BEYOND THE COMFORT ZONE:

MONOLINGUAL IDEOLOGIES, BILINGUAL U.S. LATINO TEXTS

by

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        This project examines reader reception of U.S. Latino-authored narratives that

engage in varying degrees of textual code switching and bicultural belonging. The

analysis builds on the argument that these narratives, as part of a larger body of minor

literatures, play a role in revolutionizing traditional Anglo-American discourses of

knowledge by marginalizing the monolingual and monocultural reader historically

positioned as the prototype of cultural literacy in the United States. This project further

proposes that marginalization is achieved by a textual appropriation and structural

weakening of the dominant language and culture via the creation of a narrative space that

privileges code switching to articulate bicultural identities. U.S. Latino texts that alternate

between English and Spanish mirror the misunderstandings and failures of intelligibility

in the multicultural situations they depict, thereby requiring the monolingual and

monocultural reader to experience this unintelligibility first-hand.

In order to tackle broader questions about how these literary texts and their reception reflect what is at stake politically, nationally, and culturally for Latinos in the United States today, this interdisciplinary project draws upon a diversity of perspectives originating from linguistics, literary analysis, sociology, and history to identify how literary texts mirror bicultural identity for Latinos. As a part of this analysis, the project examines the history of Spanish language use in the United States, Latino immigration history, the standard language ideology privileging English monolingualism, the persistence of bilingualism, oral and written code switching, the publishing industry, and analyses of reader responses to bilingual texts based on survey data. In situating these histories within discussions about the bilingual, bicultural nature and reception of the U.S. Latino narrative, this project shows how the linguistic makeup and the subsequent receptivity of these texts mirror the bicultural identity and changing social positioning of the Latino population in the United States.

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To my husband and children, for being what matters most.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This project is about the challenge to monolingual ideology posed by contemporary

U.S. Latino[1] narrative that engages in code switching, or the alternation between two

languages within single texts. Specifically, it examines the steps U.S. Latino writers take

toward inscribing, and thereby legitimizing, the practice of code switching in mainstream

consciousness. Many bilingual U.S. Latino writers create texts that not only alternate

between English and Spanish but also articulate a bicultural identity, one that

encompasses the cultures linked with each code or language. The bilingual and bicultural

texture of many works created by these writers, when examined within the framework of

what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari term minor literature, serves as a means used by a

minority to appropriate the majority's language and culture and to weaken its structures.

These writers achieve this appropriation in part by privileging the bilingual/bicultural

reader, while also marginalizing the monolingual/monocultural one, who has been

historically positioned as the embodiment of cultural literacy in the United States. By

requiring a circumscribed reading for the monolingual, U.S. Latino authors who code

switch achieve a metaphorical displacement of the ideal monolingual reader by producing

texts whose poetics require bilingual, cross-cultural competency.

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[1] I have elected in this project to make use of the term "Latino" without the dashed gendered ending in favor of narrative flow. Consequently, the words "Latino" and "Latinos" are used throughout this text to indicate both masculine and feminine subjects.

In order to tackle broader questions about how these literary texts and their reception reflect what is at stake politically, nationally, and culturally for Latinos in the United States today, this project examines several closely related histories, including: the history of the Spanish language in the United States, U.S. Latino immigration history, the standard language ideology privileging English monolingualism, the continued persistence of bilingualism, linguistic analyses of oral and written code switching, discussions of minor literary theory, an examination of the influential role of the publishing industry, and applications of reader reception theories. In situating these histories within discussions about the bilingual, bicultural nature of U.S. Latino literatures and how they are received by readers, I hope to show how the linguistic makeup and the subsequent receptivity of these texts mirror the bicultural identity and social positioning of the Latino population in the United States. Indeed, changes in the demographic structure of the pan-Latino population and how this grouping is conceptualized clearly indicate that U.S. Latino identity is currently undergoing a period of intense re-examination, not only by Latinos themselves but also by U.S. society as a whole.

At its core, this project defines itself as belonging to the discipline of literary studies. However, like other disciplines in the academy, literary studies is in a state of transition away from its traditional self-contained roots, evidenced by the disparate methodologies from varied disciplines steadily creeping into the analysis of literature. Consequently, this dissertation aims to reflect the changing disciplinary reality of literary studies by informing its central argument with a multi-perspectival approach originating

not only from literary analysis, but also from linguistics, ethnology, history, cultural studies, and language pedagogy. By elucidating points of contact between these perspectives, this project seeks out connections across disciplinary lines, thereby drawing a broader view of these texts and their significance beyond the scope of traditional literary studies alone.

Beyond the joining of disciplines, however, this project also brings together larger philosophical approaches to knowledge in the academy; namely, humanities and social sciences. Certainly, this is not the first project aiming to partner literary studies with linguistics[2]; however, a close examination of the details pertaining to this particular study illuminates the reasoning behind the decision to connect these fields in analyzing the import of the U.S. Latino narratives discussed throughout the project.

In order to investigate the question of how readers receive texts and what actually transpires between the narratives and their interpreters, this project attempts the joining of academic fields traditionally operating independently from one another: literary studies and linguistic research. Philosophically, these two spheres of knowledge do not always overlap; consequently, both literary studies and linguistics often approach the central questions of this project from different perspectives. In bringing together these approaches, however, this analysis attempts to forge a complementary relationship between the two, therein amplifying the possibility of both accurately and creatively examining readers' reception of the texts in question.

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[2] For example, the pairing of literary criticism with linguistics is evident in the field of semiotics, or the study of signs and symbols as a means of language or communication. Semiotics represents a methodology for the analysis of texts, playing a role in literary criticism as well as audio and visual media.

The field of linguistics falls under the disciplinary umbrella of the social sciences, emphasizing quantitative and qualitative research methods to study language. To that end, questionnaires, field-based data collection, and archival database information are some of the measurement techniques used. The quantitative methods used in the social science disciplines of sociology, ethnography, and sociolinguistics place great importance upon measurement and analysis of language phenomena, focusing on the difficult-to-attain goal of objective research or statistical hypothesis testing.

Literary studies, on the other hand, as an academic discipline belonging to the humanities, examines the human condition using methods that are primarily analytic, critical, or hypothetical, as distinguished from the mainly empirical approaches of the social sciences. At the center of a humanistic approach to study is a belief in humankind's urge to understand its own experiences via self-reflection. This understanding, according to the humanist, ties like-minded people from similar cultural backgrounds together and provides a sense of cultural continuity with the philosophical past (Dilthey 103). Literary scholars often draw conclusions about language and society that stem from the idea that people possess a narrative imagination which allows them to understand lived realities outside of their own individual social and cultural context. Through that narrative imagination, literary scholars develop a conscience believed by the humanist to be suited to the modern multicultural world (Nussbaum 3).

What distinguishes the humanities from the social sciences is not a certain subject matter but rather the mode of approach to any question. Humanists focus on understanding meaning, purpose, and goals and further the appreciation of singular

historical and social phenomena – an interpretive method of finding "truth" – rather than

explaining the causality of events or uncovering an objective truth of the social world

(Dilthey 103). For the humanist, imagination serves as a vehicle to create meaning which

invokes a response from an audience. Since a humanities scholar is always within the

nexus of lived experiences, no "absolute" knowledge is theoretically possible; knowledge

is instead a ceaseless procedure of inventing and reinventing the context in which a text is

read. Of course, many social science practitioners, like humanities scholars, may also

eschew the notion of absolute truth and recognize that any observation is necessarily

partial, biased and conditioned. Yet for the social scientist, the quest for empirical

knowledge is key because it emphasizes the role of experience and evidence in the

formation of ideas while discounting the notion of innate suppositions.

Many of the arguments of this project address the question of Latino narratives

and how they are received by readers from a humanist perspective. Namely, responses

and effects are imagined, based on close analysis of relevant contexts such as history,

identity and language. The humanist approach emphasizes analytic, critical and

theoretical elements through which these texts help to revolutionize hegemonic

discourses of dominant and subordinate languages and cultures of the United States. The

juxtaposition of this literary theoretical model with a social sciences approach

emphasizing empirical data analysis of actual responses from real readers of the

narratives in question makes the argument about these texts more robust. To that end,

beyond naming these literatures as revolutionary, this project aims to quantify the actual

effects these texts have on real readers via empirical analysis of data collected from

reader responses to the narratives in question. Ultimately, then, in order to best approach

the central questions of this project, the social scientist's conscientious concern with

empiricism is conjoined with the humanist's analytic and critical hypothesis formation,

thereby triangulating these perspectives in order to present not only a richer picture of

what effect these texts have on readers, but also to draw wider conclusions about

bilingualism and cultural transformations at play in contemporary U.S. society.

Chapter II, entitled "Spanish-Speaking Identities in the United States," examines

Latino identity and immigration history, as well as the history of the Spanish language in

the United States, closely linking these stories to socially determined concepts of racial

formation and non-native citizenship in the nation. These considerations are followed by

an examination of the diverse identities of Spanish speakers in the United States today, to

the ways in which these identities are connected to the history of the speakers, and to the

variety of ethnic labels (and the consequences of their use) attached to the approximately

34 million Spanish-speakers in the country ("Selected"). The chapter also includes a

discussion of the ways in which the identities of Spanish-speakers are represented in

narratives that capture the racial, cultural, and linguistic "in-betweenness"[3] of being

classified as Latino in the United States today. A driving theme behind the discussions in

this chapter is the notion that the Spanish language itself is closely linked to the identities

of the Latino population, regardless of actual proficiency, and that in many cases its use

has become symbolic of the population as a whole.

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[3] The term "in-betweenness" here refers to the experience of dwelling among multiple
languages and cultures (rather than just one of each), and thereby perceived as only
partially belonging to any one language or culture.

Chapter III, entitled "Language and Power," examines the hierarchical

relationships between the idealized and so-called standard English privileging

monolinguals, and the many linguistic varieties of non-standard contact language

phenomena[4] arising in bilingual communities in the nation. The discussion centers

primarily around English-Spanish bilingualism and its sociopolitical positioning in U.S.

society. Using Janet Holmes' concept of linguistic entrepreneurs (meaning innovators in

language use) as agents of language change (200) – change that is inevitable but often

resisted by socially powerful groups – this chapter discusses the ways in which speakers

of monolingual English in the U.S have come to accept unconsciously the privilege of

assuming that monolingual, uniform English is the norm. Within this framework, any

variation from this standard, such as bilingualism, represents not only a corruption of

language but also an essential threat to the unity of the nation. I argue that the value

system privileging monolingual English use leaves its mark not only in the way English-

Spanish bilingualism has historically been regarded by English-speaking monolinguals in

the U.S., but also in the way it is regarded by bilinguals themselves. According to many

sociolinguistic studies, multiple language use is a practice that many bilinguals

themselves condemn (Holmes 45). In reference to this phenomenon, Rosina Lippi-Green

notes that speakers of peripheralized languages, or participants in stigmatized linguistic

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[4] Language contact occurs when two or more languages or varieties interact. The most common products of language contact are pidgins (simplified languages that develop between groups not sharing a common language), creoles (stable languages originating from pidgins that have been nativized), code switching (the alternation between multiple languages within discourse), and mixed languages (the fusion of two source languages). The primary contact language phenomena under examination throughout this project is code switching.

practices such as the blending of two languages, sometimes accept external negative scales of value to their own detriment (175).

Against this backdrop of nativist hostility toward bilingualism and the ensuing widespread perception of multiple language use as a communicative deficiency, chapter IV, entitled "Code Switching," begins with a review of the facts about language alternation; namely, that switching between English and Spanish within single utterances does not constitute "bad Spanish" or "bad English." Rather, code switching requires high proficiency in both languages and reveals a robust grammar system comprised of two varieties. Furthermore, much like rhythm, intonation, stress, or pitch, code switching serves as one of many possible communicative tools available to speakers to signal meaning. As such, language alternation bears significant social and interactional implications, most of which revolve around Spanish-English bilingual speakers' joint membership in both the Spanish-speaking and English-speaking worlds. Finally, this chapter examines how textual language alternations differ from spontaneous, verbal code switching. I examine the ways in which several Latino-authored narratives deploy language switches as a resource through which to articulate the cultures and realities linked with each language.

Chapter V, entitled "The 'Minor' in U.S. Latino Narrative," argues that the capacity shared by many Latino writers to interrogate linguistic and cultural hierarchies via bilingual and bicultural narrative situates U.S. Latino literature within the minor literature framework established by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Examining Latino narrative through the minor literature lens provides insight into these texts' revolutionary

potential – both linguistically and culturally. I have found that texts written from Latino perspectives yet read widely by English monolinguals, such as *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Díaz and *Caramelo* by Sandra Cisneros, possess the capacity to upend the linguistic and cultural hierarchy in the U.S. by simultaneously inviting mainstream readers to participate and excluding them from fully comprehending the texts. By destabilizing the central positioning of the English-speaking monolingual reader in this way, these narratives challenge traditional Anglo-American discourses of knowledge, forcing the monolingual into a space of limited access to the text. Only the bilingual, traditionally at the margins, has the capacity to completely enter into the linguistic and cultural worlds created by these Latino writers.

Chapter VI, entitled "The Marketing and Publishing of Latinidad," examines the role of the publishing industry in determining which types of Latino-authored texts are made available to readers, what sort of literature is written by authors, and also how this selection affects the reading public's awareness of social realities and of language. Motivated by profit, the industry tends to choose texts that have a niche market and that meet reader expectations. Since sales constitute the highest priority, mainstream presses are likely to choose minority-authored books that are less concerned with reflecting truths about how people really live, think, and feel and more with what monolingual English-speaking people want to read and believe about minorities. Furthermore, given the perceived national threat posed by bilingualism as discussed in chapter III, only the most accessible and well-glossed types of bilingualism normally find their way into narratives published by mainstream presses – even those composed by bilinguals. Many of the most

commercially successful, widely read narratives by Latino writers are those written primarily in English but with Spanish language entries that are easily understood by a monolingual English speaker and with a monolingual reader in mind (Rudin 229, Callahan "Metalinguistic" 418, Torres 79). This constitutes the kind of Latino literature that sells, the kind that gets published, and the kind that is perceived as representing Latino reality in the United States.

Chapter VII, "The Effects of Bilingual Literature on (Mostly) Monolingual Readers," examines the degree to which code switching Latino-authored texts influence language and culture relationships in the United States. Specifically, this chapter contains an empirical, ethnographic analysis of reader responses to the Spanish language entries in Junot Díaz's 2007 Pulitzer Prize-winning narrative *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. The narrative, though written predominantly in English, features numerous lengthy passages of untranslated, unexplained Dominican Spanish, which the reader must grow accustomed to over the course of the 352-page text. The text, therefore, while mostly accessible to the English monolingual reader, is fully comprehensible only to the bilingual. Hence, the narrative challenges the English monolingual to continue reading in spite of multiple comprehension failures. In order to measure how this bilingual narrative technique is received by readers of varying linguistic backgrounds, a short study was conducted in which reader responses to the text were analyzed and categorized in terms of degree of receptivity to Spanish insertions in the narrative.

Throughout the process of researching and constructing the arguments contained within this project, I have felt compelled to articulate a personal connection to the subject

matter. To that end, this Introduction concludes with a brief note about the authorial relationship to the content of this dissertation. A theoretical question posed to me at the outset of this work warrants repetition here: By what right may a native monolingual English-speaking white person speak to the experience of being Latino and bilingual in the United States today? How could such an individual be justified in addressing this particular experience of marginality, arguably never having lived it first-hand?

A good response begins with an insistence that I do not presume to know these experiences, or to speak for those who do. Rather, these realities are inspiring because of their connection to language, identity, and power. Language is more than communication; it is an important marker of who we believe ourselves to be as human beings. People use language to connect to others as well as to differentiate from them. We employ language to convey our very essence and to position ourselves in society. Given what language does for human beings, what happens to identity when individuals are unable to express themselves, or when the language surrounding them is incomprehensible? What happens when people can no longer use language to navigate systems of social and political services, or to convey a sense of membership in a nation? In this situation, identity is virtually stripped, obliging subordinated groups to buy into discourses initiated by dominant groups and to take on identities determined by others, without any agency. While these experiences constitute a daily reality for people of Latin American descent living in the United States, they could not be further from the comfortable linguistic world to which many privileged monolingual English speakers automatically belong in this nation.

Within this context, language learning arises as one possible tool to raise awareness about these alternate and sometimes invisible realities by presenting learners with a chance to enter new cultures first-hand while simultaneously re-examining their personal identities. Stretching beyond the comfort zone of one's native language into new linguistic terrain holds the potential to transform an individual's perspective. The experience of reaching beyond oneself with language provides a chance at awakening to other realities, other worlds, other experiences beyond the nexus of one's own life. New languages and the experience of incomprehensibility they entail are doors into unimagined realities that cannot be accessed in any other way.

For that reason, privileged monolingual English speakers in the United States urgently need awareness-raising about what is classified as "other" in the nation, as well as about how groups like U.S. Latinos create linguistic agency for themselves. Being positioned outside of one's linguistic comfort zone constitutes a means of achieving that end. This positioning can be attained in a number of ways, the first of which is simply by working at becoming bilingual. Learning multiple languages does not instantly transform individuals into cultural insiders; however, striving to attain a second language helps learners to understand realities outside their own. Another means of raising this critical awareness is through the experience of incomprehensibility with regard to a text. Latino writer Junot Díaz described in an interview a goal in the composition of his novel *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*: "…I wanted everybody at one moment to feel kind of like an immigrant in this book. There would be one language chain that you might not *get*. And that it was *okay*. It might provoke in you a reaction to want to know – and that's

good, because it'll make you go look, and read other books and start conversations" (Díaz

"Junot"). Díaz strives to create the immigrant reality for his English-speaking

monolingual reader – the experience of cultural displacement, of disorientation, of

mutability – so that this reader can begin learning first-hand about the daily reality of the

approximately 38 million immigrants living in the United States today ("US In Focus").

The critical first step into that transformative experience comes about via the powerful

moment of required incomprehensibility.

CHAPTER II

SPANISH-SPEAKING IDENTITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

Introduction

How do readers respond to contemporary Latino-authored narrative that utilizes

code switching between English and Spanish to articulate bicultural identities? This study

aims to address how these narratives form part of a larger body of minor literatures,

transforming traditional Anglo-American discourses of knowledge by marginalizing the

English-speaking monolingual and monocultural reader who, as Frances Aparicio argues,

has been "glaringly positioned throughout history as the prototypical embodiment of

cultural literacy" ("Sub-Versive" 800). Latino writers achieve this marginalization in part

through a textual appropriation and structural weakening of standard English vis-à-vis the

natural and uncompromising appearance of Spanish in their texts, creating a bilingual

narrative texture that reflects the linguistic reality lived by many Latinos in the United

States.

A complete analysis of the manner in which these texts broaden readers' linguistic

and cultural awareness begins with a close examination of the U.S. Latino population

itself – who Latinos are, where they are from, how they define themselves or are defined

by others, and how the Spanish language is closely linked with their core identities. To

that end, this chapter opens with a brief recounting of the history of the Spanish language

and its speakers in the United States, extending from the colonial period through waves

of Spanish-speaking immigration leading to the present moment. This discussion is

followed by an analysis of the ways Latino identities are constructed through problematic concepts of race as well as a myriad of heavily contested cultural labels. Finally, the chapter concludes with an examination of how changing perceptions of the Latino population in the U.S., brought about in part through civil and human rights movements, have led to the introduction of Latino studies in higher education, a field of study that serves as a key site for the re-examination of Latino identity on a national scale.

Selective Memory and Reconstructing the Past

John Locke perceived that human beings by necessity remember the past selectively. He wrote that ideas in the mind quickly fade and often vanish from thought, leaving no more traces than shadows passing over cornfields. Once these memories are gone, the mind is as void of them as if they had never existed. Only those ideas that are most frequently repeated, noted the philosopher, affix themselves best in the human memory, and remain clearest and longest there. Revisited ideas, then, become the memories that are seldom lost. Locke concluded, "[t]he pictures drawn in our minds are laid in fading colours; and if not sometimes refreshed, vanish and disappear."

In what ways do we revisit ideas so as to retain them as clear and lasting memories? The narrating of past events is one means of achieving Locke's ideal of retention through repetition. When the past refreshes itself in the human mind via written or oral narrative, it is reborn into the present moment and consequently stands a greater chance of fastening itself in the memory. Recounting the past thus becomes a selection process whereby the narrator – intentionally or otherwise – elects those ideas that will last due to their inclusion in the narrative, and those that will fade because they are omitted.

Memory, then, reconstructs the past through the course of selection, simplification, and emphasis – processes that Howard Zinn argues are inevitable for cartographers and historians (8). In order to present a usable drawing, the cartographer must select out of the confounding mass of geographical data those bits and pieces of information required for the purpose of any given map. However, as Zinn notes, while the mapmaker's distorted representations of physical space are a technical necessity shared by anyone creating or using a map, the historian's distorted representations of the past are more than technical: they are ideological, reflecting the historian's sociopolitical assumptions and projects. For in the narrating of a history, any chosen emphasis, simplification, or exclusion of events supports an interest, whether national, political, economic, racial, or sexual.[5]

Furthermore, this ideological interest is not openly expressed by the historian, but rather is presented as if all readers of history shared it; hence, readers of such accounts are drawn into the values presupposed as universal by the historian. This keeps them in the dark about what James Loewan describes as the very nature of history: furious debate informed by evidence and reason, not blind acceptance of a discrete list of facts, dates, and answers to be learned (5). Zinn and Loewan each build a broad critique of U.S. society's construction of education and knowledge as technical problems of excellence, rather than as tools for contending social classes, races, and nations.

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[5] Contrary to Zinn's dismissal of the mapmaker's choices as merely technical, one could argue that the cartographer's selections are equally fraught with ideological interest; how could representing space not also by necessity require choices that support social ideals?

Given both Zinn's and Loewan's polemic about society's passive approach to looking at the past, I propose in this chapter that a generally uncritical acceptance of narrated histories – which are, by necessity, incomplete and ideologically-motivated accounts – very much characterizes how the nation has come to view its own history through an Anglocentric lens. For example, the familiar story of the origins of the nation typically begins with the founding of the first permanent English settlements in America at Jamestown, Virginia in 1607, followed by the arrival of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1620 (Rumbaut 90). Meanwhile, the "Hispanic" (meaning of Spanish origins) presence in what is now the United States has until relatively recently been excluded from narrated histories of the nation – even though Spanish settlers arrived in present-day Florida a full four decades before the founding of Jamestown (Ruiz 656).

The shadow cast over the Spanish past – and over the Uto-Aztecan indigenous past and present – of the United States has persisted over time; society's continued denial of this heritage is rooted in age-old racial and ethnic stereotypes that still entangle today's immigration debate (Horwitz). The same shadow is responsible for the national amnesia characteristic of society's memory and acknowledgement of its Latino immigration history, a history that has left an indelible, if ignored, imprint throughout Florida, the Southwest, and elsewhere in the U.S. (Rumbaut 90). Today, as the Latino population continues to expand and shape U.S. culture and society, the Spanish-speaking presence has emerged seemingly suddenly in the Anglo-American imaginary as a visible and pervasive new element of American life – even though it has been present since before the founding of the nation.

A Brief History of the Spanish Language in the United States

As Phillip Carter points out, several popular misconceptions about Spanish and its position in the history of the nation warrant a re-examination for the purpose of critiquing the cycle of reproduction and promulgation of myths surrounding the story of Spanish in the United States. For example, local, regional and national news stories have recently raised the misconception that native Spanish speakers are only now beginning to populate areas of the United States in large groups. In spite of the fact that recent Census reports show that the U.S. Latino population has experienced an upsurge since the early 1990's, what we now think of as Latino communities and varieties of the Spanish language have been maintained in the United States for more than four centuries, a fact discussed in depth below. Furthermore, Spanish actually predates English in the areas that now make up the composite United States — a fact that surprises many Americans (Carter).

Indeed, the early history of what is now the United States was Spanish, not English. Spanish was the first European language spoken in North America, having been brought to present-day Florida by the Spanish explorer Ponce de León in 1513. In spite of this, beginning in the colonial era, the history of the United States is often narrated with an emphasis placed on the thirteen British colonies as background to the American Revolution and the formation of an independent nation (Ruiz 656). Details and histories not supporting the narrative leading to this important revolution are frequently excluded from the history of the nation since they do not bolster the ideological interests of a society favoring the notion of the building of a linguistically and racially homogeneous,

English-speaking nation (Carter). The remainder of this section aims to recount some

these marginalized histories.

After the Spanish explorer Ponce de León's initial arrival in the present-day

United States in 1513, the Spanish established their first permanent colony in present-day

Florida in 1565 under the leadership of Pedro Menéndez de Avilés. The Spanish then

explored the Atlantic coast between 1520 and 1570, with specific interest in what are

now the Carolinas, Virginia, Georgia and the New England coast. A century and a half

later, the Spanish attempted to exert further influence in the Southeast by purchasing

Greater Louisiana from the French in 1763, though the territory was later resold to the

U.S. in 1803 (Carter).

After failing to build prosperous colonies along the Atlantic coast, the Spanish

refocused on the unexplored territory in the West and Southwest of the present-day

United States, where they left an indelible cultural and linguistic mark. Today, much of

the long-term U.S. Spanish-speaking population is located along these areas, which

include portions of Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada and Texas

(Carter). The first Spanish explorations of this region began in 1540 led by Francisco

Coronado, followed by Juan de Oñate in 1598. Spanish settlements were established

throughout the Southwest. Present-day Santa Fe, New Mexico, was claimed for Spain by

Coronado in 1540, and in 1605 was established as one of the oldest cities in what is now

the United States. Spanish colonization of the Southwest was deemed successful, and by

the mid-nineteenth century as many as 100,000 Spanish speakers were living in the

region (Hernandez-Chavez v).

The nineteenth century also marked the beginning of historical ties between the United States and three Spanish-speaking nations that contributed enormously to populations of U.S. Spanish speakers: Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Cuba.[6] When the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo ceded the Southwest territories to the United States in 1848 at the end of the Mexican-American War, Mexico lost over 500,000 square miles of land, which comprised over half of its national territory, and approximately 80,000 inhabitants of Mexican and Spanish origin who were residing in that territory instantly became U.S. citizens (Rumbaut 94). Yet, as Vicki Ruiz points out, historians tend to focus on the Mexican War as "the fire bell in the night" with the subsequent acquisition (not conquest) of new territories, an accomplishment that would bring to the forefront the inflammatory matter of slavery in the territories. After this moment in history, writes Ruiz, survey texts generally turn eastward to narrate the circuitous path leading to civil war (Ruiz 660). What of the Spanish-speakers who remained in the Southwest, newly-appointed U.S. citizens after 1848? Simply put, states Ruiz, Mexicans on the U.S. side of the border became second-class citizens, commonly dispossessed of their land, political power, and cultural privileges (660).

The geographic absorption of territories after the Mexican War, alongside the American policy of westward expansion fueled by the ideological notion of "manifest

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[6] While other Spanish-speaking nations from Latin America and the Caribbean have contributed importantly to the overall population of Spanish-speakers in the United States, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Cuba have historically supplied the largest numbers of Spanish-speaking immigrants. For this reason, as well as due to the focus of this project, I have elected to emphasize in this section the immigration histories of these three nations.

destiny"[7] helped facilitate the spread of English across most of North America. It also lead to the disappearance of Spanish as the first language of most of the area's future inhabitants. However, despite the marginalization of Spanish, the language endured in many Southwestern communities and developed into unique regional varieties. Though English of course eventually became the dominant language of the United States, Spanish played an important role in the early linguistic landscape of the country, as the Spanish influence spread to nearly every region by the mid-nineteenth century (Carter).[8]

The end of the nineteenth century saw the start of an increase in two additional influxes of Spanish-speaking communities to the United States: Puerto Ricans and Cubans began to enter the nation in periodic waves starting at the close of the Spanish American war in 1898. This war began after Spain rejected America's demand for a peaceful resolution of the Cuban fight for independence. The war ended with the Treaty of Paris, which gave the U.S. control of Puerto Rico and Cuba, among other territories. This stimulated various immigration waves in the early twentieth century, leading eventually to approximately 100,000 Cuban immigrations and 888,000 Puerto Rican migrations by the year 1960 (Rumbaut 96).

Twelve years after the Treaty of Paris, in 1910, the Mexican Revolution started with an uprising led by Francisco Madero against longtime autocrat Porfirio Díaz. The

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[7] This term refers to the belief that the United States was destined or even divinely ordained to expand across the North American continent, from the Atlantic seaboard to the Pacific Ocean.

[8] There were of course other groups and other languages besides English and Spanish spoken in what is now the United States. The Anglo majority and dominance was not always a given; for example, German has a history of a strong presence in parts of the country, where it was at one time allowed as the language of instruction in schools.

choices were simple for Mexicans who opposed the fighting: hide away or leave the country. Many chose to immigrate to the United States, leading to as many as 1 million Mexicans crossing the border for refuge between 1910 and 1920 (Rumbaut 95). Also during this decade, the passage of the Jones Act in 1917 gave Puerto Ricans U.S. citizenship and made them eligible for military draft, requiring approximately 2,000 Puerto Ricans to fight for the United States in World War I. The Puerto Rican migratory flow was increased as a result of the Jones Act (discussed in the following section), and consequently over 50,000 Puerto Ricans had migrated to New York City by 1930 ("Chronology").

About a decade later, the U.S. initiated the Bracero Program (1942 – 1964), a temporary contract labor program in which the United States government hired Mexican citizens to come across the border to work in agriculture programs and on the railroad. Over the 22-year period, the Bracero Program sponsored about 4.5 million border crossings. The end of the Bracero Program prompted increased flows of undocumented workers from Mexico, an occurrence that has continued through the beginning of the twenty-first century (Rumbaut 95).

The year 1948, just six years after the start of the Bracero Program, saw several events of significance to Latino history and hence to the history of Spanish in the United States in general. Among these were *Pérez v. Sharp*, in which the California Supreme Court struck down an anti-miscegenation law and allowed the union between a woman of Mexican descent and a man of African descent. Furthermore, 1948 marked the start of the American G.I. Forum. Approximately 500,000 Latinos had served in World War II, the

end of which signaled a significant shift in social relations for Latinos (Ruiz 666).

Consequently, the period after World War II represented a claiming of public space as

Latinos attempted to bridge the lines of inequality through protest, politics, and popular

culture (Ruiz 671). These events served as a catalyst for the struggle for civil rights

among Spanish-speaking Latinos in the United States.

A few years later, in 1952, Puerto Rico became a commonwealth of the United

States, a status that fundamentally distinguished the island's relationship with the U.S.

from other Latin American and Caribbean areas. As U.S. citizens by birth, Puerto Ricans

were granted the ability to travel freely between the island and the mainland, without

having to pass through Immigration and Naturalization Service or Border Patrol. Another

event which contributed to Puerto Rican migration included Operation Bootstrap, a

project initiated by Governor José Luis Alberto Muñoz Marín which industrialized Puerto

Rico in the mid-20th century. While Operation Bootstrap rapidly increased the island's

industrialization and urbanization, it did not resolve unemployment rates and population

growth problems. Ultimately, the project intensified pressure to migrate to the mainland.

The Puerto Rican population within the United States grew steadily, such that between

1950 and 1960 it had tripled to 888,000 (Rumbaut 95-96).

Although Cubans had been present in cities like New York, Tampa, and Key

West for nearly a century, the 1959 Cuban Revolution led by Fidel Castro contributed

significantly to further immigrations of Spanish-speakers to the United States. The

revolution resulted in the overthrow of the U.S. proxy ruler General Batista's regime,

signaling the start of a large exodus of Cubans to the United States. From 1960 to 1979,

250 thousand Cubans, mostly from the upper and middle classes, immigrated to the U.S.

and settled primarily in Florida and New York, among other places (Rumbaut 96).

The last four decades of the twentieth century saw what David Gutiérrez refers to

as a "demographic revolution"[9] in the United States, which changed the dynamics of

identity and social orientation among various Latino subpopulations. The resident Latino

populations expanded over this period, and their numbers were augmented by millions of

newer immigrants of Latin American origin or descent (Gutiérrez 2). In 1960, there were

fewer than one million foreign-born Latin Americans in the United States. Today,

according to a 2007 census report, there are close to 44 million Latinos, who represent

almost 14 percent of the U.S. population (qtd. in "How many Hispanics"). This number

includes both foreign-born Latinos as well as those of Latin American heritage. As

Gutiérrez points out, these shifting demographic balances over the last four decades of

the twentieth century are largely attributable to the passage of the Hart-Celler

Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments of 1965, which abolished the

discriminatory national-origins quota system known as the Johnson-Reed Act, which had

been in place since the 1920s and which, once lifted, stimulated significant immigration

flows from Latin America.

Racial Formation and Alien Citizenship in the United States

The Immigration Act of 1924, also called the Johnson-Reed Act, limited the

number of immigrants allowed entry into the United States based upon their country of

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[9] I interpret Gutiérrez's use of the term "demographic revolution" to mean a change in the demographic structure of the U.S. population to include far greater numbers of people originating from Spanish-speaking Latin America.

origin. The Act ushered in an era of restricted immigration to the U.S., in sharp contrast to previous years of open immigration to the nation (Ngai 17). The quota provided immigration visas to two percent of the total number of people of each nationality in the United States as of the 1890 national census ("Immigration"). The law deemed all Europeans to be part of a white race, distinct from those considered to be non-white, and the Act favored the former over the latter. As an exclusionary measure, this new immigration policy completely barred immigrants from specific origins in the Asia-Pacific Triangle, and placed a varying limit on immigrations from other parts of the world. The national origins quota system classified Europeans as nationalities and assigned quotas in a hierarchy of desirability based on race. Thus, the Johnson-Reed Act repositioned and solidified racial categories within the legal system, as Mae Ngai explains, and thus represents not only a site for the official construction of race, but also a significant moment for legally backed, large-scale white hegemonic practices in the United States (7).

This restrictive immigration law successfully produced new categories of racial difference in the United States, and created a hierarchical system favoring certain races over others by law. Yet the Johnson-Reed Act was by no means the first illustration of social constructions of race in the history of the United States.[10] As Michael Omi and Howard Winant point out, the designation of racial categories and the determination of racial identity has for centuries precipitated intense debates and conflicts in the nation.

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[10] The term "social construction" refers to a concept or practice that is the creation of a particular group of people in society. Consequently, to say that race is socially constructed is to focus on its dependence on social identities and relationships.

Many of the disputes have arisen out of the inadequacy of claims that race is only a matter of differences in human physiognomy, such as skin color (Omi and Winant 54). As an alternative to this definition, Omi and Winant suggest that race is actually "a concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies" (55). Furthermore, they note, the selection of specific physical characteristics for purposes of racial classification is always and necessarily a social and historical process (Omi and Winant 55).

Omi and Winant describe this process of selection as one of racial formation, a socio-historical method by which racial categories are invented, lived, altered, and deleted (Omi and Winant 55). This theory claims that race is formed as a result of historically positioned undertakings in which individuals and societies are represented and organized into hegemony. From this perspective, race is a matter of both social structure and cultural representation (Omi and Winant 56). The theory of racial formation suggests that society is suffused with racial "projects" to which all members are subjected and hence inserted into a comprehensive racialized social structure. These projects, which both identify and standardize perceptions of race, are the heart of the racial formation process (Omi and Winant 60).

As a racial "project" according to the above definition, the Johnson-Reed Act represents a means of identifying, signifying, routinizing, and standardizing race on a national level. As Mae Ngai points out, given that race is not a biological fact but rather a socially constructed category of difference, the classifications of race created by the Johnson-Reed Act are historically specific to the 1920s and reflect the nation's attempt to

codify immigrants based on an internally-constructed value system (7). David Gutiérrez

notes that the decades leading up to the Act were characterized by high levels of

xenophobia and nativism. American protectionists, alarmed at the rapid increase of

immigration from southern and eastern Europe, became convinced that these so-called

new immigrants were racially and culturally inferior to white Americans of Anglo-Saxon

heritage. Hence, as early as the 1880s, they began to agitate for restrictive federal

immigration legislation (Gutiérrez "Economic" 51). The Johnson-Reed Act represents an

affirmative response to that agitation.

While the Act technically set no limits on immigration from Latin America and

therefore had no directly identifiable impact on numbers of Spanish-speaking immigrants

entering the United States legally, the enforcement provisions of restriction such as visa

requirements and border control policies profoundly affected Mexicans entering the

nation. The result of these restrictions was that Mexicans, who had historically been able

to cross between Mexico and the United States unimpeded, became the single largest

group of undocumented immigrants by the late 1920s (Ngai 7). The growing social

association between Mexicans and illegal immigration led to Jim Crow segregation laws

applied to Mexicans in the Southwest. It also led to the creation of "Mexican" as a

separate racial category in the census (Gutierrez "Economic" 61).

Ngai notes that during the 1920s, both Asians' and Mexicans' race and ethnicity –

which she defines as a nationality-based cultural identity capable of transformation and

assimilation – remained conjoined, unlike Euro-Americans whose ethnic and racial

identities became separated during this time (8). In other words, a European could be

legally classified as a member of the white race while retaining an ethnicity based on one of a number of possible national origins within Europe; meanwhile, an Asian or a Mexican were simply classified as belonging to the Asian or Mexican race, terms intended to denote both racial *and* ethnic belonging in one fell swoop. As such, the legal racialization of these ethnic groups' national origin cast them as permanently foreign and unable to assimilate to the nation. They became what Ngai terms "alien citizens" – namely, Asian Americans or Mexican Americans born in the United States with formal U.S. citizenship but cast as alien or unassimilable to the nation (Ngai 8).

While the concept of alien citizenship evoked a condition of racial otherness, a permanent state of foreignness that could not be altered, it was more than a racial metaphor. Even though it was not technically a legal condition, this supposition of alien citizenship influenced structures of racial discrimination and was at the center of large-scale racist policies such as the repatriation of 400,000 people of Mexican descent, half of whom were U.S. citizens, during the Great Depression (Ngai 8).

Hence, the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 had the cumulative effect of instigating a new legal system of racial discrimination against those legally classified as non-white, including Spanish-speaking Mexicans who, as mentioned earlier, at that time were coming to the United States in increasing waves after the Mexican Revolution. Between 1910 and 1930, the number of Mexican immigrants counted by the U.S. census tripled from 200,000 to 600,000. The actual number was probably far greater (Diller et al). Therefore, even if the Johnson-Reed Act did not directly influence the countable Spanish-speaking population in the United States, the policy had an unquestionable impact on the

social status of the language and its speakers. Due to Spanish-speakers' popular and legal classification as either illegal aliens or alien citizens, created in large part by the Act's racialization of them, the national origins quota system contributed significantly to a sharp reduction in the prestige value of spoken Spanish in the United States.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the Hart-Celler Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments of 1965 abolished the Johnson-Reed Act, stimulating significant immigration flows from Latin America and shifting demographic balances of Spanish-speakers in the subsequent nearly five decades leading to the present moment. As Gutiérrez notes, the policy resulted in distinct changes in the composition of immigrant flows over the last decades of the twentieth century ("Introduction" 4). While in 1960, 75 percent of immigrants to the U.S. came from Europe and 14 percent originated from Asia and Latin America, by the end of the century that ratio had been reversed. In 2000, only 15 percent of the foreign-born population of the United States originated in the nations of Europe; the vast majority, more than 77 percent, originated in the nations of Latin America and Asia (Gutiérrez "Introduction" 4). While it is important to note that the ability to speak Spanish is not necessarily a given for every person of Latin American origin or descent living in the United States, the language remains an important marker of identity for this diverse group as a whole. As such, Spanish has become a racialized language. Today, according to a 2007 survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, there are approximately 34 million people, comprising about 9% of the total population, who report speaking Spanish as their primary language at home ("Selected").

Latinidad: The Politics of Identity and Identifiers

Thus far, this chapter has developed discussions centering around Latino immigration history and the history of the Spanish language in the United States, closely linking these stories to socially determined concepts of racial formation and alien citizenship in the nation. These considerations logically lead to an examination of the diverse identities of Spanish speakers in the United States today, to the ways in which these identities are connected to the history of the speakers, and to the variety of ethnic labels (and the consequences of their use) attached to the approximately 34 million Spanish-speakers in the country.

As Paula Moya notes, the concept of identity remains one of the most disputed topics in literary and cultural studies. Beginning with the final two decades of the twentieth century, the trend among scholars in a variety of fields engaging in debates over identity has been to make claims that social or cultural identity is theoretically incoherent and politically pernicious (Moya 2). Moya addresses these attempts to dismantle the concept of identity by constructing a postpositivist realist framework in order to recuperate it. This theory reveals that identities can be both real and constructed: that they can be politically and epistemically significant, while also changeable, extrinsic, and historically determined (Moya 12).

Linda Martín Alcoff supports Moya's framework, noting that realists about identity view identities as markers for history, social location, and positionality (6). The realist structure argues that identities are not bewildering inner quintessences but rather socially embodied facts about people in the world. Alcoff develops the theoretical issue

concerning identities beyond the discussion of whether they are constructed – arguing

that they always are, since they are socially determined – and refocuses instead on

questions of how different kinds of identities create different experiences of the world.

In her argument, Moya highlights these differences in noting the correlation

between structures of inequality and categories of identity, suggesting that their

interconnectedness is a fundamental element of social liberation and oppression (Moya

8). Within the context of U.S. Spanish speakers and the low social status historically

bestowed upon this diverse group as a whole, Moya's obervation underscores a

connection between the perceived identity of Spanish speakers – linked to race and class

– and the history of discrimination against them. Given that goods and resources are

distributed according to identity categories, and that who people are – meaning who they

perceive themselves or are perceived by others to be – significantly affects their life

chances, one can conclude that the historical perception of Spanish speakers in the United

States as racially inferior undocumented workers has played a significant role in the

social oppression suffered by this sector of society (Moya 8).

Of particular interest to the discussion of socially constructed racial identification

is the issue of ethnonyms, or identity markers often used as implicit racial descriptors

despite their claim to denote ethnicity and not race. Nicholas De Genova and Ana

Ramos-Zayas unpack the ethnonym discussion through their examination of the

possibilities and obstacles of a shared sense of "Latino" identity, or *Latinidad*, among

diverse groups of people of Spanish-speaking Latin American origin or descent living in

the United States. Indeed, since the passing of the Hart-Celler Act in 1965, thousands of

Spanish-speaking people from Latin America have made their way to the United States,

where they have joined other immigrants or exiles from South and Central America, the

Spanish-speaking Caribbean, and Mexico, as well as Puerto Ricans and sectors of the

Mexican American communities who have long lived in the United States as citizens. Yet

regardless of the varying historical processes that brought diverse Spanish-speaking

populations of Latin American origin to the U.S., their lives are today directly affected by

the use of the terms "Hispanic" or "Latino" to characterize them. The term "Latino" was

officially adopted in 1997 by the United States Government in the ethnonym "Hispanic

or Latino," which replaced the single term "Hispanic" that had been in place since the

1970s (U.S. Office of Management and Budget).[11]

De Genova and Ramos-Zayas begin their argument by asserting that, in spite of

claims to the contrary, the ongoing reconfigurations of "Latinos" are very much a matter

of racial formation in the U.S. They note that the essential unintelligibility of social

categories such as "Latino" or "Hispanic" (unintelligible because they are so broad),

combined with their enduring meaningfulness (meaningful because they do nevertheless

denote race), are suggestive indicators that these terms are indeed *racial* and not ethnic

signifiers (16). The U.S. Bureau of the Census, among other commentators, claims that

Latinos are not a "race" and that those whom the term describes may be, variously, Black

or white or some "other" race. Indeed, the U.S. Census has unequivocally held the

"Hispanic" category to be an officially non-racial classification. Nevertheless, De Genova

[11] In Latin America, unlike in the United States, the term *Latino* (meaning Latin in English) tends to refer to a common Latin culture, language (meaning derived from Latin), or shared history as members of the Roman Empire. Within this context, Italians and French are also considered Latinos, something unheard of in the U.S.

and Ramos-Zayas argue that this hegemonic "ethnic" differentiation appointed by the U.S. state has been key to the distribution of affirmative action entitlements, revealing what these scholars describe as a deliberate construction of "Hispanics" into an effectively homogenized minority population comparable to African Americans. In fact, this group has been homogenized even to the point of excluding other Hispanics, such as Sephardic Jews. Therefore, the "Hispanic" status of Latinos is in fact widely treated as a racial condition, at least in the important arena of bureaucratic visibility and services.

As De Genova and Ramos-Zayas note, the terms "Hispanic" or "Latino" are not only racialized ethnonyms. They also act as descriptors that serve to homogenize people of Latin American origin or descent living in the United States. The process by which groups have come to be blended together as "Hispanics" or "Latinos" cannot be separated from the way in which these pan-Latino labels were first devised by the U.S. federal government. The "Hispanic" label was formulated by the U.S. state as a calculated method of deletion with regard to the more particular histories of groups originating from individual nations in Latin America or the Spanish-speaking Caribbean (De Genova and Ramos-Zayas 17). Suzanne Oboler also cautions against the government's use of umbrella terms such as "Hispanic" as homogenizing markers that erase cultural histories and have the potential to spread negative connotations leading to stigmatization and discrimination against all of the designatees (Oboler xviii).

Critics of these homogenizing ethnonyms argue against their use by claiming that social identities such as "Hispanic" or "Latino" are infamous for the obscurity and inconsistency they entail in identifying diverse groups of Latin American origins (De

Genova and Ramos-Zayas 17). In spite of these inherent ambiguities and incongruities,

however, the labels have become widely used and increasingly significant, particularly

for hegemonic practices that lump together these groups as a composite "minority"

population, a political constituency, or a market segment (Dávila 2).[12] Furthermore, the

production of a Hispanic ethnic identity could serve to distract Latin American

populations within the U.S. from political mobilization on the basis of race or nationality

(De Genova and Ramos-Zayas 18).

Hence, some scholars and activists have been inspired to repudiate generic labels

like Hispanic or Latino altogether as homogenized cultural markers evocative of

historical experiences largely generated by politicians, social scientists, the mass media

and advertising industry. Meanwhile, others have come either to internalize the terms to

varying degrees, or to strategically appropriate them for purposes of self-identification,

representation, and organization (De Genova and Ramos-Zayas 19). Thus, the terms

"Hispanic" or "Latino" have come to be used as tools for creating community and

building strategic coalitions for self-representation (De Genova and Ramos-Zayas 17).

Scholars like Oboler note that there is a need to forge the political unity of the various

groups of Latin American origin or descent under one umbrella term in the search for full

citizenship rights and social justice (Oboler xviii). Therefore, while Oboler has

reservations about the use of umbrella ethnonyms as described earlier, she does see a

political utility in these pan-ethnic identifiers.

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[12] The multitude of ways in which generalized ideas about "Hispanics" have been
marketed and advertised appears in chapter VI, The Marketing and Publishing of
Latinidad.

David Gutiérrez acknowledges that so-called Latinos in the United States are a
diverse population derived from the complex colonial and postcolonial history of
Spanish-speaking people in the Western Hemisphere. However, he also points to a
number of powerful historical and cultural ties that are shared by Spanish-speaking
people of Latin American origin or descent, in spite of the multitude of differences that
make up this population. According to Gutiérrez, the term "Latino" could designate the
following six shared characteristics: a Spanish-language heritage[13], a legacy of genetic
and cultural *mestizaje* (what he describes as a melding of European, African, and
indigenous gene pools and cultural traits), a Christian tradition, a common history of
national liberation from Spanish imperialism, a legacy in contending with the effects of
U.S. imperialism, and the integrally related experience of varying degrees of
discrimination in the United States (Gutiérrez "Introduction" 10). However, even
Gutiérrez's list of characteristics silences many additional possibilities of "Latinidad,"
erasing other actors in the historical and cultural scene such as speakers of Portuguese,
for example, or non-Catholics.

In analyzing substantive commonalities among distinct Latino groups, De Genova
and Ramos-Zayas draw attention primarily to the final three features on Gutiérrez' list:
they argue that the basis for such commonalities *must* be situated in an examination of the
conjoined historicity of peoples throughout Latin America in relation to the colonial and
imperialist projects of the U.S. nation-state. Furthermore, they argue, conversations about

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[13] Given that many indigenous peoples in Latin America speak Spanish as a second
language and a significant minority of U.S.-born Latinos do not speak Spanish at all, it is
important to distinguish Spanish-language heritage from actual Spanish proficiency as a
shared characteristic of Latinos in the United States (Gutiérrez 10).

Latinidad must be accompanied by the historical and contemporary racializations of Latin America and Latinos in the U.S. by the sociopolitical order of white supremacy (21).

Gutiérrez adds that "dating almost from the creation of the United States, the general attitude of government officials and much of the American public toward Latin America has been, at best, one of ignorance and, at worst, one of disdain, if not outright animus" ("Introduction" 10). By the middle of the nineteenth century it had become second nature for both individuals of influence and much of the general public to attribute Latin American poverty, political instability, and general economic and infrastructural underdevelopment to what was widely perceived and argued to be the fundamental racial and cultural inferiority of Latin Americans themselves (Gutiérrez "Introduction" 11). Racial discrimination, it would seem, has always been part of the experience of being Latino in the U.S. Gutiérrez here gestures at the notion that a shared experience of discrimination constitutes a unifying characteristic of all people whom the term "Latino" purports to describe.

Thus, while some scholars caution against umbrella ethnonyms such as "Hispanic" or "Latino" because of the tendency of such labels to erase cultural histories and variety among this diverse population, others propose that people of Latin American origin or descent living in the United States *do*, in fact, share a number of historical and cultural ties that can be designated within a single term. Juan Gonzalez, on the other hand, sidesteps the terminology debate in his historical analysis of Latinos in the United States. Of the discussion surrounding the terms "Latino" and "Hispanic," Gonzalez writes, "Neither is totally accurate but both are acceptable" (xix). He opts, instead, to use

them interchangeably within his analysis, claiming that these changing preferences for ethnic designators reflect nothing more than "phases" through which this population is passing in selecting self-identifiers. However, the debate over ethnic label use deserves more consideration than Gonzalez suggests. Changes in terminology reflect more than simply a passage through phases, since certain labels carry with them a negative value due to their historical use as discriminatory terms. Perhaps this is why minority groups periodically opt for new self-identifiers.

According to the United States Office of Management and Budget, today "Hispanic" is commonly used in the eastern portion of the United States, whereas "Latino" is commonly used in the western portion. Because most individuals in the United States engaging with these terms are likely neither Latino Studies scholars nor census data experts, a brief examination of a dictionary definition of these terms provides a window into the everyday use and understanding of these ethnonyms. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language claims that of the two terms, "Hispanic" has the broader reference, potentially encompassing all Spanish-speaking peoples in both hemispheres and emphasizing the common denominator of language among communities that sometimes have little else in common. By comparison, "Latino" refers more exclusively to persons or communities of Latin American origin or descent. Of the two terms, only "Hispanic" can be used in referring to Spain and its history and culture. However, the distinction between the two ethnonyms "is of little significance when referring to residents of the United States, most of whom are of Latin American origin and can theoretically be called by either word" ("Hispanic"). Hence, the American

Heritage Dictionary's perspective is suggestive of a blurred distinction between the two terms, arguably reflecting an everyday perspective on the debate.

The literary and political movements of the 1960s and 1970s among Mexican Americans established the term "Chicano" as an expression of ethnic pride, and it is commonly used today to describe native-born U.S. citizens of Mexican ancestry. Though the term's meanings are highly debatable, *Chicano* bears strong political associations and is deployed by many as a positive self-identifying social construction. However, the American Heritage Dictionary warns that "[s]ince these politics are not necessarily espoused by all Mexican Americans, and since usage and acceptance of this word can vary from one region to another, an outsider who is unfamiliar with his or her audience may do well to use *Mexican American* instead." Here, the dictionary indirectly suggests this label for use by the non-Mexican, advising that the term be avoided due to its politically-charged associations ("Chicano").

This section has outlined a number of issues regarding the politics of identity surrounding populations of Spanish-speaking Latin American origin or descent living in the United States today. Taken together, these perspectives point toward a Latino experience that is at once racial, cultural and linguistic. As noted previously, while not all members of such populations are necessarily Spanish speakers, they do at the very least share to varying degrees a Spanish-language heritage. Furthermore, the Spanish language itself is closely linked to the identities of this population, and in many cases its use has become symbolic of the population as a whole. Therefore, discourse surrounding

Latinidad and the sociopolitical status of Latinos by necessity informs discussions

centering around the social positioning of the Spanish language in the United States.

The Emergence of Latino Literary and Cultural Studies

Regardless of which term one uses to describe people of Latin American origin or

descent living in the U.S., changes in the demographic structure of the pan-Latino

population and how this grouping is conceptualized have propelled a period of intense re-

examination of U.S. Latino identity, not only by Latinos themselves but also by the

nation as a whole. An important site for the dynamics of this re-examination process is

the multitude of cultural expressions emerging out of Latino communities. As William

Flores and Rina Benmayor propose in their glossing of Renato Rosaldo's concept of

"Latino cultural citizenship," these specifically Latino cultural forms of expression not

only keep identity and heritage alive, but also significantly enrich the cultural whole of

the country (2). *Cultural citizenship*, according to Flores and Benmayor, names a range of

social practices which, taken together, "claim and establish a distinct social space for

Latinos in the United States" (1).

One result of the growing Latino population discussed previously and the

subsequent emergence of U.S. Latino expressive cultures is the integration of Latino and

area studies into the American university system over the past decade. Universities are

creating a space for this dynamic field, be it in existing departments of Spanish, Romance

Languages, English, Ethnic Studies, or in newly created institutional frameworks

(Aparicio, "Latino Cultural Studies" 3). However, because of U.S. Latino literature's

tendency to engage in the mixing of Spanish and English within single narratives, a

bilingual language phenomenon referred to as code-switching, this literature's relationship to Spanish or Romance Languages departments is often brought into question. [14] This is also the case within interdisciplinary programs such as Women's Studies or American Culture (Cashman "Language Choice" 146). Holly Cashman writes, "This exclusion serves to silence the voice of U.S. Latina writers in academia for the sake of maintaining the standard language ideology" ("Language Choice" 146). This standard language ideology, defined by Rosina Lippi-Green as "...a bias toward an abstracted, idealized, homogenous spoken language which is imposed and maintained by dominant bloc institutions and which names as its model the written language, but which is drawn primarily from the spoken language of the upper middle class" (64), negates a permanent, legitimate space for narratives which engage in code-switching. U.S. Latino literature, therefore, does not have a regular home in academia but rather straddles several possible departments and disciplines, belonging partially in multiple spaces, but wholly nowhere. The Academy's resistance to this hybridized discipline reflects the institution's inscription and reinforcement of cultural biases.

According to Frances Aparicio, this lack of total belonging has to do with the prevailing perception in many universities and departments that one need not specialize in Latino studies in order to teach them ("Latino Cultural Studies" 7). She states, "This phenomenon is the result of class prejudice against cultural productions whose subjects and agents are working class and who are considered racially inferior to thinkers of

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[14] While Latino literature was at one time also rejected from English departments, this is no longer the case; rather, Latino literature has recently become a hotly-pursued area of specialization within the field of English literature.

Western culture" ("Latino Cultural Studies" 8). Because of the widespread belief that specialization is not required to teach U.S. Latino literatures, and because these literatures are usually characterized by concepts of code switching, bilingualism, and a complex cultural labeling system, they are treated differently when approached critically through the disciplinary lenses of departments of Spanish, Romance Languages, Comparative Literature, and English or Ethnic Studies. A Spanish or Romance Languages Department approach might consider Latino texts as representing a subversion or modification of standard Spanish literary discourse, while English or Ethnic Studies might approach the texts through the lens of English monolingualism and view the Spanish language entries as emblematic of cultural and linguistic "otherness." A Comparative Literature approach might focus the study of Latino literatures around discussions of translation between languages and articulations of hybrid identity.

Regardless of the critical lens through which U.S. Latino literatures are approached, many of the texts under examination engage to varying degrees in articulating an experience of dwelling between worlds, of living within two distinct cultures and languages at once. Many bilingual Latino writers create texts that not only alternate between English and Spanish but also articulate a bicultural identity, one that encompasses the cultures linked with each code or language. Thus, a state of "in-betweenness" pervades not only Latino literatures but also the study of them; the interdisciplinary "in-betweenness" of Latino Studies reflects the cultural and linguistic "in-betweenness" of the Latino experience in the United States. Just as Latinos are both desired and debased by U.S. society, which simultaneously needs and dehumanizes them,

the Academy takes on bilingual texts as a subject of study but has yet to invent appropriate institutional structures that correspond to their hybridity.

The Latino literary articulation of living between worlds is achieved predominantly through the ethnic memoir, or what Frances Aparicio refers to as the autoethnography ("Expressive Cultures" 357) – so called because it explores how the individual is continuously formed and informed by the history and political economy of local communities. Many of these texts give voice to the Latino sense of alienation and marginalization created as a result of residing in an uncomfortable, in-between space, both linguistically and culturally, within the United States or in the areas where the United States borders Mexico. This in-between space, one characterized by a sense of cultural displacement, is both literal and metaphorical, one that simultaneously leaves U.S. Latinos bereft of a sense of total physical and social belonging while at the same time allowing Latinos the freedom to move unimpeded from one fixed culture and language to another.

The U.S. Latino autoethnography engages in a project of restoring erased pasts and expressing a hybrid present. Whether they present themselves as autobiographical or semi-autobiographical, or whether they are simply interpreted as such, many of these autoethnographic texts reflect an impulse to create narratives that join disparate fragments of culture and history torn asunder as a result of the centering of U.S. Anglo language and culture and the marginalization of U.S. Latino language and culture. They do so by describing individual human experiences that offer personal testimony as a means of reclaiming cultural histories excluded from the official narratives of the nation's

history mentioned previously. Furthermore, by mixing both English and Spanish within single texts, U.S. Latino narratives begin to challenge the linguistic and cultural hierarchies so firmly set in place within the United States.

Most U.S. Latino authors, whether they choose to write predominantly in English or Spanish, intimately know both the Anglo and the Latino cultural contexts and both languages. It is therefore not astonishing that their narrators often mediate between the two, adopt or subvert culturally conditioned stereotypes, and translate linguistic and cultural differences for their intended readership (Rudin xi). Latino writers such as Sandra Cisneros, Ana Castillo, Junot Díaz, Helena Viramontes, Julia Alvarez, Gloria Anzaldúa, Judith Ortiz Cofer, Esmeralda Santiago, Nicholasa Mohr, Giannina Braschi and Susana Chávez-Silverman, all engage to varying degrees in a project of adoption or subversion of their readers' expectations via cultural and/or linguistic translations. The bilingual and bicultural elements in all of these authors' texts constitute one of the most salient and revealing markers of this process of translation. These and other writers will be analyzed further in chapter IV, Code Switching, and chapter V, The "Minor" in U.S. Latino Narrative.

Conclusion

Many argue that the Spanish-language will significantly shape the linguistic landscape of America in the twenty-first century, as evidenced by the sizeable Spanish-speaking communities located throughout the country (Carter). In this chapter, I have attempted to examine what it means to be a Spanish speaker in the United States today, how that identity is linked to the past, and the ways in which it is represented in

narratives that capture the racial, cultural, and linguistic "in-betweenness" of being classified as Latino in the United States today.

In briefly re-examining the history of the Spanish language in the United States and analyzing Latino immigration history, I critically scrutinize the ways by which widely accepted histories detailing the origins of the nation often exclude or alter events and facts to support ideological interests. As a result of such omissions, most notably for our purposes the dearth of accurate information related to the Spanish language presence in the country, many myths persist surrounding the past and present positioning of the Spanish language and its speakers in the United States.

Reconstructing the past strongly informs human identity. Memory – both individual and collective – serves as a tool for retaining information and recording past experiences, usually for present purposes. Furthermore, memories give people a sense of where they have come from and who they are, and can guide their decisions about the future. Therefore, the omission or misrepresentation of the presence of the Spanish language and its speakers, as well as of Latino immigration history, profoundly affects the identity associated with people of Latin American origin or descent living in the United States. As Locke noted, the pictures drawn in our minds are made in fading colors that vanish and disappear if not sometimes refreshed. Hence, the deletion of Latino history from the national story means the negation of roots, of presence, and of agency for those omitted.

The identity of Spanish speakers in the U.S. has been shaped by labels meant to describe ethnicity but which implicitly – if indirectly – denote an inferior race as part of

the sociopolitical order of white supremacy. The postpositivist realist theory of identity argues that the racial component that goes along with being named "Latino" or "Hispanic" in the United States is not something to transcend or subvert, but something that needs to be engaged with and attended to. Realists about identity contend that an ability to take effective steps toward progressive social change for Latinos is predicated on an acknowledgement of, and a familiarity with, past and present structures of inequality. According to this model, many U.S. Latino writers actively engage with and attend to their bilingual and bicultural identities by creating texts which mirror this experience and require readers to dwell in the same in-between space inhabited by these writers and, by extension, many Latinos in the United States.

CHAPTER III

LANGUAGE AND POWER

"There is something deeply inequitable and unacceptable about the practice of excluding the few from the privileges of the many on the basis not of what they have to say, but of how they say it." –Rosina Lippi-Green

Introduction

The primary focus of this project is to look at how readers read and receive contemporary U.S. Latino-authored narrative that engages in textual code switching, or the alternation between English and Spanish on the page. In examining these texts and their effects on readers, this project also looks at what could be at stake in terms of the national perception of the Latino population – its history, identity, power, and language. Because these code switching texts provide hard evidence of the bilingualism present in Latino communities, their reception by readers of varying linguistic backgrounds in the United States becomes representative of the shifting perceptions held by the nation regarding the monolingual ideology in this country.

This chapter focuses specifically on how and why bilingualism – particularly English-Spanish – has a long tradition of being heavily resisted in the United States. The following sections allow us to examine this history: discussions of the ways in which bilingualism, as a bi-product of language contact situations, has become emblematic of language change; an examination of the abstract ideal that is a standard language and the ideology surrounding English monolingualism in the United States; analyses of the ways

in which bilingualism itself poses a threat to the idea of a unified nation; a discussion

about the centering of national power around monolingualism and its link to anti-

immigration ideologies; and an examination of the negativity about bilingualism – and

Spanish – that many bilinguals themselves have internalized as a result.

Language Change: A Resisted Inevitability

Many are reluctant to acknowledge that variation constitutes an inherent property

of language, which has never existed in a static, pure form, and thus cannot be corrupted

or degenerate. Rosina Lippi-Green suggests that beliefs about the ways language should

be used are handed down and defended in much the same way that religious beliefs are

passed on and treasured (xv). As a human biological function, language always and

inevitably evolves, develops, and changes in normal, functional ways; indeed, the

inevitability of language change is one of the linguistic facts of life. And yet for centuries

people have resisted and disputed the simple truth that all living languages change; that

the lexicon, sound structures, tone, rhythm, the way sentences are put together, the social

markings of variants, and the meanings assigned to words are not fixed but rather shift

over time without exception (Lippi-Green 10).

Why is language change so passionately opposed? To answer the question, we

first examine where in the social hierarchy language change usually takes place. In the

typical sequence of language change, it is the lower and not the upper classes that initiate

change. Walt Wolfram and Natalie Schilling-Estes note that the laymen's view seems to

be the opposite, that the upper classes originate change and the lower classes follow

suit. While a model of change revealing the elite leading the masses might be intuitively satisfying, it turns out to be highly erroneous. In reality, the lower social classes have initiated far more language change than they have been credited for (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 163).[15]

Wolfram and Schilling-Estes note that while change is certainly natural and inevitable, some social groups may differentiate themselves by resisting changes occurring in other social groups. Because the lower classes usually adopt these changes initially, the upper classes usually resist them. Thus, note Wolfram and Schilling-Estes, a salient principle of sociolinguistic stratification constitutes the inhibition of natural linguistic changes by high-status groups. By resisting the evolutions that take place in lower-status groups, the elite social classes effectively maintain and even heighten the social stratification of linguistic differences. The heart of the matter is that members of socially privileged groups fear being mistaken for members of underprivileged groups as a result of their language use. Consequently, high status groups frequently attempt to suppress natural changes taking place in lower-status groups to keep their privileged sociolinguistic position intact. In U.S. society, therefore, the social differentiation of language is typified by upper class resistance to proposed changes initiated by the lower classes, rather than the introduction of change by the upper classes and subsequent

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[15] It is important to note that linguistic forms do not inherently have high or low status; the perceived status of a given lexical item, verb form, or pronunciation is assigned by different social groups, i.e. is socially constructed. Moreover, as Lippi-Green points out, beliefs about the ways language should be used are handed down and defended in much the same way that religious beliefs are passed on and treasured (xv).

reproduction of these changes by the lower classes (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 163-164).

The class distinction alone cannot fully explain resistance to language change, however. The link between language and power that leads to resistance of linguistic change often transcends social status distinctions alone, and includes factors such as age, status, gender, and geographic region (Holmes 200). Janet Holmes notes that typically linguistic changes infiltrate groups from the speech of people on the margins between social or regional groups. Linguistic changes are spread by these "middle people" – described by Holmes as "linguistic stockbrokers or entrepreneurs" – who have contacts in more than one group (200).

Using Holmes' concept of linguistic entrepreneurs as agents of language change – change that is inevitable but often resisted by socially powerful groups – I aim in this chapter to bring the discussion of language and power into the context of the United States by examining the hierarchical relationships between an idealized standard English used by a monolingual speech community, and the many linguistic varieties of bilingual, non-standard languages in the nation. My discussion centers primarily around English-Spanish bilingualism and its sociopolitical positioning in U.S. society. I discuss the ways in which monolingual speakers of English in the U.S have come to unconsciously enjoy the privilege of assuming that an imagined monolingual, uniform English-speaking society is the norm, and that any variation from this standard, such as bilingualism, represents not only a bastardization of standard language but also an essential threat to the unity of the nation. Nevertheless, I argue for the possibility that bilingual members of

two linguistic and social groups with contacts in both the English-speaking and the Spanish-speaking worlds are in fact Holmes' linguistic entrepreneurs, effectively wielding the power to act as agents of linguistic change on a national scale. As such, English-Spanish bilinguals constitute one possible vector through which a new linguistic reality can emerge in the United States.

Standard Language: Myth and Ideology

Given the unavoidability of language change, a standardized language can only be understood as an abstraction, for the very process of language standardization claims to accomplish the linguistically impossible: to fix language in time and space, to nail it down and describe it as a single, unvarying tool of communication, one that can be both limited and controlled. A standard language constitutes not a living language but an ideal one, continuously constructed and reconstructed with great care to serve specific purposes.

Standard U.S. English, then, is a constructed ideal language and not a real language spoken by real people, except in very controlled, scripted events (e.g. a news broadcast). As Lippi-Green notes, the way the standard is conceived and defined highlights both people's assumptions as well as their misunderstandings about language in general (53). In the following paragraphs, I will outline several aspects of standard English mythology that have bearing on issues of language use in the United States.

Many definitions of standard U.S. English incorrectly assume that the written and spoken language are equivalent, holding spelling and pronunciation as equal measures of

conformity to the norm. Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary offers the following definition:

> Standard English: the English that with respect to spelling, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary is substantially uniform though not devoid of regional differences, that is well established by usage in the formal and informal speech and writing of the educated, and that is widely recognized as acceptable wherever English is spoken and understood. ("Standard English")

As Lippi-Green points out, this definition leaves no room for social differences, but rather determines that standard English is the language of the educated only. What is meant by "educated" is not explained, however. Nor is the language spoken by those who are *not* educated, whoever they may be (Lippi-Green 54).

Most other dictionary definitions of standard English, such as the ones found in the Random House Dictionary, the Chambers Dictionary, and the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, contain similar presumptions about educated speakers as the only users of the standard language. The Guide to Pronunciation in the Preface of the 11th edition of Merriam-Webster even goes so far as to name types of occupations held by people deemed educated and hence seen as representative of correct pronunciation: politicians, professors, curators, artists, musicians, doctors, engineers, preachers, activists, and journalists ("Guide to Pronunciation" 33a). In order to pin down the pronunciation of such people, the editors listen to talk shows, medical shows, interviews, news, commentary, and the weather (Nemy). Clearly, then, the dictionary definition of what constitutes an educated person must be extremely narrow, since in

spite of the editors' claim to include all variants that are used by said educated speakers, an entry with three or more possible pronunciations is in fact quite rare (Lippi-Green 55).

Hence, as Lippi-Green argues, the designation of standard English cannot be representative in any real way of the speech it purports to describe. What proportion, she asks, of even the educated population has regular access to the broadcast media? Very few of the people who hold the professions listed above discuss their views on the budget, on foreign affairs, or on local government in a forum which is broadcast to a wider audience. Moreover, those *not* classified as educated, who by the dictionary definition must constitute the greatest number of native speakers of English, are even less represented (Lippi-Green 55).

The task of describing standard English, then, appears to be an impossibility. If there is no way to write a dictionary which truly describes variation (in pronunciation, syntax, and so on), then perhaps it becomes necessary to select one social group to serve as a model. However, notes Lippi-Green, there is nothing at all objective about electing this model. The process of selection constitutes nothing other than the ordering of social groups as a means of deciding who holds the authority on how language should best be used, and who does not (Lippi-Green 55). A choice that cannot help but support – intentionally or otherwise – the ideological interests of those making it.

Within the standard English myth, the elevation of the so-called educated social group with regard to determining correct usage reveals a perceived superiority of the written language. The built-in supposition is that people with more education are by default more exposed to written texts and literary traditions, and it is presumed that they

probably write better than those with less access to education. However, the definitions of standard English described above fail to make clear how someone who writes better necessarily has a more genuine and authoritative pronunciation. The equation of the ability to write well with the ability to pronounce words "correctly" is presented as a given. Hence, the social domain of standard English becomes more than just the language of the educated; it is the language of those who have achieved a high level of expertise in the written language (Lippi-Green 56).

Thus far, two definitive characteristics have been established as part of the standard U.S. English language myth: namely, that its speakers must be educated, and that they also must be good writers. A third dimension in the social domain of the myth constitutes the geographic location of the speakers. Dennis Preston conducted a number of studies which investigate non-linguists' beliefs about the localizations of standard language in the United States. The results showed that respondents believed the most correct English was used in five areas of the U.S.: North Central, Mid-Atlantic (excluding New York City), New England, Colorado, and the West Coast. They most positively identified Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin as the areas where standard English was best represented, and the South as the area where it was least prevalent. The Midwest, according to the perceptions of those participating in this study, is the home of standard U.S. English (Preston 66).

Lippi-Green draws attention to yet another perceived aspect of the standard English myth; namely, that speakers of this variety of English have no regional accent. This belief arises out of the desire for the standard language to be neutral, because

neutrality implies a greater range of communication. Yet linguistically-speaking, there is no such thing as non-accent, since all languages contain a set of prosodic and segmental features[16] distributed over geographic and social spaces; rather, non-accent is a collectively-held ideal which brings with it a series of social (such as educated) and regional (such as Midwestern) associations (Lippi-Green 41). Therefore, the perception that speakers of English "with an accent" are using a sub-standard variety implies that such speakers are not conforming to the determined ideal accent (thought of as neutral or accentless).

The term "mainstream" functions in a similar way to the term "standard" in the myth of standard U.S. English. Implicit to this myth about speakers of standard U.S. English is a perception about those who speak so-called non-standard or non-mainstream varieties. Lippi-Green offers a helpful description of perceptions about those who conform to the standard and those who do not (referred to below as "mainstream" and "non-mainstream," respectively):

> *Mainstream US English* speakers function in communities and institutions which rely on formal education systems to prepare children for participation in the community. Nationally, these speakers are *perceived* as living primarily in the Midwest, far west, and some parts of the east and/or as upper middle class or upper class, as literate, school-oriented, and as aspiring to upward mobility through success in formal institutions. They look beyond the primary networks of family and community for sociolinguistic models and value orientations.

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[16] Prosodic features include intonation, stress, and tempo, and segmental features include the sounds of vowels and consonants in a phonological structure.

Non-mainstream US English speakers function in communities and institutions
which rely less on formal education systems to prepare children for participation
in the community. Nationally, these speakers are *perceived* as living primarily in
the far south and inner urban centers, and/or as working class or lower class, as
less interested in literacy or school, and as aspiring to local rather than
supranational success in formal institutions. They tend to stay within networks of
family and community for sociolinguistic models and value orientations. (61)

It goes without saying that these definitions reflect the social constructions – rather than
the real lives – of speakers of different varieties of English in the United States. As such,
the above descriptions reveal how language is perceived and used as an indicator of the
speaker's social status and subsequent rights and privileges within a society.

As mentioned earlier, the myth about standard U.S. English persists because it is
carefully propagated by individuals acting for larger social groups aiming to control and
limit language variation. These larger social groups, composed of mainstream U.S.
English speakers, attempt to isolate their own variety of U.S. English (so-called standard
U.S. English) from the many other varieties so that theirs persists in finding favor across
geographic and social distinctions. As Lippi-Green points out, these speakers are not
coincidentally members of primarily white, middle- and upper-class, and Midwestern
American communities (62).

When language becomes a tool for the emblematic marking of social allegiance,
as discussed above, it becomes clear that when speakers of stigmatized varieties are asked
to reject their own way of speaking, it is not the language itself but the social allegiance

made clear by its use which is the fundamental problem. Language – unlike race, religion, or gender – is perceived as a deniable or suppressible social marker, and therefore speakers of marginalized varieties are regularly required to change their language in order to model it after the more prestigious variety, or the abstraction referred to as standard U.S. English. Within this framework, then, Lippi-Green defines standard Language ideology as "a bias toward an abstracted, idealized, homogenous spoken language which is imposed and maintained by dominant bloc institutions and which names as its model the written language, but which is drawn primarily from the spoken language of the upper middle class" (64).

Thus far, this examination of the myth of standard U.S. English has not specifically included discussions of monolingualism or bilingualism, though one might safely presume that any bias toward standard U.S. English would by default refer to its exclusive monolingual use, because as Janet Holmes notes, speakers of monolingual English typically operate under the deeply ingrained impression that everyone else speaks, or should speak, as they do (195). Indeed, in the context of immigration flows to the United States, English has become emblematic of the successfully assimilated newcomer; hence, it is promoted as the one and only possible language of a unified nation (Lippi-Green 217). However, as discussed in the subsequent section, most immigrant populations in the U.S. typically undergo a three-generation language-loss cycle, in which groups shift from monolingual use of their home country's language to monolingual use of English. As we will see, the second generation of this three-generation cycle is the group that typically operates bilingually, possessing some degree

of fluency in both the native language of their parents as well as English. Therefore, as Lippi-Green points out, the public debates surrounding immigrant populations' language use have less to do with whether these groups should be using English or their native country's tongue; rather, they have more to do with which form of "accented" English the bilingual populations will eventually speak (217).

Language Contact, Bilingualism, and a Nation Threatened

The bilingual facility typically developed by second-generation immigrant families is a byproduct of the language contact situation in the United States, through which two or more languages interact. When speakers of different varieties come into extended contact with each other, their languages typically influence each other over time. Language contact can occur at language borders – which occasionally correspond with national borders – between adstratum[17] languages, or as the result of migration or immigration. When speakers of different languages come together, the resulting linguistic relationships are determined in large part by the economic and political power of the speakers of each variety (Eble).

In the colonial era of the United States, English was established as the de facto national language, largely replacing colonial French and Spanish and the languages of Native Americans (Eble). However, large numbers of non-English speaking immigrants arrived in the U.S. in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, making the United States a country in which languages continued to come into contact with one another (Eble). As discussed in the previous chapter, Spanish in particular has played a prominent

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[17] An adstratum is a language that coexists geographically with another and is equal in prestige to the other.

role in the language contact history of the nation. Not only has the language been spoken in the present-day United States since before the founding of the nation, but also the number of Spanish speakers residing in the country has steadily increased over time. Today nearly 34 million people in the U.S. speak Spanish, making it the second most common language in the country after English ("Selected"). Clearly, language contact is characteristic of life in the United States, a nation in which English comes into contact with multiple varieties of Spanish on a daily basis.

Contact linguists have noted two truths about languages in contact: they inevitably lead to bilingualism (Appel and Muysken 1), as mentioned above, and they are characterized by constant and rapid change (Appel and Muysken 5). Bilingualism, then, appears to be a rung in the ladder leading to language change. As such, bilingualism becomes symbolic of a new linguistic horizon – one that, as mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, many resist.

Appel and Muysken note that most linguists distinguish between two types of bilingualism: societal and individual. In general, societal bilingualism occurs when all members of a given society use two languages, and individual bilingualism occurs when individual people use several languages although the society may not (Apple and Muysken 2). Li Wei concurs, noting that the term "bilingual" can describe either a person with the possession of two languages, or groups of people around the world with varying degrees of proficiency in two, three, four or even more languages. Bilingual or multilingual speakers, adds Li Wei, use the languages at their disposal for different purposes in different contexts, and they typically do not always possess the same level or

type of proficiency in each language (6). For instance, a child raised in the United States in a Spanish-speaking family might use Spanish at home or during community activities while using English at school or in public interactions such as going to the grocery store or the post office. This bilingual child might posses a higher level of oral proficiency than written proficiency in Spanish because the language is used primarily in conversations at home or in the community but not in school. Meanwhile, the child's written skills in English are likely to be stronger because of the formal schooling typically received exclusively in that language. Hence, in this example each language is used by the bilingual in different contexts and with different levels of proficiency.

Bilingualism is an essential step in the process of language shift, or the progressive process whereby a speech community shifts from speaking one language to speaking another. Calvin Veltman noted that Spanish-speaking immigrants in the U.S. move through a language shift process that typically spans three generations, as noted earlier. The first generation generally continues to speak Spanish, although most also speak English on a regular basis. Their children generally speak English, although they continue to speak Spanish as a second language. Their grandchildren do not speak Spanish on any regular basis, if at all (Veltman i). Hence, the second generation is the bilingual group, bridging the preferred language and culture of their parents (or their heritage language) with the preferred language and culture of their country. Therefore, within three generations, a language shift typically occurs from Spanish to English. Clearly, then, Spanish-speaking immigrants, like other waves of immigrants before them, acquire English and eventually abandon their mother tongue (Valdés 29).

Given this reality about the typical language shift in Spanish-speaking immigrants to the United States and the role played by the bilingual second generation, how could bilingualism possibly pose a threat to monolingual English speakers? First, as noted earlier, bilingualism in and of itself is symbolic of language change, a linguistic reality that is ardently resisted by many, particularly from higher status groups such as white, Anglo, monolingual English speakers the U.S. Second, it is impossible to separate the perceived threat posed by Spanish-English bilinguals from the perceived threat posed by immigrants from Spanish-speaking nations in general. These threats are the result of a misguided paranoia that bilinguals and immigrants will corrupt the monolingual purity and white racial identity of the nation. As discussed in chapter II, Spanish itself has come to symbolize the entire population of Latin American origin or descent, regardless of whether or to what degree its members actually speak it. Veltman describes the persistence of a national myth that Latino immigrants do not – or will not – speak English, a myth that has driven an ever-widening wedge between Latino and non-Latino citizens and residents: "The perpetuation of the myth spawns misconceptions that send a message of rejection to Hispanics: 'We don't trust you – we don't like you – we are threatened by you – we don't think you can fit in – you are too different – and *there seem to be far too many of you*'" (Veltman ii). Ana Zentella concurs, noting that a popular tactic of the English Only movement has been to portray Latinos as Spanish-speakers who do not want to learn English (10). In the perception of the nation, an ability to speak English is equated with an ability to assimilate successfully to U.S. mainstream culture. Therefore, the myth about Latinos' unwillingness to learn English explains why

bilingualism – better yet, the use of Spanish at all – is perceived as a clear threat to the unity of the nation.

The tendency to lump together English-Spanish bilinguals with Spanish monolinguals and to regard them as a single body of speakers arises due to the fact that from an English monolingual perspective, all members of the U.S. Latino community are subsumed into one group by their use of Spanish. The subtleties of language variety within the Spanish-speaking world are erased. Guadalupe Valdés points out that U.S. Latino communities often include individuals who are newly arrived and monolingual in Spanish, as well as those who have lived long enough in the U.S. to no longer speak or understand the Spanish language. She also notes, however, that the greatest number of Latinos in the U.S. are bilingual and can function to some degree in both English and Spanish (29). Confusion about these issues and the English language proficiency of U.S. Latino populations results in misconceptions about the differences between bilinguals and Spanish monolinguals, leading to their combination into one group of language speakers.

The perceived threat to national unity posed by the presence of bilinguals or Spanish monolinguals is based largely on concepts of the importance of a single language as a necessary component of nationhood. Language is one of the features that a nation uses to define itself. It figures prominently, for example, in the familiar model of a nation as a body of people who share some combination of a common history, culture, language or ethnic origin, and who typically inhabit a particular country or territory (Hobsbawm "Introduction" 5). Indeed, the ethos of 'one state, one nation, one language' that arose out

of the Jacobin model after the European Enlightenment[18] characterizes how many in the United States conceive of a nation today (Ryn 384). Benedict Anderson's discussion of "imagined communities" suggests that the original formation of national identities was rooted in the understanding of a common language shared by members of a nation. Anderson defines a nation as an imagined political community – "imagined" because in spite of the fact that every citizen will never know every other citizen, all members possess an image of their shared fellowship and union (6). An image, Anderson explains, cultivated by the print media which enables people to "come to visualize in a general way the existence of thousands and thousands like themselves" (77). Thus, in order to have access to the language of the media which permits this imaginary fellowship to exist, and to subsequently gain membership to the nation, individuals must be literate in the same language as all fellow members of the nation. According to this formulation, then, the existence of peripheral languages not used by all members is perceived as a potential danger to the wellbeing of the unified nation.

Eric Hobsbawm notes that the relatively recent focus in the U.S. and elsewhere on national language policies has conveniently replaced attempts to sort out the complications of political and civil rights issues ("Perils" 556). Discussions about

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[18] Following in the footsteps of the German Enlightenment-era philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder's notion of one-language one-nation, the Jacobin project, dating from the French Revolution of 1789-94, held as a key objective for France the building of a new republic of equality and fraternity around a single, unifying language (Ferguson 74). Regional languages were viewed as a potential threat to the integrity of the nation and to the ideal of one state, one nation, one language. Linguistic homogenization soon became an objective of European nation-state policies (Ferguson 95), a value which was carried to the New World and which is still integral to the ideology of the U.S. nation today (Ryn 384).

language, he suggests, have become the easy alternative to explaining the more complex

underlying matters. Hobsbawm quotes Miroslav Hroch, a Czech historian: "Where an old

regime disintegrates, where old social relations have become unstable, amid the rise of

general insecurity, belonging to a common language and culture may become the only

certainty in society, the only value beyond ambiguity and doubt" (qtd. in "Perils" 556).

Hobsbawm suggests that in the West, forms of disorientation and insecurity have built up

during the past half century when the world and human life changed more rapidly and

profoundly than ever before in human history. He gestures toward widespread social

metamorphoses such as the general shift from religious to secular societies, sharp drops

in birthrate, population displacements from rural to urban settings, and transformations of

generation and gender relationships. Given these cataclysmic social changes, notes

Hobsbawm, it is not surprising that people turn to group identity, of which national and

linguistic identity is one form ("Perils" 556).

Bilingual Society/Monolingual State

Fraga et al. point out that while bilingual societies constitute most of the world's

population, the majority of nation states, such as the U.S., are monolingual in an official

sense (11). A nation state selects one language from among the many spoken by its

residents to be employed by government institutions in all interactions with the citizenry.

However, as noted by Fraga et al, few societies within nations are either monolingual or

monoethnic – certainly the United States would not be among the few (11). Hobsbawm

supports this fact, noting that on a global scale, there are probably not more than a dozen

ethnically and linguistically homogeneous states among the world's approximately 170

political entities. Indeed, argues Hobsbawm, the territorial distribution of the human race predates the idea of ethnic-linguistic nation-states, and hence does not correspond to it. Development in the modern world economy constantly undermines ethnic-linguistic homogeneity because it generates vast population movements ("Perils" 555).

Certainly, vast population movements have from the beginning shaped the ethnic-linguistic terrain of the United States, a "melting pot" nation that has fused millions of second- and third-generation immigrant families into monolingual English-speaking Americans. However, as Heinz Kloss notes, millions of unmelted or partially melted have also survived (xviii). The Census Bureau supports this claim, finding that in 2000, 82% of the nation reported using English at home while 18% of the population spoke a language other than English. Of those 18%, over half reported they also spoke English "very well." And two-thirds of those who reported speaking a language other than English (monolingually or otherwise) named Spanish as their preferred language. The United States, then, is a country in which nearly one fifth of the population uses a language other than English, and about one tenth uses Spanish (United States Census Bureau).[19]

Polyethnic and multilingual populations, then, are a reality in the United States as they are in most nation states around the globe. However, the very existence of these populations runs contrary to the ideologies about nationhood and citizenship discussed in

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[19] The data contained in the Census report cited here were obtained on the sample of households who responded to the Census 2000 long form. Nationally, approximately one out of every six housing units was included in this sample. As a result, the sample estimates may differ somewhat from the 100 percent figures that would have been obtained if all housing units, people within the housing units, and people living in group quarters, had been enumerated (United States Census Bureau).

the previous section. Within the United States, as well as other nation states, monolinguals in the national language might be encouraged to learn second languages, as Europeans do English, but few nations celebrate the use of multiple national languages. Holly Cashman points out that the view in U.S. society that non-English language use threatens the wellbeing of the nation yields a double-standard about those who use Spanish: the Anglo who speaks Spanish as a second language becomes worthy of commendation, while the Latino who speaks Spanish is condemned for being slow or stubborn ("Language Choice" 139). Frances Aparicio refers to this phenomenon as differential bilingualism, indicating that native bilinguals who use both languages are seen as deficient, while native monolinguals adorning their speech with non-English terms are seen as educated (Aparicio "Whose Spanish" 10). At best, then, bilingualism in native bilinguals is taken for granted and tolerated; at worst, it is viewed as a condition detrimental to the common good (Fraga et al. 12).

Fraga et al suggest that the majority of Americans today accept English monolingualism as an ideal, most likely because the United States is considered a nation of immigrants. Except for a brief study of foreign language in school, bilingualism is actively discouraged. The de facto national language of the U.S. is English, and the exclusive use of this language is considered fundamental to the nation's social cohesion as discussed earlier (Fraga et al. 12). Interestingly, however, it has not always been so. Hobsbawm argues that United States nationalism is by origin entirely nonlinguistic, noting that it is only because of mass Latino immigration that today demands are made for the first time that English should be the *official* language of the United States, a

country which constitutionally has no official language (Hobsbawm 556). Thus, the perceived threat to national unity posed specifically by U.S. Latino Spanish speakers is very much responsible for the movement to establish English as the official language in the United States. Hence, the hidden agenda behind the English-only movement is not just pro-English or anti-non-English; it is specifically anti-Spanish.

In spite of the fact that the English Only movement first gathered strength in the 1980s, the attitude which led to its formation has long been a part of the national ideology in the United States. Indeed, a nation of immigrants such as the U.S. is one in which a multitude of nationalities have come into contact since its inception, inevitably leading to anxieties about cultural differences. As Deborah Cameron notes, whenever culture is at issue, language is also likely to be at stake. If anxieties about cultural differences and fragmentation are typically paralleled by anxieties about multilingualism as a threat to unity, then the possession of a so-called common language such as English is felt to be one of the most salient markers of a common culture. Better yet, English is thought to have the power to bring such a culture into existence. Hence, the absence of a common language is felt to encourage resistance among alienated minority groups using their own language to mobilize political rebellion (Cameron 160).

Fears about minority language use are reflected in remarks made by leaders throughout the history of the nation. For example, in 1753 Benjamin Franklin famously wrote of German-speaking immigrants to the United States, "…they will soon outnumber us, that all the advantages we have will not, in My Opinion, be able to preserve our language, and even our government will become precarious" (qtd. in Crawford *Language*

Loyalties 19). A century and a half later, in 1914, President Theodore Roosevelt publicly stated, "We have room for but one language in this country, and that is the English language, for we intend to see that the crucible turns our people out as Americans, of American nationality, and not as dwellers in a polyglot boarding house" (qtd. in Hagedorn 554). A clear link is constructed here between speaking English and being American. As Lippi-Green suggests, the linguistic anxieties expressed in the above commentaries are reminiscent of current-day fears focused on Latino populations and the threat they are perceived as posing to the linguistic homogeneity seen as integral to successful nationhood (218).

The goal, then, of the English Only movement, which arose in response to this perceived threat posed by immigrant populations and the minority languages they speak, remains to institutionalize the use of English in official government operations through the establishment of English as the only official language in the nation. The modern-day English-only movement dates from 1983, when former senator S.I. Hayakawa of California and Dr. John Tanton, a Michigan ophthalmologist, environmentalist, and population control activist, founded U.S. English, a political advocacy group favoring the adoption of English as the official language of the United States. Since its inception, U.S. English has proved remarkably successful. Within four years of its founding, the group claimed 400,000 dues-paying members and an annual budget of $5 million. Voters have since passed several English-only measures, and numerous legislatures have followed suit. To date, thirty states have adopted laws designating English as their official language (Crawford "Anatomy" 22).

James Crawford proposes that what lies behind the motivation of the English-only leadership is a covert racist agenda: resistance of racial and cultural diversity in the United States. As evidence of this, Crawford points to the close connections between language restrictionists and immigration restrictionists, noting that U.S. English and the Federation for American Immigration Reform have combined resources revealing their shared ideological affinities: the two organizations have shared a suite of offices, a general council, a direct-mail wizard, a political-action-committee director, a writer-publicist, rich contributors, and Tanton himself as founder and chairman. Moreover, the ideological link between the two organizations became clear when a memo was leaked to the news media in 1986 in which Tanton warned of a Latino political takeover of the United States through immigration and high birthrates (Crawford "Anatomy" 23).

Crawford also notes that U.S. English and similar groups have continuously disavowed the English-only label, partly as a public relations ploy but also as a result of their ideological beliefs about bilingualism; namely, that individual bilingualism is acceptable but that societal bilingualism divides the nation into warring groups ("Anatomy" 27-28). Indeed, groups like U.S. English claim to support the use of minority languages in private contexts such as the home or church, but discourage it in public ones such as schools. As Crawford observes, restrictionists claim that by offering bilingual assistance, the government would be sending a message that civic life is acceptable in languages other than English. Thus, concludes Crawford, the restrictionists "denounce as 'official bilingualism' the tiniest concession to diversity" ("Anatomy" 28).

Bilingualism from a Bilingual Perspective

Thus far, this chapter has examined the standard language ideology in the United States in order to analyze the ways in which monolingual English enjoys widespread support while bilingualism, particularly within immigrant communities, is actively discouraged. Yet the value system privileging monolingual English use leaves its mark not only in the way bilingualism has historically been regarded by monolinguals in the U.S., but also in the way it is regarded by bilinguals themselves. According to many sociolinguistic studies, multiple language use is a practice that many bilinguals themselves condemn (Holmes 45). In reference to this phenomenon, Lippi-Green notes that speakers of peripheralized languages, or participants in stigmatized linguistic practices such as the use of two languages, sometimes accept external negative scales of value to their own detriment (175).

Linguists sometimes use the term *linguistic insecurity* to describe how speakers of marginalized varieties subordinate and devalue their own language in accordance with the stigmatization generated from outside their community. Sociolinguist William Labov was the first to use this term in his analysis of social variation in New York City in 1966. Labov used the term as an explanation of his discovery that the speaker of a peripheralized variety "does not hear the actual sound which he produces, but the norm which he imposes" (455). Labov put forward the notion of linguistic insecurity as an explanation for hypercorrection, which he described as the errors speakers make when they attempt to target norms which are not native to their own variety, such as "Whom

did you say was calling?" (cf. "standard" *Who*) or "He is looking for you and I" (cf.

"standard" ...*you and me*) (Labov 475).

Lippi-Green notes that in addition to the term *linguistic insecurity*, scholars have

also used the terms *linguistic self-hatred* or *covert prestige* to observe that stigmatized

language communities have different scales of value when it comes to the evaluation and

selection of language variants (175). These speakers are often caught, she notes, between

internal community values and external ones. Hence, Lippi-Green concludes that external

negative scales of value are both accepted *and* resisted by speakers of peripheralized

varieties, and that language in this case serves as a telling gauge of how speakers think

about themselves as members of groups (175).

While neither of these observations by Labov and Lippi-Green were made

specifically about bilingualism, it is easy to see how the stigmatized use of two languages

in the United States could result in a state of linguistic insecurity for bilinguals. A 2005

study conducted by David Luna and Laura Peracchio provided insight into this issue as it

relates to bilingualism. The study examined the sociolinguistic effects of ads targeting

English-Spanish bilingual consumers, and in so doing provided insight into how

bilinguals themselves perceive and respond to the two languages at their disposal. All of

the ads included in the study contained textual code switching. Luna and Peracchio found

that code switching in written slogans resulted in the activation of associations relevant to

the language the ad switched to, and that these particular associations influenced the

consumers' evaluation of the product. For example, if the language the slogan switched

to possessed positive associations, bilingual consumers had a positive reaction to the

product. If the language had negative associations, then consumers likewise reacted negatively to the product. The study concluded that slogans switching from English to Spanish received a negative response by bilinguals, while those switching from Spanish to English received a positive one (Luna and Peracchio 44). The researchers found that ultimately, bilinguals tended to associate English with more positive features than Spanish, as a result of the negative attitudes of the majority group (English speakers) toward the group without power and prestige (Spanish speakers). The researchers determined that these negative attitudes had been activated by a language-related inferiority complex resulting from bilinguals' association of Spanish with discrimination and a sense of social inferiority (44). Luna and Peracchio concluded that these negative attitudes were adopted in part or in whole by the minority group, and were amplified to such an extent that members of the minority group held "even more negative attitudes toward their own group than the attitudes held by the majority group" (45).

This study serves as one type of proof that bilinguals can internalize negative values imposed upon the languages they use. However, as noted above, they do not always do so, but rather are caught between the negative judgments imposed from outside their community, and the positive ones encouraged from within it. This tension is illustrated by the findings of Almeida Jacqueline Toribio's 2002 study aimed at evaluating bilingual U.S. Latinos' perception of code switching, or the bilingual speech habit of alternating between English and Spanish within a single conversation. Toribio observed that in spite of the low prestige associated with code switching, covert norms within Latino communities valued the duality communicated by the switches and their

signaling of social identity. However, Toribio also found that other Latinos successfully eschewed code switching as a result of their acceptance and internalization of the stigma attached to the behavior. Rather than shoulder the stereotype associated with bilinguals, these speakers renounced code switching altogether. Hence, overall Toribio observed that while for some, the dominant social stigma informed their assessment of code switching as indicative of deficiency, still others valued and affirmed code switching for granting them affiliation with two disparate linguistic and cultural worlds (115). Code switching, and the social motivations and interactional implications for its use, is discussed further in the following chapter.

Glenn Martínez provides a framework for the contradictory forces of stigma and affirmation through an examination of the dichotomy between what he terms *language panic* and *language pride*. Martínez defines language panic as the discrimination against Spanish in the context of social restrictionist movements such as those discussed earlier in this chapter (Martínez 11), while language pride constitutes the resistance by the ethnolinguistic minority group members to their own marginalization (Martínez 13). In this context, U.S. Latino Spanish-English bilinguals live within a tension created by these vying forces, both of which affect their perception of their own bilingualism.

Conclusion

In examining the standard language ideology in the United States, this chapter has analyzed the ways in which monolingual English benefits from broad support while bilingualism, particularly within Spanish-speaking immigrant communities, is vigorously opposed. In so doing, these discussions have also underscored how the principles

privileging English monolingualism impact not only the way bilingualism has historically been regarded by monolinguals in the U.S., but also the way it is regarded by bilinguals themselves, who both internalize and reject negative values about bilingualism. These analyses constitute one piece of the larger discussions of this project as a whole, in which textual bilingualism as exemplified in U.S. Latino code switching narrative impacts readers of varying linguistic backgrounds. The following chapter takes a closer look at code switching itself and examines how this bilingual language phenomenon is deployed as a resource by U.S. Latino writers.

CHAPTER IV

CODE SWITCHING

Introduction

As has been established, the overarching goal of this project is to examine reader

reception of bilingual U.S. Latino narratives. Specifically, this project aims to analyze

how readers of varying linguistic backgrounds read and respond to texts written in both

English and Spanish together. Furthermore, out of these analyses arises the question of

what could be at stake nationally when a country idealizing English monolingualism at

every level of society contains in reality a multitude of bilingual speakers with growing

agency and power – such as U.S. Latinos – and how these bilingual texts and their

reception by readers reflects the changing linguistic realities of the United States today.

The previous two chapters highlight the roles of history, immigration, identity,

nationhood, and standard language ideology in the discussion of bilingual texts and their

significance. This chapter takes a close look at the bilingual communicative practice

called code switching, consisting of the alternation between two languages within

discourse. Code switching provides a useful framework for talking about the language

alternation that appears in the U.S. Latino narratives discussed throughout this project,

because it serves as a key marker of social identities, relations, and contexts. Specifically,

this chapter looks at: how code switching has been regarded in the linguistic and non-

linguistic communities; the linguistic patterns and constraints of code switching; the

social implications and interactional implications of code switching; theoretical debates

in code switching research; the difference between oral and textual code switching; and

finally, code switching's deployment as a resource by Latino authors.

From Hodge Podge to Language

> Por eso cada, you know it's nothing to be proud of, porque yo no estoy proud of
>
> it, as a matter of fact I hate it, pero viene viernes y sabado yo estoy… tú me ves
>
> hacia mi sola with a, aquí solita, a veces que Frankie me deja, you know a stick or
>
> something, y yo aquí solita, quizás Judy no sabe [e] yo estoy aquí, viendo
>
> televisión, but I rather, y cuando yo estoy con gente yo me… borracha porque me
>
> siento más, happy, más free, you know, pero si yo estoy con mucha gente [e] yo
>
> no estoy, you know, high, more or less, I couldn't get along with anybody. (qtd. in
>
> Labov "System" 457)

While this passage constitutes intelligible language for Spanish-English

bilinguals, for monolinguals it remains mostly incomprehensible. Transcribed in 1971 by

William Labov, this speech sample comes from a Puerto Rican woman living in New

York and demonstrates a common bilingual speech phenomenon referred to in linguistics

as code switching, or the rapid alternation of two or more languages by bilinguals in the

same conversation. Labov, an early pioneer in the field of sociolinguistics, viewed the

above passage as an example of idiosyncratic behavior (Gumperz 70) and used it to

illustrate what he and other linguists at the time viewed as a deficient knowledge of

language, a grammarless mixture of two codes (Milroy and Muysken 9).

While bilingual conversation like the one transcribed above is nothing new, it has

only in the past thirty-five years or so become the subject of linguistic research

(Cashman, "Language Choice" 132). This approach was based on the assumption that the normal, unmarked case was the monolingual speaker from a uniform speech community (Milroy and Muysken 2), consistent with the emerging model of cognitive linguistics led by Noam Chomsky, who defined the scope of reference for the study of language as the "ideal speaker-listener, in a completely-homogeneous speech community" (Chomsky 3).

More recently, linguists have come to understand that code switching is not a dysfunctional language practice, and that, like all verbal interaction, it is both meaning-based and meaning-driven (Cashman, "Conversation" 275). Bilingual speakers around the globe possess a complete grammar composed of two or more languages rather than just one. Moreover, as noted in chapter III, the widespread phenomenon of bilingualism is an essential component of an increasingly visible and audible multilingual modern world, a global reality that invites a re-examination of monolingualism as normative. In the last almost half a century, large-scale social changes such as modernization and globalization, language revivals, and migration from poor countries to the rich, rural to urban areas, have led to increased contact between languages and cultures and hence, to bilingualism (Milroy and Muysken 1). Code switching, then, constitutes yet another type of language variation in speech communities around the world.

While research on code switching has altered linguists' original view of the behavior as indicative of communicative deficiency, the predominant public perception in the U.S. of this bilingual speech phenomenon has not necessarily followed suit. As mentioned in chapter III, the three-generation language loss cycle typical of immigrants to the United States generally yields a second-generation whose bilingualism represents a

threat for many to the wellbeing of the nation. This threat is linked specifically to those of Latin American origin or descent, primarily due to their association with the proliferation of Spanish-speaking immigrants in the United States whose growing presence bring into question the monolithic notion of common language as essential to successful nationhood. Hence, code switching, as emblematic of bilingualism, continues to be viewed by many as a dangerous, audible manifestation that English has already been infiltrated by Spanish.

Ana Celia Zentella points out that the children of Latino immigrants – the Spanish-English bilingual second generation – are systematically accused of corrupting Spanish and English ("Chiquitafication" 9). Pejorative references to "Spanglish" or "TexMex" evoke notions of a linguistic mish-mash, a deficient code that is blamed for bilingual students' school failure. The following views expressed by a teacher of Puerto Rican students in Massachusetts are shared by many across the country:

> These poor kids come to the country speaking a hodge podge. They are all mixed up and don't know any language well. As a result, they can't even think clearly. That's why they don't learn. It's our job to teach them language – to make up for their deficiency. And, since their parents don't really know any language either, why should we waste time on Spanish? It is "good" English which has to be the focus. (qtd. in Walsh 106)

The deficit notion outlined above derives from a widespread belief that speakers' alternation between languages is detrimental, and that cognitive and linguistic confusion are the result (Walsh 105). Hence, the disproportionate school failure of Latinos has been

attributed to a lack of standard language development in bilinguals. As revealed in the above citation, the linguistic and sociocultural environment of the home, as well as parents' own language abilities, are blamed for the perceived communicative inadequacies and subsequent poor academic performance of bilingual children in the U.S. (Walsh 105).

Against this backdrop of national hostility toward bilingualism and the ensuing widespread perception of code switching as a communicative deficiency, this chapter begins with a review of the facts about language alternation; namely, that switching between English and Spanish within single utterances does not constitute "bad Spanish" or "bad English." Rather, code switching requires good proficiency in both languages and reveals a robust grammar system comprised of two varieties. Furthermore, much like rhythm, intonation, stress, or pitch, code switching serves as one of many possible communicative tools available to speakers to signal meaning. As such, language alternation bears significant social and interactional implications, most of which revolve around Spanish-English bilingual speakers' joint membership in both the Spanish-speaking and English-speaking worlds. Finally, this chapter examines how textual language alternations differ from spontaneous, verbal code switching, and the ways in which published Latino-authored narratives deploy language switches as a resource by articulating the cultures and realities linked with each language.

The Linguistic ABC's of Code Switching

Contrary to the opinion pronounced by the educator cited above, code switching presupposes rich linguistic knowledge, not devoid of grammar but rather composed of the

grammars of multiple languages (Poplack, "Code switching" 1). Furthermore, the alternation of varieties within discourse constitutes a normal, natural product of bilingual language use. Like monolingual speakers, bilinguals who code switch make use of a full range of functions and structural complexities. This section discusses some of the facts about language alternation, the grammatical constraints that govern switches, and the proficiency required by speakers in order to engage in code switching.

Code switching involves alternations in language that occur between the turns of different speakers, between utterances within a single turn, and sometimes even within a single utterance (Milroy and Muysken 7). The term *inter-sentential* refers to switches between sentences such as, "Y luego me dijo, 'I'll be there in a minute'" (And then he told me, I'll be there in a minute). *Intra-sentential* refers to switches that occur within the sentence such as, "Monica tiene los movie tickets" (Monica has the movie tickets). Three other terms, *tag switching, emblematic switching*, and *extra-sentential switching,* all refer to switching between an utterance and the tag or interjection attached to it. For example, "El coche está aquí, right?" (The car is here, right?)

Since language alternation first became the subject of linguistic research, linguists have tried to determine the precise points at which switches occur in utterances (Holmes 43). As Shana Poplack notes, intra-sentential code switching, initially dismissed as random and deviant, is now known to be grammatically constrained ("Code Switching" 1). Poplack discusses two constraints on intra-sentential code switching. The *equivalence constraint* states that the word order immediately before and immediately after a switching point should exist in the two languages to make it possible for a switch to take

place (Poplack, "Sometimes" 228). The two languages involved can then be interchanged freely, as shown in Table 1. Here, the code switch occurs with the word *pa'que*, which is preceded and followed in both the English and Spanish versions with an equivalent surface structure, or word order.

Table 1

Equivalence Constraint

English	I	told him	that	so that	he	would bring it	fast
Spanish	*(Yo)*	*le dije*	*eso*	*pa'que*	*(él)*	*la trajera*	*ligero*
Code-switch	I	told him	that	pa'que	-	la trajera	ligero

Source: Poplack, Shana. "Sometimes I'll start a sentence in Spanish y termino en español: toward a typology of code-switching." 1980. Preface Shana Poplack. *The Bilingualism Reader.* Li Wei, ed. London: Routledge, 2000. 228. Print.

A second intra-sentential constraint mentioned by Poplack, called the *free-morpheme constraint*, states that a switch can occur after any discourse constituent (meaning a word or a group of words that functions as a single unit within a hierarchical structure) provided that constituent is not a bound morpheme (Poplack, "Sometimes" 227).[20] In general, according to this constraint, a free morpheme and a bound morpheme can be mixed from one language to another, as illustrated in Table 2. Here, the free morpheme *eat* moves from the English word *eating* to the Spanish word *comiendo* where

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[20] A *morpheme* is the smallest linguistic unit that has meaning. For example, the word *unbreakable* has three morphemes: the prefix *un-*, a bound morpheme which cannot occur in isolation; *break*, a free morpheme which can occur in isolation; and the suffix -*able*, another bound morpheme

it supplants the Spanish stem and attaches to the Spanish suffix *-iendo*. The resulting

code switched word is *eatiendo*.

Table 2

Free-Morpheme Constraint

	word	stem/free morpheme	suffix
English	*eating*	*eat*	*-ing*
Spanish	*comiendo*	*com*	*-iendo*
Code-switch:	*eat-iendo* (English free morpheme + Spanish suffix)		

Source: Poplack, Shana. "Sometimes I'll start a sentence in Spanish y termino en español: toward a typology of code-switching." 1980. Preface Shana Poplack. *The Bilingualism Reader.* Li Wei, ed. London: Routledge, 2000. 227. Print.

In addition to the two constraints mentioned above, another suggestion about the

rules governing code switching is that there exists a *matrix language frame* which

imposes structural constraints on code switched utterances (Holmes 44). According to

this constraint, when two or more language varieties are joined within a single bilingual

constituent, the languages do not participate equally. One of the languages, called the

matrix language, is the source for the abstract grammatical structure. The other language,

called the *embedded language*, can contribute only limited material such as content

morphemes (Myers-Scotton, "Matrix" 24). In the following example sentence, the

content word (the noun *friends*) is English, while the abstract grammatical structure of the

sentence is entirely Spanish: "Me gustan tus friends porque son muy amables." Hence,

the matrix language in this example is Spanish while the embedded language is English.

In response to the above observations about possible constraints governing code switching, some linguists argue that it is unlikely that there are universal and absolute rules of this kind. They also criticize the extreme complexity of some of the constraints, pointing to evidence indicating a large number of exceptions and contradictions. Pieter Muysken proposes that much of the confusion appears to arise from the fact that several distinct processes are at work: The process of *insertion* of material from one language into a structure from the other language (which corresponds with the matrix language frame constraint mentioned above), the *alternation* between structures from languages, and the *congruent lexicalization* of material from different lexical sets into a shared grammatical structure. These three processes, argues Muysken, are constrained by different structural conditions and operate differently in different bilingual settings. This accounts for much of the disorientation surrounding the discussions of grammatical constrains on code switching (Muysken 3).

Clearly, as evidenced by the research discussed above, the widespread perception among non-linguists in the U.S. that code switching represents a deficient knowledge of language is erroneous. Research on language alternation has proven that code switching constitutes a complex and grammatically constrained language in and of itself, contrary to the popular perception that the switches are random and deviant. Bilinguals who code switch possess proficiency in the separate languages they blend, engage in alternations at precise moments according to grammatical prescriptions, and thereby contribute full meaning in the context of bilingual conversation.

Social Motivations and Interactional Implications of Code Switching

While many linguists studying code switching have researched the patterns and constraints of language alternations as discussed above, others have placed greater emphasis on social, stylistic and contextual influences, claiming that the points at which bilinguals switch are likely to vary according to factors such as which codes are involved, the functions of the particular switch, and the level of proficiency in each code. For example, only very proficient bilinguals might engage in intra-sentential switches while less proficient speakers might employ inter-sentential or emblematic switches (Holmes 44).

In seeking to understand some of the social, stylistic and contextual factors governing code switching, researchers over the past decades have worked within two primary approaches to the examination of bilingual conversation. Both the *symbolic approach* and the *sequential approach* pursue an explanation of the social motivations and interactional implications of language choice in code switching (Cashman, "Conversation" 276). The symbolic approach claims that different languages carry different symbolic meanings, while the sequential approach argues that it is the sequential positioning and subsequent contrast of languages within a conversation that creates meaning. Both approaches grew out of the pioneering work of John Gumperz, whose observations of bilingual conversation in the 1970s and 80s led researchers to look at code switching as an indicator of speakers' social impulses and as a tool to produce meaning in interaction (Cashman, "Conversation" 278).

Holly Cashman highlights three key concepts from Gumperz that are critical to the discussion of the symbolic and sequential approaches ("Conversation" 276). The first of these concepts, the *we code vs. they code*, proposes the existence of an in-group code (*we code*) and an out-group code (*they code)* within situations of diglossia.[21] According to Gumperz, the we/they distinction explains code switches that occur due to situational changes in setting, such as home, school, or work; activity type, such as public speaking, formal negotiations, or verbal games; and participants, such as friends, family members, strangers, government officials, and so on (Gumperz 60). Gumperz named this kind of switching *situational switching*. The second important concept from Gumperz, *situational switching vs. metaphorical switching*, contrasts situational switching with switching that occurs when there is *no* change in setting, activity, or participants. Rather, metaphorical switching is intended to convey social meaning or to reference social categories and groups (Cashman, "Conversation" 277). The third concept from Gumperz is *contextualization cues*, which refers to the signaling function performed by a number of linguistic features available to interlocutors such as prosody, syntactic structure, lexical item, language variety, register, or style (Gumperz 131).[22] In order for speakers to

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[21] In linguistics, *diglossia* is a situation in a given society in which there are two (often closely-related) languages, one of high prestige, which is generally used by the government and in formal texts, and one of low prestige, which is usually the spoken vernacular tongue.

[22] In linguistics, *prosody* refers to rhythm, intonation, stress, and related attributes in speech, *syntactic structure* refers to grammatical structure, *lexical item* refers to a single word or words that are grouped in a language's lexicon, *language variety* refers to a language form that differs from others systematically and coherently, *register* is a subset of linguistic forms (phonetics, vocabulary, syntax, etc) used for a particular purpose or social setting, and *style* refers to variation in the language use of an individual.

share interpretations of these cues' meanings in interaction, they must share an awareness of the signaling function the cues have (Cashman, "Conversation" 278). According to this formulation, a switch in code is just one of many contextualization cues available to speakers.

As mentioned previously, these three concepts from Gumperz are relevant to understanding both the symbolic and the sequential approaches to researching bilingual conversation. The symbolic approach argues that different languages available to bilinguals carry with them different symbolic meanings. Within the framework of this approach, as Cashman states, "conversational behavior is seen as a window into social structure because speakers are seen to reflect social structure in their conversational interaction" ("Conversation" 278). Conversational behavior, according to the symbolic approach, acts as a mirror to underlying, pre-existing social frameworks such as race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, education, gender, and so on.

An important symbolic approach relevant to contemporary research on code switching is the Markedness Model, developed by Carol Myers-Scotton in 1993. The Markedness Model relies upon notions of what is expected and normative among speakers, and claims that speakers manipulate their language choices as a means of either conforming to or resisting this expectation. Unmarked language choices constitute the expected choices, while marked choices are the unexpected. According to the Markedness Model, language users are rational, and choose a language that indicates

their rights and obligations[23] relative to others in the conversational setting (Myers-Scotton, "Markedness Model" 75). In terms of code switching, the Markedness Model claims bilinguals employ switches either as unmarked choices (if, for example, the group with which they are interacting is also engaging in code switching and therefore code switching is the expected choice), as marked choices (to differentiate from the expected choices of the group which may be conversing in just one code), or as exploratory choices (when there is no expected choice and therefore the speaker's switch indicates personal preference) (Cashman, "Conversation" 279).

Unlike the symbolic approach to bilingual conversation, the sequential approach does not assume a pre-existing relationship between language variety and social meaning (Cashman, "Conversation" 284). Rather, the switch itself, and the contrast it creates, is critical to the flow of the conversation. Within this approach, social context is not central, but relevant only as speakers use it in ongoing interaction. More important is the sequential context, which refers to the context provided by previous turns of talk within a conversation. For example, if at any given moment in a bilingual Spanish-English conversation one participant happens to be using Spanish, then Spanish becomes part of the context that affects the next speaker's turn in the conversation. The communicative effect of the next speaker's choice in language, whether Spanish or English, is influenced by the previous speaker's turn. Thus, rather than acting out underlying social roles as

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[23] In linguistics, *rights and obligations* is a theoretical construct for referring to what participants can expect in any given interaction type in their community. For example, in a church in a given speech community, it may be expected that people greet others by nodding slightly toward those they wish to acknowledge. The terms *rights* and *obligations* do not refer to actual "rights" in any legal or moral sense (Myers-Scotton, "Rational actor models" 80).

suggested by the symbolic approach, participants in the conversation proactively create social meaning through the process of interacting.

The theory of conversational analysis (CA), originally developed in the 1960s by sociolinguists examining primarily monolingual data, constitutes the primary sequential approach to bilingual conversation. The main tenet of the CA approach is the assumption that each speaker's turn creates a context for the turn that follows. Therefore, this turn-taking context is co-constructed by participants (Cashman, "Conversation" 285). In 1984, Peter Auer brought the CA approach into the arena of bilingual conversation by building on Gumperz' concept of contextualization cues and claiming that code-switching might be used by bilinguals as a signal to orient participants to changes in interaction (Cashman, "Conversation" 286). Specifically, Auer identified two types of code-switching: *discourse-related code switching*, which juxtaposes different languages in one conversation as an organizing device (Auer 12), and *participant-related code switching*, which utilizes this juxtaposition to communicate the speaker's language preference to other members of the conversation (Auer 46). Both discourse- and participant-related code switching may influence a speaker's language choices.

Though they differ in their arguments, both the symbolic and sequential approaches to bilingual conversation seek to understand the social motivations for language choice and code switching. A third approach, referred to as the *identity-in-interaction approach*, attempts to integrate the concerns of both the symbolic and sequential approaches by including both the pre-existing as well as the emergent aspects of social identity (Cashman, "Conversation" 293). In other words, identity-in-interaction

incorporates the symbolic approach's concern with social categories such as race, ethnicity, occupation, and gender, into the sequential approach's concern with locally and interactionally constructed identities created during conversation. Within this approach, Cashman writes, "identity is seen as both who people are and what they do in interaction, and code-switching and language choice in interaction are seen as resources for both indexing social identities and constructing them" ("Conversation" 293). Joseph Gafaranga supports this view by calling for a "demythologized" conceptualization of language alternation via the integration of both the conversational and social structures into one approach (283). According to the identity-in-interaction approach, then, code switching is one among several tools speakers can use to both delineate and transgress group boundaries.

Theoretical Debates in Code Switching Research

Both the symbolic and the sequential approaches to bilingual conversation have undergone critiques that have created theoretical debates in code switching research. Specifically, both the Markedness Model and the conversation analysis approaches have invited detailed criticisms in several areas. In examining the Markedness Model, linguists such as Li Wei, Joseph Gafaranga, and Johannes Jørgensen, among others, have identified four main issues of contention. First, as Li Wei argues, only in stable, diglossic situations can speakers identify an unmarked language choice ("Why and How" 173). Speakers often participate in new conversation experiences that they cannot compare to past experiences which would set up clear guidelines of what is expected or unexpected.

Furthermore, as Li Wei explains, heterogeneous speech communities may hold differing

associations between languages and identities ("Why and How" 159)

Johannes Jørgensen points out a second criticism of the Markedness Model by

indicating that not all code switching instances reflect a macro-level social meaning

(256). Sometimes code switching indicates social identity, but not always. As Cashman

notes, while the Markedness Model's explanation of code switching as an unmarked

choice does allow for code switching that is not meant to convey special communicative

intent, it falls short of identifying precisely what the function of that unmarked choice is

("Conversation" 282). In other words, the Markedness Model's overwhelming focus on

social meaning leads to shortsightedness with regard to possible interactional meanings

of code switching (Li Wei, "Why and How" 170).

A third issue identified in critiques of the Markedness Model comes from Mysers-

Scotton herself, who writes, "the model presumes that much of what 'happens' is below

the surface: speakers' intentions surface as code choices" (Bolonyai and Myers-Scotton

15). But, she continues, how those intentions are interpreted is not empirically verified.

Thus, without evidence indicating speakers' intentions, as Cashman points out, analysts

risk imposing their own meaning, a particularly perilous practice when researchers are

"out-group members with little knowledge about the sociopolitical and linguistic history

of a given community" (Cashman, "Conversation" 282).

A final criticism of the Markedness Model arises out of the model's focus on the

social meaning that is pre-existing or "brought along" by speakers into the interaction

(Cashman, "Conversation" 282). The overarching attention given to this "brought along"

aspect of social identity results in a devaluing of the identity that speakers create or "bring about" through interaction (Li Wei, "Why and How" 170). Such a view of interaction suggests that it is merely a reproduction of underlying social meanings, and that it has no creative potential.

In addition to the points mentioned above, Li Wei offers a further critique of the Markedness Model as it is recast explicitly as a rational choice model ("How can you tell?" 377). A rational choice model assumes that individual social acts are governed by rationality, and that these acts are chosen as a result of a transparent deliberation process. Li Wei argues that social actors' rationality should not be taken for granted, and that rational deliberation is in fact not a transparent process ("How can you tell?" 377). Therefore, he calls for a more detailed, interaction-oriented analysis to support the conclusions of the rational choice model ("How can you tell?" 388).

While the above list of Markedness Model critiques is by no means exhaustive, it includes some of the main shortcomings discussed by linguists in relation to the symbolic approach to bilingual conversation. The chief thrust of these critiques is that the symbolic approach focuses overwhelmingly on the pre-existing social contexts of conversation, to the detriment of the social meaning created by interlocutors in the moment of interacting with each other.

Not surprisingly, the sequential approach receives objections from the opposite direction; criticisms of the approach argue that trivial details of interaction are given inadvertent attention by researchers, while the larger, underlying social contexts are summarily ignored. Bolonyai and Myers-Scotton argue that the conversation analysis

approach ignores who people are socially, demographically, and ethnically (5). Margaret Wetherell notes that the CA approach lacks a social theory and cannot, therefore, connect to a larger socio-political context. As such, this approach is merely a technical analysis of spoken discourse (Wetherell 394).

Other linguists have criticized the CA approach's assumption of a transparent methodology. As noted by Jan Blommaert, CA fails to acknowledge that its processes of converting conversational discourse into data by necessity involves ideologically motivated decisions on the part of the analyst (18). In a similar vein, Alessandro Duranti delivers three points of contention with the CA approach: he claims the approach excludes non-verbal means of communication, operates according to a diminished concept of what constitutes speech, and fails to consider participants' interpretations of their own interaction (266).

Specifically within the realm of bilingual conversation, critics argue against the CA approach for neglecting the social meaning of code switching as well as speakers' motivations. Carol Myers-Scotton notes that CA does not provide the analyst with a way of examining marked choices, or of even allowing those choices to exist for bilingual speakers ("Theoretical" 36). The chief concern Myers-Scotton brings to her critique is that she claims the CA approach views speakers' opportunities in the moment of interacting as the sole determiners of their choice in language, thereby falsely assuming that speakers' motivations are constant and unchanging (Cashman, "Conversation" 290).

Textual Code Switching

The code switching under examination thus far in this chapter has consisted of spontaneous verbal discourse only. As largely unplanned speech events, the switches that occur verbally, while suggestive of speakers' motivations and social identities, are for the most part subconscious choices of expression. Bilinguals switch codes rapidly, effortlessly, usually without realizing they have done so. Many speakers who alternate languages are not conscious of having engaged in code switching (Holmes 45). Furthermore, as noted in chapter III, some bilingual interlocutors regard the language mixing process they utilize as a "bad habit" and vow to "try harder" to converse in just one code. These ingrained negative judgments about code switching arise out of the so-called standard language ideology in the U.S., which defines monolingualism as normative. As mentioned earlier, this value system initially led evaluators to view code switching as evidence for internal mental confusion or the inability to separate two languages sufficiently (Lipski "Spanish-English" 191).

Unlike verbal code switching, textual code switching, while still a process of bilingual language alternation, consciously aims at achieving a specific effect. As a result of the writing and publishing processes, notes John Lipski, which by necessity are ones of craft and revision, writers who engage in published textual code switching do so in a calculated and premeditated fashion and less as a reflection of internal, subconscious mechanisms of bilingual expression ("Spanish-English" 192). As a result, concludes Lipski, while bilingual writers usually come from bilingual backgrounds and communities, the literary code switches they engage in do not necessarily represent the

same code switches that would spontaneously occur in their speech communities ("Spanish-English" 192). This does not indicate, however, that spontaneity is wholly absent from the process of writing code switching narratives. As Hispanic linguistics scholar and bilingual writer Laura Callahan explains, "What I noticed when I switched from one language to the other is that I would do so at certain syntactic junctures, not at others, and I didn't have to think about where. I just wrote" (*Spanish/English* 1). Hence, while the processes of textual and verbal code switching are not entirely parallel, a study of the former still informs an understanding of the latter. Lipski explains that "an analysis of written code switching may be of great value in tracing psychological variables that come into play and promises to provide a broader perspective on the affective values of language mixing" ("Spanish-English" 191).

To date, much of linguistic research on code switching has focused on speech rather than writing. The emphasis on oral discourse has not been motivated by any particular theoretical principle, but rather reflects what Marcia Buell describes as the overwhelming historical tendency of sociolinguists and ethnographers of communication to focus on verbal communication (98). However, as Buell notes, even though research has examined speech more than writing, code switching across languages constitutes a salient feature of written text, and the motivations for such shifts are complex and need investigation (98).

As established in the previous section, code switching is a key marker of social identities, relations, and contexts. Writers who engage in code switching may do so to reflect their perceptions of readers' expectations, and to consciously make use of the

tension created by either meeting or failing to meet those expectations. Hence, the written switches are mediated by the writer's own understanding of language use, of the context, of social relations, and of aspects of identity the writer wishes to highlight (Buell 100). As such, textual code switching functions within the Markedness Model described previously, in that writers make use of reader expectations for literary effect. Authors may employ unmarked or ordinary forms when they believe they are sharing the same set of rights and obligations with the reader, or, if the writer perceives a need for a new set of rights and obligations, he or she may consequently change to a more marked form (Buell 100).

However, because perceptions of rights and obligations may not match between the writer and his or her imagined reader, the writer must constantly negotiate with the perceived reader to establish parameters for communication. Activating a code that is different from the one readers expect – intentionally or otherwise – can result in a negative reception of the text or in communicative breakdowns. Yet from a sociolinguistic perspective, notes Buell, misunderstandings of this type serve social functions, marking and constructing relations of affinity and distance, and of inclusion and exclusion across social groups (101). Hence, writers who utilize a language that is different from the one readers expect (for example, as a result of inserting Spanish in a text read by monolingual English readers) may do so consciously, precisely to achieve a specific distancing effect between the writer and the perceived reader.

Code Switching as a Resource in U.S. Latino Narrative

Distancing constitutes just one of a wide variety of targeted effects accomplished by textual code switching in U.S. Latino narratives. Indeed, what is distance for one reader may be proximity to another; code switching narratives may simultaneously push away some readers (monolinguals) while bringing closer others (bilinguals). In addition to the space constructed between writer and reader, U.S. Latino texts engaging in code switching have at their disposal a number of literary effects. As Gary Keller notes, bilingual writers are able to depict characters, explore themes, express ideologies or messages, and fashion rhetorical devices as a result of their capacity to alternate between English and Spanish within their narratives (171). However, contrary to what Keller suggests, more is at stake than literary effect; U.S. Latino writers have deployed code switching as social, political and communicative devices, in addition to aesthetic literary functions. In light of the mainstream language ideology in the United States that values the monolingual application of English above all other languages (Cashman, "Language Choice" 139), the very use of Spanish *at all* constitutes an oppositional act. Hence, rather than creating code switching narratives purely for stylistic purposes, many U.S. Latino writers engage in a purposeful and powerful inscription of a subordinated language – Spanish – in writing in order to question its subordination by the standard language ideology discussed in chapter III (Cashman, "Language Choice" 135). Chapter V examines this issue more closely by analyzing how bilingual narratives possess the capacity to function as linguistically revolutionary texts.

A common thread tying together U.S. Latino code switching narratives is the articulation of the cultures and realities linked with each language appearing in the text. The amount of Spanish used, as well as how it appears and for what purposes, varies widely; however, in the majority of cases the use of Spanish is generally limited to lexical borrowing as a means of expressing ideas or concepts that do not exist in English, such as names of foods, plants, or music (Cashman, "Language Choice" 141). Ernst Rudin discovered that many Latino narratives that engage in code switching, even though they are often read and presented as politically revolutionary texts, are in fact reluctant to be subversive in terms of language. Many of these narratives, concludes Rudin, reveal code switching at the level of loanwords, clichés, or etymological pairs,[24] all easily accessible for the monolingual English reader (228). Not surprisingly, many of the most successful published U.S. Latino writers are ones who employ this type of code switching in their narratives. (A detailed discussion of the role of the publishing industry in shaping texts available to readers appears in chapter VI).

Julia Alvarez's *In the Time of the Butterflies* (1994), for example, is a narrative with very little code switching. The Spanish language entries that do appear in this novel about the Trujillo regime in the Dominican Republic are theoretically easy to understand either because they are names of people, loanwords clearly explained by the context, or

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[24] According to Rudin, a *loanword* is a Spanish expression used in English that has preserved its spelling, such as *adobe, canyon, sombrero, chile*, etc. A *cliché* is a frequently-used expression such as *buenos días, hasta la vista, Dios mío*, etc. An *etymological pair* is a set of words from two different languages that have the same root and are therefore understandable without translation. Examples in Spanish include *aeroplano, compañero, comunista, perdón*, etc. (Rudin 116-121).

well-known exclamatory expressions such as *Ay caray* or *Díos mío*. The following

description of Trujillo at a reception held in his honor illustrates several examples:

> Surrounded by those men – you know, Maldonado and Figueroa and
>
> Lomares, and that Peña fellow. They're all saying, '*Ay*, Jefe, you've done
>
> so much good for our province.' '*Ay*, Jefe, you've raised strong morale
>
> after sanctions.' '*Ay*, Jefe,'" Tío Pepe crooned to imitate the cronies. El
>
> Jefe keeps nodding at this pile of horse shit, and finally he says, looking
>
> right at me – I'm standing at my post by the Salcedo farmers, filling up on
>
> those delicious *pastelitos* Florín makes – and he says, 'Well, boys, I've
>
> really only got two problems left. If I could only find the man to resolve
>
> them.' (281)

By incorporating Spanish in this easily-accessible way, Alvarez exoticizes the otherness

of the Dominican culture she describes, thereby directing her narration toward the Anglo

reader. In so doing, the non-Spanish-speaker is skillfully guided toward an understanding

of the Spanish words by contextual cues, all of which help the monolingual to discern

that *Ay* is an exclamatory expression and *pastelitos* is food. As such, Alvarez's narrative

is addressed to the English monolingual, and creates a safe place for that reader to enter

into a feeling of foreign linguistic territory without requiring the reader to do any work in

obtaining meaning from Spanish. Hence, while Alvarez does imbue her text with a

"foreign" feel by inserting an occasional Spanish language entry, on one level *In the Time*

of the Butterflies appears to engage in less of an affront to the standard language ideology

than other Latino texts discussed here. Nevertheless, as argued in chapter III, *any*

appearance of Spanish whatsoever, no matter how well glossed, constitutes an affront to many monolingual English speakers. Therefore, by simply bringing Spanish onto the page, this text challenges the acceptance of monolingualism as normative.

Another function code switching serves in some Latino narratives reflects the symbolic approach to spontaneous verbal bilingual conversation. Namely, shift in code mirrors a sharp division of domains signaled by the use of English and Spanish (Keller 173). In the following citation taken from *Barrio Boy* (1972), Ernesto Galarza uses Spanish loanwords within the predominantly English text not because the lexicon is hard to translate or does not exist in English, but rather to signal a representation of the Chicano world via the Spanish language:

> Crowded as it was, the *colonia* found a place for these *chicanos*, the name by which we called an unskilled worker born in Mexico and just arrived in the United States. The *chicanos* were fond of identifying themselves by saying they had just arrived from *el macizo*, by which they mean the solid Mexican homeland, the good native earth. Although they spoke of *el macizo* like homesick persons, they didn't go back. They remained, as they said of themselves, *pura raza.* […] Like us, they had come straight to the *barrio* where they could order a meal, buy a pair of overalls, and look for work in Spanish. (197)

With this sprinkling of Spanish loanwords, like Alvarez, Galarza infuses his narrative with a sense of "otherness" for the monolingual English reader.

Ana Castillo's deployment of code switching in *So Far From God* (1993) is similar to Galarza's and consists largely of loanwords from Spanish that could theoretically be translated fairly easily into English, but which she elects to write in Spanish nonetheless. Although Castillo, unlike Galarza, does not italicize her Spanish language entries, the net result of this sort of switching is a heightening of the "otherness" of the culture being depicted by the Spanish lexical items. In addition to lexical borrowing, Castillo imbues her English text with a Spanish presence in several ways. First, she plays with the spelling of English words so that they appear to be Spanish, as in her regular use of the word *traila* instead of *trailor*. Second, she consistently employs double negatives in English, thereby infusing the English with a presence of translation from Spanish, which allows for double negatives. For instance, "Caridad insisted on finding her own place without asking no one, so it was no surprise to anyone neither that she took the first place she found without considering that there was no stall to keep her mare" (43). Double negatives are also a characteristic of many robust, non-standard English varieties; consequently, "without asking no one" could also be interpreted simply as the non-standard English of this bilingual speaker. A third mechanism employed by Castillo to bring Spanish into her English text consists of word-for-word translations of Spanish expressions, such as Castillo's choice to translate the Spanish expression *dar a luz* as *to give light* even though it actually means *to give birth*. For example, she writes, "It is true, however, that by the time he came to see Loca, whom he had not seen since the day her mother gave light to her, his eyes were not what they used to be." This choice in phrasing clearly targets a bilingual reader, though the monolingual English-speaking

reader might be able to infer the meaning from context (certainly not without some work and thought).

Although some have argued that the majority of published U.S. Latino writers engage in mainly non-subversive code switching practices such as those mentioned above, there are a number of exceptions. Among them, Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands: La Frontera* stands as the classic example of textual code switching that is more radical and hence less comprehensible to monolinguals. Anzaldúa regularly uses inter-sentential, intra-sentential, and tag-switches in her text, in addition to occasionally shifting entirely into un-translated Spanish for entire paragraphs, pages, and occasionally whole poems inserted in the text. In the following passage, she makes liberal use of Spanish-English code switching with no gloss and no in-text translation:

> I have come back. *Tanto dolor me costó el alejamiento.* I shade my eyes
> and look up. The bone beak of a hawk slowly circling over me, checking
> me out as potential carrion. In its wake a little bird flickering its wings,
> swimming sporadically like a fish. In the distance the expressway and the
> slough of traffic like an irritated sow. The sudden pull in my gut, *la tierra,*
> *los aguaceros.* My land, *el viento soplando la arena, el lagartijo debajo*
> *de un nopalito. Me acuerdo como era antes. Una región desértica de vasta*
> *llanuras, costeras de baja altura, de escasa lluvia, de chaparrales*
> *formados por mesquites y huizaches.* If I look real hard I can almost see
> the Spanish fathers who were called "the cavalry of Christ" enter this
> valley riding their *burros*, see the clash of cultures commence. (111)

This passage illustrates Anzaldúa's use of textual code switching as a tool to break down barriers set up by the standard language ideology by reflecting the situation of language contact between Spanish and English in the United States and in her life (Cashman, "Language Choice" 143).

These code switched texts are just a few examples of a vast and growing body of narratives engaged in Spanish-English code switching authored by U.S. Latinos. While it is not always possible, or prudent, to impose intention upon a writer's personal choice in deploying language alternation within a text, the use of textual code switching suggests at least a degree of premeditation on the part of the author (or publisher, as discussed in chapter VI), certainly more so than the practice of spontaneous verbal code switching. Hence, a writer's decision to engage in textual code switching, and a publisher's decision to publish it, reveal a project of targeted effect on the reader, both monolingual and bilingual. The writers discussed above engage, to varying degrees, in a project of inscribing Spanish into English, thereby working at confronting the standard language ideology.

This chapter has taken a closer look at the rapid alternation between two languages within single communicative events between speakers proficient in multiple languages. Specifically, this examination has highlighted the disparity between the linguistic community's perceptions of code switching and those of the wider public in the U.S. While research has proven to linguists that code switching constitutes both meaning-based and meaning-driven communication, mainstream perceptions of the phenomenon persist in regarding language alternation as deviant and deficient – a judgment linked

specifically to uninformed perceptions of people of Latin American origin or descent living in the United States whose presence constitutes a threat for many to the wellbeing of the nation. Furthermore, regardless of the fact that the linguistic community has come to view code switching as meaningful communication, this bilingual speech phenomenon continues to be for many monolinguals in this country an elusive process, one either shunned completely or exoticized and "othered" by a variety of factors stemming from a monolingually-oriented presumption of language alternation as unusual, a puzzle to solve. As Suzanne Romaine ironically notes in the first line of her book entitled *Bilingualism* (1995), "It would certainly be odd to encounter a book with the title *Monolingualism*" (1).

When code switching extends beyond the realm of oral discourse and into the arena of published narratives written by Spanish-English bilingual Latinos, readers (both monolingual and bilingual) are presented with texts that illustrate with their language alternations the cultural "in-betweenness" lived by many Latino bilinguals in the United States. In particular, many of these narratives, while written with varying quantities and qualities of Spanish language entries, articulate a bicultural reality linked with the languages of the texts themselves. Therefore, U.S. Latino code switching narratives effectively describe the realities lived by the authors and their speech communities; namely, the realities of the English-speaking world and the Spanish-speaking world as they are joined together in the life of the bilingual writer.

CHAPTER V

THE "MINOR" IN U.S. LATINO LITERATURE

"Ultimately it will be minor literature that will push the limits of the English language,

transform it, and enrich it, and not the John Updikes and Jonathan Franzens of American

letters."

-Rolando Pérez

What Is Minor Literature?

In their 1975 classic of critical thought entitled *Kafka: Pour une Littérature*

Mineure, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari propose the concept of "minor literature" as a

tool for interpreting the work of Franz Kafka, a Czech author who wrote in German. The

text, translated into English and published in the U.S. as *Kafka: Toward a Minor*

Literature in 1986, asserts that minor literature constitutes the use of a major language

that subverts it from within. Writing as a Jew in Prague, contend Deleuze and Guattari,

Kafka made German "take flight on a line of escape" and joyfully became a stranger

within it (*Kafka* 26). His work therefore serves as a model for understanding all critical

language that must operate within the confines of the dominant language and culture.

Although the minor literature framework as originally established by Deleuze and

Guattari denies the power of bilingualism in favor of one language (*Thousand Plateaus*

118), Monique Balbuena's counter-argument makes a strong case for the capacity of

multilingual texts to "challenge and re-inscribe" major languages (Balbuena 5). In this

chapter, I deploy Balbuena's critique to argue that the capacity shared by many Latino

writers to interrogate linguistic and cultural hierarchies via bilingual and bicultural narrative situates U.S. Latino literature within the minor literary framework established by Deleuze and Guattari. Moreover, examining Latino narrative through the minor literature lens provides insight into these texts' revolutionary potential – both linguistically and culturally.

Deleuze and Guattari delineate three essential criteria a work of literature must meet in order to be recognized as minor. First, the work must have a "high coefficient of deterritorialization," or it must be written in the major language from a marginalized or minoritarian position (*Kafka* 16). Second, a minor literature must be political in nature. They write, "Minor literature is different [from major literature]; its cramped space forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics. The individual concern thus becomes all the more necessary, indispensable, magnified, because a whole other story is vibrating within it" (*Kafka* 17). The third characteristic of minor literature, according to the French philosophers, is that it articulates a collective experience. "…if the writer is in the margins or completely outside his or her fragile community, this situation allows the writer all the more the possibility to express another possible community and to forge the means for another consciousness and another sensibility" (*Kafka* 17). The voice of the minor author, then, becomes representative of his or her entire minor or marginalized community. Having met these criteria, a minor work, according to Deleuze and Guattari, becomes a revolutionary one.

Several key concepts within the minor literature framework require close examination. First, the terms "minor" and "minority" in this context, while occasionally

used interchangeably, in fact denote different concepts. A minor language in this case

signifies a language spoken by a sector of a given population that does not hold dominant

sociopolitical power.[25] For example, in situations of diglossia, the language with lower

prestige value[26] would be characterized as minor, while the higher prestige language

would be referred to as major, or dominant. To be minor, then, suggests to be subjected to

social and political domination, or to be a member of a subordinated group. However, for

Deleuze and Guattari, the "minor" does not refer to minority groups as described in

ordinary language.[27] Minority groups are defined by identities in relation to dominant

groups. By contrast, minor refers to identities that *depart* from dominant identities and

invent new forms of collective life, consciousness, and affectivity (*Thousand Plateaus*

105-106). Deleuze and Guattari use Kafka as their example. Kafka was not formally

involved with Jewish religious life in Prague, nor did he belong to the dominant German

and Austro-Hungarian power structure. Consequently, his writing aims to forge a new

identity, a new people, a new sense of social and cultural belonging (*Kafka* 17).

An additional key concept for Deleuze and Guattari is the notion of a

"revolutionary" text. Only a work that has met the above three criteria required for

classification as "minor" may be revolutionary, according to their argument. "There is

nothing that is major or revolutionary except the minor. To hate all languages of masters"

[25] A group holding "dominant sociopolitical power" is one which enjoys a privileged
social position, a status which results in that groups' language and culture becoming
normative within the larger society.

[26] The term "prestige value" refers to the level of social influence or reputation arising
from success, achievement or rank in society.

[27] "Ordinary" here describes non-specialized, everyday language.

(*Kafka* 26). A minor literature, they state, is not one that comes from a minor language, but instead one "which a minority constructs within a major language" (*Kafka* 16). Therefore, Deleuze and Guattari conclude, it is not a question of there being two kinds of languages, "but two possible treatments of the same language" (*Thousand Plateaus* 102). The minor treatment of the major language, they claim, is what constitutes the revolutionary act. For by writing in the major language from a minor perspective, a minor literature effectively weakens the major language and culture by appropriating its structures, attaching it to the minor experience, and actively creating new forms of expression within it.

As noted above, Monique Balbuena critiques Deleuze and Guattari's conceptualization of minor literature by challenging their requirement that only texts written in the major language have the capacity to be revolutionary. Balbuena writes, "I argue that minor literatures can emerge from multilingual contexts and social conditions, and that minor languages have the capacity to challenge and re-inscribe dominant languages" (5). She asserts that Deleuze and Guattari fail to consider minor languages' contribution to the composition of major languages, as well as minor languages' power to "revitalize" major languages (5). Balbuena's argument builds upon Chana Kronfeld's earlier critique of Deleuze and Guattari, in which Kronfeld argues that their restriction of the minor to the language of the major prevents any non-major linguistic practice from serving as an alternative model. Furthermore, notes Kronfeld, in the process of setting up the "truly minor" in this way, the historically, culturally, and linguistically diverse formations of minor writing become invisible (6). Taken together, these criticisms assert

that Deleuze and Guattari's essentialist claim that minor literature must be written in the major language in order to be revolutionary in fact continues to privilege dominant power structures by negating the revolutionary potential of texts written in minor or multiple languages.

U.S. Latino Literature as Minor

The minor literature framework constructed by Deleuze and Guattari serves as a valuable tool for interpreting U.S. Latino narrative. Indeed, this diverse body of literature, taken as a whole, amply meets the required three essential criteria outlined by Deleuze and Guattari that a work of literature must possess in order to be recognized as minor. As described earlier, their first requirement states that the work must have a "high coefficient of deterritorialization," or it must be written in the major language from a marginalized or minoritarian position (*Kafka* 16). In the context of Latino narrative, most published writers – themselves either English-Spanish bilingual or monolingual English speakers with a Spanish language heritage – author texts predominantly in English, their home society's major language, but from the peripheralized social space occupied by Latinos in the U.S. As Cuban-born Rolando Pérez notes, in reflecting upon his scholarly writing in English, "I remain an outsider, using a language which is simultaneously mine and not mine" (90) – "mine" because Pérez speaks and writes in English as a native language, "not mine" because as a Latino, Pérez's identity is inextricably linked with Spanish, the

language presumed to be the true mother tongue of all Latinos regardless of actual linguistic competence in Spanish.[28]

Here the critiques outlined above by Balbuena and Kronfeld bear particular relevance, since many U.S. Latino texts, although written predominantly in English, contain Spanish-language entries to varying degrees as discussed in the previous chapter. Certainly, most narratives made available and rendered successful by the publishing industry in the United States today are mostly – to completely – comprehensible to monolingual English readers; yet many texts also contain expressive subtleties linked specifically to the Spanish language which are inaccessible to non-Spanish speakers. For instance, as discussed in detail below, writer Junot Díaz liberally sprinkles his predominantly English narrative with Dominican Spanish phrases which, while perhaps vaguely comprehensible to the non-Spanish speaker, remain fully accessible only to the bilingual reader well-versed in Dominican Spanish.[29] Therefore, Deleuze and Guattari's requirement that narratives be composed only in the "major" language falls short of completely describing the full linguistic impact of U.S. Latino narrative, since many Latino texts are written in multiple languages and not just English.

The second criteria for minor literature described by Deleuze and Guattari is that the work must be political in nature (*Kafka* 17). As Pérez points out, many Latino writers see the linguistic struggle as inseparable from other social struggles, placing Latino

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[28] See chapter II for a discussion of the ways in which the Spanish language, regardless of whether or to what degree it is spoken by U.S. Latinos, has become emblematic of Latino identity.

[29] It is important to note that Díaz does not just use Spanish; he uses a very specific Dominican slang that is also incomprehensible to many native Spanish speakers.

literature within the history of ethnic liberation movements (95). Cherríe Moraga notes: "The generation of Chicano literature being read today sprang forth from a grassroots social and political movement of the sixties and seventies.... It responded to a stated mandate: *art is political*" (57). Frances Aparicio concurs, adding that the interaction between English and Spanish in Latino literature stands as a protest against the uprooting of historical, personal, and ethnic identity: "These words are not only unique in their cultural denotations, but more importantly, they function as 'conjuros' as ways of bringing back an original, primordial reality... from which these [writers] have been uprooted in a political and cultural way" ("La Vida" 149). Pérez names this textual interaction between English and Spanish – referred to throughout this project as "code switching" and discussed in depth in chapter IV – as a "linguistic mestizaje," noting that it serves as both a weapon in the struggle against marginalization as well as a confrontation with the major language (96).

The third characteristic of minor literature, according to the French philosophers, is its ability to articulate a collective experience (*Kafka* 17). As noted previously, the voice of the minor author then becomes representative of his or her entire minor or marginalized community. Abdul JanMohamed and David Lloyd elaborate on this third criterion by adding that the collective nature of minority discourse derives from the fact that minority individuals are always treated and forced to experience themselves generically (9-10). "Coerced into a negative, generic, subject position, the oppressed individual responds by transforming that position into a positive, collective one.... The minority's attempt to negate the prior hegemonic negation of itself is one of its most

fundamental forms of affirmation" (JanMohamed and Lloyd 10). Within the U.S. Latino context, then, the experience writers are able to voice for their home communities is the political and personal struggle with intercultural/interlingual identity (Pérez 102). Hence many Latino writers do indeed transform the "negative, generic, subject position" they are forced to occupy into a positive and collective one, thereby affirming the experiences of oppression shared by their communities.

In accordance with Balbuena's critique, then, U.S. Latino narratives engaging in expressions of bicultural and bilingual selves serve as counter-examples that effectively expand Deleuze and Guattari's formulation of the minor to include multilingual texts. The Latinos who write from a marginal position do so within a bilingual framework in opposition to English, their territorial or dominant language. As a result of these authors' deliberate uses of textual code-switching to articulate biculturalism, this body of literature collectively expresses a U.S. Latino linguistic reality that questions the supremacy of English, of monolingualism, and of cultures linked to the Anglo-Saxon tradition in the United States. This challenge is discussed in successive sections of this chapter.

The Latino Writer's Linguistic Micro-Hamlet

The choice to write in Spanish or English is one that, regardless of whether or not linguistic ability would permit either language as a viable option, many Latino writers confront at the moment of putting pen to paper. Rolando Pérez describes this choice as the outcome of a question posed by a "linguistic micro-Hamlet" who deliberates uncomfortably within the mind of the writer about whether to write in English or to write

in Spanish, which for many Latino writers literally means *ser o no ser* (Pérez 91).[30] "And whether 'tis nobler to write in one or the other, or even in both, can only provoke anxiety in a writer torn between his/her mother tongue or the 'adopted' language, for ultimately, the question of language choice has a lot more to do with self-concept and one's affective relations to a language than with linguistic competence" (Pérez 91). Pérez here implies that Latino writers have emotional ties to Spanish that persist regardless of linguistic proficiency, suggesting that the pull to write in Spanish is related to a sense of core identity for these authors.[31]

Much of this anxiety comes from general misunderstandings about bilingualism and about who is bilingual. As discussed in chapter III, in spite of the mainstream conception in the United States that all Latinos are Spanish-speakers, many, particularly those who belong to third generation or later immigrant families, are in fact monolingual English speakers. The language acquisition pattern of all immigrant families to the United States typically follows a three-generation language shift cycle, whereby the first generation is monolingual in the home country's tongue, the second generation is bilingual in English and the home country's language, and the third generation is monolingual in English. Immigrants from Spanish-speaking countries are no exception to this rule, the result of which is that many Latinos in the U.S., while they may have Spanish-speakers in their families, and while the Spanish language is an intrinsic part of

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[30] *Ser* is the Spanish verb "to be" and here I interpret this use, borrowed from Pérez, to indicate that for many Latino writers, the choice to write in English or Spanish influences whether or not their writing will actually be published and read in the U.S. market.

[31] Ironically, Pérez here invokes in this metaphor a quintessentially Anglo figure – Hamlet – thereby demonstrating how deeply internalized the dominant can become.

their identity, are most comfortable communicating in English. Yet since Spanish lies at the heart of the Latino writer's identity regardless of proficiency, choosing to write in English for many writers represents the worst kind of betrayal (Pérez 91). As Cuban American writer and scholar Gustavo Pérez Firmat explains, "I have always felt a mixture of regret and remorse that I have not done more of my writing, and my living, in Spanish. Sometimes I have even thought that every single one of my English sentences – including this one – hides the absence of the Spanish sentence that I wasn't willing or able to write" (2).

Taking this "absence of Spanish" into account, Firmat calls for a new conception of bilingualism: the true bilingual, according to Firmat, is not someone who possesses native competence in two languages, but someone who is equally attached to, or torn between, competing tongues (4). These attachments to languages are what Firmat calls "tongue ties," which he states have little to do with competence and are affective rather than cognitive in nature. "Tongue ties do not presuppose mastery of a language. Just as it is possible never to have met one's parents, it is possible to be ignorant of one's mother tongue. [32] The maternal denotes attachment, not skill; affinity, not fluency; familialness, not familiarity" (4). Firmat's conception of bilingualism as an emotional, identity-oriented attachment to multiple languages rather than actual linguistic competence in those languages provides insight into the struggle many Latino writers face when their inner linguistic micro-Hamlet requires them to choose English or Spanish.

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[32] Firmat uses the term "mother tongue" here to mean heritage language rather than actual native language.

Many Latino writers have shared their experiences with the language choice question. Dominican-born writer Junot Díaz, for example, when asked in an interview if he would ever write a novel in Spanish, answered that since he learned to read and write in English, in the end English would probably be his life's language, adding, "[P]eople kind of forget that for most young people, the language that they're saddled with wasn't a choice. I came over [from the Dominican Republic] so young that speaking English wasn't a choice, it was a basic form of reality on the ground" ("LAist"). Here Díaz speaks to the mistaken assumption held by many readers that Latino writers have a choice to make about language, when in reality the language choice was already made for them by parents, society, or other social factors. Like Díaz, Puerto Rican writer Judith Ortiz Cofer notes that for her, English is the language of her formal education and therefore the language in which she writes. Spanish, in contrast, constitutes the affective linguistic substratum – the language of her heart – that makes English resonate in her poetry (Pérez 92). In an interview she stated,

> I went to the escuela pública for about six months... so how can I write well in Spanish when Spanish is my second language? When I say it is my second language, it means that English is the language of my schooling. However, my language was Spanish; I spoke only in Spanish with my mother; I dream in Spanish.... But I cannot write in Spanish because much of the grammar is alien to me. (Acosta-Belén 90)

Ortiz Cofer here suggests that writing – as opposed to speaking – requires a set of proficiency skills different from those possessed by writers such as herself, who may

regard Spanish as their language of identity and who may have been raised speaking Spanish to their parents, but who never learned how to use it formally in school as they did English.

Firmat underscores Ortiz Cofer's relationship with Spanish and English by reporting that U.S. Latino writers habitually pledge allegiance to a mother tongue that, for the most part, they no longer possess: "Swearing loyalty to Spanish in English, they bear false witness, for even when the words have become unintelligible, even when the attempts at Spanish are riddled with solecisms, the emotional bonds remain unbroken" (4). In previous chapters I have analyzed the explicit link made by many – both Latinos and non-Latinos – between the Spanish language and Latino identity, a link constructed regardless of actual linguistic proficiency. Spanish, whether used or not, is part of being Latino – the language itself is emblematic of Latino history, immigration, and presence in the United States. Therefore it is not surprising that Latino writers would embrace Spanish as a hallmark of their identity and feel a sense of responsibility to it, whether their texts appear in English, Spanish, or both languages. However, as Pérez notes, the bond to Spanish is not without struggle. What many Latino authors have in common is not only a political but also a personal struggle with their cultural and linguistic identity (Pérez 102). Indeed, as Firmat puts it, "there is no bilingualism without pain" (6).

These discussions about U.S. Latinos' varying levels of proficiency in Spanish explain only part of why most of the published and successful narratives on the market are written predominantly in English. The publishing industry itself plays a significant role in ensuring that English-dominant texts are the ones available to mainstream readers,

a reality analyzed in detail in chapter VI. Spanish, however, is far from absent from these narratives. Its presence varies from writer to writer, yet Spanish makes itself known even in narratives with very few actual Spanish language entries. As noted above, writers like Ortiz Cofer use an English that resonates with a Spanish rhythm, an effect referred to as "tropicalization" by Frances Aparicio ("Sub-Versive" 796) and discussed later in this chapter. Likewise, Julio Ortega notes that Junot Díaz writes in an English that one reads as though it were Spanish: "...[L]a lengua española [es] también capaz de ocupar el inglés. Escritores cubano-americanos, mexicano-americanos, puertorriqueños y dominicanos de Nueva York narran en un inglés enunciado desde el español" (14).[33] The following sections will look at the ways in which Spanish vibrates within the English narrated by several U.S. Latino writers.

Weird English

As described earlier, within the context of U.S. Latino literatures, Deleuze and Guattari's formulation of the minor creates the space for these texts to revolutionize the language and culture of hegemony in the U.S.; namely, English and cultures linked to the Anglo-Saxon tradition. The hegemonic language and culture of the United States is unquestionably one that, as discussed in chapters II and III, persists in valorizing certain races and languages over others. Specifically, so-called "whiteness" and monolingual "unaccented" English use significantly improve individual odds for success in the United States (Espino and Franz 612). Possessing "non-white" skin and using "non-standard"

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[33] "Spanish is also capable of occupying English. Cuban-American, Mexican-American, Puerto Rican and Dominican writers from New York narrate in an English that is enunciated from Spanish." (translation mine)

English – or not using English at all – are guarantors of discrimination in the United States today (Lippi-Green 63). As a minor literature, U.S. Latino narrative faces the possibility of, as Balbuena writes, challenging and re-inscribing monolingual English in the hegemony that is the United States (5). These narratives do so by incorporating the presence of the Spanish language and the marginalized experience of U.S. Latinos into the major language text, thereby subverting English from within.

This phenomenon is not restricted to Spanish alone. Evelyn Ch'ien notes that the blending of English with non-English languages in literature is a growing trend in the United States today (3). With increasing frequency, she writes, narratives reveal barely intelligible and sometimes unrecognizable English created by combining one or more languages with English. Chi'en names this process the "weirding of English" and notes that this blending is not restricted to the current moment but has been an ongoing phenomenon throughout history. After all, she continues, English, like other languages, is a hybrid consisting of influences from Latin, French, and German. The difference, she claims, between the past and the present is that recently the phenomenon of hybridity has entered the print literary culture. Hence, authors are performing the act of weirding English on a political level. "[T]hey are daring to transcribe their communities and thus build identities.... Vernaculars used by weird-English authors have existed for decades, but the act of transcribing establishes the community-speak in a permanent way" (Ch'ien 4).

As discussed in chapter III, when this "community-speak" consists of the bilingual linguistic practice of blending English and Spanish in U.S. Latino communities,

many monolingual English speakers feel threatened. Juan Gonzalez notes that nothing seems to inflame advocates of the nation's Anglo-Saxon traditions so much as the issue of language (xiii). Since culture is inevitably expressed through its language, he continues, the growth of "foreign" (non-English) language use in the U.S. implies the growth of "foreign" (non-Eurocentric) cultures as well. Thus, because the number of Spanish-speakers in the United States has grown significantly in recent years, Latinos – whose identities are closely linked with the Spanish language – have likewise increasingly been seen by mainstream, non-Latino Americans as the "vanguard of a linguistic threat" (xiii).[34]

Many Latino writers, then, hold within their grasp a tool to effect linguistic change, and to question the valorization of monolingual English use in the United States. The implement available to these writers is the placement of Spanish in their otherwise English texts, and the Latino identity its presence signifies.[35] Chapter IV describes how U.S. Latino texts that code switch between English and Spanish work at confronting monolingual language ideologies in the U.S. by inscribing Spanish into English on the page. However, as noted earlier, Spanish makes its presence known in varying ways, not all of them featuring its explicit appearance. Lourdes Torres groups writers' strategies for

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[34] The identification of Latino or Latin America with the Spanish language alone constitutes a significant erasure of indigenous languages, which also figure into the identity of this population.

[35] It is important to note that not all U.S. Latinos who publish necessarily work to revolutionize the English language. Nor should they have to. As Pérez explains, "I wrote these and subsequent books out of my own personal and intellectual interests. I never set out to write a 'Latino' book, or worried about whether I was crossing some prohibited cultural border by not writing in Spanish" (100).

inclusion of Spanish into English texts in three categories based on the accessibility of their Spanish by the reader. These categories, which I refer to as "Spanish Made Easy," "Favoring the Bilingual," and "Radically Bilingual," are introduced below and discussed in depth in the following three sections.

The most common strategy used by Latino prose writers, Torres explains, reveals what she describes as an "easily accessed, transparent, or cushioned Spanish" (79). This technique consists of including Spanish words whose meaning is obvious from the context, such as recognizable cultural signifiers like food (*salsa, tortilla*), locations (*playa, casa*), or familiar common nouns (*compadre, amigo*). Such lexical items, Torres notes, may serve to Latinize the text but are easily understood by readers with little or no knowledge of Spanish (78). Another way of "cushioning" the Spanish for a monolingual reader, she explains, consists of the use of Spanish accompanied by an English language translation.

A second strategy of including Spanish presents the reader with un-glossed, un-translated Spanish language entries which are intended to gratify the bilingual reader. Techniques that fit into this category, according to Torres, include the use of un-italicized Spanish with no translation such that Spanish is not marked as foreign in any way. A second option for gratifying the bilingual reader consists of writers' positioning of Spanish as indirectly, or covertly, present in the English text. Sandra Cisneros makes use of this technique in the unusual-sounding English names of several of her characters in *Caramelo*, such as the characters she names "Aunty Light Skin." To the bilingual, this name is recognizable as the Spanish "*Tía Güera*," but to the English monolingual the

name sounds strange (Torres 78). Writers who make use of this second strategy prioritize the bilingual reader and may, as Torres puts it, cause instances of discomfort or annoyance to the monolingual reader (78). This speculated response suggested by Torres is tested in chapter VII, in which reader discomfort and annoyance is empirically measured.

The third and most infrequent strategy employed by Latino writers for incorporating Spanish into their texts consist of creating texts which are what Torres describes as "radically bilingual" (86), such that they can be accessed successfully only by readers proficient in both English and Spanish. These texts reveal longer Spanish-language entries that are wholly un-explained and completely inaccessible to the monolingual English reader. Hence, as demonstrated by Torres, there exists a range of narrative techniques by which Spanish reveals itself in English-dominant U.S. Latino literature. The following three sections discuss all three strategies introduced here.

Spanish Made Easy

While scholars such as Alfred Arteaga argue that any appearance of Spanish in English texts undermines monolingualism in the U.S. by undercutting claims of prevalence, centrality, and superiority and confirming the condition of heteroglossia (14), others, such as Ernst Rudin, Laura Callahan, and Lourdes Torres agree that the majority of the Spanish in published Latino prose fiction is easily understood by a monolingual English speaker and is written with the monolingual reader in mind (Rudin 229, Callahan "Metalinguistic" 418, Torres 79). Torres explains that in fact, bilingual knowledge is unnecessary in understanding most of recent Latino fiction because of redundancy and

explication of the Spanish text for the monolingual English reader. She writes that this focus on monolingual readers "can make such texts plodding for a bilingual audience" (79). Torres further suggests that the appearance of Spanish alongside the English on the page marks these narratives as distinctly "Latino" in a direct manner, and hence could be challenging monolingualism at least at a surface level (79).

Juan Gonzalez names this type of narrative technique "the safari approach," meaning the gearing of a text written by a Latino author toward an Anglo audience, with the writer as "guide and interpreter to the natives" (xvii). In essence, according to these critiques, such texts explicitly reveal Spanish explained to the non-Spanish speaker. In some of these types of narratives, only a few Spanish words occur and most of them are translated for the reader. Torres suggests that writers may desire to mark the text as Latino at the linguistic level but may not wish to alienate monolingual English readers (79), who, after all, represent the largest readership for any published writer in the United States today.

In an interview with Carmen Dolores Hernández, Judith Ortiz Cofer commented that she avoids code switching in her narratives and writes in Spanish sparingly for the purpose of illustrating the linguistic reality in which her characters dwell. She remarks:

> What I do is to use Spanish to flavor my language, but I don't switch. The context of the sentence identifies and defines the words, so my language is different from that; it's not code-switching. It is using Spanish as a formula to remind people that what they're reading or hearing comes from the minds and the thoughts of

Spanish-speaking people. I want my readers to remember that. (qtd. in Hernández

101)

In Ortiz Cofer's narratives, Spanish is usually either directly translated into English, or a

word that appears in English is translated in Spanish and appears italicized immediately

following the English language term. Torres provides examples of these two techniques,

including "*Así as la vida, hijas:* That is the way life is" ("Nada" 58) and "She felt a sense

of destiny*, el destino,* a powerful force taking over her life" ("Corazón's Café" 97).

Esmeralda Santiago's *When I Was Puerto Rican* reveals a similar strategy by

italicizing Spanish terms and then explaining them in English:

At home we listened to *aguinaldos*, songs about the birth of Jesus and the joys of

spending Christmas surrounded by family and friends. We sang about the

Christmas traditions of Puerto Rico, about the *parrandas*, in which people went

from house to house singing, eating, drinking, and celebrating, about pig roasts

and *ron cañita*, homemade rum, which was plentiful during the holidays. (40)

Here Santiago appears to adhere to the Gonzalez "safari approach" by offering an

ethnographic description of Puerto Rican cultural traditions for the uninformed

monolingual reader. In an interview with Bridget Kevane, Santiago commented on her

use of Spanish, remarking, "I pay a lot of attention to the weight of words. Any word

that's in Spanish in my English texts is not there by accident, or because I couldn't figure

out how to translate it, but rather because it has a resonance in Spanish that it doesn't

have in English" (qtd. in Kevane and Heredia 135).

In a similar vein, Nicholasa Mohr explained her use of Spanish in her stories:

I use it sparingly because I feel that the reader might not be getting the point. I am

concerned for my readers, so I manage to make my intent clear. With poets it's

different. They can read their work aloud and have close contact with their public.

When I do use words in Spanish, I follow them up in English in a way that is

clear. (qtd. in Hernández 93)

Mohr suggests that she writes with a monolingual English-speaking audience in mind, or

at least that she strives for the accessibility of her text by these readers. In her narratives,

Spanish tends not to be translated if the meaning is obvious, or if the terms are cushioned

by the context. For example, in "A Matter of Pride" she writes: "Midday was the time

when folks went home, showered, ate an abundant *almuerzo* and then took a long *siesta*"

(11). *Almuerzo* is not translated because the text lends cues as to its meaning with words

like "midday" and "ate." *Siesta* is not translated because it is a term used and understood

widely by English speakers in the U.S. Spanish terms are italicized and thus marked as

foreign to the English-speaking reader (Torres 80).

As noted in the previous chapter, Julia Alvárez's use of Spanish in *In the Time of

the Butterflies* also generally falls within the category of "Spanish-made-easy" for the

monolingual English reader. Her italicized and translated or intertextually-explained

Spanish language entries in this work reveal a text that is on the whole familiarized for

the monolingual reader. The familiarization techniques cited in the above examples,

Torres notes, could have subversive value in their introduction of Spanish to monolingual

readers in an unintimidating manner (81). An ideal result of such a reader's encounter

with any of the above texts would be that this reader would learn that the Spanish language is an intrinsic part of Latino existence and also of the multilingual reality of the United States. Furthermore, physically placing Spanish on the page next to English yields a public site where Spanish and English share textual space. Additionally, this type of easily-accessible Spanish could have the effect of encouraging second and third-generation Latinos who are not Spanish-speakers to become reacquainted with their heritage language (Torres 81).

However, a different view of the language employed in these narratives suggests that the texts in fact reinforce monolingual linguistic complacency by making Spanish easy for the English monolingual. "[C]ushioning Spanish in this way may allow the reader to sense that s/he is entering the linguistic world of bilingual Latino/as without having to make any effort" (Torres 81). While the appearance of so-called "foreign" terms in a text does serve to underscore the cross-cultural nature of the narrative, continues Torres, these terms can also be used in ways that support mainstream culture rather than empower a minority culture (82). Specifically, translation (direct or indirect) tends to negate the text's difference and renders "the other" familiar. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tifflin argue that not translating foreign words is a political act, because glossing gives the translated words and the receptor language more prestige (64). As Torres notes, the Spanish in the preceding examples is presented but then "virtually cancelled and familiarized for the monolingual through translation" (82). Likewise, the appearance of a glossary at the end of the book even further ensures that the monolingual English reader will not have to sweat it out in unfamiliar linguistic territory. Hence, while these texts

may successfully subvert mainstream culture on levels other than the linguistic, they give primacy to their monolingual readers in terms of language (Rudin 229).

One might also argue that texts which are linguistically fully accessible to monolingual readers may in fact possess increased power to subvert mainstream culture since they easily reach the very audiences writers may wish to transmute. This transformation could occur by simply raising consciousness about the Latino experience while simultaneously putting Spanish itself on the page with English. Ultimately, however, whether texts in this category actually do undermine the prevalence of monolingualism in the literary world depends upon whom you ask. As discussed above, arguments falling on both sides of the debate are easy to construct. I view such texts as working in both directions simultaneously: they at once weaken the valorization of monolingual English use via the appearance of Spanish in the text, while also favoring the English monolingual reader by cushioning Spanish so as to make it easily accessible. Without direct evidence of the experience of readers encountering these texts, however, these debates cannot be anything other than purely hypothetical. To that end, chapter VII examines the reader experience of code switching texts in great detail.

Favoring the Bilingual

In contrast to the above-mentioned narratives, some Latino texts, while published by mainstream presses, frequently favor the bilingual, bicultural reader over the monolingual. In fact, monolingual readers of these narratives may be blocked from full access to the text due to their linguistic limitations. While they may often decipher meaning from the context, monolingual readers often have to resort to outside sources

such as dictionaries to obtain meaning. Furthermore, occasionally no reference text will

help, and the monolingual will have to settle for partial comprehension. Torres outlines

several strategies used by Latino authors to make texts more engaging for a bilingual

readership (83).

The use of untranslated, un-glossed Spanish within the English text constitutes

one strategy employed by some writers. Junot Díaz, for example, describes in an

interview his own uncompromising stance with regard to the appearance of Spanish in his

work:

> For me allowing the Spanish to exist in my text without the benefit of italics or
>
> quotations marks a very important political move. Spanish is not a minority
>
> language. Not in this hemisphere, not in the United States, not in the world inside
>
> my head. So why treat it like one? Why "other" it? Why de-normalize it? By
>
> keeping Spanish as normative in a predominantly English text, I wanted to remind
>
> readers of the mutability of languages. And to mark how steadily English is
>
> transforming Spanish and Spanish is transforming English. (qtd. in Ch'ien 204)

Díaz does not italicize or otherwise tag as foreign the Spanish in most of his fiction. The

Spanish that appears in his texts consists primarily of single lexical items, usually cultural

terms or slang from Dominican Spanish. For example, in "Otra Vida, Otra Vez" Díaz

writes, "He had a housekeeping guiso then, mostly in Piscataway" (188). In *Drown*, the

reader encounters passages such as, "My mother tells me Beto's home, waits for me to

say something…. He's a pato now but last year we were friends" (91). In these examples,

the terms "guiso" (gig) and "pato" (pejorative term for a homosexual man) are not readily

found in most dictionaries because these lexical items and the meanings employed by

Díaz are specific to informal, Caribbean Spanish only.

At other moments in Díaz's fiction, the author switches to Spanish for longer

passages, such as in *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. In describing how Belicia,

the protagonist's mother, developed a brash attitude as a teenager while living in the

Dominican Republic with her adoptive mother, La Inca, Díaz writes,

> Those of you who have stood at the corner of 142nd and Broadway can
>
> guess what it was she spoke: the blunt, irreverent cant of the pueblo that
>
> gives all dominicanos cultos nightmares on their 400-thread-count sheets
>
> and that La Inca had assumed perished along with Beli's first life in Outer
>
> Azua, but here it was so alive, it was like it had never left: Oye, parigüayo,
>
> y que pasó con esa esposa tuya? Gordo, no me digas que tú todavía tienes
>
> hambre? (108)

Within this single passage, Díaz mixes not only English and Spanish, but also brings

together the Dominican Republic and New York City within the mouth of Belicia as she

speaks what La Inca presumably judges to be low-class Spanish. And by expressly

including his Latino bilingual readers, those who have heard similar words on the streets

of New York, Díaz effectively excludes and even alienates a monolingual English reader

from fully comprehending the passage.

Like Díaz, Sandra Cisneros makes textual code-switching choices that potentially

marginalize the monolingual English reader while privileging the bilingual. However,

Caramelo, an English-dominant novel about a Mexican family living in Chicago and

their annual expedition south to visit their extended family in Mexico City, is not as replete with un-translated Spanish passages as *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao.* Lala Reyes, the narrator, is the youngest and only girl in the family of seven, and it is through her eyes, both as a child and a frustrated teenager, that the reader sees her family and their past. The text is characterized in many instances by the occurrence of Spanish terms followed by their English translations, while in other cases, some expressions go un-translated because their meanings can be inferred by the non-Spanish-speaker from the context (Jiménez Carra 37).

As scholars such as Ellen McCracken, Sonia Saldivar-Hull, and Lourdes Torres have noted, Sandra Cisneros' narrative style succeeds in both engaging the monolingual and rewarding the bilingual by incorporating Spanish throughout her texts (Torres 84). In *Caramelo*, she italicizes Spanish words but usually does not mark obvious translations from Spanish that probably remain unintelligible to the monolingual reader but amusing to the bilingual. In commenting on the Spanish language entries in her texts, Cisneros states that she will not make translation concessions for the Anglo reader, adding, "The reader[s] who [are] going to like my stories the best and catch all the subtexts and subtleties, that even my editor can't catch, are Chicanas. [...] But I'm also very conscious when I'm writing about opening doors for people who don't know the culture" (qtd. in Jussawalla and Dasenbrock 290).

However, in spite of those moments that may remain unintelligible to the monolingual reader and amusing to the bilingual, Nieves Jiménez Carra's analysis of Cisneros' code switching in *Caramelo* resulted in her conclusion that the author's

strategies for incorporating Spanish into her text reveal an underlying focus on the Anglo reader (Jiménez Carra 56). The Spanish language entries in Cisneros' text, according to Jiménez Carra, tend to be inter-textually translated into English, understandable via context, or similar enough to their English equivalents as to be understood by monolinguals. For example, as an introduction to Lala's grandfather, Narciso, the narrator provides a clever in-text translation of the Spanish terms as follows: "It was the cultural opinion of the times that men ought to be *feos, fuertes, y formales*. Narciso Reyes was strong and proper, but, no, he wasn't ugly" (Cisneros 103). And when Spanish words go un-translated, Cisneros provides enough of a context to cue in the monolingual reader: "...Remember how she used to sing when she was just a baby? *¡Qué maravilla!* She was just the same as Shirley Temple.... Still in diapers but there she was singing her heart out, remember?" (Cisneros 58) Here, the two sentences following the exclamation in Spanish leave no doubt in the mind of the monolingual reader that the phrase is a positive expression about the singing talent of the child.

In spite of Jiménez Carra's conclusions, however, Frances Aparicio argues that on a linguistic level, Cisneros engages in subversive language use by employing what Aparicio terms "tropicalized English" which she describes as "a transformation and rewriting of Anglo signifiers from the Latino cultural viewpoint" ("Sub-Versive Signifiers" 796). In accordance with Aparicio's formulations, Cisneros herself explains that the incorporation of Spanish in her work allows her to create new expressions in English, to say things that have not been said before. For instance, Cisneros often literally translates Mexican Spanish expressions or refrains into English, such as: "God squeezes,

but He doesn't choke" (119) which succeeds in producing an effect of "foreignness" to the monolingual English reader. Of these Spanish-influenced expressions, Cisneros says, "All of a sudden something happens to the English, something really new is happening, a new spice is added to the English language" (qtd. in Jussawalla and Dasenbrock 288). This "new spice" or, as Aparicio terms it, "tropicalizing gesture," destabilizes discursive hegemonies tied to Anglo relations with Latinos in the United States (Aparicio, "Sub-Versive Signifiers 796) by opening a universe of new, distinct, and very non-Anglo sensitivities and ways of thinking (Jiménez Carra 45).

Like Cisneros, Helena Maria Viramontes favors the bilingual reader of her novel *Under the Feet of Jesus*, except that Viramontes does so by leaving untranslated phrases or entire sentences in Spanish. Viramontes employs this strategy most frequently in dialogue, and as a result these portions of the text are only accessible to the bilingual. While her use of un-glossed Spanish in this way treats the bilingual to an "insider" experience of the text, the bilingual might also assume the text would be inaccessible to, and consequently rejected by, the monolingual. Chapter VII discusses how the bilingual preoccupation with the monolingual experience often weighs heavily in the bilingual reader's own reception of the text.

When asked about her use of inaccessible Spanish in her texts, Viramontes suggested that monolinguals' frustration at being excluded linguistically has to do with more than just language:

A few years ago a southwestern writer, Cormac McCarthy, wrote *All the Pretty Horses*. If I remember correctly, there were whole paragraphs in Spanish. Not one

reviewer questioned it, not one reader said, 'I wish there was a glossary.' But if a Spanish-surnamed writer uses Spanish, it becomes an issue. Readers feel purposely excluded, like, why are you keeping this from me? Well, I'm sorry. How could I not give integrity to the characters? (qtd. in Kevane and Heredia 150)

Here Viramontes gestures at the double-standard held by mainstream readers' requirement that Latino writers make their Spanish accessible, while non-Latino writers remain free from this responsibility. Pérez, too, explains that the way in which readers receive texts has very much to do with authors' surnames (and the racialization they imply) and the assumptions that go along with them. Latinos' Spanish names, he notes, are thought by many to be sufficient proof of the fact that Latinos are bilingual and bicultural and hence must by default possess not only the ability to write in Spanish if they so choose, but also the responsibility to adequately gloss that Spanish for their English readers. Following this logic, *not* glossing would be a purposely exclusionary, and therefore unacceptable, course of action on the part of a Latino writer. More on monolingual readers' reception of bilingual texts appears in chapter VII.

The following example from Torres illustrates Viramontes' use of untranslated Spanish in bilingual puns inaccessible to monolingual readers:

There is a girl over there, Alejo whispered.

-It's the sun, 'mano. Fried your sesos.

Alejo could barely make her out before the twilight turned her into a silhouette. She hadn't even looked around.

-Pronto, 'mano. Estoy pensando en garrapatas, no garranalgas. (39)

While "mano" and "sesos" may possibly be guessed by the monolingual reader from the

context to mean "brother" and "brains," the final reference remains inaccessible. The last

line contains a pun which translates as follows: "I am thinking about ticks (since they are

climbing trees and stealing peaches at night) rather than skirt-chasing." The meaning

cannot be guessed even with the aid of a good bilingual dictionary since "garranalgas"

(butt grabber) is a pun based on "garrapata" (tick). This passage might very well frustrate

the monolingual reader due to these inaccessible references (Torres 84).

Esmeralda Santiago's *America's Dream*, in contrast to *When I was Puerto Rican*

mentioned in the previous section, contains un-italicized Spanish terms and no glossary

for the English monolingual reader. Some Spanish terms are cushioned, yet *America's*

Dream gratifies the bilingual with moments of insight and understanding unavailable to

readers who do not know Spanish. An example of this reveals itself in the name "Correa"

chosen for one of the main characters, a cruel and dominating man. The noun "correa" in

Spanish signifies "belt" or "dog leash" in English and describes the violent character

well. Santiago also chooses place names that bear special meaning to the bilingual reader,

such as the first line of one chapter: "It's uphill from Esperanza to Destino" (16). The

bilingual reader, unlike the monolingual, understands that the main character has just left

hope behind and is about to embark on a difficult journey. Here Santiago plays with

bilingual puns and rewards the bilingual, bicultural reader (Torres 86).

Radically Bilingual

Academic presses, rather than mainstream ones, have over the years published Latino prose works that employ sustained code switching that can only be read by a bilingual audience. Linguistic experimentation in Latino prose texts published in the U.S. is not a new phenomenon; starting in the 1970s, writers such as Tomás Rivera and Roberto Fernández produced linguistically diverse texts that challenged both Spanish and English monolingual expectations. In 1971, Rivera wrote *...y no se lo tragó la tierra* in the colloquial Spanish dialect typical of Mexican migrant workers in the Southwest in the 1940s and 1950s. Readers of any linguistic background who are unfamiliar with this dialect would find the text a challenge to comprehend. Likewise, Fernández's *La vida es un especial $.75*, published in 1981, captures the experience of working-class Cubans living in Miami. The novel is written predominantly in Spanish but utilizes a wide array of linguistic options used by bilingual speakers, which yields the text inaccessible to monolingual speakers of either language. Several decades later, in a text innovatively expressing the Chicano experience in Anglo culture, Gloria Anzaldúa's 1987 *Borderlands/La frontera* posed a similar linguistic challenge to readers. This text features long passages of un-translated Spanish inaccessible to the English monolingual. Because these narratives mentioned above and other similar texts have been locally distributed by small presses, they address concerns that are suppressed by the state and present linguistic realities that are not represented in mainstream presses (Torres 86-87).

As Torres notes, the memoirs of Cherríe Moraga, Gloria Anzaldúa, Rosario Morales and Aurora Levins Morales established a trajectory in the 1980s and 1990s of

autobiographical writing that bilingually narrates the borderland experiences of the authors (87). Two more recent authors, Giannina Braschi and Susana Chávez-Silverman, take the bilingual performance aspect to a new level. Braschi's *Yo-Yo Boing!* (1998) and Chávez-Silverman's *Killer Crónicas* (2004) present texts which are constantly moving in between cultural and linguistic spaces in a narrative style that cannot be translated into either Spanish or English without losing the essence of the intercultural message (Torres 90).

Yo-Yo Boing! contains bilingual poetry, monologues, and dialogues placed between two Spanish language chapters. As such, the text innovates not only in terms of language but also in terms of genre, challenging its reader with hybridity on multiple levels. As explained in the introduction, the text is intended to be read as a performance piece. Within the narrative, Braschi explicitly expresses her views on bilingualism:

> If I respected languages like you do, I wouldn't write at all. El muro de Berlín fue derribado. Why can't I do the same. Desde la torre de Babel, las lenguas han sido siempre una forma de divorciarnos del resto de la humanidad. Poetry must find ways of breaking distance. I am not reducing my audience. On the contrary, I am going to have a bigger audience with the common market – in Europe – in America. And besides, all languages are dialects that are made to break new grounds. I feel like Dante and Petrarca, and Boccaccio and I even feel like Garcilaso forging a new lenguaje. Saludo al nuevo siglo, el siglo del nuevo lenguaje de América y le digo adiós a la retórica separatista y a los atavismos. (142)

By claiming that all languages are dialects that are made to break new grounds, Braschi

gestures at the linguistic truth that languages naturally evolve, and suggests that her

particular task as a bilingual poet is to forge a "new language," one which, as revealed in

this passage, reflects the hybrid mixing of codes arising out of the author's own

bilingualism. She argues that writing in the vernacular of the people will actually expand

and not decrease her readership, suggesting that it is only a matter of time before

bilingual communication is accepted on a wider scale. Since Braschi is a well-known

Puerto Rican poet, her first prose work, *Yo-Yo Boing!,* contributes to the task of making

bilingual prose writing acceptable and legitimate (Torres 88).

Like Braschi, Chávez-Silverman experiments with language mixing in what

Torres calls her "Spanglish" memoir, *Killer Crónicas*. This narrative uses language to

capture the writer's bicultural reality and her transnational in-betweenness. *Killer

Crónicas* constitutes a series of completely bilingual letters written to family and friends

during travel to Argentina. Almost every sentence throughout the work contains both

English and Spanish. Some linguists have argued that this text would be a good example

of sustained intra-sentential code switching, which, as discussed in the previous chapter,

requires a high level of proficiency in both languages. Torres notes that there are very

few instances within the text in which the writing violates the proposed rules of oral code

switching, namely the equivalence constraint and the free morpheme constraint first

outlined by Shana Poplack in the 1980s and discussed in the previous chapter (Torres

94). For example, in the beginning of the narrative the author writes:

These crónicas began as letters: cartas a amigos extrañados, love letters to cities, smells, people, voice and geographies I missed. O, por otra parte, comenzaron como cartas a un lugar, or to a situation that I was experiencing intensely, casi con demasiada intensidad and yet pleasurably as well, a sabiendas de que la viviencia acabaría demasiado pronto. (xxxi)

Chávez-Silverman has stated that she hopes her book will inspire others to write bilingual texts, not only in the US but also internationally, as there are many places where one's identity is expressed in more than one language (Torres 90). Both Braschi and Chávez-Silverman insist that bilingual writing is very much a part of the US literary experience. Torres suggests that texts such as the ones discussed in this section do not necessarily completely exclude monolingual audiences (90). Debra Castillo adds that monolingual audiences from either Spanish or English are invited to experience these narratives and undergo a sense of partial exclusion. For exclusion, notes Castillo, is very much the point, creating a different and valid response (170).

The monolingual English-speaking reader's required experience of marginalization in relation to these radically bilingual texts places these narratives within the minor literature framework discussed earlier. For by metaphorically displacing these readers into the periphery, these authors work toward challenging the dominance of English by giving prevalence to their bilingual readers. However, because these texts tend to be published by academic presses rather than mainstream ones – likely due to their inaccessibility by monolingual English readers – these texts may ultimately be less likely to affect real change since their inaccessibility by default restricts their readership

to bilinguals. Consequently, the very readers who most need to be reached – namely, English monolinguals – are at risk of being cancelled out entirely.

Conclusion

This chapter has framed U.S. Latino narrative within Deleuze and Guattari's concept of minor literature by showing how these texts work to subvert the major, dominant language and culture from within. I have argued that the capacity shared by many Latino writers to interrogate linguistic and cultural hierarchies via bilingual and bicultural narrative situates U.S. Latino literature as a whole within the minor literary framework. By destabilizing the central positioning of the English-speaking monolingual reader, these narratives challenge traditional Anglo-American discourses of knowledge and force the monolingual into a space of limited access to the text. Only the bilingual, traditionally at the margins, has the capacity to completely enter into the linguistic and cultural worlds created by these Latino writers.

As discussed earlier, a critical component of minor literature consists of its revolutionary potential. According to the framework, narratives written in a major language from a minor perspective have the ability to weaken dominant linguistic and cultural power structures as a result of their accessibility to mainstream readers who possess sociopolitical authority. Within the context of the United States, this signifies that texts written from the Latino perspective but read widely by English monolinguals possess the capacity to revolutionize the linguistic and cultural hierarchy in the U.S. by simultaneously inviting mainstream readers to participate and excluding them from fully comprehending the texts.

Many types of Latino narratives achieve this effect; however, I propose that none does so quite as effectively as the texts falling into the second category discussed above by favoring the bilingual reader. Writers such as Junot Díaz, Sandra Cisneros, Helena Viramontes, and Esmeralda Santiago successfully author narratives published by mainstream presses, thereby ensuring a wide, mainstream readership. At the same time, these texts employ narrative strategies that effectively exclude English monolingual readers from full access to the prose. English monolinguals may not understand everything they encounter from these writers, but they appear to be both buying and reading their texts nonetheless. Hence, writers such as those mentioned above achieve what could be the start of a linguistic and cultural revolution in the U.S., by publicly and politically naming Spanish – and the cultures of those attached to it – as normative.

CHAPTER VI

THE MARKETING AND PUBLISHING OF LATINIDAD

The Myth of the "Authentic" Text

Readers and literary critics alike often construct an implicit link between literature and culture, whereby literary texts become windows into, or examples of, the "otherness" of the culture they are read as representing. Within this construct, narratives are taken as an articulation of social reality, a living (and hence authentic) example of culture. Writers are perceived as carrying out the task of speaking for entire communities of people, of narrating the collective experience of a group to which they are presumed to belong. This is particularly true for minority writers, who are perceived as dwelling within and relating experiences from realities unfamiliar to their non-minority readership (JanMohamed and Lloyd 10). The texts created by such authors, then, are uncritically accepted by many as authoritative specimens of cultural production that accurately replicate the writer's reality for the reader. Thus far, the arguments presented in the preceding chapters may have likewise taken for granted the notion that Latino narratives available to readers in the United States today authentically reflect the experiences that their writers live. However, a prominent factor in the relationship between the experience of Latinos and the narratives available to the reading public remains as yet unexamined within the current analysis: namely, the publishing and marketing industry's role in determining not only which types of texts get published, but also how those texts are composed.

The reading of literary texts as windows into reality stems in part from the theoretical model created by the literary realism movement of the nineteenth century, during which time literature came to be regarded by the public as a faithful representation of social reality. John Lye notes that Marxist theorist Georg Lukàcs, for example, held that through the methodology of realism, literature reflects a social reality whose phenomena serve as a model for the work of art. Lye suggests that the realist writer, according to the model, gives a complete and correct account of observed social reality, and thus is able to uncover the driving forces of history and the principles governing social change. Literary works in the realist model, then, serve the function of representing deep-seated social truths as well as reflecting large-scale human development.

The acceptance of literary texts as authentic examples of social realities likewise reveals itself as an uncritically examined truth from a social sciences perspective. The field of language pedagogy, for example, approaches certain literary texts as authentic specimens of linguistic and cultural realities named as part of the so-called target language and culture they represent. The language teacher's use of *realia* – a term used to describe real-life materials that spring directly from the target culture rather than via textbooks – is often touted as the most effective way to enable learners to encounter the new language and culture authentically (Larsen-Freeman 29). As Vicki Galloway notes, authentic texts – which she defines as texts written *by* members of a language and culture group *for* members of that same group – provide opportunities for learners to engage in their own process of discovery in the target culture "through the language of the culture communicating with its own" (98). Galloway's remarks reflect a widely held

presumption in the field of language pedagogy that authentic texts by default not only

arise unabridged from the writer, but also are written primarily for other members of the

writer's own community rather than for a wider readership.

In contrast to the beliefs outlined above, a tenet of translation theory rests upon the

belief that language can never authentically communicate meaning, but that all texts are

interpreted by readers, who infuse them with a personal meaning of their own (Barnstone

23, Graham 18). Similarly, reader reception theory claims that the audience does not

simply passively accept text, but that readers interpret the meanings of the text based on

their individual cultural backgrounds and life experiences. According to this framework,

one could argue that regardless of whether or not literature provides a window into

reality, readers can never truly know the world a writer sets out to describe but rather

must always construct meaning based on their own interpretations of the text (Hall 5).

Hence, reads can never access the author's experience, since the reception and

significance of any literary work depends entirely upon the negotiation between writers

and readers, who may interpret words in varying manners.

Regardless of the manner by which readers construct meaning, the process by

which writers author, edit, and finally publish their narratives certainly shapes the texts

available to any reading public. A writer may set out to create a text which authentically

reflects his or her personal, cultural reality, but through the processes of revision and the

pressures of the marketplace, any original text becomes vulnerable to significant

alterations as a result of the restrictions and requirements placed by publishers upon

writers who hope to publish. Ultimately, authors published by mainstream presses must

create texts that readers will buy and read; they cannot write for their own gratification alone, no less to educate the reader in a manner deemed undesirable or unmarketable by a publisher. Hence, the industry, by default, becomes the authoritative source for and determiner of what readers buy and read as well as what writers write and publish. Furthermore, as mentioned above, many readers today have retained an uncritical acceptance of the verisimilitude of narratives, fictional or otherwise, particularly when texts treat subject matter with which readers are largely unfamiliar. Therefore, mainstream readers assume a posture of passive acceptance rather than one of critical examination (Hamilton 279, Paul 47). Consequently, the publishing industry clearly plays a prominent – if invisible – role in the creation of a body of narratives available to a reading public, who essentially allows the industry to control its perception of social reality. Within the context of Latino narratives available to readers in the United States today, then, mainstream presses shape not only which texts will be published, but also how those texts are actually written. This issue is developed in the following sections.

The Machinations of the Publishing Industry

The publishing industry, rather than infused with a pernicious intent to control readers' perceptions of social reality, is simply susceptible to the goals of economic achievement like any other business in the capitalist market. Like any arts-oriented industry, book publishers must bridge the gap between representing artistic expression and fulfilling commercial success. As Patrick Forsyth notes, a publishing house will only survive and prosper if it is financially profitable. Simply put, this means a press must produce more in sales revenue than it expends in costs (however worthwhile such

expenditure may be), and that profit must be generated to allow it to develop and grow further. Any other intention, warns Forsyth, leads not only to less success, but very possibly to complete failure (xiii). Hence, the drive to succeed financially requires the business to conform to marketing strategies designed to increase book sales.

Success, then, depends on the market – described by Forsyth as demanding, unpredictable, dynamic and fickle. Even the best titles, he notes, cannot be left to sell themselves; hence, marketing has become a vital part of the publishing business's survival as well as its means to future profit and growth. Without good marketing, Forsyth argues, the skilled efforts of writers, agents, and editors may be wasted if a book fails to sell (xiv). John Maxwell Hamilton agrees, noting that marketing plays an overwhelming role in book sales, and that while previously, editors could be satisfied to break even with a promising first-time author, now they feel pressure to make money right away (63). Hence, while the publishing industry may be conceptually linked with artistic production and higher aesthetic endeavors, the bottom line for book publishers – especially mainstream presses – is turning a profit.

As any good business student knows, the whole essence of every aspect of marketing – the concept, the planning through to all the research, communications, and the application of every technique – must focus on the customer. The customer is king, as the saying goes, and customers are ultimately the pipers who call the tune. As Forsyth warns, "Knowledge of, and respect for, the customer – whether that is defined as the bookshop or other professional buyer, or the ultimate book-buyer reader – is essential" (150). He continues that while some customers, such as major trade buyers, are powerful,

all (including readers) are fickle and their behavior is difficult to predict. Success, he claims, goes to those who keep the closest eye on consumers (150).

Therefore, keeping a close eye on book-purchasers so as to attempt to predict their buying behavior increases the chances of publishers' financial survival. When asked in an interview what editors look for in both authors and submissions, Jeanette Perez of HarperCollins Publishers noted that while editors value a well-written book, the text also has to have a hook that is easy to pitch (Perez). Perez continued, "Much of my job as an editor is selling the book in-house to our publicity, marketing, and sales teams. If I can present the book to them concisely and give them a hook they can use when they are selling the book to accounts, the book has that much better of a chance in the marketplace" (Perez). As an editor, Perez is a link in the long chain of decision-makers that begins with the aspiring writer and ends with the accounts team at a publishing house. Any writer hoping to publish through a mainstream press must first have an agent, whose job it is to know the editors and their interests as well as which editor would be best suited for which book (Perez). The editor, in turn, must sell the book to the marketing and sales team, who must then sell it to the accounts team for the publishing company. As noted earlier, the bottom line and driving force behind every decision made regarding a book is the book-buyer. Therefore, attempts to predict the customer's choices shapes every decision made about a book as the manuscript moves from team to team in preparation for the market.

What People Read

Knowing what people read, then, is paramount to a book's success. Yet predicting what book consumers will buy constitutes a tricky task indeed, even for the most skilled analysts. As *New York Times* reporter Motoko Rich found, there is no empirical answer to what turns someone into a book lover who keeps coming back for more, or even whether people will continue to be drawn to the literary landscape. She writes, "The gestation of a true, committed reader is in some ways a magical process, shaped in part by external forces but also by a spark within the imagination." Furthermore, notes Rich, despite the proliferation of book groups and literary blogs, reading is ultimately a private act. Sara Nelson, editor in chief of the trade magazine *Publishers Weekly*, supports this idea of the mystery of literary taste: "Why people read what they read is a great unknown and personal thing" (qtd. in Rich). Ultimately, as Junot Díaz points out, it is impossible to explain what draws people to reading: "I feel like it's a mystery what makes us vulnerable to certain practices and not to others" (qtd. in Rich).

Daniel Goldin, general manager of the Harry W. Schwartz Bookshops in Milwaukee, suggests that in many cases, what turns people into readers is the right book at the right time. "It can be like a drug in a positive way. If you get the book that makes the person fall in love with reading, they want another one" (qtd. in Rich). However, Goldin does not propose precisely what sort of book that would be. Rich hypothesizes that one quality which transforms a book into trigger for continuous reading could be a main character with whom the reader identifies. For example, Sherman Alexie, a Spokane Indian and author of *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* which

won the National Book Award for young people's literature in 2007, noted upon accepting his award that he had been greatly influenced by one book as a child. The text, a well-known title for children called *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats, depicts an indigenous character with which Alexie identified. "It was the first time I looked at a book and saw a brown, black, beige character — a character who resembled me physically and resembled me spiritually, in all his gorgeous loneliness and splendid isolation" (qtd. in Rich). Identification with characters, then, is a possible key component of texts to which readers are drawn.

Another impulse that draws people to read, suggests Rich, is a wish to embrace the "other" made accessible via literature. In an interview, Azar Nafisi, author of the 2003 memoir *Reading Lolita in Tehran* about a book group she led in Iran, noted, "It's that excitement of trying to discover that unknown world" (qtd. in Rich). Readers may feel that texts depicting realities vastly different from their own provide them with the chance to open their eyes to experiences they might otherwise not be able to access; this, Nafisi suggests, draws people to reading. A reader of Rich's article concurs with this proposal, remarking: "Simply put, I read to expand and enhance my perception of reality" (Kenny). Furthermore, adds another reader, "Reading allows me to cross time and space and enter another's perspective; it multiplies my experience" (Morrison). Books that depict "otherness" for readers, then, appear to stand a greater chance of succeeding in the marketplace.

A third type of book people buy and read, according to Rich, constitutes a text perceived by consumers as easy to read. In an interview, Alan Bennett, author of the 2007

novella *The Uncommon Reader*, named *The Pursuit of Love*, a 1945 popular novel by

Nancy Mitford, as the first adult novel he read for pleasure. Bennett noted that the book

served as a stepping off point into more heavyweight literature, adding, "There are all

sorts of entrances that you can get into reading by reading what might at first seem trash"

(qtd. in Rich). Notes one reader, "Reading takes me away from the problems of the

ordinary world, into a world that where [sic] if problems exist, they have solutions and

endings. All romantic stories have happy endings…. murders are always solved"

(Hilton). While such things as happy endings and solved murders may be hallmarks of

so-called "trashy" literature, they appear nonetheless to be easy, pleasurable elements for

many readers to encounter.

Other books, unlike those described by the characteristics mentioned above, are

chosen by readers simply because they have become what Rich calls a "phenomena,"

meaning they are widely known and read based on popular reputation alone. Examples

would include J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, Dan Brown's 2006 best selling novel

The Da Vinci Code, or, to a slightly lesser extent, most books recommended for Oprah

Winfrey's book club (Rich). However, readers who opt for purchase of "hot" books such

as the ones mentioned here more often wait for the next popular title to appear rather than

remain faithful to authors of previously popular titles. In fact, notes Rich, even after

Oprah Winfrey recommends a title, sales of other books by the same author do not

necessarily match those of the book that bears her imprimatur. Jonathan Galassi,

publisher at Farrar, Straus and Giroux, agrees. "What I find with readers today is they

don't go off on their own to another book. They wait for the next recommendation" (qtd.

in Rich). Hence, readers of popular books, it would seem, are easily influenced and guided by celebrity endorsements.

Therefore, although what people buy and read would appear to remain largely abstruse, publishers and analysts do propose several types of narratives consumers seem to prefer. Namely, as outlined above, readers appear to favor books that depict characters with whom they can identify, that describe realities foreign to their own, that are easy and pleasurable to read, and that are endorsed by celebrities or have become a phenomenon. Certainly, in pursuit of predicting the tastes and preferences of the all-important yet elusive and fickle book buyer, mainstream presses expend considerable energies and funds analyzing precisely what people will buy and read. Their fiscal survival depends upon the successful prediction of readers' choices. Likewise, the most successful books will be narratives conforming to publishers' predictions about customers' choices.

Yet it is impossible to discuss attempts to predict the actions of culture consumers such as book buyers without duly noting the eminent importance of best-seller lists. As Laura Miller points out, these rankings serve extremely vital functions for members of the book industry, who use them as powerful marketing tools to sell more books (286). Among the many rankings now printed, *The New York Times* best-seller list is widely considered the preeminent gauge of what Americans are reading. Yet, as Miller notes, its methodology is highly problematic, and many in the industry assume there are irregularities on the part of sources who report to the *Times*; conversely, members of the public have little understanding of what the lists actually represent (287).

Miller suggests that best-seller lists such as the one compiled by the *Times*, rather than passively recording the doings of the book world, are in fact actively participating in it (289). The real power of the best-seller list, according to Miller, lies not in its ability to reflect accurately which books are the country's top sellers, but rather to actually sell books (295). Indeed, the marketing power of being a *New York Times* best-seller is unquestionably tremendous. Currently, notes Miller, once a book makes the *Times* list, the achievement is trumpeted in all further promotional material and the book is sought by readers who habitually read best-sellers. The book is also given special treatment by retailers. Publishers likewise make the best-selling status of a book its most notable feature. Hence, the power of the list lies in its ability to determine what books are likely to be bought, and the rankings become self-fulfilling prophecies rather than reflections of reality (Miller 294).

Despite the *Times'* claim to be ever more empirical in its compilation of best-sellers, Miller notes, the methodology employed in building the rankings, as noted above, casts doubt on the accuracy of the report (293). Furthermore, the lists can be easily manipulated by enterprising authors or publishers who discover which stores in given areas are *Times*-reporting and use this information to cause large buys to be made from them. Miller provides an example concerning author Jacqueline Susann, who, determined to get *Valley of the Dolls* on the list, tried to butter up *Times*-reporting booksellers and bought large quantities of her own book (294). In another case, writer Wayne Dyer, author of the 1970s best-seller *Your Erroneous Zones*, also purchased thousands of copies of his own book (294).

Miller concludes that while existing best-seller lists might bear some relation to actual sales of books, rankings may not always be deserved and there may be other high-selling titles that do not make it onto the lists. She warns that scholars who want to use such lists as records of popular tastes need to scrutinize more closely the context in which they are produced. The authority of the list, writes Miller, is more cultural than scientific, and indeed the purpose of the list is as much about economics as it is about entertaining or informing the public. Ultimately, the best-seller list does not provide an account of Americans' reading patterns as much as the social production of best-sellers (300).

More Than Meets the Eye: The Writer's Perspective

Given the financially driven pressures of the publishing industry to pump out only the sorts of books that will succeed in the marketplace, it is impossible to assume that any aspiring writer would be able to author a work wholly unaffected by the demand to capitulate to publishers' interpretations of reader preferences. To publish a book, as noted earlier, writers have to write the sort of book that will sell. On the one hand, many famous, published writers have expressed their ability to focus on the work itself rather than on the desire to sell; on the other hand, such a stance may be interpreted as a luxury enjoyed only by already successful writers. Several published, well known, and widely read authors such as Junot Díaz, Julia Alvarez, and Sandra Cisneros, have each at one time or another alluded to a sense of removal from concern about the public's reception of their books. In discussing whether he felt pressure in writing his novel *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, Díaz stated in an interview, "After this many years you just don't give a fuck. It's like I don't care. And I'm writing a book that in its structure

reflects the I-don't-careness" (Díaz "Interview"). Likewise, Alvarez noted in an interview, "Book biz can be distracting. A writer runs the danger of becoming a creature of publicity.... It's so easy to get sucked into that star world instead of paying attention to your work. And your work is really bigger than you" (Alvarez 29). Cisneros, too, mentioned in an interview that getting published should not be the only aim of writing: "Writing is to get in touch with some intimate part of yourself. Publishing, fame, money, if you get it at all in your lifetime, is just icing on the cake but not the cake" (Cisneros "Home" 57).

Other successful, published authors have made similar comments about their ability to separate themselves from the demands of the industry in order to focus on their writing rather than their success. Clearly, that these writers have already met with success affords them the ability to philosophically distance themselves from the need to write for the sole purpose of publishing. However, as mentioned above, this distanced relationship with the industry would appear to be a privilege enjoyed by writers who have already published and can afford to write for the sake of writing. Aspiring authors, however, may have a different experience; getting a first novel published might easily take precedence over the experience of writing for writing's sake. Granted, those drawn to the practice of writing are likely not the type to seeking abundant remuneration. However, authors, like everyone else, enjoy being able to make a living from their work, and publishing a book might enable a writer to, simply put, continue writing.

In fact, many published, successful writers who no longer have to worry about the public reception of their books began their writing careers authoring texts more geared

toward meeting the pressures of the industry. As Díaz stated in an interview, for example, "Contracts, of course, create pressure. Of course, they disrupt your work. Of course, they entail a danger of destabilizing you to the point where you don't have your own voice anymore" ("Fiction" 899). He described his early writing self, therefore, as susceptible to the demands of the reading public. These demands, while perhaps less visible in the work of established writers such as those references above, certainly run the danger of revealing themselves as overtly present in many choices made by would-be published writers, those not fortunate enough to have earned fame and fortune from their work yet.

A simple search online for tips on how to write a novel or how to get published yields a plethora of gimmicky guides, how-to books, and checklists for the would-be bestselling author. For example, James Frey's 1987 *How to Write a Damn Good Novel* describes itself as a "crash-course" in novel writing and a step-by-step "no nonsense" guide to dramatic storytelling. Or Daniel Jones' 2001 *How to Write a Best-Seller While Keeping Your Day Job! A Step-By-Step Manual of Success for Writers Who Want to Be Published But Don't Have the Time*, which likewise describes itself as a "practical and fun" outline for getting your book published. Countless web sites claim to teach you to write a successful novel easily and instantly, such as the check-list written by Cliff Pickover entitled "How to Create an Instant Bestselling Novel." Another unintentionally hilarious list found on the site WikiHow entitled "How to Write a Best Seller" outlines the process of writing and publishing in six simple steps, the first of which is "Pick any topic and write." The successive steps emphasize the importance of the title, book cover, and publisher… but not the writing itself.

Hence, there appears to be a common perception in the United States that writing a book is not a matter of skill or craft but rather of cracking a formula; the content, topic, and development, it would seem, are all superfluous to success. What matters is marketing, networking, and strategizing. From this perspective, book writing is just as much a business as book publishing. The take-home message from many of the sources noted above is that shaping narratives to meet the expectations and preferences of readers is paramount to success in the marketplace – uncritically assumed to be the real goal of any writer. Moreover, as discussed earlier in the chapter, the public's taste in literature is susceptible to being determined by publishing companies, which have the power to accept or reject narratives based on their perceptions of reader preferences.

When the discussion of book publishing enters the realm of minority writers and literature, the question of which minority narratives end up getting published, and which do not, begins to revolve around whether or not writers conform to the publishing industry's determination of readers' perception of the minority group to which the writer belongs. David Goldweber, a writing instructor in Oakland, proposes that writers who happen to be members of minority groups are systematically pigeonholed by the publishing industry into writing only about minority issues. "I think it has become understood and expected, at least by book editors and English teachers and perhaps by society as a whole, that minorities write about minorities and that white people write about everything else" (Goldweber). With very rare exceptions, he continues, discourse about nonracial issues – such as history, politics, science or nature – comes from a non-minority writer. Goldweber notes that it is understandable why textbooks would form this

way, since many minority writers *choose* to write about minority issues; indeed, organizations such as the Black Writers Alliance have been founded expressly for this purpose. Yet textbook editors and publishers, notes Goldweber, seem to assume this is *all* that gets written, and *all* that anyone wants to read.

Rolando Pérez, a Latino and a literary scholar at Hunter College who has written extensively about non-Latino issues, describes what he terms "the paranoiac's fear" of literature written by minority writers opting not to focus expressly on minority concerns (Pérez 102). This fear is generated from members of non-minority groups as a result of their false expectations about minority writers. He describes a comment made by one of his colleagues when he told her that his work was going to be included in the *Norton Anthology*. She asked, "Will that be the regular *Norton Anthology* or just the Hispanic one?" Her question indirectly implies that Latino writers such as Pérez should be writing about Latino issues and not about "regular" ones. The limitations of such expectations about minority writers are abundantly clear; the built-in supposition is that members of minority groups only have the authority to speak to their own experiences as minorities, and that "everything else" should be left to non-minority group members. As Goldweber rhetorically asks of aspiring minority writers, "Are we doing them a favor when we imply that the only thing they should be writing about is themselves?"

There exists a general expectation about minority writers that they should write about minority affairs. The publishing industry, as well as the popular media, projects images of Asian, African American, Latino and Native American people in the United States which aim to preserve their "otherness" in the perception of the non-minority

public. They do so by defining these minority identities in terms of their differences from non-minority identities, and as Arlene Dávila notes, by capitulating to society's demand for exotic and segregated others (219). She states, "Only the general inability to consider racial and ethnic and sexual 'minorities' as part of U.S. society sustains marketers' stubborn insistence on the fiction that the general market, like U.S. society, is white, heterosexual, and ethnically untainted and feeds the need for ethnic marketing to affirm 'respect' for or appreciation of minority populations" (219). All of these marginal others, argues Dávila, need to be repeatedly reminded that they too are part of the United States and that their contributions enrich the nation because, regardless of their history or citizenship status, they remain foreign in the perception of the so-called "general public" by the nature of their race, ethnicity, and culture, and the values and behaviors ascribed to them by such differences (219).

Latino Literature: The Flavor of the Month?

In examining the formative role played by advertising and commercial culture in shaping the contours of contemporary Latino identities, Arlene Dávila argues that Latinos' increased popularity in the marketplace is, as suggested above, accompanied by their growing exotification and invisibility in mainstream consciousness. She scrutinizes the complex interests that are involved in the public representation of Latinos as a generic and culturally distinct people, and questions the homogeneity of the different Latino subnationalities that supposedly comprise the same people and group of consumers.[36] Dávila also shows that marketing discourse has become a terrain where Latinos debate

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[36] This topic is discussed fully in Chapter II.

their social identities and public standing – or where such things are debated for them.

Dávila's observations about the marketing industry's creation of a Latino identity also

hold sway in the publishing industry, which, as argued throughout this chapter, is

overwhelmingly determined by consumer culture in its pursuit of fiscal success.

It is common knowledge in the marketing industry today that Latinos comprise a

large and profitable sector of the market. In a speech delivered at an advertising

presentation by the Spanish TV network Telemundo, actor Antonio Banderas declared,

"Latinos are hot, and we are not the only ones to think so. Everyone wants to jump on the

bandwagon, and why not? We have the greatest art, music, and literature. It's time we tell

our stories" (qtd. in Dávila 1). In urging advertisers to "jump on the bandwagon,"

Banderas articulates a belief permeating the advertising industry: that Latinos are the

hottest new market and that targeting this population promises to be a fruitful endeavor

(Dávila 1). As Dávila points out, that a famous Spaniard like Antonio Banderas should

become the spokesperson for U.S. Latino culture is symbolic of the loss of distinctions

between the different national-origins subgroups all consolidated into a common

Latino/Hispanic identity that now encompasses anyone from a Spanish or Latin

American background living in the United States (1).

Central to this consolidation, proposes Dávila, is Hispanic marketing and

advertising, which has advanced the idea of a common "Hispanic market" by selling and

promoting generalized ideas about Latinos to be readily marketed by corporate America.

She notes that over eighty Hispanic advertising agencies and branches of transnational

advertising conglomerates spread across cities with sizeable Hispanic populations now

sell consumer products by shaping and projecting images of and for Latinos (2). Some of these generalized ideas about Latinos are articulated in a booklet entitled *Multicultural Marketing: Selling to a Diverse America* by Marlene Rossman. In describing the Hispanic market, Rossman notes:

> Although the $200 billion Hispanic market is not a monolith, several values serve to unite Hispanics. They include the importance placed on the family and children, the desire to preserve their ethnicity, an emphasis on aesthetics and emotions, a devotion to religion and tradition, and a strong interest in their appearance (48).

As Dávila suggests, ethnic consumers are most often presented by marketers as family-oriented, traditional, and brand-loyal. This, she notes, is unsurprising given that the family values and morality of minority populations have historically been under scrutiny by the dominant society, requiring minority consumers to feel the need to prove their worth and compensate for their tainted image by buying into projected images of good family values and religiosity (Dávila 217).

When the discussion of the marketing and selling of Latino identity enters the arena of book publishing, these projected images of family values, religion, and tradition remain largely unchanged. Many of the most successful Latino-authored narratives are books which capitalize on these same generalized ideas about Latino identity. Esmeralda Santiago, when asked in an interview to share her thoughts on the current interest in Latino literature, responded as follows:

The interest was always there on the part of the readers. The books weren't. Now the great thing is that these books are available. People frequently tell me, 'I was looking for books like yours.' They just couldn't find them. I think that publishers hadn't tapped into the potential. And yes, maybe we're the flavor of the month, but the only thing we can do is enjoy it while it lasts. We must keep writing, take advantage of the fact that publishers have finally noticed there is a market for Latino literature, and keep buying books by Latino authors, so that more and more of us get published" ("A Puerto Rican" 136).

Santiago suggests that readers have long wanted and expected to encounter Latino literature, but that those narratives, until recently, were simply not there for them to read. While she does not specifically define what she means by Latino literature, we might safely assume she means books written by Latinos about Latino issues. Santiago appears to be comparing the present moment to a time when Latino literature was not yet a "hot" item in the publishing industry and hence Latino narratives were not yet available to readers. Of course, this does not mean that the experiences captured in such narratives did not exist; it simply means that the publishing industry had not yet determined that such experiences were marketable, or that Latino literature was worth publishing. In noting that publishers "hadn't tapped into the potential" Santiago could be in danger of capitulating to the "Hispanic market" model defined by corporate America and critiqued by Dávila above. Santiago suggests that Latino authors ought to take advantage of the fact that there is currently a popular market for Latino literature, even though it may not last. While her argument is logical that Latino authors should make the most of this trend

in order to get their narratives published, this suggestion might also run the risk of encouraging writers to conform to those same marketable, generalized, publication-worthy, and yet limiting projected images of Latinos that are the cornerstone of the Hispanic market strategy. Such values, as noted above, may very well yield products that are marketable and publishable, but are certainly not a full representation of reality.

Language(s) Fit to Print

One significant level on which reality appears to be at extreme odds with its representation in print centers around language. Bilingualism, as discussed in chapter III, constitutes a heavily resisted language phenomenon in the United States, a resistance that is reflected in published narrative. As noted in that chapter, in spite of the fact that bilingualism – particularly English-Spanish bilingualism – is a broad daily reality in the United States, the official use of two languages by bilinguals is widely regarded as a threat to the well-being of the nation. This is due to the fact that bilingualism in and of itself is symbolic of language shift, a reality ardently resisted by many, particularly from higher status groups such as those in the U.S. characterized as white, Anglo, and monolingual English-speaking. Furthermore, as argued in chapter III, it is impossible to separate the threat posed by Spanish-English bilinguals from the threat posed by immigrants from Spanish-speaking nations in general. As noted in chapter II, Spanish itself has come to symbolize the entire population of Latin American origin or descent, regardless of whether or to what degree its members actually speak it.

In the United States today, nearly 34 million people in the U.S. speak Spanish, making it the second most common language in the country after English ("Selected").

Hence, Spanish-English bilingualism is a clear and present reality in a country valuing English monolingualism. As argued previously, the perceived threat to national unity posed by the presence of bilinguals or Spanish monolinguals is based largely on concepts of the importance of a single language as a necessary component of nationhood. Language is one of the features that a nation uses to define itself. It figures prominently, for example, in the familiar model of a nation as a body of people who share some combination of a common history, culture, language or ethnic origin, and who typically inhabit a particular country or territory (Hobsbawm "Introduction" 5). Benedict Anderson's discussion of "imagined communities" suggests that the original formation of national identities was rooted in the understanding of a common language shared by members of a nation. Anderson defines a nation as an imagined political community – imagined because in spite of the fact that every citizen will never know every other citizen, all members possess an image of their shared fellowship and union (6). An image, Anderson explains, cultivated by the print media which enables people to "come to visualize in a general way the existence of thousands and thousands like themselves" (77). Thus, in order to have access to the language of the media which permits this imaginary fellowship to exist, and to subsequently gain membership to the nation, individuals must be literate in the same language as all other fellow members of the nation. According to this formulation, then, the existence of peripheral languages not used by all members is perceived as a potential danger to the wellbeing of the unified nation.

Hence, given the perceived national threat posed by bilingualism, it is unsurprising that only the most accessible and well-glossed types of bilingualism would find their way into published narratives – even those composed by bilinguals. This phenomenon is discussed in depth in the previous chapter. Many of the most successful, published, and widely read narratives composed by Latino writers are those written primarily in English but with Spanish language entries that are easily understood by a monolingual English speaker and with a monolingual reader in mind (Rudin 229, Callahan "Metalinguistic" 418, Torres 79). As Lourdes Torres notes, the appearance of this "easy" Spanish alongside the English on the page marks these narratives as distinctly "Latino" in a direct manner without challenging the comprehension of the English-speaking monolingual (79). This constitutes the kind of Latino literature that sells, the kind that gets published, and the kind that is perceived – however incorrectly – as accurately representing the Latino world in the United States.

(Il)literacy in the United States

This chapter has examined the role of the publishing industry in determining what sort of literature is made available to readers, what sort of literature is written by authors, and also how this selection affects the public's awareness of social realities and of language. In pursuit of fiscal success, the industry tends to choose texts, as discussed above, that have a niche market and that meet reader expectations. Since sales are the bottom line, as noted throughout this chapter, mainstream presses are likely to choose minority-authored books that are less concerned with reflecting truths about how people really live, think, and feel and more with what people want to read and believe about

minorities. Certainly, smaller academic presses publish texts that diverge from this formula, but very few of these books are known by a wide reader audience and instead are restricted to a limited readership comprised of specialists.

In closing, one must consider that any discussion about literatures in the United States, or about their connection to representing cultural realities for readers, remains incomplete without a close examination of literacy. Literature's ability to affect public consciousness in any way is of course strictly limited by the fact that not every member of society is capable of reading anything at all. In fact, a surprisingly large number of people will never have access to the texts discussed throughout this dissertation based upon a lack of education, opportunity, and a consequent inability to read. According to the National Institute for Literacy, more than 20% of adults read at or below a fifth grade level – far below the level needed to earn a living wage, let alone to read a popular novel. The National Adult Literacy Survey also found that over 40 million Americans aged 16 and older have significant literacy needs. A 2002 government-commissioned study of literacy called Adult Literacy in America showed that as many as 23% of adult Americans were not able to locate information in text, could not make low-level inferences using printed materials, and were unable to integrate easily identifiable pieces of information.

Consequently, the question of who exactly is buying, reading, and inferring truths or gleaning entertainment from Latino narratives – or any narratives at all – cannot proceed without first acknowledging the harsh reality of declining literacy in the United States. The book industry is certainly declining as well, a downturn which cannot help

but reflect the dropping literacy rate in this country. Hence, whether or not published, widely read, and Latino-authored narratives are responsibly representing reality to readers, the fact remains that fewer and fewer people will actually encounter these texts, or any texts. This truth is humbling, one that cannot be ignored in discussions about literature's ability, or inability, to articulate social truths.

CHAPTER VII

THE EFFECTS OF BILINGUAL LITERATURE ON

(MOSTLY) MONOLINGUAL READERS

"What critics have failed to grasp is that intelligible and meaningful are not completely

over-lapping, synonymous terms. Indeed, the meaningfulness of multicultural works is in

large measure a function of their unintelligibility for part of their audience. Multicultural

literature offers us above all an experience of multiculturalism, in which not everything is

likely to be wholly understood by every reader."

–Reed Way Dasenbrock

Theory Meets Evidence: The Triangulation of Literary Studies with Linguistic

Research

A central aim of this project has been to examine the manner in which readers

receive U.S. Latino narratives that engage in varying degrees of textual code switching

and bicultural belonging. Several hypotheses have come to light through these

discussions, including a proposal that these narratives, as part of a larger body of minor

literatures, play a role in revolutionizing traditional Anglo-American discourses of

knowledge by marginalizing the monolingual and monocultural reader historically

positioned, as Frances Aparicio has argued, as the prototype of cultural literacy in the

United States ("Sub-Versive" 800). According to the hypothesis, this marginalization is

achieved by a textual appropriation and structural weakening of the dominant language

and culture via the creation of a narrative space that privileges code switching to

articulate bicultural identities. U.S. Latino texts that alternate between English and Spanish mirror the misunderstandings and failures of intelligibility in the multicultural situations they depict, thereby requiring the monolingual and monocultural reader to experience this unintelligibility first-hand (Dasenbrock 12).

However, the suggestions thus far about these texts and what they do rest largely upon conjecture. We imagine code switching texts to have a certain effect on monolingual readers, but we do not know precisely what that effect is. Educated guesses abound about how narratives are read and received, but until the hypotheses are tested and the results analyzed, they remain just that: speculation. Only when the effects of these narratives are measured may we determine to what degree the predicted outcomes are probable. Therefore, beyond simply naming these literatures as revolutionary in the above-mentioned ways, the following analysis aims to document and empirically analyze reader responses collected from online reader reviews of one of the narratives in question. This process is described in-depth in the successive sections of the current chapter.

As discussed in the Introduction of this dissertation, in order to tackle the question of how readers receive texts and what actually transpires between the narratives and their interpreters, this project as a whole has attempted a joining of two academic fields normally operating independently from one another in the academy: literary studies and linguistic research. Consequently, both literary studies and linguistics often approach the central questions of this project from different perspectives. Specifically, the humanist approach emphasizes the theoretical, while the social sciences approach emphasizes the empirical. In bringing together these stances, this analysis has attempted to forge a

complementary relationship between the two approaches, therein hopefully amplifying the possibility of both accurately and creatively examining readers' reception of the texts in question.

Many of the previous arguments of this project have addressed the question of Latino narratives and how they are received by readers from a humanist perspective. Namely, responses and effects are imagined and speculated, based on close analysis of relevant contexts such as history, identity and language. The humanist approach to this question emphasizes the analytic, critical and theoretical element by imagining that these texts help to revolutionize the hegemonic relationship between the dominant and subordinate languages and cultures of the United States. However, to add depth to this theory, the addition of a social sciences approach emphasizing empirical data analysis makes the argument about these texts more robust by examining and analyzing actual responses from real readers of the narratives in question. Therefore, in order to best approach the central questions of this project, the social scientist's conscientious concern with empiricism is conjoined with the humanist's analytic and critical hypothesis formation, thereby triangulating these perspectives in order to present a richer picture of what effect these texts have on readers. By combining the forces of experience and evidence with those of innate and self-reflective ideas, this chapter examines the degree to which code switching Latino-authored texts influence language and culture relationships in the United States.

Language Ego Permeability and Reader Reception

Within the past several decades, the field of applied linguistics has begun to examine the notion of ego permeability and its influence on second language learning. According to the Encyclopedic Dictionary of Applied Linguistics, ego permeability refers to the ease with which new experiences, cultural features or perceptions of other people may pass the defenses of one's personality. The term was borrowed from clinical psychology and used by language researchers to explain learners' openness or lack thereof to a foreign language or culture ("Ego"). The language ego permeability hypothesis argues that some people have difficulty learning foreign languages because they are reluctant to give up control over self-presentation. This hypothesis about people's potential resistance to new languages and cultures informs the central question of this project. A monolingual English-speaking reader's language ego permeability may very well influence that person's reception or rejection of a text which alternates between English and Spanish, because it simultaneously articulates a bicultural reality foreign to the reader.

Amy Bruckman and James Hudson argue that giving up control is necessary to learning a new language (1); likewise, the ability to surrender linguistic control is necessary to receive a textual narrative that features language excerpts with which the reader is unfamiliar. Madeline Ehrman of the Foreign Service Institute of the U.S. Department of State notes that almost all of the most successful second language learners

show substantial flexibility and willingness to shift cognitive set[37] because they possess

what she terms "thin ego boundaries" (330-331). These learners are described by

Alexander Guiora as having the ability to successfully function in new language

situations based on their capacity to tolerate ambiguities and uncertainties, which he

names as a sign of the psychological strength essential to an understanding of the "other."

Furthermore, he notes, "[t]he capacity to entertain an alternate hypothesis about any

proposition is the mark of the successful blend of cognitive and affective templates that

can lead to new discoveries" (171).

According to the ego permeability construct formulated by Betty Lou Leaver,

Madeline Ehrman, and Boris Shekhtman, thin ego boundaries are associated with a

relatively permeable ego, a tolerance of ambiguity, flexible categories, and subconscious

learning. Thin-boundary people accept the fact that in immersion or communicative

second-language learning situations, there will be many words and a lot of grammar they

do not understand, particularly when they are at the lower levels of proficiency. These

types of learners also accept that a word will have multiple meanings in a foreign

language, some of which do not equate to the same range of meanings of the most

obvious translation in their first language. Thin boundary types are relatively likely to "go

with the flow" and to try to figure out what they can as they proceed. Often, they learn

implicitly, meaning they learn new second language features but cannot identify how the

learning occurred. Moreover, as Leaver, Ehrman and Shekhtman argue, the flexibility of

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[37] In psychiatric research, shifting cognitive sets refers to re-directing one's focus away from one fixation and toward another. Within the context of Ehrman's argument, a shift in cognitive set suggests an ability to refocus attention in a new direction.

thin ego boundaries promotes empathy, which also helps with accepting and absorbing another language and culture (124).

In contrast, thick ego boundaries relate to a desire for clear categories, compartmentalization of information and lifestyle, and a relative intolerance of ambiguity. Thick-boundary people may be irritated and confused when they cannot figure out clear rules for the grammar they encounter or clear meanings for the words they hear in the second-language environment. They sometimes try to translate words literally from their native language into the foreign language as a result of an assumed one-to-one correspondence between terms in both languages. The rationale behind this reflex is understandable: these learners want everything to have a clear, predictable place in their mental organization. Leaver, Ehrman and Shekhtman note that empathy may not be as well developed in thick boundary people, who may have difficulty putting themselves in the place of a person from the culture they are studying. Furthermore, they argue, learners with thick boundaries could learn to communicate more effectively in the second language if they lessen their need for control (125).

In their discussions of language ego permeability, the above-mentioned scholars all reference what is in general terms described as a tolerance of ambiguity, or an acceptance of confusing situations and lack of clear lines of demarcation. Ehrman notes that students who can tolerate moderate levels of ambiguity have been more likely to persist in language learning as well as to achieve more than students who cannot (335). Tolerance of ambiguity as a personality characteristic, she notes, relates to the frequency of use of many kinds of learning strategies as well as to an individual's willingness to

take risks. Students who avoid risk taking for fear of criticism from others or from themselves experience limited progress in their language learning (335).

Another important factor in an individual's reception of new language and cultural input, according to Ehrman, is the ability to manage novelty. Managing novelty involves the ability to keep both the original schema and an alternative hypothesis in mind when confronted with foreign linguistic or cultural stimuli. Every second language learner, notes Ehrman, is faced regularly with this kind of challenge. Consequently, anxiety plays a significant role in the language learning experience, so much so that experts have coined the term *language anxiety* to refer to a form of anxiety manifested in the second language-learning context. Because language learning is such a complex and emotionally involved process, writes Ehrman, all anxiety in the language-learning environment is likely to have debilitating effects on a student's progress (335). The case of readers encountering texts that require them to engage with foreign language, such as the Latino narratives under examination throughout this project, is strikingly similar to the second-language situations discussed above. Language anxiety could have a potentially crippling effect on readers' willingness to continue with the text. This possibility invites a close examination of readers' language ego permeability as a potential variable in the degree to which they receive bilingual narratives.

An Empirical Examination of Reader Receptivity of Spanish in Junot Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*

This section contains a brief analysis of reader receptivity of Spanish language entries in Junot Díaz's 2007 Pulitzer Prize-winning narrative *The Brief Wondrous Life of*

Oscar Wao. Oscar, an overweight, romantic, ghetto geek born in the Dominican Republic and raised in New Jersey, writes fantasy fiction in hopes of becoming a Dominican J.R.R. Tolkien. As discussed in depth in chapter V, the narrative is written predominantly in English yet features numerous lengthy passages of untranslated, unexplained Dominican Spanish, which the reader must grow accustomed to encountering through the course of the 352-page text. In essence, Díaz authored a novel accessible to the English monolingual but which contains passages that only the Spanish speaker will fully understand. Hence, the narrative challenges the English monolingual to continue reading in spite of multiple comprehension failures, much like the second language learner attempting to construct comprehension in a foreign language.

Furthermore, readers of *all* linguistic backgrounds who wish to gain full access to the text must first familiarize themselves with the many science fiction and fantasy references, Dungeons and Dragons roleplaying games, as well as with J.R.R. Tolkien's oft-cited epic high fantasy novel *Lord of the Rings*. Díaz makes no concessions of any sort for his readers, very few of whom will escape the necessity to research arduously in order to completely comprehend the events that unfold. Often within a single sentence, the author switches not only from English to Spanish, but also from a reserved formality to an educated urban vernacular, or from a Homeric epithet to a coarse bilingual insult. In essence, Díaz assumes in his reader the same considerable degree of multicultural, bilingual facility he himself possesses, and offers no gloss on his many un-italicized Spanish words and expressions, or in his plethora of genre and canonical literary allusions.

In an attempt to measure how the unapologetically bilingual narrative style of this novel affects readers of varying linguistic backgrounds, a short study was conducted in which reader responses to the text were analyzed and categorized in terms of degree of receptivity to Spanish insertions in the narrative. What follows is a data analysis conducted and examined within this chapter according to the established structure of ethnographic research, including an introduction, methods section, results, and discussion.

Introduction to Study. As noted above, this study was conducted in order to analyze reader responses to the Spanish language entries in *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Díaz. The source of data in this analysis consists of 100 written responses from the web-based social networking book review site called Goodreads. The network currently has over 2,400,000 members who recommend and rate books, compare what they are reading, keep track of what they have already read or would like to read, form book clubs, and discuss texts in online forums ("about goodreads"). In September of 2009, the total number of written responses to *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* submitted to Goodreads was 34,433 ("Brief"). In order to collect a representative sampling of all responses that mention textual Spanish use as well as the reader's proficiency in Spanish, the first 100 reader reviews which specifically referenced textual Spanish usage and reader proficiency were collected from the site's default listing. The default sorting algorithm on Goodreads uses a variety of factors to determine what they deem the most interesting reviews for other users. The factors include length of the

review, number of people who responded to it, recency of the review, and overall popularity of the reviewer ("Brief").

The writers of the samples collected were not responding to specific questions about the narrative in question, but rather were offering their opinion in an open-ended discussion forum. Although information was sought regarding reactions to Spanish language entries in the text, this was not a predetermined topic of any feedback delivered by members. Therefore, not every response referenced the Spanish language entries in the narrative; hence, those that did not were not included in the study. In addition to receptivity of Spanish, a secondary characteristic the analysis attempted to measure was a rough estimate of the reader's Spanish language ability.

In completing the study, two research hypotheses were tested: 1) that the majority of readers would fall somewhere in the range between primary positive (meaning fully accepting) and primary negative (meaning fully rejecting) receptivity, and 2) that there would be a positive correlation between lack of Spanish proficiency and negative receptivity of Spanish in the text. The first research hypothesis was formulated based upon the knowledge that in spite of the fact that Spanish is the second-most widely spoken language in the U.S., and that consequently many monolingual English speakers are potentially familiar enough with the language to feel somewhat comfortable engaging with a small degree textual Spanish, English solidly remains the prestige language in this country. Consequently, any non-English language is perceived as potentially threatening to the standard. Therefore, the first research hypothesis suggested that readers' reception of Spanish entries in an otherwise English text would fall somewhere between fully

accepting and fully rejecting the text. The second research hypothesis was based upon a presumption that readers generally tend to feel more receptive to texts utilizing language they fully understand, and that therefore those less familiar with Spanish would understand less and consequently be less receptive to the Spanish entries in the text due to its linguistic inaccessibility to them.

Materials and Methods Used in Study. As mentioned above, this study was conducted according to the principles of ethnographic research. Ethnography is a qualitative research method often used in the social sciences for gathering empirical data on human societies and cultures. Data collection is typically carried out through participant observation, interviews, or questionnaires. At its core, ethnography aims to describe the nature of those who are studied through writing. In this study, the source utilized to collect all the data was the online reader response forum on Goodreads. The responses, all written voluntarily by Goodreads members and available only to other members, were collected in September of 2009 but were originally submitted to the site between September of 2007 and August of 2009. Members of Goodreads are not required to submit written critiques of narratives but may do so if they wish. Therefore, the responses collected were not elicited but rather offered by members who wished to make their opinions known to the Goodreads community of readers.

Responses that specifically cited reactions to and discussions of the Spanish language inserted into the text were collected according to the default listing as noted earlier, based on a sorting algorithm adding randomness to the sample and thus objectivity to the study. Additionally, responses that in some way referenced the reader's

Spanish language proficiency were elected over ones that did not – an easy step to take since almost every sample focusing on textual Spanish also referenced the reader's proficiency level. Feedback was collected in an Excel spreadsheet and subsequently categorized according to the reader's receptivity of Spanish. Receptivity was classified according to a range, including primary positive receptivity, secondary positive receptivity, secondary negative receptivity, and primary negative receptivity. In general, specific types of reviews fell into different categories of receptivity.

Those classified as *primary positive receptivity* readers included reviewers who, regardless of Spanish language proficiency, expressed enjoyment of the Spanish language insertions. In many cases, they also noted that the appearance of Spanish was an important and worthwhile choice on the part of the author. For example, one such reviewer proposed: "I think [Díaz's] ability or necessity to alternate between languages, voices, registers (moving sometimes from the lyrical to the vulgar within a sentence), to sound both street-smart and highly literate, to coexist in these multiple spheres that really make up American society, is the whole point" (Kemp). Occasionally these reviewers expressed the opinion that all readers should exalt in, or readily accept in spite of the challenge, the Spanish language entries in the otherwise English text. As one reviewer noted, "...translating the Spanish would defeat the purpose. It only adds to the wild amalgamation that makes the book so enjoyable for me" (Christian). A general opinion among primary positive receptivity readers was that readers ought not to mind not understanding every word, and that people should have to work in order to enjoy great literature. One reader noted, "Like all great works of literature, you're going to have to

work to 'get' it. Most people don't 'get' Joyce's ULYSSES" (Christopher).

The *secondary positive receptivity* and *secondary negative receptivity* readers were grouped according to a broader range of responses. In general, the secondary positive reviews were written by readers who, regardless of Spanish language proficiency, themselves liked encountering the Spanish in the text, but wondered if other non-Spanish speakers would tolerate it – or predicted that they would not. For example, one reader wrote: "I'm just not sure about recommending it to friends who don't know Spanish. It might be frustrating to read it and not understand everything. That's why I only give it 4 stars. But if I knew the review was only going to be read by English-Spanish bilingual people, I'd probably give it five" (Donovan). Reviews that fell under this category tended to be written by readers with good Spanish proficiency – most bilinguals – who expressed enjoyment at finding Spanish in the text but suspected non-Spanish speakers would be utterly lost or would reject the text. The secondary negative reviews, on the other hand, tended to be written by readers who had little or no Spanish proficiency, who didn't mind that there was some Spanish in the text but felt they would have enjoyed the narrative more without Spanish or with a glossary. As one such reviewer noted: "It's a struggle to read, especially considering I don't speak Spanish…. A lot of the language used in the novel is a mix of English and Spanish slang that's never translated - I need to figure it out based on context (which, I admit, isn't as difficult as I thought it would be)" (buppyspek).

The *primary negative receptivity* responses were categorized as such if they demonstrated open hostility toward the authorial choice to utilize a language they could

not understand in the text. Typically the writers of these reviews also noted that they had little or no Spanish language proficiency. For example, one such reviewer noted: "Every other sentence is Spanish or Spanglish. I have never taken Spanish in my life, and… it was really frustrating and lots of the content was lost on me" (Walker).[38] In general, responses that fell into this category expressed such a high degree of intolerance of Spanish that the reviewers often included comments relating to their sense of disbelief about the accolades received by the narrative. Frequently, these reviews express a general sense of offense by the choice to include Spanish at all; many also present the opinion that others should avoid buying or reading the text, and that Díaz was lazy and unkind for leaving them in the dark linguistically when clearly he could easily have provided some gloss for the Spanish if he had so chosen. One reader commented: "…as I do not speak spanish [sic] I found it frustrating that the author waxes on about history at will, but doesn't bother to translate pasasges [sic] which seem to have been integral to the plot" (Caroline).

A secondary characteristic that was categorized and later analyzed about the responses was the Spanish language proficiency of the reviewer. Because reviews were not written for the purpose of explicitly describing the readers' Spanish abilities, not all responses included enough information to be able to approximate the level of proficiency. However, in general most responses which referenced the appearance of Spanish in the text also happened to include clues about the reader's own Spanish ability, since the two

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[38] This claim is of course not true, as most of the text is in fact in English. This reader's statement underscores the racialization of Spanish, in that his misperception of Spanish as abundantly-present in the text reveals how this reader is threatened and frustrated by the presence of people whom Spanish represents to him.

factors often (but not always) correlated. The categories for Spanish language ability were broadly drawn: reviewers were rated in two categories: as having either little or no Spanish language ability (based on specific comments to that affect), or as having some or more knowledge of Spanish (again based on specific comments indicating this to be true).

In rating the responses, particular care was taken not to confuse receptivity of Spanish language entries with overall rating of the novel. While in many cases, the two factors correlated, they did not always do so and thus every precaution was taken to keep separate the readers' overall opinion from their opinion specifically about language use.

Results and Interpretations of Study. To analyze the data, responses were initially sorted according to level of reader receptivity. The results revealed that 42% of the responses analyzed presented primary positive receptivity, followed by 32% at secondary positive receptivity, 15% at primary negative receptivity, and 11% at secondary negative receptivity (see Table 3). This indicated that, among the four categories, the greatest number of reviews in the study showed a primary positive reception of the Spanish language entries in Díaz's narrative, while less than half of that number showed a primary negative receptivity of the Spanish. These results would seem to suggest that, while a sizeable and quite vocal percentage of readers appear to resist the appearance of Spanish in an otherwise English narrative, the majority not only had no problem with the Spanish but also exalted in its appearance and effect. Meanwhile, the two secondary ranges of receptivity, when combined, were roughly equal to the number of reviews falling under the primary positive receptivity category. This finding indicates

that a percentage of readers equal to those who enjoyed the Spanish fall somewhere between fully accepting and fully rejecting the bilingual elements in this text. Put simply, most people either love or mostly like Díaz's use of Spanish, while a few are openly opposed to it.

Table 3

Receptivity

	Primary positive receptivity	*Secondary positive receptivity*	*Secondary negative receptivity*	*Primary negative receptivity*
Number of responses (100 total)	42 or 42%	32 or 32%	11 or 11%	15 or 15%

As mentioned earlier, a secondary characteristic examined in this study was the Spanish language background of the reviewers. Based on specific comments about language ability found in their written responses, readers were categorized as either having little or no Spanish proficiency, or as having partial to full comprehension of Spanish. In some cases, the Spanish language ability could not be determined from the review. The results were then correlated with receptivity as shown in Table 4. The results revealed a clear, if unsurprising, correlation between Spanish proficiency and receptivity. As shown in the table, the percentage of respondents in each category of receptivity who had little or no Spanish proficiency climbed as their response become more negative. This makes intrinsic sense, since readers want to understand what they are reading and

hence a reader who does not comprehend any Spanish would logically seem more likely to reject it in the text, while a reader who has some Spanish language background would presumably be more accepting of it. However, the secondary positive receptivity category provided an interesting variation. As the table reveals, respondents categorized at this level of receptivity actually demonstrated a higher Spanish proficiency than those categorized as primary positive receptivity. This occurred because a number of reviews in this category were written by people highly proficient in Spanish who expressed doubts as to whether non-Spanish-speaking readers would tolerate the bilingualism in the text. Many of these readers were themselves self-described bilinguals, who interestingly proved less accepting of the Spanish code switching than those with lower Spanish proficiency.

Table 4

Spanish Language Proficiency and Receptivity

	Primary positive receptivity (42 total)	*Secondary positive receptivity* (32 total)	*Secondary negative receptivity* (11 total)	*Primary negative receptivity* (15 total)
Little/no Spanish	25 or 60%	14 or 44%	9 or 82%	14 or 100%
Some Spanish	8 or 19%	16 or 50%	1 or 9%	0 or 0%
Spanish level unknown	9 or 21%	2 or 6%	1 or 9%	0 or 0%

Discussion and Conclusion of Study. This brief study aimed to examine both the overall reader receptivity of Spanish language entries in Díaz's novel, as well as the link between receptivity and Spanish language proficiency. As noted in the introduction, prior to completing the study, I expected to find that the majority of readers fell somewhere in the range between secondary positive and secondary negative receptivity, and that there would be a correlation between lack of Spanish proficiency and negative receptivity of Spanish in the text. Contrary to the first predicted result, it turned out that of the four categories of receptivity, primary positive receptivity contained the greatest number of reviews. However, the combined total of the two secondary categories (secondary positive, secondary negative) equaled the total of the primary positive category, indicating an equal split between the lukewarm reactions and the strongly positive reactions to the Spanish in Díaz's text. Hence, the first expectation was proven false.

The second expectation, however, was proven partially true. Since the results indicated that receptivity depended on proficiency, receptivity served as the dependent variable while Spanish proficiency was the independent variable. In general, the hypothesis was proven accurate given that overall receptivity decreased as Spanish language proficiency decreased. For example, almost 100% of the primary negative receptivity reviews were written by readers with little or no Spanish background, while only 60% of the primary positive receptivity reviews were written by readers with little or no Spanish background. However, as noted above, some respondents falling into the secondary positive receptivity category constituted an exception to the hypothesis. Many

of the reviews classified in this category were authored by either bilingual or highly proficient Spanish-speaking readers who expressed a simultaneous enjoyment of the narrative and a prediction that non-Spanish speakers would not tolerate it. Consequently, although readers of this category tended to have a higher Spanish proficiency, they in fact demonstrated lower receptivity than those in the primary positive category.

Whether or to what degree readers accepted or rejected the Spanish language entries in the narrative, in general many of the reviews examined in this study expressed strong affective reactions related to the issue of untranslated Spanish in an otherwise English text. Reviewers tended not to discuss the issue of language in the novel passively, but instead chose to infuse their responses with highly emotional reactions. If they loved the Spanish, they truly loved it; conversely, if they did not, they expressed this dislike in a charged manner.

For example, one reviewer from the primary negative receptivity category with little Spanish background who identified herself as "Beth" wrote:

> This book was a Pulitzer Prize winner??? Really??? It's awfull! [sic] First of all, the language is incredibly crude and vulgar and does so in multiple languages. Luckily I don't know much spanish [sic] and missed a good portion of it, at the same time I felt I was missing the meaning of whole passages because I didn't understand the language. (Beth)

Here, Beth asserts her response to the text with multiple exclamation points and negative value judgments, explicitly linked to the Spanish language usage which she fails to comprehend. She at once expresses ironic relief that she is unable to understand, but

simultaneously rejects the text for alienating her by utilizing some language she cannot access. Many of the primary negative receptivity respondents wrote similar reviews. Another reader, "Rebecca," wrote:

> I felt like the narrator was some "clever" professor who is quite enthralled with his own knowledge of Dominican history and Spanish. I could imagine him sitting in a bar relating this "fuku" story and assuming that the listener already knew everything about his culture and language. If you have a great story, please tell it more concisely, and with less sarcasm, in order to properly educate the stupid people out there, such as myself. I wish I was smart enough to love this book so I could be part of the cool Pulitzer and National Critics club, but hey, editor, please help! (Rebecca)

Here, Rebecca sarcastically refers to herself as "stupid" for not understanding the Spanish, yet in so doing she makes it clear that this adjective is not her own self-description but rather how she believes she would be described by the narrator for failing to comprehend the text. In essence, like Beth, Rebecca feels alienated by the Spanish and responds by rejecting it.

However, other readers with similarly little Spanish background appeared less negatively affected by the Spanish, in spite of the fact that they could not understand. For example, a reviewer who identified herself as "Marge Boyle" wrote: "I didn't get a lot of the allusions, not having ever been a sci-fi fan, nor did I get much of the Spanish, but I still "got" the book, deeply" (Boyle). Boyle suggests that comprehending every word is peripheral to truly understanding the novel, its message, or its import. Therefore, she does

not feel inhibited from enjoying the text. Similarly, a reviewer named "Harley" who had

no Spanish background, wrote:

> I enjoyed having things I only half understood sort of wash over me -- the
>
> Spanish, the cultural references, the references to Oscar's obsession with Genre.
>
> The book intimated these other worlds that I may only have time in my life to
>
> brush up against, but that are fascinating. And I'm reminded that I could go there
>
> if I choose. (Harley)

Both Harley's and Boyle's reviews were categorized as primary positive receptivity, and

each expressed an ability to override, or even to embrace, instances of failures of

intelligibility due to the Spanish language entries in the text.

In concluding this study, I noted that although the research hypothesis about the

secondary receptivity categories containing the majority of reviews was proven false

since primary positive receptivity had the largest percentage, a sizeable portion (43%) did

end up falling into these combined secondary categories. This result suggests that a large

section of the reviewers in the study presented ambivalent attitudes toward Spanish,

meaning they exhibited both positive and negative elements in their receptivity. This may

be a reflection of the place the Spanish language occupies in the mainstream

consciousness of the country; Spanish is regarded as "exotic" and "other" but at the same

time, it is the most widely spoken language other than English in the U.S. Even if a

person has never studied Spanish, he or she is likely to have heard it many times and to

even know some terms or phrases. Hence, within this context of a steady increase of

Spanish speakers in the United States, it makes sense that the language could have

naturally started to penetrate people's awareness whether they like it or not. Some, as exemplified by the primary positive receptivity respondents, completely embrace its appearance, while an equal number neither celebrate nor shun the language. The situation is evocative of the push-pull tensions surrounding Latino identity in the United States today as discussed in chapter II. As noted in that chapter, the identity of Latinos has been shaped by a racial, cultural, and linguistic "in-betweenness" encapsulated in labels meant to describe ethnicity but which implicitly – if indirectly – denote an inferior social reality as part of the sociopolitical order of Anglo-oriented supremacy.

Immigrant for a Day

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, an object of the research behind this entire project has been to examine how and why readers read and respond to U.S. Latino code switching narratives, and what happens to them as a result. Predictably, readers receive texts differently depending on their own language backgrounds, though not always in expected ways. One truth that has come to light as a result of these analyses is that a typical response for monolingual English-speaking readers is a sense of marginalization – an experience that some embrace and some reject. Monolingual English-speakers in the United States are not typically accustomed to the experience of partial linguistic comprehension because they live in a culture that privileges the English speaking monolingual at every level of society. However, communicative failures of this sort are far from absent from the United States; indeed, they are a daily reality for many immigrants who come to America speaking little or no English. Yet the experience of partial comprehension is completely unknown to many monolinguals, who therefore can

choose to enjoy the privilege of assuming a posture of protest against the language

barriers they face in encountering un-translated, unexplained switches into Spanish in

texts like *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao.*

For example, in reviewing Díaz's narrative, one reader who identified himself as

"Cameron" in the study wrote:

> …important information – be it dialogue or exposition – is often relayed in
>
> Spanish. Now, I took two semesters of the language in college, and yet I
>
> had no idea what characters were saying in many parts, because context
>
> didn't lend hints. If Díaz is aiming this book towards a bilingual audience,
>
> then so be it. But how difficult would it have been to translate the Spanish
>
> in footnotes? […] Throw a gringo a bone. (Cameron)

Through comments about his lack of Spanish language proficiency, as well as his choice

to utilize the self-identifier "gringo," Cameron definitively presents himself as a

monolingual English-speaking, Anglo-American reader. At first pass, his commentary

seems reasonable enough: How hard *would* it have been, after all, for Díaz to include

gloss to help his non-Spanish-speaking reader to understand the code-switched passages?

Clearly, Díaz himself is a skilled bilingual, more than capable, as Cameron requests, of

"throwing a gringo a bone." Cameron's surprise at not having been guided by the author

toward a complete understanding of the Spanish language entries demonstrates a

presumption of English as normative.

As a monolingual English-speaker, Cameron protests the language barrier he

faces in encountering Díaz's switches into Spanish. The experience of unintelligibility,

however, may have been precisely the effect Díaz was hoping his narrative would have on monolingual readers. In a 2008 interview about *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* on National Public Radio, Díaz noted:

> Part of the thing that really interested me about the reading experience is that a lot of times, we forget that a large portion of what we're reading, we don't understand. And most of the time we just skip over it, because it's sort of implicit – we don't understand a word, we'll just skip over it and keep going. But you know, that's like a *basic* part of communication – you know, unintelligibility. And so if you're an immigrant, you're so used to not being able to understand large chunks of any conversation, large chunks of the linguistic cultural codes. And part of what I was trying to get at when I was writing this book is that, you know, I wanted everybody at one moment to feel kind of like an immigrant in this book. There would be one language chain that you might not "get." And that it was *okay*. It might provoke in you a reaction to want to know – and that's good, because it'll make you go look, and read other books and start conversations – but that life, and the experience that most of us have in the world, is that we tend to live in a world where a good portion of what we hear, see, and experience is unintelligible to us. And that to me feels more real than if everything was transparent to every reader. (Díaz "Junot")

In essence, Díaz, through his use of un-translated Spanish in the otherwise English text, treats his monolingual English-speaking reader to the experience of unintelligibility so common to immigrants in the United States. Due to the success of his novel, many, many

monolingual readers have had the opportunity to experience just that through the narrative. For in spite of the objections of people like Cameron, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* was published in 2007 to critical acclaim that eventually earned Díaz the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the National Book Critics Circle Award. Clearly, Díaz's language choices are not affecting his success as a writer in the United States or his acceptance in the Anglo-American community of readers. Ultimately, this author's decision to leave the Spanish code-switched passages un-translated forces a limited reading for monolinguals like Cameron. As Frances Aparicio suggests, the resulting text achieves a metaphorical displacement of the ideal monolingual American reader by using language that requires cross-cultural and bilingual competency for full comprehension ("Sub-Versive" 800). Readers with no Spanish background will have to settle for unintelligibility, which, according to the author, is the whole point. The monolingual reader of his narrative is displaced into a new, marginal space in relation to the text.

And what about bilingual readers? As noted at the beginning of the chapter, when examined within the minor literary framework discussed in depth in chapter V, narratives such as Junot Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* have a hand in revolutionizing traditional Anglo-American discourses of knowledge by marginalizing the monolingual and monocultural reader historically accepted as the prototype of literacy in the U.S. (Aparicio "Sub-Versive" 800). According to the construct, this marginalization is brought about by a textual appropriation and structural weakening of the dominant language and culture via the creation of a narrative space that privileges code switching to articulate bicultural identities.

Bilingual readers, then, are in theory privileged in a text like Diaz's novel. However, the study examining reader receptivity of Spanish in Díaz's narrative yielded an unexpected finding related to bilingual readers. While on the level of intelligibility, bilinguals might be privileged by texts engaging in code switching, bilinguals themselves do not necessarily embrace these texts in a predicted manner. As described in the discussion section of the study above, on the whole, bilingual readers – or readers with a high proficiency in Spanish – were *less* receptive to Díaz's narrative than those with little or no Spanish background. Many of the bilingual readers enjoyed the Spanish but felt quite sure that others who did not speak Spanish would not. As one such reviewer wrote, "I only give it 4 stars (instead of 5) because I can't imagine what it would have been like reading it, if I hadn't known Spanish" (Rachel). Another noted, "I appreciated the flow from English to Spanish, but acknowledge that it's an easier read if you speak and/or read Spanish" (Antonia). Hence, the proposal that U.S. Latino writers like Díaz are creating a narrative space that specifically privileges bilingual readers may be correct on a linguistic level; however, at least within the scope of the empirical study described above, overall these readers presented a degree of caution in their receptivity of a narrative they knew all too well could be met with hostility by many non-Spanish readers. This caution could also be attributable to the outcome of the study conducted by Luna and Perrachio, discussed in chapter III, in which bilinguals exhibited anxiety about their group's perception by monolinguals (Luna and Perrachio 44).

Pedagogical Implications: Code Switching Narratives as a Path to Transformative Learning

Given the findings of the reader receptivity study outlined in this chapter, one might easily hypothesize a link between receptivity and the language ego permeability issues discussed earlier. Perhaps those readers with thick ego boundaries – who are predicted to be less flexible and more uncomfortable with linguistic unintelligibility – constitute the reviewers who responded with negative receptivity to the Spanish in Díaz's text. Likewise, readers with thin ego boundaries – predicted to be characterized by a more flexible nature as well as by a comfort in situations of partial linguistic comprehension – may very well be the authors of the more receptive reviews of the text.

However, regardless of the state of readers' egos when they encounter code switching narratives like *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, a positive reception of the text appears to be secondary. Writers like Díaz do not seem to have set out to make readers comfortable with their books. What matters, according to the comment cited earlier by Díaz, is the experience of unintelligibility for readers – an experience resisted by some, embraced by others. Furthermore, this experience could arguably be *more* valuable to those who most highly resist it, since they constitute the people least likely to identify with linguistic experiences other than their own, and consequently are those most in need of a broadened perspective earned through first-hand experience.

An adult learning hypothesis developed by Jack Mezirow called the Transformative Learning Theory provides a useful framework through which to examine the affects and pedagogical implications of code switching texts like many of the U.S.

Latino narratives analyzed throughout this project. Transformative Learning Theory, while not specifically about language, is an adult education-based construct that suggests ways in which adults make meaning of their lives. It looks at so-called "deep learning," not just content or process learning, and examines what it takes for adults to move from a limited knowledge of knowing what they know without questioning. Transformative Learning Theory looks at what mechanisms are required for adults to identify, assess and evaluate alternative sources of information, and in some cases, reframe their world-view through the incorporation of new knowledge or information into their existing world-view or belief system ("Core").

At the core of Transformative Learning Theory is the process of "Perspective Transformation." Mezirow identifies three dimensions to a perspective transformation: psychological, meaning changes in understanding of the self; convictional, meaning revision of belief systems; and behavioral, meaning changes in lifestyle. An important part of transformative learning is for individuals to change their frames of reference by critically reflecting on their assumptions and beliefs and consciously making and implementing plans that bring about new ways of defining their worlds. This process is fundamentally rational and analytical.

When examined through the Transformative Learning Theory lens, U.S. Latino-authored texts which engage in passages of Spanish that challenge readers' willingness to accept unintelligibility can serve as a springboard for monolingual English readers to undergo a change of reference by critically reflecting on their assumptions about language – namely, that every word should be transparent to every reader. Code

switching texts provide such readers with a chance to examine their beliefs about language in so far as they challenge readers to interact with language in a new way by requiring them to experience unintelligibility. Consequently, these texts also provide readers with the opportunity to re-examine, and potentially change, their world-view.

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