

Spanish 365: The Chicano Novel
Professor Donald W. Urioste
Final Exam: Fall 2016

I. Discuss the Portrayal of women in the following works: "Woman Hollering Creek" [the story] by Sandra Cisneros, Memories of Ana Calderón by Graciela Limón; Across a Hundred Mountains by Reyna Grande; and Desert Blood: The Juárez Murders by Alicia Gaspar de Alba. (50 points)

II. Respond to one (1) of the following options: (30 points)

- A. Discuss the role of dreams in *Bless Me, Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya. Cite at least three dreams in your response.
- B. Discuss the coming-of-age process of Richard Rubio in *Pocho* by José Antonio Villarreal.
- C. Discuss the life of Agricultural Migrant Workers as portrayed in the novel *And the Earth did Not Devour Him* by Tomás Rivera. To support your ideas please refer to at least three individual stories from the novel.

III. Of all the literary works read for the class (see complete list below), which was your absolute favorite? Why? (Give a detailed explanation [10 points])

IV. Of all the literary works read for the class (see complete list below), which was your least favorite? Why? (Give a detailed explanation [10 points])

List of literary works read for the class

- Pocho* (1959) by José Antonio Villarreal
- And the Earth did Not Devour Him* (1971) by Tomás Rivera
- Bless Me, Ultima* (1972) by Rudolfo Anaya
- Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories* (1991) by Sandra Cisneros
- Memories of Ana Calderón* (1994) by Graciela Limón
- Across a Hundred Mountains* (2006) by Reyna Grande
- Desert Blood: The Juárez Murders* (2006) by Alicia Gaspar de Alba
- Into the Beautiful North* (2013) by Luis Alberto Urrea

Once you have completed your answers, please upload to the **Spanish 365 Final Examination folder** in week 5 December - 11 December of I-learn. You have until 11:55 p.m. December 18th to submit. Buena Suerte!!

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Spanish 365 Final

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1. The portrayal of women in these various novels is very complex and detailed. In my personal opinion, I found that the male authors usually portrayed women with very flat linear personalities. I know that in the majority of those novels written by male authors, the protagonist was a male character but in Luis Alberto Urrea's novel, the female characters seemed too simple. However, these novels went into more detail about the women's dreams, fears, and hopes. In the story, *Woman Hollering Creek* by Sandra Cisneros, the main character Cleófilas is described as woman who is arranged to marry a man who she hoped be her prince in her fairytale. In other words, Cleófilas was expecting her marriage to be all love and instead she was being physically abused. Cleófilas is the typical prototype of a Hispanic woman whose aspirations and expectations are severely crushed. As a result, she had to seek hope and find an escape as soon as possible. While Cleófilas may seem like the normal version of what a Hispanic woman should be, Felice becomes the counter character. Felice is described as a woman who is independent and has masculine traits. Thus, Cisneros is showing us how a different type of feminine in a woman does not make a woman hold less worth than anyone else. This idea that a woman doesn't fit the prototype of being "feminine," is also present in Alicia Gaspar de Alba's *Desert Blood: The Juárez Murders*. Ivon, the main character, shows a side to what constitutes to being a woman that perhaps many are not familiar with. First, the author describes how Ivon's homosexuality has been liberating for her even though it has caused a lot of problems with her mother. Ivon is portrayed as independent, stubborn, and determined. In the novel, *The Memories of Ana Calderón* by Graciela Limón, Limón depicts women as women that are very strong and never lose hope. Through Ana's life

experiences, the audience could see how resilient Ana was, even though there always seemed to be something in her way. Even after she unfortunately held a relationship with her son unknowingly, she realized that her life still had a purpose and that she shouldn't give up. These characteristics were also present in Adela or Juana in *Across a Hundred Mountains* by Reyna Grande. Although Juana was basically surviving on her own most the time, she was relentless and kept fighting in order to bring peace back to her mother.

I felt that all four novels did a great job in portraying women as they are. That is, any other human being. I liked how these women were neither portrayed as saints or demons. Instead they were described as normal human beings that had positive traits yet made mistakes like any other person. Sometimes those mistakes were pivotal in the fact that they had to face certain challenges and situations, however all characters were described as resilient and strong.

2. In *Bless Me Ultima*, the role of dreams served the purpose to show the reader the actual feelings that Antonio had for every situation he went through. His first dream is the essence of his long-lasting dilemma. His first dream was the day of his birth and his struggle of not knowing whether he was a Marez or a Luna. This dream showed the reader the constant family conflict that Antonio finds himself in. Also, in this dream a dark figure is introduced. Later on, we find out that it was actually Ultima. This is significant because it shows the power and respect that Ultima held because with only one word she restored order. Another important dream that tells us a lot about Antonio's situation is when he dreamt his parents arguing between Catholicism and the Golden Carp. This is important because Antonio's doubts in a religion really tore him apart. When it appeared that he was going to pick Catholicism, Ultima reappeared which can be interpreted as foreshadowing because Ultima became the place where Antonio deposited his faith and trust. One last dream that held vital importance was when Antonio dreamed of three figures. At first, he thought that those figures were his bothers but later he saw that they were Narciso, Lupito and Florence, the deaths he had witnessed. That dream also serves as a foreshadow of

Ultima's death. This dream was important to Antonio because it ultimately became the representation of his loss of complete innocence.

3. Out of the eight novels, my favorite was *The Memories of Ana Calderón*. I enjoyed reading this novel because I loved how Limón used detail to really spark the reader's imagination. First, the use of the interchangeable point-of-views were really effective and kept me hooked on the reading. I liked how we were able to get an objective narration and then were able to see how Ana actually felt in all of these situations. Also, like I mentioned before, I liked the fact that Ana was presented in a neutral way. I know that many would say that they felt sorry for her for all the situations she encountered especially those with her father and son, but I liked how Ana was described as having flaws like anyone else. The storyline itself was really intriguing because it was an easy read that had a lot of twists and turns. The ending itself was quite surprising as well. Above all, I admired Ana. Her resiliency and determination was what made me really appreciate how much a human being is willing to endure for the love of someone else. In this case, she fought endlessly for her son and protected him at all costs, to the point of almost killing. The detailed vocabulary made it quite easy to use my imagination and feel almost as if I were going through everything that Ana was experiencing. I really enjoyed this novel and I thank you for introducing it to me, definitely one of my top favorites.
4. The novel that I enjoyed the least was *Y no se lo Trago la Tierra*. I didn't enjoy this book quite as much as the other respective novels because it was quite difficult for me to follow along. The stories between each chapter only ended confusing me more. The ending itself left me unsettled because it felt like there was not really a closing to it. The content of the stories was really enjoyable because I was able to relate to some of them and empathize. Especially with the main character's questions about God and the fact that God permits bad things to happen. I, have been in that same situation where I have questioned my beliefs. Even though I was able to relate and connect with some of the characters, I really felt like I was misunderstanding the whole purpose of the story.