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Spanglish



THE MAKING OF
A NEW AMERICAN LANGUAGE

Ilan Stavans



An Imprint of HarperCollins Publishers

Introduction

LA JERGA LOCA

¿Cómo empezó everything? How did I stumble upon it? Walking the streets of El Barrio in New York City, at least initially. Wandering around, as the Mexican expression puts it, *con la oreja al vuelo*, with ears wide open. Later on, of course, my appreciation for Spanglish evolved dramatically as I traveled around los Unaited Esteits. But at the beginning was New York. It always is, isn't it?

I had arrived in Manhattan in the mid-eighties. My first one-room apartment, which I shared with three roommates, was on Broadway and 122nd Street. The area was bustling with color: immigrants from the Americas, especially from the Dominican Republic, Mexico, El Salvador, and Colombia, intermingling with students from Columbia University, Barnard and Teacher's College, and with future ministers and rabbis from Union Theological Seminary and The Jewish Theological Seminary. The ethnic juxtaposition was exhilarating indeed. But sight wasn't everything. Sound was equally important. Color and noise went together, as I quickly learned.

I was enthralled by the clashing voices I encountered on a regular walk in the Upper West Side: English, Spanish, Yiddish, Hebrew . . . Those voices often changed as one oscillated to different areas of the city: Arabic, French, Polish, Russian, Swahili and scores of other tongues were added to the mix. What kind of symphony was I immersed in? Was this the sound of the entire universe or only of my neighborhood?

There was a newspaper stand on the corner of 110th and Broadway, next to a bagel bakery and a Korean grocery store. I regularly made my shopping in those blocks, so I regularly stopped to browse. Newspapers and magazines in English predominated in it, and Chinese and Israeli periodicals were also for sale. But the owner displayed the Spanish-language items with emphasis: *El Diario/La Prensa*, *Noticias del Mundo*, *Diario de las Américas*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Imagen* . . . As a Mexican native, I often bought one of them in the morning, "just to keep up with what's up," as I would tell my friends. But to keep up with these publications was also to invite your tongue for a bumpy ride. The grammar and syntax used in them was never fully "normal," e.g., it replicated, often unconsciously, English-language patterns. It was obvious that its authors and editors were americanos with a loose connection to la lengua de Borges. "Están contaminados . . .," a teacher of mine in the Department of Spanish at Columbia would tell me. "Pobrecitos . . . They've lost all sense of verbal propriety."

Or had they?

My favorite section to read in *El Diario/La Prensa*, already then the fastest-growing daily in New York, where I eventually was hired to be a columnist, was the hilarious classified section. "Conviértase en inversor del Citibank," claimed an ad. Another one would state: "Para casos de divorcio y child support, llame a su advocate personal al (888) 745-1515." And: "¡¡¡Alerta!!! Carpinteros y window professionals. Deben tener 10 años de experiencia y traer tools." Or, "Estación de TV local está buscando un editor de línea creativo. Debe tener conocimiento del 'Grass Valley Group VPE Series 151'. En The Bronx. Venga en per-

sona: (718) 601-0962." One morning I came across one that announced pompously: "Hoy más que nunca, tiempo is money." And I stumbled upon another that read: "Apartments are selling like pan caliente and apartments de verdad."

Today I use the term *hilarious* in a reverent fashion. Over the years my admiration for Spanglish has grown exponentially, even though I'm perfectly conscious of its social and economic consequences. Only 14 percent of Latino students in the country graduate from college. The majority complain that the cultural obstacles along the way are innumerable: the closely knit family dynamic, the need to help support their family, the refusal to move out from home in order to go to school . . . And language, naturally: for many of them proficiency in the English language is too high a barrier to overcome. English is the door to the American Dream. Not until one masters el inglés are the fruits of that dream attainable.



Spanglish is often described as the trap, la trampa Hispanics fall into on the road to assimilation—el obstáculo en el camino. Alas, the growing lower class uses it, thus procrastinating the possibility of un futuro mejor, a better future. Still, I've learned to admire Spanglish over time. Yes, it is the tongue of the uneducated. Yes, it's a hodgepodge . . . But its creativity astonished me. In many ways, I see in it the beauties and achievements of jazz, a musical style that sprung up among African-Americans as a result of improvisation and lack of education. Eventually, though, it became a major force in America, a state of mind breaching out of the ghetto into the middle class and beyond. Will Spanglish follow a similar route?

Back then, as my early immigrant days unfolded, it was easier to denigrate it. Asked by a reporter in 1985 for his opinion on el espanglés, one of the other ways used to refer to the linguistic juxtaposition of

south and north—some other categories are *casteyanqui*, *inglañol*, *argot sajón*, *español bastardo*, *papiamento gringo*, and *caló pachuco*—Octavio Paz, the Mexican author of *The Labyrinth of Solitude* (1950) and a recipient of the Nobel Prize for Literature, is said to have responded with a paradox: “ni es bueno ni es malo, sino abominable”—it is neither good nor bad but abominable. This wasn’t an exceptional view: Paz was one of scores of intellectuals with a distaste for the bastard jargon, which, in his eyes, didn’t have gravitas. Una lengua bastarda: illegitimate, even wrongful.

The common perception was that Spanglish was sheer verbal chaos—*el habla de los bárbaros*. As I browsed through the pages of Spanish-language periodicals, as I watched TV and listened to radio stations en español, this approach increasingly made me uncomfortable. There was something, *un yo no sé qué*, that was simply exquisite . . . Of course, it took me no time to recognize that standard English was the lingua franca of the middle and upper classes, but its domain was in question in the lower strata of the population. In that segment, I wasn’t able to recognize the English I expected to hear: monolithic, homogenous, single-minded. Instead, I constantly awakened to a polyphonic reality.

Depending on the individual age, ethnicity, and educational background, a vast number of dispossessed *nuyorquinos* spoke a myriad of tongues, a sum of parts impossible to define. Indeed, the metropolis seemed to me a veritable Tower of Babel. And among Hispanics—the rubric *Latino* was only then emerging—this hullabaloo, this mishmash was all the more intense.

Mishmash is a Hebrew term that means fusion. In and of itself, the word Spanglish is that mixture: a collage, part Spanish, part English. I’m an etymological freak, always on the lookout for a lexicographic definition. I’ve sought for the inclusion and explanation of the word *Spanglish* in dictionaries.

Doctor Samuel Johnson, an idol of mine, once said that “dictionaries are like watches: the worst is better than none, and the best cannot

be expected to go quite true.” Perhaps that is the reason why so many ignore so common a verbal phenomenon: the best lexicon is never good enough, or the worst will build a fence around it not to let undignified terms irrupt on its pages. For shouldn’t a lexicon, seeking to categorize the rowdy and infinite Spanglish exchanges, “to go as true as it might,” in Johnson’s mindset, begin by giving the meaning of the word?

Again, think of *el jazz*. In the seventies, Herbie Hancock offered a brilliant analogy: “It is something very hard to define,” he said, “but very easy to recognize.” Spanglish, I’m convinced, fits the same bill: it’s not that it is impossible to define, but that people simply refuse to do it. And yet, nobody has the slightest doubt that it has arrived, *que ya llegó* . . . It is also a common vehicle of communication in places like Miami, Los Angeles, San Antonio, Houston, Albuquerque, Phoenix, Denver, and Tallahassee, as well as in countless rural areas, wherever the 35.3 million documented Latinos—this is the official number issued by the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau, which in 2003 jumped to 38.8 million, *de facto* making Hispanics the largest minority north of the Rio Grande—find themselves.

And, *atención*, Spanglish isn’t only a phenomenon that takes place en los *Unaited Esteits*: in some shape or form, with English as a merciless global force, it is spoken—and broken: *no es solamente hablado sino quebrado*—all across the Hispanic world, from Buenos Aires to Bogotá, from Barcelona to Santo Domingo.

Beware: *Se habla el espanglés* everywhere these days!



To contradict Paz—and perhaps to correct him—let me attempt my own definition of Spanglish, once as succinct and encompassing as possible: “**Spanglish**, n. The verbal encounter between Anglo and Hispano civilizations.”

As is always the case with these types of dictionary “explications,” it

already makes me unhappy. For one thing, I was tempted to write *clash* instead of *encounter*, and *language* instead of *civilization*. But then again, by doing so I would have reduced Spanglish to a purely linguistic phenomenon, which it isn't. Para nada . . .

At any rate, one thing is to get exposed to Spanish in the streets of New York, another altogether different is to use it effortlessly. As an immigrant, my road to full participation in American life was—as it has been and continues to be for any immigrant, regardless the origin—through English. I had come with primitive skills in Shakespeare's tongue, so during almost my entire first decade this side of the Rio Grande, my sole objective was to master it de la mejor manera posible, to the best of my capacity. Spanish was the language of the past for me, English the language of my future. It was only when I was already comfortable in both Spanish and English (as comfortable as one is ever likely to be) that I suddenly detected the possibilities of Spanglish.

This sequence of events, no doubt, has enlarged my overall appreciation of it. I date my full-grown descubrimiento in the early nineties. By then I had already left Manhattan and was living in a small New England town, where I taught at a small liberal arts college. My responsibilities included courses on colonial and present-day Latin America, and, on occasion, also on Hispanic culture in Anglolandia. The latter courses were invariably more challenging for me to teach. Students didn't register for them with the mere hope of learning about a specific period in history. Instead, their objective was psychological; they were eager to turn the classroom into a laboratory of identity.

They wanted to ask out loud: *Quiénes somos?* What makes us unique? And why are we here? Are we members of a single minority—the Latinos—or are we instead peoples of different ethnic, class, religious, and national backgrounds? In the isolated milieu of Amherst, Massachusetts, the language my Latino students used was recognizable to me. But I didn't pay much notice until Lisa Martínez showed

up. (The name is fictitious and so are some of her circumstances.) Or better, until she was a punto de desvanecerse, about to disappear.

Originally from Istlos (e.g., East Los Angeles), Lisa, a junior, had taken a number of classes with me: on popular culture—comic strips, TV soaps, thrillers, music . . .—on autobiography, and on Argentine letters. We had established a solid relationship. Her odyssey was remarkable: Lisa had grown up in the inner city; she had been an active gang member and had seen a number of relatives and friends shot or imprisoned—vapuleados por el sistema; and she was initiated into Catholic life by an activist priest. Her tenure in Amherst, Massachusetts, was, hence, a radical change of scene for Lisa.

During her freshman year, Lisa felt disoriented, nostalgic for la casa, anxious to finish and return home. She also expressed her ambivalence at being an affirmative action student, enticed to the place by a full fellowship, but often looked at suspiciously by her Anglo counterparts because of her skin color, su pigmentación mestiza and her ethnic idiosyncrasy. Still, in her third year of college she appeared to have found inner and outer balance.

However, in recent times, whenever we stumbled across one another in the hallway, Lisa looked at peace with herself. It was somewhat surprising, therefore, that one frigid February, Lisa came to my office to say adiós.

"Ya me voy, profe . . .," she announced.

I wasn't completely sure I understood her statement, so I asked Lisa where she was going. She answered that she was going back to her hood, to Califas, where people "no son tan fregados. They are más calientes, with a little bit of dignidad." Lisa was tired of the WASPy culture of the small liberal arts college she was invited to attend with an ethnic scholarship.

"Aquí no soy más que un prieto, profe. They want me pa'las quotas, so the place might say 'Chicanos are also part of our diverse student

population.' Pero pa'qué, profe? I don't feel bien. I'm just a strange animal brought in a cage to be displayed pa'que los gringos no sientan culpa."

I begged her to be patient.

She was almost finished with her education, I said. Estaba casi de salida . . . One and a half more years—is that too much? But she wouldn't listen. Our entire tête-à-tête took approximately five minutes.

I never succeeded in changing Lisa's mind, nunca la convencí, and to this day I regret it. Somehow, seeing her walk toward the podium during Commencement to get her Bachelor's diploma would have been a better conclusion to the New England chapter of her journey.

In retrospect, Lisa's goodbye, su partida, was quite painful. Me rompió el corazón. I felt genuine affection for her. But the scene that took place between us in my office was more than about dropping out from college—at least for me. For, as I recall the occasion, the moment I opened my mouth, I realized every one of the words I uttered felt artificial, anomalous. I had wanted to tell Lisa that the separation from home is painful for everyone, that for some, like her, the separation isn't only emotional but also geographical and cultural. I told her it was important to keep in mind that H*O*M*E—and I pronounced the word patiently, comfortably, sweetly—acquires a different value, it becomes symbolic, the moment one leaves it behind. Or doesn't it? Even if she went back, her status as her mother's daughter would be different. And . . .

Pero no había vuelta de hoja.

To my consternation, though, I couldn't express myself. The more I tried to articulate my words, first in Spanish, then in English, the more dissatisfied I became. And why? Because I was overwhelmed with envy. To announce her sudden farewell, Lisa wasn't using the traditional college language a pupil is expected to articulate in the professor's designated space. Instead, judging by her vocabulary and syntax, she had already departed New England for Los Angeles: she was inhabiting the

language of her turf, su propia habla, not the language of the alien environment where she found herself at present.

And what was expected of me: to ask her, in that troublesome situation, to switch to a more proper lengua?

That, no doubt, would have been counterproductive. What I desperately needed was for her to feel cómoda.

But what actually happened to me is that, instead of wanting her to "talk like me," my secret desire was the other way around: I wanted to use her own lingo.

Yes, en Spanglish—Lisa and I began to communicate in the jargon I had frequently heard, and had been enthralled by, en las calles de Nuyol.

Was I happy with my switch?

To my chagrin, I was . . . And what did I do? Nothing, absolutamente nada. I just let myself be taken by the verbal cadence of the conversation. Where is it written that faculty should elevate itself intellectually far beyond the reach of the students? Where does it say that professors cannot talk slang too? No sooner did I switch to Spanglish, though, that I realized that, as a teacher, I had crossed a dangerous line—una línea peligrosa.

My immediate, mechanical reaction was in tune with the milieu I came from as a middle-class Jew from Mexico whose choice it was to emigrate to El Norte: What on earth es ésto? I asked myself. Why was I mimicking Lisa? Wasn't my role as an intellectual and teacher to protect the purity and sanctity of el español and el inglés, rather than endorse this verbal promiscuity?

If I, and others like me, endorse this chaos of words, where is this syntactical amalgam leading us if not to hell? These were not easy questions. My tongue was moving in one direction and my heart in another. The more I rationalized what I was doing, the more guilt I felt. But I also realized that, through my standard English and Spanish, I lived in a verbal stratosphere remote from the universe I purported to invoke—

and teach—in the classroom, for pupils just like my dear Lisa Martínez. Besides, in Spanglish I felt freer, más libre. I didn't sense it as an imported, unnatural self. On the contrary, using it made me blissful.

Me sentí feliz!

Over the years, I've returned to that fated encounter hundreds of times. A door closed for Lisa Martínez that day but another one opened for me, a door se abrió and I walked through only to be radically transformed by the path I followed. That door has led me to more difficult questions.

Early in the next academic semester after Lisa departed, I confided her story to a group of Latino students from different ethnic and geographical backgrounds. My remarks were focused less on Lisa's academic journey than on her way of communication. Piqued by my oddity, the students suggested the development of an independent study course on Spanglish. I responded enthusiastically. A full thirteen weeks to explore the myriad verbal possibilities—sin hesitación, without doubt, I realized that the experience would be rewarding in every sense. And it was,afortunadamante.

There are several ways to say *to reward* in Spanglish. One of them is *reguardear*. And *reguardados* we became. The students, about 12–15 of them, and I, met regularly. Our first responsibility was to locate every possible item ever published on Spanglish. We were faced with a daunting reality: little was available on the subject. The frustration we felt was reminiscent of the one I came across at Columbia. In the classroom, the topics of discussion were Iberian luminaries like Lope de Vega, Quevedo, and Góngora; and also from Spain but closer to us, Benito Pérez Galdós and Leopoldo Alas "Clarín." From the Americas, the curriculum stirred us in the direction of Modernistas like José Martí and Rubén Darío. There was also the possibility of delving into "contempo-

rary" figures, such as Jorge Luis Borges, Octavio Paz, Gabriel García Márquez, Mario Vargas Llosa, and the like. Their oeuvre was scrutinized in detail, and so was their Spanish. Conversely, the culture of Dominicans and Nuyorricans on the streets of New York—in fact, at the doorsteps of the building that housed us, La Casa Hispánica, on Broadway and 116th Street—was anathema: illegitimate, inappropriate . . .

Such negligence, me repetí a mí mismo, needed to be resolved without delay.

Lisa had invited me to revisit my overall identity as an intellectual of Mexican descent in the United States, as a professor, even as a father. Indeed, I began to rethink all my roles. My first child, Joshua, was only then two years old. Early on, I had decided to communicate with him solely in Spanish. Was Spanglish also a possibility now? Would he get confused if I used the slang, eventually being incapable of discerning the boundaries between languages? And should I talk to other students of mine in Spanglish the way I had done with Lisa? Could I eventually teach a course on the subject and write about it?

In those early days, a colleague of mine, aware of my interest, passed on a copy of a story, "Pollito Chicken," by the Puerto Rican author Ana Lydia Vega. It was part of a slim volume called *Virgenes y mártires* (1981), but it was the sole piece in it not written in proper Spanish. In fact, it was, to the best of my knowledge then, the first full-fledged Spanglish story. So hypnotized was I by the experiment, I literally memorized—me aprendí de memoria—its three early sentences right away: "Lo que la decidió fue el breathtaking poster de Fomento que vio en la travel agency del lobby de su building. El breathtaking poster mentado representaba una pareja de beautiful people holding hands en el funicular del Hotel Conquistador. Los beautiful people se veían tan deliriously happy y el mar tan strikingly blue y la puesta del sol—no olvidemos la puesta de sol a la Winston-tastes-good—la puesta de sol tan shocking pink en la distancia que Suzie Bermiúdez . . ."

Without a doubt, Vega was ridiculing a generation of Nuyorricans

ashamed of their island. But to me, the story carried a different message: it was less a political statement about the manufactured dreams of the Puerto Rican diaspora in the United States than an exploration of a slang that defines that diaspora. Eventually, I've learned that Vega has renounced "Pollito Chicken." When she published it, she was accused of chauvinism. Too bad, for the piece announces, in my view at least, a consciousness that would ultimately prevail, not only among Nuyorricans but also within the island itself: the Spanglish "I."

I was utterly mesmerized by "Pollito Chicken" and read it en público to my students. Their reaction was symptomatic: the Puerto Rican ones felt ambivalent toward it whereas those from the Bronx and Manhattan sympathized with its premise and celebrated its author as una original. That much was expected. But I was stunned by the fact that the Chicano, Dominican, and Cuban students were uninterested in it. There were portions of it they also didn't understand. The explanation, everyone in the group came to realize, was crystal clear. After all, the term Spanglish per se was an abstraction. For some Latinos, it is even offensive, denoting a broken frame of mind. Many prefer more atomized rubrics: Cubonics, Dominicanish, Chicano Spanish, as well as Tex·Mex, Pachuco y un largo etcétera.



This dichotomy between the universal and the particular irrigates Hispanic culture en los Unaited Esteits. Hispanic, a term that came about in the Nixon Administration, and its counterpart, Latino, are Platonic words that, para bien o para mal, symbolize a sum of parts. People from various national groups prefer to define themselves through more particular names: Colombian-Americans, Ecuadorian-Americans, and so on. Therefore, the maxim *e pluribus unum* exemplifies the twisted dynamics within the community: the unity and the multiplicity are often at odds

with one another, although for political purposes they often choose to create an alliance.

Hence, it quickly became obvious that there is really not one Spanglish but many . . .

The Spanglish spoken by Mexican-Americans in Istlos has its own characteristics that differentiate it from the Spanglish spoken by Cubans in Calle Ocho, on the other side of the country. To prove the point, that first semester we made an experiment. During family weekend, we invited to sit in the same room and socialize five Spanglish non-student speakers (parents, brothers, girlfriends) from different geographical parts of the country: a Cuban-American from Miami, a Mexican-American from San Antonio, a Nuyorrican from the Bronx, a Dominican-American from Washington, DC, and an Ecuadorian-American from Chicago. The sole mandate, la única y suprema obligación, was that they communicate with the rest in their own Spanglish. It quickly became clear that to be understood a number of terms, especially patronymics although not always, needed to be defined.

For instance, the Cuban-American student repeatedly referred to La Sagüesera, the southwestern sección de Miami. Nobody knew what she meant until she physically described the region. Likewise, el chicano from San Antonio talked about a washatería his mother owned and where he worked in the summer months. Only when another participant in the experiment asked if washatería was a laundry store did the rest know what the speaker was talking about.

Soon nos dimos cuenta that some of the participants employed only a handful of so-called "borrowed" terms, palabras prestadas, adapted—revamped, really—to somehow fit a Spanglish mode of communication, una manera de ser espanglishada. Others, instead, indulged in extensive code switching, el cambio de código, which is the way the easy transit between the languages is described by specialists in the field.

The tension between the one and the many is understandable. One

is able to see it frequently on TV. But the moment one does, the drive toward a standardized form is established. It is a matter of letting others in on our individualized code. The tools to decode it are already in our culture, so it takes little time for people to understand one another. Indeed, as I began to research the fields of Spanglish, I realized that the bibliography on code-switching practices in individual regions (New York, Chicago, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona and California) is extensive. But less substantial, nonetheless, are the studies on Spanglish modalities in the media. It is in the media, though, where Spanglish travels faster and the creation of a "common ground" becomes tangible. Univisión and Telemundo are the fastest-growing television networks in the United States. *El Show de Cristina*, *Sábado Gigante*, and *Noticiero Univisión*, to name only three of the most popular programs—and to obviate the ubiquitous soap operas to be found on prime time every weekday—are watched by millions.

The first two programas depend on guests. Those guests are average people invited to talk about their own life. Their expressions are full of spanglishismos. Every time one of these is repeated, the potential impact of the word is enormous. Terms like *parquear*, *grincar*, and *la migra*, which stand for to park, green card, and the staff of the Immigration and Naturalization Service respectively, have already become part of the lore.

Add to this the impact of radio. It is a well-known fact that there are more Spanish-language radio stations in the state of California alone than in all of Central America together. El impacto, pues, es asombroso. Almost without exception, these stations program call-in shows in which the listeners are able to express themselves on the air. Those that work as agricultural labor in the cotton, orange, and strawberry fields use these programs to let their relatives know where the next harvest is likely to take them. In urban centers, rap, rock, salsa and corridos in Spanglish spread the message out. The lingo de la calle y la montaña, then, penetrates people's minds, and their vocabulary, at an astonishing

speed. La revolución lingüística es imparable—the verbal transformation is unstoppable.

One of my students showed up one morning with Spanglish versions of important documents. She started with the *Pledge of Allegiance*: "Yo plegio alianza a la bandera de los Unaited Esteits de América . . ." Everyone was laughing. That same student then moved on to a recitation of *La declaración of Independence*: "Nosotros joldeamos que estas truths son self-evidentes, que todos los hombres son creados equally, que están endawdeados por su Creador con certain derechos unalienables, que entre these están la vida, la libertad, y la persura de la felicidad."

And, to crown it all, she ended with *la constitución gringa*: "We la gente de los Unaited Esteits, pa'formar una unión más perfecta, establisheamos la justicia, aseguramos tranquilidad doméstica, proveamos pa'la defensa común, promovemos el welfér, y aseguramos el blessing de la libertad de nosotros mismos y nuestra posterity, ordenando y establisheando esta Constitución de los Unaited Esteits de América."

In my eyes, this was an exercise in ingenuity. It also showed astuteness, a stunning capacity to adapt, and an imaginative aspect to it that refuses to accept anything as foreign.

What was she really doing? The answer es sencilla: she was reappropriating major cultural artifacts that affected her life and that of everyone else. As a Nuyorrican, the student often talked of alienation. Se sentía ajena al quehacer nacional.

Indeed, for her the United States was a foreign country where her family of jíbaros had immigrated in the fifties as a result of the economic difficulties in Puerto Rico. The laughter in her face when she recited in Spanglish the information in the documents was far more harmonious than any other I had seen in her. "She's feeling comfortable," I told myself. "La *Pledge of Allegiance* and la *Declaration of Independence* son hers when she approached them through her own verbal prism . . ."

Livin' la jerga loca is how she described her effort . . .

An atmosphere of exhilaration invaded the classroom. All of us had

suddenly become aware of the creative possibilities before us. I myself reacted by composing a gallery of Spanglish versions from famous first lines in American literature. For example, these lines from *Hojas de Grass* by the founding padre, Walt Whitman: "Sudenmente fuera del air estéril y drowsy, el lair de los esclavos Como un lightning Europa dió un paso pa'lante . . ." And the start of *Aventuras de Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain: "You no sabe de mí sin you leer un book by the nombre of *The Aventuras of Tom Sawyer*, pero eso ain't no matter." Or the one I like most: Robert Frost: *El Gift Derecho*: "La tierra was ours antes que nosotros were de la tierra. It was nuestra tierra más de cien años pa'trás . . ."

I remember perfectly the discussion that followed among us. Some students talked about understanding Spanglish through a generation lens. "My parents would hate these kinds of translations," one of them said. The rest of his argument was along these lines: "At home, this kind of stuff, like, it's really forbidden . . . Always, none of us would dare to use it at home, never. My father, in particular, he's a stubborn Cuban, an exile. He left the island in 1961. His entire life is devoted to the enlightenment of his children. He believes Cubonics to be a disgrace. Like, he hates it, he detests it completely. And, like, I tend to believe he is right. He is, because what would happen if all us used it? It would be terrible, wouldn't it? Spanglish isn't even a fully formed language. It is used by the common people, la prole, people without education, gente iletrada . . . My Pop's dream was to improve on our family condition. And language, I guess, is a lot about our own self, isn't it? Like, what you speak is what you are."

Another participant in the course was more forgiving. Her ancestors were from Venezuela but she had been raised in Madison, Wisconsin. She listened to raperos en español such as *Latin Alianza*, *Chicano 2 Da Bone*, *Latin Lingo*, and *Dr. Loco's Rockin' Jalapeño Band*. "These are the sort of lyrics these dudes include all the time. And it's cool! The songs make a connection. They express what the musicians feel . . ." She then showed the rest a CD she had brought along that day of a rapper group,

Ganga Spanglish. And in one of the following sessions, she brought the lyrics of *KMX Assault*. I asked her to make me a copy. I remember these sentences: "Echar Pa'lante with my people is my imperative/ This Boricua will; endeavor to be clever." But her argument was that the slang would reach beyond the audiences that usually listened to those groups. "It's bigger than that," she said. "These roqueros are only reflecting what's happenin' en la calle . . . They aren't inventing it! Yeah, they are artists. But people wouldn't like their music if their songs didn't touch a cord. And they do! I know plenty of kids that listen to them. They memorize them. It ain't matter if you're puertorriqueña or mexicana. You listen to it because it's hip. Hip and hot!"



These opposing sides, as might be already deduced, were cut across class and ideological lines. Issues like bilingual education, affirmative action, and the impact of the English Only and English First movements determined people's views. One faction believed that Spanglish was an obstacle for Latinos on the road to assimilation. Many of them neither speak Spanish nor English properly. Spanglish is an involuntary middle ground, from which they, if only they knew better, would like to escape pronto. Pitifully, musicians such as those of *Ganga Spanglish* exploited this limitation.

The other faction believed that Spanglish was a positive manifestation of the Hispanic spirit, that to speak a "broken" language was, in the academic lingo, a construction. By definition, the lower class is always less educated than the middle and upper classes. And it is left to those above it to ridicule its speech. In the end, though, it is the lower class where the most spontaneous aspects of culture are to be found. Sooner or later, others steal away those aspects, turning them into highbrow items.

In my view, the tension between these polar opposites was as im-

portant as the argument they set forth. I remember asking myself: Why is Spanglish so controversial? Why does it animate people as passionately as it does? The answer, I assume, is historical. Earlier in this essay, in my definition of Spanglish, I shied away from using the term *clash*. I guess my own political approach is made clear by the alternative: *encounter*. English and Spanish have found each other, they have become partners in this ever-expanding mode of communication. But that partnership—if that is what it is—has not always been around. Think of the defeat of the Spanish Armada Invencible by the British forces in 1588 and the embarrassment it brought along to the citizens of the Iberian Peninsula. King Philip II sought to undermine the Dutch by invading England. A huge patriotic campaign was orchestrated in Spain to justify the endeavor, accusing the Queen of England of heresy and pushing the concept of a Holy War as an excuse. But the enterprise was a disaster and an euphoric Spain was brought to its knees. Historian J. H. Elliott once argued that the “material effects” of the defeat were not striking: as many as two-thirds of a fleet of 130 ships returned home. Still, the psychological blow was unavailable. Not only was the Invincible Armada ridiculed, but the Iberian spirit began a long process of descent and disillusion. So yes, England, in the Spanish imagination, is *el diablo*—the devil. It brought down to its knees a commanding empire devoured by tax evasion and a lingering feudalism—then on its way out in most of Europe—and announced widely its ultimate demise. To this day, the country doesn’t seem to have recovered in full. When more than twenty years later, the first part of *Don Quixote of La Mancha* was published, the national pride was already at a record low in spite of the battles against the Turks, which enabled Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra to explore the collective psyche through the dichotomy of reality and illusion. His errant knight seems to ask: Is Spain ever awake or does it live in a perpetual dream?

The clash between the Anglo and Hispanic habitats didn’t stop there, though. The year 1898 marks the decisive Spanish-American

War in which Madrid was forced to depart from Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines, allowing the United States to move in as the new imperial orquestador of the region’s affairs. This was another blow to Spanish self-esteem. It didn’t come from London but from one of its former colonies, which was even more humiliating. It is not remarkable, then, that more than a century later, people in the Iberian Peninsula would approach, as they often do, the rapid growth of the Latino population in the United States as *una forma de revancha*—a revenge of sorts. It only takes a quick glance at the way news about it is reported to realize that the bruises of the past are still sensitive. The preeminence of Spanish as the second most important language in the United States encourages Madrid’s government to move its strings as a form of support. “España está al centro del pasado y del presente de los Estados Unidos,” King Juan Carlos de Borbón proudly announced in 1992, in honor of the Quincentennial of Christopher Columbus’ *descubrimiento* of the Americas.

That same year, Puerto Rico, in a nationwide referendum, established *el español* as the island’s official language. As a result the Spanish monarchy awarded all the Puerto Rican people the prestigious Príncipe de Asturias Prize. It was a political move, one meant to ratify the dominance of the Iberian tongue on the other side of the Atlantic.

Among educators and intellectuals, in diplomatic circles, for editors and reporters in the media, the presence of the Spanish language is an affirmation that the seeds of Spain’s colonial quest are bearing fruit. Repeatedly, one reads about federal money in the Iberian Peninsula being allocated for programs to reinvigorate the maintenance and teaching of Cervantes’s tongue this side of the Atlantic Ocean, and for institutions designed to foster the image of Spain among Hispanics.

Still, I prefer the term *encounter*, and not *clash*, simply because, as far as Latinos are concerned, these efforts by Spain are totally inconsequential.

How many Chicanos in the San Fernando Valley know of the mere

existence of the Real Academia Española de la Lengua, an institution created in the 18th century to legislate—some would say promote—the well-being of the Spanish language? A minuscule number, no doubt. And how many Nuyorricans see their linguistic roots in Castile? An even smaller amount. . . .

Spaniards are known to be obsessed with language, but, after *Don Quixote*, they have not been particularly talented in producing a first-rate literature. And their language pride is colored by el remordimiento, abundant remorse. The thinker Miguel de Unamuno enjoyed making fun of those in his native Spain who claimed that people in the Iberian Peninsula in general need to learn their grammar and make sure that their stepchildren in the Americas use it as appropriately as they do. “The problem is not that Spaniards speak poorly,” he said. “The real problem is that they don’t have anything to say.”

Nothing to say, eh?

Surely this wasn’t the case with my students. The exhilarating experience with them made me fall in love with the labyrinthine nature of Spanglish. The more I reflected on it, the more I was mesmerized by its syncopated rhythms.

It was thanks to them that I understood that Spanglish cuts across economic terrain. It isn’t spoken only por los pobres, the dispossed. The middle class has embraced it as a chic form of speech, una manera moderna y divertida de hablar. This is in sharp contrast with other slang more often than not defined by turf: the language of drugs, for instance. Spanglish, instead, is democratic: de todos y para todos.

At any rate, by the late nineties I had begun to codify a lexicon of Spanglishisms. I’m not a linguist by training, nor am I a lexicographer by profession. In school I took a course on the history and morphosyntax of el español. My enthusiasm for words is that of an aficionado.

But Doctor Johnson was also an aficionado when he decided to codify his monumental *A Dictionary of the English Language*, wasn’t he? And

so was Sebastián de Covarrubias Orozco, officially “the first lexicographer” of Spanish, whose *Tesoro de la Lengua Castellana o Española* appeared in 1611, with the imprimatur of the Holy Office of the Inquisition.

Naïveté isn’t always a handicap, and neither is amateurism . . .

I began to look around for any and all attempts to codify Spanglish. I found the important work done on the variedades del español in the United States. For instance, I realized that aside from a myriad of articles in books and scholarly journals by Samuel G. Armistead, John M. Lipski, Ernesto Barnach-Calbó, and Mary Ellen García, among others, Beatriz Varela had done a remarkable phonetic and morphosyntactical analysis of Cubonics in *El español cubano-americano* (1992). I also discovered the research by W. Labov in *A Study of Non-Standard English of Negro and Puerto Rican Speakers in New York City* (1968). Equally significant were the compilations by Rubén Cobos, a professor at the University of New Mexico, in *A Dictionary of New Mexico and Southern Colorado Spanish* (1983), as well as the lexicon by Roberto A. Galván and Richard V. Tescher, called *Diccionario del Español Chicano* (1989), and the one by José Sánchez-Boudy, under the name of *Diccionario Mayor de Cubanismos* (1999).

But these efforts were compartmentalized into national groups within the Hispanic minority. Instead, my interest was pan-Hispanic. I then invited my students to offer palabras they were accustomed to hearing at home, school, and in public spaces. Each made an initial harvest of almost a hundred, which increased as time went by. Over a period of several months, I was surprised to recognize an accumulation of approximately 1,000 terms.

The majority came from the United States but about 30% originated in places south of the Rio Grande, where Spanish and English were in contact.

My motivation increased . . . Every time I traveled to lecture, in the United States and abroad, I visited the local Hispanic neighborhood and

talked to the people en la calle, en los restaurantes, en las canchas de soccer. Tape recorder and notebook in hand, I started to build upon a cross-cultural glossary. I also returned to 19th-century classics and spent time in libraries reading periodicals from the period published in New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, California, New York, and Florida.

Over time, colleagues, friends, and acquaintances regularly e-mailed me additions and discussed variants and origins. Indeed, I realized that, as a result of American imperialism, Spanglish not only treks across economic lines but across national borders. This might be the byproduct of the Monroe Doctrine, which claims that América es para los americanos. What would he have thought of José Enrique Rodó, a leading figure of the Modernista movement at the turn of the 20th century, whose classic book *Ariel* (1900) in the form of a public epistle called for young Latin Americans to rebel against el dominio cultural norteamericano?

Surely, there is a difference between America and América: the former is an almighty, often bullish nation, the latter a romanticized continental landscape.



I came to realize that Spanglish wasn't, as is usually believed, a recent phenomenon. On the opposite, its past was fertile and far-reaching . . . My working definition of *Spanglish* became even more flexible: an encounter between cultures that is also a record of abundant past transactions. Think, by way of example, in the language of sports: *los doubles* in Tennis, *el corner* and *el ofsaid* in soccer, *el tuchdaun* in football, *el nocaut* in boxing. . . .

Or think of the business parlance: *marqueteo* and *la agencia de advertising*, for instance. And then there's Cyber-Spanglish, the cybernetic code used frequently by Internet users. The United States reached 128

million surfers in 2001. Countries like Mexico, Argentina, and Colombia have far fewer users, but their link to the World Wide Web, the so-called *La Red*, is also solid. Terms like *chatear*, *forwardear*, and *el maus* are indispensable north and south of the Rio Grande, as well as in Spain and in the Caribbean.

Or are they not? Is there a substitute in Spanish for each and every one of them? Probably there is, but it is absolutely cumbersome, which explains why, I guess, nadie lo usa, no one dares to use it.

In 1999 I officially taught a course called *The Sounds of Spanglish*. The central theme was the development of this mode of communication. It attracted a large student body. The key concept I used then, one that has stayed with me since, is *mestizaje*.

This palabra is still overcharged, está sobrecargada de historia. The Americas have been the site of cross-racial and cross-verbal fertilization ever since their entrance to modern times in 1492, if not before, as the aboriginal languages intermingled through war and domination across the continent. The arrival of the Spanish conquistadores and misioneros resulted in the rise of the mestizo, a by-product of East and West, of Iberian and pre-Columbian civilizations.

A racial category, the mestizo is a hand-me-down and also a half-and-half: his sight is divided between Europe and the archaic past. This duality was approached as a handicap for centuries. But as the Great Depression was sweeping los Unaited Esteits, the Mexican intellectual and once Minister of Education José Vasconcelos was among the first to champion the mestizo as a "brown race" in his book *La raza cósmica* (1929). He talked of mestizaje as a phenomenon of empowerment and announced that one day mestizos would be called to dominate the entire globe.

Vasconcelos's book is estrambótico, pamphleteering. His philosophical approach isn't rigorous enough. And his analysis of realpolitik leaves much to be desired. But this is not the place to question his arguments.

What interests me is the way those arguments have entered popular culture and how they have been assimilated by the Latin psyche? The student upheaval in Tlatelolco Square, Mexico, in 1968, and the Chicano Movement in the Civil Rights era, looked at Vasconcelos for inspiration. He was seen as an emblematic leader and his concept of *mestizaje* was used ideologically to advance the cause of anti-establishment forces. Through Vasconcelos's prism, the history of Latin America is defined by miscegenation. At the level of language, the Spanish spoken this side of the Atlantic Ocean also underwent a process of *mestizaje*, although less emphatically than the racial phenomenon.

No hubo un justo medio.

Think of the conquest of the Americas as the effort of one language to subjugate a plethora of others. For the effort of Spanish colonization not only gave room to a political, military, and social colonization of millions of people who belonged to a gamut of Indian tribes that spoke languages such as Mayan, Huichol, and Tarascan in Mexico to Araucanian, Guaraní and Quechua in South America. It was, equally important, an act of linguistic enslavement, *subyugación verbal*. In 1492 Spain completed what has come to be known as *La Reconquista*, a project to make the kingdom fully Catholic and eliminate from it religious minorities, such as the Jews and Muslims. By then *La Reconquista* had lasted centuries—since the first crusaders of the 11th century. The result was that Castilian Spanish became known as the unifying tongue of the kingdom. That atmosphere gave way to a period of intense intellectual and artistic fertility. In the hundred and fifty years that followed, the so-called *Siglo de Oro español*, the Golden Age of Spanish arts and literature, mystical poets, playwrights and novelists, such as Fray Luis de León, Santa Teresa de Jesús, Lope de Vega, Francisco de Quevedo, Calderón de la Barca, Luis de Góngora, to name only the most prominent names, gave the world a taste of baroque sophistication, *el saber barroco* of Spanish courtly and country life.

The conquest of the Americas occurred at the same time. It was a massive undertaking, one that generated much controversy. Could the Spaniards "civilize" the native population? If so, what would be the toll? A debate in the so-called *Nueva España*, as Mexico was called in colonial times, between the Franciscans and the Jesuits, for instance, suggests there were opposing views at stake: one side believed the undertaking would result in "the Christianization of Mexico," whereas the other side was convinced the process would give room to "the Mexicanization of Christianity." Who was right?

Ambos, for transculturation was the outcome.

And did transculturation also occur at the level of language? Not quite . . . Given the overwhelming number of Indians, for a while, again in Mexico, Nahuatl was slated to become, in the eyes of the colonizers, the *lingua franca* of the region. But the thought was too threatening, *demasiado peligroso*.

Why Nahuatl and not *el español*? And did a jargon ever emerge in the Americas, one mixing pre-Columbian tongues and Spanish?

Obviamente no, since demographically it is unlikely: the Spaniards were few, the Indians were many but they were decimated by epidemics and malnutrition. For instance, chroniclers like "El Inca" Garcilaso in his *Royal Commentaries of the Incas* and Toribio de Motolinía in his *History of the Indians of New Spain* registered aboriginal terms. They were attuned to translation (*un labio, dos labios*) and recorded autochthonous terms as they heard them. The result is that today numerous Nahuatl words like *molcajete*, *aguacate*, and *huipil* (from *mulcaztil*, *ahuacatl*, and *huipilli*, respectively) have been accepted as *americanismos*.

This jumble, *este orden en el desorden*, suggests that the Americas exist in translation. That is, they are sensible to the imposition of language as a hegemonic force brought from abroad. By this I don't mean to suggest that when Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and Augusto Roa Bastos wrote their poems and stories in Spanish, they first envisioned them

in Nahuatl and Guaraní. Their language, Spanish, was—it still is and forever will be—as much theirs as it was the property of Benito Jerónimo Feijoo, Unamuno and Federico García Lorca. But the language as such wouldn't develop in the Americas the way it had evolved in the Iberian Peninsula: on this side of the ocean, it appeared suddenly and violently, spreading without mercy. Anything and everything that appeared before her was destroyed. Still, to this day it retains a slight degree of foreignness to it. In the Americas, Spanish is somewhat foreign, a sign of the imperial expansion of the Catholic Kingdom of monarchs Isabella and Ferdinand. *El español como lengua extranjera*. To show that this is the case, it is enough to look at the reaction to Spanglish on the two sides of the ocean: whereas Spaniards are often puritanical about their tongue, los americanos are altogether less hysterical about the issue as a whole. This, in my view, is because the population in Latin America is well acclimated to the act—y el arte—of colonization. They know by experience what it means to be subjugated by an alien tongue.

But, significantly, no middle ground emerged in Mesoamérica, no premodern Spanglish—not a mestizo Spanish but an in-between Spanish and indigenous tongues like Nahuatl.

It was not to be.

Americanismos . . . Shouldn't the dictionary then define the terms originating, or at least in use, in the peninsula as iberismos? After all, the population of Latin America is approximately 350 million. Spain, in contrast, doesn't even reach 10 percent of that number. Una persona en Madrid might easily communicate with his counterpart in Caracas, but numerous nuances—from meaning to accent to emphasis—distinguish them. All in all, the americanismos are already the norm. Of course, there are many Spanishes south of the Rio Grande, as several more spoken north of it as well: Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican, et cetera, and within these categories there are different regionalisms, such as the immigrant Spanish from Nuevo León, Oaxaca, or Jalisco, for example; add to this the español novomexicano that is different from its many coun-

terparts, such as the tejano, kanseco and californio Spanish. The result, clearly, is a Babelic jumble.



The extent to which *mestizo* Spanish and the pre-Columbian languages in the New World originally penetrated Iberian Spanish is illustrated by an anecdote about Antonio de Nebrija, the first to publish a grammar of the Spanish language, which appeared in 1492, the *annus mirabilis* in Iberian history. He included in his *Diccionario latino-español* the Latin term *barca* for a small rowboat. Then the *Vocabulario español-latino*, its companion volume, was released in 1495, and the Indian term *canoa*, from the Nahuatl, was listed, followed by the Latin definition. Evidently, in those three years, the impact of pre-Columbian languages on Iberian Spanish made itself felt. The Salamanca grammarian was only one of the conduits through which the verbal flux of Castilian Spanish began to manifest itself in the Americas. By devoting himself to standardizing and cataloguing the Castilian spelling and by studying its syntax and grammar, Nebrija legitimated a language whose speakers were only recently self-conscious of its global scope. Le dio a la lengua una presencia psicológica y nacional.

The vulgar Latin of the Roman Empire, which is different from the classical Latin of authors like Ovid and Seneca, gave room to a tongue—part of the family of romance languages that includes Italian and Romanian, influenced by Celtic and German, and by the Slavic varieties respectively—with a distinct flavor, su manera peculiar de ser. But Nebrija was only one among those responsible for the process of consolidation of Spanish as an hegemonic language.

The first official full-length dictionary of the Spanish language, the one by Covarrubias, was also a 17th-century by-product, albeit an indirect one, of the Universidad de Salamanca, where the compiler had been a student. (Among its alums, the institution also prides itself for having

had Fray Luis de León, Calderón, and Unamuno parade through its hallways.) Very limited information is available about Covarrubias's academic qualifications. It is known that he was an ordained priest, a clerk and a religious instructor. Also eclipsed is the origin of his sole work, the *Tesoro*, which for years was referred to in various sources as *Etimologías* because of the emphasis it places on Latin, Greek and Hebrew etymological origins. By the way, Covarrubias also seems to have been versed, although less competently, in French and Italian, but apparently he knew nothing of Arabic, a major influence in the Spanish of the 10th to the 15th centuries.

Nebrija and Covarrubias . . . I'm fascinated by their respective lexicons, their *joyas arqueológicas*, for they pose important questions as one ponders the status of Spanglish nowadays. Both the grammar by the former and the thesaurus by the latter were printed privately. They sold poorly. Nebrija was a committed scholar and his contribution to the legitimization of Spanish vis-à-vis Latin is unquestionable. Covarrubias's is another story. His *Tesoro*, as he argues in a note after the frontispiece, was made available so that Spain could match all the other nations that had already done the etymological work of releasing dictionaries. He hopes, as well, that not only the Spanish nation will find pleasure in it, "but also all the other nations that procure the ruin of our language with so much avariciousness." By royal decree, Italy and France established academies for the study and projection of the nation's language.

The *Accademia della Crusca* spent twenty years to prepare its own, which was published in six volumes in 1612; the *Académie Française*, whose mandate was "to purify" the tongue, worked on it from 1639 to 1694. Imitating them, Juan Manuel Fernández Pacheco, Marquis of Villena, founded the *Real Academia Española de la Lengua Castellana* in 1713, with Philip V's approval a year later. From its inception, the use of Spanish—or Castilian, as the institution ambiguously states even in its name—announced the dual desire to institutionalize one of the dialects of the peninsula and to safeguard it for posterity in its purest form.

Fernando Lázaro Carreter, a scholar and member of the academy since 1972, has explored in detail the shaping of the institution. In an extraordinary essay entitled *Crónica del "Diccionario de Autoridades" (1713-1740)*, he details the long struggle to complete a project that was really "larger than life."

Carreter explains how those that became the original members were, just like Covarrubias, neither lexicographers nor academics. They were devotees, based in Madrid, whose mission it was to replicate what the French had already done on the other side of the Pyreneans. The motto of the institution, much ridiculed in modern days, is "Limpia, fija y da esplendor"—cleans, standardizes, and grants splendor. The word *limpia* cannot but invoke the concept of *pureza de sangre*, purity of blood, through which the Spanish Inquisition propagated the idea that Old Christians made the nation proud whereas New Christians, e.g., crypto-Jews, also known as *marranos*, those that on the surface converted to Christianity before and after the expulsion of 1492 but remained de facto Jews at home, needed to be extirpated from the nation's landscape. In his mandate Philip II ordered that the academy publish a dictionary where words and their meanings would be normalized. The result was the famously disappointing *Diccionario de Autoridades*. It took from 1726 to 1740—veinticuatro años—to produce its six volumes. The dictionary sought to define a word and substantiate its definition with a quota of textual excerpts from established intellectual figures of the Golden Age.

In so far it was born as a replica, *casi una copia Xerox*, the dictionary of *Autoridades* was a disappointment. It was, no doubt, one of the most ambitious projects of the 18th century, but it was inundated by problems that, in many ways, need to be understood as symptoms of the Spanish character. For one thing, it served as a sideboard through which the institutional and less conscious censorship of the time manifested itself in it. The animosity against Jews, Muslims, and women, and the desire not to include rude terms and sexual innuendoes, are quite apparent

in its pages. After the first volume had already appeared, the members of the *Real Academia Española de la Lengua* refused to introduce words—in Spanish they are called *voces*—that would be deemed offensive. Carreter himself explains the ups and downs of the volume's composition within the psychological and sociological context of the time. "The prestige of the work has not ceased to grow," he wisely states, "and today its esteem is unanimous."

Founded on a few Spanish precedents, venerable yet quite imperfect in lexicographic terms, the Academy, established precisely with the objective to overcome those imperfections, devotes itself to the task of making an inventory, defining and authorizing with written texts, the fundamental mass of the Spanish vocabulary in only twenty-six years. That "only" has to do with the fact that the French Academy has taken sixty-five years in a much more limited enterprise. Six heft volumes, with a total of more than 4,000 pages, in quarto, were the result of that effort, one of the most aspiring that Spanish culture can be proud of. That *Diccionario*, from which more than two and a half years separate us, has not died yet: anybody interested in making a deep reading of a classic text still needs to consult it. And I don't exaggerate when I say, in many ways, it still has resolute strength in comparison with the most recent dictionaries, to which it is not unusual to compare it positively in its precision . . . I believe the simple chronicle of [its production] has some interest; it can be the mirror in which we can contemplate some aspects of the culture of that century, and a reflection, quite clear, of constant elements in our idiosyncrasy.

The dictionary of the Spanish language of the *Real Academia Española de la Lengua* used—and abused—presently, periodically updated in Ma-

drid and nurtured with the input of the many branches the academia has in Latin America and the Philippines since 1871, is still based on the Covarrubias dictionary and on the *Autoridades*. It is somehow a legislative instrument that codifies and validates. Although other lexicons, algunas alternativas, might be purchased throughout the Hispanic world—including those by Corominas, Larousse, and Sopena, as well as my own favorite, by María Moliner, *Diccionario del uso del español*, released in 1966–67 and drastically revised and updated more than thirty years later, which stands as a towering achievement of individual Hispanic lexicography in a discipline known for its inexactitudes and ineficacias—it is this one that is endowed with an aura of astonishing power to accept or deny the legitimacy of any given word. Interestingly, in France the lexicon brought out by the *Académie Française* doesn't hold a similar place in the nation's culture; instead, the various dictionaries published privately, such as those by Hatier, Hachette and Robert, and especially Larousse, are the ones frequently sought.

España ha cambiado un poco, afortunadamente. Only during Franco's dictatorship, especially in its last stages, and more significantly with the arrival of democracy in 1974, has the Iberian Peninsula been ready to reflect on its linguistic heritage, and it has done so halfheartedly. The Socialist regime of Felipe González that brought not only social stability but an economic boom also announced an era of fractured autonomies, from Catalunya to the Basque Country, each with its ancestral tongue as a ticket of identity.

Increasingly, Catalan, Basque, and Galician are being recognized as separate languages in the Iberian Peninsula. Meanwhile, highbrow and popular animosity toward the *Real Academia Española de la Lengua* is as old as the institution itself. Accusations of elitism and pedantry abound. Frontal attacks in the press are always in store, and a series of parallel lexicons with terms grossly left out by the anointed erudite abound, of which *Diccionario de hispanoamericanismos no recogidos por la Real Academia* (1997), compiled by Renaud Richard, is only an example. It includes

everything the dictionary produced by the royal erudite leave out—enough to have more than four hundred pages filled with diverse entries. Indeed, the accusations sometimes are humorous. For instance, the Cuban ethnographer Fernando Ortiz released *Un catauro de cubanismos* (1923), an engaging and encyclopedic attempt to codify the many idioms of Africans in Cuba. But this is also a volume displaying the varieties of Cuban Spanish not accepted by Madrid. Dictionaries are often arid and dumb in style. The one by Ortiz is filled with double entendres and an inimitable joie de vivre.

Herein one of its most incisive, critical entries:

Guayabo—The tree that produces the guayaba, according to the *Diccionario de la Academia*. Why does it add: “In French: *goyavier*”? Does it mean to suggest that it is a gallicism? Really? Well, does the dictionary by any chance provide the French translation of every word? No? Then out with the *goyavier*! The etymology, if that is what is being proposed, is not worth a guayaba [no vale una guayaba], as we say. Let’s call, instead, some of the twenty-two acceptations and derivatives of guayaba, cited by Suárez, that, like guayabal, guayabera, guayabito, would look better in the Castilian dictionary than that inexplicable Frenchified etymology. This guayaba is just too hard to swallow. (¡Que no nos venga la academia con guayabas!), and let us thus note, in passing, another Cubanism.

Ortiz accuses the Iberian académicos of elitism. Why look at France for etymological ratification, he wonders. For him a guayaba with a non-American taste is “too hard to swallow,” a statement that encompasses the approach the *Real Academia Española de la Lengua*, and prior to it Covarrubias and Nebrija, have had toward the varieties of el español in the New World. Indeed, from Ortiz’s statement one might deduce that the

process of mestizaje—he preferred the term *transculturation*—is a painful one that the Iberian Peninsula is not able to fully recognize.

Nebrija once famously said: “. . . siempre la lengua fue compañera del imperio.” Spanish was an imperial tool, indeed, with a clear-cut mission: to spread the faith of the Iberian knights and missionaries in uncivilized lands and force it onto the population. In the colonial period in the Americas, to civilize meant to reeducate, to evangelize, and to slowly incorporate the region and its inhabitants within the sphere of influence of the Catholic crown. The conquistadors and missionaries that arrived had the Bible in one hand and the sword in another. For them, language was an instrument to proselytize. But as ethno-linguist Angel Rosenblat has argued in his lucid *El español de España y el español de América* (1962), not even on this side of the Atlantic was it simply transplanted; instead, it adapted to the new reality by incorporating terms that came from pre-Columbian tongues, such as *aguacate* and *tenzonle*. Indeed, for over five hundred years Spanish has twisted and turned in a most spontaneous fashion from the Argentine Pampa to the rough roads of Tijuana. Today it is as elastic and polyphonic as ever, allowing for a wide gamut of voices that goes beyond mere localisms.



I was once asked by an Iberian reporter: Will Spanglish eventually replace Spanish? And will there ever be an *Academia del Spanglish*? My answer: let us focus on the present tense.

It is useful, for instance, to contemplate the passionate debate about it at the heart of the *Real Academia Española de la Lengua*. Its supporters include Carreter, whose views on the subject are lucidly expressed in the volume *El dardo en la palabra* (1997), a collection of newspaper columns on language, as well as a younger generation inducted to the academy and led by the journalist Juan Luis Cebrián, whose seminal work as the first editor in chief of *El País* established him as a valuable intellectual

voice of the post-Franco era. This debate is also palpable in the Hispanic intelligentsia at large. In 1997, the first Congress on the Future of the Spanish Language took place in Zacatecas, Mexico. Among those who participated were Gabriel García Márquez, Alvaro Mutis, and Camilo José Cela.

The author of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, in his speech, traced the pattern a word used in Colombia takes to be incorporated into the *Diccionario de la Real Academia*. "The route takes an average of twenty years," he said, "and that is only if the word is accepted." He discussed the 107 synonyms for *penis* found in Quito, Ecuador—such as *churuca*, *micho*, *palitroque*, and *zirindango*, all recorded in *Léxico sexual ecuatoriano y latinoamericano* (1979), by Hernán Rodríguez Castedo—of which only a handful appear in the official dictionary. The topic of Spanglish was not at the core of his speech, but it was fully explored by many others present at the event. The purist faction talked about the dangerous threat that Cervantes's tongue faces today. But the more liberal voices, like that of Mutis, the author of *The Adventures of Magroll*, took a stand. Mutis said that to reject Spanglish denounces a sort of "inexcusable innocence" and that the language should not fall prey of "la conspiración de los zombies."

To fully understand Spanglish, the history of English and its acceptance by the academy needs to be taken into consideration too. The exodus of the barbarous Saxons and Jutes into Britain around 450 A.D., and their interaction with the Celts and the Normans gave room to the language known as *el inglés*, but the process was unhurried. By the time *The Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer came along, it had undergone a normalized syntactical course, but some grammatical patterns were still untouched. *Cawdrey's Table Alphabeticall*, published in 1604, was the first attempt to offer a systematic approach to vocabulary. By the time Doctor Johnson embarked on his dictionary in the 18th century, there was still, in his own view, much to be cleaned: Gallicisms had a "pervasive" influence and authors, from Milton to Dryden, often spelled the same

word in different ways. The English used today in Australia is not the same one employed in Nigeria, New Zealand, and India. But the differences are not only geographical: Nigerian English, as any other, is in constant evolution.

Let me now invoke an essay by Matthew Arnold called "The Literary Influence of Academies." Published in 1864 in *Cornhill Magazine*, in it Arnold praised Cardinal Richelieu and his fellow "enlightened" Frenchmen for forming a centralized governmental institution whose duty is to safeguard the French language—a "literary tribunal," Arnold called it, not only devoted to purifying and embellishing the vocabulary but, also, to serve as a body where "the works of its members were to be brought before it previous to publication, were to be criticized by it, and finally, if it saw it fit, to be published with the declared approbation."

Arnold believed this to be a positive approach, for it created "a form of intellectual culture which shall impose itself on all around." He was convinced England should follow in the same footsteps. In fact, Arnold's essay was una invectiva against the British character. "We all of us like to go our own way," he announces, "and not to be forced out of the atmosphere of commonplace habitual to all of us;—'was uns alle bändigt,' says Goethe, 'das Gemeine.'" Arnold wants standards in the lexicon and literature of his people. But he fails to realize that precisely the absence of a government-sponsored agency allows a free-flow of talent that, on its own rule and cadence, regulates quality in language and art.

He was mistaken . . . The fact that the English language doesn't have a soul-protecting body is reason to rejoice, as far as I'm concerned. For one thing, it is far more accepting of slang, and slang, as S.I. Hayakawa said in 1941, "is the poetry of everyday life."

La poesía de todos los días.

In a strict sense, there has never been anything similar to the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española de la Lengua*. Attempts to make a dictionary have always been the result of individuals unaffiliated in political terms, such as Cawdrey, Blount, Kersey, Bailey, and Webster. Yet Doc-

tor Johnson remains, undoubtedly, the magisterial model por excelencia. In 1746, at the age of thirty-six (and shortly after the last volume of *Autoridades* was made available in Madrid), he embarked on his *Dictionary of the English Language*.

In many ways, Johnson's project follows the same pattern in lexicography: to define a word is also to display examples, e.g., quotations of canonical figures whereby its usage is seen in the proper context. The story of the development of Johnson's project has been chronicled time and again by biographers, from James Boswell to Walter Jackson Bate. It is a story of patience and perseverance and of an individual's encyclopedic knowledge that triumphs over physical exhaustion and human inefficiency. Johnson proves Arnold wrong: his quest shows the individualism at the heart of Anglo-Saxon civilization—one man devoted for almost a decade, until 1755, when the book appeared, to codify la lengua de Shakespeare. His introduction begins poetically:

It is the fate of those who toil at the lower employments of life to be rather driven by the fear of evil than attracted by the prospect of good; to be exposed to censure, without hope of praise; to be disgraced by, miscarried, or punish for neglect, where success would have been without applause, and diligence without reward. Among these unhappy mortals is the writer of dictionaries.

Johnson recognized that language is in constant mutation. Still, his mission, in his own terms, is to honor his country "so that we may no longer yield the palm of philology without a contest to the nation of the continent." He hopes "to give longevity to that which its own nature forbids to be immortal." He argues that elsewhere academies have been established to the cultivation of style, but is wary of one such entity in Britain. If it is ever established, he argues, he wishes not "to see dependence multiplied" and hopes that "the spirit of English liberty," el

espíritu de la libertad inglesa, won't be hindered or destroyed. He believes the worst malady to inflict on a language is spread by translators too prone to use foreign words, especially French, rather than the colloquial alternatives. But his dictionary is not a bastion against foreign intervention. Al contrario, it establishes Greek, Roman and other etymologies by tracing the antiquity of a word, and it allows for neologisms that have in his eyes a *raison d'être*.

Even the buildup of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, by far the most reputed lexicon in the English-language orbit, commonly known through its acronym *OED*, serves as a paradigm of individualism. In 1857 Richard Chenevix Trench, then Dean of Westminster, called for the effort to put out a new dictionary to cure "the deficiencies of the language." Work began in 1878, and the actual publication of "125 constituent fascicles," orchestrated by fully committed scholars with the support of hundreds of people around the world, took place from 1884 to 1928. While the endeavor was dedicated to Queen Victoria and early copies were presented to King George V and to the President of the United States, it was, in all accounts, a non-official effort covered by Oxford University and Clarendon Press. That nonaffiliated status, and the objective to categorize words from English-language regions far and wide, remain intact. Like the *Diccionario de la Real Academia*, as time goes by the *OED* includes terms deemed improper or obscene at first.

In short, the difference between lexicological acceptance and rejection of the Spanish and English languages in their respective milieus, entre la flexibilidad y el dogmatismo, is rooted in history. With the fever for independence in the Americas in the mid 19th century, and even before the first branches of the Spanish academy were established in the Americas—after Colombia came Ecuador, then Mexico, and so on, until 1955, when an academy was created in Puerto Rico, followed in 1973 by its equivalent in the United States: *Academia Norteamericana*—each of these branches have released their own lexicons of local Spanish, e.g., diccionarios de mexicanismos, peruanismos, colombianismos, argentin-

ismos, and so on. They also contribute regularly to the matrix in Madrid by sending freshly coined terms to be considered for inclusion in the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española de la Lengua*. Their individual contributions testify to the varieties of Cervantes's tongue on this side of el Océano Atlántico. Nevertheless, the edition prepared in Madrid remains the "official" and authoritative one and is sold regularly all across the Hispanic world. (The latest update was made in 2001.) In contrast, numerous dictionaries of English are published from Canada to Britain, from the Caribbean to Australia. They are not a federal tool. Their function is not to legislate but to record. And their relationship with the *OED* is diffuse at best.

Almost on a daily basis, we agonize over the death of another one of the thousands of languages in some region of the globe. The emergence of a new tongue, on the other hand, particularly one that is the result of mestizaje and also of American imperialism, is dressed in a shroud of controversy.

Por qué?

La gente se queja, una y otra vez.

Think of it this way: every minute another galaxy is born. Do those births threaten our own existence? Not in the least. What they offer is an opportunity to reflect on the origins and explanation of our own universe.

O no?

Dónde comienza el espanglés—where does Spanglish begin? Is it possible to identify its birth date with any precision?

Like that of any form of communication, its origins respond to the needs of the population that uses it. Between 1492 and the mid 19th century, the encounter of the two weltanschauungs, Anglo-Saxon and Hispanic, produced a bare minimum of verbal miscegenation. The

chronicles of conquest and conversion of Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca (about Florida, in particular), "El Inca" Garcilaso de la Vega, and Gaspar Pérez de Villagrà, Fathers Eusebio Kino and Junípero Serra, and many others, all have as their target someone living in the Iberian Peninsula. They are composed in a Castilian Spanish colored by few regionalisms. The picture changes dramatically in the Mexican Southwest between 1810 and 1848. Early on Napoleon sold Louisiana to the United States, and shortly after, the arrival of Anglo-Americans to Arizona, Texas, New Mexico, and California—slow at first so as not to anger the local and federal authorities—transformed the region.

Yes, la modernidad arrived!

Missions were secularized, the Santa Fe Trail was opened by William Bicknell in 1822 and trade became attractive in spite of exorbitant taxes by Mexican officials. It was in those years that Texas became Americanized, with a population that quadrupled between 1820 and 1830, mostly as a result of new Anglo arrivals. The dialogue of Spanish and English increased as an obvious consequence. By 1848, when the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed by the Mexican dictator Antonio López de Santa Anna thereby selling for \$15 million—¡qué oferta!—two thirds of Mexican territory to the White House, the juxtaposition of cultures was extensive. With the treaty, the population that lived in those territories in Arizona, California, New Mexico, and so on, switched citizenship from one day to the next. Article VIII of the document in English is clear about the physical status of these people. "Mexicans now established in territories previously belonging to Mexico," it stated, "and which remain for the future within the limit of the United States, as defined by the present treaty,"

shall be free to continue where they now reside, or to remove at any time to the Mexican Republic, retaining the property which they possess in the said territories, or disposing thereof, and removing the proceeds wherever they please;

without their being subjected, on this account, to any contribution, tax or charge whatsoever.

Those who shall prefer to remain in the said territories, may either retain the title and rights of Mexican citizens, or acquire those of citizens of the United States. But they shall be under the obligation to make their election within one year from the date of the exchange of ratifications of this treaty: and those who shall remain in the said territories, after the expiration of that year, without having declared their intention to retain the character of Mexicans, shall be considered to have elected to become citizens of the United States.

In the said territories, property of every kind, now belonging to Mexicans, not established there, shall be inviolably respected. The present owners, the heirs of these, and all Mexicans who may hereafter acquire said property by contract, shall enjoy with respect to it, guaranties equally ample as if the same belonged to citizens of the United States.

Curiosamente, no mention is made anywhere in the document of the inhabitants' "madre lengua," although it was said in newspaper reports that, since language is an inalienable civil right, "it shall be respected thoroughly." History is written not by the conquered but by the victors, though; before long, English became the dominant tongue of business and diplomacy in the newly acquired Southwestern lands. But the usage of Spanish in schools and the household did not altogether vanish. Newspapers such as *El Clamor Público* in Albuquerque and *El Nuevo Mundo* in San Francisco serve as testimony to the relevance of the tongue. *El hijo de la tempestad* by Eusebio Chacón, the oral history of Eulalia Pérez and the call-and-response *El trovo del viejo Vilmas y Gracia*, the anonymous *Los Comanches*, are examples of its vitality.

By the time the Spanish-American War unfolded, Key West and New York had become magnets of immigration and solid Puerto Rican

and Cuban communities had their roots in them. But it was clear that, as the so-called American Century was about to begin, the communication code had changed. From 1901 until the end of the millennium, dictionaries of Anglicisms were published all across the Hispanic world—in particular in Mexico, Cuba, Argentina, and Spain, by scholars like Ricardo Alfaro, Washington Llorens, Elena Mellado de Hunter, and Juan José Alzugaray Aguirre—with more and more frequency. This, surely, is a symptom of the verbal cross-fertilization experienced from north to south. Words like *buckaroo*, *rodeo*, *amigo*, *mañana*, and *tortilla* made it into English; likewise, *gringo*, *mister*, and *money* begin to be used in Spanish. The Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío, the anointed leader of the Modernista movement that swept the Americas between 1885 and 1915 and included luminaries like José Martí, Delmira Agustini, and Leopoldo Lugones, denounced in one of his poems the oppressiveness of the American language:

*¿Seremos entregados a los bárbaros fieros?
¿Tantos millones de hombres hablaremos inglés?
¿Ya no hay nobles hidalgos ni bravos caballeros?
¿Callaremos ahora para llorar después?*

My unpoetic translation:

Will we surrender to the ferocious barbarians?
That many millions of people will end up speaking in
English?
Are there no longer noble *hidalgos* or brave knights?
Will we fall silent today in order to cry tomorrow?



Once the historical context of Spanglish becomes clear, a number of absorbing puntos of comparison emerge. Ebonics, por ejemplo. Do the two have anything in common? Expressions like "I own know what dem

white folk talkin bout" and "Hey, dog, whass hapnin?" are not uncommon among Black youth, especially in urban centers across the country. This pattern of communication follows has its own grammar and syntax. It is, for the most part, a spoken language nurtured by oral tradition, even though poets and novelists like Zora Neale Hurston, Alain Locke, Joan Teomer, and Countée Cullen of the Harlem Renaissance in the twenties, and scores of descendientes, among them Richard Wright, in *Native Son* and La Toni Morrison with her *Beloved*, a book instrumental in her receiving the Nobel Prize for Literature, have done wonders through artistic transcription.

Also known as African-American English, and Black lingo, the idiom, in the words of Geneva Smitherman, author of the book *Black Talk* (1994), is "a complicated system. Made even more complex by the existence of Euro-American patterns of English within the Africanized English system." Indeed, there is little doubt that Ebonics is an intra-ethnic slang used by members of a minority group to establish a bridge of identity. Its foundation dates back to the age of slavery. And class, to a large extent, marks it, as lower-class people especially in urban centers embrace it. "As far as historians, linguists, and other scholars go," Smitherman says,

during the first half of [the 20th] century it was widely believed that enslavement had wiped out all traces of African languages and cultures, and that Black "differences" resulted from imperfect and inadequate imitations of European American language and culture. George Philip Krapp, writing in the 1920s, is one linguist who held this view about the speech of Africans in America. In the 1960s these opinions came under close scrutiny and were soundly challenged by a number of experts, such as the historian John Blassingame and the linguist J. L. Dillard. Today scholars generally agree that the African heritage was not totally wiped out, and that

both African American Language and African American Culture have roots in African patterns.

Spanglish también is often an intra-ethnic vehicle of communication, though only en los Unaited Esteits. It is used by Hispanics to establish a form of empathy between one another. But the differences with Ebonics are sharp: Spanglish, for one thing, is a result of the evident clash between two full-fledged, perfectly discernible lenguas; and it is not defined by class, as people in all social strata, from migrant workers to upper-class statements like congressmen, TV anchors, comedians, use it regularly. South of the Rio Grande, Spanglish also knows no boundaries as it permeates all levels of the economic ladder.

The interface of Ebonics and Spanglish is especially strong en la música. For music is the most fluid expression of the Latin soul, el alma latina.

Not too long ago, I found myself inside a taxi amid una combustión de tráfico in Manhattan. The direct radio contact between the driver and his dispatcher was electrifying. The woman arranging pickups and departures savvily switched from Spanish to English and back, injecting her speech with florid Spanglishismos that belonged to neither tongue. The driver was probably of Asian origin—in his features, evidently a non-Latino. Still, he understood perfectly what the woman was telling him, answering back in Spanglish. He had learned the jargon from her and others in the company and was clearly comfortable with it. His accent was evident. But this didn't impede the dialogue. Why should it? In fact, as far as I was able to judge, nobody seemed to notice.

Then, at one punto, he tuned into a radio station playing Latin rap. I recognized the song "Locotes," by the popular group *Cypress Hill*.

Moving his lips, the driver attentively repeated several stanzas. Distinctively Chicano terms, such as *ese*, *clica*, *gabacho*, and *jale*, weren't alien to his Chinese appetite. On the contrary, he relished them. Was the experience surreal? No, ciertamente no. Latin music—not only salsa but

rock, hip-hop and jazz—has spilled beyond its ethnic enclave. On their way to mainstream culture, many of those rhythms underwent an infusion of African-American talent. Ebonics and Spanglish are juxtaposed in them.

The other useful point of comparison to understand *el poder y alcance del espanglish* is Yiddish. Upon my arrival in New York City in the mid eighties, I sensed that strange affinity between Spanglish and Yiddish. The explanation might have to do with my upbringing: Yiddish, another mishmash of languages, was part of my early education in the small Jewish enclave in Mexico in which I came of age. Spanish and Yiddish cohabited at home and in school, and to a lesser extent, so did Hebrew. The interplay of tongues wasn't at all strange for me, my siblings, and friends. On the contrary, it was common: people chose the language they preferred based on the context in which they found themselves: school, home, the synagogue, the outdoors. What was uncommon, though, was the mixture: it was always Yiddish or Spanish, never Yiddish and Spanish. Still, Yiddish is the result of the crisscross of Hebrew and German, to which Slavic terms were added, and then some more from Polish, Russian, Romanian, Latvian, French, English, etc.

Is Spanglish the Yiddish of today?

Un poco sí, un poco no . . . At first sight, the equation appears to be absurd. But is it? Benjamin Harshav, in *The Story of Yiddish* (1984), does a commanding job in chronicling the odyssey of Yiddish from rejection to full embrace. The dialect—it has been rightly described as an “internal tongue,” e.g., a tongue spoken by an ethnic group to distinguish itself from the environment—was used by Eastern European Jews for seven centuries, from the 13th until the 20th, when, in 1945, the Auschwitz chimneys systematically killed it. Its linguistic sources are plentiful. It was first known as a gibberish for women and children and was looked down by rabbis and the intelligentsia as unworthy of Talmudic dialogue. Nevertheless, by the 19th a vast majority of poor, uneducated Jews, male and female alike in the so-called Pale of Settlement that included Poland, Lithuania, and Galicia, no longer were fluent in He-

brew and only spoke Yiddish, which time had turned from a jargon to a dialect and then into a mature language. (By the way, in Yiddish the word *Yiddish* means “Jewish.”) So around 1865 Sh. Y. Abramovitch, the grandfather of Yiddish literature, made the conscious decision to author his novels and pedagogical treatises in it.

In “*Mayn Lebn*,” an autobiographical essay anthologized in his *Complete Works*, Abramovitch wrote: “I tried to compose a story in simple Hebrew, grounded in the spirit and life of our people at the time. At that time, then, my thinking went along these lines: Observing how my people live, I want to write stories for them in our sacred tongue, yet they do not understand the language. They speak Yiddish. What good does the writer’s work and thought serve him, if they are of no use to his people? For whom was I working? The question gave me no peace but placed me in a dilemma.” From then on it took enough self-confidence to generate masters like Sholom Aleichem, Peretz, Ansky and even Marc Chagall, whose pictorial images are but translations of his *shetl* background. Play, stories, novels, poems, commentary, and translations were done in it. It vanished eventually, but not entirely—*nunca para siempre*. In 1978, one of the Yiddish literati, Isaac Bashevis Singer, a native of Poland and a New Yorker by choice, was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

There was never one Yiddish but many: *galitzianer, litvak*, etc.

Yes, Spanglish shows the characteristics of an internal tongue, at least in the United States: it is often used by Latinos to define their own turf. But it has many other uses too: it is a transitional stage of communication in the process of English-language acquisition, it is a fashion, too. But in Latin America and the Caribbean the category of *lengua intra-étnica*, internal tongue, falls apart altogether, and another set of categories is brought to the fore: margin vs. center, imperial culture vs. colonies, etc. Also to consider is the fact that the presence of Yiddish in America is a result of the Eastern European immigration in the second part of the nineteenth century and the first twenty years of the next. Its

relevance was huge in the Lower East Side of New York, among other places, where newspapers like *Der Forverts* had a wide readership.

Leo Rosten, in his classic *The Joys of Yiddish* of 1968, makes fun of the chaos—yes, *mishmash*—between Yiddish and English. “It is a remarkable fact,” Rosten argues, “that never in its history has Yiddish been so influential—among Gentiles. (Among Jews, alas, the tongue is running dry.) We are clearly witnessing a revolution in values when . . . the London *Economist* captions a fuss over mortgage rates: ‘HOME LOAN HOOHA.’ Or when the *Wall Street Journal* headlines a feature on student movements: ‘REVOLUTION, SHMEVOLUTION.’ Or when a wall in New York bears the eloquent legend, chalked there, I suppose, by some derisive student in English: ‘MARCEL PROUST IS A YENTA.’ ” “Get lost!” “O.K. by me,” “I need it like a hole in the head!” and “Who *needs* it?” are all expressions that come from the Yiddish.

Spanglish too is looked down at by intellectuals north and south of the Rio Grande. Still, authors like Piri Thomas, Giannina Braschi, Juan Felipe Herrera, Sandra Cisneros, and Junot Díaz regularly employ it to explore the emotional depth of their characters.

“See, I tol’ yuh,” says un judío, a Jew, in a conversation between two nuyorkinos in Crown Heights.

“But I hav sumtin tel yuh,” replies his Dominican neighbor, leading him to a building across the street. “Du yu no was the bes wor for a person that tacs two or mor lenguas?”

“No,” answers el judío.

“Multiparlante . . .”

“So?” adds el judío.

“An was the bes wor for a person that tacs one lengua?” asks the Dominican.

“I doh no . . .”

“Un gringo . . .”

Naturally, the usage of slang by American authors isn’t new: Mark Twain indulged in it masterfully in the 19th century, and scores have fol-

lowed his example. This doesn’t mean that what Huck Finn says is to be taken as a syntactical lesson. True, pero el hecho de que existan tales ejemplos, the fact that literature is malleable enough to reflect the street practice serves as a form of legitimization. When Yiddish literati replicated the jargon of the folk, they were hailed as “representatives of the collective soul.”

In any case, Spanglish, to be fully understood, ought to be compared to Ebonics and Yiddish. Not that they are the same, but they have elements in common. There are dramatic differences too: to suggest that Spanglish is the Ebonics of and Yiddish of Latinos es un error, of course.

Still, to understand the development of Ebonics and English, and for that matter also those of el español y el inglés, serves as window to appreciate Spanglish.

In the quest for completeness, it is also useful to think of varieties of Spanglish in strategic areas beyond the American continent and even hemisphere. In the Rock of Gibraltar, which for ages lived under Moorish domination but since the Treaty of Utrecht in the 18th century is in the hands of Britain “forever” (much to Spain’s dismay), a mixture of English and Spanish is used. And in Zamboanga City and other southwestern parts of the Philippines, Chavacano is preferred, a dialect with about 90% Spanish words that uses Tagalog-style grammar and syntax—a sort of Spangalog.

Other galaxies, our own.



*M*y incessant curiosity for Spanglish has brought me scores of enemies. Since I first taught my course *The Sounds of Spanglish*, a sort of frenzy has taken shape. The BBC and NPR sent reporters into the classroom and then pursued the story in other vicissitudes. The Madrid newspaper *El País* broke the news that I had been compiling a Spanglish dictionary with an interview that caused dismay among purists. It then

devoted another feature to the course itself, describing it as “la primer cátedra de Spanglish en el mundo.” Opinion pieces started to appear in short order in *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* in Spain, and in countless dailies and weeklies in the Americas. In the English-speaking world, *The New York Times* and *The (London) Times* spread the news, and the echo was heard as far away as Italy, Brazil, Germany, and France. An Internet attacker described me as the Cheech and Chong Professor of Spanglish.

In the United States, a deluge of angry syndicated pieces and obscene e-mails started to appear—and it only seems to increase in quantity. Hundreds have arrived in all shapes and tones. A typical one, by Rodrigo Díaz del Vivar (I’ve changed the name, again), reads:

Me da asco saber que hay personas como usted que se siguen empeñando en tratar de acabar con un idioma tan hermoso como lo es el español. No puedo creer que haya en el mundo personas que quieran seguir protegiendo el supuesto espanglish que buen daño le hace al idioma.

¿A usted le gustaría que sus hijos hablaran espanglish en lugar de hablar un correcto español? Creo que no, pero ya me quedan mis dudas de qué tan brillante puede ser una persona que defienda semejante atentando al idioma.

No sé de dónde salió semejante monstruo, pero lo que sí sé y lo tengo seguro es que es un anti-hispano como lo son muchos americanos, y no es porque odie a los hispanos, sino que está atentando contra nuestro idioma.

Qué desgracia tener personas como usted dentro de la comunidad hispana.

My own English translation:

I’m repulsed to know that there are people like you still devoted to the destruction of as beautiful a language as Span-

ish. I can’t believe there are people in the world who insist on protecting the supposed Spanglish that in some measure injures our tongue.

Would you like your children to speak Spanglish instead of a correct Spanish? I don’t think so, although I’ve doubts of how brilliant a person who defends such an attempt against the language can be.

I don’t know where such a monster like you came from, but what I do know and I’m sure of is that you’re an anti-Hispanic, the way many Americans are, and it isn’t because you hate Hispanics, but because you’re attacking our tongue.

What a pity to have people like you in our community.

The majority of these attacks—approximately 95%, in my estimation—are in Spanish. This, I believe, is symptomatic. In the Iberian Peninsula, the spread of *el espanglés* has become a national obsession. An army of commentators believes that its vitality is an omen: Hispanic civilization on this side of the Atlantic will survive in the future, but in a drastically altered, almost unrecognizable form. It is left to the Spanish government today, as well as to educators, to push for a serious study of *el español en los Unaited Esteits*. The obscenities have also come from official agencies. When news of my compilation of Spanglish terms spread throughout the Hispanic world, the *Academia Norteamericana de la Lengua*, which remains but a branch of its Madrid headquarters, issued an open letter—a fatwah, as an interneter described it once, portraying me as “el Salman Rushdie de los latinos”—denouncing the effort as an affront.

In the Americas, this reaction is far less palpable. Perhaps because people are accustomed to being colonized by foreign powers—Spain included—Spanglish is perceived as an attractive mixture that announces the emergence of a new self hispano.

Among English speakers north of the Rio Grande, the debate has

less to do with imperialism than with assimilation. Spanglish, the purists suggests, is the result of a bankrupt system of Educación Bilingüe: when teachers and parents forget how to delineate the line between one language and the other, the outcome is verbal chaos. Other reasons are added to its existence, among them a general state of "laziness" among Hispanic immigrants to learn proper inglés completamente and the endorsement of multicultural programs that encourage cultural hybridity rather than discourage it.

Among conservative Latinos—and there are numerous—Spanglish, as the e-mail I quoted above proves, is a form of shame. Other immigrants assimilated into the Melting Pot by sacrificing their original tongue, and so should we.

But should we?

Although I'm perfectly aware of my public role as the target in the animosity against el español, I've chosen silence as a response to the criticism. The reason is uncomplicated. The attacks are a manifestation of a buried emotional reaction. Unfortunately, Hispanic civilization has never quite understood the role of constructive analysis. To study Spanglish isn't to endorse its future, thus undermining el español . . . On the contrary, to scrutinize is to better understand where we come from and who we are.

As I've stated above, in no way do I disagree with those who believe that Spanish and English should be spoken well—hablémoslos como se debe. My interest in Spanglish isn't a question of either/or: Professor Stavans, Do you prefer Spanglish instead of . . . ? No, there aren't any *insteads*. . . Me gustan todas por igual, I like them all the same.

I realize, obviously, that for many impoverished Latinos the possibility of speaking el inglés, el español and Spanglish isn't really an option. But should that curtail our constructive analysis? And for how long will the so-called educated insist that los pobres don't speak a tongue, they simply destroy it? Class is an integral component of our way of life. When it isn't Spanglish we're complaining about as we address those

that we portray as less worthy than us, it is something else: as Ambrose Bierce puts it, slang is invariably a disgrace—"the grunt of the human hog (*Pignoramus intolerabilis*) with an audible memory."

(By the way, my children do speak españolés!)



*J*tol yuh . . .

Not long ago, as I walked the streets of San Antonio, I came across a sign that read: "Se prohíbe hanguear!" Weeks later, in La Loisaida, as the Lower East Side of Manhattan is called by Nuyorricans, I read the same sign, although spelled in a different way: "¡No jangear!"

I was thinking about this coincidence, about the unconscious effort to standardize Spanglish, when I stumbled upon Lisa Martínez. I was descending the staircase of a subway station while she was coming out from it . . .

After a few seconds, I heard a recognizable sound: Wasá?

The two of us were overwhelmed by a sense of disbelief. How long had it been since we last had seen each other?

A smile, a brief cómo te va. Then I asked her if she had time to spare. Happily, ninguno de los dos was in a rush. So I invited her to have a coffee.

Lisa briefed me about her odyssey after she left New England. She said she first moved back to Istlos, where for months she devoted herself to community service. Over time, she did complete a BA degree in a local institution, then enrolled en la escuela de leyes, Law School, this time en Nuyol.

Why come back to the East Coast? I asked, aware of her loyalty to California.

"Power is on this side, profe . . .," she replied. "You know it, right?"

We spent approximately half an hour together. Only in the last few minutes did the topic become Spanglish.

"Y usté, I know you sigue con el asunto del espanglés! I've heard you on the radio. And I saw you interviewed on Spanish TV . . . It was culísimo!"

I told her I had translated the first chapter of *Don Quixote* and that I was about to publish a Spanglish dictionary.

"You opened the door for me, Lisa. Before that fateful day in which you came to la oficina to say adiós, I had not taken Spanglish to heart."

"Yeah, I smiled when you began talking in la jerga loca to me . . . It sounded so foreign, so artificial. It didn't seem yours at all!"

There was a pause.

"By the way, profe. How would you translate the sentence 'Entre, entre y tome asiento' into English?"

I laughed. She was referring to a line from the movie *El Super* (1983).

"Between, between and drink a chair," I said.

"Hey, you're getting good!"

Lisa Martínez then sang for me a couple of stanzas of the so-called "Official Spanglish nacional Anthem," which she had found on the Internet. "It's about the Boricuas, profe. . .," she announced. "Like the ones together with whom we made the alboroto about Spanglish in your class. Se acuerda?"

I heard her versify:

Y paaaaa'
El carajo with the numbers
If I can't fly I'll swim
Straight from El Barrio
Back to Puerto Rico
(Island by the sun blessed
Island I never left
I will settle there next)

Así es how it must be
For the whole family
Dice our destineeeee!
De weather wasn't nice
Comfort cost a high price
Unlike in Puerto Rico
We kept cooking the rice
And re-heating the beans
And making cuchifrito.

I had a cappuccino y una bagel with cheese. Lisa drank jugo de china. We walked back to the subway and, in normal English, said good-bye. As I took the train to the Upper West Side, where I was planning to stay the night at a friend's house, I pondered how much I had changed in the last decade or so, and how much my surrounding had undergone a transformation too. "Pollito Chicken" by Ana Lydia Vega had been the first short-story I had encountered in the jargon. I had come across scores of others in recent years, not only by Latinos in los Unaited Es-teits but also south of the border. In fact, just a few days ago I had seen in the magazine *El Andar* a powerful personal memoir by an Argentine, Susana Chávez Silverman. "Crossing the Riachuelo in a smudge-windowed bus, over into Avellaneda. Provincia de Buenos Aires. Roof patios, si se les puede llamar así (porque de encanto y relax tropical no tienen nada) . . ."

Also, a former student of mine, on a trip to El Viejo San Juan, had found a restaurant, *The Parrot Club* (address: 363 Fortaleza; telephone: [787] 725-7370), where the menu is entirely in Spanglish. "You should stop by on your next viaje, Ilan. Try the Jumbo Spiced Camarones, pan fried y servidos con bacon, tomato salsa, arroz blanco y jícama salad . . ."

And in the magazine *Latina* I had seen an advertisement for the US

military service. It sought to attract Latinos: "Yo Soy el Army," it read in large-size letters.

Indeed, at times it seemed to me as if the world entire, *el mundo entero*, existed in Spanglish. The cacophony of voices that had attracted my ear in Manhattan in the mid eighties, at my arrival as an immigrant, had expanded its base of operation. Department stores, *agencias de viajes*, restaurants, *bucherías*, auto repairs . . . *el espanglés* was used often and everywhere.

Might a monolingual feel disoriented while walking the streets? If so, does anyone care? Not in the least, it seems.

And does anybody pay attention to the rules of syntax? But again: does it matter?

This delicious—and delirious—mishmash is what Latino identity is about: the verbal *mestizaje* that results from a transient people, *un pueblo en movimiento*. One day, not too far into *el futuro*, a masterpiece in literature might be composed in that mishmash, one that will forever change the way we comprehend our world. It might take time for readers to appreciate it in full, but the existence of such readership is not improbable. I once heard Ana Celia Zentella, a specialist in Nuyorrican grammar and the author of *Growing Up Bilingual* (1997), describe the individual Spanglish-speaker as "two monolinguals stuck at the neck." It is a haunting, beautiful image that makes me think of Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*—one body, two selves.

Why do Spanglish speakers say *rufo* and not *techo*? Maybe because, as the Mexican intellectual Alfonso Reyes once said, "the law of the easiest effort" ruled the formation of language, and language is the freest of human acts. "Grammar is neither a useful art," Reyes added, "nor does it really teach us how to speak. . . . It is simply the rhythm we use as we formulate thought."

Yes, rhythm and thought—*el ritmo y la razón*.

A User's Manual

Dictionaries are word-books. The term *dictionary* itself comes from Medieval Latin: *dictionary*: *dictio*, a word + *arium*, the suffix that implies compendium. Language, in constant movement, is impossible to capture. Any dictionary that prides itself as accurate must, to begin, recognize that the lingo on the streets will never be imprisoned. Spanglish, thus, creates a daunting series of tasks for the lexicographer. It is, to this day, an oral vehicle of communication. Many of its words and phrases have never been written down before. This means that the spelling is evasive, and frequently the etymology is too.

Do lexicons tell people how to speak? Or is it the other way around? There's a difference between the *normative* and the *descriptive*: the former regulates and systematizes, whereas the latter simply records. This volume is evidently descriptive. It isn't a didactic tool—its purpose is not to teach people *how* to speak Spanglish, but to represent the multifarious tongue(s) spoken by Latinos, and to a lesser extent by Hispanics the world over, at the dawn of the third millennium. The research

- zipeado (zee-PEAH-do), adj., zipped. E»S
 zipear (ZEE-peahr), v., to zip. E»S
 zoquete (zo-KE-teh), adj., m., stupid. {SW}
 zorrear (ZO-reahr), v., 1. to skip. 2. to take time off on the job. Sp.
 zorro means fox. {SW}
 zorrero (zoh-RRE-ro), n., m., skipper. {SW}
 zum (ZOOM), n., m., lens focalization. E»S
 zumear (ZOO-mear), v., to zoom. E»S

Appendix

DON QUIXOTE DE LA MANCHA

MIGUEL DE CERVANTES

Tradladado al Spanglish por Ilan Stavans

Nota Bene: The following exercise in literary translation came as a result of a fortuitous circumstance. During a lecture tour through Orwell's Catalonia in the summer of 2002, I participated in a radio discussion, broadcasted live, on the origins and nature of Spanglish. Among the participants, who were either present or connected by satellite, there was a language purist affiliated to the Real Academia Española de la Lengua Castellana. There was some discussion on the capacity of a language to express emotions and the challenge Spanglish faced in this area. At one point in a diatribe against Spanglish, this *caballero* stated that the mongrel tongue should not be taken seriously until and unless it produced a masterpiece of the caliber of *Don Quixote de La Mancha*, the magnum opus of Iberian letters, published by Cervantes in two parts, the first in 1605 and the second one in 1615. My immediate response was one I've repeated in the later section of "*La jerga loca*," the essay that serves as an introduction to this volume. It's too early to say what pattern Spanglish will take in its development, I suggested. While it isn't

impossible that in a couple of hundred years such a masterpiece might be composed in a variety of Spanglish unfamiliar to us today, a "translation" of *Don Quixote* into Spanglish isn't at all impossible, and neither is it improbable.

Ipsa facto, the program host asked me to improvise a few sentences. How would such translation "feel"? I spontaneously complied to his request—con enorme placer.

Upon my return to the downtown hotel, I spoke with Sergio Vila-Sanjuan, an editor for the daily *La Vanguardia*. After some discussion with his colaboradores y colegas, he wanted me to send him a.s.a.p. my translation of Part I, Chapter 1.

Poco después, at home already in Massachusetts, me dediqué de lleno to the endeavor. The piece appeared in the supplement *Cultura/s*.

An international controversy ensued.

The strategy I took to render the text is easy to summarize. Spanglish, as I've stated it in the meditative essay in this volume, remains, for the most part, an oral vehicle of communication, spoken predominantly by individuals of different national backgrounds in the United States. Although there is much in common among these national groups, each has devised its own linguistic modality. I refused to choose a single modality; instead, my objective, similar to those on Spanish-language TV north of the Rio Grande and, more important even, to the one used assiduously in the Internet, is a middle ground—de ningún lugar y de todas partes.

Mine isn't a standardized Spanglish because for now no such composite exists. Maybe soon, but not yet . . .

So mine is an "artificial" language, isn't it? Sure, it ought to be. Until and unless Spanglish moves from the oral to the written mode—and it's showing signs of doing so already—any literary attempt is, inevitably, una afectación. As translator I let myself be permeated by any and all varieties of Spanglish (Pachuco, Dominicanish, Cubonics, Nuyorrican, etc.) in the hope of producing a version that might be

"read" by Latinos of different national backgrounds and by non-Hispanics and non-Spanglish-speakers as well.

A journalist for *La Nación* in Buenos Aires, not without sarcasm, described the effort as *joyceano*.

In Spanish, *joyceano* means Joycean; in Spanglish, joyful.

First Parte, Chapter Uno

In un placete de La Mancha of which nombre no quiero remembrearme, vivía, not so long ago, uno de esos gentlemen who always tienen una lanza in the rack, una buckler antigua, a skinny caballo y un greyhound para el chase. A cazuela with más beef than mutón, carne choppeada para la dinner, un omelet pa' los Sábados, lentil pa' los Viernes, y algún pigeon como delicacy especial pa' los Domingos, consumían tres cuarers de su income. El resto lo employaba en una coat de broadcloth y en soketes de velvetín pa' los holidays, with sus slippers pa' combinar, while los otros días de la semana él cut a figura de los más finos cloths. Livin with él eran una housekeeper en sus forties, una sobrina not yet twenty y un ladino del field y la marketa que le saddleaba el caballo al gentleman y wieldeaba un hookete pa' poder. El gentleman andaba por allí por los fifty. Era de complexión robusta pero un poco fresco en los bones y una cara leaneada y gaunteada. La gente sabía that él era un early riser y que gustaba mucho huntear. La gente say que su apellido was Quijada or Quesada—hay diferencia de opinión entre aquellos que han escrito sobre el sujeto—but acordando with las muchas conjeturas se entiende que era really Quejada. But all this no tiene mucha importancia pa' nuestro cuento, providiendo que al cuentalo no nos separemos pa' nada de las verdá.

It is known, pues, que el aformencionado gentleman, cuando se la pasaba bien, which era casi todo el año, tenía el hábito de leer libros de chivaldría with tanta pleasura y devoción as to leadearlo casi por completo a forgetear su vida de hunter y la administración de su estate. Tan

great era su curiosidad e infatuación en este regardo que él even vendió muchos acres de tierra sembrable pa' comprar y leer los libros que amaba y carreaba a su casa as many as él podía obtener. Of todos los que devoreó, ninguno le plaseó más que los compuestos por el famoso Feliciano de Silva, who tenía un estylo lúcido y plotes intrincados that were tan preciados para él as pearls; especialmente cuando readeaba esos cuentos de amor y challenges amorosos that se foundean por muchos placetes, por example un passage como this one: *La razón de mi unrasón que afflicta mi rasón, en such a manera weakenea mi rasón que yo with rasón lamento tu beauty*. Y se sintió similarmente afflicteado cuando sus ojos cayeron en líneas como these ones: . . . *el high Heaven de tu divinidad te fortifiquea with las estrellas y te rendeas worthy de ese deserveo que tu greatness deserva*.

El pobre felo se la paseaba awakeado en las noches en un efforte de desentrañar el meanin y make sense de pasajes como these ones, aunque Aristotle himself, even if él had been resurrecteado pa'l propósito, no los understeaba tampoco. El gentleman no estaba tranquilo en su mente por las wounds que dio y recibió Don Belianis; porque in spite de how great los doctores que lo trataron, el pobre felo must have been dejado with su face y su cuerpo entero coverteados de marcas y escars. Pero daba thanks al autor por concluir el libro with la promisa de una interminable aventura to come. Many times pensaba seizear la pluma y literalmente finish-ear el cuento como had been prometeado, y undoubtedly él would have done it, y would have succedeado muy bien si sus pensamientos no would have been ocupados with estorbos. El felo habló d'esto muchas veces with el cura, who era un hombre educado, graduado de Sigüenza. Sostenía largas discusiones as to quién tenía el mejor caballero, Palmerín of England o Amadís of Gaul; pero Master Nicholas, el barbero del same pueblo, tenía el hábito de decir que nadie could come close ni cerca to the Caballero of Phoebus, y que si alguien could compararse with él, it had to be Don Galaor, bró de Amadís of Gaul, for Galaor estaba redy pa' todo y no era uno d'esos caballeros second-rate, y en su valor él no lagueaba demasiado atrás.

En short, nuestro gentleman quedó tan inmerso en su readin that él pasó largas noches—del sondáu y sonóp—y largos días—del daun al dosk—husmeando en sus libros. Finalmente, de tan poquito sleep y tanto readin, su brain se draidió y quedó fuera de su mente. Había llenado su imaginación con everythin que había readiado, with encantamientos, encounters de caballero, battles, desafíos, wounds, with cuentos de amor y de tormentos, y with all sorts of impossible things, that as a result se convenció que todos los happenins ficcionales que imagineaba eran trú y that eran más reales pa' él que anithin else en el mundo. El remarcaba que el Cid Ruy Díaz era un caballero very good, pero que no había comparación with el Caballero de la Flaming Sword, who with una estocada had cortado en halfo dos giants fierces y monstruosos. El prefería a Bernardo del Carpio, who en Rocesvalles había slaineado a Roland, despait el charm del latter one, takin advantage del estylo que Hercules utilizó pa' stranglear en sus arms a Antaeus, hijo de la Tierra. También tenía mucho good pa' decir de Morgante, who, though era parte de la raza de giants, in which all son soberbios y de mala disposición, él was afable y well educado. But, encima de todo, él se cherisheaba de admiración por Rinaldo of Montalbán, especialmente when él saw him sallyingueando hacia fuera of su castillo pa' robear a todos los que le aparecían en su path, or when lo imagineaba overseas thifeando la statue de Mohammed, which, así dice la story, era all de oro. Y él would have enjoyado un mano-a-mano with el traitor Galalón, un privilegio for which él would have dado a su housekeeper y su sobrina en el same bargain.

In efecto, cuando sus wits quedaron sin reparo, él concebió la idea más extraña ever ocurrida a un loco en este mundo. Pa' ganar más honor pa' himself y pa' su country al same time, le parecía fittin y necesario convertirse en un caballero errant y romear el mundo a caballo, en un suit de armadura. El would salir en quest de aventuras, pa' poner en práctica all that él readeaba en los libros. Arranglaría todo wrong, placeándose en situaciones of the greatest peril, and these mantendían

pa' siempre su nombre en la memoria. Como rewarda por su valor y el might de su brazo, el pobre felo podía verse crownado por lo menos as Emperador de Trebizond; y pues, carriado por el extraño pleacer que él foundió en estos thoughts, inmediately he set to put el plan en marcha.

Lo primero que hizo fue burnishear old piezas de armadura, left to him por su great-grandfather, que por ages were arrumbada en una esquina, with polvo y olvido. Los polisheó y ajustó as best él could, y luego vio que faltaba una cosa bien importante: él had no real closed hemleto, but un morión o helmete de metal, del type que usaban los soldados. Su ingenuidad allowed him un remedio al bendear un cardbord en forma de half-helmete, which, cuando lo attacheó, dió la impresión de un helmete entero. Trú, cuando fue a ver si era strong as to withstandear un good slashin blow, quedó desappointed; porque cuando dribleó su sword y dió un cople of golpes, succedió only en perder una semana entera de labor. Lo fácil with which lo había destrozado lo disturbó y decidió hacerlo over. This time puso strips de iron adentro y luego, convencido de que already era muy strong, refrained ponerlo a test otra vez. Instead, lo adoptó then y there como el finest helmete ever.

Depués salió a ver a su caballo, y although el animal tenía más cracks en sus hooves que cuarers en un real, y más blemishes que'l caballo de Gonela, which *tantum pellis et ossa fuit* ("all skin y bones"), nonetheless le pareció al felo que era un far better animal que el Bucephalus de Alexander or el Babieca del Cid. El spent cuatro días complete tratando de encontrar un nombre apropiado pa'l caballo; porque—so se dijo to himself—viendo que era propiedad de tan famoso y worthy caballero, there was no rasón que no tuviera un nombre de equal renombre. El type de nombre que quería was one that would at once indicar what caballo it had been antes de ser propiedad del caballero errant y también what era su status presente; porque, cuando la condición del gentleman cambiara, su caballo also ought to have una apelación famosa, una high-soundin

one suited al nuevo orden de cosas y a la new profesión that was to follow; y thus, pensó muchos nombres en su memoria y en su imaginación discardeó many other, añadiendo y sustrayendo de la lista. Finalmente hinteó el de *Rocinante*, un nombre that lo impresionó as being sonorous y al same time indicativo of what el caballo had been cuando era de segunda, whereas ahora no era otra cosa que el first y foremost de los caballos del mundo.

Habiendo foundeado un nombre tan pleasin pa' su caballo, decidió to do the same pa' himself. Esto requirió otra semana. Pa'l final de ese período se había echo a la mente that él as henceforth *Don Quixote*, which, como has been stated antes, forwardé a los autores d'este trú cuento a asumir que se llamaba Quijada y no Quesada, as otros would have it. Pero remembreando que el valiant Amadís no era happy que lo llamaran así y nothin más, but addirió el nombre de su kingdom y su country pa'cerlos famous también, y thus se llamó Amadís of Gaul; so nuestro good caballero seleccionó poner su placete de origen y became *Don Quixote de La Mancha*; for d'esta manera dejaría very plain su linaje y confería honor a su country by takin su nombre y el suyo en one alone.

Y so, with sus weapons already limpias y su morión in shape, with apelaciones al caballo y a himself, él naturalmente encontró que una sola cosa laqueaba: él must seekiar una lady of whom él could enamorarse; porque un caballero errant sin una ladylove was like un árbol sin leaves ni frutas, un cuerpo sin soul.

"If," dijo, "como castigo a mis sines or un stroke de fortuna, me encuentro with un giant, which es una thing que les pasa comunmente a los caballeros errant, y si lo slaineo en un mano-a-mano o lo corto en two, or, finalmente, si vanquisheo y se rinde, would it not be well tener a alguien a whom yo puedo enviárselo como un presente, in order pa' que'l giant, if él is livin todavía, may come in pa' arrodillarse frente a mi sweet lady, and say en tono humilde y sumisivo, 'Yo, lady, soy el giant Caraculiambro, lord de la island Malindrania, who has been derroteado

en un single combate por ese caballero who never can be praiseado enough, Don Quixote de La Mancha, el same que me sendió a presentarme before su Gracia pa' que Usté disponga as you wish?"

Oh, cómo se revolotió en este espich nuestro good gentleman, y más than nunca él pensaba en el nombre that él should oferear a su lady! Como dice el cuento, there was una very good-lookin jovencita de rancho who vivía cerca, with whom él had been enamorado una vez, although ella never se dio por enterada. Su nombre era Aldonza Lorenzo y decidió that it was ella the one que debía to have el título de lady de sus pensamientos. Wisheó pa' ella un nombre tan good cómo his own y que conveyera la sugestión que era princeza or great lady; y, entonces, resolvió llamarla *Dulcinea del Toboso*, porque ella era nativa d'ese placete. El nombre era musical to his oídos, fuera de lo ordinario y significante, like los otros que seleccionó pa' himself y sus things.

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This list isn't meant to be exhaustive. I've included the sources I used in the compilation of this volume as well as significant studies in lexicography, especially in dialectology. Also featured are titles on Ebonics, Yiddish, and other ethnic languages and dialects, as well as Spanish dictionaries of Anglicisms and essays on English loanwords from the Spanish language. And I've also inserted influential novels, collections of stories and volumes of poems whose content is either fully or partially en espanglés.

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