (1981), the main themes aired in New Mexico newspapers around 1890 can be reduced to sentiments against despotism and monopoly.[44] Of particular relevance to Chacón's first novel, El hijo de la tempestad from 1892, is Rosenbaum's observation about a given newspaper: "... in its continual denials of any connection between the Knights [or Los Caballeros de Labor] and violence, La Voz [del Pueblo] never failed to stress that the real villains in New Mexico were not the 'vandals or masked highwaymen' but the 'despotic oppressors ... hidden technically by the law....'"[45] The fundamental question lies in that all sides sought to point out someone else as responsible for such unbridled violence. What was at stake was plain power, possible control and future hegemony. The various components of these dynamics clouded subtle shifts in the interests involved. The region was suffering growth pains in a framework of struggle between coexistence and cooptation.

VIII. Ars Poetica: The Vengeance of Poetic Justice

In coping with two distinct activities, Chacón was actively engaged in reflecting the makeup of his social environment as well as exercising his creative impulse. However, his central concern was not to propose dichotomies, but rather conflicting entities of a bipolar nature. This dialectical interplay manifests itself in his two novels that appeared in 1892: *El hijo de la tempestad* is characterized by an overriding tension and conflict as a result of different forms of banditry, while *Tras la tormenta la calma* represents an about-face from the semi-Realist mode and indulges in a literary experimentation in order to examine the concept of honor. Together, they attest to Chacón's versatility as a writer, as well as to the wide spectrum of his personal interests.

Published at the same time, the two works deliberately advance a joint purpose: they consciously set out to establish the novel as a new genre to the region and they serve to disclose political, cultural and behavioral dilemmas of his people. He recognizes, in the Dedication, the significance of his undertaking as the first novelist, and he directly addresses literary disenfranchisement by Anglo or foreign circles, claiming his works as a product of *his own* fantasy:

> Son creación genuina de mi propia fantasía y no robadas ni prestadas de gabachos ni extranjeros. Sobre el suelo Nuevo Mexicano me atrevo á cimentar la semilla de la literatura recreativa para que si después otros autores de más feliz ingenio que el mío siguen el camino que

> aquí trazo, puedan volver hacia el pasado la vista y señalarme como el primero que emprendió tan áspero camino.[46]

Composed within the tradition of a manifesto, the Dedication merits close scrutiny. First, his initial comments are filled with words that reflect a restrained hostility toward outsiders at the same time that he claims that what he writes is neither a copy nor an imitation. That he should state it so emphatically can only mean his declaring a literary emancipation for himself and his people. Although it might seem a false presumptuousness on his part to designate himself the originator of "recreative literature"--here meaning the novel--, he is or must have felt compelled to create the "authentic New Mexican novel," therefore defiantly contrasting his work with Anglo-American literature. He characterizes his accomplishments as having paved a rough path for others to follow. His daring attitude might invite complications, but it seems the best way to avoid outside impositions in canon. His language in the Dedication is generally metaphoric and rarely explicit, and thus obscures his true feelings. Responding as a self-aware literary pioneer, his concluding statements also offer advice on how to complete a novel and avoid superfluous characters in the story. He succinctly justifies his use of the novella form: that is, he wishes to use oral tradition as backdrop in order to transform what he terms "literatura recreativa" into a literary form of written literature. With his literature he strives to provide enjoyment and construct a social situation to stimulate a judgment from the reader. "Literatura recreativa" means to Chacón all that

"recreation" connotes: both delight and re-production. His lying purpose is to transcend the obvious so that the works may be decoded and interpreted on various levels.

IX. In the Eye of the Storm

In the first novel, El hijo de la tempestad, Chacón hopes to carry out the mission as stated in the Dedication. His principal objective is to make every attempt to create a "New Mexican novel," selectively choosing from a diverse range of literary preferences. The storyline functions as a faithful mirror of the prevalent chaos in his region and its composition gives testimony to actual events witnessed by the author. This work, then, embodies a writer's perspective on social problems, while at the same time exhibiting inspiration in fantasy. Both literature and history become fused with the purposeful design to grapple with the complexities of his times. His proximity and attachment to the events, plus his rejection of negative foreign elements, oblige him to become even more entrenched in Hispanic literary tradition. The primary source that gives impetus and provides a framework for the story is the oral tradition.

El hijo de la tempestad is filled with contradictions and mixed messages. Characterized by internal conflicts and antithetical elements, most of the novel unfolds as a dynamic struggle between forces of Evil and Good. True to a Romantic novel, triumph of Good seems secondary. It seems more vital here to critically expose the forces of Evil in operation. If the novelist's only intent were to denounce outlaws, he would not

have chosen a villain as his protagonist to disapprove of an outlaw's state of power. Chacón resorts to the allegory to show the genesis of an outlaw and associates him with the underground that becomes institutionalized in a political system. In this sense, the novel's initial fantastic scenes later acquire greater significance in establishing the setting with which to unveil a deplorable political situation. In short, the outlaw protagonist represents a true menace, but the petty and corrupt politicians by comparison are deemed far worse. The novel ceases to operate as a literary diatribe against a certain type of outlaw when viewed in light of formulating a target of the roots of corruption, evil and power. Chacón, then, has carefully structured a political allegory in a Romantic-Naturalist mode which fits literary tastes of the times in Mexico, Latin America and Spain. As an integral part of the literature fascinated with the outlaw as a social outcast, the work complies with trends in vogue at the same that it pinpoints intricacies of local phenomenon.

The novel provides witness to the breakdown of social values which Chacón perceived in his society. According to one of the principal authorities on bandits, Eric Hobsbawm, banditry is symptomatic of the tension and crisis that appeals to major social movements for change.[47] Unlike what Germans term Rauberromantik ("bandit romanticism"),[48] the New Mexican novelist does not pretend to portray a social bandit, nor is idealization in order. Instead, he transports the story from the realm of popular myth and ballad to the realm of historical consciousness in order to bring attention to the regional problems breeding anarchy. The confused purposes and ambivalent resolutions

challenge the reader to unravel the complex set of circumstances. We are led to see the protagonist as a rebel without a cause and a cause without rebellion. The impasse allows Chacón to situate his story within the construct of a fable that parallels contradictory perceptions of a rapidly changing society. Old patterns of traditional alliances along cultural lines were suddenly challenged as nonrelevant. It was no longer easy to determine whowas what, as masquerading and double identities became common practices. This is well illustrated by the inner workings of bandits involved in double-agent activities in Manuel C. de Baca's historical novel or chronicle titled Historia de Vicente Silva y sus cuarenta bandidos, sus crímenes y retribuciones (1896). The fact that Vicente Silva, the ring leader and also a police officer, utilized his office as a public front in Las Vegas, New Mexico, eventually attained legendary proportions. It became impossible to make justice and law synonymous; also, justice outside of the law gained popularity. Therefore, the confused nature of rampant violence and anarchy fueled a situation of hidden warfare. Mixed purposes contributed to the overall choas, thus confirming that the region experienced a serious social imbalance. The situation, as described in an excerpt from Manuel C. de Baca's book, may well explain part of the Zeitgeist and specifically serve to better contextualize Chacón's source of inspiration for his novel:

> Around the year 1892, the County of San Miguel was terrified by these incidents. The army of bandits that Silva commanded committed every possible kind of abuse, and the garrison of police charged with keeping the

> peace, maintaining order and keeping respect for the law unfortunately was counted among Silva's ranks.[49]

Both Chacón and C. de Baca focus on the same phenomenon in their indictment of outlaws, except that the former attempts to universalize what is part of local oral tradition. Chacón's work is literature trying to comment on history, while C. de Baca's is history trying to assume a literary construct.

In El hijo de la tempestad the text relies heavily on oral tradition for some of its conventions in developing the storyline and characterization. Filled with fanciful flairs, the descriptions have the lack of logic generally rendered in Romantic works. A freedom of associations occurs, almost whimsically, which diverts the central storyline while injecting fantastic elements with the purpose of enhancing interest. At the root of the narrative, one can detect an interplay between what the author considers an integral voice in popular lore and a narrator with literary ambitions within the written tradition. Folklore, for example, already contains numerous cases of a son who rebels against his parents, a common theme in the romances "El hijo desobediente" and "El hijo pródigo." In Chacón's novel, this figure is modified considerably by stating that the son's innate fierceness killed his mother at the moment of birth. Destiny, free will and the presence of supernatural elements contribute to highlight the action more than the content of the story. In addition , Chacón has the father abandon his son, turning him over to a gypsy woman, who was also a sorceress. If the child was born with preordained violence as a natural tendency, circumstances beyond his control did not help correct

his ways; on the contrary, he is predetermined to act in the name of Evil. T.M. Pearce, in "The Bad Son (El Mal Hijo) in Southwestern Spanish Folklore," points out this situation as one of the motifs of Southwestern folklore.[50] The main difference in Chacón's "hijo de la tempestad" is that the deformity Pearce refers to as essential for the "Mal Hijo" syndrome is not physical but psychological. As Cain figures, both the "Mal Hijo" and the novel's protagonist function as prototypes that were cursed from the moment they appear on the earth.[51]

An easily recognizable folk character, the bandit as a terror was an object of songs who instilled fear for his deeds. From a New Mexico newspaper from 1893, the following excerpt supports the popularization of such figures and could correspond to Chacón's nameless protagonist. The innovative feature here is that the bandit explains his own situation from a personal perspective; that is, it is not an external judgment but rather a confession on why he feels compelled to fight back.

Tantos males los hombres me han hecho
Que he perdido la fe y la esperanza;
He jurado exterminio y venganza,
Y mi voto fatal cumpliré.

(...)

Cuando ruge con ímpetu el trueno
Y retiembla la tierra de espanto,
Sólo se oye en las rocas mi canto,
Y a mis pies viene el rayo a morir.

De cien bravos se forma mi banda
Y obedecen mi altiva mirada,
Solo allá en mi cabaña apartada,
Aparece mi rostro feroz.[52]

Even the title El hijo de la tempestad reveals the close affinity between the popular versions of romances and Chacón's work. In the novel, as in the romances, the protagonist has no name because the goal of this type of literature is to provide a didactic framework. The main character is not all sure who his parents really are, except that they are identified as "un hombre y una mujer," thus reinforcing prototypical qualities. His parents are only biological; in reality, his environment and the gypsy woman act as surrogate parents. In this way, the author utilizes the character as a symbol for the pernicious effect of the social environment on the individual.

Modeled within Romantic aesthetics, the opening scene in the novel aims to establish a mournful atmosphere of suspense and danger in the midst of a terrifying storm. Charged conditions add to the drama of a couple that seeks refuge from the threatening elements, and their pursuit of refuge becomes even more urgent because the mother is about to give birth. Hyperbole abounds to make the story further enticing. Escaping from the jagged mountain peaks and the perils of the storm, the couple enters a cave. As an opening scene, it has heightened interest to captivate the reader, much in the same way that it would captivate a listener if the story were being rendered orally. The narrative effectiveness would probably be greater if told outloud. After the predictable beginning, the storyline follows

other pre-established patterns according to popular tradition. In a parallel situation, simultaneous to the couple's refuge in the cave, a gypsy woman sings a prophecy in a nearby town about a boy's birth. She instills in the townspeople the fear of taking in the child because he is destined to be evil and the terror of the region. Therefore, when the father goes to town with the child--grieved by his wife's death but happy about his son's birth--to seek help, the gypsy accepts to take care of him. A strong sense of determinism prevails for a boy born "en una noche sin estrellas" whose only influences will supposedly be of a negative and evil nature.

Various other techniques of folklore are employed to inject interest in the unfolding of the story. For example, fantastic duels between the gypsy and another mysterious woman, referred to only as "Sombra de la Luz," take place to settle who is to keep custody of the child since each claims the sole rights to him. Relying on different interpretations of scriptures, they argue their points from contrasting views: the gypsy woman believes that the evil child is not meant to die but rather unleash his will on an impoverished people; the other woman wants to eliminate him for being a child of the devil. Although questionable in their logic, the arguments make entertaining reading while they tend to infuse fear as a teaching device. Other absurd figures are used to strengthen the sense of evil as the overriding influence. For example, a monkey serves as companion to the gypsy woman and it inexplicably metamorphoses into a greater devil figure who overpowers the woman "Sombra de la Luz." The diabolical scene closes when the latter--in a

typical metaphoric representation of ridding evil--is swallowed when the earth parts. The fable switches to a visual emphasis to describe the day darkening and the earth rumbling. Designating the end of the second part of the novel, this theatrical abruptness contrasts well with the dramatic series of events that are replete with free associations and poetic liberties found mainly in the oral cuento tradition.

The last three parts of the novel are by comparison low-key, consisting essentially of the bandit's misdeeds, the terrorism he carries out , and his enslavement of a young lady. A shift or flash forward in time of almost 20 years is evident, ignoring explanations or any cause-and-effect relationships. The narrative simply makes the leap from the gypsy's predictions to their self-actualization in which the young man does in fact become barbaric and evil. Folk myth further fuels the narrative through the protagonist's surrounding himself with one-hundred thieves, somewhat simulating Ali Baba's forty thieves. Operating out of the cave in which he was born, the "hijo de la tempestad" has completed a circle to his origins, now using the cave as a complex system of labyrinthine paths. Urged on by an insatiable greed he dedicates most of his energy to leading his group to sack communities. A completely amoral character, his domination seems unchallenged until he kills the young woman's father (who was also enslaved) and attempts to rush the wedding with the disapproving maiden. These two events mark his final faux pas and subsequently lead to his downfall. Love might have redeemed him, but his wretched nature makes him incapable of even enter-

taining that alternative. The bandit's indictment reaches a conclusion only after he targets his vengeance on a defenseless victim and threatens her honor. The denouement has him succumb to rescue forces who surprise the thieves and kill him.

Most of the story contains a close affinity with folklore and legendary narratives. The death of the infamous leader becomes incorporated again into a realm of myth and a moral device. Another nameless person, a captain, responsible for his death, serves as the center of focus in the end of the novel as the local people recall past horrors. Resembling more Cervantes' Novelas ejemplares, the final scene consists of the captain telling his curious audience the whereabouts of the gypsy: "Pues sabed que se la llevó el diablo, a lo más profundo de los infiernos... Tiénela allí barriendo el aposento que deben ocupar ciertos politicastros que traen a la patria muy revuelta..." (p. 29). The captain's revelation is startling in terms of its implications to a social situation characterized by rampant lawlessness. The key significance here is that the reference goes beyond the story we just read. Chacón indeed does not condone violence, thus avoiding the idealization of the bandit figure. Instead, he utilizes this despicable character to establish the grounds for a more sweeping indictment against the squandering politicians who, by comparison, are responsible for the region's plight. The author now singles out the false heroes who hide behind the lawlessness and accuses them of being the true perpetuators of social dissolution and turmoil. In sum, the novel begins as a fable or an allegory, continues with a chain of fantastic associations common in popular storytelling, and

finishes with a social commentary of redeemable value for Chacon's times.

X. The Laws of Honor: A Roulette of Irony

Characterized by a totally different approach, Chacón's second novel, Tras la tormenta la calma, aspires more toward aesthetic ends. He again sets out to implement another facet of the literary emancipation he defended so vehemently in the introductory manifesto. His concept acquires new meaning: the emphasis on his own "fantasía" now refers to a renewed sense of eclecticism between English and Spanish literatures viewed from a local perspective. The literary exercise develops into a form of syncretism tempered by a bicultural experience. While openly acknowledging his two influences, and particularly relishing Hispanic tradition, Chacón links the two together and cultivates them as one which he considers New Mexican. As a writer, conscious of his unique situation of creating a regional novel in Spanish, he emerges with force and conviction. If his first work entailed a noncompromising diagnosis of social problems pertaining to his region, Tras la tormenta la calma presents dilemmas of the heart, that is, emotional predicaments of the sort that feeds intrigue. Whereas the first novel deals with unbridled chaos on a collective scale, the second one reflects a state of affairs on a more subjective level. Together, both works accomplish complementing ends: on anticipates a social upheaval of the magnitude of the Mexican Revolution; the other one provides a vision of social disintegration and the hope of

establishing new values.

Although Tras la tormenta la calma might be termed escapist in nature, part of its essential motive is to promote an urban costumbrista novel. The many models, such as Don Juan Tenorio, Bécquer, the typical themes of the Spanish Golden Age theater (i.e., honor, personal nobility versus class nobility, love versus infatuation), Espronceda and George Byron, can be easily identified. These established literary sources account for a majority of the influences, but Chacón again incorporates an undeniable source that is omnipresent: oral tradition. In numerous instances, the author borrows inter-generically (oral tradition and written tradition) in order to give his plot and his characters a degree of popular verisimilitude. For example, he emphasizes the unique and remarkable beauty of morena women which coincides perfectly with an anonymous song, "Mi gusto," that was in fashion in 1982:

> No me hables ¡por Dios! así....
> ¿Por qué me hablas al reves?
> Di con tu boquita 'sí';
> Pero no me digas 'yes'.
> (...)
> Que yo, a las mexicanitas,
> Las aprecio muy deveras;
> Trigueñitas o morenitas
> Me gustan más que las hueras.[53]

The narrator, who operates as a character and witness to the action, constantly admits personal involvement--vicarious--in the

love triangle between Pablo, Lola and Luciano. Through him, Chacón manipulates narrative perspectivism in order to heighten sentimentality and comment on social and literary conventions. As an intermediary between readers and characters, the narrator becomes the voice that gives direction to the events, plus he adds to the dimension of an otherwise predictable love story. Since part of his function is that of a narrative conscience, the novel takes on the significance of a lesson on how each character fails in living out the laws of honor and romance.

Tras la tormenta la calma can best be understood as a nineteenth century Hispanic dime novel or fotonovela without photographs. Part of the major thrust is to experiment in recreating a sentimentalist ambiance with flowery language, including the superficialities of a fantasy-filled imbroglio of love. The three protagonists, sterotypical in their respective characterization, carry out a well known script. It is the narrator-character who often demands to appear in the foreground, frequently interrupting the action due to his uncontainable involvement in the melodrama. Fanciful and sentimental, he takes advantage of the interjections to editorialize about such matters as pure love on an abstract level. Although plagued by ulterior fantasies, and inclined to obstruct the development of the story, his principal roles is to divulge characteristics about his native Santa Fe. He serves the narrative tool of manipulating and observing his surroundings, providing a glimpse into the area of local gossip and amorous affectations. A typical Romantic narrator, he reveals more than is expected of him: he reports with some objectivity about the lovers' dilemmas, but his

emotional outbursts confirm his attachment to the events. In other words, he is there to augment sentimentality and frivolous relationships for the sake of also showing his own affective makeup.

Despite the fact that the love story appeals mainly to the base sentiments of an innocent reader, Chacón is careful to incorporate other substantive elements to salvage an otherwise simplistic story. Plot lines, stock characters, intertextual allusions, linguistic nuances, and themes from Spanish literary models, especially from the Golden Age and Romanticism, are used with the intent to uplift the novel. Actually, this imitative slant debilitates the work, for its real value derives from the portrayal of regional qualities and social patterns. On the surface, it can be argued that the story is filled with an over abundance of decorative features, at times sacrificing action for wit and humor. This reduces the storyline down to a thin plot and leaves a didactic lesson short of force.

Chacón must have been aware of the attitude toward the novel as a genre during his times. At times considered frivolous, the novel was regarded by some as a moral threat to the young reader. In La Aurora in 1910, a translated essay by V. E. Thomann reflects the low point of the novel's reputation:

> It is well known that any book we read leaves some kind of impression in our mind. And those thoughts when developed, form almost always the destiny of the readers. Some because of their tendency to read instructive works, develop their personal faculties and become eminent men and useful women to society; however,

> others who read stories or novels try to imitate what they read, and as a consequence, some manage to become clever swindlers, high-strung anarquists [sic], seductors or evil-doers, who defend themselves before the law that their deeds remain exempt from punishment, blood from the innocent is shed and justice is mocked.[54]

Such perceptions perhaps did not permit Chacón to create a purely literary exercise, especially in view of his moralizing tendencies in the other novel. Part of his overt intent is to entertain and also demonstrate his literary background. With a penchant for European modes and models, he is determined to show how New Mexico is an extension of the Old World rooted in the Southwest.

Set in the idyllic colonial environment of Santa Fe, an authentic love relationship develops between Lola and Pablo, who seem to be naturally meant for each other. Harmony abounds in much the same manner as in the Spanish Golden Age theater, a situation which conveniently serves as a challenge to the villain named Luciano. The young couple, of humble origins, represent true nobility of character as opposed to those-- for example, Luciano-- who inherit their social class status. Pablo himself fits most of the descriptions of a Lope de Vega hero such as Peribáñez, especially for his industriousness and impeccable morality. Lola also meets most of the requirements as a comparable heroine with an enticing natural beauty. Her physical looks overtake Luciano, a wealthy student who has recently returned to his native city and his Donjuanesque talents are resourceful to take advantage of her vulnerability. Thus, what

seemed to be an exemplary love relationship between Pablo and Lola is challenged by Luciano who tests for possible weaknesses. Totally infatuated by Lola's beauty, this new suitor feels compelled to break the existent harmony and balance. Luciano, whose name is ironic, desires to carry out his obsessions of conquest for the sake of game. The challenge alone makes the opportunity appealing. He then confirms the fears V. E. Thomann expresses about certain types of literature, particularly in view of the fact that Luciano's eagerness to conquer Lola is based on living out literary fantasies in real life. The process also parallels Don Quixote's avid reading, except that the effect is the opposite: instead of correcting wrongs, he imposes his impulsive will by deception. With enchanting songs and persuasive rhetoric of love, Luciano manages to captivate Lola and both are found partially dressed by Pablo (and her aunt) in a seductive scene. At this moment the narrator savors his social commentary to mention that rumor is self-generated and the story spreads through town. The drama of the scene is only exceeded by the humor as Luciano runs throughout the city in his under garments until Pablo catches him and physically "teaches him a lesson."

The dénouement of the novel offers various twists to some intertextaul influences. Chacón straddles a fine line of borrowing parts of narrative models such as "El curioso impertinente," El celoso extremeño, and of course Don Juan Tenorio. The main difference lies in the way in which the New Mexican novelist judges the outcome defending Pablo's honor. All receive their due punishment and poetic justice is consequently

served. For instance, Pablo, who feels publicly disgraced and dishonored, had not been sufficiently protective of his loved one, and had thus left her exposed to more devious pursuers. Compelled to express a judgment, Pablo demands that the priest marry Lola to Luciano because she had surrendered to him physically. Since he had only received a commitment in promises, he feels that his own claim is a weak one. Instead, Pablo opts toward exercising abnegation by duly receiving his punishment in the form of ending up alone in a melancholic state. Lola, on the other hand, suffers by having to marry the self-made Don Juan for whom she does not feel love, only infatuation. Part of her chastisement is due to the weak sincerity and questionable affection she felt toward Pablo. Luciano also experiences the opposite of his true desires: his mockery of love and honor lead him into an unwanted permanent relationship.

These relationships and their motives--Chacón seems to suggest--are exaggerated and misdirected. For that reason, punishment is applied democratically to all. Irony dictates that they lose what they originally cherished. It is in this sense that Tras la tormenta la calma attempts to provide a new view of honor: it becomes a relative code of social behavior which is to be implemented equally. A judificious view of reality comes forth in a literary context that depends on European masterpieces, but which finds its own path in satirically presenting the obsession of love in a frivolous society. Chacón moralizes about how human behavior should be held accountable and responsible for one's actions. As the title implies, the novelist is seeking calmness and refuge in more authentic modes

of social behavior. The term "storm" might at first bring to mind the lawlessness and chaos of the first novel. It may also refer to the curtailment of inconsistencies in social values. In part this includes lamenting the loss of regional self which results upon imitating others. Calmness, then, is possible only when the characters are true to themselves. Chacón in this way contributes to the creation of a new cultural identity in a new environment. Literary emancipation, to the New Mexican novelist, is understood as positing an enterprise that is based on problems and elements characteristic of the area. Literature becomes a vehicle with which to present local concerns and comment on their problematic nature.

XI. Conclusion: Popular Forms Fuel a Written Tradition

From the background information to contextualize Eusebio Chacón's writings, and the analysis of his two works, we suggest that his contributions to the novel clearly set him apart from other nineteenth century writers. Both his personal qualities and his literary production attest to the presence of intellectual activity in what has generally been described as a backward frontier. As a writer, participant, spokesman, and initiator of the Hispanic novel in the Southwest, he embodies one of the paramount links to a wealth of Hispanic expression that still remains untapped. It is a shame that he has been ignored in the annals[55] of "official" literary history in New Mexico and the Southwest in general; nevertheless, that relegation now adds greater significance to his works and his civic stature. The tenacious lawyer, writer, and orator will someday occupy a

distinctive place as a seminal figure, whose ultimate goal entailed giving notice to the roots of literary tradition in the region. To accomplish such objectives, he has consciously focused on sources outside of his milieu in order to assimilate and mold them into viable forms that are appropriate to his people. The key balance has been to import outside influences and cultivate only what is locally suitable and compatible. Eusebio Chacón has been adept at indulging in the collective voice of popular tradition. The wisdom imbedded in that tradition is converted in his novels into a viable narrative consciousness that reflects and comments on itself.

Francisco A. Lomelí
University of California,
Santa Barbara

FOOTNOTES

[1] Gerald W. Haslam, Forgotten Pages of American Literature (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1970), p. 1. As useful as this collection is to try to fill gaps within American literature, it is a shame that the concept and the examples are not further developed.

[2] The most responsible for developing this concept and popularizing it was George I. Sánchez in Forgotten People: A Study of New Mexicans (Albuquerque: Calvin Horn Publishers, 1947). Directly or indirectly, this expose has probably spawned a whole series of books dedicated to researching New Mexico's Hispanic past.

[3] J. Frank Dobie, Guide to Life and Literature of the Southwest (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1942), p. 9. Emphasis is in the original.

[4] See their otherwise authoritative study Southwest Heritage: A Literary History With Bibliographies (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1st edition in 1938; revised and augmented in a 3rd edition in 1972). The work contains a wealth of information other than the deficiencies described. Other citations from this work will be indicated with its corresponding pagination.

[5] Florence E. Barns, Texas Writers of Today (Dallas: Tardy Publishers, 1935). From the data presented, it is obvious to conclude that Hispanic representation in arts and letters in

Texas is considerably less than in New Mexico.

[6] This is an enigmatic source considering its field of concentration and its blatant gaps.

[7] Miguel Romera-Navarro, El hispanismo en Norte-América: Exposición y crítica de su aspecto literario (Madrid: Renacimiento, 1917), p. 1.

[8] Edwin W. Gaston, Jr., The Early Novel of the Southwest (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1961), p. 83.

[9] See Stanley T. Williams, The Spanish Background of American Literature (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955).

[10] Lawrence Clark Powell, Southwest Classics: The Creative Literature of the Arid Land: Essays on the Books and Their Writers (Los Angeles: The Ward Ritchie Press, 1974).

[11] See Philip D. Ortego's doctoral dissertation "Backgrounds of Mexican American Literature," University of New Mexico, 1971, pp. 50-51. To accurately determine Clarence E. Carter's original idea about American historiography, we recommend his article "The Territorial Papers of the United States: A Review and a Commentary," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 41 (1956), 521-522.

[12] For further information on Judge Roy Bean, "the Law West of the Pecos," consult A Treasury of American Folklore, edited by Benjamin A. Botin (New York: Crown Publishers, 1944) from which we include an excerpt: "Carlos Robles, you have been tried by

twelve good men, not men of yore peers, but as high above you as heaven is of hell, and they've said you're guilty of rustlin' cattle. Time will pass and seasons will soon come and go; Spring with its wavin' green grass and heaps of sweet-smellin' flowers on every hill and in every dale. Then will come sultry Summer, with her shimmerin' heat-waves on the baked horizon; and Fall, with her yeller harvest-moon and the hills grown' brown and golden under a sinkin' sun; finally Winter, with its bitin', whinin' wind, and all the land will be mantled with snow. But you won't be here to see any of 'em, Carlos Robles; not by a dam' sight, because it's the order of this court that you be took to the nearest tree and hanged by the neck till you're dead, dead, dead, you olive-colored son-of-a-billy-goat!" (p. 136). Hanging Judge Parker fares equally well to the task of slander against a Mexican for his national origin: "And then, José Manuel Xavier Gonzales, I command further that such officer or officers retire quietly from your swinging, dangling corpse, that the vultures may descend from the heavens upon your filthy body and pick the putrid flesh therefrom till nothing remains but the bare, bleached bones of a cold-blooded, copper-colored, blood-thirsty, chili-eating, guilty, sheep-herding, Mexican son-of-a-bitch" (also from A Treasury of American Folklore, p. 148).

[13] Erna Fergusson, New Mexico: A Pageant of Three Peoples (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1951), p. 380.

[14] Although the quote is somewhat out of context, it nevertheless seems disturbing to overlook since much of the other information he presents seem credible. See Edward Simmen, The

Chicano: From Caricature to Self-Portrait (Bergenfield, N.J.: The New American Library, 1971), p. 25.

[15] The enlightening study by Russel Saxton uncovers much valuable information on the subject of historiography, its development and what attitudes prevailed, despite the many attempts to camouflage them. See "Ethnocentrism in the Historical Literature of Territorial New Mexico," doctoral dissertation, University of New Mexico, 1980.

[16] This interesting concept is developed by Franklin Walker in his work A Literary History of Southern California (Berkeley: University of California, 1950).

[17] It is worth noting that Stanley T. Williams in The Spanish Background of American Literature (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955) does not recognize any Aztlanense works per se as a legitimate piece of literature when he states: "Ultimately all this tangled weave from a lively expression in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, chiefly in fiction and in works which were at once historical, descriptive, and interpretive. One might wonder why the early relaciones of the documentos or the autos produced during the era of the missions no authentic piece of great Spanish literature in the Southwest" (p. 212). Then he adds: "But nonreligious writing was sometimes burned in the courts of the missions. Soon after the law of secularization in 1833 the tide of American invaders flowed through the Southwest, contemptuous of everything which might have inspired an indigenous poet, novelist, or dramatist" (p.

212).

[18] See Edwin S. Fussell, Frontier: American Literature and the American West (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University, 1965).

[19] The first article appears in La Palabra, 2, No. 1 (Spring 1980), 2-15, and the second study is in Chicano Literature: A Reference Guide (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985), pp. 244-260, coedited by Julio A. Martínez and Francisco A. Lomelí.

[20] These constitute the most commonly known literary forms that were already prevalent during the Colonial period and maintained constant through the twentieth century. For further explanation see Luis Leal's articles "Hispanic-Mexican Literature in the Southwest, 1521-1848," as cited in footnote #19, and "Mexican American Literature, 1848-1942" (Chicano Literature: A Reference Guide, pp. 280-299).

[21] See the introductory comments by Armando Miguélez in his doctoral dissertation titled "Antología histórica del cuento literario chicano (1877-1950)," Arizona State University, 1981.

[22] Aurelio M. Espinosa is particularly outstanding in his arduous collections of corridos and canciones in Folklore nuevomejicano y cancionero nuevomejicano and "Romancero nuevomejicano" (1915); he also excelled in his numerous studies on language from the state. In one occasion in 1915, he commented on the state of the Spanish language: "El elemento inglés que entre en 1846 y que ya se comienza a sentir, no ha cambiado todavía el lenguaje de los descendientes de raza

española, y la tradición española vive en Nuevo México como en cualquier otro país español. En la nueva generación, sin embargo, ya se puede observar un nuevo desarrollo. El idioma inglés, absolutamente necesario para el comercio, las escuelas públicas, donde se enseña solamente el inglés, en fin, la vida americana con todas sus instituciones inglesas, va haciendo desaperecer poco a poco el elemento tradicional español" ("Romancero nuevomejicano" en Revue Hispanique, 333 [1915], 446-560). Juan B. Rael distinguishes himself for the voluminous collections of folk tales in Cuentos españoles de Colorado y Nuevo México (Stanford: The Stanford University Press, 1957) consisting of two volumes and an amazing 1,378 pages. Aurora Lucero White-Lea has made valuable contributions in the area of diversified compilations of folklore in Literary Folklore of the Hispanic Southwest (San Antonio: Naylor Co., 1953). Arturo L. Campa is well recognized for his work Spanish Folk-Poetry in New Mexico (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1946).

[23] For further information on the subject, consult Anselmo F. Arellano's unpublished study "The Rise of Mutual Aid Societies Among New Mexico's Spanish-Speaking During the Territorial Period" and Peter A. Stratton's The Territorial Press of New Mexico, 1834-1912 (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1969). Arellano's article is cited with his permission.

[24] Extracted from Aurelio M. Espinosa's "Romancero nuevomejicano" which appears in Revue Hispanique, 333, (1915), 446-560. As compiler of this décima, he states having received it in

writing from Sr. Candido Ortiz from Santa Fe.

[25] Ibid., p. 526. The poem, from which this is just the beginning fragment, is attributed to Simon Gutiérrez, as compiled by Aurelio M. Espinosa.

[26] Porter A. Stratton, p. 5

[27] Ibid., p. 24.

[28] Ibid., p. 25.

[29] Cecil Robinson, Mexico and the Hispanic Southwest in American Literature (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1977), p. 137. This edition represents a revision of With the Ears of Strangers, originally from 1963.

[30] Anselmo F. Arellano is perhaps the scholar who best summarizes the types of poetry found in the newspapers of the period in an unpublished study "Historical Sketch of Culture and Society in Las Vegas During the 1880s" as part of his forthcoming dissertation "La Merced: The Las Vegas Land Grant and Its Colonizers," which we cite with his consent.

[31] See Anselmo F. Arellano's pivotal collection of poetry and personal biographies in Los pobladores nuevo mexicanos y su poesía, 1889-1950 (Albuquerque: Pajarito Publications, 1976), p. 13.

[32] Los pobladores nuevo mexicanos, p. 37.

[33] The list has been composed from Anselmo F. Arellano's book in conjunction with the names provided by Benjamín B. Read in Historia ilustrada de Nuevo México (1910). Other additions that appear after 1900, or before 1880, might be Don Jorge Ramírez, Antonio J. Martínez, Vicente Bernal, Don Pedro Bautista Pino, José Inés García, Felipe M. Chacón, Conchita Argüello, Nina Otero, Phillip N. Sánchez, Eusebio Chacón, Aurora Lucero White-Lea, José F. Fernández, Néstor Montoya, Jovita Gonzales, Josefina Escajeda, N. Faustín Gallegos, José Gonzales and Félix Martínez. Also, consult Doris L. Meyer's "Anonymous Poetry in Spanish-Language New Mexico Newspapers (1880-1900)," The Bilingual Review/La Revista Bilingüe, 2 (1975), 259-175.

[34] See footnote #21.

[35] The doctoral dissertation is from the University of Arizona, 1984.

[36] "The Rise of Mutual Aid Societies...," p. 7.

[37] The entire list of societies has been extracted from Anselmo F. Arellano's article "The Rise of Mutual Aid Societies...." To understand some of the society's inner workings, we highly recommend perusal of the constitution found and reproduced by Arellano in a special issue of De Colores, 1, No. 3 (1974), 5-18.

[38] The point deserves reiterating with the following quote that supports our contention: "Ignorance in literature, which existed among our people during a remote period, has disappeared

forever, and in its place we find a youthful generation which is growing in education, culture, and intellectual development. We believe that the palpitating question on the Castilian language should not be an obstacle, whether it be in form of a pretext, which might impede our right to statehood, although it is certain that the United States government through the present epoch has accepted the use of the Castilian language. Our beautiful language originated in Castile and our natural dialect has been used in New Mexico before and after these lands were acquired by the American government, and each day it becomes more necessary and important to use it among ourselves; and to make it disappear from the American continent shall be a major obstacle." The quote appears in El Combate, a newspaper from Wagon Mound, New Mexico, on December 6, 1902, which was translated by Anselmo F. Arellano.

[39] Appears in La Voz del Pueblo (other pertinent bibliographical information unknown) and the translation is provided by Anselmo F. Arellano.

[40] Although providing lists of the books that seemed to circulate in the region might lead us into the area of erroneous speculation, we consider it worthwhile to offer the following list of authors and works that were either found in personal libraries or were mentioned in book catalogs, or book jackets, assuming they became available. From the list, we can at least begin to ascertain the literary tastes of the times that might have had an impact on the writers. We submit only the fragmented information known that has been compiled, recognizing that much

remains to be accomplished in this area of inquiry:

1. Spanish novelist Fernán Caballero's novel Deudas pagadas in La Revista Católica (1875).

2. Carlota M. Braeme's Por el pecado ageno o la lucha de amor, translated by Bachiller Sansón Carrasco (Barcelona: Casa Editorial Maucci, 1900).

3. Avelina y Gabriela by D.J.M. Ramírez (Paris: Librería de Rosa y Bouret, 1864).

4. Su majestad el amor by I.A. (Barcelona: Casa Editorial Lezcano, n.d.).

5. Possibly other works by Casa Editorial Lezcano: Malditas sean las mujeres, Malditos sean los hombres, Malditas sean las suegras, Marina o la hija de las Olas, El hada de los mares, El paraíso de las mujeres, El infierno de los hombres, El purgatorio de las solteras and La hija de las flores.

6. Dora by Carlota M. Braeme and also Azucena.

7. La ciudad negra by George Sand.

8. Noventa y tres by Victor Hugo.

9. Los trabajadores del mar by Victor Hugo.

10. El hombre que ríe by Victor Hugo.

11. Atala, René and El último Abencerraje by Chateaubriand (3 novels).

12. María by Jorge Isaacs.

13. Sor Filomena by E.J. de Goncourt.

14. Fromont y Risler by A. Dudet.

15. La Señorita Girand, mi mujer by A. Belot.

16. Spanish literature of all sorts, especially some of the masterpieces from the Spanish Golden Age such Don Quixote, the picaresque novel, drama, some current Modernist poetry from Latin America and costumbrista literature from Mexico (i.e. Ignacio M. Altamirano).

17. English writers such as Shakespeare, Shelley and Byron, and other classics by Greeks and Latins.

18. It is noteworthy to mention that the Trinidad Chronicle in Trinidad, Colorado, in 1898 offered for their readers the Southwest classic Historia de la Nueva México (1610) by Villagrá in a series form which clearly attests to the sophistication among the readership and the respective literary tastes.

41 Following the same order, Manuel M. Salazar's manuscript is being revised by Juan Estevan Arellano and Anselmo F. Arellano; Chacón's works appeared as a limited edition thanks to La Tipografía El Boletín Popular from Sante Fe, New Mexico; Manuel C. de Baca's novel was published by the Las Vegas Normal

University in Las Vegas, New Mexico; the anonymous work first appears in La Voz del Pueblo on June 4, 1898.

[42] For further biographical information on Chacón, we suggest Anselmo F. Arellano's summary in "La Junta de Indignación 1901" which appears in De Colores, 2 No. 1 (1975), 30-37; also, see Francisco A. Lomelí's study "Eusebio Chacón" in Chicano Literature: A Reference Guide, coedited by Julio A. Martínez and Francisco A. Lomelí (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985), pp. 91-97.

[43] This speech, identified as "Elocuente discurso," is reproduced by Anselmo F. Arellano (De Colores, 2, No. 1 [1975], 39-46) from the original in La Voz del Pueblo in 1901. Already on February 28, 1898, Eusebio Chacón was described in terms of admiration that confirms much of what appears in 1901. One of the persons at an organization meeting, called Unionista, declared: "...es uno de los mejores oradores que tiene el país. fluido en su lenguaje y pulido en su modo de expresarse, encantó con su discurso a cuantos tuvieron la feliz suerte de oirle (sic). Combatió con toda su energía la idea de sucitar (sic) cuestion (sic) de razas, pero agregó: 'si alguien quiere levantar cuestion (sic) de raza en contra de ustedes vosotros no haréis mas (sic) que bien con defenderos de la misma manera.'" (La Voz del Pueblo).

[44] See Robert J. Rosenbaum, Mexicano Resistance in the Southwest (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1981), p. 146.

[45] Robert J. Rosenbaum here is referring to the herein mentioned newspaper from March 28, 1891. See his book on p. 131.

[46] El hijo de la tempestad, p. 2. All other citations from work will appear with their corresponding pagination.

[47] Eric Hobsbawm, Bandits (New York: Dell Publishing, 1969), pp. 17-19, has also stated: "When banditry thus emerges into a larger movement, it becomes part of a force which can and does change society. Since the horizons of social bandits are narrow and circumscribed, like those of the peasantry itself, the results of their intervention into history may not be those they expected" (p. 23).

[48] Hobsbawm discusses this category at length in pages 83-85.

[49] Manuel C. de Baca, Vicente Silva y sus 40 bandidos, edited by Charles Aranda is a modern translation. No known publisher appears or date of publication, although it was probably 1978. Numerous other translations and editions have been made of this original book from 1896. Also, the topic of banditry was much in vogue according to the critics José Timoteo López, Edgardo Núñez and Robert Lara Vialpando who, in Breve reseña de la literatura hispana de Nuevo México y Colorado (Juárez: Imprenta Comercial, 1959), have observed: "Las novelas aparecidas en Nuevo México a fines del siglo pasado tienen como tema la vida de los bandoleros que se hicieron famosos en toda la 'salvaje frontera'. Al lado de los cuatreros 'güeros' eran famosos los hispanos Vicente Silva y Elfego Baca en Nuevo México,

Joaquín Murrieta en California. (...) Las novelas editadas en Nuevo México, están escritas en un español sencillo y casi dialectical lleno de modismos y giros propios del Sudoeste" (p. 8).

[50] T.M. Pearce, "The Bad Son (El Mal Hijo) in Southwestern Spanish Folklore," Western Folklore, 9, No. 4 (October 1950), 295-301.

[51] Ibid., p. 289.

[52] La Voz del Pueblo, Las Vegas, New Mexico, February 4, 1893.

[53] La Voz del Pueblo, Las Vegas, New Mexico, June 25, 1892.

[54] See La Aurora, August 15, 1910. V.E. Thomann continues to argue that novels can break marriages and make one lose all feeling of honor and nobility. He also warns parents to keep children away from novels, otherwise they will be prematurely gray and their children will "run around incontainably through the illusion of the world." As far as he is concerned, novels distort reality and corrupt a sense of morality.

[55] Francisco A. Lomelí and Donaldo W. Urioste in Chicano Perspectives in Literature: A Critical and Annotated Bibliography (1976) were the first critics to specifically discuss Chacón's stature as a writer of novels. As a final biographical note, Eusebio Chacón died in Trinidad, Colorado, on April 3, 1948.