

**Latino Migration to Metropolitan Centers: A Prophecy Fulfilled**  
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Latino emigration is much in the news today, and there is a substantial body of literature that chronicles the experience of uprooting oneself from the native land, culture, and language and subsequently entering a world that is foreign in the fullest sense of the word. Virtually all the novels of Latino emigration chronicle attempts to acculturate and assimilate in major urban centers in the United States. As two examples, *Soñando en cubano* is narrated from Brooklyn, New York; *La casa en la calle Mango* is set in Chicago. Although the former records much action in Cuba through narrations of the past, the present day is defined in New York City and, eventually, in a brief return to “la perla del occidente.” In *La calle Mango*, all narration is set in the streets of Chicago and the frustrating attempts of Latinos to assimilate into the dominant culture.

This study focuses on the role of the city as cultural and physical entity in challenging and limiting the acculturation of migrants, referencing studies on spatial as well as cultural assimilation. There is a decided emphasis on the expectations of the dominant U.S. social class toward the Latino emigrant and how these presumptions contrast with the reality portrayed in the novels selected and the sociological studies cited. The reality hidden from the majority consciousness is one of violence, loss, and deep sorrow, as will be seen in the two novels referenced. Even in what has been regarded as an optimistic ending in *La calle Mango*, a close reading reveals that there is no rising in social status, no ascension to a better life; that ideal house [life] that has been dreamed is still an aspiration. This presentation consequently moves naturally into an examination of the role of the dream, demonstrating that the dreaming described in *Soñando* is an alternative way of dealing with reality, an escape from the illusions and myths that color the portrait of emigration portrayed and believed by the host country.

The study then turns to the many references in the two novels to men, patriarchy, politics, countries, and wars to discover that the original impulses setting in motion the flow of immigrants are imperialism and colonialism. We have, played out in the narratives of immigration, what Edward Said predicted about the “metropolitan center.” They will become the homing beacons for the millions they have displaced and made refugees. These postcolonial masses yearning to speak free will establish themselves as countervoices to the narratives of empire and their stories will emanate from the very centers that, decades (even centuries) before, sent troops and money forth to pressure compliance and subjugation.

“Today writers and scholars from the formerly colonized world have imposed their diverse histories on, have mapped their local geographies in, the great canonical texts of the European [and U.S.] metropolitan centers. And from these overlapping yet discrepant interactions, the new readings and knowledges are beginning to appear” (Said, *Culture and Imperialism* 51). One of these “diverse, discrepant histories” is the narrative of a false construct: the assimilation of Latinos into the dominant U.S. culture. The two “new readings” discussed lay the lie to the dominant myth and strengthen the voices proclaiming their alternate reality in the metropolitan centers of this country.