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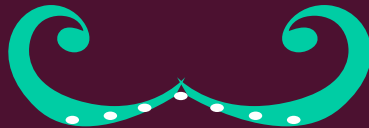
The Female *Bildungsroman* in the Chicana Novels of Reyna Grande and Graciela Limón

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Outline

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Bildungsroman



- ❖ Literary genre that originated in Germany, in the XIX century: Bildungs (formation period that corresponds to the early childhood lessons) and Roman (novel)
- ❖ “Coming-of-age novel” or learning novel





Inspiration

- This research arose from our interest in the literary genre of the Bildungsroman and the few studies that have been completed taking into account the manifestation of the Bildungsroman in Chicana narrative.

Purpose

- The purpose of this research is to analyze the development of this literary genre and to interpret the theories and trends associated with the female *Bildungsroman* in Chicana literature.
- The main focus of this study is on the protagonists of these two novels: Juana García and Ana Calderón. We seek to identify the main characteristics of their development within each story, emphasizing their border experience.



Research Questions

1. How are the stages of the female Bildungsroman manifested (in terms of the development of the characters) in the Chicana novels by Reyna Grande and Graciela Limón?
2. How is the role of the Chicana woman represented in these works and what effect does it have on the cross-border growth of the protagonists?

Literary Review

The Chicano Movement

- ❑ The Chicano movement was a social struggle for the civil rights of the Mexican-American population in the United States during the 1960s.
- ❑ At the start of the Chicano movement, Chicano literature emerged as an expression of the Chicano being, and the concept of belonging or identifying with two different nations, like the U.S. and Mexico border.
- ❑ The richness in the various genres of Chicano literature has given it an important place within Latin American and United States Literatures.

Source: oaxacaevents.com



Source: Mural Conservancy of Los Angeles

Literary Review cont.

The Literature of the Border

- ❑ The literature of the border includes the literary work of those who have lived the border experience by migrating from their native country to the United States, and have imilate into the American culture.
- ❑ A leading writer of literature from the border is Gloria Anzaldúa, a Chicana author who in her literary works of theory and poetry writes about her formation of the Chicana/Tejana identity, on the border of Mexico and the United States.

Source: ANTONIO NÚÑEZ



Source: El Economista

Literary Review cont.

Chicana Feminist Literature

- ❑ Chicana Feminist literature is the work of those female authors of Mexican descent or who have emigrated to the U.S. from Mexico.
- ❑ The Chicana Feminist authors like to distinguish and seek acknowledgment of not only their gender, but also of their working class and ethnicity.

Source: Maylei Blackwell



Source: Judithe Hernandez

Literary Review cont.

The Female *Bildungsroman*

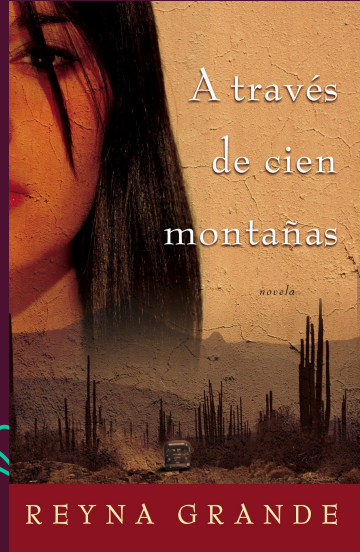
- ❑ The Female *Bildungsroman* arose from feminist movements in the 1970s. The *Bildungsroman* focuses on the physical, moral, social, and psychological evolution of the female protagonist of the story, usually from her childhood to her adult life. It also includes biographical characteristics and is usually more structural and generic than the classic *Bildungsroman*.
- ❑ The main characteristics of the Female *Bildungsroman* are:
 1. The stages of development of the protagonist
 2. The rebellion before a patriarchal society
 3. Independence and absolute maturity at the end of the story
- ❑ Another Chicana novel within this literary genre is Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street* (1984)



Source: Concha Jiménez Puente

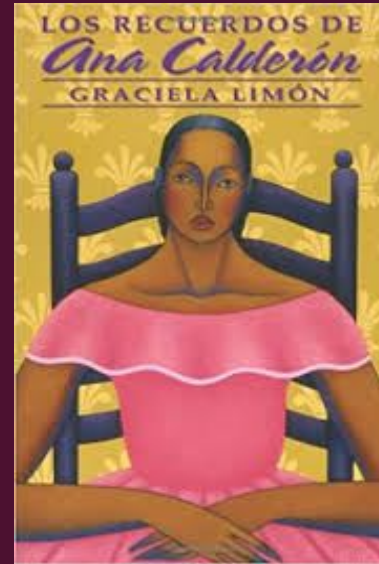
Methodology

Across a Hundred Mountains (2006)



Source: simonandschuster.com

The Memories of Ana Calderón (1994)



Source: amazon.com

Reyna Grande



Source: The Claremont Colleges

- ❑ She was born on September 7, 1975 in Iguala, Guerrero, Mexico.
- ❑ Her parents emigrated to the U.S. when she was very young. Grande emigrated at the age of 10 to be with them on the other side.
- ❑ She was the first in her family to earn a college degree from the University of California, Santa Cruz.
- ❑ Writer and professor of creative writing at UCLA Extension
- ❑ Her literary works include: *Across a Hundred Mountains* (2006), *Dancing With Butterflies* (2009), *The Distance Between Us* (2012), and *A Dream Called Home* (2018).





Across a hundred mountains

Childhood:

Farewells

“Four years ago, when her other younger sister died from a scorpion sting, Amá and Apá had held on to each other like now, but Juana had been put in between them, so they could share their grief as a family. She wondered why they hadn’t called her to them now. Wasn’t she still part of the family?” (Grande 17)

Suffering

“Through the cracks between the bamboo sticks she saw something that made her eyes widen in disgust. She looked at her naked mother, leaning over the cot. And behind her, and just as naked, was Don Elías, growling and snorting as he pushed against her.”
(Grande 73)



Across a hundred mountains cont.



Adolescence:

Rape

“Gerardo pinned her against the bed, with her back to him He clutched her wrists with one hand, and with the other buried her head in the pillow. Then Juana shuddered in pain as he entered her. Juana wished Gerardo’s knife would cut her. She wanted to die, and yet, deep inside she knew she had to survive.” (Grande 202)

Emigration

“She went to the dresser and peeled off the pictures she and Adelina had taped there. Pictures of them together. She opened the bottom drawer and took out Adelina’s birth certificate. Juana looked at it for a long time, memorizing the information. She looked at her reflection in the mirror and opened her mouth to speak. — What’s your name?— she asked herself in English. — My name’s Adelina. Adelina Vásquez. Juana made her way to the border inspection station.” (Grande 223-224).



Across a hundred mountains cont.

Maturity:

Adelina

“—You want to know something about the moon?—the man asked.—It has two faces. She only shows one face to the world. Even though it changes shape constantly, it's always the same face we see. But her second face, her second face remains hidden in darkness. That's the face no one can see. People call it the dark side of the moon. Two identities. Two sides of a coin. Now isn't that interesting?” (Grande 23-24)

Redemption

“Her father's ashes. Her redemption. Perhaps after she delivered the ashes to her dying mother there would be no more demons to haunt her, and she would be able to lower her head on a pillow and sleep. ” (Grande 12)



Graciela Limón



Source: www.elpasotime.com

- ❑ Born August 2, 1938 in East Los Angeles, California
- ❑ Daughter of Mexican migrant parents
- ❑ She had a Catholic upbringing from an early age
- ❑ First in her family to get a higher education
- ❑ Writer and university professor in Santa Barbara, CA.
- ❑ Her literary works include: *In Search of Bernabé* (1994), *Memories of Ana Calderón* (1994), *Song of the Hummingbird* (1996), *The Day of the Moon* (1999), *Erased Faces* (2001), *The River Flows North* (2009) and *The Madness of Mamá Carlota* (2012).





The memories of Ana Calderón: Analysis

Childhood:

Emigration

“I wondered at those times why I was different. I still went into myself to become an elegant and well-known lady, but I did this only at night when I was falling off to sleep.” (Limón 39)

Menstruation

“I knew that in just a few years, maybe even less, I would be the same as the women surrounding me. I saw that what I had desired - my hope of being a dancer, of being famous - was nothing but a fantasy; the silly, empty dream of a child. I felt something inside of me shatter, and I could hear the pieces clashing against one another as they cluttered up my insides.” (Limón 40-41)



The memories of Ana Calderón: Analysis Cont.



Adolescence:

Rebelliousness

“You can't go on thinking that you're better than the other women of the family. A head filled with foolish thoughts means empty hands not only for the woman, but for everyone else around her. Your mother worked with her hands as had her mother, and her mother. She did what God had put her on earth to do: to work and have babies. It's now your time.” (Limón 60)

Betrayal

“Her mind told her that Octavio was not coming, and that no matter how long she waited he would never come. But her legs were unable to lift her body up and out of the church.” (Limón 83)



The memories of Ana Calderón: Analysis Cont.



Religious Symbolisms:

Maturity:



The Penitent



Biblical passage of Agar

The Penitent

... the angel of the Lord said,
“Hagar...where have you come from and
where are you going?”
She answer,
“I am fleeing . . .”
The angel of the Lord said to her,
“ . . . The Lord has heard you in your
humiliation . . .”

-Génesis 16: 8-11

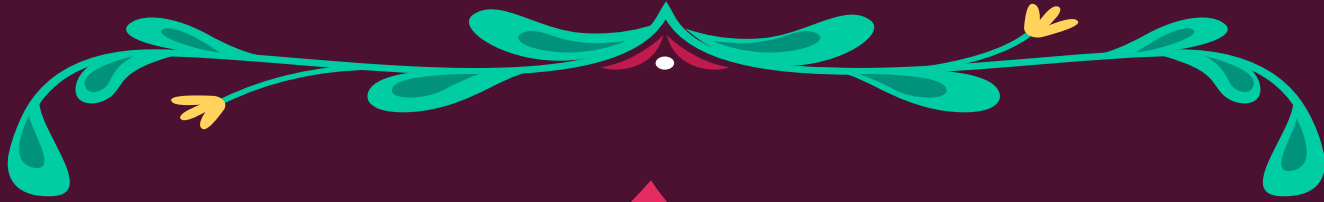
Forgiveness

“Driven by desire to be forgiven, she made her way to Mexico City with the intention of approaching the altar of the Virgen of Guadalupe. There, she was convinced, she would find her absolution that would keep her from losing her mind. Ana remember again the penitent woman, and she now understood her grief.” (Limón 194)

“Like Hagar, it was for me to choose to go on living because I was given a life to live. This thought coursed through me. It gradually flooded my being, freeing me at last from the desert of worthlessness into which I had been cast by my father’s disdain.” (Limón 198-199)

Conclusion

- ❑ Both authors use in the description of the growth of the protagonists in their novels, through the three stages: childhood, adolescence and maturity.
- ❑ Using the protagonists' border experience as one of the main themes in each work, the authors mark a new writing style within the *Bildungsroman* genre, which could be defined as a female *Bildungsroman* of the border in Chicano literature.
- ❑ Both styles of writing highlight the social and cultural injustices on both sides of the border. They also portray women's autonomy and struggle through their protagonists.



Gratitudes

We would like to thank our advisor, Dr. Carolyn González, and Gus Leonard for supporting and guiding us in this Capstone project.

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The image features a central text 'Thank you!' in a white serif font. This text is framed by two symmetrical, stylized floral arrangements in shades of teal and pink. Each arrangement consists of a thin, curving stem with several leaves and three flowers of varying sizes. Small teal butterfly-like motifs are positioned on the far left and far right of the floral decorations. Below the central text, there is a decorative flourish in a golden-yellow color, resembling a stylized '90' or a calligraphic flourish.

Thank you!

