



## **An Anthology of Chicano Literature**

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# **FLOR Y CANTO IV & V**

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## Historical Perspectives of pre-Hispanic America

The problem of research in the area of pre-Hispanic cultures is largely one of perspective. While it is common to detect errors made by researchers caused by a language problem (*Náhuatl*-Spanish), it is moreover a problem of recognizing sources replete with distortions. When the Spaniards invaded the Americas, the majority were brutal and illiterate, with the exception of the clergy. However, the problem with the clergy was one of a religious myopia which pervaded the church and state. Moreover, Spain in the 16th Century was feudalistic and backward, utilizing further the Inquisition in the name of God.

In addition to the problem of ignorant Spaniards censoring and distorting documents after 1521, there is the question of modern researchers utilizing questionable sources which portray a European interpretation of pre-Hispanic reality.

The problem becomes even more complex as we focus on pre-history. Western man has tried to neatly categorize civilizations by the use of material objects utilized which would subsequently correspond to their age. Rather, focus should be concentrated not from a physical measure which is narrow and confining, but to the natural social progression and evolution of cultures or civilizations.

According to the oral history of the *Aztékatl* people it begins with *Ixacilan*, which translated meant immensity. This continent was not a new land, it was of the same age as the remaining continents. There was an absolute uniformity in terms of social and spiritual development. It begins with the age in which man shares with nature, adapting according to climate or vegetation. This is the pre-historic age of *Ohtonki* which is part of the *Quinto Sol* and should not be confused with other *Soles* or evolutionary creations on this earth.

In retrospect, in the first creation (*Nahui ocellotl* or Jaguar-4) <sup>1</sup> beings are made of ashes and are devoured by the cosmic cataclysm; all are to perish and the sun is to disappear. The second creation (*Nahui ehecatl* or Wind-4) beings are swept by wind and become a type of simian being. Notwithstanding, wind sweeps all, including houses, trees, and the sun.

*Nahui quiyahuatl* or Rain-4 is the third creation in which beings finally disappear due to a rain of fire. These were small beings, aviary in nature. During the fourth creation, *Nahui Atl* or Water-4, it rains for a 52-year indigenous century and all mountains and land masses disappear. These beings destroy themselves and become aquatic beings.

It should be understood that the idea of creation is not one of an egocentric view of man made in the image of God. Therefore, the question of

the creation is not necessarily limited to *Homo sapiens*, as we understand it. The creation of earth beings must be considered from an indigenous perspective which recognizes spirits in all things which have equal importance as well.

It seems that in the last stages of the fourth evolution there appears a new creation; that of giant beings as seen in the Codex Vaticano-Rios. These giants were not to last because of their inability to adapt to the environment and cataclysmic changes.

It is interesting to note that prior to the *Quinto Sol*, or the current evolutionary creation on earth, there is recorded the existence of simian man known as *Tlacaozotzin*.<sup>2</sup> In terms of the main staple, we see man using first acorns of the evergreen oak, a diluted type of maize, the *cincocopi*, the prototype of maize, and finally the genuine maize reputedly discovered by *Quetzalkoatl*.

In the final and fifth evolutionary creation known as *Nahui Ollin* or Movement-4, we see the earth characterized by land movements and hunger; it is an age represented by *Teotihuacán* and *Piedra del Sol*, a human impulse and desire to exist, consist and transcend.<sup>3</sup>

Let us return again to the second age following *Ohtonki*. This is the age of *Chikomoztok* often confused in translation as a place of the seven caves which the Spaniards in their greed took for the Seven Cities of Gold. Rather, it means the Age of the Caves in which man from *Ixacilan* perfected his languages, invented pictographic and symbolic writing and invented fire. In their refuge, these groups acquired great unity and ideas to be transmitted through their accounts; one sees further the perpetuation of life through history.

After *Chikomoztok* is the age of *Telli* or mounds characterized by the textiles, ceramics, agriculture and religion. This is the age of the first architectural constructions in the Americas. The age of *Tecancin* follows with the perfecting of all home artifacts, the great development of industrial art, common familial norms, and social organizations. Groups created by social unities in small populations develop the idea of social and spiritual unity.

*Petl*, or fortress, is the age which gives rise to the necessity of defense against aggressive tribes. This is followed by *Altepetl*, which is a more important socio-geographic institution representing the transition between the pre-historic and proto-historic epochs. It is the epoch in which Indigenous man has a marked social and cultural development. Books, libraries, astronomy, and medicine reach great heights and philosophical ideas penetrate throughout the continent.<sup>4</sup>

More contemporarily, we have had a tendency to consider single migratory patterns of Indigenous man based on archeological finds. One of the fundamental errors is the acceptance of the idea that most *Indios* came