

Nation: Country follows L.A.'s course

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ish-speaking peoples across the border and into New Mexico, Arizona and California.

Instead, he seems to take it as something that's pretty much an accomplished fact. He writes, for instance, that Los Angeles is now "a Latin American city, the northernmost Spanish-speaking metropolis in the hemisphere, a sort of Mexico City Lite."

And, according to Tobar, as Los Angeles goes, so goes the rest of the country: "Across the United States, in all the new places where Spanish-speaking immigrants are settling, in Dalton, Georgia, and Grand Island, Nebraska, the moment will come when simple demographics make Latino political power inevitable."

Tobar's notion of "simple demographics" in this statement points, in fact, to one of the book's major failings, for it glosses over the very real and, indeed, complex, problems and issues arising out of the impact of this population of illegal immigrants on our nation's increasingly fragile social support systems of welfare, health and education — systems which can only be described as in a state of crisis, particularly in Los Angeles, that "Mexico City Lite" celebrated by Tobar earlier in the book.

It is not, after all, racist or exclusionary to ask what effect the arrival of an estimated 3 million or more (Tobar's figures) undocumented workers every year across our southern border has on the quality of life of those already living here. Is lettuce, as proponents claim, cheaper? Or are we subsidizing every head of lettuce with the tax money we pay to provide the social supports for the cheap labor that picked the lettuce?

It's questions such as these, and many others as well, that shadow the pages of this book, darkening the air around the undeniable success stories of particular individuals. Had he looked more carefully into those shadows, Tobar might have given us a much more vital, much more important look at the new America he claims to see coming in the very near future.

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Chronicles: 'It's all here'

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Bradbury and his wife, Maggie, welcomed Weller from the start. It seemed that Bradbury was ready to find his Boswell and that it was time for his story to be written. And for the next three years, the biographer was like a member of the family.

The first few chapters of *The Bradbury Chronicles* take place in Waukegan, Ill., the small town where Bradbury grew up and the template for the apocryphal Green Town, made famous in *Dandelion Wine* and dozens of short stories. Bradbury claims a nearly eidetic memory, even purporting to remember his birth, and Weller does an amazing job of tying Bradbury's memories to the plots and themes of many of his stories.

In 1934, when Bradbury was 14 years old, the family moved to Los Angeles, where he became enamored with the Hollywood scene. He frequented the hangouts of the stars and managed to build an amazing collection of autographs and photographs. He acted in high school productions but soon discovered that his true talent lay in writing scripts. He also spent his free time writing stories and poems.

After high school, Bradbury began writing a short story a week while supporting himself selling newspapers on a street corner. And eventually, in the 1940s, the stories began to sell. His first book, *Dark Carnival*, a collection of stories, was published by Arkham House in 1947. And although only 3,000 copies were printed, his career was on the rise. *The Martian Chronicles*, one of Bradbury's most important books, would follow in 1950.

Weller is adept at relating Bradbury's indefatigable positive attitude during this period. The author knew that his books would eventually sit on shelves next to those of his literary idols, not just fantasy authors like L. Frank Baum, Jules Verne and Edgar Rice Burroughs but mainstream talents like Hemingway, Welty, Steinbeck and Fitzgerald.

In the 1950s, Bradbury's dream of working in motion pictures came true when he wrote the screenplay for John Huston's *Moby Dick*. Brad-

bury has chronicled the joys and anguish of working with Huston in his semi-autobiographical novel *Green Shadows, White Whale*. Weller's version adequately reveals the impact this experience had on Bradbury's life and career.

A central focus of *The Bradbury Chronicles* is Bradbury's courage and individuality. He stood up to the McCarthy investigations and was a champion against all types of prejudice. And his cautionary works like *Fahrenheit 451* stand alongside such novels as George Orwell's *1984* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* as stark warnings of disastrous futures.

Weller also paints Bradbury as a Renaissance man — a designer of the World of Tomorrow at the United States Pavilion at the 1964 New York World's Fair, creator of the interior of the Space Ship Earth display at Disney World's EPCOT Center, a commentator for various NASA efforts, an artist, and a filmmaker who was nominated for an Academy Award for his animated film *Icarus Montgolfier Wright*.

Although *The Bradbury Chronicles* is by no means a trashy tell-all biography, Weller reveals that Bradbury was known to stray and that although Maggie was his great love, they came near divorce more than once. On the other hand, it would seem that Bradbury has always been a doting father to his four daughters.

Bradbury may have been shortchanged when it came to genre awards, but his wish for broader recognition was realized in November 2000 when the National Book Foundation Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters was conferred on him at the National Book Awards Ceremony in New York. (The ceremony is depicted among the 15 pages of photographs that chronicle his life.)

Meanwhile, Bradbury is still writing. His most recent collection of stories, *The Cat's Pajamas*, was published in 2004, and at age 84, he isn't finished yet.

Mark Graham reviews Unreal Worlds stories regularly in Weekend@Home.

Night: Tales of real insight

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Salter's characters suffer the unglamorous defeats and disappointments of love. He holds his characters at a distance that allows the reader insight into their emotions while also maintaining a sense of detachment. This can make the reader feel at once like an observer and a participant, witnessing the interactions of characters but also sharing in their experiences of surprise and betrayal.

In the title story, a man assists in the suicide attempt of his terminally ill wife, but things don't turn out as expected. The wife comes downstairs the next morning, still alive, to witness her husband with another woman, Susanna. The husband and his lover's affair disintegrates after this encounter: "They met two or three times afterward, at his insistence, but to no avail. Whatever holds people together was gone. She told him she could not help it. That was just the way it was."

As in many of these stories, Salter avoids the black-and-white morality of wrong vs. wronged. Instead, he leads us through the inexplicable geography of emotions that lie in between. He navigates the territory with exceptional insight and skill: Bitter or silent, awkward or serene — or as clear and bright as morning light — Salter writes it just the way it is.

Jessica Slater is technology editor at the Rocky Mountain News.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Answers on 34D

ACROSS

- 1 Piano part
- 6 Robust
- 11 Threshing debris
- 16 Turns pancakes
- 21 Crawled out of bed
- 22 Infuse
- 23 Like a wolf's howl
- 24 Magazine appeal
- 25 Not free (2 wds.)
- 26 Bedsprings
- 27 Large parrot
- 28 Left over
- 29 Glitzy pianist
- 31 Crowbar
- 33 Danson and Kennedy
- 35 Bonn single
- 36 Puts
- 37 Third power, in math
- 39 Falls gradually
- 41 Brings to mind
- 43 Outshine
- 46 Tabloid twosomes
- 48 Part of LAX
- 49 Pert
- 52 Trade punches
- 54 Villain's smile
- 56 Iffy attempts
- 60 Reflexive pronoun
- 62 "Da" opposite
- 64 Sailing vessel
- 66 What the suspicious smell (2 wds.)
- 67 Pamplona cheer
- 68 Where Anna taught
- 70 Exceeded the limit
- 72 Brass instruments
- 74 GI morale booster
- 75 Elite alternative
- 77 Musical symbol
- 79 Yukon hauler
- 81 Rustic home (2 wds.)
- 83 — voce (softly)
- 85 Extol
- 87 Roast pig repast
- 89 Patio
- 90 Turned chicken
- 92 High-chair part
- 94 Tijuana Ms.
- 96 Carpet
- 97 Uppercase letter

- 101 Succotash bean
- 103 — Winslet of *Titanic*
- 105 Juicy pears
- 109 1950s fad
- 111 Wind-driven mist
- 113 — d'oeuvres
- 115 Lowest high tide
- 116 High dudgeon
- 117 Tiny
- 119 Comparable
- 121 Physics particle
- 123 Nonflying bird
- 124 Ta-ta in Turin
- 126 Goddesses' statues
- 128 Whiskery animal
- 130 Plant with tendrils
- 132 Leading man
- 134 Elbow room
- 136 Swing locale
- 138 Think logically
- 139 Actress — Caldwell
- 141 Loud kiss
- 143 Complains
- 145 Predicted
- 149 Wouldn't hurt —
- 151 Hit dead-center
- 152 Longings
- 156 Yale alumnus
- 157 Musical ensemble
- 159 Less coarse
- 161 Wakefulness
- 163 Proverb
- 165 Hang down
- 167 Roof part
- 169 Jury
- 170 Raga instrument
- 171 Greenish-blues
- 172 More chilly
- 173 Temporary peace
- 174 Ball clubs
- 175 Multitude
- 176 Thrills
- 177 Pilots' place

- 9 Boring
- 10 Pro votes
- 11 Glues tight
- 12 Pays attention
- 13 Curved path
- 14 Edict
- 15 Less
- 16 Wall paintings
- 17 Caesar's law
- 18 Computer-chip maker
- 19 Hazard
- 20 Long-necked waterfowl
- 30 Plastic
- 32 Sundial numeral
- 34 Computer key
- 38 Sports network
- 40 Make steel from iron
- 42 Nick and Nora's dog
- 44 Hawaiian strings
- 45 Responds
- 47 City near Inchon
- 49 Karate moves
- 50 Sun, in combos
- 51 Perpendicular
- 53 DC figures
- 55 Mars Rover
- 57 Caribbean isle
- 58 Fundamental
- 59 Fruit pit
- 61 Cool time
- 63 Legendary archer
- 65 Device that beeps
- 69 Stew ingredient
- 71 — ex machina
- 73 Cancel a launch
- 76 Posh hotel lobbies
- 78 Roll tightly
- 80 Brunette
- 82 Radio-tube gas
- 84 Vows
- 86 Lectern's place
- 88 Jazz's home
- 91 A Judd
- 93 Gym org.
- 95 Standing on
- 97 Mexican miss
- 98 Mr. Goldfinger
- 99 Trouser feature
- 100 Lots and lots
- 102 Bering Sea birds
- 104 Severeid of the news
- 106 Percolates
- 107 Antique brooch

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- 108 Rebuff
- 110 Sits down heavily
- 112 Eat "lite" foods
- 114 Reddish horses
- 118 Alpaca kin
- 120 Zilch
- 122 Poet's contraction
- 125 Slime
- 127 Painter's support
- 129 Rangy
- 131 Gull (2 wds.)
- 133 Roll-call lists
- 135 Lunar event
- 137 Sent via modern (hyph.)
- 140 Listener's need
- 142 Purview
- 144 Sourdoughs
- 145 Banquet
- 146 Vintage tune
- 147 Lasso
- 148 AAA or EEE
- 150 Sponsorship
- 153 Ho-hum feeling
- 154 Family member
- 155 Price reductions
- 158 Chocolate cookie
- 160 Marathon or 10K
- 162 Makes a decision
- 164 Herd of whales
- 166 Boathouse gear
- 168 Place for laundry