



Development Of Self -Identity In Sandra Cisneros's Novel The House On Mango Street

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ARTICLE INFO ABSTRACT

Literature consistently acts as a significant source that illuminates societal changes on all fronts. Modern books are not an exception to this rule. With reference to the chosen novel, this paper attempts to examine the social advancement and changes that racially divided individuals of their culture, have to deal with, such as identity crises, gender crises, and sexual exploitation of Chicano people. It has been designed to show how education helps women in need and is forsaken in order to advance the status of independent Mexican women as well as the advancement of society in the context of both Mexican and American culture. Given that her unique circumstances differ from those of other American writers, Cisneros's writing has been impacted by her experiences. She writes not just about fictional characters but also about actual people she has encountered in her life. In her writing, Cisneros explores themes that are important to her, including friendship groups, feminism, civility, love, and religion. Cisneros herself credits economic disparity for her unique upbringing in a particular cultural hybrid, which has left her with unique tales to share. Elvira, Cisneros's mother, was a formidable female influence. Unlike her father, she was a voracious reader and possessed greater knowledge and social consciousness. These female figures represent the voices of the oppressed and powerful. The research is a critical analysis by employing both qualitative and descriptive analysis. The article intends to highlight Chicano women's desire for self-identification through the character Esperanza by employing the social identity theory for interpretation.

Keywords: Self-development, Self-identity, Self-exploration, Evolution of identity, Feminism.

Introduction

In Multicultural American writing, the heterogeneous environment of the United States is widely conveyed. The works of ethnic Americans mostly reflect the effort to choose between two worlds of different cultural value, gender standards, and so on. Writer, Sandra Cisneros is a "Mexican American author, born on Dec.20, 1954 in Chicago. Her fiction "The House on Mango Street" Cisneros fiction comes in different forms as fiction, short story, poem by that author challenges social and cultural experience of Chicano in United States of America. The term Chicana/o is a chosen cultural identity of Mexican American in United State. The term greatly used during the Chicano civil right movement and majorly among the people of Mexican and American. At the time, they wanted to reveal an identity of cultural and ethnic and honour for community. Chicano/a literature seeks to focus on theme of identity, discrimination, dual-cultural identity and history of Mexican American people that deserves experiences and culture in the United States. At the time Chicano reveal and represent themselves and receive voice of social and economic critique and fight for that.

Furthermore, these Chicana/o chastised other feminist movements for failing to offer a helping hand to Mexican descendants, and their disdain for other feminist movements heightened the necessity for separate feminist movement against the militant misogynistic culture. At the time, The Chicanas used one of the most power tools, writing, to reveal their dissatisfied pathetic condition in the society. Hence many of the writer

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have written about these problems. The presence Chicano authors include Cherrie Margo and Sandra Cisneros, Denise Chaves, Ana Castillo, Gloria Anzaldua and literary studies of Chicana/o authors.

Background of the Study

Mexican American has faced a numerous challenges from the independence of Spain colonization in Mexico who descendants to United State of America as a Chicano people for problem of the borderline between US-Mexico. This colonization extremely victimized Mexican society and their tradition. Mexican tradition faced lot of challenges injustice within killing forced shifts from their ancestral lands to mission and the oppression of the cultural norms and rules by dominant culture massacres, violence and important upheaval for the Mexican people characterizes colonization period.

Furthermore, Spain colonization in Mexican people in Mexico and America had merely victim particularly leading to the distressing and phenomenon known as the border .This term refers to forced separation. Mexican individuals from their family's early stage of Spain colonization a practice that determined until the 1848's to 1940's. Therefore, these forced separation resulted in the disruption of family and cultural close relation leaving fully isolation consequences for Mexican people in America, so make a boundary build a wall .We are always surrounded by wall behind which people live have door entrances to go in out." (66 Page).

Problem of the statement

This present research is to focus to be finished within time, when we see from feminism point of view are patriarchal problems and when we see from cultural discrimination point of view are hybridity problems.

Significance of the study

The research aims at exploring the work of Sandra Cisneros's fiction. There will be an examine Mexican American literature with the exclusive study of majority studies as a native homeland of Chicano/a writer and her works will be explored by this study.

Objectives

The main objectives of this paper are:

- To study feeling of migrate people like Mexican American Chicano/a connection with their mother and father nation.
- To study economic culture and injustice opposite the minority people.
- To study feminists share a desire to go behind merely exploring the victims of patriarchy, gender inequality and sexual exploitation of the particular aspects.

Review of Literature

The paper focuses on the study of Mexican American theory and Chicano Literature. Respect colonizers ruled the thoughts of colonized people and this is focused research descriptive study with exclusive bibliography of Chicano people as well as Chicano's, women in their majority group. In this research, Identity theory has been studying with the study of literary theorist and feminist writer as well as critics who is Elainshowalter a well-known as critics in literature and theory. When one focus on the impact colonization on the history and culture, especially, in the writing of Chicanos one can understand, the study of colonized society, feminism and the relationship between economic and injustice in literature.

- The transfiguring self of Adolescent world
- To other women who were urge once "Race and gender in Chicana fiction
- A women voice and identity narrative messages as a solution to voicelessness in American Literature.

Women character in Cisneros works looks like the search for self-identity who fight for the basic rights. That is the reason, Cisneros has marked suppression of the Chicano/a by their character.

Research Methodology

This is to focus on the research paper work is based on Sandra Cisneros 'fiction. However, she is well known as for her struggling voice of Mexican American lifestyle in America at Chicago. Colonization is great term to study and impact on the culture and society. Hence, by the work of Sandra Cisneros, research scholar will try to study Chicano Literature in the colonization study. Cisneros major novel The house on Mango Street, has lot of vignettes or series. Especially female characters in these are the suppressed voice a critical overview study will be bringing by the research.

A Critical Rereading of Sandra Cisneros novel The House on Mango Street

Sandra Cisneros was the third of seven children in her first novel The House on Mango Street (1984). She has received several awards from national foundations. She is an American writer best known for her famous debut novel, The House on Mango Street. Cisneros and her six siblings moved to the middle of Mexico and Chicago (USA), but she never forget it. Cisneros wanted to write about what she knew, so she chose a writing

style that deliberately contradicted that of her school friends. During this time, she taught high school dropouts in Chicago.

The House on Mango Street is a series of several vignettes by Sandra Cisneros and is a true portrayal of teenagers in the next era of society and culture. The main character of the series is Esperanza, who is 12 years old in the beginning of the series. She is at a pivotal moment in her life when the path to the development of her self-identity is becoming decisively clear. Individual identity is organized through self-exploration in relation to the number of members of society. Adolescence is a time of physical and mental changes throughout the lifespan and also plays a role in the development of identity. In adolescence, everyone experiences great anxiety and panic, which must be resolved with the help of older people. There are several factors that can lead to identity construction, including, family, friendships, social trends, and popular culture. The House on Mango Street is where she attempts to form her own identity as a poetry writer. She is very sure that she wants to be herself in the future. A certain level of maturity right from the start of the series can be seen in her. One can study various elements common to the development of female adolescent identity in the series *The House on Mango Street*.

Female voice of the Novel

One can understand that Sandra Cisneros fiction showcases self-identity and feminist theoretical method. Sandra Cisneros is well known for her innovative voice of Mexican American life in Chicago. Identity is a loaded term to study and it brings effects on people, cultures and society. So, through the work of Sandra Cisneros, one can study feminism and the idea of identity in Chicano literature. In the novel, *The House on Mango Street* women characters are the voices of dominated and suppressed people.

Critical Overview of the story

This series is a story about a young girl named Esperanza who has many doubts about her surroundings. Esperanza, the central character, has just entered the world of youth and continues to grow both physically and mentally throughout the series. This series effectively highlights the struggles, confusion, hopes and panics of every teenager. The development of self-identity is a very important phenomenon in adolescence, as individuals feel the need to create a unique perspective image of them to the outside world. At this stage, young people try to find the answer to the question "Who am I"? Therefore, to identify someone, society also plays an important role in evaluating and defining that person's self-identity. Erikson's well known psycho social theory stresses that,

"Identity refers to our sense of who we are as individuals and as members of social groups, our identities are not simply our own creation". (Erikson 224). ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Identity_\(social_science\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Identity_(social_science)))

Erikson strongly believes that identity development begins in childhood and becomes important only in adolescence, when a person begins to develop physically, mentally, and socially.

Esperanza is very interested in writing poetry since her childhood. However, it was from her early childhood that she received her education and began pursuing her goal of becoming a poet. There are certain characteristics that influence an adolescent's self-concept, such as religion, caste, nationality, race, language, gender, parents, siblings, friends, colleagues, family, social trends, and popular culture. Esperanza's self-identity is formed by her own evaluation of herself, taking into account the opinions of others about her. The word "others" refers to her father, mother, her grandfather, close friends such as her brothers and sisters and friends of her family, and the teacher. Esperanza writes a note for her and pack her sandwich one made of family cannot afford lunch meats. At school sister superior does not accept. Esperanza's shame is largely self-imposed. Do not try to make Esperanza feel bad. Esperanza ultimately exiles herself out of shame once she gets to the canteen. These elements suggest that, to succeed but also the stumbling block of her own feelings of shame. Elizabeth Hurlock in her book entitled *Developmental Psychology* has stated the significance of elders role to encourage the adolescence in their field of willing as follows: "Adolescents who are encouraged to be creative in play and academic work from an early age develop a sense of individuality and identity that positively impacts their self- image". (45)

Since childhood, Esperanza was interested exclusively in the creative field. Her neighbor, her aunt Lupe, the oldest person on the street, always encouraged her to write poetry, which is revealed in her memorable series of diaries. She is also very proud of the diary series itself, there is an evidence for this which follows,

"Daddy's super pound of my writing... Coming month I will win the match in school and she told everyone on the planet about it Everyone" (*The House on the Mango Street*, 78)

At this stage of her life, even if they are determined at becoming something different, she tends to feel less confident at times. Elders during this time at time should help in this regard by guiding adolescent in well manner. When Esperanza was uncertain of becoming a poem writer it can be understood from the following lines,

"I really don't know if I will ever become a writer though. daddy knew what I was thinking. He said of course you will hopes" (*The House on the Mango Street*, 89).

As it is mentioned earlier, adolescence is a time that is rapid in making physical and mental change. Adolescents' attitudes toward life, parents, peers, and other things change over time. Until childhood, they have a very close relationship with their parents, but during adolescence they tend to separate from their

parents. This is due to increased emotional and sexual maturity and changes in attitude. If parents try to regulate in the right way, adolescents want to be independent in their own way of life.

They feel like they are being treated like a child. Every society has its own way of dealing with young people. In Indian society, parents try to control their children in every possible way. However, in most Western countries, teenagers earn money and live independently. The parent-child relationship is a very important in adolescence, as it is generally understood. Parents need to stay aware of what is happening around them and in society. As the trends in society changes, the way we raise children also needs to change. Authoritarian parents are more likely to give opportunities to their children to express their opinions.

Esperanza's parents adopt an authoritative parenting style, which is evident throughout the *Esperanza* series. Esperanza's father is an Indian father who acts as a judge when his children quarrel, gives advice like a sage when his children face difficulties, and is happy to see his children's achievements. And also, Esperanza's mother is a woman who does not say unnecessary things and acts wisely depending on the situation. She chooses different ways to deal with her children in this modern era. As the mother, she is also concerned about Esperanza's growth and well-being, and her safety in her society. Esperanza's relationship with her father and mother is beautifully portrayed by the series. The *Esperanza* series reflects the current or upcoming era of society from the perspective of Esperanza's grandfather, her parents, and their friends. In the episode called (Children she didn't know what to do), Esperanza's father provides emotional support to Esperanza. This is the result of Esperanza's harsh actions towards Shri Ram, the boy who was beaten by Esperanza. Fights often occur between children at school. However, parents have a duty to compromise their children and ensure that hostility between them does not increase. It may affect children's future development.

Changing of the Modern Society

In today's era, society constantly contributes to the formation of an individual's identity. Esperanza's identity is also shaped by events that occur in society. Esperanza carefully observes everything around her. Many events cause questions in her mind and she tries to find answers using different methods.

Dan P. McAdams talks about self-identity as, "Second, the self is motivated agent, who acts upon inner desires and formulates goals, values, and plans to guide behavior in the future to create a story about who I am, how I came to be". (Self and identity by Dan P. McAdams of Northwestern University.)

A young person's identity in college is based on their class and section. In Indian society, students in the class have many gangs, and each gang in the class has a WhatsApp group. Esperanza has her own gang, consisting of just her three people: Lucy, Cathy, and Marian. Due to her high status in her class, Esperanza is also her junior's boss. When Esperanza hears the two boys making fun of her brother, she gets angry and scared because they are her seniors. It can be identified through the following lines,

"My name is Esperanza (hope), that boy over there is other friend, if you tell her I'll kill you (Sandra Cisneros at her Mango Street home". (The House on the Mango Street, 92).

Erikson is the most prominent critic of Chicana literature and theory, studying society's racial and cultural production, feminism, and the relationship between economy and society in literature. The female characters in Cisneros works come to our hearts like self-examination and existential exploration, where the struggle for basic rights and the conflict for survival are identified. The main contributions of the characters in the novel is that Cisneros emphasized the oppression of Chicanos. Esperanza is the significant character that showcases this idea. Chicana is the region where the predominance of the strong powers was observed.

So, one can understand that development of self-identity among teenage girls in modern times. The factors that contribute to the formation of identity are both personal exploration and social characteristics. Through this survey of the character Esperanza, one can understand that social factors such as parents, teachers, peers, friends, and social trends play a major role in the development of a teenager's self-identity, and that the guiding attitudes of their elders. Esperanza tells aunt Lupe in the novel that she has got an identity from the region where everyone is suppressed and she is moving out of the region. She also tells that when she comes back she would sensitize all the victims in that region to get their identity as she has got her.

Conclusion

Author and protagonist also believes that she will be an example for the future generation to avoid such oppression. This study analyzed cultural identity encountered by the protagonist in Sandra Cisneros's Literary works, providing valuable insights. Esperanza, through her self-exploration and self-evaluation of her inner self, ultimately forms her own personal identity in this society. She is very careful about adapting to society. As a teenager, Esperanza is very conscious about gender, religion, language, feminism, and sexuality. She also recognizes other types of social discrimination that affect the development of an individual's identity. One can argue that Esperanza is not only shaped by her own thoughts, but also takes into account the perceptions of others. Understanding such aspects can help enhance deep understanding Mexican connections with American cultures.

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