

# Forty

Catherine S. Ramírez

Until very recently, forty, the midpoint of human life in the industrialized world, marked the somber beginning of middle age. This milestone year carried with it the gravity of experience, hard-earned wisdom, and imminent mortality. Yet now that forty is the new thirty (or so they say), it has taken on new luster and vitality. At forty, one can have it both ways: one should be familiar with the ways of the world but remain energetic, hopeful, and dynamic. As its venerable history and seemingly promising future indicate, *Aztlán* is an exemplary forty-year-old.

While many of us notice some lamentable physical changes at forty, *Aztlán*, in contrast, looks better with each passing year. Two-color covers have given way to glossy, full-color images of resplendent digital murals and conceptual multimedia sculptures. As the journal's perspective has broadened, its subtitle has evolved as well, from *Chicano Journal of the Social Sciences and the Arts* to *International Journal of Chicano Studies Research* to *A Journal of Chicano Studies*. And the masthead has changed quite a bit, too. In the beginning, the editorial staff consisted of "concerned scholars in various disciplines who [were] indigenous to the Chicano community," according to the spring 1970 issue. With the exception of Deluvina Hernandez, an assistant editor, this staff was entirely male. Forty years later, this is no longer the case. While a woman has yet to serve as chief editor, feminist scholars, myself included, have joined the editorial board. Meanwhile, *Aztlán* has become a vibrant forum for feminist scholarship and the articulation of the study of race, class, gender, sexuality, and Chicana/o queer theory. Indeed, at forty, *Aztlán* is only a bit older but much, much wiser.

As the premier journal in Chicano studies, *Aztlán* functions as a barometer for this field of inquiry. It charts shifts in perspective and paradigm. So what does *Aztlán*, as both a concept and a journal, mean in 2010? For better and worse, our world—and, along with it, Chicano

studies—has changed drastically over the past four decades. Early issues of *Aztlán* testify that scholars in this field have long looked beyond “the NortherN / mYthical land / wherefrom the AZTECS CAME,” to quote Alurista’s 1970 “Poem in Lieu of Preface.” But an increasing number are concerned with what the creators of the now-defunct zine *Pocho* called Aztlán’s “outer territories,” such as New York City, the Midwest, and el Nuevo Sur, and with the universe beyond the galaxy that Américo Paredes (1993) identified as Greater Mexico, a universe that includes Central and South America, the Caribbean, and even Europe, Asia, and Africa. In other words, the exigencies of globalization and neoliberalism, along with advances in information technologies, have prompted us to reckon with the international, transnational, and postnational. As the field of Chicano studies has brushed up against and even fused with those of Latin American and Latino studies, *Aztlán* allows us to remap what Alurista (1970) calls “la TIERRA / dE / AztláN.”

Just as *Aztlán*’s cartography has transformed over the past forty years, so has its institutional home, the University of California. Unfortunately, some recent changes at this university threaten Chicano and Latino studies and students alike. For example, in 2009 the UC Office of the President stopped funding the University of California Committee on Latino Research. As a consequence, the Chicano/Latino Research Center at my campus, UC Santa Cruz, took a 70 percent cut to its budget. Now more than ever, we, the scholars who make up *Aztlán*, must defend Chicano studies so that our next four decades can be just as fruitful and dynamic as those just completed.

## Works Cited

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CATHERINE S. RAMÍREZ, an associate professor in the Department of American Studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz, is the author of *The Woman in the Zoot Suit: Gender, Nationalism, and the Cultural Politics of Memory* (2009). Her current project, on immigration and assimilation, compares Mexicans in the United States and Muslims in Western Europe. She can be contacted at [cathysue@ucsc.edu](mailto:cathysue@ucsc.edu).