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QUEST FOR IDENTITY IN THE SELECT CHICANO FICTION

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ABSTRACT

Chicano literature is comparatively recent development in the field of literature has only recently been acknowledged as a significant and worthwhile section of American literature: nevertheless, as Ronoldo Hinojosa states in his essay "Mexican-American: Toward an Identification," 'there is a long literary tradition behind what is produced today.' It has several intricate and diverse facets. Its main characteristic, fundamental for this body of literature is that deals with ethnic identity, therefore they raised their voices against discrimination. Particularly, the novels state their quest for identity, in their novels as Acosta, Oscar, Zeta, Sandra Cisneros and Candelaria Nash.

Keywords: Chicano/a, discrimination, ethnicity, identity, quest

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Introduction

The problem of identity is one of the most crucial in the development of each and every society. Identity is about belonging and existence of everyone in the society.

In American literature this essential problem becomes obvious through the many forms of narratives of the quest for a private, inner identity as a major human experience. Moreover, Chicano literature has several intricate and diverse facets and within its complexity are content distinct strata and orientations. Its main characteristic fundamental for this body of literature, is that it deals with particular themes and issues related to Chicano life and experience. Rudolfo Anaya was called one of the founding father of Chicano literature.

Select Chicano Novels

Chicano or Mexican American fiction includes those works in which writers sense of ethnic identity (chicanismo) animates his or her work majestly and fundamentally, often the presentation of Chicano characters, cultural situations and patterns of speech.

Chicano fiction tends to focus on themes of identity, discrimination, culture and history, with an emphasis of validating the Mexican American experience or Chicano culture in the U.S. It is also associated with the social and cultural claims of the Chicano movement. It is a vehicle through which Chicano express and presents themselves and also often a voice of social critic and protest. The tradition of fiction for Chicanos

stems from the Spanish and Mexican tradition of that genre, fiction that includes so many masterpieces. These fiction were casted in the form of the traditional Cuentos, stories that drew heavily from folk elements. This was the literary settings form Mexican of the northern borderlands in their transition to becoming Americans.

The major Chicano writers who made Chicano literature great world over were the writers like Anaya, Rudolfo Alfanzo, Acosta, Oscar Zeta, Richard Vasquez, Villarreal Jose Antonio, Rolando Hinojosa, Ana Castillo, Sandra Cisneros, Candelaria, Nash, Tomas Rivera, Luis Alberto Urrea, Benjamin Aliere Saenz, Victor Villasenor, Gloria Anzaldua, Cherrie Moraga, Pat Mora, and Rudolfo "Corky" Gonzales.

Acosta, Oscar Zeta (April 8, 1936) disappeared in 1974, was an American attorney, politician, novelist and activist in the Chicano movement. His best works as 'Autobiography of a Brown Buffalo' (1972) 'The Revolt of the Cockroach People' (1973). Sandra Cisneros (Dec 20, 1954) a Mexican American novelist, poet and short story writer is best known for her first novel 'The House on A Mango Street' (1984) and Caramelo (2002) Candelaria Nash (May 7, 1928) is a Mexican American novelist, known for a tetralogy of novels about the Rafa family. His notable works are 'Memories of the Alhambra' (1977) and 'Not by the Sword' (1982).

Quest for Identity in the Select Chicano Novels

The Chicano also confronted against discrimination for equality. It shows courses of discrimination, racism, exploitation and atrocities on female. Such confrontation is revealed by creative writers in the U.S. called Chicano writer who have studied and analyzed the value of fiction written on quest for identity.

Acosta, Oscar Zeta (April 8, 1936 – disappeared in 1974) became estranged from his Hispanic past. He added "Zeta" to his name when he became a political activist. It is because it was the name of a Mexican revolutionary. His novels are autobiographical in the sense that they deal with events and happenings that he knows at first hand. His famous works are 'The Autobiography of A Brown Buffalo' (1972), and 'The Revolt of the Cockroach People' (1973).

'The Autobiography of a Brown Buffalo' is Acosta's first novel. It is a fictional journey through many facts of his life. Acosta's anti-intellectual stance and his rejection of literary convention express the shock and chaos; construct for him a new and revitalizing identity. As a first novel it focuses on his own self-discovery in a fictionalized way. The plot represents an alienated lawyer of Mexican descent, working in an Oakland, California, anti-poverty agency, without any sense of purpose or identity. The novel is Acosta's own account of coming of age as a Chicano in the psychedelic sixties. For quest of identity, this is a landmark of contemporary Hispanic-American literature.

'The Revolt of the Cockroach people' by Oscar Zeta Acosta, a semi-autobiographical account of the turbulent Chicano power movement. The title itself suggests the quest for identity in the novel. This is the most realistic book discusses the Chicanos of the 1960s neo-freedom movements. A man searching for an identity in the legal profession with Hunter H. Thompson and in El Paso.

Sandra Cisneros is a Chicago-born chicana activists and novelist. 'The House on Mango Street' is the fictional autobiography of Esperanza Cordera, an adolescent Mexican American girl who wants to be a writer. It paints a striking portrait of a young chicana struggling to find a place in her community without relinquishing her sense of self. Sandra Cisneros, Caramelo is a big book with a large heart that transports to a world rich and wonderful. Caramelo and her family visit their relatives in Mexico every year. Her heritage inspires her imagination as she discovers her heritage and the diversity of beauty in the world. It is the story of a large Mexican-American family, covered several generations.

Candelaria Nash's 'Memories of the Alhambra' (1977), one of Chicano literature's most celebrated novels sketched in the American southwest. Its history and its people. 'Memories of Alhambra' (1977) is a seminal novel in Chicano literature, and 'Not By The Sword' (1982), an American Book Award Winner. Nash Candelaria was forty-nine appeared Memories of the Alhambra. The first volume of his Rafa family quartet, critics opined about the system expressed. Candelaria Nash questioned his self-characterization as a Chicano who writes. I don't see my writing..... It shows quest for Identity of Candelaria Nash.

The second novel in the tetralogy is 'Not by the Sword' a story of Rafa family shortly before the Mexican war of 1846. It is weaved into the fabric of socio-political events along with quest for identity. It also describes a powerful feeling of American southwest heritage.

Conclusion:

Thus, the present article is a focus on the ethnic discrimination of the Chicano people who raised their voices against discrimination for liberty. But the select Chicano novelist as Oscar, Acosta Zeta, Sandra Cisneros and Candelaria Nash are the selected.

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