

SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE: LAND AND HOUSING IN CHICANA LITERATURE*

Maite Aperribay-Bermejo
UPV/EHU, U. Basque Country

ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the novels *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984), *So Far from God* (Castillo, 1993) and *Under the Feet of Jesus* (Viramontes, 1995) and the drama *Heroes and Saints* (Moraga, 1994) from the perspective of social and environmental justice, taking into account Cherríe Moraga's concept of Land, in which home plays a primary role. The sense of justice in these works emerges from an oppressed landscape in which the environment, the homes and the bodies of the protagonists reflect the damage done to the environment and to human beings. The analysis of the above-mentioned literary works shows how different Chicana authors advocate the achievement of concepts such as social and environmental justice, while at the same time denouncing the impossibility of Chicanos achieving the desired American Dream.

KEYWORDS: Chicana Literature, Social and environmental justice, Land, Housing, American Dream.

JUSTICIA SOCIAL Y MEDIOAMBIENTAL: TIERRA Y HOGAR EN LA LITERATURA CHICANA

RESUMEN

Este artículo analiza las novelas *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984), *So Far from God* (Castillo, 1993) y *Under the Feet of Jesus* (Viramontes, 1995) y el drama *Heroes and Saints* (Moraga, 1994) desde la perspectiva de la justicia social y medioambiental teniendo en cuenta el concepto de tierra de Cherríe Moraga, en el que el hogar juega un papel primordial. La conciencia de justicia de estas obras surge de un paisaje deprimido donde el entorno, los hogares y los cuerpos de las protagonistas son reflejo del daño infligido al medio ambiente y en consecuencia también al ser humano. El análisis de las obras mostrará cómo diversas autoras chicanas abogan por la consecución de conceptos tales como justicia social y medioambiental y al mismo tiempo denuncian la imposibilidad del pueblo chicano para alcanzar el tan ansiado sueño americano.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Literatura Chicana, Justicia social y medioambiental, Tierra, Hogar, Sueño americano.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25145/j.recaesin.2024.88.05>

REVISTA CANARIA DE ESTUDIOS INGLESES, 88; abril 2024, pp. 61-71; ISSN: e-2530-8335



From the Spanish conquest in the 15th century to the final demarcation of the current border between the United States and Mexico in 1848, the territories and borders of the North American Southwest have varied greatly. Following the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed and Mexico lost a significant portion of its land to the United States. These annexed territories now make up the American Southwest and have provided the backdrop against which races and cultures have mixed and clashed. As a result of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, this newest part of the American territory was inhabited by Mexicans who were classified as Mexican-Americans or Chicanos. Historically, Chicanos have been a subject nation to both the Spanish conquerors and Anglo-Saxon culture. In the 1960s, however, they began to realize that they had been taken advantage of and consequently began to organize and to fight for their rights. They adopted the term Chicano and began to use it in a positive way. Since then, the term has come to reflect the pride of belonging to a mixed race; a race that can trace its origins back to the ancient inhabitants of the region, but at the same time recognizes that living in the United States distinguishes them from their Mexican neighbors.

Within the Chicano community, a variety of social organizations and movements have emerged to actively fight for social rights. These had their origins in the pacifist, anti-racist, and anti-war movements of the 1960s and 1970s and included the Chicano Movement, the Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán, the Crusade for Justice or the Raza Unida Party, but undoubtedly one of the greatest milestones of the Chicano movement was the creation of the United Farm Workers Association (UFW), an agricultural trade union that fought to improve the working conditions of farmworkers. The racism, discrimination and oppression suffered by the Chicano people would soon be reflected in their art and literature. Their works of art began to describe the most significant characteristics of their identity and to depict their experience as citizens belonging to a minority group.

Since the beginning of the Chicano Movement, its greatest battles have been the demand for social justice and the fight against the environmental pollution to which Chicanos are exposed due to the direct contact with pesticides and toxic products in their workplaces as well as in the land they inhabit. The term *land* refers to Cherríe Moraga's concept of land: "[...] land is more than the rocks and trees, the animal and plant life that make up the territory of Aztlán or Navajo Nation or Mayan Mesoamerica. For immigrant and native alike, land is also the factories where we work, the water our children drink, and the housing project where we live" (Moraga 1993, 173). It is important to note that Chicano society as a whole is subject to social and environmental injustices that Benjamin Chavis has defined as environmental racism:

Environmental racism is racial discrimination in environmental policy-making and enforcement of regulations and laws, the deliberate targeting of communities

* This article has been written under the auspices of the REWEST research group, funded by the Basque Government (IT1565-22).

of color for toxic waste facilities, the official sanctioning of the presence of life-threatening poisons and pollutants in communities of color, and the history of excluding people of color from leadership of the environmental movement. (1994, xi-xii)

Because of issues of race and class, all those territories -the land, the workplace, the housing projects, and even their bodies- are exposed to pollution and environmental degradation. As Devon Peña affirms, “Ecocide and ethnocide go hand in hand, and people of color are also «endangered species». [...] Chicano environmentalism is not so much about the preservation of nature and wilderness as it is about struggles to confront daily hazards and threats to health and well-being in environments where we live and work” (1998, 14-15).

Social and environmental racism and the impossibility of reaching the American Dream are inherent in numerous works of Chicana literature, including the novels *The House on Mango Street* (1984) by Sandra Cisneros, *So Far from God* (1993) by Ana Castillo and *Under the Feet of Jesus* (1995) by Helena Maria Viramontes and the drama *Heroes and Saints* (1994) by Cherríe Moraga. The chronological analysis will focus on issues of social and environmental justice.

THE AMERICAN DREAM, AN ILLUSION FOR THE CHICANO COMMUNITY

The American Dream is defined as “the ideal by which equality of opportunity is available to any American, allowing the highest aspirations and goals to be achieved” (Murtoff 2023, n.p.). This dream includes, among other things, free mobility, a well-paid job and a beautiful home. As Kaup points out:

in the United States the home is more than just a shelter; it is a national institution almost as sacred as the American flag. In home ownership, the American Dream and the American Way are manifest: the civic values of individualism, economic success, and self-sufficiency are asserted [...] in «the single-family detached house.» (1997, 361)

Indeed, owning a house is a key component of the American Dream which “symbolizes autonomy, achievement, and national pride” (Diaz McConnell and Marcelli 2007, 199). But in a highly stratified American society, merely 50 percent of the Latinos own a house, one of the lowest rates compared to non-Hispanic whites (76 percent) or Asians, Pacific Islanders, and American Indians (60 percent) (Diaz McConnell and Marcelli 2007, 200). Moreover, Chicanos, like other racial minorities, tend to be isolated in peripheral neighborhoods. Numerous American cities reflected, and still reflect nowadays, these racial and class divisions, with a middle-class population in the city center and a lower working class or mixed-race middle class in the suburbs:



[...] *ghettoization* and *barrioization* were more complex and dynamic than can be explained by residential segregation alone. [...] Both were affected by de facto and legal restrictions and by the prevailing attitudes of the dominant white society. Both were shaped by the internal forces operating in their respective populations—the desire to locate near their own people and to establish their folkways and institutions in an urban milieu. And, both were shaped by the external societal forces which confined blacks and Chicanos to their own sections of a city. (Camarillo 1984, 2)

THE HOUSE ON MANGO STREET

This is the case of Sandra Cisneros' *House on Mango Street* (1984). Set in a large city, the novel denounces the extreme working conditions of the Hispanic population and depicts their living conditions in a very low-income peripheral neighborhood. The novel portrays aspects of the Chicano experience within the barrio and at the same time evidences the various struggles of the female protagonist (Lewis 1997; Sendin 2004). This oppressive reality is manifested in the main character of the teenager Esperanza Cordero, whose name means “hope”. The family used to live in numerous precarious rental properties but finally manage to settle on Mango Street. Esperanza feels ashamed of all the houses the family had lived in before, and she does not feel comfortable in their new home either:

Once when we were living on Loomis, a nun from my school passed by and saw me playing out front. [...] Where do you live? she asked. There, I said pointing up to the third floor. You live *there*? *There*. I had to look to where she pointed [...]. You live *there*? The way she said it made me feel like nothing. *There*. I lived *there*. I nodded. I knew then I had to have a house. A real house. One I could point to. But this isn't. The house on Mango Street isn't. (Cisneros 1984, 4-5)

Housing is part of the environment that affects the way people feel and behave, and the characteristics of this environment are important because they condition the development of young people and, therefore, the development of society (Garza 1984). It is precisely because housing has such profound effects on the individual that it is important for everyone to have decent housing. Adequate housing is what Esperanza dreams of, and is recognized as a right in a wide range of international instruments, such as the Declaration of Human Rights or the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. As recognized by the UNO, “adequate housing must provide more than four walls and a roof” (2014, 3).

Life on Mango Street captures the gap between the American Dream and the social reality of the young Chicana protagonist. Esperanza constantly dreams of living in a beautiful home with garden, like the ones her father works on: “I want a house on a hill like the ones with the gardens where Papa works” (Cisneros 1984, 86). But belonging to a minority group and a lower income class she is forced to live with this harsh reality: “I am tired of looking at what we can't have” (Cisneros 1984,



86). The American Dream clashes once again with the multiple discriminations that Chicanos and other minority groups endure.

For Esperanza, living in the *barrio* means growing up surrounded by poverty and segregation, but as she matures, the protagonist of this *Bildungsroman* seems to find a balance between her desire to leave this reality behind and her need to stay in touch with her community and her origins: “One day I’ll own my own house, but I won’t forget who I am or where I came from. Passing bums will ask, Can I come in? I’ll offer them the attic, ask them to stay, because I know how it is to be without a house” (Cisneros 1984, 86). Like many women from impoverished ethnic communities, Esperanza is a victim of race, class, and gender discrimination. Nevertheless, she is able to break through these limitations and desire a home of her own:

Not a flat. Not an apartment in back. Not a man’s house. Not a daddy’s. A house all my own. With my porch and my pillow, my pretty purple petunias. My books and my stories. My two shoes waiting beside the bed. Nobody to shake a stick at. Nobody’s garbage to pick up after. Only a house quiet as snow, a space for myself to go, clean as paper before the poem. (Cisneros 1984, 108)

SO FAR FROM GOD

Ana Castillo’s *So Far from God* (1993) is another novel that describes the environmental pollution and racism faced by Chicanos. The main protagonists are the matriarch Sofia and her four daughters Esperanza, Caridad, Fe and La Loca. It is the story of the Valle family’s struggle between unemployment, assimilation, environmental racism, and the poverty and discrimination faced by Hispanics in the rural Southwest. Although the family lives in an impoverished environment, Sofia is the pillar of a home around which the lives of these five women revolve, a home where the daughters feel safe and valued. Even though some of the daughters leave the house in search of a better life, they always return home whenever they have problems: “She had grown up in a world of women who went out into the bigger world and came back disappointed, disillusioned, devastated, and eventually not at all. [...] At home she had everything she needed. Her mother’s care and love, her sisters [...]” (Castillo 2005, 151-152). Castillo hence constructs their family home as a ‘site of resistance’, following Bell Hook’s theory of the homeplace. Hooks affirms that:

it has been primarily the responsibility of black women to construct domestic households as spaces of care and nurturance in the face of the brutal harsh reality of racist oppression, of sexist domination. [...] making homeplace [...] was about the construction of a safe place where black people could affirm one another and by so doing heal many of the wounds inflicted by racist domination. (2001, 384)

Castillo built this site of resistance with the figure of Sofia and the home she built for her daughters, but also on the public sphere, first becoming the leader of



the M.O.M.A.S. association (*Mothers of Martyrs and Saints*) and later being elected as Mayor of Tome. Sofia's home, like the entire town of Tome, is a site of resistance where the protagonists fight not only for social justice, but also for environmental justice.

Each of the novel's protagonists is a victim of racism and discrimination, and their struggle for justice is constant. Fe, one of Sofia's daughters and the most assimilationist, has always pursued the American Dream and has worked really hard trying to achieve it. She got married and had the desire to buy their own house as soon as possible, so they "settled into a three-bedroom, two-car-garage tract home [...] with option to buy. They furnished it all new [...] and bought a brand-new sedan model" (Castillo 2005, 176-177). She left her job at the bank, where she would never get a promotion, and started working at Acme International, where the pay was really good, but "in addition to the raises she was getting nausea and headaches that increased in severity by the day" (Castillo 2005, 177-178). The workers at Acme -most of them poor, racialized women- are not aware of the risks they face, but they suffer from severe headaches and nausea, many have miscarriages, and others suffer from cancer. The workers are lied to about the nature of the chemicals they handle, and as a result some of them, including Fe, develop brutal cancers. However, the pollution is not limited to the workplace, as "the chemical she more than once dumped down the drain at the end of her day, [...] went into the sewage system and worked its way to people's septic tanks, vegetable gardens, kitchen taps, and sun-made tea" (Castillo 2005, 188).

The Environmental Justice Movement defends the idea that the workplace must ensure the health and economic security of its workers. But the job that would theoretically help Fe pursue the American Dream is killing her and contaminating the whole community and its environment. As Castillo denounces, the dream has become a nightmare again because "[u]nlike their abuelos and vis-abuelos who thought that although life was hard in the «Land of Enchantment» it had its rewards, the reality was that everyone was now caught in what had become: The Land of Entrapment" (2005, 172).

HEROES AND SAINTS

Cherrie Moraga's drama *Heroes and Saints* (1994) also deals with the struggle of the Chicano community, but this time the story is set in the agricultural fields of California. In the Author's Notes Moraga affirms that although *Heroes and Saints* is fiction, it was written in response to numerous events that took place in the late eighties, such as the grape boycott or Cesar Chavez's fast, to name a few. Moraga additionally states that she saw the documentary *The Wrath of Grapes* (Chaves, 1984), which denounces the tragedy of the people of McFarland, in the San Joaquin Valley of California, where a so-called cancer cluster was discovered. This documentary inspired the character of the main protagonist of her drama.

The play is set in in 1988 in McLaughlin, California, a fictional town in the San Joaquin Valley. The main protagonist, Cerezita Valle, is "a head of human



dimension, but one who possesses such a dignity of bearing and classical Indian beauty she can, at times, assume nearly religious proportions” (Moraga 1994, 90). The people of McLaughlin know that “Cere turn out this way because Dolores pick en los files cuando tenía panza” (Moraga 1994, 94). As mentioned above, the Environmental Justice Movement defends the idea that the workplace must ensure the sanitary and economic safety of its workers. One of the seventeen principles of environmental justice is directly related to the issues and problems Moraga writes about because it proclaims “the right of all workers to a safe and healthy work environment, without being forced to choose between an unsafe livelihood and unemployment” (Taylor 2002, 43). Dolores, Cerezita’s mother, not only worked in the fields while pregnant, but she also worked in a packing house where she was still exposed to pesticides: “The poison they put on the almonds, it would make you sick. The women would run out of the place coz they had to throw up. Sure, I dint wannu go back in there, pero after a while you start to accept it because you gottu have a job” (Moraga 1994, 99). They had to work in contaminated environments to make a living, but the chemicals and pesticides contaminated their workplace as well as their housing projects, and their living environments:

You don’ believe me, but they bury all their poison under our houses. Wha’ chu think that crack comes from? An earthquake? The house is sinking, te digo como quicksand. [...] They lied to us, Lola. They thought we was too stupid to know the difference. They throw some dirt over a dump, put some casas de carton on top of it y dicen que it’s the “American Dream”. Pues, this dream has turned to pesadilla. (Moraga 1994, 102-103)

The protagonists see how their American Dream turned out to be a nightmare because their housing project was built on what was once a dump site for pesticides and chemicals, with the full knowledge of the contractors and authorities. They are victims of the environmental racism, and the protagonists are aware of the reality: “Our homes are no longer our homes. They have become prisons. When the water that pours from the sink gots to be boiled three times before it can pass your children’s lips, what good is the faucet, the indoor plumbing, the toilet that flushes pink with disease?” (Moraga 1994, 110-111).

UNDER THE FEET OF JESUS

Under the Feet of Jesus is Helena Maria Viramontes’ first novel and was published in 1995. The protagonists to whom Viramontes gives voice are poor immigrant peasants working in the agricultural fields of California. As Grewe-Volpp (2005) points out, they are subjected to the violence of the State, to a precarious economic situation, and to social stigmatization. The novel recounts the life of a large Chicano family headed by a mother named Petra and her five children, among whom we find Estrella, the teenage daughter and main character. Sixteen-year-old Alejo, from Texas, joins the family soon after the story begins. The novel describes



the ups and downs of the daily life of these seasonal workers, as well as their dreams, their fears and hopes.

The inequalities and discrimination suffered by Chicanos are described not only in the workplace, but also in the social sphere. The protagonists face constant discrimination and harassment from Anglo-Saxon society, which frequently treats them as inferiors. Seasonal workers get neither recognition nor a fair wage, with serious consequences for the family. Because of the temporary and precarious nature of their work, they do not own their own homes and are forced to change both their homes and their schools each time they change jobs. As they moved from place to place, none of the houses they have lived in felt even close to a home, and the housing units have not even met minimum health and sanitation standards:

Perfecto inspected the two-room bungalow [...]. He rattled the knob, stepped into a dingy room with a window facing the porch. The stink of despair shot through the musty sunlight, and he knocked a fist against the window to loosen the swollen pane to get some fresh air into the room. ... There were no beds and only a few crates used for chairs arranged around one table [...]. Perfecto figured only men had stayed here. (Viramontes 1996, 8)

The precariousness of their working and living conditions has other negative effects on the personal hygiene of the characters, which occasionally makes them the object of racist attention:

... some of the teachers were more concerned about the dirt under her fingernails. They inspected her head for lice, parting her long hair with ice cream sticks. They scrubbed her fingers with a toothbrush [...]. She remembered how one teacher ... asked how come her mama never gave her a bath. Until then, it had never occurred to Estrella she was dirty, that ... the vigorous brushing and tight braids her mother neatly weaved were not enough for Mrs. Horn. (Viramontes 1996, 25)

Viramontes' novel clearly echoes the torturous working conditions that Chicano farmworkers must endure. Their workday is achingly long, and their tasks are performed under the burning sun, but they are paid poorly and live under precarious conditions: "For the pay we get, they're lucky we don't burn the orchards down" (Viramontes 1996, 45). But no member of the family can afford to lose their job, neither the aging Perfecto, nor the teenage Estrella, or the pregnant Petra. The novel denounces once again that the landlords did not respect the principles of environmental justice.

Under the Feet of Jesus contains heartbreaking descriptions of agricultural fields and the living conditions of the farmworkers. California, like many other agricultural areas, is recurrently portrayed as a paradise, but the novel shatters this idea of a natural agricultural wonderland where healthy fruits and vegetables grow on their own and shows the reality of that world and the people who make these goods available to us. It sets aside bucolic stereotypes of nature and farming to convey the gritty reality of the food and agricultural industries. It could also be argued that the patriarchal capitalist system abuses both nature and humans for the sake of



achieving its goal of the maximum profit. Nature has been abused and mistreated for centuries. Intending to obtain greater food production, the agricultural industry uses pesticides and insecticides that pollute the soil, the subsoil, and the waters. These practices damage not only human health, but also the natural environment. Viramontes' work illustrates the real situation Chicano laborers have suffered for decades and denounces how pesticides and insecticides are sprayed without notice, even while the peasants are working in the fields:

She heard the faint buzzsaw engine of a biplane as she approached to the fence. ... 'Weren't they gonna spray the orchards next week?' Estrella asked matter-of-factly, and pointed to the biplane which dusted the peach trees not far from the barn. ... 'Since when do they do what they say?'
'... I thought I had no business in the barn, Estrella replied. ... I thought you said it was dangerous.'
'It means extra money'. (Viramontes 1996, 73-74)

Viramontes' protagonists once again face the same problems. They suffer from social and environmental racism, and their precarious economic situation prevents them from doing anything about it. At the beginning of the story, many of the youngest protagonists, except for Estrella, seem largely unaware of the dangers of pesticides, yet they do wonder if there will be consequences for their future health. However, the main characters become increasingly aware of the dangers of pesticides and chemicals. This harsh reality is exemplified by the character of Alejo, a sixteen-year-old Californian who falls seriously ill after being poisoned by pesticides in the agricultural fields. Alejo's cousin Gumecindo and other seasonal workers must continue working and are therefore unable to take care of the sick teenager, so the young man remains alone for days, thinking that he does not wish to die in solitude. Given his situation, Alejo is taken in by Estrella's family. Her mother, Petra, feels that she should take care of him, as she would like others to do for her children: "If we don't take care of each other, who would take care of us? ... We have to look out for our own. [...] It's not good to leave people behind. [...] If Arnulfo or Ricky or my hija got sick, I would want someone to take care of them, won't you?" (Viramontes 1996, 96-97). What Petra does in caring for the sick Alejo could also be considered as another example of what Hooks (2001) defines as a 'site of resistance'.

CONCLUSIONS

Our homes should be our shelters, the place where we feel safe, the places we share with our families, where we rest and live, in capital letters. But as we have seen in the novels and dramas analyzed, this is not the case for the Chicano community. As Garza (1984) points out, everyone must have decent housing so that individuals can develop correctly along with the community. He also affirms that the Hispanic population is particularly vulnerable in terms of housing.



Chicana literature frequently focuses on the identity or the coming of age of the protagonists, the family and the fight for their rights. All of the literary works analyzed address issues of identity, race, class or gender, and social and environmental justice are always central themes. Some focus more on social justice concerns, while others do also emphasize environmental justice issues. As Kaup (1997) notes, the topic of home had a greater presence since the decade of the eighties and it is a constant in almost all Chicano literary works, where homes are generally depicted as poor or very poor. The houses or rentals usually lack minimum health and sanitation conditions, and they are frequently built on polluted land. With their portrayal of the Chicano reality, it is clear that Cisneros, Moraga, Castillo, Viramontes and other Chicana writers aim to make visible the discrimination, pollution, and lack of development suffered by the Chicano people, and thus join the struggle against the invisibility of these workers, their living conditions and the precarious economic situation of Chicanos. Cisneros, Moraga, Castillo and Viramontes are openly fighting for a better world, a world where healthier lives can be guaranteed and where well-being, sustainable economic growth and decent work can be promoted for all. A world where inequalities are reduced within and among countries, and where cities and human settlements are inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. This would mean effectively achieving not only social but also environmental justice.

Review sent to author: 30/11/2023

Revised paper accepted for publication: 19/01/2024



WORKS CITED

- CAMARILLO, Albert. 1984. *Blacks and Hispanics in Urban America: Some Comparative Historical Perspectives*. Stanford, California: Stanford University.
- CASTILLO, Ana. 2005. *So Far from God*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- CHAVIS, Benjamin F. 1994. "Preface." In *Unequal Protection: Environmental Justice and Communities of Color*, edited by Robert Doyle Bullard, xi–xii. San Francisco, California: Sierra Club.
- CISNEROS, Sandra. 1984. *The House on Mango Street*. New York: Vintage Books.
- DIAZ MCCONNELL, Eileen and Enrico A. MARCELLI. 2007. "Buying into the American Dream? Mexican Immigrants, Legal Status, and Homeownership in Los Angeles County." *Social Science Quarterly* 88, no. 1: 199–221. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6237.2007.00454.x>.
- GARZA, Jose S. 1984. "Hispanic America: Limited Housing Options". In *A Sheltered Crisis: The State of Fair Housing in the Eighties*, edited by U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 174–177, <https://archive.org/details/shelteredcrisiss00wash>.
- GREWE-VOLPP, Christa. 2005. "The Oil Was Made from Their Bones: Environmental In-Justice in Helena Maria Viramontes' Under the Feet of Jesus." *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 12, no. 1: 61–78.
- HOOKS, Bell. 2001. "Homeplace (a Site of Resistance)". In *Available Means: An Anthology of Women's Rhetoric(s)*, edited by Joy Ritchie and Kate Ronald, 382–390. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt5hjqnj>.
- KAUP, Monika. 1997. "The Architecture of Ethnicity in Chicano Literature." *American Literature* 69, no. 2: 361–397, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2307/2928275>.
- LEWIS, Marvin A. 1977. "Caras Viejas y Vino Nuevo: Essence of the Barrio." *The Bilingual Review* 4, no. 1: 141–144.
- MORAGA, Cherríe. 1993. *The Last Generation: Prose and Poetry*. Boston, Massachusetts: South End Press.
- MORAGA, Cherríe. 2000. *Heroes and Saints & Other Plays*. Albuquerque, New Mexico: West End Press.
- MURTOFF, Jennifer. 2023. "American Dream." *Britannica*.
- PEÑA, Devon G. (ed). 1998. *Chicano Culture, Ecology, Politics: Subversive Kin*. Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press.
- SENDIN, Emily. 2004. "Latina Womanist Writers: Breaking Boundaries of Race, Class, and Gender in the Works of Sandra Cisneros and Julia Alvarez". In *Perspectivas Transatlánticas en la Literatura Chicana. Ensayos y Creatividad*, edited by María Herrera-Sobek et al., 277–286. Málaga: Universidad de Málaga.
- TAYLOR, Dorceta E. 2002. *Race, Class, Gender, and American Environmentalism*. Portland, United States Department of Agriculture.
- UNO. 2014. *The Right to Adequate Housing*. United Nations Organization.
- VIRAMONTES, Helena María. 1996. *Under the Feet of Jesus*. New York: Plume.



