

My epistolary, my voice: Writing to vindicate the marginalized child in Teresa Cárdenas's novel *Letters to my Mother*

Over the past two decades, children's books in Latin America have undergone a significant shift in discourse that expands the conventional thematic framework. Texts that dare to explore alternative imaginaries, viewpoints other than the patriarchal, and promote respect toward female characters have proliferated. One of the more representative narratives in which gender, religion, and race shape the sense of identity and belonging of the main character is, perhaps, the novel *Letters to my mother* by Cuban writer Teresa Cárdenas. Constantly debating herself between anguish, racism, and humiliation at the hands of her closest relatives, the protagonist's identity is molded within the context of race, religion, and cultural beliefs. This study examines how by resorting to the epistolary genre, the author not only offers the reader a profound and impactful view of childhood, but builds a plot where the marginalization of the main character challenges accepted notions of gender and race as emerging factors that influence the sense of belonging.