‘THERE IS A REBEL IN ME’: THE SHADOW-BEAST AND DIVERSE FEMININE SUBJECTIVITIES IN CHICANA YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

A Thesis

by

CRISTINA SUSANA RHODES

BA, Longwood University, 2013

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

ENGLISH

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
Corpus Christi, Texas

May 2016

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May 2016

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This thesis meets the standards for scope and quality of
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and is hereby approved.

Catherine Quick, PhD
Chair

Kevin Concannon, PhD
Committee Member

Kelly Bezio, PhD
Committee Member

May 2016

ABSTRACT

As diverse young adult literature (YA) garners more interest, the necessity to study and promote it becomes urgent. While the sample size of diverse children's and YA literature is still small, the growing significance of diversity in children's literature scholarship indicates the need for a lens with which to examine the nuances and particulars of these books. To this end, I have positioned Chicana theorist Gloria Anzaldúa's identity-theory surrounding the image Shadow-Beast as a central figure in informing the self-affirmed identity of diverse female protagonists in YA literature. The Shadow-Beast is representative of counterhegemonic subjectivities posed against the normative patriarchy. The Shadow-Beast is a reactionary figure whose agency is derived from directly opposing the normative philosophies that surround her. Whereas other powerful feminine figures that occur throughout literary history demonstrate subversive tendencies, the Shadow-Beast's entire existence is predicated upon her ability to exist counter to the dominant ideal. While the subversive figure of the Shadow-Beast works within the ulterior spaces of the world, she also learns to refigure herself within social spheres by acting as a savior to her chosen community.

To demonstrate the ways the Shadow-Beast identity is actualized, I have focused on studying her emergence in Chicana YA literature. Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street*, published in the 1980's, triggered a shift in the critical attention paid to adolescent Chicanas in YA literature through the advent of a subversive, Shadow-Beast-like identity in Cisneros's adolescent narrator, Esperanza. In recognizing the significance of the figure of the Shadow-Beast identity in Chicana YA literature, this thesis proposes the continued and invested study of this identity in both Chicana and diverse YA literature. By developing a critical lens

with which to view diverse YA books, the theory of the Shadow-Beast exposes the power potential of diverse, female, adolescent protagonists.

DEDICATION

First and foremost, I would like to dedicate this project to my parents, Kevin and Martha Rhodes, for their love, support, and patience. Without you guys, I never would've been able to do any of this. I love you both, so much!!

I would also like to dedicate this project to my twin sister, Maria. Love you!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are so many people to thank and acknowledge for their contributions to this project, so if I've made any omissions, please forgive me.

To my amazing thesis committee, Drs. Catherine Quick, Kelly Bezio, and Kevin Concannon: thank you seems insufficient. I couldn't have asked for a better thesis committee. From pep talks to thorough, thoughtful feedback on drafts you guys all provided the range of support and guidance I needed to get through this project with my sanity intact.

Thank you to my professors at both Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi and Longwood University. Especially Dr. Rhonda Brock-Servais, professor extraordinaire.

Thanks to everyone at the Writing Center at Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi; especially Mary Hood Luttrell – thank you for the invaluable support, informative and engaging feedback, and all those Starbucks runs!

Thank you to my patient, understanding freshman who made my first year as a teacher so rewarding.

To my fellow grad students—thanks for being awesome and for challenging me to be a better student every single day. Special shout-out to my readers Meghan Moon and Tina Buchan.

Finally—I'd like to thank and acknowledge the Shadow-Beasts. This one's for you.

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Introduction

"I like to tell stories. I am going to tell you a story about a girl who didn't want to belong."

-Sandra Cisneros, *The House on Mango Street*

In 1984, in a fictional house on Mango Street, the first Shadow-Beast emerged. From within Esperanza Cordero, Sandra Cisneros's precocious, child narrator in the Chicano touchstone *The House on Mango Street*, a new identity unfolded and came to flourish within its subversion. It wasn't until three years later, when Gloria Anzaldúa published *Borderlands/La Frontera*, that Esperanza's defiant alternate identity could come to be known as the Shadow-Beast, a term coined by Anzaldúa to describe the rebelliousness and alterity of Chicanas in a direct reaction to their marginalization and their fear or inability to confront their inner selves. To embrace the Shadow-Beast identity, young women must experience the apperception of the mirror stage, mimicked from their childhood onto their older selves. For my research on children's and young adult (YA) literature, I have built upon Anzaldúa's theory and refashioned her brief, and at-times hyper-feminist, descriptions of the Shadow-Beast into a literary lens through which to view the agency and potential of diverse, female protagonists.[1] When I first began to study diverse YA literature, I noticed that by and large the protagonists in these texts are on the outskirts of their communities while simultaneously working to make that community thrive. Essentially, the main characters of diverse YA literature must work for their own survival in order to aid in the survival of those they care for. To this end, Anzaldúa's theory of the Shadow-Beast provides us with a framework with which to study this exclusive yet clearly agentic figure.

With the almost meteoric rise of the diverse YA literature movement in the last two years, there has been a greater push to provide inclusive literature to teen readers; but many are

still unaware that literature about people like them exists and can be empowering. In the fall of 2015, I asked my students, all first semester college freshmen, to name one book they had read in high school that had a character of color as the protagonist, or more importantly since I teach at a Hispanic-serving institution, had they read any book with a main character who looked like them. Overwhelmingly, the answer was no. That seemingly negative answer led us to have a powerful and positive discussion about how, had they been exposed to literature for or about people like them, they might have been more inclined to read and would have felt more comfortable as readers and writers if they knew that other Latinos also read and write. For teens, seeing themselves in literature is an overwhelmingly empowering experience. Similarly, it would be equally empowering, as a diverse woman myself, to see scholarship on books for, by, and about diverse peoples. I don't mean to diminish the recent developments in children's literature studies that encompass the rapid diversification of children's and YA literature, but there is still a dearth of research and criticism for these demographics. In recent years, there has been a push in the publishing sphere to market and distribute diverse literature, but for many publishers diversity is a moneymaker and not necessarily the lived reality of a significant portion of the population. Similarly, for some children's literature scholars, diversity is merely a buzzword or a fad to be capitalized upon and not something that necessitates deeply involved and rigorous study.

While I will be spending some time in both the Introduction and final chapter of this thesis exploring the implications of the lack of diverse representation in children's and YA literature, I would be remiss were I not to localize my argument on the historic represention of Chicanas in both canonical and children's literature. Chicana culture is predicated on the need to establish Chicana identity and the Chicana's place within the world (Flores 142-43). Whereas

historically, Chicanas have not even had a voice in the overarching narrative of the Chicano Movement, in children's literature they are nearly nonexistent. Furthermore, the study of a figure like the Shadow-Beast in either cultural or literary studies is noticeably absent. Though scholars like Gloria Anzaldúa and Rafael Pérez-Torres take on the figure of the Shadow-Beast, they do not discuss how she could be studied through the lived or textual experiences of *adolescent* Chicanas. Therefore, this thesis will posit the Shadow-Beas identity as the central figure in an emergent methodology to assess the diverse content of children's and YA literature. Understandably, establishing a functional methodology for reading, understanding, and criticizing children's literature is too vast an undertaking for the scope of this project—but what I will be doing is laying the foundations of what could become a methodology focused on the subversive identity of the Shadow-Beast. This inaugural study will use the Shadow-Beast's potential to be a subversive presence as the lens with which to view diverse—or more narrowly: Chicana—children's and YA literature.

Lack of Representation

Until Nancy Larrick's groundbreaking article "The All-White World of Children's Books" was published in 1965, children's literature studies did not pay heed to the lack of representation in children's and YA literature.[2] While Larrick's article focuses primarily on the absence and misrepresentations of African-Americans in children's books, her article makes the distinct claim that twentieth century children's literature, whether by accident or design, has erased people of color (84). Larrick's article reveals the misrepresentation of African-Americans in children's literature, but I would like to expand Larrick's problematizing of children's narratives to the wider misrepresentation or lack of representation of diversity in children's literature in the second half of the twentieth and now in the twenty-first century. For her article,

Larrick evaluated over 5 thousand children's books published in the early 1960's and determined that only 6.7% of those books contained African-Americans, and many of these depictions were damaging stereotypes. In 1987, almost twenty years after Larrick's study, Opal Moore and Donnarae MacCann explored the misrepresentations of Latinos in children's literature and determined that the majority of children's books about Latinos published prior to 1987 were heavily dependent upon the White Savior trope.[3] While this historical information is startling, what is even more disturbing is the fact that diverse representation has not improved in the more than half a century since Larrick first exposed this problem. A recent article by the late Walter Dean Myers opens with the assertion that though there were over 3 thousand children's books published in 2013, only 93 of them were about African-Americans. Further, an infographic created by multicultural publishing company Lee & Low evaluated children's books published between 1994 and 2014 and determined that only 10% of books published in that 20 year span contained "multicultural content" (Lee & Low).

However dire the current situation regarding diversity may be, good work has been done to combat this lack of representation. In her keynote address to the attendees of the 2014 Children's Literature Association's annual conference, Katharine Capshaw put out a call to young scholars to work with diverse literature (Capshaw 244). I attended and presented research at this particular conference and Capshaw's message struck a chord with me; but I want to emphasize that I believe that diversity should not just be a truism in children's literature studies. What I would like to accomplish through both this project and my continued research is to establish diversity as integral to understanding children's literature as a whole. Without diverse perspectives, children's literature studies would be one-dimensional. Therefore, the lack of

representation of diversity in critical children's literature studies is precisely why the creation and implementation of a framework with which to assess diverse YA literature is so important.

While I specifically chose to demonstrate this framework's use on Chicana YA literature because of my personal connections to these texts, I also want to illuminate the need to study the sparse but profound Latino children's and YA literature that does exist. So often, Latinos are overlooked in children's and YA literature and the numbers about the representations of Latinos are disconcerting, given that of the 3,500 books collected by the University of Wisconsin-Madison's library program in 2014, 59 were by Latinos and 66 were about Latinos (Cooperative Children's Book Center). Though these numbers are small, it is still necessary to critically discuss these texts to emphasize that they are important and relevant to conversations within children's literature studies. In his critical discussion of representation in YA literature, Antero Garcia contends, "unless you are white, traditionally beautiful and heterosexual, you're not going to be getting a lot of mileage as a female in YA books" (77). But what I want to illuminate with this project is that though non-normative individuals are not prized in YA literature, they are worthy of study.

Lack of Critical Focus

Both critics and connoisseurs of children's literature are beginning to recognize the merits of diverse literature, as evidenced by the grassroots We Need Diverse Books movement and the emphasis on representing diversity in critical children's literature studies at the Children's Literature Association's annual conference in 2014, themed "Diverging Diversities."[4] However, as I have explained, little has been done to provide a framework with which to assess and interrogate diverse YA literature. The literary lens regarding the Shadow-Beast identity seeks to fill this gap. I want to be clear however, that while many scholars have devoted their

careers to studying one facet of diversity, little has been done to talk about diversity in broad strokes. What I want to do is create a method with which to look at diverse children's and YA literature across the board, to see similarities and differences. I have been studying children's literature for several years now and I have noticed many texts do have some sort of Shadow-Beast figure whose purpose in the text is to act as the counter-hegemonic power force. As I have observed this pattern, I have begun to see that it was worth investigating on a larger scale; thus the potential for a critical methodology based on the Shadow-Beast identity was born.

I first was able to put the name "Shadow-Beast" to the phenomena I had been seeing when I read *The House on Mango Street*; but while much of the critical discussion centering on *The House on Mango Street* addresses both Esperanza's gender and culture, little has been said about her place as a progressive, feminine figure. Initial critical reception on Cisneros's work was slow and the response to *Mango Street* came from predominantly Chicano critics, but with the burgeoning popularity of multicultural studies in the early 1990's, the response grew (Sickels 37). Regardless, much of this criticism still reads Esperanza solely as an insular character, concerned with constructing her own space following Virginia Woolf's literary tradition of a room of one's own. But the Shadow-Beast is often concerned with constructing a space for others, for her female relatives and friends who also suffer oppression. The critical response to Chicana literature like *The House on Mango Street* lacks a formal recognition of a figure like the Shadow-Beast, which further illustrates the need for an engaged study of feminine power and agency in diverse YA literature.

Furthermore, *The House on Mango Street*'s position as the foundational, Shadow-Beast text solidifies its necessity in a study such as this. *Mango Street* was the cultural lynchpin that triggered the paradigmatic shift of female autonomy in Chicana YA literature. Previous to the

publication of *Mango Street*, few texts existed that directly addressed the need for a reactionary figure like the Shadow-Beast. Beyond *Mango Street*'s position as a foundational text in the Shadow-Beast study, it also has directly influenced the more contemporary YA novels I have chosen for this thesis. Without *Mango Street* having laid the groundwork, many of these texts would not be as critically and socially successful. Furthermore, Cisneros's success as a Chicana author paved the way for the Chicanas who wrote these five novels. Their publication, and the publication of more and more Chicano, Latino, and diverse YA books each year, signifies a move forward toward positive reception to children's and YA texts about people of color, and other non-normative individuals.

Before I can make any gains in discussing the Shadow-Beast's place in Chiana YA literature, I want to be very clear that the connections between *The House on Mango Street* and the five more recent texts in this study is their inclusion of the Shadow-Beast as a counter-hegemonic identity. *The House on Mango Street* is a very visible Chicana text that is widely accepted into the Latino literature canon, but the others in this study are only popular within the confines of children's and YA literature circles. While *The House on Mango Street* is relatively timeless, the more contemporary texts are certainly products of the twenty-first century and as such, their content reflects a more modern subjectivity. I have included *The House on Mango Street* as a control subject, both because its content is so ubiquitous and because it is the first text to exhibit the Shadow-Beast; therefore it is key in the inception of the Shadow-Beast as an identity observable in diverse YA literature. Each new text adds something to this identity-based practice. For example, Nora's struggle as an undocumented immigrant in Bettina Restrepo's *Illegal* is a distinctly Chicana experience, and this layer complicates the mobility necessary to the identity formation of the Shadow-Beast. In this same vein, Gabi's grappling with her weight and

body image in Isabel Quintero's *Gabi, a Girl in Pieces* speaks to the identity formation of a non-normative person. The Shadow-Beast also takes control of the dark parts of her life, like Masi's fight to save her home in Claudia Guadalupe Martínez's *Pig Park* or Lupita's grief and hope during her mother's battle with cancer in *Under the Mesquite* by Guadalupe Garcia McCall. Alternatively, the Shadow-Beast does not always come through in diverse YA literature, as can be seen with Cesi who, in *Border Crossing* by Maria Colleen Cruz, does not come to terms with her identity as a Chicana thus she cannot be a Shadow-Beast because she never fully activates her own agency. Whatever new facet each character brings to this study, the Shadow-Beast demonstrates a resilience and flexibility born from her sometimes-painful history. By reading to see the Shadow-Beast, we are able to critically examine the importance of agency and autonomy in YA literature through a study of the alternative and counter-hegemonic character identities in these texts.

Chapter 1: The Shadow-Beast Identity

"How does one put feathers on this particular serpent?"

-Gloria Anzladúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*

While Anzaldúa first coined the term "Shadow-Beast," I believe that this identity transcends beyond Anzaldúa's corpus of work. Many other Chicano studies theorists, like Rafael Pérez-Torres, use Anzaldúa's theories as a springboard for their own conceptions of Chicano identity. In keeping with this tradition, I am using Anzaldúa's theory as a building block for my discussion of autonomy and identity in diverse YA literature. While Anzaldúa regards the Shadow-Beast as an amorphous figure, tangentially related to the powerful Aztec goddess Coatlicue yet tamped out by colonial power and further subjugated by Anglo pride, I believe that the Shadow-Beast is a dormant possibility in *all* diverse women. The Shadow-Beast, as an internalized identity, can only be awakened through the agentic and subversive actions of the bearer herself. It is the awareness of something beyond herself that stirs the Beast into awakening. Inevitably, what characterizes the Shadow-Beast is a resistance to conform, to devote any deference to the patriarchy or hegemony. Because she is a diverse woman, the Shadow-Beast is abjected. She cannot occupy any position of socially constructed power within male-dominated culture, but she can occupy a subversive position. As women fight within the oppressed space of the patriarchal hierarchy, they must first understand how they are oppressed so that they can directly fight against it. For the Shadow-Beast, this means coming to understand how patriarchy and hegemony work to oppress diverse women.

Gloria Anzaldúa wrote extensively on womanhood and being Chicana; and her theories continue to both positively and negatively affect Chicano studies today. Rafael Pérez-Torres contends, "the mestizaje that Anzaldúa champions as a strategy of personal development does

seem very distant from the actual racialized conditions Chicanos and Chicanas endure in systems of social exchange" (26-27). Regardless of the perceived usefulness of Anzaldúa's theory, her work has been integral to Chicana feminism and it is Anzaldúa's theory that I will be drawing on the most. In the introduction to the Fourth Edition of Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Norma Cantú and Aída Hurtado explain:

> Anzaldúa provided the experiential documentation to address how women may survive carrying the burden of their social and political stigma when they have no control over how others categorize them in social groups. ... Anzaldúa proposes that one possibility among many is to use the contradiction to one's advantage and rise above the negative assignation to develop a complex view of the social self. (8)

In a world that consistently categorizes women, Anzaldúa resists any classification not generated from within. The Shadow-Beast identity that Anzaldúa proposes, is the "part of [herself] that refuses to take orders from outside authorities" (38). The Shadow-Beast is a counter-hegemonic identity that exists outside of the categorized spaces of society. This project will ultimately demonstrate how diverse young women choose to awaken the Shadow-Beast within to fight back against the patriarchal influence of the dominant culture.

While Anzaldúa would use the Shadow-Beast's subversive identity to further her feminist agenda, I want to take a decidedly literary approach to this identity. In YA literature, adolescence is so often regarded as a transition in the life of an individual, with adulthood as the ultimate and immediately desirable outcome. Most YA literature tells the story of struggle for the teenaged characters and demonstrates the resilience of those characters when faced with adult problems that must be contended with from inside their still-child bodies. This tension proves

fertile ground for the awakening of the Shadow-Beast, since the Beast does already exist somewhere within the recesses of the young protagonists. When faced with problems, the protagonists let the unconscious hold on the Shadow-Beast slip. This powerful identity can become a reality when characters like those in the texts I discussed in the Introduction are faced with problems that need solutions that may not fit with the traditional morals or tropes of YA literature. If the Shadow-Beast, as a powerful and subversive identity, can become real for these young women, then the problems they face may be taken head-on.

The Shadow Beast and Politics of Space

Confinement, both for women and adolescents, is an immediate issue. Women are trapped in the "angel in the house" mentality; but adolescents, who are so often told that they should be growing up, are still contained within the confines of their parental home. What becomes of this for female adolescents is the dichotomy between needing to be free and being told that that will never happen, both because of their age and relative inexperience and because of traditionally defined gender roles attributed to women. For this reason, according to Anzaldúa, the Shadow-Beast acts as a "rebel" (Anzaldúa 38). Therefore the Shadow-Beast becomes the abject other, feared by men for her Lacanian lack, she is "man's recognized nightmarish pieces" (Anzaldúa 39). By embodying what men fear the most, the Shadow-Beast is trampled out of traditional cultures like Chicano or Latino culture. While women transmit culture through procreation, men are the enforcers of traditional power structures (Anzaldúa 38). Men stand to benefit from traditional patriarchal apparatuses of power; by disempowering women, they prove their worth as men not just to themselves but to the white men from whom they would stand to gain recognition. As a result, women "have served as the embodiment for a whole collection of fears and anxieties which make up the Shadow-Beasts of Anglo, Chicano,

Indian, Mexican, and Spanish cultures" (Hames-Garcia 106). Because men fear women, they must marginalize them. Anzaldúa argues that this issue is exacerbated by diverse men's own feelings of marginalization by the dominant, white culture (105). Because of the marginalization of diverse men, they must cultivate a space within which their power is ultimate. This space is the domestic home. The home is a safe space for men; meanwhile it is a space where women "are made to submit to the patriarchal roles, awaiting them from birth, and imposed upon them by fathers and husbands. So women are confined to what men want them to be" (Fernández 120). Since men are in charge, women are relegated to whatever spaces men allow them to occupy.

Female confinement is a historical, literary, and cultural trope—from princesses locked in high towers, to the madwomen in attics, to women kept barefoot and pregnant in the kitchen. When women are kept in domestic prisons, they are stuck in a state of stasis. Certainly women can and have repurposed domestic spaces, as the Shadow-Beast refuses the confinement of the domestic sphere.[5] The adolescent Shadow-Beast is further confined to the domestic home because of her age, but her youth by no means makes her less hesitant to accept confinement. Like adult Shadow-Beasts, the adolescent Shadow-Beasts that I study also create safe spaces for themselves. Susan Honeyman contends the construction of localized and domestic safe spaces for children in literature "[indicates] the fragile conceptual barriers that are necessary for preserving the concept of childhood as a simple, totalized social space," but the Shadow-Beast does not care for the concept of childhood as a space of innocence (n.p.). Instead, the Shadow-Beast needs to know things about the world around her and needs to have access to alternative spaces. Whereas physical spaces often diminish the Shadow-Beast's potential for power, figurative spaces allow her the capacity to cultivate her power outside of the hegemonic norm.

The Shadow-Beast's occupation of the ulterior spaces of the world belies her true power—she works against dominant ideological apparatuses to decenter the localized idea of power. What the books I will be discussing in the coming chapters demonstrate then, is the dawning awakening of the Shadow-Beast from within the depths of the young, female protagonists. They actualize the potential already harnessed within themselves by responding to the social and political restrictions upon their identities. The Shadow-Beast, in her earliest stages, recognizes that there must be something more to life than the interpellated identity fed to her since birth. Thus, when women are locked into patriarchal spaces and out of spaces of power, they enter a third space that I will be calling the shadow space. Homi Bhabha theorizes that third space, "though unrepresentable in itself, ... constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew" (55). The third space is a space of possibility and is a fertile ground for the Shadow-Beast. However, separation from hegemonic spaces causes "a sense of belonging [which] coexists with an awareness of exclusion" (Pérez-Torres 12). Therefore caught between being accepted within society and compelled to depart from the norm, the Shadow-Beast experiences the reality that "to be both locked in and locked out are part and parcel of the condition of being a woman ... in a patriarchal culture" (Oliver-Rotger 176). From the subversive third space the Shadow-Beast finds a place perfectly tailored to fit her specific needs. The Shadow-Beast needs a space that has access to patriarchal society but this is also a space not defined by it within which to realize her identity. The Shadow-Beast, as she manifests in diverse young women, thrives within the uncategorizable spaces of the world.

Liberation through Sexuality

Further, the Shadow-Beast competes within patriarchal space because she is a sexual being, whose carnality is policed by the hegemony. Anzaldúa claims that women "try to make [themselves] conscious of the Shadow-Beast, stare at the sexual lust and lust for power and destruction we see on its face, discern among its features the undershadow that the reigning order of heterosexual males project on our Beast" (42). Women's sexuality is often considered to be a taboo topic, while men are celebrated from their sexual conquests. In her highly popularized TED Talk entitled "We Should All be Feminists," Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie states, "We teach girls that they cannot be sexual beings in the way that boys are...We police girls. We praise girls for virginity" (n.p.).[6] Once the Shadow-Beast is released, the need to keep women's bodies as a dark, private space is no longer necessary. Sexual liberation can be achieved within the shadow space, as "it is out of the (narrow, crowded) spaces between sanctioned sites ... that non-normative desire can flourish" (Brady 89). While Anzaldúa often presents the need for open discussions of homosexual desire, I would argue that all feminine desire, whether homosexual, heterosexual, asexual, etc., is considered non-normative as ultimately women are prized more for their purity and chastity.

In Chicano culture, as with many other patriarchal cultures, women are valued only as domestic objects; furthermore women are also dichotomized into two distinct gender roles. Women can either be "'good' women or 'bad' women, as 'clean' or 'dirty', as 'virgins' or 'malinches" (Petty 119). The malinche, the whore or Cortés's indigenous Aztec bride, is analogous to una mujer mala, "selfish. If a woman remains a virgen until she marries, she is a good woman" (Anzladúa 39). However, authors like Sandra "Cisneros [resist] the triad of virgin, wife/mother or whore in order to blur the boundaries between these groupings, allowing

Chicana women to admit their sexuality, no matter their marital status" (Field 55). By allowing herself to be a sexual being without fear of the cultural repercussions, the Shadow-Beast is a liberated figure. She becomes like the Coatlicue, the primordial serpent goddess of the Aztecs.[7]

The intrusion of colonialism bred the hybridity that I now argue is so integral to the dual self of the Shadow-Beast.[8] Anzaldúa charts the evolution of the Shadow-Beast, from her origins with Coatlicue to Coatlalopueh, who "is descended from, or is an aspect of, earlier Mesoamerican fertility and Earth goddesses," to the Virgen de Guadalupe, the Virgin Mary (Anzaldúa 49). Anzaldúa's Guadalupe is a syncretized hybrid of the Aztec Tonantzin and the Catholic Virgin Mary (Lara 107). However, "after the Conquest, the Spaniards and their Church ... desexed *Guadalupe,* taking *Coatlalopeuh*, the serpent/sexuality, out of her" but the Shadow-Beast replaces this lost, yet powerful, sense of sexuality (Anzaldúa 49). The Virgen is often thought to be a sexless figure because of the Immaculate Conception, but the mother goddess of Mesoamerican religions was the goddess associated with pregnancy and childbirth, occurrences that presume the existence of sex. While I argue that it is not necessary for a woman to have sex to be a Shadow-Beast, she needs to, at least, not be made to fear her sexual capacity. For young women, particularly children, whose sexual capabilities are latent, to become Shadow-Beasts they need an awareness that sexuality is not akin to sinfulness. To assume that women are sexless beings, like the Virgen, is another component of the patriarchal machine that perpetuates that ideology that women are pure insofar as they remain chaste. Policing women's bodies is certainly nothing new; equally it is something that the Shadow-Beast is directly opposed to due to her inherently rebellious nature.

When discussing the Shadow-Beast, it is absolutely necessary to confront the implications of the name of this alternate identity. The "beast" conjures to mind Coatlicue, the

Snake Woman but she is also posed against "the Beauties" (Anzaldúa 50). The "Beauties" Anzaldúa refers to here are the virgens, pure women. But as I've already established, the epitome of the virgen, the Virgen de Guadalupe, is one-and-the-same as the Shadow-Beast. The Virgen de Guadalupe can trace her ancestry to Cuatlaohuac "who belonged to the *mazehual* class, the humblest within the Chichimeca tribe, that her name was *María Coatlalopeuh*. *Coatl* is the Nahuatl word for serpent. *Lopeuh* means 'the one who is at one with the beasts'" (Anzaldúa 51). But contemporary children are taught not to idenfity with the beasts. In the quintessential fairytale "Beauty and the Beast," girls are supposed to identify with the Beauty, who is only able to save the Othered character in the tale through her traditional femininity. But the Shadow-Beast flips this script, and embraces her alterity. Rather than associate herself with the Beauty, she takes on the role of the Beast. In this way, the Shadow-Beast is intimately comfortable with the othered individuals of the world and provides them with power and a voice. She mediates their experiences between the patriarchal world and the dark underworld within the shadow space. As an othered individual herself, she is representative of the rebels of the world. The Shadow-Beast finds power and solace in her nonconformity. Audre Lorde explains, "difference is that raw and powerful connection from which our personal power is forged" (95). Ultimately, the Shadow-Beast does not become something inhumane because of her title, rather this title illustrates her occupation of the shadow space and her ability to commune with the subaltern.

It is important, before moving forward, to spend some time unpacking the Shadow-Beast's name. I've already explained that despite the dark or negative connotations of these terms, the Shadow-Beast is an inherently positive and productive figure. Anzaldúa concedes that the "shadow" is considered by many to be "the unsavory aspects of ourselves," but the Shadow-

Beast repurposes this fearful darkness (59). For my purposes, the shadows here are more like Peter Pan's shadow, which has a mischievous and subversive mind of its own. Still a part of Peter himself, his shadow has autonomy independent from the boy. Peter's shadow is scolded for his misbehavior but that is the limit of the repercussions for its mischief. The same can be said for the Shadow-Beast—yes, she subversively works from within a woman who society says must conform to norms but she does not do so nefariously. The Shadow-Beast works against misogyny but does not stir trouble just for the sake of stirring trouble, she always works towards the ultimate goal of providing agency both for herself and those she chooses to save. The beastly side of the Shadow-Beast can be accounted for because women are considered beastly when posed against men. Certainly our physical bodies are something pleasurable, but that pleasure is fleeting and women are often regarded as Others whose alterity alienates men. Further, Anzaldúa highlights women's abjectness by noting that they "[bleed] every month but [do] not die" (39). By highlighting women's bodily differences in comparison to normalized male bodies, Anzaldúa highlights their beastliness; but again, I want to emphasize that the Shadow-Beast does not find this negative. Instead, the Shadow-Beast is empowered through her embodied difference.

Feminine Communities

The Shadow-Beast is deeply invested in the security of her female friends and relatives, as Anzaldúa explains, "the welfare of the family, the community, and the tribe is more important than the welfare of the individual. The individual exists first as kin—as sister, as father, as *padrino*—and last as self" (40). The preservation of the feminine community is paramount, because "the real power ... is collective" (Moraga 29). The Shadow-Beast and her female community have a symbiotic relationship. While the female community provides the Shadow-

Beast with the heterotopic space within which she can actualize her identity, the Shadow-Beast works to help liberate her comadres. As with the initial, political Chicana agenda to help her family and community, the Shadow-Beast works to seek justice for her female friends, neighbors, and relatives (Rincón 51). For many women living under the quiet oppression of the patriarchy, resistance is not a possibility. But what the Shadow-Beast identity represents for women is an out. The Shadow-Beast acts as a counter-hegemonic example for her feminine community. And it is *her* community; the Shadow-Beast creates this community for herself. I want to be clear that there is a difference between the community within which the Shadow-Beast lives (particularly the adolescent Shadow-Beast who may not have clear autonomy to leave the community she is born into, which is often complicit with the disempowering of diverse young women) and the feminine community that the Shadow-Beast cultivates for herself and other prospective Shadow-Beasts. By allowing others to see her when she has adopted the Shadow-Beast identity, her audience is then implicated into the feminine community. The larger community may be hesitant of or hostile toward the Shadow-Beast but the feminine community allows her to work through her identity formation.

With or without the support of the community at large, the Shadow-Beast comes to thrive. Often, women are unable to imagine a better world not dominated by male supremacy thus they complicity accept patriarchal power. While I am not blaming these women, or deeming them apathetic, I am highlighting their differences from the Shadow-Beast. The Shadow-Beast certainly benefits from coming from a supportive environment, but it is not necessary to her actualization. The Shadow-Beast often thrives *in spite of* a lack of support system—and in doing so she comes to create her own. The Shadow-Beast is a proponent of the female community, who advocates for the homosocial bonds that unite women as a singular unit

against the strictures of patriarchal domination. The Shadow-Beast is the rallying cry for women who feel disempowered. While not all diverse women will actualize their potential as Shadow-Beasts, the Shadow-Beasts who do exist, exist for and because of their feminine community. I argue that the Shadow-Beast is a intersectional feminist figure, concerned with the (mis)treatment of all marginalized peoples, both within her larger community and her chosen, feminine community.

If adolescents are able to choose whom they associate with, rather than be relegated to a community that will interpellate them into a damaging archetypes, then they are more likely to engage with critical subjectivities. Isolation and friendlessness are two common tropes in YA literature, but the Shadow-Beast identity cannot exist in a vacuum. The feminine community, no matter how small, is created either as a product of the actualization of the Shadow-Beast identity or proceeding actualization as a catalyst for awareness of this new identity. Whether the Shadow-Beast is born from a fully-formed feminine community or whether she helps structure that community herself, her presence within that female, communal space allows her to draw her power from the hopes and desires of the other women. Separate, their collective desire for freedom and autonomy would not be enough to faze the patriarchy; but together, armed with the subversive strength of the Shadow-Beast, feminine communities can thrive.

The Abject Immigrant

Like I've said, the Shadow-Beast exists outside of the categorized, archival spaces of the world because she is an inherent characteristic, already existing within women. All diverse women have the potential to be Shadow-Beasts but it takes effort to awaken the beast within and the results have both positive and negative consequences. Because of the insular nature of the Shadow-Beast identity, when this identity comes forth, the woman within whom she is contained

is othered. In *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler explains how women come to be othered by occupying counter-hegemonic spaces. She writes, "what constitutes through division the 'inner' and 'outer' worlds of the subject is a border and boundary tenuously maintained for the purposes of social regulation and control" (2546). The Shadow-Beast is able to navigate these inner and outer worlds, but because she permeates these boundaries she becomes what Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie calls "the abject immigrant," the immigrant who is feared and marginalized (n.p.). It is important to note that this immigrant status is that of both the literal immigrant, who crosses borders and moves from one place to another, and the metaphorical immigrant whose fluid identity traverses penetrable boundaries. The Shadow-Beast's immigrant status is highlighted in texts like the ones in this study, which deal immediately with the fraught space of the Mexican-American border. But more than that, the migrating Shadow-Beast is directly connected to the idea of adolescence as a transient concept.

While the Shadow-Beast is able to move fairly freely between hegemonic space and the heterotopic shadow space, movement inevitably complicates her identity. What becomes of these movements then, is the inability to fully participate in hegemonic culture coupled with the acute loneliness that comes with occupying the shadow space. Anzaldúa suggests that women who depart from the norm of their mother culture are afraid of returning lest they be rejected. Instead of leaving, other women suppress the Shadow Beast while those who do leave, despite the fear of repercussions, "try to waken the Shadow-Beast inside" (42). However, "location is integral to the construction of identity and community" (Brady 116). Because the Shadow-Beast must be able to move, her identity is in flux. The Shadow-Beast, as a diverse, young woman, is unwaveringly adaptable to her surroundings. Diversity is all about diaspora and disruption and this is no different for the Shadow-Beast as she awakens within adolescents.

The Shadow-Beast's perpetual movement separates her from any sense of home. But this separation from home proves empowering. Anzaldúa explains, "I had to leave home so I could find myself, find my own intrinsic nature buried under the personality that had been imposed on me" (38). The Shadow-Beast must first leave her home to fully understand who she is, what she is. The diverse woman is intimately familiar with this sense of homelessness, "in this regard, ideas of home and homelessness serve as touchstones for the articulation of self-identity" (Pérez-Torres 197). According to Rafael Pérez-Torres, queer Chicanos in particular, and I argue other diverse peoples by extension, experience the struggle of finding a place to consider home in "a community that values heternormative identities" (197). As discussed in "The Shadow Beast and Politics of Space," home is also a fraught space for diverse woman, since "the majority of violent crimes against women occur in homes and are committed by acquaintances" (Brady 128). Because the home could potentially be dangerous, the Shadow-Beast must flee and find her power elsewhere. This is especially complicated for adolescents who often literally cannot leave the home space. Therefore, out of necessity, the Shadow-Beast is awakened as a coping mechanism to combat the inability to leave. The Shadow-Beast then occupies the shadow space, a third space or a psychic space. Leaving home, however, is a key theme in YA literature and this is no different for the diverse YA literature that exhibits that Shadow-Beast, even if leaving home is merely retreating into one's own shadow space.

Mary Pat Brady also considers how movement and location works with the sexualized identity of the Shadow-Beast. Brady explains that the crossing over, i.e. border crossing, in works of Chicana theorists like Gloria Anzaldúa "suggests the interplay between movement and pleasure" (83). While this concept of sexual pleasure in the movement of the Shadow-Beast may be difficult or uncomfortable to discuss within the context of YA literature, so many YA books

deal with sexual content in honest and straightforward ways. Books for teenagers "can function as both guides for and mediators of young women's understandings of 'acceptable' sexual behaviour" (Jones 80). Sex is a reality in the lives of so many young adults, but it manifests itself differently for diverse young women. In books about obese teenagers, for example, the young protagonists often struggle with body image issues and how their non-normative bodies will be perceived by potential sexual partners. Further, YA books about people of color run the risk of depicting their characters as hypersexualized—a common theme in literature about people of color. But, like I've already demonstrated, the Shadow-Beast removes sexual stigma by rejected patriarchal ideals of virginity and innocence. The Shadow-Beast's movement within the uncategorizable spaces of the world allows her to transcend beyond heteronormative boundaries and reclaim women's sexuality in positive and empowering ways. By moving into the interstices, the Shadow-Beast locates or creates a place where sexualities are normalized.

Performativity

Finally, the Shadow-Beast works to gain power through performance. While Judith Butler claims "words, acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this *on the surface* of the body," I would like to expand this definition beyond the outward performances of gender to encompass any alternative performance that allows the Shadow-Beast to construct her identity (2548). For many Shadow-Beasts, and certainly for Anzaldúa's Shadow-Beast, this performance comes through writing. In much of her published work, Gloria Anzaldúa regards writing as a healing process. Anzaldúa explains:

> To write, to be a writer, I have to trust and believe in myself as a speaker, as a voice for the images. I have to believe that I can communicate with the images. I

> have to believe that I can communicate with images and words and that I can do it well. ... I cannot separate my writing from any part of my life. It is all one. (95)

Performances like writing are integral to the identity formation of the Shadow-Beast. While writing may seem to be a completed art form, because it does not have continual action it is actually a deeply performative art. Writing, while often regarded as completed and archival, can be an embodied experience.[9] Performances are lived experiences, not concretized or categorized within archival memory.[10] This type of embodied experience, perpetuated from person-to-person, is how the Shadow-Beast is able to enact her power through performance. For children, writing (and reading) is often the only escape easily accessible. It is in this way the adolescent Shadow-Beast circumvents the limits put on her by her potential lack of mobility. Her written performances are tied to her ability to move freely as herself within the psychic shadow space.

The Shadow-Beast, as a hybridized figure, resists archival memory, as "metonymically, the mestizo body serves as the repository of this knowledge, often neither cataloged nor collected" (Perez-Torres 199). In this way, her performances have a sort of eternity or ubiquity that allows the Shadow-Beast the ability to reach beyond her localized zone. The performances of the Shadow-Beast are varying, and I am purposefully ambiguous when referring to these performances because I don't want to limit them to gendered performances or artistic performances, instead I want this definition to be interpretive. Performances can be wide-ranging, thus each different type of performance embodies something new and transformative for both the Shadow-Beast and her adopted feminine community. These performances are the ways in which the Shadow-Beast can act as the savior for her feminine community and for herself. Without performance, the Shadow-Beast would be an apathetic identity. Acting as the savior of her comrades is part and parcel of being a Shadow-Beast. The diverse, female protagonist of

these YA texts first saves herself by becoming the Shadow-Beast, and then once she is actualized within that identity she can, in turn, save others. The Shadow-Beast can be infinitely reproduced throughout the feminine community as the identity is spread and reimagined by each female character.

Applying the Shadow-Beast's Characteristics to Diverse YA Literature

The Shadow-Beast as a lens with which to view literature is easily applied to Chicana, and by tangential association, Latina literature; and when extended to cover all diverse literatures about women, the Shadow-Beast must move further and further away from its birth as an Anzaldúan theory. Anzaldúa's work is dependent upon its application to borderlands literature and figures; but I believe her Shadow-Beast can, and should, be moved outside of the Chicana framework. The first step to do this is to demonstrate how this theory works locally within Chicana literature and then to pose the methodology outward. Diverse, young women, as a whole, are concerned with the restriction of themselves within the patriarchal culture of their individualized spaces. Likewise diverse, young women must also confront their status as abjected immigrants in hegemonic society. I argue that this alterity works most directly with *young* diverse women because adolescence is so often regarded as a transitional time, a thing that must be worked through rather than reveled in. Adolescence is a precarious time for anyone, regardless of their diverse identification but it is complicated with the introduction of diverse identities. The gravity of these formative years is counteracted with the adolescents' ability to adopt the powerful identity of the Shadow-Beast. In this way, the Shadow-Beast almost works like a superheroic secret identity. Though the Shadow-Beast doesn't wear her identity as a badge on her chest, she performs it through transformative acts. The Shadow-Beast redeems the space of adolescence by empowering those who adopt her as part of their psyches to work against any

forms of marginalization. Through these tenants of the identity, the Shadow-Beast contributes to our understanding of diverse feminine subjectivities in YA literature.

Chapter 2: Shadow Spaces and Beastly Places

"across the border, where we
were true Mexicans, for a day."
-Guadalupe Garcia McCall, *Under the Mesquite*

I claimed in the previous chapter that the Shadow-Beast is a mobile character; here, I will demonstrate how the intrusion of the border in Chicana YA literature complicates the agency of mobility. Anzaldúa explains that borders, like the United States-Mexico border, are exclusionary spaces. They are "a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary" (Anzaldúa 25). To explore these concepts I will discuss the issues of space for the Shadow-Beast, the restrictions upon her movements that the border interposes, and how she circumvents these, and other, constraints. First, I will discuss the uniqueness of border crossing in Chicana YA literature and the border's ideologies about womanhood, I will then discuss the strictures of gendered communal space on the Shadow-Beast identity. Finally I will demonstrate the connections between these divergent spatialities on the need for movement and freedom within the Shadow-Beast identity.

To first illustrate these concepts, I will apply the Shadow-Beast lens briefly to a reading of *The House on Mango Street*. First, I will explain how Esperanza in *The House on Mango Street* must return to her home space to help influence her feminine community. One of the more striking examples of Esperanza's female relatives being relegated to disempowering spaces is her grandmother, also named Esperanza, who was "a wild horse of a woman, so wild she wouldn't marry. Until [Esperanza's] great-grandfather threw a sack over her head and carried her off. Just like that" (Cisneros 11). Though Esperanza and her grandmother are both strong,

rebellious women, Esperanza's grandmother is forced to comply with the traditional values of Chicano culture. Esperanza's grandmother "never forgave" her husband for imprisoning her (Cisneros 11). Esperanza is fascinated by her grandmother's plight and thinks: "I wonder if she made the best with what she got or was she sorry because she couldn't be all the things she wanted to be" (Cisneros 11). Esperanza learns a lesson from her grandmother; she reflects, "I have inherited her name, but I don't want to inherit her place by the window" (Cisneros 11). Through the physical space of the home and the metaphorical space of femininity, women on Mango Street are doubly marginalized. Esperanza, however, defies both of these spaces. She stands as the ideal for her comadres on Mango Street. For women, like her mother and grandmother who cannot escape, Esperanza's freedom serves as a vicarious experience.

Because of Esperanza's position as both Mexican and American, she can occupy the role of insider and outsider that is necessary for her construction of individuality. Esperanza's liminality is paramount for her ability to become the Shadow-Beast. Esperanza is the embodiment of the borderlands; she has "a new *mestiza* consciousness, *una conciencia de mujer*" (Anzaldúa 99). Despite being "oppressed in United States society in at least three senses: she is non-white, poor, and female. [Esperanza] draws her strength from the very sources of her oppression" (Kuribayashi 165). Esperanza's identity as a hyphenated American, her liminality as a woman, and her role as the Shadow-Beast all contribute to this mestiza consciousness. Because she is both and neither all at the same time, Esperanza embodies the hybridized identity of the Shadow-Beast. Anzaldúa explains, the Shadow-Beast "copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity;" and she learns to survive in a world posed against her (101).

Border Crossing in Chicana YA Literature

One of the hallmarks of Chicano literature is diaspora. The Shadow-Beast feels the effects of this movement immediately—as I have previously discussed, movement is a key factor in the actualization of the Shadow-Beast. But movement is so much more than mere displacement. The spaces that the Shadow-Beast travels between are integral in shaping and reshaping her, but she also shapes helps to them. Places only have a meaning and a culture if the people who reside within them transmit that culture and interpellate the residents into the ideological bounds of that location. But the Shadow-Beast resists interpellation, she sees through the process and reveals it for what it is: a mechanized recapitulation of problematic ideals. To counteract this, the Shadow-Beast occupies third spaces, and reworks normalized conceptions of reality. The Shadow-Beast removes herself from homogenous society through her adoption of the subversive role. She challenges the dominant ideologies by embracing the hybridity that diaspora breeds. The Shadow-Beast is a figure who easily crosses boundaries and embraces the fluidity of the third space. Her ease to traverse the turbulent landscape of the borderlands marks her as an agent of feminine power. For many, the border is "the site where ethnic Mexicans [attempt] to mediate the profound sense of displacement and other stresses raised by their daily existence as members of a racialized and marginalized minority in a region they had long considered to be their ancestral homeland" (D. Gutiérrez 488).[11] Because of the forced diaspora of the border moving over already rooted Mexican nationals, to be Mexican in a land not Mexico requires that individuals re-imagine themselves as connected to their indigenous community.[12] Because of the diasporic nature of Mexican-American and Chicano/a identity, border crossing is an integral part of many Chicana YA novels. In *Illegal* by Bettina Restrepo

and *Border Crossing* by Maria Colleen Cruz the border provides a stark backdrop for the dawning agency of the Shadow-Beast.

Undocumented Immigration

In 2013, the Department of Homeland Security apprehended over four hundred thousand undocumented immigrants at the United States-Mexico border in the Rio Grande Valley in southern Texas (Simanski 4). Of those crossing the border in the Valley, more than twenty-six thousand of them were children ("The Face of the Undocumented Child" 1). In the last few decades, the U.S./Mexico border has become a contested space, with the government interceding to create a strict, demarcated zone between the U.S. and Mexico.[13] Policies like the DREAM Act, which allow young undocumented immigrants to go to college or serve in the military as a means to gain citizenship, allow for undocumented teenagers and young adults to reside in the U.S. without fear of another displacement.[14] Yet, regardless of these measures, many teens and young adults living in the U.S. without documentation still fear deportation. Furthermore, this fear has begun to manifest in YA literature. In children's and YA books that depict undocumented border crossing, child border-crossers must eschew a traditional childhood and develop a sense of power over themselves typically not associated with individuals under the age of eighteen. Born from the media frenzy surrounding undocumented immigration is the often-polemical rhetoric surrounding undocumented persons in the U.S., which indicates "while some children occupy an almost sacred space within the cultural imagination, others are demonized in the popular media" (Mackey 173). Despite the fact that "in U.S. law, children's developmental and cognitive immaturity creates an ephemeral period that requires parental and state protectionism," the media dictates that some children's lives matter more than others (Oliviero 15). In the cases of undocumented children, legal status trumps the traditionally revered space of childhood in

American culture. Oralia Garza de Cortes writes, “The message Latino children are hearing is a sad commentary—that undocumented persons, who may share their heritage, are not wanted here, they do not belong, and the United States will go to any legal means to insure that they are kept out” (24). Despite the proliferation of negative views of undocumented immigration by the mass media, YA literature offers a different perspective.

By supplying the counter-narrative, YA literature takes a distinctly political stance. In her article “Border Crossing: Undocumented Migration Between Mexico and the United States in Contemporary Young Adult Literature,” Amy Cummins contends, “No novels for adolescents could be located that condemn the border crossing youth for breaking the immigration laws by entering the United States without authorization. The youth and those who help them are valorized” (69). Though some other YA problem novels attempt to fix the issues teenagers face, like magically curing a person with anorexia or providing a self-help guidebook for teens struggling with addiction, YA literature about undocumented immigration instead recognizes that undocumented immigration is a complex issue which cannot be reduced to merely right and wrong.[15] Unlike the mass media, YA literature proffers a more positive stance on undocumented immigration. For undocumented border-crossers like Nora in Restrepo’s *Illegal*, immigration is the means by which they can assert their power and awaken their identity as Shadow-Beasts.

If *Illegal* were a typical YA problem novel, Nora would become a legalized citizen throughout the narrative; but at the end of the text, though Nora has managed to begin attending a public high school, her legal status remains unchanged. Some might view this lack of resolution as problematic, but Tiffany Ana López and Phillip Serrato argue “happy-ending closure does not encourage a sense of the need for change or a sense of the child’s possible agency in effecting change” (216). If Nora were to gain legal citizenship, she would be removed

from the subversive, illegal position from which she draws her power. It is because Nora is never deported and consistently occupies a precarious position due to her lack of legal documentation that Nora can have power. As López and Serrato suggest, a sugarcoated ending, like Nora gaining legal status, would absolutely contradict Nora's bid for agency via her undocumentedness. She draws her power by destabilizing the dichotomy between legal and illegal because within the shadow space there *is* no legal and illegal. The Shadow-Beast as a critical methodology emphasizes the freedom of the shadow space and Nora certainly revels in this openness. Whereas life outside of the shadow space is oppressive, within the shadow space Nora has power over herself.

While undocumented border crossing is still illegal, as defined by the U.S. government, it has become an act of active political defiance, defined by the ability to choose where one lives in a world without borders. This choice is what makes undocumented border crossing for Nora, and others likes her, a positive experience. Furthermore, by choosing to move from a male-dominated space, a world inhabited by the memory of her father and overshadowed by his absence, Nora chooses to reclaim her feminine power and her identity as a Shadow-Beast as she enters into the shadow space. In the scope of the few chapters of *Illegal* that depict Nora's actual act of border crossing, her journey for agency stemming from her marginalized position begins. Using what little money she and her mother have saved, the pair buy space in the back of a tractor-trailer transporting mangoes to Houston. Nora's power as a border-crosser is consistently informed by the presence of her masculine antithesis. She is highly dependent on men to cross the border. Her father's absence necessitates Nora's decision to illegally cross into the U.S. Once there, it is men who help Nora and her mother throughout their journey. Furthermore Nora initially views border crossing as a typically masculine act, she rationalizes, "At least half of the

men in our town, including Papa ... had already left for the border. Soon the little boys playing in the doorway would disappear too" (Restrepo 13-14). She reasons that only the men can travel to the U.S. to seek employment since they are the natural breadwinners for their families left behind in Mexico. Yet, more recently border crossing has become a less gendered act as "women and children are increasingly protagonists of the border crossing [narratives], rather than simply dependents left behind" (Camacho 833). The moment Nora decides that she and her mother must cross the border; she takes back the patriarchal monopoly on border crossing. Despite her grandmother's, and often her mother's, protestations that they need to stay in Mexico to wait for her father's return, Nora makes the ardent decision that they need to cross the border to find him.

After travelling in the mango truck across the border, it becomes increasingly evident that the driver of the truck intends to sexually abuse Nora and her mother. As he locks them in the trailer, Nora panics and thinks, "we were trapped" (Restrepo 52). In this moment, when she is locked away her agency is taken away. The truck driver does not give them water or allow them respite from the oppressive heat inside the trailer and Nora cannot exercise any control in this situation. Because of their confinement, Nora's mother falls ill while locked in the mango truck and Nora assumes a pseudo-parental, protective role; she reasons: "[Mama] was weak. I had to be the strong one" (Restrepo 62). Upon realizing that her mother's condition is quickly deteriorating, Nora resolves to "not allow this man continue his quest to kill us" (Restrepo 63). In this way, Nora takes back control in this situation by refusing to be victimized. Throughout the narrative, Nora constantly repeats the phrase "I am not a victim", almost as if it were her mantra (Restrepo 154, 166, 189). Nora's self-affirmation against victimhood is particularly important, as women, like Nora and her mother, are at a greater risk of violence during border crossings.[16] Through the act of border crossing and the rejection of the masculinity of this act,

Nora awakens her Shadow-Beast identity. Nora removes herself from the physical and metaphorical trappings of border crossing. While she is yet confined to the mango truck, she asserts her power, even taking over the role of her mother.

When their coyote attacks them, remembering her grandmother's instruction to "get them in the vulnerable spots," Nora disables the driver by scratching at his eyes, effectively blinding him and allowing her and her mother to escape (Restrepo 65). Clearly, the conception of the male gaze plays into this scene as, rather than being the passive object of the truck driver's gaze, Nora fights against it.[17] In blinding him, she erases his understanding of her as a weak woman and a sexualized object. The constant fear that Nora and her mother will not just be deported during their border crossing but also raped is mitigated through this action. But, while Nora could have easily attempted to harm his genitals; it is an important distinction to make that to have power she does not need to threaten his maleness rather she only needs to alter his perception of her. Further, Nora also shatters perceptions of undocumented immigration as a whole. Though the dominant narrative of undocumented immigration is one of the crimes perpetrated by gang members, Nora is not a criminal. Her depiction provides a counter-narrative to the prevailing narratives of the undocumented immigrant experience. In this way, Nora is a Shadow-Beast who rejects the hegemonic cultural milieu of the border. Therefore she becomes embedded into the culture of the third space and she accepts its characteristic subversion. In this space, she subverts not just masculine power on the border but also the xenophobic perceptions a large portion of U.S. citizens hold because she does not allow her brown, female body to be categorized by powers outside of herself.

Agency and Identity through Crossing Borders

Undocumented immigration, however, is not the only form of border crossing in Chicana YA literature. In Maria Colleen Cruz's *Border Crossing*, Cesi Álvarez hypothesizes that crossing the border into Mexico from her home in California will help her better understand her father's Mexican heritage. Until she crosses the border, Cesi is unable to connect with her Mexican roots. In the first chapter of *Border Crossing*, Cesi runs away from home in an effort to find her identity in Mexico. On the way there, she worries that "people would think I was a runaway. They would send me back" (Cruz 2). But, Cesi does not consider herself a runaway; rather she wants to be called "a 'run-to'," because she is "running *to* something. [She] really liked [her] home. [She] just thought [she] would understand it more if [she] found out some things" (Cruz 2). Cesi's sense of dislocation comes from the unnaturalness of the border. Her hybridity disconnects her from her heritage. Furthermore, her father is often cryptic about his Mexican cultural background, even going so far as to reject it. Over the course of the book, Cesi learns that her father's hesitance stems from his mistreatment in school because of his inability to speak English. Her father was abused by his classmates and teachers because of his race, and he does not want the same thing to happen to his children. Therefore he removes Cesi and her brother from their Mexican roots. At one point, he even tells them, "'we're not Mexicans, we're Americans. We didn't come here so we could look back and wish we were there'" (Cruz 32).

Cesi initially regards her Mexican heritage with derision, but thinks, "If I knew a little more about Mexico, I thought I could figure out why my father seemed to hate it so much. I could also learn a little more about me" (Cruz 37). Because of her father's secrecy, Cesi feels more connected to her mother's side of the family until she begins to feel like a part of her life is missing without a connection to Mexico and Mexicanness. Silvia Cristina Bettez reasons,

“mixed-race experiences demonstrate the complexities inherent in epistemologies of belonging” (155). For Cesi, these complexities manifest in a sense of separation from her true home space. Unlike the Shadow-Beast’s necessary removal from the repression of the domestic home, Cesi’s lack of a sense of identity is compounded by her feelings of homelessness. She thinks, “I felt like I would love [my home] even more once I figured out who I was. Who were those people in that house? I just knew I would find those answers in Mexico” (Cruz 4). But her need to learn more about herself and her family is compounded by the border. To find the answers that Cesi so desires, she must confront the limitations of that demarcated space.

On her journey, Cesi begins to realize that crossing into Mexico is far easier than traversing the border in the opposite direction. Tony, a boy she meets on the train to the border who, in a bizarre plot twist, ends up being her long-lost cousin, tells Cesi, “’The immigration officers don’t care who goes into Mexico—just who comes out of it. Who would want to run away from America to Mexico unless you’re a bank robber or something?’” (Cruz 48). Tony’s question raises an important concern—why would running away to Mexico prove useful to anyone? So often, border crossing in children’s and YA literature is used as an escape from the troubled, third world homeland. But there “is something compelling ... about having an entry into both worlds” (Anzaldúa 41). The Shadow-Beast’s hybridity, perfectly exemplified by movement across the border in both ways, could bring about a stronger sense of identity and a more clearly defined access to power. For Cesi, however, this movement does not make her a Shadow-Beast. In fact, I argue that Cesi does not become a Shadow-Beast at all. Cesi only superficially accepts her Mexican identity by the end of the text. Though she learns, that “[she] had more than one home” following her trip across the border, she does not fully embrace her hybridity (Cruz 118). Even when she crosses the border into Mexico, she thinks of the Mexicans

as racialized Others. Often in this book, Cesi reduces herself and the other characters to just their skin colors. Cruz writes:

> I looked around at all the faces. Mine was by far the palest. Everyone else was a shade of brown, some dark like my brother, others just a shade or two darker than me, but still tan. No one seemed to notice me standing there, falling into their shopping bags. Maybe they knew I was one of them. *I* wasn't sure if I was. (74)

She thinks that border crossing will help her find out if she is one of them. She realizes at the end of the text, "somehow, my dad, Mexico and I all had a lot in common, or at least had worked together to make me into the person I was today" (Cruz 101). But Cesi doesn't have any agency in this equation. She is coerced into accepted her Mexicanness primarily through her patriarchal connection to it. While the Shadow-Beast "is a product of the transfer of the cultural and spiritual values of one group to another," Cesi does not represent this transfer, even through her border crossing (Anzaldúa 100).

Cesi never becomes truly familiar with the traumatic diaspora of her father and paternal grandparents. Bettez claims "diaspora disrupts notions of belonging based on nation, mixed-race experiences disrupt notions of belonging based on family and race" (161). Because of this assertion about hybridity, it becomes increasingly necessary for Cesi to be familiarized with what Henry Giroux calls border pedagogy. Giroux argues, "students must engage knowledge as border-crossers, as persons moving in and out of borders constructed around coordinates of difference and power" (72). Border pedagogy emphasizes a knowledge of the Other; a knowledge that Cesi specifically lacks. Her ignorance is exacerbated by her inability to reconcile the two parts of her identity. Cesi is constantly searching for answers about her father's culture. She thinks that these answers will come from her movement across the border;

she reasons, "it seemed that the Álvarezes were a restless bunch. We always roamed. We looked for answers, and tried to change our lives in order to find them when there really weren't really any answers" (Crus 117). While it's a step in the right direction that Cesi realizes that there are no simple answers to reduce her biracial identity into an easily understandable sentiment, this revelation does little if anything to help her become a Shadow-Beast.

It could be argued that does not Cesi *have* to become a Shadow-Beast at all. No one has to become a Shadow-Beast and Cesi's agency isn't tied to this identity, but what is important is the recognition of the potentiality of the Shadow-Beast that Cesi possess yet cannot awaken. Meanwhile Cesi's superficiality complicates the Shadow-Beast identity. While she checks all of the necessary boxes for this identity, she resists the Shadow-Beast's power. The Shadow-Beast "has a plural personality, she operates in a pluralistic mode—nothing is thrust out, the good the bad and the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned" (Anzaldúa 101). But, in the end of the text, Cesi returns to her home after having been exposed to the realities of life in the borderlands. After her initial movement in the borderlands that could have sparked the awakening of the Shadow-Beast identity, Cesi re-settles into a confining, domestic home space. Cesi could have awakened her inner power through an acceptance of her biracial identity, a realization that she is confined to her domestic home, or through a rejection of her damaging stereotypes about Mexicans; but she does none of this.

In *Under the Mesquite*, it is Lupita's journey to her hometown and her grandmother's house across the border in Mexico that enlightens her to the need to leave her home and seek agency and identity elsewhere. Unlike Cesi, Lupita's trip to Mexico helps her become a Shadow-Beast because she realizes that the trip is not the end of the journey, rather the beginning. In *Borderlands/La Frontera,* Anzaldúa explains her experience leaving home to help

find herself. But for the Shadow-Beast, there is also the inevitable return coupled with the recognition that the home space is no longer a space within which she can be confined. Lupita, the eldest of her siblings, fills a pseudo-mother role during her mother's illness and following her death. But the strain of this role leads Lupita to need an escape. At her father's urging, Lupita agrees to travel to Mexico. She thinks: "I tell him I'll go, although / I don't see how any of it / is going to make a difference" (McCall 186). In Mexico, Lupita "[finds] a new rhythm" (McCall 188). There, she is able to reconnect with her true self away from the domestic restrictions of caring for her father and younger siblings. Unlike Cesi, who cannot fully accept her fragile Mexican identity born from the shame felt by her father, there Lupita is able to reconcile the traumatic events of her life. Mexico provides her with a safe space to relearn her identity following her mother's death. McCall writes:

> At Abuelita's house
> time stands still,
> holds its breath,
> and leaves me alone
> so I can think. (191)

In Mexico, Lupita is allowed the reprieve she needs to mourn her mother's death. Typically, in children's literature, girls portray a more responsive reaction to death than boys do (Moore and Mae 58). Yet Lupita's reaction is singular in that she is allowed the escape of border crossing to help her cope with her grief. Further, her separation from the oppressive domestic space while in Mexico allows her to realize her need to travel beyond the scope of her dual homelands. In the end, she feels somewhat ashamed that she wants to leave her parents' home to seek her identity

elsewhere, but her persistence in leaving and her strength to do so is what makes her truly a Shadow-Beast.

Ultimately, Lupita recognizes that leaving home "is a welcomed uprooting" and that she is "transplanting [herself] / to a whole new place" (McCall 206). The lack of a centralized and fully-formed identity "often associated with the figure of an elder family member now gone" is a hallmark of the precarious mestizaje of Chicana subjectivities (Pérez-Torres 196). Lupita's mother's death is the disruption that Lupita needs in order to become a Shadow-Beast. It feels morbid to assert that Lupita's mother had to die for Lupita to come into her own, but the narrative suggests that, had her mother not passed, Lupita would remain static, stuck within the space where she must "accept / the clipping of [her] wings, / the taming of [her] heart" (McCall 77). After her mother dies, though Lupita should default to being the new, pseudo-mother of the home, she chooses to leave. In his article "'Grandpa Died Last Night': Children's Books about the Death of Grandparents," David Sadler demonstrates the four steps child and adolescent characters move through as they are exposed to the death of a grandparent. Lupita, too, must work through these stages in regards to the death of her mother. The fourth and final stage, which Sadler labels "The mourning and recovery of the child," is just beginning in the final poem of *Under the Mesquite* (246). Lupita closes her tale by acknowledging: "I don't know where I'll go from here, / but I want to make my own way" (McCall 207). Her mother's love spurs her forward, but it also illustrates that she needs to leave the confining, domestic spaces of her parental home. Unlike Cesi whose own travels across the border seem similar to Lupita's, Lupita becomes a Shadow-Beast because she does not attempt to abandon one identity in favor of the other, instead she allows both to coalesce and support her actualization as a Shadow-Beast.

Spatiality in Chicana YA Literature

The desire for space is ubiquitous throughout the children's literature tradition. It is not unique to literature about girls or young women, instead space, reimagined for the child subject, is a common trope across children's and YA literature. Susan Honeyman contends, "childhood spaces, because they are more limited (the home, a backyard, school, and playground) are more totalized" (n.p.). These spaces, for the Shadow-Beast, are different only in that they are not limited or confined to normalized childhood locations. The Shadow-Beast can enter into her own space whenever her need for autonomy pushes her outside of the frame of hegemonic spaces. The latter half of this chapter will explore how these spaces are often conceptualized by individuals outside of the Shadow-Beast, whether they be more nebulous like that faceless patriarchy or more immediate (and most likely on some level more impressive and influential because of their intimacy) like parents. Regardless, these outside influences must be rejected by the Shadow-Beast for her to be able to gain true autonomy. Anzaldúa claims that her Shadow-Beast, "at the least hint of limitations on my time or space by others, ... kicks out with both feet" (38). The same can be said of the Shadow-Beasts in this study, they desire freedom from limitation and will guard that freedom at all costs.

Children are often not afforded any real freedom because their age and inexperience dictates that they should have less autonomy than adults. In addition to age-related restriction, for the young women who become Shadow-Beasts, their freedom is also jeopardized by the turbulence of the patriarchal, outside world. They must arm themselves against the traumas that they face because of the diaspora of their communities. In doing so, they work against hegemonic spaces and patriarchal forces that would seek to subdue them; they gain agency through rebellion and refusal to submit. I want to be very clear that though they defy the rules

and order of the dominant community, they do not do so in a bid to create an anarchist space, rather they do so to proliferate the heterotopic space and to open that space up to those who also need an escape.[18]

Parenthood as an Extension of Domestic Spaces

The domestic spaces that all of these characters occupy stem from the cultural tradition that women are only good insofar as they engage in traditionally feminine roles. Though strides have been made in women's rights, largely their roles are still directly policed by the men in their lives. Because women are so often relegated to domestic spaces, it would stand to reason that the Shadow-Beast finds some way to both subvert and convert these realms. For the Chicanas in these texts, one of the ways that they are able to work around the suppression of domestic spaces is through their relationships with their parents. In a study published in the early 1990's, Rhoda Maxwell noted that in the preceding decades, five motherhood tropes emerged in YA literature. Of importance to this study, are Maxwell's last three characteristics: "Mothers who are passive and/or unable to cope," "Mothers limited to a self-centered perspective," and "Mothers who are competent and loving" (26). Maxwell's images of mothers, however, are limited to a predominantly white perspective, therefore I will be using Maxwell's characteristics as the springboard for my discussion of motherhood in Chicana YA literature, but I will be providing needed cultural context to add nuance to her definitions. In Latino families, mothers are more likely to take on the parental role; because nurturing and caring are stereotypically feminine traits (Dumka et al. 590, Gibson 177).

Mothers impact their daughters' ability to become Shadow-Beats by either being a woman the daughters would be loathe to become or being a woman the daughters desire to emulate. In Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street*, Esperanza's mother serves as an example of

the former; she is what Maxwell would refer to as a passive mother but she is also a loving mother. Her passivity leads her to be complicit with the patriarchy, as she does not resist the oppression on Mango Street. However her love for Esperanza makes her a key figure in Esperanza's transformation into the Shadow-Beast because she illustrates the could-be of Esperanza's life. The cautionary tale of Esperanza's mother steers her away from apathy and towards the shadow space. Esperanza's mother tells her: "I could've been somebody, you know? Esperanza you go to school. Study hard" (Cisneros 91). Her mother's wasted potential stems from a sense of feminine shame, she tells Esperanza: "You want to know why I quit school? Because I didn't have nice clothes. No clothes, but I had brains" (Cisneros 91). Her mother is ashamed of being unable to perform her femininity through her outward appearance, much in the same way that Esperanza is often ashamed of her own appearance. However Esperanza's mother gives her the tools to move past this shame; the "transmission of maternal inheritance becomes the legacy of maternal knowledge making the mother-daughter relationship for [Esperanza] central to [her] social and creative liberation as [a] Chicana daughter" (Bode 289).

Another example of motherhood acting as an arm of the domesticizing machine is Gabi's mother, in *Gabi, a Girl in Pieces* by Isabel Quintero. Gabi is born to an unwed mother, though her drug-addict father periodically returns to torment his family. Her mother's lost status because of the circumstances of Gabi's birth forever haunt her. Gabi and her mother often do not see eye to eye, and she regards them as having a "lightswitch relationship" (Quintero 25). Gabi hopes that her mother "would be more understanding, but that's not who she is" (Quintero 26). Gabi's mother's antiquated ideas about her daughter's agency cause Gabi to feel alienated from her mother. Gabi thinks, "My mom is always going on about how good Mexican girls stay home and help their families when they are in need and how that differentiates us from other people"

(Quintero 83). Gabi desires mobility, like all other Shadow-Beasts, and she wants to leave home and enter into the shadow space, but her mother's presence complicates this desire.

Throughout the text, Gabi argues with her mother about her eventual departure. In the closing pages of the book, Gabi is determined to leave home and her resolve is strengthened after an altercation with the boy who raped and impregnated her best friend, Cindy. Gabi's fight with German, Cindy's rapist, will be discussed in the coming chapter; but in the aftermath of the fight, Gabi's mother becomes even more hesitant to allow her daughter to leave home. Her mother tells her that "if [she moves] out, [she] can't come back home—that if [she leaves], that's it" (Quintero 278). But something within Gabi shifts when she fights German, she becomes a true Shadow-Beast in that scene and the pull to leave home becomes overwhelming. Inevitably, she thinks, that if anyone opposes her then "they can kiss [her] ass" (Quintero 284). Gabi's disregard for outsiders' opposition against her newfound identity as a Shadow-Beast only heightens her ability to act as one. While the Shadow-Beast is concerned with the feminine community, she must have mobility that breeds agency if she is able to save them. For Gabi, her act of salvation is the vengeance she metes upon German, but to be able to return home to demonstrate the power of the Shadow-Beast to the rest of her family, Gabi must leave to show them that the outside world does not pose a threat to those who have gained power.

If Esperanza's mother acts as a competent and loving mother, albeit trapped within patriarchal space, and Gabi's mother acts as a mother concerned with only her self-centered perspective, then Masi's mother, in Claudia Guadalupe Martínez's *Pig Park*, is the mother unable to cope. When their situation becomes dire as more and more businesses close after the factory in their barrio shuts down, Masi's mother begins to lose hope and leaves her husband and daughter behind when she goes to stay with her own parents in Texas. Masi feels betrayed by

her mother's abandonment. She wonders if her mother would have had a better life had her parents not settled near the factory, she thinks, "maybe my dad and I had gotten in my mom's way" (Martínez 91). Her mother's absence spurs her father's distance and Masi laments that she has become "an orphan kitten" (Martínez 105). However, we must differentiate between Masi's mother's movement and the movement of the Shadow-Beast. Masi's mother runs away while the Shadow-Beast leaves in order to find herself and return to her feminine community to exhibit her agency. We see the best example of this in *The House on Mango Street*, when Esperanza realizes that she must return to Mango Street someday to help those there who cannot help themselves. But Masi cannot leave, she is different because it is her mother's movement that acts as the impetus for her becoming the Shadow-Beast, not her own.

Because her mother leaves, Masi realizes that she does not need to; instead she is jettisoned into the savior role of the Shadow-Beast and must cope with the onslaught of responsibility. Masi thinks, "I still longed for my mom to come back, but there wasn't much I could do. I finally had a chance to make a real difference this summer. Maybe I could actually help save the bakery and Pig Park" (Martínez 139). In the end, a fire at the abandoned factory reroutes foot traffic into Masi's neighborhood and brings life back to the place. Though Masi does not have a hand in starting the fire, her reaction to it is what makes her a Shadow-Beast. Masi is resilient. Despite her mother's abandonment and her father's distance, Masi becomes deeply imbedded in the welfare of her community. When her mother strays, Masi assumes the role of woman of the home much in the same way that Nora becomes a pseudo-mother when her own mother is ill during their border crossing. The loss of her mother, for however small an interval, allows Masi the space within which to gain power stemming from her mother's absence. Without another domesticized female presence close, Masi can begin to exist outside of the

maternal, patriarchal authority. Though I've pointed to places in these texts where the female characters adopt pseudo-mother roles, I do not think they become *mothers*, as defined by patriarchal gender roles. Instead, as pseudo-mothers, they are able to reinvent how motherhood is defined within the domestic space.

Beyond the maternal constrictions of the Chicano patriarchy, the Shadow-Beast must also contend with the influence of her father. Though it would stand to reason that fathers are implicit in the role of the patriarchy, their relationship to domestic spaces is much more complicated. Increasingly Latino fathers are taking on a more dynamic role in their daughters' lives. As more and more Latinos move away from rural areas to urban areas, fathers' ideas about their daughters' agency and sexualities are changing and becoming more progressive and accepting (González-López 1119). This progression is evident in three of the six texts in the study. Lupita's father allows her agency as does Masi's. Moreover Cesi's father comes to trust her enough to tell her about his childhood traumas. In two of the six books, the fathers are dead—a hard fact that the daughters must learn to cope with throughout the course of the text. For Nora the news of her father's death is the impetus she needs in order to become the Shadow-Beast; and Gabi's father's death from a drug overdose serves as reminder of the harsh realities of a life that lacks agency. In the epilogue to *Illegal*, Nora, still living in the U.S. and attending high school, visits her father's grave on the anniversary of his death. She thinks, "One year ago..., we found him. His death. My womanhood" (Restrepo 248). For Nora, her journey across the border triggers her maturation, but her father's death solidifies it. She is no longer part of the dichotomous binary of masculine/feminine because her father's death means she need not remain dependent upon her masculine antithesis. Outside of the patriarchal rule of her father, Nora establishes a new order. While she was within the patriarchal hierarchy Nora could still be

a victim because of her marginal position to her father, but outside of his hierarchy, in her own shadow space, Nora cannot be victimized. She acts as an agent within her own space. For Gabi, however, her father's death is a traumatic event. Nora does not witness her father's death instead she experiences it secondhand. Gabi finds her father, "in a corner of [their] garage" slumped over with a "pipe in hand" after a drug overdose (Quintero 150, 151). However, Gabi chooses to remember the good in her father, not the addict. In a letter she writes to him after his death, she tries to think about him in heaven or in hell but cannot imagine him in either. Instead, she invents a third space where he can "[eat] some tacos and [drink] a Pepsi" without fear of relapse or the constraints of his cultural responsibility (Quintero 192). Like when Shadow-Beasts become pseudo-mothers, Gabi's creation of a space for her father outside of the domestic home, refashions the parental role within the patriarchal apparatus.

Shadow Spaces

Shadow spaces are the uncategorizable spaces of the world; but the shadow spaces can be states of mind, rather than physical locations. For Chicanas, place is geopolitical, therefore to remove themselves from these realms, they withdraw into the shadow space. Anzaldúa writes, "in leaving home I did not lose touch with my origins because *lo mexicano* is in my system. I am a turtle, wherever I go I carry 'home' on my back" (43). The ability to keep her home within herself demonstrates the Shadow-Beast's intimacy with third spaces. "The diasporic subject ... is always re-creating the unimagined, the unknown, where mobile third space identities thrive," and where the shadow space converges with hegemonic space (Pérez 79). The shadow space is liminal, influenced by the powerful spaces that surround it but largely impervious to their influence. Of all diverse women that can become Shadow-Beasts, Chicanas are already exposed to these shadow spaces through their diaspora and hybridized identities as neither Mexican nor

American. In *Illegal*, by choosing to move from a male-dominated space, a world inhabited by the memory of her father and overshadowed by his absence, Nora chooses to reclaim her feminine power and she enters into the shadow space. Nora recognizes that the experience of border crossing has altered her identity, “something had changed [her] in the back of the truck” (Restrepo 84). The literally dark and shadowy space of the mango truck mimics the openness of the shadow space; Nora’s involvement with the simulation of a shadow space provides her a familiarity with that space that endows her with power and agency.

Nora experiences the shadow space as a physical space, through a longing for a new home, but Masi, Lupita, and Gabi experience the shadow space in different ways. Using Gabi as the representative example, I will briefly explain the psychic shadow space and its impact on Chicana subjectivities. Gabi must first learn to differentiate between the dark spaces of the world and the freedom afforded by the heterotopic, shadow space. When her brother is beaten by her mother, Gabi notes, “we had entered an alternate universe where we were ruled by primal urges” (Quintero 166). This alternate space is overwhelmingly negative, but it does not put Gabi off her search for a positive shadow space. Gabi’s realization of her need for autonomy pushes her away from the more normalized paths that her friends take. She realizes that “[she] could be in the same boat as Cindy,” an unwed teenage mother, and instead she “[wants] to be free” (Quintero 243). The shadow space promises freedom within its heterotopic boundaries and it represents a breakdown of deeply rooted and socially accepted concepts and procedures. By destabilizing the norm, characters like Gabi remove the central and localized concepts of personhood and objectification attached to diverse women. Through “a series of substitutions of center for center,” Gabi reroutes the normalized narrative that a Chicana’s “worth is between her legs” (Derrida 2; Quintero 146). Instead, Gabi learns that her worth stems from her ability to

shatter the interpellated notions of her capabilities and remove herself from the patriarchal categorization of herself as a singular subject, good insofar as she is able to provide the traditional feminine counterpoint for man's needed release. Gabi's words, as we will see in the next chapter, are what break her out of the cyclical subjugation of Chicanas to the dominant powers. Like Gabi, all of the Shadow-Beasts in this project redefine, in some way, the patriarchal scripts they are meant to follow and break out of the confining spaces within which they are initially trapped.

Chapter 3: Beastly Performances for Community Salvation

"Mostly, I wished for a miracle to save us."

-Claudia Guadalupe Martínez, *Pig Park*

In life or death situations, it is often the men who work to engage with solutions for survival but the Shadow-Beast takes this tradition and flips it on its head. The Shadow-Beast engages in "the dialogue between [her] Self and *el espíritu del mundo*," the spirit of the world (Anzaldúa 92). Anzladúa explains, "I change myself, I change the world" (92). This investment with the wider community is paramount to the actualization of the Shadow-Beast identity in diverse, young women. In the previous chapter, I explained how the Shadow-Beast comes to perform her identity within counter-hegemonic spaces; but what I will demonstrate in this chapter is how the Shadow-Beast reenters the patriarchal world and performs her subversive identity there, to be witnessed by her community. One way in which the Shadow-Beast is able to control her identity is through writing. Whereas women's stories are so often controlled by those beyond the women themselves, the Shadow-Beast takes ownership of her own story.

As with Chapter 2, I will briefly explain how the first Shadow-Beast, Esperanza in *The House on Mango Street,* demonstrates this facet of the Shadow-Beast as an observable, agentic identity. Unlike her female relatives who have no access to alternative spaces through education, Esperanza can utilize her writing as a mode through which to become the Shadow-Beast. In her writing, she takes control of herself and over her space on Mango Street. Like her mother who advocates for her education, Esperanza's Aunt Lupe also encourages her to write her way out of Mango Street. Her aunt listens to her writing, and tells her: "You just remember to keep writing, Esperanza. You must keep writing. It will keep you free" (Cisneros 61). This freedom is something that all of Esperanza's female relatives seem to yearn for, but because they do not or

cannot write, they are unable to gain agency like Esperanza's. As *Mango* Street draws to a close, we never get to see Esperanza move back to her community to save it. However the narrative suggests that Esperanza is moving toward a point in her own consciousness wherein she would be comfortable with Mango Street, enough so to ensure that the other women there are given a voice and a choice. Though Esperanza is the only character who actively works against the systemic othering on Mango Street, she is not the only character to wish for rebellion. Like her mother, Esperanza's other female family members also contribute to the construction of her role as Shadow-Beast, as Jacqueline Doyle writes: "In the extended filiations of her ethnic community Esperanza finds a network of maternal figures. She writes to celebrate all of their unfulfilled talents and dreams and to compensate for their losses" (10). Unlike her female relatives who have no access to alternative spaces through education, Esperanza can utilize her writing as a mode by which she becomes the Shadow-Beast. Only her Shadow-Beast has the power to return to Mango Street. As the Shadow-Beast, she is strong enough to return to Mango Street, but to no longer be defined by it.

Redemptive Performances

The Shadow-Beast performs through writing, as Anzaldúa explains, "the act of writing is the act of making soul, alchemy. It is the quest for the self, for the center of the self, which we women of color have come to think as 'other'—the dark, the feminine" ("Speaking in Tongues" 167). By coming to know herself and to understand these dark subversive parts of her psyche, the Shadow-Beast is embracing that which makes her different and powerful. Diverse young women are faced with the precarious position of double-marginalization, but through performance and salvation they are able to face this oppression and not be defined by it. I want to stress that these performances are not superficial and that the agency that comes from them is

not fleeting but a permanent solution to the heretofore-oppressive state that these young women existed in. By saving themselves from oppression, these young women are given the opportunity to help save their community and to become, not the beasts that Anzladúa fears will be "abandoned by the mother, the culture," but the visible and powerful faces of the revolution (42). However, performative experiences, like writing, are exclusive to literate peoples; therefore potentially illiterate Shadow-Beasts must embody substitute performances to be able to gain agency. Alternatively they convey their stories not through writing, but through oral tradition, shared memories, or the act of testimony. To this end, in this chapter, I will examine the redemptive power of the Shadow-Beast as illustrated by her performative actions and reactions.

Through her actions, the Shadow-Beast is able to use her performances as a metonym for power. Women, so often viewed as the weaker sex, present their power through embodied performance. Diana Taylor claims that embodied performances, like those of gendered performances, are ways "of knowing and transmitting knowledge" (26). For Taylor, "every performance enacts a theory," thus the theory that I would like to posit regarding the Shadow-Beast is this: that her performances serve as the absolution for the systemic and hierarchical subjugation of women (in particular *diverse* women) through the heteropatriarchy (27). As Judith Butler notes in "Subversive Bodily Acts," we must also question, if there is "a political shape to 'women,' as it were, that precedes and prefigures the political elaboration of their interests and epistemic point of view?" (2542). For Butler, the female (and I would also argue the feminine if not biologically female) body "is always under siege" through the historical categorization and refiguring of the feminine form without consultation of the owner of the body in question (2543). The Shadow-Beast however resists this outside construction. Comparatively she reconstructs herself through performative action. These performances do not take place in a

vacuum; they are dependent upon the presence and consciousness of the feminine community. Taylor claims, "the multicodedness of [embodied performance] transmits as many layers of meaning as there are spectators, participants, and witnesses" (49). All performances need an audience, without which the catharsis of performance would be lost. The latter half of this chapter will more directly address the feminine community, which acts as an audience for these redemptive performances, but first I would like to delve more deeply into the presence of writing as a metaphor for healing and power in Chicana YA literature.

The Power of Writing

Writing, for the Shadow-Beast, allows her the creative space within which she can reconstruct herself outside of the strictures of the heteronormative patriarchy. Anzaldúa finds healing in writing, "in reconstructing the traumas behind the images, I make 'sense' of them, and once they have 'meaning' they are changed, transformed. It is then that writing heals me, brings me great joy" (92). Writing is not just an escape for the female protagonists in these texts it is essential in their actualization of the Shadow-Beast identity. But writing inevitably brings with it the anxiety of authorship. If male writers suffer from "what Bloom calls revisionary swerves," then, as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar note, "the female writer's battle for self-creation involves her in a revisionary process" (49). The Shadow-Beast, like any other female creator, must revise not only others' outward perceptions of her, but also her inward perceptions of her own capabilities. Initially, creative power becomes a tenuous process for the Shadow-Beast. In a letter to other oppressed female writers, Anzaldúa explains, "it is not easy writing this letter. It began as a poem, a long poem. I tried to turn it into an essay but the result was wooden, cold" ("Speaking in Tongues" 163). But Anzaldúa, like many other women writers, soon finds, "the writing ... shields us, gives a margin of distance, helps us survive" ("Speaking in Tongues" 167).

Writing gives women the freedom to explore the fractures within their worlds—to make sense of the patriarchy and their place both within and outside of it.

In *Gabi, a Girl in Pieces*, Gabi writes to preserve herself. The "zine" she creates mid-novel expresses her counter-hegemonic views and her resistance to normative values of beauty and femininity. She reflects, "I wanted the zine to make people think about how girls are raised to think about our bodies and who gets to decide how we think about them" (Quintero 204). However not all writing can cultivate a Shadow-Beast. In *Border Crossing,* Cesi *tries* to use her journal as a space to better explore herself; but she resorts to other resources to create herself rather than rely on self-identification. Cruz writes Cesi "spent three hours in the library looking up all kinds of interesting facts about Mexico. [She] wrote them down in [her] journal," but she does not go out of her way to reflect on how these facts could alter her selfhood (Cruz 38). She superficially records them and uses them as evidence for her separation from and inability to reconcile herself with her Mexican heritage. For Cesi, there is no life to her narrative, no innovation; therefore there is no freedom.

But the very nature of Gabi's magazine project resists already-existing narratives. Within the zine, she is able to express her counterhegemonic ideals. The zine contains seven separate "diagrams," each of which represents a different part of the female body. Accompanying Gabi's straightforward, slam-style poetry within the zine are sketchy images of body parts, all placed to heighten the jarring slant of the poems. The nontraditional, mixed-media zine inserted within Quintero's narrative is exactly the kind of performance necessary to shift Gabi forward in her quest for freedom and by extension to become a Shadow-Beast. Through her zine, Gabi explores what it means to exist outside of the hegemonic patriarchy. She writes, if a girl were to "cut

[her] hair," she would "look like a marimacha, and that is bad" (Quintero 199).[19] But, Gabi continues:

> You do not want to be bad.
> Well, maybe just a little,
> just to see how it feels.
> So you cut it
> and realize how good it feels.
> You are different.
> Bad is not so bad. (Quintero 199)

This "badness" cloaked in goodness is instrumental to the Shadow-Beast identity. The Shadow-Beast works within the grittiness that comes with subversivity. For Anzaldúa, the rejection of the good/bad dichotomy comes with an acceptance of the Beast within. She writes, "Why *are* we dangerous beasts? Because we shake and often break the white's comfortable stereotypic images they may have of us" ("Speaking in Tongues" 165). The female characters in YA novels so often fret about how they can (or cannot) be perceived as "good" girls. Regularly, this leads to some personal dilemma that causes the female protagonist to either fully commit to being "bad," and accept the negative repercussions of that choice, or to allow herself to meld into the traditional calls of femininity and works to be an acceptable female character. Gilbert and Gubar note, "it is debilitating to be *any* woman in a society where women are warned that if they do not behave like angels they must be monsters," but to take this a step further; the girls in YA novels are often told that if they do not behave, they will face horrible or debilitating repercussions (53). Gabi addresses the concern of polarized gender roles in her zine when she explains the myriad identities women can adopt.

Gabi's zine is addressed to a nameless, female reader; but while she spends the majority of this creative space listing the multitude of ways the female body is used and abused both by its owner and the men and women around it, she concludes with the following cry for hope:

> But maybe...
>
> You will forget all this
>
> and learn to speak and think
>
> and become a woman.
>
> And think thoughts that will change what comes out of your mouth.
>
> Thoughts like:
>
> If words are our weapons, we must ask ourselves, why should we use rocks and sticks when we have tanks available?
>
> And you will know how to answer (Quintero 202)

Beyond Gabi's words is the nuanced meaning of her zine. The lack of punctuation at the end of the final poem in the zine is far from unintentional. The openness of this statement is something that Gabi strives for. With her writing and careful attention to detail, Gabi is able to demonstrate the need for freedom and open expression for the diverse woman. This need for freedom is paramount to her actualization as a Shadow-Beast. Gabi sees this freedom as absolutely necessary to her own ability to survive and thrive within the world. In a place where Gabi has so little power, her ability to write and create her zine enables her the psychic space within which to cultivate her performative power. Gabi purposefully leaves the "answer" that her intended female reader will come to as ambiguous because she knows that not one answer will fill the gap for all women. Gabi recognizes that womanhood is not a monolithic experience and that what works for one woman might not work for another, but she provides for them an out, a way for

her intended female reader to come to her own agency by finding her voice. The ability to represent themselves outside of the hegemony is what becomes most important to the Shadow-Beast.

Like Gabi, Esperanza in *The House on Mango Street* also uses writing as a way to separate herself from the strictures of the patriarchy. It is important to understand that *Gabi, a Girl in Pieces* and *The House on Mango Street* were published thirty years apart but their sentiments toward the power of writing are strikingly similar. What Cisneros expressed in 1984 resonates with Quintero's message in 2014. Writing, for the Chicana, is a way to linguistically construct her identity and cultivate her individual voice. However, though Cisneros's text is centered on Esperanza, we rarely see her actual writing printed in full. In one example given in "Born Bad", Esperanza writes: "I want to be / like the waves on the sea, / like the clouds in the wind, / but I'm me" (Cisneros 60). Esperanza longs for departure and separation. Esperanza, like all Shadow-Beasts, longs for freedom. She concludes: "One day I'll jump / out of my skin," because she wants to shed the identity of Mango Street (Cisneros 60). Esperanza wants "Not an apartment in back. Not a man's house. Not a daddy's. A house all my own" but she can never fully lose her Mango Street self (Cisneros 108). In one of the closing vignettes, the Three Sisters tell her, "When you leave you must remember to come back for the others. A circle, understand? You will always be Esperanza. You will always be Mango Street. You can't erase what you know. You can't forget who you are" (Cisneros 105). To tie this to the performative act of writing, I want to focus on the Sisters telling her that she cannot "erase" what she knows. The very existence of *Mango Street* as a book illustrates Esperanza's inability to erase the parts of herself constructed on Mango Street. Because she cannot erase it, she must write it. She comes to make sense of her femininity, her culture, and even her rape, through narratives.[20]

Other Embodied Performances

Women are often expected to act a certain way lest they be perceived as something negative; therefore women are natural actresses. Though acting is possibly the most obvious type of performance, its implications for the identity formation of these young women are more nuanced and rooted within the inherent nature of the performance of identity. All individuals perform their identities, but diverse women's performances are often couched in their inability to fully express themselves lest they be perceived as what Anzaldúa calls mujeres malas (Anzaldúa 39). By performing counter to what is expected of them, women who awaken the Shadow-Beast identity become deeply familiar with their othered selves. In a discussion of Lacan's theory of subjectivity, Karen Coats explains the intersection of Lacanian theory and reading children's literature "enables us to come to an understanding of just how implicated the Other (as other people, as our own unconscious, as language itself) is in the formation of our own identities" (105). By performing in these texts, the female protagonists become more comfortable with the Othered and performative role of the Shadow-Beast. The redemption within these performances is that the Shadow-Beast comes to be comfortable with her identity through continually embodying what it means to be a powerful woman.

While writing is a clear way for women to reclaim ownership of themselves, other embodied performances manifest differently for the Chicana Shadow-Beast.[21] In this section, I will briefly discuss acting on the stage as a clear form of embodied performance but I will also broaden our understanding of performances to also encompass reactions of the body's physiological responses to feminine maturation through menstruation and post-pubescent sexual awakening linked to the loss of virginity. Whereas menstruation and sex are often taboo topics or the subjects of didactic problem novels in the YA literature tradition, the books in this study

take on a decidedly forward and productive stance in regards to these occurrences. Through embodied performances these young women are able to fashion their responses to their bodies as another outlet for empowerment.

To foreground this discussion, I would first like to examine how the physical act of performance on a stage is proximal to the embodied performances of gender and sex. In *Borderlands/La Frontera,* Anzaldúa considers her writing to be healing at the same time she considers her stories to be thought of "as performances [rather than] inert and 'dead' objects" (Anzaldúa 89). In this same vein, Lupita in *Under the Mesquite* takes up acting as a way to help her cope with her mother's illness. She is introduced to drama club in high school but is immediately faced with the barrier of her cultural identity barring her from being able to full immerse herself in acting. Her drama instructor tells her, "'If you're serious about acting— / and I think you are—then you need to / lose your accent'" (McCall 67). Up until this point, Lupita had not been self-conscious of her speech, instead she is proud of her acting and sees it as a way for her to demonstrate her strength to her mother and to make her mother happy during her illness. But as her mother's condition deteriorates, Lupita starts to doubt herself. During her senior year of high school, Lupita is offered a key role in the spring play but she wavers about accepting the part. Her teacher, unaware of Lupita's mother's condition, urges her to embrace her natural acting talent and her ability to cry on cue, to which Lupita replies she can demonstrate genuine emotion on stage because her home life is enough to fuel performative emotions. Her teacher tells her, "'Maybe you could take / that pain, that energy and use it / to become someone else for a while'" (McCall 160). Inevitably, the "someone else" that Lupita becomes is the Shadow-Beast. I do not mean to imply that the Shadow-Beast is a character that diverse, young women can play and then go back to being powerless women, conformed to the

patriarchy. Once women awaken the Shadow-Beast identity there is no going back. Even if the Shadow-Beast returns to the site of her oppression she still maintains her ability to be impervious to its influence. Certainly diverse woman are forced into conforming to the hegemony, but what Shadow-Beasts see are the fissures within those apparatuses. The Shadow-Beast learns how to act around the patriarchy and to perform the subliminal role rather than a submissive one.

Likewise, the Shadow-Beast must not only act on the stage, but also act in her life. The best example of this type of performance is Nora in *Illegal* whose very life is an act. She has to play the part of documented citizen, when she is anything but. To not draw attention to herself, she has to seamlessly blend with society. In Houston, as an undocumented immigrant, Nora is "just someone else," who learns to function as a new person or face deportation (Restrepo 174). Nora gets a summer job, working at a snack stand near a local pool and she does everything that she can to fit in in that space. Nora takes her cues from the other teenagers who play at the pool, relying on her mimetic faculties to be able to mirror their actions. However, Nora understands that she is not like them, but she attributes this dissimilarity to her undocumented status and not to her powerful identity as a Shadow-Beast. It is my assertion that Nora's position as a Shadow-Beast is what pushes her to have to mimic the actions of the other teenagers rather than fully immersing herself in their culture. The one friend Nora truly makes, Keisha, a younger African-American girl, is shunned by the older, more streetwise teens at the pool and because of her Otherness, she befriends Nora. It is from Keisha that Nora learns how to act out her difference and to enable that difference to influence her rise to power. Keisha is untroubled by her differences and, more importantly, doesn't care about Nora's. Keisha exemplifies the types of performances that Nora must master.

Acting a specific role for society can lead to the actualization of the Shadow-Beast identity. Similarly, embracing one's sexual identity can also unlock the power of the Beast. As I've previously discussed, the Shadow-Beast is an inherently sexual figure. Women, however, are taught to repress their sexualities. Young women are told that if they expose their sexual natures they will attract unwanted and violent attention. For Gabi, in particular, these warnings resonate, but Gabi sees past the subterfuge of her culture's hierarchically masculine ideals and decides that she has the power over her sexuality. After prom, Gabi and her boyfriend Martin have sex. Gabi is initially underwhelmed by the encounter. However, in the aftermath Gabi realizes that sexual power is something she has control over and can engage in and use for her own devices. She thinks, "I was feeling content. Am I a bad girl because I don't feel that guilty? Probably. But the thing is, I am starting to care less about that badness" (Quintero 248). Gabi's indifference to the moral standard of virginity demonstrates her ability to act around patriarchal norms and values. Quintero writes, "At that moment I wasn't too fat, I wasn't too white, I wasn't bad, I was just me" (247). Were Gabi to continue feeling ashamed of her body after sex, the pleasure of the act would be lost, as would the corresponding empowerment. However, Gabi's refusal to be damned due to her sexual awakening speaks to her reconceptualization of feminine power and desire. Gabi wants to act upon her sexual impulses and this type of embodied performance through sex demonstrates the capabilities of the Shadow-Beast's corporeal form to align with the powerfulness of this often-insular identity.

While engaging in sex is clearly the most definitive proof that the Shadow-Beast identity is tied to sexuality, it is not the only example of feminine power drawn from the body. For example in *Illegal* Nora's womanhood unfolds through metaphors of menstruation. The superficial wound Nora receives from the mango truck driver during their scuffle drips blood

onto her dress, leaving a stain. "When [Nora] looked closer at the stain, [she] could see it. ...It was a sign of strength" (Restrepo 72). The blood is also a sign of Nora's post-pubescence as it is an analogue for the blood of her menstrual cycle. Later in the text when Nora attends a church service with her grandmother to go to confessional, she puts the dress on for the first time since the fight with the truck driver. Since she and her mother arrived in Houston, Nora had preferred to keep the dress hidden though the narrative does not make it clear whether or not this is out of shame or if Nora cannot fully accept the bloodstain and its myriad connotations. She cannot wear the dress again after the initial trauma on the border because she must first accept her new position as a Shadow-Beast. Until she understands her new power, the dress and its bloodstain must remain hidden, but once she truly starts to come into her own as a Shadow-Beast, she can then don the dress once again, this time proudly. Once she puts it on, Nora notices her physical growth, thinking, "When I slipped it over my body, I realized it was shorter. It used to touch the bottom of my knees," and now the dress fits her new, womanly body in ways it previously had not (Restrepo 239). The dress is a clear symbol of Nora's feminine growth, both in relation to her physical and emotional maturation.

Salvation and the Community

Finally, the Shadow-Beast must perform for the disempowered. To prove herself within the feminine community, she has to perform her power and her ability to defy norms to demonstrate her capability to save. The Chicano movement of the 1960's was also based around this idea of community uplift. While adolescent Chicanas were pioneering for their place within the larger Chicano movement, their identity construction was suffering from exclusion.[22] This identity struggle, of course, has continued in the intervening half-century. Whereas Chicanas initially struggled within the movement to understand how their femininity fit with the

hypermasculinity of Chicano subjectivity, modern Chicanas similarly struggle against the constraints of community. However, like I've discussed, the Shadow-Beast is deeply imbedded with the success of her chosen feminine community. Without her community, the Shadow-Beast would have no one to save. Certainly, salvation of self is a critically important step in the actualization of the Shadow-Beast identity, but this identity means little to nothing if it cannot be outwardly expressed within the space of the feminine community. Further, where diverse YA literature is concerned, the community is paramount to the widespread success and reader-base of this dawning trend toward inclusion. In her article, "Multicultural Young Adult Literature as a Form of Counter-Storytelling," Sandra Hughes-Hassell explains, "By reading multicultural literature, teens of color and indigenous teens gain insight into how other teens who share their racial, ethnic, or cultural background have affirmed their own identities" (219). Much of what I've found makes young women Shadow-Beasts is their ability to take control of their own circumstances. But the reality is, adolescents are not fully equipped to take control of their situations, as they are not being provided the tools with which they can reimagine themselves as powerful individuals who can exist and thrive in counter-hegemonic spaces. If teens go their whole lives never seeing themselves as powerful—they become powerless adults. It becomes the responsibility of the diverse feminine community then, to not only be supported by the Shadow-Beasts but to support the Shadow-Beasts in turn.

The Feminine Community

There is a constant tension for the Shadow-Beast to be of and apart from her community. As a Shadow-Beast, the adolescent female protagonist rejects the constraints of community within its imagined borders; but as a savior she must move past her initial unease with the structure of the community and begin to work with the other marginalized subjects within that

community. As Lisa Flores explains, Chicana feminists (and by extension Shadow-Beasts) "[recognize] their still existing connections to various other groups, Chicana feminists construct bridges or pathways connecting them with others" (146). *Gabi, a Girl in Pieces* presents a feminine community in need of the salvation proffered by a Shadow-Beast. As I discussed in Chapter 2: Shadow Spaces and Beastly Places, the turning point for Gabi to become a Shadow-Beast is when she physically fights with German, the boy who raped and impregnated her best friend. In the chapters leading up to this confrontation, the intimate cultivation of Gabi's feminine community, comprised of her friends Cindy and Sebastian, provides Gabi with the supportive backdrop she needs to be able to let herself become the Shadow-Beast. Their feminine community is constructed through mutual support and shared secrets. In the opening pages of *Gabi, a Girl in Pieces*, Quintero reveals that, previous to beginning of the text, Sebastian came out to Gabi and this openness in their relationship continues to dictate their closeness as friends. In the same section of the text that we learn about Sebastian's sexual orientation, Cindy tells Gabi that she is pregnant. As opposed to Gabi's reaction to Sebastian's sexual orientation, Gabi regards Cindy's news with thinly-veiled disgust and horror, thinking that Cindy had become "just another statistic: Hispanic Teen Mom #3,789,258" (Quintero 11). Regardless, Gabi is the one who takes Cindy to the pharmacy to confirm her pregnancy and as the story progresses Gabi's unease with the situation is transferred from Cindy to German. German is both an interloper into Gabi's feminine community and a direct threat to one of Gabi's best friends.

After Gabi assaults German, however well-deserved the altercation may be, she starts to doubt having taken up for her feminine community. Quintero writes, "Did I feel bad? Yes, of course I did, because I am Gabi Hernandez and feel bad about most decisions I make because

lately those decisions have been bad ones. But, oh fucking well, I have had enough" (264). Gabi's apathy with the situation is not so much sparked by her fear that she has somehow wronged German but with the revelation that Cindy is furious with her because of the fight. In an attempt to mend their friendship, Gabi puts together a list of rape survivor support hotlines and presents it to Cindy when they meet to talk. Cindy tells Gabi, "'I know you were doing what you thought was right. Part of me is glad that you did it. He deserved it more. But it doesn't change how I feel'" (Quintero 270). Gabi's act as the savior of her friend group may not always be welcome; but this is a risk that the Shadow-Beast must take. Just because the Shadow-Beast can save does not mean that her feminine community always wants to be saved. Gabi's story demonstrates that women are so deeply interpellated into patriarchal society that they do not want to be removed from because remaining within the patriarchal, hegemonic space is much easier than trying to defy tradition. This is the difference between the Shadow-Beast and other female characters in diverse YA novels—the Shadow-Beast is the character who does not care if her actualization is isolating, she needs to be something more than herself and will attempt to demonstrate through lived experience the necessity of agency for her feminine community. To be the saving Shadow-Beast means that not everyone within the feminine community will be saved, but the Shadow-Beast's connection to her feminine community means that she will continue to fight for them even if they do not want to fight for themselves.

Religion of the Shadow-Beast

Perhaps the best example of the Shadow-Beast acting as the savior of her community is Masi in *Pig Park*. The central conflict of this text is the degradation of a Chicago barrio colloquially dubbed Pig Park following the closure of the American Lard Company factory on the outskirts of the neighborhood. The factory buildings effectively block Pig Park from the rest

of the city and with no one travelling to the factory, no one travels to Pig Park. To revitalize the community, a shifty businessman called Dr. Casal proposes the construction of an Aztec pyramid, El Gran Pirámide, at the center of the neighborhood as a tourist trap. Masi's community's existence is dependent upon their participation in constructing El Gran Pirámide (and then allowing it to be destroyed). Masi supports her community first by helping construct the pyramid, despite her reservations. What this demonstrates is that the Shadow-Beast does not always have to subvert to gain power. Instead Masi does what is necessary for the continued preservation of her community. Like Esperanza and Gabi who are active participants in the salvation of their communities, Masi begins as an active participant but soon transitions into a spiritual supporter. When it becomes increasingly clear that the residents of Pig Park have been duped by Dr. Casal, Masi learns that her community is doomed and begins to consider what it would take to save her home. She thinks, "I can't say that I prayed, but it was something like it" (Martínez 227). Mere hours after Masi hopes for this miracle, longing that some divine intervention will present itself and save Pig Park, "there was a loud bang and something like the soft roll of thunder" (Martínez 229). The explosion that Masi hears is the American Lard Company building catching fire and once it burns the community of Pig Park is once again visible to the outside world, after having been blocked from view by the factory for decades.

For Pig Park, the fire is cleansing. Biblically, fire is either a representation of hell or a clear and definitive proof of the existence of a god. From the burning bush that speaks to Moses, to the tongues of flame that baptize the apostles following Christ's ascension, fire represents hope and spiritual cleansing. Meanwhile, it bears specifying that Masi does not start the fire at the American Lard Company. Instead, it is implied that some of the men in the community including her father, do. But Masi is the one who has constantly given voice to the growing

discontent among the residents. When a group from the community is venting their unease with the pyramid project, Masi interjects, "'We did everything short of wearing pig suits" (Martínez 216). Masi, despite being a teenager and a girl, therefore undervalued in her community, has a voice within the group of dissenting adults. And it is Masi's voice that is heard when a woman, Mrs. Jones, ventures into Pig Park following the fire and finds the struggling businesses there. Mrs. Jones's connections with the outside world and her interest in Masi is what helps bring more revenue to Pig Park. Masi becomes the face of this movement. In this way, Masi is not so much the active savior of Pig Park, but the visible embodiment of the Shadow-Beast that is necessary to demonstrate Pig Park's redemptive potential. I want to be clear that I am not arguing that Masi's desire for a miracle and the serendipitous occurrence of the fire makes Masi a godlike being, rather the Shadow-Beast is a deeply spiritual figure, whose faith not only in her own power but in the power of the good that does still exist in the world is enough to spur change.

In Chapter 1: The Shadow-Beast Identity, I briefly alluded to the religious roots of Anzaldúa's Shadow-Beast, but the religious iconography in the Chicana YA texts complicates this connection. Thus what Masi's spiritual link to the Shadow-Beast and the divine represents is the relationship between the Shadow-Beast's redemptive power and the historical precedent for the powerful, religious connotations of this figure. For the Chicana Shadow-Beast in particular, power and agency are drawn from the redemptive image of the Virgen de Guadalupe. Guadalupe is unique for Chicana Shadow-Beasts. Arguably, Shadow-Beasts from other ethnic backgrounds or diverse identities will also have intimate connections with a spiritual figure synonymous with their particular cultural milieu, but Guadalupe's appearance in Chicana YA literature is not something to dismiss as a byproduct of the largely Catholic ideology pervasive in

most Latino literature. Guadalupe herself is conceivably a Shadow-Beast and her presence as a key, feminine role model is the first introduction that the female adolescent protagonists have to a woman who looks like them in power. For example in *Illegal*, initially it is Nora's memory of her father that spurs her journey to the U.S. She lives vicariously through his agency allowing her own power to grow from her ideas about his. This foundation shifts however, as Nora simultaneously rejects her father's influence and accepts that of the Virgen de Guadalupe. She symbolically adopts the image of Guadalupe, a figure who guides her on her journey, and whose medallion her grandmother gives her on her sixteenth birthday "'because of [her] faith and courage'" (Restrepo 250). According to Gloria Anzaldúa, "*La Virgen de Guadalupe* is the symbol of ethnic identity and of the tolerance for ambiguity that Chicanos-*mexicanos*, ... people who cross cultures, by necessity possess" (52). Guadalupe epitomizes the ideals of the Shadow-Beast, as both a powerful woman and a sacrificial one. It is no coincidence then that the Virgen de Guadalupe guides Nora throughout her journey. Guadalupe manifests as the voice that Nora hears inside her head, and speaks to her in her moments of need. As Nora crosses the border in the Rio Grande Valley, she looks for a sign from the Virgen, she thinks, "Searching my mind for the voices I had heard in Cedula, I imagined the dark eyes of the Virgin Guadalupe ... Maybe I could pray for her strength? Maybe roses would appear in the darkness as a sign we would be okay?" (Restrepo 52-53). In the moments leading up to her rebirth as a Shadow-Beast as she crosses the border, Nora cleaves to the comforting image of the Virgen as a reminder of her Mexican past and as an emblem of her prosperous future. In the absence of her father, Nora looks to the quintessential mother figure: the Virgin Mary. It is only when Nora accepts her role as the Shadow-Beast and puts on the image of Guadalupe her grandmother gives her, that she asserts, "I knew this was just the beginning of all the things I would do" (Restrepo 251). She

comes to understand the possibility afforded by the Virgen de Guadalupe, and she actively chooses to use the Virgen's power to effect positive change in her life.

As I have demonstrated, power and performance are instrumental for the Shadow-Beast. Drawing on her inner strength, the Shadow-Beast is able to engage with the contradiction of the patriarchal world that had initially sought to define her. By becoming the performative and redemptive Shadow-Beast, she begins to redefine the patriarchal world and reshape it to be a more positive space for those she is closest to and most invested in. The Chicana Shadow-Beast is unique in her connection to the spiritual side of performance and the salvation of the feminine community. While other Latina Shadow-Beasts have the potential to be connected to figures like the Virgen de Guadalupe, Guadalupe is clearly "the single most potent, religious, political and cultural image of the Chicano" (Anzaldúa 52). Other Shadow-Beasts potentially have religious connections based on their own cultural heritage but for the purposes of this project, the direct connection that the Chicana Shadow-Beast has with her Aztec religious roots and the syncretized version of Guadalupe opens doors for these Shadow-Beasts to be able to emulate these religious figures. By performing their powerful identities, the female adolescent protagonists in these texts exemplify what it means to be a Shadow-Beast. Their writing and performances are the evidence of their power. By putting their creations out into the world, like Gabi's zine and Lupita's acting, the protagonists of these Chicana YA novels allow others within their feminine communities to see what they are and what they have become. They are visible and their power is evident in performance.

Chapter 4: Out of the Shadows

"And that all the things I am worried about are gonna be all right."

-Isabel Quintero, *Gabi, a Girl in Pieces*

At the end of *The House on Mango Street*, Esperanza reflects on what she will do in the future. She thinks that she will have "a space for myself to go, clean as paper before the poem" (Cisneros 108). Esperanza's tabula rasa mentality for her future is similar to many Chicanas'; she wants to carve out a space for herself to create her own identity. What she has begun to realize at the end of the book, is that this new identity, which she is just starting to come to terms with, is a powerful one. For women, looking within themselves is a difficult and potentially terrifying task—we don't know what we'll find when we reflect on how we are the sum of our experiences; but what the Shadow-Beast, as a subversive identity, provides to those women who would seek to awaken her, is the reassurance that there is power in being marginalized. Rather than feeling helpless because women are considered the weaker sex, women who come to embrace their beastly side recognize that they are powerful *because* of these things. If young women have their inner power affirmed, their understandings of their own capabilities will flourish.

While children's literature and media play an important role in constructing the dominant norm of patriarchal culture, as it often reinforces "an uneven social hierarchy that privileges the status quo and subjugates marginal populations," what I have found is that diverse children's and YA literature offers a different perspective, one that demonstrates diverse women's capabilities for power and autonomy (G. Gutiérrez 10). While the lack of diverse representation in children's and YA literature means that readers and scholars have to look hard to find these empowering perspectives, they still exist. What I hope to do with this research moving forward

is demonstrate the necessity of the study of diverse YA literature about young women in order to empower both the ideal audience and the invested scholar.

Limitations of the Study and Further Research

While I tried to be as judicious in my choice of texts in this study as I could, there have inevitably been gaps within this research. The books I chose for this study (*The House on Mango Street* aside) were all published within the last decade, yet this study of the Chicana Shadow-Beast could also be expanded to the intervening years between the publication of *The House on Mango Street* in 1984 and the present. I had some difficulty locating texts with protagonists who were both Mexican-American and female. As a result, I relied heavily on Latino children's literature blogs and fellow scholars to suggest works to study. The texts that I did choose for this project are a mixture of suggested books and books I found on my own. What this means is that some of the books in this study are more acclaimed than others. For example, *Gabi, a Girl in Pieces* by Quintero won the 2015 Tomás Rivera Award, among many others; but books like *Border Crossing* are lesser known within even the Latino children's literature community. In looking at both types of books, I attempted to create as diverse a sample of readings as possible.

Certainly, the Shadow-Beast as a mode of reading diverse YA literature could be easily applied to other Latina YA literature. While I hesitate to say this, lest I inadvertently conflate Latina and Chicana identities, the cultural milieu of both groups is similar enough to warrant comparable application. Furthermore, in the future, I would like to do a comparative study of Latina Shadow-Beasts to see if the Shadow-Beast identity manifests differently in other Latinas. I hypothesize that the Cubana Shadow-Beast is certainly different than the Boricua Shadow-Beast, and both would contrast greatly to the Chicana Shadow-Beast. Regardless, I think that to study each Latina Shadow-Beast would prove both intriguing and fruitful for the critical study of

Latina YA literature. Further, this study could also expand to other diverse subjectivities. However, to do so I believe that reading for the Shadow-Beast, as a critical methodology, should be extended and made more inclusive. With its base in Chicana studies, Anzaldúa's Shadow-Beast theory is deeply rooted in Chicana subjectivity, thus I think that any methodology based around this identity would need to be broadened. It would be impossible to fully unmoor the Shadow-Beast methodology from its Chicana studies foundations, but I believe that more research can be done to allow the methodology to be more seamlessly applied to all diverse YA literature.

While I have not thoroughly applied this reading to anything but Chicana YA literature, my familiarity with other diverse YA texts affords me the ability to see how a Shadow-Beast methodology might work when applied to other books. For example in Thanha Lai's verse novel *Inside Out and Back Again*, Há, a Vietnamese refugee, rebels against the oppression of American culture. In her new school, where the white American children regard her with disdain because of her appearance, Há strives to be something else. She seeks to prove herself, because she "[hates] being told [she] can't do something" (Lai 214). Like the young women in the Chicana novels, Há resists the confines put on her because of her race and her gender. Oppression is not the only hallmark of diverse YA literature. The Shadow-Beast's synonymy with the divine can also be seen in books like Jewell Parker Rhodes's *Ninth Ward,* in which Lanesha's ability to "keep looking for signs that others don't see," helps her to survive Hurricane Katrina (Rhodes 177). While these are only a few examples, I believe that the Shadow-Beast identity is something that all diverse women have the potential to be.

This belief can only be corroborated with a more extensive study of diverse YA literature. I want to ensure that studying diversity in children's and YA literature isn't just en

vogue now, but will persist in critical discussions for years to come. While there have been key touchstone studies of diversity in children's and YA literature, as I discussed in the introduction to this project, I have not come across any scholar whose work is more broadly devoted to studying diverse representations in children's and YA literature. Instead research tends to have a more narrow focus, which while beneficial to the study of children's and YA literature, does not take into account how diversity pervades everyday life. Diverse character identities influence each other and work within a cosmopolitan worldview. Without contact to those whose lived experiences are different, life and literature become one-dimensional. I believe that a study of the diverse Shadow-Beast would assuage this problem by demonstrating how subjectivities coalesce and renegotiate within an inclusive shadow space.

Discussions about diversity in YA literature become necessary when one considers that the characters in an imagined audience of YA literature are predominantly white, cisgender, straight, and able-bodied (Garcia 39, Snell 256). Many children's literature scholars agree that diverse representation in children's and YA literature is absolutely necessary to diverse and non-diverse audiences alike (Larrick 63, Bishop 650, Myers). As Sandra Hughes-Hassell explains, "by reading multicultural literature, teens of color and indigenous teens gain insight into how other teens who share their racial, ethnic, or cultural background have affirmed their own identities" (219). For teens, seeing themselves in literature is an overwhelmingly empowering experience. In allowing adolescents to explore their own power through the stories they read, teachers are providing their students with a safe space. Critically reading diverse YA literature "shows [diverse teens] defining themselves and engaging in problem solving, and it emphasizes the importance of self-reliance and self-determination" (Hughes-Hassell 226). Much of what I've found makes young women Shadow-Beasts is their ability to take control of their own

circumstances. However, the unfortunate reality is: adolescents do not know that diverse literature exists or can be empowering. While I recognize that creating and implementing a critical methodology for reading diverse YA literature does little to put these books in the hands of the teenagers who need them, it is my hope that as more work is done on diverse literature it becomes more accessible to real readers and not just scholars or enthusiasts of diverse children's literature.

While the push for diverse representation in children's literature is a step in the right direction, I cannot predict if this expansion of the genre will persist. But what I can do is continue to work in this field despite the dearth of critical research and the scarcity of primary sources to study. The Shadow-Beast is important research because it brings Anzaldúa's amorphous theory into a practical application. Certainly, it would be easier to apply more established feminist theories to critically reading diverse YA literature or to apply something like critical race theory to texts with female protagonists; but the Shadow-Beast reading I have used in this project is specific to diverse YA literature and I believe that narrowed focus marks the importance of this research. While other theories can and have been applied to readings of YA literature, by creating and implementing a diverse YA literature-centric theory, I have tried to highlight the importance of studying diverse YA literature not as a tokenism but as something invaluable.

As a Chicana, this thesis's content is particularly important to me. With this research, I wanted to learn more about myself—and to see representation of other Chicanas in YA literature is eye opening. What I found is that, largely, these books are beautiful. Not just because I enjoyed studying them and found new and challenging material in their pages, but because they are artfully written, crafted by authors who are invested in allowing their readers glimpses into

the lives of young women who can rise above adversity. As I continue to study the Shadow-Beast in diverse children's and YA literature, I want to ensure that the experiences I had while preparing for and writing this project are experiences that can be shared by other readers and scholars. I want the Shadow-Beast to not just be a figure on the pages of a book. Anzaldúa writes about the Shadow-Beast being inside real women and I am inclined to agree that the Shadow-Beast exists as a real, lived identity. Maybe it will just take seeing and studying the Shadow-Beast as she moves and works on the page for someone to realize that the Shadow-Beast is moving and working inside of her too.

Endnotes

1. It is important to explain what I mean by diverse—here I will refer to the We Need Diverse Books campaign's definition, which "[includes] (but [is] not limited to) LGBTQIA+, people of color, gender diversity, people with disabilities, and ethnic, cultural and religious minorities" (n.p.). In other words, any individual marginalized by patriarchal, hegemonic society falls under the umbrella of diversity.
2. Throughout this project, I will use 'children's' and 'young adult'/'YA' literature somewhat interchangeably. Children's literature typically refers to books published for infants through children 12 years of age; whereas YA literature is published for the 12-18 year old demographic. Within children's literature studies, however, 'children's' literature is largely regarded as the umbrella term for all literature published for anyone under the age of eighteen. It is for this reason that I sometimes refer to the literature in this study as 'children's' literature.
3. The White Savior trope is common in film and literature. The White Savior is a white, heteronormative character who saves the marginalized characters of the text in some way. An example of the White Savior is fiction is Atticus Finch in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird.*
4. In the spring of 2014, the We Need Diverse Books movement was born from the unease surrounding an all-male, exclusively white panel of children's literature authors at BookCon. In a reaction to this, children's literature authors Malinda Lo and Ellen Oh started a social media campaign for more diverse representation in children's literature, which later became the We Need Diverse Books (WNDB) movement. Since its inception, WNDB has raised almost two hundred thousand dollars to finance education

and support for diverse authors. WNDB works closely with its supporters and authors to ensure that diverse readers have a chance to see themselves in books. They have launched several successful social media campaigns, and have released YouTube videos featuring popular children's and YA literature authors, notably John Green, capitalizing on Green's sway within the children's and YA literature community.

5. Please see Maite Zubiaurre's article "Culinary Eros in Contemporary Hispanic Female Fiction: From Kitchen Tales to Table Narratives" for a more illustrative description of domestic spaces and feminine communities.
6. See Adichie's *We Should All be Feminists* for more information.
7. Coatlicue is "the symbol of the dark sexual drive, the chthonic (underworld), the feminine, the serpentine movement of sexuality, of creativity, the basis of all energy and life" (Anzaldúa 57). Women who embrace their Shadow-Beast also confront the inhuman parts of themselves. Anzaldúa refers to this as an enlightening experience, "Not many jump at the chance to confront the Shadow-Beast in the mirror without flinching at her lidless serpent eyes, her cold clammy moist hand dragging us underground, fangs bared and hissing" (42). But this snake is not the Edenic tempter, for Anzaldúa, Coatlicue's synonymy with the Shadow-Beast imbues the Shadow-Beast with the power of the pre-Columbian Aztec pantheon.
8. Before the Spanish conquest, "women ... had the supreme power in Tula, and in the beginning of the Aztec dynasty, the royal blood ran through the female line" (Anzaldúa 55). This matrilineal power structure was disrupted when "the four Aztec lords of royal lineage picked the king's successor from his siblings or male descendants" (Anzaldúa 55). Further, once the Aztecs were conquered, matrilineal power was completed erased

with the introduction of Spanish colonialism. The colonial machine introduced patriarchal categorization and women began to be relegated to dissonant spaces. As the patriarchy fully established itself throughout the centuries following Cortés's perfidious victory, "women's activities [were] unseen, unthought, merely a shadow in the background of the colonial mind" (Pérez 7). The colonial repression of women provided the perfect shadow landscape for the Shadow-Beast to begin to form in the Americas. Before Spanish colonialism dominated the cultural edifice of Mesoamerican feminine folklore, women's power did not need to be hemmed in.

9. Anzaldúa claims, "My 'stories' are acts encapsulated in time, 'enacted' every time they are spoken aloud or read silently. I like to think of them as performances and not as inert and 'dead' objects" (89).
10. Diana Taylor in her book *The Archive and the Repertoire* claims, "the repertoire ... enacts embodied performances" (20). Taylor poses her titular repertoire against the archive, a space where "memory works across distance, over time and space" where "'knowledge' [is separated] from the knower" (Taylor 19). Taylor's distinction between the archive and the repertoire is tied to this notion of performativity. Performances occupy the repertoire and, in doing so, are lived experiences not concretized or categorized within archival memory. Whereas the archive would seek to reduce performances to systemic categories, the repertoire allows performance to live within corporeal memories.
11. The rallying cry for many Latinos, most recently delivered by Dolores Huerta, Chicana activist, at her speech in Corpus Christi, Texas in October of 2015, is the concept that "we did not cross the border, the border crossed us". The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, in the mid-nineteenth century, triggered the end of the Mexican-American War, but also

resulted in the loss of land between the Nueces and Grande Rivers. Following Mexico's devastating loss, the border was moved more than a hundred miles southward, resulting in the psychic dislocation of many Mexicans living in what then became the tenuous space of southernmost Texas.

12. This, of course, relates to Benedict Anderson's concept of imagined communities, which must be "*imagined* because the members ... will never known mot of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear them, yet in their minds of each lives the image of their communion" (6).
13. Some of these government interventions include Operation Gatekeeper in 1994, which attempted to stem the flow of immigrants in California; then, following the terror attacks on September 11, 2001 and the ensuing surge of American exceptionalism, the Bush administration implemented the Secure Fence Act in 2006 (Nigro 413). Most recently, under the Obama administration, border security has been heightened to stem the flow of Central and South American immigrants coming through the U.S./Mexico Border. The White House emphasizes that these regulations on the border are to keep out criminals who pose a threat to American safety, rather than exclude families and children who come to the U.S. after fleeing the poverty and violence of their native homelands.
14. The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act was first introduced to the Senate in the summer of 2001, thus it predates the terror attacks on September 11, 2001; however, it was not fully implemented until 2012, a year after Restrepo's *Illegal* was published.
15. See Joseph Michael Sommers' article "Are You There, Reader? It's Me, Margaret: A Reconsideration of Judy Blume's Prose as Sororal Dialogism."

16. Anzaldúa explains: "*la mujer indocumentada* ... [contends] with sexual violence, but like all women, she is prey to a sense of physical helplessness" stemming from her relationship with men (34).
17. Laura Mulvey contends that the male gaze "has functioned on two levels: as erotic object for the characters within the screen story, and as erotic object for the spectator within the auditorium" (1176). Though Mulvey focuses on women and the male gaze in film, it is also a prominent factor in defining femininity and agency in YA literature.
18. Michel Foucault argues that the hetertopias "are disturbing" because they destabilize normative values and social constructions of language (xix).
19. The term "marimacha" is a derogatory, Mexican slang term for a lesbian.
20. In this way, Esperanza's writing mirrors that of Hélène Cixous's écriture féminine. "Woman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies—for the same reasons, by the same law, with the same fatal goal. Woman must put herself into the text—as into the world and into history—by her own movement" (1643).
21. Anzaldúa explains that she writes to "rewrite the stories others have miswritten about me ... to discover myself, to preserve myself, to make myself, to achieve self-autonomy" ("Speaking in Tongues" 167).
22. See Marc Simon Rodriguez's *Rethinking the Chicano Movement* for ore information about Chicanas' roles in the Chicano Movement of the 1960's.

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