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## “Me voy pal Norte”

La configuración del sujeto migrante indocumentado en ocho novelas hispanoamericanas actuales (1992-2009)

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## Abstract

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This study explores the representation of the undocumented migrant in the contemporary Latin American novel. Clandestine crossings have long been a theme in Mexican and Chicano literature, often narrated from a highly nationalistic working-class stance, but it is here argued that recent literary production on this problematic is significantly more heterogeneous.

The aim of the present work is to examine, compare and systematize the configuration of the migrant subject in a corpus of eight novels published in the 1990s and the 2000s, which focus on the current phenomenon of unauthorized Latin American migration to the United States. The study's main concern is to scrutinize how this subject is depicted and how the different elements that comprise the affiliated identity formation suffer from transformation as the rendered characters move from one cultural setting to another. In order to achieve this, a second aim in effect becomes to inductively establish a methodology for the narrative study of the shaping of the migrant subject in and by *movement* as such.

Drawing on the decentering of the human subject as well as positional, relational and intersectional approaches to identity in recent postcolonial and feminist theory, a model is elaborated for the study of the geographic figurations of identity and subjectivity in the novels according to four analytic stages of the process of migration: the *anticipatory* moment in the South; the *crossings* of material and metaphorical borders; the intercultural *contact* with the North; and the *contrast* between the experiences of migration and the mnemonic processes linked by close bonds to the homeland.

The ensuing analyses demonstrate that there is not *one* migrant subject represented in the texts, but a plurality of different subjects that acquire coherence and historical continuity by being inserted into the metanarrative of the Promised Land. Situated in a dialogic exchange between continuity and change, three main directions crystallize among the novels: the tendency of a return to roots, the tendency of a rupture with the past, and the exaltation of hybridity. The stress of the material aspect of the border and the subjective accounts of the human consequences of the undocumented condition as an extended liminal position are identified as the main constituents of this literature. A tension between pro-immigrant sympathies and a ludic sensibility toward stereotyped representations of Hispanics and Anglo Americans is also displayed.

**Keywords:** Latin American literature, undocumented migration, borders, migrant subject, identity, difference, intercultural contact, hybridity, intersectionality, the myth of the Promised Land, rites of territorial passage.