

6-7-2017

Thinking in Uno and Reading en Otro: Codeswitching in American Novels

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THINKING IN *UNO* AND READING *EN OTRO*:
CODESWITCHING IN AMERICAN NOVELS

A Thesis

by

MARY ELIZABETH MUÑOZ

Submitted to Texas A&M International University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

May 2017

Major Subject: Language, Literature, and Translation

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May 2017

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Michel Martín del Campo, and our precocious daughter, Matilda Luna. Both of you have been a constant source of support and encouragement during the challenges of graduate school and life. The level of appreciation and love I feel for you both is ineffable. This work is also dedicated to my parents, Rolando and María Muñoz, and my siblings—Denise, Xochitl, and Roland Muñoz. All of you have loved me unconditionally and helped me grow as a person and student. Finally, this work is dedicated to the professors and teachers who have made a profound impact in my life. Thank you all for not giving up on me and helping me realize my path.

ABSTRACT

Thinking in *Uno* and Reading *en Otro*:
Codeswitching in American Novels (May 2017)

Mary Elizabeth Muñoz, B.A. English; B.A. Spanish, Texas A&M International
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Throughout history, languages that have come into contact with each other often fought for supremacy, but ultimately, they ended up coexisting in peace for the most part. The United States is a prime example of multiple languages mixing together, and after generations of doing so, some have blended almost entirely; this is not necessarily a bad thing. The U.S. has a history of being a nation that harbors multiple cultures along with those many languages, and even after wars, expansion, and segregation, those cultures and languages that remain cannot be suppressed.

The United States houses multiple cultures, and there are several factors that determine which languages get adopted and which get discarded in different social situations. Factors, such as belief and age, for example, are vital to make these distinctions, and codeswitching (CS) texts have become more significant because they record and showcase how these factors push people to choose which language to use. Spanish and English, primarily, have been in contact for many years, and in the U.S., there have been multiple attempts at pushing out Spanish, but English-only laws have never taken hold nationally.

For Americans who are born in the U.S. to Latin American immigrant parents, both Spanish and English are languages that shape their identity and thought process. These

people grow up thinking and speaking with both languages running simultaneously through their minds, and they often become bicultural, bilingual readers who are able to read in both languages and can understand CS texts.

It is important for their sense of identity that we continue studying what makes these texts so unique, and luckily, readership today is starting to acknowledge not only the existence and legitimacy of CS works, but also the importance of celebrating the unique blend of cultures and Spanish and English in literature. The number of CS texts is expected to grow, and more readers, both bilingual and monolingual, demand more texts like these. This thesis analyzes what makes written CS so relatable to many types of American audiences and how the prevalence of these texts legitimizes their inclusion into the American literary canon.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the support of my professors and mentors at Texas A&M International University. I would like to thank my chair, Dr. Manuel Broncano, and committee members, Dr. Lola O. Norris, Dr. Alia Paroo, and Dr. Frances G. Rhodes, for their help in developing my ideas. I could not have completed this endeavor without your guidance. I would also like to thank our department chair, Dr. Stephen M. Duffy, for his patience and support. In addition, I would like to give a special thanks to Dr. José Agustín Martínez-Samos for changing my life. You saw potential in my work from the beginning and pushed me to become a better student, writer, and *hispanohablante*. For that I owe you more than you can imagine.

Finally, to my congenitally nerdy, Trekkie-versus-Warsie squabbling, Dungeons-&-Dragons-loving friends, I thank you for your love and acceptance.

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CHAPTER I

CODESWITCHING IN AMERICAN NOVELS: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Motherfuckers will read a book that's one third Elvish, but put two sentences in Spanish and they think we're taking over.

— Junot Díaz

Change is an inevitable part of life, and in the world of language, change is constant. According to Rudi Keller, “It is sometimes claimed that human beings are not aware of the change in their language because it takes place too slowly and in steps that are much too small. Both claims are wrong. There are actually very fast and sudden changes” (6). These sudden changes occur for a variety of reasons, and one major argument that is heavily debated is the “idea of endogenous or internally triggered change” (Milroy 143). In other words, this is the argument that points to a language solely changing within itself rather than being changed by those who speak it. However, it is both: people have influence over a language changing, and a language is capable of changing within itself because of constant human movement via migration and language contact.

Spanish and English have been contiguous for several decades in the United States, and there have been multiple attempts throughout history to eliminate Spanish from the country; although there are several states that establish English-only laws, they are not nation-wide laws. Today, both Spanish and English shape the identity and thought process of many Americans, some of whom have more than one cultural heritage. Bilinguals grow up listening, speaking, and especially thinking in these languages. As a result, more people realize that languages “are not strangers to one another, but are, a priori,

This thesis follows the style of *Arizona Quarterly*.

and apart from all historical relationships, interrelated in what they want to express” (Benjamin 74), and many have used writing in both languages as a form of expression.

According to Cecilia Montes-Alcalá, the growth of “bilingual literature in the United States in the last decades seems to indicate that mixing languages at the written level has obtained a level of legitimacy” (68). Even though the mixing of English and Spanish terms in poetry and prose is not a new concept, there is a rise in works not only using simple terminology in both languages that need no translation but also utilizing codeswitching (CS), which mixes the two languages in the narrative and dialogue to such a great degree that fluency in both languages is needed to fully understand the text. To illustrate, Raquel Valle-Sentías, Rolando Hinojosa, and Sandra Cisneros are well known authors who continue to codeswitch in their works. Moreover, the United States has already shown a change and accepted Spanglish and CS texts into the American literary canon with the success of writers such as Giannina Braschi and Junot Díaz, respectively. Even a writer like Cormac McCarthy, who does not come from a Hispanic or Latino background, has embraced this change and has also written discourse in untranslated Spanish because this language is historically an integral part of the US-Mexican border, which is where his *Border Trilogy* takes place.

This type of literature is crucial to soothe the sometimes fragmented identity of bilinguals who live in a society that is quick to ostracize those who do not fit into one definition or one language. The increase, success, and recognition of CS throughout novels—by authors like McCarthy, Díaz, and Braschi—validate and justify not only spoken CS as a natural form of communication for a bilingual but also written CS and Spanglish as viable forms of American prose, and the growth in usage shows the malleability and compatibility

of English and Spanish in the United States; this growth and acceptance is vital to help bilinguals see that the way they speak and think is not wrong but appropriate and legitimate.

History of Language Contact in the New World and U.S.

America is a melting pot of cultures and languages. A prime example of the impact and influence languages can have on cultures or societies once they come in contact is found in the New World, the “newly discovered” Western Hemisphere. According to Edwin Gentzler, “During the early period of the ‘discovery’ of the Americas, most texts were written in any language but English, making the archeology of such reconstructions linguistically complex. Christopher Columbus, from Genoa, wrote in Spanish with some Italian interference” (“Multiculturalism” 13). Gentzler goes on to explain that other explorers who came after Columbus not only used multiple languages to communicate but also wrote in different languages. For example, Hernán Cortés who explored the Southwest and Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca who explored Florida both wrote in Spanish while John Cabot and Jacques Cartier, both explorers of the Northeast, wrote in French, and Giovanni de Verrazano who explored the Carolinas wrote in Italian (13-14). Therefore, when explorers from different regions began to land on “new” soil for various reasons, the mixture of all the languages in contact also became an intricate part of the New World and what would become the U.S.

Gentzler believes that if “there ever were a multilingual and multicultural society, the United States embodies it *par excellence*” (11). For example, there were over fifty languages—such as Navajo, Cherokee, and Apache—already in use in what is North America today before the arrival of any explorer, and during colonization, both immigration and slavery made their mark and brought languages and cultures from Africa, Asia, and Latin

America. Europeans, of course, brought along Castilian, but other influential languages like French, German, Dutch, and Portuguese also became a part of the United States (10-11). It is clear that English was not the only language to influence or even entirely shape this country.

In fact, Spanish has been and continues to be a very important part of how America was shaped since it has been “in the Southwestern U.S. for nearly four centuries. After colonization by Spain, the area remained under Spanish, and later Mexican, rule until 1848, when English-speaking immigrants became dominant” (Pfaff 292). Today, the use of both languages to communicate is becoming more common and acceptance is growing, and that has transferred to CS in novels and other informative texts, such as speeches and advertisements, in recent years (Callahan, *Spanish/English Codeswitching* 117-18). With changes in pop culture and entertainment, such as film and music, Spanish is becoming more accessible and praised; some even see it as the language of the future (118). In addition, communication through social media and websites, like YouTube, has made it possible for people to express their love of Spanish. In the world of marketing, CS is becoming a market strategy because “appealing to a target audience in its language of everyday use” (118) brings in more audience members who purchase more.

Because of this, more contemporary authors are expressing themselves through CS since it highlights not only the thought process but also the writer’s identity as multicultural. Gentzler argues, “Indicative of the schizophrenic translational nature of the ‘United’ States culture are the plethora of hyphenated identities such as Cajun-American, African-American, Asian-American, Chinese-American, or even more local hybridizations such as Nuyorican, all of which underscore the difficulty of ever arriving at the unified monolingual ‘American’ identity” (“Multiculturalism” 31). The acknowledgement of English not being the only

language but one of many languages that helped make the country what it is today has led to a major change in accepting CS between Spanish and English as U.S. literature.

CS Typology

Before continuing with the historical significance of CS in the written corpus, defining CS and the different types that exist now is equally important when trying to understand the various changes occurring. CS is the alternating of two or more languages. In the U.S., English and Spanish sentences are at times fused together in a motley dance when both spoken and written. According to Laura Callahan, “Codeswitching is the use of words and structures from more than one language or linguistic variety by the same speaker within the same speech situation, conversation or utterance [...] CS may occur at inter- and intrasentential levels, and may consist of single words or phrases” (*Spanish/English Codeswitching* 5). What Callahan refers to as “intersentential” is CS that occurs after each a speaker has finished one sentence or clause in one language and starts and ends another complete sentence in another language, so it occurs outside complete sentences (Myers-Scotton and Jake 245). On the other hand, an “intrasentential” level of CS occurs within a clause; the speaker often alternates languages after a few words (245). For example, the following sentences are intersentential: “Es mi silla. What’s going on?” [“It’s my chair. What’s going on?”]¹ However, the sentence “El problem is that I don’t know quién es tu friend” [“The problem is that I don’t know who your friend is”] showcases intrasentential CS.

As Carol Myers-Scotton and Janice L. Jake’s article “Matching Lemmas in Bilingual Language Competence and Production Model: Evidence from Intrasentential Code-Switching” shows, scholars’ work and study mostly focuses on intrasentential switching.

However, whether or not switching a single word from one language to another can be labeled a level of CS is subject to an ongoing debate since back-and-forth switching single terms less frequently can be considered borrowing, also known as using loanwords. Callahan explains that borrowing “refers to the process by which word forms from one language are introduced into another. In codeswitching, the forms of each language, though contiguous, remain discrete in at least some aspects” (*Spanish/English Codeswitching* 5). The argument centers on many scholars being unable to distinguish whether or not “material from one language (L_2) is used in another (L_1)” (5) as borrowed from L_2 since it has entered the lexicon of L_1 at some point in time or if said material remains “discrete from L_1 ” (5). What makes this debate difficult to settle is that there are more factors to consider when determining if CS is occurring.

Namely, a few of these factors are phonological adaptations, in which the pronunciation of a syllable or letter changes (6); quantity, in which “some prefer larger constituents such as phrases or clauses” (8) to be considered CS instead of single words and others consider both alternated single words and phrases to be CS regardless (7-8); and frequency, in which words that are used more frequently are deemed borrowings than those that are not (9). It is possible that this debate will continue in the future since there are more factors and theories, not named in this research, to consider when determining CS; however, the main point to understand is that no scholar can deny the occurrence of Spanish and English mixing and how speakers of both languages actively switched between the two to communicate for centuries, and because of the changing attitudes toward CS, the languages will continue to mix as more communities interact and intermingle in the U.S.

In addition, Montes-Alcalá says oral CS “is a natural occurrence in the speech of bilingual individuals that, however, has often been erroneously attributed to illiteracy and poor linguistic competence. Hence, the mix of Spanish and English in the United States has earned derogatory labels such as ‘Spanglish’ or ‘Tex-Mex’ among monolingual and bilingual individuals alike” (68). The shift in attitudes—from negative to positive—toward CS has altered more than mere acceptance of the usage. As Montes-Alcalá notes, terms such as “Spanglish” and “Tex-Mex” are used in a derogatory fashion, but in recent years, the terms have gained a positive connotation that elicits pride for those who practice the alternation of languages (Callahan, *Spanish/English Codeswitching* 115). In the introduction to Giannina Braschi’s *Yo-Yo Boing!* (1998), Doris Sommer and Alexandra Vega-Merino claim that Spanglish is a style, one that offers originality and charm (16), which is a positive viewpoint. Elsewhere, Callahan argues that CS has been more prestigious in many parts of the world than it is in the United States in the past (“The Role of Register” 19), but in the last few decades in America, CS is rapidly becoming the future (*Spanish/English Codeswitching* 118). One way in which this growth is being acknowledged is through literature: there are more written works that include CS appearing and altering the American literary canon.

The Chicano Movement and U.S. Literature: Usage and Problems

Bilingual authors who codeswitch to communicate have also written in this form as a stylistic and artistic choice, and it is not the first time written works show the weaving of Spanish and English. During the 1960s, the Chicano Civil Rights Movement—also known as *El Movimiento* and later shortened to The Chicano Movement—took root in American soil, and those who were a part of the movement sought empowerment and justice for the Mexican-American people. Later, Chicana feminism also took hold to help women

specifically both proclaim their mixed Mexican-American identity and make their oppressed (by both Mexican-American men and American women) voices heard. Moreover, Montes-Alcalá states, “[T]he Chicano literary movement then sought to create a literary voice for illiterate migrant workers and this was achieved for the most part by recreating the language of these people—including their bilingualism” (69). Bilingualism began to appear in literature to show the “bicultural reality of Nuyoricans in El Barrio and Losaida (Lower East Side in New York City)” (69), and this continued to evolve into using more Spanish through CS and not translating directly so that the audience that this literature was meant for, the bilingual reader, could show its strength and existence, which was and still is a powerful way to show identity. As much as many viewed CS in a positive light, others were not impressed or happy about the two languages mashing together for the sake of art.

In the advertising field, for example, advertisers have many aspects to consider when creating a new campaign or advertisement; these include expressing ideas through a combination of written slogans and imagery, which require creativity, familiarity with art and its components, and a clear focus on the consumer—the audience. In David Luna and Laura Peracchio’s 2005 study of the use of CS in advertising for the purpose of targeting minorities, their results show varying degrees of positive and negative attitudes toward CS. According to Luna and Peracchio, “In general, majority languages tend to be associated with more positive features than minority languages, resulting in ‘positive’ majority-language schemas and ‘negative’ minority-language schemas” (45). They note that in the U.S., English is the majority language and Spanish is the minority language, so English has more prestige, and it is perceived as “the language of integration” (45), while Spanish “tends to be associated with a lower socioeconomic status, and therefore can activate feelings of inferiority” (45).

Furthermore, even though the Hispanic population is growing, Spanish is still sometimes viewed as a hindrance and barrier between the culture of origin and the American culture.

Luna and Peracchio explain that a “reason for this effect is that the negative attitudes of the majority group toward the group without power and prestige are adopted in part or in whole by the minority group, and are often amplified to such an extent that members of the minority group hold even more negative attitudes toward their own group than the attitudes held by the majority group” (45). In other words, many Latinos experience negative attitudes toward Spanish because they feel pressure to assimilate into the American culture, which is highly marked by the use of English to communicate. However, many of these feelings are difficult to measure since even in advertising, Luna and Peracchio found that the negativity felt toward CS is often determined by several factors, “such as level of education or degree of integration into the dominant, majority-language group” (46). Not to mention, at times both positive and negative feelings intermix since the perception of Spanish in some Hispanic communities can be seen as “a source of pride and solidarity, but on the other hand, it is also a social stigma” (45). However, this study was conducted over a decade ago, and further studies are necessary to understand both the growth of the Hispanic community and how its members feel about CS in advertisement now. It is possible that the perception has changed with the acceptance of more CS texts.

Fortunately, as negative attitudes are changing, CS texts are being accepted by both bilingual and monolingual readers as a part of literature pertaining to the United States. In the past, the obligation some authors felt to write only in English or to translate immediately after using Spanish to “flavor” their work comes from a concern with the monolingual reader. According to Holly E. Martin, “These authors may be concerned that they will lose

their monolingual, English-speaking audience if they code-switch too frequently, and therefore, may only code-switch from English to Spanish with single words or short phrases” (408). Today, however, many bilingual authors are feeling more comfortable using CS more often in their writing since they are also presenting how they both think and speak, “without ‘correcting’ their Spanish or English, switching codes frequently without explaining or translating, accommodating neither the native English nor the native Spanish speakers, but forcing them to confront the multilingual space” (Gentzler, “Border Writing” 153). In fact, a growth in CS novels does not mean that CS authors no longer care about the types of audiences they have; on the contrary, they are celebrating how the mind works with more than one language in it, and they are actively keeping record of the process through their works, which allows us to study more. CS use reinforces the power of greater communication through two or more languages for those who were once made to believe that we can only speak English in the United States. Nevertheless, the fear of losing monolinguals with copious CS continues to apply today but not to the same degree as before.

The concern with monolinguals not understanding the text fully has been subsiding in the last decades. Callahan states, “Reading a text written in more than one language requires of all readers more sustained attention than reading one without such alternation” (*Spanish/English Codeswitching* 110), and this is quintessentially a positive aspect of CS even though not all see or understand the benefits. For example, for writers, CS allows them to express their thoughts, emotions, and bicultural identities; for bilingual readers, the text does not become repetitive when authors automatically translate what is written in Spanish, and for monolingual readers, especially, reading texts that codeswitch is a more enriching experience. Since the text with both languages woven together is more difficult to decipher

for monolinguals, “the extra effort applied serves to increase the reader’s engagement with the task, and thus heightens enjoyment” (110). Not only are monolinguals learning about new cultural factors and terms, but also all readers are immersed in a richer and more unique literary experience through CS.

Since the 1970s, theories about bilingual texts have always been and always will be debatable, but the fact is that theories and certain mindsets about languages can change. For example, the popularization of texts that contain English and Spanish is helping CS gain more positivity and understanding for the blending of languages now. According to Gentzler, there is madness in defining these texts since they have so many factors to consider (“Multiculturalism” 31). A viable reason for this is because opinions on the definition and criteria necessary for a text to be considered authentic CS continuously change. This debate centers on determining whether a text contains authentic CS, which gives an insight into how CS is utilized in said author’s speech community, or if it is artificial and only created by the author to “flavor” the text (Montes-Alcalá 69). As a result, in the early 1980s, John M. Lipski categorized the amount of written CS.

CS in Writing: Authentic versus Artificial

Lipski explains that literary CS is seen more in poetry than in a novel, and that is a reliable observation in 1982 (192); however, this has changed in recent years, and more narratives are CS throughout. According to Lipski, Type I is a text for the monolingual since only a handful of Spanish terms are used in the text to latinize the story while Type II “bilingual literature exhibits intersentential code switches, where entire lines of poetry or entire sentences of prose are produced in a single language, with switches occurring at phrase/sentence boundaries” (195), and finally, Type III exhibits intrasentential CS that

shows the highest integration of Spanish and English grammar (195). Since bilingual writers are typically raised in environments where CS is highly used to communicate, it may seem simple to assume that all type of written works with any level or amount of Spanish contains CS.

However, because there are so many factors when determining CS typology, like frequency and others mentioned earlier, it is a mistake, according to Lipski, to assume that all types of Spanish mixed in with English works are CS texts. It is important to note that not all of the factors and dynamics that are associated with defining CS pertain solely to how both languages are structured in sentences. There are larger, societal factors that make CS typology so complex; social class, age, living conditions, religion, and gender, language prestige, and even sound influence when CS occurs.

In fact, Lipski noted that there may not be one single and accurate way to determine authentic from artificial CS (194), and Montes-Alcalá argues that spoken and written CS will always differ since it is very possible that the Spanish utilized in some English prose is for “purely rhetorical purposes” (69). Nevertheless, bilingual writers who were raised in communities that codeswitched grew up switching because it is absolutely *normal* and common (Lipski 192). Lourdes Torres states that in the U.S., different impacts—such the increase of Latino/a immigrants, the growth of both large and small Latino/a communities, and the heavy mixture of Spanish and English in the U.S./Mexican border, “means that codeswitching in literature is not only metaphorical, but represents a reality where segments of the population are living between cultures and languages; literary language actualizes the discourse of the border and bilingual/bicultural communities” (76). Therefore, although there is an ongoing debate to define the moment in which the mixing of Spanish and English

becomes CS and the argument going on still to determine if CS in any written work is authentic or simply an artificial artistic choice, the key element is that CS texts are becoming more prominent and accepted into the American literary canon.

CS in Contemporary U.S. Literature

As noted before, the increase in CS texts in the last few decades legitimizes CS as American literature (Montes-Alcalá 68), and this is because CS brings another level of creativity and art to literature. Frances R. Aparicio argues the following:

While some prescriptive linguists, editors, and authorities in education would judge the interference of Spanish in English as a deficit, a postmodern and transcreative approach would validate it as a positively creative innovation in literature. Indeed, the most important contributions of U.S. Latina/o writers to American literature lie not only in the multiple cultural and hybrid subjectivities that they textualize, but also in the new possibilities for metaphors, imagery, syntax, and rhythms that the Spanish subtexts provide literary English. Needless to say, this transformation is not restricted to the formal sphere, and its political and social implications regarding readership are only now beginning to be discussed. What on the surface appears to be a praxis that signals cultural assimilation may be defined also as a subversive act: that of writing the Self using the tools of the Master and, in the process, transforming those signifiers with the cultural meanings, values, and ideologies of the subordinate sector. Underlying intertextuality clothed in the language of the Other. (797)

In other words, Aparicio is pointing out that CS brings a new dimension to literary creativity, which in turn, creates a richer canon for later analysis. This includes experiencing an entirely new perspective given the use of multiple languages, and it is something that cannot be done by using only one or the other language. In fact, there is a growing market for these texts even though “the majority of bilingual texts have not been given full credit as part of the canon in US-Latino literature and most contemporary bilingual authors still lean towards writing monolingual texts” (Montes-Alcalá 85). For example, Junot Díaz winning the 2008 Pulitzer Prize for *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007), which is written in “a sort

of streetwise brand of Spanglish” (Kakutani), proves that there is authenticity in both utilizing CS and accepting these types of novels as part of U.S. literature (Montes-Alcalá 68).

Conclusion

In an article published a decade ago, Torres argues that as the “number and power of Latino/as in the United States increases, it will be interesting to see if Spanish continues to muscle its way into what have been exclusively English language arenas” (92). She also notes that more publications in Spanish and English will appear as years go by, and we are already seeing that today. Bilinguals live in a constant state of CS via both thought process and verbal communication, and this is something that, fortunately, has been noticed by a many writers as part of an identity in the bicultural world. They understand that writing and “interacting with either language can continue to open opportunities to be fluid in ways that invite working through cultural misunderstandings resulting from what each generation feels politically and emotionally necessary to share” (Abad 556). The mixing of English and Spanish in poetry and prose may not be a new concept, but the demand is growing for more works in both languages. Aside from U.S.-Mexican border that have already shown a change and accepted bilingual and CS more, there are other areas in America that are rapidly catching up, and those are the North-Eastern areas of the United States.

CHAPTER II

CODESWITCHING IN CORMAC MCCARTHY'S BORDER TRILOGY

The state of landscapes is a theme that encompasses most of McCarthy's novels; however, they serve to show more than narrative description. In *The Border Trilogy*—which includes *All the Pretty Horses* (1992), *The Crossing* (1994), and *Cities of the Plain* (1998)—McCarthy uses the wounding of the land to show that borders are merely physical representations of a separation that was never made true in the minds of many. According to Gloria Anzaldúa, “The US-Mexican border *es una herida abierta* [is an open wound] where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the life blood of two worlds merging to form a third country—a border culture” (3). It is an invention and fantasy of man to think that borders exist; the U.S.-Mexican border has a connection that no artificial barriers, be it bridges or fences, can ever sever. McCarthy's reason for CS as a form worthy of reading is to prove said connection between the two cultures in the U.S.-Mexico border and in the minds of those who live in this “border culture.” Both bilingual and monolingual readers benefit from understanding the border region through McCarthy's profuse use of CS dialogue.

The U.S.-Mexican Border and Language

1848 marks the end of the Mexican-American war. The end of the war, however, does nothing to halt or even hinder territorial greed. It is a time when the U.S. takes the territory that will become an empire, and this carves a borderline that is written in blood. In the nineteenth century, Americans faced the original inhabitants of the land: Indigenous Peoples and Mexican descendants of conquistadors and natives, but Americans wanted them gone. Therefore, the “final solution to this problem was conceived in stark terms: either

assimilation or removal. ‘In the present state of our country one of two things seem necessary,’ Senator Thomas Hart Benton stated in 1844, ‘either that those sons of the forest should be moralized or exterminated’ ” (qtd. in Eaton 158). This was the only way to expand the empire and separate the culture.

On the other hand, the border culture and the Spanish language prevailed regardless of the marked separation, and Spanish specifically remained as the vein that continued to connect the two divided countries. Regarding American literature and publications, though, “Spanish usage was severely limited, often by editorial fiat, on the theory that the English-speaking reader has an extremely low tolerance for non-English words. Thus, Spanish tended to be accompanied by the glossaries and/or often awkward translations” (Castillo 155-56). In the Trilogy, McCarthy purposefully omits glossaries and direct translations. Instead he codeswitches, which is “typical of almost all Latino texts” (155), according to Debra Castillo, specifically in dialogue. To clarify, I am not arguing that the Trilogy is a Latino text. Rather, I am arguing that the three novels are just as much American novels as those that do not contain any Spanish, and this is not simply because they are written by McCarthy, who is a non-Latino, but because his CS between English and untranslated Spanish captures the voice of the border.

The Border Trilogy

All the Pretty Horses (ATPH) takes place one hundred years later in San Angelo, Texas, where the protagonist, John Grady Cole, goes into a journey of initiation. He is a character who seeks the old Western ways in this classic Bildungsroman structure since *ATPH* is, as a whole, a coming-of-age story. However, John Grady shows to be a much more complex character even before he sets out on his journey. For one thing, he is young man, a

young American man, who finds himself displaced in the United States. His mother is missing, and while John Grady is in Mexico, his father dies. In addition, the death of Grady's grandfather marks the death of the myth of the West in *ATPH* just as Grady's own passing will mark the death of the cowboy in *Cities of the Plain (COTP)*. Before this, however, he seeks to hold on to the life of the cowboy by going to Mexico, and throughout his stay there, he communicates in Spanish.

John Grady speaks fluent Spanish, but for him it is more than just a language. He was actually raised by Mexican women, one of whom he calls his *abuelita* [granny]. According to Manuel Broncano, "Grady is a liminal being, a bilingual individual who has yet to acquire literacy in either one of his cultures, or rather, in both. He is the offspring of the border—his surrogate mother, Luisa, and grandmother, 'abuelita,' are Mexican, which accounts for Grady's command of the Spanish language—and as such, he is the son of [Anzaldúa's] 'open wound' which is the frontier" (58). As noted previously, these women instill in him the culture and language they know. At the end of the first novel in the Trilogy, the only person—aside from his grandfather—he had an opportunity to pay his respects to was *abuelita*. McCarthy writes that *abuelita* was with the Grady family for fifty years, and she "had cared for [Grady's] mother as a baby and she had worked for his family long before his mother was born and she had known and cared for the wild Grady boys [...] and he stood holding his hat and he called her his abuela and he said goodbye to her in spanish [sic]" (McCarthy, *ATPH* 301). At her funeral, he speaks in Spanish as he says his goodbyes and contemplates the disappearing world of the cowboy. John Grady may be American-born, but he is part of the border culture because through Luisa and *abuelita*'s teachings, he is neither

fully American nor fully Mexican. He is the in-between and proof that there are no borders in culture or language.

In *The Crossing (TC)*, Billy Parham, the protagonist, is even more a part of the border culture since his maternal grandmother was Mexican, and she taught him her culture as well. Billy has been speaking Spanish since he was a child. For example, in the very first chapter of the novel, the narrator describes the family move to Hidalgo County and how Billy and his younger brother, Boyd, named “features of the landscape and birds and animals in both spanish [sic] and english [sic]” (McCarthy, *TC* 3). This border culture that lets Billy understand and express himself in a bilingual manner is deeply ingrained in the novel. His family has even accepted this biculturalism by naming Billy’s deceased sister after her maternal grandmother: Margarita Evelyn Parham (168). Billy, like John Grady, feels lost as an in-between, and he seeks himself by crossing the border once and again.

However, even though authorities man the border, Billy still crosses; once again, McCarthy points out the physical damage that man has done to the land with the implementation of “borders.” To illustrate, after Billy returns to an empty home because his parents have been murdered, the narrator describes the landscape. The description of a fence cutting across the land like a suture is a metaphor for the wound that man has made in the earth. Billy is already well aware of that. When asked if he thinks Mexico is a place where one can do as he likes, his response is the following: “I never thought that. I never thought about this country one way or the other” (McCarthy 119). Billy does not think in terms of borders because he does not think that both countries are, deep down, all that different. McCarthy is showing that through language and the connection that these characters have with the Mexican culture, there are no such things as borders.

COTP amalgamates the lives of John Grady Cole and Billy Parham. The novel begins with them working together in a cattle ranch in El Paso, Texas, and soon after, they visit a brothel called *La Venada* across the U.S.-Mexican border in Ciudad Juárez. This is where John Grady first spots Magdalena—the young and beautiful, epileptic prostitute he will love beyond death itself. In regards to language, they only speak Spanish since she cannot speak English; however, they are never lost in translation. Soon after meeting, Grady proposes to Magdalena, and they make plans to live their lives in the United States. Tragically however, since Eduardo, the grand *alcahuete* [“procurer”; “pimp”] who runs the brothel, also loves Magdalena (albeit in his own warped way), he sends his right-hand man, Tiburcio, to slit her throat when she tries to cross the border. In the final confrontation between Grady and Eduardo, Grady manages to kill the *alcahuete*, but Eduardo mortally wounds Grady, and he only lives long enough to speak with Billy, who tries throughout the novel to help Grady prevent his inevitable fate.

CS in The Border Trilogy

The use of Spanish language in the Trilogy may be seen as unnecessary by many, especially because “textual use of code switching is typical of [...] mixed reception [because it is] often dependent upon presumptions about the inclusion or exclusion of specific potential audiences” (Castillo 15). However, it is McCarthy’s use of Spanish that enhances the story since it provides readers with a more authentic depiction of the U.S.-Mexican border. In fact, Spanish first appears almost immediately since it is first used in a dialogue on the “second page of *ATPH*. Untranslated passages of Spanish dialogue occur throughout the Trilogy, most heavily in *TC*, but with moderate frequency in the first and third volumes as well” (White 133). McCarthy is trying to capture life on the border where Spanish and

English are used interchangeably in conversation. Kenneth Hada explains that the “border is more than just a river. McCarthy's treatment of the western myth involves the specific placement of his characters in the topos of the southwest and shows them in dialogue with representative voices of Mexican culture on Mexican soil” (34). Therefore, it is more authentic to use CS in the dialogue since the usage of both languages is a reality on the border.

As mentioned in the first chapter, there is an ongoing debate over whether or not borrowings used in writing, specifically Spanish in this case, have to be fully accepted in the English lexicon to be called “borrowed” (Callahan, *Spanish/English Codeswitching* 5). According to Callahan, the term “borrowing” in reference to CS refers to the process of introducing a word in a language different from the language in which a text is written (5). Therefore, in *The Border Trilogy*, McCarthy offers several borrowings which can both be easily understood and difficult to grasp by readers who are unfamiliar with Spanish. Moreover, in some cases, McCarthy also provides translations in the dialogue or in the narrative surrounding the dialogue and uses more intersentential CS, which is interesting since most scholars study intrasentential CS. The switching he provides within the sentence (intrasentential) is demonstrated through dialogue tags (or speech tags).

For example, there is a plethora of instances in which McCarthy uses loanwords to codeswitch in the narrative and in the dialogue. In *ATPH*, McCarthy uses Spanish words that have indeed made their way into the English lexicon since they appear in several dictionaries with complete definitions and etymologies; these are a few: “charro” [“cowboy”] (261), “quinceañera” [“fifteen year old”] (232), and “haciendas” [“ranch”; “estate”; “property”] (232). However, he also utilizes terms that are not. McCarthy writes, “My family are

considered gachupines here, but the madness of the Spaniard is not so different from the madness of the creole” (230). “Gachupines” is not a term that has made its way into the English language, so readers (both monolinguals and bilinguals) who are not familiar with the meaning need to research. Broncano explains, “Alfonsa recounts her family history as *gachupines*—a derogatory term applied to Spaniards in Mexico—who carry in their genes the inheritance of a people who have a profound conviction” (61). Having to do an extra reading and research to understand the Trilogy is not necessarily a hindrance since having to do so is now seen as a more enriching experience as Callahan notes (110).

In *TC*, more borrowings show up as titles of people. There are still borrowings that denote objects or things—such as “arroyo” [“stream”; “brook”] (420) which is already in the English lexicon and “portazgo” [“toll”] (119), which is not at this time—but more titles in Spanish appear. For example, when Parham crosses Mexican authorities, they stop him and “immediately assault Billy with bureaucratic demands (Crain 70). The titles used are “mozo” [“a young man”], “alguacil” [“sheriff”], and “carretero” [“cart driver”] (97-99). Furthermore, in *COTP*, McCarthy continues to use Spanish titles as borrowings. For example, when Eduardo, the man who runs the brothel, is described, he is given three titles: “cuchillero” [“knife fighter”], “filero” [“knife fighter”], and “alcahuete” [“procurer”; “pimp”] (196-198). However, McCarthy includes more borrowings for the names of places, such as a brothel or street. These borrowings are the following: “La Venada” [“The Doe”], “Dos Mundos” [“Two Worlds”], and “Calle de Noche Triste” [“The Night of Sorrows Street”] (68; 205; 228). As noted in the introduction, the concern with losing monolinguals because of borrowings used to “flavor” an American novel with Spanish is diminishing. As Gentzler notes, leaving out translations or highlighting when another language is present (typically

with the use of italics, for example) is being left out more today to provide an accurate experience of the border through literature (“Border Writing” 153).

McCarthy includes intrasentential CS in the Trilogy. However, it is rarely in the dialogue itself; rather, the switch occurs in part of the dialogue tag of a sentence. For example, when John Grady is finally able to speak to Magdalena in *COTP*, their entire conversation is in Spanish, but the tags and narration are switched to English. McCarthy writes,

John Grady looked at the girl. She leaned forward and smoothed her skirt again.

Lo siento, she said. Pero no hablo inglés.

Está bien. Podemos hablar español.

Oh, she said. Qué bueno.

Qué es su nombre?

Magdalena. Y usted?

He didn't answer. Magdalena, he said.

She looked down. As if the sound of her name were troubling to her.

Es su nombre de pila? he said.

Sí. Por supuesto.

No es su nombre . . . su nombre profesional.

She put her hand to her mouth. Oh, she said No. Es mi nombre propio. (67)

[John Grady looked at the girl. She leaned forward and smoothed her skirt again.

I'm sorry, she said. But I don't speak English.

It's OK. We can speak Spanish.

Oh, she said. That's good.

What is your name?

Magdalena. And you?

He didn't answer. Magdalena, he said.

She looked down. As if the sound of her name were troubling to her.

Is that your given name? he said.

Yes. Of course.

It's not your. . . your professional name?

She put her hand to her mouth. Oh, she said No. It's my given name.]

This is a piece of a longer dialogue that has most of its crucial points in Spanish. Even though it is long, the Spanish is still simple enough that it can be analyzed by computer-aided translation software or even researched in English-Spanish bilingual dictionaries. However,

as shown in the example, both the use of “she said” and “he said” are the points in which intrasentential CS occurs.

The point of using so much Spanish is not simply to give the novel a richer content or a more realistic aspect. In fact, Castillo explains that many writers use tag phrases to identify “a particular speech context or to sustain character [...] Nevertheless, readers have proven to be far more flexible than mid-twentieth-century editors imagined, and U.S. Spanish today flourishes not only in texts by bilingual Latino/as, but also in general in those narratives located in territories crossed by multiple languages” (Castillo 156), such as with writers like McCarthy. Therefore, Spanish is weaved in and out of the entire novel as a way for McCarthy to show that borders do not exist for these characters.

Although, intersentential CS is not a focus for many scholars and researcher, it is important to note that McCarthy makes abundant use of this type of switch. At times, McCarthy provides a translation within the dialogue or the narration after dialogue. For example, McCarthy writes, “She said that the blind man had been born of humble origins. Orígenes humildes [humble origins], she said” (*TC* 275). When Parham enters a town called Juan Ceballos, a woman takes him by the hand and asks the following:

Y adónde va? she said.
 He said he did not know. He said that he was going where the road went. The wind. The will of God.
 La voluntad de Dios, she said. As if choosing. (*TC* 279)

[Where are you going? She said.
 He said he did not know. He said that he was going where the road went. The wind. The will of God.
 The will of God, she said. As if choosing.]

In the first quote, readers are provided with the translation of the upcoming quote through the codeswitch, and immediately after the translation, the Spanish quote is given. In the second example, only the woman is given speaks and the rest is narrative. Again, the translation is

provided immediately before the Spanish quote. As Castillo argues, however, readers (both monolingual and bilingual) are more flexible with CS; thus, along with borrowings, and translations, most of the intersentential CS McCarthy writes in the Trilogy does not have translations such as these exceptions.

To illustrate, When Grady and his mother have a meal together and Luisa provided the service, the mother speaks in Spanish and switches to English. McCarthy writes,

Algo más, señora?
 No, Luisa. Gracias.
 Buenas noches, señora.
 Buenas noches.
 The door closed. The clock ticked. He looked up.
 Why coulnt [sic] you lease me the ranch?
 Lease you the ranch.
 Yes.
 I thought I said I didnt [sic] want to discuss it. (*ATPH* 15)

[Anything else, ma'am?
 No, Luisa. Thank you.
 Good night, ma'am.
 Good night.
 The door closed. The clock ticked. He looked up.
 Why coulnt [sic] you lease me the ranch?
 Lease you the ranch.
 Yes.
 I thought I said I didnt [sic] want to discuss it.]

In addition, as Parham listens to the blind man speak, he switches during his storytelling:

“Origins and destinations became but rumors. To move is to abut against the world. Sit quietly and it vanishes. En mis primeros años de la oscuridad pensé que al ceguera fué [sic] una forma de la muerte. Estuve equivocado” [During my first years in the darkness, I thought that blindness was a form of death. I was wrong] (*TC* 291). Once again there is switch from English without providing any translations to the content in Spanish, and McCarthy provides good reason for this within the words of La Dueña [“female owner”; “proprietor”] in *ATPH*. During her conversation with Grady in which she tell him about her life when she was

young, she says, “Rafaela was my own age within three days and we were very close. Much more so than with the daughters of Carranza. Teníamos compadrazgo con su familia. [We were close friends with her family.] You understand? There is no translation” (*ATPH* 232). Although one can find an equivalency for “compadrazgo” [“camaraderie”; “close friendship”], La Dueña and McCarthy are right; there is no literal translation, and this is why CS is so vital to the Trilogy which is centered on border life and the deep-rooted relationship between English and Spanish.

Conclusion

Bilinguals consider themselves linked to a dual culture, and McCarthy is an author who can attest to that. However, monolingual, especially those on the border, have vicarious experience with that dual culture as well. The use of Spanish indeed sets McCarthy apart because although the three novels are “aimed at an English-speaking audience [they] frequently feature untranslated sections in Spanish, often with a wink to the bilingual reader” (Castillo 156). McCarthy, a non-Latino, using extensive CS shows how subversive he is and how willing he is to create something to challenge American Literature. The connection he makes and themes he carries throughout his novels are a testament of true border culture and the connection with the land felt by many people living there.

CHAPTER III

CODESWITCHING IN JUNOT DÍAZ'S

THE BRIEF WONDROUS LIFE OF OSCAR WAO

As mentioned previously, the use of CS and bilingual jargon in literary works is not new, and there have been many works from celebrated bilingual writers, such as Sandra Cisneros, Rolando Hinojosa, and Giannina Braschi, who are critically acclaimed for not holding back the use of Spanish in their writing. According to Cecilia Montes-Alcalá, “While code-switching in natural discourse has proved to serve a number of socio-pragmatic functions, its use in literature may obey stylistic or aesthetic rules and it can also be used as a source of credibility and/or to communicate biculturalism, humor, criticism and ethnicity” (69). An author who made it a point to break some of those rules that are followed by both monolingual and bilingual writers is Junot Díaz. *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (*TBWLOOW*), a novel by Junot Díaz that contains frequent CS, has made an impact worldwide for its use of what many call an aggressive form of Spanglish; however, in essence he set out to write something that highlighted the thought process of bilinguals. The novel embraces what it is to speak, think, and feel in two different languages that often battle for dominance in the mind of a bilingual and bicultural person, and because of this, *TBWLOOW* is an ideal novel for the bilingual reader who is trying to salvage his or her biculturalism and historical roots in the United States through CS.

The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao

Winner of both the 2008 Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award (“*The Brief*”), *TBWLOOW* is a powerful novel centered on not only the short life of Oscar De León, a “sweet but disastrously overweight ghetto nerd who—from the New Jersey home he

shares with his old world mother and rebellious sister ” (“*The Brief*”). Each member of the family encounters hardships and tragedies that are simultaneously personal and intimately shared with each other throughout decades of fear and anguish. The family lives in fear because of the Dominican Republic dictator, Rafael Trujillo, and the belief that he brought on the *fukú*, “generally a curse of a doom of some kind [and] specifically the Curse and the Doom of the New World” (Díaz 1). Oscar grows up and learning in two different worlds and languages, which is a common familiarity shared by many bilinguals; however, his experiences are gained through the Dominican-American culture.

According to Allison Amend, the novel “is written in Spanglish-inflected slang-filled prose, full of references to J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*, C. S. Lewis’s *The Chronicles of Narnia*, role-playing games such as Dungeons and Dragons, video games, modern music, anime movies, comic books, and the history of the Dominican Republic” (102). The story is introduced by an omniscient narrator named Yuniór de Las Casas, who was Oscar’s roommate in college and who dated Lola, Oscar’s sister. From the beginning of the novel, the CS utilized in the dialogue and narrative, between multiple characters, and throughout avid footnotes takes control of the story. This novel can be said to be slightly more difficult for monolingual English readers to grasp, yet it is very much possible to understand the story even if readers are not fluent in Spanish. According to Gary D. Keller and Randall G. Keller, CS “is a primary phenomenon which, we would argue, is the single most unique characteristic element of US Hispanic creative literature. Furthermore, most code-switching between Spanish and English, or between registers within each language, has been in support of the multicultural feature of US Hispanic literature, in one way or another”

(166). Keller and Keller highlight the changing views of today, which see CS and bilingual texts as unique, worthy of being called literature, and a peek into the minds of bilinguals.

Criticism of Other Languages in America

However, even with the progress made today, many still adhere to the old idea that disagrees with the positive outlook on the mixing of languages. The United States has a long history of trying to suppress minority voices. In the introduction, this was only touched upon. William Reese et. al. note that along with the growth of the belief in the importance of an American school system during the Western expansion of the United States grew the belief that all children should be assimilated into the “American” society. Moreover, this was aimed at children of Amerindian, African, Asian, and Mexican descent, and children who did not comply were ridiculed, expelled, and attacked (Gentzler, “Multiculturalism” 12-13). However, the political fight to either keep or discard English-only dogma continued well into today, and expectations for minorities to assimilate in the United States became stricter. According to Terrence G. Wiley, “The basic tenets are that immigrants should surrender their native languages as a kind of recompense for the rite of passage into the receiving society because they will be more prosperous in their new country than they were in their countries of origin” (54). Therefore, immigrants needed to erase all links to their past as a way of paying for the right to live in the United States. This is exactly the opposite of what explorers did in the New World: they inculcated their beliefs and languages and were not forced to relinquish or surrender their native languages and customs by the indigenous people who were the original inhabitants of the New World.

The height of the push for English monolingualism was in the early 1980s. Joshua Fishman states that those who advocate “English Official/English Only” both believe and

stress that the problem is never with them, the “middle-class anglicized Americans” (133), in the realm of “in here” but with those “out there,” those who do not belong in their group, the outsiders, the Other, which are immigrants (132-133). In the 80s, Fishman continues, there was a type of witch-hunt launched as “a patriotic ‘purification’ campaign against the ‘foreign elements’, akin today to the anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant, anti-Black, and anti-hyphenated-American campaigns of past eras in American history” (133). In 1983, specifically, the English-only movement was founded as the result from a burgeoning number of Latinos on American soil, and the justification for the resistance to “bilingual Spanish-English education from the beginning [was] because such an approach would lead to ‘identity confusion’” (Extra and Gorter 19), according to the philosophy of English monolingualism. To reiterate, immigrants coming in were expected to sever their roots and assimilate into the American society, which was molded by a very specific group: the “middle-class anglicized Americans.”

Unfortunately, although there have been extensive studies both disproving “identity confusion” in bilinguals and verifying strengths associated with bilingualism in “cognitive development, mental flexibility, and intelligence” (Edwards 17), there has been a backlash recently because of recent world events involving terrorism and fascistic rhetoric in America. Wiley explains that this “clichéd theme has been recently revived within a post-9/11 context of national security by Harvard professor Samuel Huntington [...] in his controversial book, *Who Are We: The Challenges to America’s National Identity*” (54). However, against these odds, there are still millions of Americans who speak languages other than English, and Spanish is becoming more acceptable as a part of US history despite the hateful speech toward communities that use multiple languages to communicate. Castillo argues, “In recent years there has been an increasingly urgent call to rethink the United States’ relation to

America writ large, as well as to the nation's understanding of itself [...] There is no doubt that much needs to be done. It has been widely noted, for example, that the lack of attention to intellectual work in Spanish often walks hand in hand with a denigration of the language" (Castillo 189-190). Thus, Díaz and his novel, *TBWLOOW*, are so important for the bilingual reader to appreciate his or her identity as a bicultural and bilingual American.

Junot Díaz's Languages

The reason Díaz is the one of the quintessential authors to show CS and bilingualism in his works is because he has managed to capture and write out his own experiences as a bicultural and bilingual Dominican-American. He was born in Santo Domingo but moved to New Jersey when he was seven and became a U.S. citizen (Amend 95). He did not always have the use of both languages, but he strived to perfect his Spanish because he understood that it was a part of his identity. Díaz's struggle with re-learning Spanish is one that many bilinguals face at some point in their lives. When asked during a talk he gave in 2007 at Google headquarters in Mountain View, California, about how he decides what language to write when he CS, Díaz recounts how he learned English as an immigrant child in the United States. He admits that it took him a longer time than his sibling to learn how to speak it, but he was able to pick up reading in English after a few months. Therefore, he claims, he feels he has a bizarre relationship with language that has been tricky for him, especially during his adolescence when he almost lost his Spanish because of a "that weird self-hate period where you hate everything that has to do with your larger culture" (Talks at Google), so he had to re-learn all of his Spanish once English was his dominant language.

His experience with not only learning a new language (English) but also hating his mother tongue and having to re-learn it at some point is a similar experience that many

bilinguals have had in the United States. The period of self-hate that distances bilinguals from their “other, non-American” culture is most of the time pushed by their surroundings outside of the home, and sometimes it is those in the home that push English-only. According to Mike Davis, “The ultimate betrayal of Latino children is the demagoguery that asserts that their main ‘handicap’ is speaking Spanish. Whereas the rest of the world recognizes that bilingualism is an invaluable comparative advantage in a globalized economy, Spanish skills . . . are treated as a learning disability” (139). However, some bilinguals do eventually have the epiphany that pushes them to embrace the two voices in their heads. Díaz provides the following example:

And the thing with me is not so much that, uh, I have like either a Spanish or an English voice. It’s more that I have those two voices running through my head at the same time, and sometimes I’m in my English self, my English-dominant self in a complete Spanish setting. And so people are speaking in Spanish, and I’m translating the Spanish for my English self. And sometimes I’m my Spanish-dominant self in an English setting, and I’m sitting there listening to everybody speaking English, and I’m just like, oh brother, and you know and I’m translating the English to my Spanish self, and the best part is when my languages actually coincide, you know because it’s just whatever frame of mind you’re in, and sometimes you encounter these worlds. And for me it’s like I feel both languages are like running simultaneously, and they’ll cross at weird moments, and when I’m writing, I tend to have both of them running through my head, and the one that bullies through the most, you know, because English is what I write in, but Spanish and English are what I think and speak in, so in my head Spanish will always, like, seize control. It’s like a really angry driver, like, passenger who, like, grabs the wheel. So anytime I’m writing in English and Spanish is like “Enough. Ya. Ba’ta. Tú eres un pendejo. Cállate la boca. Yo te voy a decir algo aquí.” [“Stop. That’s enough. You’re a dumbass. Shut your mouth. I’m going to tell you something here.”] Suddenly, it just, it comes in. (Talks at Google)

It is understandable that the meshing of two languages is an alien concept to monolinguals; however, this should not be the factor that forces bilinguals to forget their mother tongue,

whatever it may be. In fact, there are no factors that justify getting rid of Spanish or any other language that is not English in the United States or the world.

Junot Díaz's Writing

A common misconception is that Spanish is used in novels like *TBWLOOW* to confuse the reader. However, it is used not only for the sake of establishing the bicultural identity of certain characters and mapping the bilingual thought process of an author but also as an artistic tool that allows for the writer's creative license. A novel that codeswitches is not the only medium that uses a mixture of two or more languages; genres include "visual and performance art, bilingual fiction and poetry, translation, and literary and cultural criticism" (Gentzler, "Border Writing" 143). Therefore, along with capturing both Spanish and English as a way to write down how he thinks and speaks, Díaz's novel is "ultimate corroboration of this authentication process" (Montes-Alcalá 68), which in turn is making more people realize the importance of bilingual literature, allowing past bilingual works to surface and be re-evaluated as valid art.

According to Díaz, while writing *TBWLOOW*, he set out to break all the rules he teaches his students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to follow. In an interview on Open Book Club TV, he explains that through the extensive use of Spanish, he broke a rule. Díaz explains, "Don't kill your main character on the title. Don't have a title that nobody will ever remember. Don't have a book where 20% of the words of the book are really—[...] Don't have footnotes that are in a different language, and then don't have a book where 40% of the language is either in a different language or you've got to be a nerd to understand" (Junot Díaz). To this, another guest on the show, actor Joe Pantoliano, states, "The stuff—the little words underneath the big words. Is that what you call them, footnotes?"

[...] Well, that's what I thought it was. I didn't read the bottom part. It was too much—I only stuck with the bigger words. Did I miss anything?” (Junot Díaz). Although it got a good laugh on the show, this statement highlights the frustration many monolinguals must have felt when trying to decipher not only simple words in Spanish but full phrases and also sentences that alternate between Spanish and English. Pantoliano is not the only reader to have gotten stuck and possibly even given up on finishing *TBWLOOW*. Díaz certainly broke rules, but it is his CS that makes this novel so relatable to the bilingual and bicultural reader.

In her article “In the Contact Zone: Code-Switching Strategies by Latino/a Writers,” Lourdes Torres is able to compartmentalize the different strategies she noticed Latino/a writers use when impregnating their texts with Spanish. She argues, “Through strategies that range from very infrequent and transparent use of Spanish to prose that requires a bilingual reader, Latino/a authors negotiate their relationships to homelands, languages, and transnational identifications. The strategies they use lend themselves to multiple readings and differing levels of accessibility” (76). She notes that through the usage of the first two strategies, Latino writers make it clear that English is dominant, and Spanish words that are obvious to a monolingual are sprinkled in the text to basically Latinize it. These include “recognizable items like food (mango, taco, tortilla, etc.)” (77), and in other texts, a translation is automatically offered after a Spanish word or phrase that may not be so familiar to those who do not speak Spanish (78). In these cases, Spanish is used to make a text feel more ethnic or exotic.

CS in *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*

To an extent the first two strategies include words in Spanish that “are italicized and explained in English” (81). Díaz does include Torres’ first two strategies in his novel by

using familiar nouns, such as “tía” [“aunt”] (5), “abuelo” [“grandfather”] (5), “tío” [“uncle”] (24), “hija” [“daughter”] (79), “mango” (127), and “campo” [“field”; “land”; “camp”] (276); however, they are not italicized, which has become part of the norm, so although these terms in particular may not be too difficult for a monolingual to understand, either because they are familiar or can be translated easily, it may be easy to miss them completely since they are not “marked as foreign by the use of italics” (Casielles-Suárez 476). Díaz, though, does not use italics for a different reason. During an interview, Díaz explained why he chose to not mark his Spanish. He says,

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. (Ch’ien 204)

Therefore, what may seem as a nuisance for monolinguals, not having Spanish words italicized to guide the reader, is not a problem for bilinguals who can appreciate Spanish and English meshing together in this novel without being “marked” since bilinguals do not think in italics, meaning they do not tend to think about how often they are switching languages while they think or speak. Therefore, not italicizing Spanish terms sends a strong political message that is changing the way we view Spanish use in the United States. It is not a language that will simply disappear. It is strong; it is highly used, and there is no need to “other it,” as Díaz puts it, because it is not alien.

The second option, in which Latino writers automatically translate any Spanish terms they use, is an option that Torres claims does “not challenge the monolingual reader” (78).

This is not a featured tactic in *TBWLOOW*, especially because Díaz wants to break rules and get away from the “norm” of foreignizing Spanish. Nevertheless, there is an example of one “followed by an English language translation” (78), but it is still not the exact translation that clarifies the Spanish term for bilinguals. Díaz writes, “The casa [house] near empty—his abuela’s [grandmother’s] crib was spare” (281). As noted before, automatic translation is not offered very much in *TBWLOOW*, and this example has a translation, but it is neither necessary nor an actual translation. To begin with, even though it is not italicized, “casa” is not a word that is difficult to figure out for a monolingual.

“Casa” falls under one of the familiar nouns that Torres says is the simplest form of adding Spanish to English-dominant texts by Latinos. For example, the common Spanish saying “Mi casa es su casa” [My home is your home] is used by many who do not speak the language, and it is heard in pop culture. However, the translation Díaz offers for “casa” is “crib,” which has a different meaning. “Crib” is more commonly known as “a child’s bed” (“crib”), so it is not the ideal translation for someone who perhaps does not know what “casa” means because Díaz is not using the same register; he is using a slang term that means “house.” Utilizing a translation is what Torres calls catering to the monolingual English speaker while the bilingual reader “must endure redundant references” (78); however, the translation of “casa” offered in *TBWLOOW* requires the knowledge of a slang term, which even if not understood by the monolingual English reader, the bilingual reader has no problem understanding what it means, and it is still a slang term that can easily be understood since it is relevant and well known today.

Monolinguals English speakers can argue, though, that to get through *TBWLOOW* they only need a dictionary or websites, such as Google Translate, that could offer a

translation. Not only is this a tedious task, it is also one that would not help in many cases with this particular novel. Nevertheless, there are a few examples that can be translated easily and give no problems to monolinguals. When using online translation sites, monolinguals will either get a very good translation or enough examples to help figure out what something means. For example, if “tranquilízate, muchacha” (Díaz 154) is looked up online, one may get “slow down,” “calm down” or “ease up” for the Spanish term “tranquilízate” and “girl” or “young one” for “muchacha” (“tranquilízate, muchacha”). Monolinguals can figure out that the female character is being told to calm down, and it does not cause any issues with understanding. However, translations online do not always provide the best equivalence for a sentence or word.

For example, after one of the characters, Beli, is badly beaten for getting pregnant, she realizes the fetus was killed during the beating and yells, “Mamá, me mataron a mi hijo. Estoy sola, estoy sola” [“Mom, they killed my child. I’m alone, I’m alone”] (154). She is yelling this at the woman who raised her, called La Inca, and who Beli calls her mother; this woman also takes care of Beli after the beating. If this sentence is taken to a translation website such as Google Translate, the translation is not as accurate as it needs to be to understand what is happening. In the novel, Beli is badly beaten by goons working for her married boyfriend. They killed the fetus and almost killed Beli as well. However, the best translation offered by Google Translate is “Mom, I killed my son. I'm alone, I'm alone,” which does not accurately state what happened. Therefore, monolinguals readers would think that Beli kills her own unborn child instead of what she says, which is that her child was killed by the goons.

In fact, the novel does not offer very many examples of what Torres calls the first two strategies used by Latino authors when using Spanish. Other authors tend to use Spanish sparingly lest it may confuse and lose the monolingual reader (Torres 80), but this is not a concern for Díaz. Díaz's use of Spanish falls under what Torres calls "Radical bilingualism," which gratifies the bilingual, bicultural reader because it "is a completely bilingual text with sustained code-switching, which can only be successfully accessed by bilingual readers" (Torres 86; Casielles-Suárez 477). Díaz's reasoning for not having to cater to the monolingual reader is because he claims that "Spanish words can be considered part of American English just as many other non-English words have been appropriate and become part of the English language" (Ch'ien 204). During an interview, Díaz stated, "What does a loan word become and English word? [...] I decided I don't need a hundred years for the Oxford English Dictionary to tell me that it's okay to adopt this or that word as a part of our normal vocabulary [...] We should be pushing the dates on words" (qtd. in Ch'ien 204). This is exactly what is conveyed in *TBWLOOW*. There are so many more specific terms, CS phrases, and straight Spanish sentences that would drive a monolingual mad, but that is not the intent. It is meant to remind readers of the many ways we can play with languages.

According to Casielles-Suárez, Díaz is doing more than using radical bilingualism. She claims that he "goes beyond gratifying the bilingual reader and approaches radical bilingualism, although in a different way, which I call 'radical hybridism'" (477). In other words, Casielles-Suárez argues that Díaz not only incorporates copious amounts of Spanish terms and codeswitches often "at phrase boundaries" (477), which could simply be skipped by a monolingual, but he also creates hybrid phrases caused by the quantity of Spanish used, and these phrases show how "Spanish to become part of English" (477), which is what he set

out to do in the first place. This allows for what Casielles-Suárez calls an “uncushioned” Spanish, which does not use either “the lexicon of most anglophones [sic]” or italics or translation.

One phrase that can be used as an example is “the family’s resident méteselo [stick it in her] expert” (Díaz 24). Here, Yuniór is explaining that Oscar’s family is trying to teach Oscar how to talk to girls. According to Yuniór, “Everybody noticed his [Oscar’s] lack of game and because they were Dominican everybody talked about it” (24). Oscar’s uncle steps into the conversation and gives Oscar advice. Díaz writes, “‘Listen, palomo: you have to grab a muchacha, y metéselo. That will take care of everything. Start with a fea. Coje that fea y méteselo!’ Tío Rudolfo had four kids with three different women so the nigger was without doubt the family’s resident méteselo expert” [“Listen, chump: you have to grab a girl and stick it in her. That will take care of everything. Start with an ugly one. Fuck that ugly one and stick it in her!’ Tío Rudolfo had four kids with three different women so the nigger was without doubt the family’s resident stick-it-in-her expert”] (24).

Díaz’s entire quote is very difficult and seems impossible for monolinguals to translate word for word or even on a translation website. Words like “fea” [“ugly”], “coje” [“fuck”], and even “palomo” [“chump” in Dominican slang] can be translated, but “coje” and “palomo” have so many translations that it would be hard to figure out which ones to use as a monolingual English speaker. However, it is not impossible. Through research and by consulting other Dominican-Americans or Spanish speakers, monolinguals can hunt down a good translation and feel satisfied when their work pays off, and they understand the meaning or context. It is interesting to see how the phrase that Casielles-Suárez would call radical hybridism shows how Spanish certainly becomes a part of English. However, what

may be the most confusing aspect here for a monolingual is the grammar in both “metéselo” and “méteselo,” especially because they both mean “stick it in her” but in different grammatical forms.

Conclusion

As previously stated in this thesis, the bilingual reader has been consistently put aside or labeled as inconsequential. Works that touch on bilingualism typically focus on being English dominant so that monolinguals do not get lost while reading and translating. This has proven to be an annoyance for the bilingual, bicultural readership that deserves to read works that embrace their language and culture, which is not only American but also Spanish. Montes-Alcalá writes, “The ultimate corroboration of this authentication process can be attested in the fact that [...] Díaz received the 2008 Pulitzer Prize for *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*” (68). This novel is truly the epitome of CS and bilingual texts, and it is ideal for the bilingual readers who translates simultaneously throughout his or her life and needs this type of literature to both capture the true mixed American identity and salvage the historical roots that Spanish has in the United States.

CHAPTER IV

CODESWITCHING IN GIANNINA BRASCHI'S *YO-YO BOING!*

McCarthy utilizes CS in *The Border Trilogy* to highlight the realities of the US-Mexico border culture, a culture thought to be torn in half by what Anzaldúa calls “*una herida abierta*” [“an open wound”] (3), the physical existence of a border along the Rio Grande; however, what McCarthy essentially showcases is how much people on the border rely on CS to communicate with each other, which proves how much the physical border does nothing to sever the languages. Moreover, in *TBWLOOW*, Díaz’s use of CS highlights “a hybrid street register” (Stavans 557) in contemporary literature, and he cements the notion that there is an ongoing relationship between Spanish and English that is very difficult to dissolve. About reconnecting with the Spanish language as an adult who spent his early education immersed in English, Diaz states, “[R]eturning to a language is like returning to an old relationship—it often requires more courage than striking up a new one” (Cresci), and that is happening more now in American literature: more authors are returning to using Spanish or CS to communicate in a form they deem natural. As the ultimate novel to demonstrate CS, Giannina Braschi’s *Yo-Yo Boing!* (*YYB!*) is labeled the first Spanglish novel, and in it Braschi codeswitches in a stream-of-consciousness style that verifies how much the American literary canon has changed in recent years.

Giannina Braschi

Before having attended graduate school, Braschi was a “tennis champion, singer, and fashion model” (“About Giannina”). She was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, but in the 1970s, she settled in New York and went to the State University of New York, where she “obtained a PhD in Hispanic Literature” (Montes-Alcalá 73), when she discovered writing.

Her collected poems have been translated into English; however, she is said to write in three languages: “Spanish, Spanglish, and English—to express the enculturation process of millions of Hispanic immigrants in the U.S.” (“About Giannina”). Nevertheless, she is better known for the extensive use of CS in *YYB!*, which is “a novel written in a sort of stream of consciousness style quite different from the expected conventions of fiction” (Montes-Alcalá 73) and one that encapsulates many elements, such as poetry, memoir, drama, essay, and manifesto.

Because of her “aggressive” CS, there are readers who believe this novel to be frustrating since it can “provoke a kind of motion sickness in her readers, a disturbance in our perception of reality” (Castillo 182, 186). However, *YYB!*, without a doubt, cements the notion that Spanish is being accepted in the U.S. as part of American literature. *YYB!* not only presents the doubleness in bilingual identity and voice but also demonstrates how CS is used as an option to communicate when bilinguals are “[u]nsatisfied with a single tongue” (Castillo 157) and wish to express themselves with everything they know. Moreover, Ilán Stavans argues that since “a language cannot be legislated[,] it is the freest, most democratic form of expression of the human spirit. And so, every attack against it serves as a stimulus, for nothing is more inviting than that which is forbidden” (556), and this is exactly what Braschi tries to convey in her work. She takes readers into “the world of a bilingual academic who addresses the joy and pain of a writer's life and the life of an academic” (Torres 89), but her focus is language.

CS and Spanglish

The novel is a combination of genres, as previously noted, that sets the English and Spanish languages as centerpiece and does not apologize for any playfulness between the

two. However, before seeing how Braschi utilizes CS in *YYB!*, it is important to explain why it is called a Spanglish novel specifically and not a literary piece with CS. In an article entitled “Tickling the Tongue” published over fifteen years ago, Stavans claims that Spanglish is more than a type of CS; it is a “fresh tongue, with a syntax which specialists like Ana Celia Zentella, responsible for *Growing Up Bilingual*, are now beginning to sort out” (556). However, the term is much older than that and had a more negative connotation for many. For example, José L. Torres-Padilla explains the following about Spanglish:

The most salient manifestation of this hybridity is the intermingling of Spanish and English, often referred to as “Spanglish,” the translated version of “Espanglish,” a disparaging term introduced and popularized by an island Puerto Rican writer Salvador Tio to label what he saw as the alarming encroachment of English into the Puerto Rican Spanish vernacular. Tio saw Spanglish as a threat to national cultural development, claiming that such abuse of language could not lead to dear thinking and certainly could not create a suitable literature. Frances Aparicio’s essay, “La Vida es un Spanglish Disparatero,” [“Life is a Nonsensical Spanglish”] counters Tio’s and other similar commentary by analyzing the poetics of Nuyorican poets and persuasively arguing that only such a hybrid writing could faithfully represent the existing popular culture and social conditions of *puertorriqueños* [*Puerto Ricans*] en El Barrio [The Neighborhood]. Aparicio sees this “poetics of bilingualism” as a form of counterhegemonic cultural production, a response to Anglo American political and cultural dominance. (291)

Because it was not seen as a positive change in language at the time and not all understand the characteristics of Spanglish, negativity toward Spanglish and CS continues to linger today. However, even during the time it was first used, writers like Aparicio have found ways to counter the negativity through writing in Spanglish. Stavans also states that he is not shocked that Spanglish in the U.S. often brews an “atmosphere of anxiety and even xenophobia in both Hispanic and Anglo enclaves” (556). Therefore, it is not surprising either

that Braschi's first major work in Spanish is sometimes viewed as frustrating and overall disturbing.

On the other hand, the game Braschi plays with both languages celebrates her refusal to "decide between performing in English and revelling [sic] in Spanish" (Sommer and Vega-Merino 11), which brings a refreshing uniqueness to CS throughout the story which is the best example of a "contact zone where English and Spanish confront each other and comfortably or uncomfortably coexist" (Torres 92). The novel is divided into three main sections: "Close-Up," "Blow-Up," and "Black-Out," and the first two are written completely in Spanish. Lourdes Torres, Professor of Latin American and Latino Studies at DePaul University, describes the novel's bilingual content as being "sandwiched between two Spanish language chapters" (87), which Torres finds befitting since "the majority of Braschi's previous publications were exclusively in Spanish. Her publishing history and these monolingual sections suggest that Braschi is a Spanish-dominant speaker who is experimenting with a new form" (87). It is also possible that the novel both begins and ends with complete sections "written entirely in stream of consciousness and in Spanish" (Castillo 178) to show how important the language was to America not only at the time, during the late 1990s and earlier in history, but also today and the important role it will play in the future, which is why she ends the novel with the all-Spanish "Black-Out" section.

CS in *Yo-Yo Boing!*

However, it is the middle section, "Blow-Up," where the author reveals her "postmodern song of the self" (174) by blowing up both languages and weaving them back together through CS. For example, Braschi begins using both intersentential and

intrasentential CS from the very beginning of “Blow-Up.” In the first example of dialogue, Braschi writes the following:

Abrela tú.
 ¿Por qué yo? Tú tienes las keys. Yo te las entregué a ti. Además, I left mine adentro.
 ¿Por qué las dejaste adentro?
 Porque I knew you had yours.
 ¿Por qué dependes de mí?
 Just open it, and make it fast. Y lo peor de todo es cuando te levantas por las mañanas y te vas de la casa y dejas puerta abierta. (35)

[You open it.
 Why me? You have the keys. I gave them to you. Besides, I left mine inside.
 Why did you leave them inside?
 Because I knew you had yours.
 Why do you depend on me?
 Just open it, and make it fast. And the worst is when you get up in the morning and leave the door open on your way out.]

To reiterate, intersentential CS occurs at the clause or sentence level (Myers-Scotton and Jake 245). In this example, the sentences “Just open it, and make it fast. Y lo peor de todo es cuando te levantas por las mañanas y te vas de la casa y dejas puerta abierta” show a clear switch from English to Spanish after a complete sentence is stated in English. Furthermore, this same section also includes intrasentential CS, which is CS inside the sentence. For example, “Tú tienes las keys,” “Además, I left mine adentro,” and “Porque I knew you had yours” all illustrate CS. In the first sentence, the noun “keys” includes the feminine plural definite article “las” [“the”] before it, and this is interesting because in Spanish, the term “llaves” [“keys”] is a feminine plural noun. This means that although there is a switch to the English term “keys,” Braschi’s character knew that the Spanish term for “keys” was feminine and used “las” to complete the noun phrase. The other switches into Spanish include “además” [“besides”], which is an adverb, “adentro” [“inside”], which is a preposition, and

“porque” [“because”], which is a conjunction. These are modifiers and connectors that Braschi also utilizes to codeswitch.

Braschi continues using not only intrasentential CS, which is more commonly studied by scholars, as stated earlier in the introduction, but intersentential CS simultaneously. In a conversation between the protagonist, her secret ex-lover (Jabalí), and his friends, Jabalí’s friends want the protagonist to have a drink with them, but she feels Jabalí does not want her to go. The following codeswitched dialogue occurs:

¿Por qué la quieres esconder?
 Sí, qué de malo tiene tener una pollita bella. Relax, no eres el único.
 I don't socialize with students.
 Esas son las mejores. Son fáciles de seducir. Listen, it's nothing to be ashamed of.
 I'm not ashamed of anything. Sí, vente—dijo entonces Jabalí irguiéndose como un marajá de la India, y sonriéndose, pinching my other elbow to the rhythm of: ya me lo pa-ga-rás. (Braschi 65)

[Why do you want to hide her?
 Yes, there is nothing wrong with having a pretty chick. Relax, you aren't the only one.
 I don't socialize with students.
 Those are the best. They're easy to seduce. Listen, it's nothing to be ashamed of.
 I'm not ashamed of anything. Yes, come—said Jabalí, smiling and straightening like an Indian maharaja, pinching my other elbow to the rhythm of: you will pay. For. This.]

With the exception of the English term “Relax” being used as an interjection and the Spanish phrase “ya me lo pa-ga-rás,” which demonstrates intrasentential CS, the rest of the example alternates Spanish and English in an intersentential manner. This offers an opportunity to study intersentential CS further and provide more examples for the ongoing debate of whether or not either form demonstrates authentic CS in ordinary speech.

The dialogue in the novel continues both patterns of CS; however, since Braschi plays with registers, phonetic spelling, and onomatopoeia along with two complete sections in Spanish, it takes CS to a new level. According to Torres-Padilla, “Unlike the Nuyorican poets’ use of Spanish and English to construct an ideologically oppositional text, Giannina Braschi’s Pulitzer-nominated novel, *Yo-Yo Boing!*, intentionally merges various registers in the two languages but not in any way that could be typified as resistant or oppositional” (293). The idea, Torres-Padilla continues, is to for the Puerto Rican poet to feel free to explore and experiment with the two languages rather than sticking to limited choices that represent traditional CS.

For example, switching to Spanish phonetic spelling is demonstrated through broken English. Braschi writes,

Rocka my baby
On the tri tad
when the come baby
cris o win blow (108)

[Rocka my baby
On the treetop
when the come baby
cradle wind blows]

“Tri tad” does not exist in either language; however, it is the word “treetop” in broken English since “tree” is phonetically spelled using Spanish alphabet sounds, and “tad” is meant to sound like “top.” Likewise, “cris o” is meant to be “cradle, and “win blow” is the closes to the English “wind blows.” In addition, Braschi uses bilingual onomatopoeia as part of her CS (Torres-Padilla 296). For example, Braschi provides both Spanish and English onomatopoeic words for the sound a cow makes. In Spanish, she spells it as “Muuuuuu,” and

in English, she spells out “moooooooooo” (109). In another example, Braschi writes the following:

Metí una manguera en mi boca—and gulp, gulp, sploosh—ahogado en mi garganta—glup—came a glob, a frog—a tender tadpole which I swallowed whole. I dropped the hose, realizing it was scum water my father was siphoning from the pool. A queasiness overcame me. Saltó el guzarapo, glup, me tragué el renacuajo, y seguí andando como un sapo. (97)

[I put a hose in my mouth—and gulp, gulp, sploosh—drowned in my throat—gulp—came a glob, a frog—a tender tadpole which I swallowed whole. I dropped the hose, realizing it was scum water my father was siphoning from the pool. A queasiness overcame me. The tadpole leaped, gulp, I guzzled it, and I hopped away like a toad.]

There is musicality to the first sentence with “gulp, gulp, sploosh [...] glup—came a glob, a frog,” and it is interesting to note that Braschi includes both bilingual onomatopoeic terms for swallowing large amounts of water: “gulp” in English and “glup” in Spanish. This enhances the musicality between the two spellings and sounds and shows an elevated form of language play.

It is this experimentation and play with language that forces a few scholars to argue that her CS is inauthentic. For example, Yvette Bürki argues that CS authenticity can never be attained in writing, and Bürki also claims that in written communication, nothing spoken can ever be found in an authentic state because there are parameters that define a written record and said parameters cannot be found in the spoken language (81). However, Torres-Padilla highlights, “Braschi has not created a text that through hybridity produces ambivalence, but rather she has consciously created a hybrid text to sustain a point about ambivalence” (297). In other words, the fluctuation in CS caused by having to choose between the languages to convey a message or didactic point is the main idea of literature. It

is in her language fluidity that Braschi demonstrates the art in literature, and *YYB!*, along with other CS texts, are very much American literature.

In the novel, Braschi, as the protagonist, is able to explain the importance of CS and language fluidity. Braschi writes:

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. [sic] 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 language. Saludo al nuevo siglo, el siglo del nuevo lenguaje de América y le digo adiós a la retórica separatista y a los atavismos. (142)

[If I respected languages like you do, I wouldn't write at all. The Berlin Wall was torn down. Why can't I do the same. [sic]. Since the tower of Babel, languages have always been a way to divorcing us from the rest of humanity. 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 Petrarch, and Boccaccio and I even feel like Garcilaso forging a new language. I greet the new century, the century of the new language of America, and I bid farewell to separatist rhetoric and atavisms.]

Braschi makes it clear that she is aware of what she is doing with CS. According to Castillo, her goal is to go “beyond a reading of the fragmented agent in a familiar epistemological structure into an organization of knowledge that is itself fluid, situated, relational” (174).

Braschi aims to tear down old structures and archaic ideas about language to unify humanity.

Conclusion

Castillo views *YYB!* as an invitation for monolingual audiences to experience the possibilities that exist when languages are brought together to play (170), and Lourdes Torres

agrees. Torres does not believe these types of texts completely exclude monolinguals, and states that “bilingual writing is very much a part of the US literary experience” (90). What is certain is change, as noted at the beginning of this thesis, and Braschi understands that languages evolve, especially since this is what she sets out to prove with her writing. Moreover, Norma Mendoza-Denton even speculates reading about Latino experiences in various parts of the globe. Mendoza-Denton states, “Latino emigration is a worldwide phenomenon, and yet we know comparatively little about and do not incorporate into our analyses the differential experiences of Latinos in Canada, Europe, Africa, or Asia” (389). This is why it is crucial for CS texts to be incorporated into the American literary canon. Although this novel was published nearly twenty years ago, it is an important part of American literature, and it is a novel that will continue to push for the acceptance of CS as a natural viable form of communication.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Overall, the fact that nothing about language is static or fixed proves how much languages need to be respected and admired for the vast metamorphosis that they have undergone throughout centuries and that they are still subject to today. Here in the United States, it is a question of accepting that the New World did not flourish with only English and that Spanish is just as much a part of this country's history. Through my research, I have understood that the highly debated issues of CS and bilingualism go beyond the narrow concern that most Americans feel about the English language potentially declining or even disappearing simply because Spanish is vastly used in colloquial speech, politics, and literature. It is important to remember how much change is inevitable in every sense, and as humanity grows and evolves, languages do not stay behind. Languages will always be a form to communicate, and as they come in contact with each other, the potential for them to change as they cause influence will always exist.

Understanding and Accepting Change

In other words, history is crucial to understanding how the United States came to be, and forgetting that is part of why intolerance toward race and language continue today. This is not something that helps the nation grow; it stunts it. Therefore, embracing the fact that multiple languages, especially Spanish, are a part of this nation is a step toward cultural understanding and acceptance. There will always be those who oppose having any language other than English appear in a text, let alone let it be called an American text. In fact, some still cling to belief that communicating in Spanish is a disadvantage, and it is probable that particular false belief will always exist. However, through CS in American texts, attitudes

toward the use of Spanish have become more positive and with more authors using both languages, there can be more acceptance of written CS texts.

McCarthy, Díaz, and Braschi

Once again, the point of including CS is not entirely to push monolinguals away. Although some audiences will feel excluded, as previously mentioned, it is readers who have to search for meaning in Spanish that have a more enriching experience. One of the American authors to understand the importance of CS is Cormac McCarthy. McCarthy's CS not only pulls the bilingual reader in, but it also creates more opportunities for linguistic experimentation and wordplay. Although there are arguments about his grammatical use of Spanish in his novels, the point to grasp is that he understands the importance and significance of the existence and use of Spanish in the United States no matter how "incorrect" his usage may be. McCarthy successfully highlights the importance Spanish as not just a language on the border but a language that helped shape America.

Junot Díaz's work attests to that, and he is an author who has helped put bilingual texts and CS on the map. In his interviews, Díaz has talked about how he writes in the way that he speaks and thinks, and there are many bilinguals who do the same. In turn, the bilingual reader feels a deeper connection to his or her past and culture by reading Díaz's radical bilingualism and CS which is what makes *TBWLOOW* so much a part of American literature. Some may still think that CS is used only on the border; however, writing that celebrates CS and bilingualism does not always have to stick to that specific area. Thanks to more bilingual writers, such as Junot Díaz and Giannina Braschi, CS in writing is experienced beyond the U.S.-Mexican border. The marriage of Spanish and English is everywhere in America, and it has been for centuries.

One of the best examples of a CS text to this day is Braschi's *YYB!*. Braschi takes the relationship between English and Spanish to an entire new level since her stream of consciousness does what is most important in all literature: her words document her experience with bilingualism and being an American who can think in different languages. That is an experience that many Americans have, especially those who come from immigrant backgrounds. One of the differences in her work is that Braschi goes beyond CS and includes Spanglish as well. Her work was published in 1998, the same year McCarthy published *COTP*, which was the third novel in the Border Trilogy to incorporate Spanish in the dialogue; however, it is Braschi's *YYB!* that shows the extent to which Spanish can be incorporated into an American text.

These authors have challenged both linguistic and literary norms, and their success has made publishers keen to the fact that in nearly two decades, these novels have served as prime examples of CS outside the Chicano/a Movement. McCarthy's Border Trilogy proved that biculturalism and bilingualism could be used by anyone living the experience on the border, while Díaz and Braschi's works have shown geographically that CS is popular in regions other than the border.

CS Impact Today and Future Studies

Once thing is certain: CS will not disappear, and monolinguals should not fear or lament the use of it in different writings. Spanish has a deep-rooted relationship with this country just as English does, and it is important to note that although there are various ways to codeswitch with multiple levels of Spanish, writers such as McCarty, Díaz, and Braschi are aware of their audiences and accommodate them all. CS in English and Spanish has helped bilinguals appreciate their identity, and writers who continue to codeswitch in their

texts are proving that it is not only a natural way to communicate and connect with readers of various backgrounds through prose, but also it is way to highlight the spectrum of language in our changing society.

I began this thesis reminding readers that change will always occur in life; language cannot escape this reality. There are bound to be more changes as the years pass. It is well known that the Hispanic and Latino population in the United States will no longer be a minority in the next few decades, and as a result, CS will continue to grow as part of the American culture. Evidently, changes in the literary world happen as well, especially as audiences evolve, and it is time to study how much CS has become a part of American literature. With CS becoming more popular, it will be fascinating to see how many more experiences will be shared through fiction written in both English and Spanish. Therefore, there should be more studies regarding CS itself, its impact in texts, and the attitudes toward it, and since it is a part of American prose, it needs to be welcomed into the classroom alongside the classics that helped shape the United States.

NOTE

1. Unless otherwise indicated, translations provided in brackets are those of the author.

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