The Korean War played a significant role in the US history of race relations because it was the first conflict fought by an integrated military in which African American and Japanese American soldiers served side by side with white soldiers. The war would not seem to mark the same kind of watershed event for Mexican Americans, who were classified racially as white and therefore not consigned to segregated units during World War II. This did not mean, however, that they were exempt from the forms of racism that were visited upon other military men of color during the Korean War. One telling anecdote that speaks to this racism involves General Walton Walker, a white Texan who served as commander of the US Eighth Army. According to historian Max Hastings, Walker was one of the US military leaders who greatly miscalculated how committed the People’s Republic of China would be to aiding their North Korean ally. In the winter of 1950—while
reports had begun to emerge about the increasing numbers of Chinese that were being captured by United Nations (UN) forces—Walker “sought to explain away the presence of some Chinese among the North Koreans as insignificant: ‘After all, a lot of Mexicans live in Texas. . . .’”¹ The rationale behind Walker’s odd statement would seem to be that these Chinese soldiers should be considered North Korean, more or less, much as Mexicans in Texas are considered Texan, more or less.

Walker is referring to a minority community in South Texas that had become incorporated into the United States not through immigration or as a result of slavery but because it had been forcibly annexed at the end of the US-Mexico War. His statement suggests, however, that he nonetheless saw those “Mexicans [who] live in Texas” as Mexican, not Texan—and, by implication, not US citizens. Understandably, some Mexican American soldiers took offense at this comment. One of these was Rolando Hinojosa. Hinojosa is a Chicano writer who was championed by Ramon and José DavidSaldivar as they helped to popularize a borderlands methodology in the 1980s.² In Hinojosa’s Korean Love Songs (1978), Rafe Buenrostro, the protagonist and narrator of that work, recounts his tour of duty as a member of the 219th Artillery Battalion, and he refers to Walker’s statement as he recalls the horrors endured by US soldiers as they were being routed by the Chinese in the waning days of 1950. He begins a chapter titled “The Eighth Army at the Chongchon” with an ironic recapitulation of the rationale that had been given to US soldiers to explain why they had been sent to Korea:

Creating history (their very words)
by protecting the world from Communism, I suppose
One needs a pep talk now and then, but what
Gen. Walton H (Johnny) Walker said.
Was something else.³

The “pep talk” Rafe refers to is the statement cited by Hastings, though it is clear that Rafe sees a very different meaning in Walker’s words:

And those who survived
Remember what he [Walker] said:
“We should not assume that (the)
Chinese Communists are committed in force.  
After all, a lot of Mexicans live in Texas.”
And that from the Eighth Army Commanding
Himself. It was touching
And yet, the 219th
Creating history by protecting the world from Communism,
Brought up the rear, protected the guns, continued the mission,
And many of us there
Were again reminded who we were
Thousands of miles from home.4

What all the US soldiers who lived through the long march south—“those who survived”—remember about Walker’s words is how wrong they turned out to be: indeed, many more Chinese troops would actually be involved in the fighting than North Korean troops. But “many of us,” Rafe notes—and here he seems to indicate specifically those who were members of the very group that Walker referred to—were rankled by the general’s statement. Walker’s “pep talk” suggests to Rafe that he and others like him are putting their lives on the line for a country that sees them as foreign nationals—not as Texans, but as “Mexicans [who] live in Texas.”

In this essay, I read the Korean War writings of Rolando Hinojosa for the window they open into how Mexican American servicemen perceived their role in the conflict. Korean Love Songs is actually the first of three works on the Korean War written by Hinojosa: the others are Rites and Witnesses (1989) and The Useless Servants (1993). These are all part of a larger work, a serial novel titled Klail City Death Trip (hereafter KCDT), which currently comprises fifteen volumes. The passage from Korean Love Songs I cited above suggests that soldiers like Rafe found themselves negotiating a conflicting set of responses to what they experienced in Korea. His works illuminate how the war provided Mexican Americans with an opportunity not only to demonstrate their loyalty to the United States (“Creating history by protecting the world from Communism”) but also to glimpse a genuinely interracial social order in the camaraderie that emerged on the battlefield between ordinary US fighting men—to simply become one of a racially unmarked group consisting of “those who survived.” However, the
racism they encountered in the service also indicated that, to many whites, they would continue to be perceived as not fully US citizens: no matter how valiantly they fought, they would still be “reminded who we were / Thousands of miles from home.”

The presence of racial minorities—and particularly African Americans and Japanese Americans—in a US military force that was being desegregated was a key facet of the ideological battle with communism that the Cold War necessitated. The role that African American servicemen played in the early emergence of what Melanie McAllister has termed “military multiculturalism” is a development that historians like Thomas Borstelmann, Mary Dudziak, and Penny Von Eschen have explored in their work: studies that mention the Korean War as a pivotal event in the creation of a Cold War liberalism that required a putative commitment to the ideal of racial integration; Christina Klein and Robert Lee have brought into focus the place that Asians and Asian Americans occupied in emergent Cold War ideologies of race. Little attention has been paid, however, to the part that Mexican Americans—and particular those in the military—played in these transformations. Taking up Hinojosa’s Korean War writings, then, enables us to begin addressing that gap.

Hinojosa’s novels do not, however, just illuminate the place of Mexican Americans in the shifting domestic structure of race in the early Cold War years. In highlighting Walker’s statement, Korean Love Songs also points to the complex transnational racial dimensions of the war. The enemy that the United States waged war against in 1950, like the one it engaged with just a decade before, was Asian. Yet this Pacific war could not be a race war in the same way the prior one was, for a number of reasons. Most obviously, the Korean War was fought explicitly on behalf of one Asian country, South Korea, and implicitly on behalf of another—Japan, which was to serve as the economic lynchpin in the capitalist “archipelago of empire,” as Bruce Cumings describes it, that the United States sought to create in East Asia.

Looking at these works invites us to consider what Mexican American soldiers might have made of the fact that they were nonwhite combatants waging war on behalf of a white supremacist country against a nonwhite enemy. What we might hope to find in Hinojosa’s writings is a third worldist sense of solidarity with Koreans that is comparable to the cross-racial
identifications with the Asian enemy that were experienced by many men of color who served during the Vietnam War: a Chicano version of the Afro-Orientalism championed by cultural critics like George Lipsitz, Bill Mullen, and Vijay Prashad. However, as I will demonstrate below, a much more vexed and ambivalent set of cross-racial identifications take place in Hinojosa’s fiction. I will show that there are several strains of Orientalism that figure in his Korean War writings that attach to the three categories of Asian characters that appear in his works: Japanese civilians, Chinese soldiers, and Korean civilians. And while none of the Chicano-Asian connections generate a fully blown Chicano Orientalism comparable to the Afro-Orientalism championed by Mullen and others, they nonetheless constitute an important dimension of his writings. For they invite the reader to travel a historiographical trajectory that leads them to a consideration of the wider contexts in which the events depicted in the works should be situated.

Ultimately, Hinojosa’s Korean War writings ask their readers to explore the connection between the war that the United States fought in the 1950s in Asia with one it fought a century earlier in North America. For a distinctive facet of the ambivalence expressed by Rafe, Hinojosa’s fictional alter ego, has to do with the fact that, as a Chicano from the Texas-Mexico border region, he is a US national because he is part of a community that was incorporated through a colonial war of territorial conquest. Hinojosa’s fictions invite us to recognize that the border that was the catalyst for the Korean War—the 38th parallel—resembled the one that was established at the conclusion of the US-Mexican War: to see both as partitions that were shaped by the exigencies of US empire, reflecting a continuity in US imperial projects in both their territorial and extraterritorial manifestations.

**Korean Love Songs? Chicano Orientalism in the Korean War Trilogy**

A postscript included with the German bilingual edition of *Korean Love Songs* asserts that Hinojosa’s novel should be thought of as “love songs to Korea, a love that is stronger than its counter theme, death.” This is a rather strange characterization, since there is little in this work that expresses affection toward the country of Korea or to its people. The absence of much overt concern with Korea or Koreans is somewhat rectified in Hinojosa’s
final Korean War novel, *The Useless Servants*, as I will explore later. On the whole, though, to the degree that this novel and the trilogy it is part of function as love songs to Asia, they are addressed more explicitly to the Japanese civilians that Rafe befriended and the Chinese soldiers he fought.

The most pronounced strain of Orientalism in Hinojosa’s Korean War writings is in many ways a familiar one. Several chapters of *Korean Love Songs* are set in Japan, which is where Rafe was stationed before the war. Hinojosa’s Japan is similar to the one that appears in many other US representations of the Korean War. As Bruce Cumings notes, in most memoirs of the conflict, Japan appears as “civilized, beautiful, with a petite culture only to be admired—not to mention the floor shows, the Ginza, the golf courses.” Many Hollywood films from the 1950s prominently featured Japanese female characters who were prostitutes, lovers, and/or war brides. The fact that Rafe and many of his friends from South Texas take Japanese lovers suggests a resemblance between Hinojosa’s writings and these other Cold War Orientalist depictions of Japan. But the affinity that Rafe and other Chicano soldiers feel for the Japanese, and the informal familial bonds they form, suggest a kind of interracial affinity that isn’t apparent in mainstream representations.

Several chapters disclose the deep attachment to Japanese civilians that Rafe and other Mexican American soldiers developed when they were stationed in Tokyo before hostilities broke out on the peninsula. The men have all taken Japanese lovers. Sonny Ruiz, moreover, has gone so far as to assume a Japanese identity as Kazuo Fusaro, a schoolteacher who is engaged to be married. He has been able to pass because “to Americans he looks Japanese.” The narrative illustrates this in a chapter, “Brief Encounter.” Two MPs have stopped Rafe and are inspecting his paper when they notice a figure stroll by who they assume is Japanese:

> Just then, Sonny Ruiz passes by and tips his hat, showing,
> As he carries, the biggest, the loudest, the most glorious bouquet
> In the whole of Honshu.
> One of them grunts and says:
> “Pipe the gook and them flowers, there.
> Damndest place I’ve ever seen.”

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What explicitly links the Japanese and the Mexicans is a seeming physical resemblance that enables the racist gaze of white soldiers to see them as indistinguishable. In the passage above, the indiscriminate nature of this discrimination is played for laughs. The motivations for Sonny’s racial masquerade, however, are treated quite seriously when he provides an answer to Rafe’s question in the exchange below:

And home?
“This is home, Rafe, why should I go back?”
He has me there, Why indeed?15

Sonny’s decision to go AWOL and pass as Japanese makes sense to Rafe not only because it enables an escape from the horrors of war but also because it enables him to avoid a return to the racism that reigns in South Texas. As Ramón Saldívar has observed, “the cultural affinity between Japanese and Mexican American life” that Sonny finds so congenial “allows for this assimilation and its resulting turn away from an oppressed, self-negating home in South Texas.”16 “Objects of prejudice and exploitation at home, dying in Korea,” Saldívar continues, “it is no wonder that they are charmed by the allure of Japanese self-sufficiency, integrity, and family solidarity in the face of an occupying American army.”17 The final line of Saldívar’s comment suggests another possible dimension of this identification. In the Japanese, who have been subjugated, while retaining a sense of “integrity,” by an occupying US army that sees them simply as “gooks,” it would seem that Rafe and his friends see a version of their own community: for they are the descendants of a civilian population that suffered under US military occupation.

Another vector of cross-racial identification in Hinojosa’s Korean War writings takes shape around his depictions of Chinese soldiers. When Rafe first describes the mass killings in which he is engaged in Korean Love Songs, in a chapter titled “Chinaman’s Hat,” he has no overt emotional response to his actions:

From Kujang-dong, we had supplied the fire
Which, along that of armor.
Rid the Chinese and cut them to pieces. What we didn’t kill
The Air Force did, and those who were left,
Up they scurried to Chinaman’s Hat18

But later, in “The January-May 1951 Slaughter,” it is clear that these actions have taken a psychic toll:

No one talks about the cold anymore, nor about the dead,
Theirs or ours, but mostly theirs.
Also, we never seem to run out of shells. . . .
I don’t want to look at the Chinese dead.
There are hundreds of them out there. They died in the city,
They died in the fields and in the hillsides.
They died everywhere.19

This lament for the multitudes of Chinese soldiers Rafe has killed is expanded in Hinojosa’s final Korean War novel, *The Useless Servants*. Over the course of that work, which is written as if it were a war journal, Rafe comes to feel first a growing numbness and then a mute outrage over the vast loss of life he has caused or witnessed. He ultimately draws on a kind of universal discourse of soldiering in order to evoke an interracial and transnational brotherhood of war. In the final pages, Rafe dedicates his writing not only to his fellow US soldiers but also to the Chinese soldiers he has been fighting: “And it’s for all the other useless servants, the CCF [Chinese Communist Forces], who also fought for their masters in a foreign land.”20

Neither of these vectors of interracial identification, however, culminate in the kind of progressive Orientalism that has been valorized in the African American context by critics like Lipsitz and Mullen. Firstly, while his sympathetic rendering of the Chinese soldiers stands in stark contrast to hegemonic US and South Korean depictions of the conflict, it is important that their radicality not be overstated. For running alongside the “military multiculturalism” that Melanie McAllister has described, which focuses on the diversity within the US Armed Forces, is a kind of sister discourse that we might term “military Orientalism.”21 This identification with the Asian enemy posits a singular sense of military brotherhood—an almost sacred sense of communion—that links ordinary soldiers of all races who are put in the position of having to slaughter each other in
war. It can be detected in the very first Hollywood film about the Korean War—Samuel Fuller’s *The Steel Helmet* (1951)—which concludes by humanizing the North Korean communist soldier it has been vilifying throughout. And to cite a more recent example, this military Orientalism shapes two films directed by Clint Eastwood and released in 2006: *Flags of Our Fathers* and *Letters from Iwo Jima*.

Secondly, Hinojosa’s Korean War writings do not ultimately embrace or develop the cross-racial identification with Japan exemplified by Sonny’s transformation into Kazuo. While Rafe, the author’s alter ego, understands the reasons for Sonny’s embrace of Japan, he himself chooses to return to South Texas after the war. Moreover, in his final Korean War novel, *The Useless Servants*, he includes a few details that reveal an awareness of the history that would render a Chicano identification with an imperial Japan problematic—an understanding of the brutal colonial history that links Japan and Korea. It is not a coincidence that the Chicano identification with Japan is most muted in the only work in his trilogy that prominently features Korean civilians.

In certain key moments, that work speaks to what Hinojosa has identified as the object of some of his strongest memories: “the refugees (dead men, women, children, and their bones).” Rafe is haunted by an event he and Joey Vielma (a friend from home) witnessed in August of 1950 when “columns of refugees (in the hundreds, maybe thousands: people, carts, oxen, etc.)” pushed their way onto a bridge that had been slated for demolition. While some effort is made to clear the bridge of refugees, the order to blow it up is given and carried out:

The Gen (don’t have his name yet) gave the order himself. And then, the bridge was destroyed. Blown up. Hundreds died on it: kids, families, animals.

Joey and I turned our backs to avoid seeing the bodies. The bridge was blown up in all kinds of pieces. A roar, a geyser of water and who knows what else went up in the air. All the time, our vehicles revving the motors, but we could still hear the screaming and the crying. The Engineers had set the charges and were waiting for all units to get across.
This was worse than any hand-to-hand fighting we had had in Chuchiwon.²⁴

Rafe is on the whole a rather stoic character, and this is one of the few moments in which he expresses an emotional response to what he has witnessed. Despite the fact that he and Joey turn away from the scene of carnage, its impact is nonetheless felt, and the violent loss of life is registered in a series of sounds that incite his imagination: a “roar,” the “revving of motors,” “the screaming,” the “crying.”

What makes this moment significant is not simply that it might register Rafe’s racialized identification with the Korean refugees who are being slaughtered by the army he is part of. It is also the fact that this event provokes in him a need to make some sort of sense of what he has witnessed, a desire that motivates him in a series of conversations he has with other soldiers in his unit. Three days after having witnessed the demolition of the bridge, Rafe is “shooting the shit with the guys and the Old Guys [the more experienced soldiers],” and they find themselves talking about the refugees who perished at the hands of US Army engineers:

Old Guys say that the majority of refugees (back to that again) are city people. From as far away as Seoul, some of them. K[orea] is mostly a land of farmers, and peasants tend to stay put. The Communists treat them better than city folk, too. After all this talk got back to blowing up of bridge.

Still living with it. What can I do?²⁵

While their conversation does not seem to do much to mitigate the guilt and horror Rafe is feeling, it does produce in him a greater historical awareness of the nature of the war in which they are embroiled. Several similar conversations subsequently take place.

This scene and others like it are crucial to understanding the relationship to history that Hinojosa’s writings attempt to generate in their readers. They allegorize for us how we should engage with the events depicted in his works. Insofar as the incident on the bridge—the slaughter of Korean civilians by US soldiers—functions as a metonym for the war itself, the process of how we might come to understand that event should mirror the actions that Rafe takes.
In the discussion above, the conversation leads Rafe and the others to see that the conflict between the two Koreas might have a class component to it: that the North seems congenial to the “farmers” and “peasants” that compose the majority of Koreans, while the South is linked with “city folk.” In other passages, the men in Rafe’s unit come to an awareness that an antipathy between Japanese and Koreans may also have something to do with the war in which they have been embroiled. In one of them, Rafe reflects on the name of the country that US GIs are purportedly seeking to defend:

As for us, we’re heading northwest to the River Yalu which divides North Korea from Manchuria. Os [Officers] tell us that both Korea and Manchuria were under Jap domination for years. Korea was called Chosun or Chosen by the Js [Japanese] and Manchukuo was their name for Manchuria. Since the Koreans call their country Han-guk, who named it Korea?

Lt Waller said he didn’t know; Old Guys say Korea is also a Korean name, maybe it’s a classical name. One thing is sure: the Old Guys all agree that Koreans don’t like the Japs one damned bit.26

Soon thereafter, in a conversation with his Jewish lieutenant, who has experienced anti-Semitism in the army, Rafe describes an incident he witnessed in Japan. While attending Mass at a Roman Catholic church in Tokyo, he saw how Korean worshippers were segregated into their own section.

While these scenes do not directly explain the reasons for this Korean-Japanese antipathy, the conversations that take place between Rafe and the other soldiers model for readers the response that they should have to reading Hinojosa’s fiction: which is to supplement what they have witnessed with a greater historical knowledge. They also indicate Hinojosa’s own awareness of Japan’s horrendous treatment of the Asian countries it conquered.27 These scenes encourage readers to see the war in Korea in the way that many scholars of East Asian studies now see it: as deeply embedded in a longer history of intra-Asian conflict in which the brutality of Japanese imperialism played a determining role.

While there are no scenes in The Useless Servants that develop the Chinese-Chicano axis of identification into a comparable set of historical queries about China’s relationship to the war, the passages I have discussed above
provide a kind of pedagogical itinerary for readers to follow. If we follow the
text’s invitation to do what Rafe and the other men in his unit do, we should
respond to the events we witness by asking our own questions. How this
Chinese-Chicano linkage might provoke an illuminating inquiry into the
historical relationship between the two sites that Hinojosa’s writings bring
into proximity—South Texas and Korea—is suggested by anthropologist
José Limón in the opening of his book-length study, Dancing with the Devil:
Society and Cultural Poetics in Mexican-American South Texas. Limón begins
his book by suggesting how Walker’s “seemingly bizarre cultural simile”
reveals “a dualistic and racist cultural poetics,” an Orientalism that links
Mexicans and Chinese in two ways: both are rendered as “a horde threaten-
ing to overwhelm,” and yet both are presented as “inert and passive, ‘unwill-
ing or unable to intervene effectively’ in war and society.”28

Limón goes on, however, to suggest how Walker’s analogy might lead
us to consider an actual historical resemblance between the situation faced
by the Chinese in 1950 and that of the Mexicans who lived on both banks
of the Rio Grande a century earlier. Walker might not have underestimated
the Chinese, Limón asserts,

had he but recalled, in his comparative metaphor, a more accurate, less
stereotypic, historical sense of Mexicans in Texas. Had he done so, he
might have more accurately sensed the Chinese willingness to go to war
in defense of their border against what they saw as American imperial-
ism. For it is a basic premise and organizing metaphor for this essay that
since the 1830s, the Mexicans of south Texas have been in a state of social
war with the “Anglo” dominant Other and their class allies.29

The similarity that Limón draws between the Chinese and the Mexi-
cans in Texas depends on defining the United States as acting in relation
to both populations as a belligerent imperial power. In its military con-
fl ict with Mexico over Texas, which began in earnest in 1830 in Limón’s
account, the United States was engaged in a war of colonial expansion. The
Rio Grande, then, which delineates the border that was the outcome of this
war, is implicitly invoked here as a kind of corollary to the Yalu. Moreover,
Limón suggests that the US-Mexican war was a kind of race war, one that
has persisted in South Texas as a “state of social war” between working-class Chicanos and “the ‘Anglo’ dominant Other and their class allies.”

I will return later to the historical analogy that Limón makes between the US-Mexico War and the Korean War—and specifically between the political borders, or partitions, that they established—but for now I want to highlight his rendering of the “state of social war” that defines the Texas-Mexico border region, for it is quite relevant to the agenda that shapes the most ambitious of Hinojosa’s Korean War novels, *Rites and Witnesses*. While Limón suggests that this “social war” is, to a certain degree, both a class war and a race war between Anglo elites and working-class Mexicans, he also refers to a third category: “class allies,” who are the well-to-do Mexicans who align themselves with wealthy whites.

Hinojosa’s focus in *Rites and Witnesses* is on the dilemma faced by middle-class Mexican American men who, as a result of their service in the Korean War, find themselves positioned to become potential “class allies” of the Anglo elites who occupy the seat of power in South Texas. The predicament that Rafe, Hinojosa’s protagonist and alter ego, faces in the Korean War centers on the ambivalences that emerge out of an awareness that he is serving in a military organization that has been involved in the oppression of the racialized community that he is part of. As a soldier in an army that is ostensibly in East Asia to “create[e] history by protecting the world from Communism,” Rafe confronts the question of whether in doing so he is actually collaborating with the very forces that have brought significant harm to his own community. It is this dilemma that is highlighted by the only work in Hinojosa’s Korean War trilogy—and formally the most difficult one—that explicitly connects events that transpire in Korea with ones that take place in South Texas, *Rites and Witnesses*.

**Being a Good Soldier: Rites and Witnesses**

Each of the works in Hinojosa’s Korean War trilogy (like all the other works that constitute *KCDT*) is an experiment in genre. *Korean Love Songs* is described by the author as a “novel in verse,” and *The Useless Servants* is presented as a journal written by Rafe himself. *Rites and Witnesses*, however,
consists almost entirely of dialogues that resemble a screenplay or dramatic text, and first-person testimonies or witness statements. Throughout, readers are plunged into events in medias res, which makes *Rites and Witnesses* far and away the most difficult of Hinojosa’s Korean War novels for readers to negotiate. It is simply impossible to read this novel without engaging in a tremendous labor of interpretation. However, it is only by engaging with the novel’s immense formal challenges that we can grasp the elusive connections it invites its readers to make between the two seemingly disparate historical sites it brings into intimate contact—South Texas in 1960 and Korea in 1950—and the specific point he is making about the participation of Mexican American soldiers in the Korean War.

*Rites and Witnesses* jumps back and forth between these two settings: Korea during the war and Belken County a decade after. In addition to these two historical sites, the novel also evokes what life in South Texas was like through the first half of the twentieth century. Though at times a third-person narrator appears, the vast majority of the novel takes the form of dialogues or monologues, in which the identity of speakers and the context of their speaking are left to the reader to determine.

The chapters that depict the Korean War are much easier to follow and are very much of a piece with the other works in Hinojosa’s trilogy. The chapters set in Korea that fall in the first half of the novel—which is titled “The Rites”—depict Rafe’s work as a kind of spotter for artillery attacks. They center on a single episode in which he and the other men in his observation post identify a large group of Chinese soldiers in the valley below, call in an artillery attack that decimates hundreds of them, and are themselves subjected to a devastating barrage of enemy artillery fire. This section of the novel ends with Rafe’s attempting to bring a wounded soldier to safety. In the second half of the novel—titled “The Witnesses”—we find out that Rafe was hurt badly in his rescue attempt, and that the man he attempted to save has died. As Rafe is recovering in a hospital in Japan, he receives a series of visitors from white soldiers who all outrank him: Captain Ted Bracken, Lieutenant Phil Brodkey, and Sergeant Frank Hatalski. Brodkey and Hatalski are sympathetic characters: the former commends Rafe for his bravery and informs him that he’s been recommended for a Bronze Star; the latter relays the news that Charlie Villalon, one of Rafe’s friends from home, has been killed and
offers to arrange for a visit to his grave, which is near the hospital. Bracken, however, is a rather hateful character. While he attempts to bond with Rafe over the fact that they are both from Texas, it is revealed that Bracken wanted him court-martialed. Although Bracken treats all the men under his command with disdain, his antipathy for Rafe seems driven by racism.

Overall, the portrait of the US Army that these chapters paint is of a bureaucracy in which most of the men, Anglo and Chicano, do their best but are often undermined and indeed killed by mistakes made by others—white men who are in positions of command despite their incompetence. The ambitious and craven Captain Bracken epitomizes all that is wrong with the US military. The primary focus of the Korean War chapters in 

*Rites and Witnesses* is on the ordinary fighting men who lost their lives in the fighting: the novel constitutes something like a Mexican American memorial to the Korean War that seeks to honor *all* the soldiers who died in the conflict—paying witness and administering last rites, as it were, to their collective sacrifice. The final chapter takes the form of a US Army report that catalogues the casualties suffered by Rafe’s unit when it comes under a rocket attack: Rafe and Rusty Pardue, a Cajun he had befriended in the novel’s early pages, are wounded: among the dead are Joey Vielma, another one of Rafe’s boyhood friends from South Texas, and Frank Hatalski, the sergeant who brought news of Charlie Villalon’s death.

*Rites and Witnesses* does not memorialize these deaths in order to arrive at the kinds of nationalist platitudes one finds in most US memorials to the Veterans of the Korean War: their deaths are not rendered as the necessary price of freedom. The novel’s critique of the war registers through its juxtaposition of the Korean battlefields in which so many Chicano soldiers lost their lives and the South Texas community that those who survived returned to after the war. The juxtaposition of “the two settings and the two time-frames (1960 in Klail City and 1950 in Korea),” as Rosaura Sánchez has argued, “expresses the futility of the deaths of many American boys, among them many Chicanos whose bodies were fished out of the river by fellow soldiers so that the Klails, Blanchards, and Cookes of the world could continue to profit, scheme, manipulate, fornicate, and destroy the Valley of their forefathers. The Rites are for the dead in Korea and for the decaying Valley, in the hands of Anglo capitalists and their Chicano lackeys.”
Sanchéz accurately conveys the novel’s rendering of South Texas. The conversations that are depicted in the first half of the novel—“The Rites”—reveal the inner workings of the KBC, which is a kind of syndicate comprising the richest Anglo families in the region: the Klails, Blanchards, and Cookes. Readers are exposed to the sordid personal lives of what is essentially a ruling class: extramarital affairs, the impregnation of underage Mexican domestic workers, and so forth.

Readers also learn of two Machiavellian schemes that the KBC are putting into motion in 1960. One involves their search for “Chicano lackeys,” as Sanchéz puts it, whom they hope to install in various positions of relative power. The other plan involves the Fredericka Cooke Institute, a nonprofit organization established ostensibly in honor of one of their own who dies of uterine cancer early in the novel. The KBC devises a complex stratagem to turn the institute into a shell company that will enable them to reap the profits from a leather factory without having to pay the US government any taxes; it is a scam that is entirely legal.

Insofar as the KBC families remain the dominant power, the South Texas that Chicano veterans find themselves negotiating in 1960 seems much the same as the one they left in 1950 to fight in Korea. Indeed, Ramón Saldívar has argued that Hinojosa’s writings demonstrate how “the Texas home to which the Korean War veterans will return is no different from the one to which the World War II veterans returned.” As I will demonstrate, however, Saldívar is only partially correct. For Hinojosa’s agenda in *Rites and Witnesses* is to stress both the continuities and the discontinuities in the experiences of Chicanos in South Texas before and after the Korean War. In order to understand the nature of Hinojosa’s critique and its proper object, we need to attend to both the similarities and the differences.

What remains constant (and what is a running theme throughout the *KCDT*) is that South Texas is essentially run by a white ruling class. Hinojosa’s depiction of this region resonates with José Limón’s assertion that “since the 1830s, the Mexicans of south Texas have been in a state of social war with the ‘Anglo’ dominant Other and their class allies.” The KBC families are very much the dominant power in Belken County throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but what *Rites and Witnesses* under-
scores is how the Korean War catalyzes a pivotal shift in the tactics and strategies they can rely on in order to maintain their hegemony.

Prior to the Korean War, the KBC was able to amass its wealth and power by forcibly taking land from Mexicans. In this they were greatly abetted by George “Choche” Markham, a kind of hatchet man and enforcer and a member of the Texas Rangers. Readers become acquainted with what Markham and the Rangers were involved in primarily from the chapters in the second half of the novel, which read like witness statements. From them we learn of two incidents in which Markham was directly involved. In 1915, Markham, as a member of the Texas Rangers, shot and killed three Mexican prisoners and strung up their bodies; three decades later, he shot and killed Ambrosia Mora, the nephew of one of the three prisoners and a returning World War II Veteran. John F. Goodman, a retired US cavalryman, bluntly describes the exploits of Markham and the Rangers: “The Rangers raised hell . . . and they murdered people.”34 Goodman also explicitly implicates Markham in both the killing of the Mexican prisoners and the murder of Mora.

By 1960, however, Markham has outlived his usefulness. In one conversation, members of the KBC discuss the need to ease Markham into retirement and their desire to “take care of him” for his loyalty and service.35 Moreover, the now elderly Markham himself denies the racial violence he perpetrated as a young man. As Goodman recounts, “Choche used to say that he had been in on that [murder of the Mexican prisoners] in Nineteen Fifteen, but now he says that he wasn’t. There’s a lot of stuff that he now says he wasn’t mixed up in.”36 Markham in his own statement insists that his shooting of Mora was justified—“when I up and shot Ambrosio Mora it was in the line [of duty]”—and says of his relationship to Mexicans: “I’m their friend. What the hell do they know. . . . Why, I married a Mex, didn’t I?”37

The overall impression one gets from the testimonies in the second half of the novel is that overt and direct expressions of anti-Mexican racism as well as legal and extralegal forms of racist violence have by 1960 taken on the character of an uncomfortable relic. It is a time in which the brutality of the past now seems an embarrassment to Anglos, even to those who perpetrated them. The specificity of the historical claim that Hinojosa is making about
the effect of the Korean War on the Chicano community in South Texas emerges within the context of these changes.

Interestingly, Rafe does not appear in the chapters of the novel that are set in South Texas (though we find out from other works in *KCDT* that he will eventually use the GI Bill in order to attend college). However, the central protagonist—insofar as there is one—in these chapters is a figure who is closely linked to Rafe: Jehú Malacara, Rafe’s best friend and the other primary character in the *Klail City Death Trip* as a whole. While this fact is not mentioned directly in *Rites and Witnesses*, Jehú is also a Korean War veteran who makes use of the GI Bill in order to earn a college degree.

Early on in the novel we find that Jehú is someone that the KBC family hopes to install as county commissioner, essentially to serve as their political lackey. He declines that invitation but does serve as a loan officer in their bank. Indeed, he plays a crucial role in making the financial and legal arrangements that will enable their scam involving the Fredericka Cooke Institute to succeed.

The connection between the Korean and Texan plotlines of the novel is centered, then, on the comparable positions that Hinojosa’s two protagonists, Rafe and Jehú, find themselves in as they are incorporated into the two institutions they serve. This sense of doubling is emphasized by Hinojosa’s use of acronyms to identify both of these organizations: the KBC and the AUSA (Army of the United States). We are thus invited to see the title of the novel’s first section, “The Rites,” as referring to the rites of passage that Jehú and Rafe must negotiate as they serve the KBC and the AUSA, respectively.

The novel makes clear that, for Jehú, acting as a “good soldier” for the KBC is tantamount to committing racial treason, since the Anglo families he is working for have been victimizing Mexican Americans in the valley for over a century. What is not entirely clear, however, is whether the novel invites us to regard Rafe’s service in the Korean War in similar terms. Rafe certainly proves himself to be a good soldier, despite the obstacles posed by incompetent and possibly racist officers like Captain Bracken. But what ethical judgment does Hinojosa’s narrative ask its readers to make about the larger cause that the organization he is involved with is working for? What does his writing have to say about the war itself, in other words? In Jehú’s case, his loyalty to the organization he serves is presented as being in
conflict with his loyalty to other Chicanos, but what of Rafe? Is the cause his organization fights for—victory in the Korean War—presented as ethically compromised?

To address these questions, it is first necessary to acknowledge that, in a general sense, there is some distance between Hinojosa’s politics and those of other Chicano writers from the border region—Américo Paredes or Tomás Rivera, for instance. As Klaus Zilles notes, Hinojosa’s writings are absent “the antiestablishment attitudes of a minority protest literature with a specific political ideology,” and his characters “do not question the U.S. political system as a whole, and neither do they scoff at middle-class ambitions, the free market, corporate America, and Puritan work ethics.”

Part of this difference also stems from the fact that while Hinojosa’s writings evince a deep awareness of the plight of working-class Chicanos, he is committed to depicting a wide range of Mexican American experiences. As Juan Bruce-Novoa has observed, Rafe and Jehú “are descendants of a Texas-Mexican landed aristocracy of sorts, albeit with all the rusticity the area calls to mind. The Buenrostro family owned enough land so that they could distribute it to others.” Indeed, while Rafe’s family is idealized in KCDT—the Buenroostros, in Rosaura Sánchez’s words, “are presented as the defenders of the land and protectors of other with whom they share the land”—they occupy a similar position of economic privilege as the Mexican American family that plays the villain’s role, the Leguizamóns. The Leguizamóns are depicted as “allied to Anglo landowners and the Texas Rangers and interested in requiring by hook or crook additional Belken County land” and as “a family of leeches who turn against the people of the valley for their own personal gain.”

Hinojosa shares the same background as his fictional alter egos, Rafe and Jehú, and he too benefited from the GI Bill as a result of his service in Korea. My aim in pointing out Hinojosa’s class position, however, is not to invalidate his perspective but rather to provide a more precise account of the analysis it offers of the dilemma that middle-class Mexican Americans like Rafe, Jehú, and Hinojosa faced at mid-century—a dilemma they confront precisely because of their participation in the Korean War.

To identify more accurately the historical argument that Rites and Witnesses makes, then, and the precise nature of the link between South Texas
and Korea that it establishes, we need to engage with the fact that its protagonists are the potential beneficiaries of the racial order that is emerging in post–Korean War South Texas. For the KBC to maintain its hold on power, it must expand the cast of Mexicanos they are willing to work with to include not only their old allies like the Leguizamóns but also the Jehú Malacrans and even the Rafe Buenrostros.

Indeed, the overall impression of Klail City that *Rites and Witnesses* gives is of a community that is slowly and unevenly becoming integrated, with public schools now open to Mexican students, and with some—veterans of World War II or of the Korean War, like Jehú and Rafa—going to college thanks to the GI Bill. Evidence of these changes are apparent from the statement given by Rebecca Ruth Verser, a retired schoolteacher, who is nostalgic for a time when schools were segregated—“In my day, the Mexicans didn’t go to school with us”—and rails against how things are now: “And now? Now, they go on to school and even graduate sometimes,” despite the fact that “they *still* speak Spanish.”43 Another Anglo woman, a storeowner named Johnnie Pike who has a more positive view of Mexicans—“Traded with Mexicans all my life, and got three of them working for us”—observes that “Times’ve changed and for the better in many ways.”44 She goes on to describe how Vicente Vizcarra, Jr., a used car and insurance salesman, was able to open an office in a section of town formerly denied to Mexicans. The Jehús, Rafas, and the Vicente Vizcarras represent a slowly growing Mexican American middle class, their ascent hastened by a Cold War welfare state that, among other things, has brought at least a legal end to segregation and enabled some minority populations to reap the benefits of the GI Bill.45

The legal scam concerning the Cooke Institute that preoccupies the KBC also illustrates these shifts. Instead of focusing on taking land away from their Mexican neighbors, the KBC has set its sights on the federal government, which itself is in the midst of a transformation as it increasingly presents itself as serving the interests of minority communities. Jehú’s observation about whom this scam will victimize is crucial: “The KBC didn’t have to put it to the Mexicanos anymore; they now went after bigger game; the U.S. Treasury, for one.”46

In identifying the opportunities that open up for Rafe and Jesú as a result of their service in Korea, *Rites and Witnesses* calls attention to the fact that
one tangible outcome of the Korean War was to enhance the life chances of certain minorities—or, more precisely, of certain members of certain minority groups. And with that additional capacity for choice comes with it the greater possibility of complicity and co-optation. The question of what some Mexican Americans of Hinojosa’s generation might do with the somewhat greater range of opportunities that have opened up to them as a result of their service in the Korean War is a palpable concern that runs through the novel.

In highlighting the ethical quandaries faced by his two protagonists, Jehú and Rafe, *Rites and Witnesses* forces its readers to ponder the uncomfortable fact that these Mexican Americans have been fighting for a military force that nurtured the likes of not only General Walker and Captain Bracken but also George Markham.

To underscore the ethical difficulties of Jehú’s and Rafe’s predicament, we might return to a chapter I discussed briefly earlier, in which John Goodman, a retired US cavalryman, criticizes the racist violence perpetrated by Markham and the Rangers but also makes clear that he and others in the army were aware of it: “We knew what they were up to by scaring the Mexicans on both sides.”47 This admission invites us to read this character’s name in an ironic light, since his denunciations of Markham and the Rangers are self-serving. For even as he distances himself from them, Goodman also makes clear that the Rangers were part of the same military force he was: “There was Texas Guard units [Rangers], and we had everything: engineers, signal corps ambulance companies, field artillery, infantry, of course, truck companies, pack trains, baker companies; you name it. Everything, don’t you know. We came loaded for bear ’cause those were harsh times on both sides of the River.”48

As almost a casual aside, Goodman mentions that not all Mexicans in South Texans were opposed to the US Army, even back then: “The Mexicans on this side [of the Rio Grande] didn’t mind the Army too much—some of them was in the Service, too—but it was the Texas Rangers they looked to, and the Rangers walked around like the big muckety-mucks. . . . Not saying they liked the Army, no, but the Rinches rankled, y’understand?”49

And if it is self-serving for Anglo soldiers like Goodman to disavow their association with racists like Markham, then what are we to make of those
Mexican Americans who were allied with the Rangers in the early decades of the twentieth century or of those who, like Rafe and Jehu (as well as Hinojosa), fought for the General Walkers and the Captain Brackens just a few decades later?

Read in purely domestic terms, then, what is valuable about Hinojosa’s Korean War writings is the perspective they offer on how that conflict shaped what José Límon describes as the “state of social war with the “Anglo” dominant Other and their class allies” that has defined life in the border region since the 1830s. *Rites and Witnesses* in particular draws attention to how returning Korean War veterans like Jehú and Rafe, as beneficiaries of the Cold War welfare state that was significantly enlarged as a result of that conflict found themselves in a position to become the “class allies” of the KBC elites. The issue of whether these two protagonists will accept the invitation being offered to them by the KBC elites is one that will be settled in later volumes of *KCDT*. But the contemporary historical origin of that dilemma and the possibilities of upward mobility and collaboration it affords, *Rites and Witnesses* dramatically shows us, lie in the Korean War.

**Being a Good Reader: Parallel Lines**

There is also a crucial transnational dimension to the trajectory on which *Rites and Witnesses* launches its readers, which I will now elaborate. As I do so, however, I want to say a bit more about how the formal experimentalism of that work impels its readers toward these kinds of historiographical inquiries.

To say that *Rites and Witnesses* is the least accessible work in Hinojosa’s Korean War trilogy would be a significant understatement. In the dialogues that make up much of the novel, the names of the speakers are not given, and no context is given to situate the seemingly transcribed witness statements that make up the rest of the novel. Readers are plunged continuously into events in medias res and must ceaselessly double back in order to produce even a rudimentary mapping of the novel’s diegetic world. The whos, whats, whens and so forth at even the most basic level can be arrived at only through a tremendous amount of interpretive work. Moreover, it is impossible to produce a close reading of *Rites and Witnesses* that does not connect
it to other works in Hinojosa’s Korean War trilogy and to KCDT as a whole. The historical sweep of this fifteen-volume series is immense, spanning centuries of life in the border region. But the clearly epic historical ambitions of this work are not expressed through the blend of realism and myth making we would see in the work of a James Michener. Rather, readers are thrown into the midst of this history without a chance to get their bearings.

An apt metaphor for what careful readers therefore must do as they read Hinojosa, then, can be found in a passage I discussed earlier: namely, the scene in which Rafe and a small group of soldiers attempt to come to terms with the horrific event they have just witnessed and are implicated in—the blowing up of hundreds of Korean refugees by US Army engineers. To read Hinojosa adequately we must do as they do, which is to seek our own understanding of the wider historical context for the events that have taken place before us and of our own implication in them.

In closing, I’d like to touch upon a crucial historical detail that Rafe and the other soldiers divulge in the scene I discussed earlier. The men comment on the class makeup of the civilian refugees, noting that the majority of them are “city people,” while Korea itself is “mostly a land of farmers.” What readers are to make of that fact is left unsaid within the text. However, since reading Hinojosa always entails connecting details across various works, those who are able to supplement their analysis of Rites and Witnesses with an awareness of what takes place elsewhere in KCDT will glimpse a resemblance between the North Korean communists and Rafe’s own family. The Buenrostros, after all, while members of the Mexican American aristocracy, represent its good face (as the English translation of this surname would suggest), having tried to act in the interests of the working-class farmers and ranch hands threatened by the predations of the Rangers, the KBC, and the Leguizamóns.

To be clear, Hinojosa never offers any explicit commentary about either of the Korean regimes. But insofar as the Buenrostros-Leguizamón conflict is rendered as a kind of civil war that plays itself out in the context of a colonial war between the United States and Mexico, his writings invite readers to glimpse the parallels between these two warring clans and the two states claiming sovereignty over the Korean peninsula. Readers are also encouraged to see that modern Korea has been shaped by the legacy
of Japanese imperialism: to see that one reason why “Koreans don’t like the Japs one damned bit,” as some of Rafe’s fellow soldiers put, it is that “both Korea and Manchuria were under Jap domination for years.”

If we move, as *Rites and Witnesses* encourages us to do, beyond the events that the novels actually depict but from an angle of vision that retains an after-image of South Texas, we arrive at a view of the two regimes that emerged north and south of the 38th parallel that accords with the perspective that Bruce Cumings has provided in his path-breaking scholarship. While military historian Allan Millet has described the Korean War as “a three-phase Maoist war of national liberation in which two competitive parallel political movements, neither strong enough to stand alone, started their struggle to prevail in 1945–48,” Cumings has persuasively argued that only one of the two Koreas should be seen as emerging out of a legitimate decolonizing struggle for national self-determination. It is the political movement that took shape as the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea that would seem to resemble the heroic Buenrostros; the counterpart to the villainous Leguizamóns would seem to be the men who came to power in the Republic of Korea. For the latter regime was replete with figures who had collaborated with a prior occupying power, the Japanese, and was largely installed in power by a second, the US government.

Another line of historical inquiry that Hinojosa’s *KCDT* encourages its readers to pursue concerns the parallel outcomes of the Korean War and the US-Mexico war in the partitions that each established. The term *partition* refers, of course, to a particular kind of political border. Joe Cleary notes that in most examples of partition “one or more of the new states have claimed to be the sole legitimate successor to the territory of the divided administrative unit.” This leads to a scenario in which the portion of the divided territory that lies under the sovereign jurisdiction of another country is constructed as “lost.” The US-Mexico border does appear in Hinojosa’s writings as a kind of partition. His evocations of Nuevo Santander suggest that South Texas is a kind of “lost territory” that was taken through force by a colonizing Anglo power. Insofar as the Rio Grande is regarded as the site of a partition, a spotlight is cast on the imperial motivations that lay behind the US annexation of Texas.

Hinojosa’s writings invite us to follow, as it were, the path of the US-
Mexico border and see its continuity with another partition that was established at the conclusion of a much later US war. Nearly a century after the signing of the Treaty of the Guadalupe Hidalgo established the Rio Grande as its border with Mexico, the United States created another political border on the other side of the world that would divide a nation that had long existed as a single entity. According to historian Bruce Cumings, “the initial decision to draw a line at the thirty-eighth parallel was wholly an American action, taken during a night-long session of the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC), on August 10–11, 1945.”54 As General John Hodge landed and the first contingent of US military forces began arriving in Korea, he was directed by General Douglas MacArthur to treat the civilian population they encountered as “liberated people.”55 The decisions Hodge made, however, bespoke a different attitude. “Southern Korea,” Cumings writes, “was subjected to a hostile occupation possessing the full panoply of powers of a victor in enemy territory; and the Occupation did not relinquish these powers until August 15, 1948,” when the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea were established.56 Since they treated their administration of the Koreans as an occupation, the US forces simply retooled a bureaucratic apparatus that had been created by the hated Japanese, essentially replacing Japanese managers with Koreans who had been loyal to the Japanese.

In its decision to intervene, the United States initially treated the 38th parallel as a wholly legitimate international border. What it more accurately constituted, however, was a partition, one of several created with the end of World War II and the collapse of several colonial regimes, including Japan’s. As Cumings observes, “Kim Il Sung crossed the five-year-old 38th parallel, not an international boundary like that between Iraq and Kuwait, or Germany and Poland; instead it bisected a nation that had a rare and well-recognized unitary existence going back to antiquity.”57

To perceive the 38th parallel in a way that does not naturalize or reify it as a legitimate international border would involve seeing the war not as one in which the sovereign integrity of one nation was defended from an illegal attack by another: rather, it would entail seeing the Korean War as, first and foremost, a civil war. Cumings asserts that the conflict should be recognized “as a civil war that had its origins in the 1930s if not earlier, but was made
inevitable by the thoughtless decision, taken the day after the obliteration of Nagasaki, to etch a frontier along a line no one had ever noticed before in Korea’s continuous history: the 38th parallel.”

It is possible that a civil war between these competing nationalist movements, which emerged out of four decades of anticolonial struggle against the brutality of the Japanese annexation, was inevitable. It is also possible that, as Cumings suggests, a different set of policies might have enabled a unified Korea to emerge out of the shadow of the Japanese empire. But in turning the 38th parallel into a political border, the United States provided a frontier, a line in the sand, a spatialization to this conflict and was ultimately responsible, in Cumings’s view, for making a civil war that was possible into something that was inevitable and far more devastating.

Ultimately, the value of Hinojosa’s Korean War writings—and *Rites and Witnesses* in particular—is that they make the history that shaped modern Korea contiguous with that which shaped the US borderlands. By inviting readers to see the Rio Grande and the 38th parallel as part of a continuous history, his works lead them to the recognition that both of these international boundaries were the materialization of US imperial aspirations. In describing how the decision to send military forces to Korea came about, Cumings asserts that Dean Acheson, “the prime mover” behind it, “understood containment to be primarily a political and economic problem, of positioning self-supporting, viable regimes around the Soviet periphery; he thought the truncated Korean economy could still serve Japan’s recovery, as part of what he called a ‘great crescent’ from Tokyo to Alexandria, linking Japan with Korea, Taiwan, Southeast Asia, and ultimately the oil of the Persian Gulf.”

If the annexation of Texas made manifest the colonial aspirations of an emergent hemispheric power in 1848, the decision to send nearly 2 million soldiers (among them Rolando Hinojosa) to Korea a century later reflected the imperial aspirations of what had become the leading global power. No longer content to simply draw a line in the sand between itself and its neighbor to the south, the United States partitioned off a massive portion of the globe, claiming the first and much of the third world as its bailiwick. What this brought into being, as Cumings describes in the following, was an “archipelago of empire”: 
In the second half of the twentieth century an entirely new phenomenon emerged in American history, namely, the permanent stationing of soldiers in a myriad of foreign bases across the face of the planet, connected to an enormous domestic complex of defense industries. For the first time in modern history the leading power maintained an extensive network of bases on the territories of its allies and economic competitors—Japan, Germany, Britain, Italy, South Korea, all the industrial powers save France and Russia—marking a radical break with the European balance of power and the operation of realpolitik, and a radical departure in American history: an archipelago of empire.\textsuperscript{60}

What students of both US and East Asian history should laud about Hinojosa’s Korean War writings is the fact that they invite us to see 1848 and 1945 as linked by a continuous history, to see the Rio Grande and the 38th parallel, now the demilitarized zone, as associated segments in the borderlands of US empire.

Notes

2. A note about usage: while it is also customary to refer to this population as “Tejanos,” in this essay I use the terms used by the Saldivars and Hinojosa: \textit{Chicanos} and \textit{Mexican Americans}. At times Hinojosa uses the term \textit{Borderers}.
4. Ibid.


10. Hinojosa, Korean Love Songs, 122; the edition does not identify the author of the postscript.

11. Cumings, Korean War, 68.


15. Ibid., 100.


17. Ibid., 154.


19. Ibid., 42.


23. Hinojosa, Useless Servants, 35.

24. Ibid., 35.

25. Ibid., 40–41.

26. Ibid., 78.

27. For an illuminating discussion of the problems posed by Japan as the focal point of a progressive Chicano-Asian interracialism, see the contentious exchange between José Limón


29. Ibid., 15.

30. An inscription on the Korean War Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC, reads “Freedom Is Not Free.” The exhibit on American wars at the Smithsonian, which includes a small section on the Korean War, is titled “The Price of Freedom: Americans at War.”


33. Limón, *Dancing with the Devil*, 15.

34. Rolando Hinojosa, *Rites and Witnesses* (Houston, TX: Arte Público Press, 1989), 86.

35. Ibid., 63.

36. Ibid., 89.

37. Ibid., 76.


39. As Hinojosa explains in an interview with Philip Jason: “Because I also wanted to show Mexican Americans and their different socioeconomic classes, I presented them in as many occupations and professions as I could” (Jason, “Conversation with Rolando Hinojosa,” 299).


41. Sánchez, “From Heterogeneity to Contradiction,” 89.

42. Ibid., 88; Mark Busby, “Faulknerian Elements in Rolando Hinojosa’s The Valley,” *MELUS* 11, no. 4 (1984): 104.

43. Hinojosa, *Rites and Witnesses*, 97, 98.

44. Ibid., 77.

45. For accounts of how Mexican Americans fared during the 1950s—their uneven and limited access to upward mobility as well as the expansion of racist anti-immigrant policies—see Mario T. García, *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, & Identity, 1930–1960*, Yale

47. Ibid., 88.
48. Ibid., 86.
49. Ibid., 87.
55. Ibid., 126.
56. Ibid., 126–27.
58. Ibid., 226.
59. Ibid., 209.
60. Ibid., 218.