

"A home in the heart": Esperanza's discovery of home in Sandra Cisneros's the house on Mango Street.

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Abstract:

This thesis begins by introducing the reader to Chicana feminism, the issue of home, and how Chicana women fit into and challenge social roles. As Chicana feminism continues to develop a new definition of home, I focus on Gloria Anzaldua's theory in *Borderlands: La Frontera* and Sandra Cisneros's fiction in *The House on Mango Street*, both of which specifically address the definitions and processes involved in the creation of a significantly new idea of "home." Following the introduction, this thesis analyzes Cisneros's main character, Esperanza, and the character's narration of the process of discovering and moving towards "home" as parallel to Anzaldua's theoretical development of ideas of the Borderland and the Mestiza. Divided into three distinct sections, stories found within *The House on Mango Street* are used to illustrate the importance of Esperanza's narration of the lives of other women on Mango Street, the narration of her own experiences, and the narration of a new understanding of "home." In the first section, "The Women of Mango Street: Esperanza Narrates the Struggles of Chicana Women," I analyze three stories in which Esperanza narrates the situations of three Chicana girls to show how personal struggles and traditional social roles can hinder each woman's journey "home." The second section, "Esperanza's Narration of Self," focuses on stories in which Esperanza's own character, hopes, and fears are exposed allowing the reader to see the developing Chicana woman that Esperanza is becoming. The third section, "A Home in the Heart": Esperanza Moves Towards the New Vision of Home" analyses stories in which Esperanza's old idea is challenged and eventually replaced by the more abstract version of the new "home." This final section is also where I develop the importance of Esperanza's connection to writing. In the conclusion, I determine that while Anzaldua's *Borderlands: La Frontera* gives the reader a good theoretical basis with which to consider terms and concepts, it is Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street* and the use of the girl narrator, Esperanza, that gives feminism the best illustration of the process of how to eventually reach this newly conceptualized "home" so crucial to Chicana feminism.

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