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**THE REFLECTION OF POWER OF MEN IN SANDRA CISNEROS'S
"CARAMELO", "THE HOUSE ON MANGO STREET" AND "WOMAN
HOLLERING CREEK AND OTHER STORIES"**

Erol GÜLÜŞTÜR
Bülent C. TANRITANIR*****

Abstract

This paper focuses specifically on the connections between Cisneros's male and female characters. For centuries, men and women relations have varied regarding the societies in which they maintained their lives. Societies have adopted various beliefs and these beliefs have affected their members in very different manners. As in the case of the societies where Cisneros puts her characters, we clearly witness male characters enjoying social, economic and cultural privileges while women characters continually being subjected to discrimination, inequality and prejudice. This article aims to reveal male characters in relation to female characters and to uncover the motivations leading them to be the sole power. In this context, it will look into the author's "*Caramelo*", "*The House on Mango Street*" and "*The Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories*".

Key words: Sandra Cisneros, Man, Society, Woman

**Sandra Cisneros'un "Caramelo", "The House On Mango Street" ve "The
Woman Hollering Creek And Other Stories" Adlı Eserlerinde Erkeğin
Gücünün Yansıması**

Özet

Bu çalışma, özellikle Cisneros' un erkek ve kadın karakterleri arasındaki ilişkiye yoğunlaşmaktadır. Yüzyıllarca yaşadıkları topluma bağlı olarak, kadın ve erkek ilişkileri değişiklik göstermiştir. Toplumlar farklı inançlar benimsemiştir ve bu inançlar

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** Lecturer. School Of Foreign Languages, Bingöl University.

*** Assist. Prof. Dr., Faculty Of Letters, Yüzüncü Yıl University.

toplum bireylerini çok farklı şekilde etkilemiştir. Cisneros' un karakterlerini yarattığı toplumlarda ise kadınların sürekli ayrımcılık, eşitsizlik ve önyargıya maruz kalırken, erkeklerin sosyal, ekonomik ve kültürel ayrıcalıkların keyfini sürdüğünü görmekteyiz. Bu makale, erkek karakterleri kadın karakterlerle ilişkili olarak yansıtmayı ve onları tek güce iten nedenleri ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda yazarın “*Caramelo*”, “*The House on Mango Street*” ve “*The Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories*” adlı eserleri incelenecektir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Sandra Cisneros, Erkek, Toplum, Kadın

INTRODUCTION

I know that there's an attempt now at reconciliation. If I was writing Woman Hollering Creek over again, or House on Mango Street, I would look very deeply into the male characters that are creating the violence in those books. I would go farther back, into how they became who they are, not to excuse them, but to understand them (Missouri Review 25, no. 1 (2002): 95-10)

It is worth noting at the outset that we have seen for the last decades, how Chicano literature has progressively turned into part of the mainstream literary world. Chicano /writers started their publishing careers in small-scaled publishing houses; nevertheless works coming out afterwards have later showed up in mainstream publishing houses. The rapid impact and sheer diversity of this success of Chicano/a literature has ascertained us to be acquainted with the prominent literary figures, one of whom, there can be no doubt of that, is Sandra Cisneros. The fact that she has created a new language with its immediate outcomes taking praise from the literary world; she is placed as a unique and distinctive author in the literary world. For this reason Cisneros has contributed a lot to literary world with her notable works. In particular she employs an abundance of references such as class, race, sexuality and gender discrimination. These are precisely what form the subject of her reflections and hence of the character of her writing at the subjects in question best convey these preoccupations. To render better, in a nutshell, she elaborates on these issues distinctly and cohesively. In this sense, today, the notions of race, gender and class have remained highly debated topics that have been employed in relation to each other. It is a constant struggle for women that these three notions often correspond in their fight as they always find themselves as more oppressed by men. Their existence is generally characterized by predetermined roles including motherhood, servility, voiceless. Men, on the other hand, ostracize them and take the role of authority. We come to the fiction of Cisneros

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in different ranges like novels, poems, and short stories. She, through these genres, covers all the bases of women silence, patriarchal hegemony and social repressions. In her works, Cisneros explicitly attempts to seek or uncover the voice of having a sphere that shouldn't bring out restrictions and deprivations. Her characters are forced to be succumbed beneath their lords, and they mostly cease to break up the trap they have been within that still remains in men's possession. As well, male and women characters' given positions cause them to adopt different modes of language. Male characters' language is based on harshness, authority and power, as to women, they use a language of silence, submissiveness and shyness and that's what keep them from being successful. Owing to all these reasons, the author, Sandra Cisneros elaborately weaves together the individual, psychological and social modes into stories. In these stories, we see Esperanza, Cleofilas, Celaya and other women and, of course men for whom the support from social conventions provides a unique opportunity to secure their very single dominance over women.

MEN VERSUS WOMEN

Male characters in Cisneros' works live an absolutely free life. Actually, the patriarchal community builds male authority over women and imposes it as an ordinary practice. Men are accepted entities to enjoy their lives while women exist to enable this way of living. Their disposition, assuredly on some level, takes power from established norms of societies that give them prominence in terms of social security, traditional values and inordinately freedom of choice in yearning for this-and that. They have the right of controlling women's life, they, indeed, exist for themselves and utilize the submissiveness of women. Perhaps the most unsettling truth about this issue is that the more women submit to silence and passivity which evoke cold and unavoidable images, the more authoritative will they be, and in this context the distortion and outright rejection of women existence is supported and smoothed. These situations which characterize their stances set their phase of existence in an unflinching mode. Consideration of this set of practices brings up some questions; do women make their minds to set aside their frustrations with such attitudes? Or do these swipes illustrate a broader problem? To answer these questions it will be momentum to look over the accounts of male and female existences in Cisneros's characters that we will study in the paper.

We try to ponder connections between men's position and supporters to catalyze his stable status. More broadly, for men they are important entities gaining power from the rooted conventions and community; they regard themselves as the sole power exerting pressure on women. They carry the idea that their existential roles are, also based on divine might. Here, in her article "Religion and Violence": The Suffering of Women, Suzan Racozy puts it as: "In patriarchy, the male is superior and women are understood to be inferior in every way. Since patriarchal structures are and have been the way life is, they have been considered to be a historical, eternal and ordained by God" (30). Women win a label only if men allow them and they hardly ever occupy center stages. Men's remarks and attitudes, women characters maintain, are dismissive of their self and advance. Men are regarded in the society as lord, boss and leader. Although it is commonly believed that the home is the property of the woman, it is actually the man's as woman only does the household and bears children, but men have the total control of the home ranging from making choices in the home to run it as he wishes. Their attitudes are tied to something more primal. At any rate, he continues to require the woman to obey him, if she does not; he believes that it reverses with his existential role of being the powerful one. It is, then again, true for the characters of Cisneros that men's commands and attitudes, relationships with the women reflect their places in the society and give us the answers of their existential roles as literary figure Teresa Ebert shows: "Patriarchy is the organization and division of all practices and signification in culture in terms of gender and the privileging of one gender over the other, giving males control over female sexuality, fertility, and labor" (19). Male characters' power is great and Cisneros gives the example of the women whose lives are snagged by men, literally the bosses, stated by Ellen McCracken in *Mango Street*:

We see a woman whose husband locks her in the house, a daughter brutally beaten by her father, and Esperanza's own sexual initiation through rape. Like the threatening corner grocer in "The Family of Little Feet", the men in these stories control or appropriate female sexuality by adopting one or another form of violence as if it were their innate right. One young woman, Rafaela, gets locked indoors because her husband is afraid [she] will run away since she is too beautiful to look at. (67)

Cisneros indicates that, her male characters claim themselves as the primary one, ignoring and violating women: "Most women on *Mango Street*

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remain in their homes, wishing for salvation while staring out the windows, while others are routinely beaten by their husbands or fathers"(Dubb 227). Male characters describe themselves as the mediator to make the women characters as significant beings and of course this description relies on social and economic factors. They think they enable women to perceive and recognize their inner lives in order to survive. When Regina Betz mentions Marin, she observes as: "Marin is restrained by her male cousin and is not permitted to leave the house. She is kept inside, so she desires to engage with anyone outside of her immediate world. Her freedom is limited because she is the caretaker to her cousin's children" (24). His manner is just one element of a larger conglomeration. Without the recognition of the man, her individuality is invalid as Elizabeth Martinez observes "...instead they endure poverty and racism from the society at large and oppression under the men in their lives. They do not have much choice before or after marriage" (31). His existence centers around lordliness while the woman's is based on being just as a material. The concept of culture and traditions of places where Cisneros's male characters come from surround them with the role of authority and family father: "Sandra Cisneros also yokes the repressed and dominant traditions through the formal elements of the text" (Karafilis 67). There are many reasons for the presence of a male dominated society.

To start, men have been given a lot of privileges, have been regarded superior to women and these have caused men to maintain their existential positions in an easier way. When they perceive this, they use this privilege realistically or tyrannically as stated by Betz: "Cisneros is certain to portray the community's fear to leave its boundaries, and this is due to feeling threatened and insecure" (21). While performing their so called privileges, they are repressive, harsh and uncaring towards the opposite sex. They smack down women by making them a meek entity, meaningless commodity and as a result try to achieve their dominant power. Literary critic Stella Bolaki puts it as: "*The House on Mango Street* underwrites the narrator's wish to escape from the confining patriarchal scripts of her community into a space of private enjoyment" (5). Accordingly, when Esperenza evaluates men's positions in the society she attempts to identify herself with a man putting out as: "I am one who leaves the table like a man, without putting back the chair or picking up the plate" (89). Taking this quote as reference, Hartley Kroger reveals the power of men and the unrealistic attitude of Esperenza: "Gender identity is an either/or

proposition and maleness itself has freedoms of behavior that Esperanza covets but cannot access” (285). All these opportunities give men an ultimate power of violation, abuse and humiliation. Men appear as the sole power to dictate over women as in the example of Sally: “Her father says to be this beautiful is trouble” (77). When McCracken makes her evaluation on Sally, she notes men around her exert the vicious power in any way:”In effect, her father's violent attempts to control her sexuality-here a case of child abuse-cause Sally to exchange one repressive patriarchal prison for another. Dependent on her husband for money, she is forbidden to talk on the telephone, look out the window” (68). Cisneros reveals as: “Sally sits at home as she is afraid to go outside without his permission. She looks at all things he owns: the towels, the toaster, the alarm o'clock, the drapes” (102).

As we see in *Mango Street*, the place which is regarded best for women is the house and as in the example of Neny and Esperanza they just have the opportunity to contact with the boys at home. The boy's existential roles are different as stated by Ellen Mayock: “Cisneros uses a language of oppositions. Esperanza and Nenny's cultural location is the house, the only place it is considered licit for them to interact with boys, brothers who will not acknowledge them outside this familial environment” (224). Women are viewed as objects just for sitting by the window and looking around. Their lives are, by men, limited to home. Men reduce women's lives to desperateness, because the rooted conventions dictate for men to continue their positions: “The boys and girls live in separate worlds. The boys in their universe and us in ours. My brothers for example. They've got plenty to say to me and Nenny inside the house. But outside they can't be seen talking to girls. Carlos and Kiki is each other's best friend . . . not ours” (8). The hierarchy of the community makes it natural for men to ignore and violate women regarding their existence as stated by giving examples of Sally, Minerva, Rafaela and other women:

Together with other instances of male violence in the collection-Rafaela's imprisonment, Sally's beatings, and the details of Minerva's life, another young married woman whose husband beats her and throws a rock through the window-these episodes form a continuum in which sex, patriarchal power, and violence are linked.(McCracken 69)

Furthermore, Cisneros tells about Esperanza's grandfather and grandmother. Although she has some sympathy for her grandmother, she also expresses her unpleasant feelings and sorrows towards her attitudes she adopts

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dictated by her husband here, yet her voice is suppressed by the society: "The Mexicans don't like their women strong a wild horse of a woman, so wild she wouldn't marry. Until my great-grandfather threw a sack over her head and carried her off. Just like that, as if she were a fancy chandelier. That's the way he did it" (6). This quote is made clear by Kroeger as: "The text assumes they are in positions of power. The vignette about Esperanza's great-grandmother makes this very clear. Men and marriage together are a source of oppression, and the two are often linked in the vignettes" (286). Esperanza's grandfather's power comes from the society which automatically blesses him with an irrepressible control and oppression on her wife. His and others' existences are simplified by the society:

Chicanos, as descendants of Mexican women and Mexican culture, have always been subjected to and, up to certain degree, tamed by a male chauvinist society that has relegated them into a secondary position. Removed from the power organs, they have been forced to accept the rules imposed by men. This is the society we find in Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street*. (Serrano 112)

As a result, men around Esperanza treat their wives, sisters, and girlfriends as if they were slaves who exist for men's pleasures. Male characters in *Mango Street* have an uncontrollable and huge action and superiority to women. Cisneros reflects them as powerful and repressive beings acting upon women characters. So, we come across the patriarchal, gender-based impose and force as Esperanza estimates her position by the window as specified by McCracken: "The men in these stories control or appropriate female sexuality by adopting one or another form of violence as if it were their innate right." (76). Esperanza wants to free herself from the bedlam that surrounds her, yet other women think more realistically and express as follows: "When you leave you must remember always to come back... 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" (105).

Male characters around Esperanza repress, and prevent her from having a brilliant vision, and that's why she pursues a different life as stated: "Instead, her home will be an alternative to the male-dominated households in both American and Chicano societies" (Karafilis 70). Because the structures of society and *Mango Street* are based on patriarchal dominance and this structure

has unremittingly paid off, Cisneros's male characters find it their natural right to subjugate women to their wills and dictates. Their existential roles enable them to have the absolute power on both Esperanza and other women characters as clearly summarized by Serrano as: "Esperanza Cordero sees how the women in Mango Street are culturally submissive to men and afraid to react against servitude. They have grown up in a culture, the Mexican, or Mexican-American, where their sole role is to satisfy their husbands; where men's authority and power cannot be questioned" (104).

Similarly, in *Woman Hollering* the same authority of men over women and their existential roles are strikingly displayed by Cisneros. In many stories, she does reflect male characters as the single power on women. "In *Woman Hollering Creek*, Sandra Cisneros cleverly—and rather strongly—questions traditional values of society, and unveils the hegemonic ideology that attempts to manipulate and subordinate the social groups" (Romero 127). In "One Holy Night", it is stated: "I don't think men understand how it is to be a girl. I don't think they know how it is to have to wait your life" (34). Male characters in this work regard themselves as inviolable, as for women they are just simple slaves. It is stated in "A Texas Opera": "But, you know how men are, unless you are washing their feet and drying them with your hair" (61). While analyzing the life ways of men overall in *Hollering Creek*, it is essential to highlight that women and men live in different worlds, the former is to live a submissive and humiliating life, her seclusion is evident, she exists within herself alone, on the other hand, the latter one is to enjoy the statues blessed him by the society. Laura Paz pinpoints: "Traditional Mexican society is characterized by rigid gender roles in which women are expected to be faithful wives who are subservient to their husbands, as well as take care of the children and home. Men, on the other hand, can be promiscuous and enjoy sexual relations outside the marriage" (Abstract). In "A Texas Opera", Cisneros remarks: "This husband whose shoes she must air each morning on the porch, who demands each course served on a separate plate... this lord, this master, this husband till kingdom came" (49). In "Never Marry a Mexican", we see: "Not a man exists who hasn't disappointed me, whom I could trust to love whom I have loved" (69).

Men not only have the psychological, but also economical and physical advantage. Paz indicates as: "Men are supposed to be the financial providers and therefore rule the family and home. They are regarded with both fear and respect since they will use physical force against both wives and children if they

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deviate from proper behavior" (13). We witness the roles of women and male characters predetermined by the rooted conventions of the community. "When she is invited and accompanies her husband, she sits mute beside their conversation, waits"(48). Some duties are regarded as unique to women, but male characters' way of living carries more prestigious agendas. In "Little Miracle", it is revealed: "Can you send me a man. I mean someone who isn't ashamed to be seen cooking or cleaning or looking after him?"(117). As for the main story's protagonist, Cleofilas, she is heavily under the control of her husband, Juan Hernandez. "This is a story in which Cleofilas, a young Mexican woman, moves from one Third World patriarchal context to another with the hope of escaping economic limitations and fulfilling romantic illusions"(Hull 253). Cleofilas's husband Juan, for instance, establishes himself such a position that, he almost locks his wife in the house, abuses, violates and abolishes her interaction with the outer world. "Never marry a Mexican, mum said once and always. She said this because of my father" (69). Hernandez exerts a strict authority over Cleofilas, he uses his male power in such a way that he forces Cleofilas to surrender to anything he commands. Ana M. Carbonell manifests:

Her lived experience of married life provides her with greater knowledge about patriarchal gender relations, allowing her to shed previous illusions that welcomed male dependency. Before, ignorant of patriarchal abuse, she willingly walked into the hands of her oppressor. Afterwards, recognizing her man of happily ever after as an antagonist, she makes the self-reliant choice to protect herself and her children by leaving him. (66)

The attitudes of male characters have their roots in a society where men with the power bestowed by the norms of tradition take it that women's existential role is to serve him in the course of life and in that way he tries every dual interest to manipulate to his advantage. Bolaki describes the scene as: "Both houses and local communities are arbitrary; like borders, they enclose people within the safety of familiar or intimate territories, but can, at the same time, become prisons" (7).

Women characters don't delve into motivations regarding their being of secondary importance as they already bear in my mind that their struggle for salvation and right is trifled, this is made clear as: "It is men whose theories and intellectuals models have defined women as flawed" (Thomson 417). Cleofilas and her neighbors can maintain their lives by being timid and submissive to their husbands, being regarded as eternities created to make men happy.

“Somehow one ought to live one’s life like that, don’t you think? You or no one” (45). Mythee Rojas says: “They must know and practice the dominant patriarchal discourse and conventions for survival, even as they also learn to develop separate spaces that provide them with an unmediated, affirmative identity of self” (137). Hernandez has the money, he has no economic dependence, as to Cleofilas, when she gets sick she has to ask for money and if necessary begs for what she needs: “Her husband ensures her isolation and dependence upon him by refusing to allow her to write or phone her family in Mexico” (Brady 40). His economic power is therefore particularly important to satisfy his own dominance. Rakoczy remarks: “Gender violence denotes the legal, economic and social system that validates rule by men over women; it is systemic in every aspect of society to the point where it is experienced as normal” (30). Under the command of the conventions, Hernandez’s position is strengthened and he is allowed to exist as the boss of his wife. To Hull: “Cleofilas is compelled to put into practice the other lessons provided by her novelas when her husband asserts his role as head of the family through the power of his fists” (225).

Hernandez claims and implies to his wife that he is the most valuable entity, so he uses his privileges to exist in a better way and if his partner shares the same ones, he may not enjoy the life: “He says he hates this shitty house and is going where he won’t be bothered with the baby’s howling and her suspicious questions”(49). To comprehend better, James Phelan evaluates Cleofilas’s situation: “...the physical abuse Cleofilas endures is part of a larger atmosphere of male hostility in which she lives. The effect is to make her situation seem more hopeless” (229). On account of the dominance of Hernandez, long before Cleofilas makes her decision about an issue, he takes the issue and solves it without consulting her. He takes up his freedom and uses it at random, claimed as: “...a certain helplessness that ensures the continuity of the violence of patriarchy and the inevitability of men exploiting their physical dominance over women.”(Brady 139). Moreover, his existence is defined by the role of being a father and protector, clearly placed in social context as superior to the woman, that’s why Hernandez feels confident that his wife totally needs recognition from him and has a dependence regarding family structures. “I’ll never marry. Not any man. I’ve known men too intimately. I have witnessed their infidelities” (68). His regarding her position as servility has roots in her economic helplessness as well. This claim apparently rests on two agendas. The first is

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that his power comes from the society and the second is concerned with his economic dominance. This is made clear by Dana Shejbaloa as: "Economic dependence on her husband together with their inability to make any social contacts make them isolated in their domestic sphere.

Moreover, these women lose their touch with outer world and their identity is limited to being a wife as a complementary element to the husband" (30). This implication seems to enable him to feel a growing superiority and right to confine his wife to the sphere of house and the city she dwells as: "Cleofilas's map of the city, imbued as it is with her sense of the structure of her relationship with her husband, provides few models for resistance" (Brady 141). Owing to the fact that he is dominant, he believes his position of earning money and running the home gives him the right to be the single power to make choices for Cleofila's life and selections and finds a right to violate Cleofilas. "Towns here are built so that you have to depend on husbands. Or you stay at home" (50). It may well mean that he has already outclassed her and he performs what he is endowed: "This one's cadaver, this one unconscious, this one beaten blue. Her ex-husband, her husband, her lover, her father, her brother, her uncle, her friend, her co-worker. Always. The same grisly news in the pages of the dailies. She dunked a glass under the soapy water for a moment and shivered" (52).

In the last novel, *Caramelo*, too, Cisneros gives us a clear picture of male characters. The book's male characters are in a position of authority. As women, they depend on the male members of the society and their predetermined roles restrict them to just minor spheres even when Celaya's grandmother expresses her negative attitude to her daughters: "All my sons are my sons... And you daughters? I ask" (29). Male characters undertake their roles in the context of hegemonic and dominant male society as Lala's mother states: "I was born into a family of category. At first I couldn't bring myself to eat in front of my husband. I would eat in the kitchen. I would say I am not hungry" (121). For the purpose that men's existential positions give them a considerably free vision of a life they exert pressure on their wives, sisters, lovers described by Sally Giles: "Despite obvious individual variation, gender roles traditionally divide men and women into separate spheres, respectively the public and the domestic, also often referred to as exterior and interior spaces" (12). It looks ordinary for male dominance to show his strength which helps him to exist and serve his interests reversed with those of the woman. It is by means

of this power that his behaviors, ideas, doings, are unquestioned and regarded as routine: “They don’t understand women” (191). He is thought to be the single proprietor of the woman. Cisneros reflects that the society produces this image of patriarchy because his existential role has been, for years, blindly organized in that way, and he takes his authority by abusing his opposite sex, this is exemplified when Celaya wants to be free of her family and her father, Inocencio gets angry: “That is not for girls like you. Good girls don’t leave their father’s house until they marry” (359). Mara Salvucci observes when she takes the society as:

Lala has to deal with the historic dichotomy that forces the Chicano women to comply with the traditional Catholic values of her community. According to this system, if she does not accomplish her essential family functions, such as the reproduction of the species or the transmission of established cultural values and beliefs to the next generations. (191)

While Celaya narrates the story, she draws a picture of the society which regards men as the dominant authority and does not pay attention to women for regarding them as ordinary commodities. “The tension between subjectivity and female identity is exacerbated by the fact that woman’s voice in patriarchal culture is not heard or listened to and is often as good as lost” (Paloge 154). For instance, when Celaya wants to leave the house, her father takes the society as basis: “If you leave your father’s house without a husband, you are worse than a dog. You aren’t my daughter. You aren’t a Reyes. One must strive to be honorable”(360). His enunciation reflects more as Robin Lakeoff speaks:” Gendered linguistic for men functioned as ways of displaying an engagement with power” (11). Here, Ann Weatherall remarks as: “Men are more likely to challenge the norms of language and communication because they are generally in more powerful positions than women” (Int.). The society and the family of Celaya just think of the man and Celaya complains about it as she talks to Zoila, her mother: “All you worry about is your boys, I say to mother”(364). Due to male character’s showing up as the lord whether they are decent or not, Celaya isn’t content with this power and role. Candela Marin puts it as: “As a girl whose foundations in terms of family structure are based on mutual, unavoidable dependence, she extends this perception to all the members of the household. Their roles determine their oneness with the others”(13). Women are required to be faithful to their husbands in any terms, whereas men enjoy the total control of the social relations. “But where can mother go? She doesn’t

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have any money. All she's got is her husband and kids, and now she doesn't even want us" (83).

They come to accept reality which reads their existence is bound to orders of their lords literally, men, as it is and to tolerate the presence of conjunctures within themselves. "Silence as potentially subversive element that should be understood in terms of women's fundamental diglossia or need to express them through a male dominated discourse" (Weldt 23). "Father pays no attention to mum's complaints" (49). Celaya indicates that her father and her brothers have the control of the home and don't allow her and mother to live as they like. "They are expected to bear all suffering, especially that imposed upon them by the men in their lives"(Giles 9). She says that men around her fulfill their existential roles as described by the society. We comprehend better when we read the comment by Guadalupe Lineras: "In *Caramelo*, both Celaya and Soledad face a dilemma. Though their minds may be free, social convention keeps their bodies imprisoned" (24). Consequently, in her society women regard men with fear and respect for the reason that men are the provider and ruler of the family based on the ground that women have no right or capacity to maintain their lives. Celaya says: "Wasn't the society strange? They demanded you not to become... but they didn't tell you how not to"(153). As in the case of Celaya's elopement, she makes a comment on men in the home as: "My brothers would say something if they ever catch Ernesto, they are going to kick his ass. That's what brothers are supposed to say to save the family honor" (399). We witness Celaya's father, brother, lover are independent for abusing, drinking, exerting violence while her mom, grandmother are trapped in submission and silencing. Because of this assumption, men around Celaya unquestionably place pressure on women to remind their special existential roles. "Men are seen more interested in establishing their independence from the others, their autonomy"(Köhler 5). They, thus, use and remind this inherent power granted to them by social and domestic rules. Similarly, the construction of masculinity enables men to live a highly prestigious position both in the home and outside. "The people who are in power have legitimate views of the world, including knowledge of what is incongruous or ridiculous. Women have not been as free to ignore men's debates, the discussions, or ridicule as men have been free to ignore those of women" (Kramarae 53). But these demeanors reveal more than that. To simplify, Linares, when telling about awful grandmother's birth of Celaya's father, notes: "Still, her body remains in a state

of submission because in her world, the woman's body is not merely subordinate to her husband. She is subordinate to all men and all women who follow men's rules" (21). It becomes more and more clear that they're surrounded by messy things they are reluctant to sense or accept. "Women internalize their subordination and devaluation" (Crawford 16). The despair over the impossibility of reaching their goals is explicit and thus Celaya's narrating herself and other women, in brief, reveals the superiority of men in the society that they exist at the top and women are below as exemplified in the remark of a man whom Awful grandmother had an affair in the past: "I don't have any privacy, I said. Why don't you go to the forest? That's when I realized how unaware men are about the world women live in" (276). This manner alone underscores their strength while women's inability.

RESULTS

This paper scrutinizes *The House on Mango Street*, *Woman Hollering Creeks and Other Stories* and *Caramelo*. More generally, it reaches some titles that are examined in the aforementioned works. Men and women perceive the world differently because they have different perception of shaping experiences. Those different experiences result from their performing different tasks in society. Women are forced into rigid structures that disenfranchise them and limit their identity. In this regard, social conventions, oppressions, gender discriminations, ethnicity and culture differences enable men to be superior to women characters. Men abuse and society's role bruise individuality of women characters voicing their pains and helplessness. Superiority of men is regarded as natural phenomena by the society. The male-dominated society dictates women to submit to orders and commands imposed in an arbitrary manner.

In the first work, *The House on Mango Street*, some embodiments of women characters come out. Marin is always looking for ways to escape from Mango Street. Alicia, another character, is supposed to look after her dad as her mother isn't alive. Sally is Esperenza's best friend who is locked at home by her father and gets married at a very young age and her husband, the common profile of those who regard women's existential roles only to remain at home and serve her husband for sex, however, does not allow her to have conversations on the phone, go out with friends or look out the window to see around. Cisneros describes Rafaela, another woman who is always locked by her husband indoors, the reason is that he thinks she will abandon the home and

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damage the family's honor. Rafaela waits to be kept free. The women living in Mango Street are pessimist and coward due to the violence coming from their husbands, fathers or brothers. Esperanza, Nenny, Sally and Rafaela become increasingly trapped in this patriarchal society, they lose their self and let the rules dictate over their essence and existence.

As to the next work, *The Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories* however, characters and their dispositions are closely allied to the previous book we have mentioned. Cleofilas, Clemencia, Ines and other women characters of *Woman Hollering Creek* aren't allowed to build up an identity they choose, on the contrary, they have to belong to their husbands, fathers or brothers to survive. Because they don't work, they are obliged to be depended economically on men and this situation makes men stronger and besides, men take it their own right to dominate on women. Nearly all women characters are exposed to suffer the harsh dictations of roles determined by the society. Cleofilas' husband, Juan, after bringing her from Mexico to U.S.A starts to abuse her, she partly not to blot her family's honor as leaving her husband will trouble them, remains silent. Cleofilas cannot keep touch with her surroundings or when she is ill, she has to ask for money in a quite docile way, or ultimately when Juan is invited somewhere and she accompanies him, she just sits beside him and is discarded during the conversations.

Eventually, in the last work, *Caramelo* the motivations of the characters and their phase of existence are clear and uncomplicated. As we see, Celaya undergoes alienation by her family. For instance, we see in the beginning of the novel, a clear portrait of the family on a summer trip to Acapulco. All of the members of the family are there except Celaya, who has been ignored by the male members of the family. When Celaya wants to live an independent life, go to university, if possible take a career, her father's reaction becomes harsh and oppressive as stating that fathers and brothers deserve these, not mothers or sisters. Cisneros establishes a bond between Celaya, grandmother Soledad, and mother, Zoila. Three of them represent the women who are forced to be second class citizens. Although these women are trying to integrate themselves into society, men bring out serious obstacles to prevent them. Grandmother, Soledad, is compelled to adapt to the oppressive society's structure, Zoila lives a prison- like life and is busy with her motherhood roles, and eventually Celaya waits her path already set out in the male-dominated society.

CONCLUSION

Sandra Cisneros delineates male and female characters and she foregrounds that their phase of existence is predetermined by the rules of the community that they maintain their lives. Male characters cause women to be imprisoned in a household where identity, possession and self-control are forsaken. They force women to be succumbed beneath their spirits, and exult in their physical and social advantages, so glory their positions. In addition, the language they adopt operates as a remainder of their statues that may not be overshadowed. As we discussed in the paper, Cisneros purports that the language used by male and women characters differ greatly. Male characters use the language as a tool to damage the psyche of women characters and through rigid structures, they make use of language to disenfranchise and stifle their identities. In the societies created by Cisneros, a male-oriented supereminence is dominant. By using this as an advantage, they use all their possessions to suppress women's voices. Male characters maintain their high existence to encompass the privileges of the social agendas while interfering with life choices of women by preventing them to have a stable identity. They equip their surroundings with the arrangements for women; chagrin embarrassment, harassment, or trepidation - all indications of the state of patronizing triumph. Upon the concessions arising from this, they manage, by means of a rigorous and biased society, to enjoy luxury of life, without troubling themselves about its easily obtained premiums. Women in Cisneros's three novels face the loss of voice. Their lives are destined to silence and submissiveness. Male power causes them to suffer a debilitating silence. This situation originates either from a patriarchal community- as it is apparent in *Mango Street* of Esperenza, *Seguin* of Cleofilas, or the house of Celaya- that forbids them from determining their identity or from a social anticipation of gender roles that restricts women to a limited domain which reads blind obedience, domesticity, passivity and timidity and gives men the concession of being the single as well as the infinite authority. Male characters have got rather an instrumental position in which they are affective, authoritative and esteemed. Esperenza, Cleofilas, Celaya are all women who are struck between two spheres; one is their struggle to have a voice in their communities, the other is to escape from all boundaries that restrict their selves. These characters lose their freedom and sense of individuality; thus, become slaves of men. Men have the power to face down, bear control over women characters' lives and control their

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societies and ultimately they transform them into passive victims of seclusion. Culture, time, and history have taken up one party superior to the other and the winner has always been men. In the societies where Esperanza, Celaya and Cleofilas live, there is a great power of male characters. The hegemonic or obtained power, by which rage is usually manifested, and to which the social and cultural norms have assigned a grace, has been so frequently seen in those male characters, as to have brought female characters to their knees. They always take decisions, control hegemonic power, and for the most part, are assertive in physically, psychologically and emotionally. In such an environment, they often remarkably gather strength being in full possession of the contents of life and have an absolute power and confidence to impose control over the opposite sex in order to establish their authorities. If women characters face rather than acquiesce to the paradigms of rooted conventions, their attempts, at a minimum, are hindered or thoroughly forbidden.

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