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# The Impact of Migration in Reyna Grande's Across a Hundred Mountains

AnjuFrank

Ph.D Research Scholar (Full- time)RegNo: 18113164012032

Department of English & Centre for Research Scott Christian

College (Autonomous), Nagercoil-629001

Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abishekapatti, Tirunelveli – 627 012.TamilNadu, India

## Abstract

In her work Across the Hundred Mountains, Mexican author Reyna Grande explores the ramifications of migration on Mexican society. The story revolves around the hardships that the protagonist's family has had to endure after her father left Mexico for the United States. The situation of a family's lone male member also lends credence to a long-held fear of rejection. The struggles of the indigenous Mexicans in Guerrero, Mexico, are shown in Grande's novels. As a result of Mexico's deteriorating economic situation, the novel's indigenous Mexican characters flee to the United States in search of a better life. When the operation fails, the family left behind in Mexico is viewed as an abandoned family by society. In her story, Grande explores the plight of Mexican women who live in their homeland and are oppressed by powerful males. There is an attempt in this work to highlight the bad practices that occur in Mexican society, which reveals the sufferings of abandonment because male family members migrate. As a result, Grande exemplifies the novel's central theme of a fractured Mexican family perpetuated through a cycle of violence and torture.

**Keywords:** Neglect, abuse and poverty are just some of the hardships migrants face.

Even Nevertheless, it can be claimed that the three major forces - religious persecution, political oppression, and economic hardship – are the primary reasons for the mass migration."

- John F. Kennedy.

Religious, political, and economic factors all have a role in determining how people migrate. People who fall within these groups, on the other hand, are more likely to move around in order to improve their situation. Economic instability is the most common reason for migration, although there are many other reasons for people to leave their homes. "The economic aspect has been more complex than religious and political factors," writes critic Kennedy. As far back as the beginning, some people have migrated to the United States in search of wealth, some in a desperate bid to escape poverty, and yet others because they were transported and sold and had no other option. " (7). Because of this, economic hardship is still a major driver of migration, even though cultural and environmental variables are still important, even if they are less common. Economic persecution is a major element in migration, according to D.B. Grigg (3), and as a result of this, many Mexicans decide to flee their homes and embark on life-altering journeys that are fraught with unimaginable danger, uncertainty, and misery. Because of the lack of cultivable land in hilly or mountainous locations, these people move to more fruitful areas. There is, however, a decrease in the amount of land available due to an increase in population. This

makes it difficult for farmers to feed their families, and as a result, family members often advise their relatives to leave the countryside in order to find work and a better quality of life in metropolitan areas. When people migrate, they do so because of two factors: the "push" force and "pull" component. The 'push' of increasing poverty in the country side could have been as powerful as the 'pull' of high pay in the town, according to Ravenstain (14). Migration is not taken lightly because it is always the most emotional and thought-provoking event for the people involved. A person's migration is influenced by both the "push" and "pull" elements. Immigrants' point of view is that, because their current location has negative consequences on them, they are willing to leave their own land in the hope of continuing on with the journey to ensure their survival.

Most Mexicans try to cross the border between the United States and Mexico to make a living, often without the proper documentation. Mexicans who enter the United States illegally are the most populous ethnic group in the country, according to critic Ravenstain. That's why Mexican novelist Reyna Grande shows how Mexican families have accumulated feelings and thoughts over the years that have led them to say farewell to the neighborhood where they've lived for generations. When her father moves the family away from their native land in search of work, the author utilizes the protagonist to bring home the poverty and the lingering fear of being abandoned. As well as showing the interconnectedness of family, religion, and education within Mexican culture, the novelist shows how women's status and role have shaped Mexican culture as a whole. For her part, Grande appears in *Across the Hundred Mountains*.

depicts a Mexican family's fight for existence after a natural calamity decimated their home country and forced them to relocate to a new location.

Juana and her impoverished family are introduced in the first chapter of Grande's novel *Across the Hundred Mountains*. As a result, she is able to convey both the physical construction of the house and the precarious state of her family's safety, as the river frequently floods the area where they live, causing their home to be washed away (*Across* 6). Juana's shack is being submerged as the water level rises. When the rain started to fall, Juana's mother, Ama, and Juana climbed onto the table, which is the only spot in their shack where they can get out of the rain. However, the hut quickly filled up with water as the downpour continued. Ama, Juana, and her baby sister Anita are always waiting for their father to return and save them from the dangers of the streets. Throughout the story, this steadfast resolve serves as a metaphor for the plight of her family.

In the novel, the Mexican father is shown as a role model with an unbreakable tie with his family. When it comes to family dynamics, in Mexican culture, the father is always a powerful figure who establishes a strong stance. Family values are highly held in Mexico, according to critics Fernando Pliego Carrasco and Maite Lot. There are several and varied reasons for this condition. Beyond those obtained from long-term marriage and familial ties, there are others (2). Because Apa is the first man Juana meets in her life, she sees him as a strong figure. No matter how hard things get or how many of his children he's lost, he doesn't give up on his family or put up his rags in front of his daughter Juana. Instead, he tells Juana, "Do you see those houses?" Juana nodded in agreement when she saw Apa's expression. There are houses. 'Si, Apa.' Ama did not answer to any of my questions. How would you like to live in one of these?' Standing up, Ama made her way to Apa. She grabbed him by the arm and yanked him around. He remained steadfast in his stance. In the future, "he added, "we shall live in a house like that" (*Across* 21). Her father, Juana believes, is a moral figure who has not been shattered by any strange events in his life. As a result, he decides to leave his native land for the United States of America, or "El OtroLado" (36), where he hopes to improve the lives of his family.

It breaks Juana's heart to learn of her father's predicament. Juana is devastated. While watching Anita in the last flood, she feels a deep sense of shame for drowning her baby sister. Furthermore, she is aware that her father has relocated to the United States in order to repay Don Elias for Anita's burial expenses. Why would you leave us?" Juana asks herself as she mourns the loss of her father, eliciting emotional responses inside herself. Are you no longer in love with us? Is it because you've grown tired of me? Her mind wandered but she didn't say anything (27). Juana suddenly feels helpless as her father prepares to leave the family and fears that she would lose her father's love and affection for all time at this critical point. The protagonist, who suffers from guilt for drowning her infant sister, believes that she is the primary cause of her father's relocation. Thus, Grande portrays the protagonist's state.

Grande's worth is enough to imagine the plight of a lady whose spouse abandons her. Juana claims that her mother, Apa, has been gone for six houses now, and neither she nor Ama had left feeling like doing anything. What was Ama's mind doing? Juana was curious. Clearly, she was shaken and anxious. Do you think she was worried Apa might forget about her once he reached the other side? (36). The family's worry of being labeled an abandoned family by their community if they don't acquire information from her father's exile has a huge impact. It is revealed that the protagonist's dread of abandonment is still present, despite her father's decision to flee. As a result, the novelist is particularly concerned with conveying the harrowing plight of the Mexican family split up by the loss of a male breadwinner.

A talented novelist like Grande eloquently depicts the ramifications of parental absence on Mexican households. Moreover, she reveals that Mexican families are always at risk because of the situation of its male members. Many women were left financially dependent on their families, were often blamed for the collapse of the marriage, and reported a loss in contacts with extended family and friends" according to the critic Anita (33). Juana tells how her father's move to the United States has left her and her family in the clutches of bad men. Juana's father Miguel is the breadwinner of the family, but Lupe, Juana's mother, may have been damaged by harsh men in her community. Her grief is compounded by the fact that the patriarchal culture of rural Guerrero, Mexico, has left her with no male family members to protect her and her kid from the atrocities they encounter. But Lupe has a hard time handling the issue when Don Elias shows up at her house and demands that she give him back his money. "Don't worry, Don Elias, my kid and I will be OK," she says. My spouse has promised to send your money in a few weeks, and I'll let you know as soon as it arrives.'" (Spread over 43 lines.) Juana's family is in a difficult situation because of their obligations to Don Elias, who is torturing them on a regular basis. In addition, it depicts the pitiful state of Mexican families who have been left behind as a result of the migration of the family's male members. Consequently, Grande frequently exposes the precarious situation of women everywhere, including in their own countries.

To illustrate the inequitable treatment of Mexican abandoned families as a result of male family members migrating, Grande expertly depicts the system in her novel. In Juana's family, everyone is gossiping about Lupe's husband's abandonment because they don't have any information from her father, and thus everyone in the village begins to discuss about it. Because they believe they were not intentionally abandoned by her father, Juana and her mother, Lupe, refuse to embrace the term "abandonment." Instead, Juana and Lupe claim:

They were surrounded by a cloud of whispers. Juana was able to make out every word... Since he left four weeks ago, there has been no communication from him. You think he left them, don't you? No, Miguel is a trustworthy individual. As far as he is concerned, he would never do that. A man can't help



but succumb to temptation when he's surrounded by all those golden-haired gringas at El OtroLado."

(48) When a woman is abandoned by her spouse, she is in a perpetual state of anxiety when she faces the outside world. They eventually become a laughing stock in their own community as a result of being excluded by their own family. Lupe's life is shaken by the act of mocking, but Juana's is too. As a result, Juana receives a lot of negative feedback from her students. She, on the other hand, is devastated to be in this position. They said, "Your father abandoned you." Juana couldn't take it any longer, so out of anguish she translates their words as, " "What would Juana do without Papa?" (46). Her father holds a special place in her family's heart, as evidenced by these statements. Juana's father, while being absent from Juana's life since the beginning of the story, is a constant presence in Juana's life. Juana also shows how her father's struggle causes her family to be torn apart by the cruelty of the Mexicans. As a result, the novelist's depiction of Mexican society's brutal practices is typical.

The novelist's compelling depiction of migration's effect on economic dictatorship is vividly conveyed. Perhaps the other kids are hurting Juana because of her father's financial situation. Juana is the protagonist of the story. "The youngsters made fun of her for being twelve years old and still in the fourth grade," she asserts. Apa, on the other hand, always told her not to pay attention. Occasionally, dad didn't have the money to buy her school supplies, but it wasn't her fault (49). That she is a laughing stock in front of her fellow students in her native town is a testament to her family's dire financial situation, which means that her father has abandoned her without providing any information about his migration to the United States of America. As a result, Grande depicts the usual status of the Mexican society's abandoned families, who work tirelessly to overcome the hardships they face.

Grande depicts a typical family structure, which emphasizes the family's oneness. In fact, the entire narrative revolves around the protagonist's quest to find her father and bring him back to her family. Because her father's struggle has affected the entire family, her search provides her with a sense of fulfillment, as well as a sense of belonging to the family. However, as soon as her father's divorce is final, she assumes the burden of going door-to-door asking questions about him to learn as much as she can. After her father's ordeal, Juana visits her grandmother's house and inquires about him, since she hadn't heard from him in a while. Juana entered and stood alongside her grandmother, "I came to ask about Apa," she says to her (60). Juana and her mother's desperate search for knowledge about Juana's father is depicted in this scene, as well as the effect that migration has on a person's social standing. As a result, Grande reveals the plight of abandoned families who work tirelessly to maintain their family's dignity in the eyes of society.

The impact of migration on a family is depicted in the novel by the author. Because she is unable to accept the fact that she has been abandoned by her husband after learning of Don Elias' suffering, Juana's mother Lupe becomes depressed and an alcoholic as a result of breaking her marriage vows while becoming close to him. After losing her baby and her husband's predicament, though, she begins to feel better about herself. To deal with the situation, she succumbs to such a terrible practice that eventually breaks her family apart. Her

Insanity in behaviorism comes to light when Don Jose, the graveyard's night watchman, tells Juana that "She is at the foot of your sister's grave yelling and raving like a loca. Despite my best efforts to de-escalate the situation, she attacked me with a shattered tequila bottle (96). With these comments, it's clear that the accumulation of all of her failures and setbacks has caused her to experience a state of

mental and emotional collapse. Lupe endures a great deal in order to overcome her obstacles, yet she falls short of her goals. As a result, Grande powerfully depicts the terrible situation of women who shatter their lives because of the consequences of desertion and the testimony of their continual failures.

In her novel *Across the Hundred Mountains*, Grande depicts the impact of migration on Mexican society, which is often seen as a reflection of the subjugation of women. They argue that "in Mexico, as well as the overwhelming majority of Latin American countries, women are treated as second-class citizens" (30). As Lupe mourns the loss of her husband, Don Elias allegedly takes advantage of her, forcing her to pay his debt in lieu of Lupe's. Don Elias emotionally and physically burns Lupe, making her want to sleep with him. When Lupe's husband is not there, he takes advantage of the circumstance and plots to abuse her for his physical fulfillment, so he threatens to receive his payment by misbehaving with her. This is the tragic plight of women who stay powerless in a male-dominated culture, as Grande points out. Women who are viewed as submissive to men are depicted in Grande's work. She explains Lupe's predicament as a result of her agreement to pay off Don Elias's debt by having sex with him. To justify Juana's action, she says "I know the decision I made would condemn me, but I can't see any other option. But you should know, Juana, that I still adore your father. I will always have a special place in my heart for your father" (*Across* 68). This image perfectly captures the state of mind of women who have been left speechless and terrified by the tragic circumstances surrounding the death of a male family member. In spite of Juana's age, Lupe reveals to Juana why she chose to have sex with Don Elias in the first place: Juana allows Don Elias into her life solely because she hasn't made good on her promise to pay off Don Elias' debt. As a result, Lupe is able to convey the harsh and desperate status of her family at this critical juncture. As a result, she doesn't want to see Juana orphaned or imprisoned. A woman abandoned by society is cleverly depicted by Grande as a bait in the hands of her own society's terrible men.

The novelist does a good job of highlighting the difficulties of a woman's emotional state when she encounters a series of setbacks during her family's journey. She throws all the dishes on the rock, which she keeps as a treasure to be passed down to her daughter as a paternal inherit, after Lupe is sexually assaulted by Don Elias. According to Juana, "Ama began hurling the plates on the rocks." Juana Crashing into 100 pieces on its own, one dish went flying one day... As Juana rushed to her mother's defense, Ama proceeded to throw.. "At last, she stood in front of her mother, clutching the final plate in her possession, the sole plate that belonged to her" (74). To stop all of Lupe's misfortune, she aims to smash all of the dishes in her life. If her daughter receives the present, she fears she will be put through the same ordeal as

As a result, she is concerned about the safety of all the plates. A woman's mental health can be affected by her family's hardships, and this is shown by Grande.

Grande does an excellent job of capturing what happens when people are tormented by feelings of guilt and are unable to let go of those feelings. Lupe's act of defiance is a reflection of the pain she feels as a result of her own sense of guilt. As a result, she refuses to eat and finally refuses to discuss her feelings, instead allowing herself to damage herself. Furthermore, she doesn't eat because she doesn't want to, but because she's been through a series of mishaps and failures in her life. She is also a killer because she cannot bear or forget her husband's death, her son's sexual abuse, or the loss of their marriage. To her dismay, Ama responds by saying, "Don't touch me Juana," as Juana approaches her. "I'm not clean" It's time to eat, Ama. Get up off the floor and join me. Then she shook her head and began to rock herself back and forth, back and forth, back and forth, back and forth. Her decision was made, and Juana started picking up the plates." As a witness to Lupe's misery, this scene shows her being enslaved by a

group of malevolent guys for the sake of their own enjoyment. As a result, Grande captures the inner turmoil of a woman forced to choose between escaping and rebelling against her circumstances.

Mexican women tend to be some of the most loving moms in the world, and they devote a lot of time and effort to their children's well-being. But although Lupe has been deceived and pregnant with Don Elias, she is extremely clear about the pregnancy. She names the baby boy after her husband because she wants the world to know that he is her husband's child, and she does it in a bold and confident manner. Even as the novel's narrator, she makes the following claim: "'If I dare to name my boy after my husband, it is because this baby is his!' Ama became enraged and screamed. Don Elias was holding a wailing baby, which she held out to him. No, he isn't there, are you? The man in question is not your child. She has a son with Miguel (her husband).' Juana was in disbelief at what she had just heard. Apa's child. Full-blooded sibling (91). When Juana learns that the infant is her brother, she has a strong sense of self-confidence. In addition, she will be able to experience the fulfillment that his birth will provide to her family. Even though her father has been missing for some time, the birth of her brother has filled the need that had been left in her household.

Grand has the protagonist commit her life to finding her father's identity and regaining his love and support in the process. The author shows the protagonist's capacity for rebellion and development by having her embark on a quest to find her father and, ultimately, her brother, who was abducted from his mother shortly after his birth by Don Elias. To get her kid back, Lupe pleads for the return of Don Elias's wife, Dona Martina. As Juana recalls the incident, "Ama limped towards Dona Matilde, ignorant of the blood. 'I want my son back.' 'Give him to me, please.'... 'Give us the baby back!' she cried. Return him to you!'" (91). For Juana, this scene instructs her to take on the burden of bringing her father back to his original land, and subsequently to claim her brother from Don Elias. The story, on the other hand, depicts the plight of the Mexican family, whose male members are unable to protect them from the excesses of evil men because there is no male member in their family. As a result, Grande has influenced Juana, the main character, to assume responsibility for her family's well-being in the wake of her father's departure from his native Mexico.

A tragic state of the protagonist, shattered by her mother's difficult conditions, is revealed by Grande at this important time in the story. Seeing her mother powerless, Juana's mother harms herself and blames Juana for all the bad things that happen in her life since her mother is unable to accept the fact that her husband has abandoned her. Lupe, on the other hand, frequently blames her for the death of her baby sister Anita by letting go of her grip during the flood. Many times Lupe says "'What happened, Juana? Why did you fall asleep?' I instructed you to look after her. 'I told you so.' Juana chewed her lips. To force her to face the filthy grave, Ama grabbed her head and held it there. 'Tell your sister something.' Get your mouth out of the gutter (98). The fact that Juana was just eight years old at the time of this incident does not necessarily mean that she was incapable of caring for a baby during the night. Juana's mother's charges against her daughter are completely unfounded. Even still, her mother continues to prod her and lay the guilt squarely on her daughter's shoulders. In this way, Grande vividly depicts the protagonist's pitiful state as a result of his wife's tension and her husband's abrupt departure from their own soil. In her stories, Grande depicts Lupe in the most desperate of circumstances: she is involved in theft. Her son, Don Elias, has been kidnapped away from her by Don Elias and so she decides to grab him back from him herself. Dona Martina, the wife of Don Elias, cries, "'she just showed up and tried to take my son from me'" when Lupe enters Don Elias's house to abduct her own baby (139). "I begged him to give me my son," she tells Juana when she fails to steal her son. I was punched and thrown to the ground by him' (140). It's clear from this picture that a mother is in a desperate battle to save her son from the grips of an immoral man. It's in this way that Grande exposes the helpless status of women in a patriarchal culture.

When the novelist is in this state, the character undergoes a temporary shift as he or she attempts to accept reality as a part of sin for the first time. In this way, Lupe is sure that she is being punished for the sins she and her family have committed over their lives, and she is unable to bear her hardships. After confessing her fault, she begins to perform sacrifices and build altars of devotion to the "La Virgen de Guadalupe" (126). To top it all off, she hopes that by honoring the Virgin Mary, she will be granted forgiveness of her sins and the opportunity to reclaim her only son from Don Elias, the man who had kidnapped him. Juana hears her say, "I must attempt to contribute something more powerful than prayers and tears," in a pitiful tone. Forgiveness and the return of my kid are the only things I can offer them, Juana." (132). It takes her "eventually getting to the agachados" (133), where men and women participate in a ritual in which they walk stoop-side with their ankles tied together, dragging heavy chains to obtain redemption, in order to get her son back. Juana, on the other hand, sees her mother participate in the parade. When she sees the scarlet lines of blood on her mother's bare back, she thinks, "maybe her sin will be cleansed. It's possible that's what she needs" (133). As a result, Lupe decides to participate in the procession, in which the participants will be the ones who suffer in order to find the penitence. As soon as Juana spots her mother among the performers, she trembles and refuses to see her mother in such a harrowing state of affairs. As a result, Grande's protagonist's state of mind is highly focused.

Because of her father's relocation from her native land, she has had to battle for her entire life.

When a person fails, it can cause them to become a killer, according to the novelist's depiction. It is Lupe's belief that God has abandoned her, despite her powerful sacrifices like participating in the events for "agachados," that drives her into the act of vengeance as a form of self-sufficiency. Lupe kills Don Elias in the church because she can no longer face the loss of her son, which causes her anguish and despair. Dona Matilda, upon learning of Don Elias' wife's death, exclaims, "Take the murder away!" (140). After killing the man who kidnapped her son, Lupe goes into a psychotic condition, expressing her joy at finally having a child of her own. However, she insists that the child is her husband's, and not Don Elias's, offspring. Retribution offers a sense of satisfaction to the woman, as her prayers and hopes have failed. Consequently, the abandoned Mexican family struggles and shuffles to achieve respect in their community through Grande's lens.

At this point, Grande permits the protagonist to take the first steps toward self-discovery. Juana, the protagonist of the story, is unable to bear her family's hardships, so she sets out to find her father, who has been missing for years from her native Mexico. For some reason Lupe's plan to abduct her son fails and she ends up killing Don Elias in order to do it. "They didn't hear my prayers, Juana," Ama said as the police officers dragged her along, she claimed. 'I pleaded with him to return my son to me. 'He slapped me and tried to eject me.' However, Ama resisted and continued to converse with Juana as the judiciales pulled her into the vehicle and slammed its door shut (140). She is unable to accept responsibility for the deed since Juana believes that her mother's activities are insignificant. She realizes that her mother's actions will never restore their lost joy and sense of self, but she fears that they will make things worse. Consequently, she devotes herself to reuniting herself with her father so that she can escape the brutality of the indigenous.

In *Across a Hundred Mountains*, Grande explores how migration has shaped Mexican culture. The story revolves around the tribulations of a group of indigenous Mexicans who are all affected by the absence of a male family member. A special focus is on women who are subjected to the oppression of patriarchal society. It also examines the importance of male characters in a family, despite the fact that male characters play a significant part in the family. They're either victims of patriarchal culture or circumstances in which they don't have enough room for themselves, and this tale is no exception. Due to her husband's relocation, Lupe first becomes a victim of Don Elias' crimes and subsequently a victim



of an unjust justice system. The protagonist, Juana, suffers as a result of her family's inability to play a significant role in their community. Even more so, she suffers from the guilt she feels about losing her newborn sister Anita during the flood. Accordingly, the story reveals the protagonist's desire to show that masculine characters must guide women away from the ravages of an autocratic society.

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