Strange Rumblings in El Chuco: Ruben Salazar Writes for the Prospector, 1947-48 & 1953-54

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Master’s Program in History

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Dedication

To Gloria F. Del Hierro and Rubén Salazar, their memory helped guide every stage of this thesis.
STRANGE RUMBLINGS IN EL CHUCO: RUBEN SALAZAR WRITES FOR
THE PROSPECTOR, 1947-48 & 1953-54

by

GUSTAVO DEL HIERRO, B.A.

THESIS

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Introduction: A Man, a Martyr and the Birth of a Myth

“Folk heroes arise of a need to articulate feelings unsung by conventionality.”

Rubén Salazar, July 1970

“It was a hot day in August,” was how Raul A. Reyes, an attorney and news media contributor, remembered his father telling the story of the day he had left work in order to join others at “a ‘Peace March’ in East Los Angeles.” The August 29, 1970, “National Chicano Moratorium” was to be a protest over the disproportionate number of Mexican Americans or Chicanos dying in the service of their country in Vietnam. Reyes’ interest in this story was “piqued” by his father calling himself a “Chicano” and imagining his father the “straight-arrow striver…bank manager” at a protest with people he had suggested were ‘militants.’ There was something unique about this day as the outrage evoked by the war brought “everyone” together including his father’s “co-workers and friends.” Among those in attendance were children, senior citizens and a wedding party. Protestors marched through East Los Angeles and made their way to a park for the rally. His father found respite “under the shade of a tree, listening to the speeches.” Suddenly, three successive popping sounds rang out and the audience began to break apart as they scurried in fear. Reyes’ father knew he had to find a way out and dashed into an alley where he came upon L.A. County Sheriff’s officers approaching him with their guns ready to fire. He ran back the way he entered and made his way around the corner only to be impeded by several officers armed with tear gas. Chaos had engulfed the once “peaceful gathering” and a riot ensued causing his father to make one last desperate sprint through a “side street” where he was able to break free and walked back to his residence. In all of the commotion, he had failed to realize that he had taken his car. When Reyes heard this story as a child, he was fascinated by the

fact that his father had forgotten his car and it was only years later that he became aware of the historical significance of what had transpired that day. His father had been present at the then largest political rally by Mexican Americans that became a day marred by injuries, arrests and the death of three individuals. Among the dead was *Los Angeles Times* columnist and KMEX news director, a Spanish-language television station in Los Angeles, Rubén Salazar who was killed when a sheriff’s deputy fired a tear gas projectile into the bar Salazar had sought refuge in. The tear gas missile struck him in the head and ended his life. This death had “shocked” the Reyes family who had full faith in the government as “second-generation Americans who saw themselves as fully part of American society,” but this “killing” made them consider that “maybe they were not.” Salazar’s death was a significant moment for Mexican Americans/Chicanas/os because he was a prominent journalist whose life was ended through the use of the same legitimate violence that he had reported on as a problem faced within this community.

For many students of Chicana/o history, their exposure and understanding of Salazar is limited to this event or of his image on signs carried by Chicanas/os in marches and at rallies and depictions in murals throughout Mexican American communities in the U.S. Others may have even known him because of this tragedy and the fact that he was from their hometown of El Paso, Texas, which may have made them wonder how he made his way out west. Generations of Chicanas/os would have known him as a martyr for the movement who was gunned down by the sheriff’s for being an outspoken Mexican. Salazar became a ghost known more for being the victim of a careless or even deliberate act of violence depending on the perspective. His name appears in timelines of textbooks, PowerPoint slides in Chicano studies classes, or in historical texts for the most part accompanied by the words describing his death at the Moratorium, which

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became synonymous with it. Salazar’s passing and what lead to it are significant, but it has been the defining characteristic of his legacy; the reporter who was killed. This has caused the details of his life to become irrelevant because his martyrdom took on a life of its own and he transitioned into one of the symbols of Chicana/o oppression. What is missing from his narrative are the components that made him a figure worthy of remembering and a concerted effort to provide as much accurate information as possible to help fight the distortions of historical memory and its inevitable inaccuracies.

Before the events of August 29, 1970, a brilliant and remarkable career had unfolded on the pages of the El Paso Herald-Post, Santa Rosa Press Democrat, San Francisco News, Los Angeles Herald-Express, Los Angeles Times and a new phase had just begun as news director for KMEX. Salazar had emerged as one of the leading Mexican American voices, and perhaps the most important, in mainstream news media who focused on issues affecting the Mexican American community in Los Angeles and its emerging Chicana/o Movement. His career included covering events throughout Latin America, in Mexico City, in Vietnam during the war and perhaps his most known and recognized work reporting on the Chicana/o Movement in Los Angeles. There is, despite the lack of scholarship, a great deal more to Salazar’s life other than the one day in August that has dominated his narrative.

Salazar was born in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico on March 3, 1928 to Luz and Salvador Salazar, his sister, and only sibling named after his mother, was born December 21, 1925. In 1929, his family moved across the border to El Paso, Texas where they would live and

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raise the children. Rubén would attend Lamar Elementary where he exhibited a proclivity for reading and writing, earned high marks in school, and was awarded numerous certificates for reading books, his sister would recall. He would attend El Paso High School and write for the school paper, the Tattler, and graduated from the school on January 17, 1946. That same year he would enroll at the local college, Texas College of Mines and Metallurgy (TCM), as a mechanical engineering major and joined the Prospector, TCM student newspaper, as a reporter in the fall of that year, later switching his major to journalism sophomore year. After working for the publication as a staff reporter, he was given his own column in the fall of 1947, also contributing editorials, and upon completion of the fall term in January 1948 left school. During this period, he worked with his father who was employed at a jewelry store, his father was the head of the silver department. In September 1950, he was drafted into the Army and inducted the following month serving for two years, before returning to El Paso. The spring 1953 semester saw him return to his studies and to the pages of the Prospector where he resumed writing his column until he graduated in May of 1954. His professional career began in 1955 when he joined the El Paso Herald-Post as a reporter and, after a few stops at three different

5 Salazar’s immigration identification card shows February 15, 1929 as the date he was admitted into the U.S., Ruben Salazar Project, http://rubensalazarproject.com/timeline/.
7 For his time at El Paso High, Flynn, “Tales”; for Salazar’s high school diploma, Ruben Salazar Project.
California newspapers, he joined the *Los Angeles Times* in 1959. For the next eleven years, Salazar worked at the *Times* and continued to contribute as a columnist after leaving the paper in April 1970 to become news director at KMEX, the city’s Spanish-language television station, until the time of his death.\(^{11}\) It was during the formative years before his death that the journey of an incredible and intrepid journalist took place which nurtured and refined a cunning intellect and personality that would create numerous moments of somber reflection and outrage.

Salazar’s life before joining the *Times* is often ignored and what details there are about him in textbooks, articles, and documentaries are inaccurate or incomplete. The time prior to his professional career has been glossed over or relegated to the margins of obscurity even though there have been opportunities to uncover it. The misappropriation of Salazar by writers and filmmakers is a consequence of his martyrdom and a dearth of published information about his life in El Paso and as a college student. In the documentary, *Ruben Salazar: Man in the Middle*, his journalism begins at the *Herald-Post* which is only covered briefly then transitions to the *Times* for the remainder of the film. It attempts to show Salazar as a conflicted journalist torn between Mexico and the U.S., the Mexican American community and an Anglo world, which is further complicated by the Chicana/o Movement.\(^{12}\) If director Phillip Rodríguez had bothered to look at Salazar’s college writing, he would have seen a young man defiantly proud of being Mexican while living in the U.S., calling for a true constitutional democracy absent of race and ethnicity and dealing with the issues of being a minority in an Anglo dominated society. As the film stands, Salazar’s time as a journalist in college did not exist, merit attention, or have any impact on his time as a professional. While scope and length are factors to consider for the

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\(^{11}\) Ibid, 29.

\(^{12}\) *Ruben Salazar: Man in the Middle*, directed by Phillip Rodríguez (City Projects, 2013), DVD (PBS, 2014).
exclusion of this period, for a film whose purpose is depicting Salazar’s life and its influences, the omission of his college journalism renders it incomplete.

In *Border Correspondent*, historian Mario García collected select writings of Salazar’s from his start at the *Herald-Post* throughout his time at the *Times* and included information on his life in El Paso in an introduction. A section on the time leading up to his start at the *Post* suggested that Salazar graduated from high school and then subsequently joined the Army, after which he decided due to “his own ambition and the encouragement of his parents” to attend college. It was during this time, while majoring in journalism, that he “wrote a few pieces for *El Burro*, the campus paper.”¹³ The research that contributed to this study revealed that Salazar attended college after graduating from high school in 1946, and he began writing for the *Prospector*, the college’s newspaper soon after. *El Burro* was a humorous publication that ran at the college, but there is no evidence that Salazar ever contributed. At the *Prospector*, he wrote several signed articles and later wrote his own column and editorials, one of which proved so controversial that he was almost expelled. He left school and was drafted into the Army during the Korean War and re-enrolled in college upon returning from the conflict, and resumed writing his column that agitated administrators and students. In each of his stints as a contributor to the *Prospector*, his writing was submitted to a state-wide collegiate press contest and each time won awards for his work. The entirety of this thesis examines his college writing and is composed of more than a “few” selections. This is not an indictment of García, but an attempt to show one of the sources for the inaccuracies that have been perpetuated in other texts or have ignored his time at the *Prospector*.¹⁴ García’s purpose was to provide a selection of writings that embody

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¹⁴ A text that has biographies about influential Latinos in the media references García’s information from his introduction for a chapter on Salazar and it consists of the same inaccuracies/omissions and even contributes some
Salazar’s incredible talent as a journalist and social commentator that originated from a distinctly unique perspective as a Mexican American. He never intended for the collection or its introduction to constitute a full biography, but as one of the few researched and credible accounts of Salazar’s life it has become a widely referenced work. Salazar’s time as a college journalist was significant in his development as a writer because he gained experience navigating the political climate as a Mexican American writer and it revealed his character as an intellectual willing to challenge discrimination.

Due to the lack of scholarship on Salazar’s life and writing, the years since his death have witnessed a proliferation of misinformation and misappropriations that have further complicated the cultivation of reliable sources that do not distort his life. There appeared to be a waning interest in examining Salazar’s life and work, as no scholarship has been published that focuses on him and how and why he became such a significant figure in journalism and prominent assayer of the Chicana/o Movement. What has taken place, unintentionally in most cases, is that the myth of Salazar has grown, allowing him to become whatever the source needs him to represent at a given time. An article from the Prospector in 2014 described Salazar in this way, “Born in Ciudad Juárez on March 3, 1928, Salazar grew up like many UTEP students today—commuting from their home in Juárez to attend school in El Paso and back and forth on a daily basis.” His family “eventually moved to El Paso” and he attended Texas Western from 1946-47, but left and served in the Army and returned to major in journalism and began working for the


15 García said as much when he wrote that a full biography of Salazar would one day be written, but until then his collection of writings would serve as a reminder of an extraordinary career and voice. See, Salazar, Border Correspondent, 37.
student paper.\footnote{Lorain Watters, “Rubén Salazar, the voice of a generation,” \textit{Prospector} (El Paso), September 9, 2014, accessed October 1, 2015, \url{http://www.theprospectordaily.com/2014/09/09/ruben-salazar-the-voice-of-a-generation/}.} This depiction is inaccurate given that Salazar’s family moved to El Paso when he was an infant and he was raised and educated in the city. Much of his perspective and contention with the subjugation of Mexican Americans and other minority groups came from this upbringing. He worked at the \textit{Prospector} since he began college which considering some of his actions/writings and the ramifications to be discussed in Chapter One, it is important not to overlook this period. While these inaccuracies may seem minute, it only helps to obscure his time as a writer for the \textit{Prospector} and what it could reveal about who Salazar was and what issues had always been important to him.

Sally Salazar, Rubén Salazar’s widow, saw this myth grow as well as his martyrdom as she revealed in a column written to commemorate the tenth anniversary of his death. Her attempt to demythologize her husband became a part of the distortion about Salazar. In “Journalist Ruben Salazar: The Man, Not The Myth,” she wrote about his life and the confusion that had developed in her by the “murals and memorials and a creation built in the public mind—someone other people call Ruben Salazar, but someone to this day I don’t fully recognize.” Another point she felt necessary to emphasize was that he was loving and attentive with his children and “his blonde Anglo wife.” One paragraph in particular is very problematic,

The Ruben I knew had left the barrio behind, in El Paso, Texas, many, many years before. In a Newsweek [sic] interview published just two months before his death, he described himself as ‘middle-class Establishment.’ His favorite meal was steak and corn. He liked to wear Louis Roth suits. Our circle of friends were newspaper people, and Ruben loved nothing more than to engage in lengthy debates on issues of the day. The intriguing part of him was that he could and would take either side of an argument. Sometimes he’s [sic] switch in midstream.\footnote{Sally Salazar, “Journalist Ruben Salazar: The Man, Not The Myth,” \textit{Brownsville Herald}, September 7, 1980, accessed March 1, 2016, \url{http://0-access.newspaperarchive.com.lib.utep.edu/us/texas/brownsville/brownsville-herald/1980/09-07/page-56?tag=Sally+Salazar&rtserp=tags/?pf=sally&pl=salazar&psb=relavance&ndt=by&py=1980&pey=1989&ndt=ex&py=1980}.}
Rubén’s appropriation by Chicanas/os seems to be her main concern in attempting to say that he was nothing like them, that he could not understand their struggles and only because of his personality and empathy did he take an interest in them. It seems as though her title should have been, “Journalist Ruben Salazar: The Man, Not the Mexican,” because it seemed very important that he not be ghettoized and have a legacy as a barrio hero/icon of the lower class Mexican American/Chicana/o community. She acknowledged that his pride for his “Mexican heritage was absolute, but his tastes and ambitions blended into another world where he chose to compete.” He was unapologetic to the Anglo and Chicana/o communities for being “a man in the middle” as he enjoyed “having access to both.” When she attended an awards banquet with one of her daughters, speakers “eulogized” Rubén as a “devoted fighter for la causa” and a “great and formidable barrio leader” which their daughter remarked was not her father. He may not have lived in the barrio and may have worn a suit to work, but he was also one of the few, if not only, mainstream media personalities that was addressing the issues facing the Mexican American community. Even though his life may have been absent of the conditions he reported on due to his profession, he had grown up as a Mexican living in an Anglo dominated world that sought to justify his status as a second class citizen. To imply that he was a man in the middle suggests that he had nothing to gain or lose from the ongoing civil rights struggle, one in which he had been participating in since his time growing up in El Paso and advocating for in the Prospector. Sally Salazar’s attempt to counter the myth simply became another aspect of it and an additional factor in the need for Rubén Salazar’s earlier life to be examined. An analysis of Salazar’s time in El Paso as a college student is necessary to understand his perspective by analyzing what he expressed and experienced during this formative time of his life in order to contextualize his work as a journalist and advocate for the Chicana/o civil rights movement.
The historiography that this thesis seeks to contribute to and has been influenced by is somewhere between the scholarship on the “Mexican American generation” and into the Chicana/o era. Salazar grew up during a time of transition for Mexican Americans in the pre-war and post-war era of WWII and later was present and influential in his coverage of the Chicana/o movement. As a result his political generation falls in-between both eras, but his life is ultimately influenced by both.\textsuperscript{18} Mario García’s work has thus been informative and necessary for understanding the environment in which Salazar was raised in. His analysis of the issues, conditions and the political situation of Mexican immigrants to El Paso, which Salazar and his family would have found when they immigrated to the city in 1929, was helpful and provided a context of the city and immigrant life. Other works concerning the political and ideological ascension of the Mexican American generation, forbearers of the Chicana/o, were significant in understanding the varied factions and factors faced by this community along with different paths of identity formation.\textsuperscript{19} It is in this scholarship that Salazar’s experience as a Mexican immigrant/Mexican American was put into context.

In \textit{Desert Immigrants}, García looks at the factors that made El Paso the most significant port of entry for Mexican immigrants in the U.S. in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Apart from being a gateway into the country, El Paso became home to one of the largest Mexican/Mexican American and Spanish speaking populations in the nation along with Los Angeles and San Antonio. This also made the city a prime example of the systemic and institutional barriers that helped marginalize people of Mexican ancestry who although in the


majority of the population where still relegated to a minority status. In *Mexican Americans*, García examines the ascension of the Mexican American political generation, the precursors to the Chicanas/os of the 1960s. Through the establishment of organizations such as the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), Mexican American citizens began organizing and developing concepts about what it meant to be a U.S. citizen of Mexican descent. It is in the decades of 1930-1960 that the formulation of the “Mexican American” identity and ideology went through several permutations that ranged from different tactics concerning cultural, educational and political approaches. Among the different groups and leaders, all sought to remedy what had been a historic marginalization of people of Mexican descent since 1848. This process often produced conflicts that fractured communities and complicated progress due to issues of class, citizenship, culture, immigration and language, but always centered on ameliorating the conditions faced by Mexicans/Mexican Americans in the U.S. These works by García provide the backdrop for Salazar’s childhood and his later formative years coming of age in a society that was inclusive yet exclusionary in some aspects because of his ethnicity.

This thesis owes its origin to the studies that examined the Chicana/o era during which Salazar cemented himself as a powerful force and voice in the mainstream media because he was present during the growth of the movement. It is because of this scholarship and in this context that Salazar became a subject of interest due to the contrast between his impact and enigmatic personage. Ernesto Chávez’s and David Montejano’s work, and similar studies, examining the historical and political conditions to which the Chicana/o movements were a reaction to were important in informing this thesis on the parallels between activists and Salazar.²⁰ He was drawn

²⁰ Ernesto Chávez, “¡Mi Raza Primero!” (My People First!): Nationalism, Identity, and Insurgency in the Chicano Movement in Los Angeles, 1966-1978 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); David Montejano, Quixote’s Soldiers: A Local History of the Chicano Movement, 1966-1981 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010);
to the movement for reasons other than a journalistic curiosity and it is in this mutual
understanding of the historic inequities faced by people of Mexican descent that his coverage
seemed relevant. It is also in a similar climate that Salazar himself grows and matures as a writer
and intellectual during his college journalism.

As the historiography relates to Salazar himself there is only a small body of work that
examines his life or any phase of his journalism career. The closest possible form of this is an
introduction by García in his collection of Salazar’s writing and the documentary Ruben Salazar:
Man in the Middle. This study’s intent is to provide a stepping stone towards a more expansive
scholarly work examining the life and journalism of Salazar and the thread that runs through it.

As this is the case, this study relies for the most part on primary sources, which reveal what
Salazar was writing about and what was taking place in his life. The Prospector and the El Paso
Herald-Post represent two important sources in accomplishing this endeavor and open up a
period of Salazar’s life to analysis that has thus far not taken place relegating this period to
obscurity.

It is in this context that each chapter of this study is presented. Chapter one looks at his
initial career at the Prospector and his progression from a young reporter to one who understood
his capacity to provoke and possibly create change. During this time developments took place
that may have contributed to his leaving the college and this represents a watershed moment
from which his career may revolve. Chapter two looks at his return to college and the Prospector
as an older and more experienced person utilizing knowledge gained during his hiatus that
informed his perspective and the need to continue to advocate for the breakdown of social and
institutional barriers. His experience out of school, especially in the Army, gave him further

Montejano, Sancho’s Journal: Exploring the Political Edge with the Brown Berets (Austin: University of Texas
ammunition to challenge the barriers that prevent certain groups from attaining the same opportunities as Anglos. Chapter three examines his final semester at Texas Western when he seemed intent on attacking the institutional barriers and ideas that have persisted from the time of his initial college enrollment. At this point in his career, there was a culmination of his experience as a writer, student, and Mexican American living in a society that refused to acknowledge and change the unequal access and participation of minorities in the United States. An overarching theme in each of these chapters is Salazar’s struggle to find his place in a white dominated world that wanted him to believe he was an “American” yet constantly reminded him that in his case as a Mexican American there were special conditions and circumstances.
Chapter 1: “This Shot World,” Salazar Writes for the Prospector, 1947-48

Salazar’s collegiate writing career at Texas College of Mines and Metallurgy (TCM), later Texas Western College (TWC), now the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), began in the fall of 1946, he was a reporter for the school’s student newspaper, the Prospector. As the nation was still recovering from the second world war and a new era of cultural movements were about to unfold, the specter of war still loomed in the life of the nation as growing tensions mounted between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Atomic war and the annihilation of entire nations served as the backdrop for a new generation of college students who had to cope with the uncontrollable reality of nuclear warfare. An emerging class of historically marginalized communities, empowered by opportunities derived from the war, became more visible and vocal about their role in this country. Many of the social and racial issues that would come to dominate the mainstream news cycles of the 1950’s and 60’s had existed before the war. Now, they would reach new pinnacles as a mounting surge of civil rights movements would begin to lay the foundation for the changing mood and mindset in communities and on college campuses. African Americans, Mexican Americans, and other ethnic minority groups had sacrificed and contributed to the war effort at home and abroad and experienced new socio-economic prosperity that for many was rescinded in peace time. Salazar’s writings often reflected this change that the status quo could no longer be tolerated and he pointed out their hypocrisy in a nation whose democratic ideals often clashed with unconstitutional realities. His voice as a writer was unique because as a

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Mexican national, raised in the U.S., he had an insider’s view with an outsider’s perspective. Consequently, his ambiguous status because of his ethnicity allowed him to enroll in a Southern university without having to file suit, but also exposed him to the realities of white privilege inherent in society and its institutions. He was given access to a world others were denied and yet the fact that he was Mexican American limited this access. Through his writing, it becomes clear that Salazar understood this reality as he sometimes revealed in the subtext of his articles during his initial career at TCM.

What makes this time in his life so significant is that his college writing informed his professional life, but his career has not been analyzed and for the most part has been ignored. During his time at the Prospector, he was one of the few Mexicans/Mexican Americans on the staff which was also the case throughout his professional journalistic career. A review of the Prospector’s October 19, 1946, issue, when Salazar was first listed as a reporter, revealed that out of forty-four staff positions only one other person had a Spanish surname. Another constant thread that expands over his career was his innate ability to find a way to provoke his readers, often because he pointed out problems and called out the privileges of those who benefited from the status quo. His ascendance as a writer is unique because he was an ethnic Mexican being educated and raised in the U.S. which made him a predecessor to the Chicana/o movement that he later covered and became a martyr for. He was representative of an emerging demographic that in subsequent decades sought to have their rights recognized and culture undiminished. Also of note was the fact that he belonged to a generation of Mexican immigrants that came to the

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22 The term Mexican American is applied to Salazar throughout this study to emphasize the fact that, although a Mexican national, he was raised and educated in the U.S. and identified with and understood “American culture.”

23 A review of the five years prior to the arrival of Salazar to the staff of the Prospector revealed that between the semesters of fall 1941 to spring 1943 there are no Spanish surnames listed as staff. Beginning in the 1943-44 academic year, two students with Spanish surnames are listed as staff. In fall 1944 it peaked at three then went back to two in spring 1945. The two semesters prior to Salazar becoming staff, fall 1945 and spring 1946, there was only one staff member with a Spanish surname listed.
U.S. through El Paso in the 1920s that gave it a unique characteristic due to its concentration of urban Mexican immigrants, the only city in the southwest with a Mexican majority.24

In the spring of 1947, Salazar’s first signed article appeared on the front page of the Prospector.25 He had been on the staff of the student newspaper since the previous fall, but had not been credited with writing an article. At first glance, the piece seemed no different than any other story found in a college newspaper because he was writing about student association elections. The subject of his article was Larry Hillyer, whom he had singled out as the person responsible for getting students elected as president of the Student Association. He described Hillyer as a “blue eyed, blonde” whose appearance was more indicative of the average college student than Hillyer’s own self-described image as a ‘rugged individual.’26 What stood out about this description is that Salazar seemed to be revealing to his readers how he viewed himself and the majority of the student body at TCM. Most attending the college were white, the campus was not integrated until the fall of 1955, and that placed him in direct opposition to the concept of the “average” college student. Salazar did not fit the profile of what he saw as the typical enrollee and that is a fact that he acknowledged by providing this description. While this may seem to be a minute detail, the manner in which he wrote subsequent articles about elections and “Greek” organizations identified who those candidates and members actually represented. Salazar recognized and wrote about how only a specific kind of individual participated at the exclusion of other groups based on class and ethnicity.

25 The Ruben Salazar Project timeline appears to suggest that his first signed article was in the Prospector April 25, 1947 issue a week after the article on Hillyer, http://rubensalazarproject.com/timeline/.
The fall 1947 semester brought new students onto campus and provided Salazar with a setting for an article whose premise was based on an alleged interaction he had with an incoming freshman during registration. He personified this individual as someone who was from a rural community and had come to college seeking to harvest larger produce and yield a higher volume of milk from his cow, “Patsy.” This humorous piece identified this anonymous character by his purported registration number of 1689 and had him speaking and mispronouncing words with a country or southern drawl. Words such as chemistry and genetics became “chemistree” and “gernetics” and when Salazar suggested 1689 was an agriculture student he responded that he was “a fresherman, jest beginin’…gonna learn how to git better and bigger crops.” Salazar informed 1689 that before he had begun studying to accomplish that, he must first learn different subjects from the liberal arts catalogue including a foreign language. To this he received the following response, “I don’t want to talk to Patsy in no furrin lingo…There’s too many furriners in this here country as it is. Nobody talks American no more.” However humorous his readers may have found this, it was clear that Salazar was personifying the white southerner who perceived the nation was being overtaken by outsiders, non-whites, and that they were predominantly non-English speaking immigrants. It was likely that Salazar heard this comment made by Anglos about the Spanish-speaking population of El Paso. As a Mexican immigrant living in a border town, he would have been sensitive to remarks or comments like this. After further discussion, Salazar went on to relay that 1689 abruptly left the line over the audacity of pursuing a non-vocational education that would take him four years to complete. Salazar responded to his departure by gladly taking the spot that 1689 left vacant in the registration

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27 It is also in this first issue of the 1947 fall semester that Salazar is listed as the News Editor for the *Prospector*, http://0-theprospector.newspaperarchive.com.lib.utep.edu/el-paso-prospector/1947-10-04/page-2.
His writing conveyed that he relished the opportunity to receive a college education that included a broad range of subjects that would have made him a more astute and well-rounded person. Another intent may have been to show the types of individuals he might come across who were uncomfortable with the presence of a large non-Anglo and non-English speaking population. This article also inverted the traditional power dynamics for stereotypes and caricatures about Mexicans depicted in the media. Salazar was the educated individual who spoke proper English without an accent and his white counterpart appeared un-educated, spoke with an accent and had no interest in expanding his mind. Education and the state of it, especially at the university level, was important to Salazar who recognized its virtues and the class/racial barriers that he encountered in pursuit of it.

On October 18, 1947, Salazar began writing his column titled, “This Shot World,” where he could take aim at any subject that related to what he saw occurring on campus and throughout the nation. Its title perhaps attempted to reveal that the world was in a state of ruin and that his content/commentary was intended to highlight the issues that were contributing to its then current state. The significance of attending a university and the impact college athletics had on diminishing that importance were at the center of this first column. He began the article by sarcastically stating that college football was played because of the gratification players acquired from participating in it. Of little, or “secondary importance,” was the fact that athletes were “bought and paid” by universities. Some in fact were so “sportive” that they want to play for as long as they can and he gave the example of Barney Poole, who played on Army’s team and then played for Mississippi’s in what was his sixth year as a varsity player. Then he gave the example

of Charles Trippi who had made Georgia proud by returning to his alma mater for a “rumored” sum of five thousand dollars, an apartment and a car. Salazar juxtaposed these examples with that of the “audacious” President of American University, Paul F. Douglas, who had “abolished” the school’s football team because he viewed its players as being exploited and believed that the current state of the sport had little connection to education. This notion of course proved “preposterous,” for as Salazar sarcastically implied, players played for the simple joy of doing so. 29 A young student attacking football as a sport and culture in Texas could be seen by some as blasphemous, to do so as a Mexican American in the south probably more so. Yet, he did and made in 1947 an argument that is still relevant today when discussing college athletics. His writing highlighted a problem that still looms over universities as centers for learning and empowerment that often clash with the exploitative and business-like model of sports programs. Salazar’s column, and future ones, provided a glimpse of the future journalist he would become by revealing his talent as a writer and his sensitivity towards acknowledging and calling out injustice, racial discrimination, and other inequities. These traits were present from the start of his writing career.

His next two columns also focused on different aspects of what he saw as the modern landscape of higher education. In one, he argued that universities had gone into the business of admitting wide-eyed teenagers who believed that once enrolled in school they would absorb all of the knowledge available, socialize, graduate, and then find themselves at the top of their respective fields. This “sudden interest in higher learning” was causing cash registers to “tinkle so vehemently” across college campuses throughout the country. When the University of California president addressed the student body and proclaimed that ‘…there are 10,000 too

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many of you’ he had clearly shown that he was out of touch with the “new conception of college education.” Salazar revealed his keen eye for observation as he saw that the pursuit of a college education was being handled under a business like model that sought to bring in as many possible patrons as it could. The following week he lambasted the legislature for having initiated an increase to the out of state tuition paid by non-residents at Texas universities. A law that was “rushed” through during the summer increased the fee from twenty-five dollars to one hundred-fifty dollars plus an additional fifteen dollars for extracurricular activities. Salazar wrote that Texas “being the cultural hub of the universe with its GREAT professors…research laboratories, and…libraries, the foreign element would only help to make our institutions…mediocre dumps as Harvard, Yale, or Columbia.” His final line read, “Let’$ pa$$ $ome mor$,” which revealed what he felt these new regulations truly represented. It is interesting to note that he refers to out of state students as a “foreign element,” this suggests he may have seen this fee increase was aimed at a particular group and was not exclusively intended for out-of-state residents from within the U.S. Because TCM was situated along the border, students from Ciudad Juárez or recent immigrants from Mexico who had not established residency, were to be disproportionately affected by the increase. This also affected poor out-of-state residents who were being asked to pay more than six times what the fee had been and due to the correlation between poverty and ethnicity, specific groups would likely be affected more than others. Again, Salazar’s perspective seems prophetic given the current cost of a college education as he wrote


about issues concerning the financial motives of universities and legislative bodies passing laws that were geared to restrict certain individuals from infiltrating Texas universities.

Salazar used the supposed discovery of a fifteen-thousand-year old “Ice-Age Mexican” to discuss the political and economic climate that this individual would have experienced were he alive at the time. The “Tepexpan man…he’d have troubles more perplexing than just wearing out his club from wooing too much,” an acknowledgement of the political climate from the ongoing Cold War.\textsuperscript{32} If alive, he’d be “accused by Adolphe Menjou [an actor of the period] of being a Communist,” and if Adolphe were unsuccessful in proving it “Pravda [the soviet newspaper] would probably accuse our hero of being a Fascist.”\textsuperscript{33} Then, he referred to the Tepexpan Man as “Jose” and how eating a steak in his time was as simple as killing a large mammal, but in 1947 this endeavor required having to rob and murder a millionaire in order to afford such a luxury. Attending college would have proved just as perplexing because of the turmoil associated with social and romantic relationships between men and women. And finally, if “Jose” were to decide to use his “last nickel” to purchase a soda, he’d find that he needed another nickel to “buy the privilege of using the bottle, too.”\textsuperscript{34} Salazar shows a talent for being able to discuss something like the discovery of the Tepexpan Man and tie it into social commentary on the state of things in the nation and world. Society was polarized and anyone who was thought of as other or not professing an allegiance to a particular ideology was subject to suspicion. It was a discourse that

\textsuperscript{32} The Tepexpan Man is the name associated to pre-historic human remains discovered near Lake Texcoco in 1947, Helmut de Terra, “Preliminary Note on the Discovery of Fossil Man at Tepexpan in the Valley of Mexico,” \textit{American Antiquity} 13, no. 1 (July 1947): 40-44, accessed October 22, 2015, \url{http://www.jstor.org/stable/275752}.

\textsuperscript{33} Adolphe Menjou was an actor who testified before the House Un-American Activities Committee as a “friendly” witness, \url{http://www.nytimes.com/movies/person/48438/Adolphe-Menjou/biography}. Pravda was the official newspaper of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from 1918 to 1991, \textit{Encyclopedia Britannica}, s.v. “Pravda,” \url{http://www.britannica.com/topic/Pravda}.

nullified reason because a political and rhetorical binary left no room for nuance. Along with his political remarks, a focus on economic issues relayed a consciousness that the plight of the working class and those who were economically disadvantaged gained nothing from ideological battles. Salazar’s writing showed an ability to discuss issues that had a significant impact on people and reflect on the state of society through the very deliberate and strategic use of satire.

Along with this column, an editorial ran that same day adjacent to “This Shot World” that lacked humor and differed greatly from any article one would have expected to find or read in this period. The month of November typically signified the final weeks that college football was played with the storied rivalry games of Thanksgiving Day weekend followed by the traditional bowl games that are carried out in December and January. In El Paso there was to be a football game between TCM and “Tempe” (Arizona State University) on November 8, 1947. Miner fans would have filled the stands at Kidd Field, TCM’s stadium, and cheered and jeered as the two teams attempted to best each other. A few fans in attendance may have noticed that Tempe was playing without one of its team captains and among those few who knows what percentage knew the reason why. This player did not miss the game due to injury, he did so because he was African American and was not allowed to play in the game. El Paso’s demographics made it different than other cities throughout the south, its population consisting of a high percentage of Mexicans and Mexican Americans since 1920.35 Despite its demographics, it was still a city located in the south where racial segregation was ubiquitous, even if not always obvious.

One individual acknowledged what was to take place at Kidd Field and spoke out about the injustice through an unsigned editorial printed in the Prospector and published on the same

35 García, 36.
day the game was to take place. Under the headline “One American Won’t Be There,” Salazar called out this situation when he stated that Senate investigating committees looking to define “Un-American” should have attended the game and discovered what it meant. The player who was a “Negro-though American” would have played in the south and that part of the country would “have nothing to do with such Americans.” Although only nineteen years old, the young journalist was calling out the discrimination of a U.S. citizen, and others like him in the south, whose rights and freedoms were being denied even though they were protected under the laws of the country. Salazar’s editorial was not simply him pointing a finger at a particular group, but an attempt to show that anyone who allowed this to take place was also complicit. He writes,

Who is to blame? Nobody and Everybody. Our South, which is still fighting the Civil War, is so used to this type of un-Americanism that it takes it for granted, and like Scarlett O’Hara decides: “I won’t worry about it now…I will think about it tomorrow…after a good night’s sleep.” The South has not only had a good night’s sleep, but it has also helped fight two major wars to preserve the country which is supposed to hold as undemocratic such acts as the South’s not letting a captain of a visiting football team play because his skin is darker than that of the hosts.  

Some readers, he insisted, may have believed that little could be done because there was a state law that prohibited African Americans from participating in college sports, he assured them “There is no such law.” Those who believed such a law existed were directed to read the Constitution’s 14th Amendment, which prohibited states from passing or enforcing laws that rescinded the rights of its citizens. And if such laws were passed, he pointed out that under the first Amendment, Congress could not create any laws that prevented people from peaceful assemblage or petitioning the government for a ‘redress of grievances.’ His argument, although

motivated by personal convictions, was based on the laws of the nation and the fact that the
government, like its citizens, was bound to preserve and uphold them. Evoking the sentiments
associated with the war earlier in the decade and those prominent during McCarthyism in the
subsequent political climate of the 1950s, he warned that if “Americans” continued to ignore this
problem “they might as well be living in Russia or pre-war Germany.” To further drive home
this point and its connection to past and ongoing conflicts that citizens of many racial/ethnic
backgrounds contributed to, he speculated about the next war in defense of the Constitution.
How many draft boards would have told “Tempe’s” captain that he was not allowed to
“participate” in the war because it was being fought “exclusively by whites?”38 His repeated use
of the word “American” seems deliberate perhaps signifying that his rights as a citizen were
being overlooked and that his skin color should be irrelevant. Salazar did not mince words, he
had called out the South and the nation for the way in which specific members of its population
were being treated which infringed upon rights guaranteed to them as citizens.

His impassioned editorial appeared unsigned and its publication showed approval from
those in charge of overseeing the student newspaper. Salazar had challenged the status quo and
those responsible for upholding it and the editorial did not run without notice. He along with
Mary Hill, the Prospector’s editor, and Charles Scarritt, a journalism instructor and its faculty
sponsor, were being held responsible for the column making it into print. It had drawn attention
to a rule by the college’s Board of Regents that prohibited African American athletes from
playing on Kidd Field, or any other state funded facility in Texas. TCM’s president, Dossie
Wiggins, threatened Hill and Salazar with expulsion if they did not apologize to the Board of
Regents for publishing the editorial, they both acquiesced and escaped punishment. Scarritt, on
the other hand, was fired for his role in the incident because as faculty sponsor he had allowed

38 Ibid.
the column to appear. Two students had their academic careers placed in jeopardy and one college instructor lost his position because an editorial had stated the unconstitutionality of segregation. Salazar had not sensationalized the situation or made statements that bordered on libel, he made a similar argument to one that would later be made and upheld in the Supreme Court’s decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. In 2008, Hill remarked that this had been written before the Civil Rights Act was enacted and that the editorial was the first of its kind that “addressed race relations” among college newspapers in Texas.\(^\text{39}\) It is remarkable that such words ran in a newspaper printed in the south at a time when such sentiments were still associated with a fringe element far outside of the mainstream, but also another example of a future champion for the disenfranchised.

Salazar gave his own personal account of what had transpired in a letter he sent to the *El Paso Herald-Post*, written during his hiatus, criticizing this policy and its continued effect on African American athletes. In November 1948, The University of Louisiana at Lafayette had declined its invitation to play in the Sun Bowl, a college football bowl game played at Kidd Field, because one of its players, an African American, would not be allowed to play. The “Prejudice Bowl,” as he referred to it, prohibited the former “lieutenant of the not so exclusive Army” to play and students from Lafayette had written to President Truman asking if this was democratic. He recalled how the past year he had “asked that question” and instigated a “furor that surprised” him. The previous year when he discovered that Tempe had an African American on the team, a co-captain and thus also an important member, Salazar asked if this player would be allowed to play against TCM and was told he would not. Salazar then began to circulate a petition with the help of friends that the African American player be allowed to participate and gathered more than three hundred signatures. He was then told by Dean Judson Williams in an

\(^{39}\) Robert, “Journalist.”
attempt to “shut us up” that there was a state law that did not permit “Negroes” to play, which he would discover did not exist. He wrote the editorial “denouncing” what he saw as an “undemocratic act” and before it was even published Dr. Wiggins had “summoned” the Prosector’s faculty supervisor, Scarritt, to discuss the matter. He left the meeting so frightened that a return visit included the paper’s editor, Hill, so that they could present a “proof” of Salazar’s editorial because they each felt it was ‘expedient.’ Dr. Wiggins then ‘advised’ that it should not be printed and Scarritt and Hill, both “fearing the losing of their jobs,” did so anyway. At this point Salazar wrote, “Nothing came of it but I was let known by some faculty members that I was being radical, naive and as one doctor of philosophy put it ‘thoroughly unconventional.’” His letter was motivated by TCM’s attempt to diffuse the situation by claiming that Lafayette had rejected the invitation for other reasons, but due to a negative reaction by the student body the university had now fabricated a story about racial discrimination. Salazar’s initial reaction was to circulate a petition much like an activist would. After it did not yield results, he found greater efficacy in publishing an editorial to bring the issue to the forefront believing this would cause a greater reaction. His suggestion that nothing happened as a result of his piece being published may have been an attempt to save face, or down play what transpired, but this account merits further investigation to discover why he made this statement. One thing that was evident though, Salazar’s belief in the power of journalism as an effective tool for activism, because he turned to it after the petition had failed and garnered a greater reaction.

Aside from the significance of a young Mexican American college student challenging segregation in the South, his emphasis on being an “American” and what this entailed is

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noteworthy. Salazar’s definition was different than that of groups like the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and the American G.I. Forum at their inception. While LULAC initially emphasized the “white” qualities of their members and that this “whiteness” thus legitimated their status as full-fledged U.S. citizens, his differed greatly. 41 Their ethnic parity narrative was a calculated attempt to show Mexican Americans as “white” and stressed a shared Anglo ancestral and cultural heritage originating in the Roman Empire. It also emphasized that they were descendants of prominent Spaniards and highlighted iconic figures like Cervantes and Cortés as examples of their pedigree. Since they were by this argument “white,” there was no basis for the racial discrimination that they faced.42 The American G.I. Forum members emphasized citizenship in correlation to their military service, but also developed a strong nationalistic ideology that was hostile towards Mexican immigrants and ignored this group’s struggles. They were ardent supporters of ending the Bracero Program after the war and worked in conjunction with labor organizations for the passage of immigration reforms.43 Although their members had Mexican heritage, they were “Americans” first and by extension “white,” aligning their goals with that of Anglo citizens who sought to scapegoat the migrant workers. Salazar did not believe in a need for qualifiers or characteristics to align with the dominant class. In his view, U.S. citizenship meant that the government was bound to honor their rights and any attributes that differentiated them from the dominant Anglo society were irrelevant. It is also important to note that Salazar, a Mexican national raised in the U.S., had

41 This point was brought up and emphasized in a meeting discussing the article with Dr. Yolanda Chavez Leyva on October 7, 2015.
42 García, Mexican Americans, 43.
43 Gutiérrez, Walls and Mirrors, 154-55.
applied for citizenship in 1946 and at the time of the editorial had another application pending. His understanding/definition of what it meant to be “American” was relevant to his own life and the legal procedure he had initiated to become a U.S. citizen. More importantly, these were rights that he himself could not currently claim as an immigrant, but had been taught as a product of the U.S. educational system and as a college student. Salazar’s use and definition of “American” imparts his understanding of the rights granted through citizenship by the Constitution and sets him apart from organizations like LULAC and the American G.I. Forum’s ethnically and racially motivated nationalistic ideology.

Two weeks after the editorial, Salazar wrote a satirical take on a fellow colleague that discussed censorship and double standards and can be easily misconstrued if taken out of context. Judy “Pete” Peterson who was the Assistant Society Editor for the Prospector was also responsible for the column “Muck” which had a social aspect and could best be described as a campus gossip column. Although it would seem that he was accusing Peterson of being a yellow journalist, he was actually remarking about the kind of column she wrote, and making reference to issues students had with it. The column discussed her resignation as the editor of “that much read piece of tripe-Muck” and expressed his lament over it, but made sure to preface the rest of the column with “the following is not necessarily the opinion of the editor.” Under other circumstances this may not seem to be significant except for the fact that his editorial from two weeks earlier almost had him and the editor expelled and led to the firing of the Prospector’s faculty sponsor. This new piece was also meant as a jab against the individuals that had

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44 Documents and letters written to and from Salazar concerning his application for citizenship were found on the following post, Elena Kadvany, “Ruben Salazar’s Road to Citizenship,” Ruben Salazar Project, August 20, 2013, accessed October 7, 2015, http://rubensalazarproject.com/2013/08/20/ruben-salazar-road-to-citizenship-2/.

45 A section in the Ruben Salazar Project about his time at the Prospector mistakenly refers to this article as commentary on actual yellow journalism and how he despised Peterson, some unknown writer, for it. http://rubensalazarproject.com/category/early-years/.
complained about the content of “Muck,” which resulted in the situation that caused its author to resign. As he wrote, Peterson had “at last been gagged” by those who claimed to have been “slammed” by the column “but are the first to complain when their names don’t appear.” She had been silenced “by people who believe in doing everything ‘the right way’ and hold as their yardstick the closest insipid, hypocritical and derogatory character.” His words revealed that he was upset not only about the situation, but with the individuals who instigated the resignation. In this section alone of about four sentences he used the word “gagged” five times and ended the paragraph with a single word, “Gagged.” It is not difficult to understand how he must have felt about this attempt at censorship after being made to apologize for the November 8 editorial in order to remain in school. Salazar stated that Peterson, “who has never meant any harm,” would no longer be able to write her clever quips about the social lives of the student body. The use of censorship is something that journalists must view with contempt because its implementation can often motivated by political reasons. What is being said is viewed in the context of who it is being said about, whether it be affluent students or the Board of Regents, rather than the argument being made. One can only infer from the body of this article that his comments were made with the aftermath of the “One American Won’t Be There” editorial in mind, using it as a subversive avenue to vent some of his frustration.

Now in December with the semester about to end, Salazar shifted the focus of his column to the recent run-off elections for “All Mines Favorite” and “Sun Princess.” He was not only vocal about this issue in print, but had also addressed the Student Council at a special meeting


47 All Mines Favorite was an honor bestowed upon the winner of an election amongst the members of the Student Association. Sun Princess was elected by members of the Student Association to represent the college in the Sun Carnival festivities that preceded the New Year’s Sun Bowl football game, similar to a homecoming court. Flowsheet 1954, (Student Publications, Inc., Yearbooks, no. 29, 1954), 58-60, accessed February 13, 2016, http://digitalcommons.utep.edu/yr_books/29.
convened to discuss the run-offs for the titles. Aside from his personal interest in fairness and justice, two of the candidates involved in the elections, Judy Peterson and Nancy Lee Wilcox, were his colleagues at the *Prospector*. When he addressed the student council on behalf of students who thought there should be a new election, Salazar identified that several campaigns had committed numerous “faults.” Among them were Sue Richards, Peterson’s opponent, wearing a campaign card while officiating at the polls, the influencing of voters by both parties within 50 feet of the polls, voting booths opening an hour late, not giving advanced notice of the election in the *Prospector*, changing the election date, and the discovery of mutilated ballots. After he made his third point, he was interrupted by the president of the Student Council and informed that a recent discussion in his government class had conveyed that “all is fair in politics” and that candidates could “even buy votes.” Ultimately, it all came down to what candidate had been the “best lobbyist.” Salazar did not respond to the comments and continued listing the irregularities, some of which the Student Council admitted took place. Despite acknowledging that it was not conducted legally, this appeal changed nothing as the council voted in favor of honoring the results of the election.48

In his column, Salazar expressed his frustration by stating that, “when someone thinks him a stupid ox and takes measures to prove it…this writer is liable to start thinking that he is not regarded as much.” He referred to himself as a “naive creature” for going before the council and protesting about the irregularities only to have them admit that “they were bad boys” who would never do it again and then “overwhelmingly refused to have a re-election.” His initial suspicions had arisen when he saw a candidate presiding over a polling booth, that no one knew the exact

time of the election, and when “mutilated” ballots were discovered around the voting area. Sarcastically he remarked, “Subtlety is the best policy.” 49 In the last several weeks, the young impassioned and idealistic writer had seen that championing what was just did not always yield favorable results as either a journalist or as a concerned student. Salazar had seen corruption and the misuse of power too frequently to ignore the fact that such rampant abuses were inherent in a system that was rigged in favor of maintaining the status quo.

In his final column of 1947, Salazar continued to write about the election and its continued fallout. He wrote that the “stinking aroma” had begun to clear up and in time it would be forgotten and added, “Rotten politics have again come up triumphantly in their too long visit to the Mines campus.” His choice of “again” suggested not only that this was not the first time something like this had taken place, but perhaps that he was exasperated by this continued state of affairs. Although student apathy towards the election may have existed, some of them “just didn’t like to be treated like morons.” Hinting here that such overt actions relayed the state of the status quo and how certain individuals played by a different set of rules and were above reproach. A faculty committee had been formed to investigate the election and “as was expected” had voted not to have another election.50 The committee reported that it had found several irregularities in the primary and run-off elections, but had not found any “definite violations of any rule in the present student constitution.”51 Salazar did not fault the committee’s findings

because the college’s constitution did not overtly state that “UN-ETHICAL ELECTIONS CAN’T BE HELD.” He was also reminded that it also did not say that “elections can’t be held in Juarez” and he jokingly suggested two locations where voting could take place. On the bright side, students in the future would be treated to “better” elections and they would not have to worry about any violations of the constitution because the new student handbooks no longer carried it. Lastly, he wished everyone a Merry Christmas and specifically desired that the Student Council have a “more happy and ethical New Year.”52 It seemed as though he knew that something as insignificant in the long run as these elections was also emblematic of a number of real world scenarios that awaited him outside of school. His displeasure with the situation stemmed from his belief that it was a model for future behavior in settings where the stakes and consequences would be much higher. Salazar had employed his wit to reprimand those implicated in the election fraud, but he could not mask his sense that things should be carried out democratically because only in this way could results occur justly and thus negate privilege and promote equality.

Another one of Salazar’s arguments reappeared in the December 20 issue of the Prospector, in an article about the Border Intercollegiate Athletic Conference which was holding its annual meeting in El Paso that day. This was the governing body for a collection of teams that played against each other, including TCM and Arizona State University. One of the main points to be discussed that day was whether the Border Conference’s African American athletes should be allowed to participate in games played in Texas.53 Only a month earlier, Salazar had called this rule into question and one can only speculate if he wrote the editorial knowing that the city would host this meeting. If it is more than a coincidence, then Salazar’s editorial was a deliberate

52 Salazar, ibid.
act that not only highlighted the illegality of the rule, but sought to create the kind of attention and dialogue that would spur the change necessary to end this practice. He had shown in his most recent writings that he would be a force to be reckoned with as a journalist and that he was not afraid to challenge the existing state of affairs or to call out corruption and injustice.

In his final article of the fall semester, published January 10, 1948, he discussed the proposed implementation of a Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program on the TCM campus. What was significant about this column was that he related some of his own personal two-year experience with the ROTC in high school. He referred to the program as “very democratic” because some of the “boys were given stripes and brass and told they were THE LEADERS,” while other students were given “pestilent uniforms and told to obey the half wits in command or else.” It could be inferred from these comments that he believed race/ethnicity and other factors played a role in who was given priority in the program. He went on to write about his instructor, a “retired Army drunk,” who demanded respect for “his cronies with Sam Browns” and their orders.54 In his two years in the program, he had learned how to march and salute and “hate prigs” who believed that they were better than others because they wore a “Sam Brown.” This was followed by a criticism of the program for not teaching about the causes of war, the potential “means” of preventing them, or how to “fight vicious propaganda.” Salazar believed that the ROTC taught the importance of marching, drilling, shooting straight, the need for an ‘Officer’s Club’ and respecting some “prig” who wore a different uniform. Salazar stated that an ROTC should operate differently at the college because, “Of course, it will be different at

54 “Sam Browns” is a reference to the Sam Browne belt that was a part of the official Army uniform used during WWI and WWII issued exclusively to commissioned officers, http://www.militarytrader.com/military-trader-news/the_sam_browne_belt.
Mines. Everything is fair and democratic at Mines. Everything…” The remark was meant to be a statement about the problems that had arisen at TCM in the previous months and how he felt things were handled. The ROTC, from his experience, represented another institution that operated under the same auspices as did a majority of the organizations on campus and the college itself. They favored a select few and what seemed to distinguish them from others had little to do with any merits the individual possessed and most often was a result of what group that person represented.

As the semester came to a close, so did Salazar’s initial career at TCM and the Prospector. Following a year in which he had distinguished himself as a promising and aspiring journalist, he left school and no record of why he did so remains. In the first issue of the spring term, his name no longer appears listed as the news editor and there were no columns attributed to him. It was only revealed two weeks later on February 28, 1948, that he had been replaced as news editor because he was “not in school this term.” Further research is needed to determine why he left TCM at this time. By looking at his writing, the fallout from it, and his assessment of the state of the campus, it is not difficult to understand that he may have felt disillusioned with his experience as a student and as a writer for the Prospector. Until any of his personal accounts are found this is all merely conjecture, although the correlation between his departure and his relationship with the college at the time is important.

Salazar’s writings revealed a distaste for privilege and the undermining of democratic ideals in college and society, which considering how the year ended could have provoked him to

leave. He had been threatened with expulsion along with that of another colleague and his November 8 editorial had also resulted in the firing of Scarritt, whom he had been working under since his career began in 1946.\(^{58}\) Any number of causes could have led him to leave school including the consequences related to the editorial, or personal and financial reasons. Unfortunately, the actual reason has yet to be determined, but what is known is that he was a talented writer who was acknowledge as such by the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association (TIPA) for 1947-48. Apart from contributing to the \textit{Prospecto}r’s All American rating for its fall issues and second place TIPA rating, his column, “This Shot World,” won the general column division.\(^{59}\) No longer enrolled at TCM at the time he won the award, it is significant that at such a young age, and in his first semester as a columnist, he achieved this recognition.

There is little record as to what led Salazar to take his hiatus from TCM and the \textit{Prospector}. What is known is that he went on to work as a jewelry salesman for two years with his father.\(^{60}\) In October of 1950, he was drafted into the Army and after basic training was stationed in Germany during the Korean War.\(^{61}\) His time in the military provided him an opportunity to continue his education as he received an Army Education Program Certificate for Military Correspondence in December of 1951.\(^{62}\) While in the military, he also continued the process of naturalization, which he had initiated four years prior to his deployment. Salazar’s


hopes of becoming a U.S. citizen had been mired by bureaucratic obstacles that he had been promised could be circumvented now that he was in the Army. As part of his letter written to the Naturalization Office in El Paso while stationed in Germany explained, he had been informed at the reception center at Fort Hill, Oklahoma that naturalization “would now be an automatic process.” He also expressed his anxiousness to become an “American Citizen” and was hoping to be given proper instructions as how to complete this process. Unfortunately, he was informed that it could not be completed while he was abroad and was urged to file new paperwork once he had returned to his legal residence in the United States. Further research is necessary to uncover what Salazar did during his time away from TCM and to understand what factors motivated the decision to end his studies and writing career in early 1948.

His quest for citizenship may have been deterred until he returned home, but it was clear that his continued struggle during military service exemplified that he wanted to achieve this status. It is similar to today’s struggles by many immigrants, both documented and undocumented, who wrestle with a path to citizenship despite their contributions to the country. In his case for example, the government easily facilitated his ability to serve and potentially give his life in service of the U.S., but could not utilize that same ease in processing his application for citizenship. Mexican Americans had long been an essential part of U.S. military campaigns and had served with distinction and often died in disproportionate numbers in correlation to their percentage of the population since WWII. As a journalist he could later draw upon his experience in his coverage of the Vietnam War, which disproportionately affected the Mexican

63 Kadvany.
American community and helped galvanize Chicana/o activism in the 1960s and 70s.\textsuperscript{65} Through an analysis of his time at the \textit{Prospector}, Salazar emerges as a person who not only believed in the power and privilege that being a U.S. citizen provided, but it is also clear that he accepted full heartedly the responsibility of upholding such ideals.

Between 1946 and 1948, Salazar had transitioned from being a young Mexican American high school graduate to an accomplished student journalist for TCM. He had used his wit to write satirical columns that brought to light some of the discrepancies inherent to the university with regards to the student body and its politics. The state of education and the value of a college degree also received his attention in numerous writings that called out double standards and questioned the true intentions of universities and elected officials. As the son of immigrants, he had an appreciation of the transformative properties that a college degree represented for someone like him and others in the Mexican American community. His writing had also shone a spotlight on the harsh reality of segregation and that the treatment of “American” citizens in the south was a violation of their civil rights. Putting his TCM career at risk, he took a stand and let his readers know what was taking place and who was responsible for this deplorable situation. As a juxtaposition to his editorial about civil rights and citizenship was his ongoing attempt to become a naturalized citizen and his own perception of where he fit into society.

This phase of his journalistic endeavor only lasted two years, but they proved to be impactful. Not only had he been acknowledged for his talent as a writer, but he had also shown the qualities which made him an outstanding journalist and trailblazer as a professional. No matter what the subject matter, it was obvious that Salazar looked to uncover and reveal the inner

\textsuperscript{65} In the southwest, Mexican Americans made up approximately twelve percent of the population yet they represented almost twenty percent of the regions casualties in Vietnam and twenty-five percent for the state of Texas. See, Yolanda Alaniz and Megan Cornish, \textit{Viva La Raza: A History of Chicano Identity and Resistance} (Seattle: Red Letter Press, 2008), 186.
mechanisms of power and privilege that sought to control certain individuals based on race and socio-economic status. He may not have always been the direct victim of injustice, but this did not deter him from pointing it out by calling attention to the plight of others and insisting on a strict adherence to democratic principles. In his years as a professional journalist, this trait stood out and distinguished him as someone willing to promote justice by revealing an alternative perspective that the mainstream media had no intention of reporting. Salazar’s time at TCM and the *Prospector* from 1947-48 had provided a glimpse of the qualities and characteristics that made him a renowned journalist and advocate for Chicana/o civil rights.
Chapter 2: Salazar Returns to TWC and the *Prospector*, February-December 1953

Salazar left TCM at the start of 1948 after having made an impression at the university due to his penchant and willingness to call attention to issues he viewed as undemocratic and unjust. In his time away from school he had joined the workforce and later served in the military during the Korean War, while stationed in Germany. This promising journalist’s career had begun when he was a teenager, although his age was not indicative of the maturity he showed as a writer. When he returned to the *Prospector*’s pages in February 1953, a little more than five years since his last column, the Texas College of Mines had been renamed Texas Western College (TWC). The school’s name was not the only thing that changed, he was also about to turn twenty-five, was a veteran, and had observed the world without the auspices of academia. He had served the country he was raised and educated in, but not as a citizen entitled to the constitutional ideals he embraced and had called adherence to within society and at the university. Older and more experienced with the harsh realities of the world, he drew greater parallels between what occurred on campus and what took place outside its walls. Through this refined perspective, he extrapolated where the privileged classes learned the behaviors and attitudes that helped perpetuate social injustice. A different form of education had taken place and it reinforced his sense of responsibility to use this position in a manner that served more than his career ambitions. Although his perception of what it meant to be a U.S. citizen was evident in his earlier writing, his time in the military further exposed him to the dire realities of the time. Through journalism, he would once again be empowered to bring to light the contrast between those ideals and how society and institutions actually employed them. His writing was still representative of those initial beliefs, but now carried the additional weight of recent personal
experiences he could share with his audience. From this point on, Salazar’s columns were to be more overt and subversive, reflecting an individual who understood the need for urgency and who was aware of his capacity to create change, revealing the cunning nature of the professional journalist he was to become.

Salazar reemerged in the *Prospector* February 14, 1953, beginning where he left off, via his column “This Shot World.” His return titled “St. Valentine’s Day-- As Seen From Anti-Commercial View,” steered away from the controversial or the political and instead was a commentary on the holiday. The column acknowledged the “ingenious sentimentalists” that had made the day an event to express love through “verbal, printed or material” means. This no doubt brought much delight to the Chamber of Commerce as it helped fill the “lag” that took place after the Christmas shopping season. With the shift to a more austere society having made the day fall into “disuse” in England the celebration had become much bigger in the U.S. and a very “expensive proposition” for its participants. While school children held parties and expressed their sentiments to each other under the guidance of their teachers, adults had to endure more complicated matters. For them, it was a “Clearing Day for all peeves, demonstrations, antagonisms and bitterness that many have accumulated during the past year between the two major sexes.” Men escaped “ridicule” if they broke away from “their usual passive resistance toward women” and were allowed to “admit fancifully” their love towards any significant others. He also pointed out that “cynical realists” had protested that with Valentine’s Day falling between Christmas and “Income Tax Day” it had developed into a hardship levied upon “manhood.”

66 This initial column in his return to the *Prospector* may seem light hearted and

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even trivial in comparison to his writing before his departure, but it does reveal a few things about its author. For one, it showed someone that was able to discern between the sentimental desires of people and the actual commodification of love, a distinction emblematic of a mature and pragmatic viewpoint. He saw beyond the kitsch accoutrements that had become associated with Valentine’s and that it represented an opportunity for individuals, especially men, to break away from gendered concepts. At the same time, he acknowledged that “American” culture was built on materialism and influenced by a retailer’s profit margin. Because something as basic to the human condition as love was, through advertising, tied to money and ultimately another aspect of class and privilege. Having worked as a jewelry salesman, he would have known the price and the pressure placed on people to participate in these rituals. Salazar had returned with the same wit and analysis he employed in his earlier writings, yet his perspective also conveyed that he was at a different point in his life than when his studies began.

The following week Salazar turned his attention to the student body and how he saw himself in contrast to its current state as well as the atmosphere around campus in reference to some changes being made at the college.\textsuperscript{67} He wrote from the third person perspective of “THE BORE” who traveled around campus coming across different scenarios in which students engaged in some activity that he felt portrayed apathy towards their education and college experience. It began as he stumbled upon a group of male students that had gathered in the Union

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\textsuperscript{67} A point of contention for the staff of the \textit{Prospector} at the beginning of the spring semester, as it dominated the editorial section in this issue, was a new policy that was being implemented that allowed students to sell their Student Association books for a partial refund of fifteen dollars. Previously the fee was mandatory but lapsed after the fall semester and a new policy allowed students to be reimbursed half of the fee. These funds were used to pay for such things as the \textit{Prospector} and other events/activities on campus as well as for the construction and maintenance of facilities utilized by students. “Extra-Curricular Program Faces Cut Without SA Fund,” \textit{Prospector} (El Paso), February 21, 1953, accessed October 27, 2014, http://0-theprospector.newspaperarchive.com.lib.utep.edu/el-paso-prospecto/1953-02-21/page-2/pageno-208968990?tag=anita+blair&rtserp=tags/anita-blair?ndt=by&py=1949&pey=1954.
Building having a discussion in “comparative anatomy” over who was “better built” Marilyn Monroe or Janet Leigh. At this point “THE BORE” asked them, “What do you guys think of the loyalty oath one has to sign before being permitted to register for classes?” The conversation ground to a halt as they “stopped chewing on their doughnuts” and looked at him the way elementary school children do at the teacher after “he blows the whistle indicating the end of recess.” One student, which he referred to as a “young college lad, leader of tomorrow,” shrugged and stated that he signed under false pretenses. Because it read, “I swear…that I believe in and approve the Constitution of the United States and the principles of government therein contained” and he had no idea “what the constitution therein contains.” The group of students burst out into laughter as he snuck away and the conversation resumed on its previous topic.  

68 It is interesting to note that Salazar positioned himself as the teacher in opposition to the students which indicated that he saw himself as the older, authoritative and knowledgeable figure in this scenario. There was also significance to his emphasis on an understanding of the constitution, or the lack thereof, by what he mentions as a future leader. Given his proclivity to address the disparities present in society and policies as they related to constitutional rights, he inferred that many of the ills of contemporary life stem from leaders, people in positions of power, who are charged with upholding a document that they do not understand.

As he made his way across the “exotic Tibetan campus” towards the library, he took in the scenery and the plethora of “temples” dedicated to learning that surrounded him.  

69 Once there he encountered a “group of scholars” in a line that extended from the Business Manager’s office and overheard phrases like “Fifteen bucks!…Trying to gyp us, eh?” He asked a “fellow

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69 The style in which the campus’s buildings are designed is actually Bhutanese.
scholar” if the students were there to sell their S.A. books to which this person responded in the affirmative and stated that as soon as they heard about it at the SUB (Student Union Building) they came running. “THE BORE” responded that this would hurt the college and the entirety of the extracurricular activities with this action. Although the business office had committed “a very embarrassing blunder,” students should “use their noodles” and see how they were shortchanging themselves by diminishing student activities, one of the more important aspects of college life. The individual who allowed this transaction to take place “is taking you people for dupes” in a move that is an ambitious attempt by a “novice politician” trying to stand out in Austin. While the “scholar” scratched his head and begun to process the information he had just been given and “fearing that his brain may function,” he quipped, “All I know is that I’m getting 15 bucks now, so get lost, bore.”  

Salazar’s phrasing in this section suggests that these were younger and impulsive students who only saw the opportunity for monetary gain and were short sighted for their lack of understanding the long-term ramifications that this action would have. By referring to the students as “scholars,” he pointed out that these were going to be the type of individuals who would exemplify being educated and worthy of a degree, along with all of the benefits that would come from it. His premise also presented him as the pensive and worldlier individual in this exchange because he understood the need for funding programs and activities that created well rounded graduates.  

Making his way into the library, he sat down to read a book when he observed two female students who appeared to have come out of a “cigarette advertisement.” He overheard one tell the other that her mother had promised to buy her a car the previous semester if she passed her classes with straight A’s, but she was “fouled” by a professor who had given her a D.  

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70 Ibid.  
71 Salazar had made such an argument in one of his early articles referenced in Chapter One, “‘Number, Please’—Registration Drama.
Fortunately for her, she had devised a scheme for the current semester by only taking twelve hours and “all snap courses.” To this her friend replied, “Gee…what kind you gonna get? Convertible?”\textsuperscript{72} Perhaps as a tactic to show the influence of class privilege, Salazar used this particular student to embody those who have the financial means to attend school and do so for reasons other than receiving an education. Continuing along a similar thread, it is the fault of the professor who gave her the failing grade and not her own for not passing the class based on merit. He also emphasized the women’s appearance, not simply for their aesthetic qualities, but to call attention to the manner in which they were dressed perhaps as a visual cue representative of their affluence. It is intriguing that there is no mention or indication as to the ethnicity of the students he observed and this may either be a calculated measure or because the author believed it was implicit. He also continued the theme of a materialistic culture that measured itself through its consumption and accumulation of wealth. This column was Salazar’s attempt to show that a subsection of students at TWC were taking their education for granted and were dismissing the privilege of attending college, which for them was simply a means to an end, and not the empowering and transformative process Salazar viewed it as.

A similar emphasis was present in his next column, although the state of education had always been a focal point since he began writing at the \textit{Prospector}, which discussed an article written by Louis Bromfield in \textit{Esquire} about universities and the type of graduates they produced.\textsuperscript{73} Salazar wondered what a college student could do as such articles attested that a college education may not have been a worthwhile pursuit anymore. Perhaps a more productive endeavor could be undertaken as a retail sales person, a bar tender or even as a door-to-door

\textsuperscript{72} Salazar, “This Shot World: The Bore Finds Life At College Hard One.”
\textsuperscript{73} Louis Bromfield, “The Shame of Our Colleges: The uneducated people with all the degrees—how did they get that way?” \textit{Esquire}, March 1953, accessed December 1, 2015, \url{http://archive.esquire.com/issue/19530301#!&pid=32}. 

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salesperson. There were students, he suggested, who did not worry if “they’re getting anything good out of attending college” since they were enrolled for the “sheer joy” that was to be offered. These individuals were in fact the only ones who understood exactly what they were doing in school and should be envied. To the students who were not attending for the simple pleasure, Bromfield asked the “often embarrassing question” about why they were in college.\textsuperscript{74} One point in particular that Salazar emphasized was that, “Many of our college graduates—perhaps a majority—cannot think: they can only emote.”\textsuperscript{75} This notion was one he took to heart as an “uncomfortable truth” and offered up as general examples state legislators, along with some Army officers and K-12 teachers.\textsuperscript{76} Some of his previous writing had singled out certain legislators and Army officials as illustrations of people who had achieved their post despite an incapacity to think. He was also a few months removed from his own military service and may have written this with specific people in mind. As a consolation, Salazar pointed to another line from \textit{Esquire} that may have explained the then current state of college students and graduates, “We have had much too much dishonest teaching from kindergarten upward,” with the greatest share coming from the highest echelon of the “administrative pedagogical structure.”\textsuperscript{77} A common thread brought up in past and future articles shared this perspective on the root cause of many educational and social ills being a symptom of institutional deficiencies that perpetuated such conditions.

While this may not have been new territory in “This Shot World,” it seemed that the current and previous column may have been inspired in part by some of the issues that Bromfield


\textsuperscript{75} Bromfield.

\textsuperscript{76} Salazar.

\textsuperscript{77} Bromfield.
brought up in his own article. The concept of emphasizing the degree rather than the actual college education may have struck a particular cord with Salazar as he had made similar observations in earlier writings. Another point made by Bromfield and emphasized by Salazar in the past week’s column was the priority to procure material wealth over a desire to receive an education.  

This is no more evident than in the examples of the student seeking the fifteen dollar refund and the young woman who was more concerned with getting a car than the fact she had failed a class. It is also worth noting that Bromfield wrote in his article “many of us are first and second generations of immigrants coming from countries where education was expensive or traditionally barred to most persons of humble origins.” These factors thus necessitated sending, as a reaction, individuals to college who had “no business being there.”  

Reading this must have caused Salazar to contemplate on his own situation as he was a first-generation immigrant whose family came from Mexico where educational opportunities can be difficult to secure. He may have even come away with a better understanding of his own studies and ambitions and an even stronger resolution to use this opportunity to foster the change necessary for society to progress. A correlation can be made between Salazar’s choice of topics and having read the Bromfield article, as it probably inspired him to choose the subject, but it no doubt resonated with him because it was something he was passionate about and identified with.  

A few weeks later, Salazar used his column to acknowledge the death of Joseph Stalin and also ridicule the former Soviet leader. Written as a satirical play, “Comrade Stalin in Hell” was credited to “Rubén (George Bernard) Salazar” and its premise was that the recently deceased

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78 Ibid.  
79 Ibid.
Stalin has just arrived in hell.\footnote{Salazar, “This Shot World: Comrade Stalin In Hell,” Prospector (El Paso), March 14, 1953, accessed November 1, 2014, http://0-theprospector.newspaperarchive.com.lib.utep.edu/el-paso-prospector/1953-03-14/page-4/pageno-90475754?tag=ruben+salazar&rtserp=tags/ruben-salazar?ntd=by&py=1953&pey=1955&psb=dateasc.} In doing so, he also inadvertently, or perhaps deliberately, personified the well-rounded literary knowledge that a college student should possess.\footnote{The title and the name “George Bernard” were appropriated by Salazar to convey the source material for his writing, at least to those who recognized the source material. Salazar was referencing the playwright George Bernard Shaw and his 1906 work Man and Superman whose third act is Don Juan in Hell, based on a Mozart opera and often omitted from productions and instead staged as a standalone play. The third act is set in Hell where the character of Don Juan has a dialogue with Satan, along with other characters. http://chicagocritic.com/don-juan-in-hell/.} As Satan sat on his throne, a “mushroom-like red cloud” appeared and as it faded away revealed a “short stocky man” with a mustache dressed in baggy pants which were tucked into “Russian-type boots.” He also wore a “gabardine smock” and a “pearl-studded Communist fraternity pin,” which had been meticulously pinned to it. Satan, who was described as not being surprised but clearly disturbed, welcomed the “Comrade” whose arrival he had been expecting. Stalin was invited to participate in a game of Russian roulette, but declined the invitation because he was in a rush to procure “Hell’s Army” so that he could attack Heaven immediately. Satan informed him that no such army existed as everyone there was “at peace among ourselves” and instead offered him a hammer to “mash my friend Hitler’s head in.” The lack of an army, war, purges and an income tax upset Stalin who declared that he must liberate hell from its “Wall Street influences.” He then removed an atomic bomb from under his smock, a “going away present from some American traitors,” and proceeded to launch it at Satan. Then, in the process of dying, the devil accepted his fate and declared that the modern world had rendered hell “obsolete” and that Stalin’s presence was “too much” for him. Stalin then addressed everyone in hell and stated he was its new master and was implementing the “first Five-Year Plan in Hell” that was to consist of increased pain, torture, and infighting, which was to be “distributed equally among
everyone!" Salazar made little effort to conceal how he felt about Stalin and his form of socialism. Not only did he send him to hell, but he was a greater villain than Satan because even in death he was still fueled by a proclivity for belligerence and a blind adherence to his political dogma. This was probably because Salazar saw him as someone who posed a threat to peace and stability in the world and was perhaps further motivated by his own recent military service. His viewpoint was consistent with his other writings that express a distrust of those in power who abused their positions and whose careless nature resulted in the suffering of others.

In his final column of the spring semester, Salazar echoed similar sentiments about the ongoing Korean conflict and the two world powers that used it as a proxy for their ideological warfare. His column, written in the form of a story, began as an “OD colored Cadillac” stopped in front of the Pentagon and a “retired three-star general” got out of the vehicle and made his way up the stairs. There he was greeted by a “four--star general” whose hand he shook after a “snappy military salute.” A great commotion was going on inside the building as “junior officers” were taken aback by the presence of “so many stars.” One of the generals proclaimed, “Our army has been seriously limited in the quantity of ammunition it can fire at the enemy.” To which the other replied, “Oh no, as you were. There is enough ammo in Korea.” The setting then shifted to congress where a “wing-collared senator” had gotten up to make a speech, which he did with “great emotion.” He declared, “We have appropriated for the last three fiscal years $160 billion for the military and by July 1 we will have spent another $103 billion, and yet some say we have not got enough ammunition to fight in Korea. In my judgement that is a national

82 Salazar.

83 In 1927, Stalin began his “revolution from above” which was intended to rapidly industrialize the Soviet Union and collectivize agriculture to help remove any vestiges of capitalism introduced under the New Economic Policy. The following year his party adopted his “First Five-Year plan that included unrealistic goals for industrialization which led to a shortage of goods and collectivization which produced a famine and almost completely ended the existence of private property. 

84 “OD” are the initials for the color olive drab green, which was during World War II and afterwards, the color applied to and associated with the gear, vehicles and uniforms of the U.S. military.
scandal.” The setting shifted to Korea, where a “muddied and cold GI” turned over in his tent and spoke with another soldier who was “bundled up like a ball trying to protect himself from the sharp wind that enters the tent from all sides.” In the exchange, one soldier said he had read that there was not enough ammunition to fight the “Reds” with and the other replied that it did not matter as they would “probably die from the cold and those rations we get, anyway.” The narrative then transitioned to the setting of “Hometown, USA” where a mother trembled as she opened a telegram sent by the War Department that began with, “We are sorry to inform you that your.” At his point, he had the mother fall to the floor screaming in grief. In the following, and final line of the column, he wrote, “In Moscow, a big fat slob of a man smiles.”

Salazar, who a year earlier had been in the military, left little room for doubt about what he thought about the politics and rhetoric behind the government’s and military’s response to the ongoing conflict. Servicemen were suffering and dying while those charged with facilitating their success were staging a campaign of denial that sought to prop up their handling of the war. Not only was this a great injustice, but every time a soldier died the country had ultimately played into the hands of the leadership in Russia. His protest of the war, as presented by the column, was that ideology had trumped reality and that the U.S. had fallen into a ploy created by its Cold War rival in allowing the conflict, and the conditions around it, to lead to the loss of American lives. Salazar used the podium his column represented to challenge the patriotism that blindly drove many to overlook the true cost of war, one that families had paid and his family could have.

Salazar’s next column was aimed towards the high school graduates who were recent arrivals on campus and had just left the world of secondary education for the new challenges of

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college life. It appeared in the fall issue of September 11, 1953, as the new academic year had just begun, it was also in this issue that he was again listed as the “Managing Editor” of the Prospector. With his first line, he welcomed them with the phrase, “Bienvenidos, Freshmen.” It is interesting to note that he used the Spanish word for welcome in this first column of his senior year, perhaps it was a way to show pride in his own heritage and an acknowledgement of the area that surrounded the college. He then proceeded to inform the incoming freshmen that everything they had been told at their high school commencements was “bunk.” They had been told that the world was theirs and that they were to be the leaders of tomorrow and that a “pinnacle” had been reached. According to Salazar this was not the case. These phrases were only meant for those students who upon leaving high school were about to be “clutched by business, the military, or labor.” For them, these terms were the necessary praise needed to ease this transition because they had forever left the “pursuance of knowledge.” Their career paths led them into the common “grooves” that many had fallen into as they “must only follow one and only one path” which was “conventionality in the field they propose to follow.” Those individuals who had enrolled in college to ‘learn more’ were encouraged to forget the “shallow commencement platitudes” for their own betterment. They had shattered the “chrysalis” when they graduated and could “start learning something.” Having been some time removed from his own high school graduation in 1946, Salazar had experienced college life, time away from it, and was then currently embarking on the final steps to complete his degree. His motivation for writing this was clearly inspired by what he believed were the benefits of his exposure to a college education. The incoming freshmen were to discover that they were “dumber” than they thought and if they had not found this out, then they had been “incorrigibly dense.” Being in college, he pointed out, meant that they had “grown up” and their treatment by professors would
reflect this because no one cared if they had studied. Professors did not hurl “dogmatic statements,” something he felt was prevalent in high school education, and even admitted that there were subjects or knowledge they did not know. What was most important though for the new college students was that they remembered their arrival at college was not to ‘follow in the footsteps of your elders’ but instead to “by-pass them into something better.” This act of “insolence” was justified in his thinking and could be summed up with a quote from novelist Joseph Conrad, ‘Youth is insolent; it is its right—its necessity; it has to assert itself, and all assertion in this world of doubts is a defiance, is an insolence.’86 In his final line, Salazar encouraged his new readers to give their “brains hell.”87 A message perhaps intended to impart that other than the rigors of study was a necessity to challenge their own biases, assertions and the socio-political structures around them.

His urging of insolence, and an appreciation for it by youth, is a crucial characteristic that he developed as a college student/journalist that made him such a key figure later in his career covering the Chicano movement. He may have understood that early in a person’s life there is a greater sense of urgency and an increased sensitivity for the need to create change. An interesting dichotomy considering that a younger individual has experienced the mechanisms of oppression for a shorter period relative to older generations that have been affected by it longer. Aside from the cynicism about commencement speeches, he may have also been fueled by nostalgia for the young man he had been seven years earlier. Someone who arrived at TCM with a complete misunderstanding of what college could teach him and expose him to as a student. A young man

86 Joseph Conrad was a novelist born in the Ukraine to parents of Polish descent, who had been exiled there for their part in attempting to end Russian rule in Poland. After a career as a sailor, he became a successful novelist and is highly regarded for his contributions to English literature. His published works include Lord Jim (1900), Nostromo (1904), and Heart of Darkness (1902). http://www.britannica.com/biography/Joseph-Conrad.
who would later be transformed by the process of pursuing a college education into a provocative journalist who sought to expose the instruments of power that had created an unbalanced system for ethnic minorities.

Salazar shifted his focus away from the burgeoning academic lives of college freshman and injected some cultural and regional influence into his following column. He did so by greeting his readers with the opening phrase, “How would you like to eat a worm taco?” If any of them found the idea nauseating, he assured them that they had not truly eaten unless they had “devoured a crisp taco” filled with these plump delicacies. The worms, he explained, were “gusanos de maguey” (agave worms) which lived off of a “Mexican” plant from which their name was derived from. In Mexico, “Indians” traveled into the cities carrying small sacks filled with the living maguey worms and sold them to the taco vendors. When prepared for consumption, the “little creatures” were thrown onto the grill and “fried to a crisp brown death” and subsequently served inside of tortillas lathered with butter. He insisted that “genuine Mexicans” would have assured them that this was the best way to consume them. And if readers did not have indigenous friends who could procure the worms for them, they could be purchased in cans for the sum of “four and a half pesos.” Anyone that came across a bottle of mescal with one of these worms sitting at the bottom of it was urged not to sue their “bootlegger” as this was just another way of enjoying them. The still living worms had been tossed into the bottle of the “atomic drink” where they met an “alcoholic” demise. At the point during which the contents of the bottle had been consumed, the person who had “killed the jug” was expected to consume the

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88 The maguey, also known as the agave or century plant, has long robust leaves that have sharp spines along its edges and can survive in harsh conditions by storing water in its heart. It has had a great value for the variety of products that it can produce and has been celebrated since the sixteenth century by Spanish explorers and even earlier, since at least 800 A.D., by Mesoamerican civilizations. Gary M. Feinman, Linda M. Nicholas and Helen R. Haines, “Mexico’s Wonder Plant,” Archaeology 55, no. 5 (September/October, 2002):32-4, accessed March 12, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41779061.

89 The juice of the maguey heart can be distilled and processed to create tequila or another distilled but less refined alcoholic drink known as mescal. Ibid.
“drowned worm” as a sign of their appreciation. As a suggestion, he joked that these worms could be skewered with toothpicks and served chilled as hors d’oeuvres during “Rush Parties.”

His infusion of Mexican culture into his column speaks volumes about how Salazar perceived himself and harkens back to his stance about being a citizen, a concept that did not negate any ethnic characteristics.

Unlike the earlier whitewashing of organizations like LULAC, he spoke of eating worms as a unique experience that should not be limited to those of Mexican heritage. It is not difficult to imagine that such a practice was considered taboo, but the column also acknowledged the indigenous heritage that countered the white by Spanish lineage argument made to garner inclusion in earlier decades. By including the consumption of mescal, he also recognized the Mesoamerican origins of the drink that many coeds on the campus may have consumed without ever knowing the culture from which it originated. Apart from the cultural lesson, Salazar made sure to launch a barb with his final line at the Greek organizations that he had always expressed a disdain for. His tongue in cheek reference to the mescal worm being served at rush parties was intended to highlight the nature of these social gatherings and at the same time evoke the elitist nature of the exclusionary groups.

This column served as a platform for Salazar to share an aspect of his Mexican heritage, especially the indigenous aspect, while at the same time letting his readers know that he was not ashamed of it as well.

A couple of weeks later, the column turned its focus back to the political machinations of the campus student body and the Student Association. He wrote about “fixed caucuses” along

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91 Rush parties are the social gatherings held by Greek organizations when they are recruiting new members and are often associated with the consumption of alcohol. For Salazar, these campus groups represented the politics of exclusion as they often limited their membership based on class and ethnicity, especially towards African Americans and Mexicans/Mexican Americans, an argument made in past and future columns.
with the “high-powered salesmanship” in gathering signatures for petitions as well as the “indiscreet ‘big –wheel’ tactics” being employed by his fellow students. These phrases accurately surmised the on campus political activities, according to Salazar, but he wondered who was at fault for this state of affairs. Was it the individuals who had manipulated things so that they could get the result that they wanted or was it the Student Association which allowed itself to be “run like a herd of cattle?” Salazar had always shown great interest in analyzing and critiquing the political atmosphere of the college, perhaps because he understood it represented a microcosm of the practices that were utilized outside of campus. He described the “typical campus-wheel” as an “imaginative” person that sought recognition and publicity. Someone who would be satisfied at the end of the school year when they saw their picture “plastered all over the Flowsheet” with the names of multiple organizations beneath it.92 To further drive home this point about the “wheel,” he made the following declaration, “That’s what he wanted and that’s what he got.” It is important to note the statement that Salazar was also making in that his descriptions were always attributed to “he” showing that not only was the political structure run by prominent white students, but was also gendered. In opposition to this person was the “purist” a “righteous and indignant democrat” who kept highlighting the “monopoly” the Greeks had on campus activities. This person “is shocked” at the sight of a “politico bigwig” running down “naive freshmen” to get them to sign a petition and “abhors” the way an “imaginative” person controls everything while surrounded by followers that only answer in the affirmative. One can infer that the “indignant democrat” described here was someone like, if not, the author himself based on previous columns. The “campus-wheel” continued to achieve the desired result and cared little for any criticism received while the purist continued to be “indignant—and jealous.” Perhaps this jealously was rooted in the efficacy of the strong arm tactics that garnered results for

92 The Flowsheet was the yearbook at TWC.
the big wheel types. It was, as the author urged, time that the “campus-wheel” be acknowledged because he had infused campus activities with life and had not waited for the Student Association to attempt to improve the “imperfection” of the college’s politics. Things had to get done and the “wheel” did precisely that with whatever “he has on hand.” Of course, this state of affairs was not ideal but was also not surprising considering that the Student Association was normally in a “lethargic stupor.” Salazar sarcastically ended the column with the line, “So, more power to the campus-wheel…” as a way of warning his readers that as long as this unchecked influence was allowed to continue it would persist. His pragmatic viewpoint laid the blame not only on those who abused power through “imaginative” ways of circumventing the rules, but on those who created the vacuum for such offenses to occur. To Salazar, the state of campus politics was a direct result of the lack of leadership by those entrusted to oversee it who in essence encouraged the actions of those willing to benefit from the lack of oversight.

In his column of October 31, 1953, Salazar took issue with a new advertising campaign aimed at getting Texans to consume more of the state’s beef. He urged his readers to get their “Kleenex ready” as he described the full page ad aimed at achieving this goal to promote the consumption and thus the purchasing of more red meat. The ad was quoted as urging ‘Mrs. Housewife’ to buy more of ‘all grades and cuts of beef’ as it was issuing a ‘challenge’ for homemakers to show their creativity in serving meals consisting of ‘appetizing meats’ in a myriad of variations. This presented an opportunity for ‘all Texans’ to assist the farmers, ranchers and cattlemen in their time of need by ‘EATING MORE TEXAS BEEF.’ It was not only enjoyable to prepare an ‘attractive platter of delicious meat,’ but by eating more beef individuals were going to help this Texas industry that was in dire straits and in great need of

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Salazar remarked, “Sigh, how times of changed,” and asked his readers if they remembered the “old days when only such Texans as Glenn McCarthy and Jesse Jones could afford to buy good ol’ Texas beef?” As the situation deteriorated, the “10-gallon hatted people” had begun asking “Mrs. Housewife” to purchase more meat, but her memory was not as short as the “vaqueros” (cowboys). She could recall the high prices, the bad-mannered butchers and the lengthy waiting lines. Whatever pleasure was to be derived from serving dishes consisting of this “delicious meat” had been typically reserved for those privileged enough to afford it. Although Salazar told his readers he was not willing to “go as far as H.L. Mencken” in his criticism of the rancher, he did subsequently include Mencken’s quote, ‘When the going is good for him he robs the rest of us up to the extreme limit of our endurance; when the going is bad he comes bawling for help out of the public till.’

He then sarcastically lamented for the “cattleman” who would be unable to trade in their “dilapidated ’53 Cadillac for a ’54 this year,” with the words “Weep, Weep.” Salazar’s viewpoint was clear, the meat industry had turned its back on the working class making such meals that featured the protein a luxury only affordable to the wealthy. Now that the cattle barons had seen their prosperity suffer did they have the audacity of appealing to the very consumer they had previously alienated. Through the context of this column, one can assume that this was an issue that had come up at the dinner table in the

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95 Henry Louis Mencken was a journalist and was considered the most influential American literary critic of the 1920s who had a profound influence on U.S. fiction throughout that decade. Encyclopedia Britannica, s.v. “H.L. Mencken,” accessed March 8, 2016, http://www.britannica.com/biography/H-L-Mencken.

Salazar household our in the homes of acquaintances which compelled him to take issue with the new advertising campaign. In a 1947 article, he had also complained about having to rob a millionaire in order to be able to afford a steak for dinner.\textsuperscript{97} Although his wit and sarcasm were prominent in this article, it is obvious that Salazar saw a need to speak out against an industry that had ignored the socio-economic detriments of minority groups.

The following week, Salazar offered up a humorous take on how to create an egalitarian landscape for student organizations and honor societies at TWC. He began with a warning, “BEWARE; what you’re just about to read might be an idea.” If indeed it was, he apologized as he had not been “completely” educated. How was it possible that “college pundits” had not thought up of honorary organizations that were not only for a “select few,” but open to everyone? They could operate under the same meeting schedules and at the academic year’s conclusion there could be a “college annual as democratic as a telephone directory.” Everyone would be listed and accompanied by the “lofty-sounding names of cliques” beneath students’ pictures. Other than the “traditional ones,” he proposed that the following could be created to facilitate this goal. The “Almost-Made-It-Organization” would be made available for those who had missed out on one of the groups listed above them, a reference to the way organizations were listed in descending order in the Flowsheet. “If You Fail, Try Again” could be the fraternity reserved for students who kept repeatedly failing the same courses and the “Tom Dewey Club” for students who continually lost in every election they ran in.\textsuperscript{98} And finally, a “Me Too, Please, Circle” organization for those “dying” to join a group but who were “cruelly” denied admittance. This list could amended as additional circumstances arose. Because no one would be excluded

\textsuperscript{97} Salazar, “This Shot World,” Prospector (El Paso), November 8, 1947.
and felt a sense of belonging there was to be no more “inferiority complexes, dropping out of school, or shamfaced parents” and no need for envy. Students could address each other as “brother” and “mean it” as opposed to it ringing hollow. Salazar’s proposition even bore a “social welfare” aspect as students behavior would become civilized towards each other because membership to an “honorary would make manifest our responsibilities as accepted members of society” and all radical thought would end. Free of this oppressive burden, students could then concentrate on something of higher importance: the initials after their names. Without an understanding of Salazar’s humor it would not be difficult to take some of his suggestions out of context, but a careful reading of his writing fosters an appreciation for his argument. He himself may have felt excluded and recognized that others like him were at the mercy of organizations whose membership guidelines implicitly or explicitly denied admittance due to ethnicity or class. As a columnist for the student newspaper he could express an outsider’s viewpoint while possessing an insider’s privilege, this dichotomy may not have been lost on Salazar and would be a recurring theme throughout his career.

In his next column, Salazar took issue with a fellow colleague who had recently resigned from the Prospector over disagreements with the editors of the paper and what he felt was the diminishing quality of the publication. Dale Brittan had recently resumed writing a column, “The Wet Stope,” that ran alongside Salazar’s own column and was intended to provide insight into the opinions and interests of the school’s engineering students. Salazar expressed his lack of empathy for Brittan’s complaints and decision by beginning with the line, “BOO, hoo, Dale Brittan has left us.” He was unaware that “Peasants” quit so easily and appeared to be upset that Brittan had left over some issue with the editorship rather than finding a way to work through

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His journalistic passion may have even gotten the best of him as he compared Brittan to a “pledge” being reprimanded for not wearing “her” pin and questioned how a “tough engineer” could be compelled to quit over a “tiny slap on the wrist.” It went even further as he pointed out a spelling mistake made in Brittan’s final column when he used “censure” as opposed to censor. Salazar urged him to worry about “censoring” and not “censuring” as Brittan had mistakenly written. If there had been a problem at the *Prospector*, then something should have been done about it instead of just leaving. Salazar wrote about his own issues with the paper’s “make-up policy” and that some of the other policies in place were restrictive to the point that he questioned if it was in fact a “truly” student publication. To him, such obstacles actually necessitated that a writer acknowledge the “horrible point” that there were other means of doing things other than their own. This “challenge” prompted a writer to find creative solutions to such limitations. Salazar believed that when a writer could not be blunt, they could use sarcasm or satire in the place of vulgarity. Then, if they were still unable to “have your own way,” they could “learn to cooperate to the best of your advantage.” Here one can observe some of the tools that Salazar utilized as a writer and recognize some of the basis for his professional work in the future. In his argument, Brittan had also referenced past columnists as examples of the benchmark from which the current staff had declined. Using these same examples, Salazar

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100 “Peasants” was the term by which engineers were referred to by other students on campus and in the *Prospector*. The counterpart to this term was “Peedoggies” which was a play on the word pedagogy which had been a department in the UT system, later renamed Education. Engineers were also known as West Siders and “Peedoggies” as East Siders in reference to the side of the campus their departments were situated. Elmer Grounds, “Elmer’s Tune: ‘Peasant’ Name For West Side Under Fire,” *Prospector* (El Paso), October 30, 1948, accessed November 20, 2015, http://0-theprospector.newspaperarchive.com.lib.utep.edu/el-paso-prospecto/1948-10-30/page-2/pageno-90475278?tag=peedoggies&rtserp=tags/peedoggies?page=3&pt=15972&ndt=by&py=1915&pey=1954.
pointed out that one of them had written some of his best columns under an editor with whom the only thing they agreed upon was their mutual disdain for one another.101

This column’s defensive, and at times aggressive, posture provides a multitude of insights into Salazar’s mindset. He was the Managing Editor for the Prospector and could have been himself one of the targets of Brittan’s criticism. The nostalgia expressed for past writers, none of whom had Spanish surnames, was in essence a way of saying that Salazar failed to live up to their standard and that his writing lacked nuance and technique.102 It also becomes obvious from his stance that Salazar took writing/journalism seriously and understood the power of having this particular platform. Before his hiatus, the editorial written about segregation had nearly cost him his academic career, that of a colleague, and had led to the termination of the Prospector’s faculty sponsor. Brittan was leaving the paper over a disagreement with his editors, something that only an individual not invested in journalism could do. Salazar had to find a way to work within the system to allow his perspective as an ethnic Mexican to persevere, one that was and would continue to be in the minority in mainstream media.

Also in that week’s issue was an unsigned editorial written by Salazar about a talk given by Jim Lucas, a prominent and nationally renowned war correspondent who had reported on the Korean War.103 He had been invited to speak in El Paso and was also there to meet with veterans.

of that conflict and their families, those who had lost loved ones, and the general public. He gave his thoughts about his time covering the conflict, its aftermath and his general viewpoint about war and its politics. The “Soldiers Reporter” lectured for “free” before a “sparse” crowd and did so “overflowing with sincerity and radiating with a sense of urgency.” That urgency was not of a “hysterical” nature, but one derived from a reasonableness and a “great” sensitivity. Lucas spoke of cynicism and disillusionment being ‘two luxuries’ the U.S. could not possess because of what was at stake. Salazar called it “refreshing” to have heard someone speak so straightforwardly. Because he had “no stars to lose from his shoulders” or any voters to appease, he could focus on significant issues like “war, life and death.” The inconspicuous “bachelor” told the audience,

I am a man who has been wrong before and will be wrong again; and I’m not bothered with it anymore. I can’t pass judgment on the men who acquiesce to the communists. They were tortured. I myself, am afraid to sit in the dentist chair. As for those who didn’t give in, I only wished more of us could be like that.

Later in the talk, an audience member asked if the war had been won or lost. Lucas responded that it had been lost since the “communist gangster generals” had not become “our” prisoners. Salazar wrote that it had been an “important experience” to have heard Lucas “talk, not eloquently, but tenderly and powerfully frank.” He also took issue that Liberty Hall, where Lucas

104 Lucas was a Scripps-Howard Newspaper Alliance writer and his November 1953 appearance had been arranged by the El Paso Herald-Post, a Scripps-Howard newspaper. He had undertaken a speaking tour of the country as part of a promise he had made to soldiers, while covering the war, that he would visit them and their loved ones. “Jim Lucas Will Visit El Paso, Keep Promise to GIs,” El Paso Herald-Post, October 30, 1953, accessed November 1, 2015, http://0-access.newspaperarchive.com.lib.utep.edu/us/texas/el-paso/el-paso-herald-post/1953/10-30.


106 “Jim Lucas Spoke With Great Feeling,” Prospector (El Paso), November 14, 1953, accessed
spoke, had been at less than half capacity in contrast to the most recent concert there by “Spike Jones and his City Slickers” which sold out and patrons had to be turned away.\textsuperscript{107} Although free of charge and of such profound significance as the “fate” of the nation and “our very lives,” the public’s interest in hearing Lucas was not as fervent as its desire for entertainment.\textsuperscript{108} Clearly, Salazar was a fan, as an aspiring journalist himself, and found a great deal of honesty and pragmatism in what Lucas said to the crowd that day. The candid nature of the speaker not only appealed to Salazar because he abhorred subterfuge, but also because it spoke to the state of discourse whereby those in power risked losing it or faced being reprimanded if they deviated from a sanctioned narrative. Salazar’s writing had always represented a desire to challenge corruption and the necessity for transparency in a democracy in order for it to truly be democratic. Deception and dishonesty were not new in politics or warfare and for Salazar it was ubiquitous on campus and throughout society, which made the apparent lack of interest in what Lucas had to say all the more disheartening.

As the fall semester was coming to a close, Salazar took inspiration from a recent performance of George Bernard Shaw’s play, \textit{Pygmalion}. He suggested that a student organization such as the “celebrated Thugs Club” hold a clandestine “democratic” meeting to elect a Sun Queen from the “lower classes.” This choice of words was deliberate as it emphasized that not only were such organizations corrupt, the election process was undemocratic, biased and elitist as it only favored those of a higher socio-economic status. Queens representing “Juárez nightclubs” and from other houses could then be utilized to “assist the poor Majesty of the Sun.” The women could be taught by the “cosmopolitan Thugs” how to use a

\textsuperscript{107} Spike Jones was a bandleader known for his novelty recordings and in 1942 formed the band Spike Jones and His City Slickers. In the 1950s, Jones also had a hit television series. \textit{Encyclopædia Britannica Online}, s.v. “Spike Jones,” accessed March 5, 2016, http://www.britannica.com/biography/Spike-Jones.

\textsuperscript{108} “Jim Lucas Spoke With Great Feeling.”
cocktail fork, curtsy and how to properly wear rhinestone tiaras. Here it may be inferred that performativity is the only factor that truly separates the higher classes from the lower rungs as wealth only creates the façade by which superiority was justified. By using Shaw’s *Pygmalion* as the basis for his satire, Salazar was deliberately making this connection. 109 What separated the upper classes from the lower ones was superficial and not due to an actual superior quality. A “parade of the working classes” would take place along Rim Road and a Mariachi band could perform at a dance held in McKelligon Canyon. 110 Salazar’s imagery was not intended to disparage Juárez, Mariachi music or the working class but to personify the things that would have been looked down upon by affluent snobs. Having been born in Juárez, where his parents were married, it was no doubt hurtful to hear disparaging remarks about Mexicans or their culture. Salazar’s jabs at student organizations and Greek society were not simply motivated by the act of exclusion, but also because the behavior perpetrated by these groups justified the continued subjugation of ethnic minorities outside of the university.

In this same column, he used the second half to turn his gaze towards the recent actions of Senator Joseph McCarthy, which he referred to as a highly repulsive “fatuous” egomaniac. A man who was “consciously or unconsciously” concerned with only himself. Through his “meddling, raping of the truth and name calling,” he had succeeded in persuading the “less

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109 In *Pygmalion*, Eliza Doolittle, a flower girl who spoke in a course Cockney vernacular, is taught by Henry Higgins, as part of an experiment, how to pass herself off as a lady by changing her accent and vocabulary so that she may rise above her lower class status through the impression she belongs to a higher socio-economic class. Shaw, who believed in Fabainism as a means for creating social justice, uses Eliza’s transformation to show that the differences between her and high society were superficial and performative and not based on innate qualities. This meant all people were essentially equal and that socio-economic disparities were due to different levels of access and as such could be manipulated by those in power to include or exclude certain groups. For further reading see, Christopher Busiel, “An overview of Pygmalion,” *Drama for Students*, (Detroit: Gale) *Literature Resource Center*, accessed March 9, 2016, http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CH1420006639&v=2.1&u=txshracd2603&it=r&p=GLS&sw=w&asid=ea812bc05a3c78f05b9e68c1a6d2141.

literate citizens” of the nation into believing he was a “red-blooded American communist fighter.” Salazar’s conceptualization of what McCarthy represented distinguished him and perhaps personifies why he was to become such an astute journalist. As a veteran and ardent patriot he could have easily fallen for the rhetoric of such blowhards, but perhaps because of his own experience as a Mexican growing up in the U.S. he possessed a different perspective. The otherness and subversive characterizations of Communists employed during the Red Scare were no different than tactics used against Mexicans/Mexican Americans in the 1940s.111 His understanding of the Cold War was nuanced, as he showed in an earlier column, and his objection to McCarthy was not motivated by a leftist opposition. Salazar understood the threat that Moscow posed and could separate his understanding of what communism was compared to what was being practiced. When he wrote of Truman’s accomplishments, although conceding that he was “not exactly a great man,” in saving Western Europe for democracy he did so to counter McCarthy’s false narrative.112 Salazar was not afraid to show that the senator was nothing but a bully willing to mislead the uninformed and someone who could through his power destroy the lives of innocent people. Despite his heated rhetoric from three weeks earlier, he closed this column by paying tribute to Dale Brittan who had lost his life, along with three others, in a car accident.113 He shared some notes that had been jotted down by his deceased former colleague for a project aimed at creating a publication geared toward engineers and ended the column with, “A noble idea died with a good guy.”114 With the year coming to a close and

112 Ibid.
114 Salazar, “This Shot World.”
this tragedy fresh in his mind, Salazar may have been motivated to be more assertive in his writing and the following weeks showed this.

During the second week of December in 1953, most TWC students may have been preoccupied with the looming end of the fall semester and the final exams that were to accompany it. One “Miner” in particular had other plans and with a straightforward question challenged the student body and an entire region’s way of life.\(^\text{115}\) “IMAGINE having a Negro in your government class?” That was how Salazar began his column that was to tackle the issue of integration at public universities. He began with the premise of a typical college student, “white, American and probably a member of some Greek letter society,” sitting in a class studying the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. In this hypothetical classroom there also sat another student, who had the “audacity of being black!” If his readers were to “dig far enough into your daily newspapers” they may have found a story of “some darn Yankees” that were attempting to accomplish that, which was “going too far.” Society had deemed it appropriate to refer to Germans as “our friends” despite the fact that “our fighting boys” had become casualties at their hands. The Japanese, or “Japs” as he called them, were now our allies despite their entertaining U.S. soldiers with the Bataan Death March. Readers must have understood the need for allowing “white” former spies Whittaker Chambers and Elizabeth Bentley to have made “lots of dough” from having sold books based on their “treason.”\(^\text{116}\) The emphasis on Chambers and Bentley being white in contrast to black students is a significant juxtaposition, because one group

\(^{115}\) TWC’s mascot was the Miner, derived from the school’s origins as a mining school.

\(^{116}\) Whittaker Chambers had been a member of the Communist Party and worked as a Soviet agent, but left the party and later turned witness for the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). His testimony was crucial in the indictment and conviction of Alger Hiss as part of a spy ring in Washington, D.C. Chambers published a best-selling autobiography, *Witness*, in 1952. http://www.britannica.com/biography/Whittaker-Chambers. Elizabeth Bentley had also been a Communist and worked as a spy in an elaborate espionage ring, but defected and alerted the FBI in 1945 after a falling out with her superiors. She provided evidence to the FBI and her testimony before the HUAC led them to question Chambers who then identified Hiss as a Soviet agent. In 1951, she published her autobiography, *Out of Bondage*. https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol47no2_2003/article08.html.
had deliberately conspired against the nation and then profited while the other was guilty of attempting to receive an education while being black. He then declared, “But Dixieland! To actually have black Negroes in Kelly Hall, right there with us, studying the Bill of Rights—that’s un-American!” A deliberate attempt to use the anti-communist rhetoric of the era and an acknowledgement of how integration and desegregation would actually be a break from the country’s long standing practice of marginalization and discrimination towards African Americans. Fortunately, the country had “heroes” willing to honor the legacy of officials like the late Senator Bilbo who would “protect us” from the “infamy” integration represented.\footnote{Democratic Senator Theodore G. Bilbo of Mississippi had been elected in 1934 and beginning in the 1940s began to increasingly promote a white supremacy agenda in his campaigning. In 1946, his unrestrained rhetoric attacked the press, African Americans, the North, other members of congress and even Eleanor Roosevelt. He died in 1947, before a Senate special committee had reached a ruling with regards to the senator’s disenfranchisement of African American voters in the 1946 Democratic Primary. http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/contested_elections/126Theodore_Bilbo.htm.} Salazar provided the example of Georgia’s “wonderful” governor, Herman Talmadge, whose plan “would forever make it impossible for nasty personages—such as Negro war veterans—to study under the same roof with us lily whites.” Talmadge had planned to circumvent any ruling by the Supreme Court that declared segregation in public schools illegal by amending the state’s constitution in order to privatize public schools and then provide state funds to help students pay for tuition. This proposition may have been an “expensive” one, but Salazar assured that it was well worth the cost for the “sake of our honor.”\footnote{Salazar, “This Shot World,” \textit{Prospector} (El Paso), December 12, 1953, accessed November 15, 2014, http://0-the prospector.newspaperarchive.com.lib.ute.pdx.edu/el-paso-prospecto/1953-12-12/page-2/pageno-208969172?tag=ruben+salazar&rtserp=tags/ruben-salazar?psb=dateasc&page=3&ndt=by&py=1953&pey=1955.} It was clear to Salazar that El Paso, no matter what its ethnic makeup, was still a part of Texas and the South. TWC’s policies were still governed by a society that permitted the injustice of racial discrimination to have a place within its institutions. The former Axis powers had become our allies, but for many there was still no greater sin than the color of a person’s skin, especially if it was of a darker hue. While students
prepared to take final exams, Salazar reminded them that it was a privilege that others were being denied in an ongoing fight between two ideologies, one of them belonging to those who sought to uphold the shameful legacy of the South.

To the uninitiated, Salazar’s use of sarcasm and satire may have been lost, if they were unfamiliar with his writing style, leading them to misread his column as being in favor of segregation. Unfortunately, for Sammy Schneider, he not only misread the column, he wrote to the editor of the *Prospector* to rebuke the author of “This Shot World” as part of his own efforts for “straightening out” such individuals. The column, according to Schneider, was a “desperate” attempt by the writer to have someone other than the copy editor read his “trashy material” and so this “idiotic article” was written. Salazar’s “short minded” mentality was similar to that of the “ignorant, intolerant fools” that had been the Axis leaders during World War II. Contrary to the assertions made in the column about “Dixieland” since the death of Senator Bilbo, the south had “progressed quite a bit toward equality” a fact that he was very “happy” with. During the war, “Negro” servicemen had defended the nation from “aggressors” while Salazar had “sat around” on his “dead can” as conflicts occurred. He advised him to read the Constitution. Particular attention should be given to the “part” that read “All men are created free and equal” and that he needed to keep his “nasty thoughts from tarnishing” the *Prospector*. Schneider then lauded Abraham Lincoln because he had abolished slavery with the 12th Amendment and given “Negroes” the right to vote with the 13th and established himself as a “great equalizer of peoples no matter what their color.” Lincoln would continue to be revered for the duration of this country’s existence, “Long after Rubén Salazar has turned in his pencil, which should take place
immediately if not sooner, and the FBI has deported the aforementioned writer.” Schneider’s incorrect understanding about what each amendment actually enacted aside, his poorly thought out letter and condescension toward Salazar was emblematic of a reaction to an author with a Spanish surname. Apart from his ignorance about the FBI, he had singled out and attacked Salazar because of his Mexican ethnicity which made him a candidate for deportation. The progress made by the south that Schneider was proud of, under which de jure segregation existed at TWC, must not have applied to ethnic Mexicans. He knew nothing about Salazar other than he was most likely Mexican and that is all the information he needed to make assumptions about him. Who the author was seemed to be the greater offense to Schneider, regardless of what had been written.

As is customary in any publication’s “Letters to the Editor” section, Jim Palmer, editor of the Prospector, replied to Schneider’s letter. He informed Schneider, that Salazar’s “dead can” had been drafted during the recent conflict in Korea and urged him to “re-read” the column without his “cute but disappointing—for a college man—naïveté.” Salazar and Schneider, Palmer assured, were on the same side. With regards to the FBI’s deportation of Salazar, he was an “American citizen” who no other country claimed. This caused some confusion as to where he could be deported. The Prospector was going to contact “Lower Slobovia [sic]” and inform Schneider about their reply. Lower Slobovia, may have been a deliberate choice as a way to both ridicule and suggest that Schneider believed Salazar originated from a country that embodied the satirical setting. No matter what the response, it was clear that the letter was

120 Ibid.
121 Lower Slobovia was a fictional country created by the cartoonist Al Capp for his comic strip Li’l Abner. It was an impoverished backwater populated by downtrodden individuals.

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meant to hurt Salazar. There was no need to suggest deportation in order to make his misguided point, it only served to highlight that Salazar did not belong in the country because of Schneider’s perception that he was not “American” based solely on his name.

In keeping with the holiday spirit, Salazar wrote his final column of 1953 as a letter to Santa Claus from the perspective of a child he identified as “Danny Boy.” The year was coming to a close and students were eagerly anticipating their impending winter break from the TWC campus, some may have even been anxious to find out what Christmas gifts were awaiting them. Danny had thought about asking for a bicycle and a space helmet, but upon further examination he believed it was wrong for “us kids” to ask for gifts. Because he and his friends had “lots of fun this year,” he felt it was best for the focus to be on the adults who had, from his estimation, a “tough year” and were in greater need. He recalled the previous night when his parents discussed how atomic bombs had the potential to annihilate the entire human race. They both “sounded real worried and sad” and that night his mother prayed longer than she normally did and his father had to drink some kind of panacea prior to going to sleep. If possible, he wanted Santa to take the bombs and give them to someone like “Hopalong Cassidy” who could use them for something positive like eliminating bandits. 122 That way Danny’s parents could “stop worrying and have fun.” 123

Next, he asked Santa what “white super-macy, or something like that” meant. He had overheard a man, who “didn’t say his ‘r’s’ too good,” arguing with Danny’s father because he “wasn’t gonna see no ‘niggahs’ going to school with his son.” This individual had been very upset and said such a scenario would result in “Civil War if ‘niggahs’ went to school


with us.” Danny found this humorous because he had a “nigger” friend that he wished could go to school with him, he was athletic and would help improve the quality of his team, and he liked him. How could this possibly start a war? So he urged Santa to “give that man some ‘r’s’ and tell him I don’t mind niggers” it was the “bullies” he didn’t like. Finally, he asked if Santa could help out his sister and her husband who were having financial problems and were worried that they would be unable to reciprocate the “Joneses” with a gift as expensive as the one they had given. If Santa could only persuade Danny’s sister, her husband and the “Joneses” to pool their money together so that they could buy Jesus a gift. “After all it’s His birthday, aint it?”

Salazar’s gift to TWC was a column that was unwilling to ignore the harsh reality that the nation was facing. The Cold War had the potential to be the last war because both the U.S. and Russia possessed the capacity to annihilate one another and the rest of the world. By framing the tension caused by the pending Supreme Court case regarding segregation in the harsh language of racist rhetoric, he made his readers deal with the issue without any filters to diminish the vitriol espoused by those in favor of it. His anti-commercialist view of Valentine’s Day and feelings about materialism expressed in earlier writings was applied to Christmas, which had become more about cash and less about Christ. Salazar knew that the country was not only at war with a foreign power, but within itself. The nation was divided because the issue of race had never been fully addressed and non-white U.S. citizens, with all the protections the Constitution granted them, where still standing on the margins of society waiting to be equal in every facet of their lives.

If there was one thing that could be said about Salazar’s return to the Prospector it would be that his time away had done little to diminish his form as a writer and as an intellectual.

124 Ibid.
125 Ibid.
126 Earlier in the month, the Supreme Court had begun rehearing the case of Brown v Board of Education.
Before he left school and the paper, he wrote about profound issues that had significant effects for him and others around him. He challenged segregation in the fall of 1947 because it was “un-American” and six years later he continued this fight to rightfully vilify that horrible practice. It is an unfortunate commentary on the state of the country that many of the issues relevant in his first year as a columnist were still relevant six years later. Accusations of communist affiliation were still predominant in political discourse and the fear that a bomb could instantly destroy an entire city still made people uneasy. The Korean War began during his hiatus and ended in 1953, but whatever solace could be taken from its resolution was diminished by its aftermath and the fact that the Cold War had produced an actual proxy war. The college had gone from Texas College of Mines to Texas Western College, but the name change still left the corruption and discrimination that took place in student elections and organizational membership. Perhaps the only thing that changed since his return was Salazar himself. His education had resumed and informed his writing, his wit and profound ability to provoke were more refined.

Despite the tone of pessimism that may seem prevalent in analyzing Salazar’s return, it is misleading. Change, even when urgently needed, is often gradual. Salazar did not need someone to point out how much had remained the same in his return, he observed it. He ended the year by writing about race, the war and socio-economic conditions, issues that are relevant in any time period. The fact the he continued to write and agitate was a display of great optimism on his part because he still believed things could change and that he could be a catalyst for it. His writing remained a constant reminder to TWC that someone was still fighting for the underrepresented and that he would continue to take a stand against discriminatory practices. The theme of social justice manifested in a variety of ways in his column, but his attempt to remain ever vigilant meant Salazar believed that journalism still remained a necessary and important aspect of a
democracy, a characteristic that would serve the Mexican American community and the Chicana/o movement in later years.
For his first column of 1954, Salazar took issue with a popular trend among officials urging the public to remain calm. Were his readers calm, he asked, had they woken up at night in a “cold sweat” after having a nightmare in which they along with their loved ones had been “atomized.” Had any of his “liberal” readers expressed uneasiness and “shudder” at the idea of McCarthy as the next president. Perhaps they had been preoccupied with the unemployment trend or were worried about getting drafted after they graduated or flunked out of college. What a “silly” reaction this would have been to these issues, instead they should have remained calm, as President Eisenhower and journalists like Walter Lippman had encouraged.  

How was it possible that the public kept “disobeying them,” had they the intention to “start trouble or something?” Could they recall when “Mamie Eisenhower’s spouse” had “called for a ‘sense of urgency’ from the American people?” The situation had changed and the new message was to “keep calm,” so he suggested that his readers should, “Play it cool.” Salazar had instituted a “Be Calm Week” and anyone who had put their signature on the non-Communist affidavit at registration was eligible to join. The rules were simple and the only prerequisites were “apathy and disinterestedness,” there was no cost to participate. He then went over the rules participants were to follow. First, in the mornings they should not read the newspaper. Here they would have only found alarming news like the “Dulles-Molotov deadlocks, teenage thieves, and war in Indo-
Secondly, they should have stopped taking notes in classes to alleviate their minds from any possible discomfort and read “El Burro” instead, which they could have taken jokes from and told to other students who needed to be calmed. Finally, they needed to avoid sleep so that they would not have any nightmares. As an alternative, he encouraged them to visit Juárez to listen to the “soothing melodies of the Mariachis” because keeping people calm was a “cultural aspect” of the city. Once the week had concluded if participants felt like a “new” person the attitude should be permanently adopted. They needed to cancel their newspaper subscription and leave school, since “knowledge is disturbing,” and begin living calmly. “Calmism [sic],” he assured them, was the adequate response to the menace of “Communism.”

Salazar’s issue with keeping calm in the face of all these threats and concerns was due to his understanding that doing so was in essence not caring or paying attention. Anxiety, was for him, a natural response because it meant the public was engaged and that kept them from being excluded. Keeping calm benefited the status quo and Salazar was an agitator who knew that apathy was not the solution, change was only possible if people were concerned. His purpose as a writer was to let those in power know that one individual was keeping tabs on them, Salazar knew that change was never passive, it was a response, a reaction.

A discussion from an advanced journalism class was the catalyst for the next column and it included many of the author’s own experiences and personal beliefs. The students had been engaged in a discussion concerning juvenile delinquency in El Paso’s Eastside. He wrote, “Everybody agreed that the presence of Southside juvenile delinquents was understandable. But

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129 “Dulles-Molotov” is a reference to the negotiations taking place between Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav M. Molotov while they were both attending a conference in Berlin with two other diplomats. The negotiations were the result of a December 8, 1953, speech given by President Eisenhower, before the U.N., that proposed governments should transition away from using nuclear technology for weaponry and instead repurpose it for peaceful applications.

130 El Burro was a humor magazine published on the TWC campus.

131 Ibid.
Eastside! That, indeed, was the enigma of the age.” One of his fellow classmates asked, “Didn’t these Eastside boys…associate with the lower classes: Mexicans?” A brief silence fell over the room “being that present, was a member of the lower classes, to wit: a Mexican!” That “Mexican,” Salazar, “snickered inwardly” as opposed to the days of his youth when he would have responded by becoming indignant. This was no longer the case, he had acclimated to such “pronunciamientos” (pronouncements). He recalled responding violently and fighting in elementary school when other children “sneeringly” called him ‘Mexican!’ Which was difficult to understand after having been told in class that he was “American.” There was also another memory he had from his childhood when he was not permitted to swim at Memorial Park because he was Mexican. Although, after WWII “he understands, that situation does not exist anymore. Progress.” In high school, he had a teacher that “openly expressed” his disdain for Mexicans. One of his friends gave in because he could no longer tolerate it and “he beat up the educator” which brought “that Mexican’s contact with pedagogy” to a conclusion. His time in the military had produced another recollection when a “defender of democracy” fiercely exclaimed, ‘There is only one thing lower than a Mexican—a nigger!’ These things used to bother “this Mexican,” but that was no longer the situation. Salazar had formulated a theory of his own, “These prejudiced creatures are only gargoyles in our modern American structure. They’ll spout for a while longer, but they’ll eventually be replaced by more modern plumbing.” As a result of his college education, he had formulated a scientific name for those ignorant individuals: “fauna gringo ignoramuses.” Age and wisdom had guided him to a new perspective,

Now, instead of being indignant, this Mexican contents himself with three things. As a Christion [sic] he feels sorry for the obsolete gargoyles. As a scientest [sic] he studies the fauna gringo ignoramuses [sic] minutely to find its weaknesses, so as to aid in its eventual destruction. As an American he tries to laugh them off the face of the earth.

132 El Paso’s Southside community was predominately Mexican/Mexican American.
Viva los Estados Unidos!\textsuperscript{133}

Another response that can now be included was that Salazar was able to turn this incident and its subsequent self-reflection into writing. How many others on the campus could relate to his experience and had been made to feel like the “other” because of their heritage? His column was cathartic, but also let others know that they were not alone. Someone like them had dealt with these issues and endured. At every stage of his life, Salazar had encountered discrimination and racism. His column represented an argument that mainstream media needed more voices like his, its omission of non-Anglo writers was emblematic of the social injustice in the country. As a writer he could expose these problems and as a Mexican American he could share his experience and perspective with readers like him and those who were not.\textsuperscript{134}

On March 6, 1954, Salazar’s column focused on a book by Philip Wylie, \textit{An Essay on Morals}.\textsuperscript{135} He began by quoting a passage from what he referred to as a “jolting” book, ‘…it is certain that up until this very day, God has been man’s main excuse for failure. God his moral alibi.’ Of particular interest to him was that Wylie’s work was an attempt to provide readers with a “philosophy for our Atomic Age.” Then, he presented Wylie’s interpretation, in three concepts, of Carl Jung’s central theories. First, man was an animal, but was not aware of this truth and only paid it ‘lip service.’ Second, animals and man are ruled by instinct which meant that our actions were not driven by what is referred to as ‘reason’ but instead by instincts similar to what led insects to mate or birds to construct nests. Third, instinct had “taken form in man as


\textsuperscript{134} In the weeks following its publication, there are no letters to the editor concerning Salazar’s column. Considering that past and future columns about race and Greek organizations had elicited responses, it is difficult to comprehend how this column did not. It may be the case that the \textit{Prospector} received letters and chose not to print them because of their content or to mitigate any racial tensions that existed or could potentially develop. Further research is needed to uncover the apparent lack of a response.

legend” resulting in “gods and devils” becoming symbolic representations of our instincts. Wylie believed this hypothesis could be proven by taking infants and placing them on an island free of any potential dangers and populated by hidden observation stations. These children could then develop and mature free of any outside influence and without any concept of being ‘man’ to reveal the ‘psychic elements naturally present in humanity and not implanted there by custom and instruction.’ Wylie’s conclusion was that the human race was “ill” and the ‘viruses’ responsible had originated in the church and to a lesser degree from patriotism. Salazar ended by remarking that classes at TWC were “not likely to be dismissed for assemblies to present ideas such as Wylie’s, it behooves open-minded students to read books like An Essay on Morals.”

This was a reference to an upcoming Religious Emphasis Week in which classes were to be dismissed on three separate occasions so that students could attend one-hour assemblies where representatives from the Jewish, Catholic and Protestant faiths would speak. The hostility or resentment he expressed toward the forthcoming religious activities are potentially a result of having observed people who professed a devotion to their respective faith yet behaved contrary to its tenets with hostility toward other races/ethnicities. It is likely that Salazar had read or heard about the book in one of his classes, it was first published in 1947, and applied the ideas from it to his own understanding of social inequities. In light of the column he had written two weeks earlier about discrimination and prejudice, it may have helped him process and reflect on what drove people to develop the ideas that led to such beliefs. His writings depicted someone who believed that humans were inherently good and possible of change, but whose preconceptions


were likely a product of their environment. Salazar embodied the consummate learner, eager to obtain and apply newly gained knowledge for the betterment of himself and his readers and probably spent a great deal of time trying to contemplate why the inequities and hostilities of his time had developed.

One week later, Salazar focused on the controversy concerning former prisoners of war from the Korean conflict who had defected/provided false statements under duress. To him, there was something, “inexplicably sad and phony, humiliating and frightening” with the situation “ex-Red American GI’s [sic]” had come back to along with “General Dean’s Story” and “Marine Col. Schwable’s predicament.” Individuals who possessed an infallible certainty of “what is right and what is wrong” had not struggled to decide what needed to be done. For them if the “ex-Red” GIs were guilty, it called for punishment. If Col. Schwable had been a “lying coward,” it was “vindictively” exclaimed he needed to be dishonored to the “full extent of the law.” Those “purists in matters of guilt and innocence” had not paused to contemplate what

138 Major General William F. Dean was the highest-ranking POW from the U.S. captured during the Korean War. Dean was sent to Korea to serve as military governor of the country’s southern region and was taken by the North Korean’s in 1950. Although in possession of important military intelligence, he never divulged it while being constantly interrogated for several consecutive days, but did sign two propaganda statements and deviated from the military’s Code of Conduct. He was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor while listed as missing and released after the war and considered a hero. Dean’s story and later testimony in support of Colonel Frank Schwable was an attempt to combat the controversy that POWs had cooperated too easily with their captors. Charles S. Young, “Dean, Major General William F. (1899-1981),” *Encyclopedia of Prisoners of War and Interment*, ed. Jonathan F. Vance, 2nd ed, (Millerton, NY: Grey House Publishing, 2006), 105, *Gale Virtual Reference Library*, accessed March 20, 2016, http://0-go.galegroup.com.lib.utep.edu/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CCX3487300092&v=2.1&u=txshracd2603&it=r&p=GVRL&sw=w&asid=5ec33288a5eaec28b6b7958e3523a65f3.

139 The “ex-Red GIs” was a reference to Corporal’s Claude Batchelor and Edward S. Dickenson who, along with twenty-one others, had collaborated as POWs and then later refused to return home during *Operation Big Switch*, an allied POW repatriation, to become Communists and relocate to China. Both later decided to return to the U.S. and were subsequently charged, and later convicted, for their collaboration with the enemy. Dickenson’s charges and Batchelor’s repatriation both took place in January 1954. For more information see, Brain D. Mcknight, *“We Fight for Peace”: Twenty-three American Soldiers, Prisoners of War, and “Turncoats” in the Korean War* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2014), *eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)*, accessed March 10, 2016.

140 Colonel Frank H. Schwable was taken prisoner in 1952, becoming the second highest ranking POW held during the Korean War. After months of physical and mental torture, he signed a confession claiming the U.S. had engaged in chemical warfare against the Chinese and North Koreans. A military inquiry into his actions was launched in January 1954 and caused further controversy because it carried no punishment as opposed to a court-martial.
war entailed. War, according to Salazar, was a “stupid, brutal and obscene thing” and the byproduct of an “egotistical” mind. Humans had invented a bomb that instantly and easily killed “thousands upon thousands” of innocent lives and yet had not deduced a means of preventing war. Man had created religions to “suit anybody’s prejudices,” but had not found a consistent way to live peacefully amongst one another. When “young men” were sent out to “slaughter each other,” society expected them to do so in a civilized manner and if they had not done so, it created outrage. Salazar gave the analogy of sending one’s own daughter to prostitute herself and then admonishing her for “immorality” when she returned. He considered it “useless” to suggest that “our wars are righteous ones” because war was the invention of people. It had once been the case that the U.S. offered fifty thousand dollars to any communist pilot in Korea who defected along with their aircraft. This was a solicitation of “treason.” Were any U.S. soldier to betray the nation because of weakness, suffering or ignorance the response would be “superciliously condemnatory” which was “horribly inconsistent.” The judges presiding over the cases of the “so-called” traitors would do well to consider the words of Jim Lucas when he addressed his El Paso audience in November 1953. He said, ‘I can’t pass judgment on the men who acquiesced to the communists. They were tortured. I myself, am afraid to sit on the dentist chair.’ To “those of us” that acknowledged “fairness” he offered the words of William Saroyan, ‘Remember that every man is a variation of yourself. No man’s guilt is not yours, nor is any man’s innocence a thing apart. Despise evil and ungodliness, but not men of ungodliness or evil. These


141 Salazar had been present for and written an editorial on Lucas’ speech in November 1953, as noted in pages 43-44 in the chapter 2.
understand.”\textsuperscript{142} Salazar once again exhibited an uncanny ability to write about significant and complex issues while drawing upon a vast array of knowledge to exhibit a nuanced understanding of the problems. He saw the gray area and knew that a simple solution/understanding never correlated with complexity. A characteristic that he continually exhibited which allowed him to be an ideal moderator for the dialogue that would take place among a polarized community during the Chicana/o movement. Salazar recognized that the soldiers who had participated in communist propaganda, defected or given false statements/confession, no matter what the reason, were no more culpable for their “treason” then the men who had sent them to war and ignored the implications.

Elections were looming on the TWC campus and as a result the political maneuvering of organizations and their leadership had drawn the attention of “This Shot World.” The “Greeks” whose “insatiable thirst” for “petty” honors had begun a campaign intended to “shamelessly steal all TWC political offices.” They had created the “United Western Party” which was an amalgamation of the Greek organizations under one political banner. Salazar found this unifying strategy disturbing because it was, “United against what is usually known as American democratic ideals.” It would be carried out through a convention system in which “big-wheel Greeks” would impose themselves on “lesser subservient Greek fauna” and ascend as the leaders of the “cynical machine.” Then they would “march” all of the Greeks and “other dupes” to the ballots to cast a vote for the ticket which had been selected for them by the “wheels.” The “fun” would have begun for the “uninterested observer” after the “Machiavellians” started “prostituting” themselves for votes. It was not rare to see “Greek boys” dating specific “Greek girls” because they had been ordered to by their “Greek masters” to do so in order to obtain the


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young women’s votes. While this imposition may have proved burdensome to their love lives, they should remember the communist adage, “Anything for the Party!” This political landscape would create an atmosphere where the “less-known Greeks,” like the “Kappa Sigs,” had to work the hardest. Up to that point the only accomplishment they could boast was that one of their members had won “Mr. Miner” which they had literally bought with their blood. This fraternity had almost no notoriety and the last time they had a nominee for office he was “double crossed” by one of his brothers. Although now, the Greeks had pledged to only betray “non-Greeks.” What all of this meant was that the Greeks had all but guaranteed their victory in the upcoming elections except for one obstacle, the “illegitimate son-of-Greeks, the APO’s.” They were being “coy” and had not said if they would “join the United Soviet, or rather, the United Western Party.” If the Greeks were able to “seduce” the engineers to join, the politics of TWC would be “Greeker [sic] than Plato.” Salazar’s objection to the Greek organizations attempted monopoly over student elections may seem disproportionate considering the scale of this issue. Campus politics had long been a point of contention and appeared as a topic throughout his writing career, so this column would have surprised no one. Anyone familiar with his writing

143 “Mr. Miner” along with “Miss Goldigger” were honorary titles awarded to students which had been nominated by their respective organizations in order to raise money for a campus charity fund. The candidate that raised the most money, each penny raised accounted for one vote, won the title and was crowned at a dance. That year Jim Palmer, Editor of the Prospector, won in part because his fraternity donated blood to earn additional money for him. “‘Miss Gold Digger,’ ‘Mr. Miner’ Candidates Due Monday Morning; Chest Drive To End Dec. 5,” Prospector (El Paso), November 21, 1953, accessed December 30, 2015, http://0-theprospector.newspaperarchive.com.lib.utep.edu/el-paso-prospecto/1953-11-21/?tag=mr+miner&rtserp=tags/mr-miner?ndt=by&py=1953&pey=1954, and M.G. Arrieta, “Broke? Sell It!: Moola Raising Drive Results in Bloody Affair for Greeks,” Prospector (El Paso), December 12, 1953, accessed December 30, 2015, http://0-theprospector.newspaperarchive.com.lib.utep.edu/el-paso-prospecto/1953-12-12/?tag=mr+miner&rtserp=tags/mr-miner?ndt=by&py=1953&pey=1954.


would have also known that he was a vocal advocate of constitutional and democratic principles, but his objection was more complex. These elections, from his arrival on campus to the end of his time there, had always been a reflection of the power structure at the school and within society. Democracies are ideal because everyone has a voice; at least that is the ideal. A select few were in control and what distinguished them from others was not an acute political savvy. TWC was a microcosm of the realities outside of campus and as such was ailing from the same social ills as the world around it, that was Salazar’s contention and one he would make abundantly clear in his next column.

Salazar’s column in opposition to the Greek’s United West Party must have been a topic of discussion around the campus and at fraternity and sorority houses because it was mentioned in three separate editorials and one letter to the editor the following week. One of those columns was “Touché: Columnist Presents Other Viewpoint,” by Faye Cormier, which was intended to provide an opposing viewpoint, but seemed to be more about dismissing claims made against Greek organizations and romanticizing their purpose. She proposed that his column had accomplished two things, it attracted more readers to the editorial page and had angered the Greeks. According to her, he had “probably expected several rebuttals” and her column was to be one of them because “This Greek” could not “keep still on this subject.” She wrote that “Mr. Salazar” was a “good guy,” but that he along with others had the “wrong idea” about fraternities and sororities and that this misconception was often unable to be “straightened out” as “these people” where intent to only see the negative and not the positive aspects. His remark about ‘anything for the party’ was “off color” and was not even “worth looking at.” She exclaimed that dates were not “political arrangements,” but if some “radicals” did so she could only “shudder” at the thought of the “positively enchanting time” they would have “during the evenings.”
Organizations had a right to their own “political beliefs and preferences” and the Greeks as a whole happened to share “common bonds.” As the Greeks made up a significant segment of “student membership, why shouldn’t they organize?” The Greeks had been some of the college’s “best leaders” and some of the “best ones” in the future would be Greeks. “Why shouldn’t these leaders be pushed by their organizations?” Some of these organizations stressed party loyalty, but no one had ever told her how to vote and no one ever could. Regardless of how much someone loathed the Greeks, membership in these organizations did not negate their individualism. Cormier’s intention to provide a rebuttal began instead as a rebuke of Salazar as a person by portraying him as someone who was stubborn and willfully blind to seeing the good in Greek organizations. Then, she flatly dismissed one of his points because it did not even merit being discussed. She denied another about politically motivated dating while at the same time admitting that it was likely, but only by “radicals” and then expressed how even this had positive aspects. Cormier then argued that because Greeks were a majority they should have a monopoly and that they have and would continue to produce the “best leaders,” but never gave any specific examples. While she admitted that party loyalty was stressed, she only provided her own experience within that group to dismiss the claim against all organizations. Her attitude, naïveté and privileged perspective were probably shared by many others who disagreed with Salazar and that was part of the problem.

Another column took issue with Salazar’s comments, this one was written by Jim Palmer who was the editor of the Prospector and had been referenced in the past week’s column. He boasted that the “Independents” had reason to be worried about the upcoming elections and rhetorically asked if it had anything to do with fallout from Salazar’s column about the Greeks,

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which had actually brought them “closer together, and with more determination than ever.” Any writer, even one as “liberal” as Salazar, could recognize “where the power lies” on every campus, it was “organization” and it leaders always bore the brunt of “mud sling[ing] [sic].” The Greeks consolidation was producing fear in Independents who carried a “chip on their shoulder” toward “anything” that they were associated with. He also wanted to clarify what was actually happening because what had been said made it sound dubious. Greeks had met to discuss the positive aspects of unifying, as was done at most campuses, and decided to do so in order to work together instead of against each other. This was mutually beneficial, especially since Greeks made up the “majority of Student Association citizens of this college.” His next comment appeared to imply that Salazar’s intent was to mislead. “To discredit and defeat this, the Independent felt he should let those believing the same, know what was happening.” Palmer then referenced his winning of Mr. Miner which was an election tied to fund raising and that any group that mobilized and gave blood in order to raise money should be commended for it and not admonished. The past election had seen the participation of an ‘Independent Political Machine’ as well as the Greeks. Palmer ended his column by saying that the measures could be “argued both ways, for and against” as each group was ultimately trying to win the election and told “Mr. Salazar” that the Student Association books needed to participate “aren’t sold only to the Greeks!”

Palmer’s column was aimed at framing Salazar’s commentary as biased, bitter, and misleading, but ultimately as a boon for Greeks that could rally against it. Writing in generalities and using the argument that other campuses also unified their organizations for elections, Palmer never addressed Salazar’s concerns. His comment about anyone being able to participate ignored

the point that Salazar had made about one group holding so much influence in determining who could run and who would win.

The third column to mention Salazar’s previous one was Ramón Rincón’s “The Wet Stope” which was dedicated to the issues and perspective of the engineering students. He took exception with the engineers organization being called ‘illegitimate-sons-of-Greeks’ because this organization was actually the oldest on campus having been founded in 1919. The oldest national fraternity, “Phi Taus,” did not arrive until 1941. Other than that, Rincón seemed to agree with what Salazar had written form the standpoint that the unification was an attempt by the larger fraternities eliminating competition from smaller competing factions. This strategy was essentially pooling together the substantial voting block that Greeks represented and all but assuring their victory. It had also in essence given the two largest fraternities control over this unified party and would result in the smaller ones sitting on the sidelines “while these big wheels Democratically [sic] hog the whole show.” One final comment that he made, relevant to Salazar’s point, was that the privilege to vote was “on sale” for fifteen dollars.148 Salazar had repeatedly acknowledged that Greeks were predominantly from an affluent background and the fact that Student Association books had a cost associated with them meant that participation was limited to those who could afford it. It even raises the question if these books, needed to participate in other school functions, were ever purchased for students in exchange for their vote.

A letter to the editor was also printed this week that took issue with Salazar’s column and was intended to clarify the misconceptions presented in it, but mostly to ridicule its author. Joe Pierce wrote that Salazar had attempted to degrade “fraternities, sororities and all organization in general.” Being that the column was not the “opinion of the Prospector” and was “composed of

hearsay, warped opinion, and half truths [sic]” he was not going to argue against Salazar’s right to express what he believed. Instead, Pierce would take issue with the “confusing method” that Salazar wrote in known as ‘Tongue in Cheek’ noting that, “Some successful writers have used this approach effectively but thus far it has not been to [sic] prominent on this campus paper.” Another issue was that Salazar was “attempting to raise such a furor over campus politics” but was not a member of the Student Association or voting in elections. He had also stated being against “all organizations in general” but was a pledge to Alpha Phi Gamma, the journalism fraternity. This made Salazar’s perspective appear to be flexible to what the “occasion demands.” There was also an attempt to “arouse” the “Independent” Student Association members against a supposed looming “catastrophe” posed by the United Western Party. “Dare Mr. Salazar point out what this awful black cloud is?” His “attack” on the unified parties “undemocratic methods…missed the boat” because majority rule was the basis of “Democratic government.” The party represented the “majority” of voters and the “majority of the campus leaders who carry the ball.” In opposition to them were the “grandstanders” who were not “members of the team” and made “themselves conspicuous by their noise.” Salazar could “blow” his “warped horn” while “we will shoot the bear” and added that his fraternity, Kappa Sigma, was “strong enough to withstand your latest blast of hot air.”149 Pierce was clearly not a fan of Salazar, by initially stating that he was a liar and had a “warped” perspective. He then criticized his writing style as being confusing, but also insinuated that Salazar’s writings never attempted to say anything. Then, he claimed Salazar was disingenuous because he allegedly did not participate in elections and belonged to the journalism fraternity. Alpha Phi Gamma was a national honorary journalism fraternity whose membership was co-ed and one of the requirements included having been on the

staff of a student publication for at least one year. While research has not uncovered if Salazar was a member, it does not seem to be the type of organization he took issue with. Pierce’s comments about an imagined threat and how a democracy functioned meant he did not understand what the column’s intent was or prognosticated. His remarks about grandstanding are troubling because he was invalidating Salazar’s concerns/perspective and appeared to take issue with who the author was. As this was his most recent “blast of hot air” not only was Salazar notorious within some circles of the student body, his opinion had been singled out. The responses that were printed in the Prospector all shared a common theme, not only was there disagreement with what Salazar wrote, the problem was the writer as they each attempted to discredit him and present him as an outsider.

Salazar may not only have been privy to the letters sent to the Prospector in response to his March 20 column, he probably heard from its staff and the student body directly which prompted this March 27 response. He began his column by stating that if TWC was to become a “first-rate” institution it had to lose the “snobbish anachronisms” that were the “Greek-letter social cliques.” It was shameful for a “state-supported” college to “permit, nay, encourage, the existence of said temples of discrimination.” The Religious Emphasis Week assemblies that students were advised to attend had promoted tolerance and that the “truly educated” individual was “cosmopolitan” and could be at peace with anyone. “Yet, many Freshmen [sic] find themselves excluded, at the offset of their college career, from Texas Western-backed organizations: sometimes because of their religion, their racial background, or financial condition.” The consequences from this were “bad psychologically for the more sensitive

150 This information was taken from the 1954 Flowsheet. Salazar was not listed as a member, but not all of its membership was listed. Flowsheet 1954, 193.
151 Pierce’s comment also made reference to his belonging to Kappa Sigma which was also the fraternity of the Prospector’s editor, Jim Palmer. This may suggest that Palmer’s opinion about Salazar and his writing may have come up in discussion between the group’s members.
rejected student” and led to the creation of “clubs based, consciously or unconsciously, on a
group inferiority complex, such as the Campus Colleagues.”152 Salazar made his case abundantly
clear when he wrote,

According to Colliers Magazine the following ‘secret clauses’ are found in the
constitution of some national fraternities. ‘Members must be of the Aryan race and not of
the black, Malayan or Semitic race.’ And: ‘Candidates for pledge-ship must not be of
Mongolian, Maylasion [sic], Negro or Jewish blood.’ One more: (Membership is limited to)
‘white persons of full Aryan blood.’ Enough. All this is well-known, but defended
because the adherents of these cliques point to the fact that life is discriminatory and we
might as well face it. What good is education, then, if it can’t combat these things?

These Greek-letter social groups, with their mumbo-jumbo rituals and gentlemen
agreement outrages, teach snobbery of the most ignorant type. They get a group of
anxious Freshmen [sic] in a party and then the active Greeks pick out the ones they want
‘in,’ in the most haphazard manner, by first impressions, beforehand agreements or
because the girl is pretty or the boy rich. In this way many worthy and talented kids are
left out. They come to the realization that they were victims of snobbery—but the scar is
still there.

Is this a healthy situation Educators?153

It is important to note his references throughout his column to TWC being state funded, the
Greek organizations supported by the college and his appeal to educators, by which he would
have included the administration and Board of Regents. He did this to show that the Greeks were
not the only group culpable for this situation, but those in positions of power who allowed this
culture of discrimination to have existed and persisted. They had the authority and should have
had the judgment to end these practices, but had essentially endorsed them by allowing them to
exist. Salazar bluntly reasoned that public universities upheld and perpetuated the status quo that

152 The “Campus Colleagues” were a student organization founded in 1944 with the intent of being a “social group
for Spanish speaking students.” Anyone that was fluent in Spanish and had an interest in Latin American culture was
allowed to become a member. Aside from being socially active the organization participated in all campus activities.
Flowsheet 1954, 221.
theprospector.newspaperarchive.com.lib.ute.edu/el-paso-prospector/1954-03-27/page-2/pageno-
their students had been taught was not representative of “American” democratic values and yet were being educated to propagate such practices.

Analyzing the language and examples provided by Salazar in context with his previous work for the *Prospector* it can be surmised that his own painful experience as a Mexican American working-class student was embedded throughout the column. He had, along with family and friends, felt the bitter sting of rejection and judgment based on factors that held no relevancy as conditions. From the time he was a young boy to this point in his life, the classroom had preached American exceptionalism and that he was an “American,” yet consistently reminded that in his case there were extenuating circumstances. His objection toward Greek and other school organizations was not based on some purported agenda to “cry wolf” or draw attention to himself. For too long colleges had nurtured these discriminatory groups’ ideas and practices and acted as though they were some aberration which operated independently from the universities who sanctioned their presence. These social cliques were the consequence of a national narrative that had normalized oppression as a natural condition and blamed the marginalized. Salazar wanted to ensure that his argument was not lost to any confusion because of his writing mechanic and his clarity and tone seemed to be motivated by a desire to force his intended audience to deal with the issue of race. His column acknowledged the harsh realities faced by people of color throughout the U.S., but of greater significance was that it addressed the issue at TWC. Salazar drew the distinction that this was not a foreign or imagined problem; discrimination was real, immediate and present in the lives of every student attending the college, it just so happened that some had the privilege of ignoring it.

His March 27 column was intended to provoke and challenge the laissez-faire attitude with which racial and ethnic discrimination were perceived and handled by the administration
and student body of TWC. Two letters were printed on April 3 that addressed the issues that Salazar brought up and unsurprisingly embodied the argument he had made. One, written by George Maynes, was an affirmation of Salazar’s writing as to what the experience on campus had been for students who were not Anglo and whose appearance/heritage was not of the “white” persuasion. He wrote that Salazar was a “personal friend” and that they had shared “more than a few pleasant hours together sipping beer and listening to the mariachis.” Maynes mentioned that he addressed Salazar by the nickname ‘viejo’ (old) and thought he was a “great guy” and a “free-thinker” whose ideas may not have always have been mutual, but would defend his right to have said them. To him, Salazar had “given the Prospector a much needed shot in the arm” since his return as the publication in his absence had become a “schedule of the Greeks’ activities” and other related minutiae. As it stood, “thanks to Rubén,” the Prospector was now “occasionally” covering relevant issues and he gave credit to Salazar for having the courage to address the “vital” issue of discrimination by Greek organizations “against the Gonzálezes and Goldbergs” at the college. Individuals like Salazar had been responsible for elevating TWC from the rank of a backwater, according to Maynes. He then shifted his focus from Salazar to the issue of the Greeks with whom he wished to “talk a little cold turkey” with, but with a few clarifications in regards to the nomenclature relevant to the debate so that everyone was on “common ground.” The “Mexican” was someone who spoke Spanish and knew some English, was born and raised in the country, had a dark complexion and was not to be confused with “Webster’s misconstrued idea that a Mexican is ‘a native or naturalized inhabitant of Mexico.’ A “Jew” was also an “American citizen,” possibly a veteran, had a “prominent nose,” went to a synagogue, thought only of money and likewise was not to be “confused with Webster’s silly notion” it was a person that belonged to the ‘Hebraic division of the Semitic race.’ Having settled the “clear meaning” of
the terms ‘Mexican’ and ‘Jew’ he could continue. He urged “Palmer, Pierce, and Cormier,” who had expressed opposition in their responses, to “re-read” Salazar’s articles after imbibing a few alcoholic beverages so that “one truth” could become apparent and “belt them between the eyes.” What would become evident was the “TRUTH!” that ‘Mexicans’ and ‘Jews,’ as he had defined, were “NOT accepted into the Greek-letter social organizations at TWC.” Maynes wrote that Salazar’s ‘warped horn,’ a reference to a comment by Pierce, had alerted the campus to the “clear note of discrimination” at the college. His letter concluded with,

You went on to mouth some long-yawn, Fourth-of-July, hoary old chestnuts about ‘majority rule’ and ‘Democratic government.’ So you see, Mr. Pierce, it was you who missed the boat; the moot point of Rubén’s articles is that Greek-letter social organizations at TWC are undemocratic in they prohibit membership to ‘Mexicans’ and ‘Jews.’

This, Greeks, is the gauntlet which Rubén has thrown before you. Do any of you accept the challenge?154

Maynes, a fellow student and observer/victim of the same discrimination that Salazar had written about, felt compelled to voice his concern over the situation and the apparent unwillingness or even ignorance to discuss the issue at hand. As the current president of the Campus Colleagues, the group which Salazar claimed developed out of an inferiority complex, he spoke with an insider’s perspective as an active member of the Student Association.155 Salazar had been accused of standing on the sidelines and grandstanding, Maynes could not be accused of the same and he shared the same perspective. No one in the majority wanted to speak about race/ethnicity and that it factored into de facto discrimination because for many it was the basis for their privilege/access and they had the freedom to ignore it.


155 Salazar, “This Shot World,” Prospector (El Paso), March 27, 1954.
A second letter published on April 3 about Salazar’s column did not share his perspective or that of Maynes and instead was indicative of the problem that both men had sought to address. J. Gordon Palmer began his letter by expressing his condolences to the Prospector for having been “forced to harbor such a warped and immature little mind.” Salazar needed to deal with the unpleasant reality that his “narrow little mind” was only motivated by the urge to “hurt” people, but had through his “nearsighted actions” and “half-truth writing” only done so to himself. Palmer asked if Salazar lacked friends, poise, a social life, or had been spurned because the answers to those questions would “shed light” on the apparent inferiority complex that led to his “attack” on “all that is, at least striving toward, properness and correctness.” Salazar’s alleged hatred of government and individuals “banding together…for mutual advancement” may have also explained a lack of involvement in the Student Association. The possibility of having a “voice” in the “selection of the governors” was not enough to subdue his animosity either. Palmer then addressed Salazar directly, “Mr. Salazar, you are a little man, with a little spoon attempting to move a mountain. If the mountain were not right, it would not exist.” He also explained that the Greeks discussed more campus wide business and financially promoted more scholarship than Salazar’s “little mind” knew or could even comprehend. As to the Campus Colleagues, they were not “frustrated, downtrodden and forgotten” which they had proved in previous elections. Also, there were no freshmen being “forced” to join Greek organizations and those who did pledge were looking to gain “friendship” and a “future to be proud of” and asked, “What are you after Salazar?” Ponder belonged to a church, a family and was an “American citizen” which were factors that trumped his fraternity, as it was for “all Greeks.” Any organization that sought to “secure and retain moral, religious, and political freedom for the individual are not wrong” and Salazar’s “opposition” was the result of “ignorance or ill
breeding.” Ponder then compared the Greeks at TWC to El Paso’s own “Service Clubs” both of which produced “leaders” unlike the “editorial pages.” Based on Salazar’s “remarks,” it was apparent that the only requirement for “genius” was the ability to write. The letter concluded with a “challenge” for Salazar to “publish a list of those traits that make Greek organizations so abominable allowing me to place beside it a list of only the salient good FACTS about the Greeks.”

Ponder must not have considered a column addressing the racially motivated discriminatory membership practices of the Greek organizations who sought to monopolize student elections, thereby silencing the concerns and aspirations of marginalized students, as a negative trait. He also echoed similar sentiments that seemed to focus on attacking Salazar’s character rather than his argument and an insistence on a “warped” perspective. It can be surmised from all of the opposition pieces that no one ever once considered Salazar’s perspective as a Mexican American legitimate, that he deliberately focused only on the negative and that he was selectively an outsider to the election process.

The March 27 column had done much more than elicit responses from the student body and staff of the Prospector it had also caused a chain reaction. Salazar had exposed, and not fabricated, a powder keg that was the treatment and discrimination of Mexican Americans and other groups at TWC. Because Greek organizations limited or completely obstructed the admittance of ethnic groups into their ranks the unification of said groups into a political party meant that they could control nominations, elections and perpetuate the exclusion. An editorial made this point by reporting that Greeks held at least five hundred of the approximate seven hundred Student Association books purchased in order to participate in the election. If the


157 “Politics In The Limelight,” Prospector, Ibid.
white students continued to limit access, they would never have a need or compulsion to become inclusive. Salazar’s column exposed this and others like Maynes took notice and expressed their acknowledgement and concern. Other students, namely those within the Greek organizations felt threatened and uncomfortable about the issue of race and ignored it while at the same time expressing great agitation and a willingness to fervently uphold the status quo. Even students who were not Greeks, but were white, felt compelled to express their opinion opposing Salazar and Maynes. Bill Crawford began his letter by proclaiming that he had accepted Maynes’ “challenge” and that he himself was not a Greek, nor did he “believe” in such groups, but his reasoning would “hold water a million times longer than yours will.” The letter’s sound logic was contradictory and at one point admonished Maynes for not taking into consideration the possible “good” that could come of the United Western Party even if was minimal to “non-existent.” Crawford never acknowledged the central issue of racially/ethnically motivated discrimination, but seemed intent to defend white privilege and belittle Maynes. Exclusion was simply a consequence necessitated by membership requirements the same way he could not join an honorary band organization because he lacked musical ability. To him, Maynes’ opposition to the Greeks came down to entitlement, “I want in so I should be allowed to join.” The letter concluded by claiming the “challenge” had been met and directed Maynes to “Room 201—Miners Hall” if he wanted to “discuss it further.”158 This passive aggressive remark showed that tensions ran high on both sides of the issue, although Salazar and Maynes had challenged the discrimination inherent in Greek organizations and never a specific individual. A meeting of Independent students was fractured when its chairman, Fernie Garcia, demanded politically minded students to leave because he only intended to form an “Independent men fraternity”

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which was to be ‘exclusive and snobbish.’ Salazar had affected the culture at TWC and the racial tensions that had otherwise been veiled now began to reveal itself as students addressed the issue amongst each other and in the public forum of the *Prospector*.

No one could retroactively keep Salazar from exposing this powder keg of racial tensions, they could perhaps suppress the potential spark that would ignite it. In the April 3 *Prospector*, a small editorial column ran that brought the debate, at least as it dealt with the issue of race, to an end on its pages. Unfortunately, the archival copy of this issue is damaged and a tear obscures some of the column’s text. What remains of the editorial does give context as to its intent, although it cannot be completely analyzed. Titled, “No More Spouts of Emotions,” the editorial lamented that the *Prospector* was to publish “two letters it would rather not print,” those of Maynes and Ponder, but did so only because each “arose” in response to its columns. The papers opposition came from a belief that each represented the “sentiments of a minority” and also because they were motivated by emotions and not thought. Whatever the case may have been, the issue was that they expressed personal beliefs and should be handled personally and not in the columns of the newspaper. Its April 3 letters to the editor were to be the “last letters” they would “publish on this issue.” By ending this aspect of the conversation, it can be inferred that Salazar was also urged to do so himself as to not arouse these sentiments within the student body. Although, the following week two additional letters broached the topic one by Jesus Hernandez acknowledge that Salazar’s argument was valid and that most of the opposition was circumventing his point about discrimination, but focused more on the election without

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160 “No More Spouts of Emotions,” Ibid.
specifically mentioning race.\textsuperscript{161} Crawford’s letter was the other and while it ignored race, it was full of personal attacks on Maynes, and well over the \textit{Prospector}’s word limit. This declaration put the issue to bed ensuring that what Salazar had compelled his reader’s to consider was no longer seen as an acceptable topic because it had been labeled an emotional one. Apparently, acknowledging then expressing condemnation and opposition to racially based, and sanctioned, discrimination was an emotional subject and not one that could be thoughtfully discussed. A consequence of describing the debate as emotional was that it meant it could not also be rational and therefore further invalidated the perspective of marginalized students. Another factor for suppressing the issue may have been the letters that were received that addressed Salazar directly and possibly expressed threats. No matter what the reason, Salazar had once again shown his penchant for provoking his readership and speaking to the truths that the establishment conveniently kept hidden from view.

Salazar’s column of April 3, the same issue the \textit{Prospector} declared an end to rampant “emotions,” moved on from the issue of discrimination and instead focused on another relevant issue concerning the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. He did however continue the theme of contradictions with special interest with TWC’s faculty and students facilitating the creation of bombs and thus threatening peace. The “eggheads” had developed hydrogen bombs so large that they did not know the exact consequences that would occur when one was dropped on “God’s Little Islands.” As science had gone “too far” because the bombs were “liable to kill someone” he felt all “Texas Western engineers, physicists and their professors must be purged before we peace-loving liberal arts scholars are atomized.” Since students in these fields had yet to gain the knowledge necessary to become “proficient” in the creation of bombs, they could be made to study “something constructive—like ceramics” instead of learning to split atoms. Their

\textsuperscript{161} Jesus Hernandez, “Letters to The Editor,” \textit{Prospector} (El Paso), April 10, 1954.
professors or “masters” had to go even though they “aren’t so bad” and had educated liberal arts majors “superfluous, but cute, knowledge like mathematics and chemistry.” Although, when it came to the issue of “making H-Bombs” it was necessary for “we liberal arts aestetes [sic]” to respond resolutely and compassionately. A gentle approach to terminating the employment of TWC science professors could be done by reallocating funds into a retirement account to enable them to live comfortably and “stop thinking” about how to create larger and more efficient bombs. He reaffirmed that “science has gone too far” and the problem needed to be resolved, but also remarked that he agreed “100 per cent [sic]” with Greeks that the detonation of an “H-Bomb” at TWC would have been the “biggest faux pas of the social year.”162 If he could not point out the discrepancy between democracy and Greek organizations, he was still able to illustrate the connection between education and the destruction and mass murder enabled by institutions of higher learning. Science, or more specifically the people disseminating its knowledge, had the capacity to assist in the destruction of communism and the nations/peoples that supported it by disintegrating them. Salazar appreciated the contradiction within an institution that preached knowledge and understanding as a means to produce civil and cosmopolitan graduates along with those who could eradicate life on a massive scale, somewhat similar to past inconsistencies he had discussed.

The following week, Salazar offered another pensive critique about universities and their respective students and how this relationship was mired by the absence and desire for radical thought. He began by stating that the principal concern with “college life” was the lack of “radical thinking” by students who feared it and educators who opposed it. The word “radical” probably evoked for “radio-TV majors, Greeks and the like” the ominous threat of communism.

whose adherents he believed were the “least capable” of radical thought. By embracing an intelligent form the U.S. would be able to save the human race, but colleges had to be the catalyst. Universities had stopped stimulating minds and instead become “indoctrinating machines which rivet students with the ‘right’ conventions.” The age in which he lived necessitated a frank introspection that must not be dulled with politeness. People had to ask themselves about “the existence of God; about our sincerity on the issue of democracy; about our sexual behavior; about whether our view of man is exaggerated, etc.” What had become the “flaw” of college thinking was that whenever someone expressed or wrote anything “contrary to conventional dogma” the initial reaction was to discredit the person. This approach diminished what had been conveyed and “whether it was, or was not, worth hearing or reading.” He ended his column by writing,

We must not be afraid to flog or destroy old accepted institutions. If we sincerely believe it is for the betterment of man. We must not be afraid to probe our minds to the very depths where our real selves [sic] are. The result, This Shot World thinks, would be emancipating—and revealing.


Radicalism was not the downfall of society for Salazar, but a means of improving it. Challenging the status quo was radical when pointing out the illegality of segregation in Texas and the exclusion of minorities from Greek organizations. Asking “white Americans” to acknowledge their privilege and to undermine it by accepting others into their social spheres and promoting equality was radical. Writing proudly about being Mexican and demanding that the country respect your rights as a citizen without taking away or diminishing your heritage was an act of radicalism. It is not difficult to imagine why Salazar would be drawn to cover and attempt to
mediate the Chicana/o Movement in the 1960s because he understood their struggles and related with the need to be radical and demand change.

In the penultimate column of his collegiate career, Salazar returned to the topic of the upcoming elections and his advice for voters along with some candidates for their consideration. It was his “biased opinion” that Student Association members, no matter if they were “Greek, Independents or Buddhists,” should consider voting Independent. His “best” reason for doing so was “for the hell of it.” There was no significant issues or anything to be lost or gained by the defeat or loss of any candidate. Liberal Independents did have one advantage over the Greeks which was “a beautiful and catching political naïveté.” They had smaller numbers, worked hard, had “few votes ‘in the bag,’ an “unlimited faith” in democracy, limited financial resources and an abundance of courage. Among the candidates was football player Noel McCormick who in order to remain fit had to avoid alcohol, the “more hectic forms of romance,” and get home early. For the post of vice-president voters could elect Arthur Meyer the talented actor who continually impressed the student body with his performances and they could repay his hard work by casting a ballot for him. Then there was “likeable” George Maynes who he considered one of the most intrepid students on campus because he had gotten married just before final exams had begun, which merited a vote. Salazar’s column was “not a paid political advertisement” simply thoughts he entertained while in Mexico City and drinking an alcoholic beverage.164 Salazar had been there along with others from the Prospector’s staff for the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association contest where he had been awarded second place for his editorial on the Jim Lucas speech.165 In expressing not having any desire in the outcome of the election he was able to take

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one last jab at the Greeks by acknowledging the characteristics of the Independents. He took any semblance of emotion out of the equation and was able to subtly remind students about his argument against the Greek political machine. Salazar was graduating later in the month and never had any vested interest in the election other than fighting for what he felt was just and democratic, which had always been the case for him.

Salazar’s time at the *Prospector* had finally come to a close and on May 1, 1954, he wrote his final “This Shot World” column, which reflected on the state of the paper and the college during his return. His column was going to “shut up its loud mouth for good” after this issue and he wanted to thank those individuals that had expressed they enjoyed reading it. Those he had “angered” were also thanked because it was his intent to do so and their “cooperation was appreciated.” He had loved the *Prospector* for “a long time” maybe longer than he should have and as with any relationship each side had “intentionally” hurt one another. Since his column had returned from “defending democracy in the German gasthauses, it has been out of place.” The column resumed at a time when the operative word was “conservatism.” An environment of reciprocation and ambivalence towards issues was encouraged in order to “please everybody,” but he did not fault the *Prospector* as it was simply a symptom of the times. Salazar found it ironic that it was the “Communist slaves” that had cheated “Americans” of their ability for independent thought because the Russians had caused fear, an irrational one, which kept people from thinking on their own. Seeking a remedy people joined organizations and adopted philosophies that could think on their behalf, while conservatives had “taken up this national trend of thinking and turned it into an era of conformity.” As a result, colleges had transitioned into “vocational schools” that taught “safe conformity” and it was reflected in college newspapers. He recalled Joseph Conrad’s writing that it was “youth’s right to be insolent” a
“necessity,” but that was no longer true. College students no longer had the luxury of having “insolent and free minds” as school had become a setting to make ‘contacts’ that resulted in employment down the road. “Furthermore…Oh, for Christ’s sake, Shot World, shut up…” and so this chapter in Salazar’s life concluded. He bid farewell to the pages of the Prospector and its readership by lamenting on what had become the dominant theme of the campus and society. A journey that began in in 1946 as a graduate of El Paso High, temporarily ended after an impactful fall semester in 1947, and resumed in the spring of 1953 as a veteran in his mid-twenties was complete. With a conciliatory tone, he reflected on his time as a writer who sought to agitate and also survive at a publication that had conformed with the times to the detriment of the columnist. Salazar had waged battles against an ideology that was pervasive and embedded in the foundation of the institution he hoped he could transform into a more egalitarian one free of the injustices he had encountered and observed throughout his life.

The spring semester of 1954 was significant for Salazar because it brought his college career to an end and exemplified the kind of writer he had been and would continue to be as a professional. He was in the final months of being a student and in the process of cementing his legacy as a contributor to the Prospector. This closing chapter of his collegiate career was taking place a year after he had resumed writing for the paper and six years since he first appeared as a named author. If there was one defining characteristic that had emerged about him, it was his ability to grab the reader’s attention and to provoke a reaction with his words, but without resorting to inflammatory attacks. Salazar’s evolving prose was evidence of his brilliance because it allowed him to navigate around possible censorship and address some of the problems

present in society. This ingenuity and intrepidness is what made him a force to be reckoned with at TWC and as a professional and what ultimately made him a catalyst for change and conversely a threat to others.

167 Salazar had written about employing the use of sarcasm and satire to avoid censorship. Salazar, “‘This Shot World’,” Prospector (El Paso), November 14, 1953.
Conclusion

In the fall of 1955, TWC made history as it became the first state funded college in Texas to admit African Americans for undergraduate study.\textsuperscript{168} After winning a lawsuit against the college, ten African American students were allowed to enroll as any other student wishing to pursue a higher education there.\textsuperscript{169} The presence of these ten individuals signaled a new era that would soon be coming as a long stagnant status quo was about to change in other campuses across the state and the nation. Except of course for the fact that they had to appeal to the courts to recognize the unconstitutionality of the policies that denied them admittance on the basis of their race as opposed to the qualifications that any other person had to meet. This was the harsh reality that people of color were subjected to, being judged by factors other than those related to whatever position they sought to apply for. Salazar had been pointing out these discrepancies and injustices throughout his collegiate writing career at TCM/TWC even though he was not subject to the same form of race-based discrimination.

Such initial hardships were not levied against Salazar when he began his career at TWC and he was not present to see this barrier broken, he graduated in 1954 a year before integration had been achieved. He had been allowed to study without the need to file suit because of the long standing racial designation for Mexicans/Mexican Americans as white. His struggle was similar, yet distinct, as was that of other Mexican Americans in El Paso, TWC and other cities and

institutions across the country. People of Mexican descent, like all other people of color in the U.S., had been racialized and excluded whenever it became convenient. The pre-Chicana/o landscape was a cloudy one that may not have been drawn along the same constructs as the racial segregation faced by African Americans, but bore many similarities to it. Mexicans and Mexican Americans had faced de facto and de jure discrimination since annexation in 1848, but their legal racial status as white had granted them a form of access that created a semblance of integration.\footnote{See, Gutiérrez, \textit{Walls and Mirrors}, 38.} A looming battle for civil rights had been set in motion when these two historically marginalized communities had been asked, as citizens, to sacrifice during WWII and then abruptly returned to the status quo after the war despite their contributions which rescinded any advancement made and ignored this aspect of their citizenship.

For Salazar, his journey to college did not resemble that of the integrated students. He was not denied admittance based on his race, yet his writings revealed that he observed and challenged the discrepancies in the college experience of others like him, and of African Americans, in contrast to the majority of the student body. An aura of otherness always seemed to surround him in which his heritage granted him a double edged form of acceptance. In his own mind he was not the typical college student, his experience often reinforced that he was atypical and that certain characteristics about him always stood out. When his articles drew the ire of the student body, there always seemed to be an issue with who the writer was in addition to what he had written. His career as a journalist fighting against social injustice began at TCM and TWC when he wrote for \textit{The Prospector}, but his experience as a Mexican American forging his way into social and institutional spheres, where he often was the only one, also began there. Salazar’s writing for the \textit{Prospector} may have covered a variety of topics, but he understood that the university was a microcosm, a reflection, of the world outside of the walls of TWC which was a
society that reinforced and justified the normalcy of discrimination and oppression. In order to move beyond the myth and martyrdom of Salazar and to better understand his professional career, it is necessary to examine this time as a writer for the Prospector to comprehend that his intellect, compassion, identity and ideology were present and refined during this time.

As has been the case in the few attempts to analyze his contribution and significance to the broader Mexican American-Chicana/o era and place him within its historiography, Salazar’s time at TCM/TWC has been ignored. His time at the Prospector provided an education as to the type of environment he was going to report on and work in throughout his time as a professional journalist. Salazar’s voice was to be among a minority at the El Paso Herald-Post, Santa Rosa Press Democrat, San Francisco News, and Los Angeles Times or at any other English language news media outlet in the nation. At TWC, he was able to experience firsthand how a predominantly Anglo readership would react to the issues he brought up in his column. There was also the reaction from the Mexican American students who sympathized with and echoed his sentiments, but also felt empowered that someone understood and acknowledge the hardships they experienced. His columns drew the ire and the attention of the student body and the administration because no one else was writing about these issues at the Prospector. Its staff may have had members who were sympathetic to the cause of civil rights, but none of them had Salazar’s audacity to put those beliefs into writing. When he began writing about the Mexican American community in Los Angeles for the Times, he was continuing a tradition that had begun as a journalist at TCM/TWC. Salazar was a trailblazer not only because of his ethnicity, but also because of the willingness to challenge the status quo and voice concern for the marginalized people of the U.S.
Salazar was not simply a writer for the Mexican American community, but he understood the necessity to express concern and address the situation that others were not inclined to write about. When he wrote about African American segregation in Texas, specifically at TCM, he himself had nothing to personally gain but was compelled by the belief that it was unconstitutional. He saw the inconsistency in a system that would ask African Americans and Mexican Americans to sacrifice for “their” country and then return to see themselves and their community continue to be discriminated. During his hiatus, he continued to bring up the issue in letters to the Herald-Post pointing out that Lafayette elected to not participate in the Sun Bowl, or “Prejudice Bowl” as he called it, because one of its team members, an African American veteran, would not be allowed to play.171 In another, he praised the necessity to tie civil rights into a draft bill because African Americans were being drafted to defend democracy while still serving in segregated units.172 Within a separate letter, his praise for a ruling ending the segregation of ‘Latin American’ students in Texas school districts was presented as a way of combating Communism by “putting up a true democracy” to oppose it.173 Salazar routinely expressed and challenged the hypocrisy of a country that boasted of its freedoms and took up the mantle to fight oppression while marginalizing its own non-Anglo citizens.

Although there had been no African Americans allowed onto TCM/TWC, one voice had still cried out against this injustice. When a student opposed his column about integration, and did so under a misinformed but none the less progressive perspective, he did not acknowledge

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171 Salazar, “He Calls Sun Bowl The ‘Prejudice Bowl.’”
two significant factors. First, the constitutional amendments that granted African Americans their freedom and rights as citizens were not being fully adhered to because none were allowed to enroll at the school under state sanctioned policies. Second, he called out Salazar for being Mexican and that he should be deported after just having praised the country’s achievements towards civil rights. Salazar, who had just returned from military service, was still fighting the same kind of ignorance and prejudices of his childhood and those he had also seen firsthand in the Army. He understood that there were two “Americas” and which one you lived in depended on the color of your skin and your ethnic background. In the 1960s, these conditions still persisted and the walkouts staged by Mexican American high school students in Los Angeles and throughout the nation were motivated by the same conditions he had been exposed to growing up. The fact that these attitudes and conditions endured meant that change was still necessary and that Chicanas/os were simply the next generation of Mexican Americans that had found a new ideology with which to challenge this oppression.

As a reporter for the *Times* he could draw upon his own experience and relate to the new emerging movement because he had championed and fought for similar change when he was a student/journalist in El Paso. While Bert Corona may have expressed that El Paso was slightly more progressive than Los Angeles in its treatment of Mexicans/Mexican Americans, he and Salazar both observed the ubiquitous discrimination in both cities. A nostalgia for the “not-to-distant” past of the Spanish southwest could not mask the reality of widespread discrimination and unequal opportunities/access that Mexican Americans were facing in El Paso, Los Angeles and San Antonio. The Chicana/o Movement and Salazar both expressed the same frustrations

175 For the appropriation of Mexican heritage in the southwest see, David G. Gutiérrez, “Significant to Whom? Mexican Americans and the History of the American West,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (November
with a socio-economic and governmental system that denied equal access, denigrated Mexican ancestry, and then expected Mexican Americans to die overseas in defense of a democracy that only applied partially to them. Salazar had grown up during WWII and had been drafted into the Korean War, when he was not even a citizen, and knew about the contradiction exemplified by compulsory military service in a nation that still had not resolved the inequalities facing minority groups. He understood that citizenship for the non-Anglo community did not have the same meaning or protections that it did for those fortunate enough to be “white” citizens.

For these reasons, it is difficult to imagine that Salazar thought of himself as a “white man” in a political sense no matter what economic status his profession had allowed him to achieve. Portrayals of Salazar are limited in their scope and tend to ignore his time in El Paso where he spent the majority of his life. His writing at the Prospector reveals an individual who was not conflicted about his place in society as he had been reminded throughout his childhood and into his adult life that his “Mexicaness” trumped any “whiteness” he may have possessed. In his writings from 1947-54, Salazar would have rarely been considered conservative and was called “liberal” by his own editor at the Prospector, even lamenting about the age of conservatism that existed during his return. When Phil Montez described Salazar’s family background as conservative and rightwing which attributed to a confusion about how to deal with the “social situation of Mexicans as a writer” it must be considered as a misconception. Salazar had expressed very progressive ideas in his columns and editorials that caused a commotion among the student body and the college’s administration. He had urged the need for youth to be insolent and that their education should make them radical and hesitant to conform to past traditions or beliefs. Chicanas/os of the 1960s would have appeared to have been a


176 Ruben Salazar: Man in the Middle.
manifestation of this ideology and what drew him to contemplate and report on their cause because he understood its need and origin.

It becomes the problem of his martyrdom that he is appropriated to suit the needs of whomever feels the desire to use Salazar as a symbol, but the same can be said of those who attempt to clarify who he was. Throughout the documentary Ruben Salazar: Man in the Middle, testimonies seem intent to present Salazar as a middle-class conservative conflicted over and drawn to the Chicana/o movement by a curiosity fueled by the fact that he had once been “Mexican.” There was not some grand revelation for him to make as he had expressed a pride in being Mexican in the U.S. and not ashamed of his heritage throughout several of his college columns. His own daughter, who was eight years old when he died, said she did not know “how much he was identified with being a Mexican. My father led a completely Anglo life. He was a professional. He was part of the establishment.”177 It is true that Salazar was not living in the same conditions as those of the Mexican American/Chicana/o community he was covering, but to assume that he became Anglo because of his profession dismissed the kind of discrimination he faced growing up as a person of Mexican descent. It also suggests that one cannot be or ceases to be Mexican if they are educated, have a profession, live in a specific zip code, dress in “proper” attire and speak English fluently and without an accent. One can only imagine that when he upset readers, law enforcement officials or any form of authority that his ethnicity complicated the fact that he was reporting on the conditions and disproportionate experience of a marginalized community. To portray Salazar in this way diminishes his own struggles and attempts to expose and remedy the circumstances that minorities had faced for as long as he could remember.

177 Ibid.
As a writer, Salazar was brilliant at coaxing his readership to participate in his discourse where they often revealed their own biases and allowed him to expose what really was at the heart of their argument. To put it simply, he was playing chess while everyone else was playing checkers. Sometimes it seemed as though the other columnists and student body members just wanted to put “that Mexican” in his place for speaking out about things that were better off left unsaid. In his K-12 schooling he was taught about democracy, in the Army he was trained and expected to uphold it, in college he was educated in how to preserve it and at every phase he was reminded that he was Mexican first and an American after the fact. He excelled at agitating and the result often manifested itself in personal attacks that took issue with him because it was not socially accepted to talk about racism. His legacy as a writer is that he did just that, he reminded everyone about the aspect that differentiated one group from another which was the root cause for the inequities present in every facet of their lives.

It has been the purpose of this thesis to analyze and place into context Salazar’s time as a student journalist for TCM/TWC from 1947-54 to contribute a more profound understanding of this man’s career and life. His life before the Los Angeles Times has had little attention paid to it by scholars and documentarians which has allowed for the growth of a misconception about his life to become an aspect of his historiography. A review of what has been written specifically about Salazar, other than a chapter by García, is mired with inconsistencies, inaccuracies and misappropriations. Little to no attention has been paid to his time as a college writer in El Paso and that is the context in which this work seeks to contribute. The research for this study proved expansive and exhaustive not because it was difficult to find extant primary resources, but because there were few secondary works to use as a basis for this scholarship. What ultimately focused this research became an effort to expose the life of Salazar to contradict the misinformed
narratives and provide something other than the abundant references about him as a victim of deliberate or overzealous police violence. The scope of this work is limited to his time at the *Prospector* because it represents an initial step towards a broader and more encompassing analysis of his life and career as a journalist. To comprehend his coverage of the Mexican American community and the development of the Chicana/o movement it is necessary to contextualize his professional writing with his collegiate one. His perspective was unique both because of his Mexican heritage and in how it differed greatly from that of his peers considering the city was in a southern state. It is imperative that his life before college and during his hiatus become the next phase of scholarship to find what factors contributed to his understanding of the world and nurtured his belief of what constituted citizenship and why no other factors could impinge upon its protections.

Historian Mario García ends his introduction to *Border Correspondent* by stating, “A full biography of Salazar will no doubt be written someday,” and while this has yet to have been accomplished this study is a small contribution toward this goal. Salazar’s journalism career has its roots in high school, but it was not until college when he changed his major from engineering and began writing for the *Prospector* that he laid the foundation for the extraordinary impact and legacy he would leave as a journalist. On August 29, 1970, Salazar was covering the Chicano Anti-War Moratorium for KMEX when the unrest that unfolded led him to the Silver Dollar Cafe to seek refuge and it is there that his life was cut tragically short and an important voice for the disenfranchised was forever silenced. His life as a journalist, a brother, a son, a husband, and as a father came to an end, but so did his control over who was able to describe the person he was. In death, he became malleable to the distortions of historical memory and the whims of political causes who were able to portray him according to their needs.

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discourse became about the social, economic, political and racial category he belonged to which blurred the significance of what he sought to accomplish as a journalist. A life that would come to be defined by how it ended, obscuring the forty-two years that preceded it. In 2008, he was commemorated with a postage stamp that had three distinct characteristics; his name, his face and segments from a headline reporting his death. Chicanas/os desperate in their desire to express the injustice they felt made him a martyr in their struggle to forge an identity respectful of their ancestry and a recognition of their rights as citizens. The unintended consequence being that he became a footnote in the history of the Chicana/o Movement, the most prominent of three people who lost their lives that day. Salazar’s life and career was overshadowed by his death.

Salazar’s journalism from El Paso to Los Angeles is linked by his ability to strike a chord with his readers and authorities wary of his true intent. He excelled at being an agitator because he understood that the status quo remained stagnant as long as no one compelled you to question it. Insolence was necessary of youth he once remarked and an education the harbinger of radicalism. The pages of the Prospector can attest to how well he applied this philosophy to his own life and the career he would later have as a professional journalist evidence that these ideas still influenced his thought and writings long after the days of his youth. His commentary remains relevant today in a society that still bears the racial divisions and disproportionate imprisonment of minorities inherent to a social order where class and ethnicity can influence the trajectory of a person’s life. From the streets of Ferguson, Missouri to the barrios of El Paso and Los Angeles, communities still struggle to find a solution to cyclical poverty, racial profiling, police brutality, inadequate/culturally insensitive schooling and disparate opportunities for advancement. Salazar appreciated the transformative property that an education possessed and he knew that change was only possible as long as there were people willing to create it. Long before
he had become a symbol of the fight for Chicana/o civil rights and the injustice they faced, he had been an incredibly talented journalist who from his time at the *Prospector* spoke out on behalf of all citizens no matter their class, religion, race or ethnicity.
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Vita

Gustavo Del Hierro was born, raised and educated in the Mission Valley of El Paso, Texas. He graduated with a B.A. in History and a minor in Secondary Education from the University of Texas at El Paso in December of 2009. As a fulfilment of his minor, he taught at the high school level as part of a teaching apprenticeship. In 2012, he began working on his M.A. in History with a minor in Public History from UTEP.

With the help of Dr. Ernesto Chávez, Del Hierro applied for and was awarded a grant to work as a research assistant for Dr. Chavez in the summer of 2013, helping him conduct research for his book on actor Ramón Novarro. In the fall of 2013, he contributed to and helped develop, along with other graduate students and under the direction Dr. Yolanda Chávez Leyva, an exhibit on the Chicana/o Movement at UTEP title “Viva La Causa: Forging UTEP’s 21st Century Demographic,” which opened in June 2014 as part of the university’s centennial celebration. He also worked as a teaching assistant in the department in the spring and fall of 2014.

In the spring of 2015, he would once again work with Dr. Leyva, this time as a research assistant for UTEP’s Museo Urbano (Urban Museum) until his graduation in May 2016, and contribute to an exhibit chronicling the philosophy and work of a local women’s labor organization, La Mujer Obrera. During his studies, he was also the recipient of the Richard E. Dunlap Memorial Scholarship, awarded to an outstanding M.A. student in the history department.

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This thesis was typed by Gustavo Del Hierro.