Narrative Crossings: Weaving Transnational Identity through Border Storytelling in *Caramelo* and S*eñales Que Precederán al Fin Del Mundo*

By Adelaida E. Rama Luna

"Hay tantisimas fronteras que dividen a la gente, pero por cada frontera existe tambien un puente" *– Gina Valdés*

"There are so many borders that divide people, but for every border that exists, there too is a bridge" *– Gina Valdés (my translation)*

As an undocumented scholar, finding these works of literature which convey messages of liminality, exile, and one's personal search for belonging reverberates with my crossing of the US-Mexican border and loss of home. It was thereby through my own experiences that I developed an interest in exploring the presence of borderlands in reference to identity formation salient in literature. In my research, I find that while there is a popularized discourse surrounding border narratives produced in the United States, the inclusion of border texts occurring at the southern side of the US-Mexican border is absent. More specifically, the literary discourse centering around borders predominantly focuses on popularized texts emerging from the Chicano literary genre. Chicano literary works like Pam Muñoz Ryan's *Esperanza Rising* and Sandra Cisnero's *House on Mango Street* and *Caramelo or Puro Cuento* are predominantly referenced as border narratives which showcase the Mexican immigrant diaspora from the perspective of their protagonists, self-identified Chicanas and second-generation diasporic subjects. This is specifically true of *Caramelo* which provides the reader with a border narrative that presents the Mexican immigrant diaspora in the United States through the perception of a second-generation diasporic subject such as the main narrator and protagonist, Celaya. First published in the US in 2002 by renowned Chicana author, Sandra Cisneros, *Caramelo* introduces the intricate history of the Reyes family through the main storyteller and protagonist, Celaya (Lala) Reyes. Daughter to

Mexican immigrants living in Chicago, Lala explores her family's movement across borders, their dwelling in-between cultures, languages, and the supernatural through the orality of storytelling while concurrently creating a space for herself as a Chicana woman. Composed of three parts: "Recuerdo de Acapulco," "When I was Dirt," and "The Eagle and the Serpent, or My Mother and My Father," the novel fuses English and Spanish to create a hybrid, Spanglish text with a communal narrative crafted primarily by Lala who tells her grandmother's narrative in the second part of the text, "When I was Dirt." Through the interpenetration of voices in the text, Cisneros structures a sophisticated, postmodern narrative which foregrounds borders, in-betweenness, and the inheritance of exile with reference to search for belonging.

Indeed, while these riveting works capture the effects of migration on identity, these texts also fail to convey a dual perspective which encapsulates what happens before the diaspora and during the traversal of borderlands. Because of this breach within the discourse surrounding border literature, it is necessary to study border narratives produced at the southern side of the border in Mexico. Mexican novels such as Carlos' Fuentes *La frontera de cristal,* Willivaldo Delgadillo's *La Virgen del Barrio Árabe,* and Yuri Herrera's *Señales que precederan al fin del mundo,* put forth border narratives which not only show the immigrant diaspora as it unravels in Mexico but also problematize the reoccurring image that criminalizes and demonizes the migrant Other migrating to the US. Thus, for the purpose of this paper, I specifically focus on border literature that centers around the US-Mexican border in order to take a multifaceted approach that sheds light on the border discourse occurring outside of the US. Particularly, Yuri Herrera's contemporary Mexican novel, *Señales que precederan al fin del mundo* (2009)*,* reveals to the reader a different perspective on immigration that undermines the US's perception of the migrant Other while critiquing the US's intervention on Mexico's war on drugs as he foregrounds migration as a spiritual yet violent journey through the invocation of Pre-Colombian folklore.

Published in 2009, during a time in Mexican history wherein drug cartels rampaged the country, Herrera introduces Makina, a self-assertive, young woman living in the small town of Mexico, Pueblo. Drawing upon fatalities occurring in the country after President Felipe Calderon's[1] declaration of war on drugs in 2006, the author crafts a narrative where his protagonist must seek help from the cartel in order to find her brother who has migrated years earlier to the US in pursuit of a promised land of property and citizenship. The Mexican novelist further adheres to magical realism throughout his novel by invoking Aztec mythology such as the legend of Mictlān, the underworld ruled by Mictlantecuhtli located in the far north that was to be journeyed by the spirits of the Mexica peoples seeking to attain eternal life. This incorporation of magical realism is evident as Herrera structures his novel in nine chapters that are reflective of the nine layers of Mictlān. Writing from Mexico, Herrera presents a contemporary text which showcases the border experience and the border as a space of knowledge production wherein the subject in transit, Makina, must undergo a mythical death in order to be reborn into a new identity and thus generate a new hybrid consciousness.

In my discussion of identity in *Caramelo* and *Señales*[2], I take a multifaceted approach to show how Cisneros and Herrera refute the notions of borders and weave a transnational identity by pairing hybridity of genre with the hybrid identities of their protagonists. Firstly, I consider how the narrative form of these diasporic texts influence Lala and Makina's formulation of identity as both protagonists find themselves in transit. In the case of *Caramelo,* I assert that the text stands as a mestizaje narrative that interweaves the characters' storytelling with the insertion

---

[1] Shortly after his inauguration to the Mexican presidency, Felipe Calderon deployed the Mexican army to battle drug cartels in the state of Michoacán. However, the presence of the Mexican troops throughout the country proved futile in battling cartels as millions of citizens have fallen victims to the violence rampaging the streets of Mexico, leading to thousands of deaths and reports of disappearances (Lakhani).

[2] The writer will refer to the title of the novel as *Señales* for the remainder of this paper for the purposes of directness.

of authorial footnotes on the linked history between Mexico and the US in order relate a communal narrative that not only transgresses narratological and cultural borders but also presents the search for identity after migration has occurred through the eyes of Lala. To a different, yet important extent, I concur that the nine chapters in *Señales,* which are reminiscent of Mictlān, ultimately showcase the process of dislocation and homelessness as Makina's journey across national and spiritual borders foregrounds the loss of her home and the excruciating, violent act that entails the death of identity that takes place during this traversal of borders. *Señales,* then, not only conveys a border narrative from the perspective of a first-generation diasporic subject such as Makina, but also captures the contemporary discourse and viewpoint transpiring at the southern side of the US-Mexican border.

As previously stated, both novels focalize the idea of the border standing as a space for knowledge production wherein *los atravezados,* those who cross over, have to undergo a death of the psyche in order to birth a new identity that allows for a hybrid consciousness. The idea of the border posing as a space of epistemic production is introduced by well-known decolonial, border feminist, Gloria Anzaldúa in her innovative theoretical work, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza.* In her manifold opus, Anzaldúa introduces the decolonial undertaking of *penzamiento fronterizo,* border thinking or thinking from the exterior, which promotes a change in the perception of a monolithic reality so that one is able to dwell on the border in order to create a decolonizing culture, identity, and language. In turn, those who reside on the border are able to develop *la facultad*[3]*,* the capacity to "see the deep structure below the surface" (60) or more specifically, a shift in perception within the individual that intensifies their senses and "reaches the underworld (the realm of the soul)"(61). In capturing the depth of the soul,

[3] *Facultad (noun)* in Spanish can be defined as the capacity or natural, physical, or moral ability that an individual has to perform on a thing. Thus, a close English translation to *facultad* would be capability (my translations).

Anzaldúa argues that the individual dwelling on the border is able to develop an awareness of the Self, creating a *mestiza consciousness.* While the emergence of this hybrid awareness is the source of intense pain, the theorist elucidates that its primary objective is to "break down the subject-object duality that keeps [the mestiza] a prisoner and to show in the flesh and through the images in her work how duality is transcended" (102). Through an application of Anzaldúan border thinking, then, it becomes evident that both protagonists, Lala and Makina, are able to develop *la facultad* and a *mestiza consciousness* of the Self that allows them to formulate a hybrid identity and negotiate their space of in-betweenness. Therefore, in applying the theoretical framework of Anzaldúa, I argue that Cisneros and Herrera craft transnational, decolonizing texts through their employment of multilingual and cultural methodologies such as the allusions to Aztec mythology and cultural history. Moreover, in portraying characters who are able to weave a transnational identity through migration and storytelling, the texts link identity formation with spirituality as it relates to the creation of a third consciousness and hybrid identity. In this way, the texts problematize xenophobic and racist notions on migration while seeking to humanize those who traverse borderlands.

On the Discussion of Border Narratives

In the discussion of border narratives, identity formation as it relates to the search for home becomes a prominent theme for many protagonists and cultural theorists researching this phenomenon. Scholars such as Gloria Anzaldua and Sonia Saldivar-Hull agree that a transnational identity emerges as a result of border crossing, movement, in-betweenness, exile, and homelessness. Pertinent to my study of *Caramelo* and *Señales Que Precederan el Fin del Mundo,* the themes of in-betweenness and the search for belonging arise from the perpetual migration of the protagonists, resulting in an urgency for the characters to shape a space for themselves through storytelling. As an example of Chicanx literature, *Caramelo* challenges the

reader to confront the communal, postmodern narrative tinged with magical realism that is crafted by Celaya as she weaves a new fabric of Spanish, English, and Spanglish. On a different note, *Señales* stands as an example of Latin American literature that adheres to the beguiling genre of magical realism in order to foreground migration as a means of survival for its protagonist, Makina. In showcasing the experiences of women dwelling and travelling across the U.S.-Mexican border, Cisneros and Herrera present texts that problematize the enforcement of borders to contain bodies within the state while simultaneously portraying characters who are able to weave a transnational identity through migration and storytelling.

Scholars such as Heather Alumbaugh, Tereza M. Szeghi, Gisela Norat, and Yolanda Melgar Pernías, take a different, more specific approach in the exploration of migration and identity formation as they help uncover *Caramelo* as a diasporic work of literature that takes on a postmodern approach to craft a communal narrative that defies narratological and cultural boundaries. According to Tereza M. Szeghi in "Weaving Transnational Cultural Identity through Travel and Diaspora in Sandra Cisneros's 'Caramelo,'" "[the] multigenerational, transnational, cross-cultural, and diasporic novel… demonstrates travel's critical role in the formation, maintenance, and contestation of cultural identity for members of the Mexican and Chicana/o diaspora" (164). Travel, thus, is a central component to the complexity of this diasporic oeuvre. Szeghi further critiques Heather Alumbaugh's take on *Caramelo* as the latter argues that the process of migrating from the U.S. to Mexico causes Lala, the protagonist, to exist in a state of confusion that results in her ultimate loss of identity. Alumbaugh, however, presents a sophisticated analysis of *Caramelo*'s postmodern, framed narrative as she argues that the form of the novel posits it as a new narrative form. One which puts forth a migratory narrative that allows its narrator to transgress narratological boundaries through the interpentration of Spanish,

English, and Spanish and the weaving of stories between Lala, the primary narrator, and her grandmother.

On a different note to *Caramelo,* the critical work surrounding *Señales* is very limited since it is a fairly recent work of literature that has very little recognition in the US. The literary discourse analyzing the Mexican novel often includes book reviews which present a short amount of research and analysis of the text. For this reason, much of my analysis for *Señales* was accomplished through personal knowledge[4] of Mexican culture, history, and folklore as well as primary research which includes newspapers like *The Guardian.* Fairly recent articles published in Spanish, however, emphasize the complexity of the Mexican's novel form and allusions to Aztec mythology. In "Fronteras de la violencia en la narrative de Yuri Herrera," Chilean scholar Christian A. Uribe explores the motif of violence salient in Herrera's works, *Señales* and *Trabajos del reino.* The violence on the border, according to Uribe, allows for different consequences one of which is the displacement of identity and culture. Adding on to this discourse, Marcelo Rioseco explores the structure of Herrera's nine-chapter novel in his essay, "Mito, literatura y frontera en *Señales que precederán el fin del mundo* de Yuri Herrera." Rioseco intensive comparison of Mictlān to Herrera's novel demonstrates the multifaceted nature of the novel. In this sense, Herrera is able to craft a text that is more transnational in nature since his work employs Pre-Colombian folklore to critique the notions of borderlands. Interviews with the author also offer a different perspective to the condition of Mexico as a transient state during the publishing of the novel. In integrating Herrera's points on movement and liminality, one is able to better understand the occurring discourse at the southern side of the US-Mexican border.

[4]Much of my knowledge on Aztec folklore was limited. Which is why most of my questions on Mictlān were directed toward my mother, who, like most Mexicans has a pretty extensive understanding of Aztec folklore passed down to her through the orality of storytelling in our family.

In doing so, one can avoid a monolithic approach which focuses solely on border texts produced in the US.

In her innovative work, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza,* border theorist and feminist, Gloria Anzaldúa, introduces the notion of border thinking as she animates questions of liminality, displacement, and the intersections of identity which emerge from the traversal of psychic, cultural, and linguistical borders. Anzaldúa introduces the border as psychic, social, and cultural terrain which individuals inhabit and which, at the same time, inhabits them. Through prose, poetry, and theory, Anzaldua ultimately introduces the *mestiza consciousness* which she calls, "an 'alien' consciousness is presently in the making- a new mestiza consciousness, una conciencia de mujer. It is a consciousness of the Borderlands" (99). This new consciousness results in *la mestiza,* a product of colonial breeding and cultural fusion, as she navigates multiple cultures in search for a sense of belonging or home. It is only after achieving this state of consciousness that she becomes aware of the multitude of cultures she inhabits and can thus become culture-less.

Surviving the Borderlands

Sandra Cisnero's *Caramelo* focuses largely on the space of liminality Lala inhabits as a Chicana negotiating both her Mexican and American identity. Lala, a young woman reaching womanhood at the age of fifteen, takes on the role of a *cuentista,* a female storyteller, in order to undo and weave the tangled history of her family all which seems to be intricately tied to her grandmother's story. From the perspective of a second-generation diasporic subject living in the US, Cisneros presents *Caramelo* as a border text focusing largely on the effects migration has on the identity of subjects like Lala. Particularly, the author animates questions on the inheritance of exile and liminality, factors which Lala inherits per her family's migration between the US and Mexico and which inadvertently lead to a fragmented identity which she must piece together by

developing a hybrid consciousness that allows her to negotiate both cultures and identities. This awareness of identities is largely achieved through the employment of storytelling as a method for seeking and recuperating identity. In order for Lala to gain a full sense of Self, she must first connect to her Mexican ancestral roots by consuming and telling her late grandmother's narrative who, like Lala, finds herself navigating a liminal space between the world of the living and the dead. It is thereby this dwelling on the borders, that Cisneros situates the border as a space for knowledge production.

Through Lala's search for belonging, the text brings forth a discussion on borderlands as a space for epistemic production and regeneration. Lala's characterization as a fragmented, second-generation diasporic subject who must dwell on cultural borderlands proposes that a hybrid consciousness is necessary for the survival of the Self torn between cultural and spiritual borders. Gloria Anzaldúa's specializations on identity formation in regard to the notion of borders make this point, where she presents the mestiza figure as a product of "crossbreeding, designed for preservation under a variety of conditions" (103). The mestiza figure, according to Anzaldúa, is that of a woman who has been marginalized by her countries and cultures. As a result, the mestiza is cultureless, she makes the thin edge of barbwire that connects and divides her cultures her home. It is through this dwelling on the border that an intense source of pain arises and in order to survive these crossroads, the mestiza must gain *la facultad.* That is, the capability to "pay attention to the soul [where] we are thus carried into awareness—an experiencing of the soul (Self)" (61). Through this experiencing of the Self, the mestiza is able to gain a new perspective which gives her the ability to gain a hybrid awareness that will allow her to survive the crossroads she occupies.

In the light of this discussion, it becomes clear that *Caramelo* presents Lala as the mestiza who must inhabit a space of liminality between the cultural borders that fragment her identity.

Because the protagonist stands as a product of her family's migration, she has trouble negotiating and recuperating both her Mexican and American identities. Like Anzaldúa's mestiza, Lala has been displaced by both of her cultures and consequently inhabits a space of in-betweenness. This state of displacement comes to light when Lala reveals the language barrier which casts her and her siblings as outsiders during their family's vacation to Mexico, "the Awful Grandmother herself has seen how these children raised on the other side don't know enough to answer—*¿Mande usted?* to their elders. –what? We say in a horrible language, which the Awful Grandmother hears as *¿Guat?*" (28). After the children are scolded by their grandmother for responding in English to her orders, the grandmother comes to the conclusion that in being "raised on the other side," her daughters-in-law have "given birth to a generation of monkeys" (28). The displacement the children have to undergo is due to their unawareness of Mexican cultural markers that causes them to respond "what?" instead of "*¿Mande usted?*" (at your service, my translation) and which consequently leads their family in Mexico to undermine their Mexican identity and label them as *gabacho*s, English-speaking, non-Latinos. Furthermore, because Lala and her siblings stand as Chicanx and second-generation diasporic subjects, they are naturally perceived as outsiders in their father's homeland, their broken Spanish standing as tangible evidence of their displacement. Unlike their father, a first-generation migrant who arranges their family trips as a means to uphold a connection to his motherland, Lala and her siblings have to *create* and uphold a connection to Mexico which ultimately leads to their state of liminality and search for belonging. It is through this displacement of cultures and state of in-betweenness, however, that Lala is able to forge *la facultad.* Anzaldúa mentions that this capability arises when one's "everyday mode of perception" is broken and a "shift in perception occurs" (61). In Lala's case, not only is she is able to develop *la facultad* because of her displacement from cultures as a mestiza, but also because of her family's continuous traversal of

borders. The trips to Mexico, then, allow the protagonist to forge a connection with her ancestral roots and develop a better sense of Self. Lala's relationship to Mexico is also explores by scholar, Tereza M. Szeghi, who explores the Reyeses' constant migration from Chicago to Mexico City in her article, "Weaving Transnational Cultural Identity through Travel and Diaspora in Sandra Cisneros's 'Caramelo.'" In her work, Szeghi highlights that the "return visits to Mexico are critical for Lala's understanding of her cultural and familial identity (as they are for diasporic peoples generally) and for her construction of a transnational hub inclusive of her cultural and geographical influences" (167). As a result, Lala is able to gain the capability to construct a transnational identity that captures her "cultural and geographical influences." In so doing, *Caramelo* introduces the border as a space for epistemic production wherein the individual in transit is able to gain a higher capability of the Self. Through this presentation of *la facultad,* Cisneros is able to portray a *mestiza consciousness* which emergences once Lala consumes her grandmother's narrative as a means to connect to her ancestral, cultural roots.

Traversing Spiritual Borders: Gaining a New Mestiza Consciousness

Lala's consumption of her grandmother's narrative is introduced in the second part of the novel, "When I was Dirt," wherein Lala narrates the life story of the family's matriarch, Soledad, in an effort to help her grandmother cross over to the afterlife. Cisneros aptly employs magical realism in order to foreground storytelling as a necessary mechanism for seeking, reclaiming, and sustaining identity as Lala takes on the role of a *cuentista (*female storyteller*)* and *coyote*. Storytelling, then, stands as a tool that is employed by Lala in her developing understanding of the Self. Having the ability of *la facultad,* Lala is able to understand her dual identities, yet a *mestiza consciousness* is necessary for the negotiation of her in-betweenness and Mexican American identities. This hybrid consciousness, however, is forged when she is tasked with telling her grandmother's narrative in order to connect to her ancestral roots and history and in

return, she is able to gain a *mestiza consciousness* or as Anzaldúa bluntly asserts, a "consciousness of the borderlands" (99). With this consciousness, the mestiza is able to gain a plural personality and vision which allows her to straddle two or more cultures. In this way, the new *mestiza consciousness* developed by the subject in transit aims to piece together their fragmented pieces as a way to reconsolidate a hybrid identity that allows for the navigation of the liminal expanse they inhabit.

The gaining of a new *mestiza consciousness* is achieved through the orality of storytelling which Lala utilizes to tell her grandmother's story. Yet, Cisneros further complicates the plot of her novel by employing magical realism when presenting Soledad as a being that is neither dead nor alive, but instead inhabiting a liminal space that prohibits her from reaching the desired afterlife. Elements of magical realism continue to be salient throughout the novel when Lala has to take on the role of a border smuggler or as Cisneros illustrates, a "coyote"[5] that must carry over her grandmother's narrative in order to aid in her traversal of spiritual borders. This is all revealed when Lala's father, Inocencio, is hospitalized after suffering from a heart attack. As the body of Inocencio lays unconscious, his daughter and the ghost of his mother dispute over his mortality. Soledad, wishing to take her son with him, proposes allowing her son to live if only Lala tells her story—a story that appears to be intricately tied to the family's history and which connects Lala to her mestiza roots and identity:

- Celaya, it's so lonely being like this, neither dead nor alive, but somewhere halfway… I'm in the middle of nowhere. I can't cross over to the other side till I'm forgiven. And

[5] Coyotes are known for smuggling bodies across geographical borders. Cisneros references this figure in order to present her protagonist as a guide that must smuggle her grandmother's narrative over the supernatural border which restricts her from resting in peace. This figure may perhaps as well be a reference to the Xoloitzcuintli dog, a prominent character in Pre-Colombian folklore that was in charge of guiding spirits across the underworld of Mictlān.

> who will forgive me with all the knots I've made out of my tangled life? Help me, Celaya, you'll help me cross over, won't you?
>
> - Like a *coyote* who smuggles you over the border?
>
> - Well ... in a manner of speaking, I suppose.
>
> - Can't you get somebody else to carry you across?
>
> - But who? You are the only one who can see me. . . . You'll tell my story, won't you, Celaya? (408)

In this imperative exchange between Lala and Soledad, Cisneros highlights Soledad's inability to tell her own story and how this occurrence traps her in "the middle of nowhere" as she is required to inhabit a space "neither dead nor alive, but somewhere halfway." When requesting help from her granddaughter to "cross over" this spiritual boundary, Lala references the "*coyote* who smuggles… over the border," ultimately revealing her role as a spiritual guide and storyteller. In presenting Lala with the role of a smuggler, Cisneros elucidates the importance of storytelling since Lala is tasked with the objective of not only saving her grandmother but also her father's life. Because Soledad is unable to cross over to the eternal life, she is stuck in a liminal space between life and death and as a result requests her granddaughter's aid to "tell [her] story." With her father's destiny on the line, it is up to Lala to save her family by evoking the orality of storytelling. In doing so, the author emphasizes a narrative of migration that demands its storyteller to transgress narratological, cultural, and geographical bounderies by taking the role of a smuggler.

The presentation of a narrative coyote ultimately presents the space of in-betweenness which both Soledad and Lala inhabit. Although both women dwell on distinctly different borders—Soledad caught between supernatural borderlands and Lala caught between cultural borderlands—Cisneros presents her protagonist with the role of a coyote so that she is able to use

the border as a space for achieving a third (mestiza) consciousness. Ringing true to Anzaldúan border thinking, *Caramelo* presents the border as a place for epistemic production wherein the narrative smuggler, Lala, can gain new knowledge on her ancestral, Mexican roots through her connection to Soledad's narrative. While Lala is well aware of her dual identity as a Mexican American/Chicana woman, her connection to her father's ancestral homeland is absent since she is primarily considered American when she visits Mexico. As a result, her Mexican identity is undermined, and she struggles to achieve a hybrid consciousness that allows her to negotiate both of her identities. However, this struggle in juggling both of her identities, cultures, and languages does not necessarily point to an ultimate loss of identity. Part of this analysis stems from existing criticism of *Caramelo,* criticism which presents migration as a deficit of identity. Heather Alumbaugh suggests this notion in her article, "Narrative Coyotes: Migration and Narrative Voice in Sandra Cisneros's *Caramelo*," wherein she narrowly correlates the Reyeses' constant migration with loss and pejoratively assumes this to be emblematic of the "migratory Latina experience" (65). While the loss of home and identity is indeed a major component evident in border texts, to correlate migration with ultimate loss of identity and culture not only fails to take into account the gaining of hybrid identities and consciousness, but it also ultimately overlooks diaspora as a continuous phenomenon wherein each diasporic generation is able to repurpose its inheritance and forge new modes for negotiating identity. In fact, *Caramelo* challenges this monolithic perception as Lala begins to use storytelling as a mode for regaining and sustaining identity. This is because the protagonist is able to learn new familial and cultural knowledge through her grandmother's painful past which she uses for her own formulation of a mestiza identity and consciousness. As a narrative coyote and *cuentista*, Lala not only poses as a savior who saves her grandmother and father, but she also begins to weave a transnational

identity as she listens, deconstructs, and constructs her grandmother's narrative to make it her own.

Defying Narratological Boundaries: On Form

The narrative form presented in *Caramelo* foregrounds it as a hybrid oeuvre that weaves a transnational identity in its protagonist through border storytelling. Unlike the narrative arc of many bildungsroman, *Caramelo* stands as a postmodern diasporic text which through its possession of the real unreality of magic realism is able to embroider a new literary fabric that showcases the entwined multigenerational histories of the Reyeses and Lala's search for belonging as a second-generation diasporic subject. More specifically, Cisneros' blending of Lala's storytelling with her grandmother's narrative not only reveals the intricate migratory history of the Reyeses which foregrounds exile and the creation of cultural hybridity, but it also presents the entangled histories of Mexico. This nuanced complexity of form renders *Caramelo* as a mestizaje text as referenced by border feminist Sonia Saldívar-Hull in her book *Feminism on the Border*, "the text is a mestizaje, like Moraga's *Loving in the War Years* and Anzaldua's *Borderlands,* a mixture of fiction and history" (Saldívar-Hull 85). This narrative mestizaje, most often signifying a person of combined Spanish and Indigenous descent, is symbolically personified in *Caramelo* through the grandmother's caramelo *rebozo,*[6] which is not only representative of the communal narrative woven between Lala and Soledad, but of the multicultural, hybrid identities of each character, more specifically the protagonist.

In order to understand the form and structure of the novel, one must first understand the complexity of the *rebozo* since its very presence throughout the novel is an embodiment of the text's mestizaje structure as well as an emblem of the heterogenous threads of Mexican history.

---

[6] A traditional, embroidered shawl worn in Mexico that embodies *mestizaje*. Evolved from the cloths of indigenous women used to carry their babies to the fringe of Spanish shawls, the *rebozo's* design imitates a snake's skin, an animal revered in Pre-Columbian times.

In the text, Cisneros reveals Soledad's maternal lineage as a group of traditional *empuntadoras,* weavers, who weave traditional silk *rebozos* for a living. However, before Soledad is able to learn the art of weaving, her mother, Guillermina, passes away without teaching her daughter this sacred tradition. It is of no coincidence, then, that Cisneros presents Lala's grandmother as a woman unable to embroider her own narrative. The author remarkably reflects the act of weaving a *rebozo* in the act of storytelling, which Lala dominates. As Alumbaugh notes in her article, "Because the art of the shawl making dies with Guillermina, Lala's migratory narrative voice, her 'talk,' replaces her great-grandmother's art. This explains why Cisneros figures the art of *las empuntadoras* and the art of *la cuentista* (the female storyteller) in stunningly similar terms" (71). Cisneros' parallel between Lala's storytelling and the weaver's interweaving, complicates her novel as she is able to present a mestizaje text that mirrors the intricate form of a *rebozo.* Furthermore, her inclusion of the *rebozo* reflects the disparate fibers of Mexican history which are reflective of Lala's multicultural identity as a Mexican American/Chicana seeking to salvage her mestiza roots that counters cultural purity and evokes Anzaldúa's *mestiza consciousness.*

At the time of producing her and her grandmother's narrative, Lala is living in the US while recalling her (and her family's) movement between Chicago and Mexico City. As a result, the text becomes more transnational in nature since the protagonist negotiates her Mexican and American identity while constantly searching for a place of belonging. In using Lala's liminality as a result of her family's movement across borders, Cisneros crafts a text that not only explores the multilayered intersections of a migrant Mexican American woman but also stands as an example of a mestizaje text that defies narratological boundaries. With Lala's role as a storyteller who must carry her grandmother's narrative like a *coyote* across the border, Cisneros crafts a communal narrative as she fuses the voices of Lala and her grandmother in the second part of the

novel, "When I Was Dirt." In this respect, the author is not only able to create a hybrid text that moves from English to Spanish, but also shifts narration between Lala and Soledad:

> Awful Grandmother. ***¡Qué exagerada eres!***[7] **It wasn't that long ago!**
>
> Lala. I have to exaggerate. It's just for the sake of the story. I need details. You never tell me anything.
>
> Awful Grandmother. **And if I told you everything, what would there be for you to do, eh? I tell you just enough…**
>
> Lala. But not too much. Well, let me go on with the story, then.
>
> Awful Grandmother. **And who's stopping you**? (92)

In this conversation, Soledad interrupts Lala's storytelling to interject her opinion as a means to guide her granddaughter through her life story. Because Lala is the primary storyteller, she crafts her grandmother's narrative by cutting and adding elements that "exaggerate[s]" aspects of the story to fill in gaps that her grandmother has omitted for "the sake of the story." With this in mind, Cisneros brings to question the notion of Truth in storytelling as she exposes Lala's added details. Furthermore, when Lala confronts her grandmother's lack of detail, Soledad refutes that she only tells Lala "just enough" or else "what would there be for [Lala] to do?" This undoing and weaving of stories is highlighted by the protagonist in the beginning pages of the text where she includes a disclaimer that forewarns the reader about the complex, entangled stories which make up her family's history: "The truth, these stories are nothing but story, bits of string, odds and ends found here and there, embroidered together to make something new… to write is to ask questions. It doesn't matter if the answers are true or *puro cuento*" (1). Already in the first pages of the novel, Cisneros complicates the structure of the border narrative by bringing to question the truth of the stories presented. However, Lala, the appointed storyteller, reminds the reader

[7] "How you exaggerate!" (my translation).

that the objective truth should not be a point of focus in these stories, instead she opts to use the crafting of stories as a means to "ask questions" and create her own identity from these narratives. In this vein, truth is but a frivolous concept in the pages of *Caramelo* and Lala's emphasis on the possibility of these narratives posing as "puro cuento" echoes the title of text, *Caramelo or Puro Cuento.* "Puro Cuento" translating to "tale," "pure story," or more bluntly put in terms of Mexican slang, "bullshit."

In interlacing Lala and Soledad's voice together through most of the second part of the postmodern text, Cisneros' work is both a communal and mestizaje narrative that defies narrative borders. In presenting a hybrid text that encapsulates both English and Spanish while presenting two storytellers, the Chicana author, like her female storytellers, transgresses linguistical and narratological boundaries that defy the structure of the traditional English text. In this light, *Caramelo's* adherance to storytelling to craft a communal narrative ultimately allows Lala, the primary storyteller, to present her family's multicultural identities while salvaging her mestiza roots and gaining a hybrid consciousness.

Complicating the Popularized Narrative

While Cisneros' border text, *Caramelo,* certainly aims to highlight themes of exile, in-betweenness, and *mestiza consciousness* all through a postmodern, hybrid medium, the truth is that much of the surrounding discourse which centers on border narratives focalizes texts produced in the US. Captivating the perspective of a second-generation diasporic subject such as Lala, *Caramelo*'s primary focus highlights migration after it has occurred. As a result, it becomes essential to study border texts outside of the US in an effort to take a manifold approach that avoids a monolithic standpoint. For instance, Yuri Herrera's Mexican novel, *Señales*, complicates the migrant discourse transpiring around border narratives since he presents a border text that undermines the popularized idea of the Mexican citizen wanting to migrate to the US.

This is done through his portrayal of Makina, a young woman tasked with the job of taking a message to her brother living in the US. While most popularized border narratives underline the notion of the migrant wanting to achieve the "American Dream" or the pursuit of a better life, Herrera dismisses this storyline and instead highlights Makina's disinterest in what she calls the *gabacho*[8], the US. Accordingly, the author's compelling novel demonstrates another perspective from Cisneros' *Caramelo* in tracking the movement of Makina's traversal of borders and presenting a narrative that demonstrates the Mexican perspective on illegal immigration as a journey that connects with the spiritual relation to home and identity.

In fact, it is this essential take on spirituality that marks *Señales* as a riveting work which employs magical realism to explore the doing and undoing of the psyche as the subject in transit moves between geographical and spiritual borderlands. In his use of magical realism, Herrera portrays the crossing of the US-Mexican border as the otherworldly excursion of traveling the nine layers of Mictlān and the structure of his novel perfectly parallels these nine realms. It is through this sophisticated standpoint that Herrera creates a text that distinguishes it from other border texts. In pairing it with *Caramelo,* it becomes clear that the allusions and use of Pre-Colombian folklore evident in *Señales* demonstrates Mexico's perspective on illegal immigration as an effect of the US's intervention on Mexico's war on drugs, demonstrating Mexico's condition as a subject in transit.

In order to better understand the critique *Señales* asserts in regard to US intervention on Mexico, one must first explore the tangled history between both countries and the emergence of the Mexican text as a contemporary work of literature. As previously stated, *Señales* was initially published in Mexico in 2009 and draws upon Mexico's war on drugs since the author introduces

[8] Mexican slang for an English-speaking, non-Latino individual. Most often used to refer to white Americans (my translation).

cartels and Makina's relation to them in his text. Emerging only three years after President Calderon's declaration of war on drugs, the novel is critical of the US state as it portrays officers as snakes in the eight realm of Mictlān. Choosing to refer to Mexico as *el Gran Chilango*[9] and the US as el *gabacho,* the text problematizes the role of US forces in the Merida Initiative signed in 2008[10]. In so doing, the novel is able to present Mexico in a condition of ontological transition that, like the protagonist, must use its space of liminality on the border to employ border thinking as a mode for generating a new, hybrid consciousness. Herrera asserts this point in an interview wherein, when asked about *lo fronterizo,* that relating to the border, he invokes Anzaldúan border thinking saying, "besides narrating the geographical space that is the border, with *'lo fronterizo*' I mean that space of knowledge, of generating new identities; '*lo fronterizo*' helps me to talk about what is in transition" (Herrera 2011, my translation). Indeed, movement as it pertains to migration and "transition" are key components that arise throughout the Mexican novel. As a subject in transit, Makina is initially portrayed as having the ability to view herself as a transient subject; this in turn, allows her to move between spaces of in-betweenness as she is ultimately able to complete her mission.

The Door: In-betweenness and Displacement

In *Señales,* the Mexican novelist chronicles Makina's movement from the small town of Pueblo in Mexico to the US. In so doing, Herrera's text animates themes of migration and liminality in reference to the migratory discourse transpiring in Mexico through the employment

[9] Chilango is a Mexican slang term that refers to citizens who are from or living in Mexico City. Here, *el Gran Chilango* signifies Mexico City and Mexico interchangeably.

[10] According to Nina Lakhni and Erubiel Tirado in *The Guardian, "*The US has donated at least $1.5bn through the Merida Initiative since 2008 (another $1bn has been agreed by Congress), while Mexico has spent at least $54bn on security and defence since 2007. Critics say that this influx of cash has helped create an opaque security industry open to corruption at every level" (quoted in Lakhani and Tirado, 2016)

of magical realism. Initially portrayed as priding herself in the ability to perceive herself as a transient subject, Makina is presented as a trilingual woman who is able to speak a native, indigenous language, Spanish, and English. Because of this multilingual capability, Makina manages a small phone booth in her town where she is in charge of delivering messages from individuals living in the US to their loved ones in Mexico. Presented as a messenger, Makina discloses her ability to maintain boundaries that distance her from the lives of other individuals as in creating a rule for herself, "Una es la puerta, no la que cruza la puerta" (19) ("You are the door, not the one who walks through it" [19]). In grounding herself as "the door," Makina ultimately asserts her position as a transient subject who is able to navigate spaces of liminality. Precisely, it is this very philosophy that carries Makina throughout her migration to the US and which reveals her awareness of the Self, *la facultad.* Unlike Cisneros' protagonist, who has to develop this capability through her displacement from both Mexican and US cultures, Herrera presents Makina as a subject already aware of her position of transit. While the author does not implicitly depict Makina's attainment of *la facultad,* one can assume that her mestiza identity has allowed for a shift in perception that allows for this awareness of the soul/Self. After all, according to Anzaldúa, *la facultad* develops in "those who are pushed out of the tribe for being different… the darkskinned, the outcast, the persecuted, the marginalized, the foreign" (60). With the capability to see the Self, Makina is able to perceive the displacement which occurs after one migrates to the US and introduces a new narrative that undermines the propagated notion which assumes that all Mexicans want to migrate to the US.

This pejorative notion is brought to discussion in the novel when Herrera foregrounds displacement as a direct result of migration. In tracing a motif of time and displacement throughout the novel, the author presents time as an unreal reality that invokes magical realism. This comes to light in the first chapter of the book, "La Tierra"/ "The Earth," wherein Makina

plans her migration to the US to find her brother and begins to worry about her return to Mexico. Contemplating on her friend's return from the US, Makina notes that time plays a critical role in the transformation of home, "Tal vez un día de mas o una hora de mas, en todo caso bastante de mas como para que le pasara que cuando volvió todo seguía igual pero ya todo era otra cosa, o todo era semejante pero no era igual… como si los hubieran copiado de un original que ya no existía" (21) ("Maybe a day too long or an hour too long, at any rate long enough that when he came back it turned out that everything was still the same, but now somehow all different, or everything was similar but not the same… as if they'd been copied off an original that no longer existed" [21]). Makina notes that "a day too long"/ "un día de mas" or even "an hour too long"/ "una hora de mas" in the US can completely transform the perception in which one views their homeland. In the case of Makina's friend, Makina emphasizes the displacement taking place after his return since everything around him is "similar but not the same"/ "semejante pero no era igual." As a result, her friend questions the existence of his home in his futile search for belonging, highlighting the threat time poses to those who move across boundaries and space. This idea is further supported by Christopher A. Uribe in his article, "Fronteras de la violencia en la narrative de Yuri Herrera," wherein the writer analyzes violence as a motif salient throughout many of Herrera's works of literature. In his research, Uribe finds that in *Señales* displacement not only occurs in the physical spaces from one nation state to the other, but there is a displacement of identity that arises through the crossing of geographical and cultural borders, *"*the identity and cultural conflict that arises through the crossing between these spaces, as well as the relationships / assessments they establish among themselves" (27, my translation). Therefore, in tracing the motif of time in this passage, one is able to see Herrera's incorporation of magical realism as he reveals Makina's reluctance to migrate to the US. Unlike problematic assumptions which showcase the subject in transit with a desire to leave their homeland, *Señales*

introduces a reluctance to migrate as it can lead to both a loss of home as well as cultural and identity displacement that changes the relationship between the migrant and their homeland.

The Obsidian Place: On Form and Death of the Psyche

Similar to the way in which *Caramelo*'s possession of magical realism allows for the weaving of a communal structured narrative between Lala and Soledad, Herrera also adheres to magical realism through his structuring of the novel which imitates the nine layers of the Mexica underworld, Mictlān. This becomes apparent when surveying the title of each chapter: "La Tierra," "El Pasadero de Agua," "El Lugar Donde Se Encuentran Los Cerros," "El Cerro de Obsidiana," "El Lugar Donde el Viento Corta como Navaja," "El Lugar Donde Tremolan las Banderas," "El Lugar Donde son Comidos los Corazones de la Gente," "La Serpiente Que Aguarda," and "El Sitio de Obsidiana, Donde No Hay Ventanas, Ni Orificias Para El Humo." With Herrera's incorporation of Mexican folkore, the author presents Makina's trek to the US as a spiritual journey to the underworld that places her very essence, the Self at risk for survival. Not only do the author's allusions to Mexican folklore demonstrate a nuanced complexity, but this fusion of mediums ultimately makes a bold observation about the (de)construction of identity through the process of traversing borders and leaving one's home behind.

Herrera draws on the loss of home toward the end of the novel in the last layer of Mictlān and circle of hell, "El Sitio de Obsidiana, Donde no Hay Ventanas, Ni Orificios para el Humo"/ "The Obsidian Place with No Windows or Holes for the Smoke," where Makina must face the complicated decision of losing her home in Mexico and gain a new identity in the US. After having encountered her brother and facing his resistance to return to their homeland, Makina is guided by Chucho[11], her border coyote, through a labyrinth of doors in an underground club

[11] In *Señales,* Chucho takes on the role of a spiritual guide as he guides Makina across the Mexican-US border and finally rejoins her in this last scene in order to direct her to the last realm of Mictlān, where she must meet the death lords, Mictlantecuhtli y Mictecacíhuatl. The nickname

where a strange, unnamed man appears and hands her a file containing her citizenship papers: "Makina tomo el legajo y miro su contenido. Ahí estaba ella, con otro nombre y otra ciudad de nacimiento. Su foto, nuevos números, nuevo oficio, nuevo hogar. Me han desollado, mustio" (118 – 199). ("Makina took the file and looked at its contents. There she was, with another name, another birthplace. Her photo, new numbers, new trade, new home. I've been skinned, she whispered" [118 – 119]). The author's adherance to magical realism becomes apparent to the reader in this passage since throughout Makina's migration, she never once applied for citizenship. Therefore, the man's presence in the novel and his presentation of US citizenship to Makina is baffling when conducting a superficial reading. However, when one takes into account the author's mirroring of Mictlān, it becomes clear that Makina's citizenship is emblematic of her psyche's death. Through the novel's employment of magical realism, *Señales* is able to emphasize the mythical and spiritual death of those who traverse borders. In connecting migration to the spiritual relation to home and identity, the author is able to present a text that focalizes the sorrowful process a first-generation diasporic subject like Makina undergoes. This sorrowful and painful procedure is clear when Makina mumbles in shock that she has "been skinned." The act of being skinned is most often perpetuated on animals and it is a violent, agonizing action that leads to its eventual death. Through the utilization of violent imagery, then, the text further demonstrates Makina's death as she is given "another name"/"otro nombre," a new city of birth ("otra ciudad de nacimiento"), and finally, a "new home"/ "un nuevo hogar." In this imperative moment, Makina not only loses her home, but she ultimately undergoes a death the psyche.

"chucho" sounds similar to "xolo" an abbreviation for Xoloitzcuintle, the spirit guide dog for the Mexica peoples. In this light, Herrera's incorporation of Pre-Colombian elements of Mictlān adds a spiritual and mythical dimension to the migratory narrative.

However, to equate migration with ultimate loss would fail to take into consideration the acquisition of a hybrid identity and consciousness. It is thereby necessary to highlight that while *Señales* does indeed highlight death as a consequence of migration, it also presents regeneration since the subject in transit must birth a new identity that makes space for a hybrid consciousness. Not only does this idea ring true to the notion of border thinking, wherein the border must be a space for epistemic production. But it further demonstrates a mirroring of Mictlān since in the ninth and final realm one is met with silence that allows for one to regenerate into a new being. In this state of regeneration, the spirts are able forge a new identity and enter into a new dimension. Marcelo Rioseco reverberates this line of thinking in his essay, "Mito, literatura y frontera en *Señales que precederán el fin del mundo* de Yuri Herrera," wherein the author gives a detailed analysis of the role Mictlān plays in the border novel. Rioseco asserts that despite *Señales'* complex structure and themes presented by Herrera in the novel, the message which resonates is that "all true journeys imply crossing a border, and this seems to be the goal of Yuri Herrera in his writing: to tell a story that is also a story of life and death, an illumination that is also a descent, in this case of Makina and her mythic journey. A fall into a dark world, dangerous and cruel, but also a birth into a new world" (Rioseco, par. 13). In this vein, Herrara presents a border narrative that, through its employment of Pre-Columbian folkore, is able to showcase a different perspective on identity as discussed in the southern side of the US-Mexican border. In this way, the novel connects migration with the spiritual relation to home and identity.

The Birth of a Mestiza Consciousness

In the discussion of border discourse and theory, it comes to light that the border may often pose an emblematic space for epistemic production. This is apparent in Cisneros' *Caramelo,* where Lala's role as a narrative coyote and storyteller allow her to consummate her grandmother's narrative and as a result, she is able to forge a connection to her ancestral roots.

Indeed, storytelling in *Caramelo* is employed by Lala as a new mechanism for seeking, reclaiming, and sustaining identity. In turn, she is able to gain a *mestiza consciousness* which allows her to negotiate two or more identities and cultures. In a similar way, *Señales* introduces the border as a space for rebirth when Makina undergoes a death of the psyche that drives her to birth a hybrid identity and a third element. Anzaldúa describes this third element as "a new consciousness—a *mestiza* consciousness—and though it is a source of intense pain, its energy comes from continual creative motion that keeps breaking down the unitary aspect of each new paradigm" (102). This source of "intense pain," as described by the Tejana theorist, is evident in *Señales* through the skinning of Makina's identity. However, it is through this death, that Herrera presents her with the ability to forge a hybrid identity and awareness:

> Dejo de sentir la pesadez de la incertidumbre y de la culpa: evoco a su gente como a los contornos de un paisaje amable que se difumina, el Pueblo, la Ciudadcita, el Gran Chilango, aquellos colores, y entendió que lo que le sucedía no era un cataclismo; lo comprendió con todo el cuerpo y con toda su memoria, lo comprendió de verdad y finalmente dijo Estoy lista cuando todas las cosas del mundo quedaron en silencio (119).
>
> She stopped feeling the wright of uncertainty and guilt; she thought back to her people as though recalling the contours of a lovely landscape that was now fading away: the Village, the Little Town, the Big Chilango, all those colors, and she saw that what was happening was not a cataclysm; she understood with all of her body and all of her memory, she truly understood, and when everything in the world fell silent finally said to herself I'm ready (119).

In perhaps one of the most moving and raw scenes from the border novel, the author employs a hopeful tone that reveals the beginning of a new journey for Makina. Once she stops feeling the

"wright of uncertainty and guilt"/ "incertidumbre y de la culpa" for abandoning her home, Makina recalls the beauty of her homeland and compares the memory of her people to that of distant "landscapes"/ "paisaje[s]" that begins to slowly "fade away." In her memory, the protagonist is able to recall the cities she crossed through her journey and "the colors" which made up these landscapes. With a tinge of melancholy but mostly in a hopeful tone, the text illuminates Makina's birth of a third consciousness as she understands that her journey was "not a cataclysm;" instead, she is able to grasp the regeneration of her identity. As the world falls silent around her, Makina understands it is time to embark on a new journey. A journey which entails new anguish and suffering, but which will endow her with a plurality of vision for her healing and survival of the crossroads.

Border Narratives and Representation

Sandra Cisneros' *Caramelo* and Yuri Herrera's *Señales* allow the reader to witness the difficulty of negotiating and generating identity especially as it relates to the traversal of borders. In both of these texts, the authors demonstrate the effects migration has on formulating identity. Results like the loss of home, the death of the psyche from the experience of a firs-generation diasporic individual, and the laborious work it can take a second-generation migrant to connect to her ancestral roots as a means to develop a sense of Self. *Caramelo* and *Señales* stand as nuanced works of literature that encapsulate the migrant diaspora from both the northern and southern side of the US-Mexican border. Their employment of magical realism to emphasize spirituality as a major component of migration is perhaps a subtle yet valiant approach to remind readers of the humanity of *los atrevezados,* those who cross(ed) over.

In a political climate which seeks to sanction those seeking asylum or who, like Makina, have no choice but to cross over the US-Mexican border, these texts put forth narratives that encapsulate the complexity of traversing borders, especially in relation to identity. In pairing and

analyzing both of these texts, not only is one able to gain a multifaceted perspective of the border literary discourse transpiring on both ends of the border, but one can see a message of resistance that normalizes movement and migration. This way, it becomes evident that border novels like *Caramelo* and *Señales* are necessary in presenting the often-silenced narratives of undocumented and migrant individuals. Narratives which are necessary for matters of representation and the undermining of xenophobic rhetoric that plagues current immigration discourse. With the push for immigration reform as the lives of DACA and TPS recipients depend on these temporary programs in the US, the production of border narratives and testimonies undermining xenophobic beliefs and presenting the struggles to formulate, and birth identity will undoubtedly continue to progress, solidifying *Caramelo* and *Señales* as fundamental border texts.

Works Cited

"Fronteras De La Violencia En La Narrativa De Yuri Herrera." *Confluencia: Revista HispáNica De Cultura y Literatura*, vol. 31, no. 2, 2016, pp. 17–30.

Alumbaugh, Heather. "Narrative Coyotes: Migration and Narrative Voice in Sandra Cisneros's Caramelo." *MELUS*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2010, pp. 53–75. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/40587210.

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands: The New Mestiza = La Frontera*. San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute, 1987. Print.

Cisneros, Sandra. *Caramelo, Or, Puro Cuento : a Novel.* New York :Vintage Books, 2003. Print.

Herrera, Yuri / González Veiguela, Lino (2010): 'Yuri Herrera, viajes hasta el final del mundo conocido' [entrevista], en: *Clarín* [Oviedo] 15, 85, pp. 41-44.

Herrera, Yuri / Jiménez, Arturo [2010]: 'Herrera da vigencia al relato del descenso al Mictlán desde nuevas coordenadas' [entrevista], en: *La Jornada*, 3-01-2010, p. 5.

Herrera, Yuri. *Señales que precederán al fin del mundo*. Vol. 5. Editorial Periférica, 2010.

Lakhani, Nina. Tirado, Erubiel. "Mexico's war on drugs: what has it achieved and how is the US involved?" *The Guardian.* 8 Dec 2016. Accessed 25 November 2018.

Navarro Pastor, Santiago. "La violencia en sordina en *Señales que precederán al fin del mundo* de Yuri Herrera." *iMex. México Interdisciplinario. Interdisciplinary iMex,* 2011, 93–122.

Rioseco, Marcelo. "Mito, literatura y frontera en *Señales que precederán el fin del mundo* de Yuri Herrera." *LALT: Latin American Literature Today,* November 2018, www.latinamericanliteraturetoday.org/en/2017/april/myth-literature-and-border-signs-preceding-end-world-yuri-herrera-marcelo-rioseco. Accessed 19 November 2018.

Szeghi, Tereza M. “Weaving Transnational Cultural Identity through Travel and Diaspora in Sandra Cisneros's ‘Caramelo.’” *MELUS*, vol. 39, no. 4, 2014, pp. 162–185., www.jstor.org/stable/24569936

Works Consulted

Carini, Sara. (2014). Identidades fronterizas a través del lenguaje en Trabajos del reino y Señales que precederán el fin del mundo de Yuri Herrera. Revista Liberia. Hispanic Journal of Cultural Criticism. 2. 1-24.

Cutter, Martha J. "Editor's Introduction: Transgressing the Borders of 'America.'" *MELUS*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2010, pp. 5–12. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/40587207.

Errico, Elena. "Hispania." *Hispania*, vol. 97, no. 4, 2014, pp. 699–701. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/24369212.

Jaggi, Maya. "Signs Preceding the End of the World by Yuri Herrera review – a lyrical Mexican migrant's tale." *The Guardian.* 22 April 2015. www.theguardian.com/books/2015/apr/22/signs-preceding-the-end-of-the-world-yuri-herrera-review-mexican-migrants. Accessed 20 November 2018.

Joliff, Tatiana Calderón Le. "Laberintos fronterizos en *Waiting for the Barbarians* de J.M. Coetzee y *Señales que precederán al fin del mundo* de Yuri Herrera." *Confluencia: Revista Hispánica de Cultura y Literatura*, vol. 33 no. 1, 2017, pp. 91-103. *Project MUSE*, doi:10.1353/cnf.2017.0034

Long, Ryan. "Signs Preceding the End of the World." *World Literature Today*, vol. 90, no. 1, Jan. 2016, p. 58. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.7588/worllitetoda.90.1.0058.

Mignolo, Walter D., and Madina V. Tlostanova. "Theorizing from the Borders: Shifting to Geo- and Body-Politics of Knowledge." *European Journal of Social Theory*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2006, pp. 205–221.

Mignolo, Walterd. "Geopolitics of Sensing and Knowing: on (De)Coloniality, Border Thinking and Epistemic Disobedience." *Postcolonial Studies*, vol. 14, no. 3, 2011, pp. 273–283.

Norat, Gisela. “US Latinas Writing through Carnal Mothers Back to Ancestral Homelands.” *Letras Femeninas*, vol. 34, no. 1, 2008, pp. 31–54. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/23022217.

PERNÍAS, YOLANDA MELGAR. “La Dialéctica Entre La ‘Historia Normativa’ y Las ‘Contrahistorias’ De Formación: Bildung y Anti-Bildung.” *Los Bildungsromane Femeninos De Carmen Boullosa y Sandra Cisneros: Mexicanidades, Fronteras, Puentes*, NED - New edition ed., Boydell and Brewer, Woodbridge, Suffolk; Rochester, NY, 2012, pp. 126–189. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/10.7722/j.ctt3fgmjg.7.

Randall, Margaret. “Weaving a Spell.” *The Women's Review of Books*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2002, pp. 1–3. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/4024009.

Said, Edward W. “Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors.” *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 15, no. 2, 1989, pp. 205–225. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/1343582.

Socolovsky, Maya. Troubling Nationhood in U. S. Latina Literature : Explorations of Place and Belonging, Rutgers University Press, 2013. ProQuest Ebook Central, https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ozone.nsc.edu/lib/nsc/detail.action?docID=1562485.

Volpi, Jorge. “Dispatches from the Front: On Narconovelas.” *The Nation,* 31 Jul. 2013, www.thenation.com/article/dispatches-front-narconovelas/. Accessed 18 November 2018.