

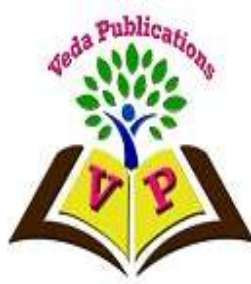


## CULTURAL HYBRIDITY IN CHICANO FICTION

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### ABSTRACT



In this paper, the concept of cultural hybridity is explored. The major novels of Sandra Cisneros, Acosta Oscar Zeta and Rudolfo Anaya are taken for the study. These Chicano writers' novels are full of themes and techniques. The major theme here is cultural-hybridity. Originally the cultural forces give rise to Chicano literature which dates from the sixteenth century. Here, a rapidly evolving diversification of cultural practices is evident in many spheres including politics, labor, markets, sports, marriage, music, food, festivals and language. Hybridity has encompassed all sections of life in literature. Cultural hybridity is a major theme in contemporary Chicano literature.

**Keywords:** *Chicano, Cultural-Hybridity, Mexican- American, Borderland, Homeland, Identity, Quest.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The concept of (cultural) hybridity, has assumed a central position in the field of literary and cultural studies. The term, which stems from the field of biology where it had usually been employed to denote a crossing of species, has now become a most useful metaphor for conceptualizing and analyzing cultural contact, transfer and exchange, especially in the field of postcolonial studies (cf. Zapf 303). Hybridity has been employed to describe and analyze "diverse linguistic, discursive and cultural intermixtures."

One of the most important theorists who has shaped the concept of hybridity and who himself "locates his own history as that of someone from a border position," (Childs/Williams 73) is Homi K. Bhabha. His approach sets out to analyze the complex dynamics of the discursive (trans-)formation of cultures and identities within the context of (post)colonialism. Putting particular emphasis on the potential of language as a system of representation, signification and sense-making (cf. Fludernik 12).

The study of Chicano literature focuses on many questions about its origin and make up. Chicano literature is the literature written since 1848 by Americans of Mexican Descent or by Mexican in the U.S. who write about the Mexican-American experiences. It is the slow creation of a Chicano consciousness. The dominant Anglo culture constantly attempted to interfere to change the institutions of conquered Mexican Hispanic population and tried to make English the dominant language.

The 1960s, the movement of Chicano emphasized the importance of seeking of a synthesis of the Mexican and American culture.

## CHICANO FICTION

Chicano is a politicized identity that recognizes a Mexican ancestry that places its unique American experiences at the centre of the conversation, away from the margins. Originally the cultural forces gave rise to Chicano literature that dates from the 16th century. By 1900, Mexican American literature had emerged as a distinctive part of the literary culture of the United States.

Fiction has been an important medium of expression for the Chicano. The tradition of fictions for Chicano stems from the Spanish and Mexican

traditions of those genres. The 19th Century Chicano fiction was cast in the form of the traditional cuentos, stories that drew heavily from folk elements. It rooted in the folklore tradition of the people.

## CULTURAL HYBRIDITY IN CHICANO FICTION

Anaya Rudolfo is considered the founder of contemporary Chicano literature. Cultural hybridity is a relatively neglected issue in globalization studies. The term refers to the production of novel cultural forms and practice through the merging of previously separated antecedents. The present paper examines the appearance of cultural hybridities, at the Grass roots level along the United States Mexico borderlands. The impacts of a rising Latino presence in the city of Los Angeles, including the 2005 election of Antonio Villaraigosa as the city of Los Angeles mayor. In such most ethnically and racially-diverse of cities, people of Latino origin are now the majority minority. Hear a rapidly evolving diversification of cultural practices is evident in many spheres, including politics, labour markets, sports, marriage, music, food, festivals and language. In fact, one out of every seven residence of the United States is of Latin origin; latinization of the entire country is a predominant demographic trend. Hence, it is necessary to understand Los Angeles style of hybridization in a broader scene.

Hybridity has encompassed "all the processes that combine discrete social structures or practices, which already exist in distinctly separate forms to create new structures, objects and practices in which the antecedents merge". At the levels of culture and identity the shift from integration to integration to more complicated forms of hybridity becomes more apparent.

After the 1848 war between Mexico and the United States, there was a one-100- period of cultural oppression. The 1960s Chicano movement responded to that period by creating and exhilarating era of social protest. Chicano Renaissance from 1972s through the 1980s or the 1990s, claim for cultural artistic developments. The Mexican-American great migration created the need for acculturation in the United States on a massive scale. Mexican-American faced stark cultural differences.

The Mexican American assertion of Aztlan as the Aztec Homeland is exactly such a historical



and mythic claim. The title of mestizos come home echoes that Mexican-Americans have with American culture in general. Colonial expansion and the importation of Africans into the Americans as slaves created the conditions for complex command and cultural mixing.

In the novel 'The House On Mango Street', the Chicano author (American of Mexican Heritage, parents in her case) Sandra Cisneros makes us aware to Esperanza, a young girl who went through the experience of displacement and longs to have a house of her own. The characters most profound wish is to have a home. The novel has forty-four short vignettes ranging in length from half a page to several pages. Cisneros offers not a return to have but away out of the oppressive, sad and poor neighborhood through her pen so cultural hybridity.

Rudolfo Anaya's Bildungsroman Bless Me, Ultima figures as a text on hybridity, embodied in the story's protagonist. The novel's first-person narrator, Antonio Juan Márez y Luna, recounts in a first-person retrospect his mental and spiritual development, from approximately his sixth to his eighth year, in the US Southwest around the end of the Second World War. The different forms of his development are best illustrated with two sociological concepts, enculturation and acculturation. Enculturation (or ethnic socialization) is an individual's internalization of cultural knowledge obtained within one's ethnic group from other co-ethnics such as family relatives and peers. Acculturation (or cultural assimilation) on the other hand describes the ethnic individuals encounter and engagement with the culture of the dominating majority group. Ethnic identity, the realization of individual ethnicity, has been described as a "construct or set of self ideas about one's own ethnic group membership".

The contemporary Chicano novel was born in 1959 with the publication of Jose Antonio Villarreal's *Pocho*. As Ramon Ruiz says, "in the literature of the American southwest, Pocho merits special distinction." Pocho has both suffered and been rewarded for being the first "Chicano novel which shows cultural hybridity and identity in real sense. It's author seen as a Pocho himself who presents stereotypes of the Mexican-American peoples. The protagonist of Pocho's individualism has

been seen as the authors denial of el pueblo and his heritage as a cultural distinct.

The subjective quest for a new Chicano identity and cultural hybridity produced a series of novel: *The Autobiography of a Brown Buffalo* (1972) by Oscar Zeta Acosta; "--- *Ynoselo trago la tierra*" (1971) by Tomas Rivera; *Bless Me, Ultima* (1972) by Rudolfo Alfonso Anaya and *Memories of the Alhambra* (1977) by Nash Candelaria. As Francisco Jimenez has pointed out in his criticism 'this quest for self often involves a criticism of the socio-economic injustices of the United States.

### CONCLUSION

Just as significant as cultural hybridity, and many such things to an overview of the novel is the sense of a kaleidoscope of people that emerges from the pages of the Chicano novel. It shows cultural hybridity.

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