

“The Pachuco lads of today just ain’t got it.....”
Towards a Discourse Analysis of Chicano Expression

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The Spanish speaking residents of the United States are, by definition, a transnational phenomenon. There is a paradox here. This is because we are urged by a temptation to understand their expression from a national dimension. This is especially so, as you might expect when all too often with regard to so-called Chicano’s, writers representative of Mexican literature such as Octavo Paz and Jose Agustin are taken up and debated and tend to supply people’s image of Mexicans in the United States. Furthermore, we are urged all the more to simplistically locate as “Mexican” the frequency at which Chicano artists quote from the mythological world of indigenous peoples and the spiritual world of the Mexican masses when they culturally assert themselves. However, if we consider the fact that Chicano Studies (or Latino Studies) had already been institutionalized in American universities beginning in the 1960s and also consider the accumulative fruits of that research, it should become clear that we should avoid allowing Chicano expression to be incorporated naively into either of the national narratives of the United States and Mexico. Moreover, as the only literature scholar among the participants of this symposium, I believe that it may be possible to contribute to the Area Studies of the American-Mexican border region through reading the minutiae of the texts of Chicano self-expression. For example, it is possible to open up and find reverberations of poems of the masses from the far away border regions of Texas in the plays of Luis Valdez which take as their subject the so-called Pachuco, or Chicano delinquent gangs that, according to Jose Agustin, formed an early part of *Mexican* counter-culture.