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Littérature/Philosophie/Langues



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Latino Literature

Mothers as Touchstones for their Daughters

RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODOLOGY

The Research Problem

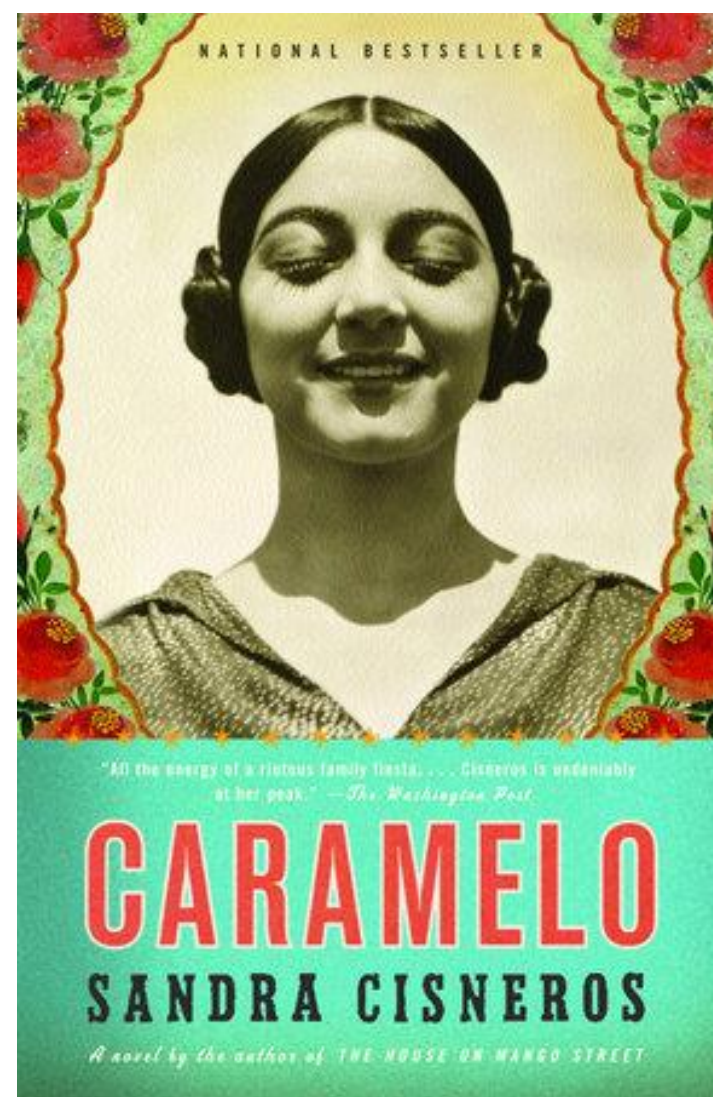
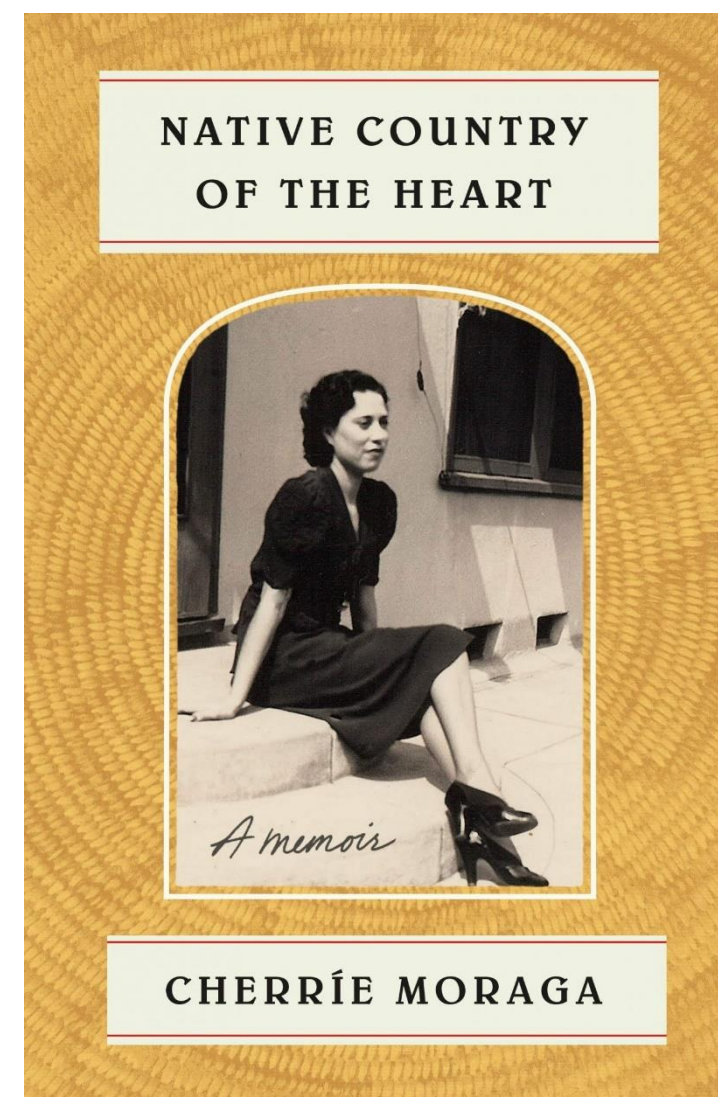
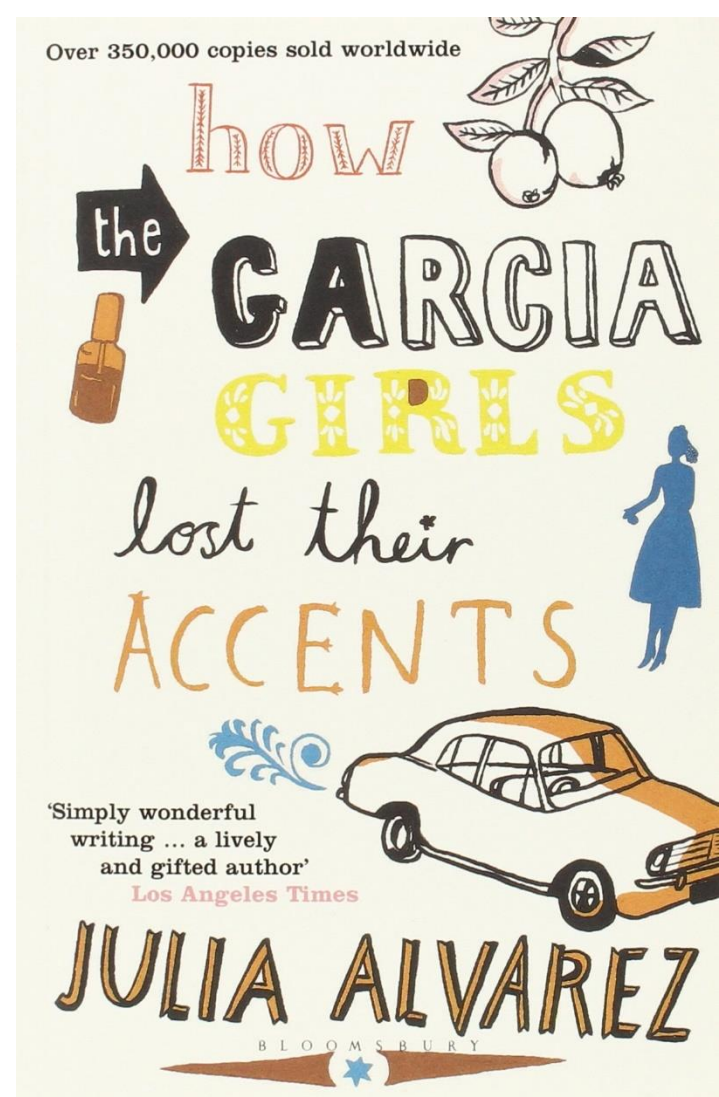
“To what extent are Latina mothers touchstones for their daughters, be it as guides in life or as links to their heritage in Latino literature written in the United States?”

The Methodology

- 1) Synthesis of the historical context of Latino literature written in the United States and its main characteristics
- 2) Overview of sociological terms associated with Latino culture: *Familism* and *Marianismo*
- 3) Close readings of three chosen novels

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Finding N°1: The motif of family was the **red string** that guided all of the stories.



The strength of the familial bonds between the characters was incarnated in various ways:

- The rebozo (a Mexican shawl donned only by women) in *Caramelo*: a symbol for family and an objectification of the transmission of cultural values
- Numerous depictions of shared mealtimes and homecooked meals: the embodiment of the mothers' love and care for their daughters
- Repeated use of words and phrases in Spanish: a mirror of the daughters' cultural affinities, a reflection of their bi-cultural identities, and the element that gave a sense of realism to the stories

Finding N°2: Core values of Latino culture such as putting family first (*familism*) and sticking to principles of purity and chastity (*marianismo*) were woven into all of **the mothers' teachings**

Those same teachings were the primary reason for conflict between the mothers and daughters due to their cultural differences (American vs. Mexican or Dominican)

- ! Despite those conflicts, the daughters always came back to their families and culture for comfort.

Finding N°3: The mothers weren't the only ones who offered **support and guidance** to their daughters; society and the adults around them were also played an important role in their nurturing.

- ! However, the mothers were definitely the main connection to their daughters' cultural heritage.

They achieved this largely through homemade meals and constant chidings (put family first, respect the elderly, maintain dignity by staying chaste).

IN CONCLUSION:

- 1) Latina mothers are touchstones for their daughters, especially as links to their heritage.

Thanks to them, their daughters are able to maintain a strong attachment to their family and culture despite growing up in an American context.

- 2) The stories told were fictional, but not fake.

This lets them take on a larger meaning: as stories, they can help readers understand the realities of life between two cultures and encourage healthy dialogue between Latino and American culture.