

The Establishment of Community in Zora Neale Hurston's *The Eatonville Anthology* (1926) and Rolando Hinojosa's *Estampas del valle* (1973)

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In his essay "Chicano Literature: The Establishment of Community,"¹ Tomás Rivera defined community as "place, values, personal relationships, and conversation"² and subsequently described two short pieces by Rolando Hinojosa as "attempts to build a community."³ In the final paragraph he generalized this observation:

Up to the present time, one of the most positive things that the Chicano writer and Chicano literature have conveyed to our people is the development of such a community. We have a community today (at least in literature) because of the urge that existed and because the writers actually created from a spiritual history, a community captured in words and in square objects we call books.

The urge to create a community, in and through literature, should be conceded not only to the Chicanos. To reveal correspondences and divergences in two ethnic literatures, I shall analyze two texts with obvious structural and thematic similarities, Zora Neale Hurston's "The Eatonville Anthology" published in 1926⁴ and Rolando Hinojosa's "Estampas del valle", part of his first major work, *Estampas del valle y otras obras* (1973).⁶ After the two analytical sections I will compare the two cycles⁷ and determine their place in the context of Hurston's and Hinojosa's other works. In the end I very tentatively shall try to distinguish them from mainstream products treating the same theme.

In his *Zora Neale Hurston. A Literary Biography*⁸ Robert E. Hemenway highly praises "The Eatonville Anthology":

It is pure Zora Neale Hurston: part fiction, part folklore, part biography, all told with great economy, an eye for authentic detail, and a perfect ear for dialect . . . It is Hurston's most effective attempt at representing the original tale-telling context . . . the best written representation of her oral art.⁹

"The Eatonville Anthology" consists of fourteen individual pieces. In contrast to Edgar Lee Master's *Spoon River Anthology* (1915)¹⁰ the titles of the sections¹¹ do not disclose an apparent ordering device,¹² although the combination of place name and "anthology" implies a deeper kinship between the two works, particularly their view of small-town life as a feature of the past.

Most of the fourteen sections open with a statement on the outstanding quality of a character which defines his social status.¹³ Whenever this introduction refers to a negative quality, the narrator rushes to the character's help with a modification such as "Coon Taylor never did any stealing"¹⁴ or an extensive explanation like:

Becky Moore has eleven children of assorted colors and sizes. She has never been married, but that is not her fault. She has never stopped any of the fathers of her children from proposing, so if she has no father for her children it's not her fault. The men round about are entirely to blame.¹⁵

By this strategy the narrator signals approval of these individual attitudes and the responses of the community: stealing Coon Taylor has to "leave his town for three months"¹⁶ only. In the case of Becky Moore the women of the town isolate her children to prevent contamination. Only the town vamp, Daisy Taylor, eventually leaves for good after overstepping the limits of the townspeople's tolerance. But even here the narrator closes in an ironic and conciliatory tone: "Before the week was up, Daisy moved to Orlando. There in a wider sphere, perhaps, her talents as a vamp were appreciated."¹⁷

Without deeply probing the psyche or the history of these figures,¹⁸ the narrator and the citizens of Eatonville pragmatically consider even the self-imposed isolation of some of its members constituent for their community. This fact accounts for the static, anti-climactic nature of the place and its portrayal. In hardly any of the stories are the basic situations subject to change. We learn of some unsuccessful efforts in the past to correct obvious iniquities. Generally, however, people just feel amused and entertained like the prospective reader or listener.¹⁹

The World War, the coming of the railroad, and the departure of individuals occasionally cause physical and spiritual movement depicted as the loosening of morals and the questioning of social rituals. Only when these phenomena endanger institutions guaranteeing the survival of the community do people start reacting: The women e.g. violently defend the family. Normally, the communal self-defense mechanisms are still functioning. Change but complicates matters as the narrator indicates: "Back to the good old days before the World War, things were simple in

Eatonville.”²⁰ Continuity is felt or at least pretended within a generation and between the older and younger ones.²¹ The general refusal to examine the many dimensions of an individual character perfectly matches with this denial of change by eagerly overrating the stereotypical, the communal rituals. The reader perceives change mainly as a function of biological processes, i.e., the eventual death of the people portrayed.

Though the narrator makes frequent use of irony, he basically shares the attitudes and values of Eatonville. Quite often he adapts his syntax and vocabulary to the plainness of what he is telling. The repetition of words, phrases and situations, the narrator’s and his figure’s falling back on proverbial wisdom, expose the ritualistic quality of the experience. In the “Village Fiction” sequence the narrator even joins the lying contest with one of the town characters. Nevertheless, his command of various language registers signals detachment.²² With the exception of the closing formula, Black English is exclusively used whenever the characters are allowed to speak up for themselves. With evident delight in verbalization and in the tasks of the arranger he draws Eatonville as a collection of types permanently re-enacting stereotypical social encounters, thus assigning to this community permanence and continuity, affirming his characters’ desire to resist fundamental change.

The selection and positive acknowledgment of repetitive social action as a typical feature of a small Black community is based on a profound respect for individual conduct and a deep trust in the correspondence of human emotions. Hurston closes her “Anthology” with a Brer Rabbit tale explaining why the dog and rabbit hate each other.²³ In contrast to the preceding “crayon enlargements of life,”²⁴ the folk tale displays a firm cause-and-effect relationship. But it refers to a collective, not an individual phenomenon of the animal world, detached from a specific time and place. It is set “Once way back yonder before the stars fell.”²⁵ Projecting human behavior into the animal world signifies a reality-thinking desire, an effort to conjure up imperial power in a situation of oppression.

These observations should make us see the stabilizing functions of storytelling as demonstrated in the folk tale and the whole “Anthology”. By closing with a brer Rabbit story, Hurston transfers its strengths and weaknesses to her portrait of a specific community. The formula “Stepped on a tin, mah story ends” lifts the spell on the folk tale and the whole cycle whose individual themes and situations were already adapted to the typical features of the folk tale. The re-construction of Eatonville as a community establishes a complex interrelation between the narrator and his material and an equally strong communion between storyteller and his prospective audiences; it is folklore in the making. Storytelling is as repet-

itive as the situations re-enacted and described. Zora Neale Hurston hints at the importance of cultural identity through ritualization in "Double-Shuffle" where the males turn the formal dancing into a celebration of the Black musical folk traditions. Before releasing the listener into his own ambiguous world, the process of selection, verbalization and repetition, affirming and denying the restrictions of the individual life, of the singular community, of place and time, has magically fulfilled the basic human need for identification and permanence and has defeated the notions of isolation and transitoriness.

In a "Preliminary Note" and "A Note of Clarification" Rolando Hinojosa designates his "Sketches of the Valley" as self-contained and interrelated, claiming their own lives due to the strength of characters and situations. The role of the author is thus restricted from the outset.²⁶ Consequently, as in Hurston's "Anthology," the titles of the twenty sketches do not produce a common denominator.²⁷

Looking for framing devices for the obviously heterogeneous materials, we encounter two collective scenes in end position, "Voices from the barrio" and "Round Table," suggesting an effort to impose order through atypical and/or functional situation. The search for communication and orientation reveals itself as a major theme, particularly after studying the first sketch of the series, "Braulio Tapia": The father of the bride relates his present situation to his own courting scene.²⁸ The chain of identification across the generations ends with his father-in-law, Braulio Tapia, because the speaker does not possess any further knowledge. His limitations are exposed in his unanswered final "Whom did don Braulio see at the threshold when he asked for his wife?"²⁹ The theme introduced here confirms Hinojosa's choice of the mode of presentation.

In the third sketch, "Roque Malacara," characters from "Braulio Tapia" recur. Roque Malacara, the former suitor, declares:

My Tere gets tired and with good reason. We have a son, in addition to my father-in-law, we've also lost three little girls. My father-in-law was a good man. He loved to go fishing and he always found a way to take along his little namesake, Jehú. If people are reborn, I'd say that my son and his granddad are the same person.³⁰

Here, the space of time is expanded to the next generation through the basic truths of human life, birth, death and, as in the previous sketch, through memory and identification compensating for loss.³¹

In the two final "estampas" we shall spot this Jehú in a courting scene among the "Voices from the barrio" and in "Round Table" as subject of the conversation of old men. It is significant that they are

equally unable to reconstruct history beyond Braulio Tapia. So, the sequence of four generations and the final definition of the place, "Klail City, one of many towns in Belken County, Rio Grande Valley, Texas"³² circumscribe the margins set for these sketches. Transgression is reserved for some citizens who by this act attain to eminent status, not necessarily for the community, but for individual narrators.³³

Critics have reflected upon the fragmentation of this restricted world referring mainly to Hinojosa's use of the multiple point-of-view.³⁴ Articulation and dialogue occur in private situations like marriage, sickness and death requiring ceremony or ritual. The boundaries between the two spheres are not clearly marked as both public and private affairs can miraculously get out of hand³⁵ and subsequently, provoked misunderstandings and renewed verbalization.³⁶ Quite frequently the narrators try to show their utter surprise at life's consistencies and inconsistencies.³⁷ Very seldom do they find reliable stability.

A completely positive picture of human relations is drawn in the sketches dealing with don Víctor and Jehú, and in "Voices from the barrio."³⁸ In the collective scene the sounds of the younger and older generations are heard. But even there the community is portrayed as an accumulation of separate groups. The appraisal of this night as miraculous, as repetitive and a celebration of the people³⁹ gives this sketch a superior rank among the many scenes documenting the unreliability of experience. This construction stresses the desire of the people to save themselves some spheres of self-determination in a world closing in on them, also a longing for wholeness and order.⁴⁰

How do the individual narrators and the characters introduced respond to these ambiguities? Like the Blacks in Hurston's "The Eatonville Anthology" many of the Chicanos demonstrate a remarkable pragmatism.⁴¹ They all try to cope with their experience by verbalizing it, by fixing it and making their bewilderment known. Depending on the subject, their degree of personal involvement, their linguistic faculties and education, they develop individual varieties of tone and perspective.⁴² But also common attitudes are established: Most of the time they ignore the Anglo and his civilization,⁴³ seeking their identity and their images in the Chicano world. Some try to relate to the Mexican Revolution or the victories won against the Texas Rangers;⁴⁴ others retreat to Chicano folklore, proverbial wisdom⁴⁵ and folk medicine.⁴⁶ Many insist on family ties and on giving people proper names and nicknames,⁴⁷ thus finding orientation in the community, even though these strategies might include some wishful thinking.

Without obvious interference of a superior narrator, the fragments

gradually assemble into an expressive mosaic of one major segment of Belken County society. This seemingly self-propellent movement undoubtedly shuts out the nostalgic perspective and maintains the impression of a largely incoherent, unstable but vital reality including various strategies of response, efforts to keep up order and identity. Though the sketches generally evoke an atmosphere of simultaneousness⁴⁸ and not of sequence, the younger generation, represented by Jehú and Rafa, slowly but irresistibly moves to the forefront as subject of conversation, as persons pursuing social functions, and as speakers in their own right.⁴⁹ Their performances do not promise radical change as both of them seem to tolerate the "static heterogeneity" of this, in many ways, "restricted community."

In my comparison of the two cycles I am going to focus on the individual and the group, continuity and change, and the role of the narrator. Both texts largely define their characters through interpersonal relations. In Hinojosa's "Estampas del valle" the vicarious narrators constitute themselves as a group by their common urge to communicate through the verbalization of their own experience and that of others. Coherence between the individual encounters with reality is established in three collective scenes and through responses to the challenges of life with native strategies of the ethnic group, e.g. language and folklore.

In their actions and speeches the characters express a desire for independence *and* commitment, for individual *and* social identity according to the pressures they feel at the time. The enemy powers are never pinpointed, although we can conclude that the experience of isolation, insecurity, loss and the lack of perspective prompt them to retreat into the group. As they are not able to take advantage of its full potential, e.g. a new historical outlook, the characters do not build up a consistent group identity and very soon fall back into their individual selves. These shortcomings of Hurston's and Hinojosa's figures generate stasis as a predominant condition.

In both texts the group is primarily established in the reader's mind.⁵⁰ The characters never consciously define themselves as social beings. Other worlds beyond theirs occasionally forcing them to raise their flag as a community occur only marginally and are generally ignored. Hurston's narrator corrects these failures by cutting the individual encounters to size, to storytelling proportions so that they can become as much part of a communal tradition as the model animal tale.⁵¹ Hinojosa also compensates for his narrators' limitations in "Voices from the barrio," though less visibly and comprehensively than Hurston.

By a process of transformation Hurston retrospectively liberates her

characters and their stories from the conditions dominating the individual life, change and eventual death. This procedure asks for the capturing of a phase of small-town life, freezing it, making it disposable exactly as her characters prefer the collective, repetitive, stereotypical phenomena to experience continuity and familiarity. Whenever and wherever change occurs, Hinojosa's characters tend finally to accept it in view of their own ineffectuality. Hurston's figures frequently ignore or deny change in spite of their just-as-remarkable powers of acceptance. "The Eatonville Anthology" deliberately withdraws this place from the temporal process while Hinojosa leaves Belken County open for change and extinction, as his authorial retreat at the beginning implied. Of course, both techniques basically acknowledge the fact that the two traditional societies have been destroyed.

Contrary to this intended invisibility, Hinojosa is present in the selection of his material and, as telling, in his exclusion of many aspects of Chicano life.⁵² Hinojosa and Hurston communicate with their audiences through the choice of framing devices, the sequence of the sketches, and the maintenance of the oral folk tone. Hurston seems to have less confidence in her reader, in the self-propellent energies of her characters and stories, in their qualities of endurance and the general cumulative effect of her sketches.⁵³ Both authors confirm their trust in language as a means of communication, stabilization and preservation.

Both "The Eatonville Anthology" and "Sketches of the Valley" were published in the initial, testing phases of their authors' career.⁵⁴ To establish this context, I shall briefly indicate the further development of the themes and techniques described in my analytical and comparative sections.

Zora Neale Hurston returned to the Eatonville setting in various stories, novels, her autobiography, a folklore documentation, a drama, and in some of her essays.⁵⁵ Her hometown provides a positive communal mood and morality, source of identification for herself, her characters, and a place where storytelling is practiced.⁵⁶ This locality is never exposed to change and development; sometimes even characters and situations recur in later works. The pervasive spirit of the place just receives different status among the structural elements of the texts. Only in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, in her autobiography, and in *Mules and Men* do we occasionally get contrastive images of other places and social entities.⁵⁷ Some texts appear to be mere enlargements of the condensed Eatonville sketches, reversals of the folklore-in-the-making process.

The static quality of the place in the "Anthology"⁵⁸ and in all her works seems to contradict Hurston's belief in vitality, in her well-

developed sensitivity to contradictions as displayed in her essays and her autobiography.⁵⁸ These irritations can be dissipated when we take into consideration that the author assessed the values of Eatonville retrospectively, with a sense of loss, from the distance of her Northern experience. The term "anthology" in the title confirms this perspective.⁵⁹ Eatonville is conceived and presented as a reconstructed phase of Black communal life before the distortions through acculturation claimed their toll. For didactic purposes the illusion of permanence has to be established to re-activate the sources of communal ethnic identity. In some of her essays Hurston refused to let the racial question confine her life and art. She rather dedicated her fictional and documentary works to the re-vitalization and celebration of the heritage, putting it out of the reach of the majority culture.⁶⁰

Rolando Hinojosa's re-creation of Chicano small-town life presents itself in a different context. His "Estampas" form part of his first larger work, the first building block of his *Klail City Death Trip Series*, to date comprising seven books.⁶¹ In the subsequent titles the Chicano community loses its static quality as it is included into the historical process. Mobility and confrontation in Belken County cause the eventual destruction of traditional social structures.⁶² We already recognized the fragmentary nature of "Estampas" as foreshadowing loss.⁶³

In contrast to Hurston's method, Hinojosa chronicles the process of change in detail and does not merely imply it in a saving attempt. Step by step he focuses on more than one reality, various generations, slowly filling a large canvas with scenes of interdependence between individuals and various ethnic groups. In Hinojosa's work in progress the weaknesses and strengths of value systems are tested in a fluid, heterogeneous world producing both despair and endurance as extreme responses. Like human life Hinojosa's individuals and groups are on a permanent death trip.⁶⁴ Loss and death compete with vitality and creativity reflecting basic ambiguities of the human condition. This aspect gives the portrayal of the lost society of the "Estampas" struggling for survival a universal meaning. And after all, this world is still stimulating Hinojosa's creative energies as the "recasting and recreation in English"⁶⁵ of it in *The Valley* (1983) prove.

Hinojosa imitates the natural expansive mode of social orientation and the sequence of growth, stasis, destruction and reconstruction in the life of a community. Depicting a segment of Belken County society in its earliest memorable period, he invites the reader to re-assess the strengths and weaknesses of the traditional Chicano community. This is a procedure honoring the vitality and independence of his characters and readers, more democratic than Hurston's rather prescriptive method. Nevertheless,

the two strategies of persuasion are used for the same ends, the establishment of community through the reconstruction and revitalization of the usable past.

Reconstructing small-town life is a theme not quite alien to American mainstream literature. I already mentioned Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology* (1915). The Midwest is also represented by Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919), the sequel *Poor White* (1920), and Sinclair Lewis' *Main Street* (1920). John Steinbeck contributed *Cannary Row* (1938) and Thornton Wilder built Grover's Corners in *Our Town* (1938). Moving South we could think of William Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County and Larry McMurtry's Texas novels.⁶⁶ Most of these writers described their localities as threatened by change and eventual loss, and the majority of these works were published at a time when these worlds had already been destroyed. And it is also quite obvious that many of the authors wrote against the pervasive ideology among their contemporaries who either let the spirit of these communities fall into oblivion or tried to romanticize and mythologize it. Therefore Anderson, Masters, Lewis, Steinbeck, Wilder, and Faulkner share the intent of reconstruction, documentation, and re-interpretation, of making the past useful. These goals provide many roles for the writers, from historian, teacher, and social worker to outsider and nostalgic dreamer.

Considering these wide areas of correspondence between mainstream and minority, I still believe that themes like language, community, continuity, change and mobility, history, or endurance include special connotations in the works of ethnic writers. The trust in the power of the word as a tool to overcome powerlessness, forced muteness, is a first step towards identity and visibility as a group. For the minority leaving the community does not exclusively mean liberation from the confines of the small town, as for George Willard when he takes the train for Chicago at the end of *Winesburg, Ohio*, but a more ambiguous event, namely abandoning the protection granted by the community and moving into the domain of the enemy.⁶⁷ History and community have to be reconstructed and preserved in view of the deliberate denial, uprooting and destruction of alternative concepts as inferior by the majority civilization. This story of debasement forces ethnic writers to start from scratch, at the foundations of the communal building.

From the conserving function of the ethnic writers we should not conclude that they have to restrict themselves to traditional forms of writing. Interpreting the group heritage for a modern audience certainly asks for an innovative spirit who finds appropriate techniques of quote, integration and transformation. And retrieving the Black and Chicano past can be

equally revolutionary in a mainstream culture with a shaky conceptual base. In many books a delicate balance between change and continuity is maintained as ethnic writers would not like to affirm an oppressive situation. On the other hand, the urge for stability does not imply a rejection of progress and civilization, a refusal to grow up. Zora Neale Hurston's "The Eatonville Anthology" and Rolando Hinojosa's "Estampas del valle" should be understood in the context of a recurrent trend to think small, to investigate the results of internal colonialism, to stress the varieties of the American and the human experience, and to revalue the sense of community.

¹In Luis Leal, Fernando de Necochea, Francisco Lomelí, Roberto G. Trujillo, eds. *A Decade of Chicano Literature (1970-1979). Critical Essays and Bibliography* (Santa Barbara, 1982) pp. 9-17.

²*Ibid.* 12

³*Ibid.* 16

⁴*Ibid.* 17

⁵Quoted as EA from *The Messenger* 8,9 (September, 1926) pp. 332. Reprinted (with an incorrect publication date) in *The Norton Anthology of American Literature II* (New York, 1985²) pp. 1641-1651.

⁶"Estampas del valle/Sketches of the Valley," *Estampas del valle y otras obras* (Berkeley: Editorial Justa Publications, 1973). Quoted as EV.

⁷I am not at all interested in the discussion on the applicability of the term "novel" to Hinojosa's work. The same kind of argument started when Jean Toomer published *Cane* (1923) and Sherwood Anderson *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919). Unfortunately Hinojosa's explanations could not silence his critics. Cf. Juan Bruce-Novoa. *Chicano Authors. Inquiry by Interview*. (Austin, 1980), 59-60.

⁸(Urbana, Ill., 1977).

⁹*Ibid.*, 70.

¹⁰A collection of brief, confessional, explanatory or accusatory monologues of various authors, speaking up in the form of their epitaphs. Many of these statements are interrelated, the 244 former inhabitants of Spoon River talking about each other and themselves. The whole series of individual poems is loosely connected by a long poem by the editor, "The Spooniad" and an "Epilogue," a sort of play for voices by mythological figures.

¹¹I. The Pleading Woman; II. Turpentine Love; III.; IV. Tippy; V. The Way of a Man with a Train; VI. Coon Taylor; VII. Village Fiction; VIII; IX; X; XI. Double- Shuffle; XII. The Head of the Nail; XIII. Pants and Cal'line; XIV. Section XIII remains fragmentary. The complete story can be found in Hurston's autobiography *Dust Tracks on a Road*, ed., by Robert E. Hemenway (New York, 1984²) pp. 22-25. The main character of Section XII, Daisy Taylor will recur in Hurston's and Langston Hughes' unpublished play "Mule Bone: A Comedy of Negro Life".

Cf. R.E. Hemenway. *Zora Neale Hurston. A Literary Biography*, pp. 184-154. The concluding Brer Rabbit story was also incorporated in Hurston's collection of Black folklore, *Mules and Men* (Philadelphia, 1935) pp. 145-146.

¹²Cf. R.E. Hemenway, *Zora Neale Hurston*, p. 70: "The fourteen parts have no thematic, structural, or imagistic relationship beyond their general identification with Eatonville in a bygone age."

¹³Cf. I. "Mrs. Tony Roberts is the pleading woman"; II. "Jim Merchant is always in good humor—even with his wife"; IV. "Sykes Jones' family all shoot craps." Even a statement like "Old Man Anderson lived seven or eight miles out in the country from Eatonville" not only refers to spatial but also psychic distance in this character. And a simple remark like "Mrs. Clarke is Joe Clarke's wife" (262) describes a basic situation.

¹⁴EA, 261

¹⁵*Ibid.* Section III includes striking parallels with motifs and themes in Jean Toomer's stories "Karfintha," "Becky" and "Blood-Burning Moon" from *Cane* (1923).

¹⁶EA, 262

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 297. Cf. this story to Hinojosa's "Fira the Blond" in "Sketches of the Valley."

¹⁸Vague explanations are occasionally offered by referring to folk wisdom.

¹⁹Cf. e.g. EA, 297: "The town winked and talked. People don't make secrets of such things in villages . . . The town smiled in anticipation . . . So the town waited . . ." and 319: "He was hailed cheerily as he passed the sitters on the store porch . . . and set the porch to giggling and betting."

²⁰EA, 262

²¹See "Double- Shuffle"

²²Note the repetition of situations in IX and XI. Also the narrator's use of a mock jury trial in VII and elements of the tall tale in VII and VIII.

²³Motifs of the animal tale very well relate to the preceding story, "Pants and Cal'line." For an introduction into the meanings of the Brer Rabbit tales see Maria Leach, ed. *Funk & Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend* (New York, 1972) pp. 163 and the section "Animal Tales" in Langston Hughes and Arna Bontemps, eds. *The Book of Negro Folklore* (New York, 1958) pp. 1-30.

²⁴Hurston's term as used in her autobiography and essays.

²⁵EA, 332

²⁶In the new version of this text, *The Valley* (1983), the author turns into the "complier"; the new titles of these notes are "On the Starting Blocks" and "A Word to the Wise (Guy)."

²⁷Preliminary Note; a note of clarification; 1. Braulio Tapia; 2. Tere Noriega; 3. Roque Malacara; 4. Orphaned and Looking Forward; 5. My Cousins; 6. Harships of the Profession; 7. Learning the Profession; 8. Death Again; 9. Flora; 10. In the Pit with Bruno Cano; 11. Don Javier; 12. Emilio Tamez; 13. My Aunt Panchita; 14. Epigemio Salazar; 15. Fira the Blond; 16. Arturo Leyva; 17. Don Manuel Guzmán; 18. The Maestro; 19. Voices from the barrio; 20. Round Table.

Ten of these titles refer to individual names, two to family relations, five to individual situations worth telling, one to place, and the last two to conversational, collective scenes.

²⁸Note the nearly identical vocabulary: "I say yes, we shake hands, and I let him in . . . Don Braulio says yes, shakes my hands and lets me come in" (40).

²⁹EV, 40

³⁰*Ibid.* 42

³¹Refers to loss of the family, friends or limbs. Cf. e.g. "Emilio Tamez" and "Don Javier."

³²EV, 75

³³Cf. "My Cousins" where El Mion "was granted a one way trip by the state government to the pen in Sugarland where, with diligence and great application, he trained himself to make license plates. This is a highly specialized profession but one not much in demand, as El Mion found out since he never got the opportunity to practise it after he completed schooling at Sugarland" (45). Also "Death Once Again": Don Víctor Pelaez' notes from the Mexican Revolution are introduced as texts for Jehú's reading practice but also explain his personal attachment to this new father figure. In "Don Manuel Guzman" the Mexican, Texas and Wyoming experience build up a considerable contrast to Guzmán's rather prosaic death. In "The Maestro" Rafa and don Genaro Castañeda "shared almost identical experiences: they passed like clouds that are dispersed by air and time" (71) though they went to two different wars, World War I and the Korean War.

³⁴Cf. e.g. Rosaura Sánchez, "From Heterogeneity to Contradiction: Hinojosa's Novel" in José David Saldívar, ed. *The Rolando Hinojosa Reader. Essays Historical and Critical* (Houston: Arte Publico Press, 1985) pp. 76-100.

³⁵As promised in the "Preliminary Note" Cf. e.g. "Don Javier" and "In the Pit with Bruno Cano." The grotesque situations created there by accident reach the proportions of Mark Twain's humor.

³⁶Cf. e.g. "Don Manuel Guzmán."

³⁷Typical examples can be found in "Braulio Tapia" "Orphaned and Looking Forward," "Don Javier" and "Epigemio Salazar."

³⁸"Hardships of the Profession," "Learning the Profession" and "Death Once Again." These sketches, especially the first one of them, have the quality of Ernest Hemingway's Nick Adams stories. Other centers of stability are Tere of "Roque Malacara" and "Arturo Leyva" who functions as a moral authority, and the altogether evil Salazar in "Epigemio Salazar" and "Arturo Leyva." In "Fira the Blond" Américo Paredes is quoted as an authority on the people of Jonesville. (cf. 67).

³⁹EV, 73: "Now it's the *barrio's* turn to sleep. In the *barrios* a lot is discussed and, miraculously, there's always something to talk about, night after night. The *barrios* can be called el Rebaje, el de las Conchas, el Cantarranas, el Rincón del Diablo, el Pueblo Mexicano—really, names don't matter much. What does count, as always, are the people." This statement is ironized in the following sketch when the old men of Klail City can only provide family trees as personal context for the people they discuss.

⁴⁰The notion of continuity and change is quite ambiguous. In "Tere Noriega" we hear the complaint: ". . . but I get tired of working and, if you really want to know, I get tired of the same old life" (41). In "My Cousins" a folk wisdom is quoted: "It seems that people don't like being confused," (49) another one in "Learning the Profession": "But according to Saint Thomas, force of habit forms its own rigorous code. . . ." (49), and later, "Frankly, what was said wasn't anything new either and it might be that its greatest appeal was based on people's tastes which, and this is well-known, do not change without any warning" (49-50). Cf. also Don Javier's statement: ". . . not too many like her around anymore" (63) and the mood of loss in "Fira the Blond."

⁴¹Frequently shown in formulas like ". . . and that's it, you know?" (41), ". . . it's a known fact. . ." (45), "What else can you do?" (51), ". . . and that's that" (67), and ". . . but that's how it is and that's that" (71), signalling acceptance and an end of further elaboration. The formulas of consent and resignation resemble Kurt Vonnegut's "So it goes" in his *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969). Charles M. Tatum comments on these stylistic means: ". . . the tone of resignation to a course of events over which the characters seem powerless to exert any control" (55) in "Contemporary Chicano Prose Fiction: Its Ties to Mexican Literature" in Francisco Jiménez, ed., *The Identification and Analysis of Chicano Literature* (New York: Bilingual Review Press, 1979) pp. 47-57.

⁴²In spite of these differences the general tone remains oral. One of the simplest forms of response is represented by "Tere Noriega": ". . . I'm what I am and what comes out, comes from the heart." This sketch competes with passages from "The Maestro" when Rafa obviously tries to imitate Don Genaro Castañeda's own account of his war experience. In spite of the fragmentation through multiplicity and rather bleak social conditions, an overall atmosphere of humor and good-naturedness is kept up.

⁴³The Anglo world is present in its wars, the daylight contrast to the night life of the barrio ("Voices from the Barrio") and in the merchandise at the candy vendor's of the circus (cf. "Learning the Profession", 50).

⁴⁴Cf. EV, 74

⁴⁵Not always very successfully as is shown in "Hardships of the Profession": " 'Yeah, like they say, we're in the same boat.' 'That's right, Jehú, we sure are. And just like Cuahutemoc says, eh? Do ya think I'm in bed of roses?' 'It was Moctezuma.' 'Was it? Okay. . . . ' " (47). The spirit of acceptance is very well expressed in the proverbial ". . . There's a little bit of everything in the Lord's vineyard." (45)

⁴⁶Cf. EV, 44: "Orphaned and Looking Forward" and "My Aunt Panchita". (65)

⁴⁷Cf. EV: ". . . it's a known fact that nicknames often take the place of everything else: first name, surname and even the character of the fortunate bearer." See also "Roque Malacara" and "The Maestro."

⁴⁸With only occasional flashbacks or foreshadowings. A typical example for the breaking up of chronological sequence is the end of "Death Once Again": ". . . I decided to say in Flora; once again death, once again an orphan, and once

more looking ahead" (56). Here, the title of this sketch and of "Orphaned and Looking Forward" are paraphrased. At the end of "Don Manuel Guzmán" his death is commented upon; in "Round Table" he "leaves to stroll through the streets of Klail City" (75).

⁴⁹The author's presence can be observed in the associative linking of sketches, e.g. "Tere Noriega" and "Roque Malacara"; "Don Javier" and "Emilio Tamez"; "My Aunt Panchita" and "Epigemio Salazar." The author also guarantees that his narrators are granted the courtesy of being able to speak up without interference from others. See Yolanda Julia Broyles' article on "Hinojosa's *Klail City y sus alrededores*: Oral Culture and Print Culture" in José D. Saldívar, ed. *The Rolando Hinojosa Reader*, 109-132.

⁵⁰Cf. Zora Neale Hurston, "Characteristics of Negro Expression" in Nancy Cunard, ed. *Negro. An Anthology* (New York, 1970; originally published 1934) pp. 24-31: "Negro folklore is not a thing of the past. It is still in the making. Its great variety shows the adaptability of the black man: nothing is too old or too new, domestic or foreign, high or low, for his use. . . the rabbit, the bear, the lion, the buzzard, the fox are culture heroes from the animal world. The rabbit is far in the lead of all the others and is blood brother to Jack" (27), and "It is said that Negroes keep nothing secret, that they have no reserve. This ought not to seem strange when one considers that we are an outdoor people accustomed to communal life. Add this to all-permeating drama and you have the explanation. . . discord is more natural than accord. If we accept the doctrine of the survival of the fittest there are more fighting honors than there are honors for other achievements. Humanity places premiums on all things necessary to its well-being, and a valiant and good fighter is valuable in any community. So why hide the light under a bushel?" (28)

⁵¹Hurston described an all-Black community! Cf. R.E. Hemenway, *Zora Neale Hurston*. . . , 11-12: "Eatonville, Florida, existed not as the 'black backside' of a white city, but as a self-governing, all-black town, proud and independent, living refutation of white claims that black inability for self-government necessitated the racist institutions of a Jim Crow South. Incorporated since 1886, Eatonville was, in Zora Hurston's words, 'a pure Negro town,' 'with charter, mayor, council, and town marshal; the only white folks were those who passed through.' "

⁵²Cf. Günter H. Lenz, "Southern Exposures: The Urban Experience and the Re-Construction of Black Folk Culture and Community in the Works of Richard Wright and Zora Neale Hurston", *New York Folklore* 7/1-2 (1981) pp. 3-39: "Her work is characterized by a strong determination to transform everything into *one voice*, to reveal the unity manifested by her single narrative voice. . . "

⁵³In 1926 Zora Neale Hurston had attained some popularity as the author of short stories and poems accepted mainly by the magazine *Opportunity*, the house organ of the *National Urban League*. One of her stories, "Spunk," had been reprinted in Alain Locke's path-breaking anthology *The New Negro* (1925).

⁵⁴1924: "Drenched in Light" (short story); 1925: "Spunk" (short story); 1926: "Sweat" (short story); 1924: *Jonah's Gourd Vine* (novel); 1935: *Mules and*

Men (documentation); 1937: *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (novel); 1942: *Dust Tracks on a Road* (autobiography). Unpublished materials: "Eatonville When You Look at It" (essay); "Mule Bone: A Comedy of Negro Life" (play, written in cooperation with Langston Hughes).

⁵⁶In *Their Eyes Were Watching God* the main character returns to Eatonville to tell her life story on Joe Clarke's front porch.

⁵⁷In an unpublished series a comic verse, "The Book of Harlem", Hurston transferred some of "The Eatonville Anthology" techniques to another locality. Cf. R.E. Hemenway, *Zora Neale Hurston*. . . , 31.

⁵⁸Cf. Robert E. Hemenway, "Introduction" to *Zora Neale Hurston. Dust Tracks on a Road*, xix: "Zora constantly stresses in *Dust Tracks* her awareness of coexistent cultures. Even the process of assigning names demonstrates American biculturalism. Also Hurston's own comments in her autobiography: "So I sensed early, that the Negro race was not one band of heavenly love. There was stress and strain inside as well as out. Being black was not enough. It took more than a community of skin color to make your love come down on you. That was the beginning of my peace. . . Our lives are so diversified, internal attitudes so varied, appearances and capabilities so different, that there is no possible classification so catholic that it will cover us all, except my people! My people!" (234-235 and 237).

⁵⁹Cf. *Anthology*: "The *Greek Anthology* of ca. 4100 epigrams and over 2000 other pieces, mostly in elegiac verse: amatory, dedicatory, sepulchral, epideictic, horatory, convivial, humorous. . ." (Joseph T. Shipley. *Dictionary of World Literature* Totowa, N.J., 1966). Edgar Lee Masters restricted the term to a collection of epitaphs, thus interpreting small-town life as a memorable but dead past.

⁶⁰There is no doubt that this limitation can also be understood as a flaw, as an inability to keep up a more detached perspective.

⁶¹1973: *Estampas del valle y otras obras*; 1976: *Klail City y sus alrededores* (*Generaciones y semblanzas*, 1977); 1978: *Korean Love Songs*; 1981: *Mi querido Rafa*; 1982: *Rites and Witnesses*; 1985: *Partners in Crime*; 1986: *Claros Varones de Belken*; 1987: *Klail City*.

⁶²Cf. Rosaura Sánchez' statement: ". . . it is only in the last two books that the destruction of the Valley idyll is complete and that social contradictions beyond ethnicity become manifest. The novel's movement from heterogeneity to contradiction will be analyzed in terms of the text's time-space framework and its intertextuality, with a focus on the novel's dialogue with history." ("From Heterogeneity to Contradiction: Hinojosa's Novel," in J. D. Saldivar, ed. *The Roldando Hinojosa Reader*, 76-100) p. 77.

⁶³But the titles of Hinojosa's books still stress collectivity: "The very titles of Hinojosa's novels convey collectivity: *Klail City y sus alrededores* and *Generaciones y semblanzas*. These collective nouns in the plural at once span numerous time (generations), spaces (*Klail City y sus alrededores*) and agents (*semblanzas*). Both of Hinojosa's titles imply a broad scope, unlike the scores of Chicano titles which reveal a reduced, particularistic, often individualistic, primary focus: *Bar-*

rio Boy; *Autobiography of a Brown Buffalo*; *Bless Me, Ultima*; . . . y no se lo tragó la tierra; *Pocho*. Where these works do include community, it is filtered through the experiences of the protagonist." (110) (Yolanda Julia Broyles, "Hinojosa's *Klail City y sus alrededores*: Oral Culture and Print Culture," in J.D. Saldívar, ed. *The Rolando Hinojosa Reader*, 109-132).

⁶⁴Hinojosa's switch from Spanish to English in *Korean Love Songs*, *Rites and Witnesses*, *Partners in Crime*, and even in *The Valley* closely relates to the theme of destruction and loss.

⁶⁵José David Saldívar, "Rolando Hinojosa's *Klail City Death Trip*: A Critical Introduction," in *The Rolando Hinojosa Reader*, 44-63; p. 47.

⁶⁶*Horseman, Pass By* (1961); *Leaving Cheyenne* (1963); *The Last Picture Show* (1966); *Moving On* (1970) also Dylan Thomas *Under Milk Wood* (1954) and Gabriel García Márquez' Macondo novels.

⁶⁷Cf. Nash Candelaria's *Memories of the Alhambra* (1977) and Rudolfo Anaya's *Heart of Aztlán* (1967); N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* (1968) and Leslie M. Silko's *Ceremony* (1977); Richard Wright's *Native Son* (1940) and Jean Toomer's *Cane* (1923). In Toomer's book the movement from rural Georgia, the birthplace of the communal tradition, in Section One to Washington, D.C. in Section Two, and the attempt of an uprooted Black intellectual to return to Georgia in Section Three comprises most of the themes treated by the other ethnic writers. Unfortunately Toomer did not continue his writer's career after *Cane* and did not demonstrate how his materials could be further developed and adapted to the historical process. Cf. Heiner Bus, "Jean Toomer and the Black Heritage," in Günter H. Lenz, ed. *History and Tradition in Afro-American Culture* (Frankfurt, 1984) pp. 56-83.