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The New Mestiza of the 21st Century:

From Gloria Anzaldúa to Vianney Harelly

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Resumo:

One of the most culturally relevant phenomena of our time is globalisation. A state of permanent connection that increasingly fades away the barriers that separate us from each other. However, there are still certain unbreakable limits that profoundly affect people's identities, these being the borders. The present dissertation will focus on the case of the border that separates the countries of Mexico and the United States through two female authors: Gloria Anzaldúa and Vianney Harelly. A comparison will be established between Harelly's poetry, which is contemporary writing, and Andalzúa's autobiographical, essayistic and poetic work titled *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987). Both are included within Chicana literature, as due to their experience and ancestry they portray the struggles of those Mexican-Americans who remain in a cultural limbo. Accordingly, the initial hypothesis is that Harelly's poetry depicts the 'new mestiza' of the 21st century as a reinterpretation of the concept coined by Anzaldúa in the 20th century. The differences and similarities in the figure of the 'new mestiza' will be observed through their thinking on issues such as identity, race, gender and language.

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Título:

La Nueva Mestiza del siglo XXI: de Gloria Anzaldúa a Vianney Harelly

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One of the most culturally relevant phenomena of our time is globalisation. A state of permanent connection that increasingly fades away the barriers that separate us from each other. However, there are still certain unbreakable limits that profoundly affect people's identities, these being the borders. The present dissertation will focus on the case of the border that separates the countries of Mexico and the United States through two female authors: Gloria Anzaldúa and Vianney Harelly. A comparison will be established between Harelly's poetry, which is contemporary writing, and Anzaldúa's autobiographical, essayistic and poetic work titled *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987). Both are included within Chicana literature, as due to their experience and ancestry they portray the struggles of those Mexican-Americans who remain in a cultural limbo. Accordingly, the initial hypothesis is that Harelly's poetry depicts the 'new mestiza' of the 21st century as a reinterpretation of the concept coined by Anzaldúa in the 20th century. The differences and similarities in the figure of the 'new mestiza' will be observed through their thinking on issues such as identity, race, gender and language.

Palabras chave:

border, Chicana literature, Gloria Anzaldúa, hybridity, the new mestiza, Vianney Harelly

Declaración de orixinalidade do traballo:

Eu, Giselle Hermida Rubio, estudante do Grao en Lingua e Literatura Inglesas na Universidade de Santiago de Compostela prometo que os contidos deste traballo son orixinais, non plaxiados e que as ideas aquí expostas fan mención á súa orixe e autoría.

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1.- INTRODUCTION

The creation of the present work is prompted by the unquestionable actual relevance of social media, even more when talking about activism. Online platforms such as Instagram or Tiktok, among many others, have facilitated the spread of information, art, and culture in general. Although they must be employed with prudence, their use as tools that give a voice to socially marginalised groups is a great step forward in terms of revolution, awareness, and social resistance. It is an almost natural evolution of the traditional written format, which so many authors have used throughout history to express their ideals. The aim of this thesis is to provide a diachronic overview of the struggle of Chicana women through literature. On the one hand, the author Gloria Anzaldúa has been chosen because she became a prominent presence in the Chicana movement in the 20th century; on the other hand, the author Vianney Harelly has been chosen for her daily posting on social media of her writing, which intends to share her border experience with the world in an immediate way.

The key element of this dissertation is the concept of 'the new mestiza' coined by Gloria Anzaldúa in her book *Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1986). The figure of this new mestiza diverges from the conventional mestiza: she is more than the simple result of a mixture of races, and it is this fact that provides her with exceptional experiences and abilities while inhabiting a constant limbo, both physical and spiritual. Anzaldúa drew on her experiences as a native of the US-Mexico border and as a lesbian, working-class woman of colour to forge a new mestiza consciousness that would enable her to accept all aspects of her reality and to fight against all that oppressed her. The basic element to delimit the scope of this paper is to be found in the US-Mexico border, as this is what triggers the discussion of Chicana women's literature, given that the two authors under analysis fall into this category.

Gloria Anzaldúa was born in 1942 in the Río Grande Valley (nowadays part of the state of Texas), a territory that belonged to Mexico before it was usurped in 1848 by the US. She grew up in a Mexican family forced to adapt to a culture that had been imposed on them. Being part of the Chicana movement, the most salient way in which she sought to approach her roots was through the indigenous cultures that inhabited Mexico in the past, with special emphasis on the mythical Aztlán. Anzaldúa's work, mainly *Borderlands / La Frontera*, is one of the most important pieces of Chicana literature, which has been of interest to scholars and non-scholars for decades, giving rise to a large number of research papers and articles related to postcoloniality, the border, or feminism, among many other fields. By contrast, Vianney Casas —known as Vianney Harelly— grew up in Tijuana, Mexico, thus on the other side of the border. However, due to the precariousness of her country, she decided to emigrate to the United States in search of better academic and professional opportunities. Harelly currently lives in San Diego and works as a freelance writer: she edits and publishes her books by herself. In addition, she is also a digital content creator. This is closely linked to her writing, as most of the content on her social media (notably Instagram and TikTok) is focused on her poetic production. However, thanks to the versatility offered by these platforms, Harelly shows many facets: as a communicator she is constantly sharing with her followers information about social relevant issues, giving her point of view as well; in addition, she usually holds lectures and writing workshops; as a graphic artist she creates more engaging posts to the public through photography, collage and video montage works. Harelly has already done interviews and collaborations with different brands, yet she remains an emerging artist, so at present there is no academic or research work done on her or her work.

Once the authors have been introduced, it can be seen that the commonalities between them are due to their status as racialised women in the US-Mexico border

context. For this reason, one question arises: how has the figure of the Chicana woman evolved from the heyday of the movement to the present day? In an attempt to provide an answer, the concept of the 'new mestiza' has been chosen to narrow the focus of this thesis and to examine the literary production of Gloria Anzaldúa, exponent of the last two decades of the 20th century, and Vianney Harelly, contemporary author. Hence, the main question is framed as follows: to what extent does Vianney Harelly represent the figure of the new mestiza in the 21st century? There are several possible answers: Harelly distances herself too far from the figure created by Anzaldúa, she adheres strictly to the original concept ('old' new mestiza), or she makes it her own and expands it ('new' new mestiza). The initial hypothesis is that Vianney Harelly does represent the new mestiza of the 21st century, broadening the concept and adapting it to modern times, so the objective is to assess the extent to which this statement is true.

The methodology used to conduct the comparative analysis between Anzaldúa and Harelly and consequently answer the question posed is the following: first, a selection of relevant and updated bibliography is made, being the primary sources the work *Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1986) and Harelly's poetic production, including physical works and online publications; next, the most important theoretical notions are established in a theoretical framework constructed through the secondary sources; finally, the analysis of the primary works is carried out through close reading, intertwining them to present a structure that resembles a dialogue between the authors. The analysis is divided into four chapters, each of them focusing on central themes shared by the primary sources. The first chapter deals with the issue of language, how Spanish and English are combined in the border context, resulting in new codes, and what is the intentionality behind the literary use of code-switching. The second chapter presents the Mexico-US border as a protagonist, dealing with the problems at this geographical point

from a political perspective, focusing mainly on the physical wall between the two countries. The third chapter addresses the sense of identity of the new mestiza, who finds herself in a middle ground, belonging to two cultures while at the same time being alienated from both. The final chapter discusses various gender-related issues, such as the double colonisation of women, how patriarchal narratives corrupt motherhood and female historical figures, and the intergenerational trauma that occurs in mother-daughter relations due to the burden of a past filled with violence.

2-. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The following theoretical framework will establish the bases on which this dissertation will be elaborated. It serves to outline the key concepts necessary to understand and approach the established topic, as well as to provide brief recensions of previous works on the primary sources. The present project focuses on border identities, specifically those that belong to the border between Mexico and the United States. Starting from Aztlán and through a long history full of colonial and postcolonial violence, interweaving identities such as Indian, Spanish, Mexican, and North American along the way, it emerges in the 1980s the figure of Gloria Anzaldúa: Chicana with an 'A'. She coined the term 'the new mestiza' to designate individuals —particularly women— who navigate both literal and metaphorical borderlands, constantly negotiating and blending cultural practices, beliefs, and languages. The new mestiza acknowledges intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and class; and through this identity, oppressive structures and binary norms can be challenged, resisting the hegemonic culture and reclaiming indigenous knowledge and spirituality. Anzaldúa's concept of 'the new mestiza' underscores the significance of accepting hybridity and viewing the borderlands as spaces of resistance with transformative potential. Nonetheless, concepts must undergo a process of evolution, stagnation, or obsolescence. Consequently, the objective of this paper is to assess if Vianney Harelly, contemporary Mexican and Latina author, embodies the idea of 'the new mestiza', and if she does, whether she expands it or adheres strictly to Anzaldúa's original proposal.

In order to be able to comprehend the history of this border, it is necessary to look back into a past that is so remote as to be mythical. First, there was Aztlán: the homeland of the Aztecs, that nowadays remains unclear as to its exact location, which places it

somewhere between myth and reality. Nonetheless, scholars suggest that it may have been located between today's north western Mexico and south western United States. The historian León-Portilla (2005) summarises not only the importance of Aztlán, but also of the Aztlán route, and how the establishment of a border shatters millenary relations. It is known that relations were established between Mesoamerica and the land of Aztlán long before the Spanish colonisers arrived, and when the time came, a journey began from north to south in which a group of Aztecs, the Mexica, laid the foundations of Tenochtitlan, later known as Mexico City. In other words, migrations had existed since ancient times in what is now the border between Mexico and the United States, and it was an important transit point for the people who inhabited the territory. In the 16th century, after the fall of the Aztec Empire due to the violent conquest conducted by the Spanish Empire, the Aztlán route was recovered. Nevertheless, the route was reversed, this time from south to north, through incursions led by the Spanish and some Nahua allies that began to show signs of Hispanicisation. "For the Indians, this constituted a return to the place of origin, Aztlán, thus making Chicanos originally and secondarily indigenous to the Southwest." (Anzaldúa, p. 5)[1]; this statement from the author subject of analysis provides another reason to emphasise the ever-present journey to and from Aztlán. The traces of these expeditions would produce a greater intertwining of the north western and south western territories and their people, as the name of remaining settlements like Los Angeles (California) or Tumacácori (Arizona) exemplify. At that point, the mestizo children of the Spanish, the Mexican Indians and the North American Indians had already

[1] This dissertation relies on Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1986) as a key theoretical reference. Anzaldúa's quotations exclusively derive from this book, so the publication year is omitted for conciseness.

been born, and they would become the ancestors of the majority of Mexicans, something that would mark their identity until the present times.

After almost 300 years of Spanish rule, Mexico gained its independence in 1821, holding possession of the Great Southwest (Arizona, California, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas and Utah, and parts of Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Wyoming). However, the assaults on the Mexican people did not cease and the illegal annexation of Texas by the United States forced a war in which the Mexicans lost more than half of their territory, particularly that corresponding to the mythical Aztlán. While narrating the recent history of her country, Anzaldúa (p. 7) says of Mexico that the United States forced 'her' to give up half of 'her' nation; this feminisation, which already points to the concept of double colonisation, will be key in establishing the point of view of this project and will be reviewed further on. By 1848, with the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, the war was put to an end and the limits of the border were officially set. According to the US National Archives: "Mexico also relinquished all claims to Texas and recognized the Rio Grande as the southern boundary with the United States", this meaning that the border was pushed further down than the original territory of Texas and reached Río Bravo (also known as Río Grande), which was part of the Mexican state of Tamaulipas. That is why many Mexicans say that they did not cross to the United States, but the United States crossed them (Schmidt, 2000).

Concerning the border in the last century, since the usurpation of those territories, the United States has not even tried to disguise its rejection of the Mexican people. It can be clearly seen through its increasingly hostile immigration policies. Following Schmidt's (2000), it can be observed how at first, after the evident forced separations of communities and families, some Mexicans began to migrate to the United States for economic reasons. This encouraged the United States to accept certain temporary migration arrangements to

take advantage of cheap labour, but the number of migrants grew rapidly and began to aggravate the conflict. Even with the agreement in place, in 1954 alone 33% of Mexican migrants were deportable, rising to 89% when it ended. Some immigration policies over the years, among many others, include: in 1990, expansion of the definition of aggravated felony to include all drug-related offences and retroactivity of the law; in 1994, expansion of the definition of aggravated felony establishing summary deportation proceedings; in 1996, elimination of the defence of long-time residents threatened with deportation, punishment with restrictions on entering the country for those who have been undocumented for more than a year and abolition of the suspension of deportation for extreme harm suffered by the undocumented. In addition, the construction of the wall that began in 1994 under President Bill Clinton, with the aim of setting up a physical and impenetrable barrier, further complicated the situation of migrants. It is still a relevant issue, as seen in President Trump's actions and President Biden's inability to ameliorate the situation. The 'war' that has been going on at the border has resulted in countless arrests and in the deaths of more than 800 migrants solely within the year 2022.[2]

Up to this point, the border has been approached mainly from a geopolitical point of view: what the United States or Spain have done, what Mexico has undergone, where Aztlán could have been. Therefore, it is vitally important to start focusing on the people who inhabit this place and their identities. To do this, it is necessary to identify who are the ones who live on the border. Are those on one side Mexican and those on the other American? Are they Mexican American? Are they Hispanic because of their colonial

[2] According to the data provided by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Southwest Land Border witnessed a significant number of enforcement encounters, totalling 2,378,944 in the year 2022. The reported number of deaths represents only those that have been officially registered, potentially underestimating the actual figure.

heritage? This is a topic with many nuances and political connotations, as the mere choice of which word to identify with will radically change the way an individual views and interacts with the culture and the community. In the first place, it would be logical to opt for the first suggestion: Mexicans on the one side and Americans on the other. The problem arises when, due to human and border displacements throughout history, the two are so closely integrated that it is almost impossible to make such a distinction. Moreover, the still recent and troubled history with the United States, outlined above, probably prevents those who inhabit the Great Southwest that still maintain some ties to Mexico from considering themselves fully American, as this would entail a total alienation for which the conditions are not met. Rather, what is highly likely to happen is that they consider themselves Mexican Americans, namely those who were born in the United States but have Mexican heritage. This widely accepted label indicates the acknowledgement of a hybrid identity that belongs to both cultures. Additionally, the use of Hispanic concerns certain level of nostalgia towards a glorified past, implying gratitude for the fact of having been colonised. For this reason, from a more historically conscious perspective, there is a preference to reject the latter label among groups such as Chicanos, who will be presented below.

Attending to terminology, the most plausible theory states that Chicano originates as follows:

> If one starts with the word *mexicanos*, which simply means Mexicans, shorten it by dropping the first syllable, or '*me*', we are left with '*xicanos*'. The 'x' in *xicanos*, pronounced as 'ch', transforms the word into *chicanos*. In Mexico the word *chicano*, when used in the Spanish language, was deemed a vulgar, derogatory, class-based term that referred to persons of dubious character, to those of lower-class origins, and to tramps. In the 1960s this class-based term of insult and derision

> was chosen consciously as a badge of pride and ethnic identity, in recognition of the social realities Mexican Americans experienced. (Gutiérrez in Lomelí, Segura, Benjamin-Labarthe, 2019, p. 58)

In this case, reappropriation, which is a strategy adopted by oppressed groups to fight back using the means of the oppressor, took place in the second half of the 20th century. However, reappropriation did not occur solely in this aspect, and as it will be seen throughout this thesis, such strategy takes on a transversal character. Consequently, Aztlán must be mentioned again, now in relation to Chicano philosophy. With the publication of the manifesto *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán* (1969) a new journey back to the mythical land, a spiritual journey, began. It consisted of the reappropriation of the territory that was once home to the Aztecs in order to encourage a pro-indigenist collective consciousness that would lead to the liberation of Mexican Americans, who were being abused in all kinds of ways by the United States. The most relevant terms in that text are nation and race, since the mobilisation of Chicanos ('La Raza de Bronze', the mestizo nation) should transcend any differences to achieve independence. Thus, they stated: "Por La Raza todo, fuera de La Raza nada". Aztlán then became a spiritual mecca for those Mexicans of the diaspora; as well, it provided a sense of belonging for those on the border who lived in a limbo, in the liminal space. This connection with several elements of the Aztec culture of Aztlán, and the constitution of the territory as the central piece of their discourse, results in a case of what the geographer Y. F. Tuan called 'topophilia'.

Considering these facts, it may be of interest to review some of the definitions of Chicano that apply today. If one looks at the OED, an organisation with ties to colonial power, there is a definition that is connected to geopolitics, and which deals warily with the radical implications of the word. By contrast, in the Urban Dictionary, where anyone

can contribute, it is possible to find a definition that is less restrictive and more faithful to the original intention of reappropriating the term:

> ANYONE who wants to be part of la Raza looking for the homeland of Aztlan. Mostly used by Mexican-Americans but open to all Vatos who want to connect to their indigenous roots and still keep it OG in the Barrios. Someone who DOES NOT identify as Hispanic due to its oppressive origin. (2010: online)

A very important figure in the Chicano movement and in the making of *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán* was Rodolfo 'Corky' Gonzales, activist and poet. He wrote the epic poem "I am Joaquin", in which he speaks about the challenges Chicanos face as a mestizo race, while alluding to their past, present and future. Author Vianney Harelly, also under analysis in this work, was inspired by this poem to write "I am Vianney", in which she also alludes to the abuses suffered by Mexicans at the hands of Spanish and Americans. Most significantly, she mentions Gloria Anzaldúa in the poem in a way in which they seem to be interacting with each other. In this sense, the two authors converge in the same space and this will pave the way for the rest of the issues that will be discussed in the analysis.

Despite the revolutionary nature of the Chicano movement, as in all other aspects of society, there was also room for the effects of patriarchy. Originally the movement was conceived with Mexican American young men and their position in society in mind, as social stigma relegated them to the margins. Once the reappropriation of Aztlán began, these young men started to find inspiration in the virility of Aztec warriors, which fed the power fantasy of a powerless group (Gutiérrez, 2019). On the other hand, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Chicana women felt that the movement only focused on the problems that oppression caused to Chicano men, but not to them. Because of this, the term Chicano

referred only to men, and it became necessary to differentiate between Chicano and Chicana to address what women were suffering as well, to some extent falling back on the reappropriation of the term. Then emerged the Chicana feminist discourse, that had also been seen in feminists of other races, which acknowledged the double colonisation to which they were exposed because of their race and gender. García (1989, p. 220) describes the situation saying that "Chicana, Black, and Asian American feminists were all confronted with the issue of engaging in a feminist struggle to end sexist oppression within a broader nationalist struggle to end racist oppression.". Moreover, women were and still are facing class oppression, resulting in a triple oppression.

Many Chicano men disagreed with the introduction of feminist views to their cause, arguing that Chicana women's liberation constituted a division in the movement and an attack on Mexican tradition. For them, the matter of race should prevail over all else:

> Be "Chicana Primero" (García 1997, p. 197), the men exhorted, asking the women to take pride first in their cultural heritage and to reject women's liberation. Chicanas responded rather uniformly that they did not want to dominate the movement. They only sought full equality and participation for all. (Gutiérrez, 2019, p. 62)

Two conclusions can be drawn from this quote: the machismo present in the Chicano movement and the intention of Chicanas to be inclusive. This is why from now on the allusion to this collective will be in feminine, using the word Chicana with an 'A'. These feminists were often dismissed as 'malinchistas', in association with the traitor woman by excellence in the Mexican imaginary. La Malinche, as well as other mythicised female figures, such as La Virgen de Guadalupe or La Llorona, are positioned at the extremes of hatred or idealisation. Anzaldúa (1987) argues that this extremist and

misogynist vision feeds the oppressive mechanism in which some women have been used to exert patriarchal control. While deconstructing these figures and acknowledging the heterogeneous nature of the mestiza "Anzaldúa turns to the Aztec creator goddess Coatlicue, using her duality and contradictions to craft an image of the Chicana as both multiple and somehow whole." (Nelson, 2008, p. 77). Thus, Chicanas contain multitudes within themselves and look for a room of their own.

It is especially important to stress that "if the aim of the Chicano movement was to decolonize the mind, as the novelist Tomás Rivera once proposed, Chicanas were determined to decolonize the body." (Gutiérrez, 2019, p. 63). Chicanas had to liberate their bodies from three perspectives: sexual, familiar and as a labour force. Firstly, sexual liberation consisted of trying to stop being viewed solely as an object of male desire, therefore reclaiming their own femininity and sexuality. Authors such as Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherrie Moraga (1983) theorised on this from a queer perspective as lesbian women of colour, which is why they were even more attacked by Chicano men, since their perspective did not fit their family model. In close relation to the last statement, it needs to be highlighted that "at the cultural level, the Chicano movement emphasized the need to safeguard the value of family loyalty. At the political level, the Chicano movement used the family as a strategic organizational tool for protest activities." (García, 1989, p. 219); this caused Chicanas to question gender roles in the domestic sphere, as it was established that their fate was to become mothers —depriving them of reproductive rights— subjugated to their husbands. Mothers were not supposed to work and thereby lacked economic independence, as their husbands had to be the main provider for the family. The fact that Chicanas wanted to take possession of their bodies, according to men, shattered the "ideal Chicana" (Garcia, 1989, p. 222), a submissive and long-suffering woman who sacrificed everything for the cause.

It is imperative to underline the fact that all these situations take place in a postcolonial context, in which working-class racialised women precisely find themselves totally ostracised, thus being subaltern subjects. The social hierarchy in this context would be: Chicana woman, Chicana man, white woman, and at the top, the white man. It is worth pointing out once again the gender-based oppression, for it has already been seen that the Chicano man dominates the Chicana woman. As for the origin of this machismo, some authors cited by A. M. García in her work *The Development of Chicana Feminist Discourse, 1970-1980* (1989), as well as Gloria Anzaldúa, expose that the sexist construction of the Chicano social hierarchy is not inherent to race, but on the contrary is a destructive form of socialisation imported by the Anglos[3]. In response to this, it is of interest to consider some of the ideas of the Indian philosopher Gayatri Spivak, who is a relevant figure in postcolonial discourse. She warns that it is dangerous to fall into a nativist attitude, glorifying the subject of a precolonial past and trying to return to it, instead of evolving towards a better future by using it as a strategy. Spivak also asks the well-known question that gives title to her essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988) and in the case of Chicanas, who with significant effort have been able to establish a space where they can express themselves and be heard, the answer would be positive.

Chicanas, regardless of sexist oppression, made significant contributions to their movement; specially Chicana artists, who made their own journey back to Aztlán, and found Nepantla. The Nahuatl word 'nepantla':

[3] In this paper the term 'Anglo' will be used to refer to white people from the United States. This decision is based on the fact that in theoretical works on the Chicano movement the term 'Anglo' predominates. A more up-to-date equivalent might be 'gringo', which also adheres to more informal and even pejorative uses.

> means an in-betwixt and in-between place, a middle place or place of passage and reciprocity. According to Cortez, nepantla art celebrates intracultural diversity and stimulates personal visions of creative ways of turning marginality and religious experiences of land and gender into new and liberating expressions. (Carrasco, 2019, p. 23)

This liminal space was a place for safety, exploration and self-knowledge, which consequently would reinforce their resistance activity. In contrast to the Chicano men who used elements of mythical Aztlán to fuel their power fantasies, Chicanas chose elements that they could use to favour their interests on race and the discriminated. Therefore, the advantages provided by Nepantla also served to reconsider female figures such as the previously mentioned, the victims of misogyny in the recent Mexican imaginary, through the "Aztlán archetype with its elements of hill, water, sustenance, fertility and female divinity." (Carrasco, 2019, p. 23).

Nonetheless, it could also be said that the mestiza, as inhabitant of Nepantla, "undergoes a struggle of flesh, a struggle of borders, an inner war." (Anzaldúa, p. 78). In line with what has been discussed above about terms such as Mexican American or Hispanic, Hiernaux-Nicolas (2005) points out that it is in contact with the Other that one becomes more aware of what one shares with other members of the group, noticing how different the Other, a member of another group, can be. So, as Barth (1995, cited in Hiernaux-Nicolas, 2005) remarks, it is at the borders that the perception of identity is most evident and where it is consolidated. All this arises the question of identity on the in-between subject, like the Chicana, who is inherently detached from the physical space and thus entails mobility. Hiernaux-Nicolas presents that while in many cases this Chicana imaginary does not go beyond the stage of subjective construction, for others it is concretely embodied in attitudes, lifestyles and vivid identity reactions. In this way, he goes on to ask whether it is valid to transfer the concept of identity to the simple belonging

to certain symbolic configurations or particular practices, detaching it from its geographical and historical context, which were a central support for the definition of identity. Vila (2000) adds that the way of understanding the processes of identity construction in border contexts requires that it is no longer a question of 'identity' but of 'identities', as this implies avoiding the conceptualisation of some kind of unified or centred identity. He states that authors such as Gloria Anzaldúa tend to homogenise the border, as if there were a single Mexico/US border, a single border culture or a single process of hybridisation. In this sense, Vila considers that the metaphor of "border crossing" that authors such as Anzaldúa are proposing is correct, but also partial. He explains that if on the one hand the process of globalisation and hybridisation is here to stay, on the other hand many people feel threatened by the idea of abandoning a type of identity and culture (being American, Mexican, etc.) that has identified them for generations and in which they have invested effort, desires, and aspirations.

After reviewing Chicana history, it is crucial to take into account the impact it has had on successive generations. The term that addresses such issue is called 'intergenerational trauma', which "has been defined as the cumulative emotional and psychological wounding that is transmitted from one generation to the next." (Dass-Brailsford, 2007; Rakoff et al., 1966, cited in Cerdeña, Rivera, and Spak, 2021, p. 1). Although, as the name suggests, it is a phenomenon that has been occurring throughout history, it has only begun to receive attention relatively recently, since humanity has witnessed its greatest man-made global catastrophes. Then, it can be understood that "this framework is particularly resonant for Indigenous communities, who may still suffer the effects of genocide and forced removal from ancestral lands, even across multiple generations." (Cerdeña, Rivera, and Spak, 2021, p. 3), as has been the case in the Chicana experience.

> In addition to personal trauma, Latinxs are vulnerable to the interlocking oppressions of colonialism, racism, sexism, discrimination against gender and sexual minorities, nativism, and ethnocentrism, rendering them especially susceptible to weathering—or premature health deterioration (Geronimus et al., 2006)—by intergenerational trauma. (Cerdeña, Rivera, and Spak, 2021, p. 4)

It should be noted that the use of the term 'Latinxs' as a gender-inclusive umbrella term will be discussed later, but it encompasses Chicanas in terms of nature of shared trauma. That said, the most obvious way in which people show intergenerational trauma is not through a real consciousness of the systematic oppression to which their ancestors were subjected, for that would represent the deepest possible level of awareness of such rooted harm. Instead, it is reflected through parenting: "several potential mechanisms were identified as mediators of intergenerational trauma transmission, yet the vast majority center around disrupted maternal behavior […] and impaired attachment." (Cerdeña, Rivera, and Spak, 2021, p. 17). Again, this would point to the fact that women suffer greater oppression, so if maternal behaviour is one of the main mechanisms of transmission of trauma, it is likely to affect the daughter more deeply, with her repeating the cycle with her own daughter, and so on. Issues such as the importance of family in Chicana culture, the female but above all maternal figures who are idolised and hated in equal measure, and the mother-daughter relationship as a major exponent of intergenerational trauma have all been raised. The common factor in all of them is the figure of the mother. Anzaldúa said that Chicana people have three mothers (Guadalupe, La Chingada or Malinche and La Llorona) and also identify with the mother (Indian) rather than the father (Spanish); while Harelly, through her poetry, puts all her efforts into breaking cycles. The two authors reconnect with maternal relationships and attempt to

heal them from different perspectives: Anzaldúa on the large scale and Vianney from her own intimacy.

> As she grows up, the daughter needs to realize that her mother is not necessarily the cause of her feelings of inferiority, but rather, that it is a patriarchal cultural system which has wounded both her own and her mother's femininity. Very often it is the task of the daughter to heal the mother-daughter split both with her personal mother as well as within her own psyche (Murdock, 1990; and Rivers, Barnett, and Baruch, 1990 cited in Hester, 1995, p. 3).

Everything Anzaldúa writes is framed by her status as a Chicana lesbian woman, and her words are directed almost primarily at the mestizas who also share her struggles. Harelly, despite describing her work in her Instagram profile description as 'palabras de frontera que abrazan' and having shared that she has been part of groups such as MEChA[4] (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano/@/x de Aztlán) in her student days, currently she detaches herself from the Chicana label in favour of Mexicana and Latina, sometimes even using Latinx/e in her posts and hashtags to refer to the community as a whole. Sánchez (2000) highlights that to speak of generations offers the advantage of a systemisation, an order and a quest for practicality in the globalisation and particularisation of events. The fact that a group is contemporary in its experiences and deals with them in a certain way sheds light upon a collective awareness of the moment. Anzaldúa represents the Chicana generation in its heyday, those who resonate with her words: "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." (Anzaldúa, p. 16). Meanwhile, Harelly represents a new generation that understands even more the power of union and

[4] See Annex 1

community encouraged by a globalising tendency and tries to help heal Latinas and Latinxs (including Chicanas and Chicanxs). As stated above, the term Latinx also encompasses Chicanas, bringing back the problematic issue of denomination. Mexico is considered part of Latin America due to contact and cultural similarities, being one of them the language inherited from Spanish colonisers. Therefore, it could be said that Chicanas, seeing that many of their problems coincide with those of Latin Americans, can also consider themselves Latinas. Both Chicanas and Latinas, since the birth of their feminist discourse in the second half of the 20th century, have used 'a/o' to mark gender in an inclusive way. But nowadays, thanks to the LGTBIQ+ movement, it is noticeable that the ending 'a/o' is falling into obsolescence because it denotes a binarism that excludes all other identities that do not fit the traditional mould. Richard T. Rodriguez, professor at the University of California specialised in Latino/a/x studies, points out about past and present attempts at inclusion:

> While the previously fashioned "Latina/o" and "Latin@" (and Chicana/o and Chican@) sought to counter the singular use of the masculine O (which collapsed women under the weight of a presumed inclusiveness), the current application of the X in place of those letters and symbols that (sometimes inadvertently) stabilize masculine and feminine pronouns aims to undermine both binary constructions of gender and essentially assigned, exclusively contoured categories in favor of non-binary identification or gender neutrality, nonconformity, and inclusivity. (Rodríguez, 2017, p. 203)

Before commenting on the complexities of this sociolinguistic issue, it is necessary to briefly note the trends in the use of some of these terms. For this purpose, it has been used the Google Ngram Viewer tool, which creates frequency graphs of any text-formatted search through corpora differentiated by language and date of last update.

Here, the following graph displays information in relation to the terms Chicana, Chicanx, Latina and Latinx:

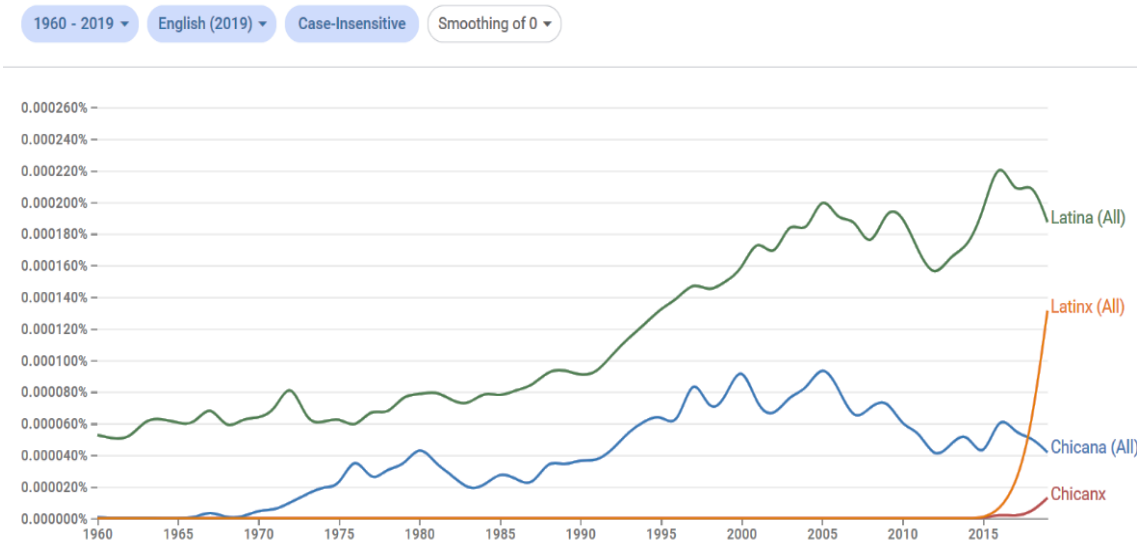

Figure 1. Graph created using the Google Nviewer Tool. It shows the frequency of use between 1960 and 2019 of the terms 'Latina', 'Latinx', 'Chicana', and 'Chicanx' in English.

Firstly, it is evident that the 'Latina' category is larger because of larger demographics. With this in mind, it is possible to comment that the 'Chicana' category reached its highest point a longer time ago, during the first decade of the 2000s, and since then there has been a downward trend in usage. 'Latina', on the other hand, shows an upward trend in usage, with a slight decrease from 2015 onwards, when, at the same time, there is a sharp increase in 'Latinx'. Following this tendency, 'Chicanx' appears timidly around 2017, clearly influenced.

There exist several positions for and against the introduction of the 'x' to express inclusivity in Spanish language. A common argument against it is the impossibility of the realisation of the 'x' sound in a word-ending context, in which another consonant usually precedes it. This is why another possibility that has been put on the table is the use of the vowel 'e' as a substitute for 'a/o', while preserving the original intention of 'x'. Furthermore, there is a critical opinion which argues that the substitution undermines the

efforts that women have been making for decades to achieve visibility, as if they were the only ones to fight for equality. In any case, who does it really include the 'x'? People on the non-binary spectrum, or everyone, including men and women? Today, 'Latinx' is becoming an umbrella term, something that shows how it has completely deviated from its original purpose.

> The multiplicity of the potential meanings embedded within it gives an idea of how the X moves and alters over and over again—even against itself, and even against the marked subject position of a LatinX trying to come to terms with a language by which to frame the "rapidly shifting" speed of one's X-ness. (Milian, 2017, p. 6)

Rodríguez (2017, p. 208) asks "if the initial subversive intent of embracing Latinx now runs the risk of co-optation by neoliberal agendas. Certainly, this was not the goal of the brown trans activists, scholars, and artists who see their embodiment reflected in the X." As seen in the graphic, in relation to the sharp increase of Latinx, Rodríguez (p. 205) also suggests that "its widespread usage […] should compel us to think critically about how a term's connotations of radical insurgency can easily be resignified toward accommodationist politics that erase history and occlude difference." Nevertheless, it is essential to consider that the attempt at standardisation represents an initial stride towards general acceptance, thereby justifying the utilisation of the umbrella morpheme 'x' as a viable approach. Once widespread acceptance is achieved, an evaluation of the subtleties and implications associated with alternative options will become pertinent. Ultimately, this work will categorise the authors Vianney Harelly and Gloria Anzaldúa within feminine categories, in which they have identified themselves. Again, this is not incompatible with the acceptance, on the part of these authors and the author of this thesis, of those who challenge the system and claim their identity beyond binarism.

To conclude the present theoretical framework, it is imperative to take into consideration the features of the language employed in the literary creation of Anzaldúa and Harelly, and in Chicana literature in general, because of its bilingual character. The border context, inherent to Chicano identity, has produced the overlapping of two languages, English and Spanish, thus giving rise to a linguistic alternation in oral and written discourse. As Aranda (1992) explains, whereas it cannot be said that Chicano bilingual literature emerges from an explicit tradition, there are examples of World War I in which linguistic alternation shows how English begins to be mixed with Spanish. She goes on to explain that linguistic alternation as an indicator of social identities (Anglo, Mexican and Chicano) arises from the strong significance it acquires within a bilingual and bicultural background. In this sense, it is of interest to rely on what L.P. Aegerter says about the Jamaican author Michelle Cliff:

> Her journey into speech entails, then, a discovery of the power of language to define and redefine personal and cultural identity. Her redefinition of self means using the language that has denied her personal and cultural wholeness to find or retrieve that wholeness-using hegemonic language to resist hegemony, to expose its oppressive machinations in the mechanisms of colonization. (Aegerter, 1997, p. 901)

Following Aranda, this is a context which can be linked to universal behaviour; that is, understanding linguistic alternation as a cross-cultural response in which language change is more important than the direction of change. To further delimit what is meant by linguistic alternation in this case, attention is focused on what Bailey defines as 'heteroglossia':

> Heteroglossia addresses (a) the simultaneous use of different kinds of forms or signs, and (b) the tensions and conflicts among those signs, based on the sociohistorical associations they carry with them (Ivanov 2001). The first part of this definition of heteroglossia subsumes formal definitions of bilingualism (as the coexistence of two linguistic systems) or code-switching (as the alternation of codes within a single speech exchange) (Gumperz 1982; Heller, 1988). […] The second part of the definition of heteroglossia captures the inherent political and sociohistorical associations of any linguistic form, i.e. its indexical meanings (Peirce 1955), or social connotations. These indexical meanings, or historical voices, are not explicit or static, but rather must be interpreted on the basis of constellations of forms in particular interactional and sociohistorical contexts. Such meanings are thus shifting, subjective (Bailey, 2007, p. 257-258)

It serves to take into account "the utility of the notion of heteroglossia relative to a narrower focus on code-switching, in analysing identity negotiations in talk" (Bailey, 2007, p. 260) and to emphasise that "conceptualizing bilingual speech as a social construction does not minimize its on-the-ground social implications." (p. 271), as it happens with the categories of identity in which he agrees with Barth (1995). Then, in relation to said social implications, Aranda (1992) describes that the language 'us' as opposed to 'them' is not given by the context, but by the language that conveys the feeling, thought or idea in question. The code, which corresponds to a group or community, is usually not accessible to those who do not belong to the group. That is, it does not alternate with those who do not belong to the same group precisely because of the connotations implicit in one code or another (McMenamin, 1973; Poplack, 1981 cited in Aranda, 1992) Hence, in a dialectical confrontation, Spanish and English create a certain tension over the meaning conferred on each language. Spanish is shown to be full of feelings of the past, of family, food, religion, and sentimental, intimate and popular emotions. This more 'human' side is in direct opposition to a more realistic, monetary, legalistic, modern and exploitative English.

> This type of switching has sometimes been called 'metaphorical switching'. Each of the codes represents or symbolises a set of social meanings, and the speaker draws on the associations of each, just as people use metaphors to represent complex meanings. The term also reflects the fact that this kind of switching involves rhetorical skill. Skilful code-switching operates like metaphor to enrich the communication. (Holmes, 2008, p. 42)

With the aim of providing a simple and clear classification of these phenomena, the classification proposed by Aranda (1992) on linguistic alternation[5] in the Chicano context will be used for the subsequent literary analysis. She presents four main patterns for code-switching: minimal (loanwords and insertions), where specific words are smoothly incorporated into the speech without altering the overall linguistic structure; interorational, which occurs at the level of complete utterances or sentences; intraorational, that involves switching within a single sentence or phrase; and linguistic leap, where the speaker switches abruptly self-translating the immediate previous utterance.

Following Aranda, the consideration of the writer's use and even intention of the linguistic resources at hand is even more significant than the decoding that different readers might make of it. Although the code-switching between English and Spanish in bilingual Chicano literature falls outside monolingual norms, it is nonetheless part of the expectation of its speech community. In reference to the possibility of monolingualism, Bailey (2007, p. 265) comments on the approach of Blommaert (1998) on considering this kind of multilingual talk as just one code and that "the insistence on two distinct

[5] Aranda (1992) examines different definitions of 'linguistic alternation' by various scholars. These definitions suggest that 'linguistic alternation' can be used as a synonym for 'code-switching', which is preferred to prevent ambiguity.

languages as the frame of reference for this form of speech is not helpful in terms of interpreting it.", being that the reason why terms like 'Spanglish' arise. In any case, citing one last time the words of Aranda (1992), there is no doubt that code-switching will continue to be a viable form of expression in Chicano literature as long as it continues to conjugate a reality that is still rooted in the recent past.

3-. FROM THE ‘NEW MESTIZA’ TO THE ‘NEW (NEW) MESTIZA’

The following literary analysis will be based on the work *Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987), by Gloria Anzaldúa, and on the poetic production of Vianney Harelly, which includes the books *The Plants Are Burning* (2022a) and *Here Are The Tears I You We Didn’t Cry* (2022b), as well as those poems that she has published through social media in post or story format. There is a common point that unites both authors: the epic poem “I am Joaquín” by Rodolfo ‘Corky’ Gonzales. For Anzaldúa, the poem marks the beginning of Chicano identity, saying: “With that recognition, we became a distinct people. Something momentous happened to the Chicano soul” (Anzaldúa, p. 63); while Harelly decided to reinterpret “I am Joaquín” in a new personal version called “I am Vianney”, shared on her Instagram stories[6]:

I am Vianney,
lost in a world of confusion.
Anzaldúa me grita y me pide to live without borders,
pero no puedo madre mía, si los balazos me llegan de los dos
lados.
En México los españoles me desnudaron y robaron mi
esencia, because my indígenas brothers and sisters were
dirty salvajes.
En Gringolandia my mother was arrested and deported,
because she couldn’t speak English and she had no
money.
Because Latinxs are dirty salvajes.

[6] See Annex 2

¿Cómo sobrevivir en las borderlands de Anzaldúa, si la sangre
me llega por todos lados?
Pero let me answer, for those who ask,
ya no sé a donde irme,
but I won't give them the satisfaction of running away,
if I'm killed I will rest in power and my people will
march&scream for me.
if I survive, I will make sure I am never destroyed.
Tus dos sistemas les temen a lxs despiertxs, and one day, this
won't hurt anymore.
One day I will rise and grow taller than this metal monster
dividing my people.
Si en dos lados soy la misma Malinche, la misma Eva, la
misma Llorona.
I will rise and the systems will be afraid of me, it will be
their turn to run from me, porque soy Vianney,
chingona en un world of confusión.
Soy mexicana, soy Latina, soy mujer, soy estudiante, soy la
que piensa, soy la que protesta, soy la rebelde.
I am Vianney,
survivor of a world of confusion.
and I am more than what Gringolandia y PAN PRI PRD
make of me.

This new version written by Harelly constituted an escape route at a critical time for all immigrants, especially Mexicans, when Donald Trump won the US presidential elections in 2016. As can be seen, not only does it deal with all the themes that will be analysed in this project, thus serving as the skeleton of the thesis, but it also contains direct allusions to the other author who is subject of analysis: Gloria Anzaldúa. With her

"Anzaldúa me grita y me pide to live without borders, / pero no puedo madre mía", Harelly establishes a clear dialogue that, out of desperation, questions Anzaldúa's ideas. This fact is the starting point for pondering whether Vianney Harelly is moving towards or away from the concept of 'the new mestiza'.

3.1-. THE (FORCED) HARMONISATION OF TWO CODES

> In the confusion, Pedro ran, terrified of being caught. He couldn't speak English, couldn't tell them he was fifth generation American. *Sin papeles*—he did not carry his birth certificate to work in the fields. *La migra* took him away while we watched. […] *Se lo llevaron sin un centavo al pobre. Se vino andando desde Guadalajara.* (Anzaldúa, p. 4)

> En Gringolandia my mother was arrested and deported,
> because she couldn't speak English and she had no
> money.
> Because Latinxs are dirty salvajes.
> (Harelly, 2016)

Language, as the supreme force that shapes cosmovision but also as the one that determines how the world sees us, is one of the most important aspects within the social dimension shared by all human beings, so it cannot be approached without taking this dimension into account. In order to understand the linguistic 'mestizaje' presented by both authors, it is necessary to go back to the establishment of the languages that constitute it. First, Spanish was imposed by colonisers in the 16th century, violently wiping off the map the indigenous languages of the territory and forever changing the trajectory of the Mexica people, which Harelly addresses in "I am Vianney" by saying that the Spanish stripped her naked and stole her essence in Mexico. Centuries later, the

U.S. invasion of Mexico that resulted in the Anglos taking half of the Mexican territory triggered a ‘motionless migration’. This means that there was no displacement of people, but there was a displacement of political borders. From one instant to the next, many Mexicans found themselves in a different country, a different culture, but above all, subjugated to a different language, as in the case of Anzaldúa’s family. Palacio (2020, p. 24) explains that Rio Grande Valley has been Anzaldúa family's home since long before Texas declared independence and continues to be so even though independence caused them to be expelled from their land and dispossessed of their livelihoods. Moreover, for economic reasons, the United States continued to exert great influence in Mexico, from where many Mexicans still cross the border daily to pursue better labour and even academic opportunities. Such is the case in Harelly’s life, who in her poem “Spanglish” (2022) narrates and analyses the influence of her father and education in her way of speaking:

> why do I mix English and
> Spanish in my poetry?
> I’d like to say that that’s
> what comes natural to me
> Algo como lo que significa
> El café con azúcar
> Que uno sin el otro
> no tiene sentido
> Me recuerdo de pequeñita
> Cuando me sentaba en la
> mesa y escuchaba a mi
> padre hablar por teléfono
> Como vivíamos en frontera
> he worked on the other

side and he spoke English

so well

I always admired my father

so I begun watching movies

and shows to speak like

him

Soy de Tijuana

La ciudad que duerme y

baila del otro lado de un

monstruo de metal

Nuestra identidad no es

binaria es fronteriza

We say things like parking

instead of estacionamiento

Poco a poco el hermano

mayor del otro lado nos

convence a ser como él

Después me fui a la

universidad de San

Francisco

Donde nadé entre literatura

compañeres y profesores

diferentes a lo que yo

conocía

my writing evolved into the

English language

I couldn’t understand de

Chiquita when my father

spoke on the phone

simplemente me cansé de

explicarle a mis profesores
el idioma de mis emociones
then I realized I couldn't
possibly write everything in
English
El idioma me parece frío y
distante
y mi poesía es
todo menos eso
Siempre he dicho que hay
Emociones que no se
Traducen
Entonces las frases que
más fuerte siente mi
corazón
permanecen intactas en el
idioma que canta mi madre
en la cocina
Y mi poesía es eso:
Un testamento de una vida
entre dos culturas

Due to the aforementioned factors, bilingual communities that mixed Spanish and English were developed on both sides of the border. In the absence of consensus on denomination, but also given the vast variety of realities of Chicana people, Anzaldúa (pp. 55-56) claimed to speak many languages, such as Chicano Spanish, Tex-Mex, Spanglish or 'Pachuco', considering the first two the closest to her heart. In Harelly's case, she exclusively uses the term Spanglish when referring to and defending the language she speaks. Returning to the poem of the same name, "Spanglish", she answers

herself and her followers who question her use of the language: “why do I mix English and / Spanish in my poetry? /I’d like to say that that’s / what comes natural to me / Algo como lo que significa / el café con azúcar / Que uno sin el otro / no tiene sentido”. As we can see in this example, and in the rest of the work of the two authors, language alternation, specifically code-switching, takes precedence and can be presented in a variety of ways. Aranda (1992) argues that bilinguals behave differently in different communities, so that the results of alternating or mixing languages and the interpretations of what is happening will not all be the same. Languages do not mix in every speaker and in every situation in the same way, nor is their taxonomy uniform. There is a gradation in the amount and mode of switching from one language to another. With the help of Anzaldúa and Harelly’s texts, the various forms of code-switching in the context of the US-Mexico border can be illustrated. Furthermore, it is important to highlight certain characteristics in their respective styles that reflect the particular way of thinking in the time periods where they belong.

Following the classification provided by Aranda (1992) on linguistic alternation, applied to code-switching:

I. Minimal code-switching (loanwords and insertions)

> Anzaldúa (p. 82): “She puts bones, pieces of bark, *hierbas*, eagle feather, snakeskin, tape recorder, the rattle and drum in her pack and she sets out to become the complete *tolteca*.”
>
> Harelly (“I am Vianney”, 2016): “Because Latinxs are dirty salvajes.”

II. Interorational code-switching

Anzaldúa (p. 110): “She didn’t like to talk about such things. *Mujeres no hablan de cosas cochinas*.”

Harelly (2022a): “Remember the yellow roses on the tree hanging in / Medellín / En Aracataca réplica de Macondo las flores / favoritas de Gabo eran amarillas”

III. Intraorational code-switching

Anzaldúa (p. 90): “I walk out to the back yard, stare at *los rosales de mamá*.”

Harelly (2022a): “He looked at me con sus / ojitos llenos de vergüenza / No me quiso decir but I knew because he looked / just like the sad man inside Van Gogh’s *At / Eternity’s Gate* that the sea had taken my father”

IV. Linguistic leap

Anzaldúa (p. 83): “*Tú no sirves pa’ nada*— you’re good for nothing. *Eres pura vieja*.”

Harelly (2022a): “I saw my father Te juro que vi a mi papi”

These samples of code-switching serve not only to exemplify its types, but also to explore other aspects. Firstly, in Harelly’s example in IV there is an emphatic self-translation closely tied to sentiment, a fact that leads to the appearance of what Holmes (2008, p. 42) describes as ‘metaphorical switching’. In English she uses a declarative sentence without any kind of nuance, while in Spanish there are two elements that trigger an increase in the degree of subjectivity and emotion: the addition of the verb ‘juro’ and the replacement of the fully neutral form ‘father’ by ‘papi’, thus expressing familiarity and affection. Vianney Harelly herself says that she finds English cold and distant and that there are emotions that cannot be translated, so the words her heart feels most strongly

remain intact in the language her mother sings in the kitchen. Secondly, in Anzaldúa's citation in I, the loanword she employs comes from Nahuatl, the language spoken by the Mexica and probably by the inhabitants of the mythical Aztlán. The word 'tolteca' is the demonym of a civilization originated in Tula that became very influential in Mesoamerica. Gloria Anzaldúa was one of the most prominent figures in the Chicano and later Chicana movement, so she felt strongly attached to the concept of 'La Raza', which originated in Aztlán. It is for this reason that the use of loanwords from Nahuatl, abundant in her work, acts as another way of accessing and appreciating her roots, as well as of reinforcing her ideals. Lastly, regarding the predominantly male gendered aspect of Spanish, Anzaldúa (p. 54) wrote:

> The first time I heard two women, a Puerto Rican and a Cuban, say the word 'nosotras,' I was shocked. I had not known the word existed. Chicanas use *nosotros* whether we're male or female. We are robbed of our female being by the masculine plural. Language is a male discourse. […] Even our own people, other Spanish speakers *nos quieren poner candados en la boca*. They would hold us back with their bag of *reglas de academia*.

Harelly shared through an Instagram story[7] the following statement:

> The purpose of it [my poetry] is to make you feel something not to be approved by La Real Academia Española, English professors or literary critics. My work, from the creation of poetry to the publication of it in books, does not follow rules because it is meant for people who deserve to exist happily beyond the rules created to repress/suppress/oppress them.

[7] See Annex 3

It is essential to stress the handling of gender in a language that is binary and dominated by masculinity, such as Spanish. Harelly in I uses the form 'Latinxs', which is quite distant from what Anzaldúa reported back in the 1980s. The use of '-x' as a gender-neutral morpheme is not only an evolution, but also a revolution and a vindication against the rules of the academy to which Anzaldúa alluded. The aim is to favour inclusion in a world in which binarism has begun to transform into a reality that is slowly becoming more and more obsolete. Harelly uses '-x' for this purpose, but also '-e', expressing in her writing that '-x' and '-e' are interchangeable[8]. Therefore, Harelly's position seems to be a logical evolution from an Anzaldúa who, despite identifying herself as a woman, expressed thoughts like: "But I, like other queer people, am two in one body, both male and female. I am the embodiment of the *hieros gamos*: the coming together of opposite qualities within" (p. 19).

The specific features of each author's code-switching to a greater or lesser extent reveal some intentionality, although these were not the only decisions they had to face when deciding how to express themselves to the public who would read them. De la Paz (2000) looks closely at the issue of translation in Anzaldúa and notes that there seems to be certain hierarchisation of English in *Borderlands / La frontera*. Most of the prose text is written in English. The notes at the end of the chapters are written only in English because in a formal, paratextual setting, Anzaldúa must use a standard language and chooses English. There are translations of poems and quotations in Spanish into English, but not vice versa. It is the Spanish that carries the italics. It is 'La Frontera' that is under 'Borderlands' in the title of the book. However, it seeks a bilingual reader who needs no explanation. Because a reader who only understands English would be lost, marginalised. Anzaldúa has the generosity to prepare lexicons for some poems that include many

[8] See Annex 4

Spanish words, but she also leaves whole poems in Spanish without even translating the title. The work can only be interpreted in one direction, the one chosen by the author. She makes sure that the reader cannot make a 'misreading' and makes it clear who is in charge of the meaning. Nevertheless, the political and socio-historical factors that led to the situation of heteroglossia also meant that Anzaldúa got condemned from both sides for her 'bastard' use of the two languages: she was accused of treason by her race and marginalised by the Americans, De la Paz points out. In that sense, Anzaldúa met the same fate as La Malinche. On the other hand, Harelly in the literary field uses a type of Spanglish in which one language does not predominate over the other. It is noteworthy that in her texts written in English there are always small instances of code-switching, however minimal they may be, while there are texts entirely in Spanish. The book *The Plants Are Burning* was first published in Spanglish, except for the prologue and epilogue in Spanish; and once it gained popularity, at the request of her readers, she published a reprint that also included self-translations of every poem into English and Spanish. In her next book, *Here Are the Tears I You We Didn't Cry*, the original edition was supplemented solely by self-translations into Spanish. When drawing a comparison, Anzaldúa seemed to adopt a more radical position which, as mentioned above, appeals to a very specific type of reader. Anzaldúa wrote to those who inhabited her border reality, she dedicated her work to all Mexicans on both sides of the border. Harelly writes from the border, yet tries to reach out to everyone, to those who understand her authentic way of speaking and to those who lack the knowledge to understand her: she considers herself not only Mexican, but also Latina.

Notwithstanding the 35-year gap between the texts under analysis, it was possible to recognise a multitude of similarities as well as minor differences that attest to the evolution and survival of Chicana discourse. Spanglish stands as a living language despite

the purist attempts to deprive it of its status under a racist and classist bias in favour of hegemonic forms of discourse. If everything related to the linguistic sphere is a matter of choice, there is a contradiction in the fact that both authors have declared that it is their natural way of self-expression. If their own language becomes a political statement and a rebellion, then their status as subaltern subjects is clear in the first instance. In the case of Chicanas, subalternity[9] is embodied by belonging to the margins of society and the physical margins of two countries, the borderland. Harelly's poem "Spanglish" ends by saying that her poetry in this language is a testament to a life between two cultures. Finally, Anzaldúa (p. 59) declared her concern about the future of the language by saying that "by the end of this century English, and not Spanish, will be the mother tongue of most Chicanos and Latinos", also endangering the survival of the rest of the languages she spoke. Today, however, the mestizo language seems to survive in the new mestiza of the 21st century, who at the same time also inherits that kind of worries: Harelly comments in "Spanglish", in relation to her language, that little by little the big brother from the other side convinces them to be like him.

3.2-. WHERE TWO OPPRESSIVE SYSTEMS MEET

1,950 mile-long open wound
dividing a *pueblo*, a culture,
running down the length of my body,
staking fence rods in my flesh,
splits me splits me

[9] Spivak (1988) expanded on the concept of 'subalternity' proposed by Antonio Gramsci by examining the challenges faced by women in postcolonial societies. She emphasised the difficulty of representing their experiences and allowing them to speak within existing power structures.

me raja me raja

This is my home

this thin edge of

barbwire.

(Anzaldúa, pp. 2-3)

Tus dos sistemas les temen a lxs despiertxs, and one day, this

won't hurt anymore.

One day I will rise and grow taller than this metal monster

dividing my people

(Harelly, "I am Vianney", 2016)

When Gloria Anzaldúa wrote *Borderlands / La Frontera* the most famous wall in the world was the Berlin one. That wall ceased to exist and instead the US-Mexico border wall appeared in its place, among many others. When Vianney Harelly began to take her first steps, so did the 'metal monster' that still divides her people to this day. The 'open wound' went from having barbwire staples to thousands of metal stakes poking through it. The two types of border mestiza are reflected in the authors: Anzaldúa was born and raised in the United States, in a usurped territory, it was not her family who moved but the border itself; Harelly was raised on the Mexican side of the current border and was influenced by the power on the other side.

"I press my hand to the steel curtain— / chainlink fence crowned with rolled barbed wire— / rippling from the sea where Tijuana touches San Diego", Anzaldúa (p. 2) related, thereby connecting with Harelly, native of Tijuana. While Anzaldúa's use of semantics here emphasises the re-enactment of the physical suffering of those forced to cross illegally —constituting a metaphor for spiritual suffering—, Harelly focuses more on the suffering that the border causes in interpersonal relationships. She is especially

sensitive to this issue given her personal situation, since she explains in "Catalina dreams" (2023) that both her father and mother are in Mexico and neither can cross; moreover, the Tijuana-San Diego border is one of the most heavily trafficked border crossings in the world, so it is not uncommon to witness scenes of families being separated from each other. The following excerpt comes from the poem "Abrazo que no alcanza" (2022) that Harelly wrote for the #fight4hugs campaign[10], which is a claim that hugs with loved ones should be a right and not a revolution, as for instance happens to many children who have been separated from their parents at the border:

> If I can't reach the horizon si me detiene este monstruo de metal
> How can you know that I love you?
> How can you hear that I miss you
> si en las olas que chocan contra el muro queda la nostalgia
> y el llanto de nuestras raíces
> ya ahogadas
> ya frías
> ya tristes

Harelly addresses two systems when referring to the political entities that oppress people and decides: "I am more than what Gringolandia y PAN PRI PRD[11] make of me". On the one hand, she loves Mexico, dedicates poems to it and rejoices in its culture through a range of artistic means: writing, graphic arts, or characterisations (her social

[10] Hashtag created to promote a social media campaign to support family reunification processes at the US-Mexico border. It is organised by the association ODA (Otros Dreams en Acción).

[11] Acronyms of three Mexican political parties: Partido Acción Nacional, Partido Revolucionario Institucional and Partido de la Revolución Democrática. Mainly conservative in ideology.

media profile picture is of herself attired as the Virgin of Guadalupe). On the other hand, she is fiercely critical of her country's corrupt and ineffective politics, so she says: "El Lago de Chapultepec es verde / In Distrito Federal / the lake is green / because México's president / probably hides bodies under the water / I could be murdered there for saying this" (Harelly, 2022a). Moreover, she has stated via Instagram[12] that in her college years she constantly travelled to Mexico City to join protests, to the point where she had to turn down a job at a Mexican newspaper because of violent retaliation against students and reporters. Subsequently, Harelly introduced a poem she wrote at the time entitled "Yo sé que no aplauden", inspired by the words of former Mexican president Enrique Peña Nieto (from PRI political party) when, after a conference, no one applauded. In addition, by sharing this information on Instagram she has revealed that she is currently creating an anthology of poems that deal with this theme. Thus, the attitude of protest is seen in Harelly as was also seen in Anzaldúa, a defender of Chicana identity, women, and queer people. The latter is more critical of the other side, the US one, of which Vianney also speaks mainly by alluding to the concept of the 'American dream'. This 'American dream' is born out of a propagandistic idealisation that portrays the United States as the land of freedom and equality, where anyone can climb the social and economic ladder regardless of class, race, or gender. Therefore, many migrants from the rest of the world have been attracted by a false premise that has deeply permeated the collective consciousness. In her poem "Casitas extrañas" (2022), Harelly exemplifies it by narrating: "My mother used to drive us around houses in the US / She would talk about how she would own a house one day / Y ahora solo le queda soñar desde México / Porque el sueño americano no existe / Es solo eso solo un sueño". She also criticises other symbols of 'Americanness' such as the country's own personification —another

[12] See Annex 5

propaganda strategy— in "*Querida Madre: / I have burned the house / our dear Uncle Sam / gave us that one night*" (Harelly, 2022a).

It is unavoidable to conclude repeating again that "the U.S.-Mexican border *es una herida abierta* where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country—a border culture." (Anzaldúa, p. 3). The border then becomes the great burden of the marginalised and at the same time the home that welcomes them without prejudice and allows them to be creators. Without the existence of the border as a liminal space, the work of Anzaldúa and Harelly, who have managed to find their place in the world by defining themselves as 'fronterizas', would not be possible.

3.3-. THE HEAVY BURDEN OF IDENTITY

> Among ourselves we don't say *nosotros los americanos, o nosotros las españoles, o nosotros los hispanos.* We say *nosotros los mexicanos* (by *mexicanos* we do not mean citizens of Mexico; we do not mean a national identity, but a racial one). We distinguish between *mexicanos del otro lado and mexicanos de este lado*. Deep in our hearts we believe that being Mexican has nothing to do with which country one lives in. Being Mexican is a state of soul-not one of mind, not one of citizenship. Neither eagle nor serpent, but both. And like the ocean, neither animal respects borders. (Anzaldúa, p. 62)

> Soy mexicana, soy Latina, soy mujer, soy estudiante, soy la
> que piensa, soy la que protesta, soy la rebelde.
> (Harelly, "I am Vianney", 2016)

The identitarian conflict that emerges from belonging to several cultures and none simultaneously, living in a limbo, induces an apparent inherent confusion in those who

inhabit the liminal space. Such internal conflict may never disappear, given that even Anzaldúa herself (p. 63) expressed that "I have so internalized the borderland conflict that sometimes I feel like one cancels out the other and we are zero, nothing, no one. *A veces no soy nada ni nadie. Pero hasta cuando no lo soy, lo soy".* There is only one thing that remains very clear, and that is what Harelly says in "Spanglish" that her identity is not binary, it is a border identity. Anzaldúa (p. 194) evoked more identities but resolved in the same way: "To live in the Borderlands means you are neither *hispana india negra española ni gabacha, eres mestiza, mulata*, half-breed caught in the crossfire between camps while carrying all five races on your back not knowing which side to turn to, run from".

The violence arising from the combination of the oppressive systems causes Vianney Harelly to wonder how to survive in Anzaldúa's borderlands if the blood comes from all sides, given that "*la mestiza* undergoes a struggle of flesh, a struggle of borders, an inner war." (Anzaldúa, p. 78). Anzaldúa also explains in the same page that:

> The ambivalence from the clash of voices results in mental and emotional states of perplexity. Internal strife results in insecurity and indecisiveness. The mestiza's dual or multiple personality is plagued by psychic restlessness. In a constant state of mental nepantilism, an Aztec word meaning torn between ways, *la mestiza* is a product of the transfer of the cultural and spiritual values of one group to another. […] Like others having or living in more than one culture, we get multiple, often opposing messages. The coming together of two self-consistent but habitually incompatible frames of reference causes *un choque*, a cultural collision.

The solution proposed by Anzaldúa is to live without borders in the sense that the new mestiza has the capacity to adapt to contradictions and ambiguities. She possesses a plural personality in which nothing is wasted, not even the dreadful things. By innately containing contradictions, ambivalence becomes a natural ability. She can immerse

herself in the Anglo world while being Mexican, and in the Mexican world while being Anglo. While never disregarding oppression on both sides, Anzaldúa (p. 22) also specifies that "if going home is denied me then I will have to stand and claim my space, making a new culture—una cultura mestiza—with my own lumber, my own bricks and mortar and my own feminist architecture." It has been 7 years since Harelly said "Anzaldúa me grita y me pide to live without borders, / pero no puedo madre mía" and it seems that she is beginning to figure out how to live without those restrictions, having found a community that accepts and supports her own architecture of mestiza culture as a feminist, healer and cycle breaker.

To reach the point of embracing a plural identity, which at the same time shapes a new identity, does not mean that by being 'fronterizas' there is no total or partial self-identification with any of the cultures they come into contact with. Both Anzaldúa and Harelly relate to the Mexican. As we have already seen in the section on language, Anzaldúa (p. 202) embraces Mexico with its Indian past in mind: "But they will never take that pride / of being *mexicana*-Chicana-*tejana* / nor our Indian woman's spirit."; Harelly, in contrast, aims for a broader category in which Mexican is included, that of Latina: "Que esta cultura / Con todas sus flores y sus traumas lleva generaciones / And I don't think you would understand unless you woke up today like me still Latina / Still surviving" ("Mi identidad", 2022). Harelly's citation refers to a phenomenon known as 'cultural appropriation' that has recently gained some popularity in the social media context. Before delving more deeply into the issue from the contemporary perspective, it can be remarked how Anzaldúa (p. 68) already highlighted something similar:

> Ethnocentrism is the tyranny of Western aesthetics. An Indian mask in an American museum is transposed into an alien aesthetic system where what is missing is the presence of power invoked through performance ritual. It has become a conquered thing, a dead "thing" separated from nature

> and, therefore, its power. Modern Western painters have "borrowed," copied, or otherwise extrapolated the art of tribal cultures and called it cubism, surrealism, symbolism. The music, the beat of the drum, the Blacks' jive talk. All taken over.

Anzaldúa talked about the loss of spirituality in the objects or customs over which the oppressor had taken power, as these only make sense in the culture where they belong. She then goes on to mention the art of tribal cultures as something that was 'borrowed' or copied and then redefined as the original creation of the oppressor, with no credit given. The latter is precisely what Harelly is referring to[13]. Besides, the importance of cultural appropriation lies not only in the fact of showing a foreign cultural manifestation of any kind as their own, but also in the fact that many of these manifestations have been the object of mockery or repression until they are adopted by white people. Power relations and privilege are key elements in this situation. In recent years there have been several notorious cases on the Internet, notably in relation to aesthetics, which can exemplify this phenomenon. It can take many forms, from the use of a single cultural element, such as African braids, to the imitation or characterisation of a particular race to the point of derision. The best-known case in this respect would be 'blackface', where white people choose to paint themselves black, emphasising privilege through racial discrimination. Not only the mestiza, but any other minority can undergo this kind of process to which Harelly also gives voice. Concerning Mexican culture, in recent months its aesthetic became popular through trends with names such as 'Mexican Girl Core' or 'Latina/Hispanic aesthetic', which imitate certain forms of fashion, hairstyles or makeup elements of Mexican culture or of what is understood as Hispanic —the denomination itself denotes the ignorance and detachment of those who follow the trend— by

[13] See Annex 6

foreigners. The poem “Mi cultura” (2022b) that Harelly wrote on the occasion of the #latinxheritagemonth states:

> I wish I could tell you go ahead usa mi cultura de disfraz
> But it's not fair
> Tú te quitas las trenzas por las noches
> Yo me quedo despierta extrañando a mi madre
> This is not a trend to me
> This is my life
> I miss my family

This fragment shows the aesthetic element that has been appropriated, namely the braids of her culture, and how the uninformed use results in the disfiguration and mistreatment of her reality. Harelly speaks of the injustice of using such elements while ignoring the harsh realities faced by the people of the target culture, such as the family separation previously mentioned in the border section. At the end of the poem she also adds: “& I don’t think you understand that to be me is to carry more than one identity”, reusing the structure that appears in “Mi identidad”. Harelly poses the following message in the caption of the post of the poem:

> [...] It makes me wonder, if they love our culture so much, would they be willing to be in our shoes and live our lives? [...] Our culture and identities isn't something we wear and take off when we get bored. Esta es nuestra vida. No todo es colores. We are out here working twice as hard to be taken seriously, fighting all stigmas and stereotypes, missing our parents, breaking cultural and generational curses.

Ultimately, the present section has been useful in underlining the many difficulties faced by identities that do not fit into a single mould or that diverge from the norm.

Arguably, identity issues are tremendously dangerous because they are capable of corrupting the roots of the self. However, Anzaldúa and Harelly embrace the chaos and find solutions to heal, to survive in a world that works against them. It becomes remarkable what Anzaldúa articulates in the preface of *Borderlands / La Frontera* about the subversion and marginalisation of their existence, going beyond the positive or the negative, almost ahead of her time:

> However, there have been compensations for this mestiza, and certain joys. Living on borders and in margins, keeping intact one's shifting and multiple identity and integrity, is like trying to swim in a new element, an "alien" element. There is an exhilaration in being a participant in the further evolution of humankind, in being "worked" on. I have the sense that certain "faculties"—not just in me but in every border resident, colored or non-colored— and dormant areas of consciousness are being activated, awakened. Strange, huh? And yes, the "alien" element has become familiar—never comfortable, not with society's clamor to uphold the old, to rejoin the flock, to go with the herd. No, not comfortable but home.

3.4-. MISOGINY, MOTHERS AND PEDESTALS

> *La gente Chicana tiene tres madres.* All three are mediators: *Guadalupe*, the virgin mother who has not abandoned us, *la Chingada (Malinche*), the raped mother whom we have abandoned, and *la Llorona*, the mother who seeks her lost children and is a combination of the other two.
>
> (Anzaldúa, p. 30)

> Si en dos lados soy la misma Malinche, la misma Eva, la misma Llorona.
>
> (Harelly, “I am Vianney”, 2016)

In the hierarchy of oppression, the lowest place was and still is occupied by women merely because of their gender, regardless of their race or class. Hence, racialised

women face a double colonisation: their race has been subjected, as well as their bodies, being low-class women the most vulnerable. Anzaldúa (p. 12) details through real cases how women who cross the border are betrayed by the two cultures:

> The Mexican woman is especially at risk. Often the *coyote* (smuggler) doesn't feed her for days or let her go to the bathroom. Often he rapes her or sells her into prostitution. She cannot call on county or state health or economic resources because she doesn't know English and she fears deportation. American employers are quick to take advantage of her helplessness. […] She may work as a live-in maid for white, Chicano or Latino households for as little as $15 a week. Or work in the garment industry, do hotel work. Isolated and worried about her family back home, afraid of getting caught and deported, living with as many as fifteen people in one room, the *mexicana* suffers serious health problems. *Se enferma de los nervios, de alta presión. La mojada, la mujer indocumentada*, is doubly threatened in this country. Not only does she have to contend with sexual violence, but like all women, she is prey to a sense of physical helplessness.

The country of Mexico itself could be compared to the double colonised woman, as it has been physically and spiritually dominated, which is why it is not unexpected that Anzaldúa resorts to the feminine personification (‘her’) to mention it. Thus, Mexico and patriarchal violence merge together. The same can be seen revisiting the quote from “I am Vianney”: “En México los españoles me desnudaron y robaron mi esencia” as the use of the first person refers not only to her as an individual, but to all her indigenous female ancestors and in a way to Mexico in general. In the book *The Plants Are Burning* Harelly narrates many of her life experiences, which are completely affected by her condition as a woman and as a racialised person. As noted earlier concerning double colonisation, women lose possession of their bodies and sexuality, making abuse a frequent occurrence. Recounting one of these aggressions, she reproduces the words of a man who decided to abuse her: “I know you’re a feminist cunt and I hate feminists but I’ve always wanted to

fuck you I think you're hot as fuck he said I've never fucked a Hispanic before" (Harelly, 2022a). Such words display two of the axes of oppression: firstly, the aggressor believes that his own condition as a man allows him to touch the woman without permission, as he sees her as inferior from his misogynist and therefore sexist point of view. In addition, he emphasises that he hates feminists because he is conscious of the abuse he is perpetrating and that the victim knows how to identify it. The fact that he is openly outspoken about his awareness of this is yet another strategy to subjugate her to his power. The direct attack on feminism was also something that Chicanas had to experience, as discussed on previous pages. Secondly, the man shows what is known as colonial desire by manifesting his interest in the author because she is exotic in his eyes. Race fetishisation transforms the woman into an inert, collectible vessel whose only function is to receive patriarchal violence justified by the dominant system. In a later incident, an unknown man she meets in an elevator tells her she is beautiful and asks her if she is Italian. She replies that she is Mexican and the man, while laughing, tells her as he walks away that she does not look Mexican. In this case the 'compliment' is not to be desired for her race, but the opposite, it is implied that the compliment is to look European and not Mexican, which is a cause for jibe. In other words, the attacks again come from both sides, there is no safe place for her living between two cultures. In the original text, between the two parts of the anecdote, Harelly adds:

> In your head the elevator catches on fire / The newspapers would either say / "Lone wolf slightly blonde former swimmer causes / accidental fire" / or / "The Mexican daughter of a former convict causes / fire killing a blonde golden eyed man"

The imaginary newspaper headlines are an exaggeration but reflect the reality of racism from the US point of view: in the first one, where it is not assumed that she was

the cause of the fire, they refer to a 'former swimmer' because if she is treated as a white person she must be someone respectable who causes 'accidental' fires; in the second one, when it is specified that she is Mexican, a foreigner, she is nothing more than the 'daughter of a former convict' and the murderer of 'a blonde golden eyed man'. Moreover, the fire symbol is recurrent and represents all the rage and inner discomfort she contains, the destructive power she yearns to unleash against all that has harmed her. In relation to this, when Anzaldúa (p. 23) speaks of the Indian woman, the most repressed part of the Chicana identity, she uses fire in the same sense and explains that "She hid her feelings; she hid her truths; she concealed her fire; but she kept stoking the inner flame". In the third and last incident to be analysed in which she finds herself in the position of the foreigner, Harelly tells how she sneaked into the SFMoMA posing as a French person. Once inside, she recalls: "I walked in straight to the second floor the surrealist section looking for some Leonora Carrington and Remedios Varo but bumped into Dalí and Magritte"[14]. This prompted the following events:

> took out my lighter and set the whole room on fire while playing some Chavela Vargas in the background A man came running up to me Ma'am are you ok? I began to weep he stared at the freckles on my nose and said No worries ma'am I will save you My blonde wig got destroyed in the fire and the Peach Glow foundation began to melt and my dark tangled brown hair began to show along with the hints of burned french toast on my skin Ma'am I am going to need to see your ticket The Chavela Vargas gave me away which is exactly when the man stared at the brown in

[14] The selection of artists is very significant: Leonora Carrington, English by birth, became a Mexican citizen; her great friend and Spanish artist Remedios Varo did not become a citizen, but spent the rest of her life exiled in Mexico. Due to their absence, two male artists appear. The figure of Dalí emphasises the contrast by being an extremely controversial person, not only because of his awful relationship with women, but also because of his aversion to Mexico.

> my hands and pushed me into the fire so he could run away and save himself The next day newspaper headlines spoke of the mysterious beautiful blonde French lady who disappeared in a surrealist fire // But / no / one / spoke of me //

The fire symbol and the newspaper headline reappear, describing her as a 'mysterious beautiful blonde French woman' who disappeared in the fire. As a French, she is treated with delicacy: the sordid details of her death are not disclosed, but hidden in a romantic halo of mystery, also a man comes to her concerned and promises to save her; as a Mexican, when her dark hair and skin become visible, she is even asked for her museum ticket in the middle of the fire, while the same man pushes her into the fire to save himself. Finally, her existence is not even acknowledged in the newspaper, implying that this is how it happens in society.

Harelly often adopts the style of magical realism —that she also references regularly— so when narrating events she introduces utterly fantastical elements that blend with reality, mainly in situations that carry some type of trauma. Díez (2014) explains that numerous writings that have emerged in the border sphere resort to magical realism to capture a heterogeneous and hybrid reality of convergences and clashes. One of the most emblematic spaces in this sense is the border that divides two nations and the two main cultural areas of the American continent: the division at the Río Bravo. Moreover, she adds that magical realism and its manifestations signify the rootedness to a land, to a culture that lives on in the heart, that shows itself as a nurturing and protective mother, that protects those who do not abandon or forget it and that opposes the aseptic and incredulous dominant Anglo culture. That is what can be seen in Anzaldúa, for instance in the story of how she became a 'curandera', or healer, as Harelly also calls herself:

> Get up, Juan Dávila, get in the bed.

I lay in the bed and slept.
When I woke up I saw
squirming serpents on the floor
shiny serpents on the walls
serpents moving on the windows.
A small fear appeared and entered me.
I heard a big black snake say,
"We are your healing spirit guides."
The serpents slithered off the walls
I couldn't see them any more,
but I felt them all around me.
"What do I do now," I asked them.
"We will teach you," they said,
"but first you must gather the herbs."
(Anzaldúa, p. 178)

Anzaldúa speaks of encounters with serpents on more than one occasion, but that is no accident. Anzaldúa's serpent is not understood with the actual negative connotations derived from the Christian myth, instead she "invokes powerful serpent metaphors drawn from her Indo-Hispanic and Anglo ancestries to construct a representation of a mestiza consciousness. She consciously attempts to change her unconscious" (Aigner-Varoz, 2000, p. 49). Anzaldúa underwent a perpetual reconstruction as she had to radically change her reality to match who she really was. For example, she grew up listening to her mother telling her things such as: "*No vayas al escusado en lo oscuro*. Don't go to the outhouse at night, Prieta, my mother would say. *No se te vaya a meter algo por allá*. A snake will crawl into your *nalgas*, make you pregnant." (Anzaldúa, p. 25). In this case the allusion to the snake clearly represents evil and masculinity, as it is the popular belief. Aigner-Varoz (2000, p. 52) elaborates:

> Anzaldúa's references to "the mark of the Beast" and to "Serpent" images serve to transform allusions to male constructs representing evil and knowledge in Judeo-Christian mythology. Dissatisfied with and disempowered by these representations, Anzaldúa reappropriates and reinscribes the beast and serpent and their representations within psychologist Carl Jung's "Shadow" figure: Anzaldúa's "Shadow-beast" becomes a concept representing forbidden inner knowledge recognized by the "supra-human," godlike parts of ourselves (Borderlands 16, 20, 37, 42, 44). She alleges that its forbidden status is a societal encumbrance that serves to limit human potential.

The reinterpretation of the serpent as the creature representing the consciousness of the new mestiza appears mainly because of Coatlicue —and other aspects of her such as Coatlalopeuh, Tlazolteotl, Cihuacoatl and Tonantsi— who is the Aztec creator and therefore sexual goddess. ‘Coatl’ is the Nahuatl word for serpent, so in this case it is the woman and not the man who is closely linked to this animal spirit in a positive sense. As Messinger (1995) summarises, everything changed with the arrival of the Spanish Empire, which combined images such as Eve and Mary from the Judeo-Christian heritage and Medea from the Greco-Roman tradition with mother figures from the Mexica-Aztec world to form hybrid figures such as La Malinche, the Virgin of Guadalupe, and La Llorona. Those exact three hybrid figures are what Anzaldúa speaks of when she says that Chicana people have three mothers, three archetypes into which women are classified in her culture. Yet, as Cisneros (1996) points out, there are only two possible outcomes: motherhood (and therefore marriage) or ‘putahood’. The virgin/whore dichotomy serves as a mechanism that distinguishes obedient women from women who are defiant and disruptive to the patriarchy, and in the face of this fact Chicana women needed to reappropriate said figures and give them back their original power.

First, the ‘bad mothers’: La Llorona, the one who wanders in despair crying over the loss of her children, similar to Medea. Anzaldúa (p. 33) explains that “Wailing is the Indian, Mexican and Chicana woman’s feeble protest when she has no other recourse.” Usually, the imagery of tears points to weak individuals, and in the case of women this causes them to be seen as objects to be protected, thereby subservient to man. Harelly’s intention in this regard is explicit; as the very title of her latest published book indicates, she seeks to recover and enhance the tears that have not been cried, as it is a way of connecting with the past and healing the wounds that have been buried. She says that “Hay tanto peso tanta agua from all the tears we never cried so we could save our families” (Harelly, 2022b) so it is logical for her to identify with the figure of La Llorona. Then there is La Malinche (or Chingada), she is the worst of all, the quintessential symbol of misogyny, she was blended with the Christian figure of Eve. The extreme hatred of this historical figure, the ‘traduttore traditore’[15] who supported the Spanish colonisers, has left its mark on the language and ‘chingada’ is one of the most common insults used by Mexicans, while ‘malinchista’, as already explained, was a term used by Chicano men to brand feminists within their movement as traitors as well. In view of this, it is pertinent to rescue the quote by Anzaldúa (p. 54): “In my culture they are all words that are derogatory if applied to women— I’ve never heard them applied to men.” They turned the raped woman, the ‘sexed’ one, she who was involuntarily trapped between two worlds, into the biggest target of hate. The only way to save her is through the sorority and empathy that women like Harelly express by saying that she herself is La Malinche as well as Eva, or Anzaldúa (p. 17) saying: “*Sí, soy hija de la Chingada*. I’ve always been

[15] Italian expression which translates as ‘traitor translator’ due to the difficulties faced by the translator when trying to be as faithful as possible to the original source. In the case of La Malinche this concept reaches its maximum expression because of her historical importance as interpreter for Hernán Cortés.

her daughter." Ultimately, as Messinger (1995) states, the negative characterisation of the Malinche-Eva-Medea-Llorona-Chingada in the popular reading has led to the Indian woman being associated with treachery, perfidy, and subalternity, thus not deserving dignity. This agglutination of images of the inferior Indian has more to do with the domination of European discourse and hegemonic power than with the inherent indigenous nature.

Finally, there is the 'good' mother, the Virgin of Guadalupe. Despite the appearance of this figure as a result of subjugation, Anzaldúa claims that 'Guadalupe' assimilated and bore the burden of the conquest and became a symbol of hope and resistance. Her figure is central to Chicana/Mexican culture as she constitutes a rebellion against the oppressor. For a further examination of this matter, it will be analysed a poem[16] Harelly shared on her social media dedicated to the Virgin of Guadalupe:

> Dear Virgencita
> My precious Morenita
> You who before the pain were
> our mother Tonantzin
> […]
> That it probably hurts you to see how
> our country treats women
> dark skin black eyes
> us
> That maybe in your time they didn't let you
> be free

[16] The original version of this poem is composed in Spanish. Given its relevance, as it deals directly with the present theme and all the derivations worthy of comment for this thesis, a translation of some fragments is provided on an exceptional basis.

And that you miss your life

before the conquest

and now you exist frozen on a pedestal

[…]

And even though now men use you

to punish women

and want us pure and perfect

I know you didn't want that.

[…]

And take care of every woman in my wounded Mexico

so that they can come back home

In this poem Harelly speaks directly to the Virgin of Guadalupe almost as if it were a prayer, since at the end there is a petition. In the first four lines she identifies her by three names: Virgencita, Morenita and Tonantzin. The first two terms denote affection and closeness and are widely used by her devotees, thus indicating absolute adoration, placing her at the opposite extreme to La Llorona and La Malinche. In addition, the fact that she is called 'Morenita' because of her skin colour contains a very important symbolic value. Said characteristic inherited from the Indian side, being a motivation for the white oppressor to justify domination, reinforces the racial identification of her people with her, making her one of them as well as one of the 'others', somehow a mediator.

> Modern American culture and media construct white bodies as pure and good and brown bodies as inheretly perverse or corrupt. As Ferré points out, Guadalupe is the only Catholic virgin saint who is not white (80). As a result, she has taken on significant cultural meaning in both Mexican and Chicana/o cultures; however, part of this meaning continues to rest on the direct parallel of her purity and holiness to that of the white Virgin Mary. (Mendoza, 2013, p. 20)

As Mendoza comments in this quote, although the Virgin of Guadalupe may have been able to retain characteristics that relate her to her people, the Christian legacy is still visible. She is still a virgin, ironically the archetype of the perfect mother, because "they desexed Guadalupe, taking Coatlalopeuh, the serpent/sexuality, out of her." (Anzaldúa, p. 27). Harelly addresses "Coatlicue's transformation into Guadalupe" (2022a) by saying that she used to be Tonantzin (which means 'Our Holy Mother') and that she may miss her life before the conquest, because afterwards she was exploited and became an instrument of oppression to keep women pure and perfect in the eyes of men, both Chicano/Mexican and Anglo. According to Anzaldúa, the latter, through strategies of domination such as the one described above, are responsible for a dynamic in which:

> The loss of a sense of dignity and respect in the macho breeds a false machismo which leads him to put down women and even to brutalize them. Coexisting with his sexist behaviour is a love for the mother which takes precedence over that of all others. Devoted son, macho pig. (Anzaldúa, p. 83)

For such a system it is convenient that the virgin is 'frozen on a pedestal': she is worshipped because she is the mother of all, she is quiet and suffers for them. If the rest of the women do not resemble her, they are useless. Despite everything, both Anzaldúa and Harelly are aware that "she didn't want that" because her original values were different. By attending to the construction of her figure and recognising her importance, both authors are able to reconstruct the Virgin of Guadalupe in order to give her a renewed and improved position in their feminist architecture.

All these male-created archetypes have harmed millions of women from the moment of their conception and account for a large part of the colonial wound. The re-examination of history and the configurations that have resulted in certain behaviours,

carried out by Chicana feminists such as Anzaldúa, has meant that nowadays this can be extrapolated and consequences can be found in the most personal aspects of life, as will be seen in Harelly.

In this final aspect is where the most significant generational gap between both authors is to be found. While Anzaldúa recognizes the suffering and significance of the maternal figures in her life, especially her grandmother 'Mamagrande Ramona', and the profound impact of the colonial wound, she struggles to establish a tangible connection between them. On the other hand, one of the primary themes explored in Harelly's poetry is the complex relationship between her, her mother, and her grandmother. In her poem "Pedestal" (2022) Harelly declares:

> The biggest heartbreak
> is when our mother breaks our heart
> En nuestra cultura ponemos
> a nuestra madre en un pedestal
> Tenemos a la Virgen de Guadalupe
> y creemos que amor de mama
> es amor incondicional
> But what happens when abuelita's heart
> is broken so she breaks your mother's
> And your mother breaks yours?

The mention of the pedestal, which applies not only to the Virgin of Guadalupe but to all mothers, serves as the first indication of how the historical past has influenced the relationships between mothers and daughters. It is crucial to refocus on the previously discussed history of violence along the border and in Mexico as a whole, including the broader context of Latin America with its shared colonial past. Throughout these events,

women have consistently borne the heaviest burdens. Consequently, such experiences have inevitably transcended from one generation to the next, giving rise to intergenerational trauma[17]. Harelly clearly depicts this mother-daughter dynamic in the following excerpt from "Ser tu hija" (2022): "From my mother I got her eyes / I see myself through them / Cuando me veo en el espejo me castigo con sus ojos / The way she loves me is the way my grandmother tried to love her". When reviewing the repercussion of the mirror image over generations, Ciplijauskaité (1989) explains that according to psychoanalysts, the image of the mother is the first mirror in which the newborn looks, even unconsciously. In its pre-oedipal phase, the other becomes equal to the 'I'. It is only when it becomes aware of the differentiation that it begins to see itself as other. The mirror, which was identification in the first case, is now used for awareness. As the principle of continuity is predominant for women, when she looks at herself in the mirror, she sees the continuity of her role, not herself as a unique individual. In the poem "Madres e hijas" (2022) Harelly narrates an unreal situation in which she visits her mother and grandmother when they were children and tells of her mother: "You felt your mother far away / just how I sometimes I feel you", and of her grandmother that "She told her pillow her / mother was distant". The chain has been running for countless generations, but she does not blame them because "No one teaches how to be / a mother to those / who don't learn how to / break cycles" (Harelly, "Madres e hijas", 2022). To break such cycles Harelly must gain power over the relationship and realise the causes of pain of her predecessors. Once that is done, she encourages the healing of the inner child. On her website she presents her poetry as her tool "to heal by revisiting old wounds and blocked

[17] While this phenomenon is not limited to mother-daughter relationships, it remains pertinent to only explore such bonds in this chapter.

memories in honour of her inner child". This involves a reconciliation of the woman with herself, and even with her maternal figures, depending on the case.

In the end, both Anzaldúa and Harelly seek to break this destructive cycle. As mentioned above, Anzaldúa never dealt directly with the concept of intergenerational trauma, but her work definitely helped to uncover the wounds that may have triggered it. Anzaldúa (p. 202), who dedicated these words to her sister: "Hard times like fodder we carry / with curved backs we walk", was aware that she had to free herself from the great weight that tormented her and so many other women:

> To this day I'm not sure where I found the strength to leave the source, the mother, disengage from my family, *mi tierra, mi gente*, and all that picture stood for. 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. (Anzaldúa, p. 16)

Harelly (2022b) also identifies with the fact of abandoning everything she knows and claims: "yo te entiendo y te amo / pero no quiero ser como tú / So I heal / as hard as I can / so my future children / whether through me or my / community / can sleep free of ghosts / under their beds". She expresses how she does not want to repeat the mistakes of her mother or grandmother, and for this she must abandon their view of the world. The ghosts under the bed are the wounds of the past that Harelly wants her children not to inherit. In comparison to Anzaldúa, she takes it a step further and aims to build through her poetry a community in which women can heal "All the generational / weight we carry / All the curses we break" due to "All the power we hold" (Harelly, "Mujer", 2023).

In another world

My grandma my mom me

my daughter and the next

are a tree

And we are happy

We are one

Without ancestral

weight or pain

In another world

In this one I write poetry

(Harelly, “Generaciones”, 2023)

4-. CONCLUSION

The conclusions that bring the present dissertation to a close are presented next. In this section, the initial hypothesis stated in the title of this work is confirmed or discarded: that Vianney Harelly represents the new mestiza of the 21st century. If the hypothesis turns out to be true, it will prove that the concept born at the peak of the Chicana movement endures over time and adapts to it. This means that the hybrid identities of the US-Mexico border have not yet been erased by the power of the hegemonic culture and continue to claim their own space through their own literary production, a vital element in the survival of any culture.

First, the conclusions made from each of the four chapters. In the language chapter, it stands out that both authors recognise Spanglish as the language in which they feel most comfortable, which is a common aspect of the Chicana community. Moreover, all types of code-switching examples can be found in the work of both authors. The major difference appears in the hierarchy established between Spanish and English. While Anzaldúa chooses English as the formal language in her work, Harelly presents a more balanced combination of the two languages when writing poetry. In fact, it is much more frequent to find her poems entirely in Spanish rather than in English. This is the opposite of Anzaldúa's tendency, who nevertheless uses the mestizo language as a form of resistance essentially against the Anglo system. Harelly's preference for Spanish is influenced by her audience and the community she intends to build. As explained in the section on identity, both Anzaldúa and Harelly identify more with the Mexican side; nonetheless, the main distinction resides in the fact that Harelly prefers to opt for a broader label: Latina. This is why, by identifying herself as Latina and trying to assemble a community that identifies with her same kinds of problems and feelings, she appeals to

her audience with a more accessible work in which self-translation into Spanish predominates.

Both writers take the struggle of having been born and raised on the border between Mexico and the United States as a starting point for the establishment of their identities, although Harelly expands it to the whole of Latin America. This considerable shift in attitude seems to fit in with Harelly's current historical moment, as the globalising tendency is on the increase. As a result, she is especially mindful of the strategies adopted by the privileged, such as 'cultural appropriation', something which Anzaldúa had already suggested in the past.

By using writing as a means of protest and exposure of oppression, each of them can be found to criticise openly the two cultures to which they belong. Anzaldúa focuses on depicting through the narration of historical events the violence exercised by the Spanish Empire and later by the United States towards the Mexican people and their ancestors. Harelly, who also takes all this history into account, decides to aim directly at the Mexican side, exposing the cultural and political elements that wound her people. She emphasises the wall built on the border, much bigger than the chain link fences that Anzaldúa talked about in *Borderlands / La Frontera*.

History is also very important when evaluating the role of Mexican and/or Chicana women. Women in colonised territories were doubly colonised: by the man of their race and by the invader. This led to the production of a Mexican imaginary in which women were categorised into one of the two extremes of the virgin/whore dichotomy. After carrying out a reconstruction of the most important maternal archetypes in Mexican culture, Anzaldúa expressed that she never felt completely identified with any of them. In contrast, Harelly also manages to restore the dignity taken away from these figures by saying that she is every one of them. Although from different points of view, both authors

agree that no woman can be confined to a single category just because of the male gaze, and for this they use the mechanisms granted by their own feminist architectures. Besides, Harelly takes it a step further and does not only deal with the historical level, but also merges it with the personal one. This results in a topic that Anzaldúa never developed, despite having the ideas separately. It deals with how mother-daughter relationships carry the weight of intergenerational trauma born centuries ago due to the colonial past. It is on this last point that the greatest generational gap between the two authors can be seen, as it was an issue that was not as developed in Anzaldúa's time as it is today.

As has been demonstrated in the different conclusions extracted from each chapter, Vianney Harelly clearly follows the steps of Anzaldúa's new mestiza. It is in the small differences where the necessary signs to affirm the initial hypothesis can be found; therefore, Harelly does represent a reinterpretation of the term 'new mestiza' in the 21st century, giving rise to a new 'new mestiza'. It cannot be overlooked that it is highly plausible that Harelly herself had previously been influenced by Anzaldúa's work, as is reflected in the poem "I am Vianney", which serves as the backbone of the analysis. The fight of the Chicana —and now also Latina— woman preserves the same set of values, as reflected in the contemporary author. The new 'new mestiza' continues to be committed to her language, fiercely criticises the oppressive systems that surround her, suffers while accepting and learning to navigate the physical and spiritual borderlands, and above all, is aware that her reality of womanhood has caused her so many ills not by her own fault, but by the misogyny sustained by the patriarchy.

To conclude, it is worth pointing out some possible lines of future research in relation to what has been exposed here. One of them is the investigation of authors whose work is predominantly in online format and how it is best to approach their study. The advantages and disadvantages that this entails, such as that content is more accessible and

gives more freedom to the creator, but also that it is more difficult to preserve (e.g., when posts are down due to problems with the social media platform) or to access them when there are formats that are automatically deleted after a certain time (e.g., stories). Another line is that, as there is no research on Vianney Harelly, who produces large volumes of content, it will probably be necessary in the future to continue with the study of her work, both that which she will publish later and that which is written only in Spanish —which this work did not allow as it is a requirement for the attainment of a degree on English language and literature—. The content of her work also allows for other comparative analyses, for example with the authors Sandra Cisneros or Virginia Woolf, with whom she agrees on the importance of the need for women to have their own space to be able to develop their creativity in freedom on their own terms. Lastly, it also needs to be highlighted that Gloria Anzaldúa's work, which has been deeply analysed for years, has remained sufficiently relevant and can be the subject of further research. Even the very figure of the new mestiza can still be used as a basis for queer studies. The intersectionality and the ideas that it embodies are consistent with sexual and gender identities that do not subscribe to normativity. Together with a linguistic-literary analysis, as seen in Harelly's way of marking gender in Spanish, this is undoubtedly a viable future line of investigation.

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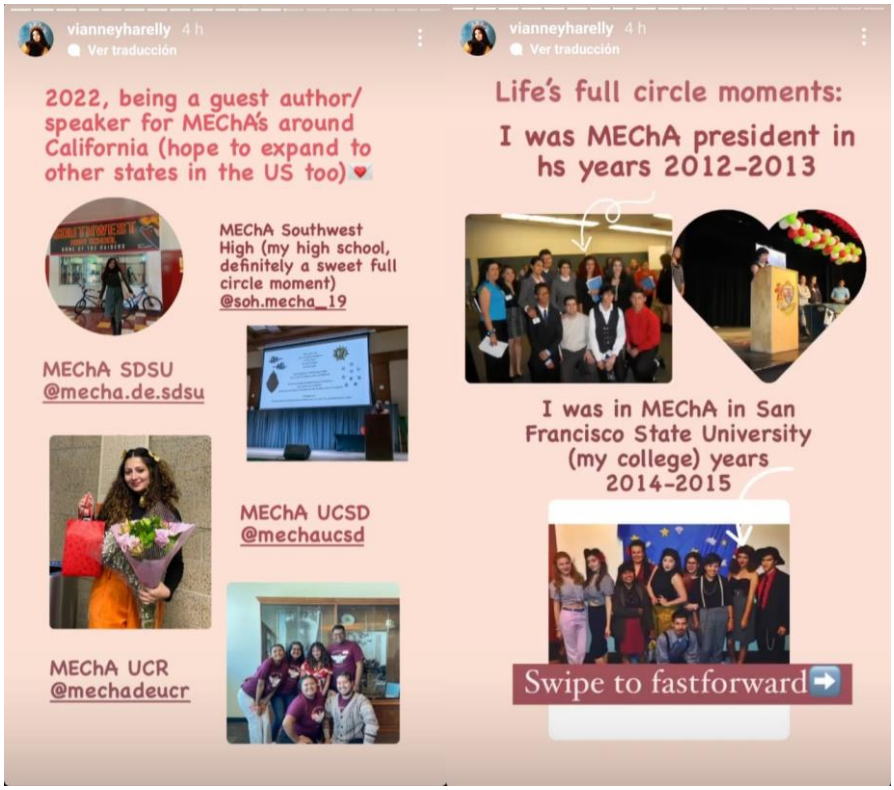
Annexes

Annex 1



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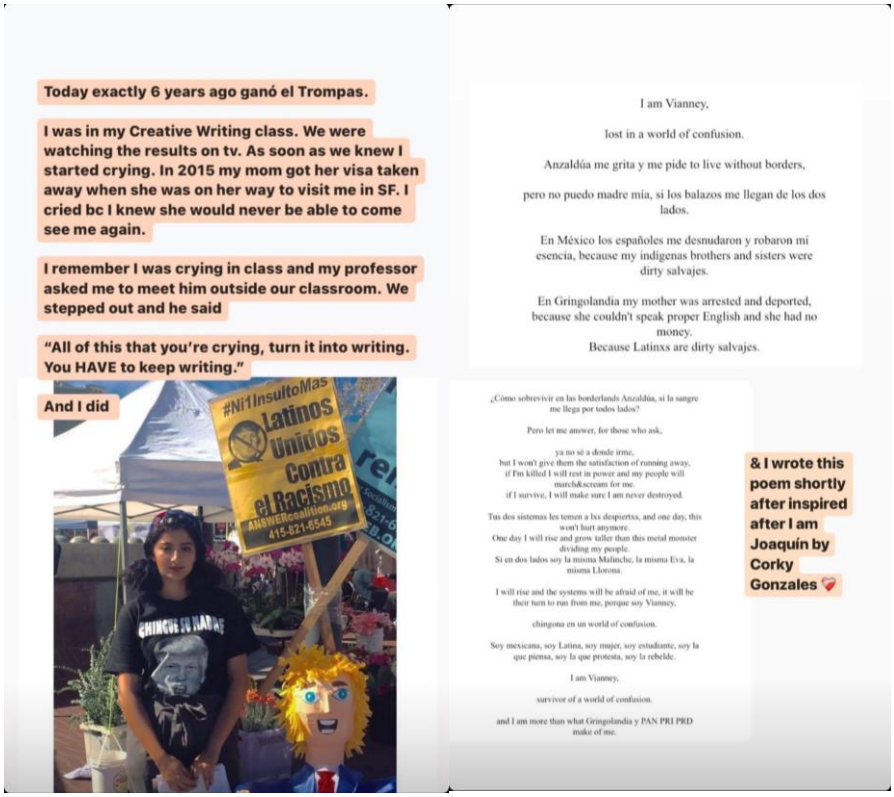

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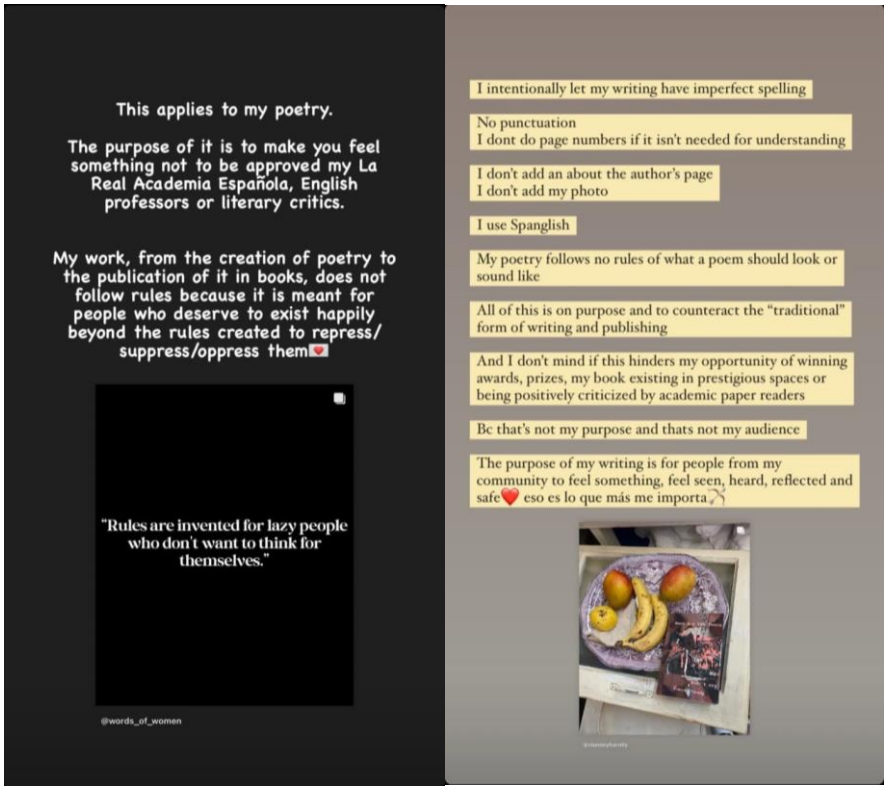
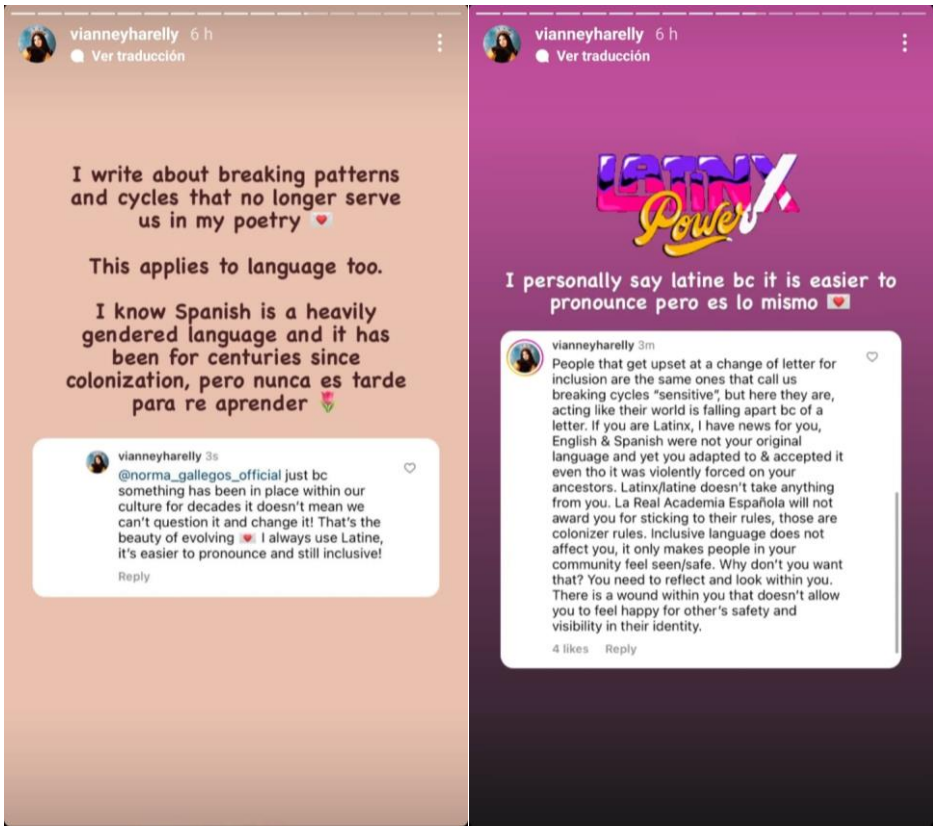
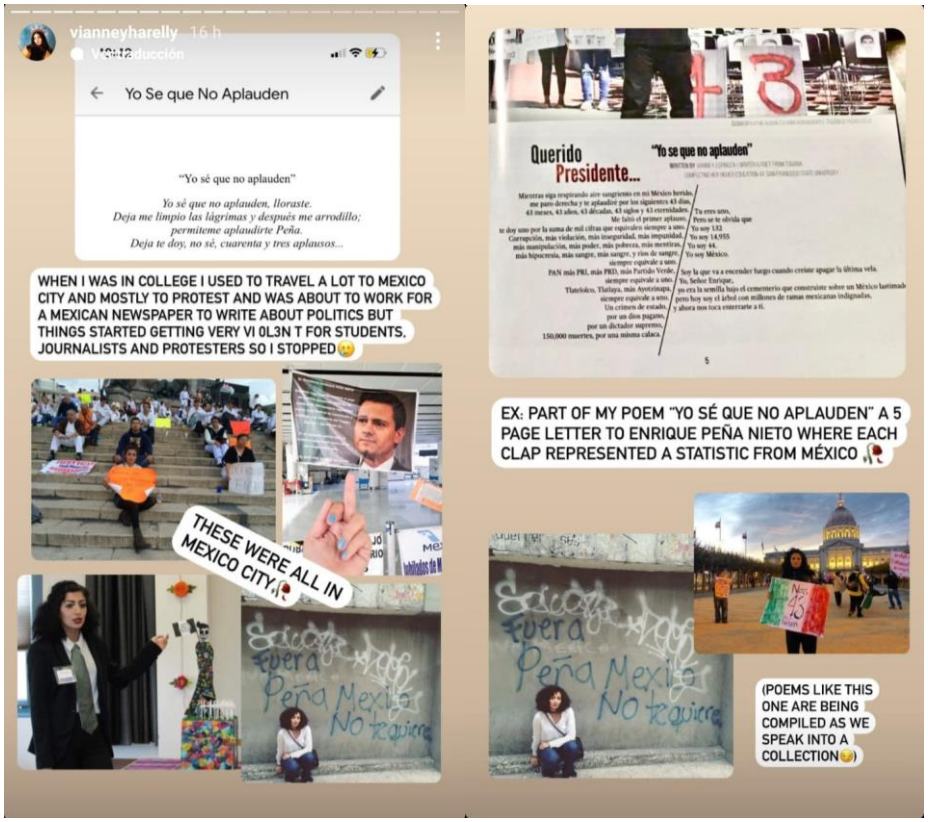


Annex 4



Annex 5



Annex 6