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Mapping the New Latinx Identity: How Native Beliefs and Magic Realism in Latinx Literature and Culture Extrapolate the Need to Develop One's Identity Through the Retention of Native Origins

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MAPPING THE NEW LATINX IDENTITY

How Native Beliefs and Magic Realism in Latinx Literature and Culture Extrapolate the Need to Develop One's Identity Through the Retention of Native Origins



ABSTRACT

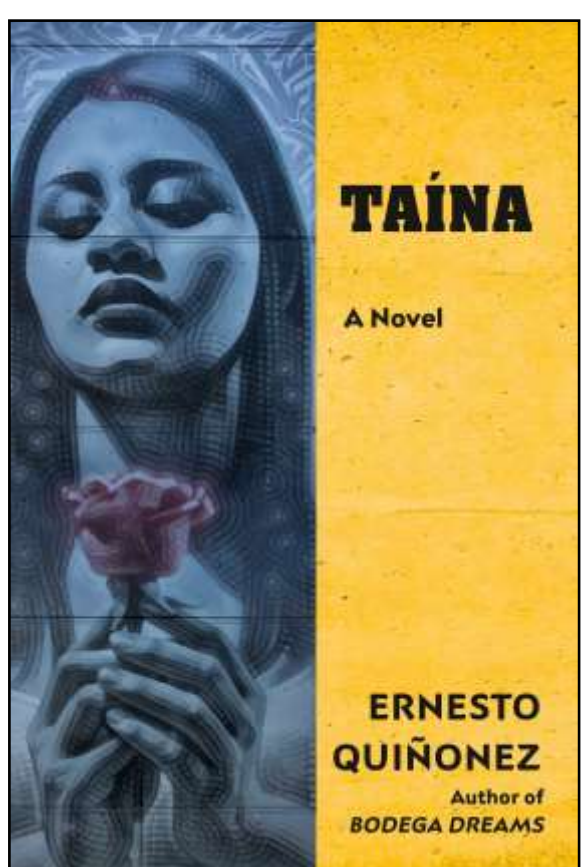
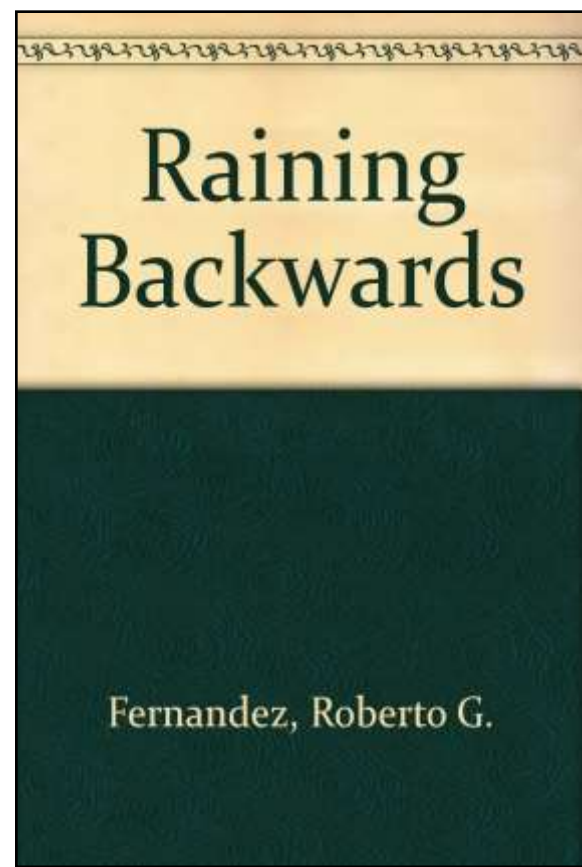
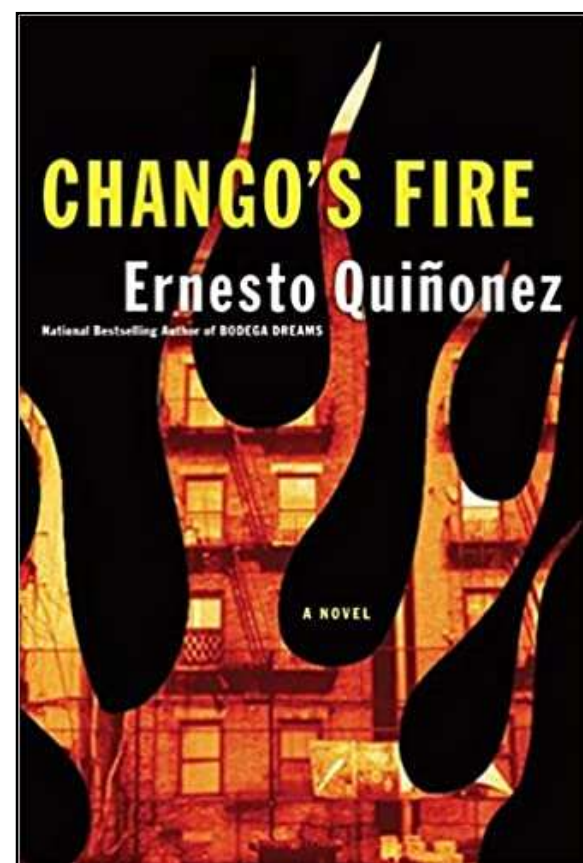
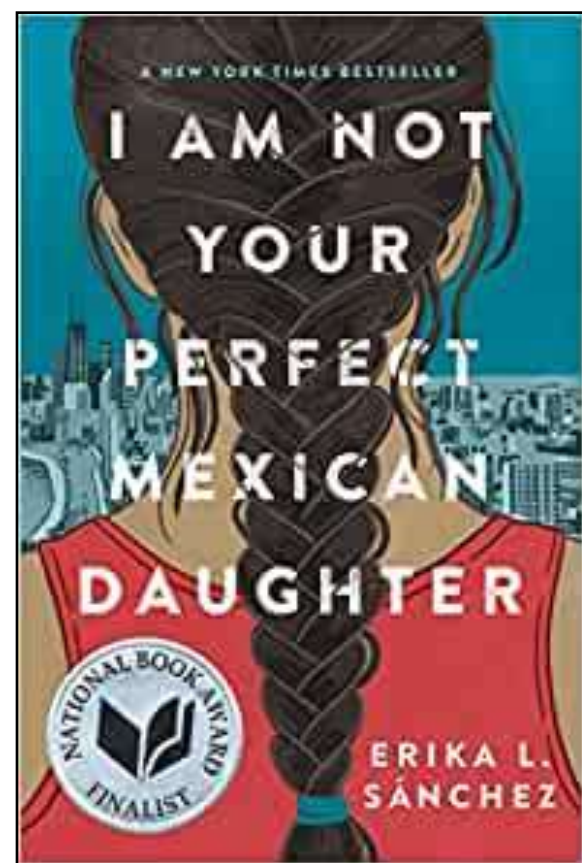
The disparity between the yearning to belong to a society and the inability to find acceptance within it plagues Latinx immigrants as they struggle to establish a balance between their culture of origin and the need for assimilation in the United States. A partial formation of identity in both spaces leaves Latinx immigrants torn between assimilation or isolation, creating internal conflict as they strive to locate a space to belong.

Using the theme of folk religion under the scope of magic realism as the canvas, Latinx authors, such as Ernesto Quiñónez in *Changó's Fire* and *Taina*, Érika Sánchez in *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*, Sandra Cisneros in *The House on Mango Street*, and Roberto Fernández in "Raining Backwards", paint a vivid picture of the necessity to maintain familiarity with national and religious origins during assimilation.

This analysis seeks to establish the need that Latinx immigrants have to create a new space where both assimilation into the new culture and conservation of the old can coexist to develop an amalgamated identity.

FOLK RELIGION

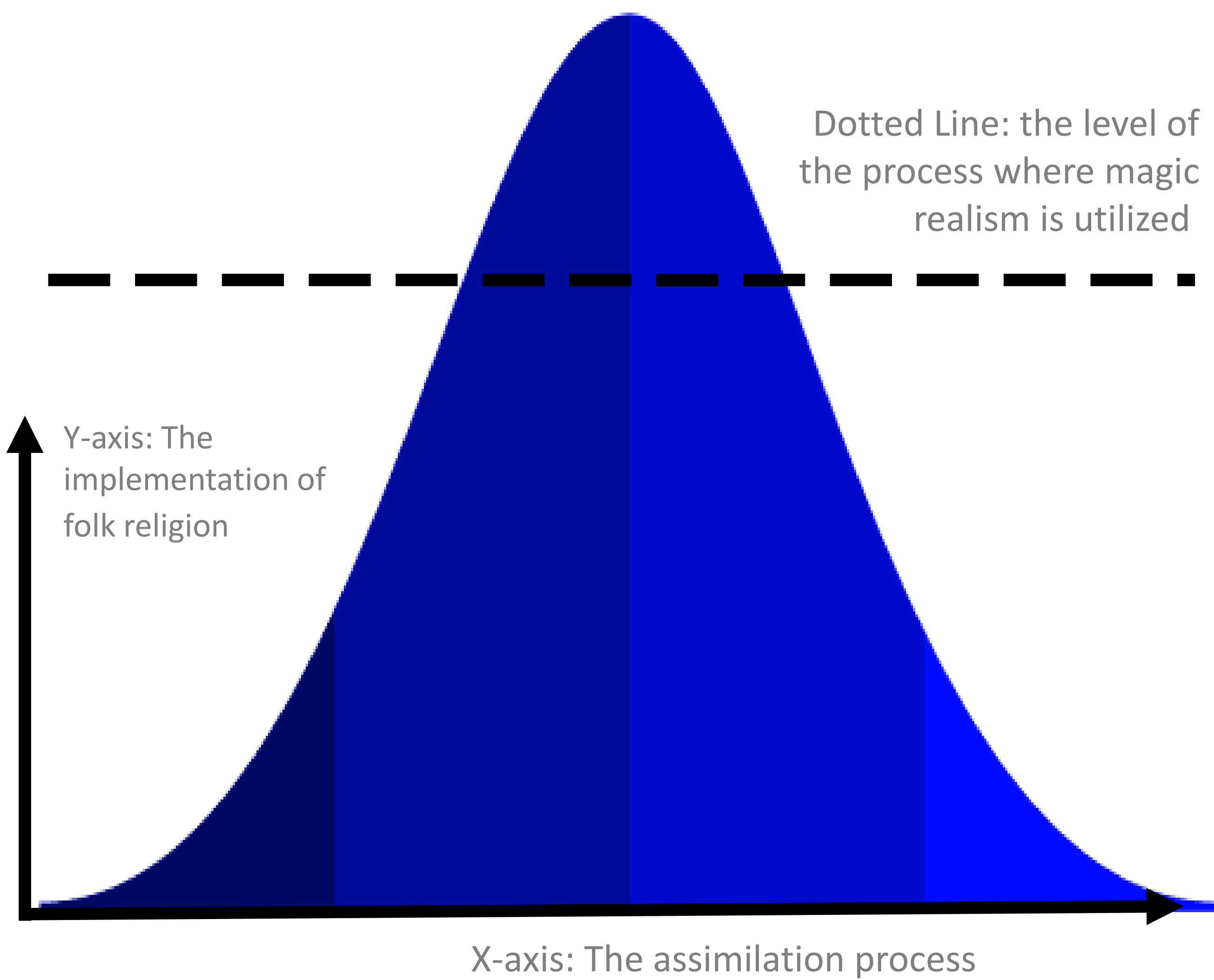
the mixture of an official 'high' religion (Catholicism) with 'native' or 'primitive' religion, in this case either African primitivism or indigenous Indian religion



MAGIC REALISM

the portrayal of magical or supernatural events in a dead-pan style as if they were real

Figure 2: The relationship between assimilation and folk religion and the role of magic realism



CONCLUSION

Native beliefs play a key role in latinx immigrant characters' identity development in these latinx literary works. They represent the journey back to roots of origin to find the strength to survive assimilation in the United States. Without assimilating sufficiently, immigrants find themselves in a place where they cannot keep going, but assimilating too much leads to forgetting the past and isolation from their families. To complete this

balance, it is imperative to find and keep reminders of the past. The method that these latinx authors utilized to emphasize this argument is through folk religion. This strong emphasis becomes the key using the literary device magic realism to demonstrate, in a hyperbolic way, the importance of native beliefs. Each main character ends the story with hope that they can be successful in their journey toward assimilation. And each of them receives that hope and power in remembering.

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Figure 3: *Praying* – A painting done by Chicana Isabel Martínez portraying the battle she experienced in assimilation and the role of her native beliefs in the process

