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A Journey to/through Family

Nostalgia, Gender, and the American Dream in
Reyna Grande's *The Distance Between Us*

ALICIA MUÑOZ AND ARIANA E. VIGIL

The US-Mexico border is a prominently contested site not just of nationality and migration but also of history, memory, and identity: a heterotopia of fluctuating meaning and status that imparts scars, both physical and psychic, upon individuals and families. Reyna Grande's memoir *The Distance Between Us* (2012) explores this multidimensional space through her family's experiences of separation, deprivation, and longing.¹ Grande stakes out her painful and searching tone by beginning with a comparison between the United States and a frightening figure of Mexican folklore: "Neither of my grandmothers told us that there is something more powerful than La Llorona—a power that takes away parents, not children. It is called The United States."² The invocation of La Llorona, or the Weeping Woman, who threatens children throughout Mexico and Central America, broaches two significant aspects of the text: the separation of children and parents, and the child's voice. In addition, the specter of La Llorona raises gendered transgressions and threats; the folk figure pushes back against idealizations of motherhood while also illustrating the consequences for women who do not fulfill these ideals. In this essay we consider the way that gender impacts Grande's separation from, and relationship with, her mother and father. Placing questions of gender, nostalgia, genre, and narration in conversation, we argue that the narrative framing allows readers to join Grande as she struggles to construct an identity out of a family fragmented by migration, haunted by a father alternately absent and abusive, and grasping for connection across distance, border, and economy. Our attention to the construction and articulation of the memoir affirms the writer's process as an "active and imaginative interpretation . . . of home, history, and memory."³ We concentrate specifically on the feeling of nostalgia that Grande exhibits, somewhat surprisingly, for her difficult childhood in Mexico and her neglectful mother. She displays ambivalence in her recounting of both; the privation she faced living in Mexico is described

via painful and wistful details, and echoes of the archetype of the bad mother accompany an adult recognition of the severe choices her mother faced. Reproducing the "often-tangled relationships between discourses on motherhood and nation," the narrative feminizes home, associating it with her mother and Mexico; at the same time, the abuse and neglect she suffers from these sources preclude them as wholly adequate sites of comfort and belonging.⁴ Moreover, the home that she inhabits in the US with her father is ruled by fear—of his abuse and of their undocumented status. As we explain, the narrative associates Reyna's father with opportunity, the United States, and the American Dream. But the limitations the family experiences in the US, and the father's abuse, also suggest the inability for Reyna to make these sites and people a basis for her identity as she grows and matures. Between these two poles, Reyna has one constant—her elder sister Mago. Ultimately what Grande longs for is not her mother, Mexico, or the opportunities in the US represented by her father, but rather the belonging, love, and possibility of successfully negotiating a transnational identity offered by her sister.

GENDER, NOSTALGIA, AND NARRATIVE

The importance of nostalgia in Grande's memoir is an echo of its status in Chicana/o and Latina/o cultural production. Catherine Wiley explains that Chicana/o culture in particular is dependent on Mexico for its "origins" and "essential meaning" but that this dependence "fosters a dual nostalgia for and resentment of the homeland as a territory of desire and impossibility . . . and material poverty."⁵ Looking at Mexico's position within contemporary Chicano *teatro*, Wiley explains how nostalgia permeates texts and performances shaping "characterization, plot and theme."⁶ For Chicana/os, nostalgia for Mexico is complicated by the fact that many reside in areas that correspond to Aztlán, the homeland of the Aztec peoples. Composed of both mythical and historical importance, Aztlán is often thought to coincide with land in northern Mexico and/or the southwestern United States. This means that Chicana/os may experience nostalgia for a homeland they currently inhabit and yet cannot fully access. The geographical proximity of the southwestern United States to Mexico adds a further complication in that Chicana/os may clearly view and be reminded of their originary "home." While Chicana/o relationships with Mexico may be distinct, nostalgia functions powerfully in Latina/o and immigrant narratives as well. Nostalgia may be "a useful idea to apply to immigration," as immigrants may engage in a "lifelong struggle" of creating home in a strange land while "looking with longing at what has been left." The loss that immigrants experience may spur "a desire to recuperate

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the loss, to regain presence and visibility, and to reclaim the originary place."⁸
This desire may manifest through imagining the former place or time or via
literal return.⁹

Of course, loss is not only experienced in terms of the migrant's feelings
of separation or displacement from the homeland; the process of migration
itself, particularly for undocumented immigrants to the US, may provoke a
deep loss. Alicia Schmidt Camacho argues that "the dehumanizing effects of
the unauthorized border crossing" have been countered with "an emergent
mode of migrant subjectivity" that can be found in recent migrant cultural
products—including songs and *retablos*.¹⁰ She terms this subjectivity "migrant
melancholia," following Freud's definition of melancholia as a "pathological
or thwarted process of mourning in which the absent object becomes
constitutive of the melancholic self."¹¹ Schmidt Camacho considers the Latin
American nation-state as an object of loss such that migrant melancholia "also
marks the loss of a social contract, the democratic ideal anchored in the Latin
American nation-state."¹² These perspectives on immigration and nostalgia
affirm the presence and significance of discourses of loss, deterritorialization
and attendant attempts at recuperation through affective longing in US
Latina/o immigrant narratives. We build from these ideas by examining
more closely how nostalgia is enacted and discussed in Grande's memoir. We
add to this conversation a specific focus on gender in order to understand
how the text works with and through gendered notions of home and self.
Grande's memoir is a particularly fascinating object of study because it both
reproduces and challenges common articulations of gendered homes—that
is, the assumed relationship between female-gendered spaces and peoples
and feelings of comfort and belonging. In what follows we trace how Grande
simultaneously aligns with and challenges these relationships. As we explain,
Grande negotiates her nostalgia for her homeland of Mexico, her idealized
notions of motherhood, and her reality of surviving with her abusive father in
the United States through her relationship with her older sister.

The book is divided into two parts: "Mi mamá me ama" describes Reyna's
upbringing in Mexico, and "The man behind the glass" refers to her father
and takes place in the United States. At the age of two Natalio Grande leaves
for the US in order to earn enough money to construct a house in their
hometown. When her mother, Juana, follows soon afterward, Reyna and her
two older siblings are forced to live with their stern paternal grandmother,
who neglects them physically and emotionally. Reyna's parents separate, and
though her mother returns to Mexico, she lets the burden of their care fall
on their maternal grandmother. At the age of ten Reyna immigrates to Los
Angeles with her siblings and father. In this new country, living with their

father and his girlfriend, they confront his alcoholism and abuse as well as the challenges of being undocumented immigrants. Her family displaced and fractured between parents and borders, Grande negotiates retrospective nostalgia and prospective optimism, as she struggles to find belonging within either country.

Grande's memoir contributes to a growing body of life-writings in Chicana/Latina literature. Autobiographies, memoirs, and *testimonios* have been an important part of Chicana/o literary production but, prior to the 1980s, were largely dominated by male authors such as Tomás Rivera (*... y no se lo tragó la tierra*, 1971), Ernesto Galarza (*Barrio Boy*, 1971), and Richard Rodriguez (*Hunger for Memory*, 1982). With the emergence of women writers who came of age during and after the Chicano Movement, these genres have provided a powerful platform for female voices in the last several decades, constituting a deep body of work worthy of critical consideration as "a radical feminist cultural practice."¹³ An illustrative example of this radical cultural practice is Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987), which pushes the boundaries of several genres. In the last twelve years writers such as Josie Méndez-Negrete (*Las hijas de Juan: Daughters Betrayed*, 2006), Sandra Cisneros (*A House of My Own: Stories from My Life*, 2015), and Ana Castillo (*Black Dove: Essays on Mamá, Mi'jo and Me*, 2016) have also published their own personal writings. Focusing on experiences as daughters, mothers, and lovers, these texts have explored issues of gender, sexuality, and agency in a Chicana context. According to C. Alejandra Elenes, "Chicanas have embraced autobiographical genres because through them they are permitted to articulate and disseminate their own political positions in response to the multiple forms of oppression that affect their lives."¹⁴ Though based on the personal self, these personal memoirs or autobiographies destabilize the individualistic "I" through the transmission of a collective experience of oppression.

Specifically, within the category of life-writings, *testimonios* most explicitly call for the translation of personal strife to social action. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson define *testimonio* as a kind of life-writing in which the narrator "intends to communicate the situation of the group's oppression, struggle, or imprisonment, to claim some agency in the act of narrating, and to call upon readers to respond actively in judging the crisis."¹⁵ Grande's work *The Distance Between Us* is a memoir both in style and marketing, but it shares some elements of *testimonio* in its focus on trauma, injustice, and impetus for action, while also offering the opportunity for personal emancipation through authorial healing. Expanding on the work of scholars such as Elenes, Norma Cantú writes, "For many Chicana and Latina authors, writing personal memoir or autobiography constitutes an exercise in communal storytelling insofar

as many of our stories a shared story of unjust of expressing this collective use the perspective of a countered growing up."¹⁷

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as many of our stories cut across age, geography, and even gender, and tell a shared story of injustice and prejudice."¹⁶ For Grande, an important piece of expressing this collective experience of separation and immigration was to use the perspective of a child, a storytelling voice that she herself had not encountered growing up.¹⁷

Grande's use of a child's point of view in her memoir facilitates a nostalgic recuperation of her past. However, as pointed out by Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan in her study *Narrative Fiction* (2002), it is important to differentiate between the *focalizer* as "the centre of consciousness" and the *narrator*, or "the user of the third [or first] person."¹⁸ Alicia Otano clarifies:

The narrator transmits the child's point of view (his or her earlier self) through what the child perceived or focalized, yet the older version of the self controls past, present, and future, therefore showing these focalizers as separate agents. . . . The former self "sees" in a different way from the adult self, a "higher narratorial authority" which in retrospect, having more information, chooses to interpret, or to let events speak for themselves.¹⁹

In the case of *The Distance Between Us*, Grande is the narrator, providing the reader at times with a greater context and perspective afforded by time and experience, while young Reyna is the focalizer through whose eyes we see events.²⁰ A consequence of using a child's perspective is the increased potential for affective connection with the reader. Depending on an author's ability to craft a sympathetic and likable character, both a child and adult character can certainly elicit compassion from a reader, but one's natural instinct to protect both the child and childhood heightens the reader's sensitivities. As Debra A. Castillo explains, "the cute child immigrant becomes the most telling case possible for displaying the inhumanity of current immigration policy: the perfect affective response to the xenophobe's emotional overlaid soundbite stridency."²¹ Further, Darrell Lockhart posits that "although a child's voice commands less authority," at the same time it "enjoys more freedom of expression" and thus can be employed "as a subversive means of criticism."²² In Grande's memoir, although the child may not be directly subversive, she is a vehicle for a type of emotional truth-telling that cuts through the sterile deliberation of adult policy debate. In particular, this technique helps to reach an audience for whom the described experiences are foreign. At the same time, the focalizer child can be effective in representing those readers who have gone through a similar journey.

To date little has been published on *The Distance Between Us*, though it has earned popular praise.²³ Novelist and journalist Héctor Tobar calls it a "ground-breaking addition to the literature of the Latino immigrant experi-

ence.”²⁴ He focuses on the connection that the narrator seeks to maintain with Mexico, via her discussion of her umbilical cord, an issue we discuss later. In the concluding chapter of his book *Collective Identity and Cultural Resistance in Contemporary Chicana/o Autobiography* (2016), Juan Velasco discusses *The Distance Between Us* as exemplary of a discourse of interrelationality, wherein divisions of nation, language, and geography cede to the connections of lives, family, and memory.²⁵ Velasco commends Grande for the structured symbolism tying each nation to a parent, thereby linking them through her own origin, spatialized memories, and physical journey. Focusing specifically on space, Angelica Lozano-Alonso analyzes “spatial justice” in several of Grande’s works, including *The Distance Between Us*. She argues that Grande’s works “demand spatial justice for her characters” by “[shedding] light on the economic realities that force people to leave their countries of origin.”²⁶ While the critic argues that in Grande’s first book, the novel *Across a Hundred Mountains*, the protagonist crosses the US-Mexico border in order to find a just home, she does not consider this issue in light of Grande’s memoir.²⁷ In regard to the memoir she focuses on the physical abuse Reyna suffers as “a metaphor of the human rights violations and spatial injustices created by the US-Mexico border.”²⁸ Lozano-Alonso’s focus on issues of spatiality and justice as significant in all of Grande’s work suggests a further dimension to our consideration of nostalgia. In fact, nostalgia has spatial dimensions; when it operates in a restorative manner, for example, by cherishing particular memories, it temporalizes space.²⁹ Thus our focus on nostalgia offers another way in which we may understand the spatial dimensions of Grande’s work.

This article contributes to scholarship on Grande by focusing on one of her works that has received less attention. Furthermore, our focus on gender and nostalgia reflects a new approach to Grande’s memoir that nevertheless places this text in relation to other works of Latina/o immigrant literature, allowing for productive understandings of Grande’s contributions to Latina/o writing. In addition, our close reading of Reyna’s narration privileges an important aspect of the text—the perspective of a child immigrant. Understanding how nostalgia functions in relation to gender and from the perspective of the child immigrant offers further appreciation of the standpoints and significance of the work and opens up new avenues for research and scholarship within the wider field of Latina/o literary and cultural production.

GENDER AND NOSTALGIA: MAMÁ

Throughout Grande’s memoir, and particularly in its first half, her mother and her early life in Mexico are remembered in an entanglement of deprivation and nostalgia. Midway through the text Reyna contemplates her sensory recall

of Mexico: “I touched me to my mother and to Even though I liked this explains that the umbilic betraying mother,” is one the photograph of her fa longing for her home, c and country. Creating a c the United States, sugge Reyna must struggle to r Her sister attempts to he part of Reyna’s body. Her Mexican home, and in h with the notion that no r mother, and that earth, chic split but focuses it— places at once—and the the US without abandon that it is Mago who help one who has experience bridge this divide by ren

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of Mexico: "I touched my belly button, and I remembered the bond that tied me to my mother and to my country. *Would it be so terrible to be sent back?* Even though I liked this beautiful place, I still missed my home."³⁰ Velasco explains that the umbilical cord, which connects Reyna with her "tender and betraying mother," is one of the memoir's "two main symbols," the other being the photograph of her father.³¹ In her meditation Reyna expresses a feeling of longing for her home, contrasting her current place with that of her mother and country. Creating a distinction between home and not home, Mexico and the United States, suggests a psychic division between self and non-self that Reyna must struggle to reconcile.³² Who can she be if she is not in her home? Her sister attempts to help her reconcile this by fostering a connection with a part of Reyna's body. Her umbilical cord was buried under the dirt floor of her Mexican home, and in her mother's absence her sister Mago consoles Reyna with the notion that no matter the distance, she will stay connected with their mother, and that earth, through the cord. This does not really solve the psychic split but focuses it—Mago suggests a way for Reyna to be, literally, in two places at once—and the means through which she can fully inhabit her life in the US without abandoning the parts of herself that are Mexican. But the fact that it is Mago who helps Reyna see this is also significant—she is the only one who has experienced almost everything that Reyna has. She helps Reyna bridge this divide by remaining by her side.

Grande feminizes her homeland of Mexico, equating it with her mother and her biological birth, but this homeland was neither nurturing nor supportive. In fact, in Reyna's memory her mother is associated with much of the pain and deprivation she faced in Mexico: "the thought of my mother living apart from me made my body tremble, my teeth clench in my mouth, my eyes burn as they did whenever we had no money to buy gas and I would have to fan the hot coals in the brazier as our meal slowly cooked."³³ Reyna voices the repercussions of both emotional and physical want; her mother's absence seems to engender the same corporeal reactions that cooking over hot coals does. Because money her parents sent did not often reach its intended recipients (Reyna and her siblings), Reyna's emotional neglect is not offset by monetary compensation from her immigrant parents. To the contrary, the narrative explicitly describes how her childhood was spent living in a shack, abdomen swelled with roundworms, hair covered in lice, and bathing in a dung-infested canal.

Reyna confronts her nostalgia for Iguala and Mexico directly through a return visit as a young adult. Within the text, Grande utilizes the future anterior tense to embed this future memory in a discussion of her childhood. In a chapter mostly focused on Mago's sixth-grade graduation celebration,

Grande, in the narrative voice, tells readers that years later, she would return to visit Don Oscar, who served as the padrino to Mago's party, and his family. While Reyna as the child focalizer attending this party is struck by the status and wealth displayed by Mago's benefactor, when the return visit is focalized through young adult Reyna, she sees their lifestyle as normative: "I would find myself not gawking at their two-story brick house because by then I would have set foot in similar houses in the United States," she tells readers.³⁴ Reyna's comparison of middle-class Mexican and US homes tempers her estimation of the former. When she runs into her cousin Lupita working for Don Oscar's family as a maid, Reyna is prompted to consider her life if she had stayed in Mexico. Grande tells readers that she "knew then, as I do now, that could also have been my fate," affirming her decision to migrate and remain in the US.³⁵

Although she confronts the reality of Mexico through this return visit, Grande does not abandon her nostalgia for her homeland. Moreover, and in spite of her increasingly strained relationship with her mother, she continues to associate her mother and Mexico with a feeling of longing. Grande's maintenance of significant affective ties to Mexico and her mother suggests that her connection to the country is not based on any sense of logic, or a desire for a particular material existence, but rather on an emotional state that she wishes to inhabit. Later in the memoir she recalls how her mother's words urge her not to put Mexico fully behind her:

Two thousand miles was the distance between us and Mami. Between me and the place I had been born. Between me and my childhood, however painful it had been. I turned to look behind me as the car sped on. Mami had once said she didn't want me to forget where I came from.³⁶

Here Grande develops a portrait of home that is physical and emotional. Significantly, it is her distance from Mexico and her mother that fosters the distinction between "home" and "not home." As Biddy Martin and Chandra Mohanty explain, "'not being home' is a matter of realizing that home was an illusion."³⁷ Moments in which she confronts Mexico, even as they allow her to acknowledge the loss that she suffered there and would suffer if she were to return, nevertheless also underline distinctions between Mexico and the US that foment feelings of longing and nostalgia for a past and a future that could be.

While the absence of her mother is a catalyst for emotional and physical hardship, Grande's portrait of her mother is not wholly unsympathetic, and we can read in her rendering of Juana both an acknowledgment and implicit critique of idealized notions of motherhood. Grande then is similar to other Chicana writers who depict mothers who fail to live up to societal expecta-

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tions but who offer "motives for [the mother's] limited ability to nurture."³⁸ Young Reyna explains that two years after migrating to "El Otro Lado" (the other side), her father Natalio sends for her mother. As Juana prepares to go north, she never fails to tell neighbors in their small colonia that "my husband needs me at his side."³⁹ Reyna notes her anger at this sentence and the implication it contains that her children did not need her as well. But both Juana and Natalio's pride is impacted by their sense of gender and expectations—Natalio wants to fulfill his duty as a husband and father by providing for his family, and Juana wants to fulfill her duty as a woman by being needed by a man. This first chapter of the memoir establishes Juana as a woman whose understanding of herself and her relationships exists within a rigid patriarchal and heterosexual context.

Several years later, however, Juana returns, humiliated that her husband has found another woman. She explains that Natalio had cheated on her and threatened her and their new child, Betty. The children are at first happy to have their mother back and to be able to leave their paternal grandmother's house, where they were poorly cared for and abused. But the reunification that the children longed for is difficult for Juana. Grande recalls: "In August, 1982, two months after my mother had returned from El Otro Lado, the peso was devalued for the second time that year due to the national debt crisis."⁴⁰ The little money they had did not go far, and Juana found readjusting to the hardships in Mexico difficult.

But what was harder for her was to have to explain to everyone who knew her why she had come back. . . . I didn't realize back then how difficult it must have been for my mother to look at her friends and admit that her husband had indeed left her for another woman, just as they had once teased her that he would.⁴¹

Notable in this description are the juxtaposition of emotional and financial need—and preeminence of the emotional. The financial hardships were difficult, but Juana is most injured by her loss of status as a rejected woman. As Ana Castillo notes, many heterosexual women "have been trained to reserve their tenderness for men."⁴² Thus Juana seeks an object of her affection in the form of another male lover.

Grande's mother soon seeks solace in other men; some time after moving back to Iguala, Juana meets a man who sells insurance next to the record shop in which she works. His dream is to be a *lucha libre* fighter (wrestler), and when he asks Juana to accompany him to Acapulco where he has a contract, she leaves her children once again. This second abandonment comes quickly;

the children had no sooner learned that their mother had a boyfriend than she told them she was leaving. She does not spend weeks holding her head up high, proud to be joining her husband in El Norte as she had before. She simply tells the children, "I'm going away with him," and leaves town while they are at school.⁴³ Later Grande explains that her mother was "two people in one: a woman who wanted to be loved by a man, and a mother who wanted to do right by her children."⁴⁴ Within the narrative, Juana appears to struggle with these two wants, with the former winning over the latter.

In this instance Grande juxtaposes Mami with her other major maternal figure—her older sister Mago. Speaking of Mago's willingness to make a huge sacrifice—refusing to migrate to the US with their father if Reyna is not taken, Grande writes that "destiny had made [Mago] become my little mother, and unlike my mother, Mago's maternal instincts won over her need to save herself."⁴⁵ Grande takes advantage of her adult narrator, in contrast to the child focalizer, in order to interpret her mother's actions semi-sympathetically and acknowledge her predicament. However, she also, quite understandably, views Juana as being unable to place the needs of others before her own, something Mago is able to do for Reyna. This memory establishes the importance of Mago and specifically Mago's willingness to do something that neither Juana nor Natalio was willing to do—fulfill Reyna's emotional and physical needs by taking her to the United States.

Juana's search for a place to belong is constrained and complicated by the cultural assumptions surrounding motherhood. Within the binary that defines and circumscribes ideals of motherhood, Juana is a "bad mother." Good mothers are those that most resemble the Virgin Mary—pure women who are wholly devoted to their children and completely asexual. Good mothers stand in opposition to the figure of Mary Magdalene, a prostitute.⁴⁶ By possessing and acting on her own sexual and emotional needs, Juana fails to fulfill the mandates of a good mother/Virgin Mary and instead takes on characteristics of a bad mother/Mary Magdalene. This cultural construction is impacted by race, class, and nationality. For Chicanas and Mexicanas, the binary between good mothers and bad mothers is represented by La Malinche and La Llorona, on the one hand, and La Virgen, on the other. Women who reject or fail to perform "proper" motherhood are linked to the former two figures, figures of revulsion and fear in Chicana and Mexicana society. In leaving her children for her lover, Juana fulfills aspects of the La Malinche and La Llorona myths. She embodies the "sold-out" mother who "bought into the cultural constructs created for [her and her] daughters and [is] doomed to a life of misery and poverty."⁴⁷ While these icons are pervasive and perpetuated

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by women and men, it is important to recognize that they originate within a male-centric and patriarchal society where men have the power to define the relationship between mothers and children.⁴⁸

Despite the significance of issues such as race, class, and nationality, idealized portraits of motherhood tend to ignore these factors. The idealized mother, Cristina Herrera explains, is a woman "with all the answers who appears to live a relatively happy life, apparently unburdened by any concerns outside her obligations as dutiful mother."⁴⁹ And yet, for women of color, the mother's situation—racial, economic, or both—must be taken into account.⁵⁰ As Grande's memoir makes clear, the national context and immigration status of mothers is also relevant. In many patriarchal, heteronormative cultures, it is the mother's job to perpetuate the status quo regarding gender, leading to a fraught mother-daughter relationship, particularly when daughters may interpret their mothers as condoning sexism.⁵¹ This tension may be exacerbated by the fact that patriarchal societies encourage competition between women wherein women, including mothers and daughters, "are encouraged to view the other as enemy rather than ally."⁵² We can see the impact of patriarchy and heterosexism on Grande's family when she depicts her mother's relationships with men and holds her mother accountable for placing romantic relationships before her children. Even though Juana has in many ways fulfilled patriarchal societal expectations by placing male lovers above herself and her children, she has also failed to embody ideas of the self-sacrificing mother. The result of this failure is not understanding or sympathy, but rather scorn; women such as Juana who are seen as rejecting motherhood may face the "Llorona complex," and suffer humiliation and ridicule as a result.⁵³

Within this ideology that ignores the realities of women's lives, Juana—and indeed all women—would inevitably fall short of meeting the standards of a good mother. Nevertheless, cultural enactments of idealized mothers abound. Ideal maternity is exemplified through particular enactments of filial devotion—marked by constant attention and presence—the kind of enactments that are impossible for working-class women, especially those who must migrate without documentation.⁵⁴ While cultural representations such as the Mexican film *La misma luna* may "accurately [represent] the psychological reality of an undocumented Mexican migrant mother, whose emotional pain would likely be inflected by the ideals of *marianismo*," such representations also "refuse to explore more complex dimensions" of migrant mothers.⁵⁵ Grande's narrative joins a larger corpus of works by Chicana writers that tries to present more complex portraits of Chicana mothers. These works speak back to dominant discourses that portray Chicana mothers as "silent, passive, and powerless."⁵⁶ Even as she presents a complicated, even painful, portrayal

of her mother, Reyna is not able to abandon completely her own ideas of an ideal mother. Grande's continued idealization of her mother speaks to the strength of these cultural and social constructions; their endurance even as she ages also drives home how nostalgia works with and through not just objects, things, or peoples but ideals and values as well.

While Reyna and her mother both end up immigrating to the United States, Grande continues to associate her mother with Mexico. Her mother fosters this connection by continuing to live "the way she had . . . in Mexico," as Grande narrates:

Ever since she had become a legal resident of the United States, my mother had been going to Mexico every year, sometimes even twice a year. . . . Even though we had suggested she learn English and find herself a better job, my mother insisted on living the way she had lived in Mexico or the way she had lived when she was still undocumented. She refused to learn English and how to drive a car. She refused to look for a job that could offer other benefits—such as medical insurance and a pension plan, and where she could finally get off welfare.⁵⁷

Interestingly, though Grande expresses nostalgia for her homeland, she criticizes her mother for not giving up her old "Mexican" ways and assimilating more to the cultural expectations of the United States. This push-pull between understanding and resentment of her mother speaks to the tensions in mother-daughter relationships and echoes the conflicting feelings of nostalgia and relief at her departure from Mexico that Grande attempts to reconcile with respect to her identity as a Mexican American.

THE MAN BEHIND THE GLASS

While Grande associates her mother with Mexico and with deprivation and nostalgia simultaneously, her descriptions of her father are correlated with the discourse of the border and El Otro Lado. Natalio Grande left Mexico when she was two, and from that point until he returned eight years later he was known to her as an imagined figure housed in a framed photograph: he was "the Man Behind the Glass." The glass separating her from his likeness echoes the selective permeability of the US-Mexico border that lies between their bodies. This barrier distorts matters and keeps her from comprehending either her father's person or his geography. When young Reyna moves to her paternal grandmother's house, she clutches closely the picture of her father. When her mother points out that her paternal grandmother's house will have plenty of pictures of her father, Reyna insists: "But *this* is my papi." The adult

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narrator expands on her juvenile perspective: "She [Mom] didn't understand that this paper face behind a wall of glass was the only father I'd ever known."⁵⁸ Reyna's photograph of Natalio literally becomes her father; the framed picture both indexes the loss that Reyna has endured—if he were present, the photograph would not be necessary or so highly valued—and becomes a way of mitigating that loss. In this way the picture records the trauma of migration and "becomes the material object that connects" Reyna to her father.⁵⁹ While her actual father remains an abstract idea, the framed photo is a concrete representation that she can grasp and onto which she can project emotions and ideas. Similarly, when her brother and she imagine driving to the US in a junked car, Reyna remarks on the distance between them and their parents: "As he drove, I looked at the Mountain That Has a Headache and was sure El Otro Lado was over there. Mago said El Otro Lado was really far away, and back then nothing seemed farther away than an unknown town on the other side of the mountain."⁶⁰ Faced with the difficulty of conceptualizing a land so far away, the cloud-wreathed "Mountain That Has a Headache" visible from her town becomes her reference point from which to imagine the other side. Such an unknowable place at an unfathomable distance further represents the ungraspable, unreachable father to the comprehension of a child.

Living in Mexico, Reyna and her sister imagine the possibilities of both the return of their estranged father and life on the other side. In his absence Mago especially inflates the perception of their father as a figure of salvation, influencing Reyna. "He will come back for us. I know he will," I clung to Mago's words. With Mami gone again, our father was the only hope we had, however small that hope was. . . . We needed to believe in something, for what would happen once we lost our faith in both our parents and had nothing left to hope for?"⁶¹ This exchange illustrates how despite, or perhaps because of, his absence, Natalio is associated with the future, with opportunity, and with progress. Concurrently Reyna's perception of the other side of the border is influenced by a prevailing discourse of veneration. As she explains, "Every time someone mentioned El Otro Lado, there was a reverence in their voice, as if they were talking about something holy, like God. Anything that came from over there was coveted, whether it was a toy, or a pair of shoes."⁶² In both instances the distant abstraction is described in a language of possibility and power.

Reyna's longing for the United States is a significant motivation for her crossing. Given her mother's increasing neglect, her father and the crossing necessary to live with him become the siblings' only hope of having a parent who will take care of them. Three months after crossing without documentation, Reyna is warned by her father: "Papi said we had broken the law by com-

ing to the United States, but back then I didn't understand much about laws. All I could think of was why there would be a law that would prevent children from being with their father. That was the only reason I'd come to this country, after all."⁶³ At that age, her migration was not motivated by the pragmatic but by affect; she yearned to be with the father she had been dreaming of on the other side of the glass. Grande's father is intertwined with the border, El Otro Lado, and migration through the motivations, ideations, and descriptions in her memoir. This crossing reflects an emotional reconciliation with a parent for whom she has long yearned but also spurs confrontations with physical and emotional abuse.

Once in the United States, Reyna interestingly abandons the discourse of veneration for one of practicality. Faced with the abusive reality of living with her father in the United States, she clings to the prospect of a better life as justification. Upon their arrival to Los Angeles, the three siblings move in with their father and his girlfriend Mila to a one-bedroom apartment. Their father is an alcoholic who physically harms and emotionally belittles them.

Even the time he punched me in the nose so hard it broke, as I watched the drops of blood landing on my tennis shoe, I told myself that maybe he was right. We shouldn't expect anything better from him. He didn't forget us, after all. We were here because of him. *I* was in this country because of him. *I begged* him to bring me. I got what I wanted, after all. How could I complain now, simply because things weren't all that we had hoped for?⁶⁴

Reyna adopts the self-incriminating psychology of an abuse victim. She doesn't view her father as a positive figure, but she does regard him as one with great power who has granted her this opportunity, and she believes it is her place to accept whatever punishment he doles out in order to gain the advantages of her migration. Throughout, Reyna clings to the thought that her father had once told her that "one day I would be somebody in this country" and feels a burden to pay back that debt.⁶⁵ While Grande's rendering of this scene evokes a larger context of gender-based violence, Velasco contextualizes Grande's perspective within other immigrant narratives, explaining that children face "overwhelming pressure . . . to embrace education as the road to success" and writing that Reyna's abuse was a "product of those forces."⁶⁶ This perspective offers a way of approaching both Natalio's abuse and Reyna's response.

A parallel can be drawn between Reyna's need to be acknowledged by her father and the recognition she will later require from the State as an undocumented immigrant living in the US. Natalio's extended absence and initial

hesitation to bring her to the US had become my sole reason for being seen by her father. And because they are undocumented

"One way or another. Back then, I hadn't thought about the fact that I couldn't express my silent, I thought I

In this passage Grande attempts to convey the innocence of her father's actions with a more complex perspective than she hadn't known . . ." Her father, victimized by her father, other paternity—then wrapped up with her

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hesitation to bring her haunts her to the point where "My father's acceptance had become my sole reason for being."⁶⁷ A repeated motif is her desire to be seen by her father. Although she comes to be with him in the US, as long as they are undocumented Reyna finds that there they must strive *not* to be seen.

"One way or another," Papi said, "we will stop living in the shadows." Back then, I hadn't known what exactly he'd meant by that, but when I thought about the way Mrs. Anderson had ignored me, about the fact that I couldn't express myself in class and my lack of English kept me silent, I thought I understood what Papi meant.⁶⁸

In this passage Grande takes advantage of the dual perspective of her memoir to convey the innocent practical concern of the child while complementing it with a more comprehensive adult understanding signaled by "Back then, I hadn't known . . ." Having crossed the glass border to be with and be recognized by her father, Reyna now finds herself striving to be validated by another paternity—that of the State. When this affirmation comes, it is again wrapped up with her father, who bestows it and their open future upon them:

We had become legal residents of the United States! Finally we could let go of our fear of being deported and look to the future with hope. Papi said, 'I've done my part. The rest is up to you.' And the three of us clutched our green cards in our hands, imagining the possibilities.⁶⁹

Such naïvely optimistic and clichéd language, while understandable considering the very real advantages conferred by legal status, nevertheless recalls the child's need for her father's love.

Grande's discussion of her father and El Otro Lado indicates the extent to which the young child has internalized and adopted ideas of the American Dream. Her father encourages these ideas by stressing to his children the importance of education—that cornerstone of upward social and economic mobility in the US. In a particularly painful moment Papi beats Mago for missing school after the young girl is too terrified to explain that she stayed home because she got her period. For readers critical of US immigration policy and the social and racial stratification it causes, this "buying into" the American Dream on the part of Grande can be perplexing. And yet Grande's young narrator is not alone in her simultaneous narrative of exclusion from the American Dream and ardent belief in it. Marta Caminero-Santangelo analyzes the narrative structure of *testimonios* by undocumented youth, pointing out that they share "form and function" and "tell a *collective* story of oppression, disenfranchisement, and nonrecognition."⁷⁰ Caminero-Santangelo points out that in their narratives, the youth underscore their

"Americanness" in order to counter xenophobic arguments about Latina/o immigrants who don't assimilate.⁷¹ Claudia A. Anguiano and Karma Chávez find a similar positionality in their examination of posts on the DREAM Act Portal, a website utilized by youth to voice their support for the DREAM Act.⁷² The authors focus on the vernacular rhetoric employed by posters on the portal and highlight the ways in which many fail to "challenge the relationship between the values found in the American Dream myth and the enactment of such exclusionary policies," such that they "[naturalize] the value of the American Dream myth."⁷³ Anguiano and Chávez look at how posters participate in the construction of ideas of "good" and "bad" immigrants whereby they, as hard-working, law-abiding students, fulfill the former. Reyna echoes common DREAMer rhetoric that emphasizes their lack of choice in migration, and therefore their "innocence," when she explains that she doesn't understand why what she did was wrong since "the only reason [she'd] come [to the US]" was to be with her father.⁷⁴ According to Caminero-Santangelo, this structure is indicative of a *bildungsroman* plot, in which the narrator passes from childhood/innocence to adulthood/knowledge.⁷⁵ However, this framing also suggests that family reunification is an appropriate reason to alter current immigration policy without questioning some of the more fundamental inequalities in US policy. In their attempt to understand the positions of the youth, Anguiano and Chávez acknowledge that in a US environment hostile to Latina/os and undocumented immigrants, these young people "have limited resources available in the construction of their narratives."⁷⁶ Taking into consideration the status of the youth, they conclude that "the naturalization of the American Dream *by these particular subjects* is a radical act," which, through its performance and following Judith Butler's ideas of gender performance, may reveal "the very fiction of American identity."⁷⁷ These considerations are useful in understanding Natalio's and Reyna's approach to the United States. Specifically, within the polarized and xenophobic climate in which they immigrated, they lack access to more nuanced ways of approaching immigration and immigration policy. Thus we may view their adoption of ideas of the American Dream as a counterhegemonic rendering of this discourse. Moreover, taking into account their specific status as marginalized people, their espousal of ideals of this dream directly challenges those who would deny undocumented and formerly undocumented people even rhetorical access to US ideals.

While Juana refuses to avail herself of opportunities in the US and Natalio refuses to help his children negotiate their status as immigrants, Mago offers another approach to family and migration that is important to Reyna's self-development. Unlike Reyna, who at one point wonders if it would "be so

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terrible to be sent back," Mago rejects any actual or theoretical return to Mexico.⁷⁸ On their first trip back to Mexico after immigrating eight years earlier, Mago displays disgust for the country of her birth. She complains about public trash, the state of roads, and dust. While this attitude suggests that she has firmly bought into ideas of US progress and opportunity, Mago does not adopt an attitude of gratefulness toward their father for bringing them to the US. Rather, in a very "American" fashion, she fights consistently for her independence, eventually securing a job for herself and moving out of the house. Still, she maintains her emotional and financial responsibilities toward her younger siblings—it is only through Mago's generosity that Reyna is able to have a quinceañera or take the return trip to Mexico. Mago's actions and decisions are not wholly positive—Reyna describes how Mago develops a harmful affinity for and dependence on credit, such that she accrues significant debt and drops out of college to work full time. Mago serves as an example to Reyna of the negative repercussions of an extreme rejection of Mexico and acceptance of American ideals, fashions, and attitudes. At the same time, however, Mago provides a significant example of standing up to their father, and this example is no doubt instrumental in Reyna's decision to move out of her father's house to attend college. Thus while Mago adopts certain aspects of the American Dream, she also serves as an important reminder to Reyna that she can both embrace and reject aspects of Mexican and American culture to forge her own path.

Mago harnesses her experiences, relationships, and perspectives to forge a transnational Chicana identity and viewpoint. In doing so, she joins and continues a legacy of Chicana women who have drawn from Mexican and US traditions and values to create specifically Chicana transnational spaces. Sonia Saldívar-Hull explains that Chicana writers and activists such as Gloria Anzaldúa, Sandra Cisneros, and Helena María Viramontes explore connections with women writers and activists in Latin America in their establishment of transfronteriza feminism.⁷⁹ Cultural production has been a significant means through which to express "a transnational vision of the United States, Mexico, and Latin America."⁸⁰ As Juanita Heredia writes, characters such as Denise Chávez's Tere from *Loving Pedro Infante* form a "transnational border feminist culture" by "negotiating values of the past" (associated with Mexico) with "a more progressive Chicana vision of the future."⁸¹ This delineation between the past and future seems to build on common tropes of nations south of the United States being associated with a regressive, oppressive culture and society. However, both the fictional Tere and Grande's sister Mago work out their negotiation within a "community of peers"—other Chicanas, Mexicanas, and immigrants.⁸² Their transnationalism

is defined by this negotiation, which is neither wholly assimilation into nor rejection of US-based values and cultures. Like the characters in Heredia's study, the writers analyzed by Saldívar-Hull negotiate questions of race, class, gender, and sexuality across and between national borders. While Heredia and Saldívar-Hull examine transnational subjectivity through cultural production and social justice work, Grande's memoir offers a portrait of how child migrants form and articulate their transnational consciousness. Rather than working through cultural forms or social movements, Mago forges a transnational identity through her experiences with her parents and extended family, her movements between Mexico and the United States, her encounters with racism and xenophobia within the United States, and her relationships with her siblings.

As the text makes clear, the children must struggle to establish themselves in relation to their parents and particularly in relation to their father. Natalio's death depicts the continued entanglement between his and Reyna's immigration to the United States but also offers the memoir the opportunity to illustrate the extent to which the author has been able to reconcile her complex bond with her father and her adopted country. Grande is in her mid-30s when her father becomes terminally ill, and in speaking of this time period she recalls the trials she experienced, and her attempts to forgive her father, and begins a process of reconciliation after years of little communication. Notably, she describes her reconciliation with her father in terms of immigration: "I began to find my way back to my father, although the journey—like the one I took across the US-Mexico border—was not at all easy."⁸³ Again, she conjoins her father and El Otro Lado, in this instance by comparing her emotional journey with her physical one. This suggests the extent to which the physical migration from Mexico to the United States continues to define Grande's emotional experience and especially her relationship with her father. This relationship is invoked again at the very end of the memoir, when Grande is with her father as his life support is turned off. While conflating her dual journeys (to the US and back to her father), she finds justification for each. "As I held my father's hand, and my life with him flashed through my mind, I thought about that question I had often asked myself: if I had known what life with my father would be like, would I have still followed him to El Otro Lado? *You made me who I am*, I thought as he took his last breath. And I knew then that the answer to my question was yes."⁸⁴ For Velasco, this incident reflects Grande walking the "'distance' to be herself."⁸⁵ But the experience also involves a reflection of the distance she has already covered. As Grande views it, the abuse and hardships that she endured are vindicated by her having been given a shot at the aspiration and upward mobility signified by the American

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CONCLUSION

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Dream. When she addresses "you," she is crediting both her father and her migration. Ultimately, conflating the two allows her to reconcile with her father and come to peace with her transnational identity. However, in order to do so, Grande, like the young DREAMers discussed by Anguiano and Chávez above, relies on a narrative that suggests a belief in the promises of the American Dream.⁸⁶

CONCLUSION

The Distance Between Us was published in 2012, just as the United States was about to experience a sharp increase in the number of child migrants at the US-Mexico border. In 2014 nearly forty thousand unaccompanied minors, the vast majority of them from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, were apprehended at the border, and the subsequent years saw an increase in these numbers.⁸⁷ These children, who are fleeing gangs, poverty, and the legacies of US-backed civil wars, face an increasingly anti-immigrant environment in the United States. While politicians, educators, lawyers, and activists debate immigrant rights, the voices of migrants themselves are seldom heard. In a recent guest post on the blog "Latinos in Kid Lit," Grande explains that her story counters racist and xenophobic ideas about immigrants such as those perpetuated by Donald Trump.⁸⁸ Listening closely to the stories of immigrant children offers a crucial perspective on questions of immigration, economic justice, and human rights. As our analysis has demonstrated, children often frame their own narratives both within a familial context and within ideologies and tropes heavily influenced by culture and gender. Grande's memoir consistently associates Juana with Mexico and feelings of loss and nostalgia, while Natalio is contextualized within ideas of progress, the United States, and the American Dream. These associations reflect how Reyna attempts to understand and negotiate her own relationship to Mexico, the United States, and her family of origin within larger cultural and societal ideas of mothers, fathers, progress, and betrayal. Reyna's negotiation Mago plays an important role—offering Reyna the consistent care and attention she needs but fails to receive from her parents as well as a cautionary example of hyper-assimilation through financial recklessness. The portrait of Mago encourages us to pay closer attention to the role that siblings may play in processes of immigrant adjustment. Ultimately, we hope that our analysis has offered a more complex understanding of the perspectives at play within Grande's narrative and that this work will form the basis for, and encourage, further research on narratives involving child migrants.

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NOTES

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4. Guisela Latorre and Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, "Editor's Note: Reproduction, Motherhood and Sexuality," *Frontiers* 35, no. 1 (2014): vii–viii.
5. Catherine Wiley, "Teatro Chicano and the Seduction of Nostalgia," *MELUS* 23, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 99–115.
6. Wiley, "Teatro Chicano," 99.
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8. Fatima Mujcinovic, "Multiple Articulations of Exile in US Latina Literature: Confronting Exilic Absence and Trauma," *MELUS* 28, no. 4 (Winter 2003): 169.
9. Wiley, "Teatro Chicano," 100.
10. Alicia Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries: Latino Cultural Production in the US-Mexico Borderlands* (New York: NYU Press, 2008), 286. According to Schmidt Camacho, "The retablo, or votive painting, is a popular form of devotion that renders compensation for the miraculous intercession of the patron saint. The paintings, rendered in oil paint on wood or tin, typically depict an individual reckoning with a personal ordeal" (284).
11. Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries*, 299.
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13. Norma Klahn, "Literary (Re)Mappings: Autobiographical (Dis)Placements by Chicana Writers," in *Chicana Feminisms: A Critical Reader*, ed. Gabriela F. Arredondo et al. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 117.

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17. Personal cc
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19. Alicia Ot, *Bildungsroman* (M
20. For the pu, focalizer voice as
21. Debra A. C, *of Affect: Across l*
22. Kavita Panjabi (D
23. Darrell B. l and Rosa Nissán's 1980–1995, ed. Kri
24. Héctor Tol, *tween Us*," *Los An* /entertainment/la-
25. Juan Velas, *Chicana/o Autobic*
26. Angélica L, *in Negotiating Lati* Sánchez (Newcastl
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16. Norma Cantú, "Memoir, Autobiography, Testimonio," in *The Routledge Companion to Latino/a Literature*, ed. Suzanne Bost and Frances R. Aparicio (New York: Routledge, 2013), 320.
17. Personal conversation with author, September 2016.
18. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2002), 75.
19. Alicia Otano, *Speaking the Past: Child Perspective in the Asian American Bildungsroman* (Münster: Lit, 2004), 15.
20. For the purposes of this essay, we will refer to this child/younger contemporary focalizer voice as "Reyna" and to the author and retrospective narrator as "Grande."
21. Debra A. Castillo, "(Don't) Tell: Children in the Borderzone," in *Cartographies of Affect: Across Borders in South Asia and the Americas*, ed. Debra A. Castillo and Kavita Panjabi (Delhi: Worldview, 2011), 125.
22. Darrell B. Lockhart, "Growing Up Jewish in Mexico: Sabina Berman's *La bobe* and Rosa Nissán's *Novia que te vea*," in *The Other Mirror: Women's Narrative in Mexico, 1980–1995*, ed. Kristine Ibsen (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1997), 159–74.
23. In 2016 Grande adapted her memoir for a middle grade audience (10–14 years old).
24. Héctor Tobar, "Review: A Courageous Voice Emerges in 'The Distance Between Us,'" *Los Angeles Times*, August 19, 2012, <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/aug/19/entertainment/la-ca-reyna-grande-20120819>.
25. Juan Velasco, *Collective Identity and Cultural Resistance in Contemporary Chicana/o Autobiography* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).
26. Angélica Lozano Alonso, "Seeking Spatial Justice in Reyna Grande's Works," in *Negotiating Latinidades: Understanding Identities within Space*, ed. Kathryn Quinn-Sánchez (Newcastle Upon Tyne, England: Cambridge Scholars, 2015), 73.
27. Lozano Alonso, "Spatial Justice," 73.
28. Lozano Alonso, "Spatial Justice," 74.
29. Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 49.
30. Grande, *Distance Between Us*, 174.
31. Velasco, *Collective Identity*, 195.
32. Eleonora Rao, "'Home' and the Narrative of an Impossible Nostos," *Commonwealth Essays and Studies* 37, no. 2 (July 2015): 27–34.
33. Grande, *Distance Between Us*, 130.
34. Grande, *Distance Between Us*, 133.
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36. Grande, *Distance Between Us*, 159.
37. Biddy Martin and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "What's Home Got to Do With It?" in *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 90.
38. María González, "Love and Conflict: Mexican American Women Writers as Daughters," in *Women of Color: Mother-Daughter Relationships in 20th Century Literature*, ed. Elizabeth Brown-Guillory (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 153–71.
39. Grande, *Distance Between Us*, 7.
40. Grande, *Distance Between Us*, 77.
41. Grande, *Distance Between Us*, 77.
42. Ana Castillo, *Massacre of the Dreamers: Essays on Xicanisma* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994), 191.
43. Grande, *Distance Between Us*, 92–93.
44. Grande, *Distance Between Us*, 135.
45. Grande, *Distance Between Us*, 149.
46. Heather Hewett, "Mothering Across Borders: Narratives of Immigrant Mothers in the United States," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 37, nos. 3 and 4 (Fall–Winter, 2009): 126.
47. González, "Love and Conflict," 159. La Malinche refers to Malintzin Tenepal, an indigenous woman sold into slavery and "given" to the conquering Spaniards. Eventually serving as Cortés's translator with Aztec leaders, she is popularly understood as an unfaithful woman who sold out her people and aided the enemy. Her status as traitor is explicitly sexualized and gendered in the cultural imagination.
48. González, "Love and Conflict," 155.
49. Cristina Herrera, *Contemporary Chicana Literature: (Re)writing the Maternal Script* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2014), 20.
50. Herrera, *Contemporary Chicana Literature*, 20.
51. Herrera, *Contemporary Chicana Literature*, 11.
52. Herrera, *Contemporary Chicana Literature*, 11.
53. Castillo, *Massacre of the Dreamers*, 186.
54. Hewett, "Mothering Across Borders," 126.
55. Marianismo refers to the veneration of women and particular gendered expectations within Latin American cultures. The concept draws from reverence for the Virgin Mary and suggests that women are semi-divine, "morally and spiritually superior to men" and "able to endure immense pain and sorrow." Often viewed as a counterpart to *machismo*, the idea was discussed and opposed by Chicana feminists, who pointed out its oppressive and narrow mandates for women and femininity. Kandace Falcón, "Marianismo," in *Multicultural America: A Multimedia Encyclopedia*, ed. Carlos E. Cortés, vol. 3, pp. 1407–8 (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2014). Hewett, "Mothering Across Borders," 128.

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56. Herrera, *Contemporary Chicana Literature*, 11.
57. Grande, *Distance Between Us*, 274.
58. Grande, *Distance Between Us*, 6.
59. Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Popular Cultures* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 146.
60. Grande, *Distance Between Us*, 31.
61. Grande, *Distance Between Us*, 105.
62. Grande, *Distance Between Us*, 37–38.
63. Grande, *Distance Between Us*, 165–66.
64. Grande, *Distance Between Us*, 256.
65. Grande, *Distance Between Us*, 251.
66. Velasco, *Collective Identity*, 200.
67. Grande, *Distance Between Us*, 259. Lozano Alonso also argues that domestic abuse and state-sanctioned violence are paralleled in the text, although she focuses on the unequal relationship between the United States and Mexico, arguing that “the relationship between Mexico and the US can also be understood as a physically abusive relationship” (“Spatial Justice,” 87).
68. Grande, *Distance Between Us*, 229.
69. Grande, *Distance Between Us*, 251.
70. Marta Caminero-Santangelo, *Documenting the Undocumented: Latino/a Narratives and Social Justice in the Era of Operation Gatekeeper* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2016), 229.
71. Caminero-Santangelo, *Documenting the Undocumented*, 230.
72. Claudia A. Anguiano and Karma Chávez, “DREAMers’ Discourse: Young Latino/a Immigrants and the Naturalization of the American Dream,” in *Latino/a Discourse in Vernacular Spaces: Somos de Una Voz?* ed. Michelle A. Holling and Bernadette M. Calafell, 81–99 (New York: Lexington Books, 2011).
73. Anguiano and Chávez, “DREAMers’ Discourse,” 89.
74. Grande, *Distance Between Us*, 166.
75. Caminero-Santangelo, *Documenting the Undocumented*, 230.
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77. Anguiano and Chávez, “DREAMers’ Discourse,” 98.
78. Grande, *Distance Between Us*, 174.
79. Sonia Saldivar-Hull, *Feminism on the Border: Chicana Gender Politics and Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).
80. Juanita Heredia, “From Golden Age Mexican Cinema to Transnational Border Feminism: The Community of Spectators in *Loving Pedro Infante*,” *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies* 33, no. 2 (Fall 2008): 37–59.
81. Heredia, “From Golden Age Mexican Cinema,” 37–38.
82. Heredia, “From Golden Age Mexican Cinema,” 38.

83. Grande, *Distance Between Us*, 163.
84. Grande, *Distance Between Us*, 322.
85. Velasco, *Collective Identity*, 196.
86. Aguiano and Chávez, "DREAMers' Discourse," 83.
87. Ian Gordon, "70,000 Kids Will Show Up Alone at Our Border This Year: What Happens to Them?" *Mother Jones*, July–August 2014, <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/06/child-migrants-surge-unaccompanied-central-america/>.
88. <https://latinosinkidlit.com/2016/11/17/crossing-borders-a-guest-post-by-author-reyna-grande/>.

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