

# Belong But Do Not Belong

## Identity and Home in *The House on Mango Street* A Multigenre Inquiry Project

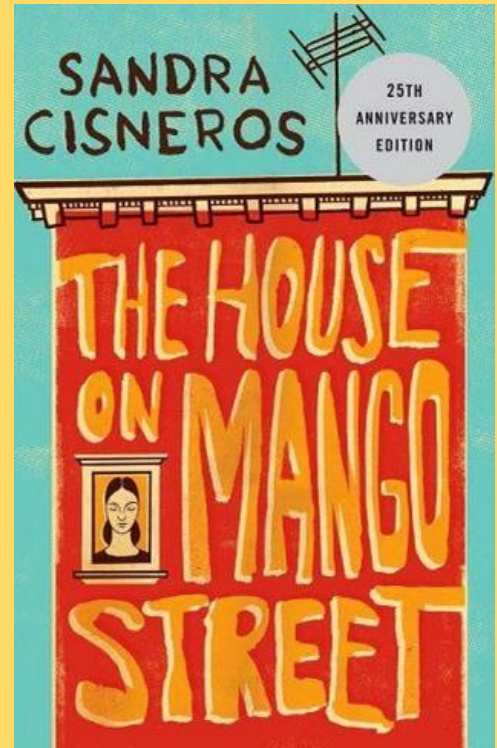
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### What is a multigenre inquiry project?

The purpose of a multigenre inquiry project is to explore a text's core question through the lens of multiple genres, each shedding light on the question in a creative, meaningful way. The various entry points multiple genres provide allow students to grow their understanding of the text while expanding their creative and analytical abilities.

### Overview of the Novel

*The House on Mango Street* follows Esperanza as she navigates a pivotal childhood year on Mango Street. It is told through a series of vignettes as adult Esperanza looks back on the events and lives that shaped her identity as a woman, Mexican-American, member of the working class, and writer.



### Essential Question

**What are the costs and benefits to identifying and disidentifying with your home?**

### Connections to Other Literature

Connections to canonical and non-canonical works of literature that explore questions of identity, belonging, and home include:

- *Kindred* by Octavia E. Butler
- *There, There* by Tommy Orange
- *Long Way Down* by Jason Reynolds
- *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain

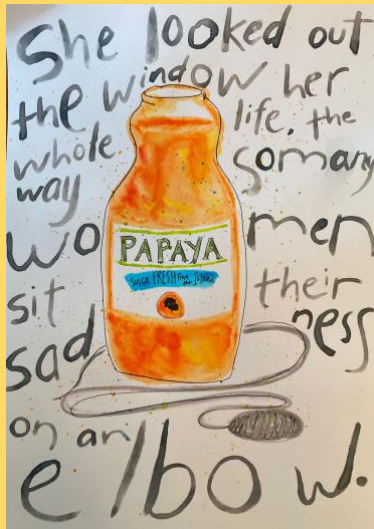
[mangomultigenre.weebly.com](http://mangomultigenre.weebly.com)

## Selected Genres

### Alternative Perspective

This genre is an alternative perspective piece that retells a scene from “The Monkey Garden” from the perspective of Sally rather than Esperanza. I sought to explore emotions and motivations behind a character whom readers only see from the outside. Mimicking Cisneros’s style, I hone in on Sally’s desire to be loved in the context of her “home,” a place where she is abused, limited, and unable to “get out.”

*“Go home, Esperanza,” I said. My face was hot; my heart was loud. “Go home. I told you it’s not a big deal.” The way she looked at me made me mad. The kind of mad that jumps on your shoulders and squeezes you numb. The kind where you think you might have exploded because you can’t feel your arms or legs anymore. The kind that happens when you pinch your brother right as your mom walks in...”*



### Visual Art

This piece uses watercolor paints and ink to depict a bottle of Rafaela’s papaya juice surrounded by the text, “She looked out her window her whole life, the way so many women sit their sadness on an elbow.” I chose bright colors to convey the tantalizing world seen through a window, and I framed it with these words to connect generations of women who are only able to access the world through small, confined spaces.

### Informative Research

Since this novella centers around a geographic area, I created a map of significant events and characters drawn from textual evidence to show the relationships between spaces around Mango. Coupled with this map is statistical data that connects readers of *The House on Mango Street* to real-life issues at play in the lives of Latinx people in America today, which are consistent with the text.

