

## ABSTRACT

### “THINGS LEFT UNSAID”: THE FIGURE OF LA MALINCHE IN SANDRA CISNEROS’S CARAMELO

For over four hundred years, La Malinche, in México, has been considered a negative figure, with the fall of the Aztec Empire as her responsibility. Her presence as the betrayer of a nation has not subsided, even though there are many who think otherwise. One such group was Chicanas, also known as Mexican American women. They have come to her defense, arguing that her role in the conquest had nothing to do with betraying a country but rather was a method of survival. Chicanas themselves have had to survive within two countries that have denied them entry, and if they do enter into either realm, they are considered betrayers to those who believe their roles have already been established.

This thesis focuses on the La Malinche figure used in Sandra Cisneros’s Caramelo. Cisneros, a Chicana writer, draws on the figure of La Malinche showing how she has emboldened Chicanas to translate beyond cultures (between the United States and México), defend their sex and sexuality, and lastly, defy patriarchal constructs.

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May 2009