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# Psychological Borderlands in Memoirs of Reyna Grande and Esmeralda Santiago

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## Abstract

Transnational Latina narratives, including memoirs written by Reyna Grande and Esmeralda Santiago, focus on the intersections of race, gender and migrations and explore the social and cultural contexts between the authors' national heritage and United States, the country they immigrated to in their youth. By focusing on two memoirs *The Distance Between Us* and *When I Was Puerto Rican* written by two Latina authors, Reyna Grande and Esmeralda Santiago, this paper will try to further explore the notion of psychological borderlands and the way it affects authors' identities and their growing up in United States. Gloria Anzaldua wrote that borders are not only physical but also psychological spaces, ever present in the minds of im/migrants. Anzaldua also mentioned that "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" - both Grande and Santiago, the authors of the two memoirs to be explored in this paper, often describe themselves as aliens and feel out of place in the United States, while constantly trying to fit in and survive. This paper, by closely examining the memoirs of two contemporary Latina authors, Reyna Grande and Esmeralda Santiago, will try to shed new light on the dialogue between these two specific works and the issue of psychological borderlands both authors are exploring in their memoirs. In addition, this paper will also focus on the rarely acknowledged issue of children immigrants and their experiences and both *The Distance Between Us* and *When I Was Puerto Rican* provide outstanding examples of works focusing on diverse immigrant experiences of children, published in the last two decades.

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