Chapter One

Introduction

The United States of America is a multicultural nation where people belonging to diverse cultures and distinct races coexist. According to The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,

Multiculturalism is a body of thought in political philosophy about the proper way to respond to cultural and religious diversity. Mere toleration of group differences is said to fall short of treating members of minority groups as equal citizens; recognition and positive accommodation of group differences are required through group differentiated rights.

In fact, the presence of different ethnic or social groups is the genesis of the pluralistic nature of the U.S.A. The people of these social groups emigrated from other countries and settled down in U.S.A. at different periods of history. Subsequently, they were identified by the names of their native countries or the continent or the language or even by the colour of their skin. The different social groups of the U.S.A. are White Americans, Black or African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, Native Hawaiians and Hispanic Americans.

The ancestors of the people, who emigrated from European countries – Germany, England and Italy are identified as white Americans. Black or African Americans are those whose ancestors came from African countries. The
immigrants from Asian countries, China, Japan and Philippines are known as Asian Americans. There are people who have been living in the U.S.A. for thousands of years. They are the Native Americans. The Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders are those having origins in any of the original peoples of Polynesia and Melanesia. The Hispanic Americans are those whose ancestors came from the Spanish speaking nations of Latin America.

According to the census 2010, 54 million of the 308.7 million residents in the U.S.A were Hispanic. The Hispanics thus account for 17% of the total population. This makes them the largest ethnic minority group. The 34.6 million Mexican-Americans constitute the largest group of the Hispanics, 17% of the population. These Spanish speaking Mexican Americans are called Chicanos. The word Chicano originated from Mexicano. The famous Chicano critic Arteaga claims in his work *Chicano Poetics: Heterotexts and Hybridities* that, “the word Chicano stems from Mexicano, which in turn, originates from Mexica, the label that the Aztecs used to refer themselves” (9). The Oxford English Dictionary (1989) defines:


... 

B. adj. Of or pertaining to Mexican-Americans or to the varieties of English and Spanish spoken by them. (104-05)
It is explicit that the question of being Chicano is not merely a matter of where a person is born and resides. Instead, it is highly dependent on issues regarding identity. It is quite obvious in the statement of the Chicano theorist Anzaldúa who speaks of a “dual identity”, in her book *Border lands/ La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, which she explains thus: “We don’t identify with the Anglo - American cultural values and we don’t totally identify with the Mexican cultural values. We are a synergy of two cultures with various degrees of Mexicanness or Angloness” (85). The Chicano critic Jorge Huerta also echoes a similar view in his work *Chicano Drama: performance, Society and Myth*. He claims that, “choosing to call oneself Chicano means maintaining an identity that is a synthesis of the Mexican and the Anglo American” (1).

The term Chicano was for a long period of time used in a derogatory manner to refer to the economically poor of Mexican descent. It was during the period of Chicano Movement in 1960s, that the young militant Chicanos adopted this traditionally derogatory term in a defiant stance of self-assertion. Subsequently, the term “Chicano” assumed ideological meanings and became a term of cultural self-affirmation, celebrating the Spanish, Indian and Mexican cultural heritage of the people of Mexican ancestry residing within the United States. The term can therefore be seen as a symbol of ethnic and socio-political identification. The Chicano writer, educator and critic Cherrie Moraga explicitly declares in her work, *The Last Generation: Prose and Poetry* that the term has political implications and that it stands for radicalism. Describing herself as a Chicana, Moraga states:
I call myself a Chicana writer not a Mexican-American writer, not a Hispanic writer, not a half-breed writer. To be a Chicana is not merely to name one’s radical cultural identity, but also to name a politic, a politic that refuses assimilation into the U.S. mainstream. It acknowledges our Mestizeje-Indian, Spanish and Africano. After a decade of “Hispanicization” (a term super imposed upon us by Reagan-era bureaucrats), the term Chicano assumes even greater radicalism. (56-57)

However, in the modern context the term “Chicano” refers to male Mexican Americans while the term “Chicana” refers to their female counterparts.

Chicano literature, as in the case of all other literatures, is embedded in a certain social and historical context. For the better understanding of the cultural resources that Chicano writers draw upon in their writings, it is indispensable to be acquainted with certain historical events that shaped the political, social and cultural positions of the Chicanos. For the object of this study a brief historical review of the Mexican American war and the rise the Chicano movement, is necessary.

During the period between 1830 and 1848, the United States of America endeavoured to expand its territory towards the south. This attempt was on the basis of an ideology called “Manifest Destiny.” The U.S. claimed that the conquest was for a noble cause. It even justified its action by declaring that it was spreading liberty, democracy and progress. The Chicano historian Acuna Rdolfo points out in his book *Occupied America: A History of Chicano* that, “‘Manifest Destiny’ had its roots in puritan ideals, which continue to influence Euro
American thought to this day. . . . Euro Americans believed that God had made them custodians of democracy and that they had a mission -- that is, that they were predestined to spread its principles” (49). The Anglo Americans believed that they were superior and destined to expand their territory to the whole continent, while spreading democracy and liberty. This attitude of the U.S.A. led to the war between the U.S.A. and Mexico.

In the beginning of 1800s, Anglo Americans and other foreigners had penetrated into the north western parts of Mexico. The Mexican government also permitted the American colonization in Texas. The colonists came as refugees from the depression of 1819. As a result, nearly 20,000 colonists and 2000 slaves immigrated to Texas and consequently, the Americans outnumbered the Mexicans. In this juncture, the U.S. government tried its level best to buy Texas but Mexico refused to give up its territory. The conflict between the two nations was further aggravated when Mexico abolished slavery in 1829. The people of Texas then revolted against the Mexican government with the aid of the U.S. government and the Texans won. Then Texas became an independent republic in 1836 and remained so until 1845.

In 1846, a war broke out between the U.S.A. and Mexico. After the fall of the Mexican capital on 2nd February, 1848, The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed. As per this treaty Mexico lost nearly half of its territory to the U.S.A. Thus the U.S.A. gained the territories Texas, California, Nevada, New Mexico, as well as parts of Arizona, Colorado, Utah and Oklahoma. In exchange, Mexico received fifteen million dollars. The river Rio Grande became the new border between Mexico and the U.S.A.
The treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo defined the border between Mexico and the U.S.A. It clearly noted that it was a ‘Treaty of peace, Friendship, Liberty and Settlement between the United States of American and Mexican Republic’. The treaty ensured the Mexicans in the U.S.A. to either retain the title and right of Mexican citizens, or acquire those of citizens of United States of America. The article IX of the treaty guaranteed the Mexicans that they could enjoy all the benefits and privileges of the U.S.A., according to the principles of the constitution. In that sense, Mexicans in the newly occupied territories were in no way inferior to the citizens of the U.S.A. They were equal to the citizens of the U.S.A. and their language, customs, religion and property should be protected. However, the treaty was not upheld by the American government. As a result of this, Mexican Americans were subjugated and thrown to the position of minorities in their own place. The writer and educator Cherrie Moraga explains the history and the position of Chicanos in U.S.A. in her work, The last Generation: Prose and Poetry. She describes the Chicanos as children of a double-rape:

Chicano Nation is a mestizo nation conceived in a double-rape: first, by the Spanish and then by the gringo, in the mid-19th century. Anglo-Americans took possession of one-third of Mexico’s territory. A new English speaking oppressor assumed control over the Spanish, Mestizo and Indian people inhabiting those lands. There was no denying that the United States had stolen Aztlan from Mexico. But it had been initially stolen from the Indians by the Spanish 300 years earlier. (153-54)
The failure to uphold the treaty and the subsequent implementation of Mexican American civil and property rights became the basis for the subjugation and segregation of Mexican Americans. The Mexican land owners had to prove their ownership. Otherwise their ownership claims were rejected, and their lands were usurped. The courts were also biased and all the proceedings of the courts were conducted in English. The courts were situated at places inaccessible to the Mexicans. In some cases, the land taxes were increased to unbearable levels for the Mexicans and lowered after they were forced to sell their lands to Anglo American families. Sociologists Luis Falcon and Dan Gilbarg point out in their essay “Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and Cubans in the Labor Market: A Historical Overview” how the Mexicans were deprived of their lands:

Traditional claims were rejected, and original owners were required to prove their ownership in court. The procedures of the courts were biased against the original owners: The burden of proof fell on them, the courts were conducted in English and in locations less accessible to Mexican land owners, and standards of legal proof were based on U.S. law rather than Mexican law under which the land had originally been acquired. (58)

However, Mexican Americans were suppressed and relegated to the position of second class citizens of the U.S.A. The Mexican Americans witnessed humiliation and subordination in all the fronts. In short, they were not treated on par with other citizens as per the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Consequently, the decade 1960 saw the social and political struggles of different movements such as the Civil Rights Movement, the Chicano Movement and the United Farm
Workers Movement. It was only during this period the socio-political struggles of the Chicanos came to be known to the public. The Chicano Movement consisted of several groups: the student movement, the urban working classes and the farm workers. The significance of the struggle was social protest, struggle for civil rights, nationalism and radicalism.

These socio-political organizations promoted and strengthened the ethnic solidarity among the Mexican Americans. The noted sociologist Gordon All Port points out in his work *The Nature of Prejudice*: “One of the results of ethnic persecutions is the strengthening of ethnic ties. Within their group, ethnic minorities can laugh and deride their persecutors, celebrate their own heroes and holidays” (149). According to Elizabeth Jacobs in her work *Mexican American Literature: The politics of Identity*,

These organizations were primarily concerned with reinstalling Spanish and Mexican land grants and property entitlements dating from the colonial period. Tracing a direct lineage back to these times, many New Mexican residents legitimated their claims to land through their Spanish forebears, thus predating American annexation of Mexican land after the US – Mexican war of 1846-8. In 1966 Tijerina led Allianza members in an attempt to reclaim part of the Kit Carson national forest in New Mexico calling for a stricter adherence to the civil and property rights promised by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848). (9)

The Chicano Movement paved the way for the establishment of Spanish language newspapers which helped the Mexican Americans to publish the
discrimination against their community. In addition to this, the Mexican American press developed a sense of ethnic solidarity by reporting on cultural events as Mexican Independence Day and Cinco de Mayo, which celebrates the defeat of the French forces in Mexico in 1862. It is also noted that “Chicano Movement” was not the sudden outburst of the Mexican Americans. It had its roots even before the turn of the twentieth century. It means, Mexican Americans started opposing the domination of Americans in the newly annexed territories of Mexico, soon after the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. It is evident in the statement of the Chicano historian Richard Griswold Del Castillo in his work *The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo: A Legacy of Conflict*. He states that “between 1850 and 1900 at least 15 associations were established in Los Angeles. Their purposes were social and political. However, they overwhelmingly promoted Mexican nationalist sentiments” (135).

The Chicano Movement of 1960s specifically, promoted a sense of personal worth and pride in common history and culture by emphasizing the contributions of Chicanos to the American society. The activists of the movement revived the symbols associated with their heritage, culture and physical appearance. They were very keen in pronouncing Spanish names and words with proper accent. They showed much interest in wearing costumes, shawls and sandals symbolic of Mexican culture. They were of course, proud of their heritage and their acquaintance with the Chicano Movement. Consequently, the Chicano Movement proved that it was instrumental in creating awareness about the problems faced by Mexican Americans in the U.S.A. Many of the activists of the Chicano Movement were involved in the
mainstream politics. Both the Democratic Party and the Republican Party acknowledged the importance of Chicano vote. Mexican American elected officials began to represent important areas of the south west. The noted Chicano historian Gutierrez discloses in his work *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants and the politics of Ethnicity* that, “This trend accelerated after 1971 when a U.S. district court ruled that Mexican Americans constituted an identifiable minority group entitled to special federal assistance” (187).

The Chicano Movement witnessed unprecedented success in literary and cultural production. A number of Chicano writers emerged. As a result, anthologies and festivals of Chicano literature appeared. A number of theatre groups were formed to enact dramas for creating Chicano consciousness among the Mexican Americans. Subsequently, a number of publishing houses were established to publish books and journals pertaining to Chicano consciousness.

However, Chicano literature is a recent concept that was influenced by the Chicano Movement, the socio-political civil movement of the 1960s. This body of literature did not emanate from a literary vacuum. It is a part of the continuous chain of literary activities of the Mexicans residing in the United States. So the beginning of the Chicano literature could be traced back to the year 1848, when the conditions for the Chicano consciousness were created. Thus the Chicano literature of the last three decades is the end product of the long-standing sentiments and traditions of the Mexican Americans. It is indispensable to note that the Chicanos had a literary tradition even before they became the citizens of the U.S.A. in 1848. The roots of that literature go back to the writings of the Spanish colonizers who colonized Mexico during the colonial era.
The Spaniards, at the time of colonization developed a literary tradition that was in the form of historical narration, reports, letters and diaries. They even narrated the history of their exploration and described the nature of the landscape and the natives of the new world. The earliest known work of this nature is *Relacion*. It was authored by Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca who escaped from a shipwreck off the coast of Florida in 1528. He wandered through the present Texas, New Mexico and Arizona for eight years and finally met the Spanish conquerors. His narration is an authentic account of the life of various native tribes of this territory. Another Spaniard, Fray Marcos de Niza chronicled the life of the native Indians living in Arizona and New Mexico in his work *Relacion de descubrimiento de las Siete Ciudades*. This work narrates the influence of Europeans and Judeo-Christian myths over the explorers.

During this period of Spanish colonization a number of colonizers wrote the history of colonization and their relationship with native Indian tribes. They elaborated in their writings about the ways and means adopted by them to establish their settlements and the subjugation of Indian tribes. Significant among the early writings and their authors are *La Historia de la Nueva* by Lasper perez de Villagra; *Viaje* by Hernando; *Viaje y descubrimiento* by Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo; and *El viaje que hizo Antoniode Espejo* by Antonio Espejo.

In 1700s Friars came to Mexico and established missions. They continued the literary tradition left by the explorers. Most of the Friars wrote narrative descriptions and diaries. The most important Friars are Fray Juan Crespi, Fray Pedro Font, Padre F. Garces, Fray Junipero Serra and Miguel de Quintana, Fray Isidro Felix and Fray Bartolome. During this period religious plays were enacted
The age old Spanish pageant-drama Moros y chrostianos was performed for the Indians, most likely as a warning. Among the descendants of the first settlers, religious plays, secular plays, romances, corridos and folk tales became an integral part of life and although based on old Spanish traditions, they took on distinct characteristics as they developed in the southwest. Los Commonches, a secular folk drama about the conflicts between the settlers and the Indians, is a good example of life in that region. The same development is also apparent in the romances, corridos and folk tales of this early period. (4)

In 1821, Mexico got independence from Spain and remained so till 1848 when nearly half of its territories were annexed by the U.S.A. After this annexation, the social, political and cultural conditions of people living in the conquered territories were changed. This change was reflected in the contemporary literature. The literary pieces of that period echoed the sentiments of the people. The portrayal of the conflict between Mexican-American and Anglo American was the major theme of that period. For instance, the famous play *The Texans* depicts the conflict between Texas and New Mexico after the independence of Texas.

During this transition period the writers continued to write in the traditional literary forms, and created descriptive narratives of historical
character. They chose to write in Spanish as a cultural identity. The noted writers and their works are Antonio Franco Coronel’s Cosas de California; Florencio Serrano’s Recuerdos; Fr. Francisco Palou’s Noticias historicas de la Antigua y Nueva California; Augusto Janssens’ Vide y aventuras and Jose del Carmen Lugo’s Vida de un ranchero. Among the works written in English are Miguel Antonio Otero’s, My life on the Frontier and Andrew Garcia’s novel, Tough Trip Through Paradise.

In 1960s, due to the advent of Chicano Civil Rights Movement, Chicano consciousness was created among the Mexican Americans. This made them assert their rights politically and culturally. Subsequently, the Chicano consciousness and the self-assertion of Chicanos influenced the Chicano writings. According to Annie O. Eysturoy and Jose Antonio Gurpegui, “The Movement (Chicano) changed the very character of Chicano literature and a new type of literature emerged which explored all the various facets of Chicano experience” (7).

The first Chicano novel Pocho written by Jose Antonio Villarreal was published in 1959. The central theme of this novel is identity crisis. The protagonist rejects the Mexican traditions of his parents and searches for his ancestors to find out his identity. Finally, he joins the U.S. Military. Other novels written by Villarreal are The Fifth Horse Man (1974) and Clemente Chacon (1984).

John Rechy’s novel City of Life published in 1963 deals with the theme “search for self-hood”. It is an autobiographical fiction in which the hero ventures from his native Elpaso, Texas, into the homosexual underground of

The novel *Plum Plum Pickers* (1969) written by Raymond Barrio, is a social protest novel that throws light on the exploitation of farm labourers by the agriculturalists of the U.S.A. This novel is influenced by the farm workers movement led by Ceaser Chevez. The same theme is dealt with by Thomas Rivera in his novel *Y no selo trgo la sierra* published in 1971. In this novel, the protagonist, a young boy, does not accept exploitation and oppression as a fate, as his ancestors did and finally achieves a sense of self through an affirmation of the Chicano community.

The novelist Rudolfo Anaya deals with the Mestizo heritage of Chicanos in his novel *Bless Me, Utima* (1971). This novel focuses on the Spanish, Mexican and Indian cultural roots of Chicanos. Anaya’s *Heart of Aztlan* probes the spiritual identity of Aztlan and *Tortuga* conveys the indomitable will of a man to live.

The search for identity is the theme of the novel *The Autobiography of a Brown Buffalo* (1972) by Oscar Z. Acosta. The theme is satirically described by the novelist in his second novel, *Revolt of the Cockroach People* (1973) which satirizes both the Chicano Movement and the Chicano community.

The life of the Chicano community living in the valley of Rio Grande in Texas is narrated by Rolando Hinojosa in his novel *Estampas de Valle y otras*
obras (1973) In addition to this narrative, He has written a series of novels called Klail City Death Trip Series. The novels of this series are Klail city y sus alrededores (1976), Miquerido Rafa (1981), Rites and Partners in Crime (1985), Dear Rafa (1985). In these novels Hinojosa depicts the relationship between Anglos and Chicanos. He reveals how Anglos manipulate to dominate over the Chicanos in the power struggle. Hinojosa’s art of blending humour and satire makes him an accomplished Chicano writer.

Alejandro Morales depicts the complexity of urban life and the daily life of Chicanos in his novel Caras Viejas y Vino Nuevo (1975). Morale’s second novel La verdad sin voz probes what happens when idealism and the realities of barrio life meet in the fictive town of Mathis, Texas. In Reto nel Paraiso (1983), Morales explores Chicano history and society through his personal experience. His novel The Bride People (1988) is his first novel written in English. It is a historical novel dealing with the problem of migrant labourers who migrated from Mexico at the time of Mexican Revolution and became labourers at Simons brick factory in California.

Lionel G. Garcia has written two novels. The first one Leaving Home (1985) deals with the history of Chicanos of California prior to the World War II. The second novel, A Shroud in the Family (1987), is about the identity crisis of Chicanos in Texas. Both the novels stand testimony to the sense of humour and satire of Garcia.

In Rain God published in 1984, the novelist Arturo Islas blends Indian myths and family history of Chicanos. Max Martinez’s novel School Land published in 1988, portrays the life of rural Texans and describes the hardships
experienced by the Texans in 1950s. The contribution of Chicana writers is also considerable as it adds a different view to Chicano literature. The Chicana novels throw light on the position of women in the male-dominated Chicano society. The noted Chicano academicians and critics Annie O. Eysturoy and Jose Antonio Gurpegui, in their work *Chicano Literature: Introduction and Bibliography* elucidate the characteristics of Chicana writings:

What generally characterizes the Chicana novel is a focus on the cultural and social forces with which women have to come to terms in a patriarchal society. The female protagonists of these novels have to define themselves not only as Chicanas within Anglo American society, but also women in a male-dominated Chicano culture. Another general trend in the Chicana novel is experimentation with narrative structure and form, a trend that could indicate a need to find new forms to better reflect a district female experience. (11)

The American Book Award winning novel of Sandra Cisneros, *The House of Mango Street* (1985) is a narration of the incidents in the life of the novelist. Cisneros, while describing various episodes in her life, makes her feminine voice audible as the novel proceeds. In Denise Chevez’s novel *The Last of the Menu Girls* (1986), the female protagonist refuses to perform the role prescribed by the society and takes up writing as her profession. Chevez’s second novel *Face of an Angel* (1988), presents the family life of Chicano women.

Estela Portillo Trambley’s novel *Trini* (1986), depicts the history of Mexican Revolution and migration of Mexican women from a Mexican village to

In addition to the novels, the Chicano and Chicana writers have also authored considerable number of short fiction. Most of the novelists have written short fictions which are in no way different thematically from the novels. All the short stories, as in the case of novels, deal with the Chicano themes such as search for identity, migration, alienation, rootlessness, problem of migrant labourers, Chicano culture and Chicano tradition.

The contemporary Chicano poetry also served as a mode of expression for the Chicano writers to express the Chicano consciousness. The poems of some of the representative writers and their works show the themes which have characterized the Chicano poetry. The poem of the Chicano activist and the founder of “Crusade for Justice”, Rudolfo Gonzales, *I am Joaquin* (1967) narrates the Chicano history and it seeks the Chicanos to go back to the roots of Chicano culture. The poem also emphasizes the need of unity among the Chicanos in order to reclaim the lost land and dignity of the mestizo identity.


Abelardo Delgado is a prolific poet of the Chicano Movement. His poems convey the message of protest against the American society. The important poetry collections published by him are *Chicano: 25 Pieces of a Chicano Mind*

The Chicano poet, who deals with the social and political conditions of Chicanos in his poems, is Tino Villanueva. The important poetry collections published by him are *Hay Otravoz: Poems* (1972), *Shaking off the Dark* (1984), and *Cronica de misanos peores* (1987). The contemporary Chicano themes such as culture, identity, inner and outer conflicts are reverberated by Bernice Zamora and Loma Dee Cervantes in their poems. A number of Chicana poets appeared on the literary scene with their anthology of poems and contributed feminine perspective to the general body of Chicano literature. Significant among them and their works are Alma Villanueva’s *Bloodroot* (1977), Lucha Corpi’s *Noon Words* (1980), Ana Castillo’s *Women Are Not Roses* (1984), Angela de Hoyos’s *Woman, Woman* (1985) and Sandra Cisnero’s *Wicked Ways* (1987).

Contemporary Chicano drama is the continuity of the literary tradition established by the early Spanish settlers of Mexico. They performed religious plays to propagate their religion among the native Indians. Drama became an integral part of Hispanic cultural traditions. After 1848, drama played a vital role in the preservation of culture and community solidarity among the Chicanos.

Luis Valdez is considered to be the father of Chicano drama. He led El Teatro Campesino, a social organization that fought for the cause of farm
labourers in U.S.A. This organization performed plays on social issues which affected Chicano community. The language of these plays was an inter-lingual blend of English and Spanish. The important plays written by Valdez are Zoot Suit (1981) and La Bamba 1987. In addition to these plays, he has edited a collection of plays Actos: El Teatro Campesino (1971). This anthology contains some of the best productions created by El Teatro Campesino. Another leading Chicano playwright Jorge Huerta edited, El Teatro dela Esperanzo: An Anthology of Chicano Drama (1973). It is an anthology of seven plays written for the purpose of creating cultural, social and political awareness among the Chicano people.

An anthology of dramas, Contemporary Chicano Theatre: An Anthology (1976) edited by Robert J. Garza, contains the works of some of the best Chicano dramatists. The famous Chicano dramatist, Estela Portillo Trambley’s drama The Day of the Swallows is a part of this collection. This collection also contains a comic satire, Los Vendidos written by Luis Valdez. Trambley has published an anthology of four dramas, Sor Juana and Other plays (1983) other plays of this collection are Puente Negro, Autumn Gold and Blacklight. In all these plays, Trambley discusses women’s struggle for autonomy as the central theme. Carlos Morton’s anthology, The Many Deaths of Danny Rose and Other plays (1986) contains El Jardin, Los Dorados and Rancho Hollywood.

A careful analysis of the Chicano writings reveals the fact that the ideology of the Chicano Movement is the foundation for the Chicano Literature. The Chicano Movement in fact, fought for the civil rights of Mexican-Americans in the multicultural society of U.S.A. This movement organized protests against
the domination of Anglo Americans over the Chicano population and urged non-conformity to Anglo American culture. Significantly, it challenged the assimilationist orientations of Chicano culture within the larger Anglo American society. Subsequently, the movement created a sense of pride in Chicano history, Chicano heritage and culture among the Mexican Americans. This Chicano consciousness influenced the Mexican American writers to take up Chicano themes to create awareness and solidarity among the Chicanos.

Evidently, many of the Chicano writers prefer to write in Spanish as a symbol of their cultural heritage and others write in English. Naturally, irrespective of genres, the themes of all the Chicano writings are circumscribed in the narrow circle of Chicano world. Though, some of the themes are universal in appeal and relevant to similar ethnic groups, the Chicano writers aim at establishing their own cultural values among the Mexican Americans.

The popular Chicano themes are identity crisis, discrimination, preservation of Chicano culture, Chicano history and experience of migration. Identity crisis is one of the dominant themes of Chicano writers whose ancestors were not the natives of U.S.A. but of Mexico. They claim that they are not the descendents of native Indian tribes but of the Spanish colonizers who colonized Mexico in 1821. Culturally Chicanos have no connection with the U.S.A., so they have a sense of rootlessness. As a result, they are forced to search for their cultural identity by probing the annals of history. The noted critic of Chicano literature Christina M. Hebebrand asserts in her book *Native American and Chicano/a Literature of the American Southwest*: “The central goal of many of these works (of Chicanos) was to come to terms with the history and to redefine
their identity, i.e. to achieve a more positive sense of self than the American society was willing to allow them” (227).

The Chicanos are discriminated socially, politically and economically. Their land was usurped by the Americans in one way or the other. They were denied of proper representation in government establishments, and they were not fairly treated by the police. Their children were not provided with adequate opportunity to learn their language and culture. They felt that they were treated as second class citizens in the U.S.A. Consequently, exploitation and discrimination became the subject matter for Chicano literature.

The portrayal of experiences and problems of migrant labourers is a prominent theme for Chicano narration. During the period of Mexican Revolution in 1910, a number of Mexicans crossed the Mexican-American border and worked in American mines, factories and agricultural farms as labourers. These later day migrants were not fairly treated by the Anglo Americans and they were considered to be the illegal trespassers into the American territory. When the Chicano Movement was started in 1960s, all the Mexican Americans were included in the movement irrespective of their place of birth and nature of arrival. As a result, Chicano Farm Workers Movement and Chicano Civil Rights Movement fought for the cause of these labourers. Consequently, their problems and experiences got reflected in the Chicano literature.

Culture is another major theme of Chicano literature as the Chicanos are identified in the U.S.A., by their distinct culture. Their strict adherence to their cultural values and language demarcates them as a prominent ethnic group in the U.S.A. Evidently, the Chicanos are afraid of getting their culture assimilated with
the dominant culture of the Anglo-Americans. So they are very keen in upholding their unique cultural values as a symbol of pride and heritage. The Chicano Movement also organized the Chicanos on the line of culture. Naturally, the responsibility of propagating and inculcating the cultural values among the Chicanos falls on the literary writers. As a result, Chicano culture becomes a theme for writing literary pieces. The Chicano historians Matt Meir and Feliciano Ribera in their book, *Mexican Americans/ American Mexicans: From Conquistadors to Chicanos* state:

The movimiento and the cultural renaissance of the late 1960s and 1970s clearly were mutually reinforcing. Artists drew inspiration from the movement as well as from their Mexican-Indian background; some created a unique synthesis of the two. Most authors drew upon their life experiences for topics and themes, but some combined these with cultural elements from their Indian past. (234)

Narration of history plays a vital role in Chicano literature. Chicanos in fact probe history to find out their culture and identity. In that sense exploring the history of the ancestors is a part of Chicano literature. It is evident in the book of the famous Chicano critic Ramon Saldivar, *Chicano Narrative: The Dialectics of Difference*. He elucidates: “For Chicano narrative *history* is the subtext that we must recover because history itself is the subject of its discourse. History cannot be conceived as the mere ‘background’ or ‘context’ for this literature; rather, history turns out to be the decisive determinant of the form and content of the literature” (5).
In this literary background, the contribution of the novelist Nash Candelaria to the body of Chicano literature is remarkable and worth mentioning. Candelaria’s novels undoubtedly conform to the ideology of the Chicano Movement. All his novels inevitably deal with all the dominant Chicano themes without deviating from their course. Candelaria, being a descendant of one of the early settlers who founded the city Albuquerque, presents history authentically to represent identity, culture and discrimination.

Candelaria was born in Los Angeles on 7th May 1928, to the couple Ignacio N. Candelaria and Flora Rivera. His father Ignacio served as a railway mail clerk. He had his early education in local schools at Los Angeles, and obtained his degree in Chemistry from the University of California-Los Angeles in 1948. Though he was a science graduate, his craze for creative writing, drove him to take up courses in short story writing, play writing and writing scripts for Television. During the time of these courses, he had the benefit of being taught by the teachers who had Hollywood background. He then worked as a chemist in a pharmaceutical company in California for four years. In 1952, he joined the air force as an officer training in ground electronics and served at Keesler Air base at the time of the Korean War.

After his military service, he returned to Los Angeles and took up the assignment as an editor for a research organization designing nuclear reactors for producing electricity. Then he joined a company that manufactures instruments for chemical laboratories, as a technical writer. Soon after this, he was transferred to the company’s advertising department from where he obtained vast experience in marketing and advertising.
He married Doranne Godwin, a fashion designer by profession in 1955, and later had two children David and Alex. Presently, Candelaria is living with his family in New Mexico. He has written five novels, two short story collections and a memoir. They are *Memories of the Alhambra* (1977), *Not by the Sword* (1982), *Inheritance of Strangers* (1985, *Leonor Park* (1991), and *A Daughter’s a Daughter* (2008). In addition to these novels he has published two anthologies of short stories entitled *The Day the Cisco Kid Shot John Wayne* (1988) *Uncivil Right and Other Stories* (1998) and a memoir *Second Communion* (2010).

Candelaria was awarded American Book Award for his novel *Not by the Sword* and the novels *Not by the Sword, A Daughter’s a Daughter*, and the memoir *Second Communion* were shortlisted for Western Writers of America’s best historical novel, PEN South West Fiction Award and Honorable Mention, International Latino Book Award respectively.

The present study endeavors to analyze all the five novels of Nash Candelaria in the light of Chicano history. Candelaria’s first novel *Memories of the Alhambra* is the first in the trilogy of historical novels that deal with the history of Rafa family since the time of Spanish colonization. In fact, Candelaria himself is a descendant of Rafa family, so he represents the history of Chicanos by narrating the history of his ancestors. A careful reading of this novel reveals that it is highly autobiographical, and that Candelaria has delineated his own life and inner self through the protagonist, Jose Rafa. Candelaria spent his early life in Los Angeles but always thought that New Mexico was his home. It is clearly understood in his decision to spend his old age at Santa Fe in New Mexico.
Similarly, the protagonist of the novel also goes to Los Angeles along with his wife in order to seek his fortune and returns home after his retirement, to attend the funeral of his father. To him, the death of his father is the end of one generation. He feels that he is an alien in New Mexico and so he undertakes a journey to Mexico in order to trace out the roots of his ancestors. In Mexico, he feels that Mexicans are not his ancestors but Spanish. So his journey takes him to Spain where he is not able to trace out his cultural roots. He finds only the statue of Hernan Cortes, the conqueror who invaded Mexico in 1821. Now, he wonders who his mother is, if Cortes is his father. He thinks of Malinche, an Indian who served Cortes as a translator and later became his mistress. Jose, with this inconclusive thought returns home. But unfortunately, he dies on his way home.

Candelaria delves into history and brings out historical facts about Spanish colonization, early settlers, Mexican independence, Mexican American war and Chicano life. Evidently, Candelaria’s theme of quest for identity is obviously revealed in this novel. He searches for his cultural identity first in New Mexico, then in Mexico, and finally in Spain by analyzing the annals of history. He, while exploring history, throws light on certain historical events to bring out the themes of discrimination, exploitation and other problems experienced by the migrant labourers. A careful scrutiny of the novel exposes the fact that Candelaria’s themes are revolving around the Chicano consciousness.

The second novel *Not by the Sword* is another historical narration that chronicles the Mexican American war that alienated the Chicanos from the sovereign state of Mexico. It is this war and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo signed in 1848, made the people who were living in nearly half of Mexican
territories, minorities overnight. Candelaria chronicles that the war was unwarranted and unjustifiable that the Americans falsely claimed nearly half of the Mexican territories.

Candelaria glorifies the life of Mexicans by describing the culture and traditions of Rafas. Rafas in fact enjoyed peaceful lives as landlords in Mexico, prior to the American invasion. They even predicted that they would be treated as slaves if the Americans invaded them.

In *Sword*, the character Carlos Rafa is presented as a typical Mexican who sacrifices his life for his nation. He hates Americans and joins the militia formed by the Mexican government in order to defend the nation from the American invasion. When the war begins, the Governor Armijo dismantles the militia and paves the way for the Americans to invade the country. Being agitated by this treacherous act of the Governor, Carlos joins the rebels and tries to redeem the lost territories from the Americans. But their secret plan is disclosed soon and Carlos is killed by American troops. Carlos’s brother, Tercero begins his career as a Catholic priest. When his brother Carlos dies in the war, the family is left without heir so he quits priesthood and joins family life. Traditionally, the eldest male member of the family becomes the heir and he is considered to be the future patriarch of the family. Here, Tercero’ decision reflects that he gives more importance to tradition than the religious duty. Here, Candelaria’s view of upholding culture and tradition is quite discernible.

The next novel *Inheritance of Strangers* is the continuation of the previous novel. Candelaria portrays the history of New Mexico and California during 1890. He delves into history to expose American domination and the
subjugation of Mexican Americans. Candelaria elaborates the ways and means adopted by the Anglo Americans to usurp the land of the Mexican land lords. Even the American judiciary was biased that it supported the cause of the Americans. Consequently, Mexican Americans lost their property and were thrown to the position of agricultural labourers. It is also discernible in the novel that American culture slowly started penetrating into the Mexican culture. Candelaria narrates the history of California during the period 1890 through the character Don Pedro and chronicles the history of New Mexico through the character Jose Antonio Rafa. The novel has been written in the form of a story narrated by Jose Antonio Rafa to his grandson Leonardo.

Candelaria presents Don Pedro as a land lord in California. He befriends an American lawyer, John Archer and incurs loan on mortgaging his estate. The lawyer slowly interferes into Pedro’s affairs and marries Pedro’s mother after the death of his father. Archer murders Pedro’s brothers in order to usurp their property. Finally, infuriated Pedro attempts to murder Archer who escapes even without a small injury but Pedro is arrested. He escapes from the prison and goes home with much enthusiasm to meet his family, but he is shocked to know that his house and the estate are in the possession of an Anglo. Pedro learns from a servant that Pedro’s wife and children left for New Mexico. Pedro searches for them but he cannot find them out and becomes mad.

In the story of Leonardo, the American money lender Smith tries to field his own man as a candidate for the sheriff’s election in order to flourish in his real estate business. Mexican Americans want to field a candidate of their own choice so that their grievances would be redressed. In their political rivalry
Leonardo’s father is assaulted by Americans and finally the boy Leonardo is also shot dead. Candelaria has written the novel in such a way to convey the message that all these problems are caused by the Americans. Here Candelaria exposes the position of Mexican Americans and emphasizes the importance of organizing the Chicanos to uphold their culture and tradition.

The novel *Leonor Park* is the story of a self-willed woman, Magdalena Armijo Sanchez Castillo Soto, who dominates over her brother Nicholas Armijo to get the legacy of their father. Candelaria presents Magdalena as a brave and obstinate woman to represent the brave and courageous Mexican American women who fought for their rights. The novel also deals with the history of land owned by Mexican Americans.

In the novel, Magdalena’s father Armijo leaves behind his ten acres of land and a big house in addition to other properties. As per the will left by Armijo, after his death, his two children should get equal share. But after the death of Armijo, Magdalena creates a fake will and tries to amass the entire wealth including the 10 acres of land. Interestingly, the land originally belonged to the Rafa family and the Rafas sold the land to pay the lawyer to prove that they were the real owners of the land in which they had been living for nearly three hundred years.

Candelaria presents Magdalena as obstinate and money minded that she could not even live with one of her three husbands she married and so preferred to live alone. Her only companion in her life is Leonor, the only daughter of her brother Nichols. Leonor has been with Magdalena ever since the death of her mother during childbirth. As Leonor alone is her solace and trusted person in her
life, Magdalena wants to make her the heir for her entire wealth. But contrary to her expectation, Leonor falls in love with Antonio Rafa and elopes with him without the knowledge of Magdalena. On hearing about the elopement, Magdalena goes out in search of Leonor all alone in her car and falls off a bridge that is under construction. After the death of Magdalena, Leonor becomes the indisputable owner of the entire property of her aunt. After fifty years of this incident, Leonor donates the ten acres of land to the municipal corporation to establish a park for the use of the public.

In *Leonor Park*, Candelaria analyzes history and understands the fact that the pieces of land possessed by the Mexican land lords, were once usurped from the native Indians by the Spanish colonizers. The natives, the real owners were deprived of their land and thrown to the position of minorities and slaves in their own land. The land obtained thus was granted to the Spanish settlers. Candelaria claims that, Mexican Americans face the same fate in the U.S.A. Their lands were usurped and thrown to the position of minorities in their own place. He comes to the conclusion that the only way for redemption is to return the land to the original owners.

Candelaria delineates the lives of three generations of women in *A Daughter’s a Daughter*. While describing the lives of women, he carefully deals with certain cultures and traditions of Chicanos and underlines the changes taking place in their culture and traditional values like marriage, religion and family life.

Candelaria, in this novel depicts the life of Liberata, the only daughter of Carlos Rafa. She studies in the school and has the habit of attending dances along with her friends. Once she happens to meet one Benito Sanchez, a boy
working as a delivery boy in a hardware shop. Liberata falls in love with the boy and goes to the extent of marrying him, much against the wishes of her parents.

After the marriage, Benito’s behaviour and attitude changes and he even finds fault with Liberata for trivial things and beats her up unnecessarily. Liberata identifies that he has illegal connection with another woman who bears his child. One day all of a sudden, Benito disappears and it is believed that he has joined military. Candelaria exposes the fact that attending dance and marrying without the consent of the parents are not part of the Chicano tradition. Liberata has only one daughter, Maria. Liberata carefully brings her up by adopting traditional values. After her schooling, she is married to a hard working agriculturalist, Denial Bustamante. Though, Maria initially does not like to marry him, later marries him and leads a successful life.

The third part of the novel deals with the life of Irene, the eldest daughter of Maria. Irene is presented as a modern educated woman who goes to California for her higher education and becomes a professional lawyer. Irene’s life is entirely different from that of her ancestors. Her attitude towards religion, marriage and family life is just opposite to that of Chicano tradition and culture. Candelaria here exposes that Anglo American culture has gradually started penetrating into the Chicano culture. Candelaria exposes in this novel, the dwindling of Rafa land and the deterioration of Chicano culture, generation by generation.
A close reading of Candelaria’s novels reveals that Candelaria is a historical novelist who probes the history of Chicanos in order to find out their cultural roots to fix their identity in the multicultural American society.

The present thesis entitled “Transcultural Conflicts in the Fiction of Nash Candelaria” focuses on the various historical events narrated by Candelaria to trace out the cultural roots of Chicanos. It attempts further to study in detail and evaluate critically, Candelaria’s portrayal of Chicano history, culture and traditional values upheld by the Chicanos and their ancestors in their family life since the period of Spanish settlers. As a socially committed author Candelaria holds aloft the Chicano history and culture and in fact attempts to convert literary writings into valuable sources of records. The researcher has focused upon fathoming out the psyche of the author in depicting the history and culture of his community.

Chicano writers have occupied a pride of place in literary circles in the west. There have been serious studies and researches on the writings of Candelaria and other Chicano authors among the western literati. However, curious enough, in Indian literary circles Candelaria’s writings have not been studied and discussed much. To the best of the knowledge of the researcher, no Indian scholar has attempted a systematic study on the writings of Candelaria. In the Indian journals also one cannot find scholarly articles on Candelaria. As such it is evident that the writings of Candelaria present numerous possibilities for research and analysis. Therefore, it is quite sure that the present study on Candelaria is highly relevant and innovative.
The thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter one “Introduction” makes a sociological survey of America to find out the position of Chicanos in the multicultural American context, the major writers of Chicano literature and their writings, literary corpus of chosen author, common themes in his writings, review of literature and the objectives of the thesis are included in this chapter. There is also a mention of the methodology adopted.

The Chicano authors in general and Candelaria in particular are socially committed and try to reconstruct their racial history in their writings. Historically referring, the Chicanos have suffered rootlessness, loss of identity and lack of historical evidences about their ancestry. Consequently, all the Chicano writers attributed paramount importance to trace the history of their race and place them on record through their literary writings. The second chapter “Historicity of Text” attempts to study Candelaria’s depiction of Chicano history in his novels. Every social group cherishes distinct socio cultural patterns and traditional aspects. Chicanos are most cautious in the preservation of their unique culture from the onslaught of the American culture. In spite of the Chicanos’ strong cultural moorings, very often they are susceptible to acculturation resulting in the vanishing of the few elements of the Chicano culture and the inclusion of the alien aspects of culture. Candelaria has meticulously dealt with the theme of cultural conflicts in his novels which is critically analyzed and evaluated in the third chapter of the Thesis titled “Cultural Conflicts”.

It is interesting to note that along with vignettes of Chicano culture and history elements of the quotidian affairs of Chicano life lie scattered in the pages of Candelaria. Hence the fourth chapter “Domestic Life” dovetails the features of
Chicano life found in the novels of Candelaria for analysis. The last chapter sums up the arguments of foregoing chapters. The limitations of the study and the possibilities of further research in the writings of Candelaria are incorporated in this chapter.

The researcher has used the tools of comparison and contrast. For recording the findings of the research the *MLA Hand Book for the Writers of Research Papers* (Seventh Edition) has been used.