



# Chicano and Chicana Literature: Otra voz del pueblo (The Mexican American Experience)

*Charles M. Tatum*

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The literary culture of the Spanish-speaking Southwest has its origins in a harsh frontier environment marked by episodes of intense cultural conflict, and much of the literature seeks to capture the epic experiences of conquest and settlement. The Chicano literary canon has evolved rapidly over four centuries to become one of the most dynamic, growing, and vital parts of what we know as contemporary U.S. literature. In this comprehensive examination of Chicano and Chicana literature, Charles M. Tatum brings a new and refreshing perspective to the ethnic identity of Mexican Americans. From the earliest sixteenth-century chronicles of the Spanish Period, to the poetry and narrative fiction of the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, and then to the flowering of all literary genres in the post-Chicano Movement years, Chicano/a literature amply reflects the hopes and aspirations as well as the frustrations and disillusionments of an often marginalized population. Exploring the work of Rudolfo Anaya, Sandra Cisneros, Luis Alberto Urrea, and many more, Tatum examines the important social, historical, and cultural contexts in which the writing evolved, paying special attention to the Chicano Movement and the flourishing of literary texts during the 1960s and early 1970s. Chapters provide an overview of the most important theoretical and critical approaches employed by scholars over the past forty years and survey the major trends and themes in contemporary autobiography, memoir, fiction, and poetry. The most complete and up-to-date introduction to Chicana/o literature available, this book will be an ideal reference for scholars of Hispanic and American literature. Discussion questions and suggested reading included at the end of each chapter are especially suited for classroom use.

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