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The Symbolic and Political Logic of Contracts in *George Washington Gómez*  

Américo Paredes’s novel, *George Washington Gómez*, was first published in 1990 but was written during 1936 and 1940 during the Depression making it a problematic postcolonial representation. This paper argues that Paredes’s text may be located within the postcolonial because it exemplifies a process Radhakrishnan describes as “the allegorization of the ‘postcolonial condition’” (Radhakrishnan 1996, 177). Acknowledging that “postcoloniality at best is a problematic field” (171), Radhakrishnan asserts that in postcolonialism, “allegory be made available as that relational space to be spoken for heterogeneously but relationally by diverse subaltern/pressed/minority subject positions in their attempts to seek justice and reparation for centuries of unevenness and inequality” (177). I draw on Carl Gutiérrez Jones’s notion of “consensual paradigms” (1990, 109-112) to argue that Paredes utilizes allegory in *George Washington Gómez* to reconceptualize the twentieth century border history of South Texas as well as to portray the psychological anguish experienced by Guálinto, the protagonist of this novel. This essay views Guálinto’s identity formation and the creation of his subject position through the lens of contract law thus locating this youthful subaltern subject within an alternative historiography that operates to subvert and critique the system of domination and subordination that characterizes internal colonialism in the United States. Conceptualizing identity formation and the creation of a stable subject position within the rhetoric of contract law invites the reader to become an empathetic listener who hears cries for change emanating from Mexican Americans affected by inequitable institutions in *George Washington Gómez*. 